

AMERICAN LATIUM

American Artists and Travelers in and around Rome
in the Age of the Grand Tour

Proceedings of the International Conference edited by

Christopher M.S. Johns, Tommaso Manfredi, Karin Wolfe



ACCADEMIA NAZIONALE DI SAN LUCA

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Thomas Hiram Hotchkiss, *Torre di Schiavi*, 1865, detail.

Smithsonian American Art Museum, 1977.52

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Contents

- 7 Introduction
Karin Wolfe

THE AMERICAN GRAND TOUR: FROM OLD MASTERS TO THE NEW WORLD

- 17 Copying Old Masters for the New World: American Painters in Eighteenth-Century Rome
Jonny Yarker
- 31 James Bowdoin III and Ward Nicholas Boylston in Italy: American Collectors in the Later Eighteenth Century
Sarah Cantor
- 43 John Singleton Copley in Rome: The Challenge of the Old Masters Accepted
Christopher M.S. Johns
- 53 London Between America and Continental Europe: Art and Academies
Martin Postle
- 67 The Prince and the President: Antonio Canova and Benjamin West at the Royal Academy in London
Francesco Moschini
- 79 John Neal, the Old Masters, and the American Muse
Francesca Orestano
- 91 'In the Beginning there was the Word': American Writings on Raphael from the Founding Fathers to the Gilded Age
Linda Wolk-Simon

AMERICAN LATIUM: SITES AND ITINERARIES IN AND AROUND ROME

- 103 American Itineraries in Rome and the Campagna
Fabrizio Di Marco
- 113 A Grave in a Foreign Land: Early American Presence at the Protestant Burying-Ground in Rome
Nicholas Stanley-Price
- 123 Thomas Cole and the Aqueducts: *Plein Air* Painting in the Roman Campagna
Lisa Beaven
- 139 Thomas Cole, Desolation, and the Ruins of Rome
David R. Marshall

- 153 Scenery Found: John Gadsby Chapman and Open-Air Oil Sketching in and around Rome, 1830-1882
Mary K. McGuigan
- 165 American and European Artists and Intellectuals in Nineteenth-Century Latium: the "School of the *Castelli Romani*" and the Locanda Martorelli in Ariccia
Francesco Petrucci
- 169 Living and Creating in Antiquity: Roman Residences and Studios of Thomas Gibson Crawford, William Wetmore Story and Moses Jacob Ezekiel
Pier Paolo Racioppi

AMERICANS AND THE ARTISTIC CULTURE OF ROME: TOWARD AN AMERICAN ART

- 183 Americans on the Grand Tour and Angelica Kauffman in Rome
Wendy Wassyng Roworth
- 195 Championing Liberty: the Roman Sculptor Giuseppe Ceracchi in Britain and in America
Karin Wolfe
- 215 The Rome of Charles Bulfinch
Tommaso Manfredi
- 229 Thomas Jefferson: Rome in America
Maria Cristina Loi
- 239 A Painter and Diplomat: The Two Careers of James Edward Freeman and their Correspondences
John F. McGuigan Jr
- 257 Forgotten Fervor: Paul Akers in Rome
Arlene Palmer
- 269 Undressing America: Nineteenth-Century Expatriate Sculptors in Rome and the Problem of Nudity
Kevin Salatino
- 287 Bibliography
- 303 In memoriam and acknowledgements

AMERICAN LATIUM

AMERICAN ARTISTS AND TRAVELERS IN AND AROUND ROME IN THE AGE OF THE GRAND TOUR



Thomas Cole, *The Course of Empire, I: The Savage State*, 1836, oil on canvas, New York Historical Society (detail)

Introduction

Karin Wolfe

The project *American Latium: American Artists and Travelers in and around Rome in the Age of the Grand Tour* was first presented at the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Annual Conference in 2015, and developed into the international conference sponsored by the Accademia Nazionale di San Luca and hosted by the Centro Studi Americani at Palazzo Mattei in Rome on 7-8 June 2018, convened by Christopher M.S. Johns, Tommaso Manfredi, and Karin Wolfe.¹ The premise for *American Latium* was to consider the entangled and reciprocal history of cultural transmission and translation involving American artists, collectors, writers and diplomats and a European network of Rome-based artists, travelers and intellectuals between 1760 and 1870. Global interactions were formed in these years between Italy and America at a critical juncture for both nations. Exposure to Italy, and particularly the turbulent international politics of Rome, stimulated Americans to reflect on their own recent acquisition of national identity and consider the significance of a national American aesthetic. The remarkable degree of cosmopolitanism found in Rome made it a locus of cultural erudition and a place of experiment and creativity for artists of differing nationalities, a place where ancient history was cross-pollinated with the experience of the modern. The city of Rome as a site of universal artistic pilgrimage was articulated by William M. Gillespie, a traveler from New York to Rome in 1843-44 (Fig. 1):

'Rome is the home of all Art, and therefore the country of Artists of all nations. Wherever their bodies may have chanced to have been born, their souls are citizens of Rome. It is scarcely a metaphor to say that one inhales the spirit of Art in every breath that one draws in the atmosphere of the Eternal city. The great works of antiquity salute the stranger on every side. The inhabitants ... welcome with enthusiasm every species of artistical excellence. It is no wonder, then, that thousands of foreign artists have made it their temporary abode, and that many have adopted it as their permanent home. Here of old came Michael Angelo, Raphael, Annibale Caracci, Claude, Poussin, Salvator Rosa, and their compeers, as to the Metropolis of all art. They felt it a glory and an honor to live in Rome, and for this they forsook the place of their birth; not loving it less, but on the contrary, with the most farsighted patriotism. ... Among our own countrymen, Benjamin West and Washington Allston owe to Rome the development and cultivation of their genius. At the present moment, Rome is thronged with Sculptors and Painters from the four quarters of the globe. Their studios may almost be termed continuations of the Vati-

can museum, and offer to the cultivated tourist rich stores of instruction and enjoyment.'²

Beginning in 1760 when the first Americans arrived in Rome to be challenged by the old masters, this volume, divided into three parts, covers a wide range of transnational cultural phenomena. The first section foregrounds the American version of the traditional British Grand Tour to continental Europe and Italy, and the London connection, and examines subjects ranging from the earliest copies made by Americans of Italian art, to early American collecting of Italian art, to the earliest American art criticism and writings on art. The second section discusses the Italian experience of American travelers and artists in Rome and Latium focusing on the itineraries and sites Americans frequented and favored, and American artists' responses to Italy in a range of media. The final section considers the American presence in Italy up until 1870 when Rome became the capital of a united Italy and how the cultural heritage of Rome and Latium profoundly influenced and informed American art, architecture and taste. As the majority of American Grand Tourists traveled to and from the continent by way of London, several papers take up the question posed by Martin Postle of 'how London as an artistic and academic hub, positioned itself between the old world represented by Italy and the new world represented by America.'

The American Grand Tour in Europe: From Old Masters to the New World

The American Grand Tour began later than that of other European nations in the eighteenth century. It followed the path of British travelers, who had preceded the North Americans by two centuries. As Sarah Cantor explains in her paper, the Scottish painter John Smibert (1688-1751) was a key figure in the American Grand Tour and the dissemination of Italian culture in North America. He traveled to Italy in 1719, spending two years touring, copying and collecting art, and painting portraits, before moving to Boston, where in 1734 he established an art studio and workshop. There he played a pivotal role in the training of American artists and in educating the American public. Smibert's unique collection of Italian prints and drawings, plaster casts after antiquities, and his own painted copies after Italian masters were made available to New England artists who trained with him and to the wider public.



1. Washington Allston, *Italian Landscape*, 1814, oil on canvas, 118 x 183 cm. Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, 1949.113.
2. Sarah Miriam Peale, *John Neal*, c. 1823, oil on canvas, 72.39 x 58.74 cm. Portland Museum of Art.

Before the nineteenth century, the majority of American artists had no formal training. John Neal (1793-1876) (Fig. 2), the Portland Maine writer and art critic, discussed in the essay by Francesca Orestano, wrote of his American compatriots in 1829: "Their progress too, is altogether astonishing, if we consider the disadvantages under which they have laboured, with no models, no casts, no academy figures, and little or no opportunity for them to see the old masters gathered together, where they could either be copied or studied with impunity."³ As Orestano highlights, under Neal's mentorship two talented Maine-based artists with no formal training traveled to Italy in 1851: the sculptor Paul Akers (1825-1861), the subject of Arlene Palmer's contribution, and the painter who shared his studio, John Rollin Tilton (1828-1888), (see Fig. 10 in Orestano's essay).

Smibert's collection of European art, the only one in pre-revolutionary America, was generally accessible until the middle of the eighteenth century, inspiring the first generation of American-born artists, including John Singleton Copley (1738-1815), whose artistic awakening in Italy is discussed in this volume by Christopher M.S. Johns and Jonny Yarker, and whose later London career is examined by Postle. Elements of Smibert's collection later formed the nucleus of the first American art museum at Bowdoin College in Maine, founded with a bequest from James Bowdoin III (1752-1811), the subject, with Ward Nicholas Boylston (1747-1828), of Sarah Cantor's contribution. Cantor traces the itinerary in Italy of the 1773 Grand Tour of Bowdoin and Boylston, which

Boylston recorded in a diary, and examines their cultural interests, collecting activities, patronage and legacies.

The first American artist to arrive in Rome was the painter and Quaker Benjamin West (1738-1820). He was one of the few Americans not to travel to Italy by way of London, sailing directly from Philadelphia to Livorno (Leghorn) aboard a merchant ship, arriving in July 1760 at the age of 22. West was viewed by Italians as an eccentric and exotic during his three-year stay.

West became the protagonist of a confrontation between the emerging culture of America and the ancient civilization of Rome. His “otherness” greatly aided him in coming to the notice of Rome’s most important artistic and cultural figures. Soon after his arrival, West was introduced to the elderly Cardinal Alessandro Albani, at that time nearly blind.⁴ Assuming that West must be an indigenous native – a common Italian misconception until the mid-nineteenth century – Albani asked his courtiers whether the artist was black or white. When he was informed that West was white he exclaimed in surprise, ‘What, as fair as I am?’, which amused the assembled company, as Albani had a dark complexion, much darker than West’s. After touching West’s face Albani deduced he was young, whereupon he and his court began to debate excitedly whether West represented the true embodiment of a *sauvage*. As Martin Postle describes, as an experiment to test West’s unformed cultural instincts, it was proposed that he be taken to see the greatest works of classical art in the Vatican collections to witness the effect which these would produce on him.

After this initial confrontation between the new world and the old, West rapidly adapted to Roman society and culture. Although he was a practicing portraitist when he arrived in Rome, West, like the majority of American artists who had not had the opportunity to frequent Smibert’s studio, knew the old masters only through engravings, had no formal training and, as he himself observed did not know how to draw properly. In Rome West attended the Capitoline Accademia del Nudo which had been founded in 1754. It was led by Anton Raphael Mengs, who was also *Principe* (President) of the Accademia di San Luca. Mengs exerted an enormous influence over West’s development, as Jonny Yarker discusses in his essay. West, on Mengs’ advice, traveled to Florence, Bologna, Parma and Venice, studying and making copies of the compositions of Renaissance masters. This was standard practice for European artists and travelers on the Grand Tour, and included primarily the works of Raphael, Correggio and Titian. West did not make a copy of Raphael’s *Madonna della Sedia* in Florence because of ill-health, although he had been commissioned to do so, yet he later painted his wife Elizabeth Shewell and his son, named Raphael, posed after Raphael’s famous composition in reverse (Fig. 3).⁵ As Linda Wolk-Simon explains in her contribution, Raphael figured on the American art agenda from the very beginning, although before 1900 only Raphael copies made their way back across the Atlantic, as the scarcity and cost of the artist’s works made it impossible for American collectors to acquire them.

Yarker foregrounds that the “culture of copying”, which was

a fundamental aspect of Roman art education, was also important for the tourist market. A number of American painters and sculptors copied old masters not only to gain artistic experience but also to sell them to support their Italian stay. However, as Yarker emphasizes, West copied not only Renaissance painters, but also Baroque masters such as Domenichino and Guido Reni, and contemporary masters, including Mengs. Even after he moved to London, West encouraged American artists heading to Rome to copy the paintings of Reni.

As a history painting conceived and executed in Rome, John Singleton Copley’s *Ascension*, discussed by Christopher M.S. Johns, illustrates the mechanics of this type of conscious imitation. The painter, who had arrived in Rome by autumn 1774, saw his Italian trip as an opportunity to ‘return to England with an Eclat that would establish me in the most effectual manner, not only as a portrait, but also as a Historical Painter.’⁶ Until he traveled to Italy, Copley’s only historical canvases had been painted copies of engravings, but once in Italy, undaunted by his limited experience in the colonies, he copied a number of oil paintings on commission for British clients. Following West’s example, he believed that an artist could only be truly great through study of original masterpieces of painting and antique sculpture.

Inspired by Raphael’s *Transfiguration*, the most famous picture in Rome at that time, Copley’s *Ascension* was both a homage to the Renaissance artist’s work and an attempt to surpass it. As Johns notes, while he worked on the painting, Copley wrote to his half brother, the painter Henry Pelham (1748/9-1806), that the *Ascension* had been praised by the Scottish artist Gavin Hamilton (1723-1798) and the Italian

3. Benjamin West, *Portrait of Mrs. West with her son Raphael*, c. 1770, oil on canvas, diam. 90.2 cm. Utah Museum of Fine Arts, University of Utah, UMFA1982.007.003.





4. John Izard Middleton, *Pointed cyclopien gate at Segni*, colored aquatint. *Grecian remains in Italy: a description of cyclopien walls, and of Roman antiquities: with topographical and picturesque views of ancient Latium*, London, Edward Orme, 1812.

Opposite

5. George Inness, *Olive Trees at Tivoli*, 1873, gouache, watercolor, and graphite on blue wove paper with colored fibers, 17.8 x 31.4 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, N.Y., Morris K. Jesup Fund, 1989, 1989.287.

printmaker Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778). Copley never finished the work and he kept it for himself, surely as a reminder of the positive reception it had received in Rome, and as Johns proposes, as an ‘aide memoire for the classical tradition and, above all, for Raphael.’

During the three years he had spent in Italy, West was made a member of art academies in Florence, Bologna and Parma, and in London he contributed to the founding of the Royal Academy of Arts in 1768. As Yarker underlines in his essay, American artists were attracted to West’s studio there from the moment it opened in 1763, where they encountered the myth of Rome before setting off for Italy, a subject Martin Postle explores in his discussion of the American presence in art academies in London.

In his contribution, Francesco Moschini considers the historic context of the official banquet at the Royal Academy

in London offered by the President Benjamin West in 1815 to the celebrated artist Antonio Canova (1757–1822), at that date *Principe perpetuo* of the Accademia di San Luca in Rome. Canova had traveled to London to see the Greek sculptures from the Parthenon in Athens that had been acquired by Thomas Bruce, 7th Earl of Elgin, the ‘Elgin marbles’, but he also acted as an emissary for Pope Pius VII Chiaramonti, having negotiated for the Pope the return to Italy of the artworks trafficked by Napoléon. While in London, Canova was instrumental in brokering to gift to Britain a selection of plaster casts of antique sculptures from the Vatican collections, greatly facilitating the study from the antique for artists in the capital.

American Latium:

Sites and Itineraries in and around Rome

The second part of *American Latium* develops the theme of American cultural itineraries in and around Rome. One of the earliest Americans to explore Latium was the artist and first American archaeologist John Izard Middleton (1785–1849). Middleton traveled extensively in Latium in 1807–9 surveying and drawing ancient polygonal walls that pre-dated the Romans, as was discussed by Luca Attenni at the conference (Fig. 4).⁷ In the introductory chapter to his 1812 publication of his endeavours Middleton explained that his artistic passion, and the accurate drawings he made, were what impelled his scholarship: ‘The views therefore which are now offered to the public are not meant merely to accompany the text; they are the principal object of this publication. I write, because I have drawn.’⁸

Middleton was followed by numerous American artists who were drawn to Rome and the Roman Campagna not only as the site of great art, but as a place of intrinsic interest. In his contribution Fabrizio Di Marco analyzes specific neighborhoods in the ancient city where Americans resided and worked: the cafès, academies and studios they frequented, and streets made popular by American artists such as Via Margutta. This street, not far from the Spanish steps where Americans congregated, had hosted foreign artists to Rome from the sixteenth century onwards, and by the nineteenth century was of particular importance for the American artistic community, as it offered a range of international art academies and studio-residences.

As Mary K. McGuigan has demonstrated, an American academic presence followed on the heels of the first informal English academy, founded in 1821, that hosted an evening life school, which two Americans at any given time could attend.⁹ By March 1842, the first American academy had opened, as Thomas Cole (1801–1848) noted that year: ‘An American Academy has been started here and is at present going on well. A good room is provided with models every evening.’¹⁰ This first attempt at a national institution lasted only a short time, to be replaced by the American Sketch Club in 1843, which met at its members’ houses by rotation. This was dissolved by 1848, when the political upheavals engulfing Europe meant that fewer Americans were traveling to Rome. The idea of a formal American Academy in Rome was proposed in 1893,

‘to promote the pursuit of studies and advanced research in the arts and in the humanities.’ Di Marco traces the history of this still flourishing institution, inaugurated in 1914 on the Janiculum, designed and built by Charles Follen McKim (1847–1909) and his partners William Rutherford Mead (1846–1928) and Stanford White (1853–1906).

Prior to the creation of the first English and American academies in the papal capital, an artist associated with the French Academy in Rome, Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes (1750–1819) had from the time of his stay in Rome in 1778 nurtured the development of the *plein air* (outside in front of the motif) oil sketch.¹¹ By the nineteenth century the practice of painting *en plein air* had become enormously popular and large groups of artists, increasingly including Americans, headed for the Alban hills as soon as the weather stabilized in spring. American artists also interacted with Rome’s professional community of models, a social phenomenon which has been foregrounded by Mary K. McGuigan’s research.¹² She argues in her essay that an interest in life drawing was not limited to figurative artists, but extended to landscapists, who regularly incorporated figures into their compositions. The experiences, itineraries and painting and sketching practices of American artists in the environs of Rome are described in detail by Fabrizio Di Marco, Lisa Beaven, David Marshall, Mary K. McGuigan and Francesco Petrucci.

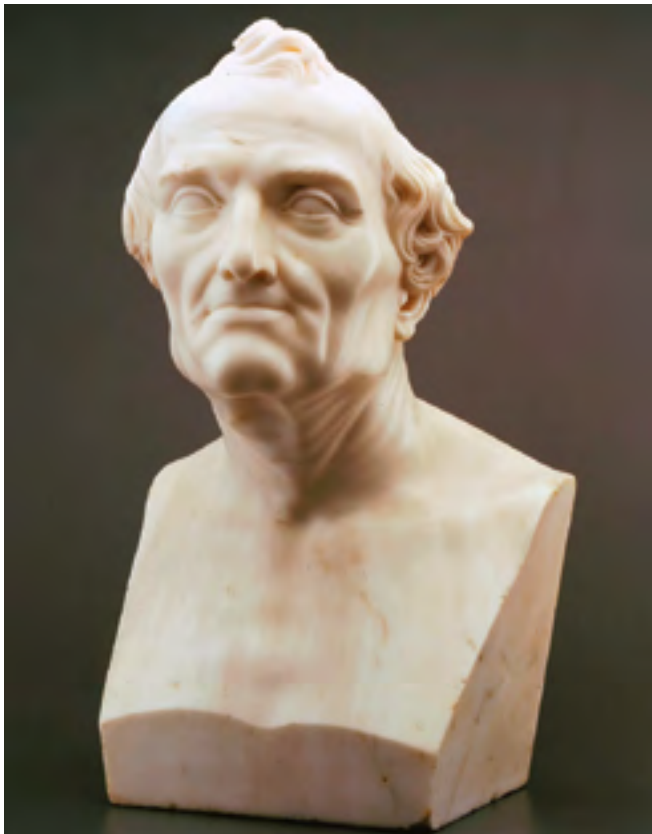
Artists such as Cole, Samuel Morse (1791–1872), Asher Brown Durand (1796–1886), Jasper Francis Cropsey (1823–1900), Sanford Robinson Gifford (1823–1880) and George Innes (1825–1894) followed an established itinerary to Ariccia, Nemi, Albano and then Tivoli to sketch and paint the landscape (Fig. 5). Some, like Gifford, journeyed further in-

land to Subiaco, riding up the valley of Anio from Tivoli to Subiaco where he hired donkeys to climb the steep slope up to the Sacre Specco, the shrine of St. Benedict.¹³ From Subiaco they rode three hours up rough mountain paths to ‘Cerbara’ (Cervara). Gifford was typical in that he traveled with other American artists, as most lacked the language skills to undertake a sketching trip with artists from European countries. In his essay Francesco Petrucci describes the eternal allure of Ariccia as a destination for landscape painters, and the attraction of the bohemian inn the *Locanda Martorelli* (opened in 1818) which became the main meeting place and hostelry of the various national artistic communities in the Alban area, including many American writers and poets.

In her contribution Lisa Beaven examines the itinerary in the Roman Campagna of Thomas Cole, arguing that, contrary to what has been supposed, his oil sketches of the aqueducts were not painted *en plein air* but are instead compositional sketches made in the studio. The *pleinairists* often chose the same sites as their predecessors going back to the seventeenth century in order to pay homage to them, but David R. Marshall underlines in his essay that Cole was resistant to this culture, and instead based his view of Tivoli on meticulous topographical drawings made on site that were indifferent to tradition. Instead the ruin landscapes of the Campagna held a different significance for him: that, like Rome, modern civilizations were destined to decline and fall.

Increasingly, American artists saw the potential of their time in Rome for developing their careers back in America, which required the creation of an American aesthetic. As Theodore Stebbins Jr declared in *The Lure of Italy*, his groundbreaking 1992 exhibition and catalogue that inspired *American La-*





6. Anonymous, carved, c. 1815, after a model by Giuseppe Ceracchi of c. 1790-94, *Amerigo Vespucci*, marble, 53.3 cm. White House Collection / White House Historical Association.

Opposite

7. Massimiliano Ravenna, carved 1816, after a model by Giuseppe Ceracchi of 1790-91, *George Washington*, marble, 57 cm. Mount Vernon, Virginia.

tium: 'The artist went to Italy to discover himself, and to find out what it would mean and what it would take, to create an American art.'¹⁴ In the often physically unhealthy climate of Rome, some never left, and found their way into the Protestant burying-ground in Rome, a historically fascinating foreign enclave discussed by Nicholas Stanley-Price in his essay. The least itinerant American artists in Rome were the sculptors, as their weighty materials tied them to their studios. Many of these studios served the dual purpose of residences and social and commercial hubs for the international community in Rome, as Pier Paolo Racioppi examines in the case of three sculptors, Thomas Gibson Crawford (1814-1857), William Wetmore Story (1819-1895) and Moses Jacob Ezekiel (1844-1917). Racioppi posits in his contribution that these sculptors, by renting studio-residences in historic Roman aristocratic palaces and villas associated themselves with the fame, notoriety, and long history of the Roman nobility in order to integrate themselves into local society and to attract international patronage.

A compelling exception to the chronological limits of *American Latium*, Ezekiel, discussed by Racioppi, with additional

research by Di Marco, arrived in Rome only after unification in 1874. Ezekiel fell in love with Rome in all its antique glory and unification chaos, with its artists, writers, musicians, churchmen, reformers and politicians of all nationalities and convictions. In a highly romantic gesture he moved into the ruins of the Baths of Diocletian to live and to work. Having become a cultural fixture of Roman life for almost forty years, Ezekiel died during the First World War in his last Roman residence, a tower in the Aurelian walls overlooking the Pincian Hill.

*Americans and the Artistic Culture of Rome:
Toward an American Art*

American travelers to Rome set out with the intention to improve upon European models in order to fashion a cultural template for themselves as a nation. As Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826) wrote from Paris in 1785, the arts were a path 'to improve the taste of my countrymen, to increase their reputation, to reconcile to them the respect of the world, and to procure them its praise.'¹⁵

Jefferson never reached Rome, but he thought a great deal about the ancient city, as Maria Cristina Loi explains in her essay. He brought a modern version of Rome to America by making use of his library to inform his various architectural projects, such as for the University of Virginia and Monticello. As Tommaso Manfredi discusses in his contribution, for Jefferson, architecture was the most important of the Roman arts for American travelers to study.¹⁶

Charles Bulfinch (1763-1844), the first native-born American architect who would design the Capitol in 1818, traveled to Britain, France and Italy in 1785-86, including a short stay in Rome in the spring of 1786. As Manfredi explains, this three-week sojourn is the least examined episode in studies of Bulfinch's life and work, but was a formative cultural and social experience for the architect. Bulfinch's tour has been seen as wholly dependent on letters of contact that Jefferson had supplied the younger architect but when Bulfinch met Jefferson at the end of 1785 the latter had not visited Italy, which he did only in 1787, well after Bulfinch had completed his tour, and, as we have seen, never reached Rome.

As Manfredi documents, in Rome Bulfinch encountered the Rome of the Grand Tour – as recorded by William Short, Jefferson's personal secretary, during his visit there a year later in 1788 – and the Rome of cosmopolitan Italians who were open to international culture. The protagonist of this second Rome was Francesco Milizia (1725-1798), historian and architectural theoretician, who was described by Andrea Memmo, the patrician politician and proponent of Enlightenment values in 1786 as 'the colonel of the philosopher architects.'¹⁷ Milizia's *Principi di architettura civile* (*Principles of Civil Architecture*) published in 1781 considered architecture to be a pragmatic expression of philosophy and natural science, a distinctly English approach with affinities to the outlook of Bulfinch and Jefferson. Jefferson, who later received the treatise as a gift described it as: 'the valuable work of Milizia on Architecture. Searching, as he does, for the sources and prototypes of our ideas of beauty in that fine art, he appears

to have elicited them with more correctness than any other author I have read.¹⁸

Jefferson's statement clearly demonstrates that his ideas on architecture were linked to progressive Roman architectural theory as Manfredi foregrounds, and not defined exclusively by classical and Renaissance sources, as generally assumed.

After the American Revolutionary Wars, there was an urgent political need for an original American iconography. In 1783 the Founding Fathers passed a congressional resolution for a monument to George Washington.¹⁹ To accomplish this they turned to European artistic models and European artists. One such was the Roman sculptor Giuseppe Ceracchi (1751-1801), a rabid Republican with Masonic connections who would later be executed during the French revolution. Ceracchi's career is explored by Karin Wolfe in her essay. He was the son of a Roman goldsmith and studied at the Accademia di San Luca and the Capitoline Accademia del Nudo before traveling to London in 1773 in pursuit of professional opportunities. In Britain Ceracchi was exposed to a thriving art market which was entrepreneurial in spirit and to political ideals of democracy and liberty. In 1790 Ceracchi traveled to America hoping to win the commission for the monument to Washington. His project failed to attract enough support and Ceracchi returned to Europe where he persevered in attempts to attract American patronage by producing a series of busts of national importance, such as of Christopher Columbus and of Amerigo Vespucci (Fig. 6), as well as of contemporary figures he had studied from life, including of Washington (Fig. 7), of Thomas Jefferson and of Alexander Hamilton.

Ceracchi traveled to America a second time in 1794-1795 to present a new, more grandiose project which he entitled "Monument Designed to Perpetuate the Memory of American Liberty". The hundred foot-tall design featured a colossal figure of Liberty pointing to a column inscribed with the Declaration of Independence. Not surprisingly, this costly and extravagant second project also failed to find patronage, notwithstanding that Ceracchi attempted to fund it by public subscription. He returned to Europe, and took up the French revolutionary cause, disillusioned over what he perceived as American civic indifference toward national monuments.

American sculptors in Rome were initially less engaged with revolutionary issues and were more concerned with introducing their countrymen to the classical sculptural ideal while attempting to support themselves by meeting an increasing American market for 'Roman' souvenirs. These drew heavily on antique prototypes, such as the several marble copies of the *Daphne* after the bust modeled in 1853 by Harriet Goodhue Hosmer (1830-1908) (Fig. 8). What most of the statues modeled in Rome by American sculptors had in common was the sensuous potential of the naked human figure, but what was inspirational in Rome proved controversial in the more puritanical environment of America, as is explored in the contribution by Kevin Salatino. Tracing the gradual acceptance of the artistic nude in America he concludes that, it was 'the fact of Rome, its cultural heritage, its pervasive influence, and its embedded presence in the mind and marrow of every American who aspired to high culture and established

taste' that would persuade the American public to accept the nude in art.²⁰

While American intellectuals and artists attempted to come to terms with the culture of Rome, erudite Romans increasingly showed an interest in the American experiment and in Americans as exponents of liberty. Already by 1797 an American consulate was providing an official American presence in the papal city. But in 1798-99 a brief Roman Republic was declared, followed by Napoleon's invasion of northern Italy and papal restoration until a French conquest in 1808 that lasted until 1815. In contrast to Cardinal Albani's ingenuous reception of West in 1760, when he was confused about whether or not he was a native American and when the papacy was still an important player in world politics, in 1818, Pope Pius VII Chiaramonti reflected on an entirely new world order in which the papacy had little political power while America was now a significant force. In a private audience with the linguist and protégé of Jefferson, George Ticknor (1791-1871), the Pope praised the liberality of Americans, specifically noting the Americans 'universal toleration ... the prodigious increase of their population ... [and] the superiority of [their] merchant vessels over those of all other nations' concluding that 'the time would soon come when [America] should be able to dictate to the Old World.'²¹

By the third decade of the nineteenth century, American artists and prominent cultural figures began to fully integrate





8. Harriet Goodhue Hosmer, *Daphne*, marble carved 1854 after original model of 1853, 69.9 x 49.8 x 31.8 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1973.133.

Opposite

9. George Peter Alexander Healy, *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow together with his Daughter, Edith, at the Arch of Titus in the Forum*, 1871, oil on canvas, 188 x 124.5 cm. The Newark Museum, Newark, New Jersey.

into Roman society, and Americans also became involved in Italian revolutionary politics. John F. McGuigan Jr documents the extraordinary dual career of the American painter James Edward Freeman (1810-1884), who, after a year's sojourn in Rome in 1836-37 to study art, returned to Italy in 1840.

The expatriate American community had a great deal of sympathy with the *Risorgimento* and during the final days of the Roman Republic of 1849 Freeman became acting US consul to Rome. McGuigan Jr recounts that Freeman watched through his telescope from the Pincio on 30 April 1849 as Giuseppe Garibaldi's Republican forces repulsed the French army from their attack on Rome, and was in Rome when the French breached the ancient walls of the city on 1 July. Freeman saved the lives of over 3000 Italian patriots by having his office issue travel documents to secure safe passage, and he personally intervened with the French occupiers. While experiencing the horrors of the battles first-hand, Freeman nevertheless continued to paint, and McGuigan Jr discusses

his work championing freedom and democracy through images of Italian children and beggars, ennobled by their sacrifice and patriotism.

Exchange between America and Rome was not limited to artists but extended to the scientific and literary communities, as discussed by Wendy Wassyng Roworth in her contribution on the scientist and doctor John Morgan (1735-1789) of Philadelphia. Dr. Morgan arrived in Rome in 1764 and followed in the footsteps of the Grand Tour as perfected by the British, touring the papal capital in the same suite as the Whig politician Edward Augustus, Duke of York, and availing himself of the same agents and cultural intermediaries. He was received into various literary and scientific societies across Europe, beginning with the 'Belles Lettres' Society of Rome, demonstrating the full cross-cultural immersion on offer to early American travelers.

Notwithstanding the fundamentally British Grand Tour program he undertook in Rome, Dr. Morgan commissioned a portrait of himself from the Swiss painter Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807) that depicted him with his scientific texts and not with the typical Grand Tour antiquarian objects favored by British travelers. As Roworth explains, Kauffman painted many portraits of Americans, surely on account of her friendship with West whom she had met in Italy, and who recommended her to Americans who called on him in London. When they reached American shores, Kauffman's penetrating portraits influenced the first generation of American artists such as Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827).

Writers were particularly responsive to the collision of the idea of Rome and its environs with the topographical reality. Inspired by the example of Goethe's *Italianische Reise* which provided a powerful model for being changed by Rome, Americans embraced the personal change that the Roman experience effected in them. Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) wrote that:

'It is very singular, the sad embrace with which Rome takes possession of the soul. Though we intend to return in a few months, and for a longer residence than this has been, yet we felt the city pulling at our heart strings far more than London did, where we shall probably never spend much time again. It may be because the intellect finds a home there, more than any other spot in the world, and wins the heart to stay with it.'²²

The Portland Maine poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882), expressed a similar sentiment: 'Italy remains to the poet the land of his predilection, to the artist the land of his necessity, and to all, the land of dreams and visions of delight' (see Fig. 3 in Arlene Palmer's essay in this volume).²³ Longfellow, who had taught himself Italian during his first sojourn in Italy in 1827-28, later translated classics of Italian literature including Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Michelangelo's poetry. He epitomizes the volume *American Latium* as he sojourned in Ariccia during his early Italian tour dedicating a chapter in his European diary to the town, detailing the main itineraries of the *plein air* painters, described by Francesco Petrucci.²⁴ Forty years later in 1868-69, after the death of his beloved second wife Frances Appleton in 1861, Long-

fellow returned to Rome with his daughter Edith. They were depicted twice by America's first portraitist of international repute who kept a studio in Rome, George Peter Alexander Healy (1813-1894) – the second painting, finished after their departure, is a unique composition which recent research suggests was based on a photographic image of the Forum that Healy owned and which Longfellow admired (Fig. 9).²⁵ Indeed this emblematic picture, showing Longfellow and Edith standing underneath the Arch of Titus also features three American painters then resident in Rome in the right foreground, the seated, sketching figure of Jervis McEntee (1828-1891), the standing bearded Frederic Church (1826-1900), and Healy himself leaning over McEntee's shoulder observing him sketching. Longfellow and Edith have been reduced to *staffage* in the background, in a diachronic vision of Grand Tour portraiture, in which art in Rome is the protagonist, from the ancients to the moderns, including antique ruins, landscape, architecture, sculpture, poetry (in the figure of Longfellow), painting (in the vignette of the three painters in the foreground), and even the nascent art of photography.



Notes

- 1 The 46th American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS) Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, 21 March 2015, session convened and chaired by Karin Wolfe, with contributions by Christopher M.S. Johns, Tommaso Manfredi and Vincent Pham.
- 2 Gillespie 1845, pp. 175-6.
- 3 See Francesca Orestano in this volume.
- 4 For the episode describing West's meeting with Cardinal Albani, the "Anecdote of cardinal Albani", see Galt 1816, pp. 129-31.
- 5 On West's *Portrait of Mrs. West with her son Raphael*, c. 1770, see Troyen 1992.
- 6 Adams, Jones and Ford 1914, p. 300.
- 7 Attenni 2019; Attenni 2020.
- 8 Middleton 1812, p. 2.
- 9 For the history of American art academies in Rome described here, and for previous bibliography on this subject, see McGuigan 2009 and Fabrizio Di Marco in this volume.
- 10 See McGuigan 2009, p. 53.
- 11 See de Valenciennes 1800, pp. 404-7, quoted in Galassi 1996, p. 27.
- 12 See McGuigan 2009.
- 13 Sanford Robinson Gifford papers, 1840s-1900, circa 1960s-1970s. Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, vol. 2, European Letters March 1856-August 1856, p. 124.
- 14 Stebbins Jr 1992, p. 20.
- 15 To James Madison from Thomas Jefferson, 20 September 1785, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-08-02-0191> [Original source: *The Papers of James Madison*, vol. 8, 10 March 1784-28 March 1786, ed. Robert A. Rutland and William M.E. Rachal. Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1973, pp. 366-9]; on Jefferson's passion for the arts, see in this volume Linda Wolk-Simon.
- 16 See Tommaso Manfredi in this volume.
- 17 *Ibidem*.
- 18 Cited by Manfredi in this volume.
- 19 Library of Congress, George Washington Papers, Series 4, General Correspondence, 1697-1799, MSS 44693: Reel 092, Continental Congress, August 7, 1783, Resolution and Partial Copy on Equestrian Statue.
- 20 See Kevin Salatino in this volume.
- 21 Letter to Elisha Ticknor from George Ticknor, Rome, February 1, 1818, in *Life, Letters and Journals of George Ticknor*, ed. By George S. Hillard, vol. I, 2nd ed., London, Sampson Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1876, p. 144.
- 22 Hawthorne 1871b, p. 221.
- 23 See Longfellow 1886, Chapter VII, Journal 1851, January 9, 'My last lecture on Italian literature', pp. 186-7, note 1.
- 24 For Longfellow in Ariccia see Francesco Petrucci in this volume, with previous bibliography.
- 25 The earlier Healy painting of Longfellow and his daughter which focuses on the sitters' close relationship is in the collections of the Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts, (no. 1972.141), *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and his Daughter, Edith*, 1869, oil on canvas, 146.1 x 108.9 cm. For the second painting (Fig. 9), today in the Newark Museum, New Jersey, 1871, oil on canvas, 188 x 124.5 cm, see the recent discussion in McGuigan Jr and Goodyear III 2022, pp. 59-60, pl. 92, 235.

THE AMERICAN GRAND TOUR: FROM OLD MASTERS TO THE NEW WORLD



Thomas Cole, *The Course of Empire, 2: The Arcadian or Pastoral State*, 1836, oil on canvas, New York Historical Society (detail)

Copying Old Masters for the New World: American Painters in Eighteenth-Century Rome

In 1771 John Singleton Copley wrote enthusiastically of visiting Philadelphia to his half-brother, Henry Pelham:

‘I have seen several fine Pictures with which you would have been charmed had you been with us ... We saw a fine Coppy of the Titiano Venus, and Holy Family at whole Length as large as life from Coregio ... The Venus is fine in colouring, I think beyond any Picture I have seen.’¹

Copley continues with an elaborate passage of ekphrasis describing for Pelham the appearance of the Venus and conjecturing how these effects might have been achieved: ‘the Joints of the Knees, Elbows, etc, very Read. And no Gray tints anywhere to be found.’² The 33-year-old Copley, by then already a successful portraitist in Boston, wrote with a professional eye: ‘there is no minuteness in the finishing; everything is bold and easey; but I must observe had I Performed that Picture I should have been apprehensive the figures in the Background were too Strong.’³ Copley’s confidence is striking, not least because he delivered his assessment without ever having left America, let alone seen Titian’s *Venus of Urbino* in Florence. The fact that Copley devoted so much time to studying these copies is significant and should give us pause: by the 1770’s an ambitious, European-facing painter such as Copley, had little chance of examining old master paintings in America, he was working in something of a visual vacuum. Copley was steeped in European writing on art and through prints arriving in Boston, he would have felt himself fully conversant with the images of exemplary historic paintings, but he had little conception of their physical appearance or technique. Therefore copies and particularly a modern, sophisticated replica of an admired Italian painting, offered an important opportunity for him to test his ideas. Copley had every reason to trust the fidelity of the copies he saw in Philadelphia as they had been made at source, in Italy by America’s most celebrated artistic son, Benjamin West.⁴

West was the first American born painter to pursue a decidedly European – and I would argue Anglo-Saxon – form of artistic education. He traveled from Philadelphia to Rome: ‘profoundly sensible’ as his earliest biographer noted: ‘that he could not hope to attain eminence in his profession, without inspecting the great master-pieces of art in Europe.’⁵ Inspection in this case meant copying; West produced a series of close, same-sized replicas of old master paintings. West’s example offered a paradigm for later American artists. In this essay I want to focus on West’s activities in Italy and demonstrate the impact his Grand Tour had on a handful of later

American painters working in both Europe and back home, focusing in particular on West's copies after old master paintings and what they tell us about the aspirations of an emerging American school.

West's Italian trip was largely opportunistic. He left Philadelphia on the *Betsy Sally*, a merchant vessel bound for Livorno with a cargo of sugar – a speculation calculated to profit from the scarcity of sugar in Italy occasioned by the Seven Years' War – accompanied by two scions of wealthy mercantile Pennsylvania families, John Allen and William Shippen.⁶ They arrived at Livorno on 27 June 1760, West went straight to Rome, arriving on the 10th of July. Once there he was immediately introduced to the community of British travelers and their dependants: the resident antiquaries, traveling tutors and cicerone who catered for their needs. He met Thomas Robinson, later 2nd Lord Grantham, a Yorkshire landowner who commissioned a portrait of himself from West, and, through Robinson, he was slowly inducted into the Roman art world.⁷ West met Cardinal Alessandro Albani, made a now famous trip to the Vatican to view the Apollo Belvedere and was consequently introduced to Anton Raphael Mengs.⁸ Mengs was considered the leading historical painter in Rome and was seen, particularly by the resident British community, as a great teacher; he encouraged young artists to work in his studio and oversaw the Accademia del Nudo in the Capitoline.⁹ It is therefore not surprising to find West gravitating towards Mengs; West was, after all, an ambitious artist who aspired to return to America and become, not merely a portraitist, but its leading history painter.

Galt gives a sense of the advice he received. Mengs recommended that West, having reached proficiency in the 'mechanical' aspects of art, whilst in Rome:

'See and examine every thing deserving of your attention here, and after making a few drawings of about half a dozen of the best statues, go to Florence, and observe what has been done for Art in the collections there. Then proceed to Bologna, and study the works of the Carracci; afterwards visit Parma, and examine, attentively, the pictures of Corregio; and then go to Venice and view the productions of Tintoretti, Titian, and Paul Veronese. When you have made this tour, come back to Rome, and paint an historical composition to be exhibited to the Roman public; and the opinion which will then be formed of your talents should determine the line of our profession which you ought to follow.'¹⁰

By study, Mengs expected West to make careful copies. He adumbrated a creative formula which required West to draw antique sculptures so as to enable him to copy a sequence of exemplary old masters before composing a historical composition. This was a formula of copying, imitation and ultimately invention rooted in the French classicist texts of the seventeenth-century. Copying was the staple activity of most artists studying in Rome. As a practice, it formed a fundamental precept of training at most European academies, with many institutions sponsoring students to visit Rome specifically to copy works of art. It was, for example, one of the *envois* or mandatory exercises of the *pensionnaires* at the French Academy in Rome.¹¹

It is worth just rehearsing West's schedule in Italy: he began by copy-

1. Benjamin West, after Anton Raphael Mengs, *A Sibyl*, 1763, oil on canvas, 118 x 92.7 cm. Ferens Art Gallery, Kingston upon Hull.



ing Domenichino's *Cumaen Sibyl* then in Palazzo Borghese and a *Sibyl* (Fig. 1) by Mengs himself, both copies survive in the collection of the Ferens Art Gallery in Hull. Drawings by West show that he worked during this period in the Capitoline making studies from the life at the Accademia del Nudo and from antiquities. Following Mengs's advice he moved to Florence where he began three copies: the first of *Venus Lamenting the Dead Body of Adonis* in Palazzo Corsini, a painting then attributed to Annibale Carracci and now generally thought to be the work of Alessandro Tiarini.¹²

The summer heat had prevented West returning to Rome, so he sought permission from the keeper of the Uffizi to copy Titian's *Venus of Urbino*, this continued as West described to Joseph Shippen: 'when just as it was dead coloured in, the fire broke out in the gallery, and put everything there in confusion, and stopped the work of the copying there, upon that picture, for some time.'¹³ The fire mentioned by West occurred in the west wing of the Uffizi on 12 August 1762.¹⁴ West took advantage of the forced



2. Benjamin West, after Guido Reni, *Salome with the Head of John the Baptist*, 1763, oil on canvas, 125.3 x 94.1 cm. Ferens Art Gallery, Kingston upon Hull.

interruption and set off on a tour of Northern Italy. In Bologna he copied Guido Reni's *St Peter and St Paul*, now in Milan but then in the Sampieri Palace before moving on to Parma where he began a copy of Correggio's *Holy Family with St Jerome*.¹⁵ He then traveled on to Mantua, Verona, Padua and finally Venice. West returned to Rome at the beginning of 1763, there, as he declared to Shippen: 'I thought myself happy in getting done a copy of Guido's finest Herodias in Cardinal Corsini's palace, and another picture I composed as a study of my own.'¹⁶ West's copy of Guido Reni's *Salome* is also now at the Ferens Art Gallery in Hull (Fig. 2). 'The study of my own' mentioned by West, is his painting of *Cimon and Iphigenia*. This confirms that West followed the ideal syllabus proposed by Mengs, concluding his two years spent studying and copying exemplary works, by completing a historical composition inspired by what he had absorbed. But it is here that I want to underline that West was not working in a pure-

ly Continental tradition, he was directly influenced by the demands of the Anglo-Saxon Grand Tour. West's copies were not solely educational exercises – they were commodities. In common with British artists, West had no state sponsorship for his trip to Rome: he was financially supported by two leading figures in Philadelphia – Lieutenant Governor James Hamilton and his brother-in-law, Chief Justice William Allen and West completed his copies as partial recompense for their support of his European travels. Almost as soon as they were finished, in May 1762, West's copies after Domenichino and Mengs were dispatched to Philadelphia effectively ending their educational benefit. In all West dispatched six copies back to America: the Titian seen by Copley, the Domenichino, the two Mengs's, the Carracci *Venus and Adonis* and the *Salome* after Guido Reni.

Reading William Allen's correspondence it is evident that he and Hamilton viewed supporting West, in part, as a speculation. Allen's letters to his merchant contacts in Livorno – Messers Jackson & Rutherford – are filled with business matters and the usual requests from Italy: parmesan cheese, olive oil, 'two Barrells of best Anchovies' and black silk for mourning scarves 'much used for Buryings in this country.'¹⁷ When Allen advanced West £100 in August 1761, he wrote to his bankers in London: 'from all accounts he is like to turn out a very extraordinary person in painting way; and it is a pity such a Genius should be cramped for want of a little Cash.'¹⁸ The following year Allen wrote again, advancing a further £150 to West noting: 'We have such an extraordinary Account of Mr West's Genius in the painting way, that we venture to afford him these Supplies, and for his Incouragement to take it out in Copies.'¹⁹ What is notable about this letter, is that the language of 'encouragement' allowed for the existence of a relationship that could be described as a straightforward business transaction, with the artists' works being purchased in a cash exchange, but equally cast in the language of civic responsibility.²⁰ West was both a young professional advancing his skills and his career and a representative of the cultural interests of his patrons.

In the economy of the Grand Tour, the production of copies had long been regarded as a suitable exchange for financial support of an artists' education. Joshua Reynolds, for example, wrote to his patron Richard, 1st Baron Edgcumbe who had brokered his passage to Italy: 'Since I have been in Rome, I have been looking about the Palaces for a fit picture of which I might take a copy to present your lordship with; though it would have been much more genteel to have sent the picture without any previous intimation of it. Any one you choose, the larger the better, as it will have a more grand effect when hung up, and a kind of painting that I like more than little.'²¹

For Allen and Hamilton, commissioning copies – rather than original works of art – was a way of reinforcing their position within Philadelphia as European-facing merchant princes. I am not going to dwell on their politics – they were leaders of the Anglican Proprietary Party and staunch loyalists – but by prominently displaying copies after celebrated old masters they were actively involved in promoting public taste. There is ample evidence that around this date copies after celebrated old masters were viewed in Shaftesburian terms. There was a sense that a rising

appreciation of virtù signaled a parallel rise of public virtue. In the 1750's Mengs himself had made a monumental copy of *The School of Athens* for the semi-public gallery at Northumberland House in London. It generated a tremendous amount of comment on its arrival and its memory was still fresh when West was in Rome. James Barry reported a conversation amongst British artists in the city shortly after West's departure, one of the artists observed that: 'Menges's copy was not well relish'd at first by people at home, which was not to be wondered at as it required some time to form the Taste of a Nation & that he was sorry that Mengs was not in England to teach.'²²

From his own correspondence, it is clear West was highly conscious of both the financial value of the copies he produced and the potential cultural capital that would be attached to them in colonial society. As such, he was vigilant in safe-guarding his patrons' investment. When sending the first two copies to James Hamilton, West requested through Jackson & Rutherford that: 'no copies of them be taken by anybody.'²³ He explained this motivation further in a letter to Joseph Shippen, adding: 'Not that I am jealous of anyones gathering Improvement from them if able, but because the paintings themselves might lose a part of their Merit of being the only ones of the Kind in the Province, and they might perhaps be liable to suffer, if lent for the use of any unskilled Hands.' West was sensitive to the loss of value incurred by too much repetition: if his copies were in turn copied, the value of Allen and Hamilton's investment would be undermined.

Here we hit, for me, a slight paradox. West was apparently pursuing an academic syllabus, one devised by Mengs and yet he does not produce copies of the great frescos available in Rome – as Mengs had with his *School of Athens* – in fact he copies no paintings by Raphael for Philadelphia at all. The choices therefore demand further explanation.

Mengs again offers a partial answer. Mengs's appeal amongst British patrons was founded on the method he outlined to West: namely that viewers could easily see in his own compositions the various artistic precedents he adopted. In around 1761 Mengs painted three compositions for British patrons – including the *Sibyl* West copied. The direct antecedent of the composition was Guercino's *Persian Sibyl* which had been in the Museo Capitolino since about 1750; stylistically, however, the influence of Domenichino was decisive, particularly in the facial type and drapery. The second of Mengs's 1761 commissions was a *St Cecilia*, where the debt to Domenichino is particularly legible: Mengs simply rearranged Domenichino's *Cumean Sibyl* from Palazzo Borghese, another of the paintings copied by West. Mengs's most successful canvases were therefore composite images celebrating the work of seventeenth-century Bolognese artists.

With this context in mind, we might view West's copies as largely decorative: those after Mengs and Domenichino, were clearly conceived as a pair and were hung upon arrival in a domestic setting. West wrote back to Philadelphia in May 1761 of his satisfaction on hearing that they were 'judged deserving to be hung up in the Governor's House.'²⁴ This suggests that we consider such pictures as a confluence of three distinct elements: whilst the action of copying was educational, the motivation was commercial and

their final use decorative. West himself was conscious of these competing ideas. He wrote to Joseph Shippen, in America, in September 1763:

‘My first application was to serve my worthy and honoured patrons in the copies they desired, as far as lay in my power; and as, just at that time, Lord Fordwich had ordered up from Leghorn to Florence the picture Mr Mings had painted for him, of a Holy Family, and was so obliging as to give me leave to copy it. I thought myself happy in having such an opportunity of studying upon my favorite master ... I concluded also that nothing could be more agreeable to you and my other friends than the copy of so capital a piece ... I got through the copy in two months ... nothing but such a study after Mengs could have made me go through with so large a copy, and in so short a time.’²⁵

The painting was one Fordwich, later the 3rd Earl Cowper, had acquired from the dealer and banker Thomas Jenkins in Rome, following Mengs’s departure for Spain.²⁶ Ultimately West’s time in Italy had led him not to Raphael or Michelangelo, but to Mengs himself, a fact that had ramifications for his own teaching.

West was in London by August 1763 where he established a successful studio which became a mecca for visiting Americans; famously depicted in a painting by Matthew Pratt, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.²⁷ There is plenty of evidence to suggest that West continued to use those copies he had not sent to Philadelphia as instructional models in London. West rapidly became an authority on study in Italy. Two letters written by West give a glimpse of the method of working in Italy he recommended. In 1787 he offered practical advice to Johann Heinrich Ramberg, in which he went further than Mengs ever did, by suggesting specific paintings that Ramberg should copy in Italy: in Florence, Raphael’s *Madonna della Sedia*; in Parma, Correggio’s *Madonna with St Jerome*; in Rome, Guido Reni’s *Salome* from Palazzo Corsini; in Bologna, Guido Reni’s *St Peter and St Paul* from Palazzo Sampieri and in Venice, Titian’s *St John the Baptist*, then in Santa Maria Maggiore.²⁸ With the exception of the first and the last, these were all pictures West had himself copied. It is notable that West recommended two paintings by Guido Reni and only one each by the trinity of Raphael, Correggio and Titian. This list formed the de facto syllabus for the next generation of American painters.

In June 1764 Pratt escorted his cousin, Betsy Shewell, to London where she married West. Pratt remained in London as West’s pupil where his first task was to produce a copy of Correggio’s *Madonna with St Jerome* from West’s own copy; Pratt’s copy is now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington. It accompanied Pratt back to America where he established a successful portraiture practice in New York. West’s Correggio was replicated again, on a reduced scale, by John Trumbull in the winter of 1780 when he was working in West’s studio and temporarily incarcerated in Tothill Field Prison on suspicion of being a spy.²⁹

The enduring appeal of the Correggio is significant. It was to Correggio that West returned in his advice to Copley in 1773 on the eve of the latter’s tour of Italy, observing:

‘there are ... beauties in the art he greatly surpass’d even those in all others that came after him. Which was in the relief of his figures by the management of

the clear obscure. The prodigious management in foreshortning of figures seen in the air, the gracefull smiles and turnes of heads, the magickal uniteing of his Tints, the incensable blending of lights into Shades, and the beautyfull affect over the whole arrising from those pices of management is what charmes the eye of every beholder.³⁰

It is therefore no surprise that the only copy Copley made in Italy was after *The Madonna and Child with St Jerome* in Parma. At the end of his Grand Tour – having already completed the *Ascension* and his double portrait of the Izards – Copley went to Parma.³¹ There Joseph Wright of Derby saw him at work, reporting to the miniaturist Ozias Humphry: ‘Mr Copley has been hard at it five weeks & says he will spend twice the time more over it but he will get it like the Original. It is with infinite labour he produces what he does.’³²

Another West pupil is the almost completely unknown painter James Smith. Smith traveled from Philadelphia to London and on to Italy in the mid-1770’s. He seems to have spent some time in West’s studio in London – where he completed this portrait of West now in Washington (Fig. 3) – and there undoubtedly received advice about how to approach his time on the Continent. Smith is almost completely absent from histories of American art; I know him, because he was an amiable fixture in British circles in Rome throughout the 1770’s. By Easter 1774 he is recorded living in Via del Babuino and he has a walk on part in Thomas Jones’s *Memoir*: ‘an artist and native of N. America, whom I afterwards knew in Rome by the name *Smith of Parma* to distinguish him from others of the same name.’³³

Three letters from Smith addressed to his friend and correspondent Ozias Humphry in 1776 from Parma describing the difficulties of copying in front of Correggio’s canvas in the Accademia di Architettura, Pittura e Scultura are published here as an Appendix.³⁴ He described the process in vivid detail, complaining about ‘the dam[n] weather ... nothing but darkness, mist, snow two foot deep’, these climactic difficulties were aggravated by the behaviour of the keeper of the Accademia: ‘a cursed old stupid painter of a custody ... I am obliged to wait before the door of the academy till the arrival of Mr Son of a Bitch ... he will upon no consideration leave one with the picture without himself or a watch trusting no one with it as he says he caught Copley spitting on the picture; this appears strange as I never saw a picture bear out fuller or better.’³⁵ But these picaresque details aside, it is instructive to consider precisely what West’s pupils hoped to achieve by copying in Parma.

Smith’s letter reveals that in line with West’s advice, he hoped the close study afforded by copying would enable him to discern the method by which Correggio achieved his ‘precious pearly tint.’ One of the educational benefits of close copying, over merely sketching, was the revelation of technical knowledge. Working from the completed picture, the copyist was engaged in a process of imaginative reconstruction as there was no way of knowing the under-painting or techniques for achieving areas of relief. This was particularly the case when trying to produce a successful copy of painters such as Correggio, who relied on colour and light to achieve their effects. Many painters wrote sustained and perceptive



3. James Smith, *Portrait of Benjamin West*, 1770, oil on canvas, 54 x 47 cm. National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institute; gift of the Margaret Hall Foundation.

analyses of the paintings they studied and used copying as an opportunity to attain the apparently 'lost' technique of the old masters.³⁶ In his quest to accurately replicate Correggio's technique, Smith asked Humphry to send him 'half an oz of ultramarine of a deeper tone than what you gave me as that will not arrive to the strength of the madonnas drapery neither to the sky or distance but for the flesh I would not wish to have better than I had of you.'³⁷ Considering the time taken on such copies – Smith and Copley worked for over two months on their canvases – the condition of the original painting was of paramount importance.

As with West a decade earlier, the crowd of painters who congregated around Correggio's painting in the 1770's, were engaged in a calculated balancing act: on the one hand striving to improve their technique and on the other hoping to defray the cost of Italian travel by making a marketable commodity. Joseph Wright of Derby hoped copying in Parma would be financially

'advantageous' and the reason Copley took 'infinite labour' and fifteen weeks was that the copy had been commissioned by West's great patron Richard, 1st Earl of Grosvenor.

Smith had still not sold his copy of the Correggio by August 1778 when Hester Poggi reported to Humphry that he was seeking a buyer.³⁸ But he found a way of capitalising on his studies, executing a version of just the central figures in the form of a tondo, pairing it with a copy of the *Madonna della Sedia*, to make a decorative set which he sold to the collector Henry Blundell.³⁹

West, Copley and Smith essentially turned their backs on America, focusing their commercial attentions on London. But as I stated at the beginning of my essay, their copies carried enduring cultural weight in America. West's canvases in Philadelphia were arguably the most visually powerful group of European paintings to arrive in the country in the eighteenth century. Copley writing from Italy in 1775 returned continually to West's copies as visual equivalents in his descriptions of the genuine works he was studying and describing for Pelham back in Boston. Copley admits, for example, to being surprised by his encounter with autograph works by Titian, having known only West's copy of the *Venus of Urbino* to date: 'I supposed them Painted in a Body of Oyl Colours with great precision, smooth, Glossy and Delicate, something like Enamil wrought up with care and great attention to the smallest parts.' He tries to explain the

difference to Pelham, returning again to West's copy: 'that will give you the best Idea of it, yet I beleave was you to see them together you would think the Coppy less broken and variegated in the tints of Flesh than the original.' And perhaps here lies West's greatest legacy, one that could be explored further, that he set American art on an 'enamelled' path inspired by Mengs, away from the painterliness of Titian.

Appendix

Letter I.

Royal Academy Archives, London, Humphry Papers, HU/2/3.

James Smith to Ozias Humphry, no date.

'Dr Sir

Sigr Volpate⁴⁰ has just received his letter from Parma, acquainting him that the Coregio⁴¹ is disengaged & that I may go and copy at as soon as I please, he says that the custody knows nothing of the canvas that Mr West⁴² left there – but probably it may be found as some one of the academy may know of it, as tis never safe to rely on probability should be glad to know wither I shall get one here, or at Florence or Parma for my part of a cloth can be had of a good even tooth or thread I would rather prepair the ground my self as I have had some experience that way: it should be a water ground tis done in a short time that your answer shall determine me in this point. This morning I applied & got leave to make a tracing which I shall be carefull about & bring with me & shall sett myself in motion on Saturday ten night with my face towards Florence before theat time shall be glad to here from you –

I am your sincere friend & humble servt.

J Smith'

Letter II.

Royal Academy Archives, London, Humphry Papers, HU/2/46.

James Smith to Ozias Humphry, Parma, 19 November 1776.

'Dr Sir

Mr Townley⁴³ delivered your friendly and obliging letter, should have immediately answered it: but thought was better to defer until I could give you a more particular account of the state of your picture. As the most difficult part of a picture is the management of the flesh: but more especially that of Coreggioes; tis so exceeding clear that it even speaks, and triumphs in brilliancy above all other pictures that I have yet seen; therefore am ablidged to be more careful in any preparation. I flatter myself its pretty clear, your idea I found to be very just little or no red should be made use of until tis brought near to the finishings and tis owing to this conduct that, this happy painter has preserved a precious pearly tint, which glimpses insensibly through the picture. A good deal of trouble I had to give it that smooth superfine, which so much contributes to give a fluid look, which the original has to a surprising degree most all the flesh is prepared that is I have gone over it three or four times which is absolutely necessary if one would attain solidity and firmness for flimsey pictures the reverse is the expedient.

The St Jerome excepted though this too is in a state that I can reduce it tho the pitch I want – my fears are not now so great as they were, as I have made some

tincts on the Madona & Childs head by which I can judge to what a height, I can bring the picture too. I would rather is those parts of the most consequence say partly well before I give the last finishing. In this I do not follow Coregio for he was either necessitated or impatient to finish before the bodied colour was well fixed; thus running a thin colour over it, has caused a curdling in the colours, which is obvious in most parts of this divine picture. I observed before that a pearly tint runs through the pictures, which gives a wonderful harmony this is owing to the great use he has made of ultramarine, the which he has been far from being sparing. I will not say tis in – owing to this, that has made this picture, as fresh as if it has been painted yesterday, (exempting the harmony which time has given) but will venture to affirm has greatly contributed to it. I will know most good painters has made use of it. but am persuaded few or more knew how to apply it like him. – we all possess the same colours, the difference lies in a proper choice and a right mode of applying them. Hence arrives the various manners of painting, by which we distinguish a Caracci a Guercino, a Guido, and the divine Titian and Coregio – but were am I running, certainly I am a most impertinent fellow to write of that which you are far better acquainted with than myself, however you must excuse one is very apt to make free with a friend; and even trouble him with our most trifling thoughts. If you can by any means send me half an Oz of ultramarine of a deeper tone than what you gave me as that will not arrive to the strength of the madonas drapery neither to the sky or distance but for the flesh I would not wish to have better than that I had of you – I have enquired, & am told that it might be sent by the post without much cost, if it be sent as a small parcel and agreed on before hand. but not in a letter directed for me at Monsr Barlet. Had lately the pleasure of seeing Mr Norton⁴⁴ & his companions & Mr Allen⁴⁵ who set off from hence last week am much obliged to you for your friendly message by him.’

Letter III.

Royal Academy Archives, London.

Acc. 1998/3

Letter not from the HU papers- from James Smith to Ozias Humphry from Parma addressed to the Caffè Inglese [no date]

‘Dr Sir

Your very friendly & obliging letter gave me extreme pleasure; the contents of which have received of Sig Pelotte should be glad you had in – of your generosity, a most excellent picture I can promise no more than the utmost extent of my poor ability tis very strange that I should be so long so very long is finding out the most simple thing in the world, & that is that colour makes colour it would be easy to fill a sheet with mathematical demonstration of his fact: but how the devil I came to be so stupid as not to know this. – Correggio has clearly opened my eyes, I cannot tell, but this am clearly convinced of, that the thicker & smoother colour is the more pure & brilliant tis; provided there be a perfect union & truth between the light & shade of each particular colour which is not so difficult to comprehend if one will properly represent the shadow of each particular colour from whence one may – at the knowledge of the true shadow even of any compound colour whatever. It always was and is still my opinion that the harmony & truth of shadows is the very soul of a fine coloured picture and tis that that gives truth charm & delights the spectator. Tis true that light not well understood causes unfavourable effects such as hard & sharp ones which we sometime find even in painters of

reputation tis proper enough for bronce marble jess &c but will never represent truth or the flesh of our old friend Titian or Charming Correggio.– but why do I continually trouble you with simple and empertinant remarks empose on your patience & good nature, I know I expose myself but then am conscious tis to a friend, and who is this that deserves that name and be afraid of opening his soul with all his weekness as no one can be more desirous or take more pains to finish my work as soon as possible, so if their no one, more anxious to produce a good picture, as to time I make as much use of what there is, as tis possible, but that the dam weather does not depend upon me, & this I know that the winter of Parma is the very devil, nothing but darkness, mist, snow two foot deep, almost continual excepting now & then by way of addition misty rain and for my no small comfort a cursed old stupid painter of a custody who will by no means let one in to work there after he has bought his marketing which is never hardly over till nine oclock, so that it often happens that I am obliged to wait before the door of the academy till the arrival of Mr Son of a Bitch no evil without some good the cold serves to purify my blood which generally is much heated with impatience, tis a poor consolation but – he will upon no consideration leave one with the picture without himself or a watch trusting no one with it as he says he caught Copley⁴⁶ spitting on the picture; this appears strange as I never saw a picture bear out fuller or better. As to Passing any time in the evening tis generally at the Academy have had the honour of posing the figure several times to the satisfaction of the accademitions. On holliday evenings I spend mostly at the opera of which I am free & pay not a fathering as belonging to the academy. Sometimes grinding of colour & at other times reading I take thus my evenings is spent: but scarce know tis carnival have not as yet found time to see the Courso. As to my lodging tis in the family way the cheapest I could find in the family 4 pauls a day for lodging breakfast dinner & supper candles & fire much to my satisfaction.

PS. Beg my particular respects to all friends – Mrs Mary Nulty⁴⁷ &c &c Mr & Mrs Banks⁴⁸ there is a lady here that will be her future acquaintance she is an English lady of good fortune married to a Parmagan painter they intent to go to Rome their names Mr & Mrs Poggi.⁴⁹ I should be glad if you would procure me a place to copy the Madonna della Sedia that is if I may be in time on the list & tis generally bespoke before hand.’

Notes

This essay is dedicated to Karin Wolfe in grateful recognition of her friendship and encouragement.

1 Adams, Jones and Ford 1914, p. 163.

2 Adams, Jones and Ford 1914, p. 164.

3 Adams, Jones and Ford 1914, pp. 163-4.

4 Von Erffa and Staley 1986, cat. no's. 504, 506, 510-1 and 516, pp. 441-7.

5 Galt 1816, pp. 96-97.

6 Richardson W.A. and Richardson E. 1978.

7 It is worth noting that Robinson (later 2nd Earl Grantham, 1738-86), also sat to Mengs for a portrait.

8 For an account of West's early months in Italy see Staley 1989.

- 9 For Mengs as a teacher see Roettgen 1998.
- 10 Galt 1816, p. 122.
- 11 The requirement to complete a copy as part of the Prix de Rome was formalised with the appointment of Joseph-Marie Vien as director of the French Académie in Rome in 1776. The rules regarding the *envois* – the works required by the state – were tightened and it became a condition of the scholarship that a copy of an old master painting was made for the King's collection. See Lapauze 1924, II, p. 349.
- 12 Von Erffa and Staley 1986, cat. no. 504, p. 441.
- 13 Richardson W.A. and Richardson E. 1978, p. 22.
- 14 Von Erffa and Staley 1986, cat. no. 520, p. 448.
- 15 Von Erffa and Staley 1986, cat. no. 505, p. 442.
- 16 Richardson W.A. and Richardson E. 1978, p. 23.
- 17 Richardson W.A. and Richardson E. 1978, p. 10.
- 18 Richardson W.A. and Richardson E. 1978, p. 16.
- 19 Richardson W.A. and Richardson E. 1978, p. 20.
- 20 This is an idea discussed in Myrone 2005, pp. 70–4.
- 21 Reynolds to Lord Edgcumbe, after May 1750, Ingamells and Edgcumbe 2000, p. 9.
- 22 James Barry to Edmund Burke, 23 May 1767, see Fryer 1809, vol. I., pp. 67–75.
- 23 Richardson W.A. and Richardson E. 1978, p. 17.
- 24 *Ibidem*.
- 25 Richardson W.A. and Richardson E. 1978, pp. 21–2.
- 26 In a letter from Thomas Jenkins in Rome to Henry Hoare, 10 July, 1762, giving the circumstances of the sale of Mengs's *Holy Family* to Fordwich, he observes: 'the strongest representation have been made with his lordship to have a copy of it.' Chippenham, Wiltshire History Centre, Stourhead Papers, 383/907.
- 27 See Fig. 2 in Francesco Moschini's essay in this volume. For West's studio in London see Rather 1993.
- 28 Forster-Hahn 1967, pp. 381–2.
- 29 Sizer 1967, pp. 71–2.
- 30 Adams, Jones and Ford 1914, p. 196.
- 31 On the Copley *Ascension*, see Christopher M.S. Johns in this volume.
- 32 Joseph Wright to Ozias Humphry, 24 July 1775 in Barker 2009, p. 86.
- 33 Oppé 1946–48, p. 49.
- 34 Smith was seen at work on his copy by Patrick Home, who noted in his journal: 'he succeeds tolerably, much to be done, a most difficult enterprise.' London, Paul Mellon Centre, Brinsley Ford Archive, RBF/1/612. 46.
- 35 See Appendix, Letter III.
- 36 See an account of a painting of the *Virgin and Child* by Rubens in the collection of Thomas Jenkins at Rome, in the front of one of George Romney's Italian sketchbooks, Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, MS. 1-1917, 2.
- 37 See Appendix, Letter II.
- 38 Hester Poggi to Ozias Humphry, London 1 August 1778, London, Royal Academy Archive, HU/2/70.
- 39 The pictures which were sold at Christie's London 19 April 1991 (lot. 32 & 33) were recorded in Henry Blundell's catalogue of his own collection as: 'A Holy Family, a copy by Mr Smith, from the centre part of that famous picture by Corregio, in the academy at Parma. The original reckoned one of the finest pictures of that master, and was one of

those which were selected by the French to be taken to Paris.' Blundell 1803, pp. 216-7.

40 Giovanni Volpato (1735-1803) was an engraver and speculative archeological excavator resident in Rome.

41 *The Madonna and Child with Sts Jerome and Mary*, known as "il Giorno", was commissioned in 1523 by Briseide Colla for a private chapel in Sant'Antonio Abate in Parma. It was removed to the Accademia di Architettura, Pittura e Scultura shortly after its foundation in 1752.

42 Benjamin West (1738-1820) had visited Parma in the company of a Scottish traveler, William Patoun, in 1763. Whilst in Parma he made his celebrated copy of the Correggio and presumably another painting, the 'canvas' mentioned by Smith.

43 Charles Townley (1746-1801) engraver and print publisher traveled to Italy in 1773, he was elected to the *Accademia del Disegno* on 14 November 1776 and was presumably on his way back to Britain when he visited Parma on the 19th November.

44 Christopher Norton (1740-1799) was an engraver and colleague of the leading Scottish dealer James Byres. Norton accompanied David Allan to Britain where he remained only a short time.

45 This confirms that the Scottish painter David Allan (1744-1796) was in Parma in November 1776 having left Rome en route for London.

46 John Singleton Copley (1738-1815) was in Parma from 16 June 1774 until 22 August where he produced a copy of Coreggio's painting for Richard, 1st Earl Grosvenor. See Prown 1966, p. 443.

47 Mary Nulty was presumably the wife of Matthew Nulty (c.1716-1778) the agent and antiquarian. Nulty was a fixture of the British community in Rome.

48 The sculptor Thomas Banks (1735-1805) and his wife Elizabeth (1748-1834) were resident in Rome from 1772 until 1779 where they were prominent amongst the British artistic community.

49 Antonio Cesare Poggi (fl.1769-1836) a painter, print publisher and dealer and his British-born wife, Hester, nee Lewis, were traveling in Italy. Joseph Farington confirms Smith's observation recording in 1808 that: 'her maiden name was Lewis. She had a fortune of from 7 to £10,000, little of which is now left. Her Husband by speculations having reduced it to that state. He is abroad & it is long since she heard from Him. She now, assisted by Her daughters, educates Young Ladies.' Cave 1982, p. 3301. The Royal Academy Archives contains a number of letters from Hester Poggi to Ozias Humphry.

James Bowdoin III and Ward Nicholas Boylston in Italy: American Collectors in the Later Eighteenth Century

In October 1773, two wealthy young men from prominent Bostonian families embarked on a Grand Tour of Italy. Arriving in Naples, James Bowdoin III (1752–1811) and Ward Nicholas Boylston (1749–1828), visited major sites in and around that city before traveling to Rome, where they parted ways in April 1774. A detailed record of their lengthy Italian sojourn survives as Boylston kept a travel diary.¹ Accompanied by tour guides in both Naples and Rome, Boylston carefully records major monuments, works of art and social events. After their tour, the two friends' paths diverged. Bowdoin soon returned to America, participated in the newly formed government, and eventually founded the college in Maine named for his family, Bowdoin College. He also dedicated himself to collecting art, and he subsequently donated his collections, consisting of over sixty paintings and prints, a dozen family portraits, and nearly one hundred and fifty old master drawings to Bowdoin College.² The collection of drawings, comprising primarily sixteenth and seventeenth century Italian and Dutch works, some by recognized artists and others copies after famous paintings or drawings, is the earliest such documented collection in the United States, and it became the first old master drawing collection donated to an institution of higher education. Numerous probate inventories in colonial America and the Early Republic reveal a taste for prints, often copies after old master paintings, but there are few examples of drawings known.³ In contrast to Bowdoin's collecting activities, Boylston commissioned only a few family portraits, and did not buy a single painting or drawing by a European artist. This essay explores the possible reasons why the two friends, both immersed for months in the culture of Italy, adopted such different approaches to the value and relevance of art collecting.

James Bowdoin III was born into one of the wealthiest families in eighteenth-century Boston.⁴ His father, James Bowdoin II (1726–1790) was a merchant as was his father and grandfather, and an amateur scientist. In 1780, Bowdoin II helped to found the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and served as governor of Massachusetts from 1785 until 1787. Bowdoin II had an extensive library, which he donated to the Academy upon his death, and a modest art collection, consisting mostly of family portraits, several originals or copies of old master paintings, and a number of prints.⁵ Educated at Harvard like his father, James Bowdoin III sailed for England in December 1770 before officially receiving his diploma, due to ill health. He enrolled at Oxford, intending to study law, but transferred to the King's Riding School where he studied French, dancing, and fenc-



1. Unknown Artist, *James Bowdoin III*, c. 1774, oil on canvas, 76.84 x 64.77 cm. Bowdoin College Museum of Art, 1826.1.

ing.⁶ At both Oxford and in London, Bowdoin would have encountered collections of old master paintings, drawings, and prints in private and public collections. Although letters from his father complain of his rate of spending money and his seeming lack of focus on his studies, no art purchases are documented. However, it is likely that his exposure to the university collections at Oxford and the newly opened British Museum, both combining art with science and antiquity like the private cabinets of curiosity or *wunderkammers* of the previous centuries, sparked Bowdoin's interest in collecting and rational ordering of the world.⁷ Bowdoin surely also attended exhibitions and sales in London as well as visiting the collections of the aristocracy, learning the importance of collecting art, including the study of drawings. Historical scholarship suggests that from the late sixteenth century onward, collectors took a particular interest in draftsmanship, as it was considered that a drawing allowed for a better understanding of the genius and skill of an artist, than even the final painting.⁸ Bowdoin returned to Boston in April of 1772 and the following year, set sail again for Europe.

Ward Nicholas Boylston was born Ward Hallowell, the son of Benjamin Hallowell (1724-1799), who worked as a commissioner of customs

in Boston, and Mary Boylston Hallowell. Ward Nicholas changed his name in 1770 for the promise of an inheritance from his maternal uncle, the wealthy merchant Nicholas Boylston (1716-1771).⁹ The promised gift was not as great as Ward Nicholas had hoped for, and two years after his uncle's death, Boylston, as he was henceforth known, decided to embark on a tour of Italy, funded by his inheritance.¹⁰ Boylston had eloped with the daughter of staunch patriot and Boston Tea Party organizer William Molineux (c. 1717-1774), Ann Molineux, in early 1771, and they had a son, Nicholas, later that same year.¹¹ Notwithstanding his young family, Boylston determined to travel abroad without them, spending most of the funds left him by his uncle, perhaps because his import business was failing due to available surpluses and the British credit crisis of 1772.¹² Additionally, however, his political leanings as a loyalist put him at odds with his wife's family.

Departing Boston together in October 1773, Bowdoin and Boylston arrived in Naples in mid-January, remaining in that city, then under the control of Spain and ruled by Ferdinand IV, for over a month. Boylston kept a comprehensive diary, recording their visits to Mount Vesuvius, Pompeii, Herculaneum, various churches, and major art collections, like Portici, as well as social events such as the dates that they dined with important individuals, including Sir William Hamilton, the British Ambassador to the Kingdom of Naples.¹³ Hamilton's substantial collection of ancient vases, sold to the British Museum in 1772, greatly enhanced that museum's holdings of Greek and Roman works, and prior to the sale, the entire collection was published in four lavishly illustrated volumes by Pierre-François d'Hancarville, an amateur dealer and scholar, with contributions by Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768), the German art historian and archaeologist.¹⁴ It was surely at the many dinners and gatherings Bowdoin and Boylston attended at the Hamilton residence, that they were introduced also to the writings of Winckelmann, whose seminal treatise on the history of ancient art, *Die Geschichte der Kunst des Altertums* rapidly became a fundamental source for the discipline of art history. Indeed, Bowdoin subsequently purchased a 1794 French edition of Winckelmann's volume, that was donated at his death, along with the rest of his library, to Bowdoin College.¹⁵



2. Marble Tile Samples in Frame, donated by James Bowdoin III, 1796. Collection of Historical Scientific Instruments, Harvard University, 0046a. Photograph © The Collection of Historical Scientific Instruments, Harvard University.



Although Boylston recounts in detail the paintings, sculptures, and antiquities that he and Bowdoin saw during their travels, he does not mention any art acquisitions they may have made.¹⁶ Bowdoin, instead, in a letter to his sister, Elizabeth Temple, dated 21 January 1774, writes that he will have his portrait taken as per her request, and it is now presumed that this is the unattributed portrait of Bowdoin at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art (Fig. 1).¹⁷

On 12 March, the travelers arrived in Rome, where Bowdoin asked that his letters be directed to the well-known Scottish antiquarian, art dealer and cicerone, James Byres (1734-1817).¹⁸ Byres was friendly with Sir William Hamilton and already had accompanied several Americans on the Grand Tour in the previous decade.¹⁹ Boylston provides detailed accounts of their visits to ancient monuments and churches, including San Pietro in Vaticano, Sant'Andrea della Valle, Santa Maria della Vittoria, Sant'Ignazio, the Chiesa Nuova, Santa Maria Maggiore, Santa Maria in Trastevere, San Pietro in Montorio, Santa Cecilia, Santa Bibiana, the Vatican Library, the palaces of the Albani, Farnese, Pamphilj, Ruspoli, Colonna, Barberini, and Borghese families, the Capitoline, and the Pantheon – a list of sites considered essential viewing for properly culturally educated continental gentlemen travelers for decades.²⁰ Boylston had provided little discussion of particular artists or works of art in his diary entries on Naples, other than a brief comment about several paintings by the Carracci family at the Capodimonte Palace. Instead, he wrote highly detailed descriptions of his Rome tour, carefully describing myriad famous paintings and sculptures in every church or palace, cultural and historical information surely gleaned under the tutelage of Byres.²¹ He records individual chapels in San Pietro in Vaticano and other churches, elencating the works within, and even names important manuscripts that he viewed in the Vatican Library.

3. Charles-François Grenier de LaCroix, *Seaport with Fortress*, 1754, oil on canvas, 34.5 x 64 cm. Bowdoin College Museum of Art, 1813.31.

Opposite

4. Unknown Artist, *Sleeping Ariadne*, mid-18th century, marble. The Thomas Jefferson Foundation, Monticello, Charlottesville, VA, 1928-4. Photograph © The Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello.

5. Unknown Artist, *Scene in a Garden*, mid-18th century, red chalk on paper, 20.2 x 26.35 cm. Bowdoin College Museum of Art, 1811.38.

6. Unknown Artist, *Allegory of Justice*, late 18th century, red chalk, 23.8 x 14.2 cm. Bowdoin College Museum of Art, 1811.59.



Boylston's diary focuses almost exclusively on factual information, noting location, artist, title, and sometimes the cost of an artwork, and only occasionally does he record his personal reaction to a work of art.²²

Interestingly, while in Rome, Boylston also described in his diary the different types of marbles that he and Bowdoin observed at both contemporaneous, as well as ancient sites – again an indication that the two travelers were receiving expert instruction.²³ In the 1790s, Harvard was given a joint donation from the two travelers – marble tile samples (Fig. 2) – almost certainly purchased during their time in Rome.²⁴ Bowdoin continued to collect geological specimens and related materials throughout his life, donating the majority to Bowdoin College, whereas Boylston's scientific interests shifted entirely to medicine. For both Boylston and Bowdoin, the Grand Tour provided an opportunity to study the ancient past, the great art produced in Italy, and to acquire souvenirs of their voyage. While Bowdoin left Rome for London, Boylston stayed in the city for another month before continuing his journey eastward first to Turkey, then Syria, and finally to Egypt, eventually landing in Alexandria in late 1774.²⁵ During his extensive trip to the Middle East, Boylston began to record acquisitions of ancient rarities and geological and botanical specimens.

In Cairo, he bought a mummy, ostrich eggs, and pieces of coral and petrified wood.²⁶ Boylston also brought botanical specimens and coffee back with him when he traveled to London after leaving Egypt. But no acquisitions of paintings, sculptures, drawings, or prints are recorded in his diary or memo books.²⁷

After leaving Rome, Bowdoin traveled to Florence, Bologna, and France, before sailing for England to stay with his sister Elizabeth and her husband until his father insisted he return to Boston in September 1775. In 1780, he married his cousin, Sarah Bowdoin, and attempted to establish himself in trade, in which he was not successful. Bowdoin subsequently engaged in a career in politics and diplomacy.²⁸

Despite the lack of documentation surrounding any art purchases during his Italian trip, Bowdoin certainly bought some paintings, and likely some drawings, which were left in England with Elizabeth. One such example (Fig. 3) is a small landscape painting by the French artist Charles-François Grenier de LaCroix (c. 1700-1782), who was working in Rome in the 1770s. Elizabeth wrote to her brother in March 1784 complaining

of the exorbitant cost of shipping the works to Boston, and suggested instead that Mr. Christie sell them at auction.²⁹

Later in life, having been appointed the Minister Plenipotentiary to Spain in 1804, Bowdoin wrote to President Thomas Jefferson thanking him for his appointment to his diplomatic position, and offering his services as a connoisseur of fine art should the need arise.³⁰ In the letter, dated March 1805, he states that “having been in Italy and having viewed the works of the best masters, if you would entrust me with your commissions, I would execute them in the best manner of my power.”³¹ Jefferson was an avid collector and recognized the value that the arts could provide to the newly established Republic, to improve and educate society through the contemplation of what was beautiful and noble.³² In the same letter, Bowdoin offered Jefferson the gift of a marble sculpture (Fig. 4) – a smaller copy of the antique Roman sculpture of Ariadne, then at the Louvre, but which previously had been in the Vatican collections (and which was eventually returned there). Bowdoin notes in his letter to Jefferson that this work was originally owned by a Frenchman, copied from the original in Rome, information suggesting how knowledgeable he was about what he collected. As his letter was mailed before Bowdoin left America for his diplomatic mission in Europe, the sculpture he gifted Jefferson was very likely an acquisition from his first Grand Tour with Boylston.³³ Thus, evidence exists for Bowdoin’s collecting activities and his interest in establishing himself as a connoisseur, although no documentation survives as to where the extensive group of paintings and drawings he acquired were purchased from. In the earliest catalogues of the Bowdoin College collection, dating from the late nineteenth century, it was assumed that all Bowdoin’s paintings and drawings were acquired during his later diplomatic mission to Spain, during which time he also spent two years in Paris as a negotiator.³⁴ Although his diplomatic mission to Europe ultimately failed in its political ends, Bowdoin returned to Boston culturally richer, with the latest French furnishings and décor, making his home one of the most fashionable in the city, and he also acquired several contemporary paintings.³⁵ Moreover, it is highly probable that Bowdoin collected drawings during his diplomatic mission, as several surviving drawings today at the Bowdoin College Museum of Art are of French origin and date from the mid to late eighteenth century (Figs. 5–6). Bowdoin’s wife, Sarah, kept a diary during their residence in Paris, recording visits to palaces and art collections, including visits to exhibitions of contemporaneous artists.³⁶ At least several of Bowdoin’s drawings and paintings came from a different



Opposite

7. Unknown Artist, *The Fall of Icarus*, late 16th century, pen and brown ink and brown wash over black chalk, 26.7 x 20.3 cm. Bowdoin College Museum of Art, 1811.55.

8. Unknown Artist, *Portrait Caricature of a Man* (possibly Antonio Magliabecchi), late 17th-early 18th century, black and white chalk, 16.4 x 13.4 cm. Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Bequest of the Honorable James Bowdoin III, 1811.54.

Below

9. Unknown Artist, *Design for a Circular Dish*, 16th century, pen and brown ink and brown wash, 15.88 cm diameter. Bowdoin College Museum of Art, Bequest of the Honorable James Bowdoin III, 1811.56.

source: the studio of the Scottish painter, John Smibert (1688-1751), who settled in Boston in 1729 after arriving in America at the behest of Bishop George Berkeley (1685-1753) to work at his planned college in Bermuda (which was never realized). Smibert had traveled to Italy in 1719, residing there for over two years, painting portraits and copies of artworks in Italian collections.³⁷ In his extensive notebook, which recorded not only his travels, but also the paintings he produced over the course of his career, and his purchases, Smibert lists a group of 250 drawings bought from 'Sig.re. Scatchati, a floure painter' in Florence in 1720.³⁸ This artist has been identified as a member of the Scacciati family of flower painters and printmakers active in Florence in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.³⁹ Smibert opened a shop in his home and studio in Boston in 1734 selling colors, oils, materials for painting fans, and prints, but not drawings, which he probably kept for teaching purposes.⁴⁰ His studio not only trained young artists, but was accessible to other artists who could admire his collection of copies of old master paintings, drawings and plaster casts. Smibert's nephew inherited his estate after the early death of his two sons, and the contents were sold after 1778. Bowdoin, having returned a few years earlier from his Grand Tour, and who was also friendly with the artist John Trumbull who later rented Smibert's studio, surely left at the opportunity to acquire Smibert's collection, most notably the painted copy of Nicolas Poussin's *Continence of Scipio* attributed to Smibert, and another painted copy by Smibert of an Anthony van Dyke portrait, *Jean de Montfort*. Three drawings, on the other hand, bear the inscription 'John Smibert' likely indicating their provenance, rather than creation. These include a late sixteenth-century Italian drawing of the *Fall of Icarus* (Fig. 7), a

caricature once believed to be of Duke Cosimo III de' Medici done by Smibert himself while in Florence (Fig. 8), and a sixteenth-century northern design for a dish (Fig. 9). To this group, we can most likely add a drawing by the Florentine artist, Tommaso Redi (1665-1762), who regularly sold work to Grand Tourists and from whom Smibert recorded purchasing a painting.⁴¹ As the drawings remaining in Smibert's inventory at his death were recorded as a group, and as there was no detailed inventory made of the paintings, it is impossible to determine just how many works today in the Bowdoin College Museum of Art's collection were from the collection of the artist, and how many were purchased by Bowdoin personally on his European travels.

Unlike Bowdoin, Boylston's interests were mercantile and practical. After his extensive travels in Italy and the Middle





10. Gilbert Stuart, *Portrait of Ward Nicholas Boylston*, 1825, oil on canvas, 91.76 x 71.12 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1976.666. Photograph © 2019 Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

East, Boylston sailed for London, where he remained for the next twenty-five years, establishing himself as a merchant. His wife and son joined him in London, but Ann passed away when sailing back to Boston in 1779.⁴² Boylston returned to America in 1800 and remarried in Boston in 1807. Although not a graduate of Harvard, Boylston chose the university as a major benefactor of his estate. His interest in benefitting Harvard initially may have been to ensure that his uncle Nicholas's legacy of a professorship in rhetoric was established, but thereafter he also endowed prizes for elocution and medicine.⁴³ He also donated funds for an anatomical museum and library, furnished with numerous books from his own collection, which are inventoried in his will.⁴⁴ He gifted Harvard the only documented works of art he owned, which were family portraits by American artists, one of which was his own portrait painted by Gilbert Stuart (Fig. 10).⁴⁵ Despite spending several months in Italy touring the best-known art collections, monuments and sites, all of which he dutifully recorded in his diary, and despite amassing a vast fortune through his business dealings, Boylston

did not appreciate art in the manner of Bowdoin, and instead he focused on supporting Harvard's medical college and other more pragmatic interests.⁴⁶ Boylston may have viewed his tour of Italy and his journal-keeping as perfunctory, a compulsory obligation for a young man of wealth. As a traveler, however, Boylston was more adventurous than Bowdoin, as he traveled eastward at a time when few foreigners ventured there, and he acquired important objects of scientific interest, and botanic goods, such as coffee, that could be sold or traded.

Bowdoin, on the other hand, was genuinely devoted to collecting and commissioning art. In founding a college and donating his acquisitions, which were extensive and exceptional for the early Republic period in America, he intended that his works of art and of scientific interest, along with his library, would serve as models for instruction for generations of students.⁴⁷ Bowdoin surely kept his collection of drawings in his library to peruse – they were catalogued there in 1811 by John Abbot, sent from the college to document the property the college had inherited upon his death. The entire library, comprising over 2,000 volumes, arrived at Bowdoin College with 'two folios' of drawings in 1811, and the paintings, which Bowdoin had displayed throughout his house, arrived two years later, in 1813. The paintings were first recorded at Bowdoin College in 1820 hanging in the Philosophy Chamber, at which time they were praised for their morally uplifting content, deemed appropriate for students.⁴⁸ James Bowdoin III's collection remains a unique and influential example for the Early Republic, representing its owner's awareness of European models and his study of art history. Although Boylston and Bowdoin traveled the same path through Italy, it was Bowdoin who determined to dedicate himself to collecting art and encouraging education in the arts as his contribution to the nation. The drawings and paintings he acquired throughout his life, during and after his Grand Tour, became the basis for one of the earliest university art collections in the United States.

Notes

1 Travel Diary of Ward Nicholas Boylston, 1773–75, box 85, vol. 19 and 20, Ms. N-4, Boylston Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.

2 For Bowdoin's collection and its history, see *The Legacy* 1994.

3 Lovell 2005, p. 22.

4 Saunders III 1994, pp. 1–31, remains the best overview for Bowdoin's biography.

5 The large collection of prints, some of which were even seemingly decorating the stable, is documented in the inventory taken in 1774, when the Bowdoin's Beacon Hill home was occupied by a British officer, Inventory of the House of James Bowdoin II, September 15, 1774, Winthrop Family Papers Microfilm, Reel 47, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston. For James Bowdoin II's biography, see Kershaw 1976; Kershaw 1991; Manuel, F.E. and Manuel F.P. 2004.

6 Letter from James Bowdoin II to James Bowdoin III, 12 June 1771, Reel 47, Winthrop Papers Microfilm, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston and Letter from James Bowdoin III to James Bowdoin II, 3 November 1771, Reel 47, Winthrop Papers Microfilm.

7 For a brief history of the *Wunderkammer* and collecting, see Impey 1986; Smith and Findlen 2002; MacGregor 2007. For more on Bowdoin's time in England and its influence

on his art collections, see E. Goodpasture, 'James Bowdoin III's Collection in Context: On Historical Roots and Their Legacies', in *Art Treasures, Gracefully Drawn: James Bowdoin III and America's Earliest Drawing Collection*, Bowdoin College Museum of Art, <https://www.bowdoin.edu/art-museum/catalogues/old-masters/goodpasture-essay.html>.

