

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations .....	viii
List of Abbreviations .....	xv
Acknowledgements .....	xvi
Foreword .....	xviii
Introductory Note .....	xxi
Eckhard Leuschner	
Chapter Abstracts .....	xxx
PART I	
Chapter One .....	2
From Collection to Art History: The <i>recueil</i> of Prints as a Model for the Theorisation of Art History Valérie Kobi	
Chapter Two .....	19
A Game of Drawing Fame: Sebastiano Baldini and his Gifts to the Marqués del Carpio María López-Fanjul y Díez del Corral	
Chapter Three .....	37
The Cabinet Room: Works on Paper on Display. Madrid Collectors’ Choices, c.1750–1816 Beatriz Hidalgo Caldas	
PART II	
Chapter Four .....	54
The Prince as Collector and Draughtsman: Remarks on Architectural Drawings and Prints in the Northern Renaissance Sebastian Fitzner	

Chapter Five .....	72
Looking at Prints in Renaissance Germany: The Court of Ottheinrich Miriam Hall Kirch	
Chapter Six .....	87
Collecting Early Modern Festival Books: On MS. Douce 387 in the Bodleian Library, Oxford Ivo Raband	
Chapter Seven.....	105
“Achtet Casten, darinnen allerley Buecher”: Prints and Manuscripts in the Kunstkammer of Ferdinand of Tyrol Borbála Gulyás	
Chapter Eight.....	121
The Reconstructed Print Album of Johann Georg I. Zobel von Giebelstadt Joyce Zelen	
Chapter Nine.....	138
The Cabinet of Drawings of the Hermitage Museum and the Legacy of Catherine the Great Catherine Phillips	
Chapter Ten .....	155
The British Royal Family and Satirical Prints, 1760–1901 Kate Heard	
Chapter Eleven .....	172
Wallmoden’s Collections at Hanover-Herrenhausen Depicted: Towards the Reconstruction of a Baroque <i>aemulatio</i> of the Uffizi Ralf Bormann	
Chapter Twelve .....	190
Collecting in the Age of Enlightenment: The Collection of Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen Eva Michel	
Chapter Thirteen.....	203
Luigi Malaspina di Sannazzaro and the “Accessories” for a Print Collection Laura Aldovini	

## PART III

Chapter Fourteen .....	220
Collecting Himself: Hans Holbein the Elder's Portrait Drawings Alisa McCusker	
Chapter Fifteen .....	236
The Macleay Family of Colonial New South Wales 1767–1891: Public Figures—Private Collectors Anne Harbers	
Chapter Sixteen .....	252
Selling Antiquity and Collecting Nature: The Art Dealer Carl Christian Heinrich Rost and Christian Ludwig von Hagedorn's Conception of Art Sabine Peinelt-Schmidt	
Chapter Seventeen .....	266
Viewing Thoroughly: J.F. Städel's Drawings and Prints as Integral Part of his Art Collections around 1800 in Frankfurt/Main Corina Meyer	
Chapter Eighteen .....	283
Pierre-Marie Gault de Saint-Germain (1752–1842) and the Practices of Collecting during the Early 19 <sup>th</sup> Century in France Camilla Murgia	
Bibliography .....	296
Authors' Biographies .....	366
Index .....	372

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Figure 1: “Title Page”, *Inventory of Prints in the Martin von Wagner Museum*, Würzburg, 1875 (source and © Martin von Wagner Museum, Würzburg, University Museum Archive).
- Figure 2: First page of the list of Rembrandt prints in the Martin von Wagner Museum, 1875 inventory (source and © Martin von Wagner Museum, Würzburg, University Museum Archive).
- Figure 3: First page of the list of “Oldest Sheets” (Älteste Blätter) in the Martin von Wagner Museum, 1875 inventory (source and © Martin von Wagner Museum, Würzburg, University Museum Archive).
- Figure 4: “Title Page.” In *Œuvres de Jules Bonasone*, Albertina, Vienna, Grafische Sammlung, inv. nr. HB35.1 (source and © Albertina, Vienna).
- Figure 5: “Catalogue.” In *Œuvres de Jules Bonasone*, Albertina, Vienna, Grafische Sammlung, inv. nr. HB35.1 (source and © Albertina, Vienna).
- Figure 6: “Title Page.” In Pierre-Jean Mariette, *Description sommaire des desseins des grands maîtres d’Italie, des Pays-Bas et de France, du cabinet de feu M. Crozat. Avec des Réflexions sur la manière de dessiner des principaux Peintres*, Paris, Aux Colonnes d’Hercule, 1741, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (source and © Bibliothèque Nationale de France).
- Figure 7: “Title Page.” In Pierre Crozat (et al.), *Recueil d’estampes d’après les plus beaux tableaux et d’après les plus beaux dessins qui sont en France dans le Cabinet du Roy, dans celui de Monseigneur le Duc d’Orléans, & dans d’autres Cabinets divisé suivant les différentes écoles; avec un abrégé de la vie des peintres, & une description historique de chaque tableau*, Paris, Imprimerie Royale, 1729–1742, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (source and © Bibliothèque Nationale de France).
- Figure 8: Giovan Battista Gaulli, *La Gratitudine*, black chalk, pen, black ink and wash, c.1684, 179x113mm, Biblioteca Nacional de España, inv. nr. RES/252, 1–2 (source and © BNE).
- Figure 9: Giacinto Brandi, *La Vera Armonia*, black chalk, pen, black ink and wash, c.1684, 179x113mm, Biblioteca Nacional de España, inv. nr. RES/252, 22–3 (source and © BNE).
- Figure 10: Carlo Maratta, *Il Colombo overo lo Scoprimiento dell’Indie*, black chalk, pen, black ink and wash, c.1684, 179x113mm, Biblioteca Nacional de España, inv. nr. RES/252, 59–60 (source and © BNE).
- Figure 11: Ciro Ferri, *La Meraviglia della Lente*, black chalk, c.1684, 179x113mm, Biblioteca Nacional de España, inv. nr. RES/252, 190–1 (source and © BNE).

- Figure 12: Stefano Peragine, *Lo Specchio*, black chalk, c.1684, 179x113mm, Biblioteca Nacional de España, inv. nr. RES/252, 257–258 (source and © BNE).
- Figure 13: Paolo Albertoni, *Il Tempio della Fama*, pen, black ink and wash, c.1684, 228x158mm, Fundació Bartolomeu March, inv. nr. B97–V2–23, final page (source and © FBM).
- Figure 14: Anonymous, untitled, c.1776–1800, oil painting on glass, 40x50.50cm, (source and © Museo de Artes Decorativas, Madrid).
- Figure 15: Pedro Grolliez, “Second Sight of Ferrol’s Harbour”, from the series *Vistas de los Puertos de España*, 1782–1785, watercolour and colour inks on laid paper, 345x533 mm (source and © Real Academia Española. Biblioteca. Legado Rodríguez-Moñino, María Brey, Madrid).
- Figure 16: Giovanni Ottaviani, Gaetano Savorelli & Pietro Camporesi, Pilaster from the series *Loggie di Raffaele nel Vaticano*, 1772, coloured etching in distemper, 1050x410mm, Spain, Casita del Príncipe, El Escorial (source and © PATRIMONIO NACIONAL, Spain).
- Figure 17: *ARCHITECTVRA*, volume of architectural prints and drawings, sixteenth century, 52.0x38.3cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna, Kunstammer, inv. nr. KK 6623 (source and © KHM).
- Figure 18: *ARCHITECTVRA*, volume of architectural prints of Androuet Du Cerceau, sixteenth century, 15.7x10.8cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna, Kunstammer, inv. nr. KK 6589 (source and © KHM).
- Figure 19: *ARCHITECTVRA*, several drawings and prints for fortifications, sixteenth century, 52.0x38.3cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna, Kunstammer, inv. nr. KK 6623, fols. 27v–28r (source and © KHM).
- Figure 20: Elector August of Saxony, “Design for a Fortification”, 2nd half of the sixteenth century, 18.8x29.2cm, Sächsische Landes-, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Dresden, inv. nr. Mscr.Dresd.L.14.m, 4 (source and © Deutsche Fotothek/SLUB).
- Figure 21: Prince Christian of Saxony, “Design for a Fortified Castle, 1576/1577”, 41.7x29.0cm, Staatliche Gemäldegalerie Dresden, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. nr. Ca 61, fol. 28r, 41.7x29.0cm (source SKD cited after Barbara Marx/Peter Plaßmeyer, eds. *Sehen und Staunen. Die Dresdner Kunstammer von 1640*, Berlin/München 2014, plate 7).
- Figure 22: Matthias Gerung, *Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, 1530–32, fol. 288r (detail), Ottheinrich Bible, VIII, Cgm 8010/8, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich (source and © Wikimedia Commons).
- Figure 23: Johann Neudörffer, “Title Page” (detail), *Ein Gute Ordnung und Kurze Unterricht* (Nuremberg, 1538) (source and © Wikimedia Commons).
- Figure 24: Albrecht Dürer, *Imagines Coeli Septentrionales cum Duodecim Imaginibus Zodiaci*, woodcut, 1515 (source and © Wikimedia Commons).
- Figure 25: Screenshot of preview page (detail), digitised print album bound for Ottheinrich, 1558, C 72222–50 Gross Res, Universitätsbibliothek, Heidelberg (source University Library, Heidelberg and author, © author, 20 February 2015).

