Chapter 11

THE FOREIGN RESIDENTS

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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 The difficulties were great: unpublished material had to be secured from the family; a frontispiece, drawn by the 'famous painter' Gian Domenico Ferretti of Florence, had to be engraved; and a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 *notaio*, 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 colleague[6]; 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 Facciolati, 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'. Facciolati 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 hà 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 volontieri 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 submitt 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 Collection[7]—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 Conduitt '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 Canalettos 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 purche il lavoro ne sia eccelente, 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 vagliono. . . .'—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 Brittanico *Smith*. Mio fratello dissegnò 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 piu 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 Saxony[2] 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 resume 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 Banquetting 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 palace[4]—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 Crisostomo[3] 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 wrote[5] 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 Corfù, 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 Corfù). 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 Corfù are recorded in the inventory.

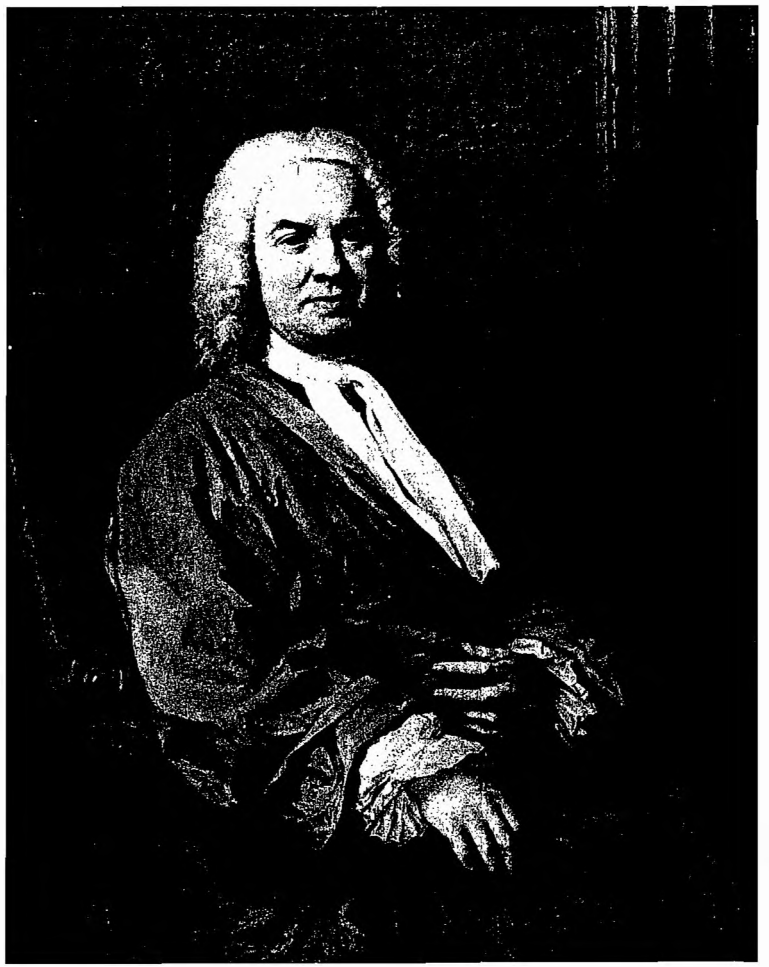
For some of Schulenburg's portraits see Morassi, 1952, pp. 85-91.

[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.

a. PIAZZETTA: Marshal Schulenburg

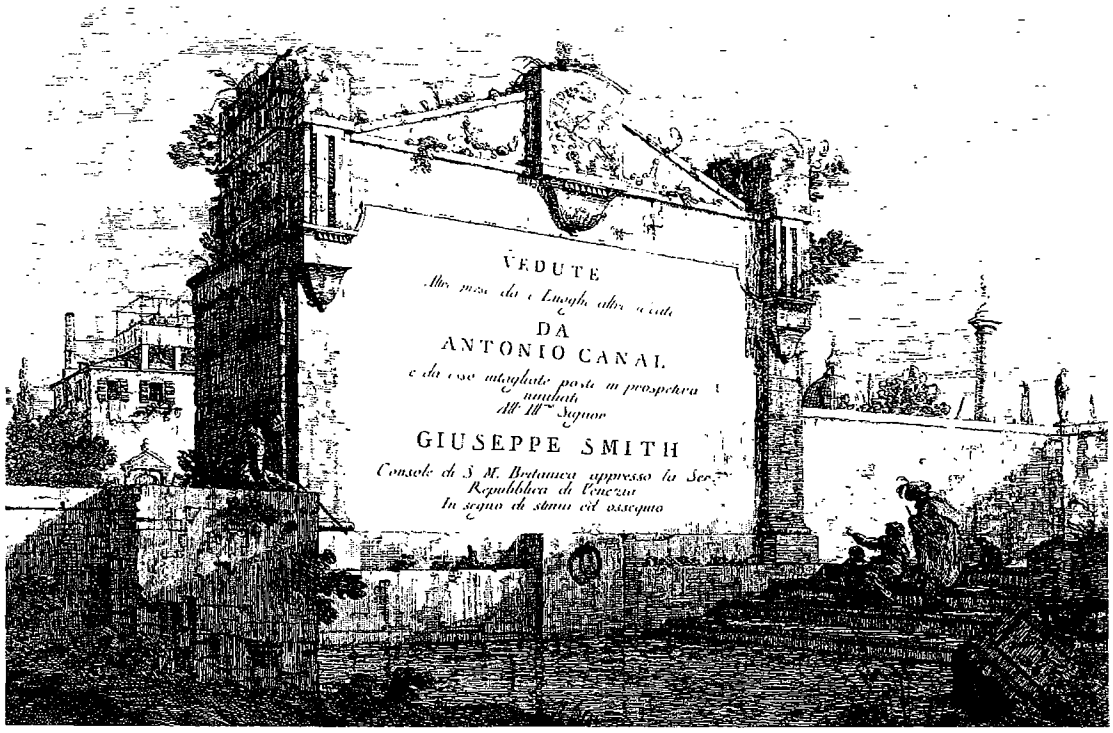


b. AMIGONI: Sigismund Streit

Plate 53

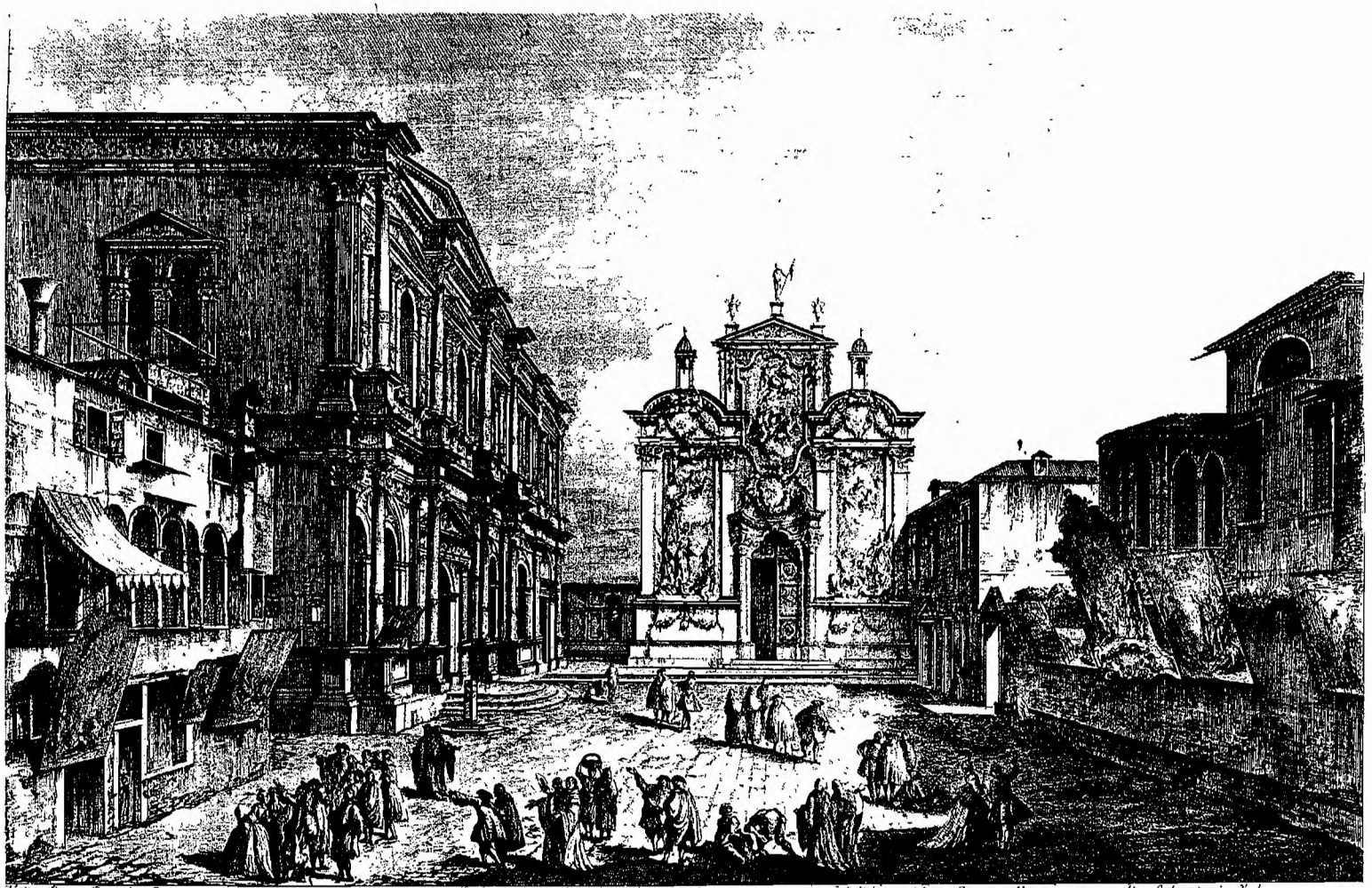
Plate 54 VENETIAN ART FOR MARSHAL SCHULENBURG AND CONSUL SMITH (*see Plates 54 and 55*)

PIAZZETTA: Idyll



a. CANALETTO: Dedicatory frontispiece to Etchings

b. MARCO RICCI: Village Scene



Talis Diui Rocchi facies rudis adhuc ex cocto latere, nec sectis marmoribus obducta: ad lævam magnum sodalitium eidem Sancto dicatum, et studio Sebastiani Serly construction

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 low[1]; 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 Feldmarechal 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 Canalettos, 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 Grié—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 congenial[4] 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.