

Prints, Salami, and Cheese: Savoring the Roman Festival of the Chinaea

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For Esther Gordon Dotson

And Your Lordship well knows that just as paper has no less stability than bronze and marble, so too there is no ultramarine color as vividly expressive as ink.¹

I shall begin with the art of engraving in copper, not as the oldest, but as the one of greater use, and doubtless of a usefulness more serviceable to people for increasing their knowledge.²

The obsolete Italian word *chinaea*, derived from the Old French *haquenée* (in English “hackney”), means “horse of ambling gait.” From the time of the Norman conquest of Southern Italy and Sicily in the eleventh century, sovereigns offered homage to the papacy in the form of tribute money and a white horse called the Chinaea. Although at times interrupted by shifting political circumstances, the homage remained a fixture of diplomatic relations between the unified realm and Rome until 1788, at which point the king of Naples, Ferdinand IV, intent on loosening “an indecorous shackle of a chimerical feudalism,” permanently suspended public payment of the tribute.³

From the 1680s on, princes of the Roman Colonna family were regularly named ambassadors extraordinary for the absent monarch, and presented the homage in his stead. In the eighteenth century, this act of diplomacy came to occur in the guise of a festival, held on the eve and feast of SS. Peter and Paul, June 28–29. In the late afternoon of the first day, an elaborate procession (comprising the Chinaea, the constable Colonna, his domestic staff, his vehicular train, and guests he entertained at a reception) moved from the site of diplomatic representation to St. Peter’s Basilica or, less frequently, to the Vatican or Quirinal palaces. On both days the constable held late-evening receptions for the Roman nobility, ambassadors, prelates, and aristocratic Neapolitan subjects; offered free red and white wine to the Roman people; and sponsored concerts and fireworks displays. In addition, set pieces (*macchine*), used as bases for the fireworks displays, were built either in the Piazza SS. Apostoli (in front

of the Palazzo Colonna), or in the Piazza Farnese (in front of the Palazzo Farnese, which served as the Neapolitan embassy after 1734).⁴ Erected for the public celebration of imperial elections, royal accessions, marriages, births, and name-day festivities; for triumphal entries; and for the ritualized expression of grief at state funerals, set pieces such as those built for the Chinaea formed an integral component of the political, religious, social, and visual life of early modern Europe.⁵

Prints related to Chinaea structures were commissioned by the constable, who had them distributed to a local and international audience: one print corresponded to the first set piece, the other to the second. The Chinaea etchings of 1759, their production, dissemination, and reception, are the focus of the present article; they will be studied as works of art in their own right, and not in terms of a presumed evidentiary relationship between prints and lost ephemeral structures (Figs. 1, 2). Unlike the set pieces, which were designed to have a short life, the etchings have survived; yet they constitute a mediated, even evasive form of documentation. As will be demonstrated, impressions were pulled well before the set pieces were completed.⁶ Topographical prints can be tested against extant buildings and urban contexts or, less directly, against a historical reconstruction of those entities; the same comparative process cannot be uncritically adopted when studying prints that relate to ephemeral structures, because the structures no longer exist, and they cannot be reconstructed independent of visual images, namely prints and (to some extent) drawings. To be sure, in both topographical and ephemeral contexts, prints relate most directly to preparatory drawings (few of which survive), not to built structures, real streets and squares, or set pieces. Etchers and engravers worked in studios, not on site; they did not create visual transcriptions that can be likened to photographs, but translated the conventions of one graphic medium to another.⁷

The ambiguous relationship between prints and the ephemeral structures they purport to represent was acknowledged by contemporaries. At the end of a 1661 Florentine

1. The author alludes to his pamphlet, which describes a festival and its ephemera. [P. S. Pallavicino], *Relazione Scritta ad vn'Amico delle feste celebrate nel Collegio Romano della Compagnia di Giesu dopo la fondazione di essa*, Rome, 1640, iii. Translations, unless otherwise specified, are mine.

2. *Encyclopédie*, s.v. “graveur.”

3. The quoted words are from Neapolitan secretary of state Bernardo Tanucci, who recounts the events of 1768, when the Chinaea was not presented; Madrid, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Sección de Estado, Correspondencia Tanucci, Legajo 3787 (letter dated July 5, 1768). For an overview of the political history of the presentation, see G. Moroni, *Dizionario di erudizione storico-ecclesiastica*, 103 vols., Venice, 1840–61, s.v. “Chinaea.”

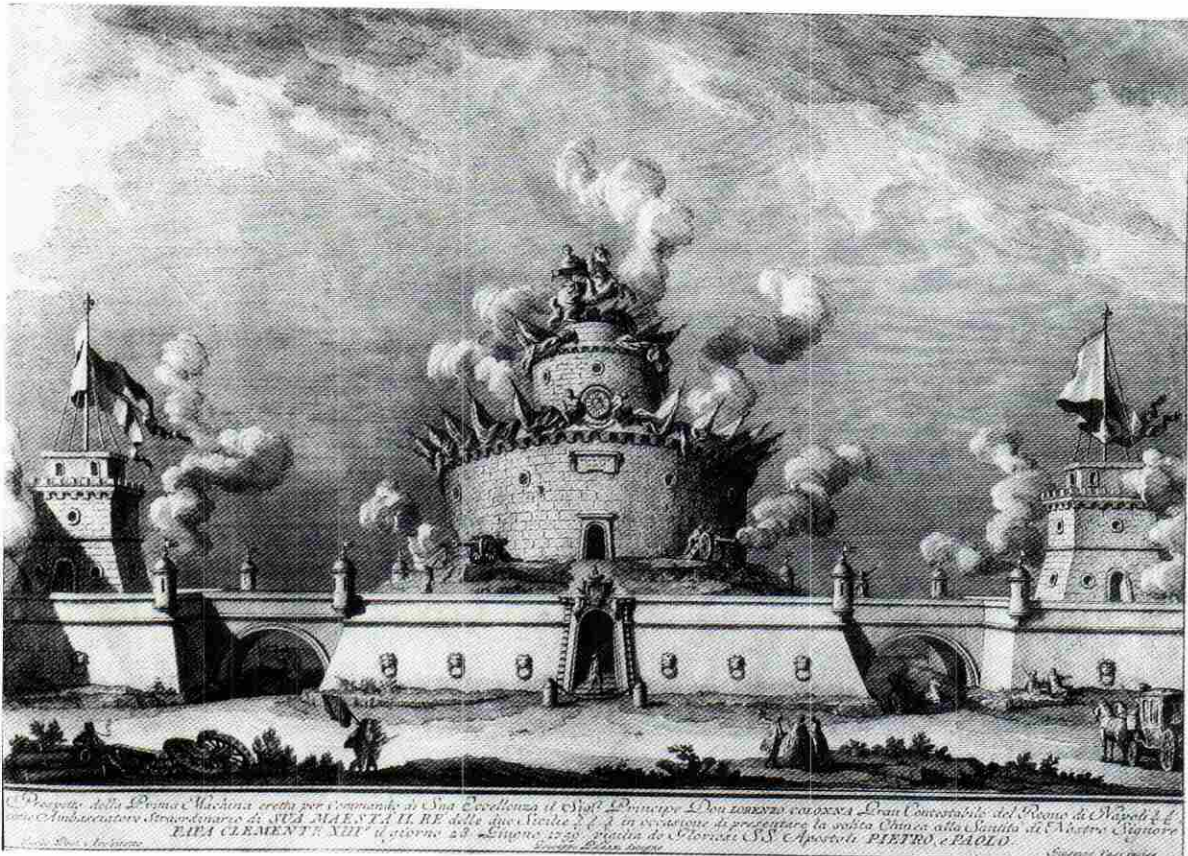
4. Set pieces were erected in the Piazza SS. Apostoli from 1722 to 1733, and from 1776 to 1787; in the Piazza Farnese from 1738 to 1775. For a list of ambassadors extraordinary and loci for the presentation, see BAV, ms Vat.

lat. 8393. For the use of the Palazzo Farnese, see G. Michel, “Vie quotidienne au Palais Farnèse (XVIIe–XVIIIe siècle),” in [École française de Rome], *Le Palais Farnèse*, 1, pt. 2, Rome, 1981, 509–65.

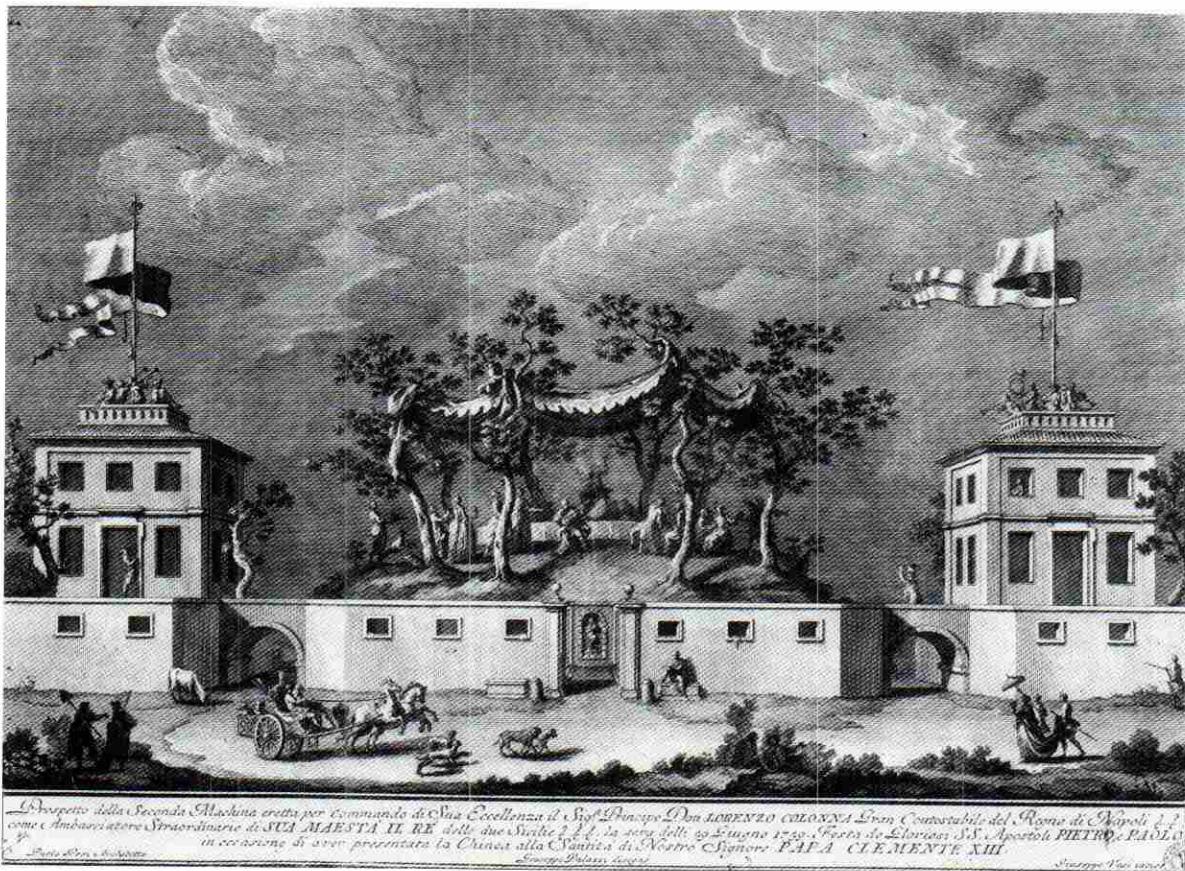
5. For an overview of 17th-century Roman festivals, see M. Fagiolo dell’Arco and S. Carandini, *L’effimero barocco: Strutture della festa nella Roma del ‘600*, 2 vols., Rome, 1977–78. For European ephemeral design, see W. Oechslin and A. Buschow, *Festarchitektur: Der Architekt als Inszenierungskünstler*, Stuttgart, 1984.

6. One study has already briefly made this point; see M. Boiteux, “Les Fêtes publiques dans l’environnement du palais,” in [École française de Rome] (as in n. 4), 636–45.

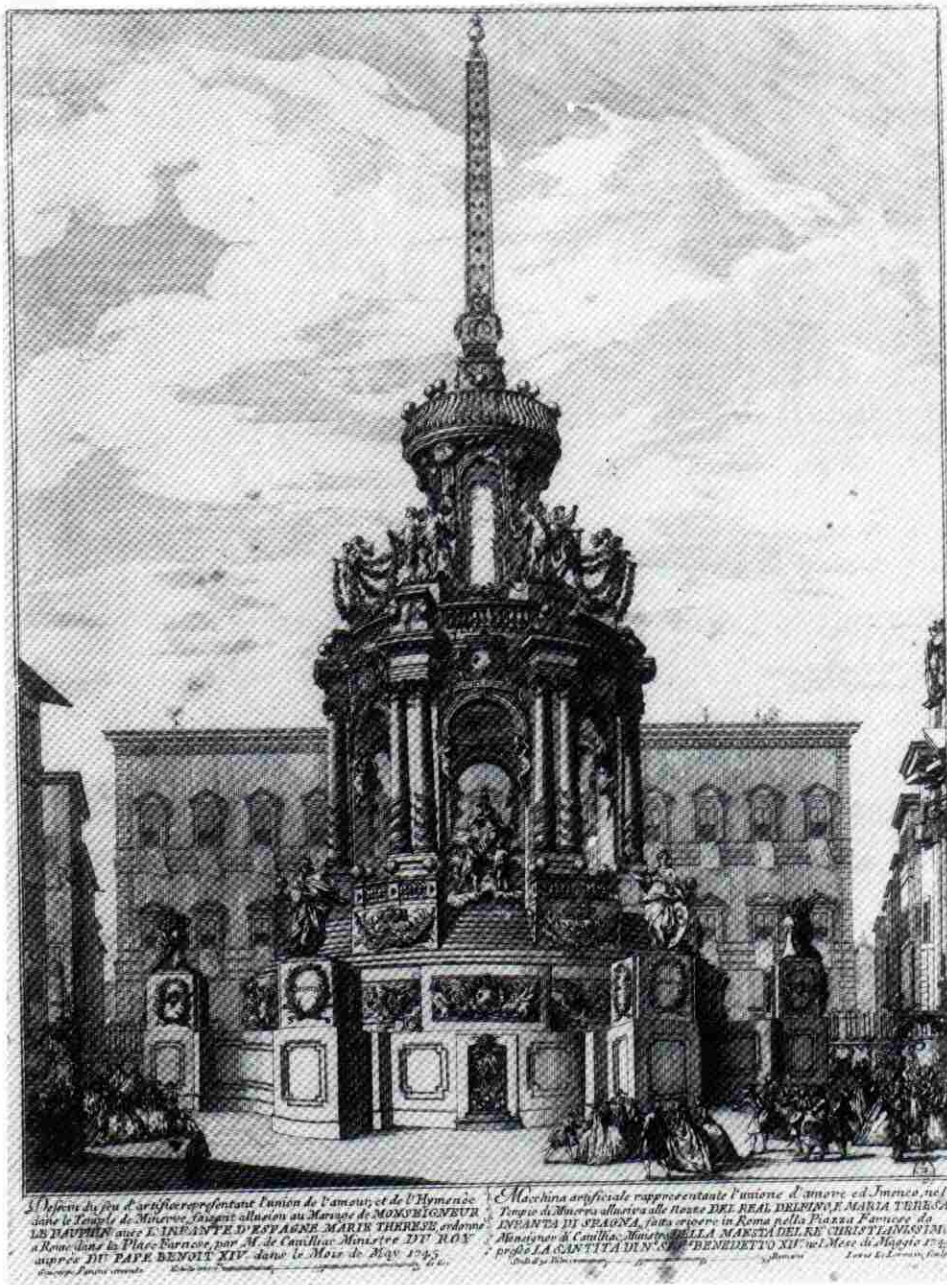
7. For illustrations of 106 of the 108 extant Chinaea etchings and some drawings for which no related prints exist, see Gori Sassoli, whose study is the most complete to date, and includes references to earlier scholarship.



1 Giuseppe Vasi, first set piece for the China of 1759, etching after Giuseppe Palazzi. BAV, Stampe III.267 (photo: BAV)



2 Vasi, second set piece for the China of 1759, etching after Palazzi. Cambridge, Mass., Houghton Library, Typ. 625.63.712 P (photo: by permission of the Houghton Library, Harvard University)



3 Jacques-Louis Le Lorrain, set piece built in the Piazza Farnese to celebrate the marriage of the dauphin Louis and Infanta Maria Theresa, 1745, etching. BC (photo: BC)

festival book, after readers have already united the words of the libretto and the illustrations, they learn that “the figures in print, depicting the sets, resemble them little or not at all.”⁸ Similarly, even though his correspondent was to “see the prints,” French ambassador La Rochefoucauld wrote that “the etching renders only imperfectly the beauties of the spectacle” of the festival held in Rome to celebrate the wedding of the dauphin Louis and Maria Theresa in 1745 (Fig. 3).⁹ In terms of the festival of the China, the prices and detailed descriptions of goods and services preserved in accounting and other records point to three-dimensional entities whose erstwhile existence is alternately confirmed, denied, or left ambiguous by what etchings depict. The comparison of relevant written documents with prints instructively recalls the epistemological limitations involved in reading images generally.

Nevertheless, the communicative power of the print must not be underestimated. Without being asked to do so, the Roman agent of the duke of Würtemberg promised to send his patron a portrait of the newly elected Clement XIII “as soon as . . . the prints come out.”¹⁰ A Huguenot traveler planned to mail his English correspondent a print of relics preserved in the cathedral of Cologne, no doubt to mock Catholicism, but also to make words more vivid.¹¹ Having years before seen in Dresden a book illustration after “an old painting,” Winckelmann asked a friend in Florence to hunt out the image with all haste, as it was to serve as a model for a fresco in the Villa Albani.¹² The international broadcast of prints after a battle scene painted for the king of Sardinia would, Alessandro Albani felt certain, advance the career of a Flemish artist under his protection.¹³

Sovereigns, too, saw to the distribution of prints. To a

young Venetian nobleman, Charles VII, king of the Two Sicilies (later Charles III of Spain), presented two illustrated volumes—one of the antiquities of Herculaneum, the other of the royal palace of Caserta—gifts important enough to merit mention in the Roman newspaper.¹⁴ Representatives of foreign monarchs took pains to transmit to their respective courts images related to ephemeral structures. A French consul thought he could omit further expatiation on the subject of festivities held in Rome to celebrate the second marriage of the dauphin Louis because “a print [was] being etched.”¹⁵ The Roman agent of the Two Sicilies mailed off China etchings to his sovereign, even though he assumed that numerous copies would already have been sent by others.¹⁶

Philipp von Stosch, Prussian-born antiquarian and spy, owned 591 prints related to festival structures that had been erected in several European cities in the course of more than two centuries, prints that included the China. In the existing scholarly literature, ephemeral architecture has often been understood as an outlet for designers' creative, even outlandish expression, or as a laboratory for experimental formal innovation.¹⁷ Yet these designers worked on commission, not on their own: freed from the constraints of propriety and tradition that informed permanent architecture, they still had to produce legible ensembles that redounded to their patrons' status and credit. That is to say, patrons had little desire to spend a small fortune on experiments. More to the point, ephemeral architecture had

its own constraints of propriety, its own rules and traditions. It fashioned its own way of engaging the visual, and was judged according to exacting standards by a well-informed public that knew how to link the structures to larger contexts. Stosch's festival prints, collected separately and assiduously, lend historical support to the idea that ephemeral design constitutes an independent genre of artistic production, not a poor stepchild of more ambitious projects.¹⁸ Implicit, too, in his system of ordering is the possibility of rapid consultation, whether by Stosch himself or by the numerous artists whose studies he supported.¹⁹

Finally, spared the distortions of elapsed time and distant space, while standing on the balcony of the Farnese palace on Sunday afternoon, June 20, 1745, Benedict XIV, “with [silk] print [Fig. 3] in hand,” and for “almost half an hour,” examined a temporary architectural structure, “compar[ing] many elements therein to the set piece itself.”²⁰ The pontiff's act suggests that the representational entities he studied were not equivalent, and that establishing the differences between them was a time-consuming, worthwhile, and delightful act of discrimination.

After a twenty-two-year hiatus engendered by the War of the Spanish Succession, the presentation of the China was revived in 1722. Alessandro Specchi, then house architect for the Colonna, expressed in the inscription of the etching related to the first set piece of that year, “a burning desire to give to the world, with prints, a small countersign” of

8. “Le figure in stampa rappresentanti le scene poco, o niente s'assomigliano; se ne deve incolpare la strettezza del tempo; si promette bene trà poco il darle fuori in tutto simili alla vaghezza de i loro originali”; G. A. Moneglia, *Ercole in Tebe: Festa teatrale . . . per le reali nozze de' serenissimi sposi Cosimo Terzo Principe di Toscana, e Margherita Luisa Principessa d'Orleans*, 2nd ed., Florence, 1661, 152.

