

Review

Reviewed Work(s): *La Galleria Palatina e gli Appartamenti Reali di Palazzo Pitti. Catalogo dei dipinti* by Marco Chiarini and Serena Padovani

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alleged memoir is hardly a work of fiction. An extensive chronological survey of Bandinelli's career (pp.xv–xxiii) contains a few notable errors, such as the untethered assertion (p.xv) that in 1516 an *Olympus* was engraved by Agostino Veneziano, and it is indeed remarkable that such a survey confirms (and hardly alters) the trajectory of Bandinelli's career as it has been understood for the last forty years or so. Of three appendices the second (pp.895–909) is the most welcome, for it is the first publication of the manuscript of Bandinelli's second treatise on drawing, the *Libro del Disegno*, which Waldman unearthed in the Biblioteca Moreniana, Florence. Finally the reader will be warned by the 'List of Works Cited in Abbreviated Form in the Notes' (pp.927–35), which does not contain the name Ulrich Middeldorf, that in the present instance Waldman's goals were primarily historiographic and not historical: he is to be abundantly congratulated for a magnificent accomplishment.

Das römische Reiseskizzenbuch des Florentiners Giovanni Battista Naldini 1560/61. By Christel Thiem. 192 pp. incl. 10 col. pls. + 130 b. & w. ills. (Deutscher Kunstverlag, Munich and Berlin, 2002), €49.80. ISBN 3-422-06395-1.

Reviewed by ALESSANDRO CECCHI
Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence

FOR BATTISTA NALDINI, then aged twenty-three, the eight-month period he spent in Rome between late September 1560 and May 1561 was one of intense and fruitful activity, as Giorgio Vasari and Vincenzo Borghini, among others, had predicted. Naldini had stayed too long in Pontormo's orbit in Florence, and Borghini, *spedalingo* (governor) of the Ospedale degli Innocenti and the young artist's protector, entrusted him in Rome to the care of Marco da Faenza.

Various drawings testify to Naldini's productivity at this time, most in collections outside Italy; they are mainly drawn with an irregular, hard line, with additions in pen or, more rarely, red chalk, later Naldini's favourite medium, while marginal notes in the artist's unmistakable handwriting identify the subject; they are already known to scholars thanks to the work of Pini and Milanesi.¹

Christel Thiem, for many years a student of Naldini's graphic work, has now collected together the artist's miscellaneous drawings, the '*disiecta membra*' of a notebook which documents the wide scope of the Florentine artist's interests on his first visit to Rome. The earliest drawings date from a sojourn in Pisa; there follow panoramic views of Rome, drawings of monuments and of the principal palaces of ancient and modern Rome, from the Colosseum to the arch of Septimius Severus, from the Cortile del Belvedere to the Villa Farnesina or Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne. Thiem rightly attributes to Naldini a view of the Colosseum in pen (National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh; inv. no.D992A, recto);

another view in Christ Church Picture Gallery, Oxford (inv. no.0809), is published as the work of an anonymous mid-sixteenth-century artist, but in fact its style and calligraphy suggest that it can be added to the many Roman drawings by Naldini in that collection.

Giovanni Antonio Dosio, a Florentine artist four years older than Naldini, was in Rome at the same time, and it seems likely that he stimulated the younger artist's interest in classical architecture. He, too, filled a notebook with views of Rome, and his so-called '*Libro delle Antichità*' may contain some sheets that can be attributed to Naldini.² In fact, for some of his drawings Battista seems to have had access to works by Dosio, so much so that his *View of the Arch of Septimius Severus* in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (inv. no.11031, recto), seems to be based on Dosio's at the Uffizi, Florence (inv. no.2567A); the same is true of his *View of the Vatican obelisk* (Uffizi, inv. no.7516F, verso) which is taken from Dosio's drawing in the same collection (inv. no.2335A). Naldini also devoted himself assiduously to copying reliefs on sarcophagi in private collections and among the ruins; many appear in this book, the majority from Christ Church, and others were drawn from the Alexander Krater, now in the Museo di Villa Torlonia (nos.18–20), and from reliefs now at the Villa Borghese, the Uffizi and the British Museum (nos.21–26). He was not attracted exclusively to antique art during his fecund Roman sojourn; many of his drawings, collected in one chapter of the book, are of the 'modern' buildings that embellished Rome at that date, some still under construction, such as the unfinished Portone di S. Spirito by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger or the Cortile del Belvedere, which was also drawn by Dosio, but from a different angle, almost an aerial view (Uffizi, inv. no.2559A). The art of Raphael and his school formed another magnetic attraction for painters visiting Rome, and in Naldini's notebook we find his careful copies in pen of the Vatican loggia, the tapestries for the Sistine Chapel and the façades painted by Polidoro da Caravaggio.

