Looking at patterns and motifs

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Abstract
I take as my point of departure the various meanings of the Spanish word *trama*, observing and ordering these as they relate to different aspects of the art of printmaking. The phenomenon of *trama* is appreciable in the conception and activity of printmaking and also in the materials this art employs, which in turn leave their mark upon the visible and the tactile. *Trama* is also important in the graphic narrative and in iconography, and this article contributes to the literature with two, hitherto unpublished examples. The first example is a multifaceted icon which was created in the context of popular European printmaking but which came to exert an influence on fine art printmaking even in Picasso. The second example is a drawing which I have been able to attribute to Marià Fortuny, the most internationally renowned Catalan painter of the nineteenth century, and which I examine in the light of an association that may be made between the drawing and a print by Rembrandt.

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Introduction

[1]　　In Latin languages the word *trama* appeared for the first time in the year 1400, from the Latin *trama*, the weft to form cloth. It is defined as the thread or group of threads which run the width of the cloth, interlaced with the lengthwise yarns that form the warp. Etymologically it has the meaning "across", in Spanish *a través*, from the Latin *trans* which in turn derives from the Sanskrit *tar*. In the jargon of textile making, the threads of the weft and the warp are differentiated, the warp running the full length of the material, parallel to the edges. Weavers draw the weft yarns transversally through the previously laid out lines of the warp.

[2]　　*Trama* is also the word used for things which have a structure similar to that of threads of fabric: the distribution or links between the different parts of something, a group of interlaced filaments, the support structure of living tissue. The word is commonly used in architectural jargon and in urban planning, and one needs to look no further than the block pattern of Cerdà's plan for the Eixample district in Barcelona.

Figuratively, as a metaphor of fabric, *trama* refers to a plot or intrigue, as in the expression *se trama una conspiración* – "a conspiracy is being woven". In the vocabulary of photo-mechanical reproduction, the word refers to the transparent screen with a very fine square grid, which is placed between the photosensitive plate and the photoengraving surface to obtain half-tones by separating the resulting image into dots of light. In present-day communication and computing technology, it refers to what in certain communication protocols is called a 'packet', the unit for sending data over a network, composed of a packet header, the actual data and the packet trailer – *final de trama* in Spanish. Particularly within the art of engraving, there is a wide range of meanings of the word *trama*, which not only appear frequently but also determine its specific language. Within both the process and the objective it can differentiate four groups of meanings: graphic, textural, narrative and iconographic. The latter two aspects will be developed below through specific study cases related to popular Catalan prints and etchings by two of the most eminent Catalan and Spanish artists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Marià Fortuny (Reus 1838-1874) and Pablo Picasso (Malaga 1881-Mougins 1973).[1]

Graphic patterns

[3]   In all cases, the word *trama* suggests regularity and continuity. This continuity is always maintained in the whole, even when there are interruptions or physical breaks in an area. The *trama* may be ripped in the same way as a thread may be cut. Using thread as a metaphor, it can establish a 'fabric' based on lines. In engravings on metal plates, the layout of the dots forms a pattern within a pattern. A visual one, to create the image, and a physical one for the print, together they determine the actual perception of the print and what it represents. Even when there is an inferred outline, when there is an organised shape, the new pattern superimposes its prevalent order to complement the composition and is the organisational structure. But patterns which are free or broken, obtained by creative etching or abstract processes, also always form the necessary tissue for printmaking.

[4]   In the most basic pattern for line drawing in traditional engraving, especially copperplate engraving, the single stroke, the line resulting from a succession of dots, is the element that triggers subdivisions. The mental object – the line – and the physical object – the stroke – partition the blank paper and introduce shading to create half-tones, values and volumes through incisions: inferred, ordered, full-length or in sections, grouped, regular, thick, thin, resembling mycelium filaments or simply dots and lines.

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[1] In relation to these aspects, it is worth mentioning in particular the contribution of Rosalind E. Krauss (*The Optical Unconscious*, Cambridge, Mass. 1993), who took Walter Benjamin's idea on optical intuition and developed it transversely through networks of modern art. A similar contribution, though with a more phenomenological approach, is that of Jean-François Chevrier in *La trame et le hazard*, Paris 2010.

[5]   When the art of engraving was at its moment of maximum splendour, it brought about the normalisation and classification of graphic patterns in a standardised theory of 'strokes'.[2] When, in a black-and-white print, the appearance of one signifies the absence of the other, the pattern configures the whole gradient of visible and inseparable values simultaneously, light and dark. When the black is sunk into the engraved lines and is minimised, the white stands out and expands, and they become totally dependent on each other for their existence. The *trama* also structures the perceptive quality of the light resulting from the vibration of black and white, a rhythmic alternation, of presence and absence of light, of directional and expansive dynamic structure as in musical cadencies.

[6]   It should also be noted, as Ingold points out in his recently published *The Life of Lines*, that when executing a pattern, the engraver's hand makes the same movement through the air, but in the opposite direction, as the burin on the copper. It is a physical movement that creates a double pattern, one as a gesture in space, the other becoming permanent and leaving the mark made by the tool.[3] In contrast to the trace of a single line, the movement alludes to the idea of violence. As lines cross, the first ones are attacked by subsequent lines running over them, in the same way as a pattern tends to invade the area around it as it extends. With regard to the image of Rafael's *Poetry*, Hubert Damisch noted "*L'opposition, le contraste entre deux régimes du trait en se réduisant pas à un simple trait stylistique; dans l'intervalle entre la planéarité du dispositif des hachures et la linéarité perdue du contour, la violence incisive se fait jour qui est celle non plus du stylet, mais du trait de plume*".[4] It is obvious that this aspect is more strongly emphasized with the effects of the burin and the drypoint needle on the paper.

