ART AND POLITICS IN THE AUSTRIAN NETHERLANDS: COUNT CHARLES COBENZL (1712–70) AND HIS COLLECTION OF DRAWINGS

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Abstract

The Cabinet of Count Charles Cobenzl lies at the heart of the Hermitage Museum, forming the core of the collection of Old Master Drawings. Yet despite perpetual references to him as 'grand collectionneur', no study of Cobenzl's collecting has ever been undertaken. Nor, in the absence of prosopographical studies of art production or collecting in the Austrian Netherlands in the middle of the eighteenth century, or indeed of other individual collectors, has it been possible to set him in a 'collecting context'.

Bringing together the works of art themselves and Cobenzl's abundant correspondence, this thesis assesses what he owned, how and why he acquired it, the political and intellectual framework for his collecting and how he perceived the objects in his possession. Looking at Cobenzl's roles as public figure and private collector, it shows how the latter fits into the context of the former, his collecting rooted firmly in his ambition to revive the economy and the arts of the Austrian Netherlands, in his own ambiguous status and his conflicts with the Governor, Charles de Lorraine. The battle for both real and perceived superiority was played out in many different parts of Cobenzl's professional and private life, and he used display – the adornment of his home and his person and his collecting – as part of a play for social prestige. Cobenzl used objects as a discrete assertion of both intellectual and aesthetic superiority.

This thesis proposes that Cobenzl's transformation into a collector of drawings was an example of his perspicacious identification of emerging trends that could be turned to advantage, economic or prestigious, public or personal. He was drawn by the status of drawings, perceived as accessible only to those of greater refinement and understanding, as something elite, less accessible than the collecting of paintings. The direct and specific stimulus for his emergence as a collector of drawings lay in the provenance of two large groups of works he was offered, which permitted him to assert a very specific link to the past. It suggests that Cobenzl adopted not only the drawings, but also their histories, to negotiate social position and identity, within the context of his pragmatic utilitarianism.

This egocentric study also provides the foundation for a preliminary attempt to create a context for Cobenzl's collecting of drawings, within his circle, in the Austrian Netherlands overall, and, through analysis of his collecting practices, in the wider European context.

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Acknowledgments

This thesis was inspired by the research of Mikhail Dobroklonsky, former Keeper of Drawings at the Hermitage Museum, whose catalogues of Flemish and Italian drawings published between the 1940s and to 1960s are central to any study of the collection, and by a request from the current Keeper of Dutch and Flemish Drawings, Alexey Larionov, that I see if there was any information to be had on Charles Cobenzl, about whom almost nothing was known in Russia. Dobroklonsky's publications have remained a point of reference, his erudition – at a time when the Soviet Union was largely cut off from Western Europe – worthy of great admiration. Alexey Larionov has been consistent in providing valuable advice and being critical where necessary. Having set me, by accident, on my path, he has continued to be generous with his knowledge about the drawings in his care.

A great debt is owed to a number of scholars who have studied Cobenzl or looked at his life in the context of the Austrian Netherlands in the eighteenth-century: Count Carlos Villermont, Denis Coekelberghs, Alain Jacobs, Xavier Duquenne and Claude Sorgeloos. Xavier Duquenne in particular has been unstinting in providing references to sources of information and in sharing his thoughts about Cobenzl. The specific mention of these individuals does not in any way deny the vast importance of the many scholars, librarians and friends who have each contributed to this text in some way.

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Particular thanks go to The State Hermitage Museum as an institution, for its enlightened policies permitting reproduction of images in theses and scholarly publications.

Notes and abbreviations

Although ‘Belgium’ and ‘Belgian’ are an anachronism in the eighteenth century, the word ‘belge’ was in use as a generalisation. Nonetheless, these words have been avoided. The term ‘Austrian Netherlands’ is preferred, although ‘Southern Netherlands’ is used to indicate the region beyond the period of Austrian rule.

Some individuals mentioned in this book are known by different versions of their names: the subject of this study, Johann Carl Philip Cobenzl, was universally known as Charles Cobenzl; his eldest son is both Ludwig and Louis, his nephew – Philippe and Philip. The decision has been taken to call them, respectively, Charles, Louis and Philip.

Several key sources provide firm points of reference underpinning all analysis: the untitled manuscript catalogue of the Cabinet as sold to Catherine the Great, the inventory of Cobenzl’s house contents compiled afer his death and other executor documents, the sale catalogues for his house contents and his books. These are not referenced in footnotes.

All references to sale catalogues are abbreviated in the text and footnotes.

Exchange rates are based either on references within the documents themselves or on the exchange rates provided in Michèle Galand’s commentary to the Journal secret de Charles de Lorraine. 1766–1779, Brussels, 2000

References to all drawings from the Cobenzl collection give their Hermitage inventory number (OR ….) even when they have left the Hermitage collection.

Abbreviations

AAbK	Archiv der Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna
AGR	Archives générales du Royaume et Archives de l’Etat, Brussels
ARS	Arhiv Republike Slovenije, Ljubljana
CA	Coronini Archive, Gorizia
HHStA	Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs, Vienna
NA	National Archives, Kew, London
RGADA	Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts, Moscow
RGIA	Russian State Historical Archive, St Petersburg

Introduction

In August 1761 at 49 years of age, Count Charles Cobenzl, Plenipotentiary Minister of Maria Theresa in the Austrian Netherlands, bought en masse two thousand drawings, following this up nine months later with a further lot of one and half thousand sheets. He wrote enthusiastically to interested colleagues of the pleasures and advantages of a collection of drawings, of its superiority over a collection of paintings. Having previously acquired or commissioned only portrait paintings and furniture pictures, and certainly no drawings save pastel portraits, he became an avid collector. Over the next few years he made further acquisitions of much smaller groups of drawings and created a Cabinet of Paintings. From late 1765, however, he largely ceased acquiring works of art, except for a series of attempts to purchase individual paintings by Rubens for his small but select Cabinet. In early 1767 he was still negotiating for the purchase of works by Rubens, but in June 1768, apparently unexpectedly, he sold the whole of his Cabinet – paintings, drawings and a small selection of sculptures – to Catherine the Great.

In the remaining eighteen months of Cobenzl's life he acquired only a few prints, some furniture pictures and portraits. His period as a collector of paintings and drawings lasted, therefore, just seven years, ending as unexpectedly and as hastily as it had begun. But his collection remained as a monument to him, forming the heart of the Hermitage Cabinet of Drawings even today.

What was the place of the arts in Cobenzl's life? Why did he start collecting, concentrating on drawings? How was it possible for him to 'stop' so suddenly? He started collecting at a time when the Austrian Netherlands was a site of dispersal of works of art, rather than of accumulation. There was apparently no significant circle of collectors to inspire and encourage his efforts, to make collecting the norm. As for drawings, there is little evidence that there were more than a few scattered individuals sharing this particular interest.

This thesis looks at Cobenzl's roles as public figure and private collector and shows how the latter fits into the context of the former, his collecting rooted firmly in his ambitions for the Austrian Netherlands, his own ambiguous status and his conflicts with the Governor and the aristocracy. It traces his origins, establishes his character and follows his career through various foreign posts in the Habsburg service before he settled in Brussels.

For all his learning and curious mind, Cobenzl cannot be demonstrated to have been driven by the kind of empirical curiosity that was motivating many contemporaries across Europe, seeking to acquire and arrange 'knowledge'. He was, quite clearly, a pragmatic utilitarian, for whom knowledge was a practical tool. As a loyal servant of the Habsburgs who spent his life largely 'abroad', but never in a major 'collecting capital' such as Paris or London or Amsterdam, he does not fit into the 'national' pictures of collecting – particularly the collecting of drawings – that have been created for France, Britain or the Netherlands.

Cobenzl played an essential role at the very heart of cultural life in the Austrian Netherlands – three federal Belgian cultural institutions today credit Cobenzl with the inspiration and efforts that lay behind their foundation: the Académie Royale, the Bibliothèque Royale and the Commission Royale d'Histoire. Supporting training for young artists, including the establishment of a programme to send them to study in Rome, actively promoting the arts and artistic industries in the Austrian Netherlands (such that he came to be known flatteringly as 'the Colbert of Belgium'), Cobenzl nonetheless included almost no works by the artists whose careers he promoted in his Cabinet.

Over the course of his career the way that Cobenzl presented himself evolved, in part in accordance with his environment. During the 1740s and early 1750s, based at various German courts, he seemed to be a bluff and witty hunting man with an eye for the ladies and a passion for books, and a merely gentlemanly interest in the artistic contents of his house, whether paintings or furniture, although already with a porcelain collection. Promoted in 1753 to a new, settled and more visible post in Brussels, he started creating a suitable context for his role, remodelling his (rented) mansion, transforming the gardens and making his collection of oriental porcelain into one of the largest in the country.

Thus there are three overlapping phases in the path of Cobenzl's personal acquisitions: books and porcelain were acquired more or less consistently from the 1740s until his death, the adornment of his house and garden dominated after his move to Brussels, then drawings and paintings became the focus of his attention, before apparently losing it entirely. In the second and third phases Cobenzl's activities were strongly coloured by his ambiguous position at Court and amongst the nobility, and specifically by the at times overt struggle for power between himself and the Governor, Charles de Lorraine. Their battle for both real and perceived superiority was played out in many different parts of Cobenzl's professional and private life, and he used display – the adornment of both his home and his person, and his collecting – as part of a play for social prestige. Cobenzl

would always be subordinate to Charles de Lorraine in rank, but he could use objects as a discrete assertion of intellectual superiority, a superiority of taste and preference.

This thesis proposes that Cobenzl's transformation into a collector of drawings was an example of his perspicacious identification of emerging trends (industries and practices) that could be turned to advantage, economic or prestigious, public or personal. He was attracted by the status of drawings, perceived as accessible only to those of greater refinement and understanding, as something elite, less widespread than the collecting of paintings. The direct and specific stimulus for his emergence as a collector of drawings lay in the provenance of two large groups of works he was offered, which permitted him to assert a very specific link to the past. It suggests that Cobenzl adopted not only the drawings, but also their histories, to negotiate social position and identity within the context of his pragmatic utilitarianism.

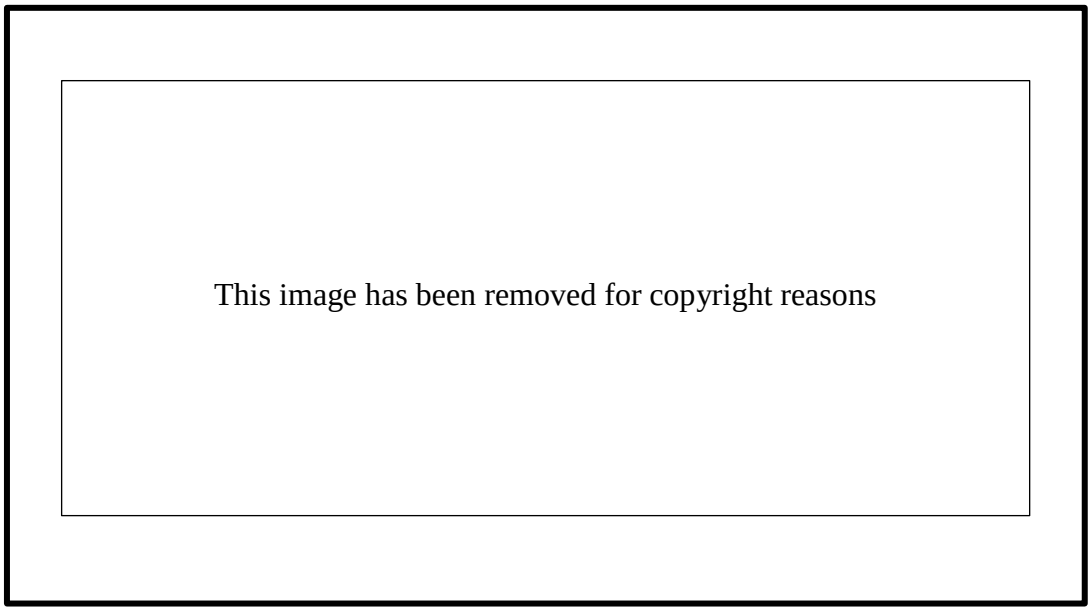

Figure 1. Anthony Van Dyck (1599–1641), The Rest on the Flight into Egypt. This is a typical intact Cobenzl mount. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Part I

Chapter 1. The Importance of the Cobenzl Collection

It was probably the sale of Cobenzl's Cabinet of works of art to Catherine the Great in 1768 that did more than anything else to ensure its fame outside Russia in later years. Even those who knew nothing of Cobenzl's own collection save its existence knew something of the mass of treasures acquired by the Russian Empress. By association, therefore, some assumed that the Austrian Minister had owned a magnificent array of paintings.[1] The relative lack of knowledge about the collection's composition would seem to have been ascribed to the closed nature of Soviet society – and of Soviet art history, which only rarely talked of provenance and patronage, as something too individual, too dependent on the stories of the rich and aristocratic, for a truly socialist picture of art.

Cobenzl's collection in fact consisted of just 46 paintings (Appendix I) but over 4,000 drawings, with a small selection of sculptures. Despite the overall high quality of the paintings and the presence of outstanding works by Rubens, a superb Van Dyck and a magnificent Rembrandt, the paintings collection cannot have been said to have been defining in the history of the Hermitage Picture Gallery, which gained the Brühl collection in the same year,[2] the Crozat collection in 1772 and the Walpole paintings in 1779.

It is the drawings that bring the name of Cobenzl most actively into play in art historical writing. For until the nationalisation of private property in the early Soviet period the Imperial Hermitage's collection of Old Master drawings was to all intents and purposes that of Count Cobenzl, with some – albeit major – additions. This has been recognised within the Hermitage, where the acquisition of the Cobenzl drawings in1768 is said to mark the foundation of the Cabinet of Drawings. Cobenzl's collection is thus hugely significant in terms of its formation, its composition and its historical fate (i.e. its preservation more or less en bloc) and what it tells us about the history of the Hermitage. Even the weaker drawings contribute to our knowledge of the collecting of drawings in the eighteenth century, particularly in Brussels.

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[1] e.g. Comte Carlos de Villermont, La cour de Vienne à Bruxelles au XVIII[e] siècle, Le comte de Cobenzl, ministre plénipotentiaire aux Pays-Bas, Lille–Paris–Bruges, 1925, p. 178

[2] The date of the Brühl acquisition is usually given, incorrectly, as 1769. See the original documents relating to the purchase and despatch, firmly dated 1768: Сборник императорскаго русскаго историческаго общества [Anthology of the Imperial Russian Historical Society], XVII, 1876, Appendix IX, pp. 388–94

The simplest way to demonstrate the vital importance of the Cobenzl collection within the Hermitage is through a number of telling statistics.

The first inventory of drawings in the Hermitage in 1797 lists 6,798 items,[3] although that does not include the 1,000 Brühl drawings.[4] The 1839 inventory included everything and listed 9,924 drawings.[5] Still the Cobenzl collection made up over two fifths of the whole. When one takes out 780 drawings by Charles-Louis Clérisseau, over 260 topographical views by Jean-Pierre Houël and other architectural drawings, as well as the 'Julienne album' of 1,000 drawings by Callot, it becomes clear that even thirty years after its acquisition by Catherine II the Cobenzl collection still formed the greater part of the Hermitage Old Master drawings.

If the nationalisation of private collections in the immediate wake of the October Revolution of 1917 brought many more Old Master drawings into the Hermitage, the significance of the Cobenzl drawings has remained definitive. One third of the 244 drawings shown at the first exhibition of the 'expanded' Cabinet of Drawings in 1926 came from Cobenzl.[6] Of 805 drawings in the catalogue of Flemish drawings of 1955, over 600 came from Cobenzl.[7] Exhibitions of the 'stars' of the Hermitage are dominated by Cobenzl's possessions. An exhibition from the Hermitage in 2011 included 40 of the Museum's greatest Flemish sheets: 28 from the Cobenzl collection.[8] Thanks largely to the huge number of French crayon (over 170) and black chalk (nearly 50) portraits, Irina Novoselskaya's exhibition catalogues of French drawings of the fifteenth and sixteenth

[3] 'Опись оригинальным рисункам разных авторов, находящимся при Императорском Эрмитаже, по высочайшему Его Императорскаго Величества повелению сочиненная членами Академии Художеств в конце сей описи подписавшимися' [Inventory of Original Drawings by Various Authors in the Imperial Hermitage, compiled by highest order of His Imperial Majesty by the members of the Academy of Arts whose signatures stand at the end of this inventory]. Manuscript completed 20 March 1797. Department of Drawings, Hermitage Museum

[4] The drawings and prints were all kept in albums until the early nineteenth century, and only then were the drawings entered in the drawings inventory. See Alexei Larionov, 'Die Sammlung der Zeichnungen des Grafen von Brühl', in: Bilder-Wechsel: sächsisch-russischer Kulturtransfer im Zeitalter der Aufklärung, Cologne–Weimar, 2009, pp. 125–50; Dimitri Ozerkov, 'Das Grafikkabinett Heinrich von Brühls', Ibid., pp. 151–83

[5] 'Опись рисункам оригинальным разных мастеров находящимся в Императорском Эрмитаже в Санктпетербурге 1811 года, исправленная в 1839 году' [Inventory of Original Drawings by Different Masters in the Imperial Hermitage in St Petersburg 1811, Corrected in 1839]. Manuscript. Department of Drawings, Hermitage Museum

[6] Mikhail Dobroklonsky, Musée de l'Ermitage. Dessins des maîtres anciens. Exposition de 1926, exh. cat., Hermitage, Leningrad, 1927. The catalogue, in French, has an excellent introductory survey of the history of the Hermitage collection of drawings.

[7] Государственный Эрмитаж. Рисунки фламандской школы XVII–XVIII веков [The State Hermitage. Drawings of the Flemish School, Seventeenth–Eighteenth Centuries], Moscow, 1955

[8] Rubens, Van Dyck & Jordaens. Flemish Painters from the Hermitage, exh. cat., Hermitage Amsterdam, 2011–12; Amsterdam, 2011

centuries and of the seventeenth centuries also included large numbers of Cobenzl works: 71 out of 77 and 36 out of 80 respectively.[9]

Figure 2. Louis de Caulery (c. 1580–1621?), Landscape with Courtly Figures by a River. © The Trustees of the British Museum. One of a group of more than twenty drawings from Cobenzl's collection that gave their name to 'The Master of the Hermitage Sketchbook' (although they are now agreed not to be the work of a single artist). This drawing was sold from the Hermitage in 1931

The significance of the collection lies not only in its indubitable quality, however, but in the very fact of its preservation more or less in its entirety, despite the transfer of over 360 drawings to other Soviet museums and the sale of 60 or so at auction in 1931 and 1932.[10] The vast majority of the drawings are still on the highly distinctive lilac mounts given them by Cobenzl which, with cartouches containing the attribution, form the Cobenzl collector's mark (see fig. 1).[11] Moreover, the arrangement of the Cobenzl collection on its arrival was to have a long-lasting effect in that it defined how the Hermitage kept its drawings: the

[9] Irina Novoselskaya [Novosselskaya], Французский рисунок XV–XVI веков в собрании Эрмитажа / Le dessin français des XV^e^ et XVI^e^ siècles dans les collections du Musée de l'Ermitage, exh. cat., Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, 2004; Irina Novoselskaya, Французский рисунок XVII века в собрании Эрмитажа / Le dessin français du XVII^e^ siècle dans les collections du Musée de l'Ermitage, exh. cat., Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, 1999

[10] These drawings were removed from the Museum by the Soviet government to raise foreign currency. Handzeichnungen alter Meister, C. G. Boerner, Leipzig, 29 April 1931; Handzeichnungen alter Meister, aus den Beständen der Eremitage in Leningrad, C. G. Boerner, Leipzig, 4 May 1932; Bücher, Gemälde / Graphik Handzeichnungen (z. T. aus der Eremitage, Leningrad)…, Max Perl, Berlin, II. Teil, 15 & 16 March 1932

[11] L.2858b, although Lugt sees the cartouche, rather than the mount and cartouche, as the mark.

three main sizes of storage box still in use today are those set by the first three standard sizes of the Cobenzl mounts.

If the collection had been formed in one of the great eighteenth-century 'collecting capitals', where collecting was more than just a princely occupation, in Paris, London or Amsterdam, the survival of such information would have been significant enough. The formation, arrangement and mounting of the collection by an individual based in Brussels makes it all the more important.

The approach that sees Europe as a whole, taking a global view of trends, also has its effect on cultural history. If we rightly understand the Enlightenment as something much broader than the French or even the British experience, if we analyse the unique national version of the Enlightenment in different countries, we realise that there can be no picture of 'the Enlightenment' that does not incorporate its variations, particularly on the European periphery. The same can be said of collecting: without analysis of the collecting practices beyond Paris, London and Amsterdam, how can we truly create a picture of the eighteenth-century, and how can we understand practices there without a much broader understanding of the pan-European context? Cobenzl's collecting practices throw light on the situation in the Austrian Netherlands, adding vital information for an overall picture of collecting on the periphery that remains to be drawn.

Chapter 2: Cobenzl as an Object of Study

Despite the survival of his collection largely intact in St Petersburg and Moscow, there has been no specialist study of Cobenzl as a collector, either of paintings or drawings, prior to this author's work.[1] A preliminary recreation of the collection of paintings was presented at a conference in the Hermitage Museum in 2007;[2] a number of papers have been given to specialist groups, such as that on Cobenzl's French connections in the series of Seminars in the History of Collecting at the Wallace Collection in July 2009, that on Cobenzl's drawings, their mounts and collector's mark, at the Salon du Dessin in Paris in 2010,[3] and another on Cobenzl's preference for private sales over auctions, at the conference on Art and Money at the European University in St Petersburg in May 2011.

It is not possible, therefore, to offer a detailed history of the study of Cobenzl and his collection. Numerous references to the latter's significance have been superficial, featuring within the context of Cobenzl's political activities, or in catalogue entries to a specific work. They often repeat incorrect information regarding the date the collection was formed or its composition. At best they are accompanied by the admission that the subject remains almost untouched.[4]

Cobenzl has nonetheless been the object of study in a number of other contexts, political, national and cultural, that inevitably impinge on the question of his patronage of the arts and artistic industries and his collecting. They create the background for an understanding of Cobenzl's motives, in which his collecting was a political act, an act of social

[1] An exhibition of drawings from his collection held at the Hermitage in 1969 simply presented a selection of drawings, with two brief pages on the composition of the drawings collection and two paragraphs on Cobenzl's identity and the purchase of the drawings by Catherine the Great; Избранные рисунки из собрания Государственного Эрмитажа. К 200-летию основания отделения рисунков: Коллекция К. Кобенцля. 1768–1968 [Selected Drawings from the Collection of the State Hermitage Museum. On the 200th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Department of Drawings: The Collection of C. Cobenzl. 1768–1968], exh. cat., Hermitage Museum, Leningrad, 1969, pp. 5–7

[2] Catherine Phillips, 'Кабинет картин графа Карла Кобенцля: опыт реконструкции и история его создания' [Reconstruction and History of the Cabinet of Paintings of Count Charles de Cobenzl (1712–1770)], in: Труды Государственного Эрмитажа. Эрмитажные чтения памяти В.Ф. Левинсона-Лессинга (02.03.1893 – 27.06.1972). 2006–2007 [Transactions of the State Hermitage Museum. In Memoriam Vladimir Levinson-Lessing (02.03.1893 – 27.06.1972). Proceedings of the Conferences 2006–7], St Petersburg, 2011, 78–101

[3] Catherine Phillips, 'Collecting Drawings in Brussels in the 1760s. The Collection of Count Charles Cobenzl (1712–1770) in the Hermitage, St Petersburg', in: Marques de collection I. Cinquièmes Rencontres internationales du Salon du Dessin, Paris–Dijon, 2010, pp. 111–24

[4] One of the best informed authors, Denis Coekelberghs, could still justifiably say in 2005 that 'Sa collection de dessins, acquise par Catherine II en 1768, est à l'Ermitage à Saint-Pétersbourg et attend d'être étudiée en tant que telle'. Denis Coekelberghs, 'Les peintres belges à Rome aux XVII^{e} et XIX^{e} siècles. Bilan, apports nouveaux et propositions', in: Nicole Dacos, Cecile Dulière, eds, Italia Belgica: la Fondation nationale Princesse Marie-Jose et les relations artistiques entre la Belgique et l'Italie 1930–2005: 75^{e} anniversaire (Études d'histoire de l'art, IX), Brussels, 2005, p. 277 note 5

positioning. Such work has often been done in isolation from related research projects, one reason being the huge gap (geographical, political and disciplinary) between the historical studies taking place in Belgium, Austria, Slovenia, Italy (Gorizia) and St Petersburg, the loci of Cobenzl's career and artistic heritage (despite Cobenzl's ten years in Germany 1743–53, he has not been the object of attention there). If studies of French art are international – conducted by scholars across the world, published in periodicals with an international circulation – most of these regions are or have been perceived as peripheral in the picture of the eighteenth-century art situation. Publications here have often been relatively 'parochial', produced by local scholars viewing subjects exclusively within the context of the region, and access to them has been limited – they appear in periodicals with a purely internal circulation (particularly in Belgium), in local exhibition catalogues (e.g. in Gorizia), or in languages that are not 'accessible' (Slovenian, Russian). Little connection has been made between the work being done in each area.

Material in the archives in Brussels relating largely to Cobenzl's activities between 1753 and 1770 has provided the most fruitful source of information to all scholars. Beyond Brussels, the information is scattered, and the political history of the Eastern Bloc played its role in 'hiding' available Slovenian and Russian material from outside scholars.

This survey therefore looks at the scattered literature on Cobenzl in general, demonstrating the different images of him that have been drawn in different contexts, and attempting to link them together.

Cobenzl the Statesman

Cobenzl has come under most scrutiny from Belgian historians assessing his role as Plenipotentiary Minister in the Austrian Netherlands (1753–70); he features – usually in passing – in studies by Austrian historians of Habsburg politics of the 1740s to 1760s. To both national groups he was an outsider: in the first case the imposition of a foreign power, whose presence was not always welcomed; in the second absent from the capital, located on the periphery of the Habsburg lands and thus far removed from the centre of Austrian eighteenth-century history.

In Austria, the name Cobenzl causes some confusion, since it is associated with two other politicians and statesmen, Charles' son Louis and his nephew Philip, both of whom played an important role in foreign and domestic affairs between c. 1780 and 1805. Nonetheless,

Cobenzl does draw significant attention in a number of recent studies on Austrian eighteenth-century history, dealing with the Southern Netherlands as a Habsburg subject and with individuals whose lives came into contact with him.[5]

Whilst there is no confusion of identity in Belgium, attitudes to him there have been ambiguous, even contradictory. Belgium's emergence from subjection to Spain, Austria and France produced a complex brand of nineteenth-century nationalism when the country at last arrived at independence as a constitutional monarchy. While some saw Cobenzl as a man of vast achievements who did much to bring prosperity and intellectual renewal to the country, others, mainly those largely identifying regional nationalism with Catholicism, denied him any merits and indeed did their best to paint a picture of a man of immoral habits who trampled the traditions of the local people. Closely associated with the reforms and centralising policies of the Habsburg monarchy, Cobenzl is thus seen very differently by those who take a positive or negative view of Austria's centralising policies, the reduction of local privileges and limitations on monastic property rights (mortmain) and of the reforms introduced by Joseph II, particularly unpopular measures such as the expulsion of the Jesuits (in fact a Europe-wide phenomenon) and the eventual closure of many monastic houses in the Austrian Netherlands. Later references to Cobenzl have been coloured by this nationalistic-moralistic attitude, with authors not themselves affected by prejudice repeating or echoing the biassed statements of earlier writers.

When Cobenzl's involvement with the arts was mentioned by such historians, even in passing, it was frequently accompanied by familiar assertions that even in this he was a creature of foreign rulers, given to corrupt and devious practices, with little interest in the Southern Netherlands. Yet historians of the state institutions such as the Académie Royale, the Commission Royale d'Histoire and the Bibliothèque Royale manifest unanimity, even in the nineteenth century, in presenting a favourable view of Cobenzl's role.

Running parallel to this is the contrasting attitude to the Governor of the Austrian Netherlands, Charles de Lorraine. Well into the twentieth century Belgian historians seemed to continue to be charmed by the gaiety and insouciance of a prince who openly sought to gain maximum popularity with the local people and who did his best to distance himself from all unpopular measures, however necessary. While Charles de Lorraine's

[5] e.g. Renate Zedinger, Die Verwaltung der Österreichischen Niederlande in Wien (1714–1795). Studien in den Zentralisierungstendenzen des Wiener Hofes im Staatswerdungsprozess der Habsburgermonarchie, Vienna, 2000; Paul P. Bernard, From the Enlightenment to the Police State: the Public Life of Johann Anton Pergen, Urbana–Chicago, 1991

sexual mores were as lax as those of Cobenzl, and his irresponsible expenditure and vast debts far outdid those of his Minister, this is passed over by the same writers who decry just those habits in Cobenzl. Cobenzl's revitalisation of the economy, his vision of the arts as an important tool for regeneration, are often credited exclusively to Charles de Lorraine. In the wake of Belgian independence in 1830 one can trace the growing admiration for the Prince, presented as the defender of local interests against the Austrians, until he had become an almost mythical hero.[6] The problems encountered by those dealing with the balance of power between Charles de Lorraine and Cobenzl, their relative responsibility for political and economic policy, are mirrored when we try to separate their contributions to artistic policies in the Austrian Netherlands.

Yet there have always been those speaking up for a recognition of Cobenzl's dominance with regard to economic and administrative initiatives, where most conflict arose, and to the artistic projects on which the two men found themselves largely in accord.

In 1813 Michaud's Biographie Universelle … – written in Paris at a time when the Southern Netherlands were still part of the French Empire – presented a positive picture of Cobenzl that was to form the basis for subsequent biographies in similar encyclopaedic publications.[7] It rightly credited Cobenzl with the foundation of the Académie de Bruxelles (and wrongly with that of the École gratuite de dessin) and implied that Cobenzl lay behind many of the reforms later instituted by Joseph II: the underlying approbation for those reforms and for the financial overhaul of the religious communities surely reflected attitudes in Paris – very different to the conservative Catholicism of the Southern Netherlands – in the wake of the French Revolution and the establishment of the Napoleonic Code.

In 1835 the first Annuaire de l'Académie Royale des Sciences et Belles-lettres de Bruxelles of the newly independent Belgium credited Cobenzl as the inspiration for the Académie and recognised his wider efforts on behalf of the arts and sciences; its very first biographical notice was devoted to the Plenipotentiary Minister.[8] This positive view of Cobenzl and his achievements was reasserted even more strongly in the 1852 Histoire et

[6] Attitudes to Charles de Lorraine are surveyed in the introduction to Michèle Galand, Charles de Lorraine, gouverneur-général des Pays-Bas autrichiens (1744–1780) (Études sur le XVIII^{e} siècle, XX), Brussels, 1993

[7] Biographie Universelle, ancienne et moderne…, Paris, 1811–53, IX (1813), pp. 148–49

[8] 'Aperçu historique de la création de l'Académie de Bruxelles, sous Marie-Thérèse (Extrait du discours préliminaire du tom. I des anciens Mémoires de l'Académie)', Annuaire de l'Académie Royale des Sciences et Belles-lettres de Bruxelles, Première année, Brussels, 1835, pp. 32–35; Baron F.A. Reiffenberg, 'Notice biographique: Le comte Charles de Cobentzl', Ibid., pp. 85–87.

Bibliographie analytique de l'Académie Royale.[9] Successive publications on the history of the Académie have universally given credit to Cobenzl, although with somewhat less hyperbole.[10] Other pictures of society and court life assigned a central role to Cobenzl in the arts, without ever going into any detail.[11]

The pan-European phenomenon of the identification, study and full-text publication of national historical documents that was remarkable from the British Isles all the way east to Russia had a particularly acute resonance in Belgium. Not only had the country just emerged as an independent nation state, but it had only just retrieved its national archives.

The efficiency of the Austrian bureaucracy meant that in times of war and occupation major paperwork was kept safe. Kaunitz sent the government archive to Antwerp at the start of the French occupation of Brussels in 1745; during the Seven Years' War, in June 1758, Cobenzl made plans to evacuate state documents to Luxembourg as the Prussians advanced.[12] When the French moved in again in the 1790s, the Austrian foreign ministry moved the archives of many institutions to Vienna. Some papers seen as relating to purely regional history were returned to the French Republic in 1802, others to the United Netherlands in 1815. Moreover, the French had also removed large quantities of documents, which were only returned to Brussels after 1815.[13] This chequered history, and the resulting disorder, gave an extra stimulus to the work of archivists.

Among the papers repatriated by the Vienna government was Cobenzl's personal correspondence,[14] separated from his official papers (still largely in the Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs, Vienna). Bound into 283 volumes, Cobenzl's correspondence – and the many more volumes of documents in the Belgian archives relating to Charles de Lorraine and court life – provided a fascinating source of

[9] Jean Pierre Namur, Histoire et Bibliographie analytique de l'Académie Royale des Sciences, des Lettres et des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, 2nd augmented edn, Brussels, 1852, pp. 1–2, 124

[10] e.g. Édouard Mailly, Histoire de l'Academie Imperiale et Royale des Sciences et Belles-Lettres de Bruxelles, 2 vols (XXXIV, XXXV), Brussels, 1883; L'Académie Royale de Belgique depuis sa fondation (1772–1922), Brussels, 1922; L'Académie Impériale et Royale des sciences et belles-lettres de Bruxelles, 1772–1794, sa fondation, ses travaux, exh. cat., Académie Royale de Belgique, Brussels, 1973

[11] e.g. P. Roger, Ch. de Ch., eds, Mémoires et souvenirs sur la cour de Bruxelles et sur la société belge, depuis l'époque de Marie-Thérèse jusqu'à nos jours, Brussels, 1856, pp. 75–76

[12] Comte Carlos de Villermont, La cour de Vienne à Bruxelles au XVIII^{e} siècle, Le comte de Cobenzl, ministre plénipotentiaire aux Pays-Bas, Lille–Paris–Bruges, 1925, p. 79

[13] On the complex history of the Brussels archives see Joseph Cuvelier, 'Les revendications d'archives belges à l'Allemagne et à l'Autriche-Hongrie', Bulletins de la Classe des Lettres de l'Académie Royale de Belgique, 1919, pp. 255–69; Joseph Laenen, 'Coup d'oeil historique sur le fonds des Pays-Bas', Les Archives de l'Etat à Vienne au point de vue de l'histoire de Belgique, Brussels, 1924, pp. 1–19; Herman Coppens, René Laurent, eds, Les Archives de l'État en Belgique, 1796–1996, Brussels, 1996 (AGR Publ. 2410)

[14] AGR, SEG, nos 1053–1296, 1299–1303

material for writers. Filled with information not just about politics and local government but about the man's private life, the letters contributed to a series of publications.

In 1874, for instance, the archivist and archaeologist Charles Piot published his picture of Maria Theresa's reign in the Austrian Netherlands.[15] Presenting a somewhat simplistic if widespread view of Kaunitz and Cobenzl as the 'long arms' of Joseph II, and Joseph II himself as an enemy of the Belgian people, Piot made little criticism of Maria Theresa and Charles de Lorraine. Whilst admitting many of Cobenzl's achievements, he largely accepted the Governor's not unbiassed assessment of his character, expressed in so many letters of complaint to Maria Theresa, and concluded: 'Enfin, pour tout dire, c'était l'ami de Kaunitz. Il était imprudent et même indélicat dans les questions d'argent.'[16]

For Piot, it was enough to say that Cobenzl was 'the friend of Kaunitz' for his reader to understand that he should be viewed negatively. Whilst Cobenzl's debts and lack of concern about paying them certainly prove him to have been 'indélicat' in terms of money, there was no apparent basis for Piot's assertion that he had killed an official in a duel.[17] Piot's book was to have long-lasting effect on perceptions of Cobenzl.[18]

At the start of the twentieth century the Brussels archives – complemented by documents in Vienna and Paris – provided the material for a full biographical study of Cobenzl. In 1925 Count Carlos (Charles) de Villermont published an entertaining and informative picture of the man that managed to be both readable and apparently faithful to its sources, demonstrating that he had mastered the whole of the voluminous correspondence.[19] Although officially entitled La cour de Vienne à Bruxelles au XVIII^{e} siècle with Le comte de Cobenzl, minister plénipotentiaire aux Pays-Bas as a subtitle, the book concentrated almost exclusively on Cobenzl and his role at the heart of life in the capital and was largely free of the distortion that had 'beatified' Charles de Lorraine and demonised Cobenzl. Despite minor inaccuracies of fact and interpretation the picture has largely stood the test of time, but Villermont's minimal use of footnotes (often incorrectly citing archival references) makes his text difficult to use as a basis for further research. Reading of the

[15] Charles Piot, Le règne de Marie-Thérèse dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens, Louvain, 1874

[16] Ibid., p. 71

[17] Xavier Duquenne kindly confirmed (letter, April 2012) that no source for Piot's statement has been found in any Belgian archive.

[18] The story of the duel, for instance, was repeated in Lucien Perey, Charles de Lorraine et la cour de Bruxelles sous le règne de Marie-Thérèse, Paris, 1903, p. 141

[19] Villermont 1925

Cobenzl correspondence may largely verify Villermont's conclusions, but one is forced to read it all in order to understand where he found his information.

Ghislaine De Boom used the same archives to produce a political study of all the ministers who worked alongside the governors of the Austrian Netherlands, which was dominated by Cobenzl.[20] Despite some references to 'them' (the Austrian rulers) and 'us' (the Belgians), De Boom presented Cobenzl as a force for good. A representative of a younger generation of academics, she mentioned Villermont in the bibliography and in occasional footnotes, but largely dismissed him by saying that 'aucune synthèse vraiment scientifique n'avait été tentée de cette invraisemblable activité'.[21] Yet despite its greater academic rigour, her study only reinforces Villermont's conclusions and lacks his overall picture of the man, his personality and his achievements. Moreover, it might be seen as going too far in, as Galand complained, 'reléguant le prince Charles à un rôle décoratif'.[22]

These two publications by Villermont and De Boom remain the key sources for all those interested in Cobenzl. Later scholars, referring to them extensively when dealing with Cobenzl's role in the government of the Austrian Netherlands or with the role of Charles de Lorraine, have largely found them sufficient for their purpose. There has been no subsequent detailed academic study concentrated on the man universally declared to be central to so many aspects of Belgium's history.

Post-war Belgium saw a renaissance in national history, with scholars seeking to look at the troublesome eighteenth century from a more objective viewpoint, shorn of the anti-Austrian nationalism that had been such a dominant feature heretofore. The 1960s produced several non-academic articles by authors attracted by the story of Cobenzl's prodigious debts, both those apparently determined to demonstrate his immorality[23] and those with a neutral interest in him as a historic figure, such as lawyer and writer Carlo Bronne.[24] But it was the foundation in the early 1970s of the Groupe d'Étude sur le XVIII^{e} siècle at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, led by Roland Mortier and Hervé Hasquin and still very active, that contributed most to a revival in eighteenth-century studies and to the

[20] Ghislaine De Boom, Les Ministres plenipotentiaires dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens, principalement Cobenzl, Brussels, 1932

[21] Ibid., p. 4

[22] Galand 1993, p. 14

[23] R. de Montdidier, 'Révélations surprenantes sur les difficultés pécuniaires du comte de Cobenzl, ministre de Marie-Thérèse', Les cahiers Lèopoldiens, série II, No. 12, 15 December 1961–15 January 1962, pp. 13–23

[24] Carlo Bronne, 'Les prodigalités du comte de Cobenzl', Financiers et comédiens au XVIII^{e} siècle, Brussels, 1969, pp. 123–40

renewal of objective scholarly interest in Cobenzl. Philippe Moureaux, professor of economic history and Belgian politician, inevitably found himself dealing repeatedly with Cobenzl and his brief assessment of Cobenzl's role as a 'modern statesman' appeared in the very first number of the Groupe's Études sur le XVIII[e] siècle in 1974.[25] In this positive view of the significance and independence of Cobenzl's approach to government, Moureaux inevitably refers to Villermont and De Boom as the important sources, but notes 'une personnalité aussi riche que celle du comte de Cobenzl n'est jamais entièrement élucidée, qu'elle mérite toujours des recherches nouvelles'.[26]

Cobenzl's name appears throughout the many different volumes of the Études sur le XVIII[e] siècle and he lies at the heart of all studies of the Austrian Netherlands in the middle of the eighteenth century. Michèle Galand's clear-headed study of Charles de Lorraine devotes much time to demonstrating the Governor's genuine achievements by untangling the complicated relationship with Cobenzl, attempting to justly apportion credit (or blame) for successes and failures of policy.[27]

Cobenzl's importance as the spirit behind several of Belgium's national cultural institutions – not just the Académie – is almost universally recognised. He is today credited with saving the Burgundian Library almost immediately he took office, in fighting for the creation of an organised royal library, with a librarian and a law of legal deposit, which was to eventually be accessible to the public as the Bibliothèque Royale.[28] Even the Commission Royale d'Histoire, founded only in 1834, sees its origins in the initiatives of Charles Cobenzl – from the late 1750s – to gather and publish documents chronicling the history of the different constituent elements of the Austrian Netherlands.[29]

By the end of the twentieth century the patriotic tone that had coloured so many references to Cobenzl had all but disappeared. Nonetheless its lingering effects occasionally make

[25] Philippe Moureaux, 'Charles de Cobenzl, homme d'état moderne', Études sur le XVIII[e] siècle, I, Brussels, 1974, pp. 171–78. Galand suggested that Moureaux, like De Boom, went too far in minimising the positive involvement of Charles de Lorraine; Galand 1993, p. 14

[26] Moureaux 1974, p. 171. Moureaux's interest continues: Philippe Moureaux, 'Un épisode mouvementé des relations entre le Ministre Cobenzl et la banque de Nettine (1755–1756)', in: Serge Jaumain, Kenneth Bertrams, eds, Patrons, gens d'affaires et banquiers: hommages à Ginette Kurgan-van Hentenryk, Brussels, 2004, pp. 93–106

[27] Galand 1993. She herself defines this problem as central to her study on p. 16

[28] La Librairie des ducs de Bourgogne. Manuscrits conservés à la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, III, Turnhout, 2006, pp. 26–28; Frans Vanwijngaerden, 'The Royal Library Albert Ist / La Bibliothèque Royale Albert I[er]: Instrument of Knowledge and Depository of our Written and Printed Patrimony', IFLA Journal, 1977 III/12 (accessed online November 2008 at http://ifl.sagepub.com)

[29] The history of the Commission on its website (http://www.crhistoire.be/fr/commission/histoire_fr.html, accessed 1 July 2011) opens with a portrait of Cobenzl and a description of these first efforts to produce a history of what is now Belgium.

themselves felt. As late as 2004 Olivier Vanderhaeghen played down Cobenzl's achievements and described him – apparently with some surprise, despite Cobenzl's post as a highly visible foreign administrator – as 'véritable agent de Vienne à Bruxelles, voir même espion des Habsbourg'.[30]

Cobenzl as Patron and Collector

The picture of Cobenzl as patron and collector is far more fragmentary but has suffered from the same two problems as that of him as a politician, statesman and administrator: establishing the relative contributions of Cobenzl and of Charles de Lorraine, in whose name by the very nature of his position all measures were taken, and the negative interpretation of his actions insisted on by some authors.

Charles Piot accused Cobenzl of corruption in the acquisition of works of art, citing an exchange of letters in 1767 in which Cobenzl and Patrice-François de Neny discussed the possible spoils to be gained if the Society of Bollandists in Antwerp was to be closed down.[31] Piot assumed (wrongly) that the 'theft' had taken place and extrapolated this assumption to conclude that it was Cobenzl's main method of acquiring art. The story was repeated thereafter by numerous authors, largely those pro-Charles de Lorraine[32] or critical of Cobenzl's policy on religious grounds,[33] and became so widely accepted that even authors with no agenda accepted the 'fact' of Cobenzl's corruption.[34]

In 1874 the Belgian professor of law Alphonse Pierre Octave Rivier, who had studied in Geneva and Lausanne, covered Cobenzl's correspondence with the Swiss gentleman Rodolphe Valltravers (Vautravers) regarding the acquisition of crystals and of works of art.[35] This demonstrated clearly the gentlemanly manner of at least some of Cobenzl's purchases of drawings and their fair financial basis. Perhaps because the article appeared in

[30] Olivier Vanderhaeghen, 'Les voyages de Patrice-François de Neny à Vienne (1751–1768). Prolégomènes à l'étude de l'activité diplomatique du chef-président du Conseil privé (1758–1783)', in: Bruno Bernard, ed., Bruxellois à Vienne, Viennois à Bruxelles (Études sur le XVIII[e] siècle, XXXII), Brussels, 2004, p. 59

[31] Piot 1874, p. 71

[32] Perey 1903, pp. 240–41

[33] Hippolyte Delehaye, L'oeuvre des bollandistes à travers trois siècles 1615–1915, Brussels, 1959, p. 115. Tellingly, Delehaye said that this was exactly 'ce qu'elle pouvait attendre des agents du gouvernment autrichien'.

[34] Villermont 1925, pp. 302–3; De Boom 1932, p. 66, although she added 'Heureusement la plus grande partie de ces riches collections semblent avoir une origine plus avouable'; Vladimir Levinson-Lessing, История Картинной галереи Эрмитажа (1764–1917) [The History of the Hermitage Picture Gallery (1764–1917)], 2nd edn, Leningrad, 1986, p. 261 note 69

[35] Alphonse Rivier, 'Mélanges d'histoire nationale: Rodolphe de Vautravers et le comte Charles de Cobenzl, d'après des documents inédits', Bibliothèque universelle et Revue Suisse, LI, 1874, pp. 133–61

a Swiss journal of limited circulation the revelation that Cobenzl owned a large body of drawings by Old Masters seems to have passed most people by.

The first real attention to be paid in Belgium to Cobenzl's involvement in the arts – beyond his role as founder of state institutions – was the publication in 1884–85 by historian and archivist Alexandre Pinchart of extremely selective extracts from Cobenzl's letters.[36] Concentrating on famous correspondents such as Winckelmann and Lalive de Jully, the painter and writer on art Jean-Baptiste Descamps, or local artists and officials, Pinchart excluded Cobenzl's highly illuminating discussions of artistic matters with lesser figures. Pinchart's publication remained the key source of information on Cobenzl's artistic activities, his tastes and collection, for many years. Its most immediate effect, however, was the description of Cobenzl as the 'Colbert of Belgium', since Descamps drew a parallel between the two men in a letter of 1765 published there.[37]

Although Cobenzl has been repeatedly described as 'grand collectionneur' his role in the arts in the Austrian Netherlands – particularly as a collector – has remained more legendary than factual. Into the early twentieth century scholars were faced with lack of evidence with which to work. Pinchart provided no information in his commentaries and in Russia catalogues of the Hermitage collection gave a Cobenzl provenance for only a few paintings while the provenances of drawings were not mentioned at all. In the 1920s the history of Russia introduced new barriers. Those who knew that the collection had been acquired by Catherine the Great and had gone to Russia saw it now as inaccessible, hidden away in the Soviet Union; others did not know the fate of the collection but assumed it had eventually been broken up and dispersed. Yet others, aware only of the exceedingly summary catalogue of the 1770 house sale, produced in great haste after Cobenzl's death and including only the portraits and furniture pictures that had not been sold to Catherine two years earlier, could see no basis for discussion of an important collection.

Cobenzl's two biographers, therefore, had in essence only the correspondence and state documents to work with. De Boom, more concerned with the economy than Cobenzl's artistic patronage declared simply that he had 'l'âme d'un mécène aussi passionné

[36] Alexandre Pinchart, ed., 'Correspondance artistique du Comte de Cobenzl', in four parts, Compte rendu des séances de la Commission Royale d'Histoire, 4me série, XI (séances 1883 – janvier 1884), XII (séances 1884), Brussels, 1884–85; part 1, XI, pp. 193–224; part 2, XI, pp. 269–86; part 3, XI, pp. 353–76; part 4, XII, pp. 18–53

[37] Ibid., part 2, p. 285. The term had been used before in a printed publication, in Natalis Briavoine, Mémoire sur l'état de la population, des fabriques, des manufactures et du commerce, dans les provinces des Pays-Bas, depuis Albert et Isabelle jusqu'à la fin du siècle dernier, Brussels, 1841, p. 86

qu'averti'.[38] Chapter VII of Villermont's 1925 book was entitled 'Cobenzl et les Arts' but consisted of just seven pages. Nonetheless, he concluded 'C'était, en effet, un amateur d'art et un grand collectionneur'[39] – without naming a single work he owned. He repeated the story of the Jesuit art treasures, ending gleefully and utterly mistakenly: 'Ainsi étaient liquidés, en l'an de grâce 1767, les trésors artistiques d'un grand ordre religieux, par un grand seigneur et un magistrat éminent, tous deux ministres d'une pieuse impératrice.'[40]

It was not until 1976, when Denis Coekelberghs included a whole chapter on Cobenzl, entitled 'Un mécénat éclairé', in his study of Belgian painters in Rome between 1700 and 1830, that any attempt was made to provide more than the most summary picture of his involvement with the arts.[41] Without playing down Charles de Lorraine's involvement in official artistic policy, Coekelberghs dealt with Cobenzl's role in promoting a programme of pensions for painters to stay in Rome. Yet, he stated, the subject remained little studied, and his bibliography to the subject consisted of just three works: De Boom, passing references to Cobenzl in the key article by S. Anciaux and J. Lavalleye on painters at the Court of Charles de Lorraine, and his own brief article on several Flemish painters.[42]

Since the 1930s, writers have inevitably discovered that Cobenzl and Charles de Lorraine walked a largely parallel path in their commissions and patronage,[43] but Coekelberghs' 1976 text remains the key source on his artistic concerns interests. Subsequently, all scholars working with primary documentation have concluded that if Charles de Lorraine supported the initiatives put to him, it was Cobenzl who gave that interest shape, who conceived the ways in which the arts might be supported and who pushed for the establishment of schools and training programmes.[44]

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[38] De Boom 1932, p. 65

[39] Villermont 1925, p. 178

[40] Ibid., pp. 302–3

[41] Denis Coekelberghs, Les Peintres belges à Rome de 1700 à 1830 (Études d'histoire de l'art / Institut historique belge de Rome, III), Brussels–Rome, 1976

[42] S. Anciaux, Jacques Lavalleye, 'Notes sur les peintres de la Cour de Charles de Lorraine', Revue belge d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art, VI, 1936, pp. 305–30; Denis Coekelberghs, 'Notes d'archives sur quelques peintres flamands du XVIII[e] siècle: J. Garemyn, M. Geeraerts, H. De la Pegna et M. De Hase', Revue des archéologues et historiens d'art de Louvain, II, 1969, pp. 59–63

[43] Most recently: Reinier Baarsen, '"Ebénisterie" at the Court of Charles of Lorraine', The Burlington Magazine, February 2005, pp. 91–99; Reinier Baarsen, 'Sèvres in Brussels: the collection of Charles of Lorraine', The French Porcelain Society Journal, 3, 2007, pp. 45–57

[44] Denis Coekelberghs, Pierre Loze, eds, Autour du néo-classicisme en Belgique: 1770–1830, exh. cat., Musée d'Ixelles, Brussels, 1985; Alain Jacobs, A. C. Lens, 1739–1822, exh. cat., Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp, 1989; Alain Jacobs, Laurent Delvaux: Gand, 1696 – Nivelles, 1778, preface by Denis Coekelberghs and Pierre Loze, Paris, 1999; Michèle Galand, 'Les Sciences, les Lettres et les Arts dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens et la Principauté de Liège au siècle des Lumières', in: Claude Sorgeloos, ed., Autour de Charles-Alexandre de Lorraine, gouverneur general des Pays-Bas autrichiens, 1744–1780: culture et société (Numéro spécial du Bulletin de Dexia Banque, 54e année, no. 212, 2000/2), Brussels, 2000, pp. 11–

Despite the inclusion of an article crediting Cobenzl with the key role in the arts, the 1987 Europalia exhibitions devoted to Charles de Lorraine largely allocated the dominant place in artistic policy to the Governor.[45] Some working largely on the basis of objects and official documentation (decrees and founding documents, etc.) have often taken at face value the presence of the name of the Prince and of Maria Theresa. Christophe Loir, for instance, continues to cite Charles de Lorraine as initiator of artistic projects to found the Academy and the prime mover behind Maria Theresa's decree 'liberating' the arts in 1773.[46] Such has been the continued portrayal of Charles de Lorraine as prime mover in artistic policy, despite evidence to the contrary, that thirty years after his first statement on the subject, in 2005 Denis Coekelberghs felt the need to reprise his assessment of the balance of responsibility.[47]

One reason why the significance of Cobenzl's role is perhaps still insufficiently recognised is the overall dearth of studies of collecting in the Austrian Netherlands in the eighteenth-century. The glorious age of art production and consumption in the seventeenth century has a bibliography too long to cite but if Coekelberghs noted in 1976 just how little work had been done on the eighteenth-century in comparison to the seventeenth century, and how little study had been conducted in the archives, in 2010 Gérard de Wallens, referring to Coekelberghs' lament, could only conclude 'Les choses ont peu changé'.[48]

Indeed, papers given at a symposium on art in Brussels 1600 to 1800 in December 2010 emphasised the huge amount of work still to be done on sorting archives in Brussels. Veerle De Laet, opening her presentation with a screen bearing only the words 'Brussels: A Blank Spot?', drew attention to how few individual studies had been produced, almost

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14. Both Xavier Duquenne and Alain Jacobs reiterated their belief in the primacy of Cobenzl's actions in personal conversations and letters 2009–11.

[45] Alain Jacobs, 'Le mécénat officiel', in: Charles-Alexandre de Lorraine: gouverneur général des Pays-Bas autrichiens, exh. cat., Palais de Charles de Lorraine, Brussels, 1987 (Europalia 1987–I), pp. 84–94; Charles-Alexandre de Lorraine. L'homme, le maréchal, le grand maitre, exh. cat., Cultureel centrum van de Vlaamse gemeenschap Alden Biesen, Bilzen-Rijkhoven, 1987 (Europalia 1987–II)

[46] Christophe Loir, L'émergence des beaux-arts en Belgique: institutions, artistes, public et patrimoine (1773–1835), Brussels, 2004; Christophe Loir, 'Le discours sur la décadence artistique dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens durant la second moitié du XVIII^{e} siècle', in: Valérie André, Bruno Bernard, eds, Le XVIII^{e}, un siècle de décadence? (Études sur le XVIII^{e} siècle, XVIII), Brussels, 2006, pp. 143–50

[47] Coekelberghs 2005, p. 238

[48] Gérard de Wallens, Les peintres belges actifs à Paris au XVIII^{e} siècle à l'exemple de Jacques François Delyen, peintre ordinaire du Roi (Gand, 1684 – Paris, 1761) (Institut Historique Belge de Rome. Études d'histoire de l'art, XI), Brussels, 2010, p. 13

none for the middle of the century, such that it was impossible even to begin to consider the overall picture of art and collecting.[49]

One of the few authors to make a significant contribution to this area before the end of the twentieth century was Claude Sorgeloos of the Bibliothèque Royale in Brussels. Armed largely with sales catalogues – but aware of and stating clearly their limitations, supplementing the information provided by them where possible – Sorgeloos produced a documentary analysis of the libraries of Cobenzl and his wife, Charles de Lorraine and other leading figures.[50] He has also looked at scientific collections and, where possible, art collections, both in general[51] and as the property of individuals such as Salm-Reifferscheid, Bishop of Tournai (from whom Cobenzl acquired 1,500 drawings in 1762), but was forced to conclude that 'lorsqu'il s'agit de reconstituer l'histoire du goût chez les collectionneurs des Pays-Bas autrichiens, on manque encore d'éléments de comparaison.'[52]

With regard to drawings, the Southern Netherlands (not just during the Austrian period), like other regions outside the 'collecting capitals', have been almost entirely neglected: Sciolla's 1992 survey of collecting drawings provides valuable information on Italy, France and England but lumps together in a single chapter 'Collectionneurs en Allemagne, en Autriche-Hongrie, en Suède, aux Pays-Bas et en Russie'. For each of these countries on the collecting periphery, save Germany, just one collector is mentioned.[53] Plomp's 2001

[49] Veerle De Laet, 'At Home in Seventeenth-century Brussels. Patterns of Art and Luxury Consumption'. Paper given at: C'était au temps où Bruxelles bruxellait. Art & Art Production in Brussels 1600–1800, Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven, 9–10 December 2010. De Laet deals with the subject more fully in her PhD thesis, which she most kindly made available to this author before publication; now published as Brussel binnenskamers. Kunst- en luxebezit in het spanningsveld tussen hof en stad, 1600–1735, Amsterdam, 2011

[50] Claude Sorgeloos, 'La bibliothèque du comte Charles de Cobenzl, ministre plénipotentiaire dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens, et celle de son épouse la comtesse Marie-Thérèse de Palffy', Le livre et l'estampe, XXX/119–20, 1984, pp. 115–210; Claude Sorgeloos, 'La bibliothèque de Charles de Lorraine, gouverneur-général des Pays-Bas autrichiens', Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire, LX/4, 1982, pp. 809–38; Claude Sorgeloos, 'Les bibliothèques de Patrick Mac Neny et de Patrice-François de Neny', in: Une famille noble de hauts fonctionnaires: Les Neny (Études sur le XVIII^{e} siècle, XII), Brussels, 1985, pp. 87–112

[51] Claude Sorgeloos, 'Les cabinets d'histoire naturelle et de physique dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens et à Liège', in: La diffusion du savoir scientifique XVI^{e}–XIX^{e} siècles (Archives et bibliothèques de Belgique, numéro spécial 51), Brussels, 1996, pp. 125–230; Claude Sorgeloos, 'Les cabinets de curiosités dans les Pays-Bas espagnols et autrichiens: de la curiosité baroque à l'inventaire', in: Laurent Busine, ed., Cabinets de curiosités: origines et résurgences, Brussels, 2006 (La vie des musées, numéro spécial), pp. 39–48

[52] Claude Sorgeloos, 'Les collections scientifiques et artistiques de François-Ernest de Salm-Reifferscheid, évêque de Tournai (1698–1770): une première approche', Mémoires de la Société Royale d'histoire et d'archéologie de Tournai, XI, 2003, p. 166. The same conclusion was reached by Dries Lyna, who found that 'Deeper research into individual collections remains needed' for a proper study of the art situation. Lyna kindly provided the author with a copy of his as yet unpublished thesis: Dries Lyna, 'The Cultural Construction of Value: Art Auctions in Antwerp and Brussels (1700–1794)', PhD thesis, University of Antwerp, 2010, p. 57.

[53] Gianni Carlo Sciolla, ed., Le Dessin, 3 vols, Turin, 1992, II: Les grands collectionneurs

study of Dutch collectors of drawings has demonstrated how untenable is such an approach.[54]

It is only in the early twenty-first century that serious work on collecting in the Southern Netherlands in a wider context has commenced. This has dealt largely with paintings,[55] or with a subject not covered in this thesis, the decorative arts, usually as part of interior decoration or furnishing, not as the object of a passion for collecting. Individuals studied – far from exhaustively – include Maximilian II Emmanuel[56] and Charles de Lorraine.[57]

Some aspects of collecting in the Austrian Netherlands, both general and specific, notably the Brussels–Lille–Paris connections, have been dealt with by Sophie Raux and Gaëtane Maës at Lille.[58] In recognition of the need for further study from within Belgium, the study group 'Collections et collectionneurs en Belgique au XVIII^{e} siècle' was established at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, but this has had few published results so far.

Exceedingly fruitful has been the research conducted within the context of the economy and the consumption of luxury goods, notably by Bruno Blondé and Filip Vermeylen[59] and their students in Antwerp and Rotterdam. Expanding the vital work of Erik Duverger on seventeenth-century Antwerp inventories,[60] they have used notary records, inventories and sales catalogues to draw conclusions about the use and circulation of consumer goods, including paintings. Only in very few cases is there any knowledge of (or interest in) the actual appearance (i.e. quality) of the works of art mentioned, and the studies are of

[54] Michiel C. Plomp, Collectionner, Passionnément. Les collectioneurs hollandais de dessins du XVIII^{e} siècle, Paris, 2001

[55] A rare exception was Cabinets de curiosités… 2006

[56] Der bayerische Kurfürst Max Emanuel in Brüssel. Zu Politik und Kultur in Europa um 1700, exh. cat., Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Munich, 1998; Jean-Philippe Huys, 'Deux mécènes de culture européenne à l'aube du XVIII^{e} siècle: Les électeurs Maximilien II Emmanuel de Bavière et Joseph-Clément de Cologne, entre Pays-Bas méridionaux et royaume de France', in: Gaëtane Maës, Jan Blanc, eds, Les échanges artistiques entre les anciens Pays-Bas et la France, 1482–1814 (Actes du colloque international, Lille, IRHiS-Lille 3, 28–30 mai 2008), Turnhout, 2010, pp. 155–69

[57] Leo de Ren, 'Tafelzilver van prins Karel Alexander van Lotharingen (1712–1780) bewaard te Wenen', Antiek, XIX, 1984, pp. 121–36; Leo de Ren, 'Karel Alexander van Lotharingen (1712–1780) en de sierkunst. Het erfgoed van een kunstliefhebber', unpublished doctoral thesis, Catholic University of Louvain, 2003; Thibaut Wolvesperges, 'Les achats parisiens de Charles-Alexandre de Lorraine (1712–1780)', in: Sophie Raux, ed., Collectionner dans les Flandres et la France du Nord au XVIII^{e} siècle, Lille, 2005, pp. 183–201; Baarsen 2005; Baarsen 2007

[58] e.g. Raux 2005; Maës, Blanc 2010

[59] e.g. Bruno Blondé, 'Conflicting Consumption Models? The Symbolic Meaning of Possessions and Consumption amongst the Antwerp Nobility at the End of the Eighteenth Century', in: Bruno Blondé, Natacha Coquery, Jon Stobart, Ilja Van Damme, eds, Fashioning Old and New. Changing Consumer Patterns in Western Europe (1650–1900), Turnhout, 2009, pp. 61–80; Dries Lyna, Filip Vermeylen, Hans Vlieghe, eds, Art Auctions and Dealers. The Dissemination of Netherlandish Art During the Ancien Régime, Turnhout, 2009

[60] Erik Duverger, Antwerpse kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw, 12 vols, Brussels, 1984–2002

possessions, not collections. Veerle De Laet's studies of luxury goods in Brussels house inventories have encroached onto the early eighteenth century.[61] Attention has been concentrated by Vermeylen and Dries Lyna on financial value, particularly at auction, and on methods of marketing works.[62] The series Studies in European Urban History has broken new ground in moving studies of the Southern Netherlands in the eighteenth century – i.e. in the Austrian Netherlands – beyond the parochial into a wider European context, a disappointingly rare practice to date. Nonetheless, the emphasis on economic factors and on the auction catalogue can only take the study of art and collectors in the eighteenth century so far.

Xavier Duquenne, a retired lawyer and writer on architecture and public sculpture, is one of the few to look at the wider picture of taste in Brussels in the eighteenth century.[63] In 2004 he produced a hugely valuable guide to the Cobenzl correspondence which, despite reflecting Duquenne's own bias towards cultural matters and lacking a summary for letters in German or Italian, at last made the vast body of material available to a much wider range of scholars.[64] Duquenne has also looked at specific instances of Cobenzl's official patronage[65] and continues to use Belgian archives to contribute to a picture of the Austrian Netherlands in the eighteenth-century that has so far been disastrously lacking in detail.

Cobenzl's Collection

Totally separate from the locally-focussed emerging study of eighteenth-century culture in Brussels has been the analysis of individual elements of the collection itself, most of them still in Russia.

As far as the paintings are concerned, it was only in the early twentieth century that Cobenzl's name came to the fore even within the Hermitage. In 1863 the first published catalogue of all the paintings on display (the Museum opened to the public in 1852) gave a

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[61] De Laet 2011

[62] e.g. Filip Vermeylen, 'Adulterous Woman on the Loose: Rubens's Paintings Sold at Auction in Antwerp During the Eighteenth Century', in: Katlijne Van der Stighelen, ed., Munuscula Amicorum. Contributions on Rubens and his Colleagues in Honour of Hans Vlieghe, Turnhout, 2006, pp. 185–98; Dries Lyna, Filip Vermeylen, 'Rubens for Sale. Art Auctions in Antwerp during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', in: Lyna, Vermeylen, Vlieghe 2009, pp. 139–54; Dries Lyna, 'Changing Geographies and the Rise of the Modern Auction. Transformations on the Second-hand Markets of Eighteenth-century Antwerp', in: Blondé, Coquery, Stobart, Van Damme 2009, pp. 169–85; Lyna PhD 2010

[63] e.g. Xavier Duquenne, 'Le goût chinois en Belgique au XVIII^{e} siècle', Chinoiseries, papers from a journée d'études 2008, Brussels (Woluwe-Saint-Lambert), 2009

[64] Xavier Duquenne, Inventaire Analytique de la correspondance générale du comte de Cobenzl (1718 [sic] – 1770) (Archives Générales du Royaume. Instruments de recherche, 578), Brussels, 2004

[65] Xavier Duquenne, 'La pompe funèbre de l'empereur François I^{er} à Bruxelles en 1765, avec la collaboration de l'architecte Guymard', Études sur le XVIII^{e} siècle, XXXII, 2004, pp. 163–86

detailed history of the picture gallery without mentioning Cobenzl.[66] Nonetheless, the catalogue included 35 of the 46 Cobenzl paintings: six paintings were already in other locations (the Rumyantsev Museum in Moscow or imperial suburban palaces) and four had disappeared early in the nineteenth century. One more painting, Rubens' Cimon and Pero, had been removed from display for reasons of nineteenth-century prudishness. Just two were given a Cobenzl provenance: Dou's Dévideuse and a small Wouwerman, Rider on a White Horse. Three paintings were mistakenly said to have come from the Crozat collection (two landscapes by Lucas van Uden, the small Self-portrait by Gonzales Coques) and one from the Brühl collection (Jan I Brueghel, Road on the Edge of a Town). When the catalogue was revised by Andrey Somov in 1901,[67] he added a Cobenzl provenance for just three more works: Rubens' The Virgin Giving the Rosary to St Dominic and Venus and Adonis, and Wouwerman's Riding at the Cat (both of the latter paintings had been engraved while in Cobenzl's possession with dedications to him), incorrectly stating that the Cobenzl collection was acquired in 1771.

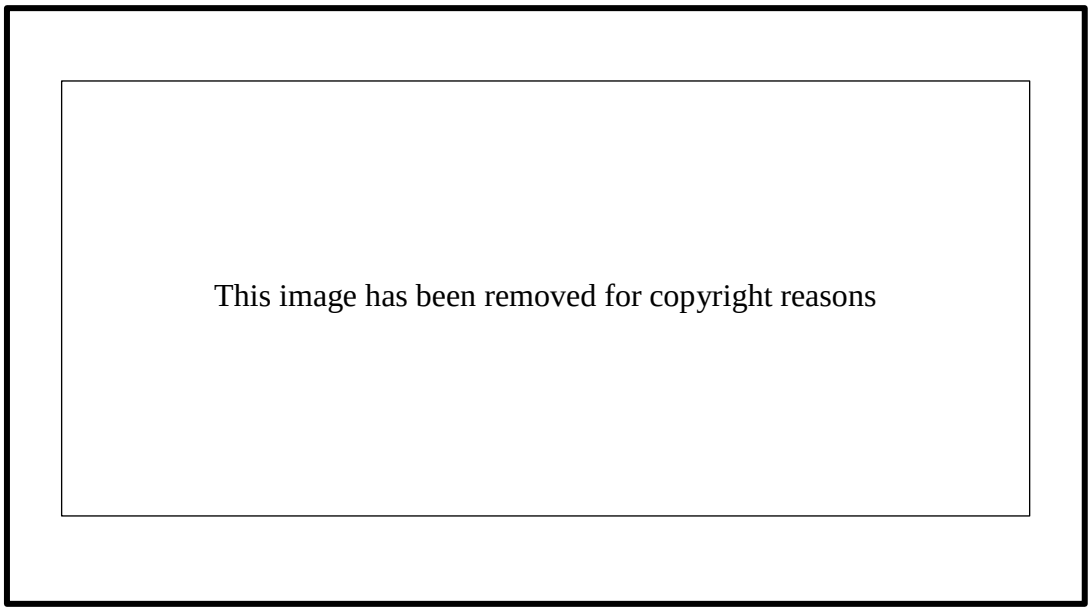

Figure 3. Gerard (Gerrit) Dou (1613–75), Old Woman Unreeling Threads. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

[66] [B. de Koehne,] Ermitage Impérial. Catalogue de la Galerie des tableaux, St Petersburg, 1863

[67] Andrei Somof [Somov], Ermitage Impérial. Catalogue de la Galerie des Tableaux, II, Ecoles néerlandais et école allemande, St Petersburg, 1901

The provenance of some of the Cobenzl paintings was established by individual scholars during the twentieth century, but as of 2008 just 26 of the 46 paintings had an established Cobenzl origin. Since four had disappeared, sixteen paintings did not have their rightful Cobenzl provenance, among them Rembrandt's Polish Nobleman now in Washington[68] and the lost St Sebastian by Van Dyck.[69]

Figure 4. Peeter Gysels I (1621–90/91), Garden. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Considerably more progress was made in the sphere in which Cobenzl's collection played the greater role, the history of drawings. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries it has been drawings specialists who have found themselves mentioning the collector's name most often. In part this is due to the fact that most of the drawings remained – and indeed remain today – on their distinctive lilac mounts with printed cartouches below, making them immediately identifiable. The sheer quantity of drawings deriving from the collection, and their proportion of the Hermitage collection as a whole, has meant that few publications that include Hermitage Old Master drawings omit to refer to Cobenzl.

[68] Its provenance established by this author; Catherine Phillips, 'The Provenance of Rembrandt's "Polish Nobleman"', The Burlington Magazine, February 2009, pp. 84–85

[69] The others were two paintings by Berchem, Jan I Brueghel's Road on the Edge of a Town, a Cuyp, a copy after Cranach's Portrait of Friedrich the Wise, a Gonzales Coques Self-portrait, a small Marienhof portrait, a copy after Titian's Portrait of Pope Paul III, two anonymous Italian works, works by Adriaen van Ostade, Gillis van Tilborgh, Jan van der Heyden and Aert van der Neer.

Such knowledge of the Cobenzl drawings – despite the barriers erected between international scholars after the formation of the Soviet Union – is owed to the post-Revolution generation of keepers at the Hermitage. The drawings remained largely unsorted and unpublished at the start of the twenty-first century, a fact lamented by the artist and collector Stepan Yaremich.[70] It was Yaremich's colleague Mikhail Dobroklonsky,[71] on the Hermitage staff from 1919, who engaged on a thorough overall of the Hermitage's drawings (hugely increased after the Revolution by nationalised collections) and drew particular attention to Cobenzl. This prolific scholar organised the 1926 exhibition of drawings in the Hermitage, with its accompanying publication in French,[72] and published individual sheets in European periodicals in the late 1920s and early 1930s; between 1940 and 1961 he produced three volumes of catalogues (in Russian only) of the Flemish and Italian drawings.[73] Matching Dobroklonsky in his contribution to knowledge of the Hermitage drawings overall and Cobenzl in particular was Yury Kuznetsov, who took over as head of the drawings collection at a more liberal period in Soviet history and was responsible for a series of revealing drawings exhibitions both at the Hermitage and abroad from the 1960s to early 1980s.[74]

Even though the exhibition Kuznetsov organised in homage to Cobenzl's drawings collection in 1968, two hundred years after that collection was acquired by Catherine the Great, was held in Russia only, [75] the very fact of its happening was significant. Despite the 'personality cult' of the Stalin years, the official guidelines for Soviet scholarship denied individual – particularly aristocratic – significance in art history, and thus the study of collecting and collectors was not encouraged.[76] Kuznetsov's introduction may include almost no information on Cobenzl, but that was in part because although nearly all the

[70] Stepan Yaremich, 'Собрание рисунков Эрмитажа' [The Hermitage's Collection of Drawings], Старые годы [Days of Yore], March 1910, pp. 48–52

[71] Vladimir Loevinson-Lessing, 'Obituary. M. Dobroklonsky', The Burlington Magazine, August 1965, 437–38

[72] Mikhail Dobroklonsky, Musée de l'Ermitage. Dessins des maîtres anciens. Exposition de 1926, exh. cat., Hermitage, Leningrad, 1927

[73] Mikhail Dobroklonsky, Государственный Эрмитаж. Рисунки итальянской школы XV–XVI веков [The State Hermitage. Drawings of the Italian School, Fifteenth–Sixteenth Centuries], Moscow–Leningrad, 1940; Mikhail Dobroklonsky, Государственный Эрмитаж. Рисунки фламандской школы XVII–XVIII веков [The State Hermitage. Drawings of the Flemish School, Seventeenth–Eighteenth Centuries], Moscow, 1955; Mikhail Dobroklonsky, Государственный Эрмитаж. Рисунки итальянской школы XVII–XVIII веков [The State Hermitage. Drawings of the Italian School, Seventeenth–Eighteenth Centuries], Leningrad, 1961

[74] Seymour Slive, 'Obituary. Yury Kuznetsov', The Burlington Magazine, January 1985, 38–39

[75] Leningrad 1969

[76] A spate of exhibitions and publications appeared in the early 1990s, mainly the fruit of research by scholars who had ignored official discouragement of the study of individual collectors. These were succeeded by a number of imperfect 'dictionaries' of Russian collectors, often based on nineteenth-century biographies or with no bibliographical sources cited, but serious academic studies in collecting are still relatively few.

drawings could be identified, the only information about Cobenzl that seems to have been available to Russian authors was Pinchart's 1884–85 selection of the artistic correspondence and Perey's book on Charles de Lorraine.

Hermitage keepers have been generous in providing international scholars with information about the collection and its composition, yet a large body of drawings remains unknown. This is sometimes because of misattribution in older inventories: in 2010, for instance, Alexey Larionov published several early Netherlandish drawings that had been accidentally placed amongst the 'secondary' collection.[77] Other works of markedly lesser quality that have not drawn the attention of scholars are of considerable historical value, such as copies by Francesco Petrucci of works belonging to Gran Principe Francesco de' Medici, referred to in the inventory of the Prince's property on his death[78] and drawings by young artists supported by Cobenzl's educational schemes. No true overall picture of the collection, encompassing the secondary drawings, has yet appeared, although a summary catalogue is being compiled by this author for future publication.

Interest in the West was also stimulated by the sixty or so drawings that emerged onto the European market as part of the Soviet government's project to sell works of art to raise money in the 1930s. While the paintings that were sold tended not to have a recognised Cobenzl provenance, even the sale catalogues correctly noted the source of the Cobenzl drawings.[79] With Cobenzl drawings now in major public collections in Berlin, Frankfurt and Munich, in Amsterdam, The Hague and Leiden, Antwerp, Paris, London and New York, scholarly interest is no surprise.

Despite major advances in knowledge in recent years, the division between the physical objects – drawings, mounts and storage boxes, manuscript catalogue – and the Brussels documentation has remained. Thus by the mid- 2000s the accepted picture of Cobenzl's collecting amongst drawings scholars[80] was simplistic and incorrect in its details.