- Figure 26: Unknown artist, *Archduke Ernest arriving at the Emperor's Gate in Antwerp*, copy after a print by Pieter van der Borcht, drawing, ink and colour on paper, c.1600–1700, Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS. Douce 387, fol. 005r (source and © Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford).
- Figure 27: Pieter van der Borcht, *Archduke Ernest arriving at the Emperor's Gate in Antwerp*, etching, 32.6x20.1cm, 1595, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. nr. BI-1953-0546B-04 (source and © Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam).
- Figure 28: Pieter van der Borcht, *Tilting at the Rings*, 33.1x42.8cm, 1595, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. nr. BI-1953-0546B-35 (source and © Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam).
- Figure 29: Maerten de Vos, *Allegorical Representation of America*, drawing, ink on paper, 28.8x17.2cm, 1593/94, Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, inv. nr. PK.OT.00074 (source and © Museum Plantin-Moretus/Prentenkabinet, Antwerpen—UNESCO Werelderfgoed).
- Figure 30: Unknown artist, *The Arch of the Portuguese Merchants*, copy after a print of Pieter van der Borcht, drawing, ink and colour on paper, c.1600–1700, Bodleian Library, MS. Douce 387, fol. 017r (source and © Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford).
- Figure 31: Joos de Momper (attr.), *The Triumphal Arch for the St. Michael's Convent for the Ceremonial Entry into Antwerp of the Archducal Couple Albert and Isabella in 1599*, watercolour, brown ink on paper, 33.3x22.5cm, 1599, Museum Plantin-Moretus, Antwerp, inv. nr. CVH.0546 (source and © Coll. Van Herck, King Baudouin Foundation, entrusted to the Print Room of the Museum Plantin-Moretus, Belgium).
- Figure 32: Pieter van der Borcht, *The Triumphal Arch for the St. Michael's Convent for the Ceremonial Entry into Antwerp of the Archducal Couple Albert and Isabella in 1599*, etching, 32.7x20.3cm, 1599–1605, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. nr. BI-B-FM-032-28 (source and © Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam).
- Figure 33: “Petites Grotesques” by J. Androuet Du Cerceau (Orléans, 1550) in the album *Grodesche et Arabesche* of Ferdinand of Tyrol, sixteenth century, 281 folios, 37.1x47.7cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Kunstammer, inv. nr. KK 6640 (source and © KHM).
- Figure 34: Manuscript “A” of the *Weißkunig*, woodcut by Hans Burgkmair the Elder and dedicatory text to Charles V and Ferdinand I, Marx Treitzsaurwein, 1514, 592 folios, 41x28.5cm, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, Cod. 3032, fols. 7v–8r (source and © ÖNB).
- Figure 35: *Munich Wedding-Roll*, after 1568, 51.2x424cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, Kunstammer, inv. nr. KK 5346, detail (source and © KHM).
- Figure 36: Giorgio Liberale, *Triggerfish*, 1562/63–1576, 62.3x86cm, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, Cod. ser. n. 2669, fol. 23r (source and © ÖNB).
- Figure 37: George Bocskay, *Writing Model Book*, 1562, 33 folios, 24.7x66.6cm, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna, Cod. ser. n. 2664, fol. 8r (source and © ÖNB).

- Figure 38: “Cover” of Johann Georg I Zobel von Giebelstadt’s *Print Album*, c.1568–70, vellum, 545x885mm (open), 540x440mm (closed), Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv. nr. RP–P–OB–105.451 (source and © Rijksmuseum Amsterdam).
- Figure 39: Giovanni Battista Franco, Folio 10: *a) Roman Warrior Offering his Hand to a Young Woman b) Allegory of Wisdom*, c.1520–61, etching, 542x421mm, 212x202mm, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv. nr. RP–P–OB–105.227 (source and © Rijksmuseum Amsterdam).
- Figure 40: Giovanni Battista Franco, Folio 88: *a) Francesco Sforza b) Hurdy-Gurdy Player c) Two Caricatures of Men’s Heads; d) Two Caricatures of Old Women with a Salami*, c.1530–61, etching and engraving, 151x115mm, 155x122mm, 120x153mm, 120x153mm, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv. nr. RP–P–1999–108 (source and © Rijksmuseum Amsterdam).
- Figure 41: Monogrammist DWF after Giorgio Ghisi and Luca Penni, Folio 29: *Venus and the Rose*, 1558, engraving, 315x228mm, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv. nr. RP–P–OB–105.235 (source and © Rijksmuseum Amsterdam).
- Figure 42: Giulio Sanuto, Folio 33: *Tantalus*, c.1565, etching and engraving, 447x352mm, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam, inv. nr. RP–P–1999–113 (source and © Rijksmuseum Amsterdam).
- Figure 43: *The Gallery of Drawings in the New Hermitage*, 1859, watercolour by Konstantin Ukhtomsky (source and © The State Hermitage Museum).
- Figure 44: Copy after Jacques Callot, inv. nr. OR 573, on a surviving mount from the display of drawings in the Hermitage in the early 1860s. We see the pinholes in the corners of the drawing from the original mounting method visible in the watercolour of 1859, the number of the drawing in the 1860 guide to the Hermitage and the artist and title in both French and Russian as described there. The pencil notes were made by later keepers and specialists (source and © The State Hermitage Museum).
- Figure 45: *The Gallery of Fine Arts in the New Hermitage*, 1858, from the early 1860s used to house and display the collection of drawings. Watercolour by Konstantin Ukhtomsky (source and © The State Hermitage Museum).
- Figure 46: “Plan of the ground floor of the New Hermitage”, from: Oskar Waldhauer, *Die Vasensammlung der Kaiserlichen Ermitage*, St Petersburg, 1906. From 1857 to 1861 the drawings were displayed in what is here room XVIII (originally room I, to the right of the entrance) but then moved to the much larger long gallery XII (source and © Catherine Phillips).
- Figure 47: Copy after Nicolas Poussin, inv. nr. OR 5106, on a surviving mount from the display of drawings in place from the mid-1860s to 1915. The number on the mount accords with the catalogue of 1867 but the pencil inscription is of later date (source and © The State Hermitage Museum).
- Figure 48: Thomas Rowlandson (1757–1827), *Doctor Convex and Lady Concave*, 1802, etching with hand colouring, Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 810584 (source Royal Collection Trust and © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 2018).

