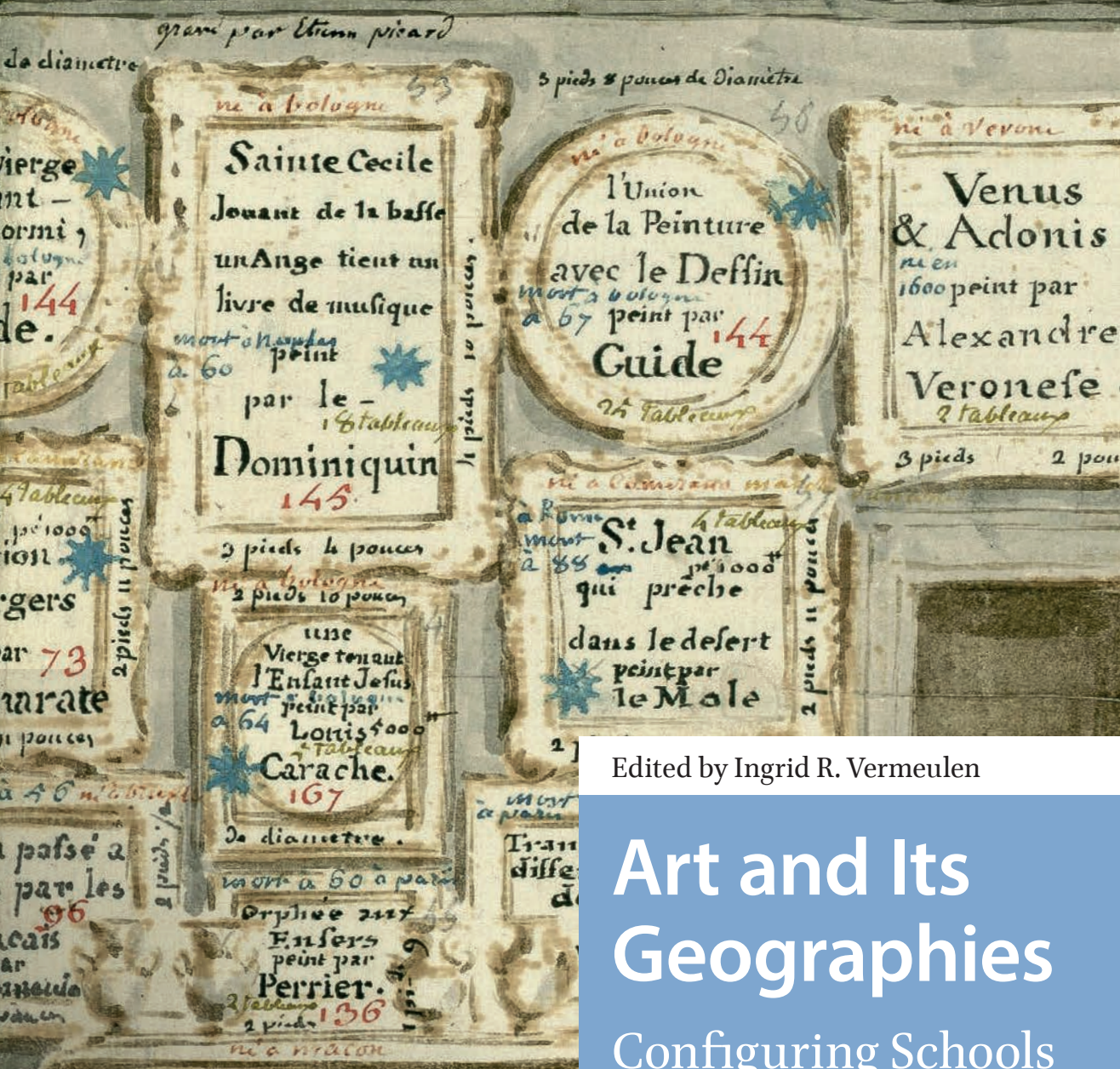


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Edited by Ingrid R. Vermeulen

# Art and Its Geographies

## Configuring Schools of Art in Europe (1550–1815)

## Art and Its Geographies

# Visual and Material Culture, 1300-1700

A forum for innovative research on the role of images and objects in the late medieval and early modern periods, *Visual and Material Culture, 1300–1700* publishes monographs and essay collections that combine rigorous investigation with critical inquiry to present new narratives on a wide range of topics, from traditional arts to seemingly ordinary things. Recognizing the fluidity of images, objects, and ideas, this series fosters cross-cultural as well as multi-disciplinary exploration. We consider proposals from across the spectrum of analytic approaches and methodologies.

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# Art and Its Geographies

*Configuring Schools of Art in Europe (1550–1815)*

*Ingrid R. Vermeulen (ed.)*

Amsterdam University Press

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# Introduction



# Art and Its Geographies: Configuring Schools of Art in Europe (1550–1815)

*Ingrid R. Vermeulen*

## Abstract

The introduction to this edited collection traces the emergence of the notion of a school in artistic discourse, and the manifold ways in which it shaped our understanding of the geography of European art during the early modern period. It argues that the notion of a school was fundamentally unstable because it comprised heterogeneous definitions, was employed in a variety of media, and sparked competitive debate regarding the hierarchy of art and artists. Thus, this notion established a pluriform panorama of both distinct and interconnected artistic traditions within European art. Such a variegated panorama contrasts markedly with the essentialising fixations of the national school—including its nationalistic and racist excesses—which predominated during the modern period.

**Keywords:** schools of art, Europe, geography of art, conceptualisation, mediation, connoisseurship

Globalisation is accompanied by increasing fascination in the field of art history with the study of artistic relations across the world. Although the geographical scope of such studies may be articulated by a translocal, transnational, or global outlook on the art world, these studies all emerge from a shared interest. They ground the understanding of art in terms of the mobility, exchange, transfer, mixing, networks, diffusion, mediation, or circulation of artists and artworks, as well as of artistic ideas and materials. Moreover, they are conducted in a variety of art historical domains, including art production, literature, travel, the art market, collecting, and museums.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> DaCosta Kaufmann 2015 (2017).

This fascination with global artistic phenomena in the modern era has produced critiques of nationalist and racist accounts of art history, which are often rooted in the notion of a 'national school of art'. The close association between schools of art and nations resulted from a belief that the crucial characteristics of artworks from a given school were inextricably tied to the essential nature of a people. The conviction that artistic production is determined not so much by individual artists but by their national origins—and, conversely, that works of art are the ultimate expression of the genius of a nation—laid the foundations for the thesis of the hereditary persistence of national styles in the history of art. The essentially exclusionary nature of these accounts played a role in national socialism, and it subsequently became a point of criticism among post-colonialists.<sup>2</sup>

The present edited collection aims to revisit the notion of the school of art. It traces the emergence of the notion in the European art world and gauges its contribution to the geographical understanding of European art from about 1550 to 1815. Instead of restating the essentialist features of the notion of the school of art, it highlights the fundamental instability of the concept. As will be argued, such instability resulted from the various meanings that the concept accumulated over time. Further, because schools were not self-evident components of the art world, they were shaped and promoted for different reasons through a wide range of artistic and visual media in the context of art academies, art literature, collections of drawings, prints, and paintings, art markets, and picture galleries. Moreover, the school perspective on art engendered widespread controversies about the prominence of certain groups of artworks and artists in Europe.

This study seeks to avoid the anachronistic projection of the modern national school backwards in time and the teleological assumption that the early modern notion of a school of art must necessarily have evolved into the modern one. In early modernity, the notion was indeed open to adaptation and debate. This was because it was not yet fixed within modern nationalist frameworks of art, which were shaped by the nineteenth-century nation-state and its cultural institutions, including the museum, the university, and the discipline of art history. Instead of rehabilitating the notion of the school for the purposes of present-day art history, this study is ultimately intended to draw attention to the notion as a historical phenomenon in order to reflect on some of today's concerns about intersections of art and geography.

<sup>2</sup> Michaud; DaCosta Kaufmann 2004, pp. 17–67; Locher, pp. 439–449. See also De Jongh in Grijzenhout, pp. 142–161.

## Early Modern Definitions and Demarcations

The classical notion of a school was first applied to the visual arts in the sixteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Its subsequent semantic accumulation, geographical expansion, and competitive impact can be illustrated by several prominent examples from early modern art literature. In his *Vite* (1550, 1568), Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574) used the notion primarily to denote the school of an artist and his pupils (as in the school of Nicola (1220/25–before 1284) and Giovanni Pisano (1245/50–before 1319) or the school of Raphael (1483–1520)), but he did not use it to indicate the different kinds of painting he found in Venice and Rome.<sup>4</sup> Not until the seventeenth century did it become more common to associate schools with cities, regions, and countries. For example, Carlo Cesare Malvasia (1616–1693) conceptualised and claimed a place for the school of Bolognese painters in his *Felsina pittrice* (1678).<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, the insights of Vasari, Malvasia, and other scholars fed into the art connoisseurship of Roger de Piles (1635–1709). In addition to insisting on a French school, his overview of European art was particularly aimed at systematically arranging schools according to the shared style of groups of artists and associating them with what he termed the ‘taste of nations’.<sup>6</sup>

The notion of a school of art was construed in other ways as well. When Bainbrigg Buckeridge (1668–1733) argued for the existence of an English school in his translation of De Piles’ work, he did so largely on the basis of a group of widely dispersed artists who had been active in England, regardless of whether they came from the Low Countries, Italy, Switzerland, or elsewhere.<sup>7</sup> Alternatively, in his rebuttal of Arnold Houbraken’s (1660–1719) survey of Netherlandish painters, Christian Ludwig von Hagedorn (1712–1780) highlighted the birthplaces of artists in the German Holy Roman Empire to lay claim to a German school, which comprised the scattered artists Van Eyck, Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), Adriaen van Ostade (1610–1685), Gerard de Lairese (1640–1711), and Andrea Pozzo (1642–1709).<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, the

3 In classical antiquity, the notion of a school signified a group of people consisting of a teacher and pupils and, increasingly, also their place of learning or institution of gathering. However, it did not refer to visual artists or artistic styles. Pfisterer, pp. 402–403. For the relationship between the notion of a school of art and Pliny’s *genera* of Greek styles, see also the essays of Oy-Marra and Prosperi Valenti Rodinò in this edited collection.

4 Occasionally, Vasari also used the term ‘school’ for places of learning, including the garden of Lorenzo de’ Medici (1492–1519), the courtyard of the Scalzo painted by Andrea del Sarto, and the city of Rome. Vasari, I, pp. 351 (Pisano), 628 (Medici), 696 (Sarto), 895 (Rome), 971 (Raphael); II, 805 (Venice-Rome).

5 In several passages, he compares the Bolognese school to those of Florence, Rome, Lombardy, Venice, and France. Malvasia, I, Prefazione (unpaginated), pp. 63, 133, 491; II, p. 309; Bologna, pp. 135–136; Bonfait, p. 398.

6 Piles 1699. See also the essay by Vermeulen in this edited collection.

7 Buckeridge, pp. 398–480; Hooek, pp. 67–79, esp. 68.

8 Van Mander, Sandrart, and Houbraken did not organise their compendia of artists’ biographies according to schools, but instead emphasised the national origins of artists in sections devoted to the

notion of a school of art was combined with the ideas of Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1768) about art as the essential expression of nations in art historical overviews compiled by Luigi Lanzi (1732–1810), Jean-Baptiste-Louis-Georges Séroux d'Agincourt (1730–1814), and Johann Dominikus Fiorillo (1748–1821) around 1800.<sup>9</sup>

Although the 'school' thus became an accepted part of the understanding of European art, it was far from a stable concept. Based on early modern art literature, the following discussion aims to trace the definitions of the notion of a school of art and to demarcate the playing field in which it was used. This field entails the range of circulating definitions of the notion, its geographical dissemination, and some of the parameters of the debates that it provoked about the hierarchy of art and artists in Europe.

Definitions of the notion of a school of art appeared in art treatises, dictionaries, and encyclopaedias published in France, England, the German Holy Roman Empire, the Dutch Republic, and the Italian peninsula from around 1700. According to Louis de Jaucourt (1704–1780) and Jean le Rond d'Alembert (1717–1783) in the *Encyclopédie* (1751–1780), a 'school' basically was both a series of painters and a 'class' of painting, which comprised knowledge of the lives of artists and the connoisseurship of artworks. Moreover, as a 'class', it was a key tool for the systematic arrangement of European art, which ran parallel to the classification of objects in the natural sciences.<sup>10</sup>

Art literature also distinguished various, sometimes overlapping, meanings of the notion of a school of art. First, a school was understood as a place of artistic learning. It denoted the workshop or studio of a celebrated artist who educated assistants, pupils, the pupils of pupils, and followers. A school was also understood to comprise art academies, which had been established since the sixteenth century as sites of instruction for artists. Second, schools were linked to cities, regions, or countries. Artists and artworks originating in these places, as well as those from elsewhere, were able to contribute to their reputation and glory. In some cases, schools of this kind were also associated with art academies in these places, but not necessarily. The idea of a school could even precede and foster the foundation of academies, as was the case with the Accademia Clementina in Bologna and the Royal Academy of Arts in London.<sup>11</sup> A third understanding equated schools to manners

lives of Netherlandish and German painters. See also the essay by Osnabrugge in this edited collection and Vermeulen 2020, pp. 403–406.

9 Winckelmann did not organise his *Geschichte der Kunst des Altherthums* (1764) according to schools, but according to peoples or nations. Lanzi, I, pp. ix–x; Séroux, II, pp. 86–87, 128–129; Fiorillo, I, pp. v–xix.

10 The notion of the school of art referred to the field of painting, as well as to the fine arts in the broader sense. For example, compare Furetière 1702, I, p. 804 ('Ecole, se dit en Peinture'); Jaucourt, V, pp. 314 ('Ecole (Peint.)'), 333–335 ('Ecole dans les beaux Arts'); Meijers, pp. 104–124.

11 Bonfait, pp. 395–400; Hoock, pp. 67–79.

or styles of artists' groups, which assumed shared or affiliated artistic practices that could be observed in the visual appearance of artworks. These schools were often characterised by generalised discussions of the parts of painting (e.g. design, colour, expression, composition) that formed a vital component of the production, theory, and connoisseurship of art. Fourth, the nature of schools was further explained by the taste, character, or genius of nations, including the circumstances of climate and commerce. Only at the very end of the eighteenth century was the loose association between school and nation united in the compound formulation of the 'national school'.<sup>12</sup>

Geographically, the notion of a school of art emerged on the Italian peninsula and spread from there to various parts of Europe. In its circulation, there was no division between the north and the south or the east and the west of Europe. From 1550 to 1815, the period covered in this book, the total range of identified schools was subject to expansion and revision, yet this range would never cover the entire continent and would instead remain confined to a limited part of Europe. Giovanni Battista Agucchi (1570–1632), who is regarded as one of the first to define European art according to schools at the beginning of the seventeenth century, distinguished the following: the Roman school, the Venetian school, the Lombard school, and the Tuscan school. He further noted that Germany, Flanders, and France had many famous artists.<sup>13</sup> More than a century later, De Jaucourt still distinguished the same range of places, but he referred to all of them as schools and broke down Germany and Flanders into the German, Flemish, and Dutch schools.<sup>14</sup> In the second half of the eighteenth century, some believed that a substantial number of these schools had declined, and some refined the existing range of schools by further distinguishing Bolognese, Genoese, Neapolitan, and so on, while others spotted new players, including English, Swiss, and Spanish, as well as Danish, Swedish, Russian, and Polish.<sup>15</sup> Not all artistic activity was automatically termed a school (e.g. when artistic activity was considered premature or comprised an isolated number of artists). For instance, German and English art and artists were not easily recognised as schools.<sup>16</sup>

12 Furetière 1690, I, unpaginated; Furetière 1702, I, p. 804; Richardson, II, pp. 77–80; Chambers, II, unpaginated ('School in Painting'); Jaucourt, V, pp. 314, 333–335; Sulzer, I, pp. 181, 244–245, 389, 392–393, 402, 545–546; II, pp. 721, 988, 1057; Eynden; Watelet, I, pp. 35 ('école nationale'), 210–238, 621 ('école nationale'); Milizia, I, pp. 245–257; Burtin, I, pp. 128–192. Just before the French Revolution, Watelet's use of the adjective 'national' in the phrase 'national school' cited above did not relate to the nation-state, but to the cultural nation. Princely rulers supported the arts in various ways for the benefit of the public, but they did not nationalise them.

13 Agucchi's treatise was first published in 1647. Mahon, p. 246. See the essay by Oy-Marra in this volume.

14 Jaucourt, V, pp. 314–333.

15 Eynden, pp. 23, 61, 67–70; Watelet, I, p. 238; Milizia, I, p. 257; Burtin, I, pp. 137–140.

16 Walpole, I, pp. vi–vii; Sulzer, I, pp. 244–245, II, p. 1057; Watelet, I, pp. 210, 230, 238; Milizia, I, pp. 255, 257.



Reference was also made to art outside of Europe. One example was Chinese art, which was both popular and reviled, but which did not attain the status of a school.<sup>17</sup> Despite the global relations established in the early modern period, the range of identified schools did not extend to countries in Asia, Africa, or America. Such a geography of schools of art can be explained by the formation of a hierarchy of artistic traditions, which accepted or included some on the grounds of their perceived artistic achievements, while rejecting or excluding others.

The geographical dispersal of a multifaceted understanding of the 'school of art' in Europe was accompanied by a widespread debate about the hierarchy of art and artists. Hagedorn referred to the contest of schools (*Wettstreit der Schulen*), and many others touched upon the rivalry, competition, or jealousy involved.<sup>18</sup> In the quest for the prestige of participating in the European art world, this contest not only entailed an active and often calculated use of variations of the notion of a school of art; it also comprised the need to take a motivated position within a debate that was evolving along the axes of patriotism versus scholarship and of singularity versus plurality of artistic traditions.

The patriotic pride or party spirit of members of the art world served as an important catalyst for the debate on the hierarchy of schools, resulting in a host of opposing opinions. In the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the focal point of this debate was the Florentine or Tuscan bias of Vasari, which generated a whole series of claims of artistic traditions in Milan, Bologna, and Naples, as well as in the Low Countries, Germany, and France.<sup>19</sup> During the eighteenth century, the formulation—and, in some cases, reformulation—of schools situated the comparison and assessment of these artistic traditions at a broad European level.<sup>20</sup> At that time, the centre of gravity in the debate shifted towards the prejudices of French connoisseurs. Claims to the superiority of the French school—as distinguished by De Piles (1699) and later defended by Jean-Baptiste de Boyer d'Argens (1704–1771) (1752) and Ange-Laurent de La Live de Jully (1725–1779) (1764)—resulted in similar rival claims in favour of the English, German, and Swiss schools by Buckeridge (1706), Hagedorn (1755), and Johann Caspar Füssli (1706–1782) (1755).<sup>21</sup>

17 Alembert 1751–1780, V, p. 334.

18 Hagedorn 1762, pp. 63–64; Lanzi, I, pp. xvi–xvii. See also Oechslin.

19 Morigi 1595, Malvasia 1678, and Celano 1692, among others, in Bologna, pp. 123–132; Mander; Sandrart; Piles 1699.

20 For example, Buckeridge, pp. 398–480; Piles 1710, which incorporated extracts from Sandrart's lives of High and Low German artists in the German school; Eynden, in which Van Mander's and Houbraken's model of the lives of Netherlandish painters was transformed into the Dutch school. See also the essays by Osnabrugge and Korthals Altes in this edited collection.

21 Whereas De Piles, Buckeridge, D'Argens, and La Live de Jully adopted the phrase 'the school of art' prominently, Hagedorn and Füssli used it more sparingly and instead referred to German or Swiss painters.

Acknowledged as a threat to unbiased and truthful judgment, patriotism and partiality were challenged by another strategy for assessing schools of art—scholarship—which took the form of art connoisseurship and art history. The heated, opinionated debates threatened to end in a deadlock to such an extent that truth, common opinion, and impartiality were instead proclaimed as a means to achieve valid knowledge and judgment of art.<sup>22</sup> In the field of art history, around 1800, this shift sometimes even led to the suppression, but not abolishment, of schools in favour of the idea of a general art history entailing the continuous development or progress of art.<sup>23</sup> Partiality and scholarship were thus important in both subjective and objective motivations for the distinction and assessment of schools.

The competition among schools was further marked by the conflict between the homogeneous and heterogeneous features that were accorded to schools. The process of the systematisation of art in Europe entailed the articulation of distinctive traits or differences between individual schools, but it did not mute the acknowledgement of variable traits and mutual connections among them. Several authors cautioned against generalised school characterisations (e.g. associating the Roman school with design, the Venetian school with colour, or the German school with a Gothic manner). They argued that such characterisations did not take into account the artistic changeabilities existing within and beyond schools. For example, artists were often represented in schools based on their best works, but this ignored the fact that their oeuvres included phases of childhood, perfection, and decay. Furthermore, the distinctive characterisation of a school was usually based on the style or taste of the best artists; according to some, however, such characterisations would not be sufficiently precise if mediocre artists were also included.<sup>24</sup> More importantly, artists and their works were shaped not only within a school, but also through interaction with other schools because artists were mobile and travelled to be educated, establish contacts, or find employment elsewhere.<sup>25</sup> In their work, artists were also encouraged to combine the parts of painting in which predecessors of various schools had excelled. Homogeneous and heterogeneous conceptions of schools of art were thus employed in the debate about the hierarchy of schools in Europe.

Buckeridge, p. 397; *Alembert*, V, pp. 333–335; *Argens*; *Hagedorn* 1755, pp. 14–15, 158–160; *Füssli*; *Live de Jully*; *Oechslin*, pp. 389–398; *Bailey*, pp. 33–69.

<sup>22</sup> *Hagedorn* 1762, I, pp. 52–66, esp. pp. 55–56, 63–64; *Eynden*, pp. 6–8; *Lanzi*, I, pp. xvi–xviii, xxxiv–xxxvii.

<sup>23</sup> *Fiorillo*, I, pp. XI–XII; *Séroux*, I, p. 5 (*Discours*), II, pp. 86–87, 128–129.

<sup>24</sup> *Alembert*, V, pp. 333–334; *Lanzi*, I, pp. xiii–xiv.

<sup>25</sup> *Sandrart*, I (*Book 3, Part 2*), p. 313; *Piles* 1699, pp. 300, 532; *Houbraken*, I, p. 67; *Watelet*, I, pp. 224–225, 230; *Eynden*, pp. 20–21.

## Recent Insights and Critical Gaps

Recently, scholars have discussed the notion of a school of art from a variety of perspectives.

Art historians with an interest in globalisation, transnationalism, or geography have identified the school of art as an important starting point for these fields of enquiry. In a range of outstanding studies, Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann has considered the place of art within a global art history and has analysed its complex, geographical characteristics in terms of dissemination, diffusion, exchange, mobility, transfer, circulation, and mediation.<sup>26</sup> In *Toward a Geography of Art* (2004), he briefly examines the notion of a school of art in a section devoted to the historiography of artistic geography. He argues that this notion became combined with theories about national character, climate, and style, and developed into a standard form of art historical categorisation during the early modern period. Subsequently, the 'school of art' prompted nationalist and racialist accounts of art history in the modern period.<sup>27</sup> In a study devoted to the relationship between art history and racialism, entitled *Barbarian Invasions: A Genealogy of the History of Art* (2019), Michaud has similarly argued that the links established between the notion of a school of art and the taste of nations in the early modern period slowly contributed to a theory of the hereditary transmission of styles, which became a hallmark of a racialised art history in the modern period.<sup>28</sup> Both authors place the notion of a school of art in the context of the essentialising emphases of modern nationalist and racialist art history, which form a sharp contrast with today's relational dynamism of global art studies. In such a context, the original instability of the notion of a school of art is easily overlooked.

Another branch of art historical enquiry, which is concerned with the reassessment of national art histories, also evokes the school of art. The edited volume *Art History and Visual Studies in Europe: Transnational Discourses and National Frameworks* (2012) problematises the national paradigm within the modern and contemporary discipline of art history. As does Matthew Rampley, it recognises, that 'the division of art into national "schools" became fixed at an early stage in the history of the discipline.'<sup>29</sup> Many scholars acknowledge the national school as

<sup>26</sup> These studies were often also conceived in cooperation with other scholars, such as Elizabeth Pilliod, Michael North, Catherine Dossin, and Béatrice Joyeux-Prunel. DaCosta Kaufmann 2004, 2005, 2014, and 2015 (2017). To these, many others can be added, for instance North 2009 and Gludovatz. For global approaches to the study of Netherlandish art, see Weststeijn and North 2021.

<sup>27</sup> DaCosta Kaufmann 2004, pp. 17–104, esp. pp. 30–32.

<sup>28</sup> Michaud, pp. 15–48, esp. p. 16.

<sup>29</sup> Rampley, pp. 231–246, esp. p. 233. Poulot described in the same edited volume how the division of painting into schools gradually became dominant in museums from the late eighteenth century. Rampley, pp. 197–215, esp. p. 200.

the foundation of national art histories, which they re-evaluate from historical, political, economic, geographical, or historiographical perspectives. Ferdinando Bologna performs this type of study for Italian art, Hans Belting for German art, Eddy de Jongh for Dutch art, Colin Bailey and Élisabeth Décultot for French art, Hans Vlieghe for Flemish art, Mark Cheetham for English art, and Rosalind Blakesley for Russian art.<sup>30</sup> In these studies, the notion of the national school seems to give way to that of national art, because its association with narrow, nationalist accounts is evaded in favour of more porously defined, national art histories. In this way the school notion is equally reduced to a fixed meaning—the national school—which tends to ignore the historical changeability of the notion of a school of art.

Museum historians relate the appearance of displays based on schools of art in royal or imperial picture galleries to epistemological developments, the emergence of ‘the public’, and the process of nation-building, which informed the rise of the public art museum in the transition from the early modern to the modern period. Debra Meijers and Andrew McClellan have studied this new form of display in the context of the Habsburg Picture Gallery in Vienna and the Louvre in Paris. They analyse it as a form of scholarly classification of the art of painting (analogous to the classification of the natural world) and as a technique for proclaiming the ideals of the Enlightenment and budding national identities.<sup>31</sup> Displays of schools of art have subsequently been acknowledged as an important factor in the history of national museums.<sup>32</sup> Although museums are often studied from national perspectives, the idea of the museum as a transnational phenomenon in European and global contexts has been embraced recently.<sup>33</sup> Alternatively, Gabriele Bickendorf has traced the success of the schools of art displays in the Habsburg Picture Gallery and the Musée Napoléon back to early modern traditions of art connoisseurship, collecting on paper, and illustrated books, in particular Pierre Crozat’s (1665–1740) *Recueil d’estampes* (1729–1742).<sup>34</sup> Such analyses point out the relevance of the notion of the school of art to the museum context, but do not address the adoption of the notion in an increasing variety of media that shaped the early modern European art world.

Studies concentrating on the notion of the school of art can be found primarily in the entries of lexica and dictionaries, as well as in several important publications. Most of these works apply a conceptual-historical approach to the historiography of art from classical antiquity to the twentieth century. Some entries are largely framed by their respective national historiographies of art, while others provide

30 Bologna; Belting 1998, pp. 37–38; Vlieghe, pp. 187–200; De Jongh in Grijzenhout, pp. 142–161; Bailey, pp. 15–32; Décultot, pp. 137–149; Cheetham, pp. 8–9, 15–81; Blakesley.

31 Meijers; McClellan.

32 Bergvelt; Poulot, pp. 89–118; Knell.

33 Pommier; Gaetgens, pp. 137–162; Bergvelt; Paul, pp. vii–xxi; Meyer; Knell; Pomian 2020–2022.

34 Bickendorf, pp. 33–52.

clues for international comparison (e.g. the adoption of the term in different European languages, shared theories of climate, and the international scope of the art market).<sup>35</sup> The conference proceedings edited by Christine Peltre and Philippe Lorentz are devoted entirely to the notion of the school of art, focusing on the investigation and deconstruction of the notion as part of the historiography of art and bringing together case studies (mostly from France and adjacent areas) in sections devoted to style, historiography, and geography.<sup>36</sup>

The present volume problematises the picture that emerges from this scholarship. First, the contrast which has been created in recent research between transnational and nationalist phenomena within the art world largely overlooks the inherent instability of the notion of the school of art. The notion of the school of art is often associated to the uniformity and essentialism of nationalist frameworks of art in the modern period, yet heterogeneous and diverse features of the art world equally make up the notion of the school of art since the early modern period. Second, the historiographical bias of many studies devoted to the school of art neglects the range of media and institutions through which the concept was shaped, communicated, and promoted. The notion of the school of art did not emerge only in art literature; it was also mediated by means of prints, drawings, and paintings within the context of academies, collections, markets, and galleries. Third, the dominant understanding of the school of art as a modern, national phenomenon also tends to disregard the historical continuity and transformation of the concept from the early modern into the modern period. National frameworks surrounding schools of art are easily and anachronistically projected backwards in time, whereas it is actually the instability and multivalence of the concept that is a constant factor.

### **Approaches of Conceptualisation, Mediation, and Connoisseurship**

As stated above, the primary aim of this edited collection is to trace the emergence of the notion of the school of art in the European art world and to gauge its contribution to the geographical understanding of European art from about 1550 to 1815. The emergence of schools of art was certainly not merely a matter of discourse about art, in which the conceptualisation of an artistic geography was expressed in written or spoken words among members of the art world. In particular, the notion of the school of art was also mediated through artworks (e.g. drawings, prints, and paintings) that were linked to various sectors of the art world (e.g. academies, art literature, collections, markets, and galleries). It was in this interplay between

35 Grassi, pp. 749–752; Pfisterer, pp. 402–406; Flour, pp. 88–93; Trouvé, pp. 181–189.

36 Peltre.

the concept of the school of art and the medium or institutions through which it was conveyed that the critical assessment of artworks, artists, and schools took place. To explore a broader history of the notion of the school of art, this volume combines approaches from the history of concepts, media history, and the history of art connoisseurship.

The conceptual-historical approach entails study of semantic changes in the concept of the school of art, which was enriched by shifting notions of art, place, and nation. Analyses of the concept of art (especially as composed of the fine arts) were originally addressed by Paul Oskar Kristeller and recently criticised by James Porter.<sup>37</sup> Although these studies explore theoretical literature on the fine arts in the early modern period, they do not address the early modern literature on theories of art connoisseurship that embraces the notion of the school of art.<sup>38</sup> DaCosta Kaufmann has linked the notion of the school of art to concepts of place. His research on the geography of art relies on insights from the field of geography, in which the physical and natural properties of the Earth are studied in relation to human culture. In a review of the historiography of art history, he explains how issues of place tie art to people, culture, nation, and state, as well as to school, climate, and identity.<sup>39</sup> Rather than associating the notion of the school of art primarily with its essentialising manifestations in modern nationalism, however, the present study emphasises its inherent instability and constructedness. The phrase ‘school of art’ encompassed fluctuating groups of artists, places, styles, or nations, or combinations of these.

Conceptions of the nation have primarily been the concern of historians of nation and nationalism. These scholars have nevertheless failed to consider the related idea of the school of art.<sup>40</sup> A nation generally is a distinct group or community of people associated by common descent, history, or language; in addition, it is usually organised as a political state and occupies a definite territory.<sup>41</sup> Given the elusiveness of the historical use of ‘nation’, however, Joep Leerssen has distinguished between ‘national thought’ and ‘nationalism’. The pre-nineteenth-century range of disparate traditions of national thought—which are concerned with national character, human temperaments, patriotism, citizenship, or variation in cultures—merged into the political ideology of nationalism (aligning nation and state) after the French Revolution. This merging is often regarded as a rupture rather than a continuity in the history of the concept of the nation. Historians have also devoted attention to

37 Kristeller 1951, pp. 496–527 (Part I), and 1952, pp. 17–46 (Part II); Porter, pp. 1–24.

38 Piles 1699, pp. 93–106, esp. p. 95; Richardson, I, p. 147; Dezallier d’Argenville, I, pp. xv–xliv; Jaucourt, V, p. 333.

39 DaCosta Kaufmann 2004, pp. 1–13. See also DaCosta Kaufmann in Peltre, pp. 9–16.

40 Smith 1986; Leerssen; Smith 2013. See also Pomian 1990.

41 Leerssen, p. 16.

the close relationship of 'nation' to identity and the culturally informed competition between the European nations.<sup>42</sup> In the present study, the history of the notion of the school of art partly overlaps with that of the nation. At the same time, this study highlights continuity more than rupture, as national schools of art were already established in the early modern period and assumed nationalist connotations in the modern period.

To remedy the limited attention paid to the various manifestations or range of media through which the school of art was shaped and employed, a focus on media is adopted. The case studies in this edited collection address a variety of ways in which the notion of the school of art was communicated across artistic, visual, and verbal media, and mediated through various institutions of art. Consequently, they develop a historical perspective on how media and institutions were used to communicate schools of art—a viewpoint that is less common in a scholarly field usually devoted to new media in recent periods.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, this volume presupposes interconnectivity between various media and institutions. Although works of art and printed publications were familiar media in the period under discussion, they served to substantiate schools of art within novel contexts, including the art academy, the systematically arranged collection, the catalogue raisonné, the illustrated book, the auction market, and the public gallery. The history presented in this edited collection could be regarded as a process of mediatisation of the school of art, in which the understanding of European art was transformed by the adoption of the concept of the school of art in an increasing number of powerful media and institutions.<sup>44</sup>

Finally, this edited collection assumes that the notion of the school of art evolved within a critical framework provided by the field of art connoisseurship. In addition to knowledge of art, the field of connoisseurship is interested in critical debate. The knowledge of schools formed an integral part of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century theories of connoisseurship, which involved enquiry into the quality, authorship, and authenticity of artworks.<sup>45</sup> Because connoisseurship was concerned with the judgment of what was good and what was bad in art, it created hierarchies of artworks, artists, and schools, and it determined which objects were to be included in or excluded from the domain of the visual arts in Europe. Understood as the geographical location of artists, schools also helped to establish the authorship or attribution of artworks. Furthermore, as argued by Pascal Griener, connoisseurship comprised scientific, social, political, commercial,

42 Thiesse; Leerssen, pp. 13–102.

43 Belting 2003, pp. 161–166; Mitchell, pp. 198, 211–213; Henning.

44 Lundby, pp. 3–36. See also Vermeulen 2016, p. 235.

45 Gibson-Wood 1988, pp. 38 (Mancini), 62 (Piles), 85 (Dezallier d'Argenville), 122 (Richardson); Gibson-Wood 2000, pp. 179–229; Smentek, pp. 115–124.

and democratic practices.<sup>46</sup> These practices informed a range of motivations for artists, collectors, dealers, scholars, and beholders to evaluate schools of art. For example, as illustrated by Werner Oechslin, connoisseurship informed patriotic debates about the superiority of schools of art in Europe.<sup>47</sup>

The approaches presented above are applied to the case studies assembled in the present book. On the one hand, the case studies have been selected for their representativeness of the European schools identified in the early modern period. The schools discussed include those from the Italian peninsula, the Low Countries, the German Holy Roman Empire, and France, as well as from Spain, England, and Russia. On the other hand, the case studies have been chosen to highlight the most important media and institutions through which schools were shaped, communicated, and promoted in early modern Europe. Encompassing the artistic and visual media of prints, drawings, and paintings, the notion of the school of art was mediated through art academies, art literature, collections of drawings and prints, the art market, and picture galleries. These media and institutions have been used to organise the essays into different sections.

Not included in the case studies are the schools of Denmark, Hungary, or Poland, as planned by Anton Friedrich Büsching (1724–1793) in his *Entwurfeiner Geschichte der zeichnenden schönen Künste* (1781).<sup>48</sup> Although Winckelmann is referred to regularly, no case study is devoted to him; his seminal *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (1764), which considers the essence of the art of nations in classical antiquity, was understood as an art history devoted to schools only in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.<sup>49</sup> The scope of this volume also does not extend to encyclopaedic or natural historical collections, which could reveal alternative forms of systematisation and evaluation of European art and objects within a wider global context.

The case studies fall within the period from 1550 to 1815. 1550 was the publication date of the first edition of Vasari's *Vite*, which was dedicated to Cosimo I de' Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany (1519–1574). That pioneering work established and consolidated the notion of the school of art in artistic discourse, not in the least because of its wide, enduring provocation of members of the art world to defend artistic traditions elsewhere on the Italian peninsula and in Europe. 1815, in its turn, marks the demise of Napoleon (1769–1821). The years between the start of the French Revolution in 1789 and 1815 saw the rise of the national museum at the Louvre—which was constituted in several versions—as an institution founded by

46 Griener, pp. 92–130; Michel.

47 Oechslin, pp. 375–376, 380, 387.

48 Locher, p. 215.

49 Lanzi, I, pp. ix–x. Winckelmann is considered by Brakensiek, Griener, Manikowska, and Meyer in this edited collection.



the nation-state and in the service of nationalist ideology. The Musée Napoleon in the Louvre would become the primary model for national museums established in Europe during the nineteenth century.<sup>50</sup> Under these circumstances, the early modern notion of the school of art was able to develop into a modern tool of nationalism. The period from 1789 to 1815 has been included in the present volume to demonstrate how the notion of the school of art continued to be unstable and far from self-evident in the modern period.<sup>51</sup>

## Presentation of the Case Studies

The section entitled *ACADEMIES OF ART, CHURCHES, AND COLLECTIVE ARTISTIC IDENTITIES* considers the school of art as an institution of artistic learning, and how it acquired wider meaning for cities, regions, or nations. Collectively in groups or communities, artists united in art academies or associated with churches for the sake of practical and theoretical learning, as well as to obtain patronage and protection. In addition to elevating the status of art and artists, this assured their role in the cultural politics of protecting rulers who aimed to promote the prestige of states, cities, or nations. Consequently, the works that artists made in the context of academies or churches helped to shape collective artistic identities for local, regional, national, or supranational purposes. National artistic identities were already being created by national churches when the first art academies were founded and the notion of the school of art became current in artistic discourse during the sixteenth century. *SUSANNE KUBERSKY-PIREDDA* considers Santa Maria dell'Anima, the church that was rebuilt and decorated for the German nation and in the German manner in Rome during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. *MARIA ONORI* demonstrates that a collective national identity emerged among a community of Spanish artists when they tried to establish an art academy in Rome in 1680 under the protection of the Spanish king, even though their attempt ultimately failed. Similarly, *LUDOVICA CAPPELLETTI* argues that Mantua's identity as a city of the arts was shaped by the local art academy. Founded in 1752, this academy operated within a network of academies in Milan, Rome, and Parma, which was under the protection of rulers in Austria and later France.<sup>52</sup> Although artists who were affiliated with art academies are often identified by a recognisable, shared manner or style, the essays in this section emphasise the stylistic heterogeneity

<sup>50</sup> Pomian 2020–2022, II, pp. 11–165; Bergvelt.

<sup>51</sup> See the essays by Godfroy-Gallardo and Racioppi in this edited collection. Pomian 2020–2022, II, p. 65.

<sup>52</sup> Later, in the historiography of art, Mantua would be acknowledged as a school—and as a sub-school of Lombardy—by Lanzi. Lanzi, IV, pp. 4–25.

of the institutions discussed.<sup>53</sup> Both KUBERSKY–PIREDDA and CAPPELLETTI draw attention to the fluidity of styles and identities: the mixing of elements from northern Europe and the Italian Renaissance in Santa Maria dell'Anima, and the stylistic diversity of the built and painted heritage of Mantua (e.g. the work of Andrea Mantegna (1430/31–1506) and Giulio Romano (1492 or 1499–1546)), which provided models for artists at the Mantuan academy.

The essays in the section devoted to ART LITERATURE, ARTISTS, AND TRANS-NATIONAL IDENTITIES focus on various forms of art literature in which the notion of the school of art both designated institutions of artistic learning and came to be used in a broader geographical sense to denote groups of artists associated with cities, regions, or nations. During the seventeenth century, the notion of the school of art was used in this way on the Italian peninsula, but not as swiftly in the Low Countries. In Italian compendia of artists' biographies, the school of art became a vehicle for debate about the artistic prominence of cities, especially in reaction to Vasari's Tuscan bias in the *Vite*. ELISABETH OY–MARRA addresses the early attempt of Giovanni Battista Agucchi to distinguish four kinds of painting on the Italian peninsula, namely the schools of Lombardy, Venice, Rome, and Bologna. Further, she analyses Agucchi's claim that a renewal of painting was achieved by the school of the Carracci in Bologna, and the subsequent controversy with Francesco Scannelli (1616–1663) and Giovan Pietro Bellori (1613–1696), who argued for the artistic prominence of Modena and Rome, respectively. At the same time, and in the same genre of compendia of artists' biographies, the notion of the school of art was used in the Low Countries only to indicate an institution of artistic learning; the city, regional, or national school was an anachronism for this area. Highlighting Karel van Mander (1548–1606) and Arnold Houbraken, MARIJE OSNABRUGGE argues that they applied the origins of artists and their places of activity as criteria for determining the artists incorporated into biographical compendia. This approach allowed for the flexible inclusion of both native artists and artists from abroad. In the eighteenth century, the illustrated collection catalogue (i.e. the *Galeriewerk*) not only discussed schools of art in texts, but also newly included images representing them. One example is Carl Heinrich von Heineken's (1707–1791) *Recueil d'estampes*, which illustrates paintings from the Italian and Flemish schools in the royal picture gallery in Dresden. EWA MANIKOWSKA discusses how, in the quest for exact reproductive prints for this monumental work, a cosmopolitan group of German, Italian, and French migrant artists was attracted to Dresden. They defined their artistic identities according to their painting schools of origin, and they heterogeneously interpreted painting styles for their reproductive prints.

53 Goldstein; Barzman.

The section entitled DRAWINGS, CONNOISSEURSHIP, AND GEOGRAPHY comprises essays that discuss collections of drawings. Such collections substantially increased the visual understanding of schools of art and contributed to the development of art connoisseurship in the second half of the seventeenth century. Drawings were believed to exemplify the first ideas of artists in the process of creating works of art, thus forming the foundation of a range of art forms. They were also regarded as visually exemplifying the style of artists, as well as their affinities and genealogies within and beyond schools.<sup>54</sup> In collections, drawings were usually stored in albums or portfolios. SIMONETTA PROSPERI VALENTI RODINÒ discusses the drawing albums compiled by Sebastiano Resta (1635–1714). One example is the *Galleria portatile* ('Portable Gallery'), in which schools were illustrated innovatively by drawings and explained by *alberelli*, which resembled genealogical trees and which linked artists, styles, and influences. From Filippo Baldinucci's (1624–1696) personal collection of drawing albums, FEDERICA MANCINI focuses on drawings by Genoese artists, who were situated within various heterogeneous artists' groups that were active in Rome, Florence, and Naples. These albums also highlight Baldinucci's connoisseurship of visual affinities through stylistic connections and continuities. In the case studies presented here, collectors often assembled drawings in conjunction with the writing or study of art literature, thereby following Vasari's well-known *Libro de' disegni*, which was compiled in conjunction with the *Vite*. Because Vasari was particularly a lightning rod for competition among schools, drawing collectors also became receptive to rivalry between schools. PROSPERI VALENTI RODINÒ explains that Resta projected schools into Vasari's evolutionary conception of Italian art from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century and explored new anti-Vasarian insights about the Lombard, Neapolitan, Venetian, and Bolognese schools and their mutual connections. Analysing the increasingly popular medium of reproductive prints after drawings in the eighteenth century, SARAH W. MALLORY discusses Arthur Pond's (1705–1758) *Prints in Imitation of Drawings* (1734–1736), a set of reproductive prints after Italian drawings. She argues that the English printmaker aimed to demonstrate his ability to equal the artistic achievements of Italian art, but that he also sought to elevate English art within a European context.

The two essays in the section that considers TASTE AND GENIUS OF NATIONS concentrate on the art theorist and diplomat Roger de Piles. He made a persuasive comparison between the school of art and national character, thus reinforcing the widespread belief that nations possessed distinct character traits, including the taste and genius for art.<sup>55</sup> This comparison was furthermore supported by his conviction

54 Baker; Vermeulen 2010, pp. 91–176; Forlani Tempesti.

55 For national character, see Leerssen, pp. 52–70.

that art had an impact on the public and civilisation. INGRID R. VERMEULEN argues that De Piles' link between the taste of nations and schools of art was informed by his diplomatic experiences under Louis XIV, King of France (1638–1715), in which knowledge about the *esprit* or character of nations was vital. De Piles' systematic presentation of schools of art and the taste of Europe's nations in the *Abregé* (1699) propounded both differences and interconnections between schools, while claiming a place for the French school of art. PASCAL GRIENER explains that De Piles' idea of national taste helped to generate new insights about artistic masterpieces as representations of important periods from the past (e.g. Raphael's *School of Athens* as a symbol of the Renaissance) and about geniuses as creators of great civilisations. Thus, De Piles' notion of the taste of nations supported increasingly subversive discussions in which a nation's rise to perfection was no longer attributed to the king, but to artists with genuine talent.

The section focused on PRINTS, COLLECTING, AND CLASSIFICATION features collections of prints, which became an important means of visually communicating schools of art. Unlike drawings and paintings, prints were usually published in editions and dispersed widely. The essays in this section showcase three eighteenth-century examples, providing evidence that print collections grew alongside and out of encyclopaedic collections, and were motivated by art and, increasingly, by print connoisseurship.<sup>56</sup> GAËTANE MAËS argues that the primarily thematic arrangement of the print collection of Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville (1680–1765) was rooted in the tradition of encyclopaedic collecting, according to which prints served important documentary functions of learning and memorisation by vision. The fact that Dezallier did not organise his collection into schools of art indicates the undervaluation of prints as an artistic medium. Nevertheless, prints began to be classified chronologically according to schools within the framework of art connoisseurship. In a comparative analysis of two publications devoted to prints by the German connoisseur Michael Huber (1727–1804), VÉRONIQUE MEYER shows how the dependent role of prints as images that were imitative of and that also conveyed knowledge of painting in the *Notices* (1787) was transformed into the full recognition of printmaking as an independent art form arranged according to schools in the *Manuel* (1797–1808). At the end of the eighteenth century, the notion of the school of art had become an accepted scholarly tool for classification in print collections. STEPHAN BRAKENSIEK examines the scientific collecting practices of Adam von Bartsch (1757–1821), who was the curator of prints in the Vienna Hofbibliothek beginning in 1791. Bartsch prioritised chronology over school in order to give visible

<sup>56</sup> Print collections organised according to schools of art are rooted in both encyclopaedic and geographically arranged print collections from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. See the essay by Maës in this edited collection and Griffiths, pp. 427–445.

form to a history of art emphasising the rise of art from the beginning and its development to perfection alongside the moral progress of mankind.

The commercial adoption of the notion of the school of art via the interactions between art dealers and collectors in the international art market is addressed in the section devoted to **ART MARKETS: SELLING AND COLLECTING**. From the mid-eighteenth century, art dealers turned to schools of art as strategies for selling paintings, drawings, and prints in response to collectors' interests, while collectors deployed schools for the pursuit of art, the arrangement of collections, and the promotion of their interests. The essays in this section provide diverse explorations of the format of the sale catalogue, which used schools of art to increase the commercial value of art, while also providing knowledge about school models to assist collectors in the acquisition, arrangement, and documentation of collections.<sup>57</sup> **EVERHARD KORTHALS ALTES** analyses some of the first auction catalogues of paintings organised according to schools in France and the Dutch Republic by Pierre Rémy (1715–1797) (1756) and Gerard Hoet (1698–1760) (1760). Because Netherlandish painting was not subdivided into Flemish and Dutch schools until the first half of the eighteenth century, **KORTHALS ALTES** believes, the notion of the school of art became a commercial strategy for promoting various sectors of Netherlandish art in reaction to an increasing taste and demand for this art in France. Both **LEEFLANG** and **EMELIANOVA** single out collectors who responded to the art market in their collecting practices. **HUIGEN LEEFLANG** addresses the print collection of the Leiden patrician Pieter Cornelis van Leyden (1717–1788), whose outstanding print connoisseurship was nourished by art literature and auction catalogues and was expressed in the loose arrangement of his collection according to schools. **IRINA EMELIANOVA** analyses three editions of a *catalogue raisonné* (1793, 1800, 1807) of the painting collection of the Russian Count Alexander Stroganoff (1733–1811). Modelled on French annotated sales catalogues and illustrated collection catalogues, this catalogue introduced the schools of European painting for the first time in Russia, while the illustrated version—which was created by Russian artists—was intended to introduce Russian painters into a recognised circle of European artists, thereby contributing to the formation of a Russian school of art.

A monumental embodiment of the notion of the school of art was realised in the picture gallery, where it became an instrument of public display. The essays in the final section, **ON PUBLIC DISPLAY IN PICTURE GALLERIES**, indicate that displays of pictures organised into schools of art sparked claims about a 'visible history of art', which accompanied the increasing public access and the budding democratic

<sup>57</sup> Marchi; Miyamoto. See the essay by Maës in this edited collection for the art dealer Rémy, who used an arrangement according to schools of art to increase the commercial value of Dezallier d'Argenville's encyclopaedic print collection.

goals of picture galleries in the second half of the eighteenth century. CECILIA HURLEY analyses the underrated critique by Joseph Sebastian von Rittershausen (1748–1820) of the new organisation according to schools and chronology of the Imperial Picture Gallery in Vienna in 1781. For Von Rittershausen, this ‘visual history of art’, as arranged by Christian von Mechel (1737–1817), failed to serve as a public space for the moral instruction and aesthetic debate of all classes in society. One of the reasons why arrangements based on schools of art appeared later in picture galleries than in drawing and print collections is probably the long-standing preference for imposing and aesthetically mixed displays.<sup>58</sup> In this respect, CHRISTINE GODFREY–GALLARDO discusses the attack of the art dealer Jean-Baptiste-Pierre Lebrun (1748–1831) on the mixed display of the national museum at the Louvre after the French Revolution because the display did not entail a classification by school. According to Lebrun, a display organised into schools inspired public education, moral purification, and love of one’s country. Schools within the public arena of galleries could invite comparative assessment that would foster cultural nationalism. PIER PAOLO RACIOPPI argues that after the restitution of Italian artworks from the Musée Napoléon in 1815, the Pinacoteca Vaticana aspired to a display of Italian unity by transforming the established variety of Italian schools into a single, new Italian school.

The notion of the school of art made a profound contribution to the geographical understanding of the European art world in the early modern period. It emerged on the Italian peninsula in the sixteenth century, spread to France in the late seventeenth century, and subsequently circulated to a range of countries throughout Europe during the eighteenth century. Its broad geographical dispersal is connected to the manifold configuration of groups of artworks and artists into schools for a variety of purposes. The notion of the school of art expanded conceptually, it was mediated in numerous ways, and it became a tool of widespread competition. Thus, schools became configured in a fundamentally unstable manner. Conceptually, the notion of the school of art assumed various meanings across the early modern period, denoting artistic learning, geographical origins, stylistic phenomena, or national allegiances, or combinations of these. Its substantiation and promotion through a range of different media and institutions—such as prints, drawings, paintings, and books, as well as academies, galleries, and the market—ensured deep penetration into various sectors of the art world. Furthermore, as a measure of the reputation and prominence of art, artists, and nations, schools fuelled competition and the rise of new schools. In spite of, or maybe thanks to, its instability, the notion of the school of art created a large common ground that aligned art, artists, and artistic traditions, systematically arranging them into a cohesive panorama of the

58 Bickendorf.

European art world. Within this context, the notion of the school of art developed into an instrument for highlighting artistic differences in stereotypical ways. For example, the Roman school was characterised by *disegno*, the Venetian school by colour, and the German school by a Gothic style. At the same time, however, schools of art remained open to correspondences between artistic traditions. For instance, they could encompass mobile artists, stylistic interconnections, national affinities, or exchanges on the art market. Moreover, because the notion of the school of art included groups of artworks and artists as well as the public and the nation, it generated a powerful view of art in society, which was able to mobilise artistic engagement in Europe. For the modern period, after 1815, further research is required to establish how an unstable notion of the school of art became fixed into national and nationalist frameworks and how it was transformed into new group formations, such as art movements or artists' collectives, which continue to define the art world today.

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## About the Author

**Ingrid R. Vermeulen** is Associate Professor of Early Modern Art History at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Her research focuses on the early modern history of art history as it is evidenced in art literature, collections, and museums in Europe. This focus generated the book *Picturing Art History* (2010) and the project 'The Artistic Taste of Nations' (2015), which has been funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO).

# **Academies of Art, Churches, and Collective Artistic Identities**



# 1. Notions of Nationhood and Artistic Identity in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Rome

*Susanne Kubersky-Piredda*

## Abstract

The concept of artistic schools first found its way into Italian art theory during the sixteenth century and was used with increasing frequency by the seventeenth century. But beyond art theoretical discourse, notions of school, manner, and style linked to specific geographic territories were part of much broader cultural historical developments regarding collective identities and their artistic forms of expression. On the basis of the foreign communities residing in sixteenth-century Rome and considering the specific case of the church of Santa Maria dell'Anima, this paper examines the extent to which art was used as an expression of 'national' identity and the role played by strategies of demarcation and rivalry in identity-building.

**Keywords:** national churches, sixteenth-century Rome, foreign communities, Holy Roman Empire, collective artistic expression

The concept of artistic schools first found its way into Italian art theory during the sixteenth century and was used with increasing frequency by the seventeenth century. The term was initially applied to the genre of painting exclusively. It is possible to distinguish two different uses of the concept: in relation either to a specific geographical territory or to a single, outstanding master. The most important stages in the formation of the term have been traced by several scholars, most recently by Paolo Pastres and Stefano Pierguidi.<sup>1</sup> The earliest and most frequently cited source is a letter from the Neapolitan Pietro Summonte (1463–1526), who, as

<sup>1</sup> Pastres 2012; Pastres 2018; Pierguidi, cf. esp. pp. 11–32.



early as 1524, mentions a 'docta scola veneta'.<sup>2</sup> In a letter of 1591, Giovanni Battista Paggi (1554–1627) differentiates for the first time between Roman, Florentine, and Venetian schools of painting.<sup>3</sup> In the seventeenth century, Domenichino (1581–1641) and Giovanni Battista Agucchi contributed to the further consolidation of the concept, adding a fourth school, the Lombard.<sup>4</sup> The designation of schools was closely related to a series of other terms, which were also used in combination with geographical indicators: *maniera* (in the sense of a regional style or fashion), *gusto* (in the sense of a collective taste or preference), and—especially from the seventeenth century—*stile*, to be understood as a collective artistic expression in a certain geographical area.<sup>5</sup> My aim here is to examine whether the notion of an artistic school or manner played a role in the collective identity-building of foreign communities resident in Rome during the sixteenth century. I will use the community of people originating from the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation and its church, Santa Maria dell'Anima, as a case study.<sup>6</sup>

Ferdinando Bologna was the first to consider the importance of the territorial fragmentation of the Italian peninsula and its variety of regional cultures for art production between the Middle Ages and the twentieth century.<sup>7</sup> In the early 1980s, he coined the notion of a 'historical awareness', linked to space and time and necessary for the creation of art and culture.<sup>8</sup> His approach aligns with some ideas current in the sociological debate on nation and nationalism of the same years.<sup>9</sup> According to Benedict Anderson's concept of 'imagined communities', rather than a given geographical entity, a 'nation' is to be understood as an artificial construct that arises within a social collective through the creation of common symbols and traditions and the development of a common world of ideas and memories. Anthony Smith defines the premodern nation as 'a named and self-defining human community, whose members cultivate shared myths, memories, symbols, values, and traditions, reside in and identify with a historic homeland, create and disseminate a distinctive public culture, and observe shared customs and common laws'.<sup>10</sup> Bologna's study shows that beyond early modern art theoretical discourse, the concept of artistic schools pertains to a much broader cultural

2 Pierguidi, p. 15, with reference to Pietro Summonte, letter to Marcantonio Michiel, ms. 1524, published in Nicolini, p. 163. See also Bologna, pp. 73–75, 125.

3 Bologna, p. 125; Pastres 2012, p. 186; Pierguidi, pp. 19, 41.

4 Bologna, pp. 124–125; Pastres 2012, p. 541; Pierguidi, p. 20.

5 Pastres 2018, p. 542.

6 People originating from any territory of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation were usually referred to as Germans. For the sake of simplicity, in what follows I will also use the term in this sense.

7 Bologna.

8 Bologna, p. 8.

9 Anderson.

10 Smith 2008, p. 184, cf. also Smith 1991, esp. pp. 77–79.

historical development regarding territorial, collective identities and their artistic forms of expression.

Recently, Stefano Pierguidi has drawn on Bologna's study to examine the extent to which the categorising of art according to geographical criteria was already widespread among patrons and collectors from the Quattrocento onward, long before these concepts found their way into art literature. In some church decorations and private art collections, he recognises the endeavour to compare or rival works from different artistic regions. According to his interpretation, in the Sistine Chapel, painters of two cities, Florence and Perugia, were deliberately juxtaposed, while in the late sixteenth-century campaign for the decoration of Lucca's cathedral, Giovanni Battista Paggi, also its designer, worked alongside representatives of the three major painting schools: Jacopo Tintoretto (1519–1594, Venice), Domenico Passignano (1559–1638, Florence), and Federico Zuccari (1540/42–1609, Rome). Pierguidi finds this to be a paradigmatic case that demonstrates the reflection of the concept of painting schools not only in art theory, but also in the practices of exhibiting and collecting.<sup>11</sup>

In recent historical research, competition has been emphasised as a core component of premodern nation-building.<sup>12</sup> According to Caspar Hirschi, the European nations distinguished themselves from one another using archaic categories of virtue and vice in order to validate their own superiority.<sup>13</sup> Forms of collective honour played an important role in these rivalries. It seems plausible that such territorially anchored, rival ideas of identity also contributed to the conceptual development of artistic schools. Competitive relationships were also supported by the *aemulatio* principle ubiquitous in early modern art and literature.<sup>14</sup> In what follows, I will examine the extent to which art in sixteenth-century Rome was used as an expression of collective identity by people who shared common geographical origins. I will also consider the role played by strategies of demarcation and rivalry in this context. In particular, I will use Santa Maria dell'Anima, known as the church of the 'German nation', as a case study.

## Foreign Communities and Their Collective Identities in Sixteenth-Century Rome

Seat of the papacy, destination of pilgrims, and metropolis of art, early modern Rome was a perpetual hub for foreigners. From the Middle Ages on, groups of compatriots

<sup>11</sup> Pierguidi, pp. 44–57, 99–107.

<sup>12</sup> Hirschi 2005; Hirschi 2012.

<sup>13</sup> Hirschi 2005.

<sup>14</sup> Müller.

gathered in confraternities, founding hospices, oratories, and churches. These groups mirrored the linguistic, ethnic, and cultural features of their homelands, and were perceived as 'national' representative bodies long before the idea of 'nation states' was established on a continental scale.<sup>15</sup> At the beginning of the sixteenth century, nearly 50 churches and hospices had been founded by groups of foreigners in Rome, about two-thirds by non-Italian communities and one-third by groups from Italian cities and regions. Their members were concerned not only with mutual assistance, including basic needs (accommodation, food, job placement, and legal assistance), but also with the maintenance of local traditions and cults. In the course of the sixteenth century, these foundations increasingly assumed political valences when various European sovereigns recognised their identity-creating potential and exploited them for dynastic, representational purposes.<sup>16</sup> References to shared cultural characteristics were essential for the formation of collective identity within Rome's foreign communities. From the terms of the statutes of these communities, it becomes clear that shared characteristics—including knowledge of the respective 'national' language or birth in a particular territory—were even conditions for admission to the various national confraternities.<sup>17</sup> Also of great importance were the maintenance of traditions and cults and references to certain national symbols or identity figures.

### **Self-Assessment and Strategies of Self-Presentation**

The church of Santa Maria dell'Anima is located in the immediate surroundings of Piazza Navona. The foundation of the first hospital here, with an adjacent oratory that was run by a lay confraternity, dates to the late fourteenth century. The hospital and oratory were open to people from any social background and originating from any territory of the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation. The community was thus characterised by strong plurality and fluidity. Regional and professional subgroups formed and often came into conflict with each other, complicating any and all decision-making. While the Romans summarily referred to the community as the 'German nation', none of the confraternity members would have probably presented themselves as 'Germans' or as 'subjects of the Holy Roman Empire'. They felt much stronger cultural bonds to their individual home

<sup>15</sup> Recent publications on the foreign communities in Rome and the related questions of collective identities include: Koller and Kubersky-Piredda; Molnár; Cabibbo and Serra; Serra; Kubersky-Piredda 2018; Fosi; Kubersky-Piredda 2020.

<sup>16</sup> Kubersky-Piredda 2015, pp. 17–64.

<sup>17</sup> Over the course of time, the inclusion criteria changed from linguistic to more political features; cf. Kubersky-Piredda 2015, p. 25.

cities and regions, including their local cults and traditions. However, in order to assert themselves among the numerous foreign communities in Rome and to appear united to the outside world, they had to conceal the plurality of their group by creating a recognisable collective identity. This might be one of the reasons why Santa Maria dell'Anima has an extremely simple façade with only a few decorative elements that served the confraternity's self-presentation (Fig. 1). By contrast, the interior of the church has a rich and varied artistic decoration, which reflects the diversity of the groups of people united under one roof (Fig. 2).

The church was completely renovated in the early sixteenth century, replacing an earlier Gothic church, which was only 50 years old. A document issued by the confraternity in 1499 explains their decision to build a new church:

Considering that the hospital of our nation in the City is old, and that the other nations, which after us have built hospitals for foreigners of their nations, have built new decent churches near the hospitals themselves and adorned them with modern and most honourable buildings, lest we be seen as odd and backward to other nations, it is our desire to construct and build a new church in honour of our German nation, [...] a praiseworthy work composed in [the] Alemannic manner.<sup>18</sup>

Two aspects of this explanation are particularly interesting. The first is that national identities in Rome were evidently based on rivalry among foreign communities and on the desire to compete with each other. This is also confirmed by Giorgio Vasari, who affirms in the second edition of the *Vite* (1568) that the Florentines in Rome decided to build their church, San Giovanni dei Fiorentini, in order to surpass the churches of other nations in 'magnificence, grandeur, cost, ornamentation, and design'.<sup>19</sup> The greatest rivals of the Germans were the Spanish, French, and Portuguese communities, all of whom had built hospices and churches in the same neighbourhood.<sup>20</sup>

The second significant observation is that the new church of Santa Maria dell'Anima was supposed to be built in the 'Alemannic manner'. The document thus suggests that as early as 1500, notions of artistic identities linked to geographical

18 'Considerantes hospitale nationis nostrae in Urbe vetustius esse, ac ceteras nationes, quae post nos peregrinis nationum suarum hospitalia aedificarunt, apud ipsa hospitalia novas decentes ecclesias construxisse et eas modernis et honestissimis aedificiis adornasse, ne videamur ceteris nationibus impares et postpositi, desiderantes ad [...] honorem nostrae nationis Germanicae [...] construi et aedificari facere novam ecclesiam, opus laudabile Alemannico more compositum, [...]' ASMA, A V, 10, f. 4, quoted by Nagl 1899, p. 65; Schmidlin, p. 207; and later scholars.

19 Vasari 1970, IV, p. 220.

20 San Giacomo degli Spagnoli (Castile, Spain), San Luigi dei Francesi (France), and Sant'Antonio dei Portoghesi (Portugal).



1. Façade, 1518/1523, Santa Maria dell'Anima, Rome. © Artaphot / Stephan Kölliker.



2. Interior, 16<sup>th</sup>–19<sup>th</sup> century, Santa Maria dell'Anima, Rome. © Enrico Fontolan, Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History, Rome.

territories existed. The term used was the Latin word *mos*, which corresponds to the Italian term *maniera*. In sixteenth-century chronicles, *mos* was also deployed to describe the clothing and music typical of foreign groups in events such as processions and funerals.<sup>21</sup> In art theory, Agucchi was the first writer to associate the term *maniera* with geographical attributes.<sup>22</sup>

## Exterior Simplicity and Recognisability

What the Anima confraternity meant when it decided to build its church in the ‘Alemannic manner’ has most recently been explored by Hubertus Günther, who demonstrates that nation-building in early modern architecture included multiple elements, among which were spatial arrangement, stylistic features, and ornaments, as well as building materials and the origin of the workforce employed.<sup>23</sup> Santa Maria dell’Anima was originally planned in a late Gothic style, as a three-aisled hall church with six high, narrow bays, cross vaults, tracery windows, and a polygonal choir.<sup>24</sup> German stonemasons were called to Rome since it was evidently not expected that the local workers would have the necessary know-how.<sup>25</sup> The fact that the church was ultimately built in *all’antica* style, following models like Santa Maria del Popolo and Sant’Agostino, must have been the result of a negotiation process between homeland traditions and local Roman conditions and possibilities.<sup>26</sup> An attachment to Gothic traditions would have appeared out of place in early sixteenth-century Rome, since the repertoire of Italian Renaissance forms was fashionable across Europe and the *maniera tedesca* had by then acquired negative connotations in Italy.<sup>27</sup>

Nevertheless, at Santa Maria dell’Anima, several northern European architectural elements were purposely added as symbols of national identity, including the

21 See, for instance, ‘more hispanico’, in Burckardt, I, pp. 379, 414, II, pp. 133, 311; ‘more gallico’ or ‘more gallicano’, Burckardt, I, pp. 379, 580, II, p. 293; ‘more romanorum’, Burckardt, II, p. 315; ‘more alemanico’, Burckardt, I, pp. 384, 392. Written sources on the *maniera tedesca* in Italian Renaissance architectural theory are in Brandis.

22 With the exception of Vasari’s pejorative phrases ‘maniera tedesca’ and ‘maniera greca’, see for example in the *Life of Giotto* ‘quella goffa maniera greca’ and ‘per essere cosa tedesca, e di maniera vecchia’, Vasari 1568, pp. 119 and 129. On Agucchi, see Bogna, p. 124–125.

23 Günther 2023. See also Baumüller, pp. 21–45; Günther 2013; Günther 2016.

24 Günther 2023, p. 58–60; Bova, p. 39.

25 Günther 2023, p. 72. See also Bova, p. 30. On the building history of the church, see especially Samperi.

26 Schmidlin, pp. 230–235, has already dealt extensively with the interlocking of Gothic and Renaissance architectural elements. See also Lohninger, pp. 38–46; Rohlmann, pp. 112–113. For a new assessment of the sources on the building history, see Bova.

27 Günther 2023, pp. 75–79. Cf. also Brandis, p. 237; Günther 2003.



3. Bell Tower, 1520, Santa Maria dell'Anima, Rome. © Enrico Fontolan, Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History, Rome.



campanile with its Gothic pinnacles and its pointed, conical spire covered in polychrome glazed tiles (Fig. 3).<sup>28</sup> Other identifiers of the German homelands appear on the church façade (Fig. 1). Near the top, the coats of arms of Pope Adrian VI (1459–1523) and Emperor Maximilian I (1459–1519) symbolise the confraternity's loyalty to the Holy See and to the Imperial court. From 1518, Santa Maria dell'Anima was under the direct protection of the Emperor thanks to a privilege granted to the confraternity by Maximilian I. Very few foreign communities could boast a pope from their own ranks. It was thus of particular importance for the Anima community when Adrian VI (1522–1523), a Dutchman, was elected pope. Besides the heraldic symbols, a horizontal inscription extends across the façade and informs us of the church's dedication, function, national affiliation, and date of consecration.<sup>29</sup> Stone reliefs of the Imperial eagle were also placed on all the buildings belonging to the confraternity.

The church was intended to have statues of its patron saint, the Madonna of Souls, both on the exterior and the interior.<sup>30</sup> In 1518, the stonemason Bartolomeo Lante from Fiesole signed a contract for the marble sculpture of the main portal.<sup>31</sup> For the Anima church, these sculptures were a particularly urgent matter, since the rival Spanish community of San Giacomo degli Spagnoli by that time already had three sculptures in Renaissance style of their national saint.<sup>32</sup> The decision was therefore taken to commission a sculpture group by an Italian master of the Virgin and Child flanked by two nude figures representing souls (Fig. 4).<sup>33</sup> Even though the Virgin vaguely recalls Raphaelesque models,<sup>34</sup> the individual figures are not of particularly high quality, and the group lacks compositional unity, most likely because of the absence of sculptural precedents for this unusual representation.

28 The Gothic pinnacles, the *candelieri*, and *frontespiti* were executed by the stonemason Bartolommeo Lante from Fiesole: see ASMA, E II, 15, f. 194v. The glazed tiles were perhaps modelled on St Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, as represented in the *Wiener Heiltumsbuch*.

29 'TEMPLVM BEATAE MARIAE DE ANIMA HOSPITALIS TEVTONICORVM MDXIII'.

30 Lohninger believes that the church owes its name to a medieval votive image representing the Virgin Mary with Christ and two 'souls' in the form of children. The work may have survived into the early sixteenth century. Lohninger, p. 9.

31 Daniels 2023, pp. 177–196. See also Frommel 1978, pp. 248–249, note 103; Weil-Garris Brandt, p. 126.

32 A statuette attributed to Paolo Romano (fl. 1451–1470?), originally in the tympanum of the east portal of the church (after 1450); a life-size statue by an unknown sculptor, originally in the gable of the west façade (around 1500); a statue by Jacopo Sansovino (1486–1570), originally in the Serra chapel of San Giacomo degli Spagnoli (1518).

33 For unspecified reasons, work was still underway in 1538. In 1542, the mason Gasparo da Morchio was paid for setting up a Madonna, but it is not entirely clear whether the document refers to the portal sculpture or to the *Pietà* on the main altar. Ff. Lohninger, p. 77; Weil-Garris Brandt, p. 126, note 27; Frommel 1978, p. 249, note 103. We do not know with certainty whether it was Lante who completed the group.

34 Weil-Garris Brandt, pp. 123, 131.



4. Statue of the Madonna with Souls, originally above the main portal, today inside the church, 1525/1538, Santa Maria dell'Anima, Rome. © Enrico Fontolan, Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History, Rome.

The Madonna of Souls presumably has its roots in medieval iconographic models of the Virgin Mary comforting souls in Purgatory, who are usually shown as small, naked figures suffering amid flames. On the Anima façade, however, this narrative is replaced by a rather iconic representation of a traditional Mary and Christ Child statue carved from one block and flanked by two separate, kneeling figures of full-grown, naked men, possibly carved in a different moment and by a different artist. The absence of flames suggests that these men represent souls who have already been redeemed from Purgatory.<sup>35</sup>

Despite its internal heterogeneity, then, the community of Santa Maria dell'Anima presented itself to the outside world as a unified and institutionalised group by displaying imported heraldic, iconographic, and stylistic elements on their buildings so that any traveller would have immediately recognised the neighbourhood as a German enclave. The lack of a traditional national patron saint of the Holy Roman Empire prompted the establishment of a new iconographic model that was supposed to offer a figure symbolic of the German community—a strategy that would, however, have limited success, as the interior decoration of the church reveals.

### Interior Plurality of Identities

Like the façade, the sixteenth-century church interior is based on Italian Renaissance models, although here as well a few northern European features were introduced, including the hall church space with its three naves of the same height, which was uncommon in Rome, and a Gothic vault in the presbytery, today covered by Baroque stucco decoration (Fig. 2). The interior's artistic furnishings—its altarpieces, fresco cycles, and funerary monuments—mirror the inner fragmentation and diversity of the German community and the constant interaction of multiple identities, many of which were based on geographical criteria.

The presbytery was conceived as a memorial space for outstanding representatives of the nation, among them a pope, a prince, and two cardinals, all of whom received impressive funerary monuments between 1530 and 1600.<sup>36</sup> Around 1538, the confraternity board planned to display a fully carved, life-size marble statue of the *Madonna of Souls* on the main altar, similar to the one that had been installed

35 For a detailed analysis of the iconography of the Madonna of Souls, see Kubersky-Piredda 2023.

36 The four funerary monuments were those of Pope Adrian VI (1459–1523, see Götzmann 2004; Götzmann 2009; Götzmann 2010, pp. 190–250; Gnann), Hereditary Prince Karl Friedrich of Jülich-Cleves-Berg (1555–1575, see Götzmann 2007), Cardinal Willem van Enckenvoirt (1464–1534, see Gnann); Cardinal Andrew of Austria (1558–1600, see Schemper-Sparholz). The cardinals' tombs are today located on the east wall of the church, next to the main portal.

on the façade.<sup>37</sup> The stonemason Giovanni Magone erected a magnificent *all'antica* marble altar that was intended to incorporate the statue.<sup>38</sup> But the minutes of the board meetings reveal that 20 years later, the search for a satisfactory design was still ongoing.<sup>39</sup> So as not to leave the niche completely empty, for a few decades, it was filled with a copy of Michelangelo's (1475–1564) *Pietà* made by Lorenzetto (1490–1541) for one of the side chapels.<sup>40</sup> In anticipation of a proper representation of the Madonna of Souls, the *Pietà* would have at least represented a typical northern European iconographic pattern (in German, called *Vesperbild*). After several years, though, it was decided to move the *Pietà* back to the chapel since it had little connection to the church's dedication. In order to be in line with the Tridentine Counter-Reformation decrees, the board then decided to place only a sacramental tabernacle (now demolished) on the main altar and, in the pediment, a coat of arms with a Habsburg eagle combined with the Anima Madonna.<sup>41</sup> The search for an adequate altar sculpture proved fruitless, never leading to any tangible results. A more permanent solution was only implemented in the eighteenth century, when the presbytery was completely refurbished in the Baroque style and Giulio Romano's Fugger panel was moved from the family chapel to the high altar.<sup>42</sup> The confraternity's attempt to create a common patron saint for the German nation in Rome must thus be considered a failure, possibly because an artificially constructed identification figure like the Madonna of Souls did not find the same acceptance among members of the community as did the long-established cults of the numerous regional saints of the Holy Roman Empire, which were venerated in some of the side chapels of Santa Maria dell'Anima.

## Iconographic Models as Elements of Collective Identity

While the decoration of the presbytery of Santa Maria dell'Anima was commissioned and funded by the confraternity board, the side chapels were entrusted to private patrons from across the Holy Roman Empire and featured a variety of different

37 Thanks to the patronage of Enckenvoirt, the sepulchral monuments of Pope Adrian VI and Enckenvoirt himself had been previously placed in the presbytery.

38 He was paid 1,500 ducats. For the two contracts (1536 and 1538), see ASMA, A II, 2, ff. 107r–108r. See also Weil-Garris Brandt, p. 123, note 19; Lohninger, p. 83.

39 ASMA, A VI, 1, f. 97v.

40 For Lorenzetto's *Pietà*, see most recently Hubert and Hegener.

41 ASMA, A VI, 1, f. 98v. On the tabernacle, see Kubersky-Piredda 2015, pp. 50–51. On the statue planned for the high altar, see Kubersky-Piredda 2023.

42 In a few late seventeenth-century travel guides, reference is made to an altarpiece showing a Madonna with several souls: see Sebastiani, p. 147; Piazza, p. 575. No such painting has been preserved, however, nor is one mentioned in the archives of Santa Maria dell'Anima.

artistic styles. Most of these individual donors were cultured members of the Curia who hoped to enhance their status at the papal court by commissioning works in an appropriately *all'antica* style.<sup>43</sup> The above-mentioned *Pietà* by Lorenzetto was commissioned in 1519 and executed 1530–1532 for one of the side chapels, and is a free copy after Michelangelo's depiction of the same subject (1497–1499).<sup>44</sup> The Gothic genre of the *Vesperbild* is here translated into the Renaissance idiom, and it is no coincidence that the patrons of both versions were natives of northern Europe: the Anima *provisor* Johannes Schütz commissioned Lorenzetto's *Pietà*,<sup>45</sup> and the patron of Michelangelo's work was the French cardinal Jean Bilhères de Lagraulas (1434/39–1499).<sup>46</sup>

Another subject popular among patrons from the Holy Roman Empire, but less familiar in Italy, was the so-called *Anna Selbdritt*—that is, the Virgin Mary with Child and St Anne.<sup>47</sup> The most famous example in Rome is the marble group in Sant'Agostino, carved 1510–1512 by Andrea Sansovino (c. 1467–1529) and conceived as part of an ensemble with Raphael's *Prophet Isaiah* fresco, for the protonotary apostolic Johann Goritz, a native of the Moselle.<sup>48</sup> A sculpted *Anna Selbdritt* was also installed in Santa Maria dell'Anima, but in this case, it was a polychrome wooden sculpture recently attributed to a South Tyrol workshop and dated to the second quarter of the sixteenth century.<sup>49</sup> The work, no longer in its original setting, is indebted to the Gothic style and would have been immediately recognised as an imported 'German' element.<sup>50</sup> The differences between these two works arise from their distinct functions. Sansovino's *Anna Selbdritt* is part of a memorial programme for a high-ranking, humanist cleric in the Curia and expresses the patron's intellectual and representative claims through a complex system of iconographic and formal references. The wooden *Anna Selbdritt* in the Anima church, on the other hand, was commissioned by a lay confraternity of craftsmen and merchants and functioned as a devotional image and reliquary.<sup>51</sup> The latter was thus a marker of collective identity, offering

43 Interestingly, most of the fully carved altar sculptures created in Rome around 1500 were commissioned by northern European clients, including the *Pietà* by Michelangelo (St. Peter's, 1497–1499), the *Pietà* by Lorenzetto (Santa Maria dell'Anima, commissioned 1519, executed 1530–1532), and the *Anna Selbdritt* by Andrea Sansovino (Sant'Agostino, 1510–1512). Cf. Rohlmann, pp. 116–117.

44 Rohlmann, pp. 117–118.

45 See especially Mazzotta.

46 Rohlmann, pp. 117–118, with bibliography.

47 On this type of image, see Solty; Buchholz.

48 Cf. Rohlmann, pp. 116–117; Fattorini, esp. pp. 226–239, with bibliography.

49 Raub. See also Rohlmann, p. 115, with bibliography.

50 The statue is now in one of the rooms of the seminary of Santa Maria dell'Anima.

51 Raub. On the German congregations in Rome, see also Schuchard; Schulz and Schuchard; Daniels 2018, with bibliography.

a concrete reference to traditions and cults of the German Empire, and it also interacted with the believer on a more immediate level. The two very different St Anne groups again illustrate the heterogeneity of the 'German' nation in Rome, composed of individuals from different territories and of various social and professional backgrounds.

### **Conflicting Regional Artistic Identities**

During most of the sixteenth century, members of the Curia from central German territories dominated the Anima confraternity and its decisions. However, towards the end of the century, a remarkably large number of clergy from the principality of Liège entered the Roman Curia, and the number of German clerics diminished because many territories had turned Protestant. After 1600, Flemish members of the Curia became the most influential figures at Santa Maria dell'Anima, staging an open rivalry with the Germans. The conflicts between the two groups were reflected in their art patronage. The decoration of the first chapel on the right side of the nave was commissioned in 1618 by a prominent German patron, Johannes Lambacher, and by the executors of his will, Johannes Faber (1574–1629) and Peter Mander (1555–1626).<sup>52</sup> The altar painting represents the miracle of a Saxon saint, Benno of Meissen, who became an important figure for German Catholics during the Reformation (Fig. 5). His canonisation in 1523 by Adrian VI had been highly controversial and was strongly criticised by Martin Luther (1483–1564). While the painting depicts an episode from the life of a German saint, it was executed by a Venetian artist, the Caravaggesque painter Carlo Saraceni (c. 1579–1620), a representative of early Seicento Counter-Reformation art. The fascinating chiaroscuro scene showing a fish that had swallowed the key of Meissen's cathedral must have immediately caught the eye of every visitor who entered the church, but only insiders would have fully understood the iconography. Contemporary beholders would have probably perceived the painting as 'German' because of its unusual iconography, but not in terms of its artistic style.

Only a couple of years later, the chapel on the opposite side of the nave was assigned to a nobleman from Liège, Lambertus Ursinus de Vivariis, and his nephew, Aegidius. The chapel was dedicated to St Lambert, who was De Vivariis' personal saint and also the patron saint of Liège (Fig. 6).<sup>53</sup> Evidently struck by the visual impact of the St Benno altarpiece, De Vivariis decided to engage the same artist,

52 For a detailed analysis of this chapel, see Daniels 2015. See also Lorizzo.

53 For this chapel, see Russo; Lorizzo.



5. Chapel of Saint Benno, 1617/1618, Santa Maria dell'Anima, Rome. © Enrico Fontolan, Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History, Rome.



6. Chapel of Saint Lambert, 1618–1653, Santa Maria dell'Anima, Rome. © Enrico Fontolan, Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History, Rome.



Carlo Saraceni. The painting shows St Lambert's martyrdom in Liège: while praying in church, he is attacked by armed men. In addition to its private function, the chapel thus represented a place of worship for pilgrims from Flanders—a fact that was further enhanced by an inscription referring to Liège and by a fresco cycle with scenes from the life of St Lambert executed by a Flemish painter, Jan Miel (1599–1664) from Antwerp.

The chapels of Saints Benno and Lambert thus embody at least three levels of collective identity: the donors and their family members who are buried there, conflicting social groups originating from the German and Flemish regions of the Holy Roman Empire, and strong support for the Catholic Church within the religious conflicts then raging across Europe.

### **Final Considerations**

The intention to build a 'praiseworthy work composed in [the] Alemannic manner' mentioned in the founding document of Santa Maria dell'Anima demonstrates that as early as 1500, some thought was given to the representation of national identity—with regard to a group of people of common territorial origin—through artistic or architectural means. This, of course, was far from being based on any structured artistic theory. However, the project of rebuilding Santa Maria dell'Anima expresses the desire to translate common cultural elements into visual forms of communication or representation within the competitive context of Rome's foreign communities. As we have seen, elements used for representing a group of compatriots were iconographic patterns, stylistic features, artistic techniques and materials, as well as heraldic symbols, emblems, and inscriptions. The choice of artists from a certain geographical region could also convey a collective identity. However, these elements never came together in the same work of art. As revealed by the analysis of the art patronage at Santa Maria dell'Anima, both imported identitarian characteristics and local Roman artistic elements were combined in various ways, evidently as the result of negotiations between contrasting traditions and cultural models and depending on the representational needs of the different patrons. However, the use of artistic elements deriving from a certain territory and the awareness of their identity-building potential may be considered a first step towards the development of the concept of artistic schools that would enter art historical discourse by the end of the sixteenth century.

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## About the Author

**Susanne Kubersky-Piredda** is a Senior Scholar at the Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max Planck Institute for Art History in Rome. She received her PhD from the University of Cologne. Her research interests include collective identity and notions of nationhood in early modern visual culture, the history of art markets and the social status of the artist, and artistic exchange between Spain and Italy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.



## 2. A Failed Attempt to Establish a Spanish Art Academy in Rome (1680): A New Reading of Archival Documents

*Maria Onori*

### Abstract

This essay investigates the failed attempt to establish an academy for Spanish artists in Rome in 1680. The analysis of the protagonists—in particular, the perspective painter Vicente Giner—and of the relationships with other academies like that of France, the long-standing rival of Spain in Rome, sheds light on the Roman and Spanish art worlds at the end of the seventeenth century. These academies had a notable importance in the diffusion of art, and the formation and inclusion of artists in the heterogeneous cultural environment of Rome.

**Keywords:** academies, Rome, Spain, seventeenth century, Herrera el Mozo, Vicente Giner

Rome, 28 July 1680: A group of nine Spanish painters resident in the Eternal City tries to create the first nucleus of what would become, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the Real Academia de España en Roma.<sup>1</sup> By signing a deed witnessed by the notary Jacobus Antonius Redomtney, they constitute themselves as members of an academy designed to study mathematics, painting, and sculpture.<sup>2</sup> Although the project failed, for the reasons that I will detail below, the attempt to establish a Spanish art academy in Rome is useful for understanding the artistic life of Spanish artists in early modern Rome.

This essay aims to provide a new reading of the above-mentioned deed, already well known to researchers in the first half of the twentieth century, who nonetheless

1 ASC, AGU, sect. I, vol. 642, s.n.

2 ASC, AGU, sec. I, vol. 642. Redomtney held the office of 'apostolic notary public' from 1668 to 1683.



failed to understand the real meaning and impact of the event. My research at the Archivio Storico Capitolino, the Archivio Apostolico Vaticano, and the Archivio dei Virtuosi del Pantheon will help to decode the roles of officials (such as the Spanish ambassador to the Holy See) and of foreign artists involved in the deed.

To clarify why Spain had a peculiar position in Roman society, we need to consider what brought together the community of Spanish artists in Rome, to explain the roles of the individuals involved, and to understand why the Spanish royal court denied funding for founding a new academy.

The Spanish community, and the Iberian world more generally, are traditionally linked to two churches in Rome and to the Spanish Embassy to the Holy See, which has been located in Palazzo Monaldeschi since 1647, when Ambassador Iñigo Velez de Guevara y Tassis, eighth Count of Oñate (1597–1658) purchased the building.<sup>3</sup> However, the absence for centuries of a permanent space for gatherings of Spanish artists and intellectuals is key to understanding Spain's level of self-awareness as an 'artistic nation': an identity that could be expressed by socialising in both sacred and secular places—for instance, in national churches, embassies, or academies.<sup>4</sup>

## The Community of Spanish Artists in Rome

The history and the presence of Spanish artists in Rome did not start in the seventeenth century, as much as it did not end with the failure of the 1680 proposal for an art academy.

The situation was markedly different in the previous century. From the early 1500s onwards, Spanish artists regularly arrived and stayed in Italy, sometimes for long periods of time, and their numbers were continually increasing. Beginning

3 San Giacomo degli Spagnoli and Santa Maria di Monserrato. As Anselmi points out in her volume on the churches of the *nazione spagnuola*, there were seven ecclesiastical institutions linked to the Iberian world in Rome in the seventeenth century. These included the churches of Santi Ambrogio e Carlo al Corso, San Francesco di Paola dei Calabresi, Santo Spirito dei Napoletani, Sant'Antonio dei Portoghesi, and Santa Maria dell'Itria dei Siciliani. See Anselmi 2012, and the work of Vaquero Piñeiro on San Giacomo degli Spagnoli and real estate property: most recently, Vaquero Piñeiro 1999 and 2014. On Palazzo Monaldeschi, see Anselmi 2001, esp. pp. 53–54 for the purchase of the palace by the Count of Oñate.

4 Much has been written about the term and the meaning of 'nation' and of national identity. Here, 'nation' indicates a community grouping very different from the idea of a modern nation. In early modern Europe, the word 'nation' was used to differentiate groups of compatriots in a foreign city who shared similar criteria for identity that were associated with a place linked to their country of origin. In the case of Rome between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, 'no other city could boast a comparable number of foreign institutions that co-existed and interacted with one another' (Koller, p. 8). See also Prodi for a discussion of 'nation' and the concept from a historical perspective, and Koller on the national churches in Rome.

with Alonso Berruguete (c. 1486–1561) and Pedro Machuca (c. 1490–1550) in Florence and Rome during the early 1500s, the presence of Spanish artists intensified after the Sack of Rome in 1527.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, as Redín Michaus has explained, in those years after the Sack of Rome, the Spanish community was the largest and most important foreign colony in Rome. Artists could count on the financial support of their more erudite compatriots as they fought to enter the market of Roman art commissions. Among these artists, the most prominent were Pedro Rubiales (c. 1518–c. 1560) and Gaspar Becerra (c. 1520–1568), who were employed to paint murals at important sites, including the Sala dei Cento Giorni in Palazzo della Cancelleria (1546–1547). Here, they were registered in 1546 as assistants of Giorgio Vasari, who recorded them as ‘Bizzerra e Roviale spagnuoli’.<sup>6</sup>

By the mid-1600s, the situation had shifted significantly. As Thomas Dandeleet has noted, the decline of Spanish Rome under the pontificate of Urban VIII (1568–1644) had a decided influence on the presence of Iberian artists.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, after the election of Innocent X Pamphili (1574–1655) in 1644, King Philip IV (1605–1665) and his delegates in Rome developed ways to re-establish the Spanish community. Succeeding in reconsolidating ties and political alliances, Spanish artists started, once again, to circulate in the orbit of prominent Roman patrons.<sup>8</sup>

It is important to stress that traditionally, only a small number of artistic academies existed in early modern Spain. One example, albeit linked to the scientific sphere, was the Academia Real Mathematica, founded in 1582 in Madrid at the request of Philip II (1527–1598).<sup>9</sup> Its direction was entrusted to the royal architect, Juan de Herrera (1530–1597), designer of the Alcázar of Toledo (1585), the cathedral of Valladolid (1589), and the Royal Monastery of El Escorial (1594).<sup>10</sup>

Despite the founding of this academy, Madrid lacked official artistic training until the Academia de San Fernando was finally established in Madrid by King Ferdinand VI (1713–1759) in 1752.<sup>11</sup> The collections of the Academia de San Fernando came to include all of the study material assembled by the painter Diego Velázquez (1599–1660) during his travels to Rome (August 1629–December 1630, January 1649–June 1651) as an agent of Philip IV to study classical antiquity and the

5 Saporì.

6 For Rubiales and Becerra, see Redín Michaus, pp. 27–150, 157–247. For the quotation, see Vasari, VI, p. 388.

7 A critical and controversial text, Dandeleet’s work remains the only comprehensive study of the Spanish community in Rome during the seventeenth century. See Dandeleet, p. 188.

8 This tendency was confirmed by the election of Pope Alexander VII Chigi (1599–1667) in 1655 and Pope Clement IX Rospigliosi (1600–1669) in 1667, who had been the apostolic nuncio to Madrid for nine years. Dandeleet, p. 203.

9 Yeves Andrés.

10 Barreiro Pereira.

11 Heras Casas.

great Renaissance masters. His paintings, statues, and plaster casts would later be studied and used as models in Madrid.<sup>12</sup>

During the seventeenth century, the only formal art academy on Spanish territory was the Academia de Bellas Artes ('Academy of Fine Arts') in Seville, founded by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1618–1682) and Francisco Herrera el Mozo (1627–1685) on 11 January 1660.<sup>13</sup> This academy represented the sole attempt to create an institutional meeting point for Sevillian painters in the style of the Roman Accademia di San Luca.<sup>14</sup> The Academia of Seville lasted just a few years: in 1674, fourteen years after its foundation, it was closed due to economic problems, quarrels among the artists, and the absence of an official acknowledgement by the Crown.

Spain was not alone in this scenario; most national entities did not feel the need to found an academy. Indeed, despite the fact that English travellers were documented in Rome throughout the Seicento, the presence of British painters and sculptors in formal academies only became significant from the 1740s onwards, at the height of the Grand Tour.<sup>15</sup> Similarly, the German artists' colony in Rome would have to wait until the eighteenth century to develop comprehensively.<sup>16</sup> In some instances, the existence of an official seat or institution was not necessary to consolidate ties amongst national residents of foreign cities. Illuminating evidence of this is offered by the 'Bentveughels': a confraternity of Netherlandish artists in Rome that remained a fundamental reference point for the Dutch community throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries without being a formal academy.<sup>17</sup>

Spanish artists, on the other hand, in accordance with the French model, sought and expected support from Madrid, and requested direct approval and financing from the court. The Académie de France in Rome was a model for the Spaniards: founded in 1666, it was powerfully active, initially located in Palazzo Mancini Salviati al Corso and, from 1803, in its present location in Villa Medici.<sup>18</sup>

The foundation of the Académie de France in Rome was clearly instrumental for King Louis XIV's grand displays of 'art propaganda'. Apart from being a place where artists could socialise and study together, the Académie de France was a powerful symbol and tool of the cultural agenda of the French monarchy, and of

12 For the activity of Velázquez in Rome, see the studies of Harris: the articles from 1958 and 1960, as well as the monographs from 1982 and 2006. Most recently, see the studies by Garin-Llombart and Salort Pons.

13 Some of the key recent work on Murillo were presented during the conference for the fourth centennial of the artist: Navarrete Prieto 2019.

14 For more recent studies, see Corzo Sánchez, García Baeza, and Sánchez-Cortegana.

15 Falabella.

16 Loevinson, p. 1.

17 On the Bentveughels, see Hoogewerff; Schulte van Kessel. Most recently, in connection with the academic tradition in Rome and the Accademia di San Luca, see Hendrix.

18 Coquery, pp. 29–35.

Louis XIV himself, and it succeeded in carving out a slice of the Roman art market and aggressively asserting the king's 'physical' presence in the Eternal City.

Although the Spanish monarchy was probably less interested than the French in being represented artistically by an outpost in Rome, a group of Spanish artists sought the support of King Charles II (1661–1700) to establish an academy of the arts in Rome in 1680. Their appeal was turned down, as I will detail below. Throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, contacts between Spanish artists remained informal. The first group of *pensionados* of the Academia de San Fernando only arrived in Rome in 1758.<sup>19</sup> By 1873, a new institution for Iberian artists had been founded: the Real Academia de España en Roma, still located in the Franciscan convent of S. Pietro in Montorio on the Janiculum Hill.<sup>20</sup>

The failed attempt to establish an art academy in Rome during the reign of Charles II is thus an important puzzle piece in the study of the places, identitarian residences, and associations that contributed to creating a sense of identity and belonging for foreign residents in Rome.<sup>21</sup>

## The Ambassador's Endorsement and the King's Refusal

The discovery of the failed attempt to create an academy 'de la Nación Española' was initially announced by Luis Pérez Bueno in 1947, and was based on a document preserved in the correspondence between the Spanish ambassador in Rome, Gaspar de Haro y Guzmán, seventh Marquis del Carpio (1629–1687), and King Charles II.<sup>22</sup>

From this documentation, it can be inferred that the proposal originated with the Spanish artists then living in Rome, in particular with Vicente Giner (1626–1681), who had been designated by the Spanish-Roman artistic community as their representative and who spoke for himself and on behalf of the Spanish painters living in the Eternal city (Fig. 7).<sup>23</sup> Originally from Valencia, Giner was a perspective painter and was probably a pupil or collaborator of Viviano Codazzi (c. 1604–1670), a specialist in architectural *capricci*. Because he had been living in Rome for some

19 Gallego García.

20 The Spanish academy would be given a permanent seat in the complex of the convent of San Pietro in Montorio on 23 January 1881; see Bagolan.

21 Analysis of the historical and artistic phenomena related to foreign communities and national churches in Rome from the mediaeval period to the modern age is the objective of the Minerva research group *Roma communis patria*, coordinated by Susanne Kubersky-Piredda and promoted by the Max Planck Institute from 2011 to 2015.

22 Pérez Bueno; this was a discovery based on documents already published in Viñaza, pp. 271–278. The document is preserved in the Archivo General de Simancas (Estado, Rome, legajo 3.063). On Carpio's collections and patronage of the arts, see Ortiz-Iribas; Frutos Sastre 2009, 2010.

23 Pérez Bueno, p. 155.



7. Vicente Giner, *Interior of a Basilica with Musicians*, c. 1675, oil on canvas, 121 x 167 cm, Museo de Bellas Artes de Valencia, Valencia. © Museo de Bellas Artes de Valencia, Valencia.

time, he had become prominent among the Spanish artists living in the city.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, he signed the document on behalf of ‘otros nueve españoles, todos de profesión pintores, residentes en la Corte de Roma de algunos años a esta parte’ (‘nine other Spaniards, all professional painters, resident in the Court of Rome for some years now’).<sup>25</sup> The ten petitioners requested royal approval and funds for the creation of an art academy.<sup>26</sup> They argued that it was essential to found an academy ‘a similitud de las demas Naciones’ (‘like the other nations’).<sup>27</sup>

The proposal did not meet with the Spanish court’s approval, and Pérez Bueno partially transcribed the negative response sent by the Council of Italy to the Marquis of Carpio.<sup>28</sup> The ambassador was instructed to inform the painters that their petition had been rejected for financial reasons: ‘pues el erario no está oy para semejantes desperdicios’ (‘because the treasury is not for such waste’).<sup>29</sup> It is interesting to see that their request, sponsored by the ambassador to the Holy See, was deemed a *desperdicio*: a waste.

Strangely enough, the 1680 correspondence between the papal nuncio to Madrid, Cardinal Savo Mellini (1644–1701), and the Vatican Secretariat of State (who dealt with the major political, social, and cultural events in Rome and Madrid), does not mention the artists’ proposal.<sup>30</sup> The lack of discussion of the proposal may be due to the fact that in November 1680, both the court of Madrid and the Holy See strongly disliked and censored the ambassador’s work in Rome because of two events that had undermined his reputation.

