

mentales Gegensatzpaar' (53-78), 'Warum Griechenland?' (79-120) und 'Kunst als Gegenstand der Geschichte' (121-178). In luzider Sprache (den Übersetzern ist ein großes Lob auszusprechen) und in klarer gedanklicher Struktur wird ein aspekt- und facettenreiches, dabei breit belegtes neues Bild von Winckelmann gezeichnet. Dabei geht die Verf. nicht selten weit über ihr eigentliches Thema hinaus – es entsteht in Teilen nachgerade eine Allgemeingeschichte der deutschen Buchkultur im 18. Jh. Gerade weil auf den 'Heros' der deutschen Archäologie hier so mancher Schat-

ten fällt, ist der Stendaler Winckelmann-Gesellschaft für die Aufnahme in diese Reihe großer Respekt zu zollen.

Nimmt man alle vier Bücher gemeinsam in den Blick, so ist zu konstatieren, daß einige redaktionstechnische Nachlässigkeiten (u. a. fehlen bei Wrede und Déculot Angaben über das Erscheinungsjahr; bei Steiner finden sich diverse Unstimmigkeiten in der Typographie) das insgesamt höchst positive Fazit nicht mindern können. Mit Spannung erwartet man weitere Bände der Stendaler Winckelmannforschungen.

Christoph Höcker

STEFFI ROETTGEN

## Anton Raphael Mengs, 1728-1779

*Volume I: Das malerische und zeichnerische Werk. Volume II: Leben und Wirken. Munich, Hirmer 1999-2003. 1,319 pp, numerous illustrations. € 398,- . ISBN: 3-7774-7900-4*

Since the advent of interdisciplinary studies in the humanities during the 1970s that gave rise to the so-called new art history, the number of traditional artist's monographs and œuvre catalogues has dramatically declined. Indeed, with many scholars increasingly focused on patronage studies and cultural history, some have thought that the era of the scholarly monograph devoted to a single artist was at an end. Even a brief perusal of Steffi Roettgen's magisterial *Anton Raphael Mengs* will assure the most skeptical art historian that the artist's monograph and œuvre catalogue are alive and well. The product of three decades of painstaking archival research, *Mengs* is also a monument of brilliant and sophisticated historical reconstruction. This massive, absolutely authoritative book has greatly broadened (possibly even redefined) the parameters of what a monograph can achieve. The only publication of similar scholarly

ambition and intellectual distinction is David Mannings's two-volume *Sir Joshua Reynolds: A Complete Catalogue of His Paintings* (Yale University Press, 2000), which appeared one year after the publication of the first volume of *Anton Raphael Mengs*.

Roettgen's impressive achievement is thoughtfully organized and, despite its complexity and the range of its contents, is completely usable, a distinction few books of this length and scope can claim. Volume one, the catalogue raisonné, will be the part of the book most frequently used for information on individual works and for its extensive bibliography (pp. 587-613). The volume begins with a thoughtful overview of the eighteenth-century textual sources, the secondary literature and the history of criticism of Mengs's work. This is followed by sixteen color plates (some of better quality than others) before the start of the catalogue

itself. It is divided into four parts: subject paintings (pp. 25-196), portraits (pp. 197-359), ceiling frescoes (pp. 360-418) and drawings (pp. 419-87). Supplementary catalogues that include such items as a list of sources that mention Mengs's works, works attributed to him, etc., follows (pp. 489-560). Documentary appendices that include Mengs's death inventory of 1779 and the inventory of the Mengs drawings in the estate of Bernardo de Iriarte precede the bibliography, which is followed by highly useful indices of places, individuals, works that are *in situ*, location of other works, etc. Despite the sheer volume of information, the catalogue's rich contents are surprisingly accessible and instructive.

