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A SELECTION OF WORKS



Northern European Artist working in Rome

1590–1610

View of St. Peter's Square During a Papal Blessing

Tempera on parchment glued on panel, 90 x 140 mm.

This rare and precious parchment shows a view of old St. Peter's Square as it was before the changes made by Carlo Maderno in the early years of the 17th century for the construction of the new basilica and its façade.

The pope, wearing the papal vestments and the triple tiara, is shown on the gestatorial chair with its red canopy in the "Benediction Loggia". He is looking out and raising his right arm in blessing, surrounded by cardinals and acolytes and witnessed by a crowd of people standing in the square.

In the centre we see an armed guard, a member of the "*Guardia dei Cavalleggeri*" or "*Cavalieri di Guardia di Nostro Signore*", the corps entrusted with the pope's protection, wearing steel armour and a purple cloak ("*sago*"), mounted on a black horse and brandishing a lance with a yellow and blue pennant.

Thus, the parchment depicts the apostolic blessing "*Urbi et Orbi*" traditionally imparted by the pope from the Benediction Loggia in St. Peter's after his coronation or on Maundy Thursday, Easter Sunday or the feast of Saints Peter and Paul. A prototype for comparison purposes is the celebrated engraving by Étienne Dupérac, printed by Bernardo Faletti and dateable to 1567, depicting a blessing of Pope Pius V in St. Peter's Square (fig. 1), updated by Antoine Lafréry in the early 1570s (fig. 2) and by Ambrogio Brambilla a decade later.



fig. 1. E. Duperac, *Blessing of Pope Pius V in St. Peter's Square* 1567, engraving

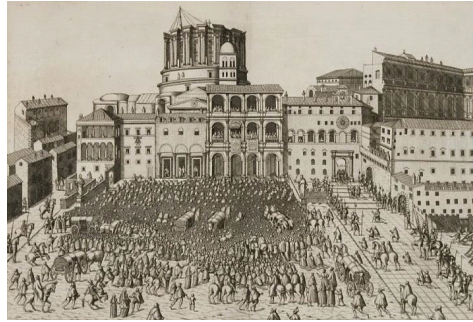


fig. 2. A. Lafréry, *Papal Blessing in St. Peter's Square* 1571-2, engraving

If we examine these in detail, we can make a fairly accurately guess as to our own parchment's date. The absence of the church's definitive façade, which was constructed to a design by Carlo Maderno between 1607 and 1612, and the even more relevant presence of the bell tower on the "Palazzo dell'Arciprete" on the left and of the 15th century "Benediction Loggia", both of which were demolished starting in 1610, allow us to date our parchment to no later than that year.

By the same token, it cannot be dated earlier than 1586, the year in which Domenico Fontana moved the obelisk into the square by order of Pope Sixtus V; but there is another element which can reduce that "window" even further. The presence of the main dome and two minor domes shifts the earliest possible date forward to 1590, when Giacomo della Porta completed Michelangelo's gigantic project after labouring for three whole years.

Thus the square is depicted as it looked between 1590 and 1610 and is as valuable from a documentary standpoint as the views shown in an unsigned drawing in the Herzog August Bibliothek in Wolfenbüttel (fig. 3) and a drawing attributed to Federico Zuccari and dated 1603 now in the Getty Museum (fig. 4).



fig. 3. Anonymous artist, *View of St. Peter's Square*, first decade of the 17th century, drawing, Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek



fig. 4, F. Zuccari, *View of St. Peter's Square*, c. 1603, drawing, Los Angeles, The J. Paul Getty Museum

The characteristics of the parchment – without margins and mounted on a probably coeval wooden tablet – together with the miniaturism pervading the view suggest that it was originally intended for use as the frontal decoration for the drawer of a cabinet, probably a "monettiere" or coin cabinet, known as a "studiolo" in Rome at the turn of the 16th century.

It is thus highly likely that our parchment was the work of a Northern Master working in Rome, where workshops run by painters from France and Flanders were busily introducing new techniques and categories to the papal capital, constantly interacting with the output of local craftsmen specialised in the production of such cabinets. An outstanding Flemish artist in this field was Jan van Santen, known as 'Giovanni degli Studioli', who devoted the early part of his career to this kind of work before going on to become the Borghese family's 'in-house' architect. A very similar view to ours painted in oil by Louis de Caulery (Caulery vers 1580? – Anvers 1621) preserved in Petit Palais de Paris, meticulously accurate yet painted with rapid, cursive brush strokes, echoes early 17th century Flemish examples modelled on the work of Antonio Tempesta and Paul Bril, but the hand could belong to an Italian or Northern European artist working in one of these workshops. In any event, we should consider it an unfinished work and thus it may never have reached its destination, being reused instead as a cabinet picture. The inscription on the stair around the obelisk remains a mystery, although investigation prior to the parchment's restoration has revealed that it was added at a later date. The long and currently indecipherable acronym is likely to refer to an owner, or else to an artist who reused it for a different decorative purpose. The presence of a 'W' certainly points to an individual from northern Europe, and a historical and topographical interpretation of the subject depicted - also considering the still '16th century' style of the figures' costumes - suggests that the parchment was produced at the turn of the 16th century.



Ippolito CAFFI

Belluno, 1809 – Battle of Lissa, 1866

Preparations for the departure of the Barberian horses in Piazza del Popolo. Carnival of Rome.

Pencil, ink and watercolor on paper, 190 x 226.5 mm

Signed lower right 'Caffi'

The rediscovery of this very rare watercolour by Ippolito Caffi shows a little-known episode of the preparations immediately preceding the departure of the 'Barberian' horses in Piazza del Popolo in Rome.

The race was part of the celebrations of the Carnival of Papal Rome: a group of ten to twelve horses without a jockey ran along the Corso from Piazza del Popolo (the *mossa*) to Piazza Venezia (the *ripresa*). The event has been depicted by countless painters: from Géricault to Horace Vernet from Roger to Bartolomeo Pinelli and immortalized by the pens of countless illustrious writers: from Goethe to Hans Christian Andersen from Zola to Dumas in a famous chapter of 'The Count of Monte Cristo'. All the Roman people flocked and crowded along the edges of the Corso, while the wealthy foreigners who flocked to Rome for the occasion rented balconies or windows of the patrician buildings that overlooked the street. A special semi-circular stand was set up in Piazza del Popolo in front of the obelisk.

While, as we said, the various phases of the race have been widely described and depicted, this version by Caffi is completely unpublished, most likely part of a series of watercolours of which this gallery has had two other examples painted with the same technique and same dimensions (the *mossa* and the *corsa*). Here is shown one of the moments preceding the start: a carriage is depicted carrying Swiss guards dressed in their work costumes, who have evidently just helped clear the street from carriages and people. In the foreground it can be seen part of the stands already crowded with cheering spectators while in the background we can glimpse the carriages

trotting towards the square. Some figures in the foreground on a carriage and on foot are to be identified as the race judges ready for the starting operations.

Just outlined on the right in pencil are two gendarmes.

It remains incredible how masterfully and immediately Ippolito Caffi managed to make us participate in the energy and anticipation of this extraordinary event that was the Roman Carnival.



Uniformi di Guardie Svizzere papali



Caffi, *La mossa*, olio su tela, cm 30 x 42; coll. Privata

Ippolito CAFFI (BELLUNO, 1809 – Battle of Lissa, 1866)

Discovering a talent for drawing at a very early age, Ippolito Caffi began studying art in his native city of Belluno, later moving to Padua to pursue his studies in the field of painting. He completed his artistic training at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Venice between 1827 and 1832, studying perspective under Tranquillo Orsi (1771–1844) and figure drawing under Teodoro Matteini (1754–1831). During his time in Venice, he fell under the spell of the 18th century *vedutisti* in general and of Canaletto in particular.

Caffi moved to Rome in 1832, joining the workshop of his cousin, the "historical" painter Pietro Paoletti (1801–47), and publishing the first edition of his *Lezioni di prospettiva pratica* in 1835. In 1837 he painted *Carnival in Rome: The Feast of the Little Candles* which was to become his best-known painting and was revisited on fully forty-two occasions. After travelling to Trieste, Venice and Padua, where he painted four pictures for the Caffè Pedrocchi, Caffi was back in Rome by 1843.

His travels in the Middle East were to have a major impact on his art: driven by a desire not only to see new places but also to discover little-known peoples and cultures considered different from those in Europe, Caffi sailed from the port of Naples on 5 September 1843 on a journey which was to coincide with the most fertile and promising period in his entire career. The clear, bright light and perfect geometry in his views of Athens gives way to more liquid images shrouded in a golden atmosphere, such as those that he painted in Constantinople – for example his splendid *View of the Sweet Waters of Europe* (1843) –, and to the burning light and lyricism of the pictures that he was to paint in Egypt, including *The Simoon Wind in the Desert* and the *Isthmus of Suez* (1844). Caffi went on to visit Jerusalem (*A View of the Mount of Olives*), Ephesus, Laodicea and Hierapolis, which he captured in a masterpiece swathed in a softly magical and dreamlike light.