[7]   Since the first, most paradigmatic theoretical work of Abraham Bosse, *Traicté des manières de graver en taille-douce sur l'airain* (Paris, 1645) (Fig. 1) and its later additions and translations into different languages, the pattern has been a well-studied topic for teaching the use of engraver's burins, needles and etching tools, to obtain various effects. In contrast, studies of its rhetoric aspects are limited to passing references in texts on perception, most of which are based on the book by William Ivins Jr., *Prints and Visual Communication*. Written in the 1950s, it was published in Spanish in Barcelona, as *Imagen impresa y conocimiento*, over twenty years later (1975), by Gustavo Gili, with a prologue by Daniel Giralt-Miracle, an expert in graphic arts. This is an instructive text which today, at the beginning of the 21st century, is still relevant, with no other publication improving on its study of the meanings of traditional graphic patterns.

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[2] Javier Blas (dir.), *Ascensión Ciruelos, Clemente Barrena, Diccionario del dibujo y de la estampa. Vocabulario y tesauro sobre las artes del dibujo, grabado, litografía y serigrafía*, Madrid 1996, 81.

[3] Tim Ingold, *Líneas. Una breve historia*, Barcelona 2015, 188.

[4] Hubert Damisch, *Traité du trait. Tractatus tractus*, Paris 1995, 73.
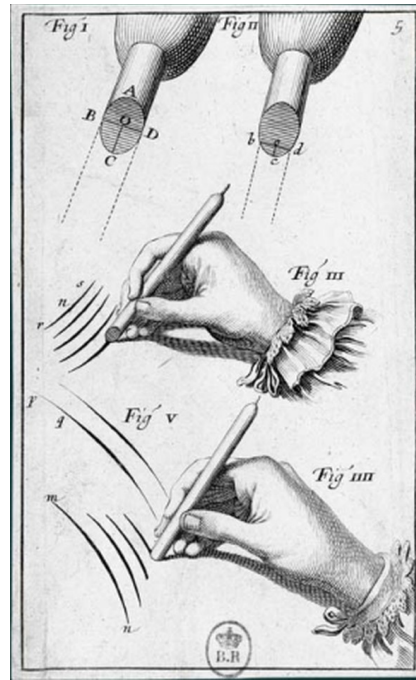
1 Abraham Bosse, *Traicté des manières de graver en taille-douce*..., fig. 5 (rep. from Gutenberg Reprint, Paris 1979)

[8]   Ivins defined the graphic pattern as syntaxes, the standardisation of the line work similar to the rational network of geometry, a special system of linear structures. Beginning with the Renaissance, he describes it in the fine lines used by gold and silversmiths and in the wider lines produced by sketch artists and painters. He continues with the previously mentioned book by Abraham Bosse and the technique of Claude Mellan, based on using parallel and spiralling lines – the 'warp' – sometimes without any transversal lines, which puts him at the zenith of the profession.[5] However, this also meant the onset of the decline of the burin, which finally came about at the end of the nineteenth century with the arrival of photography, reducing its use almost exclusively to engravings for stamps and bank notes. But, above all, Ivins emphasises the influence of the graphic pattern in the understanding, history and visual knowledge of the works of the collective imaginary before photography.[6]

Surface textures

[9]   But what is usually forgotten, what I find no reference to, is the strands of thick ink from the copper plate physically transferred onto another type of *trama*, a material *trama*, the fibre of paper, and, of course, the luxurious silk in special prints. Just looking at a sheet of laid paper against the light is enough to grasp the intricate texture of

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[5] Maxime Préaud, *L'oeil d'or. Claude Mellan, 1598-1688*, Paris 1988.

[6] This is a very important aspect in shaping the look not only of a work of art but of perception in general. Ivins' text dates from the first half of the twentieth century. Obviously the construction of the modern view has evolved meteorically, and this evolution is treated by Jonathan Crary in his paradigmatic book, *The techniques of the Observer. On Vision and Modernity in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge, Mass. 1990) which reconstructs and reconsiders the social and historical backgrounds and, very importantly, technical, modern perception and visual culture.

differently-spaced vertical 'wire-marks' and horizontal chain-lines'. Obviously, it is the weft and warp of the wire mesh which determine the form of this sheet of paper, while in more modern wove paper it is the random arrangement of compressed fibres. In addition, the finishing on the sheet of paper has other surface textures, to give a tactile or optical effect and which can influence the printmaking results: grooves, granules, colour hues, satin finish, gloss, transparent and opaque effects, etc. The paper is not merely a support, but merges with the printed image and becomes the light of the print.

[10]   This double texture, that of the paper and the strongly pronounced relief of the ink, both physically present, is eminently tactile. Running a hand over the print, with our eyes closed, we navigate over the black relief of straight lines, curves, squares, rhomboids, etc. We travel along flat, satin or cotton spaces, and moving out of the printed area, we can appraise the softness, the roughness, and the resistance of the paper, through a wide range of varying sensory perceptions.

From pattern to pixel

[11]   However, the *trama* has progressed from this physical presence, on both copper and paper, to virtual reality, along a route from the ordered dot, engraved on metal by hand, to the mechanically treated film of photoengraving. Along with the massive expansion of the image, patterns have continually evolved and been perfected. Thanks to the invention of photomechanical processes in the US and Europe around the 1880s, the move was made from engraving to photoengraving. In the new technique, the image is modified using patterns of large numbers of dots which make it possible to reproduce half-tones together with text in high-speed printing processes. A whole range of techniques emerged progressively to enable refining of the patterns and to improve printing. This continued in techniques dedicated primarily to reproductions and the graphics industry, and eventually led to the lines on the television screen or the present-day pixels of the digital image. When printed on paper, the image must be converted into minute dots of black ink. Printing of the image now involves lines so fine that sometimes they are not noticeable. Since the invention of the laser in 1960, the 'picture element', has meant images are reduced to several million pixels per square inch, have only optical and no tactile textures, are suitable for flat reproductions, and can be stored in 'the cloud', having no physical existence.