9. “. . . vous verrez les Estampes de la decoration, mais je puis vous assurer que la gravure ne rend qu'imparfaitement la beauté du spectacle”; AMAE, vol. 797, fols. 340–340v (letter dated June 23, 1745).

10. “Subito che sortiranno i Rami, o sieno stampe mi darò l'onore di spedire a V.A.S. un ritratto del Pontefice”; GSStA PK, I, Rep. 81, Rom I (C), Nr. 3, Fasz. 1 (letter dated July 8, 1758).

11. “I bought a large Sheet on which all the consecrated Relicks preserved in this Cathedral are engraved. I'll send it to you with other Things by the first opportunity that offers. Its Contents are very curious”; Blainville, 1, 85.

12. See W. Rehm and H. Diepolder, eds., *Johann Joachim Winckelmann Briefe*, Berlin, 1952–57, II, 166; see also S. Röttgen, “Die Villa Albani und ihre Bauten,” in H. Beck and P. Bol, eds., *Forschungen zur Villa Albani: Antike Kunst und die Epoche der Aufklärung*, Berlin, 1982, 96.

13. For Albani's interventions for Hyacinth La Peigne, see F. Noack, “Des Kardinal Albani Beziehungen zu Künstlern,” *Cicerone*, XVI, 1924, 424, 427. Count Lagnasco, minister of the elector of Saxony, also sent a print: “J'ai envoyé à M.r Minelli une Estampe du Tableau, qui represente la Bataille du Col de l'Assiete, fait pour le Duc de Savoye par La Pegna Peintre Flammand. J'espere, qu'à present V.E. l'aura reçus, et qu'Elle n'aura pas trouvé mauvais, que j'ai pris cette liberté, dans l'esperance, qu'Elle l'aurait agréé”; H.St.A 750 (letter from Rome dated July 20, 1754). According to H. Honour, *Neoclassicism*, Harmondsworth, 1968, 88, “modern history pictures . . . were . . . often commissioned mainly with an eye to the print market.” For a study of the market relationship between painting and prints in the work of Angelica Kauffman, see Alexander.

14. “. . . si restitui in Roma da Napoli Sua Eccellenza il Sig. Stefano Guerra nobile Veneto, dopo avere ricevuto colà molte distinte finezze . . . in particolare da S.M. il Rè delle due Sicilie, che . . . fecegli il regio dono del primo tomo dell'Opera delle antichità del famoso Ercolano, e suo corrispondente Catalogo, e quella dei disegni delle regie fabbriche di Caserta”; Chracas, no. 6531, May 19, 1759, 2. The volumes were: *Le pitture antiche d'Ercolano*, Naples, 1757; and L. Vanvitelli, *Dichiarazione dei disegni del reale palazzo di Caserta*, Naples, 1756. In his introduction, Vanvitelli alludes to an international audience: “Bastava in vero per l'Opera, che queste fra le private mie carte si rimanessero; ma non avrebbe allora compreso l'Italia, anzi l'Europa, a qual sublimità giungano i pensamenti delle MM. VV.” Elsewhere he wrote:

“Richiesi al Re degli esemplari del libro, due per il Landgravio di Cassel, e poi circa una trentina di molti che me l'anno richiesto. Egli mi rispose: “Sì, dillo a Tanucci che te li dia, perché io l'ho fatti stampare per dispensarli e non per tenerli in Stamperia”; Strazzullo, II, 123 (letter from Naples dated Oct. 8, 1757).

15. “Le Pape, sur la description qu'on lui avoit faite de cette feste, voulut la voir la veille, et S. E. eut soin de faire illuminer le Theatre tout comme le jour dela representation . . . S.S. en fut si enchantée, qu'Elle avoit oublié son chapeau en sortant. Comme on doit en imprimer la relation, et qu'on travaille a graver une Estampe, je n'en dirai pas d'avantage a Votre Excellence”; AN, AE.B.I.965, fols. 242–43 (letter from Rome dated July 19, 1747).

16. “Quantunque possa credere, che saranno mandate à V. Ecc.za più Stampe di queste due Machine di Fuochi fatte fare dal Sig.re Contestabile, ad'ogni buon fine ne mando ancor io due esemplari per Machina”; AS, vol. 1242 (letter from Rome dated July 1, 1738).

17. This point of view is expressed in J. Rykwert, *The First Moderns: The Architects of the Eighteenth Century*, Cambridge/London, 1983, 357–61.

18. In an 18th-century biography, one sentence is devoted to Posi's ephemeral designs, in contrast to the pride of place given to his permanent structures; see F. Milizia, *Memorie degli architetti antichi e moderni*, 3d ed., Parma, 1781, II, 371–72.

19. Prints related to festival structures comprised 7 of the 324 volumes of Stosch's *Atlas*. For a list of all volumes, see “Catalogue de l'Atlas” in M. l'Abbé Winckelmann, *Description des pierres gravées du feu Baron le Stosch*, Florence, 1760. For Stosch, see L. Lewis, “Philipp von Stosch,” *Apollo*, LXXXV, 1967, 320–27; F. Noack, “Stosch, Albani und Winckelmann. Urkundliche Ergänzungen zu ihrer Geschichte,” *Belvedere*, n.s. VIII, 1929, 301–8; and H. Egger, “Philipp von Stosch und die für seinen Atlas beschäftigten Künstler,” in *Festschrift der Nationalbibliothek in Wien*, Vienna, 1926, 221–34.

20. “Corrisposero alla generale aspettativa le Feste qui fattesi per l'altro per il Matrimonio del Delfino . . . la ben intesa, ed eseguita Machina di fuoco all'ultimo gusto dipinta fece risaltare la commune curiosità à segno, che spinse l'Animo anche del Papa ad'esserne spettatore, onde . . . prendendo motivo d'uscire per la Visita dell'Esposizione del Venerabile, venne poi à questo Real Palazzo gustando della vista della Machina dal Balcone; Ivi con la stampa alla mano confrontò molte cose sù la Machina istessa, e compiacendosene per quasi mezz'ora, alle strida del numeroso Popolo ritrovatosi in Piazza non potè trattenerli di benedirlo per più volte”; AS, vol. 1065 (letter from Rome dated June 22, 1745). The material of the print is mentioned in ÖS RK 134 (letter from Rome dated June 26, 1745).

Constable Fabrizio Colonna's "magnificent generosity."²¹ Just as Atlas had the strength to support the earth on his shoulders, so too could the architectonic form and symbolic conceit of the set piece be carried over to the printed image, which could be sent wherever mail was delivered. Over the years, China prints were dispatched to locales as far-flung as Dresden, Palermo, Paris, Madrid, and Vienna.

The analysis of a wide array of heretofore unstudied documents facilitates a detailed historical reconstruction of China-related etchings. What follows in the first section will expand our knowledge of the festival, and indicate how the festival intersected with the printmaking industry in eighteenth-century Rome. The second section will treat of another form of gift, namely food given to the domestic staffs of guests who attended receptions held in the Palazzo Farnese, and to artisans who built the set pieces. Two individuals bridge the apparent gap between the production and dissemination of visual images, and the provisioning and distribution of things to eat.

Etchings: Protocol, Components, Production, Decoration, and Distribution

That visual images formed an integral part of the entire presentation of the China is made abundantly clear by the 1769 *Direzione istruttiva*, a protocol that delineates the constable's duties as Roman ambassador extraordinary to the king of the Two Sicilies.²² In receptions held at the Farnese palace, the constable's outriders were to distribute prints while standing in "the room next to the privy stairs [*scaletta*]," the same space in which their lord received guests.²³ It was the duty of the valet to deliver four prints of the set pieces to the pope on June 27, the eve of the presentation. Two were printed on satin (*raso bianco*) adorned with gold lace, the others on paper.²⁴ It sufficed to present the suite to the papal valet. Yet at times Benedict XIV, ever curious about ephemera, accepted the etchings himself while stopping in the Piazza Farnese.²⁵ The constable saw to it that prints were distributed to cardinal nephews, a gentleman from his staff performing that task. "One post beforehand" (that is, before June 28), a box with etchings on satin and paper was sent "to the royal court in Naples"; "many other personages" received prints on paper. Mailing lists were lodged with the secretary and the bookkeeper, duplication insuring against loss.

Whether carried by hand within Rome or mailed abroad, China etchings served as tangible, legible signs that the "Grand Constable of the Kingdom of Naples" still cut a prominent figure in Roman society, lending luster to his lord's reputation in the process. The visual structuring of the

prints bespeaks other functions too. Cast in an even light, the images often represent the set pieces as if they had been built in imaginary, not real space, and provide little indication that they were used for fireworks displays (Figs. 1, 2). Clarity of presentation helps to communicate the structures' symbolic content; to claim that the prints record a moment in time, or bear a direct relationship to what was built, is rash. Contemporaries would never have understood the etchings as unmediated images of what stood in the Piazza Farnese. Familiarity with ephemeral events, and with their preservation in various visual media, erased the risk of such conceptual confusion. Deprived of on-site presence, those who received these works of art by post knew of their dispatch before the event. Many details in the prints—human figures, pack and draft animals, plant materials—need not have matched anything that had existed, occurred, or been observed. Prints lent the individual imagination a structure on which to fashion a mental image, a structure nuanced by education and common cultural codes, and necessarily altered by personal experience.

Captions give specifics of time and place, titles, and proper names that locate the China in a political context whose parameters were well known to contemporary viewers. Printed pamphlet descriptions, or indications on the prints themselves, sometimes offer information about scale, without which it would be hard to imagine how the set pieces occupied real space. Additionally, the etchers' names are always included. Artists, patrons, and the curious who lived elsewhere could look at these prints, and use them for new purposes.

Related to the second set piece of 1743, an etching without inscription isolates itself within a decontextualized aesthetic realm (Fig. 4). The caption endows the image with a rarefied citation from ancient literature, a biographical reference to Charles VII's love of the hunt, and a sophisticated conceit.²⁶ Yet the graphic image evokes a set piece that seems far more pictorial than architectonic. The absent inscription—the absent subject—forces viewers, unusually, to study formal and compositional elements alone, since there is no incentive to wonder why the etching was made, what it was used for, or whether it reproduced an extant work.

Printed images need supporting surfaces. Payment is recorded to an illiterate carter named Vittorio Cordovani, who had transported fourteen reams of paper to Rome from Pioraco, a locality in the Marches that was an important center for the production of paper and a byword for paper of

21. For an illustration of the print, see Gori Sassoli, 81. The prints related to the set pieces of 1722 were actually published in July 1723; see Chracas, no. 926, July 10, 1723, 3.

22. See AC, II.GG.110.

23. This room is marked "X" on the plan of the first floor of the Palazzo Farnese, as reproduced in [École française de Rome], *Le Palais Farnèse*, II, Rome, 1980, 405.

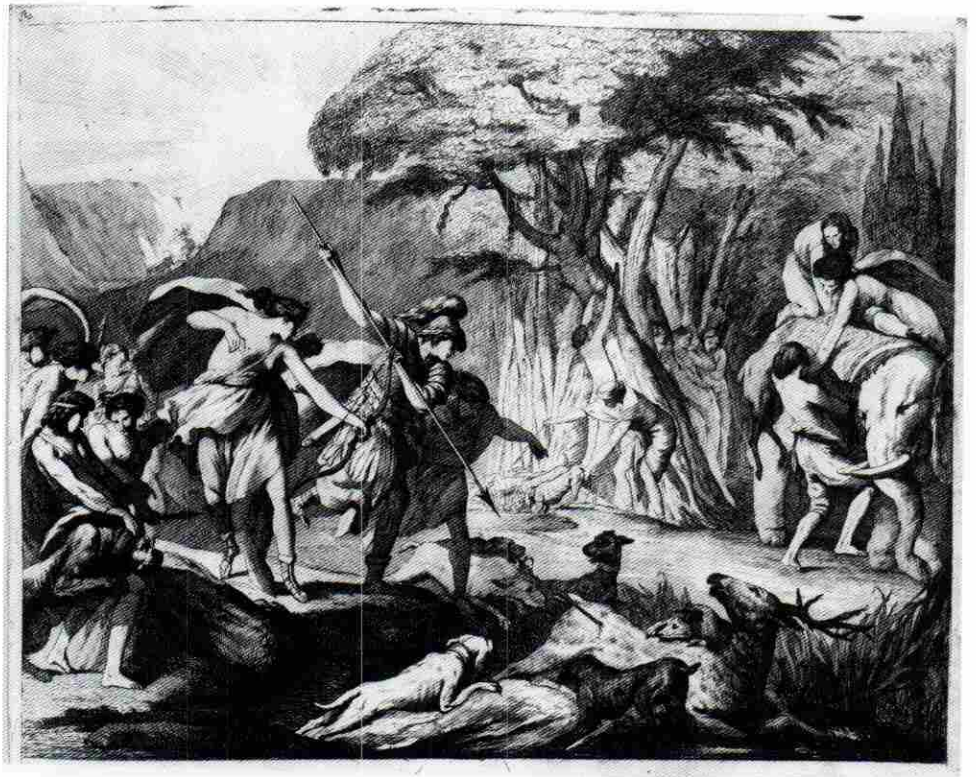
24. A hierarchical differentiation in material was typical: "ed intanto prostratosi a SSmi Piedi il di sopranominato Monsig. Olivieri presentolle in un bacile d'oro la Stampa del Deposito di marmo della Regina defonta [Maria Clementina Sobieski], in Carta, e in Seta guarnita di merletto d'oro, assai gradita dalla Santità Sua; e le medesime stampe in Carta furono anche

dispensata alla Famiglia Nobile Pontificia"; Chracas, no. 4293, Jan. 30, 1745, 18–19.

25. "Lunedì vigilia della festività de' suddetti gloriosi Principi degl'Apostoli . . . la Santità di Nostro Signore si trasferì . . . [al] Palazzo . . . Apostolico Vaticano . . . essendo già inalzata in piazza Farnese la prima machina di fuoco d'artificio . . . la Santità Sua facendo quella strada volle osservarla di passaggio, facendo fermare alquanto la muta. Quivi trovossi il Sig. Pietro Battisti, Soprintendente Generale dell'Ecma Casa Colonna, ad umiliare al SSmo Padre le stampe in rame di amendue le machine in un bacile d'argento, state ricevute con l'innata benignità dalla Santità Sua"; Chracas, no. 6081, July 3, 1756, 10–11.

26. For an illustration of an impression with letters, see Gori Sassoli, 111.

4 [François Hutin], second set piece for the *China* of 1743, etching, unsigned and undated proof without inscription. Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Kupferstich-Kabinet, A 738,2/Inv. Nr. 63273 (photo: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden)



high quality.²⁷ Major-domo Francesco Andreini posted the expense on April 27, 1759, two months before the etchings were to be distributed. He noted that the receipt Cordovani had carried with him had been mislaid in the bookkeeper's office. The master ledger records a payment of 42 scudi to paper manufacturer Girolamo Vittori; previous years' events can be used to reconstruct much of the information contained in the lost receipt.²⁸ In 1756, Vittori supplied fourteen reams of paper "for the two prints of the fireworks."²⁹ Accounting clerk Francesco Petrini, who drew up the mandate for payment, wrote that the paper was sent to Rome "in the present month of June," which is incorrect; at that time, the bookkeeper's office received a note from Vittori soliciting payment.³⁰

Vittori lived and worked far from Rome, and therefore experienced more intensely than others the effects of business practices in the Eternal City, according to which merchants typically waited many months for payment. He was often forced to write to remind the Colonna of unsettled accounts. In inventive letters he strove to find the right balance of words to flatter and to dun; to express insistence, while giving the noble clients the sense that their personal convenience determined everything. "Convinced" that the

Colonna would by then have "acknowledged the known fourteen reams of paper," Vittori assumed the merchandise had met with their approval, and asked the constable if he would "deign to give [him] some recognition of it." In 1756, Vittori used as an intermediary one "Fra Francesco Alessandrini," who lived in the community of Conventual Franciscans at SS. Apostoli, adjacent to the Palazzo Colonna. The merchant signed off "with the usual esteem and humble respects."

Physical examination of etchings reveals several common traits. A sheet of *carta real grande* is cream-colored, sturdy, and heavyweight, and has a rough texture that serves to attract ink. Held to the light, sheets show the labor-intensive nature of their fabrication: laid lines cross chain lines, ghostly shadows of the mold that a vat man once dipped into a soupy brew of rag pulp. After excess water had dripped through the mold, a newly formed sheet was ready to be couched on a piece of woolen felt. Watermarks consist of a double circle that surrounds a fleur-de-lis.³¹ In the present examples, an oblong folio format was used (Figs. 1, 2). Each printed sheet consists of four parts: (1) the field of the etched image; (2) the field of the engraved caption; (3) a series of three closely

27. For payment to Cordovani, see AC, I.A.443/152; for Pioraco, see *Enciclopedia Italiana*, s.v. An advertisement for a series of eight engravings of an Etruscan vase in the "Museo Kirker" states that "[l]'edizione è in carta imperiale di Pioraco"; Chracas, no. 7155, May 14, 1763, 14.

28. See AC, I.B.49, fol. 8851.

29. "Il Nro Comp:ta dia Credito nel Conto di Girolamo Vittorj mercante in Pioraco di Scudi quarantadue = per il pz:io di risme Quattordici = Carta in Foglio Real grande . . . per le due Stampe de Fuochi artificiali"; AC, I.A.410/33.

30. "Mi persuado che à quest'ora averà fatte riconoscere le sapute quattordici Risime Carta Realgrande se siano di suo genio, il che non dubito sapendo io esser le medeme di tutta perfezione, che gradirò si degni

darmene qualche rincontro. Ciò seguito dunque la supplicarei con suo comodo l'ammontare delle medeme ascendente à Scudi quarantadue, quando così le piaccia pagarle in mano di Fra Francesco Alessandrini M. Cnle di SS:Apostoli per mio conto ad Ella ben cognito, e per avermi da togliere la briga di piantare partita di simil bagatella"; AC, I.A.410/33.

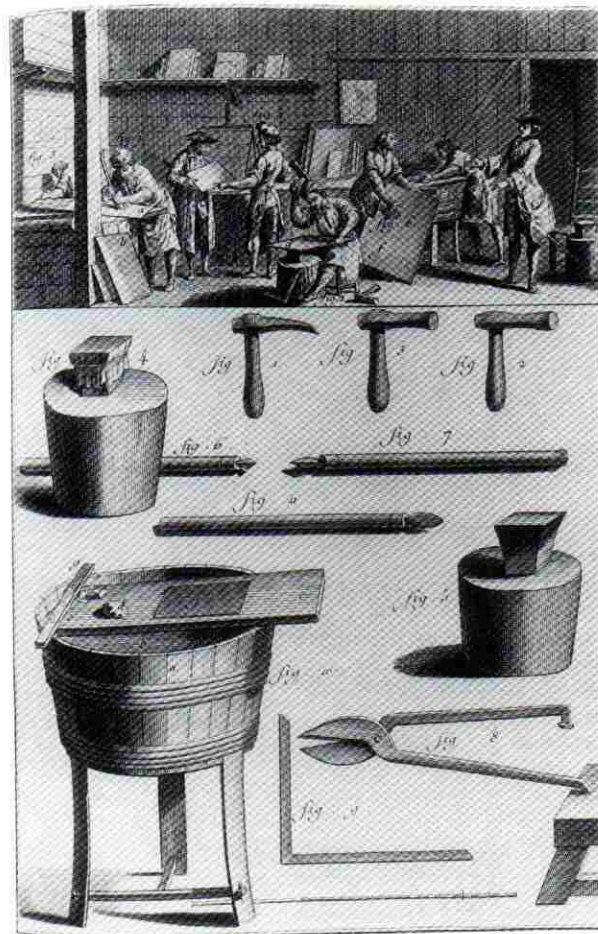
31. Encircled fleurs-de-lis are at times surmounted by a "V" or underset by an "M." Differently sized kidney-shaped forms are sometimes visible near the watermarks, either above or below the lily, with the "hilum" facing here left, there right. For related watermarks, see A. Robison, *Piranesi: Early Architectural Fantasies. A Catalogue Raisonné of the Etchings*, Chicago, 1986, 221, nos. 30, 32; and 222, no. 36bis.

juxtaposed rectangles that enframe printed image and text; and (4) a blank margin that surrounds the engraved frame, and comprises that part of the sheet that was not forced down onto the inked surface of the copperplate. A full sheet measured approximately 23.43 by 16.85 inches (59.5 x 42.8 cm). Sheet edges incorporate the variations inherent in hand-made products; ragged and uneven, they testify to seepage beneath the deckle, a wooden frame placed over the papermaker's mold to prevent the pulp from running off altogether.³² These deckle edges were removed, sometimes with large portions of the uninked margins of the sheet, when the prints were subsequently altered for ease of handling, preservation, or sale.

