Articles in Honour of Edgar Peters (Pete) Bowron

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MARIA VITTORIA PELLINI
When the pioneering scholar and collector of Italian eighteenth-century art, Anthony Morris Clark, died in Rome in 1985, the thirty-three-year old Edgar Peters Bowron, known to his friends as Pete, inherited the mantle of leadership in the emerging field of Italian settecento studies, above all in the revival of scholarly interest in the painting and graphic art of eighteenth-century Rome. As a “museum man” par excellence, Pete did more than anyone to ensure that Italian Settecento objects of the highest quality came to occupy an important place in the collections of the numerous museums in which he served as curator or director, including the Minneapolis Institute of Art, the North Carolina Museum of Art, the Harvard University Art Museums, the National Gallery of Art in Washington and, above all, as Curator of European Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston. It was from his base in Houston that he organized the most impressive exhibitions of his illustrious career. In 2000, in conjunction with the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pete curated “The Splendor of Eighteenth-Century Rome”, an exhibition of vast scope that still stands as the most significant display of Roman Settecento art and visual culture ever realized.

Pete’s lifelong interest in Venetian painting came to fruition in 2001 in “Bernardo Bellotto and the Capitals of Europe”. During his time at the National Gallery of Art, he was responsible for the acquisition of Bellotto’s spectacular Veduta di Königstein (1756-1758; fig. 1) which is arguably the artist’s masterpiece. I remember standing in front of the picture while Pete pointed out its aesthetic virtues and extraordinary quality.

With Pete, it has always been quality that determines a work’s merit. And while many may have difficulty defining exactly what artistic quality is, for Pete, it is crystal clear. Of the many memorable interactions that I have enjoyed with Pete during my career as an art historian, it is the simple act of looking at works of art with him that has afforded me the most pleasure and edification. Simply put, I have never met anyone who understands connoisseurship and artistic choice as well as he does, and I am forever grateful to him for teaching me how to “see”.

The essays by some of Pete’s friends and colleagues in this issue give a good indication of his exceptionally broad range of artistic interests, but it is as the authoritative scholar of the works of Pompeo Girolamo Batoni, or PGB as he often calls him, for which he is best known. In 1983, he modestly listed himself as “editor” of Anthony Morris Clark’s oeuvre catalogue of Batoni’s paintings and drawings. In fact, he worked from a rather incompletely body of Clark’s note cards, and it must have been a daunting scholarly (not to mention logistical) challenge to transform them into an outstanding monograph. Clark/Bowron, as I have always thought of it, stood the test of time until it was surpassed in 2016 by the magnificently produced, two volume, magisterial Pompei Batoni: A Complete Catalogue of His Paintings, which is all his own. This is arguably Pete’s greatest scholarly accomplishment. As a warm up for the new oeuvre catalogue, in 2007 Pete published Pompeo Batoni: Prince of Painters in 18th-Century Rome, an innovative, essay-driven exhibition catalogue that accompanied the Houston/National Gallery, London exhibition, co-authored with Peter Bjorn Kerber. I had the pleasure of introducing Peter to Pete in 2015, and it was the beginning of a fruitful scholarly collaboration between them. Pete’s publications are far too numerous and rich to list and describe in detail here, and this brief overview is wholly inadequate to characterize the impressive range of his published work. This has inspired a cadre of younger scholars, myself included, to pursue research in Italian eighteenth-century art.

I first met Pete Bowron in 1981, when I was casting about for a dissertation topic focused on the Roman eighteenth century. Sir Ellis Waterhouse, Richard Krautheimer, and Donald Posner (Pete’s dissertation advisor), among others, suggested I contact Pete before proceeding further, and I am very happy that I took their advice. I wrote to him at the North Carolina Museum of Art (one did such quaint things in those days) to ask if he would be willing to talk to me for a few minutes about settecento Roman art, and he graciously agreed. I read his dissertation on Benedetto Luti in preparation for our meeting. What we both thought would be a brief interview turned into an afternoon discussion of mutual interests, and he offered to serve as an outside reader for my dissertation. He even came to Newark, Delaware to participate in my dissertation defense. Indeed, Pete was then and continues to be generosity itself and has always gone out of his way to help others who are engaged with the art he so passionately champions.

But it is Pete’s warmth and sense of humour that impress me most. Always ready with a joke, refreshingly self-deprecating, and a true citizen of the world, Pete Bowron is an extraordinary individual. I conclude by relating a personal joke that we share.

After many years of friendship, I still had no idea where Pete grew up, so one day I asked him. He responded: “L.A.,” and I of course assumed he meant Los Angeles, but he paused, smiled and said: “Lower Alabama”. As a fellow son of the American Deep South, I almost fell off my chair laughing.
The economic status of the artist and the many aspects—including social—of his or her career have long been topics of discussion in the work of Edgar Peters Bowron. Even as a knowledgeable connoisseur attentive to the formal and stylistic qualities of artworks, Bowron has never overlooked the cultural, political, economic, and social factors that inevitably played a role in artistic production, as can be seen in his essay on the study of the nude in the second half of the eighteenth century and his fundamental studies on Pompeo Batoni, including his recent monograph on the artist. Moreover, it was with an essay entitled “Batoni’s Professional Career and Style” that his teacher Anthony M. Clark opened the catalogue of the first exhibition dedicated to Batoni, thereby making clear the link between an artist’s career and his social rank. Clark was certainly among those scholars who revived interest in settecento painting in Rome after a century and a half of critical neglect. His studies, along with those of other scholars in the field—among whom Pete (if I may call him that) has played a leading role for many years—have highlighted the many issues that affected Roman art in the Age of Enlightenment, from the papacy of Clement XI Albani (1700-1721) through to its tragic conclusion, marked by the death in exile of Pius VI Braschi (1775-1799).

Over the course of the eighteenth century, artists aspired, with greater intensity and more overtly than ever before, to free themselves from their status as mere “craftsmen,” that is as workers engaged in manual labour, and sought recognition for the intellectual and noble aspects of their profession. One of the main literary sources that documents this is the writing of biographer Lione Pascoli, who, in his “Vite”, drew upon reliable information to describe the careers of artists within a socio-economic context. Pascoli addresses such factors as social background, daily practices, successes (culminating sometimes in a knighthood or ennoblement), and last, but by no means least, the high status conferred on the profession thanks to the elevated quality of life—that of the “gentleman”—enjoyed by certain artists.

Pascoli discusses, amongst others, the painter Andrea Provacini, who came from a wealthy family and was thus able to benefit from a proper training, and Giuseppe Ghezzi, son of the painter and architect Sebastiano. Ghezzi worked for the king of Portugal, who had bestowed upon him a knighthood with the right to pass his title down to his descendants, and as a result he was able to educate his son as an aristocrat. It is this privileged status that always seems to surface in the complex social relationships of Giuseppe and his son Pier Leone, who was also a knight, propitiating their dominance in the world of the Roman Academy. If these are instances of the highest level of privilege, artists were more typically sons of artists, inheritors of workshops and materials, and expected to pursue a career in the art world. The most famous examples are Pompeo Batoni, son of a goldsmith from Lucca, who would have wanted him closely attached to his studio, and Anton Raphael Mengs (whose despotic father Ismael forced him and his sister Therese into the art world using methods that recall the bullying suffered by the young Mozart).
A similar situation can be noted in the cases of the painter Giuseppe Passeri, the sculptors Camillo Rusconi, Pierre Legros, and Pierre-Étienne Monnot, and the architects Carlo Fontana and Giovanni Battista Contini. Others who came from a less privileged background sought a respectable position in the art world in order to ensure a good quality of life. In this respect, we have the son of an innkeeper (Giuseppe Chiari), of a weaver (Marco Benefial), the cousin of a wine merchant (Pietro de’ Pietri), and Sebastiano Conca, who, according to Pascoli, was of humble birth and studied thanks to the support of an uncle who was a priest. Our common feature emerges from the lives of these artists: the discipline they practiced in their artistic activity, pursued with cult-like devotion. This, in the case of Pietro de’ Pietri, Pascoli eloquently summarizes: “He revered the profession greatly and always feared God.”

Much later, at the end of the century, Luigi Lanzi challenged the usefulness of this type of biographical information, deeming it irrelevant to the history of art and relegating it to the realm of anecdote. In this case the great historiographer – to whom our studies are much indebted – took up a position which for the most part is no longer shared. Such factors as an artist’s background, lifestyle, and achievements are important components of a broader discussion which considers artistic production within the context of the economy of a city like eighteenth-century Rome, where professions linked in some way to the art world were widespread and constituted a principle activity in a system that was otherwise burdened by a parasitical economy. As Charles de Brosses famously said: “Imagine what a city must look like when one quarter of its population is made up of priests, another of statues, a third of people who work very little and the remainder of inhabitants who do no work at all, a city where there is no agriculture, no commerce and no factories...” In reality, this population, which appeared largely inactive to the concettist de Brosses, included, as has been discussed, a large number of people working in the art market.

One can argue that, in many cases, it was precisely because of its economic importance to the city of Rome that the pursuit of art was seen as an effective method of social advancement. A self-portrait by Giuseppe Chiari depicts the artist with his wife, children, and brother Tommaso, also a painter (fig. 1). It is Pascoli who identifies all the family members: Lucrezia Damiani and their offspring Stefano, Carlo, and Teresa. He also provides information on the social status enjoyed by the children, all the result of their father’s efforts: Stefano would become canon of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, Carlo, and Teresa. He also provides information on the social status enjoyed by the children, all the result of their father’s efforts: Stefano would become canon of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, Carlo followed in the footsteps of his father and uncle and became an artist, while Teresa married a jeweller. In 1766, another group portrait presents a family – that of the great silversmith Luigi Valadier – in an even more elevated way, with a sophisticated intellectual connotation: Giuseppe Bottani depicts Valadier’s wife Caterina Della Valle as Latona and their children, Giuseppe and Maria Clementina, with the attributes of the gods Apollo and Diana in “classical disguise” (fig. 2). Such an approach may have been more appropriate for the portrayal of the aristocracy (Marco Benefial had already used it for the wife and children of Prince Domenico Orsini) but clearly it was not considered excessive for an individual who had reached an elevated social standing thanks also to his special relationships with families of the highest rank of nobility, such as the Chigi and Borghese.
Already in the previous century, artists strove to achieve some form of distinction: the title of knight conferred by the pope was proudly displayed next to signatures and emphasized by biographers. When Caravaggio failed to obtain this title in Rome (for reasons which are all too obvious), he sought to obtain it in Malta; he succeeded in this, only to have it revoked because of his involvement in a violent crime. Failure to be recognized in this way could result in severe depression such as that which caused the death of Orazio Borgogni, so disturbed was he by the award of the title to his enemy Gaspare Celio.

Membership at the Accademia di San Luca for artists in Rome and Accademia del Disegno for those in Florence was without doubt a fundamental step in any career path, confirming one's standing as an established artist; but such institutions were of a strictly "professional" character which did not necessarily lead to any career path, confirming one's standing as an artist. Membership of such organizations enjoyed an intellectual status which they often shared with high ranking aristocrats and prelates. This is true, for example, in the case of the Accademia dell’Arcadia: the requirement for admission was an acknowledged literary talent, as demonstrated by the composition of poetry or the writing of treatises. In this way, artists had access to the courts of the cardinals or the "conversazioni" (intellectual gatherings) of aristocrats, and, thanks to the extensive presence of writers there, they could avail themselves of learned sources for the iconography of complex allegories and for mythological or historical subjects. But beyond such connections, the professional success of these artists was also measured by their ability to live the lifestyle of "gentlemen", something that was often demonstrated by a self-portrait or family portrait in which the signs of success were proudly displayed. "Arte gli gentiluomini della Repubblica delle Lettere" (Gentleman Artists in the Republic of Letters) is the title Stefano Bonsignore uses to introduce his essay on the portraits of "Arcadian" artists in the Accademia di San Luca.11 In a group painted by Anton von Maron, these artists – among them the sculptor Vincenzo Pacetti (fig. 5), the architect Antonio Asprucci, and Maron himself with his wife, the painter Therese Pacetti (fig. 3), the architect Antonio Asprucci, and Maron himself with his wife, the painter Therese Pacetti – are depicted in elegant attire, without any specific attributes of their profession (such as the palette and brush, scalpel or compass), and with an air of assured elegance typical of intellectual elites conscious of their own prestige.

In a famous Self Portrait (fig. 4), Anton von Maron – the "von" refers to his ennoblement by Maria Teresa of Austria – depicts himself in front of one of his most important commissions, the decoration of the room of Dido in the noble rooms of the Villa Borghese. That the subject is drawn from Virgil underlines the "professional" character which did not necessarily lead to any career path, confirming one's standing as an artist. Membership of such organizations enjoyed an intellectual status which they often shared with high ranking aristocrats and prelates. This is true, for example, in the case of the Accademia dell’Arcadia: the requirement for admission was an acknowledged literary talent, as demonstrated by the composition of poetry or the writing of treatises. In this way, artists had access to the courts of the cardinals or the "conversazioni" (intellectual gatherings) of aristocrats, and, thanks to the extensive presence of writers there, they could avail themselves of learned sources for the iconography of complex allegories and for mythological or historical subjects. But beyond such connections, the professional success of these artists was also measured by their ability to live the lifestyle of "gentlemen", something that was often demonstrated by a self-portrait or family portrait in which the signs of success were proudly displayed. "Arte gli gentiluomini della Repubblica delle Lettere" (Gentleman Artists in the Republic of Letters) is the title Stefano Bonsignore uses to introduce his essay on the portraits of "Arcadian" artists in the Accademia di San Luca.11 In a group painted by Anton von Maron, these artists – among them the sculptor Vincenzo Pacetti (fig. 5), the architect Antonio Asprucci, and Maron himself with his wife, the painter Therese Pacetti – are depicted in elegant attire, without any specific attributes of their profession (such as the palette and brush, scalpel or compass), and with an air of assured elegance typical of intellectual elites conscious of their own prestige.

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This he achieved only in 1750, when he was made a member of the nobility of Sant’Angelo in Vado, his birthplace,15 and the title “patrician” was permitted on his tomb, which still exists in San Bonaventura al Palatino.16 Even more significant is the case of Corrado Giaquinto, who amassed a vast fortune partly with the intention of acquiring a fiefdom for 80,000 ducats; he died without achieving his aim, but not before he had, in preparation for the purchase, adopted a lifestyle for himself and his children, in both Spain and Naples, that was worthy of a grand aristocrat.17

Often estate inventories can shed light on the socio-economic position achieved by an artist. Confirmation of an artist’s social advancement – typically after passing through all stages of training, coming into contact with the various channels of patronage (usually through the master of the workshop where they were apprenticed), and practising the profession itself over a long period – can be traced particularly in official, and often revealing, documents such as testamentary dispositions and inventories of possessions left to heirs. Current interest in this type of source material is particularly strong, and there have been numerous studies and publications dedicated to the subject. Consideration of just a few sample cases reveals information that is of great significance for the present subject. The inventory of furnishings, the itemizing of clothing, the presence – or absence – of valuables and works of art, the list of so-called “luoghi di monte”, credits and debts, the description of the studio, and the ownership of books provide a wealth of information of remarkable value. 18 Such material supplements and generally confirms the biographers’ accounts: both Pascoli and Nicola Pio often provide precise information on the contents of estates or record those rare cases of disregard for the accumulation of goods.19 The apartment of Giuseppe Passeri, according to Pascoli, was worth visiting to see the rare furnishings and to witness the elegance and good taste of the rooms; Pietro de’ Pietri, by contrast, had no interest in a life of leisure or wealth and “lived as a philosopher” with great sobriety, bequeathing as a result only a modest inheritance to his brother.

Of an altogether different calibre is the level of wealth revealed by the inventories of the possessions of Carlo Maratti (d. 1713) and his consort Francesca Gommi. This might seem rather obvious given the artist’s high rank, his self-image (shown, for example, by the solemnity with which he depicts himself with Marchese Nicolò Maria Pallavicini in the painting now in Stourhead (fig. 6), and the glory he enjoyed in his lifetime as an artist honoured by popes and rulers. That it was not so straightforward becomes clear when one considers the financial situation of another artistic giant, Pompeo Batoni, who upon his death in 1787 had not left enough to guarantee even a modest quality of life for his family. Thus, even if an artist enjoyed recognition, this was no guarantee of entry into that select group of wealthy artists who were able to live off their riches without needing to work. There are also cases of artists of great renown who were no longer able to pursue their career because of illness and lived their final years in poverty with the help of a compassionate patron. Of these the most iconic – if not the most tragic – was Marco Benefial, blind and without means of support, who was provided for by the generosity of his benefactor, Niccolò Soderini. 20 Benefial, who had repeatedly portrayed himself with the knight’s cross (fig. 7), and twenty years after his death was honoured with a bust in the Pantheon like Raphael and Annibale Carracci, in his lifetime suffered several reversals of fortune and showed insufficient foresight in managing his affairs. Such imprudence was not shared by the aforementioned Corrado Giaquinto and Placido Costanzi. The inventory of Costanzi’s possessions – in addition to paintings, sculpture, silver, jewelry, and accessories indicative of his high rank (swords, pistols, wigs) – includes investments and real estate, which guaranteed his economic well-being.21
Among the properties he owned was a working vineyard with a house on Via Nomentana, which bordered the estates of aristocrats such as the Conti Bolognetti and the Marchesi Nuñez. In the same way, in the residence of Gian Domenico Campiglia, who ended his artistic career while holding the lucrative position of Superintendent at the Calcografia Camerale, the existence of hunting rifles and a card table allude to fashionable social gatherings, hosted in a setting of luxurious furniture, valuable silverware and expensive clothing. A reasonably extensive library (with books on history and classical subjects in addition to religious texts) and the presence of scientific instruments (including a camera obscura) confirmed that Costanzi was a cultured artist, in close contact with intellectuals such as Cardinal Neri Corsini and the learned Giovanni Gaetano Bottari. Costanzi’s economic success is shown by a substantial fortune of 3,500 scudi. The estate of Giovanni Pichler was the result of the activities of a valuable family business, which included a private academy (as shown by the stool and lights used for the models), where historical and figurative paintings were produced, in addition to the engraved gems for which Pichler was famous.

The numerous prints, model books, and academic studies, among them many by Corvi and Batoni as well Pichler himself, must have had the same function. The rooms also contained works by a range of artists – from Rubens to Muratti, Lanfranco to Corvi – along with about fifty-three landscapes and marine scenes by Fidanza (without any indication as to whether they were by Francesco, Giuseppe, or Gregorio), all of which testify to another business activity of artists who were, by the nature of their profession, often in direct contact with a clientele that was predominantly foreign: the trade in works of art.

Some twenty years ago, when Stefano Susinno and I considered the subject of the artist’s role in a social context in an essay on “Roma Arcadica”, we made the following observations, which I cite here as they are relevant to the theme under consideration:

Emphasizing the nobility and liberal character of the profession was in fact the only way in the ancient regime to free art from the “mechanical” aspect that was still inherent in the undeniably manual character of its production. Knighthoods and Academies, Arcadian discussions and meetings, the practice and teaching of drawing, all things more prevalent in Rome than elsewhere, allowed Domenico Corvi – with the years of revolution nearly past – to depict himself in his self-portraits (fig. 8) with the air of self-assurance and nonchalant ease of a gentleman; this kind of self-portrayal provides the clearest evidence of the tension which an entire social group felt in their desire, in the name of the arts and sciences, for equality with the highest levels of that society. At the end of the eighteenth century, when political events had begun to prevail, Pius VI still decided to make Vincenzo Pacetti Count Palatine (“conte palatino”).

Even if the rise of the ideology of the bourgeoisie just a few years later seemed to negate such a laborious and ancient system for the promotion of artists, when in Rome during the Restoration there was a return to the social standards of the ancient regime, Canova, prince of artists, was ennobled with the title of marquis, an honour that had never been granted to an artist before.

In addition to Corvi’s Self Portrait, that of Jacob More, a Scottish painter active in Rome for a long period – a work that was intended for the Uffizi collection – also shows an artist fully aware of his own prestige (fig. 9). More portrays himself full-length on a canvas that is almost two metres high, a depiction that was so unusual that some noted that in the same collection even Raphael was represented by a more discreet “half-length” self-portrait.
Even sculpted portraits depict the artist in a different way, in line with the format that had already been established at the beginning of the century. Among the most important examples is the magnificent bust of Piranesi by Joseph Nollekens (fig. 10), which imitates the most noble “heroic” portraits intended for the aristocracy or members of the intellectual elite, without any elaborate hairstyle or clothing, while in the herm executed by Giovanni Volpato for the Marchese d’Azara, Anton Raphael Mengs is represented “all’antica” with his hair intertwined with that of his friend and protector (fig. 11). The decision to eliminate any contemporary accessory removed the sitter from the context of mere chronicle and placed the subject in the realm of History—a sign that the ennoblement of art and the artist had reached, at least momentarily, its summit.
The names and dates of the births of the children of Luigi Valadier are recorded in the registers of the Vicariate of Rome for the following events:

1. The diocese of Rome was established as a separate entity in 1792, under Pope Pius VI, with the papacy in exile. For the history of art in Rome, see Liliana Barroero, "Roma arcadica capitale delle Arti del Settecento," in the catalogue of the exhibition "Arcadian Rome, Universal Capital of the Arts" (Florence: Ecole Française de Rome, 2018), pp. 71-136.

2. In announcing the news, the Diario Ordinario 2194 of 9 January 1796 underlined that no artist had ever received such a title.


10. The painting of Benoni dated 1714 is in the Museo di Roma a Palazzo Pamphilj.


20. The painting of Benoni dated 1714 is in the Museo di Roma a Palazzo Pamphilj.


In July 1997, I visited the Staatliche Graphische Sammlung in Munich for the first time and—as was (and remains) my habit when visiting any new print room—I asked to see all of the drawings by and associated with the Carracci. Among the sheets attributed to Lodovico Carracci, there was a large and impressive study in black chalk of a naked young man (fig. 1). Lodovico’s authorship of the drawing did not strike me as very convincing, and I noted speculatively: “Looks like Riminaldi.” The physiognomy of the model reminded me very much of one of the few paintings by Riminaldi I knew quite well, namely the Amor Victorious in Palazzo Pitti, a clever reworking of Caravaggio’s painting in Berlin which is widely considered to be Riminaldi’s masterpiece (fig. 2). The slightly imprecise, soft-focus rendition of the facial features, with the eyes glancing to the model’s right, is common to both drawing and painting. Interestingly, this effect is not present in the other autograph version of the painting, in a Milanese private collection, which is tighter and more Caravaggesque in handling, and is therefore generally deemed to be earlier in date than the Pitti canvas. The association of the Munich drawing with Riminaldi on these grounds seemed just about plausible but a long way from watertight, and I let the matter rest.

A couple of years ago I came across the photograph of the drawing I had ordered at the time of first seeing it, and my curiosity was rekindled. In the intervening years scholarly interest in Riminaldi, as is true of the whole phenomenon of Caravaggio and his impact, had grown exponentially, and numerous contributions to our understanding of his work culminated in the publication of a comprehensive catalogue raisonné. Among the recently identified paintings included in the catalogue was a large canvas representing the Combat of Hercules and Achelous, which emerged at an auction in Naples in 2011, and now belongs to the Galerie Giovanni Sarti in Paris (fig. 3). The painting, which has been dated to about 1624–1625, presents a rather unusual take on the Ovidian tale, in which Achelous appears in his three principal manifestations—in human form, as the vanquished, recumbent river god, crowned with a wreath of reeds; as a coiling serpent; and, in the right middle distance, as a bull, being wrestled to the ground by Hercules, who therefore appears twice.

The drawing in Munich was surely the painter’s point of departure for the figure of Hercules in this painting. The correspondence in pose is very close, but not exact. Most obviously, Hercules’ head, now heavily bearded and crowned with the skin of the Nemean Lion, is in a slightly lower position, and the demi-god stares rather disconcertingly directly out of the painting at the viewer. The arrangement of his arms and shoulders has been adjusted to accommodate this shift, resulting in a slightly more upright stance relative to the drawing. X-radiograph images of this area of the painting reveal no significant pentimenti corresponding to these changes, so it is not the case that the painter first followed the drawing exactly, and then made the adjustments described on the surface of the canvas itself. The torsion of the model’s twisted pose in the drawing implies that he is about to hurl an object to his proper right in a manner analogous to Gianlorenzo Bernini’s roughly contemporary statue of David in the Galleria Borghese, a work that could have influenced the posing of Riminaldi’s model.
Such a highly sprung pose does not quite suit Hercules’ action of strangling Achelous in the form of a snake, with his energy channelled into the arms and hands, so the torsion of his pose is duly relaxed a little in the painting. It is of course possible that the differences between the drawn study and the painted figure may have been effected by means of another life drawing, or indeed by painting directly from a life model posed in an amended version of the Munich drawing, in the manner of Caravaggio, but either of these options seems unnecessarily labour-intensive. Attentive comparison of the definition of the muscle blocks and the play of light over the model’s torso and legs leaves little doubt that Riminaldi had the drawing to hand whilst painting his figure of Hercules. Even the hero’s lion-skin finds a parallel in the faintly indicated drapery streaming from the model’s shoulder in the drawing, its highlights created by deliberately erasing the black chalk.

In view of the differences just noted, it is rather unlikely that the drawing was made specifically as a preparatory study for the painted figure of Hercules. A more likely scenario is that it was selected by the artist from a pre-existing stock of life drawings, and adapted for the purpose in hand. It is really a very confident and accomplished piece of draughtsmanship, convincing anatomically and a balanced representation of a figure in motion, with pleasingly inflected contours and beautifully captured play of light and shade over the forms (although this is slightly compromised in places by the water stains).
It betrays an artist who must have had considerable experience drawing from the life-model. Stylistically, the closest comparable studies are to be found not among the work of Riminaldi’s immediate contemporaries, but in the magisterial group of life drawings produced by Annibale Carracci in connection with his Farnese Gallery frescoes and other works of that period (fig. 4). 9 A large group of such studies had passed to Annibale’s favoured pupil Domenichino, in whose Roman studio – according to a largely reliable early biographical account – Riminaldi spent some time. 10 Only one other drawing of the “academic nude” type attributed to Riminaldi is known (fig. 5). 11 This is altogether softer and more delicate in its handling than the more robust Munich drawing – in part, perhaps, reflecting the model’s more relaxed pose – but there are similarities between them, as well as with painted figures by the artist, so a qualified acceptance of the traditional attribution seems justified. The slight indication of wings behind the model has understandably led to an association between this drawing and Riminaldi’s two paintings of Amor Victorious (see fig. 2). The few other surviving drawings by the artist are rapid, almost brutally summary compositional sketches in black chalk, very different in appearance from the two male nudes. 12
Presumably because of the absence of surviving evidence, both visual and documentary, little attention has been placed on the role of life drawing in Riminaldi’s working procedure, although the likely use of life models has been noted in connection with a few individual figures or compositions, including the Combat of Hercules and Acrisius. But if we review his painted oeuvre with the Munich drawing and related painting in mind, it becomes very apparent that drawing – and possibly even painting – from posed models must have been fundamental to his practice. Male nudes in academic-type poses, often with complicated foreshortening, appear everywhere, from his earliest identified works such as *Juno Placing Argus’ Eyes on the Peacock’s Tail* (Rome, Galleria Doria Pamphili) and the documented *Samson Victorious over the Philistines* (Pisa, Duomo, 1620–1622) until at least the end of his Roman sojourn in 1627. A particularly striking example is the later painting of *Samson Victorious over the Philistines* in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Grenoble, in which the fallen victims are heaped in an array of challenging poses (fig. 6). This is not to suggest, however, that a life drawing necessarily lay behind each and every male nude in Riminaldi’s oeuvre.

The specific context for Riminaldi’s studies from life models remains to be clarified, but much useful research has been carried out recently on the broader subject of artistic training and drawing academies in early-seicento Rome. A reasonable assumption might be that most life drawing took place under the auspices of the official academy of the painters and sculptors, the Accademia di San Luca, one of the stated priorities of which was artistic education and the training of young artists. Riminaldi is recorded as a member of the Academy from 1624 until 1627, during which period the institution’s patron was Cardinal Francesco Maria del Monte, who made a concerted attempt to reinvigorate it. At a historic meeting on 20 October 1624, the French painter Simon Vouet was appointed as the new principe, and Riminaldi himself, at his first meeting, was given an official role as censor. But despite best intentions, it seems that the ambition to institute regular life-drawing classes at the Academy – albeit only on Sunday mornings after Mass and on feast days – was short-lived and sporadic.