Cardinal Mellini details, in a letter dated 21 November 1680, how Carpio had decided to move the Spanish post office to the embassy district without requesting the pope’s permission.<sup>31</sup> Two more letters (respectively of 22 November and 5 December 1680) describe an event involving the marquis’s servants in an inn on Via di Ripetta.<sup>32</sup> The measures taken by Carpio against his servants were considered

24 It has not yet been firmly established whether Giner served an apprenticeship with Codazzi (Marco García, p. 752); Marshall has hypothesized that he trained in Codazzi’s workshop between 1650 and 1660 (Marshall, pp. 226, 256–260, 264–283). He has also identified the influence of Cornelis de Wael (1592–1667) on a painting by Giner and has suggested that the two men met in Genoa before the Spanish artist arrived in Rome (Marshall, p. 505).

25 Pérez Bueno, pp. 155–156.

26 ‘Con el solo fin de adelantarse en las Artes de Pintura, Arquitectura, Escultura y Matemáticas’ (‘For the sole purpose of improving their knowledge of the arts of painting, architecture, sculpture, and mathematics’). Pérez Bueno, p. 156.

27 ASC, AGU, sect. I, vol. 642.

28 The Consejo de Italia was the Spanish monarchy’s institution for managing and governing the Spanish properties in Italy.

29 Pérez Bueno, p. 157.

30 On Mellini, see Tabacchi.

31 AAV, SS, Spagna, vol. 155, fols. 1376r–1376v.

32 AAV, SS, Spagna, vol. 155, fols. 1382r–1383r, 1440r–1440v.

so useless that on 5 December, the nuncio concluded: 'in avvenire tenga la sua famiglia ne limiti convenevoli al rispetto dovuto al Governo Pontificio' ('in future, he shall keep his household within the limits appropriate to the respect due to the Pontifical Government').<sup>33</sup> In other words, the issue resulted in a conflict of jurisdiction between the *natione spagnuola* and the pope that encompassed the entire embassy quarter.<sup>34</sup> Unfortunately, Carpio lost credibility right when Giner and the other nine painters asked him to intercede at court on their behalf.

We can nonetheless surmise that the project to create a single, physical meeting place devoted to studying the arts was a key goal of, and had strong support amongst, the community of Spanish artists in late seventeenth-century Rome.

### The Self-Awareness of the Spanish Artists' Proposal

The document found by Pérez Bueno (dated 27 October 1680) can be compared with a source from the Archivio Storico Capitolino, which contains the original proposal and is dated a few months earlier, 28 July 1680.<sup>35</sup> This document is evidently a fully-fledged act of association: a constitutive deed witnessed by a notary, Redomtey, in which Giner does not figure among the signatories (in contrast to the document discovered by Perez Bueno, in which Giner himself wrote to the king on behalf of himself and nine other painters). The signatories to the 28 July 1680 document were: Pedro Granera, Pedro Capaces, Luis Serrano de Aragon, Antonio de San Juan, Sebastián Muñoz (c. 1634–1709), Martin Rulli, Antonio Gonzalez, Juan Ximeno, and Gonzalo Thomas de Meca. They decided to elect 'por nuestro Academico mayor el Señor Don Vicente Giner' ('as Senior Academician Mr. Don Vicente Giner'), and this is likely the reason for the absence of Giner's signature from the document.<sup>36</sup>

With the exception of Sebastián Muñoz, a pupil of Claudio Coello (1642–1693) who studied in Rome in 1680–1684 with Carlo Maratta (1625–1713) according to Antonio Palomino de Castro y Velasco (1655–1726), the other names remain unknown (Fig. 8).<sup>37</sup> In addition, no information is provided on the academy's physical location in Rome. Presumably, given the support of the Spanish ambassador in Rome,

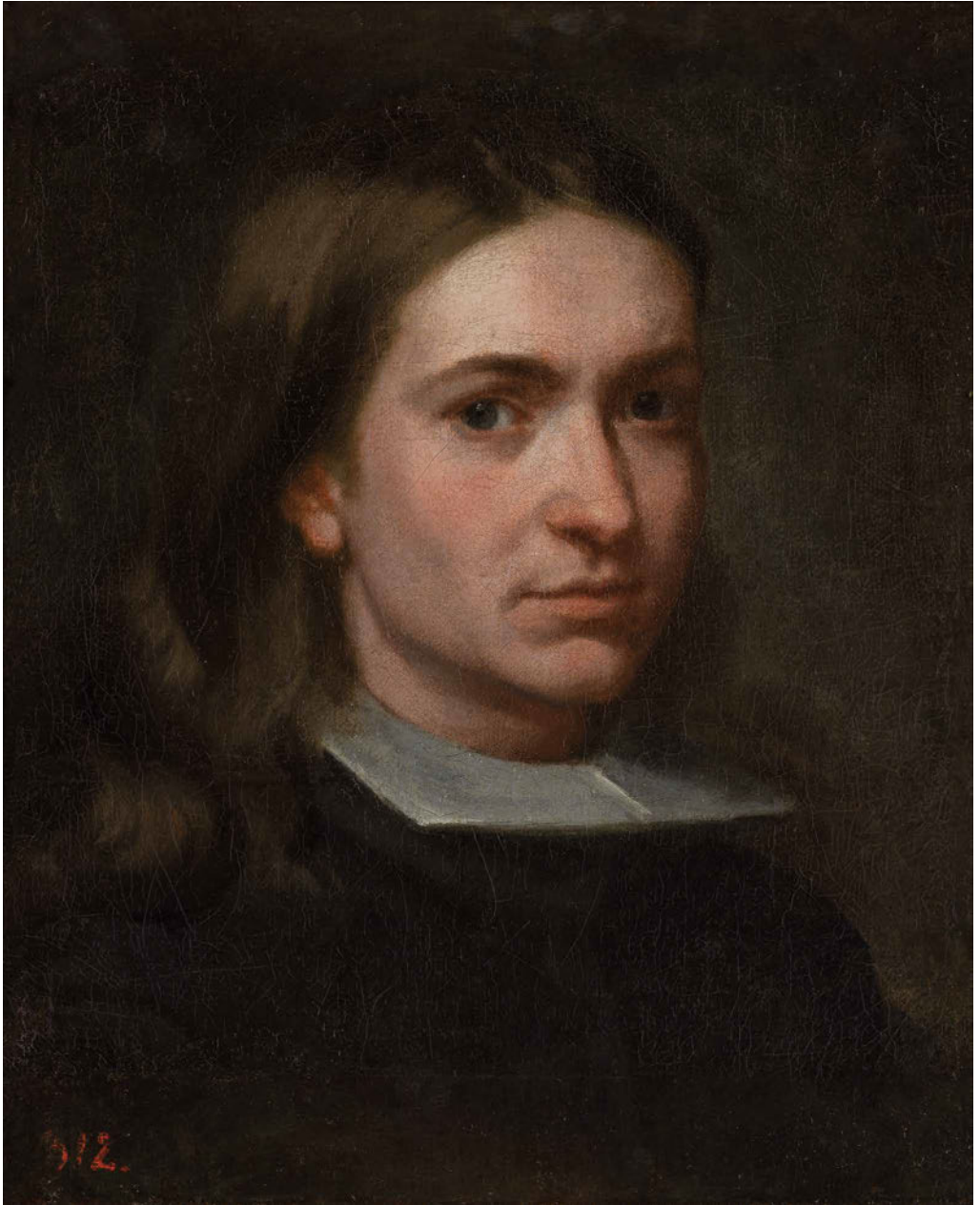
33 AAV, SS, Spagna, vol. 155, fol. 1440v.

34 On the conflict between Papal jurisdiction and the right of the Spanish embassy to diplomatic immunity, see Anselmi 2001, pp. 171–179.

35 Pérez Bueno, p. 155. The document preserved in Archivio Storico Capitolino had already been traced and noted in Aterido Fernández, p. 179, note 1, but not analyzed.

36 ASC, AGU, sect. I, vol. 642.

37 Martínez Ripoll and Pérez Sánchez, pp. 328–329. For the quotation, see Palomino De Castro y Velasco, III, p. 1048. We can consider 28 July 1680 to be the *terminus ante quem* for Muñoz's arrival in Rome.



8. Sebastian Muñoz, *Self-Portrait*, 1670–1680, oil on canvas, 42.7 x 35 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid. © Photographic Archive, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.



the academy would have occupied space in the Spanish embassy or in one of its dependencies.

The assembly listed in the document of 1680 also expressed its desire to have the academy directed by an academician in Spain and a deputy in Rome: Francisco Herrera el Mozo and Vicente Giner, respectively.<sup>38</sup>

One of the renowned artists of the Spanish Baroque, Herrera was already court painter to Charles II at the time (Fig. 9). It is possible that the nine painters selected him to be the 'long-distance' director of the academy because of his previous experience as director and founder of the Academia de Bellas Artes of Seville. He was also highly knowledgeable of Italian art and had acted as an artistic mediator between Rome and Madrid.<sup>39</sup> The document is not specific about his future duties; it only suggests that the Roman director—Giner—would take orders from Herrera and from Madrid.<sup>40</sup> What relationship between the Spanish artists in Rome and Madrid would have determined the appointment of Francisco Herrera el Mozo, who had lived in Rome between 1649 and 1653, at this new academy?<sup>41</sup> What functions were implied in his role as 'long-distance director' from the Spanish court? Would he have directed the work of teachers and students? Was he planning to seek out decorative and iconographic Roman models and circulate them in his homeland?<sup>42</sup> Or was he supposed to simply oversee the development of this enterprise? All these questions remain open, but the proposal of the academy and Herrera's role in it certainly remind us of the immense importance that the study of Rome, its classical antiquities, and the canonical works of the Renaissance masters had by then acquired for the *Siglo de Oro español*.<sup>43</sup>

Interestingly, the document of 28 July provides detailed information about the origins of each artist. When the deed was signed, the names of the fathers and the cities of origin of each of the signatories were meticulously recorded.<sup>44</sup> Pedro Granera and Pedro Capaces were from Zaragoza, Luis Serrano de Aragon from Malaga, Antonio de San Juan from the bishopric of Calahorra, Sebastián Muñoz

38 ASC, AGU, sect. I, vol. 642.

39 It is important to remember that Herrera himself had travelled to Rome in his youth, thirty years earlier. See Palomino De Castro y Velasco, III, p. 1020. On Herrera, see Pérez Sánchez, pp. 294–299. My thanks go to Benito Navarrete Prieto for his invaluable suggestions.

40 ASC, AGU, sect. I, vol. 642.

41 For the dates of Herrera's sojourns in Rome, see Navarrete Prieto 2018, p. 111.

42 On the reception of Italian Baroque models in Madrid, see Navarrete Prieto 2008.

43 On the diffusion of sixteenth-century Venetian painting, the Carracci, and Luca Giordano (1634–1705) by direct viewing of the originals or as prints by the artists of the late Spanish Baroque, see Navarrete Prieto 2014. Herrera's ties to Italy, and Rome in particular, can also be demonstrated graphically. See Navarrete Prieto 2018.

44 'Todos españoles naturales al presente residentes en Roma' ('All natural Spaniards presently residing in Rome'). ASC, AGU, sect. I, vol. 642.



9. Francisco Herrera el Mozo, *Saint Joseph's Dream*, c. 1662, oil on canvas, 196.5 x 209.5 cm, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid. © Photographic Archive, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid.

from Segovia, Martin Rullì from Palma in the bishopric of Mallorca, Juan Ximeno from Panerudo in the archbishopric of Zaragoza, Antonio Gonzalez from Toledo, and Gonzalo Thomas de Meca from the bishopric of Cordoba.

The geographical origins of artists is currently a focus of research for analysing early modern cultural identities.<sup>45</sup> An illustrious predecessor for these artists who consciously promoted his geographical origins, as well as his 'Spanishness', was Jusepe de Ribera (1591–1652). Javier Portús has examined the ways in which Ribera habitually signed his works. In most cases, he added 'español' or 'hispanus' after his name in his signatures.<sup>46</sup> After he was admitted to the Accademia di San Luca in 1613, he added another qualification: 'academicus romanus'.<sup>47</sup> This double qualification reveals how Ribera identified with both Spanish and Roman artistic education, and probably with both regions, as if he combined two souls in one single body. He was also able to exploit this ambiguity for personal propaganda, to emphasise his adaptation to the Roman Accademia di San Luca, and to present himself as a cultivated artist of Italian and academic formation. In contrast, Giner, the member of the group who could have laid the greatest claim to this double 'Hispano-Roman' formation, did not sign the petition's document.

The profile of Vicente Giner has recently been reconstructed by Aterido Fernández, who discovered Giner's will, the record of his name in the parish registries of the Archivio Storico del Vicariato di Roma, his residence, and part of the social circle he frequented.<sup>48</sup>

My doctoral research in the Roman archives on the Iberian community can fill in some of the remaining gaps regarding Giner's life and activity in Rome.<sup>49</sup> A Spaniard named Vincenzo Giner was admitted to the Congregation of the Accademia dei Virtuosi del Pantheon during the regular associates' meeting of 16 February 1680.<sup>50</sup> The congregation's register of 10 March 1680, specifies his profes-

45 See DaCosta Kauffman.

46 Portús, pp. 19–36. Most of his points had been previously and publicly made by Sabina de Cavi in two unpublished conference papers: 'Jusepe de Ribera Español F(ecit)', at the conference 'The Mistress-Court of Mighty Europe: Configuring Europe and European Identities in the Renaissance & Early Modern Period', on 11 September 2004 at the Department of English, University of Wales, chaired by A. Hiscock in Bangor, Wales (UK), and again in the session entitled: 'Authorship and Identity in Early Modern Signatures III: Cryptic Signatures', chaired by D. Boffa and K. Rawlings, at the Renaissance Society of America Annual Meeting held on 22 March 2012 in Washington, DC (USA).

47 In particular, see Portús, pp. 33–34.

48 Aterido Fernández.

49 *'Nazione Spagnuola'. Arte e committenza iberica a Roma (1647–1700)* ('Nazione Spagnuola'. Iberian Art and Patronage in Rome'), which I defended in July 2021 at the Sapienza, University of Rome.

50 'Fu fatta la Congatione nel nostro solito Oratorio dove si disse dover rifare la festa del n.ro Patriarca S. Giuseppe colla musica, quadri, et in ogni altro miglior modo. [...] e molti furono proposti per nostri Confratelli li seguenti e come molti di questi sono academici di San Luca e gl'altri virtuosi cogniti furono tutti ammessi et approvati per nostri confrari con voti universali, e sono [...] D. Vincenzo Giner da

sion: 'D. Vincenzo Giner Pitt[o]re Prospetico'.<sup>51</sup> Throughout 1680, Giner attended every meeting, and on 8 December, he was nominated first vice-regent to the new regent, the Sicilian painter Agostino Scilla (1629–1700).<sup>52</sup> His office was confirmed on 10 January 1681.<sup>53</sup> Giner's presence at meetings was then recorded throughout the year, up to 10 August, in line with the date of his death identified by Aterido Fernández (5 September 1681).<sup>54</sup> At the meeting of 14 September 1681, only Scilla and the chamberlain, Giovanni Amerani, were registered—a detail confirming that by that date Giner had died in Rome.<sup>55</sup> Giner's death is also mentioned in the chamberlain's expense book.<sup>56</sup>

The Spanish painter, who had thus become a member of the Congregation of the Virtuosi before trying to establish an academy, may have sought admission in order to demonstrate his reputation as a painter within the Roman artistic community. The *Accademia dei Virtuosi del Pantheon*, then known as the Congregation of St Joseph of the Holy Land, was, and still is, the oldest confraternity of artists ever founded in Rome, authorised by Pope Paul III (1468–1549) in 1542. In addition to providing welfare assistance to its members, the Congregation played a crucial role in their studies and in the artists' interactions with the Roman public, thanks

Valenza di Spagna Pittore' ('The Meeting was held in our usual Oratory where it was said that the feast of our Patriarch St Joseph ought to be held again with music, paintings, and all the best possible means. [...] and many men were then nominated to become our confrères and since many of them are members of the *Accademia di San Luca* and men of renown they were all admitted and approved as confrères by unanimous vote, and these are [...] D. Vincenzo Giner from Valenza in Spain, Painter'). APAVP, *Libro delle Congregazioni 1674–1712*, fols. 28–29.

51 APAVP, *Libro delle Congregazioni 1674–1712*, fol. 30. See Marshall, and previously Soria, for the first attributions of perspective paintings to Giner.

52 APAVP, *Registro delle Congregazioni 1653–1701*, sn. The regent oversaw the Council of Virtuosi (composed of thirty Virtuosi: ten painters, ten sculptors, and ten architects). The first vice-regent held the office of regent in his absence.

53 'Fu tenuta la Congazione nel solito Oratorio dove fatte le n.re consuete Orationi si diede possesso alli Signori Reggente et Aggiunti nuovi, [...] et cioè: Li Signori Agostino Scilla Reggente; D. Vincenzo Giner Primo Aggiunto; Michele Maglia 2 Aggiunto' ('The Meeting was held in the usual Oratory where after the customary Speeches the new Regent and Vice Regents took office, [...] to wit: Messers Agostino Scilla, Regent; D. Vincenzo Giner, First Vice Regent; Michele Maglia Second Vice Regent'). APAVP, *Libro delle Congregazioni 1674–1712*, fol. 33. Giner's relations with the confrères of the Pantheon, in particular with Scilla, who was also linked to the Spanish Crown, require investigation and are the subject of a forthcoming study by the author.

54 Aterido Fernández, p. 181, note 13.

55 APAVP, *Registro delle Congregazioni 1653–1701*, sn.

56 'Al Signore D. Sforza Farina per 15 messe uno baiocco e 50 moneta, per cinque Fratelli defonti e sono stati li Signori Giovanni Bonatti, Giovanni Colli, D. Vincenzo Giner, Guglielmo Teuter, Francesco Spier' ('To Signore D. Sforza Farina for 15 masses one baiocco and 50 moneta, for five deceased brothers, namely Giovanni Bonatti, Giovanni Colli, D. Vincenzo Giner, Guglielmo Teuter, Francesco Spier'). APAVP, *Spese del Camerlengo, 1667–1713*, fol. 147.

to the exhibitions organised each year on the feast day of St Joseph (19 March) in the vestibule of the Pantheon. Since admission to the Virtuosi was reserved for the academicians of San Luca and famous painters, it is likely that Giner already enjoyed a certain level of fame in Rome during the second half of the seventeenth century, before he was selected by his Spanish companions to represent them at their academy.

Seventeenth-century biographers of Spanish artists, such as Palomino, do not make any reference to Giner's pictorial oeuvre. However, the absence of his biography in the *El Parnaso Español pintoresco laureado* (Madrid: Lucas Antonio de Bedmar, 1724) might not be due to a lack of fame, but could instead be explained by a difference in perspective. Since Giner spent most of his life in Rome and never returned to Spain, it is possible that Palomino considered him an Iberian-born, naturalised Roman artist rather than a *pintor español*.<sup>57</sup>

The story of the failed attempt to create a Royal Academy of Spain in Rome in 1680 helps to clarify the role of Spanish artists in Rome. My analysis of the founding documents demonstrates the presence of the artists, their engagement in the Roman cultural environment, and their self-consciousness as vassals of Spain.

In conclusion, we can define the attempt to constitute the first, albeit stillborn, Spanish academy in Rome as important and atypical. Despite the failure of the proposal, the documents delineate a lively panorama of the Spanish painters active in the city during the second half of the seventeenth century. The documents also reveal that these artists were sufficiently aware of their merit to propose that the king fund them through the creation of a formal Royal Academy and were correspondingly confident that they would obtain the support of Charles II. Without doubt, although financial support was denied, the community of painters managed to consolidate the role of Spanish artists in the Roman academies. Even such a failed attempt was nonetheless capable of contributing to the process of cultural unification of Spanish nationals within the competitive and heterogeneous art world of seventeenth-century Rome.<sup>58</sup> Though never receiving political confirmation, the self-awareness of the community prevailed in this historical time and space.

57 Viñaza includes the document related to the creation of the Academy in his additions to the biography of Herrera. In this case, too, Giner did not 'merit' a complete biography of his own. There is only a mention of one 'Giner, pintor valenciano. Pintó perspectivas con mucho gusto é inteligencia á principios del siglo XVII' ('Giner, Valencian painter. He painted perspectives with great pleasure and intelligence at the beginning of the seventeenth century'). Viñaza, p. 192.

58 In the Simancas letter cited by Pérez Bueno, p. 156, we read: 'se establezca un Seminario de virtudes a emulacion de Franceses, Tudescos, Ingleses, Italianos y otras Naciones, logrando al mismo tiempo los pobre escolares españoles este asylo para continuar tan honrados principios y studios' ('A Seminar of virtues in emulation of French, German, English, Italian, and other Nations is established, while at the same time the poor Spanish schoolchildren achieve this institution to continue such honored principles and studies').

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### **About the Author**

**Maria Onori** obtained an MD in modern art history in 2012 and completed a postgraduate programme in artistic heritage in 2015 (both magna cum laude) at the Sapienza, University of Rome. She defended her PhD thesis about the Iberian presence and collecting in Rome from 1647 to 1701 in July 2021 at the same university.

### 3. Mantua: A School of History and Heritage (1752–1797)

*Ludovica Cappelletti*

#### **Abstract**

The Accademia di Pittura, Scultura e Architettura of Mantua was established as a modern academy under the auspices of the Austrian government in 1752, in order to foster the cultural development and artistic renaissance of the city. Its teaching methods proved to be strongly rooted in Mantua's built heritage, which professors and students could experience and draw to acquire the fundamental principles of architecture and art. The Accademia performs a work of interpretations on these monuments, especially Giulio Romano's Mannerism, which demonstrates a modern approach to the lessons of the past and a new lens through which to view the history of the city, thereby redefining the contemporaneous civic identity of Mantua.

**Keywords:** academy, Mantua, heritage, identity, reinvention

'We have devoted our attention to the Accademia di Pittura, Scultura ed Architettura that was established in the city in 1752; and considering how Fine Arts have thrived in this city in the past and how highly they have been regarded, we have decided to strongly support the Accademia, so that individuals might be encouraged in the contemplation of truth and beauty, and in the restoration of the splendour of liberal arts and good taste.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> 'Abbiamo rivolta la nostra attenzione all'Accademia di Pittura, Scultura, ed Architettura esistente in quella Nostra Città fino dall'anno 1752, e considerando il grado di estimazione, e di fiore, in cui furono altre volte le belle Arti in detta Città, abbiamo risoluto di prestarvi con efficacia la Real Nostra Mano affine di eccitare gli ingegni allo studio fecondo del vero, e del bello, e ripristinare lo splendore delle liberali facoltà, e del buon gusto', *Memorie*, I, p. XXVI. Quotations from original documents have been translated by the author for the purpose of this essay. My gratitude goes to the Accademia Nazionale Virgiliana, Archivio di Stato, and Museo di Palazzo Ducale in Mantua, to the Archivio di Stato in Milan, and, finally, to Ugo Bazzotti, Federico Bucci, Roberta Piccinelli, and Ingrid Vermeulen for their invaluable suggestions.

With these words, Karl Gotthard von Firmian (1718–1782), the Austrian governor of Lombardy, described the purpose of the Accademia di Belle Arti (Academy of Fine Arts) of Mantua, established by the painter and architect Giovanni Cadioli (1710–1767). Founded in an era of marked development of the arts in Italy and Europe, the Accademia was the first of its kind in Lombardy in the eighteenth century, and it represents an important case study in analysis of European ‘geographies of taste’. Yet the Accademia was short-lived; the alternation of French and Austrian dominance at the turn of the century in Mantua caused the gradual decline of the Accademia. Eventually, it became part of other, larger institutions, and it remained out of sight for almost a century. Only at the end of the twentieth century did the exhibition curated by Ugo Bazzotti and Amedeo Belluzzi uncover for the first time drawings and accounts that show the modern approach to architecture and painting fostered by the Accademia. Because of this unique contribution, the work and history of the Accademia was brought to light, allowing its activity to be further studied. In 2018, new investigations were carried out for the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Accademia, highlighting its contribution to the cultural environment of Mantua.<sup>2</sup> Starting from PhD research that explored the critical work of the Accademia at Palazzo Te, this essay wishes to address the relationship between the Accademia and the city by retracing the work of the Accademia within a larger geography of schools of art. It proposes a possible interpretation of the role of the Accademia in shaping the civic identity of Mantua through the valorisation of the built and cultural legacy of the city.

## History, Goals, and Organisation of the Accademia

Cadioli had already started teaching students in his own house before 1752. In 1763, he published an extensive guide to the most relevant works of art and architecture in Mantua: *Descrizione delle pitture, sculture, ed architetture, che si osservano nella città di Mantova, e ne' suoi contorni, data in luce, a comodo singolarmente de' Forestieri, da Giovanni Cadioli, Pittor Mantovano, ed Architetto Teatrale*. In the introduction, Cadioli indicated his intention of offering a detailed description of monuments and masterpieces of the city to readers and visitors.<sup>3</sup> This description, the first of its kind for Mantua, reveals the primary motivation for establishing the Accademia. Acknowledging the artistic and architectural significance of the city, the Accademia's founders aimed to promote this awareness more broadly, and to disseminate a renewed identity for Mantua as a city of culture.

<sup>2</sup> See Navarrini.

<sup>3</sup> Cadioli, pp. 7–8.

At this time, Mantua was already ruled by an Austrian administration. Having lost the political and economic distinction that had characterised the duchy of Mantua under the rule of the Gonzaga family, the city still retained its most valuable assets: its art and architecture. The Accademia of Mantua stemmed from the need for a cultural centre in a city that had relinquished its artistic pursuit. The project for the Accademia sought to foster the cultural development of the city as a whole, according to two main priorities: to acknowledge the artistic and architectural legacy of Mantua, built during the centuries of the Gonzaga family's dukedom, and to actively shape the contemporary city via education of a wider public. Simultaneously, Lombard educational institutions were being reorganised under the patronage of the Austrian Empress Maria Theresa (1717–1780). The project aimed to establish a centralised system of multidisciplinary state academies, all working with a unified pedagogical method.<sup>4</sup> Mantua was one of the first cities where this system was put into practice: in 1769, the Accademia di Belle Arti was combined with the existing Accademia di Scienze e Belle Lettere ('Academy of Sciences and Humanities') and the Colonia di Arti e Mestieri ('Association [lit: Colony] of Arts and Crafts'). Following the example of the existing Accademia Clementina in Bologna, considered a valuable model, the new Reale Accademia di Scienze, Belle Lettere e Arti of Mantua brought together sciences, art, architecture, and literature to educate professionals whose expertise would later be employed by the city and the state—painters, architects, sculptors, decorators, writers, artisans, and engineers.<sup>5</sup>

Explaining the structure of the Accademia, Secretary Matteo Borsa (1751–1798) wrote in 1795: 'It will be an Academy and a School at once. As an Academy, it will explain through annual lectures the definitions of art [...], to educate the youth on theoretical principles; as a School it will teach the students how to apply such principles through the work of the Directors and Vice-Directors'.<sup>6</sup> These lines eloquently convey the meaning of 'school' and hint at the increasing importance of practical experience as a necessary component of artistic education. To reinforce the students' interest and strengthen their abilities, annual design competitions were established in 1765. As in many eighteenth-century academies across Italy and Europe, these contests were structured according to the subjects taught in the

4 On the Accademia, and its precedents, see Bazzotti and Belluzzi 1980; Papagna; Mortari; Pastore. For an overview of Mantua in the eighteenth century, see *Mantova*. Part of the following description has been synthesised for the first time in Cappelletti.

5 On the educational reforms, see Patetta 1977; Pinotti; Ricci.

6 'In questo modo la Classe delle Belle Arti verrà ad essere Accademia e Scuola ad un tempo. Come Accademia spiegherà [...] le definizioni dell'arte, d'onde si traggono le regole per ispiantare le difficoltà alla gioventù, per renderla teoricamente istruita: come Scuola ammaestrerà la gioventù coll'opera de' Direttori, e Vice-Direttori nel modo di por quelle perfettamente in esecuzione', *Memorie*, I, p. LXV.

Accademia. A call for participation in the competition would offer instructions for each subject area, each of which included a 'classe di copia' ('section of copying') and a 'classe di invenzione' ('section of invention').

Between 1752 and 1769, local professors with theoretical approaches to different subjects had led the Accademia. Their teaching methods favoured a general education in the fine arts, rather than a specialisation of expertise.<sup>7</sup> A new direction was pursued from 1773 onwards, when the Accademia offered classes in: painting, under the direction of Giuseppe Bottani (1717–1784), called to Mantua from Rome; architecture, under the direction of Paolo Pozzo (1741–1803), an architect from Verona; and ornament, under the direction of Giovanni Bellavite (1739–1821).<sup>8</sup> All three professors employed theoretical lectures, practicums, and annual competitions. Together, these methodologies forged well-rounded specialists.

Pozzo outlined his didactic process in 1793, while discussing his most gifted students and explaining the importance of copying and imitation for learning.<sup>9</sup> Each student should be prepared in arithmetic and geometry. For the fundamental principles of architecture, the students should come to know the treatises of Jacopo Barozzi da Vignola (1507–1573) and Andrea Palladio (1508–1580) through drawing exercises of the necessary principles of proportions, rhythm, and symmetry, and their employment in the composition of the Classical Orders. Study of the Orders was also necessary for the apprentices in the subject of ornament. Reading through the records of the Accademia, one can picture the walls of the atelier filled with assignments portraying classical entablatures, Doric or Ionic columns, and models of bas-reliefs.<sup>10</sup>

Finally, the most important aspect of invention was learning the lessons of the past. The apprentices drew various kinds of vases, festoons, and cornices from Greek and Roman masterpieces, and modelled them in plaster and wax. In the architecture class, students examined the archaeological discoveries of Palmyra and Heliopolis and sketched the monuments of Rome from *Les edifices antiques de Rome: dessinés et mesurés très exactement* (1682) by Antoine Desgodetz (1653–1728), while Pozzo also referred to Palladio and Inigo Jones (1573–1652). These buildings, from antiquity to the present day, were exemplary paragons of equilibrium and harmony that were worthy of imitation.

7 In 1752, the Accademia focused on 'Disegno e Modello' ('drawing and sculpture'), while the architecture section was added in 1753; see Bazzotti and Belluzzi 1980, p. 9.

8 On Giuseppe Bottani, see Bazzotti 1980. On Paolo Pozzo, see D'Arco, I, pp. 104–114; Carpeggiani 1972; Carpeggiani 2007, pp. 45–46. On Giovanni Bellavite, see Bazzotti 2006.

9 ASANV, CBA, G. 5, 20 May 1793.

10 ASANV, CBA, G. 5, Scuola di Ornato: among these documents is a manuscript that details the importance of ornament for all disciplines; Martelli; Bazzotti 1980, pp. 85–86, note 92; Pastore, p. 330.

## Monuments, Pedagogy, and Civic Identity

Understanding of architectural models requires primarily direct observation and representation to scale, in order to gather first-hand experience of the articulation of spaces; that is, knowledge through physical appropriation is necessary. The students were urged to copy paintings and buildings from the originals, to become acquainted with techniques of representation, and to improve their execution. This relationship defined the Accademia and evoked the specificity of Mantua. Masterpieces by Andrea Mantegna, Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472), and Giulio Romano traced the city and represented unique educational opportunities. The students could traverse the city, observe and survey its most exemplary buildings, and draw them in detail, once again understanding through representation. The city of Mantua itself thus became a teacher.

All disciplines in the Accademia shared this awareness of the importance of history and, therefore, of the remarkable opportunities presented by Mantua. The Accademia's programmes stressed surveying and drawing all works of art in person: the monuments of Mantua permeated both assignments and topics of competitions. A generation of students and professors rediscovered Mantua as a city of art. The Palazzo Ducale appeared in the competition introduced in 1787 to determine which student would be awarded a five-year residency in Rome to study its antiquities. Aspiring architects, painters, and decorators measured the space of the Galleria dei Marmi and devoted their efforts to tracing its ceiling, reproducing the stuccos and pictorial decorations, and delineating its plan and sections to better understand its proportions. The frescoes of the Camera degli Sposi, realised by Mantegna between 1465 and 1474, were copied in thin pencil lines, producing tentative black and white images of an inimitable ideal. The prize-winning student traced the *Parete dell'Incontro*.<sup>11</sup>

The Accademia considered the works of Alberti to be incomparable examples of excellence and required that architecture students analyse his corpus thoroughly. Themes for competitions included the complex tasks of tracing the plan of the church of San Sebastiano, producing a longitudinal section of its pronaos and a perspectival drawing of the arched entrance door, and representing ornamental features in detail.<sup>12</sup> A similar assignment focused on the basilica of Sant'Andrea; the surveys by the student Leandro Marconi (1763–1837) appear almost like anatomical drawings—detached recordings that dissect the inner workings of the monument

11 ASANV, CBA, G. 6, 4 October 1787. Among the submissions for the Camera degli Sposi, one drawing by Giuseppe Bongiovanni (1756/57–1824) and one by Luigi Gamba (1788–1804) survive: *La Camera degli Sposi, Parete dell'Incontro*, copies after Mantegna, Museo del Palazzo Ducale, Mantua, inv. 12782, 12783; Bazzotti 1980, pp. 78, 108; L'Occaso, p. 415.

12 ASMI, SPA, b. 5, 1796.

(Fig. 10).<sup>13</sup> Pozzo strongly defended the significance of these buildings above all others, arguing that Alberti was 'the first to restore the Fine Arts to their true glory'.<sup>14</sup>

So great was the benefit to be derived from studying the past that Pozzo chose to have the students survey and draw all the buildings designed by Giulio Romano in Mantua as part of their daily instruction. Acknowledging the value of these structures, in 1769, the governor Karl Gotthard von Firmian proposed to fund the publication of a series of engravings of all the frescoes and paintings by Giulio Romano in Mantua in order to preserve the memory of his works.<sup>15</sup> This endeavour, later extended to the works of Mantegna, offered further opportunities for collaboration between the city and the Accademia, as the students were asked to realise the preparatory drawings for the engravings: 'by doing so, they would train their eye on excellent models and acquire a sound taste for beauty, that is indeed the only way to shape great artists.'<sup>16</sup> This project also clarified the merit awarded to the Accademia for its valorisation of the past. In the exercises, competitions, and lessons, the Accademia constructed an atlas of references that illustrated the distinction of Mantua as a city of art.

In the Accademia's initial competitions, Giulio Romano's Palazzo Te seemed to recur often among the subjects chosen for copying across all the disciplines. In 1774, participants had to draw part of the vault in the Loggia di Davide, tracing its decorations in *chiaroscuro* without the figures; the architecture topic required a measured plan and two sections of the atrium that serves as entrance to the palace.<sup>17</sup> The same assignments were proposed in 1795, and Giovanni Nascimbeni's submission demonstrated the precision that he and his peers devoted to understanding the construction, decoration, and relationship between built elements and voids in Giulio Romano's work (Fig. 11).<sup>18</sup>

Students copied many of the frescoes in the rooms of Palazzo Te for the painting competitions. In 1772, it was the giant towering above the fireplace of the Camera di Psiche; later, students portrayed the paintings in the Camera di Attilio Regolo. In 1796, they had the complex task of tracing in black lapis one of the sixteen medallions of the Camera dei Venti, preparing the drawing as if it were intended

13 ASANV, CBA, G. 6, 4 October 1787. Leandro Marconi, survey of S. Andrea in Mantua, sections, Museo di Palazzo Ducale, Mantua, inv. 12769, 12770; Belluzzi 1980, pp. 36, note 58, 47; L'Occaso, p. 416.

14 'Vi sono però nell'Accademia tutti i Disegni del Tempio di S. Andrea disegnati dai scolari, che hanno avuto il premio, e questi dovrebbero a mio parere essere i primi a darsi al pubblico, perché la fabbrica è di Leon Batta: Alberti celebre, e primo restauratore delle Belle Arti.' ASANV, CBA, G. II, 23 October 1798.

15 ASMI, SPA, b. 4, 31 January 1769; see Bazzotti 1980; Belluzzi 1998, I, pp. 249–250.

16 'Per tal guisa formerebbero i giovani l'occhio su i grandi esemplari, ed un gusto solido del Bello in essi s'introdurrebbe, che solo per mio avviso è acconcio a formare i grandi artefici.' ASMI, SPA, b. 5, 13 September 1786.

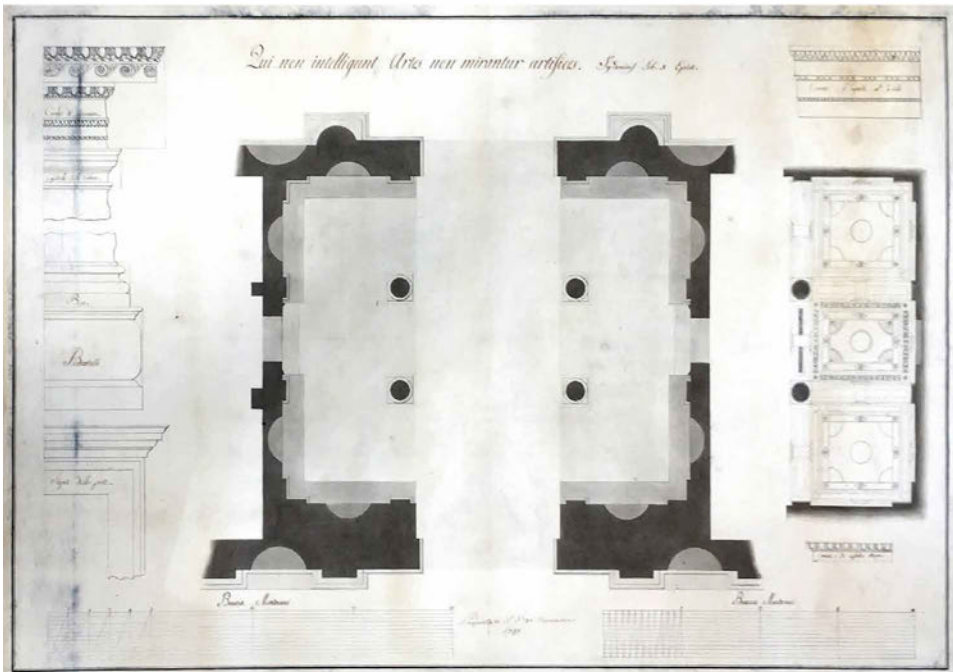
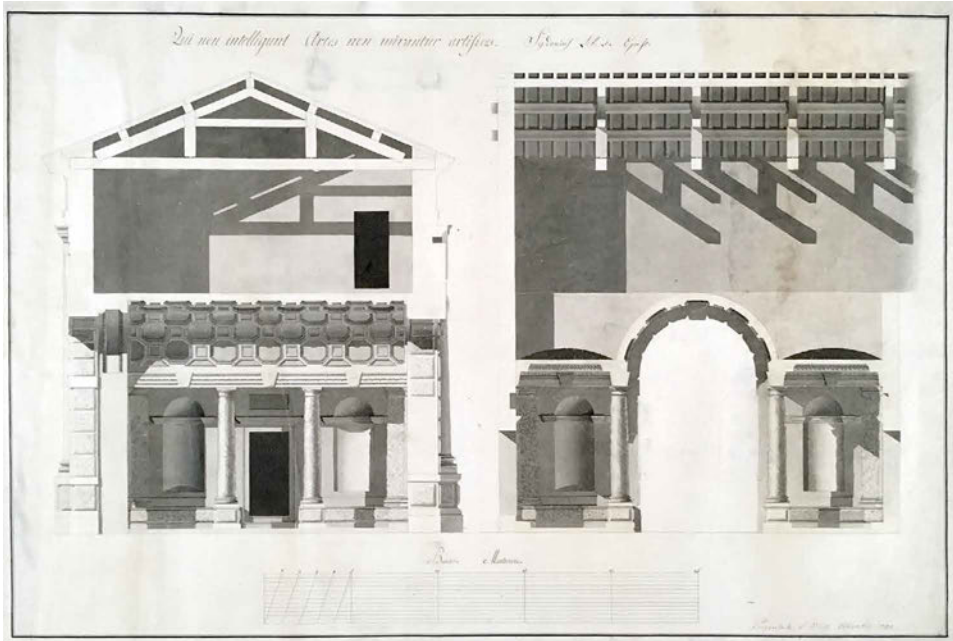
17 ASANV, CBA, G. 5, 1774.

18 ASMI, SPA, b. 5, 1795. On Nascimbeni's drawings, see Belluzzi 1980, p. 66; Belluzzi 1998, I, p. 242.



10. Leandro Marconi, *Survey Drawings of S. Andrea in Mantua*, cross-section, elevation, and longitudinal section, 1788, Museo di Palazzo Ducale, Mantua, inv. 12769, 12770. © Musei Civici, Comune di Mantova; Museo di Palazzo Ducale, Mantua; Courtesy of Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali.





11. Giovanni Nascimbeni, *Survey Drawings of the Main Entrance Loggia of Palazzo Te in Mantua*, plan and sections, 1795, Archivio Storico, Accademia Nazionale Virgiliana, Mantua, Fondo Cadioli, F2, II, inv. 26, 27. © Archivio Storico, Accademia Nazionale Virgiliana, Mantua.

for engraving. The façades of Palazzo Te combined modular construction and ad hoc variations: this original combination made them a frequent feature in the architecture section, while the decorations of metopes were often required in the module on ornament.<sup>19</sup> Finally, in 1787, competitors were required to tackle both Giulio Romano's and Andrea Mantegna's works in the Palazzo Ducale.

Surveying and drawing facilitated the interpretation of buildings by Giulio Romano and others through the lens of the Enlightenment, as works from the Renaissance and Mannerism became a legacy from the past during the eighteenth century.

Beyond the few examples noted above, the inventories of the Accademia's archives list numerous drawings realised by students. The Villa Favorita, Sant'Andrea, the Palazzo Ducale, and the works of art inside them were all drawn, as was the Teatro all'Antica in Sabbioneta. Awareness of the significance of these monuments guided the didactic programmes of the Accademia: by measuring and drawing such examples, the students could distil from them fundamental principles of design. The Accademia's teaching thus established tight connections between *ex cathedra* lessons, education through experience, and practice. The *ex novo* schemes that the architecture students drew for the annual competitions demonstrated the last phase of such connection. The topics assigned were ambitious: large-scale designs for villas or dignified country houses were ideal exercises. The guiding elements were the rules of construction, proportions, and symmetry, which the students had learnt from the aforementioned masterpieces.<sup>20</sup> The value accorded to the monuments of Mantua in the educational process underscored the close relationship between the Accademia and the city.

Furthermore, the work of the Accademia was meant to be shared *with* the city, in order to contribute to its growth and progress. To this end, the Accademia organised displays that presented its activities to the public. In 1775, it celebrated the inauguration of its new residence, remodelled by the architect Giuseppe Piermarini (1734–1808), through an exhibition of the different types of objects realised by students and professors.<sup>21</sup> Each school presented its instruments and achievements in the room allocated to its activities. The ateliers of the Accademia were filled with books, plaster busts, heads, statues, copies from masterpieces of Rome and Florence, and drawings by students. Hung on the walls were rows of large plates portraying the monuments of Mantua, especially plans and sections of Palazzo Te and the Villa Favorita.<sup>22</sup> The Accademia organised another exhibition in 1793,

19 ASANV, CBA, G. 5, 1772; G. 4; G. 3.

20 ASANV, CBA, G. 2.

21 Belluzzi 1978; Bonora Previdi.

22 *Ragguaglio*, pp. 4–5.

to further engage the city and explain its methods of teaching. On the stage of the Teatro Scientifico, designed by Antonio Galli Bibiena (1697–1774) in 1767, the Accademia showcased several objects: drawings of architecture, eight works of painting, four models, and ten drawings of ornament; these objects exemplified the didactic approach employed in each class. Among them were studies for heads and details of portraits, models for bas-reliefs, and drawings of the decoration of Sant'Andrea and Palazzo Te.<sup>23</sup>

However, the Accademia was also instituted as part of an ideal network of multidisciplinary academies within the Austrian Empire. Thus, the Accademia and the city were forced to look beyond local limits and compare themselves to other contemporaneous experiences. The school of architecture was the first to be affected by this change: a foreign architect, Piermarini, had already been called to design the building for the Accademia according to the modern principles of rationality in architecture. Piermarini's scheme seems to convey a clear imperative of openness and modernity, and so of the education of taste. The scope of the Accademia extended beyond Mantua's boundaries by encouraging exchanges with other institutions that would prove of fundamental importance for the cultural environment of Mantua. The geography of teaching expanded from Mantua to Italy: the monuments of Mantua became models and were discussed within academic circles. Giocondo Albertolli (1742–1839), professor of ornament at the Accademia di Brera in Milan, even worked directly on the restoration of the Palazzo Ducale in Mantua. Pozzo expressed strong criticism of Albertolli's 'barbaric' decorations for the palace in his letters to Giuseppe Franchi (1731–1806), a sculptor and professor at Accademia di Brera. Franchi and Pozzo also debated the teachings and organisation of the Mantuan Accademia.

This dialogue intensified a translocal discussion on the role of the Accademia itself, and brought different ideas and stylistic approaches to Mantua.<sup>24</sup> The Accademia also urged students to take part in the competitions organised by the Accademia di San Luca in Rome and the Accademia di Belle Arti in Parma, fostering a greater degree of exchange between academies.<sup>25</sup> The student Luigi Campovecchio sent back to Mantua a corpus of drawings devised for the competitions in Parma. Among them is a curious transformation of the Pyramid of Caius Cestius in Rome into a country residence. Though clearly distinct from the schemes of Étienne-Louis Boullée (1728–1799) and Claude-Nicolas Ledoux (1736–1806), this design suggested similar enquiry into the archetypal principles of architecture and the concept of typology.<sup>26</sup> Beginning in 1787, students were also given the opportunity to travel to

23 Bazzotti 1980, pp. 78, 85, notes 90–92.

24 D'Arco, II, pp. 203–204, 212.

25 On the Accademia of Parma, see Mambriani.

26 ASANV, Fondo Cadioli; Belluzzi 1980, pp. 31–33.

Rome for five years of study and experiment in other academic contexts. At Pozzo's behest, they sent back drawings of Giulio Romano's works in Rome.<sup>27</sup> Such travel facilitated direct exchange of information and influence between the Accademia of Mantua and other cultural environments, as shown by surviving letters. Images of Mantua moved beyond its borders through its students and professors, and the city slowly became a Grand Tour destination.<sup>28</sup> These occurrences became the occasion for contacts between academics and academies. After visiting Mantua in 1775, Giacomo Quarenghi (1744–1817) wrote to Tommaso Temanza (1705–1789) about the monuments of the city and his conversations with Paolo Pozzo on the architectural principles of Vitruvius.<sup>29</sup>

The Accademia illustrated Mantua and disseminated these images well beyond its confines. Yet depictions of Mantua began to show an anachronistic version of the city: all monuments appeared side by side, analogous, as excellent models, regardless of their origins and their differences. In 1794, the Accademia published its guidelines and organisation, as well as the regulations and provisions for academic competitions and activities, thereby codifying its structure definitively. The guidelines and organisation reinforced the combination of theoretical and practical education and proposed new didactic objectives.<sup>30</sup> Yet the turn of the century (1797) saw the Accademia lose its identity as an educational institution; it reopened under the name of 'Accademia Nazionale Virgiliana' at the beginning of the twentieth century.

## The Problem of a Local Style in an International Context

Although the merit and achievements of the Accademia and its students have often been debated, it could be argued that it is not the excellence of the apprentices' works, nor their subsequent careers, that define the success of the Accademia. Its teaching methods and didactic programmes were imperfect, but they urge us to look beyond these immediate aspects. The Accademia seemed to be connected to the uniqueness of its local cultural legacy, which shaped its distinct style and taste within an international context. We are thus brought back to our initial question: what did the Accademia signify for the city of Mantua?

It could be argued that the Accademia was meant to evoke a collective civic identity in Mantua. The Accademia promoted Mantua's importance as a city of art, showcasing the value of its history and its monuments to both its students and

27 D'Arco, II, p. 221.

28 For an overview of visitors to Mantua, see Belluzzi 1998, I, pp. 250–253.

29 Zanella, pp. 25–27.

30 *Memorie*, I, p. LXIX.

the wider public. For a time, the Accademia worked to nurture and develop the cultural environment of the city. A different connotation of 'school' thus began to appear, one related to method and practice and, significantly, intertwined with the specificity of Mantua and its history.

If we compare eighteenth-century Mantua to neighbouring cities and their academic circles, a telling difference emerges. At the turn of the century, Milan was involved in an extensive transformation of its urban structure and landmarks into a *magnificenza civile*;<sup>31</sup> Rome was defined by the archaeological discoveries that stimulated its cultural environment and perpetuated its role in art education through Grands Prix and the Grand Tour. Mantua was not similarly affected: though part of the Austrian Empire from 1728 to 1797, 1799 to 1801, and then again after 1815, Mantua had a limited role that would remain almost unaltered during French rule between 1797 and 1815. Yet, both the Austrians and the French recognised the importance of supporting the arts in a city that had been one of the most thriving artistic centres during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Accademia of Mantua benefited from this conjuncture: it represented the first experiment of a modern academy in Lombardy and became a model for the subsequent institution of the academy of Milan in 1776.<sup>32</sup>

Ahead of its time, the Accademia dealt with the topics of preservation and transmission of an architectural and cultural legacy that the professors and students identified in the sixteenth-century buildings and paintings they wished to draw, learn from, and actively restore, clearly recognising their artistic value. The significant specificity of Mantua lies in its Renaissance urban development, in its public buildings and palaces commissioned by the Gonzaga court from the most prominent artists of the time, and in the historical awareness that such foresight has impressed on the city. From the early seventeenth century to the present day, Mantua's citizens have consistently found themselves confronting these historical buildings, living with and within them and thus being compelled to understand them, recognise their value—a value related to their author, to the moment in time they represent, and to the originality of their design. Together, these buildings and the works of art within them conferred an unmistakable cultural identity on the city that perpetuated the Renaissance outlook and that was promoted, reinterpreted, and disseminated—through descriptions, images, and narrations—by architects, artists, and academics, in order to preserve it, illustrate it for students, and make it part of their design references.

Due to this modern approach of the Accademia, one can find in its work a concerted effort to convey the artistic legacy of Mantua—an intention to 'contribute to

31 Patetta 1978.

32 See Papagna.

the renaissance of taste, and fine Arts in our City'.<sup>33</sup> Though still distant from today's historiographical category of heritage and its regimented practices of conservation, the commitment of the Accademia highlighted the cultural identity of Mantua; the modern aim of the Accademia to understand and produce images of the city and its art represented the first step towards twentieth-century definitions of heritage. The Accademia built the city of the eighteenth century, providing it with purpose and guidance, as well as an awareness that Mantua had been, and still should be, a city of the arts.

The significance and meaning of the Accademia for the city of Mantua cannot be identified in a local style. Instead, the relationship to the past defines this significance and meaning; the teaching references of the Accademia ranged indiscriminately from Mantegna and Alberti to Giulio Romano. Yet Giulio Romano's masterpieces present peculiar features. His Mannerism—the falling triglyphs of the courtyard at Palazzo Te, the gargantuan figures of his frescoes there, the twisted columns of the Cortile della Mostra at the Palazzo Ducale—sparked conflicting reactions and opinions from artists, critics, and architects.<sup>34</sup> In 1769, approached with the prospect of publishing engravings of Giulio Romano's works in Mantua, even the Austrian chancellor, Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz (1711–1794), expressed his doubts about the potential public success of this endeavour. In his opinion, Giulio's style, his *maniera*, was not in line with current taste.<sup>35</sup> In fact, much more classical architecture characterised teaching in the coeval academies of Rome and Milan.

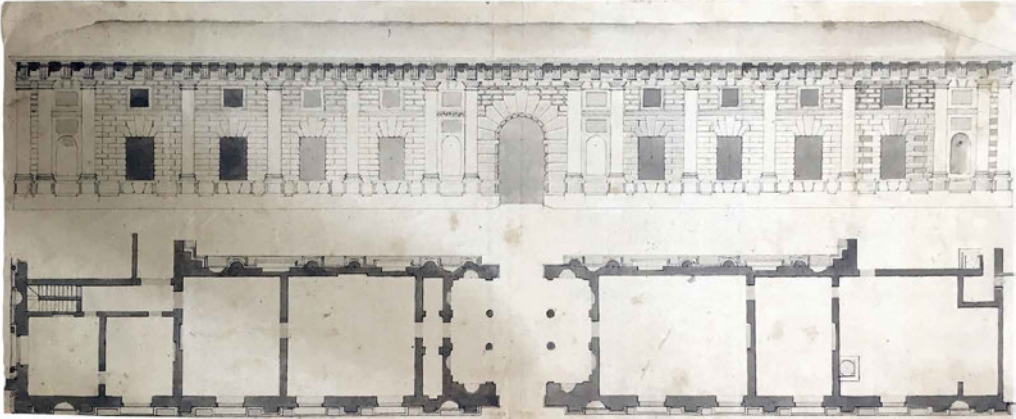
However, there is no trace of this preoccupation in the teaching of the Accademia. If we turn once again to drawings from the Accademia, we find them to be classically drafted: in his drawing of the west façade of Palazzo Te, Pozzo corrected all irregularities, and Giulio's masterful optical illusions disappeared (Fig. 12).<sup>36</sup> In Nascimbeni's survey of the atrium, the rustic treatment of the columns, quite imposing in real life, is subtle, almost faded, as compared to the clear-cut ornament of the barrel vault. From 1774 to 1797, in the years following Denis Diderot's (1713–1784) and Jean Baptiste Le Rond d'Alembert's (1717–1783) *Encyclopédie* (1751), the same longing for a scientific systematisation of knowledge that characterised the European academies seemed to prompt these drawings. Eighteenth-century academics

33 'Ci lusinghiamo, che questo Istituto sotto la vigile, ed illuminata vostra direzione sarà per contribuire al risorgimento del buon gusto, e delle belle Arti nella nostra Città di Mantova.' *Memorie*, I, p. XXIX.

34 The bibliography for Giulio Romano's work in Mantua is extensive; here are listed only the main contributions: Gombrich 1934; Gombrich 1935; Hartt; Shearman; Forster; Belluzzi 1976; Verheyen; Gombrich 1984; *Giulio Romano* 1989 (trans. *Giulio Romano* 1998); Baldi; Tafuri 1994; Belluzzi 1998, I; Bulgarelli 2019.

35 'Per non essere la maniera di Giulio quella, che sia più accomodata al gusto del secolo.' ASMI, SPA, b. 4, 16 February 1769; see Belluzzi 1998, I, pp. 236, 271.

36 ASMN, Paolo Pozzo, drawing of the west façade of Palazzo Te; see Belluzzi 1998, I, p. 235; Carpeggiani 2007, p. 46.



12. Paolo Pozzo, *Drawing of the West Façade of Palazzo Te in Mantua*, Archivio di Stato, Mantua, Documenti patrii d'Arco, b. 264, f. 38v. © Archivio di Stato, Mantua.

surveyed, measured, and drew all buildings equally on large folios. Representations of Sant'Andrea or Palazzo Te showed no significant stylistic differences; professors and students considered every model as a specimen to be methodically examined and committed to paper, in order to record the rigorous anatomy of a monument. Each drawing contributed to a comprehensive knowledge of the art of Mantua. Yet, in this collection of monuments, all differences of style are muted.

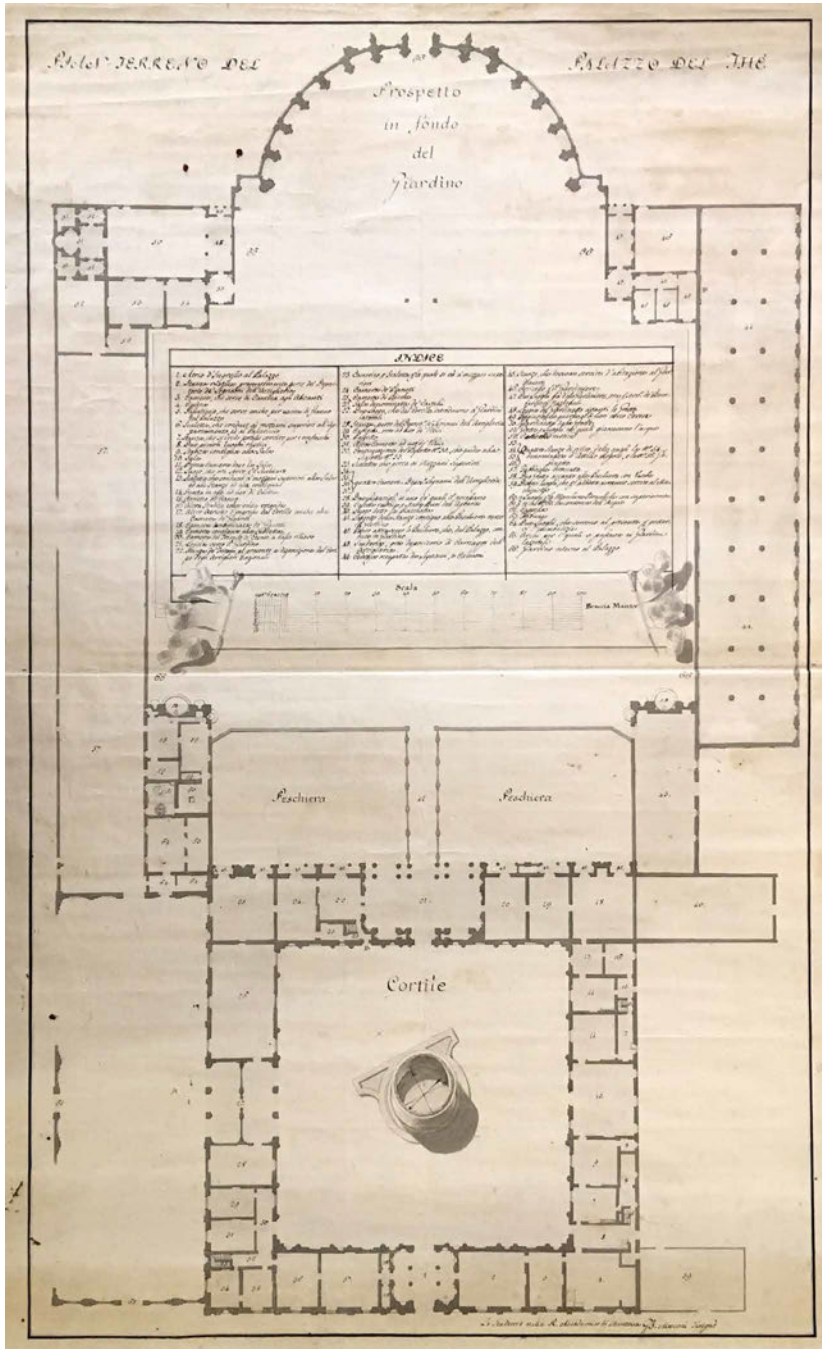
Since the fourteenth century, and for almost four centuries, the patronage of the Gonzaga family had shaped Mantua and its architecture in fluctuating ways and had generated opposing polarities in the city's fabric, thus creating more than one modernity. But in the Accademia's teaching and drawings, these historical particularities seem to disappear. There is no trace of the shifting narrative created by patronage and other changes, and no one example is preferred over another. The city of Mantua found itself pervaded by Giulio Romano's works and accepted them as models worthy of emulation. The academic method does not question the atypicality of these works, but instead re-reads and re-interprets them to transform them into teaching instruments. Giulio Romano's 'stravagante maniera', which Giorgio Vasari described so brilliantly, is avoided.<sup>37</sup> The academic Enlightenment succeeded in instilling serenity even in Giulio Romano's idiosyncratic inventions. In a strikingly modern fashion, rather than condemning this Mannerism, the Accademia absorbed it and redefined it; any judgment or censure of Giulio's masterpieces was avoided, and they were interpreted without preconceptions. The teaching and work of the Accademia thus rewrote the history of Mantua and its landmarks. Through survey drawings, restorations, and a series of modifications to the monuments of the city, Pozzo and his students proposed a new interpretation of previous works, emphasising what they thought were the original, ideal designs of the buildings. In the redacted irregularities, in the smoothing out of 'Mannerism', one can retrace the new sensibility of the Accademia—a new passion for the architecture of the past. Pozzo's approach superimposed his 'shape of time',<sup>38</sup> that of modernity, onto the sixteenth-century buildings he analysed, taught, and worked on as both professor and architect, yet he always demonstrated a clear respect for the past. Even as he intervened in Giulio Romano's buildings, Pozzo recognised the genius of history and celebrated it in a uniquely original way. In the Accademia of Mantua, the teaching of architecture was rooted in the different seasons of history.

Indeed, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Accademia's restorations of and interventions in sixteenth-century monuments in Mantua represented a critical reading of these historical structures—a reading infused with the new character fostered by the Accademia itself. The modern era produced its own

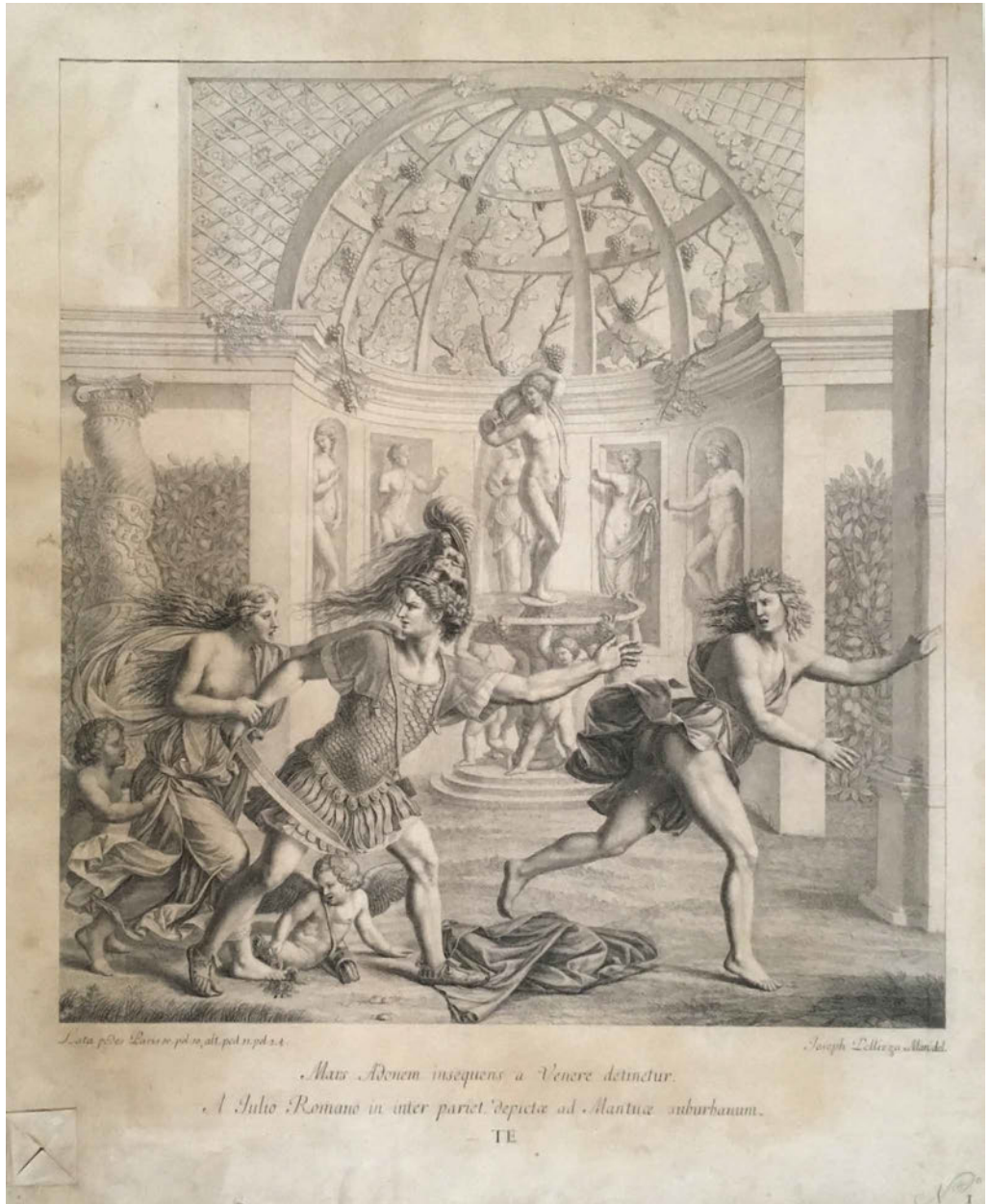
<sup>37</sup> Vasari, p. 887.

<sup>38</sup> Kubler.





13. Giambattista Marconi, *Pian-terreno del Palazzo del The*, survey plan of Palazzo Te in Mantua, drawing based on Paolo Pozzo's survey, 1774, Archivio di Stato, Mantua, Mappe e disegni di Acque e Risaie, b. 194. © Archivio di Stato, Mantua.



14. Giuseppe Pellizza, *Mars Driving Adonis from Venus's Bower*, copy after Giulio Romano, Sala di Psiche, Palazzo Te, Mantua. Archivio Storico, Accademia Nazionale Virgiliana, Mantua, Fondo Cadioli, F2, IV, inv. 51. © Archivio Storico, Accademia Nazionale Virgiliana, Mantua.

monuments based on the legacy of the sixteenth century, monuments shaped from stylistic debate, paper, and ink that together composed an equally important testament to different sensibilities and artistic pursuits. This approach would influence the international perception of Giulio Romano's works for years to come. In the Accademia's drawings, his frescoes for the Camera di Psiche and his compositions for Palazzo Te almost became neoclassical and were accepted as models (Figs. 13, 14).<sup>39</sup> This forces the observer to wonder if maybe, immersed in the peculiar countryside setting of Mantua, these rusticated structures no longer seemed to be exceptions and instead suitably complemented their surroundings.

The Accademia recorded the entire city by reinventing its past and built an atlas of models and monuments guided by a modern approach of suspended judgment that constructed a specific image of Mantua. In its scientific drive for the rationalisation of knowledge, the Accademia rejected any definition of style, defied all classifications, and conferred new implications on the concept of a school of art, linking both school and city in a modern interpretation of history that defined the identity of Mantua and created its very own '*magnificenza civile*'.

## Archival Material

Accademia Nazionale Virgiliana of Mantua, Archivio Storico (ASANV)

B. 38 Classe di Belle Arti (CBA):

- G. 2, 'Distribuzione de' Premj, celebrata in Mantova l'anno 1765. il di 16. Giugno dalla Reale Accademia delle belle Arti'; 28 December 1766; 'Scrutinio de' Disegni d'Architettura', 22 January 1769.
- G. 3, 'Soggetto per la copia per la scuola d'Ornato nell'anno 1790'; 'Soggetto di copia per l'anno sud.to 1796'.
- G. 4, Inventari; Carte varie di memorie.
- G. 5, Nota dei disegni presentati al pubblico, 'Soggetti proposti alle due scuole di pittura e d'architettura', 1772.
- G. 5, Nota dei disegni presentati al pubblico, 'Soggetti proposti alle due scuole di pittura e d'architettura dalla Reale Accademia di Mantova per l'anno 1774'.
- G. 5, Nota dei disegni presentati al pubblico, Scuola di Architettura, Paolo Pozzo, 'Elenco dei giovani di maggior abilità che sono riusciti nello studiare l'architettura in questa R. Accademia', 20 May 1793.

39 The student Giambattista Marconi (1755–1825) drew the survey plan of Palazzo Te (1774) for the restoration works carried on by the Accademia (ASMN). See Forster, p. 291; Belluzzi 1976, p. 92; Belluzzi 1998, I, p. 234. The students Sante Legnani and Giuseppe Pellizza drew scenes from the frescoes in Palazzo Te; see Bazzotti 1980, pp. 106–107.

- G. 5, Nota dei disegni presentati al pubblico, Scuola di Ornato.
- G. 6, Bando di concorso [...] per lo studio dei ‘grandi modelli dell’antichità’, 4 October 1787.
- G. II, letter from Paolo Pozzo to Pasquale Coddè, 23 October 1798.

#### Accademia Nazionale Virgiliana of Mantua, Archivio Storico (ASANV)

- Fondo Cadioli, F2, II, n. 22, 23, 24, Luigi Campovecchio, *Nobile Casino*, plan and sections.

#### Archivio di Stato, Mantua (ASMN)

- Documenti patrii d’Arco, b. 264, f. 38v, Paolo Pozzo, drawing of the west façade of Palazzo Te.
- Mappe e disegni di Acque e Risaie, b. 194, Giambattista Marconi, survey plan of Palazzo Te, 1774.

#### Archivio di Stato, Milan (ASMI)

##### Studi parte antica (SPA):

- b. 4, letter from Kaunitz to Firmian, 16 February 1769.
- b. 4, letter from Firmian to Kaunitz, 31 January 1769.
- b. 5, letter from Gherardo d’Arco, 13 September 1786.
- b. 5, ‘Elenco degli argomenti proposti dalla R. Accademia di Mantova pel concorso ai premi del 1795’.
- b. 5, ‘Elenco degli argomenti proposti dalla R. Accademia di Mantova, pel concorso ai premj del 1796’.

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## About the Author

**Ludovica Cappelletti** holds a PhD from Politecnico di Milano in Architecture, Built Environment, and Construction Engineering (2018). From 2018 to 2021, she was a Postdoctoral Fellow at Politecnico di Milano, Mantua Campus, UNESCO Chair in Architectural Preservation and Planning for World Heritage Cities. Her research focuses on archival sources for twentieth-century European architecture. At present she works at the Historical Archives and Museum Activities team of Politecnico di Milano.

# **Art Literature, Artists, and Transnational Identities**





## 4. Conceptualising Schools of Art: Giovanni Battista Agucchi's (1570–1632) Theory and Its Afterlife

*Elisabeth Oy-Marra*

### Abstract

This essay features a close reading of Giovanni Battista Agucchi's concept of artistic schools, which he develops in his uncomplete treatise, published 1646 by Giovanni Antonio Massani. From this fragment, it can be shown that an artistic geography, which had been formulated to a large extent by Giorgio Vasari and which is seen here from a different perspective, has been modified and developed further. In particular, I focus on the goals Agucchi pursued in his conception of artistic schools. While he regarded these schools as a historical development, he seeks to praise the Carracci for their unification of three of the four types of painting that he identified. Agucchi's concept of artistic schools was influential and further developed by Francesco Scannelli and Giovan Pietro Bellori, while later authors referred to the invention of schools.

**Keywords:** artistic geography, schools, style, unification, body of painting, nation-building

To this day, schools of art are a widely accepted means of organising the display of paintings in museums according to geographical location. Only recently has this rigid and often retrospective classification rightly been called into question for failing to take into account the migration of artists and styles. The concept of a school of art can be traced back to antiquity, but the term was used only from the second half of the sixteenth century, and its roots lie in the rivalries between Italian cities. Being able to demonstrate significant artistic production was a source of pride and provided a means of differentiation and competition.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pierguidi 2020b, pp. 41–108; see also Pfisterer, pp. 402–406, here: p. 403.

An implicitly geographical approach to style appears especially in the 1568 edition of Giorgio Vasari's *Vite*. Vasari distinguished the artists he portrayed not only by historical period, but also by region, giving particular attention to Venice, Rome, and Lombardy while claiming that Florence was the centre of artistic production. On the basis of his connection between places and particular styles (or manners), an artistic geography emerged, raising questions about the inclusion and exclusion of regions.

The artists themselves also played their part in this process and for the most part were happy to position themselves within particular stylistic schools. Giovanni Battista Passeri (1610/16–1679), in his *Vita di Francesco Mocchi* written between 1670 and 1679, rebuked the sculptor for identifying himself with the school of his hometown, Florence—in other words, for associating himself too much with the ‘maniera fiorentina’.<sup>2</sup> In his criticism of the connection between region and style, Passeri uses the term nation (*nazione*) for *scuola*, making it evident that the issue at stake is not only classification, but nation-building as well.<sup>3</sup> Over the centuries, the concept of a school of art became transposed into the art of particular nation-states, and it developed into an important instrument for legitimising supremacy, including justifying art theft under National Socialism in Germany.<sup>4</sup>

Although individual studies have deconstructed particular schools, there is still a lack of analysis of the preconditions that led to the development of the concept of a school of art and its history.<sup>5</sup> In the next section, I will take a closer look at Giovanni Battista Agucchi's treatise of painting and its impact on seventeenth-century art literature, in which the connection between regions and styles is established explicitly for the first time. Agucchi's treatise on painting plays a prominent role in forging this connection because Agucchi developed the classical concept to give it a plausible legitimacy.

## Agucchi's Conception of Geographical Schools

The key origin point for the connection of a school of art to geographical territories and style is in fact Agucchi. In his treatise on painting, of which only the fragment published by Giovanni Antonio Massani's *Diverse figure* in 1646 is known, Agucchi

2 ‘Di questo in proposito di Francesco Mochi [...], il quale nacque nello stato di Fiorenza e volle mostrarsi sempre rigoroso imitatore della maniera fiorentina.’ Hess, p. 130. See also DaCosta Kaufmann, p. 31.

3 ‘Non pretendo io di fare a Sindaco impertinente in censurare lo stile di nessuna nazione.’ Hess, p. 130. For nation-building in early modern Italy, see Kubersky.

4 For the development of the concept see Michaud; for the justification of art theft under National Socialism see Doll.

5 See, for example, Décultot.

described four regional schools in Italy, referring to the *Natural History* of Pliny the Elder.<sup>6</sup> While he uses the notion of ‘school’ for the concrete description of the schools of painting, he also speaks about the types, or ‘species’, of painting: ‘quattro spetie di Pittura in Italia’ (‘four species of painting in Italy’).<sup>7</sup> Finally, he identified the main artist(s) (*capi*) he deemed representative of these schools. For the Roman school, which comes first in Agucchi’s list, he mentions Raphael and Michelangelo, because they were closest to the art of antiquity. He then refers to Titian (1485/90–1576), whose work was notable for its imitation of nature, in the Venetian school. Next comes the Lombard school with its founder Correggio (1489–1534), who, according to Agucchi, imitated nature even better than the Venetians because of his ‘delicate’ (*tenero*) and ‘easy’ (*facile*) style.<sup>8</sup> After the Lombard school, Agucchi turns to the Florentine school, and its main protagonists Leonardo da Vinci (1452–1519) and Andrea del Sarto (1486–1530). The Florentine school, he claims, differed from the other three schools because its ‘maniera’ was more ‘detailed’ (*del minuto*) and ‘diligent’ (*diligente*) and tended towards the ‘artificial’ (*artificio*).<sup>9</sup>

Agucchi thus characterises the regions mentioned according to style, often of their *capi*. When defining the particular features of a style, he draws in some cases on sixteenth-century art literature—on Vasari, who had already described the styles of the masters of his *maniera moderna*, such as Correggio, Leonardo, Michelangelo, Raphael, and Titian.<sup>10</sup>

The artistic geography of Italy sketched out by Agucchi is given weight above all by the fact that it derives from Pliny’s *genera* of Greek styles, namely the Ionic, the Sikyonian, and the Attic.<sup>11</sup> Agucchi adds the antique Roman style to these three in order to draw parallels between the golden age of the ancient regions and the modern Italian ones he describes, to which he naturally gives a prominent position via parallels with Greek-Roman artistic production. It is worth reading Pliny’s text carefully, because it is based on one artist, Eupompus, the teacher of Apelles, whose influence (*auctoritas*) was so powerful that he extended his style (*genera*)—at the time limited to the Hellenadic and the Asian—to include his home region of Sikyon. Consequently, the Hellenadic style was divided into the Ionic, Sikyonian, and Attic

6 Mahon, pp. 241–258. The fragment was published posthumously by Giovanni Antonio Massani as a preface to the edition of prints after Annibale Carracci’s drawings of Bolognese artisans entitled *Diverse Figure*; for this edition see Saporì.

7 Mahon, p. 246.

8 Mahon, p. 246.

9 Mahon, p. 246.

10 For the implications of Vasari’s *maniera moderna*, the last of his divisions structured into three epochs, see Vasari 2004, pp. 91–106; for the notions of style at the time see Sohm.

11 Mahon, pp. 244–245.

*genera*.<sup>12</sup> This may also explain Agucchi's focus on particular artists as the heads of the schools; following Pliny's text, these artists can be considered the founders of the schools in question.<sup>13</sup> It must be emphasised that Agucchi did not take into account the assumption, found in ancient literature, that climatic conditions could have a formative effect on the inhabitants of a region. This consideration would later be adopted as an explanatory model in the eighteenth century, especially by Johann Joachim Winckelmann.<sup>14</sup> In the case of Agucchi, artistic schools were created by the artists who shaped them.

Agucchi's model is therefore largely based on the ancestry and specific *auctoritas* of the heads of the schools who, like Pliny's Eupompus, were understood to be committed to their birthplaces and thus to their *patria* or *nazione*.<sup>15</sup> This may also explain why Agucchi limited himself to only four schools, excluding all other regions, such as Genoa and Naples, whose artists were then not as well known, but who would strive for recognition across the seventeenth century, when many new collections of artists' biographies were published—for instance, by Raffaele Soprani (1612–1672) and Bernardo de Dominici (1683–1759). It is not often noted that Agucchi places his four regional, Italian schools within the context of a European artistic landscape, namely the *nationes* of Germania, Flanders, and France, which are compared to the regional schools of Italy. He also mentions Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) as the founder of his own school. The fact that Agucchi must have seen the four regions he described as representative of Italy seems clear from his phrase 'quattro spetie di Pittura in Italia'. Hence, the four regional schools can be read as representative of the whole of Italy, even though Agucchi does not pursue this point. What is interesting here, in any case, is the close relationship between 'school' and 'nation'. With his tableau of regional styles and their founder figures, Agucchi sketches in just a few sentences an alternative model to the predominant, chronological, and biographical art history of Vasari's *Vite*.<sup>16</sup>

Agucchi was born in Bologna in 1570 and became famous in art historical research through Denis Mahon's publication of his fragmentary treatise in 1947, to which he added a commentary. In his *Studies in Seicento Art and Theory*, Mahon highlighted

12 Pliny the Elder, § 75.

13 'Ma che una sol maniera si possa reputare quella, che da molti vien seguitata; i quali nell'imitare il vero, il verisimile, o'l sol naturale, o'l più bello della natura, caminano per un'istessa strada; & hanno una medesima intentione, ancorchè ciascuno habbia le sue particolari, & individuali differenze.' Mahon, pp. 243–244.

14 DaCosta Kaufmann, pp. 30–42.

15 The notion of *natio* comes from Latin. In antiquity, it was used for people of a particular place or for assigning strangers to their origins. See Fritz Gschnitzer, 'Volk, Nation, Nationalismus, Masse', in Kosselleck, VII, pp. 151–171.

16 See Ginzburg Carignani 1996a, pp. 277–278; Ginzburg Carignani 1996b.

the position of Agucchi's treatise in the history of the *idea del bello* ('concept of the beautiful') and its significance for the Carracci.<sup>17</sup> Mahon also demonstrated that Giovan Pietro Bellori referred to Agucchi, especially in his preface to his *Vitae*, entitled *Idea del pittore, dello scultore e dell' architetto*.<sup>18</sup> However, Mahon was not interested in Agucchi's attempt to craft an art history structured according to schools. Only Silvia Ginzburg has tried to contextualise the development of this novel concept in Agucchi's lifetime; in her important article of 1996, she argued that this concept was part of a cultural awakening under Pope Clement VIII, Ippolito Aldobrandini (1536–1605).<sup>19</sup> She also emphasised the clearly anti-Vasarian thrust of Agucchi's treatise. Before we examine her approach in detail, however, it is important to characterise Agucchi as a person.

The secretary and majordomo of Pietro Aldobrandini (1572–1621), Agucchi belonged for a few years to the most powerful circle around Pope Clement VIII, whose family, like Agucchi's, was from Bologna.<sup>20</sup> While he was initially in the service of his uncle, Cardinal Filippo Sega (1537–1596), Agucchi acquired a new position in 1596, when he joined the inner circle of Pope Clement VIII, who then included him in his legation to Paris in 1600–1601. After the pope's death in 1605, Pietro Aldobrandini fell out of favour with the new, hispanophile papal family of the Borghese, due to his support of the anti-Spanish League. When Aldobrandini was forced to leave Rome and fulfil his residency requirement as Archbishop of Ravenna, Agucchi did not serve the papacy for a few years. Gregory XV, Alessandro Ludovisi (1554–1623), brought Agucchi back into papal circles in 1621, appointing him to the posts of private secretary and *breve* secretary. Agucchi later became papal nuncio to Venice under Pope Urban VIII. His *Trattato della pittura*, which he wrote during his years outside papal service (i.e. between 1607 and 1615),<sup>21</sup> is only one of several publications that Agucchi contributed to and influenced. Agucchi also corresponded with Galileo Galilei (1564–1642) and wrote treatises on the planets and on the foundation of Bologna. He was also close to the painters Ludovico (1555–1619) and Annibale Carracci (1560–1609). He must have written his treatise while coping with the deteriorating health of his friend Annibale Carracci, whom he even assisted on his deathbed in 1609. Agucchi and Annibale Carracci's favourite pupil, Domenichino, who probably painted Agucchi's portrait (Fig. 15) and who is considered to be the co-author of the *Trattato della pittura*, maintained a particularly

17 Mahon, pp. 109–154, 193–229.

18 Bellori 2018b, I, pp. 54–101.

19 Ginzburg Carignani 1996a, pp. 273–291; Keazor; For Clement VIII as a patron see: Oy-Marra 2005, pp. 15–46, 99–129 and Robertson.

20 For what follows, see Toesca; Ginzburg Carignani 1996a, pp. 273–280.

21 Mahon, pp. 112–124; Pierguidi 2020a; Toesca. See also the essay by Ingrid Vermeulen in this volume for parallels to Roger de Piles as a diplomat and art writer.



15. Domenichino (attr.), *Portrait of Giovanni Battista Agucchi*, 1603/1604, oil on canvas, 35 x 30 cm, City Art Gallery, York.  
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warm friendship.<sup>22</sup> Thus, across his lifetime, Agucchi pursued theoretical writings alongside cultural and political activity that was focused on establishing the Carracci and their school, specifically Domenichino, in Rome.

As indicated above, Ginzburg has already drawn attention to the cultural, political context of Agucchi's painting treatise.<sup>23</sup> She contextualised the importance of Agucchi's novel use of geography to organise artistic schools according to their regions and their styles, and how he ruptured the Florence-Rome axis emphasised by Vasari. To support her thesis that Agucchi's concept arose within the context of the efforts to unify Italy in the religious and cultural realms under Pope Clement VIII, Ginzburg refers to various initiatives. She considers especially the work of the linguist Asciano Persi, who set out to assemble a collection of all the vocabulary and idioms of the Italian dialects, and the geographical map of Italy undertaken by the astronomer and mathematician Giovanni Antonio Magini (1555–1617), who also created a compendium containing the economic, political, and artistic situation of each region.<sup>24</sup> Although Ginzburg's portrayal of these initiatives certainly need to be fleshed out, even in her essay they point to a cultural, political context that must have had a strong influence on Agucchi during his early years at the papal court in Rome.

Therefore, Agucchi must have considered the idea of a unified Italy composed of different regional styles when he described the four regions as representative of Italy. In fact, with his phrase 'quattro spetie di Pittura in Italia', which is then supplemented by the *nationes* of Germania, Flanders, and France, he already suggested that these regions are to be seen within a broader context of Italy as a whole. Even though this suggestion implies a tension between the stylistic peculiarities of the individual regions and the common ground that transcends them, it could be understood as propounding a blending of different properties. In fact, Agucchi does not prioritise any particular region. Florence, the region for which supremacy is claimed by Vasari, is deliberately set apart from the other three.

22 For the portrait of Agucchi, see Ginzburg Carignani 1994; Sparti; Pierguidi 2007/08. See also the letter of Domenichino to Francesco Angeloni, in which he explained the schools: 'Mi adoperai nel distinguere e far riflessione alli maestri, e maniere di Roma, di Venetia, e di Lombardia, et a quelli ancora di Toscana.' Bellori 2009, p. 359; Bellori 2022, pp. 282–283; Bottari, II, p. 392. For the collaboration of Agucchi with Domenichino, see Bellori 2009, p. 315; 'In questo studio l'Agucchi communicando con Domenichino, si propose di comporre un discorso sopra le varie maniere della pittura, dividendola in quattro parti, come l'antica.' See also Grassi, p. 852, note 44: 'In the Life of Francesco Albani Malvasia states that the treatise was composed "with the guidance and advice first of Annibale and then of his dear Domenichino".' See Malvasia 2004, II, pp. 243–244; Pericolo in Malvasia 2013, p. 193, note 240. Agucchi is known as adviser of paintings by Domenichino. For a complete bibliography see Pericolo in Malvasia 2013, pp. 155–156, note 33; Albl.

23 Ginzburg Carignani 1996a, pp. 277–280.

24 For Persi and Magini, see Ginzburg Carignani 1996a, pp. 278–279; Lago.



But Agucchi offers more than a sketch of an artistic geography. It could be claimed that he actually historicised the Italian schools. For him, the four schools were a development of the past, which he now considered to be in decline.<sup>25</sup> Adopting Vasari's historical concept of flowering and decline,<sup>26</sup> he claims that painting had already erred from the right path ('smarritala la vera via') and the styles that had emerged as a result were far from what was true and probable; they were instead more committed to appearance than substance.<sup>27</sup> Agucchi describes the process by which painting moved ever further away from the truth as an aberration and a disease that has infected ('infettava') almost the entire profession. Only the three Carracci, Ludovico, Agostino (1557–1602), and Annibale, opposed the imminent demise of painting.<sup>28</sup> By remembering and studying the true painting of the past, according to Agucchi, the Carracci opened up a new beginning. He explains at length how this happened. He emphasises Titian and Correggio as their role models, whose works they travelled to study. In addition, he narrates how at the most intense moment of their colour studies,<sup>29</sup> Annibale and his brother Agostino travelled to Rome to study the ancient statues as well as Raphael and Michelangelo in order to educate themselves in drawing (*disegno*) and to gain a broader knowledge of art.<sup>30</sup> Agucchi thus evoked the ideal of combining the delicacy of the drawing of the Roman school with the beauty of the colouring of Lombardy.

This section of Agucchi's treatise has always been seen as essential to understanding the art of the Carracci.<sup>31</sup> By historicising the characteristics of the four regional schools as the zenith of Italy's artistic development, Agucchi paves the way for a new school, the Carracci, based in Bologna, which builds on former achievements.

Returning to the religious, linguistic, and geographical conceptions of Italian unity, which Ginzburg described and which circulated in Bologna and Rome during the 1590s, it is worth asking to what extent Agucchi engaged with these ideas. To be sure, he would have encountered them during his early years in Rome at the court of the Aldobrandini. Although his description of the four Italian schools may not refer explicitly to a unified Italy, Agucchi's evocation of the historical position of the Carracci certainly acknowledges the concept. In fact, the Carracci not only adopted the most important stylistic achievements of the four historical schools, but also intensively studied the best masters of the schools. According to Agucchi,

25 'Avenue poi alla Pittura di declinare in modo da quel colmo.' Mahon, p. 247.

26 For the Vasarian division of the development of art, see Vasari 2004, pp. 23–26.

27 'Lontane dal vero e dal verisimile, e più appoggiate all'apparenza, che alla sostanza.' Mahon, p. 247.

28 Mahon, pp. 247–248.

29 Mahon, p. 248.

30 Mahon, pp. 251–252.

31 Ginzburg Carignani 2019.

a new level of perfection distinguished the paintings of the Carracci and ultimately led to a new school centred in Bologna.<sup>32</sup>

The next section considers how Agucchi's ideas were subsequently received in the art literature of Modena and Rome and whether his concept of a future-oriented school that encompassed the characteristics of former styles was adopted and further developed.

### Francesco Scannelli, Modena, and the Unity of Painting

Although Agucchi casts the Carracci's project as uniting the styles of Venice, Lombardy, and Rome with the aim of resolving the rivalry between the schools, it goes without saying that the dispute regarding the advantages—and so potential superiority—of the different styles continued. In particular, numerous treatises and collections of biographies continued to appear. It is interesting to note that Agucchi newly describes Correggio and the Lombard school as being equal in merit to the renowned schools of Venice, Florence, and Rome, not least because of the significance of the Lombard school for the Carracci. The Florentine school, according to Agucchi, was much inferior to the other three. His praise of Correggio strikingly improved the artist's stature from Vasari's *Vite*. It was Agucchi's intention to rebut Vasari's assertion that Correggio had been unable to perfect his art because he had not been to Rome.<sup>33</sup>

One of the first treatises in which Correggio and the Lombard school were granted a leading role was written by Francesco Scannelli, who was born in Forlì. Scannelli was the personal physician and director of the art gallery for the Duke of Modena and Reggio, Francesco I d'Este (1610–1658). In his treatise, which is entitled *Microcosmo della pittura* and which was printed in 1657, he described the most important artists of the time with the help of medical analogies.<sup>34</sup> The position of each artist was compared with an organ. Scannelli thus sketches a complex exchange between the artists, which initially appears to have no points of contact with the regional schools described by Agucchi. However, the title page of the treatise, designed by Giovanni Francesco Barbieri, known as Guercino (1591–1666), evokes different ideas (Fig. 16). It shows three nude women wearing crowns who are easily recognised as the Venetian, Roman, and Lombard schools by the inscriptions and their attributes of a lion, a wolf, and an ox. Above them

<sup>32</sup> Hochmann.

<sup>33</sup> Vasari 1966–1987, IV, p. 50: 'Se l'ingegno di Antonio fusse uscito di Lombardia e stato a Roma, avrebbe fatto miracoli.' Spagnolo, pp. 44–65; Vaccaro; Schmiedel.

<sup>34</sup> For the treatise, see Scannelli; Cropper 2018; Pericolo.



16. After Guercino, Title page, etching, in Francesco Scannelli, *Il microcosmo della pittura ovvero trattato diviso in due libri* (Cesena: Neri, 1657). © Ghent University Library, BIB.ACC.028379.

hovers *Pictura* with a paintbrush and palette, gazing up at the coat of arms of Duke Francesco I d'Este, beside whom can be seen a cherub holding a banner with the motto 'Otium Regium'. It is interesting to note that the unusually large *Pictura* is shown as the amalgamation of only three schools. The Florentine school has been omitted entirely here, while the Lombard school appears on equal terms with the schools of Venice and Rome.

This title page reflects the amalgamation of these schools in the paintings of the Carracci, as described by Agucchi, and especially in the works of Annibale Carracci, although the Carracci and their school are not depicted. Instead, Guercino refers to the rule of the Duke of Modena and Reggio, in which *Pictura* represents *Otium*. In his text, Scannelli describes the 'scuola lombarda' and mentions a broad panorama of artists from Milan, Brescia, Parma, Bologna, and Ferrara, singling out Correggio as the most important of all these masters. Scannelli also refers to Francesco I's collection in Modena, the highlight of which he considers to be Correggio's *Holy Night* (now in Dresden). Like Agucchi, Scannelli emphasises the central role of the Carracci and their affiliation to the Lombard school. Despite some criticism of Agucchi, he adopts Agucchi's idea that the styles of the different schools of painting were amalgamated by the Carracci to create a new style.<sup>35</sup>

Although the title page evokes the unity of the three schools of painting, Scannelli describes painting from the perspective of the Lombard school, which acquires a contemporary definition for the first time in his treatise. Duke Francesco I, to whom Scannelli dedicated his volume, does not appear only on the title page but is also mentioned in Scannelli's text through the reference to his collection. Thus, the duke becomes the patron and preserver of the Lombard school—a role that fit well with his attempt to consolidate his prominence through the display of splendour.

## The Roman Perspective

A few years after Agucchi produced his treatise on painting in Rome, the Roman physician, collector, and art dealer Giulio Mancini (1559–1630) compiled his *Considerazioni sulla pittura* (1617–1621). It is possible that his use of the term *scuola* ('quattro ordini, classe o ver vogliam dire schole', 'four orders, types, or, we would say, schools') can also be traced back to Agucchi, but scholars today repeatedly argue that his approach was purely empirical.<sup>36</sup> In fact, Mancini does not delineate regional schools and instead singles out those created by Caravaggio (1571–1610) and Cavaliere d'Arpino (1568–1640) as the most recent ones. Nevertheless, Mancini

<sup>35</sup> Scannelli, pp. 88–92, 99–101, 109, 268–346.

<sup>36</sup> Mancini, p. 211. For Mancini, see Gage; Pierguidi 2020b, pp. 129–142.

can be compared with Agucchi in another respect. Like the latter, he refers to Pliny and calls upon scholars in the cities of Italy to compile a list of their notable works. In this manner, he hoped, it would be possible to compile a catalogue of paintings and artists throughout Italy ('di tutt' Italia'), similar to the one presented by Pliny in Book XV of his *Natural History*.<sup>37</sup>

The most important reference to Agucchi's painting treatise appears in the *Lives* of the Roman Bellori, which were published in 1672 with a dedication to Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619–1683).<sup>38</sup> Bellori had close contact with Agucchi's circles through his foster-father Francesco Angeloni (1559–1652) as well as with Domenichino, from whom he received drawing lessons. The latter's biography plays a particular role in Bellori's collection of the *Lives* of twelve artists,<sup>39</sup> among them Caravaggio, Agostino and Annibale Carracci, and their pupils Domenichino and Giovanni Lanfranco (1582–1647), as well as François Duquesnoy (1592/97–1643), Peter Paul Rubens, Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641), and Nicolas Poussin (1594–1665).<sup>40</sup> Mahon emphasised Bellori's dependence on Agucchi's painting treatise, above all for his prefatory *Idea*.<sup>41</sup> It has also been pointed out that Bellori referred to Agucchi's theory of schools in his 'Life of Domenichino'.<sup>42</sup> In fact, Bellori reproduces Agucchi's narrative in its entirety, highlighting that he quotes the original text and asserts Domenichino's co-authorship.<sup>43</sup> His primary concern was to emphasise Domenichino's importance as a theorist.

However, in the introduction to his biography of Annibale Carracci, he refers to Agucchi's concept of a unified school.<sup>44</sup> Here, Bellori first recalls Raphael, whom he praises for his success in restoring painting to its ancient grandeur. While he then follows closely Agucchi's narrative of the accomplishments of Annibale in Rome, his text differs from that of Agucchi in two essential respects. First, Bellori ascribes the completion of the new style to Annibale alone, and second, the epochal event of a new style is now located in Rome rather than Bologna. Bellori, like Agucchi before him, describes in a few sentences the decline of painting due to the

37 Mancini, p. 212. I am grateful to Frances Gage for drawing my attention to this passage.

38 Bellori 2009; for the English translation of the *Lives*, see Bellori 2005; for the German translation and critical commentary, see Bellori 2018a–.

39 See Bellori 2022.

40 For Bellori's network, see Montanari, in Bellori 2005, pp. 4–14; Oy-Marra 2018, I, pp. 11–16.

41 Mahon, pp. 143–151.

42 Bellori 2009, pp. 330–331; for Agucchi and Domenichino, see Mahon, pp. 114–124.

43 Bellori 2022, pp. 120–127, note 196. In fact, the text here differs to some extent from that published by Mahon. According to Bellori, Agucchi's treatise was the result of ongoing conversations with Domenichino. In a letter to Francesco Angeloni, Bellori expressed his hope that Giovanni Antonio Massani would bring Agucchi's treatise, which Agucchi had written when they shared a home in Rome, with him when he visited Rome. See Bellori 2009, p. 359; Bellori 2005, p. 272; Bellori 2022, pp. 282–285.