- Figure 49: Richard Newton (1777–1798), *The Inexhaustible Mine*, 1797, etching with hand colouring. Staatliche Bücher- und Kupferstichsammlung Greiz, inv. nr. S2034a (source and © Staatliche Bücher- und Kupferstichsammlung Greiz).
- Figure 50: Thomas Rowlandson (1757/1827), *Filial Piety!*, etching with hand colouring, 1788. Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 810287 (source Royal Collection Trust and © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2018).
- Figure 51: William Heath (1794–1840), *The Royal Milling Match*, 1811, etching with hand colouring, Library of Congress, PC1–11746 (source and © Library of Congress).
- Figure 52: S.W. Fores (1761–1838), *A Peep into W[indsor] Castle*, 1820, letterpress, Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 811283 (source Royal Collection Trust and © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 2018).
- Figure 53: Diederich Christian Ludewig Witting, *Plan and Elevation of Wallmoden Palace*, March 1818, pen, ink and watercolour on paper, 315x400mm, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv, Hanover, Sig. Hann. 92 Nr. 209, sheet 53 (Archive of the author).
- Figure 54: Johann Joseph Zoffany, *The Tribuna of the Uffizi*, Florence, 1772–1778, oil on canvas, 54.9x123.5cm, Royal Collection, Windsor Castle, inv. nr. RCIN406983 (source Bridgeman Images/Royal Collection © Royal Collection Trust/Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, 2016).
- Figure 55: *Album Kielmansegg*, assembled in 1814, large folio 2°, leather bound, 53x38x6.5cm, on fol. 86r, Johann Gerhard Huck, after Pietro Berettini, called Pietro da Cortona, “The Expulsion of Hagar”, around 1800, red chalk on paper, 399x297mm (image), private collection (source and © Landesmuseum Hannover).
- Figure 56: *Album Kielmansegg*, assembled in 1814, large folio 2°, leather bound, 53x38x6.5cm, on fol. 76r, Johann Gerhard Huck, after Paolo Veronese, “Nymph and Satyr with Sleeping Eros”, around 1800, chalk on paper, 432x339mm (image), private collection (source and © Landesmuseum Hannover).
- Figure 57: *Album Kielmansegg*, assembled in 1814, large folio 2°, leather bound, 53x38x6.5cm, on fol. 65r, Johann Gerhard Huck, after Raphael (?), “Madonna with Christ and the Young St. John”, around 1800, red chalk on paper, 310x238mm (image), private collection (source and © Landesmuseum Hannover).
- Figure 58: Johann August Walther, *Duke Albert of Saxe-Teschen*, 1776, brush in grey ink, white heightening, on parchment, 30.4x23.3cm, Vienna, Albertina, inv. nr. 24428 (source and © Albertina, Vienna).
- Figure 59: “The Ordering Principles of the Roman School”, letter by Giacomo Durazzo to Duke Albert, 8 July 1775, Archive of the Albertina, Vienna (source and © Albertina, Vienna).
- Figure 60: “The Ordering Principles of the Collection of Duke Albert”, letter by Giacomo Durazzo to Duke Albert, 8 July 1775, Archive of the Albertina, Vienna (source and © Albertina, Vienna).



- Figure 61: Giacomo Durazzo. *Discorso Preliminare* (1st version), 1776, Vienna, Albertina, inv. nr. 30858a (source and © Albertina, Vienna).
- Figure 62: Jakob Alt, *View of Vienna*, 1817 (purchased by Duke Albert between 1817 and 1822), watercolour and gouache, 39.9x71cm, Vienna, Albertina, inv. nr. 14615 (source and © Albertina, Vienna).
- Figure 63: Giovita Garavaglia, *Portrait of Marquess Luigi Malaspina di Sannazzaro*, engraving, 1817–1818, 267x191mm (plate), Pavia, Musei Civici, inv. nr. VAR P 5323 (source and © Musei Civici, Pavia).
- Figure 64: Decorative frames for prints from the Malaspina collection, nineteenth century (before 1835), Pavia, Musei Civici (source Laura Aldovini and © Musei Civici, Pavia).
- Figure 65: Boxes for prints, nineteenth century (before 1835), circa 68.7x55x8.3 cm, Musei Civici, Pavia (source Laura Aldovini and © Musei Civici, Pavia).
- Figure 66: Malaspina's mount for Albrecht Dürer, *Small Passion*, woodcuts, and the copy by Marcantonio Raimondi, engravings, Musei Civici, Pavia, inv. nr. St. Mal. 120–131 (source Laura Aldovini and © Musei Civici, Pavia).
- Figure 67: Francesco Capsoni, Map of the Stabilimento di Belle Arti Malaspina, drawing, 1837, Archivio Storico Civico, Pavia, cart. 1 (source and © Musei Civici, Pavia).
- Figure 68: Hans Holbein the Elder, *Portrait of Ulrich Artzt*, 13.8x10.3cm, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. nr. 2513 (source and © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz).
- Figure 69: Hans Holbein the Elder, *Portrait of Kunz von der Rosen*, 9.8x8.9cm, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. nr. 2511 (source and © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz).
- Figure 70: Hans Holbein the Elder, *Portrait of Leonhard Wagner*, 13.6x9.5cm, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. nr. 2525 (source and © Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz).
- Figure 71: Hans Holbein the Elder, *Portrait of Johannes Faber*, 13.9x10.7cm, Kunstmuseum Basel, Kupferstichkabinett, inv. nr. 1662.189 (source and © Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel).
- Figure 72: Diagram of Hans Holbein the Elder's social and professional network (source and © J.J. Carlson).
- Figure 73: Fanny Macleay (1793–1835), *The Colonial Secretary's Residence, Macquarie Place, Sydney*, drawing, 1830 (source and © Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales).
- Figure 74: James Stuart (c.1802–1842), *Wallabies Drawn from Life*, Sydney, New South Wales, drawing, September 1835 (source and © Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales).
- Figure 75: James Stuart (c.1802–1842), *Young Gannet*, Norfolk Island, drawing, 1839 (source and © Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales).
- Figure 76: James Stuart (c.1802–1842), *Seabird with Chick and Egg*, Norfolk Island, drawing, 1839 (source and © Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales).
- Figure 77: William Sharp Macleay (1792–1865), *Caterpillar*, Cuba, c.1830, drawing (source and © Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales).

- Figure 78: Johann August Rossmässler, *Auerbach's Hof during a Fair in 1778*, 1778, etching, 41.5x47cm, Stadtgeschichtliches Museum, Leipzig, inv. nr. 1624 (source and © Stadtgeschichtliches Museum Leipzig).
- Figure 79: Detail (of Fig. 78) from Rossmässlers etching with the shop sign of Carl Christian Heinrich Rost and with the dealer himself or a shop assistant presenting one of his widely advertised models of a Greek temple.
- Figure 80: Jacques Philippe Le Bas after David Teniers the Elder, *The Temptation of St. Anthony*, etching, 353x485mm, inv. nr. 52927D, Graphische Sammlung Städel Museum Frankfurt (source and ©: Städel Museum Frankfurt).
- Figure 81: Richard Earlom after Guido Reni, *Simeon and the Child*, mezzotint, 418x305mm, inv. nr. 27363D, Graphische Sammlung Städel Museum Frankfurt (source and ©: Städel Museum Frankfurt).
- Figure 82: Jean Pesne after Anthony van Dyck, *A Bagpiper*, etching, 358x364mm, inv. nr. 11940D, Graphische Sammlung Städel Museum Frankfurt (source and ©: Städel Museum Frankfurt).
- Figure 83: Angelica Kauffmann, *Portrait of Johann Joachim Winckelmann*, 1764, inv. nr. 444; and etching, inv. nr. N.18429D; Johann Heinrich Roos, *A Stable with Playing Children*, 1675, inv. nr. 168; and inv. nr. N.44431D, Graphische Sammlung Städel Museum Frankfurt (source Städel Museum Frankfurt; © Städel Museum Frankfurt and CM).
- Figure 84: In the centre Anthony van Dyck, *Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, Alte Pinakothek Munich (source and © Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Alte Pinakothek), the model for a lost copy in Städel's collection. Prints from upper left clockwise: Joseph Hauber after Anthony van Dyck, *Holy Family*, 1796, etching, 343x262mm, inv. nr. 11910D; Ferdinand von Piloty after Anthony van Dyck, *Holy Family*, lithography, inv. nr. 36966D; Michel van Lochem after Anthony van Dyck, *Holy Family*, inv. nr. 11911D; Joseph Hauber after Anthony van Dyck, *Holy Family*, inv. nr. 11909D (all four, source Graphische Sammlung Städel Museum Frankfurt, © Städel Museum Frankfurt and CM).
- Figure 85: Anonymous, *Credit est mort*. Hand-coloured etching, early nineteenth century, 260x345mm, Harvard, Baker Library (source and © Harvard University Library).
- Figure 86: Hippolyte Pochon, *Les Visites du Jour de l'An*. Hand-coloured etching, 1814, 213x283mm, London, The British Museum (source and © The Trustees of the British Museum).

