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A Display of Prints in the Dresden Kupferstichkabinett, c. 1728–1750. Exhibiting German Art in Western-European Comparison¹

In the second quarter of the eighteenth century a little-known display of prints was realized in the print room of the royal cabinets of curiosities in the Zwinger in Dresden (fig. 1). It was compiled by the first keeper of prints, Johann Heinrich von Heucher (1677–1746). Comprising approximately one hundred prints in gilded frames, the display was probably exhibited above a series of cabinets which contained a collection of albums with prints and drawings. It is not known how the prints would have been distributed on the walls. However, the inventory of 1738 indicates an arrangement which is easily regarded as one according to national schools, but which was primarily based on the national origins of the printmakers, namely French, Italian, Flemish, and German.² The prints may have been on display already, when the print room was moved into the Zwinger in 1728. But at the very latest it is known that they were in the print room from 1738 onwards. By 1750, however, they had deteriorated to such an extent that the entire display was dismantled and replaced.

The display of prints in Dresden is remarkable, because it predates by circa half a century the renowned arrangement of pictures according to schools of art displayed in the picture gallery of the Vienna Belvedere from around 1780. Moreover, the arrangement of the display was realized on the walls of a representative semi-public space and not just in collections of prints or drawings which were stored in albums or portfolios. In this article I will focus on the ways in which the arrangement of the Dresden display of prints shaped notions of German art in Western-European comparison.³ Firstly, I will discuss the display by identifying some of the prints and analyzing the arrangement mentioned in the inventory. And secondly, I will further investigate the display with reference to widespread Western-European debates among scholars and collectors on the mechanisms that shaped notions of German art, such as reactions of defense, the impact of prejudice, and scholarly legitimization.



1. Bernardo Bellotto, called Canaletto, *The Zwinger in Dresden with in the middle left background the print room on the ground floor of the German Pavilion*, 1758, etching. © Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Kupferstichkabinett, Inv.nr. A1914-278.

For the research presented in this article I am indebted to print historians such as Christian Dittrich, Stephan Brakensiek, Christien Melzer, and Martin Schuster who have already investigated the holdings of the Dresden print room.⁴ Claudia Schnitzer in particular has drawn attention to the history of wall displays of prints in the Dresden print room in an article in 2010.⁵ Also museum historians such as Debora Meijers, Andrea Meyer, and Bénédicte Savoy are of importance as they referred to (national) school arrangement and transnationalism as features of the rise of the modern public art museum in the eighteenth century.⁶ Lastly, historians of nations and nationalism such as Anthony Smith, Joep Leerssen, and David Bell have provided a cultural-historical framework for the history of the concept of nation. They have distinguished notions at play in the formation of nations and its identities which are of value for the understanding of the operation of the visual arts in this field.⁷

The Dresden Wall Display of Prints

The wall display in the Dresden print room was inventoried by Heucher in 1738 under the subtitle *L'Embellissement du salon d'estampes, consistant en chefs d'oeuvre, des plus celebres graveurs de l'Europe le tout en cadres dorés*. As indicated above, the inventory describes a systematic arrangement of prints according to the (national) origins of successively French, Italian, Flemish, and German printmakers.⁸ As such it was not at all representative of the encyclopedic print collection which comprised a series of twenty-two cabinets with albums of prints and drawings. The print collection entailed thematically arranged cabinets as well as cabinets devoted to art. Individual cabinets were devoted to Italian, Flemish and Dutch, French, and German painters, and these were mixed with cabinets devoted to among others China, natural history, portraits, architecture, and costume as well as cabinets devoted to graphical techniques, such as drawing, mezzotint, and engraving. China – the only other geographically defined cabinet – was also represented on the walls of the print room above the respective cabinet, but it was inventoried separately and therefore did not seem to figure in the display of Western-European prints.⁹ The display on the wall can be viewed as a significant extract from a wide variety of images in the encyclopedic print collection which highlighted the domain of the visual arts in Western Europe with a view to the national origins of printmakers.