44 Bellori 2005, pp. 31–32.

spread of the *maniera* that corrupted the schools and led to their degeneration. He enumerates the schools and describes their end as a process of gradually falling silent and vanishing:

It is said that the city of Florence, which boasts of being the mother of painting, has fallen silent without the glory of the brush [*taceva già senza laude di pennello*], the Roman school had stopped following the great models of antiquity and modernity and had abandoned everything to oblivion [*avevano posto in dimenticanza ogni lodevole profitto*] and in Venice and Lombardy, too, the bright call of colours [*udivasi più quel chiaro grido de' colori*], which had fallen silent with Tintoretto, had ceased to be heard.<sup>45</sup>

For Bellori, this resulted in nothing less than the imminent end of painting ('quando la pittura volgevasi alla fine').<sup>46</sup> His evocation of this nadir is even more dramatic than that of Agucchi and gives him the opportunity, in a variation on the beginning of Vasari's life of Michelangelo, to turn the story around and introduce Annibale Carracci as the genius sent by God ('sorgesse un elevatissimo ingegno'), who would raise art to a higher level ('che con esso risorgesse l'arte caduta e quasi estinta').<sup>47</sup> At this point, Bellori admits that Annibale's native city of Bologna was known for science and scholarship ('di scienze maestra e di studi'), but asserts that it was only when Annibale arrived in Rome could he develop his genius because he could study antique sculpture and devote himself to art. Bellori explains: 'Finding himself in Rome, Annibale was overwhelmed by the great knowledge of the ancients and he gave himself up to contemplation and the solitary silence of art.'<sup>48</sup> This narrative of the perfection of Annibale's art in Rome, which for a long time unjustly eclipsed his beginnings in Bologna, was challenged by Carlo Cesare Malvasia and has remained a point of critical examination of Bellori's narrative.<sup>49</sup>

However, the most important difference between the narratives of Agucchi and Bellori is Bellori's claim for the supremacy of Rome over Bologna. Although Bellori acknowledges Bologna as Annibale's birthplace and admits that, consequently, it was the birthplace of an important school of art, he emphasises that Rome was the place where Annibale's style could finally fully flourish. As mentioned above, Agucchi had already noted Agostino and Annibale's visit to Rome, but he was clearly concerned more that they had travelled there in order to perfect their art than with describing Rome as the city where perfection could be achieved. Bellori,

45 Bellori 2005, p. 71.

46 Bellori 2005, p. 72; Bellori 2009, p. 32.

47 Bellori 2005, p. 72; Bellori 2009, p. 32.

48 Bellori 2005, p. 72.

49 Malvasia 2004, I, pp. 263–305; see also Summerscale. For Malvasia, see Cropper 2013.



17. Carlo Maratta, *Allegory of Annibale Carracci Who Changed the Destiny of Art*, c. 1673/1674, drawing, 436 x 633 mm, Département des Arts Graphiques, Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 3371. © RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / image RMN-GP.

contrastingly, focuses on the place where Annibale's art attained its highest point. This is also the message of the engraving designed by Carlo Maratta, on which Annibale is portrayed as the one who—guided by the light of the *Idea*—restored the ancient dignity of art in Rome (Fig. 17).<sup>50</sup> The 'Life of Annibale Carracci' is not the only one where Bellori clearly focuses on Rome. He considers Rome in nearly each of his artist biographies as the place in which the artist accomplished his most important works.<sup>51</sup> Consequently, modern scholarship has stressed Bellori's determined regional focus, even though he included four non-Italian artists in his volume.<sup>52</sup> Returning to Agucchi's project of unifying regional Italian styles, I believe we should not consider Bellori's approbation of Annibale as a 'Roman' artist solely from a regional perspective. Bellori's interpretation of Agucchi's narrative, especially his shift from Bologna to Rome, seems to be a consequence of Agucchi's argument that the Carracci unified the four schools. Since Bologna was politically part of the Papal States, Bellori may have tried to increase the meaning of the new, unifying style of Annibale Carracci by emphasising Annibale's leadership through the central religious and presumed political position of Rome.

It is well known that Bellori's view was not universally accepted. Carlo Cesare Malvasia, whose *Felsina pittrice* was published in Bologna in 1678, only six years after Bellori's *Lives*, resolutely opposed Bellori's interpretation, and instead highlighted how the Bolognese tradition of the Carracci was anchored in the northern Italian schools. He thus attempted to assert the primacy of Bologna as a centre of painting and the most important school. Malvasia, however, uses the concept of a school of art in a new way. Not only does he move the foundation of schools in Bologna back into the distant past—into the late Middle Ages; he makes a similar move for schools in other regions. For example, he considers the goldsmith Manno to be the founder of the Bolognese school, while he names Giotto (1267/75–1337) for Florence and Pietro Cavallini (c. 1240–after 1330) for Rome.<sup>53</sup>

At the end of the century, the Milanese collector Sebastiano Resta took up Agucchi's portrayal of the Italian schools again in his *Galleria portatile*.<sup>54</sup> On the title page, he transforms Agucchi's list of historical schools—namely, the Venetian, Lombard, Florentine, and Roman schools—into the basis for organising the drawings that he then presents. In fact, Resta dedicates a large section to the Carracci, whom, like so many before him, he understood as reformers and founders of the modern school (Fig. 18). However, in his concluding remarks, he

50 Rudolph, in Borea/Gasparri, II, pp. 465–466.

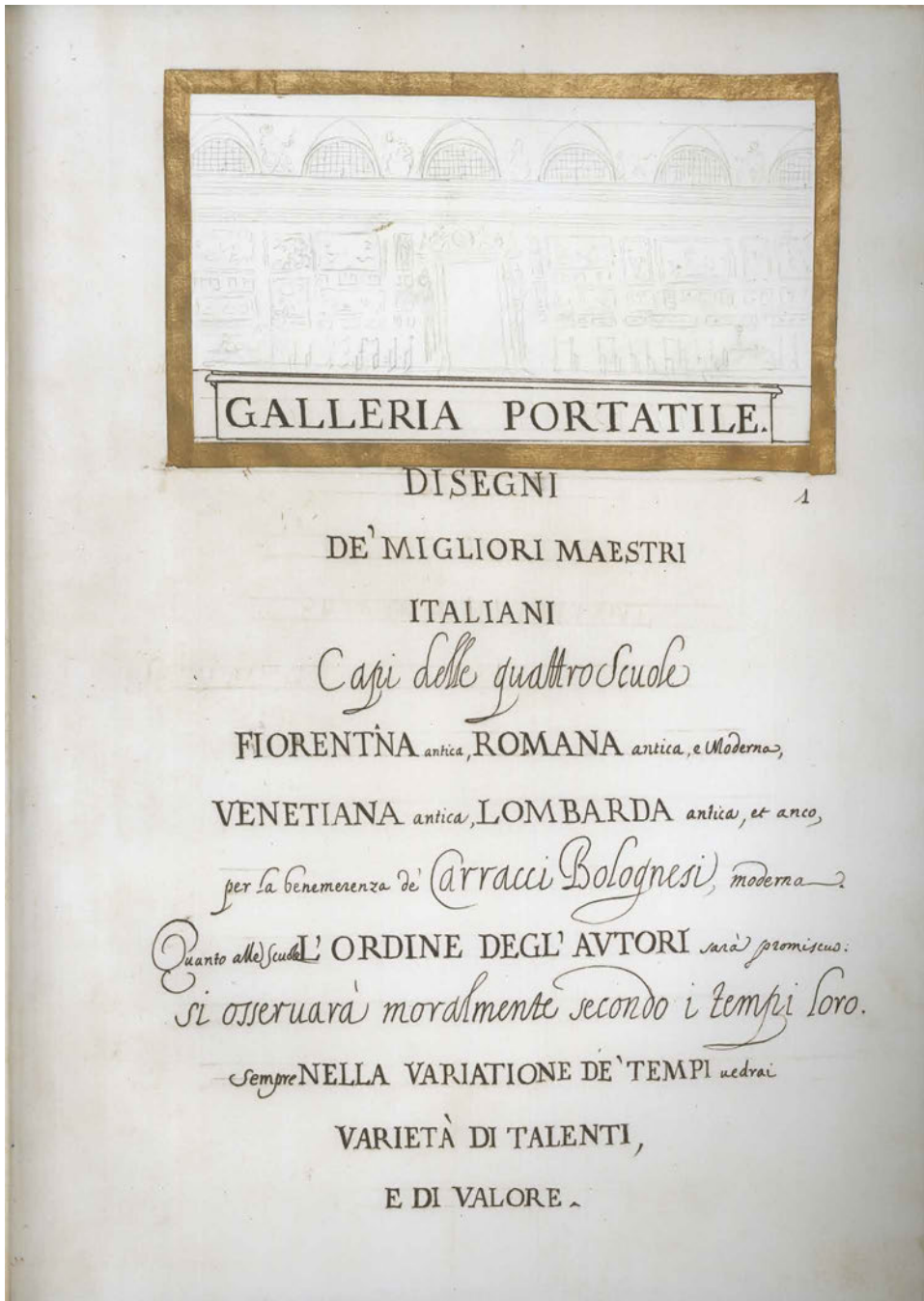
51 For the conception of Bellori's *Lives*, see Cropper 1991.

52 For example, Perini Folesani.

53 Malvasia 2004, I, p. 26.

54 Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Resta 1705/06; Fubini; Bora; Pierguidi 2020b, pp. 249–252. For Resta, see the essay by Prospero Valenti Rodinò in this volume.





18. Frontispiece and title page, drawing, Sebastiano Resta, *Galleria portatile*, c. 1705/1706, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, from Giorgio Fubini, *Cento tavole* (Milan: Biblioteca Ambrosiana, 1955). Photo taken from *Cento tavole*.

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emphasises that he has followed the development of art from Giotto through the *scuola moderna* of the Carracci to the newer schools, which have branched out into three different styles. Besides Andrea Sacchi (c. 1599–1661) and Maratta, whom he counts (with Bellori) among the successors of the Carracci, he also names Poussin, Gianlorenzo Bernini (1598–1680), and Pietro da Cortona (1596/97–1669) as founders of new schools. Adding these founders of new schools, he deviates from Agucchi's and Bellori's theories of schools using Agucchi's theory of schools henceforth as a means of classification.

In my brief survey of theoretical constructions of the Italian *scuole*, I have endeavoured to show how influential the short passage of Agucchi's painting treatise was. During the seventeenth century, neither was *scuola* a general term of classification, nor was it associated only with the staging of a contest between regions. Agucchi instead attempted an appreciation and historical survey of specific stylistic developments, the amalgamation of which he associated with the paintings of the Carracci. He described the unification of the artistic schools within the context of his hopes for the political unification of Italy. His treatise thus codified an artistic geography that had been drawn up to a large extent by Vasari, but that was now considered from the different perspective of ongoing modification and development. The subsequent reception of Agucchi's theory demonstrates that the place where the unification of the regional schools occurred remained a topic of debate. In fact, Bologna, Modena, and Rome all were highlighted in the process of unification.

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## About the Author

**Elisabeth Oy-Marra** teaches art history at Mainz University. Her research focuses on artists' biographies, the history of knowledge and collecting, and the history of connoisseurship. She is editor of the bilingual critical edition of Bellori's *Vite* (Wallstein 2018–) and directed the project entitled 'The Materiality of Visual Orders: Sebastiano Resta's Drawing Albums'.



## 5. Claimed By All or Too Elusive to Include: The Appreciation of Mobile Artists by Netherlandish Artists' Biographers

*Marije Osnabrugge*

### Abstract

Artist biographies contribute significantly to our knowledge and definition of art in specific cities, countries, or regions. Through the inclusion and exclusion of artists, biographers shaped the understanding of artistic production in a place, and as such of local 'style' and the local 'school of art'. The mobility and migration of artists—a ubiquitous phenomenon—poses a problem to the construction of the idea of local art. This paper explores the ways in which early modern Dutch biographers dealt with mobile and migrant artists. As I will argue, these biographers did not yet think in terms of a clearly delineated Dutch 'school of art' or 'local style' and, consequently, brought a more inclusive and flexible approach to mobile artists.

**Keywords:** Dutch art, seventeenth century, mobility of artists, artist biographies

Leafing through Arnold Houbraken's *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen* ('The Great Theatre of Netherlandish Painters and Paintresses', 1718–1721),<sup>1</sup> the reader suddenly stumbles across a short biography of the Italian painter Orazio Gentileschi (1563–1639). Anticipating the reader's surprise at encountering Gentileschi in his survey of Netherlandish painters, Houbraken explains himself as follows:

<sup>1</sup> At the request of the editor, I systematically use the adjective 'Netherlandish' to refer to people and things from both the northern and southern Netherlands during the early modern period; 'Dutch' for the northern Netherlands; and 'Flemish' to refer exclusively to the southern Netherlands. However, it is often anything but clear what exactly the authors discussed here (Van Mander, De Bie, Sandrart, and Houbraken) considered 'Netherlandish' at the time of writing. In fact, as this essay will show, their definition appears to be quite flexible.



In turn Orazio Gentileschi now appears. He was Florentine by birth, yet is not counted amongst the Italians, because he spent most of his life in Spain, England, Brabant, and Holland, which is why we also reserve him a small place amongst the painters.<sup>2</sup>

In other words, Houbraken's criterion for including Gentileschi in his overview of Netherlandish painters was the place of activity, rather than the place of birth. However, Gentileschi spent 60 years of his life in Italy and only fifteen abroad (from 1624 to 1626 in Paris and then in London until his death in 1639). Houbraken's statement is even more remarkable since there is no proof that Gentileschi was active as an artist in Holland or Brabant, although some of his works could be admired in this region.<sup>3</sup> He likely based this assertion on the biography by the German artist-theorist Joachim von Sandrart (1606–1688), who met Orazio Gentileschi personally in London in 1627 and calls him 'my dearest friend' ('meinen vertrautesten Freund').<sup>4</sup> Sandrart placed Gentileschi's biography amongst the northern Europeans in the third book of the *Teutsche Academie* ('German Academy', 1675), entitled *Von Der Hoch- und Nieder-Teutschen berühmten Mahler, Bildhauer und Baumeister: Leben und Lob* ('Of the Famous High-German and Low-German Painters, Sculptors, and Architects: Life and Praise'), and he included the painter's portrait on a sheet with portraits of northern artists (Hendrick van Steenwyck (c. 1550–1603), Joris Hoefnagel (1542–1601), Roelant Savery (1576–1639), and Simon Vouet (1590–1649)) and of Orazio's daughter Artemisia (Fig. 19).<sup>5</sup> Sandrart suggests a consistent logic for his categorisation:

Based on the nation it would be correct to also place the famous David de Haen from Rotterdam, Dirck van Baburen from Utrecht and Nicolas Regnier from

2 Houbraken, I, p. 80. Unless stated otherwise, the translations of the quotations are by the author.

3 There are only three references to paintings by Gentileschi in Dutch collections (*Mars Disarmed by Venus and Cupid* in the collection of Cornelis Utenbogaert, auctioned in Amsterdam on 3 April 1711; *Bacchus and Ariadne* and again a *Mars Disarmed by Venus and Cupid* in the collection of Jan van Beuningen, auctioned in Amsterdam on 13 May 1716; source: Getty Provenance Index, Sales Catalog N-A50, Lot 0001; Sale Catalog N-A73, Lot 0011 & Lot 0012). In Duverger's *Antwerpse Kunstinventarissen, a Rest on the Flight to Egypt* ('n. 86: La Sainte Vierge, Nostre-Seigneur et Saint Joseph dormant, Gentilesco') is listed in the sale of paintings by George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (1628–1687) to William Widdrington on 24 December 1649. Although the painting was in Antwerp, there is clearly a strong connection to England, and the sale consists mainly of works by Italian masters. Duverger, VI, 1649–1653, p. 74.

4 Sandrart, I, Part II, Book 3, p. 299.

5 Sandrart explains himself as follows: 'Seine Bildnus ist darum nicht unter den Italiänern/ sondern in der Blatten KK. zu ersehen/ weil er außerhalb seines Vatterlands meist gelebt/ auch gestorben.' Sandrart, I, Part II, Book 3, p. 299. The decision to also include the portrait of Orazio's daughter Artemisia here contradicts his own logic, as he includes her biography amongst the Italians in Book Two. In her *vita*, there is no reference to the portrait, suggesting that it was a later, ad hoc decision. Sandrart, I, Part II, Book 2, p. 204.



19. Joachim von Sandrart after Anthony van Dyck, *Six Artists' Portraits*, c. 1675, engraving, from Joachim von Sandrart, *Teutsche Academie* (Nuremberg: Sandrart, 1675–1679), I, Tafel KK, unpaginated, after p. 296. © Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Maubeuge here, since the first did all his work in Rome and died there, the other was his companion, and the third also did nothing in his fatherland (as is described in his *Life*) yet [did] a lot of work in Italy and lived and was buried [there]; which is why I left them with the Italians, in contrast to Horatio Gentilesco, a Florentine, however, because he spent time in France, the Low Countries, and England and accompanied many of the Netherlanders there, as the kind reader can see in the *Register*, where a description of each can be found.<sup>6</sup>

In fact, in the *Register*, Sandrart notes for Orazio Gentileschi: ‘Gentilesco, Mahler zu Londen. 298’ (‘Gentileschi, Painter in London’), whereas for most other artists he mentions their place of origin.<sup>7</sup>

Such considerations about the inclusion (Houbraken) and placement (Sandrart) of mobile artists like Gentileschi highlight the tension that arises when an author tries to categorise artists whose careers are characterised by mobility and/or immigration. Today, a museum curator would be the subject of ridicule if they hung Gentileschi in the English or French section of their permanent collection, let alone in the Dutch section. Yet, for other masters who spent considerable time abroad, they might be more hesitant. Think of Jusepe de Ribera (Spanish or Neapolitan?) or Nicolas Poussin (French or Roman?), not to mention El Greco (c. 1541–1614, Greek, Spanish, or perhaps Venetian or Roman?). Museums often—though not exclusively—base their displays on loosely defined notions of local ‘schools’ mixed with a touch of nationalism and practical concerns. Curators move mobile artists around freely in these constellations, thereby foregrounding either their origins or place(s) of activity. Houbraken’s and Sandrart’s explanations indicate that the categorisation of mobile masters was also problematic in early modern Europe.

Artists’ biographies play an important role in the formation of the artistic canon and, consequently, of artistic taste.<sup>8</sup> They constitute the most comprehensive way by which knowledge about artists and art has been handed down to us. Besides the judgements they expressed and the hierarchies they constructed, the biographers’ decisions to include or exclude certain artists have not only affected the knowledge of these artists, but have also had a persistent impact on their reputations. While art historians nowadays are of course well aware of the haphazard, ideological, and otherwise biased selection criteria of early modern biographers and have learned

6 Sandrart, I, Part II, Book 3, p. 313.

7 Sandrart, I, Part II, unnumbered pages after the third book (*Register*).

8 For Van Mander’s impact on the canon of Netherlandish art, see Melion. I am unaware of a comprehensive, comparative study of the genre of the artist’s biography across early modern Europe; scholarly studies generally focus on one publication or region.

to appreciate these texts for exactly those reasons,<sup>9</sup> it is hard to underestimate the impact of artists' biographies on the extant knowledge about artists.

Most biographers of artists, beginning with Giorgio Vasari, have focused on artists and their oeuvres in one specific geographical area, and, as a result, their compendia have played a role in forming the idea of art in that place. On the one hand, these geographical restrictions were imposed by practical considerations: biographers started their investigations with mapping information that was easily accessible to them. On the other hand, one of the principal objectives of early modern artists' biographies was to praise local artists and highlight artistic production in a specific country, region, or city in order to establish its superiority. In most cases, authors identified the geographical focus explicitly in the title or introduction, or the selection and narrative demonstrate this focus beyond any doubt. However, closer analysis of the artists included in the various compendia of early modern artists' biographies shows that many non-native artists were included, indicating that the selection criteria were either loosely applied or based on a different reasoning. The phenomenon of artist mobility is at the root of this issue.

Early modern artists were incredibly mobile, travelling frequently between cities in their native countries or further abroad. The number of artists who (temporarily) settled elsewhere and can be characterised as migrants is likewise considerable. Despite the frequency of these phenomena, the mobility and migration of artists poses a particular problem to artist biographers that has no clear-cut solution. If they imply a *genius loci* in their publication, does this local focus interfere with the reality that in every early modern region, one encountered artists who were not 'local' (but displaced), nor 'native' (but instead foreign) to this place? How do these artists and their works reflect the geographical area, according to the biographers? And what does this mean for the notion of a local 'school' of art? In this essay, I will explore the manner in which early modern biographers approached mobile artists and the consequences of this approach for the notion of local schools. I will limit myself to Netherlandish artist biographies because enlarging the scope would likely lead to generalisations and simplifications.

These dynamics can however also be found in artists' biographies from other periods and regions. In his thought-provoking book *The Traveling Artist in the Italian Renaissance: Geography, Mobility, and Style* (2014), David Young Kim addressed the tension created by the mobility of artists in artists' biographies. Kim analyses how mobility was described by sixteenth-century Italian artist biographers—primarily Vasari, Ludovico Dolce (1508–1568), and Giovanni Battista Armenini (c. 1525–1609), as well as in a selection of other sixteenth-century texts, and how these writers on

9 For a recent publication that considers the value and limitations of artists' biographies, in this case Bernardo de Dominici's lives of Neapolitan artists, see Zezza.

art connected changes in style to the mobility of artists. Evaluating the perception of Vasari and others of the sojourns of native artists outside their home region, Kim remarks:

Artists receiving prestigious commissions at distant princely courts were portrayed as ‘germinating’ and planting the seeds of their style. At the same time, when artists entered into dialogue with foreign styles, artworks, artists and environments, the tropes of contagion, illness, and amnesia come to the fore.<sup>10</sup>

Apart from the striking duality that this characterisation of the sixteenth-century ideas on the impact of artist mobility (i.e. positive for the places hosting the artists and negative, even dangerous, for the mobile artist), Kim’s analysis suggests that ‘style’ was understood as something clearly defined that was altered perceptibly by the mobility of artists. Moreover, Kim implies that ‘style’ was local in the eyes of these theorists.<sup>11</sup> Although this essay will not examine the specific terminology employed by Netherlandish artist biographers, Kim’s observations should be kept in mind for early modern Netherlandish artists’ biographies. As will be shown, the place of mobile artists in artist biographies changed with the growing importance of artist mobility during the seventeenth century.

### **Selection Criteria for Mobile Artists in Van Mander, De Bie, and Houbraken**

Karel van Mander’s *Schilder-boeck* (‘Book of Painting’), published in Haarlem in 1604, is often characterised as the Netherlandish version of Vasari’s *Vite de’ più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori* (‘Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors and Architects’). To a certain degree, Vasari’s *Vite* functioned as a model for the structure of the ‘Levens’ (‘Lives’) in the *Schilder-boeck* and—in the case of the Italian lives—as source material. Yet, the *Schilder-boeck* differs in several ways from its Tuscan counterpart and from other sixteenth-century Italian texts. Within the context of this essay, it is important to recall that Van Mander also devoted sections of his book to the lives of ancient and Italian painters, whereas Vasari almost exclusively included biographies of artists who were directly related to Tuscany.<sup>12</sup> Van Mander

<sup>10</sup> Kim, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> Kim connects this idea to the concept of *aria*, which he discusses at length in his book. Kim, esp. pp. 43–46.

<sup>12</sup> For a thorough analysis and re-appreciation of Van Mander’s Italian *Levens* within the context of the *Schilder-boeck*, see Cohen-Willner 2014; Cohen-Willner 2016.

positioned his book and the Netherlandish artists whose lives he describes in relation to their Italian and ancient counterparts. The changes and updates that Van Mander made to the Italian lives and the information in the biographies of ancient masters form a valuable source of information in their own right, but their main purpose was to provide contextualisation and comparison for the lives of artists from the Netherlands.<sup>13</sup> The section of the *Schilder-boeck* entitled ‘Het Leven der Doorluchtighe Nederlandtsche, en Hoogduytsche Schilders’ (‘The Lives of the Venerated Netherlandish and High-German Painters’) is undisputedly the part of the book that has had the biggest impact on Netherlandish art and art history. As the title indicates, Van Mander treated the northern and southern Netherlands as a single unit and included some German artists, like Albrecht Dürer and Hans von Aachen (1552–1615). Van Mander thus does not yet consider the newly founded Dutch Republic of the United Provinces as a separate region, despite the importance the Dutch Revolt had in his personal life (he fled the Spanish Netherlands and settled in Haarlem in 1583).

Netherlandish artists were very mobile during the sixteenth century; they fled because of war and religious troubles, and relocated for professional and educational reasons.<sup>14</sup> In fact, Van Mander himself was an immigrant from the southern Netherlands, and in the 1570s, he undertook a trip to Italy that left a lasting mark on his art as well as on his ideas on art. The significance of mobility in the lives and careers of artists is apparent throughout Van Mander’s biographies of Netherlandish and High German artists. Van Mander did not perceive travel and emigration as a reason to exclude artists from his biographies, but as a common phenomenon that deserved recognition. Typically, the biographer defends the inclusion of Jan Soens (c. 1647–1611), who left the Netherlands for Italy in the 1570s never to return, as follows:

I would not like to forget the famous [people] in our art, wherever they are dispersed or live. Therefore, since those of our Netherlandish Nation, more than any other in the World, have the inclination to travel and visit foreign lands and peoples, I also want to remember the very artful painter Jan Soens from Den Bosch here, despite him being abroad, staying in Parma in Lombardy or Italy, with the Duke there, if I am correct.<sup>15</sup>

Van Mander thus indicates that he finds it important to include painters such as Soens in his survey, despite the fact that they are far away (and it is uncertain whether they will return). The seemingly nonchalant interjection ‘als ick wel meen’

<sup>13</sup> Melion, esp. Part One.

<sup>14</sup> Scholten, p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> Mander 1604, p. 288v.

(‘if I am correct’) points to the fact that it was more difficult for Van Mander to obtain reliable information about artists residing abroad.<sup>16</sup>

Consequently, Van Mander frequently mentions the travels of artists, describing how they absorbed the landscape and art they encountered, interacted with foreign patrons, and competed with local artists, in particular with the Italians to whom he dedicated the preceding section of the book. Unlike what Kim observed in Vasari, who generally framed the foreign experience as a contamination of style (with the exception of the greatest artists, who spread their brilliance to other regions), Van Mander describes mobility as something positive: a way to develop skills and repertoire and to demonstrate abilities in a different environment. In the biography of Pieter Cornelisz. van Rijck (1567–1635), for instance, Van Mander alludes to a certain manner or form of working (‘wijse oft ghedaente van wercken’) with which Netherlandish artists return from their foreign travels (Fig. 20):<sup>17</sup>

The practitioners of our Art, who spent much time abroad especially in Italy, when they return usually bring home with them some manner or form of working, which surpasses the simple old Netherlandish [manner or form of working] in beauty and perfection, or in which one sees an extraordinary clever particularity [*gheestighe aerdicheyt*].<sup>18</sup>

This assertion testifies to Van Mander’s strong appreciation for Italian art and the importance he attributed to a journey to Italy, during which northern artists could enrich their imagination and practice.

The next series of biographies of Netherlandish artists, Arnold Houbraken’s *Groote schouburgh der Nederlandsche schilders en schilderessen*, was published more than a century later, between 1718 and 1721. During that century, Netherlandish artists had continued to move across Europe and the world. While a trip to Italy was still an important part of the career of many Netherlandish artists, the invitation to work at foreign courts (mainly in the German lands, Scandinavia, and England) had become increasingly common as well. At the same time, the growing wealth

16 Greve.

17 It should be noted here that Van Rijck only briefly returned to Haarlem between 1602 and 1605, exactly the period in which Van Mander was composing his biographies, before settling permanently in Italy (RKD Explore, ‘Pieter Cornelisz. Van Rijck’, <https://rkd.nl/artists/66925>).

18 Mander 1604, p. 298r. Miedema translated ‘gheestighe aerdigheyt’ as ‘lively naturalness’, commenting: ‘The *aerdigheyt* here undoubtedly lies in the natural and subtle rendering of materials achieved through the handling of paint. Quality like this can be attained only if there is a full measure of “spirit” to put to use.’ Mander 1994–1999, VI, p. 103. I would however argue that ‘aerdigheyt’, with its root ‘aerd’ (‘character’) refers to the typical or the particular.



20. Gillis van Breen after Pieter Cornelisz. van Rijck, *The Seductress*, c. 1602–1612, engraving, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. RP-P-BI-4807. © Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



of the Dutch Republic and the fame of certain Dutch artists attracted foreigners to spend time in the country.

In the introduction of the *Groote schouburgh*, Houbraken congratulates himself on having saved knowledge of his selected artists from oblivion.<sup>19</sup> As useful sources of information for his biographies of Dutch artists, he lists French authors (André Félibien (1619–1695), Florent le Comte (1655–1712), Roger de Piles) and especially Sandrart.<sup>20</sup> Houbraken explicitly places his book in the tradition of Karel van Mander, and identifies Cornelis de Bie's (1627–1711/16) *Het gulden cabinet van de edel vry schilderconst* (1662) as the next compendium of biographies of Netherlandish artists. He complains that De Bie favoured artists from the Southern Netherlands ('zyner Landslieden', i.e. his compatriots) too much and neglected the Northern Netherlands.<sup>21</sup> Most of the artists in *Het gulden cabinet* are indeed from the Southern Netherlands (and from Antwerp in particular); artists from that region are at the centre of the book. However, De Bie actually included numerous artists from the Northern Netherlands (60 out of 285), and more than a quarter of all painters, sculptors, architects, and engravers included in the book originate from other countries (Italy, France, the German lands, England, Bohemia, Poland) and never worked in the Netherlands.<sup>22</sup> In other words, while De Bie's bias towards the Southern Netherlands and Antwerp is clear,<sup>23</sup> he never intended his book to be exclusively about Netherlandish artists. In fact, the subtitle of the publication does not foreground a specific origin or place of activity, but instead indicates that the book includes eulogies of the most famous artists of the century.<sup>24</sup> While artists from Antwerp may have been superior for De Bie and so dominated his selection,<sup>25</sup> his selection criteria were different from Houbraken's. Whereas the Dutchman pretends to provide a relatively complete overview of seventeenth-century Netherlandish artists, De Bie states that he selected the most famous masters. At this point, it comes as no surprise to encounter Gentileschi in De Bie's book. However, unlike

19 'En helpt my de dingen door de vergetenheit met duisterheid omzwachtelt, ontwindelen; op dat ik een verklaart gezicht kryge van het duistere: de Konst naar hare waarde, en elk der Konstoeffenaren ten Tooneel brenge, eyndelyk na mynen afgesloofden yver zeggen mag met Horatius: 'K heb een gedachtenis den Volken/ Voltooit, die 't staal verduuren kan.' Houbraken, I, p. 8.

20 Houbraken, I, p. 5.

21 'Een geruimen tyd daar na heeft KORNELIS DE BIE, van Lier, het zwaart op gevat, maar wel meest voor de glory zyner Landslieden geschermt, en zig weinig aan de Hollandsche Konstschilders laten gelegen leggen.' Houbraken, I, pp. 4-5.

22 Moran recently analysed the origins of the artists selected by De Bie. Moran, pp. 381–382.

23 This is also indicated by the citation of Carolus Scribanus' poem *Antverpia* by De Bie. Moran, p. 382.

24 'Waer-inne begrepen is den ontsterffelijcken loff vande vermaerste Constminnende Geesten ende Schilders van dese Eeuw.' Bie, title page.

25 Again, the factor of proximity to and availability of information about these artists for De Bie likely also played a role in his selection, besides his patriotism.

Houbraken and Sandrart, De Bie sees no reason to defend his choice to include Gentileschi other than his talent and reputation. He identifies Gentileschi simply as 'Italiaenschen schilder' ('Italian painter'), praises his artistic qualities, and says he was famous all over the world.<sup>26</sup>

Unlike Van Mander, Houbraken limited his selection to Netherlandish artists. To 'correct' De Bie's neglect of Dutch painters, he focused on the territory of the Dutch Republic and included a small selection of masters from the Southern Netherlands, especially in the first book where he discusses artists born before 1613 whom he considers wrongfully ignored by Van Mander.<sup>27</sup> In the second and third book, which contain biographies of artists born between 1613 and 1635 and between 1635 and 1659 respectively, he displays the same bias of which he accused De Bie by largely neglecting painters from the Southern Netherlands. But which artists did Houbraken perceive as worthy of inclusion? In the introduction to his book, he gives us valuable insight into his reflections on the appropriate selection criteria:

Yet we were unable to define it so narrowly, as we sometimes had to jump sideways to neighbouring countries, because many of our prominent—both old and new—painters from Germany, Switzerland, the Duchy of Jülich, the Electorate of Cologne, et cetera, settled in Gelderland, Brabant, and other surrounding Provinces, as well as in Holland, practising their art there and spending the days of their lives as native inhabitants. Such as Caspar Netscher, born in Prague in Bohemia; Johannes Lingelbach and Abraham Mignon in Frankfurt; Johan Liss in Oldenburg; Peter Paul Rubens in Cologne; Gerard de Lairese in Liège; Govert Flinck in Cleves; Nicolaes van Helt Stockade in Nijmegen; Ludolf Bakhuizen and Frederic de Moucheron in Embden; Ernst Stuken in Hamburg; Dirck Ferreris in Enkhuizen; Gerard Ter Borch in Deventer; Lambert Jacobsz in Leeuwarden and a large part in Brabant.

On the other hand, Dutchmen, stimulated by the desire to travel, have spent their whole lives outside their fatherland, and practiced their art in the service of foreign courts. For this we frequently had to overcome wild seas and steep Alps. However, this does not prevent this Book from uniquely carrying the name 'The life story of Netherlandish painters' on its cover.<sup>28</sup>

He thus decided to include foreigners who settled in the Dutch Republic as well as Dutchmen who worked elsewhere. The painters whom he cites here to illustrate

26 'Dat hy het leven schier aen stof en asch cost gheven, / Daer ons de rasse Faem ghenoech van openbaert / Die sijn eel Schilder-const de wereltd door vermaert.' Bie, p. 105.

27 Cornelis, p. 168. While I agree with Cornelis regarding the first book, Houbraken seemed less inclined to consider selecting Southerners for the second and third book.

28 Houbraken, I, pp. 6–7.

his point—although not all of his information is correct—fall into both groups: artists born abroad working in the Dutch Republic and native Dutchmen who built a career elsewhere. For Houbraken, both the place of activity and the origin of artists were solid arguments for inclusion in his survey of ‘Netherlandish painters and paintresses’. Pointing out the difficulties of his task, moreover, Houbraken explains how he crossed ‘wild seas’ and ‘steep Alps’ in his efforts to gather information about the activities of Netherlandish artists abroad. The many references throughout his volume to failed attempts to verify certain information about artists in faraway lands serve simultaneously as an excuse for *hiatus* and as a reminder of the significance of his accomplishment.

In their selection criteria for mobile artists, Van Mander and Houbraken were mostly inclusive, although many artists undoubtedly slipped through the cracks because they were ‘out of sight’ at the time of writing or had not been sufficiently integrated into the Netherlandish context to be considered. As a consequence, these artists were lost to posterity or only given attention when they resurfaced thanks to the discovery of archival documents and artworks. On the other end of the spectrum, we find a small number of artists who were claimed by all and can be found in the majority of collections of artist biographies throughout Europe. Peter Paul Rubens (Fig. 21), whom Houbraken also mentioned in his introduction, is perhaps the best example of such an artist. Besides his artistic genius, Rubens’ life and career were characterised by mobility. He was born in 1577 at the court of Anna of Saxony (1544–1577), the wife of William the Silent (1533–1584), in Siegen. His parents, both from Antwerp, had fled the city because his father was a Calvinist. Rubens spent his early childhood in Cologne, before returning to Antwerp in 1589 after his father’s death. Following his apprenticeship with Otto van Veen (c. 1556–1629) in Antwerp, he embarked on an eight-year trip to Italy, which was interrupted by a diplomatic mission to Spain in 1603. In Italy, he spent considerable time in Venice, Mantua, Rome, and Genoa. After his return to Antwerp in 1609, he settled in his *patria*, but continued to travel as an artist and diplomat to Spain, France, England, and the Dutch Republic.

Together, his fame and his mobility account for the fact that Giovanni Baglione (c. 1566–1643), De Bie, Sandrart, Giovan Pietro Bellori, Filippo Baldinucci, Félibien, Florent le Comte, De Piles, and Houbraken all included a biography of Rubens in their publications. This is not the place to reiterate the minutiae of each of these biographies, but Houbraken’s account of Rubens’ life is particularly instructive:

In the same year, 28 June 1577, that great sunlight on the Netherlandish ‘art heavens’, namely Peter Paul Rubens, rose in Cologne on the Rhine, to the great splendour of that city. [...] His father Jan Rubens [...] was forced by domestic unrest to flee Antwerp and seek refuge with his wife in Cologne, [...] on which



D. PETRVS PAVLVS RVBBENS EQVES.  
REGI CATOLICO IN SANCTIORE CONSILIO A  
SECRETIS ÆVI SVI APELLES ANTVERPIÆ

*Ant. van Dyck pinxit.*  
*Paul. Pontius, fecit.*

*Cum privilegio.*

21. Paulus Pontius after Anthony van Dyck, *Peter Paul Rubens*, c. 1632–1657, engraving, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. RP-P-OB-16.491. © Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

occasion our Peter Paul Rubens was born there. Such is recounted by De Piles, which is confirmed by Florent le Comte, whom I generally find more accurate and perceptive than Cornelis de Bie, who has attempted to honour Antwerp with the birth of Rubens. Yet be this as it may: Art finds reason to rejoice in the birth of the 'light of art', which shines over the whole world.<sup>29</sup>

Houbraken evidently considered it important to indicate the correct place of birth (which was, however, Siegen, not Cologne) and scolds De Bie for wrongfully claiming Rubens was born in Antwerp. At the same time, Houbraken argues that it does not even matter where Rubens was born, as his light shone so brightly that it reached all the corners of the world. Further on in his biography, Houbraken alludes to historical strife amongst the cities claiming to be the birthplace of Homer:

We do not wish to start a discussion regarding his birthplace, or who taught him the principles of Art: but I say with Basilius Kennet, in the biography of the Greek poet Homer, with regard to the strife of cities, regarding his birth: 'Meanwhile the lovers of poetry have made use of this uncertainty and wanted that both their great master, as their art, should be judged of divine origin.'<sup>30</sup>

According to Houbraken, the genius of artists of the level of Homer and Rubens was divine and omnipresent, rather than originating from a specific place. Consequently, it was perfectly acceptable to include artists of this category in any publication, no matter the geographic focus. Houbraken's downplaying of the importance of the place of birth in the case of Rubens adds a new dimension to discussions of *genius loci*, or the connection between place and ingenuity (whether of a creative or intellectual kind). For extraordinary geniuses, the place of birth as well as of creation is of minor importance, and all biographers are eager to include these masters in their narrative.

## The Anachronistic Notion of a 'Dutch School' of Art

Thus far, I have discussed how early modern Netherlandish artist biographers went about categorising mobile artists according to a specific location or origin. This question is closely related to one of the central issues of this volume: the development of the notion of schools of art. In order to evaluate whether this notion actually played a role in the Dutch Republic, it is necessary to establish if the question of

<sup>29</sup> Houbraken, I, pp. 61–62.

<sup>30</sup> Houbraken, I, p. 63.

whether an artist belonged to a specific ‘school’ of painting was considered by seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Netherlandish artist biographers. Here, things quickly become problematic.

First of all, the term ‘school’ is not used in early modern Netherlandish art literature, neither in the narrow sense of a workshop or educational institution, nor as a means of defining a group of artists collectively working in a clearly distinctive manner or style or with a focus on a particular kind of subject matter.<sup>31</sup> Terms like ‘tekenschool’, ‘oefenschool’, ‘academie’, and ‘college’ refer exclusively to informal gatherings during which beginning (and sometimes also advanced) artists would practice their drawing skills (Fig. 22).<sup>32</sup> In contrast to other European countries and cities, there was no official art academy in the Dutch Republic until the foundation of the Haagsche Teekenacademie in 1682. And even then, its relatively loose organisation—without a unified curriculum or explicit guidelines—did not necessarily lead to a uniform style or other shared artistic objectives. The absence of a term in a language or sociolect (i.e. the language of a specific social or professional group) strongly suggests that there was no necessity for such terminology because the topic was not discussed or did not need to be described.

Another issue is the question of a perceived existence of a ‘national’ school in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic. The relatively recent foundation of the Dutch Republic as an independent country made it impossible to rigidly define a national school. In fact, neither Van Mander nor Houbraken apparently considered Flemish and Dutch art(ists) as essentially distinct from each other.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, despite the existence of a central government in The Hague (the States General), the various provinces and cities functioned relatively independent of each other, and the Dutch Republic of the United Provinces was in reality far from ‘united’, also from a cultural or artistic perspective.

To represent the situation more accurately, art historians have therefore suggested thinking in terms of city schools (most notably, the ‘Delft School’ and the ‘Haarlem School’).<sup>34</sup> To a certain degree, acknowledging the variety of artistic centres in the Dutch Republic is valuable for understanding Dutch art, and the focus on artistic production in specific cities allows us to be more precise. However, the notion of city schools is by no means based on historical sources, the *imaginaire* of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century biographers, or the careers of artists active during this period. In fact, many artists moved freely

31 See Trouvé for an analysis of the early modern notion and terminology of ‘school’ north of the Alps.

32 See the LexArt-database (<http://www.lexart.fr>) for the occurrences of the respective terms.

33 For an overview of the discussion of the problematic division by art historians from the nineteenth century onwards of early modern Netherlandish art into Dutch and Flemish schools of art, see Clippel 2015; Clippel 2016.

34 For a good discussion of this issue and the field of *Kunstgeographie*, see Loughman, with bibliography.

and frequently between the cities in the Dutch Republic over the course of their careers and worked simultaneously for collectors in different towns (Jacques de Gheyn (1565–1629), Jan Steen (1626–1679), Nicolaes Maes (1634–1693)—to name just a few), thus making it unthinkable to pinpoint their work as characteristic of a specific city. Biographers might refer to the lineage of a certain artist according to the instruction received from a specific master, but never in relation to the art of a specific country or city. As a case in point, Houbraken did not organise his biographies geographically; artists from or active in different cities appear next to each other.<sup>35</sup>

If the concept of a ‘national school’ is indeed anachronistic within the context of early modern publications devoted to Netherlandish artist biographies, to what degree did Netherlandish artist biographers consider geography a factor in their classification of artists? The present examination of how Van Mander and Houbraken treated mobile artists confirms that they were not bothered by the desire or need to neatly fit artists into strictly defined ‘schools’. They applied flexible and inclusive selection criteria, based on the artist’s place of birth or location of activity. To better understand the reasoning underlying these criteria, it is worth taking a closer look at Sandrart’s argument for the placement of Gentileschi amongst the northern Europeans, which was cited in the introduction of this essay. Sandrart placed Gentileschi’s biography and portrait in the section on Netherlandish artists because the Florentine spent considerable time in their company in London (*‘daselbst verschieden denen Niederländern zugesellet’*). Sandrart seems to suggest similar reasoning for David de Haen (c. 1600–1625), Dirck van Baburen (c. 1594/95–1624), and Nicolas Regnier (1591–1667), to whom he refers in the preceding sentences, explaining that he ‘has left them in the company of the Italians’ (*‘als hab ich sie bey denen Italiänern gelaßen’*), as they worked, lived, and died in Italy. ‘Leaving them in the company of the Italians’ can here be interpreted figuratively (they are in the second book, where Sandrart discusses the Italian artists) as well as literally (they are situated in the country where they were buried). In Sandrart’s eyes, then, Gentileschi belonged to the community of northern artists in London, and De Haen, Van Baburen, and Regnier were part of the artistic community in Italy. Thus, it is evident that interaction and exchange lay at the basis of communities of artists in early modern Europe and that these binding mechanisms were considered more significant than nationality.

A related question is whether these communities of artists were characterised by a recognisable collective style, notwithstanding the anachronism of the notion of ‘school’ in the Dutch Republic. ‘Style’ is, after all, a prominent marker for schools of art in many of the other contributions to this volume. The development of the

35 Cornelis, p. 168.



22. Michiel Sweerts, *The Drawing Lesson*, 1660, oil on canvas, 76.5 x 110 cm, Frans Halsmuseum, Haarlem, inv. I-317.  
© Frans Halsmuseum, Haarlem.



notion of style (and of taste, for that matter), is complex and predates the period discussed in this essay. Again, the lack of a term for style in the early modern Dutch language of art is indicative.<sup>36</sup> Netherlandish theorists considered ‘manner’ (*manier*) and ‘handling’ (*handeling*)—the terms most closely related to the notions of both style and technique—as developed by and belonging to an individual artist rather than a group or indeed a ‘school’.<sup>37</sup> However, that is not to say that Van Mander and Houbraken did not recognise or mention differences between art from various regions. In the introduction to the biography of Van Rijck in his *Schilder-boeck*, cited above, Van Mander shows an awareness that the Netherlandish artists would encounter new (and perhaps better) manners of working abroad. This way of thinking about geographical differences is nevertheless still far removed from connecting typical artistic qualities or characteristics to the idea of a national, or even local, school.

The mobility of artists resulted in direct confrontations of artists from different regions. Concepts like ‘school’ and ‘style’ were gradually invented to make it easier to define these confrontations. In a way, such notions are simplifications to facilitate a comparison. Ironically, the same artists whose mobility made theorists aware of the diversity of manners in different regions are difficult to locate in a single school of art and were consequently pushed to the margins of art history or claimed by all (equally unacceptable for classification into schools). Van Mander’s and Houbraken’s inclusive approach, on the other hand, still allowed artists to roam freely.

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<sup>36</sup> Blanc.

<sup>37</sup> Passignat; Osnabrugge.

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## About the Author

**Marije Osnabrugge** is Lecturer at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. She is a specialist in early modern Netherlandish and Italian art and European art theory. Her research focuses on the mobility of artists, artistic practices, creativity, and the perception of time. After obtaining a PhD from the University of Amsterdam in 2015, she was a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Montpellier and subsequently a researcher and lecturer at the University of Geneva.

## 6. The *Galeriewerk* and the Self-Fashioning of Artists at the Dresden Court

*Ewa Manikowska*

### Abstract

This essay focuses on the circle of international artists involved in the publishing project of the *Galeriewerk* of the Königliche Bildergalerie in Dresden. It discusses how the study of and discussions surrounding artistic schools and Old Masters strongly influenced the ways in which these artists constructed their own artistic and social positions at the Saxon court, as well as the ways in which their work was framed in the writings and collections of contemporaneous connoisseurs. I argue that the traditional hierarchies and ties based on kinship and nationality (Venetian, Roman, or French) and the artistic profession (sculptor, portrait painter, or *veduta* painter) were reinforced by how artists framed themselves as both successors and representatives of a given artistic school.

**Keywords:** migrant artists, artistic identity, connoisseurship, collecting, reproductive engraving, picture cabinets

In this essay, I explore how in the middle of the eighteenth century, the rise of connoisseurship, of reproductive engraving, and of salon and conversation culture, alongside the slow emergence of what Colin Bailey has brilliantly defined as ‘patriotic taste’ (that is, a deliberate focus in taste and collecting based on the national schools of painting),<sup>1</sup> influenced the models of artistic identities, careers, and self-fashioning based on kinship and national ties.

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<sup>1</sup> Bailey.

## The *Galeriewerk*: Studying and Defining Painterly Schools

My case study is a group of artists involved in the production of one of the most astonishing *Galeriewerke* of the second half of the eighteenth century: the *Recueil d'estampes d'après les plus célèbres tableaux de la Galerie Royale de Dresde* (Fig. 23).<sup>2</sup> Such publishing enterprises were usually conceived by the keepers of the collections, engravers, or connoisseurs and co-sponsored by the court. In Dresden, it was Carl Heinrich von Heineken, the keeper of the Kupferstich-Kabinett and an established connoisseur of prints, who embarked around the middle of the eighteenth century on the project of an illustrated overview of the masterpieces from the Königlische Bildergalerie in Dresden.<sup>3</sup> His ambition was not only to produce an exact reproduction of a given painting, but also to create one that would reflect the artist's style and the characteristics of national and regional painterly schools. To achieve this goal, he formed a team of eighteen artists to work on the preparatory drawings. He involved in the project both established court painters (Stefano Torelli (1712–1784), Teresa Concordia Mengs (1725–1806/08), and Bernardo Bellotto (1721–1780)) and a group of young artists just beginning their careers.<sup>4</sup> The latter were recruited with the assistance of the court painter Louis de Silvestre (1675–1760) in Paris and Matthias Oesterreich (1716–1778), a painter, engraver, and connoisseur who was also involved in this project and who embarked on a trip precisely to Italy to find these young artists, as well as other artistic agents and diplomats of the Dresden court.<sup>5</sup>

Explaining the need to employ eighteen artists for several years on just one publishing project, Heineken stressed the importance of the drawings that needed to be made in preparation for the reproductive engravings in the *Recueil d'estampes*: the artists would be both responsible for capturing the manner of a given school and/or artist and for suggesting in the drawing how to translate it into engraving.<sup>6</sup> According to Heineken, these tasks required study, specialisation, and connoisseurship. Thus, he matched the skills of the members of his team with given Old Masters in the Königlische Bildergalerie and assigned to each member the study of an Old Master's *maniera*. In so doing, Heineken did not necessarily match the nationality of members of his team with a given school or Old Master. Thus, Francesco Gandini (1723–c. 1778), a native of Bologna and a pupil of Pierre Subleyras (1699–1749) at the Accademia di San Luca in Rome, made drawings after paintings of the Ferrarese

2 *Recueil d'estampes* 1753–1757. *Galeriewerke* are albums of reproductive engravings from the masterpieces of a given royal or princely collection.

3 Schuster 2016, pp. 46–63.

4 Schuster 2010a, pp. 153–167.

5 Schepkowski, pp. 168–181.

6 Carl Heinrich von Heineken, 'Beantwortung der recension des Kupferstichwerks des dresdnischen Bilder-Galerie', in Heineken 1768–1769, I, pp. 103–124.



23. Marco Pitteri after Charles-François Hutin, *Tableau de Joseph Ribera dit l'Espagnolet*, plate from *Recueil d'estampes d'apres les plus celebres tableaux de la Galerie Royale de Dresde* (1753), etching, no. 30. © National Library, Warsaw.

school, which fitted well his artistic background. Marcello Bacciarelli (1731–1818), the pupil of Marco Benefial (1684–1764) in the Accademia di San Luca, however, not only copied works of the Bolognese school, which matched his artistic training, but also paintings of the Venetian Quattrocento and Cinquecento and even a portrait by Hans Holbein (1497/98–1543). Charles-François Hutin (1715–1776), who studied painting under François Lemoine (1688–1737) and sculpture with René-Michel Slodtz (1705–1764), specialised in, among other things, the reproduction of Jusepe de Ribera's and Rembrandt's (1606–1669) works. Bellotto, the Venetian *veduta* painter, copied the Dutch and Flemish view paintings. The group of artists under Heineken's guidance produced an impressive number of preparatory drawings,<sup>7</sup> which outnumbered by several times the 150 plates published in the *Galeriewerk* of the Königliche Bildergalerie and in the *Recueil*, which Heineken and his group of artists prepared simultaneously for Prime Minister Heinrich Graf von Brühl (1700–1763) to celebrate his private collection of paintings.<sup>8</sup> Through their drawings, the artists were supposed to study *maniere*. In addition, Heineken often commissioned the reproduction of the same painting from different artists and chose only the best interpretation. Moreover, he discarded unsatisfactory drawings and repeatedly changed the list of paintings to be included in both albums. In particular, to follow the preferences of Augustus III (1696–1763), the king of Poland and elector of Saxony, he had to shift the focus from a general overview of the schools of paintings represented in the royal collection to just the Italian and Flemish ones. Heineken applied the same rigorous selection process to the engravings. He involved as engravers court artists (i.e. Philipp Andreas Kilian (1714–1759) and Bellotto) and artists with engraving skills recruited from Paris and Italy (i.e. Giuseppe Canale (1725–1802) and Giuseppe Camerata (1718–1803)). Moreover, a large share of the plates was commissioned from the most established reproductive engravers in Venice, Amsterdam, and Paris. As with the drawings, Heineken adhered to the principle of specialisation in a given school or Old Masters in his commissions of the plates. He was also equally rigorous and critical, readily discarding plates which did not meet his expectations.

The complex, time-consuming, and expensive production process of the *Galeriewerk* was deliberate and based on Heineken's artistic and scholarly ambitions. Indeed, the *Receuil d'estampes*, conceived as a masterpiece of both reproductive engraving and connoisseurship, echoed the prototype of the genre, the so-called *Recueil Crozat*.<sup>9</sup> The latter, a two-volume album with reproductive engravings of the best paintings of the Italian schools, was produced by 36 engravers under the

7 Today preserved in the Kupferstich-Kabinett of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen in Dresden. For a detailed list of the drawings, see Schuster 2010b, pp. 151–177.

8 *Recueil d'estampes* 1753. See Schuster 2017, pp. 98–113.

9 *Recueil d'estampes* 1729–1740.

guidance of a group of Parisian connoisseurs, Pierre Crozat, Anne Claude Philippe de Caylus (1692–1765), and Pierre-Jean Mariette (1694–1774) and was supported by Philippe d'Orleans. It offered a history of Italian painting according to schools and offered illustrations of the highest quality alongside a connoisseurial apparatus.<sup>10</sup> The publication displayed the elevated status of the art of French printmaking. As explained in Mariette's introduction, the skills of the French engravers were perfectly suited for capturing and rendering the manners of the Italian painters. Moreover, such engravings were not just reproductions but also primary research tools and arguments: the drawn or engraved copy was considered a means of study and interpretation of style as important as the written description of the painting. Indeed, the *Recueil Crozat* codified the practices of Parisian connoisseurs—collecting, exchanging gifts, and copying drawings of Old Masters and contemporary artists—alongside demonstrating their interests in the art of engraving and the role accorded to engraving as a tool of connoisseurship.<sup>11</sup>

Addressed to the international milieu of connoisseurs, Heineken's *Galeriewerk* had a twofold function: to give insight into the collection of paintings at the Königliche Bildergalerie in Dresden, and to glorify the collection's creator. However, the album is not as consistent in its ordering according to national (regional) schools as its French predecessor nor is it provided with an as sophisticated introduction. Nevertheless, it is distinctive in its deliberate focus on and attention to the cosmopolitan team of artists involved in its production. In the short introduction to the reader, Heineken argues that the album gives insight both into the art and style of the Italian and Flemish masters and into the *maniere* of the most talented contemporaneous European artists involved in this publishing project.<sup>12</sup> Arguably, the group of artists under Heineken's guidance was challenged to study and reproduce the *maniere* of the assigned masters and schools on the one hand, and to redefine through this focus their own unique style on the other. The preparatory drawings and engravings, which were included in the Kupferstich-Kabinett in Dresden, were thus part of the evolving history of painting. Moreover, Heineken included biographies of the artists who contributed to the project and a detailed list of their graphic works in the four-volume dictionary of artists represented in the Kupferstich-Kabinett in Dresden (*Dictionnaire*), as well as in a long essay that he published in his *Nachrichten von Künstlern und Kunstsachen* (*Nachrichten*) in response to a critical review of his *Galeriewerk*.<sup>13</sup> The short biographies of the *Galeriewerk*'s team of artists in the *Dictionnaire*, in the unpublished manuscripts of the *Dictionnaire*, and in the

10 Leca, pp. 623–649; Smentek, pp. 56–92.

11 Leca, pp. 623–649.

12 Carl Heinrich von Heineken, 'Avertissement', in *Recueil d'estampes* 1753–1757, unpaginated.

13 Heineken 1778–1790; Heineken 1768–1769, I, pp. 175–248.



*Nachrichten* reveal how Heineken classified the artists' styles and inscribed them in the evolving history of the national (or regional) schools of painting. Indeed, as the following three examples will show, his classification was based on the principles of genre (an artist's specialisation) and school (an artist's origin and education).

Bacciarelli was one of Heineken's favourite painters. His biography in the *Dictionnaire* forms a eulogy of the artist's brilliant career, of which his employment in the *Galeriewerk* was a turning point.<sup>14</sup> In the *Nachrichten*, Heineken praised Bacciarelli as the draughtsman most suited to copying the great history paintings in the Dresden collection,<sup>15</sup> not only because of his talent but also because of his Roman artistic background and his apprenticeship with the history painter Benefial. Many preparatory drawings were made by Giovanni Battista Internari (?–1761) and by Charles-François Hutin. Both specialised in Venetian masters of the High Renaissance and in Italian Baroque painters, whose works were in the most cherished and praised part of Augustus III's collection. About Internari, who died prematurely in 1761, Heineken wrote only that he was a talented Roman draughtsman with a particular inclination for caricatures.<sup>16</sup> Hutin, on the other hand, was one of the most accomplished and talented members of the team; he studied painting under François Lemoine in Paris and sculpture with Slodtz in Rome, and in 1746, he became a member of the Académie Royale in Paris.<sup>17</sup> Heineken wrote of Bellotto: 'Bernardo Bellotti, nephew and pupil of Antonio Canal in Venice, painted *vedute* and perspectives in the *maniera* of his master. Thus, he was generally called Canaletto.'<sup>18</sup> This unpublished, short biography of Bellotto pinpoints the artist's familial and stylistic links with Canaletto (1697–1768) and his specialisation in *vedute* and perspectives. In the published *Dictionnaire* version of this small entry, Bellotto's skills as a *veduta* painter ('peintre de vues and des paysages') and engraver are singled out. According to Heineken, Bellotto was best suited to interpreting in drawing and engraving Dutch and Flemish view paintings in the royal and Brühl collections. However, as this genre was marginal in both *Recueils*, the *Dictionnaire* mentioned only one work connected to these publishing enterprises: an unfinished and rare engraving of one of Van Heym's landscapes from the Brühl collection.<sup>19</sup>

Heineken mentioned in the *Nachrichten* that Bacciarelli learned the principles of engraving in Dresden. These skills made it possible for him to convey in drawing the interpretation of the style of a painting more accurately to the engraver.<sup>20</sup> For

14 Heineken 1778–1790, II (1788), p. 8.

15 Heineken 1768–1769, I, pp. 179–181.

16 Heineken 1768–1769, I, p. 217.

17 Heineken 1768–1769, I, pp. 214–215.

18 ASK, Kupferstich-Kabinett, G58, no 25.

19 Heineken 1778–1790, II, p. 434.

20 Heineken 1768–1769, I, p. 180.

Hutin, Heineken noticed that the work of copying and interpreting the works of the great masters in the *Königliche Bildergalerie* stimulated a successful return to painting. He also mentioned—recalling a portrait traditionally ascribed to Albrecht Dürer and published as a Rembrandt—that in the process of copying, first in drawing and then in engraving, he and his team learned more about the paintings and the style of each single master.<sup>21</sup> Heineken thus clearly suggested that the *Galeriewerk* project sparked an artistic and intellectual collaboration and competition between the artists involved and urged them to engage with the heritage of Old Masters.

### Connoisseurship, Painterly Schools, and Sociability in Dresden

Such creative collaboration and competition went well beyond the walls of the *Königliche Bildergalerie*: art, painting, style, and reproduction became important subjects of conversation and sociability in Dresden. This phenomenon is exemplified well in a caricature by Mathias Oesterreich, which shows the Roman pupils of Benefial—Bacciarelli, Canale, and Internari—and Oesterreich himself in conversation with the daughter of the royal confectioner, Nicholas Corthier (Fig. 24). An unidentified woman standing in the background and looking away holds a printmaking tool in her hand, clearly suggesting the subject of the conversation. The print, dated 1766, follows Internari's drawing of 1751, the year in which all the artists were involved in the making of Heineken's *Galeriewerk*. Interestingly, the caricature suggests that the friendships and national and artistic ties of the Roman pupils of Benefial still mattered in Dresden. However, the intellectual climate surrounding the cosmopolitan group of artists under Heineken's leadership also stimulated friendships and networks beyond nationality. Bacciarelli managed to widen his professional networks to become international. He was well acquainted with Oesterreich and the French and German artists involved in the *Galeriewerk*. His marriage with a member of the *Galeriewerk* team and relative of Heineken, the Saxon miniaturist painter Johanna Juliana Friederike Richter (1733–1809?), sealed the close ties with the director of the Dresden Kupferstich-Kabinett. Working in this cosmopolitan group of artists, Bacciarelli most probably learned French and acquired the skills of a connoisseur. Such skills paved the way for his subsequent, brilliant career at the court of the last king of Poland, Stanislas Augustus (1732–1798).<sup>22</sup> As Director of the Royal Buildings (*Directeur Général des Bâtiments de Sa Majesté*) and first royal painter in Warsaw (*Premier*

<sup>21</sup> Heineken 1768–1769, I, p. 182.

<sup>22</sup> On Bacciarelli, see Juszcak.



24. Matthias Oesterreich after Giovanni Battista Internari, *Caricature*, etching, 1766, British Museum, London, inv. 1870,0514.2834. © British Museum, London.

*Peintre du Roy*), he attained the highest financial and social status. Among other duties, he oversaw the formation of the royal collections of paintings, sculptures, and engravings. He stood behind the main royal acquisitions of Old Masters and was the author of the inventories of the royal collections, written in French and in the language of connoisseurship. Importantly, in Warsaw, Bacciarelli finally exhibited his talent in painting. From 1767, as the first royal painter, he was the portraitist most sought after by the king and the Polish aristocracy and also the main history painter. Interestingly, after decades of a successful career at the courts of Dresden, Vienna, and Warsaw, he still based his artistic identity primarily on Rome. In 1787, after 36 years, he returned for several months to the city of his birth as an official royal artistic envoy, and during this stay, he was admitted as a member of the Accademia di San Luca. For the rest of his life, Bacciarelli considered himself to be a Roman citizen (a worthy citizen of his hometown) and painter. In his self-portrait, painted shortly in the aftermath of his Roman trip, he chose the convention traditionally used in the images intended to decorate the Accademia's official interiors: a bust on a dark, neutral background with his name and a short description of his professional position written on a white stripe at the bottom of the painting (Fig. 25).

Besides his employment in the *Galeriewerk* project, Hutin received both court and private commissions for sculptures and paintings. He was particularly praised for his cabinet pictures in the genre of *bambochades*.<sup>23</sup> Among his main patrons was the secretary of the French ambassador at the Polish-Saxon court, Pierre-Michel Hennin (1728–1807), whose employment in Dresden and Warsaw marked the beginning of a diplomatic career and who used his post to affirm his position in the Parisian cultural, literary, and scientific milieus. Collecting was an important means of his self-fashioning. In forming a small cabinet of paintings, Hennin focused on French masters active in the Saxon and Polish cultural centres, and Hutin became his most cherished artist. Importantly, he regularly exhibited Hutin's paintings (both those from his collection and those intended for sale) at the Parisian Salons. For Hutin, Paris was an important point of reference in his artistic activity, particularly for his engravings. With his experience in the *Galeriewerk*, Hutin tried his hand at being a *peintre graveur*, and he wanted his works to be known in France. Thus, a group of his engravings, published as the *Recueil de differents sujets*, were first distributed among Parisian connoisseurs and finally published in Paris.<sup>24</sup>

Bellotto, defined by Heineken as a *veduta* painter born in Venice, paid particular attention to demonstrating his artistic links not only with Canaletto—his uncle

23 On Hennin, see Manikowska 2009, pp. 85–106.

24 Stein, p. 49.



25. Marcello Bacciarelli, *Self-Portrait*, oil on canvas, 68.5 cm x 57 cm, after 1787, National Museum, Warsaw, inv. MP 313.  
© Piotr Ligier, National Museum, Warsaw.

and teacher and the recognised master of the genre—but with the Venetian school as a whole. His artistic identity was evidenced in a small but ground-breaking cabinet of pictures on view in his Dresden apartment.<sup>25</sup> Described by Bellotto as the ‘Gabinetto di Quadri’, it was hung with 59 paintings in identical, gilded frames and contained 22 of his views of Dresden, Pirna, and Königstein, as well as his architectural fantasies, alongside 37 pictures, mainly by the most famous contemporary Venetian masters: Giambattista Pittoni (1687–1767), Gaspare Diziani (1689–1767), Giandomenico Tiepolo (1727–1804), Jacopo Amigoni (1685–1752), Giambattista Cimaroli (1687–1771), Francesco Zuccarelli (1702–1788), Marco Ricci (1676–1730), Giovanni Antonio Pellegrini (1675–1741), Giovanni Battista Piazzetta (1682–1754), and others. Indeed, Bellotto’s cabinet reflected the key patterns of Venetian eighteenth-century collecting that had been introduced, solicited, and popularised in the European centres of patronage, as well as in collections by Venetian cosmopolitan artistic agents, publishers, connoisseurs, and foreign residents, including Francesco Algarotti (1706–1764), Anton Maria Zanetti (1680–1767), and the British consul in Venice, Joseph Smith (1682–1770). The taste for *modelli*, pairs, larger ensembles of paintings, new Venetian cabinet genres (*teste di carattere*, *capriccios*), and contemporary Venetian history painters all became fashionable. Venetian cabinet pictures—highly prized by the connoisseurs who saw Bellotto’s cabinet—highlight the importance of connoisseurship and collecting in the self-fashioning of a court artist in the middle of the eighteenth century, as well as for Bellotto’s contacts in the circle of the Venetian artistic agents at the Dresden court.<sup>26</sup>

The taste for Venetian cabinet paintings spread across the European courts and was reflected in Dresden, both in the Elector’s acquisitions and in the cabinets of collectors and connoisseurs. Accordingly, Bellotto defined himself as a Venetian painter by assembling a group of his *vedute* in a picture cabinet designed around leading Venetian ideas and also reflecting the collecting patterns and taste of the Dresden court. His small cabinet was probably the most complete and the largest collection of the kind, other than Augustus III’s cabinet in Hubertusburg, his favourite hunting lodge, which housed six canvases commissioned by Algarotti from the most renowned Venetian painters of the time—Giambattista Tiepolo (1696–1770), Amigoni, Piazzetta, Pittoni, and Zuccarelli.<sup>27</sup> As has been mentioned, we know from Bellotto’s inventory that a cabinet of paintings (*gabinetto di quadri*) was an important space in his apartment.

25 Manikowska 2017, pp. 212–220.

26 Kowalczyk, pp. 24–31.

27 Liebsch, pp. 42–57.

## Connoisseurship and Artistic Identities of Migrant Artists in Dresden

Dresden in the mid-eighteenth century was an important European cultural and artistic centre that attracted a large, cosmopolitan array of artists, primarily from German, Italian, and French artistic centres, until the outbreak of the Seven Years' War (1756–1763). This diversified group of migrant artists apparently organised their lives and careers into networks based on nationality, kinship, language, and artistic profession. Thus, the Italian artisans, masons, architects, and artists who, under the leadership of the court architect Gaetano Chiaveri (1689–1770), were involved from the 1730s to the middle of the century in the construction of the Katholische Hofkirche (Catholic Church of the Royal Court of Saxony) lived side by side in a specially built borough, the 'Italienisches Dörfchen' (Italian Village).<sup>28</sup> Seventeen years later, Bellotto, allegedly with the assistance of the Elector's Venetian artistic agents, was called to the court of Augustus III of Poland to work on a cycle of Dresden *vedute*; he moved with his family to an apartment building near the Frauenkirche, in which all the apartments were rented by Italians.<sup>29</sup> The brothers Pierre (1723–1763) and Charles-François Hutin, who around the same time were employed at the court of Augustus III of Poland after the intervention of their uncle, the first court painter Silvestre, maintained close relations with the French artistic circle in Dresden.<sup>30</sup> However, a closer analysis based on surviving writings and correspondence of the artists in question reveals a more complex picture. Often a necessity, migration for an eighteenth-century artist required skills of adaptation that went well beyond just acclimatising to the different climate, language, or local traditions. The experiences involved in artistic migration should instead be framed as a complex process of acculturation, in which the ability to move among cosmopolitan cultural and artistic networks and familiarity with modes of collecting and sociability were essential. This is particularly striking in Dresden, where connoisseurship and collecting based on French models was an important element of court culture. As the examples of Bacciarelli, Hutin, and Bellotto clearly show, the international cultural milieu in Dresden, in addition to the innovative artistic initiatives of the court (for instance, Heineken's *Galeriewerk*), encouraged the artists to clearly define their identities according to the principles of connoisseurship, including the notion of painterly schools.

Up to the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, Dresden was an important centre of culture, sociability, and collecting—not only at court but also in the cosmopolitan

<sup>28</sup> Caraffa, p. 25.

<sup>29</sup> Manikowska 2017.

<sup>30</sup> Manikowska 2009.

circles of artists, musicians, literati, diplomats, and courtiers. The rebuilding and modernisation of vast areas of the city during the first half of the eighteenth century transformed it not only into a fashionable centre of Baroque and Rococo architecture, but also into a city of comfortable and modern apartment buildings and palaces, which satisfied the needs of the cosmopolitan group of artists and connoisseurs employed at court. The apartments for rent included various spaces of sociability and conspicuous consumption, alongside picture cabinets and libraries.<sup>31</sup> Thus, the professional discussions about painting schools and the styles of the Old Masters that would have occurred inside the Königliche Bildergalerie were transferred in a natural way from and were continued in the nearby spaces of private picture cabinets and salons. Importantly, many of these spaces were just a few steps away. Heineken's apartment was connected to the Kupferstich-Kabinet. Moreover, the Neumarkt Square, where the Königliche Bildergalerie (open to the public from 1747) was located, was among artists' and connoisseurs' favourite places to live. For example, one could find here the apartments of Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Bellotto, the engraver Adam Friedrich Oeser (1717–1799), the pastellist Francesco Pavona (1695–1777), and the painter Gandini.

Particularly important were the innovative apartments and the picture cabinets of Heineken and of Christian Ludwig von Hagedorn, the Saxon diplomat and connoisseur who in 1764 became the first director of the Allgemeine Kunst-Akademie in Dresden. Both men considered their collections to be extensions of and supplements for their writings on art and painting, which usually took the form of artists' biographies and dictionaries. As Hagedorn observed in the sophisticated description of his cabinet published as the *Lettre a un amateur de peinture*, artists' biographies could not just be reduced to dates, but were a genre at the heart of connoisseurship that required an analysis of artists' works.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, biographies entailed linking the contemporary artist with a painterly school. Hagedorn starts the description of his cabinet with the *Noli me tangere* by Francesco Solimena (1657–1747). To prove the authenticity of the painting, he mentions a certificate issued by the Kaiserlich-königliche Hofakademie der Maler, Bildhauer und Baukunst in Vienna and, more importantly, the opinion of Pietro Rotari (1707–1762), one of Solimena's most talented pupils who was employed at the Dresden court.<sup>33</sup> Importantly, Solimena's masterpiece opens the description of the Italian school in Hagedorn's cabinet and is followed by works of living or recently deceased artists active in Italy, and of those who, like Rotari or Torelli, worked at the court of Dresden. Heineken's picture cabinet is known thanks to Pierre Rémy's auction catalogue of 1757.<sup>34</sup> Like Hagedorn, Heineken reserved a special place for

31 Heres, pp. 98–133.

32 Hagedorn, p. 367.

33 Hagedorn, p. 7.

34 Rémy.



contemporary artists, showing the links connecting them to established schools of painting. The artists active in Dresden were classified according to their origins and education. Thus, a kitchen scene by Charles-François Hutin was listed with the works of the French school, and Bellotto's *View of Pirna* with the Venetian school. Interestingly, Heineken collected just one piece by each artist and eagerly juxtaposed the Dresden artists with other contemporary representatives of their school.

According to Benedict Leca, the *Recueil Crozat* should be read with a national focus; he argued that a particular manner of engraving reflected the style of a given artistic school.<sup>35</sup> Moreover, inasmuch as the French engravers had the best skills and abilities to reproduce the most highly prized masterpieces of the Italian Renaissance and Baroque schools, the *Recueil Crozat* sanctioned the prominent position accorded to the contemporary French school. Indeed, for Heineken, the Dresden *Galeriewerk* also constituted an important national statement. On the one hand, he showed the affinities of the *maniere* of the Old Masters with contemporary representatives of the most established national and regional schools of painting and so evoked a continuity of national style. On the other, his album played a significant role in establishing Dresden as an important centre of art, connoisseurship, and collecting. The descriptions of the cabinets of Heineken and Hagedorn show that they both aimed to recognise, describe, and codify a German school of painting. The foundation in 1764 of the Allgemeine Kunst-Akademie der Malerei, Bildhauer-Kunst, Kupferstecher- und Baukunst constituted the culmination of this process. Hagedorn, its first general director, planned to select the staff of the new institution from the cosmopolitan circles of former artists of the court of Augustus III of Poland who had contributed to Heineken's publishing project for a *Galeriewerk*. Thus, for example, Hutin became the academy's director, and Bellotto served as the professor of perspective until his employment at the Warsaw court. Bacciarelli, who left Dresden at the time of the Seven Years' War and never returned, launched a project for a fine arts academy in Warsaw and discussed his ideas with Hagedorn. In this way, the representatives of the Venetian, French, and Roman schools of painting became founders of new national painterly traditions in their adopted homelands.

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## About the Author

Ewa Manikowska is Associate Professor at the Institute of Art of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. She has also worked for various museum institutions, including the Galleria Palatina and the National Museum in Warsaw. Her research interests focus on the history of collecting, survey photography, cultural heritage, and art restitution.

# Drawings, Connoisseurship, and Geography



## 7. Padre Sebastiano Resta (1635–1714) and the Italian Schools of Design

*Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodinò*

### Abstract

During the second half of the seventeenth century in Italy, Padre Sebastiano Resta, a prominent collector and connoisseur of drawings who was based in Rome, assembled drawings in nearly 30 volumes. He organised the drawings in his albums to demonstrate a particular art historical point of view: the early development of visual art in Italy according to artists and schools, and in strict chronological order. Every volume illustrated a complete history of 'disegno', because his purpose was to display the history of Italian art in figures. This essay discusses the volumes entitled 'Galleria portatile' and 'Felsina vindicata contra Vasarium', which place him both in the tradition of Giorgio Vasari and in the anti-Vasarian polemic of the seventeenth century.

**Keywords:** Sebastiano Resta, school of design, Italian drawings, history of art in figures, Antonio Allegri (Correggio), anti-Vasarian polemic

The idea of a school of art tied to a geographical context dates back to Pliny the Elder's *Historia naturalis* and his treatment of the arts. In modern artistic literature, it first appears in the writings of Paolo Giovio (1483–1552). Giovio's adherence to the Plinian model is recalled by Giorgio Vasari in his autobiography, where he explains the difference between that tradition and a new model of artist biographies arranged according to an evolutionary stylistic sequence.<sup>1</sup>

The seventeenth-century conception of local art schools depends on these precedents and was adopted in Rome by Giovanni Battista Agucchi in his *Trattato della pittura* (c. 1610) and by Giulio Cesare Gigli, a writer from Brescia who published a poem in 1615, *Pittura trionfante*, where for the first time the concept of local art

<sup>1</sup> On Giovio, see Agosti 2008. For Vasari, see Agosti 2013; Agosti 2016.

schools is coherently articulated.<sup>2</sup> As early as the end of the sixteenth century, the concept of schools of painting in Italy was supported by those who argued against Vasari's assertion of the sole primacy of the Tuscan-Roman school. For instance, Ludovico Dolce and Paolo Pino (fl. 1534–1565) argued for the prominence of the Venetian school, and Carlo Cesare Malvasia later defended the Bolognese school.<sup>3</sup>

During the second half of the seventeenth century in Rome, the Oratorian Padre Sebastiano Resta,<sup>4</sup> who was a prominent collector and connoisseur of drawings, also propounded the idea of schools in Italian art through a historical and geographical stylistic explanation. He assembled drawings in nearly 30 volumes, and he organised these volumes according to schools and artists to demonstrate a particular art historical point of view (an innovative practice of connoisseurship at the time): a chronological development of Italian art across artists and schools, from the fourteenth century up to his contemporary time. Since Resta's main goal was to display the history of Italian art through figures, every volume offered a comprehensive consideration of drawing.

In the frontispiece for *Galleria portatile*, now at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana in Milan (Fig. 26),<sup>5</sup> Resta follows Vasari and states that the most significant Italian schools in the Renaissance were the Florentine and the Roman ones. Yet he does not neglect the other schools: the Lombard, where he highlights Correggio's draughting skills, the Venetian, the Bolognese, and the Neapolitan.

In this essay, I will consider the literary concept of schools that Resta constructs with often unusually innovative insights through examples from the title pages of his volumes, the display of drawings in the volumes, his comments on current art literature, and finally the notes he placed at the margins of his drawings. These notes appeared very interesting to Jonathan Richardson (1665–1745), the renowned eighteenth-century English connoisseur, who copied them in a now famous manuscript at the British Library.<sup>6</sup> These notes are important because they document the sequence of drawings within each volume, which have unfortunately been disassembled. In many of these volumes, Resta used drawings to convey the history of Italian figure art and so to evoke the evolution of art history in Italy from its origins to his time.

Many of Resta's attributions for his oldest drawings are not acceptable today: the most famous case is the sheet he considered by Giotto in the *Galleria portatile*, a work which has since been ascribed to Bartolino de' Grossi.<sup>7</sup> But the strongly negative

2 For Agucchi, see Ginzburg 2000, with bibliography; Gigli. See also the essay by Oy-Marra in this edited collection.

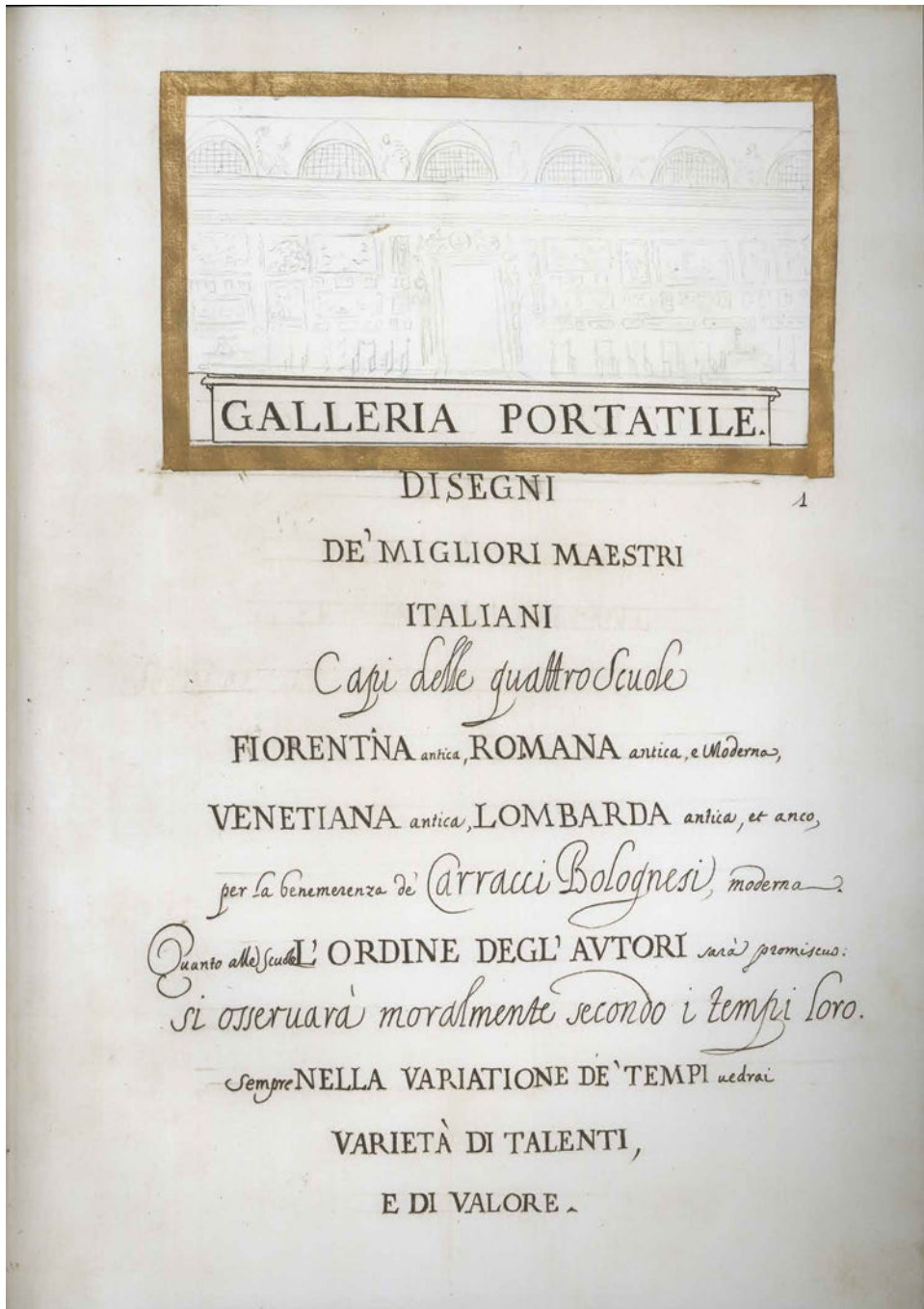
3 On Dolce, see Aymonino; Malvasia.

4 On Resta, see Popham 1936–1937; Fusconi; Warwick; Prospero Valenti Rodinò 2001, pp. 60–86; Prospero Valenti Rodinò 2007; Prospero Valenti Rodinò 2013; Bianco; Pizzoni 2018.

5 Bora 1976, pl. 1.

6 BLL, ms. Lansdowne 802; Warwick; Gibson Wood.

7 Bora 1976, pls. 4, 5.



26. Frontispiece and title page, Sebastiano Resta, *Galleria portatile*, c. 1705/06, black chalk, pen and brown ink, 523 x 385 mm, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, from Giorgio Fubini, *Cento tavole* (Milan: Fontes Ambrosiani, 1955). Photo taken from *Cento tavole*. © Institut für Kunstgeschichte und Musikwissenschaften der Johannes-Gutenberg-Universität, Mainz.



judgment of Resta sometimes expressed during the nineteenth century has now been overturned thanks to the recent re-evaluation of Resta's importance for the history of collecting and the drawing market in seventeenth-century Europe, for the provenance of his drawings, and, above all, for a broader view of Italian art schools.<sup>8</sup>

## Revolutionising Vasari: New Direction and Schools

Although it is clear that Resta mostly sought sheets from the protagonists of the Renaissance and Italian classicism (Michelangelo, Raphael, and the Carracci), he also displayed an unprecedented appreciation for artists and schools hardly valued previously; this taste contrasted markedly with Giovan Pietro Bellori's theories which were then popular in Rome.

It is worth noting Resta's early interest in drawings by fourteenth- and fifteenth-century artists, and by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century painters who had trained in the Lombard and Bolognese-Emilian schools. He was also keen on drawings by the most prominent Mannerist artists, who were often neglected in his time—for instance, Polidoro da Caravaggio (c. 1499–c. 1543), Perino del Vaga (1501–1547), Francesco Salviati (1510–1563), and the Zuccari brothers, whose high quality of draughtsmanship he was the first to understand. Moreover, he did not forget other, less-valued Italian areas, such as Venice and Parma, and, even more so, Milan and Naples,<sup>9</sup> of which he can rightly be deemed the first true admirer.

Resta's conception of drawings was based on a literary approach to the development of art from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century in Italy. This approach was not original, as he followed Vasari's evolutionary conception of Italian art history, which stretched from decline in the first century AD to rebirth with Cimabue (c. 1240–before 1302) and Giotto, and to perfection in the Renaissance.<sup>10</sup> Many of Resta's volumes depart from Giotto to encompass the later seventeenth century, including not only the aforementioned *Galleria portatile*, but also the volumes that have been dismantled: *Serie grande in quattro tomi*, *Parnaso dei pittori*, and *Arte in tre stati*.<sup>11</sup>

Yet Resta introduced a new group of artists, 'the primitives'. As a member of the Congregazione dell'Oratorio, he followed the historiographical approach of Cesare Baronio (1538–1607), the well-known author of the *Annales ecclesiastici*.<sup>12</sup> Baronio's

8 For a reevaluation of Resta as connoisseur, see Popham 1936–1937; Fusconi; Warwick, pp. 76–107; more recently, Ginzburg 2017, pp. 381–391.

9 See the essays by Giulia Bonardi, Giulio Bora, Mario Epifani, Francesco Grisolia, Maria Rosa Pizzoni in Bianco.

10 Agosti 2015b, pp. 35–51.

11 Popham 1936–1937; Warwick.

12 Gulia.

art revaluation focused on the early centuries of the Church, especially on paintings from catacombs and early Christian mosaics preserved in Rome.

Resta's interest in early medieval art history, which was also investigated by some Roman intellectuals, such as Cardinal Roberto Bellarmino (1542–1621), Cardinal Francesco Barberini (1597–1679), Cassiano dal Pozzo (1588–1657), and Giovanni Giustino Ciampini (1633–1698),<sup>13</sup> is evidenced by the volume that contains copies of early Christian mosaics and that is now in Edinburgh.<sup>14</sup> Resta arranged it not to highlight the quality of the draughtsmanship, which was modest, but to document Roman art before Cimabue and Giotto.

For Resta, it was easy to grant the supremacy of the Florentine painting school asserted by Vasari when dealing with the drawings in his volumes. In fact, Resta did not miss a chance to proclaim Tuscan prominence in the rebirth of modern art from the fourteenth through the seventeenth centuries. He made Giotto the pioneer of this resurgence in the arts and ascribed the apogee to Michelangelo in the sixteenth century. With the help of high-quality drawings, such as those by Domenico Ghirlandaio (1449–1494), Filippino Lippi (c. 1457–1504), Andrea di Cosimo (1477–1548), Raffaellino del Garbo (1466–1524), Sandro Botticelli (1444/45–1510), Luca Signorelli (c. 1450–1523), and Perugino (c. 1450–1523), Resta conveyed the fundamental role these artists played in the rebirth of the arts. For all of these artists, he owned original drawings.<sup>15</sup>

But Resta's legacy is best captured in a postscript he affixed to Vasari's text, where in the transition from the second to the third age—a transition characterised by protagonists such as Andrea Mantegna in Lombardy, Perugino in Rome, Ghirlandaio and Andrea del Verrocchio (1435–1488) in Florence, and Giovanni Bellini (1431/36–1516) in Venice between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries—Resta identifies Leonardo as the 'cornerstone [...] to which they looked and by which all the Italian schools were regulated'.<sup>16</sup> In this crucial passage, Resta revolutionises Vasari's description of painting schools: as a Florentine, Vasari privileged the Tuscan school, but he did not use the term of 'school' to delineate a geographically organised evolution of art. By studying drawings, Resta transforms the well-defined stylistic context of schools into a geographical context based also on chronological development.

In other words, Resta does not limit himself to defining Leonardo's stylistic features within the Florentine school; he also highlights Leonardo's influence in Lombardy at the end of the fifteenth century by linking elements of style to geography, as illustrated by Resta's well-known *alberelli* ('artists' trees').<sup>17</sup> These 'trees'

13 On this topic, see Herklotz, with bibliography.

14 Gardner; Bonardi, pp. 133–142.

15 The drawings attributed to Masaccio, Donatello, and Fra Angelico were later or were copies.

16 Ginzburg 2017, p. 387.

17 Warwick, figs. 39, 40. On the *alberelli*, see also Grisolia 2016, pp. 14–15; Ginzburg 2017, p. 388.

are genealogies of schools and artists connected via style and artistic influences. Resta combined biographical, stylistic, and chronological data to highlight the evolution of artists and schools of painting in Italy.

He was the first to identify in Italian art literature—and long before Luigi Lanzi—fundamental elements for the history of Italian art, anticipating critical results only recently achieved by art historical research. For instance, the fact that Piero della Francesca (1410/20–1492) was Perugino's teacher, that Mantegna was Correggio's, that Correggio was influenced by Raphael when he was in Rome, and not least that Leonardo da Vinci was the real catalyst for art in Lombardy.<sup>18</sup> Resta's primary importance lies precisely in his discussion of the Lombard school, as he re-evaluated the designs of artists hitherto ignored by critics. It is still surprising today that he scattered rare drawings by Bramantino (c. 1465–1530) and Donato Bramante (1443/44–1514) throughout his volumes (despite making mistakes of attribution between the two), by Gaudenzio Ferrari (1480/84–1546), by Aurelio Luini (c. 1530–1593), and that he collected a sketchbook of studies by Ambrogio Figino (1548–1608), today at the Morgan Library in New York, as well as various sheets now dispersed across the world. See for instance the page in the *Trattenimenti*, which is now at the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi in Florence.<sup>19</sup> Resta also purchased numerous drawings by the various Campi of Cremona, Lattanzio Gambara (c. 1530–1574), Enea Salmeggia (1565/70–1626), and by members of the Procaccini family.<sup>20</sup>

Undoubtedly, Resta's most ingenious intuitions were to put Correggio at the head of the Lombard school in the sixteenth century and to follow Vasari in recognising Correggio as the protagonist not only in the transition to the 'modern manner', but also—thanks to a link to Lanfranco—in the development of art in seventeenth-century Rome. Through another brilliant intuition (which Roberto Longhi noted as well), Resta understood that he could not neglect Correggio's journey to Rome, when he saw Raphael's works. Continuously, Resta looked for Correggio's drawings so that he could reconstruct his biography and stylistic development and support his argument about Correggio's two trips to Rome. He dedicated two volumes to Correggio, *Cartellone de' Correggeschi* and *Correggio a Roma*, which became the leitmotif of his theory and most innovative artistic practice, as Arthur Popham recognised in 1958.<sup>21</sup>

Both Resta's interpretation of Correggio and the presence within his collections of Leonardo's famous cartoon with St Anne (Fig. 27) led him to meet Bellori, the

18 Warwick.

19 Grisolia 2018b, cat. nos. 85a–85e.

20 For the Lombard school in Resta's collection, see Prosperi Valenti Rodinò 2013a, pp. 64–89; Bora 2017, pp. 241–302.

21 Resta, ed. by Popham, 1958; Pizzoni 2017, with bibliography. Today, the volume *Correggio a Roma* is preserved at the British Museum.



27. School of Leonardo da Vinci, *Cartoon with St Anne*, Esterházy Collection, Budapest, present whereabouts unknown. © Bibliotheca Hertziana – Max-Planck-Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Rome.



28a, b. Frontispiece, Sebastiano Resta, *Piccolo preliminare al grande anfiteatro pittorico*, pen and brown wash, 513 x 385 mm, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale Vittorio Emanuele II, Rome, vol. 68, Banc II 15. © Su concessione del Ministero per i Beni e le Attività culturali e per il Turismo, Italy.

L'Anfiteatro Pittorico si fabrica, anzi è  
quasi fabricato à gloria de' Pittori Moderni.

Noi pigliamo l'operar moderno dal tempo di Raffaele,  
ma poiché pare ad alcuni, che la Maniera moderna sia  
stata aperta da Pietro da Cortona in Roma, di cui parla  
il P. M.<sup>o</sup> Orlando nel suo Abecedario come d'Antesignano d'  
una moderna scuola, dicendo, che al serrarsi della Scuola  
Carraccesca si apri quella di Pietro da Cortona, Corona  
de' Pittori, Perciò qui si uedrà, che la sua Modernità  
fu originata dall' Antecedente Modernità de' Carracci,  
e del secolo di Raffaele, siccome pur anco da bass  
relieuf, e statue antiche, che mostrarono à quel tempo il  
fondamento dell'Arte à gl'occhi ben purgati di quel  
secolo, non conosciuto, né inuestigato per ottocent'anni  
prima, ne quali ogni artefice in faccia al lume cami-  
naua alla cieca, oculos habentes, et non uidentes.

Ne daremo qui un semplice saggio mostrando alcuni  
pochi studij fatti, copiando da altri Antecessori, di mano di  
Pietro, e di suo Ordine, da alcuni suoi discipoli, massime in  
occasione di dover fare la Galleria Panfelia, che fu la foriera  
de' suoi maggiori applausi, ed uì si prese l'idea Farnesiana  
per Madre della sua. Così han fatto tutti i prudenti Maestri,  
che han cauato non ignominia né publanimità, ma gloria, e genesi-  
tad idta d'hoi, e generosità  
de' Maggiori.

most distinguished theorist in Rome during the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>22</sup> Indeed, Resta shared Bellori's admiration for Correggio; both men deemed the painter to be the head of the Lombard school and argued that his luminosity, sensual softness, and innovative illusionism were brought to Rome by Annibale Carracci, the true founder of the modern manner in the city—a style then deepened by Lanfranco, the first great Baroque artist.

Unlike Bellori, Resta demonstrated critical independence. He founded his knowledge on Correggio's early works in Parma, and his pragmatic, less intellectual approach to art history allowed him to appreciate both contemporary artists and the great masters of the Baroque, while Bellori focused on the classicists.

In fact, Resta dedicated an entire volume of drawings to Pietro da Cortona, whom he considered to be the father of the modern age: *Il piccolo preliminare al Grande Anfiteatro pittorico*, still preserved at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale in Rome (Figs. 28a, b).<sup>23</sup> Here, Resta indicated that the necessary training of a young Baroque painter comprised the study of ancient art, Raphael, Michelangelo, Polidoro da Caravaggio, Annibale Carracci, Gianlorenzo Bernini, Cortona, and Peter Paul Rubens.

## Bologna

As for Bologna, Resta and Bellori both greatly admired Annibale Carracci, an artist whom Resta came to know through the splendid sheets for the Galleria Farnese, which were then in Rome and many of which came into Resta's possession. These drawings inspired Resta to devote an entire volume to the Bolognese school from Amico Aspertini (1474/75–1552) to the Carracci. Entitled *Felsina vindicata contra Vasarium*, the volume was the most programmatic album of drawings in Resta's collection.<sup>24</sup> As can be seen from the title, which paraphrases that of the *Lives* of Malvasia, the volume is a significant example of seventeenth-century, anti-Vasarian polemic in Italy.

Vasari denigrated the Bolognese school because he preferred sixteenth-century Florentine painters. His criticism sparked a response from Malvasia, a seventeenth-century Bolognese biographer who wrote about Bolognese painters

22 On Bellori and Resta, see Prosperi Valenti Rodinò in Borea, I, pp. 524–529; Pizzoni 2012. On the Leonardo cartoon, see Prosperi Valenti Rodinò 2008a, pp. 29–47; Delieuvin, cat. nos. 25, 27, pp. 100–104; Grisolia 2018a, pp. 111–117, fig. 10.

23 Fusconi.

24 Prosperi Valenti Rodinò 2013d, pp. 45–89, 175–189.

and exalted his fellow artists in open opposition to Vasari.<sup>25</sup> Resta agreed with Malvasia's arguments, although he was aware of the higher quality of sixteenth-century Florentine designers than of the Bolognese (in fact, he finally agreed with Vasari).

*Felsina vindicata*, composed of 80 pages on which 110 drawings were glued, comprehensively displayed the Bolognese development of art that Malvasia traced in his work. This account was structured according to a chronological conception of schools of art: the first comprising the beginning of the sixteenth century, the second focused on the second half of the sixteenth century, and the third devoted to the seventeenth century. The volume opens with the *Prima scola* ('First School') including Francesco Francia (1450–1517), Timoteo Viti (1469–1523), and Aspertini; continues with the *Seconda scola* ('Second School') of Pellegrino Tibaldi (1527–1596), Prospero Fontana (1512–1597), Bartolomeo Passarotti (1529–1592), and 'more followers of Michelangelo than of Raphael'; and ended with the *Terza scola de Bolognesi, in secolo d'argento aurea* ('Third School of the Bolognese, in the Silver Century Aurea').<sup>26</sup> This last school celebrated the Carracci and their followers as the protagonists of the modern era and underlined how they had triumphed over all the other Italian schools in the sixteenth century.

In fact, Resta assembled high-quality examples in his volume: the most beautiful sheets by Ludovico, Agostino, and Annibale Carracci,<sup>27</sup> and their followers Domenichino, Lanfranco, Guido Reni (1575–1642), and Alessandro Algardi (1598–1654). Once the volume was complete, the prior Antonio Renzi, a merchant in contact with Resta, procured him a splendid drawing of a frieze with a Victory by Correggio, which Genevieve Warwick has identified in the collection of the Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth.<sup>28</sup> Resta placed this drawing at the end to triumphantly conclude the volume and reiterate the role played by Correggio as a founder of the Emilian school in the sixteenth century, alongside Raphael. As we have tried to demonstrate, *Felsina vindicata* was a significant episode of anti-Vasarian polemic in seventeenth-century Europe.

## Naples

Even more substantial was Resta's role in defining the Neapolitan school via the footnotes and comments below his drawings. This role is now recognised in the

25 Cropper, in Malvasia.

26 Prosperi Valenti Rodinò 2013d, pp. 59–79.

27 Prosperi Valenti Rodinò 2013d, figs. 22–31, identified by Wood.

28 Identified by Warwick, p. 34, fig. 14; Prosperi Valenti Rodinò 2013d, p. 80, pl. II.



most recent scholarship<sup>29</sup> and anticipates, in an intelligent and farsighted way, Bernardo de Dominici's reevaluation of Neapolitan artists in 1742.