From a practical point of view, it was in fact a proliferation of private life-drawing classes – *accademie del motto* or *accademie del nudo* – hosted in artists’ own homes or studios, that made a much more important contribution to artistic education in this period. They appear typically to have been open to all, whether established artists or aspiring ones. The seventeenth-century artists’ biographers Giulio Mancini, Giovanni Baglione, Giovanni Battista Passeri, and Giovanni Pietro Bellori record a wide range of painters attending informal life-drawing sessions of this kind, including many of a broadly Caravaggesque stamp; other documentary evidence, notably court proceedings, also confirms the existence and popularity of such private academies. Artists as diverse as Domenichino, Andrea Sacchi, Vouet himself, another French artist called Robert Picou, the Franco-Flemish Nicolas Régnier, Andrea Camassei, the Florentine Andrea Commodi, and the Veronese Marcantonio Bassetti are all recorded as hosting *accademie del nudo* in their Roman studios. There is no mention of Riminaldi having organized or attended classes of this kind, but that is hardly surprising, as his name is completely absent in any context from the seicento Roman biographical accounts. He seems to have been especially close to the community of French painters in Rome, and the stylistic influence of Vouet and Régnier, in particular, has often been noted in his work. The fact that painted nudes in almost identical recumbent poses appear in works by both Riminaldi and Régnier points to a common root in drawings from the life-model made during the same sessions, presumably those that Régnier is known to have housed from 1621.
NOTES

1. I am very grateful to Kurt Zehet, Giovanni Sarti, Patrizia Cavazzini and Laura Donati for their help in the preparation of this article.

2. The drawing is inv. no. 14855 Z. Black chalk, 43.2 x 32.3 cm; the upper left part of the sheet water-stained in places. Inscribed on the verso with the number “9493”, which is not an inventory number of the Musée du Louvre and must therefore pertain to its entry into that collection, which was at some point between 1829 and 1852. In the latter year it was listed, along with 145 other sheets, as part of a group of “French and Academic Studies”. The sheet bears two nineteenth-century Graphische Sammlung collection marks, Lug. 1027 and Lug. 1717.

3. The traditional attribution was in fact to Pontormo, and it was published as such by Hans Wolfsmann, “Einige unbekannte italienische Handschriftensammlungen in der Graphischen Sammlung zu München,” München Jahrbuch der Bildenden Künste 7 (1915): 36-52; and included under his name in Bernard Berenson, D’après de platte Fonction, 3 vols. (Milan: Electa Editrice, 1961), II, p. 387 (with incorrect inventory number). It is not recorded who proposed the alternative attribution to Lodovico Carracci.

4. Pierluigi Carofano, Orazio Riminaldi (Soncino: Edizioni dei Crescenzi, 2001), no. VII.9, pp. 452-453; and Patrizia Cavazzini and Franco Paliaga, Orazio Riminaldi (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2001), fig. 24; Carofano and Paliaga, Orazio Riminaldi, pp. 42, 48, note 30, and fig. 29.


6. Carofano and Paliaga, Orazio Riminaldi, no. 16, pp. 128-130, plates XVII-XIX.

7. Carofano and Paliaga, Orazio Riminaldi, and, for a reliable shorter account of Riminaldi’s career, see Mario Pupillo, “Orazio Riminaldi,” in Pittura e collezionismo a Pisa nel Seicento (Soncino: Edizioni dei Crescenzi, 2005), no. 29 and 31.

8. See Carofano and Paliaga, Orazio Riminaldi, figs. 23, 25, 29 and 31.


11. For the anonymous biography of Riminaldi, inscribed on the Crescenzi manuscript because of its probable authorship by a member of that distinguished family, is in the library of the Galleria degli Uffizi. See Carofano and Paliaga, Orazio Riminaldi, pp. 149-150, doc. II, for a transcription. See also the discussion in Pupillo, “Orazio Riminaldi,” pp. 393-404.

12. See Carofano and Paliaga, Orazio Riminaldi, figs. 25, 29 and 31.


16. For Riminaldi’s career, see, for instance, Nicolas Régnier, “Note su Orazio Riminaldi e i suoi rapporti con l’ambiente barocco,” Pittura e collezionismo a Pisa nel Seicento (Soncino: Edizioni dei Crescenzi, 2005), no. 23, pp. 141-142.

17. Carofano and Paliaga, Orazio Riminaldi, pp. 41-42, 54-60.

18. Lemoine, Nicolas Régnier.
Among his many interests, Pete Bowron has long been the foremost admirer of Italian view painting in the English-speaking world, an admiration which found expression above all in his exhibition Bernardo Bellotto and the Capitals of Europe (Houston, 2001). The present writer is proud to have contributed in a very small way to that, and Pete has always been a consistent source of encouragement, inspiration and friendship. Thus this seems a particularly appropriate opportunity to gather together several works by Canaletto which have been awaiting publication for some time, along with comments on several others, notably the Molo which belongs in the Städel Institut, Frankfurt, which may well be the artist’s earliest signed and dated painting. As Pete would be the first to agree, the audience for specialized view painting studies is select, so to a significant degree everything that the present writer has written in this field has been for Pete.

Unknown paintings by Canaletto happily still reappear not infrequently, the majority of recent rediscoveries inevitably being of works from the less well understood early years of the painter’s career. Several are presented or discussed here; an opportunity is also provided to discuss two recently re-emerged Venetian views in the context of Canaletto’s views of Venice painted in London.

A view of The Molo from the Bacino di San Marco, apparently unrecorded before it was bequeathed to the Denver Art Museum in 2009, is a very welcome addition to Canaletto’s early work (fig. 1).\(^1\) The reappearance of a Canaletto view of the Molo taken from a point in the Bacino near the central axis of the Piazzetta, rather than from an angle from left or right, should come as little surprise, as such a view featured prominently in the repertoire of both of his significant precursors. Gaspare Vanvitelli painted a series of paintings seen from a similar axis, most from a more distant viewpoint, beginning with that of 1697 in the Museo del Prado.\(^2\) That in the Galleria Doria Pamphilj, however, while from a viewpoint slightly to the right, is close in composition, showing six bays of the Zecca on the left and seven and a half bays of the Doge’s Palace on the right. Vanvitelli’s large preparatory drawing, squared for transfer, in the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Rome, may conceivably have been seen by Canaletto in Rome in 1719–1720.\(^3\) Luca Carlevarijs’s etching of 1703 is taken from an angle slightly to the right and from an elevated viewpoint, but shows exactly the same number of bays of the Doge’s Palace as the Denver Molo, while his paintings which show the Molo more or less frontally, in the Lehman Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, in a private collection, and in the Terruzzi Collection are all from more distant viewpoints.\(^4\)

The only related composition in Canaletto’s work is one showing the central part of the view from the Molo itself, known in two versions, one of them an upright
component. Royal Collection, RCIN 405074), of the important set of six large canvases of the Piazza and Piazzetta which were the first major works for Joseph Smith, the other a variant in a square format now in Brest. Both have a prominent senator as a focal point. Both are datable to ca. 1723-1724 and the Denver painting must belong to the same moment. The broad strokes of the two sails and the white awning are closely paralleled in the Royal Collection canvas (RCIN 405074), *The Bacino di San Marco from the Giudecca* (Cardiff, National Museum of Wales), *The Bacino di San Marco from the Molo* (Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen), *Santa Maria della Salute from the Molo* (Grenoble, Musée de Grenoble) and elsewhere.\(^7\) The handling of the figures, the Liberia, and the sky is close to that in the *modelli* for the Rotterdam painting, currently in a Milanese private collection.\(^8\) Canaletto’s handwriting in the depiction of bundles is particularly distinctive, the white example in the boat in the centre being composed of almost the same strokes as that in the barge at lower right in the (slightly later) *Grand Canal from Palazzo Baldi to the Reale* (Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi).\(^9\)

The Denver painting is notable for the solidity of the buildings, coupled with the strong sense of recession created by the shrinking of the Basilica of San Marco and the Torre dell’Orologio, and the sombre mood, with the sky possibly beginning to clear after rain, as well as the already virtuoso rendering of textures of cloth, stone, and brick. It is of the same size as the series of Grand Canal views executed for Joseph Smith – of which only the view of *The Upper Branches of the Grand Canal from the Fondamenta di Santa Croce* can be this early – and is thus one of the first instances of Canaletto employing what was to become his standard format during the 1730s. Could it have originally been intended as part of the series for Smith? Or could it have been painted as a *modello* for a horizontal composition for Smith which, strengthened by the focus on the central part of the composition and by the viewpoint being brought much closer, became *The Piazzetta looking North* (RCIN 405074)\(^9\)? One of Canaletto’s views of the Molo from an angle deserves far more consideration than it has received hitherto in the context of studies of his first *vedute*, a painting which was hosted from the Städelisches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt-am-Main in 1945 (fig. 2).\(^9\) It bears an inscription on the reverse of the original canvas, in what could well be the artist’s hand “Antonio Canal Pitor / Venezia 1722”. The painting was in the collection of Johann Friedrich Süßel (1728-1816), as the work of Canaletto, and was listed as Canaletto’s work by Bernard Berenson in Italian Painters of the Renaissance in 1894. The attribution was, however, emphatically rejected by Constable,\(^1\) and, although it was championed by Antonio Morassi,\(^2\), it is still doubted in Frankfurt.\(^3\) This is admittedly a (hopefully temporary) abstain, but the pendant remains in the collection and is clearly autograph.\(^4\) It shows the Fondamenta Nuove at the Ponte dei Mendicanti, with the Casino degli Spiriti beyond and the Doges’ Palace in the distance, no doubt with considerable flexibility over topographical accuracy, not least because two sculpted cartouches on the façade of the palazzo in the centre display what appears to be the *Du Canal* coat-of-arms, which would be a very early example of the use of those as a type of signature. While the Fondamenta Nuove view is unique as well as remarkable, the Molo view corresponds with only very minor variations, except in the sky, with a plate in Domenico Lovisa’s *Giam Tinto di Vicenza* first published in 1717. This is unexpected and, to complicate matters further, a version by Bernardo Canal is known (Yorkshire, Private Collection), on the same scale but with less sky and including the Column of Saint Theodore.\(^3\) If the Molo view is indeed by Canaletto and of 1722, as seems probable, it is the painter’s first dated (or indeed accurately datable) painting and is crucial for a full understanding of his early development. This is particularly important following Darío Succi’s reattribution to Gaspare Diziani of the Schodenburg *capriccio* (UK, Private Collection) and the *Capriccio of a Gothic Church by the Lagoon* (Vicenza, Banca Intesa), a suggestion which deserves serious consideration.\(^4\)

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\(^7\) The handling of the figures, the Liberia, and the sky is close to that in the *modelli* for the Rotterdam painting, currently in a Milanese private collection. Canaletto’s handwriting in the depiction of bundles is particularly distinctive, the white example in the boat in the centre being composed of almost the same strokes as that in the barge at lower right in the (slightly later) *Grand Canal from Palazzo Baldi to the Reale* (Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi).\(^8\) The Denver painting is notable for the solidity of the buildings, coupled with the strong sense of recession created by the shrinking of the Basilica of San Marco and the Torre dell’Orologio, and the sombre mood, with the sky possibly beginning to clear after rain, as well as the already virtuoso rendering of textures of cloth, stone, and brick. It is of the same size as the series of Grand Canal views executed for Joseph Smith – of which only the view of *The Upper Branches of the Grand Canal from the Fondamenta di Santa Croce* can be this early – and is thus one of the first instances of Canaletto employing what was to become his standard format during the 1730s. Could it have originally been intended as part of the series for Smith? Or could it have been painted as a *modello* for a horizontal composition for Smith which, strengthened by the focus on the central part of the composition and by the viewpoint being brought much closer, became *The Piazzetta looking North* (RCIN 405074)\(^9\)? One of Canaletto’s views of the Molo from an angle deserves far more consideration than it has received hitherto in the context of studies of his first *vedute*, a painting which was hosted from the Städelisches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt-am-Main in 1945 (fig. 2).\(^9\) It bears an inscription on the reverse of the original canvas, in what could well be the artist’s hand “Antonio Canal Pitor / Venezia 1722”. The painting was in the collection of Johann Friedrich Süßel (1728-1816), as the work of Canaletto, and was listed as Canaletto’s work by Bernard Berenson in Italian Painters of the Renaissance in 1894. The attribution was, however, emphatically rejected by Constable,\(^1\) and, although it was championed by Antonio Morassi,\(^2\), it is still doubted in Frankfurt.\(^3\) This is admittedly a (hopefully temporary) abstain, but the pendant remains in the collection and is clearly autograph.\(^4\) It shows the Fondamenta Nuove at the Ponte dei Mendicanti, with the Casino degli Spiriti beyond and the Doges’ Palace in the distance, no doubt with considerable flexibility over topographical accuracy, not least because two sculpted cartouches on the façade of the palazzo in the centre display what appears to be the *Du Canal* coat-of-arms, which would be a very early example of the use of those as a type of signature. While the Fondamenta Nuove view is unique as well as remarkable, the Molo view corresponds with only very minor variations, except in the sky, with a plate in Domenico Lovisa’s *Giam Tinto di Vicenza* first published in 1717. This is unexpected and, to complicate matters further, a version by Bernardo Canal is known (Yorkshire, Private Collection), on the same scale but with less sky and including the Column of Saint Theodore.\(^3\) If the Molo view is indeed by Canaletto and of 1722, as seems probable, it is the painter’s first dated (or indeed accurately datable) painting and is crucial for a full understanding of his early development. This is particularly important following Darío Succi’s reattribution to Gaspare Diziani of the Schodenburg *capriccio* (UK, Private Collection) and the *Capriccio of a Gothic Church by the Lagoon* (Vicenza, Banca Intesa), a suggestion which deserves serious consideration.\(^4\)
Canaletto: some recent rediscoveries & observations

A small canvas showing The Interior of the Basilica of San Marco emerged in 2012 which, on cleaning, turned out to be worn but still of considerable beauty (fig. 3).17 This must be by several years the earliest of Canaletto’s depictions of the interior,18 and one may presume that it was painted before the removal in 1723 of the escutcheons with the doges’ coats-of-arms above the arcades to left and right, these being long gone by the time of the two later depictions of the nave, though still included.19 It corresponds closely with the description of a painting by Canaletto recorded in the collection of the great Venetian polymath, philosopher, poet, essayist, connoisseur and art collector Count Francesco Algarotti (Venice 1712-1764 Pisa). The printed catalogue of his collection lists an “an interior view of the church of Saint Mark, taken from the main door of this church. On wood, seven and a half pouc. high, by five and a half pouc. wide”.20 The description of the painting as taken “from the main door of the church” and the size, in Venetian pounce (once), correspond almost exactly (1 once = 2.98 cm; 7 ½ x 5 ½ once = 22.3 x 16.4 cm). The only discrepancy is in the support being given as panel. Not a single Venetian painting by Canaletto on wood is known, the only four paintings using this support all being London views executed on mahogany during his years in England, and of much larger size. There are, however, two Venetian views on canvas applied to panel, almost certainly before execution, a pair showing The Piazzetta with the South-West Corner of the Doge’s Palace and The Quay of the Dugna, sold at Sotheby’s, New York, 29 January 2010, lot 229. Of unusually sketchy character, these are also of small size (28 x 37 cm) and date from the later 1720s. The possibility should be entertained that this painting was originally on canvas applied to panel and was lifted from it at a later date. Algarotti obviously cannot have been the first owner; maybe the artist retained it for a while.

A compositional sketch in the Robert Lehman Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York is usually associated with Canaletto’s two views of the interior of San Marco of the 1740s and 1750s.21 It is, however, more closely related to this composition, and is similarly taken from the left rather than the right side of the central axis, although from slightly nearer the altar. Although generally regarded as of fairly late date, it may be no coincidence that this also belonged to Algarotti, being recorded in the collection of his niece Maria Corniani. A copy of this painting, very slightly larger and on copper, is signed (on the hanging standard) by Antonio Joli.22 Variations include most of the figures (though some, such as two in the right-hand aisle and two between the escutcheons above, follow the Canaletto prototype) and the omission of the escutcheons, which were no longer there. Presumably Joli saw this painting in Venice, possibly already in Algarotti’s collection, and was impressed enough by it to make his own, rather less atmospheric, version of it.

Fig. 3 / Antonio Canaletto, The Interior of the Basilica of San Marco, ca. 1723, oil on canvas, 23.2 x 17.2 cm, Private Collection.
Another painting, this time a capriccio rather than a view of Venice, should, to this writer's eye, be discussed in this context. Though hardly little known, the Capriccio of Ruins (fig. 4) which entered the Royal Collection with that of Joseph Smith is generally dated, along with its pendant, to the early 1740s and was included in the recent Canaletto exhibition at the Queen's Gallery as of ca. 1742-1744. Nobody seems to have questioned this dating, although differences in handling have often been noted. The painting, however, by no means fits comfortably either with its pendant or into the small group of capriccio of this type which Canaletto began in ca. 1742 after, as far as we know, a complete break from painting works of the imagination since 1723. This period of particular inventiveness also found expression in the medium of etching, a series of thirty-five, begun in ca. 1740 being mostly published in 1744 as Folte Attie. In English, there is a large extent in his “Bellottegian” phase, having just made an influential visit to Pachas and the mainland with his nephews. The same qualities are evident in the pendant (RCIN 405078) although possibly tempered, as it was presumably commissioned by Smith to go with the Capriccio of Ruins (RCIN 405079). It seems to this writer that the latter painting (fig. 4) does not in fact belong with those listed above, but with the group of capriccio executed no later than ca. 1723. Its buoyant light, warm sunshiny, the richly textured surface, the dominant memories of Rome, the half-formed figures, the abundant foliage, the treatment of the sky, and the way that the light catches the flutes of the columns and the reeds, silhouetting them against the shade, all find parallels in early capriccio such as the Cini Collection pair, the Giouacelli pair, and the Allegorical Tomb of Lord Somers. To this writer it seems probable that the Capriccio of Ruins (RCIN 405079) was commissioned by Smith at more or less the same time as the much smaller Capriccio with Ruins Based on the Forum (RCIN 405068), though it is hard to explain why he might have wanted two “left-hand” capriccio of different sizes. It may also be noted that the frames of the Capriccio with Ruins (RCIN 405079) and that of its pendant (RCIN 405078) do not match, that of the former being Venetian and rather than that of the latter, which is English, although that is itself inconclusive.

In 2010, a view of The Sposalizio of the Redentore in San Marco, the Doge’s Palace and the Piazzetta Seen through the Arch of the Torre dell’Orologio turned up in an English private collection with an attribution to the circle of Francesco Guardi (fig. 5). Datable around 1723, this is evidently Canaletto’s first rendition of a striking composition to which he was to return after 1735 for much smaller paintings in the Fitzwilliam Museum and of unknown whereabouts. Still in the original English carved giltwood frame of the 1720s, it has a provenance from Sheffleld Henry Morier Neave (1833-1936), 29 Bryanton Square, London, by whom it was entered for sale at Christie’s, London, 27 June 1885, lot 25, as “Canaletto – The Doge’s Palace” (with an untraced pendant “The Bridge of Sighs” as lot 26). This is of particular interest, as it thus joins a group of ten paintings by Canaletto which remained together in the possession of the Neave family until the latter nineteenth century (the majority until the late twentieth century). The group consisted of a pair of views of Venice datable to Canaletto’s English period (The Churches of the Redentore and San Giocoso and The Prison), a Venetian capriccio probably painted in England (Capriccio of the Scuola di San Marco from the Loggia of the Palace (probably London), a larger view of Rome painted later in the English period or shortly after the artist’s return to Venice (The Piazza del Campidoglio and the Forum), and three pairs, two of Venetian views and one of Rome, certainly painted in Italy after 1755. According to family tradition they were acquired by the founder of the family fortunes, Richard Neave (1731-1814), who was created a baronet in 1795, but the dates do not fit and the identity of the first owner of this nearly homogenous group is one of the main outstanding mysteries of Canaletto’s. The re-emergence of this painting may provide a clue to solving this problem. The present writer pointed out in 2006 that many of Canaletto’s most useful patrons during his years in England had already acquired paintings from him, even two decades earlier. Thus the 2nd Duke of Richmond had acquired a pair of Venetian views on copper of the late 1720s and at least one of the two even earlier Allegorical Tombs of English Hitherto, painted by Canaletto in collaboration with other artists. Sir Hugh Smithson, later Earl and Duke of Northumberland, had already acquired a pair of large and highly impressive Venetian views which was delivered by 31 June 1741. Francis Greville, Baron Brooke, later Earl of Warwick, was presumably acquired the large Rehearsal of an Ambassadors at the Doge’s Palace of ca. 1730 sold by the Earl of Warwick in 1794 and now in the Courtauld Collection at the Kunsthalle, Zürich. William Holbech, of Euxborough Hall, Warwickshire, had commissioned a pair of Venetian views in the early 1740s and commissioned two more from Canaletto in England before 1750 to make a set of four. George Garnier had acquired two pairs of paintings in the early 1740s, The Rialto Bridge from the South and a Capriccio of Palladio’s Design for the Rialto Bridge, The Interior of the Basilica of San Marco and The Courtyard of the Doge’s Palace with the Gian and elsewhere. If the Neave paintings fit this pattern, we should be looking for a patron for the group who could have been on the Grand Tour in 1722. Hopefully this will provide a clue to solving this problem somewhere in the Neave family tree.
Two sets of four Venetian views certainly painted by Canaletto in England in the 1750s should have been discussed by the present writer in 2006. Two paintings from the first set have, in fact, only recently been rediscovered (by the present writer, in 2016). They were bequeathed to the Rijksmuseum in 1941 by Julius Wilhelm Edwin vom Rath (1863–1940), who had bought them on 25 May 1920 for fl. 10,000 from the London dealers Ascher & Koetser (figs. 6 & 7). They have spent most of the decades since then in storage, latterly in Lelystad, catalogued as products of Canaletto’s studio. This is to a large extent due to Constable’s classification of them as such in 1962, very probably without ever having seen them. In fact, the viewpoint as well as all the boats and figures in *The Entrance to the Grand Canal, Venice, Looking West, with the Church of Santa Maria della Salute* (fig. 6) differ from the painting in the collection of the Duke of Bedford at Woburn Abbey of which Constable described it as a version. The relationship between *The Grand Canal, Venice, with the Rialto Bridge from the North* (fig. 7) and its supposed prototype in the Royal Collection is similarly loose. The starting points for both compositions were plates in the first, 1735 edition of Antonio Visentini’s *Prospectus Magni Canalis Venetiarum*, his set of fourteen engravings after Venetian views by Canaletto then in the collection of Joseph Smith. This is characteristic of the painter’s modus operandi, as he inevitably relied on graphic sources when far away from his subject matter. The boats and figures, however, differ almost entirely, the latter being particularly vivacious and, in the foreground, up to 7 cm high. While the paintings are in what must surely be the original English carved giltwood frames, the Rialto has a 5.5 cm strip of canvas added at the top by the artist, who presumably had originally intended it to be of more horizontal format. This is unexpected in Canaletto’s work and suggests a change in the circumstances of the commission. Although their light tonality and bright colouring are somewhat obscured by discoloured varnish, the Rijksmuseum paintings may be dated on stylistic grounds with certainty to the early 1750s, and are indeed among the finest Venetian views painted by Canaletto in London, as well as being in very good condition.
Canaletto: some recent rediscoveries & observations

The earlier history of the two paintings has not hitherto been published. It is, however, provided by a Thomas Agnew & Sons label with the stock number 1443 on the stretcher of the Rialto. Agnew’s stock book shows that the paintings had been bought at Christie’s, London, on 9 December 1905.48 They were sold as “The Property of H.J.A. Eyre, Esq., Removed from Shaw House, Newbury” and were then accompanied by two others, “A View looking down the Grand Canal, Venice, with the Dogana and the Church of Santa Maria della Salute” and “The Piazza of Saint Mark’s, Venice, with processions and numerous figures”.49 Those former companions re-emerged in 1997, when they were sold at Sotheby’s, London; they have since been sold by Richard Green twice to private collectors.48 Interestingly, the Piazza San Marco view is also on a canvas which has been enlarged, in that case by 5 cm at the bottom as well as by 3.5 cm at the top. The Eyre sale at Christie’s in 1905 included three portraits of members of the Andrews family, from whom the Eyres had inherited Shaw House, one a delightful group portrait of the family by James Wills, signed and dated 1749, now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. This shows Joseph Andrews (ca. 1691-1753) with his second wife Elizabeth the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. This shows Joseph Andrews (ca. 1691-1753) with his second wife Elizabeth (d. 1761) and his children Elizabeth (d. 1761) and Joseph (1727-1800), created 1st Baronet Andrews of Shaw in 1766, and James Pettit (1737-1797).

The Elizabethan mansion, still one of the sights of the area, had been acquired by James Brydges, 1st Duke of Chandos, in 1728, and his widow lived there until her death in November 1750. Soon after his purchase, Andrews drew up plans for the remodelling of the house, which surely included the commission from Canaletto of the set of Venetian views. Andrews’ connection with Sir Robert Walpole may be fundamental in this respect, as Walpole had in the early 1730s acquired a spectacular pair of Venetian views by Canaletto, showing The Grand Canal, looking North-East from the Piazzetta to the Rialto Bridge and The Bacino di San Marco on Ascension Day, which hung in “The Parlour” at 10 Downing Street until his fall from power in 1742.50

Neither Walpole nor Andrews ever visited Italy, and nor did, as far as we know, Edward Hoskins, the first owner of a set of four larger Venetian views which have passed by inheritance, remaining together in an English private collection (figs. 10-13). Their recent cleaning removes any doubts that they date from Canaletto’s years in England.51 Stylistically clearly from late in the English period, they share a provenance with a View from the Terrace at Kenwood by John Wootton, which is dated 1753. The frames are evidently by the same maker and there is every reason to believe that their date must be similar. Here again the artist has used Visentini’s Sue Aspects of the City of Venice after an earlier, rival paintings as the basis for the compositions, here more closely than in the Andrews set, though still with variations in the boats. Three of the four subjects correspond with those of the earlier set, while for the fourth The Bacino San Marco has been replaced by The Molo, Looking West, which closely follows plate twelve in the second, 1742 edition of Visentini’s series of engravings. The correspondence of three of the four subjects suggests that Hoskins may have been aware of Andrews’ set. Both sets testify to Canaletto’s exceptional ability to capture the spirit of his native city a long way from home and between them add significantly to the artist’s production of Venetian views during his years in London.

Joseph Andrews Senior owed his career to Sir Robert Walpole (1676-1745), by whom he had had the good fortune to be “protected and encouraged” and who had secured for him his appointment as Paymaster of the forces serving in Scotland in 1715 when he was twenty-four years old. He was subsequently, in ca. 1722, appointed to regularize and oversee the accounts of the Pay Office, his success in this role earning him a gift of a banknote for £1,000 in a gold box from the Paymaster General, Spencer Compton. Andrews’ fortune, augmented by the income from extensive plantations in Jamaica and Dominica, allowed him to purchase the Shaw House estate on the outskirts of London.
Canaletto: some recent rediscoveries & observations

Fig. 10 / Antonio Canaletto, The Entrance to the Grand Canal, Venice, Looking West, with the Church of Santa Maria della Salute, ca. 1755, oil on canvas, 68.5 x 106.5 cm, Private Collection.

Fig. 11 / Antonio Canaletto, The Grand Canal, Venice, with the Rialto Bridge from the North, ca. 1755, oil on canvas, 68.5 x 106 cm, Private Collection.

Fig. 12 / Antonio Canaletto, The Molo, Looking West, ca. 1755, oil on canvas, 68.5 x 106 cm, Private Collection.

Fig. 13 / Antonio Canaletto, The Entrance to the Grand Canal, Venice, Looking East, with the Church of Santa Maria della Salute, ca. 1755, oil on canvas, 68.5 x 106.5 cm, Private Collection.
NOTES

1. I am grateful to Timothy Standing for bringing this to my attention, for inviting me to Brown to see it in 2012 and for making my visit so enjoyable. The painting was conserved in the Museum by Charles Ehrlich M. Stormont.


4. It had been on loan to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, as part of the exhibition Giovan Battista Tiepolo: The Drawings, 31 January-27 March 2005.


6. The painting in Brest, Musée des Beaux-Arts, once in the possession of the Bonaparte family, was apparently unrecorded until its recent exhibition in London. See Alban Merle, Ancien Roi: Le peintre Canaletto (Paris: Musée des Beaux-Arts, 2012), pp. 49-50, fig. 1.

7. The painting in Brest has been the subject of much research, and a recent essay by Thomas M. Schirrmacher has been most helpful. He notes that it is a copy of the painting in the Hermitage (St. Petersburg), a view of the Church of San Maurizio, Milan, which was acquired by the British Museum in 1816. This painting was given by the Marquis de Lafayette, French ambassador to London, in 1788. See Stampa d’Oro: The Paintings of the Marquis de Lafayette (Florence: Centro Di, 2011), p. 207.

8. The painting in Brest is dated 1744, although the artist was in Italy for much of that year. This dating is supported by the sale in 1766 of a preparatory drawing of the same subject to Dr. Robert Jones, which was included in the exhibition of the works of Canaletto and the Art of Prints in London in 1767, and which the present author wishes to thank Dr. Jones and the British Museum for permission to publish the image in this essay.


10. For the painting in Brest, see the essay by John Fasick, “The Drawings of Giovanni Antonio Canal (Canaletto),” pp. 176-179.

51. I am grateful to their owners for permission to publish the image. See also Anthony B. Bond, An Essay on the Life of Canaletto and the Art of Engraving (London: J. Dodsley, 1756), pp. 11-12, 34-35, 37-38, and 139-140.

52. Sotheby’s, London, 3 July 1997, lot 94; with Richard Green, London, 7 July 2005, lot 47; the latter lot was last seen at Ader Tajan, Paris, 15 December 1993, lot 13.

53. 51.5 x 66 cm; Constable, Canaletto, nos. 36 & 80.

54. 51.5 x 66 cm; Constable, Canaletto, nos. 232 & 235, 516-517.