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[77] Alexey Larionov, От готики к маньеризму. Нидерландские рисунки XV–XVI веков в собрании Государственного Эрмитажа [From Gothic to Mannerism. Early Netherlandish Drawings in the State Hermitage Museum], exh. cat., Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, 2010

[78] Identified by this author, 'Drawings by Francesco Petrucci (1660–1719): an Artist at the Court of Ferdinando, Gran Principe di Toscana', forthcoming

[79] Handzeichnungen alter Meister, C. G. Boerner, Leipzig, 29 April 1931; Handzeichnungen alter Meister, aus den Beständen der Eremitage in Leningrad, C. G. Boerner, Leipzig, 4 May 1932

[80] Summarised in the introduction to: Irina Novoselskaya [Novosselskaya], Французский рисунок XV–XVI веков в собрании Эрмитажа / Le dessin français des XV^{e} et XVI^{e} siècles dans les collections du musée de l'Ermitage, exh. cat., Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, 2004, pp. 6–7. Interpretation of the text was further distorted here since the original French of the memoirs of Cobenzl's nephew Philip (Alfred Ritter von

Figure 5. Artist from the circle of Niklaus Manuel Deutsch (1484–1530), Young Man Taking Money from an Old Woman. Sold from the Hermitage in 1931 (image from sale catalogue, Boerner, Leipzig, 29 April 1931). The drawing now Kupferstichkabinett, Basle

Philip Cobenzl described mounting his uncle's drawings immediately on his arrival in Brussels (in late 1760) and it was assumed that the collection was started when Cobenzl came to the Austrian Netherlands in 1753 and was more or less complete by 1761, whereas research has shown that Cobenzl only acquired his first drawings in August 1761, which was when Philip was set to work.[81] Philip has been consistently credited with authorship of the manuscript catalogue in the Drawings Department, which it is now realised was impossible: the catalogue includes drawings dated 1768. It was surely compiled at the time of the sale, long after Philip's departure for Vienna.

Despite the general acceptance of Charles Cobenzl's importance as a collector of drawings in eighteenth-century Brussels, and despite his prominence as a historical figure, a number of other misconceptions, from factual errors to matters of interpretation, are frequently

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Arneth, Graf Philipp Cobenzl und seine Memoiren, Vienna, 1885) was cited in a Russian translation, which was then translated back into French.

[81] This is clear from an analysis of the letters in the Cobenzl correspondence, e.g. Cobenzl to Dorn, 6 August 1761; AGR, SEG, 1119, ff. 21–22. Guido Cobenzl correspondence, August–September 1761; AGR, SEG, 1093, ff. 400, 406. Philip described organising the collection in his memoirs: Arneth 1885, p. 79

repeated. Not only is it mistakenly suggested that he collected before 1761, but that he collected 'in Vienna and Brussels'.[82] Cobenzl has often been confused with his son Louis or his nephew Philip, and even where an author correctly identifies him by name, he has sometimes been called Governor, not Minister, of the Austrian Netherlands.

Moreover, there is a pronounced tendency to 'correct' or mis-cite his name. That Lugt and other decided to call him Karl with a K (a nineteenth-century affectation) rather than Carl, as his name appears in official German documents, or indeed as Charles, as he signed himself throughout his career and as he is almost universally known in Belgium, has some logic to it. But even making allowances for eighteenth-century variations of his name (Cobenzl – Cobenzel – Cobentzl – Cobentzel etc.), it is surprising how many people 'correct' his surname to the geographical definer 'Coblenz'. It is as Coblenz that his family appears on the official Gorizia website, and as Coblenz that he appears in the documentation of the Institut Royal du Patrimoine artistique in Brussels, amongst others.[83]

Cobenzl in Gorizia/Slovenian History

The Cobenzl family estates in the Habsburg lands were located largely in what is now western Slovenia, and partly in what is now Italian Gorizia. Because of this region's complicated history (Habsburg Empire – independence – widescale destruction of the heritage during the Second World War –Yugoslavia – independence again), the Cobenzl family heritage has been confused and in part forgotten, but is gradually being rediscovered.

The history of the properties of the Counts Coronini – heirs to the Cobenzl estates and family archives – is typical. The two main Cobenzl estates, Haasberg (Hosperk) and Luegg (Predjama), had been sold by the Coroninis to the Windischgratz family in the middle of the nineteenth century, but both retained remnants of the historic art collections. Those at Haasberg were nearly all destroyed by bombing that left the castle a mere shell and those at Luegg (Predjama) Castle – set into the rock face above a vast cave – have been much damaged by damp and were removed in the early 2000s, but remain in storage, apparently

[82] Lugt 2858b (Frits Lugt, Les marques de collections de dessins & d'estampes, Amsterdam: Vereenigde drukkerijen, 1921; Supplément, The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1956

[83] There are plenty more instances where this error appears in otherwise excellent academic texts, e.g. Jean-Pierre Thomas, F. d'Ormesson, Jean-Joseph de La Borde: banquier de Louis XV, mécène des Lumières, Paris, 2002

uncatalogued. When the eastern parts of Gorizia became part of Yugoslavia in 1954 only a small proportion of the remaining possessions could be removed to Italy.[84]

Figure 6. Predjama (formerly Luegg) Castle, near Postojna, Slovenia, a Cobenzl estate

The last Count Coronini, Guglielmo, set about studying the history of his family and gathered as many family artefacts as he could with limited resources, acquiring portraits and documents, establishing a foundation that would preserve and publish the Coronini family heritage,[85] and organising exhibitions from 1956 onwards.[86] He inspired an active community of local historians but exhibitions here have looked mainly at the Italian part of Gorizia,[87] including the literary and artistic patronage of the family of Cobenzl's brother Guidobaldo and nephew Philip,[88] with Charles featuring as a famous, but distant, relative.

[84] Lucia Pillon, Beatrice di Colloredo Toppani, Villa Coronini Cronberg, Gorizia, Rome, 1997; Magdalena Malni Pascoletti et al, Le collezioni Coronini Cronberg di Gorizia: l'arte, il feticcio, la nostalgia, Gorizia 1998

[85] Fondazione Palazzo Coronini Cronberg Onlus, Gorizia. See: www.coronini.it

[86] Il Settecento Goriziano, Gorizia, 1956

[87] Maria Teresa e il Settecento Goriziano, exh. cat., Palazzo Attems, Gorizia, 1981–82; Gorizia Barocco. Una città italiana nell'impero degli Asburgo, exh. cat., Civico museo del castello, Biblioteca statale isontina; Monfalcone, 1999; Il genio delle Alpi, exh. cat., Castello di Gorizia, 2000–1; Tavagnacco, 2000; Studi in

In post-Communist Slovenia the assertion of an independent national identity has led to a surge in interest in local personalities, among them the Cobenzl family and their estates, often in collaboration with Italian specialists.[89] With the former Cobenzl Palace in Ljubljana now housing the France Stele Institute of Art History, scholars such as Dr Helena Seražin have published on architecture and sculpture in the region, and the individuals involved. But articles such as that on paintings by Francesco Pittoni formerly at Haasberg, by Barbara Murovec, head of the Institute, reveal the terrible problems faced by scholars when trying to trace provenance, where much of the documentation has been destroyed.[90] The content and nature of aristocratic cultural holdings, including those of the Cobenzl–Coronini families, remains to be studied.

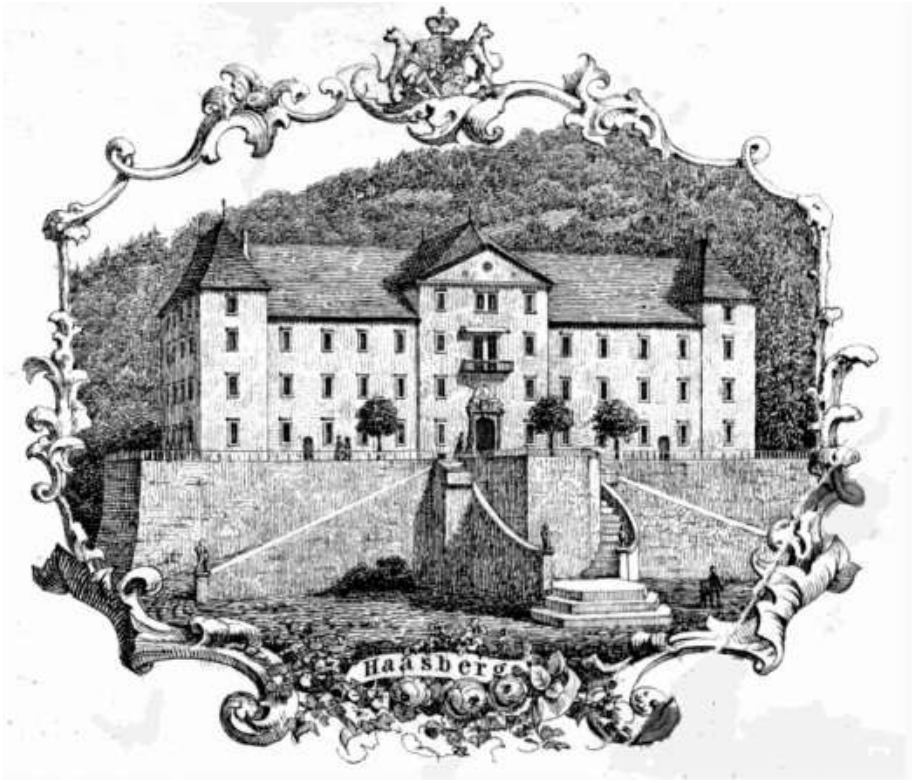

Figure 7. Haasberg, near Planina, Slovenia. The main Cobenzl estate, now ruined.

onore di Guglielmo Coronini Cronberg (1905–1990), Gorizia, 2006; Abitare il Settecento, Palazzo Attems Petzenstein, Gorizia, 2007–8; Udine, 2008

[88] Marino de Grassi, ed., Gorizia e il Friuli tra Venezia e Vienna. Libri illustrati del Settecento, exh. cat., Castello di Gorizia; Mariano del Friuli, 2008, passim

[89] Blaženka First, Carlo Maratta in Barok na Slovenskom / Carlo Maratta and the Baroque on Slovenian Territory, Ljubljana, 2000, with detailed English summary; Ferdinand Šerbelj, La pittura barocca nel Goriziano, exh. cat., National Museum, Ljubljana, 2002; Ferdinand Šerbelj, Barok na Goriškom / Il barocco nel Goriziano, Nova Gorica, 2006

[90] Barbara Murovec, 'Slike Francesca Pittonija iz dvorca Haasberg / I dipinti di Francesco Pittoni del Castello di Haasberg', Acta historiae artis Slovenica, 7, 2002, pp. 56–69, particularly p. 64

Chapter 3: Sources

For the first time this thesis brings together the scattered sources for a more detailed assessment of Cobenzl's collecting. The two central bodies of documentary information are the drawings themselves (most are in the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg, and the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow) and the vast body of Cobenzl's personal letters in the Archives Générales du Royaume in Brussels. These are supplemented by further family papers in the Coronini Archive in Gorizia, and the various catalogues and inventories dating from the eighteenth century onwards in the Hermitage Museum. In an attempt to create some context for Cobenzl's activities in Brussels, the culture within which he existed, cautious use has been made of the few surviving catalogues for sales containing drawings that were held in the Austrian Netherlands in this period. Their number is insufficient to create a full and true picture, without support from other sources, such as notary records and letters, but the absence of broader studies of collecting in the region, and particularly the collecting of drawings, validates their significance.

Whilst this author has largely reconstructed the collection of Charles Cobenzl as sold to Catherine the Great, that reconstruction does not represent the end purpose of this thesis.[1] Yet it is hard to see how one can look at a collector's personality if one does not know at least a good proportion of the works in their possession, allowing us to judge whether works of art matched their often high-sounding attributions and descriptions and permitting an analysis of the collector's preferences. Thus the reconstruction serves here as a tool, bringing to light new documentary evidence – in the form of the works of art themselves – that can be used to analyse the eye and habits of the collector himself. In this case, physical analysis of the drawings, the marks upon them and the alteration in mounting practice has made it possible to suggest at least a partial provenance and chronology of acquisition for some of the drawings.

The personal correspondence in Brussels includes letters dating back to 1742, but it represents a reliable cross-section of Cobenzl's correspondence only from 1753, when he arrived in Brussels. It includes not only letters received but drafts of the replies (written down by secretaries at his dictation), thus presenting us with a very full picture of Cobenzl's communication with some individuals. Between the prostrate widow and the

[1] Locating works of art sold from the Hermitage is a matter of networks rather than science. Some of the drawings have been drawn to our attention by Rhoda Eitel-Porter of the Morgan Library, New York; Thera Folmer-von Oven; Peter Führing of the Fondation Custodia, Paris; Larissa Haskell of Oxford; Natalia Markova of the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow; Irina Sokolova of the Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg.

Catholic prurience of the executors, who were Maria Teresa's officials, it seems likely that some family correspondence and other material of a highly personal nature, which might discredit Cobenzl and thus the Austrian rulers, was destroyed. We must therefore realise the limits of this correspondence in terms of defining Cobenzl's personality.

The personal correspondence should be seen in parallel with the official correspondence, preserved in part in the same archives in Brussels, and in part in Vienna. In this thesis references to the Vienna archives are made exclusively via secondary material, i.e. publication in other books and articles. The information used in such publications has been largely political and there can be no doubt that a search of the Vienna archives for references to Cobenzl's art would produce some new material.

We must also note that much archival material in Belgium was destroyed during the Second World War. Moreover, some aristocratic archives, most notably and damagingly those of the Princes de Ligne, remain essentially closed to scholars.

Several key sources provide firm points of reference underpinning all analysis: the manuscript catalogue of the Cabinet as sold to Catherine the Great, the inventory of Cobenzl's house contents compiled after his death and other executor documents, with the sale catalogues for his house contents and his books. Some of these sources are reproduced in the supplementary appendices on the accompanying CD. Reference to them is implicit in the text and is not individually footnoted.

Collection studies are all too often based, for lack of other evidence, on catalogues or lists drawn up at the moment of sale, usually after the owner's death. These almost always present a far from true picture of the collection, since they might not include works sold or exchanged earlier, removed from the sale by heirs or other claimants. The Cobenzl collection is a case in point. The Cabinet had been sold before the inventorisation of his property on his death in 1770. Not only is the auction catalogue so summary as to be of little assistance but the sale itself did not include a number of works removed for Maria Theresa or reserved by the family. The sale catalogue of the collections of the Bishop of Tournai the following year does not reveal that he had ever owned some 1,500 drawings – since he had sold them to Cobenzl in 1762.

A chronology of Cobenzl's collecting, based on his own correspondence and on references in other sources, was thus drawn up. This chronology does not form part of the text but

underpins it at all points. It helps look at process and compensates for some of the deficiencies of the post-mortem house inventory.

In setting the context for Cobenzl's collecting, however, we are forced to rely very heavily on surviving sales catalogues, due to the absence of other studies for reference. Thus a checklist of known catalogues containing paintings and / or drawings was compiled (sales of prints or books without drawings were not covered) and the majority of those with even a single reference to drawings were viewed. An analysis of the 21 sales including more than 200 drawings was then conducted, the results of which are summarised in Table 8.

In addition, the collectors and dealers mentioned in four key texts of the 1760s and 1770s were analysed: Guillaume Pierre Mensaert's Le peintre amateur et curieux of 1763, Jean-Baptiste Descamps' Voyage Pittoresque de la Flandre et du Brabant of 1769, J. F. M. Michel's Histoire de la vie de P. P. Rubens of 1771 and the anonymous Ghent Nieuwen almanach der konst-schilders, vernissers, vergulders en marmelaers of c. 1777.

Bringing together sources that help us trace 1) process (the formation of the collection) – such as the correspondence and evidence on the drawings themselves, 2) finished result (the Cabinet as sold to Catherine the Great) and 3) aftermath (the records of works of art left behind in the house after the sale), we hope to create both a nuanced picture of Cobenzl's activites that reveals how they changed over the relatively short period in which he was 'a collector' and a sense of the context within which they unfolded.

Breakdown of Parts II and III

Part II covers Cobenzl himself. First it investigates his identity and career prior to 1753 (Chapter 4), looking at the family circumstances and questions of nationality that may have influenced his attitude to different kinds of collecting. It assesses his personality and interests but also his experience of art, what he might have seen or known, prior to his arrival in Brussels (Chapter 5). Chapter 6 looks at Cobenzl's involvement in the arts during his time in the Austrian Netherlands in his public capacity, demonstrating how the arts were part of a wider strategy, in which learning, including national history, the arts and artistic industries were to be used for the revitalisation of intellectual, industrial and economic life, with the aim of raising not just the income received from the region but its overall potential. While his different cultural activities have been looked at separately, this is the first attempt to link at least some of them together and demonstrate cohesion and a

common motivation. This is followed in Chapter 7 by a detailed description of how he formed his collection, when he started buying, what he acquired, who from and in what manner, making clear the limited time frame within which he manifested an interest in owning a 'Cabinet', whether of paintings or drawings.

Part III of this thesis, in the absence of any significant body of research into collecting in the region in the eighteenth century, either of paintings or drawings, attempts to set Cobenzl into a general context, at least partly in the hope that this will contribute to further study. Investigating the cultures of collecting – with specific reference to drawings – in the Austrian Netherlands in the middle of the eighteenth century, Chapter 8 looks at available sources for identifying the main actors and the guiding spirit, assessing some of the information in sale catalogues and seeking to understand the level of connoisseurship in the circle around Cobenzl. Chapter 9 assesses Cobenzl's acts of collecting, the methods of acquiring works of art – including the role of networks – and asks what they tell us about his attitude to his collection overall, taking the opportunity to assess the much-repeated story of his 'corrupt' acquisition practices. In the following chapter, we look at his acts of possession: what he himself understood to be his 'Cabinet', how he presented it and how he used it, both intellectually and physically, as a means of self-promotion, asking whether it formed part of the wider public image that he sought to present, notably in his portraits. In the last chapter we seek to establish the less visible significance of Cobenzl's collecting, the purposes it served, providing important intellectual links – via the provenance of the works – to great individuals of the past and positioning Cobenzl in an elite group of collectors with an interest in drawings.

Part II

Chapter 4. Cobenzl: Life, Work and Identity

Cobenzl's importance in historical terms has until recently been largely defined by the role he played in Belgian national history. Yet when Cobenzl arrived in Brussels he was already 41 years old and he had behind him a successful career in which he had sufficiently pleased Maria Theresa and Kaunitz to gain this important post on the western fringe of the Austrian territorial holdings.

Figure 8. Frans Harrewijn (1700–64), Portrait of Count Charles Cobenzl. 1761

Despite references to Austria, even to the Austrian Empire, the Habsburg occupant of the Austrian throne nominally controlled a wide variety of very different territories with their own customs and privileges, yet in fact exercised no more power than that of prestige in most of them. In addition to the 1,500 more or less independent political institutions of the

Holy Roman Empire the Austrian monarch had direct control of other lands, including, from 1715, the Southern (i.e. the Austrian, formerly Spanish) Netherlands. There was no single term to describe the territories controlled by the Habsburgs and the Pragmatic Sanction issued by Charles VI in 1713 simply called for the 'inalienability' of the Habsburg lands or the 'Habsburg conglomerate'.[1] While Austria was devoutly Catholic, the Habsburg-controlled lands were multi-ethnic and inevitably multi-religious. 'Austrian', although it will be used here, is an anachronistic term in the eighteenth century with regard to nationality and identity, for the Habsburg identity was rather what one might call a 'supranational dynastic identity'.

An official or diplomat in the vast, scattered Habsburg bureaucracy had many opportunities open to him, but, as in other countries, he received little salary and was responsible for covering most of his own expenses. Thus whilst there were great opportunities to build a successful career, those opportunities were only open to those already enjoying family income and with sufficient influence to gain other sources of income, whether from land or emoluments. Taking on any post in an embassy involved huge personal outlay. Kaunitz, future Austrian Chancellor, rejected the offer of a post in Turin in 1741 because he could not afford the expense.[2]

In addition to bureaucrats, frequently with a legal education, the Habsburg service also drew men of the nobility from the hinterland, such as the Gorizia/Carniola region, then, as now, inhabited by both Italians and Slovenians, with an aristocracy that combined both Italian and Germanic families. It was the loyalty of men such as these – largely from strictly Catholic families, serving for the sake of prestige rather than money – that made it possible to govern such disparate territories.[3]

Cobenzl must be placed in this category. During the first half of his career he worked both in the lands of the Empire and in those that were personally subject to the monarch in Austria. His skills were those of intrigue and negotiation, of lobbying for the interests of the Habsburgs in various European states and most particularly within the confines of the Holy Roman Empire. His proven abilities and sympathies, and his deep-rooted loyalty to

[1] The term used by Szabo: Franz A. J. Szabo, Kaunitz and Enlightened Absolutism 1753–1780, Cambridge, 1994, pp. 1–4

[2] Grete Klingenstein, Der Aufstieg des Hauses Kaunitz. Studien zur Herkunft und Bildung des Staatskanzlers Wenzel Anton, Göttingen, 1975, p. 277

[3] Friedrich Edelmayer, '"Carlo Cobenzel": Giovanni Gasparo Cobenzl e Carlo VI', in: Gorizia Barocco. Una città italiana nell'impero degli Asburgo, exh. cat., Civico museo del castello, Biblioteca statale isontina; Monfalcone, 1999, p. 247

Vienna, made him the perfect candidate for the difficult job as Plenipotentiary Minister in the Austrian Netherlands, acting ostensibly under the command of the Governor, Charles-Alexandre de Lorraine. In the complicated situation in which Charles de Lorraine, as twice brother-in-law to Maria Teresa, initially hoped that the Austrian Netherlands would be his own private fiefdom, in conflict with Maria Teresa's proclaimed aims of greater centralisation,[4] Cobenzl's task was essentially to be responsible directly to Vienna whilst maintaining the impression of total subordination to Charles de Lorraine's sole rule.[5] Moreover, as Austria reversed her allegiances on the eve of the Seven Years War, in the Diplomatic Revolution that rejected the traditional alliance with Britain in favour of France, Cobenzl was a valuable man to have located at this crucial geographical point on the map of Europe.

This chapter aims to establish Cobenzl's status and identity, in the fullest meaning of the words. Without attempting to produce a detailed biography of the man prior to 1753, it sets out to identify the influences that shaped him as he entered on the last, most important, phase of his life, during which he eventually became a 'collector'.

Family Background

Charles, comte du Saint Empire Romain de Cobenzl, Baron de Proseck, St Daniel, Mossa, et Leitenbourg, Seigneur des Seigneuries de Hasperg, Steegberg, Loitsch, Lueg, Reiffeniz, Isernico, Flambruzzo, et Sivigliano, Grand Echanson Héréditaire du Duché de Carniole et de la Marche des Vandales, Grand Fauconier Héréditaire, et Grand Porte Plat de la Comté de Gorice, was a member of a prominent family that had served the Habsburgs faithfully since the fifteenth century. The extent of the lands covered by his titles – across Gorizia and Carniola (now largely in Slovenia) – indicates the scope of the territory they once controlled, even if they no longer owned all of the estates mentioned by the middle of the eighteenth century.[6]

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[4] Michèle Galand, chapter II, 'La nomination de Charles de Lorraine au poste de gouverneur général des Pays-Bas autrichiens', Charles de Lorraine, gouverneur-général des Pays-Bas autrichiens (1744–1780) (Études sur le XVIII[e] siècle, XX), Brussels, 1993, pp. 45–64

[5] Ibid., passim, particularly pp. 54–55 and chapter V, 'L'arrivé de Cobenzl aux Pays-Bas: une autre manière de gouverner', pp. 110–22

[6] Proseck – Prosecco, Trieste, Italy; St Daniel – Štanjel, Slovenia; Mossa – Italy; Leitenbourg – Lože near Vipava; Hasperg – Hasberg (Hošperk), near Planina; Steegberg – Cerknica; Loitsch – Logatec; Lueg – Predjama; Reiffeniz – Ribnica (all Slovenia); Isernico, Flambruzzo, Sivigliano are all in Friuli, Italy. On the family see: [Cronenfels,] Die Grafen von Cobenzl, [Vienna, 1818]; 'Cobenzl', in: Giorgio Geromet, Renata Alberti, 1001 Gorizia 2001. Nobiltà della contea. Palazzi, castelli e ville a Gorizia, in Friuli e in Slovenia. 80 famiglie di sangue blu, 2 vols, Gorizia, 2001, I; 'Cobenzl', in: Baron Carl von Czoernig, Gorizia "La Nizza Austriaca". Il territorio di Gorizia e Gradisca, translated by Ervino Pocar, Gorizia, 1969, pp. 652–57

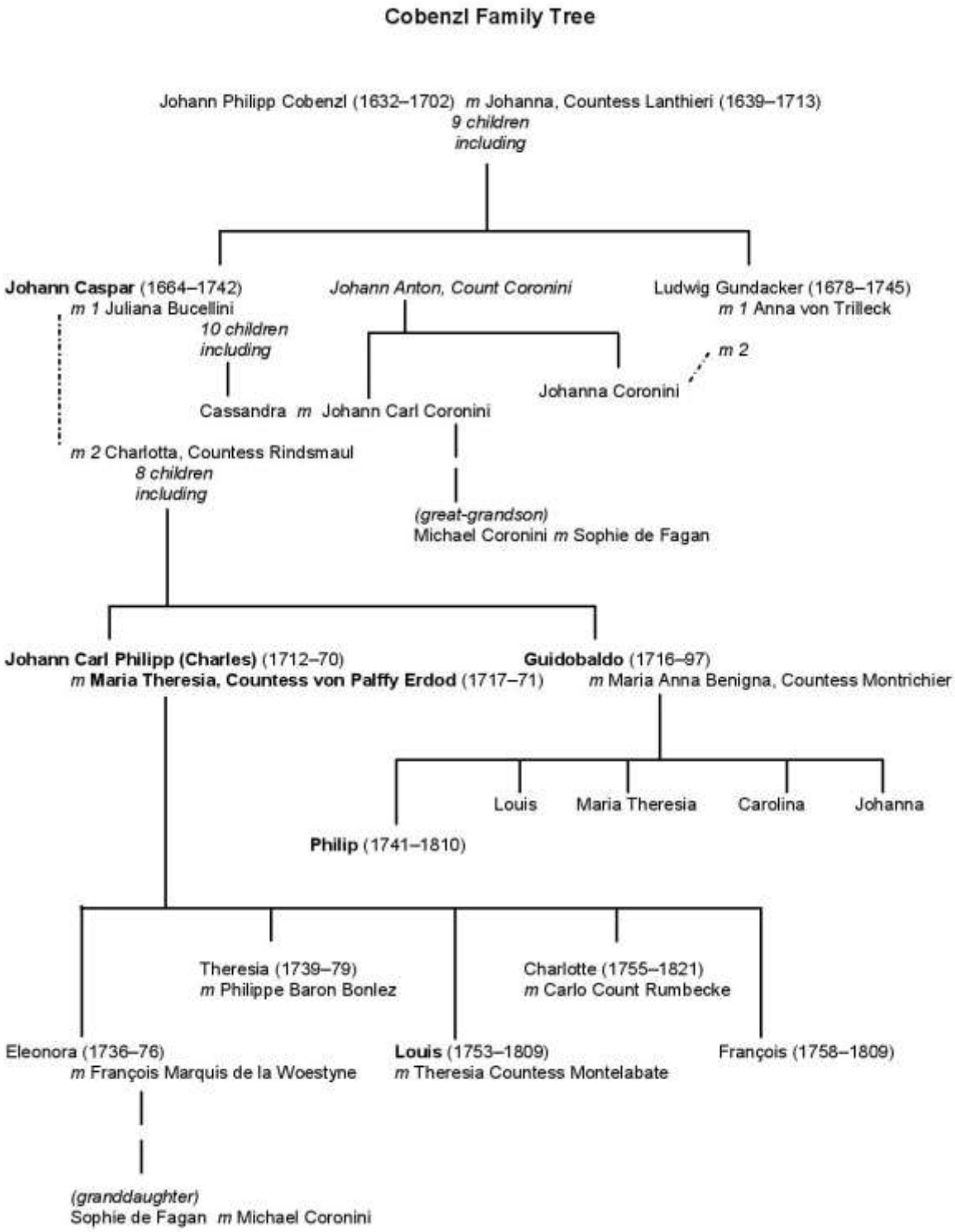

Figure 9. Cobenzl's family tree. Charles Cobenzl was related by marriage to many of the key families of the Habsburg lands.On the death of his son Louis the family property passed through the female line (via his daughter Eleonora) to the Coronini family.

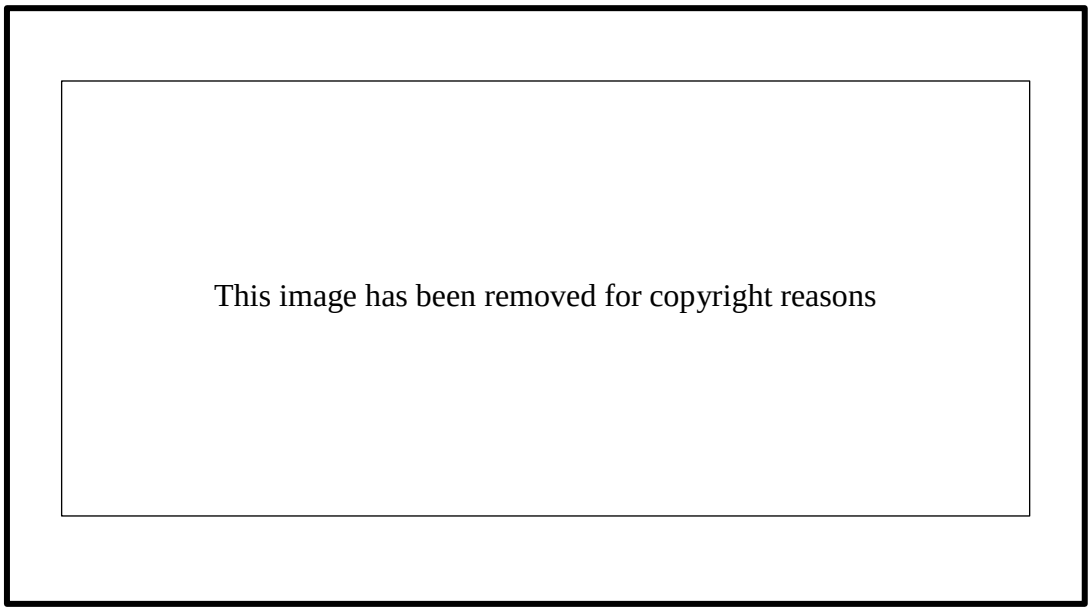

Figure 10. Unidentified artist, Portrait of Johann Caspar Cobenzl in the Robes of the Order of the Golden Fleece. 1731. © Fondazione Palazzo Coronini Cronberg Onlus, Gorizia

Figure 11. Johann Gottfried Auerbach (1697–1753), Charles VI in the Robes of the Order of the Golden Fleece. 1730s. © Heeresgeschichtliches Museum, Vienna

Cobenzl's father Johann Caspar (1664–1742), a loyal servant of Charles VI, laid the basis for the flowering of the family in the eighteenth century, when three generations of Cobenzls occupied positions of influence at the imperial Court and in public affairs. Over the course of the first half of the century, he 'rationalised' the family estates, offloading urban palaces in Gorizia and Carniola in order to acquire palaces in Graz and Laibach (Ljubljana), but retaining vast tracts of land in Postumia, around the key family castles of Luegg and, most importantly, Haasberg.

Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI was born in 1685. The following year the 22-year-old Johann Caspar was given the post of 'gentleman of the bedchamber' and appointed tutor or 'confidant' to the young prince. Such was their relationship that Charles VI retained his trust in and respect for Cobenzl until his death in 1740.[7] It was at the Cobenzl palace at Laibach, capital of the Carniola, that his son Charles was born in 1712 but Johann Caspar's appointment as Marshal of the Court in Vienna in 1722 necessitated the removal of his

[7] Edelmayer 1999, pp. 247–53; Geromet, Alberti 2001

family to the capital. In 1723 he was entrusted with the post of tutor to François-Étienne de Lorraine, prospective husband of Charles VI's daughter Maria Theresa and later Holy Roman Emperor François I. This dual connection to the ruling Habsburgs and the Lorraine family was to be central to Charles Cobenzl's later career.

As eldest son, Charles was sent to university in Leiden at the age of eighteen,[8] while his brother Guidobaldo (1716–97) entered military service. Related by descent to many of the important Habsburg families of the Western reaches of the territory, the Lanthieri, Rabatta and Rindsmaul,[9] Johann Caspar arranged good marriages for his two sons. At 22 Charles was married to Maria Theresa, Countess Palffy, granddaughter of Johann Palffy of Erdöd, adviser on Hungarian matters to Maria Theresa. At 23 Guidobaldo married Marie Benigna, Countess Montrichier. By these marriages the family gained further estates and forged ties with the nobility of Hungary and Styria.

Charles entered on a career at Court and in the administration that took him far away from the family lands, and indeed far away from Vienna. It appears that he never returned to his own estates from the late 1730s, when his diplomatic career took off. Certainly in 1760, when his brother Guido visited him in Brussels, they had not met for over 20 years.[10]

Life and Career[11]

Cobenzl's first major task was for Charles VI and his son-in-law, taking part in the negotiations by which Lorraine was 'swapped' for the Grand Duchy of Tuscany. The last Grand Duke of Tuscany died on July 1737 and the following year Cobenzl was appointed Plenipotentiary Minister for the establishment of the borders of Lorraine.[12]

With the death of Charles VI in 1740 Cobenzl was recalled to Vienna where, after a brief hiatus, he was given a new, similarly delicate job. The War of the Austrian Succession,

[8] Album studiosorum Academiae Lugduno Batavae MDLXXV-MDCCCLXXV: accedunt nomina curatorum et professorum per eadem secula, [aliis adiuvantibus edidit Guilielmus du Rieu], The Hague, 1875, I, 1575–1731, p. 930: (1730, Rectore Hermanno Boerhaave II) '24 October, Carolus A Cobenzl, Comes S.R. Imp. 20, J. (i.e. facultas juridica)'. He was accompanied by his tutor, 'Simon Gregorius Rosman Carniolensis', and two servants.

[9] A full genealogy is provided in the document drawn up for Cobenzl's daughter Charlottte, 'Charlotte Comtesse Cobenzl aspirante', certified 26 January 1771; CA, Atti e Doc., busta 265, filza 671

[10] Alfred Ritter von Arneth, Graf Philipp Cobenzl und seine Memoiren, Vienna, 1885, p. 73

[11] Cobenzl presented his own potted biography in a letter to his childhood friend Cesar Comte Coppola in Naples, 24 October 1758, AGR, SEG, 1099, f. 3–4v. Cited almost in full in: Comte Carlos de Villermont, La cour de Vienne à Bruxelles au XVIII^{e} siècle, Le comte de Cobenzl, ministre plénipotentiaire aux Pays-Bas, Lille–Paris–Bruges, 1925, pp. 8–9

[12] His reports from Lorraine, where his colleague was Count Königsegg-Erps, are in Vienna: HHStA, StK Lothringen, Fasz. neu I, Konvolut Weisungen 1737–40

which temporarily put Charles Albert of Bavaria on the throne as Holy Roman Emperor Charles VII (1742–45), inevitably ruptured the integral foreign policy of the lands personal to the House of Habsburg and the constituent lands of the Holy Roman Empire, leading to the formation of a new, separate 'Austrian' foreign policy and a relevant bureaucracy.[13]

Cobenzl was despatched to the realms of the Empire to use his talents urging support for Maria Theresa and gathering intelligence regarding the loyalties of different rulers. From 1742 he was charged with lobbying for Austrian interests along the Middle and Upper Rhine, in Franconia, Swabia and Westphalia.[14] He was initially to be peripatetic, although he spent three years in Bonn at the Court of the Elector of Cologne, Clemens August, libertine and renowned collector. With the death of Charles VII Cobenzl's talents came sharply into play once more as he was required to drum up support for the election of François as Holy Roman Emperor.

Based in Western and Central Germany, Cobenzl kept his finger on the pulse of intellectual and political affairs over a much wider swathe of Europe. Thanks to his university studies at Leiden and his travels, he had a wide range of contacts both noble and intellectual, including the historian and jurist Johann Daniel Schöpflin, professor at Strasbourg University.[15] It was in 1746 that Kaunitz, then Plenipotentiary Minister in the Austrian Netherlands, first recommended Cobenzl to Maria Theresa as his successor there.[16] But there was still important work to be done in the lands of the Holy Roman Empire for a valuable intriguer such as Cobenzl.

In late 1746 Cobenzl was ordered to Ratisbonne (Regensburg), since 1663 the seat of the Imperial Diet of the Holy Roman Empire, but was then permitted to settle in Mainz, which was his base until 1753.[17] The Elector of Mainz was Archchancellor and Director of the Electoral College responsible for organising the election of each new Emperor and himself had jurisdiction over the numerous dioceses; his support was vital to the Emperor. From

[13] Szabo 1994, p. 42

[14] Renate Zedinger, Die Verwaltung der Österreichischen Niederlande in Wien (1714–1795). Studien in den Zewntralisierungstendenzen des Wiener Hofes im Staatswerdungsprozess der Habsburgermonarchie, Vienna, 2000, p. 79

[15] Johann Daniel Schoepflins brieflicher Verkehr, ed. Richard Fester, Tübingen, 1906, Letters 24 and 25, pp. 22–23. The correspondence with Schöpflin lasted more than twenty years.

[16] Charles-Alexandre de Lorraine: gouverneur général des Pays-Bas autrichiens, exh. cat., Palais de Charles de Lorraine, Brussels, 1987 (Europalia 1987–I), p. 11

[17] See bills from Joseph Freundschick of Mainz, covering the rent on his house and provision of goods and services, November 1746 to February 1753; AGR, SEG, 2645, ff. 186–218

here, Cobenzl travelled around the German lands as required, his trips included a meeting with George II in April 1750 during the latter's visit to Hannover.[18]

The nuances and ambiguities of the post were numerous. Maria Theresa's representative was not so much a diplomat as a skilled negotiator and intriguer.[19] Cobenzl excelled at his job, not always persuading the princes to vote as Vienna would like, but establishing contacts and forging political, intellectual and less formal friendships that were to last long after he had moved to Brussels.[20]

On 13 May, Cobenzl was officially named successor to Count Antoniotto Botta Adorno as Plenipotentiary Minister in the Austrian Netherlands under Charles-Alexandre de Lorraine. The appointment was no surprise, for he was a protégé of Kaunitz, who completed his ascendancy through the Austrian hierarchy to be named State Chancellor on the same day as Cobenzl was confirmed in his new post. Kaunitz, who had served in Italy and Paris, and notably as Plenipotentiary Minister in the Austrian Netherlands 1744–46 (during the absence of the Governor and whilst Brussels was occupied by the French),[21] took a radically new approach to Austria's international interests, proposing that established alliances be overthrown in favour of a new alliance with the old enemy, France.

In September 1762 Cobenzl recorded that he had for Kaunitz 'Un tendre attachement que j'ai voué a notre respectable Ministre il y a plus de 32. ans…'[22] They presumably met in Vienna in or just before 1730 on the eve of their departure for university, and probably improved their acquaintance at the Court of Würzburg. They both entered the Imperial Aulic Council in 1735.[23] Moreover, Cobenzl's Catholic credentials were balanced by considerable intellectual freedom and he might have echoed Kaunitz's declaration of his interest in 'public enlightenment and the abolition of harmful prejudices for the sake of humanity'.[24] In February 1765 Cobenzl responded to Jacques Dorn's decision to hang his

[18] London Gazette, 28 April 1758

[19] Paul P. Bernard, From the Enlightenment to the Police State: the Public Life of Johann Anton Pergen, Urbana–Chicago, 1991, pp. 4–5, 9

[20] See the abundant correspondance in the Brussels archives. Schöpflin recalled the high regard in which Cobenzl was still held in the German states fourteen years later. Schöpflin to Cobenzl, 25 October 1767. Johann Daniel Schöpflin, Wissenschaftliche und diplomatische Korrespondenz, ed. Jürgen Voss, Stuttgart, 2002, p. 519

[21] William J. McGill, 'The Roots of Policy: Kaunitz in Italy and the Netherlands, 1742–1746', Central European History, 1/2, June 1968, pp. 131–49

[22] Cobenzl to Jacques Dorn; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 75

[23] Klingenstein 1975, pp. 256–59

[24] Kaunitz to de Silva, 29 March 1769; HHStA, Staatskanzlei: Wissenschaft und Kunst, Karton 1

portrait beside that of Kaunitz with the words: 'J'ai quelque droit à cette place, parcequ'il est juste, que le disciple soit à côté du Maitre.'[25]

Convinced that the Austrian Netherlands and the Grand Duchy of Tuscany were in many ways a liability, Kaunitz saw them more as pawns in an international game than as permanent Habsburg territories. The problems inherent in managing such distant, non-contiguous lands were clear and the Austrian Netherlands were in a very poor financial state. Maria Theresa refused to consider getting rid of them, however, and although they were run from separate offices within the Austrian Chancellory, reflecting their 'separateness' from the historic Habsburg lands, they remained 'Austrian' until the 1790s. It was thus necessary to put in place a skilled and loyal Minister.

Between May and August 1753 Cobenzl was in Vienna, receiving complicated instructions for his new job as de facto Prime Minister in a 'conglomerate within a conglomerate', for the Austrian Netherlands were a microcosm of the Habsburg lands themselves, similarly composed of small states and duchies each with their own history, culture and privileges. Maria Theresa was not Queen or Empress here, but held each title individually: Duchess of Brabant, Countess of Flanders, Dame de Malines etc. Cobenzl's experience made him the most obvious choice, not only in holding the reins of many different, divided territories, but in playing the game of intrigue in the relationship between the Austrian Netherlands, Charles de Lorraine and the Vienna administration.

Arriving in Brussels on 19 August, Cobenzl almost immediately took a quick tour of Flanders,[26] taking over officially as Minister on 15 September 1753. He was to be responsible for revitalising the economy of the Austrian Netherlands, for kick-starting industry, promoting the building of roads and canals, and generally increasing the national income – even if that income was largely despatched to Vienna. Cobenzl was to successfully hold the post until his death on 27 January 1770.

Nationality

The straightforward assumption that nationalism was born at the end of the eighteenth century is now being refined and nuanced.[27] It is hard to imagine a true sense of national

[25] Cobenzl to Dorn, 15 February 1765; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 166

[26] Cobenzl to Pergen, 26 August 1753; AGR, SEG, 1188, f. 152

[27] The discourse has been enlivened by the emergence of East European scholars in the nations that have taken shape since the collapse of the Soviet bloc. See e.g. Balázs Trencsényi, Michal Kopeček, eds, Discourses of Collective identity in Central and Southeast Europe (1770–1945). Texts and commentaries, I:

identity even within the individual states of Western and Central Europe, where rulers were so often the product of intermarriage between royal families of different lands, and where broader political alliances determined allegiance. How can one talk of 'nationalism' in an area where nationality itself was in question. Yet the question of Cobenzl's nationality inevitably arises, both because he has been described as 'Austrian' or 'German-speaking', and set within dogmatic contexts on that basis, and because of the national nature of so many studies of collecting, which root a collector within a national 'school' or tradition.

In Central Europe, particularly for the upper echelons of society, place of birth was not key to identity and to speak of national allegiance or ethnicity, is to pose questions that are irrelevant to many aristocrats of the age. The usual way of avoiding anachronistic national descriptions in the period prior to 1800 is to refer to 'German-speaking countries'. This is the term used – for want of any other – by the Getty Provenance Index[28] and by Michiel Plomp in his 'topography' for the collecting of drawings by Rubens.[29] Plomp's group covers drawings collectors in Dresden and in the 'Habsburg Austrian Empire', a generalised and imprecise term for Szabo's 'Habsburg conglomerate' that allows Plomp to cover both Vienna and Brussels.

Yet to call Cobenzl and his fellow aristocrats and officials – or the lands which they inhabited – 'German-speaking' is to mislead. The language of many official documents across the Habsburg-controlled lands may have been German, but German was rarely the first language. It was the very lack of concepts of nationality within the Habsburg system that made it possible for men such as Eugene of Savoy (who signed himself 'Eugenio von Savoy',[30] a marvellous Italo-Franco-German example of Habsburg multiculturalism), born and brought up in France, to make a career in the Habsburg army. Eugene never learned German properly, nor did the Spaniards who transferred their allegiance when the Spanish (Southern) Netherlands became the Austrian Netherlands.[31] Maria Theresa's Portuguese adviser, Don Manoel Telles de Menezes e Castro, created Duke of Sylva in 1755 (known as Sylva-Tarouca), wrote and spoke French and never learned German at all. These men

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Late Enlightenment – Emergence of the Modern 'National Idea', Budapest, 2006. There have been a number of conferences questioning homogenous views of nationalism, e.g. Between Inclusion and Exclusion: Cosmopolitan (Cultural) Nationalism in the Age of the Enlightenment, University of Graz, 25–29 July 2011

[28] Thomas Ketelsen, Tilmann von Stockhausen, The Index of Paintings Sold in German-speaking Countries Before 1800 (Getty Provenance Index), Munich, 2002

[29] Michiel C. Plomp, 'Collecting Rubens's Drawings', in: Anne-Marie Logan, Michiel C. Plomp, Peter Paul Rubens. The Drawings, exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; New Haven, 2005, p. 48

[30] Agnes Husslein-Arco, Prince Eugene: General-Philosopher and Art Lover, Munich, 2010, e.g. cat. II 47

[31] Renate Zedinger, '"La carrière faisait le bonheur de notre vie […]". Les fonctionnaires des Pays-Bas autrichiens à Vienne (1714–1794)', in: Bruno Bernard, ed., Bruxellois à Vienne, Viennois à Bruxelles (Études sur le XVIII^{e} siècle, XXXII), Brussels, 2004, pp. 28–30

were servants of the Habsburgs; the loyalties and allegiances they demonstrated were not to the lands of their own estates but to the Habsburg rulers. Language and ethnicity play no conscious role in their vision of themselves.

It is only under Kaunitz that the imposition of a 'German' administration, as part of the means of centralising the territories controlled from Vienna, commenced. He established a new Department of the Southern Netherlands at the Chancellory in 1757 and sought to put 'Germans' in charge.[32] At the beginning, however, there were not enough German-speakers with the right experience and Kaunitz continued to have to requisition individuals from the administration in the Austrian Netherlands,[33] or appoint relatively young men. This led to the appointment as head of the new Department at the age of just 35 of Johann Jakob Edler von Dorn (c. 1722 – 1766). Even he, however, conducted his official business and private correspondence largely in French, signing himself Jacques Dorn.

In the Habsburg lands overall the situation was far more complex. Examples are provided by the languages used by individuals around Cobenzl not just in their official life but in their private correspondence. The friendly letters exchanged by the future Charles VI and Johann Caspar Cobenzl are illuminating: in 1703–4 they wrote to each other in Italian; their letters of 1706 are in German.[34] While Cobenzl himself had the official German name Johann Carl Philipp but was always known as Charles, his brother had the Italian name Guidobaldo, but was often called by the French form, Guy. Guidobaldo's son Philip wrote to family members in the period 1761–65 in three languages: with his father he corresponded in French; with his brother, studying at a seminary in Rome, in Italian; with his aunt and his sister – in German. Cobenzl himself was fluent in French, German, Italian, English and Latin.[35] An analysis of books in his library at the time of his death undertaken by Claude Sorgeloos revealed 1,433 books in French and 606 in Latin, but only 255 in German, not that far above English at 177.[36] There were 101 books in Italian and 99 in Dutch. Bearing in mind that this was Cobenzl's personal library, brought from Germany to Brussels and added to there, its preference for French is significant.

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[32] Kim Bethume, 'Les hauts fonctionnaires autrichiens à Bruxelles au XVIII[e] siècle. Leur role au sein du gouvernement des Pays-Bas et les reactions de la population locale', Ibid., pp. 95–112

[33] Zedinger 2004, pp. 39–42. See also: F. Szabo, chapter 3, 'The Structure of Government', in: Szabo 1994, pp. 73–112

[34] Edelmayer 1999

[35] Arneth 1885, p. 74

[36] Claude Sorgeloos, 'La bibliothèque du comte Charles de Cobenzl, ministre plénipotentiaire dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens, et celle de son épouse la comtesse Marie-Thérèse de Palffy', Le livre et l'estampe, XXX/119–20, 1984, pp. 195–96

In asking ourselves about Cobenzl's nationality, therefore, we might compare him with a particularly celebrated younger contemporary: Prince Charles-Joseph de Ligne, who famously declared 'J'ai six ou sept patries: Empire, Flandre, France, Espagne, Autriche, Pologne, Russie et presque Hongrie'.[37] Jeroom Vercruysse identified the very different parallel concepts of 'patrie' in the middle and second half of the eighteenth century:[38] semantic (the land of one's fathers, where one is born – for de Ligne this was Flanders, for Cobenzl this was unclear – was it really the Carniola, where he had his estates?); the land where one has obligations of service to the state (for both de Ligne and Cobenzl this was Vienna); the land where one has rights, income or interests (Ligne's list of six or seven, for Cobenzl Gorizia and the Carniola and possibly Vienna). The last category is the Ciceronian notion of 'Patria est ubicumque bene' [wherever we are content, that is our country], and Vercruysse defines this as France for de Ligne.[39] We might ask where it was for Cobenzl for most of his life, but his letters to friends imply that by the end of the 1750s it was Brussels and the Austrian Netherlands.[40]

Franz Szabo analysed the language of Cobenzl's mentor and model, Kaunitz, in an effort to get to the root of his national and cultural character. Despite Kaunitz's insistence on German as the official language, French was his language of choice. He made wide use of Italian and could of course read Latin, he spoke Czech but very little English. Szabo was forced to conclude with a phrase that might with some justification be applied to Cobenzl: 'Kaunitz can, therefore, not be understood in any cultural context except the broad cosmopolitan one which he embodied so well'.[41]

Character

Cobenzl's intellectual abilities, his talent as an efficient administrator, an adroit intriguer and lobbyist, were backed up by a blunt charm and considerable social skills. He seems almost never to have dropped any acquaintance, maintaining a correspondence, however brief, with people met many years before and never seen since. His childhood friends, his

[37] Prince Charles-Joseph de Ligne, Fragments de l'Histoire de ma Vie; cited in: Jeroom Vercruysse, 'Le prince de Ligne et ses patries. Thèmes et variations sur les "affinités électives"', Nouvelles Annales Prince de Ligne, XVII, 2007, p. 50

[38] Jeroom Vercruysse, 'Le prince de Ligne et l'Autriche: tableau d'une passion', Nouvelles Annales Prince de Ligne, XV, 2002, pp. 51–82; Vercruysse 2007, pp. 47–68

[39] Although 'Belgian' nationalism, the sense of a collective consciousness, of nationhood, only appeared in the 1780s, at least in part thanks to opposition to Joseph II's at times heavyhanded reforms, after de Ligne was forced in 1794 to abandon his lands – his estate at Beloeil and his house in Brussels – and never to return to France, he spoke until his death of being in exile. Vercruysse 2007

[40] e.g. Cobenzl to von Hoditz, February 1762; AGR, SEG, 1143, f. 58

[41] Szabo 1994, pp. 28–39

old tutor, aristocrats and officials at various European courts – with all of them he kept in contact, not without the aid of numerous secretaries.

When we look at the judgments of contemporaries, the most surprising result is that, despite their prejudices, however opposed their political or religious views and thus their interpretations of Cobenzl's character, they tend to be in agreement regarding his learning and his gregarious personality, his administrative skills and his protection of the arts.

Carlo Morelli, proud inhabitant of the Cobenzls' native Gorizia, declared him to be 'cittadino di tutte le nazioni, con cui aveva a trattare',[42] while Philip Cobenzl presented a picture of the epitome of the enlightened man of the very highest rank: 'Un homme de beaucoup d'esprit, ayant une instruction très-étendue, une grande habileté et activité dans le maniement des affaires. Il … était d'une extrême politesse et amabilité dans la société.'[43]

Less positive was the opinion of Monsignor Giuseppe Garampi, a cleric of understandably conservative outlook who found Cobenzl's freethinking worrying and hinted that studies at 'non-Catholic' universities might be to blame, whilst also lamenting (tactfully) his infidelities.[44] Most bitter of all Cobenzl's critics, however, was Charles de Lorraine, always torn between recognition and jealousy of Cobenzl's talents. He repeatedly railed at Cobenzl and complained to Maria Theresa of his insubordination.[45] Were these simply the complaints of a governor seeking to have Cobenzl recalled in order that he be given a more complaisant Minister who would reinforce his own perception of his Court as 'independent' of Vienna, or were the criticisms, however exaggerated, founded in truth?

Despite the clear propensity for free-thinking that Garampi deplored and Cobenzl's aim to limit the many privileges enjoyed in the Austrian Netherlands by the Church (in which he was a true assistant to Kaunitz and latterly to Joseph II, but also a man of an age that was moving against perceived excessive clerical power across Europe)[46] there is no evidence that Cobenzl – unlike Kaunitz – was or was seen as being particularly anti-clerical.[47]

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[42] Carlo Morelli di Schönfeld, Istoria della contea de Gorizia, 4 vols, Gorizia, 1855 (published posthumously); new edn. Mariano del Friuli, 2003, with a fifth volume of notes and index, III, pp. 283–84

[43] Arneth 1885, p. 74.

[44] Mgr Garampi, 'Impressions de voyage', Revue Bénédictine, VII, 1890, pp. 162–63

[45] He provided a detailed list of complaints in 1756: AGR, SEG, 2586, f. 38

[46] e.g. Ghislaine De Boom, Les Ministres plenipotentiaires dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens, principalement Cobenzl, Brussels, 1932, p. 120

[47] A fact noted by Villermont, who devoted a whole chapter to 'Le comte de Cobenzl et le clergé belge': Villermont 1925

Cobenzl's intellectual curiosity is undoubted. He gathered information of all kinds: writings on philosophy, history, economics and law, military gossip about the battles that raged across Europe throughout most of his career, social tidbits and scandal from various courts. He established networks to supply him with both informal information (in letters) and with published works. Based in Western Germany, he had ready access to the booksellers of Frankfurt. A huge proportion of his correspondence right up to his death was with booksellers who not only provided books and pamphlets but acted as intermediaries in gathering political information.

Cobenzl gained a reputation as a friend of men of letters, known to Voltaire and to Montesquieu. The contents of his personal library are recorded in posthumous inventories and the catalogue of the sale held in Brussels in June 1771: among the reasons for the delay in organising the sale were the quantity of banned books that had to be dealt with and the impossibility of finding someone sufficiently learned to catalogue the books in such a wide variety of languages.[48]

An analysis of the contents of the library makes clear that it was a working library, as opposed to the polite selection of books that fell into the category of 'cabinet de curiosité'.[49] Yet Cobenzl was by no means an intellectual recluse. As a pragmatic utilitarian,[50] he believed in the practical application of learning, and in the philosophical eclecticism that was one of the underlying aspects of Enlightenment thinking. As his support for industry in the Austrian Netherlands was to demonstrate, despite a lack of manifest interest in the natural sciences in the abstract, he investigated the practical application of science and new technologies where he saw how they might contribute to economic development. In his study of intellectual life in Brussels c. 1763 Bruno Bernard lamented the general stagnation but picked out Cobenzl as one of the very few partisans of intellectual and scientific progress.[51]

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[48] Sorgeloos 1984, pp. 115–210

[49] On the distinction see: Jean Viardot, 'Naissance de la bibliophilie: les cabinets de livres rares', in: C.I. Jolly, ed., Histoire des bibliothèques français, II, Les bibliothèques sous l'Ancien Régime 1530–1789, Paris, 1988, pp. 268–89

[50] He is the perfect embodiment of the Enlightenment as defined by Ernst Cassirer, who felt that 'the basic idea underlying all the tendencies of enlightenment was the conviction that human understanding is capable, by its own power and without recourse to supernatural assistance, of comprehending the system of the world and that this new way of understanding the world will lead it to a new way of mastering it'. Cited in Herbert Dieckmann, 'Themes and Structures of the Enlightenment', in: Herbert Dieckmann, Harry Levin, Helmut Motekat, et al, Essays in Comparative Literature, St Louis, 1961, p. 58

[51] Bruno Bernard, 'La vie intellectuelle et scientifique à Bruxelles vers 1763', Nouvelles Annales Prince de Ligne, VI, 1991, p. 146

The picture that arises is of a man of the nobility who, though charming, was more bluff and shrewd than refined and effete. An intellectual with a love of books and a considerable library, he supported the Church and State whilst feeling free to read and own works that were banned by both. A free-thinker, he was nonetheless almost certainly not a Freemason and in accordance with tradition he placed his younger daughters to be educated in a convent and sent his younger son to a career in the Church.

Central to Cobenzl's information gathering – for personal and professional use – was his extremely vivacious character and taste for socialising. During his years in Lorraine and central Germany, separated from wife and children, Cobenzl to all intents and purposes lived the life of a bachelor. In Brussels, not only reunited with his family but housed in stable accommodation and with a very different style of career, the pattern of his life inevitably changed, his entertainments became calmer and more domestic.

Before he settled in Brussels, hunting and women are the two interests most openly reflected in frank exchanges with his successor in Mainz, Baron Pergen.[52] From the second half of the 1750s Cobenzl's interest in hunting waned and he informed Pergen with some finality on 5 December 1764 that he had given away his dogs, sacked his huntsmen and hung up his guns.[53] Now, he said, he had a Cabinet of Paintings, a collection of drawings, a handsome house and garden, he went to the theatre and played cards.[54]

As for Cobenzl's women, it must be recalled that whilst Cobenzl flitted between German courts, his wife sat in Vienna bringing up his children. They did not meet once between April 1742 and January 1753 and the regular pregnancies that had been a feature of their earlier life came to an end during this period. The son born after his departure in 1742 died in 1751, having never met his father.

There is plenty of evidence that Cobenzl's affairs were extensive One friend wrote to him facetiously: 'Je l'avois mandé à votre épouse baruthine; car, Dieu merci, il faut distinguer vos femmes par les noms des provinces et des villes'.[55] News of his extra-marital affairs even reached his mother in Vienna[56] and Garampi was aware that these 'incidents

[52] AGR, SEG, 1187–1191

[53] AGR, SEG, 1191, f. 280. This is confirmed by the contrast between the fuss made about packing his arms when he left Mainz (Pergen correspondence, May 1753; AGR, SEG, 1187) and the relatively modest arms cabinet inventories on his death (Cobenzl Inventory MS 1770).

[54] Cobenzl to Pergen in Mainz, 19 December 1764; AGR, SEG, 1191, f. 287

[55] Cited in: Villermont 1925, p. 13, with reference to HHStA, Correspondence of Maria Theresa, vol. 286

[56] P. Bernard 1991, pp. 2–3

regrettables' had led to much displeasure on the part of Maria Theresa.[57] Pergen found it hard to keep up with Cobenzl's reputation in Mainz and the Landgrave felt it necessary to urge him on to new conquests, hoping that Pergen would eventually rival Cobenzl in 'bedding the belles of Frankfurt'.[58] When Cobenzl's nephew Philip passed through Mainz in September 1760, on his way to Brussels, Pergen reported: 'c'est un joli enfant, il auroit eu la santé trop délicate autrefois pour être dressé par V. Exc., puisqu'il falloit alors combiner le travail avec les veilles, le vin, le jeu et la femme.'[59]

Cobenzl's freedom was clearly more restricted once his wife joined him in Brussels but her presence had many advantages. In the staid context of court life, so very different from the libertine atmosphere of the courts of Germany, a wife of high birth who could act as hostess was key to his new position as Minister. As a Countess Palffy, whose grandfather and father were important figures at Court in Vienna, she brought him status and a common ambition.

As regards her character, the picture remains unclear. Villermont tended to see her as frivolous,[60] a perception certainly supported by the description of her by the Prince de Ligne, who called her 'Praline' (i.e. a hard nut coated in soft sugar):

> 'Praline a l'air d'être la femme de chambre de Proserpine; elle tient aussi un peu de l'Étrusque, ayant du rouge et du noir dans la physionomie: elle n'en a pas dans son âme, car elle est bonne: elle ne rêve que confiture, gâteau de ploud, sucre, prend, rend, crême, meringue, et biscuit; elle devine tout ce qu'on mange et tout ce qu'on boit, mais comme elle s'imagine que d'autres ont le même goût, et comme elle est bonne femme, c'est pour en donner une partie: elle est sensible, reconnaissante, rit, pleure, se fâche sans savoir pourquoi, croit tout ce qu'on lui dit, et fait tout ce qu'on veut.'[61]

Something of this is reflected in the diaries of Count Zinzendorf, who stayed in Brussels in 1766 and again in 1769–70 and who mentioned the Countess on numerous occasions.[62] Most of Zinzendorf's comments are either neutral or slightly disparaging in tone; he notes her bad temper, that one of her eyes is deeper set than the other, at one point even calling her 'cette bête de Madame Cobenzl' when she refuses to receive him.[63]

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[57] Garampi 1890, pp. 162–63

[58] HHStA, Ministerial Correspondenz 47: Pergen to Landgrave, 16 January 1755; Landgrave to Pergen, 18 January 1755. Cited in P. Bernard 1991, p. 19

[59] AGR, SEG, 1188; cited in Villermont 1925, p. 88

[60] Villermont 1925, passim

[61] Prince Charles-Josephe de Ligne, Caractères et Portraits, Paris, 2003, p. 380

[62] J. K. C. H. Comte de Zinzendorf, Journal. Chronique belgo-bruxelloise 1766–1770, ed. Georges Englebert (Nouvelles Annales Prince de Ligne, hors series, II), Brussels, 1991

[63] Ibid., entries for December 1769

There is no evidence, however, that the Countess was lacking in intelligence. Indeed, the analysis of the books kept in her rooms – some 535 titles – at the time of the Count's death in 1770, suggests the contrary. Sorgeloos noted that 34% of the titles were novels, mostly relatively recent, and she apparently had a preference for the gloomy sentimentalism of Baculard d'Arnaud, but there there were also religious, philosphical and historical works, among them the writings of Hume and Voltaire and even a translation of Mikhail Lomonosov's History of Russia.[64]

The Countess' library also included books for the children. Eleonora (born 1736) and Theresia (born 1739) had been largely brought up by their mother, whilst Cobenzl was absent in central Germany, but the Count was much more involved in the education of the younger children: Louis (born 1753), Charlotte (born 1755) and François (born 1758). Cobenzl himself was apparently an affectionate father, occupying himself with his children's education in some detail, not just that of his sons but that of his daughters.[65] The elder daughters' letters to him are chatty and filled with warmth, demonstrating considerable fondness,[66] but all of the younger children were sent away for their education. The boys were sent to school in Paris when they were twelve and seven, in which there was nothing unusual, but Charlotte was despatched to a convent in Paris at six and was followed by a younger sister, Josephine, just three years old, who died there four years later. However prestigious the Paris convent, this was an unusually early age at which to part with a daughter and there is nothing to suggest that the Countess was demonstratively affectionate or even particularly bothered with the girls in Brussels, where she seems, by all accounts, to have been particularly occupied with recognition of her status.

Madame Cobenzl apparently insisted on taking precedence after Charles de Lorraine's sister, Anne-Charlotte, and thus above the Duchess of Arenberg – wife of Cobenzl's keenest rival – and the Princess de Ligne. This was bound to lead to problems. Angered at her temerity, the offended aristocrats appealed to Maria Theresa and were initially supported. Not long after, however, in the absence of Charles de Lorraine, the ladies of the Court returned to Brussels after an absence and refused to pay the first visit to Madame Cobenzl or indeed to visit her at all. This was no longer a minor incident and Cobenzl

[64] Sorgeloos 1984, pp. 174-89

[65] Cobenzl addressed the educator Madame de Grafigny regarding the education of his eldest girls in 1755; Jeroom Vercruysse, 'Madame de Grafigny précepteur des enfants Cobenzl. Lettres inédites', Cahiers bruxellois, XIII, 1968, pp. 73–77. In 1765 he corresponded at length with Lalive de Jully regarding schools for his two sons; AGR, SEG, 1167.

[66] Eleonora Marquise de Woestine, correspondence, AGR, SEG, 1249, ff. 1–174; Theresia, Baronne de Bonlez, correspondence; AGR, SEG, 1077, ff. 354–410

intervened, forcing the Empress to decree that 'il ne serait même pas permis à madame la comtesse de faire la première visite à quelque dame que ce soit…'[67]

Madame Cobenzl won her point, for reasons of protocol, but the situation did not endear either Count or Countess to the local aristocracy, as Philip Cobenzl recorded:

> 'Quelques grands-seigneurs du pays, et nommément les Arenberg, les Ligne, et ceux de leur société, ne l'affectionnaient pas singulièrement, à cause de quelques disputes de rang entre Mme de Cobenzl et les princesses du pays, mais rien n'y paraissait, et même ceux qui ne l'affectionnaient pas beaucoup pour des motifs d'intérêt personel, lui rendaient toute la justice qui lui était dûe.' [68]

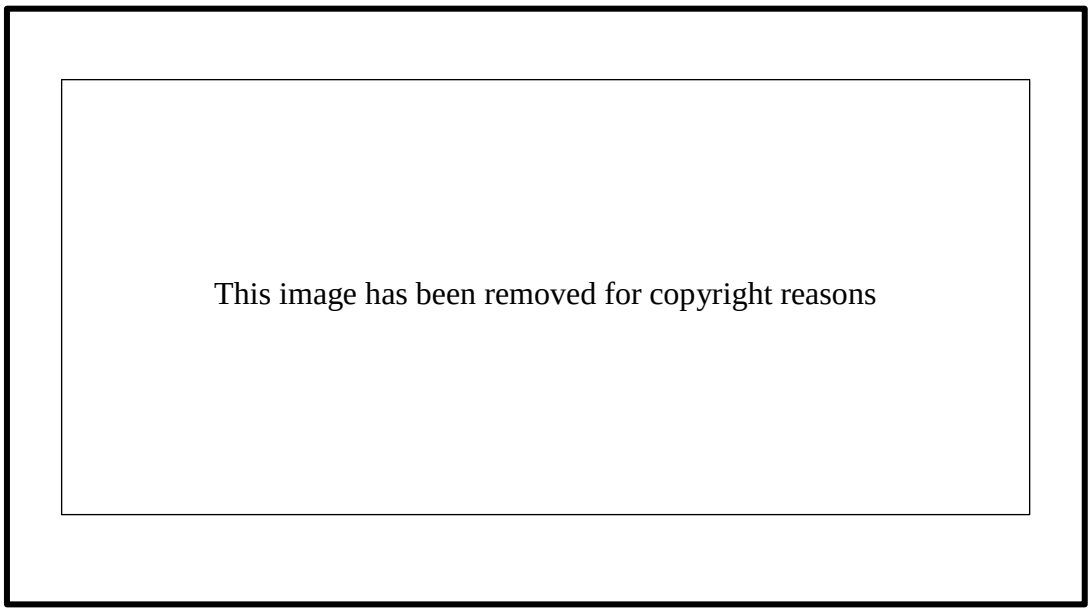

Figure 12. Bernard Verschoot (1728/30–83), Portrait of Countess Maria Teresa Cobenzl Palffy. 1768. © Fondazione Palazzo Coronini Cronberg Onlus, Gorizia

Figure 13. Bernard Verschoot (1728/30–83), Portrait of Anne-Charlotte, Countess Maria Teresa Cobenzl Palffy. Private collection, Brussels

The Cobenzls' continued insistence on their status was reflected in a number of portraits in which their images ran parallel to known images of Charles de Lorraine and his sister

[67] The situation is set out in some detail by several authors, e.g. P. Roger, Ch. de Ch., eds, Mémoires et souvenirs sur la cour de Bruxelles et sur la société belge, depuis l'époque de Marie-Thérèse jusqu'à nos jours, Brussels, 1856, pp. 77–79; Lucien Perey, Charles de Lorraine et la cour de Bruxelles sous le règne de Marie-Thérèse, Paris, 1903, pp. 252–54; Villermont 1925, pp. 240–41

[68] Arneth 1885, pp. p. 74

Anne-Charlotte, most strikingly seen in a portrait of Anne-Charlotte with her brother as a bust in a garden, used as the format for a similar portrait of Madame Cobenzl.

Despite the tensions Cobenzl and his wife apparently lived in amity, not only producing children together but presenting a united front to the world. They entertained in style, although often separately, the Count receiving in his rooms (or in his garden pavilion) the Countess in hers (or her own garden pavilion), with guests moving between them over the course of a day or an evening.[69] The Countess would appear to have been a perfect wife for a man of such high position, blind – or apparently blind – to his peccadilloes whilst supporting his ambitions, and herself ambitious for her children.[70]

She surely had much to put up with in terms of his affairs prior to the arrival in Brussels. Villermont thought that by 1759 these were a thing of the past, and noted that there was nothing in the Brussels correspondence to contradict the idea of the virtuous husband once the couple were installed in the same city.[71] But we must not ignore the likelihood of considerable 'editing' of that correspondence by his wife and executors. In the last years of his life he certainly enjoyed a romance of some kind with Marie-Caroline Murray (1741–1831), a woman of considerable intellectual talents thirty years his junior, who was to be the first woman to win the prize of the Brussels Academy in 1785[72] and was known as 'la Muse Belgique'.[73] The relationship with Murray nonetheless remains ambiguous. They may have enjoyed considerable intellectual compatibility, but he commissioned portraits of her and made her gifts of diamonds and when papers were found to be missing on Cobenzl's death an approach was made to Mademoiselle Murray, in case she might suggest ideas where they could be found.[74]

Another woman who figured large in Cobenzl's Brussels life, a woman with whom he definitely enjoyed a purely platonic relationship, was Barbe-Louise Stoupy (1706–75), vicomtesse de Nettine, Austria's banker in the region.[75] Her importance as a financial adviser to Cobenzl cannot be overstated, but the relationship was more than that, it was a

[69] Zinzendorf 1991, passim
[70] Ibid., entry for 14 June 1769
[71] Villermont 1925, p. 246
[72] The prize was for: Éloge et Mémoire historique et politique sur la vie de Jean de Carondelet…, Brussels, 1786
[73] Christine Lepeer, 'Marie-Caroline Murray. Une romantique des Lumières', unpublished thesis, Vrije Universiteit Brussel, 1979–80; Jeroom Vercruysse, 'Le portefeuille de Marie-Caroline Murray. Lettres et vers inédits du prince de Ligne', Nouvelles Annales Prince de Ligne, XI, 1997, pp. 55–139
[74] Villermont 1925, pp. 247–48
[75] Arneth 1885, pp. 74–75; Philippe Moureaux, 'Un épisode mouvementé des relations entre le Ministre Cobenzl et la banque de Nettine (1755–1756)', in: Serge Jaumain, Kenneth Bertrams, eds, Patrons, gens d'affaires et banquiers: hommages à Ginette Kurgan-van Hentenryk, Brussels, 2004, pp. 93–106

true friendship that was struck up almost immediately on Cobenzl's arrival in Brussels in 1753. By the 1760s he had an established routine, in which he not only conducted business with the widow as required by events, but drank tea regularly with her. Philip Cobenzl reported: 'Elle avait gagné au suprême degré l'amitié de mon oncle, qui ne passait pas un jour sans aller causer une heure avec elle, et allait souper chez elle au moins une fois par semaine.'[76] Cobenzl also helped Mme Nettine marry her daughters well, thanks partly to the reversal of alliances in 1756 that led the Duke of Choiseul to seek to connect Jean-Joseph de La Borde, French Court banker, and the house of Nettine. Cobenzl was to play a key role in tying this Franco-Austrian financial knot.[77]

Despite the huge debts that Cobenzl incurred over his life there is no indication that gaming, that fashionable eighteenth-century vice, was in any way to blame.[78] His attitude to money overall, however, is open to much criticism. There has never been any founded accusation that he in any way misused government money or misappropriated funds from elsewhere but if his financial probity within the confines of his official post seems certain, his private finances were an utter mess. In the absence of a proper salary that would cover the expenses involved in maintaining his position, his private income was far from sufficient to cover his costs. He may not have acquired a house in Germany or even in Brussels, but he expended considerable sums on house contents (not counting his collections), particularly in the Austrian Netherlands. And to judge by the unpaid bills at his death in 1770, gewgaws for lady friends also accounted for large sums.

On at least two occasions he got himself into such dire financial straits (not without the aid of his wife) that Maria Theresa agreed to pay all his bills. In 1764 she agreed to pay all outstanding debts (217,890 florins) and increase his salary of 42,000 florins by 10,000, provided 'qu'il se défait de toutes les inutilités de porcelaine et nippes qui ne conviennent à son état'[79] – suggesting that the portly Minister was something of a dandy (supported by the vast contents of his wardrobe at his death).

Many of the criticisms aimed at Cobenzl by Charles de Lorraine and the Brussels aristocracy derived from his refusal to act as an inferior. Indeed his position was ambiguous from the start. The Cobenzls were minor provincial aristocracy and the

[76] Arneth 1885, p. 74

[77] Jean-Pierre Thomas, F. d'Ormesson, Jean-Joseph de La Borde: banquier de Louis XV, mécène des Lumières, Paris, 2002, chapter 6, 'L'hymen européen et l'irrésistible ascension'

[78] Correspondence between Cobenzl and Pergen, January–March 1753; AGR, SEG, 1187. There were no gaming debts among the many thousands of florins owing on Cobenzl's death.

[79] HHStA, Belgien Weisungen, no 10; cited in De Boom 1932, pp. 64–65

Minister himself was a man of considerable practicality whose education at Protestant Leiden University would have introduced him to a proto-democratic society where intellectual achievement meant as much as aristocratic origins. He was a supreme example of the class of Austrian civil servants increasingly promoted by Kaunitz, who saw the need for professional appointments rather than sinecures if the disastrous finances of the Austrian Habsburgs were to be recouped. Loyalty to the state, knowledge and its practical application for functional purposes were valued over courtier-like polish and deference.

Cobenzl's (vestigial) meritocracy was bound to cause problems at the small and extremely hierarchical Court in Brussels,[80] particularly bearing in mind that the very post he occupied was fraught with contradictions. Ostensibly Minister to Charles de Lorraine's Governor, Cobenzl in fact reported to the government in Vienna. Was he diplomat or civil servant, politician or de facto ruler?[81] He was an aristocrat but by no means a member of the 'leisured class'. Not only had he to maintain relations with the local aristocracy but he had to work closely and on a footing of respect with bankers and financiers, professional politicians and businessmen. Botta Adorno had similarly disliked the ambiguity of both the social position and the relationship with Charles de Lorraine but coped better with it during his brief four years in office.[82]

One universally noted fault was Cobenzl's weakness for charming adventurers.[83] Villermont, after a close study of Cobenzl's correspondence, despaired: 'pourvu qu'on eût de l'esprit et qu'on l'amusât, Cobenzl ne s'arrêtait guères au reste, et il avait, dans son intimité, des hommes tout à fait indignes de s'y trouver'.[84]

Overall, it is clear that many of Charles de Lorraine's complaints about Cobenzl's character had some basis in truth, yet each of his defects should be set against his many achievements. For Vienna, these were paramount: he revived the local economy and thereby generated income for Vienna; he managed the relationship with Charles de Lorraine in such a way as to ensure the primacy of Vienna policy over gubernatorial preference for populist measures. After yet another conflict with the Governor in 1756, Kaunitz declared:

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[80] Perey 1903

[81] Moureaux 2004, p. 93

[82] Joseph Laenen, Le Ministere de Botta-Adorno dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens pendant le règne de Marie-Thérèse 1749–1753, Antwerp, 1901; De Boom 1932

[83] Xavier Duquenne, 'Casanova et autres aventuriers de son temps en Belgique', L'intermédiaire des casanovistes, XXV, 2008, p. 28

[84] Villermont 1925, pp. 52 and 209, and chapter V, 'Gazetiers et Gazetins', pp. 152–66; Duquenne 2008, pp. 19–32

> ‘Il est laborieux, actif, rempli d’esprit et de connoissances, infatigable… en un mot, le comte de Cobenzl est, comme Ministre, supérieur à ses prédécesseurs, en tout sens préférable à ses critiques et certainement plus estimable que ses antagonistes.’[85]

That opinion apparently remained unchanged until Cobenzl’s death in January 1770, deeply in debt. The funeral was modest and he was buried in the Verreycken family tomb in the Church of the Chapelle in Brussels. No memorial or plaque was erected, not even after his wife died in December 1772 and was interred alongside him.[86] Despite this apparently ignominious end, Cobenzl’s greatest monument was the economic revival of the Austrian Netherlands, to which he had significantly contributed.

