

journal of visual arts

Predella journal of visual arts, n°41-42, 2017 www.predella.it - Monografia / Monograph

www.predella.it/www.predella.cfs.unipi

Direzione scientifica e proprietà / Scholarly Editors-in-Chief and owners: Gerardo de Simone, Emanuele Pellegrini - predella@predella.it

Predella pubblica ogni anno due numeri online e due numeri monografici a stampa / **Predella** publishes two online issues and two monographic print issues each year

Tutti gli articoli sono sottoposti alla peer-review anonima / All articles are subject to anonymous peer-review

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Predella journal of visual arts - ISSN 1827-8655

pubblicato nel mese di Settembre 2018 / published in the month of September 2018

Corina Meyer Working on «Depth of Thought» and «Serious Gravity»¹ : Johann David Passavant and Early Italian Painting

Passavant began his Italian studies visiting private collections and churches in Italy in 1817, often together with his friends, the Nazarenes. Their work was characterized by intense examination and involvement with one another. The first result of this can be seen in Passavant's Ansichten über die bildenden Künste und Darstellung des Ganges derselben in Toscana (1820). This paper will look at Passavant's ideas on Giotto, the artist's study trips throughout Italy which focused on early Italian painting, Passavant's specific influence on people from the north travelling through Italy, and his effect on museums across the Alps. Questions of expertise, the transfer of knowledge, and of trans-national influence will be addressed, in addition to the appreciation and relevance of the historical development of collections.

In 1822, the painter and writer Johann David Passavant (1787-1861) complained that German artists and professionals living in Italy often found that early Italian works were rejected or believed to be overworked by people abroad as a consequence of their poor understanding of those masters². Originally from Frankfurt but working as an art agent from Rome, Passavant was well acquainted with his fellow artists in Rome and also had good connections across the Alps to galleries and museums as well as to individuals interested in Italian art.

His statement demonstrates how variable art concepts among contemporaries on the European continent were at that time and that they were also being judged by other parties. It also indicates – as we shall later see – certain consequences of dissimilar expertise, leading to some misunderstanding among the parties, particularly while corresponding about art³.

This essay will look at Passavant's ideas on Giotto, the artist's study trips through Italy which focused on early Italian painting, Passavant's specific influence on people from the north travelling through Italy, and his effect on museums across the Alps. The article's aim is to stress the importance of trans-national connections and illustrate the effects of the Nazarene's work, ideas, and concepts on German museums. Three parties are involved in this story. Firstly, Johann David Passavant and his fellow artists who studied trecento painting; secondly, Passavant's friends from Frankfurt who also shared his enthusiasm for the Trecento; and thirdly, the

painting gallery in Frankfurt, the Städelsches Kunstinstitut (today Städel Museum), for which Passavant worked as a consultant.

Purchasing Barnaba da Modena and Gaddi in Frankfurt

The first two paintings of the Trecento were bought by the management board of the Städelsches Kunstinstitut, the so-called «Administration», one and a half decades after the museum's foundation. In 1830 and 1832, it purchased a *Madonna with Child*, painted by Barnaba da Modena in 1367 (fig. 1) and a *Madonna Enthroned with Child*, *Saints, Angels and Donors*, believed to be by Taddeo Gaddi but today attributed to Jacopo del Casentino before 1330⁴. The panels came from Italy and were sold by the Roman painter and art dealer Filippo Benucci (1779-1848)⁵. They remained the only acquisitions of trecento works by the Städel administration in the first half of the nineteenth century and are still in the Museum.

In order to better understand the complexities of the purchase of art at the Städelsches Kunstinstitut, an account of the relevant background is necessary. Johann Friedrich Städel (1728-1816), who had made his fortune in spice trading and bank deals in Frankfurt am Main, left his collections of paintings, prints, and drawings, together with his townhouse situated in one of the most prestigious parts of the city, to become an art institute⁶. This was to be founded after his death and bear his name: the Städelsches Kunstinstitut. This institute, which included a museum and the provision of art courses for children, was to be led by a board of five people (the Administrators) and was to serve the citizens of Frankfurt.

The first administration was appointed by Städel himself and was composed of friends and colleagues, merchants and lawyers, only two of whom collected art. As specified in Städel's testament, they were responsible for establishing the public painting gallery, and for enlarging the original collection by purchasing new works of art and selling the inferior ones, a guideline that the Administrators quickly followed⁷. Thus, the Administrators, mainly non-specialists, were in charge of making the decisions regarding the concept of the institute, as well as acquisitions and sales. They sometimes brought in experts or, as was the case with Johann David Passavant, they were involuntarily consulted⁸.

Since the history of collections can potentially reveal the contemporary taste of the owners or their consultants, as well as the internal or external influences during the time span in which the collection is built, it is useful to look at the situation before the acquisition of these two trecento works in Frankfurt.

J.D. Passavant Gaining Connoisseurship in Rome

Today Johann David Passavant's relevance for art history is beyond question⁹; his importance being especially recognized in his studies on Raphael carried out in the 1830s and after 1840 as director of the Städelsches Kunstinstitut¹⁰. Growing up in a trading family in Frankfurt am Main and initially trained as a banker, Passavant was later educated as a painter in the atelier of Jacques-Louis David and Antoine-Jean Gros in Paris from 1815 to 1817. In Paris, he often visited the Musée Napoléon¹¹ to see its numerous artworks gathered from the European countries Napoleon had invaded and, in doing so, started building up his immense visual memory.

In 1817, Passavant received letters from friends and family who were then living in Florence and mostly Rome, asking him to join them in that city. One of these well-wishers was his cousin Philipp Jacob Passavant (1782-1856) from Frankfurt, a wealthy merchant and art collector. In 1817, Passavant travelled from Paris via Florence to Rome, remaining there until 1824.