55. 51.5 x 66 cm; Constable, Canaletto, nos. 125; Koninklijke Maatschappij, exh. cat. (Rotterdam: Koninklijke Maatschappij, 1999), pp. 145-146, fig. 16.

56. 51.5 x 66 cm; Constable, Canaletto, nos. 170 and 172; fig. 8.

57. 51.5 x 66 cm; Constable, Canaletto, nos. 258; Koninklijke Maatschappij, exh. cat. (Rotterdam: Koninklijke Maatschappij, 1999), pp. 145-146, fig. 16.

58. 51.5 x 66 cm; Constable, Canaletto, nos. 125; Koninklijke Maatschappij, exh. cat. (Rotterdam: Koninklijke Maatschappij, 1999), pp. 145-146, fig. 16.

59. 51.5 x 66 cm; Constable, Canaletto, nos. 125; Koninklijke Maatschappij, exh. cat. (Rotterdam: Koninklijke Maatschappij, 1999), pp. 145-146, fig. 16.

60. 51.5 x 66 cm; Constable, Canaletto, nos. 125; Koninklijke Maatschappij, exh. cat. (Rotterdam: Koninklijke Maatschappij, 1999), pp. 145-146, fig. 16.

61. 51.5 x 66 cm; Constable, Canaletto, nos. 125; Koninklijke Maatschappij, exh. cat. (Rotterdam: Koninklijke Maatschappij, 1999), pp. 145-146, fig. 16.

62. 51.5 x 66 cm; Constable, Canaletto, nos. 125; Koninklijke Maatschappij, exh. cat. (Rotterdam: Koninklijke Maatschappij, 1999), pp. 145-146, fig. 16.

63. 51.5 x 66 cm; Constable, Canaletto, nos. 125; Koninklijke Maatschappij, exh. cat. (Rotterdam: Koninklijke Maatschappij, 1999), pp. 145-146, fig. 16.

64. 51.5 x 66 cm; Constable, Canaletto, nos. 125; Koninklijke Maatschappij, exh. cat. (Rotterdam: Koninklijke Maatschappij, 1999), pp. 145-146, fig. 16.

65. 51.5 x 66 cm; Constable, Canaletto, nos. 125; Koninklijke Maatschappij, exh. cat. (Rotterdam: Koninklijke Maatschappij, 1999), pp. 145-146, fig. 16.

66. 51.5 x 66 cm; Constable, Canaletto, nos. 125; Koninklijke Maatschappij, exh. cat. (Rotterdam: Koninklijke Maatschappij, 1999), pp. 145-146, fig. 16.

67. 51.5 x 66 cm; Constable, Canaletto, nos. 125; Koninklijke Maatschappij, exh. cat. (Rotterdam: Koninklijke Maatschappij, 1999), pp. 145-146, fig. 16.

68. 51.5 x 66 cm; Constable, Canaletto, nos. 125; Koninklijke Maatschappij, exh. cat. (Rotterdam: Koninklijke Maatschappij, 1999), pp. 145-146, fig. 16.

69. 51.5 x 66 cm; Constable, Canaletto, nos. 125; Koninklijke Maatschappij, exh. cat. (Rotterdam: Koninklijke Maatschappij, 1999), pp. 145-146, fig. 16.
“He was a good naturalist, always adhering closely to the imitation of the true.” With these few words, the Florentine biographer Filippo Baldinucci qualified with rare critical insight the approach of the Cremonese artist Vincenzo Campi (ca. 1536-1591) towards painting from life. An early and reliable testimony of this comes from his brother Antonio, who described two as yet unidentified portraits painted by Vincenzo of the young princes, Rudolph and Ernest of Austria, when they stopped in Cremona in 1563 on their way to visit their uncle Philip II in Spain.

In the late eighteenth century, the Cremonese biographer Giambattista Zaist recorded a large number of portraits by Vincenzo (depicting people of importance, ladies, knights, and sovereigns) and it is perhaps no coincidence that today one of the earliest signed and dated works by the artist is the Portrait of Giulio Boccamaggiore, executed in 1569 and now in the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo.

Vincenzo’s interest in physiognomy and facial expressions is nowhere more evident than in one of his most celebrated and copied works, the so-called “Buffoons” or Ricotta Eaters, known in two versions: one in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon (fig. 1), the other – looser in execution and possibly not fully autograph – in a private collection, Cremona. To these can now be added a version in a Milanese private collection, a work of particularly high quality, notwithstanding the thick layers of degraded varnish and spots of dirt scattered across the picture’s surface (fig. 2).

The success of the Ricotta Eaters is shown by the large number of copies – of widely varying quality – after it, a number that continues to grow with new discoveries on the art market. Its popularity is also attested by the reinterpretation of the subject by Luigi Miradori, called il Genovesino (1605-1656), the leading artist in Cremona at the time. Without doubt, Genovesino’s depiction of the theme – now in a private collection, Corrino – marks an important chapter in the history of taste and collecting in the Lombard city in the seventeenth century. Worthy of note for its deeply personal treatment of a highly successful prototype, it should be seen in the context of a new sensibility and sense of the comic and grotesque that differed from – and was indeed antithetical to – the prevailing taste at the time of Campi’s original.

The care taken by Campi in his celebrated composition is shown by the discovery of an unpublished study on paper for the figure of the oldest buffoon with the reddish beard, next to the woman on the right of the painting (fig. 3). In a script that is difficult to date but nonetheless characteristic of the seventeenth century, the words “VinzentiVs CampVs” have been added to the painting, either to indicate Campi’s authorship or to identify, albeit wrongly, the bearded figure with Vincenzo himself. In reality, the youngest of the Campi brothers is the creator of the work, not the sitter.

In the laughing bust-length figure, turned slightly to the right, one can recognize the features of the boor wearing the same brown jacket and shirt with white
A newly discovered Buffoon on paper by Vincenzo Campi

Vincenzo was already active as an artist by the mid-1560s. Trained initially by his brother Giulio, he was subsequently drawn into the circle of Antonio and Lattanzio Gambara and its neo-Brescian revival of sorts of the art of Savoldo and Moretto. In the early 1580s, Vincenzo painted a series of secular works which engage with a powerful low-class realism, depicting scenes of fruit sellers, poultry vendors, fish sellers, and kitchen interiors. While the compositions of such paintings recall the models developed in the 1560s by the Flemish painters Pieter Aertsen and Joachim Beuckelaer, they nonetheless also reveal Vincenzo’s pursuit of a distinctive type of naturalism. The inclusion of somewhat ridiculous characters, such as the buffoon in the present work, relates to a different tradition, one derived from Milanese culture descending from Leonardo to Lomazzo and his circle at the Accademia della Val di Blenio. For the Milanese painter and writer Lomazzo, the causes of a smile are, for example, those displayed by individuals who: “upon meeting laugh when they look at one another, stretch their jaws wide, revealing teeth as they open their mouths indecently to laugh again, with nostrils flared and eyes hidden up in the forehead, then they turn red, inconstant, fickle, inconconsiderate and given over to chance as happens in such situations”.

Fig. 1 / Vincenzo Campi, Ricotta Eaters, ca. 1580, oil on canvas, 77 x 89 cm, Lyon, Musée des Beaux-Arts.

Fig. 2 / Vincenzo Campi (attributed), Ricotta Eaters, ca. 1580, oil on canvas, 73 x 91 cm, Milan, Private Collection.

collar who appears in the various versions of the Ricotta Eaters painted by Vincenzo. The beard is a little tidier and the hair much thinner, while the smile reveals a fuller set of teeth which gives the buffoon a less menacing appearance. With a profusion of wrinkles and marks, rendered with a delicacy of brushwork and subtlety of colour, this figure is painted with a versatility of technique and level of execution that is clearly superior to the buffoons in the other versions. The quality of the picture confirms Vincenzo’s authorship: it reveals the artist’s virtuosity in his desire to render almost palpable to the touch the skin of the old man, from the broad, deep wrinkles of the forehead to the finer crow’s feet around the eyes. The beard, whiskers, and few hairs are described with short thin brushstrokes, while the clothing is painted more broadly and thickly. In my opinion, at this point in the artist’s career there are similarities with certain figures of Leandro Bassano, especially those in the Allegory of the Month of September, in Castle Gallery, Prague, (ca. 1583-1585, signed), which demonstrate an analogous handling of the brush and strong tonal contrasts.

The newly discovered study is concerned with the physiognomical manifestation of thoughts and emotions. In this case the principle subject is the smile, a theme that had already been explored in depth by another Cremonese artist Sofonisba Anguissola, as can be seen in a drawing of A Young Girl Mocking an Old Woman Studying the Alphabet in the Uffizi (fig. 4) and an engraving by Jacob Bos depicting A Young Woman Laughing at an Old Woman. In the first half of the sixteenth century there were already examples of the interest in depicting comical and grotesque subjects among artists in the north of Italy – the best known being Dosso Dossi’s Buffoon in the Galleria Estense, Modena; such works served as models for the genre scenes of Vincenzo Campi, Bartolomeo Passarotti, and Annibale Carracci in the 1580s.
A newly discovered Buffoon on paper by Vincenzo Campi

In the same way the crudeness “renders their acts graceless and unkind, but in some way overpowering and wild such that they attain their intended goal with no consideration or respect, which suits them well, and this is exactly the attitude of mountain villains and low-life tricksters, who have no idea of what civil behaviour or decency are.”

Also worthy of note is the unprecedented and original interaction between the people in Vincenzo’s painting that lies somewhere between an interest in naturalism and a grotesque realism of a comic nature.

The present work can be dated with some confidence to the 1580s on the basis of its close stylistic similarities with other genre paintings by Vincenzo: the Kirchheim pictures are all signed and dated between 1578 and 1581, when they were acquired by the German banker, Hans Fugger, while the Fruit Seller, formerly with the dealer Previtali in Bergamo, is signed and dated 1583.

The four canvases in the Brera (fig. 5) remained in Vincenzo’s house for over 30 years after his death and were only sold following the death of his widow, Elena Luciani, in 1623. It is worth emphasising that these works seem to have been produced “on spec” and were not destined for a particular patron; otherwise – given their high level of finish – the commissioning client would have been likely to collect them from the artist’s studio shortly after his death. On stylistic grounds, they can be placed at a very late stage in Campi’s career, towards the end of his life. Indeed, with a technical finesse close to the artist’s masterpiece, the Saint Matthew and the Angel in the church of San Francesco, Pavia, they represent a more advanced phase of the artist’s oeuvre and may thus be dateable to the turn of the final decade of the century: a dating that takes into consideration the fact Campi was still undertaking highly prestigious projects right up to his death on 3 October 1591, when he was commissioned to paint the now-lost silk banner for the Compagnia del Santissimo Sacramento of the Cathedral in Cremona. The discovery of the study of a buffoon by Campi sheds new light on the artist’s engagement with the comic genre and his working practices in his later years.
6. The painting (73 x 91 cm) was discovered and studied A newly discovered Buffoon on paper by Vincenzo Campi

5. For Vincenzo Campi, see Franco Paliaga,

4. For Vincenzo Campi, see Franco Paliaga,

3. A. M. Panni e G. B. Zaist nella storia

2. “My brother Vincenzo Campi painted these princes


7. For the version by Genovesino of slightly larger dimensions (102 x 132 cm), see Tanzi in

6. For the version by Genovesino of slightly larger dimensions (102 x 132 cm), see Tanzi in

5. For the version by Genovesino of slightly larger dimensions (102 x 132 cm), see Tanzi in

4. For the version by Genovesino of slightly larger dimensions (102 x 132 cm), see Tanzi in

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In a lecture held in April 2008 at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, Edgar Peters Bowron, the Audrey Jones Beck Curator of European Art, stated that “most of the European paintings that trickled into the museum’s permanent collection in the first twenty years of its existence were of minor importance, and it was only with the bequest of the Edith A. Straus and Percy S. Straus collection that Houston could be said to have a collection of European art of any significance”.

The gift of eighty-three objects from Edith A. and Percy S. Straus in 1944 was instantly recognized as the cornerstone of the collection of European paintings and sculptures. Percy S. Straus, the chairman of R.H. Macy & Co., better known as Macy’s department store, had assembled this outstanding collection of mainly Pre-Renaissance and Renaissance Italian paintings as well as works by Netherlandish, Flemish, Dutch, German, English, and French masters with great care. The collection also comprises twenty-five works of sculpture and nine works on paper. The remarkable quality and superb condition of the works set the standard of excellence for the fledgling collection of the MFAH.

Although it has been said that Percy Straus built his collection on the works already assembled by his father, Isidor Straus (1845-1912), this does not seem to have been the case. Isidor, who together with his wife Ida, perished on the Titanic in 1912, does not mention acquiring works of art in his 1911 autobiography, nor has any evidence of this kind come to light during our recent research. With occasional input from his wife Edith, Percy S. Straus started to buy art in 1917 and continued to do so until 1940. He was a most exacting collector, deeply interested in art history, who carefully assembled the works offered to him by various dealers.

He often travelled often to Europe to see art and meet with dealers and connoisseurs. Invariably, Straus sought out the most renowned scholars of his day, including Bernard Berenson, Max Friedländer, Richard Offner, and Leo Planiscig when considering an acquisition. The works were destined for his apartment on Park Avenue, for the family’s private enjoyment and remained there until Percy Straus Sr.’s death in 1944, when they were transferred to Houston. The Straus’ second son, Percy Straus Jr. (later Percy Seldon), had settled there with his Texas-born wife Marjorie Jester in 1939, and this generous gift to the museum was intended to give the young couple a social standing in society. It was furthermore seen as a sign of confidence in this growing part of the United States.

The Straus Collection was put on display immediately after its arrival and the museum published a catalogue to accompany this first installation. Obviously undertaken at a time of financial restraint, this slender publication is nonetheless significant. It lists all of the works with the attributions thought valid at the time, with short introductions to the artists and black and white illustrations of seventeen objects. A focused exhibition of the most significant works in the collection organized in 2017-2018 has prompted new research into the collection, that is to be published in the form of an online scholarly catalogue.

No comprehensive catalogue has been undertaken since 1945, although many of the collection’s major works have been thoroughly researched and included in several of the museum’s publications in the intervening years.
Of great importance among these is Carolyn C. Wilson’s study of all Italian paintings in the museum’s holdings, Italian Paintings, XIV-XVI Centuries in the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston published in 1996, which includes all of the Straus Collection’s Italian paintings. The MFAH’s Masterpieces of European Painting by Edgar Peters Bowron and Mary Morton, published in 2000, is to date the most comprehensive publication on the collection of European art, focusing on the highlights of the museum’s collection at the turn of the twenty-first century. In addition to discussing some of the most important Italian works from the Straus Collection, it also includes several major works from the Northern schools, such as the paintings by Rogier van der Weyden, Hans Memling, and Jean-Baptiste Prater. It is the aim of the present paper to assess the most recent findings regarding the already published works and to furnish new insights wherever possible.

The digital catalogue will furthermore address those works in the collection that have not yet been published, including many of the Northern paintings, the works on paper, as well as the Renaissance bronzed and other sculptures. It will not only be readily available through the museum’s website, but will also be updated and enhanced as demanded by new findings.

**ITALIAN PAINTINGS: MASTER OF THE STRAUS MADONNA, AMBROGIO DI BALDESE, AND FRA ANGELICO**

The most significant information to have surfaced during the preparation of this catalogue is the proposed identification of the Master of the Straus Madonna as Ambrogio di Baldese (1352-1429). The painting of the Madonna and Child (fig. 1), dated around 1395-1400 by the painter known as the Master of the Straus Madonna, is both the lodestar of the Straus Collection and the most famous work by this artist, whose real name has so far remained elusive. Richard Offner, the renowned connoisseur on Florentine painting whose opinion Percy Straus sought when he considered this acquisition, wrote in a letter dated 5 October, 1926, that he had already known the painting for fourteen years and loved it.1 Offner further pointed out that he had assembled about three dozen works by the hand of this anonymous master but had not been able to ascertain his name. He had considered naming him “Amico di Agnolo” because of his closeness to Agnolo Gaddi.2 However, the artist was ultimately named after the Straus Collection, the repository of his masterpiece. Carolyn C. Wilson carefully analyzed the scholarly debate around this anonymous master, tracing it from Roberto Longhi’s initial publication assigning the name of Master of the Straus Madonna in 1928, through the authoritative findings by Zeri, Bellosi, and Boskovits and up to the contributions of Tartuferi, Eisenberg, and Paolucci.3 In an article investigating the interior furnishings of Santo Stefano al Ponte in Florence, Sonia Chiodo proposed that the artist known as the Master of the Straus Madonna was in fact Ambrogio di Baldese.4 This artist, about whom unfortunately not much is known, was commissioned in 1413 by the Compagnia di Ognissanti to paint a polyptych altarpiece for the chapel of the Gherardini family in Santo Stefano.5 The central panel depicts the enthroned Madonna and Child, surrounded by two angels, while the four lateral panels show two figures each (fig. 2). On the left are Saint Stephen, Saint Louis, Saint Donatus, and Saint Nicholas; and on the right Saint John the Baptist, Saint Eufrosino, the Angelachel Michael, and Saint Justo. According to documentary evidence, the painter received his payments in April 1417, but the Gherardini Chapel was not yet completed at that time.6

By 1370, Santo Stefano al Ponte is recorded as having been stripped of its earlier furnishings, and Chiodo believes that this particular altarpiece, distinguished by the arms of the Gherardini family, was sent to the church known as San Donato at Uzzile (and later removed to the nearby church Santo Croce at Greve), sometime between 1536 and 1585.7 This tiny settlement just south of Florence was part of the Gherardini family’s dominions and the transfer of what by then must have been considered an old fashioned work of art to a less important site is understandable. By this time, a century or more after its creation, the name of the painter had been lost. Richard Offner included the altarpiece among the works he attributed to the artist he named Master of the Straus Madonna and this attribution has been retained until now. However, if in fact this altarpiece is identical with the one from Santo Stefano al Ponte commissioned from Ambrogio di Baldese, the mystery of the actual name of the Master of the Straus Madonna could be considered resolved. As yet, this remains somewhat hypothetical, with various factors speaking both for and against the identification. In a recent, unpublished interview, Tartuferi pointed out that Baldese’s lifespan (1325-1429) does not exactly conform to the active dates of the Master of the Straus Madonna, which do not begin before the 1390s, whereas Baldese had already joined the Arti de Medici a Speciali on 9 September 1372, as a painter.8 It seems unlikely that there should be no trace of any activity for over two decades. Numerous scholars, including Kantor and Strehlke, agree with the new attribution, but Chiodo herself stresses the hypothetical nature of her proposal. We seem to be tantalizingly close to solving this mystery. A thorough technical investigation of all the works attributed to the Master of the Straus Madonna and Ambrogio di Baldese respectively would bring more certainty as to how that artist was used and subsequently Greve, as discussed above (see fig. 2).
The payment of twelve florins to Guido di Pietro in 1418 for his work on this altarpiece constitutes the first documented payment to this young painter, later known as Fra Angelico.12 The payment would not have been sufficient for an entire polyptych, but would have been commensurate with work on a portion of it. According to Strehlke, Fra Angelico scraped down Baldese’s predella and painted his own composition over it. The panel is divided into two parts by a painted, richly decorated column, separating the scenes depicting Saint Michael Archangel, who also figures in the outermost lateral panel on the right of the polyptych (see fig. 2). The predella scenes show Saint Michael Archangel Makes the Sea Withdraw to Leave a Passage for a Woman who gave Birth on a Pilgrimage to Tumba on the left, and Saint Michael Archangel and the Bull of Monte Grano on the right. Given the archival, technical, and stylistic correspondences between polyptych and predella, this altarpiece may well be the lynchpin for the identification of the Master of the Straus Madonna as Ambrogio di Baldese, and this master’s tutelage of Fra Angelico.

At the recent Fra Angelico exhibition at the Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid (28 May–15 September 2019), where this predella was exhibited, it was also revealing to see the Straus Collection’s exquisite small panel of Saint Anthony Abbot Shunning the Mass of Gold installed side by side with a panel in the Prado’s collection, portraying The Funeral of Saint Anthony Abbot, also by Fra Angelico (figs. 4 & 5). The Straus panel had first been recognized as a work by Fra Angelico by Frida Schottmüller in 1925,13 and Percy S. Straus was apparently persuaded of its outstanding quality when he acquired it just five years later. Much scholarly debate has taken place regarding the attribution of the panel to Fra Angelico since Schottmüller’s authentication in 1925. Carolyn C. Wilson has systematically laid this out, concluding that despite differing opinions the attribution is still valid.14 Giorgio Bonsanti not only includes it in his 1998 catalogue raisonné as autograph, but also deems it “of the highest quality.”15 In 2005 Laurence Kanter questioned this finding, proposing that it is a work by Fra Angelico’s close assistant Zanobi Strozzi.16 However, his conclusion, based on the comparison of the Straus Saint Anthony Abbot with a panel in the Louvre, whose own attribution oscillates between Fra Angelico and Zanobi Strozzi,17 has not found wide acceptance. Strehlke, on the other hand, maintains that the Straus panel is painted on the same piece of wood as the Prado’s panel with the scene of the death of the saint.18 The panels are of different widths but are identical in height, and were, according to Strehlke, undoubtedly part of the same predella. This finding argues strongly for the authorship of Fra Angelico for the Straus Collection panel, although it does not entirely preclude, as Wilson argues, that it may have been executed with the help of an assistant.19
Although the greatest part of the Straus Collection are Italian works, Percy Straus also acquired a number of exquisite paintings by major representatives of the Northern School, including Rogier van der Weyden, Lucas Cranach the Younger, and the Master of the Holy Blood, as well as beautiful works on paper by Albrecht Dürer and Lucas Cranach the Younger. Of these, the engraving by Dürer, *Saint Eustace* (fig. 6), ca. 1500-1501, whose authorship has never been doubted, is considered the strongest work, due to its refined mastery of line and remarkably fresh condition. On the other hand, the attribution to Lucas Cranach the Younger of *The Fall of Man* (fig. 7), a 1549 pen drawing, has only recently been confirmed. Percy Straus had acquired the drawing together with the oil painting of the same subject by Lucas Cranach the Younger from Vitale Bloch of Berlin (fig. 8). Max Friedländer, whose opinion Percy Straus sought, supported the painting’s attribution.20 Thanks to the clearly visible date of 1549 placed on the tree trunk, this work is recognized as the earliest dated work by Lucas Cranach the Younger. This has never been questioned, but the relationship between the drawing and the painting had been interpreted incorrectly. In the monographic exhibition on Lucas Cranach the Younger, organized in 2015 by Roland Enke, Katja Schneider, and Jutta Strehle, it was established that the drawing was made after the painting since it records it in every detail, as opposed to being a preliminary study.21 The inscription found below the drawing, although in a different ink, clearly states that Lucas Cranach, son of the painter to the electors of Saxony, was the artist. The differing ink of the inscription has not yet been closely analyzed, but it is nonetheless considered another indication of the drawing’s authenticity.22
With invaluable help from Jonny Yarker and Michael Tollefson, the identity of the sitter in a portrait from the studio of Sir Henry Raeburn has been newly discovered (fig. 9). This portrait in the Straus Collection was thought to represent Philip Egerton’s daughter Elizabeth (1771-1857), who married Sir John Delves Broughton, 7th Baronet, Egerton’s daughter Elizabeth (1771-1857), who is presumed to have descended in the family, which is why it has been identified as such in the sales catalogue as Mrs. Haig of Bermersyde, from Doddington Hall. Instead, recent research has been able to identify the sitter as Christina, the wife of John Haig of Bonnington, Leith, whose family owned the oldest whisky distillery in Scotland. While a confirmation of the MFAH’s attribution, Warren’s firm statement on a bronze head of a child as Saint John the Baptist, now known as Portrait of Lady Delves Broughton, ca. 1795, of John Haig of Bonnington, Leith, formerly known as Portrait of Lady Delves Broughton. Christie’s, the sitter was misidentified in the sales catalogue as Mrs. Haig of Bermersyde, from another branch of the family. It cannot be identical with the painting in the Straus Collection, since this is a slightly larger work and was acquired already in 1920. It is therefore assumed that the painting in the Straus Collection is a copy of Raeburn’s finished portrait by an unknown painter, possibly made for another member of the family or another residence. The MFAH will therefore classify it as After Sir Henry Raeburn, Scottish, 1756-1823, Christina Haig, wife of John Haig of Bonnington, Leith, formerly known as Portrait of Lady Delves Broughton, ca. 1795.

Although the majority of works in the Straus Collection are paintings, Percy Straus also acquired twenty-five sculptures, which have not been published in their entirety to date. In preparation for the digital catalogue, the MFAH asked Jeremy Warren, Honorary Curator of Sculpture at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford and Sculpture Research Curator for The National Trust, to study these works. He examined the objects thoroughly and taking into account the archival material also held by the MFAH, has been able to confirm many of the attributions, but has also assigned several works to other artists. Undoubtedly the finest among the sculptures are eight Renaissance bronzes acquired by Percy Straus mostly on the advice of Leo Planiscig, then head of the department of sculpture and decorative art at the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna and one of the most respected scholars at the time. It was he who advised Percy Straus in 1914 to acquire the bronze relief of Hercules Contemplating the Nemean Lion, ca. 1490-1500, which he believed to be by Antico (Pier Jacopo Alari Bonacolsi, ca.1469-1528), and which he published as such in the following year in the Burlington Magazine (fig. 10). Warren has firmly placed this unusual composition of the still youthful Hercules, depicted in an “elegant, balletic position”, within the context of Antico’s oeuvre, suggesting a date of 1490-1500. While this constitutes a confirmation of the MFAH’s attribution, Warren’s attribution of a bronze head of a child known as Saint John the Baptist as a Boy, now called Bust of the Infant Saint John the Baptist, is a gratifying improvement (fig. 11). Warren feels confident that this work is by the hand of Antonio Lombardo (ca. 1458-1516) himself, rather than an artist working in his circle, as previously believed. He writes,}

**SCULPTURES: ITALIAN RENAISSANCE BRONZES, JOHAN GREGOR VAN DER SCHAARDT, AND JEAN-ANTOINE Houdon**

The attribution of the model of the Saint John bust to Antonio can indeed be made with some confidence, owing to the strong stylistic parallels with Antonio’s work in bronze in the Zen Chapel, created between 1501-1521... In particular the Saint John may be related to the Christ Child of the Figio and Child group on the altar of the Zen Chapel (fig. 12) and, perhaps even more so, to the cherubim which surround the head of the figure of God the Father.
Likewise, new clarity has been achieved with regard to the small terracotta of the figure of *Day* after Michelangelo Buonarroti’s (1475-1564) sculpture for the Medici Chapel in San Lorenzo, Florence (fig. 13). Executed between the 1520s and 1534, the four monumental marble sculptures *Day, Night, Dusk*, and *Dawn*, were among the most celebrated sculptures of the Italian Renaissance, recorded in numerous drawings and prints and copied as sculptural replicas. Straus acquired this small terracotta work from Arnold Seligman, Rey & Co. of New York in 1939 for the considerable sum of $21,000, commensurate with its attribution to Michelangelo Buonarroti. It entered the museum’s collection as such, but the attribution was called into question and changed to Nicolò Tribolo (1500-1550), the artist charged with installing the unfinished works left behind by Michelangelo when he left for Rome.

For centuries, the various collectors through whose hands the terracottas of the *Times of Day* passed — among them Paulus Praun of Nuremberg, Anton Paul Heinlein, Karl Emil von Gemming, as well as the Dresden sculptor Ernst Julius Hähnel, August Stauch, Dr. A. R. Heyer, and the Viennese dealer Alexander von Frey — all believed them to have been Michelangelo’s working models for the monumental works. Panizzi confirmed to Straus that “we have before us in the Praun/Hähnel bozzetto the original sketch in its final version for the figure of *Day* of the Medici tomb,” dismissing an attribution to Tribolo on stylistic grounds. 27 Doubts about the four terracottas’ attribution arose a few years later. In 1938, Eric Maclagan, director of the Victoria & Albert Museum, voiced his concerns when his museum purchased the models of *Night* and *Dawn* (figs. 14a & b) at the same Christie’s sale where Alexander von Frey purchased the terracotta *Day* that entered the Straus Collection the following year. In his acquisition report, he wrote: “It is hardly possible to accept these terracottas as original models by Michel Angelo and it seems far more likely that they are reduced copies of his works modelled in the 16th century...”28 Maclagan may have known that Johan Gregor van der Schardt (1530-ca. 1581), a gifted Dutch sculptor active in Rome and Florence in the 1560s, had been mentioned in the 1797 catalogue of the Praun Collection, drawn up by Christoph Gottlieb von Murr. Von Murr wrote about the terracottas, “The majority of these figures were modelled by the sculptor Jean George de Sart, after the most beautiful ancient sculptures to be found in Rome and in Florence.”29 The MFAH changed the attribution from Michelangelo to Nicolò Tribolo in the 1980s and has now changed it again, following the most recent scholarship. Frits Scholten, who wrote about the terracotta models by Van der Schardt in *Shadows of Time, Giambologna, Michelangelo and the Medici Chapel* exhibition, mounted by the Skulpturensammlung, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden in 2018, included the Straus Collection’s *Day* in that group.30 Warren, as will be reflected in his entry on this object, confirms this attribution.