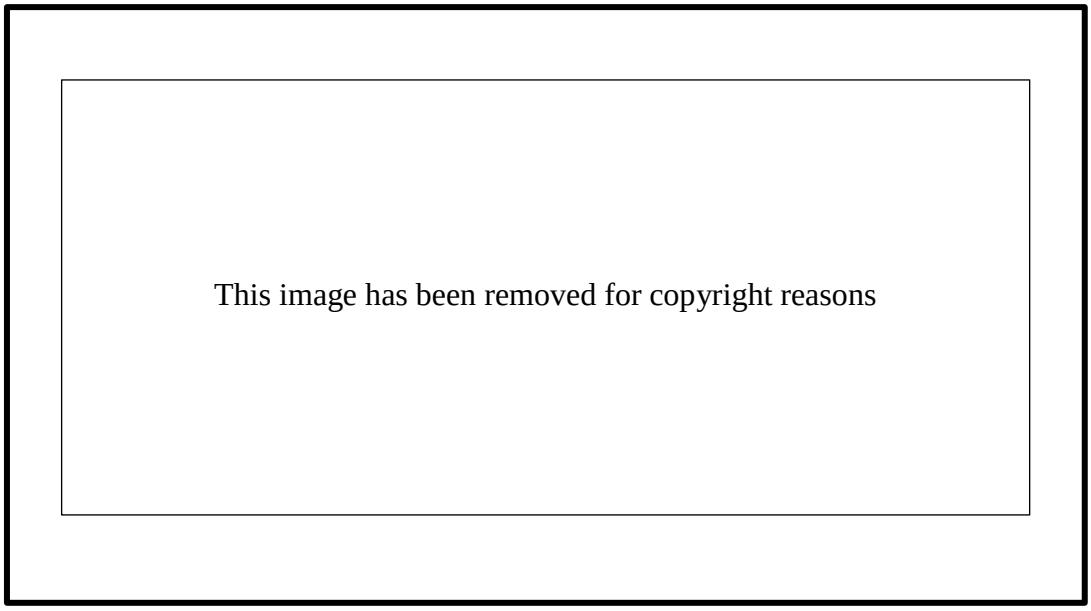

Figure 14. Isaac Jansz. Van Ostade (1621–49), Winter Scene. c. 1648. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

[85] Cited in: Moureaux 2004, p. 104

[86] Xavier Duquenne, ‘Le tombeau des Verreycken et de Cobenzl à l’église de la Chapelle’, Brusselse Cahiers Bruxellois (Revue d’histoire urbaine, Archives de la Ville de Bruxelles), XLII, 2010–11, pp. 39–42

Chapter 5. Cobenzl and the Arts Before 1753

Charles Cobenzl only became a dedicated 'collector' of paintings and drawings in the early 1760s, but he manifested a knowledge and recognition of the importance of learning and the arts immediately on his arrival in Brussels in 1753. Two questions therefore arise regarding the period before the move to the Austrian Netherlands, which gave Cobenzl a settled home – and thus a location for a collection: what he knew about art (what he was interested in, what he had seen) and what fine art he actually owned.

In 1753 Cobenzl's belongings were scattered over several properties: there were items in his house in Mainz, and those in the Cobenzl household in Vienna, occupied by his wife and children. These were transferred to Brussels. It seems likely that most of the works of art were portraits and furniture pictures and the only paintings attributed to Old Masters were to be found at the Cobenzl family estates, particularly Haasberg and Luegg, which remained in situ as part of the dynastic entail.

Family Estates

Information about the family collection is limited, complicated by the end of the Cobenzl line in 1810, by war and the division of Europe in the twentieth century. The few pictures that survived the destruction of the main family estate, Haasberg, in 1944 were moved to another former Cobenzl castle, Luegg, and then removed for reasons of conservation. Nothing is known of their provenance: they might have come from subsequent inhabitants. The inventory of Haasberg compiled on Cobenzl's death in 1770 lists 119 paintings.[1] These are mostly in groups of works in black or gilded frames, but several portraits are described, two paintings by Rubens (in black frames), various saints, the Three Kings and a Susanna, several Blümenstücke and landscapes. Most have low values, save the Rubens which, at 100 Reichsgulden for the two, make up by far the greatest part of the total of 123 Reichsgulden 41 pfennigs at which all the paintings were estimated. In addition to these paintings Haasberg must also have had a notable altarpiece, since when negotiating the purchase of drawings by Pier Leone Ghezzi in 1763, Cobenzl noted 'j'ai moi même à ma Campagne le Tableau du grand autel de ma Chapelle de ce Peintre.'[2]

[1] ARS, SI AS 309, Zapuščinski inventarji Deželnega sodišča v Ljubljani, fasc. IX, št. 39. Only the Haasberg inventory has been seen.

[2] Cobenzl to Garampi, 13 August 1763; AGR, SEG, 1131, f. 5. This painting does not feature in the inventory of paintings in the house, presumably because of its location in the chapel. The Ghezzi drawings are now in the Hermitage, OR 3190–3710

A description of Haasberg by someone who had worked there before the Second World War mentions a vast library, a statue of Johann Caspar Cobenzl, various Cobenzl portraits, 'scenes from the Old Testament, i.e. the Judgment of Solomon, Samson, Abraham's Sacrifice, and other works by great masters such as Dürer, Titian and others. Above, in front of the balcony room, was a depiction of the Romans' Entry into Jerusalem. This painting was more than four metres long. In the balcony hall were family pictures, portraits of kings [?], princes and a particularly valuable painting by Dürer: a daughter breast-feeding her own father in prison.'[3]

The most important works at Haasberg in the eighteenth century, however, were the portraits and other family relics. It was to Haasberg, the storehouse of family treasures, that particularly prized objects of historical interest were sent. On 16 July 1765, for instance, Philip Cobenzl informed the Cobenzl agent in Venice that: 'Par la derniere diligence Mon Oncle a fait partir d'ici un paquet contenans des vieux portraits qu'il veut faire garder a sa campagne de Hasberg.'[4] Years later Charles' son Louis was to immediately send home a precious rouble presented to him by Catherine the Great.[5]

When the family 'rationalised' its properties the portraits were retained. In 1739, for instance, the Palazzo Cobenzl in the town of Gorizia itself was sold to the Codelli family 'con tutti li suoi mobbili, che entro si ritrovano, eccetta li quadri delli ritratti, che sono nella sala'.[6] These paintings were presumably sent to Haasberg. Such paintings thus remained inseparable from the family estates and apart from rare additions, such as the family portraits sent from Brussels, this body of works of art must have remained essentially stable. We must demarcate Cobenzl's Cabinet and furniture pictures in Brussels very sharply from the paintings at the family estates.

Mainz and Vienna

A detailed, pedantic exchange of letters with Cobenzl's successor in Mainz, Baron Pergen, regarding the despatch of his belongings to Brussels, makes clear Cobenzl's priorities.[7]

[3] Janka Katerna of Kačje, recorded by Albin Kjuder. Typescript. Albin Kjuder, 'Zgodovinski mozaik Primorske. S posebnim poudarkom gornjega Krasa', 'Nova Gorica-Sežana', 1971, pp. 462–65; cited in Barbara Murovec, 'Slike Francesca Pittonija iz dvorca Haasberg / I dipinti di Francesco Pittoni del Castello di Haasberg', Acta historiae artis Slovenica 7, 2002, p. 64. With thanks to Olga Pankina for assistance with translation from Slovenian.

[4] CA, Atti e Doc., busta 62

[5] The rouble and an explanatory letter are in CA, Atti e Doc., busta 258, filza 659

[6] Copy of the contract in CA, Atti e Doc., busta 702, filza 2083

[7] AGR, SEG, 1187, 1188

The packing instructions of 12 May 1755 asked for Cobenzl's 'cabinet des armes' to be sent on, along with some of the tapestries from his small study, but most of the furniture was to be sold. He requested that his 'porcelaine d'Hollande' and 'porcelaine des Indes' be packed separately before being despatched,[8] the various mentions of these items confirming that Cobenzl already owned a significant body of Oriental porcelain.

Everything points to a projection of himself at this point as bibliophile and patron of philosophers. There can be no doubt, from the number of cases required to hold it, that his library was already considerable, and from the care he demanded be taken, that it was among his most important possessions. Two small incidents in 1753 demonstrate the extent of his reputation as a friend of – even politically subversive – thinkers. In the first, when Voltaire was placed under house arrest in Frankfurt on the orders of Frederick the Great, he appealed to Cobenzl in an attempt to gain his freedom.[9] Since the two men were not personally acquainted, the approach was made via the Frankfurt bookseller Franz Varrentrapp.[10] Shortly after, in September 1753, Montesquieu wrote to his friend Count Guasco asking him to give his compliments to Cobenzl and exclaimed prophetically: 'Quand il y aura des ministres comme lui, on pourra espérer que le goût des lettres se ranimera dans les Etats Autrichiens.'[11]

A portrait of 1748 by Franz Lippoldt (Lippold, c. 1688 – 1768),[12] presumably commissioned by Cobenzl, confirms this projected image. It borrows with minimal changes the format and iconography of Jacques Aved's celebrated portrait of 1738 of the writer Jean-Baptiste Rousseau, of whom Wildenstein observed that 'pour ses contemporains, il personnifiait la poésie elle-même'.[13] That painting, now lost, was widely known from engravings by Jean Daullé and by Georg Friedrich Schmidt – the latter in reverse with regard to Aved's original but the same way round as the Lippoldt portrait of

[8] AGR, SEG, 1187, f. 432

[9] Herman Haupt, Voltaire in Frankfurt 1753, mit Benutzung von ungedruckten Akten und Briefen des Dichters, Chemnitz–Leipzig, 1909; Gustave Charlier, 'Voltaire à Francfort, d'après des lettres inédites', Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire, IV/ 2–3, 1925, pp. 301–16

[10] This incident is exaggerated somewhat by Villermont; Comte Carlos de Villermont, La cour de Vienne à Bruxelles au XVIII^{e} siècle, Le comte de Cobenzl, ministre plénipotentiaire aux Pays-Bas, Lille–Paris–Bruges, 1925, pp. 18–19. The letters (AGR, SEG, 1239) show that Voltaire's approach was panic-stricken and indirect; Cobenzl's response – to Varrentrapp, not to Voltaire – was amused but distant. The significance of the incident lies in what it says of the wider awareness of Cobenzl's personality and interests.

[11] Montesquieu in La Brède, to Comte de Guasco in Verona, 28 September 1753; published in: Charles de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu, Lettres de Monsieur de Montesquieu à divers amis d'Italie avec des notes de l'editeur, London, 1767

[12] Fondazione Palazzo Coronini Cronberg Onlus, Gorizia, inv. 1540

[13] Georges Wildenstein, Le peintre Aved, 2 vols, Paris, 1922, I, pp. 29–44, II, no. 86

Cobenzl. Absolutely devoid of any artistic references (attributes of the arts, statues of Minerva), the image is indisputably that of a man of the world of letters.

This image has been removed for copyright reasons

Figure 15. Franz Lippoldt (c. 1688–1768). Portrait of Count Charles Cobenzl. 1748. The insignia of the Golden Fleece was added in or shortly after 1759. © Fondazione Palazzo Coronini Cronberg Onlus, Gorizia

Figure 16. Georg Friedrich Schmidt (1712–75) after Jacques Aved (1702–66), Portrait of Jean Baptiste Rousseau. 1740. © The Trustees of the British Museum

The Lippoldt portrait was presumably amongst the paintings that were packed up and despatched to Brussels, most of them, to judge by the Pergen–Cobenzl letters, portraits. There were sufficient paintings to cause Pergen some concern: he noted that the number of cases required for them alone was going to cost vast sums of money, but Cobenzl declared that he could not do without them and that more would be sent on from Vienna.[14] In these letters Cobenzl referred equally – and interchangeably – to both 'portraits' and 'tableaux', but the absence of specific references to non-portraits does not necessarily mean that Cobenzl's 'tableaux' were exclusively portraits. Certainly he owned paintings of other kinds, although whether they were in Vienna or in Mainz cannot as yet be demonstrated. In 1746, for instance, his brother Guido sent him a small painting said to be by Dürer,[15] and a

[14] AGR, SEG, 1187, f. 509
[15] Guidobaldo Cobenzl to Charles Cobenzl, Laibach, 31 May 1746; AGR, SEG, 1263, f. 83

copy of Titian's portrait of Pope Paul II among the works sold to Catherine the Great must have been in his hands quite by the end of 1750 since he said he had offered it to the late Prince of Wales, who died in March 1751.[16]

Figure 17. Copy after Titian, Portrait of Pope Paul III. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Cobenzl had also been actively ordering new works on the eve of his departure from Mainz and Pergen was entrusted with their conclusion.[17] These incomplete commissions make clear that he was a regular client for portraits, both contemporary and historical. A pastel portrait (of Cobenzl?) by Johann Christian Fiedler of Darmstadt (1697–1765), was to be packed up and sent to Count Carlo Firmian. Portraits were still being completed by the painters Brand and Tischbein, probably Heinrich Carl Brandt (1724-87), who worked for the Court in Mainz, and Johann Heinrich Tischbein (1722–89), who worked for the Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel. Winterstein (probably Johann Baptist, born 1723) was painting 36 small portraits on copper of the Kings and Queens of England, based on the images in L'Histoire d'Angleterre by Paul Rapin de Thoyras, of which Cobenzl had lent him his own copy.[18] Cobenzl's attitude to those last works was as something of historical, iconographical interest, within the context of the library, which was where the posthumous inventory of Cobenzl's house in Brussels reveals them to have been displayed.

[16] Cobenzl to Duval, Brussels, 11 March 1763; AGR, SEG, 1122, f. 116r. Frederick, Prince of Wales, had been introduced to Cobenzl in 1746; Villermont 1925, p. 12, citing 'Archives de Vienne, Correspondance de Marie-Thérèse, vol. 271'

[17] AGR, SEG, 1187, 1188, passim

[18] Cobenzl's 1771 book sale included two editions of the book (lots 2023, 2024).

The single clear reference to paintings that were not portraits is a bill of June 1753 from Hauck the painter (perhaps Jacob Hauck, active in Mannheim c. 1740, painter to the Elector Palatine, or one of his sons) for nineteen views of Mainz.[19] At two carolins apiece, these were probably small decorative furniture pictures.

By far the greater number of paintings referred to in Cobenzl's posthumous papers from this early period are thus portraits. There are no references to drawings and the Lippoldt portrait confirms Cobenzl's predominantly literary interests.

Cobenzl's Geography of the Fine Arts

Lack of a 'collection' does not indicate lack of interest of course, but establishing the extent of Cobenzl's knowledge of art is a matter of inference and assumption. Mapping the geography of Cobenzl's experiences prior to 1753 provides little evidence of preparation for his emergence as a collector.

Figure 18. Giovanni Daniele Donat (1744–1830), Portrait of Guidobaldo Cobenzl. 1770s.
© Fondazione Palazzo Coronini Cronberg Onlus, Gorizia

[19] AGR, SEG, 1187, f. 468v

In Gorizia, on the far border of the Habsburg lands, the first true collections emerged only in the nineteenth century.[20] Venice of course was not far away and the palaces and churches of the region were filled largely with new works, commissioned rarely from Venetian artists,[21] more frequently from less talented local painters inspired by Venetian models.[22] The first independent Gorizian painter of note, Francesco Caucig, who was to enjoy a career far beyond his native town, was only born in 1755 and his career unfolded long after Cobenzl's death (although Cobenzl's brother Guido and Guido's son Philip were to be Caucig's most powerful patrons).[23]

Figure 19. Preparatory drawing (?) for frontispiece to J. W. Valvasor, Die Ehre des Herzogthums Crain, Laibach, 1689. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

[20] Ottocento di frontiera. Gorizia 1780–1850. Arte e cultura, exh. cat., Musei Provinciali, Gorizia, 1995, p. 160

[21] Murovec suggested that Johann Caspar Cobenzl may have commissioned works from Francesco Pittoni (1654–1724); Murovec 2002, pp. 56–69

[22] On Venetian and wider Italian cultural influence see e.g.: Abitare il Settecento, exh. cat., Palazzo Attems Petzenstein, Gorizia, 2007–8, pp. 138–41, 143–63; Ferdinand Šerbelj, La pittura barocca nel Goriziano, exh. cat., National Museum, Ljubljana, 2002; Ferdinand Šerbelj, Barok na Goriškom / Il barocco nel Goriziano, Nova Gorica, 2006; Marino de Grassi, ed., Gorizia e il Friuli tra Venezia e Vienna. Libri illustrati del Settecento, exh. cat., Castello di Gorizia; Mariano del Friuli, 2008. Major architects were also mainly Venetian, see e.g. Helena Seražin, Arhitekt Giorgio Massari (1687–1766), sakralna arhitektura na Goriškem, v Furlaniji, Istri in Dalmaciji, Ljubljana 2007.

[23] Ksenija Rozman, 'Count Philipp Cobenzl and his Circle' and 'Reisenberg – Cobenzl', Franc Kavčič Caucig. Paintings for Palais Auersperg in Vienna, exh. cat., National Gallery of Slovenia, Ljubljana, 2007, pp. 15–20, 21–24

Laibach in Carniola was similarly provincial. Although further removed from Venice, Italian influence was strongly felt here,[24] yet the region was more Germanic in everything from its architecture to the predominance of book and print collections. The most notable collector had been the seventeenth-century scholar Johann von Valvasor.[25]

Nor was Vienna, where Cobenzl spent short periods in his youth and the early part of his career, the glittering capital it was to become in the nineteenth century. Nathaniel Wraxall described the courtiers and officials of Vienna unflatteringly in 1779: 'I am inclined to believe, that fewer persons of extensive reading and information are found among them, proportion observed, than in any of the German Courts … It is hardly credible how many books and productions of every species, and in every language, are proscribed…'[26] It is perhaps no surprise that a man of Cobenzl's intellectual curiosity was happy to be sent far away from the Court of Vienna.[27]

Wraxall also lamented the lack of art on display in Vienna. The paintings amassed by Eugene of Savoy were sold off in 1741, although his print collection remained in situ.[28] The imperial paintings were to be rearranged and put on public display in the Belvedere in the 1770s, after Cobenzl's death. Most of the small paintings collections described by Frimmel would seem to have been formed after 1753.[29] Certainly those of Cobenzl's superior Kaunitz and his colleague Dorn were assembled whilst Cobenzl was in Brussels, from the late 1750s. In terms of the art market, there were almost no public sales: the few paintings sales in from Vienna that feature in The Index of Paintings Sold in German-speaking Countries Before 1800 were held in 1798 and 1799, and most buying seems to have continued to be done through dealers.[30]

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[24] Blaženka First, Carlo Maratta in Barok na Slovenskom / Carlo Maratta and the Baroque on Slovenian Territory, Ljubljana, 2000, with detailed English summary

[25] Valvasor's print collection is now in the Bibliotheca Valvasoriana, Zagreb. Cobenzl owned the first four volumes of Valvasor's Ehre des Hertzogthums Crain [The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola], Nuremberg, 1689 (lot 1651 in the 1771 book sale). His collection also included a drawing related to (for?) the frontispiece to this edition of the book, OR 4646.

[26] Sir Nathaniel William Wraxall, Memoirs of the Courts of Berlin, Dresden, Warsaw, and Vienna…, 2 vols, Dublin, 1799, letter XXIX, 2 February 1779

[27] See: Derek Beales, 'Christians and "Philosophes"', chapter 3 of Enlightenment and Reform in Eighteenth-century Europe, London, 2005, pp. 60– 89

[28] Cornelia Diekamp, 'The Gallery in the Upper Belvedere and Prince Eugene's Picture Collections in the Belvedere and the City Palace', in: Agnes Husslein-Arco, Prince Eugene: General-Philosopher and Art Lover, Munich, 2010, pp. 126–53; Christian Benedik, 'Prince Eugene's Collection of Engravings in the Albertina', Ibid., pp. 155–59

[29] Theodor von Frimmel, Kleine Galeriestudien and Galeriestudien, which appeared in parts between 1891 and 1899.

[30] Thomas Ketelsen, Tilmann von Stockhausen, The Index of Paintings Sold in German-speaking Countries Before 1800 (Getty Provenance Index), Munich, 2002, I, esp. pp. 29–30

As for the great 'Viennese' collections of drawings, these were largely made much later, in the last third of the eighteenth century, and by two men who, wherever their collections were at the end of their life, collected largely in Brussels: Prince Charles de Ligne and Albert von Sachsen-Teschen. This author has demonstrated that there must have been some other drawings collections being formed in Vienna, but again this fell in the second half of the century, probably only from the 1770s.[31]

While the Grand Tour is widely recognised as central to the development of ideas – travel for learning and pleasure was a key element of the Enlightenment and part of the validation of one's knowledge of art (eighteenth-century writers on art such as Dezallier d'Argenville – although not Richardson – stressed that they had travelled and actually seen works in situ) – there is no evidence that Cobenzl travelled for anything but official purposes. His time in Lorraine between 1737 and 1740 was spent negotiating,[32] his travels amongst the various German states determined by the dynamics of intrigue and elections. There seem to have been no pleasure trips – no journeys 'home' to Gorizia, whether to his estates or to visit his brother Guido. We should recall that when Guido arrived in Brussels in 1740 the brothers had not seen each other for twenty years.

By his status and his role as a representative of Maria Theresa, Cobenzl was largely assured of access to princely collections, and by his interest in and friendship with scholars and bibliophiles and his general sociability of access to other collections. Yet there is very little evidence for any dedicated viewing of works of art. The only detailed exposition of what art he had seen comes late in his life in his correspondence 1767–68 with Johann Joachim Winckelmann.[33] Upholding the superiority of Rubens, he mentioned the works he had seen or was familiar with. Not surprisingly these included those in Munich and Schleissheim, and those in Düsseldorf; he was familiar with the Luxembourg Gallery, although this was almost certainly via prints, rather than a visit to Paris. Nor had he seen the works in Santa Maria in Vallicella in Rome mentioned by Winckelmann, and it becomes evident that Cobenzl had not been to Italy, at least not further than the borderlands around Gorizia.

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[31] See: Catherine Phillips, 'Dmitry Mikhaylovich Golitsyn (1721–1793): An Eighteenth-century Russian Drawings Collector', Master Drawings, Winter 2011, 49/4, pp. 533–48. Golitsyn arrived in Vienna in 1762.

[32] We might theorise that Cobenzl met here the Lorraine noblemen François Joseph de Choiseul, duc de Stainville, or his son Étienne François, marquis de Stainville, later Duc de Choiseul, although this cannot be proved. Certainly Cobenzl corresponded with the Duc de Choiseul later, in the wake of the Diplomatic Revolution of 1756, and the two men collaborated on arranging the banking alliance between France and Austria through the marriages of French bankers and the daughters of the Austrian banker in the Southern Netherlands, Madame Nettine.

[33] AGR, SEG, 1248, ff. 235–47; Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Briefe, eds Hans Diepolder, Walter Rehm, Berlin, 1952–57

Germany is thus the region where Cobenzl was most likely to have seen art and met collectors and to have observed artistic policies in action. And in Germany, it was at courts that art was to be seen. For a German prince, 'Collectionner était un devoir et signifiait, au XVIII[e] siècle, vivre selon son rang',[34] and in the 1740s and 1750s Germany had royal and princely collections but few private collections and no developed art market.[35]

Cobenzl's correspondence reveals that he visited courts and towns across the region and was on excellent terms with people of all ranks. During his university years in Leiden, Cobenzl had attended the Court of Württzburg, then in its heyday under several generations of Schönborns, where the celebrated Residenz was in process of construction. The atmosphere here, where men of learning, artists and musicians were highly valued at Court, must have presented a striking contrast to Vienna. Between 1743 and 1753 he resided for periods of six months or more in Mainz (1743; 1746–53), Bonn (1743–46) and Ratisbonne (1746), and made extended visits to Worms (1748), Mannheim (1748), Hannover (1750 – for the visit of George II) and Aschaffenburg (1752).

Dresden, Berlin, Düsseldorf, Cassel, Mannheim and Bonn were the main centres of power and collecting in the Holy Roman Empire. The first two were, for political reasons, essentially closed to Cobenzl, and he thus did not have first-hand experience either of the treasures of Dresden (he told Winckelmann he had not seen the works of Rubens there) or of the Prussian policies, instituted by Friedrich I, of a pragmatic and mercantilist pursuance of artistic revival as part of wholesale economic development. He must nonetheless have been aware of the latter.

In Bonn, of course, the Elector was Clemens August, libertine and renowned collector. They do not seem to have enjoyed particularly close relations, but from here in 1744 Cobenzl informed Vienna of the establishment of a portrait gallery, probably in the Summer Apartments at Schloss Clemensruh zu Poppelsdorf, the Baroque palace erected 1715–46.[36] This should be seen as an expression of Cobenzl's understanding of the significance of dynastic portraits as a demonstration of the monarch's prestige and of continuity of power rather than of artistic concerns.

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[34] Henning Bock, 'Collections privées et publiques, les prémices du musée public en Allemagne', in: Édouard Pommier, ed., Les musées en Europe à la veille de l'ouverture du Louvre, Paris, 1995, pp. 59–78

[35] Michael North, Material Delight and the Joy of Living: Cultural Consumption in the Age of Enlightenment in Germany, translated by Pamela Selwyn, Aldershot, 2008. Of the 298 auction sales in Germany before 1800, only 35 took place before 1760; Ketelsen, von Stockhausen 2002, I, esp. p. 21

[36] Kurfürst Clemens August. Landesherr und Mäzen des 18. Jahrhunderts, exh. cat., Schloss Augustusburg zu Brühl, Cologne, 1961, p. 221

Mainz, the most important ecclesiastical state in the Holy Roman Empire, may have been 'provincial and bigoted'[37] but it was not a total artistic desert. Previous electors included Lothar Franz von Schönborn, who acquired works at the sale of William III's paintings in 1713.[38] Mainz's most positive feature for Cobenzl was surely its closeness to the intellectual hub of Frankfurt, with its concentration of booksellers and its role as a crossroads for information exchange. Frankfurt was to be, along with Hamburg, the centre of the vestigial German art market for most of the eighteenth century.[39] Cobenzl's correspondence with booksellers such as Franz Varrentrapp[40] demonstrates that he made extensive use of the bookbuying opportunities but contains no references to the viewing or buying of art during his time there.

Nonetheless, Cobenzl's time in Mainz may have exerted a powerful influence on his later career. When he arrived in 1743 the region was at its lowest ebb. Two men were responsible for revitalising the economy and the arts over the next twenty years: the Elector, Johann Friedrich Count von Ostein, a pious man who founded an art academy in 1747, and the chief minister and de facto ruler, Count Anton Heinrich Friedrich von Stadion, who concentrated his efforts on trade and industry and the economic mechanisms required for them to flourish.[41] Von Stadion was also – like Cobenzl – a philanderer and a man of the Enlightenment with considerable admiration for the French philosophes. Cobenzl established excellent relations with both men, whose policies in Mainz were to be reflected in his own efforts in reviving the economy of Brussels.

Mainz was of course the perfect location for maintaining contacts with many German rulers. Cobenzl enjoyed a continuing association with Ludwig VIII, Landgrave of Hesse-Darmstadt.[42] He was on very good terms with Landgrave Joseph of Hesse-Darmstadt, Prince-Bishop of Augsburg, an ardent patron of music who also established porcelain manufactories and commissioned works of art in Rococo style. Cobenzl may have met him

[37] Paul P. Bernard, From the Enlightenment to the Police State: the Public Life of Johann Anton Pergen, Urbana–Chicago, 1991, pp. 4–5

[38] Koenraad Jonckheere, 'Lothar Franz von Schoenborn', The Auction of King William's Paintings. 1713, Amsterdam, 2008, pp. 160–69

[39] Thomas Ketelsen, 'Art Auctions in Germany During the Eighteenth Century', in: Michael North, David Ormrod, eds, Art Markets in Europe, 1400–1800, Aldershot, 1998, pp. 143–52; Ketelsen, von Stockhausen 2002, I, pp. 11–40; Michael North, 'Auctions and the Emergence of an Art Market in Eighteenth-century Germany', in: Neil de Marchi, Hans J. Van Miegroet, eds, Mapping Markets for Paintings in Europe, 1450–1750, Turnhout, 2006, pp. 285–302

[40] AGR, SEG, 1239

[41] T. C. W. Blanning, Reform and Revolution in Mainz 1743–1803, Cambridge, 1974, pp. 97–101

[42] AGR, SEG, 1111–1114

in Augsburg, but Joseph travelled extensively, taking various cures in Mannheim, Munich and Stuttgart, from where he wrote many strikingly informal letters.[43]

As late as 1767 Cobenzl's departure was still much lamented by that great patron of the arts and sciences Charles Theodore, Prince-Elector and Count Palatine (later Duke of Bavaria).[44] It was only after Cobenzl's departure from the region, however, that Charles Theodore was to embark on what was to become a magnificent collection of drawings.[45]

Even in the 1760s and 1770s Charles Theodore was one of very few people in Germany who were deliberately and consistently acquiring drawings. Drawings were still largely circulating among artists and being put to practical use in studios in south-eastern Germany and Switzerland, and were only just beginning to emerge from workshops to be made available for sale.[46] On 10 April 1773, for instance, Georg Melchior Kraus reported from Frankfurt to Johann Georg Wille that drawings were only just becoming the object of collectors' interest: 'Leider sind unsere hiesigen Liebhaber, aus Mangel an Kenntniss, noch keine Freunde von Zeichnungen… gewesen; nun aber fangen diese doch auch an, davon zu samlen'.[47]

From Switzerland Johann Friedrich Reiffenstein reported to Karoline Luise of Baden in 1761 that there were drawings available but very few amateurs to collect them.[48] Johann Caspar Füssli, although an artist himself, seems to have seen drawings as objects rather than working material (they appear frequently in his trompe l'oeil paintings) and this, together with the way he arranged and mounted his drawings, suggests that he should be seen as a collector.[49] That makes him one of the first – and for a long time extremely rare –

[43] AGR, SEG, 1064

[44] Johann Daniel Schöpflin, Wissenschaftliche und diplomatische Korrespondenz, ed. Jürgen Voss, Stuttgart, 2002, p. 519

[45] Von Mantegna bis Watteau. Zeichnungen aus der Sammlung des Kurfürsten Carl Theodor, exh. cat., Kunstmuseum, Düsseldorf, 1988 (exh. cat., Neue Pinakothek, Munich, 1983–84, reissued with additional essays). It was from the early 1760s that Charles Theodore made significant purchases of drawings. De Goë to Cobenzl, February–March 1763; AGR, SEG, 1132, ff. 186, 189

[46] There were of course a few high-profile exceptions, such as the Uffenbach collection. This appeared at sale in 1771, although most of the drawings had already been given to Göttingen University. On Uffenbach see: Zeichnungen von Meisterhand: die Sammlung Uffenbach aus der Kunstsammlungen der Universität Göttingen, exh. cat., Mittelrhein-Museum, Koblenz, etc, 2000–1; Göttingen, 2000

[47] Cited in Heinrich-Thomas Schulze Altcappenberg, "Le Voltaire de l'Art" – Johann Georg Wille (1705–1808) und seine Schule in Paris, Münster, 1988, p. 38

[48] Karl Obser, 'Schweizerische Kunstsammlungen um 1760. Nach Berichten von J. F. Reiffenstein', in: Halvdan Koht, ed., Festschrift für Hans Nabholz, Zurich, 1934, p. 248

[49] Yvonne Boerlin-Brodbeck, 'Johann Caspar Füssli und sein Briefwechsel mit Jean-Georges Wille. Marginalien zu Kunstliteratur und Kunstpolitik in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts', Jahrbuch des Schweizerischen Instituts für Kunstwissenschaft, Zürich, 1974–77, 1978, pp. 77–178, esp. pp. 162–71

Swiss collectors of drawings from the late 1740s.[50] Some of his drawings were to reach Cobenzl in the 1760s, when the Minister started collecting in Brussels.[51]

Long after Cobenzl had left central Germany and settled in Brussels his numerous German correspondents, princely or otherwise, continued to write copious letters to him, lamenting his departure, recalling times past and exchanging political news and gossip. Almost none of them, however, mention art.

An Interest in Art but no Collection

At least part of the reason for a lack of information about Cobenzl's artistic interests prior to his time in Brussels is the predominance of post-1752 correspondence in the archives. But there are indications of an ongoing interest in art that makes Cobenzl's immediate engagement in the art world on his arrival in Brussels less surprising than it might otherwise seem.

When Guido sent Charles the small work 'by Dürer' in 1746, his accompanying letter implied that Cobenzl at least had pretensions to a certain amount of knowledge: 'Le petit image que vous recevrez avec celle ci, m'ayant ete beaucoup loué des connoisseurs, et les memes m'ayant dit ou fais croir qu'il etoit d'Albert Dür j'ai voulu la garder et vous le presenter. Vous vous y connoissiez assez pour sçavoir si on m'a dit vrai.'[52]

The following year Cobenzl acquired the Dictionnaire abregé de peinture et d'architecture of François Marie de Marsy (1746).[53] This might be brushed aside as merely the bibliophile's acquisition of a new publication rather than a sign of a deliberate and active interest in the arts, if it were not that the body of letters that start in 1753 reveal activities commissioning or considering works of art that imply some knowledge.

Two sets of correspondence in particular, both of which started before Cobenzl left Mainz, contain some of the very few mentions of works of fine art – apart from furniture pictures and portraits – before Cobenzl started collecting himself from about 1761.

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[50] On drawings in Switzerland in the eighteenth century see: Yvonne Boerlin-Brodbeck, Zeichnungen des 18. Jahrhunderts aus dem Basler Kupferstichkabinett, exh. cat., Kunstmuseum, Basle, 1978. On Swiss collecting more generally: Benno Schubiger, ed., Collections et pratiques de la collection en Suisse au XVIII^{e} siècle (Travaux sur la Suisse des Lumières, X), Geneva, 2007

[51] Catherine Phillips, 'Rodolphe Valltravers (1723–1815?), Swiss Gentleman, and the Promotion of Useful Knowledge', Век Просвещения / L'Age des Lumières, III, Moscow, 2011, pp. 96–121

[52] Guidobaldo Cobenzl to Charles Cobenzl, Laibach, 31 May 1746; AGR, SEG, 1263, f. 83

[53] Varrentrapp correspondence; AGR, SEG, 1239, ff. 27–31

The first is with the important Frankfurt collector Baron Heinrich Jacob von Haeckel, to whom Cobenzl was later to refer as 'feu mon ami'.[54] The surviving correspondence with Haeckel starts in January 1753 but the two men must have been on very good terms during the previous period. The letters relate almost exclusively to the offer of paintings to the Landgrave of Hesse-Kassel, Wilhelm VIII, who became increasingly devoted to his collecting from c. 1748. In January 1753 Cobenzl wrote to Haeckel to offer several paintings; artists mentioned include Pellegrino and Beccafumi.[55] A year later, by this time in Brussels, Cobenzl informed Haeckel of the availability of two vast works by Rubens.[56]

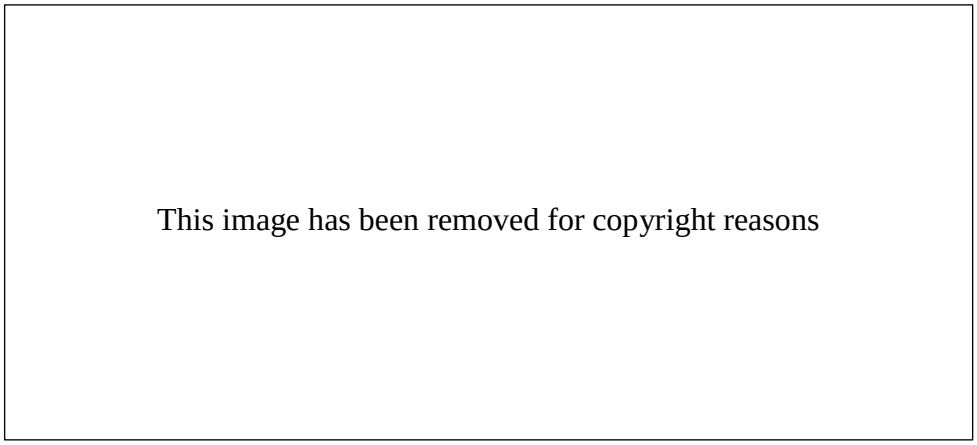

Figure 20. Workshop of Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), Diana Departing for the Hunt. After 1630. © Museumslandschaft Hessen Kassel, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister

Cobenzl had success as an intermediary for Wilhelm only in 1756, when he acquired a work from the estate of Maximilien-Joseph de Lalaing, Viscount Oudenarde, Count

[54] Cobenzl to Franz Varrentrapp, 4 August 1764; AGR, SEG, 1239, f. 83. Cobenzl refers openly to very few people as a friend and we should probably interpret this as an indication that he was indeed on very good terms with Haeckel. On Haeckel see North 2006, pp. 292–94

[55] AGR, SEG, 1143, ff. 114–20. The correspondence is extremely difficult to read and has only been skimmed.

[56] AEG, SEG, 1143, f. 128. To judge from the descriptions, these were full-size copies of Rubens' decorations for the Pompa Introitus of Ferdinand, The Voyage of the Prince from Barcelona to Genoa and The Meeting of the Two Ferdinands at Nördlingen. They were probably the works that later hung in the Brussels house of the Prince de Salm, see J. F. M. Michel, Histoire de la vie de P. P. Rubens, Chevalier, & Seigneur de Steen, Brussels, 1771, pp. 356–57

Lalaing, who had occupied a number of high posts in the administration of the Austrian Netherlands. This was Diana and her Nymphs Departing for the Hunt, then given to Rubens.[57] The business side of the acquisition was conducted through Haeckel, with Wilhelm writing to confirm his gratitude.[58]

If the association with Haeckel represented Cobenzl's official interest in art, serving as an intermediary for princes, that with the Marquis de Cavalcabò reflects a private concern.

'Georges Joseph André, Marquis de Cavalcabò', turned up in various parts of Europe during the third quarter of the eighteenth century, seeking patronage and remunerative employment with monarchs and aristocrats, and generally not quite succeeding. Boswell described him as 'very knowing and extremely clever'[59] but he seems to have been unreliable. Although Cobenzl had written letters of recommendation for the Marquis in 1752, his letters are increasingly cautious.[60] Cavalcabò sent him several paintings but Cobenzl returned them and a similar attempt in 1755 also fell flat. Despite Cobenzl's coldness, the significance of this exchange nonetheless remains: just as Cobenzl saw acting as intermediary for Wilhelm of Hesse-Kassel as a method of gaining and retaining the good opinion of a man with an interest in art, Cavalcabò also thought that the way to Cobenzl's good opinion might lie through the provision of art.

There were a few other – similarly unsuccessful – offers of paintings, but whether Cobenzl's refusal of works was due to their quality, a disinclination to become involved with an apparently hapless adventurer (Cavalcabò), or his own unsettled lifestyle and relative lack of interest in a collection in the first half of the 1750s, we cannot know. Of one thing we can be sure: the statistics of Cobenzl's Cabinet as sold to Catherine the Great in 1768 are unambiguous.

Of the drawings, almost all can be accounted for amongst the purchases that began in August 1761. Of the 46 paintings, just one – the copy of Titian's portrait of Pope Paul III – can be demonstrated to have been in his possession before 1753, although it seems likely that the German works (all portraits) – by Balthasar Denner, a copy after Cranach and a pair by Bartholomeus Bruyn – were acquired during his stay in Mainz. The acquisition of

[57] Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Inv. GK 93, now workshop of Rubens
[58] AGR, SEG, 1142, ff. 290–94; 1143, ff. 132–46
[59] Marlies K. Danziger, ed., James Boswell: the Journal of his German and Swiss Travels, 1764, London–New Haven, 2008, pp. 73–74
[60] Cavalcabò correspondence; AGR, SEG, 1081, ff. 312–91

over half the works – nearly all the paintings of highest quality – can be more or less firmly dated to after mid-1762. Even the sculptures clearly relate to Cobenzl's time in Brussels.

Figure 21. Copy after Lucas Cranach (1472–1553), Portrait of Johann Friedrich (Frederick the Wise), Elector of Saxony, in Later Life. Removed from the Hermitage in 1929 and sold (Lepke, Berlin-Potsdam, 4–5 June 1929, lot 97); location unknown.

Cobenzl may have had a knowledge of and gentlemanly interest in art prior to his departure for Brussels in 1753 but there is no evidence that he collected works of art purposefully. Most of the named works he owned in 1753 – excluding paintings at the family estates – were portraits, perceived within the tradition of demonstrating power through connections (whether simply in themselves or as objects that could be presented or exchanged) rather than within the realms of the fine arts. The contemporary works he was commissioning were also largely portraits.

Our conclusion must be that for all his concern for his 'tableaux' during the move to the Austrian Netherlands, Cobenzl had no Cabinet, no collection. His transformation into a collector was to be the result of his new life and circumstances in Brussels.

Figure 22. Bartholomaus Bruyn I (fl. 1520–60), Pair of Portraits of a Couple and their Children. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Chapter 6. Cobenzl in the Austrian Netherlands 1753–70: The Public Figure – Arts for Regeneration

6.1 Education, Cultural Institutions and the Artistic Industries

> *'Je vous addresse ci-joint par la poste un petit dessein qui exprime mes sentiments d'après vos bienfaits et votre amour pour notre art. Sous la forme de Minerve vous distribué trois couronnes aux génies de la Peinture, de la Sculpture et de l'architecture. Les armes de l'empereur sur la toile derrière Eux marque qu'ils s'occupent à célèbrer les événements glorieux de son règne. Vous êtes appuïé avec votre bouclier sur les lettres de noblesse que vous obtenez pour ceux qui méritent par leurs talents cette marque de distinction: c'est ainsi que Colbert manifesta au loin des grâces; il attira et fixa près de lui le génie et le goût par des bienfaits qui ne coûtent rien au prince, mais qui élèvent l'âme et qui encouragent l'émulation qui a besoin quelquefois des plus gandes secousses.'*
> Jean-Baptiste Descamps to Cobenzl, 11 April 1765

Descamps' drawing has not been found.[1] Certainly it was not among the drawings of Cobenzl's Cabinet as sold to Catherine the Great. But even allowing for the usual hyperbole, Descamps' letter is notable in that he gives Cobenzl full credit for practical support for the arts, not so much through individual patronage but in seeing them as a means of commemorating the achievements of the nation, in understanding that they 'elevate the soul' and 'encourage emulation'. The comparison with Colbert was to be taken up in admiring nineteenth-century national biographies of Cobenzl.

Although it is Charles de Lorraine's name and face that appear in numerous dedications and frontispieces – the introduction to the first volume of Descamps' Vie des peintres flamands in 1753, the frontispiece of Mensaert's Le peintre amateur et curieux of 1763, the unpaginated preface to Michel's Histoire de la vie de P. P. Rubens of 1771 – Galand rightly concluded that: 'Il semble toutefois qu'il ne s'est pas dégagé de véritable politique en matière artistique avant l'arrivée de Cobenzl… Grand amateur d'art, il [Cobenzl] a donné l'impulsion aux mesures concrètes du mécénat officiel.'[2] Cobenzl can be shown to be the ideologist of the policies instituted in Charles de Lorraine's name.

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[1] The letter is at AGR, SEG, 1116, f. 84

[2] Michèle Galand, Charles de Lorraine, gouverneur-général des Pays-Bas autrichiens (1744–1780) (Études sur le XVIII^{e} siècle, XX), Brussels, 1993, p. 28

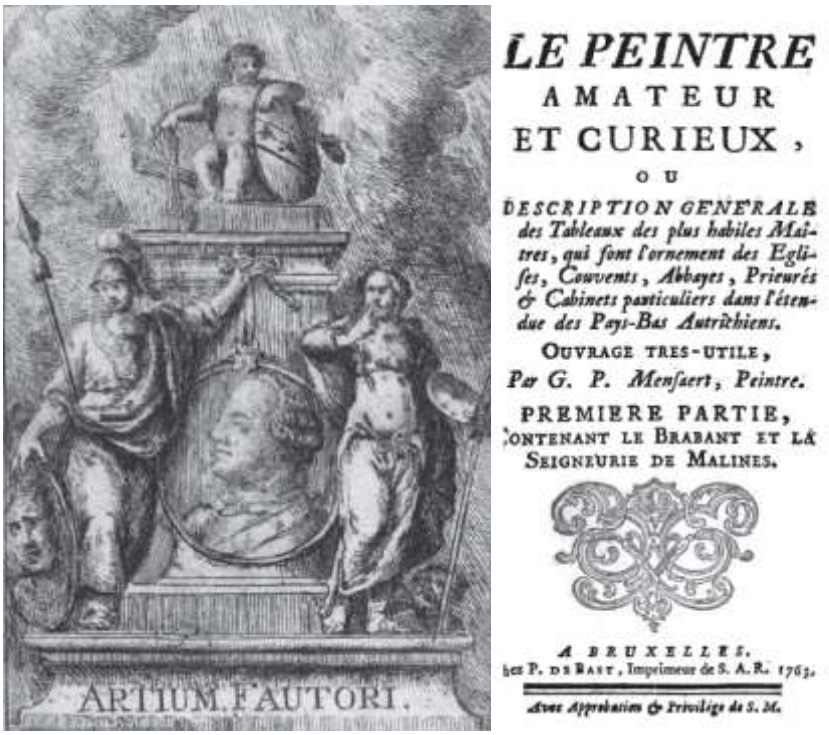

Figure 23. Frontispiece and title page from: Guillaume Pierre Mensaert, Le peintre amateur et curieux…, Brussels, 1763

Bruno Bernard compared Charles de Lorraine, with the 'naïveté d'autodidacte' and a love of science and instruments, and Cobenzl, an educated man who had all the qualities of a truly enlightened statesman, and saw the roots of progress in their uneasy collaboration.[3] As with most of his initiatives, the Minister needed the Governor's support, but while matters were far from clear with regard to many of Cobenzl's industrial and social projects – where he frequently found himself writing to Vienna to get pressure exerted from there – in the arts the two men more often worked as one. Initiatives demonstrably came from Cobenzl, but Charles de Lorraine was not slow to support them, willingly giving his name, if not financial resources, and joining Cobenzl in lobbying the central administration. The relationship of the two men on this front should be compared to the well-founded and established view of the roles of Kaunitz and Maria Theresa with regard to the arts, in which the monarch is credited officially with numerous achievements without a denial of Kaunitz's responsibility for developing policies and initiatives.

Prior to the arrival of Cobenzl Charles de Lorraine demonstrated no awareness of the idea of the role to be played by the arts in prosperity and development, a role that Cobenzl had seen in action during his time in Germany and the theory of which he presumably read in

[3] Bruno Bernard, 'La vie intellectuelle et scientifique à Bruxelles vers 1763', Nouvelles Annales Prince de Ligne, VI, 1991, pp. 143–69, esp. pp. 145–47

the second volume of the 1728 edition of Richardson's Traité de la peinture, a copy of which was in his library.[4] In the 'Discours sur la Sience [sic] d'un Connoisseur', Richardson Senior asserted that 'Le mérite de la sience, dont je fais l'éloge, paroîtra encore davantage, quand on considérera que, si les gens de qualité étoient amateurs, & *connoisseurs* de la peinture, le public en tireroit de l'utilité: 1. par raport à la réformation des moeurs, 2. par raport à l'avancement du peuple, 3. par raport à l'acroissement de nos richesses, de notre honneur & de nos forces.'[5] Over fifteen pages he proclaimed the utility of the arts: 'Peinture… est également agréable & utile: elle plaît à la Vue; & en même tems elle instruit l'Esprit: elle excite nos Passions, & elle nous enseigne à les gouverner. On fait ordinairement de la diférence [sic] entre les choses qui servent d'Ornement, & celles qui sont utiles; mais il est certain que les choses qui sont agréables ont aussi leur utilité.' Instead of importing art, the nation should create its own and export it. Not only should nobles and gentlemen become connoisseurs in order to prompt emulation, but they should establish academies to train new artists. Their activities should be pursued 'pour l'Honneur & pour l'Intèrêt de leur Patrie'.[6]

Richardson's text is the most direct and concise contemporary exposition of an understanding of the wider benefit of the arts and the obligation of the connoisseur to promote them that became increasingly influential over the course of the eighteenth century. But it was rooted in the proto-democratic mercantilist atmosphere of Britain, where the stimulus for the foundation of schools and organisations that would teach and promote the arts, bringing benefit to the nation as a whole, was driven from below (the foundation of the Royal Academy in 1768 was but the result of half a century of activity by artists and connoisseurs, preceded by several key private academies, and by the appearance of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce in 1754[7]). In other, more autocratic societies, the move to promote the arts and commerce was started at the top, at Court. In Germany and in Russia, for instance, key artistic industries were established and controlled by the state (such as the Meissen Porcelain Manufactory, established by the Elector of Saxony in 1709, and the Imperial Porcelain Manufactory in St Petersburg, established by decree of Empress Elizabeth in 1754), and rulers were not passive promoters of initiatives from below but were often (with the help of well-chosen advisers) the authors of

[4] Traité de la peinture, par Mr. Richardson, le Père, 2 vols, plus a third volume, Description de divers fameus tableaux, desseins, statues, bustes, bas-reliefs, &c., qui se trouvent en Italie; avec des remarques par Mrs. Richardson, père & fils, Amsterdam, 1728 (lot 627 in the 1771 book sale)

[5] Ibid., II, p. 145

[6] Ibid., II, pp. 146, 151–52, 156–57, 158

[7] See e.g. Sidney C. Hutchison, The History of the Royal Academy 1768–1968, New York, 1968; Charles Saumarez Smith, The Company of Artists: The Origins of the Royal Academy of Arts in London, London, 2012

those initiatives. The rapid growth in royal/state museums and galleries in the eighteenth century (not necessarily public museums, but royal private collections open to the select public, and notably to the artists of the land, who were encouraged to study and copy the works on display) reflected the widespread acceptance of such ideas at the highest level.[8] The idea that the connoisseur / ruler / state had a duty to promote the artistic industries and that justification was to be found in the benefits, both social and economic, such policies would bring, was repeated and developed in numerous contexts over the next century.[9]

From the very start Cobenzl worked untiringly – as initiator, supporter or administrator – on numerous projects to harness the power of the arts and learning. We should understand 'the arts and learning' in the widest sense of the word, covering education of all kinds, from technological improvements affecting agriculture or clock-making to the study of the region's history, the preservation, even restoration, of the arts of the past and the attempt to revive some of the region's intellectual and artistic glory. Within his first month in Brussels he started to include the arts in a programme for overall regeneration, looking at ways of revitalising education (including artistic education), and industry (including the artistic industries). He actively promoted local artists and local producers of items such as porcelain and tapestry and he arrived at a recognition of the importance of establishing scholarly and practical institutions that would promote art and learning, including an academy in Rome where artists could be sent to study. Most notably, Cobenzl tried to create some of the institutions that underpin any long-lasting reform and progress in the arts and learning.

His various initiatives cannot be totally separated, since they were all inextricably linked – often the same individual was responsible for sourcing works of art and economic treatises and political information – and all had a single purpose, to revive the economy of the Austrian Netherlands, to make the lands prosperous and stable, and ultimately to make the region a source of revenue for the monarchy in Vienna. Although some separate aspects of

[8] See e.g. Édouard Pommier, ed., Les musées en Europe à la veille de l'ouverture du Louvre, Paris, 1995; Oliver Impey, Arthur MacGregor, The Origins of Museums: the Cabinet of Curiosities in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-century Europe, Looe, 2001; Arthur MacGregor, Curiosity and Enlightenment: Collectors and Collections from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century, New Haven, 2007

[9] From the many possible sources available, one might chose the words of Christian Ludwig Hagedorn, who wrote to the General Director of the Academy in Dresden on 24 December 1763 that, through the arts '… nicht nur unmittelbar ein wesentlicher Vortheil verschafft, mehr Geld zur Circulation gebracht, Fremde herbeigezogen und das Ansehen eines Staats vermehret, sondern auch ferner die Producte derer inländischer Fabriken und Manufacturen durch Verbesserung des Geschmacks angenehmer gemacht und ein grösserer Debit Dererselben zu Wege gebracht werde'. Cited in: Moriz Wiessner, Die Akademie der bildenden Künste zu Dresden von ihrer Gründung 1764 bis zum Tode v. Hagedorns 1780, Dresden, 1864, p. 28

these activities have received attention, a more detailed study of the interconnection of these different initiatives remains to be carried out.

Brussels and the Austrian Netherlands in 1753

The administrative centre of the Austrian Netherlands, an assembly of disparate duchies and principalities of different status, Brussels was a Court city. A succession of governors, continuing the tradition established by Albert and Isabella, maintained the hierarchies and ceremonial of a full-blown Court. The increasing independence from Vienna asserted by Charles VI's sister, Maria Elisabeth, Governor 1724–41, who treated the Austrian Netherlands like her own personal fiefdom, led Maria Theresa to reassert control over the territory on her aunt's death in 1741.[10] Charles de Lorraine, appointed Governor in 1744, only fully took up the post in 1749, being joined by his sister, Anne-Charlotte, in 1754.

Charles de Lorraine's Court, described by the Prince de Ligne as 'une jolie cour gaie, sûre, agréable, polissonne, buvante, déjeunante et chassante',[11] circulated between the Palace of Orange-Nassau, the hunting lodge of Tervueren and the palace of Mariemont. According to a 1751 description of the Austrian Netherlands, Brussels had some 500 households which were not economically active – which in the eighteenth century meant that they were aristocrats or other wealthy individuals – compared to some 40 or 50 in Antwerp.[12]

Despite the wealth of the aristocracy and the tourists and valetudinarians enjoying the pleasures of Spa, by the late 1740s the economy of the Austrian Netherlands was in ruins. Endless wars, the huge payments due under the Barrier Treaty, ineffectual government and lack of investment, the rights of mortmain and the concentration of untaxed lands and property in the control of the religious houses, the non-compatibility of ecclesiastical boundaries and political jurisdiction and the privileges of the États which meant that taxes could not be imposed without the permission of their representatives, had brought the Austrian Netherlands to a parlous state. No ruling monarch had visited the area since Philip II in 1559 and the lands were viewed rather as a cash cow which, when it ceased to be productive, ceased to be of any interest. Kaunitz came to be convinced that the region was

[10] Galand 1993, chapter II, 'La nomination de Charles de Lorraine au poste de gouverneur général des Pays-Bas autrichiens'

[11] Prince Charles-Joseph de Ligne, Fragments de l'Histoire de ma Vie; cited in: Jeroom Vercruysse, 'Le prince de Ligne et ses patries. Thèmes et variations sur les "affinités électives"', Nouvelles Annales Prince de Ligne, XVII, 2007, p. 74

[12] Benoît-Marie Dupuy, **'**Description de l'économie des Pays-Bas autrichiens', MS, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Milan, Z.271.sup, published in part in: Philippe Moureaux, La statistique industrielle dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens à l'époque de Marie-Thérèse: documents et cartes, Brussels, 1974

more of a burden than a benefit to the Austrian monarchy.[13] Maria Theresa, however, refused to cede or exchange any land and so it was necessary to take the region in hand.

Figure 24. Jean-Charles François (1717–69), Portrait of Charles de Lorraine. 1753

With this in mind, Charles de Lorraine's return to take control of the Austrian Netherlands in 1749 was carefully prepared in Vienna. The groundwork was laid for a system by which the independence of the Court in Brussels could be limited, with a Plenipotentiary Minister primed to work not for the Governor, but for Vienna, ensuring that the Governor's policies were always in line with Vienna's aims of centralisation and raising maximum revenue for the monarchy.[14]

The first of the plenipotentiary ministers appointed as 'minder' to Charles de Lorraine was Count Antoniotto Botta Adorno (1688–1774), who manifested considerable intelligence

[13] William J. McGill, 'The Roots of Policy: Kaunitz in Italy and the Netherlands, 1742–1746', Central European History, 1/2, June 1968, pp. 131–49

[14] On these detailed plans see Ghislaine De Boom, Les Ministres plenipotentiaires dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens, principalement Cobenzl, Brussels, 1932, and Galand 1993, chapter II, 'La nomination de Charles de Lorraine au poste de gouverneur général des Pays-Bas autrichiens', the latter with a full and detailed discussion of the complexities of the arrangements.

and understanding of the many nuances of the job, maintaining an excellent relationship with Charles de Lorraine throughout his four years in the job (1749–53).[15]

The same cannot be said of his successor, Count Charles Cobenzl. Despite his subordinate position as Minister attached to the Governor, he was at times to receive instructions from Vienna directly ordering him to 'rein in' his superior. His directness frequently led him often into open conflict with the Prince. Instructed to introduce centralising reforms, he was often opposed by the Governor, who thus gained immense personal popularity at the expense of Vienna. The conflicts with Charles de Lorraine, the ambiguity of his position at Court and among the local aristocracy, and the ill will generated locally by his role as the long arm of Vienna, restricting local privileges, were to make him unpopular despite the huge benefits his policies were to bring.

The Economy and the Arts: The parlous state of all aspects of life in the Austrian Netherlands – economic, administrative, intellectual and artistic – in the middle of the eighteenth century were expressed in Botta Adorno's exclamation to Cobenzl soon after his arrival in May 1749: 'Ce seroit une chose criante que de laisser cette province-là dans le triste état où elle se trouve par la ruine entière du commerce, malgré sa situation, ses ports, canaux, autres commodités et le génie des habitants.'[16] The Austrian Netherlands were sunk in a 'torpeur intellectuelle regrettable'.[17] Few new books were published, and the Court city, Brussels, had no public library and just one stable newspaper.[18] Ecclesiastical censors were forced to cede superiority to royal censors only in 1761. Not that the royal censors were particularly liberal: the Austrian Court was noted across Europe for its sweeping restrictions. The sole university, at Louvain, was widely admitted to be largely sunk in stagnation.

The art of the Southern Netherlands in the eighteenth-century is usually seen as parochial and the emphasis has been on the last quarter of the century, when Neoclassicism began to gain a firm foothold.[19] Certainly during the first half of the century the art schools, which

[15] Joseph Laenen, Le Ministere de Botta-Adorno dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens pendant le règne de Marie-Thérèse 1749–1753, Antwerp, 1901; De Boom 1932

[16] AGR, 1257, f. 18

[17] Jacques Marx, 'L'Activité scientifique de l'Académie Impériale et Royale des Sciences et Belles-lettres de Bruxelles. 1772–1794', Études sur le XVIII^{e} siècle, IV, Brussels, 1977, p. 50

[18] Pol Pierre Gossiaux, Les Lumières dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens et la principauté de Liège, Brussels, 1983, No. 44; Jeroom Vercruysse, 'Journalistes et Journaux', Études sur le XVIII^{e} siècle, IV, Brussels, 1977, pp. 117–27

[19] e.g. Denis Coekelberghs, Pierre Loze, eds, Autour du néo-classicisme en Belgique: 1770–1830, exh. cat., Musée d'Ixelles, Brussels, 1985; Christophe Loir, L'émergence des beaux-arts en Belgique: institutions, artistes, public et patrimoine (1773–1835), Brussels, 2004

enjoyed no official support, made little headway. Perpetual references were made to the 'décadence' of the arts, to decline in the wake of the glorious seventeenth century.[20] With the Governor lodged in a rented palace and lack of stability in the region (plus the French occupation of 1746–49), there were few state building works or official commissions from Court.

Small art schools existed in a number of the major towns, but enjoyed little support from central government before the 1750s, and until 1773 artists were much restricted by their artisan status and the limitations imposed in terms of access to and practice of their profession by the corps de metiers or corporations.[21] Many went to train – and where possible made their careers – in other countries. Moreover, many felt an allegiance not to the Austrian Netherlands but to their native town or region, to Bruges, Antwerp, Ghent or Liège. Painting styles in each area were markedly different. Both demand and taste were often provincial, with modestly-priced portraits in great demand.

It was a vicious circle: with few art schools and a preference for works of the past century the limited market for contemporary artists led to a drain of those with greatest skill or greatest ambition. Such disunity was not resolved by those over-arching official institutions of sociability and exchange that could be so successful as drivers of intellectual progress, such as an Academy of Sciences or a national Academy of the Arts. Brussels, administrative centre of the many different elements which made up the Austrian Netherlands, lacked any institutions of this type, a lack that was to be recognised by Cobenzl, who was to attempt to resolve it.

The Rise of the Austrian Netherlands

Brussels' emergence as an increasingly prosperous modern city of Enlightenment values in the 1770s was the result of the policies introduced over the previous thirty years. Specifically, it was the result of the efforts of Botta Adorno and Charles Cobenzl.[22]

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[20] Christophe Loir, 'Le discours sur la décadence artistique dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens durant la second moitié du XVIII^{e} siècle', in: Valérie André, Bruno Bernard, eds, Le XVIII^{e}, un siècle de décadence? (Études sur le XVIII^{e} siècle, XVIII), Brussels, 2006, pp. 143–50

[21] For a good overview with bibliography see 'L'artiste libéralisé' in: Loir 2004, pp. 42–52

[22] Henne and Wauters cited the arrival of Cobenzl in the city as one of just five main events worthy of notice in the eighteenth century: Alexandre Henne, Alphonse Wauters, Histoire de la ville de Bruxelles, Brussels, 1845, II, p. 277. But Laenen rightly noted that it was the start made by Botta Adorno which allowed Cobenzl to have such a rapid effect from 1753; Laenen 1901, p. 10. Detailed analysis of the economic achievements of the two men and the similarities (and differences) in their approach is found in De Boom 1932; Galand 1993.

Vienna, much affected by the huge outlay of the War of the Austrian Succession, needed money, and that money had to come from its territories. Botta Adorno's attitude was that the money needed to come through building prosperity, rather than squeezing money out of an already impoverished people. He wrote urgently to Vienna in March 1753, stressing 'combien il importe au bien public et à celui de la ville, de soutenir le mieux possible les manufactures naissantes et d'encourager par là d'autres',[23] a cry taken up by Cobenzl. Both men, however, were hampered by the government in Vienna, where centralisation was interpreted at times narrowly, with Kaunitz suspicious of anything that smacked of local loyalties rather than loyalties to the Crown. In economic terms, this meant that Kaunitz wanted immediate results, i.e. large sums of money transferred to central government, even if this had damaging effects in the region, whereas Botta Adorno and Cobenzl attempted to plan for the long term.[24] Despite his loyalty to Kaunitz, Cobenzl was never shy of arguing his point and he strongly urged investment in the local economy, i.e. leaving some of the monies raised in the region there, but to little avail.[25]

Botta Adorno looked to improve industries that would decrease the need for imports and those where Brussels had greatest potential for export, such as the production of tapestries, and to facilitate all kinds of trade and industry through, for instance, improvement of the transport systems. His policies, continued, developed and considerably augmented by Cobenzl, enjoyed remarkable success.

Building on the groundwork laid by his predecessor, through reform, some investment, the imposition of heavy tariffs on imports, and of course the lottery,[26] Cobenzl managed to make considerable contributions to the budget in Vienna. His measures were often unpopular – and therefore opposed by Charles de Lorraine, whose ambition for the love of the people was surely greater than his ambition to be an effective governor – but they brought results. His considerable economic success was recognised not only by his superiors but by foreign powers.[27]

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[23] AGR, SEG, 1038, f. 280

[24] Philippe Moureaux, Les préoccupations statistiques du gouvernement des Pays-Bas autrichiens et le dénombrement des industries dressé en 1764, Brussels, 1971, pp. 63 ff.

[25] Philippe Moureaux, 'Charles de Cobenzl, homme d'état moderne', Études sur le XVIII[e] siècle, I, Brussels, 1974, pp. 176–77

[26] One of the greatest sources of income in the short-term was the lottery established by Cobenzl. On the lottery see: H. Houtman-De Smedt, 'Loterijen in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden tijdens de 18de eeuw', in: Geschiedenis van de loterijen in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden (15e eeuw – 1934) / Histoire des loteries dans les Pays-Bas méridionaux (XV[e] siècle – 1934), Brussels, 1994, pp. 61–68

[27] e.g. reports from various British representatives to London. James Porter to the Earl of Sandwich, 1763–65; NA, SP 77/102. William Gordon to the Duke of Grafton, 14 January 1766; NA, SP 77/103

Galand concluded that not only were Botta Adorno and Cobenzl the real leaders in economic reform, with which Charles de Lorraine was associated almost solely by virtue of his post as Governor, but that it was difficult even to see the latter's influence there.[28] In 1765 Cobenzl wrote somewhat smugly to Kaunitz: 'S'il est infiment consolant pour moi de voir prospérer les affaires de mon département, je ne puis, comme citoyen et fidèle sujet de Sa Majesté, qu'être affligé d'entendre que dans le centre de la monarchie cela ne va pas de même. Je donne toute mon application à préparer une réserve.'[29]

Such was the improvement of the economy that in 1781, 222 years after the last visit by a ruling monarch, Joseph II visited the Austrian Netherlands, an indication that this farflung territory was at last being seen as part of the Austrian lands.

Reform of the Intellectual Context

In all areas, economic and intellectual, Cobenzl realised the need both for small, individual initiatives and for government support. Moreover, he recognised that official structures were the prerequisites for sociability and the exchange of ideas, that they could provide both a legal framework and a form of quality control. His intellectual influence was widely felt and although his attempts to reform the University of Louvain were largely frustrated, three national institutions trace their origins back to him – the Bibliothèque Royale, the Commission Royale d'histoire de Belgique and the Académie Royale des sciences, des lettres et des beaux-arts de Belgique. Cobenzl's support for over-arching institutions may have been part of the wider spirit in Europe, but in the Austrian Netherlands, such an approach was radical. His activities justified Montesquieu's declaration in 1753 that 'Quand il y aura des ministres comme lui, on pourra espérer que le goût des lettres se ranimera dans les Etats Autrichiens'.[30]

The strict Court of Vienna imposed some of the harshest censorship in Europe, although it was somewhat more relaxed in the Austrian Netherlands. There was much resistance from the Brussels administration and from Cobenzl in particular, but also from the free-thinking

[28] Galand 1993, p. 90
[29] HHStA, Belgien Berichte, No. 105, 5 February 1765; cited in de Boom 1932, p. 183
[30] Montesquieu in La Brède, to Comte de Guasco in Verona, 28 September 1753; published in: Charles de Secondat, baron de Montesquieu, Lettres de Monsieur de Montesquieu à divers amis d'Italie avec des notes de l'editeur, London, 1767

Kaunitz, to extending Viennese censorship to the region. It has been suggested that Maria Theresa herself was not unsympathetic to this resistance.[31]

One of the great obstacles to the spread of Enlightenment ideals in the Austrian Netherlands was the region's sole university, at Louvain, a strict Catholic institution with a glorious past that had fallen behind the times. Botta Adorno introduced a new post, professor of jurisprudence, in 1753, and in 1755 with the support of Charles de Lorraine a chair of experimental physics and natural history was established, but opportunities for the Minister to get involved were limited.[32] Nonetheless, in 1754 Patrice-François de Neny (later head of the Privy Council) was appointed Commissaire Royal for the University. Despite disagreements, Cobenzl and Neny shared a desire to revive intellectual debate in the Austrian Netherlands and together they sought to reform the University.

As in so many other areas, Vienna refused to support their reform proposals, citing the war as justification. Perhaps in the backwardness of the University Kaunitz – usually so ardent in his support for learning and the spread of Enlightenment ideas – saw a positive aspect, for the lack of suitably educated individuals in the Austrian Netherlands qualified for posts in the administration provided justification for the imposition of German-speaking Austrian officials and thus contributed to the Theresian policy of centralisation.[33]

Cobenzl enjoyed varying levels of success in his promotion of new institutions. Two of them, the Royal Library and the society which was soon transformed into the Academy, functioned during his lifetime. The third, the Royal Historical Commission, appeared sixty years after his death but sees its origins in the spirit of public support for research and publication engendered by Cobenzl's policies.

Cobenzl's role in creating the Bibliothèque Royale was more or less straightforward. In 1754, horrified that the Royal Library, including the celebrated Burgundian Library of Charles the Bold, was mouldering, largely inaccessible, in the cellars of the ruined chapel of the Coudenberg Palace, he took the initiative and had the whole transferred to the

[31] André Puttemans, La censure dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens, Brussels, 1935, pp. 58–63

[32] Mailly saw Cobenzl as one of the prime instigators of reform at Louvain. Édouard Mailly, Histoire de l'Academie Imperiale et Royale des Sciences et Belles-Lettres de Bruxelles, 2 vols (XXXIV, XXXV), Brussels, 1883, I, pp. 1–35

[33] Bruno Bernard directly blames Kaunitz and Maria-Theresa for lack of progress in education and the sciences: Bernard B. 1991, pp. 161–62

'Palais Isabelle' (the Maison des Arbalétriers on rue Isabelle),[34] informing Vienna of his actions only after the fact.[35] He appointed a librarian, Canon Pierre Wouters, and personally set about establishing the principles which determined the library's continued existence, such as legal deposit. Wouters was entrusted with conserving the books in the library and acquiring new books at auction both in the Austrian Netherlands and in Frankfurt.[36] It was hard for Vienna to object to the preservation of royal property.

Although foreign policy was not part of the Minister's remit, Cobenzl agitated hard for the repatriation of manuscripts removed by the French during their occupation in 1747, and this was a condition included in a supplement to the 1748 Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle concluded on 16 May 1769.[37] Like other initiatives, the project came to realisation only after Cobenzl's death, in July 1770. The library, still housed on rue Isabelle, opened to the public on 6 October 1772.

Unlike the Royal Library, the Société littéraire (Académie Royale des sciences, des lettres et des beaux-arts de Belgique) was created from nothing but a recognition of the need for an 'umbrella' organisation that would promote letters.[38] Cobenzl manifested his interest as early as 1758, writing to Count Mercy-Argenteau, Austrian ambassador in Turin, enquiring about the rules of the Academy there and its organisation.[39] But he was not alone in seeing the need for an institution: in 1762 Neny noted that despite the abundance of theologians, lawyers and learned physicians in the Austrian Netherlands, 'il nous manque des littérateurs, parce qu'il n'y a aucune sorte d'établissement pour ceux-ci'.[40]

It seems surprising at first that Cobenzl opposed the establishment of a small Academy for eloquence and letters in Louvain put forward in 1765 by Abbot Nelis in an attempt to counterbalance the superficial philosophy being taught at the University,[41] but his intention

[34] On Cobenzl's key role in the salvation of the Library see: La Librairie des ducs de Bourgogne. Manuscrits conservés à la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, III, Turnhout, 2006, particularly Lieve Watteeuw, 'Six siècles de préservation et conservation', pp. 19–35

[35] Cobenzl to Koch, 11 January 1755; AGR, SEG, 1162, ff. 31–33. Cobenzl to Sylva Tarouca, February 1755; AGR, SEG, 1261, ff. 303–4

[36] Wouters correspondence; AGR, SEG, 1249. Report from Wouters to Cobenzl, covering the restoration and binding of 4,000 volumes between 15 September 1761 and 19 September 1765; AGR, Conseil des Finances, 2574

[37] La Librairie des ducs de Bourgogne 2006, III, p. 27

[38] The best description of the build up to foundation of the Académie is that of Mailly 1883, I, pp. 1–35

[39] AGR, SEG, 1176, f. 187. See: L'Academie Imperiale et Royal des sciences et belles-lettres de Bruxelles. 1772–1794. Sa fondation. Ses traveaux, exh. cat., Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, Brussels, 1973, cat. 4

[40] 17 Feb 1762, AGR, SEG, 1180, f. 164

[41] Mailly 1883, I, p. 6

was to found a central institution which would unite the intellectual forces of the Austrian Netherlands, overcoming the barriers between the constituent regions.

In 1767 Cobenzl invited his old acquaintance Johann Daniel Schöpflin – founder of the Academy Palatine in Mannheim in 1763 – to draw up his thoughts on ways to stimulate the intellectual life of the region.[42] Reports were sent to Kaunitz, who presented the project in October 1768 to Maria Theresa for approval.[43] Schöpflin had proposed the foundation of an academy but Neny and Kaunitz supported a more modest start, with a private society.[44] It was this line which was originally adopted, and the first meeting, held in May 1769, was of a 'Société littéraire', which was intended to eventually encompass not just literature but the natural sciences and national history.[45] With Cobenzl's death in January 1770, however, the society lost its driving force. The new Minister, Count Starhemberg, argued successfully that the only way to revitalise it and make it fulfil the purpose for which it was created was to refound it as the academy first proposed by Schöpflin and Cobenzl.[46] Maria Theresa therefore decreed the foundation of the Académie impériale et Royale des Sciences et des Belles-Lettres, its patent issued on 16 December 1772.

Cobenzl's role in the founding of the Commission Royale d'histoire de Belgique, which dates back only to 1834, is less tangible but no less important. It is found in his series of at times uncoordinated attempts to gather and publish documents relating to the history of the Southern Netherlands. No survey of his different initiatives has been undertaken but even a preliminary assessment of the evidence in official documents and private correspondence makes it clear that they are too numerous to list here.

Not only did Cobenzl instruct Wouters to acquire material relating to the history of the region both for the Royal Library and for his own collection of books,[47] but in late 1758 it

[42] Schöpflin's 'Réflexions sur le rétablissement des bonnes études dans les Pays-Bas' was published in: Annuaire de l'académie Royale des sciences et belles-lettres de Bruxelles, IV, Brussels, 1838, p. 169. A copy of Schöpflin's original text is in AGR, SEG, 2134.