In Rome, Passavant soon became acquainted and made friends with other artists, especially the Nazarenes, and so lived and worked with them. Having left behind the academies north of the Alps, an education that they criticized as old-fashioned and ineffective, the Nazarenes educated themselves by drawing, painting, and creating art in other ways within their circle. It was an eminent part of their autodidactic work process to discuss not only their own works of art but also masterpieces in collections, churches, or antiquities.

Thus, Passavant explored and discussed with his colleagues art and the history of art. Together with his fellow painters he viewed innumerable Italian paintings, which were arriving on the art market in the post-Napoleonic era for many Italian aristocratic families had lost their wealth as a consequence of the French invasion and started disposing of their art collections¹². Hence, the art market offered extensive material which the artists in Italy came to know by studying either in the collections themselves, or in the dealers' spaces. In doing so, painters improved their knowledge and expertise enormously. Passavant too sharpened both his eye and his art historical acumen.

Passavant's Concept of Giotto and Early Painting

In Italy, Passavant slowly evolved from being a painter to becoming an author and a connoisseur. His experience and intellectual discussions with other artists

led to his early *Ansichten über die bildenden Künste und Darstellung des Ganges derselben in Toscana* (*Thoughts on the fine arts and a description of their development in Tuscany*)¹³ published in 1820. In this book, Passavant constructed a narrative using the history of art to explain the importance of supporting the arts created by his fellow artists in Rome, the Nazarenes¹⁴. He began with the original purpose of art, which was in his view, to decorate places for religious functions. This was followed by a reading of a powerful and noble history of peoples into the existence of excellent art works from their times. Finally, by presenting the history of art in Tuscany as the maxim of excellence, he intended to illustrate his fellow artists' endeavours to improve not only the arts but also to contribute to enhancing society. Thus, training based on exquisite artistic material could only be supportive and useful.

The book was clearly seen as an advertising pamphlet for the Nazarenes immediately after its release¹⁵, and is, as well known, to be understood within the context of conflicting views on art at that time which included the classicist and anti-Nazarene moves by, for instance, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Johann Heinrich Meyer from Weimar, and the German-Roman artists' position against all classical demands¹⁶.

Already in the preface, Passavant defended the Nazarenes' approach to copy old masters from the time before 1500 («Vorzeit»), by explaining that it did not serve to learn from them how to imitate nature (here, he recommended imitating the latter directly),¹⁷ but to understand the old masters' «spirit»¹⁸. Giotto became crucial in this argument as the «father of the great sublime style in painting»¹⁹ (and of that excellent Tuscan art, of course) who seemed to be «like a mighty giant spirit»²⁰, and knew how to perfectly represent the divine. Passavant added that Giotto possessed the talent to «incorporate everything» and he:

showed by his perception or the composition of the given topic that greatness in art could not only be found in the religious or natural illustration of an act, or in the illusory effect or correct drawing, but in the depth and truth of the spirit which is expressed in the artwork²¹.

Passavant used more vague and less defined terms to label Giotto's works which appear odd today: his mind, such as «spiritual and higher truth»²², «austerity and general character»²³, «strength and depth of thought»²⁴ and «serious gravity»²⁵. Passavant neither defined nor explained these terms with greater clarity, perhaps feeling legitimated by Giorgio Vasari who had already called Giotto «an ingenious man with a very engaging character"²⁶, certainly claiming to know this without having met him, those two and a half centuries later²⁷.

Contemporaries expressed their discomfort with Passavant's views. His colleague Carl Friedrich von Rumohr (1785-1843), also living among the artists in Rome, harshly criticized Passavant's argumentation as «ahistorical» later in his review of the book, arguing in an art historical manner that Giotto was simply not able to paint any differently²⁸. Had he been born after Masaccio, he would have painted in a different manner. Rumohr would lay out his still relevant ideas²⁹ on Giotto's innovation in his *Italienische Forschungen* some years later (and Passavant would improve his historical-critical competencies in the following decades).

Yet these terms can be referred to the Nazarenes' perception of art, who, by searching for «true art»³⁰, began investigating the inner and spiritual ideas of the early artists in their paintings beyond correct drawing and balanced composition, which had led the artistic world and production since Leon Battista Alberti opened this topic on drawing, composition and colour (*circumscriptio, compositio, receptio luminum*) in *De Pictura* in 1435³¹. The Nazarenes did not define the fine arts by their imitation of nature, but by the «possibility of the beholder to reflect on the infinite or divine»³². Thus, the «religious truth in a picture» was worth more to them than overcoming «artistically technical difficulties»³³. Finally, their aim was to spread religious and higher ideas that were best expressed by the symbolic meaning and presentation of divine secrets.

Improving Expertise by Travelling Throughout Italy

Visiting innumerable collections and studying frescoes in churches was the new method of autodidactic education within the German-Roman artists' circle. In order to improve their skills, they studied early painting and with the aim of improving their artistic development and connoisseurship, they travelled throughout Italy, for instance to Florence and Venice, Naples and Sicily.

In Siena in 1822, Passavant, the sculptor Franz Eberhard (1767–1836) and the painter Heinrich Maria von Hess (1798–1863) visited, among others, the Palazzo Pubblico to see the frescoes by Ambrogio Lorenzetti and the «lovely Libreria» in the Duomo. They «gave particular note to the great Giotto, the heavenly Fiesole and the perfected Raphael in addition to Simon Memmi, Taddeo Gaddi, Giottino, Benozzo Gozzoli, Masaccio, Dom. Ghirlandaio, Mantegna etc, etc.»³⁴. The travelling artists based their education on this visual material. Hess made a drawing based on an *Annunciation* by Fra Angelico which Ferdinand Ruscheweyh (1785-1845) engraved. Franz Eberhard drew many medieval and early Renaissance Madonnas on these journeys, primarily for his brother Konrad who would then make prints based on these motifs. Johann Anton Ramboux (1790-1866) made hundreds of

drawings: *The Clarissans take Leave from the Deceased Francis* is based on Giotto's fresco at the Basilica of St. Francis of Assisi (fig. 2)³⁵ and his *Desperatia, Invidia, Infidelitas* stem from the Arena Chapel in Padua. Later he arranged and inventoried these drawings, still at the Städel³⁶. Seeing works by Duccio led Passavant to his understanding that «Duccio is not Giotto's equal because the latter is still somewhat different and gives a much more accomplished presentation»³⁷.