The most exciting attributional adjustment within relation to the nine northern sculptures — an array of fascinating works from Burgundy, Flanders, and France in ivory, wood, terracotta, alabaster, and bronze — is that of the terracotta bust by the neoclassical sculptor, Jean-Antoine Houdon of his young daughter, Anne-Ange Houdon, executed in 1791 (fig. 15).
Due to inconclusive findings concerning its authenticity, it had lingered in storage for many years. Warren's new, positive assessment, reattributing the work to the French master, has brought it to the fore, and it is presently displayed alongside Houdon's "Vidal, 1764, a much earlier work by the master that was recently acquired by the MFAH. We are gratified that the Straus Collection still serves as the cornerstone of the collection of European art at the MFAH and continues to inspire acquisitions of the highest quality.

The Straus Collection can be seen as an impetus for other major donations that have come to the MFAH, including a large number of Renaissance and Baroque paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection in the 1940s and the impressive collection of Impressionist and Post-Impressionist paintings of John A. and Andrea Jones Beck at the end of the twentieth century. The various curators of European Art at the MFAH have built on these donations, expanding its holdings with superb works. Indeed, between the 1960s and 2000s, numerous outstanding acquisitions that built on the treasures of the Straus Collection were brought to the MFAH by Edgar B. Bowron, including the exquisite Portrait of a Young Woman of 1633, by Rembrandt van Rijn, the monumental The Royal Hunt of Dido and Aeneas (The Loyd Seapiece), 1808, by John Opie, and a number of early works in the Straus Collection and more work is still to be done before the digital catalogue can be launched. Once on-line, it will hopefully work is still to be done before the digital catalogue

Numerous intriguing questions still surround some of the early works in the Straus Collection and more work is still to be done before the digital catalogue can be launched. Once on-line, it will hopefully serve as a twenty-first-century means of making this remarkable collection, assembled in the early decades of the twentieth century, readily available to art historians, students, and the general public for many years to come.

2. Leo Fleischner, MA. A. 4 March 1939 to Percy S. Straus, MFAH archives.
In 2005, The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston acquired J.M.W. Turner’s painting *Sheerness as Seen from the Nore*, 1808, also known as the Loyd Seapiece, from the private collection in which it had been held after many years (fig. 1). The picture joined *Bonneville, Savoy*, 1803 (Dallas Museum of Art) and *Glaucus and Scylla*, 1841 (Kimbell Art Museum) as one of just three major Turner oils in public collections in Texas. Sheerness was one of eight paintings of the Thames Estuary that Turner created and exhibited in his own gallery between 1807 and 1810, during a period in which the artist focused on the production of seascapes and shipwrecks. I would like here to look closely at Sheerness and some of the other Estuary paintings, with an eye towards a few related sets of questions. First, since they were exhibited, this group has been described as a “series”. This is perhaps not wrong, but it is also a term which has gone largely unexamined, and it is my contention that applying some pressure to it may allow us a useful point of entry into the circumstances and significance of this group of paintings and their exhibition. Therefore, I will consider the following questions: what are the art historical ramifications of using the term “series” for these pictures? What are the problems posed by doing so? Finally, what are the implications of the notion of “series” for the interpretative and biographical questions that have surrounded these pictures and this period in Turner’s career?

To begin, we might note that a “series” of paintings can be a troublesome topic for art historical interpretation. The discipline has historically been more comfortable with single works, which can be placed within the concept of the masterpiece, the single transcendent work of art that allows art historical discourse access to the idea of the Genius Creator and His Work, something that has a long history with Turner. Even with the advent of the so-called “New Art History” since the 1970s, the individual work of art has in some ways gained rather than lost in stature. In the wake of T. J. Clark’s detailed attention to paintings like *Olympia*, much art history has exchanged notions of biography and genius for micro-historical approaches that view individual works as irreducibly complex cultural utterances that must be given their full due.

The notion of multiple paintings, each separate but linked in some way, can be, furthermore, both theoretically and practically difficult for art history. How exactly are we to define where a series begins or ends? What we would call a “cycle” of pictures, such as Rubens’ Maria de’ Medici pictures (1622-1625, Louvre), are multiple pictures with a clear relation pertaining between them. Not only do we know precisely where the cycle starts and ends but we also understand them as functioning in clear order in the production of meaning. A “series” of paintings, as opposed to a cycle, would appear to be more linear in form, typically indicating sequential arrangement of related elements, as in Monet’s work during the 1890s.

The Thames Estuary paintings certainly share both formal and iconographic features as we will see, but they are not specifically chronologically ordered and are also notably open-ended and capable of occupying places within other frameworks of significance.
Indeed, they were not exhibited exclusively as a group, but with other pictures, and in various combinations between 1808 and 1810. On what basis then, might we even consider them a series?

When John Landseer, who, in 1808, published one of the longest and most probing accounts of Turner before Ruskin’s, saw Sheerness along with Purfleet and the Essex Shore as Seen from the Long Reach (B&J 74, Private Collection) and the Confluence of the Thames and the Medway (fig. 2) in Turner’s gallery, he referred to them as a “series”, and, as opposed to the other pictures in the exhibition, discussed them in a single shared entry. Landseer wrote that we may “very properly term [these paintings] marine landscapes”, as opposed to the upriver Thames pictures also on view in Turner’s gallery that year, such as Pope’s Villa at Twickenham (B&J 72, Private Collection), and pointed in particular to the thin line of coast in all three Estuary pictures. These features, in his view, “answer very important purposes. They serve, by identifying the several spots represented, to give names to the pictures, and to connect them with a series”. Here Landseer indicates that the coasts, the markers of geographical specificity, serve on the one hand to distinguish individually what might be otherwise interchangeable pictures, but on the other hand to mark them out as a group.

Indeed, there is something very tidy in viewing the set of Estuary pictures shown in 1808 together. All three are linked to one another and to the larger group of Estuary paintings from these years not only by geography, but also by iconography and style. As Sarah Monk very eloquently described, these pictures, which she does refer to as a “series”, include many of the same elements, which are treated in nonetheless subtly varied ways: rolling seas, the interaction of small, medium, and large vessels with each other and with forces of wind and water, and an art historical relationship to Dutch painting. All three works are also painted from the viewpoint of a small vessel near to the surface of the water. Landseer acknowledges this placement implicitly by saying that the horizontal lines of the shore contrast with the verticals of the various ship masts that are another common element, creating both a compositional stability and a reassuring “source of secret pleasure” to the viewer, “where all else is yielding to the fury of the elements”.9

Fig. 1 / J.M.W. Turner, Sheerness as Seen from the Nore, 1808, oil on canvas, 104.5 x 149.6 cm, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston.

Fig. 2 / J.M.W. Turner, The Confluence of the Thames and the Medway, 1808, oil on canvas, 91 x 122 cm, London, Tate.
They may also share a common root, as David Hill has pointed out, in studies in Turner’s Hesperides I sketchbook, among other places, made during a trip to the Estuary in the autumn of 1805. They may also share a common root, as David Hill has pointed out, in studies in Turner’s Hesperides I sketchbook, among other places, made during a trip to the Estuary in the autumn of 1805. One sketch that is done from this low viewpoint, for instance, also includes a very specific moment of the peril of near collision between boats (fig. 3). Already in this sketch, which is quite elaborately worked, filling the slightly larger than 17 x 26 cm sheet, we see Turner’s tendency to combine careful observation and attention to natural detail, with a more imaginative rendition of the witnessed scene. The near collision, for instance, creates a sense of implicit danger that resonates in many of the Estuary paintings, especially Sheerness, in which a catastrophic collision is also very narrowly avoided. The elaborate motif of the ships placed in front of one another, thus creating partial views, is also a classic Turner touch. Sheerness and the Confluence of the Thames and Medway are similar in their viewpoint from the water onto the Isle of Sheppey and Kent shore, but show different times of day.

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All three of the 1808 pictures also share a compositional interest in the deployment of ships of varying size and type. The isolation of the fishing boat in Sheerness and Purfleet, moreover, can alert us to the manner in which these terms are modified in other pictures, including the Confluence, where Turner stacks the ships up behind each other. In Sheerness Fishermen Hailing a Whitstable Hoy, exhibited at Turner’s Gallery in 1809, furthermore, the fishing boat is angled and the fisherman turn their back on us, directing our attention to the middle distance (fig. 4). In The Junction of the Thames and the Medway, Turner creates a kind of chivalrous recession – something he often did later – with the lines heading out from the angled boat in a kind of V-shape away from us, opening up the center of the canvas and emphasizing the transparency of the space by showing the larger ship in the distance. In the Guardship at the Great Nore, Sheerness, &c., shown at Turner’s gallery in 1809 and again the following year (Blk. 91, Private Collection) these structures seem mixed, with a diagonal line formed by the three ships of different sizes, which don’t quite obscure each other, occupying the middleground of the canvas.

Taken together, the paintings create a flexible, “dynamic” as Monks puts it, indeed almost moving image of the Thames estuary. In this sense, they come collectively close to the description of Sheerness, which is included at the very end of William Combe’s text for Boydell’s Illustrated An History of the River Thames, from 1794-1796.
Combe writes, “Sheerness offers nothing picturesque in itself; but the rivers which it commands, and the various vessels in motion, or moored, before it, compose a scene that may interest the painter as well as the politician.”13 I will have more to say about the reference to politics below, but for the moment, we might note the extent to which Turner seems to answer the larger concerns that Combe raises about the picture. In his preface, Combe declares:

… there is a monotony of character in the river, of which it has been my lot to be the historian, that enhances the difficulty of fulfilling the office as the subject deserves, and the public encouragement demands for how few are the terms which our language provides for the purpose of delimiting a succession of scenes, that, amid general sameness of character, abound with a variety of those lesser peculiarities and gradations, which the eye may indeed distinguish, but the pen knows not how to describe.15

Combe’s concerns are specific to text it seems, but his discussion of Sheerness indicates that monotony was a possible visual concern as well, especially down river. Turner seems determined to indicate the power of his art to combat this: he sometimes deploys the boats in a diagonal line; while at other times he stacks them up one behind the other, with sails, masts, and yards sticking out various directions. In noting the shifting placements, one can imagine a scene in motion, a literally fluid space in which the scene is captured in a series (there’s the word) of instances, none of which are exactly alike, but all of which are clearly related, mutually verifying, testaments to their shared source in observation, on the one hand, and to the power of art to exceed its sometimes mundane subjects on the other.

The paintings, like the sketches then, can be seen as located within a negotiation between observation and invention, and indeed Monks sees the desire to let observation, on the one hand, and to the power of art to exceed its sometimes mundane subjects on the other.

Introducing the show as a whole, Landseer highlights Turner’s truth to nature in his colouring and in the veracity of his “pencil”:

Perhaps no other landscape-painter has ever before so successfully caught the living lustre of Nature herself, under all her varying aspects and phenomena, of seasons, storms, calms, and time of day. The verdant and cheerful hues of spring, the rich mellowness of autumn, and the glooms and glooms of equinoctial storms, are to him alike familiar; and he dips his pencil with equal certainty and with equal success in the grey tints of early dawn, the fervid glow of the sun’s meridian ray, and the dam twilight of evening.16

Later he directs this praise specifically at the Estuary pictures, saying,

Gloomy deep-toned shadows sweep across the Purfleet picture, and that of the Union of the Thames and Medway [sic] with impressive effect, and with so much the Truth of Nature as awakens kindred recollections, and causes the spectator to imagine he hears the attendant gusts of wind; Long Reach is so known to be exposed to every wind of the compass, that rough water is a characteristic of the scene.17

For Landseer there is both a specificity to the Estuary pictures individually, and a collective comprehensiveness and unity, which was the mark of their particular success. In this way, we may now productively think about Turner’s goals in relation to exhibiting these pictures. Why, we might ask, were so many of these paintings shown in Turner’s gallery, as opposed to his other primary exhibiting locations, the annual exhibitions of the Royal Academy, and, after 1806, the British Institution? Turner was neither the first nor the only artist to exhibit his own work outside the official cultural venues, but in the years after his election as a Royal Academician in 1802, this practice became uniquely important to his work, commercial ambition and developing reputation, as it gave him greater control over the presentation of his pictures.

Turner first opened his own gallery in Harley Street as an exhibition space in April 1804.18 Joseph Farington, the Royal Academician, diarist and general source of information and gossip, reported that he had done so from an “oeconomical motive” and certainly, as we will see, that must have been a big part of it.19 But it is also worth remembering that there were extremely fractious years at the Academy. Turner’s election in 1802 had come in the midst of a crisis of governance between two groups in the RA.20 A sense of the chilly atmosphere in the RA is captured, perhaps inadvertently, in Henry Singleton’s group portrait of the Academicians of 1796 (fig. 5). The so-called “Court” painters, led by William Beechey, J. S. Copley, and James Wyatt, wished to have the Academy’s decisions made primarily by the Council, an executive committee of eight members, as opposed to being taken to the General Assembly of forty, as favoured by West and the Academical Party. Turner was plunged immediately into these dynamics in 1802 and soon found himself disgraced with this state of affairs. The exhibition space was equally fraught. On the crowded walls of the Academy, artists became increasingly jealous over prime wall-space “on the line”, and also more and more aware of the effects of the colours of neighbouring works on their own.21
Turner was perhaps more sensitive to the issues of exhibition than anyone. In theory, artists were meant to subordinate their own interests in favour of the appearance of the exhibition as a whole. In 1812, however, Farington reported that Turner did the opposite, when he became angry over the placement of his ambitious work, *Hannibal Crossing the Alps* (fig. 6). Farington, who served on the Hanging Committee that year, reported that Turner wanted the picture hung lower. Farington refused, saying it appeared there “to the greatest disadvantage, – a scene of confusion and injuring the effect of that whole part of the arrangement”. Turner eventually threatened to remove the work, until a compromise was struck three days later. Even when hung well, an artist’s pictures were often placed separately. Much like the individual in the busy, crowded city just outside Somerset House where the exhibitions were then held, single paintings on the wall were at once surrounded and in extremely close quarters with their fellows, and at the same time isolated and sometimes at the mercy of the crowd. Mark Hallett has shown that, well back into the eighteenth century, the organizers could be very canny in creating particular arrangements, but even then, this was out of the control of the individual artists. Reviewers, moreover, sometimes grouped pictures by artists together for review, but less often took the time to draw connections between them, or did so haphazardly, and in Turner’s case certainly, often ignored some pictures while giving more attention to others. It is very clear that Turner was extremely sensitive to these dynamics, and his famous work on the Varnishing Days was a response to that situation in the Academy. But showing his work in his own venue offered Turner another means of responding to this situation and enabled him to exhibit paintings in a fundamentally different manner. In the first place, he could remove himself from the fractious environment of the Academy and the competitive nature of the exhibitions, and the first years of his gallery coincide with a more general, if temporary, withdrawal from Academy affairs by Turner. Exhibiting in this way allowed Turner to control his own competitive entry into the marketplace, without having to contend with rival painters and their own ambitions. That these exhibitions were tied to his ambitions for both fame and fortune is clear. In 1805, he showed nothing at the Academy while including the *Shipwreck* in his gallery exhibition (fig. 7). This was the first of his paintings to be engraved, something that would be an important part of his developing reputation and presence in the marketplace. We do not unfortunately have a list of visitors to his gallery beyond the hints we get from Farington and isolated letters, but one of Turner’s sketchbooks of these years includes a list of subscribers to the print, which may give us an idea of who came to the gallery (fig. 8).
Intuitively, the list includes the purchasers of a number of pictures from Turner’s 1808 exhibition, including two of the Thames Estuary pictures: Purfleet and the Essex Shore was bought in 1808 by the 3rd Earl of Essex; and the Confluence of the Thames and the Medway was bought by the 3rd Earl of Egremont, also in 1808. Furthermore, Sir John Leicester, who had purchased the Shipwreck and would later commission Turner to paint two views of his seat, Tidley House, bought Pip’s Villa at Tidleyham in 1808. Lord Egremont also purchased the Forest of Bere (B&J 77, Petworth House) in the same year. In discussing the Confluence, Landseer wrote that the Thames picture’s “prevailing freshness and cool and silvery tone form an agreeable contrast with the rich golden-toned Forest of Bere, which hangs alongside.”

The fact that Egremont bought both pictures, plus two others from that exhibition, powerfully indicates the advantages of showing multiple pictures in Turner’s gallery.

But beyond the felicitous pairing of two paintings and the Turner, on the other hand, as we have seen, frequently painted the Essex Shore series on shown in 1808; 13 the River Medway, with the eye and hand at once of a painter and a philosopher and organized group shows, not unlike Turner’s in this period. Identifying a single, very specific motif allows Monet a similar mix of specificity and comprehensiveness to what we have seen in Turner, showing the Haystacks in various times of days, seasons and conditions, thus providing a proof of his careful observation of nature in detail and a knowledge of its broader movements in general.

In arranging his review of the gallery exhibition, as Luke Herrmann has noted, Landseer had thought of the Thames views and treated them together, presenting the pictures in geographical order, starting with the Union of the Thames and Isis (B&J 70), followed by The Thames at Eltham (B&J 71, Petworth House), Pip’s Villa at Tidleyham and the View of Richmond Hill and Bridge (B&J. Tate 75), before coming to the three Thames Estuary pictures.

In both Turner’s exhibition strategy with the Haystacks, for instance. We face them directly across a short span of water and can closely inspect their activities. The central figure holds up a fish on a line, displaying a recent, albeit modest, success (fig. 9). Their vessel is a particular one called a Thames pater-boat. It included an onboard water-filled tank into which fish could be placed. This allowed the fishermen to stay out for several days and keep fish fresh before heading back upriver to sell them in London. 35 Their appeal was its apparent withdrawal from the cash-nexus of aesthetic contemplation alone. Turner is carefully attentive to the activity of the fishermen in the Houston Shores. We face them directly across a short span of water and can closely inspect their activities.

This observation was made possible by the display of pictures in multiples, because it allowed Turner to reveal his attention to different times of day, seasons, and weather conditions, all of which Landseer reacts to in his account. The effect of multiple pictures around a sustained theme then is to reveal Turner’s care in looking and to encourage a similar response in viewers. In this regard, these pictures can be compared to another example of series paintings, perhaps the most famous, namely Monet’s. This should be done advisedly, because often the Turner-aesthetico- impressionist discourse that has been so much a part of his practice tends to be reducative with respect to Turner. But here, it can be employed to throw certain aspects of his practice into relief.

At the first level, we can recognize a shared set of goals that are related to exhibition. Monet’s Haystacks, for instance, were shown at the Galerie Durand-Ruel in May 1891 and marked a further stage in the artist’s withdrawal from both official cultural spaces and organized group shows, not unlike Turner’s in this period. Identifying a single, very specific motif allows Monet a similar mix of specificity and comprehensiveness to what we have seen in Turner, showing the Haystacks in various times of days, seasons and conditions, thus providing a proof of his careful observation of nature in detail and a knowledge of its broader movements in general.

Like Turner, there was also a distinctly commercial aspect to Monet’s exhibition strategy with the series. At Paul Durand-Ruel’s, the situation was very carefully, and successfully, calibrated to appeal to changing audiences in the last decade of the century. Interestingly, both artists depict natural resources, and are at least in part engaged with a metaphorization of the representative action of the landscape painter in harvesting the environment for commercial gain. 30 Monet’s series is clearly a much tighter group and was exhibited with no other works. Turner’s, on the other hand, was open-ended, both in terms of being shown with other works and being shown in different exhibitions. Monet, however, was just as willing in the end to see the Haystacks separated in sales as Turner.

Monet’s series, on the other hand, seems less open about its commercial nature. Indeed, part of its very appeal was its apparent withdrawal from the cash-nexus of the urban environment in which it was exhibited. Turner, on the other hand, as we have seen, frequently painted the Essex Shore series on shown in 1808; 13 the River Medway, with the eye and hand at once of a painter and a philosopher and organized group shows, not unlike Turner’s in this period. Identifying a single, very specific motif allows Monet a similar mix of specificity and comprehensiveness to what we have seen in Turner, showing the Haystacks in various times of days, seasons and conditions, thus providing a proof of his careful observation of nature in detail and a knowledge of its broader movements in general.

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elephant silhouetted against the glowing light, small but distinct near the centre of the canvas. Showing work in his own gallery, which according to Farington was long but rather narrow, would have enabled Turner to encourage such close looking.45 Again, he was rewarded in Lansbury, who was particularly attentive to the details of navigation, weather, and rigging in the ships, and complimentary of Turner’s nautical knowledge.

Like Shorens, both the Shipwreck and the Confidence of the Thames and Medway, for instance, are filled with a wealth of narrative detail in the ships in the foreground, so that the viewer is rewarded for closely approaching the picture. But what is striking about many of the Esmyre pictures in particular is the centrality of vision and careful looking within the imagery of the pictures. Where the Shipwreck features numerous vignettes of desperate survivors and heroic rescuers, in the Confidence of the Thames and Medway the figures in the different ships are separate and linked narratively chiefly by sight. Turner sets up a complex, dynamic interaction between the three ships closest to us and signals the urgency of the situation by the active gazes of the figures. The four fishermen nearest to the viewer, for instance, each energetically look in a different direction while figures in the vessels to the right and left of the canoes are similarly attentive to their surroundings. The Houston Shorens, on the other hand, makes the point in reverse, showing a fisherman looking up in sudden surprise as a cutter comes perilously close at high speed, while the other two are unaware. Their focus on their goal has almost fatally led them to pay no visual attention to their surroundings. One of the repeated motifs of Espmyre pictures is that navigating this area, with its colliding currents, sand bars, powerful tides, and complex traffic of vessels of all sizes requires the kind of close visual attention to both natural and man-made forms that Turner is laying claim to here.

The next year, Farington reports that fellow Academician John Hoppner went to Turner’s after going to the Vegetable Gardens Exhibition and said “after seeing the delicate and careful works at the former Exhibition, where so much attention to nature was shown, Turner’s room appeared like a Ginn, Swift & rank, crude & disorderly were his pictures.” 46 Writing after seeing Turner’s gallery in 1805, David Wilkie pointed specifically to the paintings’ failures when viewed closely:

“I really do not understand his method of painting at all, his designs are grand the effect and colouring natural but his workmanship is the most obominable [sic] I ever saw and some pieces of the picture you cannot make out at all and although his pictures are not large yet you must be at the other end of the room before they can satisfy the eye.”47

In 1807, Farington reports that West had been to Turner’s gallery and “was disgusted with what He found there; views on the Thames, crude blotches, nothing could be more vicious.” 48 These criticisms took aim at exactly the kinds of things I have described as Turner’s ambitions in showing his paintings in multiples in this setting. Even Landseer could admit that some of Turner’s paintings “wanted finishing”, including the Houston Shorens.49

Sight and visibility are ambivalent within the pictorial dynamics of the pictures as well. For it would have escaped few viewers of this work in 1808 that eleven years earlier, the Nore had been the site of a violent and destructive naval mutiny that, in the immediate wake of the French Revolution, had temporarily shut down the port of London. This would have been the all the more obvious given that one had also taken place at Spithead, on the southern coast, and Turner also showed Spithead: Two Captured Ships Entering Portsmouth Harbour (B&J 30, Tate) in his gallery in 1808.50 While the Spithead mutiny had ended peacefully, however, the one at the Nore was brutally suppressed, with the ringleaders hung from the yardarms of a drawback stationed very much like the one that looms in the background of Shorens. The picture is thus in part a product and a response to the repressive regime of the 1790s. The mutiny at the Nore and Spithead, on the other hand, makes the point specifically to the paintings’ failures when viewed closely: "When left to its own operations, the mutinies did heighten a sense of domestic alarm. An anonymous publication addressed to soldiers in the wake of the Nore mutiny, for instance, makes the point clearly that it was traitors within, rather than French influence, that was the cause of the threat: ‘How otherwise can we account for the conduct of those once so disreputably revered, once the brightest ornament and support of their country, so suddenly degenerated? Vice, like all other changes in the human mind, when left to its own operations, is progressive.’ The key phrase here seems to be ‘when left to its own operations.’ The presence of treacherous elements within the very fabric of the nation, metaphorized by the man-o’-war, creates need, as never before, for vigilance and watchfulness against its own kinds influence.

Painted at the very moment of the birth of the modern carceral and disciplinary system described by Michel Foucault, Shorens, like many of the Estuary pictures, features the looming presence of an anchored man-o’-war, a reminder of the omnipresent eye of authority over the plebian fisherman and their business. Indeed, part of the modernity of Foucault’s characterization of the modern prison is its surveillance capacity, its power to divide its subjects into discrete units. Indeed, Foucault uses the example of the transformation of the soldier from a figure “who could be recognized from afar” by his strength, courage, and pride, his body “the blazon of his strength and valor” into a docile body, one that “may be subjected, used, transformed and improved.” Central to this production was the control of boredom; not by treating them as a whole, but rather by working them individually. This allowed for a method of control which is “an uninterrupted, constant coercion, supervising the processes of the activity rather than its result, and it is exercised according to a codification that partitions as closely as possible time, space and individuality.” Close looking was central to this functioning: “A meticulous observation of detail, and at the same time a political awareness of these small things, for the control and use of men, a whole set of techniques, a whole corpus of methods and knowledge, descriptions, plans and data.”51 Discrete units both capable of, and subject to, these methods and techniques of close observation are precisely what we see throughout the Thames Estuary paintings: individualized subjects existing within the surveillance of a larger, depersonalized omni-present authority. Just as the fishermen in the foreground can ill afford to be inattentive to the dangers around them, so too must the British nation keep a careful watch now on its plebian subjects.
In this regard, finally, we might consider the position of the sun, just to the left of the bow of the guardship, hanging low on the horizon. As often with Turner, the sun has physical form, thickly painted and standing out from the surface of the canvas. As Ronald Paulson’s study of Turner has argued, Turner’s suns can be positioned complexly in relation to the regimes of observation that would allow his own practices to be observed and policed.50 Seen from this perspective, Turner has been mended and made ready to become a repeat offender. This was the price, in a sense, of reform, as if the reviewer invokes the language of reform, as if the viewer feels the presence of the regimes of observation and control, because he himself felt them, and was subjected to them.

By exhibiting in his gallery, by thus turning himself into an even more discreet individual, an identified Foucauldian author-function and subject of power, out of the crowds on the walls and in the galleries of the Royal Academy exhibition, Turner invited the kind of scrutiny that would allow his own practices to be observed and policed.51 Seen from this perspective, the invocations of Turner’s “unfinish,” “crudeness,” “blotchiness” are similarly the result of constant visual surveillance of his work and cast him as the newly invented dangerous individual that came along with this term during Turner’s lifetime see Kay Dian Kriz, An History of the River Thames (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2007), pp. 111-124. For a revised view of the dimensions and control of these pictures see: https://www.tate.org.uk/art/entry/tate05838, accessed 17 July 2019.

58. For an in-depth consideration of Turner’s reputation within the last decade the BBC produced a show by Ruskin, in the line of Eighteenth-Century Studies, for a nuanced discussion of the series see: https://www.tate.org.uk/art/articles/tourers-seen-helpful-understanding-cruising-through-the-diaspora0bf93, accessed 17 July 2019.
59. Additional information on several of the paintings can also be found on these paintings, see: https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turner-view-of-richmond-hill-and-the-confluence-of-the-thames-and-the-medway-t03874, accessed 17 July 2019.
62. I am grateful to Dr. Peter van der Meere for this identification.
74. For a study of the cultural significance of the series within the last decade the BBC produced a show by Ruskin, in the line of Eighteenth-Century Studies, for a nuanced discussion of the series see: https://www.tate.org.uk/art/articles/tourers-seen-helpful-understanding-cruising-through-the-diaspora0bf93, accessed 17 July 2019.
Among the many significant exhibitions curated or co-curated by Pete Bowron during his lengthy tenure as the Audrey Jones Beck Curator of European Art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH), one has perhaps received less attention than it deserves: Best in Show: The Dog in Art from the Renaissance to Today.1 As always, he chose the most brilliant and interesting works available and installed them beautifully. But also as always, Best in Show was conceived with historical and intellectual purpose, and with it Bowron demonstrated that exhibitions could be simultaneously popular and substantive. Instilling perhaps an additional lustre in this instance was his personal, extra-professional love of, in Peter Beckford’s words, “the dog, that useful, that honest, that faithful, that disinterested, that entertaining animal”.2 Bowron’s keen eye for both dogs and paintings is also evident in one of his acquisitions for the MFAH, Jan Weenix’s large Still Life of Game, of around 1680 (fig. 1).3

A game piece by Weenix (presumably Jan) – perhaps as elaborate as this one or a more concentrated painting like his Still Life of a Dead Hare, Partridges, and Other Birds in a Niche, also acquired by Bowron for the MFAH – was in the substantial collection of the flamboyant Colonel Thomas Thornton (1751/2-1823), said to be “the most enthusiastic, persevering and universal of Sportsmen” and “the most experienced and practical sportsman this country has to boast”. 4 He received his military rank, by which he was almost invariably referred to, by virtue of service in the West Yorkshire militia; indefatigably self-promoting, Thornton had himself portrayed numerous times as a sportsman, as in a painting of around 1800 by Philip Reinagle, recently on the art market, in which Thornton appears with his greyhound Major and a hooded gyrfalcon, manifesting his love of both falconry, in the revival of which he played a leading role, and coursing (fig. 2).5 Reinagle also painted Thornton in action, waving his cap and twisting in his saddle, his horse in full stride, and exhorting a brace of his hounds to the chase (fig. 3).