8 Meder 1978, I, pp. 478–85, provides a short overview on the shift in drawing collecting from primarily artists to scholars and connoisseurs. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century collectors and authors, including Filippo Baldinucci (1624–1697), Roger de Piles (1635–1709), Jonathan Richardson, Sr. (1667–1745), and Pierre-Jean Mariette (1694–1774), all discussed the importance of drawings and connoisseurship. See Puttfarken 1985; Gibson-Wood 2000 and Smentek 2014.

9 Nicholas Boylston is known in a youthful image thanks to the likeness captured by John Singleton Copley that survives in three versions. The earliest is that now at Harvard University Art Museums (dated 1767, object number H90), which was donated by Ward Nicholas Boylston in 1828. A slightly later version is at the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (dated 1769, accession number 23.504), which was in the possession of the family until it was gifted to the museum in 1923. The last, also in the collection of the Harvard University Art Museums, was commissioned by Harvard College in 1773 in appreciation of Boylston's gift of an endowed professorship in rhetoric and oratory. For more on the professorship and Nicholas Boylston's career, see Bentinck-Smith 1981. Nicholas Boylston's fortune is estimated to have been over £100,000, the modern equivalent of several million dollars, Bentinck-Smith 1981, p. 20. Nicholas never married, nor did his younger brother Thomas, his business partner. Mary Boylston seems to have been the only sibling in the family to have had children as another brother moved to St Kitts, abandoning his share of the family estate, two sisters had no children, and the other two sisters died young.

10 Bentinck-Smith 1981, p. 32.

11 Oliver 2014, pp. 5–6.

12 Oliver 2014, p. 6. There are multiple letters from Boylston's creditors dating to 1772 and 1773 in the archives at the Massachusetts Historical Society as well as a letter from business associates complaining of the lack of direction provided by Boylston before he set sail; Boxes 5 and 6, Ms. N-4, Boylston Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.

13 Travel Diary of Ward Nicholas Boylston, 1773–75. In a letter from James Bowdoin II to his son, dated 24 August 1774, Bowdoin II mentions that he looks forward to reading his son's travel diary. No such diary is known and it is unclear if Bowdoin kept a record of his trip or relied on Boylston's account; Reel 47, Winthrop Papers Microfilm, Massachusetts Historical Society.

14 For an extensive overview of Hamilton's collections and his importance in art history, see Jenkins and Sloan 1996.

15 See *Catalogue compiled by John Abbot of the books, artwork, and scientific instruments bequested to Bowdoin College, December 1811*, Box 1, Folder 94, Bowdoin Family Collection, George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections & Archives, Bowdoin College Library and Catalogue 1821, p. 6. Winckelmann was also an important scholar for the history of drawings, see Vermeulen 2010, particularly pp. 91–176, for his use of drawings as illustrations for the progression of the arts.

16 Oliver 2014, p. 16, discusses an account book from the latter part of Boylston's trip, which continued into Egypt. This book does mention purchases, but there are no records from the Massachusetts Historical Society related to any goods or art bought in Italy.

17 Letter from James Bowdoin III to Elizabeth Temple, 21 January 1774, Reel 47, Winthrop Papers Microfilm, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston. See Saunders III 1994, p. 4 for the connection to the painting now at Bowdoin College Museum of Art.

18 Letter from James Bowdoin III to Elizabeth Temple, 21 January 1774. For Byres, see Ford 1974; Bignamini and Hornsby 2010, pp. 246–49; Coen 2010 and Russell 2011.

19 Ford 1974, pp. 451–2. The group of Americans included Dr. John Morgan (1735–1789), a founder of the American Philosophical Society, who later recommended Byres to John Singleton Copley (1738–1815); on Morgan, see also Wendy Roworth in this volume.

20 By the date of Bowdoin's and Boylston's trip to Rome, the itinerary of sites for Grand Tourists visiting the Holy city was well-established, see Tommaso Manfredi in this volume,

for an explanation of the typical tour to Rome for travelers.

21 Travel Diary of Ward Nicholas Boylston, entry dated 27 February states that Boylston saw a number of paintings by the Carracci brothers and ‘many others equally valuable by Raphael, Paul Veronese, Rubens, and Corregio [sic].’

22 For example, in the entry dated 15 March in which Boylston visited San Pietro in Vaticano, he writes on the relief by Alessandro Algardi, ‘the subject is Leo the Great threatening Attila King of the [Huns] with the Vengance [sic] of St Peter and St Paul, who are also seen as flying from the Heaven with angry countanances[sic] in case he should offer to attack Rome, executed by Algardi, who it is said worked closely at this piece for five years and was rewarded by Pope Innocent 10th with £7500. It is altogether a most inimitable piece.’

23 Boylston may have been aware of Benjamin Franklin’s concern for the lack of good marble available in America. For more on this, see Karin Wolfe in this volume.

24 My thanks to Lola Sanchez for providing the reference to the marbles, now in the Collection of Historical Scientific Instruments at Harvard University. The online catalogue for the Collection notes that in June of 1796, the Trustees of Harvard College requested that the keepers of the mineral cabinet send their thanks to Bowdoin for the donation, ‘Marble Samples in Frame, Inv. No. 0046a’, [http://waywiser.rc.fas.harvard.edu/view/objects/asitem/items\\$0040:11661](http://waywiser.rc.fas.harvard.edu/view/objects/asitem/items$0040:11661).

25 Boylston left for Venice on 26 April. For more on his time in Egypt, see Oliver 2014, pp. 5-27.

26 Oliver 2014, p. 26.

27 Boylston’s Memo Book 1774, Ms.N-4, Box 82, vol. 3, Massachusetts Historical Society, records cost of travel in Europe and Middle East, but does not list any purchases for artworks.

28 Saunders III 1994, pp. 7-13.

29 Letter from Elizabeth Temple to James Bowdoin III, 24 March 1784, Reel 49, Winthrop Papers Microfilm, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston.

30 Letter from James Bowdoin III to Thomas Jefferson, 22 March 1805, Microfilm Reel 033, The Thomas Jefferson Papers at the Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

31 Letter from James Bowdoin III to Thomas Jefferson, 22 March 1805, The Library of Congress.

32 Zalewski 2015, I, p. 49. See also Miller 1966, pp. 12, 15-6 for more on the reception of art in America. There were critics who believed that the cultivation and collecting of fine arts was a distraction from the important work of building industry, such as Benjamin Franklin.

33 The Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello incorrectly dates the purchase of the sculpture to Bowdoin’s time in Paris, but as it was offered before he left for Spain in 1805, it must have been in Bowdoin’s collection previously.

34 Johnson 1885, p. 3.

35 See Wegner 1994 for the display of art and furnishings at Bowdoin’s home. For a succinct analysis of the failed mission and the greater political climate, see Docherty 2008.

36 Sarah Bowdoin’s Diary, October 1806-February 1808, M15.3, folders 117-23, George Mitchell Archives, Bowdoin College. The entry dated 8 December 1806, describes a visit to the Louvre to see French paintings, another dated 5 October 1807, states that she went with Bowdoin to see the ‘Cabinet of Curiosities in garden of Volant[sic].’

37 Saunders 1995, pp. 24-33, describes the artist’s work during his time abroad. Smibert made a number of purchases and it is likely that he was acting as an agent for British patrons as several of the works listed were expensive.

38 Evans, K. and Evans, O. 1969, p. 99.

39 Chappell 1982, p. 137.

40 Saunders 1995, p. 100, reproduces advertisements in *Boston Newsletter* and in *Boston Gazette*, Oct 10-17, 1734; also an advertisement about selling prints in March 1735, which proved to be successful, pp. 101-02; Lovell 2005, pp. 187-92.

41 On Redi's little-studied activity as a painter of historical subjects patronised by British Grand Tourists, see also Wolfe 2017.

42 Very little of Boylston's married life is recorded in the family archives now at the Massachusetts Historical Society, but a recent blogpost does note that Ann died while returning to the United States, see Martin, 'A Boylston Family Mystery', *The Beehive: Official Blog of the Massachusetts Historical Society*, <https://www.masshist.org/blog/749>.

43 Bentinck-Smith 1981, pp. 34-8. Boylston threatened a lawsuit against Harvard in 1801, which had not yet appointed a professor of rhetoric from the legacy left by Nicholas Boylston at his death in 1771. Harvard responded by selecting John Quincy Adams, Ward Nicholas's preferred choice (and his distant cousin) as the first Boylston Professor.

44 Will of Ward Nicholas Boylston, Oversize Box 3, Ms. N-4, Massachusetts Historical Society, pp. 2-3.

45 Will of Ward Nicholas Boylston. The only paintings mentioned are multiple portraits by John Singleton Copley: a portrait of Boylston's mother, which was left to his sister; the portrait of his uncle Nicholas, two other portraits of Thomas, Nicholas's brother and their mother, Sarah, and one of John Adams, all left to Harvard. Boylston requested that they be displayed in the medical library for the benefit of young American artists. Additionally, a portrait of John Quincy Adams, which was in the process of completion by Gilbert Stuart, was also bequeathed to Harvard.

46 Boylston's interest in medicine was likely because of his ancestor, Zabdiel Boylston (1679-1766), a physician who performed smallpox inoculations in Boston in 1721 and was appointed a fellow of the Royal Society in London. See Toledo-Pereya 2006 for more on Zabdiel.

47 The collection of old master paintings and eighteenth-century copies, however, did not reach Brunswick until 1813. Laura Sprague has speculated, and I think rightly so, that Sarah Bowdoin, who still resided in their Boston home, did not want her walls stripped bare of all decoration. In 1813, however, Mrs. Bowdoin became Mrs. Henry Dearborn (considered scandalous at the time because of how quickly the event occurred after James's death) and as her residence changed, she no longer needed to be concerned by a lack of wall coverage at her former home. Thus the paintings arrived in 1813.

48 Wegner 1994, p. 149.

John Singleton Copley in Rome: The Challenge of the Old Masters Accepted

Historians of American and British art have traditionally divided the artistic production of John Singleton Copley (1738-1815; Fig. 1) into two parts. The first encompasses his impressive production of colonial portraits based on a thriving studio practice in Boston, and the second part focuses on his successful career in London, where he settled with his family in 1775 during the early months of the American War for Independence. This bifurcation is logical, given that there is a major corpus of works produced in both the colonial and the cosmopolitan capitals, but until recently it has given short shrift to the year Copley spent on the European continent before setting up shop permanently in London. Among other scholars, Emily Neff and Maurie McInnis have published informative essays on Copley's Grand Tour, and Jules David Prown devoted a few paragraphs to the painter's Italian sojourn in his important monograph published in



1. John Singleton Copley, *Self-Portrait*, 1780-84, oil on canvas, 56.5 cm diameter. National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C., NPG.77.22.

1966.¹ Yet relatively little attention has been paid to how Copley's continental experience transformed a provincial artist of prodigious talent, but with little formal training, into a figure who rapidly ascended to the first rank of painters once he launched his career in the British metropole.

Part of the reason for this relative neglect owes to the fact that almost all of Copley's hundreds of drawings made during his continental travels were destroyed by a fire in the late nineteenth century. In addition, Copley only executed two original paintings while in Italy – one the double portrait of Ralph and Alice De Lancey Izard (Fig. 2), and the other, a modestly scaled, oil on canvas painting of a religious subject, the *Ascension of Christ* (Fig. 3). Otherwise, his time on the continent was devoted almost exclusively to the study of Old Master paintings and ancient sculpture, an occupation urged on Copley by his friend Benjamin West (1738-1820; Fig. 4), with whom he corresponded for years before coming to Europe and who he visited often in London after his arrival there in July 1774.² Indeed, the two months that Copley spent in London before his departure for Rome were the period of his closest contact with West, and West surely directly influenced the planning of Copley's Italian Grand Tour. Copley's Roman sojourn forever altered his ideas about art and his place in the professional sphere of contemporary painters, and is the subject of this essay.

Much of what we know about Copley's Grand Tour comes from the numerous letters he wrote to his family in Boston.³ Of special interest in the present context are those missives sent to his half-brother Henry Pelham (1749-1806), a painter and engraver practicing in New England and whose career Copley took considerable pains to advance. Copley's father died when he was a boy, and his mother remarried a mezzotint artist named Peter Pelham (1695-1751), who doubtless was responsible for his early training. In letters from the continent, Copley went to considerable pains to explain to Henry that the models available to artists in America gave little indication of the originals on which they were based, above all in coloring and skin tones. The elder painter tried to instruct the younger from a distance by making references



2. John Singleton Copley, *Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Izard*, 1775, oil on canvas, 174.6 x 223.5 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 03.1033.

3. John Singleton Copley, *Ascension of Christ*, 1775, oil on canvas, 81.28 x 73.02 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 25.95.



4. Benjamin West, *Self-Portrait*, 1770, oil on canvas, 76.8 x 63.8 cm. Baltimore Museum of Art, Baltimore, 1981.73.

5. John Smibert, *Cardinal Bentivoglio* (after van Dyck), c. 1720-21, oil on canvas, 97.5 x 85.1 cm. Harvard University Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1969.50.



to images with which both were familiar. Although colonial America was not the artistic wasteland sometimes described, there were only a limited number of oil on canvas paintings available for study, and these were usually indifferent copies of Old Masters. Copley and Pelham both had studied assiduously the collection of copies, drawings, engravings, and plaster casts on display in the Boston house of the Scottish artist John Smibert (1688-1751), who acquired most of his collection during a trip to Italy in 1719-1722.⁴ In addition, the artists also scrutinized a number of copies of Old Masters in Philadelphia, such as those by West, where Copley had important patrons and contacts.

A comparison of one of Smibert's copies to its original is instructive. While in Florence in 1720, Smibert copied Anthony van Dyck's 1625 *Portrait of Cardinal Guido Bentivoglio* (Fig. 5), one of the masterworks of the Medici Grand Ducal collections. Copley studied the copy of the van Dyck carefully before he went to Europe, and he often refers to it in his letters to Pelham as a point of comparison. A constant theme in his letters was that an artist could only become great through intensive study and copying of original paintings together with careful scrutiny of the canonical masterpieces of antique sculpture, ideas we have seen were encouraged by West. Copley was so taken with studying plaster casts of antique marbles that he purchased a number of them in Italy, including the *Laocoön*, and had them shipped to London. Unfortunately, these arrived broken to bits, a misfortune that caused the artist lifelong regret. It was Copley's great wish that his half-brother would one day come to Europe to study the western classical tradition at first hand, a goal that Henry would eventually realize.⁵

As a proficient and established professional artist when he set out on his Grand Tour, Copley was focused on particular cultural objectives. During his first stop in Paris he went twice to the Luxembourg Palace to see the celebrated Marie de' Medici series by Peter Paul Rubens. He visited the Louvre to view that part of the royal collection then open to the public, where he examined works by Raphael, Titian, Correggio, Guido Reni, and Paolo Veronese, among others. In addition, he went at least twice to see the spectacular Orléans collection at the Palais Royal. On his way from Paris to Italy, he passed quickly through Lyon, Marseille, Avignon, and Genoa. In Genoa, whose magnificent natural harbor and scenographic urbanism caused him to remark that Boston looked like 'a nest of wren houses' in comparison, he studied the artworks in the Palazzo Rosso, in the Balbi collection, and in the major Genoese churches, where he saw paintings by Old Masters such as van Dyck, Reni, Titian, Rubens, and Federico Barocci.⁶ After leav-



6. Raphael, *Madonna della Sedia*, 1513-14, oil on wood panel, 71 cm diameter. Galleria Palatina, Palazzo Pitti, Firenze.

Opposite

7. John Singleton Copley, *Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Mifflin*, 1773, oil on ticking, 156.5 × 121.9 cm. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia, EW 1999-45-1.

ing Genoa, Copley passed through Livorno, Pisa, and Florence. In Florence he especially admired the antique sculpture, the *Medici Venus*, and Raphael's world-famous painting of the *Madonna della Sedia* (Fig. 6). In a letter to Pelham, Copley described seeing the original Raphael of which the family had a copy over their chimneypiece in Boston, remarking on the faults he now perceived in it.⁷ It is not clear if the Boston copy was an oil on canvas copy after Raphael, or a framed print of the work, although the latter seems more likely.

By early autumn 1774, Copley arrived in Rome, armed with letters of introduction provided by West to many of the city's leading cultural players, including the Philadelphia collector John Morgan (1735-1789), and a number of other Americans who had made important contacts during their Grand Tours.⁸ The painter's most important association in Rome was with the Scottish artist, antiquarian, and art dealer Gavin Hamilton (1723-1798), who took a sincere interest in Copley's career. Hamilton arranged for the newcomer to rent lodgings across the street from his own, and introduced him to the circle of artists and connoisseurs who flocked around the art dealer, antiquarian, and part-time Scottish banker James Byres (1733-1817).⁹ Copley soon began a program of intensive study of the major masterpieces available for copying, and produced scores of drawings for future use. With the exception of a brief trip to Naples, Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Paestum in January 1775, he remained in Rome until he left the Eternal City for London the following summer.

The Naples trip was a significant one for Copley, because it led to his forming a close acquaintance with Ralph (1741-1804) and Alice De Lancey Izard (1745-1832), a wealthy couple from Charleston, South Carolina who had spent much of their adult life in England. Together they ascended Mount Vesuvius, met the British minister Sir William Hamilton (1730-1803) and studied his important collection of ancient vases, toured the city's churches and palaces, and spent a considerable amount of time in the Capodimonte collection, in addition to visiting the recently excavated ancient cities of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and the museum of antiquities at Portici. While it was customary to spend a few weeks in Naples as part of a Grand Tour, a side trip the group made to see the ancient Greek temples at Paestum, however, was extraordinary. It is likely they were the first Americans ever to travel there.¹⁰

During his Neapolitan sojourn Copley began the Izard double portrait, which he finished in Rome in 1775. As Copley's sole foray into the Grand Tour portrait as perfected by Pompeo Batoni (1708-1787) and Anton Raphael Mengs (1728-1779), this painting signals a transitional point of departure from the double portrait format of the artist's colonial production, of which the portrait of *Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Mifflin* (Fig. 7) of 1773 is arguably the outstanding example, to the more compositionally sophisticated and elegant *Portrait of the Artist and His Family* executed in 1776, the year after the Copley family was reunited in London (see Fig. 3 in Martin Postle's essay in this volume). McInnis has convincingly argued regarding the Izard portrait, that the specific grouping of elements in the background, such as the Etruscan vase, the Colosseum, and the antique

sculptural group, the *Papirius and His Mother*, had political implications for Americans on the brink of civil war in 1775.¹¹ My point, additionally, is how quickly Copley had absorbed the lessons of contemporaneous Grand Tour portraiture, a type of painting he had likely never seen until his arrival in Europe. Such adaptability reveals the artist's seriousness of intent to absorb modern models, alongside his study of antique works and Old Masters. Copley's letters reveal no mawkish admiration or startled wonder at what he was seeing; on the contrary, they betray his ambition, as he considered his objects of study to be just that – objects ready to instruct him in the proper way to do things, but which were, in the final analysis, only a tool to arrive at his ultimate goal – to be ranked among the greats in the history of art.

In his correspondence Copley constantly refers to the superiority of history painting over other genres, a common attitude in an artistic culture dominated by academic theory. In a letter written during his Tour, Copley revealed his determination to accept the challenge of the Old Masters. While Copley regularly praised Raphael for his composition and coloring, yet this admiration was tempered by a frank claim that



not only could the Apelles of Urbino be matched, but eclipsed, and that he was just the artist to do it. Among the many Raphael works Copley praised were the cartoons for the Vatican tapestries he saw in London even before leaving for Italy; en-route he viewed works by Raphael in Paris, Genoa, and Florence, notably the *Madonna della Sedia* at the Palazzo Pitti, as mentioned above, and finally in Rome, the *Transfiguration*, at that time displayed above the high altar of San Pietro in Montorio (Fig. 8). In his writings, Copley gave pride of place to the *Transfiguration*.¹² Copley's preference for this work was a commonplace in contemporary art criticism that universally characterized Raphael's masterpiece as the finest picture in the world.¹³ What may be viewed as his competitive nature in regards to the canon of iconic Old Masters, is testified in an epistolary comment to Pelham: 'the *Transfiguration*, after he [Raphael] had got the composition of it on the Canvis, he has painted with the same attention that I painted Mr. Mifflin's portrait and his Ladys.'¹⁴

Copley's acceptance of the professional challenge posed by the contemporary reverence afforded the Old Masters, Raphael chief among them, is best demonstrated by the sole original historical work he painted in Rome—the *Ascension*. The picture directly challenged the *Transfiguration* in its conception, if not its narrative. Shortly before he began work on the small painting in February 1775, he wrote to his brother that: 'I have always, as you may remember, considered the Assention as one of the most sublime subjects in the Scripture.'¹⁵ Both the *Transfiguration* and the *Ascension* narratives necessarily include an airborne Jesus, but there the important similarities end. The former story is usually rendered as a nocturne, while the latter is traditionally depicted in daylight. The *Transfiguration* includes Peter, James, and John, while the *Ascension* is witnessed by all the apostles accompanied by two angels according to the Acts of the Apostles.

The dogma of the *Transfiguration*, where Christ's body changes from a human to a divine state, had long been used as support for the Roman Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation, where the communion wafer becomes the living body of Christ during the sacrifice of the Mass. Possibly this was a reason that Copley did not to choose to depict this subject, such a miracle being too much for an Anglican painter to countenance.

Aside from Raphael's *Transfiguration*, Copley had also seen a considerable number of images of flying holy figures during his travels, and in prints.¹⁶ He praised Correggio for his 'prodigious management in foreshortening of figures in the air,' visualized in images such as the *Assumption of the Virgin* painted in the dome of Parma Cathedral.¹⁷ He also was familiar with prints after Titian's celebrated *Assumption of the Virgin* in the church of the Frari in Venice, and Lodovico Carracci's impressive *Transfiguration*



8. Raphael, *Transfiguration*, 1516-1520, oil on wood panel, 405 x 279 cm. Pinacoteca Vaticana, Città del Vaticano.

Opposite

9. John Singleton Copley, *Ascension of Christ*, study, 1774, Ink ("Bistre") washes, pen and ink, black chalk, and graphite on off-white laid paper, watercolor, 38.7 x 51.8 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 60.44.16.

10. Nicolas Poussin, *The Sacrament of Ordination (Christ Presenting the Keys to Saint Peter)*, c. 1636-40, oil on canvas, 95.9 x 121.6 cm. Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, TX, AP 2011.01.



in Bologna. Thus, Copley's *Ascension* is more than an emulation of Raphael. It was intended as a worthy successor to several Old Masters. The fact that Copley envisioned painting a theme from antiquity such as the reconciliation of Achilles and Agamemnon as a pendant to the *Ascension*, an idea likely originating with Hamilton, reveals the artist's unbridled ambition in the two major branches of historical painting. Copley had arrived in Rome on 22 September 1774, the day Pope Clement XIV Ganganelli died. Such unfortunate timing meant that he had to wait until late February 1775 to visit the Sistine Chapel and Raphael's *Stanze*, both locations being closed during the *Sede Vacante* and the papal conclave.¹⁸ The inconvenience of a papal conclave to an artist visiting Rome with only a limited amount of time to spend there may have factored into Copley's decision to visit Naples in January. Still in Rome in early December, and with no end to the conclave in sight, the artist decided to formulate a winter project, and a preliminary drawing for the *Ascension* was possibly produced before Christmas (Fig. 9). Such undertakings were traditional in Rome, given the limited sunlight and bone chilling cold and dampness characteristic of the city's churches and palaces that made extended on-site study and copying both difficult and uncomfortable. It is fortunate that at least three Copley



drawings related to the painting survive.¹⁹ It seems that only a single drawing was completed before his trip to Naples in January.

In a letter to Pelham dated 14 March 1775, Copley wrote at length about the *Ascension* project, expressing particular concern about capturing the reaction of the various spectators to the miracle overhead in a convincing manner. When he studied the series of the *Seven Sacraments* by Nicolas Poussin at the Palais Royal in Paris, he made careful note of how the participants responded to the central narratives of the individual pictures (Fig. 10). He sought to vary expressions and gestures by employing a live model for the heads, hands, and feet of some of the figures, a procedure that shows to advantage in the finished work.²⁰ Combining the study of canonical models and natural observation was the traditional method of

artistic invention advocated by academies since the Renaissance and is best expressed in Giovanni Pietro Bellori's *Idea del Bello*.²¹ Copley's immediate source for such aesthetic ideology was Joshua Reynolds' *Discourses on Art*, which he continually recommended to Pelham's attention, claiming that following their maxims would help him to become a memorable historical painter.²² It is noteworthy, and surely indicative of what Copley personally experienced artistically on the continent, that, after returning from abroad, and launching a successful career in London as both a portraitist and historical painter, he largely abandoned many of the most crucial maxims of Reynold's teachings he formerly advocated.

An additional concern to Copley in formulating the *Ascension*'s composition was his wish to create a space among the Apostles from which Christ could rise to heaven. In another letter to Pelham he cites Raphael's *School of Athens* and the *Death of Ananias* as worthy models of emulation for multi-figured compositions. In the case of the *Ascension*, such a compositional lacuna would be logical and implies a preliminary moment in the story before Jesus' flight that would be the source of the miracle and that was necessary for explaining the figures' reactions. Careful scrutiny of the earthbound Apostles, however, indicates a more frieze-like arrangement in the manner of Poussin, rather than a recessed area in the center of the group where the Savior had been standing just a moment before. Copley was not shy in claiming that both he and Raphael had similar working procedures and that they both arranged their compositions in the same way.²³ The implication here, of course, is that Copley and Raphael came to their solutions independently, no mean feat for a colonial painter who had never even attempted to execute an original history painting until he began the *Ascension*.

Copley was never averse to praising his own efforts and making known compliments he received from others. He wrote to Pelham that the *Ascension* had been lauded to the skies by no less an artist than Gavin Hamilton, who he said remarked that 'he never saw a finer composition in his life, and that he knows no one who can equal it; that it is a subject the most difficult I could have engaged in, that there is no subject but I can compose with less Difficulty.' Copley further noted that Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778), the most famous graphic artist then working in Rome, had also praised the picture.²⁴ He also informed his half-brother that Hamilton had encouraged him to produce a larger version of the *Ascension* in hopes of attracting a commission for a large-scale altarpiece. Given Copley's limited time in Italy and his increasing sense of urgency to get back to London to meet his family, who were finally able to depart from Boston for the English capital in June 1775, the artist did not pursue this project. Significantly, Copley never returned to the subject of the *Ascension*, nor did he sell the picture, and it was still in his studio when he died in 1815. Due to the financial misfortunes of war, the portrait of *Mr. and Mrs. Ralph Izard*, also remained with the artist. The two canvases served as constant reminders to Copley of his Roman and Neapolitan sojourns, and served as models for the two genres of painting he would pursue in London – history painting and portraiture.

Today in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, the *Ascension* measures thirty-two by twenty-nine inches. To my knowledge, no one has ever ad-

dressed the picture's unusually small dimensions, and the fact that it is almost square, or the question of why Copley decided to execute such an ambitious subject in such a modest format. Such a small size was traditionally reserved for a *bozzetto*, or sketch, yet *bozzetti* rarely display the high degree of finish of the *Ascension*. It is not known whether Copley produced the *Ascension* on speculation for a British collegiate chapel, as he may have known of Anton Raphael Mengs's 1777 *Noli Me Tangere* commission painted for All Souls' College at the University of Oxford, but I believe it is more likely that the picture was intended to serve Copley as an aide memoire for the classical tradition and, above all, for Raphael, and that he intended to keep the work for himself.²⁵ As Jonny Yarker has argued convincingly, the *Ascension* surely 'represented a stage in an educational process, rather than an organic work of art.'²⁶

The crucial importance of the painter's letters home during his Roman sojourn not only help to record his activities and his reactions to works of art, but also serve as a personal journal documenting Copley's transformation from a provincial painter to an artist worthy of consideration among the great European masters. Henry Pelham, the chief recipient of Copley's letters, served as the artist's alter ego, representing what he had been before he experienced first-hand the cultural and artistic glories of Europe. John Singleton Copley's rivalry with the Old Masters was intense and heartfelt, and he entered the competition with enthusiasm. He wrote to Pelham from Parma: 'I don't think a man a perfect artist who on occasion cannot paint history, and who knows, you may have a talent in history like Raphael till you try; and if you have, your fortune is secure in this life.'²⁷ While Copley repeatedly advised and assisted his younger sibling in his artistic endeavours, in this instance, he almost certainly was addressing himself.

Notes

This essay began as a paper in a session on Americans in Rome and its environs organised and chaired by Karin Wolfe at the 2015 annual meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth-Studies in Los Angeles. I thank Dr. Wolfe for including my paper and for her tireless efforts to bring the current publication to light. Her scholarship, enthusiasm, and dedication to excellence has been an inspiration to everyone involved in the present volume.

1 The best discussion of Copley's Grand Tour is Neff 2013b. Neff's study is particularly notable for its interweaving of Copley's artistic interests and the concurrent colonial crisis that weighed heavily on his mind while he was in Europe. See also McInnis 1999a and Kamensky 2016, pp. 227-65. The pioneering study by Jules David Prown (1966, pp. 247-57) is still informative and is the basis for all subsequent studies.

2 The bibliography on Benjamin West as a teacher and supporter of American artists is vast. I have found the following publications helpful: Allard 1983; Prown 1996; Prown 1997 and von Erffa 1973. See also Jonny Yarker in this volume, particularly on West's Italian copies in Philadelphia. For the later souring of the relationship between West and Copley, see Postle 2013.

3 Copley and Pelham 1914.

4 For Smibert see Sarah Cantor's contribution in this volume. On Smibert's museum in Boston, which was originally to be part of his teaching equipage for a planned university in Bermuda that was never realized, see Foote 1935 and Chappell 1982 and Saunders 1995.

5 When Copley's wife and elder children left Boston for London in 1775, Pelham stayed behind to care for his and Copley's mother, who did not want to hazard the voyage, and to care for Copley's infant son, who was too ill to leave and who died later that same year. Pelham, an ardent Loyalist, moved to England in 1777. Mrs. Pelham died in Boston in 1788.

6 Amory 1882, pp. 34-6.

7 Amory 1882, p. 37. As Linda Wolk-Simon discusses in her essay in this volume the presence of Raphael was a constant feature of American engagement with the arts, in any form.

8 Prown 1966, pp. 249-50. See also Wendy Wassyng Roworth in this volume.

9 For Hamilton's significance for the art scene in Rome, see the important study by Brendan Cassidy (2011).

10 Reinhold 1985, pp. 116-7.

11 For Copley, the Izards, and the double portrait, see especially McNinnis 1999a.

12 The most sustained discussion of Copley's reaction to the Old Masters and how his experience of them had stimulated his desire for emulation is found in a letter to Pelham dated 14 March 1775. See Copley and Pelham 1914, pp. 294-308.

13 For the cult of Raphael among eighteenth-century British Grand Tourists, see especially Mode 1996. Copley and Pelham 1914, pp. 301-2. For an American historiography of Raphael, see Linda Wolk-Simon in this volume.

14 Copley and Pelham 1914, pp. 301-2.

15 Copley and Pelham 1914, p. 295.

16 Another factor in Copley's decision to paint an Ascension rather than a Transfiguration was logistical. It would have been almost impossible to make an on-site copy, since the work was located above the high altar of a church in frequent use. For the difficulties presented to artists studying important paintings in churches, see Yarker 2013, pp. 26-27. I am grateful to Dr. Yarker for allowing me to cite his work.

17 Copley spent two months in Parma in summer 1775 on his way back to England, copying Correggio's *Madonna and Child with Saint Jerome* on commission from an English patron. However, Copley's long letter to Pelham written in Parma on 25 June 1775, deals almost exclusively with Titian's painting techniques. Copley and Pelham 1914, pp. 333-43.

18 The conclave that eventually elected Cardinal Giannangelo Braschi as Pope Pius VI began on 5 October 1774 and ended 15 February 1775. To house the cardinals and to keep them isolated from outside interference, the Raphael *Stanze* would have been off limits to visitors. The Sistine Chapel, where the ballots actually took place, was necessarily closed.

19 See Prown 1966, pp. 249-50.

20 Copley and Pelham 1914, pp. 295-9.

21 *L'Idea del Bello* by the art theorist, biographer, and antiquarian Gian Pietro Bellori (1613-1696) was penned in 1664 but not published until 1672 (Bellori 1672). It had considerable impact on the development of academic classicism in the eighteenth century.

22 See Copley's letter to Pelham dated London 17 August 1794, just before the painter left England: 'I would send you Sir. Joshua, Reynolds's Lectures if I was sure you had not them; but if you have not they are well worth possessing. I think them the best things of their kind that has been wrote.' Copley and Pelham 1914, p. 241.

23 Copley and Pelham 1914, p. 299.

24 Copley and Pelham 1914, p. 300.

25 For the Oxford altarpiece, see Roettgen 1999, pp. 105-10.

26 Yarker 2013, p. 49.

27 Copley and Pelham 1914, p. 339. The letter is dated 25 June 1775.

London between America and Continental Europe: Art and Academies

How London, as an artistic and academic hub, positioned itself between the old world represented by Italy and the new world represented by America is a complex issue. In the present essay, in the context of the chronological parameters set by the conference *American Latium*, I shall focus upon some key issues and individuals in the crucial period from the foundation of the Royal Academy in 1768 to the mid-1790s; a period of about thirty-five years which also witnessed the emergence of an identifiable British school of art. The essay is bookended by two significant paintings chronicling the early membership of the Royal Academy, Johan Zoffany's *Academicians of the Royal Academy* of 1770-72, and the *Royal Academicians in General Assembly* by Henry Singleton, completed in 1795. These two rather idiosyncratic compositions provide a window

1. Johan Zoffany, *The Academicians of the Royal Academy*, 1771-72, oil on canvas, 101.1 x 147.5 cm. Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 400747.



onto an artistic and academic world, and assist us in understanding further the role that London played for artists who traveled to Italy – and those who could not, or chose not to do so. For while Italy, and ultimately Rome, was regarded as the crucible of the academy, London became to many a kind of virtual Rome; its pedagogy and collections forming an essential resource as well as a bridge for American artists between the old and the new world.

We can begin with Johan Zoffany's fascinating group portrait of the Academicians commenced probably in 1770 (Fig. 1), prompted by the recent foundation of the Royal Academy.¹ At its most basic level, the painting provides a visual record of the founder members of the institution. On another more elevated level, not least through the conspicuous presence of plaster casts of antique statuary and living models, the painting 'declared unequivocally the Academy's affinity with other European academies and its unique position in Britain in providing professional training for students.'² Scattered about the space are copies of objects recently excavated in and around Rome; the Mattei *Ceres*, recently acquired by the pope and placed in the Museo Pio-Clementino, Giambologna's *Mercury*, cast from a bronze statue then in the Villa Medici, and lying on the floor, to the right, a cast of the torso of Venus excavated at Porta d'Anzio, the original of which had been acquired only recently by the English collector, William Lock.³

The physical location of Zoffany's *Academicians* is London, nominally a room situated somewhere in the Royal Academy of Arts. However, the gravitational pull is entirely towards Italy, and specifically to Rome. For, as MaryAnne Stevens has observed, Zoffany's composition, and indeed the narrative, takes its inspiration from Raphael's fresco in the Vatican Stanze, *The School of Athens*. As Stevens argues, Raphael's overarching program has been ingeniously adopted by Zoffany in order to combine the philosophical aspirations of the academy with the pragmatic precepts relating to artistic tuition in the material world.⁴ Zoffany's painting occupies, by virtue of its very ethos, a world 'in between'; located in the present yet harking back to the past: a world that builds upon tradition, acknowledges the present, and looks forward to the future.

Who then are the protagonists in Zoffany's painting? In the room are thirty-six people; all of them male. They include thirty-two Royal Academicians, two naked models, a visiting Chinese sculptor, and a doctor of medicine. In addition, represented via two portraits on the wall, are the Royal Academy's sole female members, excluded from the real space for the sake of propriety. While the vestigial presence of Rome hovers about the room, it is worth remarking that of the artists represented, only fourteen had first-hand experience of Italy. Of these fourteen, four were native Italians; Giovanni Battista Cipriani, Francesco Bartolozzi, Agostino Carlini, and Francesco Zuccarelli. In addition, there was one German, Johan Zoffany; and one Swiss, Angelica Kauffmann. Only seven of the British Royal Academicians had visited Italy; Joshua Reynolds, Richard Wilson, William Chambers, Joseph Wilton, Joseph Nollekens, Edward Penny and William Hoare. There was also a single American, Benjamin West, who had traveled to Italy in the early 1760s, even before he had ex-

perienced England. Here, in London, the Royal Academy acted as a fulcrum for indigenous artists, as well as those from continental Europe and even America. London was the city that all these artists shared socially, culturally and professionally, and which formed the focus of their collective academic endeavour, whatever their nationality. It was not ancient like Rome, or relatively new, like Boston or Philadelphia, both of which were founded in the seventeenth century. London had its own venerable history – founded by the Romans around 50 AD – but it was at the same time self-consciously modern and progressive. And, the Royal Academy was itself new-fangled when Zoffany painted this picture: thus, it embodied this spirit of modernity, aspiration and enterprise. Indeed, as Joshua Reynolds boasted in his inaugural Discourse of 1769: ‘One advantage, I will venture to affirm, we shall have in our Academy, which no other nation can boast. We shall have nothing to unlearn.’⁵ There were, however, things to be learnt from their American colleagues, that were not to be found in Europe.

The primary focus of the conference *American Latium* was the experience of American artists in and around Rome. Given that context, this essay will concentrate on two major American artists who not only used Rome as a springboard to success, but who constructed their subsequent careers in London and embedded themselves at the heart of the Royal Academy, and the art establishment – Benjamin West (1738–1820) and John Singleton Copley (1738–1815). We can begin by considering Copley, who is not depicted in Zoffany’s picture, and who, at that time had yet to visit London or Rome. Copley’s experience – more so than West’s – reveals the way in which London could act as an intermediary and locus

of transition between the old and the new world. Copley and West were exact contemporaries, both having been born in 1738. West had traveled from America directly to Italy in 1760, reaching England three years later. Copley did not reach London until 1774, stopping there briefly before heading off to continental Europe. So, whereas West experienced London at first hand only *after* he had already steeped himself in Italy, Copley’s secular pilgrimage to Italy was mediated through painstaking correspondence and personal association with members of the London-based academy. We can sympathise with Copley as, from his base in Boston during the 1760s, he aspired to enter the academic sphere of London through the establishment of long-distance personal relationships with artists and by participating in the annual public exhibition. Despite his financial success in Boston, Copley was keenly aware that he produced his art in a critical vacuum. In 1766, through the agency of West, by now based in London, he gained notice at the Society of Artists – the precursor to the Royal Academy – with a portrait of his half-brother. The

2. John Singleton Copley, *Boy with a Flying Squirrel* (Henry Pelham), 1765, oil on canvas, 77.15 x 63.82 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1978.297.





title of the work as provided for the exhibition catalogue was *Boy with a Flying Squirrel* (Fig. 2): this in itself indicated that he wished it to be received as a generic image; a non-person specific “fancy picture” rather than a portrait of a specific individual. Copley’s success, given the tortuous logistics of transporting his picture safely from Boston to London, and the fact that it took almost a year from dispatching it to receiving news of its critical acclaim, was all the more remarkable.

Principal among the picture’s admirers was Joshua Reynolds, whose approval was of paramount importance. Copley’s picture, on its arrival in London, had been sent to Reynolds at his house in Leicester Square. At that time Reynolds knew only that the picture was by ‘a young man ... from the provinces.’ Not surprisingly, he had supposed it was by the up and coming British painter, Joseph Wright of Derby.⁶ Upon discovering that the young man in question was not based in Derbyshire but in Boston, he told Copley via an intermediary, ‘if you were capable of producing such a Piece by the mere Efforts of your Genius, with the advantages of the Example and Instruction which you could have in Europe, You would be a valuable Acquisition to the Art, and one of the first Painters in the World.’⁷ Reynolds stressed that Copley needed to visit Europe ‘before it

3. John Singleton Copley, *The Copley Family, A conversation*, 1776, oil on canvas, 184.1 x 229.2 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, 1961.7.1.

was too late in Life, and before your Manner and Taste were corrupted or fixed by working in your little way in Boston.' Before it was too late. Copley was only twenty-eight years old; but already his biological clock was ticking. In order not to subside into abiding provincialism, Copley needed to experience Europe, as Reynolds himself had done, and upon which experience he had crafted the trajectory of his subsequent career in London. West too offered Copley encouragement, while he in return praised his fellow countryman, 'from whom', he said, 'America receives the same Luster that Italy does from her Titiano and Divine Raphael.'⁸

In the event, Copley did make it to Italy, but not for another eight years. In total he spent about eighteen months in continental Europe, principally in Italy, where he made a number of copies of old masters and one original painting, *The Ascension*, discussed in this volume by Christopher M.S. Johns. Copley, who was rather earnest by nature, regarded the Grand Tour primarily as work, with little time for the frivolities and dalliances indulged in by his more well-heeled aristocratic peers. Even so, the experience proved exhilarating, and he relished his time in Rome, stating that he was 'more at home in this city than I have been since I left England.'⁹ It was also a stressful time to be an American abroad.¹⁰ Politically, the landscape had changed, as England and the colonies were now waging war against one another, and Copley's hometown of Boston lay physically and emblematically at the heart of the conflict.

In Rome Copley met the Scots history painter and antiquarian, Gavin Hamilton, who was to be an important influence upon his development, as he had previously proved to be for West. As Emily Neff has observed, Hamilton viewed West and Copley as 'eager colonial acolytes', as he himself promoted 'a neoclassicism that could express the new role of Britain as a mighty empire formed out of the ruins of antiquity.'¹¹ There can be no doubt that Hamilton's zeal for the antique and the old masters was an important factor in shaping Copley's activities in Italy and his subsequent career in London.

Copley was reunited with family members in London towards the end of 1775. In recognition of their importance to him, Copley transformed them into the subject of a grand manner portrait, which he exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1776 (Fig. 3). He entitled it simply, 'A conversation.' As Jane Kamensky notes perceptively, this portrait painted in an icy winter in London 'radiates the warmth of Italy',¹² while the figure of Mrs Copley, inspired by Copley's recent copy of Correggio's *Madonna of St Jerome* in Parma, is herself transformed into the 'Madonna of Leicester Square', where Copley and his family were newly domiciled; a stone's throw away from Joshua Reynolds's elegant establishment across the way.

For the remainder of his career, Copley's life and art, like that of his compatriot Benjamin West, was centred upon London and the Royal Academy. However, while these two fellow Americans had provided mutual support for one another in previous years, they increasingly became rivals, not to say adversaries. They also had quite differing views on the role of the academy and the purposes it should serve for themselves and their artist-peers. By the time Copley arrived back in London West's prominent place in the Royal Academy and his grip on royal patronage was guaranteed. He had

been a key petitioner to the King for the foundation of the Royal Academy in 1768, and George III lavished his personal patronage upon him. West's prominence in the academic status quo is confirmed visually by his position and demeanour in Zoffany's portrait of the Royal Academicians: a swaggering presence, he turns to converse with the Italian painter, Giovanni Cipriani, with whom he had recently collaborated on a series of transparencies for the Royal Academy's façade in Pall Mall to celebrate the King's birthday.

For West the Royal Academy provided the principal platform for promoting his art, and his position as Historical Painter to the King. As such it served to underpin his vaunted royal patronage and academic credentials. Over an exhibiting career spanning fifty years West showed no fewer than 259 works at the Royal Academy's annual exhibition, the majority of them history paintings, with subjects drawn from classical literature, the Bible, chivalric chronicles, English literature, drama, poetry and modern life. The subject matter selected in the preponderance of these works demonstrated West's affiliation to the traditions, history and culture of his adopted country, and the aspirations of the Royal Academy to act as a crucible for high art.

At its inception, the Royal Academy of Arts embraced three core functions; to promote the work of living artists, notably its members, through the exhibition of their works; to instruct students in its schools through the teaching of drawing from the living model and the antique; and to disseminate art theory through lectures given by its leading members, particularly its President, Sir Joshua Reynolds. Throughout his Discourses, Reynolds promoted the legacy of the Roman School, embodied in the art of Raphael and Michelangelo. Irrespective of whether they responded to his overtures, Reynolds expected that the rising generation of young artists would make a visit to Italy a desideratum. At the same time, however, Reynolds was dismissive of the modern generation of Italian artists, who 'may be said rather to have lived in the reputation of their country, than to have contributed to it.' And, despite the plaudits heaped upon artists such as Batoni and Mengs by their peers, they would, according to Reynolds, 'very soon fall into the rank of Imperiale, Sebastian Concha, Placido Constanza, Masuccio, and the rest of their immediate predecessors.' The fame of modern English artists, by comparison, would not be 'borrowed from others, but solely acquired by their own labour

4. Benjamin West, *Alfred the Third, King of Mercia, visiting William d'Albanac*, engraving by Jean-Baptiste Michel from original destroyed oil on canvas (1778), 1782.



and talents.¹³ The Royal Academy itself could guide the way for a rising generation through its pedagogy and its burgeoning collections. From its inception, the Royal Academy strove to assemble a formidable collection of plaster casts from Antique paradigms. In doing so, considerable efforts were made to rally the support of artists, connoisseurs and dealers into providing casts, taken from marbles in Italy and from statuary imported by British collectors. Prominent among the academicians who performed this service were the sculptors, Joseph Wilton and Joseph Nollekens, as well as dealers and collectors, notably Thomas Jenkins, Charles Townley, Gavin Hamilton and William Lock; all of whom had spent time in Italy. Casts of antique statuary were studied as academic exercises, and Academicians were eager to incorporate the attitudes of heroic figures into their compositions, irrespective of the subject matter. In 1778 West exhibited *William de Albanac presents his three daughters (naked) to Alfred, the third King of Mercia* (Fig. 4). This otherwise obscure legend referred to Alfred III's visit to William of Albanac, when he was entranced by the beauty of his daughters. Albanac declared that if Alfred seduced one of them, he would kill them all. Alternatively, Alfred was invited to marry one of them, which he did. West's original painting, which was destroyed in a fire in the early nineteenth century, was commissioned by the Duke of Rutland, who traced his ancestry back to a medieval William de Albanac.¹⁴ West, who in all likelihood had no vested interest in the curious narrative, used it partially as a vehicle to incorporate the figure of the Venus de Medici, studied from three different angles; thus incorporating a classical paradigm of beauty into a native English legend, as well as providing an object lesson in how to make the transition from academic study to finished historical composition.

West, while he willingly illustrated scenes from both classical and British history and legend, remained acutely aware of his virtually unique position as an artist who not only mediated between the traditions of Britain and Italy, but between Britain and America. The importance West attached to his American roots emerged memorably in several encounters during his time in Rome. Among the ancient monuments he encountered, West was apparently most impressed by the Obelisk brought to Rome by Caesar Augustus in 10 BC, the hieroglyphics appearing to resemble exactly the figures in the Wampum belts of Indians.¹⁵ The Apollo Belvedere, which he saw in the Vatican, also made a deep impression. As his biographer recorded:

"The statue then stood in a case, enclosed with doors, which could be so opened as to disclose it at once to full view. West was placed in the situation where it was seen to the most advantage, and the spectators arranged themselves on each side. When the keeper threw open the doors, the Artist felt himself surprised with a sudden recollection altogether different from the gratification which he had expected; and without being aware of the force of what he said, exclaimed, "My God, how like it is to a young Mohawk warrior!"¹⁶

As it has been affirmed, such anecdotes, published simultaneously in London and Philadelphia towards the end of West's life, formed part of a larger strategy concocted by West and his biographer, John Galt, to 're-



fashion West's identity and legacy within an international context.¹⁷ In other words, it situated him firmly both within the discourse of British and American art history.

Recognition of West's unique qualifications to portray authentic Indian subject matter emerged very early on during his time in Italy, when he was commissioned to paint, at the request of the British Resident in Venice, an *Indian Family*; a genre painting representing one of the four parts of the world. On his arrival in England, in 1763, West produced a more overtly political narrative in his painting, *General Johnson Saving a Wounded French Officer from the Tomahawk of a North American Indian* (Derby Museum and Art Gallery). Here, as has been observed, the blood-thirsty subject elevated 'European standards of honorable conduct in warfare over the ferocity of uncivilized people.'¹⁸ It was not, however, until 1771, that West's reputation as a painter of New World subject matter received close scrutiny, when he exhibited at the Royal Academy of Arts *The Death of General Wolfe* (Fig. 5), a depiction of the mortal wounding of the eponymous British commander at Quebec during the conflict against the French in September 1759. Controversy surrounded the composition from the beginning, not least due to West's decision to portray the protagonists in contemporary battledress, even as their poses were drawn from the repertory of European High Art.¹⁹

Most striking, in terms of West's vaunted position between the New World and the Old was the prominence of the American Indian in the centre left

5. Benjamin West, *The Death of General Wolfe*, 1770, oil on canvas, 152.6 x 214.5 cm. National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 8007.

foreground. As Pratt has observed, West prided himself on the accuracy of his representation of the figure. 'His scalp is plucked and painted red; he has feathers and other ornaments in his hair; and his weapons, dress, and accoutrement are all insistently American Indian.'²⁰ At the same time, Pratt affirms, the individual was eclipsed by his status as a symbol of the New World. Only West, with his first-hand knowledge and experience could convey this allegory, unlike the classical figures and narratives that were handed down to him and his European and British peers. And while West was compelled to follow others in experiencing the Old World, others were compelled to acknowledge his supremacy as a purveyor of visual truths in relation to the New World.

Let us turn once more from West to Copley. In 1778, two years after he had been elected an Associate Academician, Copley exhibited his own extraordinary modern life history painting, *Watson and the Shark* (Fig. 6). Unlike West's epic visualisation of the death of General Wolfe, Copley's narrative was wholly personal, not to say eccentric, based as it was on an accident which had befallen a young Englishman named Brook Watson, in the harbour of Havana some thirty years earlier, when he had his foot bitten off by a shark. The event was not, as it transpired, life-threatening, and had no repercussions for anyone other than Watson. Nor did Watson enjoy any subsequent celebrity, other than a minor walk-on role as assistant commissary to General Wolfe at the siege of Quebec.²¹ Even so, Copley managed to elevate the subject, steeped in the traditions of Italian high art and the antique. As it has been noted, the narrative recalls the Old Testament story of Jonah and the whale, while the sailors in the boat recall specifically Raphael's *Miraculous Draft of Fishes*, the cartoon for which belonged to the Royal Collection.²² The hapless Watson, who had clearly been skinny-dipping, is depicted flailing around naked in the water. His



6. John Singleton Copley, *Watson and the Shark*, 1778, oil on canvas, 182.1 x 229.7 cm. National Gallery of Art, Washington DC, 1963.6.1.



nakedness, however, allowed Copley to revisit earlier visualisations of heroic nudity. Copley's precise inspiration is uncertain, although suggestions have included the *Borghese Gladiator*, a cast of which by then probably belonged to the Royal Academy, *Laocoön and his Sons*, and more recently the contorted figure of Prometheus by Jusepe de Ribera.²³ Together, Copley and West, it has been affirmed, were 'the publicly acknowledged avatars of contemporary history painting', injecting new life and energy into a genre, which had found its roots in Renaissance Italy.²⁴ Certainly, by bringing contemporary history painting to the fore in London in the later decades of the eighteenth century these two artists from the new world confirmed London's vaunted status as a new Rome.

In London, Benjamin West welcomed fellow Americans over several generations to his adopted country; artists such as Gilbert Stuart (who painted his portrait), Charles Willson Peale, John Trumbull, Ralph Earl, Washington Allston, Thomas Sully, Samuel Morse, and Matthew Pratt, who celebrated the influence of West's tutelage in his conversation piece, *The American School* (Metropolitan Museum, New York), painted in 1765, prior to the foundation of the Royal Academy. While some artists, notably Washington Allston, headed to Italy, others, including Stuart, Trumbull and Peale, returned from Britain to America. Was their failure to find their

7. Henry Singleton Copley, *The Royal Academicians in General Assembly*, 1795, oil on canvas, 198.1 x 259 cm. Royal Academy of Arts, London, 03/1310.

way to Italy dictated by economic factors? Possibly. Or could it have been reasoned also that exposure to the enhanced artistic experience now available in London offered in some way a comparative experience to Rome; not least via the mediation of West, the 'American Raphael' of Newman Street, London.

Following the death of Joshua Reynolds early in 1792, West succeeded him as President of the Royal Academy. From being a significant member of the Royal Academy, West was now *primus inter pares*. How the character of the membership of the Royal Academy had changed since its foundation can be gauged from the group portrait of the Academicians by Henry Singleton (Fig. 7), which was commissioned by the Royal Academy in 1793, and completed two years later.

Represented in Singleton's painting are all forty Royal Academicians, including fifteen who featured in Zoffany's earlier portrait. If we again identify those artists who had traveled to Italy, we find twenty in total (twenty-one if we count Thomas Lawrence, who at that time had not been but who was to make the journey subsequently). What *had* changed since the early 1770s was the relative 'international' aspect of the Academy. There were now two Americans, West and Copley; two Swiss artists, Henry Fuseli and Angelica Kauffmann; one German, Johan Zoffany, and two Italians, Francesco Bartolozzi and John Francis Rigaud, who notwithstanding his name, was born in Turin and had trained with the Turinese court painter Claudio Francesco Beaumont before touring extensively in Italy, only traveling to Paris when he was almost thirty. Only Fuseli was a new foreign addition to the fold. Besides these individuals there was one French artist, Phillip James de Loutherbourg. Although, we cannot pursue the matter here, there was by the early 1790s an increasing sense on the part of



8. John Singleton Copley, *The Tribute Money*, 1782, oil on canvas, 128.3 x 153.7 cm. Royal Academy of Arts, London, 03/994.



indigenous members that the Royal Academy should be composed principally of British – or even English artists. The issue had arisen as early as 1790 when Joshua Reynolds had resigned briefly as President over his support for the Italian architect, Joseph Bonomi, as the new professor of Perspective.²⁵ William Chambers (who was himself of Swedish descent) had argued that the post ought to have been awarded to an Englishman as of right. ‘The chief argument used for not admitting foreigners’, Reynolds confided in a private memorandum, ‘was that it would no longer be an English Academy. I combated this opinion likewise with every argument I could suggest. I reminded the Academicians that, if anything was to be inferred from a single instance, our neighbours the French behaved with more liberality and good sense.’²⁶ But this was 1795 and the French were no longer neighbors, and while travel to Italy was by this time was not a practical proposition, nor was it by any means a desideratum.

So where did this leave West and Copley? Quite simply, as Singleton’s picture indicates, in the thick of it. West is seated, centre, in the President’s chair, while Copley, posing with his silver-topped cane, occupies the right foreground. West’s primacy is recognised by his hat, framed by the red upholstery of his chair. Copley’s prominence is signaled not only by his full figure appearance, but the positioning of his Diploma Picture, *The Tribute Money* (Fig. 8), situated above and adjacent to the self-portrait by

9. John Singleton Copley, *The Death of the Earl of Chatham*, 1779-81, oil on canvas, 228.5 × 307.5 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG L146.

Reynolds. In addition, as Robin Simon has suggested, the arrangement of Singleton's composition may well have been influenced by another of Copley's paintings, *The Death of the Earl of Chatham* (Fig. 9), which successfully and dramatically articulated a space involving multiple figures.²⁸ Certainly, given Copley's pride of place in Singleton's painting, it may well be that he had some influence in determining the arrangement of figures in the final composition. Even so, while Copley is out front, his relationship with his fellow academicians was far from fraternal, and his engagement with the academy itself was highly combative. While Copley is depicted among the 'General Assembly' of academicians, even so, by now he increasingly lobbied to preserve the power of the Academy's governing Council, which he felt was being usurped by the rank and file. In his efforts he appealed to the King, while castigating West for being weak and ineffectual, which in certain ways he was. Although the Royal Academy ultimately survived, there can be no doubt by the end of the century its fate was uncertain and, torn apart by factions, was on the brink of self-destruction.

But here, in 1795, in a modern neoclassical apartment of the Royal Academy at Somerset House, which accommodated both Council and General Assembly meetings, and the Academy's impressive cast collection, we must leave it. Singleton's somewhat awkward composition attempts to capture an *esprit de corps* that was in reality absent, and in contrast to Zoffany's evocation of clubbable *bonhomie*, Singleton was quite clearly papering over the cracks. Continuity, without doubt, is provided not by the living protagonists, but by the enduring presence of the antique. Surrounding and towering over the assembled Academicians are celebrated classical paradigms; the Apollo Belvedere, the Venus de Medici, Laocoon, the Borghese Gladiator, and the Belvedere Torso. While in a turbulent post-revolutionary Europe, London took centre stage between America and Continental Europe, as we move towards the nineteenth century, all roads continued to lead ultimately towards Rome.

Notes

- 1 Webster 2001, pp. 252–61; Stevens 2011, pp. 218–21, no. 44.
- 2 Stevens 2011, p. 219.
- 3 Postle 2018, pp. 467–8.
- 4 Stevens 2011, p. 220.
- 5 Reynolds 1975, p. 16.
- 6 Kamensky 2016, p. 115.
- 7 Kamensky 2016, pp. 112–3.
- 8 Kamensky 2016, p. 115.
- 9 Neff 2013b, p. 128.
- 10 Neff 2013b, p. 119.
- 11 Neff, 2013b, p. 133.
- 12 Kamensky 2016, p. 267.
- 13 Reynolds 1975, p. 248.

- 14 von Erffa and Staley 1986, pp. 186-7, no. 47.
- 15 Galt 1816-20, I, 1816, p. 132 (n. 15).
- 16 Galt 1816-20, I, 1816, p. 105 (n. 16).
- 17 Sienkewicz 2009.
- 18 Pratt 2005, p.76.
- 19 See von Erffa and Staley, 1986, pp. 211-3.
- 20 Pratt 2005, p. 72.
- 21 Lysons 1811, p. 273.
- 22 See Neff 2013c, p. 176.
- 23 See Prown 1966, II, p. 273, and Neff, 2013b, p. 176. For Ribera see Clancy 2012, pp. 102-11.
- 24 Neff and Weber 2013, p. 210.
- 25 For the so-called 'Bonomi affair' see Wendorf 1998, pp. 176-205.
- 26 Leslie and Taylor 1865, II, p. 559.
- 27 Simon 2018, p. 176.

The Prince and the President: Antonio Canova and Benjamin West at the Royal Academy in London

On the first of December 1815, in the Council Room of the Royal Academy at Somerset House, the American painter Benjamin West (1738–1820) (Fig. 1), who had been President of the London academy almost continuously since 1792, offered a banquet in honour of the Venetian sculptor Antonio Canova (1757–1822), *Principe perpetuo* (“prince for life”) of the Accademia di San Luca in Rome, an honorary position assumed in 1814 at the end of his regular term as president.¹

The high symbolic value of the office of *Principe perpetuo* – until then conferred only on the painter Carlo Maratti by Pope Clement XI in 1706 – confirmed Canova’s primacy in the Roman art world and in the Accademia di San Luca, of which he was also formally the director in the role of ‘ispettore generale di tutte le Belle Arti, e di tutto ciò, che alle medesime appartiene’ (Inspector General of all the Fine Arts [in the Papal States] and of all that pertained to them) conferred on him in 1802 by Pope Pius VII Chiaramonti. In this role he had just fulfilled with great success the

arduous mission entrusted to him by Pius VII and his Secretary of State Cardinal Ercole Consalvi to bring back to Rome from Paris the masterpieces of art stolen by Napoleon and displayed at the Louvre.²

The artistic celebrity of the ‘incomparabile Scultore Canova, emolo dei Fidia, e dei Prassiteli’ (‘incomparable Sculptor Canova, emulator of Phidias and Praxiteles’), as he was described by the pope in the act of appointment to the position of *ispettore generale* in 1802,³ was the basis of the formal invitation addressed to him by West and the members of the Royal Academy, rather than his political and diplomatic role as papal delegate.⁴ Yet it was in part due to his official role that the banquet in his honor had extraordinary consequences for British artistic culture, and consequently for the American school that since the 1760s had been forming in London around the figure of West (Fig 2).⁵ And it was thanks to the intervention of Canova that in 1816 plaster casts of the most important ancient sculptures preserved in the Vatican Museums were sent as a tribute by the pope to the Prince Regent, subsequently George IV, who gave them to the Royal Academy in order to reform the study of antique models.

1. Thomas Lawrence, *Benjamin West*, 1810, oil on panel, 153.7 x 120.7 cm. Yale Center for British Art, YCBA/lido-TMS-899.



Along with the casts shipped from the port of Civitavecchia on the British ship *HMS Abundance*, which had just unloaded there a shipment of works returned by the French from Antwerp, Canova also sent personal gifts to those in Paris and London who had most favored the recovery of the stolen masterpieces: Robert Stewart, Viscount Castlereagh (1769-1822), British plenipotentiary at the Congress of Vienna, Henry Vassall-Fox, 3rd Baron Holland (1773-1840), his main host in London and above all William Richard Hamilton (1777-1859), Permanent Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who had been his main supporter in both capitals.⁶

Hamilton clarified what was the main reason that had pushed Canova to reach London in a letter sent from Paris to Thomas Bruce, 7th Earl of Elgin (1766-1841) in mid October 1815, consisting of a numbered list of topics largely concerning Elgin's famous collection of ancient sculptures. These included the sculptures he had removed from the Parthenon and had moved to London in 1804, and which from 1811 had been temporarily exhibited at Burlington House while Elgin was attempting to sell them to the crown, which he succeeded in doing in 1816, when they were transferred to the British Museum:

'7 That the Exclamation of Every Englishman in the Louvre was, "It is indeed wonderfully fine-but not equal in my judgement to the Theseus of Lord Elgin [one of the Parthenon statues from the West pediment, now identified as the river god Ilissos]." 8 That in the same Louvre, Visconti [Ennio Quirino Visconti (1751-1818)] told Canova in my hearing that untill he had been to London he had seen nothing. 9 That Canova is coming here in a week or ten days – and is prepossessed with a most favourable idea of what he is to see. Indeed he professed to be coming chiefly to see your collection. 10 That Canova and I are on the most intimate footing.'⁷

Canova, therefore, was preparing to come to London to finally see the Parthenon marbles. In Rome in 1803 Elgin had proposed that Canova should



2. Matthew Pratt, *The American School*, 1765, oil on canvas, 91.4 x 127.6 cm. Metropolitan Museum, New York, 97.29.3.

restore them, but this had been rejected by Canova who believed that works attributed to Phidias and his school should not be tampered with.⁸ Twelve years later, Canova's opinion was still the main reason why Lord Elgin had not yet had the marbles restored, on whose value and autograph status a heated international debate had developed in the meantime, which also concerning the legitimacy of their export. Among the many scholars involved in this debate was the Roman archaeologist Ennio Quirino Visconti (1751-1818), *surveillant des antiques* at the Louvre, who went to London from Paris to see the marbles, which is when he obtained the positive assessment of them that he conveyed to Canova in Hamilton's presence.⁹

On 20 October 1815, six days before returning home to London, Hamilton wrote from Paris to Canova and his half-brother Giovanni Battista Sartori who had followed him from Rome, foretelling that they would be well received by 'every amateur of what is good and beautiful' and suggesting that suitable accommodation could be had at the Hotel Brunet in Leicester Square.¹⁰

As is well known, Canova's arrival in London on 1 November 1815 created an uproar, and created a competition of hospitality among noble families, to which Canova acquiesced with his usual amiable sociability, moving continuously from the Bennet Hotel to Buckingham Street, Fitzroy Square, near the British Museum, in the end chosen instead of the Brunet Hotel.¹¹ About the reason for Canova's trip, The London Courier wrote:

'It was said among foreigners that the famous sculptor Canova would be invited to travel to England to express his opinion on the national monument to be erected in honor of the English armies. We are happy to be able to deny this rumor and to assure the public that the visit planned by Canova in our homeland is nothing but of simple curiosity. He wants to see the buildings of London, the art schools, its collections of statues and paintings, and more particularly the gallery of statues and bas-reliefs taken from Athens by Lord Elgin.'¹²

With regard to the order of his preferences regarding the curiosities of London, Canova wrote to his friend Antoine-Chrysostome Quatremère de Quincy (1755-1849) in Paris on 9 November 1815, describing his first considered impressions of the Parthenon marbles, visited two days after his arrival:

'Here I am in London ... Amazing capital, beautiful streets, beautiful squares, beautiful bridges, great cleanliness, and what is most surprising is that you see everywhere the well-being of humanity. I saw the marbles that came from Greece: of the bas-reliefs we already had some idea from the prints, from some casts and from some of the marble themselves; but the large-scale figures, in which the artist can show his true knowledge, we knew nothing about them. If it is true that these are works of Phidias, or executed under his guidance, or that he laid his hands on them to complete them, they clearly show that the great masters were true imitators of beautiful nature: they showed no affectation, nothing exaggerated or hard, that is, nothing of what could be called conventional and geometrical. I conclude that very many of the statues that we have that have those exaggerations must be copies made by a multitude of sculptors, who replicated beautiful Greek works in order to send them to Rome. The works of Phidias

are all real flesh, that is, beautiful nature, as are the other eminent ancient sculptures; so that the Belvedere Mercury is flesh, flesh the Torso, flesh the Fighting Gladiator, flesh the many copies of the Satyr of Praxiteles, flesh the Cupid, of which there are fragments everywhere, flesh the Venus, and a Venus in this royal museum [the British Museum] is true flesh. I must confess to you, that in having seen these beautiful things my self-love was gratified, because I have always thought that the great masters had to operate in this way, and not otherwise. Do not suppose that the style of the bas-reliefs of the temple of Minerva is different: they too have fine forms and fleshiness, because men have always been made of supple flesh, not bronze. Such authorities ought to be enough to effectively redirect sculptors to renounce all rigidity of manner, and to imitate instead the beautiful and soft doughiness of nature.¹³

Compared with his very positive, but generic, judgment of the urbanism of London, which never gets down to the level of individual buildings,¹⁴ Canova's judgment of Greek marbles takes on encomiastic and even dogmatic overtones, which were repeated the next day in a letter of thanks to Lord Elgin.¹⁵ Of similar tenor are his opinions as recorded in other sources, starting with the diary of the painter Benjamin Robert Haydon (1786-1846), a fierce opponent of the Royal Academy and a staunch supporter of the value of Greek masterpieces against those, like the scholar Richard Payne Knight (1751-1824), who would deny it.¹⁶

Documentary sources also attest to the leading role played in the story of the Parthenon marbles by West both as President of the Royal Academy, and as a painter particularly attracted to ancient statuary since the time when, in 1760, just arrived in Rome from America, he compared the Apollo Belvedere to a Mohawk warrior, thus making the first connection between classical art and the young American nation.¹⁷ West had had the privilege of drawing the Parthenon frieze sculptures between 1808 and 1809 when they were still at Lord Elgin's residence on Park Lane.¹⁸ And although he added the missing parts, he also declared himself against the restoration after being convinced that the Elgin marbles were autograph works by Phidias. He explains this in a long letter of thanks addressed to Lord Elgin, who published it after the council of the Royal Academy had refused to publish it because of West's position.¹⁹ West and Canova were united by their interest in the Elgin marbles, and also by their youthful interest in the Apollo Belvedere, which Canova drew passionately in his early years in Rome. The role played by West is such that the diplomat Hamilton must have introduced them to each other well before their first documented meeting on 27 November 1815 at the Royal Academy. This took place at one of the spectacular lectures by anatomy professor Sir Anthony Carlisle (1768-1840), when the idea of a banquet of honor for Canova was born, as reported by the painter Joseph Farington RA (1747-1821) in his diary:

'November 27. – Howard wrote to day to inform me that Canova, the celebrated Italian Sculptor, was expected to attend Carlisle's Lecture at the Royal Academy this evening accompanied by Mr. West, the President. He added that many members had expressed a desire that the Royal Academy shd. give a dinner to Canova whose stay in this Country wd. be short. – I replied to Him by note that I had been confined at home sometime by the affects of a Cold & had seen very few members of the Academy, but that I had thought that would be very proper

for the Academy to shew Him this mark of respect & I had looked for some younger & more active members than I now am or desire to be to move the Council for this purpose; & that I thought the President & Council shd. have the direction & management of the dinner if given.²⁰

According to what Haydon wrote in his diary, Canova's delayed invitation from the academicians, of which Farington was implicitly critical, stemmed from the widespread opinion that he had arrived in London to acquire important commissions, denied ironically by Canova saying he always had too much work and that he would not have undertaken a colossal statue of *Religion* for St. Peter's in Rome if he had sought more.²¹ What Canova affirmed must have been known, directly or indirectly, by the main academic sculptors active in London: Joseph Nollekens (1737-1823), John Flaxman (1755-1826), Charles Rossi (1762-1839) and Richard Westmacott (1775-1856), all of whom in the course of their careers had carved out well-defined areas in the field of antiquarian culture thanks to the accreditation provided by periods of training in Rome of varying lengths. While the aged Nollekens had had no relationship with Canova, having left Rome nine years before the latter moved there from Venice in November 1779; Rossi (in Rome 1786 to 1788), Flaxman (in Rome from 1788 to 1794) and Westmacott (in Rome from 1793 to 1796) had had the opportunity to engage with him during their stays in Rome.²² In particular, Flaxman, professor of sculpture at the Royal Academy since 1810, had earned Canova's esteem, so much so that he was judged the most important British artist and was recommended to Lord Elgin as the only one capable of restoring the Parthenon marbles, should he accept the undertaking.²³

Flaxman, who also refused to restore the Elgin marbles, more than any could have introduced Canova to his academic colleagues, such as the painters David Wilkie (1785-1841) and Thomas Lawrence (1769-1830), author of drawings of the Elgin marbles and of the portrait of Canova perfected in 1819 in Rome and donated to the sculptor (Fig. 3).²⁴ These included those who had not been able to know Canova in Rome because their stay predated his arrival, such as the architect George Dance (1741-1825) and the painter Henry Fuseli [Füssli] (1741-1825), and those who yet had to stay there, such as the painter Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851). If Canova and the architect John Soane (1753-1837) met it could only have been before Soane left Rome in May 1780, but Canova and the architect Robert Smirke (1780-1867) certainly met during the latter's Grand Tour in Italy, undertaken with his brother Richard from 1802 to 1804. It is as one who knew Canova well that Farington refers to him as one uninterested in money and indifferent to any commissions that the British government might propose.

'Robert Smirke who knows Canova the celebrated Italian Sculptor, spoke of the perfect indifference He showed to the

3. Thomas Lawrence, *Antonio Canova*, 1815-19, oil on canvas, 90 x 72 cm. Museo Gipsoteca Antonio Canova, Possagno.



accumulation of money. He never desired more than what is sufficient to defray His present expences, and leaves to others the management of what arises from the execution of His numerous Commissions. He has seen the Elgin Marbles, the works of Phidias, & says He never before saw Sculpture at such a height of perfection. – It is not intended to consult or employ Him upon any of the proposed British government Monuments.²⁵

It is very likely that all of them would have gone to the dinner that after Carlisle's lecture was held in Hamilton's residence in the presence of Haydon who, among other things, reported that West with his bad Italian bored everyone: "On the 27th I dined at Hamilton's to meet Canova, and spent a delightful evening. West was there, but his bad Italian annoyed us all".²⁶

Haydon himself says that he also met Canova in the following two days, exchanging further opinions on the Elgin marbles, and receiving his judgment on some academicians: peremptory on the genius of Turner and on the flashiness of Fuseli, and critical on the qualities of Rossi and West:

'On the 28th. Hamilton kindly arranged I should show him the lions. I showed him the Duke of Devonshire's, and setting aside all animosities took him to Turner's. "*Gran génis*," he kept exclaiming. ...

Next day I met Canova at the Elgin Marbles. He was delighted to see me, and pointed out all the beauties with the dash of unerring practice, saying, "*Come e sentito*" (how it is felt), He seemed a facetious man. Rossi, whom he knew at Rome, he called "*Un bon diable*" (a good devil). "When they get a mould of this," said he, pointing to the fragment of the Neptune, "how will they be astonished at Rome."

In talking of Fuseli he said, "*Ve ne sono in li arte due cose, il fuoco e la fiamma. Fuseli n'ebbe che la fiamma; Raffaele il fuoco.*" (In art there are two things, fire and flame. Fuseli only had the flame; Raphael the fire).

"How do you like West" said I. "*Comme ça.*" (so-so) "*Au moins*," said I, "*il compose bien.*" "Non, Monsieur," said Canova, "*il met des figures en groupes.*" (At least," said I, "*he composes well.*" "No, Monsieur," said Canova, "*he puts figures in groups.*")

"If any sculptor," he said, "had made such statues [i.e. like the Elgin marbles] before these were seen, '*Sono troppo veri*' (they are too realistic) would have been the cry."²⁷

Haydon, on the other hand, did not record Canova having praised Flaxman's projects, and caught an unpleasant hint of jealousy: "The only symptom I saw of jealousy was certainly at the name of Flaxman. When we talked of his designs there was an expression I did not like."²⁸

It is therefore almost certain that on the day of the banquet, 1 December 1815, Canova already knew all the academicians present, and had some idea about each of them, and would have been able to carry on discussions on any artistic theme, although the account of the event published by the *Morning Chronicle* was more succinct:

'On Friday last Canova the celebrated Sculptor dined with the Academicians in the Council-room of the Royal Academy, in consequence of an invitation sent to him by the President and Council, at the general request of the members. The meeting was highly interesting, and presented a most pleasing example of the harmony and cordiality which should ever subsist in the community of the Fine

Arts. We are glad to see this amiable foreigner received with such peculiar distinction by our Artists; it proves, that in liberal minds a brotherly affection for high talent is quite compatible with the emulation of rival excellence.²⁹

Farington's diary offers a more complex perspective on the event, which followed the annual Royal Academy award ceremony by a few hours:³⁰

'A little after 5 oClock *Canova* came, accompanied by His Brother the *Abate Canova*, Dr. Granville, an Italian, – Mr. Hamilton under Secretary of State, and another Italian. They were recd. in the Library where the President & Academicians were assembled.

We dined at *i* past 5 oClock. – Several toasts were given by the President, including Mr. Canova & Mr. Hamilton. – Conversation was well kept [up] by those who sat near each other so as to render the scene agreeable. Abt. ½ past 8 Coffee & tea was placed on the table, and before 10 oClock Canova with the other Visitors retired, and gradually the whole company. – Fuseli spoke to me of Canova in very approving terms, thinking highly of His modesty & His talents –.³¹

It is easy to conclude that the recurring themes of the conversations were the imminent return to Rome of the works stolen by the French, the controversial negotiation of the sale of the Elgin marbles, the comparison of Canova's opinions with those of the other diners on these works and in general on classical sculpture and its importance for the progress of contemporary art. It is likely that the universality of the arts of *disegno* was discussed, as was the case in the discussion that took place on 5 December at Canova's last convivial occasion in London, lunch at Hamilton's with Smirke and Lawrence that also revealed Canova's skills as a painter.

'December 5. – Robert Smirke [Jnr.] I dined with. R. Smirke and Lawrence at Mr. Hamilton's yesterday in company with Canova it being a farewell dinner. Canova was to leave London this morning. He expressed himself as having been much gratified while in England & was particularly so with the reception He had when presented at the Levee. – Lawrence said that Canova was born in the vicinity of Venice & that He is a Painter as well as a Sculptor, & that He had painted an Altar piece 30 feet high for a Church near Venice.' He [Canova] spoke of Painting with feeling. He said composition, & drawing are necessary to form a Picture but colouring and effect are to be added otherwise. He who is deficient in these respects had better be a Sculptor.³²

And surely there was discussion of the resolution just taken by the Council of the Academy to create the Schools of Design, which was implemented in 1816.³³ To this context has convincingly been linked the motion put forward by Flaxman, as professor of sculpture, at the General Assembly for the convening of an extraordinary meeting to 'take into consideration the expedience of procuring for the Academy a new Collection of Casts from the Antique', and the subsequent sending by the Council to the Prince Regent of a formal request in this regard dated 14 December 1815:

'Being desirous to render the Schools of Design as efficient as possible, conformably with H.R.H.'s known disposition to advance the Arts of Painting & Sculpture the President and Council humbly intreat Y.R. Highness to afford your gracious aid [and] protection to their efforts for obtaining new and perfect Casts from some of the fine Antiques in Rome, Naples and Florence, by al-



4. Archibald Archer, *The Trustees in the Temporary Elgin Room*, 1819, oil on canvas, 94 x 132.7 cm. British Museum, London, Painting.30. In the idealized view, Benjamin West is portrayed seated on the left.

lowing them a free conveyance to London in some of His Majesty's Vessels, and by such other facilities as Your Royal Highness in your wisdom and goodness may direct for the advantage of the Royal Academy.³⁴

This project would have been developed during the reception of Canova by the Prince Regent (Monday 4th December), but was certainly conceived during the academic dinner in his honor with the contribution of West and Flaxman.

Flaxman later recalled that the Pope's gift to the Prince Regent of the casts of the masterpieces of the Vatican Museums selected by Canova was in recognition of the decisive British contribution to the restitution of the works looted by the French, and that the Prince Regent, preferring public advantage to individual gratification, had granted them to the Academy, in order to spread taste and promote its knowledge and study.³⁵

On 2 August 1816 President Benjamin West reported that he had received from Charles Long, later 1st Baron Farnborough (1760-1838) Joint Paymaster-General of the Treasury, a list of 'twenty-six Casts from Marbles in the Pope's Museum which are about to be sent to the Prince Regent and which His Royal Highness is graciously pleased to present to the Royal Academy.'³⁶ This list, probably transcribed from a letter from Canova, included:

'1 Torso Belvedere. 2. Laocoon. 3. Mercury, or Antinous. 4. Meleager. 5 to 14 Apollo with the Muses. 15 Menander. 16. Posidippus. 17. Dying Gladiator. 18 Capitoline Venus. 19 Antinous – Heads of the same. 22 Jupiter Serapis. 23 Ajax. 24 Ocean. 25 Bacchant. 26 Similar.'³⁷

In August 1816 the availability in London of the ancient masterpieces of the Parthenon, finally acquired by the British Museum (Fig. 4) and copies of the most significant works of the Vatican Museums, finally laid the foundations for a school of drawing at the Royal Academy comparable

to that of the Accademia di San Luca, permitting the consolidation of the relations between the two institutions headed by President West and *Principe perpetuo* Canova.

In this way an artistic cross-fertilization of extraordinary importance was developed between Rome, Paris and London. It took place under the sign of the Apollo Belvedere, a statue dear to both West and Canova, and considered by Flaxman to be superior to the best of the Parthenon marbles. As the original statue was repatriated from Paris to Rome, a copy arrived in London from Rome.

As a result the protagonist of this process, Canova, became enormously popular among the British cultural world, as is revealed in the homage to the sculptor in the newspaper *The Examiner* on 10 December 1815:

‘Canova is gone; and by his sweet and amiable manners, during his short stay, he endeared every body who knew him. He was about the middle stature, with a fine head of silent Italian sensibility; whenever he spoke of Art, his countenance lit up with a bland harmonious smile, as if music would follow the motions of his lips. He displayed a complete knowledge of his Art in whatever he said relating to it, and shewed as much feeling for Painting as for Sculpture. He characterized all the great Men in both Arts by a few words, that exemplified a mind long used to come to right conclusions and stored with materials; and the way in which he dashed about his hand when pointing out the beauties of the Elgin Marbles, had the air of a master in his profession; it went at once to the knees, loins, elbow, arm-pits, shoulders, and all the great divisions and beauties of the body, as if the hand was among parts it recognised. He shewed his feeling, by seeing at once the beauties of these divine things, and – curbing the petulance of advanced life, which he must have felt, in finding something at his age superior to what he had hitherto adored, – with the frankness and candour of a pure mind, said (what we had all said before him), that they were superior in stile to every thing else on earth; that at Rome they had no idea of such things, and would be astonished when they saw them; that there would be a great change in the whole system of both Arts in consequence; and that, had he seen nothing else in England, they would have amply repaid his journey.’³⁸

Canova maintained a vivid memory of these events reflected in the biographical writings dedicated to him by his friends Melchiorre Missirini and Antonio D’Este.³⁹ As soon as he returned to Rome, in January 1816, he wanted the Accademia di San Luca to be formally involved, he proposed, as *Principe perpetuo*, to welcoming into its membership the protagonists of his London visit. At the congregation on 21 January 1816, Hamilton and West were elected by acclamation, as an *accademico di onore* and *accademico di merito* respectively:

‘As proposed by *Signor Marchese Canova*, our *Principe perpetuo*, the gentleman William Hamilton Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs was acclaimed as an honorary academician in merit of having contributed much to the recovery of our objects of art. Also acclaimed as an academician of merit was Mr. Benjamin West, painter of His Majesty the King of Great Britain and President of the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in London, also proposed by the *principe perpetuo*.’⁴⁰

In the subsequent congregations of 18 August and 29 September, Flaxman, Lawrence and Fuseli, who evidently in Canova’s eyes best combined ar-

tistic merit and institutional commitment, were admitted as *accademici di merito*. For the ‘genius’ of Turner his appointment as Academician had to await his arrival in Rome in 1819.⁴¹ By this time relations between the academies of London and Rome had been consolidated in Canova’s name to such an extent that in 1817–19 Prince Hoare (1755–1834), Secretary for Foreign Correspondence to the Royal Academy, foreshadowed a volume, never published, dedicated to Rome, based in part on Canova’s communications on Roman academies and artists.⁴² In 1817 the scholarship program of the Royal Academy in Rome was restored, recognizing the papal city as an ideal place for the formation of the most ambitious young European artists eager to shape the tastes of the international public.⁴³ With the opening of the English Academy in Rome in 1821 the British were preparing to catch up to the French, who had been established in Rome since the seventeenth century, followed in 1842 by the first American Academy,⁴⁴ which inaugurated a new cycle of intercontinental studies almost eighty years after Benjamin West arrived in Rome.

[Translated by David R. Marshall]

Notes

1 Canova was elected academician of San Luca on 5 January 1800 (Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, Archivio storico, Roma – ANSLAs, *Congregazioni*, vol. 55, f. 73v); on 2 September 1810 he was elected *Principe* of the Academy (ibid., vol. 56, f. 106v), on 20 March 1814, at the end of his three-year term, Canova refused the position of *Presidente perpetuo* (the office of President had replaced that of *Principe* after the French reform of 1811). The academicians, after having considered that the title of *Presidente onorario* proposed by Canova himself, conferred on him the honorary title of *Principe perpetuo* (ibid., vol. 59, ff. 40rv), previously given for the first and hitherto only time to Carlo Maratti in 1706 by Pope Clement XI. Similarly honorary was for the simultaneous appointment of Francesco Fontana as *Vice-Principe*. On Canova’s institutional roles in the Accademia di San Luca, see Cesareo 2012.

2 Johns 1998, pp. 171–94.

3 *Chirografo* 1802.

4 In 1802, ‘Mr Canover’ had presented to the Royal Academy a plaster cast of one of his works through the offices of Giuseppe Bonomi. Liscombe 1987, p. 231.

5 See Martin Postle in this volume.

6 For a discussion of Canova’s presence in London between November and December 1815 concerning the Elgin marbles and the negotiations for the financing of the transport of works of art returned by the French to the Papal States, see Pavan 1976.

7 The letter is published in Smith 1916, p. 332. The official objective of Canova’s stay in London was however linked to the request for the financing of the transport from Paris to Rome of the works of art he recovered. On 28 November he wrote to Cardinal Consalvi from Paris that ‘the day after tomorrow I am leaving for London ... I will study if possible to obtain, as I hope, another sum to the object itself and from the same nation, and this is the main reason that persuades me to travel.’ *Lettere inedite di Antonio Canova* 1888, p. 25; Pavan 1976, p. 246.

8 Pavan 1976, pp. 225–6.

9 Pavan 1976, pp. 243–4.

10 Pavan 1976, p. 246. The original letter is in *Manoscritti Canoviani*, Museo civico di Bassano, E-52, 56–38.

11 Pavan 1976; Johns 1998, pp. 171–94. Canova’s residence at the Bennet Hotel is noted in Haydon 1853, I, p. 284.

12 *The London Courier*, 1 December 1815, cited, in Italian translation, in Pavan 1976, p. 250.

13 'Eccomi a Londra ... Capitale sorprendente, bellissime strade, bellissime piazze, bellissimi ponti, grande pulizia, e quello che più sorprende è che si vede in ogni dove il benessere dell'umanità. Io veduto i marmi venuti di Grecia: de' bassorilievi già ne avevamo un'idea dalle stampe, da qualche gesso ed ancora da qualche pezzo di marmo; ma delle figure in grande, nelle quali l'artista può far mostra del vero suo sapere, non ne sapevamo nulla. Se è vero che queste siano opere di Fidia, o dirette da esso, o ch'egli v'abbia posto le mani per ultimarle, queste mostrano chiaramente che i grandi maestri erano veri imitatori della bella natura: niente avevano di affettato, niente di esagerato né di duro, cioè nulla di quelle parti che si chiamerebbero di convenzione e geometriche. Concludo che tante e tante statue che noi abbiamo con quelle esagerazioni devono esser copie fatte da que' tanti scultori, che replicavano le belle opere greche per ispedirle a Roma. L'opere di Fidia sono una vera carne, cioè la bella natura, come lo sono le altre esimie sculture antiche; perché carne è il Mercurio di Belvedere, carne il Torso, carne il Gladiator Combattente, carne le tante copie del Satiro di Prassitele, carne il Cupido, di cui si trovan frammenti da per tutto, carne la Venere, ed una Venere poi di questo real museo è carne verissima. Devo confessarvi, che in aver veduto queste belle cose il mio amor proprio è stato solleticato, perché sempre sono stato di sentimento che i grandi maestri avessero dovuto operare in questo modo, e non altrimenti. Non crediate che lo stile de' bassorilievi del tempio di Minerva sia diverso: essi hanno tutti le buone forme e la carnosità, perché sono sempre gli uomini stati composti di carne flessibile, e non di bronzo. Basta questo giudizio per determinare una volta efficacemente gli scultori a rinunziare ad ogni rigidità, attenendosi piuttosto al bello e morbido impasto naturale.' Missirini 1824, p. 397-8; Quatremère de Quincy 1834, p. 288.

14 On 8 November, a friend of the Hollands, Mr. Whishaw, wrote that Canova had not appreciated Westminster Abbey, saying only that '*il y a quelques beaux idées*' (there are some nice ideas) and that he had not heard what he thought of 'our architecture', see further Seymour 1906, p. 119.

15 *A Letter* 1816, pp. XXI-XXII: 'Allow me, my Lord, to express to you the lively sentiments of pleasure which I feel, from having seen in London the inestimable antique marbles brought by your Lordship from Greece. I can never satisfy myself with viewing them again and again; and although my stay in this great metropolis must of necessity be extremely short, I am still anxious to dedicate every leisure moment to the contemplation of these celebrated relics of ancient art. I admire in them the truth of nature combined with the choice of beautiful forms: every thing about them breathes animation, with a singular truth of expression, and with a degree of skill which is the more exquisite, as it is without the least affectation of the pomp of art, which is concealed with admirable address. The naked figures are real flesh, in its native beauty. I esteem myself happy in having been able to see these masterpieces with my own eyes; and I should be perfectly contented with having come to London on their account alone. I am persuaded therefore that all artists and amateurs must gratefully acknowledge their high obligations to your Lordship, for having brought these memorable and stupendous sculptures into our neighbourhood.' English translation of a letter written in Italian. Pavan 1976, pp. 252-3.

16 Pavan 1976, pp. 229-30.

17 On the biographical episode related to the impression aroused in West by the sight of the Apollo Belvedere see the essay by Martin Postle in this volume.

18 Smith 1916, p. 163.

19 Pavan 1976, pp. 230-1, 233-4.

20 *The Farington Diary* 1928, p. 47.

21 'The Academicians at first would pay no attention to him, and swore he came for work. At last, mere shame obliged them to invite him to a dinner. "As to coming for work", he said, "I have always had too much. I should not have given a colossal statue of Religion to St. Peter's if I had wanted work."' Haydon 1853, I, p. 296. On the long and tormented issue of the statue of Religion in the last phase of Canova's career, see Manfredi 2021 (with previous bibliography).

22 Ingamells 1997, pp. 361-4, 709-11, 824, 993-4.

23 Pavan 1976, p. 226. For another opinion of Canova on Flaxman see note 32 below.

24 Pancheri 2003.

25 'He is full of gratitude to Mr. Hamilton, Secretary to Lord Castlereagh, by whose exertions, He says, He obtained the restoration of the works of art taken by the French from Rome. - He had in vain applied to the French Ministry to restore them. His time was consumed in vain attendance upon them, and He then had recourse to Mr. Hamilton who He had known in Rome. Mr. William Hamilton set actively about it & obtained their restoration. Canova is between 50 & 60 years old. - He visited Mr. Long at Bromley Hill, who took Him

[for] a ride & shewed Him London from the Heights abt. Sydenham. Canova was in raptures at the prospect. – He has been to Hampton Court to see the Cartoons of Raphael, and was filled with admiration of them. – At present He is at the Duke of Bedford's at Woburn.' *The Farington diary* 1928, p. 46.

26 'Canova said in the course of the evening Raffaele's heads were neither Greek nor Roman, but "veri devote".' Haydon 1853, I, p. 296.

27 Haydon 1853, I, pp. 296-7.

28 Haydon 1853, I, pp. 297.

29 *The Morning Chronicle*, December 1815. On the invitation letter to the dinner sent on 28 November to all academics, see Malamani 1911, p. 211.

30 'December 1.– Royal Academy General Meeting I went to at 2 oClock, and there voted for some of the medals to be given but the Historical pictures (two) were so bad that no medal was given. The Academy figures from the life were also very indifferent. – A Series of resolutions agreed to by the Council to establish a School of Painting in the Academy were also read, & agreed to. It arose from the Master & Fellows of Dulwich College having offered to lend any of the Bourgeois Collection to the Academy for this purpose. – A Resolution was added after voting that this offer be accepted, that pictures obtained from other quarters should also be read, for the Students to Copy.' *The Farington Diary* 1928, p. 48.

31 *The Farington Diary* 1928, p. 48.

32 'He said John Flaxman's genius would be admired every where, but it was inferred that His execution is not equal to His imagination and taste. Lawrence said He thought the manners of Canova a pattern for an Artist; that He had modest but manly deportment. R. Smirke [Junr] sd. that what English He does speak is remarkably pure and correct.–' *The Farington Diary* 1928, p. 49.

