

Chapter 10

FOREIGN INFLUENCES

- i -

STATE, nobles and Church had been the traditional sources of patronage and we have seen how they operated during the first part of the eighteenth century. All three tended to promote the 'conservative', Counter Reformation elements in Italian painting, and this led to a type of art that could only be fully appreciated in countries with somewhat similar régimes—notably Southern Germany and, later, Spain, where Tiepolo was called in to satisfy illusions of grandeur that bore little relation to the realities of eighteenth-century European politics. Essentially, the paintings produced for all three types of patron reflected that Venetian desire to isolate herself from the contemporary world that was manifested in other fields through the censorship and the restrictions placed on foreign ambassadors and visitors. But there was another Venice—the famous, cosmopolitan city of pleasure with its throngs of tourists and dilettantes who came from societies totally different in spirit; and to cater for their tastes a wholly new kind of art came into being—one far more in touch with contemporary fashion elsewhere in Europe, whether it veered to the rococo or the neo-classical, than were the exalted visions of Tiepolo, Piazzetta and other history painters.

Europe was at war, but Venice remained neutral. Foreign embassies intrigued, foreign kings came to seek her alliance or to relax from the pressure of military campaigns. In 1703 the British Ambassador's first secretary, Christian Cole, came across a Venetian girl, Rosalba Carriera, painting snuff-boxes and miniatures on ivory. He persuaded her to turn to pastel portraits and within a few months her delicate, flimsy work was being compared to Guido Reni.¹ In 1707 the Ambassador himself, Lord Manchester, returned to Venice on a second official visit and commissioned Luca Carlevarijs to record his entry.² A year later he quarrelled with the Republic, and left, taking back with him to England Rosalba's brother-in-law, Giovanni Antonio Pellegrini, and the young landscape painter Marco Ricci.³

¹ Most early biographers report that a 'certo signor Colle inglese' was the first to advise Rosalba to turn to pastels—see *Memorie intorno alla vita di Rosalba Carriera celebre pittrice veneziana scritta dall'abate N.N. nel 1755* (Padova, 1843), p. 12, and Girolamo Zanetti: *Elogio*, 1781 (published 1818), p. 16. But Zanetti is mistaken when he says that this occurred in 1708, as on 26 June 1703 Crespi had already compared her work in this medium to Guido Reni—Malamani, 1899, p. 99. Crespi must have been thinking of Guido's very late, 'chalky' manner which was to be so attractive to eighteenth-century connoisseurs.

Cole played a very important part in Anglo-Venetian artistic relations. It was almost certainly he who advised the Duke of Manchester to choose Rosalba's brother-in-law, Pellegrini, as the painter to take back to England in 1707, and in 1710 and 1711 he wrote to Lord Dartmouth enclosing estimates of pictures signed by Sebastiano Ricci and Niccolò Cassana—Osti, 1951, p. 119.

² The picture is now in the Birmingham City Art Gallery—Nisser, 1937.

³ *Mostra di Pellegrini*, 1959, p. 15.

And the German princes came in force: Maximilian of Bavaria found time amid the disasters that befell him in 1704 to commission from Rosalba his portrait and those of the most beautiful women in Venice. He was followed by Duke Christian Louis of Mecklenburg and the Elector Palatinate with similar commissions and invitations to Germany. In 1709 Frederick IV of Denmark took time off from his war with Sweden for a holiday in Venice, where he was lavishly entertained and so impressed by Venetian women that he too commissioned Rosalba to record their beauty in twelve pastels,¹ while Luca Carlevarijs painted for him the regatta that had been offered in his honour.² Above all there was the Prince Elector of Saxony, later to be Augustus III of Poland, who visited Venice three times during the first two decades of the eighteenth century and whose admiration for Rosalba's art was limitless, as is testified by the huge collection of her work that he was to amass in Dresden.³

For these men and others like them Venice was not an impoverished Republic trying desperately to maintain her former status in the world; her inhabitants were not haughty nobles keen to assert their aristocratic claims in the face of upstarts who threatened to swamp them. Rather, she was a haven of peace, still fantastically rich, where their entertainment was encouraged by a government only too anxious to win as many friends as possible; a city whose palaces were filled, as nowhere else in Europe, with easily appreciated masterpieces of sensuous beauty and whose courtesans were renowned for their charms. It is hardly surprising that they wished to have both city and women recorded for them to take back to their warring kingdoms in the North.

With peace in Europe came the French; above all a new type of collector, symbolised by Pierre Crozat, the fabulously rich banker whose house in Paris had already replaced Versailles as a centre for young artists. In Rosalba's pastels which he saw during his visit of 1715 he found exactly what he was looking for; he wrote to her later and promised her a painting by Watteau in exchange for her work, as this artist whom he met on his return to France at the end of the year was the only man 'able to produce something worthy of you', and he was not satisfied until in 1721 he persuaded her to visit him in Paris.⁴ But for years before this visit, Rosalba had already been working mainly for foreigners.

English, French and German visitors could agree with enthusiasm about the merits of her work, and ambassadors from all these nations might employ Carlevarijs and later Canaletto to record their entries into Venice,⁵ but for other and more important

¹ Malamani, 1899, pp. 39 and 42.

² The picture is now in the Fredericksborg, Copenhagen—Mauroner, 1945, p. 51.

³ Malamani, 1899, p. 49.

⁴ For the relations between Crozat and Rosalba see Malamani, 1899, p. 50, and Sensier, pp. 22 ff.

⁵ Besides Lord Manchester's Entry into Venice (1707) and the Regatta in honour of Frederick IV of Denmark (1709), Carlevarijs painted the Entry of the Count of Colloredo, the Imperial ambassador (1726)—this picture is now in Dresden (Mauroner, 1945, p. 37, note 17). Canaletto painted the Entry of the Comte de Gergy, the French ambassador (1725)—now in the Hermitage (Haskell, 1956, p. 298), and that of the Count of Bolagno, the Imperial ambassador (1729)—now in the Hermitage (V. Moschini, 1954, p. 29).

commissions there was a divergence of taste which was soon to become very pronounced.

It has been seen that many German courts had been obtaining works of art from Italy for at least a generation, and they went on purchasing pictures in the late Baroque style to which they had grown accustomed.¹ The more powerful of them were able to attract the artists themselves as well as their pictures. The Hapsburgs summoned Sebastiano Bombelli to Vienna, and in 1709 employed Antonio Bellucci as their court painter. In 1716 the Dalmatian Federico Bencovich followed them there.² Gaspare Diziani went to Dresden in 1717 and worked for three years as scene painter for Augustus the Strong.³ By this time Giacomo Amigoni was already in Munich painting for the Elector Max Emmanuel and working alongside French craftsmen in the rococo pavilions of the Nymphenburg gardens.⁴

The English too made it worthwhile for Venetian artists to leave their native country, but as patrons they were very different from the autocratic princes of South Germany or Austria. Lord Manchester, who brought back Marco Ricci and Pellegrini from his embassy to Venice in 1709, was a cultivated diplomat with a wide experience of the world, a passionate lover of opera, a man in close touch with an influential group of dilettantes and poets.⁵ He belonged to that society of Whig noblemen who were consolidating their victory of 1688 over the King and making sure that the new dynasty should look to them for support. He and his friends, the Duke of Marlborough, Lord Carlisle and others, were having their great country houses built for them by the gentleman-architect Vanbrugh and were laying the foundations of a revived feudal aristocracy that was to govern England for over a century. In some ways they resembled the Venetian oligarchy ruled by a Doge with little more than nominal powers, and it is not surprising that their sons should have looked back admiringly to sixteenth-century Venice and its leading architect Palladio as the embodiments of their own ambitions and tastes. Unlike the Venetians of their own day, however, these men were optimistic and fully aware that their country was entering on an age of unparalleled prestige and riches. They could afford to borrow from the Continent and yet be confident that the future lay with them. 'Music', wrote the Duchess of Marlborough to Lord Manchester,⁶ 'is yet in its nonage, a foward child which gives hopes of what he may be hereafter in England, when the masters of it shall find more encouragement. It is now learning Italian, which is the best master, and studying a little of the French air to give it somewhat of gaiety and fashion.' So too with painting.

When Pellegrini and Marco Ricci arrived in London they were at once set by Lord Manchester to paint scenes for Scarlatti's opera of *Pyrrhus and Demetrius*, and then to

¹ See Chapter 7, and Lavagnino.

² Pallucchini, 1933-4, pp. 1491-1511.

³ Donzelli, p. 82.

⁴ The Amigonis in Nymphenburg date from 1716—Lavagnino, p. 121. See also Powell, pp. 68-70, 110 and 147.

⁵ See Duke of Manchester, II, *passim*.

⁶ *ibid.*, p. 140.

decorate his mansions in Arlington Street and at Kimbolton in Huntingdonshire, rebuilt for him by Vanbrugh.¹ The same architect had for some years been erecting in Yorkshire a country house as palatial as any German imitation of Versailles for Lord Carlisle, a young man who had already embarked on a career to be more noted for its dazzling social prestige than for any real political achievement. He, too, extensively employed the two Venetian artists who from Castle Howard then moved to Narford Hall in Norfolk, the country seat of the most interesting of all their English patrons, Sir Andrew Fountaine, a rich collector and connoisseur who had travelled widely in Europe.²

In England Pellegrini, like some glistening butterfly, shed the last fragments of the tough membrane of seventeenth-century stolidity that had hitherto inhibited his already adventurous achievement. In a series of mythologies, histories, *capricci* and portraits, a new style was created—weightless, sensual, sometimes clumsy and melodramatic, but nearly always free of tensions. Rose-pink plumes shimmer against a blue sky streaked with feathery white clouds; light sparkles on fragile armour; golden tresses spill down flushed and invitingly naked flesh; fancifully dressed musicians in costumes of shot silk lean over a balustrade and playfully allude to Veronese with none of the hard commitment of Sebastiano Ricci or, later, of Tiepolo (at this date still only an apprentice). New and subtle colour combinations of mauves and greens, transparent reds and silvers add to the remarkable freshness of Pellegrini's painting.

Some of the credit for these innovations must be given to the comparatively uninhibited atmosphere of England. The easy elegance and charm of Van Dyck's portraits, so different from the pompous images of Venetian Senators, not only gave him a number of technical hints, but also taught him something essential about the nature of English society. He learnt his lesson quickly, as is shown by a lively and informal drawing he made of Pierre Motteux, the enterprising translator of Rabelais and Cervantes, a journalist and picture dealer who moved in the theatrical group which circulated round Lord Manchester (Plate 46).³ The engagingly 'private' and witty observation in a work of this kind anticipates the best conversation pieces that became so dear to English society—a vein also exploited by Marco Ricci in a number of half-caricatured musical groups that must certainly have fascinated Hogarth (Plate 47).

In 1712 Pellegrini and Marco Ricci quarrelled. Both left England, but within a year Marco returned with his uncle Sebastiano and the two men were soon busily at work. Sebastiano belonged to an older generation than Pellegrini. His early patrons had mostly been the powerful autocratic rulers of northern and central Italy, and from his extensive travels he had absorbed a wide variety of styles which he was liable to display with a sometimes excessive facility. Though he too could be a bold innovator, his manner was much more tied to the past than was Pellegrini's and also much more taut, solid and robust. One of his earliest employers in England was Lord Portland, who

¹ See above all for this whole section Watson, in *Journal of R.I.B.A.*, 1954, pp. 171-7.

² Vertue, III, p. 94.

³ Mostra di Pellegrini, 1959, p. 56.

had already commissioned paintings from Pellegrini.¹ This young man was the son of William III's great favourite, the Dutch William Bentinck, whose loyalty to the Orange cause had been rewarded with vast estates.² Henry, who succeeded to the Portland title in 1709 and was created first Duke in 1716, had lived a great deal abroad and had had his portrait painted by Rigaud in 1699—a work that seems to endorse the opinion of a contemporary that he was 'a fine fellow, but very affected'. He commissioned paintings from Ricci for his town house, and above all for the chapel of his country house at Bulstrode Park in Buckinghamshire—*The Ascension*, *The Last Supper*, *The Baptism of Christ* and *The Visitation*.³ Strangely enough this was a programme that would not have been out of place in any Catholic church. When Vertue saw the paintings some twenty years later, he understandably praised them for the 'noble free invention; great force of lights and shade with variety and freedom in the composition of the parts'.⁴

Within a few months of his arrival in England Ricci was working for Lord Burlington, soon to become the most influential patron of the first half of the century.⁵ But it was not until May 1715 when the young peer had returned from his conventional Grand Tour to Italy and set about rebuilding and redecorating his great mansion in Piccadilly that he began to employ the Venetian artist on an extensive scale.⁶ As yet he had no special interest in the austere Palladianism which was later to preoccupy him, and he was as keen as any other nobleman of the age to decorate the interior of his palace with large and colourful Italian paintings. 'The wall with animated pictures lives', wrote Gay rather clumsily of Burlington House in 1715, and indeed a great number of mythological-and history paintings by Sebastiano Ricci were let into the walls and ceilings, some of which were later transferred to Burlington's villa at Chiswick.⁷

Ricci had many enthusiastic patrons among the Whig nobility and important officials—before leaving in 1716 he painted a fresco of The Resurrection in that most national of institutions, the Chelsea Hospital—and a few months after his departure another of his compatriots, Antonio Bellucci, arrived in England and was equally well received. Indeed, one of his first patrons was a man who had already given employment to Sebastiano Ricci. John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham since 1703, in which year he had begun to have built his great London house, stood politically rather outside the circles which have so far been considered.⁸ Though he acknowledged the new constitutional monarchy, he had been a staunch supporter of James II, one of whose illegitimate daughters he had chosen as his third wife. He was described by Prince Eugene in

¹ Vertue, I, p. 38.

² Turberville, II, p. 14.

³ A sketch for the *Last Supper* is in the National Gallery of Art in Washington and one for *The Baptism* was sold at Sotheby's on 7 December 1960.

⁴ Vertue, IV, p. 48.

⁵ Ricci dated two pictures for Lord Burlington in 1713. These pictures—*The Presentation in the Temple* and *Susanna and the Elders*—are at Chatsworth, the country house of the Dukes of Devonshire, who inherited Burlington's estate—Osti, 1951, pp. 119-23.

⁶ Wittkower, 1948.

⁷ Charlton. As Lord Burlington only began his villa in 1725, by which time Ricci had left England, it is probable that the works by him there were transferred from the Earl's town house.

⁸ See the *Complete Peerage*, and H. Clifford Smith, p. 26.

VENETIAN ARTISTS IN GERMANY AND ENGLAND IN THE FIRST HALF OF
THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Plate 49



a. PELLEGRINI: Allegory of the Education of the Crown Prince
of the Palatinate
b. AMIGONI: Jupiter and Io at Moor Park

VENETIAN ARTISTS IN GERMANY AND ENGLAND IN THE MIDDLE OF
THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY (see Plates 50 and 51)

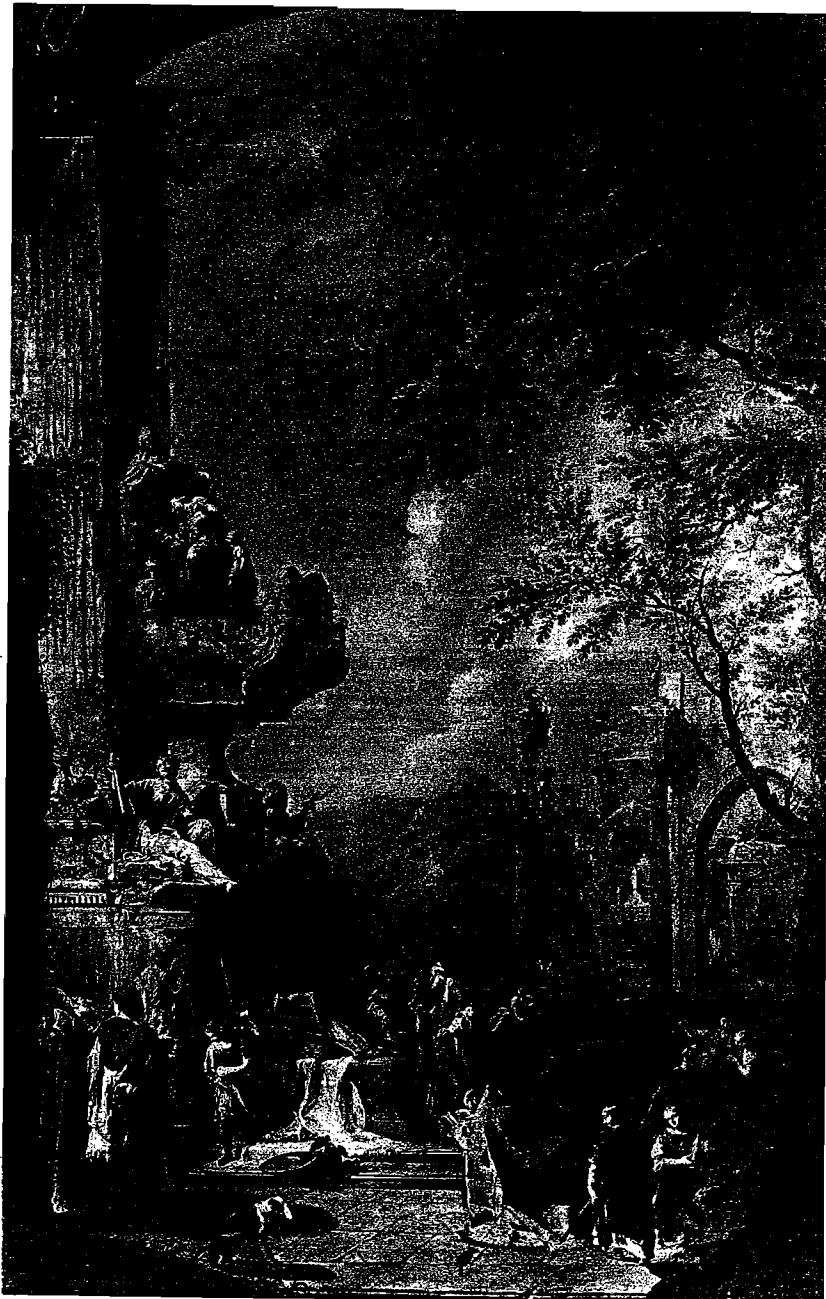
Plate 50



Plate 51



CANALETTO: View from Badminton, 1748



b. CANALETTO, CIMAROLI, AND PITTONI:
Allegorical tomb to the memory of Archbishop Tillotson



a P. VAN BLEEK: Detail from portrait of Owen McSwiney

1712 as 'a sanguine man, but of great parts and esteemed a true patriot'. He became a special favourite of Queen Anne, and when she died he retired from politics. He was by then aged 67 and despite his political affiliations had acquired a great and influential position in society. Within a year or two, as his mansion neared completion, he employed Bellucci to paint the walls of the staircase with scenes of Dido and Aeneas while the ceiling was, in his own words, 'filled with figures of gods and goddesses', and on the ceiling of another room Bellucci painted an allegorical tribute to himself and his Duchess, which she paid for in the year of her husband's death.

Bellucci's most important English patron was James Brydges, who managed to get himself created first Duke of Chandos in 1719 at the age of 46.¹ Though born in poverty he acquired an immense fortune from war profiteering after having served for eight years as Paymaster to the Forces. In 1713 he acquired the old Elizabethan manor of Canons at Edgware and he spent the next few years turning it into a vast palace in which he entertained his friends with magnificent concerts organised by Handel and Dr Pepusch. He had a number of ceilings in the state rooms both at Canons and in his London house painted with allegorical subjects by Bellucci and, above all, he employed this artist together with the Bolognese *stuccatore* Bagutti and a mysterious figure called Francesco Selter to decorate the chapel. Bellucci painted three large and twenty smaller canvases which were let into the rococo ceiling, representing *The Nativity*, *The Descent from the Cross* and *The Ascension*, around which were grouped putti holding the Instruments of the Passion.²

Thus for a decade before about 1720 Venetian history painters received wide support in England. The rich, the powerfully placed and the leaders of fashion were keen to employ them on their new and ostentatious mansions. Unhampered by any long traditions of hereditary patronage, these men seem to have inspired the artists who worked for them with fruitful vitality. Most historians are agreed that the English work of Pellegrini, Ricci and Bellucci constitutes their greatest achievements. But the situation was not to last.

When Pellegrini left England in 1712 he went to Düsseldorf. When Bellucci arrived in London a few years later he came from Düsseldorf. So too did two other Venetian artists who arrived in England—Vincenzo Damini, a minor painter, and Giacomo Leoni, an architect who helped to inaugurate the Palladian movement. In fact, for a short time, Düsseldorf was with London and Paris one of the great centres of the more adventurous Venetian artists. The town was the capital of the Palatinate, and was ruled over by the Elector Johann Wilhelm, who was the most interesting of all the German art patrons during the first two decades of the eighteenth century.

Johann Wilhelm came to power in 1690, in a state which had been utterly devastated by the troops of Louis XIV. Almost at once he was forced to quell a serious revolt,

¹ Collins Baker and Muriel I. Baker.