The catalogue of paintings is divided by theme, from the Virgin and Christ Child to allegories and personifications. Portraits are organized by gender and social rank, with males coming before females and royals and aristocrats before others; Mengs's numerous self-portraits are the final part of this section. Roettgen was wise to separate ceiling frescoes from subject paintings generally. Considered as a group, they are remarkably coherent and impressive and might have gotten lost in the larger context of the artist's painted production. The frescoes are arranged alphabetically by site, from the Spanish royal hunting lodge at Aranjuez to the Sala dei Papiri in the Palazzo Apostolico Vaticano. A highly useful feature of the more complex fresco entries is the inclusion of line drawings of the compositions within an architectural matrix (especially important given Mengs's generally architectonic conception of large ceiling frescoes). These highly detailed images include numbers next to the major figures with a caption outside the image identifying them. In the case of *Allegory of the Museo Clementino* in the Sala dei Papiri (pp. 406-18), the diagram includes the two quadrangular and two lunette fresco fields that "support" the central image of History seated before the

entrance to the museum, accompanied by Fame, History and the Roman deity Janus. The subsidiary images represent Moses and Saint Peter in the quadrangles and an ibis and a pelican in the lunettes. Since almost all illustrations of this important fresco only show the central section, the complexity of the allegory is usually missed. Moses and Peter represent the continuity of historical experience and scriptural revelation that culminates in the Clementine Museum established by the apostolic successors of the latter, while the ibis and pelican underscore the roots of western civilization in Egypt and its perfection in Catholic Rome. Roettgen is to be commended for going to the great pains of having these line diagrams produced, since they are so crucial to a proper reading of the fresco's iconography and the patron's agenda for the Museum generally, and for the Sala dei Papiri specifically.

The catalogue entries for the paintings are too numerous and detailed to consider individually, but the documentation and description of one major work, the *Noli Me Tangere*, painted for the altar of the chapel of All Souls College of the University of Oxford and now on loan to the National Gallery in London, give a good idea of what one may expect to find in all the entries (pp. 105-110). Listed as item 65 in the paintings section, the object is identified by title and biblical reference, with an indication of a color plate in the beginning of the volume (in this case, plate 3). It then lists the medium (oil on panel), the dimensions (291 x 178 cm) and location. This essential information is followed by a careful identification of the figures and a description of the colors employed, followed by comments on the painting's physical condition. Then come numbered documents, ranging from details of the commission and payments to letters from James Byres (the famous antiquarian and art dealer who lived in Rome), who was the liaison between the painter and the authorities at All Souls

College. In addition, Roettgen records the payments for packing and shipping the object to England as well as contemporary evaluations of the altarpiece, whose critical reception was mixed. The last section of the documentation is an extensive bibliography. So careful is Roettgen's research on matters related to the business of the commission, from inception to delivery, that one could imagine scholars using the entries to help construct a narrative history of Rome's thriving art market.

A detailed discussion of the iconography, style, artistic genesis and secondary literature follows the factual and documentary material related to the painting. It is in these brief interpretive essays that Roettgen the historian shows to greatest advantage. A scholar of less ambition would have been satisfied with the documentary section alone, but a desire to place individual works in a broader, more meaningful context shines through in this and in all the entries on the more important paintings. Roettgen is especially perceptive about Mengs's deployment of his sources (in the case of *Noli Me Tangere*, Correggio, and the *Apollo Belvedere* with a hint of Bolognese classicism), with the goal of reconfiguring tradition to suit modern exigencies. She also addresses the important issue of the painting's subsequent impact on academic art. The entry on *Noli Me Tangere* is followed by shorter entries on the preparatory drawings and oil sketches related to the altarpiece. Throughout the catalogue entries one is continually impressed by their cogency and discipline. Allowing for differences in approach to a wide variety of works of art, there is a remarkable consistency in quality and coverage. My only complaint about the catalogue entries in general is that one has to read the text attentively in order to find the date of the work. This detracts a bit from their usage as quick points of reference. Should not the date have been included in the preliminary information, perhaps immediately after the

title of the work? This minor quibble aside, the catalogue is enormously useful for reliable information and interpretive perception of Mengs's entire artistic production.