[12]   Without doubt, the pixel will make further progress, but I'm certain that it will never substitute the incision. The hand-drawn pattern of the artist will continue to leave its mark, an anachronistic mark, an *empreinte*, resulting from the interaction of philosophy, aesthetics, anthropology and archaeology because, in the end, it has been an innate action of man from the beginning of time.[7] It has been so ever since our ancestors

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[7] Before continuing, it is pertinent here to direct the reader to the investigative work of Georges Didi-Huberman on the *empreinte*, in his *La Ressemblance par contact: Archéologie, Anachronisme et Modernité de l'empreinte,* Paris 2008 (re-published from the prologue of the catalogue for the

carved primitive signs in rock, long before Pliny the Elder claimed that the capturing of an image by light in Corinth was the origin of the art of painting. Similarly, it seemed that photography would cause the downfall of printmaking, but in reality, it has only affected the reproduction of the engraving.

Migration and merging of graphic patterns

[13]   As previously mentioned, the word *trama* also refers to the graphic methods of photomechanical printing. The regular patterns of dots, the Ben-Day dots, which are particularly visible in the less-carefully made popular publications, and which are very obvious when the blocks of colour are positioned incorrectly, are dots which have fascinated many readers and also some artists. One of these is Roy Lichtenstein, who, from the 1960s, transformed them into a pop icon, an element which identified his style, into a pattern for his compositions – painting, graphic work and even sculpture, of which an example can be found in Barcelona. I refer to *Barcelona Head (*1992) on Passeig de Colom, which, on the surface (Fig. 2), reproduces the bright, magnificent red dots, resembling the local *trencadís*, the Gaudí style of broken ceramics.[8]

2 Roy Lichtenstein, *Barcelona Head*, 1991-92, street sculpture in Passeig de Colom, Barcelona (photograph provided by the author)

[14]   The way this is done shows clearly how a functional element, eminently graphic, becomes the main feature in plastic compositions, interacting with the graphics within the graphics. Later on, Sigmar Polke worked with the same idea and, inspired by Roy

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Empreinte, exhibition in the Musée Georges Pompidou in Paris, 1997).

[8] Mary L. Corlett, *The prints of Roy Lichtenstein. A catalogue Raisonne 1948-1997*, Easthampton, Mass. 2002. For information on this type of Catalan ceramics, consult Marta Saliné and Roser Vilardell, *Tradición y modernidad. La cerámica en el modernismo*, Barcelona 2006.

Lichtenstein,[9] used these symbols in a free interpretation of reproduction of the reproduction. More recently, these dots, laid out regularly within a network, or appearing alone and isolated, prevail in the work of artists such as Yayoi Kusama, who has based her plastic art and life experience on this basic element,[10] and Damien Hirst, who seems to be competing with the Japanese artist in the use of this icon.[11] While these examples refer to the photomechanical *trama*, something similar is found in the exploration and transposition of the manual *trama* in the work of Jasper Johns. *Hachure*, in French, *hatching* and *crosshatching*, in English, refers to clusters of two, three or more, straight parallel lines, repeated to form directional groups, to define a space or to give shading to figures and objects. Jasper Johns transformed this into a pattern in his paintings and graphic works.[12] The artist was concerned with the connection between the fragment and the whole, particularly in engravings. Around the 1970s, a central theme arose in his paintings, which is also occasionally reflected in his engravings. In paintings such as *Scent*, *Corpse and Mirror* and *Untitled* (1975), Johns only used crosshatching, using parallel brushstrokes of the same colour. He did this for the first time in the leftmost panel in his *Untitled* (1972) series. What we see, when looking superficially, could be considered coherent structures which cover and unify the surface in a balanced way, but, if we look more closely, it reveals itself as an organism on which various zones act together and in many different ways. The painting is divided into many sectors in which the crosshatched structures and the different levels of register act equally. The shade made with the lines is broken at the edge of the section or it continues in the same direction, unstoppable, so that an occasional change of colour can still occur. This system of lines, therefore, is conditioned to be called 'abstract'.[13] Pattern and colour, being different perceptive parameters, constitute two forms of chromatism, both contradictory and complementary. Johns used this repeatedly in the 1970s and 1980s: the purely graphic element, the hatching, giving shape to his paintings, lithographs and silk screen prints. You could see this link between printmaking and painting in Barcelona in 1980, in the *Jasper Johns: Working Proofs* exhibition, one of the most innovative on print presented in Barcelona in the twentieth century. It introduced new concepts in modern graphics, with *Work in Progress* and *Exhibition Proofs*, for example, demonstrating the process as an integral part of the exhibition.

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[9] Kathy Halbreich, Mark Godfrey, Lanka Tattersell and Magnus Schaefer, *Alibis: Sigmar Polke 1963-2010*, New York 2014.

[10] Yayoi Kusaman, *Infinity Net: the Autobiography of Yayoi Kusama*, London 2013; Jo Applin et al., *Yayoi Kusama*, Madrid 2011.

[11] Robert Pincus-Witten et al., *The Complete Spot paintings, 1986-2011*, London 2011.

[12] Christian Geelhaar, *Jasper Johns: proves de treball*, exh. cat., Barcelona 1980.

[13] Geelhaar, *Jasper Johns*, 25.

Narrative threads

[15]   Another meaning of the word *trama* is the distribution of, or link between, parts of something, of a theme, a story or a narration. Engravings have always tended to form sequences of images, presented sets, in series, or illustrating texts. In short, with multiple scripts, such as religious iconographies, the Italian *vedute*, *Los Caprichos* by Goya and many others,[14] with an extensive panorama of lofty examples which should include a large number of moral, entertaining and popular scripts, such as playing cards, the Aesop fables, genealogic trees and the traditional Catalan *auques* – stories told in pictures.[15]

[16]   But there are other tales on a single plate, from when engraving first began, when the style of the Book of Hours, Gothic altar pieces, and the Rosary was transferred to copper plate.[16] It is worth mentioning, as an example, the first signed intaglio work in Catalan printmaking history, *Fifteen Mysteries and the Virgin of the Rosary* made in 1488 by Francesc Domenec (Fig. 3).