[43] 'Rapport du Prince de Kaunitz à Marie-Thérèse, sur l'érection d'une société des sciences et des belles-lettres à Bruxelles', in: Ibid., pp. 151–77

[44] Cobenzl attached a note to this effect from comte de Neny of 14 June 1768 to his own letter to Kaunitz of 16 June. Kaunitz responded 29 June stressing the need to economise, thus supporting the idea of a private society. AGR, SEG, 2134

[45] L'Académie Royale de Belgique depuis sa fondation (1772–1922), Brussels, 1922, pp. 11–13

[46] Charles de Lorraine, report to Maria Theresa, 17 April 1772, on the need for and proposed nature of the reform. AGR, Chancellerie des Pays-Bas, 664, ff. 96–112

[47] See e.g. AGR, SEG, 2641, ff. 310–23. By the end of Cobenzl's life books on the Southern Netherlands made up 17 % of all his books on history, 169 titles out of 990 (with another 111 on the Dutch Netherlands; there were 131 on the Holy Roman Empire). See: Claude Sorgeloos, 'La bibliothèque du comte Charles de Cobenzl, ministre plénipotentiaire dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens, et celle de son épouse la comtesse Marie-Thérèse de Palffy', Le livre et l'estampe, XXX/119–20, 1984, pp. 115–210

was proposed that documents relating to the history and current state of the Southern Netherlands be compiled as a sort of training manual for the future Joseph II.[48]

In 1760 Cobenzl's idea to publish 'un recueil de quelques manuscrits concernant l'histoire de Belgique' at last gained government support.[49] Circulars were sent out to abbeys and priories, colleges and cathedrals, instructing them to look out works in their possession,[50] and Cobenzl himself made numerous specific enquiries about documents. Like the Royal Library, the project was identified with Cobenzl personally and it was he whom individuals informed of manuscripts in libraries or available for sale. Cobenzl became not just a coordinator but a central 'information point', the lynchpin in a series of studies of the history of the Southern Netherlands, sharing the material he received with others engaged on research. For L. J. J. Vander Vynckt, for instance, he provided references and summaries of existing works and permitted access to available resources, and Vander Vynckt's research on the governors and ministers of the Southern Netherlands covering the period from 1470 to 1765 was presented to Cobenzl, in manuscript form, in 1765.[51] This may have been in part a way of assuring that the pro-Habsburg aspect of the history was presented, but it also demonstrated his burning interest in the circulation of information.

Cobenzl did not restrict his search for material to the Austrian Netherlands. In 1765 he entrusted the Paris négociant Rigot with making acquisitions at the sale of the Jesuit library there.[52] Dealing simultaneously with the progress of mirrors being made for Cobenzl's house, the engraving of his portrait, and various book sales at which Cobenzl hoped to acquire items for the Royal Library, Rigot succeeded in acquiring three cartons of Cardinal Granvelle's letters for 800 livres.

Some of Cobenzl's projects, such as those relating to the history of the Order of the Golden Fleece, demonstrated how initiatives with official and private purposes could overlap. A study of the Order inevitably included his own name and that of his father, but describing

[48] Paul Bonenfant, 'À propos d'ouvrages manuscrits du XVIII[e] siècle relatifs à l'histoire et au droit ecclésiastiques belges', Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire, VIII/4, 1929, pp. 1131–49; Claude Sorgeloos, Les memoires historiques et politiques sur les Pays-Bas autrichiens de Patrice-François de Neny, Brussels, 1989; Bruno Bernard, Patrice-François de Neny (1716–1784), portrait d'un homme d'état (Études sur le XVIII[e] siècle, XXI), Brussels, 1993

[49] AGR, SEG, 1234, f. 237

[50] Mailly 1883, I, pp. 3–4

[51] Manuscript now in the Bibliothèque Royale, 'Histoire chronologique des gouverneurs-généraux, des ministres plénipotentiaires et des jointes, commis au gouvernement des Pays-Bas, depuis Marie de Bourgogne jusqu'à nos jours'. Vander Vynckt correspondence; AGR, SEG, 1234, ff. 379–479. See also: Baron de Reiffenberg, 'Discours préliminaire', in: L. J. J. Vander Vynckt, Histoire des Troubles des Pays-Bas, Brussels, 1822

[52] AGR, SEG, 1204, ff. 3–37. The Jesuit colleges in France had been closed on 1 April 1763.

the Order's history also had dual patriotic significance, illuminating the region's past and glorifying the current powers responsible for awarding the Order, i.e. Maria Theresa. Cobenzl ordered the compilation of an inventory of the Order's archives[53] and entrusted a member of the Great Council in Malines, François J. Bors d'Overen, with writing the history.[54] The 1768 prospectus for the history gave credit to the Minister as 'vrai Mécène des provinces', to whose care and support the publication was due.[55]

Figure 25. Sample coat of arms from: François J. Bors D'Overen, Prospectus de l'histoire de l'ordre de la toison d'or / Prospectus historiae ordinis Aurei Velleris, Brussels, 1768

At every stage Cobenzl was not merely a figurehead to whom scholars had to pay due, but an active participant in the process of gathering (reading?) and disseminating information. Whether he himself sat in the archives or library, or entrusted the task to one of his many secretaries, is largely irrelevant. He may not have himself authored a history of the Southern Netherlands, but his contribution to key works, both published and manuscript, is

[53] This inventory was drawn up over the next year by Emanuel Joseph de Turck; AGR, SEG, 1079, ff. 167–71. Baron Frédéric A.F.T. de Reiffenberg gives full credit to Cobenzl for saving and ordering the inventorisation of the archives in his preface to Histoire de l'Ordre de la Toison d'Or depuis son institution jusqu'à la cessation des Chapitres Généraux, Brussels, 1830, pp. vii–viii. See also: Joseph Ruwet, Les archives et bibliothèques de Vienne et l'histoire de Belgique, Brussels, 1956, pp. 765–99

[54] AGR, SEG, 1074, ff. 1–310. Documents relating to work on the history are in the Bibliothèque Royale, MS 20849

[55] François J. Bors D'Overen, Prospectus de l'histoire de l'ordre de la toison d'or / Prospectus historiae ordinis Aurei Velleris, Brussels, 1768

such that it more than justifies the claim of the Belgian Royal Historical Commission to owe its existence to him. Ably seconded by Neny, he created an atmosphere in which local historical study flourished. It was thanks to their efforts that in 1762 Jean-Noël Paquot, Professor of Hebrew at Louvain University, was appointed 'historiographe de Sa Majesté'. Manifesting a level of commitment and organisational skills rare amongst his fellow scholars, between 1763 and 1770 Paquot published eighteen volumes of Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire littéraire des dix-sept provinces des Pays-Bas, de la principauté de Liège et de quelques contrées voisines – at Neny's new university publishing house.

Public Patronage

Since the burning down of the Coudenberg Palace – the governors' residence in Brussels – in 1731, there had been much talk of rebuilding but little action, even to make the ruins safe. Cobenzl dreamed of turning medieval Brussels into a modern city, proposing as early as the mid-1750s that lottery money be used for this purpose.[56] Although he was involved in numerous negotiations, most of the major public building works were to take place after his death and he played only a limited role in the city's transformation.

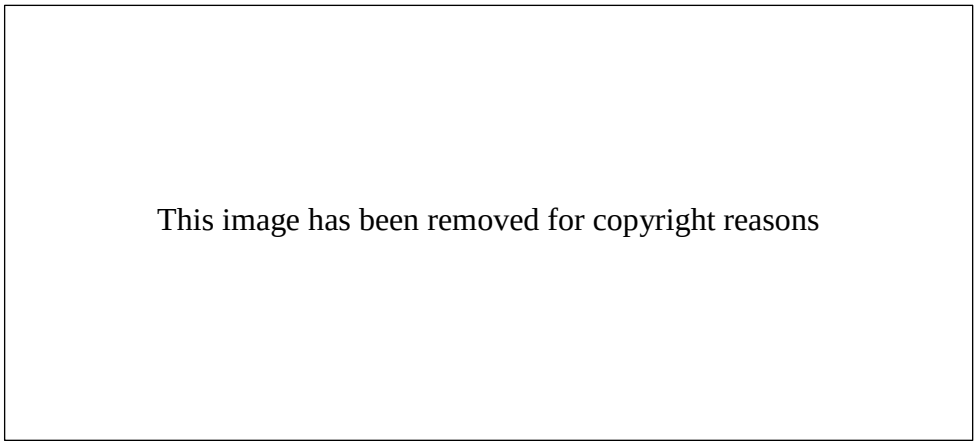

Figure 26. Barnabé Guimard (1734–1805), The Palace of the Dukes of Brabant in Brussels after the Fire of 1731. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

[56] AGR, SEG, 1225. Cited in Comte Carlos de Villermont, La cour de Vienne à Bruxelles au XVIII[e] siècle, Le comte de Cobenzl, minister plénipotentiaire aux Pays-Bas, Lille–Paris–Bruges, 1925, p. 50

Charles de Lorraine erected a new Neoclassical palace at Mariemont between 1754 and 1757, acquired the Palace of Orange-Nassau in 1756 and transformed it into the Palace of Charles de Lorraine, and established manufactories at Tervueren to produce luxury decorative goods, largely for use in his own palaces, going on to start a new palace there in 1778. These projects were the Governor's private concerns, the finances agreed between him and Maria Theresa. Cobenzl's main involvement was in attempting to impose some kind of financial control.[57] He emphasised his impotence with regard to the Governor's artistic policies (lamenting both the expense and the lack of taste) in his correspondence with Jacques Dorn of the Department of the Southern Netherlands in Vienna.[58]

The stimulus for the major building work that was to transform Brussels came in 1769, with the proposal that a statue be erected to mark the 25th anniversary of Charles de Lorraine's appointment as Governor. Cobenzl was involved only in the initial phases of planning and it was his successor, Count Starhemberg, who was truly responsible for coordinating the rebuilding of the Neoclassical Place St-Michel and the Quartier Royale.[59]

Figure 27. Barnabé Guimard (1734–1805), Celebration of the Obsequies for François I in the Church of St Gudule, Brussels, 9 November 1765. © Archives générales du Royaume et Archives de l'Etat, Brussels

[57] Maria Theresa criticised Cobenzl for not preventing the Governor from spending money that could be better used for maintaining the army. e.g. Koch to Cobenzl, 19 February 1757; AGR, SEG, 1162, f. 140

[58] Cobenzl to Dorn, 20 October 1761; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 37

[59] On the transformation of Brussels in the 1770s see: Christophe Loir, Xavier Duquenne, Bruxelles néoclassique: mutation d'un espace urbain (1775–1840), Brussels, 2009

Apart from rare occasions on which Cobenzl could take a direct role in public artistic patronage – notably the design of the catafalque for the obsequies on the death of Emperor François in 1765, during Charles de Lorraine's absence[60] – he had control over just one building project, and that outside the Austrian Netherlands, in the Free Imperial City of Aix-la-Chapelle. Austro-Hungarian troops based at Aix during the War of the Austrian Succession, led by Fieldmarshal Batthyány, noticed the deplorable state of the Hungarian Chapel in the Cathedral. Works carried out from 1748 were disorganised and made little progress and in 1753 an inspection revealed that the 'restoration' was unsafe and should be demolished. Cobenzl arrived in Brussels – just 80 miles away – at the end of that year, and with his post as Austrian Minister (and son-in-law of a Hungarian nobleman) he was the obvious official to be put in charge of overseeing the work and avoiding a similar débacle. In this single instance of Cobenzl's control of a building project, he was markedly successful and the chapel was at last completed in 1767.[61]

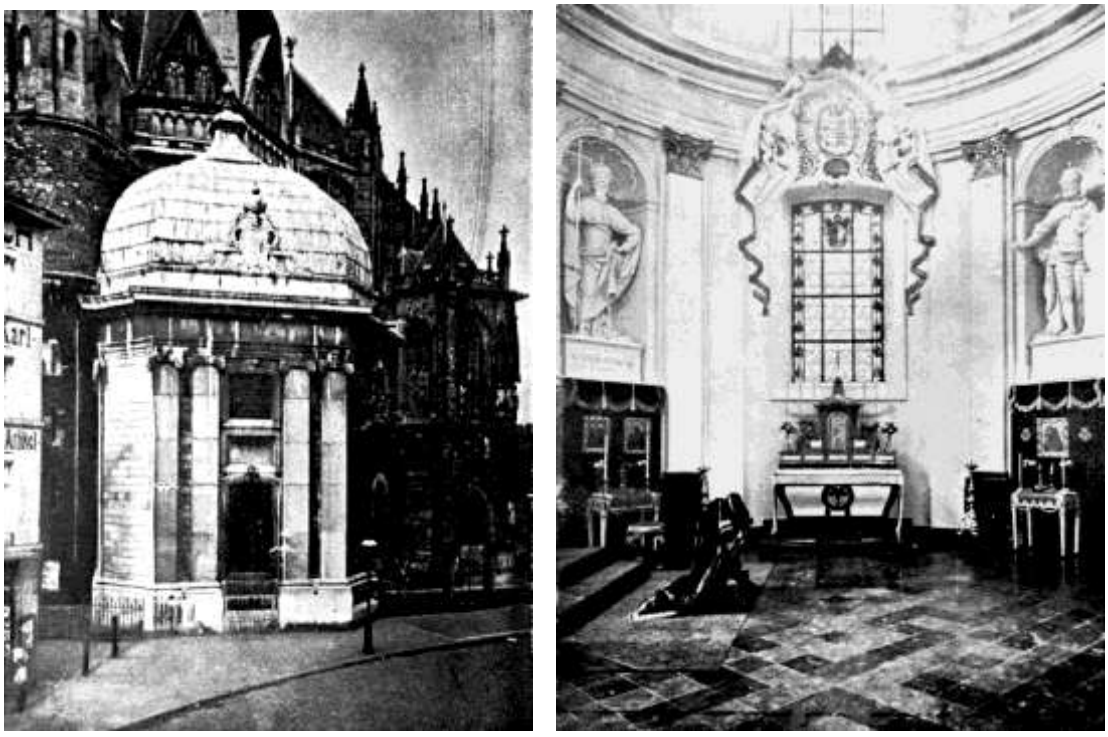

Figure 28. The Hungarian Chapel at Aix-la-Chapelle. Photographs from: Edith Tömöry, Az aacheni magyar kàpolna története, Budapest, 1931

[60] See: Xavier Duquenne, 'La pompe funèbre de l'empereur François I[er] à Bruxelles en 1765, avec la collaboration de l'architecte Guymard', Études sur le XVIII[e] siècle, XXXII, 2004, pp. 163–86

[61] On the building works at the Hungarian Chapel see Edith Tömöry, Az aacheni magyar kápolna története, Budapest, 1931 (French summary: 'La Chapelle hongroise d'Aix la Chapelle'). Cobenzl's role is not mentioned by Tömöry but is reflected in both official reports and the Minister's private correspondence, e.g. Kamps correspondence 1753–60; AGR, SEG, 1158, ff. 25–226. Moretti correspondence, 1758–61; AGR, SEG, 1178, ff. 107–42. HHStA, Ungarn Specialia 1747–1770, fasc. 270, and Hofkammer Archiv, Hoffinanz 1768, nos 308, 361

But the Minister was not totally without influence in Brussels itself, for as Jacobs established, Charles de Lorraine's house accounts demonstrate that prior to the start of major reconstruction work at the Palace of Orange-Nassau only one local artist had been invited to Court. Jacobs saw the reason for the change in policy towards a search for local artists not just in the growing intensity of building but in the arrival of Cobenzl.[62]

Support for the Artistic Industries

On 25 June 1749, Botta Adorno wrote to Sylva-Tarouca, head of the Supreme Council in Vienna, and suggested that the imported jewellery that the Court of Vienna used as diplomatic and other gifts, spending some thirty or forty thousand florins annually, should be replaced with Brussels-made tapestries, which would serve 'de procurer quelque avantage au pays en général et aux ouvriers en particulier'.[63] Such an essentially cost free method of supporting the arts within the Austrian lands marked the starting point of an attention to the artistic industries that was to be taken up by Cobenzl with enthusiasm. His plans grew increasingly ambitious over the years, to include the establishment of an academy to train artists in Rome itself.

Even if Cobenzl had been prepared by Botta Adorno, during their correspondence that started as part of the news-gathering exchange of letters amongst different representatives of the Austrian monarch,[64] the rapidity with which he took up support for the arts of all kinds indicates that he was extremely receptive to the suggestions he had received. Once again we should look for explanation to his experiences in Germany, where there was an established tradition by which local artistic industries produced items not only for use at Court but as diplomatic gifts and for foreign trade.

The two main artistic industries that received Cobenzl's support were tapestry and porcelain production. Tapestries sent as gifts not only contributed to the economy but, hung prominently in foreign countries, served to advertise the achievements of the Austrian Netherlands. Cobenzl acquired tapestries for his own house[65] and dealt with numerous orders from Habsburg officials in Vienna and London.[66] This was not the easiest

[62] Alain Jacobs, 'Le mécénat officiel', in: Charles-Alexandre de Lorraine: gouverneur général des Pays-Bas autrichiens, exh. cat., Palais de Charles de Lorraine, Brussels, 1987 (Europalia 1987–I), pp. 84–85

[63] Cited in Laenen 1901, p. 207

[64] AGR, SEG, 1257, 1258

[65] AGR, SEG, 2641, f. 76

[66] Among them Count Anton Corfiz Ulfeld, Grand Master of the Court in Vienna, who ordered tapestries both for the Chancellory in Vienna and for his own use, AGR, SEG, 1233, passim; Count Beltramo Cristiani, de facto governor of the Austrian possession of Milan, AGR, SEG, 1105, passim; Baron August Wilhelm

industry to promote, since the Brussels tapestry industry, so successful in the seventeenth century, was resting on its laurels by the middle of the eighteenth, largely weaving repetitions of earlier designs.[67] Weavers found it increasingly difficult to compete in an age dominated by French fashion and against the advantages of French manufactories, for which Colbert had achieved what Cobenzl only dreamed of, royal support and royal investment.

Figure 29. Tournai Porcelain Manufactory, Plate from the service delivered to Count Charles Cobenzl on 18 July 1765. Art market, 1990s

Studies of eighteenth-century porcelain have highlighted Cobenzl's support for the manufacture of ceramics in the Austrian Netherlands. Not only did he have a personal interest in the subject but he almost immediately established an excellent personal relationship with the founder and owner of the sole porcelain manufactory in the Austrian Netherlands, François-Joseph Peterinck (1719–99). Cobenzl himself placed a number of orders and encouraged others to buy from the Tournai manufactory.[68] In a letter of

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von Schwicheldt, cabinet minister in Hannover; AGR, SEG, 1221, ff. 459 and passim; Count Sylva-Tarouca, AGR, SEG, 1228 and 1229, passim; Vice-Chancellor Count Rudolph Colloredo, AGR, SEG, 1098, ff. 229–48; etc

[67] Koenraad Brosens, A Contextual Study of Brussels Tapestry, 1670–1770. The Dye Works and Tapestry Workshop of Urbanus Leyniers (1674–1747), Brussels, 2004

[68] Claire Derriks, Claire Dumortier, 'Le service en porcelaine de Tournai du comte de Cobenzl', Cahiers de Mariemont, 24/25, 1993–94, Mariemont, 1996, pp. 97–113; Jean Lemaire, La Porcelaine de Tournai. Histoire d'un manufacture (1750–1891), Tournai, 1999, pp. 13–37. See also the 1770 house inventory

recommendation for Peterinck in 1757, Cobenzl stated 'j'aime et suis attaché à cette manufacture comme à une maîtresse'.[69] That same year he made enquiries about employing painters from Meissen in the Austrian Netherlands.[70] He persuaded Kaunitz to take the Tournai manufactory under his protection.[71] Without government aid and the support of Cobenzl, there is no doubt that the manufactory would have folded.[72]

Brussels lace was perhaps the one artistic product of the Austrian Southern Netherlands for which there was a continuing, unfailing interest beyond the region.[73] People not only acquired lace in Brussels – and repeatedly asked Cobenzl to arrange for it to pass customs without inspection, thereby avoiding the huge taxes on the export of all but the tiniest quantities of lace for personal use – but, so precious was it, that they sent it back to Brussels to be cleaned.[74]

By the nature of lace's production, however, it was an individual craft, with one woman, or the female members of one family, serving as an isolated production unit. As the author of the Guide fidèle of 1761 noted:

> 'Les belles Dentelles qu'on y fait la rendent celebre dans toute l'Europe, même dans les autres parties du Monde, elles font l'occupation du beau sexe, une partie y travaille par récreation & l'autre par necessité, & il y a, pour ainsi dire, autant des Manufactures de cet ouvrage délicat, que de maisons particuliéres.'[75]

Since there was no single manufactory which could be given official support, Cobenzl could only provide occasional assistance, but he promoted lace-making where possible, both as an industry and as an art of which the Southern Netherlands could be proud. For instance, it was decided that the official gift from the États de Flandre to Princess Isabella of Parma, on the occasion of her marriage to the future Emperor Joseph in October 1760, should be a robe made of Brussels lace. It was Cobenzl's wife who organised the different aspects of this gift, its design and manufacture.[76]

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[69] Cobenzl to de Crancé; AGR, SEG, 1251, ff. 185–86

[70] Varrentrap correspondence, June 1757; AGR, SEG, 1239, ff. 14–18. Varrentrap investigated but was forced to inform Cobenzl that there were in fact no skilled porcelain painters currently seeking work.

[71] Cobenzl to Dorn, March–April 1765; AGR, SEG, 1167, ff. 167–68

[72] Philippe Moureaux, 'J. Peterinck, porcelainier à Tournai et ingénieur en démolitions à Bruxelles', Annales de la Société Royale d'Archéologie de Bruxelles, LXV, 2002, pp. 189–214

[73] Philippe Moureaux, 'Le Grand commerce à Bruxelles in 1771', Études sur le XVIII^{e} siècle, IV, Brussels, 1977, p. 40

[74] Notably Botta Adorno, who annually sent his lace to Cobenzl for him to arrange for its cleaning. AGR, SEG, 1077, passim

[75] Le Guide fidele, contenant la description de la ville de Bruxelles, Brussels, 1761, p. 4

[76] AGR, SEG, 1269, f. 37

For all that he could do little in broader terms to support lace production, as with other industries Cobenzl kept an eye out for technical innovations. This probably explains the presence in Cobenzl's library at his death in 1770 of 'une caisse de bois blan [sic] fermée dans laquelle on dit être des carreaux à travailler des dentelles de nouvelle invention n'appartenant pas à Son Excellence'.

This is a typical example of Cobenzl's interest not in science and technology in the abstract,[77] but in areas where he could see a practical application. He sought to be aware of all the latest developments not only for himself but with a view to ensuring that the Austrian Netherlands did not remain backward. Amongst the many industrial projects for which Cobenzl declared support, at least two others had a peripheral bearing on his policies of promoting the arts: the production of paper and the purification of crystal.

Cobenzl's interest in the production of paper and his support for one particular local manufacturer in the mid-1750s is relevant in view of questions that arise regarding the unusual violet paper used to mount his drawings. It also had an important effect on his relations with his superiors, bringing the conflict with Charles de Lorraine and with local officials to crisis point and leading to a scandal unique in Cobenzl's career.

The production of paper in the region was problematical and the lack of quality papers was among the many problems noted by Botta Adorno. Even before Cobenzl's arrival, his predecessor initiated an enquiry into the state of paper manufacturing in the regions.[78]

It was not only high quality white writing paper that was lacking, but perhaps more importantly paper suitable for playing cards. Statistics for 1764 revealed that in Brussels alone there were thirteen producers of playing cards, whose annual production was some 9,000 gross, 4,800 of which went for export.[79] An economic survey of 1771 revealed that the key exports from the Austrian Netherlands – or rather the industries that were aimed largely at export – were lace, flaxseed oil, carriages, tobacco, and playing cards.[80]

By far the greatest proportion of paper was brought in, some from the nearby principality of Liège but much of it imported from France, and there can be no surprise that the

[77] Demonstrated by a dearth of references in the available documents and the pitiful number of books on the subject in his library: out of 2821 titles, there were just 106 on the sciences overall, seven of them on physics, one on alchemy or chemistry, and four on mechanics or engineering. See: Sorgeloos 1984, p. 192

[78] AGR, Conseil des Finances, 4978

[79] Moureaux 1974, pp. 65, 519, 557

[80] Philippe Moureaux, 'Le Grand commerce à Bruxelles in 1771', Études sur le XVIII^{e} siècle, IV, Brussels, 1977**,** p. 40

government of the Austrian Netherlands wished to reduce the dependency on outside products. Moreover, in view of the government's proposed economic reforms and the increasing tension between them and the monastic houses, there can have been no joy in the fact that a number of paper manufactories were run by the Orders. In Namur, for instance, there was paper production at the Cistercian Abbey at Moulins and at the Benedictine Abbey of Waulsort.[81] The paper mill at the Norbertine Abbey of Bonne-Espérance in Hainault had been established at the start of the century and became one of its most profitable industries.[82] At the Benedictine Abbey of Saint-Hubert the Abbot, Dom Nicolas Spirlet, introduced new industries to those already practised, his whole approach to revitalising the economy of both the house and region making clear why he was on such good terms with Cobenzl.[83]

The government's determination to support paper production through financial measures provided the necessary stimulation for local entrepreneurs. In 1754 the Antwerp industrialist Guillaume Legrelle, from a family of dyers and printers, asked for tax and customs privileges to set up a paper mill, but almost immediately a rival company was set up – presumably to take advantage of the privileges on offer – by Jan-Baptist Van Tries and René Van Cuyl, with financial backing for Julien Depestre and Madame Nettine, and some less open but no less strong backing from Cobenzl. Although Van Tries and Van Cuyl demanded extremely beneficial terms, far more preferential than those requested by Legrelle, and although the latter had the backing of the Conseil des Finances, who saw value in his experience in related industries, the privileges were eventually accorded – thanks almost entirely to Cobenzl's backroom support – to the consortium. [84]

Cobenzl could not have expected the strength of the reaction this provoked. Not only did the Conseil des Finances complain to Vienna but the Treasurer General, Patrice-François de Neny, at this point still implacably opposed to Cobenzl, made sure that news of Cobenzl's interest reached the ears of the highest powers, through his brother who just happened to be secretary of the Supreme Council. All the facts suggested that the decision

[81] E. del Marmol, 'Notes sur quelques industries namuroises au XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles', Annales de la Société archéologique de Namur, XII, 1872–73, pp. 40–48, 246–47

[82] Maurice-A. Arnould, 'Une entreprise monastique au XVIIIe siècle: La papeterie de Bonne-Espérance', Études sur le XVIII[e] siècle, I, Brussels, 1974, pp. 131–57. Between 1764 and 1780 the monastery made an average of 6,603 livres annually from sales of paper; p. 138. See also: Moureaux 1971, pp. 578–79

[83] J. Charneux, J. Laurent, in: exh. cat., Terre et abbaye de Saint-Hubert, Saint-Hubert, 1973, pp. 98, 116–24. Spirlet correspondence with Cobenzl, AGR, SEG, 1225, ff. 177–203; 1147, ff. 1–29. Sylva Tarouca described Spirlet as his own friend and that of Cobenzl; AGR, SEG, 1229, ff. 279, 359

[84] This story is based largely on the detailed exposition of Philippe Moureaux, 'Un épisode mouvementé des relations entre le Ministre Cobenzl et la banque de Nettine (1755–1756)', in: Serge Jaumain, Kenneth Bertrams, eds, Patrons, gens d'affaires et banquiers: hommages à Ginette Kurgan-van Hentenryk, Brussels, 2004, pp. 93–106

had been taken for the wrong reasons and that Legrelle's company should have been chosen. The Supreme Council advised Maria Theresa that the allocation of privileges either be annulled entirely or renegotiated. Such a policy, however, would have been disastrous for it would have represented a de facto public disavowal of the government in Brussels and given ammunition to those opposing Vienna's attempts to assert control. Whilst angry at Cobenzl's manoeuvring, in August 1756 Maria Theresa was forced to accept the situation in order to support the authority of the state, with Cobenzl's protégés – and Cobenzl himself – the winner.

The story, which could in theory have brought Cobenzl's career to an end, in fact served to reaffirm his position at this relatively early stage in his Brussels career. And it gave him a close link to a successful paper manufacturer: although Van Tries and Van Cuyl dropped out of the consortium quite rapidly, by October 1758, as advertisements in the Gazette de Bruxelles reveal, the company had an assortment of writing and printing papers on sale in its own showroom in Brussels. It went on to become extremely successful and remained in existence until 1975.[85]

The purification of crystal was a question very much in the spirit of the times. Since Cobenzl himself manifested no interest in physics, we must presume that the subject was prompted by a combination of factors: in 1762 Charles de Lorraine was much impressed by samples of crystal produced by Sébastien Zoude, owner of a glass factory at Namur,[86] and in early 1763 the Minister found himself charmed by another of those charlatans to whom he was so predisposed, the Count Surmont, who promised all kinds of wonders, from the production of silk top hats to the purification of crystals. All that was needed in order to totally revive industrial production in the Austrian Netherlands was government investment. Cobenzl lobbied hard and finance was allocated for the establishment of Surmont's manufactories in Tournai.[87] Vienna was unimpressed,[88] but before everything went wrong when Surmont absconded in July 1763,[89] Cobenzl enthusiastically sought out samples of rock crystal to enable him to demonstrate his methods. Cobenzl found a source in Rodolphe Valltravers, a Swiss gentleman whom he had met in autumn 1762. Valltravers went so far as to go on a personal expedition to gather crystals in the Alps, but it was as a

[85] Xavier Duquenne, Le château de Seneffe, Brussels, 1978, pp. 12–13

[86] Brigitte d'Hainaut, 'Les premières fabrications de cristal dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens', Études sur le XVIII[e] siècle, X, 1983, pp. 153–57; Galand 1993, p. 90

[87] On the comte de Surmont in Brussels see Villermont 1925, pp. 135–37; Xavier Duquenne, 'Casanova et autres aventuriers de son temps en Belgique', L'intermédiaire des casanovistes, XXV, 2008, pp. 19–32

[88] Dorn correspondence May–June 1763; AGR, SEG, 1119

[89] Alfred Ritter von Arneth, Graf Philipp Cobenzl und seine Memoiren, Vienna, 1885, pp. 84–86

supplier of drawings that he was to make a lasting contribution to Cobenzl's Cabinet and the Hermitage collection of drawings.[90]

A Note on Charles de Lorraine and the Artistic Industries

In recent years some attention has been paid to the manufactories the Governor established at Tervueren.[91] The key question posed by these manufactories – of textiles, painted papers, porcelain, metal and braiding – is whether they were part of a policy to contribute to the revival of the existing artistic industries and the creation of new ones in the Austrian Netherlands or whether they were intended solely to serve the personal requirements of the Governor. That question indeed formed the title of the first serious study of the matter by L. Ingelrest, who asked if they were 'passe-temps princier ou stimulateur économique?'.[92] Michèle Galand concluded in 2007 that despite their innovatory nature, 'La plupart de la production était destinée à l'usage personnel du prince'.[93]

Just one workshop was to have a long-lasting effect, the cotton printing atelier, since a larger private production unit at Vilvorde continued at Anderlecht after the Prince's death.[94] All the other manufactories ceased activities immediately on Charles de Lorraine's death. Their legacy was almost zero. The motivation behind them was surely not artistic nor the public good, but a combination of the Governor's desire to provide materials for his houses and his passionate if amateur interest in chemistry and technology.[95]

Voltaire famously said of Frederick II, that 'Il y a prodigieusement de baïonnettes, et fort peu de livres. Le roi a fort embelli Sparte, mais il n'a transporté Athènes que dans son cabinet'.[96] Charles de Lorraine's scientific and artistic interests remained confined within his own Cabinet and had little, if any, effect, on progress in the outside world.

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[90] The story of the crystals, with extensive quotations from the letters, was published by Alphonse Rivier, 'Mélanges d'histoire nationale: Rodolphe de Vautravers et le comte Charles de Cobenzl, d'après des documents inédits', Bibliotheque universelle et Revue Suisse, LI, 1874, pp. 133–61. On Valltravers, including the story of the crystals, see: Catherine Phillips, 'Rodolphe Valltravers (1723–1815?), Swiss Gentleman, and the Promotion of Useful Knowledge', Век Просвещения / L'Age des Lumières, III, Moscow, 2011, pp. 96–121

[91] Claire Dumortier, Patrick Habets, eds, Bruxelles–Tervueren. Les ateliers et manufactures de Charles de Lorraine, Brussels, 2007

[92] L. Ingelrest, 'Les Manufactures de Charles de Lorraine à Tervuren (1760–1780). Passe-temps princier ou stimulateur économique?', unpublished thesis, Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la Neuve, 1987

[93] Michèle Galand, in: Dumortier, Habets 2007, p. 24

[94] Frieda Sorber, in: Dumortier, Habets 2007, pp. 55–69

[95] Alain Jacobs tentatively proposed in 1987 that Charles de Lorraine's interest in the artistic industries as process (not just as result) arose directly from the initiatives set in train by Cobenzl; Jacobs 1987.

[96] Voltaire to d'Alembert, 5 September 1752; Voltaire's Correspondence, ed. Theodore Besterman, Geneva, 1953–65, XXI, p. 55

Figure 30. Plate from an ensemble of 68 pieces painted at Charles de Lorraine's Porcelain Manufactory at Tervueren. © The Trustees of the British Museum

6.2. Cobenzl and the Cultural Heritage: Art of the Past – Art for the Future

The taste for 'old art', for Rubens and Van Dyck and other seventeenth-century painters, was extremely marked in the Austrian Netherlands, while contemporary artists, such as they were, struggled for recognition. There was a widespread perception of artistic decline, based on a comparison with the heyday of Rubens,[1] the decline itself exacerbated by that same insistence on seeing the past as a model of the future, on attempting to perpetuate the age of Rubens rather than looking forward to a new age.[2]

Developing out of his love of Rubens and out of his understanding of the importance of history per se (in which works of art played a key role through both the client/patron/donor and their place within a specific architectural or cultural context) was Cobenzl's concern for the painted heritage, increasingly manifested through an active involvement in promoting the conservation of works of art.

Cobenzl's view of Rubens as the key to the past that would open up the future – a view shared by many – inevitably influenced his approach to new art. Yet through his promotion not just of individuals but of a system of institutional patronage that would loosen the ties between artistic education and policy and the whim of an individual ruler, Cobenzl was to contribute to the radical overhaul of the arts in the region.

Art of the Past

Preservation of the Cultural Heritage: The damaged state of many of the great paintings in monastic institutions in the Austrian Netherlands was a matter of concern to nearly every writer on the region, including Descamps, Mensaert and Michel. Cobenzl turned his attention to this issue and the preservation of the painted heritage in the mid-1760s, almost certainly thanks to his growing love for Rubens, at its height between 1763 and 1768 (when he waxed lyrical about 'mon héros Rubens' to Winckelmann[3]).

Some of Rubens' works were known to him by reputation, others he saw during his occasional (rapid) tours of the provinces. His interest in the works in monastic houses,

[1] Christophe Loir, 'Le discours sur la décadence artistique dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens durant la second moitié du XVIII^{e} siècle', in: Valérie André, Bruno Bernard, eds, Le XVIII^{e}, un siècle de décadence? (Études sur le XVIII^{e} siècle, XVIII), Brussels, 2006, pp. 144–45

[2] See Pierre Loze, Denis Coekelberghs and Alain Jacobs in: Denis Coekelberghs, Pierre Loze, eds, Autour du néo-classicisme en Belgique: 1770–1830, exh. cat., Musée d'Ixelles, Brussels, 1985–86; Brussels, 1985, passim

[3] Cobenzl to Winckelmann, 8 March 1768; AGR, SEG, 1248, f. 246

some of which were manifesting all too great a readiness to sell their treasures, was motivated by both curiosity and acquisitiveness.

Cobenzl was horrified at what he learned about the state of works of art in many churches and monasteries but he was also aware of the dangers done by ill-considered and ill-executed conservation, on numerous occasions lamenting not so much the loss of an individual work as the damage to the overall heritage.[4] We cannot exclude that Descamps, who bewailed the destruction wrought by such efforts in his Voyage pittoresque,[5] discussed the matter with the Minister during his visits to Brussels.

This image has been removed for copyright reasons

Figure 31. After Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), The Stoning of St Stephen. The only Cobenzl drawing he had engraved. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Figure 32. Philippe-Joseph Tassaert (1732–1803), after Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640). The Stoning of St Stephen. 1765. © The Trustees of the British Museum

[4] e.g. Cobenzl to de Bors d'Overen, 1 May 1766; AGR, SEG, 1074, f. 94. Cobenzl's interest in promoting restoration has been recognised: Catheline Perier-D'Ieteren, La restauration en Belgique de 1830 à nos jours. Peinture, sculpture, architecture, Liège, 1991, p. 20

[5] Jean-Baptiste Descamps, Voyage Pittoresque de la Flandre et du Brabant, Paris, 1769, p. xi

One example of poor restoration was the altarpiece of The Stoning of St Stephen at the Abbey of Saint-Amand north of Valenciennes, for which Cobenzl owned what he thought was Rubens' original drawing.[6] The Grand Prior informed Cobenzl that the Tournai painter Jean-Auguste-Druon Cardinael (1731–?) had cleaned many of their paintings and transferred the St Stephen to a new canvas. This 'restoration' was Cardinael's most (in)famous work and modern scholars are far from flattering. Nonetheless the restorer enjoyed some success and obtained an exemption on customs duties to enable him to bring paintings in from France and send them back after being transferred to a new canvas.[7]

From at least as early as September 1763,[8] Cobenzl's restorer of choice was the Brussels painter Pierre Donckers (c. 1722 – after 1780). He employed the artist to assess paintings and try to negotiate their purchase (it was Donckers who purchased Rubens' Cimon and Pero in 1763–64[9]) but he also recommended him wholeheartedly to those with paintings in need of attention. Through the offices of Cobenzl Donckers restored The Adoration of the Magi at the Convent at Louvain (now King's College Chapel, Cambridge), and this was to be mentioned by Cobenzl repeatedly in recommendation of his achievements. He suggested in 1765 to G. de Potter, a canon at Ghent, that Donckers be employed on restoring their Descent from the Cross by Rombouts but Potter demurred, explaining that all their paintings had already been restored by one van Laer of Malines.[10]

In May 1766 Cobenzl made a tour of the province, taking the opportunity to view works by Rubens.[11] In consequence, he suggested that the Adoration of the Magi in the Church of St John at Malines, still in situ, be restored by Donckers,[12] and successfully negotiated the purchase of a large painting, The Virgin Giving the Rosary to St Dominic, from the Dominicans of the Hermitage in Lier.[13] The painting was being damaged by humidity and Cobenzl saw his purchase not just as a personal victory but as the salvation of the work.[14]

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[6] Cardinael to Cobenzl, 14 May 1766; AGR, SEG, 1081, f. 22. De Monchaux correspondence, 1766; AGR, SEG, 1116, ff. 28–34. The drawing, OR 5510, is no longer given to Rubens.

[7] Charles Piot, 'Jean-August-Druon Cardinael', Bulletin de la Société historique et littéraire de Tournai, III, 1853, pp. 214–17; Alexandre Pinchart, 'Cardinael (Jean-August-Druon), Ibid., XIII, 1869, pp. 161–63

[8] Cobenzl to Van Citters, 28 September 1763; AGR, SEG, 1234, f. 216

[9] Cobenzl to Dorn, 21 January 1764; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 125

[10] Potter correspondence, November 1765; AGR, SEG, 1198, ff. 264–65

[11] The itinerary set out clearly in M. Mees, 'Van Kluis naar Hermitage. Het Rozenkransschilderij van P. P. Rubens uit het Kluizekerz van Lier', Lira elegans. Liers genootschap voor geschiedenis. Jaarboek 1991, pp. 109–54

[12] Cobenzl to de Bors d'Overen, 1 May 1766; AGR, SEG, 1074, f. 94

[13] Mees 1991

[14] Cobenzl to Brenart, 30 October 1766; AGR, SEG, 1078, f. 320

Figure 33. Adriaen Lommelin (1637–73) after Peter Paul Rubens, The Virgin Giving the Rosary to St Dominic. 1669. After the painting owned by Cobenzl, now State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow. © The Trustees of the British Museum

Art of the Past on Sale: While Cobenzl was much concerned with preserving works of art in danger of deterioration, keeping them in situ but ensuring their maintenance, he was unable to counter a much greater danger to the national heritage, the sale or transfer of works of art abroad, increasingly lamented in his correspondence from the mid-1760s. Despite his growing realisation of the threat posed by this trend, Cobenzl himself was to send works out of the country, for a combination of motives.

While in the abstract he looked to bring benefit first to the region and ultimately to the centre, personal interest was also at play, particularly where it did not contradict the interests of Vienna. This is particularly visible in Cobenzl's role as intermediary, sending works of art out of the Austrian Netherlands. Such actions were hugely beneficial to him personally, allowing him to maintain and extend his network of relationships through exchange and mutual service. Where his role involved commissioning new works from local artists such actions were unambiguous and not in conflict with his overall purpose of economic and intellectual stimulation, but where the task involved acquiring and despatching works of art by the great masters of the past there was a conflict that he came increasingly to recognise.

If in 1756 he had few qualms about acquiring a painting by Rubens for Wilhelm VIII of Hesse-Kassel, by 1762 he was much more aware of the terrible loss caused by the perpetual outflow of art. In July that year Van Schorel asked him to facilitate the transportation of a painting to Remy in Paris. Van Dyck's Family Portrait now in the Hermitage (GE 543), was intended for Cobenzl's friend Lalive de Jully, and Cobenzl was torn: 'Je le trouve admirable et regretterois encore d'avantage qu'il part de notre pays, s'il n'etoit pas destiné pour une personne que j'estime infiniment'.[15]

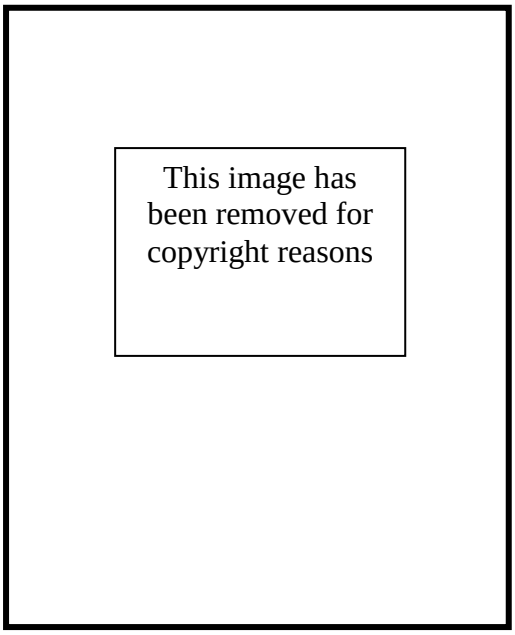

Figure 34. Anthony Van Dyck (1599–1641), Family Portrait. Cobenzl facilitated the delivery of the picture to Lalive in Paris. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

But from start to finish Cobenzl had no qualms about despatching works of art to Vienna, particularly for the royal collection. During his survey of the different buildings occupied for state purposes in 1754 he noticed that the Chambre des Comptes had two paintings that were, as he saw it, quite superfluous to the body's purpose and which should be sent to Vienna, one of them an Ecce Homo thought to be by Van Dyck, 'un des plus beaux ouvrages de ce grand peintre'.[16] A copy was made of this and the original sent to Vienna.[17]

[15] Cobenzl to Van Schorel, 24 July 1762; AGR, SEG, 1235, f. 322

[16] Cobenzl to Koch, 25 January 1755; AGR, SEG, 1162, f. 35. Cobenzl to Sylva-Tarouca, late January or early February; AGR, SEG, 1261, f. 304

[17] Cobenzl to Sylva-Tarouca; AGR, SEG, 1261, f. 355. The letter from the Chambre des Comptes accompanying the painting was dated 16 May 1755; Ibid., f. 357.

The question of what belonged to the sovereign and what to the Governor or the local administration was an open one. Cobenzl thought sending the painting from the Brussels to Vienna was simply to move the Crown's possessions from one place to another but then found that the Chambre des Comptes, whilst prepared to cede the work, insisted that it go as a 'gift', i.e. it was not the property of the Crown. There was similar confusion in other areas. What properties belonged to the Governor by virtue of his position and what were his private goods? The Holy Family by Rubens said to belong to Charles de Lorraine was commissioned 1614–15 for the official residence, the Coudenberg Palace, by a previous Governor, Archduke Albert, and was 'his' solely by right of his position.[18]

Figure 35. Philippe-Joseph Tassaert (1732–1803), after Peter Paul Rubens. The Holy Family. After the painting owned by Charles de Lorraine, now in the Wallace Collection in London. © The Trustees of the British Museum

In one case at least Cobenzl was less keen to send works to Vienna, since the matter concerned items belonging to him personally. In May 1758 he purchased eight 'cartoons' by Gillis (Aegidius) Smeyers (1634/3–1710) for paintings showing the sittings of the Great

[18] Other paintings removed from the Coudenberg Palace were lodged with the monks of St Jacques-sur-Coudenberg and these were definitely Crown property. These were the cause of some contention in 1762 when rumours reached Vienna that they were preparing to sell the works. Dorn correspondence, May 1762. AGR, SEG, 1119, ff. 61–63

Council at Malines.[19] This was the very time when Cobenzl was shaping his ideas for a history of the Southern Netherlands and the purchase should be set within that context. Wouters, entrusted with describing the paintings,[20] found them to be of a 'rare curiosity' but was unable to work out just what they were and it was only in 1762 that Cobenzl identified the subjects and author, through a member of the Privy Council and the grandson of the artist.[21]

Cobenzl made the mistake of boasting of his acquisition to Dorn in Vienna, stressing that the paintings were 'precieux par ce qu'ils representent'.[22] Dorn described the paintings to Kaunitz and the Chancellor suggested that Cobenzl cede the works to him.[23] The sacrifice was, of course, made, and the paintings were sent off in June.

A National Treasure-house: In justification for Cobenzl's readiness to send works abroad, we must cite a number of circumstances, from the perception of the Southern Netherlands as one large public museum of national art, with superb works on display in numerous churches (rather than in private collections) to the lack of a public repository for other works, i.e. a public museum or gallery.

Over the course of the 1760s. Cobenzl came to believe that the art of the Southern Netherlands should be kept within the region, in situ or in the hands of a local collector – or of course in the hands of the royal family (which meant at times that the concept of the 'region' be extended to encompass Vienna). This was perhaps in part because of his belief that it was through a study of the art of the past that the art of the future would be made. If in 1761 the 'ancients' whom he wanted young artists to study seemed to be those of Italy,[24] by the middle of the decade he was just as concerned that the models in their own land – the paintings of Rubens and his circle – be preserved for those who could not travel.

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[19] Villermont incorrectly identified the source as the Marquis d'Herzelles and called the artist Sneyers; Comte Carlos de Villermont, La cour de Vienne à Bruxelles au XVIII[e] siècle, Le comte de Cobenzl, ministre plénipotentiaire aux Pays-Bas, Lille–Paris–Bruges, 1925, p. 182. Bronne suggested they were flower paintings; Carlo Bronne, 'Le comte de Cobenzl. Un mécène prodigue à Bruxelles', Revue générale belge, 103/5, May 1968, p. 67.

[20] Wouters and Cobenzl correspondence, April 1759; AGR, SEG, 1249, ff. 271, 278–79; 2641, ff. 309–10

[21] Jacobs correspondence, 1762; AGR, SEG, 1151, ff. 66–76. Letter from Smeyers 4 March 1762; AGR, SEG, 1151, ff. 77 (Flemish original), 78 (French translation). It is clear that the paintings featured in the Steenhault sale in 1758 under the name of Diepenbeeck. Steenhault sale Brussels 22.5.1758; French edn, lot 161. There acquired by Wouters on behalf of Cobenzl. AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 53; AGR, SEG, 1151, f. 84

[22] AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 53v–54

[23] Dorn to Cobenzl, Vienna, 10 May 1762; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 61

[24] Cobenzl to Dorn, 29 June 1761; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 13v

But where could young artists study great Flemish art if it was mouldering in religious houses or being sold abroad? Where could works of art in danger be rehoused? The Southern Netherlands was not a nation, nor was the monarch in residence. The succession of governors, however much they wished to see themselves as de facto rulers, were only temporarily in charge, with no royal dynasty, no succession, to ensure within these lands.

Of the resident governors of the Southern Netherlands since the sixteenth century few created art collections that were displayed in separate galleries or cabinets. The main 'collector' governors – Albert and Isabella, Archduke Leopold Wilhelm, Maximilian II Emmanuel and Eugene of Savoy – left no free-standing collections behind in Brussels. Charles de Lorraine apparently acquired (and disposed of) large quantities of paintings but they were used to fill the space of his new palaces.[25] His collections, such as they were, were most definitely private, not state, property.

There was, therefore, no physical body of works which might be appropriated for a national museum. More importantly, however, the Austrian Netherlands had not yet developed the strong united national consciousness that was such a driving force in the creation of museums from the eighteenth through the nineteenth century.[26]

There was little sign in Brussels of public discussion – of the kind seen across Europe – of how to make art accessible to the public, for the education of both artists and public taste. Cobenzl, for all his interest in enlightenment and the institutions that support and develop the arts and learning, makes no mention of museums, galleries or similar bodies. If there are three requirements for the revitalisation of the arts – the formation of public taste, the renewal of the status of the artist and institutional reform[27] – Cobenzl introduced or supported initiatives that led to the second and third of these, but apparently none that had any influence on the first. There was no talk even of public exhibitions. However much the subject was discussed in artistic circles, it was only after Cobenzl's death that the first

[25] See the paintings listed by Leo de Ren, 'Rubens hebben we al. De Weense selectie uit de schilderijencollectie van Karel Alexander van Lotharingen', in: Katlijne Van der Stighelen, ed., Munuscula Amicorum. Contributions on Rubens and his Colleagues in Honour of Hans Vlieghe, Turnhout, 2006, pp. 509–26. Dezallier d'Argenville mentions very few works belonging to Charles de Lorraine; [Joseph-Antoine Dezallier d'Argenville,] Abrégé de la vie des plus fameux peintres, 2nd edn, 4 vols, Paris, 1762, III, p. 298.

[26] On the eighteenth-century background to the foundation of Belgian museums see Christophe Loir, La secularisation des oeuvres d'art dans le Brabant (1773–1842). La création du musée de Bruxelles (Études sur le XVIII^{e} siècle, volume hors série 8), Brussels, 1998

[27] Loir 2006, pp. 143–50

suggestions were made that a public gallery be established.[28] Without the nationalist impulse to drive them, however, they were bound to fail.

Nonetheless, by 1777 the threat of losses through sale and deterioration was so serious that Charles de Lorraine – at the prompting no doubt of Starhemberg – wrote to the magistrate of Brussels to insist on the inventorisation of all paintings kept under mainmort. The reason he gave for his concern for what was essentially private property was specifically the public interest, that they were central to the formation of taste.[29]

Art for the Future

Art Education in the Austrian Netherlands: Just a month after taking up his post in Brussels, in October 1753 Cobenzl agreed to become Protecteur Général of the Académie de peinture at Ghent. This was the first official expression of support for the arts since the Austrians had taken over the Southern Netherlands.[30] By taking on the position, Cobenzl acknowledged the importance of the tasks of public figures set out by Jonathan Richardson Senior in his Traité de la peinture in 1728, and that the promotion of young artists was a function of the state. The importance of that function in his eyes was to be consistently demonstrated over the next sixteen years, often in the teeth of strong opposition (or at least marked procrastination) from Vienna.

The instability of the various academies of art in the different parts of the Austrian Netherlands was almost immediately brought home to Cobenzl. The secretary of the Ghent Académie set out in detail its problems, which were those faced by art schools across the region – absence of young members, absence of clients, huge debts and absence of support from the city.[31] It was not only painters and sculptors who suffered from lack of places to study or career opportunities: the drawing schools and academies were the places that trained craftsmen of all kind, from carpenters and joiners to porcelain painters and gilders. Artistic revival depended upon them.

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[28] Firstly in the wake of the secularisation of the works of art belonging to the Jesuits; AGR, Comité jésuitique, 'Extrait du Protocole du Comité établi pour les Affaires des ci-devants Jésuites', 6/A, f. 768v, 13 August 1774. Cited in: Loir 2006, p. 149. See also: Loir 1998; Christophe Loir, L'émergence des beaux-arts en Belgique: institutions, artistes, public et patrimoine (1773–1835), Brussels, 2004. Then after the death of the collector Gabriel-François-Joseph de Verhulst in 1779; AGR, SEG, 1922, 'Brabant 1778' (document indicated by Xavier Duquenne)

[29] Cited in: Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles. 275 ans d'enseignement, exh. cat., Musées Royaux des beaux-arts de Belgique, Bruxelles, 1987, p. 27

[30] Alain Jacobs, 'Le mécénat officiel', in: Charles-Alexandre de Lorraine: gouverneur général des Pays-Bas autrichiens, exh. cat., Palais de Charles de Lorraine, Brussels, 1987 (Europalia 1987–I), p. 85

[31] Bailly correspondence, May–October 1754; AGR, SEG, 1066, ff. 157–63

Cobenzl could not but be aware of the reforms taking place in artistic education in other parts of Europe. His understanding of the potential of drawing schools was rooted not just in the ideas so clearly set out in the writings of Richardson but in his experience in Mainz, where the Elector founded the art academy in 1747, shortly after his arrival. In the Austrian Netherlands, his ideas must have been stimulated by the example of Bruges, where unprecedented local support did much to contribute to its success.[32]

Figure 36. Philippe-Joseph Tassaert (1732–1803), A Drawing Academy. 1764. © The Trustees of the British Museum

Numbering among its graduates Joseph-Benoît Suvée (1743–1807), who went on to teach at the Académie in Paris and then became head of the French Académie in Rome, and Bernard Verschoot (1730–83), Court painter to Charles de Lorraine, the Academy took advantage of a fire in 1753 to revitalise and reorganise itself.[33] Helped by the city, the Church and private citizens, and by Cobenzl (who persuaded Charles de Lorraine to

[32] On the Bruges Academy see: Domeniek Dendooven, 'Les collections d'artistes à Bruges au XVIII[e] siècle: miroirs d'un goût changeaut et matériaux pédagogiques?', in: Sophie Raux, ed., Collectionner dans les Flandres et la France du Nord au XVIII[e] siècle, Lille, 2005, pp. 108–12

[33] L. de la Villette correspondence, March–November 1755; AGR, SEG, 1240, ff. 178–96

become a patron), Bruges was the model (rather than Paris) to which Lille looked when seeking to establish its own drawing school.[34]

The fragmentary nature of the Southern Netherlands meant that experience in one region was not easy to transfer to another. Artists tended to describe themselves by the name of their town of origin (at best describing themselves as 'flamand', but usually as 'of Bruges' or 'of Antwerp'). The success of regional art schools depended largely on the level of support they received from the city fathers. In the absence of an over-arching institution to coordinate them there was little that Cobenzl could do. Central government limited itself to the issue of a number of medals, despite all attempts to persuade Vienna otherwise.[35]

Nonetheless, Cobenzl did the best he could without significant financial resources. Above all, he persuaded Charles de Lorraine to take the drawing academies under his protection: Ghent in 1754, Antwerp in 1755, Bruges in 1755. These were followed in 1763 by the adoption of the Brussels Academy. When the Governor became protector of the Academy in Antwerp in 1755 he was persuaded to revive the privileges it had previously enjoyed but which it had been forced to cede to the city Magistrate in the late 1740s.[36] Jacobs stressed that by doing this the Prince 'pouvait se présenter comme l'héritier et le continuateur de la politique artistique des princes du XVIIe siècle', stressing both historical continuity and status, and his own enlightened policies.[37]

Both Cobenzl and Charles de Lorraine promoted the adoption of the regional academies by Maria Theresa: Brussels in 1767, Antwerp in 1768 and Bruges in 1769. The process continued after Cobenzl's death: Charles de Lorraine adopted Malines in 1773 and Courtrai the following year; Maria Theresa and/or Joseph II became patrons of Ghent in

[34] Vicq to Cobenzl, 8 February 1755, boasting to this effect; AGR, SEG, 1239, f. 304. See also: Gaëtane Maës, Les Salons de Lille de l'Ancien Régime à la Restauration (1773–1820), Dijon, 2004, p. 29. Citing a request for information addressed by the Lille Magistrate to the Bruges Magistrate, 10 January 1755, and the reply of 23 February: Archives Municipales de Lille, 663, ff. 9v–16. Although Lille was part of France, it had been part of the Southern Netherlands until 1668 and there was an ongoing tie resulting both from this historical link and from the geographical proximity.

[35] See e.g. Denis Coekelberghs, Les Peintres belges à Rome de 1700 à 1830 (Études d'histoire de l'art / Institut historique belge de Rome, III), Brussels–Rome, 1976, pp. 186–87 and note 304

[36] In a letter to Cobenzl dated 9 February 1765 Descamps declared that in the preface to his Vie des peintres flamands 'Je vous avois déjà désigné dans les préfaces de ces quatre volumes comme le Mécène du Brabant. Je vous ay reconnu pour tel par votre envie de rétablir les arts, par votre goût et votre choix dans la collection qui fait vos délices, mais autant par vos conseils et vos largesses pour les élèves de votre école d'Anvers'; AGR, SEG, 1116, f. 84. Cobenzl is not mentioned in the prefaces, which would indeed have been strange as the first volume was only published in 1753, the second in 1754. It is the third volume, therefore, published in 1760, that we find a eulogy not to Cobenzl but to Charles de Lorraine, with a mistaken date of 1750 for the adoption of the Antwerp Academy. Jean-Baptiste Descamps, La vie des peintres flamands, allemands et hollandois, 4 vols, Paris, 1753–63, III, 1760, p. xii

[37] Jacobs 1987, pp. 84–94

1771, Audenarde, Courtrai and Malines in 1776, Ypres in 1780 and Mons in 1789. Whilst Cobenzl was pleased to let the Governor present prizes at the academies, he himself kept a close eye on the pupils' achievements and the presentation of prizewinning students of the Antwerp Academy to the Minister in Brussels was a more or less regular event.[38]

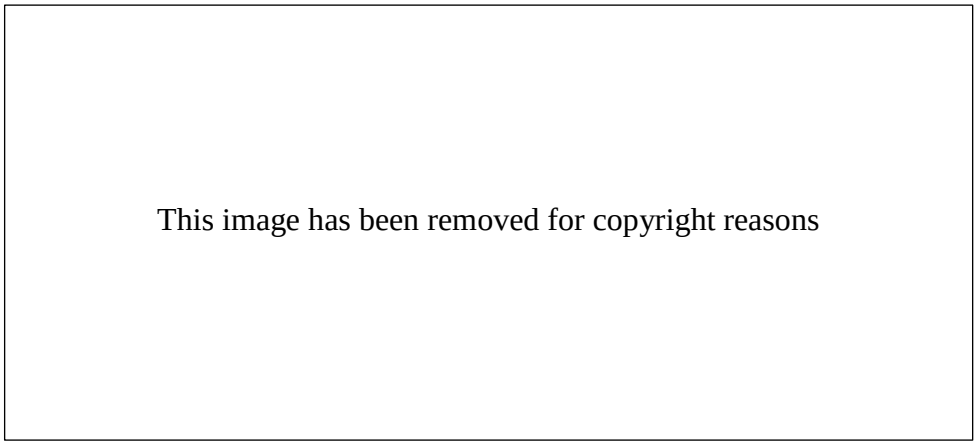

Figure 37. Matthijs de Visch (1701–65), Charles de Lorraine as Protector of the Academy of Arts in Bruges. Musea Brugge © Lukas–Art in Flanders vzw, photo Hugo Maertens

The Minister supported painters and sculptors, and was hopeful that the Antwerp engraver Pierre François (Peeter Frans) Martenasie (1729–89) would revive the art of engraving. In July 1761 he boasted to Dorn of the progress being made by Martenasie's pupils, but more particularly of his own role in their education, exclaiming 'Je forme de jeunes gens [my emphasis – CVP], dont j'ai l'honneur de vous envoyer les premieres productions'.[39]

[38] e.g. Van Schorel correspondence, March 1762, March 1766; AGR, SEG, 1235, ff. 301–2, 414

[39] Cobenzl to Dorn, 15 July 1761; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 16. The prints he sent were by Antoon Overlaet (1720–74) and Andries Cornelis Lens (1739–1822).

Thus when Cobenzl commissioned a painting from Maerten Jozef Geeraerts (1707–91) in June 1759, leaving the subject to the artist's discretion, the artist chose to praise him (the personification of government) – six years before Descamps' flattering description of the Minister – as a wise administrator and patron of the commerce which made possible the flourishing of the arts:

> 'le sujet est le genie Heroïque du gouvernement representé avec l'égide de Pallas et la lance portant dans la main une tige d'olivier en signe de paix, le genie de la prudence portant son attribut, la justice avec sa balance, la Mansuetude dont l'allegorie est l'elephant, le genie du Negoce avec son caduce de Mercure d'ou resulte l'abondance protectrice des beaux-arts qui par sa munificence les fait fleurir &c.'[40]

By May 1762 Cobenzl could boast of the academies of Antwerp, Bruges and Tournai, whilst admitting the mediocrity of that in Ghent and despairing that 'celle de Bruxelles n'a pas figure humaine', although he was about to take it in hand.[41] Not only had the Brussels Academy reached a state of acute crisis by 1762, but the Guild of St Luke had vast debts, on which it was paying 8,000 florins in interest alone.[42] It was indeed reforms promoted by Cobenzl between 1764 and 1768 that led to improvement.[43]

In supporting these academies, Cobenzl persistently stressed their utility,[44] the word used by Richardson and a word that recurs throughout the Minister's correspondence. His own initiatives were practical – dealing with financing and commissions, buildings and medals. At no point did he ever mention or express any desire to become involved in matters of theory or the teaching programme, or any interest in the question of whether the arts were liberal or mechanical. Over the course of sixteen years, pragmatic utilitarianism was the defining characteristic of Cobenzl's support for young artists, as it was of his promotion of the artistic industries.

Exhibitions: One important trend in Paris and London was not reflected in the Austrian Netherlands. As art moved beyond the walls of aristocratic mansions, opportunities for living artists to display their works were vital: this was possible at the Salon in Paris and in London through a number of small organisations such as the Foundling Hospital and the Society of Arts. The growth of the exhibition was a marked feature of the age. In the

[40] Geeraerts to Cobenzl, 17 July 1759; AGR, SEG, 1131, f. 145. He said that he had taken the subject from Cesare Ripa's Iconologia.

[41] Cobenzl to Dorn, 1 May 1762; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 59

[42] Dries Lyna, 'The Cultural Construction of Value: Art Auctions in Antwerp and Brussels (1700–1794)', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Antwerp, 2010, p. 101

[43] Académie Royale des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles 1987

[44] AGR, SEG, 1239, f. 306

Austrian Netherlands, however, even Antwerp had no regular exhibitions that might promote contemporary works. Moreover, the restrictive practices and guild statutes that were to be altered only in the early 1770s still held sway over artistic production and sale, even as society changed.[45]

Since the greatest demand in the Austrian Netherlands was for art of the Golden Age, i.e. it was largely a secondhand market, by far the greatest proportion of works of art were sold until well beyond the middle of the century either in the house of a recently deceased owner or via licensed sellers at the Friday Market. The rise of the auction in the second half of the century does not seem to have led to a decline in the quantity of works available at the Friday Market, only their quality.[46] If artists were banned from having their own shops in Paris, the situation was somewhat different in the Austrian Netherlands, where artists sold not only their own works but those of others, including Old Masters, from their studios. Elizabeth Percy, Duchess of Northumberland, described one of her many visits to the Netherlands in 1771, visiting private collections and various sellers of paintings, among them the Beschey brothers, who had on offer both Old Masters and contemporary works.[47]

This recycling of old paintings (or copying and imitating, even faking, them) was the dominant feature of the market for art in the Austrian Netherlands, with only limited opportunities to advertise the wares of living artists. The Salon in Lille, which opened in 1773, and the art school that preceded it in 1755, were aimed at training and promoting artists.[48] The Salon, with its emphasis on presenting contemporary art, thus grew naturally out of the art school. This demonstrated that Paris was also a significant factor in the development of the Lille art situation.[49] For all the influence of Bruges on Lille, however, there was to be no similar influence of Lille (Paris) on the Austrian Netherlands.

Artists at Home and Abroad: With the academies just starting to come into their own, no established exhibition spaces, little market for contemporary fine paintings and only a limited range of major building projects requiring architects and artists, the Austrian

[45] Coekelberghs, Loze 1985; Loir 2004

[46] On the secondhand art market and the rise of the auction in the eighteenth century, see e.g. Raux 2005; Filip Vermeylen, 'The Art of the Dealer. Marketing Paintings in Early Modern Antwerp', in: Hans Cools, Marika Keblusek, Badeloch Noldus, eds, Your Humble Servant. Agents in Early Modern Europe, Hilversum, 2006, pp. 109–19; D. Lyna, 'Changing Geographies and the Rise of the Modern Auction: Transformations on the Second-hand Markets of Eighteenth-century Antwerp', in: Bruno Blondé, Natacha Coquery, Jon Stobart, Ilja Van Damme, eds, Fashioning Old and New. Changing Consumer Patterns in Western Europe (1650–1900), Turnhout, 2009 , pp. 169–85

[47] [Elizabeth Percy,] A Short Tour Made in the Year 1771, London, 1775, pp. 83–86

[48] Maës 2004

[49] Maës 2004, pp. 28, 67. On the growing trend towards 'national' preferences for contemporary works in Paris, see: Colin Bailey, Patriotic Taste, New Haven–London, 2002.

Netherlands lacked many of the conditions necessary for the arts to flourish. Like Charles de Lorraine, Cobenzl needed decorative artists and portrait painters to work on the transformation of his residence and soon discovered the limitations of the talents on offer. His acquisition of tapestries and porcelain for himself and others brought home the lack of skilled designers. Within the first few years, therefore, he had a good understanding of the burning need for change. One of the keys, he felt, was the creation of a system of pensions to enable artists to study abroad and eventually of a school in Rome.

A School in Rome: The subject of pensioners and a school and Rome has been dealt with in detail by Denis Coekelberghs, who cited many of the original documents.[50] Because of the specific parameters of Coekelberghs' book, Belgian painters in Rome, he did not look at Cobenzl's contacts with other artists abroad, notably those in Paris, and he was unaware of how Cobenzl's contacts with young artists studying abroad was reflected in his Cabinet of Drawings.

Coekelberghs convincingly suggested that it was the appointment of Hyacinthe De la Pegna (1706–72) to the post of Court painter that did much to stimulate Cobenzl's understanding of a way forward for the arts, particularly the importance of a stay in Rome and the idea of creating a school there to enable a regular stream of young artists to gain advantage from study in Italy.[51] De la Pegna was recommended to Cobenzl by Cardinal Albani in March 1754 and the appointment as Court painter came in August that year. De la Pegna's specific remit was to produce cartoons for Brussels' tapestry industry.[52]

We should not forget, however, that Flemish artists had been successfully travelling abroad to train for some time[53] and there were others besides De la Pegna pushing Cobenzl for a recognition of the profitable nature of such study trips. In March 1755, a month before De la Pegna returned from Rome, L. de la Villette reported the success of the Bruges Academy both in its own teaching and in producing students who had gone on to study in Paris and Rome.[54] Some artists found sponsorship to cover their training, such as Joseph Dreppe (1737–1810) of Liège, who spent the period 1758–61 in Rome on a grant from the

[50] Coekelberghs 1976; Denis Coekelberghs, 'Le Voyage en Italie', in: Coekelberghs, Loze 1985, pp. 35–42; Denis Coekelberghs, 'Les peintres belges à Rome aux XVII^{e} et XIX^{e} siècles. Bilan, apports nouveaux et propositions', in: Nicole Dacos, Cecile Dulière, eds, Italia Belgica: la Fondation nationale Princesse Marie-Jose et les relations artistiques entre la Belgique et l'Italie 1930–2005: 75^{e} anniversaire (Études d'histoire de l'art, IX), Brussels, 2005, pp. 236–85

[51] Coekelberghs 1976, p. 187; Coekelberghs, Loze 1985, p. 35

[52] On De la Pegna see: Coekelberghs 1976, pp. 138–53

[53] See e.g. Louis Réau, Histoire de l'expansion de l'art français, II: Belgique et Hollande, Suisse, Allemagne, et Autriche, Bohème et Hongrie, Paris, 1928, pp. 13–41, 276–81

[54] De la Villette correspondence, March 1755; AGR, SEG, 1240, f. 181

Fondation Darchis.[55] A letter from the Bishop of Bruges in 1759 mentioned that the local artist Andreas de Muynck (1737–1813) was heading to study in Rome.[56]

De la Pegna was certainly the catalyst for the start of Cobenzl's personal correspondence with Jacques Dorn,[57] from April 1757 head of the newly established Department of the Southern Netherlands in Vienna. In 1759 Cobenzl sent him two views of Rome by De la Pegna[58] and the artist himself followed soon after, spending three years in Vienna working for the Court. Dorn and Cobenzl were already acquainted and they corresponded on official matters, but their exchange of opinions on artistic matters took off after this, becoming intense between 1761 and late 1765.

It is tempting to see not De la Pegna himself, but this example of the successful identification by Cobenzl of an artist then promoted to the Court in Vienna, as the catalyst for yet another aspect of Cobenzl's activities, the search for contemporary artists who might, like works of art of the past (such as the 'Van Dyck' from the Chambre des Comptes), be seen as yet another contribution from the Austrian Netherlands (via Cobenzl) to the Austrian centre. Certainly thereafter Cobenzl was to seek artists not only for his own purposes, but with a view to their potential progression to the Court in Vienna. He was keen to identify areas in which Vienna was deficient – whether in terms of finance or art – and then remedy the situation, to promote himself through the successful promotion of his protégés. Having made the acquaintance of the pastellist Pierre Bernard (1704–77), he wrote to Dorn in 1761: 'On dit que vous manqués des peintres de portraits à Vienne. Si cela est je pourrais tacher de le persuader à s'y rendre.'[59] We should contrast this with his relative indifference to artists already known in Vienna, such as Gregorio Guglielmi, who also applied for his patronage.[60] He concentrated on those whom he might be said to have 'discovered', such as De la Pegna and the Bruges painter Jan Garemyn (1712–99).

Cobenzl agitated for pensions for a number of young artists, persuading Charles de Lorraine to provide financing (although the money did not necessarily come out of the Governor's own funds). The first artist to receive a pension to study in Rome was Antoine

[55] Coekelberghs, Loze 1985, pp. 56–57
[56] Bishop of Bruges to Cobenzl, [?] 1759. AGR, SEG, 1079, f. 99
[57] AGR, SEG, 1119, ff. 1–199
[58] Dorn correspondence, February–March 1759; AGR, SEG, 1119, ff. 1–2
[59] Cobenzl to Dorn, 25 May 1761; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 10
[60] Guglielmi correspondence, December 1763 – January 1764; AGR, SEG, 1137, ff. 259–63

Cardon (1739–1822), who arrived in the city in 1760.[61] He was followed in November 1761 by François-Joseph Lonsing (1739–99) and Herman (Armand) Gillis (1733 – after 1777) of Antwerp,[62] the latter on a pension direct from Vienna. In addition, Cobenzl supported Andries Cornelis Lens (1739–1822), who financed his study in Rome through other means, and apparently discussed artistic matters with the young Suvée, whose career unfolded largely in Paris and at the Académie de France in Rome. Two artists were taken up by Cobenzl and received pensions after his death, the by no means young painter Pierre Verhaghen (1728–1811) and the sculptor Charles-François Van Poucke (1740–1809).

It was perhaps the support for Gillis from both Dorn and Kaunitz that led Cobenzl to see in Dorn a potential promoter of his own ambitions for the revival of the Flemish school at the heart of the Austrian government.[63] Dorn's letter introducing Gillis concentrated on the potential for individual patronage of the artist and his brother (the sculptor Joseph Gillis, 1724–73), but Cobenzl looked beyond this to the wider picture. Taking a moment to remind Dorn that it was he personally who had started the idea of sending young artists to Rome ('J'y ai depuis plus d'un an le petit Carton'), and fully cognisant of the limitations imposed by the Seven Years War, Cobenzl enthused of the success that could be achieved through support for a revival of 'notre ancienne peinture'[64]

Referring to 'le retablissement de notre ecole flamande' (the use of the word 'notre' perhaps a political act, to reinforce to Dorn that the Austrian Netherlands were part of the Austrian territories and not a rival state), Cobenzl noted that De la Pegna had already 'formé un projet sur cela'.[65] A school would bring glory to the reign of Maria Theresa and bring huge advantage to her people.[66] He was sufficiently encouraged by Dorn's tone to apply to him for support a month later when he wished for Kaunitz's agreement for a pension for Lonsing. The pension was approved, but the order came back to Brussels not to support any more artists until the first results of these trials were known.[67]

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[61] On Cardon see: Coekelberghs 1976, pp. 154–61; Paul de Zuttere, 'L'oeuvre gravé de Antoine Alexandre Joseph Cardon (1739-1822) au Cabinet des Estampes de la Bibliothèque Royale Albert 1er à Bruxelles', unpublished thesis, Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1983–84

[62] Coekelberghs 1976, pp. 171–73

[63] See: 'Les projets de création d'une académie flamande à Rome', in: Coekelberghs 1976, pp. 186–92

[64] Dorn correspondence, May 1761; AGR, SEG, 1119, ff. 7–9

[65] Dorn correspondence, June 1761; AGR, SEG, 1119, ff. 11–13

[66] AGR, Ch. A., 494

[67] Coekelberghs 1976, pp. 161–71

Typically, in justifying his ideas, Cobenzl stressed that he wanted not a new foundation but a 're-establishment', citing historical precedent[68] (although Coekelberghs rightly pointed out its entirely legendary nature[69]), and sent a detailed plan for the school.[70]

The subject lapsed between 1762 and 1765, but Cobenzl returned to it in the spring of 1765, perhaps prompted by the arrival in Rome of Lens.[71] Despite Cobenzl's skill, playing cleverly on Dorn's dislike of French art ('Nous ne produisons pas des Rubens, mais je suis bien trompé si nous ne surpasserions pas bientot ce Greuze, qui fait l'admiration de Paris et bien peu la mienne'[72]), he was to be unable to persuade Dorn to adopt the project.

Artists from the Austrian Netherlands Training in Paris: In the highly negative attitude to French art expressed by both Cobenzl and Dorn we may see the reason why the Minister apparently ignored the education being received by artists of the Austrian Netherlands in Paris, both at the Académie and in private schools.[73]

Despite Kaunitz's re-orientation of Austrian policy towards an alliance with France, the growing French artistic influence in Vienna and (particularly in the wake of the French occupation in the 1740s) in Brussels, and of course Cobenzl's own preference for attractive French applied and decorative art,[74] as well as his involvment in forging Franco-Austrian alliances through marriages between major banking families, the Minister was consistent in his dislike of French painting. In this he found firm allies in Cardinal Albani and Abbot Poloni, responsible for overseeing the young artists sent to Rome.[75]

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[68] Cobenzl to Dorn, 1 May 1762; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 59v

[69] Coekelberghs 1976, pp. 188–89; Coekelberghs, Loze 1985, p. 42 note 3. The legend was referred to in a letter of 1797 by Suvée, who said he had investigated it and found it to be without basis. Suvée to Guinguené, 2-0 brumaire an 6 [10 November 1797], published by A. de Montaiglon in: Correspondance des directeurs de l'Académie de France à Rome, XVII, 1908, pp. 102–5

[70] Cobenzl to Dorn, 21 October 1762; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 78 (letter but without the plan).