He painted in Rome from 1844 to 1848, also showing his work at the Mostra dei Cultori e Amatori di Belle Arti. He remained in Venice in 1848 and '49 to fight against Austria until the city capitulated. Outlawed, he fled to Genoa, only returning to Rome in 1855 and residing there until 1858. He was in Venice from 1858 to 1860, remaining in the city with only a few short breaks until the fateful year of 1866, when he decided to embark as an interpreter on the flagship *Re d'Italia* and took part in the Battle of Lissa. His plan was to record the bloody naval battle from close quarters, but tragically he lost his life when the flagship was sunk.¹

¹ The following works are still of vital importance for a study of the painter's life and art: *Vedute Romane di Ippolito Caffi*, Rome, Palazzo delle Esposizioni, June – July 1959, Rome 1959; G. AVON CAFFI, *Ippolito Caffi 1809 - 1866*, Venice 1967; M. PITTALUGA, *Il pittore Ippolito Caffi*, Vicenza 1971; G. PEROCCO, *Ippolito Caffi 1809 - 1866. Raccolta di 154 dipinti di proprietà del Museo d'arte moderna Cà Pesaro - Venezia*, Venice 1979; *Ippolito Caffi. Luci del Mediterraneo*, Belluno, Palazzo Crepadona, 1 October 2005 – 22 January 2006, Rome, Palazzo Braschi, 15 February – 2 May 2006, exhibition catalogue edited by A. SCARPA, Milan, 2005. For Caffi the orientalist see *Ippolito Caffi - Viaggio in Oriente - 1843/1844*, Mestre Istituto di Cultura "S. Maria delle Grazie", 3 July – 15 September 1988, catalogue of the exhibition curated by F. SCOTTON, Venice 1988 and *Ippolito Caffi: dipinti di viaggio tra Italia e Oriente*, Trieste, Museo Storico del Castello di Miramare, 8 July – 8 December 2015, exhibition catalogue edited by A. SCARPA, Marsilio, 2015.



Jean Antoine CONSTANTIN D'AIX

Marseille, 1756 – Aix-en-Provence, 1844

The tower of Paolo III Farnese in Rome

Oil on canvas, cm 60,5 x 48,8

PROVENANCE : COLLECTION Thierry de Chirée, Avignon

The work of Constantin D'Aix, although undated, belongs to the Roman period of the artist, because it maintains the bucolic and picturesque atmosphere of many of his landscapes. The diffuse light and lush vegetation are mixed here cleverly with both the architectural element with the human one.

The upper part of the composition is dominated by the tower of Pope Paul III Farnese on the Capitoline Hill, one of the many monuments of the 'disappeared Rome'.

It was built on the Capitol by the pope from which it takes its name, in the years 1534-1542 by the architect Jacopo Melenghino: the tower observatory was the tallest building in Rome, after the Senatorial Palace.

Between 1885 and 1888, to erect the "Vittoriano", there were many evictions and demolitions in the area adjacent to the Capitol: they were demolished (in addition to the tower depicted in the painting), the Arch S. Marco (the overpass connecting with "Palazzo Venezia"), the three cloisters of the convent of Aracoeli, and all the other buildings present on the hill.

The painting comes from the collection of Thierry and Christine de Chirée, one of the richest and most prestigious private collections in France, where the works of Constantin D'Aix occupy a prominent place: in fact, there were in the collection numerous drawings and oil paintings of the artist, such as the one presented here.

Prestigious was also the place in which the collection was presented: the "Monastery of the Visitation" in Avignon, purchased by the owners to make it their home in 1993, by the sisters of the Blessed Sacrament Which, following the sale of other two monasteries, they decided to sell the complex. The Chapel of the Visitation and the convent buildings were classified 'Historical Monuments' in 1932 and 1988. After the purchase by Thierry and Christine major works were executed, culminating with the restoration of the great library and the west gallery of the cloister.

The collecting passion of Thierry de Chirée began almost by chance in 1979 with the purchase of a design at one of the many galleries in Paris. Key figures in the development of the collection were: the friend Marcel Puech (another superfine collector), which was an important guide for the amateur from the start; Turquin Eric, whose advice persuaded Thierry to add paintings to his collection, and finally Jean Dorlhac, who made the collection enriched with rare objects, sculptures and antique furniture.

Jean-Antoine Constantin, better known by the name of Constantin D'Aix, was a talented watercolour painter and engraver, and is considered one of the fathers of modern Provençal painting.

He was born in 1756 in the district of Louviere, near the town of Bonneveine, and after a short apprenticeship at the porcelain factory of Joseph-Gaspard Robert, studied at "Academy of Painting and Sculpture" in Marseille, where he had the opportunity to follow courses of *David de Marseille*, *Jean-Joseph Kapeller* and *Jean-Baptiste Giry*.

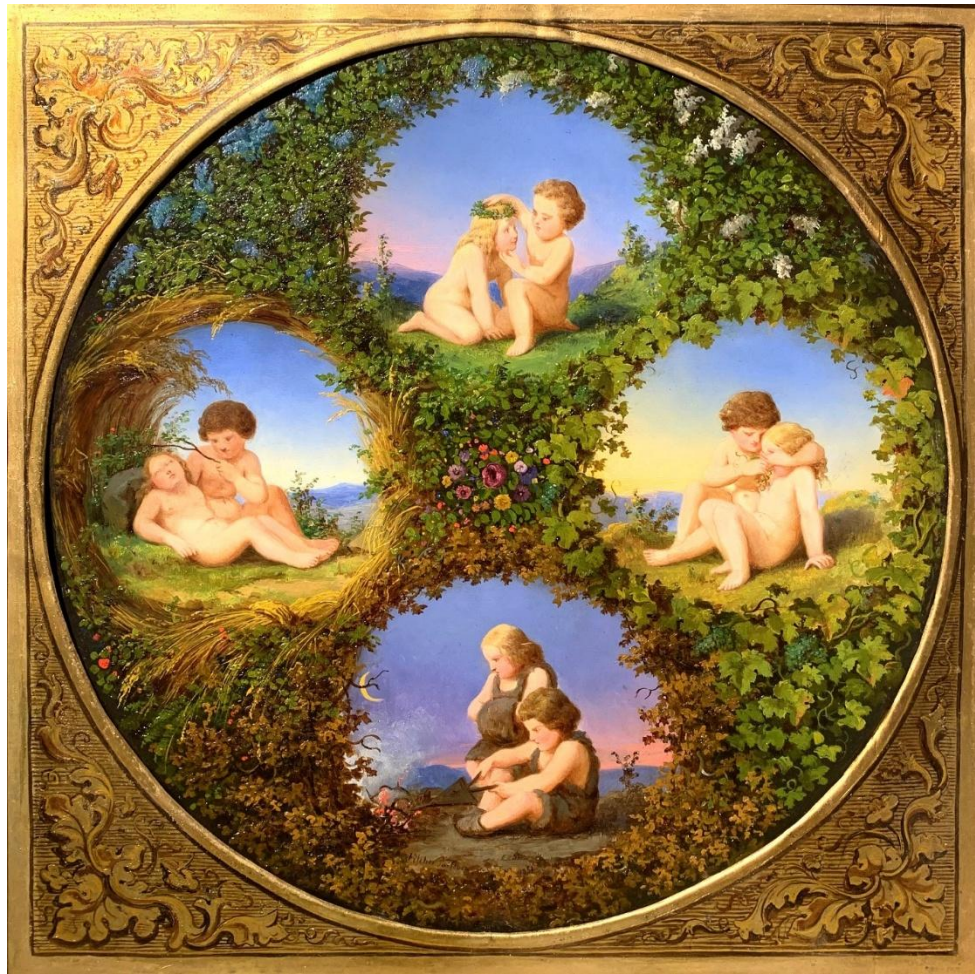
In 1773 he moved to Aix, where some patrons, fascinated by his art, offered him a training stay in Rome. Here, where he remains for only three years due to a virus that will force him to return to his native land, he completed his artistic education under the guide of Joseph Vien.

The years spent in the 'Eternal City' were very important for his life. The beauty of the landscapes, the light of the city, the quiet of the Roman countryside represented an inexhaustible source of inspiration.

In France he will apply one-self to painting and teaching, living and working primarily in Aix-en-Provence, where he will conduct between 1786 and 1792 the school of art.

Although his career has been continually hampered by health problems and economic difficulties, he arrived at the age of 88 years, leaving many works, almost all made in the second part of his life (among prizes, there is the prestigious Gold Medal won in 1817 at the Paris Exposition).

So, the painter François Marius Granet, one of his students, speaks to his colleague Augustine de Forbin: *"He will always be our teacher. We are not worthy even to tie his shoelaces."*



Theodor FISCHER-POISSON

Schwerin (Germany) 1817 – 1873

Putti with the Four Seasons

Oil on zinc, 35.5 x 35.5 cm.

Signed and dated lower center: *Fischer Poisson 1851*

This refined and delicate work depicts the allegorical theme of the Four Seasons, each personified by pairs of putti, male and female.

Each season is framed by garlands composed of flowers and natural elements typical of the represented period: Summer, on the left, is surrounded by ears of wheat; Spring, at the top, is adorned with lilac flowers; Autumn, on the right, is accompanied by vine shoots and clusters of grapes; Winter, at the bottom, shows two children warming themselves in front of a small fire.

The work is enhanced by a circular painted passe-partout with elegant gold arabesque motifs, also executed on a zinc plate, which lends further harmony and refinement to the composition.