3 Francesc Domenec, *Fifteen Mysteries and the Virgin of the Rosary*, 1488, engraving, 35 x 27 cm (author's collection)

[17]   In the upper part of this copper plate is a rectangle, split in half, which has a complete and ordered visual description of the life of Jesus Christ, through the fifteen mysteries of rejoicing, pain and the blessings of the rosary. The bottom part is divided into eight rectangles, with the Dominican saints on the left, Saint Dominic above and

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[14] Tomàs Harris, *Goya Engravings and Lithographs*, San Francisco 1983.

[15] For information on popular Spanish prints consult: Agustí Duran Sanpere, *Grabados populares españoles*, Barcelona 1971.

[16] On the arrangement of space see the classic: A. Hyatt Mayor, *Prints & People. A Social History of Printed Pictures*, New York 1972.

Saint Thomas Aquinas below. On the right are Saint Peter the Martyr and Saint Catherine of Siena. The figures in the centre are surrounded by a mandorla festooned with a rosary of roses, held by the Virgin. Above are Saint Catherine of Alexandria, patron saint of the convent, on the left, and Saint Eulalia, patron saint of Barcelona. Below are Saint Vincent Ferrer and the miracle of the horseman of Cologne.[17]

[18]   Approximately one hundred years after the *Fifteen Mysteries and the Virgin of the Rosary,* we have an example of a doubly-complex narrative thread, pioneering in compositional structure. It is the book *Evangelicae historiae imagines: ex ordine Evangeliorum quae toto anno in Missae sacrificio recitandur, in ordinem temporis vitae Christi digestae/auctore Hieronymo Natali Societatis Iesu...* (Images of the evangelical history recited throughout the year during the holy communion, ordered in line with the life of Christ), which accompanies the *Adnotationes et Meditationes in Evangelia quae in Sacrosancto Missae Sacrificio toto anno leguntur, cum eorundem Evangeliorum concordia. Autore Hieronymo Natali, Societatis Iesu Teologo. Editio prima* (Antwerp, 1593). Shortening the title, it is known as the *Biblia Natalis* in reference to the name of its promoter, P. Jeroni Nadal i Morey from Mallorca, student and successor of Ignatius of Loyola, and its 153 engravings make it one of the most superb Flemish engravings of the sixteenth century and of the Counter-Reformation.[18] We can stay with the symbolic use of the narrative cycles of the Holy Scriptures which, limiting ourselves to engraving, go back to the *Biblia Pauperum* and the wood engravings of the 15th century, the *Biblia Natalis,* thought up and used as an iconographic programme with a high pedagogic content. This became a tool for Catholic propaganda, indoctrination of the masses, in line with the ideas of the Council of Trento.[19] It was a very important compendium of the dogma and Catholic faith for teaching the catechism. It was also far ahead of its time since, after the first copies were published – some printed on vellum and satin by Plantin and Nutius – many issues were printed, as well as facsimile editions (Fig. 4)[20] even until very recently for use in catechism classes.

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[17] Guy C. Bauman, "A Rosary Picture with a View of the Park of the Ducal Palace in Brussels, possibly by Goswijn van der Weyden," in: *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 24 (1989), 135-151; and F. Fontbona, "Virgen del Rosario 1488. Francesc Domenec," http://www.march.es/recursos-web/prensa/estampas/abril2012.pdf (accessed 1 June 2014).

[18] A. J. J. Delen, *Histoire de la gravure dans les anciens Pays-Bas et dans les provinces belges des origines jusqu'a la fin du XVIII*, Paris 1924-1934.

[19] See study by Nadal Cañellas in the reissue of the Biblia Natalis: Juan Nadal, ed., *La Biblia Natalis*, Palma 2006.

[20] Juan Nadal (ed.), *La Biblia Natalis*, Palma 2006, and Pinedo Iparraguirre SJ, intro., *Biblia natalis. La Biblia de Jerónimo Nadal*, Bilbao 2008.

4 *Biblia Natalis*, 1593, fig. 107 (reproduced from reprint, Palma, 2006)

[19]   The novelty of the narrative thread here is based on the fact that each print was a subject of many possible interpretations.[21] The objective was to recreate the scenes with precise details, close to the historic, geographic and topographic reality in which the event occurred, that is, to spell out the famous "composition of the place", to visualise a reality while giving the scenes a pleasing attractiveness.[22] The result is a very high level of artistic originality with the narrative resources standing out, such as the sequences of different actions and time periods in a single composition, or an image within an image. This formula was very successful later, for example, in the well known *Meninas* and in *Hilanderas* by Velázquez.[23] Within the Saint Ignatius tradition of *Ars memoriae* and in Ramon Llull's *Ars Magna*, equally important for P. Nadal, there is also the highly effective

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[21] Samuel Y. Edgerton Jr., *The Heritage of Giotto's Geometry*, Ithaca/London 1993, and R. Vives, "La llarga repercussió plàstica de les estampes de la Biblia Natalis," in: *Serra d'Or* 579 (2008), 28-31.

[22] A detailed and definitive study of the use of the image as a medium and a well thought-out explanation to reach the divine truth is Pierre-Antoine Fabre's "Les Exercices spirituels sont-ils illustrables?," in: Luce Giard and Louis de Vaucelles (eds.), *Les jesuïtes à l'âge barroque. 1540-1610*, Grenoble 1996, 121-132. I also suggest referring to Marc Fumaroli, "Les jésuites et l'apologètique des 'images saintes'," in: Alain Tapié (ed.), *Baroque, vision jésuite. De Tintoret à Rubens*, exh. cat., Caen 203, 15-25.