Perpetuating his constant controversy with Vasari, Resta included critical glosses in two volumes of Vasari's *Vite*, now preserved in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana. He noted that Vasari was so blinded by his admiration of the Florentines that he ignored key Renaissance figures in Naples in the sixteenth century; the only non-Florentine to whom Vasari dedicated a biography was the Calabrian Marco Cardisco (fl. 1508–1541).<sup>30</sup>

Instead, Resta draws attention to Antonio Solario, known as Lo Zingaro (fl. 1502–1514), whom he considered the Neapolitan Perugino and the master of the most up-to-date generation of Renaissance culture, and, above all, to Andrea Sabatini da Salerno (c. 1480–1530/31), whom he praised as the Neapolitan Raphael and whose role he recognised in the development of Neapolitan art, as Salerno had introduced some Raphaellesque innovations to the city of Campania.<sup>31</sup>

Resta developed an in-depth knowledge of artistic developments in Naples during his frequent trips to the city—at least three can be reconstructed from his notes and footnotes, the most profitable one of which occurred in 1683, when he visited Gaspar de Haro y Guzmán, Marquis del Carpio (Viceroy of Spain). Carpio was a well-known collector of paintings and drawings, and he consulted Resta about acquiring pieces for his collection of drawings.<sup>32</sup> In 1683, Resta had bought from the aged Andrea di Lione (1610–1685) a book of drawings by local artists. It had already belonged to the prince of Tarsia, Ferrante Spinelli, and it contained drawings by Aniello Falcone (1607–1656) (Fig. 29), including the famous *Portrait of Massaniello* (now at the Morgan Library in New York), beautiful studies by Andrea di Lione, and other sheets by Mattia Preti (1613–1699).<sup>33</sup> The book also included rare drawings by Zingaro, Belisario Corenzio (1590–1646), Simone Papa (1506–1567), Battistello Caracciolo (1578–1635), and Giovanni Bernardino Azzolino (c. 1572–1645), most of which are no longer traceable today.<sup>34</sup> The existence of these pieces is not obvious in the Neapolitan Renaissance drawing scene; in fact, they are only recently studied.<sup>35</sup> As he had done on other occasions, Resta dismantled the book and grouped the drawings in his various albums and in those of the Marquis del Carpio.

29 Epifani, pp. 303–328; Pezzuto.

30 Agosti 2015a; Pezzuto.

31 Agosti 2015b, pp. 45–48; Pezzuto.

32 Prospero Valenti Rodinò 2008b; Frutos Sastre.

33 Epifani, pp. 303–328, figs. 4, 6, 7, 9.

34 Epifani, pp. 303–328.

35 Epifani, pp. 303–328; Pezzuto.



29. Aniello Falcone, *Ruth and Boaz*, red chalk, brush, and red wash, 167 x 174 mm, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 1973.71. © The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

## Venice

It is still little noticed by scholars that Resta also appreciated and collected Venetian drawings. On the frontispiece of the *Galleria portatile*, the 'ancient Venetian' school appears as the third among the four renowned schools of Italian art; it appears after the Florentine and Roman schools, but before the Lombard schools. Resta owned some of the most important sheets by Giovanni Bellini, Vittore Carpaccio (1460/66–1525/26), Giorgione (1477/78–1510), and Sebastiano del Piombo (1485–1547); the attribution of these drawings is still accepted. Resta focused on the characteristics of drawing in the Venetian school, a topic that scholars have begun to revalue only in the twentieth century after Tietze Conrat's seminal study of 1944. Vasari, in fact, harshly criticised Venetian drawing, claiming that Venetian artists considered drawing secondary to colour and even asserting that artists of the caliber of Giorgione and Titian did not know how to draw.<sup>36</sup> However, Resta understood the importance and quality of Venetian drawing, as he indicated in many of the glosses he affixed to Vasari's *Vite*; he often emphasised Vasari's bias regarding Venetian artists.<sup>37</sup>

Resta distributed many Venetian drawings across his volumes and, consequently, underscored the excellence of that school, which could for the first time be compared to other schools in terms of drawings. Rather than combining the Venetian drawings into a single volume, as he did for the Bolognese artists and Correggio, Resta incorporated groups of them into the anthological volumes in order to trace the development of Italian drawing.

Although fifteenth-century drawings were rare in the seventeenth century (and remain rare today), Resta acquired a large number of them. There is some doubt about the attribution of sheets to Marco Zoppo (c. 1432–c. 1478),<sup>38</sup> Francesco Squarcione (c. 1395–1468),<sup>39</sup> and Vivarini, but not for Mantegna, whom Resta sometimes mistook for Giovanni Bellini. Resta in fact owned a splendid, autographed sheet (preserved today in Liverpool),<sup>40</sup> which was one of the most beautiful drawings he owned. Resta demonstrated an awareness of Mantegna's centrality to fifteenth-century Paduan culture in his revaluation of the past. He considered Mantegna to be the founder of the Venetian school. By comparing Vasari's biography of Mantegna with that of Carlo Ridolfi (1594–1658), a biographer of Venetian artists, Resta corrected his city of birth from Mantua to Padua and his date of birth from 1451 (supplied by Ridolfi)

36 Whistler.

37 Whistler; Agosti 2015b, pp. 38–39; Agosti 2015a, esp. p. 124.

38 BLL, ms. Lansdowne 802, sheets f 25, i 23.

39 BLL, ms. Lansdowne 802, sheets g 26, g 91, m 3.

40 Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool (inv. WAG 1995.324); formerly: private collection, Ince Blundell Hall, Lulworth Manor, acquired by the National Museums, Liverpool. The most recent bibliography is: Majo, in Agosti and Thiébaud 2008, cat. 182, pp. 142–413.

to 1431.<sup>41</sup> He also cleverly hypothesised that Mantegna influenced Correggio, as scholars today have fully acknowledged.<sup>42</sup>

Resta's drawings of Giovanni Bellini, especially some of his very rare sheets—even if today attributed to his brother Gentile or Carpaccio—are of great interest. He owned two pendants by Gentile Bellini (1429?–1507), which depicted the *Procession before Santa Maria della Carità* and the *Procession in San Marco Square*; one is now preserved in Chatsworth and the other in the British Museum.<sup>43</sup> These works are considered the most significant examples of Venetian drawing from the late fifteenth century because of their narrative and documentary depiction of everyday life. Even more incredible is the group of drawings by Carpaccio that came into Resta's hands. Among them were small pen sketches, which represented initial ideas for paintings, such as the *View of a City with a Port* (now in the British Museum, Fig. 30) and *Sogno di Sant'Orsola* (now in the Uffizi).<sup>44</sup>

Undoubtedly, the most important Venetian sheet in Resta's possession, and the one on which he based his assessment of Venetian drawing, was Giorgione's famous view of *Castel San Zeno a Montagnana with Shepherd*. Preserved in Rotterdam, this drawing is the only one that scholars believe to be signed and dated by the artist, as Rearick states.<sup>45</sup>

There is a question that arises from Venetian drawings of this quality: how did Resta obtain them? We know that he bought Neapolitan drawings during his travels to Naples, and that he came into possession of the beautiful Emilian sheets, especially by Correggio, through his friend Giuseppe Magnavacca (1639–1724). We also know he acquired drawings by the Carracci from the collections of Bellori and Lelio Orsini after their deaths,<sup>46</sup> but it was difficult to find drawings by Mantegna, Carpaccio, and Giorgione of such high quality on the Roman market. We can speculate that Resta turned to the tight network of Oratorians scattered across Italy, in particular to Padre Ermanno Stroiffi (1616–1693),<sup>47</sup> a collector and merchant of drawings in Venice and a painter himself. Stroiffi had many points of contact with Resta, who perhaps met him during a trip to Venice when he lived in Milan in his youth.

41 On the debate about the date of Mantegna's birth, see Cavazzini and Galli, in Agosti and Thiébaud 2008, p. 55, note 1. For the mistake in Mantegna's birthplace, see the comment by Maria Rosa Pizzoni in Agosti 2015a, p. 73, note 49.

42 See Spagnolo, p. 257; Romani, in Agosti and Thiébaud 2008, pp. 408–410.

43 Tietze, p. 149, nos. 591, 592; Chatsworth, Duke of Devonshire collection, inv. 739; Jaffé, cat. no. 782.

44 London, British Museum, Prints and Drawings Department, inv. 1897-4-10.1: Popham 1936–1937, no. IX; Tietze, no. 615, pp. 152–153. Florence, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe degli Uffizi, inv. 1689 F: Grisolia 2018b, cat. no. 23.

45 BLL, ms. Lansdowne 802, k 44: Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, inv. I 367; Rearick, pp. 10–12, fig. 1, pp. 16–21.

46 Prosperi Valenti Rodinò 2013c, pp. 31, 35, 36, 56, 69, 70, 72, 76, 77.

47 Whistler.



30. Vittore Carpaccio, *View of a City with a Port*, red chalk, brush, and red wash, 172 x 191 mm, British Museum, London, inv. 1897, 0410.1. © The Trustees of the British Museum, London.

## Conclusions

Through his experience as a connoisseur, which would have made his outlook more pragmatic than theoretical, and with his in-depth knowledge of the most significant texts of art literature, Resta played a fundamental role in defining schools of art in seventeenth-century Italy.<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, his position on connections between art and geography was only partially articulated and sometimes contradictory. He relied heavily on Vasari, but he often held different opinions, as we have seen for the Lombard, Neapolitan, and Venetian schools.

Resta's ambivalence stands out especially with respect to the Bolognese school. Like Vasari, Resta believed that Florentine draughtsmen were of higher quality than Bolognese, yet he was also in agreement with Malvasia's anti-Vasarian polemic. Malvasia preferred Bolognese artists, not only obviously the Carracci, Domenichino, Reni, and Guercino in the seventeenth century, but also Aspertini and Francia in the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, whose quality of drawings was not comparable to that of contemporaneous artists working in Florence and Rome. At the same time, Resta maintained his cultural autonomy in Rome during the second half of the seventeenth century, and from the drawings he collected, it is evident that he clearly realised how sixteenth-century artists of the Florentine school were much more skilful in drawing than their Bolognese contemporaries, that Leonardo was the founder of the modern Lombard school, that Correggio was a highly talented draughtsman, and so on.

After centuries of discredit, scholars recently have accorded Sebastiano Resta—this curious personality, who was often not very reliable for attributions—the leading role that he evidently played in the late seventeenth-century cultural revolution concerning the idea of painting schools in Italy.

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48 Ginzburg 2017.

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## About the Author

**Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodinò** is Professor of Art History at the Università di Roma Tor Vergata. She is a specialist in and has published widely on Italian drawing, the history of collecting drawings, and the market of drawings in Italy from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

## 8. Connoisseurship beyond Geography: Some Puzzling Genoese Drawings from Filippo Baldinucci's (1624–1696) Personal Collection

*Federica Mancini*

### Abstract

This essay explores Filippo Baldinucci's conception of the notion of a school of art through analysis of his Genoese drawings. He owned 25 Genoese sheets among 1017 pieces that he organised into four volumes. Baron Dominique-Vivant Denon bought Baldinucci's collection for the Musée Napoléon in 1806, and all the graphic works were soon removed from the volumes. Until now, only Baldinucci's Florentine drawings have been carefully studied. Through close study of the digital reconstruction of the original position of the drawings inside the albums, I clarify many puzzling attributions concerning the Genoese sheets and offer new insight into Baldinucci's goals in shaping his collection.

**Keywords:** Filippo Baldinucci, drawing collection, graphic techniques, school, art history, style

Between 1670 and 1690, Filippo Baldinucci collected 1017 drawings and arranged these drawings in four volumes.<sup>1</sup> During the same period, he assembled the collection

I am grateful to many people who helped, inspired, and supported in many ways this research, especially to Margery and Gordon Fain, Ingrid Vermeulen, Xavier Salmon, and Alessandro Baricco.

<sup>1</sup> According to his son Francesco Saverio (1663–1738), Filippo assembled his first collection before 1665, when he offered it to Cardinal Leopoldo. He would start assembling a second one only by 1690, at which point he 'would have eventually free time to do that'. See Baldinucci 1948, pp. 43, 52. Goguel stated that Francesco Saverio was not very reliable and that by 1690, his father 'more probably devoted his final years to the task of organizing and mounting a collection that has already been largely set in place'. See Monbeig Goguel, p. 134. See also Fileti Mazza, p. 29, who writes that the volumes were ready by 1690. According to the database of the Département des Arts graphiques of the Musée du Louvre, the number of sheets amounts to 1251 including the versos. See <http://arts-graphiques.louvre.fr/>.

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of Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici (1617–1675), which was subsequently inherited by Cosimo III, Grand Duke of Tuscany (1642–1723).<sup>2</sup> Baldinucci's strong commitment to organising the Medici collection, as well as his writings inspired by this arrangement (*Notizie dei professori del disegno da Cimabue in qua* and other works, including *Vocabolario toscano dell'arte del disegno*), cemented his reputation as a connoisseur.<sup>3</sup> However, his own collection of graphic works was criticised before and after its purchase by the French government in 1806.<sup>4</sup> Despite the marked reservations of Pierre-Jean Mariette and François-Xavier Fabre (1766–1837)<sup>5</sup> about Baldinucci's attributions, Dominique-Vivant Denon (1747–1825), the first director of the Musée Napoléon, agreed to the acquisition of the four volumes, stating that 'a collection of this kind had necessarily a real interest, if not in its entirety, at least in its details'.<sup>6</sup>

Once stored in the Musée Napoléon, Baldinucci's collection of drawings was still misjudged. Frédéric Reiset (1815–1891), appointed in 1850 as the curator of the Cabinet des Dessins in the Louvre, called the seventeenth-century draughtsmen, whose drawings were included in the third and fourth volumes of the collection, 'masters of decadence'.<sup>7</sup> Following a common nineteenth-century practice, Reiset cut the sheets out of the volumes to store them individually (Fig. 31).<sup>8</sup> He classified the drawings under the names of their authors, ordering the authors alphabetically and divided them into Italian regional schools according to their place of birth; this approach followed Reiset's general storage method for objects.<sup>9</sup> Over the past 60

2 On the different commitments of Baldinucci for enlarging the collection of drawings, see Fileti Mazza, pp. 1–37.

3 Fileti Mazza, p. 19: 'Ritornando alla consistenza anche quantitativa della raccolta esistente alla morte del cardinale nel 1675, dobbiamo riconoscere che solo grazie all'organizzazione del patrimonio voluto dal collezionista e all'intuizione di affidarla ad uno storiografo capace come Filippo Baldinucci, fu garantito il rispetto dell'originario impianto.'

4 Goldberg, p. 168, note 58: '*Disegni Fiorentini*, Bacou, and Bean, eds. The authors demonstrate the imprecision of Baldinucci's attributions according to the standards of present-day connoisseurship. By the second quarter of the eighteenth century, Gabburri already felt the need to make excuses.'

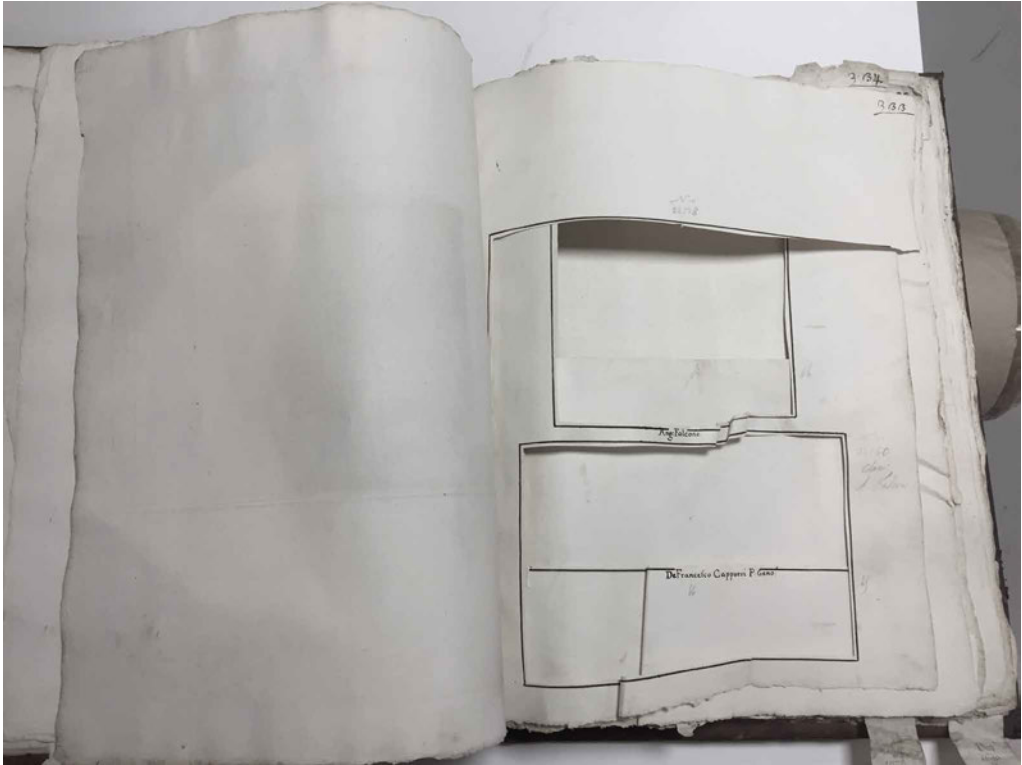
5 Formerly a student of the Académie de France in Rome, he had settled in Florence and was asked to check the value of the collection. See Reiset, p. XLIII.

6 'Fabre joignit à sa lettre le catalogue de la collection, en notant ce qui lui paraissait bon ou mauvais. Cependant Denon n'abandonna pas l'affaire. Sachant sans doute, par son expérience personnelle, qu'une collection de ce genre, si nombreuse et si anciennement formée, devait nécessairement présenter un véritable intérêt, sinon dans l'ensemble, au moins dans les détails, il poursuivit la négociation qui se termina heureusement, en janvier 1806, par l'acquisition des quatre volumes, au prix de 12000 francs.' Reiset, p. XLIII.

7 'Il constatait qu'un grand nombre de ces feuilles était médiocre, et que les deux derniers volumes étaient consacrés presque entièrement aux maîtres de la decadence.' Reiset, p. XLIII.

8 Although Frédéric Reiset did not execute the mountings skilfully, three out of four bindings are still preserved at the Louvre. On Reiset's cataloguing practices, see Coural.

9 The division into regional schools is only for Italy; for the other countries, there is only one national school. His arrangement survives today.



31. Baldinucci's binding of volume 4, interior detail, Musée du Louvre, Paris. © Musée du Louvre, Paris.

years, Roseline Bacou and Catherine Goguel have conducted a thorough analysis of the Florentine graphic works in Baldinucci's collection, by far the largest group of this ensemble. They restored Baldinucci's connoisseurial reputation, stating that 'certain of the drawings from his personal collection have no equivalent among the contents of Leopoldo's collection, which later entered the repository of the Uffizi, nothing comparable to the pastels of Giovanni Battista Vanni (1599–1660), Cristofano Allori, and Pietro Dandini at the Louvre'.<sup>10</sup> Despite their efforts, however, Baldinucci's collection still contains many puzzling and erroneous attributions for Italian regional schools other than Florence.

While preparing the *Inventaire général des dessins génois du musée du Louvre*, I have come to the conclusion that some of Baldinucci's misleading attributions for his Genoese drawings needed to be examined more thoroughly.<sup>11</sup> In this essay, I will explain the two directions that I have undertaken in my research to evaluate his connoisseurship regarding this school.<sup>12</sup> The first direction has been an appraisal of the knowledge Baldinucci demonstrated of Genoese artists in his writings so that I could compare this knowledge to the pieces he owned. We will see that even though there are many fewer Genoese drawings than Florentine in his collection, his choice of Genoese graphic works confirms his superior knowledge of the artists coming from this school.<sup>13</sup> The second direction I have been taking is creating displays of the images corresponding to the drawings in their original order inside the volumes. The aim has been to visualise Baldinucci's notion of schools of art in general and to consider the stylistic arrangements he made according to this notion. For the Genoese school, Baldinucci's outlook stemmed from a combination of three elements: stylistic recognition, knowledge of the specialised literature on the art of the major artists, and up-to-date information about the graphic activity of both major and minor draughtsmen coming from Genoa.

The digital display of the graphic works inside Baldinucci's volumes has confirmed that he did not organise his drawings according to regional school and instead chose to arrange them according to decades, specifying every ten-year period on

10 See Bacou, in Bacou 1958, p. 8. See also Monbeig Goguel, p. 134.

11 The *Inventaire général* will be cited as Mancini 2017.

12 Baldinucci refers to artists and drawings coming from Genoa, but he does not mention the term of 'school' either in the inscriptions in the volumes of his collection or in his writings.

13 The Genoese drawings coming from Baldinucci's collection are no more than 25, whereas the Florentine ones total 850. Baldinucci did not quote Raffaele Soprani's *Lives*, which was published in 1674 and which discusses Genoese artists, among his bibliographical sources for the *Notizie*, but by 1675, he had already included the names of many minor Genoese artists, including Francesco Spezzino (1579–?), Pier Francesco Piola (fl. 1565–1600), or Bartolommeo Gagliardi, in his *Listra* ('List of artists'). Their inclusion supports the assumption that he knew soon and in detail about Soprani's publication.

specific pages. On closer inspection, however, the variation in length between decades suggests that he sought to highlight his personal outlook on the art of drawing, especially by illustrating a range of techniques.<sup>14</sup> His 1017 drawings were certainly arranged in a more manageable fashion than the huge Medici collection. Baldinucci's drawings show more easily, drawing after drawing, the connections among artists as he wished to illustrate them. In the case of the Genoese artists, he decided to put their sheets close to or among the draughtsmen from other regional schools in order to show which of these artists influenced the Genoese masters because of the location of their education.<sup>15</sup>

### Baldinucci's Extensive Connoisseurship

As I was preparing the *Inventaire général* of the Genoese drawings of the Musée du Louvre, I was struck by two drawings, which have been attributed to Giovanni Battista Paggi since Baldinucci's time. The sheets that puzzled me were a study of a *Head of a Soldier*<sup>16</sup> and a *Virgin with a Child*.<sup>17</sup> Neither the pencil drawing nor the oil sketch had any relation to the graphic works known by this artist, who mainly drew with pen and ink.<sup>18</sup> As for the dry technique of the *Head of a Soldier* (Fig. 32), Paggi knew how to use pencils. According to his will, Paggi left almost 110 drawings in black and red chalk.<sup>19</sup> Very few sheets of this kind are still preserved in public and private collections. Both the *Archer* at the Morgan Library and Museum in New York and the *Man Collecting a Stone* at the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe di Palazzo Rosso in Genoa present an isolated figure articulated with rapid and broken hatchings.<sup>20</sup> The style of these sheets contrasts with the plain and repetitive black pencil lines of the Louvre *Head of a Soldier*. For the oil monochrome on paper that shows the *Virgin with a Child*, there is no other example attributed to Paggi that

14 I have written another essay on Baldinucci's interest in drawing techniques. See Mancini 2021.

15 This is the case of Paggi, Castiglione, and Capurro. For the different types of classification used for the sheets in the Medici collection, see Vermeulen, pp. 125–129.

16 Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Dessins, inv. 9534; Mancini 2017, pp. 187–188, no. 287. Both this drawing and the following one were cut out with the inscription and the doubled ink line that frame many of Baldinucci's drawings.

17 Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Dessins, inv. 9532; Mancini 2017, p. 188, no. 288.

18 A monograph on Paggi's work is still lacking. To get an idea of his approach to the art of drawing, see Pesenti, pp. 9–52; Lukehart.

19 See Priarone, in Galassi, p. 52.

20 Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Dessins, inv. 1980.69. See Newcome, p. 9, no. 20, in which the sheet was published when it still belonged to the Janos Scholz collection. The second drawing (Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Dessins, inv. D 2519) was published as the work of Lazzaro Tavarone following the analysis of Piero Boccardo. See Boccardo 2009, p. 12, no. 3.



32. Giovanni Battista Paggi, *Head of a Soldier*, red and black chalk, 22.4 cm x 17.8 cm, Département des Arts graphiques, Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 9534. © Michel Urtado, RMN-Grand Palais, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

would provide a parallel.<sup>21</sup> Without convincing stylistic evidence for confirming or rejecting Baldinucci's attribution of these two drawings to Paggi, I amended the attribution to merely 'attributed to'. It is, however, possible that Baldinucci had a better knowledge of Paggi's style with dry techniques than specialists today.<sup>22</sup>

The puzzling attribution of the *Head of a Soldier* came to my attention one year later, when a *Study of a Soldier* appeared at an auction in New York and was published as being by Bernardino Poccetti (1548–1612).<sup>23</sup> The subject, the style of the black hatchings, and the use of white paper to enhance the highlights falling on the helmet echo the *Head of a Soldier*. My first reaction was to consider the Louvre sheet as an enlarged detail derived from the soldier sold by Christie's.<sup>24</sup> However, the stylistic difference between the regular lines of the Louvre drawing and the vibrant ones of Poccetti's pencil work is remarkable. Even if the Louvre sheet is a partial study derived from the other drawing that was a complete, first sketch, Baldinucci labelled the folio in his album with Paggi's name, not Poccetti's. This could be one of the numerous examples of his errors. Yet Baldinucci knew Poccetti's style too well to misjudge the attribution.<sup>25</sup> The assumption that Poccetti is the author of both works is not satisfactory, nor is the attribution of both works to Paggi: the *Study of a Soldier* sold at the New York auction does not correspond to any figure, either painted or drawn, by him.<sup>26</sup>

Baldinucci was familiar with Paggi both as an artist and as a theorist. Evidence of Baldinucci's correct attribution for the Louvre sheet is based on Paggi's theoretical activity. Paggi was a prominent artistic personality. He was the most important Genoese artist following Luca Cambiaso's (1527–1585) death in 1585, he was the founder of the Accademia del Disegno in Genoa after his return from Florence in 1599, and he was the author of a small, now lost treatise on drawing techniques, *La*

21 The technique of oil monochrome became widespread in Genoa during the second quarter of the seventeenth century, at the time of Giovanni Andrea de Ferrari (1598–1669)—that is to say, one generation after Paggi.

22 I believe that these two drawings are still kept at the Louvre under Paggi's name and not that of some other artist (like Cristoforo Roncalli (c. 1553–1626) for the monochrome), because respect for provenance has prevailed in the past. It is always sensible to keep a long-standing attribution, especially when it refers to a rare artist or seems in some way problematic.

23 See *Old Master and British Drawings*, lot no. 32.

24 The silhouette of the soldier might be linked to the preliminary studies for the *Glorious Men's Ceiling (Soffitto degli uomini illustri)* in Palazzo Capponi in Florence, which Poccetti painted in 1585. See Marcucci, VI, ad vocem.

25 While in charge of the Medici collection, Baldinucci increased the number of Poccetti's drawings from 324 in June 1673 to 546 two years later. See Fileti Mazza, p. 23; Barocchi, pp. 571–578.

26 Only a tentative comparison can be established with a soldier painted on the frescoes devoted to *Saint Catherine Converts Two Death Convicts to Christianity* in the Great Cloister of Santa Maria Novella in Florence. These frescoes were realised in 1582, at the beginning of Paggi's stay in Florence. See Pesenti, p. 34, fig. 15. Paggi spent nearly twenty years in Florence, between 1581 and 1599.



*dotta tavola*.<sup>27</sup> It is not known whether Baldinucci owned a copy of this essay, but he studied it extensively.<sup>28</sup> He included many parts of it in his *Vocabolario toscano dell'arte del disegno*,<sup>29</sup> and in this way, many of Paggi's ideas have been preserved for posterity.<sup>30</sup> Among the numerous quotations that Baldinucci inserted into his *Vocabolario*, one in particular might explain the attribution of the *Head of a Soldier* to Paggi. As reported by Baldinucci, Paggi said that to give liveliness to a character, 'it was important to stress the details of the face with wide-open eyes, large nostrils (to imitate someone who inhales and exhales a lot of air), and an open mouth'.<sup>31</sup> These details all appear in the Louvre drawing and convince me that the *Head* may be an illustration drawn by Paggi for his *Tavola*. A didactic intention would justify the enlarged size of the head and the flat and mechanical rhythm of the coloured lines, which contrasts with Paggi's rapid pen style in his *bozzetti*. Baldinucci's decision to acquire such an unusual drawing by Paggi, was perhaps inspired by Poccetti, whom he surely knew, and could suggest a high respect for the Genoese painter, whose theoretical work was essential for Baldinucci when writing his dictionary on drawing techniques.<sup>32</sup>

### Baldinucci's Notion of a 'School of Art': Some Genoese Examples

While arranging the Medici collection, Baldinucci had to contend with a difficult situation: the constantly increasing number of drawings as Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici made regular purchases.<sup>33</sup> To organise the drawings, Baldinucci divided them according to decade. Soon, however, the chronological division was not satisfactory. He therefore introduced more criteria, such as the separation of the volumes of drawings into *Libri Universali* ('General Books') and *Libri Particolari*

27 See Giovanelli.

28 See Ostrowski.

29 Baldinucci 1681.

30 'Trovare infine il nome del Paggi, con il riferimento alla sua tavola, affiancato alle più grandi personalità della trattistica non deve sorprendere dal momento che, il Baldinucci, pare avesse nei confronti dell'artista ligure una certa ammirazione derivata sicuramente dal soggiorno quasi ventennale di quest'ultimo nella città medicea, come sembrano testimoniare altri due dati: il primo sono le undici pagine, ben superiori alla media dei pittori genovesi, che gli ha dedicato per la biografia contenuta nelle *Notizie dei Professori*; il secondo è il famoso ritratto eseguito da Giovanni nel 1589.' Giovanelli, p. 85.

31 Baldinucci 1681, pp. 10, 70, 82–83; Giovanelli, p. 86.

32 The relationship between Paggi and Poccetti dated back to 1582, when they both worked on the cloister of Santa Maria Novella. See Marcucci, VI, ad vocem, on Poccetti's biography. As for Paggi, see Zanelli, LXXX, ad vocem.

33 See Chiarini, p. 47; Vermeulen, pp. 128–129: 'The irregularities resulting from the combination of different criteria in the arrangement of the Medici collection led Baldinucci not to follow that model for his *Notizie*.'

(‘Particular Books’), the grouping of some regional schools, and the juxtaposition of works by masters and their students.<sup>34</sup>

In his own collection, Baldinucci arranged again the drawings according to decade, from 1260 until 1690.<sup>35</sup> He thus reused his approach from his *Notizie dei professori del disegno da Cimabue in qua*, which he tentatively deployed for the Medici collection.<sup>36</sup> Because the number of drawings formerly in Baldinucci’s collection is far smaller than that of the Medici collection, it has been possible to offer a general overview. This overview has provided some indications about the geography of art that the Florentine collector had in mind. For his collection, Baldinucci did not group his drawings according to the birthplace of their authors. Instead, he organised the drawings to trace an evolving, national narrative of draughtsmanship. The Florentine artists are better represented, but he inserted their works into a wider context—that of the different artistic *foyers* (‘regional workshops’) existing on the Italian peninsula.

No study of Baldinucci’s criteria for arranging the drawings in his albums had been executed before I began my research. Previously, it was also unclear that

34 On the arrangement of some drawings according to regional school (Venetian, Bolognese, and foreigners (*oltremontani*)), see Vermeulen, p. 126. As for the Aristotelian method, see Luca, pp. 97–98: ‘Quelle che Baldinucci sta usando per organizzare la sua imponente struttura altro non sono che le antiche regole dell’arte della memoria, che nata nell’ambito dell’oratoria, aveva avuto un notevole sviluppo nella seconda metà del XVI secolo, anche a Firenze tramite l’opera di Orazio Toscanella. Tra i molteplici metodi sperimentati a seguito dell’avvento della stampa, il comune denominatore, di origine aristotelica, che tutti adottavano, era quello di riuscire a visualizzare in modo sincretico lo svolgersi del pensiero. Quanto Baldinucci fosse debitore di tali pratiche sono, d’altro canto, proprio gli inventari storici a rivelarcelo. I disegni del cardinal Leopoldo erano, infatti, organizzati in libri universali e libri particolari: i primi includevano le opere di più artisti mentre i secondi quelle di un solo autore. Il principio sotteso all’ordinamento baldinuccioniano ce lo fornisce il suo autore: i fogli erano stati divisi per macrogruppi cronologici—quelli che saranno i secoli e i decennali delle *Notizie*—e all’interno di settori temporali era stato seguito il legame maestro-allievo—come nello schema sull’arte del XIII secolo nel volume I delle *Notizie*—, in modo tale che “senza lettura ma con la sola vista si sarebbero potuti riconoscere i progressi dell’Arte”.

35 Baldinucci wrote on the first page of the first volume that this collection (*raccolta*) was gathered by him and contained only original drawings by famous painters, sculptors, and architects, ordered chronologically from Cimabue’s time to 1695. He always used the term ‘drawings’ and not that of ‘school’. He did not apply the model suggested by Giulio Mancini, who preferred a division according to theme, chronology, size, school, and technique. On this issue, see Fileti Mazza, p. 17: ‘L’uso di forma con i disegni, i libri per un’agile consultazione e per una maggiore esaltazione del manufatto, era diffuso anche in altri Gabinetti italiani e europei, e lo stesso Leopoldo faceva riferimento ad un passato eccellente ricordando il *Libro di Disegni* di Giorgio Vasari. Anche Giulio Mancini nelle sue *Considerazioni sulla pittura* scriveva con i toni di un prontuario ideale, come in una collezione “dei disegni a mano ne farà [un gentiluomo privato] libri distinti secondo le materie, tempi, grandezza di foglio, nazioni e modo di disegno, se a penna, lapis e carbone, acquarello, chiaroscuro, [...] che così sarà padrone di mostrarli e farlo godere con gusto dei riguardanti [...] e facilità di chi mostrerà quali libri si serviranno in luoghi più ritirati e da poter esser visti con comodo”.

36 We should, however, remember what Vermeulen said about the Medici collection: ‘The irregularities resulting from the combination of different criteria in the arrangement of the Medici collection led Baldinucci not to follow that model for his *Notizie*.’ Vermeulen, pp. 128–129.

Baldinucci wanted to provide an overview of the history of drawing from the thirteenth to the seventeenth centuries, such as he had attempted for the Medici collection.<sup>37</sup> A virtual reconstruction of the entire original sequence of the graphic works in his volume seemed the best way to consider these issues. The aim has been to understand Baldinucci's intentions in shaping his vision of art (Fig. 33). The result is that many puzzling attributions may be explained by taking into consideration the totality of his outlook on the history of drawing. The original sequence of drawings has been reconstructed on the basis of the list compiled by Roseline Bacou and Jacob Bean in 1958; for this list, they relied on the nineteenth-century inventory made by Fabre to evaluate the purchase of the drawings before 1806.<sup>38</sup>

Analysis of the digital disposition of the Genoese drawings inside the four volumes reveals that Baldinucci highlighted the stylistic connections among artists working in the same cultural milieu by gathering together groups of sheets that show stylistic continuity and development. The digital reconstruction of Baldinucci's volumes has also made it clear that he showcased this continuity while displaying an artist's variety of genres and drawing techniques as much as possible.<sup>39</sup>

If we consider the drawings by Luca Cambiaso in the second volume, we can see how Baldinucci stressed Cambiaso's importance at the beginning of the decade from 1550 to 1560 through his placement of Cambiaso's drawings in the volume.<sup>40</sup> Although the quality of these drawings cannot compare to the ones Baldinucci collected for Leopoldo de' Medici,<sup>41</sup> these sheets form part of the sequence devoted to major north and central Italian masters. They follow the wonderful group of drawings by Agnolo Bronzino (1503–1572), Jacopo Tintoretto, Bartolomeo Ammannati (1511–1592), Giorgio Vasari, and Francesco Salviati, all of which belong to the previous decade, 1530 to 1540.<sup>42</sup> Cambiaso's sheets come before those of

37 Vermeulen, p. 128: 'Indeed, only the sum total of the volumes could be viewed as an artistic chronology from the 13<sup>th</sup> through the 17<sup>th</sup> century.'

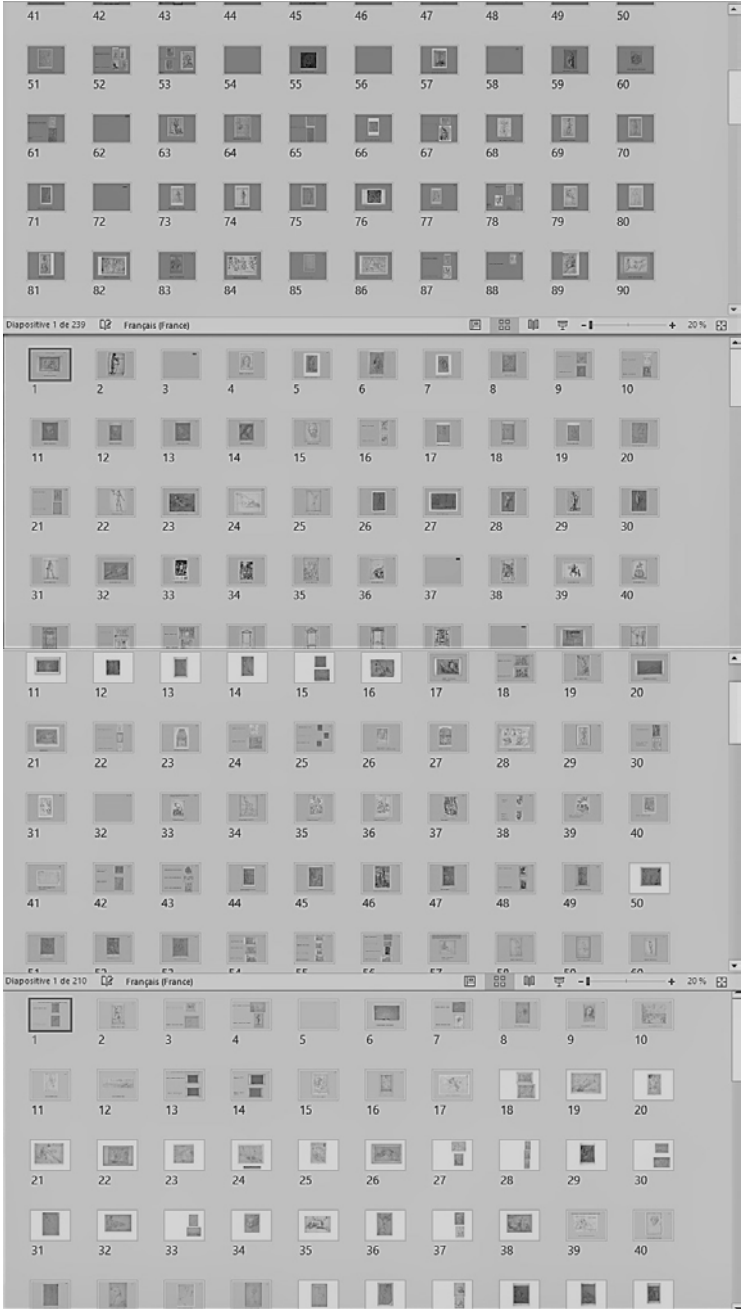
38 See Bacou 1958. The list is available for consultation at the documentation service of the Département des Arts graphiques of the Musée du Louvre. I have checked all the temporary registration numbers given by Reiset (from NIII 21249 to NIII 22266) on the edges of each folio in the three remaining bindings.

39 My study of the complete digital reconstruction was presented during the seminar on 'Red Chalk' held at the Nederlands Interuniversitair Kunsthistorisch Instituut (NIKI) in Florence, 18–19 September 2019. See Mancini 2021

40 Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Dessins, inv. 9312 (Mancini 2017, p. 144, no. 209), inv. 9400 (Mancini 2017, p. 126, no. 162), inv. 9246 (Mancini 2017, p. 135, no. 184), inv. 9218 (Mancini 2017, p. 114, no. 128), inv. 9273 (Mancini 2017, p. 140, no. 9273), inv. 9278 (Mancini 2017, p. 141, no. 200), inv. 9279 (Mancini 2017, pp. 141–142, no. 201), inv. 9405 (Mancini 2017, p. 114, no. 129), inv. 9330 (Mancini 2017, p. 147, no. 219), and inv. 9330.2 (Mancini 2017, p. 148, no. 221).

41 These drawing are now considered to be copies after Cambiaso. See Lauro Magnani's entry, in Boccardo 2007, pp. 404–405, no. 47.

42 The registration numbers of the drawings are: Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Dessins: for Bronzino, inv. 17, inv. 20; for Tintoretto, inv. 5382, inv. 5395, inv. 5396, inv. 5384, inv. 5394; for Ammannati,



33a, b. Digital reconstruction of the four Baldinucci volumes, detail. © Musée du Louvre, Paris.

Baldassare Peruzzi (1481–1536), Domenico Brusasorci (c. 1515–1567), Maso da San Friano (1531–1571), and Paolo Veronese (1528–1588).<sup>43</sup> The two drawings cited as by Paggi<sup>44</sup> were placed together among the works of the Florentine masters and were included in the decade stretching from 1570 to 1580. This decade occupies most of the second album; it includes more than 115 drawings.<sup>45</sup> Paggi's drawings were placed after sheets by Jacopo Ligozzi (1547–1627), Sebastiano Folli (c. 1568–1621), and Alessandro del Barbieri (1538/43–1592).<sup>46</sup> This placement within the graphic works of the Florentine artists confirms Baldinucci's knowledge of Paggi's biography; it suggests his awareness that Paggi spent nearly twenty years in Tuscany between 1581 and 1599. The profound impact of Florentine art on Paggi's style made him the most important ambassador of Tuscan chromatism at the beginning of the seventeenth century.

As for Giovanni Benedetto Castiglione (1609–1664), the best-known Genoese artist in the middle of the seventeenth century, Baldinucci included two works in the group devoted to the Roman circle of 'disruptors' within the third album.<sup>47</sup> These drawings were placed after those of Gianlorenzo Bernini and before those of Giovanni Battista Passeri, Luigi Pellegrino Scaramuccia (1616–1680), and Pietro da Cortona,<sup>48</sup> thus demonstrating Baldinucci's correct information about Castiglione and the artistic environment surrounding the painter in his multiple trips to Rome during his career.<sup>49</sup>

The digital reconstruction of Baldinucci's volumes has also facilitated the solution of another Genoese puzzle. The *Head of a Putto Whistling* (Fig. 34) was previously classified as 'anonymous' by Frédéric Reiset and later as a work of Bernardo Strozzi

inv. 49, inv. 51, inv. 50, inv. 2786, although no drawing is any longer attributed to him; for Vasari, inv. 2189, inv. 2187, inv. 2188, inv. 2190, inv. 2191, inv. 2787; for Salviati, inv. 1662.

43 The registration numbers of the drawings are: Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Dessins: for Peruzzi, inv. 3752, although it is now classified as a copy after Giulio Romano; for Domenico Brusasorci, inv. 10061, inv. 11118, both classified as being by Bartolomeo Neroni; for Maso di San Friano, inv. 1309, inv. 1310, inv. 1311; for Veronese, inv. 4852 (now identified as Farinati) and inv. 4680.

44 Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Dessins, inv. 9532 and inv. 9534; Mancini 2017, pp. 187–188, nos. 287–288.

45 Note also Baldinucci's statement at the beginning of the first volume of his personal collection: 'Avvertendo il Lettore, che per il tempo dell'incominciare à fiorire / di essi maestri piglierò sempre per regola ferma il tempo di loro età da 25 à 30 Anni / in circa nella quale età, pare che possa dirsi, che ogn'uomo nella propria professione.'

46 The registration numbers of the drawings are: Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Dessins: for Ligozzi, inv. 5046, inv. 5047, inv. 5048; for Folli, inv. 1164, inv. 1165, inv. 1166; for Barbieri, inv. 198.

47 On the 'pittori del dissenso', see Penta.

48 The registration numbers of the drawings are: Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Dessins: for Bernini, inv. 9584, inv. 9585, inv. 9577, inv. 9578; for Passeri, inv. 3437; for Scaramuccia, inv. 4352; and for Cortona, inv. 497, inv. 498 (now as copy after), inv. 519, inv. 515, inv. 516.

49 However, it is not possible to specify the decade because the binding of the third volume from his personal collection has been lost.



34. Francesco Capurro, *Head of a Putto Whistling*, black chalk, white highlights, on blue paper, 31 cm x 24 cm, Département des Arts graphiques, Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 9565. © Michel Urtado, RMN-Grand Palais, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

(1581–1644) by Catherine Goguel.<sup>50</sup> While checking the remains of the fourth binding, I found Baldinucci's original inscription at the bottom of the folio; he had written the name of Francesco Capurro (1620–1672).<sup>51</sup> As so often when Reiset cut the drawing out of the album, he had not included Baldinucci's inscription. Consequently, Baldinucci's attribution remained in the album and has been neglected. At present, very few paintings are verifiably attributed to Capurro, and no drawings are known to have survived. It is difficult, therefore, to assess Baldinucci's attribution.<sup>52</sup> Because Baldinucci knew such a rare and minor artist and because he attributed a drawing to him, even including it among examples of 'remarkable' artists (as his collection claimed to be), we can clearly observe the thoroughness of his scholarship. Moreover, he inserted Capurro's drawing after those of Jusepe de Ribera, Bamboccio (1599–1642?), and Falcone in the fourth volume.<sup>53</sup> This arrangement respects and reflects the influence of the Neapolitan school on Capurro, who spent part of his life in Naples, as mentioned by Raffaele Soprani in his *Vite*.

If these few examples draw attention to Baldinucci's fine connoisseurship of the Genoese school, they also emphasise another essential aspect, namely his approach to the evolution of the art of drawing. For Baldinucci, connections and influences were more important in the development of art than differences of schools or decades, and this emphasis is stylistically demonstrated by the digital reconstruction.

### **Baldinucci's Mistaken Attributions: A Personal History of Drawing**

Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici, with the assistance of an extensive network of agents, purchased drawings from across Italy and abroad.<sup>54</sup> After he passed away, Baldinucci continued to direct this network,<sup>55</sup> while still pursuing his study of the historiography of artists before and contemporary to him, in order to assure high standards for purchases for the Medici collection. Baldinucci's broad

50 Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Dessins, inv. 9565. Mancini 2017, p. 327, no. 494, as Italian anonymous artist.

51 The exact inscription is: 'Francesco Capurro P. Genovese'. Raffaello Soprani, the biographer of the Genoese artists, devoted a few pages to Francesco Capurro. He mentioned his apprenticeship at Domenico Fiasella's (1589–1669) workshop in Genoa, his trip to Rome, and his long stay in Naples: 'ove fece lungo soggiorno'. See Soprani and Ratti, p. 240.

52 On Capurro's painting, see Santamaria.

53 The registration numbers of the drawings are: Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Dessins: for Ribera, inv. 18462, inv. 18463, inv. 18464, inv. 18465, inv. 18457; for Bamboccio, inv. 22702, now classified as close to Pieter van Laer; and for Falcone, inv. 9622, inv. 9623, inv. 9621, inv. 9620.

54 On the 'agenti-corrispondenti', see Fileti Mazza, pp. 4–5, 11.

55 According to Lina Propeck, Baldinucci did not travel at all, and that is why his collection is so representative of the seventeenth-century Tuscan school. See Propeck, p. 210.

connoisseurship of artists throughout the Italian peninsula shaped his choices for his private collection, with the result that he included some unusual drawings.<sup>56</sup> The following example emphasises another aspect of his connoisseurship: the reliable sources that he used. The *Study of Saint Jerome* at the Louvre<sup>57</sup> is classified as close to Hendrick van Somer (1615–1684/85), a Flemish painter and follower of Ribera who is known to have been in Naples in 1624 (Fig. 35). Baldinucci pasted the sheet in the fourth volume of his collection as one of five graphic works attributed to Jusepe de Ribera (called Spagnoletto); the original label documents this attribution. The formal and stylistic details, the manner in which the lines are drawn, and the use of a light watercolour correspond to another sheet, the *Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*, which was formerly in the Ralph Holland collection and was attributed for a long time to the Genoese Giulio Benso (1592–1668).<sup>58</sup>

This *Martyrdom* was sold as a work by Spagnoletto in 2014, following the pencil inscription written at the lower left of the sheet. It should be mentioned that when Mary Newcome Schleier made this attribution, she did not mean Ribera but another Spagnoletto, a minor Genoese painter named Bartolommeo Gagliardi (1555–c. 1620). According to Soprani, Gagliardi, whose nickname was also Spagnoletto, worked in Spain and in the ‘West Indies’ (‘Indie occidentali’) before spending time in Naples and finally returning to Genoa.<sup>59</sup> Baldinucci devoted an entire section of his *Notizie* to the life of Gagliardi, but chose to place the *Study of Saint Jerome* under Ribera, who was the more famous ‘Spagnoletto’;<sup>60</sup> he made this decision even though the sheet is different in style and technique from the other four red chalk studies on blue paper that he placed under Ribera’s name.<sup>61</sup> I believe that Baldinucci purchased the *Martyrdom* with the attribution to ‘Spagnoletto’ and decided to include it among the drawings of the better known one.

The *Study of a Man Seen from the Back*,<sup>62</sup> attributed to Antonio Carracci (1583–1618) and at the Louvre, reveals another aspect of Baldinucci’s goals. He

56 As for the Genoese school, iconic examples are Paggi’s and Capurro’s sheets.

57 Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Dessins, inv. 18457. The drawing has been compared to a painting by Van Somer, *Saint Jerome in the Desert*, belonging to the Trafalgar Galleries. See Boubli, p. 128, no. 135. That painting is reproduced in Pérez Sánchez, p. 42, fig. 5.

58 Pencil, pen, and brown ink, brown watercolour, H. 25 cm x L. 10,2 cm, formerly in the Ralph Holland collection, Newcastle upon Tyne. See *Italian Drawings*, p. 14, no. 52. In the entry in the sale catalogue, Mary Newcome has compared the sheet to a drawing featuring *Cain and Abel* and held in the Preussischer Kunstbibliothek, Hdz 725. See ‘*Galleria portatile*’, p. 183, no. 449.

59 Soprani and Ratti, I, pp. 141–142.

60 Baldinucci wrote ‘Spagnoletto’ in the label under the drawing and ‘Giuseppe de Ribera, vedi Spagnoletto’ in the index list in the first volume.

61 Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Dessins, inv. 14862, inv. 14863, inv. 14864, inv. 14865. The four drawings are classified among the works of seventeenth-century anonymous authors.

62 Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Dessins, inv. 7651.





35. Follower of Hendrick van Somer, *Study of Saint Jerome*, black chalk, pen and black ink, brush and ink wash, 25.5 cm x 20.2 cm, Département des Arts graphiques, Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 18457. © Michel Urtado, RMN-Grand Palais, Musée du Louvre, Paris.

believed that achieving a visually coherent arrangement of pieces in his albums was more important than an arrangement by attribution. This drawing, whose draughtsmanship has not yet been fully analysed,<sup>63</sup> was pasted onto a folio following a similar composition by Ludovico Carracci.<sup>64</sup> The technique of black pencil on washed red chalk paper recalls drawings by the Genoese Lazzaro Tavarone (1556–1641).<sup>65</sup> Consequently, the attribution to Carracci should perhaps be reconsidered. For our purposes, however, a more interesting consideration is Baldinucci's clear interest in evoking the visual connections among the studies of similarly naked bodies or parts of the body in the works of Ludovico, Antonio, and Annibale Carracci;<sup>66</sup> these connections seemed more significant than the stylistic differences among them.

In conclusion, Denon's intuition about the importance of Baldinucci's collection was correct, and his purchase of it preserved its integrity.<sup>67</sup> The digital reconstruction of the original arrangement of the drawings in the volumes helps us understand Baldinucci's aesthetic, iconographic, and theoretical vision. When we look closer at Baldinucci's method of situating the Genoese drawings in his albums, we see that he was focused on the immediate influences between artists. The geographical division of artists according to their origin could not satisfy his goal of showing the history of artistic taste as he envisaged it; his history was structured formally and chronologically (according to the decade of production), but also categorised into type of composition and technique. While Baldinucci considered the activity of artists in north and central Italy, he was more interested in signalling criteria that influenced and comprised a style. If some problems of attribution linked to the Genoese school can now be explained via analysis of the drawings' original position in the volumes, problems for other regional schools can most likely be resolved by taking into account the intentions with which Baldinucci formed and shaped his collection.

63 Catherine Loisel did not include the drawing in her catalogue raisonné of the Bolognese drawings at the Louvre. According to her, Antonio Carracci's draughtsmanship is 'more a legend than a real style that has nourished the imagination of many art historians'. See Loisel, p. 277.

64 Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Dessins, inv. 7803, now as attributed to Bernardino Poccetti.

65 See, for comparison, the *Man Seated Seen from Behind* held at the Gabinetto di Disegni e Stampe di Palazzo Rosso, Genoa, inv. D 933, reproduced in Boccardo 2009, p. 52, no. 21.

66 Musée du Louvre, Paris, Cabinet des Dessins, inv. 7391, inv. 7517, inv. 7518.

67 'Nella primavera del 1778 la raccolta si trovava ancora nel patrimonio dei Pandolfini, come attesta una memoria di G. Pelli Bencivenni [...]: [La raccolta] è compresa in IV grossi volumi e distribuita esattamente con l'ordine dei suoi decennali. In principio vedesi il ritratto di Filippo e qualche pezzo da lui disegnato. La collezione in genere ha pochi pezzi magistrali, molte accademie e dei vuoti, o degli articoli scarsi troppo anche relativi ai tempi di Baldinucci medesimo. Nonostante, come autentica, sarebbe stimata molto denaro. Alcuni certo muoveranno dubbio sopra la legittimità o autenticità di certi disegni, ma noi sappiamo più dei nostri maggiori?' Fileti Mazza, p. 29.

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## About the Author

Curatorial researcher at the Prints and Drawings Department of the Louvre Museum in Paris since 2004, **Federica Mancini** has curated many exhibitions and published on Italian draughtsmanship (sixteenth through eighteenth centuries). Her research focuses on Genoese drawings, history of provenances, *quadratura* projects, and cataloguing of the 'Picot Brocard' collection and of the engravings of the Cabinet des Dessins (fifteenth through nineteenth centuries).

## 9. Arthur Pond's (1705–1758) *Prints in Imitation of Drawings* (1734–1736): Old Masters, Copies, and the National School in Early Eighteenth-Century Britain

*Sarah W. Mallory*

### Abstract

Arthur Pond's *Prints in Imitation of Drawings* (1734–1736) are usually considered to be mundane products of early eighteenth-century Britain's booming art market. This essay will re-examine the series as both an art historical text and a significant embodiment of the rise of a British school of art. In particular, I consider how Pond's prints challenge the period's dominant ideas of mastery and imitation in order to suggest a new geo-spatial narrative of art history in which British art and artists challenge the primacy of Continental European artists.

**Keywords:** Old Master, imitation, British school, Arthur Pond, drawing, print

Art historiography's linkage of aesthetics and geographically bound categories of making—the so-called national schools—has long informed contemporary interpretations of early modern European artworks of note. National schools, as we understand them today, belie the ways in which artists and artworks evidence the mutability of national identity, place, and history. Early eighteenth-century English, and by extension British, artists regularly produced work that contested the fixity of geo-artistic schools with the aim, ironically, of establishing their own.<sup>1</sup> My essay

Thanks to Ingrid Vermeulen for her kind editing of this essay.

<sup>1</sup> The concept of a British school of art and all that it entails or excludes remain a matter of debate. In 1707, the formation of 'Britain' consolidated England, Scotland, and Wales, and arguably an array of colonial territories, into a single entity. As Richard Johns has pointed out, in museums and scholarship, the British school is largely 'represented by a selection of work by just ten artists—mostly English, all white men, and all born within eighty years of one another' (Johns, <https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/>

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takes up artist Arthur Pond and his series of prints after Old Master drawings as an exemplar of this early eighteenth-century moment.

As British artists consciously began the process of organising themselves into a national school, they necessarily confronted their exclusion from broader histories of European art.<sup>2</sup> Reasons for this exclusion vary. In 1719, the French diplomat and art critic Jean-Baptiste Dubos (1670–1742) claimed England's damp weather could not 'produce a single painter of the first or second rank. Every artist of distinction who had worked there had been a foreigner'.<sup>3</sup> The French artist Jean-André Rouquet (1701–1758) 'attribute[d] the low state of the arts in contemporary England to ... the predominance of the judgement over the imagination [...] increased absorption [in trade], [...] waning of royal power and patronage'.<sup>4</sup> The eminent English artist, collector, theorist, and connoisseur Jonathan Richardson also lamented in 1719 that art in Britain was regarded merely as decoration, thus dampening artists' motivation to create fine work.<sup>5</sup> Richardson had cause to support his opinions. While the production, collection, and study of art in some parts of mainland Europe had for centuries been nurtured by a vast network of trade, patronage, and state funds, Britain, by comparison, allotted fewer resources to the visual arts. Compounding this reputation had been the nation's formal importation ban on art from the Continent through 1688.<sup>6</sup>

Consequently, British artists and their supporters sought to elevate the status of British art and artists within Europe. Their efforts established the Royal Academy of Arts in 1768, although this result was not an inevitable conclusion to a linear progression of ideas.<sup>7</sup> Rather, throughout the first half of the eighteenth century, artists explored various approaches to re-shaping the identity of British art at home and abroad. Pond's *Prints in Imitation of Drawings* is one such effort. Existing scholarship has largely considered the series within the context of the British art market and broader social reforms.<sup>8</sup> This essay casts the series as a significant embodiment of the rise of the British school of art. I will consider how Pond's prints engage emerging ideas of mastery and imitation to *make* a new narrative of

issue-01/conversation/001). While Arthur Pond is not in this group of ten artists, he does not stray far from the template. In the context of this essay, the 'British school' refers to both the formal establishment of an academy of art in London as well as the overarching, conceptual, geo-artistic framework that unites artists born in, trained in, and/or working primarily in England, Scotland, and Wales.

2 Hsieh, pp. 899–920.

3 Lightbrown, p. 12.

4 Lightbrown, p. 17.

5 Richardson 1719, pp. 8–9.

6 Brewer, p. 205.

7 See Hoock, pp. 52–123.

8 See Bermingham and Brewer; Brewer; Clayton; Pears; Alexander; Gould; Cole; Lippincott.

art history in which British art and artists challenge the primacy of Continental European artists.

## Prints in Imitation of Drawings

Pond's 'imitation' of Annibale Carracci's drawing depicts a furry monkey, drawn in what appears to be red chalk on ivory paper, crouched on a man's shoulders (Fig. 36). The ape's right hand gently parts the man's hair as if searching his scalp. The man's bemused expression belies the mild panic, if not alarm, normally evoked by a monkey on one's back. If we, however, take a cue from the ape and comb the page's details, we become ever more amused. Upon closer inspection, we see that what looked like a chalk drawing is in fact a print. This is not Carracci's sketch but rather a copy, an imitation, made in multiple. Using a roulette, Pond masterfully reproduced Carracci's grainy, smudged chalk lines with all the energy and finesse of the original (Fig. 37). A dedication at the bottom of the page announces that it is a print after Carracci, done by Pond, with the permission of the drawing's owner, Sir Hans Sloane (1660–1753).

This artwork, singularly fascinating in its mimicry, is part of a remarkable series of 70 prints done after notable Continental European drawings housed in British collections during the first half of the eighteenth century. Today referred to as *Prints in Imitation of Drawings*, the series consists of two sets of 35 prints issued between 1734 and 1736 by Pond and his publishing partner Charles Knapton (1700–1760). The works display an impressive variety of skilful engraving and etching techniques that closely reproduce the appearance of the original drawings' inks, chalks, colour washes, and lines. Viewers might mistake the sheets for the genuine article if not for the inscriptions found on each print, and for the fact that, as a result of the printing process, the imitation appears in reverse to the original. Beyond inscriptions, no explanatory text accompanies the series.

Of the 70 total plates, Pond etched 40, Knapton the remaining 30. Newspaper advertisements tout Pond's prints after 'the most celebrated masters', which, following popular taste, were Italian artists (including Guercino, Annibale Carracci, Parmigianino (1503–1540), and 'Raffael') but also included some northern European masters (Rembrandt, Claude Lorraine (1604/05–1682), and Willem van de Velde). There are no British artists reproduced in the series, although Pond's role as printmaker arguably makes the series the work of an Englishman. Pond also selected the drawings for the series from amongst the holdings of Britain's most illustrious collectors, including the Duke of Devonshire and Sloane. He further imitated fourteen drawings from his own collection and 23 from that of Richardson, his colleague and mentor. While Pond carefully labelled each of his imitations with the





36. Arthur Pond after Annibale Carracci, *A Monkey on a Man's Shoulders*, etching, 22 x 19.3 cm, British Museum, London, inv. U.1.214. © The British Museum, London.



37. Annibale Carracci, *A Monkey on a Man's Shoulders*, 1588–1590, drawing, red chalk on paper, 17.4 x 17.9 cm, British Museum, London, inv. Ff,2.115. © The British Museum, London.

name of the artist, the collector, and his own mark, he eschewed other organising principles: he neither numbered the prints, nor stated the geographical origin of each drawing's artist, although informed collectors likely knew to which school a drawing belonged. He created bound copies of the set upon request, but there are no known extant sets of Pond-bound albums; thus, we lack definitive evidence of the order in which Pond would have arranged the prints.

Customers could purchase whatever selection of prints they saw fit. Few independently bound sets of Pond's prints remain intact.<sup>9</sup> An album of unknown origin in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Met) provides insight about one collector's preferences: the impressions are organised by national school and grouped by artist.<sup>10</sup> Despite Pond's status as the British maker of the prints, the contents are sorted with deference to Continental schools. Still, we are made keenly aware via Pond's signature and inscriptions that the series is indebted to Britain. In bringing this geo-artistic tension to the fore, Pond reveals how British art can intercede in histories and hierarchies dominated by masterworks from the Continent. As such, his series of prints also presents a paradox: the prints ask viewers to simultaneously see British and Continental art as constitutive entities, but to view both aspects at once is perhaps impossible. Pond's work raises the question of whether the sight of one art history must usurp the other.

The Met album's title page suggests the outcome Pond hoped his prints would achieve: the construction of histories in which his art and nation are the organising principle. Mounted in the centre of the page is a print of a young man sitting in a window; the print was executed by the Dutch artist, collector, and noted copyist Cornelis Ploos van Amstel (1726–1798), possibly after a drawing of Rembrandt or Samuel van Hoogstraten (1627–1678).<sup>11</sup> When lifted, the print reveals an inscription: 'A Collection of Etchings & Engravings in Imitation of Drawings from various Old Masters, being Facsimilies of their respective performances, chiefly by Arthur Pond & C. Knapton, London 1734. &c.' Ploos' work postdates Pond's by several decades and thus was likely a later addition to the folio. In aligning Ploos' and Pond's work, the album presents a history of imitative prints and artist-collectors in which Pond is the protagonist. Importantly, the use of the term 'Old Masters' to refer to the artists whose work Pond imitated highlights a critical shift that unfolded over the course

9 Hake, pp. 325–350.

10 The original owner of the New York album is unknown. In the upper left corner, inside the front cover, is a bookseller's ticket that reads 'R. Riviere, 24 Union Street, Bath', referring to the bookbinder Robert Riviere (1808–1882). From 1829 until around 1840, Riviere maintained a shop in Bath; after that, he moved to London and opened a store in Great Queens Street, an area where many artists, including Pond, had once lived. See Anonymous 1891, pp. 5–7.

11 For an example of this print, see British Museum, London, object 1856,0712.114. Christian Josi also published a version of this print in 1821. Laurentius, p. 258, no. 6.

of the eighteenth century: the decisive sorting of masterful works into temporal categories of 'old' and 'new'. Neither Pond nor his peers used the term 'Old Master' to refer to his prints, yet this eventually became the standard description of his series. I will later discuss the Old Master concept in greater detail, but must first examine the broader context from which Pond's prints emerged.

### ***Prints in Imitation of Drawings: Elevating British Over European Art***

Several influential Continental print series after masterworks precede Pond's *Prints in Imitation of Drawings*. Especially influential were the *Recueil Crozat* (1729–1742), Lorrain's *Liber Veritatis* (c. 1635–1682), and Bernard Picart's (1673–1733) *Impostures innocentes* (1734).<sup>12</sup> Pond's efforts, however, were novel amongst British artists in the early eighteenth century. As Pond and his contemporaries sought to distinguish themselves, Pond's print series embody one attempt to reconcile British art with the standard measure of Continental European art. Other reconciliation and advancement strategies included the formalisation of a British school of artists via government-funded systems of patronage and education. The establishment of a British school of artists as an ontological category, however, also relied on subtle trade in soft power. Artists and their supporters could not declare a British school (as such) and expect respect and wealth to follow, especially when British collectors preferred Italian, Flemish, Dutch, and French art.

Confronting such circumstances, British artists generally opted to either emulate Continental art (in form and content) or to create art that took up life in England as its primary subject. William Hogarth (1697–1764)—the skilled artist and writer trained in England whose innovative prints and paintings focused on British subjects, in part critiquing his homeland's reliance on European culture—is today recognised as the father of the British school.<sup>13</sup> Conversely, his peer, Pond, did not so much openly break with Continental traditions as self-consciously express a deep knowledge and command of their methods. Unlike Hogarth, Pond trained abroad and at home. The two artists studied together at the (first) Academy in Saint Martin's Lane for the Study of Painting, Drawing, &c. In 1725, Pond travelled to Italy, apparently financed by his father, a 'Wealthy Citizen' in the estimation of Pond's peer and fellow engraver-connoisseur George Vertue (1684–1756).<sup>14</sup> Vertue

<sup>12</sup> Eisler, p. 171. Postmortem estate sale records reveal that Pond owned numerous versions of Houbraken's *Heads* (another precedent) and a copy of Picart's work. Langford, pp. 10, 24, 30, 32.

<sup>13</sup> Bindman, p. 72.

<sup>14</sup> Lippincott, p. 11. For further information on Pond's family and his professional development, see Stogdon, pp. 367–369.

doubted the young artist's abilities, writing '[it] is no agreeable prospect to those, who ever thinks that travelling will qualify a painter, tho it may as a Gentleman, (but.) no other way'.<sup>15</sup> This criticism hints that Pond's cosmopolitan training was antithetical to the British school's nativist emphasis. Vertue did approve of the *Prints in Imitation of Drawings* because he saw Pond's work as exceeding similar efforts by Continental artists. In a 1734 diary entry, he wrote, 'this is truly so well and justly imitated that its hardly possible to avoid takeing the prints for drawings [...] excelling all others done beyond seas'.<sup>16</sup> In December 1744, Vertue included Pond's prints alongside Hogarth's *Marriage a la Mode*, of 'this year or this time the most remarkable for works done or doing in Engraving—in England'.<sup>17</sup> In October, however, he had criticised Pond for making a print after a painting: 'this is another project of Ponds to acquire business and reputation—if his pencil or Crayons [pastels] can't find him sufficient employment'.<sup>18</sup>

Pond, then, was apparently not immune from market concerns. Vast sums of ill-gotten wealth, arising out of early eighteenth-century Britain's trade in enslaved peoples and colonial ventures, increased the wealth of the expanding middle classes, who in turn buoyed a booming art market. Amid a cascade of social, cultural, legal, and economic changes, art became a tool for social reform and education of the masses. The concept of 'good taste' soon encompassed Continental masterworks and their copies.<sup>19</sup> Pond, a well-known and trusted artist-dealer might well have understood his *Prints in Imitation of Drawings* as an attempt to produce a novel set of images that would appeal to a broad market. Louise Lippincott's important monograph of the artist (1983) makes this very point, with a caveat: she claims that the overpriced project was 'pretentious [and] amateurish', with poor sales, even though illustrious patrons, including William Kent (1685–1748), Horace Walpole, Jr. (1717–1797), and the Roman Club, subscribed.<sup>20</sup> Her opinion was informed by a comparison with Pond's friend, the eminent French collector Pierre-Jean Mariette, who, with the help of antiquarian and etcher Anne Claude Philippe, Comte de Caylus, achieved great success in France and abroad via his *Recueil Crozat*, a series of engravings after works in several prominent collections in France and arranged according to the Roman and Venetian schools.<sup>21</sup> At the urging of Richardson, Pond

15 Vertue 1933–1934, III, pp. 33, 37.

16 Vertue 1951–1952, VI, p. 192.

17 Vertue 1951–1952, VI, p. 199.

18 Vertue 1951–1952, VI, p. 199.

19 Küster, p. 180; Brewer, p. 205; Miyamoto, p. 120.

20 Lippincott 1983, pp. 124, 129, 130. Each set of Pond's etchings was priced at one guinea, Knapton's at a half guinea, and the set at three guineas. Robert Hume asserts that about six percent of the British population could have afforded such a luxury. Hume, p. 377.

21 Leca, pp. 623–649.

hoped to create a distinctly English version of the *Recueil*. Mariette, however, felt Pond selected 'relatively undistinguished designs that did not compare' with the *Recueil Crozat*.<sup>22</sup> Such a remark might be understood as a jab at the ostensibly inferior quality of British collections compared to those of France.

While Pond's project was arguably driven by a thriving market, a variety of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century visual and literary precedents—artist's biographies, critical treatises on artmaking, drawing manuals, and so-called paper museums—also anticipated his *Prints in Imitation of Drawings*. Taken together, by the early eighteenth century, these precedents had laid the groundwork for a new genre combining text and images: illustrated histories of art. As Ingrid Vermeulen's critically important work on this topic convincingly argues, Pond's series of prints should be viewed as one of the genre's earliest examples.<sup>23</sup> His series is one of the first such histories produced by a British artist, a fact that cannot be disentangled from his selection of prints and their subject matter. For example, while money perhaps motivated Pond's imitation of Polidoro da Caravaggio's drawing of *Mutius Scaevola Burning His Hand*, interpreting this choice within the context of the British school's desire to rewrite history illuminates a constellation of connections between Pond and Polidoro da Caravaggio's work. Polidoro was a pupil of Raphael; his inclusion in *Prints in Imitation of Drawings* links Pond to Italy's history of master artists. The scene depicts Scaevola, a young Roman, thrusting his right hand into a flame rather than surrender to his enemy. This event recalls the life of the famous engraver Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617), whose exceptionally skilful grip of the burin was the result of a burned hand. Goltzius produced a print depicting Scaevola and was also in his lifetime praised as a brilliant copyist (for example of Albrecht Dürer, who coincidentally also depicted Scaevola); he, in fact, often fooled experts with his imitations. Pond owned dozens of Goltzius's prints, and his decision to copy Polidoro's *Mutius Scaevola Burning His Hand* thus aligns him with Continental Europe's most famous artists and copyists.

## Old versus New Masters

The most important text informing Pond's print series was Giorgio Vasari's influential *Vite*, of which Pond owned at least three copies.<sup>24</sup> Vasari's text (subsequently emulated by scores of authors, including Karel van Mander and André Félibien)

<sup>22</sup> Lippincott, p. 129. For alternative interpretations of the economic impact of this series, see Brewer, p. 205; Clayton, p. 293.

<sup>23</sup> Vermeulen, p. 164.

<sup>24</sup> Langford, pp. 6, 8, 12.

outlines a hierarchy of artists in which Italian masters, beginning with Cimabue and culminating in Michelangelo, are the consummate practitioners, or masters.<sup>25</sup> Superlative artists, typically of European birth, working before the turn of the nineteenth century are today often referred to as ‘Old Masters.’ This definition is a departure from early-eighteenth century use, which would have looked at Vasari, who first developed the idea.<sup>26</sup> Modern masters (epitomised by Michelangelo) were the heirs of Italy’s classical past (shaped by ancient masters, including Apelles, Zeuxis, and others recorded by Pliny the Elder and Quintilian). Although there is no surviving evidence that Pond used this notion, he would have likely understood the term ‘old master’ as meaning ‘ancient’ and have considered ‘modern masters’ to be artists from anywhere in mainland Europe after the Middle Ages.<sup>27</sup> In England, this paradigm was both reinforced and challenged by Charles-Alphonse du Fresnoy’s (1611–1668) *De arte grafica* (1661), which was translated into French (1668) by Roger de Piles and into English (1695) by John Dryden (1631–1700), with whom Pond travelled throughout Italy. The Dryden edition’s supplement, *Most Eminent Painters Ancient and Modern*, begins with Cimabue and concludes, atypically, with the British artist John Riley (1646–1690).<sup>28</sup> Likewise, the English translation of De Piles’ *The Art of Painting and The Lives of Painters* (1706) references Vasari but also includes the first effort to formally delineate an English school of painters (penned by Bainbrigg Buckeridge).<sup>29</sup>

John Evelyn’s (1620–1706) diary entry of 11 June 1696 contains one of the first recorded uses of the term ‘old master’ as we understand it today. He writes ‘[Lord Pembroke] shewed [me] divers rare pictures of very many of the old and best masters, especially one of M. Angelo [...] and a large book of the best drawings of the old masters’.<sup>30</sup> Evelyn’s writings track an ontological shift underway in England: Vasari’s golden-age moderns were reconceptualised as ‘old’, thus making space for new British masters to inherit the glory of the classical past.<sup>31</sup> Pond’s *Prints in*

25 Amongst British writers, Sir John Harrington (1591), Henry Peacham (1622), William Aglionby (1685), Richard Graham (1695), and Bainbrigg Buckeridge (1706) reference Vasari’s and Van Mander’s ideas.

26 Haskell, pp. 3–5.

27 This paradigm was discussed during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries via the so-called ‘Querelle des Anciens et des Modernes’, in which scholars (first in France and then in other parts of Europe), looking to Vasari’s writings, debated the relative merits of ancient versus modern art as the most appropriate form of expression for a nation. As Hubert Locher has pointed out, this debate newly linked art and nationhood. Locher, p. 99.

28 Fresnoy, pp. 253, 347, 349.

29 Buckeridge, pp. 345–439.

30 Evelyn 1901, II, p. 91.

31 See Ayres for British interest in the classical past. Zell, p. 51, quoting Madocks, p. 546, notes a seventeenth-century use of ‘old’, but not ‘old master’, to describe Italian art that likely dated to the sixteenth century: in correspondence regarding the illicit trade in art between (Italian) Cardinal-Protector

*Imitation of Drawings* hints at this transformation; the prints—in their inscriptions, their use of modern printing technologies, the reversal of their orientation, and the addition of framing lines—delineate a boundary in time and space between Pond and the artists he emulates.

## The Rise of Drawing Connoisseurship

In addition to the 'old master' concept, British artists and collectors also took up the classical idea of *virtù*, or power and virtuousness, as a mode of connecting their work with a glorious past. During the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries, printed drawing manuals appeared in ever greater quantities, with Italian books and the Carracci as the pedagogical standard. In 1606, Henry Peacham's (1578–1644?) *Art of Drawing with a Pen* (1606) was the first English text to discuss drawing. Peacham, inspired by Baldassare Castiglione's (1478–1529) ideas, associated drawing and collecting with accomplished and knowledgeable men (*virtuosi*) who saw value or virtue (*virtù*) in improving themselves and, by extension, their nations.<sup>32</sup>

In eighteenth-century Britain, objects as much as men were understood as possessing virtues (*virtù*). *Virtuosi*, both antiquarians and connoisseurs, assessed the historical value and aesthetic qualities of an object to determine its *virtù*. Pond was a leading *virtuoso* whose interest in collecting drawings was informed by Richardson and his 1719 landmark treatise on art and the science of connoisseurship. Richardson's text espouses moral and social improvement via the study of tasteful art; his aim was to reshape Britain in the image of ancient Rome.<sup>33</sup>

For Richardson, drawing is key in the creation of an artwork and, therefore, is an important subject of study for the connoisseur.<sup>34</sup> He identifies drawing as the essential manifestation of an artist's hand and his mind and believes that copying drawings, be it with pen or etching needle, is integral to masterful artmaking.<sup>35</sup> In his English translation of De Piles' influential *The Art of Painting* (1706), he also discusses copies, imitations, and replications (interchangeably). He writes: '[in a copy] there are some things which seem to favour the Originality of a Piece, so there are others that seem to destroy it.'<sup>36</sup> Part of what De Piles thought might have been destroyed in a copy was evidence of its origins, including not simply attribution to

of England, Francesco Barberini, and members of the British royal family, Barberini wrote: 'You have not said whether you want copies or originals, old paintings or modern ones [...].'

32 Bermingham 2000, pp. 33–73.

33 Richardson 1719, II, pp. 64–67.

34 For Richardson's theories, see Gibson-Wood 1988, 2000.

35 Richardson 1719, I, pp. 191, 194, 196.

36 Piles, p. 71.



the artist but also the ability to clearly determine from which geo-artistic school a work came. Thus, while Richardson's embrace of copying as the universal practice of all great artists diminishes the geo-artistic aspects of the skill—preparing the way for the idea that great British copyists are also great artists—the French *De Piles* sees copying as a disruption of geographical models of artistic production. Even if ever so subtly, ideas of foreignness and copying undergird the British and, by extension, Pond's use of imitation to challenge the geographical and conceptual boundaries of artistic schools.

Connoisseurs, like copies, inspired ambiguous feelings throughout Europe. Some were lampooned as strangely obsessive characters, quacks, and swindlers. Distrust of the connoisseur characterises the early eighteenth century, which Lisa Zunshine describes as preoccupied with uncovering frauds 'because eighteenth-century Britons were convinced that theirs was an exceptional age of deception'.<sup>37</sup> Connoisseurship could both reveal and perpetuate fraud. Projects like Pond's print series did not masquerade as originals, but even he was entangled in an infamous critique of connoisseurship orchestrated by Hogarth and artist Benjamin Wilson (1721–1788). Wilson sold fraudulent impressions, inspired by a real Rembrandt print that he had seen in Pond's collection, to several artist-connoisseurs. He then revealed the deception at a dinner party thrown for the buyers and an unwitting Pond.<sup>38</sup>

### Imitations: New Interpretations and Legacies

While today we might consider a 'fake' to be a copy or an imitation, eighteenth-century Britons used the words copying and imitation interchangeably to describe a singular process of translating geographically or temporally foreign entities. Mimesis, though perhaps important, was not the central aim. Indeed, the 1755 *New Universal Etymological English Dictionary* looks to the writings of Dryden to define the word 'imitation' as 'a method of translating looser than paraphrase, in which modern examples and illustrations are used for ancient, or domestic for foreign [...] the translator not only varies from the words and sense, but forsakes them as he sees occasion'.<sup>39</sup> Imitation, then, is an intentional departure from the original.<sup>40</sup> Arguably, Pond himself, shaped by his experiences abroad but working in England, might be seen as an imitation, a new original.

37 Zunshine, p. 216.

38 Graciano, p. 192.

39 Scott (<https://leme.library.utoronto.ca/lexicon/entry/1346/36171>).

40 Benson, pp. 427–435.

Richardson's essay on printmaking recognises Pond's originality and inserts him into history amongst 'the most celebrated engravers in history', alongside 'Albert Durer, Goltzius, Muller, Abraham Bloemart, Andrea Mantegna, Parmiggiano [...] Anthony Tempesta, Augusstini Carrachi [...] Callot [...] Salvator Rosa, Rembrandt [...] Watteau [...] Picart'. 'Our countryman', writes Richardson, 'succeeded admirably in imitations [...] particularly [...] a monkey in red chalk, by Carrachi.'<sup>41</sup> Richardson's particular focus on the Carracci monkey reinforces the role of Pond's *Prints in Imitation of Drawings* as both representing and rivalling the long, illustrious history of drawing and printmaking in Continental Europe. We might also allow that Pond himself chose the drawing for the same reason. In producing a skilful imitation, Pond acknowledges what might be understood as the 'monkey on the back', or the persistent trouble, of British artists: the dominance of Continental European artists. Translating the drawing, Pond confronts and conquers this persistent pest.

Upon Sloane's death in 1753, he bequeathed the Carracci drawing and Pond's corresponding impression to the nation. That these two artworks now form part of the British Museum's collection affirms the validity of Pond's project.

Pond's inclusion of a print after Rembrandt's drawing depicting the biblical story of *St Peter's Prayer before the Raising of Tabitha* is perhaps the British artist's most potent challenge to the Continent (Fig. 38). Pond collected hundreds of Rembrandt's works, but his attachment to the artist exceeded mere admiration. Pond's master, John Vanderbank (1694–1739), trained under Sir Godfrey Kneller (1646–1723), who is thought to have studied with Rembrandt and his pupil, Ferdinand Bol (1616–1680). In Pond's hands, then, rests a long and illustrious Continental legacy.

Arguably, Pond hoped his imitation of Rembrandt would advance his cause, although this print, unlike so many other in the series, bears only some resemblance to the original. Pond's lines and use of chiaroscuro woodcut to imitate colour washes and passages of light and shadow do not capture Rembrandt's skill (Fig. 39). This chasm in resemblance might evidence incompetence; however, such an assertion is refuted by Pond's other prints and a skilful self-portrait Pond did in the style of Rembrandt (Fig. 40). A brief consideration of the story depicted by Rembrandt provides an explanation for the perceived discrepancies. The New Testament records Tabitha as a faithful follower of Jesus. Upon her death, the disciple Peter says a prayer that opens her eyes. Rembrandt's drawing and Pond's print show Peter praying, his eye closed and his lips slightly parted. This figure is a profound reminder of Pond's own habitual desire to open his eyes and the eyes of others to art's latent potential for crafting new lives and new histories. We do not know if Pond thought this print a good likeness of Rembrandt; nevertheless, we may speculate that the

41 Richardson 1792, pp. 262–263.



38. Arthur Pond after Rembrandt van Rijn, *St Peter's Prayer before the Raising of Tabitha*, c. 1734–1736, etching with woodblock, 19 x 21.5 cm, British Museum, London, inv. 33.13. © The British Museum, London.



39. Rembrandt van Rijn, *St Peter's Prayer before the Raising of Tabitha*, 1654–1655, drawing with ink, reed pen, 19 x 20 cm, Musée Bonnat, Bayonne. © Bridgeman Images.



40. Arthur Pond, *Arthur Pond*, 1739, etching, 18.9 x 14.1 cm, National Portrait Gallery, London, inv. NPG D3919. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

work challenges us to consider how and what we see, to examine how and why we differentiate the old master from the new.

After *Prints in Imitation of Drawings*, Pond produced a commercially and critically successful series of prints after Italian landscape drawings. This suggests that the artist as well as his public intrinsically understood his aim of advancing British artists: it would be the British gaze cast upon the world that determined the past and the future of the nation and its art. Such an idea not only harkened back to models of imperial Roman governance, but also reflected colonial British attitudes abroad. Pond's work anticipates the nineteenth-century rise of nationalism, a moment when art history as a discipline formally crystallised in history books and museums with geo-artistic schools as a guiding principle.

Today, Arthur Pond is hardly remembered in the same company as Carracci or Rembrandt. His obituary, a brief encomium in the *London Advertiser* on 11 September 1758, emphasised his status as a noted collector. In Horace Walpole's *Anecdotes of Painting* (1762–1771), Pond, again, was remembered as 'promoter of meritorious works [...] [with] singular knowledge in his hands'.<sup>42</sup> With that knowledge, exercised in the act of printmaking as much as collecting, he sought to elevate the status of British art at home and abroad. His *Prints in Imitation of Drawings* are evidence of his prescient vision to achieve this goal: to make history and to pay homage to old masters in such a way that space was created for new masters. Just as imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, it is also often the impetus for change.

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42 Walpole, p. 465.

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### **About the Author**

**Sarah W. Mallory** is the Annette and Oscar de la Renta assistant curator of drawings and prints at The Morgan Library & Museum in New York. She is also a PhD candidate in the history of art and architecture at Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. Her studies focus on sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Dutch and Flemish art. She investigates the environmental and intellectual legacies of landscape images, and she has a particular interest in Dutch influences on British art.

# **Taste and Genius of Nations**



# 10. ‘Taste of Nations’: Roger de Piles’ (1635–1709) Diplomatic Take on the European Schools of Art

*Ingrid R. Vermeulen*

## Abstract

Diplomacy shaped Roger de Piles’ understanding of European art. After the failure of a secret diplomatic mission to the Dutch Republic in 1693, he wrote the manuscript of the seminal *Abregé* (1699) during his imprisonment at Loevestein Castle. His diplomatic experience included vital intelligence about the *esprit* (or character) of nations, which informed his novel idea of the ‘taste of nations’ for art. Thus, he systematically articulated the ‘taste of nations’ in close association with the styles of artistic schools, while remaining acutely aware of the continuous circulation of artists, styles, and artworks throughout Europe. After returning to France, he placed the *Abregé* in the service of the Académie Royale in order to boost the French school of art.

**Keywords:** *Abregé de la vie des peintres*, historiography of art, diplomacy, *esprit*, national character, European art

In 1693, Roger de Piles was sent on a secret diplomatic mission to the Dutch Republic by King Louis XIV of France. The mission was soon aborted because the Dutch Stadholder, King Willem III (1650–1702), and the States of Holland estimated its potential effects to be highly damaging. De Piles was brought before the Court of Holland in The Hague and sentenced to prison for the duration of the Nine Years’ War (1688–1697) between France and the Great Alliance of European states. While detained at the notorious state prison of Loevestein Castle, he wrote the manuscript

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of the *Abregé de la vie des peintres* (1699), a concise overview of European art, published only after his release in 1697.<sup>1</sup> The book had a widespread impact; it was translated into English (1706), German (1710), Dutch (1725), and Italian (1771).

Recently, the remarkable circumstances of De Piles' diplomatic mission and his realisation of the *Abregé* in prison have been acknowledged in paragraphs and footnotes by art historians and cultural historians.<sup>2</sup> While the mission and the *Abregé* highlight two vital aspects of De Piles' career—art scholarship and diplomacy—their relationship has been little explored. On the one hand, De Piles was active in the Parisian art world as a painter, engraver, collector, and dealer, and in particular, he was the author of a range of art theoretical publications, which appeared in the context of the Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, he worked in the diplomatic service as secretary to the French ambassador, Michel-Jean Amelot de Gournay (1655–1724), whom he had tutored and with whom he stayed for extended periods during missions in Venice, Portugal, and Switzerland.<sup>4</sup>

This essay investigates the impact of diplomacy on De Piles' understanding of European art. A comparative, conceptual, and historical analysis will highlight the innovative ways in which he adopted the notions of *esprit*, school of art, and nation to shape his overview of European art in the *Abregé*. Drawing on primary sources from art scholarship and diplomatic history, my analysis will be conducted in three steps. The first section investigates the diplomatic circumstances under which De Piles wrote the *Abregé* in prison. The second section considers the ways in which the artistically critical and diplomatic use of the notion of *esprit* informed De Piles' conception of the 'taste of nations', which associated schools of art with the character of nations. The final section focuses on his adoption of the notions of the school of art and the nation to systematise artistic diversity in Europe.

### De Piles in Prison: Writing the *Abregé* (1699)

Much is known about De Piles' secret diplomatic mission, as well as the political context in which it occurred. Mirot's monograph and Wagenaar's *Vaderlandsche Historie* report the events most extensively, based on archival documents from Paris and The Hague.<sup>5</sup> However, the archival research undertaken for the present

1 Piles 1715, unpaginated ('Abregé de la vie de M. de Piles'); Wagenaar, XVI (1757), pp. 230–238; Mirot, pp. 51–56.

2 Teyssèdre 1965, pp. 396–399; Troost, p. 242; Burke, p. 92; Bély 1990, pp. 333–334; Bély 1998, p. 368; Keblusek, p. 153.

3 Lichtenstein, III (2009), pp. 15–20; Puttfarken 1985; Teyssèdre 1965.

4 Mirot, pp. 49–56.

5 Wagenaar, XVI (1757), pp. 230–238; Mirot, pp. 51–56.

study uncovered several documents that allow for a re-evaluation of some of the circumstances under which De Piles wrote the *Abregé* in prison.

De Piles was sent to the Dutch Republic under the guise of a painter and art dealer, using the alias Robbert du Plessis.<sup>6</sup> When he received royal instructions for the mission at the end of 1692, the Nine Years' War had been underway for several years. Both Louis XIV, as King of France, and Willem III, as Stadholder-King of the Dutch Republic and the British Isles as well as a member of the Great Alliance of European states, had a growing wish for peace after undecisive bloody battles, the exhaustion of resources, and the obstruction of trade. Nevertheless, the distrust between both parties was deep, and it would take years, involving more battles and difficult negotiations, before the Peace of Rijswijk was concluded. De Piles' mission was one of the first French attempts to bring about an overall peace.<sup>7</sup>

During the mission, De Piles was to meet Simon van Halewijn (1654–1727/33), the esteemed former burgomaster of the city of Dordrecht and a member of the States of Holland and the Council of State.<sup>8</sup> On his own initiative, Van Halewijn had visited the French ambassador, Amelot, in Switzerland the year before, where, due to his concerns about the military, financial, and economic conditions in the Dutch Republic, he had consulted the ambassador about Louis XIV's intentions for peace. De Piles' mission led to several meetings with Van Halewijn in The Hague, during which they carefully gauged each other's loyalties and made plans. After they had inspected a building that Van Halewijn was constructing on his Abbenbroek estate, De Piles attempted to bribe him (with 20,000 *rijksdaalders*) to convince the States of Holland to accept a plan for overall peace.<sup>9</sup>

However, De Piles' and Van Halewijn's secret negotiations were soon discovered through the interception of letters, and the men were arrested. Considered as a case of utmost importance, their arrest was discussed by the States of Holland and investigated by the Court of Holland for several months in the greatest of secrecy.<sup>10</sup> At the end of July 1693, Van Halewijn was sentenced to life imprisonment for treason—a punishment that Willem III believed was not proportional to the gravity of the offence but nevertheless accepted.<sup>11</sup> De Piles was sentenced to prison for the duration of the war on the grounds of undermining peace and tranquillity in the country, and creating division and disagreement between the allied forces and the Dutch Republic.<sup>12</sup>

6 Kinschot 1693b, unpaginated.

7 André, pp. 405–413; Troost, pp. 237–242; Bély 1998, pp. 367–372.

8 Molhuysen, IV, pp. 704–705.

9 Kinschot 1693a, unpaginated; Wagenaar, XVI (1757), pp. 230–238.

10 NADH, SvH 290, 1693 'Hof' and 'Hogen Raede'; NADH, HvH 285.

11 Kinschot 1693a, unpaginated; Wagenaar, XVI, pp. 230–238; Hoeve, pp. 99–100.

12 Kinschot 1693b, unpaginated.

At the beginning of his confinement, De Piles was imprisoned in the Voorpoort, the entrance gate to the stadholder's quarters in The Hague, the centre of government in the Dutch Republic. It is likely that De Piles was held there in a cell reserved for the upper classes, who received better treatment. Although some of his predecessors, such as the diplomat Abraham van Wicquefort (1606–1682) had spent their time reading and writing, De Piles probably did not start his book there. 'Disturbances and excesses', including the unauthorised access of visitors, writing of letters, and delivery of goods, gave the Court of Holland cause for concern. For example, letters in French intercepted from Paris, Switzerland, and Utrecht revealed that plans were being made to bribe (with 1000 *rijksdaalders*) a close girlfriend of the prison guard to organise De Piles' escape. For this reason, he was not allowed any pen or ink to write letters.<sup>13</sup>

The girlfriend may have been the French-speaking prison servant Anna Aernouds van den Bergh, who was convicted by the Court of Holland for passing on unauthorised letters, accepting money, and withholding escape plans for prisoners.<sup>14</sup> Several intercepted letters to and from De Piles can be identified in her file. One letter that can be attributed to De Piles was directed to Madame Amelot, related to Ambassador Amelot, in whose household he had stayed for many years.<sup>15</sup> There, De Piles stated that he believed his case—probably referring to his escape—was delayed, if not aborted. Moreover, he related that he had recently been held under severe conditions, with no liberties other than seeing daylight through a barred window. He added that it was only the memory of her goodness that helped him in his misery.<sup>16</sup> A further letter, signed by De Bourdaloue, was directed to De Piles and referred to Madame Amelot and Bertin. De Bourdaloue and Bertin can be identified as prolific art patrons and collectors in Paris who attempted to plead his case, but without success.<sup>17</sup>

The persistent concerns of the Court of Holland about prison irregularities resulted in De Piles and Van Halewijn being transferred to Loevestein Castle in the south of Holland during November 1694.<sup>18</sup> The castle had functioned as a state prison since the early seventeenth century, and it allowed prisoners to study and write.<sup>19</sup> This is not only suggested by the tradition of prison writers, for which Loevestein Castle is famous, particularly the legal expert Hugo de Groot (1583–1645), but also because Van Halewijn left books in his cell after his sensational escape

13 NADH, HvH 285, pp. 265r–265v, 271v–272v; Hoeve, pp. 71, 73, 75–76.

14 NADH, HvH 5364 (13), unpaginated.

15 Piles 1715, unpaginated ('Abregé de la vie de M. de Piles'); Mirot, pp. 31, 35.

16 NADH, HvH 5364 (13), unpaginated.

17 NADH, HvH 5364 (13), unpaginated. Bertin was possibly Pierre-Vincent Bertin (1653–1711), and De Bourdaloue was possibly Claude de Bourdaloue (?–1715). Coquery, pp. 164, 269–270; Schnapper, pp. 256–257, 413–414. I kindly thank Véronique Meyer for suggesting these identifications.

18 NADH, HvH 286, pp. 19v–22r.

19 Eliëns, p. 17.

in 1696.<sup>20</sup> Thus, it can be inferred that De Piles was also allowed books, although there are no archival documents that confirm this. If he had a prison library, it may have included an outstanding collection of art literature devoted to artists' biographies and written by authors such as Giorgio Vasari, Carlo Cesare Malvasia, Joachim von Sandrart, and André Félibien; this collection would have helped him to write the manuscript of the *Abregé*.<sup>21</sup> Despite his friends' attempts to expedite his release, De Piles was confined to Loevestein Castle until the Peace of Rijswijk was concluded in 1697.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Esprit*: Artistically Critical and Diplomatic Dimensions of the Concept**

In the *Abregé*, De Piles does not refer to his diplomatic experiences directly, although he occasionally has an eye for the diplomatic relationships of artists, for instance in the case of Peter Paul Rubens.<sup>23</sup> The book also provides few clues about his diplomatic travels, which nevertheless explain some of his observations about artworks in Venice or Lisbon.<sup>24</sup> However, De Piles united art scholarship and diplomatic practice in his use of the notion of *esprit*. Here, it will be argued that this concept contributed to his novel idea of a 'taste of nations', which he associated with the European schools of art. At the end of the seventeenth century, a person with *esprit* was believed to possess the capacity for judgement, imagination, or genius, and could apply himself or herself with *esprit* to such tasks as business or manual work. *Esprit* could also produce effects in a conversation, a book, or a work of some kind.<sup>25</sup> Across his earlier publications on art, De Piles had already cast the notion of *esprit* as the animating force in the style and taste of artists, artworks, and spectators. Indeed, he observed that artists and spectators had *esprit*, artists gave *esprit* to a work of art, and artworks themselves had *esprit*.<sup>26</sup> Through his diplomatic career, he expanded this particular meaning of the concept.