[71] On Lens in Rome see: Coekelberghs 1976, pp. 205–14

[72] Cobenzl to Dorn, 29 March 1765; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 167

[73] See: Samuel Rocheblave, 'Note sur les élèves flamands inscrits à l'École académique de Paris entre les années 1765 et 1812', Annales de l'Académie Royale de Belgique, LXIX, 6e série, X, Anvers, 1922, pp. 146–79; Réau 1928; Gérard de Wallens, Les peintres belges actifs à Paris au XVIIIe siècle à l'exemple de Jacques François Delyen, peintre ordinaire du Roi (Gand, 1684 – Paris, 1761) (Institut Historique Belge de Rome. Études d'histoire de l'art XI), Brussels, 2010

[74] This has been dealt with in the context of comparison with the tastes of Charles de Lorraine: Thibaut Wolvesperges, 'Les achats parisiens de Charles-Alexandre de Lorraine (1712–1780)', in: Raux 2005, pp. 183–201; Reinier Baarsen, '"Ebénisterie" at the Court of Charles of Lorraine', The Burlington Magazine, February 2005, pp. 91–99; Reinier Baarsen, 'Sèvres in Brussels: the Collection of Charles of Lorraine', The French Porcelain Society Journal 3, 2007, pp. 45–57

[75] Both of them advised young artists to avoid the French and French taste. Cardon to Cobenzl, 10 May 1760. AGR, SEG, 1081, f. 28. Poloni to Cobenzl, 19 July 1760. AGR, SEG, 1195, ff. 440

This dislike of French art may be one reason why Cobenzl did so much to stress the need of a school in Rome, to draw them away from pernicious French influence. Yet some of the best artists were going to France to train, and many of them stayed there. Gérard de Wallens estimated that of 732 painters whom he identified as emerging from the Southern Netherlands in the eighteenth century, 130 trained or were active in Paris.[76]

Figure 38. Emmanuel-Bernard Hooghstoel (fl. mid-eighteenth century), Battle Between Ancient Warriors. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Cobenzl owned no works by Suvée, the most notable of the 'Parisian' Flemings, who later claimed that at the age of 25 (i.e. in 1768) he was discussing artistic policies with Cobenzl, but of the painters listed by Wallens in Paris, Cobenzl certainly had links with three: Emmanuel Hooghstoel of Ghent (active 1750s and 1760s) and Baroness Gertrude Pélichy (1743–1825), whose drawings he owned, and Bernard Verschoot, by whom he owned both paintings[77] and drawings. If Pélichy and Verschoot are sufficiently well known, Cobenzl's Cabinet is valuable in containing nine drawings by Hooghstoel, by whom no works have previously been identified.[78] By comparison, Cobenzl's Cabinet contained unmounted drawings by Cardon sent from Rome and a drawing apparently by Lonsing (the only

[76] Wallens 2010, p. 278

[77] A portrait of Countess Cobenzl, not part of the Cabinet; now Fondazione Palazzo Coronini Cronberg Onlus, Gorizia, inv. 1307

[78] Réau 1928, p. 280; Wallens 2010, p. 308. The drawings are OR 3876–3884

known work by the artist from this early stage of his career),[79] as well as other academic nudes clearly provided by artists enjoying his support.

Figure 39. Here attributed to François-Joseph Lonsing (1739–99), after Titian, Bacchanal of the Andrians. If this work truly is by Lonsing, it is the only known drawing from his early years. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

St-Julien-des-Flamands as the Basis for an Academy in Rome: After Jacques Dorn died in 1766, Cobenzl identified Baron Saint-Odille, Minister of the Grand Duke of Tuscany in Rome, with whom he had no previous acquaintance, as the individual through whom to pursue his project for an academy in Rome. He asked for assistance in drawing up plans and costs, and most particularly in obtaining a description of the French Académie in Rome, which Saint-Odille provided.[80]

In the face of Kaunitz's refusal to support the project, Cobenzl sought other means of financing on which Vienna would find it much harder to exert its authority, hence the idea of using the income from the hospice of Saint-Julien des Flamands in Rome for the support of artistic education.[81] In 1768 the young sculptor Charles-François Van Poucke, who had

[79] This is a copy of Titian's Bacchanal of the Andrians with the inscription 'Lonchin après Titien' in the cartouche on the mount; OR 4366.

[80] Saint-Odille correspondence, December 1766 – July 1767; AGR, SEG, 1211, ff. 34–35, 40–41. The correspondence with Saint-Odille is not covered in Coekelberghs 1976.

[81] Suvée to Guinguené, loc. cit.. Suvée would have been just 25 at the time and he had not yet established his by no means insignificant reputation.

previously studied in Paris,[82] went on to Rome. The following year Albani wrote to Cobenzl recommending him for financial support, as there were no sculptors in receipt of government pensions.[83] Appointed 'proviseur' of the hospice in April 1769, Van Poucke and the former seems to have been involved in drawing up early plans, which were to come to nothing thanks in part to Cobenzl's death in January 1770. Certainly he was the author of the 'Note de la consistance et projet d'arrangement pour l'hôpital flamand de St Julien à Rome' for the Deputies of Flanders in June 1779, when the project for using St-Julien-des-Flamands to finance pensions for artists was revived, again unsuccessfully, by Cobenzl's successor, Starhemberg.[84]

The Birth of Neoclassicism in the Austrian Netherlands: Cobenzl continued to interest himself in the progress of his protégés during their studies and after their return. Cardon came back in 1767 and Cobenzl not only recommended him as an engraver on the publication dealing with the Order of the Golden Fleece,[85] but employed him to engrave prints after two paintings in his Cabinet. Cardon was to go on to a hugely successful career as an engraver, but it was Lens who was to have the greatest effect on the future of Belgian painting.

Figure 40. Andries-Cornelis Lens (1739–1822), Athalia at the Coronation of Joas. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

[82] Réau 1928, pp. 276–81
[83] Albani to Cobenzl, 25 March 1769; AGR, SEG, 1059, f. 206
[84] Coekelberghs 1976, pp. 190–92
[85] Bors d'Oeveren correspondence, 1767; AGR, SEG, 1074, ff. 140–41

Already an established artist when he set off on his travels in October 1764, Lens immediately applied what he had learned in Rome when he returned in November 1768, not least in his theoretical writings.[86] His arrival on the scene was timely, just as the local academies were gaining strength with the active support of Cobenzl.[87] His ideas and advice – initially channelled via Cobenzl – contributed significantly to the reforms of 1773 which liberated artists from the guild system.[88]

Relatively few artists received pensions to go to Rome, but they recognised that although their money might come in the name of Charles de Lorraine, Cobenzl was responsible for its allocation.[89] Even where the pension had nothing to do with Cobenzl it was the example set by him that had established the principle.

The project led to a notable increase in artists travelling to study abroad. Many went to Paris – particularly from the middle of the 1760s – and some went on to Rome. The greater numbers of painters from the Austrian Netherlands in Paris has been linked with Suvée's appointment as professor at the Académie but the flow started much earlier, in 1765: Réau noted fifteen painters and engravers from the Austrian Netherlands who registered at the Académie between that year and 1770.[90] They came not only from the extremely active environment of Bruges, but from Mons and Antwerp, Hainaut and Tournai, Liège and Ghent, Brussels and Ath. Even if Cobenzl himself did not promote artistic training in Paris, in this phenomenon we should again see the wider ripples of Cobenzl's artistic policies.

Cobenzl may have sought to recreate the glories of the past rather than remake the taste of the nation (the ambition of his protégé Andries Lens[91]), but by encouraging artists to travel and see new worlds, he changed the mentality of succeeding generations.[92]

Cobenzl came under fire from both sides for his policies: from Vienna for demonstrating at times too great a willingness to promote projects that benefited the region rather than the centre, and from the different parts of the Austrian Netherlands and Charles de Lorraine

[86] On Lens see: Alain Jacobs, A. C. Lens, 1739–1822, exh. cat., Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp, 1989

[87] Coekelberghs 1976, p. 213

[88] Louis Galesloot, 'Documents relatifs à la formation et à la publication de l'ordonnance de Maria-Thérèse… qui affranchit les peintres, les sculpteurs et les architectes, aux Pays-Bas, de l'obligation de se faire inscrire dans les corps de métiers', Annales de l'Académie d'Archéologie de Belgique, 2e série, III, 1867, pp. 451–558, particularly pp. 451–65; Coekelberghs 1976, pp. 213–14; Loir 2004, pp. 42–52

[89] Cardon to Cobenzl, 28 October 1766; AGR, SEG, 1081, f. 87

[90] Réau 1928, pp. 276–81

[91] See the letters from Julien de Parme to Lens, published in: Pierre Rosenberg, 'Une correspondance de Julien de Parme (1736–1799)', Archives de l'art français, N.p., XXVI, 1984, pp. 197–245, letters III–IX.

[92] Coekelberghs in: Coekelberghs, Loze 1985, p. 38

himself – ever determined to gain popular acclaim – for introducing measures that benefited the centre to the detriment of the region. Such dissatisfaction on both sides perhaps suggests that the Minister had found a balanced path in the extremely uneasy equilibrium between Vienna and Brussels.[93] As early as 1776 Kaunitz was forced to admit that 'Les arts, cultivés autrefois avec tant d'éclat aux Pays-Bas, et tombés ensuite dans un anéantissement presque total, semblèrent se ranimer vers l'an 1767.'[94]

A Footnote: Cobenzl's Artistic Legacy in Vienna?

Despite resistance to Cobenzl's plans in Vienna, it was there that some of his ideas were to be realised just a few years after his death. Kaunitz's support for artistic training is dated to after the opening of the Vienna Kupferstichakademie in 1766. He became official Protector of the new, united, imperial Academy and was untiring in his attention to measures that would promote the professionalisation of Austrian artists, and encouraging the rehanging of the royal collection.[95] In May 1770 he urged Maria Theresa that 'support of the fine arts is an important part of the concern of a wise ruler'.[96] But the reasons he cited – such as that when the arts flourished in Vienna this would enhance tourism and encourage wealthy clients to spend their money in Austria rather than on foreign art – echo those argued so hotly by Botta Adorno back in 1749 with regard to the Austrian Netherlands and so readily taken up by Cobenzl. Kaunitz's advice to Maria Theresa and Joseph that they become honorary patrons of artistic societies came nearly twenty years after Cobenzl had given the same advice to Charles de Lorraine.[97] The programme set up in 1772 to train young Austrian artists in Rome was established a decade after such a programme was proposed for artists from the Austrian Netherlands by Cobenzl.[98] Moreover, Cobenzl's suggestion

[93] An opinion supported by De Boom; Ghislaine De Boom, Les Ministres plenipotentiaires dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens, principalement Cobenzl, Brussels, 1932, p. 242

[94] Report from Kaunitz to Maria Theresa, 26 August 1776; AGR, Ch. A, 482 (or 487), pièce D:103 ad lit. A:3 / no. 1. Cited in: Coekelberghs 1976, p. 443

[95] Gerlinde Gruber, ' "En un mot j'ai pensé à tout". Das Engagement des Wenzel Anton von Kaunitz-Rietberg für die Neuaufstellung der Gemäldegalerie im Belvedere', Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien, 10, 2008, pp. 191–205. Kaunitz's assistant was Cobenzl's nephew Philip.

[96] Kaunitz to Maria Theresa, 25 May 1770. AAbK, Verwaltungsakten, Fasz. 1. Cited in Szabo, p. 197

[97] For instance, he recommended they become honorary patrons of the Accademia di San Luca in Rome only in 1773. Kaunitz to Joseph II and Maria Theresa, 18 January 1773; AAbK, Verwaltungsakten, Karton 2

[98] Hertha Schmidinger, introduction, Artisti Austriaci a Roma dal Barocco alla Secessione, exh. cat., Museo di Roma, Palazzo Braschi, Rome, 1972, s.p.; Walter Wagner, 'Die Rompensionäre der Wiener Akademie der bildenden Künste, 1772–1848: Nach den Quellen im Archiv de Akademie', Römische Historische Mitteilungen, XIV, 1972, pp. 65–110

that monies raised by the Lotto in the Austrian Netherlands be used to finance the school in Rome was approved of, but used to finance training in Rome for Austrian artists.[99]

Cobenzl's passion for improving the training of artists, his understanding of the role of the arts within the context of economic, intellectual and political revival, have been interpreted as another sign that he was a true follower of Kaunitz. Tracing the rise of arts institutions in Belgium, Loir saw Vienna as the leader in creating and promoting new organisations.[100] But in Walter Wagner's history of the Academy he implies that Kaunitz used the Austrian Netherlands as an example when trying to free Austrian artists of the guild regulations that gave them the status of artisans.[101]

Which leads us to consider whether the chronology of Cobenzl's correspondence, both official and unofficial, suggests that Kaunitz's emphasis on the arts, his promotion of public cultural institutions, was at the very least informed and influenced by ideas and pressure from Cobenzl, seeking to reform the arts in the Austrian Netherlands.[102]

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[99] Report from Kaunitz to Maria Theresa, 4 September 1776. AGR, Ch. A, 482 (or 487), pièce D:103 ad lit. A:4 / no. 1. Cited in Coekelberghs 1976, pp. 446–47

[100] Loir 2004

[101] Walter Wagner, Die Geschichte der Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Wien, Vienna, 1967, pp. 48–49

[102] Another of Kaunitz's achievements was in his attention to the imperial library: his activity in this sphere falls largely in the second half of the 1760s, fifteen years after Cobenzl had started agitating for the salvation and reorganisation of the Royal Library in Brussels.

Chapter 7. Cobenzl in the Austrian Netherlands 1753–70: The Collector – Arts for the Self

'Je lis quand je puis, j'ai un beau cabinet de tableaux, une superbe collection de desseins, un joli logement que vous ne reconnetterez plus et mon jardin pour faire de l'exercice. Je tache de rire a diner, je vais quatre fois par semaine au spectacle et les autres jours je fais une partie, je prende et loue à tour de role. Je ne m'ennui jamais, et je travaille gaiement…. Voila l'abregé de ma vie.'
Cobenzl to Baron Pergen, 19 December 1764[1]

Cobenzl's private collecting of paintings and drawings fits very neatly into the pattern of his life and activities in the Austrian Netherlands and yet in having a 'beginning' and an 'end' it remains strangely separate, an isolated if extended 'incident' in his biography. Whereas the collecting of books and porcelain continued through from his years in Germany, the concentrated acquisition of paintings and drawings falls very clearly into just a few years of the 1760s. Set against the considerable scope of his activities, both public and private – not the least of the latter being his development of his garden – it can be seen to occupy a small, if high-profile, place in his life.

To demonstrate the very specific nature of this phenomenon, the fluctuations and eventual waning in interest in acquisitions, this chapter takes a chronological look at Cobenzl's collecting of paintings and drawings, sketching the context of interests within which it took place, i.e. his concern for his house and garden, his porcelain and his library.

There is some slight evidence that Cobenzl had a gentlemanly interest in art before 1753 but no collection, and the situation with regard to his ownership of fine art – paintings, drawings and sculptures – was to change little in the immediate years after his arrival in the Austrian Netherlands. In the 1750s he was largely concentrating on remodelling and adorning his rented house and its extensive gardens, and adding to his rich array of blue and gold porcelain, and his commissions or acquisitions of works of art were minimal, mostly furniture pictures or items of political/historical significance.

An accumulation of circumstances – the growing involvement in the promotion of education for contemporary artists and a revival of the Rubensian tradition – plus acquaintance with a number of fellow collectors (only one of them based in the Austrian Netherlands), set within the context of Cobenzl's rivalry with Charles de Lorraine, seems

[1] Cobenzl to Pergen, 19 December 1764; AGR, SEG, 1191, ff. 287

to have contributed to a radical change in Cobenzl's attitude, manifested in a (literally) sudden interest in drawings and then in owning a Cabinet of Paintings.

The encouragement of contemporary artists and a love of the art of the past come together in Cobenzl's correspondence on artistic matters with his colleague in Vienna, Jacques Dorn (c. 1722 – 1766). Their exchange of artistic views really took off in 1761 and became a discourse on the two men's attitude to contemporary artists, to portraiture and French art, providing valuable information on Cobenzl's acquisitions and his responses to them.[2]

Similarly abundant in references to art and specifically to Cobenzl's collection is the correspondence with Petrus Frans Gisbert van Schorel, lord of Wilrijk (1716–78),[3] one time Burgomaster of Antwerp, although he was of Dutch origin. Van Schorel owned some 28 paintings given to Rubens.[4] In 1759 he and Cobenzl started exchanging letters on artistic matters, exchanges which intensified from 1761. Thereafter, van Schorel was to present Cobenzl with various small gifts for his collection and to act as intermediary in identifying artists and commissioning works.

Two other sets of correspondence, with somewhat more well-known figures, also throw considerable light on Cobenzl's artistic interests. In 1762 he made the acquaintance of Ange Laurent Lalive de Jully, with whom he developed a warm friendship that also involved the exchange of artistic gifts.[5] Then in 1767–68 he corresponded all too briefly with Johann Joachim Winckelmann.[6]

It is in the period 1759 to 1761 that we see a qualitative change in Cobenzl's attitude to the fine arts, with the result that he becomes a 'collector', in the true sense of the word, first of drawings and then of paintings. Although young artists sent to Rome started sending him paintings and drawings as proof of progress from 1760, just a few of the contemporary drawings and none of the paintings made it into his Cabinet.

There is documentary evidence that at least 25 of the 46 paintings in the Cabinet were acquired between 1761 and 1766, and it is likely that many of the others, for which documents are lacking, were also acquired then. The paintings were acquired individually,

[2] Dorn correspondence; AGR, SEG, 1119, ff. 1–199
[3] Van Schorel correspondence; AGR, SEG, 1235, ff. 249–439
[4] Van Schorel sale Antwerp 7.6.1774; Van Schorel sale Antwerp 18.4.1778
[5] Lalive correspondence; AGR, SEG, 1167, ff. 63–142
[6] The Winckelmann correspondence, AGR, SEG, 1248, ff. 235–47, has been published in: Johann Joachim Winckelmann, Briefe, eds Hans Diepolder, Walter Rehm, Berlin, 1952–57

but the drawings were largely bought in lots, all of them in the period 1761 to 1765 (the last purchase was made in October 1765, although there were a few small gifts of drawings after this). This intensity of acquisition over a short period of time, rather than a general build up over the preceding years, initially faded and then came to an abrupt end with the sale of the Cabinet of Paintings and the Cabinet of Drawings in April–June 1768.

It must always be borne in mind, however, that the Cabinet sold to Catherine II and the post mortem house contents inventory represent the conclusion of Cobenzl's activities. Cobenzl's possessions – including his Cabinet – were fluid. Exchanges were made, works no longer prized were removed from the collection and replaced. Sometimes works that Cobenzl lauded were demoted and apparently moved surreptitiously to the rooms of his wife. On other occasions he tried hard to acquire a work but was unsuccessful. Like the collector himself, the collection was a living thing, growing and changing over the years.

1753–60. A House, a Garden and much Porcelain

Cobenzl's first acquisitions were related to his house, the Hôtel Mastaing[7] on the rue aux Laines: nine tapestries showing the story of Psyche and scenes after Teniers were acquired in September 1753,[8] then he commissioned a painting of the cutting of the Ghent canal from the Bruges artist Jan Garemyn (typically, the approach was made indirectly, via a high-ranking official).[9] Cobenzl was proud both of the quality of the painting (Groeningemuseum, Bruges) and the achievements it represented and it was one of just three paintings in Cobenzl's Salon at the time of his death, the others portraits of the imperial family and of Charles de Lorraine.

Other purchases completed or contemplated in this period were also political, such as a portrait of Charles de Lorraine by Jean-Pierre Sauvage (1699–1780), delivered in April 1754,[10] or decorative, relating to work on the house, such as three paintings from Maerten Jozef Geeraerts of Antwerp (1707–91).[11] Much impressed with Geeraerts' work – and already deeply involved in the region's art schools – Cobenzl commissioned another

[7] Known earlier as the Hôtel Bournonville and later (to the present) as the Hôtel Merode-Westerloo.

[8] AGR, SEG, 2641, f. 76. On the series see: Nicole de Reyniès, 'Jean van Orley: une tenture de l'histoire de Psyché', Gazette des Beaux-Arts, March 1995, pp. 209–20

[9] Bailly d'Inghuem correspondence; AGR, 1066, ff. 1–118 passim

[10] AGR, Ouvrages de la Cour, 164; cited in S. Anciaux, Jacques Lavalleye, 'Notes sur les peintres de la Cour de Charles de Lorraine', Revue belge d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art, VI, 1936, p. 322

[11] AGR, SEG, 1131, ff. 123–29, 143–44

painting from him ‘pour servir d’émulation aux élèves de notre académie roïale’, which was delivered in July 1755.[12]

Figure 41. Jan Garemyn (1712–99), The Digging of the Ghent Canal. Groeningemuseum, Bruges. Musea Brugge © Lukas–Art in Flanders vzw, photo Hugo Maertens

The first reference to any work of art with no ‘function’ is the gift of two paintings by Paolo Anesi (1697–1773), with figures by Gori (?Lamberto Gori 1730–1801), from Abbot Poloni in December 1754,[13] in a relationship that grew out of contacts with Cardinal Albani and the interest in furthering the arts in the Austrian Netherlands.[14] Cobenzl’s reaction, for all his good relations with Poloni, was extremely restrained and the works were not to feature in his Cabinet.

[12] Geeraerts correspondence, June–July 1755; AGR, SEG, 1131, ff. 131–41

[13] Poloni correspondence, December 1754 – January 1755; AGR, SEG, 1194, ff. 148v, 155

[14] Denis Coekelberghs, Les Peintres belges à Rome de 1700 à 1830 (Études d’histoire de l’art / Institut historique belge de Rome, III), Brussels–Rome, 1976; particularly chapter III, ‘Un mécénat éclairé’, pp. 131–97

Figure 42. The Hôtel de Mastaing before c. 1760, from the Grand Plan de Bruxelles. North is to left. This image shows the Hôtel before the addition of Cobenzl's garden pavilions. © Archives de la Ville, Brussels (photo O. Pauwels, 1996)

Figure 43. The Hôtel de Mastaing c. 1780, from Dessaublaux's Plan de la ville de Bruxelles (here reproduced upside down for comparison with fig. 40). Most of the remodelling of the gardens was done for Cobenzl. © Archives générales du Royaume et Archives de l'Etat, Brussels (photo O. Pauwels, M&L, 1996)

Meanwhile there was constant activity regarding the arrangement of his house, the remodelling of the rooms and the drastic improvement of the garden. In 1757 he wrote to

Sylva-Tarouca: 'La seule dépense somptuaire que j'ai faite consiste dans l'arrangement de mon logement et de mon jardin, ce qui me paroit bien excusable pour quelqu'un qui passe les vingt-quatre heures dans sa maison.'[15] Cobenzl set up his study in a pavilion – just one of several in the garden which were decorated as richly as the interiors of the house, and transformed his garden into part of the house, making it usable space rather than a place of pure pleasure.[16] He reiterated his need for these improvements since his house was a place of work, and thus he was able to 'jouir de l'air et de la promenade sans rien négliger de mes occupations'.[17]

Count Zinzendorf described Cobenzl at work in his garden on 14 June 1769, just seven months before his death:

> 'Nous allâmes ensemble chez M. le Comte Cobenzl, que nous trouvâmes dans son appartement du jardin qui est en demi-cercle meublé de papier des Indes commandant un petit Jardin admirable pour l'agrément d'y travailler.'[18]

Porcelain was one of the luxuries decried in Maria Theresa's criticism of Cobenzl's expenses. In the second half of the 1750s Cobenzl not only ordered a Chinese blue and gold service with armorials[19] but acquired quite large quantities of old porcelain. His collection grew so fast that in 1760 Cobenzl transformed one small room or cabinet, on the garden side of the house, into a porcelain room.[20] By 1763 he could declare that he had the best collection of blue and gold porcelain in Europe, so complete that he was only making rare additions of particularly large pieces.[21] The post mortem inventory of Cobenzl's property makes clear the extent of his acquisitions and the 1770 sale catalogue included a single lot of more than 1,120 pieces of blue and gold porcelain.

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[15] AGR, SEG, 1228, f. 413

[16] Chris de Maegd studied the garden on the basis of the executor papers in the archive; AGR, SEG, 2641–2647, passim. Chris de Maegd, '"En même temps à la campagne et en ville". Les jardins de Charles, comte Cobenzl, rue aux Laines à Bruxelles (1753–1770)', in: Claude Sorgeloos, ed., Autour de Charles-Alexandre de Lorraine, gouverneur general des Pays-Bas autrichiens, 1744–1780: culture et société (Numéro spécial du Bulletin de Dexia Banque, 54e année, no. 212, 2000/2), Brussels, 2000, pp. 45–52

[17] Cobenzl to Sylva Tarouca, 25 May 1760; cited in Comte Carlos de Villermont, La cour de Vienne à Bruxelles au XVIII[e] siècle, Le comte de Cobenzl, ministre plénipotentiaire aux Pays-Bas, Lille–Paris–Bruges, 1925, p. 233

[18] J. K. C. H. Comte de Zinzendorf, Journal. Chronique belgo-bruxelloise 1766–1770, ed. Georges Englebert (Nouvelles Annales Prince de Ligne, hors series, II), Brussels, 1991, entry for 14 June 1769

[19] AGR, SEG, 1251; Xavier Duquenne, 'Le goût chinois en Belgique au XVIII[e] siècle', Chinoiseries, papers from a journée d'études 2008, Brussels (Woluwe-Saint-Lambert), 2009, p. 91

[20] e.g. Invoice for '93 consols grans et petits pour mettre de porcelains dessus' and 'deux tables pour mettre de porcelaines dessus' from the master sculptor Jean Baptist De Vits in December 1760 and December 1761; AGR, SEG, 2642, f. 123

[21] Cobenzl to Pergen, 15 November 1763; AGR, SEG, 1191, f. 128

Cobenzl was insistent that he wanted only blue and gold, with absolutely no white (presumably powder-blue Qing dynasty, Kangxi period, 1662–1722).[22] As early as 1723 Jacques Savary declared that blue and white porcelains 'sont devenües si communes en France, qu'à peine les estime-t-on quelques fois autant que de belles fayences'[23] and even multi-coloured porcelain was seen as 'ordinary'. Monochrome pieces, all-blue items with gold decoration, were seen very much as appealing only to those of more refined taste.[24] By choosing older wares over new, large over small, or commissioning new and unusual Chinese porcelain, Cobenzl was thus asserting his own social distinction.

In the second half of the 1750s there were a few modest acquisitions of portraits,[25] the paintings of the Great Council of Malines that he ceded to Kaunitz, [26] enamel miniatures,[27] various books such as a Receuil critique d'estampes and the 1752 edition of the Aedes Walpolianae,[28] but no sign of more than a general interest in art (although Wouters mentioned a Mary Magdalene by Van Dyck in Cobenzl's possession[29]).

It was two views of Rome by Hyacinthe De la Pegna that Cobenzl sent to Jacques Dorn in early 1759 that led to their first exchanges on art.[30] Dorn was most complimentary of both the works and their donor but was forced to cede them to Kaunitz[31] (recalling the situation in which Cobenzl ceded his Smeyers to the Chancellor) and the incident surely contributed to the decision to summon De la Pegna to Vienna a few months later.

There was still no reference to a collection or cabinet of paintings in Cobenzl's possession although in May 1760 Cobenzl referred to himself for the first time as 'grand amateur des beaux arts'.[32] Obviously that opinion was increasingly shared by those around him, for in July 1760 Cobenzl apparently received a birthday gift of a 'Michelangelo' from the Italian

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[22] e.g. De Vooght correspondence; AGR, SEG, 1241, ff. 121–95 passim. 'Josse' correspondence; AGR, SEG, 1251, ff. 419–88. Dulong correspondence; AGR, SEG, 1120, ff. 153–69. etc.

[23] Jacques Savary de Bruslons, Dictionnaire universel de commerce…, 3 vols, Paris, 1723–30, II, p. 1167; cited in: Kristel Smentek, Rococo Exotic: French Mounted Porcelains and the Allure of the East, New York, 2007, p. 12

[24] Michael Sullivan, The Arts of China, 4th edn, Berkeley, 1999, p. 266

[25] From the artist Jean-Pierre Sauvage, May 1756; AGR, SEG, 2643, f. 27. From Mlle Barret at Court in Vienna; AGR, SEG, 1066, ff. 294–95, 256–57

[26] These were certainly the paintings mentioned in April 1759. Wouters and Cobenzl correspondence, April 1759; AGR, SEG, 1249, ff. 271, 278–79; 2641, ff. 309–10

[27] Cobenzl to De Goë at the Court of Mannheim, 24 May 1758; AGR, SEG, 1132, f. 168

[28] AGR, SEG, 1130, f. 9

[29] Wouters to Cobenzl, 29 July 1759; AGR, SEG, 1249, f. 298. No such painting appears in Cobenzl's Cabinet or in his effects; it is possible that this was a work that later appeared in his wife's rooms.

[30] Cobenzl to Dorn, 19 February 1759; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 1

[31] De la Pegna to Cobenzl, 21 June 1759; AGR, SEG, 1187, f. 201

[32] Cobenzl to Lepaute, 19 May 1760; AGR, SEG, 1123, f. 150

poet and librettist Ranieri de' Calzabigi.[33] Six months later, in January 1761, Van Schorel sent the Minister a gift of some prints and 'un dessin apres le beau tableau de Rubbens du cabinet de Votre Excellence et un catalogue de M. Hequet des estampes de ce maitre'.[34] Although Cobenzl accepted the prints and the book, he returned the drawing.[35]

If Van Schorel's reference to a 'cabinet' should be seen as a flattering reference to a small array of assorted pictures, or simply a suggestion that the painting hung in Cobenzl's study, it does tell us that the Minister owned a painting by Rubens that was admired by Van Schorel (almost certainly Venus and Adonis, which was definitely in Cobenzl's possession by May 1763, when it was copied by Tassaert[36]). Moreover, we see Cobenzl rejecting a drawing, presumably because he had no collection in which to place it at this time.

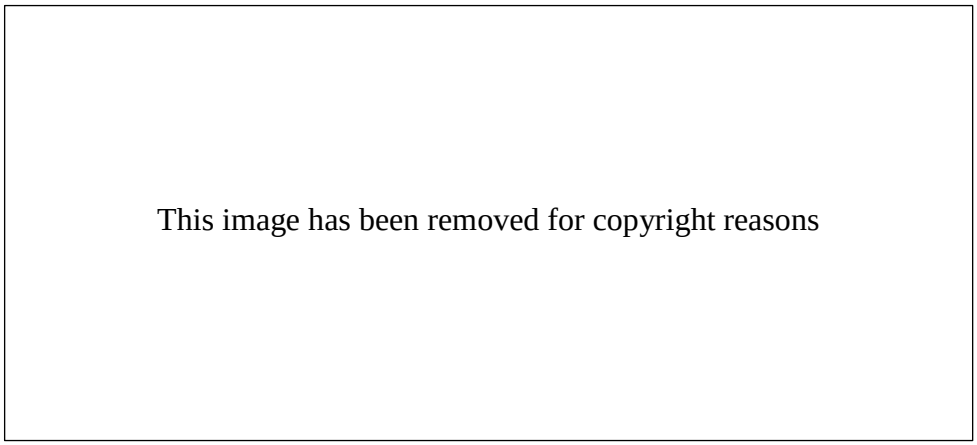

Figure 44. Peter Paul Rubens and workshop, Venus and Adonis. 1614. The first of four paintings that Cobenzl had engraved. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

[33] Villermont 1925, p. 126; Xavier Duquenne, 'Casanova et autres aventuriers de son temps en Belgique', L'intermédiaire des casanovistes, XXV, 2008, pp. 22–24

[34] Van Schorel to Cobenzl, 23 January 1761; AGR, SEG, 1235, f. 332

[35] Cobenzl to Van Schorel, 23 January and 4 February 1761; AGR, SEG, 1235, ff. 274–75. Hecquet's Catalogue des estampes gravées d'après Rubens…, Paris, 1751, was lot 650 in the 1771 book sale.

[36] Cobenzl to Dorn, 4 May 1763; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 90. Tassaert's watercolour copy is OR 5680

Figure 45. Philippe-Joseph Tassaert (1732–1803), after Peter Paul Rubens, Venus and Adonis. 1763. © The Trustees of the British Museum

1761. A New Era and a Collection of Drawings

In May 1761 Dorn decided to present Cobenzl with a mark of his respect, a portrait of General Laudon by Herman Gillis (1733 – after 1777), then on his way to study in Rome with a pension from Kaunitz.[37] This led to an exchange of works of art and opinions, to friendly rivalry and one-upmanship in demonstrating knowledge and the ability to identify artists worthy of patronage at Court in Vienna.

Dorn suggested that among the connoisseurs and amateurs to whom he might address himself for consultation was the royal jeweller, T'Sas, whom Cobenzl received shortly after. Reporting on the visit in June 1761, he proclaimed his admiration for Titian, Veronese, Van Dyck and Pourbus (as portrait painters) and said that he had shown T'Sas 'quelques peu de tableaux, que j'ai et qu'il honora du nom de mon cabinet'. [38] Whilst almost certainly showing fitting modesty to a powerful colleague in Vienna, Cobenzl

[37] Dorn to Cobenzl, 4 May 1761; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 7rv. Coekelberghs 1976, pp. 171–72
[38] Cobenzl to Dorn, 29 June 1761; AGR, SEG, ff. 13–14

clearly did not consider himself to be owner of a cabinet at this point. Although he did suggest that he might be looking around to increase the number of his paintings, he devoted greatest attention to his contribution to the education of young artists.[39] Public patronage evidently took precedence over any private art-collecting activity.

Yet less than two months later, at some point between 28 July and 6 August 1761, Cobenzl made an important acquisition, unheralded by any of the letters that had gone before: 2,000 drawings that made up 'le Cabinet du S. Borremans, qui vient encore de l'Electeur de Bavière, et que le Pere de Borremans a de beaucoup augmenté'.[40] The sale – for a total of 6,000 livres de France (2,800 florins de change) was agreed in person on 30 June.[41] The 'HG Borremans' who signed the receipt for the first payment should probably be identified with Hubert Guillaume Laurent Borremans, avocat au conseil de Brabant, whose sale took place in Brussels on 5 May 1781 (it contained no drawings).[42] Philip, son of Cobenzl's brother Guido, who had arrived in Brussels in September 1760, was entrusted with putting the drawings in order.

But although Cobenzl boasted that 'je passe des moments delicieux en les examinant. Les desseins sont plus originaux que les Tableaux, et font une consolation pour ceux qui ne sont pas en etat de posseder des Galeries',[43] news of the acquisition came at the very end of a letter in which greatest attention was paid to living artists then enjoying his patronage.

Dorn's response acknowledged the acquisition, stating that it was surely 'un vrai Tresor pour quelqu'un qui, comme Elle, joint à l'amour des beaux arts du gout, des Connoissances',[44] but their correspondence continued to be dominated by a discussion of contemporary painters. He recommended the painter Philippe-Joseph Tassaert (1732–1803) of Antwerp, a painter of portraits with a talent for imitating the Old Masters,[45] and later suggested that Cobenzl get him to try his hand at copying 'les deux jolis morceaux de Rubens, qu'Elle possede, ou en l'engageant à executer un morceau d'histoire d'après un des meilleurs desseins de sa collection'.[46]

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[39] Cobenzl to Dorn, 15 July 1761; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 16
[40] Cobenzl to Dorn, 6 August 1761; AGR, SEG, 1119, ff. 21–22
[41] Borremans correspondence with Cobenzl, August 1761; AGR, SEG, 1073, ff. 326–29
[42] Borremans sale Brussels 5.6.1781
[43] Cobenzl to Dorn, 6 August 1761; AGR, SEG, 1119, ff. 21v–22r
[44] Dorn to Cobenzl, 8 September 1761; AGR, SEG, 1119, ff. 31–32
[45] Dorn to Cobenzl, 15 August 1761; AGR, SEG, 1119, ff. 26–27
[46] Dorn to Cobenzl, 8 September 1761; AGR, SEG, 1119, ff. 31–32

There was no immediate transformation into a collector, but over the next six months or so Cobenzl's ownership of his drawings and the comments it drew from colleagues must have had its effect. Gradually he started to manifest a more active interest in acquisitions. In October 1761, for instance, he enquired about paintings from the estate of the late Gaspard d'Heyne,[47] and in November, apparently in response to a request from the Minister, Van Schorel sent Cobenzl three sculpted figures of Christ.[48]

1762. Drawings from the Crozat Collection

Works by young artists, both pensioners such as Cardon and others wishing for advancement,[49] started to arrive in Brussels. Then in early March 1762 Cobenzl made a new purchase of drawings, adding another 1,500 sheets to the existing 2,000. This time, Cobenzl's excitement for a time at least dimmed his interest in his young protégés. He boasted of the acquisition to Dorn and placed stress on the provenance of the drawings, which had supposedly been acquired at the Crozat sale in 1741.[50] The seller, who offered Cobenzl the drawings in a letter which particularly noted the Crozat link, was the Bishop of Tournai, François-Ernest de Salm-Reifferscheid (1698–1770).[51]

Perhaps recognising that Cobenzl's interest in drawings was now more intense, on 19 April Van Schorel lent the Minister a copy of the Crozat catalogue from his own library[52] and made him a gift of a print of The Marriage of the Virgin, for which Cobenzl owned a drawing, and a letter said to be in Rubens' hand.[53] This prompted Cobenzl to exclaim 'Je suis honteux de tous les embellissemens pour mon cabinet que vous me donnez',[54] implying that there were other gifts. Since Van Schorel and Cobenzl met regularly, only a proportion of those gifts are recorded in the correspondence.

Having made two large acquisitions, Cobenzl felt that over 3,000 works was sufficient for he declared to Dorn that he had no intention of adding to them, unless some chance should

[47] Cobenzl to Nieulant, 26 October 1761; AGR, SEG, 1180, f. 242. D'Heyne sale Ghent 26.10.1761
[48] Van Schorel to Cobenzl, 10 November 1761; AGR, SEG, 1235, ff. 289–90.
[49] e.g. the sculptor Pierre François Le Jeune. Le Jeune correspondence, 1761–62; AGR, SEG, 1168, ff. 252–62
[50] Cobenzl to Dorn, 25 March 1762; AGR, SEG, 1119, ff. 51v–52r
[51] Salm-Reifferscheid, Bishop of Tournai, to Cobenzl, 1 March 1762; AGR, 1231, f. 433
[52] AGR, SEG, 1235, f. 304
[53] The Marriage of the Virgin is now OR 5523, the print is also in the Hermitage, OG 133028. The letter is OR 5187, on the reverse of a drawing then given to François Du Quesnoy.
[54] Cobenzl to Schorel, 20 April 1762; AGR, SEG, 1235, f. 306

present itself,[55] but returned to the subject of the promotion of local artists and his ideas for the (re-)establishment of a school in Rome.

Figure 46. Abraham van Diepenbeeck (1596–1675), reworked by Rubens, The Marriage of the Virgin. 1630s. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Figure 47. Copy of a letter from Rubens to François du Quesnoy, with a bust from the tomb of Virginia Bonnani in Santa Catarina da Siena in Rome. Seventeenth-century copy. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

In May 1762 Lalive de Jully travelled to Brussels and Antwerp, making the Minister's acquaintance. His recommendation of a work by Berchem on sale in Antwerp led Cobenzl to consider buying it, delaying because 'je suis occupé à arranger mon cabinet' before making the purchase, his first firmly dated acquisition of a painting.[56]

A few months later, Cobenzl's nephew visited Paris, reporting back to his uncle on all he had done and the people he had seen.[57] He saw Lalive's Cabinet and visited the studio of Edme Bouchardon; he viewed the collection of Augustin Blondel de Gagny, went to the theatre and was taken to Versailles where he attended a levée and was shown the paintings.

[55] Cobenzl to Dorn, 26 March [misdated – in response to letter of 16 April] 1762; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 53v

[56] Van Schorel correspondence, May–June 1762; AGR, SEG, 1235, ff. 312–16. The painting is almost certainly Halt Before an Inn, now Kunstmuseum Basle, G 1995.34.

[57] Philip's letters from Paris are in AGR, SEG, 1095, ff. 22–45

But Cobenzl insisted that he look at some Cabinet of Drawings, 'pour que Vous puissiez juger s'ils sont bien preferables aux miens…'[58] Philip said that the collection of drawings of Jean-Denis Lempereur 'est assurement trés belle mais n'approche pas a la votre'.[59] He felt less able to assert the superiority of Cobenzl's collection two days later, after seeing 'la plus fameuse collection de desseins qui se trouve a Paris' – that of Mariette.[60]

Figure 48. Workshop of Peter Paul Rubens, St Roch, Patron of the Plague-stricken. c. 1626. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

That autumn Cobenzl received a gift from Van Schorel, a painting by Van Uden, to form a pair with one already in his possession.[61] In November, Daniel Danoot ceded an unknown number of drawings for 220 florins[62] and Lalive de Jully presented Cobenzl with a drawing from the Crozat sale given to Rubens, St Roch, Patron of the Plague-stricken.[63] Van

[58] 4 July 1762; CA, Atti e Doc., busta 239, filza 612

[59] AGR, SEG, 1095, ff. 42–43

[60] Philip to Cobenzl, 19 July 1762; AGR, SEG, 1095, ff. 44–45. The catalogue of the 1775 Mariette sale lists some 7,680 drawings, nearly double the number in Cobenzl's collection as sold in 1768. Mariette sale Paris 15.11.1775–30.1.1775

[61] Van Schorel correspondence, 29 September – 5 October 1762; AGR, SEG, 1235, ff. 326–27. The paintings are GE 626, GE 630

[62] Invoice for various works of art provided by Danoot between 1762 and 1764; AGR, SEG, 2642, f. 87

[63] OR 5522. Although Lalive and Cobenzl do not mention the title of the drawing in their correspondence, leading to suggestions in some publications that the drawing was The Stoning of St Stephen, OR 5510, Mariette states clearly that it was the St Roch that was presented by Lalive to Cobenzl, by whom it was sold to Catherine II. Abécédario de P.-J. Mariette et autres notes inédites de cet amateur sur l'art et les artistes, eds Philippe de Chennevières and Anatole de Montaiglon, 6 vols, Paris, 1851–62, V, p. 107

Schorel loaned Cobenzl another copy of the 1741 Crozat drawings sale catalogue, this time with the prices, particularly noting on which page to find the St Roch. Cobenzl had the marginal notes copied out.[64] In gratitude to Lalive, in January 1763 Cobenzl offered him two small paintings by Pieter Neeffs: 'Vous m'avés donné le plus beau dessein, que j'ai et qui existe peut-être et je ne Vous offre que les plus mauvais Tableaux que vous ayés dans votre Cabinet'.[65]

1763. The Predominance of Drawings

In terms of quantity most of Cobenzl's drawings had already been acquired by 1763. In this year he devoted most attention to individual acquisitions. Another group of drawings came via Danoot in January[66] and it was of his drawings collection that Cobenzl instructed his former librarian, Pierre Philippe Herbert de Rathkeal, to speak to Dorn in January.[67] He lamented his lack of a catalogue but indicated that he was making regular acquisitions.[68] The interest in drawings was surely boosted in early 1763 by information received from the Court of Charles-Theodore in Mannheim, that the Elector owned a cabinet of drawings and that he had just bought 'un Gabinet entier de 600 pieces des dessins des plus fameux maitres italiens'.[69] Cobenzl sent back a description of his own Cabinet, vaunting above all his drawings and boasting 'je l'augmente encore tous les jours'.[70] 'Tous les jours' was an exaggeration but Cobenzl's acquisitions of drawings were more frequent and certainly more numerous than those of paintings.

He had made the acquaintance in September 1762 of a Swiss, Rodolphe Valltravers, who immediately offered his services in Cobenzl's artistic endeavours.[71] Between April 1763 and September 1764 Valltravers sent six groups of drawings, a total of 625 sheets, all of which Cobenzl purchased. A seventh group which arrived in October 1765 was returned. Valltravers' contribution to the Cobenzl collection was not just numerical – nearly all of the 625 drawings can be identified quite clearly in the catalogue, making up 1/7 of the whole collection of just over 4,000 drawings – but qualitative, since it brought a large

[64] Van Schorel correspondence, December 1762; AGR, SEG, 1235, ff. 329–31

[65] Cobenzl to Lalive, 9 January 1763; AGR, SEG, 1167, f. 68. The paintings did not feature in the catalogue of Lalive's cabinet published in 1764. Ange-Laurent Lalive de Jully, Catalogue historique du Cabinet de peinture et sculpture française de M. de Lalive, Paris, 1764

[66] Invoice for works of art provided by Danoot between 1762 and 1764; AGR, SEG, 2642, f. 87

[67] Cobenzl to Dorn, 21 January 1763; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 86

[68] Cobenzl to Dorn, 4 May 1763; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 90

[69] De Goë to Cobenzl, February–March 1763; AGR, SEG, 1132, ff. 186, 189

[70] Cobenzl to De Goë, 26 February 1763; AGR, SEG, 1132, f. 188

[71] Valltravers' lengthy and pedantic letters, with lists of all but one of the despatches of drawings, are at AGR, SEG, 1234, ff. 23–163

number of German and Swiss drawings, as well as early Netherlandish sheets. In August 1763 Valltravers travelled to Zurich where he must have met the painter Johann Caspar Füssli (1706–82), since he acquired a number of Swiss drawings there[72] that have been demonstrated by this author to derive from Füssli's collection.[73] These drawings, which formed Valltravers' third and fourth despatches in November 1763 and January 1764, were to bring most of the superb Swiss drawings that Cobenzl owned. His attempts to act as an intermediary for the purchase of paintings, however, were refused.[74]

Figure 49. Werner Kübler I (1555–86), Stained Glass Design: King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. One of a number of Swiss drawings provided by Rodolphe Valltravers. The handwriting of the inscription appears to indicate a provenance in the collection of the artist Johann Caspar Füssli (1706–82). © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

[72] Valltravers to Cobenzl, 29 August 1763; AGR, SEG, 1234, ff. 67–68

[73] Catherine Phillips, 'Родольф Валтраверс, Иоганн Каспар Фюссли и группа немецко-швейцарских рисунков в Эрмитаже. К истории собрания графа Карла Кобенцля', [Rodolphe Valltravers, Johann Caspar Füssli and a Group of Swiss-German Drawings in the Hermitage. On the History of the Collection of Count Charles Cobenzl] in: Труды Государственного Эрмитажа. Эрмитажные чтения памяти В.Ф. Левинсона-Лессинга (02.03.1893 – 27.06.1972). 2009 [Transactions of the State Hermitage Museum. In Memoriam Vladimir Levinson-Lessing (02.03.1893 – 27.06.1972). Proceedings of the Conference 2009], St Petersburg, forthcoming; Catherine Phillips, 'Rodolphe Valltravers (1723–1815?), Swiss Gentleman, and the Promotion of Useful Knowledge', Век Просвещения / L'Age des Lumières, III, Moscow, 2011, pp. 96–121

[74] Valltravers correspondence, August–September 1763; AGR, SEG, 1234, ff. 67–69

Cobenzl was also getting drawings from Italy. In July 1763 his nephew Gian Antonio Coronini sent two small drawings[75] and then went on to facilitate the purchase of drawings by Piazzetta from Albrizzi in Venice (mostly illustrations to the latter's 1745 edition of Torquato Tasso's Jerusalem Delivered).[76] At the end of July Giuseppe Garampi informed Cobenzl of the availability of two volumes containing more than 500 drawings by Pier Leone Ghezzi; Cobenzl bought them both.[77]

Perhaps it was the visit to Brussels in late summer by Lalive de Jully, that notable patriot of contemporary French painting, that prompted Cobenzl to make enquiries about getting a drawing from Greuze. His chosen agent was the Paris marchand Rigot, a rather strange choice bearing in mind how many more qualified intermediaries were available.[78] Lengthy negotiations with the notoriously expensive and crotchety Greuze led to the acquisition of The Schoolteacher at a cost of 240 livres (120 florins de change).[79] Sometime between November 1763 and March 1765 Cobenzl was also to acquire a painting by Greuze, the only French painting in his Cabinet.[80]

The number of offers of paintings and other works of art, and enquiries put out by Cobenzl himself, intensified. Cobenzl asked André Krufft, a junior official in the Austrian service in Frankfurt, about a sale due to take place on 19 January,[81] expressing an interest in the works of Philips Wouwerman, by whom he had no paintings, but not by Teniers, 'parce que j'en ai actuellement cinq'.[82] There is no sign of the two paintings that Krufft bought there, nor of the 'five Teniers'. Other paintings were sent to the Minister on speculation, but returned,[83] or bought via intermediaries and returned once seen.[84]

Cobenzl was particularly interested in the drawings of the late Rotterdam publisher Henri Justice de Rufforth, which were offered, with the prints, at twelve florins d'Hollande

[75] Coronini to Cobenzl, 16 July 1763; AGR, SEG, 1103, f. 227

[76] Coronini correspondence, July–November 1763; AGR, SEG, 1103, ff. 227–42

[77] Garampi correspondence, July–December 1763; AGR, SEG, 1131, ff. 3–19. There are 521 drawings in all, OR 3190–3710, and two letters without inventory numbers.

[78] On the negotiations and purchase see Rigot correspondence, October–November 1763; AGR, SEG, 1203, ff. 339–49, 364–68

[79] OR 3746. This acquisition gives us a date several years earlier than that accepted for the drawing in the literature.

[80] It is mentioned in a letter to Dorn, 19 March 1765; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 167

[81] Krufft correspondence, December 1762 – January 1763; AGR, SEG, 1164, ff. 240–51, 378. Anonymous sale Frankfurt 19.1.1763; Lugt 1260. Ketelsen and von Stockhausen suggested that the collection was imported from the Netherlands; Thomas Ketelsen, Tilmann von Stockhausen, The Index of Paintings Sold in German-speaking Countries Before 1800 (Getty Provenance Index), Munich, 2002, I, p. 67

[82] Cobenzl to Krufft, 16 January 1763; AGR, SEG, 1164, f. 337

[83] Cobenzl to Keerle, 9 March 1763; AGR, SEG, 1159, f. 213

[84] Cobenzl to Nieulant, 31 March 1763; AGR, SEG, 1180, f. 248

apiece. When the drawings were sorted out, Justice offered a price of two florins apiece or three florins each if only a selection was made, indicating not only that the first price had been exorbitant but that a far lower value was put on the drawings than on the prints.[85] Justice refused to send the drawings to Brussels for viewing and no sale was made.[86]

Cobenzl showed no apparent interest in the collection of the Papal Nuncio, Molinari, noting only the collection of engraved gems.[87] The sale of Molinari's paintings that started 15 July 1763 was an important event that drew not just dealers but a number of important collectors, among them Danoot, Horion and Verhulst.[88] One reason for Cobenzl's indifference may well lie in the predominance of Italian paintings.

Although it is in 1763 that we first hear of Cobenzl's 'Titian' (a copy of Titian's Portrait of Paul III) on green marble, it had been in his possession since at least 1750, for he recorded having offered it to the late Prince of Wales, who died in 1751.[89] Another dubious Italian work came from the even more dubious Count Surmont, shortly before he absconded in late spring. Cobenzl said that Surmont owned a Holy Family by Raphael, which had once belonged to Cardinal Mazarin,[90] and according to Philip Cobenzl the painting was then presented to the Minister.[91]

Figure 50. Gerard Lairesse (1641–1711), The Holy Family with St Elizabeth and St John. c. 1673. Pavlovsk State Museum Reserve

[85] Justice correspondence, March–May 1763; AGR, SEG, 1157, ff. 281–88
[86] The list of drawings sent in May largely coincides with the contents of the sale catalogue in 1766. Justice sale The Hague 1.4.1766
[87] Cobenzl to Gordon, 19 April 1763; AGR, SEG, 1134, f. 58
[88] Molinari paintings sale Brussels 15.7.1763
[89] Cobenzl to Duval, 11 March 1763; AGR, SEG, 1122, f. 116
[90] Cobenzl to Dorn, 22 May 1763; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 94
[91] Alfred Ritter von Arneth, Graf Philipp Cobenzl und seine Memoiren, Vienna, 1885, p. 85

It was by private sale that Cobenzl bought two paintings from Martin de Brauwer, owner of a tobacco factory in Brussels. These were Cobenzl's favourite painting, a landscape said to be the work of Rubens (now identified as by Lucas Van Uden), bought in April for 1,800 florins de change, and a Holy Family by Lairesse bought in June for 448 florins de change.[92] Some time in the first quarter of the year Cobenzl also acquired a 'beau Breugel' from the jeweller T'Sas for 100 louis (over 1,100 florins de change), on condition that he add 60 drawings to the deal (although here he found himself caught up in a scandal, since the painting proved to have belonged to Dorn and only been lodged with T'Sas).[93]

Figure 51. Antoine Cardon (1739–1822), after Lucas van Uden (1595–1672), String of Carts. 1767–68. One of four paintings (and one drawing) in his collection that Cobenzl had engraved. He thought the landscape – his favourite painting, now Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow – was the work of Rubens. © The Trustees of the British Museum

He failed to acquire paintings by Wouwerman at the sale of the late Anne-Joseph de Peilhon in Paris[94] or at the sale of the collection of Charles Joseph de Schruyvere in Bruges.[95] He was similarly unsuccessful in his attempted acquisition of paintings from the

[92] Invoice from M. de Brauwer, fils, amongst the executor papers; AGR, SEG, 2644, f. 46
[93] Dorn correspondence, November 1763; AGR, SEG, 1119, ff. 113–17
[94] Lalive correspondence, June 1763; AGR, SEG, 1119, ff. 73–75. Peilhon sale Paris 16.5.1763
[95] Cobenzl to Van Praet, 1 May 1763; AGR, SEG, 1235, f. 196

sale of Peeter Snyers in August 1763,[96] or of a supposed Rubens Mary Magdalene belonging to the artist N. vanden Bergh of Antwerp (Van Schorel declared that 'il m'at fait l'aveux qu'il etet plus amoureux que de sa femme').[97] Van Schorel's offer of a painting by van der Neer was declined because Cobenzl said he already had two paintings of identical dimensions to form a pair.[98]

Many other paintings were rejected in this period and the emphasis was always on drawings. Boasting to all and sundry of 'ma superbe collection de desseins',[99] Cobenzl reported to Lalive that since last they met in 1762 'J'ai un peu augmenté mes tableaux' but 'j'ai considerablement augmenté le nombre de mes desseins'.[100]

1764. Rubens, More Drawings and Near-bankruptcy

One failed acquisition led accidentally to another successful – and economical – purchase. Burgomaster Van Citters of Middelburg refused to send a painting to Cobenzl for approval and the Minister was forced to send an agent to look at the painting in situ.[101] The agent chosen was the restorer Donckers, who rejected Van Citters' painting but on the way home came across Rubens' Cimon and Pero (Roman Charity), which he bought at the bargain price of 50 ecus (just 140 florins, not much more than the Greuze drawing).[102]

Cobenzl's Cabinet still lacked works by Wouwerman and Dou, although he sought to remedy this on a number of occasions over the course of the year. But his expensive lifestyle was catching up with him. With only a modest salary and similarly modest income from his family estates, Cobenzl borrowed increasing sums of money and neglected to pay all but the most pressing of bills.[103] There were more serious rumblings on the horizon and Cobenzl formed the intention, unrealised, of living more economically.

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[96] Van Schorel correspondence, August 1763; AGR, SEG, 1235, ff. 344–52. Snyers sale Antwerp 23.8.1763

[97] Van Schorel correspondence, September 1763; AGR, SEG, 1235, ff. 356–62

[98] Cobenzl to Van Schorel, 25 September 1763; AGR, SEG, 1235, f. 362

[99] Cobenzl to Valltravers, 16 December 1763; AGR, SEG, 1234, f. 84

[100] Cobenzl to Lalive, 18 June 1763; AGR, SEG, 1167, f. 75

[101] Bacon correspondence, June 1763; AGR, SEG, 1065, ff. 76–78. Van Citters correspondence, June 1763; AGR, SEG, 1234, ff. 207–16

[102] Cobenzl to Dorn, 21 January 1764; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 125. On the price of paintings by Rubens in Antwerp see Filip Vermeylen, 'Adulterous Woman on the Loose: Rubens's Paintings Sold at Auction in Antwerp During the Eighteenth Century', in: Katlijne Van der Stighelen, ed., Munuscula Amicorum. Contributions on Rubens and his Colleagues in Honour of Hans Vlieghe, Turnhout, 2006, pp. 185–98; Dries Lyna, 'The Cultural Construction of Value. Art Auctions in Antwerp and Brussels (1700–1794)', unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Antwerp, 2010, pp. 224–26. It should be recognised that most of the very high prices for Rubens at auction in the Austrian Netherlands were paid in or after 1779.

[103] See the executor papers, AGR SEG, 2641–1646

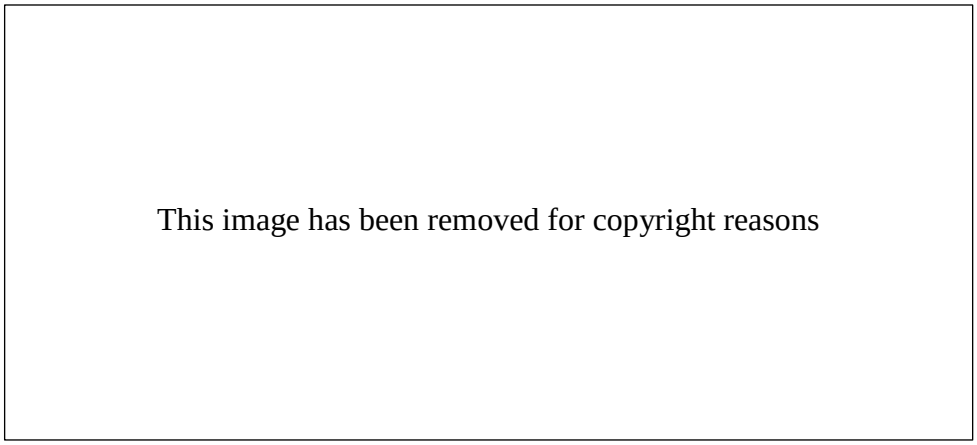

Figure 52. Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), Cimon and Pero (Roman Charity). c. 1612.
© The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Despite Cobenzl's increasingly complicated financial affairs there was only a slight slackening in the pace with which the Minister made acquisitions in 1764. The Piazzetta drawings arrived in the first few months of 1764, Valltravers' third despatch (144 drawings) in January and the fourth (110 drawings) in April; a fifth and sixth despatch arrived later in the year. After protracted negotiations with Menabuoni, imperial librarian in Florence, for portrait drawings by his father, the late Giuseppe Menabuoni (c. 1708 – after 1745), Cobenzl declined the purchase but insisted that he was continuing to add to his drawings collection: 'je compte de continuer encore aussi loin, que cela pourra aller.'[104] Menabuoni found a collector who wished to part with five pieces, which Cobenzl acquired for 21 sequins (140 florins de change).[105] (Although Cobenzl had wished to refuse the Rembrandt, since, as he said, he already owned sufficient handsome pieces by the artist,[106] Landscape with Rider is today the only Cobenzl drawing given to Rembrandt.[107]) From an unidentified sale in The Hague, Cobenzl's old friend Baron Henri de Kruyningen acquired

[104] Menabuoni correspondence, 1764; AGR, SEG, 1176, ff. 42–64
[105] Menabuoni to Cobenzl, 22 July 1764; AGR, SEG, 1176, ff. 48–49, 59. Four of these drawings can be identified, revealing them to be of high quality; OR 2704, OR 3759, OR 5060, OR 5316
[106] Cobenzl to Menabuoni, 10 August 1764; AGR, SEG, 1176, ff. 52–53
[107] Peter Schatborn has recently disputed the authorship of the Cobenzl drawing.

a number of drawings by Godfried Schalcken.[108] In April he bought seven drawings for prints by Jean-François de Troy from a sale in Paris via Rigot.[109]

Figure 53. Rembrandt Harmensz. van Rijn (1606–69), Landscape with Rider. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Other drawings came as gifts, from those who had heard of the Minister's interests and who had a favour to ask, such as the painter Gregorio Guglielmi (1714–73).[110] Yet more effectively came free, such as two drawings ceded to Cobenzl by the painter Maximilian de Haes in January 1764,[111] which had still not been paid for at the time of Cobenzl's death.[112] Twelve original copper plates for prints showing The Good Shepherd by de Haes's uncle Richard van Orley (1663–1732),[113] received from de Haes at the same time and put on display in the Chambre rouge in Cobenzl's apartments, were returned to the seller on his death.[114] De Haes was probably also the source for the set of 230 illustrations to Flavius Josephus' Jewish Antiquities by van Orley.[115]

[108] Kruyningen correspondence; AGR, SEG, 1290, ff. 294–301. List of drawings AGR, SEG, 1290, f. 300. OR 5579, OR 5580, OR 5581, OR 5582, OR 5583, OR 5584, OR 5585

[109] Cobenzl to Rigot, 31 March 1764; AGR, SEG, 1203, ff. 405–7, 427. De Troy sale Paris 9.4.1764; pp. 69–70. OR 2719–2725

[110] Guglielmi correspondence, December 1763 – January 1764; AGR, SEG, 1137, ff. 259–63. OR 3771–3777, variously dated between 1754 and 1763

[111] OR 5519, OR 5520

[112] A claim for payment appears among the executor papers: AGR, SEG, 2642, f. 105

[113] Possibly from the series of scenes from the New Testament engraved by Richard Van Orley after drawings by Jean Van Orley. See: Alain Jacobs, Richard Van Orley. Bruxelles 1663 – Bruxelles 1732, exh. cat., Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, Brussels, 2003, cats. 24–40, pp. 58–65

[114] AGR, SEG, 2645, f. 16

[115] OR 5995–6224

Figure 54. Jan Boeckhorst (1605–68), Young Lady in a Beret. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

In April, Dorn made a gift of his sketch by Rubens to Cobenzl.[116] Since Cobenzl later referred to this as 'la belle Sêne' (i.e. La Cène) we can be sure that it was The Institution of the Eucharist (formerly known as 'The Last Supper').[117] Another gift came from Van Schorel after a friendly disagreement as to which of them owned the original of a drawing by Rubens, resolved when Van Schorel presented his drawing to the Minister,[118] along with a number of other sheets.[119] Later that year he gave Cobenzl a drawing by Jan Boeckhorst after it proved impossible to buy the related painting.[120] Van Schorel also helped him buy the Wouwerman he had wanted from the Schruyvere sale in 1763, which had come into the hands of the Both brothers, dealers in Antwerp.[121] Cobenzl made a number of unsuccessful attempts to buy a Teniers or a Dou in 1764–65. In September 1764

[116] Dorn to Cobenzl, 7 April 1764; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 133
[117] Cobenzl to Dorn, 28 September 1764; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 160
[118] Van Schorel to Cobenzl, s.d. (between 8 and 14 May 1764); AGR, SEG, 1235, f. 363. Cobenzl owned two versions of both the Repentant Magdalene and 'The African Fisherman', but the drawing in question was the Repentant Magadalene since one of them (OR 5447), now seen as the preparatory drawing for the print after Rubens by Lucas I Vorsterman (1595–1675) is extremely fragile, as was noted by Van Schorel.
[119] OR 5930, OR 5963, OR 5964, OR 3083, OR 5969, OR 2797, OR 2798
[120] Van Schorel to Cobenzl, August 1764; AGR, SEG, 1235, f. 380–91. OR 4330
[121] Van Schorel correspondence, May 1764; AGR, SEG, 1235, ff. 363–69

he 'bought' (the bill was outstanding at his death) a Teniers from the banker Danoot, for the sum of 1,500 florins, but its fate is not clear.[122]

In 1764 Cobenzl's debts became so horrendous that they threatened his position in the Austrian Netherlands. They certainly threatened his position with Maria Theresa, and this at a time when matters were already complicated. Charles de Lorraine left Brussels in mid-September 1764 with the intention of visiting his family in Vienna and attending the wedding of his nephew Peter Leopold (heir to the dukedome of Tuscany and the future Leopold II). The death of Emperor François I on 18 August 1765 wrought changes in Vienna and led to further delay in the Governor's return (he eventually came back on 8 November 1765). Cobenzl was in charge in the Austrian Netherlands throughout this time, but his glee was dimmed by his personal financial crisis. Maria Theresa agreed to pay all his debts up to May 1764 (the date reflected in the executor papers) and to raise his salary.

But Cobenzl continued to spend. He remodelled one apartment in his house as a Chinese lacquer room, or 'cabinet de lacq des Indes',[123] and did not give up on his search for works to fill what he perceived as gaps in his collections of both paintings and drawings.

1765. Paintings Overtake Drawings

Cobenzl's Venus and Adonis by Rubens had been engraved by Tassaert in 1763; now he returned to the idea of having prints made after his favourite works. Despite his assertion that it was the 'Rubens' St Roch that was his favourite drawing, it was The Stoning of St Stephen that was engraved by Tassaert in late 1764.[124] He asked Lalive to find an engraver in Paris who might produce a print after his small landscape 'by Rubens'.[125]

March and April were marked by a flurry of acquisitions, mainly of paintings: a Van Balen and Brueghel from Martin Brauwer,[126] a Wouwerman, Riding at the Cat (Cobenzl called it 'un des plus beaux Wouwermans qui est au monde'[127]), and a small Road on the Edge of a

[122] Invoice from Danoot among executor papers; AGR, SEG, 2642, f. 87. This was surely not the only Teniers in the Cabinet of Paintings as sold to Russia, the Portrait of Anthony Triest, Bishop of Ghent, and his Brother Eugenio, A Capuchin Monk.

[123] Duquenne 2009, pp. 88–89

[124] Cobenzl to Dorn, 15 February 1765; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 166. This may be why some authors have identified The Stoning of St Stephen as the work given to Cobenzl by Lalive.

[125] Cobenzl to Lalive, 2 February 1765; AGR, SEG, 1167, f. 97. Despite Lalive's detailed description of the production of the print (AGR, SEG, 1167, ff. 100–34) no copies are known.

[126] Cobenzl to Lalive, 7 March 1765; AGR, SEG, 1167, f. 102. Invoice from Brauwer among the executor papers; AGR, SEG, 2644, f. 46

[127] Cobenzl to Dorn, 19 May 1765; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 170

Town by Jan I Brueghel from the sale of the Prince de Rubempré.[128] Cobenzl was so pleased with his handsome new Wouwerman – for which he had paid 4,500 florins, the highest price he gave for any painting – that he decided to have it too engraved in Paris.[129] That same month Philip (Philippus Florentinus) Vergeloo, a dealer in Antwerp, sent Cobenzl eight paintings including a Wouwerman, a Berchem and an Ostade.[130]

Figure 55. Jan Brueghel I (1568–1625), Road on the Edge of a Town. c. 1611. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Some time after April 1765 Cobenzl at last acquired (by what means is not clear) a Dou, Old Woman Unreeling Threads, and in December Vergeloo sent him his most significant painting acquisition of the year, the Polish Nobleman by Rembrandt.

Overall, Cobenzl's additions to his Cabinet of Drawings were more modest in 1765 than those to his Cabinet of Paintings. Most came via François Basan (1723–97), who had made Cobenzl's acquaintance during a buying trip to the Austrian Netherlands in October/November 1764. On his return to Paris he despatched 33 drawings for Cobenzl to look over: the Minister bought them all, among them a handsome Boar Hunt by Oudry, Goltzius' Courtesan and The Death of Niobe's Children by Abraham Bloemaert.[131] Of the

[128] Cobenzl to Lalive, 7 March 1765; AGR, SEG, 1167, f. 102. Rubempré paintings sale Brussels 11.4.1765
[129] Lalive correspondence, July–August 1765; AGR, SEG, 1167, ff. 118–22
[130] Vergeloo to Cobenzl, 6 April 1765; AGR, SEG, 1238, ff. 159v–160
[131] Basan to Cobenzl, 18 November 1764; AGR, SEG, 1067, f. 4a. OR 4872, OR 3742, OR 0240

next despatch, however, in February 1765, he chose just six works out of 39,[132] apparently because they were by artists not already represented in his collection.

Figure 56. Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617), A Courtesan. 1606. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

But in April no mention was made of an intention to buy any of 156 lots of drawings (over 1,000 items) from the Rubempré collection,[133] and when Lalive presented Cobenzl with a set of very large drawings for the Chapelle des Enfants Trouvés in Paris, by Charles Natoire,[134] they elicited expressions of gratitude but a quite tepid appreciation.[135] Cobenzl's interest in drawings would seem to be waning. Money concerns may have accounted for some of the slackening in pace, as too may the work resulting from the death of François I in August 1765.

[132] Basan correspondence, February 1765; AGR, SEG, 1067, ff. 5–9
[133] Rubempré prints and drawings sale Brussels 15.4.1765

Figure 57. Charles-Joseph Natoire (1700–77), Caspar About to Enter the Manger, from Natoire's paintings in the Chapelle des Enfants Trouvés. 1750s. The drawing was a gift from Lalive de Jully. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Cobenzl declined the offer of a drawing by Carle Vanloo from Rigot in Paris, stating simply that he already had a drawing by the artist,[136] and he returned Valltravers' seventh despatch of drawings in October.[137] The acquisitions of drawings made after this were minor. He turned down an offer of drawings from Charles Levier,[138] but he did gain drawings by Dirk Verrijk (1734–86) after his paintings (and about thirty views by Verrijk, the latest of which is dated 1765[139] – some of these may have been acquired previously)

[134] Lalive to Cobenzl, 1 April 1765; AGR, SEG, 1167, ff. 103–4. OR 4830–4843
[135] Cobenzl to Lalive, 3 April 1765; AGR, SEG, 1167, f. 105
[136] Note of reply 27 October on letter from Rigot to Cobenzl of 22 October 1765; AGR, SEG, 1204, f. 58. The drawing is OR 6291
[137] Cobenzl to Valltravers, 26 October 1765; AGR, SEG, 1234, f. 144
[138] Levier correspondence, March–April 1765; AGR, SEG, 1169, ff. 137–42
[139] OR 6335–6363

and some amateur drawings by 'capitaine 'Roquet and his teacher in 1766.[140] A few works by contemporary artists both professional and amateur trickled in, such as drawings by Louis Watteau after the wings of the Rubens altarpiece at St Amand, Valenciennes, which also arrived in 1766, and a dated pen drawing by Antoon Overlaet of Antwerp, which probably arrived as a sign of progress by artists under his protection.[141] Lens reported sending paintings from Rome, very probably for his anonymous patron,[142] but there are six mounted drawings by Lens which we must assume were given to Cobenzl by the artist.[143] Six drawings by Gertrude Pélichy are dated 1768.[144] Since they are mounted, they must have entered the collection quite by April that year.

In the last years of his collecting activities Cobenzl was to concentrate on seeking just a few high quality paintings for his Cabinet, devoting far more of his energies to the project for an art school in Rome.

1764–68: Rubens and Van Dyck

The death of Dorn in 1766 cut short their correspondence. We might suggest that the loss of this colleague collector had its effect on Cobenzl's interest in owning and acquiring works of art, which was reflected in the waning of the correspondence with Van Schorel. With Lalive increasingly ill, their correspondence too gradually dropped off. Nonetheless, the more fragmentary correspondence with intermediaries shows a marked increase in interest in acquiring – and conserving – the works of Rubens.

By late spring 1764 Cobenzl owned four paintings given to Rubens: Venus and Adonis, Cimon and Pero, The Last Supper and the small landscape now given to Van Uden. He supposedly owned a portrait of Gevartius[145] and in March 1764 he purchased portraits of Albert and Isabella from Morel-Disque,[146] although nothing further is heard of these three paintings. Cobenzl also played a role in commissioning or supporting the production of

[140] Roquet to Cobenzl, 9 April 1766; AGR, SEG, 1208, f. 465
[141] OR 6299, OR 6300, OR 4885
[142] de Busscher to Cobenzl, 12 November 1766; AGR, SEG, 1079, f. 284. Coekelberghs 1976, p. 207
[143] OR 4349–4354. The form of the mounting suggests they arrived after October 1764 and it seems likely that Lens gave them to Cobenzl just before he left on his travels in that same month. He only returned to Brussels on 3 November 1768, several months after the Cabinet was sold to Russia. Since almost none of Lens' works can be dated, these drawings that can be firmly placed pre-May 1768 are extremely valuable.
[144] OR 4932–4937
[145] Cobenzl to Dorn, 4 May 1763; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 90
[146] Morel Disque correspondence, March–April 1764; AGR, SEG, 1178, ff. 89–100

tapestries after sketches by Rubens, notably the two acquired by Danoot in early 1765.[147] Eighteen months later, in December 1766, Zinzendorf described being taken to visit Tassaert, who was engaged on a cartoon of 'un Triomphe romain de Rubens' for a tapestry to be woven by Van der Borght for Cobenzl.[148] This may be after the sketch The Triumph of Henri IV, a coloured drawing after which, by Tassaert, was in Cobenzl's Cabinet.[149]

Figure 58. Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640) and Frans Snyders (1579–1657), Statue of Ceres. c. 1615. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Figure 59. Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), Portrait of Charles de Longueval. 1621. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

It is not clear when he came into possession of the Statue of Ceres and the Portrait of Charles de Longueval, but between 1764 and 1767 he invested considerable energy in trying to acquire a large religious piece by the artist. He employed several intermediaries, largely without success, from Pierre Donckers[150] to Desbordes in Aix-la-Chapelle;[151] he

[147] AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 170. The sketches are Julius S. Held, The Oil Sketches of Peter Paul Rubens. A Critical Catalogue, 2 vols, Princeton, 1980, nos. 283, 284. Coloured drawings after these sketches, by Tassaert, formed part of Cobenzl's Cabinet; OR 5682, OR 5683

[148] Zinzendorf 1991, entry for 30 December 1766. The artist is described as 'un peintre anglais, nommé Tarssin' but there is no doubt that this is Philippe Joseph Tassaert.

[149] To judge by the drawing, OR 5684, the sketch was that now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, inv. 42.187

[150] Donckers to Cobenzl, 13 October 1764; AGR, SEG, 1118, f. 163. Cobenzl to Desbordes 24 October 1764; AGR, SEG, 1116, f. 84.4/1

[151] Desbordes correspondence, October–November 1764; AGR, SEG, 1116, ff. 84, 84.3

even enquired about the sketch for the St Ildefonso altarpiece by Rubens in St-Jacques-sur-Coudenberg, which was then with the auctioneer Jean-François Boileau-père in Paris.[152]

Figure 60. Sanders after Anthony van Dyck (1599–1641), St Sebastian. Line engraving from: Description de la Galerie de l'Hermitage du Palais impérial de St. Pétersbourg by Franz Labensky, St Petersburg, 1805–9. The painting was lost in the Second World War.

It was in early 1766 that Cobenzl acquired his only Van Dyck, a painting of St Sebastian, formerly in the possession of Lalive.[153] And in May, even as Cobenzl's secretary was repeating to Morel-Disque, the dealer in Calais, that 'S.E. doit renoncer aux tableaux, aiant resolu de ne plus augmenter sa collection',[154] he was enthusiastically trying to acquire works by Rubens and persuading monastic houses to have their paintings restored. Keen to hide his identity to keep the price low, Cobenzl approached several monasteries via different individuals.[155] He was successful only with the Dominicans in Lier, from whom he acquired The Virgin Giving the Rosary to St Dominic for 1,500 florins in October.[156]

[152] Lalive correspondence, April 1765, s.d; AGR, SEG, 1167, ff. 106–8. The sketch is now in the Hermitage GE 520; it was acquired before 1774.

[153] AGR, SEG, 1167, f. 136v. Destroyed during the Second World War.