        Particularly in relation to "composition of place" see Pierre-Antoine Fabre, *Ignace de Loyola, Le lieu de l'image. Le problème de la composition de lieu dans les pratiques spirituelles et artístiques jésuites dans la seconde moitié du XVI siècle*, Paris 1992; and Lizzie Bouli, "La 'composition de lieu' dans le procédé du 'tableau dans le tableau'. Contemplation et experiènce de la vision par la clôture," in: *La imagen religiosa en la monarquía hispánica: usos y espacios. Colección de la Casa de Velàzquez XIV*, Madrid 2008, 298-316.

[23] J. F. Moffitt, "Francisco Pacheco and Jerome Nadal; New Light on the Flemish. Sources of the Spanish Picture-within-the-Picture," in: *Art Bulletin* 1990.

mnemonic technique of labelling the sequences or the characters with capital letters, which, repeated at the foot of the image, identify or explain the subject represented. According to Edgerton, the technique reveals a very innovative mind, even though it is possible that P. Nadal copied the idea from *Rhetorica christiana* (Perusa, 1579) by Diego Valadés, or from scientific publications, which were beginning to use it, such as *Della Trasportatione dell'Obelisco Vaticano...* by Domenico Fontana (Rome, 1590). This was published three years before *Biblia Natalis*, and is a paradigm of the engineering literature of the Renaissance.[24] With large pages, this book has elegant typography, with illustrated capitals, floral decoration and xylographic vignettes. It is illustrated with beautiful etchings which show the obelisk as it was and as it was to be, giving a great deal of visually emphatic information, which I can see as a precedent for the representative concepts employed by Piranesi when he examined the constructions of Ancient Rome. An imaginative focus, with diagrams, elevation of the section shown in perspective and at a specific scale, aerial views and views of the machinery from different angles. There are 39 etchings, all by Natale Bonifacio and dated 1589, as well as a frontispiece with a burin engraving of the portrait of Fontana set in an etched frame.[25] Thirteen prints are dedicated to the erection of the obelisk and twenty-six, including three double-page spreads, to the remaining Papal commissions, from f.37r. Together they form a graphic narrative which combines historic documentation and compositional beauty, including allegorical figures and ornamentation, with scientific precision, as it represents the actual work as well as the calculations, with a great variety of plastic solutions, and marked with letters which refer to the descriptions in the references on the page preceding each print. It is a way to link images and text using engraved letters as a reference mark, forming a dual language, artistic and written, in a single graphic field, a style which was extensively used later, in very popular graphic forms, such as comics.

Iconographic motifs

[20]   The fourth group of meanings of *trama* in engraving mentioned previously, is that of iconographic motifs, which involves the importance of printing as a way of spreading images, an aspect which has been studied in depth. Themes or motifs are passed from one artist to another, from cultured to popular prints and the reverse, from one country

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[24] Domenico Fontana, *Della Trasportatione dell'Obelisco Vaticano et delle fabriche di Nostro Signore Papa Sisto V, fatte dal caualier Domenico Fontana architetto di Sua Santita. Libro primo*. In Roma: appresso Domenico Basa, 1590 (Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal), http://purl.pt/6256/1/P231.html (accessed 26 June 2014).

See also, R. Mortimer, *Italian 16th century Books*. Harvard College Library. Department of Printing and Graphic Arts. Catalogue of Books and Manuscripts Pt, II, Vol I. Cambridge, Mass. 1974; S. Broorsch, "The building of the Vatican. The papacy and architecture," in: *Bulletin, Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 1982/83. vol. XL, 3, and J. Calavera Ruiz, prol., *Del transporte del obelisco Vaticano y de las obras de Nuestro Señor el Papa Sixto V [texto impreso] hecho por el caballero Domenico Fontana, arquitecto de su Santidad*, Madrid 1974.

[25] For information on the etcher Natale Bonifacio see L. Donati, "Intorno all'opera di Natale Bonifacio," in: *Archivo Storico per la Dalmazia*, XV-XVI (1933), 223-22, and M. Pelc, *Natale Bonifacio*, Zagreb 1997.

or school to another, so in the end they become widespread. For this, the function of 'spreading the word' in the visual arts is especially fundamental in print.

[21]   Without doubt, the greatest body of engraved iconographic motifs is that generated by the work of Rafael and those who most closely interpreted his designs, particularly Marcantonio Raimondi, as published in the magnificent *Raphael Invenit* catalogue.[26] Here it is made clear that "the image of an image is another image, and this kind of binary excision is of particular importance in our world, where the majority of images are reproductions of earlier images, each having its own existence and autonomy, with the owners and authors claiming rights".[27] Vasari, in his early account of Raphael's interest in etching and awareness of Dürer's illustrations, remarked that "when Raphael saw Dürer's etchings and wanted to show what he was capable of in that area, he had Marco Antonio Bolognese study the technique intensively. Bolognese became so successful that Raphael had him print his first works: *The Massacre of the Innocents*, a *Last Supper*, *Neptune* and *The Martyrdom of St. Cecilia*. Later on, Marco Antonio made a number of prints for Raphael […]".[28] And it could be said that, as a result of Raphael's work, the use of etchings as reproductions or interpretations was established. These etchings were drawings, painting or sculpture transferred to a black and white image on paper following a process which very often involved several specialists: sketch artists; etchers specialized in representing motifs such as faces, figures, garments, landscapes and calligraphy; printers and editors. Together they formed workshops where their activity was organised in a close network of complicity, with each member being essential for the perfect execution of the work at hand. These workshops continued operating until the emergence of photography in the nineteenth century, an emblematic example being the international company Maison Goupil, which operated in Paris between 1827 and 1920. As art dealers in paintings and as editors, they promoted the works of their artists in a thriving society which was the driving force behind a culture for the masses based on the image. For the reproduction of images, they used various graphic techniques that were popular at the time, ranging from original etchings by the artists themselves (this was the case of Mariano Fortuny) to engravings made with the burin, engravings on steel plates and lithography, as well as photomechanical processes such as heliography, Woodburytype, etc., and even photography. In this way, the compositions and motifs in painting were themselves repeated and coexisted in different techniques, some of which

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[26] Grazia Bernini, Stefania Massari, Simonetta Prosperi, *Raphael Invenit. Stampe da Raffaello nelle collezioni dell'Istituto Nazionale per la Grafica*, Rome 1985.

