

Catherine Loisel: Ludovico, Agostino, Annibale Carracci (*Inventaire général des dessins Italiens*, vol. VII); Paris: Réunion des Musées Nationaux 2004; ISBN 2-7118-4748-9; € 99,-

The series of inventories of Italian drawings in the Louvre has no fixed format: the volumes can adopt a division into periods, monographs, or schools. Publications on the drawings of Vasari and his contemporaries, Stefano della Bella, Raphael and his workshop, and Tuscan drawings between 1560 and 1800 show a range of diverse approaches in art-history. The most recent volume in this series, by Catherine Loisel, discusses the drawings by the three Carracci – Ludovico, Agostino and Annibale. It not only sums up the holdings of the Louvre of these three artists; the author has turned the book into a discussion on the importance of drawings in the understanding of the oeuvre of these three painters in an introductory essay.

Under the heading of ‚une aventure artistique‘, the complex issue of cooperation in the Carracci studio is addressed, to introduce the reader to the complex field in which the attribution and discussion of the drawings in the Louvre should be considered. As Carlo Cesare Malvasia already in his „Felsina pittrice“ of 1672 pointed out, the three cousins worked together on a number of commissions, and in some instances involved their students as well in these projects. At the same time, Malvasia also stressed the individuality of each of them by turning the readers' attention to their different but complementary tempers, which enabled them to cooperate with such great success¹. The frescocycles in the Bolognese Palazzo Magnani, Palazzo Fava and Palazzo Sampieri were renowned in their time as results of this cooperation, which was even stressed by the Carracci themselves in their statement on the cycle with the Story of Romulus in Palazzo Magnani that ‚It is by the Carracci; we have all made it‘².

But Giovanni Baglione, and to a lesser extent Giovanni Pietro Bellori, singled out Annibale for his achievements in Rome, and highlighted his work to the detriment of that of his brother Agostino and cousin Ludovico³. As a result, individual style was stressed by these authors; and modern art history, with its predominantly biographical approach, has tried to individuate the hands of the three cousins in the extant works of art. But the collaborative Bolognese projects posed a problem. The state of conservation of the cycle in Palazzo Fava has hitherto hindered an understanding of the contribution of each of the three Carracci in this enterprise; the frescoes in Palazzo

1 See the translation and discussion of Malvasia's account in his *Felsina Pittrice* in ANN SUMMERSCALE: *Malvasia's Life of the Carracci*; Pennsylvania Park 2000; for the complementary characters, see p. 87: „This indeed was always Ludovico's intention – that is, to bring together some day, and to offset the diligence of Agostino against the impatience of Annibale, and in turn the quickness of Annibale against the timidity of Agostino“. – See also my review of ANN SUMMERSCALE's book in this *Journal* 6, 2002, pp. 347–349.

2 This was reported by Malvasia; see SUMMERSCALE (as in note 1), p. 148.

3 See GIOVANNI BAGLIONE: *Le vite de' pittori, scultori et architetti*, ed. by Jacob Hess and Herwarth Röttgen; Rome 1995, p. 106–109, and GIOVANNI PIETRO BELLORI: *Le vite de' pittori scultori et architetti moderni*; Bologna 2000, p. 19–98, and p. 103–131 for the life of Agostino Carracci.

Magnani have only recently been discussed more in depth; and what little remains of the larger cycle in Palazzo Sampieri has obfuscated the question of attribution completely⁴. Although the debate on the hands in the Galleria Farnese in Rome – where only Annibale and Agostino worked – has lost its acuteness, neither that issue can be considered as definitely resolved⁵.

Catherine Loisel's discussion in the introductory essay aims to show how the drawings can be used as an alternative aid in questions of attribution. It throws a different light on the matter of individual style versus cooperative products, by concentrating primarily on the drawings. She discusses stylistic matters in various paragraphs that focus on the developments in the work of Agostino, Annibale and Ludovico, in chronological sections. The main question in these paragraphs is the attribution of hands, first in individual works and then in joint enterprises. The confrontation between these two categories is used to determine the participation of each of the cousins in the joint ventures. For this reason, the longer paragraph on the 'Great commissions of the 1590s' (p. 33–46), forms the core of Catherine Loisel's argumentation. It is followed by paragraphs on the developments in Agostino's and Annibale's individual projects; as Ludovico was less involved in the joint enterprises, the last paragraph is dedicated to questions about his work and artistic development.