Theodor Fischer-Poisson (Schwerin 1817 – 1873) studied at the Dresden Academy; he mainly painted religious works for churches in Mecklenburg as well as portraits. He executed numerous paintings for the Grand Ducal Palace of Schwerin and for the Great Hall of the University of Rostock.



Carl Wilhelm GÖTZLOFF

Dresden, 1799 – Naples, 1866

The Battles of Catania, April 6, 1849

Oil on canvas laid down on cardboard, 28.5 x 40 cm.

Provenance: Swiss private collection

In this rare painting, the German artist Carl Wilhelm Götzloff depicts a bloody scene from the revolutionary uprisings that shook Catania in April 1849, in which the artist himself took part, following the 4th Swiss Regiment (two other canvases by Götzloff on the siege of Catania are preserved in Bern).

During Holy Week of 1849, on Good Friday, April 6, Catania was the theater of the brutal repression carried out by the Bourbon troops, supported by the regiment of Swiss militias from Bern. The rebels' resistance against the monarchy of the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies was heroic.

Catania was ruthlessly punished for its participation in the Sicilian federal and Risorgimento revolution of 1848–49: the population mounted desperate resistance, barricading every street and defending house by house against the royal Neapolitan troops commanded by General Antonio Filangieri, also supported by the navy, which heavily bombarded the city from the sea. The military commander of Catania, sent by Ruggero Settimo's provisional government, the Franco-Polish general Ludwik Mieroslawski, proved incapable and was overwhelmed by the efficient strategy of the enemy artillery.

In this work, the clash is rendered with vivid brutality by an artist who was himself an eyewitness to the fighting. The scene unfolds in the square beside the Cathedral, in front of the famous obelisk with the little elephant, the *Liotru*: a Bourbon contingent fires on the insurgents entrenched in the surrounding palaces, who in turn return fire from the windows. Numerous fallen figures lie lifeless on the pavement.

In the distance, at the end of the *Strada Reale* (today Via Vittorio Emanuele II), the glow of fires can be seen rising among the silhouettes of the two domes in the foreground, those of the Cathedral and the Church of the Badia di S. Agata.



Carl Wilhelm Götzloff, The Fire of Catania after the Conquest, oil on canvas, Bern, Museum

Carl Wilhelm Götzloff (Dresden, 1799 – Naples, 1866).

Between 1814 and 1821 Götzloff attended the Academy of Fine Arts in Dresden, where he trained alongside masters such as Johan Christian Dahl and Caspar David Friedrich. Dahl's views of Vesuvius in eruption exerted a powerful influence on the young painter's imagination, shaping his artistic development.

As early as 1820, at only nineteen, some of his works were exhibited at the Academy itself, attracting public attention. That same year he won a scholarship that enabled him to undertake a study trip through Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, as far as Rome. Further study trips in 1823 and 1824 took him to the Bay of Naples.

At the end of 1824 he followed Baron Karl Friedrich von Emich Üxküll-Gyllenband (1755–1832) to Sicily and Malta; the baron, an art collector, encouraged him to focus on Italian landscapes, which would become the central theme of his oeuvre. Üxküll-Gyllenband was Götzloff's first true patron, commissioning numerous Italian-themed works from him.

In 1825 the artist settled in Naples, where from 1826 he lived at No. 15 Vicoletto Vasto a Chiaia, sharing the same artistic circle as Anton van Pitloo, Giacinto Gigante, and Teodoro Duclère.

On April 1, 1835, he was appointed court painter by Ferdinand II of Bourbon, King of the Two Sicilies.

In 1848, due to the revolutionary uprisings that had shaken Europe and the kingdom, he moved with his family to Sorrento.

In 1849 he followed the 4th Bernese Regiment in the conquest of Catania, and in 1850 he returned to Naples, where he was struck by the grief of losing his eldest son, Hugo Richard.

In 1852 he was awarded the title of Knight of the Order of Leopold by the King of Belgium.

His hopes of returning to his homeland, however, were dashed in 1861, when the paintings he sent to an exhibition in Dresden found no buyers. His financial troubles deepened further when he was forced to pay ransom for the release of his son, kidnapped by bandits.

Carl Wilhelm Götzloff died in poverty in Naples on January 18, 1866.



Hieronymus HESS

Basel, (Switzerland) 1799–1850

View of the so-called 'Arco Oscuro', Rome

Pencil on paper, 280 x 390 mm.

Signed lower left: *Hess fecit*; dated lower left: *Rome 1831*

Inscribed lower center: *St. Pierre prise sous la Rue dell'Arco Oscuro*

Our drawing depicts the *Via dell'Arco Oscuro* taken from the upper part of the Parioli Hills.

This was a path that started from the Via Flaminia and skirted Villa Giulia, passing under an arch (hence the name), dug into the hill with a little Marian chapel inside. The road climbed towards the Parioli and led to the catacombs of San Valentino.

The Parioli Hills were open countryside until the beginning of the 20th century, from the top of the hill you could admire a wonderful view of the Basilica of San Pietro and the Tiber Valley.



J.G.von Dillis, *Arco Oscuro*, 1818

Hieronymus Hess was born on April 15, 1799 in Basel.

At the age of 18, he began working at the art publishing house Birmann & Huber, copying and coloring the works of the painter Peter Birmann (1758-1844). At Birmann & Huber Hess met the Neapolitan art dealer and publisher C.T. Müller who offered him to work for his firm in Naples; Hess therefore went to Naples in 1819 and worked for Müller until 1820. In the Neapolitan city he came into contact with many artists, mainly Swiss.

Hess drew subjects of popular life which he then engraved on copper and colored by hand. He then stayed in Rome for two years, coming into contact with the group of 'Nazarene' painters; he met Philipp Veit (1793-1877), Friedrich Overbeck (1789-1869), Johann Christian Reinhart (1761-1847) and Joseph Anton Koch (1768-1839).

Two Roman works in particular have become well-known, the 'School of the Jews' (which he executed in several variations) and the 'Forced Sermon to the Jews' commissioned by Berthel Thorvaldsen.

He returned home via Siena, Florence, Bologna, Milan and arrived in Basel on 22 August 1823. During his three years in Basel, Hess dreamed of being able to go to Nuremberg Dürer's city, to further perfect his figure painting, and finally went there in 1826.

In 1828, after returning home, he got married and in 1831 he obtained a permanent position as a teacher at a drawing school in Basel, which he left shortly thereafter.

After a long illness, Hieronymus Hess died on June 8, 1850 at the age of only 51.

Hieronymus Hess left behind a wide and varied pictorial production: genre scenes, portraits, caricatures, poetic and anticlerical satires, allegories, historical paintings. He was a technically versatile artist, demonstrating great mastery in both drawings and prints, and especially in watercolors. What distinguished him most was his humor, his unique talent for satirical and caricatural representations of common people as well as the good bourgeoisie. His works are found in the Kupferstichkabinett of the Kunstmuseum in Basel as well as in private properties in Basel and in Europe.



H.Hess, *The Synagogue*, Courtesy Galleria Paolo Antonacci, Rome.



François (Franz) KEISERMANN

Yverdon (Switzerland), 1765 – Rome, 1833

View of Saint Peter's Square

Ink, lavis, watercolour and tempera on paper, 675 x 1043 mm.

Signed lower right. *F.Keisermann.f.Roma*

Inscribed by the artist on the left *verso*:

Vue Generale de la place de St Pierre / dessinée et peinte sur la nature par F.Keiserman artiste à Rome.

Inscribed by the artist on the right *verso* : *pour S.E.E. Monssieur le Duc de Berswick et d'Albe.*

In a gilded period frame.

This spectacular view of St. Peter's Square drawn and coloured by Franz Keisermann as he himself mentions '*sur la nature*' may well be considered one of the Swiss artist's most successful works. The perfect perspective of the square and the Bernini's colonnade is centered by the magnificent bulk of the basilica. The carefully drawn figures in the foreground maybe ascribed to the hand of Bartolomeo Pinelli (1781 -1835), who collaborated with the Swiss artist from 1803 to 1809.

Also embellishing the sheet is the dedication to the Duke of Berswick, descendant of a cadet branch of the King of England.

It is very likely that the Duke acquired our view from Keisermann himself during one of his first trips to Rome (1814-1815, 1815-1818).

Carlos Miguel FitzJames Stuart VII Duke of Berwick and XIV Duke of Alba (Madrid 1794 - Sion, Switzerland 1835), was the son of Jacob FitzJames Stuart V Duke of Berswick and Maria Teresa de Silva y Palafox.

Born a few days after the sudden death of his father, he first received the title of Duke of Berwick, inheriting that of Duke of Alba in 1802. Together with the title of Duke of Alba, he inherited also the one of Grand Duke of Spain.

On his father's side he descended from a branch of the House of Stuart, his ancestor, James FitzJames I Duke of Berwick being the illegitimate son of James II of England. He married the Sicilian Rosalia Ventimiglia (1798-1868), of the Princes of Grammonte by whom he had three children. He died on 7 October 1835 in Sion, Switzerland.

The young Duke's first trip to Italy is documented as early as 1814 in the company of his mother, to be followed by four more. In 1816, several views by artists active in Rome and contemporary with him are documented in his collection, including Huber, Granet, Verstappen and Giambattista Bassi, and is mentioned 'twelve magnificent views of Rome that he had requested from Franz Keisermann' among which ours can certainly be included.