[154] Morel Disque correspondence, May 1766; AGR, SEG, 1178, f. 102

[155] See: M. Mees, 'Van Kluis naar Hermitage. Het Rozenkransschilderij van P. P. Rubens uit het Kluizekerz van Lier', Lira elegans. Liers genootschap voor geschiedenis. Jaarboek 1991, pp. 109–54

[156] Brenart correspondence, October 1766; AGR, SEG, 1078, ff. 314–22. Mees 1991

Cobenzl's last acquisition of a work by Rubens was a sketch, The Virgin and Child with Eight Saints from the Jullienne sale in Paris, which he bought from Basan in June 1767.[157] Just why this painting never appeared in Cobenzl's collection remains unclear but in March 1768 Cobenzl boasted to Winckelmann of having seven paintings by Rubens – the Jullienne sketch would have been the eighth.[158] Just a month later, he sold his Cabinet to Catherine II of Russia.

Figure 61. Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), The Virgin and Child and Eight Saints. Location unknown

The Sale

Some time in April 1768, to the surprise of all around, Cobenzl agreed to sell his Cabinet of paintings, drawings and sculptures to the Russian Empress. By 27 June Catherine's intermediary, Prince Dmitry Alexeevich Golitsyn, who had spent several weeks describing the collection, could report that he had despatched everything via Amsterdam.[159]

In addition to the predominantly Dutch and Flemish paintings (38 out of 46) and over 4,000 drawings, the items Cobenzl sold to Catherine the Great also included thirteen

[157] Basan correspondence, June 1767; AGR, SEG, 1067, ff. 15–21. Held identified it with a small sketch on the market in 1986: Julius Held, 'New Oil Sketches by Peter Paul Rubens', The Burlington Magazine, September 1987, pp. 572–73

[158] Cobenzl to Winckelmann, 8 March 1768; AGR, SEG, 1248, f. 246. Published in: Winckelmann, Briefe, 1952–57, IV, pp. 109–10, letter 70a

[159] RGADA, Fund 1263, Opis I, chast 1, ed. khr. 1116, ff. 62–63

sculptures[160] and 'Huit petites assiettes de fayence, dessinés par Michel Ange Buonarotti', presumably maiolica plates. Sculpture does not seem to occupy much of his time or interest and there is never any mention of him 'collecting' it. The discussions with Dorn about the relative merits of several sculptors are somewhat distant and impersonal, in comparison with the more impassioned references to paintings and drawings, and we must conclude that Cobenzl's interest was in their potential as executors of public works.

Offers of works of art by Old Masters had largely dried up even before Cobenzl completed the sale and thereafter he returned to acquiring only furniture pictures and portraits. A portrait of Mme Cobenzl by Bernard Verschoot, with the Minister himself en buste, is firmly dated to 1768,[161] and at the time of his death Cobenzl was hoping to commission another painting from Geeraerts for his house.[162] Both Cobenzl and Charles de Lorraine commissioned portrait busts from the French sculptor Augustin Ollivier ('Ollivier de Marseille'). In addition to plaster versions and the marble bust of Cobenzl, a small terracotta was made to send to Tournai, no doubt to have it made in porcelain.[163]

In anticipation of his receipt of the Order of St Stephen (which finally took place in October 1769), in 1768 Cobenzl commissioned a large painting showing St Stephen Receiving the Papal Legates from Pierre Verhaghen (1728–1811), who had come to his attention the previous year.[164] Whether the St Stephen was intended for himself, which was possible, or as a gift to Maria Theresa, as proposed by Coekelberghs, is unclear, but it was not finished at the time of his death. Charles de Lorraine was therefore responsible for arranging payment and sending the painting to Vienna.[165]

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[160] Just five sculptures have been located to date: Hercules Strangling the Serpents by Laurent Delvaux (1698–1778; Pavlovsk Palace Museum Reserve) and two near identical pairs of reliefs based on Du Quesnoy's Concert of Angel Musicians in the Chiesa dei Santi Apostoli in Naples. Two are set into the Main Staircase of the New Hermitage, two are now in the Radishchev Art Museum, Saratov.

[161] Fondazione Palazzo Coronini Cronberg Onlus, Gorizia, inv. 1307

[162] Van Schorel to Cobenzl, 4 January 1770; AGR, SEG, 1235, f. 439

[163] On the sculptor and the commission see: Marguérite Devigne, 'Augustin Ollivier, dit Ollivier de Marseille. Sculpteur de Charles de Lorraine', Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 1920/II, pp. 112–16; Denis Coekelberghs, Pierre Loze, eds, Autour du néo-classicisme en Belgique: 1770–1830, exh. cat., Musée d'Ixelles, Brussels, 1985, pp. 398–99

[164] Coekelberghs 1976, pp. 175–76

[165] AGR, Ch.A., 473; Gastos Secretos, 2252, f. 32; cited in: Coekelberghs 1976, p. 176. The painting was formerly in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, but was in 1933 transferred to the National Museum, Hungary and is now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest.

This image has been removed for copyright reasons

Figure 62. Ollivier de Marseille (fl. 1760s–1770s), Portrait of Charles Cobenzl. 1769. Musées Royaux des beaux-arts de Belgique, Brussels. © IRPA-KIK, Brussels

Figure 63. Ollivier de Marseille (fl. 1760s–1770s), Portrait of Charles Cobenzl. 1769. The Order of St Stephen was added to the marble after completion. The bust is distorted by poor plaster repairs to the face. Predjama Castle, Slovenia

Cobenzl just had time, however, to arrange for the star of the Order to be added to his bust by Ollivier[166] and to order two portraits of himself in the robes of the Order of St Stephen from Sauvage. The latter were delivered on 27 December 1769 but never hung,[167] for the Minister fell ill a few days later. He died on 27 January 1770.

The works of art remaining in the Cobenzl house after the 1768 sale, described in the posthumous inventory, are minimal, just over 180 paintings, prints and drawings framed and hung on the walls in the public and main private apartments.[168] Removing the portraits from the equation, as well as mounted prints, there were 40 paintings in his wife's rooms and 60 in Cobenzl's rooms and the public part of the house, including works set into the walls. Almost no artists are named, but it seems very likely that many of the works in the Countess' apartments recorded in the executor inventory as having been gifts from her

[166] Only the original bust, much damaged and now at Predjama Castle, Slovenia, shows this Order.
[167] Invoice at AGR, SEG, 2643, unnumbered ff. 27 bis. Described in the posthumous inventory of the house contents under 'Depost autres effets qui ont été produits en la dite mortuaire'.
[168] The cheap prints and pictures in servants' rooms are not included.

husband[169] were works deemed to be of insufficiently high quality for his own rooms. A few of them can be tentatively identified: a Mary Magdalene which hung there may have been the painting formerly given to Van Dyck, the attribution of which proved to be ambitious; ‘une couple des tableaux dont l’un represente un peintre et l’autre une femme qui desine’ were surely ‘mes etude representant la Painture et la prospective’ that Cardon sent from Rome in 1762.[170] Certainly there were ‘deux desseins par Cardon’ said to have been a gift from the Count, confirming that some of the student works found their way into the Countess’ rooms.

Without the Cabinet, Cobenzl was in essence left with a house containing paintings serving decorative, personal or political purposes, and a few mounted drawings in his wife’s rooms. The Cabinet had gone as rapidly as it had come, leaving almost no trace.

Figure 64. Pierre Verhagen (1728–1811), St Stephen Receiving the Papal Legates. 1770. Commissioned by Cobenzl but completed after his death. © Budapest Museum of Fine Arts

[169] The list of her possessions in the house inventory has the note ‘pretendu comme doné par feue S.E.’ beside a large number of the paintings.

[170] Cardon to Cobenzl, 26 May 1762; AGR, SEG, 1081, ff. 48–49

Part III

Chapter 8. Cultures of Collecting in the Austrian Netherlands

Cobenzl never expressed any interest in natural history or physics, other than possessing the minimum number of books in his library as required by the rules of gentlemanly interest.[1] He apparently acquired a set of Lippert's sulphur copies of engraved gems simply because he had been entrusted with ordering a set for Charles de Lorraine.[2] He enquired of Winckelmann about the chance of purchasing a gem to be set in a ring[3] and at his death there were two rings set with 'antiques' (i.e. engraved gems) among his personal jewellery. There were just two sets of medals listed in his inventory, which can be identified with two unnumbered lots in the book sale of 1771. Nor did he collect prints, apart from the occasional sheet that had some particular relevance, either to the promotion of an artistic industry or to a drawing in his collection. Otherwise he was consistent in insisting 'Je n'ai pas d'estampe, et je n'en cherche pas'.[4] He had no interest in silver per se[5] and much of the household silver in the posthumous inventory was to be reclaimed by the executor as having been provided by the government for his use.[6]

Such would have been the extremely limited extent of Cobenzl's hommage to current collecting fashions before about 1761 were it not for his porcelain, for which he had a long-standing affection. He brought porcelain with him from Mainz and continued to add to it, assembling a Porcelain Cabinet of well over a thousand pieces. Maria Theresa, in referring to his debts in 1764, noted his expenditure on porcelain and clothes. She made no mention of his books – presumably because there could be no criticism of him improving his mind – or of any other luxuries.

Cobenzl's library presents us with valuable material to indicate the balance of his interests and set them in context. It was of considerable size: Sorgeloos counted 2,821 titles, against 3,473 in Charles de Lorraine's personal library and 1,416 in that of Patrice-François de

[1] 'En general il est bon qu'un homme d'esprit ait un peu de Livres sur chaque matiere'. Joseph-Antoine Dezallier d'Argenville, 'Lettre sur le choix & l'arrangement d'un Cabinet curieux', Mercure de France, June 1727, pp. 1318–19

[2] Lipperts correspondence, March–September 1755; AGR, SEG, 1171, ff. 31–41

[3] Cobenzl to Winckelmann, 18 December 1767; AGR, SEG, 1248, f. 241

[4] Cobenzl to Levier, 8 April 1765; AGR, SEG, 1169, f. 142. Other instances are found in letters to Rodolphe Valltravers (16 December 1763, AGR, SEG, 1234, f. 84) and Rigot (23 April 1764, AGR, SEG, 1203, f. 450).

[5] Cobenzl to Honoré père, negociant at Cambrai, 30 September 1760; AGR, SEG, 1144, f. 230

[6] Executor papers; AGR, SEG, 2641–2648

Neny,[7] and the librarian Pierre Wouters compared the four carts needed to transport the whole of the Royal Library in 1755 with the two needed to carry Cobenzl's.[8] Desmaele produced a survey of private libraries in Brussels in the eighteenth century which, despite the inevitable disbalance caused by the fact that so many belonged to people with connections to the Church, is extremely valuable.[9] A thematic breakdown of Cobenzl's library from the analysis undertaken by Claude Sorgeloos[10] can be assessed against the statistics he produced,[11] and those resulting from a study of French libraries by Michel Marion, for the period 1761–70.[12] (Table 1)

Categories	Brussels %	Cobenzl %	Paris %
Theology and religion	36.41	8	13
Law and jurisprudence	12.09	18.5	8
history and geography	24.74	39	34
Sciences and arts	20.49	8	18
Belles-lettres	06.24	17.5	27
General		9	

Table 1. The contents of Cobenzl's library in the context of Brussels and Paris. Based on statistics produced by Bernard Desmaele (Brussels), Michel Marion (Paris) and Claude Sorgeloos (Cobenzl). Sorgeloos used slightly different criteria for his thematic analysis.

Cobenzl's library not surprisingly reveals a marked interest in history and geography, and law and jurisprudence, all spheres important to his knowledge and understanding of the world and necessary to his career. His interest in theology and philosophy is markedly low even compared to Paris, but his number of books on the sciences and the arts is quite drastically below the average for both Brussels and Paris. The percentage of books on these two areas of knowledge is roughly equal at 3.75% science and 4.04% arts. (The same

[7] Claude Sorgeloos, 'La bibliothèque du comte Charles de Cobenzl, ministre plénipotentiaire dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens, et celle de son épouse la comtesse Marie-Thérèse de Palffy', Le livre et l'estampe, XXX/119–20, 1984, pp. 115–210; Claude Sorgeloos, 'La bibliothèque de Charles de Lorraine, gouverneur-général des Pays-bas autrichiens', Revue belge de philologie et d'histoire, LX/4, 1982, pp. 809–38; Claude Sorgeloos, 'Les bibliothèques de Patrick Mac Neny et de Patrice-François de Neny', in: Une famille noble de hauts fonctionnaires: Les Neny (Études sur le XVIII^{e} siècle, XII), 1985, Brussels, p. 91

[8] Wouters to Cobenzl, 26 May 1755; AGR, SEG, 1249, ff. 242–43

[9] Bernard Desmaele, 'Coup d'oeil sur quelques bibliothèques privées bruxelloises du XVIII^{e} siècle', in: Roland Mortier, Hervé Hasquin, eds, Le Livre à Liège et à Bruxelles au XVIII^{e} siècle (Études sur le XVIII^{e} siècle, XIV), Brussels, 1987, pp. 101–24

[10] Sorgeloos 1984. His analysis was based not only on the post-mortem book sale, but on manuscript catalogues compiled before the sale. It thus took into account books that were removed before the sale.

[11] Desmaele 1987, p. 109

[12] Statistics cited in: Dominique Varry, 'Grandes collections et bibliothèques des élites', in: Claude Jolly, ed., Histoire des bibliothèques français, II, Les bibliothèques sous l'Ancien Régime 1530–1789, Paris, 1988, pp. 252–53

figures for the library of Charles de Lorraine stand at 14.48% and 3.05%,[13] reflecting the Governor's passion for the sciences but his similarly low interest in reading about the arts.)

If we look, therefore, at Cobenzl's interests over the long term, removing the paintings and drawings that were the object of his attention only between 1761 and 1768, the picture is of a man with predominantly factual, historical interests, with a good library and a passion for porcelain and clothes and – we must never forget – his garden. Those are the consistent elements, into the context of which the Cabinet was temporarily inserted. We must ask, therefore, what was the culture of collecting in the Austrian Netherlands, and how might it have affected the Minister's decision to assemble a Cabinet of paintings and drawings.

The natural context in which to search for influences and motivations must surely be the circle of collectors in the Austrian Netherlands. In doing this, however, we are faced with two problems: the relative lack of collectors and the almost total absence of any study of collecting here in the eighteenth century. The admittedly depressed creation and circulation of art of all kinds in the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century has been largely neglected and in a self-perpetuating cycle the perceived decline of art in the Southern Netherlands from the end of the seventeenth century and lack of studies of the art situation has led to assumptions that there was an almost complete suspension of activity. If comparisons of Cobenzl's library are made possible by Desmaele's study, there are no similar overviews of art collections and very few studies of individual collectors.

In attempting to create a general background to Cobenzl's collecting in the Austrian Netherlands, therefore, we must make use of the as yet very limited resources available. In addition to the guidebooks so helpful to tourists (and to potential buyers of art), we have an important source in surviving sale catalogues. This is an area that has perhaps received most attention in recent times, in the form of studies of paintings at auction, particularly in Antwerp, It is important, however, to recognise the limitations of the sale catalogue, particularly with regard to the middle of the century in the Austrian Netherlands.

Sale Catalogues as a Source of Information

The intelligent and fruitful use of sale catalogues since the 1960s by writers looking at both the history of taste and the art market (Erik Duverger, Francis Haskell, Antoine Schnapper, John Michael Montias, Krzysztof Pomian, etc.), has led to an outpouring of research based

[13] Sorgeloos 1982, pp. 833–35

on the various statistics that can be assembled on the basis of surviving catalogues. Many of the most productive studies have been by economists looking at the history of markets.

Sale catalogues do provide convenient data that can be collated and analysed, but the manageability of such data has perhaps led to a distortion in allocation of importance to it. While cautious and productive use has been made, there has been a notable demonstration of the law of the instrument ('Maslow's hammer'):[14] some have used catalogues because they are available, rather than because they are the best tool for the job, or they have settled for the data provided there without seeking supplementary sources of information.

This danger has been increasingly recognised over the last ten years, leading to calls for greater caution from a number of leading scholars of collecting history – notably Antoine Schnapper[15] – who are themselves users of sale catalogues and of the statistics gleaned from them. Caution must be applied to any interpretation of sale-catalogue-based statistics. Not only have some catalogues been irretrievably lost but in the Austrian Netherlands at least there were five or six times more sales advertised than those for which catalogues were apparently produced.[16] Moreover, sales catalogues only show works of art that were in a house at the time of the owner's death, or that he chose to select for sale, or that had been assembled by a dealer for sale. They must not be taken as representing the collection itself. The posthumous sales of Cobenzl's goods, for instance, in themselves do not indicate how many family portraits and other works were retained by his wife and children or how many books were removed from the library because they were banned. Nor do they reveal that he once owned a significant Cabinet, sold two years previously.

As for the texts of catalogues, they require careful analysis to reveal what they say about the works on sale and the level of connoisseurship. Since specific paintings can rarely be identified with entries in auction catalogues, almost always the most famous paintings or those of highest quality, the many valuable studies of percentages of paintings of particular schools, average prices paid, average numbers of paintings owned or average size of paintings sold have not been counterbalanced by in-depth studies of what those paintings really were, rather than how they were described. Discussions of relative value have thus

[14] Abraham H. Maslow, The Psychology of Science: A Reconnaissance, London, 1966, p. 15

[15] Antoine Schnapper, 'Probate Inventories, Public Sales and the Parisian Art Market in the Seventeenth Century', in: Michael North, David Ormrod, eds, Art Markets in Europe, 1400–1800, Aldershot, 1998, pp. 131–42

[16] Erik Duverger analysed the Gazette van Gendt and found 564 ads, compared to just 126 sales described in Lugt for the same period, i.e. we know of catalogues for just 26% of the public sales advertised; Erik Duverger, 'Le commerce de l'art à Gand au XVIII^{e} siècle', in: Sophie Raux, ed., Collectionner dans les Flandres et la France du Nord au XVIII^{e} siècle, Lille, 2005, pp. 147–64

so far been dealt with within the broader context of consumption, i.e. (mainly middle class) consumer desire, rather than within the context of aesthetics and aesthetic perception.

Although the collecting capitals of London, Paris and Amsterdam produced a sufficiently large number of catalogues to provide a representative sample for analysis, the same cannot be said of peripheral collecting regions – notably the Southern Netherlands – where the auction developed later and to a far lesser extent. Here the art auction was still in its infancy in the middle of the eighteenth century. A simple analysis of Frits Lugt's fundamental Répertoire des catalogues de ventes publiques[17] presents us with a clear picture of the exponential growth of the art market in Europe. (Table 2) Compared to London, Paris and Amsterdam, there were just a tiny number of auctions in Brussels, yet even that city had twice as many as Antwerp. With the sample range so limited, there is far less material for a valuable statistical analysis of catalogues in the Austrian Netherlands.

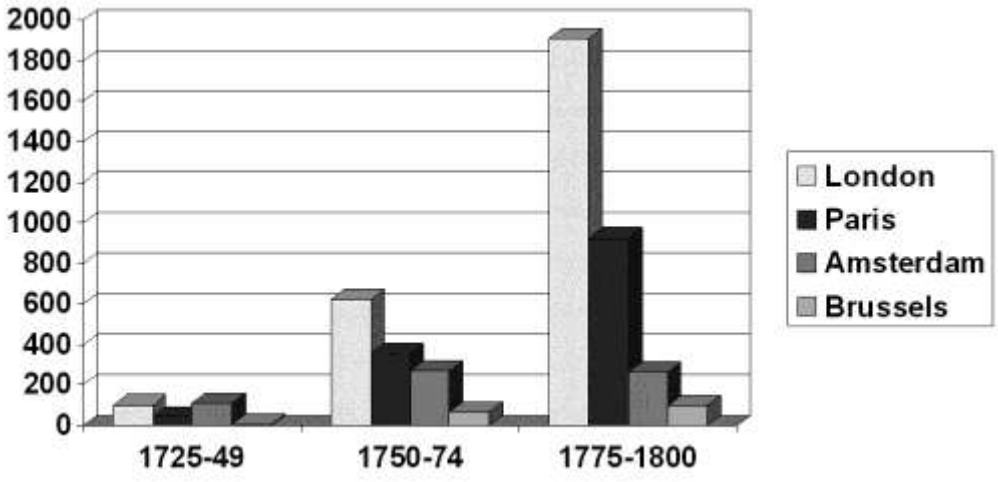

Table 2. Printed sales catalogues including works of art 1725–1800, based on an analysis of IDC Publishers' Art Sales Catalogues Online, the updated version of Frits Lugt's Répertoire des catalogues de ventes publiques. For the period 1775–1800 figures were affected by the French Revolution and the occupation of the Austrian Netherlands, which suppressed auction activity and made unoccupied London the centre of the auction world.

Moreover, despite the apparent growth of the market in the Austrian Netherlands illustrated by the multiplication of sales with catalogues, (Table 3) we should not see this as a direct reflection of growing collecting practices. The number of paintings per sale was reduced, and prices on all but the most outstanding works seem to fall.[18] Plenty of examples can be traced in which paintings moved from the collector–collector sphere to

[17] Lugt's Répertoire Online, available through IDC Publishers; http://lugt.idcpublishers.info/

[18] Dries Lyna, 'The Cultural Construction of Value: Art Auctions in Antwerp and Brussels (1700–1794)', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Antwerp, 2010, p. 216

the collector–dealer market, accompanied by a decline in value. In a story the outline of which was to be replicated endlessly, at the Robyns sale in 1758 the collector J. Platteborse bought two paintings by Jan Fyt for 101 florins,[19] but at his sale in 1774 the same two paintings went for 59 florins, not to another collector but to a dealer, François De Roy.[20]

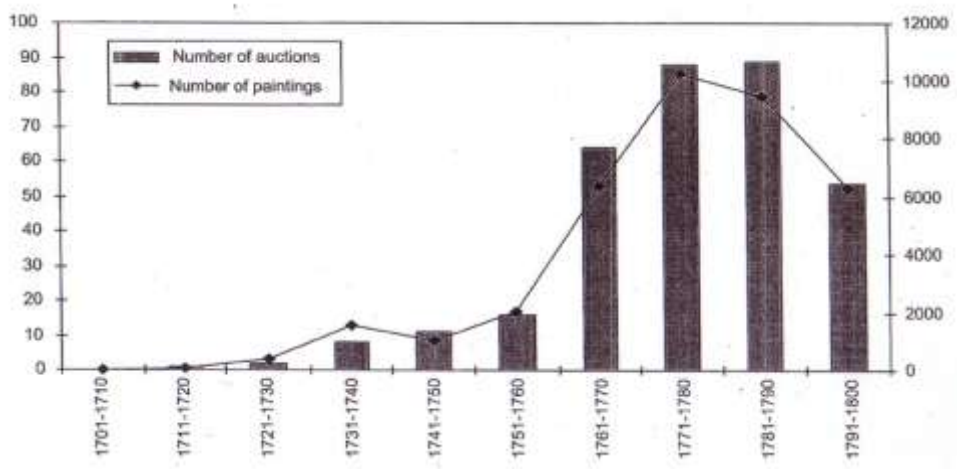

Table 3. Auctions in the Southern Netherlands with printed sales catalogues. Table created by Filip Vermeylen, published in Hans Cools, Marika Keblusek, Badeloch Noldus, eds, Your Humble Servant. Agents in Early Modern Europe, Hilversum, 2006, p. 115. The auctions in question are only those containing paintings (i.e. not book and print auctions).

Further compounding the problems relating to an assessment of the context in which Cobenzl collected his drawings is that fact that nearly all the studies of collecting based around auction catalogues – not just in the Southern Netherlands – deal with paintings.[21] This bias is reflected from the very start of the study of the auction: Hoet-Terwesten listed only paintings that passed at sale and today the Getty online provenance database includes only occasional, one might say accidental, drawings.[22]

The world of sale catalogues does not capture the many private sales that took place on the shake of a hand, without notary intervention, amongst friends and acquaintances, or from a dealer. Guillaume Glorieux noted that to limit oneself to such sources was dangerous because 'l'essentiel de cette histoire nous échappe: combien de transactions privées sans

[19] Robyns sale Brussels 22.5.1758, lots 85 and 86

[20] Platteborse sale Brussels 19.7.1774, lot 12

[21] The striking exception being Michiel C. Plomp, Collectionner, Passionnément. Les collectioneurs hollandais de dessins du XVIII[e] siècle, Paris, 2001

[22] Gerard Hoet, Catalogus of naamlyst van schildereyen, met derzelver pryzen, zedert een langen reeks van jaaren zoo in Holland als op andere plaatzen in het openbaar verkogt ... , 2 vols, 's-Gravenhage, 1752; third vol.: Pieter Terwesten, Catalogus of naamlyst van schilderyen… zedert den 22 aug. 1752 tot den 22 Nov. 1768… verkogt…,'s-Gravenhage, 1770. Although stating that it includes 'some drawings', the Getty online provenance tool covers very few, mainly those under glass listed in sales catalogues among paintings. http://www.getty.edu/research/tools/provenance/charts.html, updated July 2011; accessed 19 November 2011

trace écrite ont-elles été réalisées pour une vente publique dont il nous reste le catalogue imprimé?'[23] If this was true even of Paris, where auctions were frequent affairs even in the 1740s, and where they were a meeting place for collectors and connoisseurs of distinction, how much more so must it have been the case in the Austrian Netherlands, where the number of non-book auctions was extremely low.

Nor should we forget that the date of a sale does not necessarily reflect when the works were collected. The Rubempré sales in 1765, for instance, were of books, paintings and drawings assembled by previous holders of the title. Many of the great paintings coming onto the market had been in a family since being acquired from the artist in the seventeenth century. Charles de Lorraine's Rubens, the Holy Family, had been commissioned for the Royal Chapel by Albert and Isabella and passed to the Prince by descent by virtue of his position as Governor. Mensaert mentioned a number of 'inheritors' rather than collectors.[24] The first large sale of drawings, the Luarca sale of 1732, was of a collection formed – as the title page tells us – before 1708. Moreover, as in Switzerland, many drawings were still just emerging from artists' studios or from the homes of artists' descendants. The painter Maximilian de Haes was related to the van Orleys and he had inherited their working material (largely drawings and copper plates), which only truly became the object of collecting when it went on sale in 1782 (although his sale of drawings and plates to Cobenzl in 1764 suggests that he had been selling pieces privately prior to this).

An Export Market

It is a truism that the circulation of works of art in the Austrian Netherlands in the eighteenth century was in essence more of an outflow, a movement from Brussels and Antwerp largely towards Paris and London. Vermeylen noted the growth in taste for other luxury items besides paintings in Antwerp over the course of the eighteenth century and the consequent emergence onto the market of large numbers of paintings.[25] The better

[23] Guillaume Glorieux, review of Patrick Michel, Le commerce du tableau à Paris dans la second moitié du XVIII^{e} siècle. Acteurs et pratiques, Villeneuve d'Ascq, 2007, in: Revue de l'Art, March 2010, 167/2010–1, p. 84

[24] e.g. Madame Bosschaert and Monsieur de Lunde. Guillaume Pierre Mensaert, Le peintre amateur et curieux, Brussels, 1763, pp. 260–61, 196–98

[25] Filip Vermeylen, 'The Art of the Dealer. Marketing Paintings in Early Modern Antwerp' in: Hans Cools, Marika Keblusek, Badeloch Noldus, eds, Your Humble Servant. Agents in Early Modern Europe, Hilversum, 2006, pp. 114–15

amongst these were snapped up and taken abroad, to the extent that Vermeylen spoke of 'Anvers en liquidation au XVIII[e] siècle'.[26]

France was, of course, the main market for paintings exported from the Austrian Netherlands.[27] Gersaint was buying in both the Dutch and Austrian Netherlands in the 1730s – he announced the sale of paintings brought back from buying trips in the Mercure de France in 1736, 1738 and 1739 – even before the appetite was whipped up by the opportunities afforded during the French occupation of 1746–49.[28] Paintings and drawings sold at the two Rubempré sales in April 1765 turned up in Paris just two months later.[29]

The British too were active buyers of art in Brussels and Antwerp, largely as individuals, although the Anglo-Flemish dealer John Bertels set up a regular export business of prints, drawings and paintings to the London market from the 1760s.[30] Cobenzl himself lamented in the 1760s the sale of works to George III[31] and his 'friend', the British envoy William Gordon, was to be found buying at auction, for instance at the paintings sale of the Papal Nuncio, Molinari, in 1763.[32]

The development of the auction – and the sale catalogue – in the second half of the eighteenth century served the purpose of making art even more available to outside buyers – works of art were advertised and put on public display; catalogues were despatched to foreign cities well in advance of a sale. Access to potential purchases in private collections no longer depended largely on insider knowledge and contacts. Even though the most striking losses were to be suffered from the 1770s, with the sales of the property of the

[26] Filip Vermeylen, 'À la recherche de l'art vendu: la diffusion de la peinture flamande en France (XVIe–XVIII[e] siècles)', in: Raux 2005, pp. 134–36

[27] Hans J. Van Miegroet, 'The Market for Netherlandish Paintings in Paris, 1750–1815', in: Jeremy Warren, Adriana Turpin, eds, Auctions, Agents and Dealers. The Mechanisms of the Art Market 1660–1830, Oxford, 2007, pp. 41–51

[28] Descamps opened the 'Avertissement' to vol. I of his Vie des peintres in 1753 with the words: 'On ne connoissoit avant la derniere guerre qu'une partie des Peintres Flamands, Allemands & Hollandois. Le séjour que nos Troupes ont fait en Flandres, a donné lieu aux Amateurs d'étendre leurs connoissances & de rechercher les Tableaux des plus célebres Maîtres…' Jean-Baptiste Descamps, La vie des peintres flamands, allemands et hollandois, 4 vols, Paris, 1753–63, I, p. vii. On some examples of French purchases during the occupation see e.g.: Anne Leclair, 'Un cabinet de tableaux méconnu: les "Rubens" du marquis de Voyer d'Argenson en 1750', Revue de l'Art, 153/3, 2006, pp. 41–56; Anne Leclair, 'Rubens's "Rape of the Sabines" and Van Dyck's "Charity: a Failed Purchase by Louis XV', The Burlington Magazine, August 2011, pp. 526–27

[29] Rubempré paintings sale Brussels 11.4.1765; Rubempré prints and drawings sale Brussels 15.4.1765; Rubempré sale Paris [??.]6.1765, deferred to July

[30] Dries Lyna, 'In Search of a British Connection. Flemish Dealers on the London Market and the Taste for Continental Paintings During the Eighteenth Century', in: Charlotte Gould, Sophie Mesplède, eds, Marketing Art in the British Isles, 1700 to the Present. A Cultural History, Ashford, 2012, pp. 101–18

[31] Cobenzl to Dorn, 13 July 1764; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 151v

[32] Molinari paintings sale Brussels 15.07.1763

Jesuits, and in the following decade from the monastic houses, the outflow before that was serious enough for it to be noted with considerable concern.

By the 1770s the authors of sales catalogues were aiming their texts largely at the 'amateur absent et étranger'.[33] Derival's 'letters' of 1782 lamented the loss of the heritage and noted that the exportation of paintings annually amounted to 300,000 florins, and importation to just 150,000 florins.[34] The export was not only of the highly visible paintings, however, and although few annotated catalogues give the names of buyers of drawings, those names (and those of buyers of prints), indicate that French dealers such as Basan and Huquier, and other foreign buyers, continued to be active alongside local dealers.[35]

Although eighteenth-century Italy was also largely an export market for art (and importantly, for drawings), art historians have found plentiful material to indicate the continuance of the collecting tradition.[36] Yet many art historians (not economists) have accepted the 'blank spot' picture of collecting in the Austrian Netherlands, ignoring the insistence of contemporaries such as Descamps and Mensaert that despite the outflow and decline, there were still collectors active on the internal market.[37] Much of the vital work on identifying art from eighteenth-century collections has been done by scholars tracing the provenance of a work now outside Belgium which, although it contributes to our knowledge of dispersed collections, furthers the impression that all art was being exported.

Collectors in the Austrian Netherlands

To complement the uncritical information provided by the growing number of sales catalogues, we have several descriptions of the art of the Austrian Netherlands which

[33] Some of these are described in: Lyna thesis 2010, pp. 256–65, particularly p. 263

[34] M. Derival, Le voyageur dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens, II, November–December 1782, p. 37

[35] Buyers of drawings are known for Rubempré prints and drawings sale Brussels 15.4.1765, de Hooghe sale Antwerp 14.6.1773, Van Schorel sale Antwerp 7.6.1774. The only names that feature as buyers in the Snijers sale in Antwerp 22.8.1752, before Cobenzl's arrival in Brussels, are those of Pierre Remy and Pierre-Charles Alexandre Helle.

[36] Among others Ignazio Hugford: Francesco Grisiola, 'Disegni Oltremontani nella collezione di Ignazio Enrico Hugford', Proporzioni. Annali della fondazione Roberto Longhi, VII/VIII 2006/7, 2009, pp. 113-64 (with full bibliography); Francesco Maria Niccolò Gabburri: Novella Barbolani di Montauto, 'Le inscrizioni sui disegni della collezione di Francesco Maria Niccolò Gabburri', Marques de collection II. Sixièmes Rencontres internationales du Salon du Dessin, Paris–Dijon, 2011, pp. 45–56 (with full bibliography); Giacomo Durazzo: Walter Koschatzky, Giacomo Conte Durazzo 1717–1794, exh. cat., Albertina, Vienna, 1976; Luca Leoncini, Da Tintoretto a Rubens. Capolavori della Collezione Durazzo, Milan, 2004.

[37] Descamps noted that although 'une grande partie a déjà passé chez l'étranger, & sont ainsi dispersés… il se forme de nouvelles collections'. Jean-Baptiste Descamps, Voyage pittoresque de la Flandre et du Brabant, Paris, 1769, p. 98. Mensaert took up the subject in Le Peintre Amateur et curieux, imagining a meeting with 'deux grands amateurs de la peinture, & très bons Connoisseurs', with whom he embarked on a friendly argument regarding the supposed lack of collectors; Mensaert 1763, pp. 53–55

provide key information about prominent collectors in the 1750s and 1760s. These are Mensaert's 1763 Le Peintre amateur et curieux, Descamps' 1769 Voyage pittoresque, Michel's 1771 Histoire de la vie de P. P. Rubens and an anonymous publication of 1777, Nieuwen almanach der konst-schilders, vernissers, vergulders en marmelaers. The content of the texts (i.e. what objects are described on display where, references to sales) make it clear that Mensaert's and Michel's books and the anonymous 1777 publication were completed relatively shortly before their date of publication, whereas Descamps' Voyage… was based on material gathered over the previous twenty years and simply revised during visits several years before publication. Mensaert provides useful information about the passage of works from one generation to the next but Descamps was very dependent on Mensaert in his references to local collectors.

Between them, the four authors list 182 collectors for Antwerp, Bruges, Brussels, Ghent and Malines (including several, now dead, from the early part of the century). Just eleven of these appear in all four books. Fourteen of the collectors are specifically identified as owning prints and/or drawings. A good number of the 182 were painters and/or dealers (including booksellers who also dealt in prints and paintings) and it is hard to say whether the works in their possession were part of a collection or their stock.[38] Both Mensaert and Michel also specifically stated of some of those named that they 'conserve' or 'garde' art, reinforcing the idea that they had inherited their art and were not truly collectors. This material can thus only serve as a starting point for any study of collections in the area.

It is not as yet possibly to identify all of the collectors mentioned by Mensaert, Descamps, Michel and the anonymous Ghent author, or the sources of their paintings (i.e. inherited or acquired by the collector in question), but the Duke of Arenberg, the Prince de Ligne and Charles de Lorraine are the only high-ranking aristocrats mentioned as active collectors (the Prince de Rubempré is mentioned by Mensaert as a collector of the past, even in 1763, two years before the sale of the collection[39]). Cobenzl too appears and there are a few other noblemen – Count Callemberg is the most prominent – but overall just over twenty titled individuals are named and nearly a dozen are clerics.

Although one of the great sales of the previous generation, broken up in 1738, was formed by a member of the Austrian administration, Count Fraula, President of the Chambre des

[38] In 1777 an anonymous writer in Ghent noted the distinction, stating that Antwerp had only five real collectors as opposed to seventeen who were in fact dealers: Nieuwen almanach der konst-schilders, vernissers, vergulders en marmelaers, Ghent, c. 1777

[39] Mensaert 1763, p. 54

Comptes,[40] other civil servants were not to assemble significant collections of paintings. The largest, after Fraula, was that of Augustin Dieudonné de Steenhault, Chef-President of the Privy Council; it was at his sale in 1758 that Cobenzl acquired his paintings showing the Grand Council of Malines.[41] Slightly smaller was the 1761 sale of 171 paintings belonging to the late Barthélémy Dominique Sanchez de Aguilar, Conseiller-maître at the Chambre de Comptes.[42] Smaller still was that of Nicolas Grimberchs, Conseiller, Receveur général des Domaines, Garde de la Monnaie, whose 1764 sale contained 80 lots of paintings, which made a total of 1,250 florins (56 of the lots made less than 20 florins each, indicating their quality).[43] Eighty lots also featured six weeks later at the sale of Jaupain, Conseiller and Maître de la Chambre des Comptes, but again 60 lots made less than 20 florins each.[44] In 1766 the sale of Jean-Charles van Heurck, Conseiller du Commerce in Brussels, contained only 29 paintings.[45] None of these men had any drawings in their sales, nor did other civil servants whose possessions came up for sale, save for a few works under glass which presumably hung on the walls like paintings.

Aristocratic collections rarely appeared at auction in the Austrian Netherlands. The collection of the Prince de Rubempré (which did not have the owner's name on the title page) was an exception, as was the property of Charles de Lorraine, quite unsentimentally put up for public sale in 1781 by his nephew Joseph II in the hope of covering at least some of the late Governor's debts.

Cobenzl himself provides little help in identifying collectors in his own circle. The only comments he made about fellow collectors of paintings referred to men who were rivals in his career, most notably the Governor and the Duke of Arenberg. Cobenzl despised Charles de Lorraine's taste[46] and Leo de Ren's studies of the fine and applied art that he owned[47] demonstrate that the Governor was not a discerning 'collector' of flat art. The paintings that he owned at his death were largely seen as insufficiently important to be sent

[40] Fraula sale Brussels 21.7.1738
[41] Steenhault sale Brussels 22.5.1758
[42] Sanchez de Aguilar sale Brussels 27.4.1761
[43] Grimberchs sale Brussels 29.2.1764
[44] Jaupain sale Brussels 9.4.1764
[45] van Heurck sale Antwerp 19.8.1766
[46] Remarking disparagingly of the quality of the sculptor Gillis, he nonetheless said that 'comme Gilis est assés bon pour tout ce que Mgr pourroir peut être faire faire, je tacherai de lui procurer de l'ouvrage'. Cobenzl to Dorn, 25 May 1761; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 10
[47] Leo de Ren, 'Karel Alexander van Lotharingen (1712–1780) en de sierkunst. Het erfgoed van een kunstliefhebber', unpublished doctoral thesis, Catholic University of Louvain, 2003

on to Vienna[48] and the miscellaneous array of 70 drawings under glass that featured in the sale of his precious effects was composed largely of architectural works (including 21 lots of drawings by Bibiena).[49] The two renowned works of art that are repeatedly said to have belonged to him, both by Rubens – the painted Holy Family in the Wallace Collection and the black and red chalk Portrait of Hélène Fourment in the Courtauld Institute – were inherited along with other objects from previous governors. The areas in which the Prince truly manifested taste and discrimination were music and the theatre.[50]

Figure 65. Unidentified artist, Portrait of Charles-Marie-Raymond, 5th Duke of Arenberg, 11th Duke of Aarschot. c. 1760. Château d'Arenberg, Louvain. © IRPA-KIK, Brussels

Of all the aristocratic families in Brussels the Arenbergs had the strongest history as artistic and architectural patrons. Charles Marie Raymond d'Arenberg, 5th Duke (1721–78), had fought alongside Charles de Lorraine and they were good friends. If this in itself were not

[48] Leo de Ren, 'Rubens hebben we al. De Weense selectie uit de schilderijencollectie van Karel Alexander van Lotharingen', in: Katlijne Van der Stighelen, ed., Munuscula Amicorum. Contributions on Rubens and his Colleagues in Honour of Hans Vlieghe, Turnhout, 2006, pp. 509–26

[49] Charles de Lorraine effets précieux sale Brussels 21.5.1781, p. 125. The drawings in his book sale relate largely to military and building projects: Charles de Lorraine book sale Brussels 20.8.1781

[50] Michèle Galand, Charles de Lorraine, gouverneur-général des Pays-Bas autrichiens (1744–1780) (Études sur le XVIII^{e} siècle, XX), Brussels, 1993, pp. 26–29. Galand refers p. 27 to 'L'importante collection de tableaux, mais aussi de dessins et gravures', but since she was not herself studying Charles de Lorraine's collections her error was based on earlier generalisations.

enough to cause friction with Cobenzl, the arguments over precedence between Cobenzl's wife and the Duchess meant that the Arenbergs were not intimate associates. The 5th Duke acquired antiquities during trips to Rome and Venice and patronised contemporary artists,[51] which should have pleased Cobenzl, but his comments were exclusively negative. In 1762 he was irritated that work on a painting by Tassaert was being held up since 'le duc d'Ahremberg l'obsede par ses visites au point qu'il ne lui donne pas le tems d'achever',[52] remarking disdainfully: 'Mgr a un Cabinet des Tableaux, dans lequel il y a des pieces abominables'.[53] Indeed it is remarkable that a family that had nearly 2,000 paintings in 1619, should have only 225 lots by the early 1770s. Moreover, those 225 lots of paintings would seem to have been scattered amongst various residences, not concentrated in any one place, so it is not clear just what was in the 'Cabinet'.[54] Although Gaspar de Crayer's Meeting of Alexander the Great and Diogenes (now Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) was apparently acquired for Arenberg at the Rubempré sale in August 1766, it seems likely that most of the older works were the remnants of the seventeenth-century collection.[55] The Arenberg family collection of prints was assembled by the next generation, specifically by Louis-Englebert, born 1750.

As for Prince Charles-Joseph de Ligne, despite the considerable attention paid to him so little research has been done on the family collections at this period that although Catherine the Great is known to have bought paintings from him via Prince Golitsyn in 1768 (she spent about 1/6 of what was spent on the Cobenzl collection), we have no idea of what they were.[56] Information on other aristocratic collections is fragmentary.[57]

Collections of Paintings

When looking at the make up (if not the formation) of bodies of paintings on sale or in houses in the Austrian Netherlands there are useful statistics available, largely produced by those studying the economy and social trends using material not just from sales catalogues but from household inventories and notary records.

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[51] Anne Verbrugge, 'De kunstverzamelin', Arenberg in de Lage Landen. Een hoogadellijk huis in Vlaanderen & Nederland, Leuven, 2002, pp. 333–34. There are no footnotes to facilitate further study.

[52] Cobenzl to Dorn, 6 February 1762; AGR, SEG, 1119, ff. 48

[53] Cobenzl to Dorn, 20 May 1762; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 63

[54] Verbrugge 2002, pp. 321, 333–34

[55] Thoré-Bürger stated that the celebrated Arenberg gallery was formed largely at the start of the nineteenth century. Willy Bürger [Thoré-Bürger], Galerie d'Arenberg à Bruxelles avec le catalogue complet de la collection, Paris–Brussels–Leipzig, 1859, p. 14

[56] RGIA, Fund 468, opis 1 part 2 various, ed. khr. 3882. No. 44, f. 101. Instructions from Catherine II to pay the sum of 10445 – 71 ¾ roubles for paintings from de Ligne, 22 April 1768.

[57] e.g. the paintings belonging to Julien-Ghislain Depestre; Xavier Duquenne, Le château de Seneffe, Brussels, 1978

Providing some context for Cobenzl's despatch of (presumably historic family) portraits to his country estate in 1765, is Bruno Blondé's research which demonstrated the general decline in interest in portraits in the Austrian Netherlands over the course of the eighteenth century, such that by 1780 portrait galleries 'no longer played a large part in the construction of the identity of the group studied'.[58]

Whatever its quality, in the number of paintings owned, at 46 paintings Cobenzl's Cabinet was small. Although we should be cautious in our assumptions regarding quantities. A comparison of the figures derived from analysis of probate inventories and other household descriptions and those from sale catalogues reveals how very different are the results they provide and what care must be taken in interpreting them. The figures for home contents based largely on probate inventories indicate that the average number of paintings in the richest Brussels households around 1730 was 23 paintings,[59] with a figure for Antwerp ranging between 25 and 28 over the course of the eighteenth century.[60] Of 296 sales catalogues that included paintings between 1716 and 1799, 139 had one hundred or more lots. Only 56 had less than 50 lots.[61] Clearly only the larger accumulations of paintings or household goods – not necessarily collections as such – made it to auction.

Cobenzl's Cabinet of Paintings was more typical when broken down by genre, despite having more portraits (non-family) than the average. (At least two of the 'portraits', the Rembrandt Portrait of a Polish Nobleman and the Greuze Head of a Girl, might be classified as genre paintings.) (Table 4)

[58] Bruno Blondé, 'Conflicting Consumption Models? The Symbolic Meaning of Possessions and Consumption amongst the Antwerp Nobility at the End of the Eighteenth Century', in: Bruno Blondé, Natacha Coquery, Jon Stobart, Ilja Van Damme, eds, Fashioning Old and New. Changing Consumer Patterns in Western Europe (1650–1900), Turnhout, 2009, p. 69

[59] Veerle De Laet, Brussel binnenskamers. Kunst- en luxebezit in het spanningsveld tussen hof en stad, 1600–1735, Amsterdam, 2011, p. 275. De Laet's figures cover a wide range of social groups, not just the aristocracy. The statistics cited here are those of the wealthiest group.

[60] Bruno Blondé, 'Art and Economy in Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-century Antwerp: a View from the Demand Side', in: Simonetta Cavaciocchi, ed., Economia e arte. Secc. XIII – XVIII, Florence, 2002, p. 383. Blondé noted that the most dramatic decline in the number of paintings owned was among the upper, not the middle, classes; pp. 384–85

[61] This author's statistics, based on Lugt's Répertoire Online, plus several catalogues not included there.

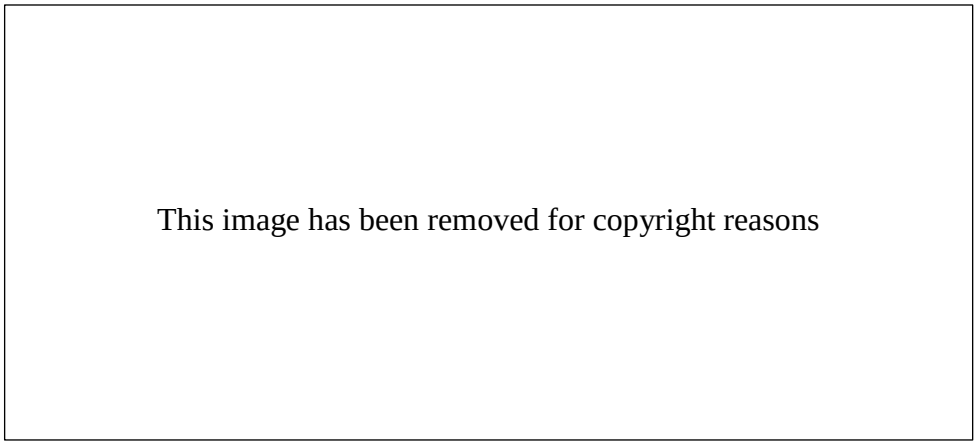

Figure 66. Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725–1805), Head of a Young Girl. 1763–65.
© The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Category	41 Antwerp and Brussels Auctions 1739–1794	Cobenzl Cabinet
Landscapes and Urban Scenes	35%	26%
Religious	21%	13%
Genre	12%	15%
Portrait	10%	26%
Animals and Still Life	9%	4%
Mythology and History	7%	8%
Allegory	3%	2%
Unknown	4%	

Table 4. Analysis of the thematic categories of Cobenzl's paintings, set in context against a range of auctions in Antwerp and Brussels. The categories and data for Antwerp and Brussels from Dries Lyna, 'The Cultural Construction of Value: Art Auctions in Antwerp and Brussels (1700–1794)', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Antwerp, 2010, p. 200, graph 7.1.

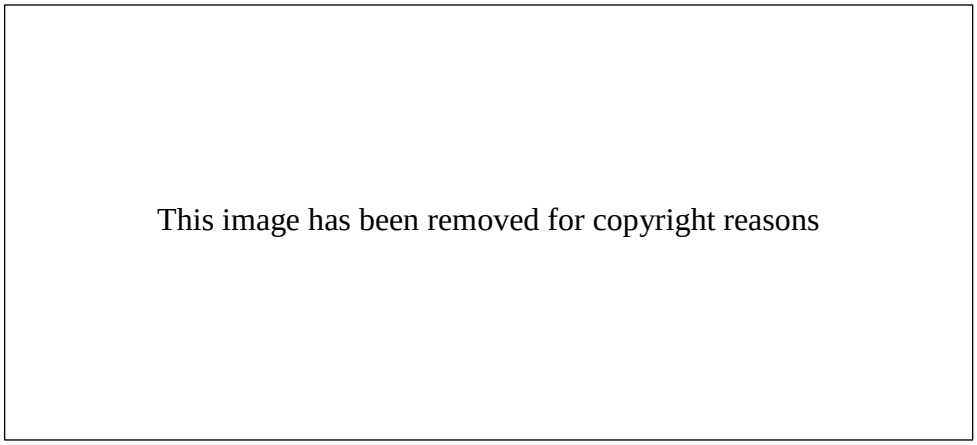

Figure 67. Unidentified Italian painter (Elisabetta Sirani ?), The Holy Family. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

The division by school, more than 80% Dutch and Flemish and with almost no Italian works, (Table 5) also fits without problem into the general picture of the Austrian Netherlands, where Italian paintings were barely visible. Descamps had warned visitors to the region that 'des Maîtres d'Italie ny sont pas en grand nombre'[62] and most auctions were over 90% Dutch and Flemish. The only major exception to that rule was – not surprisingly – the 1763 sale of the Papal Nuncio, Molinari, who had brought his Italian paintings to Brussels with him. The sale of so many better quality Italian works attracted the most important dealers and collectors – although Cobenzl was not among them.

School	Paintings %	Drawings %
Italian	6.5	33.5
Dutch and Flemish	82.6	27.8
German, Austrian, Swiss	8.7	7.7
French	2.2	12
Unidentified artist or school		18.5

Table 5. Cobenzl's Cabinet by school (according to attributions in the catalogue).

Collections in the Austrian Netherlands were thus overwhelmingly dominated by Dutch and Flemish artists. There was of course a hierarchy of popularity. Unsurprisingly, those

[62] Descamps 1769, p. xvi

advertising sales used the names of Rubens, Van Dyck, Teniers and Wouwerman to draw attention in advertisements and on catalogue title pages[63] and it was works by these artists which gained the highest prices at sale.[64]

Figure 68. Gillis (Egidius) van Tilborgh (c. 1625 – c. 1678). Domestic Concert. Transferred to Moscow in 1862 but sold by the state in 1932. Location unknown

This image has been removed for copyright reasons

Figure 69. Aert Jansz. Marienhof (1625/27–1652/72), Portrait of a Man in Black. c. 1649. Oil on copper; 13.3 x 11.8. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Figure 70. Gonzales Coques (1618–84), Self-portrait. Late 1650s or early 1660s. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

[63] Lyna thesis 2010, pp. 185–87

[64] Filip Vermeylen, 'Adulterous Woman on the Loose: Rubens's Paintings Sold at Auction in Antwerp During the Eighteenth Century', in: Van der Stighelen 2006, pp. 185–98

Gaëtane Maës summarised data from a range of sources to produce tables of 'popularity' for Dutch and Flemish artists.[65] A comparison of Cobenzl's Cabinet with these statistics demonstrates that it fitted well into the contemporary pattern. (Table 6) His 44 paintings with attributions produce a list of 27 artists' names. Of these, eighteen artists were mentioned by Dezallier d'Argenville; Cobenzl owned works by eight of the top ten names by frequency with which they appeared at sale 1676–1749 and nine of the top ten by price.

Dutch and Flemish artists also dominated in Germany[66] and Michael North demonstrated that the top twelve painters at auction in eighteenth century Germany were, in order, Rubens, Rembrandt, J. M. Roos, Teniers, Berchem, J.H. Roos, Van Dyck, J. D. de Heem, Aert van der Neer, C. de Heem, Brouwer and Netscher.[67] Cobenzl owned paintings by seven of them (and drawings attributed to nine of them).

Yet for all that it included representative works by the big names – Rubens, Van Dyck, Wouwerman, Brueghel – Cobenzl's Cabinet lacked many of the artists who were increasingly fashionable in Paris at least, such as van der Werff and Michau.[68] As early as 1752 Dezallier d'Argenville commented that 'Teniers a été long-tems en règne: Poelemburg, Wouwerman, Gerar-Dau, Mieris, Scalquen l'ont suivi; aujourd'hui c'est A. Ostade, Metzu, Potter, du Jardin, Vandevelde, Vanhuysum, Vanderverf.'[69] In his lack of works by most of these artists, therefore, Cobenzl was lagging behind Parisian developments. But he was not alone, as almost none of them featured in sale catalogues in the Austrian Netherlands, where they gained popularity only later in the century.

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[65] Gaëtane Maës, 'Le goût "français" pour la peinture hollandaise et flamande au XVIII[e] siècle: goût national ou goût commercial? Réflexions autour de Houbraken, Dezallier d'Argenville et Hoet', in: Gaëtane Maës, Jan Blanc, eds, Les échanges artistiques entre les anciens Pays-Bas et la France, 1482–1814 (Actes du colloque international, Lille, IRHiS-Lille 3, 28–30 mai 2008), Turnhout, 2010, pp. 195–213

[66] See introduction to: Thomas Ketelsen, Tilmann von Stockhausen, The Index of Paintings Sold in German-speaking Countries Before 1800 (Getty Provenance Index), Munich, 2002, I, esp. Table 3 on p. 22

[67] Michael North, "Material Delight and the Joy of Living": Cultural Consumption in the Age of Enlightenment in Germany, translated by Pamela Selwyn, Aldershot, 2008, table 6.7 on p. 113

[68] Patrick Michel, 'La peinture "flamande" et les goûts des collectionneurs', in: Raux 2005, pp. 298–306

[69] [Joseph-Antoine Dezallier d'Argenville,] Abrégé de la vie des plus fameux peintres, 4 vols, 1752–62, III, 1752, p. 95

Cobenzl Cabinet	Artists ranked in order by the number of times they appeared in sales 1676–1749	Artists ranked by price in sales 1676–1739*	Artists who appear in the Abrégé of Dezallier d'Argenville**	Artists who appear in the wish list of Karoline-Luise of Baden, 1759–60***
Van Balen and Brueghel	29 (Van Balen)	84	-	-
Berchem (2)	6	8	y	y
Brueghel (2+1)	3 (Velvet Brueghel)	4	y	-
Cuyp	-	-	-	-
Dou	13	13	y	y
Van Dyck	10	9	y	y
Gonzales Coques	-	-	y	-
Gysels	-	-	-	-
de Heem	27	31	y	y
Lairesse	11	10	y	-
Marienhof (2)	-	-	-	-
Neefs (2)	-	-	y	-
Neer (2)	-	76	-	y
Adriaen van Ostade	2	6	y	y
Isaak van Ostade	-	99	-	-
Poelenburch	12	3	y	y
Rembrandt	8	7	y	y
Rubens (7)	4	2	y	y
Tilborgh	-	-	-	-
Teniers	9	12	y	y
Van Uden and Teniers (2)	-	-	y	-
van der Heyde	40	54	y	y
Wouwerman (3)	1	1	y	y
Holbein (3)	46	29	y	-
Durer	-	-	y	-
Denner	-	-	-	-
Greuze	-	-	-	-
Cobenzl therefore had	**8 of top ten** **11 of top 20**	**9 of top ten** **10 of top 20**		

The second, third and fourth columns are based on statistics provided in: Gaëtane Maës, 'Le goût "français" pour la peinture hollandaise et flamande au XVIIIe siècle: goût national ou goût commercial? Réflexions autour de Houbraken, Dezallier d'Argenville et Hoet', in: Gaëtane Maës, Jan Blanc, eds, Les échanges artistiques entre les anciens Pays-Bas et la France, 1482–1814 (Actes du colloque international, Lille, IRHiS-Lille 3, 28-30 mai 2008), Turnhout, 2010, pp. 195–213

* Statistics compiled by Koenraad Jonckheere, The Auction of King William's Paintings, 1713, Amsterdam, 2008

** Abrégé de la vie des plus fameux peintres…, Paris, 3 vols, 1745–52; 4 vols, 1762

*** For a commentary on this list see Michael North, 'Auctions and Emergence of an Art Market in Eighteenth-century Germany', in: Neil de Marchi, Hans J. Van Miegroet, eds, Mapping Markets for Paintings in Europe, 1450–1750, Turnhout, 2006

Table 6. The artists featuring in Cobenzl's Cabinet of Paintings in the context of contemporary taste and fashion.

Collectors and Collections of Drawings

If there are few sources to provide material for an assessment of the collecting of paintings, how much more scarce are those illuminating the collecting of drawings. While Plomp could open his 2001 book by lamenting how late scholars had turned to the study of individual Dutch collections of drawings – in the 1970s – we are still waiting for any such studies with regard to the Southern Netherlands. Plomp himself has been amongst the keenest searchers after information in this sphere, but was forced to conclude that 'local collectors of drawings in the Austrian Netherlands… are hard to find'.[70]

Despite the passionate interest in drawings in the Southern Netherlands in the sixteenth century,[71] there was clearly a decline in material and in interest over the course of the seventeenth century. Drawings, like paintings, moved out of the country, even if their departure was much less visible that that of paintings. As with paintings, the buyers came largely from France and England. In 1723, for instance, the Northern drawings of the art-loving Antwerp bookseller Johannes Baptista Jacobs were sold to the English collector John Perceval.[72]

Some light has been thrown on a few collections of drawings belonging to eighteenth-century artists, but Dendooven's assessment of the drawings belonging to Matthijs de Visch, Jan Garemyn and Paul de Cock, successive heads of the Academy in Bruges and all dealers in art,[73] showed that a large part of the body of drawings that they owned was made up of their own working material.

Dendooven relied almost exclusively on sales catalogues (i.e. what remained in the artist's studios on their deaths), but in the absence of other studies we too are forced to rely largely on similar sources in our search for collectors of drawings in the Austrian Netherlands.

Only a proportion of sales in the Austrian Netherlands contained even small numbers of drawings, as is demonstrated by comparing the number of catalogues containing paintings

[70] Plomp 2001, p. 53

[71] William W. Robinson, Martha Wolff, 'The Function of Drawings in the Netherlands in the Sixteenth Century', in: The Age of Bruegel. Netherlandish Drawings in the Sixteenth Century, exh. cat., National Gallery of Art, Washington; Pierpont Morgan Library, New York; 1986–87; pp. 25–40

[72] Felice Stampfle, with Jane Shoaf Turner and Ruth Kraemer, Netherlandish Drawings of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries and Flemish Drawings of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York–Princeton, 1991, p. 103

[73] Domeniek Dendooven, 'Les collections d'artistes à Bruges au XVIII^{e} siècle: miroirs d'un goût changeaut et matériaux pédagogiques?', in: Raux 2005, pp. 107–23

with the numbers of sales including drawings, set alongside the figures for France, Holland and England. (Table 7)

	France	England	Holland	Southern Netherlands	
					over 200 dwgs
1725–1749	13	32	58	1	1
1750–1774	52	39	123	11	7
1775–1784	86	80	117	16	6
1785–1799	86	178	171	12	7
	237	329	469	40	21
Of which with over 500 drawings:			180		13

Table 7. Catalogues of sales including a significant number of drawings 1725–99 (i.e. not just a few drawings amongst the prints). The figures for France, England and Holland were produced by Michiel Plomp (Plomp 2001, p. 10) those for the Southern Netherlands were added by this author.

Less than a third of the catalogues of sales containing paintings and prints in the Southern Netherlands even mention drawings at all. As Table 8 shows, just 21 of them dated between 1725 and 1799 can be demonstrated to have included more than 200 drawings and only thirteen of those had more than 500 drawings. All but two of the sales were held in Brussels and Antwerp, and those two were the sales of the contents of artists' studios (Petrus Reysschoot in Ghent and Jan Garemyn in Bruges).

Before 1774 there were just eight catalogues of sales with more than 200 drawings. Even if we assume that a number of catalogues have been lost,[74] the limitations of the sales catalogues and the information they provide become clear.

But the surviving catalogues quite clearly do not provide the whole picture. One of the sales featuring more than 200 drawings is an anonymous book sale in 1775 which includes 'Eenen Boek met Teekeningen, waer in 343. stuk' and 'Eene partye Teekeningen'[75] and there were other book sales that included unnumbered drawings which may in some cases have reached over 200. The Molinari sales in 1763, most celebrated for their paintings,

[74] Although some catalogues have undoubtedly been lost, particularly for the earliest period from the 1720s to the 1760s, a comparison of known catalogues with a list compiled in 1803 indicates that for the later period the losses represent only a tiny proportion of the whole: Catalogue des tableaux vendus à Bruxelles, depuis l'année 1773; avec les noms des maitres mis en odre alphabetique, et la désignation du sujet, de la grandeur et du prix de chaque pièce en argent de change, avec l'extrait de la vie de chaque peintre. A Bruxelles, Brussels, [1803]

[75] Anon book sale Antwerp 18.5.1775

engraved gems and books, included 'plusieurs differens paquets de diff desseins'.[76] Paintings sales sometimes featured quite large quantities of undescribed drawings, demonstrating how little able dealers or sellers felt able to provide information (or how little they felt it was necessary).[77]

On the other hand, books containing multiple drawings in book sales, like that in 1775, may well be 'leftovers' from previous generations, rather than signs of collecting activity in the time before the sale, just as some of the paintings sales (and the Luarca drawings sale in 1732) represented the dispersal of collections formed earlier.

Of the 21 sales catalogues, two were different parts of the collection of the same man (Van Schorel). Of the thirteen with more than 500 drawings, five were collections formed by artists or dealers: Pieter Snijers in Antwerp (1752), Maximilian de Haes in Brussels (1782), Petrus Reysschoot in Ghent (1796 – the drawings he owned were nearly all by members of his family), Jan Lauwryn II Krafft in Brussels (1797), Jan Garemyn in Bruges (1799 – the drawings were nearly all by Garemyn himself).

As for the collectors whom Cobenzl might have encountered, they were few. The Luarca drawings sold in 1732 had been assembled before 1708; that sale and the Snijers sale of 1752 took place before he arrived in Brussels. The Rubempré drawings that were sold in 1765 had been assembled by the seller's father. Otherwise, there were five non-artist/dealer collectors with more than 500 drawings who were contemporary to Cobenzl: Jacques de Hooghe in Antwerp (sale 1773), his friend Van Schorel in Antwerp (sales in 1764 and 1774), Chevalier J.F. Knyff in Antwerp (sale in 1776), the reclusive Chevalier Verhulst in Brussels (1779) and the former Royal Librarian Pierre Wouters in Brussels (1797/1801). Two other major collections, that of James Hazard in Brussels in 1789 and that of the Prince de Ligne (which does not feature in these statistics because although almost certainly largely assembled in Brussels it was sold in Vienna in 1794), were formed by people too young to have been encountered as collectors by Cobenzl (Hazard was born in London in 1748 but only moved to Brussels in May 1768; de Ligne was born in 1759).

[76] Molinari book and drawings sale Brussels 4.7.1763, pp. 51–52

[77] e.g. Anon paintings sale Brussels 17.7.1776, with 127 lots of paintings and 'eene menigte schoone Teekeningen' (i.e. a multitude of good drawings); Schamp paintings sale Ghent 28.9.1776: 'On vendra encore quatre porte-feuilles avec plusieurs desseins originaux de différens maîtres, quelques livres d'estampes, un belle pendule, des trumeaux, quelques piéces de sculpture & différens autres tableaux.'

	Date	City	Seller	No. of drawings	Notes	Lugt*	Lugt. coll. mark**
1	19.08.1732	Antwerp	Luarca, Sr. P. de	3020	Spanish official? (collection formed 1690–1708)	417	
2	22.08.1752	Antwerp	Snijers, Pieter	5000+	Painter	792	
3	19.06.1764	Antwerp	Van Schorel, Seigneur de Wilryck	247 + 3 packs + 5 recueils	Landowner and Burgomaster	1349a	
4	15.04.1765	Brussels	Rubempré, Prince de	1550+	Aristocrat	1450	
5	18.07.1768	Brussels	T'Sas, F.	220	Jeweller and dealer	1698	
6	19.07.1768	Brussels	Reps, F.	350		1699	
7	14.06.1773	Antwerp	de Hooghe, Jacques	1700+		2176	
8	07.06.1774	Antwerp	Van Schorel, Seigneur de Wilryck	2180+ + 88 lots gouache	Landowner and Burgomaster	2299	
9	18.05.1775	Antwerp	Anon	343 + some loose		---	
10	04.06.1776	Antwerp	Knyff, J.F., Chevalier	518	Chevalier	2557	
11	01.07.1776	Antwerp	Beschey, Balthazar	278	Painter and dealer	2565	
12	16.08.1779 [drawings followed paintings]	Brussels	Verhulst, Chevalier	910+	Chevalier	---	
13	20.08.1781	Brussels	Charles de Lorraine, Prince	235 + not listed	Aristocrat	3293	
14	10.06.1782	Brussels	de Haes, Maximilian	3450+	Painter and dealer	3442	
15	15.04.1789	Brussels	Hazard, James	2800+	Gentleman	4428	L. 1249 L. 1322 L. 1469
16	01.08.1791	Antwerp	Bruynincks, F.A.E.	270+	Canon and Archdeacon at Antwerp Cathedral	4777	L. 78b (?)
17	17.05.1793	Brussels	Blocqueau, Boniface Gaspar Joseph De	375	Ecuyer	5065	
	04.11.1794	*Vienna****	*de Ligne, Prince*	*2587*	*Aristocrat*	*5245*	
18	22.02.1796	Ghent	Reysschoot (Reijsschoot), Petrus Norbertus van	over 2,000	Painter, architect and dealer	5412	
19	1797 (held 1801?)	Brussels	Wouters, Pierre,	9000+	Canon, formerly Royal Librarian	5685	
20	18.09.1797	Brussels	Krafft, Jan Lauwryn II	856	Painter, engraver and dealer	2652	
21	24.09.1799	Bruges	Garemyn, Jan	4000+	Painter and dealer	5971	

* Frits Lugt, Répertoire des catalogues de ventes publiques, available online via IDC Publishers
** Frits Lugt, Les Marques de collections de dessins et d'estampes, available online at www.marquesdecollections.fr

*** The de Ligne collection is here for comparison, since it was largely formed in the Southern Netherlands, although it was sold in Vienna after de Ligne's death.

Table 8. Sale catalogues in the Southern Netherlands 1725–99 with over 200 drawings. Precise numbers are complicated by the large number of 'recueils' and lots containing 'plusieurs desseins'.

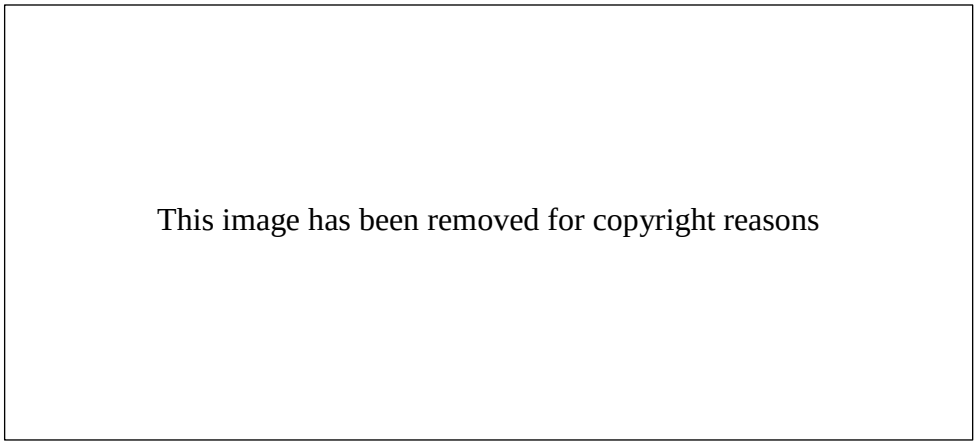

Figure 71. George Romney (1734–1802), James Hazard. Late 1760s. Private collection

Little additional information can be gleaned from Mensaert or Descamps. Both authors specifically mention that Cobenzl owned a collection of drawings (although Descamps mistakenly said he collected prints also[78]); Mensaert also mentioned Gorgeret of Brussels (unidentified) and of course Van Schorel and Wouters.

Michel referred only to 'Cabinet d'Estampes', not differentiating between prints and drawings: in addition to Van Schorel and Verhulst he mentioned Count Cuypers in Brussels, de Hooghe in Antwerp (sale 1773), Joffroy of Malines (probably the painter Jean-Baptiste Joffroy), Count Leeuwerghem in Ghent, Counsellor des Marmol in Brussels, van Meirle in Antwerp, Pester in Antwerp, Potter in Ghent, Jossen van Steenberghen in Ghent (Mensaert said he only collected prints), Advocate VandenBerghe (his 1789 sale included prints but no drawings) and Viscount de Vooght (his 1782 sale had only a few drawings). Of these, we have evidence of the collecting of drawings only for Jacques de Hooghe, whose sale, including over 1,700 drawings, was held in 1773, and Pester, whose name features among the buyers of the Van Schorel drawings in 1774.

There are few annotated drawings catalogues at our disposal to provide the names of buyers before the end of the century. In 1765 those buying drawings at the Rubempré sale

[78] Descamps 1769, p. 98

were the Paris dealer Basan, the local dealer John Bertels, the Paris dealer Gabriel Huquier ('Hiquier'), the painter, engraver and dealer Jan-Lauwryn II Krafft, Pauck/Poucke (possibly the sculptor Charles-François Van Poucke), the jeweller T'Sas (or his son), the painter Philippe-Joseph Tassaert,[79] Verhagen (presumably the painter Pierre), Walraevens (as yet unidentified) and Wauters (i.e. Pierre Wouters).

Not one of them was among the buyers at the 1773 de Hooghe sale in Antwerp or the Van Schorel sale the following year. Just five names appear in the de Hooghe catalogue: Deman, Oostenau, Pilaer, J.P.F. Ruggenberg and Philip Vergeloo, mostly dealers. All but Deman were buying at the Van Schorel sale in 1774 where the buyers were (in addition to the Van Schorel family themselves) Bruyninckx (surely F.A.E. Bruynincks, Canon and Archdeacon at Antwerp Cathedral, whose sale in 1791 included at least 270 drawings), Colins, Lauwers / Lauwrens, Canon La Roque, the Prince de Ligne (then just fifteen years old), 'Meich [?] à Bâle en Suisse',[80] Mertens, Moigh / Meigh / Meight, François Mols, Oostenau(t), Orlan, Pester, the Antwerp dealer Jan Pilaer, Cte Potocki,[81] Ruggenberg, Sibert, Van Merlin (probably Van Meirle, mentioned by Michel in 1771), the Antwerp dealer van Vergeloo and Willens (probably Wellens of Antwerp, referred to by several visitors to the town, including Cobenzl and Garampi).

There is thus very little overlap between the sources describing different collectors of drawings in the 1760s, providing little basis to trace the dynamics of the market. Nor do any of them mention 'de Mijn', a dynasty of dealers and artists in Antwerp,[82] whose mark appears on a number of Flemish drawings, including two from the Cobenzl collection.[83]

Of all those who feature in these different sources as collectors of (rather than dealers in) drawings, Cobenzl can be demonstrated to have been in close contact with very few. Just four of the sales with significant numbers of drawings were held during his time in Brussels: those of Van Schorel in 1764 and Rubempré in 1765, at neither of which does he

[79] In Les Marques de Collections Lugt identified the owner of the signature 'Tassaert' (L. 2388) as the sculptor Jean-Pierre-Antoine Tassaert. But he was in Berlin and unlikely to be buying in Antwerp.

[80] There were a number of collectors active in Basle at this time, although no 'Meich' has been identified. Achille Ryhiner-Delon (1731–88) of Basle travelled to Europe to buy works of art; see: Yvonne Boerlin-Brodbeck, Zeichnungen des 18. Jahrhunderts aus dem Basler Kupferstichkabinett, exh. cat., Kunstmuseum, Basle, 1978, Vorwort and cat. 127

[81] His identity is unclear. The collector Stanislaw Potocki, born only in 1755, would have been just nineteen years old. Lyna (Lyna thesis 2010, p. 4) suggested he be identified as Jean Potocki (1761–1815) but he would have been even younger and there is no evidence that he was a precocious collector of drawings.

[82] Lyna thesis 2010, pp. 206–7

[83] OR 3859, OR 5785. This signature has often been said to be that of a Dutch dealer but the drawings seen by this author all derive from the market in the Austrian Netherlands.

seem to have made acquisitions of drawings, and those of T'Sas and Reps in July 1768, after he had sold his collection.

Figure 72. Portrait of Gabriel-François-Joseph de Verhulst, Frontispiece to: Catalogue d'une riche et precieuse collection de tableaux… qui composent le Cabinet de Feu Messire Gabriel-François-Joseph de Verhulst, Brussels, 1779

Van Schorel was of course one of Cobenzl's key artistic contacts, playing an important role both in his patronage of local artists and in discussions of his drawings collection. He made gifts of drawings to Cobenzl on a number of occasions. The Van Schorel sale in 1764 included over 350 drawings and a further 2,200 sheets were sold in 1774.

Cobenzl possibly knew J.F. Knyff, a former Antwerp Burgomaster, but the summary descriptions of his drawings and the extremely modest prices paid for all but a very few of them at the 1776 sale suggests that this collection was not of greatest importance. Of 107 lots (518 drawings in all), 26 were of pen and ink copies of the Old Masters by the Antwerp draughtsman Antoon Overlaet.

As for Verhulst, whose 1779 sale included over 910 drawings, almost exclusively Dutch and Flemish, few people can be said to have had much commerce with him since he was

renowned as a misanthropic hypochondriac, widely reported to have confined himself to his house for over twenty years[84] (which did not prevent him from buying works of art).

Of the artists/dealers, Cobenzl was acquainted with the royal jeweller T'Sas, whose sale in 1768 consisted of some 220 drawings. The two men had been introduced via Dorn in 1761, with a view to T'Sas acting as dealer or advisor, but Cobenzl's opinion of T'Sas's connoisseurial skills was low ('il distingua le beau du mediocre mais il jugea mal des mains'); he rightly noted that the jeweller's son – who was to go on to become a notable dealer – was better qualified.[85] The prices made at the T'Sas paintings sale (of 160 lots, 93 made less than 10 florins) suggests that this opinion was justified.[86]

Cobenzl bought sixty drawings from T'Sas in late 1762 or early 1763, and in December 1763 he acquired several drawings and copper plates from the painter Maximilian de Haes (sale 1772). He had drawings from Danoot in November 1762 and January 1763, although it is possible that Danoot, then still a négociant rather than a banker, was simply acting as intermediary in their acquisitions.[87]

There is no indication that Cobenzl was acquainted with Jacques de Hooghe of Antwerp, mentioned by Michel as owner of a print cabinet but not mentioned by Mensaert or Descamps. He left over 1,700 drawings, 120 paintings and 1,373 lots of prints, which were put up for sale in 1773.