Thornton acknowledged that “[i]t has, indeed, been my uniform wish to enjoy myself through life; and as the race of man is but of short duration, I am still solicitous to skim the cream of existence, and leave the blue milk for such as may happen to prefer it.”6 He lived in high style on various estates, the most famous of which was Thornville Royal in Yorkshire, where he is said to have had his many “horses and hounds paraded before the windows every morning – ... during breakfast”.7 He spent his substantial means on virtually every available type of hunting and fishing, as well as racing horses and dogs (and occasionally wagering on his own speed or other feats of athletic prowess). His exploits were widely published during his lifetime, including in his own volumes describing grand sporting tours: A Sporting Tour through the Northern Parts of England, and Great Part of the Highlands of Scotland, which describes two tours, though written as one, around 1786; and A Sporting Tour through Various Parts of France, which takes the form of letters to the Earl of Darlington in 1802.8 Thornton, who considered himself a man of taste, engaged artists to accompany him on his tours – George Garrard, a pupil and son-in-law of Sawrey Gilpin, in England and Scotland, and a Mr. Bryant in France, where he also engaged a Mr. Lucas – to sketch the romantic and picturesque views he encountered and admired, as well as some architecture and, in France, local types.
“That useful, that honest, that faithful, that disinterested, that entertaining animal”: on Colonel Thornton’s dogs

Valley, Reinagle has set a dozen figures: Thornton, who is probably the man standing at right, supporting a hawk on his outstretched left arm; several of his companions, some who have been hunting, others fishing; and a number of servants. In the foreground at left and right are miniature game still lifes, with another of fish in the center, a mere fraction of what Thornton encountered and described: moor game, snipes, trout, fox, stags, roebucks, ptarmigans, plovers, and so on. Some ten hooded falcons are perched at left, and about a dozen dogs of various breeds roam the painting.12

The Display on the Return to Dulnon Camp was one of many sporting pictures in Colonel Thornton’s notable collection of paintings, which also included Old Masters, from which he occasionally sold and which was largely dispersed a few years before his death. William Taplin asserted that “Colonel Thornton is a distinguished patron of the fine arts, and is known to possess the first collection of sporting pictures in this kingdom.”13 There are, however, certain irregularities associated with Thornton’s collection, as there were with other aspects of his life. Most remarkably, there is the curious account, from Thornton himself, of having copies made of paintings in the “Museum of Paintings” in the Louvre, albeit with certain alterations. Thornton noted approvingly that the museum was open to the public three days a week, free of charge, and “that this institution is admirably adapted to familiarize the most uncultivated classes of society to works of sublime taste, and consequently to humanize the heart and enlarge the understanding.”14 After a visit to the museum, at which he admired in particular a game piece with a hare, peacock, and dog, he wrote the following:15

The thought suddenly struck me, which I resolved to put into immediate execution. This was to have copies taken from some of the most celebrated pictures in the museum, and in order to add to their beauty, and in some measure render them originals, I proposed leaving out such objects as appeared least interesting, and adding others of greater consequence from the same masters. Accordingly I contracted for some of these performances with two artists whom I knew to be fully adequate to the task, and I have the pleasure of reflecting, that the execution of this plan will not cost me above a thousand guineas, whereas the purchase of the originals, even if they could be procured from the museum, would amount to fifty, or, perhaps, a hundred thousand pounds.16

Garrard’s work must have been the basis for a picture by Thornton’s two favourite painters, Philip Reinagle and Sawrey Gilpin, in the collection of the Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation at the MFAH since 1987: The Display on the Return to Dulnon Camp, August 1786, which was presumably executed shortly after the tour to the Highlands (fig. 4).10 Thornton described at some length and with obvious pleasure the encampment – fine turf, a quantity of junipers, three small rivers “tumbling over their rocky channels” to unite and form the Dulnon (that is, River Dulnain, a tributary of the River Spey in northeastern Scotland), mountains rising steeply on one side, gently rising moors on another, and “that beautifully-even, immense hill, called Croke Franc” on another, with a “partial peep at the beautiful forest of Dulnon” about two miles distant – all rendered more delightful by the extraordinary variety and abundance of game.11 In Gilpin’s rocky but pleasant

Fig. 2 / Philip Reinagle, Portrait of Colonel Thomas Thornton with His Greyhound Major and a Gyrfalcon, ca. 1800, oil on canvas, 127 x 101.6 cm, London, Richard Green Fine Paintings.

Fig. 3 / John Scott after Philip Reinagle, Breaking Cover, 1811, etching, 54 x 64 cm, London, British Museum.

Fig. 4 / Sawrey Gilpin and Philip Reinagle, The Display on the Return to Dulnon Camp, August 1786, ca. 1786, oil on canvas, 112.4 x 162.6 cm, Houston, Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation.
One of these artists, Lucas ("an eminent artist of the school of the famous Pigale"), eventually brought two copies to Thornton’s hotel in Paris, where they were also examined by some of Thornton’s friends, “who are amateurs in this delightful science”. The friends gave it as their decided opinion, that the pieces were even superior to the originals, the artist having, in compliance with my request, introduced some interesting parts from similar paintings, and left out such objects as appeared objectionable. For my own part I was greatly pleased with the performances, and was fully convinced, that, by procuring such copies from the paintings in the Museum and at Versailles, together with those I might meet with in my travels, I should become possessed of a collection, which, when time should have mellowed the tints, might be deemed almost invaluable. I therefore immediately contracted for a sufficient number to give Mr. Lucas two years constant employment.27

It is not known what became of these paintings, but Thornton was sure in 1806 with an allegation of gross fraud in his sale of around two dozen sporting pictures and Old Masters—including paintings by or attributed to Carracci, Rubens, Bol, Potter, Maratti, and Stubbs—to a certain Robert Christie Burton, barely of age at the time, who also bought from Thornton a considerable number of guns, horses, deer, a library replete with books and curiosities (including a picture of Saint Peter’s, Rome, painted on a cobweb, for which Thornton had given “a pair of very elegant pistols” and about thirty guineas), with some wine and hounds tossed in for good measure.28 (Against this charge and Thornton’s alleged considerations for such a match of twenty guineas, it cannot be said that the large prints were not published until 1811.11)

Colonel Thornton’s paintings, especially editions of his own animals, provided quite a few subjects for the lively market of sporting prints at the turn of the nineteenth century. Prints such as John Scott’s etching of 1803 after George Morland, Pointer & Hare (fig. 3), with its portrayal of Thornton himself, and The Death of the Fox after Sawrey Gilmour (fig. 6), the paintings were with Scott for reproduction in 1811 and perhaps earlier), but the large prints were not published until 1811.11 Such a lengthy time to produce labour-intensive prints was not unusual in the period, leading to complaints from various parties, and a reproductive printmaker was sometimes paid more than the painter who had invented and executed the composition to be translated into print, but the potential sales and attention were thought to make the wait and expense worthwhile.29

Called by Edward Topham in 1817 one of the two “noblest sporting pictures now extant”,30 Thornton’s most renowned painting was Gilpin’s monumental, life-sized Death of the Fox, exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1795.31 (To be sure, Topham—who Thornton named in Burton’s lawsuit against him as having valued his Ferdinand Bell at four thousand guineas—also opined that Joshua Reynolds was the first portrait painter ever to provide more than mere likenesses: “it was reserved to his taste and fancy to form from such materials [the great variety of human faces] countenances of meaning and character, and to make from such subjects pictures, by their grouping and disposition, that were the admiration of those who knew nothing of the parties.”)32 Taplin, averring that the “imitatable” Death of the Fox “may be considered, by every judicious sportsman, and scientific amateur, the very ne plus ultra of the art”, presented his readers with “a literary delineation of that celebrated picture” and the circumstances that gave rise to the subject:33

Colonel Thornton, sitting amid a company of his sporting friends, and speaking of the superior excellence of the Easingwood foxes, proposed a match of twenty guineas for every year, that he would find a fox that should run twenty miles in the month of February, in each year, for eleven years in succession; the week and day being appointed, the bet to be decided on one day in that week to be appointed by Colonel Thornton, and the time and day being appointed, and the time arrived, the fox was stowed off, with the hounds at his heel, precisely at eleven o’clock, where he ran three-and-twenty miles in a most glorious style, and was killed. This first essay put a final period to the engagement, and was the cause of producing the very painting here alluded to, and the money won upon this occasion, was laid out in a piece of plate to commemorate the singularity of the event.

The Death of the Fox that useful, that honest, that faithful, that disinterested, that entertaining animal: on Colonel Thornton’s dogs

Fig. 5. John Scott after George Morland, Pointer & Hare, 1811, etching and engraving, 51.4 x 47 cm, London, British Museum.

Fig. 6. John Scott after Sawrey Gilmour, Death of the Fox, 1811, etching and engraving, 51.4 x 47 cm, London, British Museum.
In an appendix to his Sporting Bear through Various Parts of France, boasting that the area around his estate provided the best fox hunting in Europe and that the foxes there were particularly game, Thornton offered a similar account of the bet, the hunt, and the painting, including the assertion – at which the modern mind boggles – that some dogs were killed and affixed in place “to enable the artist to give the greater perfection to his work”, which takes tropes of pictorial naturalism to a paradoxical extreme.29 By contrast, the Reverend William B. Daniel reported that for a portrait, Thornton’s famous pointers, Pluto and Juno, “kept their length, Thornton could matter of factly state that “it exceeds all others for symmetry, bottom, and pace.”37 In giving his opinion on the training of dogs at length, Thornton could matter of factly state that “it is well known that perhaps no sportsman in Europe has bestowed more attention” on them than he, and he was equally famous as a breeder.30 Thornton owned hundreds of dogs, many of them renowned by name, like those listed by Taplin in The Death of the Fox.

Fig. 6 / Robert Pollard and Francis Jukes after Sawrey Gilpin, Pluto and Juno, 1784, aquatint, etching, and roulette, 44 x 55 cm, London, British Museum.

Fig. 7 / John Scott after Sawrey Gilpin, Pluto and Juno, 1802, etching 21.5 x 29 cm, London, British Museum.

Fig. 8 / Robert Pollard and Francis Jukes after Sawrey Gilpin, Pluto and Juno, 1784, aquatint, etching, and roulette, 44 x 55 cm, London, British Museum.

Fig. 9 / Robert Pollard and Francis Jukes after Sawrey Gilpin, Pluto and Juno, 1784, aquatint, etching, and roulette, 44 x 55 cm, London, British Museum.

...[T]he composition is admitted by connoisseurs to be masterly, and the last as sublime. No great was the attention paid to the minutiae, in the delineation of nature, that some of the dogs were actually killed and pinned down in the very position in which they appear, in order that the artist might perfect his work, as it was impossible to place dogs alive in those difficult positions, for a length of time sufficient for the purpose. The scene represented in the picture took place at Bowron, the distance of about fourteen miles from Thornville Royal, in Yorkshire, the seat of Colonel Thornton. In the fore-ground of the picture is seen Madcap, who was offered to match against all England for 5000 guineas, and give half a mile. Lounger, whose perfections have been already recounted, is prominent also in the picture; Merkin, Mystery (sister to Merkin and Madcap) Wanton, Chaucer, Drury, &c., all dogs of high estimation, are included. The painting is twelve feet two inches, by eight feet six; and being now in the hands of the artist by whom the engravings to this work are executed, it would be superfluous to anticipate what may naturally be expected from the long and successful exercise of his abilities.31

Thornton had several of them, such as Pluto and Juno, drawn or painted, especially by Gilpin and Reinagle, and the production of prints of those portraits suggests an interest well beyond Thornton’s private circle. Thornton’s pointer Dosh, who had been portrayed by Gilpin and then rendered in a large print by Robert Pollard and Francis Jukes in 1788 (fig. 6), was also celebrated by Daniel, who calls him “by far the best Pointer that perhaps was ever bred”, a dog that ranged upon the Moors with “extraordinary style”, and who reports that Thornton sold the dog to Sir Richard Symons for “one hundred and sixty pounds worth of Champagne and Burgundy, which had been bought at the French Ambassadors’s stall, a hogshead of Claret, an elegant Gau, and a Pointe”.32 Calling him “the Eclipse of Pointers”, John Lawrence noted that Dosh was, “in all probability, three parts Fox Hound”, which attests to Thornton’s reputation as an ambitious and thoughtful cross-bredder of dogs.33 Modish, also by Pollard and Jukes after Gilpin, is a companion piece to the print of Dosh; it portrays a fox hound that Pever Egan included among a number of Thornton’s animals as worthy of comment, calling her “A bitch of acknowledged excellence” (fig. 9).34 The inscription notes her fine pedigree, including descent from Old Conqueror, whom Egan called “A matchless fox-hound, sire of many well-known dogs in the annals of fox-hunting”.35 Both dogs are shown in the “classic” profile pose with four paws on the ground, which, as Bowron has pointed out, derives from ancient animal gems, although both are shown in action, as it were, with Dosh on the hunt and Modish snarling in protection of her whelps.36

Representations of Thornton’s dogs were not limited to paintings and prints. The Sarah Campbell Blaffer Foundation has recently added to its collection of Thorntoniana with the acquisition of a silver-gilt Fox-Head Snuff Box by Thomas Phipps and Edward Robinson, inscribed on the outside of the lid: “Presented by Colonel Thornton to Major Winceley 1809” (fig. 10). On the inside of the lid, the box features an engraved portrait of a hound, a “‘T’ for ‘Thornton’ branded on his flank, with the inscription: ‘A leading hound at 13 years old, Merryman’” (fig. 11). Egan said of him, “this celebrated dog is sire of a pack, which exceeds all others for symmetry, bottom, and pace.”37

Colonel Thornton clearly prided himself on the care he took of his dogs, recognizing at the very least that “the great pleasure and elegance of shooting depends upon the good order in which the dogs are kept”.38 And he could be highly critical of those owners who did not meet his own exacting standards, such as some rather bedraggled Scottish sportsmen accompanied by “a brace of hale-starved mongrel greyhounds, four or five couple of still worse fed hounds, , , , a couple or more, of lame, but savage, bandy-legged terriers. One half, at least, of these quadrupeds are eaten up with the mange, of which they must cure themselves, as little attention is paid to them.”39
His general attitude toward his dogs seems to have been rather more practical than sentimental. He described one, Vixen, as “very handsome” but “more likely to do harm than good”, for example, and he readily sold them or gave them as gifts when occasions arose. Yet he cared for them in more than one sense of the word. He told a story of a previous visit to Scotland that reveals both his instinctive eagerness to rise to a challenge and his concern for his dogs. Hearing it claimed that no Englishman had ever crossed a rapid, high falls near Loch Ness, he naturally determined to do so himself “regardless of the consequence”. Proceeding there with his friend, Mr. S., he found a rough fir tree laid across the “dreadful chasm”. He successfully crossed, followed by his pointer Ponto, but the dog would not recross with him, so Thornton returned to the far side, and, “dreading that my dog, a spirited one, on seeing us gone, would attempt it, and be lost, I very cautiously began ‘dashing to atoms’, but the dog ‘had made an immense cling to the fir and slowly crawl to safety’. He feared Ponto sprang loose, and Thornton fell, luckily able to recross, taking Ponto in my arms”. Halfway across, Thornton was able to project a certain mutual affection, or at least ease, with his dogs. To return to Reinagle’s portrait with the greyhound and the greyhound Major, Thornton includes the animals as extensions of himself or manifestations of his persona (see fig. 2). Son of Claret, called by Pierce Egan a “dog of very great celebrity, and the father of Colonel Thornton’s present breed of ‘greyhounds’”, Major was said to be eight years old at the Flixton Meeting in 1802, where he “was decided even at his age, to have more speed than any dog produced”. Though Major is not quite in Thornton’s lap, as we find in some portraits of sportsmen and their dogs conforming to the same compositional type, he nonetheless stays close to him, looking up to him comfortably. Reinagle also painted a standing portrait of Major, which was engraved by John Scott for William Taplin’s The Sportsman’s Cabinet (fig. 12). Toward the end of A Sporting Tour through Various Parts of France is a depiction of Thornton’s handsome library at Thornville Royal (fig. 13). It was here that Burton conducted his ill-fated business with Thornton, including the purchase of the contents of the library, which a visitor deemed “more fanciful than valuable” – hundreds of volumes and the extraordinary painting of Saint Peter’s on a cobweb, as well as “curious weather glasses, a number of stuffed birds, some animals, reptiles, curious china, magnets, an electrical machine, conductor, and apparatus, targets, Indian bows and arrows, a weighing machine, &c. &c”. Curled in front of the fireplace, made comfortable by his owner after years of vigorous service, is an old hound. Whether the image coincides with any visual or lived reality or not, it projects on behalf of Thornton both a caring and affectionate relationship with his dog and, in so far as it makes use of a visual trope of the humanist’s study that goes back at least as far as Albrecht Dürer’s engraving of Saint Jerome, Thornton himself as a cultivated man of letters.

In lieu of a conclusion, I offer one of Colonel Thornton’s valedictions to the Earl of Darlington in A Sporting Tour through France, with its attendant vignette of a French briquet, said to be of the royal breed of France, which Thornton brought back to England (fig. 14): Having stolen upon a portion of the time usually devoted to repose, in order to give your lordship as long an epistle as possible, I shall relinquish my pen for the present, after subscribing myself Your Lordship’s, &c.

[96] “That useful, that honest, that faithful, that disinterested, that entertaining animal”: on Colonel Thornton’s dogs

[97] “That useful, that honest, that faithful, that disinterested, that entertaining animal”: on Colonel Thornton’s dogs


8. Thomas Thornton and Robert Christie Burton, Sporting Tour through the Northern Parts of England, to which is Prefixed, an Account of Colonel Thornton’s patronage and collecting.

9. Taplin, p. 272n; see http://www.bl.uk/onlinecollections/pe/1527.html, which may have agreed to do so, but decided that he had no time to do it, and that the painting was not large enough.


17. “Another performance which particularly attracted me,” as the other painting.


19. “That useful, that honest, that faithful, that disinterested, that entertaining animal”: on Colonel Thornton’s dogs

20. Egan, Sporting Anecdotes, p. 124, and with Kaylin H. Weber, exh. cat. (Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2013), pp. 50-61, esp. p. 54. That the portraits were with Scott at the time of writing – thus year before the pictures were published – is noted by Taplin, Sporting Tour through France, II (opposite p. 141); cf. Taplin, p. 260, no. 6.

21. J[ohn] Hassell, Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Stubbs, (London: Vernor and Hood, 1804) (the copy of this work in the Library of the MMA is that of Edgar Prager) and Bower, Sporting Tour through France.


32. Egan, Sporting Anecdotes, p. 137.


38. Thornton, Sporting Tour through Various Parts of France, II, pp. 131 and 280, where he says of the copy: “I must be admitted, that, in the shape and form of it, so an English sportsman acquainted.”

39. “That useful, that honest, that faithful, that disinterested, that entertaining animal”: on Colonel Thornton’s dogs

40. Egan, Sporting Anecdotes, p. 139, and with Kaylin H. Weber, exh. cat. (Houston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2013), pp. 50-61, esp. p. 54. That the portraits were with Scott at the time of writing – thus year before the pictures were published – is noted by Taplin, Sporting Tour through France, II (opposite p. 141); cf. Taplin, p. 260, no. 6.

41. Bower, sporting Tour through France.

42. Bower, sporting Tour through France.

43. Bower, sporting Tour through France.

44. E.g., Jean-Marc Nattier, Louis David, and Claude Lorrain – and added:

45. “Another performance which particularly attracted me,” as the other painting.

46. “Another performance which particularly attracted me,” as the other painting.

47. Taplin, p. 275.


49. Egan, Sporting Anecdotes, p. 137.

50. Egan, Sporting Anecdotes, p. 137.

51. Egan, Sporting Anecdotes, p. 137.

52. Egan, Sporting Anecdotes, p. 137.

53. Egan, Sporting Anecdotes, p. 137.

54. Egan, Sporting Anecdotes, p. 137.

55. Egan, Sporting Anecdotes, p. 137.

56. Egan, Sporting Anecdotes, p. 137.

57. Egan, Sporting Anecdotes, p. 137.

58. Egan, Sporting Anecdotes, p. 137.

59. Egan, Sporting Anecdotes, p. 137.

60. Egan, Sporting Anecdotes, p. 137.
In 1831, the 2nd Earl Grosvenor (1767-1845) celebrated his elevation as 1st Marquess of Westminster at the Coronation honours of King William IV by commissioning a group portrait of himself and his family from the painter Charles Robert Leslie (fig. 1). Although the painting (101.6 x 144.7 cm) is on a smaller scale than the very grand group portraits of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such as those of the Marlborough family by John Closterman and Joshua Reynolds (both at Blenheim), it nevertheless carries the same connotations of dynastic pride and aristocratic pretension. Prominently seated to the left of centre of the composition is the bald, middle-aged figure of the earl; immediately behind him stands his elder son and heir, Richard, the future 2nd Marquess (1795-1869); and leaning against the earl, still in a child's knickerbockers, is his grandson Hugh Lupus (1825-1899), who brought his family to a pinnacle of aristocratic status, as well as of immense material wealth, by being created 1st Duke of Westminster in 1874. It is almost as if this further upward ascent is already predicted in Leslie's carefully orchestrated composition and glittering brushwork.1

Despite the tall, fluted columns, which again echo the typical accessories of courtly baroque portraiture, the Grosvenor family is represented not in some ideal, non-specific setting, but enjoying a musical soirée in their London home of Grosvenor House. In this respect, Leslie's portrait also belongs to another tradition of portraiture, that of the more factual and domestic Conversation Piece. Yet the fact that the particular space the family occupies is its private Picture Gallery aligns the portrait with yet another genre, that of the Gallery Picture. The origins of this type go back to the seventeenth century, as exemplified by the various representations of the Picture Gallery of the Archduke Leopold Wilhelm by David Teniers; and here, as with Teniers, most of the individual pictures are clearly identifiable. Most prominently visible, in the central background, is Rubens' huge Abraham and Melchisedech (fig. 2), one of four cartoons for a series of tapestries depicting the Triumph of the Eucharist, on the right wall of the same space are two more of the cartoons; and on the right wall next to the family are Lodovico Carracci’s Holy Family,2 and below it, Velázquez’s Prince Baltasar Carlos at the Riding School (fig. 3). (The tall canvas closest to the viewer is difficult to read in reproduction.) In other words, Leslie’s painting celebrates not just the Grosvenor dynasty, but an art collection that was widely recognized as one of the finest in early nineteenth-century London. Indeed, in 1844 Anna Jameson went further, describing the Grosvenor Gallery as “long celebrated throughout Europe for the splendour and variety of its treasures”, and as “dividing [only] with the Bridgewater Gallery the homage and enthusiasm of all lovers of art”.3

The Grosvenor collection, which was largely the creation of the 2nd Earl in the three decades leading up to 1831, was largely dispersed soon after the First World War, and before the demolition of Grosvenor House in 1927. Despite its importance in Regency and Victorian London, the collection has not previously been the subject of any detailed account either of its formation, the standards of taste that shaped it, or the way in which it was accommodated and displayed.
The collection formed at Grosvenor House by Robert, 2nd Earl Grosvenor

What follows here is an attempt to remedy this lacuna. Of the various relevant published sources for the contents of the collection, fundamental is John Young’s Catalogue of the Pictures at Grosvenor House, London of 1820, in which a list of 143 paintings is accompanied by small-scale etchings of each of them. Although in his preface Young apologizes for not attempting to provide any critical assessment of the individual works, very useful for the present discussion is the regular distinction that he makes between those acquired by the 2nd Earl and those he inherited from his father Richard, 1st Earl (1731-1802). Likewise, the author regularly indicates the works that the 2nd Earl acquired as part of his en bloc purchase of the collection of Welbore Ellis Agar in 1806. Another essential source for our knowledge of the activity of both the 1st and 2nd Earls as buyers and sellers of paintings – at least, at auction – is the on-line Getty Provenance Index.7

Although Grosvenor House itself has been studied in some detail by architectural historians, a brief summary of its history and fabric should be provided as a basis for the present discussion of the ways in which the 2nd Earl sought to adapt and enlarge it as an appropriate setting for his collection. While the Mayfair estate was steadily developed throughout the eighteenth century, in the later life of the 1st Earl the family still lived outside it, at the former Peterborough House by the Thames on Millbank.

Fig. 1 / Charles Robert Leslie, The Grosvenor Family, 1831, oil on canvas, 101.6 x 144.7 cm, Private Collection.

Fig. 2 / Peter Paul Rubens, Abraham and Melchisedech, ca. 1625, oil on canvas, 445 x 571 cm, Sarasota, John and Mable Ringling Museum.

Fig. 3 / Diego Velázquez, Don Baltasar Carlos: The Riding School, 1636, oil on canvas, 144 x 91 cm, Private Collection.
In 1805, soon after his succession, the 2nd Earl bought instead a relatively modest early Georgian house on a site bounded by Upper Grosvenor Street to the north, Park Lane to the west, and Mount Street to the south, with the main entrance through a substantial courtyard to the north. Square in plan, the main floor of the house consisted of five reception rooms and an entrance hall, arranged round a central staircase space (fig. 4). Immediately upon acquiring the house, the earl commissioned his architect William Porden, who was already remodelling Eaton in a Gothic style, to undertake a lavish classicizing refurbishment of the five reception rooms, also involving an enlargement of the doors, to ease the flow of guests. By 1808, the house was ready to accommodate both the family and the picture collection, which—in contrast to the arrangement in other London mansions of the period, including at Cleveland House, Buckingham House, and Apsley House—was thus displayed on the ground floor rather than the piano nobile. A decade later, in 1818-1819, Porden extended the house to the west by adding the fifty-foot long, single-storey, top-light Picture Gallery. Subsequently in 1825-1827, Thomas Cundy the Younger was employed to extend this further to the west with a large new gallery space, to be known as the “Rubens Room,” linked to Porden’s gallery by the screen of tall, fluted scagliola columns depicted in Leslie’s group portrait. Finally, in 1870-1875 the 1st Marquess of Stafford, “the general style of decoration and magnificence of all sorts, beyond all powers of description or imagination.” This magnificence did not, however, meet with everyone’s approval, and two weeks rather the diarist Joseph Farington reported that Lord Lonsdale had found the house to be “most expensively furnished, but in bad taste.”

As may be seen in various drawn and photographic views of the south façade (fig. 3), no attempt was made by Porden or Cundy to create any architectural unity between the exterior of the picture galleries, articulated with monumental Corinthian half-columns and clad in Bath stone, and the modest, stuccoed walls of the Georgian house. Inside, however, Porden’s interior decoration clearly did create a sense of visual harmony and continuity, first between the parade of reception rooms in the original block, and then with their extension into the bespoke picture galleries. Unfortunately, Leslie’s portrait provides one of the very few visual records of the interior of the house before 1870; and for the most part, the surviving views consist of the set of photographs taken by Bedford Lemere in about 1890 (fig. 6), after its refurbishment by Clutton. Some written evidence, however, about the furnishings introduced by the 2nd Earl is provided by contemporary descriptions, and especially by the correspondence between him and his interior designer. From this it emerges that for the walls of three of the reception rooms (the Drawing Room, its Ante-Room to the Dining Room to the south-east), Porden reused lengths of crimson damask salvaged from his contemporary refurbishment of Eaton. In the Saloon he covered the walls in velvet, again of crimson. Only in the Dining Room did he use inexpensive wallpaper, this time of scarlet, apparently because this dark room to the north-east was hardly ever used in daylight. The overwhelming redness of the colour scheme was made even redder by the carpets and curtains, likewise of crimson and scarlet; and to judge from Leslie’s portrait, a similar scheme (although perhaps more pink than red) was carried through into the picture galleries. As the portrait also indicates, however, the broad expanses of red on the walls were broken up by the paintings and their gilded frames, or, in the words of the French-American tourist, Louis Simond, “all that is not picture is red cloth.”

Otherwise, the only relief or contrast was provided by the plaster decoration on the ceiling, which was white or cream, again enriched with lavish gilding. The general effect, as has been observed, must have closely resembled that of the interiors at the Prince Regent’s Carlton House, and later at Buckingham Palace; and it provided a striking contrast with that of one of the other great aristocratic picture galleries of the period, the Stafford Gallery at Cleveland House, in which the walls colours were cooler and more subdued, and the use of gilding more restrained. In fact, comparing this with the newly inaugurated Grosvenor Gallery in June 1808, the Morning Chronicle remarked that although the Earls’ collection of pictures was not as good as that of the Marquess of Stafford, “the general style of decoration is much more superb.” Lady Sarah Spencer similarly reported that the interior of Grosvenor House was “a mass of damask, velvet, gilding, statues and pictures and magnificence of all sorts, beyond all powers of description or imagination.” This magnificence did not, however, meet with everyone’s approval, and two weeks rather the diarist Joseph Farington reported that Lord Lonsdale had found the house to be “most expensively furnished, but in bad taste.”


Fig. 5 / William Deeble after a drawing by Thomas Shepherd, South Façade of Grosvenor House, Government Art Collection.