33 Hutchison 1986, pp. 68–9.

34 Liscombe 1987, p. 231, citing Royal Academy *Council Minutes Book* v, p. 240, 14 December 1815.

35 Liscombe 1987, pp. 231–2.

36 Liscombe 1987, p. 232.

37 '1 Torso Belvedere. 2 Laoconte. 3 Mercurio, o Antinoo. 4 Meleagro. 5 a 14 Apollo con le Muse. 15 Menandro. 16 Posidippo. 17 Gladiatore moribondo. 18 Venere di Campidoglio. 19 Antinoo – idem Teste. 22 Giove Serapide. 23 Ajace. 24 Oceano. 25 Baccante. 26 Simile.' Liscombe 1987, p. 232

38 'Before leaving London, he wrote letters to both HAYDON and WILKIE, expressive of the highest estimation and most affectionate regard: to the former he paid the compliment of accepting a grand edition of Milton, wick Mr. HAYDON begged to present in remembrance of his admiration and respect for him. He returns to Italy by the Rhine, and if he leave behind him on his roads such impressions of his kindness, gentleness, amiability, and taste, as he has left in England, his journey will be a journey of smiles. May peace for ever attend him!' *The Examiner*, 10 December 1815, pp. 793–4.

39 Missirini 1824, pp. 395–401; D'Este 1864, pp. 198–257.

40 'Sulla proposizione del Sig.^r Marchese Canova, nostro P[rincipe] P[erpetuo] fu acclamato in Accad[emic]o di onore il Gentiluomo Inglese Sig.^r William Hamilton sottosegretario degli affari esteri in benemerenzia di aver egli molto contribuito alla ricupera de' nostri ogetti d'arte. Fu anche acclamato in Accademico di merito il Sig.^r Beniamino West Pittore di S.M. il Re della Gran Bretagna e Presidente della Reale Accad.a delle Belle Arti di Londra. proposto anch'esso dal Sig.^r P[rincipe] P[erpetuo].' ANSLAs, *Congregazioni*, vol. 59, f. 61v–62r.

41 ANSLAs, *Congregazioni*, vol. 58, f. 46v, 18 August 1816: 'Si diede principio alla Congregazione con proporre in accademici di merito Il Sig. Flaxman scultore nell'Accad.a di Londra p. parte de SS.ri Canova, D'Este, Laboureur, il Sig. Fischley Professore di Pittura nella sudetta ad istanza de SS.ri Cav. Manno, Agricola e Pozzi, il Sig. Cav. Laurence Pittore di S.A.R. il P.pe Reggente d'Inghilterra proposto dai 3. Sudetti'; vol. 59, f. 70v, 29 September 1816: 'furono mandati a partito I nuovi accademici di merito proposti nell'antecedente congregazione economica del 18 agosto. Il Sig.^r Flaxman scultore inglese, ed i Signori Fischley, e Laurence Pittori, Inglese anch'essi furono tutti ammessi a pieni voti.'

42 Hoock 2003, p. 121.

43 *Ibidem*.

44 See McGuigan 2009 and Fabrizio Di Marco in this volume.

In *The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in the United States* (1964), Leo Marx offered a groundbreaking analysis of American art in relationship to the native American forces that shaped the culture of the country. Marx maintained that ‘At first, ... the natural environment seemed to be the only source of images capable of signifying America. ... All of which helps to account for the persistent habit of representing America with images of landscape.’¹ Allowing for both textual and visual representations, landscape offered the ideal vehicle to represent the nation’s specific ideals and distinctive promise. This essay focuses on landscape as the genre in which old and new themes produced a novel compromise between the European lesson and the American interpretation, whereby the seeds of a national American art and literature were encouraged to germinate.

Despite its lowly status in Sir Joshua Reynolds’s hierarchy of art genres, landscape was frequently practiced by American artists, giving rise to the internationally recognized movement of the Hudson River School of painting in the mid-nineteenth century. Reynolds had argued in his *Discourses* that landscape could not aspire to ideal beauty since it was not capable of including much beyond local details, being ‘a representation of an individual spot and each in its kind a very faithful but very confined portrait.’² However, it was precisely the emphasis on “local details” that imparted a decidedly American taste to the budding nation’s artistic manifestations. Focusing on the formative years of American cultural nationalism, between 1790 and 1860, Neil Harris, writing in *The Artist in American Society*, described this very dialectic:

‘The few American artists who traveled to Europe ... were not rebels ... They were provincials, cautious and conservative if a little overambitious and naïve. They hoped to revive the glories of Athens, not by propounding new theories but by obeying the old ones. The program of Reynolds pleased because it was familiar ... The only innovation made by the early American painters ... involved the entry of particularity into history painting.’³

The collection of essays in *Views of American Landscapes* (1989) demonstrates however, that a spirited and ongoing dialogue on art existed right from the start of the relations between Europe and the United States, alongside an exchange of artistic styles, of contents and of references.⁴ This comprised the genre of American landscape painting, classically inspired, but distinguished by local features and native characters.

This cultural exchange was promoted by those artists and intellectuals

who straddled both sides of the Atlantic – notably by pivotal figures such as the American writer John Neal from Portland, Maine (1793–1876), who left a significant mark on the English literary scene of the 1820s, and who was the earliest American writer to engage with questions of art and aesthetics.⁵ Neal's 1824–25 sojourn in London, from where he contributed a series of articles on 'American Writers' to *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, positioned him among the few Americans who gained a first-hand experience of European art and art criticism. In London, Neal experienced the richness of a modern cosmopolitan art milieu familiar with ancient models, yet resonant with modern voices.⁶

Alongside writing poetry, fiction, and essays, Neal was also an art critic. His ideas on American art, that can be gleaned from the epistolary *Randolph; A Novel* (1823), from his *American Writers* essays, and from the American magazines he edited or contributed to after his return to the United States, were collectively published by Harold Edward Dickson as *Observations on American Art*.⁷ Within the scope of the present research on *American Latium*, Neal's literary contributions provide an account of the aspirations of American artists to create a national style: naïve endeavour challenging the powerful, intimidating manifestations of antiquity that were visible, in Rome and in Latium, in myriad collections, enshrined masterpieces and glorious ruins, evidence of a long, unceasing and unparalleled intercourse with the classical Muses. In this context, John Neal was to consider the essential criteria for promoting American art from the beginning to the end of his long and productive career.

One of the earliest images in American art that can be considered a stand-in for an American Muse is John Vanderlyn's painting of *Ariadne Asleep on the Island of Naxos* (1808–12). Ariadne is portrayed sleeping naked in a classicizing landscape, which, however, does not betray any particular American locality, but follows the



Opposite

1. John Vanderlyn, *Ariadne Asleep on the Island of Naxos*, 1808-12, oil on canvas, 175 x 224 cm. Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, 1878.1.11.

2. William Page, *Portrait of Mrs Page*, 1860-61, oil on canvas, 153 x 92.1 cm. Detroit Institute of Arts, 37.61.

classical European tradition of a vaguely Arcadian view (Fig. 1). As has been remarked about this painting:

'The American public could not identify with the Classical heritage in painting: mythology and history, about which they were largely ignorant; and nudity which offended their religious and moral scruples. For most of them the pictorial arts were still a luxury and a mystery.'⁸

As late as the 1830's, Asher Brown Durand was still making copies after Vanderlyn's *Ariadne Asleep on the Island of Naxos* – the "American Muse" of art was still naked, and still sound asleep. But in 1860-1861 an American artist in Rome, William Page, invented a new formula incorporating an American Muse – the *Portrait of Mrs. Page* (Fig. 2).

Mrs. Page displays an antithetical relationship to classical art, notwithstanding the fact the sitter is immersed in a classical context. The background of the painting features the Roman Coliseum, while dominating the foreground is a modern woman, Mrs. Page, not naked, but dressed in contemporary clothing. Mrs. Page occupies her space with an aplomb that proclaims her gender as well as her status – she is fully historicized and no longer trapped in the classical stereotype. Her eyes are wide open and she engages with the viewer.

Apollo in the American Landscape

In a poem published in 1818, Neal early on conveyed a full sense of the nationalist ambition sustaining the effort toward self-definition of American artists, which eventually culminated in an American Renaissance. In *The Battle of Niagara, an Ode Delivered before the Delphians in Baltimore*, and signed Jehu O' Cataract, the pen name Neal adopted for the Delphian Club, Neal described the Battle of Lundy's Lane, fought during the Anglo-American war of 1812-14, comprised of eight hundred and fifty-four lines dedicated to Apollo, 'the blazing god of Poesy.'⁹ The poem opens with an American eagle, the symbolic bird that directly recalls the Roman eagle, and it focuses on a glorious sunset; it then shifts to the landscape of Ontario where the figure of an American Indian appears. The God Apollo, icon of classical beauty, is now enshrined in the person of a native American in the American wilderness. Yet Neal emphasizes an essential difference between the two mythical figures, distinguishing the American Apollo from the classical god:

'Man! All man! – the monarch of the wild!
Not the faint spirit that corrupting smiled
On soft, lascivious Greece – but Nature's child, ...
Not that Apollo! – Not the heavenly one,
Voluptuous spirit of a setting sun,
But this, the offspring of young Solitude,
Child of the holy spot, where none intrude
But genii of the torrent – cliff and wood –
Nurslings of cloud and storm – the desert's fiery brood.'¹⁰

The atmospheric quality, warring clouds, rolling mists, rising sun, enchantment and light of Neal's *Battle of Niagara* amount to what Barbara Novak,

discussing American landscape, described as 'the operatically sublime', an archetypal mixture of ancient Arcadian ideals and new landscape.¹¹

In the preface to the poem, Neal underlines the greatness of Homer, but also recognizes those who are Homers in their own country. Thus he lays the foundations for the classical nostalgia influencing the production of so many American artists, and visible in so many landscapes. As a form of art pertaining at once to realism and also to myth, landscape became the means to represent a nation at once politically young and geologically old, populated by young pioneers and primitive natives. Neal's conflation of the classical Apollo with the native Indian Apollo, can also be observed in the contemporaneous progression of the American visual arts, beginning for example with John Vanderlyn's classically inspired, *The Death of Jane M'Crea* (1804) (Fig. 3). In Vanderlyn's composition the figures are based on European neo-classical prototypes – in contrast, George Catlin's highly individualized and realistic portrait of a native American chief, looks to ideas of regionality and local folklore (Fig. 4).

Passionate Pilgrim, or, There and Back Again

The characterization of those artists and art lovers who traveled from America to Europe was that of the 'passionate pilgrims.'¹² This nomenclature inevitably suggested the hierarchy of a subaltern from a young nation worshipping at the altar of the so-called mother country. This colonial cultural attitude instead provoked a proud and rebellious reaction in Neal in favor of an American civilization. Neal's *Randolph; A Novel* (1823), published just before his move to London, featured a telling epistolary exchange between the American Molton and his English friend Stafford. Molton admits:

'No – we have no 'dramatists' – no 'architects' – no 'sculptors' – no 'musicians' – no 'tragedians'. And why? It is not for want of natural genius. There is enough of that among my countrymen. It is for the want of encouragement, riches, a crowded population, and corruption.'¹³

By the 1820s, American artists were flocking to



Opposite

3. John Vanderlyn, *The Death of Jane McCrea*, 1804, oil on canvas, 82.5 x 67.3 cm. The Wadsworth Athanaeum, Hartford, Conn.

4. George Catlin, *White Cloud, Head Chief of the Iowas*, 1844-45, oil on canvas, 71 x 58 cm. National Gallery of Arts, Washington, Paul Mellon Collection, 165.16.347.

London, where Benjamin West had served as president of the Royal Academy, beginning in 1792.¹⁴ Among Americans working in London, Neal's Molton names John Singleton Copley, Samuel Morse, Gilbert Stuart, Rembrandt Peale, John Wesley Jarvis and John Trumbull. Moreover, betraying his own prejudices, Neal's Molton criticizes works such as Peale's *Roman Daughter* or *Roman Charity* (1811), as he judges the picture a hackneyed subject, already painted by Caravaggio, Rubens, Greuze and Zoffany. The plea that Neal's Molton makes for American art and for the struggles of American painters acquires specific relevance when considered against the advantages enjoyed by those foreign artists who could afford to travel to, and reside in, and practice their art in a studio in Rome:

'Here [in America] he [the artist] has no academies; no collections; no other painters to consult ... He has no academy figures – no people trained, to stand and sit as he requires – no workers in plaster, if he wants a hand made permanently, for some particular study. And what is yet worse, nobody, whom he can prevail upon to sit. So that his men and women are, nine times out of ten, even in their anatomy, the creation of his own brain.'¹⁵

In his articles on "American Writers" for *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Neal was able to incorporate an awareness of the past alongside his own enlightened ideas, revealing a great degree of original experimentalism in his thought. As noted, Neal's residency in London, where he met many American artists and intellectuals, as well as his visit to Paris and to the Louvre, further expanded his knowledge of culture and he became truly cosmopolitan. This European experience served him well on his return to the United States, inasmuch as he was determined to steer American art toward American subjects. Described as a champion of American nationalism, Neal placed great emphasis on the efforts of his young and ambitious nation striving to differentiate itself from England and from Europe, not only politically, but also in matters of aesthetics and culture generally.

Back to the States:

'The Yankee' (1828-29) and *'The Atlantic Monthly'* (1868-69)

Neal's writings were read avidly by the founding fathers of American literature and, significantly, Neal was considered the first writer to describe themes, contexts, historical events, characters, and genres that would set in motion the classic literary explosion identified by Francis Otto Matthiessen as the American Renaissance.¹⁶ During the first half of the nineteenth century, paralleling Neal's literary evolution, a larger movement was fomenting in American cultural circles of a shift away from foreign influences, to modes of autonomous expression. The clearest example of Neal's emerging spirit is represented by his novel *Rachel Dyer. A North American Story* (1828), wherein he focuses on the Salem trials, that would later inspire Nathaniel Hawthorne. Moreover, Neal also begins to focus on regional aspects of the States, with publications such as *The Down-Easters, &c &c &c* (1833), and on early-feminist issues, in *True Womanhood: A Tale* (1859). Neal also authored memorable short stories, popular dime novels, such as *The Moose Hunter, or Life in the Maine Woods* (1864) and *Little Moccasin, or along the Madawaska* (1866), as well as children's

literature, notably *Great Mysteries and Little Plagues* (1870), and an aptly-titled autobiography, *Wandering Recollections of a Somewhat Busy Life* (1870). The sheer variety and prolificacy of his literary production overwhelmed contemporaneous criticism, and this trend has continued to the present day.

The American landscape remained a *leitmotiv* for Neal. Whether returning to the Salem trials, as in *Rachel Dyer*, or setting his stories in the wildest areas of the American continent, landscape was always a principal, relevant feature for the writer, and not just in the form of a picturesque background. For Neal landscape signified a vital dimension organically connected to his plots – thus allowing one to draw a parallel between his sense of landscape and the association of the English romantic poets with the Lake District. In his ‘Declaration of Independence in the Great Republic of Letters’, written as a preface to *Rachel Dyer*, Neal argues that the superiority of American art is an organic consequence of the exceptional nature of the country, whether geographical or human, social or political.¹⁷ Neal’s statements, steeped in the Romantic tradition, serve to fuse together American aspirations with classical nostalgia.

Neal the art critic applies the same strategy when he challenges those artists who still follow Sir Joshua Reynolds’s mandates. Reynolds’s prescribed hierarchy of art genres in which, in descending order, historical subjects, landscape, portraiture, and still-life were considered of decreasing artistic value, was challenged when American artists moved away from classical subjects and towards true American landscapes. And yet Reynolds’s rules were not entirely discarded. My point here is that Reynolds’s aesthetics, when met with nationalist ambition and the commodification of art, produced a compromise between the lessons of Europe and the identity-building project of the American artists. Experimentation, originality, subjective perception were Neal’s keywords: he pitched his judgement against those American artists, often expatriate, who were inspired by the features of an eternal Rome, its romantic ruined monuments, its Campagna, its legendary characters, and the course of empire. Yet he also argued that if such lessons could enhance the sense of the American place and infuse it with the energy of the *paysage moralisé* they would succeed in creating a new American art. In describing “the expatriate tradition” of American painting at this time, Barbara Novak remarks that the continental experience ‘offered a dialectical foil against which the more indigenous aspects of the American vision can be measured and judged. ... When transformed and assimilated to the needs of an American expression, these European modes have become a vital aspect of an American style.’¹⁸

For this reason, assessing Neal’s writings solely in terms of cultural and literary nationalism signifies conceding to a critical stereotype that fails to throw further light on the whole question of the cosmopolitanism of American art. Neal’s critical discourses championed the exceptionality and uniqueness of the American experience, and its growing independence from the European model.

In an 1829 contribution to *The Yankee and Boston Literary Gazette*, Neal underlined promising aspects of the local art scene:

‘At this moment there are more distinguished American painters than are to

be found in any one of what are called the modern schools of Europe. Our head-makers are without number and some without price, our historical by the acre, our portrait, our landscape, our still-life painters, if not too numerous to mention, are much too numerous to particularize. They are better than we deserve; and more than we know what to do with. Their progress too, is altogether astonishing, if we consider the disadvantages under which they have laboured, with no models, no casts, no academy figures, and little or no opportunity for them to see the old masters gathered together, where they could either be copied or studied with impunity.¹⁹

By this time the United States boasted a National Academy of Design, with Samuel Morse as its president, and an American Academy of Fine Arts, presided over by John Trumbull. In addition to academies, the American art market exhibited vigorous growth, enhanced by the fashion for pictures ‘quite as necessary as the chief part of what goes to the embellishment of a house’ and ‘not merely an article for the rich, a luxury for the few, but things for everybody, familiar household furniture.’²⁰ Neal noted that the spread of visual culture was also enhanced by technical reproductions, produced, for example, by William Pendleton’s Lithography in Boston. Engravings, and even colored impressions in oil, were essential to the cultural process leading to the aesthetic democracy of the nineteenth century, which adopted photography and cheap art replicas as well.²¹ Neal praised the engravings made by, or taken from, works of American artists such as Thomas Doughty, Asher Durand, and Thomas Cole. Doughty’s *Banks of the Juniata* and Cole’s *Chocurura’s Curse*, wherein the features of local landscape and even a native American are recognizable, garnered Neal’s warmest praise, both for the quality of the engraving and for their sensitivity to light and composition. In commenting on these artists, Neal acknowledged a new movement emergent on the American art scene, the Hudson River School of landscape painting.

Neal’s own growing interest in landscape painting, and the role landscape would come to play in the discovery of an American path to a national art, is testified by exactly those above-mentioned emerging artists, such as Thomas Doughty, Asher Durand and Thomas Cole, who transposed ‘the heroic aims of the history painters to the landscape category, where at last they could take firm root in American soil.’²² The overriding influence of Claude Lorrain’s style on ideal landscape painting had led to a tendency toward uniformity in composition

5. Thomas Doughty, *In the Catskills*, c. 1835, oil on canvas, 63.5 x 88.9 cm. Reynolda House Museum of American Art, Winston-Salem, NC, 1977.2.5.



and colouring. Against this uniformity the claims for a new national art moved into ambiguous territory, wherein the images of Arcadia, and of the Roman Campagna, could at first not be distinguished from American locations (Figs. 5-8).

Presented with a kindred syntax of composition, and a limited choice of colors, the only elements that might suggest the real geographical locations of these scenes were the presence of a hut in the woods (America), or a classical temple (Europe). Thomas Cole painted views of Florence, the Sicily of the temples of Segesta, and the mountain of Etna: 'using and re-using Salvatore Rosa's gnarled trees and Claude's coulisses and glittering ponds, he deftly imposed details of American scenery upon formulae derived from earlier prototypes.'²³ These sites were Cole's dreams of Arcadia, his scenes from the Garden of Eden, his allegories of the course of empire – inspired by Claude. Significantly, Cole also painted scenes of native American wildernesses; Cole portrayed the Catskills, the Oxbow, the Connecticut River, and the Falls of Munda. According to Novak, Cole 'took Sir Joshua's dicta to heart', notwithstanding his enthusiastic pronouncement in favor of American art: 'All nature here is new to art, no Tivolis, Ternis, Mont Blancs, Plinlimmons, hackneyed and worn by the daily pencils of hundreds; but primeval forests, virgin lakes, and waterfalls.'²⁴

Neal's commentary in his 1829 essay on *Landscape and Portrait Painting* reveals not only his personal knowledge of the artists involved in this movement, but also his grasp of the formulaic nature inherent in the traditional classic landscape genre:

'We may as well acknowledge the truth. Painting is poetry now. People have done



Opposite

6. Thomas Doughty, *Landscape with Ruins*, 1828, oil on canvas, 41.9 x 55.9 cm. Sotheby's, New York, sale 24 May 2006, lot. 38.

7. Thomas Cole, *Home in the Woods*, 1847, oil on canvas, 133.4 x 189.2 cm. Reynolda House Museum of American Art, Winston-Salem, NC, 1978.2.2.

8. Thomas Cole, *The Dream of Arcadia*, c. 1838, oil on canvas, 98.1 x 159.4 cm. Denver Art Museum, 1954.71.

with nature – Life is insipid, prose flat. The standard for landscape is no longer what we see outstretched before us, and on every side of us, with such amazing prodigality of shape and colour. We have done with the trees of the forest and the wilderness, the broken-up and richly-dyed earth, overrun with wild flowers and bravely-handled herbage, weary of ... all the painting of that master who used to be looked up as an authority in landscape – God. His pictures are not colored like those of the old masters – there's no denying that; nor like any of the young masters – any may see that.²⁵

Neal realized that the public wanted the stereotypical, the conventional, the ideal, instead of focusing on the real nature of landscape: 'Our friends like falsehood better than truth; poetry better than prose.'²⁶

The painters of the Hudson River School increasingly sought freedom in their choice of subject matter, yet they continued to follow the moralized pastoralism of Claudian landscapes. Neal warned against convention in landscape composition, and he began to demonstrate not only an anti-Claudian streak, but he held out against the larger issue of the corruption of taste:

'No wonder that we have landscape painters of extraordinary merit, whose pictures are never half so much like truth, as are the commonest daubings of the stage. Beautiful they are; and works of art they are. But they are not like the live landscapes we see about us; and if they were they would not sell ... Now if poetry is what you want – you have nothing to fear. The people who buy pictures have no taste for anything else. They want the very elements of poetry in everything they buy – better trees and better skies, prettier women and more beautifully-coloured men.'²⁷

The unsavory reality of relationship between artist and client, and the laws of the market, aggrieved Neal, who was an advocate for an independent American art, and who constantly encouraged American artists to persevere despite societal pressures.²⁸

Between 1868 and 1869 Neal would return to the subject of art with 'Our Painters. I and II', written for *The Atlantic Monthly*. These articles manifest the subdued tone of an obituary – which they frequently were. Gilbert Stuart, Rembrandt Peale, John Wesley Jarvis were all "departed worthies", as were Benjamin West, Thomas Sully and Thomas Doughty.²⁹ The increasingly repetitive formula of the Hudson River School landscapes was noted by Neal in reference to Thomas Doughty:

"His first pictures were of scenery along the Susquehanna, with beautiful skies, foliage dripping with sunshine, or golden river-mist, – ... he went about ... multiplying pictures of the Susquehanna, till you never could think of the artist apart from the river, nor of the river but as a running accompaniment for the artist."³⁰

From the time of Neal's 1828 articles in *The Yankee and Boston Literary Gazette* to his 1869 essay for *The Atlantic Monthly* – a personal progression of over forty years – Neal also reveals how American art had developed an original style, freely embracing both classical themes and local description. This trend was revealed when Neal discovered two American artists in whose originality he believed: Charles Codman (1800-1842) and

John Rollin Tilton (1828-1888). Codman was a landscape painter from Portland, Maine (Fig. 9), who had begun his career painting signs and fire buckets. Returning from Europe, Neal stopped at the Elm Tavern in Portland and discovered:

‘While at table, my attention was directed to what seemed the strangest paper-hangings I had ever seen, – a forest of large trees, reaching from the floor to the ceiling, and crowded with a luxuriant undergrowth. Upon further examination, I found these paper-hangings to be painted in oil; and learned, upon inquiry, that they were the work of a sign-painter. They were masterly, and I lost no time in hunting the artist up.’³¹

Codman’s artistic origins were practical, not academic – in Boston he had painted clock-faces for the celebrated clockmaker Simon Willard (1753-1848), and also free-lanced for the ornamental painter John Ritto Penniman (1782-1841). The discovery of his talent and his introduction to the fine arts, were entirely of Neal’s making, demonstrating that the school of life was not necessarily less valid in American art circles than an academic training. Codman’s rise from obscure beginnings to fame provided proof of the justness of Neal’s observations and writings on art and native talent, and it may be noted, that recent scholarship has re-evaluated this native Portland artist, with the Portland Museum of Art dedicating an exhibition to his work in 2002-2003.

John Rollin Tilton was another Neal ‘discovery’. An American from New Hampshire, under Neal’s direction, Tilton traveled to Italy to study art and settled in Rome in 1852, dedicating himself to painting Mediterranean landscapes and views of the Alps. Among his surviving landscapes are *Rome from the Aventine*, *The Campagna* (Fig. 10), *Venice*, the *Lago di Averno*, *Vallata di Chamounix*, *Vedute di Orvieto* and *Paestum*, demon-



9. Charles Codman, *Landscape with Farm and Mountains*, 1832, oil on canvas, 53.3 x 66 cm. Smithsonian American Art Museum, 1973.157.



10. John Rollin Tilton, *The Campagna*, 1862, oil on canvas, 57.47 x 92.39 cm. Museum of Fine Arts Boston, RES.10.18.

strating how widely he toured Italy. His studio in Palazzo Barberini became a meeting place for American travelers to Rome, as well as for expatriate American artists. Neal had acquired an early view painting by Rollin of a local site near Portland, *Cape Cottage*, and later also commissioned a Roman view from Tilton. But as Neal noted, Tilton's style changed in Rome: '[Tilton produced] landscapes of extraordinary merit ... full of poetry and atmospheric effects', but as he 'generalized nature ... he soon fell into a style astonishingly like that of Claude de Lorraine.'³²

The universal human longing for an ever elusive past, for a vicariously realized antiquity, fed into the American experience of a deliberate expatriatism, drawing a whole generation of American painters and sculptors to Italy, beginning in the nineteenth century. These travelers to Arcadia, who melded American sensibilities and pragmatism with European experience, represent the genesis of an *American Latium* in landscape painting.³³ John Neal's writings on art in the first half of the nineteenth century provide an ideal starting point to navigate this American cultural odyssey.

Notes

- 1 Marx 1972, p. xv.
- 2 Reynolds 1992, p. 130.
- 3 Harris 1982, p. 14.
- 4 Gidley and Lawson-Peebles 1989.
- 5 Weisbuch 1986.

- 6 Pattee 1937.
- 7 Dickson 1943.
- 8 *American Art* 1979, p. 133. On the subject of nudity in American nineteenth-century art, see Kevin Salatino, in this volume.
- 9 Quoted in Orestano 1989, p. 129.
- 10 Neal 1819, p. 104. An American Indian was the protagonist of Neal's novel *Logan. The Mingo Chief* (Neal 1822).
- 11 Novak 1969, pp. 62-63. As with the prevailing fashion for history painting, Neal wrote at least two historic novels based on the American Revolution: *Seventy-Six* (Neal 1823) and *Brother Jonathan: or, The New Englanders* (Neal 1825).
- 12 Lockwood 1981.
- 13 Neal 1943c, p. 24.
- 14 On the central role of London for aspiring American artists, see Martin Postle in this volume.
- 15 Neal 1943c, p. 20.
- 16 Richards 1962; Lease 1972; Sears 1978; Fleischmann 1983; Orestano 1990.
- 17 Neal 1964.
- 18 Novak 1969, pp. 27-8.
- 19 Neal 1943a, p. 43. The passage is from *The Yankee; and Boston Literary Gazette*, n.s. vol. 1, 1829.
- 20 *Ibidem*.
- 21 Dawling 1996; also see Zalesh 1996. For a list of engravers and publishers of illustrated books already popular in the 1830s, among them Boston's *Token* and Philadelphia's *Atlantic Souvenir*, on which Neal offers specific detailed comments, see Harris 1982, pp. 112-113.
- 22 Novak 1969, p. 61.
- 23 Novak 1969, p. 73.
- 24 Novak 1969, p. 61.
- 25 Neal 1943b, pp. 46-7.
- 26 Neal 1943b, p. 49.
- 27 Neal 1943b, p. 51.
- 28 Orestano 2012.
- 29 Orestano 2012, p. 78.
- 30 Orestano 2012, pp. 82-3.
- 31 Orestano 2012, pp. 90-1; *Charles Codman* 2012.
- 32 Orestano 2012, pp. 91-2.
- 33 Novak 1969, p. 74. Following on John Neals's art writings, America's art trajectory was defined by William Dunlap (Dunlap 1834).

‘In the Beginning there was the Word’: American Writings on Raphael from the Founding Fathers to the Gilded Age

Long before the first autograph painting by Raphael arrived in America in 1900, the artist existed in the American literary and epistolary imagination.¹ References to Raphael appear in letters of the Founding Fathers. Passages and plot lines in the writings of celebrated nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American authors were inspired by the painter from Urbino. So were verses penned by nineteenth-century American poets, famous and more obscure. Gilded Age collectors pined for and chased down works by the Prince of Painters, a frenzied hunt recorded in written correspondence. And the mere name of Raphael was enough to ignite excited and sensationalist coverage in the American press.

At the time most of these tomes, missives and rhymes were penned, America was without any art museums: libraries and athenaeums filled their place in public and civic life until the late nineteenth century. These institutions housed diverse collections, including plaster casts and art – mostly copies of famous European masterpieces – but were devoted primarily to books, that is, to the word. So it is understandable and perhaps fitting that it was in such halls, and as a literary conceit or incarnation, that Raphael first resided in the American consciousness.² While some Americans undertook the Grand Tour and had seen actual works by the master, their compatriots were preponderantly arm chair travelers who only knew about Italy, and Raphael, second hand. For them, Raphael was foremost an idea (sometimes a vague and nebulous one) – a paradigm and an ideal that existed in words and in reproductions, intermediaries that reflected the real Raphael with varying degrees of accuracy.

American awareness of Raphael goes back to the founding of the Republic. Even before the American Revolution, Thomas Jefferson drafted a ‘desiderata’ list of ‘statues, paintings &c’ that – had it been assembled – would have formed the first art gallery in America.³ Comprised mostly of sculpture, the list included a few paintings by Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, Giuseppe Zocchi, and Pietro da Cortona, as well as Raphael’s *St Paul Preaching at Athens* from the *Acts of the Apostles* tapestry cartoons. With the exception of the otherwise unrecorded Murillo, which was purportedly then in Philadelphia, the wish list was compiled on the basis of compositions Jefferson probably knew through prints and books, and would be realized entirely through copies. (It hardly needs to be said that a fresco by Cortona from the Palazzo Pitti, one of the items on the list,⁴ was not a realistic ambition; the sculptures on Jefferson’s “wish list” were likewise comprised exclusively of copies, including the Apollo Belvedere and the Farnese Hercules).

Jefferson resided in Paris from 1784 to 1789 as the fledgling nation's Minister to France.⁵ His intoxication at being abroad and navigating the world of high culture is captured in a letter to his friend Charles Bellini written in 1785: 'Behold me at length on the vaunted scene of Europe! ... Were I to proceed to tell you how much I enjoy their architecture, sculpture, painting, music, I should want words. It is in these arts they shine.'⁶ In another letter to fellow Virginian James Madison he unapologetically expressed his passion for the arts, projecting it into a broader vision for cultivating his fellow Americans: 'You see I am an enthusiast on the subject of the arts. But it is an enthusiasm of which I am not ashamed, as its object is to improve the taste of my countrymen, to increase their reputation, to reconcile to them the respect of the world & procure them its praise.'⁷

Though he never embarked on a formal Grand Tour or visited Rome, Jefferson undertook a three-month journey to southern France and northern Italy in 1787.⁸ 'Architecture, painting, sculpture, antiquities, agriculture, [and] the condition of the labouring poor fill all my moments,' he wrote, in a striking (and, might it be said, quintessentially American), unironic conjoining of high and low.⁹ Botany does indeed appear to have been his primary preoccupation, but he offered a few words about art in another letter otherwise devoted to local crops, written from Milan a month later:

'Figs and pomegranates grow here unsheltered, as I am told. I saw none, and therefore suppose them rare. They had formerly olives; but a great cold in 1709 killed them, and they have not been replanted. – Among a great many houses painted al fresco, the Casa Roma and Casa Candiani by Appiani, and Casa Belgioiosa [Palazzo Belgioioso] by Martin [Martin Knoller] are superior ... The mixture called Scaiola [*scagliola*], of which they make their walls and floors, is so like the finest marble as to be scarcely distinguishable from it. The nights of the 20. and 21st. inst. the rice ponds freezed half an inch thick.'¹⁰

While in Paris, Jefferson attended the Salon and frequented the sale rooms. In 1787 he reported to American painter John Trumbull, 'The Salon has been open four or five days ... The best thing is the Death of Socrates by [Jacques Louis] David, and a superb one it is ... Five pieces of antiquities by [Hubert] Robert are also among the foremost. Many portraits of Madame Le Brun are exhibited and much approved. There are [an] abundance of things in the style of mediocrity. Upon the whole it is well worth your coming to see ...'¹¹ His singling out of the *Death of Socrates* for praise is not a surprise – the painting was a star of the Salon, favorably compared with Michelangelo's Sistine Chapel frescoes and Raphael's Stanze, and pronounced by one critic to be 'in every sense perfect.' Given that Jefferson framed his passion for art in the broader national interest, the subject matter of David's heroic Neoclassical composition must also have appealed.

His years in Paris fueled Jefferson's taste and honed his sensibility for art, turning the paper dream – the penned *desiderata* list – of his youth into a reality. While there, he built a substantial picture collection. Though it included the occasional, minor autograph work, the collection was comprised mostly of copies of European Old Masters.¹² Some of these Jefferson purchased at auction, like a copy of Guido Reni's *Salome*,¹³ and



1. Anonymous, copy after Raphael's *Holy Family of Francis I*, oil on canvas, 97.8 × 67.3 cm. Monticello, 1955-45.

some he commissioned. He refers to the practice of commissioning copies in a letter of 1787, expressing the condition that they not be 'too expensive,' and noting that 'painters of high reputation are either above copying, or ask extravagant prices,' but that 'there are always men of good talents, who being kept in obscurity by untoward circumstances, work cheap, and work well.'¹⁴ In a subsequent missive he reports to Trumbull that the copies in question – four portraits of Explorers in the Uffizi – had arrived; that 'they appear to be well done,' and that, at the cost of 'a guinea and a half each,' they were cheaper than if they had been made in England.¹⁵ Elsewhere, Jefferson recounted how he had come to procure them: 'Observing by the list of the pictures in the gallery of the Grand duke at Florence that these were there, I sent to have them copied.'¹⁶ Reading about the works he desired, rather than actually seeing them, was the impetus for this collecting activity.

Jefferson displayed his sizeable collection in his elegant Parisian townhouse,¹⁷ and later at Monticello, (86 crates containing his belongings, including his books and pictures, were dispatched to Virginia from Paris in 1789). Sometime after 1809 he penned an inventory; this document is the primary source of information about the col-

lection that, as noted, consisted predominantly of copies, including two after Raphael: the *Transfiguration* and the *Holy Family* (Fig. 1), displayed respectively in the Parlor and the Dining Room at Monticello.¹⁸

Raphael's *Holy Family*, known as the *Holy Family of Francis I*, had been in France since the sixteenth century – a diplomatic gift from Pope Leo X to Queen Claude, wife of the French king. According to a descendant, Jefferson had the copy made in Paris.¹⁹ His copy of the *Transfiguration* was also purportedly a Parisian acquisition, though since the original, which was looted by Napoleonic troops from the church of S. Pietro in Montorio in Rome, only arrived in Paris in 1797 – seven years after Jefferson's departure – it was either not made in France, or not done from the original.²⁰ Among the few art books he owned was a copy of Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists*;²¹ his knowledge of the *Transfiguration* (which was only second-hand) may well have been gleaned from this source, particularly given that he expressly refers to having learned about other paintings from the pages of Vasari.²²

Jefferson thus enacted the early plan he had envisioned before his years abroad, assembling a collection comprised primarily of copies. This activity begs the question: was he thinking about the national interest when he formed this collection? Or was this an aspirational effort of self-fashioning? The fact that he made no provisions to have his art collection be-

come the property of the nation, as he did his library, suggests that either the avowed public spirit that shaped the paper museum of his idealistic youth – the rationale he later offered to James Madison as an explanation for his collecting activities – was not entirely genuine, or that it gave way later in life to financial exigencies and the need to provide for his heirs. Whatever the motivation, Jefferson's copies of the *Madonna of Francis I* and the *Transfiguration* were among the first Raphaels – which in the eighteenth and most of the nineteenth centuries in America meant copies – known to have arrived in the New World.

Other than Thomas Jefferson, the Founders showed an indifference if not an outright hostility to art in general, reserving particular opprobrium for Raphael. Benjamin Franklin, in a practical-minded bent, declared that 'the invention of a machine, or the improvement of an implement, is of more importance than a masterpiece by Raphael,' while the curmudgeon John Adams announced sourly, 'The age of painting and sculpture has not arrived in this country and I hope will not arrive soon ... I would not give a sixpence for a picture of Raphael.'²³ Both these pronouncements speak to the parochial views about art that prevailed in America in its early years. (This was in fact the provincialism that Jefferson hoped to redress by forming his ideal collection.) But they do at the same time express some vague awareness of Raphael, who, in a dubious distinction, occupied the summit of the condemned heap.

When it came to acquiring copies of Old Masters, Jefferson was in the American vanguard, but by the mid-nineteenth century the practice of producing copies of canonical Old Masters had become an industry. An 1860 guidebook lists thirty-one artists' studios in Rome where they were being made.²⁴ Among the many American consumers, to cite but one, was Matthew Vassar, who energetically commissioned copies to be sent back to the eponymous women's college he founded in Poughkeepsie, New York. Embracing a notion articulated nearly a century before by Jefferson, Vassar and his contemporaries believed these works had a civilizing agency – the capacity to cultivate and instill taste and refinement in the impressionable young women of the college. His favorite copyist was the American expatriate painter Emma Church, who provided him with a copy of Raphael's *Madonna di Foligno* (Fig. 2). Influenced by what he had observed in Italy, the American novelist Nathaniel Hawthorne offered a fictionalized



2. Emma Church, copy after Raphael's *Madonna di Foligno*, oil on canvas, 302.74 x 194.31 cm. Frances Lehman Loeb Art Gallery, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY, 1864.1.15.

account of this artistic landscape in *The Marble Faun*, published in 1860. Hilda, a particularly gifted and beatific copyist, is dubbed ‘the handmaid of Raphael,’ while the otherwise anonymous masses cranking out workmanlike copies are dismissively categorized as ‘Raphaele machines.’²⁵ Raphael’s *Transfiguration* (one of the two paintings by the artist of which Jefferson owned a copy) makes an appearance in Mark Twain’s (Samuel Clemens) novel, *The Innocents Abroad, or the New Pilgrims Progress* – a travelogue about the experiences of a group of Americans on a Grand Tour to Europe and the Holy Land. In this instance, it is the original rather than a copy that the Americans confront:

‘I cannot write about the Vatican. I think I shall never remember anything I saw there distinctly but the mummies, and ‘The Transfiguration’ by Raphael, and some other things it is not necessary to mention now. I shall remember “The Transfiguration” partly because it was placed in a room almost by itself, partly because it is acknowledged by all to be the first oil painting in the world, and partly because it was wonderfully beautiful. The colors are fresh and rich, the “expression,” I am told is fine, the “feeling” is lively, the “tone” is good, the “depth” is profound ... It is a picture that really holds one’s attention; its beauty is fascinating ... Is it not possible that the reason I find such charms in this picture is because it is out of the crazy chaos of the galleries? If some of the others were set apart, might not they be beautiful? If this were set in the midst of the tempest of pictures one finds in the vast galleries of the Roman palaces, would I think it so handsome if, up to this time, I had seen only one “old master” in each palace, instead of acres and acres of walls and ceilings fairly papered with them, might I not have a more civilized opinion of the old masters than I have now? I think so.’²⁶

In this Yankee encounter with the Old World, Raphael, and particularly the *Transfiguration*, are conferred supreme status, but the response is learned, even bookish, as though the author is moving down a checklist from the pages of French art theorist Roger de Piles, according Raphael his due in each category, but with no genuine passion for the picture. The recitation also offers what must be one of the earliest descriptions of what has come to be known as museum fatigue, fueled by overcrowded galleries and an overly full itinerary.

Some mid-nineteenth-century American poets – enduring and less so – also found inspiration in Raphael. John Greenleaf Whittier’s 1842 poem “Raphael” spins epic meanderings from a chance encounter with a print reproducing a self-portrait of the artist as a boy. Margaret Fuller’s ‘Raphael’s Deposition from the Cross,’ written in 1844, is a meditation on the emotional state of the Mater Dolorosa prompted by a revelatory viewing of the *Borghese Deposition*.²⁷ And Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, in his poem *Kéramos* (1878) – which consists largely of ruminations on the potter’s art throughout the ages – devoted a few stanzas to the artist. The time traveler’s journey includes a stop in Urbino, a center of majolica production in the sixteenth century, but also the birthplace of Raphael:

‘Forth from Urbino’s gate there came
A youth with the angelic name
Of Raphael, in form and face

Himself angelic, and divine
 In arts of color and design.
 From him Francesco Xanto caught
 Something of his transcendent grace,
 And into fictile fabrics wrought
 Suggestions of the master's thought.'

Here, improbably, a paean to Raphael as a source for maiolica designs is but a prelude to an encomium to the greatest Italian Renaissance maiolica painter, also from Urbino, Francesco Xanto Avelli. (If Americans in the mid-nineteenth century knew relatively little about Raphael, imagine how puzzled they must have been to encounter this obscure name, even today familiar only to specialists.)

In 1873, when he was living in Rome, the American writer Henry James published a short story, 'The Madonna of the Future,' in *The Atlantic*. The characters have gathered for an after-dinner conversation about a small painting, a masterpiece, by an unknown artist. One of them, Theobald, himself a painter, professes his ambition to paint his own great masterpiece, a Madonna, which he hopes will rival Raphael's *Madonna della Sedia*. Again, in an American work of literary fiction, Raphael, as represented by that iconic picture, appears as an ideal and a paradigm.

Jump next to Edith Wharton, whose novella *False Dawn*, written in the 1920s but set in the mid-nineteenth century, offers a window onto the status-conferring role of art – and the primacy of Raphael – in "new" New York society in the Gilded Age. The self-made, socially prominent Halston Raycie announces his intention to form an art collection comprised solely of originals. This novel plan represents a break with the prevailing practice of acquiring copies. Raycie charges his son with 'select[ing] ... a few masterpieces which shall NOT be copies.' Copies, he avers, 'are for the less discriminating,' and the less prosperous. Though his wife 'desires ... a few original specimens of the Italian genius, Raphael,' he is more realistic: Raphael is out of the question, but 'a Domenichino, an Alban[i], a Carlo Dolci, a Guercino, a Carlo Maratta, [and] one or two of Salvator Rosa's noble landscapes' are all attainable. His son is slightly more optimistic, voicing the remote hope that he might yet find a Raphael and resolving that, at the very least, the new Raycie collection 'shall contain a Correggio.'²⁸ Canon and hierarchy are both present here: the artists who were the province of nineteenth-century copyists because they were the most famous and desirable are on the desiderata list. Raphael is the summit; and Correggio is a close second.



3. Raphael, *Colonna Altarpiece*, oil and gold on wood panel, main panel 169.5 x 168.9 cm; lunette 64.8 x 171.5 cm. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 16.30ab.

Opposite

4. Raphael Workshop (?), *The Madonna di Loreto*, oil on canvas, 118.6 x 90.7 cm. The Morgan Library & Museum, New York, AZ 139.

As with Hawthorne's literary invention 'Hilda the Handmaiden of Raphael' and Matthew Vassar's living favorite copyist Emma Church, there are certain parallels between Wharton's fictional Raycie family and real-life collectors of the Gilded Age, among them storied Boston society matron Isabella Stewart Gardner. Though she was the first American collector to acquire an autograph painting by Raphael – the jewel-like *Lamentation* predella panel from the *Colonna Altarpiece* extolled by Bernard Berenson as 'a Raphael of exquisite quality, of finest Umbrian feeling, of unquestionable authenticity, of perfect preservation, and with an almost matchless pedigree' (and, at £5,000, also a bargain)²⁹ – her appetite was unsated, for her consuming desire, as she wrote to Berenson in 1901, was for 'a heavenly Raphael Madonna.'³⁰ That desire, unfulfilled, was not unique. Witness the now-forgotten story of the so-called *Gonzaga Madonna*, which surfaced in Boston in 1907. With sensationalist flair, the attention-grabbing headline in the *Boston Globe* blared that this improbable picture was 'said to be the last work of Raphael.' The *Gonzaga Madonna* had its doubters, but it also had its ardent champions, one of whom published an elaborate defense in 1916:

'Boston was aroused a few years ago by the discovery of a Madonna by Raphael ... The composition looked Raphaellesque, but could this be a genuine work by the divine Sanzio? The claim looked pretentious to the students of art. They had been in European galleries, they had admired Raphael's works, and here,

they were asked to believe, was ... a Madonna by the greatest of artists ... Many came to the studio where the painting is now on exhibition, with an incredulous smile on their lips, only to see their doubts vanish and their admiration increase as they fixed their enraptured gaze on this marvel of art.'³¹



If a marvel, it was a short-lived one, as the painting is now entirely forgotten and long absent from the Raphael literature, even in the rejected attributions category.

The gold standard in American collectors' (real and fictitious) Raphael hunting – a 'heavenly Madonna' – was also on the radar of the legendary New York financier J. Pierpont Morgan. In 1901 he purchased the *Colonna Altarpiece* (Fig. 3) – a work that had been rejected by Mrs. Gardner, who heeded Berenson's indictment of it as 'a boring picture' with a 'squat' and 'crowded' composition, of dubious execution and in any event so heavily restored that 'hardly an inch of original paint was still to be seen.'³² Nonetheless, this was a Raphael – an undoubted Raphael – and the coverage of Morgan's purchase in the New York press was fevered. The *New York Times* gushed patriotically that the *Colonna Altarpiece* was 'finer than anything in the Louvre or the National



5. Raphael, *Alba Madonna*, oil on wood panel transferred to canvas, 94.5 cm diameter. The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1937.1.24.

Gallery by the same painter ... [and] belongs to his best period,' and both it and the *New York Herald* reported on the high price Morgan paid for his new treasure (two million francs, or roughly half a million dollars at the time). American readers' interest and sense of national pride cannot but have been ignited by this coverage. The consensus in the press was that this was the most important work of art ever to have come to America.

The famously taciturn and reticent Morgan did not express his fervent yearning for a Raphael Madonna in words, as did Mrs. Gardner (notoriously non-verbal, he was given to stretches of indecipherable silence punctuated by the occasional grunt), but there is no doubt that, like her, what he really wanted was that most elusive of trophies – a “heavenly Raphael Madonna” – hence his purchase of one of the versions of the *Madonna del Velo* (also known as the *Madonna di Loreto*; Fig. 4), which failed to win the crown and is today considered an accomplished sixteenth-century variant of Raphael's much admired composition (the original is generally agreed to be the version now in the Musée Condé, Chantilly.)

American collectors following in the wake of Mrs. Gardner, Mr. Morgan, and the fictional Halston Raycie, were finally triumphant. The fruits of their efforts are today to be found in the National Gallery of Art, which boasts among its peerless holdings of works by the Prince of Painters three Madonnas, all acquired in the first half of the twentieth century (Fig. 5). By then, Raphael had faded from American letters (and had also been dislodged from the pedestal accorded him for centuries in the Pantheon of

art, though that is a different story), replaced in the nation's consciousness by authentic paintings from his hand that could be appreciated and admired by the citizenry in its great public museum, the National Gallery of Art, founded in 1937 – a realization of a national ambition that even Thomas Jefferson did not imagine could ever have transpired.

Notes

1 This is the *Lamentation* predella panel from the *Colonna Altarpiece*, acquired by Boston collector Isabella Stewart Gardner and discussed at greater length below. On the collecting of Raphael in America, see Brown 1983 and Wolk-Simon 2023.

2 In this context, it is worth pointing out that the first modern monograph on Raphael (and the pioneering example of this genre), Passavant 1839 – a testimonial to the author's scholarly and artistic passion, the apogee of the artist's fame, and the nascent field of art history – was published at the time that copies of Raphael began making their way to American shores.

3 Jefferson drew up this list around the year 1771. According to Howard (1977, p. 583), Jefferson's gallery would have formed 'the first major art gallery of virtu in the New World,' although the quasi-public collection assembled by Scottish-born American painter John Smibert (1699–1751) – Old Master drawings, casts and copies of Old Master paintings he had made in Europe and which he displayed in his Boston studio beginning in the 1730s (for which see Saunders 1995, p. 88) – was even earlier; see also Sarah Cantor on Smibert's collection in this volume. As kindly pointed out to me by Christopher Johns, one of the Old Master paintings Smibert copied was Raphael's iconic *Madonna della Sedia*. Widely admired, the copy installed in his studio (present whereabouts unknown) may well have been the first "Raphael" to reach America. American painter (and future Jefferson friend and correspondent) John Trumbull, who subsequently rented Smibert's studio, studied it there; later, having entered the studio of Benjamin West in London and being instructed to copy an old master painting, Trumbull chose as his model that same iconic picture (as represented by one of the many copies). On Trumbull and the *Madonna della Sedia*, see Prown 2001, p. 165.

4 The fresco of *Seleucus and Stratonice* in the Sala di Venere of the Grand Ducal apartments, no. 18 on Jefferson's list; Howard 1977, pp. 594–5.

5 He was portrayed at this time in a portrait by American ex-patriot painter Mather Brown (Washington, D.C., National Portrait Gallery), executed in London in the spring of 1786 (see Fig. 2 in Tommaso Manfredi's essay in this volume).

6 From Thomas Jefferson to Charles Bellini, 30 September 1785, Founders Online, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-08-02-0448>, accessed 30 November 2018.

7 To James Madison from Thomas Jefferson, 20 September 1785, Founders Online, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Madison/01-08-02-0191>, accessed 30 November 2018.

8 Jefferson embarked on this three month-long, 1200-mile journey on February 28, 1787. He spent three weeks in northern Italy, visiting Turin, Milan, Genoa, and numerous smaller cities and towns in Lombardy, Piedmont, and Liguria. <https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/italy>. On Jefferson's tour of Italy, see also Maria Cristina Loi in this volume.

9 From Thomas Jefferson to William Short, 15 March 1787, Founders Online, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-11-02-0224>, accessed 30 November 2018.

10 *Notes of a Tour into the Southern Parts of France, &c.*, 3 March–10 June 1787, Founders Online, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-11-02-0389>, accessed 30 November 2018.

11 From Thomas Jefferson to John Trumbull, 30 August 1787, Founders Online, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-12-02-0076>, accessed

30 November 2018: "The Salon has been open four or five days. I inclose you a list of its treasures. The best thing is the Death of Socrates by David, and a superb one it is. A crucifixion by Roland in imitation of Relief is as perfect as it can be. Five pieces of antiquities by Robert are also among the foremost. Many portraits of Madame Le Brun are exhibited and much approved. There are [an] abundance of things in the style of mediocrity. Upon the whole it is well worth your coming to see ... The whole will be an affair of 12. or 14. days only and as many guineas; and as it happens but once in two years, you should not miss it. The identity of the artist 'Roland' mentioned here by Jefferson is unclear.

12 E.g., a *Descent from the Cross* by Frans Floris, one of only three examples of northern Renaissance painting in Jefferson's collection (He also had a copy of Martin de Vos's *Flagellation of Christ*). Jefferson purchased the Floris before 1789, though it is unknown where. He may have acquired it during his trip to the Netherlands in the early spring of 1788, when he visited Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague; <https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/descent-cross-painting>. On the earliest American collectors of European works see also Sarah Cantor in this volume.

13 Acquired at the Dupire de St Severin sale in 1785. See Jonny Yarker and Sarah Cantor in this volume on the practice and commissioning of copies of Old Masters by American artists and collectors.

14 Thomas Jefferson, in Paris, to his friend Philip (born Filippo) Mazzei in 1787, writing about the copies he commissioned of portraits in the Uffizi of the explorers Columbus, Vespucci, Cortez and Magellan; <https://www.monticello.org/site/jefferson/paris>. Jefferson's untraced "Explorers" were copies of 16th-century portraits from the Medici collection, which now hang in the corridor of the Uffizi (and are themselves copies of portraits assembled by the Renaissance historian Paolo Giovio for his celebrated long-dispersed "Musaeum" in Como). Years later, in 1814, Jefferson recounted to Joseph Delaplaine: "While I resided at Paris, knowing that these portraits, and those of some early American worthies were in the gallery of Medicis at Florence, I took measures for engaging a good artist to take and send me copies of them. I considered it as even of some public concern that our country should not be without the portraits of its first discoverers." https://www.monticello.org/site/house-and-gardens/christopher-columbus-painting#footnote3_2ojdcg2.

15 18 January 1789: "Those [portraits] of Columbus, Vespucius, Cortez, and Magellan are well done and cost a guinea and a half each. I do not expect as cheap work in England, tho' I do not expect better." <https://www.monticello.org/site/house-and-gardens/amicus-vespucius-painting>; PTJ, 14: 467-68.

16 From Thomas Jefferson to John Trumbull, 12 January 1789, Founders Online, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-14-02-0210>, accessed 30 November 2018.; <https://www.monticello.org/site/house-and-gardens/amicus-vespucius-painting>.

17 <https://www.monticello.org/site/jefferson/paris>.

18 <https://www.monticello.org/site/house-and-gardens/holy-family-painting>. Both are mentioned in the 'Catalogue of Paintings &c. at Monticello', an inventory or guide drawn up by Jefferson himself sometime after 1809: '36. a Transfiguration. copied from Raphael. whole length figures/ of 6.I. on Canvas. the subject Matt. 17. 1-8. see 4. Manuel du/ Museum. Pl. 1,' hanging in the middle tier of the parlor [p. 4], and '73. The holy family copied from Raphael on canvas./ the figures are whole lengths, the Virgin & infant Jesus,/ Joseph, Elizabeth & the infant John & 2. angels. see the 4. Manuel du Museum. Pl. 3,' hanging in the upper tier of the dining room [p. 8]. <https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/catalogue-paintings>. The collection also included copies after Coypel, Goltzius, Gossaert, Holbein, Reni (the above-mentioned *Salome*), Ribera, Rubens, Valentin, Van Dyck, and Vouet among others.

19 Jefferson's descendent Martha Trist Burke, who inherited the picture, referred to 'the painting of "Holy Family" from "Raphael" which Mr. Jefferson had copied in the "Louvre"'; List of "Monticello Relics", 1907-8; <https://www.monticello.org/site/house-and-gardens/holy-family-painting>; Trist-Burke Family Papers, Accession #6696, Special Collections, University of Virginia Library. The copy is believed to have been executed around 1785.

20 Jefferson did arrange to have copies made of paintings in Italy, as discussed here, though there is no record of where or how he procured his now-lost copy of the *Transfigu-*

ration, which is not referred to in his correspondence nor listed in the catalogue of the sale of paintings from his collection held at the Boston Athenaeum in 1828. It was, however, included in the July 1833 sale of Jefferson's Collection at Harding's Gallery in Boston, lot no. 50. The copy after Raphael's *Holy Family of Francis I*, subsequently returned to Monticello, was lot no. 304 in the 1828 sale. On the 1828 sale, see <https://www.monticello.org/site/house-and-gardens/boston-athenaeum-sale-1828>. For the 1833 sale, see *Catalogue of Valuable Oil Paintings, many of them by the Old Master, and all Choice Pictures, being the Collection of the Late President Jefferson, to be sold on Friday, July 19, at Mr. Harding's Gallery, School Street*.

21 Jefferson's library, which included books he purchased while in Paris, was at Monticello until 1815, at which time it was sold to the Library of Congress. It included a 1647 Italian edition of Vasari's *Lives* (Vasari 1647), <http://www.librarything.com/catalog.php?view=ThomasJefferson&deepsearch=vasari>. On Jefferson's library, see also Maria Cristina Loi in this volume.

22 It was on the basis of this source that he commissioned the above-mentioned copies of the portraits of explorers in the Uffizi: 'Nella 'tavola de' ritratti del Museo dell'illustriss. e eccellentiss. Sig. Cosimo Duca di Firenze e Siena al fine del libro Delle vita da' pittori di Giorgio Vasari [sic], si trova queste parola. "Seconda fila della banda di Mezzo dè Huomini harvi. Amerigo Vespucci. Colombo Genovese. Ferdinando Magellanes. Ferdinando Cortese;" letter to Philip Mazzei, 17 October 1787. <https://www.monticello.org/site/house-and-gardens/americanus-vespucci-painting>; PTJ, 12, 245.

23 Both quoted in Brown, *Raphael and America*, pp. 12 and 24. See also Reist 2011, p. 224.

24 Bonfigli 1860; cited by Musacchio 2006, p. 3. Their handiwork can still today be stumbled upon in any number of places, both expected and surprising. I found two examples of the "Raphaelic machines" handiwork without having to look too far: a very accomplished and to-scale replica of the *Madonna della Sedia* (the copyists' unrivaled favorite Raphael) in the church of St James the Less in Scarsdale, New York, and a perfectly passable copy of the *Madonna del Granduca* of unknown provenance, installed over a fireplace in the main administrative building (originally the manor house of a private estate built in the 1920s) of Fairfield University in Connecticut. Even more than painted copies, inexpensive prints after Raphael Madonnas were ubiquitous in American homes in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a favorite subject here being the *Sistine Madonna*. In the Gemäldegalerie in Dresden since 1754, that work was seen first-hand by almost no Americans, and was only known only through reproductive prints.

25 Hawthorne 1860, Chapter 6, 'The Virgin's Shrine,' n.p. (online edition, <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/2181/2181-h/2181-h.htm>).

26 Twain 1966, p. 226. 'Innocents Abroad is in part "a sustained exegesis" of the official [Grand] Tour program: a running catalogue of the experience of a "passionless pilgrim" whose enthusiasms invariably lead to disappointment.' (Lowry 1996, pp. 56-7; cited and quoted in Anderson 2017, p. 258, n. 25.)

27 On Fuller's poem see Lewis 2002 and Wry 2017.

28 Edith Wharton, *False Dawn*, chapter 3, n.p. (<http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks02/0200571.txt>). The narrative was obviously informed by the author's knowledge of Raphael collecting in the first decades of the twentieth century, when she was actually writing the story.

29 Letter from Bernard Berenson to Isabella Stewart Gardner, 25 October 1900; quoted in Brown 1983, p. 61.

30 Quoted in Strouse 1999, p. 413.

31 Glodt 1916. https://archive.org/stream/raphaelsmadonnagooglod/raphaelsmadonnagooglod_djvu.txt.

32 Letter from Bernard Berenson to Isabella Stewart Gardner, 9 November 1897; quoted in Wolk-Simon 2006, p. 54.

AMERICAN LATIUM: SITES AND ITINERARIES IN AND AROUND ROME



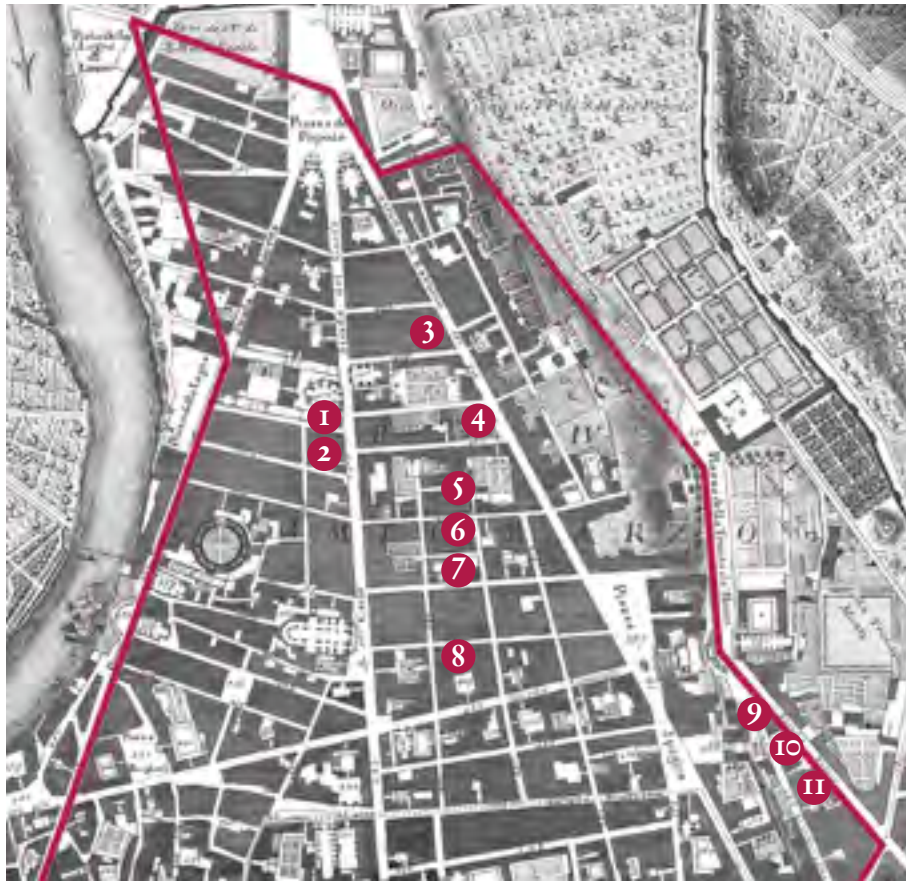
Thomas Cole, *The Course of Empire, 3: The Consummation of Empire*, 1836, oil on canvas, New York Historical Society (detail)

By the second half of the eighteenth century the British traveled to Italy in great numbers, and by the 1760s their community in Rome comprised more than three thousand aristocrats, agents, painters, architects and sculptors, documented by Sir Brinsley Ford's archival research, compiled by John Ingamells.¹ The few American travelers to arrive in Rome in the 1760s were cultural tourists, such as the painter Benjamin West and the architect Charles Bulfinch – the American Grand Tour to Italy only began in earnest in the nineteenth century when the American elite actively undertook European travel and cultural tourism.²

From British Rome to American Rome

Close links between the British community in Rome in the 1760s and the few Americans in Rome at that time were also documented by Ford, and he noted that the Americans established themselves in close proximity to the British in the northern area of the city in the so-called *Tridente* (trident) site of the ancient *Campo Marzio*.³ This densely packed urban area of Rome between the Via di Ripetta and Trinità dei Monti housed a large group of foreign artists, primarily British, who preferred to live inside the triangle formed by the Via del Corso, the Via del Babuino and the Via Condotti, at the center of which lay the Piazza di Spagna, which became known as the *Ghetto degli Inglesi* – “the English Ghetto”, a moniker which it retained until well into the nineteenth century. International social relationships were facilitated in the streets of the *Tridente* by the physical closeness and cultural and economic exchange that developed between Roman clients, artists, architects, merchants and artisans and those foreign travelers who passed through briefly, as well as those who sojourned for long periods. A number of foreign visitors to Rome who remained for long periods took up artistic professions or took up dealing in art and antiquities full-time becoming figures of cultural reference in the city.

The studios of many important Roman artists also were located inside the *Tridente*, close to the so-called “museums” of the British artists, antiquarians and dealers, including Thomas Jenkins (c. 1722-1798) on the Corso, Gavin Hamilton (1723-1798) on the Via della Croce, James Byres (1733-1817) and Colin Morison (1734-1809) on the Via della Vittoria. These British “museums” were steps away from the open studios of the painter Pompeo Batoni (1708-1787), the sculptor and restorer Bartolomeo Cavacceppi (c.1716-1799), and the sculptors Carlo Albacini (1734-1813), Anto-



1. Artists' and architects' residences and studios in the area of the *Tridente*, 1760-1820 (identified by the author utilizing the 1748 Giovanni Battista Nolli plan of Rome):

- 1 Antonio Canova
- 2 Thomas Jenkins
- 3 Bartolomeo Cavaceppi
- 4 Carlo Albacini
Adamo Tadolini
- 5 Christopher Hewetson
- 6 James Byres
Colin Morison
- 7 Gavin Hamilton
- 8 Pompeo Batoni
- 9 Angelica Kauffmann
- 10 Vincenzo Pacetti
- 11 Giovanni Battista Piranesi

nio Canova (1757-1822) and Adamo Tadolini (1788-1863) (Fig. 1).

A similar residential pattern can be documented in the upper areas of Trinità dei Monti, around the landmark of the Palazzo Zuccari. In the mid-eighteenth century, the Palazzo Zuccari began to welcome groups of resident foreign artists, who overflowed from the Palazzo Zuccari down the Via Gregoriana and the Via Sistina, extending their residencies as far as the Via Capo le Case. In this area several British painters took up residence, including Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792), Richard Wilson (1714-1782), David Allan (1744-1796) and James Northcote (1746-1831) – who declared the area of Palazzo Zuccari as ‘the pleasantest part of all Rome.’⁴ These artists’ studios were located just a short distance from the workshop of the architect Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778) and from the studios of the painters Angelica Kauffmann (1741-1807) and Carlo Labruzzi (1748-1817), and the sculptor Vincenzo Pacetti (1746-1820).

It was in the British artistic and social context of the *Tridente* that the earliest American Grand Tourists arrived, the Philadelphians, doctor John Morgan (1735-1789) and Samuel Powel (1738-1793), and the Bostonians, the lawyer Thomas Palmer (1743-1820) and John Apthorp (1730-1772). In 1764, these four Americans followed the popular course of antiquities led by James Byres: all but Palmer sat for their likenesses to the Swiss painter, Angelica Kauffman.⁵

The *Caffè degli Inglesi* (English coffee house) in Piazza di Spagna was the favored meeting place for foreign travelers to Rome in the mid-eighteenth century. The café had existed for at least two decades before Piranesi re-

designed its interior, and it was therefore an older establishment than the Caffè Greco on the neighboring Via Condotti.⁶ In 1751, Joshua Reynolds' and the British painter Thomas Patch's presence was documented in an apartment above the *Caffè degli Inglesi* before their relocation to Palazzo Zuccari.⁷ Clearly, the fact of a regular English-speaking community in the area of the Piazza di Spagna and in the neighboring streets was the main reason that American visitors were attracted there, and as noted, the reason why the area was known as "the English Ghetto".

Throughout the nineteenth-century, the entire area of the *Piazza di Spagna* became a social hub for gatherings of artists and intellectuals who met convivially, organized visits to museums and monuments and ancient excavations, planned evenings at the theater or in private homes and aristocratic palaces where music was performed, and held *soirees* in the so-called domestic academies. As the American sculptor William Wetmore Story (1819-1895) observed in his guidebook, *Roba di Roma*, "The caffè is the social exchange of the country towns. ... In Rome the number of Caffès is legion."⁸ Furthermore, in analyzing the letters and writings of North American travelers, particularly from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, including such figures as Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864) and Henry Perry Leland (1828-1868), it is important to document that apart from the appreciation of the classical ideal that was the main cultural occupation of eighteenth-century travelers, nineteenth-century tourists instead began to take an interest in expressions of everyday Italian life. This trend would

become increasingly notable in nineteenth-century visual and literary depictions, including meticulous descriptions of the inns, cafés, the popular traditions, and indeed, the working costumed models waiting for artists or photographers on the Spanish Steps, the Via Condotti or the Via Sistina resulting from this shift in aesthetic perspective.⁹ According to Leland, these local models, often employed by schools or private academies, were paid two dollars a day.¹⁰

After maintaining close links with the British community during the eighteenth century and into the post-Napoleonic era, by the 1840s the American presence in Rome became an autonomous phenomenon, and Americans were recognized as a separate foreign community in the international culture of Rome. Again, it was a café in the Piazza di Spagna – the *Caffè Americano*, located on the north side of the piazza, at the beginning of the Via del Babuino, which became the social hub for American travelers to Rome.¹¹

The location of the *Caffè Americano* can be identified by studying maps of this area of Rome. Most of the houses in Piazza di Spagna in the nineteenth century were rented out on long leases by their owners. The *Caffè Americano* was located in a house owned by the Venerable Confraternity of San Rocco, and the building's configuration is still today similar to that of the late eighteenth century (Figs. 2-3). Consulting the registers of the *Cancelleria del Censo* of 1830, the presence of a room on the ground floor used as

2. North side of Piazza di Spagna, late nineteenth-century photograph showing a house with the sign 'SCHRAIDER', the location of the *Caffè Americano* (the café was originally situated on the ground floor).

3. North side of the Piazza di Spagna, at the corner of Via del Babuino – lot 1280 was the site of the *Caffè Americano*.



a café and managed by the Serny family, adjacent to an inn located at number 3, *Locanda Serny*, confirms this hypothesis. This inn also served as the setting of a historical novel.¹² The Sernys, a historic family of innkeepers and hoteliers, ran other dining and hostelry establishments located in the northern part of Piazza di Spagna, including the *Hotel de Londres* and the adjoining *Locanda Ennis*. The family took the prudent commercial decision to update their properties in the 1840s, when more and more Americans were visiting Rome. It appears however, that the *Caffè Americano* had a brief history, as Story's *Roba di Roma*, in a lengthy chapter dedicated to the city's cafés, fails to mention it, while he describes instead the Caffè Nazzarri and the Caffè Greco 'where artists meet and discuss subjects of art.'¹³ Leland also neglected to mention the *Caffè Americano*, despite paying particular attention to the Caffè Greco in Via Condotti, noting that the four rooms of this well-known locale in Via Condotti were distinguished by the nationality that favored them, and the third room – the so-called Omnibus – was mainly frequented by Americans, the English and the French (Fig. 4).¹⁴ The American painter James Edward Freeman (1810–1884) included a precise description of the ambient of the *Caffè Greco* and of the clients who frequented this café in his book *Gatherings From An Artist's Portfolio*.¹⁵ Freeman arrived in Rome at the end of 1836, and in his diary he noted the words of the American painter John Vanderlyn (1775–1852), making reference to Vanderlyn's imaginings of past American presences in Rome, such as the painters Washington Allston (1779–1843) and Benjamin West (1738–1820): 'Thirty years ago I was on this very spot ... There sat Allston opposite me; that was Turner's corner; and there I was told, sir Joshua Reynolds and West sat.'¹⁶

By the mid-nineteenth century, an Anglo-American presence predominated in Piazza di Spagna: on the corner of the Via del Babuino was the Thomas Cook travel office, and adjacent to that, the *Libreria Piale*, both of which were important points of reference for British and American tourism and culture. Between 1846 and 1849 *Libreria Piale* published *The Roman Advertiser* – a weekly newspaper of gossip and practical information for anglophiles, including records of the arrivals and departures of prominent figures, ample space dedicated to advertisements for art studios, antique dealers, *pensioni*, hotels and inns, and articles dedicated to the literary and artistic culture of Rome.

In March 1849 the *The Roman Advertiser* noted that William Wetmore Story and his family stayed at the Hotel d'Angleterre in Rome, while an article in the December 1848 issue opened with the following observations:

'Every year the number of American visitors to this city increases; and the following graphic sketch from one of them will show that he has not crossed the Atlantic in vain, if his object was to imbue his mind with classic feelings, and images of beauty in a spot so redolent of objects and recollections that form the wealth of the poet, the painter and the sculptor.'¹⁷



4. Caffè Greco in Via Condotti, photograph showing the room known as 'Omnibus'.

Especially during the period of the Roman Republic, the Piazza di Spagna was the epicenter for American intellectuals, businessmen and artists, as it had been a century earlier for British travelers and residents. Margaret Fuller Sarah Ossoli (1810-1850) who was an American journalist, editor, critic, translator, and women's rights advocate, received a copy of the letter written to Pius IX from Giuseppe Mazzini from London on 8 September 1847 by collecting it from the Banca Maquay Pakenham and Hooker, located at number 20, Piazza di Spagna. And many Americans frequented the *Caffè Nazzarri* or *Caffè Del Buon Gusto*, a locale that had taken the place of the former English Coffee House, and that was equipped for Americans with a reading rack of foreign newspapers, and that was also famous for the superior quality of its sandwiches, as reported by *Il Mercurio di Roma*, an 1843 detailed guide to institutions, to professionals and to artists present in Rome, comprising several Americans.¹⁸

American Studios, Academies and Art Itineraries

In the 1820's and 1830's a close relationship developed between American artists and those artists frequenting the newly-opened English Academy. Recent research demonstrates that the English Academy was established in 1821, in the deconsecrated church of San Giovanni della Ficocchia near the Trevi Fountain.¹⁹ The painter Robert Weir (1803-1889) and the sculptor Horatio Greenough (1805-1852) were the first Americans to frequent the English Academy, between 1825 and 1827, invited there by Richard Westmacott (1775-1856), David Wilkie (1785-1841), John Gibson (1790-1866), Joseph Severn (1793-1879) and Richard Wyatt (1795-1850). Subsequently, the American painters John Gadsby Chapman (1808-1889) and Samuel Finley Breese Morse (1791-1872) also began attending the academy, followed by James Edward Freeman and the sculptor Thomas Gibson Crawford (1814-1857) in 1836.²⁰

The first American Academy was established in 1842, in a move for cultural independence.²¹ This academy was chaired by Crawford, with a committee that included the painters Thomas Cole (1801-1848) and Luther Terry (1813-1900). Precisely in which location these artists met is still not clear.²²

The lessons offered, following the practices of other domestic academies, included two-hour evening sessions 'to paint from Nude Models' or to draw human anatomy, instructed by the Italian drawing master Giovanni Francesco Ferrero. The first American Academy lasted just over a year: it had come about as a series of studio-residences occupied by American artists in Rome. It is clear from the 1843 *Il Mercurio di Roma* that these American studio-residences were concentrated around the area of piazza Barberini and Via Margutta. Crawford lived in Via della Purificazione (close to his mentor Bertel Thorvaldsen), the American painter John Rollin Tilton (1828-1888) was resident in Via di San Basilio, and William Wetmore Story rented an apartment in Palazzo Barberini.²³ By 1844 the American

5. *The Prince of Wales in Miss Hosmer's Studio* (*Harper's Weekly*, 7 May 1859) – at this date Harriet Hosmer's studio was at Via Margutta 5.



Sketch Club was established on the initiative of the painter Daniel Huntington (1816-1906) and the sculptor Henry Kirke Brown (1814-1886).²⁴ The Club boasted a dozen members who at first met in each other's residences and studios until 1848.²⁵

The painter Asher Durand (1796-1886) and his mentor, the businessman and amateur painter Francis Williams Edmonds (1806-1863), were staying in the studios of the photographer Pietro Dovizielli, located at number 33 Via Margutta.²⁶ Dovizielli's studios, enlarged in 1849, together with the art studios subsequently built (beginning in 1858) by the Marchese Francesco Patrizi, which were located a few meters from the Alibert theater, near to where the English Academy was located,²⁷ constituted the largest nexus of artists' accommodations at the base of the Pincian hill – an area where formerly small sixteenth-century buildings faced the *Orto Naro* and the *Giardino Cenci*.²⁸

The structural interventions that Dovizielli and Patrizi introduced to raise the roof heights of their studios, altered the nature of Via Margutta, lending it an international character of artistic *bohème* that it maintained well into the avant-garde period of the 1960s, evident also in the subsequent re-constructions of art studios such as those of Nardi, Rasinelli, Barucci.²⁹ The American sculptor Harriet Hosmer (1830-1908) resided in four different studios in Via Margutta over the years (Fig. 5), as did other American artists, such as the sculptor Joseph Mozier (1812-1870), the painter Elihu Vedder (1836-1923) and Story – all members of what Henry James described as the “first generation of expatriates”.

Via Margutta was also the site for traditional evening encounters of artists in their studio-residences, and this practice was associated with attendance at the so-called *Accademia di Gigi* – another art center that became connected with the English Academy.³⁰ There is some discrepancy among the sources about exactly when the English Academy moved from its original site at San Giovanni della Ficocchia, to the Patrizi studios, where it resumed hosting American guest artists from the 1850s onward, documented by Leland.

The *Accademia di Gigi* took its name from the artist's model Luigi Talario, and it started out in an old granary at number 48 Via Margutta (subsequently the Nardi studio), as an academy for painters and sculptors who could paint and sculpt costumed figures by day, and nudes in the evening. Three rows of benches were arranged in the large skylit room; in the eve-



6. Anonymous painter, *Lesson on Costume di Trastevere* (Trastevere Folklore) at the *Accademia di Gigi*, Via Margutta 48, oil on canvas, detail.

7. Thomas Hiram Hotchkiss, *Panoramic View of the Roman Campagna*, 1861, pencil and black ink on off-white woven paper in a bound sketchbook, detail (from McGuigan Jr 2009, fig. 134). Visible in the center of the sketch are the ruins of the Tor de' Schiavi at the Villa dei Gordiani on via Prenestina.

nings the models, posing on a platform, were lit by oil lamps' reflectors, while to the side were placed the easels, tables and trestle stands for the sculptors (Fig. 6). For a payment of three *lire* a month, any artist could attend the evening sessions, but occasionally, Gigi also asked for artists' sketches as gifts, in exchange for his time. Leland describes this arrangement via his alter ego in his novel, *James Caper*, but in the fictive account, the location of the academy has been shifted to the second floor of a dilapidated building on a street near the Trevi Fountain - perhaps in reference to the original site of the English Academy. The *Accademia di Gigi* was frequented by American painters resident in the neighbourhood, including John Gadsby Chapman's sons, the artists Conrad Wise Chapman (1842-1910) and John Linton Chapman (1839-1905), the politician David Maitland Armstrong (1836-1918), and Frederic Crowninshield (1845-1918), the future director of the American Academy. Crowninshield learned about life drawing from attending classes with artists such as Mariano Fortuny, José Villegas, Achille Vertunni, Pio Joris, Vincenzo Cabianca, Cesare Fracassini, and Giulio Monteverde.

Leaving Rome for the Campagna beyond the walls, nineteenth-century American tourists turned their attention to key archaeological sites, such as the 'Tor de Schiavi' and the Mausoleum of the Gordiani along the Appian Way.³¹ They also traveled along other Roman consular roads towards Tivoli, Vicovaro, Subiaco, Ariccia, and Genzano, and in directions such as the Castelli Romani, an excursion undertaken by Morse and Chapman in 1830 that established a roadmap for subsequent generations of painters.³² The well-known drawings and paintings by Chapman and Thomas Hiram Hotchkiss (c. 1834-1869) of the Mausoleum of the villa of Gordiani at Tor de Schiavi (Fig. 7)³³ were contemporary with survey studies undertaken by the architect and archeologist Luigi Canina (1795-1856).³⁴ These specific sites were of interest to travelers and artists as they

8. Ippolito Caffi, *The Artists' Festival at Tor de' Schiavi*, c. 1844, oil on paper laid on board, 86 x 132 cm. Museo di Roma, inv. MR 350.





lay directly along the main route to Grotte di Cervara, between the Via Prenestina and the Via Tiburtina. Cervara was a popular destination because of the occasion of the Cervaro Festival, organized annually on 21 April by German artists between 1815 and 1849.³⁵ Ippolito Caffi and Ferdinand Flor made visual representations of the festive atmosphere that prevailed (Figs. 8-9). For most of the artists who attended, even for the Americans who were by then immersed in the cosmopolitan climate of Rome, the festival was undoubtedly a tribute to the Roman Campagna itself, an area that played such a large part in their artistic formation and from which they consistently drew inspiration.

At the end of the nineteenth century, the unresolved question of a permanent, representative home for the American Academy in Rome was addressed.³⁶ After the World's Columbian Exhibition of 1893, a small group of artists, including the architects Charles Follen McKim (1847-1909) and Daniel Burnham (1846-1912), promoted the idea of creating a center for classical studies for Americans in the Eternal City. McKim had already asked Vedder for advice on such a project that year, and in 1894 an American School of Architecture was opened in Palazzo Nunez Torlonia in the Via Condotti. This school almost immediately changed location to the Casino dell'Aurora in Villa Ludovisi (in 1895), where it joined the American School of Classical Studies. The two institutions merged in 1897, becoming the American Academy of Rome, which opened in the Villa Mirafiori in the Via Nomentana in 1906 (Fig. 10). By 1910, when Clara Jessup Hayland bequeathed the property of the Villa Aurelia on the Janiculum to the new Academy, the project for a definitive institution was initiated. Designed and built by McKim and his partners William Rutherford Mead (1846-1928) and Stanford White (1853-1906), the American Academy





Opposite, above left to right

9. Ferdinand Flor, *The German Artists' Festival at the Grottos of Cervara*, 1839, tempera, Collezione Casa di Goethe.

10. Ateliers in the Villa Mirafiori, Via Nomentana, the temporary seat of the American Academy in Rome, photograph, c. 1909.

11. The American Academy in Rome, Gianicolo, general plan, 1918.

12. The American Academy, the main building in Via Angelo Masina at the date of the inauguration of the Academy in 1914, photograph, 1914.

Above

13. Giulio Magni, Project for the residence-studio for Moses Jacob Ezekiel inside the Almagià property, Flaminia. Archivio Storico Capitolino, Rome, *Ispettorato edilizio*, prot. 2688/1911.

of Rome was officially inaugurated in 1914 (Figs. 11–12).

During these same years the saga of the construction of a new studio for the American sculptor Moses Jacob Ezekiel (1844–1917) long resident in Rome, took place.³⁷ Forced to abandon his studio-residence in the Baths of Diocletian in 1911 for the *Esposizione del Cinquantenario dell'Unità d'Italia*, Ezekiel (1844–1917) was offered the opportunity of a purpose-built studio inside the villa of his friend, the engineer Edoardo Almagià, sited in the new district outside the Porta del Popolo along the Via Flaminia, close to the river port. The initial project for this studio-residence was drawn up at the end of 1910 by Gustavo Giovannoni and survives in the architect's original archives.³⁸ Another

project until now unpublished, for a studio-residence for Ezekiel to be constructed separately in the corner of the lot of Almagià's villa, bears the signature of Giulio Magni (Fig. 13), a distinguished architect and designer of the Ministry of the Navy.³⁹ The Almagià villa was under construction in 1911, but neither of the two projects for a studio-residence for Ezekiel were realized. When he returned to Rome from the United States in 1914, Ezekiel wrote of his disappointment in his *Memoirs*: 'the studio I expected to find ready had not been built.'⁴⁰ Instead, Ezekiel moved into the so-called Belisario Tower, one of the antique towers of the Aurelian Walls, as discussed by Pier Paolo Racioppi in this volume.⁴¹

Notes

1 Ingamells 1997.

2 See further the substantial bibliography on this subject: Baker 1964; Winne 1966; Prezolini 1971; Vance 1989; Stebbins Jr 1992; Soria 2002; Comollo 2005; Huemer 2005; Vance, McGuigan and McGuigan Jr 2009 (with important new archival and visual documentation); Tordella 2012 (including a full translation of Henry Perry Leland, *Americans in Rome*, 1863, pp. 19–222).

3 Ingamells 1997.

4 Ingamells 1997, p. 714.

5 Byres' course ran from 21 May until 8 June, see Ingamells 1997, p. 732. On Morgan and Kauffmann, see Wendy Wassyng Roworth in this volume.

6 On the English Coffee House see Di Marco 2021.

7 Ingamells 1997, p. 745.

8 Story 1863, p. 185.

9 See McGuigan Jr in this volume, and also see McGuigan 2009.

10 Leland 1863.

- 11 I wish to thank Karin Wolfe for drawing my attention to the existence of the *Caffè Americano* in Rome.
- 12 Apollonj 2003.
- 13 Story 1863, p. 186.
- 14 Leland 1863, pp. pp. 1777-8.
- 15 Freeman 1877, pp. 10-16; McGuigan 2009, pp. xxx.
- 16 Freeman 1877, p. 15; Winne 1966, p. 47.
- 17 *The Roman Advertiser*, December 1848, p. 7.
- 18 *Il Mercurio di Roma* 1843.
- 19 McGuigan 2009, pp. 40-9.
- 20 *Ibidem*
- 21 McGuigan 2009, pp. 49-57.
- 22 McGuigan 2009, pp. 53-4.
- 23 See Pier Paolo Racioppi in this volume.
- 24 McGuigan 2009, pp. 56-7.
- 25 *Ibidem*.
- 26 Dovizielli was a photographer of international renown. In 1858 he received Henry Cole in his personal studio in the Via del Babuino. Cole commissioned a photographic campaign on Roman architecture from Dovizielli – forty-four plates from this commission are in the collections of the Victoria and Albert Museum (<https://collections.vam.ac.uk/search/?q=Dovizielli>, accessed July 10, 2022). On the Dovizielli and Patrizi Studios see Moncada di Paternò 2012, pp. 20-33.
- 27 Moncada di Paternò 2012, pp. 34-46.
- 28 Suffering a brief decline after having been favored by Dutch and Flemish artists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Via Margutta was revitalized in the mid-nineteenth century by the presence of Americans, who, in the Dovizielli studios alone, worked alongside Enrico Coleman, Bernardo Celentano, Pio Joris, the Garibaldian Nino Costa and Guglielmo De Sanctis, who painted a portrait of the American sculptor Randolph Rogers (1825-1892), academician of San Luca and his neighbor in 1878.
- 29 Moncada di Paternò 2012, pp. pp. 286-310.
- 30 Leland 1863; McGuigan 2009, pp. 58-62.
- 31 See Pier Paolo Racioppi in this volume. On artists' itineraries outside Rome, see further, Lisa Beaven and McGuigan in this volume.
- 32 See McGuigan in this volume, with previous bibliography.
- 33 McGuigan Jr and McGuigan 2009, pp. 106-9.
- 34 Canina 1856, pp. 86-9.
- 35 Grassi 1989.
- 36 Yegül 1991.
- 37 Racioppi 2018, pp. 113-28.
- 38 Archivio del Centro di Studi per la Storia dell'Architettura, Roma, *Fondo Gustavo Giovannoni*, c. 2, 46; Archivio Storico Capitolino, Roma, *Ispettorato edilizio*, prot. 62/1911.
- 39 *Ibidem*, prot. 2688/1911.
- 40 Ezekiel 1975, p. 441.
- 41 See Pier Paolo Racioppi in this volume.

A Grave in a Foreign Land: Early American Presence at the Protestant Burying-Ground in Rome

Among the destinations in Rome for early American visitors was the cemetery for foreigners that lay adjacent to the pyramid of Gaius Cestius (Fig. 1).¹ Initially, it was the pyramid-tomb (c. 18-12 BC), that attracted tourists, who then came across the burial-ground at its foot. Following the deaths and burials in 1821 and 1823 of the poets John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley, a visit to their graves often became the specific purpose of an excursion to this spot. Within a few years the cemetery had become a place of pilgrimage.²

Other American visitors went there for sadder reasons: the burial of a compatriot who had died in Rome. In April 1829 the reverend Edmund Griffin dutifully visited the pyramid of Gaius Cestius but found himself returning for the burial of a fellow-American, John Hone Jr.³ As many travelers did Griffin reflected on the tragedy of a grave in a foreign cemetery:

‘Here repose unhonored, save by the casual looks of passing travelers, the remains of those who died, perhaps without the care of friends, the tears of kindred, the consolations of religion; without one pitying companion to receive the last request and transmit it safely to a distant home. May God deliver me, was my involuntary prayer, from such a fate.’

Griffin felt that Hone had escaped the worst fate because he was surrounded by family and friends at his death. But Americans shared with the British, Germans and Scandinavians a strong nostalgia for the home-country as the proper place to die.⁴ ‘May you die among your kindred’ was a popular benediction.⁵ Americans felt the sentiment even more keenly, the distance from home being that much greater, although the beauty of the Protestant burying-ground could provide some solace. Young men dying alone could depend on the support of their friends. For example, John Francis Boardman (see Table 1), a trained physician, was unaware of how ill he was and died quickly, aged only thirty-four. An American friend had cared for him and then organized his funeral ‘in the English burying-ground, where rest Shelley and Keats’ and ‘almost all the Americans in Rome attended.’⁶

The cemetery for foreigners, often known as the Protestant cemetery, has been in continuous use since at least 1716.⁷ The first known burial there of a Protestant American dates to after 1800. Could there have been an earlier case? The physical evidence of the extant gravestones is not conclusive. In early depictions the monuments are usually identifiable with those that survive today, for example those identified by name in the etchings



1. Friedrich Wilhelm Gmelin,
*Il luogo sepulchrale degli acattolici presso
la piramide di Gaio Cestio a Roma*,
1810-11, etching. Private collection.

by Carl Urban Keller (1811) and L. Magozzi (1818).⁸ But many other foreigners are known to have been buried there in the eighteenth century, for example the sculptors John Deare, Christopher Hewetson and Alexander Trippel, and the painters William Pars, August Kirsch and Jonas Åkerström. No gravestones for them have been recorded – they may have been discarded during subsequent landscaping operations.⁹ Other sources include the official burial licenses, travelers' accounts and diaries, and obituary notices in the contemporary press at home (which often failed to announce deaths that occurred abroad). At present there is no known report pre-1800 of an American Protestant dying in Rome.

Early American presence at the burial-ground

In the period from 1800 to the Roman republic of 1849, there are seventeen such records in the Protestant cemetery's registers (Table 1).¹⁰ The earliest is of Ruth McEvers who died at Velletri in 1803, recently married with a six-month old daughter. Already suffering from tuberculosis, she had left New York with her husband, arriving in Rome during the year of peace following the treaty of Amiens (1802). The purpose of stay in Rome is often unknown but at least two others of the seventeen were there for health reasons: William Henry Elliot from New York¹¹ and Timothy Gidley, a retired book-keeper from Albany, New York.¹² New York predominates as the city of birth or residence of the deceased, some of them members of the city's prominent Dutch families such as Abeel, Hone and Remsen. The exceptions are Eliza Watson Temple, two artists from Charleston, SC, James De Veaux and Francis Kinloch, Charles Urquhart from New Orleans (his tomb inscription is in French) and Jacob Martin, who died three weeks after his arrival as the first American chargé d'affaires to the Papal States.¹³

Despite the logistical difficulties, bodies were often repatriated to the

home country. William Beninger (or possibly 'Bininger') is the only recorded American case, however, prior to 1850. Martin's replacement as chargé d'affaires, Lewis Cass, Jr, lost his young wife Mary Ludlum only a year after their marriage. Her remains were repatriated to a memorial chapel built by her father in Prospect Cemetery in Queens, New York, for her and for two sisters who also died young.¹⁴ Her parents erected a memorial to her in Rome that survives today.