Perhaps the most important of all the collectors, even though his sale was held right at the end of the century, is the former Royal Librarian Pierre Wouters.[88] Priest and canon of the Collegiate Church of Saint Gomer in Lier, Wouters had been appointed Royal Librarian by Cobenzl in late 1754, but his inefficiency had led to his departure nearly a decade later. At no point in their exchange of letters between 1755 and 1763[89] do they mention drawings, although as early as 1763 Mensaert declared that Wouters owned 'une très-nombreuse collection, en desseins & en estampes des plus habiles Maîtres'.[90] Wouters can thus be demonstrated to have been collecting during the period of his association with Cobenzl and

[84] e.g. J. K. C. H. Comte de Zinzendorf, Journal. Chronique belgo-bruxelloise 1766–1770, ed. Georges Englebert (Nouvelles Annales Prince de Ligne, hors series, II), Brussels 1991, 7 August 1769

[85] Cobenzl to Dorn, 29 June 1761; AGR, SEG, f. 13

[86] T'Sas paintings sale Brussels 16.5.1768. There are no prices marked in known copies of the sale of his prints and drawings that year: T'Sas drawings sale Brussels 18.7.1768

[87] The paintings of Daniel Danoot were sold in 1828: Danoot sale Brussels 22.12.1828

[88] Wouters sale Brussels 1797. Although the catalogue is dated 1797 the sale was actually held in 1801.

[89] AGR, SEG, 1249, ff. 236–329

[90] Mensaert 1763, p. 66

during the first two years of the latter's activities as a collector of drawings. Unlike Cobenzl, he bought drawings at the Rubempré sale in 1765. His interest was ongoing, and between the early 1760s and his death in 1792 he acquired over 9,000 drawings.

The thirteen collections with more than 500 drawings contained few Italian drawings. Only three had 15% Italian drawings or more (Snijers 1752, Rubempré 1765, Knyff 1776), nearly half mentioned none. The Snijers and Rubempré collections had been formed much earlier and the 'Italian' drawings at the Knyff sale raised low prices, suggesting that they were copies after rather than originals. Most of the other sales included about 5% Italian drawings. French drawings are even rarer, with the French content of most sales negligible. The exceptions are T'Sas 1768 (10%, but this percentage is distorted because the sample – just 220 drawings in the sale – is so small), Van Schorel 1774 (5%) and Hazard 1789 (5%).

Figure 73. Jean Daullé (1703–63), Portrait of the Count Salm, Bishop of Tournai. Engraving. Frontispiece to : R. P. Le Vaillant De la Bassardries, L'accord de la grâce et de la liberté, Tournai, 1740

In this context Cobenzl's collection (see Table 5) is surprising. Over 33% of the attributed drawings were given to the Italian school and just 27.8% to Dutch and Flemish artists; 12% were given to French artists. His unusually high percentage of German, Swiss and Austrian

drawings – 7.7% – was due largely to his connection with his Swiss supplier, Valltravers, who also provided him with over a hundred works given to the Carracci. Even if the figure for the Italian drawings is distorted by the single purchase of over 500 caricatures by Pier Leone Ghezzi in July 1763 (representing some 12% overall), it sets Cobenzl's Cabinet firmly apart from the other known collections in the Austrian Netherlands.

The explanation for the 'disbalance', with high percentages of Italian and French and only one quarter of the drawings Dutch and Flemish, almost certainly lies in the provenance of the drawings. The first 2,000 bought in 1761 from Borremans were from a collection formed at the start of the century, while the 1,500 which came from the Bishop of Tournai the following year had been acquired in Paris, apparently at the Crozat sale. Although by and large it is not possible to state with certainty which drawings came from which collection, certain assumptions can be made. We can largely identify the drawings that were acquired after those first two purchases (i.e. there are extant lists of them) and it becomes obvious that most of the Italian drawings, apart from the 'Carracci' sheets and the Ghezzi, came from Borremans or the Bishop of Tournai. Thus the composition of Cobenzl's collection of drawings to a great extent reflects the composition of its two main constituent parts.

Those two purchase of large bodies of drawings highlight the drawbacks to relying on sale catalogues for information about collectors and collections: Cobenzl clearly did have contacts with the two collectors who ceded their works to him, neither of whose sales, in 1771 and in 1781, include drawings – for obvious reasons.

Connoisseurship in the Austrian Netherlands

We have only limited evidence on which to base any picture of the level of connoisseurship in the Austrian Netherlands with regard to either paintings or drawings. Nonetheless, that evidence does confirm the impression of a lack of finesse in the perception of both. Some dealers and painters may have had a good eye – it was after all Vergeloo who provided Cobenzl with his excellent Rembrandt and Donckers who snapped up Rubens' Cimon and Pero for him – but overall local collectors appear not to have been as perspicacious as those in Amsterdam and Paris.

When Cobenzl despatched the Ecce Homo to Vienna for the imperial gallery in 1755, he found it to be one of Van Dyck's most beautiful works. The painting had been on open

display in the Chambre des Comptes and in order to persuade them to part with it Cobenzl had to negotiate for several months and have a copy made by a local painter. In all this time nobody – at least in government circles – seems to have questioned the painting's authorship, although when it arrived in Vienna the Court Painter Martin van Meytens immediately recognised it as the work of a pupil[91] (it was very possibly the painting by Gaspar de Crayer now in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna[92]).

Figure 74. Gaspar de Crayer (1584–1669), Ecce Homo. 1649–56. Possibly the 'Van Dyck' despatched by Cobenzl to Vienna in 1755. © Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

Sales catalogues produced in the Southern Netherlands are generally not the intelligent works of the kind produced in Paris by Gersaint, Mariette or Basan. The language used even in the most detailed of them is limited and repetitive.[93] Drawings generally get short shrift, described in groups or only summarily. Dimensions and even technique are rarely mentioned. Drawings can clearly be seen to have been 'second-class citizens' which were considered to be worthy of less attention and/or, as seems likely, the compilers of the catalogue had little understanding of the material. The only exceptions are four catalogues

[91] Sylva Tarouca to Cobenzl, 6 June 1755; AGR, SEG, 1261, f. 114

[92] Inv. GG–F15. Although the painting is there given a provenance with Leopold Wilhelm, on the basis of an article by Günther Heinz, 'Zwei wiedergefundene Bilder aus der Galerie des Erzherzogs Leopold-Wilhelm', Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien, LVIII, 1962, pp. 170, 174. The dimensions of the painting described in the archive documents are sufficiently different to allow us to suggest that the work in Vienna is that sent from Brussels by Cobenzl.

[93] Lyna's analysis of the texts produced no great variety of terms. Lyna thesis 2010, pp. 169–79

connected with the T'Sas family: the 1768 T'Sas sale (apparently the work of the painter and engraver Krafft, whose own posthumous sale in 1797 included over 800 drawings) and three catalogues of considerable professionalism produced by his son N. J. T'Sas, négociant, towards the end of the century: Hazard 1789, Krafft 1797 and Wouters 1797.

Figure 75. Jan Fyt (1611–61), Fox Hunt. Gift from Van Schorel. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

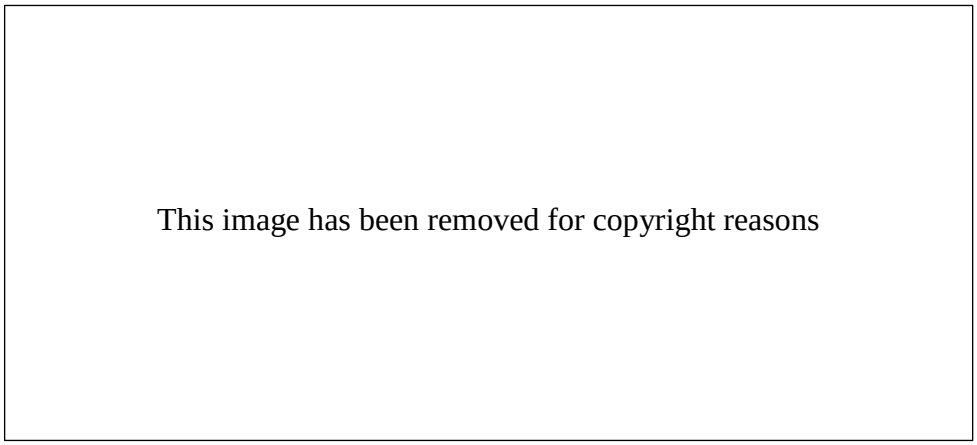

Figure 76. Copy after Abraham van Diepenbeck (1596–1675), St Francis de Paola Before Ferdinand I. Gift from Van Schorel. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

The quality of some of Van Schorel's paintings suggests that his collection was notable. He owned, for instance, two sketches by Rubens now in the Wallace Collection, showing The Birth of Henri IV and The Union of Henri IV and Marie de Médicis, and may have been among the buyers at the Jullienne sale in 1767.[94] But if we look at the drawings he gave Cobenzl we see interesting drawings of uneven quality. Alongside a well-known Fox Hunt by Jan Fyt are copies, some perhaps not immediately obvious as such (a letter to Du Quesnoy from Rubens) but others highly dubious (two drawings relating to the Convent of the Minimes in Antwerp supposedly by Diepenbeeck).[95] Nonetheless, in a friendly argument about two versions of Rubens' Repentant Magdalene, Van Schorel was correct in identifying his drawing as the original rather than Cobenzl's.[96]

Figure 77. After Peter Paul Rubens, The Birth of the Dauphin (Louis XIII). Early eighteenth century? Bought from the painter Maximilian de Haes. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

We can assume that Maximilian de Haes, nephew of Richard van Orley and owner of most of the van Orley heritage, was the source not only of a set of copper plates but of the album

[94] Isabelle Tillerot, Jean de Jullienne et les collectionneurs de son temps. Un regard singulier sur le tableau, Paris, 2010, no. 346

[95] OR 3083, OR 5187, OR 2797, OR 2798 respectively

[96] OR 5447 can be identified as Van Schorel's drawing because he describes its fragile state. Van Schorel to Cobenzl, s.d. [between 8 and 14 May 1764]; AGR, SEG, 1235, f. 363. Cobenzl's drawing is thus OR 5446. Van Schorel made a gift of his drawing to the Minister.

of 230 drawings by his uncle.[97] Yet he also sold Cobenzl two 'original drawings' by Rubens, which are quite clearly copies (albeit rather good quality) of paintings in the Luxembourg Gallery.[98] Since this was presumably a commercial transaction, it may say as much about what he thought was Cobenzl's own understanding of art as of his own eye.

Apart from Cobenzl, just two collectors of drawings in the Austrian Netherlands have drawn the attention of art historians, de Ligne and Wouters.

The collection of the young Prince de Ligne, who seems to have started buying as early as 1774 when he was just fifteen years old, was removed to Vienna and acquired by Albert of Saxe-Teschen. Despite praise by Adam Bartsch in the introduction to the catalogue, later scholars have tended to play down its significance. No concerted study of the collection overall has been carried out,[99] but although many drawings have been reattributed, a survey of them suggests that the collection, if not 'une des plus belles, des plus riches et des mieux composées, qui ait jamais été faite par un particulier', was one of the best formed in the region in the eighteenth century.

Plomp noted that the 120 drawings under Rubens' name in the Wouters catalogue, many of them highly finished compositions in black and red chalk, were unlikely to have been of good quality.[100] He concluded that 'one cannot escape concluding that in the eighteenth century connoisseurship of Rubens drawings [in Austria and] in the Southern Netherlands (where Albert and De Ligne probably bought many of their drawings and where Pierre Wouters had a comparable collection…), was generally not at the highest level.'[101]

Plomp's opinion should probably be applied more widely to drawings connoisseurship in general, particularly in the middle of the century. If Brussels and Antwerp were not as lacking in collectors as has been implied in much of the literature, and there was a very small number of men acquiring significant bodies of drawings, they did not form a coherent 'circle' or 'society' that could create an appropriate intellectual context for collecting, a climate in which the collecting of drawings had any notable profile, either as a common or as an elite activity.

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[97] OR 5995–6224

[98] Invoice, AGR, SEG, 2642, f. 105. The drawings are OR 5519, OR 5520

[99] The best overview is still Otto Benesch, 'Die Handzeichnungensammlung des Fürsten von Ligne', Die Graphischen Künste, LVI, Vienna, 1933, Mitteilungen, pp. 31–35

[100] Michiel C. Plomp, 'Collecting Rubens's Drawings', in: Anne-Marie Logan, Michiel C. Plomp, Peter Paul Rubens. The Drawings, exh. cat., Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; New Haven, 2005, p. 53

[101] Plomp 2005, p. 50

Chapter 9. Acts of Collecting

While Cobenzl tended to acquire his paintings individually, and there are therefore more separate acquisitions, drawings were acquired more rarely but in large lots. If we can account for over half of the paintings in the Cabinet sold to Catherine II, more or less all of the drawings – in terms of their quantity – can be accounted for by documented purchases. The instances in which Cobenzl selected just a few drawings at a time were extremely limited, even somewhat half-hearted. The vast majority were bought in groups: 2,000 from Borremans, 1,500 from the Bishop of Tournai, 625 from Valltravers in lots of about 100, 521 drawings by Ghezzi and 230 by Richard Van Orley in a single album.

The **87** individual transactions where we know from documentary sources how the object (painting, drawing / group of drawings, sculpture, but not portraits or furniture pictures) arrived, i.e. as a gift, via auction or private sale (Appendix II), can be broken down:

19 were gifts (individual works or groups of drawings); eleven of those are of works – paintings or drawings – that entered the Cabinet sold to Catherine; gifts came from Van Schorel, Lalive and Dorn, two were sent by artists seeking commissions or promotion.

47 were acquired by private sale (including two commissions).

11 were bought at auction on behalf of but not by Cobenzl, although in at least three cases he managed to do a deal beforehand.

10 were groups of works sent by young artists studying in Rome.

Expressed as percentages of the number of known transactions (not as a percentage of objects in the collection), this means that 61% of them were private sales and just 14.3% were auctions, just 10.4% if we take out the 'deals'. Less than 100 of over 4,000 drawings sold to Russia can be shown to have been acquired for Cobenzl at auction.

Auction v Private Sale

While we cannot discount lack of opportunity (i.e. rarity of auctions) as one reason for this preference for private sales, Cobenzl seems to have had a marked dislike of the public sale.

Of the two (possibly three) paintings that Cobenzl acquired at the Rubempré sale in Brussels in 1765, one, the Wouwerman Riding at the Cat, was in fact snapped up before the sale itself.[1] This was Cobenzl's favoured approach where a painting was put up for auction: to do a deal beforehand. Despite the large number of references to attempts to buy in such a manner, however, there are just two documented instances in which Cobenzl was successful: the Rubempré sale, and a sale in Frankfurt in January 1763, where his representative paid another dealer not to bid against him.[2]

In most cases the request was rejected quite firmly, despite Cobenzl's obligatory offer to cover all the expenses incurred. In 1765, for instance, he tried to acquire paintings before the sale of the late Abbot Favier in Lille, but the bookseller F. J. Jacqués (he was not a longstanding contact, so Cobenzl said the paintings were 'for a friend') explained to him that works could not be sent to him for approval, or bought before the sale itself, because this would be to mislead buyers coming from afar.[3]

One must ask why Cobenzl tried to avoid buying at auction. One argument sometimes put forward as to why the auction became more popular in the eighteenth century is that this was a way of raising more money than would have otherwise been possible. The experience of Cobenzl, however, demonstrates that while sellers seemed to think that they might get more money for a work at public auction, buyers often paid higher sums in a private deal. There was considerable room for inflation of a work's true value in a private sale, particularly when Cobenzl's identity was known.

Paintings offered to Cobenzl in June 1764 by François Mols of Antwerp, a Temptation of St Anthony by Teniers 'de son meilleur tems' priced at 1,000 florins if sold separately, and a Wouwerman, the two available for 4,200 florins de change, were rightly declined: at the auction of Mols' collection in June 1772 the two paintings went for just a third of the price, the Teniers for 300 florins and the Wouwerman for 1,125.[4]

Mols' Wouwerman was still one of the most expensive paintings by this artist recorded at sale in the region. But according to different annotated copies of the Rubempré catalogue Cobenzl paid 4,500 florins for the Rubempré Riding at the Cat, a huge sum even for this popular artist (although a Horse Market, lot 35 at the Gaignat sale in Paris in 1769, made

[1] 'Je me suis assuré le beau Wouwermans, qui n'en sera dans la Vente, que pour la forme.' Cobenzl to Lalive, 7 March 1765; AGR, SEG, 1167, f. 102

[2] Krufft correspondence, December 1762 – January 1763; AGR, SEG, 1164, ff. 240–51, 378

[3] Jacqués to Cobenzl, 6 September 1765; AGR, SEG, 1157, f. 4

[4] [Mols and Goubau] sale Brussels 16.6.1772, lots 5 and 1

14,560 livres, just slightly more than 4,700 florins de change) and by far the largest sum that Cobenzl is recorded as having paid for any work.

Figure 78. François Joseph Dupressoir (1800–59) after Philips Wouwerman (1619–68), Riding at the Cat (Le Caroussel flamand). 1845–47. The much-admired painting was removed from the Hermitage in 1933 and is now in the Instituut Collectie Nederland, Amsterdam/Rijswijk. © The Trustees of the British Museum

The three next most expensive paintings at the Rubempré sale were all the work of Teniers: a large Danse de Paysans (lot 48) at 4,150 florins, Peasants at Table, Others Dancing (lot 47) at 2,600 florins, and a Guardroom (lot 43) at 1,540 florins. The Rubens sketches bought by Danoot went for 2,400 florins the pair. The next most expensive painting by Wouwerman, Marauders (lot 87), went for 900 florins.

Vermeylen looked at the prices of works sold at auction in Antwerp in the eighteenth century and found only five works that sold for more than 1,000 florins, all in or after 1774. Three of them were by Rubens, one by Van Dyck, the last by Teniers.[5] Not one of the ten most expensive works was by Wouwerman. Even bearing in mind that prices in Brussels seem to have been somewhat higher than in Antwerp (the highest price for a

[5] Filip Vermeylen, 'Adulterous Woman on the Loose: Rubens's Paintings Sold at Auction in Antwerp During the Eighteenth Century', in: Katlijne Van der Stighelen, ed., Munuscula Amicorum. Contributions on Rubens and his Colleagues in Honour of Hans Vlieghe, Turnhout, 2006, pp. 185–98, table on p. 190

Rubens in Antwerp 1758–98 was 7,201 florins for Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery at the Knyff sale in 1785, compared to 12,100 for Verhulst's Coronation of St Catherine in Brussels in 1779[6]), this suggests that Cobenzl was paying over the odds.

We are forced to wonder if Cobenzl might have done better buying the painting outright at the sale, or ask whether price was perhaps not the deciding factor. (Which is not to say that price was not important. Cobenzl knew how to bargain and he managed to cut down the price of the 'original' portraits of Albert and Isabella by Rubens that he bought from Morel-Disque of Calais from 2,800 florins de change to the equivalent of 700 florins de change.[7]) What was it about the purchase of this particular work at this particular sale that made Cobenzl prepared to pay so much more money? Was it a mixture of interrelated questions: the artist, the reputation of the work and its provenance in a celebrated collection, with the added bonus that Cobenzl could negotiate the purchase without the need to take part in the auction?

In a private agreement, it was also possible in theory for Cobenzl to arrange different kinds of deals, such as staggered payments or part exchange. His first purchase of a large body of drawings in 1761 was for a total of 6,000 livres de France, payable in six equal parts.[8] The same offer did not work in August 1764 with the Royal Librarian in Florence, Menabuoni, whom he offered to pay ('for a friend') in instalments for a series of drawings by Menabuoni's father.[9]

Documented transactions indicate that Cobenzl had similarly mixed success with his offers to render works in his possession in part payment for others. The bill presented by Martin Brauwer to Cobenzl's executors shows that in April 1763 Cobenzl made a part payment of 400 florins 'en divers tableaux' off the cost his beloved 'Rubens' (Van Uden) landscape.[10] In a letter to Dorn Cobenzl suggested that the deal for the Rubempré Wouwerman was also 'un troc', i.e. at least part of the 4,500 florins came in the form of other paintings, but none of the details are known.[11] Cobenzl's last documented (unsuccessful) attempt to pay for a desired object with an exchange of paintings was in 1767. Cobenzl offered Basan a number of paintings in exchange for a small Teniers on copper:[12] his Van der Heyde, his

[6] Knyff sale Antwerp 18.7.1785, lot 176; Verhulst paintings sale Brussels 16.8.1779, lot 43
[7] Morel Disque correspondence, March–April 1764; AGR, SEG, 1178, ff. 89–100
[8] Borremans correspondence, August 1761; AGR, SEG, 1073, ff. 326–29
[9] Menabuoni correspondence, August–October 1764; AGR, SEG, 1176, ff. 52–60
[10] Invoice from Brauwer amongst the executor papers; AGR, SEG, 2644, f. 46
[11] Cobenzl to Dorn, 19 May 1765; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 170
[12] Cobenzl to Basan, 7 June 1767; AGR, SEG, 1067, f. 17

Poelenburch, two Aert van der Neer, his Lairesse, Van Balen and Brueghel, a self-portrait by Gonzales Coques and two paintings by Marienhof. But the Teniers so wanted by Cobenzl had already been sold, to Randon de Boisset.[13] There are records of other failed attempts to exchange paintings, although that does not mean there were no successes: that is probably where some of the 'missing' paintings from Cobenzl's collection went.

Figure 79. Philips Wouwerman (1619–68), Rider on a White Horse. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

The peregrinations – and price inflations – of another Wouwerman in the Cabinet demonstrates how buying openly at auction could be a more sound financial move than buying by private sale. Rider on a White Horse sold at the Bruges sale of Charles Joseph de Schrijvere, Procureur de France, in June 1763.[14] Once again Cobenzl chose a bookseller, Joseph van Praet, as his intermediary in an unsuccessful attempt to pre-empt the sale[15] and after the sale he wrote to another bookseller with whom he had dealings in Ghent, one Keerle, to enquire about the new owner. Despite the price of 68 florins clearly marked in a number of annotated sales copies, Keerle informed Cobenzl that it had made 350 florins and was now with the Antwerp dealer François de Both.[16] When Cobenzl

[13] Basan to Cobenzl, 12 June 1767; AGR, SEG, 1067, f. 18. It should presumably be identified with the small 'Guingette' that appeared in the Randon de Boisset sale in 1777, when it was sold for 2,041 livres; Randon de Boisset sale Paris 27.2.1777, lot 62. This is the painting now at Apsley House, London, WM 1499–1948

[14] Schrijvere sale Bruges 1.6.1763, lot 4

[15] Cobenzl to Van Praet. 1 May 1763; AGR, SEG, 1235, f. 196

[16] Keerle correspondence June 1763, AGR, SEG, 1159, ff. 219–21

acquired the painting from the Both (Bodt) brothers in May 1764, he paid 600 florins, nine times the sum he would have paid if he had agreed to buy at the auction.[17]

Figure 80. Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725–1805), The Schoolteacher. 1763. Acquired via Rigot. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

By comparison, the mark up on works sold to him by Basan seems more modest. The small sketch by Rubens bought at the Jullienne sale for 480 livres was offered to Cobenzl for 720 livres.[18] As a marchand or dealer, Basan made his money through applying his own knowledge of art and the market, and adding a dealer's commission on top, hence the respectable but not excessive 50% mark up. This was in contrast to Cobenzl's commercial relationship with Rigot, a négociant rather than a marchand. Rigot, who acquired a drawing from Greuze by private sale and drawings from the de Troy sale, applied a tiny commission, in effect simply a fee for services rendered, set out separately in a detailed breakdown of customs and other expenses.[19]

Basan's role as a provider of drawings further supports the assumption that private sales could be far from advantageous. In December 1765 Basan sent Cobenzl a catalogue of drawings, offering to sell him certain lots prior to the sale.[20] Cobenzl asked for the prices

[17] Van Schorel correspondence, May–June 1764; AGR, SEG, 1235, ff. 363–69; AGR, SEG, 2648, invoice ff. 42 and 68

[18] Jullienne sale Paris 30.3–22.5.1767, lot 20. Basan correspondence, June 1767; AGR, SEG, 1067, ff. 15–19

[19] Rigot to Cobenzl, April 1764; AGR, SEG, 1203, f. 407

[20] Basan drawings sale Paris 10.12.1765. Basan correspondence, December 1765; AGR, SEG, 1067, ff. 12–14

of eight lots, none of which he in the end acquired. At the auction itself these drawings made considerably less than the 'fair' prices offered by Basan.[21] Lots 31 and 32, for which Basan asked 45 livres, made 40 livres at the sale; lot 53, for which he wanted 90 livres, sold for 60; lot 86, for which he wanted 36 to 45 livres, made just 11 livres.

Of course the auction was not always the better bet. If Cobenzl bought seven preparatory drawings for prints by de Troy at auction in Paris via Rigot in April 1764 for 304 livres, in September that year he acquired five superb sheets – by Rembrandt, Giovanni Manozzi, François Pourbus, Guercino and Annibale Carracci – from Menabuoni in Florence for almost exactly the same sum. The most striking incidence of economy in a private sale was the acquisition of Rubens' Cimon and Pero via Donckers in December 1763/January 1764 for just 50 ecus or 70 florins.

Taking Cobenzl's experience as a sample, therefore, we should conclude that while auctions might bring in more money for the seller (most or all lots might be sold), individual prices were higher in private sales. For the buyer then, the auction would often have been a better bet. The predominance of private sales in Cobenzl's collecting practice thus cannot be put down to financial concerns. Other issues also played an important role.

Some paintings, for instance, were simply not available at auction. Many of the best works in the Austrian Netherlands were still housed in churches and monastic houses. Whilst religious works were to flood on to the market to be sold at auction after the suppression of the Bollandists in 1773 and the closure of many monastic Orders nearly a decade later, in the 1760s most were still firmly in the hands of those institutions which had commissioned them. A number of houses were already showing a willingness to part with their paintings, as long as the price was right, as in the case of Cobenzl's own purchase in 1766 of a painting from the Dominican Hermitage in Lier.

Nor should we ignore social and status reasons for avoiding auctions. Private sales clearly fitted into Cobenzl's system of favour and exchange, serving to cement existing links and make new ones. Most of the deals done with men in Cobenzl's extensive network of professional, aristocratic and personal contacts do not mention money at all. Prices are given when the deal is conducted purely within the sphere of business.

[21] Basan to Cobenzl, 11 December 1765; AGR, SEG, 1167, f. 14 sheet 2

Figure 81. Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), The Institution of the Eucharist. c. 1631. State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

If sums of money are defined in correspondence with professionals such as Basan and Rigot, in general, where a transfer of an object was made direct with one of equal status we find an unwillingness to mention or indeed to take money. And when Dorn's Rubens sketch came into Cobenzl's hands and the Minister expressed a desire to purchase it, Dorn simply made him a gift of the painting. The Prince of Thurn und Taxis gave Cobenzl a painting by Teniers in January 1768, expressly stating that it was to 'cementer les liens de notre amitié' and, flatteringly, that 'Ces sortes de choses n'ont de valeur qu'autant qu'un amateur qui sait distinguer les beautés, veut bien leur en donner'.[22] These examples are typical of Cobenzl's private acquisitions and also of the reaction when he himself made gifts. Cardinal Albani received a painting by Geeraerts from Cobenzl in 1755 with the words 'Je le placerai parmij les choses que j'ai le plus chéries, et pour le prix de l'ouvrage, et pour le souvenir de V.E. qui m'en a fait le présent'.[23]

The private deal implied both status and knowledge – after all, anyone with money could acquire a sale catalogue and turn up on the day. Whilst many paintings sold at auction in the Austrian Netherlands found their way into the hands of nobles, few nobles – local or

[22] Thurn und Taxis to Cobenzl, 14 January 1768; AGR, SEG, 1231, f. 232v
[23] Albani to Cobenzl, November 1755; AGR, SEG, 1054, f. 491

foreign – were buying at auction themselves. Even non-aristocrats, such as Verhulst, owner of one of the best paintings collections in the Austrian Netherlands, rarely bought at auction.[24] In general, the buyers were dealers, and not just any dealers, but dealers who were exporting works of art to more profitable markets such as Paris or London.

Thus whilst auctions in the Austrian Netherlands may not have been the social melting-pot they were becoming in Britain, there was certainly a sense that auctions allowed too many of the hoi-polloi in to mix with people of status. Moreover, the auction so often marked an unfortunate decline or end (whether bankruptcy or death), a 'dismantling' of aristocratic possession and privilege, and it opened the way for other, less elite classes to come in and not only see how the mighty were fallen, perhaps even to gloat, but to 'buy a piece' of their property, to move in on the territories of social power, to trade up, to encroach.[25]

Corruption: Theft and Undue Pressure

In looking at the way in which Cobenzl acquired works of art we must deal with the almost inevitable repetition of a single story to suggest that Cobenzl was a rapacious 'robber' of the local heritage for whom bribery and corruption were everyday matters. In 1874 Charles Piot published two letters that, he felt, proved theft and immorality.[26] The first, dated 29 May 1767, came from Patrice-François de Neny, head of the Privy Council:

> 'M. V…. m'a prié de le recommander à Votre Excellence pour la place de surintendant de la bibliothèque des bollandistes; car il est fort persuadé que les bénits pères déménageront de nos provinces. Pour donner poids à la supplication, il veut voler de cette bibliothèque et se propose de présenter à Votre Excellence le plus beau Pline de l'univers… Il y a aussi quelque prix pour ma recommandation: c'est je ne sçai quel livre grec extrêmement rare.'

On 30 May 1767 Cobenzl replied:

> 'Quoique la demande de M.V… soit une corruption pour vous et pour moi, j'accepte la proposition, bien entendu que je me réserve le beau tableau de Van Dyck qui est dans la salle de la Sodalité…'

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[24] According to Dries Lyna, he only bought at auction once, at the Molinari paintings sale Brussels 15.7.1763: Dries Lyna, '"La peinture ne flattoit plus les personnes". Private Collections of Paintings in Eighteenth-century Brussels', paper given at the symposium C'était au temps où Bruxelles bruxellait. Art & Art Production in Brussels 1600–1800, Katholieke Universiteit, Leuven, 9–10 December 2010

[25] Cynthia Wall, 'The English Auction: Narratives of Dismantlings', Eighteenth-century Studies, XXXI/1, Autumn 1997, pp. 1–25

[26] Charles Piot, Le règne de Marie-Thérèse dans les Pays-Bas autrichiens, Louvain, 1874, p. 71

The painting in question was Van Dyck's Mystic Marriage of the Blessed Herman Joseph. Quite apart from the darkest possible interpretation of what seems to this reader to be the joking (even slightly offended) tone of Neny, and the similarly joking (but wistful) reply of the Minister, the painting never passed into Cobenzl's hands, nor was there ever any likelihood of that happening.

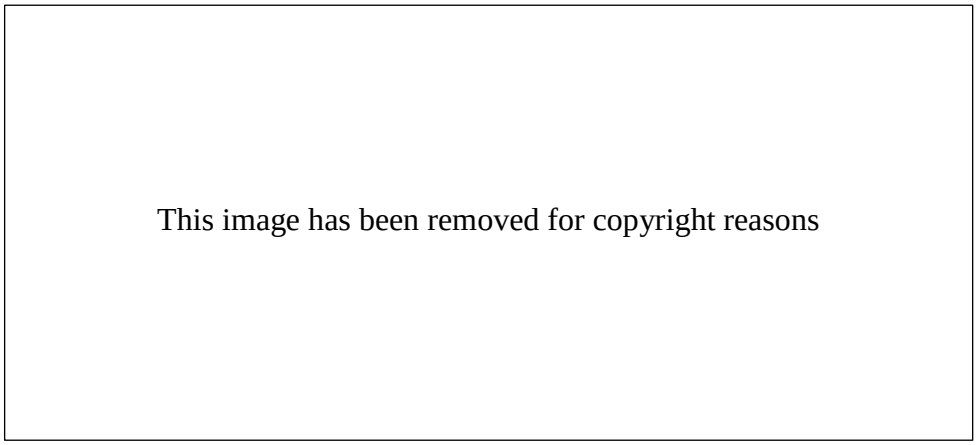

Figure 82. Anthony Van Dyck (1599–1641), The Mystic Marriage of the Blessed Herman Joseph. 1629. This work, which was never in Cobenzl's possession, was nonetheless at the centre of a much-repeated but untrue story that Cobenzl stole paintings from religious institutions. © Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

These letters were written at the height of discussions regarding the fate of the Jesuits in the Austrian Netherlands. In the lead up to their suppression across much of Europe, and particularly in Austria that very year, 1767, there was considerable concern regarding two key matters: who had the experience and knowledge to take over the Jesuits' role as teachers (so disastrous would the loss of Jesuit institutions be that it was decided that Jesuits would still be allowed to teach but could not run colleges), and what would happen

to their huge wealth. In most instances works of art and libraries became state property, but there was also a considerable amount of manoeuvering by individuals seeking to profit.

But the Society of Bollandists was to continue its work in Antwerp until 1773, when it was forced to 'evacuate' to Brussels. In 1767, therefore, the Society had not been suppressed and all discussions were purely theoretical. When the Bollandists did lose the painting admired by Cobenzl, it became the property of the monarchy in Vienna.[27]

From this single documented instance of a proposed dishonest act that in fact never took place came the assumption that Cobenzl, and other hated representatives of the Austrian rulers, committed multiple acts of theft. If Perey was moderate in simply multiplying a supposed single instance, stating that Cobenzl 'fit prendre dans les établissements religieux les tableaux les plus beaux pour les placer dans sa collection',[28] Arthur Verhaegen was impassioned in decrying the liberal tendencies of Neny, Cobenzl and Kaunitz:

> 'ils ont toujours à la bouche les mots de progrès, de réforme… et au même moment ils s'entendent comme larrons en foire, pour voler des manuscrits précieux et des tableaux de maîtres, et déclarent sans vergogne qu'ils sont prêts à se laisser corrompre…'[29]

The story was endlessly repeated thereafter, with varying degrees of warmth, but there is nothing to suggest that on any occasion Cobenzl removed any works of art or books belonging to others – whether the state, monasteries or private individuals – without their agreement and without paying for them.

It is harder to assess whether Cobenzl exerted undue pressure on anyone to part with works of art, either for money or as a gift. Certainly there is no obvious incident that can be cited to suggest that he did. The anonymity with which he frequently attempted to make purchases, via intermediaries, surely excluded misuse of his position.

Although no evidence has been discovered that Cobenzl forced people to part with works of art, it does appear that people were concerned he might do so, although whether because

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[27] On the fate of the Jesuit art see: Charles Piot, 'Les tableaux des collèges des Jésuites supprimés en Belgique', Bulletin de l'Académie Royale des sciences, des lettres et des beaux-arts de Belgique, XLVI, 1878, pp. 139–53; Walter Scheelen, 'Het lot van de schilderijencollecties van de Zuidnederlandse Jezuïetencolleges na de opheffing van de Orde in 1773', Jaarboek van het Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerp, 1988, pp. 261–341

[28] Lucien Perey, Charles de Lorraine et la cour de Bruxelles sous le règne de Marie-Thérèse, Paris, 1903, pp. 240–41

[29] Arthur Verhaegen, Les Cinquante dernières années de l'Ancienne Université de Louvain, 1740–1797, Liège, 1884, p. 191

of some unknown precedent or whether such was simply expected of someone in his position cannot be demonstrated. In 1762 he wished to buy from Madame de Bouchout of Antwerp a copy of the Pompa introitus on vellum, but as Cobenzl told Van Schorel, 'craignant apparement qu'elle devroit me l'offrir en present' she hastened to sell it to another.[30] Villermont seemed to think that Madame de Bouchout had some reason for her fears, suggesting that Cobenzl was not always averse to accepting gifts offered to him.[31] Yet we should not forget the words of Philip Cobenzl, who wrote in his memoirs 'Mon oncle… n'entendait pas à accepter des présents…'[32] While the correspondence is filled with references to gifts of barrels of beer and pheasants, usually from family, friends and equals, and to requests for and granting of favours, all of which might be interpreted in various ways, few of them relate to works of art.

The Role of Networks

Cobenzl's avoidance of the auction was influenced by the economic and social concerns set out above, but the preference for the private sale, via trusted intermediaries, was more deeply rooted in the place that collecting occupied within the wider picture of his activities.

A network of correspondents was vital to the successful functioning of any diplomat, but particularly to one located as far from the Vienna government as Cobenzl. He needed to establish his own information-gathering networks.[33] With Europe in turmoil in the 1740s to early 1760s, information such as troop movements and battles, rumours of pacts and deals, changes in policy, were vital to any diplomat wishing to keep abreast of the course of international affairs and where his own masters might wish to lead. When he was in the realms of the Empire, engaged in polite intrigue, raising support for Vienna and reporting back on loyalties and treachery, Cobenzl relied heavily on such networks.[34] Once he was in even more distant Brussels, the need was far greater. Since he himself did no travelling save to other parts of the Austrian Netherlands after he arrived in Brussels, he had a particular interest in being at the centre of a web of correspondents.[35]

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[30] Cobenzl to Van Schorel, 4 May 1762; AGR, SEG, 1235, f. 309

[31] Comte Carlos de Villermont, La cour de Vienne à Bruxelles au XVIII^{e} siècle, Le comte de Cobenzl, ministre plénipotentiaire aux Pays-Bas, Lille–Paris–Bruges, 1925, p. 180

[32] Alfred Ritter von Arneth, Graf Philipp Cobenzl und seine Memoiren, Vienna, 1885, p. 86

[33] Paul P. Bernard, From the Enlightenment to the Police State: the Public Life of Johann Anton Pergen, Urbana–Chicago, 1991, p. 6

[34] Charles Piot, Correspondance du comte Charles de Cobenzl au sujet de la Guerre de Sept Ans, Brussels, 1874

[35] Cf. L. W. B. Brockliss, Calvet's Web: Enlightenment and the Republic of Letters in 18th-century France, Oxford, 2002

The pattern of Cobenzl's epistolary communications fits into the concept of the Republic of Letters in its eighteenth-century form, not so much the republic of the late seventeenth century, almost exclusively an exchange of ideas among men of intellect, a 'republic' in which nationality and religion had no divisive power,[36] but pragmatic in tone and purpose. Cobenzl asked for (offered) books, goods, favours and information, even gossip. He exchanged news with Church men and politicians, with scholars and noblemen, with military men and booksellers, with customs officials and lackeys, but never engaged in theoretical discussion or philosophical reflection. Nonetheless, in the wider European context some of his correspondence seems old-fashioned, for in Paris and London institutions of sociability and intellectual exchange were coming to perform many of the tasks, including the reinforcement of community – intellectual, social, power-based – that had previously been conducted largely through epistolary means.[37]

Within such networks, excuses were sought to periodically remind people of one's existence, the simplest method being a recommendation for some individual who would deliver it in person, which had the advantage that not only did the addressee read the sender's letter, but it was polite to mention them in conversation with the bearer. A variety of imaginative reasons were conceived to justify the exchange of letters. Long after his retirement to his native Italy Botta Adorno annually despatched his Brussels lace (cuffs and collars) to Cobenzl for it to be cleaned by specialists in Brussels itself.[38] Such a task could have been entrusted to a less high-ranking intermediary, yet Cobenzl was, in this case and in others, pleased to carry out the task (or pass it on to his minions). In asking others to do favour and performing them himself, the foreign diplomat or ambassador was thus himself an 'agent', as was emphasised by Abraham de Wicquefort in L'ambassadeur et ses fonctions,[39] a copy of which appeared in Cobenzl's book sale.

Even where no favour was asked, no agency required, Cobenzl occasionally inserted himself into what could have been a straightforward transaction to bring himself to the recipient's attention, sometimes in unexpected contexts.[40] At times the intermediary stage seems almost illogical – such as writing to a colleague in Augsburg to commission copies

[36] Anne Goldgar, Impolite Learning: Conduct and Community in the Republic of Letters 1680–1750, New Haven–London, 1995

[37] See e.g. Dena Goodman, The Republic of Letters: A Cultural History of the French Enlightenment, Ithaca–London, 1994, chapter IV, 'Writing: Epistolary Commerce in the Republic of Letters'

[38] AGR, SEG, 1077, ff. 1–173 passim

[39] Marika Keblusek, 'Book Agents. Intermediaries in the Early Modern World of Books', in: Hans Cools, Marika Keblusek, Badeloch Noldus, eds, Your Humble Servant. Agents in Early Modern Europe, Hilversum, 2006, p. 106

[40] Cobenzl instructed the customs officer Bossaert that goods for Maria Theresa not be sent directly to Vienna, but to him in Brussels, for him to send on under his own name; AGR, SEG, 1075, particularly f. 521

of engraved gems from Daniel Lippert in Dresden[41] rather than approaching Lippert directly. Such communications served a different purpose, building up a network of friends and interests, of exchange and obligation, a deposit of favours on which each could draw when required, or expect to be returned without prompting (e.g. through the immediate communication of news). In this reciprocal community of obligation in which status, ideas and favours circulated, even the exchange of goods was but a part of the wider scope of communication,[42] and the emphasis was on 'exchange rather than the thing exchanged'.[43]

Rooted in this practice of using a respected and high-ranking intermediary specifically to recall oneself to their attention was that of employing only a trusted subordinate even in the most ordinary of situations. Under the rules of the community of exchange booksellers not only provided books but acted as information agents (spies); it was through the Frankfurt bookseller Varrentrap that Voltaire made his famous appeal to Cobenzl in 1753, but Varrentrap was also asked to view works of art for sale and to make purchases. Sometimes the chosen intermediary was hardly qualified for the task. André Krufft, a young official in Frankfurt, when asked to buy paintings at auction felt obliged to seek specialist assistance – local 'connoisseurs' – to compensate for his lack of knowledge.[44]

One of the most interesting of Cobenzl's intermediaries is Rodolphe Valltravers, a model of the interdisciplinary activities of the agent, who acted as tutor to a number of young men travelling in Europe, who acquired for the Minister both crystals (as part of his interest in industrial regeneration) and drawings (for his private Cabinet), who provided minerals, plants and prints to members of royalty (Charles de Lorraine and the King of Denmark), and corresponded with Albrecht von Haller and Linnaeus, with Benjamin Franklin and John Adams, and who is thus variously described as 'savant', 'politician' and 'dealer'.[45]

This use of trusted agents for multiple purposes is not of course unique among collectors. Robert Walpole, Britain's first prime minister, employed several such men, most strikingly the spy, John Macky, author of a number of travel books, who acquired the Four Markets

[41] AGR, SEG, 1067, ff. 58–63

[42] Pascal Griener, 'Wille, ou les récompenses de l'honnêteté', in: Élisabeth Décultot, Michel Espagne, François-René Martin, eds, Johann Georg Wille (1715–1808) et son milieu: Un réseau européen de l'art au XVIII[e] siècle (XXIII[es] Rencontres de l'École du Louvre), Paris, 2009, pp. 96–97. See also: Cools, Keblusek, Noldus 2006.

[43] Goldgar 1995, p. 7

[44] Krufft correspondence, December 1762 – January 1763; AGR, SEG, 1164, ff. 199–251, 377–78

[45] Catherine Phillips, 'Rodolphe Valltravers (1723–1815?), Swiss Gentleman, and the Promotion of Useful Knowledge', Век Просвещения / L'Age des Lumières, III, Moscow, 2011, pp. 96–121

by Frans Snyders for Walpole's collection.[46] In Cobenzl's case, he not only employed agents and spies to research and acquire works of art, but he made use of his artistic contacts to gather information. The marchand Rigot – an agent in the most basic sense of the word, someone who was paid for services – was employed in August 1761 to obtain information from the Paris police regarding the reliability and Brussels connections of an individual of interest to the Minister.[47] The painter De la Pegna – not an agent as such, and not paid save in patronage – also reported back on events in Vienna and Rome.[48]

If Stanislaw August employed everyone from family members to book dealers and bankers for many different stages in the acquisition of works of art,[49] Cobenzl can be demonstrated to have made only extremely modest use of family members in his collecting. Apart from the gift of a small 'Dürer' from his brother Guido in 1746, and the enthusiastic but superficial reports of his nephew Philip on art in Paris in 1762, our only evidence of family members being involved in Cobenzl's acts of collecting is the acquisition of two small drawings and 47 Piazzetta drawings from Albrizzi in Venice via Gian Antonio Coronini (the Cobenzl and Coronini families were linked by several ties of marriage). Philip, based in Brussels, was of course to be central to Cobenzl's acts of possession, since he was responsible for the daily care of the Cabinet of Drawings for several years.

Most surprising in looking at Cobenzl's personal correspondence is that despite the perpetual (but superficial) references to him as 'grand collectionneur' in the literature, there are almost no connoisseurs or fellow art lovers among his correspondents. Most letters having any reference to art are almost exclusively businesslike, dealing with viewing, gift, or sale. There is a remarkable lack of descriptions or details of works that were not for sale. Winckelmann is the only correspondent with whom he discusses art in any but the most practical terms. His intermediaries were drawn from his political circle, from agents working on his behalf in a variety of contexts, and from his range of booksellers. His most trusted contacts were Van Schorel and Dorn, both of whom were essentially 'work' colleagues; Cardinal Albani was also such a colleague, since he performed the functions of Habsburg representative in Rome. Cobenzl met Lalive not because the French amateur was travelling to view art but because of the dynastic

[46] On Walpole's agents see: Edward Bottoms, 'Directory of Agents, Buyers and Collectors', in: Larissa Dukelskaya, Andrew Moore, eds, A Capital Collection. Houghton Hall and the Hermitage, New Haven–London, 2002, Appendix I, pp. 429–42

[47] AGR, SEG, 1203, f. 121

[48] De la Pegna correspondence, 1754–69; AGR, SEG, 1187, ff. 185–249 passim

[49] Ewa Manikowska, 'Acquiring Paintings for the Polish Court: King Stanislaw August (1764–1795) and his Dealers', in: Dries Lyna, Filip Vermeylen, Hans Vlieghe, eds, Art Auctions and Dealers. The Dissemination of Netherlandish Art During the Ancien Régime, Turnhout, 2009, pp. 109–25

marriages being planned by Choiseul to link important French officials and the Nettine banking family in Brussels.

When one looks at the role of what Jonckheere termed the solliciteur-culturel at the start of the eighteenth century,[50] one is struck by the contrast to the way in which Cobenzl used his agents. James Brydges, later Duke of Chandos, whilst employing a single agent for multiple commissions, trusted that agent to take decisions about acquisitions of works of art, both regarding what to consider and whether the work on offer was worthy of its price. Presumably in part because Cobenzl was employing individuals in his personal and professional network, choosing them for their status as members of that network rather than because of any qualification or experience in doing business of any kind, let alone acquiring art, he was quite definite in insisting on taking his own aesthetic decisions. Cobenzl himself identified works in which he might be interested and negotiated to have the agents arrange for them to be sent to him on approval, i.e. with the right to return them if necessary. Even when Van Schorel vouched for the quality of the Wouwerman Rider on a White Horse that he wanted, Cobenzl still had the painting brought to him in Brussels, for him to make his personal judgment. He had no qualms about returning works of art, whether to Vergeloo in Antwerp or to Valltravers in Bienne.[51] Donckers is the only dealer (i.e. employee rather than colleague) whom he seems to have trusted implicitly on artistic matters, not surprising in view of the painter's acquisition of Rubens' superb Cimon and Pero at a bargain price.

Our conclusion is that Cobenzl employed almost exclusively the intermediaries that existed as a result of his friendships and the networks built up over the course of his career. Ensuring trust and cohesion was a key aspect of building such a network. New contacts were made only via trusted individuals (sometimes creating a convoluted chain of two or three correspondents), but each contact was verified by his part in the chain. This principle often defined the choice of an agent, since better a familiar and trusted intermediary than one who might, perhaps, be better informed but less loyal. Cobenzl thus frequently rejected unsolicited offers, but conversely approached even respected individuals only after 'validation' through a common contact. Aware of and interested in the publications of

[50] Koenraad Jonckheere, 'The "Solliciteur-Culturel". Some Notes on Dutch Agents and International Trade in Art and Applied Arts', De zeventiende eeuw 24, 2008, pp. 162–80

[51] He returned a painting given to Jan Asselijn citing its poor condition: Cobenzl to Vergeloo, 20 September 1765; AGR, SEG, 1238, f. 165. He returned Valltravers' entire seventh despatch of 125 drawings: Cobenzl to Valltravers, 26 October 1765; AGR, SEG, 1234, f. 144.

Winckelmann, it was only when his importance and approachability had been confirmed by Count Guasco and Cardinal Albani that Cobenzl addressed him directly.[52]

The state and composition of Cobenzl's political network thus defined the geography of his artistic enquiries and acquisitions. He made no attempt to create a new network of artistic correspondents. Which is not to say that the geographical range of Cobenzl's acquisitions was not extensive. Works of art – paintings and drawings – were sourced in Antwerp, Bruges, Brussels, Ghent, Lier, Louvain, Malines and Tournai, in Calais, Lille and Paris, The Hague and Rotterdam, Aix-la-Chapelle and Frankfurt, Venice, Rome and Florence; Valltravers said that he had gathered the drawings he sent from Bienne in Zurich and other Swiss towns; other works were investigated in Cologne, Ypres and Middelburg. But other areas, where there was no trusted individual, were not scoured for works of art, and approaches were not made 'cold' to potential artistic correspondents or intermediaries.

Cobenzl's collecting practices, therefore, including his preference for private sales, were rooted in this concept of 'the Republic of validated contacts'. Not for him the social aspect of viewing and acquisition that was so often a key aspect of collecting, particularly in France.[53] There is no suggestion at any point in any letter that he himself attended any auction, whether in Brussels or elsewhere, nor does he himself seem to have travelled to view works of art in situ with a view to acquisition.[54] Moreover, when buying through intermediaries he frequently insisted on anonymity in the purchase in an effort to keep the price down,[55] sometimes even employing multiple intermediaries to negotiate a single purchase.[56] On numerous occasions it seems clear that what was important to him was not contact with the seller, but contact with the intermediary.

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[52] Winckelmann correspondence, May–July 1767; AGR, SEG, 1248, ff. 235–39. Letters published in: Johann Joachim Winckelmann. Briefe, eds Hans Diepolder, Water Rehm, Berlin, 1952–57, vols III, IV

[53] Mariette sale Paris 15.11.1775–30.1.1776. On the sociability of the French auction see Charlotte Guichard, Les amateurs d'art à Paris au XVIII^{e} siècle, Seyssel, 2008; Charlotte Guichard, 'From Social Event to Urban Spectacle: Auctions in late Eighteenth-century Paris', in: Bruno Blondé, Natacha Coquery, Jon Stobart, Ilja Van Damme, eds, Fashioning Old and New. Changing Consumer Patterns in Western Europe (1650–1900), Turnhout, 2009, pp. 203–16

[54] Unless we accept the view of M. Mees that his official tour of several towns whose churches and monasteries contained works by Rubens in September 1766 was undertaken largely for this purpose: M. Mees, 'Van Kluis naar Hermitage. Het Rozenkransschilderij van P. P. Rubens uit het Kluizekerz van Lier', Lira elegans. Liers genootschap voor geschiedenis. Jaarboek 1991, pp. 132–33

[55] e.g. Cobenzl to Jacobs, 3 June 1764; AGR, SEG, 1051, f. 110

[56] e.g Bors d'Overen and Felix Guillaume Brenaert when trying to buy from monasteries in 1766–67. See Mees 1991.

The idea of auctions as contributing to the construction of value[57] is certainly true in the broader context, amongst buyers outside the circle of aristocrats or connoisseurs. For many of the latter, however, value was constructed by association with previous owners, with the opinions of known connoisseurs, with the use of contacts to conclude a deal that would not have been available to those 'on the outside'. For such collectors, particularly within the context of the Austrian Netherlands in the 1750s and 1760s, the auction had few benefits.

Cobenzl looked to his own trusted social and official networks to validate his artistic choices, preferring to adapt existing contacts rather than make new ones. If a collection is the result of the meeting of desire and availability, in Cobenzl's case it was the availability not of works but of trusted contacts with whom he wished to engage that was important.

[57] Charles Smith, Auctions: The Social Construction of Value, London, 1989; Dries Lyna, 'The Cultural Construction of Value: Art Auctions in Antwerp and Brussels (1700–1794)', PhD thesis, University of Antwerp, 2010

Chapter 10. Acts of Possession

If Cobenzl's acts of collecting tell us about the subordination of his acquisitions to the extent and purposes of his political and social network, the acts of possession – what he did with the works of art, how he added to them and organised them, how he manipulated them – tells us about his attitudes to the art itself.

A Cabinet of Paintings v Furniture Pictures and Portraits

Cobenzl's very first act of possession may be seen in the division of his paintings between a Cabinet and his portraits and furniture pictures. This conceptual demarcation – between usefulness and meaning, between portraits (purposeful objects) and works of art (semiophores)[1] – is well defined in his mind, as he made clear in letters to Dorn as early as 1761.[2] In general, the portraits that formed part of the Cabinet met the criteria for a work of art rather than a simple portrait.[3]

Cobenzl did not include even his most prized modern works in his Cabinet, reflecting opinions expressed in exchanges with others. Informed, for instance, that Count Firmian in Milan had bought many modern paintings for his collection, Cobenzl expressed surprise.[4] Although in his exclusion of contemporary works from his Cabinet Cobenzl revealed a certain inconsistency. His prized painting by Garemyn remained in his house when the Cabinet was sold and there were few contemporary drawings in his collection, yet he sent Dorn two paintings by De la Pegna specifically for his Cabinet in 1759 and in 1762 he spoke slightingly of the Duke of Arenberg precisely because he would not include a work by Garemyn in his Cabinet.[5]

It is not always possible to tell what lies behind the use of the word 'cabinet' in France and the Austrian Netherlands. Although it increasingly indicated a physical space, as described in the Encyclopédie,[6] 'for presenting objects of distinction',[7] in the 1750s and 1760s

[1] Krzysztof Pomian, 'Usefulness and Meaning', in Collectors and Curiosities. Paris and Venice, 1500–1800, Cambridge, 1990, pp. 26–34

[2] Cobenzl to Dorn, 29 June 1761; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 13

[3] The composition of the Cabinet might raise a few questions, particularly in the inclusion of the Greuze Head of a Girl and the small Italian pictures, but it may be that these were added at the last moment, as things not of particular interest to Cobenzl. Golitsyn wrote to the Vice Chancellor on 13 June 1768: '[Cobenzl] m'a fourni tout plein de choses qui n'iraient pas seulement dans notre marché et que je ne regardais pas comme comprise dans le même cabinet'; RGADA, Fund 1263 (Golitsyn), opis I, chast 1, ed. khr. 1116, ff. 56–57

[4] Guasco correspondence, November–December 1764; AGR, SEG, 1137, ff. 84–87

[5] Cobenzl to Dorn, 20 May 1762; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 63

[6] 'CABINET, s. m. (Architect.) sous ce nom on peut entendre les pieces destinées à l'étude, ou dans lesquelles l'on traite d'affaires particulieres, ou qui contiennent ce que l'on a de plus précieux en tableaux, en

private collections were largely defined as cabinets whatever their physical home. Descamps in his Voyage pittoresque does not talk of private collections but of 'les Cabinets des particuliers',[8] but Michel used the word only for the collections of Count Callemberg and Verhulst, suggesting that in his mind at least 'cabinet' meant something select and exclusive, rather than just an array of paintings.[9] Very many of the collections sold at auction in the Austrian Netherlands were referred to as cabinets, but our conclusion must be that this was a form of flattery or advertisement, that cabinet was perceived as something more than just a collection, even if it was not necessarily a space.

Although the word cabinet was less frequently used for drawings than for paintings in auction catalogues, Basan used it in the sense of a collection rather than a room, for instance in a letter to Cobenzl regarding drawings on offer which were 'du cabinet que nous avons achettés a Paris'.[10] Cobenzl himself sometimes differentiated the paintings and drawings, referring to the former as a Cabinet but continuing to use the word 'collection' for his drawings.[11]

Portraits and furniture pictures were hung throughout the Brussels house, where they were inventoried after his death. But since the inventory was compiled eighteen months after the paintings, drawings and sculptures that made up the Cabinet were removed, it is hard to tell just where or how they might have been arranged. Nonetheless, there seems sufficient evidence to suggest, from the disposition of the remaining works of art and from the clear intellectual distinction made between Cabinet and portraits/furniture pictures, that by the middle of the 1760s at least the Cabinet was not just a concept but a physical space too.

If Cobenzl expressed his surprise in June 1761 that the jeweller T'Sas 'honora du nom de mon cabinet' his 'quelques peu de tableaux',[12] by the time of the sale in 1768 his collection of paintings was referred to almost universally as a Cabinet with a capital C. He proclaimed in September 1767 that 'Je serai honoré de lui [M. de Passeck] montrer mon Cabinet',[13] and when the sale was agreed not only did Philip Cobenzl exclaim at the

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bronzes, livres, curiosités, &c.' Denis Diderot, Jean le Rond D'Alembert, eds, Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc., Paris, 1751–72, II, p. 488

[7] On the concept of the Cabinet and its separation from public spaces in eighteenth-century France see: Colin B. Bailey, 'Conventions of the Eighteenth-century Cabinet de tableaux: Blondel d'Azincourt's La première idée de la curiosité', The Art Bulletin, LXIX/3, September 1987, pp. 431–447

[8] Jean-Baptiste Descamps, Voyage pittoresque de la Flandre et du Brabant, Paris, 1769, p. xv

[9] J. F. M. Michel, Histoire de la vie de P. P. Rubens, Chevalier, & Seigneur de Steen, Brussels, 1771

[10] Basan to Cobenzl, 11 December 1765; AGR, SEG, 1067, f. 14 sheet 2

[11] Cobenzl to Guasco, 11 December 1764; AGR, SEG, 1137, f. 87. Cobenzl to Pergen, 19 December 1764; AGR, SEG, 1191, ff. 287

[12] Cobenzl to Dorn, 29 June 1761; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 13

[13] Cobenzl to Vorontsov, 28 September 1767; AGR, SEG, 1249, f. 213

sacrifice of 'votre Cabinet'[14] but the collection was thus described in an official report from the British representative, William Gordon.[15] Over the intervening period, therefore, the Cabinet had become a well-defined entity.

The physical arrangement of the Cabinet, i.e. the allocation of a room specifically for this purpose, should possibly be dated to around June 1762, when Cobenzl wrote to Van Schorel that he did not know if he would have room for a desired picture since at that very time 'je suis occupé à arranger mon cabinet'.[16] In September 1764 Cobenzl reported on a visit by the painter Gillis, telling Dorn 'Je l'ai reçu dans le cabinet ou j'ai mon peu de tableaux'.[17]

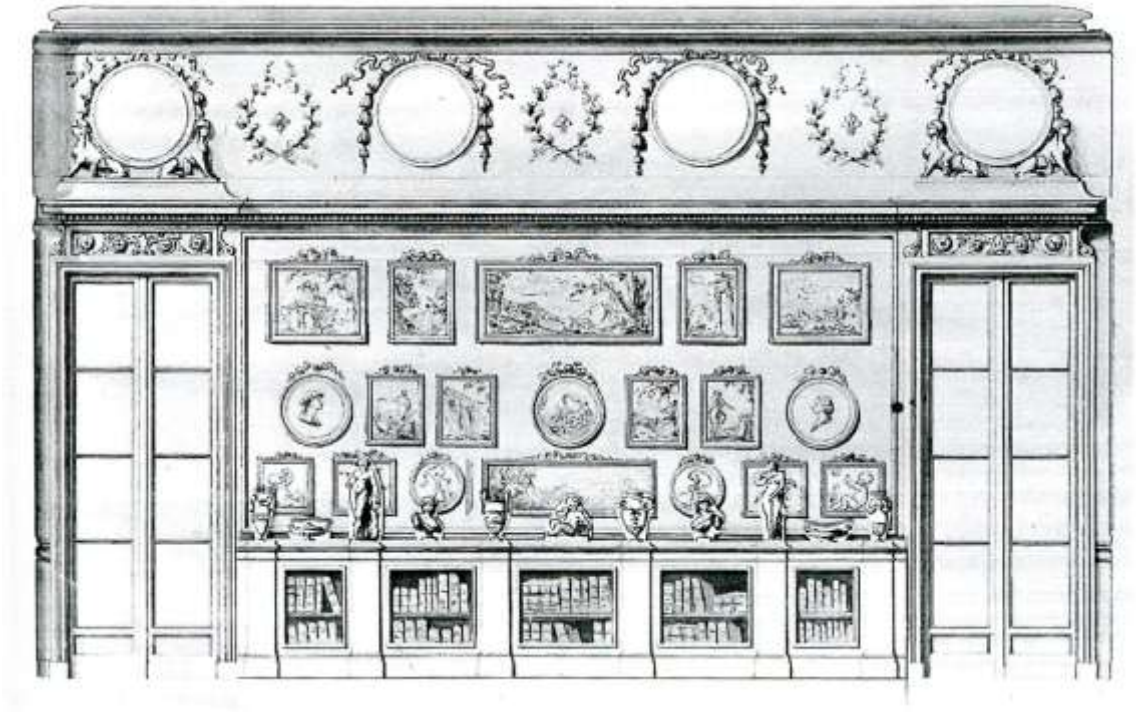

Figure 83. French School, Design for the Wall of a Drawing Collector's Room. c. 1770. Pen and ink. Sotheby's, London, 15 June 1983, lot 73

The separation of the Cabinet is further supported by the motley array of sculptures (including contemporary works) that formed part of the collection sold to Russia, which create the impression that everything in a room had been scooped up and packed off. Such an interpretation would also imply that the drawings were kept in the same space as the

[14] Philip to Cobenzl, 31 May and 22 June 1768; AGR, SEG, 1095, ff. 459, 463
[15] Gordon to Lord Viscount Weymouth, 17 June 1768; NA, SP 77/104, 1766–69, no. 21
[16] Cobenzl to Van Schorel, 2 June 1762; AGR, SEG, 1235, f. 315
[17] Cobenzl to Dorn, 28 September 1764; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 160

paintings (and not in the library[18]), in the manner proposed in a French design for the decoration of room for a collector of drawings and seen in a well-known depiction of the Cabinet of Ploos van Amstel at Petworth house.

The Physical Location of the Cabinet

Cobenzl's rented mansion in Brussels, the Hôtel de Mastaing, was not overly large. Even when his children left home most of the rooms were occupied by the staff required to run both house and office and to manage the entertaining. There was not even room in the house for his nephew, Philip Cobenzl. Lack of space was frequently cited by Cobenzl as a reason not to acquire offered works of art and he repeatedly described his Cabinet as 'petit'. Indeed the most convincing evidence that the Cabinet was a small room in the house is found in a letter of April 1765, in which Cobenzl told Charles Levier in Paris that his 'petit cabinet de tableaux… est tout rempli et comme je ne puis en aggrandir la place je ne cherche pas s'en augmenter la nombre'.[19] Although Cobenzl did of course acquire six paintings that same month, of which four made their way into the Cabinet, plus another small painting the following June, a Rembrandt in December, a large Van Dyck in early 1766 and the even larger Rubens painting of The Virgin Giving the Rosary to St Dominic in October 1766… We must assume that Cobenzl disposed of existing paintings in order to find room, either by exchanging or selling them, moving them to the other rooms or perhaps giving them to his wife.

Certain rooms must be excluded as candidates for the location of the Cabinet of Paintings: the porcelain cabinet set up 1760/61, the Chinese lacquer cabinet created in the middle of the 1760s, the Grand Salon with its large picture of the cutting of the Ghent canal and the portraits of the imperial family and of Charles de Lorraine, the Billiard Room etc.

It is tempting to see the remodelling of some rooms mentioned over the course of 1769 as resulting from the disappearance of the paintings. In March that year Cobenzl asked the painter Geeraerts to come to see him,[20] surely with a view to producing a new work to fill space freed up by the sale of the Cabinet. The posthumous inventory reveals Room 6 of the main apartments to be rather empty while room 7, the Grand Cabinet, contained 'une

[18] Alhough the bound volumes containing drawings by Ghezzi and Richard Van Orley have Cobenzl's arms stamped in gold on the front and back boards, just like the books in his library (some of which are today in the Bibliothèque Royale in Brussels, e.g. VB 2768(9) A LP, VB 10.549 E LP, II 72.773 A LP).

[19] Cobenzl to Levier, 8 April 1765; AGR, SEG, 1169, f. 142

[20] Van Schorel to Cobenzl, 25 March 1769; AGR, SEG, 1235, f. 437

quantité de moulures de papiers machées[21] pour le cabinet quoté No. 6', suggesting that it was this room which was undergoing renovation at the time.[22] Its location between the large Chambre Rouge and the Grand Cabinet supports the hypothesis that this may have been the site of the paintings Cabinet.

The Physical Arrangement of the Drawings

Just where Cobenzl kept his drawings – in the paintings Cabinet or the library – we cannot say, but he was adamant in asserting that all the drawings that formed part of his collection were stored away, not under glass or in frames. All of the drawings were, however, clearly marked with signs of his possession.[23]

Apart from a small group of unmounted sheets, mainly student works, and two bound volumes of drawings by Pier Leone Ghezzi and Richard van Orley, the drawings were laid down on identical lilac mounts of five different sizes and stored in boxes or portfolios (both described in the manuscript catalogue as 'cartons'). (fig. 1) Each drawing is mounted directly onto the lilac paper (i.e. the coloured paper runs under the drawing), unlike, for instance, the mounts of Mariette, whose drawings were laid down on white paper with strips of coloured paper around.[24] In most cases, but far from all, the drawing has a neat black ink frame some 2–3 mm wide around the drawing on the mount. Beneath each drawing is a printed cartouche containing the name of the artist, or left blank if the author is unidentified. This cartouche is considered to be Cobenzl's collector's mark (L. 2858b).

The first size boxes, made of wood, their spines bound in red leather with gold tooling, are lined with exactly the same lilac paper as is used on the mounts. These boxes are in effect imitation books, and would have been stored vertically on shelves. The second size cartons are very different, being made simply of card with reinforced edges.

[21] Probably frames, whether for panels of fabric or for paintings is unclear.

[22] The posthumous house inventory reveals that work was also under way in Madame Cobenzl's apartments, where a new chimney was being built in Room G. Geeraerts was painting another trompe l'oeil for this chimney; Van Schorel to Cobenzl, 4 January 1770; AGR, SEG, 1235, f. 439.

[23] L. 2858b. A preliminary interpretation of the physical characteristics of the mounts and mounting of Cobenzl's drawings was published in: Catherine Phillips, 'Collecting Drawings in Brussels in the 1760s. The Collection of Count Charles Cobenzl (1712–1770) in the Hermitage, St Petersburg', in: Marques de collection I. Cinquièmes Rencontres internationales du Salon du Dessin, Paris–Dijon, 2010, pp. 111–24

[24] Carlo James, Marjorie B. Cohn, Caroline Corrigan et al, Old Master Prints and Drawings, a Guide to Preservation and Conservation, Amsterdam, 1997, p. 21; introduction to Pierre Rosenberg, Les dessins de la collection de Pierre-Jean Mariette: école française, Milan, 2012, I

Figure 84. Boxes for Cobenzl's first size mounts. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Figure 85. Boxes for Cobenzl's second size mounts. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Unlike collectors such as Jabach, who pasted his lesser 'pièces de rebut' into books, mounting only his 'desseins d'ordonnance',[25] or Wilhelm Lambert, who separated his

[25] Bernadette Py, Everhard Jabach Collectionneur (1618–1695). Les dessins de l'inventaire de 1695 (Notes et Documents des musées de France 36), Paris, 2001

drawings into 'Original finished drawings', and a 'supplement of studies',[26] Cobenzl had nearly every drawing, no matter how weak, stuck onto his lilac mounts.

The Intellectual Arrangement of the Drawings

A close look at the drawings and Cobenzl's correspondence reveals that the pattern of storage and arrangement in 1768, when the drawings were despatched to Russia, was not how the drawings were initially kept. Cobenzl's letters provide a key to the drawings' history and help us interpret red chalk numbers which appear on the back of the mounts.

Within three weeks of acquiring his second large group of 1,500 drawings from the Bishop of Tournai, on 25 March 1762 Cobenzl wrote to Dorn describing his collection:

> 'En tout je possède à présent 3000. desseins, qui remplissent douze gros Volumes Atlantiques et un 13.e qui a 5. pieds de large. J'ai un Volume rien que de Portraits, qui passent les 300. Un Volume, qui ne contient qu'un dessein de chaque peintre en Ordre Chronologique et qui est comme l'abregé de ma Collection. Dans les 11 Volumes restant j'ai partagé les desseins de chaque Peintre et les Inconnûs également, afin qu'il y ait de l'ordre'.[27]

This differs vastly from how the drawings were ordered in the manuscript catalogue: by size, from first to fifth, with a single group of related drawings of different sizes split among several portfolios and no apparent systematic arrangement whether by chronology, school or genre. That Cobenzl's collection was at one time organised as he described, however, is confirmed by an analysis of the red chalk numbers which appear on the back of many but not all of the Cobenzl mounts. More than 130 French crayon portraits, nearly 50 black chalk portraits by Claude Mellan and other portraits have a Roman numeral VI followed by Arabic numerals which run from 1 to over 300.[28] These must have formed the 'Volume rien que de Portraits'. With the aid of these red numbers we can also reconstruct several other 'volumes' as they were in 1762.

[26] Gianni Carlo Sciolla, ed., Le Dessin, 3 vols, Turin, 1992, II: Les grands collectionneurs, p. 163
[27] AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 51v.

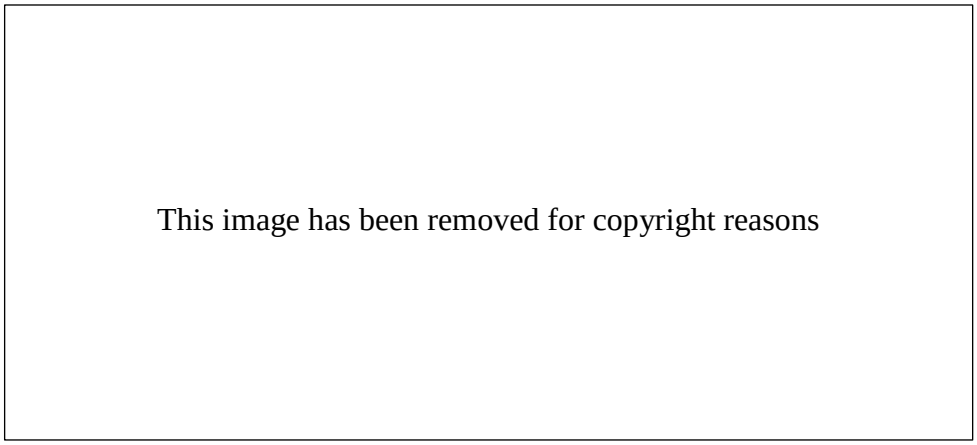

Figure 86. Ottavio Leoni (Il Padovanino) (1578–1630), Portrait of a Young Lady. 1606.
© The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

The term 'Volumes Atlantiques' should be interpreted to mean something like the Dutch 'Konstboek',[29] with the drawings lightly attached or interleaved loosely among the pages. They would have been unmounted, as is confirmed by the presence of the red chalk numbers on the back of some of the drawings themselves (visible where mounts have been removed). Images of collectors leafing through Konstboeks show them holding drawings unmounted or attached to flexible paper rather than card mounts. The thick Cobenzl mounts could hardly have been conveniently interleaved in a Konstboek.

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[28] That these red chalk numbers were significant was noted long ago by the late Irina Novosselskaya, who carefully recorded them in her catalogues, although she never arrived at an agreed interpretation.

[29] On the term see: Michiel C. Plomp, Collectionner, Passionnément. Les collectioneurs hollandais de dessins du XVIII^{e} siècle, Paris, 2001, pp. 81–84

Figure 87. Nicolaas Verkolje (1673–1746) after Arnold Boonen (1669–1729), Portrait of Jan Pietersz. Zomer. c. 1715. © The Trustees of the British Museum

The transition from 'volumes' to portfolios and boxes took place some time between the acquisition of the drawings of the Bishop of Tournai in spring 1762 (his drawings were kept in portfolios[30]) and October 1763, when Cobenzl's drawings were in 'cartons'.[31] We must assume that Philip Cobenzl, entrusted with arranging his uncle's acquisitions, initially put the drawings on loose leaves in albums using the system described by Cobenzl, marking them with a red chalk number in accordance with their place. When the decision was taken to transfer the drawings to mounts and put them in boxes, this arrangement was initially maintained and the red chalk numbers transferred to the back of the mounts. The system was maintained for several years as drawings that can be demonstrated to have been acquired in January 1764 have red chalk numbers (only the Arabic, without the Roman prefix) directly on the back of the drawing.[32] Two months later, in March 1764, Cobenzl explained that his collection consisted of 'Desseins originaux de tous les Peintres anciens avec une ou deux pieces de Chaque Peintre moderne fameux.'[33] The system presumably came to an end with the departure of Philip, given a government appointment

[30] The Bishop specifically warned Cobenzl that 'les dessins dans les portes de feuilles ne sont pas trop en ordre'; AGR, SEG, 1231, f. 433v. When the Bishop's effects were sold after his death, the prints too were largely in portfolios (the only drawings were under glass). Salm-Reifferscheid sale Tournai 12.6.1771

[31] Cobenzl to Rigot, 30 October 1763; AGR, SEG, 1203, f. 366

[32] OR 3898, OR 4564, both now Kupferstichkabinett, Kunstmuseum Basle, Inv. 1932.219, 1932.220

[33] Cobenzl to Menabuoni, 26 March 1764; AGR, SEG, 1176, f. 44

in 1764, after which the secretaries who replaced him were careless in mounting the drawings (drawings acquired after autumn 1764 do not have black borders and are often not straight on the mount[34]) and made no further attempt at integration.

Cobenzl's letter of March 1764 provides a key to the principle behind his acquisitions of drawings after those two initial large groups: the possession of a representative work (plus additional pieces if of high quality) by 'tous les Peintres anciens' and the most famous modern artists. It is demonstrated repeatedly by his acquisition practice.