## ABBREVIATIONS

ACA	Archivo Casa de Alba, Madrid
AGP	Archivo General de Palacio, Madrid
AHPM	Archivo Histórico de Protocolos de Madrid, Madrid
AHN	Archivo Histórico de la Nobleza, Toledo
ARABASF	Archivo de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Madrid
BMS	Frederic George Stephens and Mary Dorothy George, <i>Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum</i> , 11 vols., London, 1870–1954.
BNE	Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid
exp.	expediente/file
cart.	cartella/folder
FBM	Fundació Bartolomeu March, Palma de Mallorca
fol(s).	folio(s)
inv. nr.	inventory number
Inv. 1596	Inventory of the Ambras collections of 1596 (ÖNB, Cod. 8228 [ed. Boehem 1888, Nr. 5556; Boehem 1889, Nr. 5556])
KHM	Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna
LC	Library of Congress, Prints and Photographs Division
L./leg.	legajo/File (Bundle)
MET	Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
Ms(s).	Manuscript(s)
ÖNB	Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna
Op. var.	Opera varia
p.	protocolo
r.	recto
RA	The Royal Archives, Windsor Castle
RCIN	Royal Collection Inventory Number
RL	Windsor, Royal Library
SLUB	Saxon State and University Library, Dresden
TNA	The National Archives, Kew, London
UvA	University of Amsterdam
v.	verso

## CHAPTER ONE

### FROM COLLECTION TO ART HISTORY: THE *RECUEIL* OF PRINTS AS A MODEL FOR THE THEORISATION OF ART HISTORY

VALÉRIE KOBİ

In an important article published in the *Revue de l'art* in 1979, Krzysztof Pomian recounts the evolution that sale catalogues underwent during the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Pomian follows the progressive development of a classification system organised by schools of painting (Italian, French, Flemish) and the increase of catalogue entries that became gradually more precise over time. These modifications, introduced by art dealers such as Pierre-Jean Mariette (1694–1774) and Edme-François Gersaint (1694–1750), bear the signs of a new attitude towards art that led to a decreased emphasis on aesthetic appreciation in favour of a new methodology based on attribution. According to Pomian, this reversal was accompanied by an evolution of the expert eye, the principal tool of eighteenth-century connoisseurs; it was henceforth focused mainly on the materiality of the works of art, including the artists' touch and their *maniera*. This shift generated a specific art discourse that evolved from a mere personal reception of the works of art to an objective evaluation of their stylistic properties. In this sense, Pomian's argument establishes that the model of art appreciation built during the eighteenth century derived from a close connection between commercial and connoisseurial traditions—the former shaping the latter. As pertinent as this reading may be, it nonetheless neglects to consider the modalities of this process. How did such a reversal

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<sup>1</sup> Pomian 1979. On this evolution, see also: Schnapper 1987; Waterfield 1995; Glorieux 2002; Guercio 2006; Michel 2007; Vermeulen 2010 and Raux 2012. For a comparison with the Flemish tradition, see Plomb 2002.

occur? By what means was it implemented? And, finally, what were the necessary conditions of its introduction?

Using the example of the art dealer and collector, Pierre-Jean Mariette, the present chapter aims to answer these questions and to offer a reflection on the diverse practices that caused the revolution described by Pomian. I shall examine how Mariette's professional background deeply influenced his conception of the printed catalogue and *recueil* and how his concept for a catalogue in turn became, in his hands, a model for the theorisation of art history.

### **The Mariettes and Prince Eugene of Savoy's Print Collection**

It was around the year 1713 that Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663–1736) contacted the Mariettes, famous print sellers and book editors established at the shop sign of the “Colonne d’Hercule” in Paris, through the intermediary Baron Georg Wilhelm von Hohendorf (1670–1719). In exchange for a substantial sum of money,<sup>2</sup> the prince asked the art dealers to provide him with a ready-made collection of prints. This collection was

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<sup>2</sup> The exact amount stipulated by this contract unfortunately remains uncertain. However, the existing sources give us some indication on the matter: “[Le baron de Hohendorf] vous auroit écrit cet ordinaire si ces affaires le luy eussent permis, mais en attendant qu’il le fasse l’ordinaire il veut que je vous avertisse, que quoyque suivant vostre contract vous ne deviez estre payé des 12’500lt qu’après que vous auriez fourny toute la collection, cependant, si vous le souhaitez, & j’ay fait reponse que vous ne demandiez pas mieux, on vous payera toujours cette somme.” Letter from Pierre-Jean Mariette to Jean Mariette, Vienna, 6 April 1718 (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, A1622/BS b9 L21). “Monsieur Le Baron de Hohendorf [...] a ordonné de la part du Prince de vous compter les douze milles cinq cent livres qui acquitteront le second payement de vostre marché.” Letter from Pierre-Jean Mariette to Jean Mariette, Vienna 9 April 1718 (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, A1623/BS b9 L22). “Je suis assuré qu’il n’y a personne qui put faire une pareille collection pour cent cinquante mil livres.” Letter from Jean Mariette to Pierre-Jean Mariette, Paris, 8 December 1717 (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, A1573/BS b10 L8). The engraver Adam von Bartsch (1757–1821) also remarks: “Die Kupferstichsammlung der k. k. Hofbibliothek ist eigentlich die Kupferstichsammlung des großen Prinzen Eugen von Savoyen [...]. Der berühmte Mariette, der größte Kunstkenner seiner Zeit hat sie geordnet, und sie hat ihrem [sic] Besitzer eine halbe Million schwerer Thaler gekostet [...]” Letter from Adam von Bartsch to Franz Maria Freiherr von Camea-Steffaneo (1751–1825), Vienna, 29 November 1808. Reproduced in: Rieger 2014, II, 773.

intended to comprise a summary of European print production from its early stages to the contemporary period. The importance of this contract prompted Jean Mariette (1660–1742) to send his own son Pierre-Jean to Vienna in order to organise the princely collection. The letters they exchanged during that period, kept today at the Louvre,<sup>3</sup> allow us to follow the young dealer in this enterprise.

Pierre-Jean Mariette, who was only 23 at the time, arrived in Vienna at the beginning of October 1717 and immediately began working on a twofold task. First, he supplemented Prince Eugene's print collection with sheets from the family business in Paris. Next, he organised the works. He categorised the prince's *recueils* and created their catalogues.<sup>4</sup> The numerous invoices from Paris were often accompanied by short notes meant to help the young Mariette in the cataloguing process.<sup>5</sup> Alternatively, sometimes, they were even sent with complete catalogues.<sup>6</sup> The catalogues were always carefully copied and bound at the end of the volumes in folio of the collection, functioning in this context as indexes (Figs. 4–5).

This early contact with the princely collection had significant importance for Pierre-Jean Mariette's education. Roseline Bacou has rightly observed that: "If the first letters are filled with questions to his father, little by little, Mariette becomes more self-confident, up to the point of supplementing or correcting the paternal catalogues joined to the invoices."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *Correspondance de Pierre-Jean Mariette durant son voyage de 1717–1719. Autographes de Pierre-Jean Mariette, de Jean Mariette, du baron de Hohendorf, de Ferdinand Delamonce, de Jean-Baptiste Rousseau et d'Antonio Maria Zanetti.* Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, A1566/BS b10 L1–A1652/BS b9 L51.

<sup>4</sup> For the details of this work, see Smentek 2014 and Kobi 2017.

<sup>5</sup> "[...] j'ay mis de petits billets accrochés à toutes les estampes ou j'ay cru que je pourrais vous éclaircir de quelque chose que vous pourriez ignorer." Letter from Jean Mariette to Pierre-Jean Mariette, Paris, 8 December 1717 (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, A1573/BS b10 L8).

<sup>6</sup> "[...] vous m'avez joué d'un mauvais tour en prenant tant de peine à faire si bien le catalogue des œuvres de Raphaël! [...] car le Prince est assez clairvoyant pour s'apercevoir de la différence qu'il y a entre le bien & le médiocre, je veux dire entre le travail du Père & du fils." Letter from Pierre-Jean Mariette to Jean Mariette, Vienna, 27 February 1718 (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, A1618/BS b9 L17).

<sup>7</sup> "Se nelle prime lettere abbondano i quesiti rivolti al padre, a poco a poco Mariette diventa più sicuro di sé, tanto da integrare o correggere i cataloghi paterni allegati alle spedizioni." Bacou 1982, 10.