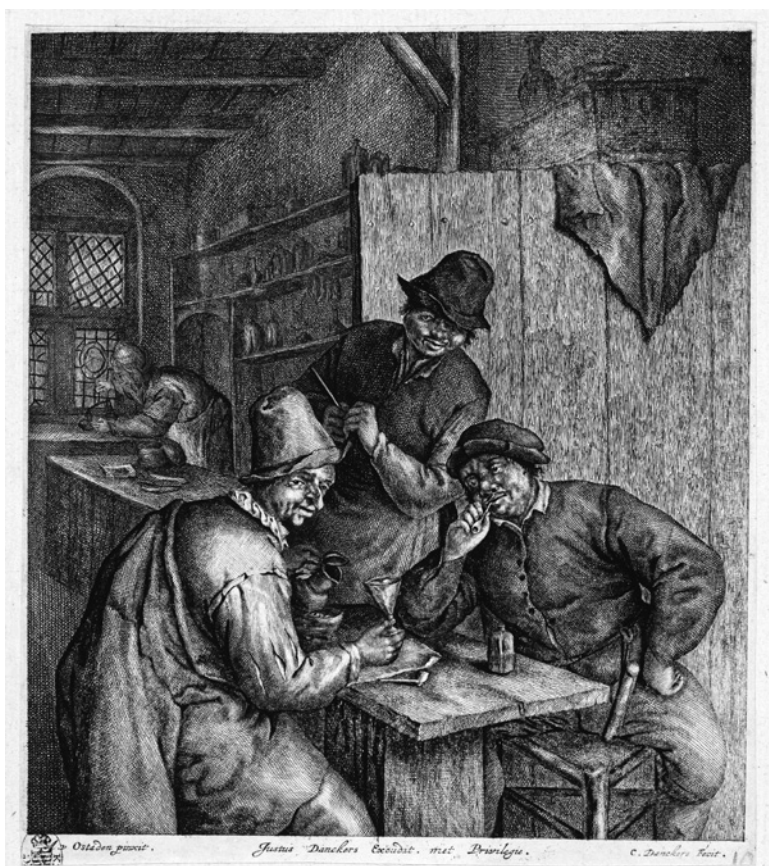
The Dresden wall display may be regarded as a kind of picture gallery on paper representing a cross-section of Western-European art. The phrasing in the inventory of Heucher reveals that the main accent was on the masterpieces of printmakers – *Catalogue des Graveurs et de leurs chefs d'Oeuvres*. Nevertheless, a majority of the entries in the inventory indicate that the prints were made after works that had been ›painted‹, ›invented‹, or ›designed‹ by often well-known artists. Moreover, among the prints in the display there were also several examples of painters' prints, i.e. of the artistically highly appreciated prints of so-called painter-engravers. It has been argued that Heucher had a new budding awareness of the difference between ›reproductive‹ and painters' prints, which can be deduced from the distinctive cabinets devoted to them in the collection. Yet, he collected and displayed ›reproductive‹ prints in much larger numbers than painters' prints.¹⁰ This gives some indication of Heucher's preference for prints on the wall which were made after the designs



2. Johann Gottfried Bartsch after Govert Flinck, *Venus and Amor*, c. 1680, etching and engraving. © Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Kupferstichkabinett, Inv.nr. A 147348.

of painters, but perhaps also of his concern to preserve the works of painter-engravers in the cabinets where they were stored safely away from light.

Many examples of leading printmakers and painters from different national origins were indeed present. French printmakers were represented by works of Girard Audran, Gérard Edelinck, and Nicolas Dorigny among others. Italian printmakers comprised works of Marcantonio Raimondi, Giorgio Ghisi, and Pietro Santi Bartoli with a few examples of the painter-engravers Andrea Mantegna, Federico Barocci, and Pietro Testa. Flemish printmakers – referring to both Flemish and Dutch – were exemplified by works of among others Paulus Pontius, Cornelis Bloemaert, and Jan van Vliet, as well as by a few works of painter-engravers such as Rembrandt and Nicolaas Berchem. Representative



3. Cornelis Danckerts I after Adriaen van Ostade, *Three Drinking and Smoking Peasants*, etching. © Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Kupferstichkabinett, Inv.nr. A39264.

canons of painters from different national origins seem to have been a less pressing issue. It is true that Poussin, Le Brun, and Mignard were present in the French section, Raphael, Michelangelo, and Carracci in the Italian, and Bruegel, Jordaens, Goltzius, and Rembrandt in the Flemish. However, while Italian painters were represented in all sections, Rubens and Van Dyck were absent in the Flemish section, and Dürer did not feature in the German but in the Flemish section.¹¹

The German section was made up of c. twenty prints by printmakers from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.¹² Most of the printmakers on display came from Augsburg, such as Wolfgang, Georg, and Philip Andreas Kilian,



4. Wenceslaus Hollar after Paolo Veronese, *Esther before Ahasuerus*, published 1660, etching. © Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Kupferstichkabinett, Inv.nr. A95477.

Georg Philipp Rugendas (Tafel 20), and Georg Andreas Wolfgang (fig. 5). Further, also Johann Gottfried Bartsch (fig. 2) from Berlin was represented and Wenceslaus Hollar (fig. 4) who had been active in several places in Germany and England. These printmakers adopted a variety of techniques such as etching, engraving, mezzotint as well as combinations of these, and they mostly put into prints works by artists from abroad, namely the Low Countries, France, and Italy. However, in the German section some anomalies seemed to occur in the form of works by Dutch printmakers such as Jan Müller after Cornelis Cornelisz van Haarlem and Cornelis Danckerts after Adriaen van Ostade (fig. 3).



5. Georg Andreas Wolffgang after Joseph Werner, *Saul in the cave of the witch of Endor*, engraving. © Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Kupferstichkabinett, Inv.nr. A26941.

On the basis of the inventory it is still possible to identify about three quarters of the prints in the German section, and roughly detect an arrangement according to subject. The prints comprised historical pieces as well as portraits. The historical pieces included mythological scenes, such as *Nymph and Satyr* by Wolfgang Kilian after Jacopo Palma and *Venus and Amor* by Bartsch after Govert Flinck from the collection of the Great Elector (fig. 2). The religious scenes entailed among others *Esther before Ahasuerus* by Hollar after Paolo Veronese from David Teniers's *Theatrum Pictorium* (1660) (fig. 4) and *Saul in the Cave of the Witch of Endor* by Wolfgang after Joseph Werner (fig. 5). Yet, also an allegorical scene with the *French Academy of Sciences and Arts* by Gottfried Stein after Sébastien Leclerc, and a genre scene with *Three Drinking and Smoking Farmers in an Inn* of Danckerts after Van Ostade (fig. 3) were present. The portraits in the German section were highly representative of the ambitious court in Dresden, as they depicted the reigning elector of Saxony (and king of Poland) in Dresden together with a successive range of Holy Roman Emperors from Leopold I to Maria Theresia. They must have dominated the wall display in the print room because of the unusually large sizes of some of them. The portrait of elector-king Friedrich August II (August III) by Johann Martin Bernigeroth after Antoine Pesne (fig. 6) was of a manageable size, yet, the portraits of the emperors Charles VI by Rugendas (Tafel 20) and Leopold I by Wolfgang after Anton Schoonjans were printed from six and ten plates respectively and were no less than 1.5 meters wide and 2.5 meters high.