Their preoccupation with early Italian painting led the German-Roman artists' circle to reach certain conclusions. Barthold Georg von Niebuhr, the Prussian envoy to Rome, who moved in the artists' circle, asserted that Fra Angelico had often drawn incorrectly and that his portrayal of hands and feet was too stiff. Niebuhr wished the artists to improve upon Fra Angelico, but the artists declined, «for this is not achievable without a loss of Fiesole's character, unless one were a second beato Angelico. These learned gentlemen do have their own special opinions without knowing enough of those matters»³⁸, Passavant concluded.

Influencing Colleagues from the North

The German-Roman artists' ideas were spread by people travelling from the north who also arrived in their circles. They were influenced by these artists and brought their ideas back to their home countries. In 1819, a certain Johann Friedrich Böhmer (1795-1863) from Frankfurt am Main travelled to Rome on his Grand Tour and met Passavant³⁹. They became friends for life. Studying law in the 1820s, Böhmer would later become a well-known historian and librarian in Frankfurt and edit influential and important works on the Middle Ages, including the *Regesta imperii* in 1831 and the *Codex Diplomaticus Moeno-Francofurtanus* in 1836⁴⁰. He was in contact with relevant authors of the time, such as Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Clemens Brentano, the Boisserées collectors, as well as with politicians in Frankfurt.

On his journey home from Italy, Böhmer travelled together with Passavant through Tuscany. They were accompanied by Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld and Charles Spruyt⁴¹. On the way to Siena, Böhmer bought a collection of nearly twenty-five Sienese artworks of the Trecento and Quattrocento of small and medium dimensions⁴². These included paintings now in the Städel, such as the panel with the *Crucifixion, Nativity, Annunciation and Four Saints* by Ambrogio Lorenzetti of 1320-25, which is considered to be an early work of the artist⁴³; the polyptych with *the Crucifixion, the Enthroned Madonna with Child and Scenes from the Legends of St. Matthew and St. John the Evangelist* by Pietro Lorenzetti's workshop⁴⁴, which was considered by the Administrators of the Städel to be poorly accomplished,

but original and with quotes from Giotto; and last but not least, the *Seven Scenes from the Legend of St. Stephen* by Martino di Bartolomeo which were restored in Florence just after their acquisition and arrived in Frankfurt later (fig. 5)⁴⁵.

Passavant judged this collection of Sienese paintings as «though ... not exquisite, still there are some very interesting paintings»⁴⁶, and would later attribute one of these works as: «The painter of your madonna is Stefano Sassetta. I have encountered several paintings by him and Hess bought one similar»⁴⁷. It is likely that Passavant consulted Böhmer over acquiring his painting collection in Siena in 1819⁴⁸. The effect of Passavant's developing connoisseurship on Böhmer's decision for the acquisition can be understood in a letter which Passavant sent to Böhmer after his departure to Frankfurt. Passavant wrote that he had heard that Böhmer was not yet wholly at peace with his views on art and assumed that he repeated the thoughts of others too much⁴⁹. Böhmer replied later:

I do not dare assume to have a good eye, although I feel the greatest and strongest love for art. Of course, I am following a party and gain everything they have already judged regarding various aspects. If I did not follow them, I would have to reconsider the matter and would probably often be mistaken⁵⁰.

Böhmer learned from Passavant about the course of art history and began to appreciate trecento paintings. This purchase revealed a far-sighted taste, and was also uncommon for Frankfurt where Böhmer took his collection⁵¹.

The Transfer of Concepts by Procuring Paintings for Galleries in Germany

Passavant not only made an impact on the small private collections of friends such as Böhmer's but tried to influence the content of museum collections. As a native of Frankfurt, Passavant wanted to help provide supra-regional relevance to his home town's Städelsches Kunstinstitut by recommending and procuring excellent paintings. He offered to acquire art for the Administration of the institute just after his arrival in Rome in 1817⁵². In light of the fact that he made this offer having only just finished his education with Jacques-Louis David, this approach seems to be unusual⁵³. In general, procuring paintings for galleries and museums at home was quite a common way for the German-Romans to use their connoisseurship, especially given the incredible number of artworks they had viewed and compared together with other individuals employed by museums across the Alps. As Passavant did for Frankfurt, the above-mentioned Carl Friedrich von Rumohr did for Berlin, and Friedrich Müller (1749-1825) and afterwards Johann

Georg von Dillis (1759-1841) did for Munich⁵⁴.

Subsequently, Passavant sent lists of paintings that were up for sale in Italy to the Städelsches Kunstinstitut⁵⁵. In order to help improve the Frankfurt gallery to present the history of art as other museums did, and also according to the German-Romans, Passavant recommended paintings from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century in equal measure. His notes read like this, for instance: «1. a little 18-inch tabernacle with side wings from the early Sienese school in Greek style. In the middle Christ at the cross and so on. The whole mainly in a good state of preservation, a special picture»; «4. a Simon Memmi, also in good condition with a new gold background»; or «7. old Sienese school with many little nice figures, very good condition»⁵⁶.

In his recommendations, Passavant did not differentiate between trecento and quattrocento paintings. He focused mostly on the state of conservation and the art historical importance of the painting. In the end, Passavant wanted the Städel to exhibit early Italian painting, as well as the recognized later schools. Passavant selected the artworks for his recommendation with an eye to their possible display. This reflected the result of his art historical studies with Rumohr (after the latter's scathing review) and other colleagues and their ideas on museum exhibitions to show the history of art⁵⁷: «most pictures are of true art value because of their beautiful composition and deep expression, others are special due to their age»⁵⁸, as Passavant explained.