The Farnese palace was home to the Neapolitan plenipotentiary ambassador, and to about one hundred and fifty persons of every imaginable social condition. Among them was the etcher Giuseppe Vasi, born in the renowned Sicilian town of Corleone. He made forty-eight Chinae etchings: one in 1745; a pair annually from 1751 to 1755, and from 1759 to 1776; and a final set in 1778. As if to mark his resumption of service after a three-year hiatus, on May 15, 1759, Vasi received eight barrels of wine for the two plates he was to etch, a payment that household accounts stress "was not to become a precedent."³³ On May 19, 1759, he received 60 scudi for having etched the plates.³⁴ Vasi may have come to this recurring and remunerative task in his capacity as royal printmaker and wardrobe master of the palace.

With the division of labor characteristic of early modern Europe, Vasi would probably not have prepared the copperplates, a process that required specialized equipment, and a considerable expenditure of time. The application of varnish to the finished product fell more properly within his bailiwick, and had to be carried out scrupulously to avoid imperfections in the etchings.

On March 26, 1759, boilermaker Alessandro Pittori consigned to the Colonna administration "two copperplates . . . for etching the said two set pieces."³⁵ Although the receipt that he presented is not preserved, there is an analogous document from 1756, when the two plates weighed a total of 26½ pounds. "Having been hammered, smoothed with pumice, planished, and treated with carbon," they were ready for use. Pittori received a separate payment "for having burnished the above-mentioned copperplates." The asking prices had been agreed upon beforehand, a specification that helped insure full payment and implies continuities of patronage. Pittori states explicitly that his tasks were performed "by order of Sig. Paolo Posi," the designer of the



5 [Benoît-Louis] Prévost, *Chaudronnier planeur*, engraving after Desgerantins, from *Recueil*, s.v. "chaudronnier," pl. III (photo: courtesy Mortimer Rare Book Room, Smith College, Northampton, Mass. [MRBR])

set pieces, to whom the finished products were finally consigned.³⁶

Pittori's work is made both specific and general in the plate volumes of the *Encyclopédie*.³⁷ The negotiation of such an apparently paradoxical epideictic space is the essence of these illustrations, a series of "how-to" manuals: "how-to-do" and, by extension, "how-to-know." There we learn that "there [are] three kinds of coppersmiths: boilermakers, planishers, and makers of musical instruments." An illustration explicates the coppersmith-planisher's craft (Fig. 5).

Having first stripped the dross left by the manufacturing process, the planisher flattened the plate by pounding it on an anvil set on top of a wooden block. Hammering increased density and solidity, and even area by up to one-fifth;

32. For paper manufacture, see *Recueil*, s.v. "papeterie." In 18th-century France at least, women found work in this industry, especially in the final stages of production: hanging spurs (groups of four or five sheets) in the drying room; picking over, smoothing, folding, and finally gathering individual sheets into quires.

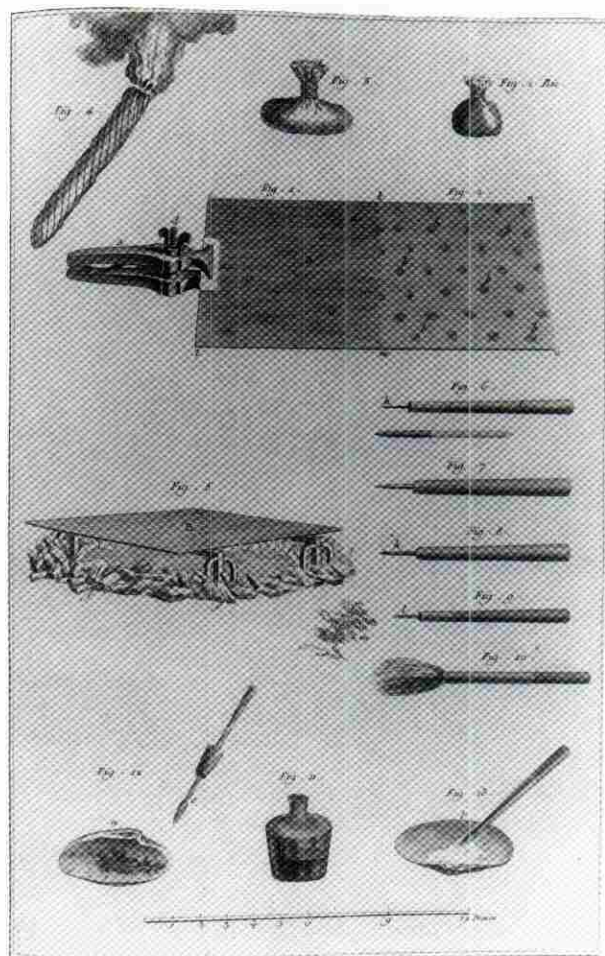
33. "Sig.re Pietro della Bitta Canevaro . . . potrà dare, al S.re Giuseppe Vasi Incisore de rami Barili Otto = Vino di Cantina . . . per recognizione delli due rami, che deve incidere per li due Fuochi artificiali . . . e questi da non passarsi in esempio"; AC, I.A.438/155.

34. "E adi 19=detto [May 1759] [scudi] 60=mta . . . pagati à Giuseppe Vasi Incisore de Rami per aver'inciso in Rame le dette due Macchine"; AC, I.B.49, fol. 873l.

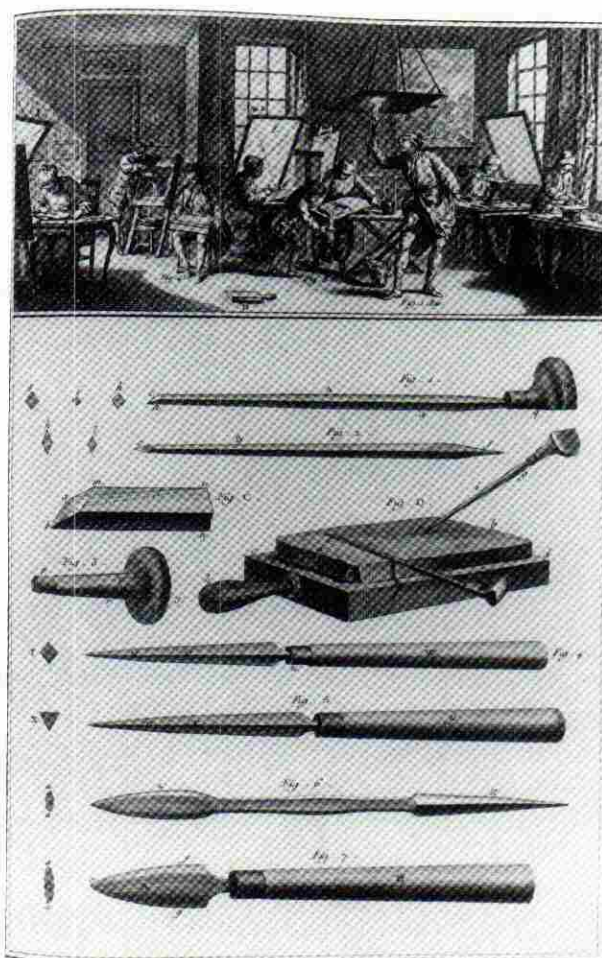
35. "E adi 23=detto [Aug. 1759] [scudi] 11:825 mta . . . pagati ad Alessandro Pittori Caldararo per il prezzo di n:o 2=Rami dati li 26: Marzo pas:to per incidere le dette due Macchine"; AC, I.B.49, fol. 885l.

36. "1756 @ 27 Marzo; Per hauere fatto Due Rami per Incidere Le Machine delli Fochi tutti battuti, e pomiciati lisci, e pianati, e Carbonati per ordine del Sig.r Paulo Posi Architetto tutti due Imbroniti di peso L.e 26—5 a [baiocchi] 45 la L.a [scudi] 11:90; E più per fattura di hauere imbronito li sudetti due Rami, e consegnati al sud.o Sig.re Paulo Posi Architetto [scudi]=80"; AC, I.A.410/10. The 1756 unit price of 6.35 scudi nearly equals the 6 scudi spent by Giovanni Battista Falda in 1669; see Consagra, xcvi, n. 2.

37. See *Recueil*, s.v. "Graveur en taille douce, en maniere noire, maniere de crayon &c.," see also *Encyclopédie*, s.v. "graveur."



6 [A.-J.] Defehrt, *Gravure en taille douce*, engraving after Prévost, from *Recueil*, s.v. "Graveur en taille douce," pl. II (photo: MRBR)



7 Defehrt, *Gravure en taille douce*, engraving, from *Recueil*, s.v. "Graveur en taille douce," pl. I, detail (photo: MRBR)

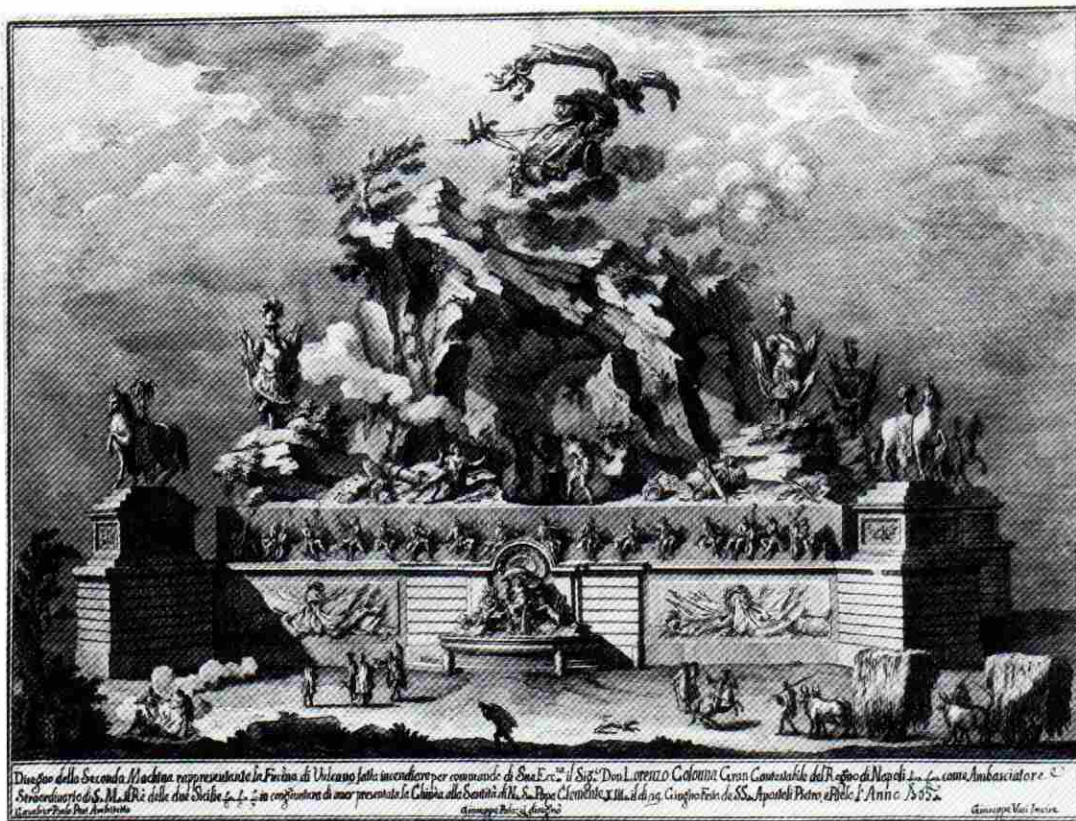
resulting uneven edges were removed with an angle iron and shears. The planisher smoothed away traces of the hammer's blows with a pumice stone, frequently flushing the plate with water. Next, the plate was tacked onto a wooden plank by means of four nails. The plank was angled obliquely over a wooden tub filled with water and a bit of nitric acid. Rinsing the plate as necessary in the weak acidic solution, the planisher drew a lump of charcoal—specially prepared from willow, carefully selected, and wrapped in cloth—over the surface of the plate to remove lines the pumice left behind. Finally, once the plate had been oiled, a steel burnisher was drawn across its surface to create a mirrorlike sheen. A final coat of oil protected against oxidation.

The vignette depicts the interior of an atelier in which (on the left), a worker weighs a finished copperplate in the presence of a printmaker, who carefully inspects it for imperfections. On the right, the printmaker extends his hands to receive the plate. Differences in clothing here are significant: shop hands wear aprons, the printmaker a tricorne, coat, and sword. Before going into the street, the printmaker had to dress himself in a way that befitted his social pretensions. He entered the shop to acquire the plate; there, the contrast both between his clothing and the workers', and between his gestures and those of the man who hands him the plate, locates them within the hierarchy of trades and

professions. By replacing the figure of the archetypal printmaker with that of Paolo Posi—or his proxy; or Giuseppe Pozzi, who etched the China plates of 1756—one can visualize what may have taken place in Pittori's shop.

With copperplates fresh from the planishing, Vasi could set about his work in 1759. The *Encyclopédie* provides an illustration of the materials and equipment involved (Fig. 6). First, the plate had to be degreased with whiting and a linen cloth. A second cloth was then used to wipe every impurity from the surface. Two types of varnish were in common use among printmakers. To create "soft varnish," artisans would set the clean plate over glowing embers in order to warm it. By first tapping the plate with a ball of varnish wrapped in cloth, they were able to spread the substance with a similarly shaped cloth pad. The finished surface had to be evenly coated. After the application of varnish, and before it had time to cool, the plate was blackened by the smoke of a link. In the case of "hard varnish," the plate was dotted with varnish before it was set over the embers. A cloth used only with this type of varnish was then drawn across the surface to spread the substance evenly. The plate was blackened and then set over embers, the unvarnished surface facing the heat. Embers were piled so as to throw the most intense heat to the edges of the plate.

Another image shows how to blacken varnish (Fig. 7). The



8 Vasi, second set piece for the Chinaea of 1767, etching after Palazzi, proof before letters. Rome, Museo di Roma, Gabinetto Comunale delle Stampe, GS 727 (photo: Oscar Savio)

paradigmatic copperplate, too heavy to be held by hand, was suspended above the artisan's head. He had to move the link along the length and breadth of the plate in a regular pattern, taking care not to let the cloth of the link (much less the flame) touch the varnished surface. Blackening caused the varnish to lose its transparency, forming a surface that etchers could see, and through which they could draw their needles. Oiled-paper screens at the three windows diffused what must have been, for this type of work, a too-bright daylight. A special apparatus behind the screens supported lighting fixtures that permitted night work. In his atelier, located in three ground-floor rooms of the Palazzo Farnese, Vasi used these techniques with a skill that made him one from whom Piranesi came to learn. According to Luigi Vanvitelli, Vasi was the best etcher in Rome, excellent at rendering the overall view, less good at drawing figures.³⁸

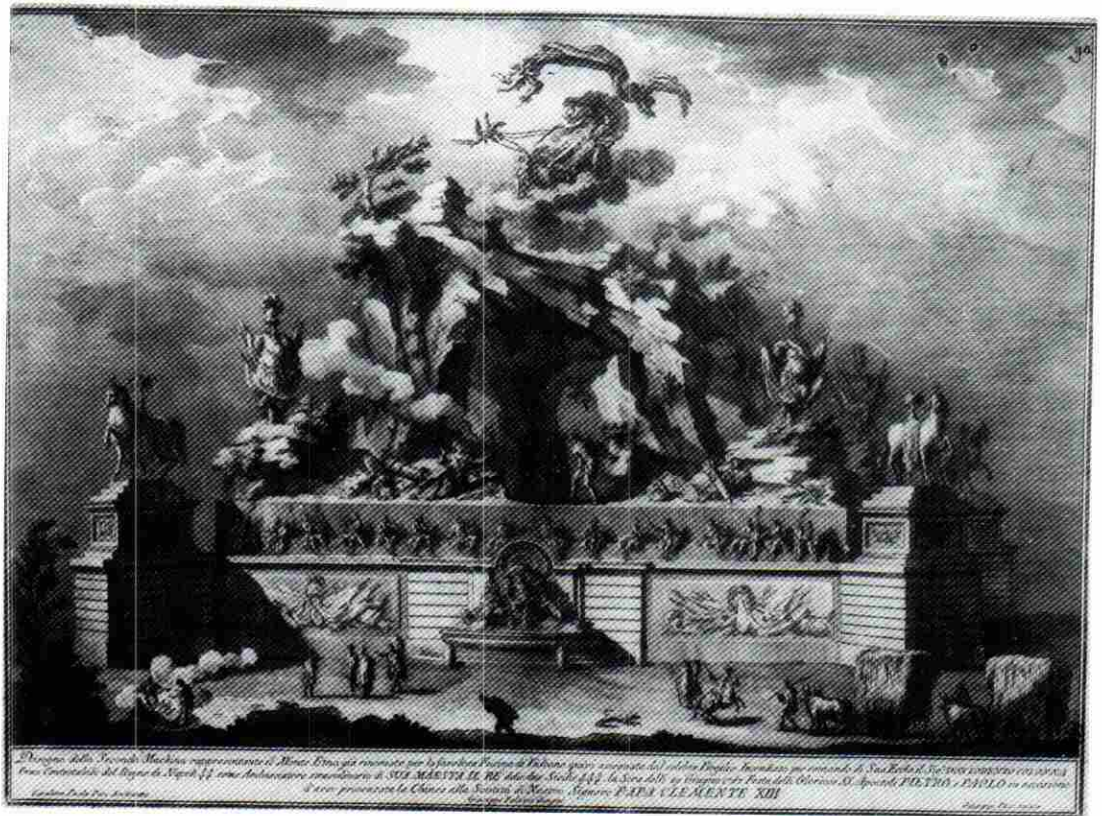
Vasi did not engrave plate captions. A proof before letters related to the second set piece of 1767 is instructive in this context (Fig. 8). Fortunately—and unusually—it is possible to say something about the provenance of this etching, and of seven others preserved in Rome, all with inscriptions written in one hand.³⁹ Two proofs before letters were

38. "Circa il disegno della Santa Casa, piaccia Dio quello che sarà, perché Vasi è goffo nel disegnare. Io non ebbi tempo di farlo, onde non so quello che riuscirà, perché a questi, senza stampella, non vi è da sperare molto, benché sia il migliore Intagliatore"; "Circa il costo del rame, andate dal Vasi, il quale è l'unico che potrà intagliarlo bene, dico la veduta, et esso poi dovrà prendere altro intagliatore per intagliare ad acqua forte e bulino le figure le quali bisogna farle disegnare da qualch'uno che sappia disegnare e non da guaste creature"; see Strazzullo, I, 118, 123 [letters from Caserta dated respectively Feb. 22 and Mar. 4, 1752].

obtained by archaeologist Rodolfo Lanciani, and form part of a body of graphic representations. In an autograph manuscript he writes that "the importance of this collection derives from the large number of original drawings and prints acquired by me from the heirs of the architects [and] printmakers"; Paolo Posi's name figures among the architects.⁴⁰ Lanciani's notes recall that prints are cultural artifacts no less complex than paintings or sculptures. We are often taught that printing is a mechanical reproductive medium—as if paintings never reproduced anything—even though each print is a physical object that has a history of production and use. Some proofs before letters remained in Posi's possession, and were apparently sold by his heirs around 1900.⁴¹ That Posi kept trial proofs is itself noteworthy, but their existence proves that drawings of projected Chinaea set pieces were finished well in advance of construction. Like presentation drawings, they must have been highly finished and attractive, to communicate something vivid to the patron, yet extant Chinaea-related drawings lack both measurements and a scale. The print, at several removes from such sources, cannot safely be read as a mere transcription of what came to be built on site.

Like the sculptors, painters, masons, and carpenters, who

39. The pattern of citation is as follows: "1767, 1" refers to the print related to first set piece of 1767, "1767, 2" to the second, and so on. Six impressions before letters are in Rome, Museo di Roma, Gabinetto Comunale delle Stampe, GCS 726 (1767, 1), GCS 727 (1767, 2), GCS 733 (1770, 2), GCS 734 (1771, 1), GCS 736 (1771, 2), and GCS 740 (1773, 2); two others are in Rome, Biblioteca dell'Istituto Nazionale d'Archeologia e Storia dell'arte, Sala Lanciani, Roma XI.58.2.51 (1773, 2), and Roma XI.58.2.54 (1774, 2).