The distinction between a German and a Flemish (northern and southern Netherlandish) section in the inventory of the Dresden wall display was probably rooted in German collections on paper which had been assembled since the sixteenth century. Collections in which German and Netherlandish prints and drawings were separated included those of for example Basilius Amerbach (1533–1591) in Basel, and of Paulus Behaim (1592–1637) and Johann Ägidius Ayser (1598–1674) in Nürnberg.¹³ However, the arrangement of the inventory of the Dresden wall display and the collecting traditions from which it sprung clearly deviated from the long-lasting international perception that German and Netherlandish art and artists shared an artistic tradition and were thus grouped together in collections and art literature. This can be deduced for example from print collections in France, the Low Countries, and Germany, such as those of Louis Odespung de la Meschinière (1597–1655) and Louis XIV (1638–1715) in Paris, Prince Eugene of Savoy (1663–1736) in Vienna,

and Pieter Cornelis van Leyden in Leiden (1717–1788).¹⁴ Also in the leading biographical art literature of Karel van Mander (1548–1606), Joachim von Sandrart (1606–1688), and Roger de Piles (1635–1709) German and Netherlandish artists were mixed.¹⁵ Apparently, the international idea of a shared Netherlandish-German artistic tradition had not been instantly effected by the political events of the Eighty Years' War (1568–1648), the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648), or the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 by which the Dutch Republic and Switzerland became internationally recognized independent states.¹⁶ However, at about the time of the Dresden wall display the idea of distinctly separating German artists began to challenge the international view of a joint group of Netherlandish-German artists on the map of Western-European art.



6. Johann Martin Bernigeroth after Antoine Pesne, *Portrait of elector Friedrich August II / king August III, etching and engraving.* © Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Kupferstichkabinett, Inv.nr. A 138461.

Reactions in Defense of German Artists

As stated above the Dresden display did not give an overview of German printmaking. It neglected German prints from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and dealt exclusively with examples from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. This choice may have been made on the basis of a wish to preserve the rare and precious examples of early German printmaking, which Heucher in fact did.¹⁷ However, in view of the artistic preferences of the time and in particular also in view of the representative surroundings of the print room at the Dresden court, I would like to argue that the selection of prints

on display can (also) be understood as a response in defense of the work of German artists which could withstand the widespread international critiques on their gothic or barbaric character. The reading of a defensive response in the Dresden display is based on the art library which was stored in two cabinets in the print room.¹⁸ In particular Sandrart's views form the beginning of an explanation of the Dresden display of German prints.

In the *Teutsche Akademie* Sandrart stated that »all nations have to admit that our natives are *not* scarce, unskilful and barbaric, but of good spirit, sensible and capable of bringing the fine arts to its uppermost perfection« [italics by the author].¹⁹ Confronted by accusations from different parts of Western Europe, such as those of among others Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574) and Van Mander, Sandrart was in denial. After Sandrart De Piles would continue similar critiques on German artists which would have been known in the Dresden print room. Simultaneously, Sandrart underlined the capacities of German artists, yet, by doing so he did not have a stringent national goal. As Schreurs has argued, the *Teutsche Akademie* was meant »to help establishing a national identity in the field of the visual arts in the German-speaking countries«. Indeed, he did not »promote a specific ›German‹ art«, but he positioned German artists in Western Europe by denying unjustified critiques and identifying those with good if not excellent capacities.²⁰

Sandrart no doubt reacted for example on Vasari, who had argued that German art was gothic and thus barbaric. His view applied mainly to architecture but it also resonated in his discussions of painting and printmaking, such as for instance in his life of Dürer for whom he had a twofold appreciation.²¹ He was of the opinion that Dürer was an example to Italians because of his refined engraving, and not because of his un-classical representation of nudes in among others his *Hercules on the Cross Roads* (fig. 7). Vasari believed Dürer's models had been bad because most Germans were themselves ugly in the nude, although he was willing to admit that they were very beautiful indeed if well dressed.²²

Sandrart's defense was probably also prompted by the work of his other model Van Mander. Even though Van Mander had united the biographies of Netherlandish and German artists in a single section in his *Schilderboeck*, like Sandrart would later on, he noticed that animosities existed between artists from both nations. For example, he reported a statement from the Dutch artist Gaspar Rem that Germans were muffs and had little knowledge of art.



7. Albrecht Dürer, *Hercules on the Crossroads*, c. 1498, engraving. © Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden, Kupferstichkabinett, Inv.nr. A1892-4.

For that reason, Rem initially did not want to accept the German artist Hans von Aachen as his pupil and sent him to a bad Italian painter. Nonetheless, Rem changed his opinion when he found out that Von Aachen was more than capable of rivalling Italian and Netherlandish art.²³ Sandrart retold Van Mander's anecdote in its entirety in the *Teutsche Akademie*.