In recent literature, attention has been drawn to the ties between *esprit* and national character in diplomacy, cultural history, and art history. Lucien Bély has pointed out that diplomats were informed about the *esprit*, character, or social singularities of nations, and were expected to respect and use such observations in negotiations. Moreover, he believed that diplomats actively contributed to a

20 NADH, HvH 286, p. 70r; HvH 5367 (6).

21 Piles 1699, unpaginated (Preface).

22 Over the course of 1695 to 1697, Amelot and De Callières, among others, pleaded for his case. Mirot, pp. 32, 55–56.

23 Piles 1699, pp. 398–399; Puttfarken 1996, pp. 86, 98.

24 Piles 1699, pp. 268, 454–455.

25 Furetière, I, 'Esprit'.

26 Fresnoy.



'characterology of peoples' because their impressions were often published in travel accounts, through which they found their way into the cultural domain of literature or fashion.<sup>27</sup> Joep Leerssen has also highlighted the differentiation and systematic classification of national character by early modern scholars such as Scaliger, La Mesnardière, Zahn, and Montesquieu. He argued that the emergence of the concept of national character had not only a political dimension but also a cultural aspect, involving language, manners, customs, fashion, lifestyle, and climate.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, in studies on international attitudes towards Dutch art and national character, Frans Grijzenhout surveyed French early modern theories about the connection between art, the human temperaments, and climate.<sup>29</sup>

De Piles adopted the notion of *esprit* during his diplomatic career, which spanned more than a decade. From 1682, he accompanied Ambassador Amelot on a range of long-term missions to Venice, Portugal, and Switzerland, and he later undertook missions to Spain, the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation, and the Dutch Republic.<sup>30</sup> In his position of secretary, he performed all the duties of a 'foreign minister' and was second in rank only to the ambassador.<sup>31</sup> Thus, De Piles followed the king's instructions on his missions and was responsible for the correspondence between the ambassador and the king. He was present at ceremonial events, for instance the ambassadorial entry of Amelot into Venice in 1682, which involved a gondola with allegorical figures designed especially for the occasion.<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, he sometimes acted as an art dealer or painted a portrait for the king.<sup>33</sup>

As ambassadorial secretary, De Piles became an expert in acquiring intelligence on the *esprit*, or character, of individual people and nations. François de Callières (1645–1717), who published a treatise on diplomacy in 1716, believed that *esprit* formed an integral part of the 'necessary and useful knowledge of the negotiator'. Insight into foreign affairs included the *esprit*, character, inclinations, interests, and passions of princes, ministers, states, peoples, and nations. It was vital knowledge in the commerce between European states. Consequently, De Callières recommended that negotiators study international treaties, the history of modern Europe, diplomatic correspondence, and travel accounts. More specifically, he suggested that they talk to experienced diplomats, visit the principal European countries and courts, as well

27 Bély 1990, pp. 520–521.

28 Leerssen, pp. 52–70.

29 Coypel, Félibien, Piles, and Dubos, in Grijzenhout 1992. Grijzenhout also discussed English, Italian, Spanish, and Dutch theories in this context. See also Grijzenhout 1999, pp. 15–16. I kindly thank Frans Grijzenhout for his suggestions.

30 Mirot, pp. 49–56.

31 Piles 1715, unpaginated; Chamoy, pp. 11–13, 28; Callières, p. 139.

32 CADP, CP Venise, CVII, p. 137v; Kerber, pp. 32–34.

33 Piles 1715, unpaginated.

as learn customs and languages.<sup>34</sup> That De Callières knew what he was talking about was apparent in the success of his negotiations leading up to the Peace of Rijswijk, which included De Piles' release.

A contemporaneous preoccupation with *esprit* is not only substantiated by the correspondence of Amelot, but also by the documents De Piles consulted in preparation for his Dutch mission.<sup>35</sup> These included several reports written by the Dutch physicist Nicolaas Hartsoeker (1656–1725), an informant for the French ambassador to the Dutch Republic, the Comte d'Avaux (1640–1709). The reports provided information about the *esprit*, or character, of several of the key figures in Dutch politics, such as Secretary of State Anthonie Heinsius (1641–1720), who was, according to Hartsoeker, a man of few words, so cold in conversation that he feared he would not be of great use. By contrast, Van Halewijn—the man De Piles was to meet—was said by Hartsoeker to have all the *esprit* imaginable; he was courageous, daring, and ambitious.<sup>36</sup> The notion of *esprit* was used not only to characterise individuals but also to make statements about peoples or nations in a more collective sense. From 1689, when Stadholder Willem III became King of England, Dutch agents informed French diplomats about the 'esprits de notre nation'.<sup>37</sup> In this vein, Hartsoeker supplied intelligence concerning the *esprit* of royalist and republican groups in the Dutch Republic.<sup>38</sup>

The character descriptions of individuals in the diplomatic realm found a parallel in De Piles' discussions of artists' personalities, which formed an integral part of his biographies in the *Abregé*. For example, in the comparison of the Bolognese painters and brothers Agostino and Annibale Carracci, De Piles indicated that Agostino had a divided *esprit*—interested as he was in different art forms—whereas Annibale focused his *esprit* entirely on painting. Furthermore, Agostino was timid and studious, while Annibale, by contrast, was courageous and entrepreneurial. De Piles' artistic expertise supported his belief that artists' personalities informed the styles in which they painted. The different temperaments of the Carracci thus explained the differences in style between them. For De Piles, Annibale's greater pride and sense of singularity than his brother was visible in the presence of more depth in his *disegno*, more liveliness in the expressions of his figures, and more vigour in the execution of his artworks (Fig. 41).<sup>39</sup>

34 Callières, pp. 49, 58–63.

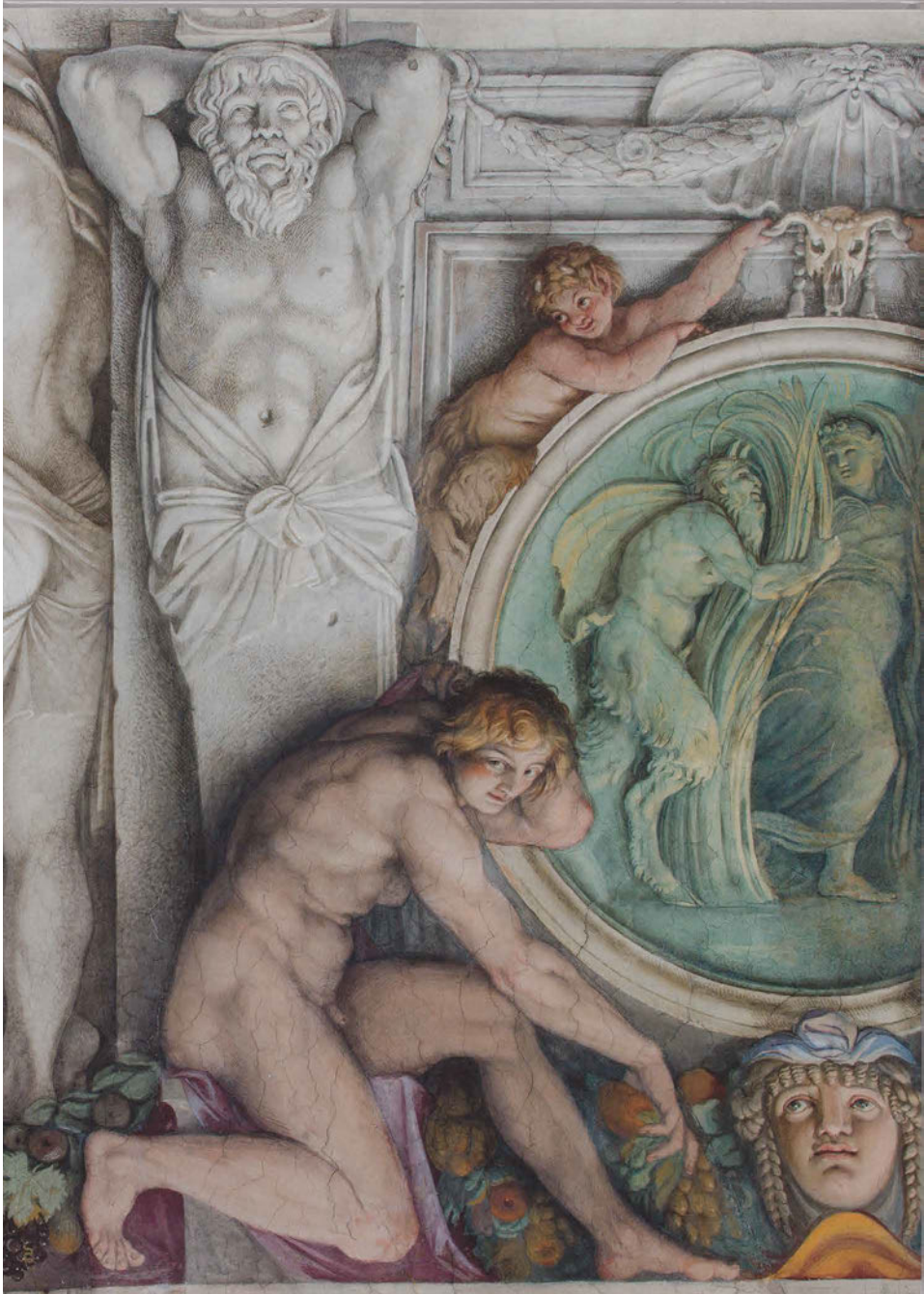
35 CADP, CP Venise; CP Portugal; CP Suisse; André, pp. 410–411.

36 CADP, CP Hollande, CLVIII, pp. 133r, 179v.

37 CADP, CP Hollande, CLVIII, p. 76v.

38 CADP, CP Hollande, CLVIII, pp. 137r–137v, 149r. See also Jensen, pp. 71–72, 79–81.

39 Piles 1699, pp. 302, 312. De Piles specifically draws attention to the nude figure supporting the Pan and Syrinx roundel at the Galleria Farnese, which was painted single-handedly by Annibale Carracci. Piles 1699, p. 311.



41. Annibale Carracci (Lombard school), *Nude Figure Supporting the Pan and Syrinx Roundel*, 1597–1608, fresco, detail from the Galleria Farnese, Palazzo Farnese, Rome. From: Elvira Cajano and Emanuela Settimi (eds.), *La galerie des Carrache: histoire et restauration* (Dijon: Fatou, 2015). © Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

More importantly, diplomatic practice involving intelligence about the *esprit* of nations underpinned De Piles' generalisations about the style of schools of art and the taste of nations in a coherent European perspective.

*Esprit* shaped the style of an artist and his school and also the collective style of schools, which De Piles arranged geographically within Europe. This was the case for the school or academy of the Carracci, in which they taught a distinct style of painting.<sup>40</sup> However, De Piles also employed the term 'school' in a significantly extended sense, grouping the Carracci into what he called the wider 'school of Lombardy'; the Carracci were placed alongside Correggio and other artists who had been their pupils or had adopted their styles.<sup>41</sup> In this way, De Piles transformed the well-established meaning of 'school' as a place of education into a classification category with which he was able to identify larger groups of artists and artworks, each united by master-pupil relationships or by similar styles. Extending the meaning of 'school' allowed De Piles to identify collective styles geographically, according to cities, regions, and countries in Europe.

Moreover, like the collective style of schools, De Piles believed, *esprit* was able to model the 'general taste' of people, which he understood in terms of nations. This 'taste of nations' implied a collective taste associated with the character of each of Europe's nations. While Félibien had occasionally addressed the Roman or Italian taste of artists or artworks, it seems that De Piles developed the concept of the 'taste of nations' for the first time.<sup>42</sup> As a faculty of the *esprit* of people, 'general taste' was susceptible to purity or corruption. This 'general taste' became individual depending on each person's interaction with specific things. De Piles argued that the 'taste of the *esprit*' was determined by the capacity of the human mind, as well as by the quality of the objects viewed by spectators, such as paintings. It was a critical faculty which, when judgement was exercised and training was accomplished, resulted in a taste for painting in each individual. Thus, taste not only had an individual and a general sense, but also a national definition. De Piles stated that the paintings on view in a country shaped the 'taste of the nation' via the *esprit* of the people who lived there. For example, the works of the Carracci and Correggio had largely inspired a Lombard taste that consisted of 'a flowing mellow design, in which a fine choice of nature, is mingled with a little of the antique, [...] colours very nearly approaching those of the life, and laid on

40 Piles 1699, pp. 305, 312.

41 Piles 1699, pp. 297–344. Agucchi had already described schools geographically. DaCosta Kaufmann 2004, p. 364.

42 Later, it was adopted by Dubos and Dezallier d'Argenville, and included in the *Encyclopédie*. Félibien, I, pp. 524–525, 581, 711; II, p. 643; Dubos, II, p. 243; Diderot, VII, p. 770; Brugère, pp. 53–54, 68–75; Lafont, pp. 88–89.

with a light pencil'.<sup>43</sup> In this way, De Piles linked the style of a school to the taste of a nation.

### School and Nation: Systematising Artistic Diversity in Europe

In his concise overview of European art in the *Abregé*, De Piles largely profited from the perpetually increasing responses to Vasari's *Vite* (1550/1568), which, through its attempt to celebrate Tuscan artists, sparked a wave of biographical compendia devoted to artists from different cities, regions, and countries on the Italian peninsula and the European continent.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, more than the sum total of these previous works, De Piles presented an unusually well-arranged overview of European art, while at the same time securing a place for the French school. This section will trace how he adopted the notions of school of art and nation as a means of systematising the diversity of art in Europe. This systematisation went hand in hand with a pluralistic understanding of art and its publics, and with insight into the circulation of art and artists across schools and nations. Below, the anachronistic projection of the modern notion of national schools into the *Abregé* is avoided, although the book may be regarded as one of the early modern roots of national forms of art history.<sup>45</sup>

De Piles claimed that he did not write the *Abregé* to provide a useful summary of painters in Europe. His principal intention was to establish the merit of artists and the works they had produced.<sup>46</sup> In the first part of the *Abregé*, he formulated a theory of painting and art connoisseurship that he applied to his critical evaluation of artists and their works in the second part. The lives of artists and reflections on their works were arranged geographically according to five different schools: the Roman and Florentine, the Venetian, the Lombard, the German and Flemish, and the French schools.<sup>47</sup> De Piles closed the *Abregé* with a chapter on taste and its diversity in relation to the taste of six different European nations; the list of these nations closely paralleled De Piles' list of schools: the Roman, the Venetian, the Lombard, the German, the Flemish, and the French.<sup>48</sup>

De Piles' notion of 'school' encompassed a group of artists, assistants, pupils, and followers who were linked by artistic style rather than by country of birth.

43 Piles 1699, pp. 525–530.

44 Piles 1699, unpaginated (preface); Grasman; Girotto, pp. 53–58. See also the essays by Oy-Marra and Proserpi Valenti Rodinò in this edited collection.

45 DaCosta Kaufmann 2017, pp. 3–7; DaCosta Kaufmann 2004, pp. 30, 32, 35–36.

46 Piles 1699, unpaginated (preface).

47 He did not assemble the antique Greek painters into a school.

48 De Piles aligned Florentine taste with Roman. He was ambiguous about the separation of the Flemish and the German schools. Elsewhere, he listed six schools. Piles 1699, p. 95.

In this respect, he not only articulated the European geography of art differently from his predecessors, who had organised artists largely based on national origins, but also made an important contribution to the rise of art connoisseurship.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, De Piles' focus on style determined his systematic distribution of artists' biographies according to schools in the *Abregé*.<sup>50</sup> In the case of Francesco Primaticcio (1504/05–1570), for example, De Piles related that the artist had been born in Bologna in Lombardy, that he had been a pupil of Giulio Romano, and that his work for the French king at Fontainebleau had influenced French art (Fig. 42).<sup>51</sup> However, De Piles did not place Primaticcio in the Lombard school as the region of his birth, nor did he appropriate him into the French school for patriotic reasons; instead, he placed Primaticcio in the Roman and Florentine school because of his classical style, which he had acquired directly as a pupil of Giulio Romano and indirectly through his master's master, Raphael.<sup>52</sup>

Curiously, the arrangement of artists and artworks according to schools resulted in an explanation not of the styles of schools, but of the closely related taste of nations. Indeed, De Piles confused style and taste.<sup>53</sup> He stated that some spectators who were not content to only observe the style or manner of an artwork also aimed to perceive the taste and the *esprit* of the artist.<sup>54</sup> By extension, he must also have been of the opinion that keen observation of the style of a school gave access to the taste and the *esprit* of a nation. For example, De Piles based Roman taste firmly on the style of the Roman school, which comprised antique works present in Rome and modern works made in imitation of them, either in sculpture or painting. It also had an inexhaustibly beautiful *disegno*, highly praiseworthy choice in the posture of figures, finesse in the expression of emotions, and an elevated style, with which the antiques, and the moderns after them, had represented nature.<sup>55</sup>

By linking schools to nations, De Piles delineated a public domain of art in Europe. Thomas Puttfarken has pointed out that De Piles targeted a new public of 'gens d'esprit' or 'honnêtes hommes', who aimed to practise art and adorn conversation about art by relying on elementary information about the lives of artists and the criteria of art criticism.<sup>56</sup> However, it should be added that De Piles developed a

49 Authors such as Karel van Mander and Joachim von Sandrart and print collectors such as Louis Odespung de la Meschinière and Michel de Marolles arranged artists according to national origin, not school. Meyer, pp. 4–30; Griener, pp. 91–115.

50 Piles 1699, p. 300.

51 Piles 1699, pp. 229–231. His work for Fontainebleau is mentioned on p. 230.

52 See also the organisation of painters in the Lombard and Venetian schools. Piles 1699, pp. 229–231, 300, 530–531.

53 Fresnoy, unpaginated ('Pour soulager les amateurs: goust').

54 Piles 1699, pp. 97–98.

55 Piles 1699, p. 528.

56 Puttfarken 1996, pp. 85, 89, 95.



42. Francesco Primaticcio (Roman and Florentine school), *Danaë*, c. 1530–1540, fresco and stucco, Galerie François Ier, Château de Fontainebleau, inv. SNPM37. © Gérard Blot / RMN-Grand Palais (Château de Fontainebleau).

plural understanding of the public, incorporating spectators from different nations. His chapter on the taste of nations clarifies scattered remarks in the biographies of individual artists about the taste of various art publics. For example, De Piles asserted that the Flemish painter Lambert Lombard (1505–1566) was the first to introduce an antique way of painting into Flanders that diverged from the reigning 'gothic and barbaric taste'.<sup>57</sup> This meant not only that Lambert Lombard introduced a classical style of painting into Flanders, but also that the taste for antique art was not confined to the public in Rome and could equally be acquired by the public in Flanders.

De Piles' categorisation of artists according to schools and nations resulted in his highlighting differences in art from various parts in Europe. He located the various tastes of nations in their differences rather than their similarities, and characterised them in a stereotypical way. For example, De Piles placed Venetian taste, which relied on colour, in opposition to the antique character of Roman taste, which depended on *disegno*. As there were no antique works to rely on, he argued, the Venetians represented the natural beauty of their country through the true colour of things—an approach that made their artworks more tangible, true, and surprising, he claimed (Fig. 43).<sup>58</sup> This positive description of both Roman and Venetian taste was contrasted with German and Flemish taste, which he negatively characterised as Gothic because it was based on the errors, rather than the purities, of nature. For De Piles, French taste was difficult to describe since the painters were too different from each other, variously expressing Roman, Venetian, or Lombard taste.<sup>59</sup>

However, De Piles was well aware that his systematic approach obscured some of the realities of the art world, as artists, artworks, and tastes circulated among the distinct categories of school and nation in various ways. Firstly, he consistently addressed the mobility of artists. While some artists never travelled, many others visited one or more countries. Travel was a positive means of artistic improvement, though not always a guarantee. Because De Piles assumed, wrongly, that Rembrandt had been in Venice, he placed Rembrandt's use of colour and handling of the brush on a par with Titian, despite his opinion that Rembrandt had not been able to avoid the bad taste of his country (Fig. 44).<sup>60</sup> Secondly, De Piles warned that it was difficult to acquire knowledge of the style of an artist. Artists worked in different styles, and their pupils practised more or less closely related styles. In addition, artists

57 Piles 1699, p. 366.

58 De Piles mentions Titian's *St Mark Enthroned with Saints* as an example of the artist's second manner. Piles 1699, p. 268.

59 Piles 1699, pp. 528–532.

60 Piles 1699, pp. 434, 437–438. De Piles acquired Rembrandt's *Girl in a Window* for his own collection. Piles 1708, pp. 10–11.





43. Titian (Venetian school), *St Mark Enthroned with Saints*, probably 1512, oil on panel, 230 x 149 cm, Santa Maria delle Salute, Venice. © Erich Lessing / Album.



44. Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn (German and Flemish school), *Girl in a Window*, 1645, oil on canvas, 81.8 x 66.2 cm, Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, inv. DPG 163 (formerly: collection of Roger de Piles). © By permission of Dulwich Picture Gallery, London.

adopted styles from other countries and changed styles within their own country.<sup>61</sup> Simon Vouet was found to have followed the style of Caravaggio and Valentin de Boulogne (1591–1631) in Rome, but to have subsequently developed a more vigorous and mannered style, with which he overcame the pale and barbarous style of France (Fig. 45).<sup>62</sup> Finally, De Piles often mentioned the dispersal of artworks across Europe and connected it to the wide appreciation they elicited. He claimed that this dispersal explained the mobility of the works of Paolo Veronese, Jacopo Bassano (c. 1510–1592), and Caravaggio, but also of those of Quentin Metsys (1466–1530), Pieter Bruegel (1525/30–1569), and Caspar Netscher (1639–1684), among others.<sup>63</sup>

De Piles systematised art with full awareness of the mutual connections between schools and nations in Europe. However, such systematisation was not a neutral affair. It opened up the possibility of demarcating a place for the French school on the European map of art. His French school was modelled on the Parisian Académie, which had been founded and protected by Louis XIV.<sup>64</sup> In the *Abregé*, De Piles did not celebrate the Académie's achievements at the expense of other European schools; it has even been argued that De Piles did not have a 'nationalistic' goal.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, there can be no doubt about his loyalties and ambitions. After his return from the Dutch Republic and the completion of the *Abregé* in April 1699, De Piles was appointed councillor to and became the main lecturer of the Académie.<sup>66</sup> In his inauguration speech, given in July 1699, he placed his knowledge of art at the service of artists. He believed that conferences about the different schools in Europe, and the lessons that could be learned about the principles of painting from them, would ultimately benefit the French school.<sup>67</sup>

In conclusion, De Piles' diplomatic experience shaped his understanding of European art. He was deeply involved in the European geopolitics of Louis XIV, with his secret diplomatic mission in 1693 resulting in prolonged imprisonment in the Dutch Republic. At Loevestein Castle, he devoted himself to the manuscript of the seminal *Abregé* (1699), which emerged out of the European scope of his diplomatic experience, including vital intelligence about the *esprit*, or character, of nations. De Piles' understanding of *esprit* underpinned his stereotypical generalisations about the collective style of schools and the collective taste of nations within a European perspective. Through the geographical alignment of the different styles of schools with the different tastes of nations, De Piles systematically arranged art, artists, and publics

61 Piles 1699, pp. 95–97.

62 Piles 1699, pp. 466–467.

63 Piles 1699, pp. 276, 290, 341, 359–360, 374, 454–455.

64 Michel, pp. xiii, xiv.

65 Mérot, p. 128. De Piles' chapter 'Du goût' was published in 1699, not 1684.

66 Lichtenstein, III, p. 17; Michel, pp. 63–67.

67 Lichtenstein, III, pp. 28–32.



45. Simon Vouet (French school), *Allegorical Figure of Fortune*, c. 1638–1640, oil on canvas, 170 x 124 cm, Musée du Louvre, Paris, inv. 8500 (formerly: collection of Louis XIII). © Tony Querrec / RMN-Grand Palais (Musée du Louvre, Paris).

in Europe. Nevertheless, he was aware of the mutual connections between schools and nations, which were established through the mobility of artists, the exchange of styles, and the dispersal of artworks. Ultimately, his book was not a neutral affair. After his return from the Dutch Republic in 1697, he placed the *Abregé* firmly at the service of the Académie, with the aim of strengthening the French school of art.

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## About the Author

**Ingrid R. Vermeulen** is Associate Professor of Early Modern Art History at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Her research focuses on the early modern history of art history as it is evidenced in art literature, collections, and museums in Europe. This focus generated the book *Picturing Art History* (2010) and the project 'The Artistic Taste of Nations' (2015), which has been funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO).





# 11. How Do Great Geniuses Appear in a Nation? A Political Problem for the Enlightenment Period

*Pascal Griener*

## Abstract

This essay concentrates on Roger de Piles' contribution to eighteenth-century philosophical debates about the role of ingenious individuals in the progress of any given society from the past. It discusses the historiographical and political consequences of De Piles' novel privileging of artistic style and taste—of schools and of nations—in art historical writing. Historiographically, De Piles foregrounded the historical model of the 'tableau' to describe the distinguished state of civilisation in his analysis of Raphael's *School of Athens*—based on Giovan Pietro Bellori—as the visual centrepiece of the Renaissance. Politically, he encouraged the conviction that the development of the arts in a nation was not explained by a prince's patronage but by extraordinary artistic talent, later exemplified by Evrard Titon du Tillet's (1677–1762) public monument of the *Parnasse français*.

**Keywords:** taste of nations, genius, style, historiography, politics, social change

Over the course of the eighteenth century, the *philosophes* developed an anthropological outlook on history. They began to consider the nature of the mechanisms that further or impede the progress of any given society. Their field of study was history—or, more precisely, particular historical moments: ancient Greece, ancient Rome, and Renaissance Italy.<sup>1</sup> Their debates focused not only on the reasons for which these cultures progressed or fell into decay; they also addressed the role of the individual within those collective, historical processes. Were geniuses the

<sup>1</sup> Grell; Stroumsa; Dupre.

product of chance, or were they nurtured by a specific type of society? Were they the driving force of progress, or merely the symptom of a given phase of historical progress within a nation? I will concentrate on Roger de Piles' contribution to such debates; he was a key figure in elaborating the theory of genius some years before the *philosophes* turned their attention to it.

In his *Abrégé* (1699), De Piles took a drastic decision. Aware of the need to develop new methods of art historical writing, he reduced the anecdotal content of the artistic biographies that he wrote, in order to privilege a clear evaluation of artistic manner. He decided to offer a unified appreciation of the formal characteristics typical of each artist's productions.<sup>2</sup> By means of this new perspective, he took a critical stance with regard to Giorgio Vasari. The author of the *Vite* (1550 and 1568) knew that he could not afford the costs of an illustrated book with engraved reproductions after the paintings or sculptures that he referred to in his text. Only his personal *Libro dei disegni* provided the stylistic evidence necessary for elucidating the manners of artists (Fig. 46); but this book was available in one copy only, and could not be adduced as visual evidence available to all of Vasari's readers.<sup>3</sup> De Piles faced the same challenge. Instead of compensating for this limitation by characterising artists via biographical anecdotes, as Vasari had done, he did exactly the opposite. De Piles tried to alter the scope of his text. The *Abrégé* was intended to introduce his readers to art and to enable them to articulate the styles typical of specific artists and within different schools. Therefore, it is accurate to say that De Piles, and not Johann Joachim Winckelmann, first understood that a history of art should not be reduced to a mere history of artists: 'Das Wesen der Kunst aber ist in diesem sowohl, als in jenem Theile, der vornehmste Entzweck, in welches die Geschichte der Künstler wenig Einfluß hat (The essence of art, however, is in this [case] as well as in each part, the most important objective, in which the history of artists has little influence).<sup>4</sup> At the end of the seventeenth century, however, such an undertaking was fraught with difficulties. De Piles had to find an answer to a major historical question: how could the historian explain more general stylistic characteristics, those that define the artistic production of entire schools, or even of whole nations? Introducing the chapter entitled 'Du gout, et de sa diversité, par rapport aux différentes nations (On Taste and Its Diversity, for Different Nations)' at the end of his *Abrégé*, De Piles says: 'Après avoir parlé des peintres de différens endroits de l'Europe, j'ay crû qu'il ne seroit pas hors de propos de dire ici quelque chose des différens goûts des nations (After having discussed artists

2 On Roger de Piles, see Puttfarcken.

3 Griener; Vermeulen; Jonietz.

4 Winckelmann, p. x.



46. Giorgio Vasari's *Libro de' disegni*, page devoted to Filippo Lippi, frame by Giorgio Vasari, drawings by Filippino Lippi, Botticelli, and Raffaellino del Garbo, drawings mounted on paper, 1480–1504, mounting after 1524, 56.70 x 45.70 mm, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, Accession N°1991.190.1. © National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.

from different places in Europe, I thought that it would not be irrelevant to say something here about the different tastes of nations).<sup>5</sup>

In this essay, I shall analyse the context and the basic tenets of De Piles' approach, which obliged a whole generation of writers to conceptualise the taste of nations in a totally new way.

At the time when De Piles started to plan his work, the idea that taste and art were subject to eternal values no longer convinced art theorists. The conflict between the supporters of Peter Paul Rubens and of Raphael showed that it was not possible to agree upon a common set of unifying principles of art based upon the antique; rather, this conflict encouraged a polarised vision of artistic geography since it clearly distinguished northern from southern Europe.<sup>6</sup> But how was it possible to explain these different tastes emerging in different countries? In his *Abrégé*, De Piles provides a clear answer. He defines three kinds of taste: natural taste, which develops in the imagination of any person who looks at nature; artificial taste, which appears only in the imagination of those who look at works of art by artists and educate their eye; and national taste, which is formed when all citizens acquaint themselves with all the artworks produced in their midst. This tripartite definition of taste was unprecedented because it relied upon an anthropological modelling of the human imagination. But above all, it raised the possibility that artworks by renowned, talented artists could shape the mind of a whole nation. Thus, the consequences of De Piles's definition are both historiographical and political. I shall first deal with the historiographical effects, and then turn to the political ones.

## Historiographical Consequences

In order to be able to describe a certain period as a whole, discrete unit, historians required a model; they found it in the form of the tableau. Historical discourse involved two distinct acts: narration and synchronisation. The first of these—narration—had to describe series of events along with their causes; it was an account based on chronological sequence. The second act—synchronisation—required another skill, that of representing a given period as synchronous, bringing together events and movements that belonged to the same time. The tableau facilitated these two acts, allowing them to coexist in one easily assimilated form. And within each tableau representing a famous civilisation, the historian had to explain the role of geniuses.<sup>7</sup>

5 Piles 1699, p. 525.

6 Szanto; Heck; Lichtenstein.

7 Huppert and Kelley wrote the first monographs to investigate this structure.

In the middle of the seventeenth century, the major proponent of this style of historical writing was a historian who was well known to De Piles: Charles de Saint-Évremond (1613–1703).<sup>8</sup> Saint-Évremond, in his *Réflexions sur les divers génies du peuple romain dans les divers temps de la République* (1663), stated that when an empire reaches its peak, all the best talents bloom at the same time, creating a brilliant culture and bearing witness to a high point in history.<sup>9</sup> But for Saint-Évremond, these talents do not remain forever in the same location; as a great empire begins to decline, its most distinguished talents migrate to other kingdoms to seek new opportunities. According to Saint-Évremond, for a group of talents to remain stable and rooted, they needed to be supported by a great civilisation. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of Saint-Évremond's essay since it became a key inspiration for Montesquieu's (1689–1755) *Esprit des lois* (1748).

In the field of the arts, the model of the tableau became a repeated trope for historical discourse, thanks to particular circumstances, namely the publication of Bellori's *Descrizione delle immagini dipinte da Raffaello d'Urbino nel Palazzo Vaticano* (1695) (Fig. 47).<sup>10</sup> This text constitutes a landmark in the history of art; it is the first time that an iconographical programme is analysed systematically and that an author who lived a century after the Renaissance tried, by means of scrupulous use of hermeneutic methods, to read the symbols and allegories that he identified in Raphael's frescoes.<sup>11</sup> Bellori criticised Vasari's reading of the Stanza della Segnatura, observing that Vasari had confused the content of the *Disputa* (1510–1511) with that of the *School of Athens* (c. 1510–1512). While Vasari had clearly made an error on this point, as a contemporary of Michelangelo and of Raphael, he nonetheless was expressing a widely shared belief that ancient philosophy and Christian theology could complement each other; this conviction had already been articulated by Augustine (AD 354–430), and then theorised by Thomas Aquinas (c. 1225–1274). The complementarity of pagan philosophy and Christian theology was paramount for many Renaissance humanists: according to this theory, ancient pagan philosophy could be seen as having prepared the ground for the triumph of Christianity. After all, many central issues of ancient philosophy are mirrored in those outlined by the Christian faith.<sup>12</sup> Bellori rejected this vision. He aimed to

8 Desjardins, p. 581.

9 Saint-Évremond 1982. The text was written in 1663, but published later. The best-known edition during the Enlightenment was printed by Tonson in London: Saint-Évremond 1705, I, pp. 151–196.

10 Bellori. On Bellori, see Borea. Bellori referred to Giorgio Ghisi's print after Raphael's *School of Athens* in the *Descrizione*. Bellori, p. 15.

11 Hénin; Kempers.

12 Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463–1494), one of the most renowned scholars of the Renaissance, stated that God is no less a philosopher than a priest and tried to show the concordance ('concordia') between the old, pagan philosophy and Christian doctrine. Copenhagen.



47. Giorgio Ghisi after Raphael, *The School of Athens* (1509–1511), published 1550, engraving, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. RP-P-OB-207.662. © Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

separate the analysis of the *School of Athens* from that of the *Disputa* and to treat these two works, which faced each other in the Stanza della Segnatura, individually. His hypothesis was that the two works were autonomous compositions, unrelated to each other. Bellori called the first one the *School of Athens*, and suggested that this work of art was an indirect representation in synthesis of the great age of the Renaissance since many of the figures could be identified as Raphael's contemporaries. In other words, Raphael's *School of Athens* was to become one of the most pregnant metaphors of the Renaissance as a Golden Age; this idea prevailed from Bellori's time to the nineteenth century, when Jacob Burckhardt (1818–1897) wrote his *Cultur der Renaissance in Italien* (1860).<sup>13</sup>

Bellori had a strong impact on De Piles, who knew the Italian theorist's essay on Raphael's *School of Athens*, translated it into French and published it in his *Cours de peinture par principes* (1708) (although he neglected to mention the original author!).<sup>14</sup> De Piles observed that this description offered artists a perfect example of invention in painting; however, the significance of Bellori's essay did not end there, and it was to become a historiographical instrument of the highest importance. It offered historians a model for the synchronic analysis of a brilliant period characterised by a dazzling array of artistic geniuses, and Saint-Évremond's text was to play a similar role.

## Political Consequences

It was by no means a neutral act to select the periods when several artistic geniuses seemed to have been thriving. Indeed, it was a highly charged gesture from a political point of view. During the seventeenth century, when absolutism was prominent across Europe, especially in France, sovereigns appropriated entirely and wholeheartedly the model of Vasari's historical narrative as a means of explaining the rise of artistic perfection; like Vasari, they were keen to prove that the rich development of the arts in a nation owed everything to the prince's patronage. In France, the act of portraying the king was a rather particular exercise. Louis XIV's divine nature precluded any representation in which he figured alongside other men or women, even the geniuses born during his reign, on public monuments. During the seventeenth century, a new class of citizens, mainly from the ranks of the bourgeoisie, first tried to advance the notion that talent could exist independently in the established system of values based on rank and birth.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Burckhardt.

<sup>14</sup> Piles 1708, pp. 73–93.

<sup>15</sup> Venturino.



It is symptomatic of this trend towards a more democratic idea of genius that artists' biographies increasingly emphasised the autonomy of the artistic genius within the structure of a state. One anecdote cropped up often in the art literature; its first occurrence can be traced back to Karel van Mander's *Schilder-Boeck* (1604). In his biographical sketch of Hans Holbein the Younger, Van Mander states that Holbein threw an aristocrat out of his studio because the nobleman was disturbing him. When the courtier complained to King Henry VIII (1491–1547), the sovereign replied: 'I say to you, Count, from seven peasants I can, if I wish, make seven earls, but I cannot make a painter like Holbein out of seven earls.'<sup>16</sup> This story is most certainly apocryphal, but it highlighted the autonomy of genius in relation to political power—a genius who owed his outstanding gift only to God, not to men, however great, noble, rich, and powerful they might be. Swiftly, the anecdote found its way into European art literature: Carlo Ridolfi, in his *Maraviglie dell'arte* (1648),<sup>17</sup> applied it to Titian; here, Charles V (1500–1558) assumes the role of Henry VIII. From the seventeenth century onwards, this vignette became a leitmotif: Vicente Carducho (c. 1570/76–1638) uses the anecdote in his biography of Leonardo da Vinci, where King François Ier (1494–1547) says: 'I can create knights and peers, but not artists, and for that reason, I must give them more esteem.'<sup>18</sup> Antonio Palomino de Castro y Velasco included it in his life of the court painter Alonso Cano (1601–1667) with Ferdinand II of Spain (1452–1516) in the role of Henry VIII,<sup>19</sup> and Jean-Baptiste Descamps (1715–1791) exploited it when depicting Albrecht Dürer with Emperor Maximilian I.<sup>20</sup> The growing importance of the anecdote shows that personal merit was now accorded preeminence over aristocratic prestige and birth. A new class of men and women was slowly trying to impose a new social order. In the *Cours de peinture par principes*, Roger de Piles followed the trend of reiterating this anecdote, quoting Ridolfi's version concerning Titian.<sup>21</sup>

By the time Charles Perrault (1628–1703) published his *Hommes illustres* (1697)—at about the same time as De Piles' *Abrégé*—the defence of genius against noble

16 Mander, I, pp. 216–217.

17 Emperor Charles V told his courtiers, who were jealous of his treatment of Titian: 'hebbe a dire rirrovarsi [sic] molti Principi ma un solo Titiano.' Ridolfi, p. 165.

18 'Yo puedo hazer Monsiures, y Pares, mas no destos hombres, y assi les debo mayor estimación.' Carducho, fol. 21r.

19 'Bien está! Quien os ha dicho, que si Alonso Cano fuera hombre de letras, no habria de ser Arzobispo de Toledo? Andad, que hombres como vosotros los puedo yo hacer: *hombres como Alonso Cano, sólo Dios los hace.*' Palomino de Castro y Velasco, III, p. 391.

20 Emperor Maximilian said of Albrecht Dürer: 'je peux d'un paysan faire un noble, mais d'un noble je ne ferois jamais un tel artiste.' Descamps, I, p. 25. On Descamps, see especially Maës.

21 Emperor Charles V said to his courtiers: 'qu'il ne manqueroit jamais de courtisans, mais qu'il n'aurait pas toujours un Titien.' Piles 1708, pp. 440–441. De Piles was quoting Ridolfi.

prerogative was taken much further, in order to support a new historiography.<sup>22</sup> Perrault states boldly in his book that all the lives he has written—whether that of a field marshal, an archbishop or a painter—have been reduced to the same length because each of them has the same value. Perrault explains at length that outstanding talent is worth the same as high birth: ‘Pour ce qui est du rang que chacun d’eux tient dans la classe où il est, on ne doit y faire aucune attention [...] en fait d’Illustres, la qualité n’y fait plus rien dès qu’ils sont morts (Concerning the social rank which each of them holds in the group where he is, one should not pay any attention to it [...] when it comes to famous people, high birth is of no relevance as soon as they have died).’<sup>23</sup> Such ideas were not new. During the Italian Renaissance, the humanist Gianfrancesco Poggio Bracciolini (1380–1459) argued in his treatise *De vera nobilitate* (1440) that there was only one kind of nobility, that of the soul.<sup>24</sup> Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527) emphasised that *virtù*—inner strength, as well as power to fight and to conquer—was paramount for any human ambition, but that put to good use, it could conquer a state.<sup>25</sup> Perrault explored the consequences of the new recognition of personal qualities in the field of biography.

Such new representations of genius were bound to turn a whole system of social values on its head. They would ultimately challenge the Vasarian model that underlined the absolute importance of the prince as a patron of the Muses for the development of the arts in a realm. At first sight, this challenge does not seem obvious. In his *Hommes illustres*, Perrault gives a prominent place to Louis XIV, who stands as the centre of the author’s representation of his century. Perrault goes so far as to propose a theological theory of history: God ensured that the birth of Louis XIV was preceded by that of many geniuses, who would be able to give true and deserved splendour to the Sun King’s reign.<sup>26</sup>

But the combined power of a new historiographical style and a new visual metaphor crafted to define significant historical periods led to an important change in the iconographical representation of the king. It will suffice to look at Evrard Titon du Tillet’s *Parnasse français* (1727), a project for a monument to the arts conceived from 1708 onwards and documented by a famous publication (Fig. 48).<sup>27</sup> For the first time, a proposal was made to erect a public monument portraying Louis XIV, as Apollo with his lyre seated on Mount Parnassus alongside three female writers—Antoinette Deshoulières, Henriette de La Suze, and

22 Perrault.

23 Perrault, preface, unpaginated.

24 Poggio Bracciolini.

25 Machiavelli.

26 Perrault, preface, unpaginated.

27 Titon du Tillet 1727 (it was republished in 1732 and in 1760); see also Titon du Tillet 1734.



48. Dominique Sornique after Evrard Titon du Tillet, *Le Parnasse françois*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Département estampes et photographie, RESERVE FOL-QB-201 (88), Hennin 7712. © Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

Madeleine de Scudéry, who were represented as the Three Graces. Below these figures were Pierre Corneille, Jean Baptiste Molière, Jean Racine, Honorat Racan, Jean Baptiste Lully carrying a medallion bearing a portrait of Philippe Quinault, Jean de Segrais, Jean de la Fontaine, Nicolas Boileau, and Claude Emmanuel Chapelle.

From that time on, it was easy to focus on a philosophical history of genius, and to forget the representation of the king as a key figure in the history of the arts. In 1768, Maille Dussausoy published his *Citoyen désintéressé*, in which he put forward the idea that the king should donate the Louvre to the city of Paris and turn it into a useful *hôtel de ville*. Inside, he hoped, there would be a large gallery containing statues of the most distinguished men in France's history—in other words, a kind of pantheon without the presence of a central, royal figure.<sup>28</sup> Even the royal bureaucracy began to adapt to the times, and under King Louis XVI (1754–1793), Comte d'Angiviller (1730–1809), the *directeur des bâtiments*, settled for a compromise in his project for a museum in the Louvre in 1775. The king would receive his due praise, but the future museum would house, at the main entrance, a large array of statues paying tribute to the greatest men in French history.<sup>29</sup> By then, the nation was no longer seen as embodied in the figure of the king;<sup>30</sup> it had become a collective entity, a political body waiting to be acknowledged as such.

It was within this new context that, freed from the Vasarian image of the king as patron of the Muses, a discussion of the causes of the surge of extraordinary talents during certain periods in history became a veritable historiographical problem. *Philosophes*, such as Guillaume Alexandre de Méhégan (1721–1766) in his *Considérations sur les révolutions des arts* (Paris, 1755) and, more particularly Montesquieu and Winckelmann, highlighted the social, political, and economic factors that led to the development of historical periods filled with talent; they viewed a given society as an organic structure in which every component was important. Francesco Algarotti followed Montesquieu's example and deployed an anthropological approach; for example, he assessed the impact of climate on the minds of people. However, in another essay, his *Saggio sopra quella opinione che i grandi ingegni fioriscano tutti a un tempo medesimo*, he rejected any idea that especially talented men are born only within specific periods of history.<sup>31</sup> In his introduction to the *Siècle de Louis XIV* (1751), Voltaire (1694–1778) attempted

28 Dussausoy, I, p. 121, sketches out his project of a 'Galerie des Hommes illustres' for the gallery along the Seine; Dussausoy, I, p. 131, proposes to erect a statue based on the model of Titon du Tillet's *Parnasse français* in the square in front of Perrault's colonnade, near the church of St-Germain l'Auxerrois; Lemas.

29 Pommier, pp. 185–212.

30 Kantorowicz; Pigeaud; Gaechtens.

31 Algarotti.

to simplify this question by declaring that in the long run, the title of a great civilisation could be reserved for those historical periods that produced superb ruins—thereby granting Bellori's visual model a key role in historical discourse; aesthetics alone enabled the historian to identify the most outstanding periods of history. Last but not least, Johann Georg Sulzer (1720–1779) adopted a purely naturalistic stance: aware that genius was a gift of nature, he put forward the idea that the arts develop 'in allen Ländern, wo die Vernunft zu einiger Entwicklung gekommen ist, einheimische Pflanzen, die ohne mühsames Warten hervor wachsen (in all the nations, where reason has developed to a certain point, indigenous plants, which grow without painful delay).<sup>32</sup>

I believe that De Piles, with his theory of the *goût de nation* ('taste of nations') and his use of Raphael's *School of Athens*, participated in a decisive manner in the creation of a debate that marked the birth of a history of art that does not limit itself to the history of artists. This new type of history sought to reconstruct a distinguished phase of civilisation in the form of a 'tableau' and to characterise artistic production by an overarching formal principle, style. The theory of the 'taste of nations', and the *School of Athens* as a historiographical form, contributed significantly to this revolution in art history writing.

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<sup>32</sup> Sulzer, p. 38.

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## About the Author

**Pascal Griener** is Professor at the École du Louvre in Paris. Previously, he was Professor of Art History at the Institute of Art History and Museology, University of Neuchâtel. As a historian of art and of culture, he devotes his research to the history of German art in the Renaissance, the history of collections, and the historiography of art in Europe.





# **Prints, Collecting, and Classification**



## 12. Dezallier d'Argenville's (1680–1765) Concept of a Print Collection: By Topic or by School?

Gaëtane Maës

### Abstract

In 1727, Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville presented a theory of collecting practices in an article that spread throughout Europe in the eighteenth century. Its author set out his own recommendations for assembling a diverse collection and dwelt in particular on prints since, for him, they synthesised a form of learning through images. Dezallier located the value of prints primarily in their documentary content and advised that they should be classified by theme, unlike drawings, which he regarded as works of art because of their stylistic features and which, he argued, should therefore be organised by school and by artist. With such arguments, Dezallier typifies a pivotal period in the graphic arts; his vision of the print looked to the past while his view of drawings heralded the future.

**Keywords:** eighteenth-century France, connoisseurship, art expertise, art collecting, history of printmaking

Amongst the collectors of the eighteenth century, Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville owes his reputation less to the content of his possessions than to the works he published on a variety of subjects: the art of gardening (1709), natural history (more specifically, the history of shells and minerals) (1742), and, lastly, the lives of painters (1745).<sup>1</sup> His eclectic interests also included the arrangement of collections, a topic on which he published an article in the *Mercure de France* in

Translated from the French by Melanie J. Moore.

<sup>1</sup> For Dezallier's biography, see Labbé, pp. 16–37. For his books, see Dezallier 1709; Dezallier 1742; Dezallier 1745–1752. All these books were reissued and translated during the eighteenth century.

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1727. The text, entitled ‘Lettre sur le choix et l’arrangement d’un cabinet curieux’ (Letter on the Selection and Arrangement of a Cabinet of Curiosities), remains an important source for art historians today.<sup>2</sup> As its title declares, Dezallier’s article covers all objects of ‘curiosity’—paintings, prints, drawings, books, natural history, bronzes, instruments, and sculptures—but, surprisingly, he gives pride of place to prints, which he discusses across eighteen pages out of a total of 35, whereas the other types of objects are rapidly dealt with in two pages apiece. Why does Dezallier show so much interest in prints?

To answer this question, I will first show that Dezallier offers a theory of print collecting that synthesises the various approaches introduced by the collectors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. On the basis of his unpublished *post-mortem* inventory, I will demonstrate that his theory was a direct result of his personal collecting practice and his desire to differentiate himself from art dealers. Next, the importance Dezallier attached to prints will be explained by the particular status he granted them in organising the knowledge that a gentleman of the early eighteenth century was supposed to possess. To him, the print was, above all, a documentary resource to be classified by topic, unlike the drawing, which was a work of art and should therefore be arranged by schools and painters. In accordance with this distinction, the two techniques of printing and drawing corresponded to two different forms of learning through images that were practised before the publication of Denis Diderot’s and Jean le Rond d’Alembert’s *Encyclopédie*: the print’s function was primarily iconographic, whereas the drawing was an instrument of connoisseurship enabling the stylistic approaches of painters to be identified.

## Dezallier in Context

Before presenting Dezallier’s theories, it seems necessary to recall that he was born in 1680 into a family connected to publishing and prints. His father, Antoine Dezallier (1642?–1716), joined the publishers’ and booksellers’ guild in 1679,<sup>3</sup> the same year that he married Marie Mariette (1637–?), herself the widow of a publisher and the sister of Pierre II Mariette (1634–1716).<sup>4</sup> Through his mother, Dezallier was therefore the cousin of Pierre-Jean Mariette, a dealer in prints and drawings, who was charged with assembling for Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663–1736) a representative

2 Dezallier 1727.

3 Antoine Dezallier was the publisher, in particular, of *Hommes illustres qui ont paru en France pendant ce siècle, avec leurs portraits au naturel* par M. Perrault (1696). See Grivel 1986, p. 9. See the essay by Griener in this edited collection.

4 Marie Mariette was the widow of bookseller Jean Dupuis. See Herluison; Préaud, pp. 230–233.

collection of engravings from across Europe between 1717 and 1720.<sup>5</sup> Pierre-Jean Mariette and Dezallier did not get along since both claimed the role of indisputable expert in graphic arts, while they were based in rival sectors: the former in the art trade, the latter in the sphere of the collectors.

From his father, who died in 1718, Antoine-Joseph Dezallier inherited 'fifteen large volumes or albums of prints by various masters, [...] eight albums of drawings by the finest masters', as well as bronzes, medals, shells, and several valuable objects.<sup>6</sup> These objects reveal that Dezallier's education was acquired amid a cabinet of diverse curiosities that allocated significant space to graphic works, as Pierre Rémy confirmed in 1779: 'Mr. d'Argenville [...] drew his taste for the Arts from Albums of Prints, the prime objects of his curiosity.'<sup>7</sup> Rémy's comment is a clear indication that Dezallier regarded prints as tools for learning and memorisation, which gave access to a 'taste for the arts'; this conception differs from how he saw the drawings in his collection, as will be seen in due course. Furthermore, it is worth remembering that the approach of putting images on a par with texts in acquiring knowledge was widely propounded throughout the seventeenth century, particularly by the pedagogue Jan Amos Comenius (1592–1670) in his education manual entitled *Orbis sensualium pictus* (1658).<sup>8</sup> In art literature, the same opinion was expressed by writers like the engraver Abraham Bosse (1604–1676)<sup>9</sup> and the theorist Roger de Piles,<sup>10</sup> whom Dezallier was to follow closely in a number of his writings, especially in his article of 1727.

Dezallier was 47 when his *Mercure de France* article was published, and his text is a synthesis of his readings and his experience of collecting; it was intended to be of service to one of his colleagues. Himself a lawyer at the Parlement de Paris and *Maître des Comptes*,<sup>11</sup> Dezallier dedicated the article to one 'Mr. de Fougeroux, *trésorier-payeur des rentes de l'Hôtel de Ville*'. This was most probably Pierre-Jacques Fougeroux (1678–1743), *seigneur de Blaveau* and lawyer at the Parlement; he became *Trésorier receveur général et payeur des rentes* of the Paris Hôtel de Ville in 1721 and was then ennobled through the purchase of the office of Secretary to the King in

5 This collection, now held at the Albertina in Vienna, was made up of 255 albums of artists' complete works, which Dezallier regarded as collections put together by dealers to induce reckless spending. On the collections of engravings assembled by Mariette and especially the one put together for Prince Eugene of Savoy, see Smentek, pp. 17–91.

6 Marriage contract of 1 September 1718, quoted by Labbé, p. 31.

7 Rémy 1779.

8 Comenius.

9 Bosse, p. 46.

10 Piles 1706, pp. 61–62. For the first version in French, see Piles 1699, pp. 84–85.

11 Dezallier purchased a position as Secretary to the King in 1716, a position as Master of Accounts in 1733, and in 1748, he obtained the title of 'Adviser to the King in his Councils', which came with a royal pension. See Labbé, p. 20.

1735. Other than his genealogy,<sup>12</sup> little is known about Fougeroux de Blaveau or his personal collections, but he was an acknowledged art lover who, in 1728, travelled to see the art of England, Holland, and Flanders.<sup>13</sup> When writing his article, therefore, Dezallier was addressing a friend with whom he was in perfect harmony in terms of age, social circle, and interest in art. These details are important for understanding the context in which Dezallier penned his notion of an ideal cabinet. He was writing at the very time when the art world was undergoing a crucial change as the art market became more active, enabling smaller but more numerous collections.<sup>14</sup>

### Dezallier's Ideal Print Collection

Dezallier's first recommended building a print collection on a modest scale—no more than 50 volumes<sup>15</sup>—both to prevent costs from getting out of hand and to derive the utmost benefit via in-depth knowledge of its content.<sup>16</sup> There were two parts to his suggested programme for collecting, and the details are set out in Tables 1 and 2. The first part consisted of several monographic albums, restricted to the finest work of a few selected masters (Table 1, left column).<sup>17</sup> These were the Carracci, Titian, Peter Paul Rubens, Anthony van Dyck, Charles Le Brun (1619–1690), Jacques Callot (1592–1635), Stefano della Bella (or 'Étienne de la Belle') (1610–1664), and Sébastien Leclerc (1637–1714). The second, larger part was composed of thematic albums split into 'history by subject, portraits by social status, and landscape by country' (Table 2, left column).<sup>18</sup>

Dezallier's programme was thus based on two complementary principles, which combined the three ways recommended by De Piles for organising a print collection in terms of one's personal interests:

12 Notably, he was the father of the botanist Auguste-Denis Fougeroux de Bondaroy (1732–1789). <https://gw.geneanet.org/fjacquemart?lang=no&n=fougeroux&oc=o&p=pierre+jacques>.

13 The trip is known from his diary, now held at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London: 'Voyage d'Angleterre d'Hollande et de Flandre fait en l'annee 1728.' It is mentioned in particular in: Dean; Russell; Jenkins, pp. 47, 70–71, 78.

14 I refer to two seminal articles: Robinson; Griffiths 1994. For a more recent summary, see the chapter 'Print collecting' in Griffiths 2016, pp. 427–445.

15 '[The idea of our cabinet] encompasses at most fifty volumes of prints and some fifteen volumes of drawings which, full of choice items, will be more satisfying than the great collections which must be browsed for ages to find anything decent.' Dezallier 1727, p. 1307. It should be noted that this size corresponds to the collection assembled by Michiel Hinloopen (1619–1708) in the second half of the seventeenth century. See Waals, pp. 9–11.

16 Dezallier 1727, p. 1296.

17 'One could build up individual collections by each master, by putting only that master's best works in the same volume, mixing in nothing from anyone else.' Dezallier 1727, p. 1301.

18 Dezallier 1727, p. 1305.

<b>Table 1</b>			
<b>Albums recommended by Dezallier d'Argenville in his 1727 article</b>		<b>Albums recorded in the post-mortem inventory (1765)</b>	
<b>Monographic Albums</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Monographic albums</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
One could build up individual albums for each master, by putting only that master's best works in the same volume, mixing in nothing from anyone else; for example a volume of the Carracci	1	No. 73 An album of 123 prints by the Carracci	1
A Titian volume	1		
A Rubens volume	1	No. 82 An album of 180 prints by Rubens	1
A Vandyck volume	1	No. 83 An album of 266 prints by Van Dyck	1
A Le Brun volume	1		
A Callot volume	1	No. 70 An album of 646 prints by Callot	1
A La Belle volume	1	No. 69 An album of 503 prints by La Belle including the new bridge before the cock, the resting place, the mountain of the philosophers, the grand duke's pieces	1
A Le Clerc volume	1	No. 68 The complete works of Sebastien Leclerc in 5 volumes	5
		No. 71 An album of 564 prints by Hollar	1
		No. 72 An album of 534 prints by Picart	1
		No. 74 An in folio album of 68 prints by the Visscher, 180 prints by or after Berchem and 66 prints after Il Bamboccio, Jan Miel and different masters	1
		No. 75 An album of 266 prints by Bloemaert	1
		No. 76 The complete works of Willem Baur consisting of 499 pieces	1
		No. 81 An album of prints by Bérain bound in calfskin	1
		No. 103 An album of 265 prints by Sadeler	1
		No. 115 The complete works of Vander Meulen consisting of 109 pieces	1
		No. 116 An album of 108 prints by Parmigianino	1
		No. 117 An album of 140 prints after Wouvermans including those engraved by Visscher	1
<b>Total of Monographic Albums</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Total of Monographic Albums</b>	<b>20</b>

Table 1. Comparison between the monographic albums recommended in the 1727 article and those recorded in the *post-mortem* inventory of Dezallier's collection (1765).



<b>Table 2</b>			
<b>Albums recommended by Dezallier d'Argenville in his 1727 article</b>		<b>Albums recorded in the post-mortem inventory (1765)</b>	
<b>Thematic Albums</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Thematic albums</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
Old Masters (pre-1490 Gothic works)	1		
Old Masters (working since the restoration of good engravings, such as Marcantonio, etc.)	1	No. 88: 230 prints by Italian masters + No. 89: 1 album of 104 prints from Italy, Flanders and France	2
Small-scale Masters (who worked only in a small format)	1	No. 111: 2 volumes of prints by various small-scale masters (473 + 122 prints)	2
Religious history	6	No. 86: Religious history (4 volumes, 504 prints)	4
Secular history	6	No. 87: Secular history (4 volumes, 730 prints) + No. 107 (1 volume of 117 prints, including 'Le Grand Escalier du château de Versailles', the chronology and the chronology of the kings of France)	5
Dark pieces	2	No. 100: 142 dark and fantasy pieces + No. 102: 156 dark pieces	2
Grotesques, bacchanales, Bamboccianti, fairs, pastorals	2	No. 96: 1 album of 515 grotesques or architectural capricci	1
Portraits arranged according to social status: two of men of the Church, two of men of the Sword, two of men of the Robe, two for the Sciences, one for the Arts and the tenth about famous Women	10	No. 90: 2 volumes of 350 portraits of men of the Church + 2 volumes of 235 portraits of men of the Robe, art and others and 266 portraits of men of the sword + No. 112: 250 portraits of women + No. 113: 1 album of 276 portraits of men of science and 1 album of 700 portraits of men of art	8
Small pieces on all kinds of topics to be glued in compartments on each page	4		
Landscapes arranged by country, two volumes on Italy, two on Flanders, Holland, Germany, and two on France	6	No. 91: 1 album of 132 landscapes of Flanders, Holland and Germany + No. 92: 1 volume of landscapes and architectural scenes by Italian Masters + No. 93: 1 volume of 117 landscapes by French Masters + No. 98: 1 volume of 220 Italian landscapes + No. 99: 1 volume of 518 landscapes of Flanders, Holland and Germany + No. 101: 1 album of 403 landscapes of France + No. 104: 1 volume of 574 landscapes by Silvestre and Perelle	7
Battles, armies on the march, hunts and animals	1	No. 79: 322 works depicting battles, hunts and animals	1
Architecture, ornamentation, flowers, fruit, vases, carpets, flowerbeds, fountains	1	No. 97: 3 volumes of views of country houses in Germany, France and Flanders	3
Views of the sea or seascapes, of mills & ruins	1	No. 78: 245 works depicting landscapes, views and seascapes	1
Topography of the world's major cities	4	No. 118: 11 volumes of topography	11
Geography	1	Included in the topography volumes (see above)?	
Clothing and fashions of the different nations of the world; the first to include Europe; the second Asia; the third Africa & America	4	Included in the topography volumes (see above)?	
<b>Total of Thematic Albums</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>Total of Thematic Albums</b>	<b>47</b>

Table 2. Comparison between the thematic albums recommended in the 1727 article and those recorded in the *post-mortem* inventory of Dezallier's collection (1765).

Those, for example, that love History seek after those Subjects only that belong to it, and that nothing may escape their Curiosity, they follow this Method, which cannot be enough commended. All that relate to particular Countries and Ages are put into one or more Covers, where they may be readily come at. [...] Such as have any Passion for the Fine Arts take another Method in their Collections; they do it by the Painters and their Disciples. [...] Others collect their Prints by the Gravers, without respect to the Painters.<sup>19</sup>

Dezallier's recommendations, therefore, include some albums compiled according to artist—whether painter or engraver—in order to satisfy artistic taste. For the most part, the albums are divided into subjects conveying historical knowledge. Nevertheless, it is apparent that Dezallier viewed these methods of organisation as complementary rather than separate. The combination of a thematic and a monographic approach (whether by artist or by school) was not new. Peter Parshall, in particular, has proved that it had been practised since the 1580s.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, we know that this approach continued to be used during the seventeenth century.<sup>21</sup> However recent studies of the collecting of prints and drawings has shown that in the eighteenth century, it largely made way for classification by national school and by artist because of the growing importance of criteria for attribution and of connoisseurship in general.<sup>22</sup> To the extent that Dezallier himself contributed to this development for painting and drawing,<sup>23</sup> I think it is necessary to understand why he continued to recommend arranging print collections primarily by topic rather than by school. Consequently, we must first determine whether his suggested classification method corresponded to what he actually did.

### Classification by Topic or by School? Prints versus Drawings

A particularly useful document is the catalogue for the *post-mortem* sale of Dezallier's engravings, which was compiled by Rémy in 1766.<sup>24</sup> A careful look at the catalogue's table of contents gives the impression that the prints in Dezallier's collection were mainly classified by school and by artist (Fig. 49). Indeed, we read: 'Prints School of Italy. Prints School of the Low Countries. Prints French School.

19 Piles 1699, pp. 86–88; Piles 1706, pp. 62–63.

20 Parshall. For discussion of the origins of collecting prints in Europe, mention should be made of the unpublished PhD thesis of Gallian.

21 Waals, pp. 13–16.

22 See the key work by Brakensiek. See also Baker; Gáldy; Grivel 2022.

23 See Gibson-Wood, pp. 71–94; Maës 2013.

24 Rémy 1766. On Rémy, see Michel; Darroussat; Marandet.

<p>NOTA. La Vente des Objets qui composent l'Histoire Naturelle dans tous les genres, &amp; qui seront entremêlés dans chaque Vacation, se fera le Lundi 3 Mars 1766, &amp; jours suivans, trois heures précises de relevé, dans la Maison de Feu M. d'Argenville, rue du Temple, proche celle de Pastourelle.</p> <p>On vendra ensuite sans discontinuation les Tableaux, &amp; l'on finira par les Estampes qui seront aussi entremêlés, pour rendre tous les jours de Vente extrêmement intéressans.</p> <p>Les Curieux qui desireront voir les Objets qui les intéresseront, pendant les trois jours qui précéderont celui de l'ouverture de la Vente, sont priés d'avoir pour agréable de faire avertir chez Madame d'Argenville, ou chez P. Remy, Peintre, rue Poupée, la deuxième Porte Cochere en entrant par la rue Haute-Feuille.</p>	<hr/> <h2 style="text-align: center;">TABLE</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Des Objets contenus dans ce Catalogue.</p> <p><i>A</i>VERTISSEMENT. page j</p> <p>Tableaux. 1</p> <p>Tableaux à Gouazze &amp; en Pastel. 15</p> <p>Estampes Ecole d'Italie. 17</p> <p>Estampes Ecole des Pays-Bas. 37</p> <p>Estampes Ecole Française. 73</p> <p>Recueils de Portraits de choix. 83</p> <p>Recueil d'Estampes de J. Callot. 88</p> <p>Œuvre de Séb. le Clerc. 92</p> <p>Recueil de Bernard Picart. 96</p> <p>Recueil d'Estampes des trois Ecoles. 101</p> <p>Paysages, Chasses, Animaux, &amp;c. de différens Maîtres &amp; Ecoles. 104</p> <p>Topographie &amp; Géographie. 107</p> <p>Différentes Suites &amp; Livres d'Estampes. 110</p> <p>Un Droguier. 113</p> <p>Pierres fines &amp; autres. idem.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">a ij</p>
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49. Table, *Catalogue raisonné des tableaux, estampes, coquilles, & autres curiosités; après le décès de feu M. Dezalier d'Argenville (Sale Catalogue for Mr. d'Argenville's Cabinet)* (Paris, 3 March 1766). © Collections Jacques Doucet, Bibliothèque de l'Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Paris.

Albums of selected Portraits. J. Callot Print Album. Work by Séb. le Clerc. Bernard Picart Album. Album of Prints by the three Schools. Landscapes, Hunts, Animals, &c. by various Masters & Schools. Topography & Geography. Various Sets & Books of Prints.<sup>25</sup>

Dezallier's *post-mortem* inventory, which Rémy began to compile on 10 December 1765,<sup>26</sup> makes it possible to show not only that this classification by school did not reflect Dezallier's actual practices but also that the collection was arranged as he recommended in his 1727 article, i.e. mainly by topics. The arrangement of the print collection according to schools rather than topics must be attributed to Rémy, as he is also the one who listed the art objects in Dezallier's *post-mortem* inventory.<sup>27</sup> This update, made especially for the *post-mortem* sale catalogue, corresponds to a commercial practice, which was advised by Edme-François Gersaint (1694–1750) for sale catalogues as early as 1744 and which became widespread in the second half of the eighteenth century.<sup>28</sup>

Published in 1727 in a widely read newspaper, Dezallier's article is indeed the textual transposition of his personal practice rather than an abstract theory.<sup>29</sup> Most of the albums described in his article can, in fact, be found in the *post-mortem* inventory, which includes around 45 thematic volumes, their contents roughly corresponding to the 1727 description (Table 2). Most of the volumes were unfortunately disassembled in the 1766 sale, but four were recently discovered at the Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal in Paris.<sup>30</sup> The pages of these four volumes offer valuable insights into Dezallier's arrangement of his prints, which confirms that priority was given to the content of the images rather than their style. The four albums, devoted to costumes and fashion, are mainly subdivided by country and then further organised chronologically (Fig. 50).<sup>31</sup>

25 88 pages describing 612 lots are dedicated to prints by school and by artist, and nine pages and 55 lots correspond to works by theme.

26 AN, Minutier central, XLIX, 749.

27 The inventory was compiled by the auctioneer Jean Mongalvy, who noted that he was assisted by Rémy for the valuation of natural history objects, paintings, drawings, and prints. AN, Minutier central, XLIX, 749, folios 3, 19.

28 'I must account to the Public for the lack of order in the Print Catalogue. I have, however, put some general titles in it; but I would have liked, if it had been possible, to arrange everything in it by schools & by masters, & to follow the same plan established in the one I gave a few years ago, which I found much more pleasant, & which would also become more interesting. The peculiar way in which the late Mr. de Lorangere had put away his prints, wholly prevented me from doing so; the topics & the masters are completely mixed in the albums where they are stuck, often even one after the other', Gersaint 1744, p. x.

29 Dezallier presents his article as a 'project' he is submitting to his correspondent. Dezallier 1727, p. 1295.

30 Pullins.

31 Bibliothèque de l' Arsenal, Paris, EST-368–371. The first two albums concern Europe and begin with French engravings, followed by English, Dutch, German, Italian, and Corsican. The third album is about Asia and the fourth about America.

As for Dezallier's twenty monographic albums, most of the artists mentioned in his article are present (the Carracci, Rubens, Van Dyck, Callot, Stefano della Bella and Sébastien Leclerc), but others were also added later. The artists mentioned in 1727 were joined by Wenceslaus Hollar (1607–1677), Bernard Picart, the Visschers and Nicolaes Berchem (1621/22–1683) in a single album, Abraham Bloemaert (1566–1651), Johann Wilhelm Baur (1607–1642), the Sadelers, Philips Wouwerman (1619–1668), Adam Frans van der Meulen (1632–1690), Parmigianino, and Jean Bérain (1640–1711) (Table 1). These albums bring me back to a key criterion mentioned by Dezallier at the beginning of his article; this criterion entails radical opposition to amassing all the works of artists. Dezallier claims that this practice, which he describes as 'ancient', has three disadvantages: it is ruinously expensive, it serves the interests only of dealers, and it results solely in mixing good and bad engravings by the same master without enabling the collector's eye to be trained.<sup>32</sup> The examples not to follow are those of the Abbé de Marolles (1600–1681) and of Florent Le Comte, both of whom wrote extensive catalogues.<sup>33</sup>

Dezallier's own monographic albums consist of selections rather than complete works, with four exceptions: Sébastien Leclerc, Hollar, Baur, and Van der Meulen.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, half of Dezallier's selected artists correspond to those for whom Le Comte had published catalogues. The others too had been the subjects of early catalogues by Edme-François Gersaint, George Vertue, Bernard Picart, or Robert Hecquet (1693–1775).<sup>35</sup> Consequently, while Dezallier refused to compile complete collected works, it seems that his choice of artists was largely dependent on existing documentation about them.

32 'Although it is the custom of most *curieux* to organise their prints by master, as do all the dealers, and to keep the works of each one separately, claiming thereby to be more satisfied at seeing a skilful man's progress by comparing his early pieces to his last, it seems, nonetheless, that there is more vanity on their part than science and that it is in order to swell the volumes. They lose the historical and chronological order in this arrangement and mix subjects together, by which I mean portraits with historical paintings and with landscapes, religious history with secular history, the grotesque with the serious; which does not satisfy the scholarly *curieux* who wishes, in addition to the pleasure of seeing fine prints, to derive some benefit from them. I expect, Sir, to see many people who, adhering to the former custom of compiling works, will be opposed to my sentiment.' Dezallier 1727, pp. 1302–1303.

33 Vermeulen 2009–2010; Jouberton; Meyer.

34 The collections of these four artists' works appeared intact in the 1766 sale: 'No. 621 Six volumes, in-folio calf, containing the work of Sebastien le Clerc, to be sold in its entirety' [made up of 3,257 prints in 6 volumes]; 'No. 343 A Work by Vander Meulen, comprising a hundred and twelve pieces, large and small'; 'No. 443 This Work, which is one of the biggest, contains 499 Pieces, engraved either by Mathear Kussel, or by Willem-Baur himself'; 'No. 444 The Work of V. Hollar in 877 pieces'. Rémy 1766, pp. 55, 67, 67–68, 92–96.

35 Here are several examples of catalogues published in Dezallier's lifetime: Gersaint 1744; Vertue; Picart; Gersaint 1751; Hecquet.



50. Page of the second Dezallier album, containing: *Habillements des peuples de l'Europe* (Clothes for the peoples of Europe), a print by Gillis van Scheyndel after Willem Buytewech, *Girl from a Fishing Village on the North Sea Coast* (1645), two prints by Wenceslaus Hollar, *Married Woman from Cologne*, *Woman from Antwerp of Good Quality* (1643), etchings, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris, folio 34. © Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

This approach is characteristic of his intellectual methods: for him, image and the gaze were central to the acquisition of knowledge, but putting knowledge into words called for documentary sources. Tried and tested on engravings, these principles were subsequently applied by Dezallier in writing about natural history and later about painters.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, he was one of the first French authors to include numerous illustrations in a book about shells and minerals. His first book on the subject, entitled *L'histoire naturelle éclaircie dans deux de ses parties principales, la lithologie et la conchyliologie, dont l'une traite des pierres et l'autre des coquillages* (1742), contained 33 plates.<sup>37</sup> Dezallier's interest in visually illustrating knowledge would give rise to an immense outlay to produce the engravings, and to cover the cost, Dezallier developed a subtle strategy. He suggested to his collector friends that they each fund an engraving showcasing a work in their own collection. A good example is plate 21 (Fig. 51), paid for by 'Mr. le Comte de Tessin, general director of the "Bâtiments du Roi" of Sweden'.<sup>38</sup> The engraved image plays a triple role here: it introduces the specimens, it makes the 'patron' famous, and it strengthens the social cohesion of the collectors as a group around the concept of a common taste.<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, in his painters' lives, Dezallier was one of the first in France to link artists to their drawings and engravings, as Giorgio Vasari had done before him.<sup>40</sup> In his *Abrégé de la vie des plus fameux peintres*, which appeared between 1745 and 1752, each life ends with three essential elements that make it possible to document each painter's style and that turn the book into a 'school of the gaze' for the reader.<sup>41</sup> Although Dezallier's biographies were abridged, the book contained no fewer than 244 entries. However, a mere three years after his book about shells and minerals, it was impossible for Dezallier to deploy the same system of 'editorial sponsorship' to illustrate his latest work. He overcame this problem by inserting a commentary on drawings that he regarded as good evidence of each artist's 'manner' since they were close to the artwork creation stage. He then added a list of each artist's key paintings, pointing out where they were so that readers could go and see them for themselves. Finally, he ended with a list of engravings enabling this visual learning process to continue at home. The list was clearly made to stand out

36 On the interactions between art and the sciences in collecting, see Meijers; Vuillemin, pp. 206–212; Bleichmar.

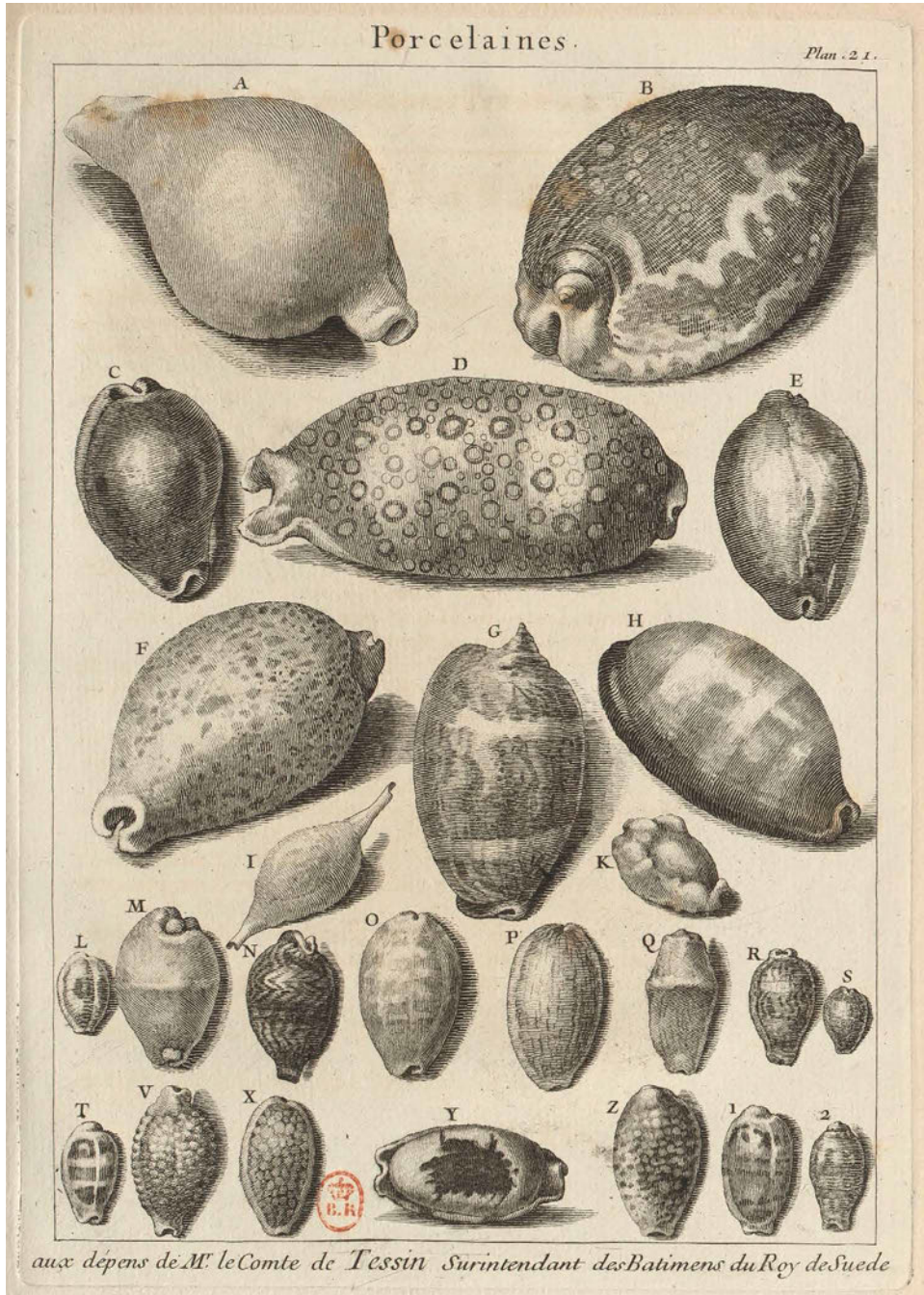
37 Dezallier 1742 (*Natural History Illuminated in Two Major Areas: Lithology and Conchology, the One about Stones and the Other about Shells*).

38 'Porcelaines, aux dépens de Mr. le Comte de Tessin Surintendant des Batimens du Roy de Suede', Dezallier 1742, p. 310, plate 21.

39 On the notion of amateurs' shared values, see Guichard.

40 Vasari.

41 Dezallier 1745–1752 (*Abridged Lives of the Most Famous Painters*). On the notion of the 'school of the gaze' in the eighteenth century, especially for Dezallier, see Griener; Maës 2013; Maës 2017.



51. Pierre-Quentin Chédel, *Porcelaines* (Cowries), from *L'histoire naturelle éclaircie dans deux de ses parties principales, la lithologie et la conchyliologie* (Natural History Illuminated in Two Major Areas: Lithology and Conchology) (Paris: De Bure, 1742), plate 21. © Bibliothèque nationale de France Paris.



since the engravings were substitutes for the original works that were deemed out of the reach of the average purse. Discussing Rubens, for example, Dezallier wrote ten lines about the techniques typical of his drawings<sup>42</sup> and then devoted over three pages to relaying the main European cities in which the Flemish master's paintings could be seen in churches or collections. The engravings were then organised by subject category and linked to specific engravers since Dezallier believed that 'Never was a painter better rendered than Rubens, especially in the engraved prints of his day, & which he himself retouched.'<sup>43</sup>

Across Dezallier's writings, engraving plays a key role because it was an essential tool for educating the spectator. This educational function explains why Dezallier's recommended arrangement for a print collection prioritises classification by theme and differs from his advice for drawing collections. The *post-mortem* inventory does not give an accurate description of his drawing collection. Instead, it bluntly states that, as well as albums of engravings, Dezallier's library was home to '[t]hirty five albums of drawings by the greatest masters both old and modern from the Schools of Italy, the Low Countries, and France, valued at ten thousand *livres*'.<sup>44</sup> Jacqueline Labbé and Lise Bicart-Sée have demonstrated that this mention of the different schools accurately reflects reality since Dezallier opted to arrange his drawings according to schools and the painters' birthdates. The sequence echoed that in his *Abrégé*: first the Italian school (Roman, Florentine, Venetian), then the Flemish school (German and Swiss, Dutch, Flemish), and, lastly, the French school.<sup>45</sup> Despite the fact that Dezallier does not use the term 'school' in his 1727 article (with the exception of the general expression 'school of painting'), his decision to organise his drawings by schools had probably already been made in 1727. He himself specifies at the beginning of the *Abrégé* in 1745: 'The author has made a collection of the drawings of the great masters of all countries, which can be considered as one of the best in Europe; it is arranged chronologically by school, and is composed of about nine thousand original and selected drawings, mixed with finished pieces, studies, sketches, and life drawings'.<sup>46</sup> From 1727 onwards, he explained the different classification methods for prints and drawings as follows:

The drawings, Sir, have something superior to the prints, despite being less finished; they are a painter's first ideas where one discovers all the fire of the imagination and the spirit of his style. This curiosity demands far more knowledge than the prints since it is a matter of judging, as it is with paintings, the quality

42 Dezallier 1745–1752, II, p. 145.

43 Dezallier 1745–1752, II, pp. 148–149.

44 AN, Minutier central, XLIX, 749, folio 29, item no. 122.

45 Labbé, pp. 38–43; Vermeulen 2010, pp. 130–138.

46 Dezallier 1745–1752, I, p. xix.

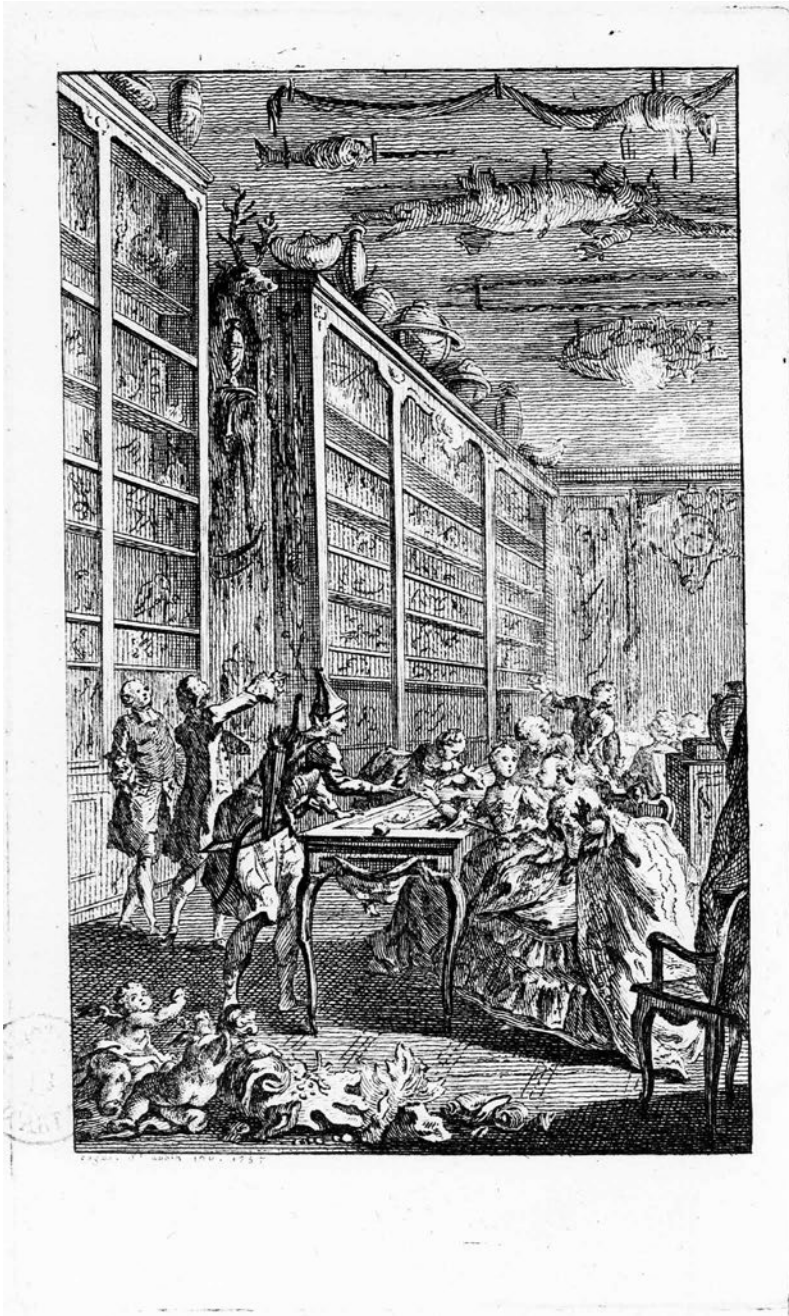
of a drawing, its originality, and of knowing one master's style from another, his particular touch, which is like an aspect of handwriting, unique to each one, and makes it possible to recognize who made the drawing. A good album of drawings by the best masters is a genuine school of painting.<sup>47</sup>

Consequently, according to Dezallier, engravings were primarily iconographic tools which structured learning through images, while drawings bore traces of the artist's hand and so formed a school of the gaze for attributions and connoisseurship more broadly. However, this general principle must be qualified because Dezallier believed that in the absence of drawings, good engravings also made it possible to learn the style of an artist. This idea explains the modest, though still significant, place of monographic albums of prints in his 1727 recommendations and in his own collection. All of these principles came from De Piles, but Dezallier was the first to disseminate them in a newspaper that circulated widely, rather than in a specialised book on art theory.<sup>48</sup> He also developed De Piles' ideas further by specifying that for drawings as for prints, quality had to take precedence over quantity. This belief was vital both because Dezallier attached a cognitive and memory function to the images and because it enabled the group of collectors to be distinguished socially from the group of dealers. The former identified with the notion of selecting particular objects, while the latter pursued commercial interests, which induced them to sell in large quantities. While these assumptions could vary depending on the individual, they were evidence of the rivalries that featured prominently in a period when art expertise was an emerging concept that different communities wished to appropriate.<sup>49</sup> In this respect, it is significant that all prints representing amateurs' cabinets emphasise the ties of sociability, ensuring the cohesiveness of their group; repeatedly, little gatherings of collectors in conversation can be seen, as they look at art objects. The frontispiece for Dezallier's *post-mortem* sale catalogue, engraved by Augustin de Saint-Aubin (1736–1807) after a drawing by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin (1724–1780), is no exception (Fig. 52).

47 The article continues with the following arrangement which, while combining several criteria, gives priority to the schools: 'Since one does not have so great a number of these [drawings] as of prints, they are all to be separated together into subject and country as follows. Six volumes about history in general and the figure, two of the best masters of Italy, two volumes of the best French masters and two other volumes on the same subject by Flemish, Dutch, German, and English masters. Six volumes of landscapes, seascapes, animals, grotesques, and others, divided by country, two for Italy, two for Flanders, Holland, Germany, and two for France. A volume of small highly finished pen drawings. A volume of views, preparatory drawings and rough sketches, done from life. A volume of studies by great masters and of figures known as *académies*. A volume of drawings of architecture, ornaments, vases, catafalques, triumphs, theatre decorations, fountains, flowerbeds, etc.' Dezallier 1727, pp. 1317–1318.

48 Piles 1699, pp. 66–74; Piles 1706, pp. 48–54.

49 Maës 2016, pp. 133–142.



52. Augustin de Saint-Aubin after Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, frontispiece, *Catalogue raisonné des tableaux, estampes, coquilles, & autres curiosités; après le décès de feu M. Dezalier d'Argenville* (*Sale Catalogue for Mr. d'Argenville's Cabinet*) (Paris, 3 March 1766), etching. © Collections Jacques Doucet, Bibliothèque de l'Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Paris.

## Dezallier's Posterity

I will conclude by briefly considering Dezallier's posthumous impact as regards print collections. If we look at the most prominent authors who published works on print collections during the second half of the eighteenth century, we can see that they were of one mind when it came to the desire to provide collectors with exhaustive information. To achieve a comprehensive presentation, Pierre-François Basan (1723–1797), Carl Heinrich von Heineken, and Michael Huber all turned to the dictionary format, organised either alphabetically or by school.<sup>50</sup> Prioritising artists and schools, this trend clearly showed that arrangement according to art history took precedence over thematic classification; it is also what endures to our own day in the leading print cabinets.

In addition, across these publications, authors took into account the quality of proofs, evidence that engraving had gradually acquired the status of a work of art, far different from the status attributed to it by Dezallier. I believe that the gradual recognition of engraving as an art medium in its own right—a recognition that was made explicit by Claude-Henri Watelet (1718–1786) in the *Encyclopédie*—is what most distinguishes these authors from Dezallier, whose conception of engravings as documents stemmed rather from the past, unlike his notion of the drawing, which heralded the future.<sup>51</sup> Of course, the presence of a few monographic albums, and more particularly of the complete works of Sébastien Leclerc, in Dezallier's collection requires us to nuance this statement. But since these albums were in the minority, compared with the numerous thematic albums of prints and drawings, they do not fundamentally call into question this observation.

The other difference between Dezallier's time and the second half of the eighteenth century is the increasingly clear-cut separation between collections designed for universal knowledge, which fell within the remit of heads of state, and those linked to personal aspirations. In their discussions of how to fulfil personal aspirations and build a private collection, subsequent authors nevertheless closely followed Dezallier, as shown by this recommendation from Huber in 1787:

In general, complete collections are only useful in public cabinets: too expansive for an individual's use, they weary more than entertain. But of all the collections, the most unpleasant are those where there is greater commitment to quantity than quality.<sup>52</sup>

50 Basan; Heineken; Huber. On this topic, see the chapter 'The Knowledge and Literature of Prints' in Griffiths 2016, pp. 446–456. See also the essay by Meyer in this edited collection.

51 Watelet, 'Estampe' and 'Gravure', in Diderot, V, pp. 999–1000, VII, pp. 877–903.

52 Huber, p. xxiii.

When we read these remarks, is it not evident that Huber is merely restating the recommendations made by Dezallier sixty years earlier?

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## About the Author

Gaëtane Maës is Professor of Art History at the University of Lille. Her main publications concern artistic exchanges between France and the Low Countries, social art history, and relationships between art and science in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.





# 13. Michael Huber's (1727–1804) *Notices* (1787) and *Manuel* (1797–1808): A Comparative Analysis of the French School of the Eighteenth Century

Véronique Meyer

## Abstract

Through his *Notices* and *Manuel*, Michael Huber proposes a synthesis that had not yet been attempted in the history of engraving articulated according to schools. Despite his reservations about this organisation, he gives a useful idea of the French school. As the defender of classicism, he appreciates what is simple and severe, while as the defender of history painting, he judges with severity what was done from the end of the reign of Louis XIV to the first half of eighteenth century. He explains the causes of the decline that began at the beginning of the century and compares it with the situation in other countries. Huber was undoubtedly the leading expert of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries for the French school.

**Keywords:** etching, engraving, French school, Michael Huber

Although several articles have been devoted to Michael Huber<sup>1</sup> as a translator into French of books by Salomon Gessner (1730–1788),<sup>2</sup> Christian Ludwig von Hagedorn (1775), and Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1781),<sup>3</sup> only Antony Griffiths has considered him as a historian of engraving, acknowledging his contribution

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1 Espagne 1996, pp. 85–106, and Espagne 1997, pp. 413–427.

2 He translated some of Gessner's poems into French: *La mort d'Abel* (Huber 1761) and *Idylles* (Huber 1762), *Les œuvres de Salomon Gessner* (Huber 1773–1777). As a translator, Huber has been widely studied. See, for instance, Espagne 1987, pp. 263–281.

3 See Anonymous, pp. 63–75, where an especially positive review was published, and Griener, pp. 44, 57–71.

to the historiography of printmaking.<sup>4</sup> My aim here is to understand the rationale behind Huber's *Notices générales des graveurs* (1787) and his *Manuel des curieux et des amateurs de l'art* (1797–1808). I shall analyse the structure of these two books and the role played by Huber abroad in developing his opinion of the French school. Study of Huber's biography and of his particularly close ties with France suggests the importance of these volumes, as do the central place held by French engraving within Europe at that time and the fact that Huber became a great supporter of the French school; he expressed strong indignation at the negative judgments pronounced by Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781) and his followers.<sup>5</sup>

Huber was born in Bavaria in 1727. Hardly anything is known about his early years. Arriving in Paris around 1750, he taught German and became a friend of the engraver Johann Georg Wille (1715–1808),<sup>6</sup> who introduced him to artists such as Juste Chevillet (1729–1790), Claude Drevet (1697–1781), Joseph de Longueil (1730–1792), and Antoine de Marcenay de Ghuy (1721–1811), and to connoisseurs such as Claude-Henri Watelet, as well as to scholars both French and foreign, including the Encyclopaedists. As Huber explains in his *Manuel*, Gabriel Huquier (1695–1772) also taught him the fundamental principles of art: 'His [Huquier's] house was open, on certain days of the week, to all those cultivating the arts: painters, engravers, and connoisseurs of all kinds. The evening was pleasantly spent browsing through his portfolios of prints and being lectured by this elderly artist on the various goals of the arts. [...] I profited from this from 1762 onwards, and it is to him that I owe the first principles of the arts.'<sup>7</sup> In 1762, Pierre-Jean Mariette gave Huber access to his notes on Lucas Cranach (1472–1553) for his review of Hofrath Reimer's book in the *Journal étranger*,<sup>8</sup> and in 1764, Mariette helped Huber in his translation into French of Winckelmann's *Lettre [...] sur les découvertes d'Herculanum* (1764), at the request of Anne Claude Philippe de Caylus, who considered the translator 'a mediocre connoisseur'.<sup>9</sup>

During 1765 Huber moved to Leipzig as a French lecturer at the university. In 1766, he published his *Choix de poésies allemandes*, a selection of German poems translated into French; he asserted their originality in his introduction. Disproving

4 Griffiths, pp. 450–454, 472–477.

5 'I became a great supporter of the French; outraged at the judgments I hear [...].' Letter from Huber to Wille, 22 June 1768. See Déculot, where nineteen letters written by Huber to Wille are transcribed. See also Wille, no. 217, p. 424.

6 Wille and Huber remained close, as evidenced by letters from Huber to the engraver between October 1766 and October 1782.

7 Huber 1797–1808, VIII, p. 74.

8 *Journal Etranger*, August 1762, pp. 101–131, esp. p. 106.

9 Caylus; Nisard, I, p. 409, Letter LXXX, 23 January 1764: 'One has to correct his style; he does not understand anything about Art.'

the French preconception of German culture as barbaric, he showed his dual attachment to Germanic and French cultures. For this book, Watelet and Longueil engraved several vignettes, as they had already done in 1762 for Gessner's *Idylles* (1762) thus demonstrating Huber's early involvement in the world of prints.

In Leipzig, Huber found a home favourable to the arts, thanks to the international fairs and the many collectors of paintings and prints. Amongst the collectors were the banker Gottfried Winckler (1731–1795), for whom Huber prepared the catalogue (published in 1801) of his collection of engravings, which included more than 80,000 items,<sup>10</sup> and Franz Wilhelm Kreuchauf (1727–1803), the author in 1768 of the catalogue of Winckler's collection of paintings.<sup>11</sup> Kreuchauf, Winckler, and Huber usually met weekly in the home of the collector Johann Thomas Richter (1728–1773), where, according to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), art history seminars took place.<sup>12</sup> Huber was also a friend of Ernest Otto (1724–1799), who had a splendid collection.<sup>13</sup> Other notable collectors were the jurist Georg Friedrich Brandes (1719–1791), for whom Huber produced the catalogue of his prints in 1793,<sup>14</sup> the Baron de Kalisch,<sup>15</sup> adviser to the court, and August Wilhelm Crayen (1750–1803), who published in 1788 the catalogue of the work of the late Leipzig engraver Georg Friedrich Schmidt (1712–1775), which Huber read and amended.<sup>16</sup>

Printmaking was also at the heart of the concerns of another of Huber's friends, the painter Adam Friedrich Oeser, who was the director of Leipzig's *Kunstakademie*, which held a large collection of prints.<sup>17</sup> As Goethe noted, in Leipzig, one found, among other aesthetes, 'Huber, connoisseur with exquisite taste. We were delighted by his collection of engravings. Moreover, he seemed to us to have the virtue of making the French appreciate the value of German literature.'<sup>18</sup> In both Paris and Leipzig, Huber was in contact with artists, for instance the painter and engraver Adrian Zingg (1734–1816), who dedicated a landscape after Jacob van Ruisdael (1628/29–1682) to him,<sup>19</sup> and the engraver Johann Friedrich Bause (1738–1814).<sup>20</sup>

10 Huber 1801–1810.

11 Kreuchauf.

12 Goethe, I, pp. 236–237.

13 Weigel.

14 Huber 1793.

15 In a letter to Wille (5 September 1772), he celebrates this court councillor as a 'great lover of prints, one of my good friends'. *Décultot*, p. 500, no. 269.

16 Crayen.

17 Letter from Oeser to Wille (18 October 1765). See *Espagne* 2009, p. 156.

18 Goethe, I, p. 237.

19 Inscriptions on the print: 'Ruisdal pinxit', 'A. Zingg sculp. dir.', and 'Dem Herrn. Professor Michael Huber gewidmet von seinem ergebensten Freund A. Zingg'. British Museum, London, inv. 1862,0208.33 (repr.).

20 'Notre ami M. Bause'. *Décultot*, p. 500, no. 269 (15 September 1772).

These amateurs and artists had travelled to Paris and maintained ties to Wille, who sent them his latest prints and sometimes those by his colleagues.<sup>21</sup> Huber was also in contact with many Parisian artists. Jean-Baptiste Pigalle (1714–1785) sent him the print of his *Tombeau du Maréchal de Saxe*, engraved by Charles-Nicolas Cochin II (1715–1790) and Nicolas-Gabriel Dupuis (1698–1771).<sup>22</sup> Humblot, the Parisian editor of his *Choix de poésies allemandes* (1766), sent him Michel-François Dandré-Bardon's (1700–1783) *Costumes* (1772–1774)<sup>23</sup> and *Les antiquités d'Herculanum*, an illustrated book by Abbé Jean-Claude Richard de Saint-Non (1727–1791) that Huber had requested from Wille.<sup>24</sup>

Huber was also aware of the most recent art being produced from reading sale catalogues and from critics' reviews in the latest catalogues of the salons of the Paris Académie Royale. In the *Manuel's* bibliography, he refers to newspapers and publications concerning engraving from across Europe. He compared his predecessors' judgments with his own; on Abraham Bosse's treatise, expanded in 1745 by Cochin, he remarked that 'by adopting this intelligent man's judgments, I have no fear of being led astray'.<sup>25</sup>

### The Notice and the Manuel

These exchanges with collectors and artists, alongside his reading, made Huber a true connoisseur. The lectures that he gave on the history of art and the analysis of the prints that made up his collection—known thanks to the sale catalogue written in 1790 by Rudolph Weigel<sup>26</sup>—also prepared him for writing the *Notices* and the *Manuel*.

*Les Notices générales des graveurs, divisés par nations, et des peintres rangés par écoles, précédées de l'histoire de la gravure et de la peinture depuis l'origine de ces arts jusqu'à nos jours, et suivies d'un catalogue raisonné d'une collection choisie d'estampes* was published in Leipzig by Johann Gottlob Immanuel Breitkopf (1719–1794) in 1787. As the title indicates, this book traces the history of engraving and painting. Huber conceived his work in two parts, the first devoted to engravings organised according to nation and the second to paintings arranged by school. In the first part, Italy is

21 *La bonne femme de Normandie*, Wille after his son, 1770. See the letter from Huber to Wille, Wille, II, p. 522 (5 September 1772).