A deterrent to repatriating bodies was the waiting-period until a scheduled sailing for the United States (William Beninger was buried on 2 May 1841 but not exhumed for repatriation until five months later). Henrietta Low King faced that situation in 1867 when her husband Charles (1789-1867), a former President of Columbia College, was mortally ill at Frascati. She paid for the rapid construction of a temporary holding-vault at the burial-ground (Fig. 2).¹⁵ His body was stored there until it could be repatriated. The vault was intended for use by all nationalities but was not used consistently even by Americans who were well-known for favouring repatriation.¹⁶ When the Kings' daughter visited the cemetery in 1904, it had been used recently.¹⁷ But thirty years earlier two Americans had instead been provisionally interred before repatriation: Colonel Charles Dix was repatriated two years after his burial, and the sculptor William Henry Rinehart (1825-1874) was eventually transferred to the Green Mount cemetery in Baltimore.¹⁸

Of the four burials subsequently transferred to ossuaries (Table 1), only the book-keeper Timothy Gidley is known to have had a gravestone.

Table 1

Deaths of American Protestants in Rome, 1800-1849.
Source: Register of burials, Non-Catholic Cemetery for Foreigners in Rome.

NO.	DATE OF DEATH	AGE AT DEATH	NAME	FROM	GRAVE LOCATION
1	29.03.1803	18	Ruth McEvers	New York	Altar, in Old Cemetery
2	04.11.1809	42	Elizabeth Watson Temple	Boston, MA	Pedestal, in Old Cemetery
3	14.02.1822	36	Daniel Remsen	New York	Ledger, in Old Cemetery
4	09.04.1829	32	John Hone	New York	Headstone, Zone V.12.17
5	18.01.1832	26	Edward Abeel	New York	Exhumed, Ossuary 1
6	15.01.1833	21	William Henry Elliot	New York	Headstone, Zone V.12.13
7	05.01.1839	53	Edward Jones	New York	Exhumed, Ossuary 2
8	10.01.1839	21	Joshua Jones	New York	Exhumed, Ossuary 2
9	23.07.1840	42	Francis Kinloch	Charleston, SC	Pedestal, Zone V.10.7
10	02.05.1841	65	William Burger Beninger	Not known	Repatriated
11	23.05.1842	42	Timothy Gidley	Albany, NY	Exhumed, Ossuary 1
12	04.04.1844	28	Charles Urquhart	New Orleans, LA	Ledger, Zone V.8.7
13	28.04.1844	30	James De Veaux	Charleston, SC	Headstone, Zone V.8.15
14	20.12.1844	15	George Francis Parker	Troy, NY	Pedestal, Zone V.7.15
15	04.02.1845	54	John King	New York	Headstone, Zone V.8.3
16	20.11.1846	34	John Francis Boardman	New York	Headstone, Zone V.7.14
17	26.08.1848	48	Jacob L. Martin	North Carolina	Headstone, Zone V.5.18

(Many burials remained marked solely by a small wooden cross if no family members or friends of the deceased had provided a stone.) With his end near, Gidley signed a cheque to cover his burial expenses and asked for a simple stone over his grave before hastening the end by his own hand. A year or two later, Gidley's former employer visited Rome and provided a modest grave-stone for his faithful clerk.¹⁹ The stone does not survive.

Gravestones are in place today for all others listed in Table 1. Eight of them are of simple design, either horizontal ledgers or standing headstones of rectilinear or arched profile. These and the larger monument to George Francis Parker, a pedestal crowned by an urn, have prototypes in Classical antiquity. The 'Roman' altar-shaped monument (Fig. 3) to Ruth McEvers is the only tomb mentioned by Washington Irving a year after her death. Finding the grave of his 'fair countrywoman' caused him to reflect: 'When so far removed from his native shores he looks upon every fellow-countryman as of the same family.'²⁰ Three years later Irving's elder brother, Peter, spotted the name of McEvers because he had known her personally. The monument was overturned, but helped by his traveling companion and a couple of shepherds, he managed to re-erect it.²¹

Two years later, the death of another American resulted in the most elaborate monument in the Old Cemetery (Fig. 4). Elizabeth Russell (née Watson) from Boston Massachusetts, had as a young widow married Sir Grenville Temple (1768-1829), the 9th baronet of Stowe House in England.²² Following her unexpected death 'of a burst blood-vessel',²³ her fine monument was the work of Swedes resident in Rome. That Sir Grenville did not engage a British sculptor perhaps reflects the scarcity of British in the city during this period of French occupation. Erik Gustav Göthe (1779-1838), a pupil of Johan Tobias Sergel (1740-1814), designed the monument. It is inscribed 'G.GOTHE.FEC.ROMAE.MDCCCX', 1810 being the year in which Göthe left Rome to pursue a successful career in Sweden. Its epitaph, composed by the Swedish diplomat and orientalist Johan David Åkerblad (1763-1819),²⁴ gives her age precisely as 38 years, 8 months, and 13 days. If Sir Grenville himself provided this information, he was unaware that his wife was in fact four years older and actually his senior. The high-relief frieze on her monument, with scenes of mourning and leave-taking, recalls classical Roman funerary reliefs. Gmelin's engraving (Fig. 1), executed in 1810 or 1811, places the monument prominently in the foreground in a view of the burial-ground. It may have been commissioned by Sir Grenville Temple in memory of his wife.²⁵

In 1822 the Old Cemetery containing the McEvers and Temple monuments was closed to further burials on the instructions of Pope Pius VII, who allocated an adjacent plot ('the New Cemetery') and had it enclosed



2. Protestant burying-ground in Rome, the King burial-vault, 1867.

Photo: N. Stanley-Price.

3. Protestant burying-ground in Rome, the monument to Ruth McEvers, 1803.

Photo: N. Stanley-Price.

Opposite

4. Protestant burying-ground in Rome, the monument to Eliza Watson Temple, 1810, designed by Erik Gustav Göthe.

Photo: N. Stanley-Price.

with a wall. Thomas Cole's painting depicts the New Cemetery after ten years of use (Fig. 5).²⁶ In his view of Florence from the Chiesa al Monte, Cole had adopted a similar viewpoint to that of J.M.W. Turner when, before visiting Italy, Turner had worked from a drawing by James Hakewill.²⁷ In this case too, Cole's viewpoint on Monte Testaccio is close to that of Turner's watercolour made from Hakewill's drawing for the latter's *Picturesque Tour of Italy* (1820), one that was reprised by Turner on his own visit in 1819.²⁸

A Cole sketchbook in Detroit, dated March–April 1832, contains two drawings of this subject, one a rough sketch and the other a more careful preparatory drawing. A small oil sketch (private collection) is also known.²⁹ To the differences noted by Huemer between the preliminary drawings and the finished painting could be added the position of the wall-tower on the right which was in reality inside the burial-ground, not outside. Overall, however, the painting is suggestive of how the cemetery appeared in 1832.³⁰ Gravestones are dispersed to either side of a central pathway lined by low bushes, which ascended towards Shelley's grave and the cypress trees planted in front of it by Edward Trelawny in 1823. Why did Cole paint this view? In climbing Monte Testaccio he was following in the footsteps of Turner whose work he had admired during his stay in London. Moreover, the burial-ground contained the graves of Keats and Shelley whose poetry delighted Cole. But these were not his only motivations: another was the grave of John Hone Jr (Table 1). Members of the Hone family were among Thomas Cole's patrons and friends. John Hone Jr, a wealthy merchant and art patron was in Rome with his wife and sister when he died in 1829, probably from tuberculosis. The artist Rembrandt Peale witnessed his funeral and burial, alluding, as Griffin had, to the melancholy of a foreign grave. The headstone erected to Hone bears a portrait relief by an unknown sculptor which, two years later, Willis recognised as depicting Hone without needing to be told who it was.³¹



In spring 1833, back in the United States, Cole received a commission, its precise terms not known, from Isaac Hone, the older brother of John Hone Jr. The artist offered Isaac an American landscape and, with some hesitation, his oil painting of the Protestant cemetery where Isaac's brother was buried. Cole's fears that 'where I would wish to afford a pleasure I may be reviving a grief' proved well-founded. Isaac accepted the American landscape but turned down the Rome painting. Soon afterwards, the *View of the Protestant Burial Ground, Rome* was exhibited at the National Academy of Design where it was listed as for sale.³² Described recently as a 'brooding nocturne',³³ it seems on the contrary to depict a daytime scene. The source of light appears to be the sun shining through a light haze, striking the distant Alban hills and prominent buildings in the distance.



5. Thomas Cole, *View of the Protestant Burying Ground*, 1833-34, oil on canvas, cm 85.0 x 115.5. Olana State Historic Site, Hudson, NY, Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, OL.1981.17.

A shepherd grazes his flocks, not normally a night-time activity. More conclusively, Cole has depicted the cemetery's gates wide open (they were usually kept closed by the custodian until called upon), with one figure standing in the gateway and another (or possibly two) inside the cemetery close to where Hone's tomb is located. It seems certain that the artist had in mind the grave of Hone and his family as the eventual recipient of the work.

Two works by American sculptors for fellow-artists

The two artists from Charleston (Table 1) both died from illness after settling in Rome. Returning from a visit to Venice, James De Veaux, a painter of great promise, caught a cold that developed into what the symptoms suggest was tuberculosis. He died after months of illness, described in long letters from his friends W.B. Chambers and the artist Thomas Rossiter to Robert W. Gibbes, De Veaux's patron in Charleston.³⁴ Rossiter's description of De Veaux's funeral conveys well the atmosphere of the 'sacred enclosure' in the shadow of the pyramid on a late afternoon in early spring. But he also evokes the tragedy of lives cut short, with references to Keats and Shelley and to other young Americans buried there – these are not named but the monuments to John Hone Jr and Francis Kinloch (see below) would have been visible nearby. De Veaux's own gravestone bears a portrait in bas-relief, executed by his friend, the sculptor Henry Kirke Brown, who modeled it a few days before De Veaux's death (Fig. 6).³⁵ It is recognisable in an etching attributed to Gaetano Cottafavi (Fig. 7), the most detailed of the several views by artists of the New Cemetery at this period, and in a watercolour by Salomon Corrodi.³⁶ Several witnesses commented on a distinctive aspect of the Protestants' ceremonies, namely the funeral cortège "taking its mournful course through the crowded streets" towards the burial-ground.³⁷ A recently discovered oil painting by Louis Gurlitt (1812-1897) is seemingly unique in depicting such a cortège.³⁸

As a close friend of De Veaux and his bedside companion during his last days, Brown was a natural choice to execute the portrait-relief. But as a young sculptor who had arrived only two years earlier, he faced competition especially from Thomas Crawford who had been resident in Rome since 1835. In the year of De Veaux's death, Crawford married Louise Ward, sister of Julia Ward Howe, a union that strengthened his place in American society and his ability to find clients. Moreover, Louise Ward's cousin was the current American consul in Rome, George Washington Green. Brown's wife Lydia wrote that Green steered commissions to Crawford 'to the exclusion of all other sculptors.'³⁹

The range of Crawford's early commissions in Rome has now been extended following the identification of a monument designed by him in the Protestant cemetery. It is the tomb of Francis Kinloch, the other artist from Charleston, SC (Table 1) which was erected by Kinloch's brother-in-law and sister, namely Henry and Harriet Middleton of Charleston.⁴⁰ Born into a wealthy family, Kinloch left for Italy in his early forties and eventually settled in Rome to study art while also supporting other, poorer artists. Dying unexpectedly in July 1840, he left no will nor had any dependents nearby. The consul, George Washington Green, arranged the funeral, secured the property of the deceased, and communicated the sad news to Kinloch's sister Harriet in Charleston. Two months later her husband, Henry Middleton, arrived in Rome where he commissioned Thomas Crawford to design a monument to his brother-in-law, entrusting Green to manage the project and to pay Crawford. On its completion in May 1841, Green could report to Middleton that 'every one whom I have heard speak of it, has declared it to be the best in the whole cemetery. I have had a little grass plot formed around it & planted with flowers.'⁴¹ The memorial takes the unusual form of a truncated, trapezoidal block of marble on a triple base, the lowest block being of travertine (Fig. 8). Below the portrait-medallion of a bearded Francis Kinloch, a bas-relief

6. Protestant burying-ground in Rome, the monument to James De Veaux, 1844, designed by Henry Kirke Brown. Photo: N. Stanley-Price.

7. Gaetano Cottafavi (attrib.), *Cemetery of the English and Russians near Porta San Paolo*, n.d., hand-coloured steel engraving. Private collection.



panel depicts an angel guiding the deceased heavenward, along with the symbols of a butterfly denoting resurrection and an extinguished torch. Crawford's distinctive cipher appears in the bottom left corner.⁴²

The solace of a grave in a foreign land

The epitaph on Kinloch's monument states 'His brother in law and his sister whom distance deprived of the consolation of watching over his death bed have caused this monument to be erected as a tribute to his worth and a testimony of their affection.' Distance weighed more heavily on Americans than on European families and friends who could perhaps, with some effort and cost, visit from their own countries. Henry Middleton made the long journey from Charleston to ensure Francis Kinloch's proper commemoration, as did Timothy Gidley's former employer when he traveled from Albany to Italy. But, at least until ship and rail communications improved, such visits were rare. For some, there could be no worse fate than dying in a foreign land. Lydia Brown, wife of Henry Kirke Brown, was quite distraught when she attended the funeral of a young American visitor – at the Protestant cemetery in Florence rather than Rome, but her thoughts when writing to her sister could have applied to either place:

'Never shall I forget my first and only visit [to the Protestant cemetery]. Never before did I feel so truly that we were 'strangers in a strange land' and how dreadful, how agonizing the thought of being obliged to leave a friend alone in such a place in such a land. I pray God I may not be called upon to witness another such scene but that we may both be permitted to lie down in that last sleep at home in our native land among kindred spirits.'⁴³

This fear diminished as transatlantic travel became easier and as health care improved. Moreover, many Americans, especially artists, remained in Italy in the full expectation of dying there, often surrounded by their family and friends. For example, artists such as Dwight Benton (1834-1903), Caroline Carson (1820-1892), William Stanley Haseltine (1835-1900), Joseph Mozier (1813-1870), Franklin Simmons (1839-1913), William Wetmore Story (1819-1895) John Rollin Tilton (1828-1888) and Elihu Vedder (1837-1923) all settled in the city and all were eventually buried in the Protestant cemetery.

But in earlier years, for those intending only a short stay before returning home, a premature death in Rome was always a risk. Visiting in 1843-44 William Gillespie had little to say about the cemetery, mentioning only the graves of Keats and Shelley, but introduced it on an unusual note: 'The Protestant burying-ground is particularly interesting to the stranger in Rome, for he does not know how soon he may enjoy a corner of it.' As if in compensation, he went on to quote Shelley that 'it might make one in love with death to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.'⁴⁴ The Reverend William Kip reflected along similar lines:

'There are few spots in Rome which the stranger will naturally visit with so much interest as the Protestant Burial-ground. At a distance from his own home, he knows not that but that the hand of death may here arrest him, and



8. Protestant burying-ground in Rome, the monument to Francis Kinloch, 1840, designed by Thomas Crawford. Photo: N. Stanley-Price.

should this be the case, within these walls he must find his resting-place. But wherever he might wander through the wide world, he could not find a more lovely spot in which to lie down for his long, last sleep.⁴⁵

Twenty years earlier, Nathaniel Hazeltine Carter, a professor of languages at Dartmouth College, concluded: 'If a stranger could be reconciled to any grave in foreign soil, the seclusion and quiet of this cemetery, lying on the banks of the Tiber, under the very walls of Rome and overshadowed by its venerable monuments, would present fewer repulsive ideas than any other spot.'⁴⁶ A few years later when standing at the grave of John Hone Jr, Willis conceded that it diminished the pain 'to see the sun lying so warm upon it, and the flowers springing so profusely and cheerfully. Nature seems to have cared for those who have died so far from home.' He added: 'with the common practice of sending the dying to Italy, as a last hope, I consider the exquisite beauty of this place of burial as more than a common accident of happiness.'⁴⁷

Kip concluded his own long account also by quoting Shelley, that it was 'the most beautiful and solemn cemetery he ever beheld.' The presence of the graves of Keats and Shelley were what drew many Americans to visit the burying-ground for foreigners. But once they had seen the beauty of the spot, they could even become reconciled to the thought of staying for ever in the foreign land of Italy.

Notes

- 1 Stanley-Price 2014; Menniti Ippolito 2014; Krogel 1995.
- 2 Stanley-Price 2016; Stanley-Price 2019.
- 3 Griffin 1831, I, p. 300.
- 4 Stanley-Price 2014, pp. 9-10.
- 5 Kip 1846, p. 216. The poem 'May you die among your kindred' (1845) was composed by Maria Abdy (1797-1867) to be sung also as a hymn.
- 6 Scott 1917, p. 110.
- 7 Stanley-Price, McGuigan and McGuigan Jr 2016.
- 8 Stanley-Price, McGuigan and McGuigan Jr 2016, cat. nos. 6 and 7.
- 9 Stanley-Price 2014, pp. 25, 30; Stanley-Price, McGuigan and McGuigan Jr 2016, pp. 30-1.
- 10 The online database provides the texts of their epitaphs. <http://www.cemeteryrome.it/infopoint/EnHome2.html>.
- 11 Willis 1835, I, p. 199.
- 12 Freeman 1877, pp. 286-9.
- 13 On the death of Martin, see Marraro 1944, pp. 489-94; also, Wynne 1966, pp. 15-16.
- 14 Rotella 2018; Freeman 1877, pp. 285-6. The year (1853) of death inscribed on her memorial in Rome is an error for 1855.
- 15 *A handbook* 1869, p. 316, and subsequent editions. On the vault Latin and English inscriptions record King's initiative: (English version) 'This vault was built by Henrietta Low King in acknowledgement of the kindness and sympathy extended to her during the long illness in Rome of her husband Charles King of New York and in commemoration of his death at Frascati on the 27th of Sept 1867. He was placed here until taken to his own country.'
- 16 *A Handbook*, 1869, p. 316.

- 17 Waddington 1904, pp. 285-6. Her brother Rufus King Jr (1838-1900) had been the last U.S. Minister to the Papal States.
- 18 Freeman 1877, pp. 283 and 293; Vedder 1911, p. 332.
- 19 Freeman 1877, pp. 286-9; Stock 1945, II, p. 82.
- 20 Irving 1920, III, p. 52.
- 21 Beach, Hornberger and Weight 1943, pp. 57-8. It caught the eye also of Berrian 1821, p. 142.
- 22 Temple's father while a colonial official in the United States had married Elizabeth Bowdoin, sister of James Bowdoin III.
- 23 *Gentleman's Magazine*, 80, 1810, I, p. 180.
- 24 Wohl 1989, p. 313. Åkerblad himself is buried nearby.
- 25 Stanley-Price, McGuigan Jr and McGuigan 2016, cat. no. 13.
- 26 Kornhauser and Barringer 2018, fig. 60.
- 27 Barringer 2018b, p. 45.
- 28 Moorby 2009.
- 29 Huemer 2011, p. 105; Parry III c. 1988, p. 122, fig. 93. The sketchbook is in the Detroit Institute of Arts 39.565.
- 30 Stanley-Price, McGuigan Jr and McGuigan 2016, cat nos. 20 and 25.
- 31 Peale 1831, p. 173; Willis 1835, p. 197; Griffin 1831, p. 300. Also, Stock 1845, p. 25.
- 32 Huemer 2011, p. 105.
- 33 Barringer 2018b, p. 48; also Huemer 2011, p. 105: 'a glowing sky at twilight with a rising moon.'
- 34 Gibbes 1846, pp. 211-4, 216-255; also, Kip 1846, pp. 191-2.
- 35 Gibbes 1846, p. 214; Kip 1846, p. 191.
- 36 Stanley-Price, McGuigan Jr and McGuigan 2016, cat. no. 21 and fig. 11; see also cat. nos. 20, 23, 24 and 33. On both the etching and the watercolour, the De Veaux headstone is visible at bottom left, to the right and behind the monument to George Francis Parker mentioned earlier.
- 37 Th. Rossiter in Gibbes 1846, p. 254, also, Peale 1831, p. 173.
- 38 Stanley-Price 2018, pp. 4-5.
- 39 Lemmey 2009, p. 75.
- 40 Moore 2018, drawing on the Francis Kinloch Estate Papers, 1731-1860 (Collection Number 1168.03.01.03), in the South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina.
- 41 Letter of Geo[rge] W. Greene to Henry A. Middleton, Philadelphia, Rome, 29 Nov[embe]r 1841, quoted in Moore 2018.
- 42 My thanks to John and Mary McGuigan for their comments during a visit to the monument and for other help.
- 43 Letter of Lydia Brown to her sister, 10 September 1843, quoted in Lemmey 2009, p. 71.
- 44 Gillespie 1845, p. 65.
- 45 Kip 1846, p. 215.
- 46 Carter 1829, II, p. 343.
- 47 Willis 1835, pp. 199-200.

Thomas Cole and the Aqueducts: *Plein Air* Painting in the Roman Campagna

Interest in nineteenth century *plein air* painting and its relationship to Rome and the Roman Campagna has increased rapidly in the last twenty years.¹ The uniquely cosmopolitan nature of the artistic scene in Rome that developed from 1780–1850 saw scores of artists of all nationalities living in Rome and traveling and painting together around Latium. While the international nature of this artistic exchange has been foregrounded in recent studies, the role played by American artists in it is still not fully understood. The aim of this chapter is to determine Thomas Cole's contribution to *plein air* painting in the Campagna, and to assess its distinctiveness.

The practice of painting out of doors began in the seventeenth century with Claude Lorrain, but he remained an isolated example until the second half of the eighteenth century when French institutional encouragement of the practice saw it flourishing in Rome. The strong association of the city and its surrounding countryside with *plein air* oil sketching was also due to what Theodore E. Stebbins Jr has described as 'the scenery, the light, the climate, the local color.'² A number of French artists associated with the French Academy, such as Nicolas Vleughels (1668–1737), Claude-Joseph Vernet (1714–1789) and Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes (1750–1819), nurtured its development by endorsing its value in the instruction of young artists. Vernet, as Lars Kokkonen observed, was a key conduit between the French painters and the English, promoting *plein air* painting among the French and advising Richard Wilson on the practice.³ Valenciennes in his treatise on landscape painting urged artists when sketching outdoors to avoid established viewpoints to concentrate on capturing ephemeral weather events and the effects of light.⁴ For this reason, to be true to the moment, he stressed the necessity of painting rapidly and boldly, and confining the sketch to one sitting, stating that studies 'should be nothing more than *maquettes* made in haste, in order to seize Nature as she is' and arguing for broad and fast technique, 'since all studies after nature should be made in a period of two hours at the most.'⁵ Valenciennes' own painted sketches represent the masterly expression of these ideals, broadly worked and made in haste, focusing on humble or mundane corners of Rome, intent on capturing fleeting lighting effects and the nature of the sky. They were intended as tests of skill in the handling of light, not as finished works.

While the French were lodged in the French Academy at Villa Medici on the Pincio, from 1827 onwards many German and Scandinavian artists were based in and around the Villa Malta nearby, enabling diverse

cultural exchanges between different nationalities. In addition to painting established views in and around Rome, the Germans also developed their own *veduta* tradition, concentrating on small and picturesque towns high in the Roman Campagna, including Olevano Romano, Civitella, and Subiaco. They discovered a rocky outcrop crowned with oak trees near Olevano called La Serpentara, and transformed this site, which held neither classical associations nor artistic significance until this point, into a landscape painting motif. With its mature oak trees, solitude, rocks, and panoramic views, La Serpentara admirably fulfilled the nineteenth century desire for landscape to function as an imaginative catalyst, 'a kind of laboratory for the profoundly new ideas of the relation between man and nature.'⁶ The desire for a solitary communion with nature can be found in travelers' responses to cities as well. Shelley, when in Rome, deliberately sought out the lonely or uncultivated parts of the city, observing that '[w]ide, wild fields are enclosed within it, and there are grassy lanes and copses winding among the ruins, and a great green hill, lonely and bare, that overhangs the Tiber.'⁷ The thrill lay in finding a neglected, secret or overgrown corner to make one's own, the more rugged the better. Henry Matthews, strolling through wild brushwood on the Palatine, was disarmed by his encounter with a fox, 'the genius of the place.'⁸ Compared with their French counterparts, German landscape painters proved to be both more intrepid and more itinerant, ranging over the entire Italian peninsula. A number of them, such as Johann Martin von Rohden, settled permanently in Italy.

The reality of *plein air* painting practice as it developed in Rome was more complicated than the quick sketching of everyday street scenes and effects of light advocated by Valenciennes. The Danish painter Christoffer Wilhelm Eckersberg, who arrived in Rome in July 1813 wrote to a friend in Copenhagen, echoing the sentiments of many other foreign artists in Rome:

'I intend to make a collection of the most beautiful of the many picturesque parts of Rome and the surrounding area. I have been working on them throughout the spring, and I have already almost half a score of small sketches finished, all of which were completed on the spot after nature.'⁹

The fact that he 'finished' only about ten paintings which he had been working on throughout the spring makes it doubtful that they were painted in a single sitting *sur le motif*. Conservation work on *plein air* sketches by Thomas Jones and Eckersberg has revealed underdrawings, suggesting that they may have been more carefully planned than they seem.¹⁰ In Eckersberg's case he appears to have begun his *plein air* paintings in his studio based on detailed drawings before finishing them outside in front of the motif, which is what he meant by 'completed on the spot after nature.'¹¹ Like many other artists, he would return to the same site over a period of days at the same time of day in order to achieve a more highly finished painting which nonetheless retained the quality of one moment in time.¹² The popular practice of returning to the motif on subsequent days was one that Valenciennes had explicitly warned against, nonetheless, on the grounds that the light and sky were never the same.¹³ Outdoor sketching

was but one part of a larger overall strategy of Valenciennes to elevate the status of landscape painting in the French Academy, and he may have regarded it as the equivalent of the study from life for history painters. His intentions for the practice, as part of the instruction of artists, would, however, be overtaken by the commercial possibilities of carefully constructed, highly finished paintings produced partly on-site and partly in the studio. Some of the best known practitioners of the painted sketch, such as Jean-Joseph-Xavier Bidault and Jean-Victor Bertin, produced paintings whose high degree of finish and careful composition suggests that rather than being impromptu they were carefully planned and finished in the studio.¹⁴

Compared with their European counterparts, American artists traveled further to get to Europe and were less likely to make multiple trips to Italy or extended stays there. Only the sculptors made protracted stays; landscape painters (apart from John Gadsby Chapman) stayed for shorter lengths of time, and either traveled with their countrymen or in the company of English artists, with whom they shared a language.¹⁵ Without an institutional base all American artists were dependent on sales or patronage while in Rome, something they had in common with the British and the Germans. The social life of many American landscape painters revolved around resident sculptors who were their fellow countrymen.¹⁶ American artists also set themselves apart from their European counterparts through their sometimes rigidly held religious beliefs.¹⁷ In spite of not being trained in the practice of outdoor painting, many American painters eagerly took it up while in Europe. Samuel F. B. Morse, for example, who was in Italy in 1830, developed a working method which involved completing a painting out of doors over two sittings, each of which lasted the better part of a day. When he and his companion walked from Tivoli to Hadrian's villa to paint on Wednesday 5 May 1830, they took their outdoor sketching kit with them. This consisted of 'a box of colors slung over the shoulders like a knapsack by the strap, an umbrella and the field chair', leaving these boxes at the end of the day with a *custode* at the site, and picking them up the following morning to continue their paintings.¹⁸ Morse's painted sketch of a wayside shrine of the Madonna in Subiaco was the result of more than one sitting, yet it vividly conveys the impression of a single moment when the afternoon sun sets on the mountainous landscape.¹⁹ Another sketch made in Subiaco of a bridge over a ravine had to be abandoned after the weather deteriorated and prevented him returning to the same spot to finish it, highlighting one of the obvious pitfalls of this practice.²⁰

By the time Thomas Cole arrived in Rome in 1832, what had begun as informal sketching expeditions to the hills had taken on the qualities of what Peter Galassi termed 'an organised industry' as large groups of painters of all nationalities headed there to paint at the beginning of spring. Many followed nearly identical itineraries. One popular route took in the Castelli Romani, which included Ariccia, Castel Gandolfo, Nemi, Genzano and Albano. Others were to Tivoli and Hadrian's villa, or to Tivoli and on to Subiaco. In each town they stayed in accommodation frequented by artists, such as the Casa Baldi in Olevano.²¹ For example, on 16 and



17 June 1830 Samuel Morse noted in his journal that there were no less than 150 artists from all nations at the ‘Festa Infiorata’ at Genzano, 22 of whom, all English or American, were staying at the Locanda Martorelli located in the main piazza in Ariccia.²² As a result of overcrowding, he and his traveling companions were obliged to sleep in a neighboring house. A more adventurous itinerary, which lasted longer and usually involved riding donkeys or horses for part of the way, was to Olevano Romano, Subiaco and Civitella.²³

Corot, who had arrived in Rome in 1823, almost a decade before Cole, and who would stay considerably longer, conspicuously failed to follow Valenciennes’ advice about avoiding famous views and monuments, and systematically repeated long-established motifs of the *vedutisti*. Galassi notes that the first thirty or so sketches he made in Rome were all famous views.²⁴ He was also keenly aware of sites endorsed by artistic tradition, such as the Tiber valley to the north of Rome, associated with both Nicolas Poussin and Claude Lorrain. He made his way repeatedly to La Crescenza, a manor house in the Campagna known as ‘la fabrique du Poussin’ by the French, which had been immortalised in paint by Claude and later sketched by Achille-Etna Michallon, in order to paint it from exactly the same viewpoint as his predecessors.²⁵ A range of French, British, German and Scandinavian artists also traversed the well-trodden path along the banks of the Tiber to the Acqua Acetosa and the Ponte Molle, documenting individual sites as they went. The importance of the Tiber valley for

1. Thomas Cole, *Landscape with a Round Temple*, c. 1830s, oil on paperboard attached to canvas, 21.6 x 31.8 cm. Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut (1905.12). Photo: © The Elizabeth Hart Jarvis Colt Collection, Wadsworth Atheneum.

the German painters is illustrated by the fact that their social group was named the 'Ponte Molle' society after the bridge, also known as Ponte Milvio, that carried the Via Flaminia into Rome.²⁶ Several artists such as Johann Martin von Rohden, Joseph Mallord William Turner, Edward Lear and Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot seemed particularly drawn to panoramic views of the deserted and deforested Tiber valley. James Fenimore Cooper described these stretches of the Campagna, over which he rode, as 'immense half barren tracts ... as lonely looking as our western prairies.'²⁷ Many of the American landscape painters were also great admirers of Claude Lorrain. George Loring Brown, for example, earned the nickname of Claude Brown because of his habit of copying Claude's paintings. Cole also greatly admired Claude, going to the British Museum on 14 December 1829 to study its collection of Claude drawings.²⁸ He also held Richard Wilson in high regard, copying one of his paintings while in London.²⁹ Richard Wilson self-consciously trod in the footsteps of Claude, visiting and painting sites made famous by the French artist, and clarifying his contribution for subsequent English artists. Thomas Jones, for example, stated '... I had copied so many studies of that great Man, & my Old Master, Richard Wilson, which he had made here [Rome] as in Other parts of Italy, that I insensibly became familiarized with Italian scenes, and enamoured of Italian Forms.'³⁰ Cole was astonished by the paintings by Claude that he saw in England, writing that 'to me, [he] is the greatest of all landscape painters: and, indeed, I should rank him with Raphael and Michael Angelo.'³¹

Yet in spite of his admiration, Cole did not consider Claude as an artist whose work was grounded in the topographical reality of the Campagna, but rather as a painter of imaginary Arcadian scenes. He separated the artistic legacy of the Roman Campagna into the classical and ideal Claudian tradition on the one hand, and the *vedutisti* on the other. As a result he did not shadow the other artists' excursions along the banks of the Tiber to the Ponte Molle and beyond, nor did any other American artist (with the possible exception of Chapman). Nor did American artists venture along the via Nomentana, to draw and sketch the Ponte Nomentana, a favourite motif of German and Scandinavian artists. The difference it seems was one of artistic tradition, with the French artists in particular attached to pictorial motifs and sites made famous by others. While Cole did paint one of the most popular sites at Tivoli, the Cascatelle, by this date it was not a site exclusively associated with Claude, but rather had become a mass tourist destination, famous as a sublime experience.³²

Cole's small *Landscape with a Round Temple* (Fig. 1) which was painted in the 1830s and inspired by his first Italian trip, has been interpreted, correctly in my view, as a pastiche of Claude's painting style, but it is one that demonstrates his failure to comprehend what lay at the heart of a Claude landscape; the deep middle distance. Sandrart had emphasised its importance when he noted that while he was sketching with Claude:

'while I was only looking for good rocks, trunks, trees, cascades, buildings and ruins which were great and suited me as fillers for history painting, he on the other hand only painted, on small scale, the view from the middle to the greater distance, fading away towards the horizon and the sky, a type in which he was a master.'³³

The middle distance in a Claude painting usually consisted of a river winding through a wide valley traversed at some point by an arched bridge, closely based on the actual topography of the Tiber valley, where the Tiber slowly coils its way through a wide, flat plain, interrupted only by the arches of the Ponte Molle. Cole's painting completely omits the middle-to-far distance, so that the temple appears as part of the foreground and resembles a stage prop.

Cole only took up the oil *plein air* sketch in Florence in the middle of 1831, having become aware of it earlier in England through exposure to works by English artists such as Constable and Turner.³⁴ Cole was friendly with Constable who sent him a small drawing after a painting by Paulus Potter, *View near the Hague with Cattle and Figures*, in commemoration of their outing to the Grosvenor Gallery in Park Lane.³⁵ Christopher Riopelle endorses John McGuigan Jr's suggestion that George Augustus Wallis may have been the catalyst for Cole to take up the practice in Florence. It is unclear what Cole's process was in relation to painted outdoor sketching, although it may have resembled that of Morse.³⁶

Cole was in Rome from February to May 1832, only four months, and largely avoided the plains of the Campagna in favour of the Castelli Romani and Tivoli, with the exception of one section of the Aqua Claudia near the via Appia Antica.³⁷ The aqueducts had not been a popular subject for artists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.³⁸ Instead, this section of the Claudian aqueduct became an attractive pictorial motif only in the first half of the nineteenth century, perhaps because, unlike the monuments in the city, it was dramatic and conspicuous in a vast and empty landscape.³⁹ Cole's letters reveal explicitly that it was their broken and ruined state that attracted him. In one letter he states that he was engaged 'in a picture that is a view of the Campagna of Rome, broken Aqueducts, &c.' and in another reports that he is 'engaged on a view of some ruined Aqueducts in the Campagna of Rome.'⁴⁰ Another reason why this section of the aqueduct became a favoured painting motif might simply have been that all routes to the Castelli Romani passed nearby. Morse, for example, traveling with four other artists in a *vettura* to Ariccia for the 'Festa Infiorata', possibly on the Via Appia Pignatelli, described the setting as follows:



2. Thomas Cole, *Aqueduct near Rome*, 1832, oil on canvas, 114.3 x 173 cm. Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Washington University in St. Louis, Bixby Fund, by exchange, 1987 (WU 1987.4). Photo: ©Bixby Fund, by exchange, 1987 (WU 1987.4), Lane Kemper Art Museum.

3. Thomas Cole, *Sketch for 'Aqueduct near Rome'*, c. 1832, oil on paper on canvas, 20.6 x 31.1 cm. New Britain Museum of American Art, Connecticut. Photo: ©Gift of Howard H. Bristol, Jr., New Britain Museum of American Art.

‘About five miles from the gate [Porta S. Giovanni] a road joins with the ancient Appian way [...] on our left a long line of aqueducts in perfect repair still brings water from the Alban hills to Rome, and the ruins of others stand in broken fragments in various parts of the wide plain.’⁴¹

Cole’s first painting of the Claudian aqueduct, *Aqueduct near Rome* (1832), which was made for Charles Lyman of Waltham, Massachusetts, is unusual for its inclusion of a medieval tower, the Tor Fiscale (Fig. 2).⁴² This famous composition is associated with two painted sketches, one of which (Fig. 3) appeared in the recent exhibition *Thomas Cole’s Journey: Transatlantic Crossings* where both are described as having been painted outdoors on the same day.⁴³ Of the other, held in a private collection, Elizabeth Kornhauser states:

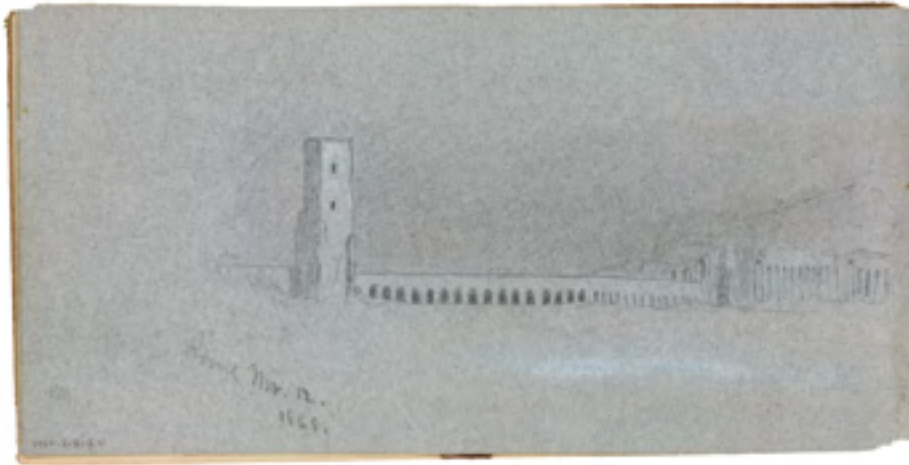
‘*Campagna di Roma* was painted in full day-light with lush wet-in-wet brushstrokes, demonstrating Cole’s mastery of the on-site oil study. He used broad strokes to capture the clouds in the sky, and added the narrative detail of a shepherd with his flock.’⁴⁴

Yet other artists who also painted this section of the aqueduct around the same time, such as Ippolito Caffi and Heinrich Bürkel,⁴⁵ did not include the tower, while those who did, such as Edward Thomas Daniell, did not include the aqueduct (Fig. 4).⁴⁶ Daniell’s painting shows the Tor Fiscale attached to what looks like a long low tunnel. An old photograph of the Tor Fiscale taken by Thomas Ashby in 1894 shows the tower surrounded by a jumble of ruined blocks of masonry, attached to an aqueduct, but one very different in appearance to the Aqua Claudia (Fig. 5).⁴⁷ We can recognise the same structure in Daniell’s painting.

4. Edward Thomas Daniell, *Ruins of a Claudian Aqueduct in the Campagna di Roma*, oil on millboard, 20.2 x 15.3 cm. Norfolk Museums Service, NWHCM: 1951.235.773. Photo: ©Norfolk Museums Service.

5. Thomas Ashby, *Campagna di Rome, aqueducts and Tor Fiscale*, 27 March 1894, photographic print, gelatin silver, b&w, 12 x 16 cm. British School at Rome Library, Rome. Photo courtesy of the British School at Rome Library.





6. Jervis McEntee, *Roman Campagna Nov. 12, 1868* (verso, from sketchbook), graphite, white gouache, on blue paper, 11.4 x 22.9 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Photo courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

7. Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, *The Roman Campagna, with the Claudian Aqueduct*, c. 1826, oil on paper, laid on canvas, 22.8 x 34 cm. National Gallery, London. Photo courtesy of the National Gallery.



Useful for the topography of this area is a sketch by Jervis McEntee of 1868 in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig. 6).⁴⁸ It seems likely that McEntee had embarked on an artistic pilgrimage of his own, retracing Cole's itinerary.⁴⁹ What he found was something different. He drew the tower attached to the same low aqueduct with its squat arches and thick upper section marching across the landscape, intersecting at the far right with the broken, higher and more spindly arches of the Aqua Claudia. A view from the same direction, but from a point further across the Almone river, can be seen in a painting by Corot in the National Gallery in London, where the Tor Fiscale is placed at the centre of the composition in the middle distance and is attached to a long, low aqueduct that extends on either side, framed at either edge by the much higher arches of the Aqua Claudia (Fig. 7).⁵⁰ This aqueduct is the Acqua Felice, completed in 1586 by Pope Sixtus V.

The Tor Fiscale was built as a watchtower in the thirteenth century at the point where a number of aqueducts intersected, the two visible above ground being the Aqua Marcia and the Aqua Claudia.⁵¹ It was a logical site for a medieval defensive tower, as anyone controlling the tower could



also control the water supply. The Acqua Felice used the foundations of the Aqua Marcia for some of its length, while other sections (the squat structure visible in Daniell's painting) were built in the 1580's.

One of the sketchbooks of Thomas Cole now held in the Detroit Institute of Art, inv. 565, documents Cole's exploration of these aqueducts. The first (fol. 119) (Fig. 8) is a drawing of the Tor Fiscale from the west, including a detailed representation of the ancient Roman masonry (part of one of the arches of the aqueduct) at the base. (This direction of view corresponds approximately to a street view from a point off the Vicolo Aquedotto Felice, an area which is quite built up today.) Next (fol. 120) (Fig. 9) is an ink drawing of the Claudian aqueduct as it stretches away to the hills, with the Tor Fiscale out of sight to the left. It has annotations and colour notes so that it could be used as the basis for a painting. As the annotations and underdrawing are in pencil (with some touches of red chalk), it is likely that Cole worked up the drawing at a later date in ink, in a similar way to Samuel F. B. Morse, who in a journal entry described working up

8. Thomas Cole, *Drawing of the Tor Fiscale (Brick Tower)*, Drawing, graphite pencil on off-white wove paper, Sheet: 22.2 x 31.4 cm. Detroit Institute of Arts, inv. 39.565.119. Photo courtesy of the Detroit Institute of Arts.

9. Thomas Cole, *Ruins of the Claudian Aqueduct, Roman Campagna*, fol. 120, pen and brown ink over graphite pencil on off-white wove paper, Sheet: 22.2 x 31.4 cm. Detroit Institute of Arts, inv. 39.565.120. Photo courtesy of the Detroit Institute of Arts.





drawings in sepia when constrained to remain indoors on a rainy day in Subiaco.⁵² That this drawing formed the basis for a much later painting of the Claudian aqueduct, *Roman Campagna (Ruins of Aqueducts in the Campagna di Roma)*, of 1843 (Fig. 10), created on his second trip to Italy, reveals the usefulness of Cole's method of making topographically accurate drawings with extensive color notes.⁵³ Fol. 121 is a view of the Tor Fiscale from the other side, with a rocky outcrop or Roman remains, with at the left what appears to be a sketch of a flower. It seems that Cole crossed the line of the Acqua Felice and then walked back towards the Tor Fiscale. Two more drawings follow; fols. 122 and, 123, the first is what seems to be an attempt to draw the continuous section of the aqueduct that he did not complete, while the second is a study of vegetation (inscribed 'purple flower') which includes in the corner a small drawing of a wayside shrine. The



Opposite

10. Thomas Cole, *Roman Campagna*, 1843, oil on canvas, 82.6 x 122 cm, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut, inv. 1948.189. Photo: © Bequest of Clara Hinton Gould, Wadsworth Atheneum.

Below

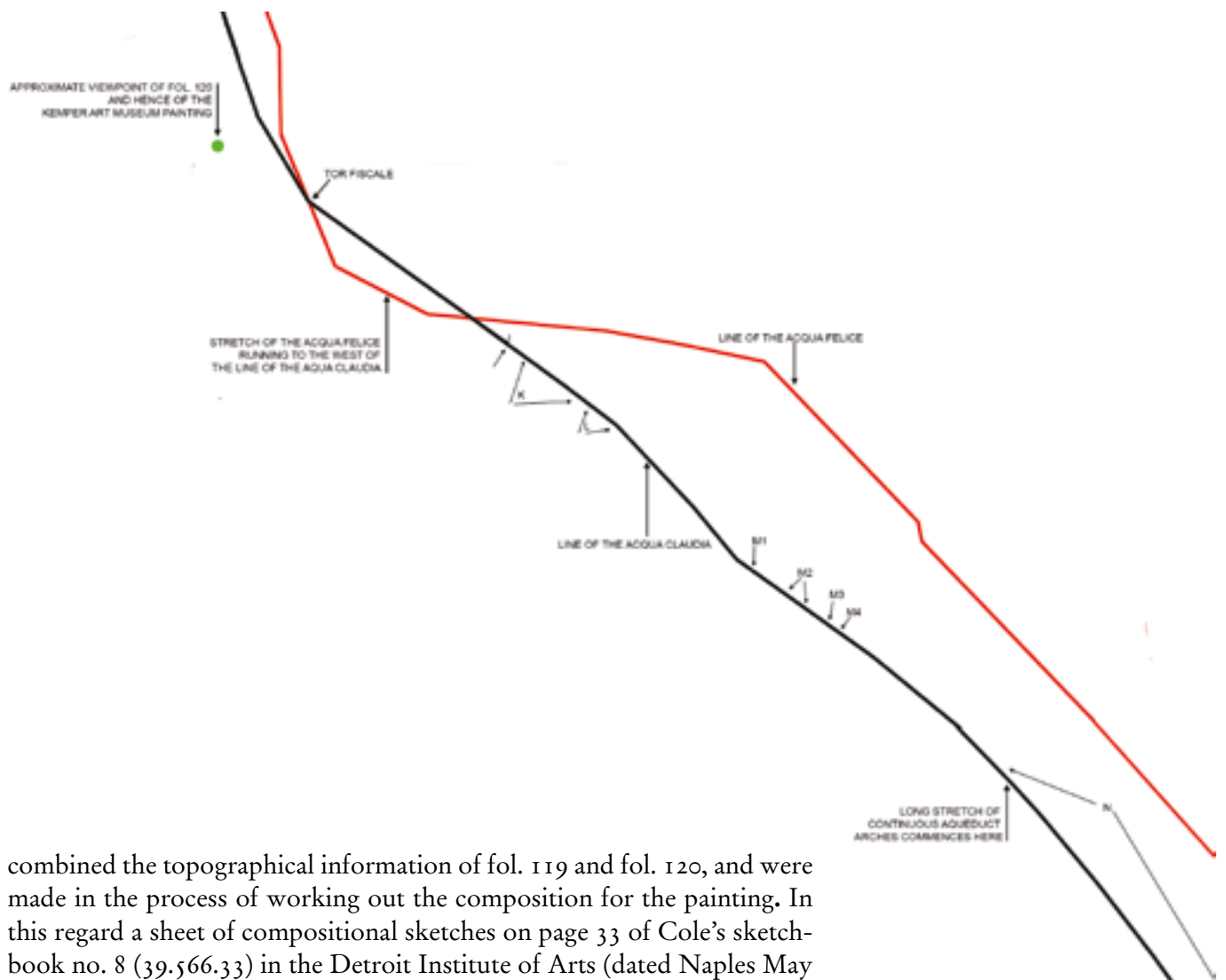
11 (a, b). Thomas Cole, *Roman Campagna (Ruins of the Claudian Aqueduct)*, drawing, graphite pencil on off-white wove paper, each sheet (fols. 124 & 125), 22.2 x 31.4 cm. Detroit Institute of Arts, inv. 39.565.124 and 39.565.124. Photo courtesy of the Detroit Institute of Arts.

next two drawings, on facing pages (fols. 124, 125) (Fig. 11 a-b) provide an extensive panorama looking south-east towards the Tor Fiscale along the line of the broken remnants of the Aqua Claudia that extend north-west from the Tor Fiscale in the direction of Rome (Fig. 12). The inscriptions on this drawing are location notes such as 'Mont Albano 12 miles off', and include the intriguing note 'Master Law held my book.'⁵⁴ Cole probably began on the right page but ran out of room, and so he repeated two sections of the aqueduct on the other page of the sketchbook. In these drawings visible behind the Aqua Claudia is the Acqua Felice, which after running parallel to the Aqua Claudia from the direction of the Alban Hills to the south-east, crosses the line of the Aqua Claudia to run to its west for a short distance before returning to it at the Tor Fiscale, after which it resumes its position to the east of the Aqua Claudia. The extent of the Acqua Felice as it continues running northwards is shown beyond the arches of the Aqua Claudia, but Cole has played it down in favour of the older Roman aqueduct. In adopting his chosen viewpoint in fols. 124 and 125 Cole was evidently attempting, without altering the topographical facts, to juxtapose the ruined sections of the Roman aqueduct with the Tor Fiscale. Whether Cole intended to work up this drawing into a painting is unclear, as none of the notes are color notes. This is the final drawing from the excursion to the aqueducts.

These drawings help to explain that the view Cole would paint in Florence of the Tor Fiscale and the Aqua Claudia for Charles Lyman in the Kemper Art Museum (Fig. 2), and the two smaller oil sketches associated with this composition (Fig. 3), are all composites, compiled from the individual drawings he sketched on site. Although the lower storey of the Tor Fiscale was built into one of the arches of the Aqua Claudia, it stood at some distance from the two stretches of the Aqua Claudia shown in fol. 120 (the southern stretch) and fols. 124-125 (the northern stretch). Could Cole, nevertheless, have chosen a sightline that included the Tor Fiscale and the Aqua Claudia in a way corresponding to the Kemper Art Museum

picture? An examination of the plan of the aqueducts (Fig. 12) tells us that the answer is no: whatever the viewpoint, the stretch of the Acqua Felice that runs to the west of the line of the Aqua Claudia would have prevented a clear sightline. For the painting Cole has joined two non-contiguous monuments, eliminating a considerable length of the Aqua Felice between. For this reason the sketches are not, and cannot be, *plein air* sketches produced on site. They are evidently compositional sketches, almost certainly made in Florence, that





combined the topographical information of fol. 119 and fol. 120, and were made in the process of working out the composition for the painting. In this regard a sheet of compositional sketches on page 33 of Cole's sketchbook no. 8 (39.566.33) in the Detroit Institute of Arts (dated Naples May 14 1832),⁵⁵ probably produced in Florence, is revealing, as it includes a pencil sketch of the composition for the Tor Fiscale/Aqua Claudia painting on the top right. This drawing (Fig. 13), which is closely related to the small painted sketches, was probably produced as a record of all the paintings Cole painted in Florence.⁵⁶

Although on paper, and technically of the right size to be *plein air* sketches, the two oil sketches of the tower and the aqueducts bear no tell-tale marks of having been painted on the spot, unlike Cole's *plein air* sketch *Stormy Landscape*, where the torn, uneven and perforated edges testify to the circumstances of its production (Fig. 14).⁵⁷ Another indication that *Stormy Landscape* is a *plein air* sketch, apart from its extremely free treatment, is the inscription, which reads: "Thunderstorm from the Campagna di Roma /seen from Tivoli", which documents the fact that it was painted on the spot.⁵⁸ Although he may have produced some *plein air* sketches while in Rome, it is apparent that for major paintings such as his *Interior of the Colosseum*, *A View near Tivoli* and *Aqueduct near Rome*, Cole relied primarily on his long-standing method of making detailed sketchbook drawings with annotated colour notes. His working practice was not to produce multiple *plein air* sketches in the Roman Campagna that he would then work up into larger studio pictures, as for example, Morse had done.

Above

12. Plan showing the intersection of the Aqua Claudia and Acqua Felice (© David R. Marshall).

Opposite

13. Thomas Cole, *Compositional sketches*, c. 1832. Detroit Institute of Arts, inv. 39.566.33. Photo courtesy of the Detroit Institute of Arts.

14. Thomas Cole, *Stormy Landscape*, 1832, oil on paper, 25.1 x 33 cm. Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society Purchase, inv. 39.586.B. Photo courtesy of the Detroit Institute of Arts.



Cole's inclusion of the Tor Fiscale in his painting implies a particular reading of the Aqua Claudia and Roman aqueducts in general. It serves to emphasise, not the status of the aqueducts as marvels of ancient engineering,⁵⁹ but the long years of their decay, when they were appropriated for the purposes of feudal warfare in the medieval period. It represents the depth, as well as ravages, of time. Like Cole, American writers were more aware than their European counterparts of the temporal depth such monuments exemplified. Henry James described Italy as 'thick with the sense of history and the very taste of time',⁶⁰ while Washington Irving expressed the same sentiment

slightly differently: '[m]y native country was full of youthful promise; while Europe was rich in the accumulated treasures of age. Her very ruins told the history of times gone by, and every mouldering stone was a chronicle.'⁶¹ The fact that Cole manipulated the topography of the site to such an extent in order to tell this story makes it much more explicitly a historical narrative about the transmutation of man-made objects by time

and nature, a theme central to Cole's work, and a point made explicit by the skull in the foreground of the painting. It means that Cole is not trying to provide a pictorial record of a particular site, but rather is seeking to make a statement about the transience of human endeavor. In this respect it is an important precursor to his series *The Course of Empire*, painted after his return to America. James Jackson Jarves's description of the Roman Campagna in his *Italian Sights and Papal Principles* exemplifies just such a response, and could well stand as a description of the painting. He wrote:

'Deserted, tottering towers, once the abode of mediaeval violence, in ghost-like rigidity, cast melancholy shadows over the plain. Far above them, majestic, sad, lonely, here in solitary arches, there linked in stone embrace, continuous lines disappearing in perspective threads, the imperial aqueducts lift their graceful forms. Broken masses of light, fringed by stone-cast shadows, stream through eternity opened its eyes upon time. Along their diminishing lines the sight wanders on until lost in space.'⁶²

Cole's sojourn in the Roman Campagna reveals that he was not interested in capturing the sense of being in a landscape at one moment of the day, when the effects of light were luminous or suggestive, but rather was fascinated with representing the cumulative effects of time, and the implications these held for the progress of civilisations.

Notes

- 1 On *plein air* painting in the Roman Campagna see in this volume, Mary K. McGuigan (including updated bibliography on the subject), and Francesco Petrucci (with his recent bibliography).
- 2 Stebbins Jr 1992, p. 21.
- 3 See Kokkonen 1996.
- 4 De Valenciennes 1800, pp. 404-7 quoted in Galassi 1991, p. 27.
- 5 De Valenciennes 1800, pp. 404-7.
- 6 Faunce 1996, p. 52. Faunce's comment refers to Italy as a whole, not to La Serpentara in particular.
- 7 Percy Bysshe Shelley, Letter to T.L.P. Esq, from Naples, 22 December 1818.
- 8 Matthews 1820, p. 75.
- 9 Conisbee 2004, p. 17.
- 10 Conisbee 2004, pp. 16-7.
- 11 Monrad 2015, p. 27.
- 12 *Ibidem*.
- 13 Galassi 1991, p. 149. The French even had different terminology for each; rapid sketches were 'esquisses' while the more finished painting completed at least partially on the spot was an 'étude'.
- 14 This is the conclusion Sarah Faunce comes to with regard to Bidault. See Faunce 2004, p. 23. See also Galassi's discussion of Bidault's degree of finish (Galassi 1991, pp. 66-7).
- 15 On Chapman in Italy, see Mary K. McGuigan in this volume.
- 16 Baker 1964, p. 66.
- 17 George Inness was apparently briefly imprisoned after he refused to take his hat off in a religious procession and hit the soldier encouraging him to do so with his cane. See Mitchell 2011, p. 22. Morse also disapproved of Catholic rituals, and wouldn't remove his hat if a religious procession went by, although he did remove it when entering a church. See also Baker 1964, pp. 155-82.
- 18 Samuel F.B. Morse, *Diaries*, Library of Congress, unpaginated. May 5th 1830.
- 19 Samuel F.B. Morse, *Sketch for The Chapel of the Virgin at Subiaco*, 1830, oil on paper, mounted

on canvas, Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, Massachusetts. Samuel F.B. Morse, *Diaries*, Library of Congress, unpaginated. See also Ricchi's catalogue entry 55 in Stebbins Jr 1992b, p. 282, 'Sketch for the Chapel of the Virgin at Subiaco', 1830: A week later, on May 18, Morse reported in his journal that in the early evening he began a sketch "at this shrine", adding that "it has been much painted by artists from its picturesque character and structure", p. 282.

20 Samuel F.B. Morse, *Diaries*, Library of Congress, unpaginated. Friday May 28. Morse woke to an overcast and wet morning, and knowing he would be leaving the next day, expressed regret at leaving his sketch of the bridge unfinished.

21 Painters became aware of this through the patronage of Baron von Rumohr, who rented it in 1819 and made it available to artists in later years. See Faunce 1996, p. 71.

22 Samuel F.B. Morse, *Diaries*, Library of Congress, unpaginated. Morse identifies this as 'the locanda of Signore Martorelli which is in the piazza of the Chigi palace.' The Locanda Martorelli in Ariccia (Nos. 4-6, Corso Garibaldi) was opened by Antonio Martorelli in 1820 as a locanda that operated until 1880. It is currently a dependency of the Palazzo Chigi. It contains murals by Taddeo Kuntze (1730-1793) made in 1770-1 when it was owned by the gilder-impresario Giovanni Battista Stazi. On the Locanda Martorelli, see also Francesco Petrucci in this volume. Further: <http://www.palazzochigi-ariccia.com/ariccia/la-locanda-martorelli/>.

23 Galassi describes three separate itineraries: Civita Castellana and Narni; Frascati, Marino, Albano, Ariccia, Genzano; and Tivoli and Subiaco, but by the time the Americans were traveling these had merged to some extent. Artists often just traveled to Tivoli and back to Rome, and the Subiaco itinerary usually included Olevano and Civitella. Galassi 1991, p. 123. Sanford Robinson Gifford, for example, took a carriage to Tivoli, and then rode to Subiaco, and then hired donkeys in Subiaco to visit the shrine of St Benedict (Sacro Speco). He and his friends then hired horses to go to Cervara (which he writes as Cerbara). Letters of Sanford Robinson Gifford, Smithsonian, European Letters vol. 2, March 1856-August 1857, pp. 123-5.

24 Galassi 1991, p. 146.

25 Galassi 1991, p. 148.

26 Faunce 1996, p. 57.

27 Cooper 1838, p. 136.

28 Parry III 1988, p. 101. See also Chronology in Kornhauser and Barringer 2018, p. 250.

29 Barringer 2018b, pp. 34-5.

30 Thomas Jones, *Memoirs*, 13 December 1776, quoted in Galassi 1991, p. 83.

31 Barringer 2018b, p. 35. On the American writers' and artists' fascination with Claude over the nineteenth century, see also Francesca Orestano in this volume.

32 Thomas Cole (1801-1848), *The Cascatelli, Tivoli, Looking Towards Rome*, c. 1832. Oil on canvas, 85.73 cm x 113.03 cm. Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, Ohio, 1991.013.001, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Knight Sturges and Family.

33 Roethlisberger 1961, I, p. 48.

34 Riopelle 2018, p. 98.

35 Parry III 1988, p. 103.

36 Kornhauser 2018b, p. 190. Kornhauser quotes a journal entry written by Cole in August 1831 in which he refers to 'sallying forth with my sketch-Book every morning at five, and never returning until night.' However it is likely that this entry refers to his numerous drawings in his sketchbooks.

37 Cole was not impressed by the standard of accommodation in the rural inns, stating: 'I should not forget to note the fine weather, and the flowers by the wayside, in February too, and the wretched inns, where you sleep over the stables always, with an entertaining company of fleas, if the beds are not too wet to drown them', letter from Cole to his parents, dated Rome March 4th, 1832, quoted in Noble 1856, p. 156.

38 *Pace* the catalogue entry by E. Jones on Thomas Cole's *Aqueduct near Rome*, 1832, (Jones 2018), an otherwise exemplary catalogue, which states that 'the aqueducts had been a popular subject for artists since the seventeenth century.'

39 Another attraction of the aqueducts outside the city was that it was possible to quarantine the ancient architecture from the modern, as indeed Thomas Cole would do, something that was difficult to do in Rome, with travelers bemoaning the way contemporary life encroached on the Roman monuments. As Henry James put it, the aqueducts 'seem the very source of the solitude in which they stand', James 1875, p. 147.

40 Parry III 1988, p. 126, where the author quotes sections of letters from Cole to Robert Gilmore and Daniel Wadsworth.

- 41 Samuel F. B. Morse, *Diaries*, Library of Congress, unpaginated. Wednesday June 16, 1830.
- 42 Thomas Cole, *Aqueduct near Rome*, 1832. Oil on canvas, 114.3 x 173 cm. Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum, Washington University in St. Louis, University purchase, Bixby Fund, by exchange, 1987 (WU 1987.4). See Kornhauser 2018a.
- 43 Thomas Cole, *Campagna di Roma (Study for Aqueduct near Rome)*, 1832, oil on paper on canvas, 21.6 x 29.2 cm. Private Collection, New York; Kornhauser 2018, p. 184. Thomas Cole, *Sketch for 'Aqueduct near Rome'*, c. 1832, oil on paper on canvas, 20.6 x 31.1 cm. New Britain Museum of American Art, Connecticut, Gift of Howard H. Bristol Jr. (1988.31), Kornhauser 2018a, fig. 117.
- 44 Kornhauser 2018a. Barringer is more circumspect, but still implies these sketches were painted in front of the motif: 'An oil study for *Aqueduct near Rome* captures the warmth of evening light over the flat landscape of the Campagna, dominated by the ancient ruins and bereft of human life. Cole's brush moved quickly to capture the radiant quality of a scene changing minute by minute.' Barringer 2018b, p. 47.
- 45 Ippolito Caffi painted the aqueducts, including the same section of the Aqua Claudia, a number of times. His earliest aqueduct painting is dated 1843. See Ippolito Caffi, *Acquedotti Romani al tramonto*, 1843, oil on paper, 27.2 x 43.9 cm. Museo di Roma, MR 5688.
- 46 Edward Thomas Daniell, *Ruins of a Claudian Aqueduct in the Campagna di Roma*, oil on mill-board, 20.2 x 15.3 cm. Norfolk Museums Service, NWHCM: 1951.235.773. F, Norfolk Museums Service.
- 47 Thomas Ashby, *Campagna di Roma, aqueducts and Tor Fiscale*, 27 March 1894, photographic print, gelatin silver, b&w, 12 x 16 cm. British School at Rome Library, Rome.
- 48 Jervis McEntee, *Roman Campagna*, dated 12 November 1848. One half of a double page spread drawing in his sketchbook, graphite, white gouache on blue paper, 11.4 x 22.9 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1982.217.2a.
- 49 This is my suggestion. There is no doubt that Cole's famous paintings of the aqueducts inspired a number of later American artists, such as Asher Brown Durand, Benjamin Champney, and Thomas Worthington Whittredge to sketch and paint this same section of the Claudian aqueduct. In Durand's case he even included a two-storey brick pillar, reminiscent of the Tor Fiscale, on the left in his drawing, in what appears to be an overt homage to Cole's work.
- 50 Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, *The Roman Campagna, with the Claudian aqueduct*, c. 1826, oil on paper, laid on canvas, 22.8 x 34 cm. National Gallery, London, NG3285.
- 51 The first mention of the Tor Fiscale is in a document of 1277. It was built into the ruins of the Claudian aqueduct, and the ancient stonework is visible around the base of the tower. See Esposito 1998, pp. 35–7.
- 52 Samuel F.B. Morse, *Diaries*, Library of Congress, unpaginated. Friday May 28th 1830: 'Of course we were prevented from painting out of doors, took the opportunity to put pencil sketches into sepia, and make some private arrangements for our departure in the morning.'
- 53 Thomas Cole, *Roman Campagna (Ruins of Aqueducts in the Campagna di Roma)*, 1843, oil on canvas, 82.6 x 122 cm. Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art, Hartford, Connecticut, Bequest of Clara Hinto Hould, 1948.190. Kornhauser 2018a, fig. 118, pp. 184–5. This was one of a pair of paintings commissioned by Thomas Hall Faile that Cole painted in Florence on his second trip.
- 54 This could also be 'Martin Law.'
- 55 Ellwood C. Parry III refers to this sketchbook (39.566 classification) as no. 8, although this information is not provided by the Detroit Institute of Art catalogue entry on this drawing.
- 56 Thomas Cole, *Compositional Sketches for Italian landscapes*, 1832, pencil on paper. Detroit Institute of Arts, 39.566.33.
- 57 See Thomas Cole, *Stormy Landscape*, 1832, oil on paper, 25.1 x 33 cm. Detroit Institute of Art, Founders Society Purchase.
- 58 Victoria 2018.
- 59 See by contrast Joseph Addison's reaction to the Claudian aqueduct, where he carefully notes the measured descent of the water over distance: 'Thus the Claudian aqueduct runs thirty-eight miles, and sunk after the proportion of five foot and a half every mile, by the advantage only of a high source and the low situation of Rome', Addison 1767, p. 217.
- 60 James 1909, pp. 502–3.
- 61 Irving 1834, p. 226.
- 62 Jarves 1856, p. 347.

In 1829-1832 the British-born American artist Thomas Cole (1801-1848), having established himself in New York State with topographical landscape views, returned to Europe to complete his artistic education. He spent much of his time in London, acquainting himself with contemporary British art, above all Turner and Constable, before making his way to Florence, Rome and Naples. His main base was in Florence, but he spent five months in Rome, including ten days at Tivoli, before returning to Florence to paint works with Roman subjects that he had drawn in Rome.

Cole aspired to be much more than a landscape painter, and in London in 1829 he conceived what would be one of his greatest achievements, a set of five paintings describing *The Course of Empire* (Figs. 1-2). This presented a cyclical account of human history through the depiction of the rise and fall of an imaginary civilisation that owes much to Ancient Rome but which also refers to contemporary Britain and especially America. The imaginary topographical setting is the same in all five canvases, though the viewpoint varies. It begins with *The Savage State* which is succeeded by *The Arcadian or Pastoral State* intended to be hung on the left of a larger central picture depicting *The Consummation of Empire* (Fig. 1) an Empire that contains the seeds of its own destruction, which occurs in



1. Thomas Cole, *The Course of Empire: the Consummation of Empire*, 1835-36, oil on canvas, 130.2 x 193 cm. New-York Historical Society, New York, 1858.3.



2. Thomas Cole, *The Course of Empire: Desolation*, 1836, oil on canvas, 99.7 x 160.7 cm. New-York Historical Society, New York, 1858.5.

3. Thomas Cole, *The Cascatelli, Tivoli, Looking Towards Rome*, c. 1832, oil on canvas, 85.73 cm x 113.03 cm. Columbus Museum of Art, Columbus, Ohio, 1991.013.001.

Opposite

4. Thomas Cole, *Temple of Vespasian, Called the Temple of Jupiter Tonans in the Forum Romanum*, c. 1831. Drawing, pen and black ink over graphite pencil on off-white wove paper, 210 x 286 mm. Sketchbook 562, fol. 78. Signed, lower left: 'TC'. Inscribed, top right: 'Temple of Jupiter' [illegible]. Detroit Institute of Arts, Detroit, 39.562.78.



the fourth painting.¹ The fifth is a scene of *Desolation* (Fig. 2) showing the remains of this once proud but hubristic civilisation. Cole had this project in mind while in Rome, and painted it after his return to the USA in 1833-36.

Most art-historical accounts of the five canvases of the *Course of Empire* are compelled to address, in one way or another, their artistic typologies, for the very good reason that, in Cole's day, the styles of particular artists had clear associational meanings. In particular Salvator Rosa (1615-1673), with his wild, mountainous landscapes, was considered to be the embodiment of the sublime, while the spacious Campagna landscapes of Claude Lorrain (1600-1682) were seen to embody the pastoral ideal of the English park. Hence we might, with some crudeness, consider *The Savage State* to be Rosian and the *The Arcadian or Pastoral State* Claudian. The *Consum-*



mation of Empire can be seen as ideal seaport like Turner's reimagining of Claude's seaports as Ancient Carthage, and *Destruction* as an exercise in the apocalyptic manner of John Martin.²

For Cole there was a tension between the referencing of artistic tradition necessary to articulate his grand vision of human history and the prevailing ideology of artistic naturalism that he also embraced. This was brought to a head with his trip to Italy. His contemporaries feared that the experience of European sites and art would be at the expense of his naturalism.³ In London he met with, and was impressed by, John Constable (1776-1837), who in a lecture delivered a few years later railed against the imitation of Claude Lorrain and the eclecticism of eighteenth-century painters like Claude Joseph Vernet (1714-1789).⁴

Hence when he came to Rome he was resistant to the practice of other foreign artists in Rome of setting out to paint the same subjects as their predecessors in order to pay homage to them.⁵

Perhaps the only one of his paintings that resulted that fits this description was his view of the Cascatelle at Tivoli (Fig. 3),⁶ one of the most canonical view painting subjects, but even here he seems to have been largely oblivious to the work of his

predecessors, such as Claude Lorrain or Gaspard Dughet, whom he had admired in London,⁷ or even Wilhelm Friedrich Gmelin (1615-1675), who had recently addressed the subject from a similar viewpoint in a print.⁸ Instead he employed a meticulous realism based on drawings made on-site that correspond exactly to the first photographs of the site, combined with his personal style of rendering foliage.⁹

In his letters he makes little reference to other landscape painters, and instead states, somewhat predictably, that: 'the things that most affect me in Rome are the antiquities. None but those who can see the remains can form an idea of what ancient Rome was.'¹⁰

Yet Cole did not busy himself with drawing antiquities in order to discover what ancient Rome was like, nor did he seek out sites in Latium associated with particular historical persons. Instead he was attracted to landscape images that conveyed what for him was the principal lesson that Rome and the Campagna had to teach: that Rome had declined and fallen. In his sketchbooks, one exceptional drawing is a rendering of a Roman ruin: a drawing of the Temple of Vespasian (Fig. 4).¹¹ The remains of this temple had provided the single most important motif of the Roman ruin painting tradition. While Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778) showed it accurately as three-quarters buried (Fig. 5), as it was before the French excavations of the Napoleonic period, ruin painters were happy to imagine its full height and use it as part of their repertory, with infinite variations and recombinations. Cole must have had his drawing of the Temple



5. Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720–1778), *Temple of Vespasian* (*Veduta del Tempio di Giove Tonante*), 1740s–60s, etching and engraving. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1994.263.168.

6. Detail of capitals in (left) *Desolation* (Fig. 2), (centre) Temple of Jupiter in sketchbook (Fig. 4), (right) Temple of Jupiter in Piranesi (Fig. 5).



of Vespasian in mind when painting the single column that in *Desolation* has survived the destruction of a civilisation. The capitals in both cases are Corinthian, and have in common a somewhat incoherent rendering of the details.

Although all five paintings of *The Course of Empire* share a common topography, this column does not appear in intact form in the *Consummation* or *Destruction* as the camera, so to speak, has tracked backwards to bring it into view only in *Desolation*. Moreover, the columns on the triumphal bridge in the *Consummation* are much fancier than these. In other words, this column does not participate in the topographical history of the previous four paintings, and has been introduced as a pure signifier of ruinousness that directly alludes to the primary source of such signifiers: the ruins of the Forum.

At the same time, as Tim Barringer and others have argued, the column in *Desolation* is also a re-imagining in antique mode of John Constable's *Hadleigh Castle*.¹² Constable's painting had deeply impressed Cole when he saw it at the Royal Academy in 1829. As Barringer writes, the ruined castle 'offered Constable a profound metaphor for the sense of loss, national and personal.'¹³ The personal loss was the death of his wife; the na-

7. Thomas Cole, *Ruined Tower on the Mediterranean Coast*, 1832–36, oil on composition board, 67.95 x 86.36 cm, signed bottom center: 'T. Cole'. Albany Institute of History & Art Albany, N.Y., 1965.1.



tional loss was the political changes of which the deeply Tory Constable disapproved.

In 1832–36 Cole painted an Italianising interpretation of Constable's painting as a *Ruined Tower on the Mediterranean Coast* (Fig. 7).¹⁴ This effectively brings Constable's emotionally and politically charged ruin landscape to Italy, as if Cole were trying to build a bridge to the antique landscape of ruins where the identification of a ruin with the viewer's personal life and national identity was absent.¹⁵ It is trans-national Rome, not the viewer, that lies in ruins in ruin paintings.

As a ruin landscape, then, *Desolation* is both a traditional ruin landscape and a radical departure from that tradition. In fact thinking about ruins had developed dramatically since the era of Giovanni Paolo Panini (1691–1765) and Piranesi. Ruins had long prompted meditations on the destructive effect of time and the vanity of human ambition. Herman Posthumus (1512–1566)'s ruin landscape of 1536¹⁶ explicitly draws attention to a passage in Ovid from the *Metamorphoses*: 'Tempus Edax Rerum Tutque Invidiosa Vetutas Omnia Destruitis', from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, XV, 234–36:

'Time, devourer of everything, and you, hateful old age, you destroy everything and bit by bit you consume all those things which have been mangled by the teeth of the passing age.'¹⁷

The ruin capriccio tradition continued to assert this point into the early eighteenth century. Where staffage was concerned, ruin painters were presented with a problem. Were they to situate their ruins in the present, as Posthumus and his Netherlandish contemporaries invariably did, or in the antique past? Or somewhere in-between? Mostly they settled for the last. While when painting views of present-day Rome Panini was invariably unambiguous in representing present-day people, in his *capricci* the

figures are invariably pseudo-antique; or perhaps Romantic would be a better term (Fig. 8). There are ancient philosophers or apostles (the two are interchangeable) and sibyls, but also women in classicised versions of contemporary peasant dress, and soldiers derived from Salvator Rosa's *Figurine* via Giovanni Ghisolfi (1623–1683), who wear fanciful versions of sixteenth-century armour.¹⁸

For ruin landscapes to be truly antique they needed to represent the ruins of a city destroyed in antiquity, the prime exemplar of which was Carthage. Ghisolfi was one of the few seventeenth century ruin painters to grasp this. He painted a number of pictures of *Aeneas building Carthage*, which are architectural history paintings with the city under construction showing the figure of Mercury recalling Aeneas to his true destiny in Latium.¹⁹ One of his ruin pieces, in Dresden, is inscribed '*hic fuit Carthago*', 'this was Carthage' (Fig. 9).²⁰ The ruinousness of the scene therefore makes sense. Although as far as I am aware the Dresden painting was not paired with an *Aeneas building Carthage*, there is a logical relationship between the two.²¹ In this Ghisolfi anticipated Turner, who transformed Claude's seaports into representations of *Dido Building Carthage* and *The Decline of the Carthaginian Empire*, which directly inspired Cole's cycle.²²

At the same time as Postumus was lamenting the destructive effect of time on Ancient Rome the idea was emerging that Roman ruins, like Roman civilisation itself, had much that was positive to teach us. The woodcut in Serlio's third book published in 1540 is famously inscribed '*Roma quanta fuit, ipsa ruina docet*' (Fig. 10): 'Rome which was so great teaches us even in ruins.'²³ By the eighteenth century this point of view prevailed, and Roman ruins were perceived primarily as exemplars of good architectural practice. This is why Panini transformed the ruin *capriccio*, which employed generic ruins that do not ask to be identified, into the *veduta ideata*, depictions of identifiable and famous Roman ruins placed together in an imaginary landscape inspired by the Campo Vaccino or the area around the Colos-



Opposite

8. Giovanni Paolo Panini, *The Cumaean Sibyl delivering the Oracles*, c. 1741, oil on canvas, 53.7 x 82.1 cm. National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, 2001.179.

9. Giovanni Ghisolfi, *The Ruins of Carthage*, oil on canvas, 116.5 x 167 cm. Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden, Gal.-Nr. 471.

10. Sebastiano Serlio, *Roma Quanta Fuit ...*, frontispiece of Book III of *Architettura*, 1540.

Below

11. Giovanni Paolo Panini, *Ancient Rome (Roma Antica)*, 1754-57, oil on canvas, 169 x 227 cm. Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart, Inv. Nr. 3315.

seum.²⁴ It is also the message of Panini's *Ancient Rome* (Fig. 11) and *Modern Rome*. In the *Ancient Rome* each of the ruins of ancient Rome are given their own framed canvases, which directly equate to the views of modern Rome in the pendant. For Panini, it is irrelevant that these ancient buildings are ruined: they are instead examples of good architectural practice that has been recovered in modern Rome.

Would Cole have known works by Panini? In spite of the widespread diffusion of the genre, it is possible he hardly knew them. There were none in the National Gallery in London at the time,²⁵ and while they could be found floating around the London art market at the time in England they were mostly in country houses to which he did not have access. In America, however, Cole did, in fact, come into contact with two of Panini's finest works, the original pair of the *Ancient Rome* (Fig. 11) and *Modern Rome* painted for the Duc de Choiseul.²⁶ These, together with the others works of the set, an *Interior of St Peter's* and a *Piazza S. Pietro*, were bought by the Boston dealer William J. Davis from Pierre-Armand-Jean-Vincent Hippolyte, Marquis de Gouvello (1782-1870). Davis shipped them to Boston and in 1834 exhibited them in the Boston Athenaeum gallery, to great acclaim.²⁷ It so happened that Cole was wanting to exhibit his *Angel Appearing to the Shepherds* in Boston at the same time, but had difficulty



finding a space to show it, so he arranged to share the Boston Atheneum Gallery with Davis's Panini exhibition.²⁸ This was two years after Cole's trip to Rome and a year or more before he started work on the *Desolation*.

Cole, however, seems to have been indifferent to Panini's message. He was an aspiring architect, and a little later in 1838–39 produced a partly implemented design for the Ohio State Capitol.²⁹ This, and the ideal city at the height of its power presented in the *Consummation of Empire*, are exercises in the contemporary Neoclassical style of John Nash (1752–1835) and other English architects, and owes little or nothing to the canon of ancient Roman buildings presented by Panini. His *Italian Scene Composition* (1833)³⁰ and *Landscape with a Round Temple* (1830s),³¹ have round temples inspired by the situations of the the so-called Temple of the Sibyl at Tivoli and the round temple by the Tiber, but in neither does he show much interest in them as architecture. The arcade at the top of the grand building complex in the *Destruction of Empire* might be understood to be a Roman aqueduct, as a similar structure in his *The Architect's Dream* has been taken to be,³² but if it is it owes nothing to the presence and ruinousness of his depictions of the aqueducts in the Campagna.³³ Cole had little sympathy with Panini's optimistic message, as the *Course of Empire* makes clear: for him ruins come at the end point of a pessimistic historical process.

Cole was heir to a shift in attitude that had taken place at the time of the French revolution. In 1791, the Comte de Volney (1757–1820), who has been called 'the most widely read philosopher of the French Revolution until at least the 1830s'³⁴ published *Les Ruines, ou méditations sur les révolutions des empires*, translated into English in 1792 as *The Ruins, or a Survey of the Revolutions of Empires*.³⁵

Volney's narrator, finding himself near Palmyra, resolved to see its ruins. After three days of traveling through the desert he comes across them. His first response is one of wonder, followed by a resolve to study them aesthetically:

'finding myself in the neighbourhood of Palmyra of the Desert, I resolved to see its celebrated ruins. After three days journeying through arid deserts, having traversed the Valley of Caves and Sepulchres, on issuing into the plain, I was suddenly struck with a scene of the most stupendous ruins; a countless multitude of superb columns, stretching in avenues beyond the reach of sight. Among these were magnificent edifices, some entire, some in ruins; the earth every where strewn with fragments of cornishes, capitals, shafts, entablatures, pilasters, all of white marble, and of the most exquisite workmanship. After three-quarters of an hour's walk along these ruins, I entered the enclosure of a vast edifice, formerly a temple dedicated to the Sun; and accepting the hospitality of some poor Arabian peasants, who had built their hovels on the area of the temple, I determined to devote some days to the contemplation of these beauties in detail.'³⁶

But he is soon plunged into melancholy about the futility of human destiny³⁷:



12. Plate 1 from Comte de Volney, *A New Translation of Volney's Ruins, or Meditations on the Revolution of Empires, Made under the Inspection of the Author*, Paris, Levrault, 1802.

'I sat on the shaft of a column, my elbow reposing on my knee, and head reclining on my hand, my eyes fixed, sometimes on the desert, sometimes on the ruins, I abandoned myself to a profound reverie.'³⁸

The pose is explicitly that of Durer's *Melencolia I*, as one of Volney's illustrators recognised (Fig. 12).³⁹

He concludes that blind fate or a hostile god rules human destiny,⁴⁰ but he is roused from these unproductive thoughts by the appearance of a genie, who prompts him to adopt the more positive strategy of seeking in ruins answers to questions about the rise and fall of human societies:

'I will go into the desert and dwell among ruins: I will interrogate ancient monuments on the wisdom of times past; I will invoke from the bosom of the tombs the spirit which once in Asia gave splendor to states, and glory to nations; I will ask of the ashes of legislators, by what secret causes do empires rise and fall; from what sources spring the prosperity and misfortunes of nations; on what principles can the peace of society, and the happiness of man be established?'⁴¹

The genie explains that history is ruled by natural laws. Taking the narrator up into space in order to see the whole world, the genie sets out a theory of history in which the rise and decline of states are related to the justice of their internal organization:

'Such, oh man, who seekest wisdom, such have been the causes of revolution in the ancient states of which thou contempest the ruins! To whatever spot I direct my view, to whatever time my thought, the same principles of growth or destruction, of rise or fall, present themselves to my mind. If a people be powerful, or an empire prosperous, it is because their laws of convention conform to the laws of nature; the government there procures for its citizens a free use of their faculties, equal security for their persons and property. If, on the contrary, an empire goes to ruin, or dissolves, it is because its laws have been vicious, or imperfect, or trodden under foot by a corrupt government.'⁴²

In this way Volney shifted the discourse of ruins away from a particular civilisation—Ancient Rome—to civilisations in general; his view from space allowed him to range across Eurasia. At the same time he shifted the discourse from the past—the Roman Empire and what happened to it—to the present and future, and so made possible the idea of a 'future ruin.'⁴³ His narrator's melancholy reflections end up with him imagining a future traveler like himself contemplating the ruins of modern Europe:

'Who knows if on the banks of the Seine, the Thames, or the Zuyder-zee, where now, in the vortex of so many enjoyments, the heart and the eye suffice not for the multitude of sensations, who knows if some traveler, like me, shall not one day sit on their silent ruins, and weep in solitude over the ashes of their people, and the memory of their greatness?'⁴⁴

Volney's book was a philosophical tract aimed at the reform of the governance of France, and soon enough the disturbances of the French revolution would mean that ruins were no longer something situated safely in the ancient Roman past, be it Rome or Palmyra, but were being created in the present. Today's monuments could potentially become ruins, as Hubert Robert (1733–1808) would assert in his view of the Grand Galerie

of the Louvre as a ruin.⁴⁵ Similarly, in 1804 Chateaubriand (1768-1848) picked up on the ancient-modern comparison that for Panini had stopped with the papal Rome of Panini's present day — the culmination of the Renaissance project to restore antiquity, which, Panini implies, had no reason ever to change — in order to contemplate the fall of papal Rome. Chateaubriand compares the Colosseum with Saint Peter's:

'but as soon as the sun had vanished behind the horizon, the bell of the dome of St. Peter's tolled beneath the porticos of the Colosseum. The correspondence established by sacred sounds between the two mightiest monuments of pagan Rome and Christian Rome occasioned in me profound emotion: I pondered that the modern building would one day fall with the ancient; I pondered that monuments follow one another just like the men who raised them.'⁴⁶

At the 1830 Royal Academy exhibition in London, to which Cole contributed, Joseph Michael Gandy, who spent much of his career rendering Sir John Soane's buildings, exhibited at Soane's direction a watercolour of Soane's Bank of England as a ruin.⁴⁷ Its ruinousness was in part a didactic device to display the plan,⁴⁸ but Gandy's atmospheric effects clearly situate the image in a real time somewhere in the future. Two years later Gandy and Soane exhibited a related watercolour that had been executed much earlier in 1798 that makes the point even more explicitly.⁴⁹

Cole's *Desolation* then, when seen from the standpoint of the *Consummation of Empire*, is a future ruin. In this respect it is more directly comparable to the pessimism of post-apocalyptic science fiction than to Panini's complacent admiration. And as with some post-apocalyptic science fiction, nature, in the form of vegetation, deer and birds nesting on capitals, has taken over. There are no people.⁵⁰ In a Panini there is always a lot of chatter going on, whether it be a sibyl holding forth or a philosopher discoursing, but in *Desolation* there is only silence. Cole was explicit about this: in September 1836 he wrote that 'in this picture I intend to express silence and solitude.'⁵¹

The association of ruins with silence is already found in Volney. Contemplating the ruins of Palmyra at sunset, Volney's narrator observes how:

'the eye perceived no motion on the dusky and uniform plain; profound silence rested on the desert; the howlings only of the jackal, and the solemn notes of the bird of night, were heard at distant intervals. ... The solitude of the place, the tranquillity of the hour, the majesty of the scene, impressed on my mind a religious pensiveness.'⁵²

He contrasts the silence of these ruins as he experiences them with the noisy vitality that would once have prevailed:

'within these walls, where now reigns the silence of death, resounded incessantly the noise of the arts, and the shouts of joy and festivity.'⁵³

Cole, too, had a similar experience.⁵⁴ His biographer Louis Noble describes an occasion in Rome, without indicating the site, when:

'returning, once, from a long walk with a few friends, he [Cole] seated himself on the fragments of a column to enjoy the sunset. As its splendours faded into

the twilight, all lapsed into a stillness suited to the solemn repose peculiar, at that time, to a scene of ruin. There came through the deepening shadows few sounds louder than the beating of their hearts.’⁵⁵

This prompts him to describe to a woman nearby the programme of *The Course of Empire*, thus retracing Volney’s train of thought: from the passive contemplation of the deathlike stillness of a ruin landscape to actively constructing an account of the universality of the rise and fall of civilisations.

Notes

1 A drawing shows their original installation, with *The Consummation of Empire* in the centre and the others double-hung on either side (see Kornhauser and Barringer 2018, cat. 52, pp. 204–5). Barringer, however, has suggested that Cole ultimately intended them to hang in a line, as they were hung in the *Thomas Cole: European Crossings* exhibition, the horizon line being consistent throughout the series. In this way, he argues, the whole would be akin to a panorama, a genre that greatly interested Cole. <https://www.metmuseum.org/blogs/now-at-the-met/2018/thomas-cole-panorama>.

2 As Parry (Parry III 1988, pp. 153–162, 167–170, 179–185) has shown, Cole’s relationship to his sources and models is rather more complex than this schema.

3 As William Dunlap wrote in 1833 after his return: ‘When he [Cole] left us for the schools of Europe, we feared that he was departing from the school of nature. We forgot that nature is omnipresent. Mr Cole profited by the school of art, but he did not abandon his first love.’ Dunlap 1833, p. 366, in a review of the eighth annual exhibition of the National Academy of Design, where Cole exhibited *A View near Tivoli (Morning)*.

4 Leslie 1845, summarizing Constable’s last lecture: “Attempts at the union of uncongenial qualities in different styles of Art have also contributed to its decline.” In illustration of this, Constable showed a print from Vernet, the trees of which were in a mannered imitation of Salvator Rosa, without his nature and wildness, while the rocks were in the artificial style of Berghem. “In the foreground,” he said, “you will perceive an emaciated French dancing master, in a dress something like one of Salvator’s banditti, but intended by Vernet for a fisherman. It is thus the art is deteriorated by the mannerists who employ themselves in sweeping up the painting rooms of preceding ages.”

5 As Galassi points out, much of the point of making landscape studies from life in Rome was to choose subjects that had been painted before in order to come closer to earlier masters. He cites a letter from the French painter Castellan, published in 1819, who wrote: ‘You will understand my enthusiasm, young artists, who tremble at the mere name of Rome; it is above all to you that I speak. Already familiar with all the monuments, the endlessly varied sights, the paintings, the statues that the works of your predecessors have treated from a thousand different points of view, you will feel, as I did upon arriving here, as if you were returning to your own country ... You wish to draw? A stone will provide a seat for you as it has for all your masters who arranged to meet, as it were, without consulting each other. A feeling for beauty attracts you and places you, like them, at the same spot.’ Galassi 1991, note 28, citing Castellan 1819, vol. 2, pp. 49–50.

6 Thomas Cole, *The Cascatelli, Tivoli, Looking Towards Rome*, c. 1832, oil on canvas, 85.73 x 113.03 cm. Columbus, Ohio, Columbus Museum of Art, 1991.013.001, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Knight Sturges and Family.

7 Cole wrote from London ‘I have seen much since I have been in England, and hope I have profited much by what I have seen. The works of the Old Masters have been my greatest study and admiration. In Landscape my favourites are Claude and Gaspar Poussin; but not to the exclusion of others.’ Cole, Letter, 1 Marsh 1830, London. Noble 1856, p. 120.

8 In particular there is an engraving by Gmelin dating from 1791 [or 1808], especially in the disposition of the main elements and the way the river appears and reappears as it winds down the valley. Wilhelm Friedrich Gmelin (1760–1820), *Veduta principale delle grandi e piccole Cascatelle di Tivoli, e loro adiacenze*, 1808. Etching, 48 x 62 cm.

- 9 See my forthcoming study.
- 10 Letter to parents, 4 May 1832, in Noble 1856, p. 157.
- 11 Thomas Cole, *Temple of Vespasian, Called the Temple of Jupiter Tonans in the Forum Romanum*, c. 1831, drawing, pen and black ink over graphite pencil on off-white wove paper, 210 × 286 mm. Sketchbook 562, fol. 78. Signed, lower left: 'TC'. Inscribed, top right: 'Temple of Jupiter' [illegible]. Detroit, Detroit Institute of Arts, 39.562.78. Founders Society Purchase, William H. Murphy Fund.
- 12 John Constable (1776-1837), *Hadleigh Castle, The Mouth of the Thames—Morning after a Stormy Night*, 1829, oil on canvas, 121.9 × 164.5 cm. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.42.
- 13 Barringer 2018a.
- 14 Thomas Cole, *Ruined Tower on the Mediterranean Coast*, 1832-36, oil on composition board, 67.95 × 86.36 cm, signed bottom center: 'T. Cole'. Albany Institute of History & Art Purchase 1965.1.
- 15 'In *Desolation* [writes Barringer] he transformed the tower into a solitary column bathed in melancholic tranquillity'. Barringer 2018b, p. 39.
- 16 Rubinstein 1985, pp. 425-33, 435-6.
- 17 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 15.234-36: 'tempus edax rerum, tuque, invidiosa vetustas, omnia destruitis vitiatque dentibus aevi paulatim lenta consumitis omnia morte!' 'Time, devourer of everything, and you, hateful old age, you destroy everything and bit by bit you consume all those things which have been mangled by the teeth of the passing age.' Translation from <https://sententiaeantiquae.com/2016/01/27/time-the-devourer-ovid-metamorphoses-15-234-6/>.
- 18 Wallace 1979, pp. 107-10.
- 19 Busiri Vici and Cosmelli 1992, cat. 50, p. 93 (Hannover, Niedersächsisches Landesmuseum); cat. 52, pp. 96-7 (Private collection.) Busiri Vici identifies the subject as the appearance of Mercury who approves Alexander the Great's project for the founding of a city, perhaps Alexandria, but it is more likely to be Aeneas helping Dido to build Carthage, and who is reminded by Mercury, sent by Jupiter, that his destiny lies in Italy.
- 20 Giovanni Ghisolfi, *The Ruins of Carthage*, oil on canvas, 116.5 × 167 cm. Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Gal.-Nr. 471. Busiri-Vici and Cosmelli 1992, cat. 48, p. 91.
- 21 Pairings in Ghisolfi can sometimes be unexpected. The pendant to Busiri Vici and Cosmelli 1992, cat. 52 is a *Augustus at the Tomb of Alexander* (cat. 51). For the identification of this subject, see Marshall 2000, pp. 47-75.
- 22 On 12 December 1829 Cole wrote of Turner's *Building of Carthage*: 'The Building of Carthage is a splendid composition, and full of poetry. Magnificent piles of architecture fill the sides, while in the middle of the picture an arm of the sea or bay comes into the foreground, glittering in the light of the sun, which rises directly over it. The figures, vessels, &c., are all very appropriate. The composition resembles very closely some of Claude's. The colour is fine, and the effect of sunshine excellent; but the sky around the sun appears to me to be too raw and yellow.' Noble 1856, p. 115. Claude's paintings themselves had already by 1772 been interpreted as representing the rise and fall of the Roman Empire. <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/turner-the-decline-of-the-carthaginian-empire-n00499>.
- 23 Serlio 1996, p. 95.
- 24 Giovanni Paolo Panini, *Capriccio of Roman monuments with the Colosseum and the Arch of Constantine*, 1743, oil on canvas, 73.7 × 97.8 cm. London, Richard Green & Co.
- 25 The first Panini to enter the National Gallery's collection was *Roman Ruins with Figures* (c. 1730, NG138, oil on canvas, 49.5 × 63.5 cm) which was bequeathed by Lt.-Col. J.H. Ollney in 1837.
- 26 Giovanni Paolo Panini, *Ancient Rome (Roma Antica)*, 1754-57, oil on canvas, 169 × 227 cm. Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart, Inv. Nr. 3315. Giovanni Paolo Panini, *Modern Rome (Roma Moderna)*, 1757, oil on canvas, 170.2 × 244.5 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1975.805.