9 Vasi, second set piece for the *China* of 1767, etching after Palazzi. BC (photo: BC)

usually signed their contracts in early May, Vasi received and made use of drawings of the projected set pieces. Vasi transferred these drawings in reverse to copperplates. On sheets rendered transparent with essence of turpentine or Venetian varnish he traced, in black chalk or India ink, the ink-and-wash drawings from Posi's studio. The transparent paper was turned over, and fastened with wax to a white sheet whose lower surface, having already been rubbed with black chalk or sanguine, was set on the varnished plate. Drawing a needle firmly along the lines visible through the upper transparent sheet, he pressed chalk from the lower sheet onto the varnish. Vasi then scraped a reverse image through the varnish, which would eventually create a print with the proper orientation; such must have been the norm with topographical printmaking. Three weeks' concentrated effort would seem a conservative time estimate for labor so exacting and prints so detailed; indeed, Vasi may well have begun his work soon after March 26, when boilermaker Pittori had finished fabricating the copperplates (Figs. 1, 2). By the end of May, however, he would have etched the plates, and then had prints pulled by someone else.⁴² In the meantime, inscriptions were devised, probably by Posi, and perhaps in alternate versions. Although primarily a function

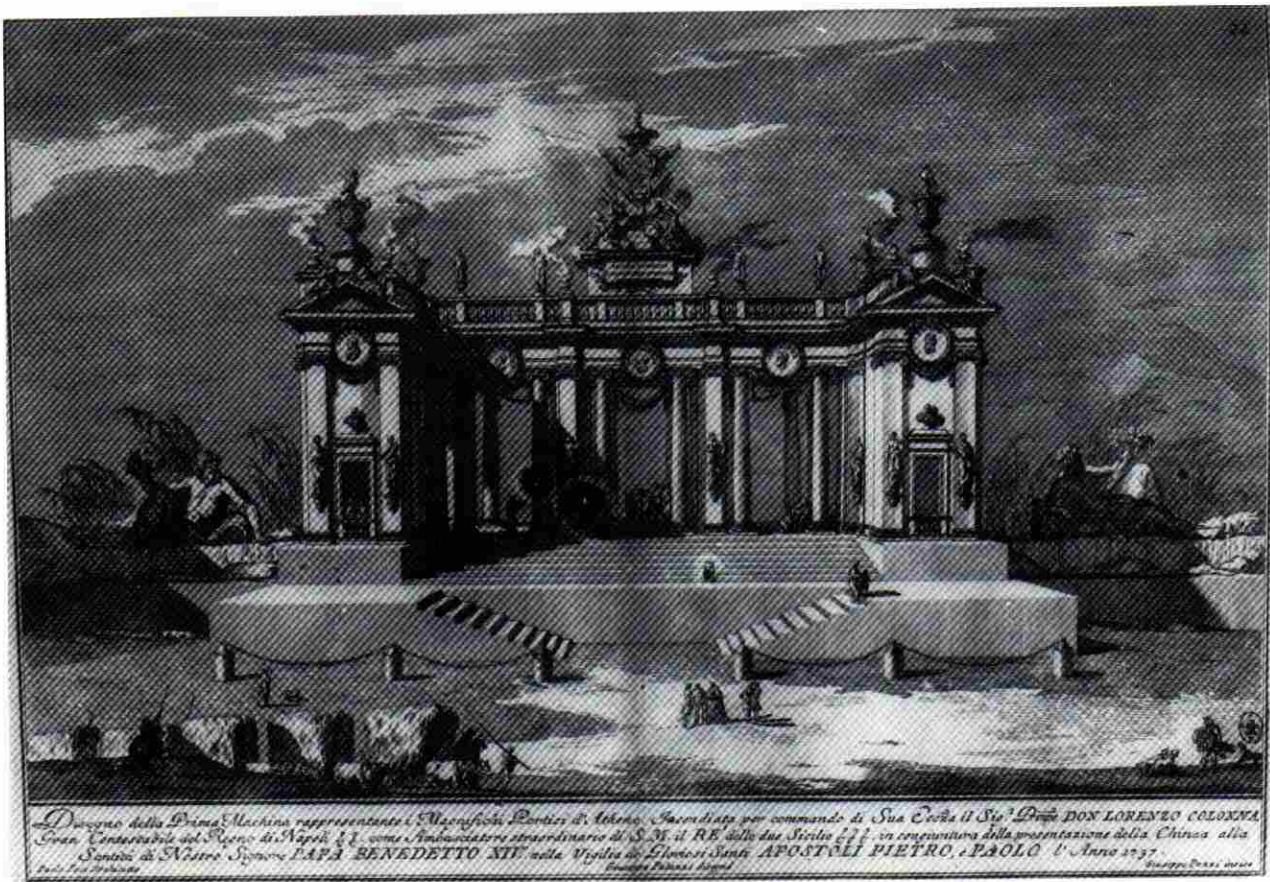
of politics, wording had an economic component. The standard practice was to pay for inscriptions by letter, so brevity was the soul of savings. Even if its mechanisms are as yet obscure, a decision-making process was in place for establishing the final form of inscriptions. On numerous occasions their texts formed an already censored source for newspaper accounts of the formal and symbolic content of *China* set pieces.

Individual letters of the manuscript inscriptions vary in thickness, size, and spacing (Fig. 8). The writer has added tonic accents to the words *fucina* (forge) and *Chinea*, which is odd, as such accents are rarely printed. The pen-and-ink inscription bears the traces of an idiosyncratic hand, rather than the precise, practiced, and predictable outlines of the calligrapher's art. The contrast emerges clearly by comparing the before-letters proof to the final state (Fig. 9). Written on a series of parallel lines, letters in the printed inscription are regularly spaced, slanting from lower left to upper right in a rigorously repeated rhythm. Majuscles are distinguished from minuscules by a precise proportional system, and by immediately perceptible differences in the thickness of engraved lines. Capital letters highlight a series of proper names—those of the Roman ambassador extraordinary; the

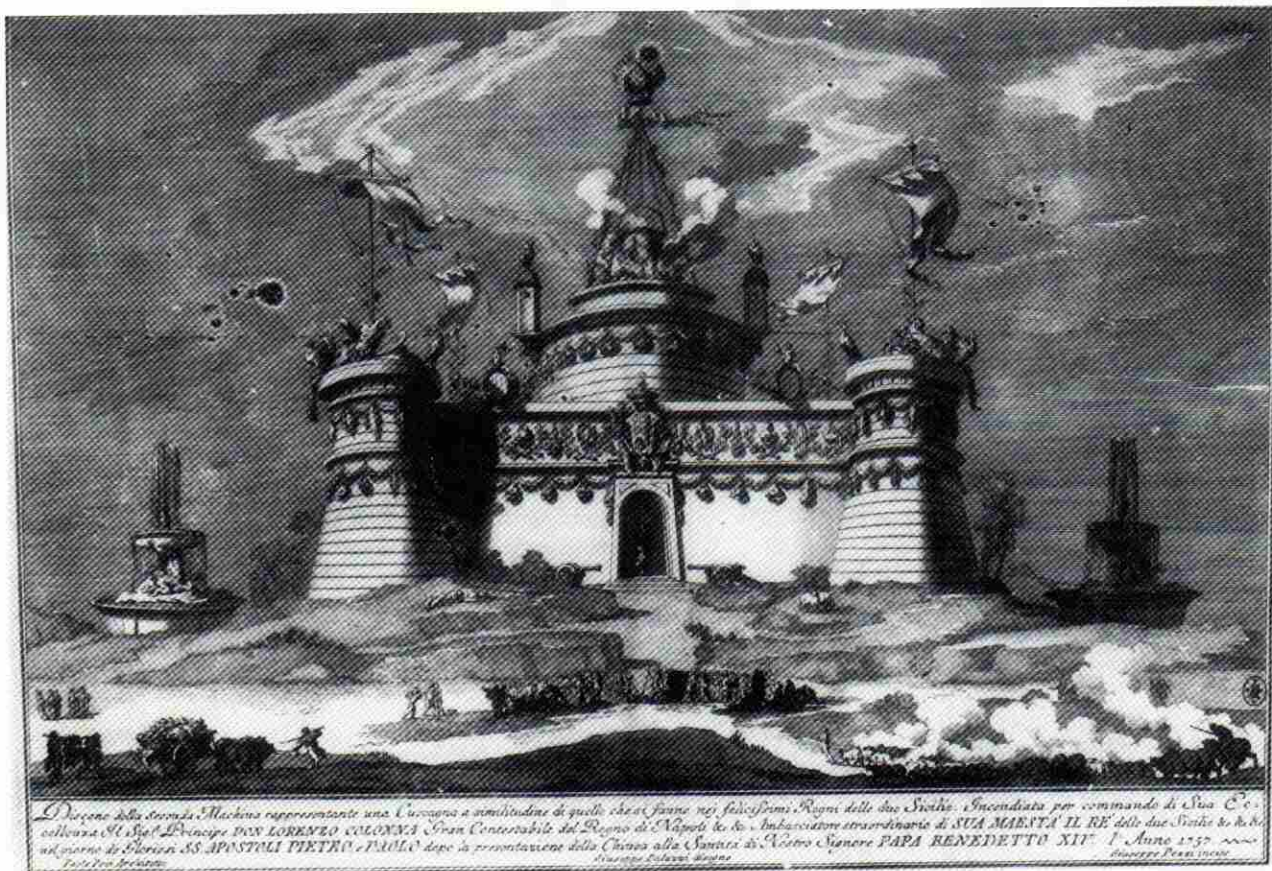
40. "L'importanza di questa collezione deriva dal gran numero di disegni originali e stampe avanti lettera da me acquistate dagli eredi degli architetti incisori . . . Paolo Posi"; Rome, Biblioteca dell'Istituto Nazionale d'Archeologia, ms Lanciani 136 (2), fol. 3.

41. A recent sale catalogue states that *China*-related drawings "were bought in Rome in the late nineteenth century at a time when large numbers of eighteenth-century architectural and decorative drawings were to be found"; Trinity Fine Art Ltd., *An Exhibition of Architectural and Decorative Drawings*, London, 1990, 18.

42. On May 31, 1754, for example, Vasi made his first consignment of 1,350 prints to the Colonna dispensing storeroom, a figure that represented 18.97 percent of the 7,116 prints pulled that year. On June 27, 450 prints appeared, for a total of 4,800 (67.45 percent); on June 28, the day of presentation, 250 additional impressions were delivered, for a total of 5,050 (70.97 percent). Only on July 11, twelve days after the second set piece was dismantled, was the full complement received; see AC, I.A.393.



10 Giuseppe Pozzi, first set piece for the Chinaia of 1757, etching after Palazzi. BC (photo: BC)



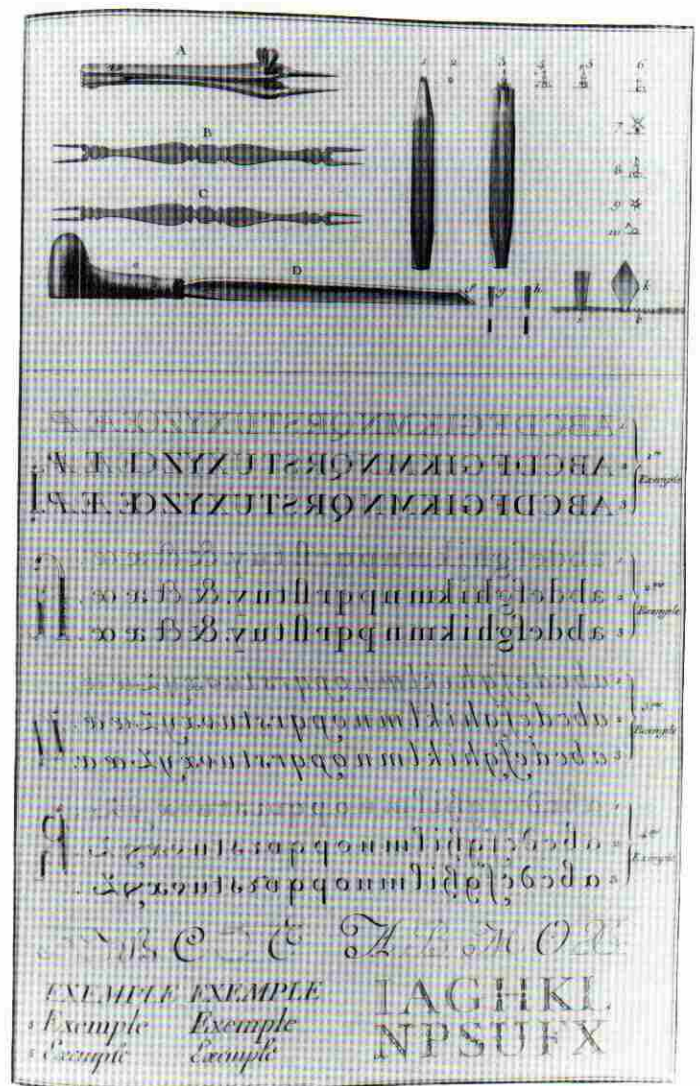
11 Pozzi, second set piece for the Chinaia of 1757, etching after Palazzi. BC (photo: BC)

tribute-rendering sovereign, simultaneously absent and present; “the glorious holy apostles,” whose lives and ministries underlay the political pretensions of the occupant of the Holy See (whose own name sets up another historical lineage)—and stand telegraphically for the entire diplomatic act.

On May 19, 1759, one “Giovanni Petroschi, engraver of letters in copper” received 19.80 scudi for his work on the plates.⁴³ That date hints at the plate’s state of completion, for Petroschi would not have begun his work before Vasi finished his. Although the bill he presented in 1759 has apparently been lost, on June 10, 1757, he presented a similar account of services “according to the prices already established in other years.”⁴⁴ Petroschi had thus established a dependable relationship with the Colonna household.

Petroschi’s payment was posted on the same day that Vasi received his, so the creation of the etched plates, and their outfitting with written text, occurred some seven weeks before the ephemeral structures were unveiled in the Piazza Farnese. In both 1757 and 1759, Petroschi engraved the inscriptions; in the former (and typical) instance, majuscules cost more than minuscules (Figs. 10, 11). He specified that the minuscules were “in the French style,” a phrase that speaks to the widespread dissemination of French patterns, and prompts another look at the *Encyclopédie*, where the trade of “engraving in letters” is delineated in letters and images (Fig. 12). Petroschi followed these steps: (1) oiling and wiping the plate “with a piece of old hat” to remove the brilliance that came from its burnishing;⁴⁵ (2) drawing a series of parallel lines (the implements used for the task are shown at letters A, B, and C: the first is like a compass, and allows for variable spacing by means of a screw; the second and third draw fixed lines only); (3) setting the plate on a cushion; (4) sketching letters in with a graver; (5) using a burin to thicken the outlines, moving from bottom to top, then from top to bottom, all the while turning the plate (this action was repeated several times, to create rough surfaces within the grooves, rather than a uniform, unmodulated gouging, so that the ink would hold in the depressions); (6) removing burrs with a scraper; and (7) using the burin to create serifs on certain letters, to give them the obliqueness characteristic of penmanship. Below the tools are specimens of engraved letters, majuscules and minuscules both, with a cursive style that bears comparison to Petroschi’s.

The tasks involved require concentration, a hand both steady and firm, and unerring precision. The repetitive and comparatively rigid nature of engraving letters stands in sharp contrast to the way in which a figural image was built up through etching. In the latter case, chance and accident play a positive role, generating deviations from drawings



12 Defehrt, *Gravure en lettre*, engraving after Aubin, from *Recueil*, s.v. “Graveur en lettres,” pl. I (photo: MRBR)

that point to a discerning artistic temperament. Vasi could return to areas already worked—making changes, adding details, biting and rebiting the plate if necessary. Etching has some of the characteristics of freehand drawing, and much of its license.

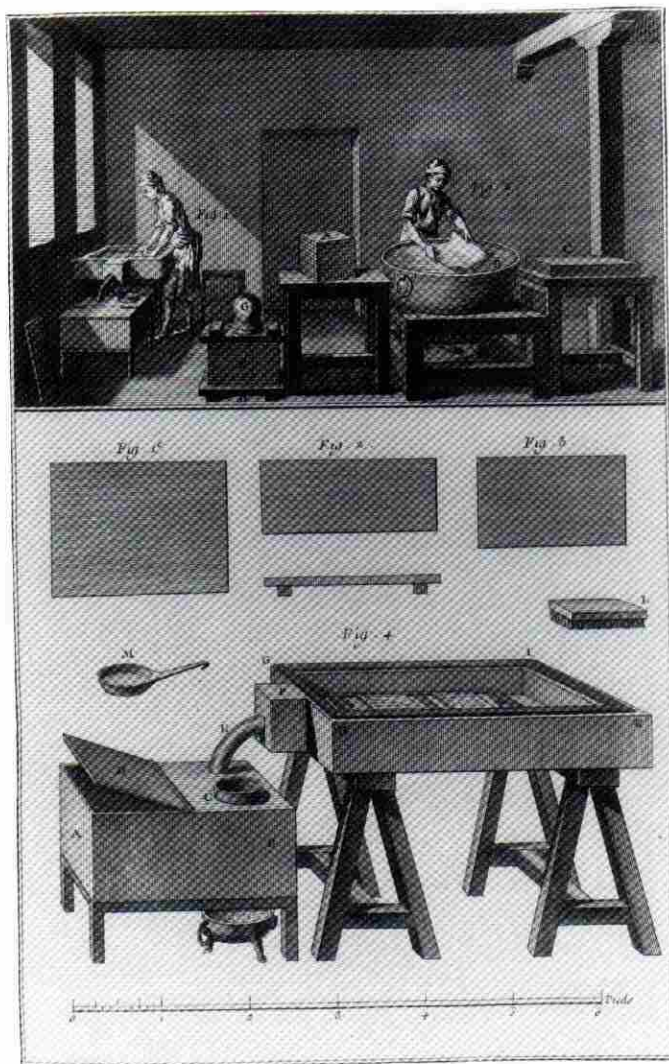
In 1759 the printer Filippo Gismondi recorded having pulled 7084 prints on paper “of the first and second set pieces.” The cost of pulling prints was .75 scudi per hundred, which equals a unit price of 4 *quattrini*, with 5 *quattrini* equivalent to 1 *baiocco* (.01 scudo). Cash payment of 53.13 scudi reflects the dimensions of his task, as do portions of wine and bread that Gismondi shared with unnamed assistants.⁴⁶

43. “E adi 19=detto [May 1759] [scudi] 19:80 mta . . . pagati à Gio: Petroschi Incisore de Caratteri in Rame per aver'inciso le lettere nelli due Rami di dette Macchine”; AC, I.B.49, fol. 873l.

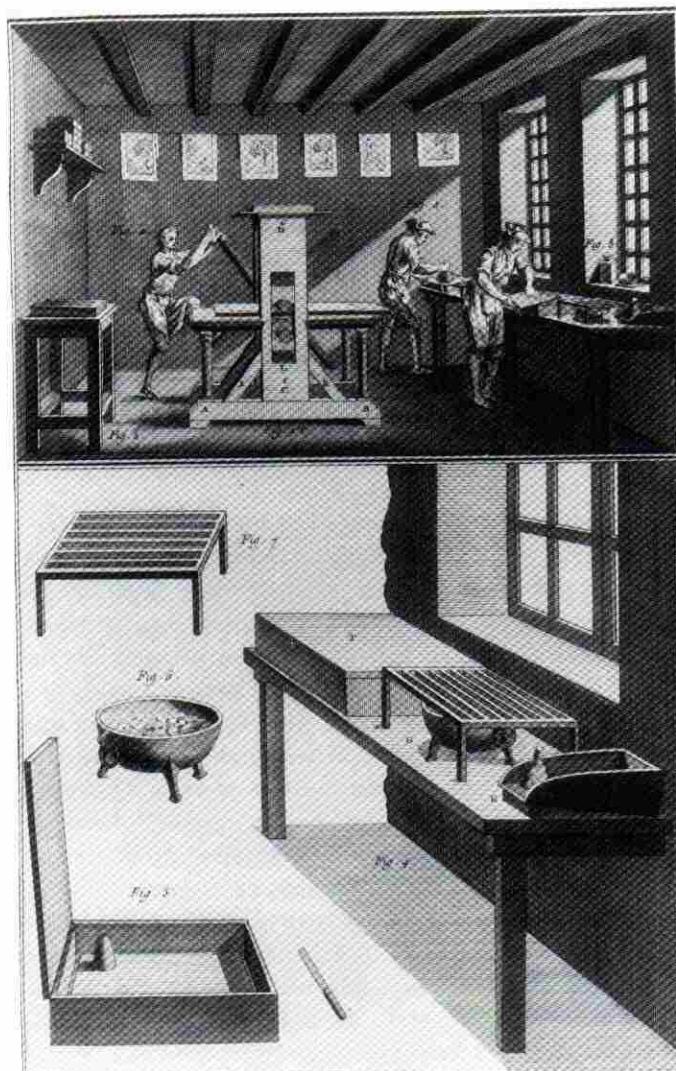
44. “Adi 10 Giug.o 1757; Nota delli Caratteri incisi da Giovanni Petroschi nelli due Rami delle Machine de Fuochi . . . sicondo li prezzi stabeliti già li altri anni; Caratteri Maiuscoli sono [scudi] 12:70; Caratteri Corsivi grandi alla Francese [scudi] 7:75”; AC, I.A.421/44.

45. “Esito ad Oglio. . . 3=d.o [June 1757] Per l'Intagliatore di lettere per li Rami de Fuochi [foghietta] 1/2”; AC, I.A.421/170.