[27] Michel Melot, *Breve historia de la imagen*, Madrid 2010, 13.

[28] Giorgio Vasari, *Las vidas de los más excelentes arquitectos, pintores y escultores italianos desde Cimabue a nuestro tiempo*, (Anthology) Study, selection and Spanish translation by María Teresa Méndez and Juan Mª Montijano, Madrid 2001, 353.

Sharon Gregory went more deeply into these aspects in "Vasari, Prints and Imitation," in: *Drawing, 1400-1600. Invention and Innovation*, Stuart Currie (ed.), Ashgate 1998. Her most recent publication is fundamental for etchings from the Italian renaissance: *Vasari and the Renaissance Prints*, Ashgate 2012.

were about to lose their status, such as burin engraving, while others, such as photography, were ready to take their place. An example of connivance of techniques in a single image is the spectacular engraving by Louis Henriquel-Dupont (Paris 1797-1892), representing the *Hemycicle de Beax Arts* (1853), an 1841 painting by Paul Delaroche. Another wood engraving of this painting was made by A. Marc and published in *L'Illustration* (1841) and an albumin print made by Jefferson Bingham in 1858.[29]

[22]   But returning to the etching of the original creator, as said at the beginning of this section, the circulation of themes between artists, whether near or far from each other, follows the principles of connection and heterogeneity. And they can be connected, or multiplied, like the "Deleuzian" rhizome, which is not a copy, nor a hierarchical reproduction, and continually reappears in varying compositions which are far apart both in time and in place. For this reason, and as examples, I present two iconographic motifs which I have worked on in our most recent research.

The *trama* of the *Gat qui menja lo rat*. From Gesner to Picasso

[23]   The first case centres around one of the best-known icons of popular Catalan engraving, the woodcut *Gat qui menja lo rat* (c. 1675), by Pere Abadal,[30] of which the Biblioteca de Catalunya (Graphics Unit) has the wooden block and an original print (Àlbum de Mostres Abadal, f. 158 / XXIII-2 B. R.E. 19505). It is an image that Catalan culture has adopted as its own, even though it is known that it is not a genuine Catalan invention. Following a pattern, it is really a direct copy of what has been found in other European countries, from Italy and France to Russia, and is based either on the cat drawn by the Swiss naturalist Conrad Gesner[31] in 1551 (Fig. 5), or on a later copy by Topsell,[32] drawn in 1658. The original cat, either that of Gesner or Topsell's copy, is sitting, face forward, with an anthropomorphic expression. Its tail is wrapped round its feet and the cat's fur is in regular horizontal bands, with a concentric marking on its left haunch. However, there is no mouse in its mouth. It is not known where or when the mouse in the Catalan version was first added. In fact, neither the Russian cat by Kazan nor the Italian one by A. Morandi (c. 1590-1652), printed by the Remondini studio in the eighteenth century, have it. The fact is that there are many variants which take on a different significance in each country.

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[29] Stephen Bann (in *Parallel lines. Printmakers, Painters and Photographers in Nineteenth-Century France*, New Haven and London 2001), explored this engraving in depth, and the relation between artists, etchers and photographers in nineteenth century Paris.

[30] Immaculada Socías, *Catàleg del fons Abadal de la Biblioteca de Catalunya*, Barcelona 2006, 39-41. Also: Joan Amades, *Xilografies gironines*, Girona 1947, 43; Joan Amades, *Costumari català. El curs de l'any*, Barcelona 1956, 290; Agustí Duran Sanpere, *Grabados populares españoles*, Barcelona 1971, 41; Elena Páez, *Repertorio de grabados españoles en la Biblioteca Nacional*, Madrid 1981; Immaculada Socías, "The Workshop of Pere Abadal," in: *Print Quarterly* XXI (2004), 4.

[31] Conrad Gesner, "Quadrupedibus vivaparis," in: *Historiae Animalium* I, Froschoverum 1551, 345.

[32] Edward Topsell, *The History of Four-footed Beasts and Serpents*, London 1658 (re-published in: *The English Experience* 561, Amsterdam, New York 1973, 104).

5 Conrad Gesner, *Quadrupedibus vivaparis...*, 1551, 354, woodcut
(http://archive.nlm.nih.gov/proj/ttp/flash/gesner/gesner.html)

6 Sessa printers' mark, *Divina Comedia*, 2nd ed., 1578 (from
http://www.italnet.nd.edu/Dante/images/tp1578ses/1578_ses.c
ol.200dpi.jpeg)

[24]   I have discovered the same icon, a male or female cat, depending on the expert, with a mouse in its mouth, in the typographic mark of the Venetian printers, Sessa. Over the years, the long line of the Sessa family used the same printers' mark of the cat, with

variations (Fig. 6).[33] In 1539, the logo for Melchior Sessa was a cat walking with the mouse. A seated cat, like the one under study, with the mouse in its mouth and the head turned slightly to the right, was used in 1564, for the books of the brothers Giovanni Battista and Melchior Sessa. Considering the fame of these Venetian printers[34] it seems that the cat was an allegory to indicate to the reader their basic values of diligence and speed, as well as a certain propensity to effectively obtain relevant results.

[25]   This leads us to deduce that, while the origin of the cat may be Swiss, the mouse may be Venetian. And in the same way that the popular prints have fed enlightened stories, the reverse has also happened: popular prints have been the source of inspiration for printmakers, there is no need to look further than some of *Los Caprichos* by Goya. It is believed that the *Gat qui menja lo rat* (Fig. 7) may also relate to the cat Picasso made to illustrate *Histoire Naturelle*, by Georges Louis Leclerc, Count of Buffon (Paris, Martin Fabiani, 1942). The *Gat* (1936) in Picasso's etching and aquatint is seen from the same point of view as that of Abadal, with similar fur and expression, but without the mouse (Fig. 8).[35] Here it can be said that Gesner or Topsell were the source, so we return to the origin.