In an appendix, brief chapters are dedicated to particular aspects of Naldini's creative drawing process, to his habit of copying – also practised by his master Pontormo – in particular copies after prints by Dürer (it is interesting to note that he also made drawings of prints after Parmigianino, some of which are in the Uffizi); another chapter is dedicated to the more conventional studies from life in red chalk dating from his mature years. The last drawing in the book, in Copenhagen, shows three studies of models from life which Naldini, in his usual manner, combined with other figures to create the elegant mythological fantasy *Apollo and the Muses* (Museo Borgogna, Vercelli), already a retardataire and academic exercise in the late Florentine Mannerist style.

¹ *La scrittura di artisti italiani (sec. XIV–XVII) riprodotta con la fotografia da Carlo Pini e corredata di notizie da Gaetano Milanesi*, Florence 1876, III, no.218.

² G.A. Dosio: *Roma antica e i disegni di architettura agli Uffizi/Giovanni Antonio Dossi*, ed. F. Borsi, Rome 1976.

La Galleria Palatina e gli Appartamenti Reali di Palazzo Pitti. Catalogo dei dipinti. Edited by Marco Chiarini and Serena Padovani. Vol.I: 310 pp. incl. 252 col. pls. + 39 b. & w. ills.; Vol.II: 556 pp. with 966 b. & w. ills. (Soprintendenza Speciale per il Polo Museale Fiorentino and Centro Di, Florence, 2003), €90 each. ISBN 88-7038-401-2 (I); 88-7038-402-0 (II).

Reviewed by ERIKA LANGMUIR

OF THE WORLD'S great picture galleries, the Palatine in the Pitti Palace, Florence, is perhaps the most baffling: a historicist hall of mirrors. Were it generally available, this lavish publication – volume I tracing the formation of the gallery and, school by school, the collections; volume II cataloguing all 947 easel paintings in the palace – might dispel visitors' bewilderment. A much needed scholarly corrective to the guidebooks, the publication is a worthy tribute to Florentine *ingegno*.

In contrast to the Uffizi, its openly didactic 'pendant', the Palatine Gallery appears to enshrine authentic period displays of pictures accumulated here by Medici rulers from 1549 – when Cosimo I's wife, Eleonora di Toledo, bought this more salubrious family residence across the Arno from the Palazzo Vecchio – to the death in 1737 of the last Medici Grand Duke, Giovan Gastone, and in 1743 of his sister Anna Maria Luisa, who bequeathed the family's art works to the city. In luxuriously part-furnished rooms, paintings, assorted by shape and size, hang cheek by jowl in beautiful bespoke frames, forming patterns from dado to cornice, an arrangement that bemuses modern viewers wary of 'mere decoration' (planned new lighting will minimise the purely physical problems of visibility). But although this hang reflects the taste of one of the greatest Medici collectors, Grand Prince Ferdinand (1663–1713), today's Palatine Gallery is a late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century creation of his dynasty's foreign successors, the Habsburg-Lorraine.