Although the catalogue rightly gives pride of place to Mengs's paintings, the drawings are by no means given short shrift – the individual entries are as detailed, informative and thorough as one could wish. In this section, the author pays special attention to male nude *académies*, studio life drawings that are unquestionably among the finest such productions of the eighteenth century. They include more naturalistically posed nudes (Z28, Z31 and Z35, pp. 428–31 are especially fine) and others inspired by the antique but suffused with a potent sense of naturalism and immediacy. The *Running Male Model posed as a Faun with a Rattle* in Darmstadt is an impressive specimen of this latter type. One must not forget that in the mid-1740s Mengs avidly attended the studio of the Roman painter Marco Benefial, who directed a life class outside the jurisdiction of the Accademia di San Luca (and in violation of its prerogatives). In their frank naturalism and corporeal intensity, some of the male life drawings (Z57a–Z57h, pp. 438–41) anticipate the celebrated painted male nude *académies* by Jacques-Louis David, produced in the late 1770s during his residency at the French Academy in Rome. In a different spirit, the wistful charm and freshness of such drawings as *Portrait of a Young Girl* in Milan (Z77, p. 449), a sensitive study of a pensive child rendered as a finely finished head but with only a barely sketched torso, should also be mentioned.

As an authoritative reference for the œuvre of Anton Raphael Mengs, volume I of Roettgen's book is the indispensable point of departure for all serious questions about individual works. Volume II, however, is a model of historical reconstruction of the life, career and theoretical writings of one of the most influential artists of the age of enlightenment.

After a section of fifty-seven fine color plates, chapter one begins with a detailed discussion of Mengs's origins and youthful training (pp. 70-114). Of particular interest here is the description of the artist's relationship with his strict father Ishmael Mengs. Also included in this chapter is an analysis of Mengs's work in pastel in Dresden. The pastel aesthetic remained influential for the painter throughout his career, and is manifested in several of his later drawings, which often have a delicate, atmospheric quality reminiscent of pastel. Roettgen mentions the celebrated Venetian pastel artist Rosalba Carriera in connection with Mengs's production but, given her great reputation at the court in Dresden, perhaps more could have been said about it.

Chapters two and three examine Mengs's works in Rome before his removal to Madrid in 1761. This period is divided chronologically; 1752-1755 (pp. 115-55) and 1755-1761 (pp. 156-216). It was during these years that Mengs's mature style fully developed and he became one of Europe's most celebrated artists. In this period he assiduously studied Raphael (pp. 130-34), both visually and theoretically, after absorbing important lessons from the Carracci and their followers during a sojourn in Bologna. An especially crucial discussion of Mengs's French connections – both to the Académie de France à Rome and to artists and patrons in Paris – reveals a much more detailed knowledge of developments in French art on the painter's part than is usually supposed (pp. 141-45). Chapter three culminates in a lengthy consideration of the artist's best-known work, *Parnassus* in the Villa Albani (pp. 184-93) and an exposition of Mengs's *Gedanken über die Schönheit und den Geschmack in der Malerey* (pp. 193-201), one of the most intellectually ambitious art-theoretical texts produced in the eighteenth century. In addition, Roettgen documents French knowledge of, and interest in, the art

of Mengs. This is only one avenue of research on the artist that could develop from Roettgen's work that might be pursued with advantage.

The next three chapters chart the artist's first residency at the Bourbon court in Madrid (pp. 217-78), a four-year stint in Italy, spent mostly at Rome, occasioned by ill health in Madrid (pp. 279-343), and his return to the Spanish capital and his last years in Rome from 1774-1779 (pp. 344-393). During his first sojourn in Spain, Mengs was especially active as a portraitist to the court, producing several memorable images of members of the Bourbon family (pp. 248-257). Of particular note in this group are his representations of the royal children. Both *Infanta Carlotta Joaquina* and *Archduke Francis of Lothringen-Habsburg* (colorplates 38 and 39) are brilliant hybrids that effectively fuse the dynastic portrait with the more naturalistic representations of children characteristic of the century. Such sensitivity to the visual qualities of children is rather surprising, given the painter's earlier works, and are deeply revealing of Mengs's impressive artistic range, an aspect of his oeuvre that is often underestimated.