7 Pere Abadal, *Lo gat qui menja lo rat*, ca. 1675, woodcut
(author's collection)

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[33] F. Ascarelli, *La tipografia cinquecentina italiana*, Florence 1953; G. Zapella, *Le marche dei tipografi e degli editori italiani del Cinquecento*, Milan 1986.

[34] Silvia Curi, *Un tipografo in Venezia "ad signum gatte"*, Verona 2010.

[35] Brigitte Baer, *Picasso. Peintre-graveur*, Bern 1968, 580; Sebastian Goeppert, Herma Goeppert and Patrick Cramer, *Pablo Picasso. Catalogue raisonné des livres illustrés*, Geneva 1983, 104-106.

8 Pablo Picasso, *Cat*, 1936, etching and aquatint, 36 x 28 cm, in
Buffon's *Histoire Naturelle*, 1942 (courtesy private collection, Madrid)

[26]   But it is more than probable that Picasso knew *Lo gat qui menja lo rat* from
elsewhere: it should be remembered that he was a regular at *Els Quatre Gats* (The Four
Cats) café, where the image of the cat was always present: from the café decoration to
all the printed advertising produced by the owner.[36] The etching has always been very
popular, particularly in Barcelona, where, until very recently, it was still being printed in a
workshop near the cathedral, in the same area where the cafe still is. Moreover, it is not
the first time that a popular print can be linked to a Picasso. F. Fontbona rightly signalled
this link when he related iconographic fragments of one of the popular prints dedicated to
the *Horrores de la guerra*, known as the *Horrors de Tarragona*, to details in the
composition of *Guernica* and peripheral paintings.[37] It should also be remembered that
Picasso was an iconographic phagocyte, observing the accumulation of imaginary and
using it as the fulcrum for his enormous creativity.

The trama of the Portrait of a gentleman after Rembrandt by Marià Fortuny

[27]   The second case I present is related to the work of Marià Fortuny. A small drawing
previously unknown, it is of great interest for its formative value, and demonstrates that
artists pursue careers based on the observation of past masters. Evidently, this generates
an iconographic framework which also reflects the traditional training of artists,
sometimes based on self-study, admiring, analysing and with a critique of past masters,
sometimes conforming to academic canons.

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[36] See the study on the artistic influence of the Quatre Gats by Marylin McCully, *Els Quatre Gats:
Art in Barcelona Around 1900*, Princeton 1978.

[37] Francesc Fontbona, "La influència del Modernisme en Picasso" (Picasso i l'art espanyol.
Antecedents i conseqüents. Publication of the talks given at the Picasso Museum in Barcelona, 25
to 28 April 1990), in: *Papers del Minotaure* 40 (1998), Barcelona, 123.

[28]   *Portrait of a gentleman after Rembrandt* (c. 1865) is an ink sketch on white paper (11 × 11 cm, private collection), a free interpretation of Rembrandt's etching, *Self-portrait Leaning on a Stone Sill*,[38] from 1639 (Fig. 9 and 10).

9 Rembrandt, *Self Portrait Leaning on a Stone Sill*, 1639,
etching, 20.5 x 16.4 cm (reproduced from Christopher White
and Karel G. Boon, *Rembrandt's etchings*,
Amsterdam 1969, 21)

10 Marià Fortuny, *Portrait of a gentleman after Rembrandt*, ca.
1865, drawing, 11 x 11 cm (courtesy Artur Ramon Art,
Barcelona)

[29]   It can be considered a free interpretation because, at first glance, it does not look very much like that of the Dutch master. My identification was based on the copy made by Attilio Simonetti to send to Baron Davillier, when Davillier was collecting information to put together the catalogue of echings by Marià Fortuny.[39] Simonetti's sketch – ink on

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[38] Christopher White and Karel G. Boon, *Rembrandt's etchings. An Illustrated Critical Catalogue*, Amsterdam 1969, 21.

[39] Charles Davillier, *Fortuny, Sa vie, son oeuvre, sa correspondance*, Paris 1875.

tracing paper together with a sketch of the *Ydille* – which is preserved in the Davillier archives, was published in the valuable catalogue for the exposition in Castres with the title: *Dessin de Attilio Simonetti, d'après une eau-forte de Fortuny* (Fig. 11).[40]

11 Attilio Simonetti, *Dessin d'après une eau-forte de Fortuny*, ca. 1878, drawing, 22.7 x 15.6 cm (INHA, Fonds Davillier, Paris, reproduced from *Fortuny. Oeuvres graphiques dans les collections du Musée Goya*, Castres 2008, 21)

[30]   Evidently, this identification does not only corroborate the known interest Fortuny had for the graphic art of Rembrandt, but also relates to one of the unknown engravings of the master from Reus which Davillier described in his notes, many of which were based on information from Cecilia de Madrazo and Simonetti. He specifically writes that Simonetti sent to him, in July 1878: "deux dessins d'un *Portrait de Rembrandt* (h. 22.7 cm; l. 15.6 cm) à l'eau-forte dont aucune épreuve ne subsiste et rappelle le goût de son maître et ami pour l'artiste: 'era fanatico di quelle di Tiepolo e Rembrandt'". He notes the height of the copper, 17 cm, and in ink at the foot of the sketch: "tiré sur une planche où sont tirées des parties de l'*Ydille*".[41] I cannot be certain of the etching which the master rejected, but I discovered the preparatory sketch, which coincides completely with the copy made by his friend Simonetti.