Since the Städelsches Kunstinstitut was also to serve an educative role, Passavant believed that artists should study trecento painting to develop their own (religious) art, in line with Nazarene ideas. This may well have been an influence on his early recommendations from around 1820, although Passavant did not mention this explicitly in his letters.

Fifteen years after he had celebrated Giotto in his *Ansichten* in 1820, Passavant still appreciated the Trecento, although his criteria had changed, now that he was more interested in the historical course of art rather than creating art. He was still searching the art market for works for Frankfurt when he found two panels by Giotto in the Ingenheim collection and recommended them for purchase by the Städel in 1835, as: «No. 2+3, Giotto, two little paintings on wood of this shape [fig. 3] with representations of Saint Francis' life. These come from the sequence of pictures which is mainly located at the Florentine academy and which Vasari had already cited»⁵⁹. Two of the quatrefoils had already been secured for Berlin by his former teacher Rumohr by that time⁶⁰, another twenty-two were and are still located in Florence (Galleria dell'Accademia), and all are now attributed to

Taddeo Gaddi⁶¹. As the Städelsches Kunstinstitut had done with most of Passavant's recommendations, it rejected this offer once more – instead, we can admire Passavant's recommendations at the Alte Pinakothek in Munich today (fig. 4)⁶².

A Change of Acquisition Strategies with Barnaba da Modena and Gaddi

To return to the beginning of our story, Benucci sold the Barnaba da Modena and a Gaddi to the Administrators of the Städel in 1830, the only two trecento paintings to be acquired in the first half of the nineteenth century.

In the first decade after its opening in 1817⁶³, the Administration of the Städelsches Kunstinstitut had purchased entire collections of Dutch painting, several Italian paintings from the Quattro- to Seicento and works by the Caravaggisti⁶⁴. As mentioned above, the board was then composed by the founder's friends and colleagues. Their acquisitions in these early years demonstrate that they were following current taste in Frankfurt, rather than creating new or progressive concepts concerning the exhibition of art⁶⁵.

But within a few years their acquisition policies changed. From 1828 onwards the Administrators only bought early European paintings aside from contemporary works. The reason for the change in their acquisition philosophy can be found in the altered makeup of the Administration in 1823. The personnel changed within the first years after the foundation of the institute, as deceased Administrators were substituted by new members, citizens of Frankfurt, as the founder Johann Friedrich Städel had willed⁶⁶. After 1823 there was a majority within the Administration who felt close to the Nazarenes' taste and outlook⁶⁷. Two old friends of Passavant had been employed in the meantime: his cousin, Philipp Jacob Passavant, a friend of early Italian painting and patron of the German-Roman artists, and Johann Friedrich Böhmer, the historian and owner of an early Sienese painting collection. Together with Theodor Friedrich Arnold Kestner (1779–1847), brother of August Kestner (1777–1853), they changed the acquisition strategy of the Städelsches Kunstinstitut after 1823.

The composition of the new board should have sowed the seeds for Passavant's innumerable recommendations of paintings. However, Passavant would not succeed. An initial deal on a Filippino Lippi had made any future transaction impossible. It had begun with an offer by Passavant in 1817 but led to a conflict with the Administration regarding this painting, which was not resolved until 1829⁶⁸. The reason for this dispute can be found in the constellation between the first Administration and Passavant and their personal power play⁶⁹. Last but not least, the Administration also had financial constraints to contend with due to a

pending lawsuit and were legally not allowed to invest between 1821 and 1828⁷⁰. Thus, the Administrators did not implement Passavant's concepts.

Yet the fact that one can today view works by Barnaba and Casentino (formerly Gaddi) at the Städel is not primarily due to the work of the art dealer Benucci, who sold the paintings to the Institute, but to Johann David Passavant and the Roman artists who influenced their friends north of the Alps, such as Böhmer and Philipp J. Passavant, soon part of the Administration. They ensured that Benucci's paintings would be understood by the other administrators and museum visitors, and, furthermore, that they were bought in Frankfurt in the first place.

When we visit the trecento paintings in the Städel today, we can still see Barnaba and Casentino (formerly Gaddi), in addition to Böhmer's collection which came to the Städel after the owner's death in 1865⁷¹. The current inventory of Sienese painting before 1550 at the Städel can even be traced back in its entirety to Böhmer⁷².

Conclusion

Passavant's studies on trecento painting were related to the contemporary artistic climate in Rome, where artists attempted to find the key to the religious spirit of these works. This seems to have been the initial impetus for Passavant to devote himself to early paintings. Passavant influenced his friends across the Alps with his views on art history, which improved after Rumohr's review of his book *Ansichten* in 1820, by highlighting and providing an understanding of earlier schools of painting. Lastly, his procurement of paintings for the Städel was led by his hope to exhibit not only masterpieces, but also to create a pedagogical course through the history of art.

Collections develop historically. The paintings on the walls of today's galleries lead us to the roots of their acquisition (fig. 5). The composition of collections can demonstrate contemporary taste in terms of both the owners and consultants and the relative time period. They tell us about the expertise, the transfer of knowledge of art, as well as about possible trans-national influences.