22 Déculot, no. 325 (12 December 1777). See <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b6944947q>.

23 Déculot, no. 348 (20 November 1780); Dandré-Bardon. See <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k65341388>.

24 Saint-Non. See <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b84900988>.

25 Huber 1787, pp. 201–202.

26 Weigel.

considered in terms of major cities and regions: Rome, Florence, Venice, Lombardy, and Naples. Since such a classification is not applicable to Italian engraving, the term 'nation' was probably imposed on Huber, especially as engravers rarely worked for painters within the painters' own native regions. Huber begins with prints because, he claims study of them prepares the connoisseur for the study of paintings.<sup>27</sup>

He combines Flemish and Dutch engravers into a single school, that of the 'Low Countries'. In the catalogue that follows he retains this category, but he prefers to indicate the names of the two countries separately in the book's title. For painting, Huber adopts a different approach: he separates Flemish and Dutch artists from the outset and discusses the Dutch school first.<sup>28</sup> Then introducing the Flemish school, he notes that three schools are now being differentiated—German, Dutch, and Flemish—adding that the Flemish were generally understood as 'the artists who flourished in the provinces of the Spanish Low Countries'. In his *Idée générale d'une collection complète d'estampes* of 1771,<sup>29</sup> Carl Heinrich von Heineken had grouped Flemish and Dutch artists together in a single school, but he had never used the term 'School of the Low Countries' and had begun with the Flemings; in his text, as in the headings at the top of each page, Heineken drops the word 'Dutch' and ultimately uses the term 'Flemish School' throughout.<sup>30</sup>

Huber justifies his own choices, content, and presentation of the *Notices* by explaining that, unlike most of his predecessors, he did not want to make a dictionary of engravers. Because his approach is historical, his catalogues are arranged chronologically rather than alphabetically. With this approach, he takes as his model the *Raisonirendes Verzeichniss der vornehmsten Kupferstecher und ihrer Werke* by Johann Caspar Füssli, published in 1771, which he nevertheless criticises for having been far too focused on painters and not enough on engravers. However, he admires its foreword on art and engraving, even though, as he says, 'most of this foreword is taken from an anonymous text in English', in fact by William Gilpin (1724–1804). While Füssli begins with the German school, in the *Notices*, Huber remains faithful to traditional classification, which places the Italian school before the others. His intention was to provide a collection useful for both youth and 'novice amateurs' and to educate collectors, who were becoming ever more numerous, by indicating to them the most beautiful pieces. He therefore offers a narrative in which he discusses 'the origin, progress, and decadence' of engraving and painting by school and that he presents as an introduction to the *Dictionnaire* (1778) begun by Heineken.<sup>31</sup>

27 Huber 1787, p. IV.

28 Huber 1787, p. 544. He never uses the terms 'Netherlandish', 'Netherlands', or 'Holland'.

29 'Will contain the Flemish School, to which we will join the Dutch School.' Heineken 1771, classe IV, p. 3.

30 Heineken 1771, classe IV, pp. 180–206.

31 Heineken 1778–1790, I, pp. IV–V (Preface).

The *Notices* was well received. In his diary, under 9 April 1788, Wille remarked that Huber spoke ‘as an excellent connoisseur’.<sup>32</sup> Already, in 1778, in the preface to the first volume of his *Dictionnaire* (1778), Heineken had thanked Huber for having read and revised his manuscript: ‘I did not think I could speak better, knowing independently of his knowledge, his love of the Arts, especially for those with which this book is concerned.’<sup>33</sup> In 1788, in the foreword to the second volume (1788),<sup>34</sup> he added that any amateur who wanted to acquire a solid knowledge of the artists of the art of drawing could not afford to be without the *Notices*.

From 1797 to 1808, first working with Carl Christian Heinrich Rost (1742–1798) and then with C. G. Martini (who would complete the publication after Huber’s death), Huber published in Zurich the *Manuel des curieux et des amateurs de l’art, contenant une notice abrégée des principaux graveurs, et un catalogue raisonné de leurs meilleurs ouvrages, depuis le commencement de la gravure jusques à nos jours: les artistes rangés par ordre chronologique, et divisés par école*. The initiative for this project came from the publishers Gessner, Füssli, and Konrad Orell; they sought to provide a continuation of Füssli’s catalogue. Rost, also a collector of prints and founder of the Rostiche Kunsthändler, the famous Leipzig company of art dealers, was originally to have been responsible for writing the book, but due to his lack of time, he requested that his friend Huber write it. Rost then loosely translated the text into German.

While the *Notices* were published only in French, the nine-volume *Manuel* was published simultaneously in German and French.<sup>35</sup> It was not officially translated into English, but the *Cyclopaedia* by Abraham Rees (1743–1825)<sup>36</sup> reproduces, in alphabetical order,<sup>37</sup> the five sections of the *Manuel*. Except for the first section, these are traditionally attributed to the engraver and writer John Landseer (1769–1852). However, it is clear that all five sections of the *Cyclopaedia* derive considerably from Huber and Rost; in many places, the text is a word-for-word translation of Huber’s writing. This might be a kind of English revenge because Huber had previously taken much from Joseph Strutt (1749–1802), who in turn had borrowed from Gilpin.

The *Manuel* is therefore a collaborative work, but Huber provided large parts of the text, making him primarily responsible; he often repeated verbatim what he had written in the *Notices*. Although he died four years before the publication of

32 Wille, II, p. 198.

33 Heineken 1778–1790, I, p. XXVIII (Preface).

34 Heineken 1778–1790, II, unpaginated (Avertissement).

35 Huber 1797–1808.

36 Published in London from 1802 to 1820 (39 volumes of text and six volumes of plates), this contains five substantial sections about the English, French, German, Italian, and Netherlandish schools of engraving: Rees, XIII, XV, XVI, XIX, XXI.

37 The *Notices* and *Manuel* are not arranged alphabetically but rather chronologically.



53. Jacob Wilhelm Mechau, frontispiece drawn and engraved for Michael Huber, *Notices générales des graveurs* (Dresden, 1787), 8 x 14.5 cm, Bibliothèque de l'Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Paris, Collections Jacques Doucet, NUM 12 F 2127. © Collections Jacques Doucet, Bibliothèque de l'Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Paris.



the final volumes, there is every reason to think that he was for the most part their author. Unlike the *Notices*, the *Manuel* offers a history of engraving alone so that this range of techniques now has an independent unity. However, since engraving is above all an art of imitation, painting is not altogether absent. Nevertheless, the purpose is not significantly different from that of the *Notices*. We find a history of each school, followed by a chronological catalogue of the school's artists. However, this time, the German school appears before the Italian school, since Huber was one of those who defended the argument that engraving was born in Germany. For the frontispiece of the *Notices*, he had asked Jacob Wilhelm Mechau (1745–1808) to depict a medal with the portrait of Martin Schongauer (c. 1435/50–1491), the 'inventor of printmaking in Germany', as he specifies in the *Manuel*.<sup>38</sup> This medal is held by Fame, while Italy, personified by the papacy, is saddened by the peaceful triumph of Germany (Fig. 53).

### The Catalogue of the *Notices* and the *Manuel*

The title chosen for the second part of the *Manuel* summarises the goal of the book relative to previous publications: to define 'the character of the principal engravers, with a *Catalogue raisonné* of their best works'. The issue is no longer simply to list the engravers and cite some of their prints, as had been the case in the *Notices*, but also to describe their style and the genres in which they excelled, thus making them known abroad, and to classify the selected prints. Huber adds monograms and signatures. For example, in the case of Jean-Jacques de Boissieu (1736–1810), he specifies that his prints 'will certainly become a milestone in the history of dry point engraving, and that one knows about sixty of his prints dated and signed "DB"'.<sup>39</sup>

Huber has also added a large number of artists for each school, but, in contrast to Heineken's inclusion of all engravers, he discusses only those who seem worthy of interest to him.<sup>40</sup> While there were 122 French engravers in the *Notices*, approximately 375 appear here, and Huber has highlighted contemporary engravers, incorporating more than 100 from between 1747 and 1760. Huber thus avoids what he criticises about Strutt's *Biographical Dictionary Containing an Historical Account of All the Engravers* (London, 1785): that it had neither left enough room for English

38 Huber 1797–1808, II, p. 271. He wrote a long and laudatory notice on Mechau, to whom he gives the first name of Jacques.

39 Huber 1797–1808, VIII, p. 224. See *Vue de Saint Andéol*, 1774, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 2000.361.10.

40 Huber 1787, p. V.

engravers of his own time nor had provided enough information about their work.<sup>41</sup> Consequently, many engravers appearing in the *Manuel* are cited for the first time. Huber records very recent engravings, such as the *Siège de Calais* issued by Jean-Louis Anselin (1754–1823) in 1789 after Jean-Simon Berthélemy (1743–1811), a ‘rich composition and beautiful engraving’,<sup>42</sup> and *La Vue du Champ de Mars* from 1790 by Jean-Baptiste Chapuy (1760–after 1814), ‘engraver in colour, [...] an artist who works successfully in the footsteps of Jean-François Janinet’ (1752–1814).<sup>43</sup> Inclusion in the *Manuel* was equivalent to a recommendation to connoisseurs all over Europe. For instance, Huber specifies that Charles-Clément Bervic (1756–1822), a student of Wille’s and an academician at the Académie royale de peinture et de sculpture since 1784, is ‘one of the most skilful burinists of our time’.<sup>44</sup>

In his catalogue, he accords an important place to the amateur engravers Caylus and Watelet, as well as to Marcenay de Ghuy and Boissieu, with whom he was connected. But while in the historical part of the *Notices*, he observes that some people have limited their interest to engravings by amateurs, this remark does not appear in the *Manuel*.<sup>45</sup>

Since Huber wrote his *Notices*, his work had been enriched by what he had read in his predecessors’ writings, as is attested by the *Manuel*’s expanded bibliography, citations, and references. The influence of Strutt’s *Dictionary* is now more obvious. Huber appreciates ‘the way he has set himself up as an artist and has characterised the ways of each engraver’.<sup>46</sup> He now chooses to follow this approach himself. The content of the catalogue is innovative in relation to that of the *Notices* because it is based on analysis of style, the incising of lines, the accuracy of the drawing, the ‘spirit’, and the ‘taste’ of the artist.

Huber describes the engravings that he has near him or that he knows. When they are numerous, he divides his catalogue into two or three parts (‘portraits, various subjects after different masters; various subjects, historical subjects, various subjects of his own composition’), each with its own numbering. He accords a new status to biography, which, he argues, should stimulate the vocations and form the taste of young amateurs. He accuses Füssli of having neglected biography, referring to the letter of Gessner to Füssli on landscape where the importance of biography is emphasised.<sup>47</sup> Watelet’s and Pierre-Charles Levesque’s (1736–1812) *Dictionnaire*

41 Huber 1787, p. V.

42 Huber 1797–1808, VIII, p. 322.

43 Huber 1797–1808, VIII, p. 334.

44 Huber 1797–1808, VIII, p. 327.

45 Huber 1787, p. 229.

46 Huber 1797–1808, I, p. XXXVII.

47 Gessner 1769–1779, III, unpaginated (Preface), and translation by Watelet in Huber 1773–1777, II, unpaginated (Preface).

*des arts de peinture, sculpture et gravure* (1792), which Huber highlights as excellent, becomes one of his main sources, and it is not surprising that his conception of the French school relies on these authors.

## Schools, the French School in Particular

As in the *Notices*, Huber proposes in the first section of the *Manuel* a history of French engraving, which, according to him, began for engraving on copper only in 1550 with Jean Duvet (1485–1560). ‘The origins of engraving in France are shrouded in darkness’,<sup>48</sup> as is the case for all schools, and the earliest prints ‘have no other merit than their precedence’.<sup>49</sup> However, the French, who, unlike the Italians and the Germans, have never claimed the honour of having invented printing or engraving, have brought both to a pinnacle of perfection. Huber mentions only three engravers from the sixteenth century—Duvet, Étienne Delaune (1518/19–c. 1583), and Philippe Thomassin (1562–1622)—and is interested primarily in the engraving of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the *Manuel*, he adds five more engravers from the sixteenth century—Bernard Salomon (called ‘Petit Bernard’, 1506/10–c. 1561), Jean Perissin (c. 1536–1616/17), Jacques Tortorel (fl. 1568–1575), Noël Garnier (1470/75–after 1544), and Pierre Woeriot (1532–after 1596)—but he notes that most French amateurs start their collection with Jacques Callot.

Compared with the *Notices*, the information in the historical part of the *Manuel* is reorganised. Huber includes in this part details that he had previously given about various artists in the *Notices*, which makes the *Manuel* more interesting and provides a more synthetic vision of each school. He also gives more details regarding the production and style of certain masters; hence, for Claude Mellan (1598–1688), Huber is interested in his *Holy Face*, but remarks that it ‘is generally too praised: it tires the sight more than it satisfies the spirit’.<sup>50</sup> From Nicolas Poussin’s engravers, he mentions only Jean Pesne (1623–1700) and Claudine Bouzonnet-Stella (1636–1697), changing his earlier opinion to now prefer the latter because of her more accurate work in both drawing and engraving. When he reaches the reign of Louis XIV, the details he includes from the *Notices* become more substantial. He insists on the perfection and balance achieved by this school thanks to royal patronage, espousing the comments that appeared in France during the 1750s with Étienne La Font de Saint-Yenne’s (1688–1771) *Réflexions sur quelques causes de l’État présent de la peinture en France* (1747), which certainly influenced Huber.

48 Huber 1787, p. 197.

49 Huber 1787, p. 200.

50 Huber 1787, pp. 205–206.

He remarks that, assisted by Jean-Baptiste Colbert and advised by Charles Le Brun, Louis XIV 'liked works perfect in their execution; and [that] it is to this love that we owe the existence of so many beautiful things produced during this memorable reign'.<sup>51</sup> He mentions those painters from Poussin to Jean Jouvenet (1644–1717) who 'began to influence engraving', contributing 'by their productions to spreading the taste for beautiful prints, in France and throughout Europe'.<sup>52</sup> The most important engravers are listed in ten pages. Concerning Gérard Audran (1640–1703), whom he deems the most excellent history engraver of any period, he writes: 'His prints, in spite of the apparent coarseness of the work which can displease the ignorant, are the subject of admiration to the true connoisseurs.'<sup>53</sup> The diversity of Huber's selected artists highlights especially French production. He seeks to understand the qualities of one artist and the limits of another; personal judgments mingle with Watelet's remarks. More than in the catalogue, he seeks in the historical section to give an overview of an artist's work in just a few words: 'Thomassin the son had a free and picturesque way; we can see a beautiful example in his print of Magnificat after Jouvenet.'<sup>54</sup> Henri-Simon Thomassin's (1687–1741) portrait of the sculptor Jean Thierry (1669–1739) after Nicolas de Largillière (1656–1746), an esteemed work by the artist, would suffice to prove 'that one can successfully advance portraits with etching'.<sup>55</sup> Finally, Huber devotes a few supplementary pages to the *Cabinet du Roi*. Reminding his readers that Louis XIV had offered these 23 volumes as gifts to foreign courts, he draws attention to the first one, which is dedicated to the paintings of the royal collections, and to the second one, which is devoted to the *Battles of Alexander* engraved by Audran after Le Brun;<sup>56</sup> for the other volumes, he simply refers to Heineken and to his *Idée générale*.

Huber draws attention to the French painters of the reign of Louis XIII (1601–1643) and especially those of the reign of Louis XIV.<sup>57</sup> A proof of the renown of the French school during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is that foreign engravers came to work in France. The Low Countries school lost its preeminence, and reacting to a lack of encouragement, its engravers went to seek their fortune either in Italy or in France; they thus contributed to the glory of France, which has 'done justice to

51 Huber 1797–1808, VII, p. 13.

52 Huber 1797–1808, VII, pp. 13–14.

53 Huber 1797–1808, VII, p. 15.

54 British Museum, London, inv. U,11.31.

55 Huber 1797–1808, VII, p. 21.

56 See, for example, British Museum, London, inv. 1842,0806.167.a-c.

57 'We are coming to the brilliant century of Louis XIV, so fertile in skillful artists of all kinds, and several of the engravers whose character we have just traced, are beginning to be part of it.' Huber 1787, p. 209; Huber 1797–1808, VII, p. 14.

their merit'.<sup>58</sup> In particular, Huber names Jeremias Falck (1610–1677), Nicolas Pitau (1632–1671), Pieter van Schuppen (1627–1702), Cornelis Vermeulen (1644–1708) and Gérard Edelinck (1640–1707), whom he integrates into the French School, whereas he had previously classified them under the 'Flemish school' in the *Notices*. The same goes for German engravers. According to Huber, France has been the school of engravers. Many artists were formed there; some stayed, like Wille, who appears under the French school, while others, like Georg Friedrich Schmidt, returned to their homeland.

Among the main productions of the eighteenth century, Huber lingers on certain 'Recueils', like those of Pierre Crozat and Mariette, and the *Galerie de Versailles* by Jean-Baptiste Massé (1687–1767), the *Galerie de l' Hôtel Lambert* by Gaspard Duchange (1662–1757) and that of the *Galerie du Palais du Luxembourg* after Peter Paul Rubens. He again refers to Watelet, who had noticed that Jean-Marc Nattier (1685–1766), an artist whose drawings were engraved, 'has a little too francized the Flemish master'.<sup>59</sup> If French engravers were excellent draughtsmen, they did not venture far enough into chiaroscuro, unlike the Flemish and Dutch, 'who alone were truly colourists'.<sup>60</sup> Continuing his panorama of the galleries, Huber includes that of Dresden; the French had executed most of the drawings and engravings of it, though without giving 'always a right idea of the paintings, neither for the expression, nor for the colour'.<sup>61</sup>

He then discusses Saint-Non's *Voyage pittoresque ou description des Royaumes de Naples et de Sicile*<sup>62</sup> and Louis-François Cassas' (1756–1827) travels, both of which satisfy him; they 'honour French engraving' and allow French engravers to compete with the famous English engraver William Woollett (1735–1785).<sup>63</sup>

According to Huber, the second half of the eighteenth century was marked by competition between France and England: 'London has now become the republic of the arts [...]; attracted by the rewards and by the honour [it offers], a large number of artists have chosen this capital for their residence.'<sup>64</sup>

58 However, it is sad to think that 'the art of engraving suddenly ceased in the Netherlands, that this land so fertile in producing skillful artists of all kinds seemed entirely exhausted [...]. This decadence was sensitive from the end of the last century and at the beginning of it. The engravers who were still there settled in France, or in Italy, for lack of encouragement in their countries.' Huber 1787, p 157.

59 Huber 1797–1808, VII, p. 30.

60 'They did not neglect the picturesque effects, the degradations of the light and the magic of the chiaroscuro: but following the example of their painters they did not push these parts as far as the Flemings and the Dutch. In this respect the engravers of the schools of Rubens and Rembrandt surpass all the others: they alone, as it has been said, were truly colour engravers.' Huber 1797–1808, VII, p. 30.

61 Huber 1797–1808, VII, p. 31.

62 Saint-Non.

63 Huber 1797–1808, VIII, p. 33.

64 Huber 1797–1808, I, p. 104.

## Decadence

While Huber eulogised the French school of the seventeenth century and some productions of the eighteenth century, he believed that French art had fallen into decay under the Regency because of moral corruption, even though the regent, Philippe II, Duke of Orléans (1674–1723), appreciated the arts. However, due to the impact of the War of the Spanish Succession, this decline was already appearing at the end of the reign of Louis XIV.<sup>65</sup>

Antoine Coypel (1661–1722), ‘a very ingenious but unnatural painter’,<sup>66</sup> was partly responsible for this degeneration of the arts under the Regency, according to Huber. Here, Huber takes up Anton Raphael Mengs’ (1728–1779) judgments published in 1776: the French school had abandoned serious studies, and ‘some artists of genius, who are called ingenious painters, like Jouvenet and Coypel, crossing the boundaries of the good and the beautiful, loaded too much one and the other and sought to satisfy the taste of the eyes more than the taste of the spirit’.<sup>67</sup>

This decadence continued under Louis XV (1710–1774), who saw ‘false taste’ taking over with Charles-Antoine Coypel (1694–1752), ‘in everything inferior to his father’.<sup>68</sup> ‘Engraving suffered’, as engravers were obliged to bow to the taste of artists in favour. The genre painters prevailed over the history painters. The taste of the degenerate public adopted that of the court. ‘Serious subjects fell out of fashion’, observes Huber.<sup>69</sup> According to Huber, Madame de Pompadour (1721–1764) was responsible for this decline:<sup>70</sup> she loved the arts but could not distinguish the beautiful from the mediocre. Though a patron of Carle van Loo (1705–1765) and Cochin, she preferred Charles Eisen (1720–1778) and François Boucher (1703–1770), ‘corrupter of painting’ (Fig. 54).<sup>71</sup> Taking up the criticisms of Watelet and those of Denis Diderot at the Salon of 1765, Huber becomes irritated by those engravers who have reproduced Eisen’s and Boucher’s works: ‘the abundance of these trivialities contributed to the discredit of engraving [...]. To foreign countries, France sent only gallant subjects, and, what is worse, a mishmash of licentious pieces which led to consignments of prints intended for foreign sale being apprehended, and gave a bad impression of French art, from which England knew to profit.’ While Pierre-Antoine Baudoin (1723–1769), ‘painter of brothels and libertines’, continued

65 Huber 1797–1808, VII, p. 23.

66 Huber 1797–1808, VII, p. 216.

67 Anton Raphael Mengs, *Œuvres complètes*, 1776, quoted by Huber 1787, p. 626.

68 Huber 1797–1808, VII, p. 24.

69 Huber 1797–1808, VII, p. 24.

70 Huber 1797–1808, VII, p. 34.

71 Huber 1797–1808, VII, p. 24.



54. Claude Augustin Duflos le Jeune after François Boucher, *La poesie pastorale*, c. 1742, etching and engraving, 25.9 × 23.6 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 53.600.1025. © Harris Brisbane Dick Fund, 1953, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

this approach, fortunately Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725–1805), ‘painter of decent folk’ had been able to establish moral decency.<sup>72</sup>

In the *Notices*, Huber criticises excessive ornamentation introduced into books as ‘one of the main causes, if not of the decadence, at least of the negligence of engraving on a large scale’.<sup>73</sup> He shared the opinion of some connoisseurs in saying that the public and not the artists were responsible for contemporaneous depravity; however, he is less negative than it may seem, as he lists authors of ‘pretty vignettes’<sup>74</sup> and himself resorts to these ornaments in his own translations. According to Huber, this decadence was widespread. In the Low Countries, the situation was still worse: ‘selfishness has taken the place of patriotism; the tastes of the amateur [have] become capricious, exclusive’. As for the Flemish school, Huber denounces the depraved taste of connoisseurs for ‘tasteless trivial representation’; only the rich become ‘the arbiter of taste [...] [and] nothing is more deadly for art, more discouraging for the artist, than the pride born of the feeling of wealth’.<sup>75</sup> He states that ‘Bernard Picart went to spoil himself in Holland, and left his light and spiritual manner for a taste at once weighty and affected’.<sup>76</sup> Concerning the German school, Huber repeats the words of Paul von Stetten (1731–1808), who criticised his country’s practices in 1788, complaining of the ‘quantity of Print Merchants, who seem to spread their merchandise only to propagate the corruption of the arts’. Following this line of reasoning, Huber then characterises a thing of bad taste as ‘Goods of Augsburg or Works of Nuremberg’.<sup>77</sup> Regarding France, ‘most of the engravings which come to us from Paris offer only gallant and often licentious subjects: they flatter only the eyes without speaking to the mind’.<sup>78</sup> Once more he claims that the fault lies with ‘a certain class of connoisseurs who want only fashion pieces’.<sup>79</sup>

The second half of the eighteenth century saw the arrival of facsimile techniques (wash, pencil, pastel), but Huber does not say much about them. Only black and white prints, etched or engraved, interest him, and he focuses on the dotted line and the mezzotint, the English manner par excellence. The *Notices* ends with England’s supremacy. Through its ‘National Engravings’, England has supplanted France, which tried in vain to equal her; the *Death of General Montcalm* by Chevillet after Louis-Joseph Watteau de Lille (1731–1798) in 1783 cannot bear comparison with the *Death of General Wolfe* engraved in 1781 by Woollett after Benjamin West

72 Huber 1797–1808, VII, p. 35. This sentence comes directly from Diderot’s *Salon* of 1765.

73 Huber 1787, p. 39.

74 Huber 1787, p. 23.

75 Huber 1787, p. 158.

76 Huber 1787, p. 158.

77 Huber 1797–1808, I, p. 103.

78 Huber 1797–1808, VII, p. 234.

79 Huber 1797–1808, VII, p. 234.





55. William Woollett after Benjamin West, *The Death of General Wolfe*, etching and engraving, 1776, 48 x 61.3 cm, Harvard Art Museums/Fogg Museum, Cambridge, MA, G4131. Photo © President and Fellows of Harvard College, G4131.

(1738–1820) (Fig. 55).<sup>80</sup> Yet in the *Manuel*, Huber does not repeat this negative comparison.<sup>81</sup> Although, like his contemporaries, he notes that the French have lost a very considerable branch of commerce, he does not end his presentation there, but instead he opens up an optimistic viewpoint by drawing on a text from 1785, which he attributes to Watelet, but which was in fact from Levesque. He asks: while the history of all peoples shows barbaric beginnings, perfections, and then decadence, from which they do not return, could the French be the only ones capable of returning to the source of true beauty? This return has, in fact, already begun. Thanks to the actions of Caylus and Joseph-Marie Vien (1716–1809), good taste seems to be in the process of being renewed. A taste for Jacques-Louis David (1748–1825) has replaced that for Boucher. Vien, Van Loo, Jean-Baptiste-Marie Pierre (1714–1789), and David had the good fortune to have skilful engravers. The glory of forming a new French school is reserved for the students of Vien, namely François-André Vincent (1746–1816), Jean-Joseph Taillasson (1745–1809), and Pierre Peyron (1744–1814): 'It is almost unbelievable that we have seen a nation rise from a taste for the artificial and stunning to one for simple and severe beauty.'<sup>82</sup> Levesque feared that political events would put an end to this renewal, and indeed, the Revolution slowed this development and the French did not manage to win the palm from the English. Huber mentions the vain efforts of Guillaume-Germain Guyot (1724–1800?) in 1793 to gain acceptance for his project of a museum of engraving in order to regenerate this art;<sup>83</sup> according to Guyot, this project would be a means of establishing the paramount value of engravings of historical subject matter.

Through the *Notices* and the *Manuel*, Huber thus proposes a synthesis that had not previously been attempted for the history of engraving: a narrative according to schools. Despite his reservations, he presents a positive and optimistic view of the French school. As the defender of classicism, he appreciates that which is simple and severe: the connoisseurs and artists he met in Paris and the authors he translated, Winkelmann as well as Hagedorn, explain this sensibility. Because he defends history painting, he judges severely Charles-Antoine Coypel for lack of character in his heroes and for having left history for 'Bambochade'.<sup>84</sup> He is more appreciative of Jean-Siméon Chardin (1699–1779), though still with reservations: 'Chardin was a very great painter in a limited genre.'<sup>85</sup> He shared these opinions with Mengs, Caylus, Watelet, and Diderot.

80 Chevillet, Versailles, inv. gravures 5382; Woollet, British Museum, London, inv. 1864,0714.89 (repr.).

81 Huber 1797–1808, VII, p. 234.

82 Huber 1797–1808, VII, pp. 49–50.

83 Huber 1797–1808, VII, p. 47.

84 Huber 1797–1808, VII, p. 220.

85 Huber 1797–1808, VII, p. 37.

The conversion of the *Notices* into the *Manuel* shows how the organisation by schools provided Huber with an opportunity to offer a history of printmaking. We can observe how the transformation of a hybrid approach into a synthetic one seems to entail prioritising school over nation and how the focus on the medium of print alone, rather than on painting as well, enables the emancipation of printmaking from other media. Moreover, Huber shifts from beginning with the Italian school into beginning with the German school; he seems to assimilate Heineken's view of the Germans as the inventors of printmaking. He is particularly concerned with stylistic characterisations—an approach that is in line with his preference for classification by school rather than by nation and that highlights a concern for connoisseurship, rather than for patriotism, which could appear as a national prejudice.

Huber was the leading expert of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries for French, German, and Italian engraving. He offers an unusually comprehensive history of engraving. Subsequently, however, chronological classification tends to disappear. Michael Bryan (1757–1821) and Charles Le Blanc (1817–1865) return to the dictionary format, and few authors offered such extensive biographical notes. However, Huber's influence was decisive for the French curator Jean Duchesne (1779–1855),<sup>86</sup> who, although he does not quote Huber, borrowed the title of his book for his own *Notices* (1823) and, like him, accorded an important place to the choice and analysis of works, to biography, and to chronology. However, Duchesne rejects an organisation according to schools and prefers a thematic approach that evokes connections between works. A page was turning and Huber, while remaining a reference, passed into history.

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## About the Author

Véronique Meyer is Professor Emeritus of Modern Art History at Poitiers University (France). She is a specialist in the history of French engravings during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Her research focuses on book illustration, illustrated theses, portraits, interpretation and copy, amateurs, and dealers. She has recently published *Pour la plus grande gloire du roi: Louis XIV en thèses* (Rennes: Pours, 2017).



# 14. Chronology and School: Questioning Two Competing Criteria for the Classification of Print Collections around 1800

*Stephan Brakensiek*

## Abstract

Adam von Bartsch (1757–1821) was a central figure in the discussion of various models for organising print collections around 1800. No longer understood exclusively as image archives for princely or bourgeois representational needs, prints came to be arranged according to contemporary scientific criteria. Two competing categories in particular will be considered here: ‘chronology’ and ‘school’. These categories were used to create print collections in the service of the history of art, art connoisseurship, the emancipation of printmaking as an art form, and moral education. Ultimately, the uses of the collections went beyond mere classification, contributing to a deeper understanding of the process of art as a more complex system of mutual influences and social factors.

**Keywords:** Adam von Bartsch, print collection, Hofbibliothek, scientific classification criteria, history of art, moral progress

‘One can, however, build collections of beautiful copper engravings from different intentions’, wrote the Swiss painter and publisher Johann Caspar Füssli in 1771 in his encyclopaedia of artists, a reference book intended for collectors of prints. He then criticises various modes of organising collections that were merely designed for representation and names the expectations of and requirements for a ‘good collection’: ‘[e]nriching insights from [the collections] [...], [...] practicing [...] taste

This essay is based on an extended part of my PhD thesis, which is entitled *Vom ‘Theatrum mundi’ zum ‘Cabinet des Estampes’: das Sammeln von Druckgraphik in Deutschland 1565–1821* (Hildesheim: Olms, 2003). I thank Andrea Diederichs for the translation.

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[...] and forming [...] reflections on the genius of the artists and the variety of art in different regions and ages [...].<sup>1</sup>

The most important premise for achieving these characteristics of a good collection was a knowledge-enhancing arrangement of a print collection that was to be practicable. Moreover, at the same time, the organisation had to enable comparisons, thus promoting the desired 'insights'. Adam von Bartsch was a central figure in the debates about various models for organising print collections around 1800. Today, he is essentially regarded as the 'father of copper engraving' (Fig. 56). In the role of curator at the Vienna Hofbibliothek ('Court Library'), he had decisive influence on the development of new systems for structuring print collections, which were no longer considered to be exclusively image archives for princely or bourgeois representational needs. My essay will consider how print collections were arranged according to contemporary scientific criteria. Above all, two categories in particular need to be considered here: 'chronology' and 'school'; both were decisive models of classification and ordering at that time.

Bartsch, who had worked as a scribe at the Hofbibliothek since 1777 and was entrusted with the reorganisation of its print collection from 1791, in a letter of 1790 recommended the expansion of the Habsburg print collection.<sup>2</sup> He stressed the importance of a chronological sequence of sheets within the oeuvre of each artist. According to Bartsch, the iconographic structure of individual volumes introduced by Pierre-Jean Mariette into the collection of Prince Eugene of Savoy, on which the Hofbibliothek's collection was largely based, obstructed the purpose of a print collection structured around the oeuvres of artists. With an iconographic organisation, it was difficult, or even almost impossible, to study an artist's development. Bartsch ultimately had to abandon his claim due to the enormous difficulties, including the information gaps in the chronology of an artist's oeuvre, but his argument was in keeping with the tradition and aspirations of eighteenth-century connoisseurs, who had already expressed these ideas.<sup>3</sup> However, a consistently chronological organisation had rarely been implemented. Neither Pierre-François Basan's catalogue of Peter Paul Rubens's oeuvre (published 1767) nor those compiled by Edme-François Gersaint, P. C. A. Helle, and Jean-Baptiste Glomy (1711–1786) for Rembrandt (published 1751) listed the works of these artists chronologically. The first exception, in a twofold way, was the catalogue of the oeuvre of Charles-Nicolas Cochin II, published in Paris in 1770 and written by Charles-Antoine Jombert (1712–1784).<sup>4</sup> This was the first catalogue to be published on the oeuvre of a liv-

1 Füssli, pp. 5–6.

2 Stix 1921, p. 94.

3 Brakensiek, pp. 280–328.

4 Jombert.



56. James Thomson after George Lewis, *Portrait of Adam von Bartsch*, 1821, lithography, 31.5 x 20.6 cm, Graphische Sammlung der Universität Trier, inv. 01927. © Graphische Sammlung der Universität Trier.

ing artist, and Jombert was also the first catalogueur to list all of an artist's works chronologically. The audience whom Jombert targeted with his catalogue were the collectors, to whom he explicitly wanted to give guidelines for the meaningful compilation of their own Cochin collections. The fact that his catalogue was used exactly in this way is documented by various sources. For example, the Paris-based German engraver Johann Georg Wille promised to his friend Joachim Wasserschlebe (1709–1787) in Copenhagen that he would send him a copy of Jombert's catalogue so that he could use it as a basis for his Cochin collection.<sup>5</sup> In addition, a folder from the last third of the eighteenth century, which today is held at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, follows Jombert's specifications in every detail of its arrangement (Fig. 57).<sup>6</sup> Across his catalogue, Jombert had linked biographical details with a descriptive list of each artist's works and thus published the model that guided Bartsch shortly afterwards when he made his assertion in 1790.

But when Bartsch attempted to create chronologies of individual artists' oeuvres, he soon became aware that his ambitious project could not be realised. Already since the time of Carl Heinrich von Heineken a few decades earlier, it had been evident that no real progress could be made with regard to the chronological organisation of a print collection, since too little was—and still is—known about the exact dates of the various prints. Bartsch, however, demonstrates the marked importance that his late eighteenth-century contemporaries attached to a print collection for study of the 'history of the arts', its development, and its manifestations.<sup>7</sup> He himself never completely abandoned his quest for chronological ordering of the holdings he administered, despite all the obstacles.

Unlike Mariette, Bartsch sorted individual artists—painters and engravers alike—into schools for his newly compiled volumes, as was already customary. Instead of creating divisions according to epoch, though, he crafted a rather consistent chronological structure by using the birthdate of each artist as the basis for his placement.<sup>8</sup> The term 'school' underwent a decisive change of meaning in Bartsch's work, but this change did not have its origin in Bartsch himself. Rather, it was connected to the rise of printmaking from an *art secondaire* ('secondary art') to a position equivalent to painting within the system of the arts. Until the end of the eighteenth century, a 'school' had been understood almost exclusively as denoting a regionally conditioned stylistic similarity in painterly and graphic treatment of pictorial themes.<sup>9</sup> However, the increasing independence of printmaking as an artistic medium called the traditional model of schools of painting into question.

5 Wille, I, pp. 473–474.

6 Foster.

7 Brakensiek, pp. 280–328.

8 Brakensiek, pp. 266–268.

9 Sulzer, III, p. 636.



57. Sheet from the so-called Philadelphia portfolio with prints of Charles-Nicolas Cochin, finished shortly after 1770/1771, album sheet, laid paper with attached prints, 66.5 x 45.7 cm, Philadelphia Museum of Art, W1958-1-38-45. © Philadelphia Museum of Art: Purchased with the W. P. Wiltach Fund, 1958.

Following Bartsch, it was no longer possible to establish a sense of belonging to a 'school' according to stylistic characteristics for the most prominent engravers. In Bartsch's understanding, the lack of importance of stylistic criteria applied to artists of the rank of Hendrick Goltzius or Jan Saenredam (c. 1565–1607). It was precisely the denial of personal style and the stylistic subordination of engravers to the manner of the artists whom they copied that distinguished a good reproductive printmaker for Bartsch's contemporaries. But, in order to be able to classify these artists into schools, Bartsch had to define the term 'school' differently. He defined it nationally rather than stylistically, using the place of the artist's main activity, not the place of his birth.

In practice, the chronological sequencing of the prints required additional information in order to organise the artists according to their birthdates. The situation was further aggravated by the fact that many reproductive prints of artists for whom Bartsch or one of his colleagues had created an oeuvre could not be found in the Hofbibliothek, as they were not listed among the names of painters whose works had been reproduced or draughtsmen executing the preparatory drawings, but exclusively under the names of the printmakers themselves. In order to remedy these problems, Bartsch created a multi-part card catalogue in which prints were listed both by engraver and by painter.<sup>10</sup> For Bartsch, a systematic catalogue was the solution. From here, the card catalogue began its triumphal march towards knowledge development in academic art history *avant la lettre*. This groundbreaking cataloguing solution, which Bartsch had developed from his involvement with the cataloguing and indexing of the books of the Hofbibliothek in his first four years there, shortly afterwards came to underpin his similar cataloguing of the print collections of Duke Albert of Saxony-Teschen (1738–1822), who had begun to build up a large print collection at the time of Bartsch's entry into the services of the Hofbibliothek. Here, Bartsch attempted to establish the chronologically structured print collection as the institutionalised basis for any kind of art connoisseurship.

To Bartsch, the Hofbibliothek, like the Dresden cabinet for Carl Heinrich von Heineken a few years earlier, was a place for connoisseurial study of the arts. For both Bartsch and Heineken, the usability of the collection was determined by its type of organisation. In 1784, Bartsch made a statement in a letter to the prefect of the Hofbibliothek, Gottfried van Swieten (1733–1803), through which it is possible to reconstruct his assessment of Heineken's techniques for organising a collection. In this letter, Bartsch reported on his visit to the Paris Cabinet des Estampes ('print room') and noted: "The furnishing of the cabinet [...] is indeed different in many pieces from the imperial collection [i.e. which Bartsch was later to preside over in Vienna], but not necessarily better. Certain oeuvres are in actual disorder, and

<sup>10</sup> Koschatzky 1978, pp. IX–XIII.

neither brought together with knowledge nor diligence. [...] In general, everywhere one can encounter sloppiness and sometimes ignorance.<sup>11</sup>

Since the Paris cabinet under the direction of Hugues-Adrien Joly (1718–1800) had in parts been restructured between 1750 and 1792, based on the organisation implemented by Heineken in Dresden, Bartsch's assessment of Heineken's arrangement can thus be deduced from his statement, but with a few limitations, which Heineken had also published in his *Idée générale d'une collection complete d'estampes* (1771). Bartsch recognised in both the Dresden model and in the almost identical Paris version an 'actual disorder' in the oeuvre volumes, and so the absence of a basis for connoisseurs to use the collection. As can be deduced from a later remark by Bartsch in his *Peintre-graveur* (1802–1821), this shortcoming was due to the lack of chronological organisation<sup>12</sup> and of *raisonnirende[n] Verzeichnisse[n]* ('catalogues raisonnés').<sup>13</sup>

Jonathan Richardson the Elder had already pointed out the need for a connoisseur to know the history of the arts,<sup>14</sup> and for the same reason, both William Gilpin and Thomas Martyn (1735–1825) had recommended and applied chronological organisation in their collector's guides.<sup>15</sup> Even Heineken stresses in the foreword to the first volume of his *Dictionnaire des artistes* (1778–1791) that he was well aware of the advantages of chronological arrangement, but that he prefers alphabetical ordering for practical reasons.<sup>16</sup> In fact, at the beginning of the 1780s, there was still widespread agreement that only a largely alphabetical structure would make a print collection usable. Alphabetical sequences also made it easier to acquire new prints, as gaps in the collection could be more swiftly compared with the auction catalogues and stocklists of print dealers, which were alphabetically arranged at that time.

Chronological ordering is described by Joseph Heller (1758/89–1849) and Joseph Maberly (1783–1860) as inferior and therefore rejected.<sup>17</sup> Yet from the auction catalogues of the period after 1780, it is evident that within private collections, the theoretical aspect of chronological ordering had finally become established to a large extent, as opposed to the purely practical aspect of alphabetical ordering, which was structured according to schools. Interest in a genetically understood history of the arts came more and more to the fore. For example, the Mannheim government official and art collector Stephan von Stengel (1750–1822), in the

11 Letter from Bartsch to Swieten, published in: Stix 1927, pp. 321–322.

12 Bartsch, VI, p. VII.

13 Letter from Bartsch to Swieten, published in: Stix 1927, p. 322.

14 Richardson.

15 Gilpin and Martyn.

16 Heineken, I, p. IX.

17 Heller, I, pp. 20–21; Maberly, pp. 24–25.

*Vorerinnerungen* ('Preface') of his handwritten collection catalogue, names the reason for his preference for the chronological method of classification:

Initially, I had arranged my collection according to subjects, as it suited me for my hobby: landscape, cattle pieces, architecture, history, etc. [...] At that time the first volume of M. Huber and Rost's *Handbuch für Kunstliebhaber und Sammler* was published. The order according to the engravers in it seemed to me to be the most suitable and [...] more appropriate for a print collection than that of Mr. Heinecke [...] So I followed Huber's chronological classification of the engravers in the various schools [...] Thanks to Huber's chronological classification, my merely artistic way of collecting was now getting a historical direction, the history of art and artists became more and more interesting in this regard.<sup>18</sup>

In 1775, Johann Georg Sulzer, according to whose *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* ('General Theory of Fine Arts') (1773–1775) (Fig. 58) Bartsch had largely oriented his thought and practices, had already expressed a similar mindset and called for collections in which the 'history of art' should have visible form:

Above all I wish that one of the most skilful copper engravers would take the trouble to give a list of such a collection from which one could see the beginning and progress of art, according to the various noticeable stages through which it has risen to perfection. This collection would constitute a collection of sheets in which each subsequent one would have something in the treatment that the previous ones still lack, and whereby the art of engraving, or etching, has been taken one step further. Such a collection would most clearly represent the true history of art.<sup>19</sup>

For Bartsch, alphabetical organisation, which was based on whether individual sheets could be found, could therefore be abandoned in favour of the theoretically justified, chronological practice in a large collection like that of the Hofbibliothek, since Bartsch created catalogues of both engravers and painters and thus guaranteed the traceability of the individual sheets. As a result, he satisfied the new scientific criteria not only in the organisation of printed sheets, but also in their accessibility. He thus made it possible to deal with prints as a medium and as works of art in a way that had never before been practiced in large collections.

18 Stengel, quoted after Tenner, pp. 32–33. Specifically on Huber's concepts, see the essay by Meyer in this volume.

19 Sulzer, II, p. 97.



58. Frontispiece and title page, engraving and letterpress printing, Johann Georg Sulzer, *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* (Leipzig: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1792 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition)). © Graphische Sammlung der Universität Trier.



Bartsch received an important impetus towards the chronological reorganisation of the prints at the Hofbibliothek and towards his preferred treatment of the original copperplate engravings and etchings from another Viennese collection, the expansion of which he was to play a decisive role in after it had been established in the Austrian capital. This was the collection of Duke Albert of Saxony-Teschen, which was located in Vienna from 1794. Giacomo, Conte Durazzo (1717–1794), a patrician originally from Genoa, had compiled the initial objects of the duke's collection. In 1773, the duke had given Durazzo the task of creating a collection of prints that would 'serve higher purposes than all previous collections'.<sup>20</sup> Only two years later, Durazzo was able to announce that the collection had been completed both in terms of its basic system and its practical structure. Durazzo then sent the Duke a treatise in which he explained the main features of the collection system: the *Discorso preliminare* ('Preliminary Address'). The second version of this treatise, which is the most detailed, is entitled *Storia pratica della pittura* ('Practical History of Painting'); its title makes clear the main aim of the print collection (Fig. 59).<sup>21</sup> Durazzo arranged the prints chronologically and separated them into only two *Hauptschulen* ('main schools'): Italians and *Oltramontani* ('northern schools'). These two schools were then further subdivided according to the school classification system that had been used since Giorgio Vasari, that is, into the usual Italian areas and the transalpine regions—namely, German, Dutch, and French. Within these schools, painters and engravers were then organised chronologically, whereby, as practised and recommended in many collector's guides of the time, the artist's birthdate was used for classification. Durazzo's aim was to create a collection superior to the other large cabinets: 'The plan presented here serves such a great purpose. It thus differs from the other ones, whose ideas do not pursue the notion of a continuous series of painters, but only seek the works of the most famous representatives.'<sup>22</sup>

For Durazzo, the superiority of his method in comparison with the organisation techniques of more extensive and complete collections resulted from the possibility of carrying out well-founded theoretical studies. The aim of the collection was to bring together as many engravings as possible from each artist, so that, according to the demands of a connoisseur, one could get a critical idea of the artist's oeuvre. 'The spiritual aim of our collection', Durazzo says, 'is to see so many works by each artist together in order to form an appropriate opinion of his work.'<sup>23</sup> Richardson had already included such an art historical claim *avant la lettre* within his concept of 'connoisseurship'. In his publication 'The Science of a Connoisseur', first published

20 Koschatzky 1963, p. 5.

21 Koschatzky 1964.

22 Durazzo, quoted after Koschatzky 1964, p. 8.

23 Durazzo, quoted after Koschatzky 1964, p. 9.



59. Giovanni David and Giacomo Durazzo, *Discorso preliminare*, Fassung II, Erstes Deckblatt, c. 1776, pen and wash drawing, 32.1 x 21.2 cm, Albertina, Vienna, inv. 30858/2. © Albertina, Vienna.

in 1719, Richardson concludes with a short draft of art history.<sup>24</sup> It was his aim to present the simultaneous development of the different schools chronologically, as well as to point out possibilities of comparison for the 'connoisseur'. In Durazzo's case, this realisation of the time-bound nature of the works of art was reflected in the decision about whether he should sort works by engraver or painter. He opted for a compromise and created both engraver and painter volumes; otherwise, one would 'confuse the periods of time, the types and also the value of the artistic invention'.<sup>25</sup> Instead, one had to 'create a collection of the underlying paintings and a series of artist engravers' since only in this way could chronological thought be maintained.<sup>26</sup> Durazzo was well aware of the central problem, also highlighted by contemporary critics around 1800, of an order oriented towards painters with regard to their possibility of representing a 'history of the art of painting', and he tried to solve this problem in the structure of his own collection. As Joseph Heller later discovered, 'nothing had been made [...] after many older artists',<sup>27</sup> especially those of the late Middle Ages or the early Renaissance. Since this was the shortcoming of such structuring, Durazzo began to commission engravings of previously unpublished frescoes and other early works of art in order to close these evident gaps in his system.

Durazzo's approach is particularly remarkable for engravings made after paintings, i.e. reproductive prints. In principle, Durazzo arranged reproductive engravings according to the painters who had created the original designs of the prints. Here were the works of all those printmakers whom connoisseurs called *Nachstecher* ('reproduction engravers') and whose works Durazzo regarded as of little use for those print collections in which it was all about the 'history of the art of engraving'. He nevertheless considered these engravers essential to the collection that he built up for Duke Albert; such engravings could be shown there 'in comparison to the original engraving, forming the school of engravings and thus contributing to the history of painting, whose idea [...] the] ultimate [...] goal is'.<sup>28</sup> The idea of forming a 'school of engravings' foreshadows Bartsch's assessment of reproductive printmaking. However, Durazzo attempts to represent in a historical series that, despite the necessary stylistic subordination to the original artwork, a *Nachstich* ('reproductive print') is able to express the hand of the engraver and the circumstances of his own time in terms of style, taste, and technical possibilities. In his *Discorso*, Durazzo uses the five reproductive engravings made in different periods after Raphael's fresco *Triumph of Galatea* in the Villa Farnesina in Rome

24 Richardson.

25 Durazzo, quoted after Koschatzky 1964, p. 8.

26 Koschatzky 1964, p. 8.

27 Heller, I, p. 18.

28 Durazzo, quoted after Koschatzky 1964, p. 10.

(created before 1514) to substantiate his point.<sup>29</sup> He writes: ‘The attentive observer will notice the diversity of views in the changing times and the constant changes in the reproductions. The clarity of the line one enjoys with the old master fades already with the pupil and even more with the others who, however, thought to faithfully reproduce him.’<sup>30</sup>

In order to facilitate comparisons of individual artists, reproduction engravers, or different articulations of the same image with each other, Durazzo refrained from the technique of mounting the prints on sheets in volumes, but instead chose to place them in cassettes, or ‘portfolios’, where the sheets were individually stored and glued onto cardboard. Already in his *Discorso preliminare*, Durazzo emphasised the importance of the ‘study of such comparisons’, especially for ‘the theory of prints’. The existence of a special category of engravings, in which the sheets of the *Nachstecher* were summarised, proves that Durazzo was not only concerned with the formation of taste or an increase in the sensitivity of the user through the contemplation of outstanding works of art. He also wanted to use prints for moral education because he was thoroughly committed to the tradition of the French Enlightenment. First raised at the Dijon Academy, the question of whether the arts could influence morals had been central to the Enlightenment project of the *Encyclopédie* since 1750. As a counterpoint to Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), in his introduction to the *Encyclopédie*, Jean le Rond d’Alembert called for the learning of seeing as a means of structuring rationally all artistic performance.<sup>31</sup> For him, knowledge could not be gained deductively from a Platonic concept; it had to be obtained inductively through an empirically comparative synopsis of individual things themselves. This attitude on the part of the encyclopaedists was clearly reflected in Durazzo’s print collection. Durazzo, for whom, just as for D’Alembert, the moral development of mankind ran parallel to the development of the fine arts,<sup>32</sup> tried to establish a place of study through the arrangement of the print collection. This collection was aimed at enabling moral progress and expanding one’s knowledge of prints. In accordance with this didactic impetus, the collection was intended to offer a ‘practical history of painting and engraving’ that would illustrate and facilitate the comparison of the development of the arts from ‘restoration [...] to the present day, therefore presented in selected examples’. Durazzo’s claim was the same as that Christian von Mechel had asserted for the painting gallery he had set up in 1781 in the Viennese Upper Belvedere: ‘The purpose

29 All prints side by side in sections shown in Koschatzky 1972, pp. 122–123.

30 Durazzo, quoted after Koschatzky 1964, p. 10.

31 Alembert, pp. 41–42, 103–105.

32 Durazzo, quoted after Koschatzky 1964, p. 5.

of all endeavours was to [...] make the arrangement as a whole, as well as the parts of it instructive, and as far as possible, a visible history of art.<sup>33</sup>

Addressing Mechel's project, Heinrich Dilly described how the display practice of art observation thus sought to catch up with the discursive one.<sup>34</sup> Dilly attributes this attempting pairing of display and discursive practices implicitly to Johann Joachim Winckelmann's ideas, which had historicised art and appeared in a second edition in 1776—the so-called *Wiener-Akademie-Ausgabe*. Here, Winckelmann—according to Dilly—'through his retreat into the space of history' made it possible 'to choose between the works of art, to record, and evaluate them independently of their location, their space, and their respective owners'.<sup>35</sup> In fact, this selection led to the creation of a line of development in art history that primarily was formally oriented towards individual works and that sought to 'combine the description of style with the historian's endeavours to synthesize and present an overall view'.<sup>36</sup> For Durazzo, as later for Bartsch and Mechel, however, whether the display practice of art history actually followed the discursive one cannot be conclusively determined since a reciprocal influence between display and discursive practices was already evident before the *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* ('History of the Art of Antiquity') was first published in Dresden in 1764. Yet after the developments in the systematics of chronology and school for print collections described so far, it can be assumed that the understanding of art as a process, not in the sense of mere chronology or biography, but in the sense of a more complex system of mutual influences and social factors did find its expression not only in Winckelmann's work. Rather, the conception of art as a process seems to go back to the preoccupation with classifying prints and drawings for the purpose of a deeper understanding of art. Presentation techniques within the large print collections and the demands and maxims of the connoisseurs, as shaped by Bartsch and Durazzo, have sparked this discourse on the historical contexts of art and its development and contributed decisively to its dissemination.

In conclusion, it can be observed that the discussion about the advantages of chronological versus stylistic (i.e. school) criteria in the structuring of print collections around 1800 was mainly focused on questions of scientific usability in the understanding of what constituted art history during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. While the 'development' of individual artists' personalities and complex relationships based on dependency were considered more fertile for the art theoretical notion of 'aemulatio' that was then still relevant, the relationship between

33 Mechel, p. XI.

34 Dilly, p. 140.

35 Dilly, p. 113.

36 Pochat, p. 406.

artists and the place of training or activity nevertheless prevailed. Essentially, practical reasons prompted this. The gradual abandonment of a rigid organisation of prints by mounting them in albums, which was common in large collections, finally offered the opportunity to continue giving preference to the system of arrangement by school—a system that was considered practicable and suitable for everyday use—without at the same time having to forego chronologically oriented ways of thinking and presentation. Ultimately, it was the introduction of card catalogues in collections that made it possible to access their holdings according to additional criteria. Hence, the question of either ‘chronology’ or ‘school’ had become dispensable.

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## About the Author

**Stephan Brakensiek** is Curator of the Print Collection of the Department of Art History at Trier University. Since his book *Vom 'Theatrum mundi' zum 'Cabinet des Estampes': das Sammeln von Druckgraphik in Deutschland 1565–1821* (2003), he has published widely on the history of printmaking, reproductive prints, and print collecting.

# **Art Markets: Selling and Collecting**





# 15. The Eighteenth-Century Art Market and the Northern and Southern Netherlandish Schools of Painting: Together or Apart?

*Everhard Korthals Altes*

## Abstract

To what extent did the international art market contribute to the shaping of the concept of schools of painting, in particular the northern and southern Netherlandish schools? By studying the structure of auction catalogues, collection catalogues, art literature, and several other sources, this essay considers the important changes that took place around 1740–1760. During this period, both Dutch and French art dealers tried to expand the canon of Netherlandish art in France. The subdivision of the ‘École flamande’ into the ‘Écoles flamande et hollandaise’ was probably part of a strategy to sell paintings by northern Netherlandish masters who were still relatively unknown in France at the time.

**Keywords:** art market, school classification, auction catalogues, northern and southern Netherlandish painting, Gerard Hoet

The aim of this essay is to better understand what role the international art market played in shaping the concept of a northern and a southern Netherlandish school of painting. Comparative consideration of various eighteenth-century sources, such as auction catalogues, collection catalogues, and art literature, helps to clarify the commercial interest of art dealers in the concept of schools of art. In order to prevent anachronistic interpretations, nineteenth- and twentieth-century notions of national schools, which were rooted in nationalist art history, should be examined first.

In 1998, Hans Vlieghe published an article with the somewhat provocative title ‘Flemish Art, Does It Really Exist?’<sup>1</sup> He convincingly pointed out that the use of the

Many thanks to Ingrid Vermeulen and Paul Knolle for their comments on an early draft of this essay.

<sup>1</sup> Vlieghe.

term 'Flemish' leads to an ahistorical approach to seventeenth-century art from the Low Countries. Flanders presently stands for the northern, Dutch-speaking part of Belgium, but, remarkably, the term 'Flemish' is still used as a classification for the art of the southern Netherlands in their entirety, i.e. more or less the area of Belgium as we know it today.

Belgium has been a sovereign state since 1830. After the fall of Napoleon, the United Kingdom of the Netherlands was established, a union of the Netherlands and Belgium as we know them today, but Belgium soon became an independent country. The first years of independence saw an increasing veneration of 'heroes' of Belgium's glorious past. For example, a statue of Peter Paul Rubens was erected in Antwerp in 1840. One would expect the artist to have been honoured as a Belgian citizen, but he was regarded as a Flemish hero instead, despite the fact that during the seventeenth century, the city of Antwerp was not even located in the province of Flanders, but in Brabant. Apparently, this distinction was insignificant in an age when the 'Flemish Movement', a group of intellectuals and cultural organisations promoting the Dutch language and Flemish culture, rapidly gained importance, and Rubens was used as a Flemish figurehead. On the other side of the border, in the Netherlands, people were equally eager to honour the heroes of their 'national' past. In 1852, a statue of Rembrandt was revealed to the public on the Botermarkt in Amsterdam. From then on, the differences between northern and southern Netherlandish art were emphasised strongly, while the artistic similarities, for instance those between Rubens and Rembrandt, received relatively little attention.

The following stereotypical contrast, initiated by authors such as Théophile Thoré-Bürger (1807–1869), became increasingly popular: in the south, monumental, Baroque art had been created for the Catholic church and for the court in Brussels, while the north had seen 'honest', 'bourgeois-realistic', intimate, small format paintings, which were bought by free but hard-working Protestant citizens.<sup>2</sup> This contrast has subsequently influenced distinct characterisations of Dutch and Belgian art deep into the twentieth century.

During the last two decades, a growing number of art historians—e.g. Hans Vlieghe, Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann, and Karoline de Clippel—have pointed out that this view is incorrect, and that the strong ties between northern and southern Netherlandish painting deserve far more attention.<sup>3</sup> Christopher Brown, on the other hand, has presented a dissenting view in his lecture 'The Dutchness of Dutch Art'.<sup>4</sup>

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Low Countries had been a patchwork of various sovereignties, only bound by their ties to the Burgundian-Habsburg rulers.

2 Bürger, I, pp. X–XI, 320–322. See Carasso, pp. 381–407; Jongh, pp. 197–206; Hecht, esp. p. 166.

3 DaCosta Kaufmann, esp. pp. 133–135; Clippel, pp. 390–405.

4 Brown.

The County of Flanders, the Duchy of Brabant, and the County of Holland were among the most important ones. The Burgundian-Habsburg rulers succeeded in setting up a process of legal integration, which resulted in a strong central government. Paradoxically, the various Netherlandish provinces only became more united in their opposition against the unpopular measures of the central government. This led to a certain awareness of a supra-regional entity, which initially had various names, but was often referred to as the Low Countries ('the Netherlands' or 'les Pays-Bas') from the end of the fifteenth century onwards.<sup>5</sup>

People from other parts of Europe must have struggled to understand the political situation with the continuously changing borders. They often called the entire Netherlands 'Flandria', which was based on the international reputation of that county in the late Middle Ages, when it had become particularly prosperous. Artists from the Netherlands were known as 'fiamminghi' in Italy. Giorgio Vasari, for example, used this term, sometimes even as a synonym for 'oltramontani'—to indicate artists from the entire area north of the Alps. He called Albrecht Dürer a 'fiammingho'.<sup>6</sup> Netherlandish artists also referred to themselves as 'fiamminghi' when they stayed in Italy.

Remarkably, even after the political separation of the seven northern from the ten southern provinces and the birth of the Republic of the United Netherlands during the Eighty Years War with Spain (1568–1648), hardly anyone—either in the Netherlands or abroad—made a clear distinction between northern and southern Netherlandish art. The artistic and cultural ties between north and south remained close, despite the political and economic separation.

Artists' biographers working in the tradition of Vasari, such as Karel van Mander in *Het leven der Doorluchtighe Nederlandtsche, en Hoogh-duytsche Schilders* (1604) and Arnold Houbraken in *De groote schouburgh der Nederlantsche konstschilders en schilderessen* (1718–1721), used the word 'Nederlands' in order to refer to both northern and southern Netherlandish artists.<sup>7</sup> They did not make a clear distinction between the artistic developments on either side of the border, and even included German artists. Samuel van Hoogstraten, however, in his *Inleyding tot de hooge schoole der schilderkonst* (1678), subdivided painters from 'ons Nederland' ('our Netherlands') into artists from Brabant on the one hand and Holland on the other.<sup>8</sup> Outside the Netherlands, in France, Italy, or Spain, artists from both the

5 Billen, pp. 48–52; Suykerbuyk, pp. 215–224.

6 Vasari, VII, p. 433: 'Alberto Duro fiammingo', VII, pp. 579–592: 'di diversi artefici fiamminghi'. See also DaCosta Kaufmann, p. 28.

7 Mander; Houbraken. For the geographical terms used by Van Mander, such as *Nederlandtsch*, *Nederduytsch* and *Hoog-duytsch*, see Miedema 2011. See also the essay by Osnabrugge in this edited collection.

8 Hoogstraten, pp. 256–257. See Carasso, p. 384.

northern and the southern Netherlands were generally still referred to as 'flamands', 'fiamminghi', or 'flamencos'.<sup>9</sup>

### School Classification

The *Abrégé de la vie des peintres* by Roger de Piles of 1699 has been of decisive importance because of the way in which he divided painting into six parts according to schools, which he associated with the principle of the 'goût de Nation' ('taste of the nation'): 'Et le goût de Nation, est une idée que les ouvrages qui se font ou qui se voient en un pais, forment dans l'esprit de ceux qui les habitent. Les differens goûts de nations se peuvent réduire à six, le goût Romain, le goût Venitien, le goût Lombard, le goût Allemand, le goût Flamand & le goût François (And the taste of the nation is an idea that the works which are made or are seen in a country develop in the spirit of those who live there. The different national tastes can be reduced to six: the Roman taste, the Venetian taste, the Lombard taste, the German taste, the Flemish taste, and the French taste).'<sup>10</sup>

This highly influential principle resulted in a classification of painters into national or regional schools. Such a classification was then adopted by later artists' biographers, including Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville, and must have had an impact on the presentation of art collections as well as on the structure of auction catalogues.<sup>11</sup>

Among painting collections, it is likely that this new type of organisation originated in France or the Holy Roman Empire, where rich, aristocratic collectors had often acquired large numbers of paintings from both northern and southern Europe. However, several collections of prints and drawings had already been systematically arranged according to schools or in a chronological order from a very early period; these collections may also have influenced the new emphasis on national taste.<sup>12</sup>

During the early eighteenth century, collections of paintings were not systematically arranged. Although famous picture galleries (for instance, in Vienna, Dresden, and Düsseldorf) presented as representative a survey of the art of painting as possible, initially they were not strictly divided into national or regional schools of painting or organised chronologically. Instead, there was a certain decorative system in which symmetry and the formats of the paintings played key roles.

9 DaCosta Kaufmann, p. 117; Newman.

10 Piles, pp. 538–545, esp. p. 541. See the essay by Vermeulen in this edited collection.

11 Dezallier 1745–1752, I, pp. XXIV–XXV. See also Maës, pp. 226–238; Vermeulen 2010a, pp. 108–109, 130–138. See the essay by Maës in this edited collection. For the origin and development of the idea of artistic schools, see DaCosta Kaufmann, pp. 17–42, esp. p. 30.

12 Plomp, pp. 72–81; Brakensiek; Vermeulen 2009–2010; Vermeulen 2010b.



This decorative system can be demonstrated by looking at a few designs for the arrangement of the walls of painting cabinets in the palace of the Elector Palatinate in Mannheim from 1731 (Fig. 60). In these rooms, northern and southern Netherlandish paintings dominated. Many of these works were of a rather small format and therefore perfectly suited to intimate rooms with a private or semi-private character. Italian paintings, on the other hand, often were larger and usually hung in larger, more ceremonial public spaces. However, there was definitely not a consistent division according to nation or school.<sup>13</sup>

It is still a matter of debate as to when and where the first attempts at an arrangement according to schools took place in picture galleries. Some scholars have pointed to the early reorganisations of the princely collections in Dresden, Salzdahlum, Potsdam, and Kassel.<sup>14</sup> Thomas Gaehtgens and Louis Marchesano have claimed that it was in Düsseldorf in 1763, when Karl Theodor, Elector Palatine (1724–1799), commissioned the artist Lambert Krahe (1712–1790) to rearrange the hanging of his collection.<sup>15</sup> Recently, it has been suggested that Philippe II, Duc d'Orléans (1674–1723), had already grouped the works in his collection in the Palais Royal in Paris by schools as early as the 1720s.<sup>16</sup>

Debora Meijers, on the other hand, has emphasised that contemporaries hardly considered rearrangements, such as the one in the Bildergalerie in Potsdam, to be innovative or important.<sup>17</sup> What they did recognise as new was the presentation of art collections in the Upper Belvedere Palace in Vienna in 1781, when the Kaiserliche königliche Bildergalerie was thoroughly reorganised by Christian von Mechel.

The catalogue of the the Kaiserliche königliche Bildergalerie explains how the collection was divided into three schools of painting: the Netherlandish, the German, and the Italian.<sup>18</sup> Rather than the place of birth of a painter, his style decided to which school he belonged. The Italian artists were divided into Venetians, Romans, Florentines, Bolognesi, and Lombards. Northern and southern Netherlandish painters were presented as a single school—the 'Niederländische Schule', or 'École flamande' according to the French version of the catalogue. Among the large number of rooms devoted to Netherlandish art, one room was exclusively hung

13 Korthals Altes 2003b; Baumstark. See also Wulff, esp. p. 237. Wulff claims that Johann Wilhelm II, Elector Palatine (1658–1716), already intended to arrange his collection according to artistic schools. However, this cannot be concluded on the basis of contemporaneous sources, such as Karsch.

14 Spenlé; Walz, esp. p. 129; Savoy 2015, p. 363; Lange.

15 Gaehtgens, pp. 4–5.

16 Schmid, p. 19. Cf. McClellan, pp. 30–42. According to McClellan, neither the collections of the Duc d'Orléans and Pierre Crozat nor the royal collection in the Luxembourg Gallery were arranged according to schools; instead, they presented a mixed display in which comparative viewing of paintings was encouraged.

17 Meijers 2015, pp. 135–152. See also Meijers 1991; Meijers 1992; Meijers 1993; Bergvelt 2005, pp. 273–282.

18 Mechel 1783; Mechel 1784.

with 'des tableaux du plus précieux fini de quelques Maîtres Hollandois, tels que les Mieris, Gérard Dou, Poelmbourg, Wouwermans, Berghem, Peter de Laer dit le Bamboche, Bonaventure Peeters, etc. (paintings of the most precious execution by some masters from Holland, such as Frans and Willem van Mieris, Gerard Dou, Cornelis van Poelenburch, Philips Wouwerman, Nicolaes Berchem, Pieter van Laer (called il Bamboccio), Bonaventure Peeters, etc)'.<sup>19</sup>

Mechel created a more or less chronological order in the Netherlandish and German schools on the second floor, as can be deduced from the terminology in the descriptions and floor plan of the catalogue: 'old' versus 'modern' or 'new' masters. Thus, the vast collection in Vienna offered an almost complete survey of the development of the history of European painting through a highly influential way of presenting art that had its roots in the ideas developed by De Piles and Dezallier.<sup>20</sup>

### School Classification and the Art Market

Having traced developments in art literature and collections of paintings, we now come to the following question: to what extent did the international art market contribute to the shaping of the concept of schools of painting? Could art dealers have had a commercial interest in such a classification system? Below, I will analyse and explain the introduction of the organisation according to schools into French and Dutch auction catalogues during the period 1740–1760.

Auction catalogues before 1740 do not follow any order whatsoever, be it alphabetical, geographical, or chronological. One of the first French catalogues to arrange paintings according to schools was compiled in 1756, for the sale of the prestigious collection of Marie-Joseph d'Hostun, Duc de Tallard (1683–1755).<sup>21</sup> The Italian school was subdivided into the Florentine, Sienese, Roman, and Venetian schools. Apart from the Italian school, there was the Netherlandish school (*école des Pais-Bas*), which included both northern and southern Netherlandish masters, but also Dürer; at the end of the catalogue, the French and Spanish schools were presented. A second innovative aspect of the catalogue was the fact that there was a more or less chronological order within the schools.

The structure of the Tallard auction catalogue does not reflect the way in which the paintings had actually been displayed in the collector's house. From a contemporaneous description by Antoine-Nicolas Dezallier d'Argenville (1723–1796), we can deduce that paintings from various schools were intermingled, possibly in order to facilitate

<sup>19</sup> Mechel 1784, p. XX. See Swoboda, I, pp. 254–259.

<sup>20</sup> Ultimately, this way of presenting art had its roots in Vasari's *Vite*. See Wellington Gahtan, p. 10.

<sup>21</sup> Pomian, pp. 139–168. For Tallard's collection, see Michel 2017.



comparison of the quality of paintings from various regions.<sup>22</sup> The walls were probably densely hung with paintings—as a kind of decorative and symmetrical mosaic.<sup>23</sup>

The introduction to the Tallard catalogue declared:

Les Tableaux des grands Maîtres d'Italie ont toujours été regardés comme les Chefs-d'oeuvres de l'art de la Peinture: ils sont les seuls qui puissent acquérir à un Cabinet l'estime des vrais Connoisseurs. C'est donc avec justice que la collection de feu Monsieur le Duc de Tallard tenoit le premier rang en France, après celles du Roi & de Monseigneur le Duc d'Orléans (The paintings of the great masters of Italy have always been considered as masterpieces of the art of painting; they are the only ones that can earn a *cabinet* the esteem of true connoisseurs. The collection of the late Duc de Tallard therefore rightly holds the first place in France, after those of the king and the Duc d'Orléans).<sup>24</sup>

The author of the catalogue, the art dealer Pierre Rémy, made it clear that he fully agreed with Tallard's preference for Italian paintings.<sup>25</sup> The duke had only bought the art of other countries if the artists had worked 'dans le genre noble & sublime (in the noble and sublime genre)'. These artists included Rubens, Anthony van Dyck, and 'autres Maîtres Flamands, qui par la noblesse de leurs compositions, & l'accord admirable de leur brillant coloris, méritent de figurer à côté des Ouvrages des premiers Maîtres de l'Art (other Flemish masters, who by the nobility of their compositions and the admirable harmony of their brilliant colors deserve to be placed beside the works of the best masters of art)'. According to Rémy, most northern and southern Netherlandish paintings were 'admirables à la vérité par la finesse de l'exécution, & le gracieux du coloris, mais dans la composition desquels l'esprit ne trouve point à s'occuper solidement, ils ne lui présentent que des beautés superficielles & momentanées (admirable in truth for the skill of their execution and the grace of their colors, but in their composition, there seems to be no spirit; they present only superficial and transitory beauties)'.<sup>26</sup>

Although a negative opinion of the subject matter of Netherlandish paintings was part of the traditional French criticism of the art of the Low Countries,<sup>26</sup> collectors still bought the paintings. As Rémy had to acknowledge, albeit reluctantly: 'Presque tous nos Cabinets ne sont présentement remplis que de ces petits Tableaux Flamands & Hollandois. [...] Mais ne craignons pas que ce goût de mode jette de plus fortes racines; il passera & fera place à un goût plus sur & plus épuré (Almost all of our

22 Dezaillier 1752, pp. 208–214.

23 For a similar display of the Jullienne collection (based on an album from c. 1756), see Vogtherr, p. 60.

24 Rémy.

25 For Rémy, see Marandet 2003.

26 Grijzenhout.

*cabinets* are currently filled only with these small Flemish and Dutch paintings. [...] But we should not fear that this fashionable taste will put down strong roots; it will pass and make room for a more durable and more refined taste.)'

From the early 1730s onwards, an increasing number of paintings by Netherlandish artists who had previously been nearly unknown in France were gradually being introduced into collections. This broadening of the canon was probably initiated and facilitated by art dealers who bought large quantities of paintings for the Parisian art market during their travels to the Low Countries.<sup>27</sup> Dealers must have realised that a market could be created for these unknown masters in France. They played a vital role in the dissemination of Netherlandish art. The classification of paintings according to schools in auction catalogues may have been part of a commercial strategy to emphasise and advertise the distinct characteristics of paintings by Netherlandish masters who were still relatively unknown in France.

### The Gerard Hoet Auction Catalogue

The first Dutch auction catalogue in which paintings were arranged according to schools was produced for the sale of the collection, or trading stock, of the Hague artist-art dealer Gerard Hoet; this collection was auctioned after his death in 1760.<sup>28</sup> Hoet had been an art dealer with an international clientele and had traded in a broad variety of schools. In order to obtain the highest quality, he had purchased paintings on various art markets: most of his northern Netherlandish paintings were bought in Amsterdam and The Hague, the majority of his southern Netherlandish paintings came from Antwerp, and his Italian art was from Paris.

Both the Dutch and French versions of Hoet's catalogue mention three categories: 'École italienne' / 'Italiaanse school' ('Italian school'), 'Maîtres allemans' / 'Hoogduitse meesters' ('German masters'), and 'Écoles flamande et hollandoise' / 'Nederlandse school' ('Flemish and Dutch schools' / 'Netherlandish school').<sup>29</sup> The structure of the Tallard catalogue had probably served as a model. It seems significant that Hoet had been well acquainted with the Tallard collection and its sale catalogue, structured by Rémy according to a system of schools. He had even attended the Tallard sale in Paris in 1756 and purchased a couple of paintings.

Another possible influence may have been the fact that quite a few earlier catalogues of prints and drawings had had a similar structure, such as the Pierre

27 Art dealers, such as Edme-François Gersaint, Ferdinand-Joseph Godefroid (before 1700–1741), and François-Louis Colins (1699–1760), frequently travelled to the Low Countries. See Duverger; Glorieux, pp. 281–288; Marandet 2008.

28 Hoet 1760; Hoet 1752–1770, III, pp. 222–236. For the art dealer Gerard Hoet, see Korthals Altes 2003a.

29 Hoet 1760.

Crozat catalogue of drawings, written by the Parisian connoisseur, collector, and dealer Pierre-Jean Mariette in 1741.<sup>30</sup> Apart from paintings, Hoet had also collected large numbers of drawings and prints, which he kept in albums and portfolios and classified according to schools (the Italian, French, and Netherlandish schools). He had even purchased drawings formerly in the possession of either Crozat or Tallard, and he had owned French auction catalogues and books, such as the Dutch translation of De Piles' *Abrégé de la vie des peintres*.<sup>31</sup>

### The Northern and Southern Netherlandish Schools: Together or Apart?

What is particularly interesting about the French version of Hoet's catalogue is the fact that Netherlandish art works were classified as the 'Écoles flamande et hollandoise', i.e. two separate but related schools, instead of one school.<sup>32</sup> In both the Dutch and the French versions, an attempt was made to group the paintings of the most important southern Netherlandish artists together, followed by the works of the most important northern Netherlandish masters—albeit in a somewhat tentative and not entirely systematic way.<sup>33</sup>

Many decades earlier, at the end of the seventeenth century, French authors of art literature, such as André Félibien and De Piles, had already mentioned regularly whether an artist was a 'peintre hollandais' ('Dutch painter') or a 'peintre flamand' ('Flemish painter'), but it seems they were not attentive to the possible artistic differences between northern and southern Netherlandish painting.<sup>34</sup> The geographical terminology used thus differs from our current notion of national schools. This can be demonstrated by analysing a document that mentions the most famous painters from 'Holland' and 'Brabant', the provinces constituting the political, economic, and cultural heart of the Dutch Republic and the Spanish-Austrian Netherlands respectively (Fig. 61).<sup>35</sup>

30 Mariette 1741. See also Mariette 1751: Mariette arranged the Crozat paintings according to schools. For the collection of Pierre Crozat and his nephew Joseph-Antoine Crozat, Marquis de Tugny (1696–1751), see Stuffmann; Michel 2007; Michel 2010; Ziskin.

31 The Crozat and Tallard provenances are specifically mentioned in Hoet 1760: see p. 172, cat. no. 40 for De Piles and p. 173, cat. no. 66 for a lot with French auction catalogues. For Gerard Hoet as a collector of drawings, see Plomp.

32 Mariette had used a tripartite classification in his catalogue of the Crozat drawings (Mariette 1741), p. 86: 'Écoles flamande, hollandoise et allemande'.

33 Hoet 1760, cat. nos. 1–21 (Italian school), cat. nos. 22–28 (German masters), cat. nos. 29–43, 66–80 (Southern Netherlandish), and cat. nos. 44–65 (Northern Netherlandish).

34 Félibien 1725, III, esp. pp. 291, 456–466; Piles, esp. pp. 409–456. See Teyssèdre, pp. 142, 151.

35 Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Geheimes Kabinett, loc. 379/11, 'Diverse Verzeichnisse', f. 239. See Korthals Altes 2003a, pp. 238–239.

163. 443

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Liste de plus fameuses peintres  
D'hollande et brabant 239

Flingerlands  
 miris le vieu  
 grad sou  
 Nesker  
 Breuges de velour  
 Poulembourgh  
 Scalek  
 Fhemiers  
 Rottenhamer  
 helshamer      Eyheimet  
 Rubbens  
 van dyck  
 morillo, D'Espaigne de ceville  
 Vanderveve peintre de Duc Palatin  
 Paulo Brit  
 Vanderveren      peintre de Duc palatin is est mort  
 brauer

61. Liste de plus fameux peintre D'hollande et brabant (List of the Most Famous Painters of Holland and Brabant), 1708, Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Dresden, Geheimes Kabinett, loc. 379/11, 'Diverse Verzeichnisse', fol. 239. © Sächsisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Dresden.

In October 1708, Augustus the Strong, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland (1670–1733), acquired eleven paintings from Mrs. Foulon in Brussels through an art dealer from Antwerp, François Lemmers. The documents concerning this purchase include a list drawn up by Lemmers. Remarkably, the list is not limited to northern and southern Netherlandish artists, but also mentions German painters, such as Adam Elsheimer (1578–1610) and Hans Rottenhammer (1564/65–1625), and even the Spanish Bartolomé Esteban Murillo ('from Seville'). The categories of 'Holland' and 'Brabant' clearly do not cover the diverse origins of painters on the list.

It is interesting to speculate about the reasons why these particular artists are mentioned here. Nearly all of them had painted expensive and highly fashionable small cabinet pieces, often in a precise and refined technique, with the exception of Rubens, Van Dyck, and Murillo, who usually worked on a larger format. Why Murillo is mentioned is an intriguing question. A possible explanation is the fact that the list was based on the presence of paintings by these masters in the Antwerp art market during those years.

One of the first French authors of art literature to make a stylistic distinction within the larger entity of the 'École flamande' between southern Netherlandish, northern Netherlandish, and German artists was Antoine Coypel. In his *Discours prononcez dans les conférences de l'Académie Royale de Peinture et de Sculpture* of 1721, Coypel tried to articulate the essence of each of the three groups in the following passage:

Imitez les grands Maîtres: [...] Dans les Flamans, Rubens, dont il faut cependant démêler ce que le goût & la nature de son pays luy ont pû donner de défectueux. Parmi les ouvrages des Hollandois, on trouvera dans les sujets les plus communs & même les plus bas, une vérité simple & naïve tres-estimable, comme dans Rimbrand, Girardou & plusieurs autres. Parmi les Allemands, vous trouverez encore dans Albert Dure le même naïf & le même vray dans les gestes: l'estime du Grand Raphael fait mieux son éloge que tout ce que j'en pourrois dire (Imitate the great masters: [...] Among the Flemish, Rubens, from whom however it is necessary to disentangle what the taste and nature of his country have been able to give him that is undesirable. Among the works of the Dutch, one will find in the subjects that are the most common and that are even the lowest a very praiseworthy simple and naïve truth, as in Rembrandt, Gerard Dou, and several others. Among the Germans, you will find again in Albrecht Dürer the same naivete and the same truth in the gestures: the respect for the Great Raphael gives him more praise than anything that I could say).<sup>36</sup>

36 Coypel, pp. 161–162. Cf. Dubos, pp. 64–67.

A few decades later, in the *Abrégé de la vie des plus fameux peintres* of 1745–1752, Dezallier subdivided his biographies of artists in the *École de Flandre* into four distinct but related groups: ‘Allemands et suisses (Germans and Swiss)’, ‘Hollandais (Dutch)’, ‘Flamands (Flemish)’, and even a small group of English artists—as the table of contents of his book shows.<sup>37</sup> Dezallier started his section on northern Netherlandish artists with Lucas van Leyden (c. 1494–1533) and ended it with contemporary masters, such as Jan van Huysum (1682–1749). In the next section of his book, he described the lives and works of southern Netherlandish artists in chronological order.

## Conclusion

Inspired by the writings of De Piles and Dezallier, and possibly also by the way in which collections of prints and drawings were organised, authors of auction catalogues such as Mariette and Rémy started to classify paintings according to national or regional schools. The Tallard catalogue from 1756 is a good example of the new trend. This approach was soon taken up in other countries, as the Dutch auction catalogue of the collection, or trading stock, of Gerard Hoet from 1760 shows.

The technique of subdivision into national or regional schools was also applied to eighteenth-century collections of paintings, especially in the Holy Roman Empire. This became the customary way of presenting art all over the world in the nineteenth century. Initially, Netherlandish painting was exhibited as a single school, despite the rise of patriotic sentiments in art literature in both the northern and southern Netherlands from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards.<sup>38</sup> It was only after the political separation of Belgium and the Netherlands in 1830 that this practice changed.

What is often overlooked, however, is the fact that long before 1830, French authors such as Coypel and Dezallier had already made a stylistic distinction within the larger entity of the Netherlandish school of painting, the ‘*École flamande*’: artists were separated into distinct but related groups (‘sub-schools’). Dezallier may have been inspired by the way in which the Italian school had been frequently structured into several regional schools. It may also be significant that he was a connoisseur and keen promoter of Netherlandish art. Perhaps he subdivided the Netherlandish

37 Dezallier 1745–1752, II, pp. III–V. See also Dezallier 1762. For Dezallier and Netherlandish art, see Carasso, p. 389; Cornelis 1995; Pommier, esp. p. 121; Cornelis 1998, esp. p. 155; Maës.

38 For the rise of patriotic sentiments in the art literature of the northern Netherlands during the second half of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century, see Knolle; Koolhaas-Grosfeld; Koolhaas, esp. p. 127; Bergvelt 1998. For the situation in the southern Netherlands, particularly the role of Mensaert 1763, see Loir; Suykerbuyk.

school in order to raise the status of the northern Netherlandish masters, many of whom were still little known in France at the time.

Dezallier's separation of northern and southern Netherlandish artists may have had an impact on the way in which auction catalogues were compiled, both in France and in the Netherlands. In the catalogue of the collection, or trading stock, of the art dealer Hoet, for example, Netherlandish art was classified as 'Écoles flamande et hollandoise', and an attempt was made to group the paintings of the most important southern Netherlandish artists together, followed by the works by the most important northern Netherlandish masters.<sup>39</sup>

Both Dutch and French art dealers had a commercial interest in expanding the canon of Netherlandish art in France. The subdivision of the 'École flamande' into the 'Écoles flamande et hollandoise' was probably part of a strategy to sell paintings by northern Netherlandish masters who were still relatively unknown in France at the time.

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39 Future research into a more substantial number of auction catalogues will hopefully corroborate these findings. See, for example, the auction catalogues for the collection of Johan van Schuylenburg (1675–1735), The Hague, 20 September 1735 (Lugt 453) and for the collection of Freiherr Ferdinand Wilhelm Adolf Franz von Plettenberg (1690–1737), Amsterdam, 2 April 1738 (Lugt 480). Both of these catalogues show a subdivision somewhat similar to that of Hoet's catalogue. Schuylenburg, cat. nos. 1–20 (Italian/French); 21–39 (southern Netherlandish); 40–62. Plettenberg, cat. nos. 1–35 (Italian); 36–52 (southern Netherlandish); 53–72 (northern Netherlandish), while cat. nos. 73–140 are a mix of paintings from various schools. See Hoet 1752–1770, I, pp. 403–458, 495–506. Cf. Jonckheere, p. 102, for his views on a hierarchy in the position of lots in auction catalogues: the most valuable lots were displayed in the first part of sale catalogues, while cheaper or lower-quality works were put at the end.

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## About the Author

**Everhard Korthals Altes** has been teaching art history at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Technology in Delft since 2005. His research focuses on the international dispersal of seventeenth-century Netherlandish painting in the eighteenth century.



# 16. The Print Collector Pieter Cornelis van Leyden (1717–1788): Art Literature, Concepts of School, and the Genesis of a Connoisseur

*Huigen Leeflang*

## Abstract

The Leiden patrician Pieter Cornelis van Leyden brought together one of the largest surviving eighteenth-century private print collections; much of its documentation is also extant. In 1807, the collection was sold to Louis Napoleon, King of Holland (1778–1846), and later it became the founding collection of the national Print Room of the Netherlands (Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum). My analysis of the organisation and documentation of Van Leyden's collection will focus on his so-called *Naemlijst*, an index of artists and art literature that he planned to publish in order to promote the collecting and study of prints. Intended to inform his readers about what he considered to be the essential texts on the subject, the document gives rare insight into the formation of a collector and his frame of reference.

**Keywords:** eighteenth-century Netherlands, print collection, print literature, historiography, Pieter Cornelis van Leyden

## ‘Very Strong in All Schools’

Pieter Cornelis van Leyden was born in 1717 into a leading patrician Leiden family.<sup>1</sup> He was raised and lived most of his life in one of the largest mansions in the city

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1. For the Van Leyden family and the history of the interior of Rapenburg 48, see Lunsingh Scheurleer, Vb, pp. 499–603; Prak. For Pieter Cornelis and his print collection, see Niemeijer 1983; Vermeulen 2010.

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on the Rapenburg canal. The only known likeness of him is in a group portrait painted in 1728 by the Leiden painter Willem van Mieris (1662–1747) and now at the Rijksmuseum. Here, he is the boy standing at the left with his hand on a book; also present are his father, mother, and two younger brothers (Fig. 62). On the table in front of the eleven-year-old boy are two bound sets of prints or print books. Pieter Cornelis probably started collecting prints from a very early age. When he married in 1742 at the age of 25, he already owned a ‘large collection of prints’, including works of ‘Italian, Dutch, and French masters’. His collection was valued at 1000 guilders and had an accompanying catalogue and a library.<sup>2</sup> In the following decades, he would assemble one of the most important private print collections of the period, containing more than 60,000 sheets stored in 215 portfolios, alongside about 172 *Galeriewerke* and other volumes with prints.<sup>3</sup> After his death in 1788, the print collection remained with the family to be sold almost twenty years later, in 1807, for 100,000 guilders to the young King of Holland, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, for the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (‘Royal Library’) in The Hague.<sup>4</sup> Thus, Van Leyden’s collection became the foundation for the national Print Room of the Netherlands, later renamed the Rijksprentenkabinet after its move to Amsterdam and incorporation into the Rijksmuseum.

Besides prints, Van Leyden also assembled a choice collection of 117 paintings, which was inherited and then sold by his son Diederik (1744–1810).<sup>5</sup> While Van Leyden’s print collection was wide-ranging and contained works from all major European schools, his picture gallery was essentially Dutch and consisted mainly of high-quality works with a focus on the second half of the seventeenth century. Documents preserved in the Rijksmuseum, the Regionaal Archief Leiden (‘Leiden Archive’), and elsewhere reveal that Van Leyden was in close contact with other private collectors, artists, dealers, and connoisseurs, such as Carl Heinrich von Heineken and Adam von Bartsch. During 1768, Heineken paid Van Leyden a three-day visit. In his travel accounts, he described Van Leyden’s collection as follows:

It is not only very strong in all schools, but the impressions are of extraordinary beauty, especially because he is very keen on first proofs. While I spent three days with him, I browsed through the Italian School and it greatly surprised me how he had brought together such a costly group of works by Marcantonio [Raimondi], not to mention those of other great and famous masters. Far strongest with him is the Netherlandish school [*Niederländische Schule*], while he owns the

2 Lunsingh Scheurleer, V1b, pp. 610–611, 644–646, 687–691, appendix V; Prak, pp. 220, 336, n. 112.

3 The number of portfolios is mentioned in the inventory in Brussels (KBR SI 789707), further discussed below. The number of prints is an estimate based on the same source.

4 Ham, pp. 36–58.

5 Lunsingh Scheurleer, Vb, pp. 519–531, 573–584, Appendix III; Eeghen; Spieth, pp. 86–95, 379.



62. Willem van Mieris, *Portrait of Diederik van Leyden with His Wife, Sophia Dina de Rovere, and Their Three Sons, Pieter Cornelis, Jan, and Adriaan Pompejus*, 1728, oil on canvas, 88 x 95 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. SK-A-4824. © Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



most beautiful and strongest collection of Rembrandt. His oeuvre of Berchem, of which ‘Heinrich Winter’ has published a catalogue, is no less renowned. It is to be desired that we could have similar works [catalogues] at our disposal of the rest of his collection.

Concluding, Heineken stated: ‘I have to admit that during all my travels I have never found a greater lover of art than “Herrn von Leyden”.’<sup>6</sup> Over the years, Van Leyden stayed in contact with Heineken, asking him for his publications and sending him information on Dutch printmakers.<sup>7</sup>

Sharing information—be it through visits, publications, sale catalogues, or handwritten lists—was crucial for print collectors to understand the complex and enormous amount of material with which they were dealing and, consequently, was essential for the development of print connoisseurship.<sup>8</sup> Although most of Van Leyden’s correspondence seems to be lost, we are exceptionally fortunate that not only almost his whole collection has been preserved, but that also large parts of its documentation, drawn up by the owner and his assistants, remain.<sup>9</sup> Among these documents are three extensive inventories of more than 1600 pages each; two of them are written in Dutch by clerks and then edited and supplemented by Van Leyden, while the third was in French and in the neat handwriting of the collector himself.<sup>10</sup>

These documents bear witness to the zeal and scholarly approach with which Van Leyden assembled and documented his collection. They show what literature he used to organise and catalogue his prints and how his taste and opinions on printmaking and print collecting developed. It is rare that one can ‘witness’ an eighteenth-century collector in action, studying, reading, and thinking. Especially significant is the so-called *Naemlijst* (‘List of Names’), an index of printmakers and

6 Heineken 1768–1769, II, pp. 59–60.

7 In their correspondence, the Amsterdam print dealer Pieter Yver acted as intermediary. BNF, Yc 263 Rés 19.

8 For this process, see, for example, Brakensiek, pp. 280–325; Griener, pp. 181–221; Guichard, pp. 93–132; Smentek, pp. 17–56; Kobi 2017; Kobi 2018.

9 So far, these documents have been little studied and used in scholarship on the history of the Amsterdam Rijksprentenkabinet. Vermeulen mentioned some of the manuscripts while discussing Van Leyden’s use of art literature. Her conclusions that the collector did not own a library and that no texts have been preserved in which he articulated his interest in art will be revised in this essay. Vermeulen 2010, p. 79, note 15.

10 The Dutch ‘inventory’ that is kept in the Rijksmuseum, in fact, consists of the lists that were placed at the beginning of each portfolio. The original inventory, in which often provenances and prices were recorded, was supposed to have been lost. Niemeijer 1978, pp. 8, 14, note 7. However, this manuscript of approximately 1600 pages has recently been found in the KBR, Brussels, KBR, SI 789707. I am grateful to the curator, Joris Van Grieken, for sharing his discovery and for his assistance in lending this important source to the Rijksmuseum for further research.

artists to which the collector systematically added references to relevant literature.<sup>11</sup> The *Naemlijst* thus provides a glimpse of Van Leyden's frames of reference and the ideas about prints and print collecting he gathered from previous and contemporaneous literature.<sup>12</sup> Some of these ideas will be discussed below, especially those that concern notions of schools and the organisation of the collection.

### **The *Naemlijst*: A Canon of Print Literature**

The portfolios in which Van Leyden stored his prints have not survived, but their content and organisation are described in detail in his inventories, often according to existing *catalogues raisonnés* or other literature. Most of the sources the collector used are carefully recorded in his *Naemlijst* (Fig. 63), the content of which he explained as: 'List of Names of the Italian, French, German, and Netherlandish Artists, Painters, and Engravers, of Whom the Prints are esteemed by Amateurs, with references to the Extracts where they are discussed by the Authors [...] Drawn up in order to inspire Pursuit.' The phrase 'to inspire pursuit' and an introductory 'Note to the Art-Loving Reader' suggest that Van Leyden planned to publish his manuscript and, by doing so, to promote the collecting and study of prints. Despite these initial intentions, Van Leyden unfortunately never published the document; it would have been a most welcome tool for contemporaneous and later print lovers.

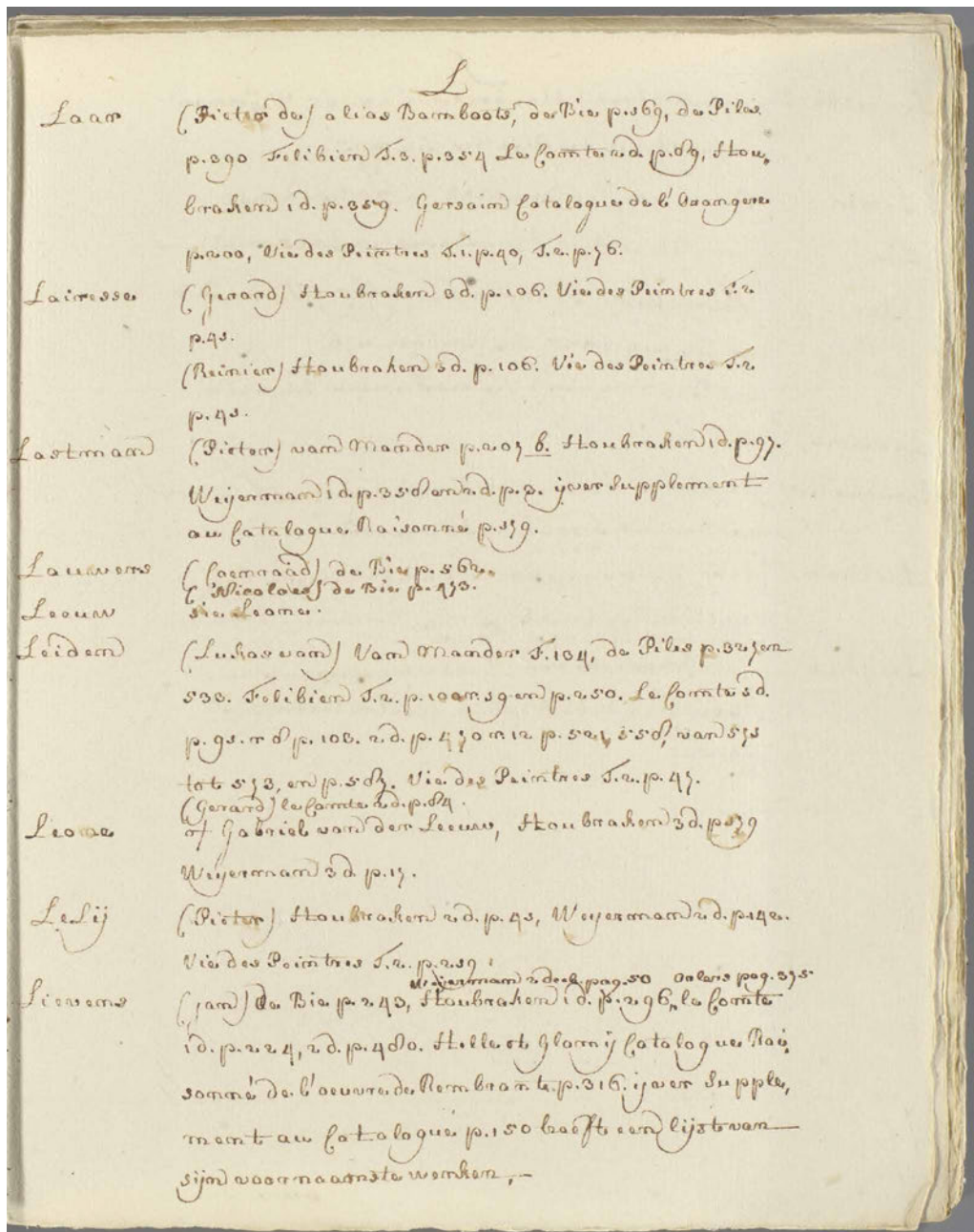
The *Naemlijst*, which lists publications dating from 1635 to 1757, contains most of the important literature on prints from that period. Van Leyden's manuscript not only refers to oeuvre catalogues of printmakers, but also to passages on the artists in other literature, such as treatises, compendia of artist biographies, and auction catalogues. For the prints by Cornelis Visscher (1628/29–1658), one is directed to the catalogue of Robert Hecquet (1751), while in the inventory, the prints by Visscher are numbered according to Pierre-François Basan's *Dictionnaire des graveurs anciens et modernes* (1767)—an indication that by then, Van Leyden had stopped keeping his *Naemlijst* up to date with his inventory.<sup>13</sup> However, he must have worked on it well into his 40s, and therefore, the document gives useful insight into Van Leyden's formation as a collector.