[31]   It could be seen as an introductory study of the etchings of the Dutch master. Degas, carrying out the same study, was registered at the French National Library's prints division in 1853, where he went to learn from his observations of engravings. The

[40] *Fortuny 1838-1874. Oeuvres graphiques dans les collections du Musée Goya*, exh. cat., Castres 2008, 21, fig. 5.

[41] *Fortuny 1838-1874*, 22.

results can be seen in his first etchings, such as the one he made while he was living in Italy: *Young man, Seated, in a Velvet Beret after Rembrandt* (1857) (Fig. 12), similar to *Young man, Seated, in a Velvet Cap* (1637) by Rembrandt (Fig. 13).[42]

12 Degas, *Young man, Seated, in a velvet Beret, after Rembrandt*, 1857, etching, 11.9 x 9.5 cm (reproduced from Sue Welsh Reed and Barbara Stern Shapiro, *Edgar Degas: The painter as printmaker*, Boston 1985, 21)

13 Rembrandt, *Young man in a Velvet Cap*, 1637, etching, 9.7 x 8.4 cm (reproduced from Christopher White and Karel G. Boon, *Rembrandt's etchings*, 268)

[32]   Charles Blanc explained this admiration, at the time very generalised, for the Dutch master in his catalogue *L'oeuvre complète de Rembrandt*:

"J'ai en souvent occasion de parcourir l'oeuvre de Rembrandt avec des artistes, soit en leur faisant les honneurs de ma collection, soit en regardant avec eux les

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[42] Sue Reed Welsh and Barbara Stern, *Edgar Degas: The Painter as Printmaker*, Boston 1985, 20-22.

> réserves du Cabinet des Estampes, et je dois dire que le *Jeune homme assis et réfléchissant* (Bartsch 286), est une des pièces qui les ont toujours le plus frappes".[43]

[33]   And, indeed, in his library, Fortuny had a copy of this book.[44] Fortuny and Degas copied and studied Rembrandt, as did many other artists in the second half of the nineteenth century: Carpeaux, Courbet, Delacroix, Géricault, Manet, etc.,[45] as well as many leading artists before and after them, including Francisco de Goya. Lafuente Ferrari, curator of the Spanish National Library, wrote the most authentic testimony:

> "In a file in the National Library is a print which was in the Cardedera collection, of little interest, which had written on the back: 'Goya took eight prints of Ramb[n] [sic] 21 May'. The note is written on a piece of paper which had been used to line a cut print of a composition of Teniers, or in his style. This small piece of documentary evidence, which demonstrates that Goya had his hands on some Rembrandt prints which are surely in the collection [of the Spanish National Library] today, gives us the pleasurable sense, today, of the relation between the two great Old Masters."[46]

[34]   To mention just two great figures as twentieth century examples affirming the network of graphic patterns, Picasso also repeatedly demonstrated his admiration for Rembrandt, reinterpreting compositions by the Dutch artist,[47] and Henry Moore evoked the poetry of his black prints: "Rembrandt's etchings do this for me: it is wonderful how he makes shadows that have mysterious, unbelievable sonorities [...]".[48]

Conclusion

[35]   This article sets out to establish the phenomenology of the notion of the Spanish word *trama* as it is associated with the art of printmaking. It identifies, differentiates and discusses a wide range of settings in which *trama* is particularly present, focusing on its importance both in the conception and the activity of printmaking and in the materials this art employs, including the most important of them all, paper. The article also considers that *trama* is appreciable in prints at both the tactile and visual levels, and that its influence on our visual language, before the advent of photography, is so clearly recognizable and so insistent that certain contemporary artists have appropriated it in their metalanguage.

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[43] Charles Blanc, *L'oeuvre complet de Rembrandt*, Paris 1861, vol. 2, 227.

[44] Carlos G. Navarro, "Testamentaria e inventario de bienes de Mariano Fortuny en Roma," in: *Locvs Amoenus* 9 (2007-2008), 319-349, 552.

[45] Alison Mcqueen, *The Rise of the Cult of Rembrandt: Reinventing an Old Master in Nineteenth-century France*, Amsterdam 2003.

[46] Enrique Lafuente Ferrari, *Grabados y dibujos de Rembrandt en la Biblioteca Nacional*, Madrid 1934, 29.

[47] Isadora Rose-De Viejo, *Rembrandt en la memoria de Goya y Picasso. Obra gráfica*, exh. cat., Madrid 1999, 168-181.

[48] Henry Moore, *Auden Poems/Moore Lithographs*, London 1974.

[36]   A multifaceted concept that crosses disciplines, *trama* extends to the graphic narrative and iconographic series. In original research examining hitherto undocumented material, the article offers two examples of this in artworks by Catalan and Spanish artists who are closely associated with a European iconographic tradition. With the first example, the article demonstrates the influence exerted on fine art printmaking by a widely used icon in popular European prints, specifically a Catalan print. It describes how this print can be linked to the trademark of the sixteenth-century Venetian family of printers, the Sessas, and how it influenced an etching by the twentieth-century painter Pablo Picasso. In the second example, the article presents and discusses a hitherto unpublished drawing by Marià Fortuny, the most internationally renowned Catalan painter of the nineteenth century, and examines how a direct association may be made between this drawing and a print by Rembrandt. Furthermore, the article offers incontrovertible evidence to demonstrate, for the first time, that Fortuny is the author of this drawing.

[37]   I could certainly give many more examples, especially in the sections dedicated to narrative and iconography. It should be remembered that, in part, the deductions on the meaning of the word *trama* could be applied to arts including painting, silversmithing, ceramics, stained glass and, equally important, digitally produced works. I'm aware that this means our *trama* clearly leaves the door open for new deductions in the future. *Trama* is a graphic as well as a linguistic object and what I have aimed to show here is that, in the sense given to the line by Barthes, *trama* acquires its most complete meaning and significance and its richest nuances in the art of etching. Based on these meanings and nuances, an analytical system can be organised which considers aspects from the gesture of the etcher in doing the work to how the observer reads the etched image.