- 1 «Tiefe des Gedankens», «strenger Ernst», J.D. PASSAVANT, Ansichten über die bildenden Künste und Darstellung des Ganges derselben in Toscana. Zur Bestimmung des Gesichtspunctes, aus welchem die neudeutsche Malerschule zu betrachten ist. Von einem deutschen Künstler in Rom, Heidelberg 1820, pp. 42-43. This short essay, based on a paper delivered to the conference «Discovering the Italian Trecento in the 19th century» in Venice on November 15-16, 2013, forms the basis of a longer article currently in preparation. The author is grateful to Eva Mongi-Vollmer, Städel Museum, for her comments on an earlier draft of this article.
- 2 «[...] da er auch, wie ich, täglich die Erfahrung macht daß man im Ausland sich Ideen von den altital. Meistern macht welche ganz verkehrt sind und so ihre schätzbarsten Werke oft verwirft oder überarbeitet glaubt», PASSAVANT letter to J.F. Böhmer, 28 September 1822, Ms. Ff. J.D. Passavant A I d, Nr. 23, fol. 45r., Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main.
- 3 This refers to a painting deal of a Filippino Lippi, see C. MEYER, «[...] denn gute Gemälde hatte ich versprochen, gute habe ich geliefert, aber, aber [...]». Ein folgenreicher Streit um die Erwerbung eines *Filippino Lippi im Städelschen Kunstinstitut um 1820*, «RIHA Journal», LVII, October 2012 (Online article: http://www.riha-journal.org/articles/2012/2012-oct-dec/ meyer-lippi-streit)
- 4 Barnaba da Modena, Madonna with Child, 1367, wood, 118.1 x 86.3 cm, acquired 1830 (Filippo Benucci), Inv. No. 807; see J. SANDER, in Italienische Gemälde im Städel 1300–1550. Oberitalien, die Marken und Rom, eds H. Beck and J. Sander, Mainz 2004, pp. 3-18; Jacopo del Casentino, Madonna Enthroned with Child, Saints, Angels and Donors, before 1330, wood, 51.6 x 29.5 cm, acquired 1832 (Filippo Benucci), Inv. No. 842; see R. HILLER VON GAERTRIN-GEN, in Ibid., pp. 15-26.
- 5 AKL IX, 1994, p. 184; ThB III, 1909, p. 357; J. SANDER, Zur Geschichte der Sammlung von Gemälden des 14., 15. und der ersten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts aus Oberitalien, den Marken und Rom im Städel, in Ibid., pp. XIII-XXVI: XIII-XVI.
- 6 C. MEYER, Die Geburt des bürgerlichen Kunstmuseums Johann Friedrich Städel und sein Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt am Main, Berlin 2013; EAD., A Desire for Action. Civic Participation, or the Right to Decide on Possessions, «Collections. A Journal for Museum and Archives Professionals», 12/3, 2016, pp. 289-315; see also the Festschrift to the bicentennial: «...zum Besten hiesiger Stadt und Bürgerschaft». 200 Jahre Städel. Eine Festschrift, ed. Städel Museum, Munich 2015; see also: <http://zeitreise.staedelmuseum.de>
- 7 MEYER, Die Geburt des bürgerlichen Kunstmuseums, pp. 183-196; EAD., A Desire for Action, pp. 289-315.
- 8 EAD., Denn gute Gemälde; SANDER, Zur Geschichte der Sammlung, pp. XIII-XXVI; R. HILLER VON GAERTRINGEN, Zur Sammlungsgeschichte früher toskanischer und umbrischer Malerei im Städel, in Italienische Gemälde im Städel 1300 –1550. Toskana und Umbrien, pp. XIII-XVIII; J. SANDER, «(...) um für eine der ausgezeichnetesten Sammlungen der altdeutschen Schule zu gelten»: Johann David Passavant als Berater und Kunstagent des Städelschen Kunstinstituts beim Erwerb altniederländischer Gemälde vor seiner Berufung zum Städel-Inspektor im Jahre 1840, in Niederländische Gemälde im Städel 1400-1550, eds K. Gallwitz and J. Sander, 2nd edn, Mainz 2002, pp. 17–25.
- 9 A. CORNILL, Johann David Passavant. Ein Lebensbild. 1. Abteilung nebst Passavants Mittheilungen über seine Familie, «Neujahrsblatt des Vereins für Geschichte und Altertumskunde zu Frankfurt am Main», January 1864, pp. 46-59; W. WAETZOLDT, Deutsche Kunsthistoriker, 2 vols, Leipzig 1921-24, 2 (Von Passavant bis Justi); E. SCHRÖTER, Raffael-Kult und Raffael-Forschung. Johann David Passavant und seine Raffael-Monographie im Kontext der Kunst und

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- 10 J.D. PASSAVANT, Raffael von Urbino und sein Vater Giovanni Santi, 3 vols, Leipzig 1839-1858; Kunst und Kennerschaft. Die graphische Sammlung im Städelschen Kunstinstitut unter Johann David Passavant 1840 bis 1861, eds H. Bauereisen, M. Stuffmann, exhibition catalogue (Frankfurt am Main 1994-95), Frankfurt am Main 1994, pp. 13-21; M. SONNABEND, Raffael, Passavant und das Städelsche Kunstinstitut, in Raffael. Zeichnungen, exhibition catalogue (Frankfurter Städel Museum die Ausstellung), eds J. Jacoby and M. Sonnabend, Munich 2013, pp. 57-75.
- 11 B. SAVOY, Kunstraub. Napoleons Konfiszierungen in Deutschland und die europäischen Folgen. (German translation of her dissertation Patrimoine annexé, Paris 2003), Wien 2010.
- 12 MEYER, Denn gute Gemälde.
- 13 PASSAVANT, Ansichten.
- 14 PASSAVANT, Ansichten, pp. 1-12.
- 15 PASSAVANT, *Ansichten* p. III; Carl Friedrich von RUMOHR'S review of Passavant's *Ansichten*, «Kunst-Blatt», 32, 19 April 1821, pp. 125-128: 125.
- 16 See on this F. BÜTTNER, «Der Streit um die «Neudeutsche religios-patriotische Kunst», in «Aurora» 43, 1983, pp. 55-76; C. SCHOLL, Revisionen der Romantik. Zur Rezeption der «neudeutschen Malerei» 1817-1906, Berlin 2012; THIMANN, Eine antiklassizistische Programmschrift, pp. 301-324 (with further bibliography).
- 17 Indeed, Giotto's contemporaries used his name synonymously with perfection of an artistic imitation of nature – and when Vasari wrote his Vite, Giotto's image had already taken on a life of its own; see Giorgio Vasari, Das Leben des Cimabue, des Giotto und des Pietro Cavallini, Berlin 2015, pp. 41-52; M. V. SCHWARZ, P. THEIS, Giottus Pictor, 2 vols, 1: «Giottos Leben", Vienna, Cologne, Weimar 2004, pp. 13-33.
- 18 «Empfehlung [...] des Geistes der alten Meister», PASSAVANT, Ansichten, p. VII and 71.
- «Vater des großen erhabenen Styls in der Malerei jener Zeiten», PASSAVANT, Ansichten, p. 37.
- 20 «wie ein gewaltiger Riesengeist», PASSAVANT, Ansichten, p. 37.
- 21 Giotto «zeigte durch die Auffassung oder die Zusammenstellung des behandelten Gegenstandes, daß das Große in der Kunst nicht in der blos religiösen oder natürlichen Darstellung einer Handlung, oder dem täuschenden Effecte und der correcten Zeichnung, sondern in der Tiefe und Wahrheit des im Kunstwerk ruhenden und sich aus sprechenden