Fig. 6 / J. S. Badfod and Company, Interior of the Picture Gallery at Grosvenor House, looking Towards the Rubens Area, ca. 1890, black and white photograph, dimensions unspecified, Science & Society Picture Library, Historic England Archive.
The collection formed at Grosvenor House by Robert, 2nd Earl Grosvenor

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The collection formed at Grosvenor House by Robert, 2nd Earl Grosvenor

Over the following decades visitors continued to draw comparisons between the Grosvenor Gallery and the Stafford Gallery (or the latter’s successor, the Bridgewater Gallery) — from the point of view not only of decor, but of the size and quality of the collection. In 1823 William Hazlitt thought that “the pictures in Lord Grosvenor’s collection... are distinguished most by elegance, brilliancy, and high preservation, while those belonging to the Marquess of Stafford, look more like old pictures, and have a corresponding tone of richness and magnificence.” In 1844, Anna Jameson expanded on the comparison, observing: “If the Bridgewater exalted in its Raphael, the Grosvenor triumphed in its Claudes. There we were enchanted by Titian, here spell bound by Rembrandt. There ruled the sober dignity of the Carracci, here the gorgeous fancy of Rubens.”

Indeed, while numerically the Grosvenor collection was only about half the size of its rival (and its supposed Titians and Raphaelss were decidedly inferior — Simeon noted “several bad, quite bad Raphaelss”), it was stronger in its holdings of certain other of the most admired continental Old Masters. Furthermore, some of its eighteenth-century English paintings — notably Reynolds’ Sarah Siddons as the Tragic Muse (fig. 7) and Gainsborough’s Blue Boy (fig. 8) — had no rivals in the English collection formed by Stafford.

It is clear that from the time of his succession to his title and fortune in 1802, the 2nd Earl aspired to put together a collection of paintings that would be on a par with any in the kingdom — in terms less perhaps of quantity, than of a quality that conformed with prevailing canons of taste. In this enterprise he did not start with a tabula rasa, but with a sizeable collection that had been put together by the 1st Earl over several decades since his own succession to a baronetcy in 1755. As recorded by Young and the various subsequent catalogues of the collection, the 2nd Earl retained some forty of his father’s paintings for the Grosvenor Gallery — in other words, about one third of the total kept there — in addition to others, such as family portraits and sporting pictures, which were more appropriately housed at Eaton. But many others he disposed of; beginning with a sale at Christie’s of sixty-eight works within a couple of months of his father’s death, and continuing with further sales in June 1807, July 1808, and July 1812.

In the absence of any published catalogue of the 1st Earl’s collection, these posthumous sale catalogues — together with the records of his own purchases at auction — provide the fullest source of information on his collection. But as recorded by Young, it is also known that he laid the foundations of his collection by engaging Richard Dalton, librarian to the future King George III, to buy paintings for him on a trip to Italy undertaken in 1758-1759. Furthermore, the 1st Earl was active not just in acquiring works by ancient and modern continental masters, but also in commissioning works from his English contemporaries. By 1776 he owned a total of 130 paintings, and a memorandum drawn up in his own handwriting shortly before his death in 1802 lists a total of 148. Since it is known that he had little interest in Eaton except as a stud for the breeding of racehorses, and that he allowed the house to fall into a state of serious disrepair, presumably this extensive collection was kept at his London home on Millbank.

Fig. 7 / Joshua Reynolds, Mrs Sarah Siddons as the Tragic Muse, 1784, oil on canvas, 239 x 148 cm, San Marino, CA, Huntington Art Collection.

Fig. 8 / Thomas Gainsborough, Master Jonathan Buttall (“The Blue Boy”), 1770, oil on canvas, 179 x 124 cm, San Marino, CA, Huntington Art Collection.
In part, no doubt, because Dalton did not go to Venice, his purchases did not include anything by the sixteenth-century Venetians, except perhaps for a “Couchant Venus” attributed in the 1802 sale to Titian, but more probably one of the many copies of the celebrated *Venus of Urbino* in the grand-ducal collection in Florence. The Grosvenor Collection was always to remain, in fact, rather limited in good examples of Venetian painting. Further, it may be admitted that few even of the Roman and Bolognese pictures purchased by Dalton and later retained for the Grosvenor Gallery appear to have been of particularly high quality.

In fact, Grosvenor fared rather better with his acquisitions on the London art market. While Dalton was in Italy in 1758, he bought eighteen paintings from the sale of the Swiss-born diplomatist Sir Luke Schaub.22 The majority of these were Italian and in a similar taste (Borgognone and Fetti, as well as Remi), but they also included works by Rubens, Jordaens, and Teniers; in the following year, the future 1st Earl bought at least eight high-quality Flemish and Dutch pictures at the sales of John Blackwood and of the dealer Robert Bragge, variously by Snyders, Berchem, Coyp, Van der Heyden, Pynacker, Steenwijk, and Wijnants.23 In 1763 he bought at least two paintings from the Waldegrave sale, including the outstandingly beautiful *Hagar and the Angel* by Pietro da Cortona (fig. 9).24 Thereafter there are relatively few records of purchases by continental Old Masters at London auctions, although there remain a number of works from the “Original” collection that have no date of acquisition, and which were presumably acquired through dealers. This is true, for example, of the first of the many Claudes to enter the family collection, a small octagon on copper (Westminster Collection);25 or Jan van Goyen’s *View of Nijmegen* (Cleveland Museum of Art); or a pair of portraits by Rembrandt (Westminster Collection), then thought to represent the painter Berchem and his wife.26 Likewise presumably acquired through dealers is a small but interesting number of contemporary French pictures, by the likes of Lagrenée and Marguerite Gérard. Perhaps acquired instead directly from a fellow-nobleman was the large group of no less than seventeen portraits of lords and ladies by Lely included in the 1802 sale.27
Grosvenor’s activity as a patron of living English painters is a topic that deserves a separate, comprehensive study, and only the outlines can be sketched here. It seems to have begun in 1758, at exactly the same moment when he began collecting Old Masters, with the debacle of Hogarth’s Sigismunda (Tate Britain). When commissioning the painter to represent a subject of his own choosing and to name his own price, Grosvenor was almost certainly expecting something entertaining or erotic, rather than a picture with a literary theme that was decidedly macabre; and as is well known, despite Hogarth’s self-conscious attempt to vie with the Old Masters (and in particular with a supposed Correggio sold for a large sum in the Schauf sale), his patron refused to take delivery of the completed work.28 Evidently more acceptable to Grosvenor as a history painting was another essay in the style of an earlier master, commissioned at about the same time: Francesco Zuccarelli’s Macbeth and the Witches (Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington),29 in which the painter sets aside his usual pastoralism to emulate Dughet in his stormy mode and Salvator Rosa. Similarly acceptable was another work dating from 1758-1760, the Rer Zuccarelli’s friend Richard Wilson, a painting that evoked the landscape around the Grosvenor county seat while bathed it in a golden, Claudian light.

The decade between 1762 and 1773 was the period in which Grosvenor became the most important and consistent patron of George Stubbs.30 In this case, however, his choice of painter was clearly motivated not by any desire for modern counterparts to his growing collection of Old Masters, but for subjects associated with country sports at Eaton and portraits of his favourite racehorses. Stubbs painted at least ten of such works for his patron, two of which – the Grosvenor Hunt of 1762 (fig. 11), and the Mass and Feud at Eaton Hall of 1764 (also Westminster Collection) – were considered to be of sufficient aesthetic distinction by the 2nd Earl to be displayed in the Grosvenor Gallery. Certainly of somewhat lesser autonomous merit were a number of pictures commissioned by his father from other animal painters, such as Sawrey Gilpin and John Crouch, which were sold off in 1807 and 1812.

Painters who provided portraits of Grosvenor and members of his immediate family included Reynolds, Gainsborough, West, and Hogarth (but not Ramsay or Romney). In 1781 he also commissioned from Gainsborough a Coastal Scene (Westminster Collection), in which figures and the sailing boats are buffeted by wind and spray; and it is usually thought that he also commissioned a similarly composed painting by De Loutherbourg in 1784 as a pendant (Westminster Collection).31 In both cases, the intention was perhaps to emulate Dutch marine paintings of the previous century – although in fact there is no evidence that Grosvenor possessed any examples of such works in his collection. By contrast, it is likely, to judge from a number of striking similarities with Titian’s Venus in Red (Lydia) of 1576 was indeed painted as a modern counterpart to the patron’s “Couchant Venus”, supposedly by Titian himself.32 The choice of Benjamin West to paint full-length portraits of himself and his brother Thomas for the Assembly of the City of Chester in 1771 came near the beginning of a decade of strong support for the artist as a narrative painter, and between 1770 and 1782 Grosvenor bought from him or commissioned no less than five large canvases, each some seven feet wide, representing scenes from British history: the Death of General Wolfe (fig. 12); the Battle of La Hogue (Montclair Art Museum, New Jersey); and General Monk Receiving Charles II at Dover (Milwaukee Art Museum).33 Although a number of the 1st Earl’s Italian Baroque paintings showed biblical or narrative subjects, none were of this ambitious scale; and as well as reflecting considerable patriotic pride, their commission represents a remarkable vote of confidence by an aristocratic patron in the future of history painting in England. Then, towards the end of his career as a collector, he made a sort of amendments to the long-since dead Hogarth by buying his Distressed Poet (Birmingham City Art Gallery) at the Ward sale in 1792.34

Although in many respects the large quantity of the 1st Earl’s acquisitions and the high quality of many of them represent an impressive achievement, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that together they constituted more of an accumulation than a coherent collection. There is no discernible pattern underlying his acquisition of Old Masters, beyond that of following fashion; and despite his support of West, his other commissions from contemporaries seem to have been guided more by convenience than any particular aesthetic taste or ideological principle.
Rather different was the case of his son. As far as is known, the future 2nd Earl bought no paintings in his father’s lifetime, with the exception of the <i>Saint Bruno</i>, then attributed to Andrea Sacchi, at the Bessborough sale in 1801 (now Ringling Museum, Sarasota).35 Although unfortunately for him, he did not come into his fortune in time to take advantage of the sale of the celebrated Orléans collection and other French aristocratic collections in London in the 1790s, it was perhaps the sight of those that inspired him to begin seriously collecting in his own right. In any case, as has been seen, immediately upon his father’s death he sold sixty-eight works that he obviously regarded as dross — including Peters’ <i>Blisse in Red</i> and its probable prototype attributed to Titian, as well as the pictures by contemporary French artists. The next step — after he had acquired a new residence in Grosvenor House, but at a point when its refurbishment by Polden had only just begun — he acquired seven works from the Marquess of Lansdowne sale, including a <i>Rest on the Flight by Poussin</i> (Oskar Reinhart Collection, Winterthur) and Rubens’s exceptionally magnificent <i>Adoration of the Magi</i> (fig. 13).36 Just six weeks later, and still long before the new house was ready to accommodate it, the new earl bought an entire, ready-made collection, which he clearly regarded as providing a more satisfactory basis for his own than that of his father: the collection of the recently deceased Welbore Ellis Agar (1735-1805).

Agar was a wealthy member of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy, who latterly held the post of Commissioner of His Majesty’s Customs in London. His activity as a collector has not been properly studied, but although he was a close contemporary of the 1st Earl Grosvenor, he does not seem to have begun collecting before the early 1770s; and this slightly later date may in part be reflected in the greater catholicity of taste represented by his collection. Agar’s collection was meant to be auctioned at Christie’s, and a catalogue (in French) of 130 lots (some including more than one work) was drawn up.37 Immediately before the sale, however, the 2nd Earl, represented by the dealers William Seguier, negotiated the purchase of the whole collection for £30,000. Although the Agar collection continued, like that of the 1st Earl, to be strong in Roman and Bolognese paintings of the earlier seventeenth century, it had a higher proportion of works at least attributed to the canonical names of Raphael, Andrea del Sarto, Correggio, and Parmigianino (even if most of these were workshop variants); and it also included a greater number by (or supposedly by) the Venetians Titian, Veronese, and even Giovanni Bellini. Dutch landscape painting also continued to be well represented, for example by Hobbema’s <i>View on a High Road</i> (fig. 14), and similarly typical works by Berchem and Wouwerman. But more importantly, the Agar collection held strengths in new areas, including some that had come to the fore, or had become newly available, with the upheavals of the French Revolution; and as part of his block purchase Grosvenor acquired major works not only by already familiar names such as Rubens (<i>The Ixion</i>, now in the Louvre) and Van Dyck (fig. 15), but also by the Spanish painters, Murillo and the hitherto barely known Velázquez (see fig. 3). Perhaps most impressive...
The collection formed at Grosvenor House by Robert, 2nd Earl Grosvenor

The collection formed at Grosvenor House by Robert, 2nd Earl Grosvenor

of all — as implied later by Anna Jameson’s words of praise for the Grosvenor collection — was the selection of no less than eleven landscapes by Claude (figs. 16, 17),38 several of which were of outstanding quality, and, as a group, was rivaled only by that belonging to the Earl of Leicester at Holkham. By contrast, although the Agar collection contained some portraits attributed to Holbein and Cornelius Johnson, it had no English paintings of the eighteenth century to rival those Grosvenor had inherited from his father.

The sales of large numbers of the 2nd Earl’s pictures took place in 1807, 1808, and 1812,39 immediately before and immediately after the completion of the new house in 1808, and following the hanging of its state rooms with selected paintings from the 1st Earl’s, the Lansdowne, and especially the Agar collections. The clear purpose of the sales was to dispose of the works that were now superfluous to requirements; yet as the introduction to the catalogue of the 1812 sale pointed out: “The pictures now offered for sale are not the weeding out of inferior performances but the separating of over-abundant specimens of the same master’s works.” This was indeed demonstrably true in 1807, when the de-accessions included two of the Claudes, a Poussin (Achilles among the Daughters of Lycomedes; now Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond), and one of two landscapes by Wouwerman, all from the Agar collection, as well as five paintings by Stubbs of the 1st Earl’s horses. But the same sales, as already in 1802, certainly did also include a large number works that the 2nd Earl considered to be of lesser quality, or were simply — like, perhaps, the seventeen portraits by Lely sold in 1807 — not to his taste. Probably falling into both categories were a number of relatively minor modern English paintings: not just sporting pictures by the likes of Gilpin and Curchin, but landscapes by William Marlow, George Barret, J. C. Ibbotson and William Hodges, and at least one fancy picture by Hoppner.

Fig. 16 / Claude Lorrain, Pastoral Landscape: Morning, 1651, oil on canvas, 99 x 145 cm, Private Collection.

Fig. 17 / Claude Lorrain, Pastoral Landscape with the Arch of Constantine: Evening, 1651, oil on canvas, 91 x 145 cm, Private Collection.
Certainly assisting the 2nd Earl in vetting and reshaping his collection was William Seguier. In 1806, as well as securing the purchase of the Agar collection, Seguier became the earl’s curator, and was responsible for hanging the collection in Grosvenor House; and presumably also, therefore, at least initially, Seguier played a leading role in advising on the acquisition of individual masterpieces as they appeared on the London art market. In the two decades following the original completion of the Grosvenor Gallery, the earl added icing to the cake by buying a succession of gems or trophies; sometimes at auction, but more often through dealers.

Among those acquired immediately after the opening of the Gallery were Mengs’s *Joseph’s Dream* (Ringling Museum, Sarasota; acquired for Grosvenor by Seguier from the Whitworth sale in June 1808); a pair of portraits by Rembrandt (still in the Westminster Collection; bought from the collection of Pierre Grand-Pré, and brought from Paris to London in 1809 by the dealer Alexis Delahante); Gainsborough’s already famous *Blue Boy* (fig. 8; acquired around the same time from the painter Hoppner); Murillo’s *Landscape with Laban and Rachel* (fig. 18; acquired in 1810 from the dealer William Buchanan, who had recently imported it from Spain); Rembrandt’s *Visitation* (fig. 19; bought in 1812, through the distinguished maker of musical instruments, Sébastien Erard); and Dou’s *Young Mother* (fig. 20; purchased in 1814, again from Delahante). The purchase by Grosvenor in 1818 of the four enormous *Triumph of the Eucharist* cartoons by ...
The collection formed at Grosvenor House by Robert, 2nd Earl Grosvenor

The Young Cottage Door composition, with some of the paintings in his collection occupies a prominent position at the right of the collectors. Hardly surprisingly, Grosvenor (fig. 22) was busy working on his 2nd Earl Grosvenor

At this date the Dutch painter Pieter Christoffel Wonder was busy working on his Patrons and Connoisseurs of Art (private collection), a large group portrait celebrating the achievements of leading contemporary British collectors. Hardly surprisingly, Grosvenor (fig. 22) occupies a prominent position at the right of the composition, with some of the paintings in his collection by Rembrandt (see fig. 19), Dou (see fig. 20), Paulus Potter (Westminster Collection) and Adrian van der Weff (National Gallery, London) – clearly represented on the walls of the ideal picture gallery behind him. Yet by 1827 both of the new picture galleries, as well as the rest of the main floor of Grosvenor House, must already have been full; and by the time he commissioned the family group portrait from Leslie, the future marquess was apparently largely content to rest on his laurels as a collector. Very few new purchases are recorded between 1831 and 1845, although an important exception may be Van Dyck’s well-known Self Portrait with a Sunflower (Westminster Collection). It may be noted that while Grosvenor’s prize purchases included high-profile masterpieces by Reynolds and Gainsborough – and he already owned other distinguished examples of British painting inherited from his father, including by Hogarth, Wilson, and Stubbs – all these artists were of the previous century and had in a sense achieved the status of Old Masters. By contrast, the 2nd Earl cannot be regarded as an enthusiastic supporter of living artists. It is true that he bought a fine landscape by Bonington, the Coast of Picardy (Westminster Collection), from the painter two years before his death in 1828, but he had previously also bought works by James Northcote, John James Chalon, and Frederick Yratae Hurstome (the latter two at the British Institution). But he bought nothing by Turner or by most of the other leading painters of the day, in striking contrast, not only with very active patrons of British art, such as the 3rd Earl of Egremont and Sir John Fleming Leicester (Lord de Tabley), but also with other collectors with whom he was closely acquainted, such as the Marquess of Stafford. Indeed, in July 1807 the diarist Farlington reported a dinner conversation during which the earl’s architect expressed regret that his employer had been deflected from an earlier plan to collect contemporary English painting. “Porden said a Picture Cleaning tribe and such a thing has been momentous the Watson Taylor sale in 1823, and Gainsborough’s Cottage Door (fig. 21) at the De Tabley sale in 1827.”

The collection formed at Grosvenor House by Robert, 2nd Earl Grosvenor

Grosvenor’s mind so far against the merit of modern art as to interrupt his design of making a Collection of Modern pictures.” Further possible evidence of a change in plan is perhaps provided by a report by Farlington of a year earlier, that when embarking on the refurbishment of the newly acquired Grosvenor House, the earl told Benjamin West that “he means to have a room furnished with English pictures only.” This would have been gratifying for the President of the Royal Academy, especially since three of his own large battle scenes, including the Death of Hippol (see fig. 12), would be displayed there. Young’s catalogue shows that in 1821 the room in question – the Ante-Room to the Drawing Room (to the right of the Entrance Hall; see fig. 4) – was indeed hung with seventeen English paintings, many of them of high quality (together with a view of the Grand Canal by Canaletto, which was perhaps regarded in part an honorary Englishman). Yet the fact that English painting was all concentrated into a single room, and that no examples were hung in any of the other state rooms, implies that the school was being as much ghettoized as privileged. Such an arrangement would have run contrary to the views of propagandists for modern British art such as Prince Hoare, who argued passionately that it should be viewed alongside the work of the continental Old Masters, and that it had nothing to fear from the comparison. Young’s catalogue was published two years before the acquisition of Reynolds’ Mrs Siddons (see fig. 7), a particularly ambitious attempt to align English painting with the great European tradition; and it is unfortunate that there is no indication whether, on its arrival, space was found for it in the Ante-Room, or whether it was hung, as its author would certainly have wanted, alongside the Rubenses in the Picture Gallery.

Of the 145 paintings listed and illustrated by Young in 1821, some fifty-two were Italian, twenty-five Dutch, twenty-one French, six Flemish, and seven Spanish, in addition to the seventeen British. Predictably for the period, the very few works deemed to date from the fifteenth century bore not entirely convincing attributions to the best-known of the Primatives, Perugino and Giovanni Bellini, and apart from the British, there were very few examples of eighteenth-century or modern painting from any school. As indicated by Anna Jameson in 1834 (see above), the strengths of the collection, in quantity and quality, lay above all in Rubens, Rembrandt, and Claude.
Apart, again, from the British, it is not easy to infer from Young's catalogue any particular systematic underlying the distribution of the paintings around the various rooms that comprised the Grosvenor Gallery. As has been seen, the sheer size of the Rubenses necessitated the construction of a new space to accommodate them; and, unsurprisingly, by 1827, several of the other larger paintings in the collection, including a huge full-length by Sir David Wilkie that comprised the Grosvenor Gallery. As has been seen, the sheer size of the Rubenses necessitated the construction of a new space to accommodate them; and, unsurprisingly, by 1827, several of the other larger paintings in the collection, including a huge full-length by Sir David Wilkie that comprised the Grosvenor Gallery.

Passavant’s visit a plan was being mooted to create a separate entrance for gallery visitors from Park Lane. Yet the idea became redundant as, contrary to the hope expressed by Pasmore, but in common with other aristocratic picture galleries such as the Sutherland Gallery at Stafford (now Lancaster) House, access to the public became increasingly restricted. A decade later Anna Jameson, while remembering with nostalgia the time when the Grosvenor Gallery was “one of the great sights on London”, noted with regret that: “Formerly during the London season, one day a week, Friday, was set apart for visitors, who were admitted by tickets in the same manner, as with the same restrictions as to the Bridgewater Gallery; but within the last ten years, from various causes and impediments of which it was imperative to speak, these arrangements have been altered. There is no stated day of admission, nor any stated mode of application, though visitors known to Lord Westminster and his friends are occasionally admitted.” Presumably these “various causes and impediments” consisted above all of a growing impatience among aristocratic collectors with the invasion of their privacy, combined with a sense that true art-lovers (as opposed to the merely idle curious) were now provided with a National Gallery (founded in 1824). In subsequent decades, up to the present day, the collection was to become even more inaccessible; and there is some irony in the fact that it was the founder of the Grosvenor Gallery himself, the same eminent collector who had opened it to the public in 1808, who was responsible for putting the process into reverse.

It is not the purpose of the present article to pursue the story of the formation of the Grosvenor Collection beyond the lifetime of the 2nd Earl. It may be briefly mentioned, however, that his son, the future 2nd Marquess, started forming his own collection in the mid-1830s, focusing now on the increasingly fashionable Primitives. The new catalogue of the paintings at Grosvenor House published in 1849 records works by (or attributed to) such painters as Piero della Francesca, Ghiandaiaia, Verrocchio, Lorenzo di Credi, and Crivelli, most of them bought in Italy on tours of 1836 and 1841, as well as Holbein’s Sir Roure Zelo (National Gallery of Art, Washington); and even more remarkably, Regnier van der Weyden’s Rejection Triptych (Louvre), then attributed to Memling. The 1849 catalogue lists 183 paintings as opposed to the 143 listed by Young; and these represented considerably more than forty new acquisitions, since by this date many of the works recorded by Young in London had been transferred to Eaton – including some as prestigious as Rubens’ Adoration of the Magi. These additions and removals naturally involved a radical rearrangement of the collection, so that it no longer corresponded at all closely to the arrangement of 1820. As recorded in the set of photographs taken by Bedford Lemere (see fig. 6), further changes to the hang were made after the refurbishment of the Grosvenor House by Henry Clutton in the early 1870s. Different again was the arrangement recorded in the catalogue of 1913, by which time the number of paintings kept in London was back down to 134, and all semblance of a room devoted to English painting had disappeared.

At about the same time Hobbema’s View as a High Road (see fig. 14) and Rembrandt’s The Staircase (see fig. 19) were sold to Alfred de Rothschild, thereby foreshadowing the more extensive sales of the 1890s. During the First World War Grosvenor House was requisitioned for government use, and the 2nd Duke moored in a smaller but much more convenient property at Bourdon House, Davies Street, Mayfair. He was never to reoccupy the former family home and, soon after he sold the lease in 1924, it was demolished, and the site was redeveloped. Although it was possible to redistribute most of the collection among a number of houses in London and Cheshire, it was too large to be retained in its entirety. The sales of some of the trophies – notably by Reynolds and Gainsborough (see figs. 7, 8, 21) – were entrusted to dealers such as Duveen who had good contacts with wealthy American collectors. Thirty-three lots were auctioned at Christie’s in 1924, followed by another eight the following year. Enthusiastic bidders, attracted as much by the Westminster provenance as by the high quality of the works of art, included the railway magnate Henry E. Huntington and the circus entrepreneur John Ringling. The sale at Sotheby’s in 1959 of a further eighteen paintings, including works of the stature of Rubens’ Adoration of the Magi and Claude’s Landscape of the Golden Calf (Staatliche Kunsthalle, Karlsruhe; acquired with the Agar collection), followed the death of the 2nd Duke in 1953. Despite these losses, however, the larger part of the magnificent collection formed, shaped and publicly displayed by the 2nd Earl as “one of the great sights on London” in the early part of the nineteenth century remains in the possession of his descendants to this day.
5. In addition to these and other secondary sources, there
8. The view illustrated in fig. 6 corresponds approximately
7. An engraving in the
4. John Young,
3. Anna Jameson,
25. Marcel Röthlisberger,
23. In both cases the name of the auction house and the
21. Letters from Dalton to Grosvenor at Eaton Hall.
19. Christie's, 13 October 1802; Peter Coxe, 27 June 1807;
18. The view illustrated in fig. 4 corresponds approximately to
17. Simond,
15. William Hazlitt, “Lord Grosvenor’s collection of
14. John Young,
13. William L. Pressly,
12. Louis Simond,
11. For the Agar Claudes, see Röthlisberger,
10. Louis Simond,
9. William Hazlitt,
8. The view illustrated in fig. 2 corresponds approximately to
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I. INTRODUCTION

When Titian set out for Augsburg at the beginning of 1548, his baggage contained a *Man of Sorrows* to present to the Emperor Charles V. Titian must have been satisfied with his painting and with its reception, for it accompanied the emperor when he left Augsburg on 13 August and, after his abdication, to his retirement at Juste. Now in the Prado, it shows Christ isolated, removed from contingency and without emblematic adjuncts, but crowned with the thorns that have drawn the blood that falls on His neck and chest and with the bruises of flails on His right upper arm (fig. 1). The painting merges two classes of representation: one the historical drama of Christ’s rejection; the other the visionary *imago pietatis* of the half-length Christ, upright in the tomb, accompanied by instruments of the Passion and/or angels, treatments of which were common in the Quattrocento but had become rarer by the mid-Cinquecento. It is worth underlining that although his *Man of Sorrows* was soon paired by Charles with a *Mater Dolorosa*, Titian created it as a self-standing image.

Titian’s *Man of Sorrows* develops a script written in Milan during the first two decades of the Cinquecento, although it had been outlined earlier; in Mantua, by Andrea Mantegna, whose Christ as an isolated Redemer dates from 1493 (fig. 2).7 Mantegna’s painting is arid and severe; in contrast, the versions of the subject produced in Milan in the circles around Leonardo were rich and luminous in surface, refined in finish, and likely to have been more congenial to Titian. Whether Leonardo made drawings for any of the painters who executed bust-length treatments of the *Man of Sorrows* and *Mocking of Christ* is unknown, but it seems probable for many of their pictures reflect his psychological subtlety. Among his followers, one stands out as the most inventive and profound interpreter of these themes: Andrea Solario (figs. 3 & 4).8 Titian’s dependence on Solario in his treatments of the single-figure *Man of Sorrows* and related versions of the *Ecce Homo* parallels his dependence in his various arrangements of the *Penitent Magdalene* from formulae developed by Giampietrino. Such Milanese prototypes were probably believed by Titian, in broad terms, to be evanishments from the mind of Leonardo, to which he would have been attuned from youth by association with Giorgione.

The painting presented to Charles V is by common consent the most moving and solemn of Titian’s treatments of the *Man of Sorrows*, but it was neither his first nor his last. His paintings of the subject, which span some thirty years, fall into chronological clusters, but precedence both within and without these clusters is often difficult to determine, and documentary evidence indicates that some paintings were executed more or less simultaneously.

**Paul Joannides**

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*Fig. 1*. Titian, *The Man of Sorrows*, 1547, oil on slate, 69 x 56 cm, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado.

*Fig. 2*. Titian, *The Man of Sorrows*, c. 1493, oil on canvas, 100 x 79 cm, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art.
II. THE MAN OF SORROWS FOR ELEONORA GONZAGA AND ANOTHER FOR GUIDOBALDO II DELLA ROVERE

Probably Titian’s earliest Man of Sorrows – or the earliest of which we have any record – was painted for Eleonora Gonzaga. On 5 January 1539, half a decade after the bust of Christ in Profile now in the Galleria Palatina arrived in Urbino and less than three months after the death of Francesco Maria della Rovere, his widow wrote to the agent of the Duchy of Urbino in Venice, Gian Giacomo Leonardi: “I certainly hope that you will also send to me … my [picture of] Christ, which Titian made.” Although it has been doubted, it seems likely that “il mio cristo” was a new painting, and one, as we gather from her letter of 8 November 1546 to be discussed below, commissioned on her behalf by her son, Guidobaldo. Considering that Eleonora would have been in deep mourning, a Man of Sorrows would obviously have been appropriate, although other visions of Christ, a reassuring Salvator Mundi for example, cannot be ruled out. But if the 1539 painting was a Man of Sorrows, it would help clarify the contents of three later letters, all to Leonardi.