27 Etienne-François de Choiseul-Stainville, later Duc de Choiseul (1719-1785) commissioned four pairs of paintings from Panini, two *Roma Antica* and *Roma Moderna* pairs, and two *Piazza S. Pietro* and *Interior of St Peter's* pairs. The four pairs are often considered to belong to two sets of four, but the relationships are complicated. The first pair to be commissioned was the *Entry of the Duke de Choiseul into Piazza S. Pietro*, now in Berlin, which is signed and dated 1754 and records his first visit to the Vatican on 4 November 1754. Its pendant, an *Interior of St Peter's*, now in Washington, would have been painted at the same time. Following his official entry to the Vatican seventeen months later on 28 March 1756, Choiseul commissioned a further such pair, now divided between the Duke of Sutherland collection at Mertoun House (the *Entry*), and the Boston Athenaeum (the *Interior*). The Boston Museum of Fine Arts *Roma Moderna* is dated 1757, and the Stuttgart *Roma Antica* must have been painted at about the same time. This commission was almost certainly associated with that for the Mertoun House-Boston Athenaeum pair, as the dimensions match closely, and they remained a set until 1837. The commissioning of the Stuttgart-Boston pair may therefore date from 1756, shortly after Choiseul's official entry into Rome. The commission for the Metropolitan pair must have followed almost immediately, since both are dated 1757, but no effort was made to match the dimensions of the 1754 Berlin-Washington paintings, which are smaller, and at the posthumous sale of the Duc de Choiseul's collection in 1786 they were divided into two lots with separate buyers. After circulating on the Paris art market before and during the Revolution, the two pairs were reunited in the collection of the painter Hubert Robert, before being separated again at his death. After the fall of Choiseul the four paintings were purchased by his friend Jacques-Donatien Le Ray de Chaumont, Paris and passed to his son-in-law Pierre-Armand-Jean-Vincent Hippolyte, Marquis de Gouvallos, Paris, in 1803, before being bought by William J. Davis in 1834. Davis brought them to Boston and exhibited them at the Boston Athenaeum, hoping to sell them to the Athenaeum. The initial price of \$8000 was too high and Davis accepted \$6000 in December 1834. In 1837 the Athenaeum exchanged for other paintings the *Roma Antica* and *Piazza S. Pietro* which were sold to Lord Francis Egerton, later 1st Earl of Ellesmere. The *Roma Moderna* and *Interior of St Peter's* were placed on deposit in the Museum of Fine Arts in 1876; the *Interior of St Peter's* was returned to the Athenaeum in 1947. Cushing and Dearing 2007, pp. 45, 194-5.

28 Parry 1988, p. 153. Cole had intended to exhibit *The Angel Appearing to the Shepherds* in Harding's Gallery, but its exhibition rooms were already taken. His agent Edwin Bennet paid the Athenaeum \$50 a month for the share of the space from 8 September to 3 October, which was partitioned for the purpose.

29 Blaugrund 2016, pp. 42-55.

30 Thomas Cole, *Italian Scene Composition*, 1833, oil on canvas, 95.2 x 138.4 cm. New-York Historical Society, New York.

31 Thomas Cole, *Landscape with Round Temple*, 1830s, oil on paperboard attached to canvas, 21.6 x 31.8 cm. Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, CT.

32 Thomas Cole, *The Architect's Dream*, 1840, oil on canvas, 134.6 x 213.5 cm. Toledo Museum of Art Toledo, Ohio. Blaugrund 2016, p. 60: 'a Roman aqueduct-like structure with multiple arches.' This may owe something to the page of elevations of aqueducts in Durand 1799-1801, which Cole owned (Parry 1988, p. 246) which emphasises a similar repetitiveness to Cole's structure. None, however, have the accents on the spandrels that Cole shows.

33 Kornaus 2018a and essay by Lisa Beaven in this volume.

34 Cook 2010, pp. 7-28, on p. 8.

35 Volney 1802.

36 Volney 1802, pp. 3-4.

37 At the end of his reverie, the narrator explicitly uses the term: 'I remained motionless, and sunk in profound melancholy.' Volney 1802, p. 14.

38 Volney 1802, p. 5.

39 This is the illustration to the 1802 edition, *New Translation*, which was made in consultation with the author. The frontispiece to the first French edition of 1791 and first English edition of 1792, engraved by Pietro Antonio Martini, is less responsive to the description of the pose found in the text, and is not explicitly melancholic in pose. In both

cases the figure wears regional dress.

40 'At these words, my eyes filled with tears; and covering my head with the fold of my mantle, I sunk into gloomy meditations on all human things. Ali! hapless man! said I in my grief; a blind fatality sports with thy destinies! A fatal necessity rules with the hand of chance the lot of mortals. But no: it is the justice of heaven fulfilling its decrees! a God of mystery exercising his incomprehensible judgments! Doubtless he has pronounced a secret anathema against this land; blasting with maledictions the present, for the sins of the past generations. Oh! who shall dare to fathom the depths of God?' (pp. 13-14).

41 Volney 1802, pp. 26-7.

42 Volney 1802, pp. 63-4.

43 On future ruins see Junod 1984, pp. 43-63.

44 Volney 1802, p. 13.

45 Hubert Robert, *Imaginary View of the Grande Galerie in the Louvre in Ruins*, 1796, oil on canvas, 114.5 x 146 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris.

46 Letter from Chateaubriand to Monsieur de Fontanes, 10 January 1804, cited in Makarius 2004, p. 115.

47 Joseph Michael Gandy, *A Bird's-eye View of the Bank of England*, 1830, watercolour on paper, 84.5 x 140 cm. Soane Museum, London P267.

48 Ruinousness as a strategy for representing interior and exterior in the one perspectival image had been around since the Renaissance, as Lotz has shown, and would be assimilated to the ruin-painting tradition by Viviano Codazzi in the seventeenth century. Lotz 1977; Marshall 1993.

49 Joseph Michael Gandy, *Architectural Ruins, a Vision*, 1798, watercolour on paper. Soane Museum, London, P127. Gandy's pictorial ideas parallel Cole's in interesting ways that do not seem to have been much explored.

50 Cole in his description of the painting writes: 'no human figure — a solitary bird perhaps: a calm and silent effect' (Noble 1856, p. 130.) In an afterthought to his first ideas he suggested adding 'a figure or two perhaps' (Parry 1988, p. 116).

51 'I am at work on the last picture of the series, although another day or two must be bestowed upon the fourth.' (Noble 1856, p. 222). 'The fifth must be a sunset, — the mountains riven — the city a desolate ruin — columns standing isolated amid the encroaching waters — ruined temples, broken bridges, fountains, sarcophagi, &c. — no human figure — a solitary bird perhaps: a calm and silent effect. This picture must be as the funeral knell of departed greatness, and may be called the state of desolation' (Noble 1856, p. 178).

52 Volney 1802, p. 5.

53 Volney 1802, p. 6.

54 The relationship between Cole and Volney is discussed by Parry in only the most general way (Parry 1988, p. 141).

55 Noble 1856, p. 155. The full passage reads: 'Returning, once, from a long walk with a few friends, he seated himself on the fragments of a column to enjoy the sunset. As its splendours faded into the twilight, all lapsed into a stillness suited to the solemn repose peculiar, at that time, to a scene of ruin. There came through the deepening shadows few sounds louder than the beating of their hearts. After some minutes of silent, mournful pleasure, seated a little apart by a lady, Cole, a thing rather unusual with him, was the first to speak. This he did in his own low, quiet voice, but with such earnestness as told the depth of his emotions, and the greatness of his thoughts. The subject was that of the future Course of Empire. In his own brief and simple way, he passed from point to point in the series, making, by many a clear and vivid outline, the liveliest impression upon the mind of his listener, until he closed with a picture that found its parallel in the melancholy desolation by which, at that moment, they were surrounded. Such was Cole, the poet artist, at Rome.'

Scenery Found: John Gadsby Chapman and Open-Air Oil Sketching in and around Rome, 1830-1882

John Gadsby Chapman (1808-1889) was one of the first American painters to take up open-air oil sketching – *plein air* painting – in the United States and in Europe, and he was an early advocate of this artistic practice.¹ The 1858 edition of Chapman's respected instructional manual, *The American drawing-book*, includes a section devoted to *plein air* painting, wherein he describes the widespread acceptance overseas of this method:

'In the Old World, out-of-door study is carried to a much greater extent than with us. The traveler is forever reminded that the artist is abroad; and scarcely a picturesque spot he visits, but he will there find either the well-equipped amateur, beneath his camp-umbrella, fortified at all points, and against all emergencies, with patent contrivances and conveniences, or the more business-like artist, with his well-worn sketch-box or portfolio'² (Figs. 1-2).

1. John Gadsby Chapman, *Looking for scenery*, n.d., oil on wooden artist's palette, 28 x 22 cm. McGuigan Collection, USA.

2. John Gadsby Chapman, *Scenery found*, n.d., oil on wooden artist's palette, 28 x 22 cm. McGuigan Collection, USA.

Chapman's text³ was instrumental in disseminating useful information about *plein air* painting to transatlantic audiences, influencing generations of nascent American artists, and the development of the American school of landscape painting⁴.

Chapman's engagement with the open-air oil sketch dates to his first study trip to Rome in 1828-31, and his exposure at that time to Rome's academic, social, and art-studio circles. Rome – and more precisely, Latium



– has been acknowledged as from whence oil painting in the out-of-doors coalesced from an occasional pursuit into an institutionally sanctioned practice already by the 1780s, and it was still the epicenter of the genre when Chapman arrived in the city. As Peter Galassi states: ‘View making of course has always been a social art, just as tourism is a social activity. In both, the ritual of repetition reinforces the shared values of community and class. The very presence in Italy of so many foreign painters expressed those values, reconfirming the long-standing cultural authority of Rome.’⁵ Rome’s ancient history, esteemed artistic patrimony, and mild climate attracted a cosmopolitan milieu characterized by sophisticated professional networks and liberal social attitudes that engendered transnational dialogue and new approaches to artistic practices, including *plein air* painting.

Chapman was the only child of a middle-class family from Alexandria, Virginia, on the outskirts of Washington, DC. When he was sixteen, he went on a sketching trip to the Shenandoah Valley with a relative by marriage, the painter George Cooke (1793–1849), although later he demurred that he had simply ‘bedaubed a half dozen sheets of pasteboard with all sort of deformities.’⁶ His early efforts were perhaps executed in oil, but more likely they were in watercolor, a medium to which Chapman never really took. The following year, 1825, he was apprenticed to the pre-eminent portraitist in Washington, DC, Charles Bird King (1785–1862), who had been a student of Benjamin West (1738–1820) in London in 1805–12, and who tasked Chapman with drawing from antique casts, copying prints after old master paintings, and performing mundane studio tasks. After a brief interruption to attend law school at the behest of his parents, Chapman entered the Philadelphia *atelier* of Thomas Sully (1783–1872) under the auspices of a wealthy family acquaintance, John Linton. Sully had also studied in London with Benjamin West, as well as with Thomas Lawrence, in 1809–10 (sharing a studio with King), and was one of America’s most fashionable portrait painters. Sully placed Chapman with a drawing master, the Neapolitan immigrant Pietro Ancora, who had lived in Philadelphia since around 1800. Five months later, convinced Chapman was prepared for the challenge of Europe, Sully and Linton determined that he set sail from New York to Le Havre on 15 July 1828. After a short period in Paris, mostly spent copying in the Louvre, Chapman reached Rome on 23 September 1828, taking a studio at Via Pinciana 8. Naturally outgoing, ambitious, and also accountable to his patron, Chapman wasted no time in immersing himself in the orbit of Rome’s art world. Surely through his relative Cooke, who had been in Rome since October 1827, Chapman was granted the privilege of enrolling in the English Academy,⁷ where he drew and painted from nude and clothed models in the evening life school.⁸ Such life classes did not yet exist in America. In Rome, Chapman also spent time making copies after old master paintings, including Guido Reni’s large fresco *Aurora* (1614), a copy commissioned by the American writer, James Fenimore Cooper (1789–1851) (presently unlocated).⁹ Chapman studied anatomy in the local hospitals,¹⁰ an exercise virtually unheard of in America, and he hired local models – a dishonorable profession in the United States – to pose for his original composition

3. John Gadsby Chapman, *Grotto at Pallazuola*, 1830, oil on wood panel, 16.1 x 21.5 cm. McGuigan Collection, USA.



based upon the Bible, *Hagar and Ishmael* (1830, Tulane University, New Orleans), painted for Linton.

Additionally, we know from the writings of two of Chapman's peers, Samuel F.B. Morse (1791-1872), painter, founding president of the National Academy of Design (established 1826) in New York and future inventor of the telegraph, and Lieutenant John Farley, dispatched by the US War Department to study European military mapmaking and drawing, that Chapman visited many artists' studios. Among this international roster of artists were the Italians Vincenzo Camuccini and Raimondo Trentanove, the Portuguese Domingos António de Sequeira, the Dane Bertel Thorvaldsen, the French Jean-Louis-Nicolas Jaley, the Welsh John Gibson, the Scottish William Scoular, and the British, Thomas Dessoulavy, Joseph Severn, J.M.W. Turner, and Richard James Wyatt.¹¹ Such studio visits were commonplace in Rome and encouraged criticism and cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural interaction among colleagues. Patrons also visited these art studios to commission or to buy artworks, making the *ateliers* vital components of the city's commercial market for art.

Similarly, coffeehouses and restaurants throughout the city served as sites for leisure contact between nationalities. Among the notable establishments frequented by artists in this era were the *caffè* Nuovo, Aragno, and Greco, and the *trattorias* Lepre, Gensola, and Gabbione. Some of the recognized social occasions on the local calendar for the international community were the newly inaugurated exhibitions of contemporary art held by the *Società degli Amatori e Cultori* at the Campidoglio, the annual exhibitions at the French Academy, the legendary artists' festival at Cervara, the *Carnevale*, and the *conversazioni*, or salons, convened in private homes. According to Farley, Americans were a welcome addition to these cultured gatherings on account of their rarity: 'At present there are many Americans in Rome, but, not being so numerous as the English, their so-



4. Samuel F. Morse, *Sketch for 'The chapel of the Virgin at Subiaco'*, 1830, Oil on paper mounted on canvas, 22.5 x 27 cm. Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA, 1941.16.

ciety is more sought by the Italians.’¹² Chapman attended at least one such *conversazione* hosted by the pharmacist Innocenzo Persiani¹³ in his home on Piazza Navona in September 1830, along with Morse, the English engraver Samuel Bellin, Sequiera, and Thorvaldsen.¹⁴

It was during his Roman sojourn that Chapman took his first decisive steps in open-air oil sketching. As he made his first initial campaigns into the Campagna and Alban Hills – antique Latium – Chapman counted among a veritable army of international artists who stalked the same ground. As Galassi describes: ‘Grouping and regrouping their ranks, they swarmed over increasingly familiar sites, competing with each other for supremacy in the act of planting the umbrella – choosing a viewpoint. Their activity was a massive communal appropriation of the landscape.’¹⁵ An international artistic network had grown up in Rome to provide instruction and material provisions for the practicalities of painting *en plein air*, including the French and English Academies; commercial purveyors of artists’ materials; and the aforementioned studio visits, where *plein air* oil sketches were seen pinned on walls for easy reference and inspiration. Chapman’s *Grotto at Palazzuola (Going to rest for the night)* (Fig. 3) exhibits an exuberant wet-on-wet paint handling, and a deftness of touch in the spirit of the oil sketch, but his composition, which surely derives from engraved examples, such as Johann Christian Reinhart’s *Die Grotte bei Palazzuola* (1804, etching), signals a novice’s hesitation in branching out beyond conventional Grand Tour imagery.

An entry in one of Chapman’s memoranda books states: ‘On the 4th May [1830] I left Rome on an excursion into the mountains in company with my friends Mr. Morse of the US and Mr. [James] Bridges of England – spent a pleasant time and made a great number of sketches in oil and pencil, returning to the city on the 3rd June.’¹⁶ The three men passed the first

night in the well-known Hotel La Sibilla at Tivoli. Morse's daily journal picks up the trio's peregrinations the next day:

'Early this morning we rose and after breakfast, equipping ourselves in our traveling costume and painting paraphernalia, viz. a box of colors, etc., slung over the shoulders like a knapsack by a strap, an umbrella, and field chair, we sallied out of the village towards Adrians's villa ... to the house of the custode of the grounds. ... Here we made provision to be supplied with wine and fruit at twelve o'clock and we then proceeded through the immensely extensive grounds of this wonderful villa. ... Before the Termes we pitched our tents, having made arrangements with the cicerone to send us at noon a flask of wine (having eggs and bread with us).'

¹⁷

Returning the following day, Morse recorded: 'We found our boxes safe at the honest old custode's house where we left them the evening before and, repairing to our posts, finished our sketch of the Baths, and commenced another from the interior of the arches of the building in the center of the hollow.'

¹⁸ Two days later, Morse concluded: 'Rose at five and again returned to Adrian's villa to complete our sketches.'¹⁹ It was common for artists to have two oil sketches in progress on any given day—one that they could work on in morning light, and another in afternoon light—and Chapman advised this method in *The American drawing-book*.²⁰

On 10 May the three painters departed Tivoli on donkeys and passed the night at Vicovaro, overnighing in the private residence of Luigi Ottati, who probably had been recommended to them by other open-air painters, as there was no inn available. On 11 May they arrived at Subiaco, one of the favorite haunts of *plein air* painters. Morse observed: 'At the side of the road near the village is a Madonna, very picturesque, three artists were painting it, and two shepherds had their flocks around it.'

²¹ Inside the town gate, the painters were immediately welcomed at an osteria that had an artist's palette as its signpost, and that night they lodged alongside the French sculptor Jaley and an unnamed German painter. A few days later a scirocco wind compelled them to paint inside the monastery of San Benedetto, 'where the monks received us kindly and gave us permission to sketch where we pleased',²² Morse wrote, and with a return of good weather, they ventured to the roadside shrine to the Madonna they had seen earlier: 'It has been much painted by artists from its picturesque character and situation.'²³ Even though he is better known as a portraitist, Morse's *Sketch for "The chapel of the Virgin at Subiaco"* (Fig. 4) is masterful in its use of the *contre-jour* technique in which the setting sun emanates light from behind the hills, suffusing the background with mellow warmth while dramatically silhouetting the devotional structure and staffage figures in the foreground. Indeed, this oil sketch, along with another of *Cervara* (1830, Poughkeepsie, NY, France Lehman Loeb Art Center), exhibits a command of the process of open-air sketching, and an artistic maturity that dispel Galassi's erroneous assumption that American artists at this early date somehow 'lacked the conditioning environment of tradition'²⁴ and that it was not until the late 1840s that they began to produce oil sketches comparable to their European counterparts.

On 24 May Chapman, Morse, and Bridges made an overnight excursion

to Cervara with a *cicerone* and a donkey to carry their paint boxes and stayed again in a private lodging, that of Checco Pellegrini. Completing their sketches in one morning, they sent their heavier belongings ahead, and hastened on foot back to Subiaco, sketching the plunging ravines and treacherous passes along the way. The following day Morse logged that he and Bridges:

‘rose at five and taking our boxes and colors repaired to the cascade below the convent of St. Benedetto and commenced a sketch of them and of the convent above. ... Mr. C [Chapman], who was not with us in our ramble but was painting the bridge below [the convent of] St. Scolastica, had while painting a disagreeable visitor, an immense snake passed across his feet which he at first supposed to be the strap of his box, and was not undeceived until he saw the head of the snake close to the side of his box.’²⁵

Three days later they traveled on to Civitella, again accompanied by the same *cicerone*. They stayed in a palace, the home of Vincenzo Mobile, Morse writing:

‘Our host is of a noble family, the family of Braschi, and among the family portraits which decorate one of the halls, are those of a Pope Braschi and two cardinals.²⁶ He does not keep an inn but is always glad to entertain artists. The family, it is said, is reduced in circumstances and he therefore receives the common remuneration for board and lodging.’²⁷

By this date, *plein air* painters were a customary sight, following prescribed routes in the Castelli Romani, and were, generally speaking, a welcome source of income for the local populace. As Chapman himself commented in *The American drawing-book*:

‘[In Europe] the artist claims, and the world accedes to him, in right of his vocation, privileges which exempt him from all restraint in his pursuits. His portfolio and his sketchbook pass and secure him favorable acceptance everywhere; and no degree of success or distinction elevates him to a position to cause humiliation, implied or felt, by being found still and forever in a student’s course.’²⁸

On 3 June Chapman and Morse walked all the way back to Rome, approximately eighteen miles, but sent their luggage and painters’ traps ahead in a diligence.

On 16 June Chapman set out for the famous Infiorata festival at Genzano with Morse, Bellin, and the Scottish painter-etcher Andrew Geddes. They stayed at nearby Ariccia, in the Locanda Martorelli, which opened in 1820 and closed around 1880.²⁹ The inn was a well-known gathering place for *plein air* painters throughout the nineteenth century, but it has not been generally acknowledged that Americans also numbered among its guests.³⁰ However, as Morse relates:

‘The locanda was so crowded with artists (twenty-two being at table and all English and American except two), that there were not beds enough to accommodate all in the house; arrangements were made with the next-door neighbor to lodge some of us, and at twelve o’clock I, with three others, was shown to the door of the house without a light. When we knocked the door

was opened by an invisible hand, and when we entered was closed in the same mysterious manner leaving us in impenetrable darkness, no voice was heard but our own and no way left us but to grope we knew not where. In this way we cautiously proceeded through a labyrinth of passages and up four or five flights of stairs till the gleams of light from a distant lamp gave some promise of release from our imprisonment. We went in the direction of the light and found our host for the night waiting at the head of the staircase to show us our chambers. They were well furnished and had good beds, the most important article to us for the time being.³¹

Morse's firsthand account is significant as it demonstrates that American artist-travelers constituted a notable presence at the Locanda Martorelli already at an early date.³² The following day, Morse continued: 'We found Genzano all bustle preparing for the festa, and filling with people from all quarters and among them not less than 150 artists of all nations from Rome. The German artists making the most conspicuous figure, having their portfolios and camp chairs slung like a knapsack at their backs.'³³ This ongoing exposure to oil sketching must have been especially reaffirming to the Americans for whom fieldwork was not yet a national ethos.

The Italian artist and patriot Massimo D'Azeglio had made observations similar to Morse about his trip to Ariccia just four years earlier: 'In the year 1826 Martorelli's inn, full from top to bottom, could have been called the "Inn of the Four Nations", except that there were many more nationals than that in residence. One long table took us all at mealtimes. I got to know several at table who, young then, were starting their careers in art. Many of them were French and I got on well with them – really charming people.' The forced intimacy of the Locanda Martorelli encouraged camaraderie and collaboration, as well as professional rivalry, in the making of oil sketches from nature. As D'Azeglio explained: 'Every morning we each went off with our paraphernalia to find places to paint from nature. At dinner-time we all deposited our work in the common room, which thus served as a permanent exhibition. This was most useful as it encour-

5. John Gadsby Chapman, *Torre d'Astura*, n.d., oil on artist's board, 17.7 x 35.5 cm. McGuigan Collection, USA.





aged competition.³⁴ The atmosphere of open critique and methodological inquiry promoted at this humble guesthouse amounted to an unofficial school for landscape sketching. As Francesco Petrucci notes: “The Locanda Martorelli became an academy of the academies. Here in fact artists of various nationalities met, confronting together the problems of landscape painting, outside of their usual spheres and the confines of the individual national academies, which in the city favored an isolating of the various groups.” Indeed, the inn was so integral to establishing the idiom of the oil sketch that, as Petrucci writes: “we can therefore speak of a real and proper “Academy of the Locanda Martorelli” or “School of the Castelli Romani”³⁵ – a phenomenon that preceded the Barbizon School, the Macchiaioli, and the Impressionists.

Chapman made one final sketching campaign during the summer of 1830: “A short time after I went to Naples and spent some time in that city and its vicinity visiting all its objects of interest or curiosity, and making studies in oil and otherwise of Vesuvius, Pompeii, Sorrento, Amalfi, Capri, etc., etc., in company with my friends Morse and Bellin.”³⁶ That the artists were reported to have traveled “arrayed in the goatskin and untanned shoes of a peasant”³⁷ might be dismissed as romantic hyperbole had it not come from the reliable critic Henry T. Tuckerman. Chapman moved to Florence at the

6. Conrad Wise Chapman, *Landscape at Frattocchie*, 1861, 11.7 x 38.2 cm. McGuigan collection, USA.

7. John Linton Chapman, *A Campagna dog*, 1860, oil on paper on board, 23.3 x 26 cm. McGuigan Collection, USA.

8. John Gadsby Chapman, *Shepherd of the Campagna*, 1872, oil on canvas, 85 x 60.9 cm. McGuigan Collection, USA.

beginning of 1831 and stayed there until May, at which time he and Bellin traveled north. Chapman met Cooke in Paris and they sailed home from Le Havre in July.

Following his return to America, Chapman lived between Washington, DC and New York. He garnered national recognition for his paintings, culminating in the prestigious commission for the mural of *The Baptism of Pocahontas* in the United States Capitol rotunda (1838). His etchings, most notably his designs for Harper Brothers' landmark *Illuminated Bible* (1846), and his pedagogical writings in *The American drawing-book* (1847) were also recognized. In art circles, Chapman was a prominent figure as an Academician and serving officer of the National Academy of Design, and he was well acquainted with both Thomas Cole (1801-1848) and Asher B. Durand (1796-1886), two of America's pioneering oil-sketchers. By the mid-1840s, however, overwork and near financial ruin, combined with recurring bad health and the deaths of two of his children, prompted Chapman to reassess his life and priorities. He decided to change course and return to Italy: 'At last the memory of the happy days I had spent in Italy brought hope that there I might do something – that there I might find place and occupation – and I made the resolution, as a desperate man, to go abroad.'³⁸ He sold many of his paintings and oil sketches to friends and patrons and hastily disposed of the remainder at auction in New York in 1848, probably the earliest public dispersal of an artist's working corpus of oil sketches in the United States. Among the lots listed, were many described as 'painted on the spot,'³⁹ including scenes of Rome, Subiaco, Tivoli, and Capri.

When Chapman returned to Rome with his wife and three young children in 1850, the oil sketch was a fixture in the transatlantic art world, standing for new, empirical approaches toward not just landscape painting, but fine art generally. Working quickly, mixing pigments sparingly, leaving brushstrokes visible, searching out unusual points of view, and embracing the unfinished, as evident in Chapman's *Torre d'Astura* (Fig. 5) – these characteristic hallmarks of the sketch aesthetic were decidedly modern in their outlook and did as much to alter the course of Western art in the mid-nineteenth century as did the advent of photography. In the 1858 edition of *The American drawing-book* Chapman recommended oil painting over both watercolor and colored crayons for fieldwork, stating: 'It is very certain that an effect of color, as well as individual tints, can be expressed more directly and certainly by oil colors than by any other method, and hence are the advantages it offers as a means of study.'⁴⁰ Perhaps recalling his previous bouts of melancholy, Chapman extolled the salutary benefits of *plein air* painting: 'We know not, among all the delightful ways to which the impulses of art direct, one affording so much real enjoyment as to be privileged to make the outdoor world of Nature our studio – to be released from the noise and strife of life, and to breathe the free air of Nature, in converse with her. The memory of the moments thus passed – in the seclusion of the forest, by the brook, on the mountain height, and the seaside – by the cottage, or the rude log hut of our own land – or among the picturesque scenery of the Old World – will abide with us forever, as consolations worth the labor of a lifetime to possess.'⁴¹

Chapman's two sons undertook traditional apprenticeships under his tutelage, and both became professional painters. The eldest, John Linton Chapman (1839-1905), named after his father's early benefactor, preferred the camera to the paint box for transcribing data on the ground, as there are few oil sketches known by his hand; meanwhile, his photographs made in and around Rome indicate a keen eye for composition and a sophisticated understanding of the medium. Chapman's younger son, Conrad Wise Chapman (1842-1910), became an accomplished oil sketcher, and the small views of battle sites he painted while a Confederate army soldier in the American Civil War attest to the expert observational and painterly skills that he acquired in Rome and the Campagna during his youth. The vibrant palette and panoramic format of his oil sketch, *Landscape at Frattocchie* (Fig. 6), anticipate the qualities that make his expansive Mexican landscapes of just a few years later so highly regarded.

Two oil sketches of a Maremma sheepdog by John Linton (Fig. 7) and by Conrad (1860, McGuigan Collection, USA) speak to the practical applications of the oil sketch within the broader nineteenth-century studio practice, as well as to the connection between the generative process of working in nature, and the more formulaic methods of composition employed in the studio. Both sketches are dated 1860, and it is probable that they were made under the tutelage of their father. These sketches remained within the larger Chapman family studio as a resource for future reference. One cannot help but note the remarkably similar appearance between the dog in John Linton's sketch and that in John Gadsby's painting, *The shepherd of the Campagna* (Fig. 8). The shepherd-model in his characteristic costume and the landscape with aqueducts were recorded at different times – in pencil, ink, oil, or even photographic emulsion – and combined in the studio to picturesque effect.

9. John Gadsby Chapman, *Excavations on the Campagna*, 1854, oil on canvas, 85.4 x 141.3, USA, McGuigan Collection.



10. John Gadsby Chapman, *Men laboring*, n.d., oil on board, 10.1 x 24.8 cm. McGuigan Collection, USA.



The amount of detail that John Gadsby Chapman incorporated into his masterpiece, *Excavations on the Campagna* (Fig. 9), verges on reportage, documenting the proceedings of an archaeological dig conducted at the Tor de' Schiavi just outside Rome. Chapman relied on oil sketches and drawings that he had made *in situ*, quite possibly during his first sojourn in Rome in 1828–31, of the architecture, the landscape, the sky, as well as the laborers, to serve as the building blocks for constructing this topographically accurate view of an iconic location associated with Latium and the Grand Tour (Fig. 10).⁴² By 1882 however, when Chapman moved to Paris to join his son Conrad (only returning to the United States in 1884), Paris had largely usurped Rome as the art capital of Europe, and the historical and aesthetic concerns of the landscape tradition were superseded by the personal immediacy of expression associated with the Impressionist landscape. Increasing public awareness of, and appreciation for, the oil sketch as the artist's unmediated response to the natural world was in large part responsible for this paradigmatic shift in the history of taste.

Notes

- 1 For an overview of Chapman's career, see McGuigan Jr and McGuigan 2015.
- 2 Chapman 1858, p. 237.
- 3 Marzio 1976, pp. 1–3, 22–3. Marzio states that Chapman's book went through at least seven editions in the United States and England before he sold the rights to it in 1877 and that he could not find a single negative review of it in the historical record.
- 4 For the history of the oil sketch in nineteenth-century American art, see Stebbins Jr 1978, pp. 3–11; Harvey 1998; McGuigan Jr 2009.
- 5 Galassi 1991, pp. 120–1.
- 6 J.G. Chapman, *Memoranda book 2*, p. 2. McGuigan Collection, USA (Chapman, *Memoranda book 2*).
- 7 For Americans at the English Academy, see McGuigan 2009.
- 8 Chapman, *Memoranda book 2*, p. 13. Chapman began drawing from the *nudo* at the English Academy on 4 November 1829.
- 9 Cooper's order, for \$150, was the only one that Chapman received on his first trip to Italy. Chapman painted other copies in the Vatican Museums, Capitoline Museums, Borghese palace, and Corsini palace. Chapman, *Memoranda book 2*, pp. 16–7.
- 10 Chapman, *Memoranda book 2*, p. 10.

- 11 Farley 1907, pp. 87-92; S.F.B. Morse, *Italian journals*, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, Samuel F.B. Morse papers (Morse, *Italian journals*), 13 and 29 March 1830, and 1 November 1830. Farley noted: 'Trentanove I had the good fortune to become well acquainted with, from his partiality to our countrymen; he being an enthusiast with regard to everything American.'
- 12 Farley 1907, p. 76.
- 13 Persiani's home on the piano nobile of Palazzo Crispoldi, Piazza Navona 21, was a frequent gathering place for artists and students; see Longfellow 1966, I, p. 259, note 1.
- 14 Morse, *Italian journals*, 17 September 1830.
- 15 Galassi 1991, p. 181.
- 16 Chapman, *Memoranda book 2*, p. 17.
- 17 Morse, *Italian journals*, 5 May 1830.
- 18 Morse, *Italian journals*, 6 May 1830.
- 19 Morse, *Italian journals*, 8 May 1830.
- 20 Chapman 1858, p. 237.
- 21 Morse, *Italian journals*, 11 May 1830.
- 22 Morse, *Italian journals*, 14 May 1830. There is a drawing, *Interior of the Convent of San Benedetto* (1830, Morse papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC) and an oil sketch of the Santa Scala (1830, private collection) that Morse did inside the monastery.
- 23 Morse, *Italian journals*, 18 May 1830.
- 24 Galassi 1981, p. 24.
- 25 Morse, *Italian journals*, 26 May 1830.
- 26 Pius VI, born Giovanni Angelo Braschi (1717-1799), and his two nephews, Luigi Braschi-Onesti (1745-1816) and Romoaldo Braschi-Onesti (1753-1817).
- 27 Morse, *Italian journals*, 29 May 1830.
- 28 Chapman 1858, pp. 237-8.
- 29 Petrucci 2012, pp. 55-6. Translation my own.
- 30 McGuigan Jr is the first, apparently, to note Morse and Chapman's early 1830 presence at the Locanda Martorelli; see McGuigan Jr 2009, p. 81.
- 31 Morse, *Italian journals*, 16 June 1830.
- 32 Besides Morse, the only other American artist that I know to have published an account of the Locanda Martorelli, c. the 1850s, was James Edward Freeman (1810-1884) in Freeman 1877, pp. 265-7.
- 33 Morse, *Italian journals*, 17 June 1830.
- 34 D'Azeglio 1966, p. 275.
- 35 Petrucci 2012, p. 57. Translation my own.
- 36 Chapman, *Memoranda book 2*, pp. 17, 19. That Geddes also formed part of the group, see J.G. Chapman, *Italian journals 1828-30*, USA, McGuigan Collection.
- 37 Tuckerman 1847, p. 148.
- 38 Chapman, *Memoranda book 2*, p. 98.
- 39 *Catalogue* 1848. None of these oil sketches has been identified to date.
- 40 Chapman 1858, p. 239.
- 41 Chapman 1858, p. 237.
- 42 The antiquarian-dealer Ignazio Vescovali conducted excavations at the site in 1829-1830, see Erpetti 2015, p. 112.

American and European Artists and Intellectuals in Nineteenth-Century Latium: the “School of the *Castelli Romani*” and the Locanda Martorelli in Ariccia

Beginning in the seventeenth century with the origins of Italian landscape painting as an autonomous genre, comprising many stylistic variations, such as the classical, the ideal, the re-imagined, the heroic, the idyllic, the arcadian, the enhanced and the natural, the *Castelli Romani*, nestled in the Alban Hills in Latium, were favoured as a principal site for the experimentation of this newly emerging genre of painting.¹ The melancholy nineteenth-century perception of the Roman Campagna as a malarial-ridden, dessicated wasteland, littered with ruins of ancient aqueducts and towers and abandoned farmhouses, traversed only by herds of oxen, buffaloes and livestock, shifted dramatically geographically when leaving the flat Campagna plain and ascending to the verdant Alban Hills, following the path of the ancient Appian Way to the area of the *Castelli Romani*.

As I have previously argued, a true school of *plein air* painting, taking inspiration from this variable and dramatic landscape developed and thrived in Latium during the Romantic age, thanks primarily to foreign artists and intellectuals, including French, German, Danish, British, Scandinavian, and Russian, but also American travelers.²

The phenomenon of *plein air* painting experienced something of a boom, as well as an academic codification around 1818, with the opening of the pensione *Locanda Martorelli* in the *Piazza di Corte* in Ariccia. This bohemian inn became the main meeting place and hostelry of the various national artistic communities in the Alban area, a sort of *Café Greco* of the hills – a realist landscape academy. Among the international artists frequenting the *Locanda Martorelli* were painters of the calibre of Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851) and Jean-Baptiste Camille Corot (1796-1875) and intellectuals such as the writers Nikolai Gogol (1809-1852) and the playwright Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906).

The American writer Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) is documented visiting Ariccia in September 1828, frequenting the *Locanda Martorelli*, while staying in the neighboring *Casino Antonini*. Significantly, Longfellow provides us with an accurate description of the main itineraries that were followed by the artists on their *plein air* perambulations. It is noteworthy that of the three chapters in his European diary that Longfellow dedicated to his Italian travels, one is entirely dedicated to “The Village of La Riccia [Ariccia].”³

The *Locanda Martorelli* rapidly became an international literary café and an informal academy of academies. Indeed, artists of different nationalities met and discussed the problems and challenges of landscape painting,



1. Robert Walter Weir, *The Duke of Bourbon's Halt at La Riccia, on His March to the Assau Rome, May 3d*, 1834, oil on wood, 88.9 x 119.38 cm. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, M.88.2.

2. Thomas Cole, *Il Penseroso*, 1845, oil on canvas, 82.23 x 122.08 cm. Los Angeles County Museum of Art, M.80.115.



freed from patriotic isolation and enclosure in their separate academies of origin, and liberated from prescribed social groups.

Numerous American artists sojourned in the Alban Hills, including exponents of the Hudson River School, who made an important contribution to the landscape painting of the Roman countryside in the nineteenth century. Free from academic and political constraints, and less affected by the legacy of the august images that these antique sites inculcated in local artists, the Americans also introduced unusual points of view and unique expressive methods.⁴

One of the earliest views of Ariccia by an American artist is a historical landscape painting depicting *The Duke of Bourbon's Halt at La Riccia, on*

His March to the Assau Rome, May 3d, 1527. This picture was executed in New York in 1834, based on earlier *plein air* sketches and drawings by the Hudson River artist Robert Walter Weir (1803-1889), who sojourned in Rome between 1825 and 1827 (Fig. 1).

Thomas Cole (1801-1848), considered the founder of the Hudson River School of painting and proponent of the new romantic vision of landscape, visited Italy a second time in 1842, and produced a suggestive and yet highly accurate view of Nemi, seen from the west coast of the lake (signed and dated 1845), that depicts a young woman in prayer at an open-air altarpiece, entitled *Il Penseroso*, (Fig. 2).

Thomas Worthington Whittredge (1820-1910), another Hudson River exponent, visited Rome together with Sanford Robinson Gifford (1823-1880), a second generation Hudson River painter and an exponent of American Luminism, in 1856-57. The two artists executed views of the two lakes near Ariccia: the lake of Nemi and the lake of Castel Gandolfo. Whittredge's composition exhibits great spontaneity, and a distinct disinterest in academic canons – the picture's naturalistic foreground is dominated by walls and rocks. Gifford on the other hand, produced an emotional and intense image of Nemi, painting a summer day's sultry

sunset from an unusual off-center vantage point in stark contrast to the usual artistic arrangement that featured the central view between the villages of Nemi and Genzano (Toledo Museum of Art).

Whittredge listed some of the American painters present in Nemi, while recalling the humorous incident of there being only one inn in the village with only one bed, which 'even if it was mammoth enough to house Whittredge, Sanford Robinson Gifford, William Holbrook Beard, William Stanley Hoseltine and Thomas Buchanan Read, it miraculously still left room for another guest.'⁵

James Edward Freeman (1810-1884) was in Rome in 1836-37, as he recounted in the first volume of his memoirs. He drew inspiration from scenes of contemporary life that he witnessed in Ariccia, where he sojourned several times, most notably for a month in the summer of 1837, to complete his painting *Costume Picture* (private collection). The Philadelphia

3. George Inness, *View of Ariccia*, oil on canvas, 32.4 x 65.4 cm. New York, Sotheby's, 1 december 2011, lot 68.

4. George Inness, *Lake Nemi*, 1872, oil on canvas, 75.56 x 113.98 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 49.412.



painter, William Stanley Haseltine (1835-1900), also spent a week in Albano in May 1877, and again in June when he stayed there for three weeks, completing several paintings – he remained in Europe and died in Rome in 1900, and was buried in the Protestant burying-ground. George Inness (1825-1894) composed numerous views of the Alban Hills of great originality, taken from differing viewpoints, and he employed a pictorial language aiming to render atmosphere, and record the ephemeral quality and effects of light (Figs. 3-4). Inness made two trips to Italy, the first between 1851 and the beginning of 1852, and the second between 1870 and 1874 – both included stops in Albano.⁶

In conclusion, it is possible to document a truly international and transatlantic movement of *plein air* painting centered around the “Academy of the *Locanda Martorelli*” and the “School of the *Castelli Romani*”, that predates the French Barbizon School of landscape painting (active after 1835). Moreover, the *plein air* painting experimentation and international collaboration and exchange that took place in the Alban Hills in Latium also pre-dated the Tuscan *Macchiaioli* movement, a movement that advocated anti-academic painting capable of reproducing “the impression of truth” as espoused by Giovanni Fattori (1825-1908), in meetings at the *Caffè Michelangelo* in Florence between 1855 and 1867. Lastly, it can be claimed that the artistic innovations stemming from the “Academy of the *Locanda Martorelli*” and the “School of the *Castelli Romani*” in Latium, led directly to the subsequent developments in painting now known universally as Impressionism, a style that arose internationally between 1867 and 1880.

Notes

1 For the origins of Italian landscape painting, see Petrucci 1995; Petrucci 2009; Petrucci 2012.

2 Petrucci 1995; Petrucci 2003, pp. 31-36. On the first American artists to lodge at the Locanda Martorelli, see Mary K. McGuigan in this volume.

3 Longfellow 1835, pp. 342-62; Longfellow 1857, pp. 448-60; Petrucci 1995, pp. 107-10.

4 McGuigan Jr 2009.

5 Baker 1964, p. 35; Petrucci 1995, p. 10.

6 Quick 2007.

Living and Creating in Antiquity.
The Roman Residences and Studios of the Sculptors
Thomas Gibson Crawford, William Wetmore Story
and Moses Jacob Ezekiel

From the 1830s onward, a large number of American sculptors settled permanently in Rome. The Napoleonic wars had long since ended, as had the postwar crisis, and Rome had resumed its role as the principal destination of the Grand Tour, the great “academy” of the arts.¹ The city remained unchallenged in that role until at least the 1860s, when Paris consolidated its position as the world capital of modern art. Yet, as the center of Christianity and classicism, Rome continued, even in the following decades, to attract artists from all over the world due its timeless and supranational dimension, challenging the contingencies of modernity.² In 1869 the US consul David Maitland Armstrong reported that Rome was still ‘the Mecca of American artists’ with its sizable colony of painters and sculptors, as American art ‘was then the fashion.’³ Aside from the twin attractions of art and history, Rome also was a powerful magnet for American sculptors for two practical reasons: first, the presence of highly qualified workmen capable of assisting them in carving marble;⁴ and second, the cosmopolitan “art system”, based upon the centuries-old practice of the art studios, the *ateliers*, which were conceived as exhibition spaces open to the public, advertised in art periodicals and special guidebooks to the studios.⁵

Furthermore, Rome was the center for the creation of ideal sculptures based on mythological, historical and biblical subjects that catered for the taste of American patrons (institutional patrons in particular), and for clients who continued to look to Rome and classicism as a unique source of aesthetic models as well as of ethical and moral *exempla*.⁶

Over the course of the nineteenth century the idea that in Rome sculpture enjoyed an unquestionable primacy over painting became widespread. According to the painter Thomas Cole, ‘sculpture has risen above par, of late: painters are considered but an inferior grade of artists.’⁷ Thirty years later, the artist May Alcott Nieriker (1840-1879) wrote: ‘Rome, in my estimation, is the place for a student of sculpture rather than of painting’, on account of the pervasive influence that ancient and modern statuary, openly displayed in all public places of the city, exerted on the sensibilities of visitors.⁸

This paper investigates what I believe to be the main self-promotional and commercial strategy adopted by the expatriate American sculptors Thomas Gibson Crawford (1814-1857), William Wetmore Story (1819-1895) and Moses Jacob Ezekiel (1844-1917) in Italy: an adept construct of themselves and their reputations based on their special residences and studios, established in the very heart of the monumental building heritage of Rome.⁹

It is well known that an *atelier* played a decisive role in the nineteenth-century art system. Faced with the growing demand for access to art and artists from a middle-class audience, artists responded by shaping an increasingly aristocratic image of themselves. The *ateliers* became their microcosms, promotional spaces, and above all, places of celebration of their genius.¹⁰ However, the studios and residences of the protagonists of this paper differ from those of other sculptors and painters of the time who had invested energy and resources into making their homes – and especially their *ateliers* – attractive to potential clients.¹¹ Instead, Crawford, Story and Ezekiel chose to live in direct contact with the antique, within history.

Crawford and Story rented large apartments in two famous papal palaces. Crawford made both his home and his studio in the demolished Villa Negroni-Massimo, commissioned by Pope Sixtus V in the second half of the sixteenth century.¹² Story lived in a vast wing on the second floor of the family palace built by Pope Urban VIII Barberini. His studio was located at the base of that immense building. Ezekiel chose to settle in the actual ruins of the Baths of Diocletian.

The sculptors' choices were due neither to chance nor to convenience (even if they actually paid very modest rents), but were purely strategies of self-aggrandizement. The young Crawford, the first American sculptor to settle permanently in Rome in 1835, was encouraged at the beginning of his career by his friend Charles Sumner, the famous abolitionist senator, with these words: 'I shall expect nice rooms in your *palazzo* on my next visit to the Eternal City.'¹³ Only a few years later Sumner could proclaim the success of his friend: 'Look now! Was I not a true prophet? He is now living in a palace and he is a great sculptor!'¹⁴ Evidently, residing in a noble Roman *palazzo* aided the professional success of an American artist in Rome.

American travelers, despite often looking down on the Roman nobility and its old-fashioned social rituals, were seduced by both at the same time. However, they could only get glimpses of life behind the windows and the main doors of the aristocratic palaces since 'only a few Americans penetrated these walls.'¹⁵ With its faded splendor and its secrets, the noble palace, no matter how dilapidated, equalled in the eyes of many Americans the quintessence of the history of Rome – a surviving story, that was still tangible through the descendants of those ancient families.

Thomas Gibson Crawford

Crawford was the first American artist to conquer the aristocratic stronghold represented by the noble Roman palace, starting a trend that would take hold more broadly. In the past, famous artists had lived and worked in the palaces of nobles and cardinals, but at that time they were dependents of a court system of patronage. Now, for the first time, the artist acted as an independent professional who negotiated the lease and paid rent to the noble property owner. This phenomenon was undoubtedly facilitated by the Roman rental market of prestigious properties that many Roman aristocrats relied on to generate income.¹⁶ Story soon imitated Crawford and went to live in the opulent Palazzo Barberini. Both

artists were determined to ennoble their professional status by choosing princely residences, thus integrating themselves and their art into Rome itself and into Rome's centuries long history.

Times were clearly changing, taking into account that Antonio Canova, the Marquis Canova, had lived in a house that was anything but aristocratic. According to Stendhal, Canova '*refusa de Napoléon un logement immense*' and '*après avoir refusé cette existence superbe et des honneurs qui l'auraient proclamé aux yeux de l'univers le premier des sculpteurs vivants, revint à Rome habiter son troisième étage.*'¹⁷

Thorvaldsen lived in a large apartment in a noble palace, located in Via Sistina, his surroundings enriched by a precious art collection now at the Thorvaldsen Museum in Copenhagen, but it was certainly not a monumental complex on the scale of the Villa Negroni or Palazzo Barberini.¹⁸ Crawford had visited Thorvaldsen's studio and had originally established his first residence and studio in the Danish sculptor's quarter, centered around Piazza Barberini.¹⁹ It was in Thorvaldsen's studio that Crawford had his first artistic success with a model of *Orpheus and Cerberus*, a work for which he had expressed great expectations: 'You, no doubt, are aware that I rest my hope of a reputation throughout our country upon this work ... I consider the responsibility attending its completion precisely as if it were a work ordered by my country.'²⁰

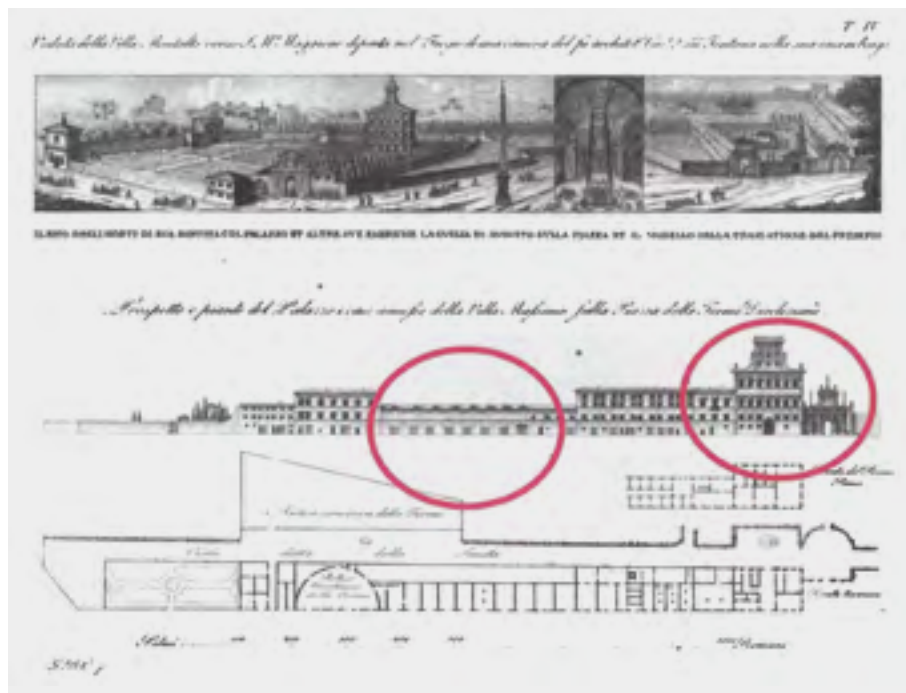
Crawford's family background was modest, which in part explained his overriding ambition: 'I am determined either to be at the top of the ladder or buried under it.'²¹ Since his arrival in Rome, Crawford had had the good fortune to be championed by influential figures, such as the American consul, George Washington Greene, and principally, by Sumner, who procured for him the patronage of the Boston Athenaeum for the transposition into marble of his model for the *Orpheus and Cerberus*.²²

Sumner and Greene undertook an extraordinary promotional campaign to make Crawford and his sculpture known, determined to launch the sculptor upon the American stage, with the *Orpheus* as a metaphor for manifest destiny: 'From such works as Orpheus ... the star of Art, perhaps, shall follow that of Empire in its westward way.'²³

The wife of the American sculptor Henry Kirke Brown, Lydia, who arrived in Rome a few years after Crawford, described how Crawford enjoyed such a privileged position in Rome.

'[Greene] is the particular friend and advocate of Mr. Crawford to the exclusion of all other sculptors, and as all Americans are obliged to see him upon their arrival by virtue of his office as Consul, they are at once taken to Crawford's studio and stuffed with praise etc. etc., without end [...]. Mr. Crawford is now in America where he went last fall to marry Louise Ward, a rich and popular lady who [...] is a cousin of Mr. Greene.'²⁴

It was at this juncture, in 1848, that Crawford, newly married, moved away from the area of Piazza Barberini to an abode he considered worthy of his newly acquired social status. The chosen site was the Palazzo di Termini of the Villa Negroni-Massimo, on the Esquiline hill, precisely the social and reputational elevation that Sumner had predicted.²⁵ The palace stood in an almost uninhabited area of the city, yet it was precisely this



1. Views and plans of Crawford's residence-studio at the Villa Negroni (Vittorio Massimo, *Notizie storiche della Villa Massimo alle Terme Diocleziane*, Roma, Salviucci, 1836, tab. IV, engraving by Giovanni Battista Cipriani).

Opposite

2. Stereopticon slide of Thomas Crawford's studio, 1858. Collection Robert Gale.

seclusion that Crawford sought, giving the impression that he did not intend to sully himself with the common business of his artist colleagues residing and working in the tourist areas surrounding Piazza Barberini and Piazza del Popolo. The Villa Negroni palace had recently been partially renovated and furnished, and its garden extended almost to the Temple of Minerva Medica; moreover, a few years earlier, Prince Vittorio Massimo had published the history of the villa, underscoring that the Palazzo di Termini had hosted princes, nobles and kings.²⁶

Crawford soon became well-known in Rome, and his *Orpheus* was highly praised in Roman periodicals.²⁷ Perhaps also for this reason, Prince Camillo Massimo considered him a tenant worthy of a permanent lease, and on very advantageous terms for such a ‘divine place’, as Crawford’s wife described it.²⁸ It is still not known if the Crawfords occupied the building only from the second floor up, or if they also had the *piano nobile* at their disposal, as reported by some sources. Crawford adapted the adjoining array of buildings (the old “botteghe di Farfa”) into studios at his own expense (Fig. 1).²⁹ The studios incorporated parts of the exedra that formed the enclosure of the Baths of Diocletian.

Crawford's lifestyle became increasingly patrician – surely because of his association with Prince Massimo. Crawford's son, the writer Francis Marion (1854-1909), would later remember his childhood spent at the Villa Negroni and especially the park with fountains and noble cypresses, in his publications.³⁰ Crawford cultivated the habit of frequently withdrawing to the covered roof-terrace of the palace, his "ivory tower", since it was there that the artist devoted himself entirely to study,³¹ in a small modeling room 'from which he could gaze upon the Alban Hills, and, looking to the south, get a glimpse of the distant sea.'³²

The large studio instead, was adjacent to the Palazzo di Termini, and gained the reputation of ‘one of the shrines of travelers at Rome because



of the number and variety as well as excellence of its trophies.³³

In 1854, a visiting journalist noted: “A visit to Crawford’s studio always seems to me like a peep into the grandest phase of American life – a phase where her moral energy and young untamed power are elevated and sublimated by the highest flights of genius”.³⁴ Crawford’s *atelier* also became a fundamental stopping place for American visitors to Rome because of the sculpture projects he was preparing there for the Capitol in Washington D.C.³⁵ and also, on account of the models he worked on there for the large equestrian monument dedicated to George Washington for the city of Richmond, Virginia.³⁶ Such a project had been Crawford’s dream since his youth, as he considered that an equestrian monument represented the quintessence of Roman classicism.³⁷ Indeed, Crawford’s studio was so admired by visitors, that after the premature death of the sculptor due to cancer, the establishment of a museum of his plaster casts following the model of that of Thorvaldsen in Copenhagen was proposed for the space (Fig. 2).³⁸

In a volte-face, some months after Crawford’s death, Nathaniel Hawthorne visited the studio declaring the works on display as ‘common-places in marble and plaster’ – excepting only the *Orpheus and Cerberus* – Crawford’s first work.³⁹

William Wetmore Story

The socially elevated environment that Crawford created at Villa Negroni deeply impressed William Story, who was his guest for over a month there in the summer of 1853.⁴⁰ Story subsequently rented an entire wing of the Palazzo Barberini, where he lived from 1857 almost up until his death in 1895.⁴¹ When they first married, Story and his wife had settled in an apartment in the area of the Piazza Barberini, an accommodation that they considered in keeping with their status of republicans, ‘more fitted to our republican conditions.’⁴² When the couple then moved to the grandiose Palazzo Barberini, Story wrote with pride: ‘We live in the Barberini Palace and look down from our windows over all Rome.’⁴³ In enthusiastic terms Story described:

‘The Principe has shown very good will to have us come and will put the whole apartment in complete order and let it to us for 250 dols less than the rent we receive for our little house in Bussey place. I never saw anything more rambling than the upper rooms above the apartment, which are to be included in our lease. They are legion in number and crop out at every new visit. I should think there are some twenty at least, of every kind and shape, going oddly about, up little stairs, through curious holes, into strange lumber-rooms, and then suddenly opening into large and admirable chambers.’⁴⁴

Gauging from this description, it is easy to understand how Story’s palatial residence dominated the city from its elevated position, towering over the lower-lying area around Piazza Barberini where less fortunate sculp-



3. Piazza Barberini with Palazzo Barberini and Story's apartment (top right), end of the 19th century.

Opposite

4. *Theater Room, Palazzo Barberini* (Mary Elizabeth Phillips, *Reminiscences of William Wetmore Story, Chicago and New York*, Rand McNally, 1897, p. 98).

5. Giovanni Riggi, Design for raising the building with the Studio of William Story at Via San Martino, 1887, Roma, Archivio Storico Capitolino, IE. Prot. 1471/anno 1926. Su concessione della Sovrintendenza - Archivio Capitolino.

6. Story's Studio at Via San Martino before its transformation into the Regio Istituto Commerciale. Studio Fotografico Filippo Reale, 1926. Roma, Archivio Storico Capitolino, IE. Prot. 1471/anno 1926. Su concessione della Sovrintendenza - Archivio Capitolino.

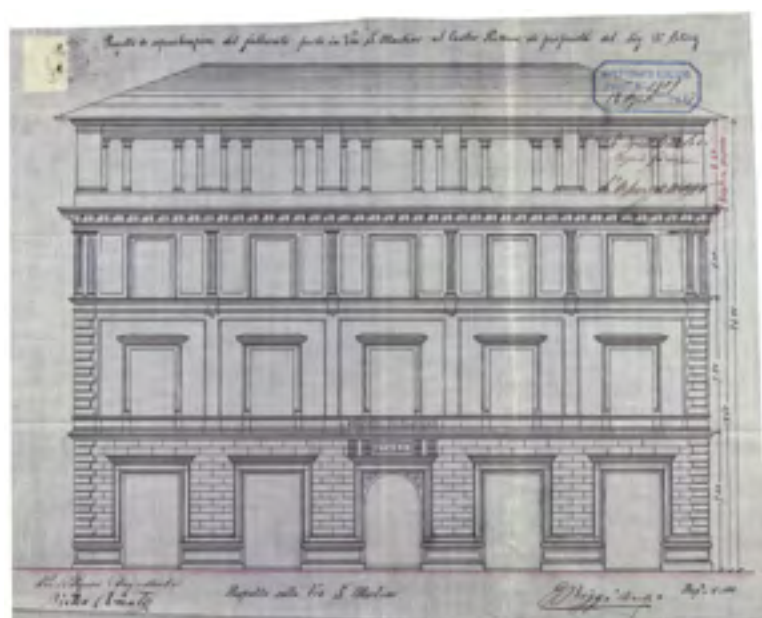
tors congregated (Fig. 3). Story came from a wealthy background and had no need to chase after patrons offering to carve their likenesses, or sculpt the genre scenes that appealed to the tastes of the middle-class bourgeois. Rather, he created several ideal figural sculptures, inspired by historical and literary themes – Story was also a talented writer and author of the popular guidebook *Roba di Roma* (1862) – so was well-informed on iconographic questions.⁴⁵ He replicated these figural sculptures in limited editions, unlike the American sculptors Randolph Rogers (1825–1892) and Harriet Hosmer (1830–1908), whose studios operated like factories, with the same work copied in different formats in various series. Story's approach to his work as an artist set him apart, lending him an air of nobility that also distinguished his creations.

The Story's luxurious residence in Palazzo Barberini set the stage for a sophisticated society, comprising an international group of writers, aristocrats and artists. Story sought to distance himself from his austere, puritanical New England family background and from the long shadow cast by the figure of his father, Chief Justice Joseph Story, who had hoped his son would enter the legal profession.

The Story's apartments were reached by ascending the monumental marble staircase to the second floor of the northern wing of the palace. Together with his wife, Story furnished their dwelling sumptuously with eclectic taste:

'It is original; some portions resemble an oriental bazaar, while others are so classical that one would imagine himself in the atrium of a Roman patrician [...] works of art, bric-à-brac, and trophies of travel in all parts of the world. One of the chiefest pleasures in receiving an invitation to the Story home was the opportunity it afforded of drinking in this atmosphere of beauty and artistic taste.'⁴⁶

One of the largest rooms served as a theater, complete with a stage, curtains and scenery (Fig. 4). Here, Story organized musical evenings, readings, and theatrical performances with famous guests including Hans Christian Andersen and Henry James, author of Story's biography after his death.⁴⁷ The Story's social climbing reached its apogee, when their



daughter Edith married the Marquis Simone Peruzzi.⁴⁸ Nonetheless, not all Americans were drawn to this lifestyle, and the writer and diplomat, James Russell Lowell, wrote to Story: ‘it is very good of you to tempt me with Rome and the Barberini, but setting aside any scruples I might have as an American about living in a palace, I am anchored here for the winter.’⁴⁹ Story’s studio was located a few steps from the Palazzo Barberini, in Via di San Basilio “under the shade” of the great palace complex.⁵⁰ In 1876, due to construction work affecting the neighborhood of Piazza Barberini, Story transferred his studio to the area of the Macao, in Via di San Martino, where he had purchased land. A new residential area, built after Rome was proclaimed capital of Italy in 1870, the Macao was expansive, and situated to the east of the historic center, with wide streets lined with villas, constructed on the model of modern European cities. This was also the most elevated and therefore, healthiest part of the city, where new ministries and the new railway station were built.

Significantly, it was in this crucial passage of Rome from a city of the *ancien régime* to a modern capital of the kingdom of Italy, that Story seems to have sought a compromise: his residence and his life-style remained unchanged, in the well-worn, timeless environment of the aristocratic Palazzo Barberini. However, for his artistic work, Story adapted to modernity. He hired the architect, Giovanni Riggi, to build a large, luminous villa/*atelier* complete with a garden with flower beds and fragments of sculptures (Figs. 5-6).⁵¹ Contemporary sources recount, that in the last year of his life, Story moved from Palazzo Barberini to Via San Martino.⁵² The *atelier* in Via San Martino was also used by his son, the sculptor and art critic, Waldo – but sadly the property was destroyed in the 1930s to make room for the Regio Istituto Commerciale Duca degli Abruzzi, at the corner of Via Palestro.

Moses Jacob Ezekiel

Story’s studio was not far from that of the

sculptor Moses Jacob Ezekiel, twenty-five years his junior, who was an extraordinary and eclectic personality, and an artist and intellectual who merits further study.⁵³ Ezekiel was born in Virginia, into a family of Sephardic Jews who had migrated from Holland to America in the early nineteenth-century. During the American Civil War he fought in the Confederate army. Ezekiel practiced art traditionally foreign to Jewish culture, and he also created works based on Christian subjects. Moreover, he was a sophisticated dandy, passionate about esotericism and a follower of theosophical ideas.⁵⁴

After studying sculpture in Berlin, Ezekiel arrived in Rome in 1874. Shortly after his arrival, he attempted to secure an introduction to William Story:

‘I called, of course, on our American sculptor, Mr. William Story. He seemed to be afraid that I wanted something from him and never returned my call. I had often heard it said that he was the best writer among sculptors and the best sculptor among writers, but I never saw any of his work in any exposition on this side of the water.’⁵⁵

After initially residing in a house in Via Rasella, in the area of piazza Barberini, during which time he rented a studio space in Via Torino, Ezekiel decided to draw directly from sources of classical antiquity by living directly inside them, and he moved into the Baths of Diocletian. The circumstances of Ezekiel’s home and studio deserve a separate scholarly study, not the scope of this contribution, nonetheless, in short, Ezekiel is remembered for the extraordinary *atelier*-dwelling that he created inside the ruins of the immense antique bath complex.⁵⁶ Several buildings of the Baths of Diocletian at that time were owned by the Comune di Roma, while others were still in private hands. Among other communities, there was also a home for the blind in the ruins of the bath complex, as well as inns and stables. But Ezekiel had discovered his future abode by chance:

‘Passing along the Piazza di Termini, which was then a wild and deserted place and really out of town, I noticed at the corner a rough inclined plane leading up to a door. [...] and saw a large room with a groined arch roof [...]. I began, in fact, by providing for everything that was absolute necessary for simple comfort, without any idea of luxury. The place itself was so grand in its proportions that everything I put in it almost disappeared.’⁵⁷

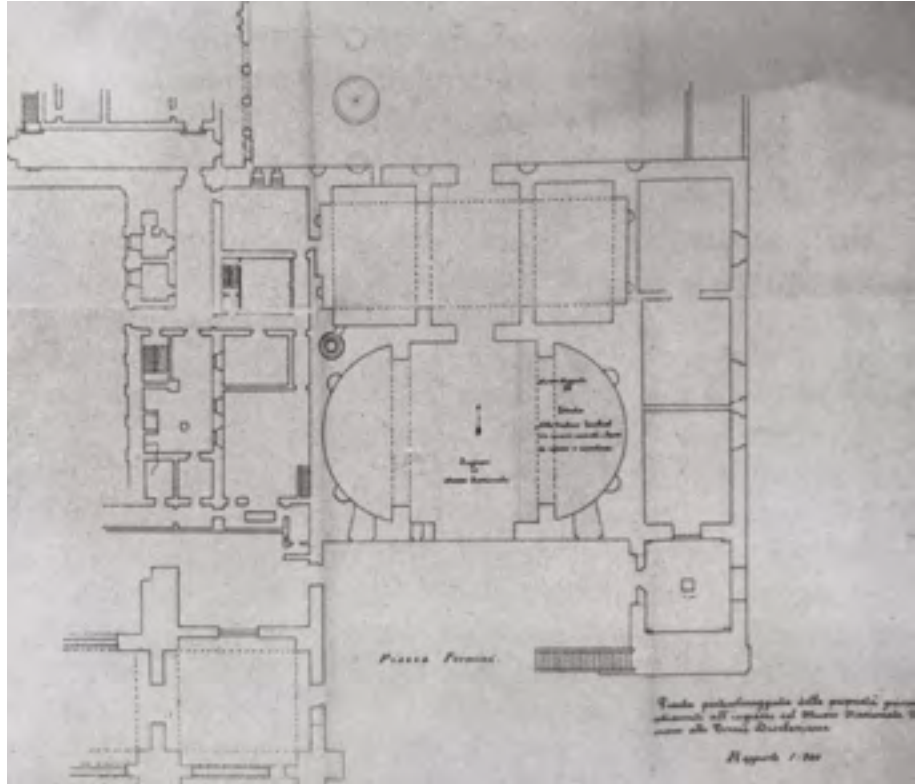
By 1879 Ezekiel established both his residence and studio inside the current hall XI *bis*, technically the property of the home for the blind, the Ospizio dei Ciechi Margherita di Savoia. At that time, the large hall was divided into two levels: he lived on the upper floor, reached by an external ramp, where he received his friends and clients, and where his finished works were displayed (Fig. 7). His actual *atelier* was located on the ground floor, and in 1897, the *atelier* was moved inside the large apsidal hall (the south-east apse of the current hall IX) to the right of the present-day entrance to the archaeological Museo Nazionale Romano (Fig. 8).



Opposite

7. Baths of Diocletian, exterior of the hall XI bis with the walled-in door (highlighted by the white box) formerly opening into Ezekiel's home and studio. Photo: P.P. Racioppi.

8. Plan of the Baths of Diocletian (1898). The apsidal hall at the right (current hall IX) became Ezekiel's new studio in 1897, as reported in the inscription. Roma, Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Ministero Pubblica Istruzione - Direzione Generale Antichità e Belle Arti- Divisione seconda- Scavi, musei, gall. d'arte, 1908-1912, b. 151 (from Piantoni, 1980, p. 273, fig. 23).



The Museo Nazionale Romano was inaugurated in 1890 next to the Charterhouse of Santa Maria degli Angeli. It was situated under 'the enormous arcades of the Baths, with a backdrop worthy of a Piranesi etching.'⁵⁸ Ezekiel surely was aware of the privileged location of his *atelier* as well as of the mutual prestige that both museum and *atelier* would gain by their proximity to one another. However, Ezekiel claimed that it was his studio that had gentrified the area in front of the entrance to the museum, which previously had served as a stable block for horses. He wrote to the Ministry of Education that, thanks to the presence of his *atelier*, the hall would 'no longer be a disfigurement of the illustrious National Museum, freed on its thresholds by impediments and filth.'⁵⁹ He requested permission to close one side of the hall with some lightweight, temporary wooden and glass structures, reassuring the Minister that these modifications would not affect or damage even a single stone or brick of the old walls.⁶⁰ In this, Ezekiel showed a true reverence toward an antiquity of which he had himself become part.

Ezekiel gradually became renowned in Rome and his studio developed into a meeting place of intellectuals, politicians and prelates, including the mayor of Rome Ernesto Nathan and the Austrian Cardinal Gustav von Hohenlohe, artists such as Achille Vertunni, Francesco Paolo Michetti, Telemaco Signorini, poets, including Cesare Pascarella, Gabriele D'Annunzio, Adolfo de Bosis, and several composers such as Franz Listz, Pietro Mascagni and Giovanni Sgambati.⁶¹ Indeed, the studio featured as the main protagonist of Ezekiel's autobiography, entitled *Memoirs from the Baths of Diocletian*.⁶²

'In this highly unusual and unique dwelling, Ezekiel delighted in showing his friends and visitors remarkable and rare examples of ancient art, including many



Greek and Roman fragments which were embedded in the structure or still lying about, which, together with this section of the Roman Baths themselves, contributed in no little degree to the nobility of a setting in which art, music, and beauty were harmoniously combined with living foliage, flowers, and birds.⁶³

With its odd mixture of furnishings, precious fabrics, and artworks exhibited against the austerity of the ancient Roman ruins, Ezekiel's *atelier*/residence was a true reflection of the aestheticism which Gabriele D'Annunzio, a friend of the artist, represented (Fig. 9). D'Annunzio dedicated a poem to Ezekiel's studio, translated into English by the sculptor himself:

'Moie, now for our sacred Roman May/A rosebud blossom on the arbor path,
/And Diocletian's dark and ruined bath /Is smiling on the quiet, solemn day.
/"Beethoven" from his terme (sic.), gives admonition/ To the happy choir:— All
is vanity! /Art, sole goddess, her secret fascination/ Spreads, o'er the soul of sad
humanity. /"David" lifts up to God his hand victorious/ Singing; and on his
divine shoulder swings/— And Crescent-like glistens, his mighty steel. /"Judith"
looks down placid in scorn and glorious;/ and from her temples, tresses of wavy
rings/ Descend a heavy clustering grape-like weal.⁶⁴

In 1910, Ezekiel was forced to leave his premises in anticipation of the

9. Ezekiel's studio at the Baths of Diocletian, end of the nineteenth century. Photo: Archivi Alinari, Firenze.

preparations for the Great Exhibition planned for the fiftieth anniversary of the Unification of Italy in 1911 in the halls of the complex that were to become a part of the Museo Nazionale Romano.⁶⁵ Queen Margherita di Savoia, his admirer and friend, even interceded (albeit unsuccessfully) for Ezekiel, hoping to prevent his eviction from his home in the Baths.⁶⁶ After he was dislodged, the Roman Government granted him use of the so-called Belisario Tower, one of the antique towers of the Aurelian Walls, near the Porta Pinciana, overlooking the Villa Borghese, where Ezekiel made a new home for the last years of his life.⁶⁷ Even the Roman civil authorities had come to realize that Ezekiel himself was an essential part of the monumental heritage of Rome, and while the setting of his new home was not as majestic as the Baths of Diocletian, the Belisario Tower was indisputably an ancient monument. In his last residence, Ezekiel became known as the “vecchio delle mura”, the old man of the walls.⁶⁸

Ezekiel's life in Rome, so inextricably integrated into the city's historic heritage, epitomizes the similar aspirations of Crawford and Story to become integral parts of the Eternal City through their residences and studios, which initially had grown out of their clever self-promotional strategies of living and creating in antiquity. Yet, finally, the three expatriate sculptors never renounced their American identity. Crawford produced works for the major American public institutions, while Ezekiel showed his patriotism in his wish to be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Story, the most naturalized Italian of the three artists, firmly asserted his patriotic sentiments with the words, “I was born an American and I shall die an American”, in an 1886 reply to a journalist who provocatively claimed the sculptor had renounced his American citizenship to become a ‘subject of Her Majesty, Queen Victoria’, as ‘he was recognized and patronized by Englishmen and denied by his own countrymen.’⁶⁹

Notes

- 1 As described by Lanzi 1847, I, p. 323.
- 2 See in particular Capitelli, Grandesso and Mazzarelli 2012.
- 3 Quoted in Soria 1963, p. 4.
- 4 A complete sculptural training was almost non-existent in America. American sculptors had learned to model but very few were trained in marble carving: see Gerds 1992, p. 70.
- 5 Gerds 1992, pp. 68-70.
- 6 Vance 1989, I, pp. 183, 193.
- 7 Dabakis 2014, p. 4.
- 8 Alcott Nieriker 1879, p. 77.
- 9 Racioppi 2018.
- 10 Susinno 1998, pp. 59-62.
- 11 For example the studios of Mariano Fortuny, Achille Vertunni and above all Harriet Hosmer and Vinnie Ream: see Racioppi 2018, pp. 116-21.
- 12 Culatti 2009, pp. 16-17.
- 13 Charles Sumner to Crawford, Boston, March 31, 1841, in Pierce 1877, II, p. 176.

- 14 Charles Sumner to William Story cited in Pierce 1877, II, p. 95.
- 15 Vance 1989, II, p. 179.
- 16 Bartoccini 1985, p. 209.
- 17 Stendhal 1866, II, p. 23.
- 18 Randolfi 2017.
- 19 Le Grice 1844, p. 275.
- 20 Crawford to Charles Sumner, June 12th, 1842, quoted in Gale 1964, p. 25.
- 21 Letter of Crawford to his sister, 1835, Gale 1964, p. 11.
- 22 Dimmick 1987.
- 23 Sumner 1843.
- 24 Lydia Brown to Adoline Taft, February 17th, 1845. Henry Kirke Bush-Brown papers, Library of Congress, Manuscript Division, Washington, DC, quoted in Craven 1969, p. 74.
- 25 Gale 1964, p. 66.
- 26 Massimo 1836, p. 227.
- 27 Dimmick 1987, p. 70.
- 28 Gale 1964, p. 64.
- 29 For these works see Racioppi 2012, p. 317 and fig. 6.
- 30 Crawford 1899, I, p. 148.
- 31 Crane 1972, p. 349.
- 32 Freeman 1877, p. 245.
- 33 Tuckerman 1867, p. 313.
- 34 'Crawford and his last work', *The Crayon*, vol. I, 1855, no. 11, p. 167.
- 35 *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, vol. IX, June to November 1854, p. 713.
- 36 'Florentia', *The Art Journal*, October 1854, p. 287.
- 37 Dimmick 1991.
- 38 Tuckerman 1867, p. 313.
- 39 Hawthorne 1872, I, p. 128.
- 40 Gale 1964, p. 100.
- 41 See the contract in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, *Archivio Barberini. Computisteria*, vol. 739, f. 281. 'Porzione del secondo piano del Palazzo Nobile alle Quattro Fontane n. 25, composto da 12 camere, 10 piccoli ambienti e 12 diversi vani superiori ad appartamento affittato a Story W.W. ... per l'annua pigione di scudi 630.' I am grateful to Elisabetta Guerriero for pointing out this document.
- 42 Story to J. R. Lowell, Rome, Sept. 20th, 1852, in James 1903, I, p. 252.
- 43 Story to J. R. Lowell, Rome, December 10th, 1864, in James 1903, II, p. 151.
- 44 Story to Charles Eliot Norton, Rome, May 21st, 1857, in James 1903, I, pp. 351-52.
- 45 Gerds 1972, p. 17.
- 46 Phillips 1897, p. 98.
- 47 James 1903.
- 48 Gerds 1972, p. 20.
- 49 J.R. Lowell to W.W. Story, Cambridge, Mass., October 2nd, 1890, in James 1903, II, p. 295.
- 50 Story to the Commissione di Belle Arti istituita per l'Esposizione Internazionale di Londra del 1862, in Archivio di Stato di Roma, *Ministero del Commercio, Belle Arti e Lavori*

Pubblici 1855-1870, b. 390, unnumbered pages.

51 Archivio Storico Capitolino, Roma, IE. Prot. 1909/anno 1887. Phillips 1897, p. 170.

52 'Mr. Story lives in an elegant and roomy villa, on the via S. Martino a Macao, built on two sides of a spacious court, in which fountains play and flowers and shrubs bloom. His studio occupies nearly the whole of the first floor, and comprises his own atelier and that of his son Waldo' ('William Wetmore Story. The Sculptor Poet', *Current Opinion*, vol. 15, 1894, p. 215).

53 For his biography, see Nash 2014.

54 Nash 2014, chapter 6.

55 Ezekiel 1975, p. 178.

56 Ezekiel's studio in the Baths of Diocletian is that described by Soria 1965, pp. 410-14.

57 Ezekiel 1975, p. 216.

58 '*le enormi arcate delle Terme, in uno sfondo degno di un'acquaforte del Piranesi*': Cervesato 1925, p. 23.

59 'Non sarà più uno sfregio al decoro dell'insigne Museo Nazionale, liberato, sulle sue soglie, delle molestie e della sozzura': Ezekiel to the Minister of Education, 31 August 1897, in Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Roma (ACS), *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione. Direzione Generale Antichità e Belle Arti*, III Versamento, II Parte, (1898-1907), b. 716, fasc. 4.

60 '*intelaiature di vetro e legno innocentissime, poste senza arrecare offesa a una sola pietra o a un solo mattone con ogni più diligente rispetto alle antiche mura dell'edificio*', *ibidem*.

61 Soria 1965, p. 413.

62 Ezekiel 1975.

63 Bush-Brown 1921, quoted in Nash 2014, p. 89.

64 '*Moié, novello al pio maggio romano, fiorisce nella pergola un roseto e stanno nel solenne aër quieto le nere terme di Diocleziano. Beethoven dall'alta erma sul lieto coro ammonisce: "Tutto al mondo è vano! Unica Dea, sul triste animo umano spande l'arte il suo fascino segreto." Leva Davide al ciel la destra invitta cantando, e sul divino omero, come falce di luna, il nudo ferro splende. Guarda dall'alto indomita Giuditta cui dalle tempie l'onda delle chiome grave, divisa in due grappoli, scende.*' Nash 2014, p. 108.

65 For the expropriations undertaken at the Baths of Diocletian, including the ones of Ezekiel's home and studio, see ACS, *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione. Direzione Generale Antichità e Belle Arti*, Div. I, 1908-1912, b. 152.

66 Letter of the Marchese Guiccioli, Cavaliere d'Onore di Sua Maestà to Corrado Ricci, Direttore Generale delle Belle Arti, January 17, 1910, *ibidem*, fasc. 13.

67 However, Ezekiel had to reconstruct a larger studio for himself in via Gaeta to accommodate the models he was working on for the Confederate War Memorial for Arlington National Cemetery: Nash 2014, p. 140. For a studio-residence which had been offered to Ezekiel by his friend Edoardo Almagià, but which was never realized, see Fabrizio Di Marco in this volume.

68 Soria 1964, p. 9.

69 Phillips 1897, p. 246.

AMERICANS AND THE ARTISTIC CULTURE OF ROME:
TOWARD AN AMERICAN ART



Thomas Cole, *The Course of Empire, 4: Destruction*, 1836, oil on canvas, New York Historical Society (detail)

During the Colonial period Americans maintained close ties with Britain, and many affluent families sent their sons to London for education or to conduct business. By the middle of the eighteenth century some Americans ventured further onto the Continent in the manner of British gentlemen to further their education with a Grand Tour of Italy.¹ Rome was a popular destination for its wealth of cultural treasures, and on 21 May, 1764, four Anglo-American gentlemen embarked on 'A Course of Antiquities at Rome ... under Mr Byres Antiquarian,' a four-week tour of palaces, churches, ancient monuments, and the Vatican. Two of the tour-ists were from Philadelphia: Samuel Powel (1738-1793), a wealthy young man from a prominent family, and Dr. John Morgan (1735-1789), who completed his medical education in Edinburgh in 1763. The other gentlemen were Bostonians John Apthorp (1730-1773), son of a prosperous merchant, and Thomas Palmer (1743-1820), a young Harvard graduate. Their *cicerone* or guide, James Byres, was a Scottish architect, antiquarian, and art dealer in Rome.²

Samuel Powel kept a journal of places visited and artworks they viewed each day.³ Powel's notes and 'occasional observations' on paintings, statues, and architecture reveal the influence of their tutor Byres' taste and edifying anecdotes. Powel praised, for example, Poussin's excellent drawing and perspective in his painting of *Confirmation* in the Palazzo Boccapaduli and admired Pompeo Batoni's *Annunciation* in Santa Maria Maggiore as 'one of the best pieces in the church – Light & Shade well disposed.'⁴ In contrast, he was critical of Bernini's *Apollo and Daphne* as '– not pleasing. She a little like a fury. The figure too long & lank', 'and the ceiling in San Luigi dei Francesi' by 'Monsignor Natoire, horribly bad – too much gilded,' reflecting Byres's distaste for Baroque excess and Rococo ornamentation.⁵

Powel's traveling companion John Morgan also kept a travel journal, though his notes on the 'course of antiquities' is only a ten-page fragment of a much longer account of their four-month return journey from Rome to England.⁶ The fragment covered their four days in the Vatican where Morgan admired: 'Apollo Bellvedera [sic], supposed the finest in ye world,' and 'the famous Torso which Michelangelo studied so long, ... one of the finest Pieces of Statuary in ye world; noble muscling, true & not outré.'⁷ He praised Raphael's School of Athens as 'remarkable and one of his finest pictures' and the 'School of Parnassus [...] beautiful but the figure of Apollo the least gracefull, as Raphael was obliged to copy a living fa-



1. Angelica Kauffman, *John Apthorp of Boston and his Daughters*, 1764, oil on canvas, 96.5 x 134.6 cm. Photo: Courtesy of Sotheby's, Inc. © 2014.

favorite musician.⁸ Morgan also recorded some of their guide's informative remarks: 'Mr Byres thinks few painters or none draw angels well except Raphael & Guido,' and 'There are 2 grand objects to be answered to make a great painter – Drawing & Colouring. The roman Painters excell in ye former – this supposed to be owing to their copying ye fine & accurate ancient statues.'⁹

The day before Samuel Powel and John Morgan departed Rome, Powel wrote to his uncle Samuel Morris in Philadelphia: 'Our time has passed most agreeably here, & Italy has exceeded our expectations. Had Fortune made me her Minion, America should have been enriched, with some few Things worthy of Attention. At present, I must be content with indulging my own Fancy, since 'tis impossible to afford the same Entertainment to you, on the other Side of the Atlantic.'¹⁰ On the afternoon of 3 June, the Americans visited the Villa Albani, and Powel wrote: 'The Cardinal very affable & polite ordered his Major Domo to conduct us through his Villa & Gardens. They are the most agreeable I have seen. The Architecture lovely.'¹¹ He noted they were accompanied by 'Miss A____a,' no doubt the Swiss-Austrian artist Angelica Kauffman (1741-1807).

The Grand Tour Portraits

Three of the Americans – John Apthorp, Samuel Powel, John Morgan – commissioned portraits from Angelica Kauffman to commemorate their Grand Tour experience. There is no record of a portrait of Thomas Palmer, who left Rome for Naples soon after they completed the course of antiquities, though his tour is memorialized by his 1772 donation to Harvard College of Giovanni Battista Piranesi prints, the *Antichità di Ercolano*, and a painting of Vesuvius erupting acquired in Italy.¹²

Angelica Kauffman had been touring Italy with her father since 1759 to further her training and advance her career by copying Old Master paintings for study and for sale. As a charming young woman artist fluent in

several languages, she attracted the attention of other artists and foreign travelers. She made portraits of several British tourists, including Brownlow Cecil, 9th Earl of Exeter and John Parker of Saltram, who were among her first patrons in England.¹³ Her Italian sketchbook includes over twenty informal portrait drawings of male subjects in addition to sketches of landscape, sculpture, paintings, reliefs, and miscellaneous subjects. Most of the portraits have been identified, at least tentatively, as British residents and international artists, *cicerone*, and agents in Rome, including James Byres, Abbé Peter Grant, and British artists Nathaniel Dance and Gavin Hamilton.¹⁴

Kauffman portrayed John Apthorp (Fig. 1) as a British gentleman in a fashionable red velvet suit with embroidered waistcoat and holding an ornate gold snuff box.¹⁵ He is seated beside his young daughters, who cling to one another, the older sister peering apprehensively at their father, the younger at the viewer. Before his trip to Italy Apthorp had been living in London where his father Charles Apthorp, a Boston merchant, slave importer, and one of the wealthiest men in the city, sent him to train in the mercantile business. In 1758 he married Alicia Mann, niece of Sir Horace Mann, the British Consul in Florence, and in 1763 Apthorp set sail for Italy with his wife and two young daughters in hope the mild climate would improve Alicia's frail health. Unhappily, she passed away at Gibraltar, and Apthorp continued his journey with the children.¹⁶ They spent several months in Florence, where he became acquainted with Horace Mann's friend, Thomas Patch, a painter known for his comical caricatures of carousing gentlemen. Patch portrayed Apthorp as a caricature in at least one painting in conversation over coffee with Mann and others, and Apthorp bought four of Patch's landscape paintings in January, 1764.¹⁷

The horizontal format of Kauffman's portrait is unusual, and the children appear somewhat disconnected from their father. According to family history, Apthorp intended to include the children, hence the horizontal canvas, though Kauffman may have added them later.¹⁸ In April, 1765, Apthorp left Italy and was back in Boston by December when he married Hannah Greenleaf. He had three more children with his second wife, and their elder daughter, Hannah Apthorp (1767-1781), married her cousin, architect Charles Bulfinch in November, 1788, two years after he returned from his Grand Tour of Europe.¹⁹

Philadelphians Samuel Powel and John Morgan may have first heard of Angelica Kauffman from fellow Pennsylvanian, artist Benjamin West (1738-1820). West, like Kauffman, was in Italy from 1760 to 1763 to improve his skills and make copies of Old Master paintings for the wealthy Philadelphians who sponsored his trip.²⁰ In 1762 West met Angelica Kauffman in Florence, where both artists were copying paintings in the Uffizi. They became friends, and it was rumored, though without proof, that West was enamoured with the captivating Angelica and she fancied him.²¹ By August, 1763, West was back in London, where he encountered Samuel Powel and John Morgan before they left England for the Continent. Powel wrote to his uncle Samuel Morris on 2 September, 1763: 'Mr West is just arrived from Italy. His reputation as a painter is beyond what you can expect.'²²





Opposite, above left to right

2. Angelica Kauffman, *Benjamin West*, pencil. Vallardi sketchbook, p. 51, Victoria & Albert Museum, London, E.395-1927.

3. Angelica Kauffman, *Benjamin West*, 1763, black chalk on greenish paper, 41.9 x 31.8 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG 1649.

Below left to right

4. Angelica Kauffman, *Samuel Powel*, 1764, oil on canvas, 125.4 x 99.7 cm. Private collection. Photo: Philadelphia Museum of Art.

5. Angelica Kauffman, *Samuel Powel*, pencil, Vallardi sketchbook, p. 43. Victoria & Albert Museum.

Above

6. Angelica Kauffman, *Dr. John Morgan*, 1764, oil on canvas, 144.1 x 108.3 cm framed. National Portrait Gallery, Washington, NPG.78.221.

Kauffman painted West as an artist with palette and brush in a portrait signed and dated 1762, now in the Uffizi collection of artists' portraits.²³ A drawing in her sketchbook represented West as a handsome gentleman looking directly at the viewer/artist (Fig. 2), and a more finished single sheet inscribed 'Mr West drawn at Rome by Angelica Kauffman 1763,' portrayed him in Van Dyck style collar and jacket, a popular fashion for sitters in Grand Tour portraits (Fig. 3).²⁴

Unlike Apthorp's portrait as a gentleman at leisure with his children, Kauffman's portrayal of Samuel Powel calls attention to his serious pursuit of knowledge (Fig. 4). He stands beside a table unrolling an architectural plan while glancing out of the picture as if interrupted, and a ruler and compasses on the table suggest Powel took his study of architecture seriously. In fact, he recorded dimensions of some buildings along with notes in his journal, and in September, 1763, his letter to Samuel Morris expressed wonder at 'the venerable remains of Antiquity, which are grand and magnificent, beyond what can be conceived, by Persons who have never seen them ... To give you an idea of the Size of one of them, (of which perhaps I may have the Pleasure to show you a Plan I have taken), I shall just mention the Front, which is 1170 English

feet, & the Depth 1075 feet – the whole, formerly encrusted with Marble, & adorned with the finest marble Columns, of an immense Magnitude.'²⁵ The plan Powel holds resembles part of an unidentified palazzo or villa. John Morgan's journal included a list of 'Articles Collected by Dr. Morgan on his Travels,' and among the books, natural specimens and curiosities, paintings, prints and drawings he shipped from Venice was a 'Plan of a Country House,' which may be similar to the plan Kauffman reproduced in Powel's portrait.²⁶

An informal drawing in Kauffman's Italian sketchbook of a young man with wig ribbons tucked into his waistcoat may also be Samuel Powel based on his resemblance to the portrait (Fig. 5).²⁷ Two years after he returned to Philadelphia in 1767, he married Elizabeth Willing (1743-1830), daughter of another prominent family, and purchased an elegant townhouse. He served as colonial mayor of Philadelphia in 1775, and after the Revolution, as the first mayor of the city in the new republic.

John Morgan's Grand Tour portrait does not feature any items of antiquarian interest (Fig. 6).²⁸ Kauffman highlighted Morgan's status as a physician acquired through study in Edinburgh and Paris, as well as his pride that 'English noblemen and other gentlemen in Italy have treated me with great politeness' and invited him to 'all the distinguished Conversaciones' in Rome.²⁹ He is dressed informally in a silk *banyan*, a loose garment as-



7. Angelica Kauffman, *Dr. John Morgan*, 1764, graphite on laid paper, 18.1 × 14.9 cm. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.5184.

sociated with men of learning, and leans casually against a desk while gazing off as if distracted in deep thought. Kauffman's drawing of Morgan looking directly at the viewer/artist appears more tentative and younger than the serious mature doctor she portrayed in the painting (Fig. 7).³⁰ The open volume on the desk displays the title and frontispiece of *Adversaria Anatomica Omnia* (Bologna, 1741) by Giovanni Battista Morgagni (1682–1771), an eminent Italian anatomist. Morgan had an opportunity to meet Morgagni in Padua during his return journey from Italy, and he described the visit in his journal. The elderly Morgagni gave the American visitor a tour of his anatomical museum and presented Dr. Morgan with his two-volume *De Sedibus et Causis Morborum* (1761) in which he wrote a flattering inscription on the title page. Morgan noted with pride that Morgagni commented on the similarity of their names and suggested, with amusement, they might be cousins.³¹

Morgan casually points to a letter at the edge of the desk to call attention to Morgan's relationship with the Académie Royal de Chirurgie in Paris, where he spent several months on his way to Italy. In Paris he lodged at

the home of French surgeon Jean-Joseph Sue, who became an advocate for the American doctor. With Sue's encouragement Morgan presented his thesis on anatomical preparations with a dedication to the *Académie Royale de Chirurgie*, and he hoped they would publish it and elect him as a foreign associate member. In March, 1764, the thesis was provisionally approved pending acceptance of the dedication by the Académie de Chirurgie board.³² In November the *Pennsylvania Gazette* published an extract of a letter dated March, 1764, in French with English translation from a 'Gentleman in Paris' to his 'friend in Philadelphia.'³³ The letter informed readers that Dr. John Morgan's thesis received a favorable review from the Academy of Surgeons in Paris, and while the newspaper did not name the letter's author, it was Sue's letter to Morgan, who proudly forwarded it to the *Gazette* so all of Philadelphia would know of his success abroad. Morgan and Powel left Paris on 25 February to continue their journey through France to Italy, where they arrived by sea at Genoa on April 1, 1764.³⁴ They visited Lucca, Florence, Rome, and Naples, while Morgan waited anxiously for a letter to confirm the Académie de Chirurgie's acceptance of his thesis and dedication. When they returned to Rome in May he finally received the official letter of acceptance signed by Saveur François Morand, Secretary of the Académie de Chirurgie.³⁵ This is the letter Kauffman reproduced suspended at an angle so that both Morgan's name and Secretary Morand's signature are visible. Morgan was disappointed his thesis was never published nor was he granted honorary membership in the Académie as he hoped. However, on 5 July, 1764, the day before he and Powel left Rome, the Académie de Chirurgie awarded Morgan's diploma with the title of *correspondant*.³⁶

Dr. Morgan and Angelica Kauffman's Self Portrait

After his return to Philadelphia in 1765 Morgan became one of the founders of the first medical school in America at the College of Philadelphia. He continued to correspond with Abbé Peter Grant and other friends in Italy, and on August, 1765, Grant wrote to him with news of Angelica Kauffman, who had recently left Rome on her way to England: 'Many a time ... has she mentioned you to me with the greatest of pleasure ... recollecting with joy the various hours she passed in your good and interesting company.'³⁷ When the American painter John Singleton Copley was preparing for his study trip to Italy in 1773, Morgan provided letters of introduction to Abbé Grant, James Byres, and others, and Copley's fellow Bostonian Thomas Palmer wrote to Byres to introduce Copley adding, 'I have advis'd him to spend the most of his time at Rome.'³⁸

In December, 1774, Morgan wrote to Copley's younger half-brother, artist Henry Pelham, in reply to his request for information about 'the justly celebrated' Angelica and the 'Charming portrait' Morgan allowed him to copy. This was a self portrait Kauffman sent to Morgan as a gift in gratitude for his medical care in Rome. Morgan explained 'Her Disorder arose from her sedentary Life and close Application to Painting, to which she was so attentive, that sometimes, ... [when making copies] in the Palaces at Rome, ... she would not eat the whole day.' Angelica offered to pay him, but he refused money, so she proposed to paint for him any piece



‘by a great Master she could conveniently copy.’ Instead, Morgan begged for her own Portrait, ‘as an Artist I greatly valued, and on asking her Father’s permission, which he readily granted. She promised to send it to me, which she did about a year after when she came to London with a letter Accompanying it.’³⁹

Since the nineteenth century a portrait of Angelica Kauffman (Fig. 8) in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in Philadelphia was believed to be the original self portrait owned by Dr. Morgan and that it was donated to the Academy by Samuel Powel’s widow in 1817.⁴⁰ Based on these assumptions, Morgan’s biographer Whitfield J. Bell claimed in 1967 that John Morgan ‘presented it to Samuel Powel, whose widow gave it to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts,’ and in 1980 Arthur Marks stated that Morgan left the portrait to Powel in his will.⁴¹ Contrary to these assertions, however, there is no evidence or plausible reason that Morgan, who received Kauffman’s self portrait as a personal gift with her father’s permission, gave the painting to Samuel Powel, and Morgan’s will contains no such bequest.⁴² In fact, the earliest record of the portrait as a gift from Powel’s widow to the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts was not until the 1860’s.⁴³ The portrait remained in the Academy collection until 2002 when the Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks, which now owns and manages Powel House, purchased the portrait, where it is today.⁴⁴

Doubts about the authenticity of the Pennsylvania Academy portrait were expressed as early as 1967 in a condition report which identified the painting as *Portrait of Angelica Kauffman (or copy?)*, and the conservator noted: ‘the present design covers an earlier painting’ which required inpainting to cover brush marks from the earlier design.⁴⁵ In 2013 a second version

8. Copy of Angelica Kauffman, *Self Portrait*, oil on canvas, 57.2 x 45 cm. Philadelphia Society for the Preservation of Landmarks. Photo: Conservation Department, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

9. Angelica Kauffman, *Self Portrait*, 1765, oil on canvas, 55 x 43 cm. Private collection A & S.G. Photo: Courtesy of Rafael Valls Ltd.



10. Charles Willson Peale, *Self Portrait with Angelica and Portrait of Rachel*, c. 1782–85, oil on canvas, 91.8 x 68.9 cm. The Museum of Fine Arts Houston, The Bayou Bend Collection, gift of Miss Ima Hogg, B.60 49.

of the Angelica Kauffman self portrait came to light (Fig. 9), and a *pentimento* under later overpaint on the oval frame, as well as the quality of handling and expression, confirmed it as Kauffman's own work.⁴⁶ This raised doubts about the Powel House portrait (Fig. 8), and in 2017 it was examined in the Conservation Department at the Philadelphia Museum of Art and compared with the rediscovered self portrait and other securely identified Kauffman paintings.⁴⁷ The result of technical analysis confirmed that the Powel House painting is an early copy by another artist, a conclusion that raises additional questions: who painted the Powel House copy and how and when did Morgan's painting return to Europe?

Archival records in the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts complicate the matter. The portrait's accession number 1809.1 and first public exhibit in 1811 suggest it was an early acquisition within a few years of the Academy of Art's founding in 1805 by Philadelphia painter Charles Willson Peale (1741–1827) and others.⁴⁸ In 1950, Charles Coleman Sellers, great grandson of Charles Willson Peale and an authority on Peale's life and work, wrote to the Pennsylvania Academy with his opinion that, depending on provenance, he was sure the

Kauffman portrait was by Peale, 'a copy probably from the self-portrait owned by Dr John Morgan.'⁴⁹ The Academy registrar and curator at that time agreed with Coleman Sellers the painting had some characteristics of Peale's work.⁵⁰ These speculations suggest another connection between an American artist, Angelica Kauffman, and Rome.

In June, 1808, Charles Willson Peale wrote to his son, Rembrandt Peale, who was in Paris studying art, to report among other news that he added a portrait of Angelica Kauffman to his museum. He must have decided to add Kauffman's portrait soon after he learned of her death in Rome on November 15, 1807. Peale wrote that he was so impressed by the 'divine Angelica,' her brilliance and simple beauty and charm, that he later named his daughter after her, Angelica Kauffman Peale.⁵¹ In a self portrait seated at his easel Peale portrayed his daughter as an impish young girl reaching behind him for his brush as he turns away from painting his wife (Fig. 10).⁵² Angelica Kauffman Peale became a painter like her brothers Raphaele, Rembrandt, Rubens, and Titian Peale, and her famous namesake.

Peale's portrait of Kauffman was a significant addition to Peale's museum in Philadelphia, which displayed portraits of American and European statesmen, military leaders, and other worthy persons along with his collection of natural specimens and scientific instruments. As a young man Peale knew Angelica Kauffman in London, where he studied painting from 1767–1769 at the same time that Kauffman became a Founding Member of the Royal Academy of Arts in 1768. Peale's autobiography, a discursive memoir he wrote from 1825 to 1827, described Angelica as 'an Instance of the perfection in painting' and noted: 'The Portrait of her in the Museum is a copy from one she painted, and was brought into this country by Doctor

Morgan.⁵³ The Powel House painting may be the portrait Peale added to his museum in 1808 and the same painting acquired by the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts when Peale's portraits and other items in his Museum were sold and dispersed in 1854.⁵⁴

How and when the original Kauffman self portrait left Morgan's possession, or when Peale (or another artist) may have copied it, is not known. In 1788, a year before Morgan died, he sold most of his household goods, including paintings and other things brought back from Italy in anticipation of moving to Princeton to live with his brother.⁵⁵ His will dated July 22, 1788, designated funds for charitable bequests to Philadelphia hospitals and churches, his medical books, including the volumes by the 'late professor of Padua Giovanni Battista Morgagni, ... presented to me by the author with his presentation therein written by himself in the Title Pages', to the College of Physicians, and 'the rest, residue and reminder of my estate, real and personal,' to his brother George Morgan in trust for the use of his children 'with power to sell or hold the whole or part' for their education and maintenance.⁵⁶ Angelica Kauffman's self portrait may have been sold by Morgan in 1788 along with his other paintings or by his family after 1789, but in either case the self portrait's history after Morgan's death remains a mystery.

By the time Angelica Kauffman returned to live in Rome in 1782, she was a well known celebrity. She lived there for the rest of her life in a house with a large studio on the via Sistina where she entertained friends and Grand Tour visitors. Her paintings were purchased by American collectors, who spread her fame across the Atlantic. Engravings after her paintings became popular subjects as sources for elite schoolgirls' fancy embroidery.⁵⁷

One of the few American women who went on a Grand Tour was Martha Coffin Derby (1783-1832), who traveled in Europe between 1801-1803 with her husband Richard Crowinshield Derby, one of the wealthiest men in Salem, Massachusetts.⁵⁸ Derby's letters express delight in acquiring new experiences and culture. In December, 1802, she wrote from Rome: 'I have seen ... Angelica Kauffman and her beautiful paintings. She is nearly sixty and draws charmingly, elegantly, and is considered the finest artist in Italy. Her manners are very pleasing ... How little did I suppose, when her name [was written] among the other celebrated painters in my common-place book, that I should ever know her.'⁵⁹

Kauffman's reputation as a celebrated artist continued to attract American travelers and art collectors through the nineteenth century and forged one of the most enduring relationships between America and Rome.

Notes

1 Ingamells 1997; Wilton and Bignamini 1996.

2 Prown 1997; Marks 1980, pp. 4-24.

3 Powel 2001. The manuscript is in the Hare papers, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia.

4 Powel 2001, pp. 65, 79.

5 Powel 2001, pp. 66, 90.

- 6 Morgan 1907.
- 7 Morgan 1907, p. 251.
- 8 Morgan 1907 p. 249.
- 9 Morgan 1907, pp. 250, 254-5.
- 10 Powel, Letter from Rome, 5 July 1764 to Samuel Morris, Philadelphia, in Moon 1898, p. 471.
- 11 Powel 2001, pp. 84-5.
- 12 Lasser 2017, pp. 51-54; Ingamells 1997, p. 732.
- 13 *Portrait of Brownlow, 9th Earl of Exeter*, signed/dated Naples, 1764, Burghley House Preservation Trust; *John Parker, later 1st Lord Boringdon*, 1764. The National Trust, Saltram.
- 14 Vallardi sketchbook. Victoria & Albert Museum, E.345-391; Walch 1977.
- 15 *Portrait of John Apthorp (1730-1772) of Boston and His Daughters*, 1764, oil on canvas, 96.5 x 134.6 cm.
- 16 Ingamells 1997, p. 22.
- 17 See, for example, *The Cognoscenti*, The National Trust, Petworth; Watson 1939-1940, pp. 34, 36, 41, 45; Patch's *Mediterranean Harbour Scene* purchased by Apthorp sold Sotheby's, London, 6 July 2017.
- 18 Marks 1980, p. 22.
- 19 Bulfinch 1896, p. 70; on Bulfinch in Italy see Tommaso Manfredi in this volume.
- 20 Von Erffa and Staley 1986, pp. 14-24.
- 21 Roworth 2007, pp. 42-6.
- 22 Powel, Letter from London, to Samuel Morris, Philadelphia, 3 September, 1763, in Moon 1898, p. 469.
- 23 *Portrait of Benjamin West*, oil on canvas, cm. 60.5 x 47.5, signed and dated 1762, Inv. 1890, no. 1928 (no photograph available). Firenze, Uffizi: Nuovi acquisti delle Gallerie Fiorentine, 1960, no. 20; Webster and Crinò 1971, cat. 66 (illustrated); Rather 2016, pp. 100, 266 n. 56.
- 24 *Benjamin West*, chalk. Vallardi sketchbook. Victoria & Albert Museum, E.395-1927; *Benjamin West*, 1763, black chalk on greenish paper, 41.9 x 31.8 cm. National Portrait Gallery, London, NPG 1649.
- 25 Powel, Letter from London, to Samuel Morris, Philadelphia, 3 Sept 1763, in Moon 1898, p. 469.
- 26 Morgan 1907, p. 263.
- 27 Walch 1977, p. 108, no. 43, identified him as possibly James Boswell, whom Kauffman also met in Italy, but Boswell's features are different in his known portraits; Victoria & Albert Museum, E.387-1927, chalk, 19.2 x 13.2 cm.
- 28 *Dr. John Morgan*, 1764, oil on canvas, 144.1 x 108.3 cm (framed). National Portrait Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, this acquisition made possible by a generous contribution from the James Smithson Society, NPG 78.221.
- 29 Bell 1966, p. 86.
- 30 *Dr. John Morgan of Philadelphia*, 1764, graphite on laid paper, 18.1 x 14.9 cm. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection. Formerly attributed to Benjamin West.
- 31 Morgan 1907, pp. 104-108; Morgan's will identifies the medical books he left to the members of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia, including: 'three volumes in Latin (folio) of the Works of the late Professor at Padua Johanni Baptiste Morgagni *de causis and sedibus morborum* and presented to me by the Author, with his presentation therein written by Himself in the Title Pages.'
- 32 Bell 1966, p. 80.
- 33 *Pennsylvania Gazette*, November 15, 1764, no. 1873, *Extract of a Letter from a Gen-*

tleman in Paris, to his Friends at Philadelphia, March, 1764, p. 3. The letter was reprinted in the *New-York Gazette*, November 22, 1764.

- 34 Bell 1966, pp. 83, 274 n. 17, letter to John-Joseph Sue, April 1764.
- 35 Bell 1966, *John Morgan*, p. 274, n. 12. Morgan sent his thesis to the Académie de Chirurgie, Paris, on May 19, 1764.
- 36 Bell 1966, p. 276, n. 36. Académie Royale de Chirurgie, Minutes des Procès-Verbaux, July 5, 1764.
- 37 Bell 1966, p. 86, 275, n. 27. Abbé Peter Grant, Rome, August 31, 1765, to John Morgan, London. Gratz Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.
- 38 *Letters & Papers* 1914, pp. 205-211; Thomas Palmer, Boston, letter to James Byres, Rome, November 10, 1773, p. 202.
- 39 John Morgan to Henry Pelham, December 27, 1774, *Letters & Papers*, pp. 282-283.
- 40 See Maxey 2006.
- 41 Bell 1966, p. 275, n. 27; Marks 1980, p. 20.
- 42 Will Book U.377, July 22, 1788, Register of Wills, Philadelphia. He died on Oct. 15, 1789.
- 43 *Summary of findings on archival search for restrictions on deaccessioning European art* (Jan. 28, 2002). On Kauffman portrait: 'No documentation has survived documenting this early donation.' Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts (PAFA) archives.
- 44 Matthew Schultz, Executive Director, PAFA, to Derek Gillman, Philadelphia Society for the Preservations of Landmarks, Oct. 18, 2002, PAFA archives.
- 45 Theodor Siegel, Conservator and Technical Advisor, Sept. 28, 1967, PAFA archives.
- 46 Rafael Valls Ltd, London, 2013, no. 23, 'Angelica Kauffman, Self Portrait with an elaborately ruched Lace Collar and a Fur Stole in a Painted Oval,' oil on canvas, 55 x 43 cm.
- 47 Baumgärtel 2018, pp. 47-49.
- 48 Letter from Pam Lajeunesse, Assistant to the Registrar, PAFA to Prof. George B. Tatum, University of Delaware, Nov. 24, 1975, PAFA archives.
- 49 Charles Sellers to Barbara Roberts, Registrar, June 24, 1950, PAFA Archives.
- 50 Barbara Roberts, Registrar, to Charles Sellers, June 28, 1950, PAFA Archives.
- 51 Charles Willson Peale to Rembrandt Peale, June 26, 1808, in Sellers 1952, p. 115.
- 52 *Self-Portrait with Angelica and Portrait of Rachel*, 1782-85, oil on canvas, 91.8 x 68.9 cm. Museum of Fine Arts Houston, Bayou Bend.
- 53 Miller and Hart 1983, pp. 319-320.
- 54 Goodyear 1976.
- 55 Bell 1966, p. 261.
- 56 Will Book U.377, July 22, 1788; Register of Wills, Philadelphia.
- 57 See McInnis 1999b, pp. 41, 152, 156, 157 and Nylander 1976.
- 58 Lanier 2007.
- 59 Martha Coffin Derby, Rome to Eleanor Foster Coffin, Portland, Dec. 19, 1802; Lanier 2007, p. 38.

Championing Liberty: The Roman Sculptor Giuseppe Ceracchi in Britain and in America

Notorious for his central role in a failed plot – the ‘Conspiration des poignards’ – to assassinate First Consul Napoleon Bonaparte at the Opera in Paris on 11 October 1800 which led to his arrest and death by guillotine in January 1801 at the age of fifty, the Roman sculptor Giuseppe Ceracchi (1751–1801; Fig. 1) collided personally and professionally with many of the most important political figures and pioneering artistic developments of his turbulent age.¹ Partly as a result of his highly itinerant lifestyle traveling for work throughout continental Europe, Britain and America, and his passionate engagement with revolutionary politics, Ceracchi is now better known as a historical figure than as an artist. With more than two-thirds of his documented works lost or unidentified, he remains an artistic enigma.²

1. John Trumbull, *Giuseppe Ceracchi*, c. 1792, oil on wood, 9.8 x 8.1 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 36.35.



Ceracchi was a celebrated portraitist, lauded by Horace Walpole among others, and he modeled from life the likenesses of the leading international statesmen, revolutionaries, scientific and cultural figures of his time.³ However portraiture was never Ceracchi's primary ambition as an artist, only a means to ingratiate himself with prospective patrons, as his aim was to leverage his virtuosity in this genre in order to obtain important public commissions to ensure his fame. To this end Ceracchi came to know the key personages of his era, and while he captured their characters as much as their physical attributes masterfully and rapidly in terracotta models drawn from life, they in turn, informed and transformed his cultural and political outlook.

An overview of the most notable figures Ceracchi encountered and portrayed in Britain and in America provides an insight into his international movements and the complex network of his associations which determined his artistic and political trajectory. Further, based on new discoveries about Ceracchi's seven-year stay in Britain from 1773–80, the pivotal period of his artistic and professional maturity, this contribution explores the origins of his ambition to design a public monument to commemorate the democratic ideal of lib-

erty, a radical departure from his Italian and all but one of his European commissions, either princely or papal, that glorified autocracy. It was Ceracchi's personal and professional pursuit of liberty that propelled him to America where he traveled on two occasions from 1790-92 and from 1794-95, sojourns which will be re-visited in the context of new research.⁴

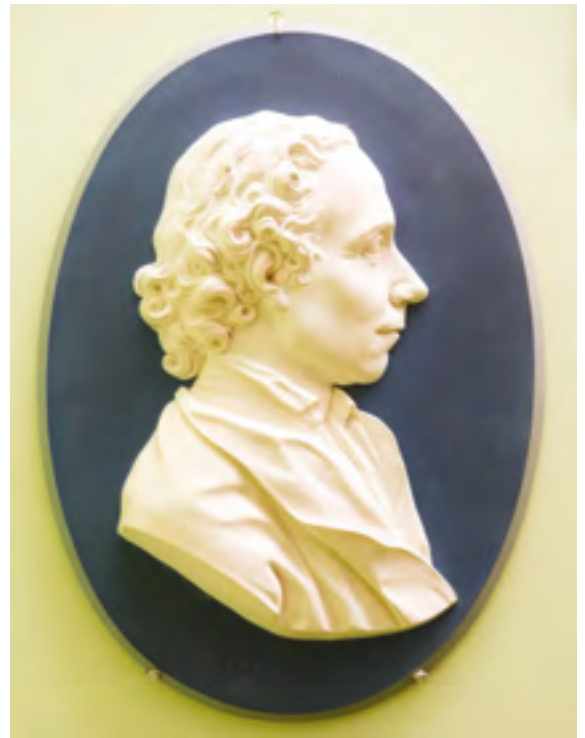
Born in Rome on 4 July 1751 in Via del Pellegrino to a noted family of goldsmiths, Ceracchi initially followed his family profession, but his father, upon recognizing his talent, apprenticed him to the sculptor Tommaso Righi (1722/3-1802) who directed Ceracchi to make small models of the most important sculptures in Rome, both antique and modern. The aim was to transition from small-scale models to larger, more monumental sculpture, and it provided Ceracchi an invaluable experience of classical statuary in addition to a keen sensibility for Renaissance and Baroque masters. Recently published correspondence between Ceracchi and his friend the intellectual Abate Giovanni Cristoforo Amaduzzi underscores this point, as Amaduzzi notes that Ceracchi singled out the drapery of Gian Lorenzo Bernini's figure of *Carità* in his Urban VIII tomb at St. Peter's for its excellence – an insight into his artistic foundations and aesthetic ideals.⁵ Ceracchi is often labelled as a neo-classicist, yet his knowledge of Baroque bravura defined aspects of his sculptural style, particularly his vivid naturalistic renderings of facial expressions which render his busts lifelike. Significantly, Ceracchi also trained in Rome with Andrea Bergondi (c.1743-c.1789) a sculptor still working in a fully Baroque idiom. From 1768-71 Ceracchi frequented the Accademia del Nudo at the Capitoline, and in 1771 he won the second prize in the first class of sculpture at the 'Concorso Clementino' at the Accademia di San Luca.⁶

In that same year, at the age of nineteen, Ceracchi traveled to Florence, commissioned by the Albani to model family likenesses (presently unidentified), and he may have met Sir Horace Mann, British diplomatic representative to the Grand Dukes of Tuscany, although no evidence supports the traditional view that Mann wrote recommendations for him to travel to London.

Ceracchi in Britain

Ceracchi's 1773 trip to London, where he is first documented in October of that year,⁷ was surely dictated by his professional contacts and associations with British clients and agents in Rome, that almost certainly included freelancing for the Irish antiquarian dealer, Matthew Nulty (active in Rome 1758-died 1788), who also arranged for the restoration of excavated antique statuary, a practice Ceracchi very likely engaged in, although none of his restorations have yet been identified. Indeed, as is confirmed by the sculptor Joseph Nolleken's (1737-1823) first biographer John Thomas Smith (1766-1833), Ceracchi arrived in London with a letter of recommendation from Nulty.⁸

Having witnessed first-hand in Rome British travelers and agents not only



2. Giuseppe Ceracchi (after), *Dr. Joseph Priestly*, jasperware after model of 1777-79. Wedgewood Museum, Stoke-on-Trent.

acquire antique sculpture, but also commission copies after antiques, and increasingly, commission contemporary sculptures of classical subject matter, Ceracchi hoped to capitalize on this burgeoning market. His political inclinations when he arrived in London were in large part formed in the crucible of revolutionary events unfolding between Britain and America in those years. In all likelihood it was initially through Noelleken's acquaintances that Ceracchi first met liberal political theorists and dissenters such as Dr. Joseph Priestly (Fig. 2) and James Fordyce, both of whom he portrayed (Fordyce bust presently unidentified),⁹ and Whig statesmen such as Admiral Augustus Keppel (Figs. 3-4).¹⁰ He was patronized by two prime ministers who supported constitutional rights for American colonists; Charles Watson-Wentworth, the 2nd Marquess of Rockingham (a patron of Noellekens) and William Petty Fitzmaurice, the Earl of Shelburne (the patron of Priestly), who secured peace with America brokering the Peace of Paris in 1783, political positions Ceracchi came to support. He also carved a marble bust of the Corsican patriot and resistance fighter Filippo Antonio Pasquale de' Paoli, at that time in London in exile, a work which he exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1779 (presently unidentified).¹¹

Ceracchi's professional contacts in London, who included initially not only Nollekens, but also Italian expatriates such as the sculptor Agostino Carlini (1718-1790), the engraver Francesco Bartolozzi (1727-1815) and the painter Giovanni Battista Cipriani (1727-1785), introduced him to a thriving art market which was entrepreneurial in spirit and vastly different from the traditional patronage opportunities at European courts. Ceracchi was employed in the extraordinary speculative housing boom in London that provided work for all manner of artisans and craftsmen, and he witnessed the public appetite for art exhibitions and for grand civic monuments, including the success of public subscriptions for art projects.

It is not known where Ceracchi worked when he first arrived in Britain, but by 1775 he was engaged by the architect Robert Adam (1728-1792), who had deep and enduring ties to Rome. In that year Adam designed



3. Giuseppe Ceracchi, *Admiral Augustus Keppel*, marble, signed 'CERACCHI FACIEBAT 1779'. Wentworth Woodhouse Mausoleum, South Yorkshire, U.K.

4. Robert Samuel Marquard, after Giuseppe Ceracchi, *Admiral Augustus Keppel*, 1782, print, stipple printed in color on paper. British Museum, London, 1852,1009.623.

the classically inspired funerary monument to John Boyle, 3rd Earl of Glasgow in the grounds of Kelburn Castle, commissioned by his widow. Ceracchi's early biographer Giuseppe Ignazio Montanari, who knew Ceracchi's friends and Ceracchi's widow Therese Schleissshan, and who had access to his personal correspondence, records that: 'For my lady Glasgow he made in marble a muse leaning against a funerary urn', a description that perfectly matches the figural sculpture for the Glasgow monument, depicting an allegorical figure of Virtue with an urn (Fig. 5).¹² Although this has not been previously noted in Ceracchi scholarship, Ceracchi's authorship is suggested in Nicolas Pevsner's *The Buildings of Scotland*, where he states: 'the figure and urn may have been carved for the Earl of Glasgow by Giuseppe Ceracchi, an accomplished Italian sculptor.'¹³ Another example of Ceracchi's early employment by Adam in Britain, also unrecognized in the scholarly literature, is linked to Adam's work (beginning in 1771) for the ongoing restoration of Stowe House, for Richard Grenville-Temple, 2nd Earl Temple. Montanari records that the 2nd Earl Temple commissioned from Ceracchi four colossal allegorical statues representing Music, Astronomy, History and Painting, works which are also listed in a 1788 inventory probably redacted by Ceracchi, for which however, no successive documentation has emerged (the statues are presently unidentified).¹⁴ The 1821 sale catalogue for the dispersal of the Stowe estate lists a lot in the Queen's Temple described as 'A marble statue of Britannia by Ceracchi' – this is annotated in the catalogue with the words 'plaster – Withdrawn' (presently unidentified).¹⁵ Taken together, these evidences tie Ceracchi to the Stowe project. The two principal iconographic themes promoted at Stowe by the 2nd Earl, patriotism and liberty, feature prominently as statuary throughout the estate, and Ceracchi doubtless was introduced to these concepts at Stowe long before he traveled to America, where he later proposed monuments featuring these ideals and symbols.



5. Robert Adam and Giuseppe Ceracchi, *Memorial to John Boyle, 3rd Earl of Glasgow*, 1775-77, marble. Kelburn Castle, U.K.

Opposite

6. Giuseppe Ceracchi, *Portrait of a Young Nobleman*, 1777, marble profile relief, signed 'Joh. Ceracchi fecit.' to truncation, 64.8 cm. Christie's London, 13 December 2018, lot. 158.

7. Giuseppe Ceracchi, *James Madison*, 1794, alabaster profile relief. Diplomatic Reception Rooms, United States State Department, Washington D.C.



By 1776 Ceracchi's name appears in the Royal Academy Records as resident at Queen's Square Court, Soho, the first year that he exhibited a work at the Academy, and the first year he applied to join, unsuccessfully.¹⁶ Ceracchi continued to exhibit there annually for the next three consecutive years – presenting some works as sculptures in the round, some as bas-relief panels and some as 'medallions' or roundels, and he attempted on two further occasions to be admitted to the Academy, but without success.¹⁷ These lists provide insight into Ceracchi's evolving professional career in Britain.

In 1777, Ceracchi is listed in the Academy Records as residing at King's Square Court, Dean Street, Soho, Carlini's house, and aside from his Academy submission he also exhibited a portrait bust of an admiral, that Walpole helpfully identified in his catalogue notes as Admiral Augustus Keppel and that he described as 'extremely like'.¹⁸ The Keppel portrait bust was evidently admired as the 2nd Marquess of Rockingham commissioned a marble version from Ceracchi, which is signed and dated by the artist '1779' (Fig. 3). After the death of the 2nd Marquess, this bust was moved into the Mausoleum at Wentworth Woodhouse (mausoleum and decorations completed in 1792), a shrine dedicated to the so-called 'Rockingham Whigs'.¹⁹ Montanari also notes that 'Lord Dockingham' – certainly Rockingham, commissioned a colossal herm figure of Mercury from Ceracchi, and an identical Ceracchi subject appears in the 1777 Royal Academy list, but to date has not been identified.²⁰ As the sculptures presented at the Royal Academy were generally small-scale models, the 2nd Marquess most likely viewed Ceracchi's presentation work of the Mercury at the Academy exhibition, prompting him to subsequently commission a larger version from the artist (presently unidentified).

Also in 1777, Ceracchi exhibited bas-relief portraits of two young aristocrats at the Academy, listed as: 'no. 50 Two medallions of two young noblemen.'²¹ One of these can now be identified as the marble profile of a young boy, signed 'Joh. Ceracchi fect.', sold at Christies London in 2018 (Fig. 6). This mode of bas-relief portraiture provided Ceracchi with professional flexibility, as these portrait models could be

translated into hardstone sculptures intended as independent artworks, such as the pendants of the young noblemen of 1777, and also as busts he would later carve of several prominent American statesmen, such as that in alabaster of James Madison (Fig. 7), and moreover, bas-relief models could also be reproduced commercially, as in the case of engravings such as that after Admiral Keppel (Fig. 4), and serve for re-casting, such as that of Dr. Priestly, in earthenware by Wedgewood (Fig. 2).

It was through Carlini that in 1777 Ceracchi received the commission from William Chambers (1723-1796) for the colossal figures carved in Portland stone of Temperance and Fortitude, destined for the outer edges of the

façade attic pediment of Somerset House (Carlini was commissioned to carve the two central figures).²² Based on the prototypes of the antique figures of the Dacians on the arch of Constantine, but transformed from defeated warriors into allegories of virtues, these monumental sculptures were an important commission for a major civic building in London that housed the Royal Academy (Figs. 8a-b). Yet it is important to note that the overall design for Somerset House, including sculptural embellishments, depended on Chambers's architectural co-ordination. Indeed, the payments to Ceracchi for his work for Chambers document that he also executed wax models for five ornamental masks for the building.

Ceracchi also continued to be employed by Adam for modeling architectural and figural decorations, including a very well-received large decorative frieze, fourteen feet in length by six feet in height, cast in "Adam's composition" (a mixture of cement with oil, known as "Liardet's cement") of the *Sacrifice of Bacchus* for the French art dealer, Noel Desenfans' first house in Portland Road.²³ After Desenfans' death in 1808, this work, comprising more than 20 figures, was acquired for the Coade factory, and as John Smith notes, "To him [Ceracchi], in all probability, is due much of the beautiful relief-work we admire in the domestic decoration of Adam's houses".²⁴ Ceracchi is known to have produced over 170 decorative casts representing subjects from the antique such as triumphs, bacchanals and sacrifices for Adam and Chambers,²⁵ demonstrating that his primary artistic activity and source of revenue in Britain was jobbing decorative work directed by others.

It is evident from his ongoing Royal Academy submissions however, that Ceracchi's ambition was to obtain commissions of greater artistic merit and prestige, as befitting an academically-schooled artist. In 1778 Ceracchi modeled a likeness of Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792), surely to curry favor with the Royal Academy director in another attempt to gain admittance to that institution.²⁶ In spite of this being the only bust taken from life of Reynolds, the painter never commissioned a marble copy of the model (it is not known if Reynolds owned a version of the original model in plaster), and a marble bust was only carved later in Rome by Ceracchi, before 1788 (Fig. 9). This marble bust was donated to the Royal Academy in 1851, by Henry Labouchere, 1st Baron Taunton, one of the commissioners for the 1851 Exhibition. Interestingly, the painted plaster cast of Reynolds associated with Ceracchi now sited in the Octagon of the Academy differs from the marble or later casts in its different treatment of the *chalmys*.

Ceracchi explored all avenues in Britain to cultivate potential clients, including art tutoring, as in the case of the sculptress Lady Anne Seymour Damer (1749-1828), the goddaughter and ward of Walpole, for whom he modeled a life-size plaster likeness posed as an allegory of sculpture. While he was paid for the plaster model he never received a commission to carve a marble version, and that on view today in the British Museum is a later copy.²⁷

In 1779 Ceracchi exhibited his most ambitious work at the Royal Academy: 'Sketch in clay of the Earl of Chatham's monument; designed for a niche in St. Paul's.'²⁸ That he exhibited a model for this prize civic commission for a monument to the recently deceased William Pitt, 1st Earl



8a above and 8b opposite. Giuseppe Ceracchi, *Temperance and Fortitude*, 1777-78, Portland stone, Somerset House, London, Façade.



Chatham, which already had been promised to the British sculptor, John Bacon (1740-1799), speaks volumes about Ceracchi's determination. No written or visual record of Ceracchi's project survives, yet a description of Bacon's first model, that was submitted to the City's Common Council committee on 28 December 1778, records that it featured a standing figure of Lord Chatham raising the cap of Liberty.²⁹

John Smith claimed that despite his 'excellence' Ceracchi 'met with so little encouragement in this country' that his ambitions were frustrated and that was the reason that he left London, whereas Walpole notes 'that in spite of commissions, our sculptor fell into debt and went suddenly off'.³⁰ Whatever the exact circumstances of his decision to leave London in February 1780, it was very likely the futility of striving against what he believed to be unequal odds, that favoured British artists that caused Ceracchi to abandon Britain, and instead, to pursue fame elsewhere.

From London Ceracchi traveled via Amsterdam to Vienna on recommendations provided by the Imperial Ambassador to Britain, Count Ludovico Barbiano di Belgiojoso (whose marble bust by Ceracchi was exhibited in 1779 at the Royal Academy; presently unidentified)³¹ – a court where he was well received and where he returned frequently. And it was during a second, 1783-85 sojourn in Vienna that Ceracchi was admitted to the culturally elite Freemason's Lodge, *Zur wahren Eintracht* (True Harmony), by the Master of the Lodge and naturalist Dr. Ignaz von Born (who commissioned a bas-relief portrait of himself from Ceracchi, presently unidentified).³² Ceracchi had returned to Vienna from Rome to deliver marble busts of the terracotta models he had earlier prepared of imperial courtiers, including one of the field marshal the Count of Lascy, and it was through Lascy and Ceracchi's freemasonry associations that the sculptor cultivated the important contacts which would lead him directly to America. On the Count's urging, on 29 April 1783, the distinguished Dutch biologist and chemist then resident in Vienna, Dr. Jan Ingenhousz (a friend of Dr. Von Born) wrote to his correspondent and fellow scientist and freemason Benjamin Franklin, then in Paris, regarding opportunities for work in America for Ceracchi:

'A few days ago the greatest favourite of the Emperour Count *Lacy* marechal of our armies requested a favour of me, Viz. to ask you whether you Should think it would answer the purpose, if the famous Statuary mr. *Ceraqui* of Rome, who has work'd in London and has now finish'd an excellent bust of the Emperour of Marechal *Lacy*, *Laudun* &c. should goe over to America in expectation of being employed in erecting or making marmor and Such like monuments, which the present Generation will probably erect to the perpetual memory of those eminent men who have had a great share in promoting the greatest revolution, which exist in human history, as also of the revolution it Self ..., and money should be Scarce, gouvernement could grant him land.'³³

Franklin responded to Ingenhousz on 16 May 1783:

'With regard to the Statuary you mention, I hardly think it can be worth his while at present to go to America in Expectation of being employ'd there. Private Persons are not rich enough to encourage sufficiently the fine Arts; and therefore our Geniuses all go to Europe. In England at present the best

History-Painter, West; the best Portrait-Painter, Copely; and the best Landscape-Painter, Taylor at Bath, are all Americans. And the Public being burthen'd by its War-Debts, will certainly think of paying them, before it goes into the Expence of Marble Monuments. He might indeed as you hint be easily paid in Land, but Land will produce him nothing without Labour; and he and his Workmen must subsist while they fashion their Figures. After a few Years, such an Artist may find Employment; and possibly we may discover a white Marble a little easier to work than that we have at present, which tho' it bears a fine Polish, is reckon'd too hard.³⁴

Significantly, Ceracchi's proposal followed directly on the heels of the Congressional endorsement of the Anglo-American Preliminary Peace, on 15 April 1783. Furthermore Ceracchi had suggested not only carving sculptures of individual figures of 'eminent men', he also had presented the novel idea of a monument dedicated to the American Revolution. Ceracchi also proposed receiving land in lieu of payment, an entrepreneurial strategy surely related to the lucrative housing boom he witnessed in London under the direction of Adam and Chambers, in which he was involved only as an artisan.

Notwithstanding Franklin's pragmatic dismissal of Ceracchi's proposal, it is notable that only three months later, on 7 August 1783, the Continental Congress approved a resolution to erect an equestrian statue to Washington in front of the site of the future Congress building.³⁵ The timing of Ceracchi's proposal, followed by the Congressional resolution, indicates the degree to which he had grasped the cultural *Zeitgeist*. Although it would take another seven years before he traveled to America, Ceracchi did not relinquish his dream of an international career projecting national monuments.

By 1785, Ceracchi instead contracted to design and sculpt a monument to the Patriot movement in Holland, in memory of the Dutch patriot Joan Derk van der Capellen (died 1781), who had supported the cause for American Independence and the recognition of the recently created United States of America.³⁶ Payment for this monument was raised by public subscription, a stratagem Ceracchi also knew from his stay in London.

Ceracchi's proposal was to depict van der Cappellen as a Roman Tribune of the people defeating tyranny, with one of the outlying statues representing



Opposite

9. Giuseppe Ceracchi, *Joshua Reynolds*, modeled 1778, carved in Rome before 1788, marble, signed 'Cirachi Sculpsit Roma', 72 x 50 x 27 cm. Royal Academy of Arts, London.

10. Giuseppe Ceracchi, *George Washington*, 1791-2, terracotta, 75 cm. Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes.

Minerva holding aloft a spear supporting a Phrygian cap – the symbol for Liberty that Ceracchi would have remembered from Bacon's first model for the memorial to Pitt.

While Ceracchi's monument to van der Capellen ultimately foundered for political reasons as the Protest movement was crushed, in a later written testimonial Ceracchi speaks of the personal political "conversion" he underwent during the planning stages for the monument, which led him to fully embrace the cause of democracy.³⁷ Ceracchi's increasingly radical political engagements brought him to the notice of the authorities in Rome and his residency there and also in Vienna became untenable. In autumn 1790 he set sail from Amsterdam for America, in part to flee Europe, but also determined to win the commission for a national monument dedicated to George Washington.

Ceracchi in America

A letter Ceracchi wrote to the Abate Amaduzzi from Philadelphia dated 15 March 1791, describes his delight at having arrived in Philadelphia 'the beautiful city of destiny for my nobil project' and he described his ambitious plan for the monument in detail.³⁸ He intended for the equestrian figure of Washington to hold aloft a book (the Constitution), while seeming to orate to the assembled spectators. Significantly, he also notes that he proposed a subscription for the payment for the monument, as was arranged for the van der Capellen monument, and that many Dutch patriots were disposed to make contributions, and he inquires of Amaduzzi if anyone in Rome 'had such a liberal spirit' that they would contribute, as by that date Roman society included many liberal thinkers.³⁹

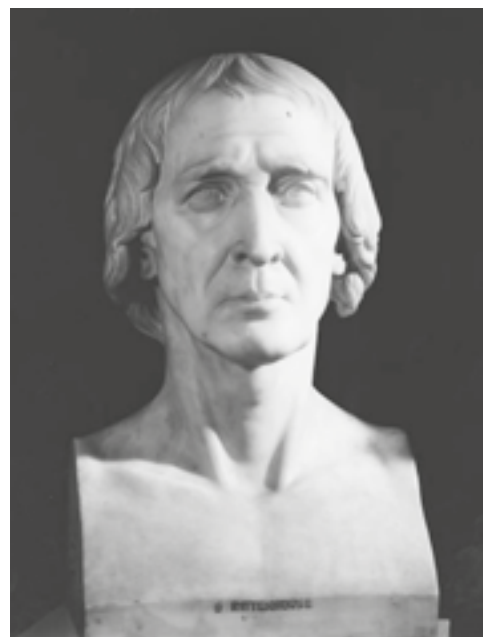
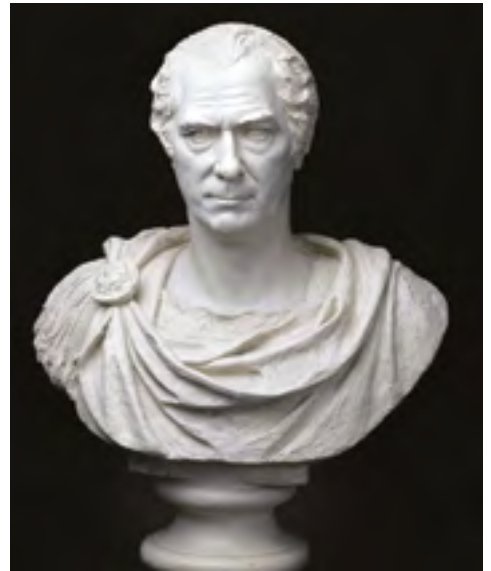
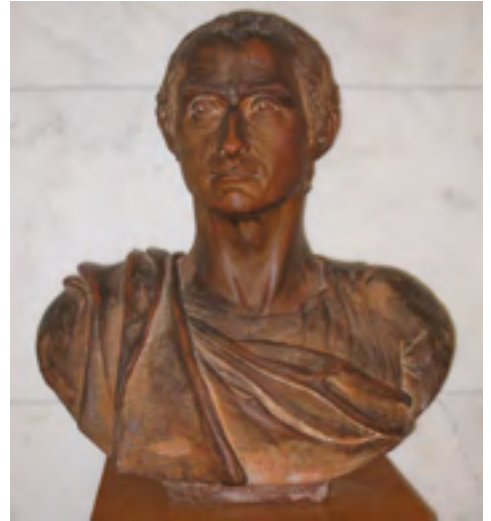
By August 1791, Ceracchi was at work on the likeness of George Washington and he writes on 12 August that General Washington happily sat to him in his apartment for three consecutive days. Ceracchi describes vividly that the satisfaction he took from being alone face to face with the '*Uomo il più Celebre del Secolo*' (most celebrated man of the century) can not be imagined.⁴⁰ Ceracchi declared the bust finished in a letter of 14 November 1791.⁴¹ The likeness Ceracchi modeled of Washington during these sittings is the terracotta bust of Washington today in Nantes (Fig. 10). Portrayed as a Roman general, this magisterial image of Washington was especially appreciated for its realism. Indeed after Ceracchi's death, Antonio Canova (1757-1822), who was commissioned in 1815 for a marble statue of Washington for the North Carolina State House, requested to view Ceracchi's model before he began working on his own sculpture as Ceracchi's likeness was known to be the most accurate portrait of the first president.⁴² Ceracchi had brought the terracotta model back with him to Europe when he left America in 1792, and he had proudly exhibited it in Amsterdam upon his arrival there in July of that year. The model served Ceracchi to make smaller marble replicas, and several were also made posthumously, such as that recently acquired for Mount Vernon (see Fig. 7 in the Introduction).

In addition to George Washington, Ceracchi had assiduously cultivated the most eminent American statesmen and ingratiated himself with

many of them by offering to portray them from life in terracotta busts which he hoped to eventually translate into marble sculptures that he could sell to them to secure their patronage also for future commissions. But Ceracchi's principal aim was to gain the support of these statesmen for his greater objective for the commission for the national monument. It is worth noting that over the course of his two trips to America, Ceracchi is documented as modeling from life some thirty-six prominent Americans, including the Founding Fathers John Jay and George Clinton and the astronomer and scientist David Rittenhouse, giving an indication of his social networking (Figs. 11-13).⁴³ Some two dozen of these terracotta busts were shipped to Ceracchi in Italy after he returned to Europe in 1792, and he translated some of them into marble, but the majority are lost, and they remain an object of historical fascination and frustration.⁴⁴

Ceracchi corresponded regularly with many of the American Founding Fathers he came to know by means of the portraits he modeled of them and his American sojourns and commissions have been documented primarily through these letters.⁴⁵ As is known, on 31 October 1791, Ceracchi submitted a written description to Congress for his plan for a national monument to George Washington and he displayed the six-foot tall terracotta model for the monument at Oeller's Hotel in Philadelphia. Significantly, Ceracchi entitled his proposal 'A Monument Designed to Perpetuate the Memory of the American Revolution' – referencing his 1783 proposal to Franklin to commemorate the 'greatest revolution, which exist in human history' – and to highlight that his innovative design was not intended simply as a monument to an individual, but rather to the political ideal of democracy.

Ceracchi's 1791 proposal was essentially the same project he had described to Amaduzzi over seven months earlier, indicating that he had traveled to America with a plan in hand, probably in line with ideas he had contemplated since he first promoted himself to Franklin. The design featured an equestrian statue of Washington – central to the original Congressional brief – but the figure of Washington was mounted atop a huge rock (this main grouping was to be sixty foot tall), and the rock encircled by four colossal allegorical groups in marble, instead of the four bas-reliefs relating to Washington's military campaigns originally envisioned for the pedestal in the congressional brief. Ceracchi's complicated iconographic program included 'an elderly consul trampling a crown before the altar of Liberty' and 'on a marine beach a seated female figure representing America holding in her hand the cap of Liberty and a sceptre' – a display that despite its allusions to democracy was still fundamentally Baroque.⁴⁶ Notwithstanding his intense social interactions with America's greatest thinkers and also artists, and the fact that he discussed his national project with many of them as his letters suggest, Ceracchi did not make alterations to his overblown project to tailor it to the spirit of the post-revolutionary America that he encountered. This is all the more surprising as Ceracchi was one of the founders of the short-



Opposite

11. Giuseppe Ceracchi, *John Jay*, 1792, terracotta. Supreme Court, Washington D.C.

12. Giuseppe Ceracchi, *George Clinton*, 1791-92, painted terracotta. New York Historical Society, New York.

13. Giuseppe Ceracchi, *David Rittenhouse*, 1794, marble, 50 x 29 x 22 cm. American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, 58.S.26.

14. Giuseppe Ceracchi, *Minerva as the Patroness of Liberty*, 1791, painted clay. Logan Library, Philadelphia.



lived first American Academy of Arts organized with the painter Charles Willson Peale (1741-1827) in 1791, and inaugurated as the Columbianum in December 1794 (when Ceracchi traveled a second time to America), demonstrating his direct involvement with the artistic and cultural developments in the country.⁴⁷

Ceracchi's Washington monument proposal did not meet with success, because as Franklin had originally predicted there was no appetite in America for expenditure for an extravagant art project. Moreover, as has been documented by the White House historian Lina Mann, many Congressional representatives were opposed to such a 'monarchical display of power', and by May 1792 the project had been formally rejected.⁴⁸ Ceracchi returned to Europe that month, leaving behind what would be his only American public monument, a colossal clay bust of 'Minerva as the Patroness of Liberty' (1791) which he had gifted to the Congressional Congress at the start of his American sojourn, surely in a bid to win

support for his national project (Fig. 14). Essentially an exercise in neo-classicism, and the first work of its kind in America, the bust featured the addition of a Phrygian cap atop a pole on Minerva's aegis, a re-consideration of his earliest encounters with libertarian iconography in Britain.

Arriving back in Amsterdam, on 16 July 1792, Ceracchi wrote to Jefferson that he had spent the six-week Atlantic crossing reading David Ramsey's *History of the American Revolution* (1789).⁴⁹ On that same day he also wrote to Alexander Hamilton (Fig. 15) referencing his disappointment over not having obtained approval for the monument, yet demonstrating his dedication to American commissions nonetheless:

'To console myself in part for the bad campaign I am returning to Rome at the earliest, where I will have the satisfaction of driving my chisel into the marble to develop some American heros. That is why I am impatient to receive the clay that I had the satisfaction of forming from your witty and significant physiognomy.'⁵⁰

Notwithstanding his professional set-back in America, Ceracchi carried on promoting his project for the commission for the Washington monument, convinced that a career in the United States offered him the best prospect for success. He continued advocating for his project to Jefferson – also as his personal situation in Rome became precarious due to his increasingly radical political associations there. In a letter of 27 March 1793 he wrote to Jefferson:

'I would be glad to know something about the new election and if Congress has remembered my project of the National Monument ... before my departure you was pleased to tell me that Congress would certainly have decreed the execution of the commission ... The Article of Liberty as produced great combustion in Urope, I don't doubt that this Divinity will triumph at last, while the opinions upon the Wrights of Man pleases every body.'⁵¹

Despite his evident respect for Ceracchi, Jefferson discouraged his ambitions, as the time was not ripe for another national monument proposal. Nonetheless, Ceracchi traveled to America a second time in late 1794. Back in Philadelphia, he presented plans for an even more grandiose national project re-invented as 'A Monument Designed to Perpetuate the Memory of American Liberty.'⁵² This hundred foot tall highly theatrical design featured a colossal figure of Liberty descending from the skies through a cloud bank in a cart drawn by four horses, hurtling toward a figure of Fame pointing to a 'massy column inscribed with the Declaration of Independence.' To fund this monument without need for government approval



15. Giuseppe Ceracchi, *Alexander Hamilton*, modeled 1791-92, marble 1794, inscribed on back of base: DE FACIE PHILADELPHIAE/ EX ECTIPO FLORENCIAE/ FACIEBAT JOS. CERACCHI/ CDDCCLXXXIV, 63.5 x 30.5 x 35.6 cm. Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art, Bentonville, Arkansas, 2005.23.

or intervention, helped by James Madison (Fig. 7), Ceracchi raised a public subscription and he produced a printed description of the iconography of the monument, in which he explained the symbolism of the figures.

Ceracchi's second monument proposal was even more complex iconographically than his first and, not surprisingly, on account of its huge estimated cost, and most likely its extravagance, the subscription to fund the project failed. Ceracchi wrote Washington an embittered letter before departing for Europe less than six months after he had arrived, having become convinced there was a personal conspiracy against him as an artist:

'My reputation Sir it is highly concerned in it, and it never will be belived in Europe that such a magnificent and honourable Project as been refused in America for want of feeling and generosity among the individuals, but it will prove a disadvantageous reflection on my Character, therefore permitte me Sir to lay before your prudent judgement some reflections.

This unhappy experiment shows that Individuals will never support public objects with there own money. Ancient and Moderne Nations have always left to Government the power to decide upon public Magnificiences. The intended Monument rappresenting the hi[s]tory of this Nation— is certenlay a National Monument, therfor the Gouvernement of the Unt. states ought to adopt it as an act competent with its dignity.'⁵³

Ceracchi's frustrated hopes to design and realize a national monument for America took its toll on his state of mind, and he wrote to a proxy of Washington on the eve of his departure: 'I am disengaged by this American infatuation, from which I am now delivered as from a poisonous monster which possessed my senses.'⁵⁴ He returned to Europe impoverished and deluded about the intractability of his American contacts.

Even before undertaking his second trip to America, Ceracchi had fully embraced the French revolutionary cause, and taken up contacts with revolutionary figures.⁵⁵ Back in Europe by 1795, he traveled to Paris where he befriended the painter Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825) and where he met Napoleon Bonaparte. In Paris he presented a project for a monument to the French Revolution, featuring a colossal figure of Liberty.⁵⁶ Returning to Rome the following year, 1796, Ceracchi stopped in Milan in October, where he again met Napoleon. Napoleon agreed to sit to Ceracchi for a likeness for a colossal bust portraying him as a Roman emperor.⁵⁷ Ceracchi was in Rome to witness the proclamation of the short-lived Roman Republic on 15 February 1798, before being forced to flee to France just over a year later.

Epilogue

In Paris by March 1799 (having left the unfinished marble bust of Napoleon in his studio in Rome), Ceracchi modeled prominent figures of the French Revolution in a final frenzy of artistic and political activism, including the politician Bertrand Barère de Vieuzac, and the Marshals of the Empire, Guillaume Marie Anne Brune, Jean-Baptiste Jules Bernadotte, Louis Alexandre Berthier, and André Masséna, Duke of Rivoli.⁵⁸ The Coup of 18 Brumaire (9 November 1799) brought Napoleon to power as First Consul – a move Ceracchi was openly critical of, as he had become bitterly deluded

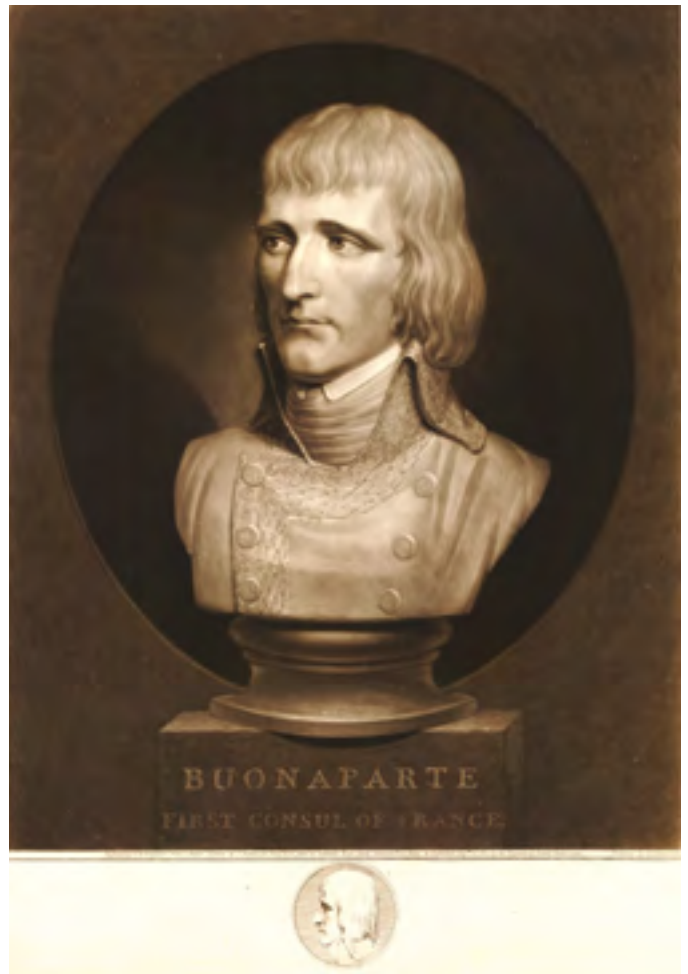
about the direction in which Napoleon was steering the Republic after revolutionary events. Yet it is a bust likeness of Napoleon attired as First Consul, pictured in two British engravings, the second of which is attributed to Ceracchi, that represents the final enigma that surrounds the artist.

The first engraving by Samuel William Reynolds (1773-1835) after a painting by James Northcote (1746-1831), published on 20 August 1800, shows Napoleon dressed as First Consul in the form of a sculpted portrait bust and is inscribed: 'Engraved by S.W. Reynolds from a Picture painted by J. Northcote Esqr. R.A. after an authentic Bust lately received from Paris' (Fig. 16).⁵⁹

The second engraving of Napoleon as First Consul, identical to the first, but with a viewpoint with the head to the right, rather than the left, is by the artist and engraver Henry James Richter (1772-1857), and is dated 1 June 1801 and clearly identified as 'by Ceracchi': 'Engraved by Henry Richter from the celebrated Bust by Ceracchi lately brought from Paris and now in his Possession' (Fig. 17).⁶⁰ To my knowledge, the Reynolds engraving has been ignored in Ceracchi scholarship, but the Richter likeness has been associated with a marble portrait bust of Napoleon, attributed to Ceracchi on stylistic grounds, which depicts Napoleon with very similar facial features and similar pose to the bust in the engravings (Fig. 18).⁶¹ The difference between the marble bust and the engravings is that the bust depicts Napoleon wearing his plain military tunic from the Italian campaigns of 1796-97, whereas the engravings show Napoleon dressed as First Consul in a double-breasted general's coat, a new official attire introduced in August 1798. Moreover, the marble bust is designed with the military tunic terminating in a rounded edge over a pedestal base, whereas in the engravings the bust is designed as a truncated, tapering herm figure with a straight lower edge on a pedestal.

How and when a Ceracchi bust of Napoleon as First Consul arrived in London is not known, but it must have arrived no later than August 1800 in time for Northcote to produce a painted image and for Reynolds to engrave it, before it was published on the 20th of that month.⁶² It was surely sent to London in response to the intense public interest for images of Napoleon at that time. Richter clearly intended to profit from reproductions made from the bust, as in addition to selling engravings after it, he also advertised plaster casts taken from it for sale at his premises.⁶³

There is no documentation to indicate that Ceracchi modeled any portrait busts of Napoleon other than the large marble work that he left unfinished in Rome. However, it is significant to note that in 1817 Napoleon recounted to his biographer, his Irish physician Barry Edward O'Meara, that Ceracchi had pressed him to model again for him (the only Cerracchi



16. Samuel William Reynolds, after James Northcote, *Buonaparte first Consul of France*, 1800, engraving.

Opposite

17. Henry James Richter, after Giuseppe Ceracchi, *Napoleone Buonaparte*, 1801, engraving.

18. Giuseppe Ceracchi (attributed), *Napoleon Bonaparte*, 1796, marble. Fondazione Palazzo Coronini Cronberg, Gorizia.



portrait sittings of Napoleon that can be documented were those in Milan in 1796), but that he had had no time for portrait sittings with the sculptor, adding cryptically, that this had certainly saved his life, as Ceracchi surely intended to stab him, making reference to Ceracchi's foiled assassination plot of October 1800.⁶⁴ It is probable, therefore, that the bust sent to London was based on a model Ceracchi executed in 1796 (Fig. 18), because Napoleon would not model again for Ceracchi, and the artist was forced to use an earlier portrait in order to create an up-dated bust of Napoleon as First Consul.

Richter's engraving was widely circulated and in 1932 it served as the frontispiece for Hilaire Belloc's *Napoleon* (Halcyon New York 1932 edition) where it was captioned: 'Bust by Ceracchi, formerly in the Possession of Thomas Jefferson. Now owned by Harold J. Coolidge, Esq., Boston, U.S.A.'⁶⁵ Jefferson actively sought to collect Ceracchi busts,⁶⁶ and whether he later owned that bust of Napoleon that Richter had acquired by 1801 – or whether he owned a plaster cast after it, significantly for this discussion, it demonstrates that Jefferson



remained an admirer of the artist after his death, and that one of Ceracchi's final works made a lasting impact in the country where he had repeatedly sought fame.

Ceracchi's final act, his attempt to assassinate his former idol Napoleon, and his arrest and execution by guillotine, resulted in his politics overshadowing his artistic output.⁶⁷ His dramatic demise was soon romanticized. He was the subject of a play, Samuel Naylor's *Ceracchi: A Drama* (1839)⁶⁸ which highlighted 'the misdirected energies of a noble nature, erring in its departure from habitual contemplation of the exalted idea of Art', and he was in all likelihood the inspiration for Victorien Sardou's character of the artist and free thinker Mario Cavaradossi in *La Tosca* (1887).⁶⁹ Ceracchi's passionate nature was well documented during his lifetime, and because of his fervent political convictions, it was decided to extract his brain from his cranium immediately after his beheading and for the brain to be examined by doctors for scientific study. Ceracchi's brain was illustrated and described in a later medical publication of 1810-19 as exhibiting revolutionary tendencies of 'arrogance and a desire to dominate', and is still preserved in the Musée de l'Homme, in Paris.⁷⁰

In spite of the fact that the majority of Ceracchi's projects for monuments were never realized, and that a good deal of his artistic output is presently unidentified, his legacy as an artist remains significant. Based

on the surviving portrait busts, it is clear that Ceracchi infused his sitters with an aplomb and gravitas derived from Roman antique models, and his American portraits unquestionably established a taste for neo-classicism in portraiture in America. Ceracchi's true talent stemmed from his insatiable interest in, and curiosity about, individuals and their characters, including their beliefs, their politics and their culture, and it was his ability to transmit the personalities of his sitters as well as their features, that distinguished his art, allowing us to visualise his contemporaries and in the process vividly bringing the eighteenth century to life.

Notes

1 For the primary bibliography on Ceracchi see, Vasco Rocca and Cafiero 1979 and *Giuseppe Ceracchi* 1989. For an inventory of Ceracchi's works before 1788 (almost certainly redacted by Ceracchi himself) see, *Giornale della Belle Arti e della incisione antiquaria, musica e poesia, per l'anno 1788*, no. 21, 24 May 1788, p. 167 (henceforth cited as: *Giornale delle Belle Arti* 1788, 24 May 1788, p. 167). See also Smith 1828, II, pp. 119-21; Montanari 1841; Gradara Pesci 1918, pp. 109-13; Gradara Pesci 1934, pp. 170-4; Magnien 2002, pp. 343-66. For recent publications not cited in the notes below; Roscoe, Hardy and Sullivan 2009; Vale 2014; J. Singerton, *All in His Hands: The Emperor's Artist Who Sculpted America's Founding Fathers*, <https://botstiberbiaas.org/all-in-his-hands/>, accessed 7 April 2022

2 The process to return Ceracchi to his context in the history of art and to re-instate a catalogue of his works is still underway. This paper treats only select works that relate directly to the arguments discussed.

3 Graves 1906, II, p. 19; Montanari (1841, p. 24) describes Ceracchi's natural gift for capturing the character of his sitters: 'Egli aveva da natura di poter comunicare, direi quasi, parte della propria anima alle sue statue, le quali certamente per calore di vita e di espressione sono mirabili sopra molte moderne ed antiche.'

4 Borchia 2015; L. Mann, *Sculpture, Bribery, and the Founding fathers. The Curious Tale of Giuseppe Ceracchi*, <https://www.whitehousehistory.org/sculpture-bribery-and-the-founding-fathers> [first published 2 November 2018]; Salomon 2018a.

5 Borchia 2015, p. 242.

6 Borchia 2015, p. 232.

7 In October 1773 Richard Hayward recorded in his list of British visitors to Rome that 'Giuseppe Caracchi Italian sculptor had come to England.' (Stainton 1983, pp. 4, 15).

8 Rieder 1975, p. 589, nos. 25-6.

9 A 'Dr. Fardyce' is listed in the 1788 inventory, see *Giornale delle Belle Arti* 24 May 1788, p. 167; Montanari records that Fordyce appreciated having a marble portrait bust (Montanari 1841, p. 20); Gradara Pesci 1934, p. 170 writes that Ceracchi did two busts for Fordyce, but without giving sources.

10 The bust was first modeled by Ceracchi for the Royal Academy exhibition of 1777, see Graves 1906, II, p. 19: '1777. 51 A bust of an admiral. (Admiral Keppel, extremely like. – Walpole.)'. For the engraving, see Admiral Augustus Keppel, engraved by Robert Samuel Marquard (who was a pupil of the engraver Francesco Bartolozzi) after a marble bust sculpted by Giuseppe Ceracchi, print published on 1 May 1782. Lettered beneath the image with the title, 'Lord Viscount Keppel'. Also lettered with the production details and publication line: 'Ceracchi scul. in Marble / Marquard Pupil to Mr. Bartolozzi sculp. / Pub'd as the Act directs May 1, 1782 by A. Torre No. 44 Market Lane.' As depicted in the engraving, this Ceracchi likeness of Admiral Keppel was a profile portrait.

11 Graves, 1906, II, p. 19, '1779.46 His Excellency General Paoli; bust in marble'; this portrait bust is recorded in the 1788 inventory, see *Giornale delle Belle Arti* 24 May 1788, p. 167.

12 Montanari 1841, p. 20 (author's translation); the sculpture of a muse leaning against a funerary urn is recorded in the 1788 inventory, *Ibidem*.

- 13 Close and Riches 2012, Monument to John, 3rd Earl of Glasgow, Kelburn Castle Estate, Fairlie LB7295.
- 14 Montanari 1841, p. 20 (author's translation); four colossal statues of the arts are recorded in the 1788 inventory, *Giornale delle Belle Arti* 24 May 1788, p. 167.
- 15 *The Stowe Catalogue, The First Supplemental Catalogue, Tuesday, October 3 1821*, p. 272: 'Queen's Building, lot 126. A marble statue of Britannia, by Ceracchi – (plaster–Withdrawn.)'.
- 16 Graves 1906, II, p. 19: 'Ceracchi, Joseph ... Sculptor Queen's Square Court, Soho 1776'.
- 17 Graves 1906, II, p. 19.
- 18 See note 10.
- 19 Eyres 2002, pp. 216–7 and n. 44; see also Gunnis 1968, p. 89.
- 20 See Montanari 1841, p. 20; two Mercury statues are listed in the 1788 inventory, see *Giornale delle Belle Arti* 24 May 1788, p. 167.
- 21 See Graves 1906, II, p. 19.
- 22 Gradara Pesci 1934, p. 172, 'Joseph Ceracchi for carving two stone statues in Portland Stone representing *Temperance* and *Fortitude*. Expenses attending setting them up and for 5 Masks modelled in wax for the Model of the front L. 203, 3 d.' Public Record Office Chancery Lane London W. C. 2, F. 2495 Roll. n. 414.
- 23 See Smith 1828, II, p. 119. Smith notes that Ceracchi's work for the Desenfan's house was 'very tastefully modeled'.
- 24 Gosse 1895, p. 17.
- 25 Gradara Pesci 1934, p. 171.
- 26 On the complex history of Ceracchi's busts of Reynolds, see J.K. Browne, 'A Catalogue of the Plaster Busts at the Athenæum', *The Victorian Web*, <https://victorianweb.org/sculpture/athenaeum/catalogue.html>, accessed 23 August 2021, '9. Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792), after Giuseppe Ceracchi (1751–1801).' Ceracchi's marble bust of Reynolds, signed 'Cirachi Sculpsit Roma', today at the Royal Academy of Arts must have been carved in Rome before 1788, as it appears in the artist's redacted list of sculptures of that year, see *Giornale delle Belle Arti* 24 May 1788, p. 167.
- 27 Montanari 1841, p. 20, states that a 'signor Dramer', surely Damer commissioned a sculpture of an allegory of painting. See Dunlap 1834, II, p. 403, on Walpole's positive reception of the plaster sculpture. Dawson 1999, p. 89; https://www.britishmuseum.org/collection/object/H_OA-10540, accessed 23 May 2020.
- 28 Graves 1906, II, p. 19: '1779.49'.
- 29 See the brilliant doctoral thesis by Sarah Burnage on John Bacon, Burnage; 2007: <https://theses.whiterose.ac.uk/14231>, p. 118.
- 30 Desportes 1963, p. 143; see also Whitely 1928, I, pp. 316, 338.
- 31 See Montanari 1841, p. 29, who publishes a letter (April 1781) from Belgiojoso to Ceracchi, praising Ceracchi's likeness of him. Graves 2006, II, p. 19, '1779. 45 His Excellency Count Belgiojoso; bust in marble'. This bust is also listed in the 1788 inventory, see *Giornale delle Belle Arti* 24 May 1788, p. 167.
- 32 On Ceracchi's engagement with freemasonry, see Borchia 2017, p. 232, note 17; on the Von Born bas-relief profile, see *Giuseppe Ceracchi* 1989, p. 90.
- 33 To Benjamin Franklin from Ingenhousz, 29 April 1783, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-39-02-0343>, accessed 22 July 2021.
- 34 From Benjamin Franklin to Jan Ingenhousz, 16 May 1783, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Franklin/01-40-02-0004>, accessed 22 July 2021.
- 35 Library of Congress, George Washington Papers, Series 4, General Correspondence,

1697-1799, MSS 44693; Reel 092, Continental Congress, August 7, 1783, Resolution and Partial Copy on Equestrian Statue.

36 On Ceracchi's ties with Holland and with Dutch political activists, see Borchia 2015, pp. 232-5, and especially p. 234, for Ceracchi's letter of 23 September 1788 to Abate Amaduzzi, in which Ceracchi vividly describes the chaotic political situation in Holland in the throes of a democratic revolution noting that France possesses the 'heart of patriots, oppressed, but not embittered' (author's translation). See also, Weststeijn 2011.

37 *Giuseppe Ceracchi* 1989, p. 45, '1789'.

38 Borchia 2015, p. 237 (author's translation).

39 *Ibidem* (author's translation). Moreover, in a letter of 27 June Ceracchi writes Amaduzzi convinced that his project can not fail as the ministers of the commission for the monument are flattered by it, see Borchia 2015, p. 238.

40 Borchia 2015, p. 240.

41 *Ibidem*.

42 Johns 2002, p. 131; Salomon 2018a, pp. 24-37.

43 Desportes 1963, p. 142. After Ceracchi's death, his friend the American painter John Trumbull (1756-1843) searched for his portrait busts, including one of himself: 'When Ceracchi [sic] was in this country, He executed Busts in Terra Cotta of many of our principal people – He took them to Europe generally – if by any means you can find them, I would wish that they would be purchased for me and shipped to me here – I particularly recollect a Head of President Adams – bald and resembling the Busts of Scipio – One also of myself, the ancient corslet on the Breast, and a pallet & pencils scratched upon that', J. Trumbull to Mr. Ivans [?], 24 February 1818, Trumbull Papers, Yale University Library, Letterbook, 1817-19, MS 506, Series I.

44 See Desportes 1963, pp. 141-2.

45 In 2010, the National Archives, through its National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC), entered into a cooperative agreement with The University of Virginia Press to create the site and make freely available online the historical documents of the Founders of the United States of America. The White House Historical Association historian Lina Mann has carefully reconstructed Ceracchi's two trips to America, in an online article of November 2018, largely based on these letters, see Mann (note 4).

46 Borchia 2015, p. 239, letter of Ceracchi from Philadelphia of 31 July 1791 (author's translation).

47 After the first American art exhibition (dedicated to painting) was held at the State House in Philadelphia under the auspices of the Columbianum, the organization failed, due in part to Ceracchi and other foreign artists quitting, see in the first instance, Dunlap 1834, II, p. 139-40; see further Nygren 1971.

48 Mann (see note 4), explains that on 11 April 1792, commissioners from the newly established federal district of Washington D.C. wrote to Jefferson, 'We are of opinion that in the application of the funds we ought to class our Work into Necessary, Useful and Ornamental, preferring them in that order. Without going into the Question of right to apply the money to defray the expence of Mr. Ceracchi's Design, or the propriety of the design itself, we decline going into that business.' Furthermore, on May 7, 1792, the House of Representatives delivered a similar verdict and on May 16, 1792 the Senate also decided not to pursue the monument, see Mann (see note 4).

49 Desportes 1963, p. 150, n. 51; for the letter, see To Thomas Jefferson from Giuseppe Ceracchi, 16 July 1792, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-24-02-0220>, accessed 25 July 2021.

50 Ceracchi was in correspondence with Secretary of the Treasury Hamilton regarding costs for the national monument: for the original letter (in French) from Ceracchi to Hamilton, see To Alexander Hamilton from Giuseppe Ceracchi, 16 July 1792, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-12-02-0044>, accessed 20 July 2021; Translation by Desportes 1963, pp. 150-1, note 54. The 'American heros' Ceracchi refers to are the eminent Americans Ceracchi had met and modeled in terracotta in America; he also modeled busts of Cristopher Columbus and Amerigo Vespucci

(see Fig. 6 in Introduction) – surely on the direct suggestion of Thomas Jefferson – who had commissioned painted copies of the “Explorers” series from the Uffizi (see Linda Wolk-Simon in this volume). Ceracchi’s terracotta busts of Americans are in large part lost, see note 43 and 44 above.

51 See To Thomas Jefferson from Giuseppe Ceracchi, 27 March 1793, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-25-02-0427>, accessed 22 July 2021.

52 See Mann (note 4) for the most accurate account of Ceracchi’s second project for a national American monument, with previous bibliography.

53 See To George Washington from Giuseppe Ceracchi, 23 April 1795, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-18-02-0051>, accessed 22 July 2021.

54 See Desportes 1963, p. 168; for the original letter see From Giuseppe Ceracchi to Bartholomew Dandridge, Jr., c.10 May 1795, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/05-18-02-0096>, accessed 27 July 2021.

55 For Ceracchi’s growing engagement with French revolutionary affairs and his impassioned political views, see Borchia 2015, especially p. 236, with previous bibliography. Ceracchi’s friendship with the French minister in Philadelphia, Jean Antoine Joseph Fauchet, had also raised concern in America, see *Giuseppe Ceracchi* 1989, p. 46, ‘1794’.

56 See *Giuseppe Ceracchi* 1989, p. 85; see also Magnien 2002, p. 351-2.

57 For the *Bust of Napoleon*, modeled by Ceracchi in Milan in October 1796, and then worked up by him in marble during 1797-8 in Rome, and finished by Francesco Massimiliano Laboureur (1767-1831) in 1802, marble, height 106.5 cm, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nantes, see in the first instance *Giuseppe Ceracchi* 1989, cat. no. 15, p. 68; Magnien 2002, p. 351-2. See Dunlap 1834, II, p. 413, for a re-counting of Ceracchi’s emotional reaction to meeting and modeling Napoleon.

58 For the busts of French generals and politicians that Ceracchi modeled between 1799-1800, see in the first instance, *Giuseppe Ceracchi* 1989, cat. no. 16, p. 69; and cat. no. 17, pp. 70-1; Magnien 2002.

59 The engraving was kindly pointed out to me by Tommaso Manfredi. Inscription content: Lettered within the image with title ‘Buonaparte First Consul of France’ and below the image with production details: ‘Engraved by S.W. Reynolds from a Picture painted by J. Northcote Esqr. R.A. after an authentic Bust lately received from Paris & Published Augst. 20. 1800, by the Engraver, 47 Poland Street, London. - Printed by G. Ebsworth.’

60 ‘Napoleone Buonaparte. Bust on a pedestal, head to right. Rectangle. Stipple. Engraved by Henry Richter from the celebrated Bust by Ceracchi, lately brought from Paris, Published June 1st 1801 by H. Richter No. 26 Neuman Street, Oxford Street, where Casts from the original bust may be had. Size 17 8/16 x 14 4/16.’

61 For the marble bust of Napoleon dressed in his military cloak attributed to Ceracchi, 1796, see *Giuseppe Ceracchi* 1989, cat. no. 14, pp. 65-7. Magnien 2002, p. 352, expresses doubts that this work is by Ceracchi.

62 It should be noted that Ceracchi may well have met Northcote during his stay in London as Northcote initially lived in Reynold’s house and assisted him in his studio – equally, Northcote may have remembered Ceracchi’s gift for likenesses, and learned of his busts of Napoleon and have been instrumental in negotiating for one.

63 See note 60. By 1800 Napoleon images were produced in large numbers in bisque by Sevres under the direction of the sculptor Louis Simon Boizot (1743-1809), see Magnien 2002, p. 352, note 7.

64 *Giuseppe Ceracchi* 1989, cat. no. 15, p. 68: Note 3: ‘... Il. Y avait aussi un certain Ceracchi, autre Corse, et fameux sculpteur qui avait fait une statue da me personne lors de mon séjour à Milan ... Il sollicita l’honneur de faire une seconde statue de moi, alléguant que la première n’était pas exécutée d’une manière digne d’un si grand homme. Quoique j’ignorasse encore la conspiration, je refusai cependant d’accéder à cette demande, ne voulant pas rester assis pendant 2 ou 3 heures dans la meme position et pendant plusieurs jours de suite, attendu que je m’étais déjà donnée cette peine auparavant. Ce refus me sauva la vie car l’in-

tention du sculpteur était de me poignarder pendant la séance...' (O'Meara 1897, I, p. 318).

65 Belloc augmented Ceracchi's moral virtue in his cinematic narrative of Napoleon's life. Harold Coolidge was a direct descendent of Jefferson. His great-uncle, Joseph Coolidge, married Jefferson's granddaughter Martha Jefferson Randolph, and as noted by Tommaso Manfredi in this volume, gifted Jefferson a copy of the 1781 architectural treatise by Francesco Milizia, *Principj di Architettura civile*.

66 Salomon 2018a, pp. 31-2.

67 For the assassination plot, see Rao 1992.

68 Naylor's work, *A Drama and other poems*, was printed privately at Maidenhead in January 1839; see also Willoughby 1914. It is worth noting that Naylor was almost certainly inspired to write about Ceracchi by Goethe, whom he met in 1830 in Weimar as he was courting the poet's daughter-in-law. Goethe had been resident in Rome in the same palace as Ceracchi on the Via del Corso 18, and had urged Ceracchi to sculpt a bust of Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1785, marble, Sala della Protomoteca, Capitoline, Rome) for the Pantheon series organized by Antonio Canova. Interestingly, Costanza Gradara Pesci (1918, p. 112) writes that there was a Winckelmann bust in Goethe's residence in Weimar in 1848 attributed to Ceracchi, referencing the catalogue by C. Schuchardt (1848, p. 339). However, while Schuchardt does list a bust of Winckelmann in Goethe's collection, in his catalogue this is not identified as by Ceracchi; *Ibidem*, section 3, 'Abgüsse und Abdrücke von antiken, mittelalterlichen..., Büsten', no. 155. Winckelmann, Joh. Joach.' As these busts are described as Abgüsse (plaster casts) this may have been a copy after Ceracchi's work or even Ceracchi's original model of Winckelmann. See also Tamblè 2015, pp. 478-82 (with previous bibliography) on writers romanticizing Ceracchi's life and politics after his death, even as recently as 2009, Luigi Magni, *Lucina*.

69 See Tamblè 2015, p. 418, who cites Burton 1993 pp. 67-86; Burton 2000, pp. 199-220. As Burton notes, Ceracchi knew Liborio Angelucci, the inspiration for Sardou's character of Angelotti, and he modeled a bust of Angelucci's wife, Caterina Nazzari Angelucci, (c. 1798, marble, 84 cm, Museo di Roma, inv. n. 4197); on the Angelucci bust see, *Giuseppe Ceracchi* 1989, cat. no. 25, p. 82.

70 See Magnien 2002, p. 344.

In 1785 at the age of twenty-two, Charles Bulfinch (1763-1844), the first great American native-born architect, took a trip to England, France and Italy that included a short stay in Rome in the spring of 1786. This trip is the least examined episode of his life and work, and it is on this that this paper will focus.¹

From the limited information we have about his youthful years in his autobiography, which was written in old age and published after his death by his niece Ellen Susan in 1896, and in the few letters he sent to parents and friends, we know that Bulfinch undertook his trip to Europe from his native Boston primarily to resolve family affairs.² His reasons for the trip were linked to an inheritance from a maternal uncle, George Apthorp, who had lived in the London suburb of Croydon, and to take care of the interests of the merchant Joseph Barrell, for whom he was reluctantly employed at the behest of his father, Thomas, a renowned Boston physician. From the moment of his arrival in London, on 20 July 1785, until his departure for Paris at the end of that year, Bulfinch lived in close contact with relatives and with the American community, as a young exponent of the enlightened Bostonian upper class. He was a Harvard graduate, with sufficient funds to be able to freely indulge all his social and cultural interests, including an amateur passion for architecture that followed the lead of other members of the Apthorp family.³ In this amateur spirit, in the first letter written to his father from London, dated 12 August 1785, the architecture of the city was the object of Bulfinch's curiosity rather than the subject of more methodical study: 'I have been engaged ever since my arrival in gratifying my curiosity with the sight of buildings &c &c, & find I have still a great deal to see.'⁴

The time Bulfinch spent in England was part of an European itinerary, like the one undertaken by his uncle John Apthorp with his wife and children.⁵ Bulfinch himself stressed this in a passage from his autobiography:

'the time of my visit to Europe was passed, partly in London & in visits to friends of my family in different parts of England; in a visit to France & through that country to Italy. At Paris I tarried some time to view its buildings & other objects of curiosity, to wich I was introduced by letters from the Marquis La Fayette & Mr. Jefferson, then minister there.'⁶

These recollections by the elderly Bulfinch of the illustrious figures in contemporary American history that he met in his youth in Paris, such as Gilbert du Motier, the Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834), and especially President Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), with whom he had in common a

glorious architectural career, was a way of establishing the continental part of his European travels as a formative Grand Tour. But it was also a literary device to compare himself after the event to a known connoisseur like Jefferson in his development as a young architect.

Jefferson, who during his time in Paris had deepened and refined his knowledge of architecture,⁷ favored Bulfinch for his visits to the ‘buildings & other objects of curiosity’ of the French capital. French architecture has been considered by modern scholars to be the true source of Bulfinch’s architectural language, and indeed the reason why he chose to become an architect, given the Francophile culture of Boston and the young American nation generally.⁸ As Bulfinch himself wrote, he made use of letters of introduction written by Jefferson and Lafayette, probably at the urging of their friend John Adams (1735–1826), then American ambassador in London, to whom Bulfinch frequently refers in his correspondence.⁹

Bulfinch’s reference to these letters of introduction has been considered an indication – if not proof – that Jefferson prepared an actual written guide for his young compatriot for the continuation of his journey to the south of France and Italy.¹⁰ But this does not take into account the fact that at the time when he met Bulfinch, 1785, Jefferson had not visited the south of France, Italy, or even England. In fact it would have been the other way around: Bulfinch preceded Jefferson to the south of France and Italy, and also to London, where Jefferson stayed for the first time from 12 March to 26 April 1786.¹¹ Bulfinch would therefore have been in a position to have been a precious source of information for Jefferson’s trip planned for 1786 – a month after their last meeting in Paris – but postponed until February of 1787 due to an injury. In any event, while Jefferson made his way alone by private carriage to Italy and did not venture beyond Piedmont, Lombardy and Liguria,¹² Bulfinch quickly crossed Northern and Central Italy using public conveyances between May and June of 1786, and then remained in Rome for three weeks. Leaving Rome he returned to Paris¹³ and then London, as noted in a passage from his autobiography:

‘From Paris I proceeded in the spring of 1786 through Nantz & Bordeaux & by the canal of Languedoc to Marseilles & then to Antibes, from which place I crossed in an open feluca to Genoa, thence to Leghorn & Pisa, by Viterbo & Sienna to Rome, where I remained three weeks, & then returned by Bologna, Florence, Parma, Placentia and Milan over the Alps by Mont Cenis, to Lyons & again to Paris: after a short stay there, I returned to London by way of Rouen & Dieppe, crossing the channel to Brighton.’¹⁴

Bulfinch wrote to his mother that he had traveled happily and without incident or ill-health, having spent less than he had anticipated, and with



1. Mather Brown, *Charles Bulfinch*, 1786, oil on canvas, 74.9 x 62.9 cm. The Harvard Art Museums, Harvard University Portrait Collection, H428.

the exciting realization that a knowledge of French – widespread among wealthy Bostonians – had served him well everywhere:

‘It is needless for me to say that the satisfaction I have received in this tour has amply compensated for any fatigue I have undergone in making it. ... It would be in vain to attempt to give here a particular account of such a country; the subject is too copious & must be left till we meet in y^e winter.’¹⁵

Sadly, Bulfinch’s preference for oral communication over written means that little personal commentary about his Roman stay has come down to us, apart from a passage written by his grandson: ‘I have heard my father say that my grandfather was so much affected by the first sight of St. Peter’s that he could not restrain his tears.’¹⁶ This fascinating glimpse has fueled much speculation about his experience in the papal city, all inferred from the supposed derivation from Roman models of his architectural work, without taking into account the probable influence of engraved reproductions. According to Johann Wolfgang Goethe, who arrived in Rome on 1 November 1786, six months after Bulfinch, it was the prior knowledge of printed reproductions of paintings and architecture that distinguished foreign visitors who, like him, were already in possession of an idea of Rome, from those who acquired an immediate, but superficial perception of the city, like the many Goethe had seen arrive and leave during the first month of his stay in Rome.¹⁷

Bulfinch belonged to the multitude of tourists who spent less than a month in Rome. But there are several clues that suggest that his perception of Rome was far from superficial, thanks to his careful preparation of visits and meetings that took place both in London and in Paris, to-

gether with his engagement with progressive artistic and architectural culture. The first clue refers to the end of Bulfinch’s European stay on 17 September 1786 when, about to leave London to return to America, he wrote to his mother about his recently executed portrait by Mather Brown (1761–1831) (Fig. 1): ‘very rough, but that is the modish style of painting, introduced by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Mr. Copeley indeed paints in another manner, his pictures are finished to the utmost nicety, but then they are very dear.’¹⁸ This competent comparative evaluation of the artistic personalities of the young Brown – also author of a portrait of Jefferson (Fig. 2) – and John Singleton Copley (1738–1815), also a Bostonian, situates Bulfinch in the American artistic circle in London associated with the Royal Academy of Arts centred on Copley and above all Benjamin West (1738–1820), the first American painter to settle in Europe and the co-founder of the Academy in 1768.¹⁹

At the urging of Ambassador Adams, both West and Copley could have instructed the young Bulfinch on the artistic implications of his trip to France and Italy, especially Rome. This could have happened either directly, by recalling to him their respective travels in the 1760s

2. Mather Brown, *Thomas Jefferson*, 1786, oil on canvas, 90.8 × 72.4 cm. National Portrait Gallery, Washington, NPG.99.66.



and 1770s,²⁰ or indirectly by putting him in contact with artists who had recently returned from the continent.

In Royal Academy circles the use of letters of advice was customary in order to inform the winners of the residential prizes instituted in 1771 about Rome (and Italy in general). The best known of these is the letter of 1774 from Sir William Chambers to his pupil Edward Stevens.²¹ Chambers was one of the founding members of the Royal Academy and a leading figure in British architecture who inspired Bulfinch's work, together with Robert Adam (1728-1792), James Wyatt (1746-1813) and John Soane (1753-1837). In 1785, five years after his stay in Rome (1778-80), Soane would have been a useful informant for Bulfinch even before his original decorative and spatial interpretations of antiquity influenced American architectural culture.²² At that time Soane was in a position to transmit to others the first results of his archaeological researches on Roman and Campanian sites in London, which now rivaled Paris as the center for research into the ancient architecture of Italy and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Following the path trodden by Chambers and Soane, the Rome frequented by Bulfinch would therefore have been the Rome experienced by other young foreign architects who, following the example of the *pensionnaires* of the Académie de France established in the Palazzo Mancini in the Via del Corso from 1725-1802, stayed in Rome for prolonged periods animated by the idea of creating from ancient remains a universal, modern, sober and functional architectural language.²³

The Rome of transient students was closely connected to that of resident foreign artists. In 1787 the German Alois Hirt listed over 160 foreign artists residing or passing through Rome, many of them British.²⁴ Among the resident British artists some, such as the painters Thomas Jenkins (1722-1798) and Gavin Hamilton (1723-1798) and the architect James Byres (1733-1817) had also assumed the roles of agents and merchants of ancient sculptures and paintings of the old masters. Others produced series of copies of masterpieces, including the sculptor Christopher Hewetson (c.1737-1798) and the painter James Durno (c. 1745-1795). All were active in the service of wealthy British travelers, which, according to the Irishman Henry George Quin in April 1786 numbered 130.²⁵

Durno, a student of West at the Royal Academy, may have been a contact for the young Bulfinch, as was certainly the painter Angelica Kauffmann (1741-1807), a friend of West, who in 1782 had definitively moved from London to Rome, where in 1764, during her first stay, she had portrayed Bulfinch's uncle John Apthorpe and his cousins Grizzell and Catharine.²⁶ Kauffmann in turn was linked by friendship to the young sculptor Antonio Canova (1757-1822), who had moved to Rome from Venice in 1780. Canova was preparing to succeed Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778), who had died in 1778, as the main Italian reference point for artistically inclined Grand Tourists, the British in particular.

Presumably Bulfinch's itinerary in Rome had privileged architecture, in accordance with Jefferson's expectations as recorded by William Short (1759-1849), his personal secretary and successor in the post of American ambassador in Paris in 1790 (Fig. 3). In November 1788 Short was sent to Italy by Jefferson to replace Thomas Lee Shippen (1765-1798), who



3. Rembrandt Peale, *William Short*, 1806, oil on canvas, 77.5 x 63.9 cm. Muscarelle Museum of Art at William & Mary in Virginia, Williamsburg, 1938.004.

from June 1788, in the company of John Rutledge Jr (1766-1819), had been traveling in Europe on Jefferson's account, in a journey of knowledge that Jefferson himself had conceived and organised in order to extend the one that had been cut short the year before, and, above all, to compensate him for his not having reached Rome.