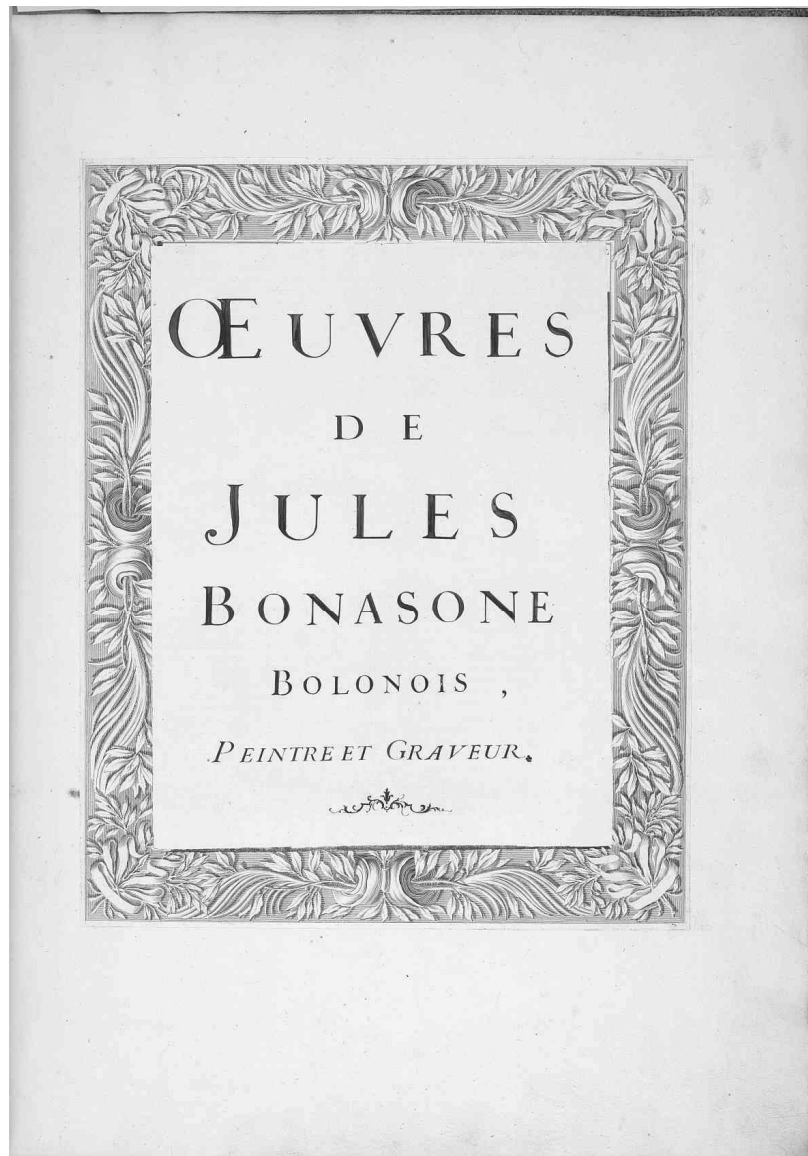


Figure 4: "Title page." In *Œuvres de Jules Bonasone*, Albertina, Vienna, Grafische Sammlung, inv. nr. HB35.1 (source and © Albertina, Vienna).

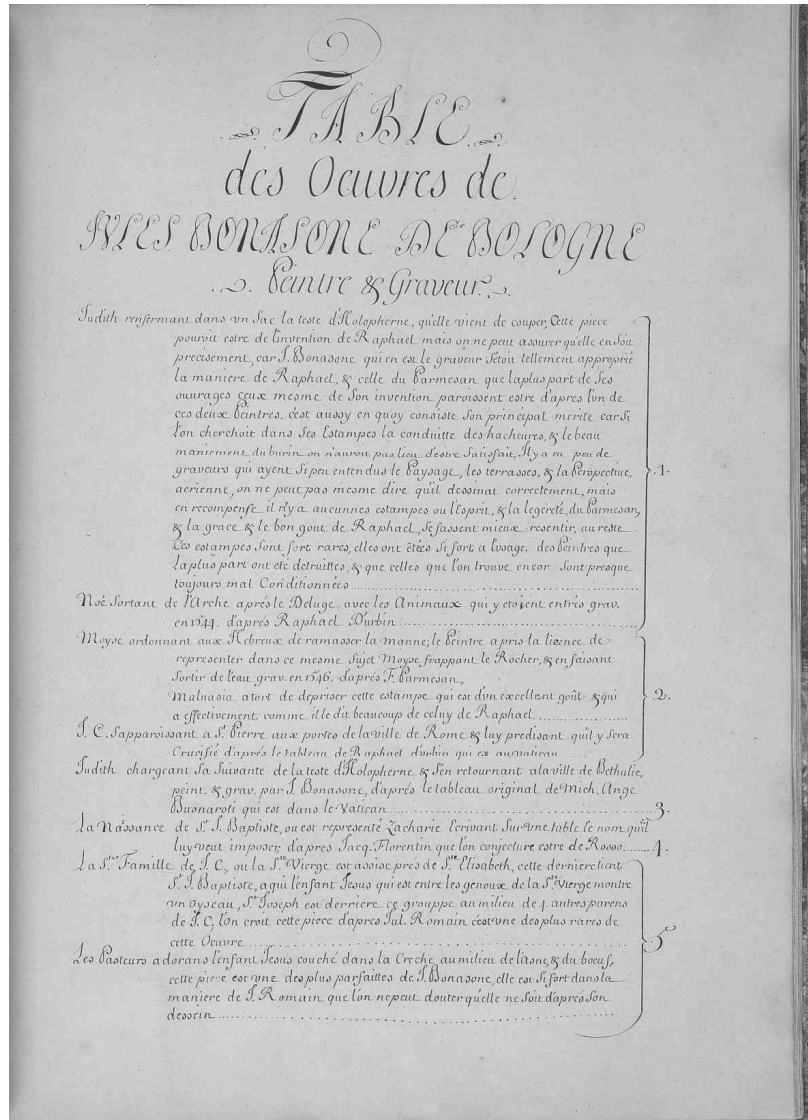


Figure 5: "Catalogue." In *Œuvres de Jules Bonasone*, Albertina, Vienna, Grafische Sammlung, inv. nr. HB35.1 (source and © Albertina, Vienna).



This professional independence, resulting from geographical distance, led to the development of a more personal methodology. Pierre-Jean Mariette explains this effect in one of his letters to his father: “Not finding you next to me anymore, I have recourse to my own industry. I am walking on new paths.”<sup>8</sup> This independence occurred on two levels: intellectual and visual. Mariette mastered these skills primarily through critical examination of prints and reading. Indeed, the “science” of cataloguing,<sup>9</sup> as he called it, requires solid knowledge of iconography and artistic styles. This erudition allows the catalogueur to create a classification system and carefully rank works within it.

The challenges Pierre-Jean Mariette faced, more than the sheer extent of the princely collection, consisted mainly of his encounters with unknown masters:

I believe, then, that to abbreviate and save time you do not have to explain the subjects. There are only a few, I think, that I will not be able to decipher. What I ask, however, are the names of the painters and engravers about which I might hesitate, especially in the work of Raphael, where there are some older engravers with whom I am still not entirely familiar, although I realise that by looking one becomes a better connoisseur.<sup>10</sup>

As Mariette acknowledges, training the eye depends on direct and repeated contact with a collection. This practice leads to an understanding of representational modes that allows comparisons and analogies. In this regard, Mariette’s methodical study of prints in Vienna consists of a true

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<sup>8</sup> “[...] ne vous trouvant plus auprès de moi, j’ay recours à mon industrie, je marche dans des voyes nouvelles [...]” Letter from Pierre-Jean Mariette to Jean Mariette, Vienna, 10 November 1717 (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, A1608/BS b9 L7).

<sup>9</sup> “[...] si l’on me tient la promesse que l’on m’a faite de me faire voir tout ce que l’empereur a d’estampes, j’en trouveray peut etre quelqu’une pour ajouter dans le catalogue [de Raphaël], car en verite je n’ay rien tant à cœur que de me perfectionner dans cette science.” Letter from Pierre-Jean Mariette to Jean Mariette, Vienna, 8 January 1718 (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, A1615/BS b9 L14).

<sup>10</sup> “[...] je crois donc que pour abreger & gagner du temps vous ne devez point tant vous fatiguer à expliquer les sujets il n’y en aura gueres je pense que je ne puisse déchiffrer ce que je demande ce sont les noms des peintres & graveurs sur lesquels je pourrais hesiter surtout dans l’œuvre de Raphael ou il y a de ces anciens graveurs avec lesquels je ne suis pas encor bien familiarisé, quoyque pourtant je m’apperçois qu’à force de voir on devient plus hardy connoisseur.” Letter from Pierre-Jean Mariette to Jean Mariette, Vienna, 27 November 1717 (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, A1609/BS b9 L8).

professional training.<sup>11</sup> Prompted by his curiosity and his passion for improving his connoisseurial skills, Pierre-Jean Mariette deepened his knowledge using books he found in the prince's library.<sup>12</sup> He completed his own catalogues with information gathered from this literature and made several comments based on his meticulous observation of the collection. This information might include, for example, a work's dimensions, its provenance or its location. Mariette also carefully copied the inscriptions found on the prints, commented on their attribution and completed the artists' biographies.