Bibliography: *Viaggiatori spagnoli in Italia. I diari di viaggio di don Carlos Miguel VII duca di Berwick e XIV di Alba*; Beatrice Cacciotti in *Il turismo culturale in Italia tra tradizione e innovazione*. Atti del convegno, Rome 2003

Keiserman's clients were noblemen such as Prince Camillo Borghese, Prince Gustav of Sweden and the Russian prince Volkonskij. His most popular subjects were, amongst others, the Waterfalls of Tivoli, the countryside around the Colli Albani, ancient Rome, and the temples in Paestum; works that were praised and described in the artistic chronicles of the time.

He died in 1833, acknowledged, also by his contemporaries, as an artist of great stature. His adopted son, Charles François Knébel, the beneficiary of his last will and testament, inherited his art collections and his studio in Piazza di Spagna.



Charles-François KNÉBEL

La Sarraz (Switzerland), 1809 – Rome, 1877

View of Rome from Trinità dei Monti

Pencil and brown wash on paper, 206 × 257 mm.

Signed and dated lower right: *F. Knébel fecit Rom 1841*

Provenance: Paul Brame Collection (1898–1971), Paris

This view was drawn from the steps of the church of Trinità dei Monti.

On the left appears the Palazzo Zuccari, recognizable by its distinctive curved loggia supported by slender columns, still topped at the time by its original trapezoidal roof, later replaced with a modern one.

The eye is then led beyond a low building at the corner of Via Gregoriana, opening onto the left side of the city: in the foreground rises the imposing bulk of the Quirinal Palace, crowned by its slender tower. In the distance can be seen the Torre delle Milizie and, in the Colonna gardens, a characteristic umbrella pine.

Closer to the viewer dominates the drum of Sant'Andrea delle Fratte, flanked by Borromini's elegant bell tower. Further away, the dome of Sant'Agnese in Agone and the tower of the Capitoline can be discerned.

Charles-François Knébel, originally from the Canton of Vaud, arrived in Rome in 1822, invited by his cousin and fellow countryman Franz Keiserman (1765–1833). A few months later, Keiserman formally adopted the young artist. Their relationship, initially based on mutual respect and artistic collaboration, gradually deteriorated, and by around 1830 Knébel left their shared residence at Piazza di Spagna 31. At Keiserman's death, Knébel became his sole heir, inheriting not only a considerable fortune but also the valuable art collection he had assembled, which included an important group of works by Bartolomeo Pinelli. Returning to Piazza di Spagna with his wife, daughter, and young Achille Titus (1833–1898), Knébel sold the Pinelli collection in 1835 through a memorable public exhibition. Knébel's artistic career continued with success. He worked in his studio at Via Margutta 33 and took part in major European exhibitions, including those in London and Brussels. He favored views of the Roman landscape, capturing with sensitivity the surrounding countryside—Olevano, Tivoli, and the lakes of the Castelli Romani, Nemi and Albano. His reputation steadily grew, and his paintings were regularly shown at the *Società degli Amatori e Cultori di Belle Arti* in Rome. Knébel died in Rome on April 2, 1877. The family retained the Piazza di Spagna residence until 1909, when his daughter passed away. His Swiss relatives then sold the apartment but preserved a remarkable collection of drawings, paintings, and sketchbooks by Franz and Titus Knébel, now kept in the Château de La Sarraz, in the rooms known as the “Appartement Knébel.”



Ernst MEYER

Altona (Denmark), 1797 – Rome, 1861

The Public Scribe at the Portico of Octavia

Oil on canvas, 62 x 70 cm.

Bearing an exhibition number lower left: 552.

Autograph version of the celebrated painting preserved at the Thorvaldsen Museum in Copenhagen.

Ernst Meyer, of Jewish faith, deliberately chose the Portico of Octavia as the setting for this painting, making it the backdrop of his composition.

Erected in 147 B.C., rebuilt by Augustus in 27 B.C. and dedicated to his sister Octavia, this Roman monument—whose imposing remains stood in the heart of the Jewish Ghetto of Rome—held strong symbolic meaning. Meyer enriched it with other architectural elements, imaginatively rearranged, almost as if to create a theatrical stage set for his characters.

The central figure is the “public scribe,” a key figure in Roman society at a time when much of the population was illiterate. These scribes usually worked in nearby Piazza Montanara, now disappeared.

In the painting, he is shown at his desk, reading a letter to a young girl, probably a message from her beloved.

Around him unfolds a lively scene of popular life: an old woman spinning, a barber with his client, the inevitable friar, and a group of townsfolk drinking outside a tavern. Many of these characters were drawn from everyday life, yet foreign artists of the 19th century gladly placed them on their canvases, turning them into characteristic figures of Rome at that time.

Ernst Meyer arrived in Copenhagen in 1812 and became a pupil at the Academy of Fine Arts, where he won silver medals in 1815 and 1818. He spent a long stay in Munich from 1819 to 1824, then settled in Rome until 1841, returning there in 1852 and remaining until his death. He was buried in the Jewish cemetery.

He thus spent most of his life in Rome, where he was well known and well liked among both Danish and German artists. He exhibited regularly at the annual Copenhagen exhibition, and Thorvaldsen acquired several of his works. In Rome, Meyer lived first at Via di Porta Pinciana 41 and 37, then from 1840 at Via del Babuino 39, and finally at Via del Pozzetto 41. His studio was located at Villa Malta.

Meyer painted Italian landscapes, but he was particularly drawn to Roman folklore. His genre scenes of everyday life were highly appreciated by the public and led him to produce numerous replicas.



Jacob MORE

Edinburgh, 1740 – Rome, 1793

Vesuvius Erupting

Oil on canvas, 73 x 101 cm

Signed and dated at the bottom center: *J. M. fecit Roma 1782*

The comparison with the pictorial production of the Scottish painter Jacob More, naturalized in Rome, makes it possible to identify with absolute certainty the autograph initials and the date of execution inscribed on the painting. Among the many possible comparisons, the parallel with the large canvas depicting *Vesuvius in Eruption* (*The Last Days of Pompeii*) preserved at the National Galleries of Scotland in Edinburgh is particularly compelling (see J. Holloway, *Jacob More 1740–1793*, Edinburgh 1987, p. 28, pl. 11; cf. attachment no. 1).

The two paintings share the same viewpoint and composition, the distinctive rendering of eruptive materials, and even the peculiar *zigzagging* lightning bolts framing the column of magma. Most notably, they also share the characteristic thick strands of paint used to create the reds of the lava, the ripples of the waters, and the rugged surfaces of the rocks.

The peculiar tree trunks framing the scene at the left foreground also recur frequently throughout More's production, with close parallels in the privately owned oval canvases of *The Abduction of Deianira* and *The Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, both painted in Rome in 1786 (cf. attachments nos. 2–3).

Although rather rare today (in addition to this canvas and the one at the National Galleries of Scotland, a third version in a private collection is known), More's depictions of Vesuvius in eruption quickly became the Scottish painter's most admired and sought-after works among the international clientele in Rome during the Grand Tour. More had permanently settled there in 1773, specializing in the representation of the sublime and "terrific" aspects of nature and landscape.

In 1780, the young Antonio Canova, who had arrived in Rome just a year earlier, visited More's studio on June 12 and noted in his travel diaries his admiration for "5 completed paintings: one representing Vesuvius as described by Pliny, another a Deluge of rain, both divine; I then saw 3 others: the Falls of Terni, the Villa of Maecenas at Tivoli, and Cicero's Villa at Naples, all of surprising beauty" (A. Canova, *Scritti*, ed. H. Honour, Rome 1994, pp. 140–141).

The other great British landscape painter active in Italy at the time, the Englishman Thomas Jones, recalled in his travel diaries how More, eager to study closely the phenomenon with its "exotic" fascination for travelers, rushed to Naples on Sunday, October 27, 1778, together with fellow countrymen Matthew Bretingham, Thomas Hardwick, and John Henderson, "to see the burning mountain" during its "most violent" nocturnal eruptions (T. Jones, *An Artist's Journey through Eighteenth-Century Italy. The Diary of Thomas Jones*, ed. A. Ottani Cavina, Milan 2003, p. 146). The eruptions were so violent that the gala evening at the Teatro San Carlo, attended by the court and by More himself, had to be suspended because "the noise in the hall was so loud that the actors could not be heard."

The great reputation Jacob More earned as a landscape painter during the twenty years he spent in Rome undoubtedly surpassed that of any other Anglo-Saxon artist in the cosmopolitan city in the second half of the eighteenth century. Joshua Reynolds, President of the Royal Academy and the most famous British artist of the time, unreservedly considered More "the best painter of air since Claude." This highlights how More's landscapes fit beautifully within the tradition of the so-called ideal or classical landscape, tracing back to the seventeenth-century works of Claude Lorrain, Nicolas Poussin, and Gaspard Dughet.

Settled definitively in Rome from 1773, where he lived in Piazza di Spagna in the former studio of Richard Wilson, More quickly became a central figure for the British artistic colony in the Papal capital. In 1779 he began a fruitful professional and personal relationship with Frederick Augustus Hervey, fourth Earl of Bristol and Anglican bishop of Derry, who became his greatest patron. This intense patronage, which included more than twenty paintings and a rich body of documentary evidence, is exemplified by the large canvas *Cicero's Villa* preserved at Ickworth.