De Piles's *Abrégé* (1699) appeared later than Sandrart's book. Its German translation (1710) was kept in the Dresden print room, in which the joint section of biographies of German and Netherlandish artists was expanded with extracts from Sandrart's lives of German artists. Assuming that a direct relationship existed between the art works in a country and the ›taste of nations‹, De Piles identified German art *tout court* with a gothic taste. His opinion was devastating: German art entailed nature with its mistakes, imitation without selection, dry and broken drapery, detailed instead of well-disposed objects, insipid expression, dry *disegno*, passable color, and a very heavy manner. In his book De Piles had referred to German and Netherlandish artists as a single ›school‹, yet, he did make a distinction between a German and a Netherlandish taste.²⁴

Sandrart rebutted the critics, and by doing so he shaped identities of German artists. His assurance that German artists were of »good spirit, sensible and capable of bringing the fine arts to its uppermost perfection« was backed up by his appraisal of ›old‹ as well as new German masters in the biographies.²⁵ Using the comparison between artists from different nations in his assessments, he argued that the old German masters had invented the new art form of printmaking before the Italians, that artists such as Dürer had created his art without the help of Italian or ancient Greek examples, and that his works along with those from for example Holbein had even impacted Italian artists such as Raimondi and Caravaggio.²⁶ Many of the new German masters, such as Johann Bauer, Matthias Merian the Younger, Johann Schönfeld, and Joseph Werner, improved their art by learning and adopting artistic styles abroad – mostly in Italy, but also elsewhere such as in the Low Countries, France, and England – and brought them back to Germany where they were subsequently held in great esteem.²⁷ With such remarks Sandrart contributed to a different characterization of old and new German masters, namely, that the first had created their art independently and the latter with a receptiveness to art from abroad.

Sandrar's defensive reaction gave rise to the perception of a distinct group of German artists in Western Europe, and to a distinction between old and new masters within this group. This can be deduced from the art literature and from the display in the Dresden print room. Sigmund von Birken (1626–1681), the editor of the *Teutsche Academie*, had suggested to Sandrar to separate German from Netherlandish artists, but he did so in vain.²⁸ Later, in 1726, it was the Leipzig print scholar Johann Friedrich Christen (1700–1756) who argued that a separation of German artists had become necessary, not only from French and Italian but also from Netherlandish artists. The motivation for his stance was his belief that each nation had fostered their own characteristic styles [*Manieren*]. Furthermore, because he believed styles change in time he distinguished between ›old‹ (until 1580), ›middle‹ (until 1680), and ›new‹ German artists (from 1680 onwards). Christen was of the opinion that such a division according to the national origins of artists was of service to the critical evaluation of art in Western-Europe.²⁹ Christen and Heucher knew each other well, and it is therefore interesting that Heucher assembled a display in Dresden in which German prints were set apart from French, Italian, and, Netherlandish prints. Even though he collected German prints from all periods, he selected only those of new (or ›middle‹ and ›new‹) artists for the display. This means he was suppressing exactly those prints which were reputed gothic or barbaric, as if he wanted to avoid any critical reception of German artists in a display which aided the comparison of art from different Western-European nations. Instead, he singled out works by German artists who had not only been receptive to styles from abroad but could also rival artists from various parts of Western Europe. In this way he outlined a position for German artists on the West-European map of art.

The Impact of Prejudice

In Western-European debates among collectors and scholars prejudice further shaped the perception of national differences between artists and schools. Triggered by disagreements about the classification of artists and schools, the accusations of national prejudice and unjustified appropriation were widespread.³⁰ How the prints were hung in Dresden can be connected to discussions in books by Arnold Houbraken (1660–1719) and Christian Ludwig von Hagedorn (1712–1780). Both authors applied different criteria to the national

classification of artists, namely 1) the origin of artists, 2) the ›character‹ of artists, and 3) the style of art works. The second criterion entailed artists who had travelled abroad and adopted the ›character‹ of another nation. The third criterion was in the making. With the rise of art connoisseurship national qualities were not only observed in the character of artists but also in the formal characteristics of art works.³¹

In 1755, several years after the wall display was dismantled but many years before he became head of the Dresden print room, Hagedorn published a letter in Dresden.³² With the aim of selling his collection of largely modern paintings he did not describe it in the manner of an auction catalogue, but he demonstrated its value to knowledge of art in general. Hagedorn critically discussed his collection in sections devoted to Italian, French, Netherlandish, and German artists or schools, and added biographies of artists among which he promoted modern German artists in particular.³³ He believed many judgements and prejudices about German art both from Germans and connoisseurs from abroad were unjustified. More than just replacing these for his own opinions, he supported his views with connoisseurship of paintings as well as prints. In his discussion of German artists, he devoted a section to early painter-engravers and one to modern painters. Building upon the earlier opinions of Sandrart, he was strongly opposed to the lazy idea that modern just like early German art was gothic. German art had been corrected because it had developed a style which was based on great Italian examples such as Raphael.³⁴

Hagedorn stated that many authors of artists' biographies had passed over German artists or they had adopted them in ›foreign‹ schools.³⁵ An important work of reference here was Houbraken's *Groote Schouburgh der Nederlantsche Konstschilders en Schilderessen* (1718–1721) of which the Dresden print room also kept a copy. Like Hagedorn, Houbraken separated Netherlandish from German artists. Yet, as he concentrated on Netherlandish artists – especially Dutch, but also Flemish – Houbraken made different selection decisions. To begin with he obviously discussed artists who lived and worked in the Low Countries. Yet, Houbraken argued that many of »our important old and new painters« came from Germany, Switzerland, »Gulikerlant« (the country of Jülich), »Keuyslant« (the country of Cologne), and elsewhere.³⁶ They had practiced their art and lived like ›natives‹ in the various provinces in the Low Countries such as Guelders, Brabant, and Holland. They included

among others Caspar Netscher from Prague, Johannes Lingelbach and Abraham Mignon from Frankfurt, Johann Liss from Oldenburg, Rubens from Cologne, Gerard de Lairese from Liège, Flinck from Kleve, Ludolf Bakhuizen and Frederic de Moucheron from Emden, Ernst Stuve from Hamburg and so on. Furthermore, he singled out artists who originated in the Low Countries, but who had left their ›fatherland‹ to produce works for courts abroad.³⁷

Hagedorn pointed out that Houbraken had included artists from abroad among Netherlandish artists because they had »in some way changed their national character.«³⁸ However, in disagreement with this procedure Hagedorn claimed artists for the German school that Houbraken had adopted as Netherlandish. In this respect he also laid claim to artists such as Van Ostade, who they both believed came from Lübeck, and Nicolaes Knüpfer from Leipzig. Furthermore, Hagedorn insisted to encompass artists from abroad who had originated in principalities belonging to Germany, such as the brothers Hubert and Jan van Eyck from Maaseik, De Lairese from Liège, and Andrea Pozzo from Trento. He even claimed Rubens because the artist had been born and raised in Cologne. But, Hagedorn argued that the artist had acquired such an exceptional status that he transcended national origins, although various countries did try and outline a special allegiance – the French in respect of the famous cycle in the Galerie du Luxembourg, the Flemish who cited the masterpieces which gave prestige to Rubens's acquired fatherland, and the German citizens of Cologne who could refer to the artist's paintings held in his place of birth. Hagedorn's net even extended across the channel to England, the work place of the Swiss artist Hans Holbein, who he felt should also be discussed within the German school.³⁹

Previously, Houbraken had combined the criteria of national origin and national character in his selection of Netherlandish artists. It allowed him to include both domestic and foreign artists working in the Low Countries, as well as Netherlandish artists who had been active abroad. For Hagedorn, however, the criterion of the national origins of artists prevailed in the composition of the German school. He reallocated artists with German origins who he believed had been erroneously included in schools from abroad. Most importantly, this enabled him to now include outstanding artists with which he was able to increase the prestige of the German school in Western Europe. Clearly subordinate to the criteria of origin and character was that of style. Houbraken and Hagedorn both arranged artists according to nations or schools, however,

they did not perceive them as working in a collective style but rather as practicing a range of different styles.

Heucher's display of prints from the German school anticipated Hagedorn's views on German art. His exclusive selection of modern German prints as well as his suppression of early German prints was in agreement with Hagedorn's later views. The prints made after German, Italian, Netherlandish, and French designs in the display underlined the receptive character of modern German art. Like Hagedorn, Heucher seems to have appropriated artists for the German school. The prints by Danckerts after Van Ostade (fig. 3) and Müller after Van Haarlem were Netherlandish and not German; both printmakers came from Amsterdam. It is not known why they were included, but it is not unlikely that the supposed German origin of Van Ostade and the German name of Müller played a role in the selection. Moreover, the iconographical focus of the Dresden display anticipated Hagedorn's ambition for German printmakers to follow French examples, for example, he recommended the printmakers to apply themselves to history pieces and portraits.⁴⁰

Scholarly Legitimization through Connoisseurship

The Dresden display reveals that the notion of German art was also shaped by art scholarship. Art scholarship increasingly took the form of connoisseurship, which as a means of specialized visual analysis of art works was concentrated on identification (name and school), aesthetic evaluation (good or bad), and authentication (copy or original).⁴¹ In this sense the Dresden display of works from artists of different nations and its demonstration of artistic judgement – highlighting modern German art – may be regarded also as the result of such scholarly activities. However, what it did not show at all was the new direction art scholarship took. Based on the acquisition of early German prints by Heucher and his successor Karl Heinrich von Heineken (1707–1791) for the Dresden court, scholars such as Christen and Heineken himself began to investigate early German art and early German printmaking in particular. They not only aimed to identify German artists, but also to prove that the origins of Western-European art lay in Germany.⁴² Both used scholarship as a strategy to get out of the deadlock of the partialities of defense and prejudice, and to legitimize the German school on the Western-European map of art.

Christen indicated that the ›outstanding‹ print collection of the Dresden court had been a great help in his studies, as well as its keeper Heucher with whom he had discussed art works orally and in writing. His book *Anzeige und Auslegung der Monogrammatum* (1747) was an unparalleled dictionary of more than a thousand artists' monograms elucidated with a short description including names and dates. Monograms occurred on paintings as well as on prints, yet, Christen concentrated on prints. He argued that they were more suitable than paintings to learn the ›history of art‹ [*Historie der Kunst*]. They were not only lighter, cheaper, and more easily observed at any time of the day, they also came with captions, existed in multiple forms, and preserved art works for posterity.⁴³ Building on ideas which he had expressed already twenty years earlier, Christen ultimately aimed with his research to serve the larger goal of compiling complete catalogues of artists and art works, of writing a history of painting according to nations and schools, and of teaching how art works should be collected.

Christen's ultimate plan may have been to write a Western-European art history, but in this pursuit he also drew attention to German painting, and specifically early German printmaking. He pointed out that there was still a lot unknown about these works, and that this obscurity led to mistaken and unjust national identifications of German artists on the part of both zealous scholars from abroad and indifferent Germans at home. Indeed, Schongauer for example was called »Martin of Holland« by Ascanio Condivi (1525–1574), whereas Vasari had indicated that the artist was appreciated as an excellent painter in Antwerp and suggested that his area of activity was Flanders. Florent le Comte (?1655–?1712) also turned the artist into a Fleming by naming him »Martin d'Anvers«, and Pellegrini Antonio Orlandi (1660–1727) called him obscurely »Martino de Secu Pittore di Romersiolaen« indicating furthermore that he was named Bonmartino.⁴⁴ To remedy ignorance and mistakes Christen wrote a *status quaestionis*, explained the artistic value of the selected prints, claimed the observation of originals in cabinets and galleries, provided artists' names in the original language based on captions and documents, devised a classification of the monograms, and determined them paleographically.⁴⁵ Furthermore, he provided guidelines on print connoisseurship in which he paid attention to styles, print media, various captions, qualities of impressions, and sizes.⁴⁶ With this detailed scholarship Christen contributed to the budding

re-evaluation of early German printmaking, and hoped it would advance taste, virtue, and even peace among the Germans.⁴⁷

As director of the Dresden print room Heineken succeeded Heucher in 1746, and remained on his post until 1763, when he was in turn succeeded by Hagedorn. It was Heineken who was responsible for the dismantling of the print display in 1750, which was by then regarded as »entirely spoiled«. ⁴⁸ He replaced it with fifty drawings which had been made in preparation for the prints of his monumental *Recueil d'estampes d'apres les plus celebres tableaux de la Galerie Royale de Dresde* (1753–1757). ⁴⁹ It is not known what drawings were on display and there is no reference to the arrangement applied. However, if the *Recueil* can be taken as an indication of Heineken's display than it is likely that the focus was on drawings made of Italian paintings. ⁵⁰ This does not mean that his interest in school classification had diminished. On the contrary, based on the work of his predecessor Heucher, Heineken continued to expand and systematize the collection in the Dresden print room. With his arrangement he gave pride of place to the artistic riches of the schools of Western Europe in the first place, which now comprised the Italian, French, Netherlandish, English, and German. Heineken further refined the school classification by arranging artists' oeuvres alphabetically according to artistic specialization, such as painters, portraitists, printmakers, architects, sculptors, landscapists, and flower painters. Yet, this applied only to the Italian and French schools, and not to the Netherlandish and German in which the alphabetical order of artists' oeuvres was the main guide. Within the German school he now united modern and early German art, but they remained separate sections. ⁵¹

Heineken provokingly celebrated the Italian school at the expense of the German on the basis of his connoisseurship. He opened his *Nachrichten von Künstlern und Kunst-Sachen* (1768/69) with the bold statement that the German school was generally the worst in Europe. Moreover, he observed that the fashion for national pride [*Nationalstolz*] in his day had prompted the unjust appraisal of German artists, especially in monthly magazines such as the *Bibliothek der schönen Wissenschaften und der freyen Künste* for which Hagedorn wrote his positive reviews of modern German art. ⁵² Heineken based his view of the German school primarily on the style of art works and not on the origins of artists. He for example claimed not to include the Swiss artist Heintz in the German school because he had been fully educated in Italy, and thus acquired an Italian style. ⁵³ A similar viewpoint determined August III's

decision not to establish an academy in Dresden. The elector-king believed there were no appropriate candidates for the post of director, and this included the internationally acclaimed German artist Anton Raphael Mengs, whose style August III felt was Italian and not German.⁵⁴ With reference to Pierre-Jean Mariette (1694–1774), Heineken argued that the true connoisseur valued each artist according to his own style and according to the school in which he had been educated. Artists should not be compared on the basis of their national origins, but on the basis of their achievements.⁵⁵

Only a few years later, in his *Idée generale* (1771), Heineken would however radically change the rank of the German school from the worst to the best in Europe. According to him it deserved such a prominent place because printmaking was invented in Germany.⁵⁶ Moving way beyond the mere premise of Sandart and the efforts of Christen, he traced the earliest known printed images in the form of engravings and woodcuts back to (among others) works of silversmiths, makers of playing cards, and the illustrations in so-called block books which resulted in the invention of the movable type books of the famous Gutenberg. He hereby contested Gerard Meerman (1722–1771), who had claimed that the Dutchman Laurens Jansz Coster had been the inventor of printing as well as of the woodcut. Heineken believed all these images appeared in Germany for the first time in the second half of the fourteenth and first half of the fifteenth centuries.⁵⁷ Setting new standards of investigation in this field, Heineken carefully built his argument on the study of print collections and libraries in and outside Germany, the use of a widespread network, and the conjunction of a thorough empirical approach to insights from the international art literature and book studies.

Moreover, Heineken cleverly used a publication strategy whereby he could emphasize the now favorable position of the German school in Western Europe. He had developed his argument about the invention of printmaking in Germany progressively in a series of scholarly treatises, which first appeared in German in his *Nachrichten* (1768/69). Subsequently, he included it in his *Idée* (1771) in a French translation which gave him access to a much wider public in Western Europe.⁵⁸ In this book he proposed a classification system for print collections, based on the collection in Dresden, in which the school arrangement was pre-eminent. In his comments Heineken mutually compared each of the schools with a specific view to the beginnings of printmaking.⁵⁹ In this context he articulated the German school as the cradle of European

printmaking with an extensive treatise. What's more, Heineken started to believe that not only printmaking but also painting was invented in Germany.⁶⁰ Heineken used the means of scholarship and publishing to firmly establish the argument about the origins of printmaking with which he sought to legitimize a place for the German school in Western Europe.

The print room of the Zwinger in Dresden provides an early example of a display of prints which was based on a systematic understanding of art divided by the (national) origins of artists. In the second quarter of the eighteenth century Heucher exhibited a selection of prints by French, Italian, Flemish (Netherlandish), and German printmakers, of which the majority depended on the designs of well-known painters. Widespread contemporary debates suggest that the presentation of only modern German prints from the seventeenth- and eighteenth centuries in the display resulted from defensive reactions on widespread critical opinions on early German art and artists (Sandrart) as well as prejudiced appropriations of artists with German origins (Hagedorn). By excluding early German prints from the fifteenth- and sixteenth centuries from the display encouraging Western-European comparison, a critical reception of its ›gothic‹ and ›barbaric‹ nature was avoided. Instead modern German prints proved their worth by assimilating and rivalling standards of Italian, Netherlandish, and French art. Yet, by mid-century the growth of connoisseurship in a context of increased national awareness also put the reputation of modern German art into serious danger – both for its perceived lack of artistic quality and national style (Heineken). This not only contributed to the ultimate dismantling of the print display by Heineken, but interestingly also to the rise of scholarship of early German printmaking. Scholarship provided new arguments for placing the origins of printmaking in Germany, and thus secured a place for the German school of art in Western Europe.

Notes

- 1 This article forms part of a research project which is funded by the Netherlands Organization of Scientific Research (NWO). I would like to thank Stephanie Buck, Claudia Schnitzer, Andreas Pischel, and Dirk Gedlich for their invaluable help in researching the materials in the Dresden print room, and Martin Schuster for his generous help and knowledge.
- 2 The inventory of the Dresden print room does not use the term school in the main rubrication. There is no mention of a German school. Only within the Italian section the term school is applied. The section concerning the display of prints entails a ›catalogue of printmakers and their masterpieces‹ which is subdivided according to French, Italian, Flemish and German printmakers. Heucher, *Consignation (1738)*, p. 163–169.
- 3 In this article the terms German and Germany refer to the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation.
- 4 BRAKENSIEK 2003; SCHUSTER/KETELSEN 2010.
- 5 SCHNITZER 2010, p. 55.
- 6 MEIJERS 1995; SAVOY 2006; MEYER/SAVOY 2014.
- 7 SMITH 1986 and 2013; BELL 2001; LEERSSEN 2008.
- 8 Heucher, *Consignation (1738)*, p. 163–169.
- 9 The cabinet devoted to German painters was referred to as *Peintres Allemands et autres nations*. The Chinese works could not be identified. I would like to thank Cordula Bischoff for her information. Heucher, *Consignation (1738)*, p. 105, 155. See for an extensive discussion of Heucher's arrangement of the Dresden print collection MELZER 2010b, p. 480–497.
- 10 Five cabinets for reproductive prints, and two for painters' prints. *Ibid.*, p. 490–497.
- 11 Frans van der Steen after Dürer, *Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand*, 1661. HOLLSTEIN 1984, nr. 17.
- 12 And four drawings by Willem de Heer and Zacharias Longuelune. Heucher, *Consignation (1738)*, p. 169.
- 13 Ayzer's collection comprised the work of a chronologically arranged set of German printmakers from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, among which he only counted the Netherlandish printmaker Lucas van Leyden. LANDOLT 1991, vol. *Beiträge zu Basilius Amerbach* (no number), p. 85, 131–139; KETTNER 2013, p. 32–36, 39–48; SANDRART 1675–80, vol. 2 (*Kunst- und Schatzkammern hoher Potentaten, Chur-Fürsten und Herren*), p. 78–80; ROBINSON 1981, p. xxxiii–xxxiv.
- 14 MEYER 2012, p. 4–30; BRAKENSIEK 2003, p. 550–553; *Catalogus Vienna s.a.*, p. 1361–1364; *Catalogus Amsterdam s.a.*, p. 9–19.
- 15 VAN MANDER 1604; SANDRART 1675–80; DE PILES 1699. Also HOUBRACKEN 1718–21 maintained a mix of Netherlandish and German artists' biographies. Except for Van Mander's work these books were present in the Dresden print room library. Heucher, *Consignation (1738)*, p. 14, 142–146 (cabinets IV, XX).
- 16 BUSSMANN/SCHILLING 1998.
- 17 Heucher collected and preserved fifteenth- and sixteenth-century German prints in a cabinet devoted to engraving. However, he did not have scruples to display the equally

- early works of outstanding Italian masters such as Mantegna and Raimondi. MELZER 2010b, p. 494–497.
- 18 Heucher, Consignation (1738), p. 14, 142–146 (cabinets IV, XX).
- 19 »(...) alle Nationen haben müssen bekennen/ dass unsere Eingeborne nicht sind rar/ ungeschickt und barbarisch/ sondern von gutem Geist/ vernünftig und bequem/ die fürtrefflichen Künste auf ihre äusserste Vollkommenheit zu bringen und zu gebrauchen gewesen/ massen deren edle Gaben an gutem Geist und Verstand den andern nicht zu weichen (...).« SANDRART 1675–80, vol. 1, II. Theil, II. Buch, p. 210.
- 20 SCHREURS 2012, p. 26f.; MEURER/SCHREURS-MORÉT/SIMONATO 2015, p. 7, 10, 34.
- 21 BRANDIS 2002, p. 238–242.
- 22 Vasari's description of the print »una Diana che bastona una Ninfa, la quale si è messa, per essere difesa, in grembo a un Satiro« can be identified with Dürer's *Hercules at the Crossroads*. VASARI/BETTARINI/BAROCCHI 1984, p. 4; GREBE 2013, p. 234.
- 23 SANDRART 1675–80, vol. 1, II. Theil, III. Buch, p. 285.
- 24 He believed that Netherlandish differed from German taste by a greater unity of well-chosen colors, an excellent *chiaroscuro* and a softer painting brush. He referred to Netherlandish art as Flemish. DE PILES 1699, p. 531; DE PILES 1710, p. 733f.
- 25 SANDRART 1675–80, vol. 1, II. Theil, II. Buch, p. 210.
- 26 Ibid., vol. 1, II. Theil, II. Buch, p. 204f., 218f., 222f., 252.
- 27 Ibid., vol. 1, II. Theil, III. Buch, p. 306 (Bauer), 324 (Merian), 327 (Schönfeld), 333 (Werner).
- 28 MEURER/SCHREURS-MORÉT/SIMONATO 2015, p. 437. See for Sigmund von Birken also GROSSMANN/BACHNER/GERSTL 1998, p. 234–244.
- 29 As well as to the further subdivision in schools of each nation. CHRISTEN 1726, p. 339f.; WAETZOLDT 1927, p. 48f.
- 30 OECHSLIN 1995, p. 367–414.
- 31 KOBİ 2017, p. 129.
- 32 HAGEDORN 1755. In 1764 he was appointed general director of arts in Saxony. He succeeded Karl Heinrich von Heineken as director of the Dresden printroom and became head of the art academy in Dresden. GRIENER 2002, p. 338.
- 33 Hagedorn interchangeably refers to either the national origins of artists or schools. GRIENER 2002, p. 337–343; MAËS 2009, p. 181–183.
- 34 HAGEDORN 1755, p. 14f., 133f., 138–322.
- 35 Ibid., p. 16, 158–160.
- 36 HOUBRAKEN 1718–21, vol. 1, p. 6.
- 37 Houbraken had praised Sandrart's impartialness in his treatment of Netherlandish and German artists. Netscher in fact originated in Heidelberg. HOUBRAKEN 1718–21, vol. 1, p. 6–7; Heucher, Consignation (1738), p. 14.
- 38 HAGEDORN 1755, p. 160.
- 39 Van Ostade was in fact born in Haarlem. Ibid., p. 16, 18, 53f., 148, 159–162.
- 40 Ibid., p. 141.
- 41 DE PILES 1699, p. 72; D'ARGENVILLE 1745, vol. 1, p. xxii.
- 42 MELZER 2010a, p. 143, 146.
- 43 Christen believed that printmaking was a ›lesser‹ kind of painting. CHRISTEN 1747, Vorrede, no pagenumbers [p. 5f., 8f.], p. 8–10. French translation in 1755. See further WAETZOLDT 1927, p. 45–51; MARTIN 2009, p. 207–209.

- 44 Christen did not explicitly mention Condivi and Vasari. CHRISTEN 1747, p. 7, 30–33, 58–60. GREGORY 2012, p. 16; VASARI/BETTARINI/BAROCCHI 1984, p. 3; LE COMTE 1699/1700, vol. 3, p. 4; ORLANDI 1733, p. 96, 317.
- 45 CHRISTEN 1747, p. 20–25, 31–38.
- 46 *Ibid.*, p. 17f., 35f., 42–55.
- 47 *Ibid.*, p. 4f.
- 48 Heucher, Consignation (1738), p. 164; Brühl to Heineken (1750), p. 26 r/v.
- 49 This presentation was subsequently largely maintained by Hagedorn. SCHNITZER 2010, p. 55. See also BÄHR 2009, p. 166–203; SCHUSTER 2010, p. 151–177.
- 50 Next to the fifty drawings for Heineken's *Recueil* the inventory describes several tapes-tries, drawings and prints. Heineken, Übergabe (1764), p. 118v. See also SCHUSTER 2010.
- 51 Heineken, Übergabe (1764).
- 52 HEINEKEN 1768/69, vol. 1, p. iii–viii; CREMER 1989, p. 303f., 307f. See also ZIMMERMANN 1758 and its many editions, also in French and English.
- 53 However, in the collection of the Dresden print room Heintz was in fact stored in the German school. Heineken, Übergabe (1764), p. 79r; HEINEKEN 1771, p. 495.
- 54 Heineken had proposed to establish an art academy in Dresden. HEINEKEN 1786, p. 10f.
- 55 *Ibid.*, p. 88f.
- 56 HEINEKEN 1771, preface (no page numbers); PFEIFER-HELKE 2013, p. 61–70.
- 57 HEINEKEN 1771, p. 224, 241, 252f., 278f.
- 58 Heineken published on this topic first in German: HEINEKEN 1768/69, vol. 2, p. 85–240 and HEINEKEN 1768/69, vol. 2, p. 241–314; second in French in HEINEKEN 1771, p. 217–482; third in German: HEINEKEN 1780, p. 22–39, and lastly in German: HEINEKEN 1786, p. 276–474. See PFEIFER-HELKE 2013, p. 62.
- 59 HEINEKEN 1771, p. 7.
- 60 SPENLÉ 2009, p. 172f.

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