geistigen Wesens liege.» PASSAVANT, Ansichten, pp. 38-39.

- 22 «geistige und höhere Wahrheit», PASSAVANT, Ansichten, p. 39.
- 23 «hoher Ernst und allgemeiner Charakter», PASSAVANT, Ansichten, p. 42.
- 24 «Kraft und Tiefe des Gedankens», PASSAVANT, Ansichten, p. 43.
- 25 Sein «strenger Ernst», PASSAVANT, Ansichten, p. 42.
- 26 «ein geistreicher Mensch mit einem sehr einnehmenden Wesen», Giorgio Vasari, *Das Leben des Cimabue, des Giotto*, p. 92.
- 27 On the reception of Giorgio Vasari see *Le Vite del Vasari. Genesi, topoi, ricezione. Die Vite Vasaris. Entstehung, Topoi, Rezeption,* eds K. Burzer et al., Venice 2010; and *Vasari als Paradigma. Rezeption, Kritik, Perspektiven,* eds F. Jonietz, A. Nova, Venice 2016.
- 28 RUMOHR, Review of Passavant's Ansichten, pp. 125-128.
- 29 On Rumohr and Giotto see H. BLOEMSMA, *Challenging the Vasarian Paradigm: Carl Friedrich* von Rumohr and Early Italian Painting, in Vasari als Paradigma, pp. 93-102.
- 30 On the meaning of the term «truth»/«Wahrheit» see M. THIMANN, *Friedrich Overbeck und die Bildkonzepte des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Regensburg 2014, pp. 33-68.
- 31 L. B. ALBERTI, De Pictura, in: ID., Das Standbild Die Malkunst Grundlagen der Malerei /De Statua - De Pictura - Elementa Picturae, eds O. Bätschmann, C. Schäublin, Darmstadt 2011, pp. 193-315.
- 32 Quote from THIMANN, Friedrich Overbeck und die Bildkonzepte, pp. 33-68: 36; see also ID., Eine antiklassizistische Programmschrift, p. 317; C. GREWE, Objektivierte Subjektivität: Identitätsfindung und religiöse Kommunikation im nazarenischen Kunstwerk, in Religion, Macht, Kunst. Die Nazarener, exhibition catalogue, (Frankfurt, 2005), eds M. Hollein and C. Steinle, Cologne 2005, pp. 77-99: 80-83.
- 33 THIMANN, Eine antiklassizistische Programmschrift, p. 322.
- 34 «Dem großen Giotto, dem him[m]lischen Fiesole und dem vollendeten Raphael ward nebst dem Simon Memmi, Taddeo Gaddi, Giottino, Benozzo Gozzoli, Masaccio, Dom. Ghirlandajo, Mantegna && besondere Aufmerksamkeit gewidmet», PASSAVANT letter to J.F. Böhmer, 28 September 1822, Ms. Ff. J.D. Passavant A I d, Nr. 23, fol. 46r., Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main. On Ramboux in Siena see: H.-J. ZIEMKE, Ramboux und die sienesische Kunst, Sonderdruck des Städel Jahrbuchs, vol. 2, Munich 1969; C.A. SCHULZE, Johann Anton Ramboux und Italien, in Italien so nah: Johann Anton Ramboux (1790-1866), exh. cat. Clemens Sels Museum Neuss, ed. U. Sölter, Cologne 2016, pp. 12-33.
- 35 Johann Anton Ramboux, *The Clarissans take Leave from the Deceased Francis*, based on Giotto's fresco at the Basilica of St Francis of Assisi, drawing from his book *Sammlung von Umrissen und Durchzeichnungen*, *dienend zur Geschichte der bildenden Künste des Mittelalters in Italien gezeichnet von J.A. Ramboux aus Trier in den Jahren 1818-1822 und den Jahren 1833-1843*, 11 vols, vol. IV, p. 25, Inv. No. Bibl. 2472, Department of Prints and Drawings, Städel Museum, Frankfurt. See also *Italien so nah: Johann Anton Ramboux (1790-1866)*, pp. 148-149; SCHULZE, *Johann Anton Ramboux und Italien*, in *Ibid.*, esp. pp. 16-18 on the artists' trip to Assisi; U. SÖLTER, *Von der Skizze bis zur Farbkopie. Zeichnerische Vielfalt im Œuvre von Johann Anton Ramboux, in Italien so nah*, pp. 42-55; ZIEMKE, *Ramboux und die sienesische Kunst*; and see the online exhibition: *Ramboux. Between art and art history* of the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz (MPI), from 20 November 2017 onwards <http://photothek.khi.fi.it/documents/oau/00000305> (25/2/2018).

- 36 See above note 35.
- 37 «Im Dom [...] die Duccios, doch ist er nicht mit Giotto in gleichen Rang zu stellen, dieser ist doch noch etwas anders und viel vollkom[m]ener in der Ausbildung», PASSAVANT letter to J.F. Böhmer, 28 September 1822, Ms. Ff. J.D. Passavant A I d, Nr. 23, fol. 46r., Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main.
- 38 «Bei Niebur war die Rede dass man den Fiesole wegen seiner Verzeichnungen und steifen Hände u[nd] Füße verbessern müsse &^a. das wurde sehr von den anwesenden Künstlern bestritten, weil dieses ohne Verlust des Charakters von Fiesole nicht ausführbar ist, es sey denn daß man ein zweiter beato Angelico wäre; diese Gelehrte Herren haben aber ihre besondere Ansichten ohne die Sache genugsam zu kennen.» ID., letter to J.F. Böhmer, 29 December 1821, Ms. Ff. J.D. Passavant A I d, Nr. 17, fol. 34r., Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main.
- 39 On Böhmer see E. KLEINSTÜCK, Johann Friedrich Böhmer, Frankfurt 1959; J. JANSSEN, Joh. Friedrich Böhmer's Leben, Briefe und kleinere Schriften, 3 vols, Freiburg 1868-69.
- 40 MEYER, Die Geburt des bürgerlichen Kunstmuseums, pp. 252-253.
- 41 HILLER VON GAERTRINGEN, Zur Sammlungsgeschichte früher toskanischer und umbrischer Malerei im Städel, pp. XIII-XVIII: XVI; ID., Johann Friedrich Böhmers Italienreise und der Erwerb seiner italienischen Bilder, in ID., Italienische Gemälde im Städel 1300–1550. Toskana und Umbrien, pp. XIX–XXV, XX.
- 42 HILLER VON GAERTRINGEN, Johann Friedrich Böhmers Italienreise, pp. XIX–XXV, esp. XIX-XXI; ID., Zur Sammlungsgeschichte früher toskanischer und umbrischer Malerei im Städel, pp. XV-XVI. G. SWARZENSKI, Die Sammlung Böhmer und ein unbekanntes altitalienisches Bild im Städelschen Kunstinstitut, «Städel-Jahrbuch», 9, 1935/36, pp. 112–152.
- 43 Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Panel Painting with the Crucifixion, Birth of Christ, Annunciation and Four Saints*, 1320-25, wood, 58.8 x 39.1 cm, Inv. No. 1005, in HILLER VON GAERTRINGEN, *Italienische Gemälde im Städel 1300 1550. Toskana und Umbrien*, pp. 27-40.
- 44 Pietro Lorenzetti's workshop, *Polyptych with the Crucifixion of Christ, the Enthroned Madonna with Child and Scenes from the Legends of St. Matthew and St. John the Evangelist*, 1345-1350, wood, Inv. No. 995, in *Ibid*, pp. 66-81.
- 45 Martino di Bartolomeo, Seven Scenes from the Legend of St. Stephen, 1390, wood, all of them c. 70 x 59 cm, Inv. Nos. 988-994, in *Ibid.*, pp. 162-185. PASSAVANT letter to J.F. Böhmer, 29 September 1820, Ms. Ff. J.D. Passavant A I d, Nr. 10, Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main.
- 46 «vorzügliches ist zwar nicht dabey, doch manches sehr interessante», PASSAVANT's letter to his brother-in-law Ziegler and his wife on 12 June 1819, quoted in HILLER VON GAERTRIN-GEN, Johann Friedrich Böhmers Italienreise, pp. XIX–XXV: XXIV.
- 47 «der Meister deines alten Madonnenbildes heißt Stefano Sassetta; ich habe mehrere Bilder von ihm getroffen u[nd] Heß hat eins dem deinigen sehr ähnliches gekauft», PASSAVANT letter to J.F. Böhmer, 28 September 1822, Ms. Ff. J.D. Passavant A I d, Nr. 23, fol. 46r., Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main.
- 48 HILLER VON GAERTRINGEN, Zur Sammlungsgeschichte früher toskanischer und umbrischer Malerei im Städel, pp. XIII-XVIII: XVI.
- 49 Mein Vetter meint «du wärest noch nicht ganz im Reinen mit deinen Ansichten über Kunst, und spräches zu viel dem nach was dir von [anderen] ist gesagt worden», PASSAVANT letter

to J.F. Böhmer, 4 December 1819, Ms. Ff. J.D. Passavant A I d, Nr. 2, fol. 4v., Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main.

- 50 «Ich selbst traue mir gar keins [kein Kunsturteil] zu; obgl[eich] ich die größte, innigste Liebe izur Kunst fühle. Da folge ich denn freil[ich] einer Parthei, u gewinne dabei alles das, was sie schon über einzelne Punkte geurtheilt hat, u wo ich, folgte ich ihr nicht, von neuem urtheilen müßte u wahrscheinl[ich] oft irren würde.» J.F. Böhmer's letter to J.D. Passavant, 16 January 1820, Ms. Ff. J.F. Böhmer, 1K5 P, Nr. 12, fol. 35v., Universitätsbibliothek Frankfurt am Main.
- 51 HILLER VON GAERTRINGEN, Johann Friedrich Böhmers Italienreise, pp. XIX–XXV: XXII.
- 52 MEYER, Denn gute Gemälde.
- 53 Rumohr insists on pointing out Passavant's late turn to art and art history and even published this: RUMOHR, Review of Passavant's Ansichten, p. 125.
- 54 R. SKWIRBLIES, Altitalienische Malerei als preußisches Kulturgut, Gemäldesammlungen, Kunsthandel und Museumspolitik 1797–1830, Berlin and Boston 2017; MEYER, Denn gute Gemälde.
- 55 PASSAVANT letters to the administration, box P.1, fascicles P.17a and P.17b, Archive of the Städel Museum.
- 56 PASSAVANT letter to the administration with an appendix of paintings, 29 November 1817, box P.1, fascicle P.17b, Archive of the Städel Museum.
- 57 MEYER, Die Geburt des bürgerlichen Kunstmuseums, pp. 196-203, 314-321.
- 58 «die meisten [Bilder] sind von wahrem Kunstwerth durch schöne Composition u. tiefgefühlten Ausdruck; andere sind durch ihr Alter merkwürdig», PASSAVANT letter to the administration with appendix of a list of paintings, 29 November 1817, box P.1, fascicle P.17b, Archive of the Städel Museum.
- 59 «N. 2 & 3. <u>Giotto</u>. 2 kl Bilder auf Holz in dieser Form [fig. 3], mit Darstellungen aus dem Leben des H. Franziscus. Sie sind aus der Folge der Bilder die sich größtentheils nun in der Akademie zu Florenz befinden und sind von Vasari angeführt --- Scudi rom. 50." PASSAVANT letter to the administration with appendix of a list of paintings, 12 June 1835, box P.1, fascicle P.17b, without foliation, Archive of the Städel Museum.
- 60 On those in Berlin: *Ausgießung des HI. Geists*, Inv.-Nr. 1073, and *Wiederbelebung eines verunglückten Kindes [Wunder des HI. Franziskus*], Inv.-Nr. 1074, offered by C.F. Rumohr in 1828 to Berlin, see SKWIRBLIES, *Altitalienische Malerei*, pp. 466-467, 640, 740; M. BOSKOVITS, *Frühe italienische Malerei* (Gemäldegalerie Berlin, Katalog der Gemälde), Berlin1988, pp. 41-47.
- 61 On those in Florence: Taddeo Gaddi, *Stories of St Francis' Life*, 1335-1340, Galleria dell'Accademia, Florence, see Sonia CHIODO in *Dipinti, Vol. 1, Dal Duecento a Giovanni da Milano*, eds M. Boskovits, A. Tartuferi, Cataloghi della Galleria dell'Accademia di Firenze, Florence-Milan 2003, pp. 251-284 (with images). See also A. LADIS, *Taddeo Gaddi, Critical Reappraisal and Catalogue Raisonné*, Columbia & London 1982, pp. 114-126.
- 62 Passavant must have offered the two panels which are now in Munich (he did not mention the subject): *Der Tod des Edlen von Celano*, 1330/35, wood, 34.8 x 30.7 cm, Inv.-Nr. 10676; and *Der hl. Franziskus bietet dem Sultan die Feuerprobe an*, 1330/35, wood, 34.6 x 31.3 cm, Inv.-Nr. 10677, purchased from the collection Count Ingenheim Reiswitz, Upper Silesia, in 1940; in: C. SYRE, *Alte Pinakothek. Italienische Malerei*, ed Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen München, Ostfildern 2007, p. 100; see also SKWIRBLIES, *Altitalienische Malerei*, pp.

466-467.

- 63 Städel asked for his institute to be founded in 1815 through his testament, he died in 1816, and the Administrators opened the public gallery in June 1817, see MEYER, *Die Geburt des bürgerlichen Kunstmuseums*, and *«...zum Besten hiesiger Stadt und Bürgerschaft»*.
- 64 MEYER, Die Geburt des bürgerlichen Kunstmuseums, pp. 191-196.
- 65 Ibid., and EAD., A Desire for Action, pp. 289-315.
- 66 Stiftungs-Brief des Städelschen Kunst-Instituts enthalten in dem Testament des Herrn Johann Friedrich Städel, hiesigen Handelsmanns und gewesenen Mitglieds des löbl. Bürger-Collegs, vom 15. März 1815, [print] Frankfurt am Main 1817, p. 9.
- 67 MEYER, Die Geburt des bürgerlichen Kunstmuseums, pp. 256-257.
- 68 MEYER, Denn gute Gemälde.
- 69 Passavant was considered to be impudent and did not respect the Administrator's achievements and challenges, and denied them any expertise. He considered himself much more eligible to lead the institute – even without having seen it in the first instance because he lived in Rome. Later, Böhmer as Administrator reprimanded him: had he not written those insolent letters, he could have had more chances to be considered for positions at the institute. MEYER, *Die Geburt des bürgerlichen Kunstmuseums*, pp. 288-289.
- 70 MEYER, Die Geburt des bürgerlichen Kunstmuseums, pp. 163-164.
- 71 HILLER VON GAERTRINGEN, Zur Sammlungsgeschichte, pp. XIII-XVIII: XVI
- 72 HILLER VON GAERTRINGEN, Johann Friedrich Böhmers Italienreise, pp. XIX–XXV: XXIII.



Fig. 1: BARNABA DA MODENA, *Madonna with Child*, 1367, wood, 118.1 x 86.3 cm, acquired 1830 (Filippo Benucci), Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum (© Städel Museum – ARTO-THEK).



Fig. 2: J.A. RAMBOUX after Giotto, *The Clarissines take Leave of the Deceased St. Francis*, (Assisi, Basilica di San Francesco), drawing from his book *Sammlung von Umrissen* (as above note 36) Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings (© Photo: Städel Museum).



Fig. 3: J.D. PASSAVANT, Illustration in his Letter to the Administration, 12 June 1835, Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum, Archive, box P.1, fascicle P.17b (© Reconstruction: CM).



Fig. 4: TADDEO GADDI, *The Death of the Nobleman of Celano and St Francis Offering the Sultan Ordeal by Fire*, ca 1340, poplar, gold ground, 34.8 x 30.7 cm resp. 34,6 x 31,3 cm, Munich, AltePinakothek (©BayerischeStaatsgemäldesammlungen, München).



Fig. 5: Presentation of Early Italian Painting at the Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main, in October 2014: Barnaba da Modena on the right hand side; from Böhmer's Sienese collection Martino di Bartolomeo's seven panels on the left wall; from this to the right the polyptych from Pietro Lorenzetti's workshop (the left one on the right wall), the next one to the right is Ambrogio Lorenzetti's panel, all mentioned above (© Photo: CM)