That, as a result, attributions in the present book differ in some respects from those made by other authors does not surprise. Catherine Loisel has attempted to reason from the secure drawings, and from there define the style of each of the cousins and consecutively identify these 'hands' in drawings of the large holdings of the Louvre that are connected to the collaborative enterprises. For example, the attribution of the preparatory drawing of „The meeting of Jason and King Aeëtes“, one of the scenes in Palazzo Fava in Bologna, had been attributed to Ludovico by Boschloo, Bohn and Feigenbaum, and to Annibale by Benati⁶. Catherine Loisel follows the attribution to Annibale, on the grounds of its freer handling and the originality of its composition (p. 22). The fresco itself has been attributed to Annibale by Boschloo and Benati, a matter that Catherine Loisel does not discuss here. Another fresco depicting „Romulus dedicating the spoils of Acron to Jupiter“, in Palazzo Magnani, had been attributed to Annibale by Rudolf Wittkower, and more recently to Agostino. Yet it is noted, for example by Clare Robertson, that the mannerist style of the preparatory

4 For the attribution of these Bolognese projects, see for example ANTON BOSCHLOO: Annibale Carracci in Bologna – Visible Reality in Art after the Council of Trent, I; Maarsse 1974, p. 25–28, and DANIELE BENATI: Annibale Carracci's Beginnings in Bologna. Between Nature and History' in: DANIELE BENATI et al.: The Drawings of Annibale Carracci; Washington 1999, p. 41f. A recent publication on Palazzo Magnani is SAMUEL VITALI: A new document for the Carracci and Ruggero Bascapè at the Palazzo Magnani in Bologna, in: *The Burlington Magazine* 143, 2001, p. 604–613.

5 See for example CLARE ROBERTSON in: CLARE ROBERTSON/CATHERINE WHISTLER: Drawings by the Carracci from British Collections; Oxford 1996, p.90, G. FINALDI/E. HARDING/J. WALLIS: Gods in Love. The Carracci Cartoons Restored; London 1995, and ROBERTO ZAPPERI: Per la storia della Galleria Farnese. Nuove ricerche e precisazioni documentarie, in: *Bollettino d'Arte* 109–110, 1999, p. 91.

6 See BOSCHLOO 1974 (as in note 4), p. 25–26, GAIL FEIGENBAUM: Lodovico Carracci: A Study of his Later Career and a Catalogue of His Paintings; Ph.D. Dissertation Princeton 1984, cat. no. 3, and BENATI 1999 (as in note 4), cat. no. 5.

drawing (the fresco is now usually attributed jointly to Annibale and Agostino) shows that Agostino in his designs for the work in Palazzo Magnani adhered more to Ludovico's style⁷. Catherine Loisel follows the attribution to Agostino, but notes that the dynamic appearance of the sheet reminds of Annibale's style (p. 40).

A third example of the intricateness of attributions can be found in the Galleria Farnese in Rome, where Annibale and Agostino collaborated in a number of frescoes. The scene of „Aurora and Cephalus“ was designed by Agostino, according to Robertson, and executed in fresco by Annibale and Agostino⁸; others attribute it to Agostino alone, or to Annibale. In this case, Catherine Loisel attributed the design to Agostino, remarking that the style of the Louvre drawing shows a certain ‚nervousness‘ that relates to the artists' taste for expressive figures.

Catherine Loisel's essay is followed by a short history of the Louvre collection of drawings, and the provenance of its Carracci holdings; again in this case, the relative fame of Annibale in comparison with that of his cousins makes it easier to trace the workshop drawings left after Annibale's death in 1609 – many of these ended up via Domenichino in the Royal Collection at Windsor. At the same time, the circumstance that Annibale enjoyed greater fame also led to the confusion of attribution, as many sheets by Agostino and Ludovico were at one time or another attributed to him; it underlines again the complexity of attribution that is Catherine Loisel's main concern in the following catalogue. The following catalogue then provides the reader with the essential details of each sheet – provenance, bibliography and attribution – which is followed by the appendix by Ariane de La Chapelle. This discusses the use and circulation of paper in the Carracci context, on account of the physical aspects of the sheets in the Louvre collection and the watermarks found in them, and individuating this for the drawings of each of the three cousins, and the copies of several drawings in the Louvre collections.