When offered five drawings by Menabuoni, he initially rejected those by Rembrandt and Annibale Carracci specifically because he already had enough works by them. Cobenzl took all of the select drawings sent by Basan in November 1764, most by artists whose works were poorly represented, but noted: 'je dois vous prevenir, Mons.r que je ne cherche plus que des pieces Capitales ou bien celles, dont l'auteur ne tiens pas encore quelque rang dans ma Collection.'[35] Of the drawings that Basan sent in February 1765, therefore, he chose just five, by Pierre-Charles le Mettay (1726–59), Simon Mathurin Lantara (1729–78), Jean-Marc Nattier (1685–1766), Jean-Jacques Delorme (c. 1680 – in or after 1756) and Matthieu Elias (Elye; 1658–1741).[36] The policy explains the lengths to which he went to acquire a single drawing by the hated Greuze in 1763. Part of the reason for a drop off in acquisitions in 1765 was that Cobenzl felt that he already had works by most artists; he wanted only 'des pièces capitales … dont les noms ne sont pas trop multipliés dans ma collection dejà assès riche pour que je desire de l'augmenter considerablement.'[37]

In identifying the artists whose works were lacking in his collection, Cobenzl apparently looked not to fashion and peer example but, as we should expect from a man whose main interest was his library, to books and biographical dictionaries. One good example of this is the range of Swiss drawings acquired via Valltravers. Knowledge of Swiss art beyond the confederation was extremely limited until the publication by Johann Caspar Füssli of his dictionary of Swiss artists in 1755.[38] Thanks in large part to Johann Georg Wille, who wrote a preface for the second volume in 1756, Swiss artistic contacts with other parts of

[34] Phillips 2010, p. 116
[35] Basan correspondence, November–December 1764; AGR, SEG, 1067, ff. 4a/2, 4b
[36] OR 4656, OR 4332, OR 4828, OR 2710, OR 2711, OR 3028
[37] Cobenzl to Valltravers, 26 October 1765; AGR, SEG, 1234, f. 144
[38] Johann Caspar Füssli, Geschichte und Abbildung der besten Mahler in der Schweiz, 2 vols, Zurich, 1755–57

Europe grew considerably.[39] Wille introduced Jean-Baptiste Descamps to Füssli's publication and translated some of the texts into French for him, these then serving as the basis for entries in Descamps' Vie des Peintres of 1753–63.[40] Nonetheless, even with this Parisian contact, knowledge of Swiss artists there remained largely limited to Descamps' text as Füssli's book itself was not in circulation in France.[41]

Valltravers accompanied his fourth lot of drawings in January 1764 with a copy of Füssli's dictionary.[42] Table 9 demonstrates that Cobenzl owned drawings attributed to nearly all the artists mentioned there, plus some by living Swiss artists, all sent by Valltravers, e.g. Johann Ludwig Aberli (1723–86) and Samuel Hieronymous Grimm (baptised 1733 – 1794). The dictionary must have served as a stimulus to Cobenzl's requests for works by Swiss artists, particularly those whose significance had been validated by their appearance in print. Moreover, we cannot exclude that Descamps, with whom he associated during the latter's stay in Brussels in 1764 and whom he had met on previous occasions, mentioned and approved the inclusion of works by these 'rare' artists. Thus when Valltravers declared to Cobenzl in September 1763 that 'V. E. est le prémier seigneur etranger, qui soit parvenu à la connoissance de nos peintres, et qui possède des desseins originaux de presque tous',[43] the statement, though flattering, contained more than a grain of truth. Whether Cobenzl would have wished to own drawings by some of these relatively unknown Swiss artists without the validation provided by Füssli's dictionary, however, is unclear.

[39] Yvonne Boerlin-Brodbeck, 'Johann Caspar Füssli und sein Briefwechsel mit Jean-Georges Wille. Marginalien zu Kunstliteratur und Kunstpolitik in der zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts', Jahrbuch des Schweizerischen Instituts für Kunstwissenschaft, Zürich, 1974–77, 1978. pp. 77–178

[40] Gaëtane Maës, 'Les livres passent-ils le Jura ? Le cas de la "Geschichte und Abbildung der besten Mahler in der Schweiz" (1755–1757) de Johann Caspar Füssli', in: Michèle Crogiez Labarthe, ed., Les écrivains suisses alémaniques et la culture francophone au XVIII^{e} siècle (Actes du colloque de l'université de Berne, Institut de français, 24–26 novembre 2004), Geneva, 2008, pp. 31–47

[41] Ibid., p. 31

[42] List compiled by Valltravers; AGR, SEG, 1234, f. 92v

[43] Valltravers to Cobenzl, 19 September 1763; AGR, SEG, 1234, f. 70

Füssli 1755–57*	Füssli 1769–70**	Descamps 1753–63***	Cobenzl owned a drawing given to the artist****	Acquired via Valltravers
Albrecht Altorfer	y		0028–0030	at least two
Jobst Ammann	y		0031–0036	y
Jacob Anton Arlaud	y	vol. IV	0040–0044	y
Hans Asper	y		0045–0048	y
Johannes Brandenberg	y	vol. IV	0441–0443	y
Gregorius Brandmüller	y	vol. IV	0444–0446	y
Johannes Dünz	y	vol. III	-	
Jacob Frey			3111–3114	y
Mathias Fuessli	y		3124	y
Johann Conrad Geyger	y		-	
Joseph Heinz	y		3853–3857, 3861–3866	y
Samuel Hofman	y	vol. II	3870–3875	y
Hans Holbein	y	vol. I	3886–3900	seven
J. Rudolf Huber	y	vol. IV	4168–4172	y
Joh. Balthasar Keller	y		-	
Daniel Lintmeyer	y		4360–4362	y
Nicolaus Manuel	y		4560–4566	y
Christoph Maurer	y		4591, 4593–4599	y
Josias Maurer	y		4592, 4600–4602	y
Meglinger	y		4605–4609	y
Matheus Merian	y		4648–4652	y
Mathiaus Merian Junior	y		4653	y
Maria Sibylla Merianin	y	vol. III	-	
Conrad Meyer	y		4657–4665, 4692, 4693	y
Dietrich Meyer	y		4666–4672	y
Felix Meyer	y	vol. III	4673–4678	y
Rudolf Meyer	y		4679–4691, 4694, 4695	y
Peter Franz Mola	y		4762–4769, 4179	y
Andreas Morell	y		-	
Johannes Petitot	y		-	
Gotthard Ringgli	y		5347–5349	one, probably all
Wilhelm Stettler	y		5646	y
Tobias Stimmer	y		5651–5655	y
Joh. Jacob Thourneyser	y		5755, 5839–5842	two, probably all
Heinrich Wägmann	y		6413–6416	two, probably all
Anna Waser		vol. IV	6296	y
Michael Weidhard	y			
Joh. Rudolf Werdmuller	y	vol. III	6422, 6432–6435	y
Rudolf Werenfels	y	vol. III	6423, 6424	one, probably all
Joseph Werner	y		6425–6430	two, probably all
	Johann Rudolf Byss			
	Werner Kubler		4301–4302	y
	Michael Muller		4819	probably
	Peter Oeri		4858	y
	Joh. Rudolf Schmid		?5599	y
	Joh. Rudolf Schmuz		-	
	Johann Martin Veith		6301–6302	y
	Johannes Wirz		-	
		Rugendas+	5529	y

* Johann Caspar Füssli, Geschichte und Abbildung der besten Mahler in der Schweiz, 2 vols, Zurich, 1755–57
** Johann Caspar Füssli Geschichte der besten Künstler in der Schweitz, 5 vols, Zurich, 1769–70
*** Jean-Baptiste Descamps, La vie des peintres flamands, allemands et hollandois, 4 vols, Paris, 1753–63
**** Hermitage inventory numbers
+ Rugendas does not feature in editions of Füssli seen by this author, but there is a translation of his text made for Descamps by Wille, in the Bibliothèque municipale, Rouen; Gaëtane Maës, 'Les livres passent-ils le Jura ? Le cas de la "Geschichte und Abbildung der besten Mahler in der Schweiz" (1755–1757) de Johann Caspar Füssli', in: Michèle Crogiez Labarthe, ed., Les écrivains suisses alémaniques et la culture francophone au XVIIIe siècle. Actes du colloque de l'université de Berne, Institut de français, 24–26 novembre 2004, Geneva, 2008, p. 41

Table 9. Published biographies of Swiss artists and Cobenzl's holdings of Swiss drawings.

The Intellectual Arrangement of the Drawings in Context

Little attention was paid to the arrangement of drawings in published sources before the last third of the eighteenth century. In his Idée générale d'une collection complette d'estampes of 1771, Carl Heinrich von Heinecken devoted just four pages out of over 500 to drawings, noting simply 'Les dessins sont régulierement rangés suivant les écoles'.[44] If this might be explained by the continuing dominance of prints and the vestigial state of the collecting of drawings in Germany, the situation in France was hardly better. Even Dezallier d'Argenville, in describing the cabinet of an amateur in 1727, devoted just two pages to drawings, as opposed to sixteen to prints.[45] He proposed that drawings be arranged exclusively by subject and country[46] although, like Cobenzl, he obviously changed his system because by 1762 his collection of 6,000 sheets was arranged chronologically by school.[47] This arrangement by school seems to have dominated French collections, while Dutch collectors by and large arranged their drawings by genre.[48]

In the Austrian Netherlands the few sales catalogues containing large bodies of drawings – i.e. our main source of knowledge, at present, for drawings collections – indicate that there was no accepted system here. The school arrangement was impossible in most cases, since collections were dominated by Dutch and Flemish drawings, with tiny percentages of Italian or French works, although we do see a tendency to group e.g. Italian drawings at the end (Snijers 1752; de Hooghe 1773). The Van Schorel sale of 1774 starts with the Flemish school, opening with the big names – Rubens, Van Dyck, Schut, Diepenbeeck – and then has volumes arranged by genre (animals and fruits, landscapes, seascapes – we should remember his Dutch origins) before moving on to French artists. The arrangement by school was more strongly felt in the later collections, but although the prints in the Hazard sale of 1789 and the Wouters sale of 1797 reflect the order familiar from Parisian sources, the drawings are largely jumbled together (although Hazard, of English birth, seems to have kept his best works in albums or Konstboeken, with some sorting by genre). It is only in the de Ligne collection – formed largely in the Austrian Netherlands but sold in Vienna in 1794 – that we find a more complex arrangement, chronologically by school, with

[44] Karl Heinrich von Heinecken, Idée Générale d'une collection complette d'estampes, Leipzig–Vienna, 1771, p. 517

[45] Joseph-Antoine Dezallier d'Argenville, 'Lettre sur le choix & l'arrangement d'un Cabinet curieux', Mercure de France, June 1727, pp. 1316–17

[46] Ibid., p. 1307

[47] [Joseph-Antoine Dezallier d'Argenville,] Abrégé de la vie des plus fameux peintres, 2nd edn, 4 vols, Paris, 1762, I, p. xxxviii

[48] Michiel Plomp, 'Le classement de la collection de dessins', Plomp 2001, p. 74

unknowns arranged by subject matter. It is not clear if this system was that of de Ligne himself or of the author of the catalogue, Adam Bartsch.[49]

Cobenzl's collection, with a much more even spread of works over different schools (essentially because of the high Italian content of the two collections he acquired en masse), would have been open to arrangement according to these criteria, but they were apparently never even considered.

When assessing the arrangement of drawings collections we tend to look at contemporary writings which may have been influential. But a closer look at the writings on the arts owned by Cobenzl (based on the catalogue of his book sale in 1771) leads us to conclude that he did not own some of what are perceived as the key sources. He owned no Vasari, no Baldinucci (whose vision of a chronological arrangement of drawings as a visual history of art is so important), no Bellori; he owned the six-volume 1725 edition of Félibien, Entretiens sur les vies & sur les ouvrages des plus excellens peintres anciens & modernes, but of de Piles he had only Recueil de divers ouvrages sur la peinture & le coloris in a Paris edition of 1755; he did, however, own Richardson's Traité de la peinture, & de la sculpture of 1728 and the 1745 edition of Dezallier's Abrégé de la Vie. Of course he also owned Mensaert's Le peintre amateur et curieux of 1763 and Descamps' La vie des peintres flamands, allemands, & hollandois.

Overall, there was a marked leaning towards dictionaries and lists of artists, of guidebooks to objects themselves, factual texts with little theory, reflecting the pragmatic utilitarianism which was such a feature of Cobenzl's outlook. Taken together with the evidence that Cobenzl actively collected Swiss drawings by artists validated by their inclusion in Füssli's biographical dictionary, we should see a direct connection between his collecting of 'names' and the biographical material in his library.

Mariette famously lamented that so many people insisted on buying 'names' rather than 'works'.[50] Very real ideal lists were drawn up by e.g. Karoline Luisa in 1759–60[51] and Gaëtane Maës has demonstrated that Dezallier d'Argenville's Vie des peintres functioned

[49] de Ligne sale Vienna 1794, unpaginated avertissement

[50] Mariette to Bottari, 26 October 1764; published in: Giovanni Gaetano Bottari, Raccolta di lettere sulla pittura, eds G. Bottari, S. Ticozzi, Bologna, 1979–80, V, Letter CLII, p. 407

[51] For a commentary on this list see Michael North, 'Auctions and Emergence of an Art Market in Eighteenth-century Germany', in: Neil de Marchi, Hans J. Van Miegroet, eds, Mapping Markets for Paintings in Europe, 1450–1750, Turnhout, 2006, pp. 297–98

as a 'shopping guide' for collectors.[52] Some collectors were quite obviously motivated in their buying not so much by aesthetic concerns as by a desire to own works by a representative list of artists, reflecting 'the quest for totality', which Pomian placed firmly within the Paris argument over the curieux and the amateur.[53] Although this approach is reflected in some of the small paintings collections formed in Bruges in the eighteenth century (an analysis of sales catalogues shows that they tended to include one – maximum two – works each by a multitude of artists[54]), it is best illustrated by Cobenzl's formation of his Cabinet of Drawings.

In Cobenzl's Cabinet of Paintings, apart from the fashionable pairs (two Van Uden, two van der Neer) and the works by his beloved Rubens and by Wouwerman, we see that he had one work by each artist. His letters show him specifically seeking 'a Dou', 'a Wouwerman', 'a Teniers' to fill lacunae, suggesting that here too he wanted a representative work by each artist (although he was not averse to having another work if it was of notable quality).

This collecting of 'names', however, is not just a tick-list approach. It should be understood within the literary concept of the collection as a history of art, or rather as a history of artists – which is how the history of art appeared in Cobenzl's library.

This concept was not new, and had a long Italian history (Baldinucci, for instance, said of the chronological arrangement of Cardinal Leopold of Tuscany's drawings that 'thus disposed, [they] would be a sort of History of the Art, which might be learnt by looking at them only, without reading'[55]), although it was more often demonstrated through prints.[56] Not surprisingly, drawings and prints were frequently kept in libraries rather than in a

[52] Gaëtane Maës, 'Le goût "français" pour la peinture hollandaise et flamande au XVIII^{e} siècle: goût national ou goût commercial? Réflexions autour de Houbraken, Dezallier d'Argenville et Hoet', in: Gaëtane Maës, Jan Blanc, eds, Les échanges artistiques entre les anciens Pays-Bas et la France, 1482–1814 (Actes du colloque international, Lille, IRHiS-Lille 3, 28–30 mai 2008), Turnhout, 2010, pp. 195–213

[53] Pomian 1990, pp. 53–60. The fine distinctions made between amateur and curieux that so exercised Parisians in the middle of the eighteenth century and that continue to interest contemporary scholars dealing with Paris art circles (e.g. L. A. Olivier, 'Curieux, Amateurs and Connaisseurs: Laymen and the Fine Arts in the Ancien Régime', unpublished dissertation, John Hopkins University, 1976; Charlotte Guichard, Les Amateurs d'art à Paris au XVIII^{e} siècle, Seyssel, 2008) must be admitted to be largely irrelevant in the context of the Austrian Netherlands, however 'Parisian' some members of Brussels society perceived themselves to be. Mensaert, for instance, uses the words 'amateur' and 'curieux' interchangeably; Christophe Loir, L'émergence des beaux-arts en Belgique: institutions, artistes, public et patrimoine (1773–1835), Brussels, 2004, p. 37. In a land with so few collectors, there was no great need for differentiation between them.

[54] e.g. Anon sale Bruges 10.9.1793

[55] Charles Rogers, A Collection of Prints in Imitation of Drawings. To which are annexed lives of their authors with explanatory and critical notes, London, 1778, II, p. 229

[56] Cf: Ingrid R. Vermeulen, Picturing Art History. The Rise of the Illustrated History of Art in the Eighteenth Century, Amsterdam, 2010

Cabinet of art. Cobenzl associated his drawings with his paintings, but his approach to them was inevitably affected by his bibliophilic and historical interests.

If we hypothesise that Cobenzl really did approach his drawings collection intellectually (but not physically) from the viewpoint of the library, of factual knowledge, we cease to be surprised that the Cabinet included two Latin illuminated manuscripts[57] and that the Minister had no interest in framing any of his drawings. Although this was far from being their main purpose, the drawings, and to a lesser extent the paintings, were a work of reference, an 'outil de connaissance' used for 'délectation intellectuelle',[58] in which the 'author' or 'compiler' sought to have as few omissions as possible.

Is the complete collection an oxymoron? Does the sense of a 'finished' collection not mean that the owner is no longer a collector, but an owner? Is not incompleteness a necessary feature of a collection, since it is the sense of something missing that drives the process of collecting?[59] Cobenzl used words that suggested he saw his Cabinet as something complete, finished, that he envisaged a potential ending to the process of formation. In April 1765, for instance, he wrote to Lalive of his proposed purchases at the Rubempré sale that they 'compléteront mon petit cabinet'.[60] It may be, however, that it was from Lalive that he gained this idea of completeness, since in June 1763 Lalive himself had told him 'Mon cabinet qui est totalement fini actuellement m'attire un grand nombre de curieux'.[61] Lalive published his own catalogue the following year, confirming the 'completeness' of his Cabinet.[62]

With regard to paintings collections the idea of completeness was of course inherent in the context of limited space, and this is partly what Cobenzl had in mind when he referred to it, but there was much greater room for expansion in the Cabinet of Drawings. Nonetheless, Cobenzl made clear that, although he was ready to make exceptions for individual works and items by artists previously unrepresented, he did indeed see his collection of drawings as complete almost immediately after his second large acquisition in

[57] The manuscripts remained in the Hermitage Drawings Department until 1835, when they were removed by Nicholas I.

[58] Christian Michel, 'Le goût pour le dessin en France aux XVIIe et XVIII[e] siècles: de l'utilisation à l'étude désintéressée', Revue de l'Art, 143, 2004, pp. 30–33

[59] Jean Baudrillard, 'The System of Collecting' in: John Elsner, Roger Cardinal, eds, The Cultures of Collecting, London, 1994, p. 23. 'The quest for totality', in Pomian 1990, pp. 53–60

[60] Cobenzl to Lalive, 3 April 1765; AGR, SEG, 1167, f. 105

[61] Lalive to Cobenzl, 15 June 1763; AGR, SEG, 1167, f. 73

[62] Ange-Laurent Lalive de Jully, Catalogue historique du Cabinet de peinture et sculpture française de M. de Lalive, Paris, 1764

March 1762, when he had some 3,500 drawings,[63] subject to the acquisition of the few artists not yet represented there.

In this idea of completeness, of having 'finished' his Cabinets of paintings and drawings, we might see the seed of Cobenzl's readiness to part with them in 1768.

Private and Public Consumption

> *'Mais ce qui acheve l'éloge de M. Crozat, & qui lui est infiniment honorable, il n'aimoit point ses desseins pour lui seul, il se faisoit, au contraire, un plaisir de les faire voir aux amateurs toutes les fois qu'ils le lui demandoient, & il ne refusoit pas même d'en aider les Artistes. On tenoit assez régulierement toutes les semaines des assemblées chez lui…'*[64]
>
> Pierre Mariette

If Carlo Bronne saw Cobenzl 'dans le secret de son cabinet, contemplant loupe en main, sa dernière acquisition dessin ou gravure'[65] we have to wonder on what he based that image. He had certainly read Cobenzl's letter to Dorn shortly after his first acquisition of drawings in 1761, in which he declared 'je passe des moments delicieux en les examinant'.[66] We might be cynical and dismiss such statements, since a man so busy could have had little time for perusing his drawings, but we cannot deny that he demonstrated knowledge of his collection on a number of occasions. In May 1764, for instance, he lamented the outflow of fine works from the Austrian Netherlands – two paintings from the heirs of Georges-Alexandre Goubau in Antwerp, a Holy Family by Rubens ('belle mais pas comparable à ma charité romaine') and a Van Dyck Charity[67] – but boasted that 'J'ai le souvenir de ces deux pieces dans ma collection des desseins, aiant les deux tetes Notre Seigneur et S Jean hors du tableau de Rubens, par Salart, et le dessein original de Van Dyck.'[68]

[63] Cobenzl to Dorn, 26 Mars [in fact in response to a letter of 16 April] 1762; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 53v

[64] Crozat drawings sale Paris 10.4–13.5.1741, pp. x–xi; see also Cordélia Hattori, 'Pierre Crozat (1665–1740), un financier collectionneur et mécène', unpublished doctoral thesis, Université de Paris IV–Sorbonne, 1998, particularly 'La société de Pierre Crozat'

[65] Carlo Bronne, 'Le comte de Cobenzl. Un mécène prodigue à Bruxelles', Revue générale belge, 103/5, May 1968, p. 67

[66] Cobenzl to Dorn, 6 August 1761; AGR, SEG, 1119, ff. 21v–22r

[67] Rubens now Thyssen-Bornemisza, on deposit with the Museu Nacional d'Art de Catalunya; Van Dyck now National Gallery, London

[68] Dorn to Cobenzl, 7 April 1764; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 133. The drawings are OR 5570, 5923

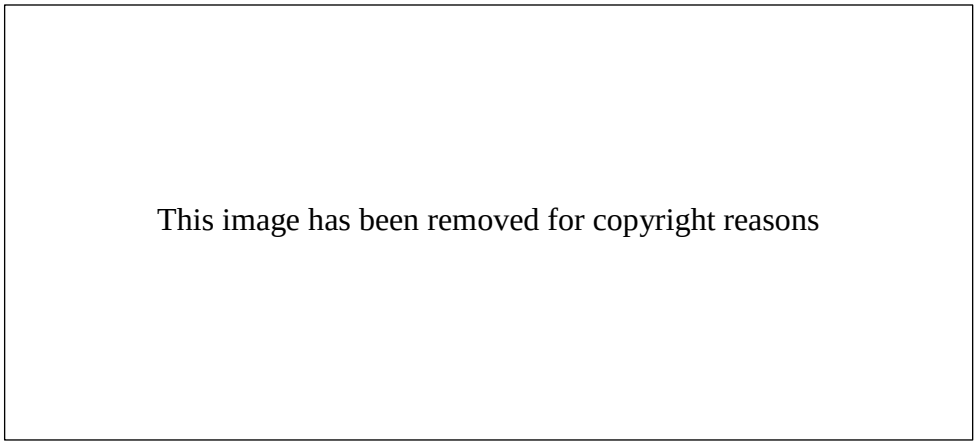

Figure 88. Antoon Sallarts (before 1590 – 1650) after Rubens, The Infant Jesus and St John. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

Figure 89. Peter Paul Rubens (1577–1640), The Virgin and Child with St Elizabeth and the Infant St John the Baptist. c. 1615. Cobenzl lamented the sale of this work abroad but noted that he had a drawing (oil on paper) as a 'souvenir'. Fundación Colección Thyssen-Bornemisza, Pedralbes

Moreover, the correspondence with Van Schorel, in which the Antwerp Burgomaster offers drawings to fill lacunae or complement existing drawings, suggests that in the period 1761–64 at least he not only looked at his drawings occasionally but he looked at them in company with a fellow collector. It is clear too that Lalive de Jully, who made judicious additions to the drawings, was well acquainted with the Cabinet and Basan's letters reveal that he looked through much of it when he visited Brussels in late 1764. The correspondence with Valltravers, and his search for Swiss drawings for the Minister, grew out of the fact that he too had been shown the Cabinet when he was in Brussels in 1762.[69]

The Cabinet was, then, not just a place of retreat from the cares of the Minister's job, but an area of socability, however limited. It could also be a place of ostentation, integrated into an overall strategy of display and self-presentation, although if we compare the visits of the painter Gillis in 1764,[70] Abbot Laugier[71] and William Gordon in 1766,[72] we see how

[69] The 'chevalet de paintre' in the Billiard Room at Cobenzl's death may have been left over from the Cabinet. Such objects were often found in the homes of collectors of drawings. See e.g. Plomp 2001, p. 98

[70] Cobenzl to Dorn, 28 September 1764; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 160

[71] Marc-Antoine Laugier, 'Détail de tout ce que nous avons observé et éprouvé dans notre voyage de Hollande', among the Correspondance de La Curne de Sainte-Palaye, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, MS

the purpose of that display was nuanced in each case. If Cobenzl wished to impress Gillis, a protégé of Dorn, his friend and rival in artistic matters, his intention in showing his Cabinet to Laugier was surely to demonstrate his own perspicacity to one with a reputation as a man of taste. Gordon at least saw his private view differently:

> 'Since I have been here I have wanted much to put Him upon the Subject of the Dutch… Yesterday I succeeded to my Wish, for after Dinner, he carried me into his Closet to shew me a Picture, which he had lately purchased, [Rembrandt's Polish Nobleman – CVP] when, after examining the Picture, I told him, that I had heard Mons.r Van Haren the Dutch Minister, had some good Pictures, & at the same Time, took the Opportunity of expressing my Surprize at that Minister's remaining in the Country at this Season of the Year…'

Figure 90. Eugène Huot (fl. 1831–47) after Rembrandt , A Polish Nobleman. 1845–47. After the painting formerly known as Portrait of Jan Sobieski, sold from the Hermitage, now National Gallery of Art, Washington. © The Trustees of the British Museum

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Bréquigny 66 [1766]. Referred to by Dirk Van de Vijver, 'Le voyage d'un critique d'art et d'architecture dans les Pays-Bas méridionaux et septentrionaux: l'abbé Laugier', paper given at the international colloquium Les échanges artistiques entre les anciens Pays-bas et la France, 1482–1814 at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Lille 28–30 May 2008 (not in the published volume, Turnhout, 2010)

[72] Gordon to the Duke of Grafton, 14 January 1766; NA, SP 77/103

As a small, totally separate space, the Cabinet could thus be used as a sign of favour, to assert superiority (Gillis) or equality (Laugier), but it could also be a locus for diplomatic activity (Gordon). Moreover, display was not just visual, and Cobenzl's correspondence provides multiple examples of the Minister recommending his Cabinet (i.e. his own taste and intellectual abilities) to men such as Dorn and Winckelmann, and through them to others such as Kaunitz and Cardinal Albani, thus inserting himself into a specific intellectual and political milieu.

These instances, however, are demonstrative acts, in which Cobenzl presents his Cabinet to an audience. There is only limited evidence for or against his use of the Cabinet within the polite practices of urban sociability, his drawings serving as the focus for association and discussion amongst equals, as we see them being used in those idealised pictures of the collector's cabinet that featured as frontispieces to a number of publications from the 1740s onwards. Sociabilité – like the Republic of Letters – implies a certain égalité, at least within the specific (temporary) context of, for instance, the Cabinet, during the time of shared occupation.[73] It also implies a circle within which such sociability is possible.

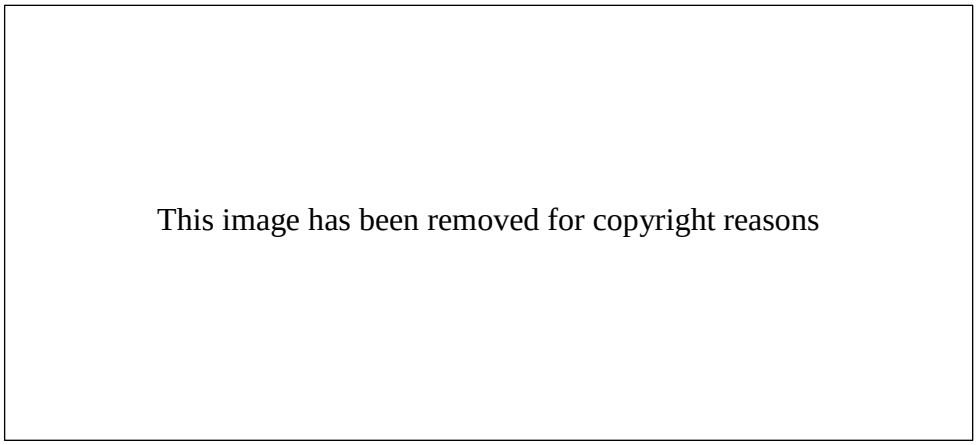

Figure 91. Unidentified (?Flemish) artist, Amateurs Looking at a Work of Art. Second half of the eighteenth century. Steinmetzkabinet, Bruges. © IRPA-KIK, Brussels

It is important to recognise the differences between Paris and London and the potential for sociability in Brussels. At the small Court of Brussels the rigidity of the Spanish model

[73] An almost unanimous opinion in the papers presented at the colloquium Art et sociabilité au XVIII[e] siècle, Institut national d'histoire de l'art, Paris, 23–25 June 2011

was replaced in the eighteenth century with that of the Austrian. This was in sharp contrast to Paris, where a large group of intellectuals had access to Court, particularly through the mediation of Madame de Pompadour and the Marquis de Marigny, and to London, where the classes increasingly mixed outside Court, for instance in learned societies, and where the three loci of the 'commerce des savoirs' in terms of art (Court, the Salon and private collections) were already inextricably linked. Organs of intellectual sociability such as the Société littéraire were to appear only as a result of Cobenzl's own activities and to flourish after his death.[74] Most social exchange in Brussels took place in the theatre, at private concerts and parties, and although Cobenzl associated with many men and women beyond Court by the very nature of his job, the diaries of contemporaries make clear that apart from his regular tea-drinking with the banker, Madame Nettine, his social life unfolded largely within the context of aristocratic entertainments.

Despite the exchanges with Van Schorel, there is no suggestion of the existence of a circle of collectors in Brussels with whom Cobenzl could share his art on a regular basis, very few mentions of the collections of others. Association with other collectors is never mentioned in Philip's reminiscences of his uncle.[75] In contrast to the world of Pierre Crozat and Jean de Jullienne in Paris,[76] there seems to have been no practice of opening a collection to interested parties. In all the sources viewed so far, just one reference is found, to J. Van Lancker in Antwerp, of whom Mensaert wrote: 'Ce Monsieur se fait un plaisir de laisser voir son Cabinet aux Curieux.'[77] Whilst the few sale catalogues for the Austrian Netherlands in the period surely represent only the tip of the iceberg in terms of what was owned (whether by inheritance or as the result of active collecting), they nonetheless indicate a relative lack of amateurs of drawings who might take part in artistic gatherings of the kind seen in Paris and the Dutch Netherlands.[78]

Nonetheless, there are indications of a level of intellectual exchange and association with like-minded men in the physical circulation of objects. In terms of art, although the only concrete evidence for Cobenzl presenting works of art as a gift to a fellow collector is in the gift of two paintings by Neeffs to Lalive de Jully in 1763, we should assume that this

[74] Cf. Hans Ulrich Jost, 'Les sociétés culturelles et artistiques 1750–1850', in: Etienne François, ed., Sociabilité et société bourgeoise en France, en Allemagne et en Suisse 1750–1850, Paris, 1986, pp. 123–32

[75] Alfred Ritter von Arneth, Graf Philipp Cobenzl und seine Memoiren, Vienna, 1885

[76] Hattori 1998; Isabelle Tillerot, Jean de Jullienne et les collectionneurs de son temps. Un regard singulier sur le tableau, Paris, 2010

[77] Guillaume Pierre Mensaert, Le peintre amateur et curieux, Brussels, 1763, p. 264. Garampi named 'Van Lankeren' as one of just two owners of collections in Antwerp whose works he saw during his visit: Monsignor Garampi, 'Impressions de voyage', Revue Bénédictine, VII, 1890, pp. 91–92

[78] Plomp 2001, pp. 101–4

was not a wholly isolated act. Van Schorel presented drawings to Cobenzl and it is very possible that Cobenzl reciprocated. But it is with regard to Cobenzl's books that we find the firmest evidence of an affirmative attitude to the sharing of intellectual property.

The announcement of the sale of Cobenzl's house contents in the Annonces et avis divers des Pays-Bas autrichiens for 16 March 1770 contained the following request:

> 'Feue S.E. le Comte de Cobenzl, ayant prêté à quantité de personnes des livres de sa Bibiothèque, il s'y trouve un vuide de beaucoup de volumes & nombre d'Ouvrages incomplets. C'est pourquoi on invite tous ceux à que ces livres ont été prêtés, ou qui ayant eu accès à cette Bibliothèque, pourroient en avoir tiré quelques uns, dont ils auroient eu besoin, de se donner la peine de faire chez eux la recherche de ces livres & de les renvoyer à la Maison mortuaire…'

We can only theorise as to whether Cobenzl was as free with his works of art, making his Cabinet of Drawings available to young artists, allowing them to study it and use the material in the way that amateurs did in Paris. Certainly in 1797 Suvée indicated that he had been able to associate with Cobenzl back in 1768, when he was just 25, and to discuss artistic policies,[79] and Cobenzl's promotion of the reforms proposed by Antoine Cardon on the young man's return from Italy make clear that many discussions took place of which no record has been found. We might perhaps suggest that it was in Cobenzl's Cabinet that these discussions, which were to bear such rich fruit in the 1770s and beyond, were held.

Regardless of the role played by the Cabinet in Cobenzl's personal associations and the opportunity it provided to promote himself as an enlightened man of taste in his letters to friends and colleagues, it found no reflection in the portraits that Cobenzl had painted (or engraved) for wider circulation.

After the 1748 portrait by Franz Lippoldt, which projected Cobenzl's image of himself as a man of books and learning, in 1759 Cobenzl commissioned numerous images showing him in the robes and insignia of the Order of the Golden Fleece which he received that year (the insignia of the Order was also painted, rather clumsily, on Cobenzl's breast in the Lippoldt portrait). Various portraits proclaiming this new honour were sent out as gifts to aristocrats and officials of the Habsburg lands, such as that now at Schloss Gymnich, where Cobenzl,

[79] Suvée to Guinguené, 2-0 brumaire an 6 [10 November 1797], published by A. de Montaiglon in: Correspondance des directeurs de l'Académie de France à Rome, XVII, 1908, pp. 102–5

dressed expensively in an embroidered burgundy coat, wears the large insignia of the Order of the Golden Fleece prominently if rather clumsily displayed on his breast.[80]

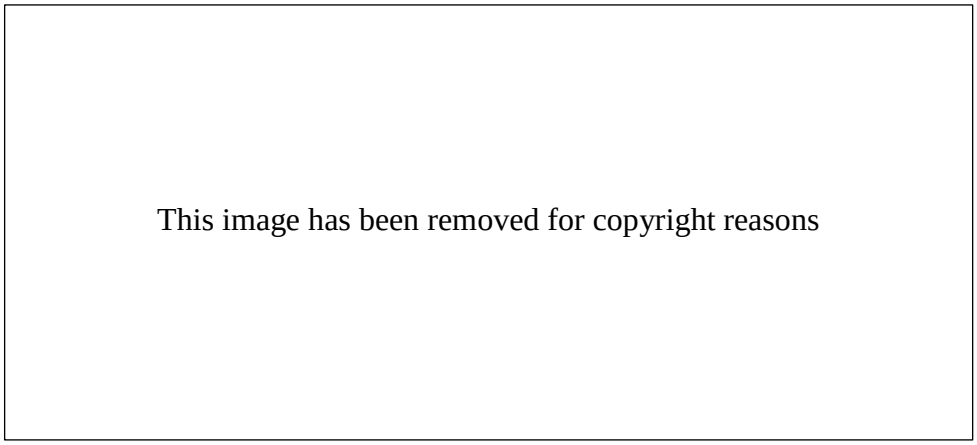

Figure 92. Unidentified artist, Portrait of Count Charles Cobenzl. 1762. Schloss Gymnich

Figure 93. Unidentified artist, Portrait of Count Charles Cobenzl. 1759–60. Musées Royaux des beaux-arts de Belgique, Brussels. © IRPA-KIK, Brussels

Even in 1761, the first engraved portrait that we know, by the bookseller and etcher François Harrewijn (Frans Harrewyn; 1700–64), shows no sign of any interest in the arts. It harks back to a small portrait of his father Johann Caspar, who had received the Order of the Golden Fleece in 1729 and who was painted in his robes in 1731.[81] (figs 10, 11) This in turn relates to a whole series of portraits of similar type, but by very different artists, showing high-ranking individuals in the robes of the Order: that of Charles VI by Johann Gottfried Auerbach (Heeresgeschichtliches Museum, Vienna), Jacob van Schuppen's

[80] Carl Otto Ludwig Theodat von und zu Gymnich (1715–85), was first Minister of State at the Court of Bonn and was part of Cobenzl's network of contacts in the German principalities, and it is likely that the portrait also came as a gift from the sitter.

[81] Probably a reduced scale copy of the large portrait that once hung at the family estate at Planina, Haasberg Castle, destroyed by fire in 1945. See: Count Guglielmo Coronini, in: Maria Teresa e il Settecento Goriziana, exh. cat., Palazzo Attems, Gorizia, 1981–82, no. III/1. That portrait was surely executed almost immediately Johann Caspar received the Order, i.e. in 1729.

portrait of Eugene of Savoy (Stadtschloss Rajice, Czech Republic), or Hyacinthe Rigaud's portrait of Count Philipp Ludwig Wenzel Sinzendorf (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna).

In 1761 therefore Cobenzl was projecting his own status and his lineage, as the son of a man who also received the Order for services to the previous monarch. Later portraits too show Cobenzl the Minister, even Cobenzl the de facto ruler of the Austrian Netherlands: in 1765, with Charles de Lorraine absent for over a year, Cobenzl had himself depicted so regally that the painting was mistakenly identified as a portrait of François I.[82]

Figure 94. ? Jean-Pierre Sauvage (1699–1780), Portrait of Count Charles Cobenzl. 1765. Musées Royaux des beaux-arts de Belgique, Brussels. © IRPA-KIK, Brussels

It is only in a single engraved portrait, commissioned in 1764 in Paris from Jean-Christophe Teucher (1715 – after 1765),[83] that any reflection of Cobenzl's interest in the arts appears. Whilst once again demonstrating an emphasis on the Order of the Golden

[82] Charles-Alexandre de Lorraine: gouverneur général des Pays-Bas autrichiens, exh. cat., Palais de Charles de Lorraine, Brussels, 1987 (Europalia 1987–I), no. II.29. It still appears as such in the documentation of the Institut Royal du Patrimoine artistique (IRPA/KIK) in Brussels.

[83] The date of death for Teucher is usually given as c. 1750 but he was clearly active nearly fifteen years later – witness this contract and the fact that he engraved portraits produced by Louis Tocqué in St Petersburg in the second half of the 1750s. The commission is covered in: Molinari to Cobenzl, 11 February 1764; AGR, SEG, 1177, f. 226. Cobenzl note on letter from Teucher, 6 February 1764; AGR, SEG, 1231, f. 11. Contract for the print: AGR, SEG, 1203, f. 387

Fleece, there is a discreet suggestion of Cobenzl's role as official patron of the arts in the statue of Minerva in a niche behind him.

Figure 95. Jean-Christophe Teucher (1715 – after 1765), after an unknown original. Portrait of Count Charles Cobenzl

This is Cobenzl the nobleman and member of the Order of the Golden Fleece, patron of the arts and learning. There are no books, no references to his library, no porcelain or paintings or drawings. The portrait celebrates the achievements of the Minister not the man and there is no surprise that the portrait bears greatest likeness (although general, not specific) to numerous portraits of important political figures, such as Johann Haid's 1755 engraving after a portrait of Kaunitz by Martin Meytens. It was only much later that Kaunitz himself was to be depicted – in his Golden Fleece robes – with a prominent statue of Minerva, for instance in a work by Johann Baptist Lampi (1751–1830) of 1786.[84]

[84] Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna, inv. 93

Chapter 11. The Significance of the Collection

If Cobenzl did not see the need to include his Cabinet in images of himself, did not see it as one of the most important elements for inclusion in his own personal iconography, what was its significance ?

The Politics of Provenance

The key to Cobenzl's transformation into a collector lay in a single moment, a single opportunity that offered the manipulation of various histories and phenomena to create a collection in which, intially at least, sign value was far greater than use or function. This was the opportunity in 1761 to buy the Borremans drawings, with their history (real or supposed) as part of the collection of 'the Elector of Bavaria'. In Cobenzl's mind at least this must have meant Maximilian II Emanuel, Elector of Bavaria 1679–1726, from 1692 Governor of what were still then the Spanish Netherlands.[1] Although there is no evidence that he owned or collected drawings, some support for the idea that at least part of the Cobenzl drawings came from him might be found in the good number of works by Dutch and Flemish artists of the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (for whom Max Emanuel was known to have a preference). In the War of the Spanish Succession Max Emanuel made the mistake of supporting France and he was forced to flee the Netherlands in 1706. Leaving Brussels in a hurry he lodged all kinds of works of art with Hendrik van Soest, Marchand ébéniste, and his banker, and when it became clear that he would not return these seeped out onto the market.[2] Although we cannot be sure that he really was the source of the Borremans drawings, we cannot exclude that drawings were among the works he left behind.[3]

Through this acquisition, Cobenzl could stress a continuity from a previous governor of the region to himself. Art as a form of propaganda to glorify a monarch has been looked at

[1] Kurfürst Max Emanuel: Bayern und Europa um 1700, ed. H. Glaser, exh. cat., 2 vols, Altes Schloss & Neues Schloss, Schleissheim, 1976; Der bayerische Kurfürst Max Emanuel in Brüssel. Zu Politik und Kultur in Europa um 1700, exh. cat., Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, Munich, 1998

[2] This information kindly indicated by Jean-Philippe Huys. See also: Jean-Philippe Huys, 'Deux mécènes de culture européene en exil à l'aube du XVIII^{e} siècle. Les électeurs Maximilien II Emmanuel de Bavière et Joseph-Clément de Cologne, entre Pays-Bas méridionaux et royaume de France', in: Gaëtane Maës, Jan Blanc, eds, Les échanges artistiques entre les anciens Pays-Bas et la France, 1482–1814 (Actes du colloque international, Lille, IRHiS-Lille 3, 28–30 mai 2008), Turnhout, 2010, pp. 155–69.

[3] Another example of works of art left behind by Spanish officials or officials in their service, apparently abandoned when circumstances forced them to leave, would seem to be represented by the Luarca sale of prints and drawings, which was formed between 1690 and 1708 but which only appeared on sale in Antwerp in 1732; Luarca sale Antwerp 19.8.1732.

widely,[4] but the use of the arts by men such as Cobenzl, however political, was not dynastic. Apart from family portrait collections or decorative works at family estates, unlike princes they had no historic collection to manipulate, there was no pre-existing continuity which could itself be continued. Their artistic policies and expressed personal preferences, although weapons of political survival, were wielded somewhat differently. Continuity had to be constructed, pasts (and futures) adopted and adapted.

Provenance represents one form of continuity, into which the collector inserts himself. Cobenzl did this in several ways. This does not make his acts in any way cynical, but it gave them added value and represented the place where private and public overlapped.

In an age when there was less sensitivity regarding the cross-over of personal and public (not surprising when we realise that a man in his position was supposed to finance many of the trappings of his status from his own income), Cobenzl revealed a considerable distaste for confusing the material aspects of the two spheres, when keeping them separate was possible. As with any minister responsible for state artistic policy, there was potential for considerable overlap between Cobenzl's official interaction with artists and architects and his own Cabinet. Surely the most vivid contemporary example of this – and of the dangers inherent in such a duality of interests – was Count Heinrich von Brühl, Chief Minister to the Elector of Saxony, who was unable to keep separate not only his purchases for the royal collections and himself, but royal and personal funds.[5] What is most striking in the case of Cobenzl is rather just how little real overlap there was, how carefully he defined what was being done in the name of the Empress and what was being done for him personally,[6] and how very different were his Cabinets of paintings and drawings, almost exclusively by or attributed to Old Masters, from the art and architecture he was responsible for commissioning or supporting in his official capacity.

Yet a total division of private and public was neither possible nor desirable. In his protection of the Burgundian Library, Cobenzl not only did something in which he believed – preserving historic books, even a part of Habsburg history itself – but he inserted

[4] e.g. Tim Blanning, The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe 1660–1789, Oxford, 2002; Susan Bracken, Andrea M. Gáldy, Adriana Turpin, eds, Collecting and Dynastic Ambition, Newcastle upon Tyne, 2009

[5] Bilder-Wechsel: sächsisch-russischer Kulturtransfer im Zeitalter der Aufklärung, Cologne–Weimar, 2009

[6] In May 1766, for instance, he wrote to de Bors D'Overen, member of the Great Council of Malines, with two requests, 'la premiere pour l'honneur du pais l'autre pour moimême'; AGR, SEG, 1074, f. 94. Although Pierre Wouters, the Royal Librarian, sometimes found it difficult to recall if he was buying books for the library or for Cobenzl, the attempts to clarify such situations make it clear that they both wished for a sharp division to be maintained between private and public tasks; e.g. AGR, SEG, 1249, f. 261

himself into that history. The same can be said of his involvement in projects to catalogue the archive of the Order of the Golden Fleece and publish a history of the Order: driven by the functional purpose of the projects, he also asserted his own place within that history both as a recipient of the Order and as the promoter of its study.

It was not even important whether the drawings bought from Borremans really had belonged to Max Emanuel. The continuity of power, of succession, from Max Emanuel to Cobenzl, had only to be implied to take effect. A striking instance of the power of understated implication is the text chosen for the granite pedestal of the monument erected to Peter the Great by Catherine II – the next owner of Cobenzl's drawings – in St Petersburg, 'Petro Primo Catarina Secunda 1782'. Through this the usurper Empress asserted her position as heir to Peter the Great, second to his first, and downplayed (or omitted) those who came in between.[7]

Catherine's career demontrates a similar use of art as part of a programme of self-positioning. Like Cobenzl, Catherine had no continuity to assert: a minor German princess who had removed her husband, the rightful occupant of the Russian throne, she had to work hard to assert her position not so much in Russia as on the international arena, where legitimate monarchs were unlikely to look benignly on her. Her chosen policy was one of blatant one-upmanship but it was not merely a matter of show, for she too (in the wake of Peter the Great) felt that the arts and industry should be improved and promoted and made into a powerful weapon of both domestic and international policy. Whether she arrived at this policy on her own or was advised by Ivan Betskoy – as seems most likely – is unclear,[8] but she set about promoting a climate in which collecting was not just approved of but almost a requisite for any member of her Court.

Catherine's buying habits have been studied in some depth and it is universally accepted that her first purchase of 225 in paintings in 1764, which laid the foundation for the Hermitage Picture Gallery, had a political motivation: the collection had been formed by the Berlin merchant Johann Gotzkowsky for her rival and enemy Frederick II, who declined the purchase because of lack of funds in the wake of the Seven Years War.[9] By acquiring these paintings, Catherine asserted both her own greater possibilities, and those

[7] See: Alexander M. Schenker, The Bronze Horseman: Falconet's Monument to Peter the Great, New Haven–London, 2004

[8] The role of Betskoy is implicit in numerous studies of Catherine II but his personality and role in her policies, particularly her artistic policies, have not been looked at.

[9] Nina Schepkowski, Johann Ernst Gotzkowsky: Kunstagent und Gemäldesammler im friderizianischen Berlin, Berlin, 2009

of Russia. Although there were individual acquisitions of paintings, Catherine's practice was dominated by the purchase of whole collections, preferably assembled by powerful individuals, particularly foreign statesmen. Such were the purchases of the collections formed by Count Heinrich von Brühl in 1768 (paintings, drawings and prints), that of Pierre Crozat in 1772, that of Sir Robert Walpole in 1778–79, and of course of one of Maria Theresa's powerful ministers, Count Cobenzl in 1768. Art was thus part of a political game in which taste was important but was also subject to political imperatives.

Drawings as Elite Collecting

The acquisition of art as a form of self-positioning was thus not unique, but we must ask why it was that Cobenzl adopted drawings as his chosen method of self-promotion. It was not just the 'Elector of Bavaria' provenance that was so important in that first acquisition, nor even the relatively modest price for a collection of 2,000 drawings. To judge by Cobenzl's own comments, it was the very fact that they were drawings (despite the fact that he had never owned drawings before and had only shortly before this returned a drawing offered as a gift by Van Schorel) that clinched the deal. Very shortly after making that first purchase Cobenzl asserted emphatically:

> 'Les desseins sont plus originaux que les Tableaux, et font une consolation pour ceux qui ne sont pas en etat de posseder des Galeries. Et je me trouve si riche de cette possession que je ne crois pas, qu'il y ait un particulier dans le monde, qui seroit en etat de payer les Tableaux des dessins, que je possede.'[10]

This statement makes clear two key beliefs: that drawings were more original and that because they were cheaper it was possible to own works by a greater range of artists.

The second belief was clearly defining in Cobenzl's approach to collecting drawings, demonstrated by the underlying principle of compiling a 'full' set of works by artists, the pursuance of some sense of 'completeness'. That arose only after the initial purchase, however, and we must see the essential motivation in the perception of the originality of drawings, which speaks eloquently of contemporary attitudes and the context within which Cobenzl made his first acquisition.

[10] Cobenzl to Dorn, 6 August 1761; AGR, SEG, 1119, ff. 21v–22r

Despite a lack of an over-arching survey of the taste for drawings, the growth of the fashion for collecting them in the eighteenth century in Italy[11] and France[12] has been summarised. Most attention has been on France, but there is little breakdown of 'the eighteenth century', of the individual stages by which drawings came to be seen as fundamental to perceptions of connoisseurship, nor is the experience of France differentiated from that of areas on the collecting periphery.

In the 1760s drawings were by no means as widespread an object of collecting even in France as they were to become later in the century and Cobenzl's adoption of this particular 'hobby' at this particular time in his specific location needs some clarification. The important publication Collecting Prints and Drawings in Europe, c. 1500–1750 deliberately chose 1750 as a cut-off point because it emphasised 'questions about the emerging recognition of prints and drawings as collectable categories of art in their own right',[13] but it was perhaps only in London and Paris that so early a date should be set for the end of the period of 'emerging recognition'.[14] The eighteenth century is not monolithic: Michel's description of the transformation of drawings from 'utilisation' to 'étude désintéressée' in France encompasses almost the whole of the eighteenth century, but each stage in that process took place at different times in different countries. The emergence of drawings from artists' studios – from utilisation – took place much later in regions such as Switzerland and the Southern Netherlands.

Nearly all studies of the collecting of drawings have been (like this one) monographic, concentrating on a single individual, often a particularly prominent collector or artist. Such studies are needed for the wider picture but even the vast body of work on French collectors has not produced a more detailed overview of the collecting of drawings in France. Our current level of knowledge of the situation in the Austrian Netherlands nonetheless makes clear that the appreciation of drawings there lagged some twenty years

[11] Julius Held, 'The Early Appreciation of Drawings', in: Millard Meiss, ed., Studies in Western Art. Acts of the Twentieth International Congress of the History of Art [New York, 7–12 September 1961], III: Latin American Art and the Baroque Period in Europe, Princeton, 1963, pp. 72–95

[12] Colin B. Bailey, '"Toute seule elle peut remplir et satisfaire l'attention". The Early Appreciation and Marketing of Watteau's Drawings with an Introduction to the Collecting of Modern French Drawings during the Reign of Louis XV', in: Alan Wintermute, Watteau and his World. French Drawing from 1700 to 1750, exh. cat., The Frick Collection, New York; National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa; 1999, pp. 68–92; Christian Michel, 'Le goût pour le dessin en France aux XVIIe et XVIII^{e} siècles: de l'utilisation à l'étude désintéressée', Revue de l'Art, 143, 2004, pp. 27–34; Alicia Weisberg-Roberts, 'Antoine Watteau and the Cultural Value of Drawing in Eighteenth-century France', unpublished doctoral thesis, Courtauld Institute of Art, London University, 2005

[13] Christopher Baker, Caroline Elam, Genevieve Warwick, eds, Collecting Prints and Drawings in Europe, c. 1500–1750, Aldershot, 2003, p. 1

[14] Weisberg-Roberts 2005

behind France. Although some drawings appeared under glass on the walls, to judge by sales catalogues and, for instance, the inventory of Cobenzl's house, this took place after the 1760s. If we exclude pastel portraits, because of their ambiguous position as 'portraits' rather than 'works of art' or 'drawings', we see that pen drawings by Antoon Overlaet and framed prints feature in house inventories from the 1770s. It is only in the 1780s and 1790s that we find references to a wider range of drawings, including rare examples of sheets given to Boucher, on the walls. It is certainly only in the 1770s and 1780s that there is any demonstrable rise in interest in collecting drawings, far behind the situation in Paris.

In Cobenzl's own circle there were two pure collectors of drawings, i.e. non-artists/dealers who were actively acquiring (regardless of the quality of those drawings): Pierre Wouters, the Royal Librarian, and Van Schorel, the Antwerp Burgomaster and patron of the Antwerp Academy. There is no evidence of other contacts with drawings collectors in the region, who were in any case so very few as to be almost invisible. Three swallows do not make a summer and these men were clearly isolated examples of non-artist collectors. Importantly, Charles de Lorraine, with his physics cabinet and his natural history cabinet, his palaces filled with silver and porcelain and fine furniture, and his paintings (whatever their quality), was not a collector of drawings. Cobenzl could thus assert his uniqueness in the wider context and in the specific sphere of direct comparison with the Governor.

In the Austrian Netherlands, therefore, to choose to collect drawings was to choose a specific strategy of distinction, demonstrating superior taste through the choice of elite and original objects. This choice was, moreover, validated by a number of reputable published sources that provided the intellectual framework for an assertion of the originality – ergo the superiority – of drawings.[15] Not only were the ideas expressed there in the air in France at least, but Cobenzl owned a number of the texts themselves.

While he may not have read the text itself, Cobenzl must have been aware of the spirit of Dezallier d'Argenville's 'Lettre sur le choix & l'arrangement d'un Cabinet curieux' of 1727, in which the author proclaimed that:

> 'Les Desseins, Monsieur, ont quelque chose de superieur aux Estampes, quoique moins terminez; ce sont les premieres idées d'un Peintre où l'on découvre tout le feu de l'imagination & l'esprit de sa touche. Cette curiosité demande beaucoup plus de sçavoir que les Estampes, puisqu'il s'agit de juger, ainsi que dans les Tableaux, de la bonté d'un dessein, de son originalité, & de connoître la maniere d'un Maître d'avec un autre, sa

[15] Kristel Smentek, 'The Collector's Cut: Why Pierre-Jean Mariette Tore up his Drawings and Put Them Back Together Again', Master Drawings, 46/1, Spring 2008, pp. 36–37; Bailey 1999, pp. 68–92

> touche particuliere, qui est comme un caractere d'écriture singulier à un chacun, lequel fait reconnoître l'Auteur du dessein. Un beau Recueil de Desseins des meilleurs Maîtres est une vraie école de Peinture.'[16]

Of the books in his library, Cobenzl would have found references to the originality of drawings in Richardson's Traité de la peinture, & de la sculpture of 1728, and the 1745 edition of Dezallier d'Argenville's Abrégé de la vie, as well as the 1755 Recueil de divers ouvrages sur la peinture & le coloris by Roger de Piles. He was thus sufficiently informed as to statements of the superiority of drawing and hence of the collector of drawings.

If such views were perhaps already becoming a commonplace in France by the 1760s, that was not the case on the collecting periphery. Cobenzl's emergence as a collector of drawings in 1761 was coloured by it, as, almost certainly, was Catherine the Great's agreement to buy his collection, predominantly of drawings, seven years later. She had in 1767 acquired the drawings accumulated by Ivan Betskoy as teaching material for the students of the Academy of Arts,[17] but having acquired several hundred paintings since 1764 it was in 1768 that she laid the foundation of the Hermitage's Cabinet of Drawings through the purchase of the drawings of Cobenzl and Brühl. Catherine apparently never discussed her drawings in her correspondence with men such as Melchior Grimm and Denis Diderot but the fact of the purchase – at a high price – implies that a collection of drawings was seen as a necessary possession for someone in her position.

In the case of both Cobenzl and Catherine, the acquisition of drawings was thus pursued not for connoisseurial reasons but as a performative act, demonstrating their position within a narrow but international circle of elite individuals. In both cases the provenance of the drawings was also a key element. Catherine was clearly satisfied with her four thousand drawings from Cobenzl and the mainly architectural and topographical drawings she added to them over the next thirty years, but Cobenzl repeated the act of acquisition consistently, if on a smaller scale, thus re-asserting the initial statement of belonging.

Peer Provenance

After that first acquisition of drawings from the 'Elector of Bavaria' direct political provenance was to be subordinate to other aspects of continuity: now the question of

[16] Joseph-Antoine Dezallier d'Argenville, 'Lettre sur le choix & l'arrangement d'un Cabinet curieux', Mercure de France, June 1727, pp. 1316–17

[17] The most readily available English summary of knowledge on the Betskoy drawings is: Irina Novosselskaya, in: Edgar Munhall, ed., Greuze the Draftsman, exh. cat., The Frick Collection, New York, 2002, pp. 29–30. See also collector's mark L. 2878a (there spelt Betzkoy)

validation through previous ownership by renowned collectors came into play. The Crozat provenance of the 1,500 drawings acquired from Salm-Reifferscheid, the Bishop of Tournai, in 1762 – borne out by the 'Crozat numbers'[18] on some and the established provenance of others[19] – was not only boasted of[20] but pursued.

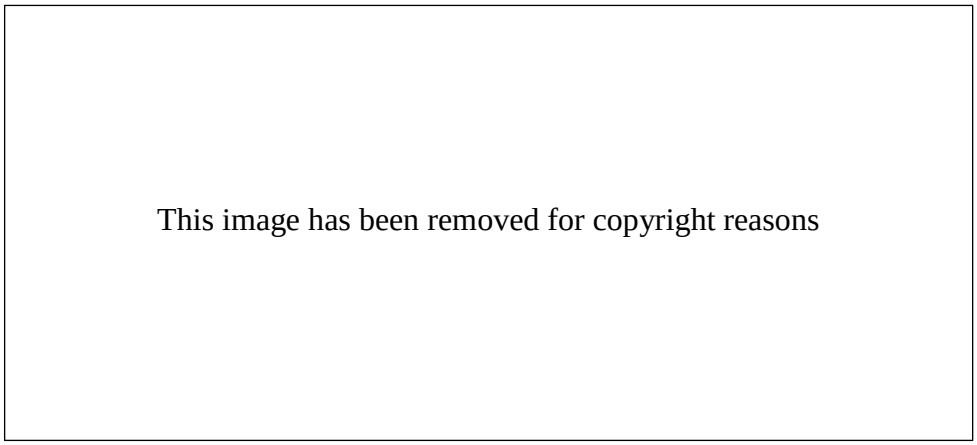

Figure 96. Francesco Primaticcio (1504–70), Diana at Rest. The drawing has a 'Crozat' number bottom right, and a small number bottom left that would seem to be associated with the Bishop of Tournai, François-Ernest de Salm-Reifferscheid. © The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg

When Cobenzl first purchased the drawings Van Schorel sent him a copy of the 1741 Crozat catalogue from his library to look at[21] and some effort was later made to acquire a copy of his own. Eight months later Van Schorel lent him a copy of the catalogue with prices and buyers marked, and he had them copied out.[22] A concern with the Crozat origin – and the casual dropping of the collector's name – was notable even two years later in 1764, when Cobenzl wrote to des Voys in Paris to enquire about publications of the Crozat drawings: 'Comme j'ai fait acquisition du Cabinet des Desseins de M Crozat, je

[18] On 'Crozat' numbers see: Cordélia Hattori, 'The Drawings Collection of Pierre Crozat (1665–1750)', in: Baker, Elam, Warwick 2003, pp. 173-81

[19] Bernadette Py, Everhard Jabach Collectionneur (1618–1695). Les dessins de l'inventaire de 1695 (Notes et Documents des musées de France 36), Paris, 2001

[20] Cobenzl to Dorn, 25 March 1762; AGR, SEG, 1119, f. 51v

[21] Van Schorel to Cobenzl, 19 April 1762; AGR, SEG, 1235, f. 304

[22] Van Schorel correspondence, December 1762; AGR, SEG, 1235, ff. 329, 331

souhaiteroit de savoir, si cet homme illustre n'a pas fait egalem[t] graver quelques uns de ses magnifiques Desseins.'[23]

Cobenzl was thus not immune to the glory reflected from previous owners that was at times so important on the Paris art market,[24] where the names of previous owners increasingly came to be mentioned in specific entries within sale catalogues (a practice that was taken up only somewhat later in the Austrian Netherlands[25]).

We should not, however, overemphasise the continuing importance of past provenance for Cobenzl. It may have served as the stimulus for purchase, but once the objects were in his hands he set about stamping them with the marks of his own possession, i.e. having them put on identical mounts and stored in identifiable boxes and portfolios. In the absence of a circle of collectors in Brussels or even in the wider Austrian Netherlands, one aspect of provenance, the collector's position within a network of people of similar taste, had little importance for Cobenzl. It affected very few of his acquisitions – gifts from Lalive de Jully, for instance – and was subordinate to the political aspect, inherent both in the acquisition of works supposedly assembled by the Elector of Bavaria and in the use of colleagues and subordinates to acquire both paintings and drawings. Unlike Padre Resta, who emphasised the history of his drawings in support of their quality,[26] Cobenzl had most of the marks of previous owners removed in the process of trimming and mounting. The mere fact of provenance with a respected colleague was not enough to ensure a work of art a place in the Cabinet – however much Cobenzl admired Abbot Poloni, for instance, the two landscapes by Paolo Anesi that were a gift from him were not part of the Cabinet.

Continuity of Provenance: The Collection Moves On

Prince Dmitry Alexeevich Golitsyn arrived in Brussels on 3 February 1768 and seems immediately to have set about negotiating the acquisition of works of art for Catherine the Great.[27] The order for sums to be allocated for the purchase from the Empress is dated 17

[23] Cobenzl to des Voys, 13 February 1764; AGR, SEG, 1241, f. 436

[24] With regard to paintings see, e.g. Charlotte Guichard, 'From Social Event to Urban Spectacle: Auctions in late Eighteenth-century Paris', in: Bruno Blondé, Natacha Coquery, Jon Stobart, Ilja Van Damme, eds, Fashioning Old and New. Changing Consumer Patterns in Western Europe (1650–1900), Turnhout, 2009, pp. 208–9

[25] The Hazard sale of 1789, for instance, notes lots (e.g. lots 11, 19) that had been bought at the Mariette sale in 1775; Bartsch's catalogue of the de Ligne sale in 1794 indicates drawings bought at the Hazard sale; the catalogue of the Wouters sale set for 1797 advertised that a list of the prices of all lots and the names of the buyers would be available after the sale.

[26] Genevieve Warwick, in: Baker, Elam, Warwick 2003, p. 148

[27] Dmitry Alexeevich Golitsyn to Alexander Mikhaylovich Golitsyn, February – March 1768; RGADA, Fund 1263 (Golitsyn), opis I, chast 1, ed. khr. 1116, ff. 12–13, 36–37

April,[28] although negotiations continued into May and it was only on 2 June that Golitsyn could report that Cobenzl had given a definitive response on the price to be paid.[29]

Yet as late as March 1768 Cobenzl was boasting to Winckelmann of his paintings by Rubens and giving no sign whatever that he intended to part with them.[30] In his agreement to Golitsyn's proposition we must see an extension of the role of provenance: the passage of Cobenzl's drawings, all marked with the sign of his possession – the mounts – to the Russian imperial collection, inserted him in yet another chain, another network, asserting his place in the circles at the top of the hierarchy. Would he have agreed to sell under any other circumstances?

Figure 97. Matthäus Merian I (1593–1650), Travellers in a Harbour with Galleons at Anchor. Removed from the Hermitage and sold; Boerner, Leipzig, 29 April 1931, lot 160. Sotheby's, London, 5 July 2011, lot 36

[28] RGIA, Fund 468, opis 1, chast 2 raz., ed. khr. 3882. No. 44, f. 101. Instructions from Catherine II to pay the sum of 60,000 roubles for paintings from Cobenzl, 17 April 1768

[29] Dmitry Alexeevich Golitsyn to Alexander Mikhaylovich Golitsyn; RGADA, Fund 1263 (Golitsyn), opis I, chast 1, ed. khr. 1116, ff. 53–54

[30] Cobenzl to Winckelmann, 8 March 1768; AGR, SEG, 1248, f. 246

Conclusion

When Philip Cobenzl heard about the proposed sale of his uncle's Cabinet in May 1768 he wrote to express his surprise. Exclaiming that although he had no doubt his uncle would get the works' monetary value, he remarked that 'le plaisir que ce Cabinet vous donne vaut aussi son prix'.[1]

There is no doubt that Cobenzl found considerable pleasure in his collection, in looking at it himself, in showing it to select individuals, in describing it to subordinates, peers and superiors. But whatever the quality of the end result, of the Cabinet of Paintings and Drawings, we must ask if it really was 'en raison de dépenses excessives justement en oeuvres d'art'[2] that Cobenzl died in debt and if he truly was the 'grand collectionneur' he is so often declared to be.

Cobenzl's art purchases represented but a tiny proportion of the transactions in which he acquired luxury objects and books. His porcelain and his clothes, as rightly noted by Maria Theresa, were amongst his greatest expenses, and he himself admitted that he spent large sums on his house and garden. His debts were in the region of half a million florins.[3] He was paid at least 110,000 florins for the Cabinet by Catherine II[4] but we cannot see that he spent anywhere near that much on its formation: although we only know the cost of some of the works, they are amongst the most important and certainly the most expensive, and the total paid for them comes to under 11,000 florins de change.[5]

While the arts were central to Cobenzl's policies both professional and private in the Austrian Netherlands, his taste for art cannot be said to be a defining aspect of his personality. He saw the arts within the context of political purpose: regeneration of the

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[1] Philip Cobenzl to Cobenzl, 31 May 1768; AGR, SEG, 1095, f. 459

[2] Xavier Duquenne, 'Le tombeau des Verreycken et de Cobenzl à l'église de la Chapelle', Brusselse Cahiers Bruxellois (Revue d'histoire urbaine, Archives de la Ville de Bruxelles), XLII, 2010–11, p. 40

[3] Comte Carlos de Villermont, La cour de Vienne à Bruxelles au XVIII[e] siècle, Le comte de Cobenzl, ministre plénipotentiaire aux Pays-Bas, Lille–Paris–Bruges, 1925, pp. 317–21

[4] William Gordon to Lord Viscount Weymouth, 17 June 1768; NA, SP 77/104, 1766–69, no. 21. This sum must be approximate and is the lowest of those mentioned. A conversion of the sum allocated by Catherine the Great, which may have included other expenses, makes nearly 140,000 florins de change.

[5] Prices in florins. 1761: 2,000 drawings from Borremans (2,800); 1763: Rubens/Van Uden (1,800), Lairesse (448), Piazzetta drawings (c. 500), Ghezzi drawings (c. 500), drawings from Valltravers (1,100), Greuze drawing (112), Rubens Cimon and Pero (140); 1764: drawings from van Kruyningen (20), de Troy drawings (142), Wouwerman Rider (429), drawings from Menabuoni (140), drawings from Basan (214); 1765: drawings from Basan (95), Van Balen and Brueghel (350), Wouwerman Riding at the Cat (4,500), Brueghel Road on the Edge of a Town (300), Guido Reni (250); 1766: Rubens Virgin Giving the Rosary to St Dominic (1,500). This list does not include works for which we know the price but which were not in the Cabinet sold to Catherine II.

country and promotion of the self. His different approaches to art as a public figure and as a private collector demonstrate the different purposes of his activities. As an engine for regeneration, contemporary art and crafts needed to be supported. In positioning himself not only within Brussels society but as Richardson's model aristocrat setting an example to be imitated by others (and thereby contributing to renegeration), he chose not only to acquire paintings by the great Flemish artists of the past (the standard to which contemporary artists should aspire) but to pursue an elite sphere of collecting, drawings.

The drawings were, like the remodelling of the house and garden, part of the Minister's projection of the ideal self-portrait, but also part of a project to demonstrate his own intellectual and cultural superiority as his battle for power with Charles de Lorraine was reaching a critical point. The transformation from public patron, supporting the arts and artists as part of a utilitarian programme to revive the economy and productivity of the Austrian Netherlands, into a collector, was serendipitous: he was offered a collection of objects perceived as elite (drawings), with a provenance ('the Elector of Bavaria') that tied them to a previous governor of rank and celebrated connoisseurial skills. The second acquisition of drawings, which provided a tie to a celebrated collector of a previous age (Crozat), cemented his desire to concentrate on his drawings, making them part of a discreet personal agenda of self-promotion.

However good Cobenzl's knowledge of the arts, it can be demonstrated to be 'bookish' and his literary inclinations led him to collect according to principles informed by the books in his library. This was reflected in the desire for his collection to be 'complete'.

The turning point came not with the sale in 1768 but in 1767. By this time Cobenzl had largely achieved 'completeness' and he had effectively 'won' his series of battles with Charles de Lorraine, leaving the Governor relatively passive and allowing Cobenzl to dominate. The collection had served its purpose in asserting Cobenzl's position and the Minister seemed to be increasingly involved with Marie-Caroline Murray. In September that year one nephew remarked that 'cette passion… est trop violente pour durer longtems'.[6] With Cobenzl showing less interest in the collection, Golitsyn's proposal,

[6] Franz Carl Coronini to Philip Cobenzl, 13 October 1767; CA, Atti e Doc., busta 713. The situation was sufficiently fraught for Madame Nettine to warn Cobenzl of the dangers of the liaison; J. K. C. H. Comte de Zinzendorf, Journal. Chronique belgo-bruxelloise 1766–1770, ed. Georges Englebert (Nouvelles Annales Prince de Ligne, hors series, II), Brussels, 1991, entry for 17 February 1770.

Whether the relationship with Murray was consummated or not, we might tentatively refer to Baudrillard's suggestion of the link between sexual potency and collecting, noting that after childhood 'it is men in their forties who seem most prone to the passion'. Cobenzl was 49 when he started collecting. 'A correlation with sexuality can generally be demonstrated, so that the activity of collecting may be seen as a

bringing an opportunity for both further self-promotion (post-provenance, i.e. sale to Catherine the Great) and financial gain (an advantageous price), could not have come at a better time.

Whatever the combination of reasons that allowed Cobenzl to part with his Cabinet without a qualm, he still had plenty of other alternatives for 'elegant performance', making physical objects play their part in promoting his image. Household accounts make clear that he continued to remodel his house and garden, where the working and pleasure pavilions proclaimed prestige and prosperity to every visitor. We cannot but conclude that the drawings and paintings were not vital to his happiness and concur with Villermont's perhaps too tentatively expressed belief that in terms of personal preference, the garden was more important to him.[7]

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powerful mechanism of compensation during critical phases in a person's sexual development.' Jean Baudrillard, 'The System of Collecting', in: John Elsner, Roger Cardinal, eds, The Cultures of Collecting, London, 1994, p. 9

[7] Villermont 1925, p. 232

Appendix I: Paintings in Cobenzl's Cabinet, as sold to Catherine the Great in 1768

Attributions in square brackets are those given in the manuscript catalogue of the Cobenzl collection.

1, 2. (Fig. 22) **[Holbein]** Bartholomeus Bruyn, Portrait of a Man with his Three Sons / Portrait of a Woman with her Daughter. Late 1530s – early 1540s
Oil on canvas, transferred from panel, 75.5 x 46, 76.5 x 46; Hermitage, GE 678, GE 679
Provenance: possibly acquired during Cobenzl's posting in central Germany (1743–53)

3. (Fig. 17) **[Holbein]** Titian, copy after, Pope Paul III
Oil on green marble, 43.5 x 40; Hermitage, GE 1534
Provenance: acquired before 1751

4. (Fig. 21) **[Dürer]** Lucas I Cranach, copy after, Portrait of Johann Friedrich, Elector of Saxony
Oil on canvas, transferred from panel, 81 x 60; Location unknown; sold in 1929
Provenance: possibly acquired during Cobenzl's posting in central Germany (1743–53)

5. (Fig. 70) Gonzales Coques, Portrait of a Man (Self-portrait?). c. 1660
Oil on copper on wood backing, 16 x 12.9; Hermitage, ORm 1143
Provenance: before June 1767

6. (Fig. 69) Aert Jansz. Marienhof, Portrait of a Man in Black. c. 1649
Oil on copper, 13.3 x 11.8; Hermitage, ORm 1139
Provenance: before June 1767

7. Jan Aertsen Marienhof, Young Man Writing in an Artist's Studio. 1648
Oil on panel, 38 x 32.5; Hermitage, GE 974
Provenance: sale 1 June 1765, Leiden, lot 35; acquired by Cobenzl before June 1767

8. Balthasar Denner, Portrait of a Man, Half-length
Oil on panel, 62.25 x 50; Location unknown
Provenance: possibly acquired during Cobenzl's posting in central Germany (1743–53)

9. David II Teniers, Anthony Triest, Bishop of Ghent, and his Brother Eugenio, A Capuchin Monk. 1652
Oil on canvas, 44 x 36; Hermitage, GE 589
Provenance: possibly January 1768, gift from the Prince von Thurn und Taxis

10. **[Italian]** Guido Reni, copy after, The Virgin Sewing
Oil on copper, 24.25 x 18.5; location unknown; last recorded at Gatchina Palace in 1925

11. (Fig. 67) **[Italian]** ? Elisabetta Sirani, Holy Family
Oil on copper, 38.5 x 28; Hermitage, GE 1532

12. Pieter I Neeffs or Pieter II Neeffs, Interior of a Church
Oil on panel, 15 x 19; location unknown

13. Pieter I Neeffs, Interior of a Gothic Church. c. 1649
Oil on panel, 38.6 x 53.5; Hermitage, GE 644

14. (Fig. 50) Gerard Lairesse, The Holy Family with St Elisabeth and St John. c. 1673
Oil on canvas, 51.7 x 58.2; Pavlovsk State Museum Reserve, ЦХ-1928-III
Provenance: June 1763 from Martin de Brauwer for 448 fl
Post-Hermitage: transferred to Gatchina Palace c. 1799; evacuated during the Second World War; allocated to Pavlovsk Palace.
Since the painting entered the Hermitage in 1768 the painting cannot be the work engraved in the Cabinet Poullain in 1781 (as suggested in: Alain Roy, Gerard de Lairesse 1640-1711, Paris, 1992, p. 74).

15. (Fig. 68) Gillis (Egidius) van Tilborgh, Domestic Concert
Oil on canvas, 58 x 76; location unknown
Post-Hermitage: transferred to the Rumyantsev Museum, 1862, from there to the State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow; allocated by the state to Antikvariat in 1932 for sale

16, 17. Aert van der Neer, A River by Moonlight
Oil on panel, 33.5 x 46, 32 x 46; Hermitage, GE 929; Pushkin Museum, Moscow, GMII 2633
Provenance: before September 1763, possibly from the dealer Philip Vergeloo
Post-Hermitage: GMII 2633 transferred to the State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, 1930

18. (Fig. 80) Jean-Baptiste Greuze, Head of a Young Girl. Between 1760 and 1765
Oil on canvas, 41 x 33; Hermitage, GE 1254
Provenance: probably acquired from the artist; brought back from Paris for Cobenzl by Mme Nettine between 1762 and March 1765.

19. Aelbert Jacobsz. Cuyp, Cattle on a River Bank
Oil on panel, 49 x 74; Pushkin Museum, Moscow, GMII 2620
Post-Hermitage: transferred to the State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, 1930

20. Hendrick van Balen and Jan I Brueghel
Les quatre saisons, représentées par des Enfans, dans un Paysage, orné de fleurs, de fruits, de Poissons et de Coquilles (Probably The Four Elements*)*
Oil on copper, 27 x 19; location unknown
Provenance: acquired June 1765 from Martin de Brauwer for 350 fl

21. Jan Davidsz. de Heem, Flowers in a Vase
Oil on canvas, 87.5 x 67.5; Hermitage, GE 1113

22. (Fig. 55) Jan I Brueghel, Road on the Edge of a Town. c. 1611
Oil on copper, 25.5 x 38; Hermitage, GE 430
Provenance: acquired April 1765 from the Rubempré sale, