



“Il Signor Granet unico in Roma, ed altrove”: François-Marius Granet, Rome, and the Vogue of Historicist Interior Views in Early 19th-century Europe

Eveline Deneer

In the years after 1800, the French painter François-Marius Granet (1775–1849)¹ acquired a remarkably international reputation as the painter of interior views par excellence. His views of historical edifices, mostly medieval and early modern churches and monasteries, were known all over Europe, and his name became almost equivalent to the revival of historical interior painting in the early nineteenth century. Although trained in France, Granet moved to Rome in 1802 and would stay and work in this city for most of the twenty-two years that followed. Without detracting from his merits as an artist, I would like to argue that Granet’s living and working in Rome in those years contributed to his international reputation and to the success of the genre in which he specialized. He was, so to say, in the right place at the right time. His presence in Rome not only allowed him to make crucial steps in his evolution as an artist, it was also precisely because he was working in Rome that the innovations he conceived were so quickly picked up by an international public. Granet’s early international success seems to reside at the very juncture between his artistic skills and the innovative nature of his work on the one hand, and the particular dynamics of circulation and diffusion at play in early nineteenth-century Rome and Europe on the other. This second aspect is hardly less important than the first, and it deserves, in my opinion, a closer look than it has received so far. In the following paragraphs, I therefore look more closely at the particular circumstances in Rome between the arrival of Granet in the city and the end of the Napoleonic Empire in 1815, to see how these circumstances contributed to his artistic development and to the spread of his innovative approach to historical architectural views across Europe.

1 Quote in the title: Giuseppe Antonio Guattani, “Prospettiva,” in *Memorie enciclopediche romane sulle belle arti, antichità ec.* 2, 1807, pp. 67–72, here p. 68.

New historicist approaches to interior painting, between France and Rome

As a pictorial genre, views of (church) interiors had a first flowering in the Netherlands in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. At the end of the eighteenth century, as the taste for Dutch genre painting became a dominant feature of many important private art collections, with masterpieces of the Dutch school being transported from various corners of Europe to the French capital, these interior paintings obtained a new visibility, especially in France.² In those same revolutionary years, churches and monasteries all over France were dismantled and objects saved from vandalism and decay were transferred to the Musée des monuments français, itself housed in what was previously the convent of the Petits-Augustins. Fascinated by these denaturalized, empty spaces and their ‘museified’ historical and Christian heritage, Granet and a few of his fellow students at the studio of Jacques-Louis David—in particular Fleury Richard, Pierre Revoil, and Auguste de Forbin—set out around 1800 to explore and paint the interiors of old churches and convents in Paris as well as in the surroundings of Lyon.³ Here, they quite literally stumbled over the vestiges of a historical and religious reality that had ceased to exist with the Revolution. Richard, Granet, and Forbin invested the genre of interior painting with an altogether new topicality: the spaces of these ancient architectures were transformed into memorials of a past that was by then, in post-revolutionary France, irrevocably cut off from the present. Chateaubriand’s *Génie du Christianisme* (1802) had not yet appeared, but its spirit is already sensible in these early works. The artists also began to explore the possibility of animating the interior views of these Romanesque and Gothic churches and cloisters with scenes set in a corresponding early Christian or medieval past, the first of which they presented at the 1801 Paris Salon.⁴

In the summer of 1802, however, Granet moved to Rome where he discovered an altogether different situation. In those years, the city was opening up again after a period of relative isolation during the revolutionary and first Napoleonic campaigns. Foreigners

2 For a study of the interest French early nineteenth-century painters took in seventeenth-century Nordic interior painting, see: Eveline Deneer, “Après tant d’années d’étude du vrai, je me croyais quelque chose, mais celui-ci me prouve que je suis un ignorant.” *L’héritage de la peinture hollandaise du XVII^e siècle*,” in Magali Briat-Philippe (ed.), *L’invention du passé*, vol. 1: *Gothique mon amour 1802–1830*, exh. cat. Bourg-en-Bresse, Monastère Royal de Brou, Paris, 2014, pp. 40–51.

3 François-Marie Fortis, *Voyage historique et pittoresque*, 2 vol., Paris 1821–1822, vol. 2, p. 9; Marie-Claude Chaudonneret (ed.), *Les Muses de Messidor. Peintres et sculpteurs Lyonnais de la Révolution à l’Empire*, exh. cat. Lyon, Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon 1989, pp. 30–33, here p. 91; Patrice Béghain and Gérard Bruyère, *Fleury Richard (1777–1852). Les pincesaux de la mélancolie*, Lyon 2014, pp. 59–61.

4 *Explication des ouvrages de peinture et dessins, sculpture, architecture et gravure des artistes vivans [...]*, Paris An IX (1800/1801), p. 25, cat. 138 (Auguste de Forbin, *Intérieur d’un cloître*, Montpellier, Musée Fabre) and pp. 52–53, cat. 283 (Fleury Richard, *Sainte Blandine*, current location unknown). Granet’s *La Reine Blanche délivrant des prisonniers* (Paris, Petit Palais), which is set in the interior of the Notre-Dame in Paris, was exhibited only during the last few days of the Salon and does not figure in the catalogue.

once again flocked to the city and breathed new life into the local art scene. The Roman art world itself was highly fragmented; there was no such thing as a centralized annual showcase of contemporary painting comparable to the Paris Salon, and artists were organized around nationally structured academies or social communities. Many of these were located in the district around the Pincio, where Granet was to settle as well: the English at the feet of the Spanish Steps, the Germans in the Villa Malta, and the French academy, which had had to stop its activities during the revolutionary years, reopened in the Villa Medici in 1803.⁵ This cohabitation of so many different artists and communities and the absence of a unifying hierarchic academy system gave the city the reputation of a “republic of the artists”⁶, a place where artists from all backgrounds could blend in and where no single current was more dominant than another. In 1809, a correspondent for the Swiss journal *Miszellen für die neueste Weltkunde* described the city’s unique status as follows:

Vielleicht mehr als alles übrige zu einem kräftigern und lebendigern Kunststreben haben die freieren Verhältnisse gewirkt, in welchen sich die Künstler zu Rom, in Vergleich anderer Orte, befinden. Und diese verhalten sich in der That wie die Menschen einer Republik zu denen in einem monarchisch-despotischen Staate. In andern Hauptstädten wo wenigstens noch auf Kunstsinne Anspruch gemacht worden ist, hat ein konventioneller Geschmack, welcher größtentheils durch das Ansehen des daselbst im vorzüglichsten Rufe stehenden Künstlers bestimmt wird [...], alles freiere Aufstreben zu dem Wahren in der Kunst beinahe unmöglich macht. In Rom konnte dies wegen der Konkurrenz der Künstler aller Nationen nicht statt finden.⁷

Exhibitions were organized in a disparate manner by the academies or by artists themselves, and took place in their workshops or in places made available for such occasions, such as embassies or churches.⁸ It was common practice for tourists to visit artists’ studios and to return home with painted souvenirs—landscapes and city views in particular.⁹ Many artists therefore made sure to always have a few finished works in their studio for all to see.

5 Denis Coutagne, *François-Marius Granet 1775–1849. Une vie pour la peinture*, Paris/Aix-en-Provence 2008, pp. 138–141.

6 Friedrich Karl Ludwig Sickler and Johann Christian Reinhart, *Almanach aus Rom: für Künstler und Freunde der bildenden Kunst*, 2 vol., Leipzig 1810–1811, vol. 1, p. 286.

7 B. E., “Ueber die Kunstausstellung auf dem Kapitol zu Rom. Rom, 16 December,” in *Miszellen für die neueste Weltkunde* 1, 3 January 1810, p. 2.

8 Christian Omodeo, “L’art français et une capitale en déclin? Peindre et exposer à Rome entre 1803 et 1840,” in *Romantisme* 153, 2011, pp. 101–116.

9 Rosanne Maggio Serra, “I sistemi dell’arte nell’Ottocento,” in Enrico Castelnuovo (ed.), *La pittura in Italia. L’Ottocento*, 2 vol., vol. 2, Milan 1991, pp. 629–652, here p. 629.

Having practiced landscape painting himself, Granet returned to the genre of the interior after visiting the medieval church San Martino ai Monti. He was acquainted with the Carmelite sacristan of the church, the French Jacques-Gabriel Pouillard. Against the warning of his friend (“c’est mortel [...] ; si vous n’y laissez pas la vie, vous y attraperez au moins la fièvre intermittente”¹⁰), Granet worked for two months in the underground crypt of the church, which was at that time still used as a burial site for the parishioners.¹¹ In their monographic study on Fleury Richard, Gérard Bruyère and Patrice Béghain justly point out that religious burial rites, which had been abolished during the Revolution, were the object of vivid debates in France in those years.¹² With the coming into effect of the imperial decree of 23 Prairial year XII (12 June 1804), the traditional practice of burying people within places of worship was officially prohibited.¹³ In Rome, however, this tradition was still very much in place. Granet’s choice to represent a funeral scene in his final painting of the underground interior of San Martino ai Monti offers eloquent insight into how he maneuvered between two worlds, and set up a dialogue between them in his work (fig. 1). The Rome that Granet discovered in these years served as a kind of secret gateway between contemporary reality and a European medieval and Christian past to which France no longer had direct access. Here, friars still lived the way they had for centuries, the chain of tradition still continued uninterrupted.

History, however, caught up with Granet. In June 1809 Rome was officially incorporated into the French Empire, the pope was marginalized, and in April 1810 Napoleon ordered all religious orders abolished and their possessions sequestered.¹⁴ Granet was profoundly touched. Just as it had in Paris, the religious life of Rome, this ‘gateway’ to the past, disappeared before his eyes:

L’occupation de Rome par les Français m’avait affligé. [...] Cette belle ville avait changé d’aspect, et tout son caractère religieux était effacé. Les hommes de guerre avaient remplacé les prélats, les cardinaux, les religieux; le tambour avait fait taire le son des cantiques et de la prière. J’en étais attristé. Je ne retrouvais plus ma Rome silencieuse; tous ses charmes avaient disparu pour l’artiste; [...] Je cherchais en vain la douce paix que j’avais possédée

10 François-Marius Granet, “Vie de Granet, peintre, membre de l’Institut, écrite par lui-même [suite],” in *Le Temps*, 4 October 1872, p. 2.

11 [Anonymous], *Voyage de Rome en 1803*, manuscript, Aix-en-Provence, Musée Arbaud, shelfmark MD 72, p. 23: “Nous avons trouvé dans ce souterrain un peintre (Granet d’Aix) qui travaillait à dessiner cet espèce de caveau, qui vaut la peine d’être représenté, on y enterre actuellement presque toutes les personnes qui meurent dans cette paroisse.” Cited in Isabelle Néto-Daguerre and Denis Coutagne, *Granet peintre de Rome*, Aix-en-Provence 1992, p. 170.

12 Béghain and Bruyère 2014 (note 3), p. 63.

13 Régis Bertrand, “Origines et caractéristiques du cimetière français contemporain,” in *Insaniyat. Revue algérienne d’anthropologie et de sciences sociales* 68, 2015, pp. 107–135.

14 Coutagne 2008 (note 5), pp. 180–182.



1 François-Marius Granet, *The Crypt of San Martino ai Monti*, ca. 1802–1806, oil on canvas, 125,5 × 159 cm, Montpellier, Musée Fabre

dans les monastères. Cette pensée me conduisit au couvent des capucins de la place Barberini; mais les bons capucins n’y étaient plus.¹⁵

This inspired Granet to conceive his most famous, and according to Stephen Bann his most densely historicist, composition: an interior view of the choir of the Capuchin church Santa Maria della Concezione near Piazza Barberini, which he populates with figures of friars that would no longer have been there (fig. 2). Where his interior of San Martino ai Monti stages a dialogue between post-revolutionary France and the ‘eternal’ city of Rome, his *Choir of the Capuchins* stages a dialogue between two visions of Rome – between the past and the present. Stephen Bann draws attention to the innovative nature of Granet’s

¹⁵ Granet, “Vie de Granet, peintre, membre de l’Institut, écrite par lui-même [suite],” in *Le Temps*, 18 October 1872, p. 3.



2 François-Marius Granet, *The Choir of the Capuchins*, 1814–1815, oil on canvas, 197,9 × 148 cm, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

work during his Roman period: “Granet was possibly the first artist to represent Rome ‘in its ancientness.’ That is to say, he addressed, over a long period, the specific issue of rendering the ‘pastness’ of the past.”¹⁶ Out of a specifically French-Roman dialogue emerged a new form of historicist imagery that soon proved to be transposable to other media (Bann mentions the diorama, for example) as well as to other cultural spheres. It captured, as Bann notes, the very rupture between tradition and modernity that underlay a new romantic approach to history. Yet, Denis Coutagne has shown that the painting was most probably executed in the few months between the end of the occupation of the church by the French army and the return of the orders in May 1814.¹⁷ This suggests that the painting could be seen as an even more complex configuration, being both a reflection on the break with the past as well as a vision of an imminent restoration.

Cosmopolitan networks of knowledge and the discovery and mediation of Medieval Rome

In the first years of the nineteenth century, Rome was still very much the high place of classicism; artists and scholars came to the city to study the monuments of antiquity and of the Renaissance. With his choice of interior painting and his preference for monuments related to early Christian and medieval history rather than antiquity, Granet took up a pioneering position in the local art scene. He was not, however, the only one to take an interest in these long-neglected eras of Roman history. In fact, Granet connected to an international network of intellectuals who shared his fascination with precisely this topic. The abovementioned Jacques-Gabriel Pouillard, like Granet a native of Aix-en-Provence, was among these.¹⁸ Another, more prominent figure was Jean-Baptiste-Louis-Georges Séroux d’Agincourt. Séroux d’Agincourt had settled in Rome at the end of the 1770s and spent decades collecting material for his *Histoire de l’art par les monumens, depuis sa décadence au IV^e siècle jusqu’à son renouvellement au XVI^e*,¹⁹ a work that he intended as an extension of Winckelmann’s *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums* (1764) into the Middle Ages. The political turmoil prevented the work from being published until 1810, but, in the preceding years, Séroux d’Agincourt generously put his knowledge and his collected documentation at the disposal of scholars and artists in Rome. Granet, who had a studio

16 Stephen Bann, “Envisioning Rome: Granet and Gibbon in dialogue,” in Catharine Edwards (ed.), *Roman presences: receptions of Rome in European culture, 1789–1945*, Cambridge 1999, pp. 35–52, here p. 37.

17 Coutagne 2008 (note 5), pp. 195–200; Denis Coutagne, *Granet et Rome*, Aix-en-Provence 2013, pp. 152–162.

18 Néto-Daguerre and Coutagne 1992 (note 11), pp. 169–170. Pouillard was also acquainted with other friends of Granet such as Pierre Revoil and Auguste de Forbin.

19 Jean Baptiste Louis Georges Séroux d’Agincourt, *Histoire de l’art par les monumens, depuis sa décadence au IV^e siècle jusqu’à son renouvellement au XVI^e*, 6 vol., Paris, 1810–1823. See Daniela Mondini, *Mittelalter im Bild: Séroux d’Agincourt und die Kunsthistoriographie um 1800*, Zürich 2005 (Zürcher Schriften zur Kunst-, Architektur- und Kulturgeschichte, 4).

in the Trinità dei Monti around the corner from Séroux d'Agincourt's house on the via Gregoriana, recalled:

Ses manières étaient si nobles que l'on aimait à passer des heures auprès de lui. [...] S'il se présentait quelques doutes sur le sujet que vous traitiez, il cherchait dans sa petite bibliothèque le volume nécessaire, et vous appreniez de la manière la plus aimable ce que vous n'auriez peut-être jamais appris.²⁰

Ironically enough, Séroux d'Agincourt's work, itself strongly rooted in the intellectual culture of the Enlightenment, paved the way for the romantic fascination with early Christian and medieval Rome.²¹

Pouillard and Séroux d'Agincourt were both well acquainted with Francesco Cancellieri, the most erudite Italian scholar working on medieval Roman history in those days.²² In 1804, Cancellieri assisted in the coronation of Napoleon in Paris and at this occasion became acquainted with another scholar who had not yet been able to travel to Italy but was equally interested in the developments in Rome: Aubin-Louis Millin. Millin had been among the first to express his concern about the revolutionary vandalism in France, and published his five-volume *Antiquités nationales* (1790–1798) partly to draw attention to the value of the historical, and in many cases specifically Christian, heritage that was being threatened with destruction. Around 1800, he formed the hub of a rapidly expanding international network of intellectuals that would have a decisive influence on the production and circulation of knowledge throughout Europe, notably on archaeology. As Monica Preti-Hamard and Bénédicte Savoy have shown, Millin procured for himself a position as mediator between the North and the South of Europe.²³ His correspondence with German scholars, in particular with the archaeologist Karl August Böttiger, provided him with firsthand information from beyond the Rhine and he soon established himself as the centre of a germanophile circle in Paris, which gathered in his office at the Bibliothèque nationale for weekly *thés littéraires* and other events.²⁴ After 1804,

20 Granet, "Vie de Granet, peintre, membre de l'Institut, écrite par lui-même [suite]," in *Le Temps*, 10 October 1872, p. 3.

21 Henri Loyrette, "Séroux d'Agincourt et les origines de l'histoire de l'art médiéval," in *Revue de l'art* 48, 1980, pp. 40–58.

22 On the relation between Pouillard and Cancellieri, see Domenico Moreni, "Notizie necrologiche del P. Giacomo Gabriele Povillard, carmelitano francese," in *Effemeridi letterarie di Roma* 12, 1823, pp. 207–223.

23 Monica Hamard and Bénédicte Savoy, "Un grande corrispondente europeo. Aubin-Louis Millin tra Francia, Germania e Italia," in *temi di Critica e Letteratura artistica* 3, 2010, URL: http://www1.unipa.it/tecla/rivista/3_rivista_pretihamard.php [accessed 11.06.2017].

24 Alain Ruiz, "Autour du Magasin encyclopédique. Les amis et visiteurs germaniques d'Aubin-Louis Millin à Paris, de Thermidor à la Restauration," in Geneviève Espagne and Bénédicte Savoy (eds.), *Aubin-Louis Millin et l'Allemagne. Le Magasin encyclopédique. Les lettres à Karl August Böttiger*, Hildesheim 2005, pp. 5–57, in particular pp. 18–19 and 22–27.

Cancellieri became an important correspondent of Millin's in Rome. Millin, Böttiger, and Cancellieri had in common that they not only sought to exchange their knowledge among themselves but also to disseminate it among a larger public. Their private correspondences were amplified by important publishing projects, and especially by widely accessible journal publications discussing their own work and that of international colleagues. Millin himself published the *Magasin encyclopédique*, while Karl August Böttiger contributed to similarly widely circulated journals in Germany such as the *Neue Teutsche Merkur*, the *Journal des Luxus und der Moden*, and *London und Paris*.²⁵ In 1806, with financial support from the pope, Cancellieri's Roman friend Giuseppe Antonio Guattani began publishing his *Memorie enciclopediche romane sulle belle arti, antichità ec.*²⁶ Guattani had travelled extensively and spent some time in Paris before returning to Rome in 1804. He was closely acquainted with the brothers Ennio Quirino and Francesco Aurelio Visconti, both archaeologists and important figures of the Franco-Italian cultural axis during the Empire. The former had moved to Paris where he had been appointed curator of antiquities at the Louvre in 1799; the latter co-authored, together with Guattani, the luxurious 1808 catalogue of the Museo Chiaramonti. The *Memorie enciclopediche* project was clearly calibrated after the example given by Millin, and was, in those years, a rare example of journalism of this type in Italy.²⁷

These journals reported on a wide range of topics and disciplines; besides archaeology, which was a shared interest among all the men mentioned above, literature, history, and art occupied an important place on their pages. The circulation of these journals and their content throughout Europe was a major concern of the correspondents, and Rome, the cradle of archaeology, was at the core of this concern. By 1809, Millin proposed that he and Cancellieri set up a regulated system of exchange in order to diffuse the *Magasin encyclopédique* in Italy, and that the same be done in turn to diffuse Roman journals—in particular Guattani's *Mémoire enciclopediche*—in France and the Northern countries.²⁸ Pouillard, Cancellieri, Guattani, and Böttiger were among the many contributors to Millin's *Magasin encyclopédique*. In 1811, Millin finally had the opportunity to travel to Rome, where Séroux d'Agincourt had been expecting him since at least 1809.²⁹ In January 1812, he also met “Monsieur Granet jeune peintre très distingué auteur de charmants tableaux.”³⁰ Granet thus shared with these internationally operating

25 Hamard and Savoy 2010 (note 22).

26 Pier Paolo Racioppi, “Giuseppe Antonio Guattani,” in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* 60, 2003, URL: http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/giuseppe-antonio-guattani_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/ [accessed 28.04.2023].

27 Maria Iolanda Palazzolo, “Tra antico e moderno. La cultura romana nel primo Ottocento,” in Stefano Susinno et al. (eds.), *Maestà di Roma da Napoleone all'unità d'Italia: Universale ed Eterna*, Milan 2003, pp. 53–55.

28 Hamard and Savoy 2010 (note 23).

29 Ibid.

30 Gennaro Toscano, “Le Moyen Âge retrouvé. Millin et Ingres à la découverte de Naples ‘angevine,’”

intellectuals an interest in medieval Roman history and architecture, and was personally acquainted with several of them.

The painter and the press

Around 1806–1807, Giuseppe Antonio Guattani visited Granet’s studio several times and immediately encouraged the readers of his *Memorie enciclopediche* to go and see the paintings for themselves: “Non serve mettersi in capo di voler render conto, o rappresentare a chiacchiere i dipinti di questo autore: bisogna vederli.”³¹ Guattani noted that it was in fact quite rare to pass by Granet’s studio without seeing exhibited at least a few paintings “da rendere estatico lo spettatore, e farlo per meraviglio segnar tre volte.”³² Granet thus responded to the local art system that led tourists and other art lovers into artists’ studios to see and commission works of art.³³ To guide the “ricchi amatori, esteri principalmente”³⁴ on such studio visits in Rome, the *Memorie enciclopediche* published a list of the most important artists in the city, organized by genre;³⁵ this list was later transcribed in the German *Almanach aus Rom: für Künstler und Freunde der bildenden Kunst* (1810).³⁶ Granet figures on both lists as a painter of architectural interiors. He seems to have continued the practice of receiving visitors and exhibiting in his studio until the early 1820s, when his friend Auguste de Forbin urged him to stop for the sake of exclusivity—“Il ne faut pas, nulle part, faire boutique.”³⁷

in Claire Barbillon, Philippe Durey and Uwe Fleckner (eds.), *Ingres, un homme à part? Entre carrière et mythe, la fabrique du personnage*, Paris 2009, pp. 275–310, here p. 282.

31 Giuseppe Antonio Guattani, “Prospettiva,” in *Memorie enciclopediche romane sulle belle arti, antichità ec.* 2, 1807, pp. 110–112, here p. 112. See also Guattani 1807 (note 1), p. 67.

32 Guattani 1807 (note 31), p. 110.

33 See also Anne-Blanche Stevenin, *La place des artistes français dans les expositions d’art à Rome, 1801–1869*, PhD thesis, Université Paris IV-Sorbonne, 2000–2001, pp. 48–49.

34 Giovanni Gherardo de Rossi, “Catalogo degli artisti stabiliti, o attualmente dimoranti in Roma,” in *Memorie enciclopediche romane sulle belle arti, antichità ec.* 4, 1808, p. 140. On the attribution of the list to Rossi, see Susanne Adina Meyer, “Le mostre in Campodoglio durante il periodo napoleonico,” in Lorenz Enderlein, Nino Zchomelidse (eds.), *Fictions of Isolation: Artistic and Intellectual Exchange in Rome During the First Half of the 19th Century*, Rome 2006, pp. 29–47, here p. 36. The same Rossi was a friend of Séroux d’Agincourt, on whom he wrote a biographical publication: *Notizie storiche del cav. G. B. Lod. Giorgio Seroux d’Agincourt scritte da Gio. Gherardo de Rossi, suo amico*, Venice 1827.

35 De Rossi 1808 (note 34), pp. 140–158.

36 Sickler and Reinhart 1810 (note 6), pp. 265–279.

37 Letter of Auguste de Forbin to François-Marius Granet, 8 May 1821; Néto-Daguerre and Coutagne 1992 (note 11), p. 81. A telling account of Granet’s reputation as a painter of souvenirs for tourists can be found in Hippolyte Nicolas Just Auger and Paul Cottin, *Mémoires d’Auger (1810–1859)*, Paris 1891, pp. 223–226. Here a critic accuses Granet of selling his paintings (mostly done by pupils) “comme on vend les chapelets sous la colonnade de Saint-Pierre.”

As an archaeologist, Guattani took an interest not only in Granet's skill as an artist but also in the particular monuments he painted. On several occasions, he enriched his descriptions of Granet's works with additional historical information on the edifice in question. This practice was pushed even further in a lengthy description of Granet's *Intérieur de l'église Saint-Etienne-le-Rond* (commissioned by the cardinal Cambacérès and exhibited at the Salon of 1808) in the *Magasin encyclopédique* in early 1809.³⁸ The text was clearly written by someone with in-depth knowledge of the architecture and the history of the early Christian Roman church itself, and the author used the description of Granet's painting to pass this knowledge on to his readers. Although the author is unknown, it may well have been someone close to the network of archaeologist-correspondents around Millin.

According to a description by Guattani, Granet's *San Martino ai Monti* was already famous in Rome before it was exhibited at the 1806 Paris Salon. He cites a laudatory review from the French *Journal de l'Empire* to prove that Granet's paintings were equally well received back in Paris.³⁹ Granet was indeed careful to present his work both in Rome and at the Salon, thus simultaneously building his reputation in the two most important artistic centres of Europe. News of Granet's successes at the Salon was later again, in the *Giornale del Campidoglio*, taken as affirming his work's prior positive reception in Rome.⁴⁰

As early as 1807, Guattani declared Granet the preeminent international painter of interiors: "crediamo al presente poter affermare essere per l'eccellenza il Signor Granet unico in Roma, ed altrove."⁴¹ These words soon resonated beyond the eternal city. They reappear, for instance, in an account on the developments in Rome by the German librarian and scholar of Romance languages Carl Ludwig Fernow, published in the *Journal des Luxus und der Moden*. Fernow, who had been in Italy between 1798 and 1803 and was a close friend of Karl August Böttiger, based his account of the Roman art scene on the *Memorie enciclopediche*, and repeated almost literally Guattani's praise of Granet as the best interior painter of the day.⁴² Should we see this as evidence of the effectiveness of Millin's project of exchanging journals with Cancellieri and thereby of diffusing the *Memorie enciclopediche* in the North? That remains hard to prove. What these examples do show, however, is that several of the journals linked to the international network around

38 [Anonymous], "Description du tableau représentant l'intérieur de l'église S. Etienne-le-Rond, peint à Rome par M. Granet [...]" in *Magasin encyclopédique* 1, 1809, pp. 364–377.

39 Guattani 1807 (note 1), pp. 70–71.

40 [Anonymous], "Varietà, Belle Arti," in *Giornale del Campidoglio* 17, 9 February 1811, pp. 67–68: "quadri che sono stati ultimamente messi nella pubblica esposizione in Parigi dopo aver meritato tanti applausi in quella del Campidoglio." The article cites a review of Granet's works at the Salon of 1810 from the *Journal de l'Empire* (21 January 1811). Information thus travelled fast!

41 Guattani 1807 (note 1), p. 68.

42 Carl Ludwig Fernow, "Kunst. Uebersicht dessen, was die bildenden Künste in Rom während der letzten vier oder fünf Jahre hervorgebracht haben (Fortsetzung)," in *Journal des Luxus und der Moden*, January 1809, p. 41: "Unstreitig ist Granet jetzt der beste Künstler dieses Faches in Italien."

Millin and his correspondents contributed at an early stage to Granet's international reputation as the best painter of historical interiors in Italy and beyond.

New initiatives of imperial cultural policy

Meanwhile, the invasion of Rome by the French troops heralded a new chapter in the Roman art scene. Eager to turn Rome into the second *capitale des arts* of the Empire, the French government took a number of initiatives to encourage the arts in the city, and to consolidate the position of French art and artists within the Roman art scene. Newly founded local journals, including the *Giornale romano* and the *Giornale del Campidoglio*, both mouthpieces of the French government used for propagandist purposes, now reported about noteworthy events in the cultural domain.

Another initiative was the organization of an international Salon-like exhibition, intended to reflect the state of the arts in Rome and to provide the Roman art scene with the centralized point of reference it had lacked so far.⁴³ Naturally, French art and artists were given an important position in this event, just as the English were completely absent. The first exhibition opened on 19 November 1809 at the Campidoglio. Although the history painters—especially Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, Gottlieb Schick, and Gaspare Landi—enjoyed privileged attention due to the superior status ascribed to their discipline, the exhibition was certainly also for Granet an occasion to consolidate his own position. He was, first of all, a member of the international committee appointed by the administration to select the works and organize the exhibition.⁴⁴ At the exhibition itself he participated with five of his own paintings, and was also present through the beautiful portrait of him by Ingres (Musée Granet, Aix-en-Provence). The event was to have imperial resonance: five days before the official opening, Joachim Murat honoured the exhibition with a visit and bought thirteen works for his own collection, among them an interior of a convent by Granet.⁴⁵

This visit as well as the actual event were covered by the local and international press. Francesco Aurelio Visconti closed his account in the *Giornale del Campidoglio* with laudatory words on the “notissime” perspectives of Granet.⁴⁶ The German readers of the *Morgenblatt* could read in an account by the painter Carl Gotthard Graß (who himself participated in the exhibition) that Granet's *Beatrice Cenci Led Out of Prison to be Executed in 1559* had

43 Elena di Maio, “Un Parnaso capitolino: la mostra del Campidoglio del 1809,” in Susinno et al., 2003 (note 27), pp. 121–125; Meyer 2006 (note 34), pp. 29–47.

44 Ibid., p. 32.

45 Ibid., p. 34.

46 Francesco Aurelio Visconti, “Varietà, Lettere nelle quali si dà conto delle opere di pittura, scultura, architettura ed incisione esposte nelle Stanze del Campidoglio il 19 novembre 1809,” in *Giornale del Campidoglio* 71, 11 December 1809, p. 290.

ceaselessly attracted spectators.⁴⁷ According to an anonymous correspondent of the *Neue Teutsche Merkur*, his paintings could be counted among the “wahre meisterstücke,”⁴⁸ and a critic of the Swiss *Miszellen für die neueste Weltkunde* deemed Granet an “ausgezeichnetes und seltenes Talent” in his field of painting.⁴⁹ A second—and final—exhibition of this kind was organized in 1810. Although this exhibition was different in its scope and ambition and Granet participated with only one work, his *Prison with Figures*,⁵⁰ this was yet another occasion for the local and international press to repeat his name on their pages.⁵¹

Thus, even before the end of the Napoleonic Empire and before the execution of his most famous compositions, Granet was already internationally known as *the* painter of historical, and in particular early Christian and medieval, monumental interior views. This was, as I have argued, in part due to the particular circumstances Granet encountered in Rome in those years. First of all, as international travellers were once again visiting the city, the market in paintings, bought as souvenirs by rich tourists, resumed. This granted Granet, who took an active part in this system, not only an income but also considerable international visibility. Secondly, the artist profited from the presence in Rome of eminent scholars equally interested in medieval and early modern history. Some of these, like Séroux d’Agincourt, put their knowledge at his disposal. Most of these men moreover had international connections that they used to diffuse news and knowledge from Rome beyond a restricted circle of *érudits* and throughout Europe. Giuseppe Antonio Guattani’s efforts to establish a modern type of cultural journalism in Rome contributed, possibly through the mediation of Aubin-Louis Millin, to the rapid international spread of Granet’s name and of his reputation as a painter of historical interiors. Under the French occupation, cultural journalism was used to propagate the cultural politics of the new administration, which in turn contributed to the consolidation of Granet’s fame: the international exhibitions of 1809 and 1810 were an important showcase for his paintings, and their coverage by the local and international press assured yet again his status as the interior painter par excellence. When, after 1810, other painters such as the German Franz Ludwig Catel, the Belgian Ferdinand Marie Delvaux, the Italian Giovanni Migliara, and the Danish Hans Detlev Christian Martens—turned to of this type interior painting, their work was often referred to as “in the genre of Granet.”⁵² This ‘genre’ owed much, as we have seen, to the city of Rome

47 Carl Gotthard Graß, “Ausstellung auf dem Kapitol (Beschluss),” in *Morgenblatt* 5, 5 January 1810, p. 19.

48 [Anonymous], “Rom. Den 8. December 1809,” in *Der neue teutsche Merkur* 3, March 1810, p. 194.

49 B. E., (*Miszellen*), 1810 (note 7), p. 6.

50 Meyer 2006 (note 34), pp. 45–47.

51 Carl Gotthard Graß, “Feyer des 14. und 15. August in Rom, oder das Napoleonsfest,” in *Morgenblatt* 220, 13 September 1810, p. 878; Giuseppe Antonio Guattani, “Belle Arti,” in *Memorie enciclopediche romane* 5, Rome, 1810, p. 80. The fifth volume of the *Memorie enciclopediche* was financed by the French administration and dedicated to Napoleon. See Racioppi 2003 (note 26).

52 Giuseppe Antonio Guattani, “Pittura,” in *Memorie enciclopediche romane* 6, 1817, p. 40: “Sig. Catel [sic.] merita di esser veduto per diversi suoi dipinti [...] nel genere de’ *Sotterranei*, in cui tanto si

and the particular artistic and intellectual circumstances just after 1800, as the Napoleonic Empire's second *capitale des arts* was rediscovering itself as the cradle of European Christianity and early medieval culture.

distinguee ancora il celebre Sig. Granet.” [Anonymous], “Proemio,” in *Biblioteca italiana*, 1818, p. XXIV: “Se parliamo di quello che chiamano a Roma dipinger di genere, in cui Granet ha fatta sì grande fortuna, noi non temiamo di mettergli a fronte il nostro Migliara [...]” When the young Hans Detlev Christian Martens travelled via Berlin to Rome in 1823, his master Lund wrote to the sculptor Christian Daniel Rauch in Berlin: “In einigen Wochen wird ein junger Maler auf der Reise nach Rom Dir einen Gruß von mir bringen, er heißt Martens und hat das Fach gewählt, worin Granet sich so auszeichnet [...]” Cited in Ulrich Schulte-Wülwer, *Sehnsucht nach Arkadien: Schleswig-Holsteinische Künstler in Italien*, Heide 2009, p. 147. These are but a few examples of many.

Image p. 262: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres, *Portrait of François-Marius Granet*, 1807, oil on canvas, 74,5 × 62 cm, Aix-en-Provence, Musée Granet

Image p. 277: François-Marius Granet, *The Crypt of San Martino ai Monti*, ca. 1802–1806, oil on canvas, 125,5 × 159 cm, Montpellier, Musée Fabre (detail of fig. 1, p. 267)