His work in Madrid, however, was not limited to court portraits or even the imposing ceiling frescoes he produced for the Palacio Real. With the support of King Charles III, he initiated a set of institutional reforms for the Academy of San Fernando that led to considerable opposition and controversy (pp. 260-64). Aimed primarily at improving the quality and consistency of instruction, especially in life drawing, Mengs's recommendations were only enacted after he had departed for Italy. Nonetheless, they had a major impact on the next generation of Spanish artists, including Francisco Goya. In fact, in chapter six (pp. 354-60), Roettgen makes a persuasive case for Mengs as an important mentor to the most celebrated Spanish painter since Diego Velázquez.

After obtaining royal permission to go to Italy (for two years, although he remained abroad for almost four), Mengs visited Genoa, Florence and Parma on his way to Rome. His experience in Parma was particularly notable, since an augmented appreciation of Correggio is seen in works produced in Rome in the early 1770s, especially the *Noli Me Tangere* altarpiece for Oxford (pp. 280-87). During his “Italian intermezzo,” as the author nicely calls it, Mengs also became much more involved in the Accademia di San Luca, where he was elected Principe in 1772. Based on his administrative experience in Madrid, Mengs attempted to institute improvements to the Academy’s pedagogical regimen, especially emphasizing life drawing. Roettgen discusses his activities at some length (pp. 297-310), illustrating her ideas with a series of male nude *académies* by Mengs and others. This chapter also includes a discussion of the painter’s rivalry with Pompeo Batoni, Rome’s leading painter, underscoring the fact that it was far friendlier than many contemporaries, especially British Grand Tourists, would have us believe, based on their letters and travel accounts (pp. 311-318). The “intermezzo” ends with an extended discussion of the ceiling fresco in the Sala dei Papiri (pp. 318-325) that goes far beyond the entry for the painting in volume I.

The final chapter of volume II considers Mengs’s posthumous reputation and artistic legacy, especially his impact on academic painters in germanophone countries in the first half of the nineteenth century. But the

most engaging section is the analysis of the artist’s numerous self-portraits, which arguably are among the most psychologically revealing and intense self-examinations in western art since Rembrandt (pp. 398-403). Here Roettgen allows an authorial reflection on Mengs as an individual as well as an artist, a view that emphatically breaks the now outmoded characterization of the painter as a cold, academic eclectic. The candor and verve of many of these images are truly remarkable. Especially moving is the transformation from the youthful confidence and hauteur of the self-portrait in Dresden executed in ca. 1744 to the introspective world-weariness of the painting in Berlin made thirty-five years later. This latter portrait in particular reminds us that a first-rate artist like Mengs often frustrates stylistic labels. Visually, the Berlin *Self-Portrait* has more in common with Gustave Courbet than with Pompeo Batoni, and Neoclassicism seems wholly inadequate as a taxonomic designation.

*Anton Raphael Mengs* is a rare achievement. Authoritative, magisterial, indispensable and, equally important – accessible, these two volumes will stand the test of time. Roettgen’s achievement should be the model for all such studies of major artistic figures of the era (Carlo Maratti, Camillo Rusconi and Agostino Masucci, among others, immediately come to mind). It is to be hoped that *Anton Raphael Mengs* will be emulated, in the best tradition of eighteenth-century ideologies of cultural progress, but there can be little fear that it will ever be surpassed.

Christopher M. S. Johns

## Kostenlose Rechtsberatung (arbeitsrechtliche Erstberatung) für Mitglieder

Der ehrenamtliche Justitiar des Verbandes, Herr RA Jens Peter Haeusgen, der stets auch für eine Rechtsberatung der Mitglieder zur Verfügung stand, ist Ende letzten Jah-

res verstorben (siehe Nachruf in der *Kunstchronik* 3.2006, S. 132). Seine mäzenatische Großzügigkeit ist nicht zu ersetzen.