46. “Per havere stampato per l'Eccma Casa Colonna N.o settemila, è ottantaquattro fogli de fochi artificiali della prima, è Seconda Machina à ragione di [baiocchi] .75 il cento importano in tutto Scudi 53:13”; AC, I.A.436/32. In addition: “A Filippo Gismondi Stampatore,” sixteen pots; AC, I.A.438/155; and “A Spesa per la Chinaa per pane . . . alli . . . Stampatori,” no amount recorded; I.A.437/142.



13 [Robert] Benard, *Imprimerie, tremperie et lavage des formes*, engraving after Goussier, from *Recueil*, s.v. "Imprimerie en caracteres," pl. XIII (photo: MRBR)



14 Benard, *Imprimerie en taille douce*, engraving after Goussier, from *Recueil*, s.v. "Imprimerie en taille douce," pl. I (photo: MRBR)

The printer was assisted by the "quartermaster of the herd of buffalo cows," Gaetano Benaglia, who received a barrel of wine for China-related services, and who supervised the distribution of prints.⁴⁷ At the outset, Benaglia saw to it that the fourteen reams of paper were transported three times. The reams had to be carried from the bookkeeper's office to the dispensing storeroom; thus the former was located in the princely palace and the latter in the household-staff palace, on the eastern side of the Piazza della Pilotta, where deliveries and dispatches, loading and unloading, were concentrated.⁴⁸

In the dispensing storeroom, individual sheets of paper were stamped. Examination of etchings whose uninked margins have not been cut away often reveals an oval stamp on the reverse, consisting of two interlocked Cs surmounted by a crown, the seal of Colonna patronage. Then the sheets were brought "to the top of the mezzanines of the palace," where the printer worked. Finally, the etchings were returned to the dispensing storeroom, whence they were distributed.

The producing of China etchings was taken so seriously that

an account of the process was written down in 1763.⁴⁹ By the constable's "own personal inspiration," one Nicola Cappelli was named supervisor. On Saturday, June 4, a printer presented himself; payments identify him as Filippo Gismondi.⁵⁰ Cappelli asked the bookkeeper to provide paper; it was from this functionary that Gaetano Benaglia, in 1759, had obtained fourteen reams. This time, four reams were disbursed: forty quires, each with twelve sheets; another quire with sixteen, for a total of 496 sheets per ream. Workers "unfolded and moistened" two reams of paper. (Moistening causes the paper to absorb less ink during printing.) Both moistened and dry reams were then transported "to the usual room at the foot of stairs between the second and third corridor of the household staff [palace]." "There," the text continues, "the [rolling] press, carbon, grate, and every other necessary thing for printing" had already been put into place. Finally, the bookkeeper presented an etched copperplate to the deputy.

On Monday, June 6, Cappelli gave the copperplate to the printer Gismondi. That consignment effected, both men made their way "to the said room," where printing was begun. "The engraver of the inscription," whom payment

documents identify as Giovanni Petroschi, was also present.⁵¹ After some initial trial proofs were pulled, certain letters were “realigned and better proportioned . . . for greater precision of the impression.” This implies that Petroschi had come prepared with the appropriate tools for scraping and smoothing, so that traces of change could be minimized. New trial proofs were pulled, one of which was passed on to the bookkeeper. With Cappelli’s technical assistance, the pulling of prints continued “until noon, and then was suspended for about one hour.” Afterwards, work continued “until the twenty-third hour,” or one hour before sundown in Roman time. At day’s end, all impressions were hung to dry, the atelier was locked, and the key consigned to Cappelli. A marginal note indicates that 150 prints had been pulled.

On Tuesday morning, two things occurred. The bookkeeper presented his trial proof of the first etching to the constable for examination. Meanwhile, at nine o’clock the deputy obtained the key, then proceeded to the atelier with the printers. Work began immediately, continued until one o’clock, and began again at half past one. Here the narrative of the 1763 printing campaign ends.

According to the text entry in the *Encyclopédie* under “printing,” individual quires were moistened in fresh water, laid between two blankets, and covered with a weight. In this way, the desired amount of water would penetrate the fibers of the paper, while the excess would flow away.⁵² The soaking room of a typical letterpress atelier is depicted in the plate volume (Fig. 13). The explanatory text states that this room should be covered, and paved to facilitate the drainage of runoff. This proviso lends support to the assumption that the Colonna dispensing storeroom was located on the ground floor of the household-staff palace. In the foreground, to the right of the worker standing at the window, a pile of already-moistened quires is shown set between two wooden forms with a heavy weight on top. The illustration shows a vat man about to dip a quire into a large copper kettle filled with clear water. In the bottom of the kettle was a faucet for emptying its contents, as the water had to be changed often. On the right, moistened quires have been laid to dry on top of waste sheets. Although the steps just outlined describe the preparation of paper for letterpress, a similar process applied to paper for etchings.

The 1763 account mentions that “coal [and a] grill” were already in place in the usual room in the household-staff palace; a plate from the *Encyclopédie* helps clarify how that equipment was used (Fig. 14). The vignette shows that charcoal was used to fuel the fire under a grill. It was

standard practice to warm the copperplate slightly before inking; as if to make the point, a shop assistant is shown coating a plate with ink while it lies on a grill. The ink consisted of lampblack and oil. Another assistant wiped the inked plate with the side of his hand, so that as much ink as possible was forced within the bitten and engraved lines and nothing remained on the smooth surfaces of the plate. A heavy blanket, a sheet of moistened paper, and the etched plate were then laid one on top of the other. The “sandwich” thus created was set on a platform moved by the turning of a wheel; drawn between the two rollers, the moistened sheet absorbed the ink caught within the etched lines. Proofs were set aside on a second blanket, while on the top of the rolling press, already moistened sheets lay waiting for the printer. Strung on a line beneath the beams of the ceiling are proofs hung to dry.

If, in a nine-hour day, the printer Gismondi and his assistants pulled 150 prints, they were working fast and efficiently. A sizable crew must have been on hand to help at all stages, from soaking paper to making ink. Paper from Pioraco had certain physical properties—thickness among them—that were necessary to resist the pressure required to attract ink to its dampened, porous surface. The engraved frame (the three rectangles that surround text and image) lies a scant 40 millimeters from the edge of the copperplate, so these expensive, hand-crafted matrices were used with little waste.

The 1763 account describes “the usual room” given over to printing, which implies continuity over time. The printer came to the Colonna palace to perform his work, so the room was not rented to him. One wonders if the princely family had gone to the trouble of investing in a rolling press. Why an overseer was necessary is still a mystery; what is certain is that the creation of China-related etchings was not to be neglected or taken lightly by the constable and his staff. If the room had to be locked at night, and if production had to be supervised by an outsider, then these inexpensive images had a value that was not reducible to money alone. To the best of my knowledge, the very fact that printed images produced under the patronage of a Roman noble family were pulled within the functional confines of its palace is unusual.⁵³ The copperplates remained in possession of the Colonna, not the etcher, so no subsequent editions of prints could be published without the constable’s leave.⁵⁴ Those who wished to offer printed images for sale had apparently to obtain official permission, although the mechanisms of request and approval or denial in eighteenth-century Rome

47. “Al S.re Gaetano Benaglia,” thirty-two pots; AC, I.A.438/155. In addition: “Lista di Spese fatte da Gaetano Benaglia . . . li 28 Giugno 1759 . . . Per porto treplicati di 14 Risme di Carta prese dalla Compotisteria portate in dispensa alla Pilotta per Bollarle e dalla med.a riportate in cima de Mezzanini del Palazzo allo Stampatore per tirarli e di poi riportati alla Pilotta, e farne le distribuzioni [scudi] 1:05”; see AC, I.A.444/21. For his title, see n. 112 below.

48. Part of the staff palace is visible in a 1731 plan by Filippo Barigioni, Rome, Archivio di Stato, Dis. e piante, Coll. IA, c. 80; for an illustration, see A. Negro, *Guide Rionali di Roma, Rione II—Trevi*, Rome, 1985, pt. 2, fasc. 2, 97. The entrance to this palace in Barigioni’s plan tallies with the elevation depicted in Maggi’s 1625 plan, which also shows the bridge that connected both palaces; for an illustration, see *ibid.*, 9. The Pontifical Gregorian University now occupies the site of the staff palace.

49. “Memoria di quanto è stato operato da Nicola Cappelli deputato dal S.E.P. di suo motu proprio soprintendente all’Impressione de Rami delle due Machine”; AC, II.GG.103.

50. “. . . à 27 Giugno [1763] à Filippo Gismondi [scudi] 32=mta per la stampa di n.o 4000=Machine de Fuochi e n.o 20 in seta”; AC, I.A.468/113.

51. “. . . à 20 detto [June 1763] A Giovanni Petroschi [scudi] 18=mta per avere inciso le lettere alle Machine de Fuochi [scudi] 18—”; AC, I.A.468/113.

52. See *Encyclopédie*, s.v. “imprimerie.”

53. For the locations of three private presses in 17th-century Rome, see Consagra, lxxxvii.

54. According to a document preserved in the Colonna archive, “[I] det. ti Rami sono tutti in potere del Guardarobba di S.E.P.”; see Gori Sassoli, 64. For the economic advantages that rounded to etchers who retained their plates, see Consagra, lxxxvii–lxxxviii.



15 Artist unknown, set piece erected in the Piazza Navona to celebrate the marriage of Louis XV and Maria Leszczynska, 1725, etching. BC (photo: BC)

55. For the Inquisition's role in approving printed images, see Consagra, lxxxviii–lxxxix. Ghezzi recounts the denial of permission in the 18th century: "Marianna Berti d.a la Romanina Cantarina, Moglie di Bulgarello fatta da Me Cav.re Ghezzi il di 14 Luglio 1728 nell'occasione che per lei ne feci in una Medaglia per intagliarla in Inghilterra, dove stamperanno tutti i Musici famosi, e le famose Cantarine, et il S.e Metastasio la volle far intagliare in Roma per non perdere il mio Disegno, et il Maestro del Sacro Palazzo Giovannelli non volse dare l'incidatur, è non volse che si stampasse, perchè è Cantarina"; Ghezzi, ms Ottob. lat. 3116, fol. 144.

56. The forty-one etchings are: 1722 (1, 2); 1723 (1, 2); 1724 (1, 2); 1725 (1, 2); 1726 (1, 2); 1727 (1, 2); 1728 (1, 2); 1729 (1, 2); 1730 (1, 2); 1731 (1, 2); 1732 (1, 2); 1733 (1, 2); 1738 (1, 2); 1739 (1); 1740 (1, 2); 1741 (1); 1742 (1); 1743 (1); 1744 (1, 2); 1745 (2); 1746 (2); 1747 (1, 2); 1748 (2); 1749 (1); 1752 (1).

57. In the case of three of Testa's prints, the *incidatur* was written on the preparatory drawings, so the absence of a license to engrave on the prints themselves cannot be unequivocally interpreted to mean that permission was neither sought nor granted; see N. Turner, "Pietro Testa," *Print Quarterly*, vii, 1990, 318–19. In the case of books and pamphlets, the absence of the tag "con licenza de' Superiori" does not eliminate the possibility that they were actually printed in Rome: "Il Cardinale Polignac determinò di fare le Feste per il Matrimonio del suo Rè. . . . In congiuntura di queste Feste si sono

have yet to be fully explicated.⁵⁵ Inscriptions on 41 out of a total of 108 China-related prints, which were not offered for sale, suggest that permission to engrave (*incidatur*) was obtained.⁵⁶

A search for the "missing" *incidatur* in the context of the China may, however, be a red herring.⁵⁷ Printmaking in this instance was part of an overarching political event, namely the presentation of homage to the pope by a secular ruler's proxy. The constable spent large sums of his own money to represent the absent monarch with splendor and decorum; the first element could not be attained without the other. Quite apart from the restrictive and censorial oversight of the papal authorities, the etched, relatively permanent component of the diplomatic act had perforce to fall within the bounds of diplomatic discourse, and within the bounds of what artists—whether working on commission, or on their entrepreneurial own—could depict.⁵⁸

Foreign ministers resident in Rome scrupulously controlled the creation of visual images that set out their sovereigns' status and pretensions in allegorical discourses inflected by references to ancient history and mythology. On October 4, 1725, to celebrate the marriage of Louis XV and Maria Leszczynska, Cardinal de Polignac sponsored festivities in Rome; a set piece was built and prints were pulled to broadcast both the event and the set piece (Fig. 15). Upon examining the latter, some wags invented a mocking interpretation of one element. Jupiter turned "with a happy aspect" toward a goddess on the right, while he pushed out his hands as if to repel the one on the left. The god's alleged gesture of rejection was taken to stand for Louis XV's refusal of an offer to marry a Spanish infanta, "even though," as the imperial ambassador wrote, "the gesture may be appropriate to the fable that is represented." This activity demonstrates not only the public's participation in ephemeral events, but also the multiple readings that works of art always offer. Having learned of the double entendre, the patron hastened to "suppress those few prints that had already come out," to have the copperplate reworked, and to have pamphlets printed that set out a fitting interpretation, in the vain hope of removing ambiguity.⁵⁹ Impressions of the etching lack the names of designer, draftsman, and etcher, and fail to

notate due cose. La prima consiste nella Cantata, in cui nominandosi la Regina Sposa, se le dà il Titolo di *Principessa di Polonia*: e nel contesto vi sono alcune espressioni favorevoli a Stanislao, che sembrano eccitare le specie del Trono di Polonia. Il Conte di Lagnasco sud.o avendo preventivam.te saputo, che la Cantata si stampava qui col sud.o Titolo, fece le sue istanze, affine di farnelo levare; ma non l'ottenne: essendosi solam.te ordinato, che si tolga dal frontispizio della Cantata la data di *Roma e la licenza de' Superiori*: fingendosi con questo temperamento, che la stampa possa essere venuta di fuori, ancorche si sappia, che è stata fatta in Roma"; OS, RK 110 (letter of Alvaro Cienfuegos dated Sept. 29, 1725).

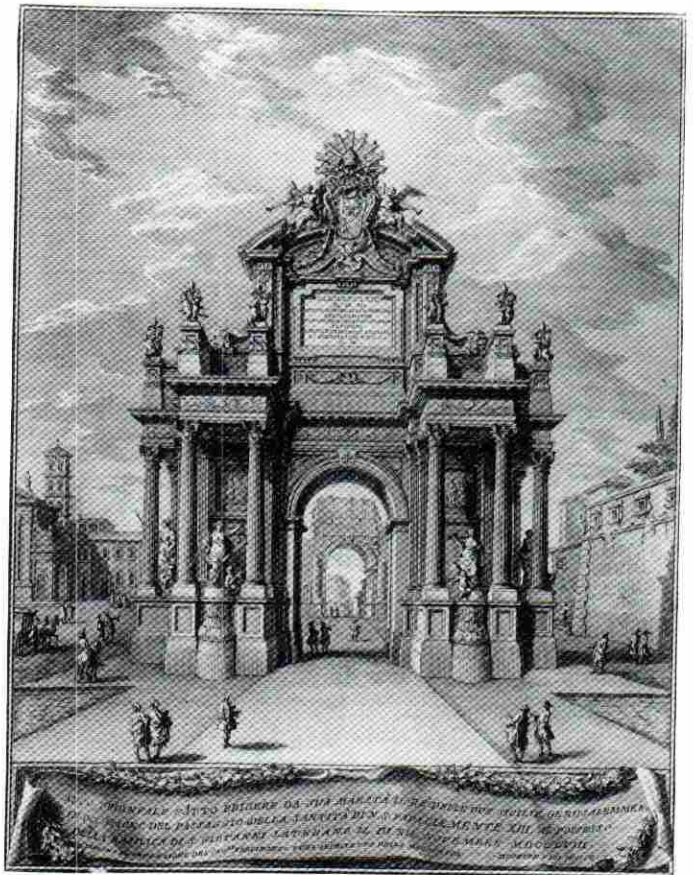
58. A knowledge of the bounds of propriety with regard to prints extended to the general populace: "Per quanto sia sfrontato quest'empio [Robert François d'Amiens, *assassin manqué* of Louis XV] non ha però saputo non comparir mutolo, e sopraffatto dal severo, e rispettabile aspetto dell'illustre Assemblea, innanzi a cui è comparso. I suoi stucchevoli scherzi alfin l'abbandonano, e l'orror del gastigo, che fra poco l'attende, comincia a fare su quel cuor perversito la sua impressione. È caduto nell'animo di un incisore d'incidere il ritratto di costui; ma veggendo tutte le oneste persone rivolger sdegnosamente lo sguardo da quest'oggetto d'abborrimento, egli s'è risoluto di nascondersi in un col suo lavoro, con cui ha incautamente avvilta in se stesso la mano, e l'arte"; Chracas, no. 6203, Apr. 15, 1757 (dateline Paris, Mar. 13, 1757), 4–5.

indicate that the image is a second state. The latter fact recalls to us the dangers inherent in neglecting to locate printed images, especially those that relate to politically motivated events, in their historical contexts.

Polignac's careful oversight of the 1725 festival and its permanent visual component, the print, suggests that papal authorities' examination of other monarchs' public relations would have been superfluous, if not inappropriate. The pope received his prints, could examine them if he so chose, could like or dislike them as any individual might; he could not, however, arrogate to himself the power to shape or dramatically emend another ruler's political expression. In terms of the Chinaea, the complete eschewal of religious imagery doubtless helped obviate unwanted interference by papal authorities.

To adduce a contrary case, in which the pope did exercise control over an etching and its production, sets the constable's forays into the Roman print world in relief. The king of the Two Sicilies habitually had a triumphal arch erected in the Roman Forum to celebrate the possession of the Lateran by a newly elected pontiff. On Sunday, November 12, 1758, the tradition continued, and Clement XIII passed under an arch set up near the entrance to the Farnese gardens on the Palatine. Two etchings by Vasi related to that structure exist, one of which is illustrated here (Fig. 16). Domenico Campiglia, "minister of the Calcografia," was reimbursed for sums spent on acquiring paper and a copperplate, and for pulling 597 prints on paper and 3 on satin.⁶⁰ Similar printmaking activities occurred several months later for the 1759 Chinaea. In the present case, however, centralization of production expressed the papal authorities' wish to control printed images with a precision similar to that exercised over printed books.⁶¹ Although the works of art—the set piece and the etchings—were paid for with a foreign monarch's funds, they had principally to do with the pontiff; thus, the king of Naples was not free to have such official images created in Rome, and afterwards circulated within the Papal States and elsewhere.

As the first Chinaea set piece of 1763 rose over nearly two months' time, its decoration was put in place slowly; likely masked by scaffolding until the last frantic minutes had



16 Vasi, triumphal arch erected in the Forum Romanum to celebrate the possession of the Lateran by Clement XIII, Nov. 12, 1758, etching. GCHAH, Special Collections (photo: GCHAH)

elapsed, it remained largely invisible to public scrutiny until the morning of June 28. Security guards in the square deterred the overzealous from sating their curiosity too early. But prints encapsulated information that had to pass through a filter before promulgation. The precaution of a locked room helped maintain the surprise of transformation for as long as possible.⁶² Apart from specific cases mandated by protocol, the powerful preview that printed images provided

59. "La seconda cosa, che si è notata, riguarda la machina sud.a. Questa rappresenta un gran Monte, sulla cui cima si vede Giove a cavallo della sua Aquila con varie Deità disposte alquanto più basso dai due lati della Ninfe, che a lui serve di Trono. Si osserva alla Destra una Dea rivolta a Giove, il quale con aspetto allegro la mira al tempo stesso, che con ambo le mani fa l'atto di accennare, e rigettare da se un'altra Dea a lui vicina dalla parte sinistra. Questo atto, ancorche possa essere proprio della Favola, che si rappresenta, è però stato interpretato per lo rifiuto fatto della Infanta di Spagna, ed ha somministrato perciò un ampio soggetto di fare qui varj discorsi, ed ha dato motivo agli Spagnuoli di offendersene"; "oggi debbo soggiungerle, che essendosi saputo dal Cardinale Polignac la interpretazione, che si dava ad un tal atto, vi pose quel rimedio, che ha potuto, facendo correggere la stampa in Rame, con porre a canto di Giove le trè Grazie in luogo dell'accennata Dea, e supprimendo quelle poche Stampe, che erano già uscite; fingendo, che sia stato errore dell'Incisore, e facendo poi pubblicare una Relazione stampata, che spiega la Favola rappresentata dalla Machina"; ÖS, RK 110 (letters of Alvaro Cienfuegos dated respectively Sept. 29 and Oct. 6, 1725). For an illustration of the second state, see Gori Sassoli, 176.

60. "Riconto de denari rimessi da Napoli per l'Arco Trionfale dà eriggersi in Campo Vaccino per il solenne Possesso del Som. Pontefice Clemente XIII. . . . Il Possesso seguì li 12 Novembre 1758. giorno di Domenica. . . . Epiù scudi Trenta, e [baiochi] 15 pagati al Sig.re Gio Domenico Campiglia

Ministro della Calcografia per n.o 600 Stampe dell'Arco, compreso il rame, Carta, e tirature delle tre in seta [scudi] 30.15"; AS, vol. 1079.