Under the aegis of this family, art works acquired by seven successive Medici grand dukes and their wives and siblings, originally accommodated in separate quarters in the palace and other residences, were amalgamated and redeployed. The public gallery opened in 1834 by concession of Leopold II Habsburg-Lorraine had thus lost the integrity of ensembles shaped by individual inclination. This can best be assessed in the former grand-ducal apartments, where Pietro da Cortona's sumptuous ceiling and coving decorations, designed in the late 1630s, exalted the princes' 'planetary' virtues. Two hundred years later these rooms became the iconographically incongruent and obtrusive setting for important sixteenth- and seventeenth-century portraits, altarpieces, landscapes and mythological paintings gathered from other zones of the palace and elsewhere. The effect is magnificent, but to make sense of it one must attend either to the pictures, or the ceilings, or – as we learn in Serena Padovani's essay – to present-day curators' proud restoration of

nineteenth-century versions of Baroque practices of display.

Although focused on the paintings and gallery, these two volumes enable readers to reconstruct the preferences and strategies of individual Medici collectors, but also pinpoint contributions by others. In 1631, Ferdinand II's wife, Vittoria della Rovere, transferred to Florence the bulk of the collections inherited from her father, the Duke of Urbino, including one of the Palatine's greatest treasures, 'quella donna che ha la veste azzurra', for which Francesco Maria I della Rovere had chivvied Titian in 1536. *La bella's* stupendous rival, Raphael's *Donna velata*, entered the Pitti in 1621, having reverted to the crown with the estate of an extinct Florentine family. Rubens's grisaille of *The three Graces* was in 1671 sent as a gift to Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici by a broadminded papal nuncio. After the Napoleonic interlude (1799–1815), Fra Bartolomeo's looted *Salvator Mundi* returned to Florence from Paris transferred from panel to canvas. The collection, now closed, has been enriched and depleted, as recently as 1952, by transfers from and to the Uffizi.

The copious historic and technical information published here will generate, it is promised, a series of even more searching schools catalogues. One hopes it may eventually also be mined for works addressed to the general public, not all Italian-readers, who deserve to understand better, and thus enjoy more, the riches of Florence's 'other' gallery.

Rembrandt: Portraits in Print. By Stephanie Dickey. 366 pp. with 178 b. & w. ills. (John Benjamins Publishing Co., Amsterdam and Philadelphia, 2004), €180/\$216. ISBN 90-272-5339-0.

Reviewed by CHRISTOPHER WHITE

ALTHOUGH RELATIVELY FEW in number – seventeen out of an *œuvre* of about 350 – Rembrandt's portrait prints are, in terms of both technique and interpretation, among his most original works in the medium. They are distinct from his painted portraits, since almost invariably there is a personal connection between artist and sitter, often acknowledged by a more expansive setting. Apart from an excellent exhibition held at the Rembrandthuis in Amsterdam in 1986–87, they have never been treated separately. This situation has now been admirably remedied by Stephanie Dickey's exhaustive study. Developed from her thesis of ten years ago, the book is meticulously researched and well illustrated with a wide range of comparative material.

As is appropriate, Dickey pays much attention to the sitters and their careers. Since Rembrandt's sitters were varied in their occupation, this leads to a wide examination of cultural life in Amsterdam, such as the different beliefs – Reformed, Remonstrant and the Waterlander faction of the Mennonites – of the three preachers he portrayed early in his

career. The portrait of Jan Wtenbogaert, the Receiver-General, a painting popularly known as the *Goldweiger*, attracts an entire chapter, which concludes that he is represented not as a miser, as traditionally supposed, but as a virtuous steward of public funds. Later sitters are even more varied in background. In the case of the apothecary and print collector Abraham Francen, depicted in 'his' study, Dickey suggests that his setting may rather be an idealised image suitable for a gentleman-connoisseur than his home in the Jordaan.

When we come to Rembrandt's last actual sitter, Lieven van Coppenol, Dickey charitably does her best to rescue his reputation as a mad, old, handwriting bore, who spent much of his time poet-bothering. (In 1661 Coppenol printed a collection of no less than twenty-seven *lofdichten* about various portraits of himself.) That he was, as the author reveals, a persistent womaniser who was censured for his regular brothel-visiting, certainly proves he had other things on his mind. Even so I cannot repress the thought that he considered his calligraphy, as practised on some impressions of Rembrandt's large portrait, at least equal to the art of its creator.