Two of these letters, one by Eleonora herself, the other by her daughter-in-law Giulia da Varano, were penned on the same day, 8 November 1546. Both refer to a request made by Titian via Leonardi to borrow a “Cristo” that he had previously painted for Eleonora in order to make a copy for Pope Paul III. Eleonora writes to Leonardi:

...The Duchess [Giulia da Varano] told me yesterday that you had written to her that Titian would like to have my Christ in order to make another one for the Pope and since I understand that he will pass through here on his way to Rome, I thought that [his request] could be satisfied here; since, to tell the truth, I doubt that I will ever get it back again [if I lend it to him]; and because it [this painting] is very dear to me, I do not think I will send it anywhere unless I am given the utmost assurance of getting the same one back, and that it will not be switched for another one, done by another hand, copied from this, because of these [copies] I already have two or three; and [but] perhaps because Titian was not paid, I would not fail to treat him with courtesy, even though the Duke [Guidobaldo II] gave it [this picture] to me. You will have understood my feelings in this matter and will ensure that they are fulfilled in such a way that I am satisfied.”
In addition to the issue that primarily concerns us, this letter is informative on several counts: biographically, it makes it clear that late in 1546 Titian, back in Venice, but planning an imminent return to Rome, wished to take with him a copy of Eleonora’s Cristo to present to Pope Paul III. Emotionally and spiritually, it reveals Eleonora’s deep attachment to Titian’s painting, both because she found it especially affecting, even though she owned two or three other similar pictures (by whom is not stated) and because it had been given to her by her son (il duca). Morally, it reveals that while Eleonora wished to accommodate Titian and did not categorically rule out sending her painting to Venice, she feared that if she did so, he might give it to the pope – from whom she could never hope to recover it – and return to her an inferior substitute. Eleonora evidently considered Titian to be capable of sharp practice, even if she acknowledged that he might not have been paid – or paid adequately (which implies that she was not privy to the precise details of Guidobaldo’s transaction with the painter). Her concern was echoed in Giulia’s letter:

About the pictures of the holy faces, her Excellency, worrying that either the picture which he [Titian] was to have to copy might be damaged or even that it might be substituted [as could happen], being a precious thing, we considered [it preferable] to wait for the time when Titian goes to Rome, as he has promised, and coming this way, we could intercept him; but we will need you to keep us informed [as to] when he wishes to leave [Venice].

A month later, on 7 December 1546, in response, it appears, to a renewed request by Titian, Giulia reiterated Eleonora’s concern in a letter that has occasioned me (and not only me) considerable difficulties, but of which Dr Carlo Corsato has generously provided what seems to me an elegant and satisfactory interpretation: “The Christ that he [Titian] is asking for, is that same one that he requested some time ago, at the urging of the Pope and her Excellency does not feel secure about leaving it in his [Titian’s] hands, for fear that it may be swapped [for a copy]; when she feels free from this worry, she would willingly send it [to Venice], but please let us know what you think.” We do not know whether Titian pursued the matter. Giulia da Varano died suddenly in February 1547, Eleonora followed her to the grave three years later, and we have no further correspondence.

Is there any possibility of identifying Eleonora’s Man of Sorrows? Perhaps there is. In the Galleria Palatina is a very worn canvas of the subject (fig. 5) with a Della Rovere provenance; it appeared in an inventory of the Dukes of Urbino of 1623-1624 and arrived in Florence with Vittoria della Rovere in 1631. When it was mentioned in a Florentine inventory of 1652, its support was given as wood, but all later references to what seems to be the same picture describe it as on canvas, and this was presumably an error – unless the canvas was then mounted on a panel. In the early nineteenth century, the Palatina Man of Sorrows was demoted to Scuola veneziana and has been little discussed since – it is ignored in all modern monographs. But Georg Gronau believed it to be autograph, and more recently two scholars have followed him in favouring Titian – or at least his studio – as its author; in my view too it is a much-damaged autograph picture. The dimensions of this canvas are close to those of the emperor’s slate version, and the pose of Christ differs minimally. But the emotional effect is strikingly different: Christ’s torso is leaned slightly more towards the viewer, and His proper right arm extends at a fractionally wider angle. He is placed a little higher in the picture surface so that more of his left hand is visible. Since His torso and arms are marginally narrower, He seems less robust. Such differences create an image that is relatively mobile and open, revealing Christ’s physical delicacy and vulnerability: in this the Palatina canvas retains elements of Milanese taste.
The tonal and colouristic range is pale, without the rich chiaroscuro of the emperor’s version, and the pallor of Christ’s face and torso is very apparent. His draperies are light red, rather than the somber burgundy of the Prado slate, and are arranged in a more insistent spiral which continues below His right elbow to reveal a pronounced triangle of flesh on His right hip. A ball of material, virtually invisible in Charles V’s picture, is here given some prominence against His right flank. A sceptre-cane is included, presumably as a final thought, for it is painted over Christ’s flesh and draperies. The bruises of flagellation on His right upper arm are not present here, and the bloodstains on His body differ from those of the Prado painting: although they are in general less pronounced, some details are deeply affecting, such as the drop that falls on His right upper eyelid.

The Palatina Man of Sorrows is less intense in its evocation of the Saviour’s sufferings than the emperor’s picture but no less profound: it projects a calmer, less physically tragic vision of Christ; on the grounds of style and emotion, it seems more likely to be a first version than a revision of the Prado picture and this hypothesis is supported by the x-ray of Christ’s head which reveals that it was originally tilted further downwards before being finalized in its present position, a position retained in all other versions of this type.15 In short, in its forms, colour, and restrained but subtle handling, the Palatina canvas is consonant with Titian’s work of ca. 1540, and the postponements suggests that it predates the other paintings discussed here.16 This version of the Man of Sorrows also seems to have been the model for Christ in the Louvre’s roundel of the Mocking of Christ (fig. 6), a studio painting likely to be identical with that recorded in the posthumous inventory of Gabriele Vendramin whose death in 1552 establishes for it a terminus ante quem. The Louvre’s painting was probably executed in the early-to-mid 1540s, supporting the date proposed here for the Palatina Man of Sorrows.

Another derivative of the “Eleonora type” is a little-known canvas in the Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle (fig. 7). With a provenance from Spain it is currently catalogued as Spanish, probably of the seventeenth century – and as a copy of the painting sent to Charles V.

It may well be Spanish, but it was not made after the emperor’s painting: it is much closer to the Palatina canvas in form, colour, and the details of drapery; although the crown of thorns is more prominent, and Christ’s head is framed by a glowing halo not found there. Such variations may have been introduced by the copyist, but the quality of execution is not such as to suggest that s/he had significant powers of invention, and I suspect that the Bowes painting records another lost or unidentified version of the subject by Titian and/or his studio following the Palatina picture, from which it differs most obviously in the absence of the cane.17 It might seem tempting to connect the Palatina canvas with a different Della Rovere commission. In an undated memo to Gian Giacomo Leonard, Eleonora’s son Guidobaldo II writes: “We very much want to have [here] by the time of our departure the Christ that Titian has promised to make for us, to take with us, to that end you will pressure him in order that we may have it at that time.”18 Gronau, in publishing this memo, conjecturally attached it to a letter of 10 May 1552; it was later suggested that the memo had been misfiled and that it should, in reality, be dated 1564-1566, when Guidobaldo II commissioned “two devotional paintings... of Christ and the Madonna” from Titian (whose identities will be discussed in part 2 of this article).19 But the memo mentions only one painting, a Christ, and if only on these grounds it seems unlikely that it refers to the later commission. Alternatively, could Guidobaldo’s memo legitimately be detached from 1552, it might rather be connected with the commission of the single figure of Christ of 1559. Either option would obviate a need to find a Man of Sorrows painted by Titian for Guidobaldo in 1532. If, however, we accept Gronau’s dating of the memo, as most scholars have, two annoying possibilities offer themselves: the Christ in question might, in theory, be Eleonora’s painting, putatively borrowed back from her and tardily returned by Titian to her son; or even a recent replacement for that painting, if Titian had indeed succeeded in borrowing it and diverting it to Paul III.20 Neither option, however, is likely, and the tone of the memo suggests that this was a new and recent commission, which would indicate that another Man of Sorrows was painted by Titian in 1532; whether it included modifications is obviously an open question.
III. THE PAINTINGS FOR PAUL III AND CHARLES V

The first two letters from Eleonora Gonzaga and Giulia da Varano, quoted above, from November 1546, imply that a Man of Sorrows was then being planned for Pope Paul III. If so, this painting was not—as generally assumed and as Vasari’s account implies—executed by Titian in Rome in 1545-1546, but in Venice in 1547. We cannot be certain that Titian’s request was denied, but if, as seems very likely, Eleonora’s painting was not loaned to him, and if he did not revisit Urbino, the Man of Sorrows that Titian painted for Paul III would perforce have been a new version. Since Titian did not in the event revisit Rome, it would have been dispatched south at some point in 1547, probably in the second half of the year. In any case, it seems that the version that he sent to Rome was not wholly satisfactory for Vasari, who speaks rather adversely of it:

[Titian] ...made, to give to the Pope, a Christ from the waist up, in the form of an Ecce Homo, which work, whether the works of Michelangelo, of Raphael, of Baldiorno and others, made him lose [confidence], or some other reason, although it was a decent picture, did not seem to the painters [in Rome] to equal in excellence many other works by him, and especially the portraits.20

In this context, it is tempting to suggest that the painting that Titian took to Augsburg in December 1548 may not have been begun with Charles V in mind.

The Emperor’s Man of Sorrows is executed on slate, a support first employed by Sebastiano and one that would have had particular resonance in Rome in 1547, the year of his death.21 In choosing a support he is not known to have employed previously, Titian was entering a Roman arena, and this is also true of the painting’s style. Might Titian have begun work on it for the pope but, once invited to Augsburg by Charles V, switched the painting—which he must have realized was particularly successful—and his allegiance to the emperor, sending to Rome an inferior variant, perhaps by an assistant.22

It would not be the only time that Titian diverted a painting from one client to another, and from such slights—even the most eminent were not exempt. Titian’s choice of Augsburg over Rome and the empire over the papacy, as well as, perhaps, the perceived weakness of the pope’s Man of Sorrows, would have constituted slights that may explain the off-hand treatment Titian later received from the Farnese. Whatever the true course of events, in the painting presented to Charles V Titian stressed the Saviour’s compact, powerful torso and broad shoulders. He seems deliberately to have evoked the restrained solidity of fourth-century BC Greek sculpture, or imitations thereof, to convey Christ’s masculine strength. Although he avoided the Herculean, Titian nonetheless endowed his Christ with the torso of an athlete, able to bear the weight of the world’s sufferings. And for the frontality and directness of His pose, wrists crossed and tethered across His abdomen, Titian surely refined his vision of Christ from contemplation of the Dacian prisoners on the arch of Constantine (fig. 8), embodiments of stoic endurance.25 In Eleonora’s painting Titian had emphasized the Saviour’s delicacy and vulnerability; in the emperor’s version Titian stressed His compact, powerful torso and broad shoulders. It was probably the “Emperor type” which guided those versions of the subject that Titian painted over the next few years. Vasari’s reference apart, we know nothing of the appearance of Paul III’s painting and cannot establish a “Pauline type”—my guess is that it stood between the “Eleonora type” and the “Emperor type” and differed from them only in some details and its handling, not in its form. What became of it is unknown. It might in principle survive among versions of the subject by or attributed to Titian, or might be recorded in a copy; but no plausible candidate has yet been proposed. However, it is worth noting that the posthumous inventory of Cardinal Rocklío Pio da Carpi (1500-1564), drawn up in May-June 1564, thus well within Titian’s lifetime, included an Ecce Homo “in pietra” by Titian, which, although described as “molto bello”, sold well below estimate; might this have been the pope’s less than satisfactory painting, passed on to a loyal supporter? If so, then Paul’s III’s Man of Sorrows too was on slate, but presumably, whether originating in Rome in 1545/1546 or in Venice in 1547, painted with less care or less flair than the version delivered to Charles.26
Paintings of the Man of Sorrows by Titian and his studio

IV. PIETRO ARETINO’S MAN OF SORROWS

While Charles V’s Man of Sorrows was being prepared for transport to Augsburg, and with Paul III’s version either already in, or on its way to Rome, Titian painted another. In December 1547, just before his departure from Venice, he left a Man of Sorrows, more likely on canvas or wood than slate, as a surprise Christmas present for Pietro Aretino. Aretino wrote to thank Titian in late December or early January 1548 in unusually tender terms:

The copy of that Christ, alive and true, that you are bringing to the emperor, sent to me this Christmas morning, is the most precious gift that ever a king gave as a reward to whomever he held most in favour. Of veritable thorns is the crown that pierces him, and of real blood is the blood that their points have drawn from him, nor otherwise can the whip swell and bruise the flesh, than your divine brush has bruised and swollen the immortal members in this devout image. The pain which compresses Christ’s form in the picture moves to repentance whoever gazes with Christian eyes at those arms wounded by the cords that tie the hands; teaches humility to whomever contemplates the most pitiful gesture of the cane which he holds in his right hand, and encourages he who observes the reconciliatory grace that the image demonstrates, to bury within himself any trace of hatred and rancour.27

As a gift to his dearest and most supportive friend, whose Umanità di Cristo seems to have had a deep influence on him, Titian’s present is unlikely to have been a studio product: indeed, Pietro himself wrote of it “di mano del solo Tiziano.”28 So “copia” in this instance means “autograph replica”. How closely it followed the emperor’s painting, which, clearly, Aretino had seen and admired in Titian’s studio, is unknown, but it included a cane absent from that and there may have been other minor differences. Nor are its dimensions known: it might, for example, have been a reduction. Only one candidate has so far been put forward for Aretino’s picture: the Man of Sorrows now in the Musée Condé at Chantilly (Fig. 9), first recorded in 1817 in Brescia in the Averoldi Collection.29 That this painting might have passed from Aretino or his heirs to the Averoldi is, of course, possible. Titian had executed his famous polyptych for Bishop Alibello Averoldi between 1519 and 1522, and might have continued to work for his family in later years; if so the Chantilly canvas could have arrived in their collection by descent and have had nothing to do with Aretino. But neither alternative need be correct: a member of the dynasty, of whose collecting habits we are ignorant, might have acquired the painting in the sixteenth century or later from some other source.

Whether or not the Chantilly Man of Sorrows, whose style would favour a date in the later 1540s, is the painting given by Titian to his friend, it conforms to Pietro’s mention of the sceptre-cane held by Christ. Furthermore, the cane is distinct from those in later versions in that it is long and thin and rises from lower left to upper right, as in the Palatina picture. So whatever its precise status – the Chantilly canvas is generally thought to be a studio work but, so far as can be judged from a distance, of good quality – it is not unreasonable to think that it might be, or might reflect, the painting given by Titian to Pietro.30

It does, however, have a potential competitor. A Man of Sorrows on wood, 63 x 50 cm, thus about 10 cm less in both directions than the Chantilly canvas, and differing from it in some details – the varied arrangement of Christ’s hair, the radiant rays, the thicker cane – appeared at auction at Dorotheum in 2011 with a reported provenance from Cardinal Luigi Carafa (Fig. 10). I know this painting only from a photograph, but while it is my impression – following the judgement of Professor Eduardo Safarik – that it is a (possibly studio) copy, it seems to be solidly painted and of reasonable quality, and probably follows an autograph variant of the Chantilly picture.31

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So, which of the two paintings of the Man of Sorrows, the Chantilly canvas or the ex-Dorotheum panel, is more likely to record Titian’s Christmas gift? Or neither? We cannot be sure, but a suggestion made by Weithey is of interest. Soon after he received his Man of Sorrows from Titian, Aretino commissioned a copy of it from Domenico Molino, a minor painter more usually associated with Tintoretto than Titian. We have no further knowledge of this copy, its size, its support, or what became of it, but it might, of course, still exist and have been mistaken for an autograph or a studio picture. If it was a reduction, then Weithey’s suggestion, that the half-size Man of Sorrows in the Victoria Art Gallery, Bath (fig. 11), might be Molino’s copy is an interesting hypothesis even if one that the picture’s Spanish provenance, via Hall Standish, does not favour.37 The Bath painting has not been examined technically but, once again, it is of decent quality and looks to be period; since it clearly follows the ex-Dorotheum panel and not the Chantilly canvas, it would, if attributable to Molino, support the former as a record of Aretino’s version. Or, could it be shown to be a product of Titian’s workshop, it would at least support the view that the Dorotheum picture reflects an authorized variant. This also opens the possibility that one or other might be – or record – the Cristo putatively painted for Guidobaldo II in 1552.

V. GRANVELLE’S MAN OF SORROWS
Towards the end of his sojourn in Augsburg, in August-September 1548, Titian executed – perhaps with assistance – another Man of Sorrows for Antoine Peronnet de Granvelle, who had evidently been impressed by Charles’ Christ and who made a practice of acquiring versions of pictures painted by Titian for his successive successors. Subsequently, from Venice, Titian sent Granvelle a second Christ which, in an earlier article, I identified as Titian’s Minneapolis Tondition of Christ and shall not discuss further here.38 The evidence that Titian presented Granvelle with a version of his Man of Sorrows is found in a letter from painter to patron of 1 September 1548:

I will consign within two days your Excellency’s paintings to your host because His Excellency [i.e. Georg Schörer, Granvelle’s host in Augsburg] has spoken to me about it. As for the Christ, even though my state of mind is uneasy, owing to my business and my worries and should it not be done as it merits, I will replace it at my convenience when I am in Italy; nevertheless, I think that it will not displease you because it is very similar to the Roman version.39

It would appear that Titian had executed a Christ, which was to be included with the other pictures for Granvelle to be left with Schörer, but, if Granvelle deemed it unsatisfactory, he would furnish another after his return home.

In a postscript Titian mentioned “il Cristo, che Sua Maestà hano portato con seco...” but, as he specified that Granvelle’s Christ was “molto simile a quello di Roma”, it must have followed Paul III’s rather than Charles’ painting, confirming both that Titian at least was not publicly ashamed of the picture he had painted for the pope, and that there were differences – known to Granvelle – between them; what those differences were is conjectural (perhaps the presence or absence of a case).40
In the sixteenth century, a few years later Mantegna set the Saviour between the edges of the slate are intact. The painting has been cut down, but the original raised treatments of the Man of Sorrows are accurately, suffered – earlier versions of this essay. 

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On 4 August 1566, Archbishop Martín de Ayala (b. 1504) died in Ontinyent, on his way to Valencia. He had governed the Valencian diocese for barely eighteen months, having taken up office on 26 December 1564. Previously bishop of Guadix and Segovia, present at several sessions of the Council of Trent, and a frequent traveller to Italy, Martín de Ayala in his (albeit short) time as archbishop had been extremely active. He had called a provincial council, held a diocesan synod, and undertaken an extensive pastoral visit through his diocese. Gravely ill with gout and a kidney condition, he had a will drawn up on 24 July 1566, naming as his benefactor the convent of Uclés in Cuenca, where he had himself taken vows in the Order of Santiago. He also stipulated that some precious objects should remain in the Valencia Cathedral, including a gold pectoral cross, a silver pax, a pallium, and some altar cloths. On 5 August, the day after news of the archbishop’s death arrived, the Council of Canons authorized his burial in the chapel of Saint Peter, and on 2 September, they received the bequeathed objects from the archbishop’s executors. After this, work on providing the archbishop with a tomb worthy of his rank in the city’s cathedral was set in motion. Although this tomb can be identified today thanks to the effigy of Martín de Ayala (even if the monument has become rather disfigured following relocations in various chapels during the course of its history), almost nothing is known regarding its production, which involved several of the most significant artists in Valencia at that time. However, documents relating to a legal dispute over the faulty execution of the tomb have not yet been analyzed and provide a wealth of information, shedding light on the construction of the monument and the individuals involved in the commission. These included the distinguished painter Juan de Juanes (1507–1579), along with Genoese marble workers and traders now known to have had an increasing presence in Spain during the sixteenth century.

The Tomb of Martín de Ayala

At present, the tomb is installed in the right-hand wall of the chapel of the Most Holy Trinity in Valencia Cathedral where it was moved in 1941 (fig. 1). At the beginning of the eighteenth century, it occupied a corner of the canons’ vestry in Saint Michael’s Chapel, beside the door leading to then designated chapel of Saint Francis Borgia. It was presumably placed there after changes were made to its original site in Saint Peter’s Chapel, which was exchanged with the chapel of Saint Louis at the end of the seventeenth century. This transformation was necessary as Saint Peter’s Chapel had become too small for its increased functions and growing numbers of the faithful, whereas the chapel of Saint Louis, founded by the Borgia family, was larger and more elegant. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the tomb was also placed for a time in the chapterhouse, now the chapel of the Holy Chalice. A photograph of it in this location was published in 1909 and shows that by this time it was already quite damaged. All these relocations have taken a toll on the tomb which in its present site is displayed with little dignity, partially hidden by a shop selling souvenirs and other objects.
A classical marble funerary sarcophagus, claw-footed and simply decorated with a cherub with outspread wings, supports the effigy (gias) of the archbishop, in pontifical dress with mitre and crosier (fig. 2). Above him, there is a large representation of his arms with an inscribed banderole, while below the sculpted tomb is his epitaph, inscribed in Latin. The heraldic shield is divided into quarters, two of which bear springing wolves, while the other two are decorated with a tree over five Joanna on a gold field. The inscribed banderole reads: “A wolf for deceit, but a refuge for truth.”

In epigraphically-accurate Roman lettering, the epitaph reads: “Here lies Martín de Ayala, Archbishop of Valencia, who governed three churches, in Guadix, Segovia, and lastly the church here in Valencia, where he died. There was, however, nothing he suffered more than to be here. He died on 5 August 1566.”

The original architectural setting of the tomb was unfortunately lost in its many relocations but is known from Ponz’s description. It consisted of flanking pilasters and a triangular pediment bearing the name of Jesus and a Latin sign in the entablature, also lost, which read: “I die in the hope of resurrection.” The gilding on the letters of the inscription at the foot of the casket has also disappeared. These losses have undermined the importance of the structure, which can only be appreciated in comparison to other tombs in the cathedral, such as those of Viceroy and Grand Inquisitor, Diego de Covarrubias and his wife María Diez, Marquis and Marchioness of Albaida. These are set in the sides of the chapel of Saint Sebastian and were made after 1608, but they seem to follow the earlier model very closely.

An elegant triangular pediment is inscribed “IHS”, while the entablature carries the same inscription mentioned by Ponz (“I die in the hope of resurrection”) in relation to the archbishop’s tomb. Here the entablature is supported by fluted Ionic pilasters, resting on robust foliate corbels, behind which is a narrow, coffered ceiling decorated with rosettes. Within the niche are the heraldic arms and sarcophagus with its corresponding effigy, surmounting a Latin epitaph. The marble tomb is almost identical, with the same cherub and claw-feet. The sides of the tomb’s architectural recess are decorated with small sculptures set within niches, which are not mentioned in the description of Martín de Ayala’s tomb, perhaps because they never existed, as is also the case with the three vases above the tympanum. The quality of the highly polished marble of the two Covarrubias tombs is, beyond doubt, a mark of Genoese sculptural work, highly polished marble of the two Covarrubias tombs is, beyond doubt, a mark of Genoese sculptural work, whereas the archbishop’s is vaguely referred to as “Italian marble” without any more specific information.

The disputes among various parties involved in the production of this tomb enable us to follow the circumstances of the commission fairly closely. It is known that Antonio Parzo, the procurator for Martín de Ayala’s executors, desiring to carry out the archbishop’s last wishes, commissioned a drawn model for a tomb from a distinguished master in Valencia. This drawing was sent via an intermediary, a Genoese merchant called Luciano Borja, to Genoa, where a craftsman was to sculpt the tomb in marble and return it to Valencia. On arrival, the piece was considered defective and deviating from the model. Extra costs were therefore incurred by repairs undertaken by Genoese master marble-workers resident in Valencia.

Delving further into the case, it becomes clear that the painter chosen to execute the design in the form of a drawing on parchment was Juan de Juanes: “a distinguished Valencian painter by the name of Juanes”, in the words of a quarry worker, Miguel Porcar, or “an honourable Valencian painter Juanes”, as a cathedral subdeacon, Juan López, calls him. Both of these men were cited among the witnesses in the legal dispute. Juan de Juanes, also known as Joan Macip (ca. 1500-1579), was one of the most prominent painters in Renaissance Spain. These epithets confirm that in the 1560s his reputation was already established and a Latinized version of his name (Juanes or Ioanes) was commonly used, as well as the adjectives “honourable” and “distinguished”.

Dated August 1566, the commission for the design of Martín de Ayala’s tomb comes at a high point in Juan de Juanes’ career. He was already fully engaged in the execution of the great altarpiece for the parish church of San Esteban, having presumably taken charge after 1560 on the death of Onofre Falco, as in 1562, he received payment for the panel of the Stoning.
The commission also coincides with other works carried out by Juanes for the Council of Canons of Valencia Cathedral between around 1563 and 1567. His series of portraits of archbishops must date from around 1565, when the artisan Arcís Sancho de Estella was paid 200 sueldos for gaudamal (a leather support for painting) delivered to Juanes for these portraits, and in 1567, Juanes received final payment for the painting of Christ on the cathedral clockface. Curiously enough, Archibishop Martín Pérez de Ayala’s portrait in the series was done not by Juanes but by his son Vicente, years later, in 1598. This painting is also on leather and at present in very poor condition (fig. 3).

Juanes’ work for Martín de Ayala was completely unknown until the legal dispute was discovered in the series of legal proceedings of the Gobernación del Archivo del Reino; it has never figured in any study about him. In considering Martín de Ayala’s tomb, it is also important to take into account an earlier work made in 1555 for the tomb of Archbishop Fray Tomás de Villanueva (1486-1555). This presents a similar case in that the tomb was commissioned in Genoa on the basis of a drawing by Juanes. Juanes would have made the preparatory drawings presumably only for Archbishop Tomás de Villanueva’s effigy, which was to be executed in marble in Genoa and then returned to Valencia.20 The structure was very different from the tomb under discussion, consisting not of a wall tomb with an architectural structure, but of a slab to be placed on the floor in the current church of Nuestra Señora del Socorro. In Miguel Salón’s words:

…[Archbishop Villanueva] had no care for a very elaborate tomb, setting up marble constructions nor other expenses commemorating his name and memory on earth, but his care was for the high and powerful Lord who had this in the heavens, where he should not lack this honour, and thus the heart of Dean Francisco Roca was moved, canon in this holy Church, by the great devotion in which he held this holy prelate, both in life and in death, so that he had the portrait of the prelate, recently dead, made on canvas by a famous painter of this city, called Joannes, and, when this portrait of the whole body and in pontifical dress, life size and accurate, was completed, it should be sent to Genoa to be sculpted from a large piece of rich marble to cover the tomb. This was done, and it returned displaying the perfection everyone desired and with a bandeau, including a few Latin words, referring to the great gifts of this servant of God.21

Due to its position on the church floor, the slab soon became very damaged, and in 1562 some bronze balustrades were installed to stop it being stepped upon. In 1603 it was moved to a chapel at the end of the church, under the choir and opposite the high altar, Patriarch Ribera believing that it should have a worthier location. This tomb has also had a chequered history as the church of Nuestra Señora del Socorro was damaged by fire and then abandoned. The effigy was sent for restoration and later moved to a private property where it remained until its donation to the cathedral in October 2010.22 It is now displayed in a chapel (fig. 4). The image is so worn that the realistic style of Juanes’ portrait cannot be made out.

According to Salón, Dean Francisco Roca, the person who selected Juanes to make Archbishop Villanueva’s portrait was also one of the executors appointed by Archbishop Ayala, and therefore among those responsible for decisions relating to the commission of his tomb. In both cases, Miguel Vich, another canon and executor of Ayala’s testament, was also involved. Salón recounts that Vich stood at Villanueva’s deathbed, imploring him to give his executors permission to provide a tomb in the cathedral worthy of his status. It is therefore unsurprising that both canons were involved with the commission for Ayala’s tomb, as barely eleven years passed between the two. Thus, the new work simply confirms the excellent relationship between Juanes and the highest representatives of the Council of Canons during those years. Juanes had made for Archbishop Tomás de Villanueva a series of cartoons for a set of tapestries on the Joys of the Virgin, which were woven in Flanders and later donated to the cathedral.23 He had also painted Villanueva’s portrait as a gaudamal for the cathedral series, this portrait was considered a true likeness (un dibujo) and may have been based on the model drawn for the archbishop’s tomb. This portrait is only known from photographs (fig. 5) as it unfortunately disappeared from the set following its exhibition in Madrid in 1980 and was subsequently replaced by a copy.24 The other portraits, which begin with the first bishops in the thirteenth century, were executed by Juanes with assistance from his workshop, based either on earlier models or his own ability to invent individualized portraits of great expressive force.