More's definitive consecration came in 1781, when he was elected Associate of the prestigious Accademia di San Luca in Rome. In 1784, as further proof of the high regard in which his work was held across the Italian art scene, he donated to the Grand Ducal Gallery of the Uffizi his *Self-portrait in the Countryside near Tivoli*, painted the previous year (cf. attachment no. 4).

In the second half of the 1780s, his works were often reviewed — with the highest praise — in the Roman journals *Memorie per le Belle Arti* and *Giornale delle Belle Arti*. In June 1787 Johann Wolfgang Goethe, then in Rome for his Grand Tour, visited the painter's studio and recorded in his *Italienische Reise* his admiration for the works on display.

More's most important commissions came in the mid-1780s, when he was involved in the extensive modernization of the Casino Nobile and the gardens of Villa Borghese, undertaken by Prince Marcantonio IV Borghese. For the villa, in 1785, More painted a large *Apollo and Daphne* (now lost) for the room housing Gian Lorenzo Bernini's celebrated group. Between 1785 and 1788, he also collaborated with the Asprucci family on the design of the so-called Garden of the Lake and its classical-style buildings, which introduced to Rome for the first time the fashion of the English garden.

In 1796, following the artist's death, his nephew Jacob organized a major auction dispersing all the paintings left in the studio at the time of his sudden death in 1793, along with a rich art collection that included works by Perugino, Tintoretto, Veronese, and Claude Lorrain.

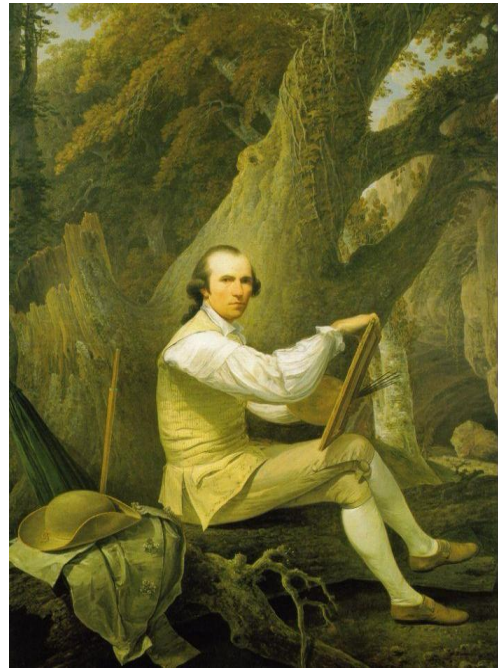
Catalogue entry by Prof. Francesco Leone

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- 2) P.R. Andrew, *Jacob More: Biography and a Checklist of Works*, in "The Volume of the Walpole Society", 55, 1989-1990, 1993, pp. 105-196.
- 3) T. Jones, *Viaggio d'artista nell'Italia del Settecento. Il diario di Thomas Jones*, a cura di A. Ottani Cavina, Milano 2003.
- 4) P. R. Andrew, *Jacob More e Villa Borghese*, in *Villa Borghese. I principi, le arti, la città dal Settecento all'Ottocento*, catalogo della mostra (Roma 2003 – 2004) a cura di A. Campitelli, Roma 2003, pp. 95-97.



Ratto di Deianira e il Riposo durante la fuga in Egitto,
dated 'Roma 1786'



Vesuvius Erupting
National Galleries of Scotland, Edinburgh.



Friedrich Wilhelm MORITZ

St. Gallen (Switzerland), 1783–1855

The Cascine Park in Florence

Pencil and watercolor on paper, 259 x 347 mm

Signed lower right: *F. W. Moritz*

In this watercolor, certainly painted *en plein air*, the Swiss artist depicts the Cascine Park, which stretches along the right bank of the Arno in Florence.

His viewpoint is located near a small landing stage, where a young man is ferrying a boat across the river with the aid of a rope. On the left, partly hidden by trees, the late 18th-century Palazzina Reale can be glimpsed.

In the foreground a lady walking with a child and two peasants carrying various belongings. It is interesting to note the contrast among the figures represented: the “elegant” strollers in the park alongside others absorbed in their daily labors.

On the right, beyond the Arno, one can discern the dome of San Frediano in Cestello, the Belvedere fortress, and the San Miniato hill. In the center of the river, the ancient bridges crossing it are portrayed, while in the distance, rising above the trees, are the dome of the Cathedral, Giotto’s bell tower, and the tower of Palazzo Vecchio.

The Cascine Park was originally a hunting estate of Cosimo I de’ Medici. At the end of the 18th century, Grand Duke Pietro Leopoldo of Habsburg-Lorraine commissioned the architect Giuseppe

Manetti (1761–1817) to transform it into a model agricultural estate, with the Palazzina Reale at its center, inaugurated in 1791. Thanks to Elisa Bonaparte Baciocchi (1777–1820), the park became public in the early 19th century; the Grand Duchess of Tuscany later entrusted the architect Giuseppe Cacialli (1770–1828) with further renovations. The municipality of Florence acquired the property in 1869, after which additional restoration work was carried out.

Friedrich Wilhelm Moritz was born in St. Gallen in 1783 and, except for an extended stay in Italy, spent his life in Switzerland. He was the cousin of Gabriel Lory “fils” (1784–1846), with whom he grew up in Neuchâtel. The two young painters began their careers by coloring a series of views of Russia. Moritz lived with the Lory family in Bern, and after marrying, spent several years in Florence, where he painted watercolors of extraordinary quality and precision. These works earned him considerable fame and remain highly sought after today. His views depict mainly Tuscan subjects (he was the only Swiss artist to paint the island of Elba), though he also produced a few rare watercolors of Rome. In 1832 Moritz returned to Switzerland, where he worked as an art teacher at the Gymnasium in Neuchâtel until 1850. There, in the city of his youth, his life came to an end in 1855.



Victor-Jean NICOLLE

Paris, 1754 – 1826

Naples, view of the “Largo di Castello”

Watercolor, pen and brown ink on paper, 205 x 312 mm

Signed on the lower right: *Nicolle*

Inscribed on the *verso*: *Vue de la place dite Largo del Castello, et du mont Vésuve, à Naples*

Our watercolor is part of the interesting artistic production of Victor-Jean Nicolle, an architect who executed watercolors of urban landscapes, enhanced by the presence of human figures.

The piece in question depicts a view of the piazza called *Lago di Castello* in Naples that constitutes the original nucleus of what is today “Piazza del Municipio”, next to the bastions of “Castel Nuovo”.

The sketch adopts a *sui generis* point of view, showing a part of the view of the square where the castle is situated, and where the main subject appears to be city life; Nicolle portrays the daily life in the square, with commercial stands and its inhabitants carrying out their daily routines. This piece has a documentarist value given that it shows us what this square looked at the time, with the Vesuvius in the distance, which today cannot be seen from that angle given the structures surrounding the port, and the different shape of the castle.

In Nicolle’s works, it is possible to find representations of Rome and France, with most of the settings based in Paris, while his Neapolitan production is constituted by around one hundred fifty works – most of which have a small format (usually less than 10 cm. in diameter). This makes our watercolor quite precious, given its larger dimensions compared to the other Neapolitan works.

Despite not exposing his works at the official *Salons*, Nicolle achieved immense success among the *amateurs* and the French engraving on his works makes us presume that his production was destined mainly to the French market.

His sketches are rarely dated, but from recent critic studies, we learned that the artist lived in Italy for different periods: between 1789 and 1799 and between 1802 and 1811. Our piece thus dates back to this period.²

Victor-Jean NICOLLE

Paris, 1754 – 1826

Victor Jean Nicolle, is a watercolourist and etcher of urban landscapes enlivened by little characters, depicted with thoroughness and accuracy, especially for what the architectural details of the city are concerned.

Nicolle in fact, had obtained in the 1771 the Grand Prix de Perspective at the École Royal and attended this school for three years until 1774, while he worked for the architectural firm Petit-Radel (1740-1818).

His great production includes hundreds of drawings, mostly views of monuments and squares of Rome, Naples, Vietri, Bologna, Genoa, Savona and Florence. The quantity of the Italian works in his production makes us believe that most of his career took place in Italy, which would explain his absence from any exhibition at the Salon, even at the time when it was still open to all artists.

His drawings suggest that he made at least two long trips to Italy, from 1787 to 1798 and from 1806 to 1811.

² Émilie BECK SAIELLO, *Raffigurare la città tra fine Settecento e inizio Ottocento. Il caso dell'artista e architetto Victor-Jean Nicolle (1754-1826)*, in *Dimore signorili a Napoli: Palazzo Zavallos Stigliano e il mecenatismo aristocratico dal XVI al XX secolo*, atti del convegno internazionale di studi (Naples, Palazzo Zavallos Stigliano - Palazzo Reale, October 20-22 2011), ed. by Antonio Ernesto Denunzio, Naples 2013, pp. 78-87.



Pietro Giacomo PALMIERI

Bologna 1737 – Turin, 1804

A grey stallion with a groom with a city on the background

Pen and brown ink on paper, 323 x 464 mm.