Catherine Loisel's book shows, that the cooperation of the three brothers is a historical issue that still affects art history at present, and the introductory essay effectively summarizes the problems that have troubled art historians until today. Most of these seem to be solved, although the three collaborative projects still remain controversial. The attempt of the present book to reason from the drawings, and not the finished frescoes, throws another light on this issue, without however arriving at the solution. One could ask, whether a definite answer is possible at all. As sources and earlier studies have shown, it occurred regularly that one of the cousins made the design, and another executed the fresco. On the other hand, Catherine Loisel's catalogue itself is somewhat short in its argumentation of the attributions, and leads to the question whether or not the discussion of single sheets should be made more explicit to begin to formulate an answer. The meticulousness with which this book has been written, though, makes it a valuable contribution to the study of the work of the Car-

7 See ROBERTSON 1996 (as in note 5), p.74.

8 ROBERTSON 1996 (as in note 5), p. 33.

racci in general, and shows how the questions of attribution that have been a main concern for many scholars in this field – a discussion that should be made explicit when writing a present-day catalogue of a museum's holdings in a particular field such as this.

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Claudia Swan: Art, Science, and Witchcraft in Early Modern Holland. Jacques de Gheyn II (1565–1629) (*Studies in Netherlandish Visual Culture*); Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2004; XVII u. 254 S., ill.; ISBN 0-521-82674-8; £ 41.–

Jacques de Gheyn II hat ein derart schillerndes Oeuvre hinterlassen, daß bislang keine Etikettierung gelang, aber auch die Bewertung seiner Scharnierstellung in der niederländischen Kunstgeschichte nicht erörtert worden ist. Die bisherige Forschungstätigkeit ist stets auf einzelne Werkgruppen konzentriert geblieben. Während der New Hollstein zu de Gheyn erst kürzlich erschienen ist, sind seit der Publikation des Oeuvrekataloges der Zeichnungen und Gemälde fast fünfundzwanzig Jahre vergangen. Kehrt man von hier wieder in die Gegenwart zurück, bleiben zwei Werkgruppen, die in isolierte Forschungsstränge Eingang gefunden haben: Blumenmalerei und Hexenzeichnungen. Erst mit Claudia Swans Buch liegt nun eine Studie vor, die nicht vor Gattungsgrenzen halt macht, sondern, gleichsam in einer Zirkelwendung, das Nebeneinander der beiden Bildgruppen als gesondertes Problem herauspräpariert. Die stilistische Differenz zwischen den beiden etwa gleichzeitig entstandenen Bildgruppen sei vom kunsthistorischen Standpunkt ebenso erklärungsbedürftig wie die Beziehung zwischen frühneuzeitlichem Empirismus und „dem Okkulten“ aus wissenschaftshistorischer Perspektive (S. 4).

Claudia Swan ordnet die beiden etwa gleichzeitig entstandenen Werkgruppen zunächst Carel van Manders Begriffspaar „naer het leven“ und „uyt den gheest“ zu und stellt sie einander pointiert gegenüber. Die Naturstudien entsprechen der kunsttheoretischen Forderung nach „Naturalismus“ bzw. Naturwahrheit oder „Mimesis“, die Hexenbilder jener nach „Imagination“, „phantasia“.

Entlang diesem Begriffspaar bzw. den Werkgruppen ist das Buch in zwei große Kapitel eingeteilt, die sich als gesonderte Studien betrachten lassen. In beiden setzt Claudia Swan die Bilder nur in einem ersten Schritt zu den kunsttheoretischen Begriffen in Verbindung, um im nächsten die Frage nach möglichen Beziehungen zwischen ihnen und erkenntnistheoretischen Grundlagen der frühen Wissenschaften innerhalb einer *visual culture* zu stellen. Es ist bezeichnend, daß der erste Teil des Buches, der den Naturstudien gewidmet ist, mit der panegyrischen Aussage von Constantin Huygens eröffnet wird: Jacques de Gheyn könne in seinen Bildern wie durch ein Mikroskop eine „neue Welt“ sichtbar machen. Bereits Svetlana Alpers hat diese Passage zitiert, um Jacques de Gheyn als Kronzeugen einer „beschreibenden“ Kunst aufzuru-