### **Malvasia's *Felsina Pittrice***

*Felsina Pittrice*, a book on Bolognese artists' lives written by the Italian art historian Carlo Cesare Malvasia (1616–1693), played an important part in Mariette's research.<sup>13</sup> Just prior to Mariette's arrival in Vienna, Prince Eugene had purchased 40 large volumes of prints through the viceroy of Naples.<sup>14</sup> If at first Mariette ignored the history of these volumes, he soon realised that they "could well have been Malvasia's collection."<sup>15</sup> This impression was confirmed by the French collector Pierre Crozat (1661–1740), who remembered seeing the albums in Bologna. *Felsina Pittrice*, used by Mariette as a reference for evaluating and classifying the 40 volumes, in fact had a deeper impact on him. Soon after discovering the provenance of the volumes, Mariette wrote to his father:

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<sup>11</sup> "[...] fò tutto 'l mio potere per imparare e rendermi più sapiente nella mia professione." Letter from Pierre-Jean Mariette to Jean Mariette, Vienna, 11 December 1717 (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, A1611/BS b9 L10).

<sup>12</sup> In his letters, Mariette mainly mentions Malvasia's *Felsina Pittrice*, Vasari's *Vite* and Orlandi's *Abcedario*. He discovered the latter work during his time in Vienna and warmly recommended it to his father. Letter from Pierre-Jean Mariette to Jean Mariette, Vienna, 17 May 1718 (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts graphiques, A1628/BS b9 L27).

<sup>13</sup> Malvasia 1678.

<sup>14</sup> "[...] quarante gros volumes d'estampes que le Viceroy de Naples a envoyé à S.A.S." Letter from Pierre-Jean Mariette to Jean Mariette, Vienna, 13 October 1717 (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts graphiques, A1606/BS b9 L5). On the history of this collection, see Gauna 2011.

<sup>15</sup> "[...] pouvoit bien estre celuy [l'ensemble] de Malvasia." Letter from Pierre-Jean Mariette to Jean Mariette, Vienna, 6 April 1718 (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, A1622/BS b9 L21).

I have dared to add, at the beginning of certain worthy oeuvres, a *petit préliminaire* [small introduction] to give a general idea of the engraver [...] and a few people to whom I have shown this work assured me that, in this way, the catalogue has more impact. This is how I did Bonasone's oeuvre (Fig. 5) [...] and I was glad to examine what Malvasia wrote about it.<sup>16</sup>

Not only did Malvasia's text directly influence some of Mariette's *petits préliminaires* but, more fundamentally, the young man came upon the very idea of writing these introductions by reading Malvasia's text. With this addition, Pierre-Jean Mariette went beyond his family's existing cataloguing practice and decided to expound on stylistic details that were, up to that point, only perceptible to an experienced eye. In this sense, the *petits préliminaires* prepare the beholder to read the catalogue and examine the prints. They explain the artistic oeuvre and allow a better understanding of the *recueil*. Rapidly, Pierre-Jean Mariette extended this practice by adding several comments throughout the catalogues concerning the quality of the prints, their attribution, and other such details. Kristel Smentek has recently demonstrated that this new way of conceiving catalogues—by basing them on analytic descriptions—endured and contributed to the success of the “Colonnes d’Hercule”, which went on to work with other members of the European nobility, including King John V of Portugal (1689–1750) and the Spencer family.<sup>17</sup> But this *modus operandi*, here only at its beginning, also prefigured Mariette's later writings, such as the *Description sommaire des desseins des grands maîtres d’Italie, des Pays-Bas et de France, du cabinet de feu M. Crozat* (Fig. 6) and the *Recueil d’estampes d’après les plus beaux tableaux et d’après les plus beaux dessins qui sont en France* (Fig. 7). However distinct these two books may be, they both offer their readers a catalogue of works organised by schools and preceded by explanatory texts. In this sense, the approach remains the one begun in Vienna. In each case, new scientific and historically founded arguments are built upon a classification system.

<sup>16</sup> “[...] je n’ay pas laissé de mon costé d’hazarder à la teste de certaines oeuvres qui en meritent la peine un petit preliminaire pour donner une idée generale du graveur [...] & plusieurs personnes à qui j’ay montré ce travail m’ont assuré que de cette manière cela avoit plus de force. C’est ainsy que j’ay fait l’oeuvre de Bonasone [...] & j’ay été ravy d’examiner ce qu’en a dit Malvasia.” Letter from Pierre-Jean Mariette to Jean Mariette, Vienna, 17 May 1718 (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, A1628/BS b9 L27).

<sup>17</sup> Smentek 2014, 47.

### **The *Recueil* of Prints as a Model for the Theorisation of Art History**

“I will always prefer the work of cataloguing.”<sup>18</sup> With these words, Pierre-Jean Mariette described to his father his enthusiasm for the task awaiting him in Vienna. In Mariette’s hands, Prince Eugene’s collection developed from its original heterogeneous nature into a rational whole. In a sense, Mariette created a structural framework with which one could organise the collection’s visual data. He provided the viewer with an instrumentarium of catalogues and commentary that allowed the beholder quickly to understand the collection’s importance. His *petits préliminaires* summarise, as Jean Mariette put it, “in one glance what is important to know as an introduction to the works.”<sup>19</sup> From this point of view, the catalogues assume the function of an index, since they make classification easily intelligible. They can be seen as a shortcut that, on the one hand, facilitates physical access to the collection and, on the other, synthesises the knowledge that governed Mariette’s organisational principles. The catalogues create an intersection between accumulation—typical of any collection—and the rational framework built by the art dealer. Furthermore, thanks to this intellectual system, Mariette transformed the collection’s œuvres into what can be considered true *recueils* in the sense of the “collection raisonnée” as defined by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond D’Alembert in their *Encyclopédie*.<sup>20</sup> The theoretical model given as example by the two philosophers was based on John Locke’s “Méthode nouvelle de dresser des recueils,” published in the *Bibliothèque Universelle & Historique* of 1686.<sup>21</sup> The empirical organisation suggested by the English philosopher consists of a conceptual structure imagined in order to classify disparate documents (e.g. texts, illustrations, small objects). These documents are laid out in a book—called the commonplace book—strictly organised by its index.<sup>22</sup> As Pascal Griener

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<sup>18</sup> “[...] je préféray toujours le travail des catalogues.” Letter from Pierre-Jean Mariette to Jean Mariette, Vienna, 10 November 1717 (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, A1608/BS b9 L7).

<sup>19</sup> “[...] d’un coup d’œil ce qu’il importe de scavoir pour préliminaire aux œuvres.” Letter from Jean Mariette to Pierre-Jean Mariette, Paris, 23 April 1718 (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, A1577/BS b10 L12).

<sup>20</sup> Diderot and D’Alembert 1751–1780, XIII, 868.

<sup>21</sup> Locke 1686. On the notion of the *recueil* and its theoretical antecedents in the field of art history, see also Griener 2010, chapter 8.

<sup>22</sup> On commonplace books, see among other publications: Lechner 1962; Blair 1992, Meynell 1993; Yeo 1996; Blair 2000; Havens 2001; Yeo 2001; Moss 2002

has demonstrated, this book form is akin to a collection, since it “tries to combine two contradictory characteristics: order, and infinite openness.”<sup>23</sup> It also participates in a pedagogic tradition related to the art of memory. As Lucia Dacome has established:

Regarded as aids to memory and storehouses of knowledge, they [the commonplace books] were part of a pedagogic tradition related to rhetoric and the art of memory that dated back to the classical period.<sup>24</sup>

Classification ensures the transmission of information and its assimilation and can thus be seen as a learning tool. This idea was transposed to print collections through the writings of Michel de Marolles (1600–1681) and John Evelyn (1620–1706).<sup>25</sup> In the case of Prince Eugene’s print collection, this mechanism relies on the narrative that Mariette weaves from one catalogue to another. With the overlapping of texts and images, Mariette guides the beholder through the history of Western art—a history carefully arranged by geographical areas, schools and artistic genealogies. He also underlines the details that one ought to notice and their significance.<sup>26</sup> In other words, he works as a *cicerone* in a “voyage en chambre”<sup>27</sup> that has as its object the dissemination of the connoisseur’s specialised knowledge. By establishing this topography, the cataloguer gives each master a specific position situated in a precise artistic context.

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[1996]; Te Heesen 2003 and Dacome 2004;

<sup>23</sup> “[...] tente de combiner deux caractères contradictoires: l’ordre, et l’ouverture infinie.” Griener 2010, 206.