61. "A proposito poi del Vescovo d'Auxerre, negli Avvisi di Foligno sotto la data di Parigi si è data notizia della di lui morte con elogio non ordinario, e che esso certo non ha meritato. Siamo restati sorpresi, abbiamo ordinata la disdetta, come già è seguito; si è arrestato lo stampatore; e dicendo esso d'aver stampato quanto ha stampato, avendo ricevuto un biglietto, in cui si avvisava, che stampasse quanto poi ha stampato, si prosiegue il Processo, per avere nelle mani l'ordine trasmesso, o almeno per sapere dallo stampatore lo trasmettente, che scoperto, sarà severamente punito"; Vatican City, Archivio Segreto Vaticano, Miscellanea Armadio XV, vol. 156, fol. 812 (letter from Castel Gandolfo dated June 5, 1754).

62. Rumors about upcoming Chinaea structures did reach Naples in 1758. Don Urbano Vanvitelli wrote to his brother Luigi at some point before Sept. 9 about the structure that Paolo Posi had designed for that day. Luigi replied: "Averò gran piacere sapere l'esito delli campanelli del faro Chinese [sic] imaginato dal Posi; egli è certo che, se l'artificio sarà fatto con polvere bianca, che dicono non faccia botto, li campanelli si sentiranno; se poi si farà il fuoco con la polvere consueta certamente, ancorché vi fossero state poste delle campane di metallo, non si sentirebbero per lo strepito maggiore dell'artificio; laonde mi persuado che sarà una perfettissima ragazzata ridicola"; Strazullo, II, 273–74 (letter from Naples dated Sept. 12, 1758).



17 Michele Sorellò, second set piece for the *Chinaea* of 1749, etching on satin. Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Kupferstich-Kabinett, Standort-Nr.Ca-230 (photo: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen)

was to be kept under wraps until the right moment.⁶³ In 1763 the constable examined a proof. Like many a princely patron who understood the power of words and images as disseminators of prestige and agents for the exercise of political power, Lorenzo Colonna brought visual acuity and a well-cultivated sense of what was appropriate and inappropriate to his evaluation of Vasi's etching.⁶⁴ Like us, those far from Rome could not do what Benedict XIV did, who "print in hand . . . compared many elements therein to the festival structure itself." Like us, they could not map out the overlap between an etching and the various works of art that comprised the set piece. Yet an image could help them—and us—learn what was happening in the Eternal City.

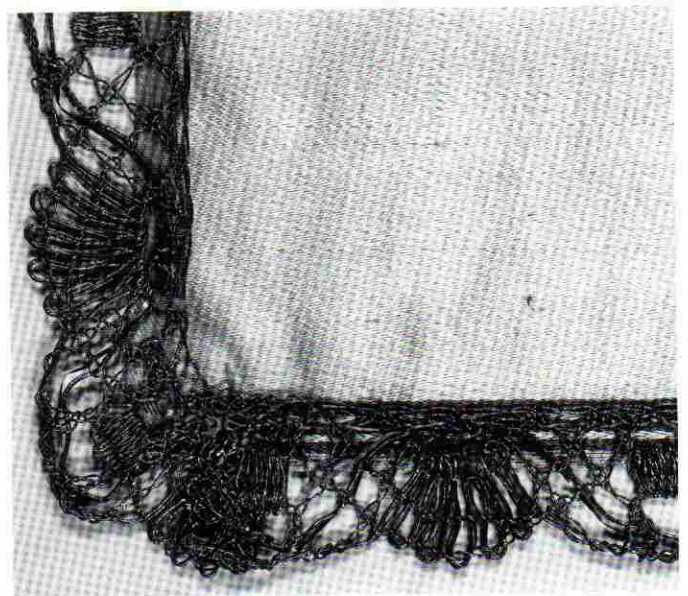
The same individual who wrote out the 1763 account of pulling prints penned a set of instructions for "the dispatch of satin prints to sovereigns."⁶⁵ In this instance, it was the printer who alerted the wardrobe master that the copperplates were ready for use. The requisite number of satin etchings varied with the moment. If the king of Spain got married, the new queen was to be sent her own set; if the queen of Naples died, the number of satin prints pulled diminished. If the pope had "declared nephews," they too received satin prints. All these notables received prints on paper as well. The choice of a luxurious medium reflected the sovereigns' importance; prints on satin thus served both as an interpretative record of current events and as a status symbol.⁶⁶

After pulling the satin impressions, the printer consigned them to the major-domo, who saw to it that gold lace was applied "to the height of one thumb." In the meantime, the

house boxmaker fashioned "adorned boxes," in accordance with the number of prints to be sent to each individual. These containers were filled with cotton wadding. Before the boxes were wrapped with paper and waxed cloth, the major-domo had to insert "the usual note." Finally, the house tailor covered each box with white canvas. So wrapped, the boxes were transported to the secretary's office, where each was inscribed with the name and title of the recipient, copied exactly from a list. Beneath the addresses two seals were attached. The house letter-carrier delivered the parcels "to the respective ministers of sovereigns to whom the boxes were directed"; the prints thus assumed the status of diplomatic offerings. Consignment occurred "according to the usual practice, two posts before the solemn action of the presentation of the *Chinaea*."

In 1759, Filippo Gismondi pulled twelve prints on satin at a unit cost of ten *baiocchi*.⁶⁷ Somehow the number of satin prints was not calculated correctly. In his September petty-cash report, major-domo Angelo Orlandi recorded a payment to Gismondi for two prints "that were lacking."⁶⁸ A head count reveals the problem. Ten prints were needed for the five sovereigns named in the 1763 account (Maria Amalia replacing the prince of Asturias), two more for Clement XIII. It must have been papal nephew and secretary of the memorials, Carlo, Cardinal Rezzonico, who somehow fell through the cracks.⁶⁹ Rather than rely on past practices, the constable's staff had always to assess the immediate situation.

Prints on satin were adorned with a border made of gold lace. The cost of this material is not preserved; however, payment to the unnamed hands that attached it is. Major-domo Andreini recorded an expense of 60 *baiocchi* for having had a "little border of gold" applied to twelve etchings on satin.⁷⁰ Buttonmaker Giovanni Battista Orelì provided an appendage with tassels "to tie together the prints of the fireworks" for the pope. One and one-half palms in length



18 Detail of Fig. 17, showing lower-left corner (photo: Staatliche Kunstsammlungen)

and gilt with 1.1 ounces of gold, this expensive French import befit the recipient's status.⁷¹

China etchings on satin from 1759 have yet to be found. Satin impressions from another year are preserved in Dresden; the print related to the second set piece of 1749 is illustrated here (Fig. 17). Like a silk scarf, a satin print shimmers in the light that bounces off its surface. The areas that accepted the black ink seem as though they were woven differently, so delicate is the supporting medium, so transforming the contact with the press. The applied decoration is better observed in a photograph taken of the lower left corner (Fig. 18). Three thin bands of green silk thread are sewn onto the satin, creating another frame. A filigree border, in which voids have a visual logic no less important than densely built-up areas, masks the print's straight edges. The border of gold thread is attached to the print with a yellow silk thread that remains invisible. (On the reverse, there are two rows of tell-tale stitching.) A strand of pure silver thread is looped over the scallops and under the blanks of this decoration. An unraveled strand of gold thread reveals its fabrication from a core of yellow silk, over which spun gold was once so tightly wrapped as to hide the supporting medium.

Sovereigns were sent prints one week in advance of the presentation of homage. Having fashioned "the usual three boxes for sending [prints] to the kings," Filippo Fattori drew up a bill on June 22, 1759.⁷² Andreini disputed the artisan's asking price, reducing it by one-third. The uncontested cost

of materials—cotton wadding, "imperial paper," waxed linen cloth, and cord—were fully reimbursed; the first three items tally with the 1763 account. Fattori added string to keep the boxes closed and to provide, for numerous unnamed hands, a means for lifting.

The 1763 account devotes a paragraph to the pope and his nephews: prints on satin directed to them were decorated and then consigned to the constable's valet, who delivered them, "and other prints on paper." As no fixed number is stated, numerous paper prints were probably dispensed to the cardinal-nephews' households.⁷³ Finally, in sharp and intended contrast to what occurred in the case of sovereigns, the twelve members of the Neapolitan cabinet received prints on paper sent "in the guise of a letter," simply addressed, and closed with a flour-paste seal, different from the wax seals used for diplomatic parcels. These prints were sent one post before the presentation. To personages named on a longer list, printed images were sent after the function, "according to the days that correspond to the respective post offices."

A mailing list is appended to the 1763 account. It is written in an extremely legible hand appropriate for the secretary's office, where the risks of misspelling, misreading, and misinformation had to be minimized. It is explained that "one week before the presentation," boxed sets of prints were sent to five people: the king of Spain; the prince of Asturias; the king of Naples; the queen of Naples; and "the Most Serene Electoral Highness of the Elector of Saxony." The list can be dated to 1763 because of the absence from it of the queen of

63. The Rome newspaper explains why descriptions of the set pieces of 1753 were not included in the number that came out on Saturday, June 30: "Le rappresentanze di esse Machine [furono] traslasciate nella scorsa perche non ancora pubblicata la stampa di quella del Venerdì sera"; *Chracas*, no. 5613, July 7, 1753, 5. Even Benedict XIV, who personally received prints related to the first China set piece of 1755, waited until June 29 for impressions related to the second: "si trovarono ad umiliarsi a Sua Santità il Sig. Pietro Battisti, Soprintendente Generale dell'Ecema Casa Colonna, e l'Architetto della machina Sig. Paolo Posi, che non solo diedero distinto ragguaglio al Santo Padre della sua rappresentanza, ma gli offersero le stampe incise in rame della medesima in un bacile d'argento. . . . La Santità di Nostro Signore volendo restituirsi all'altro Palazzo Apostolico di sua residenza al Quirinale, verso le ore 22. . . . ripigliando poi la strada per S. Girolamo della Carità, e piazza Farnese, osservò di passaggio, come avea fatto il giorno antecedente, la seconda machina di fuoco d'artificio, già ivi sino dalla mattina eretta, e ne fu ragguagliato nella stessa guisa, che il giorno innanzi, con molta sua sodisfazione"; *Chracas*, no. 5925, July 5, 1755, 15.

64. Ferdinand I, grand duke of Tuscany, personally oversaw the printed descriptions of the marriage by proxy of his niece, Maria de' Medici, to Henry IV in 1600. Six weeks after the event, he still called for revisions before final printing. Indeed, three years after his own wedding to Christine of Lorraine, he had insisted upon a revision and reprinting of pamphlet descriptions, an editorial process that included the removal of printed images; see T. Carter, "Non occorre nominare tanti musici: Private Patronage and Public Ceremony in Late Sixteenth-Century Florence," *J Tatti Studies*, iv, 1991, 91; see also 90, n. 2. In 1705, the Jesuit priest Widman gave an oration at the exequies of Leopold I that contained so much invective against "England, Holland, Denmark and other Protestant Princes," whose ambassadors extraordinary had been expressly invited to attend the ceremonies, that Joseph I commanded that the "five thousand Copies" already printed "be suppressed, prohibiting under a severe Penalty any one of them to be published"; Blainville, i, 278.

65. "Foglio istruttivo per la Spedizione de Rasi a sovrani in occasione delle presentazioni della China"; AC, II.GG.103.

66. Engravings announcing the defense of doctoral theses comprised a discrete subset of printmaking in 17th- and 18th-century Catholic Europe. Impressions on satin were pulled for degree candidates, for members of their families, and for important (or potential) patrons; see A. Griffiths, "Three Theses," *Print Quarterly*, ix, 1992, 193–97. Similar commemorative engravings appeared in Rome: "Il sud. Martedì 17. del corrente Maggio, il dopo

pranzo, nel Collegio Germanico Ungarico, sotto la cura de PP. della Compagnia di Gesù, vi fu una publica disputa di sagri Canonici. . . . della quale fu il Difendente il Signor Cavaliere Gio: Nepomuceno de Wolff, della Diocesi di Augusta in Islesia, Dottore di sagra Teologia, e Alunno nello stesso Collegio Germanico Ungarico. . . . Per decorare poi maggiormente una funzione così grandiosa furono dispensate le Tesi in non piccolo numero, stampate in un rame grande, di altezza palmi sei Romani, fatto incidere dal Cavaliere difendente per servirsene in tale occasione da virtuoso Professore in Augusta, al quale avea mandato il disegno da Roma, e fatte poi qui trasmettere"; *Chracas*, no. 7158, May 21, 1763, 15–19. For Winkelmann's plans to engage Augsburg printmakers, see H. A. Stoll, *Winkelmann, seine Verleger und seine Drucker*, Berlin, 1960, 36. For satin prints after compositions by Angelica Kauffman that were used as patterns for needlework designs, see Alexander, 122 (with pl. 100), 156, 163.

67. "Per havere stampato N.o = 12 = Rasi à [baiochi] i0: l'una importano Scudo 0i:20"; AC, I.A.436/32.

68. For the relevant archival document, see n. 115 below.

69. Carlo Rezzonico was raised to the cardinalate privately on Sept. 11, 1758, publicly on Oct. 2; see Moroni (as in n. 3), s.v. "Rezzonico."

70. "@ 28 d.o [June 1759] Per Cuscitura di n.o 12 Stampe di Raso con pedino d'oro [scudi] .60"; AC, I.A.444/152.

71. "Conto de lavori fatti . . . da Gio: Batta Orelì Bottonaro . . . Per una Zagana longa palmi 4 1/2: di Oro Sopradorato di Francia con suoi Fiochetti parimenti d'Oro Onc: 1:1: servita per legare le Stampe de Fuochi per Nro Sig.re [scudi] 3:—/2:40"; AC, I.A.436/83. French consul Digne writes of the high quality of French tassels: "quoique les Etoffes d'or et d'argent et de soye, et surtout les galons des autres pais ne sont pas à beaucoup près si beaux que les nôtres, elles sont à meilleur marché, et quand on aura pris l'habitude de s'en servir, et les yeux y seront faits, on aura bien de la peine à mettre en vogue les nôtres, ce qui est dommage present et à venir"; AN, AE, B.I.966, fol. 37v (letter from Rome dated Dec. 2, 1750).

72. "Adi 22. Giug.o 1759 fatto le tre Solite Cassette per Mandare alli Ré con le Stampe de fuochi foderate Quarmitte di Oro dell'Suo á Scudo uno é [baiochi] .20 Luno [scudi] 3.60/2:40; Speso per p.mi 7 1/2 di Tela Incerata per Coprire le Sud.e Cassette [scudi] —75/—75; Spese per Bonbace Sfilata Carta Imperiale per Involtare Le Sud.e é Cordicella per Legarle [scudi] —30/—30; [scudi] 4.65/3:45"; AC, I.A.443/178.

73. This situation obtained in the papal household; see the text cited in n. 24 above.

Spain, Maria Amalia of Saxony, who died in 1760. Telling, too, is the presence of the of the "Prince of Asturias," namely Charles, the second son of Charles VII and Maria Amalia, who in 1759 was recognized as heir to the Spanish throne over his elder, mentally ill brother Philip. Frederick Augustus II, king of Poland and elector of Saxony, was regularly apprised of diplomatic acts carried out in his son-in-law's name: having converted to Catholicism in 1712, he maintained more than a passing interest in the court of Rome.⁷⁴ Rome kept her eye on Dresden as well, to gauge how the latter fared in comparison to neighboring Protestant courts.⁷⁵

The cardinal-protector of Spain, Joaquin Portocarrero, was present at the 1759 China receptions, as was Rupert Taparal, count Lagnasco, minister of the elector of Saxony, whose punctiliousness Winckelmann did not like.⁷⁶ Sending mail in eighteenth-century Europe was often closely linked to diplomatic representation, so in-kind payments recorded for the consuls of Spain and Naples correspond both to their having received and dispatched prints, and to their attendance at the receptions.⁷⁷ The mailing list records one minister who lived in Palermo, and eleven who lived in Naples; among the latter was secretary of state Bernardo Tanucci, who in Charles VII's name officially deputized Lorenzo Colonna to present the China in a letter dated just fourteen days before the presentation of homage in 1759.⁷⁸ That is to say, preparations had progressed apace for five weeks before the constable received the official mandate to present the China.

Prints on paper were delivered to twenty-five individuals, thirty-two couples, and five cardinals, who between them lived in the cities of L'Aquila, Bologna, Chieti, Mantua, Messina, Milan, Naples, Ravenna, Venice, and Viterbo.⁷⁹ The names of forty women are listed. If consignments were addressed to husband and wife, both parties apparently found the images interesting and intelligible. Present, too, are eight women named as individuals in their own right. There is no reason to assume that married women were not

sent these polyvalent records of political, diplomatic, and artistic activity in Rome. The boxing and delivery of prints to Lorenzo Colonna's sister Maria Felice, princess of Bucheres, can be documented in 1755, and she figures as well on the mailing list of 1763.⁸⁰

All women on the mailing list surely received their own etchings, if the experiences of other noblewomen in eighteenth-century Europe can be used to evince an interest in prints. Vasi dedicated two volumes of his *Magnificenze di Roma* to women, namely Maria Amalia of Saxony and Isabella Farnese, queen dowager of Spain.⁸¹ Dedicatory pages were a means for authors, publishers, and printmakers to flatter potential patrons, drum up financial support, and sidestep censorship. But since dedications were public expressions of status and pretensions, draft proposals thereof were subjected to exacting scrutiny.⁸²

Yet I am more concerned with evidence that points to women who bought and used prints, activities that betoken a different level of engagement and interest from that to be inferred from book dedications. In March 1756, the duchess of Württemberg asked her Roman agent, Matteo Ciofani, to procure a set of the *Varie vedute di Roma*. The prints having been acquired, she then wanted him to have the famous antiquarian Ridolfino Venuti arrange them according to the way in which he had taken her and her husband to visit the ancient monuments while they were in Rome. Such, then, was the familiarity between foreign aristocrats and lesser-born intellectuals in eighteenth-century Rome. Yet the duchess's desire to own prints was not equaled by her willingness to pay for them, and the hapless Ciofani had to wait no fewer than six years for reimbursement.⁸³

Letters written to her female correspondent show that an English traveler, Mrs. (later Lady) Anna Miller, through the medium of prints, had already assiduously studied the monuments of Rome before embarking on the Grand Tour. She notes the differences between what she experienced on site, and what both writer and reader had studied on paper.

74. See AC, ILGG.4, 1759, Num. 65 (letter from Portici dated June 16, 1759).

75. The delivery of prints to Messina in 1757 is documented: "Adi 7 Agosto per Inballatura in Canavaccio d'una Cassetta de Stampe de Fuochi mandati à Messina [baiocchi] 40; Per porto dal Palazzo à Ripa [baiocchi] 10; Per Bolletta di Carico, e Bollo [baiocchi] 10; Al Patron Diego Prestia per Nolo dà Ripa à Messina [baiocchi] 60"; AC, I.A.420/289; see also n. 80 below.

76. "Nota di Lavoro Fatto ad uso di Scatolaro. . . . Segue Per altre Stampe di Carta È più Adi 3. Lug.o [1755] fatto Una Cassetta Longha p.mi 2 1/2 Largha p.mo 1 1/2 alta un p.mo per mandare fuori à S.E. La Sig.ra Principessa in Sicilia Ag.a é Legata [scudi] .50/.30"; AC, I.A.401/151. Transport of the prints is recorded: "A Pnpe Diego Prestia per Il porto di Una Cassetta di Stampe a Messina per la S.a Pnncip.sa di Bucheres [scudi] :60"; AC, I.A.402/195.

77. When cardinal-minister Domenico Orsini tried to expel Giuseppe Vasi from Palazzo Farnese, the etcher wrote to Tanucci to defend himself, citing dedicatory pages as evidence of his loyalty to the crown: "Supplio perciò la somma benignità di V. Ecc.za a riguardare con carità, che io . . . dopo avere dedicati 4. libri della mia Opera, il Primo alla Maestà del Rè, il secondo alla M. della Regina, il Quarto alla M. della Regina Madre, ed il Quinto al Reale Primogenito . . . non abbia ora a restare privo della Reale Beneficenza"; AS, vol. 1079 (letter dated Nov. 16, 1759).

78. For Winckelmann's book dedications, see Stoll (as in n. 66), 25. Winckelmann's dedication of his *Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerey und Bildhauer-Kunst* to Frederick Augustus II was an evocation of the golden age of Augustus, and a means to avoid the censors; see E. Maek-Gérard, "Die Antike in der Kunsttheorie des 18. Jahrhunderts," in Beck and Bol, eds. (as in n. 12), 31. While in London, the

74. "Monsieur, Les depeches, que vous venez de m'envoyer de Rome en date du 30. du Juin, m'ont informé de votre retour de Naples, je n'ai pas manqué, Monsieur, d'en rendre compte à S.M. qui en a été fort satisfaite. Je vous félicite cependant de tout l'accueillement gracieux, et des presents, que vous avez remporté de LL. MM. Siciliennes. . . . S.M. le Roi Nôtre tres gracieux Maitre se console regulierement toutes les semaines des nouvelles de la bonne Sante de ces Souverains"; H.St.A 750 (letter from Warsaw dated July 14, 1759).