According to the *Traveling Notes for Mr. Rutledge and Mr. Shippen*, expressly written by Jefferson, the two envoys would need to pay careful attention to the subjects that were of most interest to an American in Europe: '1. Agriculture, 2. Mechanical arts, 3. Lighter mechanical arts and manufactures, 4. Gardens, 5. Architecture, 6. Painting. Statuary, 7 Politics of each country, 8. Courts.'²⁷

The letters sent by Short and Rutledge to Jefferson from Rome beginning on the the day after their arrival on 22 December 1788 are therefore to be read as regular reports intended to satisfy the curiosity of Jefferson in Paris, giving the American point of view of the papal city, the same point of view that Bulfinch could have disclosed to both Jefferson and Short a year earlier with particular attention to architecture.

For Jefferson, architecture was 'the most important art' for the American people, much more important than painting and statuary: "Too expensive for the state of wealth among us. It would be useless therefore, and preposterous for us to make ourselves connoisseurs in those arts. They are worth seeing, but not studying."²⁸

Jefferson had developed this point of view well before his arrival in Europe, but its application to architecture was explored in Paris on the occasion of

the design project for the Virginia State Capitol in Richmond, for which he consulted Charles-Louis Clérissseau (1721-1820), 'who perfectly fulfills my wishes.'²⁹ The reason Clérissseau was considered by Jefferson to be the ideal architect to employ was less his skills as a designer than his extraordinary knowledge of ancient Roman architecture. This knowledge had been acquired during a long stay in Rome that began in 1749 as a *pensionnaire* of the Académie de France, was communicated to other architects, including Chambers and Adam, and, after his return to Paris in 1767, made him famous as a designer of real and ideal views of the antique (Fig. 4).

In the eyes of Jefferson, as well as being the most trustworthy interpreter of the glories of Roman architecture, Clérissseau was the author of a publication on the Maison Carrée of Nîmes, published in Paris in 1778 as *Monumens de Nîmes*.³⁰ Clérissseau proposed this substantially intact Roman temple as the model for the Virginia Capitol and indeed for the new architecture of the young American nation. Considering that the drawings of the Virginia Capitol were completed in January 1786 and the wooden model was already ready by June (although sent to America only in December),³¹ it is evident that the

4. Charles-Louis Clérissseau, *Capriccio with figures by a great arch*, signed and dated 'Clérissseau 1786', oil on canvas, 47.7 x 36.9 cm. Christie's, Auction 27 Sep 2016, lot 53.



attendance of Bulfinch on Jefferson in Paris coincided with the decisive phase in the design of the building. Bulfinch's involvement in the creative process of such a symbolically important work must have had a strong impact on his belief that architectural composition should be based on antique models, and he would have been aware that the Maison Carrée would be the first Roman monument that he would meet on his journey to Italy, as would be the case with Jefferson two years later. It is probable, therefore, that Bulfinch's itinerary in 1786 helped in the preparation of Jefferson's itinerary in 1787, and it is also probable that Bulfinch's itinerary was at least partially informed by Clérissseau, perhaps by means of travel notes similar to those he provided to the *pensionnaire* Antoine-Laurent-Thomas Vaudoyer (1756-1846) before his departure for Rome at the end of 1783.³²

For Bulfinch the recommendation of Chambers and Soane through Ambassador Adams, that of Clérissseau through Jefferson, and his ability to express himself fluently in French, allowed his possible contacts in Rome to include the young British and French architects who were staying there, and more widely to include all the contemporary Italian and other architects engaged in the study of ancient monuments as part of their cultural and professional training.³³

Among the British Royal Academy scholarship holders present in Rome at that time, in addition to the painters James Irvine (1757-1831) and Samuel Woodforde (1765-1817) and the sculptor John Charles Felix Rossi (1762-1839), were the architects Thomas Johnson (c. 1762-1814) and Willey Reveley (1760-1799).³⁴ Reveley, Chambers' protégé, had recently returned from a trip to southern Italy, Greece and Turkey as a draftsman in the entourage of the expedition of Richard Worsley.³⁵ He was the author of some Roman views depicting glimpses of Bulfinch's Rome: the canonical one of the Forums near the temple of Venus and Rome (Fig. 5), and the less usual ones of the Aurelian walls at Santa Croce in Gerusalemme (Fig. 6). Other drawings that Reveley was refining in the spring of 1786 belong among the extensive graphic repertoire that resulted from increasing reportage of southern Italy and the Mediterranean inspired by the work undertaken more than three decades earlier by Julien-David Le Roy (1724-1803), Nicholas Revett (1720-1804) and James "Athenian" Stuart (1713-1788).

Among the French architectural *pensionnaires* present in Rome in the spring of 1786, in addition to the above mentioned Vaudoyer, were Jean-Charles-Alexandre Moreau (1762-1810)³⁶ and Auguste Cheval de Saint-Hubert (1755-1798).³⁷ These could have been useful contacts for the young Bulfinch because of their knowledge of Roman antiquities, given that in that year the Académie Royale for the first time asked the *pensi-*



5. Willey Reveley, 'The Temple of the Sun and Moon [Venus and Rome] as seen from the Amphitheatre [Colosseum]', Rome, c. 1784-85, watercolor over graphite, with pen in brown ink and gum arabic, on laid paper, 48.9 x 37.5 cm. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.19455.

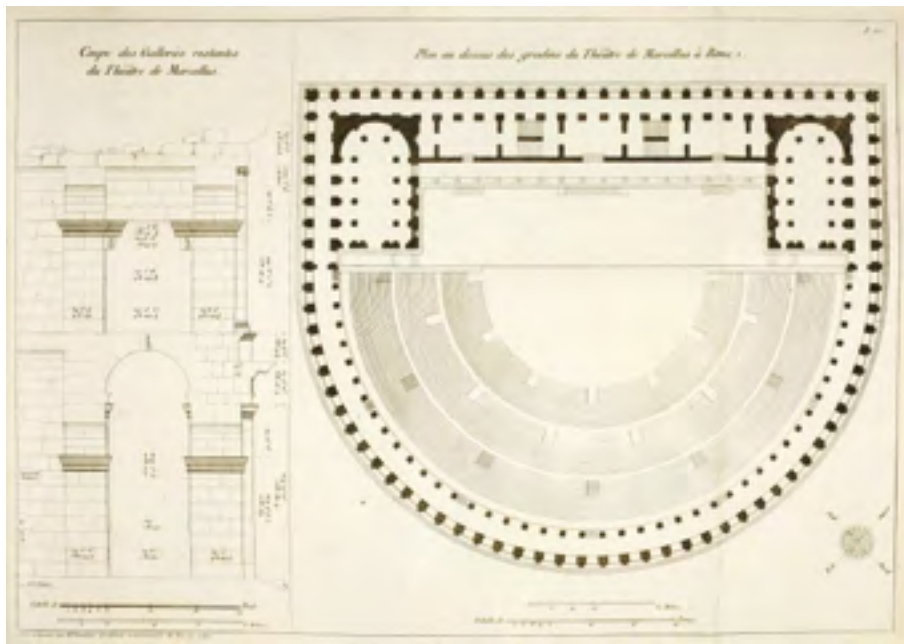
6. Willey Reveley, *The Aurelian Wall, Porta Maggiore, the Temple of Venus and Cupid and the Church of S. Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome*, c.1784-85, watercolor, with pen in brown ink, over graphite, with white gouache and gum arabic, on laid paper, 31.6 x 48.7 cm. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.19411.



*onnaire*s to produce renderings of monuments rather than design projects.³⁸ In particular, Vaudoier was engaged on a reconstructive rendering (*restauration*) of the theater of Marcellus, which was sent to Paris at the end of 1786³⁹ (Figs. 7-8), as well as a rendering of the Villa Madama of Raphael which is documented in a drawing that recently appeared on the art market (Fig. 9). And in April 1787 de Saint-Ubert would continue the reconstructive rendering of the Pantheon left unfinished by the *pensionnaire* Louis-Étienne Deseine on his departure from Rome in 1782.⁴⁰ The Pantheon, that icon of ancient Rome and the subject of countless representations that transmitted its image internationally, was the focus of interest of scholars and every kind of tourist. The extraordinarily emotional impression conveyed by Short to Jefferson in his first letter written from Rome just after visiting the Pantheon must reflect the expectations aroused by Bulfinch's conversations with Jefferson, at the point when the building was chosen as a "sublime" model for American neoclassical culture. Short's account is neither critical nor analytical, but it is imbued with the same pure emotion that had been aroused in Bulfinch by the sight of the equally symbolic Vatican basilica, which not by chance is also referred to by Short:

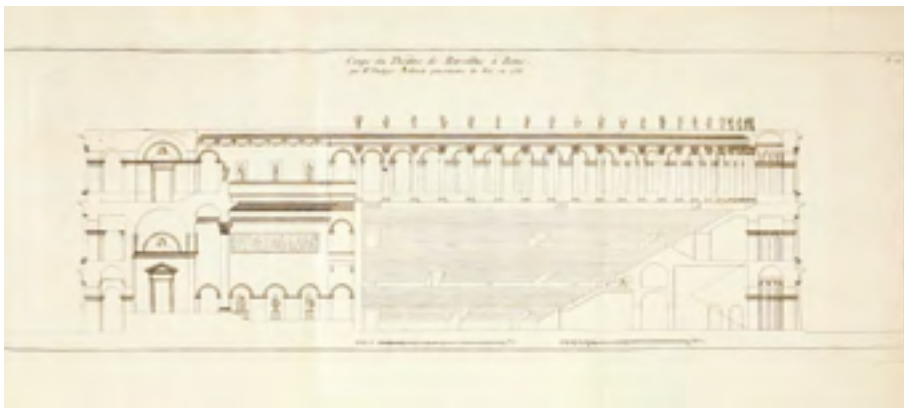
'We were about fourteen miles distant when we first saw the dome of St. Peter's which is the first part that you see of this mistress of the world. Of it I cannot yet undertake to say any thing. I find myself so fully possessed by the objects which surround me, and so stunned as it were by the pleasure of considering myself on that classical ground which I have so long been accustomed to admire, that I cannot call my attention to any particular object. I am just now come from the Pantheon. I felt there emotions, and a glow of enthusiasm which I never before experienced. I never felt before the effect of the true sublime. I feel this moment in writing to you vibrations in my mind which were occasioned three hours ago by my entrance into this grand rotunda.'⁴¹

An excerpt from Short's next letter, dated 31 December 1788, offers a precious testimony of the Rome of the Grand Tour by a sensitive and well-educated inhabitant of the New World, prepared to select the aspects



7. Antoine-Laurent-Thomas Vaudoyer, *Section of the remaining Galleries and Plan above the terraces of the Theater of Marcellus in Rome* (*Description du théâtre de Marcellus rétabli dans son état primitif d'après les vestiges qui en restent encore. Mémoire joint aux plans, coupes, élévations et détails mesurés à Rome et adressés à l'Académie royale d'architecture de Paris en 1786, Paris, 1812, tab. 26*).

8. Antoine-Laurent-Thomas Vaudoyer, *Section of the Theater of Marcellus in Rome* (*Description du théâtre de Marcellus rétabli dans son état primitif d'après les vestiges qui en restent encore. Mémoire joint aux plans, coupes, élévations et détails mesurés à Rome et adressés à l'Académie royale d'architecture de Paris en 1786, Paris, 1812, tab. 28*).



considered most curious and interesting for American society:

'It is the custom here for travellers to put themselves under the conduct of an antiquarian of whom there are several at Rome who live by the business. The antiquarian is paid so much a day and he conducts the traveller to all the videnda ancient and modern of Rome. For some days back we have been in this train and shall continue so for several days more. The great tour as it is called here, that is to say to see every picture, statue &c. in Rome and its environs, requires six weeks, but we do not intend remaining so long under the hands of our antiquarian and therefore have got a list of the more remarkable only. We have already seen the Vatican and St. Pierre. In the former are the Laocoon, Apollo Antinous or rather Meleager, the chambers of Raphael where are some of the finest remains of his pencil, as the connisseurs say. – In the latter there are many things to admire in detail but it is the whole which fills every body with enthusiasm. I cannot undertake to describe this chef d'oeuvre of modern architecture, nor the sensations it excited in me, but I felt then if ever I did the force of the true sublime. We were in time here to see the great ceremony of the Christmass mass performed by the Pope in all his pomp surrounded by his cardinals. – I have been several times to see the Campidoglio. I have looked there in vain for what I expected to find on a spot where formerly was deliberated the fate of empires, but as yet it has not

come into the tour to be made with the Antiquarian so that I have not legally a right to say any thing about it. ... Modern Rome is many feet higher than the ancient; in digging down to the ancient surface they often find the remains of antiquity. In this Pope's reign they have been particularly industrious in their searches. In the Vatican are seen a great variety of statues and remains lately found. The most remarkable is a tomb of Scipio Africanus with his bust.⁴²

On the same day, 31 December 1788, Rutledge in a kind of competitive narrative with Short offered Jefferson an even more enthusiastic version of their first week in Rome. His enthusiasm seems to be especially American when compared with the disappointment at the reality of Rome felt by many French and even English travelers, their expectations aroused by the engravings of Piranesi and others:

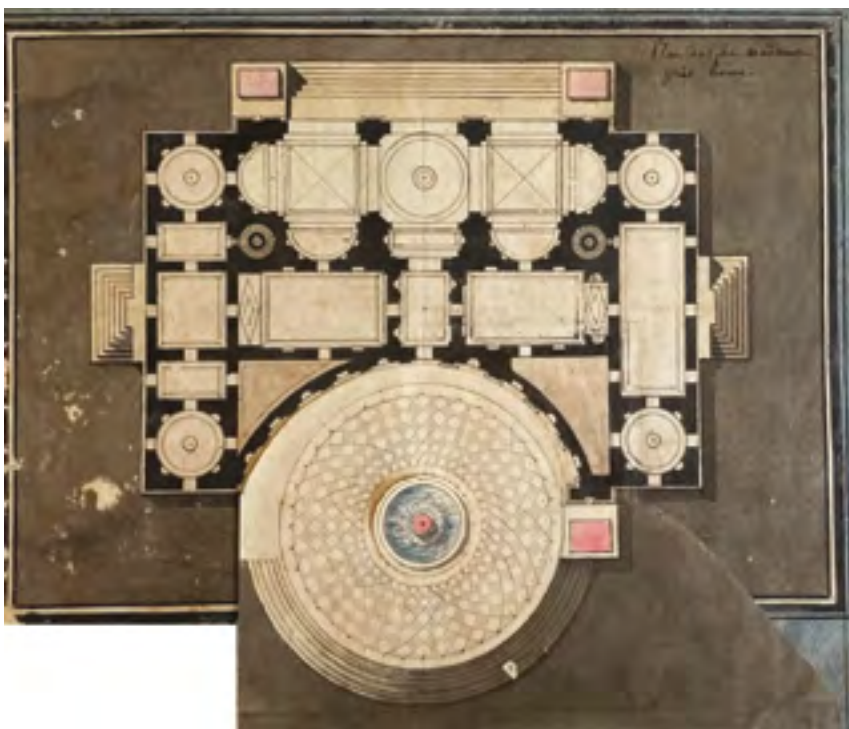
'I have not words which can express my admiration of Rome and every thing in it, indeed every thing seems like enchantment. I expected much, but it much surpasses what I had expected; and wherever I go I seem to be on fairy ground. As yet I have seen little of Rome but have seen enough to persuade me that of all the places in this world it is the most agreeable and charming.'⁴³

The Rome that emerges from the accounts of Short and Rutledge is the touristic one of the lesser aristocracy and upper-class gentlemen for whom merchants and agents prepared intense and tiring daily itineraries of as long as six weeks, individually calibrated according to the time and money available. Such itineraries are well documented in the case of James Byres, the most popular cicerone, who had been the guide of John Apthorp in 1764 and probably also of his nephew Bulfinch.

Short's letter of 31 December introduces us to another Rome, the pleasant and seductive one of the French ambassador to Rome Cardinal François-Joachim de Pierre de Bernis (1715–1794), a Rome of which Short and Rutledge, and before them Bulfinch, found themselves legitimately part as envoys of the American ambassador in Paris. Short writes that '[the letter of Madame de Tesse] to Cardinal de Bernis has been of service in procuring very pointed attentions. His civilities and hospitality are extended in common to all strangers of whatever nation.'⁴⁴

In this Rome Cardinal de Bernis (Fig. 10), a character with a stormy past that led him to be called a libertine by the prince of libertines Giacomo Casanova (1725–1798), through his popular salon exercised an undisputed dominance over the world of Roman sociability while exercising strategic control over the flow of foreign visitors, including Americans.⁴⁵ This was certainly

9. Antoine-Laurent-Thomas Vaudoyer, Plan of Villa Madama in Rome, watercolour, over graphite. Artprecium, sale 5 October 2021, lot. 82.



what Short believed, since he supposed that a young New Yorker named Seton whom he met in an important Roman salon had been welcomed thanks to the intimacy of the cardinal with the hostess.⁴⁶

For Short, Rutledge, and earlier Bulfinch, Cardinal de Bernis was also the means of accessing the occult world of Freemasonry, which was officially persecuted by the papacy. This world was frequented by Short and Vaudoyer, who had been Freemasons from 1781 and 1783 respectively, and probably also by Bulfinch, although his membership of the Freemasons has not been proven.⁴⁷ Just a year after Short and Rutledge's stay, on 15 September 1789, de Bernis would have been the principal guest at the meeting of the mysterious Egyptian lodge arranged by the Count of Cagliostro at Villa Malta on the Pincio, together with many well-known members of Roman society, including Abbot Ennio Quirino Visconti and Princess Giuliana Falconieri Santacroce, both close friends of the cardinal.⁴⁸ These people represented another Rome, that of Italian scholars open to international culture thanks to the protection of noblemen like Sigismondo Chigi, Baldassarre Odescalchi (1748-1810), Camillo Massimo and Marcantonio IV Borghese. This Rome on the one hand opened its doors to anyone, as did Prince Borghese in his palace, the favored goal of foreigners,⁴⁹ and on the other closed them in order to protect groups that under the guise of conviviality and literary conversation nourished the most liberal and heterodox ideas. One such group was the Accademia dei cioccolatai (Academy of Chocolatiers), or Società cioccolataria (Chocolate Society), which is little known in spite of the notoriety of the eight characters who founded it in 1779: Philippe Wacquier de la Barthe, Ennio Quirino Visconti, Bartolomeo Pacca, Alessandro Lante, Domenico Coppola, Nicola Spedalieri, Vincenzo Monti and Francesco Milizia.⁵⁰ The Accademia dei cioccolatai was short-lived, but its progressive spirit continued to guide its members. One of these was Ennio Quirino Visconti, who made erudite descriptions of the masterpieces of the Pio Clementino museum, founded by his father Giovanni Battista, designed to affirm the image of Rome as the capital of matters antique, as opposed to "Baroque" Rome. Another of its members, Francesco Milizia (1725-1798), attacked Baroque art in his *Roma delle belle arti del disegno* in 1787. In this Rome, simultaneously enlightened and dark and hidden, Milizia, a Freemason from the beginning, was the key figure for the history, theory and criticism of architecture. He had the protection of his great friend, the Spanish ambassador José Nicolás de Azara, who commissioned a fresco by Francisco Javier Ramos in the Spanish ambassador's residence, the Palazzo di Spagna, which portrays them both in the guise of ancient philosophers. Milizia stands at the left, while Azara is seated at the right, with between them Princess Santacroce as Minerva, and in the right background a portrait of the late Anton Raphael

10. Antoine François Callet, *Cardinal de Bernis*, c. 1771, oil on canvas, 214 x 165 cm. Private Collection.



11. Francisco Javier Ramos, *Minerva (Giuliana Falconieri Santacroce) e due filosofi (Francesco Milizia and José Nicolás de Azara)*, 1786, fresco, palace of the Spanish Embassy, ceiling of the private apartment.



Mengs (1728-1779), whose writings Milizia had edited on behalf of de Azara (Fig. 11).⁵¹

Milizia, described in 1786 by Andrea Memmo as ‘the colonel of the architect philosophers’, owed his fame to the treatise *Principi di architettura civile* published five years earlier in 1781. This was imbued with a British conception of architecture as a pragmatic expression of philosophy and natural science that was worthy of practice by a learned gentleman, such as the author himself,⁵² or Jefferson or Bulfinch. The fascination of Milizia for these circles is well expressed by the praise of Jefferson in 1824 on receiving a copy of Milizia’s *Principi* as a gift from Joseph Coolidge Jr:

‘I ought sooner to have thanked you for the valuable work of Milizia, on Architecture, searching, as he does, for the sources and prototypes of our ideas of beauty in that fine art, he appears to have elicited them with more correctness than any other author I have read.’⁵³

Knowledge of the work of Milizia gave access to yet another Rome, one where Baroque architecture was repudiated in favor of the somber grandeur of the remains of ancient Rome, provocatively reflected in the comparison between the ‘best’, as represented by the Cloaca Maxima, and the ‘worst’, represented by the Vatican Sacristy. This building was considered to be the last striking manifestation of the distorted continuity of traditional Roman architecture perpetrated by Roman academic architects, including its designer: Carlo Marchionni (1702-1786), who died at the age of eighty-four on 28 July 1786, about two months after the departure of Bulfinch from Rome.

In conclusion, it pleases me to think that Milizia’s philosophy might have influenced Bulfinch’s decision, upon his return to Boston in January of 1787, to dedicate himself to a ‘season of leisure, pursuing no business but giving gratuitous advice in architecture, and looking forward to an establishment in life.’⁵⁴

[Translated by David R. Marshall]

Notes

This study began as my contribution ‘The Rome of Charles Bulfinch: A Cultural Itinerary of 1786’, presented at the 46th American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS) Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, 19-22 March 2015 in the session *American Latium: American Artists in and around Rome in the Age of the Grand Tour* (convened and chaired by Karin Wolfe). It was revised and developed in the conference *American Latium: American Artists and Travelers in and around Rome in the Age of the Grand Tour*, Rome, 7-8 June 2018.

- 1 On the work of Bulfinch see especially Kirker 1998.
- 2 Bulfinch 1896, pp. 34-57.
- 3 In his posthumously published autobiography Bulfinch situates his transition from being a person with a taste for architecture to amateur practitioner at the time of his unsuccessful employment with the merchant Joseph Barrell: ‘My time passed very idly and I was at leisure to cultivate a taste for Architecture, which was encouraged by attending to Mr. Barrell’s improvement of his estate ... & the houses of some friends’ (Bulfinch 1896, pp. 41-2).
- 4 Bulfinch 1896, p. 44. Bulfinch’s arrival in London at 11 p.m. on the evening of 20 July 1785 aroused his enthusiasm for picturesque spectacle: ‘This is, in my opinion, the best time to enter London, you are astonished with the splendour from the immense number of lamps, & there is a sufficient degree of obscurity to make a sublime scene’ (*Ibidem*).
- 5 For aspects of the travels of John Aphorpe in Italy see Wendy Wassyng Roworth in this volume.
- 6 Bulfinch 1896, p. 42.
- 7 For the reconstruction of the context of the presence of Jefferson in Paris, see Rice 1976; Thompson 2013.
- 8 In this regard see Conroy 2006.
- 9 On Adams see McCullough 2001.
- 10 Kirker 1998, p. 12.
- 11 The fact that for Jefferson ‘both town and country fell short of my expectations’ could indicate that it was Bulfinch who fueled his expectations of London by praising its architecture, which instead appeared to Jefferson to be ‘in the most wretched style I ever saw.’ Letter, From Thomas Jefferson to John Page, 4 May 1786, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-09-02-0374>, accessed 2 September 2020.
- 12 See Maria Cristina Loi in this volume and Loi 2021.
- 13 On his return from his trip to Italy, Bulfinch passed through Paris again, where Jefferson issued him with a passport and entrusted him with goods to take home. Conroy 2006, p. 112.
- 14 Bulfinch 1896, p. 42.
- 15 Bulfinch 1896, pp. 55-6.
- 16 Bulfinch 1896, p. 56, n. 1.
- 17 J.W. Goethe, *Italienische Reise*, 5 December 1786, <https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/goethe/italien/ital164.html>, accessed 20 April 2021.
- 18 Bulfinch 1896, p. 57.
- 19 See Martin Postle in this volume.
- 20 On the nature of West and Copley’s presence in Rome with earlier bibliography see Jonny Yarker and Christopher M.S. Johns in this volume.
- 21 The full version of the letter is published in Bolton 1927, pp. 10-12 and in Harris 1970,

pp. 21-2. On the cultural context see Manfredi 2006-2007, I, 2006, pp. 33-5.

22 Bradbury 2016, pp. 235-6.

23 For an overview of the evolution of the educational Grand Tour to Rome of foreign architects, and in particular British architects from Chambers to Soane, see Manfredi 2006-2007. For the situation in the 1780s see Kieven 2007.

24 Meyer and Rolfi 2002, p. 261.

25 Bignamini and Hornsby 2010.

26 On the Roman sites frequented by the British and the Americans see Fabrizio Di Marco in this volume. On the portrait of John Apthorp and his daughters Grizzell and Catharine see Wendy Wassing Roworth in this volume.

27 Harbaugh 2013, pp. 125-6, *Traveling Notes for Mr. Rutledge and Mr. Shippen*, 3 June 1788. L. and B, vol. XVII, pp. 290-3. Jefferson's Hints to Americans Travelling in Europe, 19 June 1788, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-13-02-0173>, accessed 2 September 2020.

28 *Ibidem*.

29 McCormick 1990, pp. 191-9.

30 Clérisseau 1778.

31 McCormick 1990, p. 193.

32 B. Bergdoll, *Vaudoyer, Antoine-Laurent*, 2009, <https://www.inha.fr/fr/ressources/publications/publications-numeriques/dictionnaire-critique-des-historiens-de-l-art/vaudoyer-antoine-laurent-thomas.html>, accessed 13 September 2021.

33 For a general picture of young foreign architects in Rome see Kieven 2007. For the situation of the Italians see Pasquali 2007, pp. 31-4. For that of the Spanish see Sambricio 2007.

34 Ingamells 1997, pp. 543-4, 560, 807-8, 824, 1017. In 1786 the architect John Thomas Grove was also probably established in Rome. *Ibidem*, p. 436.

35 Salmon 2012.

36 Pinon and Amprimoz 1988, pp. 24-6, 285-6.

37 For the Italian stay of Auguste Cheval de Saint Hubert, or Auguste Hubert, see Pasquali 2019; Pasquali 2020.

38 Pinon and Amprimoz 1988, pp. 285-6.

39 *Description du théâtre de Marcellus rétabli dans son état primitif d'après les vestiges qui en restent encore. Mémoire joint aux plans, coupes, élévations et détails mesurés à Rome et adressés à l'Académie royale d'architecture de Paris en 1786*, published in 1812. Pinon and Amprimoz 1988, p. 263; David 2002, p. 144.

40 Not even de Saint Hubert was able to complete the survey of the Pantheon having decided to embark on a journey to discover the antiquarian sites of Campania and Sicily that excluded him from continuing as a *pensionnaire*. Pasquali 2020.

41 To Thomas Jefferson from William Short, 23 December 1788, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-14-02-0157>, accessed 2 September 2020.

42 To Thomas Jefferson from William Short, 31 December 1788, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-14-02-0175>, accessed 2 September 2020.

43 To Thomas Jefferson from John Rutledge, Jr, 31 December 1788, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-14-02-0174>, accessed 2 September 2020.

44 See note 42.

45 Ingamells 1997, p. 792. Henry George Quin, on 1 April 1786, recorded 130 British and Irish visitors in Rome: 'The quantities of English I met last night at Cardinal Bernis's', he then explained, 'put me in the head of making out a list of such Names as I know & who have been here [in Rome] this Winter. I may have omitted several of them & there are many others whose names I do not yet know.' On 4 January 1789 Short wrote to Jefferson: 'Few dinners are given to strangers except by Cardinal de Bernis who keeps open house for them, and does the honours of it in the easiest and most agreeable manner imaginable.' Letter, From William Short to Thomas Jefferson, 14 January 1789, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-14-02-0219>, accessed 2 September 2020. On the role of de Bernis in Roman society see Montègre 2011, *passim*; Montègre 2019.

46 'I was surprized last evening on being presented at an house in Rome to find there a young American. He has been about three weeks here and seems on a perfectly easy footing at this house which is among the first in Rome, I suppose, as the mistress is on an intimate footing with Cardinal de Bernis, by whom we were presented to her. Rutledge had an opportunity of speaking more with him than I did. He learned that he was the son of a Mr. Seton at New York, that he had been sent to Europe for his health and landed a few months ago somewhere in the Mediterranean. He told us also he had lately recieved a letter from his father which mentioned that the new Congress would certainly sit at New York.' Letter, From William Short to Thomas Jefferson, 17 February 1789, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-14-02-0325>, accessed 2 September 2020. For the identification of Seton, see Fucilla 1949, p. 101.

47 In 1782 Vaudoyer was a member of the Parisian Masonic lodge L'Harmonie. B. Bergdoll, *Vaudoyer, Antoine-Laurent*, 2009, <https://www.inha.fr/fr/ressources/publications/publications-numeriques/dictionnaire-critique-des-historiens-de-l-art/audoyer-antoine-laurent-thomas.html>, accessed 13 September 2021. In 1787 Vaudoyer was among the founders of the French Freemasons in Rome, entitled *La réunion des amis sincères*, of which in 1788 de Saint Hubert was also a member (Montègre 2015; Pasquali 2020, p. 86).

48 Donato 2009, p. 65.

49 'The Prince Borghese for instance who is said to have 30, or 35,000 pounds stlg. of revenue, who possesses one of the richest Palaces, and the most superb Villa in Rome, is the first merchant of the city. His house is one of the many here which are open to every body and where strangers go as they go to a tavern. Every night in the week is public. Those who chuse to sup, stay and sup, and during the evening ices and iced punch are carried round to all the company. Gaming tables are in every room and most people make use of them, particularly the strangers. It is a manner of living which one cannot conceive before coming here. Few dinners are given to strangers except by Cardinal de Bernis who keeps open house for them, and does the honours of it in the easiest and most agreeable manner imaginable.' Letter, William Short to Thomas Jefferson, 14 January 1789, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-14-02-0219>, accessed 2 September 2020.

50 Visconti and Waquier de la Barthe 1806, pp. 69–71. 'Sopra vari scientifici argomenti sonosi aggirati gli Esercizj de' Consocj, ciascuno de' quali si obbligò a pronunciare un Discorso, quando l'ordine successivo il richiedesse. La Metafisica, la Morale, l'Eloquenza, la Poesia, la Storia del tempo, l'Antiquaria somministrarono ai liberi ragionamenti ampla materia.' *Ibidem*, pp. 69–70.

51 Manfredi 2010.

52 Manfredi 2013.

53 O'Neal 1954, p. 12.

54 Bulfinch 1896, p. 58.

Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826; Fig. 1) never visited Rome. During his brief and only trip to Italy in the spring of 1787, undertaken while serving as American ambassador to France, Jefferson did not venture south of Liguria, Piedmont and Lombardy, and while he expressed deep regret that he could not extend his trip, he never returned.¹ In a well-known letter to the artist, his beloved Maria Cosway, he wrote:

‘I took a peep only into Elysium. I entered it at one door, and came out at another, having seen, as I past, only Turin, Milan, and Genoa. I calculated the hours it would have taken to carry me on to Rome. But they were exactly so many more than I had to spare. Was not this provoking?’²

Drawing upon Jefferson’s own words from the years he spent in Europe, from his considerable correspondence with politicians and artists and intellectuals, it is evident that a return to Rome became impossible for him for a series of practical reasons: urgent deadlines related to his office,

adverse weather conditions for travel, the arrival of his first-born child Martha “Patsy” from America, and the state of his own health. While ultimately Jefferson was resigned to this reality, yet the fact that he never visited the Rome of his imagination has remained a conundrum for Jefferson scholars.

This is because Rome had served as the fundamental source of inspiration for Jefferson, not only in terms of his political philosophy, his work as a legislator, his studies in the fields of law, history, literature and the arts, but also because it is inconceivable to separate the politician, jurist, man of letters from the amateur architect, collector and lover of the arts. The influence of ancient Rome foregrounds all of Jefferson’s architectural work, with a stirring intentionality in which art, ethics and politics merge. Jefferson’s best-known architectural projects attest to this, notwithstanding later adaptations and successive interpretations, whether fully realized or left in project form, from the State Capitol in Richmond to his house at Monticello, from the President’s House to the University of Virginia.

This essay will address some considerations regarding the unique relationship that Jefferson constructed with the Rome of his imagination – an evocative reality he studied and gained knowledge about *in absentia*. Certainly paradoxical, Thomas

1. John Trumbull, *Thomas Jefferson*, 1788, oil on mahogany, 11.4 x 8.3 cm. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 24.19.1



Jefferson's Rome was the product of an ideal mental construction, composed gradually from words and images drawn from printed sources, and social and cultural contacts. Jefferson immersed himself in Rome through the illustrations of numerous treatises that he acquired for his library, first and foremost, the architect Andrea Palladio's seminal publication of 1570, *I Quattro Libri dell'Architettura*. He also was well-versed in Latin classics, reading Marco Terenzio Varrone, Cicero and Pliny the Younger. Significantly, Jefferson was in direct personal contact or via correspondence with many contemporaneous European politicians, artists and intellectuals, and through these various routes he came to know Rome, depending also on his first-hand experience of ancient Roman sites he had visited in the south of France, such as Nîmes and Vienne. The relationship between Jefferson and Rome consisted of men, letters, books, and images, and in many aspects it can be considered the most important aspects of the "Italian connection" that always accompanied and profoundly inspired Jefferson's aesthetic and political sensibilities.³

Rome Viewed Through Architectural Treatises

The origins of Jefferson's interest in Rome can be traced back to his formative years as a student at the College of William and Mary, at which time he began to assemble an important personal library.⁴ Over his lifetime, Jefferson formed multiple collections of books, for himself and for the University of Virginia and, indeed, the importance of books for his cultural and political stature has been the subject of much scholarship. For the University of Virginia Jefferson not only designed the library buildings and chose the contents of the library holdings, but he also planned the study curricula for the students. Jefferson's personal library from Monticello was later sold and formed the original nucleus of the Library of Congress collection. Although only a limited number of his original volumes have survived fires, looting and dispersions over time, yet the reconstruction of the catalogs of his several libraries is ongoing thanks to the existence of numerous handwritten inventories, documents relating to acquisitions and sales, and Jefferson's extensive personal correspondence.⁵

In his libraries, organized according to a classification system divided into three sections – 'History, Philosophy, Fine Arts' – that recalls the Baconian thesifications of 'Memory, Reason, Imagination' as categories of knowledge, Jefferson collected many titles relating to Rome, not only in the 'Fine Arts and Architecture' section, but also in those of Philosophy and History.⁶ Reading the classics and studying antiquity, searching for moral, eternal and universal values on which to establish the fledgling American Republic and its architectural and artistic representational direction – this was the path Jefferson followed. Rome served Jefferson as a model, and exerted a decisive influence on his ideas for outlining a program for the American nation, for which he was one of the Founding Fathers. As his epitaph records: 'Thomas Jefferson, Author of the Declaration of Independance, of the law for religious freedom in Virginia and Father of the University of Virginia.'⁷

Among the books making up part of Jefferson's personal library and catalogued in 1823 by Nicolas Trist before being sold to the Library of Con-

gress – in the section dedicated to ‘Architecture - chapter 30 - Fine Arts’ – were elencated not only the titles of the most important Renaissance architectural treatises ranging from Alberti to Palladio to Serlio and to Scamozzi, in both partial editions and in translations, but there were also collections of illustrated views and engravings of monuments of ancient and modern Rome, including Claude Perrault’s edition of the Treatise of Vitruvius, the *Vedute* of Piranesi, along with works from the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, primarily in Italian and French editions.⁸ Research into Jefferson’s library catalogues provides detailed and precise information about the dates and places of the acquisition of his volumes. The importance of printed evidence for the history of architecture in Rome to Jefferson’s development as a tastemaker has been foregrounded in studies by Karl Lehman, Sidney Fiske Kimball, and James Ackerman.⁹ These scholars also highlight how Jefferson’s European experience radically impacted upon his book collecting activities, and ultimately his personal intellectual journey.¹⁰

While Jefferson proclaimed that ‘Palladio is the Bible’, yet this statement must be taken with a grain of salt, as the range of architectural references he drew upon over time expanded enormously, as his own architectural projects demonstrate.¹¹ Jefferson’s knowledge of Greek and Latin allowed him to form an idea about ideal classical ‘arcadian and agrarian lifestyles’ from textual sources, and together with the vast repertoire of visual images he had collected in treatises or as engravings, these served to inspire his visual acumen and sensibility in the design of country villas also.¹²

Rome as Viewed by William Short

Rome was the chosen destination for study and for practical application for generations of artists, sculptors, architects and antiquarians and the relationships Jefferson formed with these travelers to the Holy City contributed to his up-to-date cultural knowledge.¹³ Through his contacts he not only developed a first-hand awareness of the flurry of activity that

2. Edward Sachse (draftsman),
*View of the University of Virginia,
Charlottesville & Monticello, Taken
From Lewis Mountain*, coloured
litograph, 1856.



animated the world of contemporary art, but significantly contributed to his input into the formation of a new generation of American artists.¹⁴ The complex story of the commissioning of a statue of George Washington by Antonio Canova, who depicts the first president in the guise of a Roman soldier, constitutes a significant example of the role Jefferson played in the nascence of the arts in the young Republic. Not only was Jefferson directly involved in the selection of artists and in the coordination of major American artistic enterprises, he was able to leverage his international influence as he had a diplomat's innate ability to balance different opinions and points of view.¹⁵

An important role in the development of Jefferson's interest for Rome was played by his secretary in Paris, William Short (1759-1849), whom Jefferson referred to as 'his adoptive son.'¹⁶ For a period of eight months during 1788-89, Short traveled on a Grand Tour through Italy, stopping in Turin, Milan, Ferrara, Bologna, Forlì, Rimini, Loreto, Pesaro, and Spoleto. On 30 December 1788 Short arrived in Rome where he stayed for three weeks before continuing on to Naples. He returned to Rome on 9 February and from there began his return journey to Paris at the beginning of March, traveling through Tuscany and Liguria.¹⁷

In correspondence Short described and commented on the places he visited, regularly expressing great admiration and a sense of amazement at the scale of the antique monuments, the wealth of surviving archaeological evidence, the beauty of sculptures, paintings, frescoes, temples, churches and palaces. Over the course of his journey Short developed a growing interest in art and architecture and his Italian sojourn can be interpreted as complementary to Jefferson's brief 1787 tour, inasmuch as each description, albeit cursory, that Short provided added to Jefferson's knowledge about Italy, and particularly, about Rome. For example, Short writes:

'I find myself so fully possessed by the objects which surround me, and so stunned as it were by the pleasure of considering myself on that classical ground which I have so long been accustomed to admire, that I cannot call my attention to any particular object. I am just now come from the Pantheon. I felt there emotions, and a glow of enthusiasm which I never before experienced. I never felt before the effect of the true sublime. I feel this moment in writing to you vibrations in my mind which were occasioned three hours ago by my entrance into this grand rotunda.'¹⁸

The architecture of the Pantheon directly inspired Jefferson's final architectural project, the library at the University of Virginia. Short had been tasked with acquiring 'a compleat set of Piranesi's drawings of the Pan-



3. Charles-Louis Clérissseau, *Façade de la Maison carrée à Nîmes*, engraving (*Les Antiquités de la France*, I, *Les monumens de Nîmes*, Paris, Philippe-Denys Pierre, 1778, tab. II).

theon ... I wish to render them useful in the public buildings now to be begun at Georgetown.¹⁹

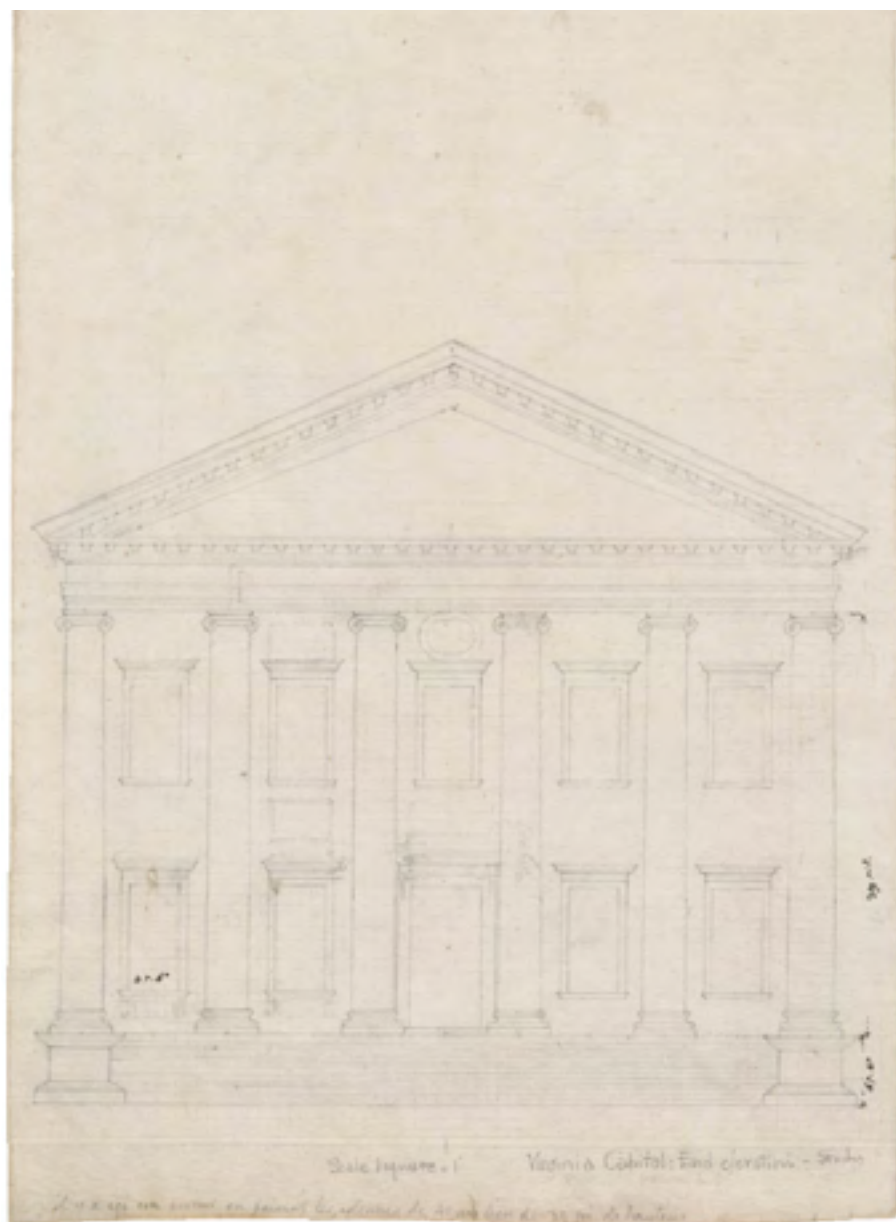
Short wrote of his experience of the Vatican that: 'The Vatican is a little world in itself filled with the finest productions of the fine arts ancient and modern', and he lauded the great Roman public baths, as an example of civic architecture dedicated by the ancient emperors to the people of Rome. 'The remains of antiquity which shew best the magnificence of those days are the baths of the emperors.'²⁰ Short's letters include a brief reference to the large public spaces of the forums, which surely fascinated Jefferson, not just as a form of temple complex architecture – which we know was one of the first inspirations for his architectural work, as demonstrated by the project for the Capitol in Richmond – but for their general layout. Indeed the plan for the University of Virginia campus is based on a forum-like design – a large rectangular open area flanked by symmetrically arranged buildings behind continuous colonnades (Fig. 2).²¹

Jefferson had already experimented on paper with a project organized around a large rectangular courtyard when he designed the extension to the College of William and Mary,²² but for the University of Virginia campus project this scheme was developed on an urban scale.²³ Undoubtedly, the Palladian images of the imperial forums and their temples illustrated in the *Quattro Libri* were a decisive factor in the evolution of the university design beginning with Jefferson's initial proposal. Jefferson's University of Virginia project evolved to embrace a rural vision linked to an agrarian utopia – realized as a series of pavilions placed equidistant from one other around a green space – and the whole complex thereby was transformed into a hierarchical system, rendered even more solemn and '*all'antica*', by the use of classical architectural orders.²⁴

Rome outside Rome

Jefferson had the opportunity to see examples of ancient Roman architecture in the south of France,²⁵ writing this impassioned passage to Madame de Tessé: 'From Lyons to Nismes I have been nourished with the remains of Roman grandeur. ... I am immersed in antiquities from morning to night. For me the city of Rome is actually existing in all the splendor of it's empire.'²⁶

The surviving Roman monuments of Vienne, the Maison Carrée of Nimes, the Pont du Gard and the arch at Orange served as stand-ins for Rome's glorious past spurring Jefferson's imaginings of a new architectural era. He extolled the magnificence of ancient Rome and condemned, instead, the interventions of the Middle Ages that he considered destructive of the beauty of the classical world.²⁷ In what Fiske Kimball defined as 'the first monument of the classical revival in America'²⁸ – the project for the State Capitol in Richmond – Jefferson relied on his impressions of the *Maison Carrée* and together with the French architect Charles Louis Clérisseau,²⁹ projected a Roman building outside Rome (Figs. 3-5). While the history of the planning of the State Capitol Building in Richmond is well known, it is worth remembering Jefferson's suggestions written in a letter to James Buchanan and William Hay in January 1786, to choose a model 'already devised and approved by the general suffrage of the world



Opposite

4. Thomas Jefferson, *Project for the Capitol in Richmond*, study for the facade, 1785, pencil on grid paper, 30.8 x 21.3 cm. Coolidge Collection of Thomas Jefferson Manuscripts, Massachusetts Historical Society, N279; K116.

5. Thomas Jefferson, *Project for the Capitol in Richmond*, study for the side facade, 1785, pencil on grid paper, 26.6 x 41.9 cm. Coolidge Collection of Thomas Jefferson Manuscripts, Massachusetts Historical Society, N277; K114.

Below

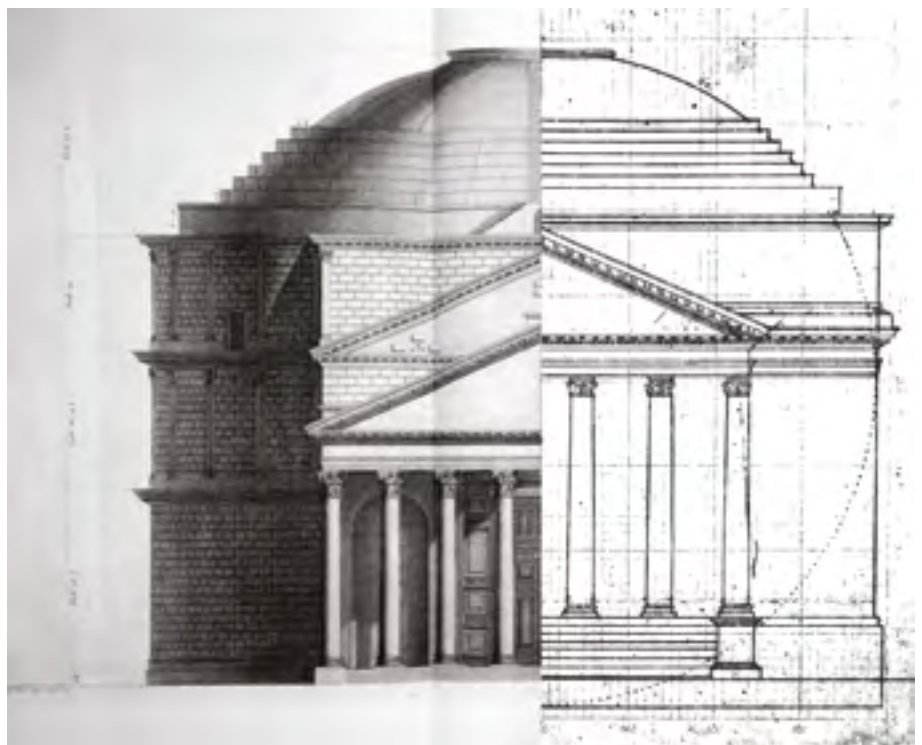
6. The Pantheon and the "Rotunda" of the University of Virginia. Hypothetical reconstructive of the design process (graphic elaboration by Maria Cristina Loi and Veronica Rigonat).

... There is at Nismes in the South of France a building, called the *Maison Quarrée*, erected in the time of the Caesars, and which is allowed without contradiction to be the most perfect and precious remain of antiquity in existence ...³⁰

While Jefferson only traveled to see the *Maison Quarrée* a year after writing to Buchanan and Hay, yet he had formed his opinions already on the suitability of the architecture of the *Maison* for civic purposes, based on his study of textual sources and renderings by Clerisseau.³¹ In Jefferson's interpretation, the *Maison Carrée* became a symbol for nascent American architecture. His project also became a re-interpretation for contemporaneous politics, in that an evocative image of the grandeur of Rome was translated into a modern building, its materials and orders modified and considered in relation to the buildings surrounding it, while the internal organization was completely reinvented to accommodate the needs of the new government.

The University of Virginia "Rotonda": Jefferson's Final Tribute to Rome

As the archetypal image of classical Rome was fundamental to Jefferson's developing strategy of statesmanship, so the choice of the Roman Pantheon as the model for the library of the University of Virginia represented a classical "temple to knowledge" (Fig. 6), providing the clearest example of the indissoluble relationship in Jefferson's mind between Roman culture and the new America. In a key passage, Fiske Kimball writes: 'It was to the statesmen and rulers, like Jefferson, Napoleon, Catherine II, and Ludwig, rather than to professional architects, that the direct reproduction of classical models made its appeal - the Virginia Capitol and the Madelaine are similar products.'³² Characteristic however, for Jefferson's cosmopolitan



attitude toward classical models was that he avoided any ‘direct reproduction’, favouring ‘adaptations’ of types. Moreover, Jefferson referred to examples of Roman architecture only for civic and public monuments, whereas for domestic architecture he drew heavily from classically inspired arcadian and agrarian models such as those espoused by Palladio.³³ These brief notes have focused on the subject of the influence of Rome on Thomas Jefferson’s work as an architect. Architecture was the most direct route to plan a project for the new Republic and Jefferson was its chief protagonist and promoter.³⁴ While aware that he could not single-handedly create a new face for American public architecture, yet Jefferson’s contribution was nevertheless fundamental in leading to a refined and considered dialogue with the architects of antiquity – a “transliteration” of the language of Roman architecture, together with Andrea Palladio and his successors, considered the creators of “beautiful and good architecture”.

Notes

1 The present text is a re-elaboration of the paper that I gave at the conference *American Latium: American Artists and Travelers in and around Rome in the Age of the Grand Tour*. The theme addresses aspects of an extended research project, focusing on the relationship of Thomas Jefferson with Italian culture, see Loi 2021.

2 From Thomas Jefferson to Maria Cosway, 1 July 1787, Founders Online, National Archives, accessed April 11, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-11-02-0435>. On Maria Cosway see Cazzulani and Stroppa 1989; Gipponi 1998. On Jefferson see Richard H. Smith, International Center for Jefferson Studies website www.monticello.org, with continuously updated data on original sources and on bibliography. For Jefferson’s original documents see The Rare Book and Special Collection Division and The Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress in Washington DC; the Coolidge Collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society of Boston and the Special Collections Department section of the University of Virginia Library, Charlottesville. The impressive collections of writings that form the basis for Jefferson studies remains: *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* 1905; *The Works of Thomas Jefferson* 1905, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* 1950–2019; and the project in progress of the International Center for Jefferson Studies of *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson: Retirement Series*, dedicated to the years 1809–1826. Digital versions of these papers are now available at: *Thomas Jefferson Papers, 1806–1827*, Library of Congress: <https://www.loc.gov/collections/thomas-jefferson-papers/>; Thomas Jefferson Papers, an Electronic Archive: <https://www.masshist.org/thomasjeffersonpapers/>; see also <https://founders.archives.gov/>.

3 The formation and consolidation of Thomas Jefferson’s relationship with Italy is the central theme of Loi 2021.

4 On Jefferson’s education, see *Jefferson’s Formal Education*, in www.monticello.org.

5 On Jefferson’s book collections, see tjlibraries.monticello.org; Thomas Jefferson’s Libraries at librarything.com. In particular, on books related to architecture see Loi 2010 and Burns 2018 (with previous bibliography). Of great interest is the recent discovery of numerous texts that belonged to Jefferson, including some architectural treatises, in the library of Washington University in Saint Louis. I must thank Ann Lucas of the International Center for Jefferson Studies for the report, that I summarized in Loi 2019. See also the interviews with Ann Lucas and Endrina Tay in Betsey Rogers, ‘A rare and notable find’, in *Washington Magazine*, Washington University in Saint Louis, October 2011.

6 The Architecture entry is a subsection of Fine Arts together with Gardening, Sculpture, Painting, Music, Poetry, Oratory, Criticism. Polygraphical, in the catalog of 1789 (chapters 31–46) and a Gardening, Painting, Sculpture, Music, Poetry, Oratory, Criticism in the “Trist catalog” of 1823 (chapters 30–43). See <http://tjlibraries.monticello.org/>. Jefferson wrote about his system of classification thus: ‘Books may be classed from the Faculty of the mind, which

being I. Memory II. Reason III. Imagination are applied respectively to I. History II. Philosophy III. Fine Arts', see Thomas Jefferson, 1783 Catalogue of Books (manuscript volume), Coolidge Collection, Massachusetts Historical Society, p. 10.

7 'Thomas Jefferson: Design for Tombstone and Inscription, before 4 July 1826', in <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-6185>.

8 See, <http://tjlibraries.monticello.org/tjandreading/trist.html>.

9 On Thomas Jefferson's classical culture see Fiske Kimball 1916; Ackerman 1964; Lehmann 1965; Adams 1976. Among the most recent interdisciplinary studies see the collections of essays in Pacini, Wood and Ferguson 1995; Onuf and Cole 2011 (review by Maurizio Valsania, in <https://reviews.history.ac.uk/review/1285>, review no. 1285) with extensive bibliographies; Cogliano 2011.

10 Ackerman 1995.

11 'With Mr Jefferson I conversed at length on the subject of architecture. Palladio he said "was the Bible". You should get it & stick close to it.' Isaac A. Coles's Account of a Conversation with Thomas Jefferson [before 23 February 1816, accessed January 18, 2019, Founders Online, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/03-09-02-0336>. See further, Loi 1993, pp. 130-136 and passim. Jefferson's main interest in the orders in Palladio's treatise emerges in a letter to James Oldham, in which, he writes 'I send you my portable edition ... it contains only the 1st book on the orders, which is the essential part.' From Thomas Jefferson to James Oldham, 24 December 1804, Founders Online, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/99-01-02-0889>, accessed 11 April 2019.

12 See Lehmann 1965; Ackerman 2013, chapters II, VIII and passim.

13 See Tommaso Manfredi in this volume.

14 See Pacini, Wood and Ferguson 1995; in particular the essays Ferguson 1995 and Prown 1995; Panichi 2018.

15 See Beltramini 2018. See Capitelli 2015 and Guderzo 2015; Wood 1995, pp. 40 et seq.

16 On William Short see Bizardel and Quarterly 1964; Bowman 1997, in <https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/william-short>, with further bibliographic references.

17 On the description of his journey to Rome: To Thomas Jefferson from William Short, 23 December 1788, Founders Online, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-14-02-0157>, accessed 11 April 2019.

18 To Thomas Jefferson from William Short, 23 December 1788, Founders Online, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-14-02-0157>, accessed 18 January 2019.

19 From Thomas Jefferson to William Short, 16 March 1791, Founders Online, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-19-02-0141>, accessed 11 April 2019.

20 To Thomas Jefferson from William Short, 14 January 1789, Founders Online, National Archives, accessed January 18, 2019, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-14-02-0219>, accessed 18 January 2019.

21 For the University of Virginia, see Wilson 2009 with extensive bibliography; see also www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/tje/university-of-virginia-uva. On the ideals that led Jefferson to the University project, see O'Shaughnessy 2021; Ragosta, Onuf, and O'Shaughnessy 2019.

22 'Plan for an addition to the College of William and Mary, drawn at the request of Ld Dunmore', CSmH, Henry E. Huntington Library, published in Nichols 1984, no. 10, n. 421.

23 For a general picture of the development of the American campus typology and the influence exercised in the twentieth century on this process by the University of Virginia project, see Turner 1984.

24 I refer to the well-known study sketch for the university floor plan that accompanies the text of a letter from Thomas Jefferson to William Thornton, 9 May 1817. The original drawing is in the Albert and Shirley Small Special Collections Library, University of Virginia

(N300, MSS 171). In the 'Specification Book for the University of Virginia' Jefferson reports, the indications relating to the orders selected for the pavilions and for the "Rotunda". Dated 18 July 1819 on the title page, the document, incomplete, in University Virginia, Jefferson Papers, No. 318 <http://www2.iath.virginia.edu>, has been published by several authors including Wilson 2009.

25 Rice 1976; on travel to Europe see Shackelford 1995. See also <https://www.monticello.org/site/research-and-collections/journey-through-france-and-italy-1787>.

26 From Thomas Jefferson to Madame de Tessé, 20 March 1787, Founders Online, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-11-02-0229>, accessed 11 April 2019.

27 In describing the Roman architecture of Vienne, the Maison Caree of Nismes, and the arch at Orange, Jefferson spoke of 'sublime antiquity, (well) preserved', while criticizing medieval interventions: 'The Pretorian palace, as it is called, comparable for it's fine proportions to the Maison quarrée, totally defaced by the Barbarians who have converted it to it's present purpose; it's beautiful, fluted, Corinthian columns cut out in part to make space for Gothic windows, and hewed down in the residue to the plane of the building.' From Thomas Jefferson to Madame de Tessé, 20 March 1787, Founders Online, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-11-02-0229>, accessed 18 January 2019.

28 Fiske Kimball 1915, reprinted from the *Journal of the American Institute of Architects*, vol. III, 1915, no.s 9-11, pp. 371-381, 421-433, 473-491.

29 Clérisseau 1778. See further, Kimball 1916, p. 93.

30 From Thomas Jefferson to James Buchanan and William Hay, 26 January 1786, Founders Online, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-09-02-0194>, accessed 18 January 2019.

31 'Here I am, Madam, gazing whole hours at the Maison quarrée, like a lover at his mistress. The stocking-weavers and silk spinners around it consider me as an hypochondriac Englishman, about to write with a pistol the last chapter of his history.' From Thomas Jefferson to Madame de Tessé, 20 March 1787, Founders Online, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-11-02-0229>, accessed 11 April 2019. See Loi 1993, pp. 91-128 and passim.

32 Fiske Kimball 1916, p. 42

33 'But Monticello remained American and individualistic; the home-made bricks and white painted wood detailing carved on the site distanced it from European models, as home-spun differed from imported silks.' Ackerman 2002, p. 274.

34 It is important to emphasize that in all of his architectural projects Jefferson was supported by professional architects both in the design and construction phases. Fundamental to him were also his contacts with Italian workers who executed elements in Carrara marble for both Monticello and the University.

A Painter and Diplomat: The Two Careers of James Edward Freeman

James Edward Freeman (1810–1884)¹ is celebrated today as an exceptionally talented painter of “fancy pictures” – a genre of art originating in Britain in the eighteenth century, usually depicting everyday scenes of life, often with children as the subjects, tinged with sentimental overtones. Freeman’s compositions heralded the Latium version of this genre, depicting humble, yet noble, Italian peasants and children (Fig. 1).² Alongside his artistic achievements, which saw him translate the genre of “fancy” painting into a political and social medium championing democracy, Freeman, acting US consul to Rome during the final days of the Roman Republic of 1849, must rightfully be remembered for his diplomatic heroism. Indeed, it was Freeman’s decisive and selfless action, including shielding revolutionaries, manufacturing travel documents under the auspices of the American government to secure safe conduct for

1. S. Ferrando, *James Edward Freeman*, c. 1870, carte-de-visite. McGuigan Collection, USA.



political activists, as well as his personal intercession with the French occupiers of Rome, that saved the lives of more than 3,000 Italian patriots. How an artist born on an island off the coast of Maine, and raised on a remote farm in rural upstate New York came to play such a pivotal role at this critical juncture in Italian history is the scope of this essay. A consideration of Freeman’s parallel careers speaks not only to his singular accomplishments as an artist and as a diplomat, but also to the broader perceptions of, and sympathies for, the *Risorgimento* held by the resident American community in the Eternal City throughout this period. When Freeman first arrived in Rome on 30 November 1836 to dedicate a year to the study of art, he was already a respected and commercially viable painter in New York. Early on in his sojourn in Rome, Freeman undertook a “fancy” portrait bust of the Amalfitan fisherman Tommaso Aniello, known as *Masaniello*, who famously led a populist uprising against the Spanish control of Naples in 1647 (Fig. 2). The poignant legend of Masaniello gave rise to a rich body of literature, of opera, and of artworks that in turn inspired advocates of Italian unification who considered that the story of Masaniello prefigured that of Italian national autonomy. Freeman’s choice to portray the revolutionary leader demonstrated his own early and passionate support for an independent Italian state, and yet his sensitive painted likeness remained within the respected

parameters of historical portraiture acceptable to his clientele based in America.

Freeman's brief but transformative sojourn in Rome ended when he fled the city at the outset of a devastating cholera outbreak in September 1837. Returning to New York, he immediately began lobbying for diplomatic posting in Italy that would provide a small but steady income, while still enabling him to paint. His efforts were realized, when in April 1840, he was appointed America's first consul to Ancona, a region of the Papal States. Upon arriving in the somewhat backwater Adriatic port town, however, Freeman soon recognized that his office held few responsibilities and no remuneration, as there were no American tourists or commerce requiring his attention. He took matters into his own hands, appointing a local vice-consul to the day-to-day affairs of the posting, and he subsequently returned to Rome and his *atelier*, where he continued to enjoy the perks of his diplomatic position transposed, such as invitations to papal ceremonies and aristocratic balls.

In 1844 Freeman completed the painting of *Italian Beggars*, a picture which was instantly acknowledged as a masterpiece in America (Fig. 3). The young boy at the centre of the work, wearing a red sash, symbolic of republicanism, reaches out for alms from unseen passers-by, while his younger sister sleeps at his feet. The two street urchins are situated in the shadow of the *Colosseum* at the foot of the *Meta Sudans*, the fountain whose distinctive shape resembled the metae, or conical turning posts, once erected inside the ancient arena to guide charioteers. Located at the intersection of the *via Triumphalis* and the *via Sacra*, the *Meta Sudans* similarly functioned as a turning point for triumphal processions entering the *Forum*. The inscription on the ancient Roman plaque behind the boy commemorates the rebuilding of the *Colosseum* after an earthquake in the fifth century AD. Freeman's painting foregrounds a deeper, philosophical belief that contemporary Rome was at a crossroads, and that once re-instated with a representative leadership, the decrepit city, like the Roman Colosseum after the earthquake, could be restored to its former ancient glory. Freeman's depiction of destitute Italian children – rendered in a charming mode notwithstanding their poverty – spoke to American audiences, many of whom understood this metaphor as a symbol of “Young Italy”, Giuseppe Mazzini's movement for Italian unification.

A year after *Italian Beggars* was painted, in 1845, a new US consul was appointed to Rome – Nicholas Carter Brown III, who arrived and took lodgings at 35 Piazza Barberini. Freeman and Brown found common ground as proponents of the *Risorgimento*, and when the liberal Car-



2. James E. Freeman, *Masaniello*, 1837, oil on canvas, 74.9 x 62.5 cm. McGuigan Collection, USA.

Opposite

3. James E. Freeman, *Italian Beggars*, 1844, oil on canvas, 144.8 x 111.1 cm. McGuigan Collection, USA.

dinal Giovanni Maria Battista Pietro Pellegrino Isidoro Mastai-Ferretti was elected pope Pius IX in 1846, both men were hopeful that the new pope would implement sweeping social and political reforms leading to a unified Italian state. However, already in 1848, a string of nationalist rebellions erupted throughout Europe in what became known as the Year of Revolution. The first, occurring in Sicily that January, led to the temporary overthrow of the Bourbon regime, followed by violent revolts against Austrian rule in Venice and Milan. When Pius IX withheld his support from these nationalist causes he effectively squandered any good will the papacy maintained. With more revolutions expected, tourists avoided traveling to the Continent, and their absence created economic hardship at Rome also. 'The consequence', Freeman wrote to a patron on 11 October 1848, 'is that there is a great foreboding among the people of want and suffering, and I have no doubt that fears for once will but be too prophetic.'³

On 15 November 1848, Count Pellegrino Rossi, Pius IX's prime minister, was assassinated on the steps of the Palazzo della Cancelleria. Violent protests ensued at the papal Quirinal Palace, and the pope fled to the Kingdom of Naples. Freeman avowed: 'My sympathies are strongly with the liberal party, although I cannot agree with their ultraism.'⁴ Free elections were called, and the new assembly declared the Roman Republic on 9

February 1849, with Freeman in attendance at the ceremony.⁵ A triumvirate was then appointed – including Giuseppe Mazzini of the "Young Italy" movement – to manage the city and implement democratic reforms. In the meantime, Pius IX had successfully appealed to Catholic Europe to restore his temporal power, and Rome was soon threatened on three fronts, as Neapolitan troops advanced from the south, Austrian forces assaulted Ancona, and the French army landed at Civitavecchia.

The prospect that the French, themselves a newfound republic, would attack another liberal, democratically installed body confounded the citizenry of Rome; but upcoming parliamentary elections in France required a strong Catholic turnout which necessitated the restoration of the papal authority. On 30 April 1849, the attack on Rome began, when 10,000 soldiers under the command of General Charles Oudinot besieged the southern gates of the city. In a letter published in the *New York Evening Post*, Freeman recalled that in his studio: 'I heard the roar of the artillery while I was in the midst of a bit of drapery which I could not leave unfinished. I went on for an hour, but





could endure it no longer. I sent my model away, and ran to the Pincio to see the smoke and fancy the battle with all its thrilling horrors.³⁶

Through his telescope, Freeman watched as General Giuseppe Garibaldi's republican forces valiantly repulsed the French army, who retreated back to Civitavecchia. Garibaldi wanted to pursue and destroy the invaders, but Mazzini overruled him in favor of a diplomatic solution, believing that the French would ultimately embrace the Roman Republic once they realized that it had popular support. By mid-May, a French envoy, Ferdinand de Lesseps, was dispatched, ostensibly to negotiate an armistice, although his real purpose was to stall for time until reinforcements arrived. Falsely promising protection against the advancing Neapolitan and Austrian armies, de Lesseps asked the Triumvirs to allow French troops to establish defensive positions outside the city. As de Lesseps made no stipulation that the pope be restored, nor the republic disbanded, Mazzini agreed – and this set a French trap in motion.

Meanwhile, Consul Brown was in declining health and preparing to resign his post at Rome. He named Freeman his acting vice-consul, so that the latter could assume his responsibilities during this tumultuous period, and Freeman willingly accepted in the hope of getting the appointment himself. Though the American government never recognized the Roman Republic, Brown and Freeman did everything in their power to help it

4. Gerolamo Induno, *La trasteverina uccisa da una bomba*, 1850, oil on canvas, 114.5 x 158.0 cm. Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna, Roma.

succeed. An audacious example of this came in mid-May, when Mazzini appealed for and received American passports for three of his secret emissaries so that they could securely smuggle large sums of money, under the seal of the United States, to purchase arms in Marseilles.⁷

As these events unfolded, Freeman sensed the impending demise of the Roman Republic and the eventual restoration of the papal government, lamenting: 'May heaven avert this calamity. [... The Romans] are too intelligent not to detest the vile church despotism which has so long kept them behind all the rest of Europe in the progress of knowledge and civil liberty.'⁸ Unlike most foreigners, Freeman and his Anglo-Italian wife, the sculptor Horatia Augusta Latilla Freeman, remained in Rome to witness the outcome of the siege and assist wherever they could.

When the French attacked Rome again on 1 June, Freeman reflected:

'It is now more than a month since we have been allowed to go out of the gates, and even the Pincian Hill is barricaded against us. Nothing is seen but military life with all its bustle and excitement. I have, as yet, gone daily to my studio, and have tried to forget that I am a prisoner in a besieged town. But it is difficult to divest one's self of the thought, and I find myself as often listening for the report of cannon.'⁹

Some 30,000 strong, the French army boasted new musket rifles with greater range and accuracy than anything the Roman forces possessed. They steadily dug trenches and daily advanced closer to the city, while the Romans, no matter how bravely they fought, were helpless.

When conducting personal reconnaissance on 3 June, Freeman marveled:

'The battle still rages at the Porta San Pancrazio, and once, during the morning, the French were forced back. I have just been to St. Peter's and the barricades. The sound of the [Roman] heavy artillery within the church is truly wonderful to hear. It is more sublime, if possible, than thunder.'

There were personal tragedies as well, as when Freeman lamented: 'A pretty young Trasteverina was killed in her bed, sleeping beside her sister who escaped unhurt', a scene poignantly immortalized in the canvas, *La Trasteverina Uccisa da una Bomba*, painted by the artist, Gerolamo Induno (1825-1890), who at this time took up arms to defend Rome (Fig. 4). 'Last night the French sent into the town a hundred and fifty bombs', Freeman wrote three weeks later, on 22 June. 'Great damage has been done to private property, and unoffending citizens have been killed and wounded.'¹⁰ In response, the remaining foreign consuls at Rome, including Freeman, petitioned Oudinot to stop the needless destruction and loss of civilian life.¹¹ Although the officer gave his promise, the bombing nevertheless persisted. From his rooftop terrace, Freeman witnessed the unceasing assault, noting on 29 June: 'The bombs continue to rain down upon us. Several have sung their barbarous music directly under our windows, and have burst in the piazza where our house stands.'¹²

On 1 July, despite heroic resistance, the French breached the city walls, and a ceasefire was declared. The triumvirate resigned, and Roman forces were ordered disarmed and disbanded, while Garibaldi and a large number of his loyal troops escaped to San Marino. Two days later, the French

occupation formally began, with French troops parading into the city and French functionaries swarming in to assume managerial duties. At this turning point, Freeman heralded: 'A new epoch is to commence in the history of venerable, insulted old Rome.' He commiserated:

'We have deeply sympathized with the brave people who have so nobly defended themselves against an unjust and barbarous invasion. Many gallant and patriotic spirits have fallen; many of those who survive, I fear will be sacrificed for their generous struggles to maintain the liberty of their oppressed country.'¹³

Freeman's fears of French retribution were real, as Oudinot soon ordered all foreigners and soldiers with passports to leave Rome, while those without proper papers had to surrender to the military police. Freeman and the British consul, John Freeborn, acted quickly to improvise quasi-official travel documents providing safe conduct out of the city, as they were not authorized to issue actual passports. In consequence, as one eyewitness observed, Freeman

'was beset from morning until night ... for protection, by the many victims of the invasion. ... Hundreds of Lombards threatened either with death or surrender to the dreaded Austrians; many of the Roman youth compromised by their fidelity to their country, and, in fact, not less than 3,000 hunted patriots thronged [his] office during several days.'¹⁴

At least one of these documents survives, having been issued to Ottavio Gigli, a prominent member in Rome's literary circles, who had held office in the Roman Republic (Fig. 5). Dated 4 July, America's Independence Day, and bearing the Great Seal of the United States, it effectively guaranteed Gigli the privileges of an American citizen returning home. Every handwritten portion of this document was completed by Freeman, including Brown's signature. The next day, Freeman was formally appointed Brown's replacement as acting consul, to which Lewis Cass Jr, the newly arrived American chargé d'affaires, heartily approved, informing the State Department: 'Mr. Freeman is a man of integrity and good abilities. As an artist, his reputation stands very high in Rome, and he is respected by all who know him.'¹⁵

In addition to issuing vital travel documents, several of Freeman's other efforts as acting consul included his rush to protect the American writer Margaret Fuller, whose passionate dispatches to the 'New-York Tribune' and selfless humanitarian work had garnered the enmity of the authorities. Freeman hoisted the American flag on Fuller's balcony overlooking Piazza Barberini, thereby attaching her residence to the consulate. Another incident involved Princess Cristina Trivulzio di Belgiojoso, the former director of hospitals under the Roman Republic, who requested passports for two Milanese fighters and entreated that her letters be dispatched under the seal of the consulate so that Oudinot could not intercept them.

On the evening of 6 July, as hundreds of threatened former freedom fighters swarmed outside the consulate in Piazza Barberini seeking Freeman's protection, a platoon of French soldiers arrived to disperse them. Insults were exchanged, and one man reportedly brandished a knife before flee-



5. James E. Freeman, United States Roman Consular certificate issued to Ottavio Gigli, 4 July 1849. McGuigan Collection, USA.

ing with a comrade into the palazzo. Despite the Great Seal and American flag over the door – clear indications of diplomatic sovereignty – the soldiers forcibly entered the palazzo at 35 Piazza Barberini and pursued their way upstairs into the Brown family’s living quarters. As Mrs. Brown tried to bar them, a soldier angrily drew his sword on her. Upon hearing the commotion, Freeman raced out of his office and confronted the commander, informing him that they had no authority there under international law. Undaunted, the soldiers violently arrested two Italian asylum-seekers and hauled them off to jail. When Nicholas Brown returned home and learned of the abuse to his family, he loaded them into his halted carriage and departed the city at once. It therefore fell upon Freeman to seek redress to this egregious diplomatic affront, and, after donning his consular uniform, he was received by Oudinot within the hour. Despite reported bullying by the general, Freeman stood firm and not only secured an apology, but the speedy release of the two prisoners.¹⁶ By mid-July, Alessandro Gavazzi, the apostate priest who had been Garibaldi’s chaplain and head of the military hospitals, was in hiding and hunted by the military police. Though Freeman had supplied him with relevant documents, when Gavazzi tried to leave Rome, these were torn up and thrown in his face because the French had changed their protocol regarding passports. For three days, Freeman and his wife Augusta sheltered Gavazzi in their apartments while Freeman tracked down the new requisite signatures, including, absurdly, that of Oudinot himself. After his escape to Britain, Gavazzi undertook a popular lecture tour, which he introduced by crediting Freeman with saving his

life.¹⁷ To put Gavazzi’s fortune in context, his intimate friend and fellow Garibaldino, Father Ugo Bassi, managed to escape from Rome, but, lacking the proper paperwork, was captured and handed over to the Austrians who executed him at Bologna.

At the height of Freeman’s risky diplomatic maneuvering, a cause of great irritation to the French occupiers, the American State Department abruptly recalled him from office. One expatriate, speaking on behalf of the American community, railed against the decision:

‘Thus deprived, without warning and without cause, of the office which was his *only safeguard*, at a time when he was sacrificing so much of personal interest for his country, and after having so nobly upheld that country’s name

and honor – can you feel surprised that a return for his loyalty and services so cold, ungrateful, and bitter, has excited, among us all, the warmest indignation?’¹⁸

Freeman’s removal, however, was not based on personal motives, but was a purely political choice: a consequence of the 1848 US presidential election, made with no regard to the events unfolding at Rome. Fortunately, before Freeman left his diplomatic post, Lewis Cass Jr attached him to his legation, thereby sparing him any serious repercussions.

After months of fatiguing work at the consulate, Freeman returned to the quiet life of an artist, yet he continued addressing *Risorgimento* themes in his paintings. An important example is the *The Savoyard Boy in London*, 1865 (Fig. 6), which depicts a young Savoyan street musician together with his trained monkey dressed in a red tunic. While the young Savoyard sleeps, awaiting an audience that has been diverted by the Punch and Judy show in the background, the alert monkey reaches for the crank of the hurdy-gurdy to play it himself. Metaphorically, the boy represents Victor Emmanuel II, while the monkey symbolizes Garibaldi, who famously wore a red shirt. The picture cleverly alludes to the king of Italy asleep to politically opportune moments to unite the Italian peninsula, whereas Garibaldi operated by force. The tattered broadsides attached to the brick wall in the background of the painting underline this interpretation, and one in particular records the Battle of Aspromonte, where Victor Emmanuel II sent his troops to intercept and defeat Garibaldi’s forces on 29 August 1862, before they could attack Rome.

In 1866, during what became known as the Third War of Independence, Italian forces mobilized to seize Venice from Austrian control. At the Battle of Bezzecca, fought in northeastern Italy on 21 July, an army led by Garibaldi invaded the Trentino and defeated the occupying Austrian forces. In consequence, an armistice was soon signed between the two countries, leading to Venice becoming part of a unified Italy. In conjunction with



Opposite

6. James E. Freeman, *The Savoyard Boy in London*, 1865, oil on canvas, 138.4 x 111.2 cm, Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington, DC, 1978.121.

7. James E. Freeman, *Young Italy*, 1866, oil on canvas, 65.4 x 54.6 cm. McGuigan Collection, USA.

8. James E. Freeman, *The Princess Prattles to her Parrot*, 1871, oil on canvas, 62.5 x 51.1 cm. McGuigan Collection, USA.



King Victor Emmanuel II, Garibaldi, one of the senior proponents of Mazzini's 'Young Italy', had added another jewel to the House of Savoy's crown, and had rid the peninsula of her penultimate foreign invader (although the French still held Rome). Surely, it is no coincidence that Freeman's best-known painting from that year, entitled *Young Italy* (Fig. 7), depicts the contrived innocence of a young girl – who is not only dressed principally in the new Italian nationalist colors of green, white and red, but who also looks directly out at the viewer, a painting which one studio visitor described as 'the finest thing in the studio, and a real gem.' Further commenting that the young girl was 'full of life and merriment, yet for the moment abashed and shy, she shades her eyes with one chubby hand in the attempt to execute the difficult feat of seeing you without having seen her,'¹⁹ comments that today sound naïve, considering the heightened political situation engulfing the Italian peninsula which Freeman has brilliantly embodied artistically in the figure of the child as representative for youthful nationalism.

In conclusion, Freeman's 1871, *The Princess Prattles to her Parrot* (Fig. 8), based on a poem by the American poet-painter Thomas Buchanan Read,

that relates the story of a young princess who liberates her lover's people from slavery and foreign oppression, must be discussed. Freeman composed a scene in which a parrot with emerald green plumage sits perched upon the right hand of a girl clad in a white blouse, her gilded locks crowned by a red ribbon. Although many social and political matters are explored by the poem, including the American Civil War and Reconstruction, the most obvious symbolism in Freeman's painting is again its clever use of the nationalist palette of green, white and red—in conscious emulation of the *tricolore* flag of the newly unified Kingdom of Italy, a nation finally united after Italian forces captured Rome on 20 September 1870.

Appendix

Two letters by James E. Freeman, being a firsthand account of the Siege of Rome, 30 April–3 July 1849 by the painter and US consul to Ancona, resident at Rome.

This correspondence appears here for the first time in 170 years after they were originally published in their respective newspapers.

Letter I.

J.E. Freeman to Joseph William Gray, editor of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* 'Letter from Rome—thrilling account of the siege by an American eye witness', *Cleveland Plain Dealer*, 25 July 1849, p. 1.

Rome, May 24th, 1849

My Dear Sir:

You will have heard through the papers of the present invasion or so-called intervention of the Roman State by the powers in France, Naples, and Austria. The French were the first to move towards Rome, where they appeared on the 30th of April. The city made a noble defense, and repulsed the enemy after six hours of fighting. The force of the French brought against Rome was about 10,000, of which a good part was engaged in the attack, which was made in three different quarters, or at three different gates on the south side of the town, where the walls form the southern enclosure of the Vatican and St. Peter's. The loss of the French in killed, wounded, and prisoners, must have been, from the best accounts I can procure, nearly 2,000. Of course their own brethren will say less than half that number. The loss of the Romans was, including killed and wounded, less than 400. The French returned back to Civitavecchia, the port where they landed a week before, and waited for reinforcements. These are now before the walls with an army of about 30,000, with sixty pieces of artillery. Negotiations have been opened through an especial envoy [Ferdinand de Lesseps], sent from Paris since the defeat or repulse on the 30th, to inquire into the state of the government here, and the real sentiments of the people with regard to the pope, and the recently established republic. France pretends to have sent her troops here to defend the people from anarchy, and to establish the government upon liberal principles, with the return of the pope. She presumed that the majority of the people would have opened the gates to them, and embraced her soldiers as deliverers from a government which they despised. But the result has shown her that the Romans are not in favor of the return of the pope, and the priests as their rulers in temporal affairs, and that they will not have them crammed down their throats by an armed intervention if they can avoid it. The king of Naples advanced simul-

taneously with the French, with an army of 20,000, and took up his position in Albano, above Rome, to the south about fourteen miles distant; but after the 30th, instead of advancing upon Rome began to entrench his forces at Albano; seemingly afraid of being surprised by the Romans. As soon as the armistice took place between the French and themselves, the Romans marched out against the Neapolitans, and after two bloody engagements have forced them again over the frontier.

This success of the Romans is unlooked for. Its means are not equal in point of arms or discipline to the difficulties they have to contend against. Austria is marching down upon us with a large force, and a few days more will see them before the walls. It remains to be seen what position France will take in the drama. If she recognizes the republic, and enters the town as a friendly power to protect it, Austria will be obliged to withdraw. If any terms may be agreed upon between the Romans and the French by which they take just possession of Rome, things may afterwards be arranged with regard to its future government. But if they can come to no terms Rome will fall before the heavy blows of the two formidable armies, and then what its hopes of liberty may be is easily conjectured. The pope and priests will again be thrust upon the people, and supported by foreign troops. May heaven avert this calamity. That the Roman people are prepared for self-government in the most democratic sense is not to be expected. But they are too intelligent not to detest the vile church despotism which has so long kept them behind all the rest of Europe in the progress of knowledge and civil liberty. The Austrians have marched into Tuscany and reduced Leghorn by bombardment. Her troops will soon have accomplished the re-establishment of the Grand Duke [Leopold II] upon the throne. Bologna, which is in the Roman State, fell after a desperate struggle of eight days. From that city the Austrians will push gradually through Romagna reducing in their wake all the lesser towns, should they resist until they arrive before old Rome, which will then have seen before its walls three powerful nations. Thus far I have remained at Rome, determined to see the conclusion of the siege.

Yours truly,
J.E.F.

Letter II.

J.E. Freeman to General John Adams Dix

'The Gauls in Rome', *New York Evening Post*, 14 August 1849, p. 1.
Rome, May 30th, 1849

My dear General:

I have been waiting a long time to write to you, that I might gather into one sheet the beginning, the progress, and the end of the present siege of Rome. One month has elapsed today since the French made their first attack upon the town, and, as you have heard, were repulsed. I need not enter into the particulars of that event, as I perceive some of the English papers have given a very fair report of it. The French journals make light of it, as a matter of course, and give false impressions in relation to it. They were, no doubt, deceived with regard to the popular sentiment of Rome, and expected their army would meet with little or no resistance. The attack was made upon the side of St. Peter's, behind the Vatican, in three different quarters, viz., at the Porta San Pancrazio, the Porta Cavalleggeri, and the Porta Angelica (look at your map of the city). Strong barricades had been constructed at all those points, and were mostly defended by volunteer corps. These corps behaved extremely well, keeping up a steady, unflinching, and well-directed fire, which did fearful execution upon the enemy. In the meantime a strong body of the organized civic guard marched out and boldly attacked the flanks of

the approaching French columns, maintaining their ground like veteran soldiers. In addition to these, the Romans had a powerful auxiliary in the force of General Garibaldi, who, as you may have heard, was some years in South America, where he distinguished himself as an able commander and intrepid soldier in the guerilla mode of warfare. He had, on the present occasion, about 2,000 men with him, and gave the enemy a great deal of trouble by his singular maneuvers. The loss of the French in this attack was about 2,000 in killed, wounded, and prisoners. The repulse was complete, and the French retired to Palo and Civitavecchia. The Roman loss was about 400 in killed and wounded. As soon as the news of this defeat reached Paris, the French government sent a special envoy to Rome, to inquire into the state of the existing government, and to make such overtures as the ministry and president supposed would be readily accepted by the Triumvirs who were at the head of this republic; but the negotiations have been thus far in vain. The terms offered had clearly for their end, the re-establishment of the pope and the cardinals; and the Romans, however they may differ as to the expediency of a republic, are united in their opposition to the pope's return as a temporal sovereign, while the priests are hated with an intensity passing belief. M. de Lesseps, the envoy of the French government, has made a very poor figure in his diplomacy, during the armistice. He has vacillated, bullied, and resorted to small intrigue. Three days since, he wrote a letter to the Triumvirs, breathing a tender regard for the cause of Roman liberty, and speaking of the impossibility of forcing the friendship of France upon the people with cannon. Today, an ultimatum was received from General Oudinot, giving the city only twenty-four hours to accept or reject the proposals which had been made. If not accepted, tomorrow is to bring with it woe to the devoted city. Thus I may be writing to you on the eve of another battle—perhaps the fall of Rome itself. The French army is now augmented to 30,000; they have taken up strong positions, and have constructed bridges to cross the river near St. Paul's Outside the Walls. The Romans blew up Ponte Molle shortly after the 30th ult. The town is full of strong barricades, and every piazza, building, and monument is prepared for a desperate defense. Great order prevails, and the citizens are united in their determination to fight it out. The Neapolitans entered the Roman State about the time the French came, and advanced with the king in person as far as Albano, where they remained until they saw that the French were negotiating, and that Rome might possibly send her troops against them. They then began to retire, but not until 7,000 of them were defeated at Palestrina, and a decided victory gained over them at Velletri. Thus far the Romans have done themselves credit as soldiers and patriots. The Austrians have taken Bologna, after eight days of siege and four days of bombardment. They are advancing through Romagna, and are in large force before Ancona. They have reduced Leghorn, and are now at Florence. Last night 14,000 troops left Rome to proceed against this invader—the third, the last, and the most hated by the Italians of all their enemies. Much hope had been placed upon the late election in France; but the conservative party seems sufficiently strong to forbid the idea that France will acknowledge this republic. What the true motive of that power may be in taking her present position with regard to Rome, it is difficult to discover. Some believe she will protest against the intervention of Austria; and, from the English papers of today, we are led to apprehend that war with Austria is not improbable. This morning the propositions from the French were received, and this afternoon were again declined by the Triumvirs. Negotiation is pronounced at an end, and we await the next act of the drama. Garibaldi is making an incursion into Naples from the Abruzzi. We shall miss him in case of an attack. Evening, May 31st.—No attack has been made today. The French have, I see, been allowed to take up a position upon Monte Mario, which, you will remember, commands the town to the west about two miles distant. This looks as if the

parties had come to an understanding. Something will be determined this evening. I feel assured, from present appearances, that the French envoy has come in from the camp, and is at his quarters at the Hotel d'Allemagne. A dense crowd has been gathered there all the afternoon, and kept at a proper distance by an efficient guard. The horse of the envoy stands at the door, ready saddled and bridled, for his departure. He probably comes to offer the ultimatum once more and for the very last time.

June 1st. — It was declared by bulletins this morning that an arrangement had taken place between the envoy and the government, in which it was agreed that the French should be looked upon as the chosen friends of Rome and as allies who should defend its territory from every other intervention save that of France. The French troops were not to take possession of the city, but to choose such positions about it as they should deem most salubrious and best calculated to repel invasion. It was, in short, a species of armistice signed by the Triumvirate and de Lesseps. It was supposed that this contract was final, but tonight, I learn that General Oudinot will not agree to it unless his troops be permitted to enter Rome. So matters are where they were a week ago. The Austrians have come on as far as Foligno. Ancona is besieged and blockaded, and, as yet, resists stoutly. Marghera, the Venetian fortress, has fallen, and the Austrians press Venice closely. The Hungarians have defeated the Austrians in several important engagements, and have driven the Russians back gloriously. It is still difficult to penetrate the motive of France. If she sustains and acknowledges this republic, it is thought that her policy must be war with Austria, in which case she will give a new impulse to the revolutionary spirit of Germany and invite the Slavonian states to rebellion. On the other hand, if she replaces the pope upon his throne, it is thought that a close alliance is contemplated by Louis Napoleon and his ministers with Russia and Austria, for the purpose of placing an emperor on the throne of France. These are speculations of the political prophets here and deserve no great consideration. Whatever comes, I feel that Rome is to gain little by it. Should France go to war with Austria, her troops will keep Italy in a continued ferment. It is now more than a month since we have been allowed to go out of the gates, and even the Pincian Hill is barricaded against us. Nothing is seen but military life with all its bustle and excitement. I have, as yet, gone daily to my studio, and have tried to forget that I am a prisoner in a besieged town. But it is difficult to divest one's self of the thought, and I find myself as often listening for the report of cannon as reflecting on the pious errand of the *Marys to the tomb of Christ*. On the memorable 30th, I heard the roar of the artillery while I was in the midst of a bit of drapery which I could not leave unfinished. I went on for an hour, but could endure it no longer. I sent my model away, and ran to the Pincio to see the smoke and fancy the battle with all its thrilling horrors. I had taken Augusta [Freeman's wife] to the consul's house, where many of our countrymen have found a refuge. She has comported herself bravely during all these troubles, and seems quite resigned to whatever may come. Most of our friends are gone, and we shall soon be alone. When we shall go, if we ever shall be able to get away, I do not know. I have thought of Perugia or Spoleto; but I fear it will be difficult to reach either on account of the Austrians. Albano, Tivoli, and Frascati will be full of French; and I do not wish to go far away. Personally, I feel no alarm; for I am unwilling to believe any Christian power will bombard or sack Rome, with all its sacred associations to repel insult and violence.

Sunday, June 3rd. — This morning, at daybreak, the French opened their fire upon the city, attacking it at the Porta San Pancrazio. It is now nearly nine o'clock in the morning. There seems to be a partial cessation of firing; probably the French are changing their point of attack.

Two o'clock, P.M. — The battle still rages at the Porta San Pancrazio, and, as yet, no impression has been made upon it. The resistance is determined, and once,

during the morning, the French were forced back. I have just been to St. Peter's and the barricades. The sound of the [Roman] heavy artillery within the church is truly wonderful to hear. It is more sublime, if possible, than thunder. It is a cruelly hot day, and there is a scirocco into the bargain. More this evening.