² After the demolition of Canons in 1747 the chapel was transferred to the country house of Lord Foley in Worcestershire and it survives intact to this day as the parish church of Great Witley—Watson, in *Arte Véneta*, 1954, pp. 295–301.

but soon after, his fortunes turned. For some years between 1708 and 1714 he achieved unparalleled influence in German politics, and with the growing success of his intrigues and military prowess it seemed possible that the Palatinate might achieve the status of one of the great powers. His love of glory was reflected in the adulation of the artists who surrounded him. 'S'il auroit vécu aux tems des anciens Romains', wrote one of his courtiers, Giorgio Maria Rapparini,¹ 'leur superstitieuse vénération n'auroit pas manqué de lui former son Apothéose—but Rapparini himself, who could scarcely mention his master's name without comparing him to Alexander the Great, hardly lagged behind the Romans in superstitious veneration, and much of the art created at Düsseldorf during these years, such as the bronze equestrian statue by the Flemish sculptor Gabriel Gruppello, was inspired by the Elector's passion for self-display. But he also had a genuine love of art for its own sake: 'à l'égard de la Peinture, sa noble manie est si forte, qu'après avoir depouillé la plus grande partie de la Flandre amatrice pour en composer la plus belle Galerie de l'Europe, j'ay oui après de sa Serenissime bouche saisié d'un enthousiasme d'amour pour cet Art; que pour une rare Pièce de quelque excellent Maître, il se depouilleroit à moitié'. This enthusiasm for collecting and patronage was no doubt spurred by Johann Wilhelm's marriage to Anna Maria Ludovica, the last of the Medici, and it was guided by Rapparini, who was a painter as well as a writer and who had studied under Carlo Maratta in Rome. In his writings Rapparini shows himself so anxious to give unqualified praise to everyone that his taste can only be described as eclectic. But despite the general enthusiasm all round, one theme constantly reasserts itself: 'Une austère regularité de l'Art rebutte les Amateurs mêmes de l'Art. Si le Peintre ne montre point au dehors quelque agrément de facilité, qui attire au plaisir d'imiter en cachant le difficile, on en décourage le Sectateur qui s'en va ailleurs. La Science vraiment de plaire à l'oeil matériel, consiste surtout dans le cromatique, c'est à dire dans le coloris. Sans ce charme mignon la Peinture perd trop de sa force, et n'a plus cette magie d'enchanter. Il faut égayer parci, parlà son Tableau par une manière riante, qui regne d'un bout à l'autre de la Pièce.' It was in this spirit, so particularly congenial to Venetian artists, that Johann Wilhelm amassed vast quantities of works from Italy²—especially by Luca Giordano—and commissioned painters such as Cignani, Franceschini, Gian Giosèffo dal Sole and Francesco Trevisani to work for him in Bologna and Rome. He also tried, albeit without success, to persuade Antonio Balestra and Rosalba Carriera (who acquired pictures for him in Venice) to come to Düsseldorf.³

¹ I am most grateful to Dr Alessandro Bettagno for indicating to me the manuscripts of Rapparini which were published in Düsseldorf in 1958. His *Le Portrait du Vrai Merite dans la personne serenissime de Monseigneur l'Electeur Palatin* gives a fairly full account of Johann Wilhelm's patronage, but as the eulogy was written in 1709 there are naturally no references to Pellegrini. The extracts I have quoted can be found on pages 14, 18, 75, 83, 81 and 69.

² Nicolas de Pigage.

³ Cignani painted two pictures for him: a *St John the Baptist* and a *Jupiter giving Suck* in 1702 and 1715—Pascoli, I, pp. 165–8. These pictures are now at Augsburg and Munich (Lavagnino, p. 85). Franceschini painted for him a *Venus* and *The Three Graces*, and Dal Sole a *St Teresa wounded by Christ* and a *Rape of the Sabines*—Zanotti, I, pp. 228 and 306–7.

For references to Francesco Trevisani and Balestra who, 'geloso della sua libertà', refused regular

He was just as enthusiastic—if not more so—about the Dutch. He visited Holland in 1696, and he avidly collected works by Jan Weenix, Adrian van der Werff and many others. Both Weenix and Van der Werff were invited by him to Düsseldorf, and though the latter refused to accept an official post as court painter, he agreed to work exclusively for the Elector for six months in every year, and large numbers of his smooth, light, enamelled paintings—in which ‘on ne voit rien de stanté, rien d’oisif, rien de leché, rien de sec, et de dur’—found their way into Johann Wilhelm’s gallery. But the real importance of this gallery lay elsewhere. For it Johann Wilhelm had ‘presque vuide toute la Flandre et la Hollande’. Seventeen paintings by Van Dyck and forty by Rubens, whose ‘bizarrie et bravure’ made a special impact and which are now among the most splendid treasures of the Alte Pinakothek in Munich, prove that for once Rapparini’s claims were not excessively exaggerated. Despite the debt that both artists owed to Venetian painting, they were little known in that city and their effect on the receptive Pellegrini was considerable.

Some sixteen years after the Elector’s death in 1716 the Baron de Pöllnitz passed through the Palatinate and described the achievements of this ‘Prince magnifique en toutes choses . . . généreux, liberal. Il protegeoit les Arts et les Sciences; sa Cour et sa dépense étoient Royales; sa bonté le rendoit aimable; il étoit les délices de ses Courtisans, l’amour de ses Sujets.’¹ The gallery consisted of five great rooms, three of them much larger than the others. The first was entirely devoted to Rubens; the second contained works by Van Dyck and other Flemish and Dutch artists. The third contained Italian paintings, then there was one given over to Van der Werff and finally the fifth contained pictures by the greatest Flemish, Dutch and Italian old masters—Raphael and Veronese, Titian and Carracci, Correggio and Guido Reni, Rubens and Rembrandt. In all the rooms were displayed bronzes and cabinets of miniatures, and below them was another gallery containing casts of the main sculptures in Florence and Rome.

In this exhilarating atmosphere Pellegrini worked for three years.² On a ceiling of a staircase in the Elector’s castle at Bensburg he painted a magnificent fresco of the *Fall of Phaethon* unparalleled among his works for verve, colour and strength of drawing. But, above all, he was called upon to satisfy the Elector’s insatiable desire for glorification. He painted a series of canvases depicting in allegorical form the benefits of Johann Wilhelm’s rule (Plate 49a). There is a certain awkwardness about the composition of some of these and a confusion of styles that may reflect the impact on Pellegrini of the Elector’s widely varied picture gallery and especially of the Flemish artists in it. But they are painted with a freshness, buoyancy and lighthearted delicacy of colour that have no parallel in Venice itself at this date. Bellucci, too, celebrated his German patron with allegories and group portraits which are much more clumsy than Pellegrini’s, but

employment under him—see the manuscript lives of these two artists in the Biblioteca Augusta, Perugia, MSS. 1383.

For a long and fully documented account of the work of Foggini, Soldani and other Florentine sculptors for Johann Wilhelm—see Lankheit, 1956, pp. 185–210.

¹ Pöllnitz, III, p. 274.

² Lavagnino, p. 120, and M. Goering, 1937, pp. 233–50.

which show that he was among the earliest of the eighteenth-century Venetian artists to appreciate the example of Veronese.¹

Pellegrini's connections with Düsseldorf made it logical enough that he should move to the Low Countries when the Elector died in 1716.² He worked in Antwerp and Amsterdam, where he was actually commissioned to decorate the city hall with frescoes—the first time an Italian artist had ever painted in Holland and a remarkable sign of the cosmopolitanism of early eighteenth-century culture. From Holland he was taken back to England for a short time in the summer of 1719 to decorate the country house of the English Ambassador in The Hague, Lord Cadogan, a man who had served as commander with Marlborough in Flanders and had later been a Whig M.P.

Paris was the third town which helped to liberate Venetian painting from the bondage of the past. Sebastiano Ricci went there in 1716, on his departure from London. He was at once brought into touch with Pierre Crozat, then aged 51, whose fine mansion in the Rue Richelieu contained a superb collection of paintings and, above all, many thousands of drawings by all the greatest Italian and Flemish masters.³ Crozat used to arrange weekly meetings of an exceptionally alert group of art-lovers, painters and writers, and he was generous in giving hospitality to artists and making his collection easily available to them. When Ricci arrived, Charles de la Fosse, who had himself been to London, was lodged in Crozat's house. He was in his eightieth and last year, and though an enthusiastic admirer of Venetian painting, he was not impressed by Ricci.⁴ But, more importantly, Crozat's latest discovery, the 32-year-old Antoine Watteau, was living in his house, and the elderly Venetian admired his work sufficiently to copy a sheet of his drawings.⁵

Four years after Ricci came his rival Pellegrini with his sister-in-law Rosalba Carriera and their common friend Antonio Maria Zanetti, the engraver and connoisseur. This visit marked the peak of Venetian influence abroad and the last time that contemporary Italian art was to make a serious impact on France. The aristocratic society, with which the three artists were at once brought into contact through the patronage of Crozat, was indulging in a relaxed atmosphere of careless rapture induced by the death of their great oppressor Louis XIV and the apparently miraculous benefits that could be obtained from financial speculation. Pellegrini was at once given the task of decorating the very symbol of the new régime, the Mississippi Gallery in the Banque Royale, which was the headquarters of John Law's reckless, but as yet successful, *Système*. The programme given to the artist represented a curious combination of royal glorification on the lines made familiar under Louis XIV at Versailles and allegorical tributes to commerce which were to become general only in the second half of the

¹ Another Venetian painter who worked extensively for the Elector at Düsseldorf was Domenico Zanetti—de Pigage.

² See the letter from Rosalba Carriera to Mariette published by Sensier, p. 95.

³ For Crozat see Mariette, II, pp. 43–53, Sensier, and H. Adhémar, p. 82, and Stuffman.

⁴ De La Fosse's reported remark to Ricci, 'Paint nothing but Paul Veroneses and no more Riccis', quoted by Levey, 1959, p. 22, from Walpole's *Anecdotes* must presumably have been made on this occasion.

⁵ Blunt and Croft-Murray, 1957, pp. 61–3.

eighteenth century.¹ He was to express 'les différents avantages de la Banque, et de les rapporter à la gloire du Roi et de Mgr le Régent'. This extraordinary task was achieved by the use of a somewhat strained mythological iconography. The King was in the centre, supported by Religion and the Régent; these figures were surrounded by others representing 'le Commerce suivi de la Richesse, de la Sureté et du Crédit', and all the gods of Olympus were called in to portray Munificence, Magnanimity and the countless other virtues which characterised the scheme. Elsewhere the Seine and the Mississippi were seen embracing, and views of ports and ships and the Bourse with men bargaining made the same points in more concrete terms.

Exactly how well he coped with the commission it is impossible to tell as the destruction of the frescoes followed soon after the collapse of the *Système* which they had celebrated. Years later, when the whole climate of taste had changed, Mariette, who strongly condemned this destruction, said that the frescoes were of an 'invention . . . heureuse. Il y avait du fracas et des groupes agréables,' but he criticised the drawing and colour.² None the less it seems likely that the frescoes had a considerable influence on French painting of the first half of the eighteenth century.

Pellegrini painted other works in Paris, including at least one altarpiece,³ but the real success of the trip was due to Rosalba. She was welcomed by Crozat, who lodged her in his house and organised a series of splendid receptions in her honour, and the delicate and subtle flattery of her informal portraits was greeted with wild enthusiasm by a society that was in full revolt against the artificiality and stiffness introduced by Louis XIV and his court. Within two or three months of her arrival she had painted the portraits of John Law, the Régent, and the little King himself who kept flatteringly quiet during the sittings—as well, of course, as those of Crozat and his family. Round these central figures flocked the aristocrats and the ambassadors, all fighting for their portraits or little mythological pictures. The artists themselves were as keen. By October, four months after her arrival, she heard the news that 'I have been unanimously admitted to the Académie. No vote was taken, as no-one wanted to make use of a black ball.'⁴ She met Rigaud and Watteau, both of whom expressed their deep admiration, and all the other artists and connoisseurs—Coypel, Vleughels, Oppenord, de Troy, Mariette. When she left Paris in March 1721 she had conquered the city and made a number of friends and admirers who were to remain loyal to her through every change of taste until her death in 1757. More importantly she gave a stimulus to a type of elegant yet intimate portraiture that other artists were to bring to much greater heights than ever she had achieved and that remains one of the triumphs of French eighteenth-century painting.

- ii -

The cities of London, Düsseldorf and Paris were the most exciting centres of

¹ See the document published by Sensier, pp. 97–102, Garas, 1962.

² Quoted by Sensier from the *Abecedario*, pp. 102–3.

³ For the Couvent des Augustins Déchaussés—Sensier, p. 107.

⁴ Sensier, pp. 199 and 211.

Venetian painting until early in the 1720s. Thereafter the situation began to change all over Europe. In England there had been ominous signs for many years that national feeling resented the success of these foreign artists. Alessandro Galilei, the Florentine architect who had arrived in 1714, said that 'the English do not behave like people in Italy, where if a foreigner arrives with a barest hint of talent, everyone rushes after him and native artists with far greater abilities are left behind. Here it is just the opposite because they want to employ only their own countrymen though they are complete donkeys....'¹ The remark was made by a disgruntled architect who had had no success—but it contains an element of truth.

The dome of St Paul's, which had been a great magnet for the Venetian artists, was given to Thornhill to paint. So too was the ceiling of the Queen's Bed Chamber at Hampton Court, after the Earl of Halifax had said that the Treasury would refuse to pay if the commission was given, as had been intended, to Sebastiano Ricci. Moreover, the new style of architecture, promoted by Lord Burlington after his return from Vicenza in 1719, gave little scope for great ceiling decorations 'filled with figures of gods and goddesses', and, as the Grand Tour became habitual and the English grew more sure of their tastes, they discovered that they did not like large-scale history painting—unless the artist was an Old Master who had died long ago. The career of Amigoni, who arrived in England in 1730, some eight years after Bellucci's departure, is symptomatic of the change. He was first greeted with great enthusiasm by Lord Tankerville, a prominent Whig and at that time Lord of the Bedchamber to the Prince of Wales. Amigoni painted his staircase, but this was pulled down only eight years later. He also painted a ceiling and the walls and staircase of Powis House in Great Ormond Street with the Seasons and the story of Judith and Holofernes.² It is impossible to be quite certain who was his patron here. Lord Powis himself was an elderly man of about 70.³ He had been one of James II's most loyal followers, and as a consequence had been arrested on more than one occasion, the last time being during the Jacobite alarm of 1715. Two years earlier the great house which he had built for himself had been occupied by the French Ambassador. During his tenancy it had been burnt to the ground and then rebuilt at the expense of the King of France. In 1722 Lord Powis's troubles came to an end. His estates, which had been forfeited on his outlawry many years before, were restored to him and he was summoned to take his seat in the House of Lords, where he sat with the Tories. If he was the patron of Amigoni, it shows that the artist was moving in very different and far less fashionable circles than those that had welcomed his predecessors a generation earlier. Amigoni's third and most important English patron was a Mr Styles who had made a fortune out of the South Sea Bubble. His country house at Moor Park was built for him in modified Baroque by Sir James Thornhill and later Giacomo Leoni. Styles had intended to entrust Thornhill with the decoration, but the two men quarrelled and to spite the artist Styles gave the job to

¹ Quoted by Ilaria Toesca, 1952, p. 208.

² For these events see Vertue, I, p. 45, and III, pp. 45, 49, 51, 67.

³ *Dictionary of National Biography*, and Wheatley, III, p. 18.

Amigoni and Francesco Sleter instead. We can be grateful for the dispute, for Amigoni's four canvases illustrating the story of Jupiter and Io are the most beautiful that he painted in England (Plate 49b).¹

Thus Amigoni's last big commission was due primarily to an accident. Thereafter he found it difficult to get any employment as a history painter, and he was compelled to turn more and more to portraiture. In this field his success was very great indeed and when he left England some ten years after his arrival he is supposed to have taken £4000 to £5000 with him, some of it derived from his work for the court. He also left a reputation which extended as far as Fielding's Joseph Andrews.²

The English went on employing Venetian painters, but with rare exceptions they confined themselves to views, landscapes and portraits—usually by Bartolommeo Nazari.³ Only one man proved wholly original in his patronage of Venetian and other artists and his very isolation shows how quickly English taste had hardened into a conventional pattern. Owen McSwiny (Plate 52a) was an Irishman whose early life was closely connected with the stage—as actor, dramatist and eventually impresario.⁴ In none of these careers was he a lasting success and it may have been this that encouraged him to make his first venture into the world of art with a plan to have engraved a series of Van Dyck portraits in English country houses.⁵ This project too came to nothing, but it fascinated McSwiny, who returned to a similar plan in later years. Meanwhile his debts were pressing, and like many a man in such circumstances he left for the Continent in about 1711. For the next few years he disappears from sight but when he re-emerged it was with a scheme of great originality. Acting on behalf of Lord March, who became Duke of Richmond in 1723, he proposed to have painted by the leading Italian artists a series of allegorical tombs to commemorate the great men of England's recent history.⁶

McSwiny had judged his moment well. For a full generation England had been on the crest of a great wave of optimism brought about by a series of military, political and intellectual triumphs which had carried her to the very forefront of Europe. Everyone recognised that her progress since the Glorious Revolution of 1688 had been immense, but now the protagonists were old or already dead and the time had come to celebrate their exploits. Meanwhile wealth at home and peace in Europe were encouraging

¹ *English Taste in the Eighteenth Century*, 1955-6, p. 26, and Hussey, 1955, p. 43.

² Vertue, III, p. 94; also Woodward, 1957, pp. 21-3, and Haskell, 1960, pp. 71-3. In Chapter 6 of Book III Joseph Andrews refers to 'Amyconni, Paul Varnish, Hannibal Scratchi, or Hogarthi, which I suppose were the names of the painters'.

³ Watson, in *Burlington Magazine*, 1949, pp. 75-9.

⁴ McSwiny spelt his name in a great number of different ways at various stages in his career, for the broad outlines of which see *Dictionary of National Biography*. See also Whitley, I, pp. 9, 11, 24-6, and a number of librettos for operas adapted by him which are now in the British Museum.

⁵ Vertue, III, p. 82.

⁶ There have been many articles about McSwiny's commissions in recent years—see Voss, 1926, pp. 32-7; Arslan, 1932, pp. 128-40, and 1933, pp. 244-8; Zucchini, 1933, pp. 23-30; Borenus, 1936, pp. 245-6; Watson, 1953, pp. 362-5; Constable, 1954, p. 154; Arslan, 1955, pp. 189-92, and [Rivani] 1959; Mazza, 1976.

thousands of English noblemen to visit the Continent and enjoy the pleasures of Italian art. There was thus every reason to believe that a project which combined reverence for England's recent past with the prestige of modern Italian painting should do well.

McSwiny wrote¹ that the monuments were to glorify 'the British Monarchs, the valiant Commanders, and other illustrious Personages who flourish'd in England about the end of the seventeenth and the Beginning of the eighteenth Centuries'. It is almost certain that no definite list of these was drawn up from the start, for some of the characters who were eventually represented only died when the scheme was already under way. Most of those commemorated were, naturally, Whigs—but there was no strict political programme, for it was found possible to include Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, who had played such a great part in bringing to an end the wars waged by Marlborough (also, of course, represented) and who had been imprisoned for two years in 1715. The pictures were all to be the same size, vertically inclined with semicircular tops like altar paintings. In fact, the scheme represented one of the first attempts to produce a secular and patriotic counterpart to the religious iconography of the Counter Reformation and the more generalised 'history painting' of the Continent—among the figures commemorated were many of the 'Saints' of the Enlightenment such as Locke and Newton. Each picture was to contain an urn 'wherein is supposed to be deposited the Remains of the deceased Hero. The Ornaments are furnish'd partly from the Supporters and Arms of the respective Families; and the Ceremonies supposed to be perform'd at the several Sepulchres, as well as the Statues and Basso-Rilievo's, allude to the Virtues, to the Employments, or to the Learning and Sciences of the Departed.'

McSwiny wrote that these subjects which were 'of his own Invention' were 'elegantly executed by the Pencils of the most celebrated Painters in Italy'. With one or two exceptions² he chose these from Bologna and Venice, and he insisted that every picture was to be painted by three artists—one for the figures, one for the landscape and one for the buildings and other ornaments. Not surprisingly the painters concerned, who were not told the purpose of the scheme, were thoroughly puzzled by this 'amateur with as-sound a knowledge of good pictures, books and antiquities as it is possible to have' who suddenly arrived to commission 'a number of strange and fanciful ideas which were neither histories nor fables'.³ In fact, McSwiny's instructions to them must have rivalled Shaftesbury's in minuteness of detail.

In Bologna he relied mostly on Donato Creti and Francesco Monti as his figure painters and in Venice on Piazzetta and Pittoni, while Canaletto and Cimaroli painted some of the landscapes (Plate 52b). All four Venetian artists were beginning their

¹ In the pamphlet *To the Ladies and Gentlemen of Taste* (no date), of which there is a copy in the British Museum.

² Solimena was apparently considered for Sir Isaac Newton's tomb as is shown in a letter from McSwiny to the Duke of Richmond dated 28 November 1727 kindly shown to me by Mr Francis Watson. Francesco Imperiali of Rome painted the monument to King George I, a version of which belongs to Lord Kemsley—*English Taste in the Eighteenth Century*, 1955-6, p. 54.

³ Zanotti, II, pp. 114, 221, 313.

careers and Canaletto was as yet almost unknown. But Sebastiano and Marco Ricci who collaborated on the monument to the Duke of Devonshire were already well-established painters and must have required a substantial fee to produce such menial work for a commoner.¹ The scheme began well, and by 1722 fifteen pictures had already been started, most of which were later acquired by the Duke of Richmond.² Yet it ran into difficulties which were almost inseparable from McSwiny's conception of the paintings. For attractive as many of the pieces are they entirely fail to achieve their declared aim which was 'to perpetuate (as long as the Nature of such Things can permit) the Remembrance of a Set of British Worthies, who were bright and shining Ornaments to their Country'. Rather, these 'monumental pieces' anticipate a taste, which only became general later in the century, for *capricci* in which a vague feeling of romantic melancholy is induced by the contrast between crumbling ruins of the past and elegant, fancifully dressed spectators—a gentle, 'picturesque' adaptation of the old

¹ The Venetian artists concerned in the enterprise were:

Canaletto	<i>Lord Somers</i>	(Birmingham)
Cimaroli		
Piazzetta		
Marco Ricci	<i>Duke of Devonshire</i>	(Barber Institute)
Sebastiano Ricci		
Domenico Valeriani	<i>William III</i>	(Duke of Kent)
Giuseppe Valeriani		
Cimaroli		
Balestra		
Domenico Valeriani	<i>Isaac Newton</i>	(Fitzwilliam Museum)
Giuseppe Valeriani		
Pittoni		
Canaletto	<i>Archbishop Tillotson</i>	(English private collection)
Cimaroli		
Pittoni		
Paltronieri	<i>Lord Dorset</i>	(Rome, private collection)
Cimaroli		
Pittoni		
Marco Ricci	<i>Sir Clodesly Shovel</i>	(Washington)
Sebastiano Ricci		
Canaletto?	<i>Lord Stanhope</i>	(Walter Chrysler collection)
Cimaroli?		
Pittoni		

Paltronieri was a Bolognese painter. I am grateful to Sir Anthony Blunt for pointing out to me that at Sir Robert Bernard's sale at Christie's, 9 May 1789, lot 68 was described as Petoni—A pair of Triumphal Mausoleums.

² Constable, 1954, p. 154. In fact there is a great deal of confusion about which of these pictures were actually acquired by the Duke of Richmond. In 1741 McSwiny published nine of them in the *Tombeaux des Princes* and said that they all belonged to the Duke. These were those to William III, Tillotson, Marlborough, Godolphin, Dorset, Cowper, Sir Clodesly Shovel, Newton and Boyle/Locke/Sydenham. This list does not wholly coincide with the one given by Vertue, V, p. 149, who recorded ten after his visit to Goodwood a few years later—William III, George I, Devonshire, Wharton, Addison, Dorset, Tillotson, Stanhope, Cadogan, Godolphin. The explanation is probably that the Duke of Richmond owned some fourteen or fifteen but did not keep them all at Goodwood.

theme of *Memento Mori*. It was almost as difficult for McSwiny's contemporaries as it is for us to understand the complex allusions to the virtues of his heroes. 'I am persuaded you will forgive me', wrote one client in 1729,¹ 'if I tell you that it has been thought your other pictures tho' finely painted are defective in that respect [establishing the identity of the hero]—and I have already seen two of them which turned to a quite different design from what they were intended. I mean those for the late D. of Devonshire and Sir Cloudesly Shovel, the first of which is turned into a Brutus and the other into a Roman Admiral by my Lord Bingley in whose possession they now are.'² As large decorative paintings hanging in the Duke of Richmond's dining-room at Goodwood, where conscientious visitors could find 'a written description left to explain the meaning', they were admirable.³ As a homage to the great men of England which might set a fashion among those who cared for the heritage of 1688 they were wholly unsuitable. McSwiny himself realised their drawbacks, but he quite rightly understood that the slavish following of too logical an iconographical programme would destroy the charm that they had. 'Tis impossible to tell (in such a Narrow compass)', he replied to his critic, 'more than one Man's story, without running into w.t wou'd be very Trivial, & y.e pieces wou'd resemble the cutts in *The Gierusalem Liberata*. In the Monum.t to y.e Memory of the Duke of Malbro' I make a Soldier, attended with Guards &c as visiting y.e Monument of a great General. I mean nothing more in it but the visit—now if I was to represent his battles, Sieges and abilities as an able Counsellour I have no way to do it but by Medagliions, Medals Basso-rilievo's, Statues etc.'⁴

Despite these problems, the Duke of Richmond bought at least ten of the paintings, and other versions of some of them also found purchasers. Then in 1730 McSwiny scored 'a fortunate hitt' when Sir William Morice bought the remaining ones that had been completed.⁵ And he had in any case decided from the first that further profits could be obtained by issuing engravings of the series, and for this purpose he employed the Bolognese artist D. M. Fratta to make drawings of the pictures as they appeared in Bologna and Venice.⁶ Some time in the 1730s he issued a pamphlet addressed 'To the Ladies and Gentlemen of Taste' in which he invited subscriptions for a magnificent volume—'a more compleat Work of the Kind, than has ever yet been published in any part of Europe'. It was to include 'fifty copper Plates, viz. twenty four Sepulchral Pieces, twenty four Inscription Plates (ornamented with Emblematical Figures), the Frontispiece and the Title-Plate; all of the same size with the Sepulchral Pieces; viz two Foot two Inches in Height, and one Foot five Inches in Breadth.

¹ Letter from John Conduitt to McSwiny of 4 June 1729 kept among the Conduitt papers in the Library of King's College, Cambridge. I am most grateful to Mr A. N. L. Munby for pointing out this correspondence to me—Haskell, 1967.

² The *Duke of Devonshire* thus altered must be another version of the one which once belonged to the Duke of Richmond and is now in the Barber Institute. The one of Sir Cloudesly Shovel has not yet been traced, but this too must have been a second version of the one belonging to the Duke of Richmond.

³ Vertue, V, p. 149.

⁴ Letter from McSwiny to John Conduitt of 27 September 1730—see note 1 above.

⁵ See letter from Joseph Smith to Samuel Hill of 26 November 1729 published by Chaloner.

⁶ Zanotti, II, p. 313.

'To which will be added (if the Encouragers of this Undertaking shall hereafter think fit) not only the Characters of the above-mentioned deceased Worthies but likewise those of many of their Contemporaries, who made considerable Figures in the Court, the Camp, the Church and State, as well as in the several Branches of useful and polite Learning, and who contributed largely to the carrying of the Reputation and Credit of the British Nation to a much higher Degree than it was ever before; with a succinct Account of the most memorable Transactions in the Reigns of King William and Queen Mary, Queen Anne, and King George.'

'The Whole to be adorn'd with Vignettes, Busto's, Medaillons, Culs des Lampes, and other proper and elegant Embellishments designed and engraved by the most celebrated Masters in Europe.'

The volume—*Tombeaux des Princes grands capitaines et autres hommes illustres, qui ont fleuri dans la Grande-Bretagne vers la fin du XVII et le commencement du XVIII siècle*—appeared in 1741, and was certainly very magnificent, but it must have disappointed McSwiny who had returned to England some ten years earlier. There were eighteen instead of fifty plates, and only nine of the allegorical tombs were engraved—all from the Duke of Richmond's collection. Only two of the heroes—Lord Dorset and Sir Isaac Newton—were given Characters, while there was no account of the memorable transactions of the reigns of William III, Anne and George I. It is none the less a fine tribute to McSwiny's enterprise and taste. Each painting is preceded by an inscription plate with the name of the hero surrounded by a rich decorative frieze designed by Boucher and engraved by C. N. Cochin, Laurence Cars and others. In many ways these plates are more satisfying than those of the actual tombs which were also engraved by French artists. They contain allegorical allusions to the hero's achievements and burst on to the page with a tense, virile vitality that is rarely found in Boucher's work.¹

The criticisms of the paintings and McSwiny's failure to attract enough subscribers to complete the book shows once again how reluctant Englishmen now were to welcome contemporary Italian history painting—even when heavily disguised. But McSwiny also catered for more conventional tastes. With his close friend, the English business man Joseph Smith, he dealt in pastels by Rosalba Carriera² and views by Canaletto. Indeed he was among this artist's first foreign patrons, though he had strong doubts about his merits. 'I hope you'll like 'em when they are done,' he wrote to a client in 1727 of some pictures by Canaletto,³ 'I am, it may be, a little too delicate in my choice, for of Twenty pieces I see of him, I don't like eighteen & I have seen several, sent to London y.t I wou'd not give house room too, nor Two pistols each. He's a covetous, greedy fellow & because he's in reputation people are glad to get anything at his own price.'

Though McSwiny's enthusiasm was only qualified, he commissioned a number of

¹ The inscription plate to Sir Isaac Newton's monument, which is very much more restrained than all the others, was designed by Joseph Perrot. Boucher, however, drew the medallion of Newton and the signs of the Zodiac above the extracts from Fontenelle's *Eloge* which are published on a separate page.

² Malamani, 1899, p. 142, publishes a letter of 1753 to Rosalba Carriera with a reference to McSwiny who had apparently not settled some account with her.

³ Letter from McSwiny to John Conduitt of 27 September 1730—see p. 290, note 1.

pictures by Canaletto for English clients, and in doing so he was for once fully in touch with national taste. On the Grand Tour noblemen regularly brought back their sets of views by the master or his pupils. Canaletto took full advantage of such a steady clientèle and raised his prices so much that he became virtually inaccessible to others and rightly acquired the reputation of being spoilt by the English.¹ Several generations of Englishmen saw Venice entirely through his eyes, sometimes with surprising results. When Dr Burney, the great musicologist, arrived there in 1770 he confessed that 'we form such romantic ideas of this city from its singular situation about which we hear and read so much that it did not at all answer my expectation as I approached it, particularly after seeing Canaletti's view all of one colour: for I find it like other famous cities composed of houses of different magnitude, orders of architecture, ages, and materials.'² Many years later William Beckford, who rhapsodised about the mystery and decay of the city, none the less found that it had been perfectly depicted by 'the pencil of Canaletti'.³

When in 1740 war in Europe greatly reduced the number of English travellers to the Continent, Canaletto found it necessary to come to this country, encouraged by Amigoni, who had had plenty of opportunity for gauging English taste. He moved throughout the land painting a series of London views and country houses for dukes and enthusiastic amateurs who welcomed him despite the denigration of jealous rivals and boisterous patriots (Plate 51).⁴ With short breaks he remained here for nearly ten years, during which time his manner became increasingly mechanical, but his shorthand of little blobs to represent the human figure was later adapted to brilliant comic purpose by the satirist Thomas Rowlandson.

The career of the landscape painter Francesco Zuccarelli was even more successful.⁵ He arrived in England in 1752 and remained here for over fifteen years with one break of three. His clients included George III and he became a founder member of the Royal Academy.

The triumphs of Canaletto and Zuccarelli are symbolic of the complete break that had occurred in artistic taste between England and the Continent. But in Europe too the situation had changed notably after the second decade of the eighteenth century. In 1724 Pellegrini's ceiling for the Banque Royale was destroyed, and thereafter, with the exception of Rosalba, contemporary Italian art proved of little interest to French collectors. As had happened some sixty years earlier, the French had taken just enough from the Italians to provide an impulse for their own native artists. But one man, who though not himself French was so impregnated with French culture that he must be considered here, continued to show great enthusiasm for Venetian art. Count Tessin was a Swede, son of the architect who had built the Royal Palace in Stockholm.⁶ He was born in 1695 and during his early travels between 1714 and 1719 he first came into contact with Watteau. A few years later he achieved great political importance in his

¹ De Brosses, I, p. 282.

² Burney, I, p. 109.

³ [William Beckford], I, p. 101.

⁴ Finberg, 1920-1.

⁵ Levey in *Italian Studies*, 1959, pp. 1-20.

⁶ For a brief account of Tessin's career and collecting activities see exhibition of *Le Dessin Français dans les Collections du XVIII^e siècle*, 1935, p. 43 and Bjurström, 1967.

native country and in 1728 he became Surintendant des Bâtiments Royaux. During his honeymoon in Paris in the same year he was engaged in buying pictures and furniture for the King of Sweden and this brought him into touch with a number of French artists. In 1739 he became ambassador to France and during his three years in Paris he assembled a superb collection of contemporary drawings and paintings by all the leading artists, especially Boucher, whose wife's lover he apparently became and from whom he had already commissioned a picture in 1737. The year before this he had been to Venice in search of a painter to decorate the Royal Palace in Stockholm. He was pleased with what he saw there—'il est constant que l'école de Venise est sur un très bon pied, et quelle se distingue en Italie—but he found little that satisfied his immediate requirements. In a well-known letter he enumerated the merits and drawbacks of the leading artists and found that only Tiepolo was ideal.¹ 'Tout est dans ses Tableaux richement vêtu jusqu'aux gueux etc. Mais n'est-ce pas la grande mode? Au reste, il est plein d'esprit, accommodant comme un Taraval, un feu infini, un colorit éclatant, et d'une vitesse surprenante. . . .' Unfortunately he was also able to command far higher prices than the Swedes could offer and the invitation to Stockholm met with no response. But Tessin was able to indulge his own taste for the colourful and the pretty. He bought a *Danaë* and a *modello* of the *Beheading of St John the Baptist* by Tiepolo for his personal collection, as well as views by Canaletto, Cimaroli and Richter, portraits and fanciful heads by Nazari and Nogari, drawings by Piazzetta and other works that attracted him. Having failed to get royal patronage for Tiepolo, he wrote that he would do his best for the sculptor Gai, whom he particularly admired, though he feared that 'jusqu'à cette heure je n'y vois encore que peu d'apparence, puis qu'il y a ici plusieurs sculpteurs François engagés aux services de la cour qui ont enterpris tout ce qu'il y a de plus pressé à faire'.² Tessin had made many friends in Venice and he remained faithful to them long after his art collecting was almost entirely confined to the French.

- iii -

Although French competition became increasingly serious as the century advanced—'hors de Paris point de salut', was the opinion in Berlin³—Venetian artists went on finding enthusiastic patrons all over Germany. After the death of the Elector Johann Wilhelm in 1716, Düsseldorf lost its importance, but the Hapsburgs and Schönborns who had hitherto stuck to the more traditional late-Baroque artists were now ready to welcome Pellegrini, Ricci and Rosalba Carriera—partly indeed, because of their very success in the more 'progressive' towns of London, Paris and Düsseldorf.⁴ And in 1725

¹ Sirén, pp. 103 ff.

² Letter from Tessin to A. M. Zanetti the Elder dated 12 March 1737 in Biblioteca Marciana, Cl.XI, Cod. CXVI, 7356.

³ Letter from Francesco Algarotti to his brother Bonomo dated 5 September 1749 in Biblioteca Comunale, Treviso, MSS. 1256.

⁴ Pellegrini went to Vienna in 1725-7 and Rosalba Carriera in 1730. Ricci's *Bacchus and Ariadne* in Pommersfelden dates from after his visit to England—*La Pittura del Seicento a Venezia*, 1959, p. 151. A letter from Johann Philip Franz to Friedrich Karl Schönborn dated 12 July 1723 to introduce Pellegrini speaks of his success in London, Paris and Düsseldorf—Von Freeden, 1955, p. 848.

Pellegrini went to Dresden where there was another sovereign whose fame as a patron was attracting international attention. Frederick Augustus I, Elector of Saxony, and since 1697 King of Poland as Augustus II 'the Strong', had made his court the most brilliant in Europe, and his munificent architectural policy was transforming Dresden into a city of dazzling beauty. But his interest in contemporary Venetian art was somewhat limited. He employed Gaspare Diziani for three years almost exclusively on painting scenery for the theatre and the festivals which were his special delight. Pellegrini was considered as a possible decorator for one of the rooms in the Zwinger, the fantastic rococo pavilion which had recently been completed by Pöppelmann, but his project was later destroyed and his activities in the city were otherwise confined to two paintings in the Catholic church for which Sebastiano Ricci had three years earlier painted an *Ascension*.¹ A year after Pellegrini came Antonio Zucchi, the engraver, who was employed in the famous print cabinet,² and though Augustus considerably enlarged the gallery of pictures he had inherited, his purchases did not very much affect Venetian painters. Two large pictures by Pittoni, an artist particularly favoured by the Germans, were acquired by him before 1722—*Nero being shown the Corpse of Seneca* and *Agrippina being killed on the orders of her son Nero*. This gruesome subject evidently had a special appeal for him, for he owned a second version of it by another Venetian artist, Pietro Negri, a pupil of Zanchi. When, however, a third, painted by the Roman Marco Benefial, arrived in Dresden, his son clearly felt that its possibilities had been exhausted and he gave the picture away.³

Augustus the Strong also acquired six mythological and Biblical paintings by Francesco Migliori, an attractive but not very significant Venetian artist of the first half of the eighteenth century, and others by Molinari and Bellucci. Virtually all these conform closely enough to that ideal of 'nudité' which so appealed to German taste. The patronage of his son Augustus III, who succeeded to the throne in 1733, was of a wholly different order. Until the disaster of the Seven Years War nearly a quarter of a century later the collecting activities of this man and his dictatorial minister Count Brühl were among the most outstanding in Europe, and under the direction of a Venetian artist, Pietro Guarienti, the Dresden Gallery achieved its great pre-eminence over nearly all the others in Germany. His fabulous purchases for it—such as the hundred finest pictures from the collections of the Dukes of Modena—cannot be discussed here but must at least be mentioned as an indication of his vast artistic ambitions. Agents acquired works of art for him throughout Europe, and in Venice itself the brothers Ventura and Lorenzo Rossi, who acted in this capacity, were always on the look out for suitable pictures. Apart from a large number of old masters they acquired six landscapes for him by Marco Ricci in 1738. But the real impact of contemporary Venetian painting only made itself felt when Francesco Algarotti returned to his native city in 1743 especially to

¹ Pellegrini's drawing is reproduced in *Mostra di Pellegrini*, 1959, Plate 92. For Pellegrini's and Ricci's work for Dresden (and other information about the gallery) see Posse, 1929 and Garas, 1971.

² Lavagnino, p. 115.

³ Bottari, V, pp. 27-8.

purchase pictures for the King whom he was then serving. Algarotti's commissions to Tiepolo, Piazzetta, Amigoni, Pittoni and Zuccarelli are discussed in a later chapter¹; but he also bought many pictures by these and other contemporary artists from private collections—two superb Piazzettas, one of them the famous *Standard Bearer*, two fine mythologies by Sebastiano Ricci and portraits and fantasy heads by Nogari and Nazari, artists who specialised in this type of picture which was ultimately derived from Flanders.

No doubt all these appealed to Augustus, despite his initial reluctance to pay too much attention to the works of contemporaries, but he had one special favourite whose works he collected avidly on his own account—Rosalba Carriera. They had met during his own visits to Venice early in the century when, as crown prince, he had revelled in the company of the beautiful and vapid ladies whose features she recorded. But he was far from satisfied with the number of pastels he had acquired from her on those occasions. Throughout his reign he was always keen to get more—from the artist herself or from private collections. His choice was catholic—portraits of friends and acquaintances or of pretty women he had never known, allegories such as the Four Seasons, or the Four Continents, or the Four Elements, religious subjects such as the Magdalene or the Virgin Mary. It hardly mattered as they were all equally attractive. His appetite was inexhaustible, and by the end of his life he had acquired over 150 examples of her work, while Rosalba's best pupil Felicita Sartori, who had married one of his councillors, came to Dresden in 1741 and worked extensively for him.²

Another Venetian artist produced a great proportion of his output for Augustus III. In 1747 Bernardo Bellotto, the nephew of Canaletto, arrived in Dresden and within a year he was appointed 'pittore di corte'—a post which he held until the break-up of that court after the disasters of the Seven Years War.³ During that time he painted large numbers of views showing, with an observation of everyday reality that had not been seen since the *bamboccianti*, the busy brilliant capital at the height of its glory. They were often produced in series of three sizes—the largest for the King, a smaller version for Count Brühl and a third example for other clients. In 1765, after he had already found employment elsewhere, Bellotto returned to Dresden. Augustus, his great patron, had been dead two years and the artist stayed just long enough to paint the ruins of the Church of the Cross which had been wrecked in a bombardment of Frederick the Great that had shocked Europe.⁴ Then he left.

No sovereign in Germany could rival Augustus in his patronage or collecting, but there were others who showed within the range of their far more limited means an equal enthusiasm for contemporary Venetian painting. Thus Clemens August, Archbishop-Elector of Cologne and younger brother of the Elector of Bavaria, who had employed Amigoni, was also a frequent visitor to Venice.⁵ He too was naturally an

¹ Chapter 14. See also L. Ferrari, 1900, pp. 150-4.

² Malamani, 1899, p. 77.

³ See catalogue of *Mostra di Bernardo Bellotto*, 1955. Another Venetian artist working at Dresden who left at this time was Pietro Rotari from Verona, who had arrived in 1750. ⁴ Posse, 1929, p. 300.

⁵ For a summary of Clemens August's patronage of Venetian artists see Levey, in *Burlington Magazine*, 1957, pp. 256-61, and also the exhibition catalogue *Kurfürst Clemens August*, Köln 1961.

admirer of Rosalba and owned pastels by her. Soon after 1730 he began commissioning altar paintings for the many churches under his patronage by Pittoni, Piazzetta—whose *Assumption of the Virgin* painted in 1735 contained the first signs of his lighter manner—and by Tiepolo. But German patronage of Venetian art, and Venetian art itself, reached a climax in 1750 when Tiepolo was commissioned to decorate the Residenz in Würzburg.¹ The bishopric had belonged to the Schönborn family, whose vast patronage has already been referred to, but after the death of Frederick Karl in 1746 and a short interval under his successor it was taken over by Karl Philip von Greiffenklau. It was he who with great difficulty and at enormous expense finally persuaded Tiepolo to come to Würzburg and decorate the Kaisersaal in the magnificent palace that had been built by Balthasar Neumann for his predecessors. The beautiful rococo room with its rich ornamentation of scagliola was quite unlike anything that Tiepolo had ever seen; the subjects to be painted, drawn from German mediaeval history, were equally foreign. But this unfamiliarity merely stimulated him to higher peaks of brilliance. On the ceiling he painted *Apollo conducting Frederick Barbarossa's bride Beatrice of Burgundy* in a chariot drawn by four prancing white horses to the awaiting Emperor—a scheme which he later adapted with suitable modifications to the Rezzonico family in Venice. On the walls he was required to paint the *Marriage of the couple being blessed by the Bishop of Würzburg in 1156* and *Bishop Harold von Hocheim being invested with the principedom by the Emperor in 1163*. The German princely clergy could not boast the Roman ancestry of Tiepolo's Venetian clients, and in any case mediaeval life was the only suitable precedent for their feudal existence in the Age of Enlightenment. None of this worried Tiepolo, who 'placed the scene firmly in sixteenth-century Venice, where in fact for him all history took place'.²

As soon as the decoration of the Kaisersaal had been completed Tiepolo agreed to paint the ceiling of the great staircase of the palace—by far the largest expanse he had ever undertaken—with a fresco depicting *The Four Continents paying homage to Karl Philip von Greiffenklau* (Plate 50). It would be charitable to describe this theme as anachronistic in 1752, but Tiepolo delighted in the dreams of absolutism. Unlike Pellegrini and the Riccis who had given of their best a couple of generations earlier in an atmosphere of change and relatively free enquiry, Tiepolo was most at home in the last bastions of an autocratic and backward looking society. In this fresco, so much fuller of possibilities than anything that he had yet been required to do in Venice, he painted his supreme and most imaginative vision of the *ancien régime*.

Other courts besides those of Germany looked to Venice for talent. The rise of Turin has been referred to in an earlier chapter.³ By the second decade of the century she had become powerful enough to attract artists from all over the peninsula. During most of the 1720s and early 1730s the architect Filippo Juvarra was artistic director of the city and on his authority a vast number of commissions was given to Sebastiano

¹ Von Freeden, 1956.

² Levey, 1959, p. 192.

³ See Chapter 7; and also Claretta, 1893, pp. 1-309 and Griseri, 1957, pp. 145-50.

Ricci for paintings in the Royal Palace and for various churches.¹ But the effects of this patronage were no longer as stimulating to Ricci, now an old man, as his travels of earlier days had been. He himself was prevented by a youthful misdemeanour from visiting Turin, and the grandiose scenes in the style of Veronese which he sent to the city have a somewhat hardened, academic quality which betrays a lack of inspiration.

Moreover, Juvarra himself showed only a very qualified attachment to Venetian painting. When, towards the end of 1735, he devised a scheme for decorating the Royal Palace in Madrid, he was asked by the King of Spain to commission pictures from all the different schools in Italy.² The list he drew up included only one work by a Venetian—Pittoni—as compared to four Romans and one each by a Genoese, a Neapolitan and a Bolognese. The proportion is extraordinary to present-day taste, but in some circles Roman painters were still looked upon as the most ‘serious’ artists working in the Grand Manner; though it is also possible that the old Spanish hostility for Venice may have played some part in determining the choice. If this is so, it no longer applied by 1739 when Amigoni went to Madrid as court painter.³ There he was followed by the far more uncompromisingly Venetian Tiepolo, who, after ruthless pressure ‘da chi puo comandare’, was sent out to Madrid in 1762 as part of an astute diplomatic move by the Venetian government.⁴ However much the nobility might still want to be immortalised by the great artist at the height of his powers, the old tradition of political cunning prevailed. On this his last mission Tiepolo, helped by his sons, once more drew upon all his resources to glorify a formerly powerful, but now declining, monarchy. And then, at the very end of his life, inspired perhaps by the traditional fervour of Spain, he produced his most personal and most deeply felt religious painting in a series of altarpieces for the royal chapel at Aranjuez. Soon afterwards they were removed and replaced with works by the new international star Anton Rafael Mengs.

Tiepolo died in 1770, but while he was still active in Spain new conquests were being prepared by Venetian artists in the most distant outposts of Europe. Pietro Rotari had gone to St Petersburg from his native Verona as early as 1756, and until his death there six years later he painted several hundred pictures of all kinds ranging from portraits to mythologies. He was followed in 1762 by Francesco Fontebasso, a pupil of Sebastiano Ricci, who decorated the Winter Palace,⁵ and in the same year Giacomo Guarana, another pupil of Ricci and Tiepolo, painted a *Sacrifice of Iphigenia* for Moscow.⁶

¹ Gabrielli, 1950, pp. 204–11, gives a full account of Ricci’s relations with the court of Turin.

In 1723 Juvarra commissioned a painting from Marco Ricci to indicate his proposals for the Castello di Rivoli. As was to occur later in his commissions for Spain he showed his preference for Roman painting by ordering four pictures from there (two each from Pannini and Locatelli) compared with only one each from a Venetian and a Turinese artist—see Viale, 1950–1, p. 161.

² Battisti, 1958, pp. 273–97.

³ It is true that Amigoni was born in Naples, but he spent his working life in Venice when he was not abroad. Amigoni was followed to Madrid in 1753 by Corrado Giaquinto, whose influence on the young Goya was far greater than that of any other Italian painter.

⁴ For the pressures put on Tiepolo to go to Spain see M. Brunetti, 1914.

⁵ Donzelli, pp. 209 and 90.

⁶ A. Longhi.

The dramatic accession to the throne in June 1762 of the insatiable Catherine the Great provided a new but, as it turned out, not very fruitful impulse for the importation of Venetian pictures. Though her culture was mainly inclined towards France, Catherine showed in her artistic as in her other tastes a reluctance to confine herself to any one style and she did what she could to continue the policy of her predecessor. Thus Bernardo Bellotto was planning to go to St Petersburg after the collapse of the Dresden court and the death of Augustus III. But while already on the journey he was persuaded to stop in Warsaw by the new King of Poland Stanislas Poniatowski and, for twelve years until his death in 1780, he produced for that art-loving and reforming monarch a large number of views to record the rapidly changing aspects of his capital.¹ Meanwhile in 1772 Pietro Antonio Novelli painted for the Empress a picture of *Creusa imploring Aeneas to rescue his father Anchises from the fire of Troy*. Though he had gone out of his way to choose a 'learned' subject to compete with the painting by Pompeo Batoni opposite which it was to hang, the thought of the climate made him refuse the opportunity to outdistance his Roman rival by accepting an invitation to Russia.² In any case Catherine's admiration for Venetian art is testified not so much by the rather minor artists and their works that she was able to attract to her distant court as by her purchase of Tiepolo's *Banquet of Cleopatra*. This masterpiece had been among those acquired for Augustus III by Francesco Algarotti many years earlier³ and its transference to St Petersburg in the 1760s provides a striking reflection of the changing balance of power in Europe which had always played such an influential rôle in the diffusion of Venetian art. But though it is true that Venice itself had perforce to remain a passive onlooker while many of the city's best artists and their pictures were drawn to London, Paris and Düsseldorf, Madrid, Dresden and Würzburg, it will become apparent in the next chapter that a more subtle relationship was possible between the dominant foreigner and native genius than one which was essentially built up on foundations of military strength and commercial wealth. For the Republic still retained many attractions and if kings and landowners could do little more than glimpse these on brief holidays, others were free to settle within her frontiers and gain a much deeper awareness of the city's treasures.

¹ *Mostra di Bernardo Bellotto, 1955.*

² Novelli.

³ See later, Chapter 14.

Chapter II

THE FOREIGN RESIDENTS

- i -

CONSUL JOSEPH SMITH

THE most important link in Venice itself between the city and the outside world was an Englishman, Joseph Smith, who became the greatest art patron of his day. He was born in about 1675, educated at Westminster School and settled in Venice during the early years of the eighteenth century as a businessman and merchant.¹ He traded extensively with Amsterdam and was concerned with the import of meat and fish—an activity which sometimes involved him in disputes with the guild of the *Salumieri*.² He quickly became rich and influential and his house was occasionally used for meetings between the Venetian nobility and English diplomats, which would have been awkward if held more openly.³ Early in the 1730s he began to take an interest in publishing which he put into practice by launching the firm of a young man, G. B. Pasquali. Smith's concern with this was far greater than merely financial, though money in any field was always a source of the keenest interest to him. For the first few years of the new venture he was actively engaged in the intellectual work involved. In 1735, for instance, he tried to enlist the help of the Florentine scholar A. F. Gori in a reprint of Guicciardini's *Histories*, and he promised in return to find English subscribers for that antiquarian's own *Museum Etruscum*. The difficulties were great: unpublished material had to be secured from the family; a frontispiece, drawn by the 'famous painter' Gian Domenico Ferretti of Florence, had to be engraved; and a suitable figure had to be found to whom to dedicate the book. Smith exerted himself in all these and many other aspects of the production, and also continued to buy books, gems and pictures for himself and for his clients.⁴ In 1744 he was made British Consul, a post inferior in status

¹ For the fullest account of his career see Parker, 1948, pp. 10 ff., who also publishes his will and other documents.

² We can get some impression of Smith's business activities after about 1740 from the papers of his *notario*, Lodovico Gabrieli, among which references to Smith are very frequent—see in Archivio di Stato, Sezione Notarile—Atti del Notaio Lodovico Gabrieli, Buste 7559-7570 (1740-70). Unfortunately I have not been able to trace who was his *notaio* before that date. Also in the Archivio di Stato, among the papers of the Avogaria di Comun—Civil 263/16—is an account of a dispute between Smith and the Arte de' Salumieri.

³ Public Record Office—State Papers 99/60: Letter from British Resident dated 18 May 1714: 'The Signor Tron, who goes Ambassador to London, sent on Wednesday last to lett me know that he would be glad to see me before his departure, and that he desired to meet me at the house of Mssrs. Williams and Smith, British Merchants here.'

⁴ See letters from Joseph Smith to A. F. Gori in Biblioteca Marucelliana, Florence: MSS. B. VIII, 4. These extend from 1727 to 1744, but the majority were written between 1735 and 1737. The Guicciardini was eventually published by Pasquali in 1738.

to the Residency for which he had hoped. In 1762, a year after resigning the consulship, he sold the bulk of his library and most of his pictures to King George III. Then five years later, at the age now of nearly 90, he temporarily resumed the post of consul when his successor went bankrupt.¹ He finally died in 1770 and was buried in the Protestant cemetery at S. Niccolò al Lido. His taste in pictures reflects much that we should expect from the two backgrounds, English and Venetian, hinted at in this outline of his long, acquisitive and persistent life.

As a patron of the arts and the owner of a superb library he was well known and appreciated in Venice, and he was in close contact with nearly all the leading painters. He was also an assiduous theatre-goer and fond of the opera.² And his palace on the Grand Canal near the church of the Apostoli was the meeting-place for a number of the more adventurously inclined nobles and intellectuals, for besides his great interest in scholarly works and fine editions, Smith was always keen to publish books which in hidebound Venice were bound to appear controversial, if not actually subversive.³ Chief among these visitors was the sarcastic, anti-conformist Padre Lodoli who would come with his lively patrician pupil Andrea Memmo.⁴ Both of them were to play important rôles in the art world of Venice, and Memmo later acknowledged the influence that the meetings at Consul Smith's house had had on his taste. But their great friendship did not long survive their rivalry in love: both men were courting the beautiful Giustiniana Wynne, the illegitimate daughter of an English gentleman and a Greek adventuress.⁵ Memmo was some fifty-four years younger than the English Consul and his victory was inevitable. Thereafter Giustiniana was to turn up again and again as a link between many of the more intelligent patrons and writers of eighteenth-century Venice.

Smith's activities and influence may have diminished after 1744, in view of the government's discouragement of contacts between the nobility and foreign representatives, though we do hear from the Resident himself that the Consul was far better placed from this point of view than his more senior colleague⁶; and Smith in his claim to the appointment specifically boasted that he had 'contracted Friendships with some Principal men in the Government . . .'.⁷ In his earlier days at least he had had friendly relations at various times with the connoisseurs Apostolo Zeno, Francesco Algarotti and Antonio Maria Zanetti, and Goldoni in the dedication to Smith of one of his plays,

¹ Public Record Office—State Papers 99/70—Letters of 10 and 31 January, 10 May and 10 June 1766. See also Archivio di Stato, Venice—Esposizione Principi, Reg. 112.

² See Goldoni's dedication to him of *Il Filosofo Inglese in Opere*, V, p. 259. He owned a large collection of operatic caricatures by Marco Ricci, A. M. Zanetti and others—see Blunt and Croft-Murray, pp. 137 ff.

³ For many vivid comments on the publishing activities of Smith and Pasquali see the letters from P. E. Gherardi to L. A. Muratori in the Biblioteca Estense, Modena. See also Chapter 13 of this book.

⁴ [Andrea Memmo], 1786, p. 1, which in turn refers to Lami: *Memorabilia*, Firenze 1742, p. 386.

⁵ B. Brunelli, 1923.

⁶ Public Record Office—State Papers 99/69, p. 224r.

⁷ Letter from Smith to the Duke of Newcastle dated 26 August 1740—British Museum: Add. MSS. 32,802, f. 182.

Il Filosofo Inglese, says that the Englishman had been among his keen admirers. From his will, drawn up in 1761, we get the impression that by this stage in his long life Smith had few close contacts in Venice beyond those of business. By far the most important of these were with his client Pasquali, who published catalogues of his gems and some of his paintings and books as well as many other works of literature and philosophy which the Consul clearly suggested to him.¹ And it is also very likely that he had certain definite business arrangements with some of the artists whom he employed for himself and others.²

Two of his most interesting Italian friends lived in Padua. Of these, one was the Abate Faccioli, a professor of history in the University, to whom he left three books 'as a testimonial of my Esteem and respect and of my grateful sense of the friendship that for so many years [he has] honoured me with'. Faccioli had a remarkable collection of pictures which was designed to illustrate the history and progress of art beginning with a series of Byzantine paintings. Such private museums were still most unusual during the first half of the eighteenth century, though another one of Smith's friends, Padre Lodoli, collected works of art on a similar principle.³ Smith's other acquaintance in Padua was the Marchese Giovanni Poleni, also a professor at the University, and an engineer and architect of some distinction—in many ways a typical product of the provincial Enlightenment.⁴ These relationships suggest that Smith was most at home in scholarly surroundings.

This is all we know about the Consul's participation in the Venetian life of his day. With the English his links were much stronger. We find him writing to Gori of his friend the 'celeberrimo S.r Dottor Mead',⁵ the most stimulating art collector of early eighteenth-century England and the great friend of Sir Isaac Newton, in whom Smith himself was closely interested.⁶ His official duties brought him into touch with many of the most important visitors to Venice, but besides these his house was always open to English connoisseurs or artists in the city whom he treated with great courtesy. At one time or another John Breval, Horace Walpole, Richard Wilson, Sir Joshua Reynolds, James Wyatt and Robert Adam were all welcomed by him.⁷ But no one really liked him. Walpole characteristically jeered at him as 'the Merchant of Venice'; Lady

¹ See p. 299, note 4. Grosley, who was in Venice in 1758, writes—II, p. 99—'L'Imprimerie de Jean-Baptiste Pasquali, l'une des meilleures et des plus occupées de Venise, roule, pour la plus grande partie, sur les fonds de M. Joseph Smith; riche Anglois qui a vielli dans le Consulat d'Angleterre à Venise.'

² The case of Canaletto is discussed separately, but it seems likely that Smith had some similar arrangement with Visentini.

³ See Previtali.

⁴ There are two very friendly letters from Poleni to Smith, dated 9 and 17 April 1747, in the Biblioteca Marciana—MSS. Ital.Cl.X. Cod CCLXXXVIII—6580. In these Poleni asks Smith to obtain some drawings for him from Visentini. There is an answer to the first of these letters, dated 14 April 1747, in which Smith refers to 'l'antica mia servitù et perpetua stima'.

⁵ See p. 299, note 4. The undated letter is on page 211.

⁶ Smith and Pasquali published many books referring to Newton. In a note on page 30 of his *Tempio della Filosofia*, 1757, the poet Arrighi-Landini tells how Smith supplied him with a copy of Pope's famous epitaph.

⁷ Levey, in *Burlington Magazine*, 1959, pp. 139 and 143.

Mary Wortley Montagu found the self-congratulation with which he rendered her a service overwhelming; and James Adam burst out in a fit of rage: 'As to Smith's flummery 'tis all good for nothing with him—mere words, of course, that have no meaning except when he has some favour to ask.'¹ Even across the centuries we sense something vaguely unattractive about the man—the obsequiousness of his dealings with the King; the cynicism of his first marriage to the rich but mad operatic singer Katherine Tofts; his grotesque though pathetic pursuit of Giustiniana Wynne; and finally his second marriage, when aged 82, to the sister of John Murray, the Resident—the very job that he had wanted for himself.

Despite the unease that he inspired in his fellow-countrymen and despite the fact that he lived abroad virtually all his life, like so many Englishmen in a similar situation he insisted on retaining the atmosphere of his native land. When Mme du Boccage visited Venice in 1757 she noted that Smith's palace was 'entirely in the English taste; the very tables and locks of the gates are made after the manner of that country'.²

And yet this palace was by that time full to capacity with Italian paintings, not all of which would have suited the taste of an English gentleman at home. When he began collecting in the 1720s, Smith turned first to Sebastiano Ricci, at that time considered the finest painter in Venice. The veteran Lazzarini had virtually retired; his pupil Tiepolo was still too young to be known outside a restricted circle. Yet Ricci, for all the esteem in which he was held, was employed far more outside Venice, principally by the court of Turin, than in the city itself, where his most important commissions were largely confined to the Church, and henceforward to Smith.

The pictures that Smith bought or commissioned from the artist were painted in his most scintillating manner, and many of them were freely adapted from Veronese.³ The most important were seven large pictures of themes from the New Testament which he hung together in a special room in his palace and which he had engraved and described in 1749, along with seven cartoons by the Bolognese Carlo Cignani, an artist enormously admired in early eighteenth-century Venice, which were hung in another room.⁴ These paintings from the New Testament may well be connected with a similar series that Ricci was engaged on for the court of Turin at much the same moment.⁵ In fact, apart from their fine quality all Smith's Riccis are of a kind which suggests either that they were bought from the artist or his heirs after his death or that, if

¹ Letter from James to Robert Adam dated 20 August 1760. I am most grateful to Mr John Fleming for showing me a copy of this letter.

² Mme du Boccage, I, p. 146.

³ For a full account of these pictures see Blunt, *Burlington Magazine*, 1946, pp. 262-8, and 1947, p. 101.

⁴ The Abate Pietro Ercole Gherardi, who wrote the *Descrizione* of Smith's Cignanis and Riccis, was a Modenese friend of Muratori with whom he engaged in a long correspondence, now in the Biblioteca Estense, Modena.

In the *Galleria di Minerva*, VI, 1708, p. 83, an anonymous writer said of Cignani, 'nessuno ha saputo fin'ora vendere in vita i suoi Quadri a sì alto prezzo'.

⁵ This has been suggested by Blunt, 1957, p. 12, note 6, who discusses all the Sebastiano and Marco Ricci drawings owned by Smith.

commissioned, Smith had as yet formed no distinctive taste of his own. The remaining thirteen religious and classical compositions are of subjects that were commonplace in the artistic repertory of the day, and the fact that Smith also owned a series of studies of heads copied from Veronese strongly suggests that he acquired a section of the artist's studio *en bloc*—for such a commission would be most unusual. And it is likely that he acquired the 211 miscellaneous drawings which date from various periods in Ricci's life in the same way.

Many of these pictures have landscape backgrounds by Sebastiano's nephew, Marco, and he too was very fully represented in Smith's collection. Once again it is not clear what proportion of the 42 paintings and nearly 150 drawings were directly commissioned by him, for the subjects offer no clue and one of the drawings is dated 1710, when it is most unlikely that the two men knew each other. Some of them were engraved by Antonio Maria Zanetti in a book which recorded a few of his own paintings by Marco Ricci and which he dedicated to Francesco Algarotti in 1743.¹ The subjects include fantastic Roman ruins, genre scenes from country life and a number of landscapes (Plate 55b).

Among other artists whom Smith was especially patronising in the 1720s was Rosalba Carriera. There are records that she knew him in 1721 and was working for him by 1723 so that she must have been among the very first painters he employed—indeed her name appears first on the list of his pictures which he drew up when he sold them to George III.² Throughout 1725, 1726 and 1728 she was receiving payments from him, and we also know that Smith obtained commissions for her from other Englishmen.³ In the end his large collection of pastel portraits formed the best known group of her paintings in Venice: in particular it contained what was universally recognised to be her masterpiece, *Winter*, represented (in Smith's words) by a 'Beautiful Female covering herself with a Pelisse allowed to be the most excellent this Virtuosa ever painted.'⁴ Smith commissioned two versions of this, and after keeping the one he liked best for himself, he sent the other to a friend (or client).⁵ He obviously guarded it jealously, for writing to Rosalba from London in 1735, a Mr Robert Dingley asked for a picture 'of a pretty young country girl . . . in the style of the *Winter* in Mr Smith's collection. . . . There is no need to say anything to Mr Smith about this. . . .'⁶

Such then are the outlines of Smith's career as collector and patron until about 1730. He was now aged 55, and living in the Palazzo Balbi near the Rialto where he had

¹ *Francisco Comiti Algarotto, Eruditissimo Viro, Bonarumque Artium Cultori, Hasce XXIV Tabulas Olim a Marco Ricci Bellunensi Colorib. Expressas, Quae Extant in Aedibus Joseph Smith, et Antonio Mariae Zanetti, D.A.F. Qui eas del. incid. et in lucem edit Venetiis Anno MDCCXLIII D.D.D.*

² Cust, p. 153.

³ See her accounts for 21 May 1726, published by Malamani, 1899, p. 147: 'Dato le Quattro Stagioni, per spedire a Londra, al Sig. Smith.'

⁴ Cust, p. 153.

⁵ Letter from Smith to Rosalba Carriera (undated) in Biblioteca Laurenziana, Florence: Cod. Ashburn, 1781, Vol. IV: 'Giacchè Ella intende di voler finire anche l'altro Inverno, quando ciò si potesse terminare per Lunedì desiderei molto volentieri vederlo à confronto dell'altro per poter allora con più fondamento risolvere quali di Due inviare all'amico.'

⁶ Malamani, 1899, p. 134.

settled on arrival; in 1731 he bought the country house at Mogliano near Treviso which he had leased four years earlier from the Procuratore di San Marco, Gerolamo Canal.¹ In these two properties he displayed his paintings and drawings by Sebastiano and Marco Ricci, Carlo Cignani and Rosalba Carriera and probably also Piazzetta with whom he was in touch during these years.² It was already the most important collection of modern art to be found in Venice (and there was also a growing number of old masters), but reflected no particular originality of outlook. From now on, however, there seems to be a change in direction, and Smith began to accumulate a series of pictures which made his palace unique as an expression of individual taste. Essentially the shift reflected—consciously or not—one that was taking place at the same time in his native England: a move away from large-scale history pictures towards views and landscapes, though in his case not towards portraits. It is indeed remarkable that though he was anxious to have portraits of all the artists who worked for him, he never seems to have commissioned one of himself.

The new direction of his patronage was marked above all by his employment of Canaletto: the relations between the two men were central in the careers of both. Though there is no conclusive record of their having been in touch before 1729, it seems likely that Canaletto actually began working for Smith a year or two earlier, by which date he was already a well-known artist with a European clientèle. Thereafter Smith directed his whole output almost entirely into English channels, and conspicuously into his own collection. The exact nature of their relations has been extensively and authoritatively discussed, but remains uncertain.³ There is, however, no doubt whatsoever that Smith's control over the artist was such that from a very early period commissions for his works were very frequently, if not exclusively, made through him.⁴ This was not altogether an easy matter, for both artist and business man had notoriously mean characters: 'nor is it the first time', Smith wrote angrily after a brush in 1729, '[that] I have been glad to submit to a painter's impertinence to serve myself and friends'.⁵ He was, however, not the man to be put off by difficulties of this kind, and he retained his self-appointed rôle as the agent through whom Canalettos were purchased. It is probably this that the Swedish visitor Count Tessin meant when he said in 1736 that for a term of four years Canaletto was engaged by Smith to work exclusively for him.⁶ Certainly besides the pictures that Smith obtained for others he was keeping a very large number for himself—far more than the fifty-three at present in the Royal Collection⁷—so that, if we include in the phrase 'work exclusively for him' those

¹ Archivio di Stato, Venice—Dieci Savi alle Decime, No. 1309, f. 84v, and Sezione Notarile, Vettor Todeschini, Atti 12,727, c. 135v and 12,731, c. 306v.

² Smith sent works by Piazzetta to Samuel Hill in November 1729—see Chaloner.

³ Parker, pp. 9 ff.

⁴ For instance in June 1730 John Conduit 'desired Mr S[mith] to procure 3 pictures from Canaletto'—see p. 290, note 1.

⁵ Letter from Smith to Samuel Hill of 17 July 1730 published by Chaloner. ⁶ Sirén, p. 107.

⁷ For instance a further fourteen appear in one sale catalogue alone—Christie's, 16 May 1776: *A Catalogue of the Capital and Valuable Collection of Italian, French, Flemish and Dutch Pictures . . . of Joseph Smith, Esq.*, Some of the implications of this and other sale catalogues are discussed in Appendix 5.

pictures that Smith was commissioning for other customers, there is no reason to doubt the substantial truth of Tessin's observation.

Smith's first Canalettes were six views of S. Marco and its immediate surroundings, larger than anything he had painted until then, bold, free and almost impressionistic.¹ They are among his finest works, and in many ways the antithesis of what was to be his characteristic style when later working for the Consul and other English patrons. Already there is a change in the fourteen pictures which he painted for him between 1730 and 1735: the treatment is now less dramatic and much more sober. This change corresponds to the evident purpose of the series. With two large exceptions—depicting regattas—the group consists of twelve small views of Venice, chosen not because of the interest, importance or beauty of the objects to be represented, but purely so as to achieve a documentary record of the whole Grand Canal. Up and down, very systematically, the painter has worked his way through this great artery, leaving as fine and yet as unpretentious a memorial as any city has ever had. Such an attitude to art was quite new. Painters, even the most distinguished ones, had often been employed to record important scenes from contemporary life for their patrons or merely buildings and landscapes which were particularly associated with them. Other artists had exploited the 'picturesque' elements of back streets and slum life and ruins. Yet others had painted individual buildings of outstanding architectural interest. But these are all the very elements that are missing in this series. With his eye firmly on the Canal the artist here often records the palaces and churches in such steep perspective that we are not intended to admire them in themselves. There is something curiously prosaic and business-like in this approach of a painter who had until now shown himself so dramatic, indeed romantic. It is almost as if the patron were drawing up a prospectus, a sort of visual catalogue, of Canaletto's abilities. Can this in fact have been the real motive for these pictures? There is some evidence for the theory. In 1735 Visentini's engravings of the series were published, thus giving tourists an easy opportunity to get to know it. A year later Tessin reports that Canaletto has been engaged to paint exclusively for Smith for four years. And, paradoxically enough, it seems that at this very time Canaletto had virtually ceased working for Smith.

There are no paintings by Canaletto in the Consul's collection between the series engraved by Visentini and a number some ten years later. But it was at this very moment that Canaletto obtained some of his most important commissions from English visitors. If the Visentini series was indeed intended as an advertisement—if the pictures were painted, in fact, with the engravings in mind—the scheme was remarkably successful. For it was during the last half of the 1730s that Canaletto painted twenty views for the Duke of Bedford, another series of twenty for Sir Robert Hervey, and seventeen for the Earl of Carlisle. In all these groups the artist pays far more attention to the accurate delineation of specific buildings than he had done when working for Smith. And it is now that we first notice the mannerisms, the harshness, the signs of studio assistance—all

¹ Constable, 1976.

the deterioration that was to become characteristic of a painter 'whom the English have spoilt'.

It is impossible to tell exactly what Smith was doing during this period. No doubt he was buying old masters extensively. And he must also have been forming and adding to his great collection of drawings—in 1734 Sebastiano Ricci died and it was probably then that Smith acquired much of the contents of his studio. Many illustrated editions of books were published by Pasquali during these years, and Smith retained the original drawings most of which were by Visentini.¹

We know too that he was buying gems and cameos, and from the many letters that he wrote about these to the Florentine antiquary A. F. Gori in 1737 and 1738 we can derive our only explicit indication of his artistic tastes.² He emerges as an enthusiastic and apparently discriminating collector. 'It makes no difference to me,' he writes,³ 'whether the stone be cut or the figures in relief or of what size they be, as long as the workmanship is excellent; and although I do like modern things when they are extremely beautiful, I must be understood always to give preference to the antique, without however blindly praising a bad piece just because it is antique. If I come across beautiful things, I am glad to pay what they are worth.' Many people, including, naturally, the dealers of the time, went out of their way to praise Smith's choice of stones,⁴ but not everyone would have acknowledged his claims of generosity or even taste. Girolamo Zanetti later said that his brother Antonio Maria who copied Smith's gems for publication had been extremely badly paid, and he commented scathingly on the quality and authenticity of many of the Consul's 'antiques',⁵ despite the fact that Smith always showed himself careful to distinguish between 'the good or, rather, excellent works of the sixteenth century when fine masters were alive' and those produced in more recent years.⁶

It was at about this time too that the connoisseur John Breval visited Smith's collection and was shown a little statuette which represented 'seemingly an Aesculapio-

¹ Blunt and Croft-Murray, pp. 67 ff.

² See p. 299, note 4.

³ On 30 March 1737: 'Giacchè Ella si dimostra si inclinata à favorirmi & satisfare il mio genio per tali Cose, Io Le dico che tutto ugualmente mi piace, che la pietra sia incisa ò con figura ò figure di rilievo et di ogni grandezza purchè il lavoro ne sia eccellente, et benche dico ch'applico à cose moderne quando sono belle assai, vorrei essere inteso, di sempre dar la preferenza all'antico senza però ciecamente stimare una Cosa cattiva perche è antica. Capitando cose bello hò Cuore anche di pagarle quello vaglioni. . . .'—Biblioteca Marucelliana, Florence—see p. 299, note 4.

⁴ The dealer Lorenzo Masini said that Smith's medal cabinet was outstanding in its day for quality—see Zabeo, p. 16.

⁵ Letter from Girolamo Zanetti dated 21 August 1751 in Biblioteca Marucelliana, Florence—MSS. B. VIII, 13, p. 170: 'Vengo al Pasquali. La faccenda appartiene tutto al Console Britannico *Smith*. Mio fratello disegnò le gemme e i Cammei, e gli Vantaggiò di molto colla matite perchè gli originali non sono di quella perfezione, che si vorrebbe far vedere. Molti, se non isbaglio, sono moderni . . .' [in margin: 'Fu assai male ricompensato.'].

⁶ Letter from Smith to Gori of 13 April 1737: ' . . . Non rifiuto le cose buone ò per meglio dire le ottime del secolo XVI quando viveano de bravi maestri, ne in niuna città fiorirono più che in Firenze, mà questa Testa d'Adriano è molto più recente, e quasi quasi direi chi l'ha fatta . . .'—Biblioteca Marucelliana, Florence—see p. 299, note 4.

Priapus; with a Pudendum of monstrous proportion' as well as some more conventional sculptures, the Cignani cartoons and various books and antiquities.¹

Early in the 'forties he resumed the patronage of contemporary artists on a large scale, and also engaged in two interesting and important transactions. In 1741 he sold a number of paintings, which are now impossible to identify, to the Elector of Saxony² and in the same year, or thereabouts, he bought a collection of Dutch and Flemish pictures from the widow of the artist Pellegrini.³ Indeed, it was almost certainly from her that he acquired at least one of his masterpieces of Dutch painting—Vermeer's *Lady at the Virginals* (now in Buckingham Palace). It has been claimed that the Vermeer greatly influenced Canaletto's development,⁴ but though the theory is a tempting one, it is difficult to substantiate. If this picture, which was then in no way singled out for special praise and, indeed, was attributed to the secondary painter Frans van Mieris, really came from Pellegrini's widow, it arrived at a time when Canaletto's style was already fully formed and his best days were nearly over. In any case the subtly modulated lighting and precision of the Dutch interior bears little relation to the huge views which Canaletto was then painting. For it was now, soon after the outbreak of the war of the Austrian succession in 1740, which so cut down the numbers of English tourists, that he once again began to work for his most persistent patron.

Canaletto's return to Smith marked a very striking change both in his style and in his subject-matter. He entirely gave up the small-scale views of Venice, on which his international reputation was securely based, and turned instead to grandeur and fantasy and a vastly increased range of subjects. There was quite possibly a second visit to Rome, perhaps with Smith, and this led to the painting of six views of ancient Roman monuments. These were the largest pictures that Canaletto ever painted for Smith, and if for no other reason they must have made a great impact among those in his collection. And their subjects made them unique in Venice. With their concentration on the grandest of antique monuments they were like some signal to show that Rome and Roman values were once more about to resunie the leading rôle in Italian art. Yet this is still Rome as seen by the outsider, and consequently lacks that matter-of-fact element which was so characteristic of the Venetian views of his earlier years. Though the paint is now harsh, there is in these pictures something of a return to the dramatic vision of his very first pictures. It is significant that Smith should have wished for views of antiquity only and ignored the contemporary Rome of Pannini; yet it is hard to see these playing more than a symbolical rôle in the rise of the neo-classic.

This is worth stressing because the next few paintings commissioned from Canaletto so clearly were intended to portray the style of architecture that Smith particularly liked. It was in 1744 that Canaletto painted the '13 Door Pieces . . . [of] the principal Buildings

¹ Breval, 1738, I, p. 230.

² Blunt and Croft-Murray, p. 11.

³ *ibid.*, p. 14, and, for the list of Smith's Dutch and Flemish pictures, pp. 19-23, and Vivian, 1962, pp. 330-3.

⁴ Most forcibly and, to my mind, least convincingly by Brandi, pp. 60 ff.

of Palladio'.¹ In fact, as Smith recognised in a note at the end of his catalogue, by no means all the pictures in the series do represent that architect's works, but this first reference by him reveals clearly enough what was the aim of the group—to show the 'most admired Buildings at Venice'. And the vast majority of these were by Palladian architects of the sixteenth century. Yet the series as a whole is not altogether consistent. Alongside the bland, almost mathematically precise, views of the Rialto as planned by Palladio or the Courtyard of the Carità are quite imaginary scenes such as the Horses of St Mark's detached from the church and placed on the piazza or a fantastic interpretation of the Scala dei Giganti. These are among the first 'caprices' in Canaletto's work and it is tempting to link them with the arrival in Venice in 1743 of Francesco Algarotti, who was later to show such enthusiasm for this type of picture and who was at this very time in touch with Smith. It is equally possible that Canaletto derived the idea from Pannini on his visit to Rome a year or two before, and it must certainly have been about now that he painted for Smith his two *capricci* with Roman ruins in 'a bold frank manner'.² Yet though such pictures are more readily associated with the fanciful Algarotti than the more phlegmatic temperament of Smith, it was to his English patron that Canaletto dedicated in these very years by far his most poetic excursions into the field of the imaginary—the series of thirty-one etchings 'altre prese da i Luoghi altre ideate' (Plate 55a). These represent a side of Canaletto's art which is totally absent in his paintings for the Consul, though it is occasionally hinted at in his drawings—an appreciation of distances, worn columns overhung with plants, the solitary black bird, arches, mountains. It is a deeply felt, informal, often poignant vision, in which—almost for the last time—Canaletto's genius blazes at full power. Very soon afterwards he left for England apparently on Smith's recommendation and for nearly ten years there was little contact between the two men.

After Canaletto's departure in 1746 Smith turned to two other artists to continue the series of overdoors illustrating Palladian architecture.³ Antonio Visentini had already been employed by him for more than fifteen years as an architect and book illustrator and Francesco Zuccarelli was an established landscape painter, who worked a great deal for Smith, though it is not clear whether his '6 Landscapes representing the story of Rebecca with Jacob and Esau' and many other pictures had already been painted before 1746 or whether the commission of that year brought about the first contact between the two men. In any case Zuccarelli's part in the enterprise was a minor one despite its greater artistic quality. It consisted of adding attractive decorative landscapes of the Venetian kind for which he was famous to the architectural views painted by Visentini. The architecture was exclusively English and consisted of a series of country houses and surroundings which neither he nor his patron had ever seen. All were in the style which Lord Burlington and his followers had raised into a dogmatic canon of

¹ Most of these overdoors are dated 1744, but the *Horses of St Mark's* is dated in Roman fashion A.U.C. 1332, which is equivalent to 1753. Sir Anthony Blunt has solved the problem by suggesting that Canaletto accidentally added an extra x—see *Exhibition of The King's Pictures*, 1946-7, No. 440.

² Cust, p. 153. The settings are imaginary, but appear to have been inspired by Padua.

³ Blunt, 1958, pp. 283-4, and Vivian, 1963, pp. 157-62.

taste—the Palladian. Five of the eleven pictures portray works by Inigo Jones, two by Lord Burlington, two by Colen Campbell, one by Roger Morris, and one—curiously enough—by Vanbrugh, though the example chosen shows him at his most Palladian. In some cases separated buildings are combined, but none of these *capricci* includes the playful distortions of Canaletto's *Horses of St Mark's* and it is clear that the genre was not inherently sympathetic to Smith. The pictures were based primarily on engravings taken from Colen Campbell's *Vitruvius Britannicus*, and as far as architectural details are concerned they are mostly of great, almost programmatic accuracy. The significance of the whole series is made absolutely clear by the portrait that Nogari was commissioned to paint for him of Inigo Jones, taken from 'Vandyke, with the plan of the Banqueting House in his hands'.¹ Smith also brought out many editions of the works of Jones and Palladio, and in 1767 he published one of the manuscripts in his collection by the seventeenth-century theorist Teofilo Gallacini. The title was indicative: *Trattato sopra gli errori degli architetti*, and within a very short time the book was brought up to date by Antonio Visentini with a series of bitter attacks on the Baroque architects and their successors down to Piranesi. The effect was not missed by the Venetians who frequented Smith's palace, and later Andrea Memmo was to write that 'a great number of books on architecture which I was able to see in his house, and the guidance of Signor Antonio Visentini, made me pick out and prefer that style which is called pure and simple'.²

This devotion to the strict canons of neo-Palladianism in 1746 shows Smith conforming closely to the English taste at the very time when it was wearing somewhat thin in his own homeland. But it coincided with a move towards classicism that was felt in all branches of Venetian art during the 'forties and that Smith's patronage during this decade did much to promote. Despite the commission of an important work from Tiepolo, which came to nothing because it was expropriated by Algarotti for the court of Dresden,³ Smith tended to move away from history painting and fantasy and turn more than ever to landscapes and architectural paintings proclaiming the virtues of sobriety. This tendency continued in the 'fifties—in the first year of that decade Visentini built a new classicising marble façade for his palace⁴—but by now his patronage of contemporary artists was greatly diminished. Zuccarelli went to England in 1752 and it may therefore have been at this period that Smith began employing Zais,⁵ whose landscapes he did not think worth including in the batch of pictures that he later sold to George III. In the same year, however, he acquired some of his most magnificent drawings—including many by Castiglione and the Carracci—as well as some old master paintings from the heirs of Zaccaria Sagredo.⁶ He also bought some more pictures from Canaletto, among them a number of English views, on that artist's return

¹ Cust, p. 161.

² [Andrea Memmo], 1786, p. 1.

³ Haskell, in *Burlington Magazine*, 1958, pp. 212-3. And see later, Chapter 14.

⁴ Gradenigo, p. 5.

⁵ G. A. Moschini, 1924, p. 82: 'Che se Giuseppe Zais e Francesco Zuccarelli ebbero un gran protettore nel Console Smith. . . .

⁶ See document published by Blunt and Croft-Murray, p. 24.

from London in 1755. These, together with the Riccis and Cignanis and most of his larger works, were hung in his palace; at his country house he kept the paintings by Dutch and Flemish artists, a number of Zuccarellis and many of the old masters.¹

By this time he was already nearly 80 and was making plans to dispose of his library and collections. In 1755 he published an inventory of his books, grandly but slightly absurdly called the *Bibliotheca Smithiana*, almost certainly designed as an elaborate sale catalogue, and a year later he began negotiations with the English royal family. These were interrupted almost at once by the outbreak of the Seven Years War.²

Disappointment, old age and the disruption of trade deeply affected him, and he began to withdraw more and more from social life. In 1756 he gave up his box in the theatre of S. Giovanni Crisostomo³ and four years later he resigned the consulship and wrote that he wished to return to England, 'but first, having spent all my vacant time in amusements of admiring the fine arts and possessing considerable collections of things relating thereto . . .' he proposed to visit the principal towns of Italy, as he knew only Venice.⁴ At just this time James Adam met him and wrote⁵ that he was 'devilish poor & should he live a few years longer which he may do, he will die a Bankrupt . . . he has a fine collection which he ought to sell if vanity wou'd allow him, but he is literally eaten up with it'. However, in 1762, after difficult negotiations he at last managed to sell most of his best pictures, books, drawings and gems to King George III.⁶ Even so, enough remained to cover his walls. His vitality was impressive: he still actively engaged in business, including picture dealing, and in 1766 he again became Consul for a few months. But, apart from this, he seems to have lived a retired life, attracting little attention from native Venetians or tourists. He finally died in 1770, two years after Canaletto, with whom he will always be associated.

- ii -

MARSHAL SCHULENBURG

Another foreigner was commissioning and collecting pictures in Venice at much the same time as Joseph Smith, and the contrasts in background and activities between Marshal Schulenburg and the English Consul are reflected very closely in their aesthetic tastes. There is no record that they were on close terms, and although they often employed the same artists, their collections were very different.

¹ Orlandi, pp. 79-80 and 206 (under Pellegrini and Zuccarelli). In 1757 Robert Adam visited Consul Smith at Mogliano and saw there 'as pretty a collection of pictures as I have ever seen, not large pictures but small ones of great masters and very finely preserved . . .'. Fleming, 1959, p. 171.

² Parker, p. 11.

³ Archivio di Stato, Venice: Atti del notaio Lodovico Gabrieli, 7564, p. 12v, 22 Marzo 1756.

⁴ Letter from Smith to William Pitt of 29 October 1760—Public Record Office, State Papers 99/68, f. 96.

⁵ Letters from James to Robert and Jenny Adam of 20 and 27 August 1760 published by Fleming, 1962, p. 270.

⁶ See Appendix 5.

Johann Matthias Schulenburg, who came from a Saxon family, was born in 1661.¹ After studying in France and Germany, he served as a professional soldier in most of the great wars fought throughout Europe at the turn of the century. He fought for the Hungarians and for the House of Savoy; he fought for the Saxons in a series of engagements against Charles XII of Sweden about which he liked to talk in later life; and he fought in the wars of the Spanish Succession, serving under Prince Eugene at Malplaquet. It was this latter connection that brought about his association with Venice, for when in 1715 the Republic appealed to Eugene for help against the Turks he advised them to turn to Schulenburg. This advice was fully justified by the Marshal's brilliant defence of Corfù against Turkish onslaughts in 1715 and 1716. The campaign, which was commemorated by various works of art commissioned both by Schulenburg himself and by the State, earned him the enthusiasm of Europe and the particular gratitude of Venice, which erected a statue to him and awarded him a life pension of 5000 ducats a year.² He continued to serve the Republic, though there was no further opportunity for actual fighting, and after travel all over Italy as well as to London, Berlin, Dresden and Holland, he settled in Venetian territory. He divided the last years of his life between Venice and Verona, where he died and was given a splendid funeral in 1747.³

Schulenburg remained a grandiose figure in his retirement. He was closely related to the Hanoverian dynasty and was on friendly terms with half the crowned heads of Europe, whose portraits—Bourbons and Hapsburgs, Farneses and Hohenzollerns—lined the walls of the Palazzo Loredan in which he lived. They would call on him during their visits to Venice and write to him for help and advice in problems of all kinds. Thus Crown Prince Frederick of Prussia (later the Great) applied to him for a young *castrato* of 14 or 15, but was disappointed that Schulenburg could only find 'une fille agée de près de trente ans'.⁴ The old Marshal himself would have seen the arrangement in a different light. He liked talking to his guests about women,⁵ and a young English nobleman who fell ill during his tour of Italy was disconcerted to have his doctor sent for by Schulenburg 'and strictly required . . . to tell whether or not I had been clapt'.⁶ To these younger men Schulenburg with his lavish hospitality and stories of bygone wars was 'un vieux bonhomme' or 'the oddest old fellow in the world'. But though amiable enough, he remained excessively proud and could be very rude. The will that he drew up in 1740 reveals a commanding spirit, keen to assert its authority over distant descendants—he had no children of his own—and determined to maintain

¹ The main source for Schulenburg's life is *Leben und Dentwurdigkeiten Johann Mathias Reichsgrafen von der Schulenburg*, Leipzig 1834.

² Romanin, VIII, p. 53.

³ There is a drawing for the procession at his funeral in Verona—Archivio di Stato, VIII—Vari No. 35. He was in Venice 1729/30; 1732-4; 1737-41, and in Verona 1734-6; 1742-7.

⁴ *Leben*, II, p. 312.

⁵ De Brosses, I, p. 142: 'C'est un bien honnête vieillard, qui entend la guerre à merveille et fort mal la morale. Il nous fait sur le chapitre des filles de fréquents sermons, peu écoutés et point du tout suivis. . . .'

⁶ Letter from Lord Rockingham in Verona to Lord Essex dated 2 February 1733—British Museum, Add. MSS. 27,733, f. 13.

in every way the noble status of his family.¹ At one time or another nearly all the artists whom Schulenburg employed were commissioned to record his own dropsical features. Piazzetta drew him several times (Plate 53a), he was painted by Bartolommeo Nazari, Giuseppe Nogari, Giacomo Ceruti, Gian Antonio Guardi, Francesco Simonini and many others, sculpted by Corradini and Morlaiter, engraved by Pitteri. His principal battles were painted by Simonini, whom he apparently took on his campaigns with him, and in 1726 he employed Canaletto to paint a view (probably taken from a print) of Corfu, the scene of his greatest triumph.² All these artists he treated with royal generosity.³

Schulenburg's collecting began suddenly in 1724 with a large purchase of old master paintings and sculpture from a lawyer, Giovanni Battista Rota, who also acted as an art dealer.⁴ Most of these came from the gallery of the last Duke of Mantua, Ferdinando Carlo Gonzaga, many of whose belongings turned up on the Venetian art market after his exile and death in Padua following the Austrian occupation of his state in 1706. The sculptures included a bas-relief by Puget of the *Assumption of the Virgin* which was highly valued, and among the pictures were many attributed to Raphael, Correggio, Giorgione and particularly to Giulio Romano and Castiglione, both of whom had been much employed by the Gonzaga in happier days. Unlike Smith, Schulenburg showed a notable interest in contemporary Venetian sculpture, and among the works he bought from other collectors and sometimes commissioned were a large group of bronzes by Bertos (including an equestrian portrait of himself) and marbles by Corradini (including a *modello* of the statue of himself which the Republic had commissioned for the island of Corfu). His taste in old master paintings, as far as can be seen from the list of his purchases, was conventional except for the very extraordinary inclusion of a picture claimed to be by Giotto.

His relations with contemporary artists are of much greater interest. The first with whom he came into touch seems to have been Gian Antonio Guardi who worked for him for some fifteen years from before 1730 until 1745.⁵ Guardi received a monthly salary from Schulenburg and was clearly looked upon by him not so much as an

¹ Biblioteca Marciana, Venice: It. VII, 480 (7785), cc. 234-264.

² Haskell, 1956, p. 298.

Keysler, III, p. 296, writes of Schulenburg's collection: 'Some pieces by Castiglione deserve particular notice, together with the last siege and new fortifications of Corfu, which are not only represented in paintings but there is likewise a model of them cut in wood.'

Canaletto's painting is described as follows in Schulenburg's inventory—see p. 313, note 3: 'Canaletti —I Tableau grand rep:te la Perspective de Corfu pend.t le Siege fait des Turcs dans l'Année 1716 avec la Perspective de son Canal, une partie de l'Ile et de la Terre Ferme Ottomane, outre les deux Armées Navales, savoir la Venitienne, et l'ottomane tirée en file.' Many other models and pictures of Corfu are recorded in the inventory.

For some of Schulenburg's portraits see Morassi, 1952, pp. 85-91.

³ See, for instance, his dealings with Pitteri as recorded by G. A. Moschini, 1924, p. 93.

⁴ See the manuscript inventories of the Schulenburg collection between 1724 and 1737 in the Staatsarchiv, Hanover. Edward Wright, I, p. 78, referred to the Puget and an 'abundance of other fine things' from the Duke of Mantua's collection as belonging to Rota.

⁵ Morassi, 1960, pp. 147-64 and 199-212.

GERMAN PATRONS IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY VENICE

Plate 53



b. AMIGONI: Sigismund Streit



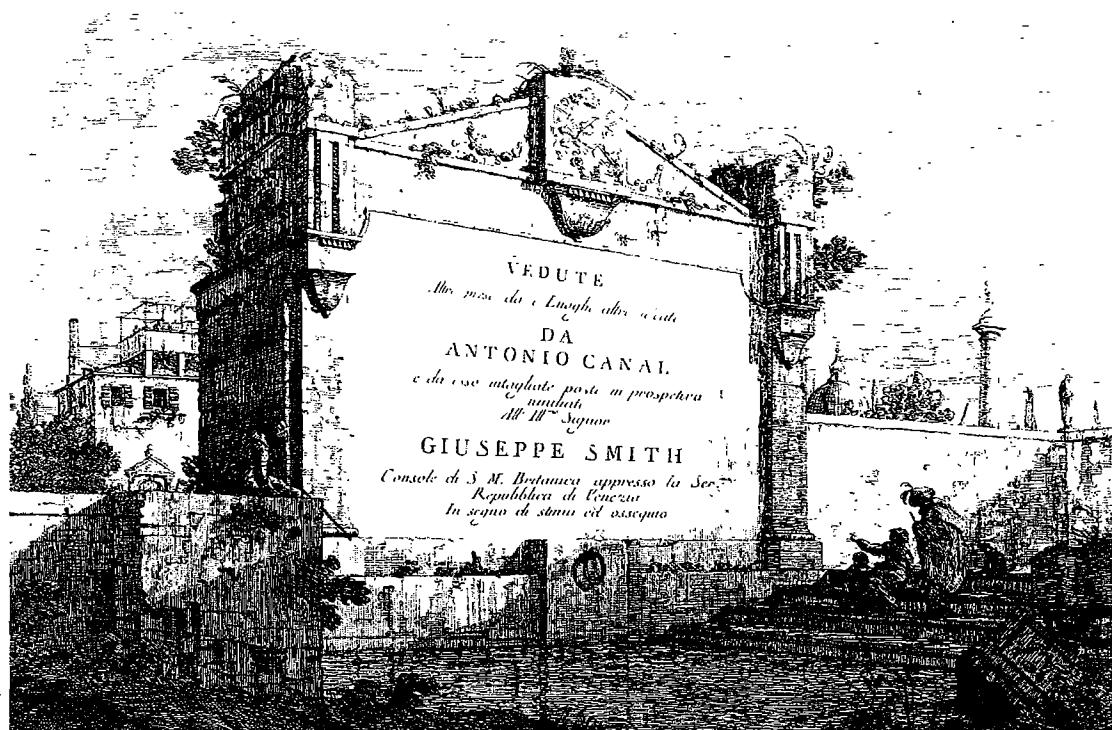
a. PIAZZETTA: Marshal Schulenburg

Plate 54

VENETIAN ART FOR MARSHAL SCHULENBURG
AND CONSUL SMITH (*see Plates 54 and 55*)



PIAZZETTA: Idyll

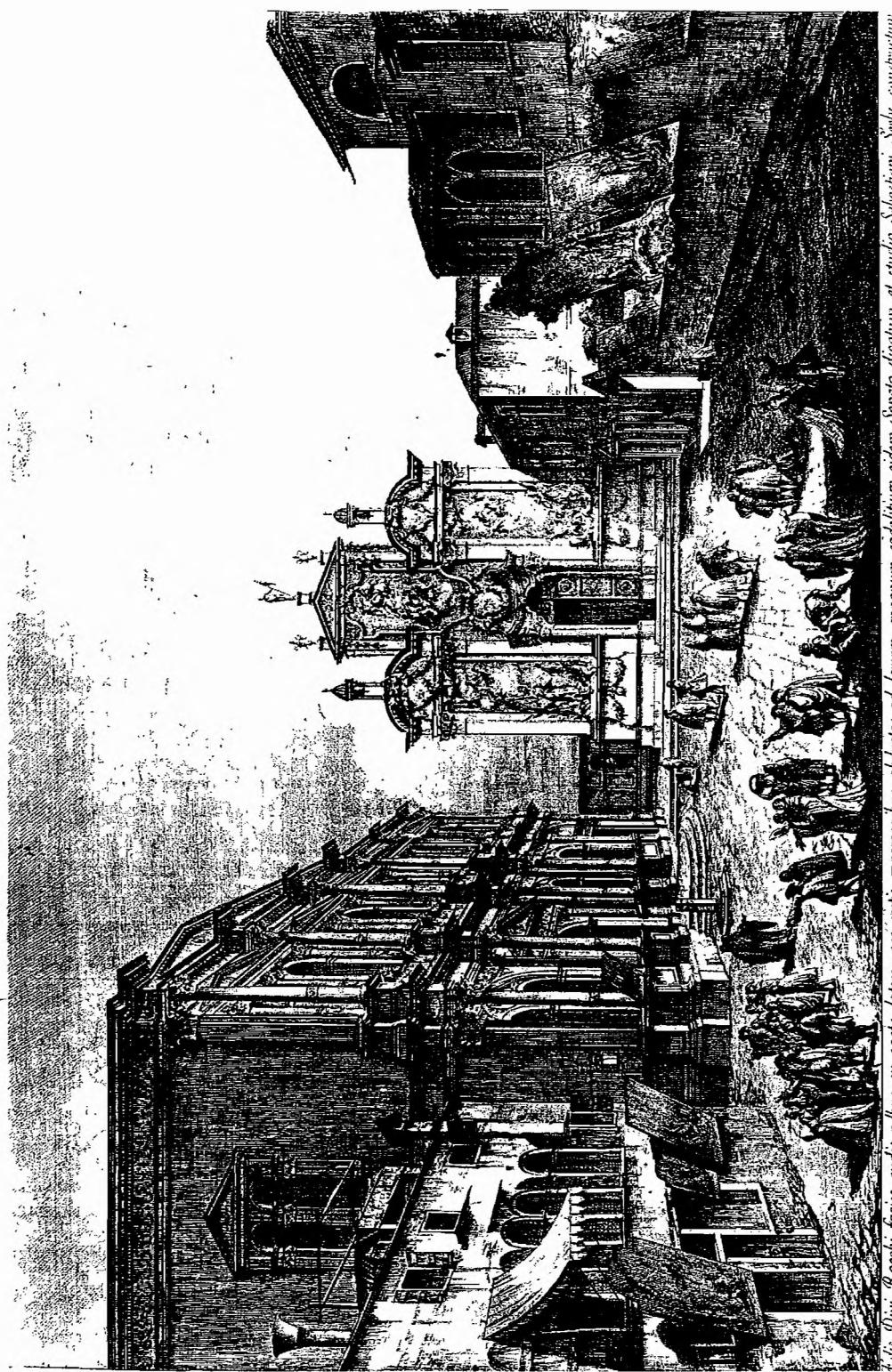


a. CANALETTO: Dedicatory frontispiece to Etchings



b. MARCO RICCI: Village Scene

Plate 56



Filiae Divi Roccii facies ruulis nubile ex cocto latere, nec sedis murinibus obducta: ad laevam magnum sedilem Sancto dicatum, et studio Sustitutum Serly Constructione.

MARIESCHI: Picture Exhibition at Church of S. Rocco

original painter in his own right as a useful copyist and hack. During the whole period of his employment only once—in 1737—was he commissioned to paint history pictures of his own; and the miserable sum he was then paid (about ten *zecchini* for the lot) shows that they must have been small and of little consequence. In general, he was required to copy masterpieces of the Venetian Cinquecento—Veronese's *Marriage at Cana* in S. Giorgio Maggiore and *Madonna and Child with Saints* in S. Zaccaria, Tintoretto's *Temperance* and *Fortitude* in the Madonna dell'Orto, Bassano's *Nativity* in S. Giorgio Maggiore—and even pictures by his own contemporaries, Sebastiano Ricci, Piazzetta and Rosalba Carriera. His remaining time was spent on churning out an endless succession of portraits, sometimes as many as six a year, of Schulenburg himself to be given to his friends and royal admirers, or of those grand connections to be hung on his own walls. It is not surprising that the quality of those that have survived is generally low¹; only rarely does the Guardi magic transform an obviously pedestrian original into a work of authentic beauty, most conspicuously in the little Turkish scenes copied in 1742 and 1743 from engravings taken from Van Mour—here at last the artist was given the opportunity to display his talent for delicate and sparkling fantasy.² There is a strange irony in the situation. Schulenburg, who was Guardi's most persistent patron, wholly failed to appreciate the true nature of his gifts except on the one occasion when he ordered him to paint these idyllic versions of the customs of his most ferocious enemies.

In fact, the Marshal's tastes veered in a very different direction. The nucleus of his collection was made up of history and genre paintings by Pittoni and Piazzetta.³ During the 'thirties, when Schulenburg was commissioning pictures from him, Pittoni was considered to be one of the leading history painters in Venice. Almost alone among his fellow-citizens he would be asked to contribute a canvas when large-scale international commissions were being planned for some royal court, and he was already much in favour with German patrons.⁴ For Pittoni turned the main episodes of Greek, Roman and Biblical history into melodramas which represented for his contemporaries the most acceptable and up-to-date versions of the old Baroque themes. Unlike Tiepolo who largely confined himself to frescoes, Pittoni rarely painted other than easel pictures and he was therefore much in demand among collectors. For Schulenburg he produced a series of pictures illustrating scenes of high Greek and Roman valour and sacrifice—Scipio and Alexander the Great, Polyxena and Iphigenia.

Piazzetta enjoyed a closer relationship with Schulenburg than any other artist except Gian Antonio Guardi, and in his case the results of this patronage were wholly beneficial. For the Marshal must have seen that Piazzetta's gifts did not lie in scenes of dramatic

¹ Apart from those reproduced by Morassi in the above articles see the portrait of Schulenburg attributed to Gian Antonio Guardi in the Museo Correr, Venice—Pignatti, 1960, p. 105.

² A number of these have turned up in exhibitions and sales during the last few years—see Watson, 1960, pp. 3–13, who now attributes the series to Gian Antonio rather than Francesco Guardi.

³ See the published inventory (n.d.): *Inventaire de la Galerie de feu Mgr. le Feldmarchal Comte de Schulenburg*. This is referred to by Morassi, 1952, pp. 85–91.

⁴ See Chapter 10.

action of the kind painted by Pittoni, and he therefore employed him on a totally different type of picture which brought out the very best of this painter's talents. It was Piazzetta also who acted as Schulenburg's chief agent in the purchase of interesting pictures on the market—usually Flemish.¹ For the old Marshal was particularly fond of Dutch and Flemish painting—a taste that was reflected in the type of patronage he afforded to certain Venetian artists. He owned a drawing by Piazzetta of 'des animaux et figures à la flamande' and some twenty heads of men and women by Bartolommeo Nazari and Giuseppe Nogari in a genre that ultimately looked back to Rembrandt. It was this taste for Flemish art that encouraged the Marshal to commission naturalistic painting. Thus Piazzetta painted for him subjects such as a *Beggar holding a Rosary*, a *Girl with a Basket of Chickens* and, above all, the great pastorals or idylls, now in Cologne and Chicago. The significance of these pictures is not clear. Piazzetta himself who drew up the inventory of Schulenburg's collection naturally valued them very highly, but described them merely as 'représentant une femme assise au naturel, avec un garçon entre les Jambes, un panier de raisins en main, des chiens, qui aperçoivent un canard dans l'eau et deux hommes en distance' and 'Une femme avec un parasol, une servante, un paysant, un garçon qui dort, et la tête d'un bœuf' (Plate 54). It has been suggested that the former picture contains a hint of social satire.² While this is almost certainly wrong, it does at least make the point that the pictures were probably taken to be far more 'realistic' than our present appreciation of their poetic qualities allows. No pictures of comparable size showing ordinary people were painted during the eighteenth century in Venice except on occasion by Piazzetta himself. But perhaps the best reason for believing that they appealed to a taste for naturalism in the Marshal is that his gallery contained so many other genre pictures. In particular he owned seven by the provincial realist Giacomo Ceruti, some of which portrayed beggars and others animals.³ These pictures alone would suffice to make Schulenburg's collection unique in Venice; and if we imagine them hanging in his palace along with his Piazzettas and his various Dutch and Flemish masters, we can see that the effect must have been strange enough to his visitors brought up so largely on histories and mythologies.

Like Smith, Schulenburg patronised the *vedutisti* and landscape painters, but with one or two important exceptions he owned nothing by Canaletto whose close relations with the English made it difficult for other residents in Venice to acquire his work. Instead he owned a view and a number of landscapes by Marieschi, and others by Carlevarijs, Cimaroli, Joli and especially Marco Ricci and Zuccarelli.⁴

Schulenburg's collection of pictures attracted less attention from travellers than did Smith's largely because he was constantly sending crates of them back to his estates in

¹ A number of pictures recommended to Schulenburg by Piazzetta, Pittoni and Angelo Trevisani are recorded in the Archives in Hanover.

² See White and Sewter, 1959, pp. 96–100.

³ See the published inventory, and for the subsequent sale of these pictures in England, Levey, in *Arte Veneta*, 1958, p. 221.

⁴ There are ten pictures by Marieschi; six by Carlevarijs; four by Cimaroli; two by Joli; nine by Zuccarelli and six by Marco Ricci.

Germany. He began doing this in 1735, and thereafter he sent dozens of pictures on two or three occasions every year. If we try and reconstruct the collections of the two men and compare them, we notice several differences. Smith's was based largely on Sebastiano Ricci, Rosalba Carriera and Canaletto—all painters who were represented—rather weakly in Schulenburg's, though he owned a portrait and some paintings of Ricci and was on good terms with Rosalba.¹ Schulenburg's collection was rich in works by Piazzetta, Pittoni and Gian Antonio Guardi, none of whom was particularly favoured by Smith. Both men owned works by Marco Ricci and Zuccarelli, though Smith had a far greater number. Neither had any painting by the finest artist of the age, Tiepolo. Smith showed a characteristically English penchant for landscape and views, Schulenburg for history, portrait and genre.

- iii -

SIGISMUND STREIT

Curiously enough a third foreign collector long resident in Venice seems to hold a position midway between those of the two great patrons who have just been discussed. A businessman like Smith, a German like Schulenburg and, like him, in close touch with Frederick the Great, Sigismund Streit owned far fewer pictures than either—only forty-eight in all—and made little impact on Venetian society. But some were of good quality and they seem to reflect so sensitively their owner's similarities and discrepancies with Smith and Schulenburg that they are worth discussing here.²

Sigismund Streit was born in Berlin in 1687, the son of a blacksmith, and he came to Venice in 1709. He soon began to engage in commercial activities which won him a fortune. He retired in 1750 and four years later he settled in Padua, moving to Venice only during the winters. He seems to have begun collecting pictures only about ten years earlier when he was already well past middle age and in 1758 and again in 1763 he bequeathed those he had acquired to various institutions, especially the Gymnasium zum Grauen Kloster in Berlin where he had been educated. He died, a bachelor, in 1775 and was buried in the Protestant cemetery of S. Cristoforo.

One of the strongest emotions in Streit's life was his admiration for Venice, the city that had transformed his situation and turned him into the rich and complacent figure who gazes at us from Amigoni's portrait. He arranged for a yearly speech to be made in Berlin in honour of his adopted city, and of the pictures he owned a strikingly high proportion were painted to celebrate its beauties and traditions. Works of art held a far more specific and also a far more personal meaning for Streit than they did for more sophisticated collectors. Of his four Canalettes, two showed scenes which were directly concerned with his own life, as he pointed out in the long notes which he made about

¹ On 28 July 1743 Schulenburg wrote to Rosalba Carriera recommending to 'di lei amorosa assistenza' a young woman painter called Angelica Griè—Biblioteca Laurenziana, MSS. Cod. Ashburn. 1781, Vol. IV, p. 266.

² For a brief outline of Streit's career and a list of his pictures with details of their subsequent fate see Rohrlach, 1951, pp. 198-200. For his position in Venice see Denina, p. 196.

his pictures.¹ One portrayed a sweep of the Grand Canal looking south-east from the Campo S. Sofia to the Rialto. Well in the foreground is a gondola in which stands Streit himself, while behind can be seen the Palazzo Foscari in which he lived. The other view was of the Campo di Rialto in which his business activities were carried out.

He was equally keen to have pictures of the ceremonies and festivals of the Republic. Two more Canalettos, among his very rare night scenes, show the *Vigilie di S. Pietro* and *di S. Marta*, the latter the most popular of all such occasions, and several other paintings by Canaletto's followers recorded the Doge taking part in official processions.² This section of Streit's collection culminated in an allegorical 'Glory of Venice' which has unfortunately been destroyed.

Streit shared Schulenburg's taste for portraits of royalty, and he commissioned his friend Antoine Pesne to paint Frederick the Great and the Queen of Prussia. But, above all, he liked to see representations of himself and his family. Portraits of his father, his mother and his sister hung from his walls as well as four of himself (Plate 53b)—not one of which wholly satisfied him.

Schulenburg was an enthusiastic collector of Pittoni and Piazzetta, Smith of Sebastiano Ricci—it seems almost inevitable that Streit should have turned to Amigoni, who painted his portrait and ten other pictures for him between 1739 and 1746.³ Their subjects were among the most popular of the Old Testament and mythological repertoire, but they had none of the glitter or heroic melodrama of Ricci or Pittoni. In them everything tends to the pastoral or the mildly erotic. Suave and delicate, with no emotional change of key between *Lot and his Daughters* and *Solomon adoring the Idols* or between *Bathsheba* and the *Sacrifice of Isaac*, they were doubtless intended to be soothing to the eye of the tired businessman. This class of patron has since become much more familiar; in the early eighteenth century he was still rare.

Streit naturally owned a couple of Zuccarelli landscapes and the odd Dutch picture, but the only other artist well represented in his collection was Giuseppe Nogari. This painter was famous above all for his 'teste di fantasia'—imaginary half-length portraits, strongly influenced by Northern artists especially Rembrandt, usually of old men and women. Streit had two of these—an *Old man with a Pipe and Tobacco Pouch* and an *Old Woman with Glasses*, but he also employed Nogari to paint four allegories of Education and other elevating subjects which were characteristically turned by the artist into pretexts for rather mawkish genre—a branch of the art which he clearly found more congenial⁴ and which, as will be seen in the following chapter, was winning much support at the time in some of the more 'progressive' circles in Venetian society.

¹ Streit's notes on his Canalettos have been published by Zimmermann, pp. 197–224. The Canalettos have also been discussed by W. G. Constable, 1956, pp. 81–93, who rejects the attribution to Moretti or some other follower.