75. "Il sovrano di Prussia . . . fu ultimamente a vedere la bella galleria delle statue, ch'è sopra le grandi scuderie del palagio, e regalò a ciascuno de'due Ispettori un oriuolo d'oro giojellato da ripetizione; siccome pure dugento ungheri ai domestici custodi d'essa galleria"; Chracas, no. 6172, Feb. 2, 1757 (dateline Dresden Dec. 27, 1756), 12.

76. Referring to his manuscript for the *Geschichte der Kunst des Altherthums*, Winckelmann writes: "Col resto del MS. . . . ho pensato di proporvi far in modo che mi cavaste la licenza di poterlo spedire a due a due quinterni immediatamente a S.A.R. senza aver bisogno di sottomettermi alla stitichezza di Lagnasco e poi che possa spedire i Rami . . . sotto il medesimo Reale indirizzo"; Rehm and Diepolder, eds. (as in n. 12), II, 218 (letter from Rome dated Dec. 12, 1759).

77. (1) "Detta [famiglia] del Console di Spagna," four pots; AC, I.A.438/155; and "Alla Famiglia del Console di Spagna," eight loaves; AC, I.A.437/142; (2) "Console di Napoli," one pot; AC, I.A.438/155; and "Conzole di Napoli," two loaves; AC, I.A.437/142. Spanish agent Manuel de Roda sent China prints in 1759: "El Condestable Colona asistió en el Palacio Farnese en la forma acostumbrada la Vispera y dia di S.n Pedro à recibir los cumplim.tos de Ministros, Cardenales, y Prelados por la funcion dela Acanea y se hicieron los fuegos q.e manifestan las adjuntas Estampas"; AGS, SE Legajo 4958 (letter from Rome dated July 5, 1759).

While complaining of “Piranesi’s” penchant for the chatty, contemporaneous detail, she writes that his prints were thought “the best,” and that she and her husband were acquiring “the most valuable of them.”⁸⁴

The 1763 account states that if a king took a queen, the latter was to have her own set of prints on satin; an analogous situation may well have obtained with less exalted personages, to whom the inexpensive paper prints were sent. The total number of individual addresses to which paper prints were distributed by post in 1763 is 79; this figure includes the five sovereigns, and assumes that couples received only one set of prints. In 1759 Maria Amalia of Saxony was still living, and her second son, Charles, was only eight years old: including her (and omitting him) would raise the figure to 80. The number rises to 112 if individual names or titles are counted.

In 1759, Gaetano Benaglia procured a rose-colored ribbon of a certain width that was used to tie prints distributed to cardinals and princes; true to the hierarchy of Roman society, a “narrower” ribbon was used for prelates and knights.⁸⁵ Four strands of rose-colored ribbon were used for unspecified “particular [individuals].” An unnamed porter made two trips to the Palazzo Farnese, carrying trunks filled with prints.⁸⁶

In partial recompense for local deliveries, which occurred on June 28 and 29, Benaglia paid anonymous workers for “many trips in making the distributions of the representations of the fireworks.”⁸⁷ However, the payments suggest that prints were distributed to the general public. We know that once they were pulled in the household-staff palace, the etchings were folded, put into a trunk, and carried to the Farnese palace.⁸⁸ But 7,084 prints on paper are many, and even the mailing list, applied with all its intricacies to the year 1759, accounts for only 2.26 percent of the print run. If the thirty-two women with living husbands received prints, the total rises to 3.16 percent. With the inclusion of the approximately 507 guests who attended the two evenings’ festivities

in the Farnese palace, the figure climbs to 17.48 percent. The records of the bookkeeper’s office do not account for the rest.

In one instance, prints related to a temporary apparatus that took the form of a window display were distributed to a wide public in Rome, comprising “nobles, and other respectable persons.”⁸⁹ A series of directives for celebrating the octave of Saint Giuliana Falconieri in Rome sets out that “medals, images [of the saint] of every type, and pamphlet biographies” were to be distributed to “princes, princesses, ladies, knights, and civil persons,” yet goes on to enjoin that additional such items be procured, since “poor confessors will be tormented” by their parishioners in order to obtain them.⁹⁰ Furthermore, colporteurs throughout Europe sold (among other things) suites of prints representing the cries of various cities; the topographical and architectural specificity of these images bespoke the buyers’ knowledge of and pride in specific urban environments and monuments.⁹¹ The possibility that Chinese etchings may have come into the possession of individuals from many social classes significantly expands our perception of who comprised the audience for printed images related to ephemeral events. If people waited on line, or jostled one another to procure prints, they must have found them worth that trouble. Reading-based literacy was not necessary to appreciate a clever rendering of a fortress, or a scene of rustic revelry under Bacchus’s aegis (Figs. 1, 2). Looking at these etchings could evoke memories of pleasant evenings spent out of doors, with wine to drink and a brilliantly illuminated city to admire, all in the company of friends. Putting back into these images the perceptions and pleasures of different individuals would increase our understanding of the importance of ephemera in their lives. The facts of long-distance delivery may facilitate the identification of images in museum and private collections, and help document the effects that dissemination may have had on designers who could not see Chinese set pieces, but could learn something from a print.

Russian engraver Gabriel Scorodomoff dedicated a print suite to Catherine II, eventually receiving £200 from that monarch; see Alexander, 157.

83. “... je vous ai écrit et prié au nom de S.A. Madame la Duchesse de lui envoyer les Vuës de Rome ou *Varie Vedute di Rome antica, et moderna. disegnate e Intagliate da Celebri Autori. In Roma. en grande taille douze. Nous les avons acheté au cours, pour quelques sequins, cel que vous donnerai pour cela je aurai soing de vous le faire repayer aussitot. S.A. vous prie aussi de porter les dits estampes chés l’Abé Venuti et de lui prier au nom de Madame la Duchesse de ranger ces Estampes selon qu’il nous a montré les Antiquités. Je vous prie, Monsieur, de faire vite cette commission, puisque cela vous fera du bien dans l’esprit de S.A.”; GStA PK, I, Rep. 81, Rom I (C), Nr. 2, Fasz. 3 (letter from Stuttgart dated Mar. 17, 1756). For Giofani’s 1762 solicitation of payment, see *ibid.* (letter dated Mar. 24, 1762).*

84. “I do not think Sadler’s prints of the ruins of Rome sufficiently accurate after the originals. Piranesi’s are too confused to give a clear idea of them; he is so ridiculously exact in trifles, as to have injured the fine proportion of the columns of the portico to the pantheon, by inserting, in his engravings, the papers stuck on them, such as advertisements, &c. Many other silly particulars of this nature have confused his designs; yet they are esteemed the best here; and we have made an ample collection of the most valuable of them. The ruins we have seen, greatly exceed our ideas formed of them from books and prints”; [Anna Miller], *Letters from Italy, Describing the Manners, Customs, Antiquities, Paintings, &c. of that Country. In the Years MDCCLXX and MDCCLXXI*, 2nd ed., London, 1777, II, 157.

85. “Per @ [canne] 13 Fittuccia Color di Rose per legare li Involti delle due Rappresentanze delle Macchine de fuochi per li Emi. Sig.ri Card. i e Principi, a [baiocchi] .10 la @ [scudi] 1:30; Per @ 25 fittuccia consimili piu stretta per li Sig.ri Prelati, e Cavalieri [scudo] 1; Per Pezze Quattro fittuccia Capicciola color di Rose per particolari a [baiocchi] .075 la pezza [scudi] :30”; AC, I.A.444/21.

86. “Per due Viaggi di un Facchino per li due Baulli in Palazzo Farnese [scudi] :30”; AC, I.A.444/21.

87. “Per diversi Viaggi pagati in fare le distribuzioni delle Rappresentanze de fuochi, li 28, e 29 Cad.e [scudi] :60”; AC, I.A.444/21.

88. “1756. . . . Per tre Viaggi fatti dal Palazzo in dispensa con il Baullo per piegare tutte le stampe de Fochi nella distribuzione delle due sere in Palazzo Farnese et altro Viaggio del d.o Baullo dalla dispensa al P. Farnese [baiocchi] :40”; AC, I.A.417/227.

89. “Nella Speziaria Apostolica detta della Regina . . . si è veduto per molti giorni l’apparato per la composizione del Mitridate, Teriaca, e Confezzione di Giacinto, nel quale vi erano per adornamento due Mumie antiche Egiziane. . . . Il concorso tanto de Nobili, che di altre Persone civili è stato numerosissimo con esaltazione, e commune applauso. In occasione poi di detta mostra sono state dispensate alcune composizioni Poetiche . . . con dispensa parimenti della mostra dell’apparato inciso in rame, e fatto stampare”; *Chracas*, n.s. no. 54, July 8, 1775, 10–11. Preserved in GCHAH is an anonymous etching entitled “Son.so Apparato di Theriaca, e Mitridato fatto da Gaetano de Luca nella sua Spet.a della Regina, posta in Roma al Paradiso li 30. Giugno del Giubileo 1750.”

90. “Medaglie, Imagini di ogni sorte con piccole vitine da distribuirsi in chiesa a Principi, Principesse, Dame, Cavalieri, e Persone Civili *ad libitum*, il che non sarà male, anche per i poveri Confessori, che saranno tormentati; see the chapter entitled “Cose necessarie da farsi prima dell’ottavario per S: Giuliana Falconieri,” in the manuscript “Ritus in solemnitate canonizationis,” preserved in GCHAH, acc. no. 940094, 220.

91. One etched series of the cries of Berlin began with a colporteur who, according to the inscription, was wont to call out “Kauften Sie mir doch von meinen Bildern ab”; see T. Gaehgens et al., *Deutsche Zeichnungen des 18. Jahrhunderts*, Berlin, 1987, 126–28.

Residing in Naples, the architect Luigi Vanvitelli was not alone as he waited to examine Vasi's etchings.⁹²

By using payments from 1759 as a fixed reference, and with the help of documents that fall near that date, I have attempted to reconstruct the production and dissemination of China-related etchings (Figs. 1, 2). The wealth of information permits the computation of a unit cost of 3 *baiocchi* (.03 scudo) per paper print. Gismondi was paid .10 scudo for pulling each satin print, as opposed to .75 scudo per hundred paper prints; the 13.33 percent price differential speaks to the luxury and expense of the matrix, and the attendant difficulty of the printing process, in which error had to be avoided at all costs. The unit production cost of prints related to the triumphal arch that Charles VII had erected was 5 *baiocchi*, but the edition was a mere 8.55 percent of that for the China prints, and the overall cost included three satin impressions (Fig. 16).⁹³ According to Pier Leone Ghezzi, someone who earned 2 *baiocchi* a day in 1728 "was dying of hunger."⁹⁴ On the brighter side, in a Roman café in the late 1780s, 6 *baiocchi* would have bought a large pyramid of ice cream.⁹⁵

When first offered for sale in August 1747, individual prints from Vasi's *Delle magnificenze di Roma antica e moderna* cost 12 *paoli*, or 1.2 scudi; if the whole corpus was purchased, the price fell to an economical 1 *zecchino*, or 2 scudi. The Chracas house, which edited and published the Rome newspaper, issued Vasi's first volume. Would-be buyers could repair to Chracas's shop (on the Via del Corso) or to Vasi's atelier to obtain copies; both locales were busy tourist areas.⁹⁶ The exceptionally high price for single etchings may reflect a conscious differentiation in marketing. A tourist could well have preferred to buy several favorite images loose, rather than the whole set of unbound etchings, if these then had to be carried for many miles and months.⁹⁷ There

was a price to pay, even in the eighteenth century, for choice and convenience. Bargain prices for bulk purchases would have encouraged rapid turnover, and a concomitant return on monies invested.

"In the palace of Sig. Co. Tomati in Strada Felice," one etching from Piranesi's *Vedute di Roma*, cost "two and one half *paoli*" (.25 scudo), a price that never varied from around 1746–48 (when the title page was put on the market), until 1763 (the last time a price and point of sale are included on a print).⁹⁸ In light of the animosity between Vasi and Piranesi, the low cost of the latter's prints may have represented a strategy for cornering a competitive market.⁹⁹ The 7,084 prints on paper pulled in 1759 can be conveniently (if arbitrarily) divided in half, yielding 3,542 etchings related to each set piece. This figure compares favorably to Piranesi's practice. Referring to his *Vedute di Roma*, the artist writes that he customarily had 4,000 prints pulled from his plates. By 1757, "prints ha[d] been requested from [him in] Germany, Denmark, Sweden, and Russia," with two hundred others destined for France; in the early 1770s, John Trumbull studied "a set of Piranesi's prints" at Harvard.¹⁰⁰ At a unit selling price of .25 scudo, the etcher would have reaped the handsome sum of 1,000 scudi for his efforts.

The low unit cost of China etchings would have rendered innocuous dramatic diminutions in value over time. These occurred in the case of Nolli's engraved map of Rome, the price of which dropped to 2 scudi in 1756, 66 percent less than the cost of a new impression in 1748.¹⁰¹ Arriviste banker Girolamo Belloni reduced the price of remaining impressions, putting them up for sale in several Roman print-dealers' shops in order to recoup the money owed him by the late Nolli.¹⁰²

At a unit price of .03 scudo, a single print on paper was almost the least expensive object in the entire presentation of China.¹⁰³ But China prints were distributed for free.

92. "Ho piacere degli vantaggi del Posi ed aspetterò la stampe delle Machine del Contestabile"; Strazzullo, I, 336 (letter from Caserta dated July 2, 1754).

93. For the print run on etchings related to the triumphal arch, see n. 60 above. Total print run for China of 1759: 7,098 (7,084 on paper, 14 on satin).

94. "Bagarollo il quale puliva le Palle alla Pilotta del S.e Contestabile il dì 12 Agosto 1728 et il giorno doppo partì per Loreto per andarsi à guadagnare il Pane perchè in Roma si moriva di fame, con tutto che lavorasse bene di racamo, e puliva le d.e Palle per due baiocchi al giorno, ed io gli diedi qualche limosina, e mè ne sono lassata la Memoria Il Cav.re Ghezzi, il dì 15 Agosto 1728"; Ghezzi, ms. Ottob. lat. 3116, fol. 114.

95. "... dans les cafés, pour six bajoques vous avez une pyramide de glace trois fois plus haute que celles de Paris, et bien mieux confectionnée"; J. Gorani, *Mémoires secrets et critiques des cours, des gouvernemens, et des moeurs des principaux états d'Italie*, Paris/Lyon/Marseille, 1793, II, 151.

96. "Da questa Stamperia Chracas è uscita alla luce un Opera il di cui frontespizio è il seguente: *Delle Magnificenze di Roma Antica, e Moderna Libro primo* . . . La medesima Opera si vende dal detto Sig. Giuseppe Vasi, ed anche nella stessa Stamperia, un zecchino il Corpo, e le sole stampe de i Rami delle Porte pavoli 12"; Chracas, no. 4695, Aug. 26, 1747, 12.

97. Topographical prints were typically sold unbound: "O riveduto tutti li libri delle vedute di Vasi; mi manca il libro 9o; questo conviene di soppiatto farglielo comprare da qual'uno, per mandarmelo, o con occasione, o per il Procaccio, perché non voglio far legare quest'ultimo Xo . . . senza unirlo con il 9o"; Strazzullo, II, 763 (letter from Naples dated Nov. 3, 1761).

98. For reproductions, see M. Campbell et al., *Piranesi: Rome Recorded. A Complete Edition of Giovanni Battista Piranesi's Vedute di Roma from the Collection of the Arthur Ross Foundation*, exh. cat., 2nd rev. ed., New York, 1990. According to Vanvitelli, "[q]uesto Piranesi si è arricchito . . . tutto parto

delle sue fatiche e del talento, per cui à acquistato fama in ogni parte. La casa sua è divenuta un porto di negozio, molto più che la Calcografia"; Strazzullo, III, 437.

99. For the relationship between Vasi and Piranesi, see H. Millon, "Vasi—Piranesi—Juvarra," in G. Brunel, ed., *Piranesi et les français*, Rome, 1978, 345–62.

100. "Ma egli è però certo, che io non mi sarei mai messo a fare un solo di questi frontespizj per trecento scudi Romani, perchè sanno tutti, che un foglio ordinario delle mie vedute di Roma si paga due paoli e mezzo; e siccome io soglio tirarne quattromila esemplari, ciascuna di esse dunque mi rende diecimila paoli, che sono mille scudi Romani"; G. B. Piranesi, *Lettere di giustificazione scritte a Milord Charlemont*, Rome, 1757, viii–ix. For the countries where impressions were sent, see *ibid.*, vi, xii. The Philadelphia-born Thomas Palmer donated nine volumes of Piranesi's *Vedute* to the Harvard College Library. For the American connection to Piranesi, see A. S. Marks, "Angelica Kauffmann and Some Americans on the Grand Tour," *American Art Journal*, XII, no. 2, 1980, 20; and T. Sizer, ed., *The Autobiography of Colonel John Trumbull Patriot-Artist, 1756–1843*, New Haven, 1953, 12.

101. Alessandro Albani wrote to Vienna in 1744 to obtain exclusive rights of sale for Nolli within crown lands—four years, that is, before the map was published; see Noack (as in n. 13), 406. Nolli's map was part of Stosch's *Atlas*; see Winckelmann (as in n. 19), 590.

102. "Il Console di Olanda mi ha richiesto che li faccia venire da Roma una pianta di Roma, cioè quella fatta dal Nolli defonto; queste piante ora si vendono due scudi e non più sei come l'ho pagata io dall'Autore. Il Belloni, che era creditore del defonto, ha preso le impressioni e per rimborsarsene ha calato il prezzo e le à date a vendere a Fausto al Corso ed altri"; Strazzullo, I, 617 (letter from Naples dated Nov. 26, 1756). The sale of these impressions is announced in Chracas, no. 6126, Oct. 16, 1756, 12.

Many must have found their way into unrecorded hands, since 7,084 far exceeded the approximately 1,014 copies needed for guests in Palazzo Farnese, and for those named on the mailing list. The remaining 6,070 impressions would have enabled about 3.94 percent of the Roman populace to obtain one print each.¹⁰⁴

Stagnate, or Gifts of Salami and Cheese

The word *stagnata* appears frequently in accounting records that pertain to the *Chinaea*, but its meaning has escaped Italian lexicographers' attention. The word refers first of all to a tin (or bronze) container.¹⁰⁵ In the Colonna household, it was more evocative of a lunch box, signifying a portion of food—specifically salami and cheese—given to numerous individuals, including the household staffs of guests who attended the *Chinaea* receptions. Analogous donations were common, especially at the end of ambitious construction projects.¹⁰⁶

Major-domo Andreini reimbursed bookkeeping clerk Antonio Montelli for monies spent in “the customs house for goods delivered by land,” where payment had been exacted, following the “new tax on the monopoly of tobacco,” for 1,000 pounds of salami “for the *stagnate* of the *Chinaea*.”¹⁰⁷ Included were costs for accompanying the salami from the Porta S. Giovanni to the customs house (located in the Piazza di Pietra, not far from the Pantheon), and unloading and keeping it under guard at the Colonna dispensing store-room, where hardy souls might otherwise have attempted to help themselves. In-kind payments to a customs-house porter, who probably saw the salami enter Rome, are recorded.¹⁰⁸

The salami came from Marino, near Castel Gandolfo. Over the years the Colonna used their palace there as a villa, and thus were familiar with the products of a local delicatessen owner named Cesare Zitelli. Ignazio Liccia, the Colonna's

overseer in Marino, posted an entry stating that Zitelli was paid 100 scudi for having provided 1,250 pounds of salami.¹⁰⁹ There is thus a discrepancy of 250 pounds between what Montelli recorded at the customs house and what Colonna quartermaster Alberto Ludovisi wrote not once, but twice, in words and figures. Payments of wine and bread “to Agostino, the carter of Marino” attest to delivery of the salami to Rome.¹¹⁰

As we know, Gaetano Benaglia, quartermaster of the herd of buffalo cows, helped supervise the production and distribution of printed images. Yet accounting records preserve traces of an activity more closely bound to his job title. In early July he posted the disbursement of 1,130 pounds of *provature marzoline*, a gift often exchanged among the powerful in Rome.¹¹¹ And what English translation could evoke the springlike freshness of the product, its creamy consistency, or the delicate taste unique to buffalo milk? The cheese was drawn from Benaglia's storeroom on separate occasions, “up to July 31 inclusive,” and represented 34.21 percent of the total disbursed in 1759.¹¹² That such provisions were on hand reflects widespread patterns of land use among Roman aristocratic families, who increasingly turned their rural properties over to dairy farming, which was less labor-intensive than the cultivation of grain.¹¹³ Implicit, too, in Benaglia's bill is the idea that those who had the right to obtain cheese did so over a period of time.