Signed and dated lower left: *Palmieri In. e Fece 1801*

Inscribed lower center: *Superbe Dessin à la plume* and *Pietro Palmieri 1740-1804 Parme-Turin; Prof a l'Academie du Parme*

A magnificent grey stallion is held by a groom in seventeenth-century style clothing.

On the background is an imaginary city, with a tower reminiscent of the *Torre della Garisenda* in Bologna, the artist's hometown.

PALMIERI, Pietro Giacomo was born in Bologna on December 7, 1737.

After spending some time in the Seminary in Bologna, he devoted himself to an artistic career. He then attended the Accademia Clementina in Bologna, completing a six-year apprenticeship.

He worked as an engraver; the series of *Invented Landscapes*, the drawing of the Pinacoteca Nazionale di Bologna of 1762 reveal the knowledge of the Venetian models of Marco Ricci, Francesco Zuccarelli and Giuseppe Zais. The contemporary models were joined by those of the seventeenth century: Guercino, Jacques Callot, Stefano Della Bella, Nicolaes Berchem.

Towards the end of the 1760s Palmieri moved to Parma, where he was taken under the protection of the minister Guillaume-Léon Du Tillot, thanks to whom he was appointed *professore* at the academy for the year 1771, a title he boasted in three drawings now preserved in Florence at the Gabinetto dei Disegni e delle Stampe degli Uffizi.

By 14 January 1773 Palmieri had already moved to the new Parisian residence of Du Tillot, for whom he also worked as a copyist.

It was perhaps his association with the circle of engravers, of which Jean-Baptiste Le Prince was a member, who had invented the new *à lavis* technique, softer and freer, that induced Palmieri to create four *à lavis* etchings:

L'occupation champêtre, L'amour maternel, Le repos du berger, La veille laborieuse. The death of his protector Du Tillot must have caused Palmieri serious economic problems and it was perhaps for this reason that he decided to leave Paris, travelling to Spain, England and Switzerland and then moving permanently to Turin in 1778. Here he married Maddalena Brunetti from Vercelli, with whom he had two children.

He was appointed 'first draftsman' of Luigi Vittorio di Carignano and was requested by Vittorio Amedeo III as 'drawing master' of the Dukes of Angoulême and Berry and 'advisor' for the purchase of drawings and prints for the court collections.

He executed works now lost, for the castle of Rivoli and in 1789 a series of 32 drawings in frames sculpted by Bonzanigo for the cabinet of the Duke of Aosta Vittorio Emanuele in Moncalieri.

The trompe-l'oeil of the Royal Library, dated '1780', date back to the first Turin period.

In the drawings attributable to Palmieri's late production, neoclassical suggestions can be identified in the clear cuts of light. The wide and enveloping skies, full of cloudy vapors and the low horizontal cuts of some sheets recall landscape painters such as Pierre-Henri Valenciennes and suggest an exchange with Giuseppe Pietro Bagetti, who frequented Palmieri's studio together with Felice Maria Storelli. He died in Turin on 18 December 1804.



Francesco PANINI

Rome, 1745-1812

Piazza Colonna in Rome with the palace of Cardinal De Solis (Palazzo Piombino) Festively Decorated

Signed and dated lower left: *Francesco Panini 1769*.

Ink, watercolour and tempera on paper, 283 x 485 mm.

Inscribed in the bottom centre: *Piazza Colonna Illuminata del Cavalier Pannini*.

Another inscription on the verso: *Disegno di Piazza Colonna con altro Imp di Francia*.

The subject of our extremely rare tempera, of which no other example is known, could be identified thanks to an engraving by G. Ottaviani and N. Giansimoni depicting 'Il Prospetto della Facciata del Palazzo d'abitazione in Roma a Piazza Colonna dell'Emo Sig Card. Francesco De Solis Archbiv. Of Seville, illuminated on 10.11.12 August 1769'.

It was custom in vogue in 17th and 18th century Rome to decorate important palaces with posthumous facades on the occasion of some special event to be celebrated.

The palace that appears in Panini's tempera is covered with a wooden and cardboard façade, with a double order of pilasters on the ground floor and twin columns on the first floor on a terrace balustrade. A rich pediment embellished with statues adorns the attic.

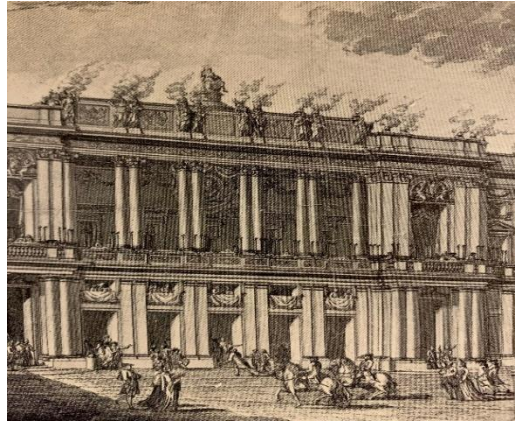
In the lavishly decorated square with torches placed on high supports, a semi-circular stage is set up in front of the Antonine column for spectators who came, some on foot and some in carriages, to watch the fireworks display.

The palace in question is the **Palazzo Piombino Boncompagni Ludovisi**, which was located in Piazza Colonna. The palace was commissioned by Cosimo Giustini in 1580 and was completed in 1588. In 1609 it was purchased by Cardinal Fabrizio Veralli and in 1636 it passed by inheritance, together with the rich collection of marble and sculpture it contained, to Marquis Orazio Spada, whose family owned it until 1819 when it was purchased by Luigi I Boncompagni Ludovisi Prince of Piombino, who had already been renting it since 1797, hence the name of the building.

The palace was demolished in 1889 for the widening of the Corso.



F. Panini, detail.



The engraving, detail.

Cardinal Francisco de Solís (Salamanca, 1713 - Rome, 1775), to whom the engraving is dedicated, was a Spanish cardinal who resided in Rome in the Palazzo Piombino.

Of aristocratic origin, he belonged to one of the most influential families at the court of King Philip V. In 1755 he was appointed archbishop of Seville and in 1756 Pope Benedict XIV made him a cardinal.

De Solís played an important role in the conclave of 1769 which was convened following the death of Pope Clement XIII and ended with the election of Pope Clement XIV.

The election of the new pope provided an opportunity to exert pressure from European states, particularly France and Spain, to abolish the Society of Jesus in the Catholic states.

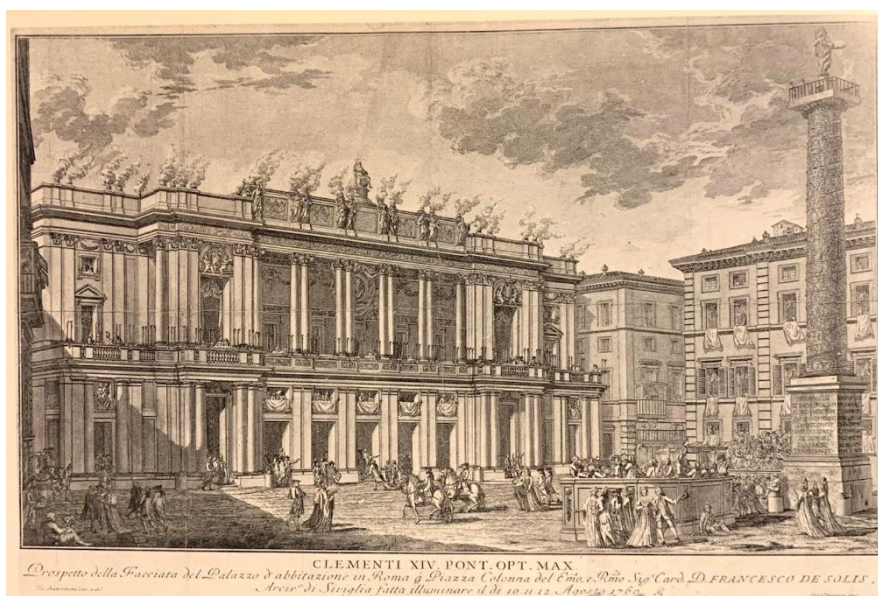
The Sacred College, however, protested against the external interference it was suffering from the party in favour of the suppression of the Jesuits.

Cardinal De Solís supported by the ambassadors of France and Spain, however, insisted on committing the next pope with a written declaration containing the suppression of the Jesuits. He began to sound out Cardinal Ganganelli on his possibility of signing the promise required by the Bourbon kings as a precondition for his election.

Ganganelli eventually signed the document that satisfied De Solís and on 18 May 1769 therefore Ganganelli put everyone in agreement and was elected with forty-six out of forty-seven votes with the name Clement XIV.

It is therefore highly probable that the celebrations depicted here in front of Palazzo Piombino, the residence of Cardinal De Solís, were held both in honour of the cardinal and for the election of the new pontiff.

Our tempera by Francesco Panini is therefore a rare document depicting this 1769 event in Roman life.



Francesco Panini or **Pannini** Rome, 1745–1812; (according to F. Arisi and L. Salerno 1738 – 1810), was an architecture and landscape painter, draughtsman and publisher of prints from the 18th and early 19th century living in Rome.

Francesco Panini was one of two sons of Giovanni Paolo Panini, a famed 18th-century Italian *Veduta* painter and architect in Rome.