In his 'Note to the Art-Loving Reader', Van Leyden states, 'The more knowledge one has, the greater the pleasure from the pursuit of [collecting] art.' According to

<sup>11</sup> RPK, RP-D-2020-7, unpaginated.

<sup>12</sup> For a survey of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century literature on prints, see Griffiths, pp. 446–456; Brakensiek, pp. 280–325; Bartelings.

<sup>13</sup> Hecquet, pp. 21ff.; Basan, II, paginated separately at the end, pp. 17–52.



63. Pieter Cornelis van Leyden, 'Naemlijst', page with references to literature on Lucas van Leyden and others, c. 1745-1765, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, MS RP-D-2020-7. © Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

him, there are two types of knowledge of art. The first is essentially aesthetic and enables one to judge what is good and great in art. The other kind of knowledge is historical and factual and concerns information about the names and dates of artists, their masters, pupils, their works, and so forth. These two types of knowledge, according to the author, go together, one strengthening the other. For both, books are an important source, but especially for the second category (i.e. gaining knowledge through historical data), the *Naemlijst* is a key reference tool.

This distinction between two types of knowledge echoes the views on connoisseurship expressed by Roger de Piles in his chapter on judging paintings; Van Leyden often refers to the Dutch translation of De Piles' book.<sup>14</sup> De Piles discerns a third kind of knowledge, the ability to distinguish copies from originals, which he considers to be more relevant for paintings than for prints (of which copies can often be discerned more easily). De Piles' notion of connoisseurship reflects the early eighteenth-century trend in which an essentially aesthetic evaluation of artworks began to be superseded by a more fact-based assessment of art that allowed attributions to be made and substantiated. As Kryzstof Pomian has argued, this process was primarily driven by dealers and the art market.<sup>15</sup> Especially for paintings, a sound attribution to an important master could raise the price considerably above that of high-quality anonymous works. Generally speaking, during the first half of the eighteenth century, the aristocratic amateur made way for the well-informed dealer as the main authority on art. The example of Van Leyden shows that some patrician collectors also developed scholarly attitudes and communicated on equal footing with such well-informed dealers as Pieter Yver (1712–1787) and such professional connoisseurs as Heineken.

Van Leyden underscored his understanding of print connoisseurship in a note to the reader where he recommends specific sources he had gathered from the literature concerning the history, qualities, technique, and collecting of prints:

The origins of Printmaking are discussed by Florin Le Comte in the second volume and also how etchings are made. Concerning the merits and the use of Prints, the reader will be satisfied by what is written by Roger de Piles. And with regard to the choices one has to make while collecting Prints, the survey by Bernard Picart in his introduction to the Book *Impostures innocentes* is recommended and also what is written by Gersaint in his *Catalogue de La Roque*. The first to have written on Mezzotints is Director Vosmaer. A list of [illustrated] books on painting one finds with Le Comte.<sup>16</sup>

14 Piles, pp. 84–96.

15 Pomian, pp. 139–209.

16 RPK, RP-D-2020-7, unpaginated.

Since these texts were apparently of great significance to the collector, it is worth exploring the extent to which the ideas and opinions contained in them are reflected in the content, organisation, and documentation of Van Leyden's own collection.

## The Two Histories of Printmaking: South and North

The highly influential, three-volume *Cabinet des singularitez d'architecture, peinture, sculpture, et gravure* (1699–1700) by Florent Le Comte contains an incredible amount of information on prints and their makers, but the material is presented in a most confusing way.<sup>17</sup> One can thus understand Van Leyden's need to create an index to organise the scattered information in those volumes and other literature on which he depended.<sup>18</sup> Le Comte's discussion of the origins of printmaking, to which Van Leyden explicitly referred, begins with the Florentine silversmith Maso Finiguerra (1426–1464), who around 1460 would have been the first to make impressions of engravings in silver on paper.<sup>19</sup> His work was then surpassed by another Florentine silversmith, Baccio Baldini (1436?–1487) and in Rome by Andrea Mantegna, who had various of his works engraved by others. The newly invented art form would have moved from Italy to the north. This account is copied almost verbatim from De Piles, who, in his turn, briefly and freely summarised Giorgio Vasari's history of the invention and development of engraving in Florence, Italy, and beyond in his 'Life of Marcantonio Raimondi' (1470/82–1527/34).<sup>20</sup>

In other parts of his book, however, Le Comte ascribed the invention of printmaking and engraving to northern, so-called 'Gothic' masters. This, for example, is the case in his extensive guidelines for a print collection in his treatise; these guidelines were entitled 'Idée d'une belle bibliothèque d'estampes'.<sup>21</sup> Le Comte's guidelines are based almost verbatim on the description that Louis Odespung de la Meschinière (1597–1655) had made of his collection and had published 50 years earlier.<sup>22</sup> In the section 'Progrez des arts', the decline of art during the 'Gothic'

17 Brakensiek, pp. 280–288; Meyer 2012; Griffiths, p. 448. Griffiths rightly points to the fact that Le Comte copied most of his information from others and to the chaotic structure of his book. For a recent reevaluation, see Meyer 2017–2018.

18 The French edition of Le Comte has a useful table of contents. Comte 1699–1700. The indexes in the two Dutch editions are very rudimentary. Comte 1744–1745; Comte 1761.

19 Comte 1744–1745, I, pp. 468–469. For a historiography of early printmaking, see Griffiths, pp. 452–453. For the current state of scholarship on early printmaking in north and south, see Landau, pp. 33–102.

20 Piles, p. 70, and the chapter 'Vita di Marcantonio Bolognese e d'altri intagliatori di stampe' in the second edition (1568) of Vasari's *Vite*. Vasari 1966–1987, V, pp. 3–25.

21 For example, in his chapter on the 'General Principles of Engraving', in the descriptions of 'Gothic' masters preceding the charts illustrating their monograms and marks. Comte 1744–1745, I, pp. 119–135.

22 Meyer 2012; Meyer 2017–2018.

period is illustrated in two albums with early prints. One album contains woodcuts dating from the invention of printing onwards and showing the crudeness of the designs at that point. The other is devoted to the origins of engraving around 1490, with works of the first engravers, such as Israhel van Meckenem (c. 1440/45–1503) and Martin Schongauer—‘the teachers of Albrecht Dürer’. These works precede prints by Dürer, the main restorer of painting and engraving in Germany and the Netherlands. In the Dutch translation of *Le Comte* that Van Leyden used, and also in later Dutch editions, the whole ‘*Idée d’une belle bibliothèque d’estampes*’ was omitted. The publishers probably thought this text would be irrelevant for a Dutch audience, perhaps because of the French orientation of the extensive history section, or maybe because they expected that only very few of their readers would assemble such an extensive print collection. Van Leyden, of course, did compile a large collection, but one wonders whether—had he known about the organisation of Odespung and *Le Comte* according to an idea of progress in art—he would have adopted their approach.<sup>23</sup>

The arrangement of Van Leyden’s print collection, beginning with the Italian school, followed by the northern and French schools, was more hybrid and not based on a single concept, such as the progress of art. Although Van Leyden often maintained some chronological order, the Italian school did not start with the earliest works, but with portfolios of engravings by Raimondi, which Van Leyden—and Heineken during his aforementioned visit in 1768—regarded as highlights in his collection (Fig. 64). Despite the fact that most of Raimondi’s prints reproduce designs of Raphael and other painters, the engraver was given primacy in the arrangement of Van Leyden’s collection, following Heineken’s catalogue of 1778. The earliest Italian engravings in Van Leyden’s collection were stored in the seventh portfolio, which contained works by masters such as Benedetto Montagna (c. 1480–1556/8), Nicola da Modena (fl. c. 1500–1520), and Antonio Pollaiuolo (c. 1432–1498).

The primacy of the Italian school in Van Leyden’s organisation was no doubt prompted by the reputation of Italian art in general, but probably also because Van Leyden adhered to the Vasarian narrative of printmaking as an Italian invention. In a text entitled ‘*Premiers gravures Italien*’ and placed at the beginning of his inventory, Van Leyden summarised Vasari’s account of the origins of engraving, referring to the 1647 Italian edition of the *Vite* published in Bologna.<sup>24</sup> Furthermore he mentioned impressions of early Florentine engraved plates that were produced

23 *Comte* 1699–1700, I, Préface and pp. 2–3, 7–17. Vermeulen defined Van Leyden’s collection as a ‘Paper Museum’ illustrating the progress of art and argued that it resembled the organisation prescribed by *Le Comte* and *Dezallier d’Argenville*. Although developments in printmaking are closely intertwined with those in other forms of art, it will be argued here that Van Leyden collected prints primarily as works of art in their own right rather than as reproductions of painting and sculpture. Vermeulen 2010, pp. 80–81.

24 KBR, SI 789707, unpaginated; Vasari 1647–1663, II, p. 299.



64. Marcantonio Raimondi after Raphael, *The Massacre of the Innocents*, 1511–1512, engraving, 27.2 x 42.6 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. RP-P-OB-12.101. © Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

under Heineken's direction and that, according to the German connoisseur, could have been made by Finiguerra, the mysterious inventor of engraving mentioned by Vasari.<sup>25</sup> At the end of the text, written one or two years before his death, Van Leyden stated that he would be most interested to learn the opinion of other experts on this matter ('les sentiments des amateurs et connoisseurs').

Throughout his life, Van Leyden seems to have been intrigued by the origins and early history of printmaking. On various occasions, he contacted other collectors and connoisseurs about early prints. He asked Heineken for information ('notices ou catalogues') on old masters, such as Michael Wolgemut (1434/7–1519) and Jan Walter van Assen (i.e. Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostanen (c. 1472/77–1533)), and on early engravings of which he sent him drawn copies.<sup>26</sup> According to Heineken, a *Rest on the Flight to Egypt*, monogrammed BM, was from the hand of the fifteenth-century Vicentine engraver Benedetto Montagna, who is often confused with Mantegna and by some Frenchmen even with 'Beau Martin', their name for 'Martin Schoen' (Martin Schongauer). The engraving is now considered to have been made by a German engraver from the circle of Schongauer.

It is unclear why Van Leyden adhered to Vasari's narrative and did not adopt the more recent speculation by Odespung, Le Comte, and Heineken that printmaking had been invented in the north. Was it the greater age and authority of Vasari's text? Or the fact that no northern print carried a date prior to 1460, the year mentioned by Vasari?<sup>27</sup> Or was there something else at play? Van Leyden assembled a considerable group of fifteenth-century northern engravings by early engravers. Most famous now is the magnificent ensemble of 80 delicate prints in dry point by the so-called Housebook Master or Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, of which the Amsterdam Rijksprentenkabinet, thanks to Van Leyden, holds the largest collection (Fig. 65).<sup>28</sup> It is unlikely that Heineken saw these prints during his visit in 1768, since he would certainly have referred to them in his writings on early printmaking. Probably Van Leyden acquired this group of prints only later.

Shortly after the publication of Heineken's *Idée générale d'une collection complete d'estampes* (1771), Van Leyden, via Yver, urged Heineken to send him a copy.<sup>29</sup> In his letter to Heineken, Yver refers to differences of opinion between the German scholar and the Dutch collector, despite the great esteem in which they held each other.

25 For the facsimiles, see Metze, pp. 58–59.

26 BNF, Yc 263 Rés 19 (24-10-1782); RPK, RP-D-2020-11 (7-5-1786); Vermeulen 2010, pp. 88–89.

27 An exception is a print mentioned in an article that Van Leyden copied: 'Remarque sur une gravure curieuse de 1384', published in the *Journal Encyclopédique* (1783) and discussing a woodcut allegedly printed in 1384. Vermeulen 2010, pp. 89–91, fig. 5.

28 These and other fifteenth-century, anonymous intaglio prints were stored at the beginning of the northern school in Portfolio 20 ('Portfeuille 20. Onbekende meesters Kopersné'). Filedt Kok.

29 BNF, Yc 263 Rés 19 (23-10-1771).





65. Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, *Card Players*, c. 1485, dry point, 13.1 x 12 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. RP-P-OB-937. © Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Did their disagreement perhaps concern their different views on early engraving and the origins of printmaking? In his *Idée*, Heineken presented a comprehensive history of early engraving and woodcuts, in which he accorded the origin of both printmaking techniques to fifteenth-century German masters. Furthermore, he ascribed the invention of printed books with moveable type to Johannes Gutenberg (1394/99–1468) from Mainz, refuting Dutch scholars who claimed the invention for Laurens Jansz. Coster (c. 1370–1440) from Haarlem.<sup>30</sup> The most prominent advocate for the Coster claim and Heineken's main target was the bibliophile Gerard Meerman (1722–1771) from Leiden, a close relative and contact of Van Leyden.<sup>31</sup> It could very well be that Van Leyden was not convinced by Heineken's assignment of both inventions to Germans, which deprived the Dutch of the invention of book printing and the Italians of that of engraving.

### On the Use and Organisation of Prints

Apart from the origins of engraving, Van Leyden recommended Le Comte's book for its account of the technique of etching; Le Comte provided a detailed description based largely on the seventeenth-century treatise by Abraham Bosse.<sup>32</sup> Another aspect of Le Comte's writings singled out by Van Leyden was 'his list with books dealing with painting'.<sup>33</sup> Here, Van Leyden was referring to a section in Le Comte's chapter on engraving, where he listed books or treatises lavishly illustrated with prints, such as those on painting by Leonardo da Vinci, by Dürer on proportion and geometry, and other literature on art and architecture, as well as *Galleriewerke*, many of which Van Leyden himself owned.<sup>34</sup> However, other types of illustrated works mentioned by Le Comte, including books on botany, costumes, princely ceremonies, battles, and other historical subjects, fell outside the scope of Van Leyden's print collection.

Among the references in the *Naemlijst*, there are no specific texts devoted to the organisation of print collections. However, for 'the merits and use of prints', Van Leyden referred to the chapter on this topic in the Dutch edition of De Piles' *Abrégé de la vie des peintres* (1725).<sup>35</sup> Images, according to De Piles, who followed

30 Heineken 1771, pp. 196–206, 278–285; Pfeifer-Helke; Vermeulen 2020, pp. 308–313.

31 Van Leyden's grandmother, Dina Meerman, as well as his mother-in-law, Françoise Magaretha Meerman, were members of this family. Prak, pp. 396–397, 402–403.

32 Comte 1744–1745, II, pp. 481–486; Meyer 2017–2018, p. 52, note 58.

33 Comte 1744–1745, II, pp. 530–533.

34 172 bound volumes and books with prints are listed in a manuscript that is included in a report drawn up in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague in 1808. RPK, RP-D-1980-12.

35 Piles, pp. 69–84.

Horace in his account, are gathered, processed, and recollected more easily and more efficiently than passages of text. The invention of printmaking made it possible to produce images of almost any subject for all kinds of users, from theologians to geographers, and from artists to historians, to name only a few of the many consumers and subjects listed by De Piles. The author noted six main benefits of prints. Five of them have to do with the capacity of prints to instruct viewers and to transfer and record information. Only the sixth benefit concerns the vital role of prints in conveying knowledge about the visual arts, which, according to De Piles, was indispensable for a gentleman. He then briefly summarised the schools and artists usually collected by connoisseurs and art lovers, identifying the Roman, Venetian, Parmese, and Bolognese schools from Italy, as well as those from Germany, the Netherlands, France, and other countries.<sup>36</sup> However, he deliberately refrained from prescribing the content or organisation of a print collection, since all art lovers would have their own ideas and each collector should feel free to arrange his collection according to his personal taste and preference.

Similar guidelines were given by Edme-François Gersaint in the essay in his *Catalogue [...] de feu M. Quentin de Lorangère* (1744), which also appears on Van Leyden's list. Before giving an example of the most common and natural organisation of a complete cabinet ('l'usage le plus suivi & l'ordre le plus naturel')—albums arranged by artist and school—Gersaint stated that there was no fixed approach to arranging prints and everyone should do what was personally most practical and agreeable.<sup>37</sup>

Gersaint's arrangement by school roughly coincides with that of Van Leyden. The latter's portfolios were organised according to three major schools. Van Leyden provided his desktop inventory with the title: *Catalogus d'un rare et précieux cabinet d'estampes des plus fameux, maitres italiens, françois et hollandois, toutes des premiers epreuves et des mieux conservees, recueillies en plusieurs Annes par P.C. van Leyden, seigneur de Vlaardinghe etc.* The assertion that the collection contained only the best-preserved, early impressions may be an exaggeration, but the overall quality of the prints is indeed exceptionally high. Although Van Leyden's title page suggests otherwise, the French works followed those by northern masters in the following pages. In the French catalogue, northerners were described as 'Peintres et Graveurs de l'Ecole Flamande, et Hollandoise (Painters and Engravers of the Flemish School, and of the Dutch)', while in the Dutch version only the term 'Hollandsche school (Dutch school)' is used, even though this section also included the oeuvres of such German masters as Dürer and Johann Wilhelm Baur.<sup>38</sup> Only in the title of his

36 The division is basically the same as in De Piles' chapters on painting, which are organised according to school and *goût de nations*, which is discussed by Vermeulen in this edited collection.

37 Gersaint 1744, pp. 46–47.

38 Thus, even within one collection, various criteria for the 'same' school could be in use. For the distinction between the Dutch and Flemish schools, see the essay by Korthals Altes in this edited collection.

*Naemlijst* did Van Leyden explicitly distinguish German from Netherlandish artists (*Hoogduijtsche en Nederlantse Consteners, Schilders en Plaetsnijders*).

Not only is his terminology undogmatic, so too was the arrangement of his collection. Portfolios were organised by artist, according to both printmakers, such as Raimondi, and painters. For example, three portfolios were dedicated to Titian, one with prints by Italian engravers after his designs, one by Netherlandish and French engravers ('d'Après Titien, par des graveurs Hollandois et Francais'), and one with landscapes, woodcuts, and chiaroscuro woodcuts by and after Titian. Within a group of prints centred around a single artist, then, Van Leyden's arrangement took into account geography, chronology (unlike the contemporary Italian prints, the French, Netherlandish, and German prints after Titian dated mainly from the seventeenth century), technique, and the distinction between reproductive and autograph prints.<sup>39</sup> School, chronology, and oeuvre are thus rather complex concepts within Van Leyden's collection. Alongside this arrangement by school and artist, one finds portfolios dedicated to specific topics, such as ornament, landscape, animals, genre scenes, portraits, and subjects from Dutch history. A curious anomaly was a lot of four albums with prints and three scrolls containing 'Chinese' paintings.<sup>40</sup>

The portfolios of Dutch, Flemish, and German works end chronologically with prints by contemporary Dutch artists. Interestingly, prints by eighteenth-century French, German, and English masters were stored together. The criterion of contemporary European prints other than those of Dutch artists seems to have been the determining factor here. A reason for grouping these works together might have been the mobility of many contemporary European printmakers. Johann Georg Wille, for example, was German by birth but worked in Paris. Van Leyden corresponded with him, asking him for proof impressions, which the artist did eventually send.<sup>41</sup>

## What to Collect?

Regarding the choices one has to make while collecting prints, Van Leyden directed the reader to the introduction by Bernard Picart in his *Impostures innocentes* ('Innocent Deceits', 1734) and to that of Gersaint in his *Catalogue [...] de feu M. Chevalier*

39 Although Titian did not make prints himself the Dutch catalogue refers to some of the woodcuts as autograph works by Titian ('Titiaan, Landschappen en Houtsné, door en na Titiaan'). For example, Le Comte also regarded the large woodcut frieze entitled *The Triumph of Faith* as a work by Titian. Comte 1744–1745, I, pp. 375–376.

40 So far, only one Chinese work from Van Leyden's collection could be traced: a large Suzhou woodcut, *Two soldiers and a Phoenix*, dating from the seventeenth century (RP-P-OB-75.554).

41 Fuhring.

*de La Roque* (1745). Picart worked as an engraver in Paris and Antwerp and settled in 1710 in Amsterdam.<sup>42</sup> Interestingly, Gersaint described Picart as a French engraver who had adjusted himself completely to the Dutch taste for highly finished, detailed works after his move to Amsterdam ('à plaire à une Nation qu'il avoit choisie pour sa demeure & connoissant la passion qu'elle a pour les choses terminées & faites avec patience').<sup>43</sup> Picart's *Impostures innocentes*, which was published one year after his death by his widow, contains mainly his delicate prints after Italian and French drawings from various private collections and from drawings by Rembrandt.<sup>44</sup> In his introduction, Picart countered three misconceptions held by print connoisseurs. The first was that these experts thought they could easily discern prints made by artists themselves and those that had been made by others after an artist's design. The second was the assumption that professional engravers could never achieve the 'gout pittoresque' ('painterly taste or spirit') that characterised the work of painters or printmakers working after their own design. The third misconception was that the designs by Raphael and other, older masters had been done justice only by engravers from their own period, and that more recent or modern versions lacked the required 'gout du temps' ('taste of the time'). Here as well, then, the 'taste of a nation' is at stake (engravers working directly after designs by Raphael were Italian), as is also the taste of the time, at least in the eyes of the biased connoisseurs whom Picart criticised. In his view, the engravings by Raimondi and Agostino Veneziano (c. 1490–1540) *cum suis*, did no justice to Raphael's inventions because of their straightforward and dry technique. Picart furthermore derided the obsessive and costly pursuit of old master prints. Although Van Leyden recommended Picart's text, one wonders if he actually agreed with every aspect of it. His collecting of old master prints can only be characterised as frenzied. However, he certainly did not look down upon contemporary prints and avidly purchased them.

The introduction by Gersaint in the auction catalogue (1745) of the estate of M. Chevalier de La Roque (1672–1744), which Van Leyden also recommended, is a lengthy apology for collecting on the highest level, seeking out only the very best, early impressions and proofs. The attitude and collecting practices preferred are precisely the ones scorned by Picart. According to Gersaint, one becomes 'curieux d'estampes ('a connoisseur of prints') for two reasons. One can collect prints for their taste, elegance, the genius of their composition, and the variety of their subject matter. Or one collects to admire the 'spirit' in the handling of the needle in etchings ('l'esprit de la pointe'), or in engravings, the beauty and strength

42 On Picart see Hunt.

43 Gersaint 1744, pp. 163–164.

44 Picart. On the *Impostures innocentes*, see Bartelings, pp. 48–51; Griffiths, pp. 482–483; Jensen Adams; Marchesano.



66. James McArdell after Anthony van Dyck, *Time Clipping the Wings of Cupid*, c. 1750, mezzotint proof, 50.4 x 35.2 cm, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. RP-P-OB-32.590. © Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

of the burin cuts. Collectors who seek mainly variety are easy to please, since they are less scrupulous regarding the quality of impressions. For the real 'Amateurs de l'art de gravûre (Amateurs of the Art of Engraving)', on the other hand, quality is far more important than quantity, and the 'connoisseur délicat (refined connoisseur)' is satisfied only with impeccable impressions. What distinguishes perfect, early impressions from lesser ones is discussed by Gersaint at great length.

Gersaint's selection of prints and printmakers represents a similarly broad, international taste for quality prints to that espoused by Van Leyden; the interests of both men ranged from Italian Renaissance, French, and Netherlandish prints of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to Dutch and English mezzotints and eighteenth-century French and German etchings. But what they specifically had in common were their high standards and discerning eye for early impressions and proofs. Van Leyden must have recognised himself in Gersaint's description of the 'curieux délicat' who wished to possess prints only in their finest form ('dans la pureté de ses premières epreuves'). At the same time, he agreed with Picart and his endorsement of high-quality prints reproducing other artworks. His preference for proof impressions is also apparent here. Prints that later would often be regarded merely as reproductive were collected by Van Leyden in various states. Dutch and English mezzotints, for example, are represented by regular impressions with the text and by proof states or impressions in different coloured ink (Fig. 66). This shows that Van Leyden appreciated these works not only as reproductions of paintings by, for instance, Peter Paul Rubens or Anthony van Dyck, but as works of art in their own right, displaying the skills of their makers—especially in proof impressions. His collection and his records, such as his *Naemlijst*, show that Van Leyden collected prints primarily for their own sake rather than, for example, as documentation of the history of painting or out of historical interest, although those objectives, judging from his inventories, were sometimes also at play. Ultimately his collection and his writings reveal that first and foremost, he considered printmaking as an art form in its own right, with its own history, merits, aesthetics, values, and expertise.

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### **About the Author**

**Huigen Leeflang** is Curator of Prints at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. He has published on prints and drawings, including, for example, scholarly exhibition catalogues on Hendrick Goltzius (2003–2004) and Hercules Segers (2016–2017). At present, in collaboration with the Vrije Universiteit, he is studying the founding collection of the Amsterdam Rijksprentenkabinet, formed by Pieter Cornelis van Leyden (1717–1788).

# 17. The Problem of European Painting Schools in the Context of the Russian Enlightenment: Alexander Stroganoff (1733–1811) and His *Catalogue* (1793, 1800, 1807)

*Irina Emelianova*

## Abstract

The *Catalogue raisonné des tableaux* compiled by Count Alexander Stroganoff at the turn of the nineteenth century is the sole example of a printed catalogue of a private Russian painting collection. The publication of this catalogue has become a crucial event in Russian culture. Stroganoff was not only a prominent representative of the Russian Enlightenment, but also the president of the Imperial Academy of Arts in Saint Petersburg. His particular interest in national European painting schools coincided with the formation of art history in Russia and a time when the country was trying to form its artistic identity and to establish the Russian painting school.

**Keywords:** art collecting, art catalogues, painting schools, Russian art

The question of artistic self-identification and of the formation of a national school has been pertinent to the study of Russian art history since the eighteenth century. In this regard, Rosalind P. Blakesley has noted:

In the first half of the eighteenth century, there was no such thing as a Russian school of painting. Growing numbers of painters were apprenticed to foreign artists and undertook commissions for the court and its satellites, but there was nowhere for them to acquire a comprehensive training. [...] By the 1870s,

however, cultural commentators in Russia largely agreed that a national school of painting had appeared.<sup>1</sup>

Such a period of prominence encompassed the foundation of the Russian Academy of Arts in Saint Petersburg (1757), and the establishment of the Gallery of Artworks of the Russian School at the Hermitage (1825) required the participation of a number of individuals. During these years, and throughout the process of the establishment of the Russian painting school, the role of Count Alexander Stroganoff as the president of the Academy of Arts (1800–1811) was significant. He belonged to a distinguished family of Russian industrialists, landowners, politicians, and patrons of the arts. One of the wealthiest men of his time, he contributed to the spread of Enlightenment cultural models, with which he was conversant, in Russia. Furthermore, among the nobility, he owned the most significant private art collection in Russia.

In this essay, I will explore Stroganoff's activities as an art collector, connoisseur, and statesman. My intention is to highlight the extent to which Stroganoff influenced the shaping of the idea of a Russian school of art. Analysis of the catalogue of his collection is important because it is a unique Russian art text of the period, and Stroganoff as its author, following European models, was interested in the classification of painting schools.

Many Russian Enlightenment art lovers of the eighteenth century sought to record their interpretations of Italian painting,<sup>2</sup> for example in their correspondence, but only Stroganoff attempted to make a catalogue of a personal collection, and he organised his catalogue according to different art schools. My essay is the first attempt to analyse the role of Stroganoff's *Catalogue* in the development of the idea of a Russian school of art. As Rosalind P. Blakesley claims: 'Count Aleksandr Stroganov [...] lobbied hard on behalf of Russian artists from the moment he was installed as president in 1800',<sup>3</sup> and his catalogue reflects the intention to introduce Russian painters into a recognised circle of European artists. Consequently, Stroganoff's text is an important step toward the establishment of the notion of a Russian school of art—a notion that was in fact already emerging. Furthermore, Stroganoff himself was a protagonist in this process.

Art historians in Russia have been interested in the Russian school and its formation since the 1980s. One of the first to study this period was Olga Mikac<sup>4</sup>

1 Blakesley, p. I.

2 Savinskaja 1995.

3 Blakesley, p. 55.

4 Mikac 1981.

of the Hermitage in Saint Petersburg, but a number of unanswered questions still remain. Study of Russian private collections has also grown apace from the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s. Previously, these topics had been considered from a political and ideological standpoint. Groundbreaking research into the Stroganoff art collection has been carried out by Ljubov' Savinskaja of the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow.<sup>5</sup> Further important facts about Stroganoff as an art collector can also be found in texts by Militsa Korshunova, Konstantin Malinovskij, and Susanne Jaeger.<sup>6</sup>

Following the October Revolution of 1917 and the nationalisation of the Stroganoff patrimony, the Stroganoff collection was put up for auction in 1931.<sup>7</sup> Some paintings were sent to the Hermitage and the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, but the whereabouts of certain pieces in his collection remain unknown to this day.

### Collecting Netherlandish Art in a European Perspective

Stroganoff first travelled to Europe around 1752. Korshunova describes his first journey and motivations:

As it soon became clear that Stroganoff the younger had no inclination for the military service that was expected of all Russian noblemen, his father sent him to complete his education in Europe. [...] He visited Narva, Riga, and Danzig but stayed longest in Berlin [...]. He examined the picture gallery, the cabinet of curiosities, and the library, and he spent time in both Potsdam and Sans Souci. Then Alexander stayed two years in Geneva, the center of European scholarly life at the time, studying history, military fortifications, architecture, logic, Latin, and Italian (he had already learned French and German at home).<sup>8</sup>

During his stay in Geneva, Stroganoff became acquainted with Voltaire, who gave him some of his manuscripts as a gift. It should be noted that many years later, in 1800, Stroganoff would become director of the Imperial Public Library in Saint Petersburg.

In 1754, the future count (he acquired the title in 1761) set off on a journey through Italy and visited Turin, Milan, and Venice, attracted by their palaces, libraries, and

5 Savinskaja 1990; Savinskaja 1995; Savinskaja 2006.

6 Korshunova; Malinovskij; Jaeger.

7 Schmidt.

8 Korshunova, p. 77.

picture galleries. Here, he became acquainted with various artists, including the French painter Hubert Robert (1733–1808), who was a close friend for many years. Stroganoff also began to purchase rare works of art, along with antiques. One of the first significant paintings to enter his collection was purchased in Venice in 1755: an oil sketch by Correggio for the artist's *Holy Night*, now in Dresden. Stroganoff later referred to this sketch when writing to his father: 'Here, an opportunity has been put my way to buy a painting by the famous Correggio, and I have already sent it to you. As we have no or very few such items, I ask you humbly to take good care of it.'<sup>9</sup> Korshunova continues:

From Italy Stroganoff's path led to Paris, where he not only viewed monuments and attended lectures but also toured workshops and factories, familiarizing himself with modern means of production. [...] Then young Alexander set out for Holland, learning *en route* about the untimely death of his father, on 30 September 1756. At the insistence of Empress Elizabeth Petrovna, who took the most active interest in his destiny, Alexander returned to Saint Petersburg in July 1757.<sup>10</sup>

Stroganoff was sent from Paris to Holland by his father, Baron Sergey Stroganoff (1707–1756). In his letters, published by Susanne Jaeger,<sup>11</sup> we read that Stroganoff visited Holland and then returned to Russia. Unfortunately, we do not know exactly which Dutch cities and places he had time to visit before his return to Saint Petersburg.

Back in Russia, Stroganoff became interested in the activities of the Saint Petersburg Academy of Arts through his friends Ivan Shuvalov (1727–1797), its founder and its first president, and Ivan Betskoy (1704–1795), its second president. He became an honorary member.<sup>12</sup> Shuvalov, in the proposal to found an art academy that he submitted to the Russian Senate in 1757, highlighted that the fruits of the academy would enhance the glory of the empire and would be to its great benefit.<sup>13</sup> After becoming president himself, Stroganoff continued Shuvalov's efforts to shape the idea of a Russian school of art and to promote the education of Russian artists.

9 'Я здесь нашол случай купить славнаго Кореджию (Correggio) картину и уже к вамъ оную послал. Что у нас ей подобных или нету, или очень мало, которую нижайше прошу очень беречь', in a letter of A. Stroganoff to his father, 17 January 1755. Quotation in accordance with Jaeger, p. 465 (trans. from Russian by myself).

10 Korshunova, pp. 77–78.

11 Jaeger, pp. 417–495.

12 Kouznie'tsov, p. 57.

13 Bartenev, p. 34.

During his second journey in Europe, from 1771 to 1778, the count lived in Paris for several years. Stroganoff became acquainted with Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville and other art connoisseurs. During his time in the French capital, he continued to purchase further pieces of art for his collection. He also met many famous artists, such as Jean-Baptiste Greuze and Madame Vigée Le Brun (1755–1842). The count became a member of several Masonic lodges and encountered Denis Diderot.<sup>14</sup> In addition, his interest in sculpture started during this period; he purchased or commissioned a variety of works. The sculptor Jean-Antoine Houdon (1741–1828) made portrait sculptures of Voltaire, Diderot, Jean le Rond d'Alembert, and Leonhard Euler (1707–1783) for Stroganoff, and Jean-Pierre-Antoine Tassaert (1727–1788) created the statue of Catherine II, Empress of Russia (1729–1796), as Minerva, protectress of the arts, for him.<sup>15</sup>

While the count bought mostly paintings by the Italian masters during his first European journey, he visited during his second journey many auctions displaying numerous works of art, where he bought, also thanks to the mediation of the artist and art dealer Vincent Donjeux (?–1793), mostly canvases by Flemish and Dutch painters from the famous Parisian collections of Jacques-Philippe de Choiseul (1727–1789), Louis-François de Bourbon (1717–1776), Paul Randon de Boisset (1708–1776), Augustin Blondel de Gagny (1695–1776), and Pierre-Jean Mariette.<sup>16</sup>

By the end of the eighteenth century, almost half of Stroganoff's collection consisted of works by Flemish and Dutch painters, and about a third were paintings by Italian artists. The remaining pieces were canvases by French and Spanish artists.<sup>17</sup> We have evidence that Stroganoff returned to Saint Petersburg with a small, but exquisite collection of about 20 paintings of old masters from the Low Countries, such as Gerard de Lairesse, Anthony van Dyck, Peter Paul Rubens, and Rembrandt.<sup>18</sup> In addition, we know that the count possessed a landscape by Jan-Baptist Weenix (1621–1660/61), a canvas depicting fishermen by David Teniers the Younger (1610–1690) and Adriaen van de Velde's (1636–1672) *Voyagers* painting from the collection of Blondel de Gagny.<sup>19</sup> Stroganoff's collection also included the canvas of *The Adoration of the Magi* by De Lairesse from the collection of Randon de Boisset and the *Portrait of Nicolaas Rockox* (1560–1640) as well as the *Portrait*

14 In Stroganoff's *Catalogue raisonné des tableaux*, there are quotations from Diderot connected with individual artists, such as Joseph Vernet (1714–1789).

15 Cf. Korshunova, pp. 77–78.

16 Malinovskij, p. 300.

17 Cf. Malinovskij, p. 301.

18 Malinovskij, p. 301.

19 Jaeger, pp. 321, 324, 328.



of the *Princess of Orange with Her Children* by Van Dyck, both originating from Mariette's collection.<sup>20</sup>

Stroganoff owned paintings considered necessary for any serious art collector,<sup>21</sup> including works by Rubens and Rembrandt. In general, his purchases were in keeping with the artistic taste of other art collectors during the second half of the eighteenth century. At the same time, as we shall see, the collection became dominated by artists from the Low Countries. In this respect, it was not too different from that of another Russian art collector of the same period: Prince Dmitry Golitsyn (1721–1793), the Russian ambassador in Paris and later in Vienna.<sup>22</sup>

Everhard Korthals Altes, in his seminal article on Stroganoff as a collector of Dutch art, wrote that the Stroganoff catalogue 'offers an extraordinarily picture of European taste in the second half of the eighteenth century. The content of his collection of Dutch seventeenth-century paintings was not unique, but representative: the works in his collection were all by artists who had already won the hearts of many other collectors.'<sup>23</sup> Korthals Altes also argued:

Until well into the nineteenth century, the art of the Italian High Renaissance continued to be most highly regarded virtually everywhere in Europe, with the works of Raphael seen as representing the undisputed peak of achievement. As time went on, however, the art of the Low Countries gradually gained ground. There was a growing appreciation not only of paintings by Southern-Netherlandish masters such as Rubens and Van Dyck, but also of the work of their counterparts in the Northern Netherlands (the Dutch Republic). Indeed, over the course of the eighteenth century the art of the Dutch Golden Age won the hearts of innumerable collectors in Germany, France, Britain, and even Russia.<sup>24</sup>

Irina Sokolova notes: 'The taste for the Dutch masters [...] had emerged in the second quarter of the eighteenth century and gained momentum over the next hundred years. It was Comtesse de Verrue (1670–1736), a celebrated trendsetter, who started the fashion for the northern school. Interest in Dutch painting soon spread to all European art lovers.'<sup>25</sup> The Stroganoff collection was based on European models, especially on French ones (reflecting his long stay in Paris) and was symptomatic of that kind of artistic taste.

20 Jaeger, pp. 333, 315, 314.

21 Cf. Savinskaja 2006, p. 388.

22 Savinskaja 2006, p. 397.

23 Korthals Altes, p. 135.

24 Korthals Altes, p. 126.

25 Sokolova, p. 36.

## Cataloguing the Collection

In 1778, Stroganoff left Paris, and from the 1780s onwards, he began refurbishing his palace in Saint Petersburg as a place within which to house his extensive art collection. Indeed, in the watercolour entitled *Picture Gallery of the Stroganoff Palace*, made in 1793 by Andrey Voronikhin (1759–1814), the count can be seen sitting at the left of the painting. The artist's attention to detail in depicting a series of pictures in the foreground of the watercolour is most evident. The paintings are displayed on an extended wall of the gallery that faces the windows, with the large canvas of *The Adoration of the Magi* by the Netherlandish painter De Lairese at its centre. Other works are arranged in pairs according to size from the ceiling to the floor, thus forming a symmetrical composition. As a rule, each pair of paintings represents one artist and one school.<sup>26</sup> For example, to either side of the canvas by De Lairese, we can see two portraits by Van Dyck from Mariette's collection.

Voronikhin's watercolour raises awareness for his contemporaries and current art historians of the quality of the count's collection and his standing as an art collector and connoisseur. Stroganoff published the first edition of his *Catalogue raisonné des tableaux, qui composent la collection du Comte A. de Stroganoff* in the same year, in 1793, and he compiled it himself. By that time, the count's collection had grown to include 87 paintings by 55 European artists organised into seven schools: Florentine, Roman, Lombard, Venetian, Neapolitan and Spanish, Netherlandish, and French. It is noteworthy that the catalogue was written in French because Stroganoff could thus address an international, well-educated group of readers. Stroganoff's catalogue is the only example of a published catalogue describing the works of art of a private Russian collection at that time.

Within Russia, the manner in which Stroganoff catalogued his collection—according to schools of art, was a novelty. In one of the first texts on art in Russia, the *Catalogue raisonné des tableaux qui se trouvent dans les galeries, salons et cabinets du Palais Impérial de Saint-Pétersbourg*, paintings from all over Europe were intermingled. This volume was compiled between 1773 and 1785 by Count Ernst Johann von Münnich (1708–1788). The original manuscript, written in French and preserved in the Archive of the Hermitage, documented many famous pieces of art that had been purchased by Catherine II.<sup>27</sup> The particulars of each painting catalogued in Münnich's manuscript include the author's name, the theme, and a brief description. The sequence of paintings listed apparently matched the display of the paintings in the Hermitage at that time.<sup>28</sup> The first painting listed in Münnich's

26 Cf. Savinskaja 2017, p. 436.

27 Frank 2001; Frank 2002; Frank 2003–2004.

28 Cf. Androsov, p. 10.

catalogue is Van Dyck's *Christ as Salvator Mundi* followed by *Woman Holding a Pearl Necklace in Her Hand* (then attributed to Rembrandt, but now considered to be a work by Philips de Koninck (1619–1688)), and next by Nicolas Poussin's *Esther before Artaxerxes*. Thus, the organisation and listing of paintings in the Hermitage's first catalogue did not entail any arrangement according to schools.<sup>29</sup>

The second edition of Stroganoff's catalogue, published in 1800, lists 116 pictures by 72 artists, organised in the same manner as those in the first edition. In the third edition, of 1807, the count included an illustrated catalogue of a selection of paintings from his collection.<sup>30</sup> Engravings for this edition were made by Russian painters, mostly students of the Academy of Arts.

The models for the 1807 catalogue were obviously the French illustrated catalogues initiated by Pierre Crozat, known as the *Recueil Crozat* (1729–1742), and Etienne-François, Duc de Choiseul (1719–1785) earlier in the eighteenth century.<sup>31</sup> From the catalogue of the count's library, it can be inferred that Stroganoff possessed some of these books.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, at the beginning of the third edition, the engraved portrait of Stroganoff emulates the *Recueil d'estampes gravées d'après les tableaux du cabinet de Monseigneur le duc de Choiseul* (1771), in which we see the image of Duc de Choiseul, the owner of the collection (Fig. 67). In each two-page spread of Stroganoff's catalogue, a reproductive engraving occupies the entire left-hand page, and a description of the painting appears on the right-hand page. The text is that of the previous editions, but often shortened. The name of the painter responsible for the reproduction can be seen under each illustration, alongside the name of the engraver. An example is Orest Kiprenskij (1782–1836), the famous Russian painter at the turn of the nineteenth century who was then a student of the Academy of Arts in Saint Petersburg. A commissioned copy of Van Dyck's portrait of Nicolaas Rockox, realised by Kiprenskij in 1807, is now at Saint Petersburg's State Russian Museum.

In 1800, Paul I (1754–1801), the son of Catherine II, appointed the count the president of the Russian Academy of Arts; he retained this post until his death in 1811. During Stroganoff's presidency, he sought to obtain more public support for the academy's students and to make their work known abroad.<sup>33</sup> In Stroganoff's illustrated catalogue, we can recognise a continuation of his activities as the academy's president on the one hand and an attempt to elevate his collection in the consciousness of the Russian elite and of connoisseurs from abroad on the other hand.

29 Androsov, p. 10.

30 Stroganoff 1807.

31 Cf. Savinskaja 1990.

32 NLR, F XVIII N 177 / 1–3.

33 Cf. NLR, F XVIII N 177 / 1–3.



67. Ignaz Sebastian Klauber, Portrait of Count Alexander Stroganoff, in *Collection d'estampes d'après quelques tableaux de la galerie de Mr. Le Comte A. Stroganoff gravées au trait par des jeunes artistes de l'Académie des beaux arts à St.-Petersbourg* (Saint Petersburg: Pluchart, 1835), State Historic Public Library of Russia, Moscow. © State Historic Public Library of Russia, Moscow. (из фондов ГПИБ России).

## Stroganoff as Connoisseur

In an *Avertissement* ('Notification')<sup>34</sup> intended for the reader, Stroganoff states that he compiled the *Catalogue* initially for his own benefit; he wanted to capture the artistic wealth of his collection and to embrace the emotions that the objects evoked within him.<sup>35</sup> They were, indeed, a source of great pride. The count adds that he also put together the publication for the benefit of true art lovers—for those similarly endowed with a sense of beauty who at the same time strove to acquire new knowledge and wished to fully enjoy works by a range of talented artists and could fully appreciate them. Stroganoff criticises those whom he considered indifferent to works of art as being in possession of a cold soul. At the end of his *Avertissement*, he asks God to free the world of 'amateurs without love' and 'connoisseurs without knowledge', whom he believed contributed to the corruption of taste and so impeded the progress of the arts.<sup>36</sup>

Describing the paintings in his collection and assessing the artists themselves, Stroganoff characterises the artists by comparing them with each other.<sup>37</sup> At that time, Raphael, who first appeared in the count's 1807 catalogue,<sup>38</sup> was considered to be the artist to whom others should aspire. Indeed, in the *Catalogue*, the Florentine school opens with this painter. Owing to the grace of his paintings Raphael was compared with Andrea del Sarto who had been placed as the first artist at the beginning of the Florentine school in earlier editions. The Netherlandish school opens with Rubens, as the 'Raphaël de Flandres' ('Raphael of Flanders'),<sup>39</sup> due to the quality of his colours and the compositions of his paintings. The French school begins with Poussin, who, as we will later discuss, was highly regarded by his fellow countrymen and peers, then continues to Eustache Lesueur (1616–1655), termed the 'Raphaël de la France' ('Raphael of France') because of the simplicity and grace of his canvases.<sup>40</sup> However, it is difficult to say whether Stroganoff preferred Raphael above all other European artists. Raphael was an ideal model, a *topos* for the artist and art lover. The variety of Stroganoff's collection suggests not that he intended to surround himself with pieces of art representing some kind of ideal model, but rather that he was

34 Stroganoff 1793; Stroganoff 1800.

35 'J'ai écrit ce catalogue pour moi, pour me rendre compte des richesses que je rassemble depuis plus de quarante ans, des sensations que leur possession me fait éprouver.' Stroganoff 1800, p. III.

36 'Délivre-nous, grand Dieu!, de ces amateurs sans amour, de ces connoisseurs sans connaissances!' Stroganoff 1800, p. IV.

37 Cf. Savinskaja 1995, p. 54.

38 It was the painting *Venus After Her Bath*, now lost.

39 Stroganoff 1800, p. 36.

40 Stroganoff 1807, unpaginated.

following a tradition founded on the myth of Raphael, who, during that period, was highly valued in Russia.<sup>41</sup>

According to Stroganoff, the Florentine school is notable for its dignity, its motion, its chastity, and its expression of strength to the detriment of gracefulness. He speculates that the brushwork of artists of the Roman school was based on the study of ancient monuments, from which they adopted the science of drawing, the beauty of forms, the grandeur of style, and the accuracy of emotions, all of which are deployed in the correct proportions without disturbing the beauty of the canon. In the Roman school, Stroganoff also includes the French painters Claude Lorrain with a *Landscape* and Gaspard Dughet (1615–1675) with a *Heroic Landscape*.

The Lombard school, he avers, is distinguished by its gracefulness, its pleasing topics, its mild brushwork, and harmonious blending of colours. In addition to the Carracci brothers, Guido Reni, and other Italian painters of that time, he lists the German painter Johann Carl Loth (1632–1698) within this school, as a follower of Caravaggio.

The Venetian school is characterised by an interest in the use of colour and light. The Neapolitan and Spanish schools are united into a single school, as the Count deemed it impossible to distinguish between the two groups. Stroganoff based this conclusion on the fact that both countries offered mostly individual artists, rather than a group of painters who could be classified easily as being of one particular school.

It is interesting to note that the word ‘nationale’ (‘national’) appears in the count’s reflections on the Netherlandish school. ‘In the school of the Low Countries’, Stroganoff writes, ‘I have combined two schools [...]; the Flemish and the Dutch; and have added some German painters, as they worked in the same genre.’<sup>42</sup> According to Stroganoff, Rubens, the principal artist of the Flemish school, flawlessly combined brilliant colours and magical chiaroscuro with majestic composition. Because Flemish paintings are endowed with strong and natural expressions and ultimately some *beauté nationale* (‘national beauty’),<sup>43</sup> they should be admired.

The count considered the Dutch school successful. In addition, it conveyed nature with the utmost truthfulness, a quality that he greatly appreciated. Dutch works are distinguished by their clarity. The Dutch also mastered the art of light gradation and its juxtapositions so that they manage to represent natural light itself.

41 Cf. Savinskaja 1995.

42 ‘Dans l’école des Pays-bas, j’ai joint deux écoles [...]; la Flamande et la Hollandaise; j’y ai même ajouté quelques peintres Allemands, parce qu’ils ont travaillé le même genre.’ Stroganoff 1800, p. 32 (trans. from the French by myself).

43 Stroganoff 1800, p. 32.

The French school, Stroganoff notes, is not homogeneous due to the dissimilarity of its painters. There seem to be several schools within a school, he argues, and, consequently, the paintings are difficult to characterise or classify. This diversity had already been noted by Roger de Piles, followed by Dezallier. However, an important feature of the French school is its ability to imitate its models. The most prominent French-born painter, according to Stroganoff, was Poussin. Unfortunately, France could not consider Poussin as one of the founders of its school, since he worked in Italy.<sup>44</sup> Poussin stands tall among his fellow nationals because his genius, according to Stroganoff, conformed to Raphael.

We can also note that Italian painters provide some kind of model in Stroganoff's *Catalogue*. The definition of the 'école Italienne' ('Italian school') also appears in his analysis of the school of the Low Countries when he discusses artists. Concerning Rembrandt, the count writes that in his painting entitled *Philosopher in Meditation* (Fig. 68), the composition is so noble that it may be compared to the Italian school.<sup>45</sup> With regard to De Lairese, Stroganoff writes that due to the nobility and beauty of his compositions, his perfect light and shadow, and his incredible colour schemes, this painter's works may be compared without prejudice to the best paintings of the Italian school.<sup>46</sup> The count offers similar remarks about other artists.

It is noteworthy that the first printed illustrated catalogue<sup>47</sup> of the Hermitage Picture Gallery, issued in 1805–1807, clearly defines the 'Italian school'. The catalogue opens with Raphael's *The Holy Family*. However, the Roman school is represented as being on a par with the Italian school. 75 paintings were selected and engraved for the publication. The Hermitage's catalogue was compiled in two languages, French and Russian, in order to appeal to a broad audience.<sup>48</sup> The Flemish, French, Dutch, and Spanish schools are also included in the catalogue.

From the catalogue of Count Stroganoff's library, it is evident that he owned various books that inspired him when he compiled his own publication. They are mostly French books of the eighteenth century. In his *Catalogue raisonné des tableaux*, Stroganoff cites the reflections of Diderot, Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Anton Raphael Mengs, Jean-Baptiste Descamps, and De Piles, whom the count

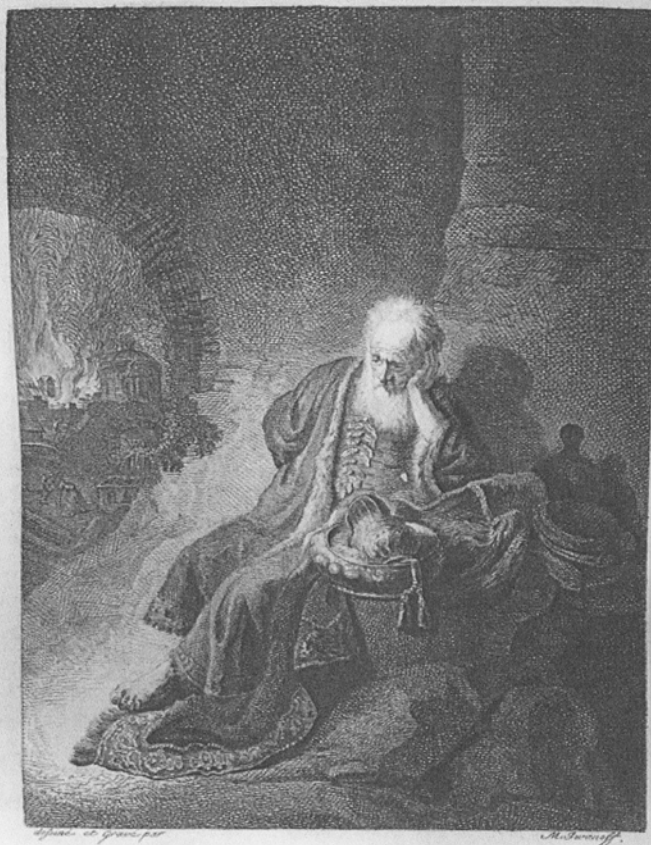
44 'Repos en Egypte. Cet excellent tableau est peint par le plus grand peintre qu'ait produit la France, et que cependant elle n'a pas le bonheur de pouvoir compter parmi les fondateurs de son école, puisque c'est presque toujours en Italie qu'il a exercé ses talents.' Stroganoff 1800, p. 65.

45 Cf. Stroganoff 1800, p. 40.

46 Cf. Stroganoff 1800, p. 53.

47 Cf. Labensky.

48 By means of the French language, a large part of Europe could be reached (i.e. the upper echelons of society). Furthermore, French was the preferred language of the Russian elite. At the same time, the use of the Russian language made the contents of the Hermitage's catalogue more accessible to the country's population.



REMBRANDT VAN RYN.  
*de la Collection de S. E. Monsieur  
le Comte de Stroganoff.*

68. M. Ivanov after Rembrandt, *Philosopher in Meditation*, in *Collection d'estampes d'après quelques tableaux de la galerie de Mr. Le Comte A. Stroganoff gravées au trait par des jeunes artistes de l'Académie des beaux arts à St.-Petersbourg* (Saint Petersburg: Pluchart, 1835), State Historic Public Library of Russia, Moscow. © State Historic Public Library of Russia, Moscow (из фондов ГПИБ России).



identified as respected by painters and connoisseurs alike.<sup>49</sup> Reading Stroganoff's text, we can observe that the ideas of De Piles had a particularly strong hold on him; direct quotations from De Piles can often be found in the *Catalogue*.

It is difficult to overestimate the importance of Stroganoff's *Catalogue* in contributing to the development of art historical scholarship in Russia, as it set the standard for the cataloguing of private collections. Other collectors were unable to achieve such brilliant results.<sup>50</sup> The *Catalogue* is also important because of Stroganoff's particular interest in cataloguing his works according to artistic schools.

Stroganoff's interest in schools of art becomes clear when we compare his work with a manuscript entitled *Catalogue des tableaux envoyés de Vienne* by Golitsyn, compiled in French during the last days of the prince's life in the 1790s. Here, a different approach to the cataloguing of paintings can be seen. The *Catalogue* comprises two parts: in the first part, paintings are listed alphabetically according to subjects (*Portrait of a Woman* (Rembrandt) or *River Landscape* (Jacob van Ruisdael)), and in the second part, alphabetically according to each painter.<sup>51</sup> Golitsyn's collection of paintings was considered the second most important in Moscow, after that of Prince Nikolay Yusupov (1750–1831), due to its comprehensiveness. The catalogue of the Yusupov collection, while illustrated, was not published, and the works were not organised into artistic schools.<sup>52</sup>

## Fostering a Russian School

Stroganoff's interest in schools of art may have been linked to his position as president of the Academy of Arts. He probably put his knowledge of European art according to schools to good use in his position by moving towards the fostering of a Russian school. The count decided to include the work of one Russian painter in his catalogue, despite not writing about a Russian school in the third, 1807 edition. At the end of his description of pictures, Stroganoff placed the *Allegory of Painting* (1725) by Andrey Matveev (1701–1739) (Fig. 69), who studied in Amsterdam and in Antwerp at the behest of Peter I, Emperor of Russia (1672–1725).<sup>53</sup> This work, as the count notes, is especially valuable to him because it is the work of the first Russian painter who managed to achieve a certain perfection. We can note here Stroganoff's wish to foster the development of Russian art based on the models

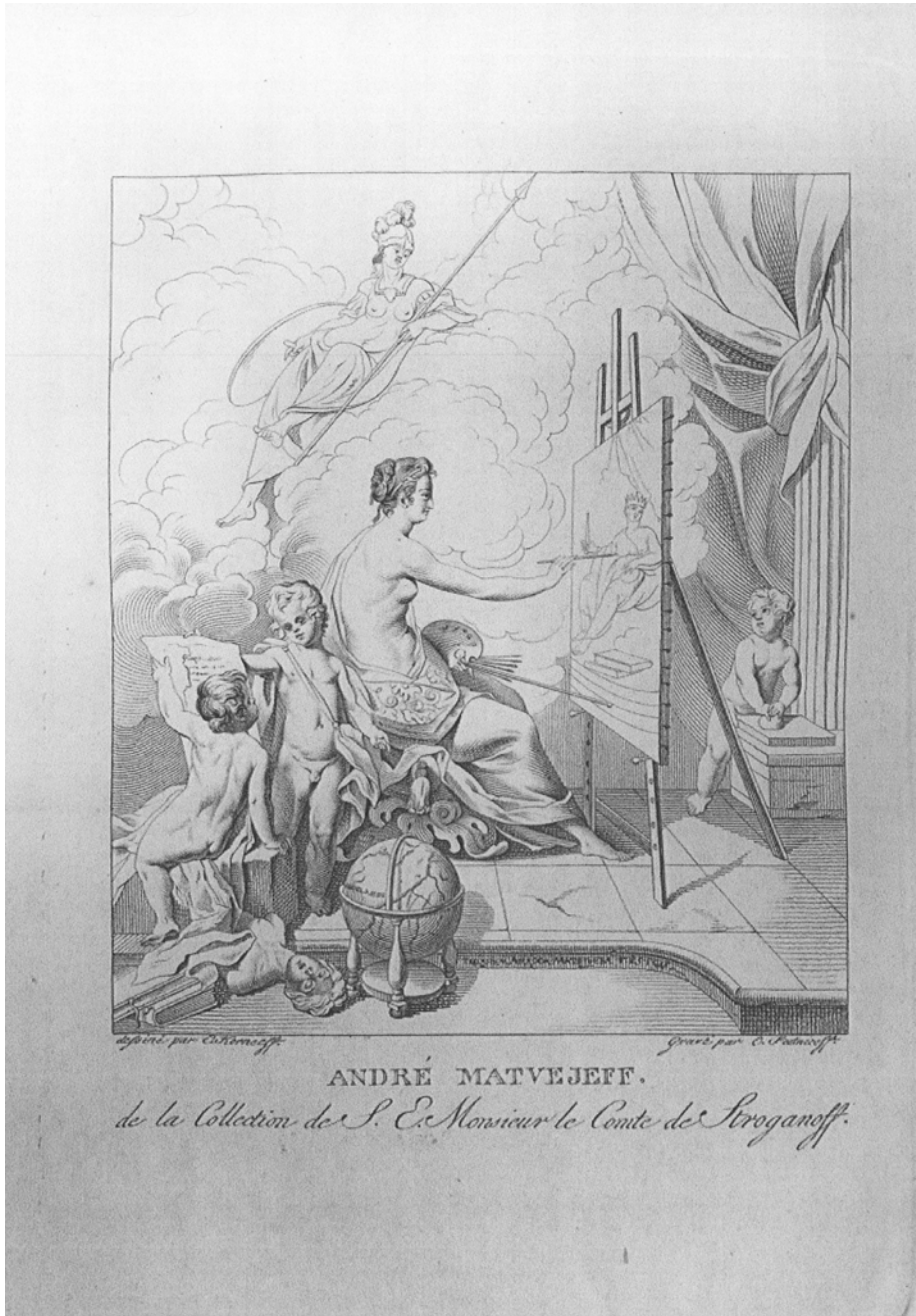
49 Cf. Stroganoff 1807, unpaginated.

50 Cf. Savinskaja 1990, p. 59.

51 Cf. Savinskaja 2004.

52 Cf. Savinskaja 1990, p. 62.

53 Stroganoff 1807, unpaginated.



69. E. Korneev after Andrey Matveev, *Allegory of Painting*, in *Collection d'estampes d'après quelques tableaux de la galerie de Mr. Le Comte A. Stroganoff gravées au trait par des jeunes artistes de l'Académie des beaux arts à St.-Petersbourg* (Saint Petersburg: Pluchart, 1835), State Historic Public Library of Russia, Moscow. © State Historic Public Library of Russia, Moscow (из фондов ГПИБ России).

elaborated by distinguished European painters. In this way he contributed to the Europeanisation of Russian culture.<sup>54</sup>

When the count became president of the Academy of Arts, he opened the doors of his picture gallery to the academy's students, so that they could familiarise themselves with prominent European painters, studying and copying their works. The Gallery of Artworks of the Russian School was first established at the Hermitage in 1825. Its collection included such paintings as *Vladimir and Rogneda* by Anton Losenko (1737–1773), *View of the Moscow Kremlin* by Fyodor Alekseyev (1753/54–1824), *Young Gardener* by Kiprenskij, *Colosseo* by Sylvester Shchedrin (1791–1830), and others. Vasily Grigorovich, a famous critic of the arts, wrote at the time: 'There is no doubt that the Gallery of the Russian School will be on a par with the best works of foreign schools [...]. The hope to see their works in this storage of Grace will instil spirit within our painters. Art will move forward, or evolve, and the glory of Geniuses and their fatherland will be the consequence of this very useful and important institution.'<sup>55</sup> Stroganoff most probably had the same idea in mind when he mentioned a Russian artist among the foreign painters in his *Catalogue*.

Thus, we could say that the Count's reflections on European painting schools and his mention of Matveev pointed towards the creation of a Russian school, the taste of which, however, had yet to be determined.

## Conclusion

Rosalind P. Blakesley has claimed that in the eighteenth century, 'self-esteem among fine artists turned primarily on the extent to which they successfully aped the European academic ideal and measured up to universal standards in the visual arts.'<sup>56</sup> She continues, 'From the 1800s, however, a growing loss of faith in Europe as a model for Russia unsettled the integrity of a cultural patriotism predicated on European practice and different forms of national discourse began to emerge.'<sup>57</sup> We can suppose, therefore, that the international events of the early decades of the nineteenth century would have intensified the pursuit of shaping of the idea of a Russian school of art.

54 Cf. Bogdan 2000.

55 'Нет сомнения, что со временем "Галерея Русской школы" не уступит лучшим собраниям произведений школ иностранных ... Надежда видеть свои произведения в сем хранилище Изящного одушевит наших художников. Искусство шагнет вперед и слава Гениев и отечества их будет следствием сего весьма полезного и важного учреждения.' Quotation in accordance with Mikas 1981, p. 37 (trans. from Russian by myself).

56 Blakesley, p. 59.

57 Blakesley, p. 59.

Alexander Stroganoff, like other enlightened Russian *amateurs* of art, was of the opinion that ‘the only thing lacking for our nation to distinguish itself in the arts has been good teachers’.<sup>58</sup> Such teachers could be not only foreign professors of the Saint Petersburg Academy, but also European artists, collectors, art connoisseurs, and their texts. This opinion was reflected in Stroganoff’s activities at the Academy of Arts, the structure of his catalogue, and even his retelling of the story of Andrey Matveev in the 1807 edition of his catalogue; his narrative traced back to the time of Peter I the idea that art education and artists’ improvement were linked primarily to Europe. Based on the best examples of European art (we remember that Stroganoff often described painters, canvases, and connoisseurs in his catalogue with superlatives), the count and his associates moulded an idea of the Russian school of art and, in this way, distinguished the Russian nation in the arts. Indeed, the identification of Russian painting as a fully-fledged school is exactly what was to occur later, in the changed cultural landscape that followed the Napoleonic Wars.

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<sup>58</sup> Blakesley, pp. 18–19.

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## About the Author

**Irina Emelianova** graduated in Moscow in Art History, with an internship at the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg. Subsequently, she studied at the Università della Svizzera Italiana (USI) in Lugano as the winner of a Swiss Government Excellence Scholarship. She defended her doctoral thesis at the USI Academy of Architecture. Currently, she is a scientific collaborator at the Institute for the History and Theory of Art and Architecture of the USI.



# **On Public Display in Picture Galleries**





## 18. Everyman's Aesthetic Considerations on a Visible History of Art: Joseph Sebastian von Rittershausen's (1748–1820) *Betrachtungen* (1785) on Christian von Mechel's (1737–1817) Work at the Imperial Picture Gallery in Vienna

*Cecilia Hurley*

### Abstract

When reorganising the Viennese Imperial collections in the early 1780s, Christian von Mechel decided to hang the paintings by school, offering what he described as 'a visible history of art'. His decision was widely greeted with approval, although there were some dissenting voices to be heard. Among them was Joseph Sebastian von Rittershausen, a Bavarian polymath, who published a lengthy and highly critical text explaining why, in his opinion, Mechel's method was faulty. Rittershausen felt that historical hang would efface the paintings' aesthetic qualities. He also argued that it was an elitist approach and would undermine the art gallery's claim to appeal to a broad audience. He suggested that paintings should be hung according to their artistic qualities and not according to erudite principles of connoisseurship based largely on attributions rather than aesthetic judgment.

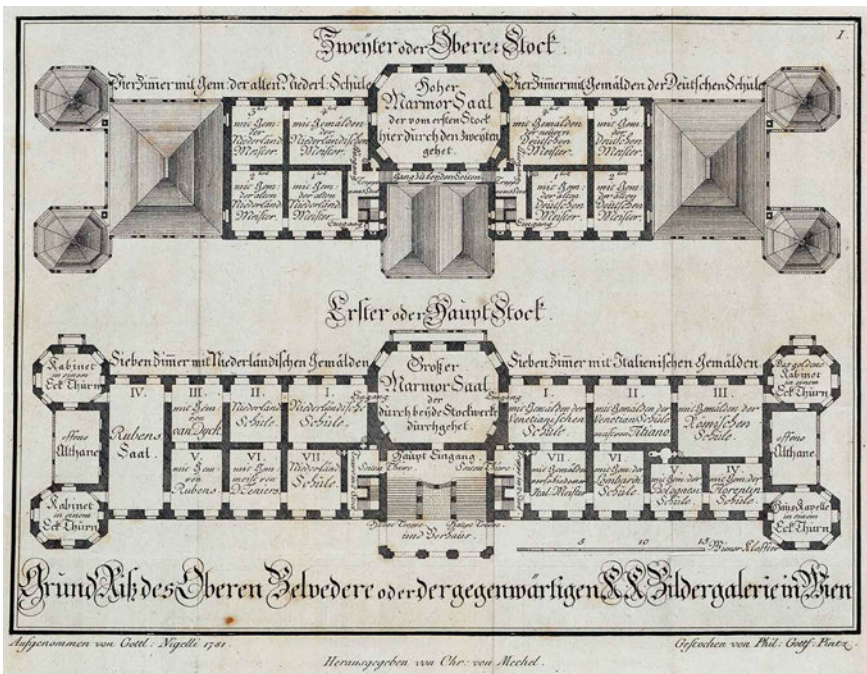
**Keywords:** school, museum, Christian von Mechel, Johann Sebastian von Rittershausen, aesthetics

In 1783, Christian von Mechel published his catalogue of the newly organised Viennese Imperial collections on show in the Oberes ('Upper') Belvedere (Fig. 70). An important feature of the galleries was the innovative organisation of the paintings by school and by epoch. Mechel boasted in the catalogue that he offered visitors a 'visible history of art' (Fig. 71).<sup>1</sup> 1300 paintings feature in the catalogue, whose entries

1 Mechel 1783, p. xi; Mechel 1784, p. xv.



70. Johann August Corvinus after Salomon Kleiner, *View of the Oberes Belvedere in Vienna, 1737*, engraving with hand-colouring, 30.5 x 42 cm, Belvedere, Vienna, inv. BB\_P1027. © Belvedere, Vienna.



71. Philipp Gottfried Pintz after Gottlieb Nigelli, *Floorplan of the Oberes Belvedere in Vienna, 1781*, engraving, 19.5 x 25 cm, Belvedere, Vienna, inv. 9539. © Belvedere, Vienna.

are succinct, offering simple details on artist, title, support, dimensions, presence of figures, and size of figures. Preceding many of the entries was an asterisk, indicating the best paintings in the collection; this was a gesture intended for visitors who wished to know the collection's highlights.<sup>2</sup> It was also the sole authorial comment regarding the relative aesthetic qualities or shortcomings of the works on display. Most reviews of Mechel's work in the Oberes Belvedere and of the accompanying catalogue were positive, hailing this 'visible history of art'.<sup>3</sup> Despite this generally favourable press, one lengthy condemnation did appear, in the form of a two-part text published in two volumes two years later by a redoubtable opponent, Joseph Sebastian von Rittershausen. In the first part, studied here, Rittershausen offers observations on connoisseurship, taste, and the organisation of a gallery. In the second, he undertakes a critical rereading of the 1783 catalogue. The text as a whole constitutes a highly important, albeit underrated contribution to the debate on these issues at the close of the eighteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Above all, it offers an interesting commentary on the merits of Mechel's organisation of the Vienna collection's paintings by schools, and his claim to propose a visible history of art.

Rittershausen was a Bavarian polymath (Fig. 72).<sup>5</sup> Born in Immenstadt im Allgäu in 1748, he went to school in Augsburg and Konstanz, then studied philosophy at the Universität Innsbruck and jurisprudence at the Universität Freiburg-im-Breisgau. After a short period spent in France, he returned to Freiburg to practise law. He then moved back to Bavaria, joining the Theatine order in 1768. Appointed librarian of the Theatiner-Kloster in Munich, he taught the novices theology and philosophy, before accepting an invitation to teach philosophy at the Lyceum in Munich. He subsequently abandoned his academic career for a short trip to Rome. On his return to Munich, he obtained an ecclesiastical living, and his modest income allowed him to devote himself to his two principal passions—writing and painting. He was forced to flee to Bayreuth in the early nineteenth century, accused of disseminating invectives against Napoleon. In 1817, he went back to Munich, where he was to live, in straitened circumstances, until his death three years later. He was a prolific author, involved in a number of scholarly journals of the time and also producing a number of books on philosophical and artistic themes, as well as some texts of popular devotion.<sup>6</sup>

What decided Rittershausen to write the *Betrachtungen* (Fig. 73)? In the introductory paragraphs to the text, he lays out his motivations clearly and systematically,

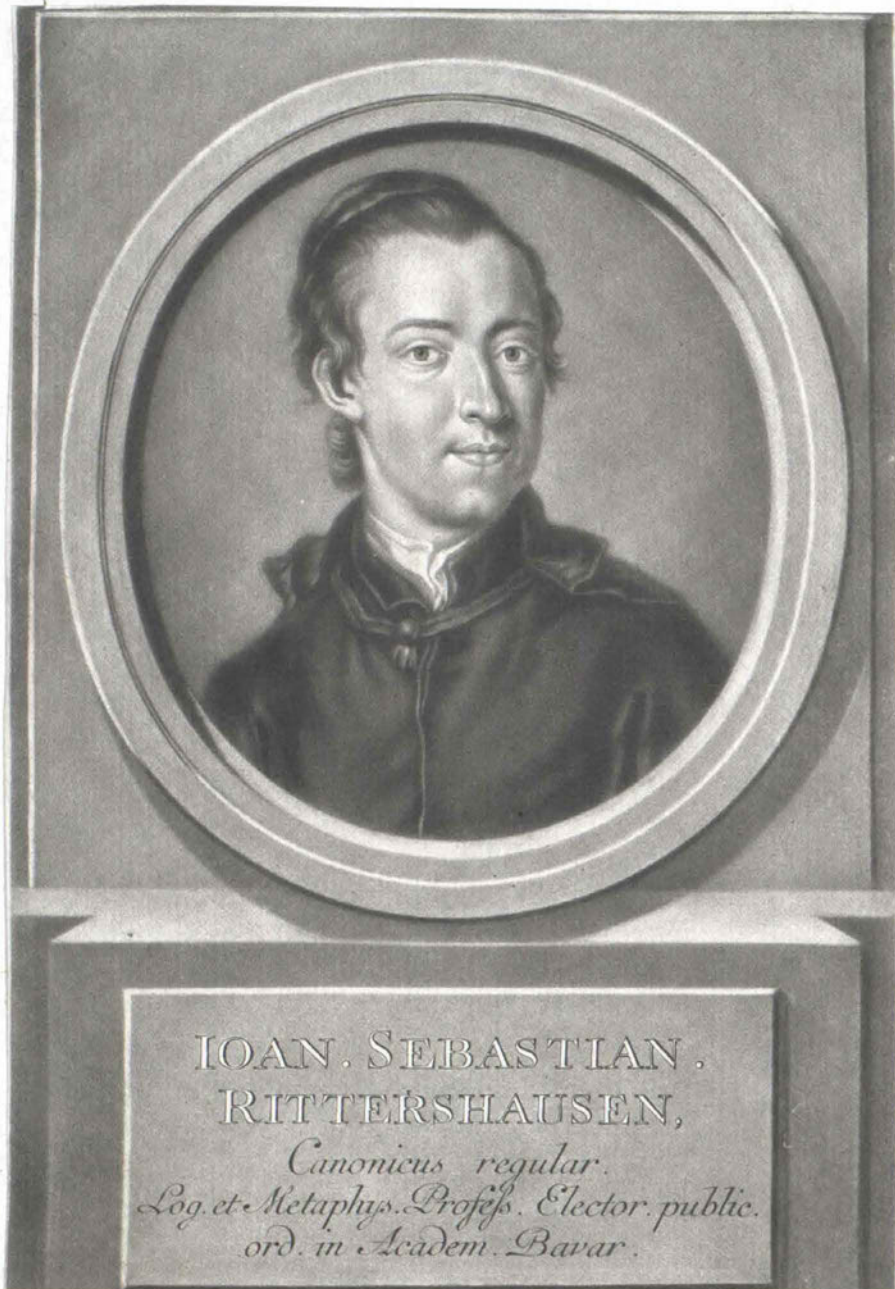
2 Mechel 1784, p. xxv.

3 See Meijers; Pommier; Hassmann; Penzel; Fisher; Schryen, pp. 484–502.

4 See Meijers, pp. 82–85; Böttger, pp. 114–115, 128–129; Pommier, pp. 75–76; Yonan, pp. 183–185; Schryen, p. 290.

5 Klingen, pp. 148–151; Baader, II.2, pp. 38–41.

6 Jöcher, cols. 67–69.



72. Portrait of Joseph Sebastian von Rittershausen, mezzotint, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, call nr. PORT\_00129485\_01 POR MAG. © Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna.



73. Title page, Joseph Sebastian von Rittershausen, *Betrachtungen über die Kaiserlichen Königliche Bildergalerie zu Wien* (Bregenz: Typographischen Gesellschaft, 1785).  
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lacing them with a number of incisive and hostile comments directed against Mechel and his work in Vienna. Rittershausen observes that Mechel has assuredly published the *Verzeichniss*, but that this amounts to little more than a printed list of the paintings indicating their dimensions and their authorship. Rittershausen is here a little disingenuous; he omits to mention that Mechel had offered further details concerning the support, the presence of figures, and even an iconographic title for each picture. As for the more detailed catalogue promised by Mechel, he concludes, it will probably not appear for some years to come. In the meantime, Rittershausen seizes the opportunity to present his own version of the catalogue, and to explain his thoughts on the subject. It is in this spirit that he therefore offers 'some explanations of these paintings judged according to aesthetic principles and written from the point of view of Everyman'.<sup>7</sup> This last word—*biedermännisch* in the text—is troublesome, rich in meaning but difficult to translate: 'petty bourgeois', 'honest citizen', 'upright citizen', or, with a nod to the literary context, 'Everyman'. What is evident is that Rittershausen's intentions for his text are neatly summed up in this one phrase that serves almost as a manifesto for his book. He here strikes at the heart of Mechel's endeavours, criticising him on two major points. First, Mechel has fallen prey to a passion for names and attributions and, in so doing, has forgotten to evaluate the paintings' intrinsic qualities. He sees the paintings as historical documents rather than aesthetic productions, Rittershausen claims. Second, according to Rittershausen, Mechel has implicitly addressed, both in the gallery and in his catalogue, the educated, privileged classes. In Rittershausen's view, neither the gallery space nor the critical tools of artistic judgement should be restricted to a monied, educated elite. He advocates a gallery that serves as a public space, and in which all classes of society can apply their critical judgement to artworks.

Unsurprisingly, given Rittershausen's philosophical education and activities, he proposes a carefully constructed proof of his theory, leading the reader step by step to the conclusion. Not only had he taught philosophy for over ten years, but he had also written a textbook on the subject.<sup>8</sup> He went about his artistic writing in the same systematic way. His central question stands at the beginning of the first part of his book: 'How should paintings be placed in a building devoted to the Muse of Painting?'<sup>9</sup> Over the next 80 pages, he sets out to answer this question and to thereby prove that Mechel's attempts to reorganise the Viennese Imperial collections are largely misguided.

He does not refute all of Mechel's innovations; above all, he does not criticise the decision to sort the paintings into their respective schools and then to hang

7 Rittershausen 1785, pp. 4–5.

8 Rittershausen 1777.

9 Rittershausen 1785, p. 6. The question is repeated almost verbatim on p. 54.

them in the gallery accordingly. Quite the contrary. He goes so far as to state that in his opinion, '[t]he idea of distributing the paintings in schools is incomparably the best if it is carried out according to these aforementioned laws'.<sup>10</sup> On the one hand, Rittershausen approves entirely the idea of displaying the paintings of the Viennese collection in their respective schools. On the other hand, he objects to using the gallery walls to offer a 'visible history of art'. This is, in fact, the crux of his criticism of Mechel's work, and his objections—and proposed solution—are laid out even more clearly twenty pages later, when he offers the following plan for a picture gallery:

I would determine the positions of the pictures in the following way: the whole gallery would be divided into as many main divisions as there are schools. In particular, the early Italians, the Netherlandish, and the old High German schools should be kept in separate sections because they are completely opposed styles (just as in the ancient world, the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans had different styles). If there is a large number of paintings, the Roman, the Florentine, the Lombard, and Venetian schools can be further distinguished, and each can be given its own place in the gallery. Each of these main subjects [the schools] is then divided into the parts of painting: drawing, colouring, expression, composition: still life, landscape, portrait, history, allegory are redistributed therein, and their own position determined.<sup>11</sup>

Here, he recommends a tripartite classification system in which the schools predominate and are then divided into the parts of painting. In their turn, the parts of painting are separated into the different genres. Rittershausen's plan was not entirely revolutionary, recalling, in its general lines, the French royal collections on show at the Palais du Luxembourg in Paris between 1750 and 1779. In four rooms, 99 paintings and 20 drawings were exhibited; one room was devoted exclusively to the French school, whereas the three others housed works from the Italian, French, and northern schools (Dutch and Flemish).<sup>12</sup> Within each room, the display was intended to encourage comparative viewing, and was generally structured around the parts of painting. Visitors could compare the different masters' skill in colour, line, composition, and expression. As Andrew McClellan has shown, this display technique was most likely inspired by the *Balance des peintres* that Roger de Piles appended to his *Cours de peinture*.<sup>13</sup> In this table, 57 artists are awarded marks

10 Rittershausen 1785, p. 57. By 'aforementioned laws', he means the principles established in the preceding pages.

11 Rittershausen 1785, pp. 77–78; Meijers, p. 83.

12 McClellan, pp. 13–48.

13 Piles 1708, pp. 390–392; McClellan, pp. 33–36.



out of 20 for each of the four main parts of painting: colour, line, expression, and composition. De Piles tried to play down the reliability and the authoritativeness of his exercise, claiming that he had done it to entertain himself.<sup>14</sup> Despite the author's protestations, the *Balance* rapidly won over a wide public, largely since it seemed to offer a means of comparing the respective worth of artists by reference to objective and quantifiable criteria. Over the course of the eighteenth century, it was regularly referred to and it even inspired emulation; in 1772, one author drew up a similar *balance* for German poets.<sup>15</sup>

The main difference between the Luxembourg hang and the one imagined by Rittershausen is the preliminary, strict division into schools; as a result, the comparison of the mastery of the different parts of painting or of the various genres is encouraged between artists working in the same tradition rather than between artists hailing from different schools. Above all, and on this point Rittershausen is very clear, what is at stake here is a visible history of art based on careful and reasoned analysis of paintings by reference to their constituent parts and their aesthetic qualities. This is in contrast to an ostensibly visible history of art that actually draws its *raison d'être* from a highly discursive form, that is, textual art history and, more particularly, the biographical tradition.<sup>16</sup> Mechel's revolution in gallery presentation was, if Rittershausen is to be believed, quite old-fashioned, referring to an art historical discourse that had held sway since the first edition of Giorgio Vasari's *Vite* (1550).

How is the proposed, aesthetic, visible history of art to be achieved, and which methods does Rittershausen advise using? First and foremost, Rittershausen believes that anyone who wishes to reorder an art gallery must be a connoisseur, a *Kenner*, and must be able to give a clear answer to two questions concerning any painting. First, is it beautiful? Second, which law or laws of painting does it contravene?<sup>17</sup> Interestingly, there is no place here for the niceties of attributions nor for the desire to label every single canvas: Rittershausen's connoisseur is more adept in aesthetic matters than historical ones. Only those who master many subjects—the author reels off an impressive list, including geometry, perspective, anatomy, optics, psychology, poetics, mythology, and history—can hope to answer these questions.<sup>18</sup> Even so, this theoretical knowledge cannot suffice. No one can claim to be a connoisseur if they have not seen a very large number of paintings and, above all else, studied the art of painting.<sup>19</sup> The connoisseur must 'master the

14 Piles 1708, p. 387; Studdert Kennedy; Steegman.

15 Klawitter.

16 Recht.

17 Rittershausen 1785, p. 7.

18 Rittershausen 1785, pp. 8–9.

19 Rittershausen 1785, p. 7.

brush' and understand the niceties of colour, line, and expression. In addition, he must understand that what appears to be simple is in fact very difficult, and that all artists need to strike the perfect balance between the 'mechanical' parts of painting and the 'cerebral', or 'scholarly', parts—imagination (whose tutelary spirit is philosophy) and intellectuality.<sup>20</sup> In short, this is a connoisseur who is easily recognisable to anyone who has read the entry *Kenner* in Johann Georg Sulzer's *Allgemeine Theorie* (1777).<sup>21</sup>

On this point—the mastery of painting and of connoisseurship—Rittershausen could claim superiority. Mechel had never studied painting. He was an engraver by trade and renowned for his connoisseurship of old woodcuts.<sup>22</sup> Rittershausen, on the other hand, had studied painting with a number of masters. These masters are usually considered to be Johann Herz (1720–1793) and Joseph Winter in Augsburg, Franz Joseph Spiegler (1691–1757) in Konstanz, Franz Joseph Rösch (c. 1724–1777) in Freiburg, and Georges Desmarées (1697–1776) in Munich.<sup>23</sup> Rittershausen also painted a number of altarpieces in Bavarian churches. In his text, he never names his teachers, merely observing once that he owes most of his knowledge to a well-travelled great painter; this brief description leads us to believe that he is referring to Desmarées.<sup>24</sup>

When organising a gallery, the connoisseur must first select the paintings that should be put on show and then arrange them correctly.<sup>25</sup> The first step is especially fraught with difficulties; many errors, in Rittershausen's view, have been committed by those who are not connoisseurs. The best works of art are left languishing in a storeroom, whilst daubs, adorned with broad gilt frames, are put on show. Furthermore, many people have damaged paintings in the name of preparing them for display. Misguided restoration and clumsy application of veneers can harm a painting's surface. Other individuals alter a painting's dimensions. Rittershausen can hardly keep his anger in check here, and the emotive vocabulary employed reveals his distress at the violence inflicted on works of art: paintings are 'emasculated' and 'trepanned', 'cut', and 'fixed'.<sup>26</sup>

Selecting the best paintings is not, however, tantamount to choosing works by the most celebrated Old Masters. This is at the core of Rittershausen's theory on connoisseurship and is equally his main grievance regarding the work recently carried out in the Oberes Belvedere. Mechel's catalogue leaves very little room for doubt or for questions. Out of a total of 1300 paintings in the gallery, a mere

20 Rittershausen 1785, pp. 9–10, 48, especially note 2.

21 Sulzer, II.1, pp. 5–14. See Griener 2005.

22 Rittershausen 1785, p. 57, note 1. For Mechel, see Wüthrich.

23 Klingen, pp. 148–151; Kolb, p. 512.

24 Rittershausen 1785, p. 6.

25 Rittershausen 1785, p. 11.

26 Rittershausen 1785, p. 11.

handful—only twelve—do not bear the name of a master.<sup>27</sup> No effort was spared in the quest for plausible attributions: Mechel explains that he has consulted art histories, biographies, descriptions of collections, archives, and scholars' notes. Above all, he has relied on engravings after the paintings, which were, in his opinion, the 'most authentic documents offering the names of the Masters'.<sup>28</sup> Once again, the foundations on which the new, 'visible history of art' is constructed turn out to be firmly rooted in the textual tradition. This is a connoisseurship that relies on reading rather than looking. Instead of trusting his own skills, Mechel founded his judgements on the artists' names indicated in the lower margins of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century prints; he was placing blind faith in the accuracy and intellectual integrity of earlier generations. His claims to have produced reliable attributions for the gallery and the catalogue seem all too flimsy.

Rittershausen deplores the mania for attributions and mocks those who claim to master this art. 'It is impossible that even the best connoisseur can always safely say that this or that picture is surely painted by the hand of this master.'<sup>29</sup> There is a host of reasons for this, and when listing them, Rittershausen betrays his close reading of *De Piles'* texts on the question.<sup>30</sup> Most artists have more than one manner, he claims. Likewise, an artist sometimes worked more quickly for base, material reasons—because he needed to be able to put food on the table.<sup>31</sup> Rittershausen gives examples of these artistic strategies. Some artists deliberately imitated the work of their predecessors or contemporaries. Sometimes a pupil copied one of his master's works and then the master just touched it up. In short, even if an adept connoisseur can recognise the brushstroke of many masters, it is unthinkable that he could recognise all artists' hands. With a neat swipe at Mechel and his colleagues, Rittershausen states simply but surely: 'knowing everything is the surest sign of knowing nothing.'<sup>32</sup>

Rittershausen's solution is simple: only beautiful works of art deserve a place on the gallery's walls. For this reason, he reminds us again, a connoisseur must first ask if a painting is beautiful. Only once a painting's beauty has been determined, can the connoisseur then turn to the question of which school it belongs to or even who painted it.<sup>33</sup> But, Rittershausen hastens to add, labels of school or artist should not be taken too seriously. Beauty is, he opines, an intrinsic quality and should be unaffected by external elements, even an artist's name. A painting

27 Mechel 1784, pp. 39, 113, 115, 143, 146, 232, 233, 234, 238, 249, 261.

28 Mechel 1784, p. xxvii.

29 Rittershausen 1785, p. 13.

30 Rittershausen 1785, pp. 13–14; *Piles* 1766, pp. 464–468; Penzel, p. 136.

31 Merck, p. 185; Griener 2014, p. 19.

32 Rittershausen 1785, p. 15.

33 Rittershausen 1785, pp. 16–21; Meijers, p. 82.

does not become more beautiful in a true connoisseur's eyes just because it can be associated with a great painter. After all, 'the best artists have often produced very bad art and mediocre artists have from time to time produced great artworks'.<sup>34</sup> The solution is apparently simple; it does nonetheless require connoisseurs able to discern beauty. To this end, the author sets out to explain what is meant by beauty and how it can be recognised.

Beauty is a form of perfection and is a visible quality that must be apprehended by the senses and not by means of philosophical treatises.<sup>35</sup> Once again, Rittershausen invites true connoisseurs to eschew book learning and textual art history and to trust their eyes and their feelings. There are degrees of beauty, and each and every one of us has our own appraisal of what is or is not beautiful. However, true, universally acknowledged beauty can and does exist; it obeys all our generally accepted rules for what is beautiful and is pleasing to everyone ('true beauty, when it shows itself to a high degree, pleases everyone.')<sup>36</sup> One problem remains, and that is the question of the ugly, the unpleasing, and the frightening. On this point, Rittershausen reveals his understanding of the recent debates regarding the sublime and the terrible, more especially the work done by Edmund Burke (1729–1797) and its reception in Germany by thinkers such as Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), Moses Mendelssohn (1729–1786), and Gotthold Ephraim Lessing.<sup>37</sup> He concludes that deformity is acceptable, inasmuch as it plays a part in a painting or representation, but that the truly repulsive can never be included in the category of 'beautiful objects' and must always be rejected.<sup>38</sup>

How can a *Kenner* recognise beauty in a painting? Many feel that it can be identified in the mechanical parts of painting, pointing to a master's use of colour or line. Rittershausen suggests, rather, that we should look for it in the intellectual parts of a painting—imagination, composition, and expression. At this point, he selects three examples of great artists: Raphael, Correggio, and Titian.<sup>39</sup> Instead of praising Raphael for his draughtsmanship, Correggio for the sensual texture of his oil painting, and Titian for the warmth of his colours, he avers, we should focus on the more scholarly, or intellectual, features of their work; Raphael excelled in the selection of forms to imitate, Correggio in the grace of his compositions, and Titian in truthfulness (the faithful imitation of colours).<sup>40</sup>

34 Rittershausen 1785, p. 21; Piles 1766, p. 465.

35 Rittershausen 1785, pp. 26–29. This owes much to Mengs; Meijers, p. 82.

36 Rittershausen 1785, p. 27.

37 Menninghaus; Furniss.

38 Rittershausen 1785, p. 28; Hagedorn 1775, I, bk. 1, ch. 9, pp. 103–123. Rittershausen later returns to this question (p. 60).

39 Rittershausen 1785, pp. 30–32. Rittershausen acknowledges his debt to Mengs.

40 Rittershausen 1785, p. 32; Mengs, p. 77.

Armed with this basic definition of beauty, and a clear understanding of the relative merits of the mechanical and intellectual parts of painting, Rittershausen finally turns his attention to the different schools of artists. Are these characteristics of beauty and skill peculiar to individual artists or can they serve to characterise entire schools? Rittershausen tends towards the latter view and develops his thesis over several pages where he offers an overview of the various schools, discussing their strengths and their weaknesses, providing a cursory history of their development, and offering a brief list of their most distinguished members.<sup>41</sup> Both the mechanical and the intellectual parts of painting are taken into consideration here. The Roman school specialised in drawing but was poor in the use of colour. The members of the Lombard school drew well and painted sublimely but did not master the art of shadows (except for Guido Reni, Francesco Albani (1578–1660), Correggio, and (maybe) Domenichino and Guercino, although their practice was never consistent). The Florentine school was strong in colour early in its history; over the course of time, however, the Tuscan painters became more talented draughtsmen. The Venetian school always excelled in colour.

When discussing the non-Italian schools, Rittershausen evaluates not only their mastery of the mechanical and the intellectual parts of painting but also of the various genres. Few people could deny that the Dutch and Flemish painters were invariably very talented in the use and application of colours and in the art of chiaroscuro, nor that they excelled in history, genre, and landscape painting. The French school, on the other hand, has little to recommend it. The artists are too lazy, refuse to apply themselves, and have therefore seldom succeeded; in short, with a few notable exceptions (he indicates Antoine Coypel and Jacques Courtois (1621–1675)), the French school is little more than a regional Italian school. It is hardly surprising that the German school is treated more kindly by Rittershausen. At its beginnings, it produced artists who were capable of scaling the artistic heights, despite working in less favourable conditions than their Italian counterparts. If only Albrecht Dürer had seen antique sculpture, he would have been able to rival Raphael.<sup>42</sup> Proud patriotism did not, however, blind Rittershausen to the German school's imperfections. Highly precise and detailed work, combined with fine draughtsmanship, was unfortunately not always allied with the most perfect forms and harmonious colours. Harsher words were yet to come, since the author then states that the fine arts have been suffering in the German states over recent years because the country does not esteem its artists and does not yet have an art

41 Rittershausen 1785, pp. 40–48; Meijers, p. 83.

42 Rittershausen seems to imply that Dürer could not have seen much antique sculpture when he was in Italy, where he spent most of his time in Venice. Rittershausen 1785, p. 46.

academy worthy of the name.<sup>43</sup> Neither the British nor the Spanish schools are deemed worthy of mention; it is probably to be imagined that their artists were subsumed into the Flemish and the Italian schools respectively.

At this point in his essay, after having defined beauty, explained the relative merits of the mechanical and intellectual parts of painting, and appraised the various schools, Rittershausen returns once more to his introductory and central question: how should paintings be arranged on the walls of a gallery? The answer is succinct: according to aesthetic principles and the rules of beauty.<sup>44</sup> He here introduces a further essential criterion, which at first sight seems to be a simple digression, but which does prove central to his *biedermännisch* concerns about art as a public good and galleries as public spaces. Art, he claims, is a path towards moral perfection. It should never be thought of as a mere series of historical facts to be learned, a crowd of names and styles that can fill our heads. It can improve our individual and collective taste and can thus aid the common good. Taste is here construed as a moral quality, in no way connected with luxury or frivolity, or limited to an educated and wealthy elite. The fine arts, just like literature, are not meant to afford us only pleasure, but are a form of instruction; admittedly, this can be a pleasurable experience, even if pleasure must always be a means to an end and never an end in itself. 'Their [*schöne Künste und schöne Wissenschaften*, 'fine arts and belles-lettres'] great purpose is to guide our will through sweet violence, to give our passions a correct turn, to wrap our hearts in a flower chain, and to guide them to virtue; their power is almost insurmountable, and our minds follow them like a willing lamb.<sup>45</sup>

By way of this striking comment on the power of art and on its role in society, Rittershausen hopes to demonstrate that a well-organised gallery could be a force for moral improvement. Yet scarcely any connoisseurs—and he is surely hinting at Mechel here—seem to be aware of art's potential for moral education, he argues. The chief culprit for this ignorance is German artistic education, particularly the art academies. As noted above, Rittershausen stated earlier that the German states do not have an art academy worthy of the title. We now understand why he holds such an opinion: the German art academies have always concentrated on the mechanical parts of art and have undervalued painting, which has been considered merely 'the pretty daughter of the mechanical arts'.<sup>46</sup> Consequently, professors in the art academies instil into their students the basic lessons of drawing and colour

43 Rittershausen 1785, p. 48. Academies did exist in Germany of course: Pevsner, pp. 115–124, 140–176. Rittershausen complains that they do not teach young painters all the necessary skills or all the parts of art, and tend to concentrate on drawing techniques: Rittershausen 1785, p. 56.

44 Rittershausen 1785, p. 55; Meijers, p. 83.

45 Rittershausen 1785, p. 55; Penzel, p. 138.

46 Rittershausen 1785, p. 56.

without ever attempting to interpret and communicate the spirit that infuses all art; yet without understanding this spirit, one cannot comprehend art's moral purpose and benefits. A remedy is to hand, in the shape of a new philosophical theory that purports to explain the spirit of art. The work in question is Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten's (1714–1762) *Aesthetica*, first published in 1750.<sup>47</sup> Regrettably, whilst many people know the name of the science—aesthetics—they know nothing of its methods. The result is all too clear on the walls of the Belvedere—a gallery that has been organised along historical rather than aesthetic lines: 'The names of great painters determine everything that is considered worthy of attention in a gallery.'<sup>48</sup>

Rittershausen's solution to this problem at first glance appears illogical. He suggests that in order to combat the historical display advocated by Mechel, a connoisseur should arrange paintings by schools.<sup>49</sup> The reasoning seems fallacious. But closer examination proves that this is not the case. Schools of art, Rittershausen argues, should not be defined by a connoisseur who bases his theories on wide readings in art history and of artists' biographies, but by one who works according to aesthetic theory: the connoisseur analyses the mechanical and intellectual parts of each painting, identifies the genre to which it belongs, and attempts to evaluate its qualities and shortcomings, especially in terms of its 'beauty' and 'perfection'. By so doing, a connoisseur can hope to assign any work of art to a school. Even anonymous pictures can be attributed at least to a school of painting, since as Rittershausen has already observed, 'even the least known artist generally betrays the school to which he belongs'.<sup>50</sup> Within each school, paintings will then be sorted into four groups: one for paintings in which colour predominates, a second for works that reveal excellent draughtsmanship, a third one for paintings whose composition is interesting, and finally, a fourth group for works that stand out in terms of expression. These four groups are familiar to all readers of *De Piles*, since they define the ranking system in the *Balance*.<sup>51</sup> A final classification principle can then be applied: the paintings should be sorted into genres. Even here, great care must be taken. In the genre of history painting, for example, a wide range of diverse subjects is to be found. History paintings must be sorted into religious or profane subjects, historical or literary, poetic or dramatic, tragic or comic. It would be quite improper to juxtapose a Bacchant by Reni and a Holy Family by Raphael.<sup>52</sup>

47 Baumgarten; for the critical reception, see Décultot.

48 Rittershausen 1785, p. 56; Meijers, p. 83.

49 Rittershausen 1785, p. 57; Meijers, p. 83. On p. 89, Rittershausen seems to contradict himself when he states that the division into schools serves only to transmit historical knowledge. This refers solely to the use of schools made in the Viennese collections and should not be taken out of context.