<sup>24</sup> Dacome 2004, 603. Patricia Falguières and Adalgisa Lugli also analysed the link between the cabinet of curiosities and the art of memory: Lugli 1998 [1983]; Falguières 2003. On the art of memory, see also Yates 1972 [1966]; Rossi 1988 [1960]; Carruthers 1990; Corsi 1990; Bolzoni and Corsi 1992 and Carruthers 1998.

<sup>25</sup> Marolles 1666, see “préface” and Evelyn 1755 [1662], 123. For an analysis of Marolles’s text, see Brakensiek 2006.

<sup>26</sup> For example, in the album of Giulio Bonasone, nr. 50 of the index: “C’est une des plus belles pièces de l’œuvre de Bonasone, elle est grav. avec plus de tendresse qu’aucune & inv. avec Esprit, le grand goût de dessiner de Mich. Ange y est mêlé avec le gracieux de Raphael, & elle a encor le mérite d’être fort rare & d’une impression parfaite.” (Œuvres de Jules Bonasone, Albertina Vienna, Grafische Sammlung, inv. nr. HB35.1. For other examples, see also: Brakensiek 2003 and Smentek 2014.

<sup>27</sup> Roche 2003, chapter 3. Pierre-Jean Mariette comments on this particularity in an advertisement for the *Recueil Crozat*, published in the *Mercure de France*: “Un autre avantage pour les Etrangers, est de se trouver comme transportés dans les plus beaux Cabinets qui sont hors de leurs pays, avec infiniment plus de fruit & de satisfaction que s’ils en lisoient les simples descriptions.” Mariette 1728, 1003.

These associations not only facilitated an understanding of the broader historical narrative, but they also encouraged the memorisation of individual artistic styles. Images fixed in the memory with this framework formed what Roger de Piles calls the “memory storehouse” in his *Abrégé*.<sup>28</sup> They can easily be remembered and called upon at any time to draw stylistic comparisons. At this point, the classification system can be extracted from the limits of the collection and applied to other artistic repertoires. However, extending the initial classification always relies on the catalogued works, identified as such by the expert. These works become the canon to which the viewer can always return if there is need of a reference.

Thus, the reader is engaged not only visually, but also intellectually. That Mariette’s catalogues executed for Prince Eugene’s collection were read aloud socially is strong evidence of this function. When the young Mariette read his Raphael catalogue to a gathering of Viennese noblemen, it was met with great enthusiasm, the assembly expressing regret that “so much time has to pass before [the catalogue] will be published.”<sup>29</sup> Around the same time, Jean Mariette experienced a similar situation in Paris:

The civil lieutenant, a man of good taste, came a few days ago with one of our connoisseurs and with Mr. Boyvin, who is in charge of the books and prints at the King’s Library. [...] They wanted me to read the descriptions [of the prints] that I had made and the civil lieutenant told me that the catalogue pleased him as much as the engravings because it educated him. He and the two others urged me to publish it.<sup>30</sup>

This praise of the catalogues’ didactic function celebrates the approach offered by the Mariette family to the world of art lovers. The dealers

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<sup>28</sup> The “magasin de la mémoire”, Piles 1699, 88. On this matter, see also Yates 1972 [1966], 372 and Griener 2010, chapter 3.

<sup>29</sup> “[...] passer tant de temps avant que [le catalogue] puisse estre rendu public.” Letter from Pierre-Jean Mariette to Jean Mariette, Vienna, 7 June 1718 (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, A1629/BS b9 L28).

<sup>30</sup> “M<sup>e</sup> le Lieutenant civil qui a beaucoup de goust vint il y a quelques jours avec un de nos curieux et Mr Boyvin qui a la garde des livres et estampes de la bibliotheque du roy. [...] Ils voulurent que je leur fis lecture des descriptions que j’en [une suite d’estampes] avois fait et M<sup>e</sup> le Lieutenant civil me dit que le catalogue ne luy faisoit pas moins de plaisir que les estampes parce qu’il l’instruisoit et il m’exhorta fort aussi bien que les autres à le faire imprimer.” Letter from Jean Mariette to Pierre-Jean Mariette, Paris, 8 December 1717 (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, A1573/BS b10 L8).

placed their knowledge at the disposal of an élite public, with elaborate strategies to guide this élite gradually to cultivate a self-reliant *coup d'œil*.

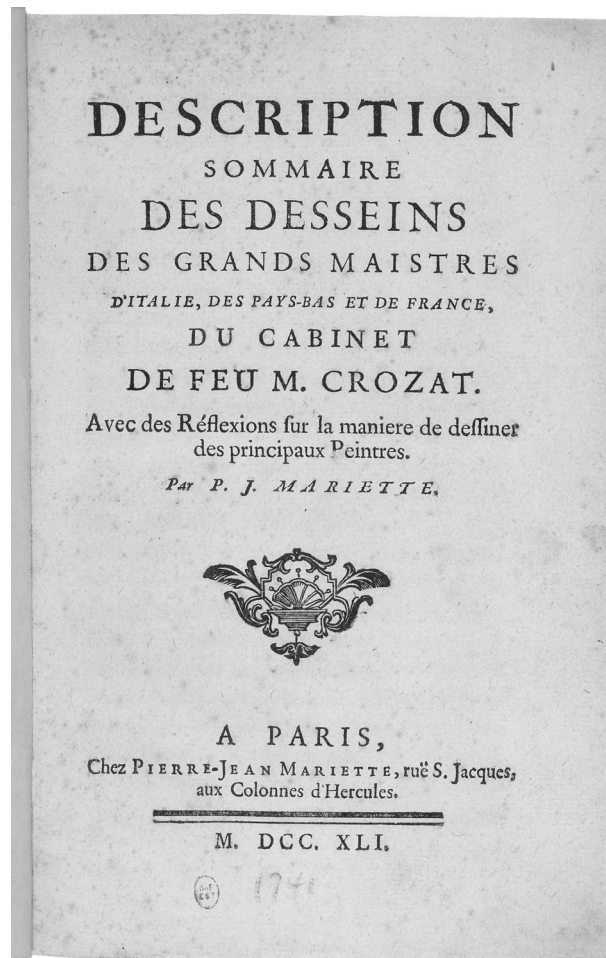


Figure 6: "Title Page." In Pierre-Jean Mariette, *Description sommaire des desseins des grands maîtres d'Italie, des Pays-Bas et de France, du cabinet de feu M. Crozat. Avec des Réflexions sur la manière de dessiner des principaux Peintres*, Paris, Aux Colonnes d'Hercule, 1741, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (source and © Bibliothèque Nationale de France).

Remarkably, Pierre-Jean Mariette understood the potential of this approach. He employed it, from 1729, in the composition of his books.<sup>31</sup> This approach occurred mainly in two editorial forms: the sale catalogue and the *recueil*. These publications are important because they definitively established Mariette's reputation among European connoisseurs. The catalogue written by Pierre-Jean Mariette for the sale of the Crozat collection probably remains the most famous (Fig. 6). It is unquestionably his most accomplished auction catalogue. As its title suggests, it is not only an inventory of the collection but also includes some *Réflexions sur la manière de dessiner des principaux Peintres*. The *Mercure de France* of January 1741 commented on this particularity:

It is then not only an enumeration organised by classes, and followed by a current number [...]; (we have enough of these kinds of catalogue) but there is, in addition, some kind of recapitulation, at the end of each main section, of what is most assured and most interesting to know about the different schools of Italy, the Netherlands, and France.<sup>32</sup>

Mariette legitimises this approach with his desire to make reading his catalogue “less dry and less boring.”<sup>33</sup> More than a simple sales instrument, this annotated list provides its reader with information on the artists and their styles—information that prevails throughout the book in the descriptions of items put up for sale. The emphasis is placed more on the artist and his particular style than on the iconographical subject. In other words, the expert gives his readers perceptual tools with which they can comprehend the artists' productions. He guides their viewing experience so that they can reach what sociologist Nathalie Heinich calls “the moment of recognition,”<sup>34</sup> that is to say, the moment in which the

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<sup>31</sup> Smentek 2014 reached the same conclusion. She mainly based her argument on the formal similarities between Mariette's print albums and *recueils*. See also Kobi 2017.

<sup>32</sup> “C'est donc non seulement une énumération distribuée par classes, & suivie par un numero courant [...]; (nous avons assés de Catalogues de cette espece) mais c'est encore une sorte de récapitulation au bout de chaque article principal, de ce qu'il y a de plus certain & de plus interessant à connoître dans les differentes Écoles d'Italie, des Pays-Bas, & de France.” *Mercure de France* 1741, 115.