² Zimmermann, pp. 199–203, attributes one of these—the *Sala del Maggior Consiglio*—to Gianantonio and Francesco Guardi.

³ These were the years when Amigoni was in Venice after his visit to England and before that to Spain. His portrait of Streit, which is published by Zimmermann, was painted when the sitter was aged 52—i.e. in 1739.

⁴ I am grateful to Mr Hugh Honour for letting me see his photographs of these paintings.

Chapter 12

THE ENLIGHTENMENT

VENICE had remained immobile—or so it seemed—but Europe had changed. The last ten years of the seventeenth century in England and France had seen the beginnings of an intellectual revolution that was to destroy the foundations on which Baroque civilisation had rested.¹ The absolute supremacy of any one authority, whether secular or religious, was seriously questioned. Reason slowly took its place as the ultimate criterion of judgement. Little by little and however grudgingly, tolerance and diversity came to be accepted. Trade began to replace landholding as an index of wealth. These great changes at first gradually and then with ever-increasing speed profoundly affected the nature of patronage and the arts. In both England and France royalty and the Church no longer monopolised the leading painters. And the new patrons, whether aristocratic or middle class, rejected the all-embracing cosmology of the Baroque. As the eighteenth century progressed, various styles were encouraged and dropped: a light-hearted rococo, which took over much of the formal language of the Baroque without its moral seriousness; a renewed interest in realism, often tinged with satire or didactic elements; an austere return to neo-classicism. The genesis of all these styles is confused; none of them can be identified with any one social class; all of them frequently overlapped. And combined with all these changes went a renewed investigation into the part that painting should be expected to play in the life of a nation—an investigation more searching than any that had taken place since that inaugurated by the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century humanists.

In Italy, too, new ideas were in the air. The creation in Rome of the Society of Arcadia in 1690 marked a deliberate and symbolic break with seventeenth-century culture—though significantly only in the field of literature. And links with the rest of Europe were greatly strengthened by the vast numbers of foreigners who crossed the Alps either as soldiers or as tourists at the beginning of the new century. Yet despite this, and despite the blossoming of learned journals in touch with Paris, Italy at first saw nothing comparable to the great changes that had shaken France and England, and more and more those Italians—writers, artists and intellectuals—who wished to experience the new developments were compelled to travel to London or Paris. On their return a great stocktaking of the state of Italian culture filled the journals with controversial articles. All this prepared the ground for the diffusion of ‘enlightened’ ideas which at first travelled only slowly and hesitantly. As late as 1737 the Pope tried to prevent the erection of a mausoleum to Galileo in the Florentine church of S. Croce and his *Dialogo* could not be published until 1744.² Although much had been achieved before

¹ Hazard, 1935.

² Maugain.

then, the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748 is usually taken as the starting-point for a new spirit in Italy. When in 1766 Voltaire turned his attention southwards across the Alps and commented on the great intellectual revival that had taken place he suggested that it had been going on for about twenty years.¹ The changes had been very striking indeed. All over Italy writers had become aware of the distance that separated them from the rest of Europe and had begun to narrow it. In 1749 Muratori published his *Della pubblica felicità, oggetto de' buoni principi* whose title alone proclaimed the advanced ideas inherent in the thesis; in 1750 appeared the Abate Galiani's treatise *Della Moneta*; in 1754 Antonio Genovesi took up his chair in Naples as the first professor of political economy in Europe; in 1764 Beccaria published his epoch-making *Dei delitti e delle pene* and was rapturously welcomed in Paris. For the first time since the silencing of Galileo Italy was in the vanguard of contemporary thought.

In these changes Venice had played little direct part. Though the ideas might filter through the censorship without too much difficulty and be discussed perhaps in Consul Smith's library or by Caterina Dolfin Tron and her intellectual friends, Venetian interest in maintaining the *status quo* was too powerful for the Republic to become the originator of any of the doctrines of the 'Enlightenment'—it was indeed a Venetian who proved to be the most vigorous opponent of Beccaria—nearly all of which presupposed the abolition of rule by aristocracy. Pietro Giannone, Carlo Antonio Pilati, Giuseppe Baretti and other unorthodox thinkers were rapidly expelled from her territory.² And yet, especially in those circles which were most in touch with foreign influences, we can trace the gradual spread of ideas which, among other things, were to have important effects on art.

One of the problems that was most discussed in Italian literary and philosophical circles in the early years of the eighteenth century was that of the relative proportions that fantasy and reason should assume in the creative act. The discussion had been stimulated by the formation of the Society of Arcadia with its deliberate call to reason and by contact with French critics who had attacked the style not only of Marino and his followers but of Tasso himself.³ Among those who made interesting contributions to the debate that followed was a Venetian who sometimes extended the discussion into the field of the visual arts and thus—mainly through his influence on other writers—played some part in their development.

Antonio Conti, of noble origins, was among the pioneers of that growing number of Italian intellectuals who realised that a visit to England and France was essential to avoid the stifling provincialism of Venice.⁴ In 1713, at the age of 36, he went to Paris, where he was in touch with Malebranche, Fontenelle and other leading figures. Two years later he crossed the Channel and met Sir Isaac Newton, who was to become the most influential man in his life. At first the relationship was highly satisfactory to both

¹ In a letter of 1766 quoted by Natali, p. 5.

² For Giannone's residence and expulsion from Venice see Pierantoni; for Pilati see Brol.

³ See J. G. Robertson and Moncallero, I.

⁴ For Conti see Robertson, Chapter IV, and Vol. II of his *Prose e Poesie*, 1756.

of them: Newton proposed Conti's election to the Royal Society—he was already an amateur scientist—and Conti wrote 200 verses on Newton's philosophy. Later there was a furious break when on a second visit to Paris Conti revealed to the French some confidential notes that Newton had shown him on the dating of classical history.¹ Although he was denounced in a public letter, Conti never abandoned his allegiance to Newton and the many other English writers he had met in London. He showed his appreciation of English literature by translating Milton, Dryden and other poets, and by being the first Italian to write on 'Sasper', whose *Julius Caesar* he imitated in a tragedy of his own. His second visit to Paris lasted eight years between 1718 and 1726, and among the many friendships he made was one with the Comte de Caylus.

In 1726 Conti returned to Venice, where he spent most of his time until his death in 1749. He had acquired a very extensive knowledge, unique in the Venice of his day, of modern English and French culture and he proceeded to display it in a series of essays, philosophical treatises, scientific pamphlets and so on, which undoubtedly influenced his friend Francesco Algarotti. From time to time he wrote about the arts, but as his papers were only edited in 1756 after his death and in a very abbreviated form, it is difficult to know just how close was his connection with contemporary painters—a treatise he wrote on painting has been lost. He certainly had some vague ideas about the effects that Newton's optical discoveries ought to have on the use of colour, but these made no impact.² He went out of his way to praise Canaletto for his sagacity in using the *camera ottica* to paint views of the Grand Canal.³ And he made an interesting defence of fantasy in painting which chimed in well with contemporary practice and thus suggests that he was one of the few intellectuals of the day who did not disapprove of the licences taken by Venetian artists—though as it is not known just when he wrote his brief paragraph on painting it is impossible to estimate its polemical intentions. 'The painter's fantasy', he wrote,⁴ 'should be expressed in breadth of knowledge, in subtlety and correctness of draughtsmanship, in liveliness and vigour of execution. Moreover,

¹ Apart from the above see Manuel, pp. 86 and 94.

² Conti, II, p. cxlviii: 'Leonardo da Vinci cita un suo manoscritto, dove egli parla dell'armonia de' colori in ordine alla pittura. Il manoscritto è nella Biblioteca di Milano, e si renderebbe un gran servizio alle bell'arti di stamparlo, in un tempo che la teoria Newtoniana de' colori ha data occasione a molti il determinare per la regola meccanica de' centri di gravità la loro composizione. Da questa ricavò il suo secreto quel Pittor Tedesco che stampa le pitture, della qual arte ne diede varj saggj a Londra, ed uno ne conserva qui in Venezia il Signor Antonio Zanetti. Io vidi questo Pittore all'Haja, ed egli mi assicurò, che seguendo i principj del Newtono su l'immutabilità e varia rifrangibilità e reflessibilità de' raggi della luce, egli avea stabiliti i gradi di vivacità e d'indebolimento da darsi a' colori per armonizarli. Se ciò è vero, si vede come in ombra, non esser impossibile il determinare nel corpo umano l'armonia de' colori, qual forse l'avea fissata Apelle, che dipingea le cose che non si possono dipingere, come i tuoni, i baleni, i folgori. . . .'

³ *ibid.*, p. 250: 'S'adopri pure la camera ottica per far la perspettiva d'un canale di Venezia con le sue fabbriche: il Canaletto per la sua sagacità potrà trasferire nella sua pittura più punti di un altro; ma non è possibile che mai tutti li trasferisca. Contuttociò i trasferiti da lui faranno un'impressione così viva nell'occhio, che vedendo il suo quadro a prima vista io sarò persuaso di vedere l'oggetto stesso. . . .'

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 278: 'La fantasia pittoresca deve essere secondo lui spaziosa nelle cognizioni, delicata e retta nel disegno, vivace e ardente nell'esecuzione, appassionata e espressiva del senso e dell'affetto, e graziosa per discostarsi un poco dalla natura ed accomodarsi meglio al giudizio e al piacere del senso. . . .'

it should excite the senses and the passions, and grace requires it to move away somewhat from nature so as to be the better adapted to the judgement and pleasure of the senses.' This seems to be the very justification of a *modello* by Tiepolo or Pittoni.

Such detached references are too brief for us to claim that Conti had any coherent aesthetic ideas or that they played much part in encouraging any particular painters. But we know that he showed an interest in the arts, for it was to him that the elder Zanetti wrote to announce his rediscovery of the process for making colour woodcuts¹; and we know too that Francesco Algarotti, who was in constant correspondence with him, took over many ideas from this Italian pioneer in the understanding of Newton. As we will see, even in his most neo-classical phase Algarotti never lost his belief in the vital importance of creative fantasy, and it is certain that this belief was largely inherited from Conti. Indeed, a thin trickle of support for the artist's right to make use of his unfettered imagination runs right through Italian eighteenth-century thought until with Saverio Bettinelli's *Dell'entusiasmo per le Belle Arti* (Milan, 1769) it merges into outright acceptance of the 'genius' with all his vagaries.

But there was in Venice during the first half of the eighteenth century a thinker whose artistic ideas were to prove far more immediately stimulating than those of Conti, even if no more effective in practice. Among the men who frequented Consul Smith's palace on the Grand Canal was Padre Carlo Lodoli, a brother of the Minor Osservanti.² Lodoli had studied mathematics and French, travelled in Rome and other parts of Italy and returned at the age of 30 to his native Venice in 1720. Here he opened a private school for the sons of some of the leading families as well as those of his friends. This school was run on the most advanced, modern lines. Lodoli's favourite authors were Galileo and Bacon; he took his pupils to visit libraries and distinguished scholars. He brought them up on Cicero and Puffendorf on the duties of man. And he had a brush with the Inquisitori di Stato because he insisted on using State documents as suitable subject-matter for grammatical and literary investigation. He was a keen admirer of Vico and he was among those who persuaded the Neapolitan philosopher to write his *Autobiography*, which was first published in Venice.³ After some years he was appointed chief censor of the Republic with duties which he carried out conscientiously but in a liberal spirit. He soon became associated with a number of the more enlightened figures in the city—Andrea Memmo, especially, but also Angelo Querini and Giambattista Pasquali, the publisher, who in later years could never mention his name without tears in his eyes. Nearly all these were also friends of Consul Smith and for a time he had a number of admirers among the Venetian aristocracy. Outside Venice he was in touch with Montesquieu and Scipione Maffei.

In appearance Lodoli was uncouth and his manner was gruff. He indulged in a degree of outspokenness which would hardly have been tolerated in anyone else; but

¹ Lorenzetti, 1917, p. 49, note 1.

² Our only source for Lodoli's life is Andrea Memmo's anonymous *Elementi dell'architettura lodoliana*, first published in Rome in 1786, but there are many scattered references to him in Venetian learned journalism of the first half of the eighteenth century. See also Petrocchi, 1947.

³ In [P. Angelo Calogerà]: *Raccolta*, I, 1728. See also Fisch and Bergin, pp. 183-4.

this is almost certainly because he was not taken wholly seriously even by those who most admired him. He enjoyed some of the privileges of the licensed jester. Besides, he knew how to turn back when the situation was becoming awkward. We learn that he 'never objected to the luxury of great noblemen, for without their generosity, ambition or whim countless good craftsmen would die of starvation'—the sort of perverse logic that has often been used by radicals tolerated in a conservative society.

Though Lodoli must sometimes have found it difficult to express openly his moral and political ideas, there was no need for any reticence when he came to deal with the arts—though in his view they were all inextricably linked. As interpreted for us by most of his contemporaries (for his own writings were lost), Lodoli insisted on a wholly functional architecture in which reason and comfort should be the final arbiters of style. In this way he was rejecting not merely the late Baroque of his own youth, but also the classicism that was beginning to replace it. Nothing shocked his contemporaries more than his dispassionate investigation of the architecture of antiquity. He certainly did not condemn it out of hand, but he called its infallible authority into question. Even the Pantheon, he said, was not perfect; and in any case everyone had interpreted classical art in a different manner.

As far as current architecture went, Lodoli's influence was negligible, perhaps because, as one writer complained, 'when he is on his own he is so overwhelming that he gives me indigestion for days afterwards', and even among critics who shared his views of the Baroque he was considered to be an 'impudent impostor'.¹ He himself only practised on one occasion, when he introduced some functional modifications into the monastery of his own Order, the Minori Osservanti, outside S. Francesco della Vigna.² He was once invited by the governor of the Ospedale della Pietà to look at Massari's *modello* for the proposed church. When Lodoli began to criticise this on logical grounds, the architect answered: 'If I were to submit some totally new conception, however reasonable, I could be quite sure that the plans of some other architect, imitating for example a façade of Palladio or Vignola, would be chosen instead of mine. And then who would support my family?'

Yet he made an impact on some of the more open-minded thinkers of the day. The essayist Gasparo Gozzi must certainly have had Lodoli in mind when he complained that 'we put so much into ornamentation that we build more for the eyes of passers-by than for the people who actually live in houses: and if someone were to come from a country where houses are used just as shelter from the cold and the rain and were to see our houses and not their inhabitants, he would think that they must all be giants'.³ Francesco Algarotti was, as usual, somewhat scared of public opinion, and he produced a rather distorted version of Lodoli's opinions which failed to please their author, though he had originally welcomed Algarotti's interest and the intention had been

¹ Letter from the Abate Ortes to Francesco Algarotti of 26 September 1749 in Algarotti, XIV, p. 315, and Temanza, p. 87.

² G. A. Moschini, 1815, I, p. 48.

³ Gozzi, I, p. 26—*Dialogo tra un librajo e un Forestiere*.

friendly.¹ On the whole, however, Lodoli's keenest admirers, Andrea Memmo, Angelo Querini and Filippo Farsetti, all became strong supporters of that very classicism which Lodoli had questioned.

Lodoli's views on painting were also exceptional. Although the two men were satirised together in a bitter and 'reactionary' sonnet which accused them of wanting to 'weigh the moon',² he wholly rejected Conti's sympathy with fantasy and adopted a far more austere standpoint. Like Smith's other friend, the Abate Facciolati in Padua, with whom he too was in close touch, he arranged his gallery on didactic lines so as to show the progress of the arts from the Greeks (i.e. the Byzantines) until the moderns.³ He acquired so many pictures from Jews and second-hand dealers that they not only covered his walls but were stacked on the floor as well. Unfortunately, we know almost nothing precise about his relations with contemporary painters. We are told that they were extensive; that he used to go and watch the leading artists at work; that he would obtain commissions for them and be given pictures by them in return; that he would give advice to people who were decorating their town and country houses. But we have no idea who these painters and clients were. From what we know of his love of reason and authenticity it is very hard to believe that Lodoli can have admired Tiepolo, Piazzetta and the other Venetian 'history painters'. It seems more likely that he may have been in close touch with artists like Canaletto and Visentini, with whose work he must have been very familiar through Consul Smith. Certainly he knew Bartolommeo Nazari and Alessandro Longhi, both of whom painted portraits of him.⁴ The latter picture (Plate 48c) was commissioned by a friend of Lodoli's, Pietro Moscheni, and it is one of the very few penetrating studies of the Venetian eighteenth century: no attempt is made to beautify the rather coarse head with its large bulbous nose, lively eyes and straggling hair. The painting was soon engraved and at the base of the print were added the words: 'P. Carlo de Co:ti Lodoli Veneziano forse il Socrate Architetto'. Lodoli himself chose the decorative border and this caused a good deal of controversy. Apart from the usual attributes of the architect—plans, rulers, compasses, etc.—he had his portrait surrounded by a circular frieze on which was written DEVONSI UNIR E FABRICA E RAGIONE—E SIA FUNZION LA RAPPRESENTAZIONE—words derived from Vitruvius which his disciple Andrea Memmo admitted were difficult for most people to understand. At the base of the portrait were two tablets bearing a text from Jeremiah: UT ERUAS ET DESTRUAS UT PLANTES ET AEDIFICES (See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms, *to root out*, and to pull down, *and to destroy*, and to throw down, *to build and to plant*)—proof, said his opponents, that he was only interested in destroying. On the contrary, replied his disciples, he was merely following Socrates who believed that prejudice must be uprooted before truth could be appreciated.

It is tempting to assume that Lodoli may have admired Alessandro's father, Pietro.

¹ For Algarotti's reactions to Lodoli see Kauffmann, 1944 and 1955.

² Biblioteca Correr, Venice—MSS. Correr, Misc. XI/1348 (1140).

³ Previtali.

⁴ The portrait by Alessandro Longhi is in the Accademia in Venice. For its history see [Memmo]: *Riflessioni*, 1788.

For we know that Pietro Longhi was highly thought of in other advanced circles of Venetian society. Significantly, it was in 1750 that Goldoni first hailed him as a 'man who is looking for the truth'.¹ This was the very period when Goldoni was making his deliberate and decisive break with the old masked comedies and was trying to reform the theatre by a return to nature. So it may well have been the painter who inspired the poet—Longhi had already been painting genre scenes for many years—rather than, as is usually assumed, the other way round. Seven years later Goldoni returned to the subject and again praised Longhi for his 'manner of representing on canvas the characters and passions of men'.² Goldoni's sympathies were 'advanced', at least by implication,³ and he was accused by his opponents of being 'a corrupter no less of poetry than of decent behaviour (*buon costume*)'.⁴ Could Longhi's pictures—those little 'conversations, meetings, playful scenes of love and jealousy'—have been interpreted in the same sense? The very idea seems absurd, despite the fact that early in the nineteenth century a Venetian historian claimed (with no supporting evidence) that he 'went so far in depicting the truth that he was several times punished by the laws'.⁵ None the less it is significant that the most enthusiastic praise of his work should have come from men who were anxious to look more steadily at the actual circumstances of Venetian life than was usual at the time.

Despite this, Pietro Longhi was certainly admired and collected by a great number of patrician families in no way associated with advanced ideas, and in most people's eyes his break with fantasy can have had no connection with directly political motives. By the middle of the eighteenth century the irrational in all the arts was coming under attack, and the ideas of men like Lodoli were making at least an indirect impact. Thus we hear that in 1749 Gian Domenico Tiepolo's series of paintings in S. Polo representing the Via Crucis met with strong criticism because 'all the figures were wearing different costume—some Spanish, some Slav and some are just caricatures. And people say that in those days that sort of person was not found and that he has painted them in that way only out of personal whim'.⁶ One at least of Longhi's admirers made it quite clear that he liked him just because of his rejection of this sort of thing. Gasparo Gozzi, who was also a strong defender of Goldoni, despite the attacks of his brother Carlo, twice wrote about Longhi in the *Gazzetta Veneta* and the *Osservatore Veneto* which he edited on the lines of English journals such as *The Spectator*. On both occasions he compared him to Tiepolo. In August 1760 he reaches the conclusion that Longhi's 'imitations' of the life he sees around him are 'no less perfect' than Tiepolo's great scenes of the imagination.⁷

¹ Goldoni: *Al Signor Pietro Longhi veneziano celebre pittore*—Opere, XIII, p. 187.

² Goldoni, II, p. 92—dedication of *Il Frappatore*.

³ Dazzi.

⁴ Goldoni is not actually named, but the allusion to him is clear in the letter from Giuseppe Gennari to Gaspare Patriarchi of 5 November 1761 published by Melchiori, p. 142.

⁵ [Paoletti], 1832, p. 122. There is no evidence for this in the Archives of the Inquisitors, and Paoletti, who calls the artist 'Antonio' Longhi, does not seem wholly reliable.

⁶ Letter from Pietro Visconti to Gian Pietro Ligari of 19 December 1749 published by Arslan, 1952, p. 63.

⁷ *Gazzetta Veneta*, No. 55, 13 Agosto 1760.