50 Rittershausen 1785, p. 40.

51 Rittershausen 1785, p. 63; Piles 1708; Puttfarken, ch. 4, p. 42.

52 Rittershausen 1785, p. 74; Meijers, p. 83.

There are a couple of exceptions to Rittershausen's blueprint for gallery organisation. First, in a small collection, the primary classification, that of schools, can be dropped. The collection would then be structured by the parts of painting and, within these categories, by the genres. Second, one of the four parts of painting—expression—deserves particular attention. Rittershausen suggests, although he is not quite clear as to whether this should apply to all collections, or only to some, that the paintings selected for the category 'expression' should be subtracted from the main sequence and housed apart, in a 'sanctuary'. Ideally, this 'sanctuary' would be at the end of the sequence of gallery spaces or rooms, so that all the other parts of painting seem to be a prelude to it.<sup>53</sup> Expression therefore stands at the pinnacle of the artist's powers.

When explaining this choice, Rittershausen refers to a collection with which he was familiar and on which he was soon to publish a text—the recently constructed Hofgartengalerie in Munich. In 1783, the building by Carl Albert von Lespilliez (1723–1796) was completed. Seven rooms were available to house the best pieces in the Electoral collections, and the curator entrusted with the work was Lambert Krahe.<sup>54</sup> Krahe offered a mixed hang.<sup>55</sup> The first, second, and fourth rooms showed works from different schools, whereas the third room housed German paintings, the fifth Dutch and Flemish, and the sixth Italian. The last room offered a selection of Dutch and Flemish paintings and played an important role in the gallery. It represented the telos of a visit, the room in which the best specimens were on show.<sup>56</sup> According to Rittershausen, '[t]he collection of their most precious objects is shut up in the last room, as in a sanctuary; one reaches it through the other rooms, as if climbing step by step in order to attain the absolute summit of art'.<sup>57</sup> He was to elaborate further on the idea of a 'holy of holies' for the Munich art collection in a text published three years later.<sup>58</sup>

A gallery organised along aesthetic lines should, Rittershausen claims, please all visitors from all classes and all walks of life: 'dilettantes, artists, scholars, commoners, and nobility'.<sup>59</sup> Why does he believe that he speaks, as he claims, for 'Everyman' and that his project for the organisation of a gallery, unlike Mechel's, is more suitable for people from all classes? First and foremost, to Rittershausen's way of thinking, the gallery that he proposes would be easily accessible to everyone, irrespective of their

53 Rittershausen 1785, p. 82.

54 An anonymous catalogue appeared in 1787: *Die Bildergalerie*. Böttger, p. 113.

55 Analysed by Böttger, pp. 113–117, and Baumstark.

56 The idea of a room for the best paintings in a collection was being tested in Florence after 1780 and would later be adopted elsewhere: Spalletti; Géal; Hurley 2012; Hurley 2019.

57 Rittershausen 1785, p. 82; Meijers, p. 84.

58 Rittershausen 1788, pp. 194–340, especially pp. 280–340. See Baumstark.

59 Rittershausen 1785, p. 77.



level of education. Whereas a collection organised along historical lines presupposes some understanding of history and, above all, knowledge of artists' biographies, a collection arranged according to aesthetic principles is open to everyone. Some might argue that aesthetic appreciation is an elite activity. Rittershausen opposes that idea throughout his text; in a series of comments reminiscent of Jean-Baptiste Dubos' affirmation of the public's role as an arbiter of taste, he sets out to prove that art can be a matter of public opinion and judgement.<sup>60</sup> For example, when attempting to ascertain the qualities of a painting, should one listen only to a coterie of connoisseurs? In Rittershausen's view, this is a cardinal error, and he offers a refreshing opinion on the way to go about things. 'Listen to the verdict of all classes of people (all those who are not absolutely degenerate); and you will soon find out whether and how they feel; only don't listen to your gentlemen (the art connoisseurs) about it.'<sup>61</sup> The lorgnetted, bewigged noble connoisseur is less likely to deliver an honest and accurate verdict on the qualities of a Renaissance painting than is the bourgeois or the working-class man or woman. The idea appears incongruous, but the reasoning behind Rittershausen's suggestion is quite simple: the true mark of a good artwork is that it arouses in the spectator—whatever his level of education and his knowledge of art history—the feelings that the artist wished to arouse.<sup>62</sup>

The democratic quality of art reveals itself in another striking fact, namely that 'true beauty, if it reveals itself to a high degree, pleases Everyone'.<sup>63</sup> The logical conclusion, which Rittershausen proceeds to apply, is that if young artists imagine works that will please everyone, they will have discovered true beauty.<sup>64</sup> When confronted with the question of relative taste, he concedes that different subjects and styles appeal to different people with different interests. But this variety is in itself an advantage, since it leaves plenty of scope for a range of styles and subjects; all of them will no doubt please someone. To prove his point, he then reels off a litany of artists' names and their potential publics. Raphael, we learn, could interest philosophers, scholars, and theologians. Correggio could charm literary types, Titian would fascinate natural historians, Peter Paul Rubens poets, Anthony van Dyck physiognomists, Jusepe de Ribera and Nicolas Poussin tragedians, and so on. The list includes the names of 22 artists and almost as many areas of interest; much, if not all, of human activity is covered here.<sup>65</sup>

This faith in Everyman's judgement runs profoundly throughout the *Betrachtungen*, motivating many of the author's beliefs concerning collections and their

60 Dubos; Lombard; Kaiser; Menant.

61 Rittershausen 1785, p. 23.

62 Rittershausen 1785, p. 24; Penzel, p. 136.

63 Rittershausen 1785, p. 27; Penzel, p. 137.

64 Rittershausen 1785, pp. 27–28.

65 Rittershausen 1785, pp. 33–39.

display. Building his argument on a corpus of artistic literature characteristic of eighteenth-century thought—Dubos, De Piles, Anton Raphael Mengs, Sulzer, Christian Ludwig von Hagedorn, and others—he constructs a vision of a gallery that should serve as an open space for aesthetic discussion and artistic judgement. Art possesses, in Rittershausen's view, a very important moral function. As he states, art's aim is 'to guide our will through sweet violence, to give our passions a correct turn, to wrap our hearts in a flower chain, and to guide them to virtue'.<sup>66</sup> A gallery should put this aim on display and should allow viewers to concentrate on the aesthetic and moral perfection of the works of art rather than on historical labels. Mechel's visible art history, with its insistence on chronology and artistic biography, would distract or dissuade wide swathes of the population. Rittershausen's proposed gallery organisation would exploit a division into schools in order to open the collection up to a wider public. The gallery would no longer be the aesthetic and intellectual playground for a group of connoisseurs and wealthy collectors but would instead propose aesthetic and moral education for the whole population. After all, '[a]s soon as a collection is intended for public use, it must be able to achieve it [moral perfection]'.<sup>67</sup> The *biedermännisch* observations on artistic geography in the museum offer a refreshing glimpse into the debate concerning art history and its classification at the end of the eighteenth century.

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66 Rittershausen 1785, p. 55; Meijers, p. 83; Penzel, p. 137.

67 Rittershausen 1785, p. 59; Meijers, p. 83.

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## About the Author

**Cecilia Hurley** teaches museology and history of collections at the École du Louvre in Paris. She is also Head of Special Collections at the University of Neuchâtel. After working on antiquarian studies and heritage at the time of the French Revolution, she has just completed a book on masterpiece rooms and canons in nineteenth-century European art museums.

## 19. An Organisation by Schools Considered Too Commercial for the Newly Founded Louvre Museum

*Christine Godfroy-Gallardo*

### **Abstract**

The decision to open the Muséum des Arts et des Sciences in the Louvre in 1793 with an eclectic arrangement of paintings sparked strong criticism. The Minister of the Interior, who refused to organise masterpieces by schools and chronologically according to the advice of the dealer Jean-Baptiste-Pierre Lebrun, was dismissed, as was the Museum Commission for the arrangement of the collections. Opposed to a presentation of pictures that followed the precepts of the academic tradition, Lebrun succeeded in imposing classification methods that were akin to commercial practices. The decision to select the Louvre paintings in line with moral virtues in order to guide all citizens along the path of moral regeneration called into question, though only for a short period, the presence of Dutch and French paintings within the Louvre's collections.

**Keywords:** painting display, public education, genre, Dutch and Flemish school, Académie royale de peinture, morality

Long before the new Muséum des Arts et des Sciences (Museum of Arts and Sciences) opened at the Louvre in Paris in 1793, decisions about the arrangement of the national collections sparked intense controversy between the commissioners in charge of setting up artworks and specialists. In particular, the art dealer Jean-Baptiste-Pierre Lebrun opposed a presentation of paintings deemed obsolete. These quarrels, revealing political struggles within the Louvre itself, highlighted the abandonment of the old academic rules too attached to the Ancien Régime and the emergence of new methods of appreciation linked to the art market. On the strength of the publications he wrote several months apart, Lebrun established himself as

an expert on the organisation of the *chefs-d'oeuvre* collected in the Louvre. His knowledge and, above all, the support of the deputy Jacques-Louis David enabled him to officially denounce the incompetence of the commissioners—mainly former academic painters—responsible for the deplorable arrangement of the paintings. To the commissioners, the classification by school and the chronological organisation advocated by Lebrun echoed a type of arrangement reserved exclusively for painting shops. The choice of masterpieces for the new museum showed the extent to which genre painting, in both the Dutch and French schools, remained an inferior category that was likely to corrupt the morality of French citizens newly freed from the yoke of despotism. The comparison between the arrangement of paintings in the Muséum and that in a dealer's shop remained recurrent until the middle of the nineteenth century, showing how demanding the public was towards collections that it had firmly appropriated.

The decision to establish a Muséum des Arts et des Sciences in the Louvre was made official by a decree of the Legislative Assembly (Assemblée législative) in May 1791.<sup>1</sup> A commission known as the Museum Commission (Commission du Muséum) was appointed the following year in order to organise the exhibition of the Louvre's masterpieces before the public opening.<sup>2</sup> This commission consisted of six members, who were mainly artists from the Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture (Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture) and who had been personally appointed by the Minister of the Interior, Jean-Marie Roland de la Platière (1734–1793) (Fig. 74).<sup>3</sup> Having no knowledge of painting, Roland relied on these artists, since those in charge of setting up artworks at the official Salon were traditionally Academicians. Since the opening day of the Muséum was fixed for 10 August 1793, the anniversary of the fall of the monarchy, the commissioners had less than a year to build up the national collections.<sup>4</sup> In an extremely short period of time, they succeeded in assembling 537 paintings by masters of all schools, as well as 124 objects of curiosity, mostly from the former royal collections and confiscated church properties.<sup>5</sup> The arrangement of the artworks in the Muséum did not give rise to any disagreement within the commission. The new administrators

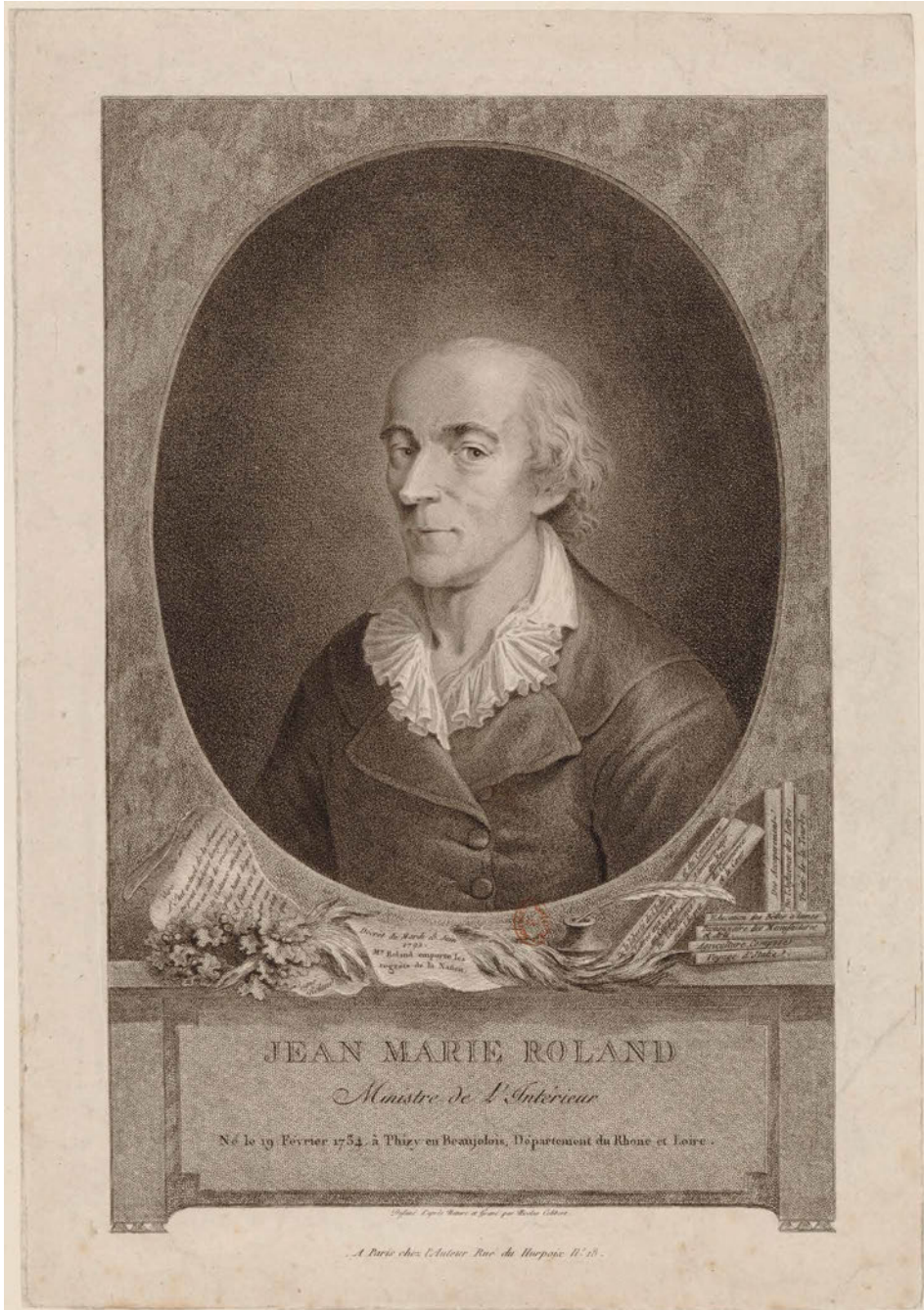
1 On 26 May 1791, the following decree was voted on: 'The Louvre and the Tuileries together will be the national palace, intended for the king's residence and for the assembly of all the monuments of science and art, and for the main institutions of public education.' Mavidal, XXVI, p. 471.

2 The Museum Commission was established on 1 October 1792. Cantarel-Besson, p. XIII.

3 The Museum Commission was composed of painters (Jean-Baptiste Regnault, François-André Vincent, Pierre Pasquier (1731–1806), P. Cossart, Nicolas-René Jollain), and a mathematician (Charles Bossut (1730–1814)). The Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture was abolished on 8 August 1793, two days before the official opening of the Muséum. 'Considérations', III, pp. 27–28.

4 McClellan, pp. 91–123.

5 Objects of curiosity included bronzes, busts, marble tables, porcelain, and clocks. *Catalogue*.



74. Nicolas Colibert, *Jean-Marie Roland, Minister of the Interior*, c. 1792–1793, etching, 31 x 19.8 cm, Département des estampes et photographies, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Hennin, 11695. © Département des estampes et photographies, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.



demonstrated an unwavering consensus throughout their mission. The instructions given by the Minister of the Interior for the display of paintings remained, however, vague: Roland recommended that the commission members 'intertwine the various schools a great deal' and make the general arrangement similar to 'a flowerbed to be ornamented with the brightest colours'.<sup>6</sup> These recommendations on the arrangement of the artistic and scientific collections did not represent innovative ideas for the end of the eighteenth century, but were, on the contrary, part of the academic tradition.<sup>7</sup> The very terms used by the minister echoed such famous authors as André Félibien and Roger de Piles. These authors likewise discussed painting in bucolic terms, using the metaphor of the flowerbed. De Piles, in his *Cours de peinture par principes* (1708), considered painting a 'beautiful flowerbed; Genius as the background, principles as the seeds, and the good spirit as the gardener who prepares the earth to sow the seeds in their seasons'.<sup>8</sup> Likewise, during the seventh conference of the Académie royale, recorded by Félibien, the painter Sébastien Bourdon (1616–1671) chose, in his comment on Nicolas Poussin's picture of the *Blind Men of Jericho*, 'to imitate the bees, who, finding a flowerbed ornamented with an infinite number of flowers, select a few on which they take pleasure in gathering honey' (Fig. 75).<sup>9</sup>

The arrangement of the Muséum's masterpieces followed the principles of presentation of private painting galleries and natural history cabinets, as described by Claude-Henri Watelet, Antoine-Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville, and other authors. In his *Conchyliology* (1742), Dezallier d'Argenville recommended arranging shell collections in parterres separated into several compartments: 'As one seeks in the parterres only the pleasure of the sight, one arranges there symmetrically the most opposite forms and colours; it is the taste which decides it.'<sup>10</sup> Placed directly under the authority of the Minister of the Interior, the Muséum's commissioners used the formula of the flowerbed in their essay entitled *Considerations sur les arts et le muséum national*, which they presented to the National Assembly (Assemblée nationale) in 1793: 'The arrangement we have adopted', they explained, 'is that of an infinitely varied flowerbed, but with the compartments traced out for us.'<sup>11</sup> The organisation of the Muséum's national collections followed the display established as early as 1750, when the king's paintings were exhibited in the Palais du Luxembourg. The visual pleasure produced by the harmony of colours and the welcome effect

6 Roland de la Platière, pp. 213–214.

7 Pommier, pp. 67–86.

8 Piles, p. 387.

9 Félibien, p. 107. The conference was held on 3 December 1667.

10 Dezallier d'Argenville, I, p. 192.

11 The 'traced compartments' probably referred to the bays, or *travées*, that punctuate the Louvre's Grand Gallery, between which paintings should be placed. 'Considérations', III, p. 187.



75. Perspective View of the Salon of the Académie royale de Peinture et de Sculpture at the Louvre, 1778, etching with hand-colouring, 30 x 42 cm, Département des estampes et photographies, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Hennin, 9707. © Département des estampes et photographies, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

of the variety of subjects was more important than the display of the paintings. The decoration of the Palais du Luxembourg was meant to provide its audience with enjoyable entertainment. Paintings and drawings were arranged to instruct visitors, but always in a pleasant manner. The same desire to charm and delight the citizens was evident in the words of Minister Roland. The commissioners' mission was primarily to 'amuse the *curieux*' and 'entertain the *amateurs*'. The arrangement chosen was particularly intended to avoid monotonous visits. Paintings were not grouped by artist or by school; instead, they were mixed according to their colours to produce a harmonious effect. Nor were they classified by genre. Themes were deliberately combined in order to keep the viewers' minds alert. 'The pious, the profane, the poetic, the pastoral were used as pendants and the different schools enhance each other', wrote the Chevalier de Tincourt to his noble correspondent, Madame la Marquise de \*\*\*, in 1750, after his visit to the Luxembourg gallery.<sup>12</sup> The Muséum's commissioners made every effort not to tire the visitors' eyesight by exhibiting ensembles of objects of the same kind. They took care to display statues, curiosities, and engravings among paintings, according to established practice (Fig. 76).

The opening of the Muséum aroused the enthusiasm of citizens, who were happy to finally come and admire the exceptional pieces gathered at the Louvre. Curiously, comments from visitors were extremely rare in newspapers. In the opinion of the commissioners, the public was rather satisfied with 'the overall quality and variety of the gallery', but no particular, documented point of view corroborated their statements.<sup>13</sup> The only criticisms published in the press came from practitioners, such as the painter, restorer, and art dealer Lebrun, the art restorer Jean-Michel Picault (1750–1794), and the painter and deputy of the National Convention (Convention nationale), David. These three men took turns violently attacking the commissioners in charge of organising the Muséum and their supervisor, the Minister of the Interior, until Roland resigned and the Museum Commission was dissolved.<sup>14</sup> Lebrun, Picault, and David opened up a public debate by questioning the minister's decisions concerning the arrangement of the national collections. They insisted particularly on the poor display of the paintings, which they attributed to the incompetence of the commissioners. The lack of classification by school was one of the main grievances against the Museum Commission. Extremely intense, the accusations made by the three men revealed excessive personal ambitions. Lebrun and Picault were stating their criticisms with the intention of integrating

<sup>12</sup> Tincourt, p. 22.

<sup>13</sup> BnF, MCA, 'Aux membres'.

<sup>14</sup> Roland was Minister of the Interior from 24 March to 13 June 1792, then again from 10 August 1792 to 23 January 1793. Bajot, p. 49.



the Muséum's administration at the highest level, while David was trying to extend his authority over the institution by personally appointing men of confidence to head the Muséum. The protagonists called out to each other through newspapers.<sup>15</sup>

### A Museum Useful for Public Education

The subversive actions against Minister Roland began long before the opening of the Muséum. At the end of 1792, Lebrun wrote to Roland several times to offer his services, but without success. Reacting to the Minister's categorical refusal to employ him, Lebrun took up his pen to explain to all citizens how an experienced man such as himself would consider organising the new institution. Several months apart, he published his *Réflexions sur le Muséum national*, followed by his *Observations sur le Muséum national, pour servir de suite aux Réflexions qu'il a déjà publiées sur le même sujet*. Finally, in 1794, he printed *Quelques idées sur la disposition, l'arrangement et la décoration du muséum*.<sup>16</sup> As Lebrun repeated insistently, the overriding rule, in his eyes, was to arrange all the paintings by school and in chronological order and to use the arrangement to reflect the progress of art. Any other system would lead to such confusion and disorder that the Muséum would offer the public only a mass of paintings organised without choice, taste, or even knowledge. The way in which paintings were displayed, usually by theme or genre, was evolving at the time towards a requirement of rigorous classification by national school. Already in 1776, Lebrun recommended this type of presentation for the display of the Prince de Conti (1717–1776) collection. Often called upon to supervise the arrangement of collectors' galleries, art dealers were the first to undertake revising the traditional order of presentation for their customers. From the middle of the eighteenth century, a classification by school began to be reflected in sale catalogues, which no longer presented paintings simply in sequence, but separated them into sections, generally according to a division between the Italian school, the French school, or the Dutch and Flemish school.<sup>17</sup>

Fiercely opposed to a presentation of the national collections based solely on visual pleasure, Lebrun legitimised his point of view by stressing the need to make the Muséum useful for public instruction. In the early years of the French Revolution, the theme of education attracted and held the attention of deputies during debates in the National Assembly. The social utility of education was considered fundamental by the elected representatives of the Republic, since it was

<sup>15</sup> Oliver.

<sup>16</sup> Lebrun 1792; Lebrun 1793a; Lebrun 1794.

<sup>17</sup> Michel, p. 234. See also the essay by Korthals Altes in this edited collection.

supposed to form good citizens, who were happier and more useful to the nation. As Minister of the Interior, Roland could not be insensitive to such arguments. After nearly 40 years as an inspector of manufactures, he knew how the nation's resources were drained and needed to be quickly revitalised. Roland, too, was convinced of the usefulness of instruction—a sentiment repeatedly expressed in his various letters to the commissioners. He believed that the establishment of the Louvre collections should have two main objectives: to nourish a taste for the fine arts among visitors and to be a school for artists by allowing them to come and copy paintings.<sup>18</sup>

Criticised for their chosen gallery arrangement, the members of the commission explained that the organisation of the masterpieces was only a temporary measure, pending the completed renovation of the Grand Gallery. They averred that they were not opposed to a classification by school, as recommended by Lebrun, but would prefer to limit this presentation to a single room in the museum. Learned amateurs, for whom this room would be intended, would then find something to 'satisfy their taste' and would be able to 'recall the chronological history of art pleasantly and without difficulty'.<sup>19</sup> An organisation by school and a chronological order would, in their opinion, not facilitate student learning as effectively. Comparison between masters, so useful for the training of young artists, was easier when paintings from different schools were intermingled. Assessing the merit of painters was more difficult to accomplish when pictures were arranged by school and grouped by artist. Schools were therefore deliberately mixed together in the Muséum, in order to 'develop the students' genius, by presenting them with masterpieces in various genres from the same point of view'.<sup>20</sup> Roland was even more hostile than his subordinates to a methodical arrangement of paintings, since he believed that comparison between masters only led to unproductive discourse: 'Strange to believe that it is important for artists to be able to easily compare the different ages and the different ways of each one in particular', he argued. 'It is infinitely better, in my opinion, to look for beauty in all genres in order to form great ideas of it and ideas of their own than to enjoy doing sterile comparisons that would only tend towards futile criticism.'<sup>21</sup> According to Roland, the Muséum was not just for connoisseurs, but must satisfy the entire population, without distinction. 'This institution belongs to everyone. Everyone has the right to enjoy it',<sup>22</sup> he insisted, refusing to accept an overly didactic presentation of the collections lest such a

18 BnF, MCA, 'Lettre'.

19 BnF, MCA, 'Aux membres', p. 6.

20 *Catalogue*.

21 Roland de la Platière, quoted by Courajod, p. CLXXII.

22 Roland de la Platière, quoted by Courajod, p. CLXXII. Compare with the essay by Hurley in this edited collection.

display scare visitors away. Exhibiting a beautiful painting, whatever its genre and age, was the best way of forming the taste of citizens and, especially, of contributing to the emergence of good craftsmen useful for the economic development of the country. By denigrating dealers, the Minister contrasted the idle occupations of amateurs vainly discussing the qualities of a painting with the practical activities of craftsmen so essential to reviving national industry.

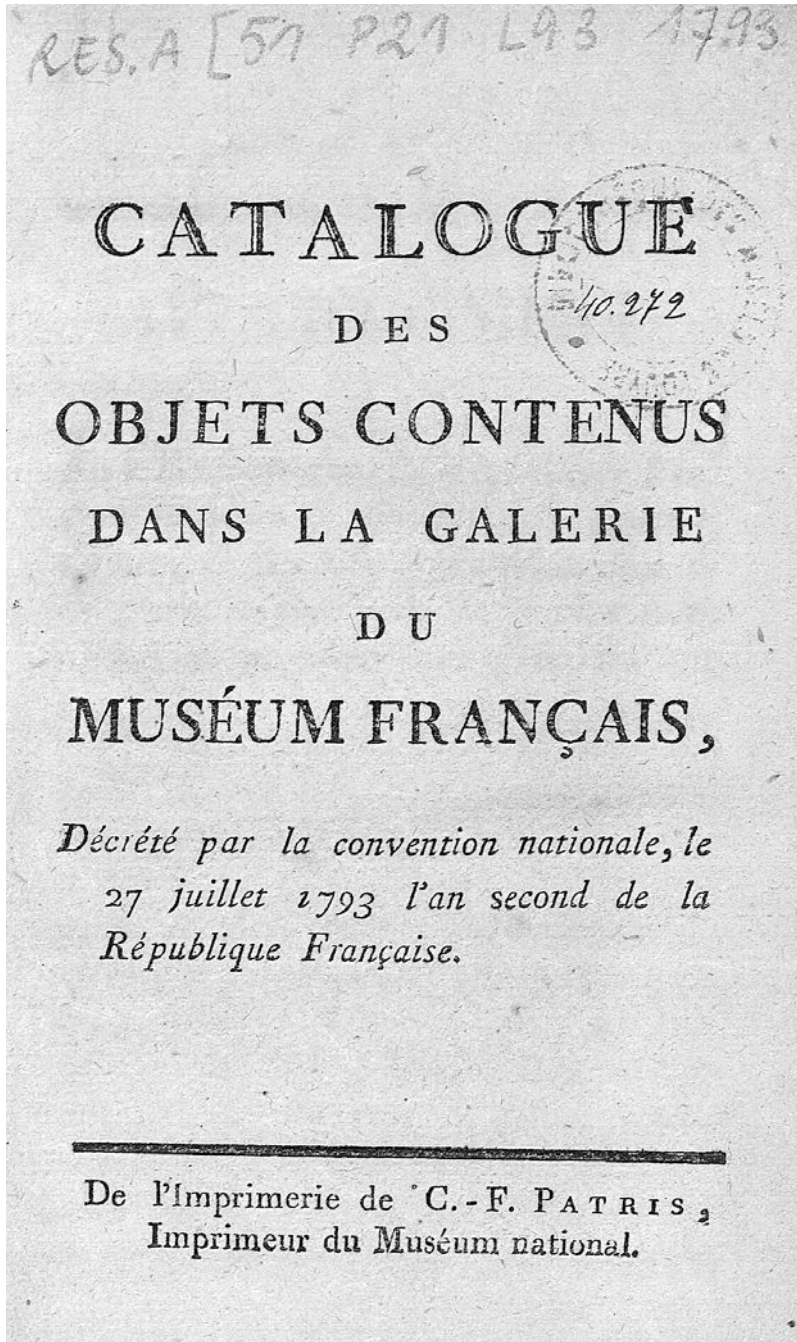
### Artists Considered as Incompetent Experts

Criticisms of the arrangement of the Muséum's collections published in the press during the winter of 1792–1793 were a clever way of questioning the legitimacy of its administrators. For both Lebrun and Picault, the decision not to establish a classification of paintings by school reflected the inefficiency of the commission's members.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, they invoked the status of painters to justify the commissioners' incompetence. The minister's decision to designate mostly artists to take care of the collections was regrettable, they averred. Lebrun and Picault sought to demonstrate to what extent these academic painters, whose talent was generally not even mediocre, seemed to be unsuitable for the prominent roles given to them.<sup>24</sup> According to them, artists, whatever their value, should not take care of such a prestigious institution as the Muséum des Arts. Lebrun and Picault compared artists with connoisseurs, who, in their view, knew the most about paintings and, above all, had more experience than painters, who were only busy with their own commissions. The creation of a national museum, the outstanding symbol of the new Republic, required the talent of capable and educated men. Lebrun argued that artists lacked knowledge about how to assess the value of the masterpieces for which they were responsible. In order to substantiate his remarks, he listed in his *Observations sur le Muséum national* all the falsely attributed paintings and the many copies that were displayed to visitors as originals. The catalogue published at the opening of the Muséum would contain an unacceptable number of errors. 'They made a mess of everything', complained Lebrun, 'mixing without distinction, the beautiful with the passable, and the passable with the bad, which should have been absolutely excluded' (Fig. 77).<sup>25</sup> Three months after the publication of the first catalogue, the administration published a new list of paintings, which followed the presentation of the previous booklet, but this time included 47 changes of attribution. Although these modifications were validated by Lebrun himself,

23 Picault 1793.

24 Picault 1859, p. 520.

25 Lebrun 1793a, p. 14.



77. Catalogue des objets contenus dans la galerie du Muséum français, décrété par la Convention nationale le 27 juillet 1793, l'an second de la République française. © Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Paris.



whose name came after that of Commissioners Nicolas-René Jollain (1732–1804), François-André Vincent, and Jean-Baptiste Regnault (1754–1829), the dealer kept his distance from members of the commission. According to him, nine paintings described as original would still be pastiches or copies.<sup>26</sup>

Taken to task personally, the minister did not have time to further develop his defence. Violently attacked by the Montagnards, Robespierre's (1758–1794) supporters, Roland was forced to leave his ministry. The Museum Commission was dismissed, and a new Conservatoire was set up, this time with the restorer Picault among its members.<sup>27</sup> This Conservatoire, whose members were mainly appointed by David himself, intended to follow Lebrun's recommendations concerning the classification of the collections. According to the report drawn up by one of its members, Casimir Varon (1761–1796), the first step was to arrange the different schools of art close to each other, so that the gallery could offer visitors an uninterrupted sequence of the progress of art.<sup>28</sup> In this way, the curators sought to present a positive history of the human spirit. The result, however, did not live up to the public's expectations. Despite the new willingness to classify artworks rigorously, visitors complained about the poor arrangement of the paintings, which were not displayed in chronological sequence. Comments in the press regularly compared the museum to a shop, or even a storeroom, where the collections were presented in a jumbled fashion, with no apparent order. The terms used to describe the museum were hardly flattering: visitors evoked a 'heap' of poorly distributed paintings and objects,<sup>29</sup> a deceptive shop,<sup>30</sup> especially because of the daylight that made it impossible to see the paintings properly. Even the picture frames were criticised; visitors drew a parallel with the gold frames of different sizes and formats that were displayed in untidy shops. 'No matter what you do, a museum of paintings of all shapes and sizes with gold frames will always look like a vast merchant's store', as the *Décade philosophique* of December 1794 commented.<sup>31</sup> Whatever the classification, when the shape and size of canvases were mixed without attention to balance and symmetry, the result inevitably lacked harmony. Determined to find the best possible arrangement for the Muséum's masterpieces, the Conservatoire

26 Lebrun 1793a, p. 13.

27 Order of the Minister of the Interior, 11 Pluviôse an II (30 January 1794); Rondonneau, IV, part 2, p. 874. Picault was appointed member of the Conservatoire of the Museum of Arts (Conservatoire du Muséum des Arts) as a restorer of paintings, while Lebrun became a member of the Temporary Commission of Arts (Commission temporaire des arts), responsible, among other things, for drawing up inventories of requisitioned artworks.

28 Varon, p. 14. Compare with the essay by Racioppi in this edited collection.

29 'Suite de l'Extrait', p. 150.

30 V[...], p. 845.

31 'Sur le Muséum', p. 216.

regularly revised the order of the paintings. These incessant changes irritated visitors, who did not understand the reasons for the continuous modifications.

## Anti-Revolutionary Schools of Painting

In addition to the arrangement of artworks in the Muséum, the choice of schools to be exhibited was controversial in these times of moral purification and focus on citizen education. While the northern schools were widely represented in the collections requisitioned from *émigrés*, members of the Conservatoire doubted the necessity of exhibiting paintings of the Flemish and Dutch masters.<sup>32</sup> The sorting of the king's former cabinet gave rise to discussions about the value of pieces to be kept in the Louvre. According to the decree of 24 February 1794, the Conservatoire planned to 'as quickly as possible [...] remove from the Muséum any works that are not worthy of being included in the establishment'.<sup>33</sup> Aware of the moral significance of their mission, the administrators refused, by mutual agreement, to exhibit all paintings that were contrary to good taste. Only pictures useful to public education deserved to be displayed in the Muséum. As Varon explained: 'If regenerated art should only offer here the expression of greatness or exquisite feelings of the soul, all that remains is to classify the masterpieces in the manner most suitable for public education.'<sup>34</sup> According to the curators, display of the Italian school alone would undoubtedly be more profitable for artists and more interesting for public taste.<sup>35</sup> Was it then necessary to admit only historical paintings and reject all genre paintings, which seemed unworthy of the attention of regenerated citizens? At risk of being purged, pictures of the Flemish and Dutch masters, whose subject was considered too scabrous, were in danger of leaving the Muséum for good. The threat seemed sufficiently credible for public opinion to be moved by this prospect and to protest (through Lebrun's voice) against the suppression of these two schools. During a session at the Popular and Republican Society of Arts (*Société populaire et républicaine des Arts*), of which he was a member, Lebrun strongly opposed such a radical solution: 'I know of no "genre" in painting when it offers me features that do not demean man', Lebrun argued.<sup>36</sup> Three months after Lebrun's intervention, the

32 *Émigrés* were mainly aristocrats, and more generally all those who left France for political reasons during the Revolution. Bodinier, p. 177.

33 Courajod, p. LXVIII.

34 Varon, p. 10.

35 Lavallée, p. 10.

36 Lebrun 1793b, p. 323. Succeeding the former General Commune of Arts (*Commune générale des Arts*), the Popular and Republican Society of Arts held its meetings in the Laocoon Room of the Louvre. Among its members were artists, such as François Gérard (1770–1837), Louis-Léopold Boilly (1761–1845), and

fall of Robespierre led to the definitive abandonment of any attempt to purify the national collections.<sup>37</sup> The Flemish and Dutch paintings were once again exhibited in the Louvre's institution, but the alarm caused much commotion among art lovers.<sup>38</sup>

Against all expectations, even the French school was not immune to the wrath of censorship. The paintings of François Boucher, Antoine Watteau (1684–1721), and Carle van Loo were considered too licentious not to pervert the morality of citizens. As the sculptor Jean-Joseph Espercieux (1757–1840) commented in a report addressed to the Popular and Republican Society of Arts, the paintings to be selected for the Muséum should aim solely at educating, regenerating morality, and inspiring love of country. Not only were antisocial, obscene, or immoral themes condemned, but even subjects considered frivolous or futile were considered anti-revolutionary.<sup>39</sup>

Let them therefore disappear from the republican collection, these bland paintings, sycophant, and cowardly productions which have offered all too often to the people's eyes the shocking images of tyrannical acts, low, and creeping tributes, demeaning adulations, narrow and a thousand time hackneyed ideas [...], reported the deputy Gabriel Bouquier.<sup>40</sup>

Such despicable productions bore witness above all to the prostitution of the talents of the artists who were employed during the reign of Louis XV to flatter the pride and moral depravity of their sovereign (Fig. 78). Unworthy of the gaze of posterity, these indecent paintings were designated for public condemnation. While the Flemish and Dutch school hung once again in the Muséum, paintings of the old French school were deliberately kept out of public view. The end of the Revolution did not signal a return to favour of the rejected French artists. Under the Empire, contentious artworks were rarely exhibited in the Musée Napoléon (Napoleon Museum). The curators' intention this time was not to protect the morality of visitors, but rather to defend the excellence of the French school. It was indeed a question of not showing paintings that might prove that 'the School of Paris, from 1720 to 1780, felt more than any other school the universal decadence of the fine arts'.<sup>41</sup> While museum visitors could see a rich panorama of the principal artists

Jean-Baptiste Isabey (1767–1855). This society dealt with the interpretation of the decrees of the Convention concerning arts and also with current issues, including the restoration of paintings and the organisation of public celebrations. The regulations and the minutes of the sessions from February to June 1794 were published in a journal kept by the architect Athanase Déournelle (1766–1807). Cited by Renouvier, p. 15.

37 Robespierre's arrest took place on 9 Thermidor an II (27 July 1794). Emile-Mâle, p. 110.

38 Spieth, pp. 213–214.

39 Déournelle, p. 192.

40 Bouquier.

41 Malte-Brun, p. 2.



78. François Boucher, *Portrait of Louis XV in Profile to the Right, Medal Worn by Geniuses above an Allegorical Composition*, engraving, 21.6 x 33 cm, Département des estampes et photographies, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, Hennin, 7694. © Département des estampes et photographies, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris.

of the Italian and the Dutch and Flemish schools, the French school included merely a limited number of masterpieces by old masters such as Charles Le Brun, Hyacinthe Rigaud (1659–1743), Poussin, and Laurent de La Hyre (1606–1656), the only ones deemed capable of strengthening national pride.

### **Attribution and Authenticity: Two Commercial Criteria**

The controversy surrounding the establishment of the national collections highlighted two ways of appreciating paintings: one linked to academic doctrine and the other in line with the development of the Parisian art market. If Lebrun focused his interest on the attribution and authenticity of masterpieces, the commissioners emphasised above all the aesthetic qualities of artworks. The ability to evaluate the beauty of a painting and to express the subject, the colour, or the language of form according to academic rules remained traditionally the prerogative of *amateurs*.<sup>42</sup> Only this knowledge, specific to a man of taste, was highlighted by the Académie. The criteria that Lebrun put in the spotlight were not among the indispensable principles for the appreciation of a painting according to art theorists. They were mainly the responsibility of dealers. Giving the exact name of the artist was of only minor interest to academicians. Being able to distinguish old masters was more useful to a dealer in paintings than to a man of taste, as the theorist Dom Pernety (1716–1801) explained:

Dealers use it to give a great idea of the paintings they want to sell and to get a larger sum relative to the master's fame. But to this knowledge, or rather to this talent, if one does not join a delicate discernment of the beauties and perfections of art, especially in relation to composition and expression, this talent is very little.<sup>43</sup>

Apart from questions of attribution, knowing whether a painting was an original or a copy seemed of secondary importance for an individual who was interested only in studying the merits or defects of a picture. As the Abbé Laugier (1713–1769) pointed out, 'when the copy is as beautiful as the original, the reason for preference between the two is all about pure fantasy'.<sup>44</sup> It did not matter whether the painting was an original or a copy, as long as it was of high quality. Dealers who focused on attribution and authenticity did not possess sufficient abilities to perceive the merits of a painting. Their knowledge was limited to pricing, according to Roland.

42 Bussmann, p. 178.

43 Pernety, p. 342.

44 Laugier, p. 16.

'Dealers know better than painters how to sell paintings, but not how to make them', he insisted.<sup>45</sup> The commercial value of a masterpiece was far removed from the concerns of *amateurs*. Above all, trade and its demeaning practices were considered incompatible with the status of the connoisseur. In his *Mémoires secrets*, the critic Louis-Petit de Bachaumont (1690–1771) severely condemned Lebrun's profession, accusing him of degrading art through mercantile manoeuvres.<sup>46</sup> A dealer could not be qualified as a connoisseur for the sole reason that he was familiar with trading practices related to the art market. This familiarity and the associated skills inevitably linked Lebrun to the status of a mere *curieux*. Roland's comments and the opinions of former academic painters who became commissioners of the French Republic testified to persistent prejudices against dealers, who were considered to be vulgar brokers without principles, more interested in their own profit than in the interests of the nation. The knowledge necessary to assess pictures was contemptuously assumed not to be in their possession.<sup>47</sup>

Although the evaluation of pictures did not imply taking into consideration the criteria of authenticity and attribution for academicians, the question of the author more than the ability to distinguish between what was good and what was bad in a painting lay at the heart of collectors' interests from the middle of the eighteenth century.<sup>48</sup> The sales processes that were then established required a correct filiation of pictures. The growing discredit of copies and the attention paid to attribution highlighted a transfer of competence from academic painters to dealers. The latter took over the title of 'connoisseur', which had previously been denied them. The term 'connoisseur' was now regularly attached to the most respected Parisian dealers. In his correspondence with Minister Roland, Lebrun did not dare to call himself a 'connoisseur'; he preferred to imply his status as a connoisseur so as not to further irritate his opponent, as the Museum Commission noted.<sup>49</sup> By reproaching the commissioners of the Muséum for not having all the knowledge required to evaluate paintings, Lebrun referred to their lack of attention to the problems of attribution and authenticity, so important to him.<sup>50</sup> It did not seem possible that these artists could display paintings by school, 'as they were unable to determine precisely from which school the paintings came and very often took copies as originals', Lebrun complained.<sup>51</sup> Attribution and authenticity were indispensable for establishing a rigorous classification of paintings according to

45 BnF, MCA, 'Réponse'.

46 Cited by Gosselin, p. 66.

47 AnF, IP, F17/1059, n°1.

48 Chanu, p. 112.

49 'Commission', III, p. 91.

50 Lebrun 1793a, p. 15.

51 Lebrun 1792, p. 12.

schools, he argued, and for rejecting from the Louvre copies of masters that were gathered there. Contrary to Roland's assertion, only dealers accustomed to visiting galleries where the most famous collections of paintings were assembled had the knowledge needed to set up the Muséum's *chefs-d'oeuvre*. Opposed to artists clinging to the academic principles of an undesirable past, the dealer Lebrun was now asserting himself as the only expert capable of ensuring the prestige of the national collections.

Criticisms of the classification of paintings and the disorderly stacking of artworks in the Muséum des Arts et des Sciences led to a questioning of the institution itself. The deplorable arrangement of the national collections seemed to justify the indignant objections raised against the massive arrival at the Louvre of masterpieces that had been seized by French armies from the newly conquered territories of the Austrian Netherlands, Holland, and then Italy. Widely discussed in newspapers, the decision to arrange paintings by schools and in chronological order was still not fixed under the Empire, the Restoration, and the July Monarchy. It was not until 1848 that all the Muséum's paintings were classified in a methodical order, by dates and schools, under the authority of the new director of the Louvre, Philippe-Auguste Jeanron (1809–1877).<sup>52</sup> Comparisons to museums created in the major European capitals encouraged administrators to align themselves with an already validated arrangement. However, even in 1850, critics still considered the display of the Louvre's paintings dreadful, employing arguments used almost half a century earlier in the controversy between the Museum Commission and the experts Lebrun and Picault. Even today, the hanging of masterpieces in the Louvre remains subjective, linked to the biases of curators who, while opting for a chronological presentation of the paintings by national school, also choose to adapt their choices to the pleasure of visitors.

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## About the Author

**Christine Godfroy-Gallardo** is a Research Fellow in the Cultural and Social Art History Department (HICSA, University Paris I – Sorbonne). After obtaining a PhD degree in art history under the supervision of Dominique Poulot in 2014, she became professor of art history while continuing her research on the history of the art market and the first national museums.



## 20. *Scuole Italiane* or *Scuola Italiana*? Art Display, Historiography, Cultural Nationalism, and the Newly Founded Pinacoteca Vaticana (1817)

*Pier Paolo Racioppi*

### Abstract

The inaugural arrangement of the Pinacoteca Vaticana, instituted in 1817, after the restitution of the artworks confiscated by the French army in 1797, aimed to celebrate the 'Italian school'. The notion of a singular *scuola italiana* was revealed through the choice and arrangement of specific paintings, as well as through the Pinacoteca's catalogue and the literature of the time. This notion matured during and after the French rule of the Italian peninsula as a result of growing Italian cultural nationalism.

**Keywords:** Pinacoteca Vaticana, Canova, art display, Napoleon, cultural nationalism

In 1815, after the arrival in Paris of the representatives of the coalition of forces opposing Napoleon to claim their artistic treasures that had been confiscated by the French armies, Dominique-Vivant Denon, the director of the Musée Napoléon, mourned the end of a universal museum erected to celebrate the human spirit and to be a monument to the arts of all nations: 'a collection such as this, a comparison of the efforts of the human spirit through the centuries [...] has just been extinguished, and extinguished forever.'<sup>1</sup>

Another report dating to 1815, following the restitution of many masterpieces to their former owners, records a shift in the concept of a museum from a universal institution to a national one: 'sans doute le Musée n'offrira plus à l'admiration du Monde les merveilles enfantées par le génie des tous les peuples; mais il retrouvera

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Preti Hamard, p. 137.

sa gloire dans sa propre École; il sera Français (without a doubt, the museum will no longer offer for the admiration of the world the marvels produced by the genius of all nations; but it will rediscover its glory in its own school; it will be French).<sup>2</sup> The nationalism that would come to shape the cultures of countries across Europe during the nineteenth century appeared for the first time in the Louvre, the former hub of the Republic of Letters, where the very concept of art's universality had first been displayed to the world.<sup>3</sup>

Here, I will discuss how the inaugural arrangement of the Pinacoteca Vaticana, which was instituted in 1817, after the restitution of the artworks confiscated by the French army in 1797, aimed to celebrate, 'sa propre École' (the *scuola italiana*) in a comparably nationalistic spirit to that of the post-Napoleonic Louvre.

In the Musée Napoléon, the paintings that the French had confiscated from different Italian cities were displayed in four consecutive bays of the Grande Galerie:<sup>4</sup> 'the various masters press close upon one another', wrote a visitor, 'from Venice to Naples is but a step, and Florence, Rome, and Bologna are all visited and gone over in a morning.'<sup>5</sup> The Italian section of the Musée Napoléon became 'the physical concretisation of the general history'<sup>6</sup> of Italian painting, which Luigi Lanzi outlined in his seminal work *Storia pittorica della Italia* (1792). The Musée Napoléon thus shaped the notion of a single *scuola italiana* (despite the variety of Italian schools) that would soon find expression at the Pinacoteca Vaticana. This 'Italian school' would be revealed in the Pinacoteca through the calculated choice and arrangement of specific paintings, as well as through the accompanying catalogue and contemporaneous art literature, including the media's response to the publication of the catalogue (1820) and the guidebook to the Vatican collections (1821), where the *scuola italiana* is explicitly mentioned and explained. The unusual notion of an 'Italian school', as represented by the paintings on display in the Pinacoteca Vaticana, was grounded on the classical and Raphaellesque canons as well as Venetian colour, epitomised in a large altarpiece by Titian that was placed in the main room next to Raphael's *Transfiguration*. This notion matured during and after the French rule of the Italian peninsula as a result of growing Italian cultural nationalism. The charismatic figure of the 'living Phidias', Antonio Canova (1757–1822), the director of the Musei Vaticani, who had negotiated the recovery of the Italian artworks in Paris, helped to shape the idea of *italianità*.

2 Quoted in Chaudonneret, p. 14.

3 McClellan 2009; Curzi 2016, p. 18.

4 McClellan 1994 (1999), p. 199.

5 Weston 1802, quoted by McClellan 2009, p. 93.

6 Brook, p. 242.

After the fall of Napoleon, the pope entrusted Canova with the task of supervising the recovery of paintings, statues, books, and manuscripts that had been confiscated by the French. The representatives of the coalition of forces opposing Napoleon requested that the paintings not be returned to their former owners, but instead be donated to the Vatican on the condition that they be preserved as a collection that would remain open to the public.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, the influence of the Louvre on the Pinacoteca Vaticana can be found in the desired visibility and publicity of cultural heritage, as well as in the ensembles of the most famous masterpieces. The most significant paintings were thus not returned to their places of origin, despite the protests of their former owners.<sup>8</sup> The antiquarian Carlo Fea (1753–1836) condemned this decision, stating that ‘all Rome is, and must be, a picture gallery’ and thus echoing the opinions expressed by Antoine Quatremère de Quincy (1755–1849) in his *Lettres à Miranda*.<sup>9</sup>

Prior to the Napoleonic period, in 1790, Pope Pius VI (1717–1799) had created the Galleria di Quadri in what is now the Galleria degli Arazzi. This picture gallery featured more than 100 paintings of varying quality, which were installed in symmetrical displays but not according to geographical or chronological order.<sup>10</sup> However, several of the best paintings were taken to Paris following the Treaty of Tolentino (1797), while others were dispersed elsewhere.<sup>11</sup> After the deportation of Pius VI to France in 1798 and the confiscation and nationalisation of many churches and convents, there was an attempt to create a ‘revolutionary’ Museo Nazionale at the Vatican, similar to the Muséum Central des Arts in Paris, during the Roman Republic (1798–1799). The new government sought to establish a distinguished collection of artworks that would contain the most famous altarpieces of Rome. The artworks were to be selected by the painter Vincenzo Camuccini (1771–1844) and the man of letters Giovanni Gherardo De Rossi (1754–1827) and displayed in the former Galleria di Quadri.<sup>12</sup> After the fall of the Republic in October 1799, the paintings were claimed by their former owners and returned to their respective convents, chapels, and altars.<sup>13</sup>

The new Pinacoteca Vaticana opened in 1817 in the six rooms of the Borgia apartment. It seems that Pope Pius VII (1742–1823) himself made the decision to convert this part of the palace into a picture gallery.<sup>14</sup> The criteria for the selection

7 Pietrangeli, p. 163, no. 120.

8 Sgarbozza 2006.

9 Curzi 2004, p. 121.

10 Abita.

11 Pietrangeli, pp. 134–136.

12 Racioppi 2014, pp. 128–164.

13 Racioppi 2014, pp. 196–199.

14 Francia, pp. 40–41.

of the paintings were based on their quality rather than quantity, unlike the earlier, short-lived picture gallery of Pius VI. Only 44 paintings of the highest quality were displayed. Carlo Pietrangeli and Ilaria Sgarbozza have discussed the way in which the picture gallery was organised.<sup>15</sup> Works returned from Paris (originally confiscated from Rome and Umbria) constituted half of the collection; the remaining eighteen paintings were taken from the papal palaces and the Pinacoteca Capitolina, and some were also purchased for the occasion. The works spanned the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries.

Unlike the Pinacoteca Capitolina, which was founded in 1749 with the acquisition of the Sacchetti and Pio di Savoia collections, the Pinacoteca Vaticana was created and shaped through specific decisions and calculated visual strategies.

The first, largest, and best lit room of the Pinacoteca, the Sala dei Pontefici, deserves special attention; it contained five masterpieces:<sup>16</sup> Raphael's *Transfiguration*,<sup>17</sup> the large cartoon *The Stoning of St Stephen* by Giulio Romano,<sup>18</sup> Titian's *Madonna in Glory and Saints*,<sup>19</sup> the *Martyrdom of St Erasmus* by Nicolas Poussin, and the *Martyrdom of Saints Processus and Martinianus* by Valentin de Boulogne (Figs. 79–83).<sup>20</sup> It was a display governed by size and symmetry;<sup>21</sup> the paintings by Raphael, Giulio Romano, and Titian had similar compositions, with the heavenly realm at the top and the earthly one below.

At the same time, symmetrically arranged, mixed-school displays likewise characterised the Pinacoteca of the Accademia di Brera in Milan<sup>22</sup> and the Accademia in Venice, even though only paintings of the Venetian school were displayed in the main hall of the latter (the Sala delle pubbliche funzioni).<sup>23</sup> These types of arrangements, which were largely curated by artists,<sup>24</sup> were governed by what

15 Pietrangeli, pp. 163–165; Sgarbozza 2006; Sgarbozza 2016. See also Francia, pp. 57–58.

16 Fea, pp. 67–69.

17 From the church of San Pietro in Montorio, Rome.

18 In the eighteenth century, the cartoon was located in the Library of the Chiesa Nuova, before it was transferred to the Pinacoteca Capitolina during the French Empire. See Cornini.

19 The altarpiece, which was from the church of San Nicoletto dei Frari, had been purchased in 1770 in Venice for Pope Clement XIV, thanks to the negotiations of the painter and art dealer Gavin Hamilton (Cassidy, pp. 242–244). It was displayed at the Palazzo del Quirinale until 1817.

20 Both taken from Basilica di San Pietro for display in the Pinacoteca of Pius VI. They were then transferred to Paris and returned to the Vatican in 1816. Pietrangeli, pp. 113, 164.

21 Raphael's *Transfiguration*, Giulio Romano's cartoon, and Titian's *Madonna in Glory and Saints* were almost the same size (410 x 279 cm, 418 x 285 cm, 388 x 270 cm, respectively), as were Valentin's altarpiece (302 x 192 cm) and Poussin's *St. Erasmus* (320 x 186 cm).

22 Sicoli.

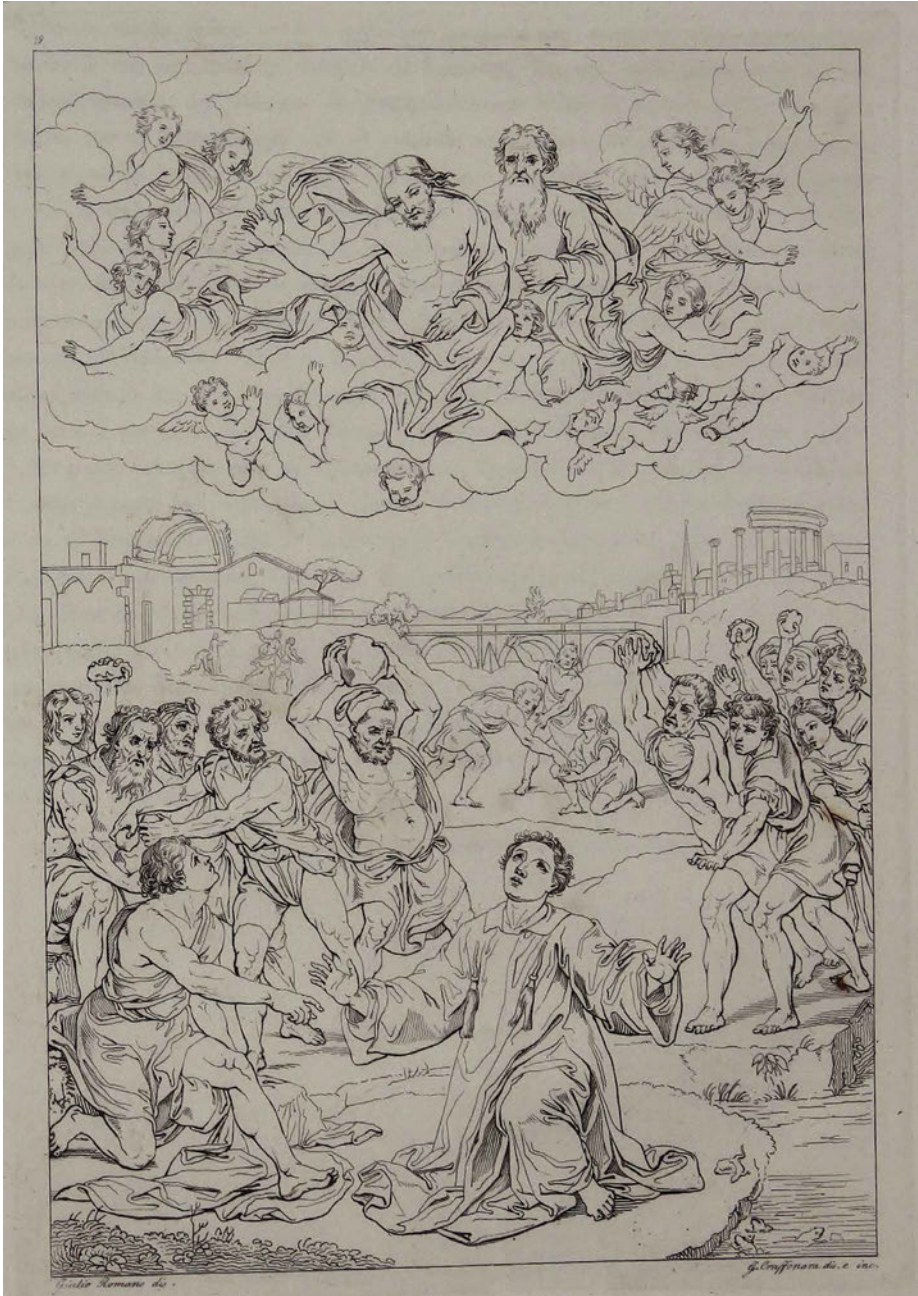
23 Manieri Elia, pp. 89–90.

24 For example, the cases of Charles Coypel for the Luxembourg Gallery in Paris (Poulot, p. 38), Giuseppe Bossi and Andrea Appiani for the Brera (Sicoli, pp. 91–99), and Vincenzo Camuccini for the Pinacoteca Vaticana (Giacomini, pp. 68–70).

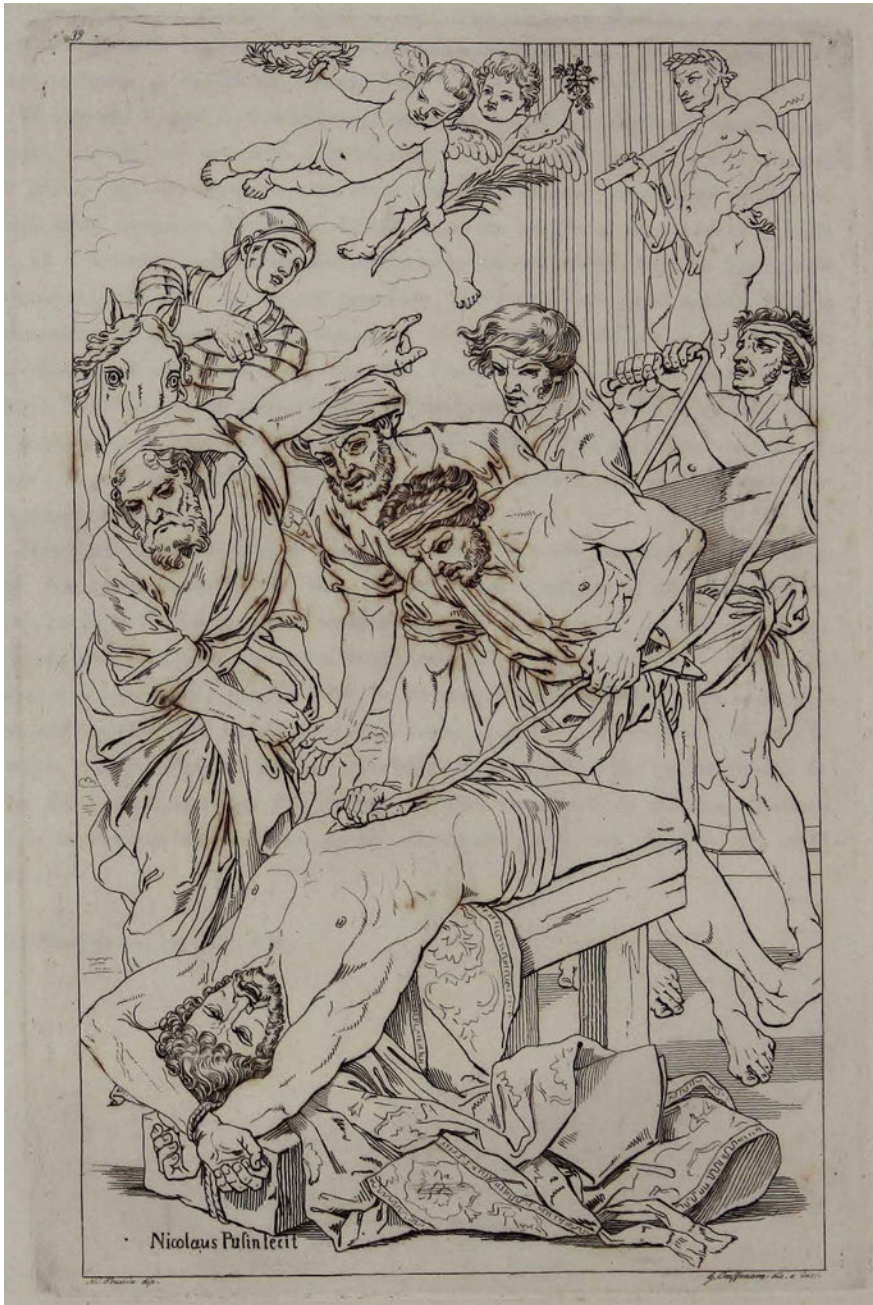


79. Giuseppe Craffonara after Raphael, *Transfiguration*, etching, in G. A. Guattani, *I più celebri quadri delle diverse scuole italiane riuniti nell'appartamento Borgia del Vaticano* (Rome: De Romanis, 1820), Archivio Storico Capitolino-Biblioteca Romana, Rome, Capitolina stragr 485, fig. XVIII. © Su concessione della Sovrintendenza Capitolina ai Beni Culturali.

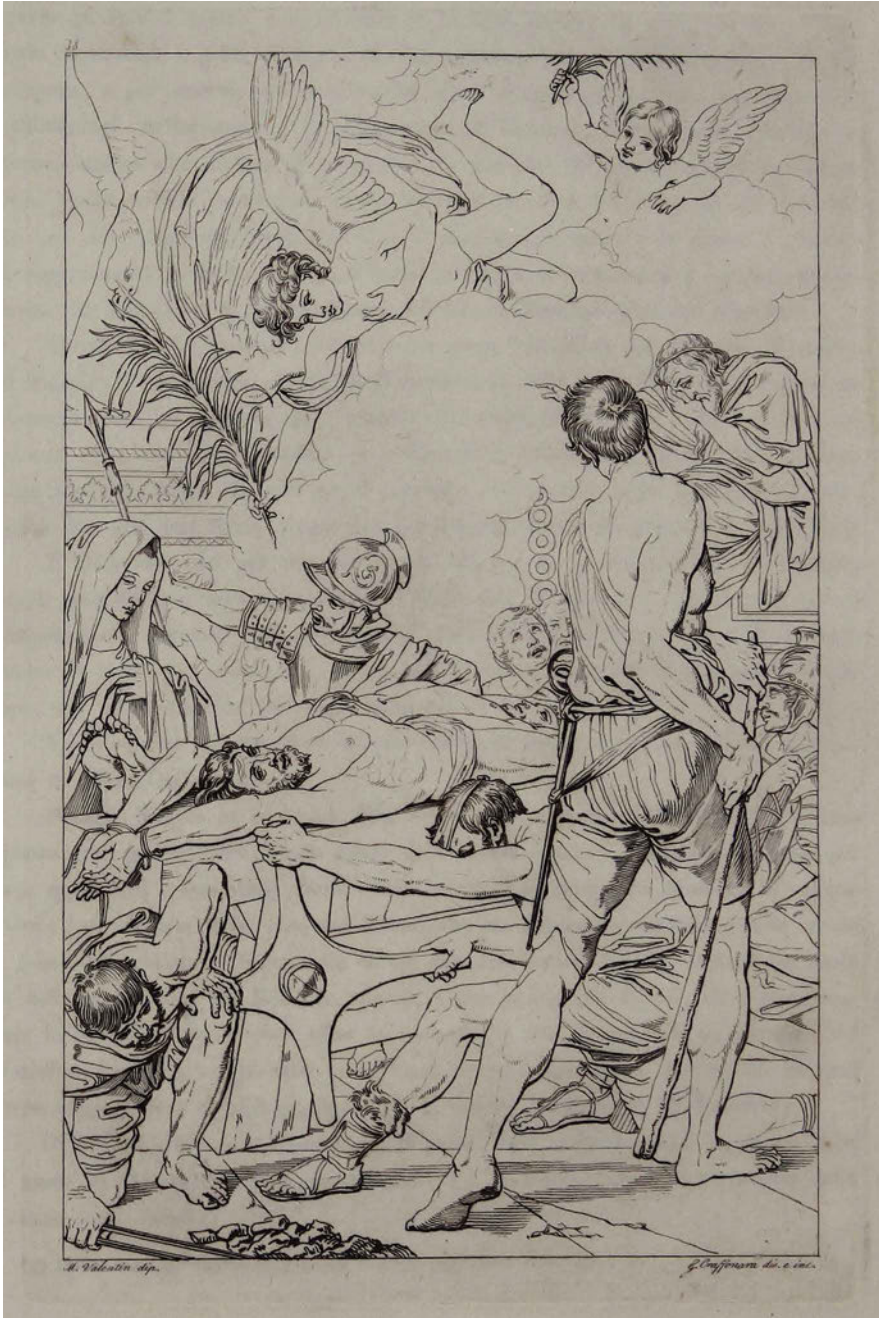




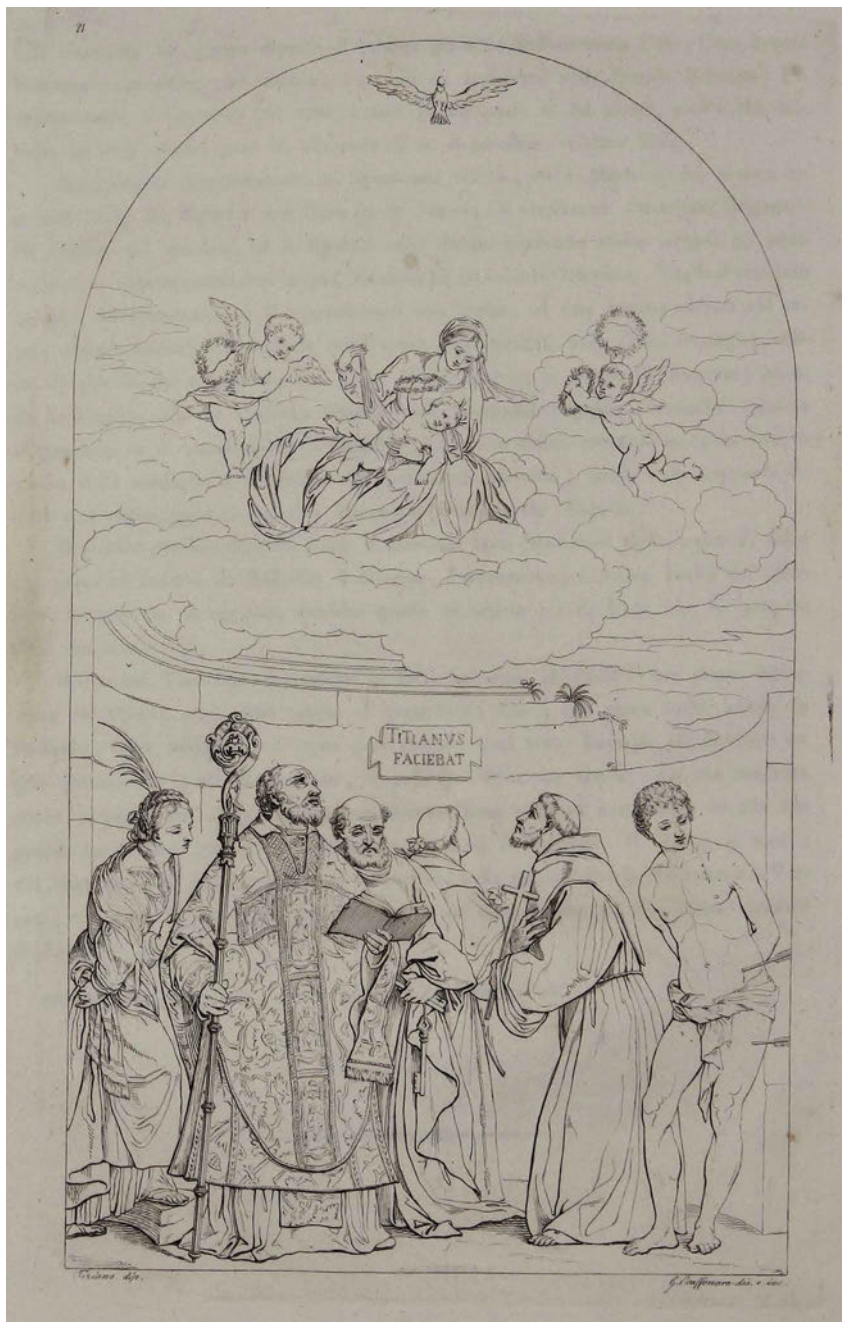
80. Giuseppe Craffonara after Giulio Romano, *The Stoning of St Stephen*, etching, in G. A. Guattani, *I più celebri quadri delle diverse scuole italiane riuniti nell'appartamento Borgia del Vaticano* (Rome: De Romanis, 1820), Archivio Storico Capitolino-Biblioteca Romana, Rome, Capitolina stragr 485, fig. XIX. © Su concessione della Sovrintendenza Capitolina ai Beni Culturali.



81. Giuseppe Craffonara after Nicolas Poussin, *The Martyrdom of St. Erasmus*, etching, in G. A. Guattani, *I più celebri quadri delle diverse scuole italiane riuniti nell'appartamento Borgia del Vaticano* (Rome: De Romanis, 1820), Archivio Storico Capitolino-Biblioteca Romana, Rome, Capitolina stragr 485, fig. XXXIX. © Su concessione della Sovrintendenza Capitolina ai Beni Culturali.



82. Giuseppe Craffonara after Valentin de Boulogne, *The Martyrdom of Sts Processus and Martinianus*, etching, in G. A. Guattani, *I più celebri quadri delle diverse scuole italiane riuniti nell'appartamento Borgia del Vaticano* (Rome: De Romanis, 1820), Archivio Storico Capitolino-Biblioteca Romana, Rome, Capitolina stragr 485, fig. XXXVIII. © Su concessione della Sovrintendenza Capitolina ai Beni Culturali.



83. Giuseppe Craffonara after Titian, *Madonna in Glory and Saints*, etching, in G. A. Guattani, *I più celebri quadri delle diverse scuole italiane riuniti nell'appartamento Borgia del Vaticano* (Rome: De Romanis, 1820), Archivio Storico Capitolino-Biblioteca Romana, Rome, Capitolina stragr 485, fig. XXI. © Su concessione della Sovrintendenza Capitolina ai Beni Culturali.

Andrew McClellan has termed a 'comparative viewing of pictures', where the 'goal was to reveal pictorial qualities of a given work by means of contrast and comparison with pictures of a different type'.<sup>25</sup>

When we consider the arrangement and administration of the Vatican collection, the role played by the Accademia di San Luca deserves special attention. Canova, the director of the Musei Vaticani, appointed Camuccini as the curator of the Pinacoteca. Camuccini was one of the most influential members of the Accademia di San Luca, and he enhanced the prestige of the Accademia by asking Luigi Agricola (c. 1750–c. 1821) and Andrea Pozzi (1778–1830), professors of painting and drawing respectively, to report on the artworks' state of preservation and on their visibility in the rooms of the Borgia apartment.<sup>26</sup> Camuccini's competence in curating picture galleries was recognised by his contemporaries.<sup>27</sup>

I will argue that the paintings in the first room of the Pinacoteca were chosen to represent 1) the 'golden age' of Renaissance Rome (Raphael and Giulio Romano), 2) the 'golden age' of Renaissance Venice (Titian), 3) the triumph of seventeenth-century classicism (Poussin), and 4) the successful balance between classicism and Caravaggesque naturalism (Valentin de Boulogne).

The decision to place these paintings in the Pinacoteca's first room was due primarily to their high quality.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, the five masterpieces could offer excellent examples of the different 'parts' of painting, according to the principles of art theory defined by André Félibien, Roger de Piles, Anton Raphael Mengs, and Lanzi: composition (in particular Raphael, Giulio Romano, and Poussin), drawing, colour (Titian, above all), and expression (Raphael and Poussin).

The Pinacoteca Vaticana's rooms also appear to embody, through the selection of a few paradigmatic examples, the 'correct idea of painting in Italy' expressed by Lanzi in the preface of his *Storia pittorica*.<sup>29</sup>

Critics from Giorgio Vasari to Lanzi admired the *Transfiguration* (Fig. 79) as Raphael's greatest work: 'the masterpiece of painting', as Charles-Paul Landon (1760–1826) described the painting when it was displayed at the Louvre.<sup>30</sup> The large cartoon by Giulio Romano (Fig. 80) showed strong compositional similarities to the *Transfiguration* and was highly appreciated for its composition and drawing.<sup>31</sup> Regarding the altarpieces of the Italianised French artists Poussin and Valentin

25 McClellan 1994 (1999), p. 31.

26 Giacomini, p. 69, no 62.

27 Giacomini, p. 81.

28 Giacomini, p. 70; Sgarbozza 2006, p. 319.

29 Lanzi 1828, I, p. 12.

30 Quoted in Rosenberg, p. 198.

31 Guattani 1820, pl. XIX.

(Figs. 81, 82), the seventeenth-century Joachim von Sandrart recorded that the two paintings could be compared when they were displayed together at St Peter's in Rome. He praised Poussin for his invention and mastery in depicting emotions and Valentin for his naturalism and harmony of colours.<sup>32</sup> In the Pinacoteca Vaticana, this comparison was proposed once again, probably by placing the two paintings, which were of almost identical size, next to one another to better appreciate their compositional parallels.

However, the Vatican collection's greatest novelty was the dialogue established between Raphael's *Transfiguration* and Titian's *Madonna in Glory and Saints* (Fig. 83). The latter had not been taken to Paris by the French and had remained at the Palazzo del Quirinale, where it had been greatly admired by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in 1787.<sup>33</sup> It must have then been transferred to the Pinacoteca Vaticana with the precise aim of showing the canonical comparison between the Venetian mastery of colour and the draughtsmanship of the Florentine and Roman schools. In the catalogue of the Pinacoteca Vaticana, Giuseppe Antonio Guattani (1748–1830) defines Titian as 'the Patriarch of colourists'.<sup>34</sup> The artist's large signature 'Titianus faciebat', which appears at the very centre of the altarpiece, emphasised Titian's authorship.

The painting was cut down for its inclusion in the Pinacoteca Vaticana: the semicircular upper section containing the dove of the Holy Spirit, the real protagonist of the picture, was removed in order to make the painting a pendant to the *Transfiguration*.<sup>35</sup> The arched altarpiece was thus transformed into a rectangular one so that it would resemble the size and format of the *Transfiguration* as closely as possible. However, the plate in Guattani's catalogue shows the missing lunette: it is likely that the author of the illustrations, Giuseppe Craffonara (1790–1837), had drawn and engraved the plate just before the removal of the upper part (Fig. 83).

The entrance of a large altarpiece by Titian into the Pinacoteca Vaticana and its placement next to the *Transfiguration* represented an innovation within the context of the picture galleries of Rome.<sup>36</sup> But what prompted the decision to place the two masters side by side? One factor must have been the opinions expressed by important art theorists: Raphael and Titian had been celebrated by Ludovico Dolce<sup>37</sup> and Mengs, who had praised the two masters as well as Correggio: Raphael

32 Christiansen, p. 219.

33 Goethe, pp. 117–118.

34 Guattani 1820, pl. XXI.

35 Pedrocco, p. 130.

36 A comparison between Raphael and the Venetian school had already been offered by the Uffizi's Tribuna; see the painting by Zoffany, *The Tribuna of the Uffizi*, 1772–1778 (Windsor Castle). See Vermeulen 2019, pp. 278–280.

37 Dolce.

for 'expression', Titian for 'colour', and Correggio for chiaroscuro.<sup>38</sup> Yet I would argue that this unprecedented comparison between Raphael and Titian—at least within a Roman context—mirrors the competition between the two most influential painters in Rome at the beginning of the nineteenth century: the classicist Camuccini and the colourist Gaspare Landi (1756–1830), both of whom were members of the Roman Accademia di San Luca. Camuccini's admiration for Raphael is evident in his own pictorial language as well as in his drawings from the *Transfiguration*, which were engraved by Giovanni Folo (1764–1836) and used as instructional materials by the students of the Accademia di San Luca.<sup>39</sup> The Emilian painter Landi, President of the Accademia di San Luca, was the most renowned colourist at the time in Rome. In 1809, the *Ascent to Calvary* by Landi and the *Presentation at the Temple* by Camuccini had both been displayed in the Pantheon, prompting contemporaries to regard Landi and Camuccini as the heirs of the Venetian and the Roman-Tuscan schools respectively.<sup>40</sup>

However, the prominence given to Titian's altarpiece may also pay homage to the Venetian Canova, the director of the Musei Vaticani and the papal ambassador in France for the restitution of Italy's paintings. Canova was highly appreciated by authors such as Francesco Milizia (1725–1798), Pietro Giordani (1774–1848), and Melchior Missirini (1773–1849) for the pictorial qualities of his sculpture, and the style of his paintings was compared to that of Titian's.<sup>41</sup>

The rest of the Pinacoteca<sup>42</sup> employed the same symmetrical, 'mixed-school' arrangement of paintings, in order to facilitate 'comparative viewing of pictures', primarily by artists.<sup>43</sup> For example, Fra Angelico's (1395/1400–1455) 'primitive' fifteenth-century predella panels,<sup>44</sup> which were praised by Guattani for their colour and naturalism,<sup>45</sup> were linked with the 'correct drawing'<sup>46</sup> of the ancient Roman fresco of the *Nozze Aldobrandini*, purchased by the pope at the recommendation of the Accademia di San Luca.<sup>47</sup> Further comparisons between the Venetian and the Tuscan-Roman schools were established by placing Raphael's *Madonna di*

38 Mengers, I, pp. 121–183.

39 Racioppi 2020, pp. 127–131.

40 Grandesso, p. 23.

41 Mazzocca, pp. 27–29.

42 See Sgarbozza 2006, pp. 318–319.

43 One British traveller, Charlotte A. Eaton, complained during her visit in 1818 about the 'whole tribe of copyists with all their lumber [...] and their huge pictures and scaffolds' blocking the view of the paintings. Eaton, II, pp. 397–398.

44 From the church of San Domenico, Perugia.

45 Guattani 1820, pl. VI.

46 Guattani 1820, pl. I.

47 Fusconi, pp. 201–207.

*Foligno*,<sup>48</sup> with its Venetian landscape, near Paolo Veronese's *Vision of Saint Helen*.<sup>49</sup> The solemn Empress Helen also echoed, in terms of composition, Venetian colour, and meditative disposition, Guercino's *Penitent Magdalene*.<sup>50</sup>

Since the Accademia di San Luca shaped the newly born Pinacoteca Vaticana, it does not come as a surprise that Guattani, its secretary and professor of history, mythology, and costumes, was commissioned to write the Pinacoteca's catalogue. Guattani was a famous antiquarian and a brilliant publicist. Moreover, he had fallen prey to the Louvre's fascination, as exemplified by one of his most famous works, *La pittura comparata nelle opere principali di tutte le scuole*, which comprised a pictorial encyclopaedia for both artists and *amateurs*. Here, Guattani aimed to compare the 'inventions' adopted by painters of different periods and schools in depictions of the same subject. He included Flemish, Dutch, and French paintings that had been on display at Napoleon's Louvre.<sup>51</sup> Guattani, who had lived in Paris for several years<sup>52</sup> and who had visited the Musée Napoléon, must have been struck by the concentration of so many celebrated paintings gathered from all over Europe. The miscellany of masterpieces presented in *La pittura comparata* mirrors the broad European character of the collections of the Musée Napoléon, even though the museum's paintings were arranged according to schools.

A markedly different organisation characterises the first illustrated catalogue of the Pinacoteca Vaticana: *I più celebri quadri delle diverse scuole italiane*.<sup>53</sup> Here, the paintings are presented chronologically according to their respective schools (Florentine, Roman, Lombard-Venetian, and Bolognese), as Guattani explains in the preface. This choice can be interpreted as a compromise between the 'comparative viewing' that had been adopted in the display of the Vatican paintings and the scientific, historical framework based on schools and chronology that had recently been developed by Lanzi in his *Storia pittorica della Italia*. The catalogue's title also suggests an aesthetic component by emphasising the fame of the Vatican paintings (*I più celebri quadri*) and the division into schools (*scuole italiane*).<sup>54</sup> Yet, unlike Lanzi's *Storia pittorica*, Guattani's catalogue is not divided, as one would expect, into chapters or sections dedicated to the different schools. Only a few learned

48 From the Monastero di Sant'Anna delle Contesse, Foligno.

49 From the Pinacoteca Capitolina.

50 From the church of Santa Maria Maddalena delle Convertite, Rome; then at the Palazzo del Quirinale.

51 Racioppi 2018, pp. 8–12.

52 Racioppi 1960–2020, LX, p. 508.

53 Guattani 1820.

54 Guattani explicitly stressed this concept in the preface: 'The reader is informed that the paintings have been described with the method and with the order of the Schools, as well as the time of the authors themselves' (author's translation). Guattani 1820, preface (unpaginated).



readers would notice in the index a chronological sequence of artists grouped according to the geographical areas to which they belonged. Moreover, in contrast to the illustrations of *La pittura comparata*, the plates—outline prints engraved by Craffonara—are not labelled with details about schools. The entries provide short but accurate iconographical and stylistic analyses. Chronological order thus prevails quite clearly over the geographical origin.

It is likely that Guattani was inspired by the structure of two important, contemporaneous works. The first potential model was Jean-Baptiste-Louis-Georges Séroux d'Agincourt's *Histoire de l'art par les monumens* (1810–1823), a monumental, illustrated history of medieval art, which Guattani reviewed in his *Memorie enciclopediche*.<sup>55</sup> As Ingrid Vermeulen writes, Séroux conceived his *Histoire* according to a 'purely chronological range of artworks rather than a primary order by school and succession of artists';<sup>56</sup> however, he did not wholly neglect the categories of schools and artists in his text. Séroux's main goal was to illustrate a 'universal chain of art',<sup>57</sup> a choice that may be explained, according to Vermeulen, 'by the increasing interest in the unified artistic achievements of humankind outweighing the diversity of artistic taste among nations'.<sup>58</sup> This was Denon's idea of the 'human spirit through the centuries' that was presented through the display of masterpieces of all nations in Napoleon's Louvre. In the catalogue of the Pinacoteca Vaticana, Guattani applied Denon's idea to the nations of the Italian peninsula,<sup>59</sup> while he transformed them into parts of a single cultural nation: Italy.

The second work that must have influenced Guattani was the *Storia della scultura dal suo risorgimento in Italia* (1813–1818) by Leopoldo Cicognara (1767–1834), a close friend of Canova.<sup>60</sup> Cicognara followed Séroux's method and organised his illustrated work on Italian sculpture according to chronology. However, he identified different schools within each epoch, and he also dedicated specific chapters to individual, illustrious Italian sculptors.

In 1773, Gavin Hamilton (1723–1798), the artist and art dealer who had negotiated the purchase of Titian's *Madonna in Glory and Saints* (mentioned above) for Pope Clement XIV (1705–1774), published a volume of 40 engravings after works of famous Italian artists, including Michelangelo, Raphael, Correggio, and Titian. The volume

55 Guattani dedicated an article to Séroux's work in his *Memorie enciclopediche*: Guattani 1806–1811, V, pp. 10–12. On Séroux and his *Histoire*, see Miarelli Mariani; Mondini.

56 Vermeulen 2010, p. 185.

57 Vermeulen 2010, pp. 211–214.

58 Vermeulen 2010, p. 251.

59 On the *nazioni italiane*, see Mannori.

60 Steindl.

bears the meaningful title *Schola italica picturae* (1773),<sup>61</sup> although Hamilton does not define this unusual phrase of *schola italica*. In 1806, the volume was republished in Rome, with the title *Schola italica artis pictoriae sive tabulae insigniores in romanis pinacothecis adservatae*.<sup>62</sup> Ferdinando Bologna has argued that Hamilton's title could be linked to the idea formulated by Voltaire in his *Le siècle de Louis XIV* (1751) of an Italian 'cultural nation' and has noted that this idea was in fact a mature concept already expressed by European Grand Tourists, especially the French.<sup>63</sup> Bologna also emphasises the shift in the notion of artistic schools in Italy between the seventeenth century, when they were regarded as self-sufficient, separate entities, and the end of the eighteenth century, when Lanzi developed a system of schools<sup>64</sup> in order to 'form a correct idea of painting in Italy',<sup>65</sup> thus implying unity in the regional variety.<sup>66</sup>

After the fall of Napoleon and the Congress of Vienna, Italian cultural nationalism intensified,<sup>67</sup> as recorded for example in the *Discorso di un italiano intorno alla poesia romantica* written by the poet Giacomo Leopardi (1798–1837) in 1818.<sup>68</sup> During the same year, an Italian expatriate in France, Luigi Angeloni (1759–1842), published *Dell'Italia uscente il settembre del 1818: ragionamenti IV dedicati all'italica nazione*, in which he proposed the idea of a confederation of Italian states.<sup>69</sup> Angeloni had assisted Canova during his mission in Paris for the recovery of the Italian artworks.<sup>70</sup> In the chapter dedicated to the Napoleonic confiscations in Italy, he urged Italians 'to be of unanimous sentiment [...] to escape the arrogance and the insults of the peoples across the Alps'.<sup>71</sup>

Meanwhile, as Christopher Johns writes, Canova became 'the most important figure in the Italian culturalist paradigm, for he was a dedicated proponent of *italianità* and, simultaneously, one of its cult heroes'.<sup>72</sup> Giordani described Canova as follows: 'He is so Venetian or Roman as well as Italian with all his soul'.<sup>73</sup> Canova's successful diplomatic mission to Paris for the restitution of the Italian artworks consolidated his aura of *italianità*.

61 Cassidy, pp. 22–27.

62 Published by Montagnani. See also Coen, p. 66.

63 Bologna, pp. 146–147.

64 Bologna, pp. 151–158.

65 Lanzi 1828, I, p. 12.

66 See also Rossi Pinelli, pp. 445–454.

67 See in particular De Francesco.

68 See Curzi 2016, p. 15.

69 De Felice.

70 De Felice, p. 242.

71 Angeloni, II, p. 265 (author's translation).

72 Johns, p. 39.

73 Quoted in Dadati, p. 89 (author's translation).

Moreover, between 1806 and 1810, Canova sculpted a majestic personification of a mourning Italy for the tomb of the poet Vittorio Alfieri (1749–1803) in the Florentine church of Santa Croce; this sculpture was one of the earliest images of the Italian nation. Yet the nationalistic overtones of the monument should be interpreted in cultural, rather than political, terms.<sup>74</sup> Canova's Italian identity was limited to the artistic realm, as confirmed by his abstinence from politics.<sup>75</sup> His supposedly patriotic patronage of busts and herms of famous Italians for the Pantheon is centred only on artists and poets, most of whom, like Canova, were patronised by the popes and to whom Canova himself ideally wanted to be connected.<sup>76</sup>

The Accademia Italiana di Palazzo Venezia (1809), run by Canova, was significant in the shaping of a strong Italian cultural identity: art students from the academies of the Napoleonic Italian Kingdom (Venice, Milan, and Bologna) would come to Rome to study under the famous sculptor.<sup>77</sup> The forging of a cultural *italianità* at this academy is perfectly epitomised by the young Venetian painter Francesco Hayez (1791–1882), with his genial synthesis of Venetian, classical, and Raphaelesque influences.<sup>78</sup> The founder of the Accademia Italiana, Giuseppe Tambroni (1773–1824), was praised by his contemporaries for his 'elevated and Italian thoughts'.<sup>79</sup>

Meanwhile, the still little-known Accademia Italiana di Scienze, Lettere, ed Arti was founded in 1807 in Livorno by the physician Gaetano Palloni (1766–1830). The aim of this institution was to establish a network among scientists, men of letters, and artists across the entire Italian peninsula; these individuals would report about new publications, discoveries, and artistic productions in order to demonstrate that Italy continued to be the mother of *sublimi ingegni* ('outstanding geniuses').<sup>80</sup> The strong cultural nationalism of this academy is particularly clear in the following lines of its constitution:

The Academic Archive, being the repository of everything that Italy will produce, especially in science, literature, and fine arts, will therefore offer the materials of the Literary History of this Classical Land, and will claim at any time, in the face of all other nations, the originality, merit, and glory due to Italian geniuses.<sup>81</sup>

74 Koomen, p. 215.

75 See, for example, Pinelli.

76 Bouwers, p. 153; Parisi Presicce, p. 37.

77 Rudolph, pp. 14–22.

78 Leone, pp. 46–51.

79 *Giornale Arcadico* 1824, p. 130, quoted in Rudolph, p. 19.

80 *Costituzione*, introduction (unpaginated).

81 *Costituzione* (unpaginated; author's translation).

The Accademia's members came from all over Italy (for instance, Cicognara from Venice, Giordani from Bologna, Giuseppe Bossi (1777–1815) from Milan) and included many of the figures who were formative in the arrangement of the Pinacoteca Vaticana: Canova, Camuccini, Landi, Guattani.

The Pinacoteca, as arranged under Canova's direction, mirrors this cultural climate. The adherence to Lanzi's school-based taxonomy fades both in the display of the paintings and in Guattani's catalogue. Significantly, the official Roman newspaper, the *Notizie del giorno*, describes the Pinacoteca Vaticana and the newly published *I più celebri quadri delle diverse scuole italiane* as follows:

The Borgia apartment [...] has greatly increased its value since the most beautiful paintings of the Italian School are gathered there. The gathering of many masterpieces inspired the painter Sig. Giuseppe Craffonara, and the engraver Sig. Antonio Testa, with the idea of making public such a sublime and precious collection by means of engravings [...] And since the number of paintings that compose it is large, therefore Sig. Craffonara wisely believed that it would be enough to engrave only the outlines, because the most sublime merit of the Italian school is composition and drawing'.<sup>82</sup>

'Scuola italiana' appears alongside 'Classici italiani', in the *Notizie del giorno*<sup>83</sup> when the anonymous author discusses the most beautiful paintings of the 'Italian School' and when he states that the distinctive and most sublime merits of this *scuola italiana* are 'composition' and 'drawing'. The Tuscan and Roman schools, the latter represented by Raphael, the supreme master of composition and drawing,<sup>84</sup> ended up subsuming and representing all the other schools, including the Venetian one. However, Lanzi himself praised the classical composition of the Venetian Titian, stating: 'Whoever is attached to the taste of the Greek *bassirilievi* ('bas-reliefs'), in which all is nature and propriety, will invariably prefer the sober composition of Titian'.<sup>85</sup>

The Pinacoteca Vaticana's display aimed to show the variety of the Italian schools but also, and above all, the common elements and universal principles of Italian art.

In the guidebook to the Vatican collections, entitled *Elenco degli oggetti esistenti nel Museo Vaticano* and published in 1821 by Giuseppe d'Este (1779–?), a contributor

82 *Notizie del giorno*, 8 March 1821, p. 1 (author's translation).

83 Most of the articles in the *Notizie del giorno* are not signed. Among the authors were Andrea Belli, Salvatore Betti, Giuseppe Checchetelli, Giuseppe d'Este, Giacomo Falghera, Michelangelo Lanci, Costantino Mazio, Domenico Poggioli, Oreste Raggi, A. Spinetti, and Domenico Zanelli. Majolo Molinari, pp. 645–646. The anonymous author was probably Giuseppe d'Este, as we will see later.

84 Mengs, p. 37.

85 Lanzi 1828, III, p. 146.

to the *Notizie del giorno*, and his brother Alessandro (1783–1826), the paintings of the Pinacoteca were again recorded as belonging to a *Scuola italiana*.<sup>86</sup> It does not seem coincidental that Alessandro d'Este was the very same sculptor whom Canova had commissioned to carve the busts of famous Italian artists, such as Michelangelo, Giulio Romano, Titian, Giotto, and Domenichino, for the Pantheon around 1815.<sup>87</sup>

A few years later, Tommaso Minardi (1787–1871) outlined a short history of Italian painting that was wholly unconcerned with the division into schools in his discourse *Delle qualità essenziali della pittura italiana* (1834).<sup>88</sup> Minardi, a professor of painting at the Accademia di San Luca, identified the unifying feature of Italian art in Giotto's work: 'the greater fundamental and regulatory principles of art itself [...] marked and prescribed by nature.'<sup>89</sup> According to Minardi, these 'principles' were then transmitted to and absorbed by the subsequent generations of painters active in different regions of the Italian peninsula: Masaccio (1401–1428), Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Michelangelo, Correggio, Giorgione, and Titian. In his *Storia della pittura italiana esposta coi monumenti*, published between 1839 and 1847, Giovanni Rosini (1776–1855) also abandoned Lanzi's emphasis on schools ('I intended to collect and present in a single picture, century by century, and not according to schools, how [...] Italian painting was born').<sup>90</sup> Rosini's unified vision of Italian painting had been shaped by his visit to the Musée Napoléon with Cicognara, where he saw 'the wonderful canvases of our greatest Artists, from Filippo Lippi to Batoni'.<sup>91</sup> in the four bays of the Grande Galerie dedicated to Italian paintings.

It was only at the end of the nineteenth century, after the political unification of Italy, that the Italian *pinacoteche*, which were separated from the fine art academies in 1882 and transferred to the administration of the Ministry of Education,<sup>92</sup> were rearranged according to Lanzi's system of schools and chronology, as Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle (1819–1897) had proposed in 1863.<sup>93</sup> The history of art thus took shape as an autonomous discipline at that point.<sup>94</sup> Artists no longer ruled supreme over the picture galleries; they had been replaced by art historians and connoisseurs.<sup>95</sup> In 1909 the Pinacoteca Vaticana was reorganised into several rooms

86 D'Este, p. 4.

87 See the complete list of the busts in Bouwers, p. 154.

88 On Minardi, see Susinno.

89 Minardi 1987, pp. 192–194.

90 Rosini 1839–1847, I, p. IV (author's translation).

91 Rosini 1839–1847, I, p. 1 (author's translation). See also Vermeulen 2010, pp. 253–256.

92 See now Lerda, p. 2.

93 Lerda, p. 3.

94 See in particular Agosti.

95 Nevertheless, the tradition of artist-directors continued at the Pinacoteca Vaticana: see Buranelli, pp. 12–37.

devoted to the different Italian schools.<sup>96</sup> This updated arrangement, based on the *scuole italiane*, would definitively replace the organisation that, beginning in 1817 and enduring for almost a century, had highlighted the substantial unity inherent in the variety of the *scuola italiana*.

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96 Pietrangeli, p. 224.

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## About the Author

**Pier Paolo Racioppi** received his PhD in art history at the Università Roma Tre. He is professor of art history at Fondazione IES Abroad Italy, Rome. His research interests include art and politics at the time of the French Revolution, art academies, and American artists in Rome in the nineteenth century.



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Schools of art represent one of the building blocks of art history. The notion of a school of art emerged in artistic discourse and was disseminated across various countries in Europe during the early modern period. Whilst a school of art essentially denotes a group of artists or artworks, it came to be configured in multiple ways, encompassing associations with learning, origin, style, and nation, and mediated in various forms via academies, literature, collections, markets, and galleries. Moreover, it contributed to competitive debate around the hierarchy of art and artists in Europe. The ensuing, fundamental instability of the notion of a school of art helped to create a pluriform panorama of both distinct and interconnected artistic traditions within the European art world. This edited collection brings together 20 articles devoted to selected case studies from the Italian peninsula, the Low Countries, France, Spain, England, the German Empire, and Russia.

**Ingrid R. Vermeulen** is Associate Professor of Early Modern Art History at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Her research focuses on the early modern history of art history as it is evidenced in art literature, collections, and museums in Europe. This focus generated the book *Picturing Art History* (2010) and the project *The Artistic Taste of Nations* (2015), which has been funded by the Dutch Research Council (NWO).