In a 1582 broadside visualization of the rhythms of Roman trades, one stereotyped figure sold “cheese [and] salted meat.”¹¹⁴ By dint of their *Chinaea*-related work, many lucky souls had no need to buy from ambulant salesmen, but instead laid claim to free portions of salami and cheese. In 1759, the same Filippo Gismondi who pulled the *Chinaea* etchings also printed 624 chits, and then a second batch of 250.¹¹⁵ All were impressed with the constable's coat of arms, an instantly recognizable image that would have validated

103. A potter had hoped to be paid .015 scudi for each of six porcelain cups he supplied for the receptions, but his asking price was reduced by 33 percent; the unit price of dessert cups remained stable at .018 scudi; AC, I.A.436/102.

104. In late 1758, the official estimate of the population was 154,058; see Chracas, *Notizie per l'anno 1759*, Rome, 1759, 15 (most of this text printed before Dec. 12, 1758).

105. “Specie di vaso fatto per lo più di stagno, che s'adopera più comunemente per uso di conservarvi olio e aceto”; N. Tommaso, *Dizionario della lingua italiana*, Turin, 1929, s.v. “stagnata.”

106. At the end of June 1756, upon completion of the Theatine monastery at S. Andrea della Valle, “si sono dati i maccheroni a Muratori a cagione d'aver i med.i posto il tetto alla nuova Fabbrica, e nella forma med.a come dopo i fondamenti si era praticato”; Rome, Archivio di Stato, Fondo dei Teatini, busta 2198, 12. I would like to thank the anonymous *Art Bulletin* reader for providing me with this reference.

107. “Io Sottoscro hò ric.to . . . Scudi Due, e [baiocchi]: 62 1/2 mta per tanti pagati in Dogana di Terra per la nuova Imposizione sopra la Appalto del Tabacco per L.e 1000 = Salami per le Stagnate della Chinaea compresovi la compagno della Porta scaricatura, e Guardia In Fede qsto di 30 Giugno [changed from July 1] 1759; [signed] Antonio Montelli”; AC, I.A.443/153. For Montelli's identification, see AC, I.A.443/145.

108. “Al Facchino della Dogana di Terra,” two pots; AC, I.A.438/155; “Al Facchino della Dogana di Terra,” four loaves; AC, I.A.437/142. In the previous year, payment is recorded “A Dom.o Falicetta Facchino di Dogana per Saldo di Suo Conto,” specifically, “a 12 d.o [Oct. 1758] per Guardia, Scaricature di L.e 200 = Salami per la Chinaea”; AC, I.A.443/26.

109. “Nota di Robbe diverse prese nella Pizzicaria di Marino . . . come appariscono nelli bollettini del Mro Ill.re Sig.re Ignazio Liccia Fattore di S.E. Pne . . . Adi 5 = Luglio [1759] per altro viglietto fatto dal Sud.o Alberto [scudi] 100. . . . Riceuto dal Sig.re Cesare Zitelli Salami per Servizio delle

Stagnate della Chinaea Libre mille dui Cento cinquanta dico L.e 1250 [signed] Alberto Ludovisi”; AC, I.A.433/206.

110. “Al Carrettiere di Marino,” two pots, and “Ad Agostino Carrettiere,” two pots; AC, I.A.438/155. In addition, “Agostino il Carrettiere di Marino,” four loaves, “Al Carrettiere di Marino,” four loaves, and “Al Carrettiere di Marino,” twenty-four loaves; AC, I.A.437/142.

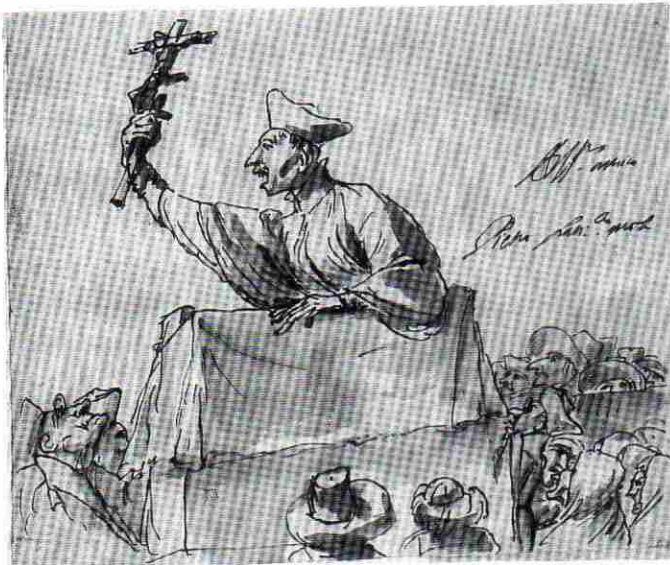
111. The comestible is defined in contemporaneous sources: “Provature, ò siano Muzzarelle fresche”; AS, vol. 1241 (letter from Rome dated May 13, 1738); “[cacio d'ottimo sapore, che si fa in alcune ville del contádo di Firenze] a kind of very delicate cheese, made about Florence”; J. Baretta, *A Dictionary of the English and Italian Language*, London, 1760, s.v. “marzolino.” Having arrived at Castel Gandolfo on Sunday, June 3, 1759, the pontiff received “[u]n bacile di Marzolini” from the hands of “il Sig. Conte Passolini, Maestro di Camera del Sign. Contestabile”; Chracas, no. 6540, June 9, 1759, 19.

112. “Lista de latticini dati del Procoio delle Bufale . . . da Gaetano Benaglia Dispenziere del Procoio Sud.o. . . . Stagnate per la Chinaea; A di 7 Lug.o [1759] per L.e Millecentotrenta Prov.e Marzoline havute dalla Dispensa del Procoio in piu volte à tutto li 31 Cad.e a [baiocchi] .05 la L.a mandate in Dispensa di S. Ecc.a Pad.e [scudi] 56:50”; AC, I.A.444/20.

113. I owe this observation to Miroslava Benes, who delivered a paper on 17th-century Roman villa culture at a symposium at Brown University on Mar. 20, 1993.

114. For an illustration, see C. d'Onofrio, *Roma nel Seicento*, Rome, 1969, 290–291.

115. (1) “Per havere stampato N.o 624: viglietti per le stagniate della Chinaea à ragione di [baiocchi] .25 il cento importano Scudo 0i:56”; AC, I.A.436/32; (2) “Io S.to hò riceuto . . . [baiocchi] 82 1/2 m.ta cioè [baiocchi] 62 1/2 per la stampa di N.o 250 bollettini per le stagniate per la chinaea, è [baiocchi] 20 per tirature di 2 stampe de fuochi in seta che mancorno questo di iò 7bre 1759; [signed] Io Filippo Gismondi”; AC, I.A.444/18.



19 Pier Leone Ghezzi, *Jesuit Haranguing a Crowd*, pen and ink. BAV, MS Ottob. lat. 3113, fol. 123 (photo: BAV)

bearers' claims at the dispensing storeroom.¹¹⁶ With 874 printed chits on hand, the servants of all 507 attending guests had ample opportunity to obtain salami and cheese, which went well with wine and bread.

What these individuals did to earn their portions is often not specified, because it did not concern the bookkeeping staff. Connection to a guest or membership within a group was meaningful, not the tasks performed. Many individuals—stable hands, grooms, factotums, domestic servants, and artisans from wigmakers to shoemakers—helped their masters or clients prepare for, go to, participate in, and return from the Chinese receptions. In this instance, work brought with it an opportunity to examine the set pieces, to enjoy concerts and fireworks displays, and to drink free wine, activities that engaged all five senses. Many servants partook of exquisite desserts as well, for the constable served them to everyone present at the receptions.

And many people could, and apparently did, procure etchings related to the set pieces. Like Benedict XIV at the balcony of the Palazzo Farnese, with "print in hand," they could "[compare] many elements therein to the festival structure itself" (Figs. 1, 2). But the pontiff had to invent excuses for diverting his carriage, and taking his on-site delight: he and those who lived within the constraints of

protocol could not simply show up to have a look at a set piece (Fig. 3).¹¹⁷ Ottavio Antonio Bayardi, an apostolic protonotary who also served as foreign-affairs correspondent—that is to say, spy—for the Neapolitan court, transmitted the frankly secondhand report that Benedict XIV had made gestures of blessing toward a festival structure. For Bayardi, the papal presence at the Farnese palace, the blessing, and the direct engagement with politicized works of art—an ephemeral one in the square below, a longer-lasting one in hand—were unbecoming.¹¹⁸ The pope's actions could rightly have engendered criticism by representatives of nations not accorded an equivalent public manifestation. To be sure, the transmission of mixed signals would not have occurred had Benedict XIV been able to check his interest and delight in ephemera.

Unburdened by titles, power, and privilege, numerous uncoerced individuals could be entertained by the spectacle for as long as they wished. The explicit purpose of the ambitious public festivals of early modern Europe was to encourage ordinary people to attend, take part in, understand, and enjoy them.¹¹⁹ The constable gave gifts in the form of a procession, prints, food, wine, music, and fireworks; the populace gave the gift of its attention and collective participation, without which all displays of largesse would have been meaningless. It matters not that some of the freely distributed etchings, keepsakes of the event, probably fell from individuals' hands to the ground, where they were soiled, trampled, torn, and swept away. To historians' dismay, what is given for free often has a short life. What matters is the visual consumption, however brief—that link between printed paper surfaces and hands eager to hold them. Today, Greek and Roman myths are learned in school, if not at university. Nevertheless, it is wrong to assume that a similar situation obtained in the past, or to draw unsubstantiated conclusions about the visual literacy of the masses, who understood more than we, dependent on reading-based literacy, might expect. In 1759, few in the Piazza Farnese needed to be told who Bacchus was, Bacchus being a common nickname for a fat man.¹²⁰

The totality of experience presented individuals with all manner of information. To an enlightened (and thus prejudiced) Northerner, ordinary Romans may have been "superstitious," but some of those superstitions were conditioned by a knowledge of ancient mythology.¹²¹ In a caricature, Ghezzi

116. In 1756, chits were printed "con l'Arma dell'Eccma Casa"; AC, I.A.417/227.

117. Cf. this extract from an account of festivities sponsored by Cardinal de Polignac in Nov. 1729 to celebrate the birth of the dauphin Louis: "Il est bon de faire observer que pendant qu'on fesoit ces preparatifs, toute la Ville s'empressoit à les aller voir, de sorte que plus.rs jours de suite c'étoit une affluence de monde inconcevable qui passoit alternativem.t du palais de S.E. à la place Navone jusque la que contre la coutume et la rigueur du ceremonial on voyoit des Card.x, des Princes, des Princesses, des Seigneurs et des Dames se promener à pied comme on fait à Paris aux Thuilleries, parce que les avenues en étoient barrées de peur que les Carosses n'interrompissent le travail"; AMAE, vol. 707, fol. 143v. That the pope had to plan his travels through the city carefully is explained by the custom requiring those whose carriages met his to stop, dismount, and fall to their knees, "ce qui fait que les cochers sont très-attentif à l'éviter"; J. Richard, *Description historique et critique de l'Italie*, Dijon, 1766, v, 43.

118. "Il Papa Domenica mattina si portò su la ringhiera di piazza Farnese col suo solito treno vi si fermò qualche tempo contemplando la machina

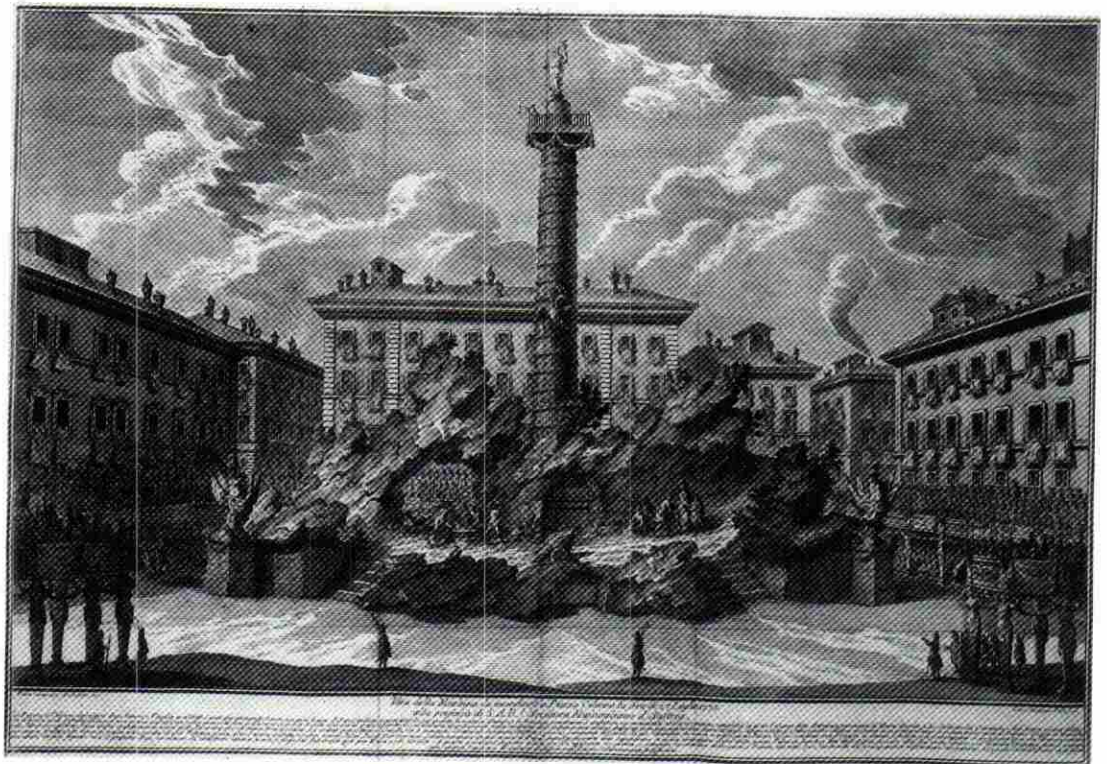
colla stampa tra le mani dando la benedizione verso detta machina. Quest'atto a dire il vero è stato disapprovato da tutta la gente di senno e che conoscono quanto vaglia il contenere il carattere della Maestà Pontificia. Ma egli l'intende così e non vi è rimedio"; AS, vol. 1099 (letter dated June 22, 1745).

119. "Fù veramente degna dell'applauso del numeroso popolo, che concorse à vederla, & in ciò dico quanto più si può dire, perche si come il fine de'publici spettacoli, e di dar gusto alla plebe, dalla sodisfazione di questa ne dipende l'esito felice;" *Descrittione del corteggio, e pompa, con la quale D. Maffeo Barberini presentò la Chinea ad Alessandro VII, tradotta dallo spagnolo da Marco Antonio Nobili*, Rome, 1663, 23.

120. "Maestro Titta Fasciani Capo Mastro Muratore, il quale nel suo mestiere à una grandissima pratica, e quando era giovane era magrissimo, e presentem.te è diventato un bacco"; Ghezzi, MS Ottob. lat. 3119, fol. 89. For an account of a carnival float, "universally applauded," whose subject was the triumph of Bacchus, see Chracas, no. 6030, Mar. 6, 8–9.

121. "Quant au peuple, il est superstitieux & avare, sale, dégoûtant, sobre,

20 Vasi, set piece erected in the Piazza Colonna to celebrate the visit of Archduke Maximilian of Austria, July 27, 1775, etching, Copenhagen, Kunstindustrimuseet, Art Library, III 1804, II, fol. 52 (photo: Uwe Woldbye)



depicts a Jesuit haranguing a crowd (Fig. 19). Gathered into a tight circle, the figures look up to the priest, who looms large over them, as he would have while standing on a platform in a Roman square. Wielding a crucifix he may have drawn from his sleeve just moments before (a standard dramatic device), he reminds the crowd of its sins, having already conjured up images of fire and brimstone that derived not only from the Bible.¹²² A Jesuit preacher constantly invoked the literature of pagan antiquity, taking it for granted that his audience would understand what it heard, even if it could not cite the ancient authorities chapter and verse.¹²³

Giuseppe Vasi refused to underestimate the intelligence of those whom the historical record has often rendered silent. He knew that by examining an etching related to a set piece, “each and every one of the people . . . against the opinion of pedants, who always tend to be scornful of them,” would be able to discern what was “poetic and picturesque, as well as

the relationship of the parts, and the unity of the whole” (Fig. 20). The set piece in question was erected in the Piazza Colonna to celebrate the 1775 visit of Archduke Maximilian of Austria, whom Vasi, as wardrobe master of the Farnese palace, may have met.¹²⁴ According to the symbolic conceit of the composition, the archduke is not shown but is understood as “the young figure whom Minerva conducts along a wide road.” The presence of the real Column of Marcus Aurelius is acknowledged as a historical solecism, yet included in the print as “an ornament of the panorama.” That a bust of the emperor appears among Vulcan’s artifacts could be read as a hidden hope that the Austrian prince would follow in the illustrious footsteps of that philosopher-sovereign.

As with China etchings, Vasi produced the image before the event; etchings were distributed at receptions held in the Palazzo Niccolini.¹²⁵ His evocation of an audience—“each and every one of the people”—may be hyperbolic. But his

parseux & débauché”; Marquis d’Orbessan, *Mélanges historiques, critiques, de physique, de littérature, et de poésie*, Paris, 1768, I, 577.

122. “The most comical Part in the Farce of those reverend Fathers in my Opinion is, that after crying, fretting, fuming, grimacing, and laughing with all their Might, they take all of a sudden out of their Sleeve a Crucifix, which they hold up, handle, and turn round as a Puppet-Show-Man does his Lady *Catharine*: They apostrophise to it with Howlings; they kiss it and seem to cry; they flatter it with saying soft Things to it; and then shew it to the People, saying to them with a thundering Voice: *See your Saviour, your Christ whom you have so often offended, and whom you offend every Day and Moment*; then clapping it back hastily into their Sleeve, they reproach them with being unworthy of beholding him any longer, and pronounce Damnation upon them if they don’t amend: And thus ends the Sermon”; Blainville, I, 335.

123. “If they [Jesuits during Lent] are speaking of Paradise, they give you Verbatim the Description which *Ovid* in the Beginning of the 2d Book of his *Metamorphosis* makes of the Palace of the Sun. *Regia Solis erat sublimibus alta Columnis*. If they want to inspire their Auditors, eight in ten of whom are very simple ignorant People, with a just Fear of Hell Torment, the 8th Book of

Virgil’s Aeneid is at Hand, together with boiling Chaldrons and burning Lakes of Sulphur and Brimstone, where damned Souls swim after they are turned into Frogs”; Blainville, II, 335; and “Vous ne serez pas fâché que je vous dise un mot des prédicateurs de ce pays. . . ce que je ne leur pardonne pas, c’est le mélange du sacré avec le profane. Pour vous en donner une légère idée, l’un d’eux parlant sur l’orgueil & la vanité, à côté des morceaux de l’Evangile qu’il citoit, ne put se défendre de rappeler la fable de Narcisse; ce n’étoit assurément pas le lieu”; Orbessan (as in n. 121), I, 538–39.

124. “. . . si portò [Maximilian] al Regio Palazzo in Piazza Farnese, a vedere il famoso Toro di marmo, salendo poi a vedere il più essenziale di detto Palazzo”; Chracas, n.s. no. 58, July 22, 1775, 20–21. In the Vatican palace, “[t]he *Guardarobbe*, the Officers . . . have the Care of the Furniture, and shew you the Apartments”; E. Wright, *Some Observations Made in Travelling through France, Italy, &c. In the Years 1720, 1721, and 1722*, London, 1730, 259.

125. “Sig. Principe Chigi . . . [fece] distribuire alla nobilissima Adunanza il ben inciso Rame del Fuoco artificiale”; Chracas, n.s. no. 60, July 29, 1775, 22–23.

words also stand as a corrective to laziness, and a challenge to reconstruct, without unconscious and distorting class bias, a protean print-viewing public in eighteenth-century Rome. And with *stagnate* of salami and cheese, some members of that audience—including the artisans who built the set pieces—had something extra to claim, with an unusual freedom to decide when to register the claim. Some, that is, ate salami-and-cheese sandwiches, drank wine, and derived multiple meanings from prints. May it be argued that the exercise of choice and the enjoyment of pleasure—a fundamental part of which engaged the complex realm of the visual—would make anybody feel like celebrating.

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 AMAE Paris, Archives du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, Correspondance politique, Rome
 AN Paris, Archives Nationales, Affaires étrangères, Correspondance consulaire, Rome
 AS Naples, Archivio di Stato, Affari esteri, Roma
 BAV Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana
 BC Rome, Biblioteca Casanatense, volume of prints entitled "Raccolta rarissima di tutte le machine de fuochi artificiali di architettura" (collocation: 20-B-I-17)
 GCHAH Santa Monica, The Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, Special Collections
 GStA PK Berlin, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Hauptabteilung I, Repositur 81, Abteilung Rom I (C)
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