Grandeur and grace are each to be found in nature: artistic merit consists in recording them at their best as do both artists. As a general idea this was not very new. Lione Pascoli had made much the same point some thirty years earlier when writing about the *bamboccianità*¹: 'Whatever the art that man practises, and in whatever manner, as long as he does so well, he deserves success and a good reputation.' But, when applied to actual artists working in different branches of painting in a rigidly hieratical society, the observation gains an entirely new force. Pascoli would never have compared Guido Reni and Cerquozzi in the way that Gozzi was now prepared to compare Tiepolo and Longhi. A few months later he returned to the question with a much more startling observation. Longhi was admired, he claimed,² 'because he has left behind figures dressed in the antique manner and imaginary characters, and paints instead what he sees with his own eyes'. The force of this is somewhat weakened by his later insistence on the amiable nature of Longhi's realism, but it is still a remarkable statement, for it implies that Gozzi actually considered Longhi superior to Tiepolo.³

Elsewhere Gasparo Gozzi made the same point with far greater social implications, though without directly naming any artist. He describes in a fable a visit he made to an old philosopher thought by the world to be mad but in fact the incarnation of true wisdom.⁴ As Gozzi enters his isolated house, he looks at the pictures on the walls. 'Each picture had beneath it a motto of some good intention. The foreshortened figures were not overemphasised, but the movements were all natural, and the figures were all clothed like living men and women, though they were much more beautiful. Seeing that I was carefully looking at these noble images, he said: "Here everything is natural. I know that today most people paint in such a way that everything shown in the picture seems to come from those clouds that float through the sky in summer in which you see and yet don't see what they show. Lots of light, lots of darkness, men and women who are, and yet are not. My painter has beautified nature as it really is, and nothing else." ' In another room the walls are hung with pictures which show various scenes from country life—ploughing, sowing, the gathering of grapes. And the old man explains that whereas he used to own pictures of beautiful women, he has now given them away, and instead wishes to honour 'a class of people, which through its efforts and the sweat of its brow is the main support of all others'. There can be no doubt who is referred to in the jibe about exaggerated foreshortenings appearing through the

¹ Pascoli, I, p. 31.

² *Osservatore Veneto*, 14 Febbraio 1761.

³ Some years later in 1770 a very vague comparison was to be made between Goldoni and Alessandro Longhi, Pietro's son—see *Poesie in lode del celebre ritrattista viniziano il signor Alessandro Longhi*, In Venezia MDCCLXX. In the dedication to Goldoni, Girolamo Garganego writes: 'La discrepanza, che passa fra voi, e il Signor Alessandro non è, che nei mezzi, di qui vi servite; per altro ambi pingete; e direi quasi, che a Voi tocca supplir à ciò, a cui non può giugner il pennello di lui... Sarebbe adunque questa relazione, che passa fra l'uno e l'altro un bastanta motivo per giustificarmi, ma vi è di più. Vi è una vecchia amicizia, che vi lega l'un l'altro dolcemente, e fa che ognuno di Voi goda delle lodi, e degli encorj dell'altro....' Recently the suggestion that there is an affinity between Goldoni and Alessandro Longhi has been made by Michael Levey, 1959, p. 156.

⁴ Gozzi, IV, p. 5—*L'abitazione d'un filosofo creduto pazzo*.

summer clouds, but the actual pictures described seem to anticipate Millet rather than anything being produced in contemporary Venice. Gian Domenico Tiepolo, the son of Giambattista, did paint in the *foresteria* of the Villa Valmarana near Vicenza some scenes from rural life which were certainly realistic by the standards of his day, but beautiful and sympathetic as they are, they hardly conform to the programme drawn up by Gozzi's philosopher—if only because the peasants are always shown eating or resting rather than at work. Even so, Gian Domenico was certainly the artist most influenced by the new ideas on society, but he confined his satirical observations of Venetian life to frescoes in his own villa or to drawings which were presumably distributed only among friends. Another artist at the end of the century, Francesco Maggiotto, was so far affected by advanced scientific ideas that he actually invented an electrical machine and wrote a treatise on the subject.¹ But in his many genre paintings he veered rather unsteadily between a coarse version of Longhi and a sentimental interpretation of the more ruthless Zompini, and when showing peasants he was always tempted to revert to a crude Flemish tradition of mockery which did little to assert the dignity of labour.

In later years Gozzi turned again to the didactic possibilities of painting. In 1782 he visited Giotto's Arena chapel in Padua and, struck by the use that the Church had always made of art, he wrote to a friend²: 'Who has ever caused to be represented in painting or sculpture the piety of some of our patricians and had these displayed in cloisters or schools or other public places? Or the nobility of certain others? The blood that they have shed for their country, their support for literature, the vast sums spent on great artists, the honour paid to writers—that is what I should like pictures to represent.' In fact, such themes were commonplace in private palaces, but Gozzi's idea to make them public was a new one. He must have been aware, however, that in that very year, in Padua itself, Andrea Memmo was putting into effect a scheme very similar to the one he was calling for, as will be described in a later chapter.³

A much more deliberate attempt to make use of the propagandist effects of art was planned at about this time by a man whom one would hesitate to include in a chapter on the Enlightenment were it not for the fact that Gozzi himself and many others saw him for a year or two as an 'advanced' figure battling against the entrenched forces of conservatism. Giorgio Pisani belonged to that class of poor nobles, the *Barnabotti*, which caused the government so much trouble during the eighteenth century.⁴ As soon as he entered politics he agitated violently for a series of reforms which were designed far more to improve the conditions of himself and his friends than to help the State as a whole. The remedy for all the evils that afflicted Venice lay in a return to the 'sacred laws of the past'. But, like Angelo Querini a generation earlier, he was driven by the logic of his position to oppose the rich and the powerful and above all the increasingly

¹ See Andrea Tessier, 1882, pp. 289–315, and *Considerazioni elettriche del signor Francesco Maggiotto*—no date or publisher indicated—[Biblioteca Correr, Venice—Misc: 105113].

² G. Gozzi: *Lettore familiari*: 1808, I, p. 239—[no date, but 1782].

³ See Chapter 15.

⁴ For Giorgio Pisani see Grimaldo.

active Inquisitori di Stato. And this won him some support—as well as the attentions of a government spy. In 1780, after complicated intrigues, he was suddenly elected Procuratore di San Marco. The appointment was greeted with great enthusiasm. Congratulations poured in, Gozzi wrote a tribute, and in the pamphlets that were printed in his honour were included strange allegorical prints that aroused the hostility of the *bienpensants*: in one frontispiece a nude youth reclined while a putto carried aloft the works of Montesquieu which were highly controversial in Venetian society; on another, steps were shown leading up to a Temple, presumably of Justice, with the implication that Pisani alone was prepared to climb them; a third set of poems was called, significantly, *Il Patriotismo*.¹

Giorgio Pisani made matters worse by designing a strange visiting-card, which has proved difficult to interpret, but which was considered provocative at the time.² It shows a young man, leaning on a ramp to which is attached a sail with the words IL PROCURATOR GIORGIO PISANI. He holds a swan and above his head there shines a star. On the left of the card is a cat on a pilaster which holds between its paws a rod on which is perched the cap of liberty. In the background can be seen the prow of a gondola.

It was the custom when a new Procurator was elected to have the palaces along which the procession would have to pass hung with pictures which were very often specially commissioned for the occasion. Here too Pisani and his friends offended the authorities, though the trouble seems to have been caused by a misunderstanding natural enough in the prevailing tension. A few years earlier a pedantic and clearly somewhat crazy Veronese doctor, Lazzaro Riviera, had commissioned a local artist, Felice Boscarati, to paint four allegorical pictures of the most incomprehensible subtlety designed to illustrate a sort of ideal philosophical and educational system for young men. As no one had the remotest conception of what the pictures meant he had them copied in large engravings with a text in garbled Latin underneath and issued an equally incomprehensible pamphlet to explain them. There the matter would have rested but for the fact that Boscarati moved to Venice and was taken up by Pisani as his official painter. At this stage the pictures were resurrected from the obscurity into which they had rightly fallen and displayed along the processional route—either by the artist himself in order to take advantage of his situation or by Pisani's advisers who rather liked abstruse symbolism for its own sake. The Inquisitors could hardly be expected to appreciate this and they decided that the allegories were intended as subversive propaganda.³ They had some reason to be suspicious, for other pictures, much more obviously

¹ *Componimenti poetici in occasione del solenne ingresso di Sua Eccellenza Missier Zorzi Pisani . . .* In Trevigi MDCCCLXXX, presso Antonio Paluello; *Poesie per il solenne ingresso di Sua Eccellenza Mss.r Zorzi Pisani . . .* In Venezia MDCCCLXXX, presso Carlo Palese; *Il Patriotismo. Poemetto per l'ingresso di Sua Eccellenza M.r Giorgio Pisani . . .* In Venezia CIO IO CCLXXX Nella Stamperia Albrizziana.

The set of these pamphlets in the Biblioteca Marciana, Venice [Misc. 212] are all marked in an eighteenth-century hand with indignant comments such as *Perfidioso*, *Seditioso*, etc. For the reputation of Montesquieu in Venice see Ambri, chapter 6.

² See the reproduction and comments in Molmenti, 1908, III, pp. 45-6.

³ This is the only coherent explanation I can give of this very mysterious episode. The paintings and their destination were referred to by Zannandreas, p. 415, but he is clearly wrong when he says that they

political, were exhibited outside the Procuratie Nuove showing 'the sleeping lion; the scales [of justice] unbalanced, the cap of liberty, the public buildings collapsing, and the Procurator occupied in rebuilding them and encouraging his own sons to copy him'.¹ Even prints that to the unsuspecting eye seem totally harmless caused trouble. Pisani commissioned from Giampiccoli, one of the most prolific engravers of the day, a view of the Campo di S. Maria Formosa in which his palace was situated. At the base of the print were the words ECCELMO GIORGIO PISANI DIVI MARCO MERITO PROCURATORI AC UNO EX QUINTEVIRIS CORRECTORIBUS. UTILIUM SCIENTIARUM CULTU, ET PUBLICAE LIBERTATIS STUDIO PRAECLARO MOECENATI HUMANISSIMO. The combination of self-advertisement and references to freedom was considered dangerous and the print was hurriedly withdrawn.

But the real trouble came on the evening of the procession when a huge celebration was held in the palace. Spies moved among the guests and noted in the main reception room 'a picture showing Pisani with various emblems denoting Freedom, Power, Sovereignty, and the collapse of the present form of government and the adoption of a completely new system'. The atmosphere was fraught with suspicion—even the menus were carefully noted, for on them were printed two lines in French:

La science, le bon cœur, l'Amour patriotique
Sont-ils les fondements de la République.

The guests must have felt uneasy, and the saying went around: 'Oggi Bordello, dimani in Castello; oggi l'Ingresso, dimani il Processo. Dio ti guardi.'

The prophecy was apt enough. Four days later the Inquisitors moved into action. Pisani was arrested, and his painter Felice Boscarati, who was dangerously fond of satire, also had trouble after the disgrace of his patron.² Such was the intensity of feeling that a later writer thought it worth recording as significant the fact that Cristoforo dall'Acqua, the engraver of the emblematic pictures, had not also been involved in Pisani's downfall.³ Thereafter politics and art separated until the French Revolution and the collapse of the Venetian Republic.

Among the less offensive poems that had been published to celebrate Pisani's

were especially commissioned for Pisani's entry. Not only are the prints by Cristoforo dall'Acqua (Biblioteca Correr, Venice—Raccolta Gherro, Vol. VIII) all dated before 1780 when there was as yet no question of Pisani's election, but Riviera's own explanatory pamphlets (*La Educazione Virile*), one in French and one in Italian, were published in Verona in 1773. [Copies of both versions of this rare pamphlet can be found in the Biblioteca Correr—Op.P.D. 3577-8.] On the other hand there is good reason to believe that the pictures or the prints were exhibited in 1780, for this is stated not only by Zannandreas but also implied by the well-informed Moschini (1924, p. 145), who refers to Dall'Acqua's prints 'nell'ingresso del procuratore Giorgio Pisani' and we also know of the very close relations between Pisani and Boscarati.

A version of one of the pictures turned up in a London saleroom some years ago (*Settecento Paintings*—Arcade Gallery, February–March, 1957), but this is unlikely to be one of the originals, which are described by Zannandreas as being large.

¹ Grimaldo and *Memorie Storiche della Correzione 1780, raccolte in XXIV Lettere Familiari scritte al N.U. S.r Francesco Donado . . . dal N.U. S.r Gio. Mattia Balbi*—Biblioteca Correr, Venice, MSS. Cicogna 2229.

² Zannandreas, p. 416.

³ Moschini, 1924, p. 145.

election was one called *Il Filosofo dell'Alpi*.¹ As the title suggests, this enthusiastic work about the Alps and Nature, which had been translated from the French, was strongly influenced by Rousseau; and the spirit that informed it was partly responsible for the outstanding success of almost the only Venetian artist of the eighteenth century who won unqualified praise from every different kind of patron. Francesco Zuccarelli was called 'non mai abbastanza lodato' by the elder Zanetti as early as 1738, only a few years after his arrival in Venice from his native Tuscany.² Consul Smith employed him constantly and his success with the English, whose love of country house life and landscape painting was already famous, is easy to understand. More significant is the praise that he won even from those who most strongly rejected the whole conception of Arcadia. Thus Baretti, chief scourge of the effeminate culture of Venice and close friend of Dr Johnson, wrote enthusiastically of him.³ And, above all, Giambattista Biffi, the friend of Beccaria and Verri,⁴ speaks of him with a rapture that he expresses for no other painter⁵: 'If only you could see this King of landscape painters! What softness, freshness, waving of leaves! His prints alone are not enough to reveal his merits, good though they are. Those limpid waters seem like glass on his canvas, and those lively and brilliant *macchiette* carry one up to Paradise. Dear Zuccarelli—thanks to you we do not have to envy the ancients.' The language alone would betray a follower of Rousseau, and indeed when Biffi heard later of that philosopher's death, he wrote in his diary⁶: 'The greatest genius of the century is dead. . . . He was my father, my guide, my master, my idol. . . .' This appreciation of Zuccarelli by such a dedicated disciple shows that the more scrupulous and deeply felt treatment of nature that was adopted by later artists was by no means a necessary consequence of that philosopher's teaching. Purely artificial Arcadias, suffused in a golden mist, were convincing enough for the most impassioned believers in the natural life: while Giuseppe Zais, a more authentic and robust interpreter of the countryside, was wholly neglected.

Various individuals might support different painters, but towards the middle of the century there was another, more basic problem that was being widely discussed. How far could painting be deemed to be of any importance whatsoever in modern life? Gasparo Gozzi was among the first to tackle the problem in Venice. Writing in 1760 he admitted that he had been attacked for devoting too much space in his journalism to buildings, altars and pictures.⁷ After making the traditional reply that these represent

¹ *Il Filosofo dell'Alpi—Ode del Signor de la Harpe dell'Accademia Francese liberamente ridotta in Versi Sciolti italiani da Giuseppe Fossati Veneziano. . . . In Venezia per Giacomo Storti, MDCCCLXXX.*

² Letter from A. M. Zanetti to A. F. Gori of 23 August 1738 in Biblioteca Marucelliana, Florence—MSS. B. VIII, 13 p. 289r.

³ Baretti, I, p. 279.

⁴ F. Venturi, 1957, pp. 37-76.

⁵ In an unpublished letter to Signor Vacchelli in 1773 in the Biblioteca Governativa, Cremona, MSS. aa.I.4., the knowledge of which I owe to Professor Franco Venturi: 'Se Lei vedesse questo Rè dei pittori paesista [sic], che morbidezza, che fresco, che batter di fronda; Le carte sue unicam.te non bastano a farne conoscere il preggio, quantunque belle. Quelle acque limpidi veri Cristalli anche sulla tela, le più vive, e significanti macchiette spiritosissime imparadiscono. Caro Zuccarelli per te non abiamo ad'invidiare gli antichi. . . .'

⁶ F. Venturi, 1957, p. 45.

⁷ *Gazzetta Veneta*, 26 Luglio 1760.

the finest claim to glory of the country that produces them, he refers almost tentatively to their social value. The arts employ people; consequently money circulates and families are kept alive. It is plain that Gozzi is here implicitly answering charges by the new political economists. Eleven years later A. M. Zanetti the Younger obviously feels that a more considered reply is needed, and he develops at some length the view that painting must be thought of as one of the useful arts.¹ He too begins with the old, accepted theory of the didactic function of painting: sacred and heroic subjects inspire sacred and heroic deeds. But he then brings the theory up to date with a notable concession to the art of his city and century. Painting not only teaches; it also provides mental relaxation. Even this, however, is merely a fashionable adaptation of the old theory of 'diletto ed utile', and a few pages later, Zanetti feels bound to take part in the more modern 'utilitarian' discussion and justify painting, or rather its patronage, on rather different grounds. Flourishing artists attract foreigners to their schools; these foreigners take back works of their masters to their own countries where they are noticed and encourage foreign princes to buy Italian pictures. Even more, these princes often invite Italian artists to come and work in their own countries, where they are extremely well paid; consequently when these artists return to Italy they bring large sums of money with them. 'And so,' he concludes, 'we cannot doubt that Painting has its part to play in trade.' Alas, whatever else might help the Venetian economy at this stage, it was certainly not the sums—however great—brought back by her artists from England, Spain, Germany and Russia. None the less, the same sort of argument was echoed in 1772 by an official committee set up to consider the general economic situation: the liberal arts, it concluded, provide attractions and pleasures and a certain reputation to the State, for they encourage foreigners to come here.²

It was ideas of this kind that persuaded the State to make its single important venture into the realm of art patronage. As early as 1724 it had been planned to found an Academy of Painting and Sculpture 'so as to attract and encourage to remain here those foreigners who have to pass Venetian territory on their way to Florence, Bologna and Rome'.³ When in 1756 the Academy was finally established (after a number of similar institutions in other towns of Italy and Europe), the Senate hoped, with a mixture of shrewd calculation and naïveté which is characteristic of much of its legislation at this period, to gain some commercial benefit from the arrangement. The actual organisation of the body, however, reflected none of the new theories about the value of paintings that had been attracting attention, for the rigid stratification of subject-matter, based on the absolute supremacy of history painting and the complete subordination of such inferior branches as view painting, looked back to a much earlier period rather than anticipated the opinions of the neo-classicists. And the artists themselves were firmly graded in a hierarchy according to the subjects that they painted.

Very shortly after the institution of the Academy the position of the artist in society

¹ In the preface to *Della Pittura Veneziana*, 1771, p. xiii.

² *Relazione per le riforme*, 18 Agosto 1772—quoted by Agostino Sagredo, 1857, p. 208.

³ E. Bassi, 1941, and Fogolari, 1913.

was debated again, but with much more insight into real problems. Andrea Memmo, himself a patron of great interest to be discussed in a later chapter, was one of the Inquisitori alle Arti, who were concerned with the reorganisation of the guilds. Among his papers there survives a sheet on which he briefly scribbled some queries to himself when preparing his report.¹ 'It will be necessary', he begins, 'to show how important it is for the liberal arts to free from the subjection of dues those men who practise them, and to explain how strange is the temperament of Painters. An example is the famous living Venetian painter C. Why does C. claim to be freed from taxes?'² Memmo looks to other towns for suggestions of reform—Rome, Florence, Bologna and, above all, Paris. What about the new Academy of Arts at Parma? And to other professions. What about musicians? And engravers? He looks to the past and reminds himself to read Vasari's life of Montorsoli.³ He even wonders what is the device and the name of the Venetian Academy and whether they could not be improved. Under the protection of which saint is the Academy placed? And at the end of his remarkably open-minded survey of the situation he concludes: 'It is right that the imaginative side of painting should be exercised freely and with nobility; genius should not be fettered in the practice of the fine arts. That is why they were called liberal.' But Memmo, with his interest in the concept of genius and his appreciation of certain anarchic tendencies in artists, was exceptional among administrators, even if his ideas in themselves were not wholly new. The status of the artist remained unchanged, and the only theoretical question that was seriously discussed—particularly at the Academy prize-giving sessions—was whether patronage of the traditional kind was necessary for the survival of art or whether, as Francesco Algarotti maintained, the existence of great art would of itself bring patrons into being.

One other development reflected the impact of new ideas on the organisation of the arts in Venice and helped to bring painting in touch with a more informed, if less powerful, public opinion than had yet been possible. By the early years of the eighteenth century there were two spots in the city which were given over to art exhibitions.⁴ In the Piazza S. Marco, by the left-hand projecting wing of the Procuratie Nuove adjoining

¹ Published in full in Appendix 6.

² This almost certainly refers to Canaletto although he died in 1768 before Memmo began work.

³ This *Life* contains an account of the formation of the Accademia di Disegno in Florence.

⁴ For a full discussion see Haskell and Levey, 1958, pp. 179–85. For the sake of completeness I add here the only three references to the S. Rocco exhibitions that I have discovered since this article was published:—

- (i) A report from the papal Nunzio of 20 August 1729 in the Archivio Vaticano—*Venezia*, n. 180: '... e in tal congiuntura si vidvero esposti diversi Quadri di antichi, e moderni Pennelli, con numero concorso di Popolo ...'.
- (ii) Thomas Martyn, p. 448: 'On S. Rocco's day, the Signory goes in procession to that Saint's church: and the painters of the present Venetian school exhibit their performances in the Scuola.'
- (iii) *Nuova Gazzetta Veneta*, 21 Agosto 1762: 'De' Quadri fu al sommo applaudito il Ritratto del Serenissimo nostro Doge Marco Foscarini, fatto dal Signor Nassi [sic—Nazari?], e incontrato a segno che nulla più si potrebbe desiderare. Vi si videro anche altre Opere de' Pittori antichi, e viventi, e tutti ebbero la dovuta lode.'

the church of S. Geminiano, painters sometimes chose to show their work to the public in a thoroughly casual way when other means were not available. But there were also far more systematic exhibitions at the Scuola di S. Rocco which probably grew up quite informally from the processions which the Doge and Senate made to the church each 16 August (Plate 56). The occasion was a fixed one and every year a number of artists took part. By 1751 Francesco Algarotti could write to Mariette that the exhibition was 'in some ways the tribunal of our painting like the Salon in Paris'. In fact, however, the S. Rocco showings never approached the Salon in complexity of organisation or the attention they attracted. Scarcely any written criticism has survived, and it is difficult to estimate how seriously they were taken. None the less, in a smaller way than in Paris but for the same reasons, these exhibitions did help to bring artist and public together, and did provide a forum where values other than those established by the State and the aristocracy could be discussed.

In 1777 a much more official type of exhibition was organised when a number of nobles asked the members of the Academy to display their work each year at a stand in the Piazzetta. The artists viewed the arrangements without enthusiasm as they themselves were required to meet all the expenses, which were heavy. Many of them did not have pictures available for exhibition, and the Academy had to resort to loans to make up the required numbers. Complaints were frequently made and by 1787 the cost had become crippling and the shows were discontinued. Thus ended State interference in the arts which had at no time proved very happy.