The effort involved in creating the portrait series (nineteen works in total) meant that Archbishop Ayala’s portrait was very delayed and, as observed, eventually painted by Juanes’ son, Vicente. The poor state of conservation of Vicente’s portrait of Ayala inhibits us from making a judgement about its faithfulness to Juanes’ original model. A better assessment might be made from Manuel Monfort’s engraving, which seems to be loosely based on the original gaudamal.25 This engraving was used as an author portrait in the archbishop’s publications, notably the Catecismo for Nicely Corrected More (fig. 6). There is also evidence that around 1722 the monastery of Uclés still housed a portrait of Martín de Ayala in the prince’s room, though the author of this work is by no means certain.26
Juanes’ oeuvre is primarily valued for his contribution to religious painting. However, his clearly significant role in establishing portraiture as an independent genre remains to be evaluated. His earlier oeuvre included portraits according to the traditional donor-formula within religious works, as in the case of the figure of Brianda de Moza in the panel depicting the Birth of the Virgin in the Fuente de la Higuera Altarpiece (1548). An unusual example is of the Venerable Juan Bautista Agnesio (1480-1535), humanist, theologian and – as a protegé of Don Serafín de Centelles, Count of Oliva – a leading figure in Valencia. Juanes painted his portrait on at least two occasions, in the Iglesia de Christo (1535) in Valencia Cathedral, and the Iglesia de Venerable Agnesio (or the Mystical Marriage) (1550-1553) now in the Museo de Bellas Artes, Valencia (fig. 7). Of particular interest here are his paintings of a single individuals. Within this group, a distinction can be drawn between paintings made from life – which included portraits made immediately or soon after the individual in question had died – and those which took earlier representations as models, usually in the case of historical figures who could not be painted as living subjects, but which nevertheless were characterized as “cf vita” or “al via”. This locates us in the realm of naturalistic representation that attempts to avoid idealization and depict a believable portrayal of the subject, whether employing a drawing taken directly from life or using earlier works as a model.

Orellana claimed he had seen portraits of the Duke and Duchess of Calahorra in the prior’s cell in the monastery of San Miguel de los Reyes, Valencia, painted by Juanes. These were on paper and fairly small – approximately thirty cm – and copied by Apodinario Larragua. Fernando Benito noted, furthermore, that the full-length portraits of Don Fernando of Aragon and Doña Germana de Foix in the Museo de Bellas Artes, Valencia, might have been based on originals (from life) by Juanes. Other portraits of the royal family must have been based on earlier written or graphic sources, or else on Juanes’ innate creative skill. It is supposed that the two most significant were part of a joint commission from the governores of Valencia, in response to an order of Prince Carlos, whose tutor at that time was the Valencian humanist, Honorato Juan (1507-1566). In 1557, two payments were made to Juan de Juanes for a portrait of Alfonso the Magnanimous, to be sent to Prince Carlos, the Infant of Aragon, ("aparición sobre don Carlos infant de Aragón"), at present in the Museo de Zaragoza (fig. 8). The other portrait in this commission, intended to please the king, was of Jaime I, now lost. Both are mentioned in various sources. One of these, also dated, is the Chronic a los Comunidades del Glosatorio y e Instituto Rey Juan, painted in 1557 by Juan Mené’s widow in Valencia. The dedicatory letter of this book reads:

I would be grateful if the chronicle or commentary of King Jaime, glorious conqueror of this excellent city and kingdom, and the portrait of wise King Alfonso II, unconquered ancestor of your Royal Highness, could be sent from here. For, if the (deeds of?) Publius Scipio or Quintus Fabius are written about, [and] images of illustrious personages are seen and contemplated, this can be an inspiration to extraordinary things. Perhaps a portrait was sent along with the chronicle, as recorded by Jaime Juan Falco (humanist and poet, 1522-1594), in a poem praising this painting, whose author is unnamed, but might have also been by Juanes. The chronicle contains an engraving of the king depicted full-length, which is hard to attribute to a specific artist, given the generalized features, although a drawing attributed to Juanes (now in a private collection) does point to it being after a work by his hand (fig. 9). The portrait of King Alfonso the Magnanimous does not follow medieval precedents, such as the portrait in the City Hall, recorded by Garderera in his Konglesi Españoles and recently attributed to Jacomart. This was used by Scipión as the basis for his 1597 portrait of King Juan II, now in the Museo del Colegio de Corpus Christi.

New findings on the Genoese tomb of Archbishop Martín de Ayala and Juan de Juanes’ ‘living’ portraiture

ARTISTIC LITERATURE AND THE PORTRAIT

An approach to Juanes through his relations with eminent humanists and men of letters in mid-sixteenth-century Valencia was pioneered by Miguel Falomir, and the present study expands on many of the suggestions in his work. Some portraits that have been associated with Juanes are linked to a group of pastoral poets and support the conclusion that one of the first laudatory texts in his lifetime was composed in 1562 in the Flore del varia poesía, an anthology of poetry published in Valencia by Diego Ramírez de Pagán (1524-1562). As Falomir pointed out, in the encomiastic sonnet, “En Juanes, most renowned painter of our age”, there is a subtle allusion to a portrait. It is thought that Juanes might have painted the portrait of Martínez Pagán, who wrote a sonnet in thanks, stating that he delighted in seeing his face made so well in his portrait, so lifelike, that it frightened viewers. Nothing is left of this hypothetical portrait, since the published engraving of Ramírez Pagán’s face is very crude and refutable conclusions cannot be drawn from it (fig. 10).
New findings on the Genoese tomb of Archbishop Martín de Ayala and Juan de Juanes’ ‘living’ portraiture

The anthology also includes another poet’s contribution: Antonio de Padilla emphasizes “The good fortune of painting your face from life”: “These allusions to portraiture are not the only ones made in the anthology which in fact contains wealth of sonnets mentioning portraits made from life, for example: ‘Y que en la biva pintura te hay mano tan avisada que restaure a sin figura’ (“There is no hand so good as to restore this figure to life in painting”), ‘Sacar del bivo la imagen’ (“to bring to life the dead image”), ‘Un artiste presume, contudace, si habrá pincel tan diestro’ (“no artist would presume to paint a portrait, nor would there be a brush skilled enough to do this”), and ‘In nito si vos en anzuela, tan valera de pintar y tan al bivo, que púares cinta exemplo de tu mano’ (“Your portrait … is so lifelike that you seem to have been engraved…”).57

Diego Ramírez Pagán was tutor of the Duke of Segorbe’s daughters and so would have been familiar with the duke’s collection of portraits in the castle and palace at Segorbe. An inventory dating from a little later, following the deaths of Francisco de Aragón in 1575, lists eleven portraits of kings and queens, among them one of Prince Carlos, one of Maximiliano, two of Queen Isabel of Spain, one each of Queen Elisabeth of France, the Queen of Bohemia, François I of France, King Manuel of Portugal (or perhaps Emanuell, Duke of Savoy), an unidentified lady in a cap, a portrait of Petrarch, and another of Laura.58 The last two are particularly relevant, since they might be taken as copies of the legendary portraits by Simone Martini, considered touchstones for the “modern” portrait.59

Proof of the great value accorded to the portrait in mid-sixteenth-century Valencia is the almost simultaneous publication of two texts which made specific reference to portraiture. These were the first epic poems in Spanish celebrating the victory of the Spanish over the French at Roncesvalles and contain references to many Valencian personages, in a court circle of nobles and humanists close to Juanes, as evidence increasingly confirms.60 In 1555, Francisco Garrido de Villena published El canto de la famosa batalla de Roncuegos, at Juan May’s printing house, while Nicolau Espinosa published Segunda parte de Orlando, con el verdadero suceso de la famosa batalla de Roncesvilla, in Saragossa, dedicated to Pedro de Centelles, Count of Olivac. Both works were conceived as continuations of Antonio’s Orlando Furioso, defending the role of Spanish soldiers.

These texts have been singled out as the oval engraving of Garrido de Villena himself in the 1555 edition has been proposed after a design by Juanes, a hypothesis which gains strength with the analysis of the work’s literary content (fig. 11).61

Both works make reference to portraiture – a genre which had begun to evolve earlier but grew in popularity in the mid-sixteenth century – permitting the identification of a real person from lifelike features based on an accurate physical likeness. Garrido de Villena’s text seem to reflect events that transpired in 1552, a few years before its publication, when an important exchange of royal portraits had taken place prior to the proxy wedding in Toro between Juana of Austria and the heir to the throne of Portugal, Prince Juan. The letters documenting this event emphasize how each sitter desired to see the other’s face; the topes of “love at the sight of the image” evokes very similar feelings to those expressed in Garrido’s Canto XXXIII.62 This relates the story of a Valencian knight, Rosciano, who, hearing of the fame of a beautiful Portuguese princess, Florinda, sends a painter to capture her likeness. As the portrait recognizably depicts the princess, the painter’s reputation is enhanced.63 Although the name of this renowned portrait painter who left Valencia for Portugal is never given, the passage reveals a culture that had fully embraced the a “modern” conception of the portrait: conveying a sense of mobility, provoking an emotional response from the viewer, and standing in for the lost one through a evocation of their image.

In Canto XV (the “Turia canto”) of the Segunda parte de Orlando,64 which the Valencian Nicolau Espinosa dedicated to Pedro de Centelles, Count of Olivac, the main character, Cotalbo, discovers a cave where he finds “Atalante’s tomb and wonderful paintings throughout.”65 These paintings constitute a series of portraits of various poets and eminent people associated with the Centelles court (“his eyes feasted on the old pictures”), including Don Juan Fernández and “his great friend Frendot,” Honorato Juan, Juan Aguilón, Serafín de Centelles, Pedro Castellar, and Luis de Santangel. The Canto concludes: “our knight revelled in the sight of such beauty in pictures.”66 Most of these nobles and humanists were active in the circle in which James moved. Serafín de Centelles, Count of Olivac and patron and protector of Juan Bautista Amós, commissioned the Tapa de la Enseñado Ignece (or The Mystical Marriage) originally intended to be placed in his chapel in the cathedral. Honorato Juan, as we have seen, had been an intermediary in securing the commission for portraits of King Alfonso and King Jaime I for Juanes. Jean Aguilón, one of the patrons who obtained Juanes’ commission for the altarpiece in the parish church of San Esteban, could be the enigmatic figure represented next to the Aguilón arms in the Altar panel, the figure which for a time was taken to be the painter’s self-portrait (fig. 12).

Fig. 12: Juanes, Portrait of Venerable Agnesio Virgin of Olivac or Avila (or Venerable Agnesio Virgin of the Holy House of Olivac), 1550, engraving, Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional.
New findings on the Genoese tomb of Archbishop Martín de Ayala and Juan de Juanes’ ‘living’ portraiture

This relationship between portraits and pastoral court literature provides context for the Portrait of a Knight of Santiago (Prado Museum). The sitter has been identified, not entirely securely, as Luis Castellá Ladrón de Vilanova, first lord of Bicorp and Quesa (d. 1544) (fig. 13). The connection has been made between this noble, knight and humanist, and the knight holding a book and armed with a sword, since the Vilanova family were part of the same literary and courtly milieu as Juanes. The Portuguese poet, Jorge de Monforte, was another of the knight’s protegés and dedicated a work to his son, Juan de Vilanova, (d. 1560) – The Seven Books of Diana, published in Valencia in 1539.

This text contains a reference to a portrait which has been overlooked. Book IV describes a courtyard in the fantasy palace of the nymphs where, in an octagonal structure, a picture is inserted representing Luis de Vilanova as an “armed knight, whose arms have many little gold shields scattered all over them”. These gold shields can be related to the ornamentation on the dress of the Prado portrait, which is embellished with small gold cabochons. It is not known whether our Luis Vilanova, who died in 1544, was in fact a Knight of the Order of Santiago, but in 1601 a descendant of Vilanova, who died in 1544, was another of the knight’s protegés and dedicated a work to his son, Juan de Vilanova, (d. 1560) – The Seven Books of Diana, published in Valencia in 1539.

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The same witness stated he saw the model painted with architectural art according to which the most reverend Archbishop’s tomb was to be made. He saw this model painted with architectural art according to which the most reverend Archbishop’s tomb was to be made. He saw this model painted with architectural art according to which the most reverend Archbishop’s tomb was to be made. He saw this model painted with architectural art according to which the most reverend Archbishop’s tomb was to be made. He saw this model painted with architectural art according to which the most reverend Archbishop’s tomb was to be made. He saw this model painted with architectural art according to which the most reverend Archbishop’s tomb was to be made.

It will be seen how painters were increasingly involved in devising architectural solutions which demonstrated a high degree of classical training. In 1565, the painter Per Joan de Tapia was commissioned to draw up designs for alterations to King Philip II’s apartments in the monastery of San Miguel de los Reyes during his visit to Valencia. Some years later, in 1596, he designed the general plan of the Royal Palace, the corridor and the main staircase, which were to be sent to the court.

In 1591 Per Joan de Tapia himself was to take part in designing the jasper doorway for the Sala Nova in the provincial government office, a project also involving the painter Santífera. At the end of the sixteenth century, Bartolomé Matarana from Genoa designed altarpieces for the church of the Colegio del Patriarca, where the prominent architectural component shows a clear understanding of classical composition. Around 1662 the painter Jéstimós de Espinosa was involved in all the experts’ consultations on the controversial closure of the lantern of the basilica of the Desamparados.

We find evidence in many previous works by Juanes of his thorough knowledge of classical architectural composition. As well as the Roman monuments reproduced in many of his background landscapes, his interiors are organized along classical principles, beginning with the early Consecration of Saint Eligius Altarpiece for the chapel of the silver-workers’ guild in the church of Santa Catalina in Valencia (1534). The panel of the Consecration of Saint Eligius represents the saint sitting on a throne with pilasters topped by fantastic capitals and an entablature with a marble cornice. These classical features are found from this early work through to his most mature work in the Saint Stephen Altarpiece, with its representation of a synagogue standing in front of perfectly arranged and composed triumphal arches (figs. 14 & 15).
If there is one work, however, that exemplifies Juanes’ skill in composing classical architectural structures, it is the drawing for the altarpiece of the convent church of San Agustín in Valencia, from the collection of the Valencian canon Vicente Vitoria (1660-1709) (fig. 16).62 The drawing of this altarpiece, as Vicente Vitoria himself explains in his manuscript text, Academia de Pintura del Señor Carlos Maratta, was an original work by Juan de Juanes “of a whole altar which was in the convent of San Agustín in the same city (Valencia) which in recent years has been taken down for its renovation”.63 Underneath the drawing Canon Vitoria himself added a text in his own hand that still survives: “Gio. di Valenza made this design for an altar in the Church of S. Agustín in the same city, which was taken down in 1696”.64

The design he refers to is for an altarpiece of Our Lady of the Milk which was placed at one of the corners of the cloister.65 If, as can be inferred from Vitoria’s annotation, Juanes made the design, we can assume that the architectural organization was also his. The structure features robust fluted columns, decorated in the lower third, supporting a slightly inset entablature. The painting is in the centre and flanked by pilasters and niches with sculptures of Saint Joachim and Saint Anne. The uppermost section of the altarpiece (el atico) has paired Ionic columns decorated with garlands the length of the shafts. Of particular interest is the use of fantastic motifs to compensate for the difference in width between the two bodies, which join up with the tondi of the Annunciation and the sculptures at the ends.
WAS JUANES THE DESIGNER OF THE AYALA TOMB?

Based on the evident skill in the design, it is not implausible that Juan de Juanes provided a restrained and correct solution, following classical norms, for the tomb of Archbishop Martín de Ayala, which was to be sculpted by Genoese masters. This would then be one of the first models of Renaissance wall sculpture in Valencia, very much earlier than those which later became quite common. It would not be until well into the seventeenth century that other tombs followed this type. When the tomb arrived in Valencia, those appointed to ensure that the Archbishop’s last wishes were carried out were deeply disappointed. Thus, from 6 November 1568, the testimony of everyone who had taken part in the commission and execution of the tomb was compiled and all parties involved were required to answer questions about the defects and expenses arising from its repair. The first to testify was the Genoese marble worker Francisco de Aprile who was in Valencia at that time.66 Aprile describes how the tomb was defective in terms of the architectural structure; Miguel Porcar, a Valencian architect whom he considered an authority on marble working, had been to be consulted. Porcar testified that the cost of repairing the tomb by the Genoese masters, Antonio de Como and Batista Aprile (Francisco’s brother) was forty-five libras.

Miguel Porcar also stated that he had seen the model for the tomb which Juanes had drawn, in the presence of Canon Miguel de Vich and Canon Francisco Joan Roca. He said he knew how they, the archbishop’s executors, had been in discussion with the painter about the tomb’s form and composition. When it arrived ready to be set into the wall of Saint Peter’s Chapel, Porcar had witnessed the intervention of the architect, Gaspar Gregori, and Francisco de Aprile attempting to set the stones which had arrived from Genoa. These were, however, faulty and did not meet the requirements for their correct assembly.

Porcar and Gregori were both well-known masters in Valencia and at that time were working together on the gallery of the Obra Nova (“new works”) in the cathedral.

These new pieces of evidence give added weight to the figure of Juan de Juanes as a portrait painter and designer of architectural structures; the artist was widely admired as one of the most distinguished painters in mid-sixteenth century Valencia and associated with the uppermost circles within both the church and the nobility. In social and artistic terms, he is, therefore, to be placed among the highest-ranking figures of the Spanish Renaissance.
The text appears to be a scholarly work discussing art history and specifically focusing on the work of Joan de Joanes and his portraits. It references various sources, including art historical journals and books, to support its arguments. The text mentions a number of artworks and historical figures, indicating a detailed examination of the historical context and stylistic features of the portraits in question. The references to specific artworks and historical events suggest a comprehensive approach to the study of the artist's work and its influence on contemporaneous art practices.

The document includes a variety of citation styles, indicating a wide range of sources consulted. It touches on topics such as the commissioning of portraits, the role of patrons, and the influence of art on society. The text also includes a discussion of the technical aspects of portraiture, such as the use of oil paint and the application of nuanced shading techniques.

Overall, the document provides a rich understanding of the historical and artistic context of the works of Joan de Joanes, offering insights into the broader cultural and social milieu of the period in which he worked.
The return of part of the renowned Grimani collection of antiquities, for the exhibition Domus Grimani 1594-2019, to its original location in the family palace at Santa Maria Formosa presents a landmark event in the history of Venetian museums. This excellent exhibition draws attention to one of the most outstanding collections of Renaissance Europe, which placed Palazzo Grimani amongst the most admired sites of sixteenth-century Venice. Illustrious personalities like Henry III King of France and Duke Alfonso II d’Este visited the palace and dedicated an entire day to appreciate the contents of this famed Venetian dwelling. The splendour of the palace was due to its main resident, Giovanni Grimani (ca. 1500/06-1593), Patriarch of Aquileia, who adorned it with “beautiful rooms and loggias on the ground floor, furnished with ancient figures and torsos, with inscriptions everywhere, on a very grand scale”. Upon his death, Giovanni bequeathed around two hundred pieces of ancient sculpture to the Venetian Republic to institute one of the first public museums in European history. As part of a project devised with the architect Vincenzo Scamozzi, the sculptures were removed from the palace and placed in the vestibule of the Marciana Library. The vestibule architecturally echoed the palace’s “Tribuna”, then known as the studio d’anticaglia (“study of antiquities”), which was the focal point of the display in Santa Maria Formosa.

The family collection originated with Giovanni’s uncle, Cardinal Domenico Grimani (1461-1523). After his death, Domenico donated to the Republic sixteen Greek and Roman antiquities. These were installed in a room of the Ducal Palace, which took the name Sala delle Tèeste (“Room of the Heads”). Marino Grimani (1488-1546), Giovanni’s older brother, had also amassed a notable collection consisting of medals, small marble and bronze sculptures, as well as some beautiful tapestries, which hung in the family’s Venetian residence. At Marino’s death, the majority of his collection was appropriated by Pope Paul III, but Giovanni repurchased it in 1551. Fearing the dispersal of his collection after his death, Giovanni appealed to the Senate in a letter dated February 1587, offering it in toto to the Republic, provided that the pieces would remain united and “governed”. Moreover, Giovanni stipulated that works from his collection were to be reunited with those that his uncle Domenico had bequeathed to the Republic over half a century earlier; these had been largely neglected and many were in need of restoration, prompting Giovanni to insist that all the family’s antiquities ought to be placed “in a public location” where they could be appreciated by visitors as one of the “marvellous things in the City”. Giovanni’s heirs showed strong resistance to the removal of the collection, claiming that many pieces were integrated into the architecture of the palace and
extracting them would result in the destruction of their family home. The legal dispute that ensued determined the selection of works that went to the Public Statuary. A few pieces, amongst them the colossal statues of Agrippa and Augustus, iconic features of the palace’s courtyard, were, at first, left behind. Other collectors, like Antonio Grimani Bishop of Torcello (ante 1587-1628) and Giovanni Carlo Grimani (active in the late seventeenth century), sought to replenish the denuded palace in the following centuries, although the number and often the quality of works they acquired could not match those of the original collection.4 The Public Statuary, on the other hand, was stripped of its collection after the fall of the Republic, following a vice-regal decree of 1811, which ordered the transferral of the antiquities to the Ducal Palace, leaving only eight busts in the vestibule. By that time, some extraordinary pieces had already been separated from the others, such as the Suovetaurilia relief, one of the many treasures seized by Napoleon in 1797 and today in the Louvre. In 1972, the scholar Marilyn Perry, comparing the inventory drawn up in 1593 by the Venetian officials and a series of drawings by Anton Maria Zanetti the younger (1679-1767), was able to identify those pieces of the Public Statuary that had come from the Grimani bequest.5 Perry was also able to ascertain that the order of display in the library vestibule was closely based on the original one in the Tribuna, thereby confirming Giovanni’s involvement in the layout. In the bicentenary of the fall of the Republic, some of the Grimani pieces returned to the Marciana vestibule, for what was initially planned as a temporary exhibition curated by Irene Favaretto and Giovanna Luisa Ravagnan, then director of the National Archaeological Museum, where the majority of the Grimani collection is held today.6

The restoration of the Tribuna (fig. 1) to its original splendour is the highlight of the current exhibition. Since Palazzo Grimani opened to the public as a museum in 2008, this room more than any other, has articulated the effect of the loss of the collection on the building: the architecture of the room was designed specifically around the antiquities it once displayed and, as a result, has felt incomplete without its treasures. For the occasion, two temporary architectural niches have been reconstructed to conceal the later modification to the structure of the room.

Closing the side door and window has also made it possible to restore the Tribuna as the culmination of a journey originally developed through a series of rooms: the Camaron d’oro (“Golden Chamber”), the Foliage Room, and the Tribuna’s anteroom. The first two rooms have been installed with objects and furnishings that recreate a typical sixteenth-century patrician residence. Many of these works come from other Venetian institutions, such as the Museo Correr and Ca’ d’Oro, supplementing the limited permanent collection of the palace. Where possible, the co-curators, have returned original furnishings to the palace. An example is the remarkable sixteenth-century inlaid ancient marble and lapis lazuli table-top (cat.110), displayed in the Foliage Room, where it had stood until 1829. Curiously, the table was probably acquired by Antonio Grimani, Bishop of Torcello, one of Giovanni’s heirs who fought most strenuously against the Republic during the relocation of the collection in 1590s. After being sold to the 3rd Earl of Warwick in the nineteenth century, the piece was auctioned by Sotheby’s in 2015 and is now owned by a private collector.
The ancient sculptures which have been installed in the rooms leading to the Tribuna were listed in the 1593 inventory and are displayed according to their original location, as specified in this document; these include, for example, the Baut of Athene (cat. 95) in the Galleria d’oro and two amphorae (cat. 117 and 118) flanking the entrance to the Tribuna. The central canvas decorating the ceiling of the Tribuna’s anteroom, housed at Musée Jacquemart-André in Paris since the nineteenth century, has been substituted with a high-definition printed reproduction, specially crafted for the exhibition. The canvas portrays the Deipnosophists Minerva and Neptune and was painted by Giuseppe Porta “il Salvati” (ca. 1520-1593) and the central canvas is flanked with a copy of Michelangelo’s Laocoön and the Nereus which is also displayed, a reference to one of the most esteemed ancient sculptures in the Grimani collection, represented by a contemporary cast in the adjacent Tribuna (cat. 6; fig. 2). Other relevant pieces in the exhibition include a tapestry (cat. 102; fig. 1), based on a drawing by Francesco Sabatini (1510-1563), Giuseppe Porta’s master, both involved in the decoration of other rooms of the palace; and a fragment of an altarpiece (altar frontal) depicting Doge Antonio Grimani by Johan Rott, made in 1554 for the Basilica of Saint Mark (cat. 92). Both of these works are displayed in the Galleria d’oro, a name that alluded to the precious tapestries woven with golden threads that originally hung in this room.

The exhibition is accompanied by a catalogue, which includes two essays by prominent scholars who have conducted extensive research on the Grimani collection, Irene Favaretto and Marcella De Paoli. De Paoli delves into the rationale behind the exhibiting choices made for the Tribuna. The reconstructed display was determined through the comparison of the 1593 inventory and a partial sketch of the Tribuna by Federico Zuccari (ca.1540-1609), dated around 1582. This drawing, to this day the only visual source for the original layout, was discovered in 2010 by Hugo Chapman in the collection of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum. Following this discovery, Favaretto and De Paoli co-authored an article, in which they convincingly reconstructed the 1580s arrangement of ancient sculptures on the four walls of the Tribuna, taking into account the fluid nature of Grimani’s collection, which was continuously evolving and expanding. The current exhibition at Palazzo Grimani builds on this first visual reconstruction, allowing the viewers to experience the space as it would have looked a decade after the drawing was made, at the time Giovanni’s death.

While the 1593 inventory, listing and describing all thirty-five statues and seventy-two busts present at that date, has been kept as the primary source for the choice of exhibits, Zuccari’s sketch has allowed these scholars to hypothesize guidelines for reconstructing the reasoning behind the choice of display of individual works. Although, it was not possible to locate and identify all of the 107 works that originally decorated this room, seventy-seven originals and eleven casts have been installed in order to reconstruct a convincing layout. The display revolves around five important sculptures which illustrate the superb quality of the collection and the ingenuity of its original installation: Bacchus, Silenus, and Aphrodite (cat. 14; cat. 37; cat. 39) occupy the main niches on the west, south, and east walls; Ganymede (cat. 18); raped by Zeus disguised as an eagle, hangs iconically from the ceiling-lantern; and Cupid drawing his bow, stands by Zeus, disguised as an eagle, hanging iconically from the ceiling-lantern, and Cupid drawing his bow, stands in the centre of the room.

The latter, for safety and conservation reasons, is visible thanks to virtual reality goggles, which allow the viewer to observe several additional pieces not on display. Experiencing the Tribuna refurbished enables the viewer to appreciate the integral nature of the architecture and sculptural works in the collection, with the polychrome marbles in the furnishing echoing the rich variety of materials used on the sculptures.

It is to be hoped that the success of Domus Grimani 1594-2019 might lead to an extension of the refurbishment of the palace to the other wings of the first floor. Already impoverished by the loss of Hieronymus Bosch’s Visions of the Afterlife, the remaining rooms now appear rather desolate, as almost all of the small permanent collection has been allocated to the current exhibition. According to the 1593 inventory, the courtyard of the palace and the chamber dedicated to Giovanni’s grandfather, Doge Antonio Grimani (1414–1523), initiator of the family fortune, displayed the greatest number of ancient works, after the Tribuna. The current contrast between the latter and the Doge’s room should encourage fresh inquiry and new lines of research which will hopefully result in further interest and investment in this unique museum.

Paraphrasing the inscription over the land entrance to Palazzo Grimani, the astonishing collection and the palace itself were conceived not only for private enjoyment, but also as a civic contribution to the city of Venice (genio Urbis augustae / sanae urbis). When Giovanni addressed the Venetian Republic in 1587, he wished for his family’s legacy to be recognized as a landmark of his homeland. He would surely have been pleased to see his historical residence become a public museum. The restitution of works from his outstanding collection to their original location presents a unique opportunity for scholars and lovers of art to appreciate the breadth of his ambition as a collector and citizen. It is hoped that this beautiful and thoughtful exhibition will give further visibility to Palazzo Grimani and lure a greater number of visitors to this hidden Venetian gem.

NOTES


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Fig. 2 © 2019 Museo Nacional del Prado
Fig. 3 © 2019, The Museum of Modern Art/Scala, Florence
Fig. 4 © RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Franck Raux
Fig. 5 © Museo Nacional del Prado

That useful, that honest, that faithful, that disinterested, that entertaining animal: on Colin Wоllaston’s dogs, by James Clifton

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Fig. 4 © 2019  National Museum of Stockholm

The collection formed at Government House by Robert, 2nd Earl Grosvenor, by Peter Humfrey

Fig. 1, 4, 6, 7, 8 & 9, 11, 13 & 15 © 2019 The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston,
Fig. 10 & 11 Biblioteca Nacional
Fig. 12 © Museo de Bellas Artes de Valencia
Fig. 13 © The Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, Co.Durham (BM.570)

New insight on the Genoese tomb of Archbishop Martin de Ayala, Valencia Cathedral (1596), and Jean de Jouven’s ‘living’ presence by Lorenzo Grazzi

Fig. 1 © National Portrait Gallery London
Fig. 2 & 3 Courtesy of the author
Fig. 4 © RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Franck Raux

Paintings of the Men of Affairs by Titian and his studio by Paul Joannides

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