<sup>33</sup> “[...] moins sèche & moins ennuyeuse”; Mariette 1741, xi. Edme-François Gersaint later reproduced this argument in his introduction of the sales catalogue of the Quentin de Lorangère collection. On this subject, see Glorieux 2002.

<sup>34</sup> “Aussi la confrontation avec l'objet—l'acte de regarder—n'est-elle qu'un moment ponctuel et individuel, intermédiaire entre la phase d'acquisition des ressources communes et la phase ultérieure de restitution des conclusions; c'est le



perception of an object actualises the knowledge that one had acquired about it. As the mediator of this process, Mariette instructs his readers in an analytical type of vision that will allow them to identify and evaluate works of art. Nonetheless, the operation described here was still intended for an experienced audience who could, through the perfect mastery of artistic vocabulary, understand the author's explications. Indeed, no illustrations support the text and no descriptions whatsoever clarify the terminology used.

### Mariette's Illustrated *Recueils*

Mariette's approach to the sales catalogue finds a contrasting application in his illustrated *Recueils*. By juxtaposing texts and images, the *Recueils* generate a dynamic of consultation very similar to the one occasioned by the print collection itself. In fact, the majority of Mariette's *Recueils* reproduced existing collections as, for example, the *Recueil Boyer d'Aguilles* and the *Recueil Gerini*. Most significantly, the only *recueil* that does not follow this tradition is the *Recueil d'estampes d'après les plus beaux tableaux et d'après les plus beaux dessins qui sont en France* (Fig. 7). Instead, this book represents an ideal gallery gathered from many private French collections, including those of the king of France, the regent of France and of Pierre Crozat. This editorial enterprise was the result of a collaboration between three eighteenth-century connoisseurs: Pierre Crozat, an influential Parisian collector who was the patron of this book; the count of Caylus (1692–1765), a famous Parisian antiquarian who coordinated its illustrations; and finally Pierre-Jean Mariette, who wrote the texts. The authors' idea was to found a "school of Painting as capable of improving taste, and educating young painters as any other lesson."<sup>35</sup> The book narrates European art history through a selection of critical paintings and drawings, organising them by nations and schools of painting. Unfortunately, various political and personal events delayed the edition and only two volumes were eventually published: the first dedicated to Roman artists, and the second to Venetian artists.

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moment de la 'reconnaissance', où ce qui est vu actualise ce qui est su." Heinich 2009, 130.

<sup>35</sup> "[...] école de Peinture aussi capable de perfectionner le goût, & de former les jeunes Peintres qu'aucune autre leçon." Crozat et al. 1729–1742, I, vii. On the *Recueil Crozat*, see, among other publications: Haskell 1987; Leca 2005; Bickendorf 2007; Schwaighofer 2009; Smentek 2014 and Kobi 2017.

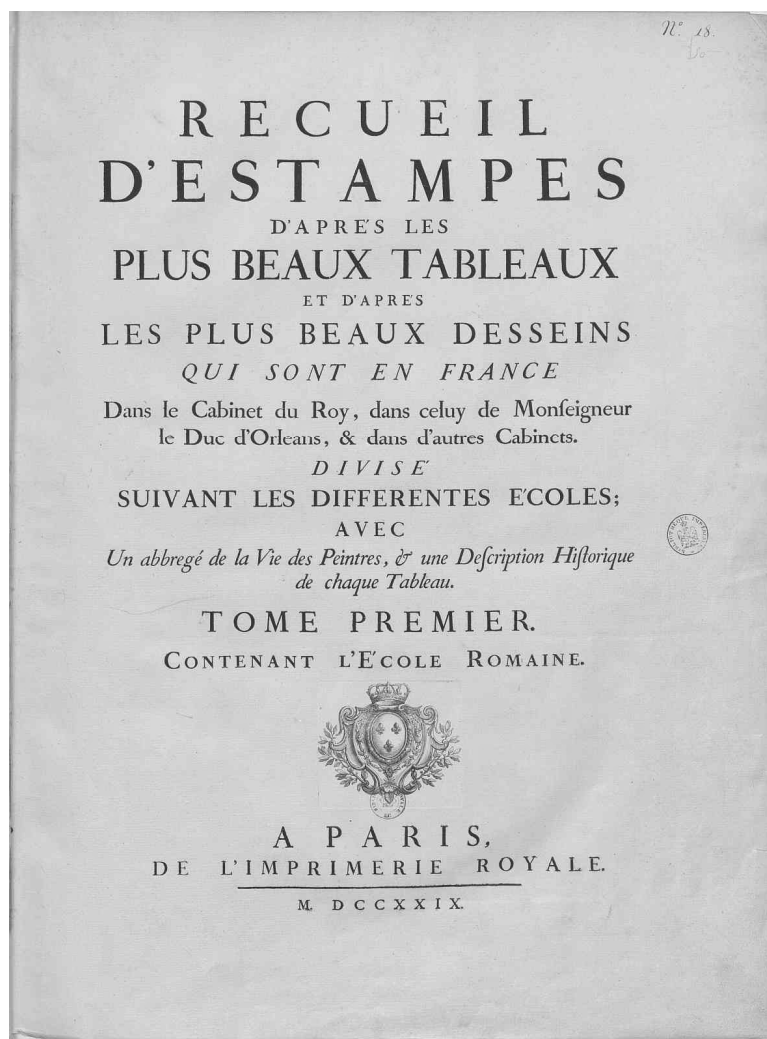


Figure 7: "Title page." In Pierre Crozat (et al.), *Recueil d'estampes d'après les plus beaux tableaux et d'après les plus beaux dessins qui sont en France dans le Cabinet du Roy, dans celui de Monseigneur le Duc d'Orléans, & dans d'autres Cabinets divisé suivant les différentes écoles; avec un abrégé de la vie des peintres, & une description historique de chaque tableau*, Paris, Imprimerie Royale, 1729–1742, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris (source and © Bibliothèque Nationale de France).

The three partners went through a great deal of trouble in order to produce the illustrations. In breach of every corporate and royal decree, Crozat installed four presses in his house, where he also gathered the artworks.<sup>36</sup> This temporary publishing house meant that engravers could work directly from the originals. This immediacy allowed the authors to present their book as a “school” for artists and for connoisseurs who might want to study the styles of the great masters. In this way, they could “compare the different manners of composing and drawing” by training their eyes through consultation of the book’s illustrations.<sup>37</sup> This assertion is sustained by the *Recueil*’s composition itself, which encourages comparisons between artists. Gabriele Bickendorf showed the ways in which these comparisons worked.<sup>38</sup> She convincingly demonstrated that, through the illustrations of the *Recueil*, the beholder was invited to perform a formal analysis of the pictures and to draw parallels between the master of a school and his pupils.

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I would like to complete my essay by adding that Mariette’s texts also participated in this dynamic. In order to ensure the clarity of his writing, the Parisian explains every technical or professional term that he uses (e.g. *chiaroscuro*, *stucco*) and he carefully structures his argument. After a short introduction on the artists’ lives, he gives a description of their works, divided into two parts: first, the title, which gives an iconographical overview; and then the description, which mainly focuses on an explication of the artwork’s stylistic and formal characteristics. As in Prince Eugene’s catalogues, Mariette’s analysis develops from the general to the specific, focusing its interest on artistic style. This epistemological model, defined by Carlo Ginzburg as an “evidential paradigm,”<sup>39</sup> works by way of abstraction. The description completely deconstructs the object to its substance—the few aspects that are characteristic of the artist’s style—finally to retain only its most distinctive qualities, and be thus easily memorised. The beholder’s contemplation taught here by Mariette, therefore, consists once again of a rational experience based on methodical observation.

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<sup>36</sup> See Dacier and Vuaflart 1921–1929, II, 87–90 and Haskell 1987.

<sup>37</sup> On “comparer les différentes manières de composer & de dessiner” see Crozat et al. 1729–1742, I, v.

<sup>38</sup> Bickendorf 2007.

<sup>39</sup> On the “paradigme indiciaire” see Ginzburg 1989 [1979], 139–80.

As a young man, organising Prince Eugene's print collection and in consultation with albums from Bologna, Mariette discovered a theoretical approach that would inform his practice for years to come and contribute to a fundamental shift in the practice of connoisseurial description and classification of art. From short introductory texts about an artist's style emerged his epistemological framework for the history of art.