His brother Giuseppe Panini (Rome, 1720–1812) was an architect and archaeologist who in 1762 completed the construction of the Trevi Fountain. The brothers worked together at different stages of their careers, as some of Francesco's drawings attest.

Francesco Panini collaborate with a number of well-regarded engravers in late 18th-century Rome: Carlo Antonini, Giovanni Ottaviani, Giuseppe Vasi, Giovanni Volpato.

Around 1770 he created a series of hand-colored views of Saint Peter's Basilica in Rome.

He then worked with Giovanni Volpato, a highly talented engraver from Venice who published, between 1772 and 1776, a large series of plates after the frescoes of the Raphael Rooms and the Loggias at the Vatican, which gained him a considerable reputation. Some of these plates were subsequently hand-colored by Francesco Panini and they became much in demand among visitors to Rome. In a letter of 1775, the painter Gavin Hamilton to his English patron Lord Shelburne wrote that he had ordered a copy of the specimens of the Loggias colored by Panini. Francesco had intentionally overcome the 'ruinistic' taste of his father Giovanni Paolo in favor of a more accurate topographical precision in his views.

With the collaboration of Francesco Panini and Lodovico Teseo, Volpato published, between 1775 and 1777, a series of prints after frescoes painted by Annibale Carracci in the Galleria of Palazzo Farnese. Like his father, Francesco was also a man of culture: in 1772 he was accepted into the Accademia degli Arcadi.

His refined works are preserved at the Albertina in Vienna, at the Louvre in Paris, at the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin, at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge.

In 1974, twenty-two temperas on paper (440 x 680 mm) formerly owned by Countess Carolina Maraini of Florence were sold at auction in Rome.

In 2005 six other views of Roman Villas appeared on the market.

Reference bibliography: *Vedute di Francesco Panini* by F. Arisi, in *Strenna piacentina*, 2006



F. Panini, *Villa Borghese*, tempera



Francesco PODESTI

Ancona, 1800 – Rome, 1895

Antonio and Cleopatra

China, white lead on brown paper, mm 235 x 330.

Signed lower right: *Franc.o Podesti*

Born in Ancona on 21 March 1800, the young Francesco lost his mother at the age of only twelve. His father sent him to study military architecture at the school of Pavia, where he was to remain until 1814. The following year, however, he lost his father, too, and thus also the means to pursue his studies.

Thanks to the intervention of the Marchese Carlo Bourbon del Monte, he was given an annual grant by the Ancona city authorities in 1816, and this allowed him to move to Rome to study painting under Vincenzo Camuccini and Gaspare Landi at the Accademia di San Luca. While in Rome, he supplemented his lessons at the Accademia by also frequenting the workshop of Antonio Canova, who soon began to feel a paternal affection for the young artist.

In October 1824 Podesti made a gift to his native city of a painting of *Eteocles and Polynices*, a way of demonstrating the results that the grant was allowing him to achieve. The painting led to his receiving commissions for two large altarpieces in the city: an *Annunciation* for the church of the *Annunziata* and the *Martyrdom of St. Lawrence*, on which he worked from 1825 to 1827, for the cathedral.

In 1826 he began to travel extensively to perfect his artistic education, visiting Florence, Pisa, Bologna, Parma, Venice and Milan. It was in the latter city that he met the Marchesi Busca, for whom he painted a picture considered to be one of his masterpieces, the dual *Portrait of Carlo Ignazio and Antonio Busca*, in 1825.

A second trip was to take him to Naples, Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Returning to Rome in the 1830s, he was commissioned by Prince Alessandro Torlonia to paint a cycle of frescoes both for the Villa Torlonia outside the Porta Nomentana city gate and for the now demolished Palazzo Torlonia in Piazza Venezia.

The decorative cycles in the Torlonia residences were the most important and demanding artistic enterprise in 19th century Rome, and certainly in Podesti's career.

Among the many artists involved in the scheme, Podesti played a role of the greatest importance.

Elected an Academic of San Luca in 1835, he was commissioned by the House of Savoy to paint a *Judgment of Solomon* for the Royal Palace in Turin. Carlo Alberto even offered Podesti the post of director of the Accademia di Belle Arti in the city, but the painter turned the offer down, fearing that the job would somehow infringe upon his freedom as an artist.

In 1855, the year in which Pope Pius IX proclaimed the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, Podesti was commissioned to fresco the large Room of the Immaculate Conception in the Vatican with historical and allegorical episodes relating to the event.

Francesco Podesti died in Rome in 1896.



Antoine-Claude PONTIUS-CINIER

Lyon, 1812 – 1885

Moonlight on the Tiber with Castel Sant'Angelo and St. Peter's

Oil on canvas, 92 x 150 cm

Signed lower right: *Ponthus-Cinier*

EXHIBITIONS:

The painting was exhibited at the *40th Exposition de la Société des Amis des Arts de Lyon* in 1877, Lyon, under the title *Rome, vue du Tibre – Effet de nuit*, no. 536 (the original exhibition label is affixed to the canvas).

PROVENANCE:

Rome, private collection

This work is one of the finest examples of the classical and majestic landscape painting, imbued with a strong sense of theatricality, that spread widely across Europe in the 19th century and of which Antoine-Claude Ponthus-Cinier was one of the most brilliant interpreters.

Probably executed during his Roman sojourn, this view of the River Tiber conveys all the fascination and mystery that the great monuments of ancient and modern Rome exerted on the artist. Considered one of the most characteristic vistas of the Eternal City, the subject had also been immortalized, to cite only a few examples, in the celebrated engravings of Giovanni Battista Piranesi and in the paintings of Gaspar van Wittel.

In the foreground, a man rows a boat across the river, his lantern glimmering on the water's surface. To the right, Castel Sant'Angelo rises majestically before the bridge that bears its name. On the horizon, bathed in a mantle of light, stands the basilica of St. Peter with its famous dome. Yet it is the full moon in the background, breaking through the clouds, that emerges as the true protagonist of the composition: it casts upon the dark and sleeping city, illuminated only by a few streetlamps, a cold yet romantic glow in which everything seems steeped in mystery.



Antoine-Claude PONTIUS-CINIER

Lyon, 1812 – 1885

Antoine-Claude Ponthus-Cinier is regarded, alongside François-Auguste Ravier, Paul Flandrin, and Charles Daubigny, as one of the leading exponents of the École de Lyon, a group of landscape painters drawn to the natural beauty of the Lyonnais countryside.

Born in Lyon on August 27, 1812, he moved to Paris to attend the École des Beaux-Arts, studying under the painter Paul Delaroche. After exhibiting in Lyon and Paris, in 1841 he won the *Grand Prix de Rome* with his religious painting *Adam and Eve Expelled from Paradise*. Arriving in Rome in 1842, he met Frédéric Flachéron, Jean François Montessuy, Gaspard Anrioud, and Claudius Lavergne, and joined the colony of artists at the French Academy, then directed by Jean-Victor Schnetz. Schnetz encouraged open-air painting, urging artists to produce views of Rome and the surrounding countryside.

According to critics, his stay in Italy and encounter with its landscapes played a decisive role in his shift from history painting to landscape. In this early phase, the influence of the 17th-century model of Claude Lorrain is particularly evident. After brief stays in Florence, Naples, Venice, and Genoa, Ponthus-Cinier returned to Lyon in 1844. He later traveled extensively across France, seeking places of natural beauty that recalled Italy. Among Italian landscapes, he was especially fascinated by the interplay of human traces—canals, roads, and bridges. He also produced numerous Alpine, Savoyard, Ardèche, Dauphiné, and Pyrenean landscapes.

He was a member of the Société des Aquafortistes in Paris, where his works achieved great success, notably the etching *La Forêt de Fontainebleau* (1867). From his return to France until 1867, he exhibited in Paris, Strasbourg, Marseille, Grenoble, and Montpellier. Until his death in 1885, he was a regular exhibitor at the Salon de Lyon, presenting many landscapes, watercolors, and etchings. Today his works are held in the Musée des Beaux-Arts in Lyon, as well as in Besançon and Chambéry.

¹ V. CHUIMER, « L'école de Lyon ou l'école des styles », in *La Gazette de l'Hôtel Drouot*, 4 marzo 2005, p. 236, n° 9.



Carel Max Gerlach Antoon QUAEDVLIEG

Valkenburg (Holland), 1823 – Rome, 1874

Peasants in a wood near Rome

Oil on board, cm 16x21,7

Signed lower right: *Ch Quaadvlieg*. Dated: *Roma 1872*

This fine painting, oil on board, is painted in the typical miniature style of the Dutch artist Carel Max Quaadvlieg, a technique in which he excelled.

The painting depicts a scene set in the surroundings of Rome, probably in the Castelli Romani: in a forest of oak and chestnut trees crossed by a path, a peasant on horseback is leading two other horses with baskets on their backs.

He is heading towards a fountain where other two other peasants are resting.

A joyful little dog, typical of Quaadvlieg's subjects, welcomes the newcomers.



Joseph REBELL

Vienna, 1787 - Dresden, 1828

Stormy sea near Amalfi

Pencil and watercolour on paper, 485 x 664 mm.