The danger of writing about portraits (not entirely avoided here, especially since facts and theories come so thick and fast) is that at times one loses sight of the artist and his work beneath the wealth of biographical details, illuminating in themselves though they may be. But if the reader does occasionally become bemused by so much information and lateral thinking, he or she is firmly brought back by the author to the ultimate purpose of the book: an examination of the prints themselves. And it is evident that she has thought long and hard about them, expressing her sometimes differing views clearly and modestly.

In evaluating Rembrandt's portraits, Dickey is commendably wide in her choice of comparisons with the work of other artists, so that one gets more than a hint of the history of Dutch printed portraits of the period. She notes that, unlike some of his contemporaries, Rembrandt avoided identifying the books or pages of text he introduced in some of the portraits. Their interpretation rests solely on the image. There is a good section on Jan Lievens as a rival to Rembrandt after the former had returned to Holland in 1644 and actively engaged in portraiture. Whatever we may think of their relative artistic merits, there is no doubt, as the number of poetic tributes indicates, that at the time Lievens had a higher reputation.

The verses connected with Rembrandt's printed portraits, usefully collected together in an appendix at the end of the volume, are not exactly the cream of seventeenth-century Dutch poetry; much of it is 'poetic verbiage', to use Dickey's apt description, frequently repetitive in its insistence on the primacy of word over image, which was often dashed off to oblige a friend or regarded as a minor commission to fill an odd moment. But as historical evidence it has a value that has not been explored in such depth before.

Having created such a rounded image of Rembrandt's sitters, Dickey goes one stage further by trying to connect the artist with some of the various intellectual worlds they represent. On the basis of the identity of some of his later sitters, as well as his *Self-portrait* of 1648, for example, she sees the artist's 'immersion in the literary community of the "Dutch Parnassus"'. Whether a commission, even one with a personal element, remains just that, or indicates a more intimate and prolonged association with the sitter, must, without evidence, remain an open question. However well Dickey argues her case, my own sense is that Rembrandt remains more detached than she allows.

Spanish Master Drawings from Dutch Public Collections. By Sandra Tatsakis with contributions by Mark A. Rogán. 128 pp. incl. 37 col. pls. + 50 b. & w. ills. (NAi Publishers, Rotterdam, 2004), €30. ISBN 90-5662-323-0.

Reviewed by MARK MCDONALD

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THERE EXISTS NO comprehensive assessment of the development of Spanish drawing up to the eighteenth century that takes into account matters of function as well as style. This is largely because of the persistent and erroneous assumption that Spanish artists did not draw or that it was a sporadic and incidental practice.¹ A look through the major collections in Spain quickly discredits this notion, as do the numbers of Spanish drawings in collections outside Spain.² The attitude has been compounded by the belief that Spanish artists preferred to work directly on canvas – which has some basis in truth – but it is more accurate to state that there was not the same appreciation of drawings during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Spain as elsewhere and many of those made have not survived. Furthermore, Spanish drawings can often be found in the 'Anonymous' boxes within collections and under similar categories in sale catalogues. What does survive, however, clearly indicates that drawing was central to artistic practice in Spain and this is becoming increasingly apparent through recent publications.³

The number of Spanish drawings in Dutch public collections is small and the majority in this catalogue are from the seventeenth century, the most challenging period in terms of identifying the hands responsible for them. The introductory essay examines the critical fortunes of Spanish drawings, placing them within a context of graphic production and presents a useful summary of why so few, relative to other schools, have survived. Although the belief that Spanish artists did not draw is refuted, not enough evidence to support this is presented and the reader is left wanting a more sustained discussion rather than an abundance of signposts.

The second part of the essay considers the function of drawing in Spain but contradicts