It is now twelve o'clock at night. The sun went down and the strife continued for more than an hour by moonlight. The attack commenced at five this morning and ended at nine this evening. I have been busy since nightfall, to gain the particulars of the day. The whole may be summed up in a few words. The assault has been conducted with great vigor upon the Porta San Pancrazio; and the resistance has been obstinate, and, in the highest degree, honorable to the Romans. The French have not gained a position which they did not possess this morning, and their loss must have been severe. The Romans state their loss in killed and wounded at 500, but it is probably nearer 1,000. The roar of artillery and musketry has been incessant. The French advanced in strong columns, and met the fire from the wall boldly, and their tirailleurs did fearful execution against those whose heads were exposed above the barricades. They threw themselves into the Casino Corsini, a short distance outside of the walls, but they were driven from it by the Roman artillery, which soon made that building untenable, and they were forced from their other positions several times. A part of the Roman legion and several companies of Lombard volunteers were outside the walls, and fought gallantly, hand to hand with the enemy against unequal numbers. The rush of the Romans to the walls was most enthusiastic, and they exposed themselves unnecessarily to the French rifles, which carry as far as ordinary field cannon. But the greatest loss was among the brave Lombards, who sacrificed themselves by too much daring and enthusiasm. Garibaldi lost five of his officers, among whom was his colonel, [Angelo] Masina. The firing ceased only with the latest ray of daylight. It may be said to be a defeat; for the French, not being able to hold the positions they attempted to take, have not made an inch of progress. They are said to have suffered much more than the Romans in killed and wounded. Tomorrow morning, I suppose, will bring us a renewal of the scenes of today.

June 4th, Evening—Very little has been done today. The French are hovering near the scene of the action of yesterday; and the guns from the walls have been heard at intervals since four o'clock this morning. The Romans have set fire to several houses in the Villa Borghese—among them that of Raphael—lest they should afford shelter to the enemy. In fact, this beautiful villa is fearfully disfigured. Much of its wood has been cut down to make moveable barricades, and for other purposes of protection. Great numbers of palaces and other fine buildings have been blown up, and otherwise destroyed, to put the town in a better state of defense. The Villa Doria Pamphili has been the scene of much of the fighting, and covers at present the French tirailleurs from the fire of the Romans. I hear, at this moment, that the French have succeeded in taking up one position today, and in planting artillery.

One O'Clock at Night.—This moment, the firing has commenced again with great ferocity, and in the quarter, I should judge, of the Porta San Pancrazio. The national guards are rushing out to do their duty. The night is beautifully serene, and the moon is high and brilliant in the heavens.

June 5th.—The morning broke, and the guns were still playing as when I went to bed at twelve. The day has closed, and the French are still outside the walls. During the day they have been enabled to make a trench, about one mile distant from the Porta San Pancrazio, and extending, I understand, about a quarter of a mile. They have already planted two heavy pieces of artillery, and one piece for bombarding. At nine o'clock, they had made a small breach to the left of the gate of Porta San Pancrazio. They have sent a few bombs among the Trasteverini, but without doing any serious injury. The Romans suffer from the French riflemen, while the latter are beyond the range of their muskets. The cannon on the walls

are continually at work, and prevent the besiegers from taking up positions very near them.

It is supposed that the attack to enter the city will take place tonight and tomorrow morning. The triumvirate have provided places for the defenseless women and children to flee to, in case of bombardment. A notice is just published to that effect. The citizens are animated with the fiercest hate against their dishonest and false invaders.

June 12th.—Seven days have passed since appearances indicated a speedy crisis in the affairs of Rome. Each morning has been ushered in with the roar of cannon, which has been kept up at intervals during the day. The French have been enabled to construct their parallels, and are at length ready to open their batteries upon the walls. The fire of the Romans has given them much annoyance in constructing their works, and several sorties have been made with great intrepidity and effect. But the rifles of the French give them a superiority in these attacks, and make it an expensive mode of warfare to the brave defenders of Rome. Much loss has been sustained at the barricades by the over-daring of the Romans, who expose themselves and are picked off by the French tirailleurs, while the latter are out of the reach of the fire of the besieged.

June 13th.—Yesterday, in the afternoon, General Oudinot sent again his former proposition to the Triumviri. They replied, with much reason and dignity, that they could not accept the terms offered; that Rome had declared herself determined to resist, and she would keep her word. Twelve hours were allowed by the French general for the acceptance of his terms, after which he should commence seriously his attack. The twelve hours expired at nine o'clock this morning, but nothing very serious has yet been effected by the besiegers. They have sent into the bosom of old Rome, hallowed by the recollections of twenty-six centuries, a shower of bombs and balls, which some good spirit seems to have so directed that little damage has been done. The cannonading has been continued mostly by the French. At sunset no breach had been made in the walls. A Roman eighteen-pounder at the Porta San Pancrazio was dismounted, and some lives lost at the barricades.

In the midst of our trials, it cheers us to learn that Ancona still holds out against the Austrians. The French detain the mails from every quarter, and have cut off the water from the city in several places. The pope has made a discourse which has been published for the benefit of his 'dear children.' He openly avows that he never intended to grant any more liberty to the Romans than they had before, and that what he conceded was forced from him. He has now unmasked himself, and the people see what they have to hope from his re-establishment over them. Poor Rome! Is there a generous heart that does not sympathize with its present noble effort to rid itself of its oppressors—the priests? Its *ci-devant* spiritual father blesses the arms which come to shed the blood of his own flock—his own peculiar children! Will they forget it, and pray hereafter for the blessing of this holy murderer of their brothers, sons, and fathers? I much mistake, or he has sown the seeds of an aversion to the Roman Catholic faith, which it will feel forever. Already I hear, every day, voices raised openly against a system which calls to its assistance the aid of destructive warfare instead of inculcating mercy, philanthropy, justice, and peace. They ask, 'Is this walking after the spirit and the commands of the Saviour?'

June 14th.—Another day of cannonading with an intermixture of bombs and shells. I hear that two persons have been killed, and some others slightly injured. One bomb fell upon the Palazzo Spada, but did it little harm.

June 18th.—The siege still continues. Much of the time since my last date has passed with little to be specially mentioned. The French have thrown about 200 shells into the town, but they have neither done extensive mischief, nor created much panic. Two days ago, a pretty young Trasteverina was killed in her bed,

sleeping beside her sister who escaped unhurt. Some few others have been killed or slightly injured by the shells. The French have constructed a covered way for a mile or two, and are gradually getting nearer the wall, between the Porta Portese and the Porta San Pancrazio. It is supposed they are constructing a mine to aid in demolishing the wall. Built, as it is, against the mount or hill, it is not easy to batter it down, even with their tremendous guns, which I hear at this moment booming over the devoted Mother of Cities and of Nations. The second envoy from the French government arrived in the French camp three days ago. The first, since his recall, is making, as you will see from the French journals, a serious affair of the difference between himself and General Oudinot. It is to be seen how the government is to get out of its dishonorable position, in the matter of the armistice between de Lesseps and this republic. To me it seems the most scandalous violation of good faith I have ever heard of in a Christian power. Upon the strength of the arrangement, the Romans left positions exposed which Oudinot took possession of, and which might otherwise be defended with ease—as, for instance, Monte Mario. The second envoy has opened a correspondence with the Triumvirs, in which he says that de Lesseps made the treaty after the dispatches for his recall ought to have reached him. France intervenes in the Roman State, to place the pope again over the people, to establish liberty and peace. This conduct is despicable, inconsistent with her late revolution, injurious to the progress of rational liberty, oppressive, and dishonest in the means employed to gain possession of Rome. By establishing the priests in temporal power, she will produce anarchy and future bloodshed, and bring into greater activity the growing discontent of the Red Republicans and Socialists.

June 19th-17th day of the Siege.—The cannonading has been heavy from the French batteries today, and answered with spirit by the besieged. The wall is giving way under the heavy fire from the French guns, and a third parallel is said to be in progress, which will bring the besiegers near enough to work at their mine. Things are coming to a crisis. All the casini and villas, near enough to the walls to be serviceable to the enemy in their operations, have been burnt by the Romans. The Villa Borghese is a wreck. The traveler who comes to Rome hereafter, will see modern ruins as startling as those which are crumbling by time alone. Balls and bombs have fallen today in the Piazza Venezia, and in the Piazza Colonna. Rome awaits the attempt to enter her walls calmly, and with a silent, dogged determination which augurs a deadly struggle. General Oudinot's reports to his government are full of the grossest lies—I cannot designate them by a milder epithet.

June 22nd.—Since two days a large breach has been made, a little to the southeast of the church of San Pietro in Montorio, which commands, as you will remember, Trastevere over the Ponte Sisto. We were kept awake the whole of last night by the crackling of small arms and the roar of artillery. The French succeeded in burning down the Porta San Sebastiano, which is open to them whenever they choose to hazard the attempt to enter. Another breach has been made in the walls, and 400 of the French have entered and thrown themselves into the Casino Corsini. I have not heard yet whether they have surrendered or continue to resist. The bells are ringing a storm, and Rome is at the crisis of her fate. The fire has been incessant today from the Roman guns upon the Casino Barberini, and I see through a telescope that it is nearly a wreck. The French riflemen are firing upon the advanced line of the Romans, which suffers severely. I have been observing them for hours today, and have seen the poor Romans fall as they exposed their heads above their defenses, but I could not see that their shots told upon the enemy. Last night the French sent into the town 150 bombs. This is, indeed, the twelfth day of the bombardment. Great damage has been done to private property, and unoffending citizens have been killed and wounded. Infamous barbarians! Was not the interference of France sufficiently disgraceful without

having recourse to this cowardly and unchristian mode of warfare to effect it! She pretends that a mere faction rules here, yet she slaughters the innocent and the defenseless, and destroys the most sacred monuments of art to gain possession of a city which has done nothing to make war justifiable. The vandalism of the modern Gauls far surpasses that of the ancient, when we consider the prevailing civilization. But their barbarian missiles strike no terror into the hearts of the Romans. The ignorant and simple say, «Christ will gather them as witnesses against the pope and the priests who have brought this visitation upon us». The intelligent pick them up to preserve them as heirlooms, for the purpose of manifesting to their posterity the humanity, the civilization, and the justice of France in the nineteenth century.

Sunday, June 24th.—A bulletin, just published, states that four of the enemy's guns, in their new position, have been dismantled and removed. The Roman artillery has been served admirably, and this feat of arms again raises the spirits of the defenders. A body of recruits, amounting to 700, came in this evening, together with a quantity of provisions, of which the city stands greatly in need.

June 29th.—The French hold their positions within the walls, and support them with strong works. Two days ago they opened a fire from eleven guns, some of which are thirty-six pounders. The position of the Romans upon San Pietro in Montorio, although a strong one, I fear must yield very soon to the superior artillery of the French, whose guns are all covered and work upon inclined planes; when discharged, they slide down into the trench and are safe from the fire of the Roman batteries. The church of San Pietro in Montorio is nearly a wreck, and that noble picture by Sebastiano del Piombo is probably destroyed. The bombs continue to rain down upon us. Several have sung their barbarous music directly under our windows, and have burst in the piazza where our house stands. Others cry destruction as they pass over our heads. Every night we watch them as they mount into the air across the Tiber, and listen to hear them burst in some devoted street or square below, in the vicinity of the Corso. The church of Sant'Andrea della Valle, where you will remember seeing the fine Domenichinos, has suffered, and those masterpieces of art are added to the witnesses which are hereafter to stand up in judgment against the barbarian Gauls of the nineteenth century.

Sunday, July 2nd.—The day before yesterday, the French batteries at their position within the walls, did fearful damage to the guns and works of the Romans up San Pietro in Montorio, and the evening found the former in possession of a part of them near the Porta San Pancrazio, after much hard fighting. The night brought a severe thunderstorm, and it continued black and threatening until day-break. As if to add to the gloom and horror of the scene, the French poured down upon us, from midnight until morning, a shower of balls and shells. It is estimated that not less than two were thrown into the city in every second of time. This may be exaggerated, but it was, nevertheless, fearful. It was one continued roar and explosion intermingled. Our neighborhood has suffered severely, but not so much so as some other quarters near the Piazza del Popolo. At six o'clock yesterday afternoon, the firing ceased, and the authorities are trying to come to terms with General Oudinot. I look upon the city as surrendered, and a new epoch is to commence in the history of venerable, insulted old Rome.

I shall have little to add to this rambling epistle, excepting to say of ourselves, that we have remained through these long-to-be remembered scenes, and that we have deeply sympathized with the brave people who have so nobly defended themselves against an unjust and barbarous invasion. Many gallant and patriotic spirits have fallen; many of those who survive, I fear will be sacrificed for their generous struggles to maintain the liberty of their oppressed country. The consular body have made a formal protestation against the bombardment of the city, and did me the honor to ask my signature. I am proud that my name stands recorded against the infamous destroyers of unrivalled art—against the barbarians,

as I have already called them, of the nineteenth century.

July 3rd.—The French are this morning in quiet possession of the city. The chambers still continue their meetings, and they will do so until dissolved by force. Garibaldi has withdrawn, accompanied by a large corps, and I presume will take refuge in the Abruzzi mountains, until he can escape into Hungary, and fight again for liberty against Austria. Mazzini has resigned his position as one of the Triumvirate. Thus has fallen, under an external force, the newborn liberty of the Roman people. It remains to be seen whether it be in the order of divine justice that so atrocious a national outrage shall go unavenged!

[J.E. Freeman]

Notes

- 1 Recently I discovered Freeman's 1865 passport application, that confirmed he was born on 10 March 1810, not 1808 as had been published previously by multiple sources; Washington, DC, National Archives, US Passport Applications.
- 2 For Freeman's career, see McGuigan Jr and McGuigan 2009.
- 3 J.E. Freeman to William Dudley Pickman, 11 October 1848. Washington, DC, Smithsonian Institution, Archives of American Art.
- 4 J.E. Freeman to Pickman, 4 July 1849. *Ibidem*.
- 5 *Freeman's Journal*, Dublin, Ireland, 19 February 1849, p. 2, reported: 'The American consul general at Rome and the consul at Ancona, were present at the opening of the chambers, and accompanied the procession in their official character.'
- 6 See Appendix, Letter I.
- 7 A large portion of Brown's diplomatic correspondence survives in his archive at Brown University, most of which dates to after Freeman had assumed responsibilities. Providence, RI, Brown University Library, Nicholas Brown papers, 1813-57, n.d. (bulk 1849).
- 8 See Appendix, Letter I.
- 9 See Appendix, Letter II.
- 10 *Ibidem*.
- 11 The petition was signed on 24 June 1849 by the representatives of Great Britain, Prussia, the Low Countries, Denmark, Switzerland, Württemberg, Sardinia, San Salvador, and both Brown and Freeman from the United States.
- 12 See Appendix, Letter II.
- 13 *Ibidem*.
- 14 'The American consular system. Case of Freeman, the artist - late consul for Ancona, etc.', *New York Evening Post*, 31 December 1849, p. 2.
- 15 Stock 1933, p. 47.
- 16 As Cass reported to the State Department that Brown had accompanied Freeman, he was apparently unaware that the consul had already left Rome.
- 17 'Father Gavazzi', *American and Foreign Christian Union*, IV, May 1853, 5, p. 221; King 1857, p. 41.
- 18 See note 14 above.
- 19 *Anglo-American Times*, 15 June 1867, pp. 8-9.

1. William Page, *Paul Akers*, 1857–58, oil on canvas, 61 x 52 cm. Collection of Suzanne Atwood, Gorham, Maine. Photo by Gail D. Dodge.



During his lifetime Paul Akers (1825–1861) achieved international recognition for the nearly one hundred portrait busts, bas reliefs, and ideal works of sculpture he created in his brief twelve-year career, many of which were modeled or put into marble during his three sojourns in Italy in the 1850's (Fig. 1).¹ Born on the outskirts of Portland, Maine, Akers had little formal education or training, but he overcame these deficiencies through his passion for art, his natural talent as a sculptor, his voracious reading and, according to numerous accounts, by his magnetic personality.² The art critic and author John Neal, another Portland native, championed the young sculptor and rented him studio space in 1849 (Fig. 2).³ Akers

quickly gained a local reputation for his ability to capture not only an accurate likeness but also the personality of his sitters. In 1851 he sculpted a bust of the eminent Portland-born poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow that was highly praised by Longfellow's family and friends. Longfellow believed Akers had 'superior talent and high ideas in his art' and was 'not an ordinary man, but a man of genius' (Fig. 3).⁴

Akers and his studio-mate, the painter John Rollin Tilton (1828–1888), traveled to Italy to study classical art in October 1851. Akers settled in Florence, probably because he had a commission from Samuel Appleton for bas relief copies of Michelangelo's *Day* and *Night* in the Medici Chapel. Yet it was Rome that enchanted him. 'And I have been in Rome! Think of it, or dream of it, as I do', he exclaimed, before recounting his experiences at the Coliseum, Pantheon, and catacombs in intense, romantic prose.⁵ In Florence, Akers completed 'admirable busts' in a style 'characterized by great boldness and power and a remarkable facility in seizing the strongest char-

acteristics of expression in his likenesses, which are singularly striking.⁶ Akers's first writings on art date from the period of his stay in Florence, when he expressed his impassioned reactions to the city's artistic treasures in a series of letters for publication.⁷ He also developed a friendly relationship with the renowned sculptor Hiram Powers, a connection that was eventually strained in 1860 when Akers penned an essay that was critical of the older artist.⁸

After a year in Italy, Akers returned to the United States. Capitalizing on publicity he received from the writer and journalist John Ross Browne, Akers spent the winter of 1853-54 in Washington where he secured fifteen commissions from politicians as well as private citizens. Among the senators, he considered the head of Edward Everett 'so noble' that he was eager to model it, and asked Longfellow to intercede on his behalf.⁹ He was less enthusiastic about immortalizing Attorney General Caleb Cushing, but the experience offers insights into his approach to portraiture. Upon meeting Cushing, Akers immediately assessed him as 'quick-energetic, enduring, keenly intellectual, subtle not shrewd, artificially prudent, naturally rash, *hard*, insincere, ambitious and heartless' and he was confident he could model an accurate likeness 'which will please him and yet that in which shall be hidden the secret of his life.'¹⁰ Several years later in Rome, Akers told astronomer Maria Mitchell that he could never 'improve upon the details of a head', although sometimes he enhanced the general outline.¹¹ Moreover, interestingly, Akers explained to Mitchell that the cheek has 'more expression than any other part of the face – that it rounds out in a smile before the lips part.'¹²

While Akers aspired to "high art", it was 1853 before he succeeded in this genre with his *Benjamin in Egypt* based on a Biblical passage. His brother Charles recalled that the sculptor had difficulty getting a suitable model and was obliged to take 'various parts from different individuals, and depended upon his own conception for a realization of the whole.'¹³

Akers returned to Europe late in 1854 and traveled with Oscar F. Dana before arriving at Civitavecchia on 29 March 1855, and proceeding to



Opposite

2. *John Neal* by Paul Akers, 1851, daguerreotype, 8.1 x 6.9 cm. Collection of Arlene Palmer, Portland, Maine.

3. Paul Akers, *Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, 1851, plaster, 54.6 x 38.5 x 31.9 cm. Longfellow House-Washington's Headquarters National Historic Site, Cambridge, Massachusetts, National Park Service, LONG 4424.

Rome. Dana detailed their Italian adventures in twenty reports that were published in the *Portland Advertiser*. The more than one hundred botanical specimens Dana collected document the sites they visited, as do Akers's sketches remaining in Dana's scrapbook.¹⁴ When they learned in May that Vesuvius was erupting, Dana and Akers went south to witness it and to explore that part of the country. At the end of the summer, Dana fondly recalled his six months of companionship with Akers, whose 'lively and most delicate appreciation of all that is highest in nature or art' had so enriched their travels.¹⁵

As a young artist, Akers received little professional attention during his first months in Rome, but he was ecstatic to be there and took rooms in the Palazzo Zuccari. He wrote to a friend that 'Rome seems to have within its walls all that I seek. All that my intellect craves is within my reach.'¹⁶ He promptly authored two essays about art for the short-lived New York art magazine *The Crayon*, and set about putting into marble several plaster busts he had shipped from the United States.¹⁷ Having convinced Edward King of Newport, along with other patrons, that only marble could convey the accomplishments of the classical masters, he was commissioned to make marble copies of famous antique sculptures.¹⁸ For that project, he used the former studio of Antonio Canova on Via della Frezza. Among his most ambitious copies was a *Dying Gaul*, the block of marble for which reputedly cost Akers \$600.¹⁹ In one instance, Akers improved upon an ancient work: after taking a cast of a mutilated head of Cicero in the Vatican Museum, he 'restored the eye, brow, and ears, and modelled a neck and bust for it in accordance with the temperament shown by the nervous and rather thin face.'²⁰

During the summer of 1856, Akers began a life-size group of *Una and the Lion* representing a passage in Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. To give realistic life to this allegory of truth, Akers

'followed a [circus] caravan ... making studies of a celebrated lion. He has succeeded in modeling the rare black African lion ... after a manner that makes Canova's of St Peter's seem, beside it, but the insipid brute of a menagerie, full-fed and lazy. Akers's is instinctive with forest life. He breathes; he lives; he is real; and the position is such as to display his form, strength, and *purpose* in regard to Una, to the best advantage.'²¹

Isaac Edwards Clarke concurred with that assessment, writing Powers that Akers's lion was 'the best and most natural lion I have ever seen.'²² This work has not been located, but contemporaneous descriptions reveal that its composition differed from John Bell's well-publicized version of the same subject. Bell's nude *Una* nonchalantly rides upright on the beast; her legs are crossed and she holds a flowering branch. In contrast, Akers's *Una* was partially naked and asleep, 'with her head on one arm, reposing on the lion's mane', according to a correspondent from *Harper's Weekly*. That same writer declared that Akers's *Una and the Lion* was the 'best work of American sculpture' in Rome, and noted that when viewed from any angle, the sculpture's aspect was 'pyramidal, and yet the lines are flowing, graceful and most beautiful.'²³ An unidentified patron ordered a copy of Akers's sculpture in marble; when Charles Akers arrived in April 1857

to assist his brother, *Una and the Lion* was being transferred from clay to plaster in the sculptor's studio at 36 Vicolo dei Greci.²⁴

By late 1856, Akers's sculptures were 'at last getting him just fame and bringing him fortune,' but his celebrity was based chiefly upon his talent for portraiture.²⁵ Clarke wrote Powers that the busts Akers had underway in January 1857 were 'certainly far superior to any others' in Rome. He added that they were priced at 500 *scudi* – less than Powers charged – but they sold not because they were cheap, but 'because they are good and therefore cheap at any price.'²⁶ Sharing Clarke's opinion was the *Harper's Weekly* correspondent who visited the studio multiple times in February and in March 1857, and who became an ardent fan. He declared that Akers's portraits surpassed all others, including those of Powers which he found inexpressive. Akers's busts were 'alive with the soulman, ... conscious intelligences,' and because Akers had a way of fastening upon the marble the 'noblest and most prominent traits' of the sitter, they became 'living, individual idealisms' capturing his subjects' 'best moments.'²⁷ A writer for the *Pennsylvania Inquirer* offered his own paean to Akers: 'the artist has been able to conceive the "possible" of his sitter ... so that you have not only the accurate likeness of the man as he was, but you feel all that he is capable of being. Your artist is in this a poet ... he has given you a higher truth ... a glimpse of the soul beneath.'²⁸ Such glowing accounts turned Akers's studio into a mandatory destination for American travelers to Rome. Art patrons from Paris, Copenhagen, and Naples also placed orders with the sculptor.²⁹ The fact that thirteen busts in Akers's studio in 1857 were of women surprised the *Harper's Weekly* reporter because he believed that painters did the female sex greater justice. 'It is rare,' he opined, 'to find a female head that can stand with advantage so great a trial as to be moulded in clay. We expect ... when put into marble, a certain degree of abstract beauty of form and expression that too few possess.'³⁰ Nonetheless, 'the desire of marble immortality' seemed to be 'contagious in the sex', and he advised women to choose Akers, because he alone could achieve a striking likeness as well as an expression of their 'utmost nobility of soul.'³¹ When another correspondent saw Akers's bust of the daughter of Daniel LeRoy, the American Consul at Rome, he was convinced 'you would fancy it an ideal head of rare feeling, did you not instantly recognise the likeness.'³² The bust of New Yorker Mary Stevens Strong was admired for the 'strength of character' it embodied that elevated its value beyond portraiture (Fig. 4).³³ Akers imparted unusual details of sensual elegance to this work, revealing flesh between the taut shoulder buttons and having Strong's back and neck seeming to emerge almost free from her garment. When Akers's bust of Caroline Perry Belmont was exhibited in New York, juxtaposed with a painted portrait of the same sitter, a critic



4. Paul Akers, *Mary E. Stevens Strong*, 1857, marble, 68.6 x 47 x 24.4 cm. Collection of Arlene Palmer, Portland, Maine. Photo by Gail D. Dodge.



5. Paul Akers, *Saint Elizabeth of Hungary*, 1860, marble, 109.2 cm. Colby College Museum of Art, Waterville, Maine, The Lunder Collection, 2013.003.

6. Detail of fig. 5.

asserted that '*Le ciseau a vaincu la brosse; le marbre est plus vivant que la toile, plus vrai dans l'expression, plus correct dans la ligne, plus profond dans le sentiment.*'³⁴

Even as he basked in this praise, Akers continued in his artistic quest to be recognised for independent creative works other than portraiture. In 1857 he sculpted a two-thirds life-size statue of *Saint Elizabeth of Hungary*, in which he expressed both a feminine ideal and an allegory of charity (Figs. 5-6). The statue depicts the moment when Elizabeth's husband demanded to know what she held within her mantle because he disapproved of her ministrations to the poor and suspected that she was taking food to them. As she opened her garment, the bread she was carrying miraculously transformed into red and white roses. Rather than depict the Saint gazing down at this transmogrification, Akers invented a figure that looked at 'something beyond-within'; and her face displayed 'not the

pride of queens, nor the joy of saints, but a pure, strong significance of love and humility.³⁵

In designing the *Saint Elizabeth*, Akers may have been influenced by William Wetmore Story's *Marguerite*.³⁶ Besides a similar stance, the two figures share strikingly similar medieval-style garments, featuring a clinging top with a squared neckline, a waistband dipping below the waist in the front, and a generously pleated skirt. While *Marguerite*'s raised arms somewhat obscured Story's meticulous modeling of her breasts, Akers offered no such modesty. Instead, his *Elizabeth* is modeled wearing a skin-tight and transparent bodice that bunches at the armpits, the elbows, and the waist, and is gathered above and below her breasts. The Saint's spine and her nipples are visible in a marvel of virtuosic carving. Nonetheless, when the sculpture was exhibited in Portland in 1861, the reviewer assured his readers that the figure was 'completely draped, so that we have no nude luxuriance of muscle to fascinate the eye.'³⁷

In summer 1857, Akers was in Britain, researching the subject of John Milton in order to model a bust of the illustrious poet for a Philadelphian descendant.³⁸ The sculptor's study of existing images, coupled with his deep feelings about Milton's poetry, informed the resulting work (Fig. 7). Presenting the blind poet unclothed, in heroic scale, Akers transposed Milton from a temporal place to the spiritual realm. Upon seeing this bust, the poet Robert Browning exclaimed, 'It is Milton, the man-angel', whereas Mitchell thought the face 'sad and sarcastic in expression.'³⁹ Nathaniel Hawthorne commented that Akers had 'succeeded even better than he knew, in spiritualizing his marble with the poet's mighty genius', and promptly "borrowed" Akers's sculptural image for his 1860 novel, *The Marble Faun: or, the Romance of Monte Beni*.⁴⁰

Hawthorne's idea for his *The Marble Faun* arose not only from his fascination with the ancient sculpture, *Faun of Praxiteles*, but also from his personal interactions with American artists in Rome, including Story and Akers. Charles Akers recalled that Hawthorne frequently came to his brother's studio, 'lounging about in silence, watching the workmen chipping the marble, and departing as he came, quite without ceremony.'⁴¹ Outside his studio, Akers socialized with the Hawthorne family and guided them through studios and sites of the city.⁴² Other luminaries of the American community whom Akers counted as friends were the actress Charlotte Cushman and her companions, the sculptors Harriet Hosmer and Emma Stebbins. Akers provided Stebbins with studio space, instruction, and encouragement, which Cushman gratefully acknowledged.⁴³ Among fellow artists, William Page was a particular favorite. Akers devoted his penultimate essay to Page's art, and in 1857, Page painted a mysterious, haunting portrait of Akers that captures his serious mien and intense, poetic character (Fig. 1).⁴⁴

While the fame of the Milton bust waned, the *Dead Pearl Diver*, the sec-



7. Paul Akers, *John Milton*, 1857-58, marble, 57.8 x 39 x 25.2 cm. Colby College Special Collections, Waterville, Maine, Colbiana Collection. Photo by Gail D. Dodge.

Opposite

8. Paul Akers, *The Dead Pearl Diver*, 1857-58, marble, 68.6 x 170.2 x 71.1 cm. Portland Museum of Art, Portland, Maine, 1888.1. ©Portland Museum of Art, photo by Luc Demers.

9. Detail of fig. 8.



ond Akers's sculpture that Hawthorne immortalized in *The Marble Faun*, remained popular because it was exhibited publicly in art galleries in Portland and New York and in the Buffalo Academy of Art before its acquisition in 1888 by what is now the Portland Museum of Art (Figs. 8-9). This life-scale sculpture of a long-haired nude youth lying dead upon a sandy mound on the ocean floor, the spoils of his dive gathered in a net about his loins, is a testament to Akers's studies after the antique as well as to his natural creativity. By 1 July 1857 Akers had completed a clay study for the work, which was cast in plaster before he left Rome at the end of April 1858. In his absence, the *Dead Pearl Diver* was put into marble under the direction of Tito Malpieri, whose expertise resulted in exquisite carving, with textural differences of sand, sea shells and flesh meticulously and convincingly realized.⁴⁵ The net of twisted rope revealing shells within is a technical marvel. Page followed the progress of the marble cutters and wrote Akers that he 'was surprised to see that they had so well embodied the plaster in marble', although he suspected that if Akers had been present he might have 'got something

more out of them.’⁴⁶ Contemporary descriptions indicate that some details of the original concept were modified in the marble version.

The *Dead Pearl Diver* is unusual in having no direct literary basis, although pearl fishers appear as subjects or metaphors in writings of the period. Their dangerous vocation appealed to the romantic sensibilities of the age, and the Biblical parable of the pearl of great price provided an irresistible moral undercurrent. As with other sculptures which were essentially rendered as nude figures by American artists, the *Dead Pearl Diver* required a narrative to make the artwork acceptable and accessible to the public.⁴⁷ Akers must have supplied the first description of the work, as its description was dispatched from Rome on 1 July 1857 as: ‘a lost Pearl Diver of the Indian Ocean ... has just filled his net, but in seizing the last precious shell his foot has caught in a bunch of coral from which he has no longer strength to extricate himself. – The sea has claimed him for its own, ... he lies upon the smooth unruffled sands of Ocean’s floor.’⁴⁸ Neal further embellished this story: ‘when just ready to spring toward the upper world, his eye is attracted by a rare shell-lying a little way off. Carried away by his love of the beautiful, and overlooking all danger, he reaches for it—clutches it—loses his foothold—and falls backward, with inflated chest and powerless limbs, only to perish among the wonders of the deep.’⁴⁹ The catalogue of New York’s Dusseldorf Gallery expanded the sculpture’s context within a discussion of pearl diving that lamented the brief lifespan of divers: their ‘health becomes so broken they have no power left, and most frequently die of consumption.’⁵⁰ Writing that his heart was “in” the *Dead Pearl Diver*, Akers chillingly anticipated his own premature death from consumption.⁵¹

The idea to represent a drowned figure may have been germinating with Akers since September 1849, when he exhibited Edward A. Brackett’s *Shipwrecked Mother and Child* in his Portland studio, and thereafter when he viewed August Lechesne’s more gruesome version of the same subject at the New York Crystal Palace a few years later.⁵² An evocative moment with Dana at the Azure Grotto in Capri, when he envisioned the boatman as ‘an antique bronze statue’ as he was diving for coral, and as a statue ‘of shining pearl’ when he was floating, may have contributed to his concept.⁵³ In its pose, the *Dead Pearl Diver* references antique sculptures and particularly the pose of the famous dying *Son of Niobe*, which the sculptor surely would have seen on display at the Uffizi in Florence. Some contemporaneous viewers of the *Dead Pearl Diver* found the ‘position of the dead youth singularly striking and natural’, whereas others, like Hawthorne, thought the pose was awkward and were disturbed that ‘the form has not settled itself into sufficient repose.’⁵⁴ Charles Akers did not recall discomfiture when he posed for the sculpture but remembered only his brother’s struggle to shape the body as he wished. As with *Benjamin in Egypt*, Akers appropriated parts from many different models, ‘getting the torso from one, the arms from another the legs from a third.’⁵⁵ That he achieved a seamless whole, praised for its ‘wonderful anatomical exactness’, is evidence of his skill.⁵⁶

One of the first recumbent male nudes by an American sculptor, the *Dead Pearl Diver*’s face has an androgynous appearance and idealized



10. Paul Akers, *Elizabeth Chase Taylor*, 1860, plaster, 22.2cm, Waterville, Maine, Colby College Special Collections, Collection of Elizabeth Akers Allen Materials. Photo by Gail D. Dodge. The subject published under the pseudonym Florence Percy and wed Paul Akers in July 1860.

ciated the mechanical skill of the sculpture but believed that the accidental death portrayed was devoid of poetic emotion.⁶¹ A visitor to the Dusseldorf Gallery recorded an initial impression of pain that quickly turned to ‘pity, mellowed by the delight in the exquisite beauty of the whole work.’⁶² The writer approved of the ‘chaste and solemn nudity’ of the figure and applauded Akers for realizing the ‘truthfulness of death without one element of repulsion’, and to his surprise, he and everyone in his party, regardless of age or gender, desired to give the figure a parting kiss. The intensive work that Akers undertook in Rome took its toll on his health. In October 1859, he traveled to Italy for a third time, and nearly died *en route*. Among the works he modeled during this short sojourn in Rome was a bas relief of his travel companion, the poet Florence Percy (Elizabeth Chase Taylor) (Fig. 10), whom he wed shortly after their return to Maine in July 1860. Their time together was brief: he died on 21 May 1861 in Philadelphia. The *Dead Pearl Diver* would become a symbol of the sculptor himself, who ‘in the freshness and fervor of his days, with heroic self-reliance, cast himself into the embrace of art, wrought long and patiently, won the pearl of beauty and then fell back and ‘by the wayside perished.’⁶³

Notes

1 Akers was christened Benjamin but was known as Paul. He signed his sculptures ‘Paul Akers’ and his calling cards from Rome are engraved ‘B. Paul Akers.’ About forty works have been located. My research builds upon the work of Miller 1966.

2 Akers is said to have studied briefly in Boston with another Maine-born sculptor, Edward A. Brackett, and learned plaster casting from Joseph Carew. See ‘Benjamin Paul Akers’, *Portland Transcript*, June 1, 1861. Also, Dyer Library and Saco Museum, Saco, Me

(DLSM), *Charles Akers Autobiography*, p. 38; Tuckerman 1866, p. 527. Charles Akers arrived in Rome to find that 'it was the same as elsewhere-he [Paul] shining forth as the leader and center of all', DLSM, *Charles Akers Autobiography*, p. 251.

3 For more on Neal and his impact on the American cultural landscape see the essay by Francesca Orestano in this volume.

4 Longfellow 1886, II, p. 196, journal entry June 12, 1851; Longfellow 1966-1982, III, 1972, p. 402, to Edward Everett, December 13, 1853.

5 Maine Historical Society, Portland, Me (MEHS), Collection 161, *Elizabeth Akers Allen Papers*, P. Akers to Rebecca Usher, April 25, 1852.

6 [John Ross Browne], 'Notes of Travel in the Old World', *Daily National Intelligencer* (Washington, D.C.), June 9, 1852. Report dated April 25, 1852.

7 Letters to Paulina Wright Davis, June 10, July 1, and August 10, 1852, were originally published in *The Una* and reprinted as dating erroneously from 1854 as 'Letters from Italy', *The Crayon*, vol. 1, no. 7, February 14, 1855, pp. 101-2; vol. 1, no. 8, February 21, 1855, pp. 118-9; and vol. 1, no. 9, February 28, 1855, pp. 134-5. Akers's bust of Paulina Wright Davis is in the Rhode Island Historical Society, Providence, R.I.

8 In Florence in 1858, Akers and his brother Charles 'spent all our evenings at the Powers's home', in DLSM, *Charles Akers Autobiography*, part 2, p. 69. 'Our Artists in Italy. Hiram Powers', *The Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 5, no. 27, January 1860, pp. 1-6.

9 Houghton Library, Harvard University, MsAm1340.2 (51), *H.W. Longfellow Papers*, P. Akers to H.W. Longfellow, December 7, 1853. Longfellow then wrote Everett, see Longfellow 1966-1982, III, 1972, p. 402. Akers's bust of Everett is at Maine Historical Society, Portland, Me.

10 MEHS, Collection 161, *Elizabeth Akers Allen Papers*, P. Akers to Ellen Usher Bacon, [Nov. 24], 1853.

11 Maria Mitchell Association, Nantucket, Mass. (MMA), box 7, folder 1, *Maria Mitchell Papers*, Journal of European Travels, March 9, 1858, p. 237.

12 *Ibidem*.

13 DLSM, *Charles Akers Autobiography*, p. 137. *Benjamin in Egypt* was displayed at New York's Crystal Palace along with Akers's bust of Longfellow; Akers made a second *Benjamin* for a Portland patron. Fire consumed both. There are written descriptions of the work but no images have been discovered.

14 MEHS, Collection 2615, *Oscar F. Dana Scrapbook*. These are mostly landscape sketches.

15 'Sketches of European Travel- No. 15', *Portland Advertiser*, October 23, 1855.

16 Usher 1894, p. 463.

17 P. Akers, 'Art-Expression', *The Crayon*, vol. 2, no. 1, July 4, 1855, pp. 3-5, and 'The Danae', *The Crayon*, vol. 2, no. 5, August 1, 1855, pp. 63-5.

18 'Men and Things in Italy', *Harper's Weekly*, vol. 1, no. 16, April 18, 1857, p. 243. 'From Rome. The Sculptors and their Works - The Studio of Paul Akers', *Pennsylvania Inquirer*, September 5, 1857 (report dated July 1, 1857). Akers made copies of at least thirteen different classical works from Roman museums, the Royal Gallery of Naples, and the Louvre. In 1863 King gave his collection of six works to the Redwood Library, Newport, R.I., where they remain today. Others patrons for copies were Harvard art historian Charles Eliot Norton, a Mr. Bradley of Providence, and a Mr. Newhall of Philadelphia.

19 'Men and Things in Italy', *Harper's Weekly*, vol. 1, no. 18, May 2, 1857, p. 286.

20 Usher 1894, p. 464.

21 'Men and Things in Italy', *Harper's Weekly*, vol. 1, no. 16, April 18, 1857, p. 243.

22 Archives of American Art, Washington, D.C. (AAA), *Hiram Powers Papers*, I. E. Clarke to H. Powers, January 13, 1857. Early in 1858, Paul and Charles Akers took up residence with Clarke and his wife on the Via Felice, see DLSM, *Charles Akers Autobiography*, p. 252.

- 23 'Men and Things in Italy', *Harper's Weekly*, vol. 1, no. 16, April 18, 1857, p. 243.
- 24 'Paul Akers', *Portland Transcript*, July 18, 1857. C. Akers said *Una and the Lion* was 'stored in a banker's cellar', DLSM, *Charles Akers Autobiography*, p. 265, and Julian Hawthorne folder, 6; Colby College Special Collections, Waterville, Me (CCSC), *Collection of Paul Akers Material*, B. Paul Akers Calling Card.
- 25 Norton 1913, I, p. 154, to Thomas G. Appleton, January, 1857.
- 26 AAA, *Hiram Powers Papers*, I.E. Clarke to H. Powers, January 13, 1857.
- 27 Three reports, 'Men and Things in Italy', dated February 21, March 2, and April 1, 1857, in *Harper's Weekly*, vol. 1, no. 14, April 4, 1857, p. 211; vol. 1, no. 16, April 18, 1857, p. 243 and vol. 1, no. 18, May 2, 1857, p. 286.
- 28 'From Rome. The Sculptors and their Works - The Studio of Paul Akers', *Pennsylvania Inquirer*, September 5, 1857.
- 29 'Men and Things in Italy', *Harper's Weekly*, vol. 1, no. 18, May 2, 1857, p. 286.
- 30 *Ibidem*.
- 31 *Ibidem*.
- 32 'From Rome: The Sculptors and their Works - The Studio of Paul Akers', *Pennsylvania Inquirer*, September 5, 1857. The subject was Mary Augusta LeRoy, wife of Edward King.
- 33 *Ibidem*. In 1859 the bust was exhibited at the National Academy of Design, New York, no. 814. *National Academy of Design* 1943, I, p. 7.
- 34 'The chisel has conquered the brush. The marble is more living than the canvas, truer in expression, more correct in the lines, and deeper in sentiment.' 'Chronique de New-York. Sculpture', *Courrier des États Unis*, February 14, 1859. The subject was the daughter of Commodore Matthew Perry and wife of August Belmont, U.S. minister at The Hague.
- 35 'Saint Elizabeth of Hungary. The Statue of Paul Akers', *Portland Transcript*, April 27, 1861. The statue reviewed was owned by John Bundy Brown of Portland; Robert Hoe of New York also owned a version.
- 36 Clark 1997, pp. 176-8.
- 37 'Saint Elizabeth of Hungary. The Statue of Paul Akers', *Portland Transcript*, April 27, 1861.
- 38 MMA, box 7, folder 1, *Maria Mitchell Papers*, Journal of European Travels, March 9, 1858, 237; DLSM, *Charles Akers Autobiography*, p. 265. The client was probably a descendant of John Milton's granddaughter, Mary Maudgridge (1669-1740), who married George Boone and immigrated to Pennsylvania.
- 39 Usher 1864, p. 464. MMA, box 7, folder 1, *Maria Mitchell Papers*, Journal of European Travels, March 9, 1858, p. 237.
- 40 Hawthorne 1860, I, pp. IX-X, 150-1.
- 41 DLSM, *Charles Akers Autobiography*, part 2, p. 54.
- 42 Hawthorne 1980, pp. 161, 188-90, 587-90, 592-3. Charles Akers discusses the friendship with the Hawthornes, in DLSM, *Charles Akers Autobiography*, part 2, pp. 52-8.
- 43 CCLSC, C. Cushman to P. Akers, February 21, 1858, Stebbins's sister married Tilton.
- 44 'Our Artists in Italy. William Page', *The Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 7, no. 40, February 1861, pp. 129-37. Charles saw the portrait in Page's studio, which he visited frequently in 1857-1858: 'I do not remember the number of Paul's sittings, but he did not complain, and the portrait was good. However, when I saw it some years afterwards, it had sunk as to be scarcely visible.' DLSM, *Charles Akers Autobiography*, part 2, p. 60. Akers's widow assumed the portrait was painted posthumously, see MEHS, *Leonard B. Chapman Collection*, Collection 116, E.A. Allen to L.B. Chapman, March 15, 1906.
- 45 'From Rome. The Sculptors and their Works - The Studio of Paul Akers', *Pennsylvania Inquirer*, September 5, 1857. CCSC, *Collection of Paul Akers Materials*, T. Malpieri to P. Akers, March 19, 1859.
- 46 CCSC, *Collection of Paul Akers Materials*, W. Page to P. Akers, February 12, 1859.

- 47 On the question of nudity in American nineteenth-century sculpture, in relation also to *The Dead Pearl Diver*, see below, Kevin Salatino.
- 48 'From Rome: The Sculptors and their Works--The Studio of Paul Akers', *Pennsylvania Inquirer*, September 5, 1857.
- 49 'The Pearl Diver', *Portland Advertiser*, October 1, 1859.
- 50 *The Dusseldorf Gallery* 1860, p. 32, quoting an account from *New York Musical World*.
- 51 Usher 1864, p. 464.
- 52 *Portland Transcript*, September 15, 1849. This record proves that Brackett's work did not represent Margaret Fuller because it predates her death. *How to See the New York Crystal Palace: ...* 1854, New York, 1854, part 1, 10. Akers's *Benjamin in Egypt* and his bust of Longfellow were exhibited there.
- 53 'Sketches of European Travel- No. 9, Naples', *Portland Advertiser*, September 1, 1855.
- 54 'The Dusseldorf Gallery', *New York Times*, March 13, 1860. Hawthorne 1860, I, p. 150.
- 55 DLSM, *Charles Akers Autobiography*, p. 293 and Julian Hawthorne folder, 7.
- 56 'The Dusseldorf Gallery', *New York Times*, March 13, 1860.
- 57 'The Lost Pearl Diver', *Portland Transcript*, October 8, 1859.
- 58 *The Dusseldorf Gallery* 1860, p. 32. The writer suggested the youth was a Moor based on his facial features.
- 59 'Benjamin-by Akers', *Eastern Argus* (Portland, Me.), December 26, 1859; a similar sentiment was expressed in 'Akers's Statue of the Lost Pearl Diver', *Eastern Argus*, October 7, 1859. Writing in 1866, Tuckerman altered the narrative and assumed the diver had emerged from the deep and died on shore, see Tuckerman 1866, p. 525. This interpretation is shared by some modern historians, e.g. Dabakis 2014, p. 104.
- 60 Hawthorne 1860, I, p. 150.
- 61 'Editor's Easy Chair', *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, vol. 20, no. 120, May 1860, p. 846.
- 62 'Akers Pearl Fisher', *Portland Advertiser*, January 2, 1860. For a later iteration of this response to Akers' *Diver*, see Salatino in this volume, note 40.
- 63 Tuckerman 1866, p. 525.

Undressing America: Nineteenth-Century Expatriate Sculptors in Rome and the Problem of Nudity

Between 1825 and 1875, American sculptors in Rome and, to a lesser degree, in Florence produced a vast parade of marmoreal nudity that defied their compatriots much vaunted disdain for, discomfort with, and even horror of the unclothed body, an ingrained prudery in which Americans seem to have taken a kind of national pride. This contradiction is easily explained. The lure of Rome was manifold and layered, filled as the city was with the cultural detritus of antiquity, an ‘intimate knowledge of [which was] at the center of formal training for American painters and sculptors.’ Indeed, most educated Americans acknowledged Rome as the classroom and Parnassus of the nineteenth-century’s ‘religion of beauty.’¹

The goal of American artists, particularly sculptors, was ‘to create new images for new temples in the New World, inspired by images of old gods,’ as William Vance memorably put it.² In Rome, unlike anywhere else, there existed the necessary infrastructure to realize this great enterprise: the presence of an international artists’ community; the availability of unblemished white marble from the quarries at Carrara and Seravezza; the existence of highly-skilled artisans (‘scalpellini’) who could expertly render the sculptors’ original conception in clay into its final carved marble form; the easy availability of female models willing to pose unclothed (unheard of in America); and, above all, the presence of affluent tourists, on whose established itinerary were all the best-known sculptors’ studios, guaranteeing a steady income for the fortunate few who achieved popular recognition.

As William Gerdts has observed, ‘once in Italy, [American sculptors] produced nude statues with abandon and in abundance, and travelers from America dutifully went to see them, though, as one female visitor remarked, “it is an awkward thing to contemplate naked statues with young gentlemen”.’³ The tension this gendered unease exposes – between the ancient and the modern, the pagan and the Christian, the nude and the draped – lay at the root of the nineteenth-century reception of American sculpture, as simplistic and anachronistic as that now may seem.

From this “parade” of marmoreal nudity, this endless procession marching from Italy to the New World – from the works of Horatio Greenough (1805–1852) and Hiram Powers (1805–1873) to William Wetmore Story (1819–1895) and Harriet Hosmer (1830–1908), from Thomas Crawford (1814–1857) and Erastus Dow Palmer (1817–1904) to William Henry Rinehart (1825–1874) and Randolph Rogers (1825–1892), from Chauncey Ives (1810–1894) and Paul Akers (1825–1861) to Anne Whitney (1821–1915) and Edmonia Lewis (1844–1907), among the multitude of American sculptors



1. Hiram Powers, *The Greek Slave*, 1843-44 (this version 1846), marble. National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 2014.79.37.
2. Erastus Dow Palmer, *The White Captive*, 1857-58, marble. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, 94.9.3.
3. Paul Akers, *The Dead Pearl Diver*, 1857-58, marble. Portland Museum of Art, Portland, Maine, 1888.1.



whose names, once famous, are now obscure – this essay will focus on three case studies, all works produced in the critical middle years of the century: Hiram Powers's *The Greek Slave* (1843-44; Fig. 1); Erastus Dow Palmer's *The White Captive* (1857-58; Fig. 2); and Paul Akers's *The Dead Pearl Diver* (1857-58; Fig. 3).

And while the first of these, Powers's *Greek Slave* – the most famous American sculpture of the nineteenth century – was, in fact, made in Florence; and the second – Palmer's *White Captive* – was made in Albany, New York, by an artist who never set foot in Italy; and only the third – Akers's *Dead Pearl Diver* – was actually executed in Rome, none could have been made without the fact of Rome, its cultural heritage, its pervasive influence, and its embedded presence in the mind and marrow of every American who aspired to high culture and established taste.

*The Greek Slave*⁴

In June 1858, Nathaniel Hawthorne, on an extended sojourn in Rome, visited Hiram Powers in Florence. Powers, Hawthorne relates,

‘showed us a statue of Washington that has much dignity and stateliness. He expressed, however, great contempt for the coat and breeches ... in which he had been required to cloak the figure. What would he do with Washington, the most decorous and respectable personage that ever went ceremoniously through the realities of life? Did anybody ever see Washington nude? It is inconceivable. He had no nakedness, but I imagine he was born with his clothes on, and his hair powdered, and made a stately bow on his first appearance in the world ... I wonder that so very sensible a man as Powers should not see the necessity of accepting drapery, and the very drapery of the day, if he will keep his art alive. ... But he seems to be especially fond of nudity, none of his ideal statues, so far as I know them, having so much as a rag of clothes.’⁵

This discomfort with the nude, so prevalent in nineteenth-century America, was further amplified by Hawthorne in his novel *The Marble Faun*, published in 1860 though closely dependent on his unpublished Italian notebooks of two years earlier. In it, one of the central characters, the expatriate American painter Miriam, about to be shown the expatriate American sculptor Kenyon’s model of Cleopatra (based on William Wetmore Story’s eponymous sculpture, which Hawthorne admired), declares with exasperation:

‘Not a nude figure, I hope. ... Every young sculptor seems to think that he must give the world some specimen of indecorous womanhood, and call it Eve, Venus, a nymph, or any name that may apologize for a lack of decent clothing. I am weary, even more than I am ashamed, of seeing such things. Nowadays people are as good as born in their clothes, and there is practically not a nude human being in existence. An artist, therefore, ... cannot sculpture nudity with a pure heart, if only because he is compelled to steal guilty glances at hired models. The marble inevitability loses its chastity under such circumstances.’⁶

This is an extraordinary statement, particularly its uncompromising certainty that nudity is not merely indecent, but, for all practical purposes, non-existent. More than any other casual remark of the period, fictional or not, Miriam’s declaration underscores the fundamental, indeed pathological, prudery of the nineteenth-century American mind, at least as exemplified by Hawthorne.

Elsewhere in *The Marble Faun*, while discussing the English sculptor John Gibson (best-known for his famous “Tinted Venus”), the author takes Gibson to task for his habit of subtly coloring his statues.⁷ By doing so, Hawthorne complained, he ‘robbed the marble of its chastity, by giving it an artificial warmth of hue. Thus it became a sin and a shame to look at his nude goddesses, [who],... bedaubed with buff color... stood forth to the eyes of the profane in the guise of naked women.’⁸ In his *French and Italian Note-Books* Hawthorne elaborated on this theme, writing that ‘the lascivious warmth of hue ... demoralizes the chastity of the marble and makes one feel ashamed to look at the naked limbs in the company of women.’⁹ Note, particularly, Hawthorne’s use of the word “chastity” in reference to the marble, “chaste” and “chastity” being among the most revealing (and ubiquitous) tropes of nineteenth-century American critical discourse when

discussing ideal nude sculpture and the marble from which it was carved. That critical discourse is also steeped in the language of religion. Again in *The Marble Faun* Hawthorne wrote that a sculptor's 'material, or instrument ... is a pure, white, undecaying substance.' 'It insures [sic] immortality in whatever is wrought in it, and therefore makes it a religious obligation to ... repay the marble for its faithful care, its incorruptible fidelity ... Under this aspect, marble assumes a sacred character, and no man should dare to touch it unless he feels within himself a certain consecration and a priesthood.'¹⁰

The justificatory language used to describe Hiram Powers's *The Greek Slave* and rationalize its offending nudity begins with the astute Yankee salesman himself: 'It was not my object,' he wrote in reference to the controversy of nudity surrounding the sculpture, 'to set before my countrymen demoralizing subjects, and thus get even my bread at the expense of public chastity ... [but rather to make] a pure abstract human form tempered with chaste expression and attitude, calculated to awaken the highest emotions of the soul for the pure and beautiful.'¹¹

In the 1848 pamphlet published to accompany *The Greek Slave* on its peripatetic, profit-seeking travels, Powers described it thus:

'The ... subject is ... a Grecian maiden, made captive by the Turks and exposed at Constantinople, for sale. The cross and locket, visible amid the drapery, indicate that she is a Christian, and beloved. But this simple phase [sic] by no means completes the meaning of the statue. It represents a being superior to suffering, and raised above degradation, by inward purity and force of character. Thus the Greek Slave is an emblem of all trial to which humanity is subject, and may be regarded as a type of resignation, uncompromising virtue, or sublime patience ... [E]very sensitive ... lover of art recognizes [in it] a high and pure ideal.'¹²

In the same pamphlet, Reverend Orville Dewey, lending considerable ministerial prestige to the sculpture, wrote: 'The Greek Slave is clothed all over with sentiment; sheltered, protected by it from every profane eye. Brocade, cloth of gold, could not be a more complete protection than the vesture of holiness in which she stands ... I would fain assemble all the licentiousness in the world around this statue, to be instructed, rebuked, disarmed, converted to purity by it!'¹³

The prodigally sentimental public reception of Powers's *Greek Slave* is perhaps best expressed in the breathless, quasi-erotic descriptive language used by the writer Estelle Anna Robinson Lewis on seeing it at its first New York exhibition in 1847:

'As we entered the exhibition room we found ourselves in a new world and a new atmosphere such as we had never breathed before ... Seats were placed in front of it, into one of which we sank in a sort of trance ... A halo of beauty encircled not only the brow, but the entire figure. The breast heaved, the lips moved, the muscles breathed, ... the cold marble mortality vanished, and it stood before us a living, thinking, speaking soul. ... Voices from a group near aroused us from our stupor, when we found we had been in this spell five hours.'¹⁴

Similarly, the actress Clara Cushman, lover of the Rome-based American sculptor, Emma Stebbins, claimed that *The Greek Slave* put her into 'a

train of dreamy delicious revery, in which hours might have passed unnoticed ... [T]he sorrowful gaze of the downcast eyes, the grace of the assumed position, affected me most singularly. I could have wept with a perfect agony of tears.' Cushman rapturously imagines 'the devotion with which the statue was gazed upon, day by day, as its development progressed beneath [the sculptor's] skillful hand – the delicate stroke chiming faintly to his fast coming fantasies ... – how he had dwelt upon its perfections until he grew mad with love.'¹⁵

This response – approving, ecstatic, reverential – was not, however, universal. The sculpture's nudity, despite the carefully woven cloak of respectability in which Powers and his allies had enveloped it, elicited unease in many quarters. Indeed, the fear that it might be officially sanctioned through acquisition by the American government provoked a strongly worded editorial in 1848: 'It is stated ... that this piece of indecent sculpture is to be purchased by the Smithsonian Institution and to be lodged in a hall worthy of it. We feverishly hope that none of the funds of the institution will be prostituted to such a purpose. As for the disposition of the statue, the only hall worthy of it would be one in which there were neither doors nor windows'¹⁶ The editorial's language, in its use of "prostituted" and "indecent," aggressively challenged the tropes of purity and chastity the sculpture's defenders had so carefully marshaled in its defense.

The Greek Slave was first exhibited in London in 1845, where it was a triumph. 'Your "Slave" has now become the talk of the town,' wrote Powers's friend, the Boston scholar-statesman Edward Everett, 'everybody of any taste or pretensions to taste goes to see it.' Even the young Queen Victoria paid the *Slave* a visit, and Lady Caroline Stamer called it 'not merely a fashion, [but] a rage!'¹⁷ In 1851, having returned to London after an extended American tour, it appeared at the Great Exhibition (a fair attended by six million people), where the imprimatur of British society assured its success (Fig. 4).



4. After John Absalon, 'View in the East Nave (The Greek Slave)', *Recollections of the Great Exhibition* (London, Lloyd Brothers, 1851), hand-colored lithograph by Day and Son. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, 1976.664 (19).



5. London Stereoscopic Company, *The Greek Slave*. By Hiram Powers, c. 1860, albumen silver print. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 84.XC.873.9169.

6. London Stereoscopic Company, *The Greek Slave*. By Hiram Powers, c. 1860, albumen silver print. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 84.XC.873.85.



There were, however, dissenters. The critic for *The London Chronicle* wrote, dyspeptically: 'The reputation of Mr. Powers is, we conceive, somewhat too great for his merits. His "Greek Slave" is certainly graceful and feminine, but ... we consider its attitude and treatment at once stiff and *namby-pamby*.' The author conceded that '[t]here are ... few statues which have enjoyed a greater popularity,' while subverting this tepid approbation with the churlish observation that '[c]asts of it in a variety of materials are hawked about the streets; every Italian boy carries it on his board; and it was but the other day that we recognized it in a sweetmeat shop in Tottenham-Court-Road, nicely executed in a species of barley sugar – a substance which ... rendered in a glorious flesh colour its sentimental graces.'¹⁸

When Powers realized the degree to which his *Slave* was being replicated in various media, from photographs to table-top Parian-ware reductions to ceramic jugs, he attempted to copyright its image. But he was too late. Concerning the Parian-ware reductions, his agent Miner Kellogg nevertheless optimistically predicted that '[t]hey will familiarize your work in the families of many good people, and help to break down the prudent nonsense which has always prevailed in this country [i.e., America] in regard to naked statues.'¹⁹ In 1853, Kellogg's optimism was at least partly vindicated in *Godey's Lady's Book* (the most popular American women's magazine) in which a certain Mrs. Merrifield, in advocating for 'putting an end to the practice of tight-lacing' in women's corsets, advised young

women to learn ‘a general knowledge of form’ (by which she meant their own anatomy), which ‘is ... best acquired by the contemplation of good pictures and sculpture.’ She recommended purchasing a table-top replica of *The Greek Slave*, insisting that ‘one of these casts should be found on the *toilette* of every young lady ... desirous of obtaining a knowledge of the proportions and beauties of the figure.’²⁰

By 1903, looking back half a century, Henry James could acerbically describe these once omnipresent table-top reductions of *The Greek Slave* as ‘so undressed, yet so refined, even pensive, in sugar-white alabaster, exposed under little glass covers in such American homes as could bring themselves to think such things right,’ encapsulating, in one sentence, *The Greek Slave*’s layered complexities, and reducing it, finally, to kitsch.²¹

Another reproductive medium of enormous importance to *The Greek Slave*’s international dissemination was the photograph and its cousin the stereo card, the latter viewed through a handheld stereoscope, the first portable version of which was popularized at the Great Exhibition in 1851 (Figs. 5-6). The three-dimensional illusion of the stereoscopic experience is particularly relevant to *The Greek Slave*. Its attempt to replicate the “object of desire’s” materiality was, at base, an inherently erotic act. Oliver Wendell Holmes, himself the inventor of a portable stereoscope, seems to have understood this intrinsically, describing the process (in 1859) as one wherein ‘the mind, as it were, *feels round it* and gets an idea of solidity. We clasp an object with our eyes, as with our arms, or with our hands, or with our thumb and finger, and then we know it to be something more than a surface.’²² The illusion of palpable corporeality of the viewed object or subject, effected by the stereoscope, assumes an intimacy that – since stereoscopic viewing is by and large a private act – becomes, by extension, voyeuristic.

The *Slave*’s exogenous eroticism was, however, bestowed more overtly. In his review of the Great Exhibition, the critic for *The Times* of London, describing the section devoted to the United States, observed that ‘[I]n the middle of the Nave ... [stands] the Greek Slave [which] outshines Madame Wharton in the execution of *poses plastiques* on its pivot.’²³ Enter, now, the “pose plastique” or *tableau vivant*, a peculiarly durable form of popular entertainment, in which living models reenacted famous paintings and sculpture on stage. The *tableau vivant* would dog *The Greek Slave* throughout its public career, and is a phenomenon that helps to shed indirect light on the work’s reception.

About the impresario, Madame Wharton, little is known except that she flourished for a few seasons in London in the 1840s and 1850s and ultimately died of drink. Her self-publicity dubiously claimed that she was fresh from the continent, where she had recruited ‘a Troupe of Eminent Artistes, and been favored with admission to the studios of several celebrated painters and sculptors.’²⁴ Included in her offerings were such performances as ‘A Night with Canova and Flaxman’ and ‘A Night with Titian,’ and among the works of art illustrated and accompanied by ‘descriptive music’ were Canova’s “Nymph,” a “Venus Rising from the Sea,” and “Lady Godiva.” While these were, at least at the beginning, favorably received as wholesome and elevating entertainment, there were immedi-

ate voices of opposition. A letter to the journal the *Art-Union* in 1847 protested against the *tableaux vivants* as ‘both offensive to delicacy and eminently injurious to the best interests of Art,’ claiming that they were ‘calculated to attract the worst form of audience,’ and that ‘all lovers of Art should raise an indignant voice ... against the wholesale display of female nudity to an indiscriminate mass of people, who view it with anything but high feeling.’²⁵

A few years later, in January, 1850, the *Morning Post* of London contained an advertisement for Mrs. Wharton’s troupe of living models performing at the “Walhalla” theater in Leicester Square, where ‘Madame Warton [sic] will have the honour of appearing in her original and inimitable personation of, among other works, the Greek Slave’²⁶. By this time, *The Greek Slave* had become a staple of the *tableaux vivants*, assured top billing by its celebrity, its nudity, and the *frisson* of its one stage prop – a chain. We can assume that this state of affairs continued unchanged until the Great Exhibition a year later, when the *Slave*’s return to London would provide fresh motivation for re-enacting it on the stage.

In 1848, a second version of Powers’s sculpture was touring America (there were ultimately six versions in all; in the 447 days of its American tour, it would be seen by more than 100,000 people) – first in New York, then Washington, thence to numerous other cities across the country. Powers’s agent, Miner Kellogg, complained to the sculptor that a contributing factor to the Washington exhibition’s poor box office was caused by the presence of “Living Models” – *tableaux vivants* – performed nearby, thus the two exhibitions were being ‘classed together in the public mind.’ Following its Washington appearance, the tour continued to Baltimore, where again it was forced to compete with *tableaux vivants*. ‘In Baltimore,’ a friend wrote to Powers, ‘the model artists [did] you a vast deal of injury and will keep the nude figure a question [flourishing] for a long while.’²⁷

In Cincinnati, where the sculpture traveled next, an especially virulent attack on *The Greek Slave* appeared in the *Western Christian Advocate* (October 9, 1848): ‘Licentiousness is increasing in our midst,’ it declared. ‘Our eastern cities are growing in impurity, and so is the great west. ... Model artists, or naked women, representing the Greek Slave and other pieces of statuary, are traveling from city to city ... exhibiting themselves for money; and ... they draw large audiences even among the ladies! ... The exhibition of the Greek Slave, in our ... judgment, prepares the way for the model artists, and they for the house which leads to the chambers of death, and to the gates of hell. Yet thousands of Christian ministers and members are among its visitors!’²⁸ For this author, then, *The Greek Slave* functioned as a sort of gateway drug to perdition: nude sculpture leading to naked women leading to prostitution leading to fornication leading, at last, to hell.

The omnipresence of “model artists” is critical to understanding the subtext of *The Greek Slave*’s public reception, and, to a greater degree than any other contemporaneous phenomenon (except, of course, the issue of slavery in the American south), it pulls back the curtain of prophylactic propaganda with which *The Greek Slave* was calculatedly enshrouded by those who would profit from it. Sex, for all the chivalric attempts to

7. Auguste Belloc (1805-1867),
Femme devant un miroir, c. 1855,
 daguerreotype, Musée d'Orsay, Paris,
 inv. PHO1986-126.



protect Powers's sculpture with the language of chastity and Christian morality, always lay just below the surface. As a critic for the journal *The Crayon* astutely observed in an article denouncing "Naked Art": 'Into art, as into everything else, the commercial spirit of the age enters to the exclusion of almost everything else ... To draw the public in crowds, to abstract the cash from their pockets ... is the leading idea of the age.'²⁹ The cloak of respectability provided by Powers and his allies was easily reversed.

Tableaux vivants, flourishing in the 1840s and 1850s when *The Greek Slave* was at the height of its fame, devolved quickly into little more than "girlie" shows, early forms of burlesque and strip tease, subverting high art's respectability through mimicry. By 1852, the *New York Times* could report: 'Some years ago, the exhibitions of Model Artistes were quite numerous in this City. They were first ... exceedingly chaste and classical ... [but] they finally came to be nothing but vulgar exhibitions of nude men and women, white and black, young and old, ... patronized by those of depraved taste ... seeking gratification in these disgusting exhibitions.'³⁰

By adopting renowned examples of ideal sculpture and painting ('A Night with Canova and Flaxman,' 'A Night with Titian'), low art successfully arrogated high art to its purpose. The purveyors of *tableaux vivants* knew the indomitability of the "animal" spirit, as Hiram Powers aptly put it when denouncing the application of color to sculpture, for *tableaux vivants*, being thoroughly *vivants*, were as colored as flesh. '[C]olour ...,' Powers declared, 'will humanize, mortalize, and pull down to earth the spiritual portion of humanity ... Colour, in short, represents the animal man; - Form, the intellectual, the spiritual.'³¹ "Animal man" asserted itself immediately, the distance between a daguerreotype of *The Greek Slave* and one of the many contemporary erotic daguerreotypes in wide circulation being relatively short (as, for example, Auguste Belloc's *Femme devant un miroir*, c. 1855) (Fig. 7).

Looking back from 1864, long after *The Greek Slave*'s golden age had dimmed to bronze, the distinguished American art historian and critic, James Jackson Jarves, penned a damning assessment:

'Powers's idea [in *The Greek Slave*] was to make an effigy of a terror-stricken girl, whose purest instincts and holiest affections are about to be trampled into the dust by a mercenary wretch ... [Instead] [w]hat have we? A feebly conceived, languid, romantic miss, under no delusion as to the quality and value of her fresh charms viewed by the carnal eye, ... naked and exposed though she is to the lustful gaze of men! We need have no pitying pang; the bought and buyer will soon be on speaking terms, for a coquette at heart always has her price.'³²

Thus Jarves savagely reduced *The Greek Slave* to nothing more than a high-class prostitute. Clearly, the "model artists" were clairvoyant in this regard, recognizing, before anyone else, her libidinous potential for profit.

The White Captive

Notwithstanding the virtual duplication of image and subject (a naked female, constrained, exposed, and victimized), the distance between Hiram Powers's *Greek Slave* and Erastus Dow Palmer's *White Captive* (Palmer's simultaneous homage and challenge to *The Greek Slave*) is formidable. *The Greek Slave* is idealized rather than personalized, devoid of individuality, classicizing, and neither particularly sensual nor sensuous, at least to modern eyes. Like a *Venus pudica*, her left hand discreetly covers her genitalia, her knees are closed, her head is averted in modesty, refusing to look her captors (or the viewer) in the eye. Her hand rests delicately on a strikingly phallic post, channeling her resignation, her submission. Her most prominent accessory, without which she would be a generic nude devoid of back story, is the chain that binds her hands. It functions as a prop of adornment, the ultimate fetish, and it alone goes a long way toward understanding her unstated appeal, the distinctly male fantasy of an exposed and defenseless woman in bondage about to be raped. Sadomasochism bubbles just below the sculpture's surface.

Palmer's *White Captive*, the artist's nativist response to *The Greek Slave*, is, on the other hand, discernibly younger, nubile. Fully personalized, she has individuality – the classic girl-next-door, a daughter, a sister, a girlfriend. She is both sensual and sensuous, her genitalia fully exposed, her hand clasping the supporting tree/phallus with a kind of insouciance. Her legs are open and inviting. Her expression, not exactly defiant, is self-assured, as if waiting, slightly impatiently, for a date who is running late rather than the sexual violation that presumably awaits her. Her pose is more classically *contrapposto* than *The Greek Slave*'s, whose more prominent right hip breaks the descending vertical of that leg to achieve an effect that can only be called demure. Her hair is disheveled, unwashed, unlike *The Greek Slave*'s soigné chignon, further granting her individuality, even agency.

With *The White Captive*, Palmer created a fully sexualized creature, an exercise in softcore pornography. That it could have been so successfully shrouded in the mist of Victorian verbal and visual sentiment is astonishing. Palmer himself described her with relative economy:

'[*The White Captive*] represents the young daughter of the pioneer in "Indian bondage," standing and bound with bark thongs at the wrist to a truncated tree, as if with the hands behind her. ... [Her] right hand is nervously clasped against the rough bark of the stump which is between the hand and the hip. She is

entirely nude, her only garment, the nightdress ... is torn from her and lies upon the ground at her feet, excepting a portion of it which is held between her hip and the tree and falls to the ground.’³³

Palmer’s language, for all its simplicity, titillates: ‘bound with bark thongs,’ ‘clasped against the rough bark of the stump,’ ‘entirely nude,’ ‘her night dress torn from her.’ But his bare-boned account was quickly embellished. *The Atlantic Monthly*, for example, invented a lengthy tale that reads like a penny-dreadful story of the old west:

‘they dragged her many a fearful mile ... and ... they stripped her naked, and bound her to a stake ... But the Christian heart was within her, and the Christian soul upheld her, and the Christian’s God was by her side; and so she stood, and waited, and was brave. And here still she stands... in a vision of faith and tenderness ... – stands and waits for the pity and the help of you and me, her brothers and her lovers. We long to rescue her and take her to our hearts ... [H]er beautiful body trembles ..., her countenance confronts her captors, and her steady gaze forbids them. “Touch me not!” she says, with every shuddering limb and every tensely-braced muscle ... Her lips quiver, and tears are in her eyes (we do not forget that this is of marble we are speaking – there *are* tears in her eyes,) ... her chin trembles, and one of her hands is convulsively clenched ... It is original, it is faithful, it is American; our women may look upon it, and say, “She is one of us,” with more satisfaction than the Greek women could have derived from the Venus de’ Medici.’³⁴

Once again, the scopophilic language used to describe the *Captive*, like that used to describe *The Greek Slave*, in its ekphrastic excess undermines criticism and betrays its real intention – the lovesick *paen* of the viewer-voyeur. This is the language of the lover: her “beautiful body” “trembles,” “shudders,” “quivers,” ‘we long to rescue her and take her to our hearts,’ ‘we forget its marble [and] accept its flesh and blood.’ This tendency to confuse stone and flesh, to accept the living for the inert, the surrogate for the real (‘there *are* tears in her eyes!’), lies at the very core of nineteenth-century American art critique, steeped as it is in a culture of sentimentality. Nor is she a poor descendant of classical Greek perfection (as is *The Greek Slave*), but triumphantly American, and ‘our ... women may look upon [her] and say, ‘She is one of us.’” Here, surrogacy, enfleshed, becomes desire, the sculpture a stand-in for the Victorian male fantasy of the ripe, teenage lover, stripped and ready for assault.

But not everyone was blind to *The White Captive*’s subtext. In the previously referenced jeremiad, ‘Naked Art,’ appearing in *The Crayon* in 1859, the author deployed the omnipresent model artists as his whipping post, his counter example to Christian morality, implicating *The White Captive* in their “pagan flesh”:

‘It is this low spirit which disgraced our city with *model artists* and forced our municipal authorities to suppress them – it is this low spirit which has lately begun to inundate us with naked art. Paganism loved to worship the naked body – to steep the senses in luscious physical forms, to become inebriate with the tantalization of fleshy outlines and protuberances, to forget the soul in the contemplation of the body. ... Are we again, after eighteen centuries of Christian effort, about to have a reproduction of pagan art? ... Let our women reflect

upon what they were before Christianity and Christian art – let them reflect upon the causes of their degradation ... before they lend their countenance to the miserable reproductions of pagan art which now disgrace our city. Will any man of unperverted intellect and moral sensibility, with instinctive Art perceptions and Art cultivation, tell us, what new art revelations he finds in the *White Captive* of Palmer? ... It is vain, it is delusive, to spin modern ideas around the naked body of a paganized figure – to pass the veil of Christian words over pagan flesh.³⁵

A letter to the *New York Times* dated December 1859 called *The White Captive* ‘an attack on the decorum of American manners,’ and condemned ‘the unblushing effrontery with which the exhibition room of the ‘White Captive’ [it was then on public view in New York] is ... made a convenient lounging and flirtation place.’³⁶

We know from many contemporary accounts that the exhibition spaces in which such sculptures as *The Greek Slave* and *The White Captive* were displayed were, or were presumed to be, sites of seduction – places where men and women mingling together, their “animal instincts” inflamed by the sculpture’s nakedness, would succumb to corrupt natural desire. This perceived social problem helps to explain why exhibitions of “model artists” could be ‘classed together in the public mind,’ as Miner Kellogg explained to Powers during *The Greek Slave*’s Washington appearance. The public’s ability to distinguish between the real and the ideal, between sense and sensibility, between the word and the image, between the performative and the merely performed, was blurred and destabilized by the simultaneity, the juxtaposition, of the popular and the high, between, for example, P.T. Barnum’s fake “Feejee Mermaid” (with its fish tail sewn to the upper body of an ape) and Hiram Power’s *The Greek Slave*.

To James Jackson Jarves, ‘brain and hand [are] at war’ in Palmer, who ‘typifies in himself American art in bondage.’ ‘The beauty of high art does not interpenetrate his work,’ Jarves insisted. ‘He has made the *White Captive* ... a petulant, pouty girl, vulgar in face and form, ... with so materialistic a treatment of the surface of the marble as to suggest meat and immodesty³⁷. Meat and immodesty. This is *The White Captive*’s final insult.

The Dead Pearl Diver

To quote again from Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Marble Faun* (as before, the painter Miriam is in the sculptor Kenyon’s Roman studio):

‘Miriam admired the statue of a beautiful youth, a pearl-fisher, who had got entangled in the weeds at the bottom of the sea, and lay dead among the pearl oysters, the rich shells, and the seaweeds, all of like value to him now. “The poor man has perished among the prizes that he sought,” remarked she. “But what a strange efficacy there is in death! ... I like this statue, though it is too cold and stern in its moral lesson, and, physically, the form has not settled itself into sufficient repose”.’³⁸

The formal sources for Paul Akers’ *Dead Pearl Diver* (1857-58) are not difficult to divine, and while it is ultimately dependent on a *Son of Niobe* from the Uffizi’s *Niobe Group*, it had more resonant antecedents in the recent past. The most immediate though rarely noted source for Akers was

the young, Florence-based, Sienese sculptor Giovanni Dupré's *Dying Abel* of 1842-44, a work that caused such an uproar for its extreme naturalism that its outraged academic critics claimed it could not have been modeled freehand but must have been cast directly from life (Fig. 8).

While *The Dying Abel* was immediately acquired by the Russian Grand Duchess Maria and shipped off to her homeland, Grand Duke Leopold of Tuscany commissioned a bronze copy which in 1851 entered the granducal collection in Palazzo Pitti.³⁹ Dupré also made several marble reductions, one of which was shown in Paris at the Universal Exhibition in 1855 and another of which was exhibited at the Crystal Palace in London in 1857. The work was, therefore, well-known and could easily have been seen by Akers, especially since he had spent a year, from 1852-53, in Florence, joining the colony of American sculptors working there before returning first to America and then moving to Rome. And *The Dying Abel*'s pathos-filled naturalism would have greatly appealed to Akers, whose own theories of art leaned toward a strong naturalism.

In February 1860, *The Crayon* published reaction to Akers's *Pearl Diver*, then on tour in America:

"The first impression when we entered the room, was that of pain. A youth lies before you stretched in death; but this feeling soon changed into pity, mellowed by the delight in the exquisite beauty of the whole work. We look with pity, yet with admiration, upon a noble youth lying on the battle sod. There is death, yet it is neither rigid nor flaccid; there is that chaste and solemn nudity, which ... is the opposite of that obtrusive nakedness which amounts to little more than the negation of drapery. ... If a cold, white marble, representing a dead body, produces in the beholder the desire of impressing a blessing kiss of parting on it ... [then] it must be, I think, a beautiful work; and every one of our party, young and old, male and female, confessed that they had that desire on leaving the statue. ... [W]ere I a wealthy man, I would request the fittest artist to sculpture Socrates shielding and rescuing his youthful friend, Alcibiades, bleeding on the ground in the battle of Potidae [sic]. This idea presented itself again to my mind when beholding Akers' Pearl Fisher."⁴⁰

8. Giovanni Dupré, *The Dying Abel*, 1842-44 (reduction, 1853). Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, M.77.11.



Homoeroticism is here only lightly submerged in the rhetoric of sentimentality. Again, like *The White Captive*, we are presented with a nubile adolescent but, unlike *The White Captive*, a dangerously androgynous one. Death is both real and unreal, since *The Dead Pearl Diver* appears only to sleep, his sensuality intact. His arms are thrown back over his head in a gesture of erotic invitation, expressing his complete vulnerability. One longs to caress his smooth and radiant flesh, to kiss this beautiful boy, to reach ever so subtly beneath the fishnet provocatively draped over his pubic zone. In this way, *thanatos* and *eros* comeingle. One gasps at the work's boldness, its audacity. It begs the question: what was its maker thinking when he conceived it? What, in turn, did its (American) audience make of it, and how can that audience have missed its blatant sexuality, its provocative homoeroticism? And yet, a reviewer for *The Crayon* in January 1860 did not miss it. The boy's position, 'extended upon its hard couch,' is one 'that could only be admissible deprived of life' (italics mine), the author states categorically.⁴¹ If dead, the viewer is safe, unprovoked. If alive, and merely sleeping, the boy – beautiful, vulnerable, naked, exposed, his hips thrust alluringly upwards – becomes a seductive object of illicit desire, brazenly inviting both the female and the male gaze.

In the 1867 edition of his *Book of the Artists*, the critic Henry Tuckerman wrote:

'In the subject or the sentiment of every characteristic work of poet and artist, we discern self-portraiture, either as regards character or destiny. ... Unconsciously the mood infects the picture ...; and therein ... we find an individuality, a coincidence which seems to foreshadow the experience ... or hint the epitaph. Accidentally encountering the best statue of Akers, its memory



9. Alexander Gardner, *Bodies of Confederate Dead Gathered for Burial, Antietam, Maryland*, 1862, daguerreotype. Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., LC-B811-557 [P&P] LOT 4168.

became in our thought associated with the artist's early death in the midst of his success [Akers had died in 1861 at the age of 35]. Had he expressly sought a conception thus to perpetuate in marble the aspiration, the struggle, and the end of his artist-life, we can scarcely imagine one better fitted to illustrate them. ... Thus the young sculptor, in the freshness and fervor of his days, with heroic self-reliance, cast himself into the embrace of art, ... won the pearl of beauty, and then fell back and, 'by the wayside,' perished. ... [It is] an eloquent and authentic symbol of all the artist achieved, endured, and was.⁴²

It is remarkable that Tuckerman uses Akers's *Dead Pearl Diver* as a form of latent or pre-ordained (auto)biography. And yet, how honest and refreshing that he admits his inability to forget, to sever, the facts of Akers's life from his interpretation and assessment of the artist's work. It is as if the only recently concluded Civil War, fresh of memory, has infected his entire account of Akers's life, *The Dead Pearl Diver* functioning as a kind of stand-in for the war dead, a connection made explicit by the critic for *The Crayon* when he described the *Pearl Diver* as 'a noble youth lying on the battle sod.' In his interpretation of the sculpture as a foreshadowing of Akers's fate, Tuckerman succumbed, however, to the strategies of Victorian fiction – in this case as exemplified by that arch-allegorist Nathaniel Hawthorne, who never met a symbol he didn't like. In Tuckerman on Akers, Victorian sentimentality merged seamlessly with the period's Civil War-inflected death-obsession.

It is, in fact, inconceivable that in the 1860s a life-sized, three-dimensional image of a young dead male, prostrate and glassy-eyed, would *not* have called immediately to mind those dreadful and unshakeable images of the war dead scattered like kindling across the battlefields of Gettysburg or Antietam, those ghastly, wrenching photographs by Mathew Brady, Alexander Gardner, and Thomas O'Sullivan seared forever in the American imaginary (Fig. 9).

In a review of an exhibition of Brady's photographs of the war dead at Antietam, appearing within weeks of the 1862 battle, the *New York Times* proclaimed:

'Mr. Brady has done something to bring home to us the terrible reality...of war. If he has not brought bodies and laid them in our dooryards and along the streets, he has done something very like it ... We would scarce choose to be in the gallery when one of the women bending over them should recognize a husband, a son, or a brother. ... How can a mother bear to know that the boy whose slumbers she has cradled ... – when but for the privilege of touching that corpse, of kissing once more the lips white and cold ... how can this mother bear to know that in a shallow trench, hastily dug, rude hands have thrown him.'⁴³

It is striking how close this language is to that of the correspondent whose description of Akers's *Diver* appeared in *The Crayon* two years earlier, at the war's outset: 'a cold, white marble, representing a dead body produces in the beholder the desire of impressing a blessing kiss of parting on it, ... and every one of our party, young and old, male and female, confessed that they had that desire on leaving the statue.'⁴⁴ The merging of stone with flesh – the conversion of stone *to* flesh – is here made complete, its eroticism permissible, though only through the mediating fact of death.

From Hiram Powers (whose *Greek Slave* is the inflection point) to Erastus Palmer to Paul Akers, we see an evolution of tolerance – an adapting, acclimating, or habituating, based on exposure and propaganda – on the part of American audiences to the undressed body in American art. There are, of course, profound tensions, but on the whole, by the end of the century, the “polite” acceptance of nudity in America, under certain prescribed conditions, achieved a kind of social and cultural detente. Through sentimentalized narrative, through the authority of classical antiquity as a marketable Roman cultural product, through the ubiquity of ever more life-like mass-produced visual surrogates, through popular entertainments like *tableaux vivants*, through the gradual adoption of naturalism and the rejection of classicism, a meta-narrative forms that swallows whole individual works like *The Greek Slave*, *The White Captive* or *The Dead Pearl Diver*. And while this habituation was made possible largely through sculpture’s inherent reproducibility, itself a product of the engine of Victorian industry and technology, it was really Rome, the *fons et origo* of America’s long parade of marmoreal nudity, that lifted, even if only tenuously and provisionally, the perennial taboo against that nudity from a land neither brave nor free in the threatening presence of the unclothed body.

Notes

- 1 Vance 1989, I, p. 183.
- 2 Vance 1989, I, p. 184.
- 3 The female visitor was Clara Crowninshield. See Hilen, 1956, p. 231. Cited in Gerdtz 1974, p. 87.
- 4 The bibliography for *The Greek Slave* is vast. For the most recent critical, cultural, and art historical assessment, see Droth and Hatt 2016; its 15 articles are organized under the categories ‘Making *The Greek Slave*,’ ‘Reproducing *The Greek Slave*,’ and ‘Contextualizing *The Greek Slave*.’
- 5 Hawthorne 1871a, I, June 4, 1858, p. 355.
- 6 Hawthorne 1980, ch. XIV, “Cleopatra,” pp. 94–5.
- 7 Hawthorne, who liked Gibson personally, is too discreet to identify him by name. He does, however, have his character Miriam criticize Gibson, naming him, elsewhere in *The Marble Faun*: ‘But as for Mr. Gibson’s colored Venuses (stained, I believe, with tobacco juice), and all other nudities of today, I really do not understand what they have to say to this generation, and would be glad to see as many heaps of quicklime in their stead.’ Hawthorne 1980, ch. XIV, p. 95.
- 8 Hawthorne 1980, ch. XV, ‘An Aesthetic Company,’ pp. 102–3.
- 9 Quoted in Person 2002, pp. 113–4.
- 10 Hawthorne 1980, ch. XV, p. 103.
- 11 Quoted in Kasson 1990, p. 50.
- 12 Powers’ *Statue* 1848, p. 4.
- 13 Originally published as “Powers’ Statues,” in *The Union Magazine of Literature and Art*, 1 (October, 1847), pp. 160–1. The article was reproduced by Powers in his pamphlet.
- 14 Lewis 1855. Quoted in Wunder 1991, I, p. 221.
- 15 Originally published in *Neal’s Saturday Gazette*, 1847; republished by Miner Kellogg in the pamphlet accompanying *The Greek Slave*’s traveling exhibition, *Powers’ Statue*

(1848), p. 29. See also Kasson 1990, p. 60.

16 *The Christian Advocate and Journal*, 1848. Quoted in Wunder 1991, I, p. 226. The sculpture was exhibited in Washington in 1848-49.

17 Wunder 1991, I, pp. 215-6. Lady Stamer's remarks are from a letter to Hiram Powers, August 7, 1845.

18 *The London Chronicle*, April 10, 1851, p. 3.

19 Wunder 1991, I, p. 240. August 25, 1849.

20 'Dress - As a Fine Art,' *Godey's Lady's Book*, no. 47 (1853), p. 20.

21 James 1903, I, pp. 114-5.

22 'The Stereoscope and the Stereograph,' *The Atlantic Monthly*, June, 1859, pp. 742-3.

23 *The Times*, April 9, 1851, p. 4.

24 Altick 1978, p. 346. On Madame Wharton, see Altick 1978, pp. 346ff.

25 *Art-Union*, 9, 1847, p. 24. Cited in Altick 1978, p. 348. "Nudity," in this context, should only rarely be taken literally, signifying, rather, either partial nudity (e.g., the semi- or full exposure of the breasts) or a simulated nudity via skin-colored body suits.

26 *Morning Post*, January 31, 1850, p. 1.

27 Quoted in Wunder 1991, I, pp. 227, 229.

28 Quoted in Wunder 1991, I, p. 233.

29 *The Crayon*, 6, 12, December 1859, p. 377.

30 'The Police and the Model Artistes,' *New York Times*, April 10, 1852, p. 2. See also Foster 1850, pp. 12ff, and McCullough 1983.

31 As quoted in the journal *The Athenaeum*, no. 1419, January 6, 1855, p. 23.

32 Jarves 1864, p. 269.

33 In a letter to Palmer's friend John Durand. Quoted in full in Webster 1983, p. 183.

34 'Palmer's White Captive,' *The Atlantic Monthly*, 5, January, 1860, pp. 108-9.

35 See note 29.

36 *New York Times*, December 30, 1859, p. 2. Quoted in full in Webster 1983, p. 77.

37 Jarves 1864, pp. 278-80.

38 Hawthorne 1980, ch. XIII, pp. 90-1. See also Rowe 2002, pp. 86-7. See also Arlene Palmer in this volume on the execution of the *Diver*.

39 The history of the *Abel* is well documented. On a visit to Florence, the Grand Duchess saw the model of the *Abel* in Dupré's studio shortly after he had executed and exhibited it. She immediately commissioned it in marble, along with his sculpture of *Cain*, only just begun and still in clay. She ultimately gave the *Abel* to her father, Tsar Nicholas I. For a full accounting, see Spalletti 2002, pp. 10ff, esp. note 61, pp. 16-7.

40 *The Crayon*, vol. 7, no. 2, 1860, February, p. 60 (quoted from 'the New York correspondence of the *Boston Courier*'). See also Palmer in this volume (note 62) on the reaction to Akers' *Diver*.

41 *The Crayon*, vol. 7, no. 1, January, 1860, p. 29.

42 Tuckerman 1867, p. 612.

43 'Brady's Photographs: Pictures of the Dead at Antietam,' *New York Times*, October 20, 1862, p. 5.

44 See note 39.

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IN MEMORIAM AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Thomas Cole, *A View near Tivoli (Morning)*, 1832, oil on canvas. Metropolitan Museum of Art, (detail)

This volume is dedicated to the memory of Christopher M.S. Johns (1955-2022), dear friend, colleague and co-editor, in honour of his pioneering academic spirit and his profound contribution to the project *American Latium: American Artists and Travelers in and around Rome in the Age of the Grand Tour*.

American Latium: American Artists and Travelers in and around Rome in the Age of the Grand Tour originated as a research project spearheaded by Karin Wolfe (British School at Rome), together with Christopher M.S. Johns (Vanderbilt University) and Tommaso Manfredi (Università Mediterranea di Reggio Calabria), and was introduced as a session for discussion at the 46th American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Annual Meeting (Los Angeles, 21 March 2015). The premise for the project was based on the remarkable cross-cultural exchange between early American travelers to Latium and the Europeans and European culture they encountered, and the resultant export of Italian culture to America and the Italian artists who traveled to America in search of artistic success. Ongoing research and interest in the subject of *American Latium* led to an international conference that was hosted in Rome at the Centro Studi Americani, Palazzo Mattei di Giove (7-8 June 2018) and that was sponsored by the Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, Rome, with the kind collaboration of the former General Secretary of the Accademia, Francesco Moschini.

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Tommaso Manfredi and Karin Wolfe



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This volume brings together the proceedings presented at the international conference *American Latium: American Artists and Travelers in and around Rome in the Age of the Grand Tour*, sponsored by the Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, and hosted by the Centro Studi Americani in Rome on the 7-8 June 2018, convened by Christopher M.S. Johns, Tommaso Manfredi and Karin Wolfe. The premise of the conference was to examine the concept of cultural exchange between America and Rome and its surrounding territory not as a bilateral transfer of culture, but rather as an entangled and reciprocal history of cultural transmission, including the importance of London with its powerful art academies as an intermediate destination for Americans making their way to the continent. Travel to Rome engaged American artists, collectors, scientists, writers and diplomats in dialogue with a network of European artists, intellectuals and statesmen. The remarkable degree of cosmopolitanism found in Rome signalled its importance not simply as a cultural destination, but as a place of experiment and creativity for travelers of differing nationalities who gathered there – a place where ancient history and tradition was cross-pollinated with the experience of the modern.

Divided into three parts: *The American Grand Tour: From Old Masters to the New World*; *American Latium: Sites and Itineraries in and around Rome*; *Americans and the Artistic Culture of Rome: Toward an American Art*, the book addresses the pioneering origins of the artistic relations between America, Rome and its environs from the eighteenth century up until 1870. Interdisciplinary in nature, these proceedings present new, and at times unexpected, research on the experience of reciprocal cultural exchange.