Bibliography:

All'ombra del Vesuvio, Napoli nella veduta europea; Napoli Castel Sant'Elmo, 12 May 29 July 1990, p. 77.

The view depicts the Amalfi coast with a stormy sea.

Rebell chose the fury of the sea as the subject of so many of his paintings, to the point of leading his contemporaries to hypothesise that he had experienced the dangers of the sea storms first-hand.

The artist painted the stormy sea set against various scenes of the Neapolitan and Sorrento coasts. In our watercolour, Amalfi seems to be relegated in the background of the scene, while the real protagonists of the scene are the great waves crashing on the rocks and the rays of the sun piercing the clouds.

The only human presence is witnessed by a sailing ship plying the sea on the horizon.

Rebell had already painted the stormy sea near the Capuchin monastery in Amalfi in 1813 (Pescara Fondazione Di Persio) and it is likely that our sheet was executed in the same year and with the same beach as the place of observation.



Rebell, *Mare in burrasca ai Cappuccini di Amalfi*, Pescara, Di Persio collection.

Josef Rebell was born in Vienna in 1787.

From 1799 Joseph Rebell attended courses in architecture at the Academy of Fine Arts in Vienna; but in 1807 he changed his direction, attracted by landscape painting which he began to study by attending the course of Michael Wutky (1739-1822).

Joseph Rebell made a trip to Switzerland in 1809, then went on to Milan, where he obtained protection from Viceroy Eugene de Beauharnais who commissioned four *Battle Views* from him in 1810. He then travelled to Naples in 1812 and, thanks to Beauharnais' introduction, obtained a commission from Queen Caroline Bonaparte for a series of thirteen *Views of Naples* and its surroundings.

The appreciation of the Austrian painter by Murat and his wife Caroline was unanimous. Rebell also painted many other landscapes for members of the local aristocracy.

In 1815, after the fall and execution of Joachim Murat Rebell found refuge in Rome, where he stayed until 1824. He continued to paint views of Naples and the islands of the Gulf, which were in great demand on the market.

In 1819, he presented a series of Italian landscapes at an exhibition in the Palazzo Caffarelli in Rome, which were appreciated by Emperor Franz II of Habsburg-Lorraine, who commissioned other works from him.

Thanks to his good relations with the emperor, in 1824 Rebell was called to direct the Gemaldegalerie in Vienna for which he left Italy for good to continue his flourishing career in his homeland.

He died in Dresden in 1828, aged only forty-seven.



J.Rebell, *Burrasca presso i Faraglioni a Capri*, Parma Galleria Nazionale



Ettore ROESLER FRANZ

Rome, 1845 – 1907

Medieval House at the Portico d'Ottavia in the Ghetto

Watercolor on paper, 750 x 520 mm

Signed lower right: *E. Roesler Franz, Roma*

This view depicts a medieval house in Rome's Ghetto, leaning against the remains of the Portico d'Ottavia. The house was spared from the demolitions at the end of the 19th century and still stands today.

Ettore Roesler Franz devoted much of his work to capturing corners and views of the Roman Jewish Ghetto that were disappearing under the drastic urban "renewal." Thanks to his watercolors and photographs, we can still see today certain aspects of the Ghetto, animated by figures engaged in humble activities, that reflect the reality of Rome at the end of the century.

It can be said that Roesler Franz dedicated his life to documenting, through his watercolors and his art, the rapid transformations taking place in Rome and the surrounding countryside. His celebrated series of watercolors depicting Rome, the so-called *Roma Sparita* (“Vanished Rome”), comprises 120 views now preserved at the Museo di Roma.

The first series of 40 works was exhibited to the public in 1883 at the newly built Palazzo delle Esposizioni on Via Nazionale, although in 1881 they had already been shown in Roesler Franz’s studio on Piazza San Claudio. The success of the exhibition convinced the Municipality of Rome to acquire the entire collection, encouraging the artist to continue his documentary project. It was only in 1908, after his death, that the second and third series of 80 watercolors were purchased by the city. These had previously been exhibited in 1897 at the Ridotto of the Teatro Drammatico Nazionale (then located on Via 4 Novembre and later demolished), an event visited by large crowds including Queen Margherita. Roesler Franz also replicated some of his most sought-after watercolors to satisfy his numerous clients.

Ettore ROESLER FRANZ

Rome, 1845 – 1907

Ettore Roesler Franz was born in Rome on May 11, 1845, into a family of German origin that had settled in the city in the early 18th century. His family played an important role in Rome’s cultural life and were among the founders of the Hotel d’Allemagne on Via Condotti.

He began his artistic training at the Accademia di San Luca, where he studied architecture and met Ettore Ferrari, who remained a lifelong friend. During these years of intense study, he perfected the technique of watercolor, which he preferred over other mediums as the most suitable for capturing the nuances of the Roman skies and the warm tones of the countryside.

“The sincerity makes the artist great” was inscribed at the entrance of his Roman studio at Piazza San Claudio 96 (which in 1876 replaced his earlier studio on Via del Bufalo 133), and he remained faithful to this maxim throughout his life.

From the late 1870s onward, Roesler Franz dedicated his artistic production to documenting the transformations that Rome underwent as the new capital of Italy. The hasty demolitions, most notably along the banks of the Tiber and in the old Ghetto—attracted the attention of his documentary brush. Drawing also on photography, he recorded the daily losses his beloved city was enduring.

This passion culminated in his famous series of 120 watercolors, *Roma Sparita*, sold in parts to the Municipality of Rome and today an irreplaceable testimony to the condition of the city at the end of the 19th century. The first 40 watercolors were purchased in 1883 by Mayor Leopoldo Torlonia directly from the artist for 18,000 lire and exhibited on the Capitoline Hill. On May 4, 1908, a year after the artist’s death in Rome at the age of 62, the Municipality acquired the remaining 80 works for 35,000 lire.

Roesler Franz was the founder and, on several occasions, president of the Società degli Acquerellisti in Rome. He exhibited in numerous European capitals—including Paris, London, St. Petersburg, Berlin, and Vienna—as well as in the Netherlands and Belgium. In Italy, his works were shown almost continuously from 1873 to 1907 at the annual exhibitions of the Associazione degli Acquerellisti and the Società degli Amatori e Cultori di Belle Arti in Rome. He also exhibited in Turin (1874–1880, 1884, 1902), Milan (1893), Florence (1874, 1876, 1896), Trieste (1876), and Venice (1905).

He enjoyed a privileged relationship with the English public, fostered by his friendship with Joseph Severn, painter and British consul in Rome, and by the English affinity for watercolor. Among his distinguished patrons were Her Majesty the Empress, wife of Tsar Alexander III, and her son Grand Duke George.

For further biographical information and a study of the *Roma Sparita* series, see:

L. Jannattoni, *Roma Sparita negli acquarelli di Ettore Roesler Franz*, Newton Compton Editori, Rome, 1981.



Antonio SENAPE

Rome, 1788 – Naples 1850

View of Rome from a Terrace at The Pincio

Ink and watercolour on paper, the sheet, 653 x 490 mm; the subject, 557 x 367mm.

Inscribed lower center: *Veduta del Quirinale presa dalla Trinità dei Monti a Roma. 1815 circa.*

Our splendid view can be ascribed with certainty to the Roman-born *vedutista* Antonio Senape.

The precise style and the meticulous details as well as the handwriting of the inscription on the center of sheet lead back to other works by Senape, although his Roman views are very rare.

The chosen viewpoint of the artist is an imaginary terrace of the Pincio Gardens (the artist mention *Trinità dei Monti*, is evidently to indicate the near neighborhood).

On the left of the composition, it can be seen the convent and the church of the *Trinità dei Monti* with its twin bell towers and the Sallustian obelisk right in front of it. Further on, one can distinguish the Quirinal Palace with the *Torrino* (The Tower) and, closer, the Borromini's bell tower of Sant' Andrea delle Fratte with the *Torre delle Milizie* (Tower of the Militia) immediately behind it.

Next to the viewer are the houses of the city centre with the dome of Sant'Agnese in Agone in the distance and the Antonine column.

A beautiful *olla* (terracotta vase) closes the composition on the balustrade of the terrace.

The figure of Antonio Senape (Rome, 1788- Naples, 1850 circa) ranks among the most prolific Italian *Vedutisti* of the first half of the 19th century. However, the considerable quantity of drawings produced by the artist is matched by the almost total lack of information on his life: his activity is not mentioned in biographical repertories of the 19th century. His date of birth, 1788, is known from a recently rediscovered document dated 1815, in which Senape himself declares that he is '27 years old' and lives in Rome at no. 50 Via Gregoriana in Rome (archives of the Vicariate of Rome of Sant'Andrea delle Fratte, Stati d'Anima 1815 f.n.n.). 'Roman', in fact, was declared in the margin of several of his drawings.

It is probable that after 1815 Senape left his hometown to settle in southern Italy; while his views of Rome are very rare, the artist's entire production is centered on images of the South.

He settled in Naples where he devoted himself to a production of views 'from life', loose sheets, all done in pen and ink, thus not colored.

These pictures of well-known places were collected in souvenir albums for travelers, especially. English travelers. The city that offered him ever-changing views became his second home.

He lived until almost the middle of the 19th century, documented by his numerous views depicting buildings constructed in that period.



G. Van Wittel, *View from the Pincio*, tempera.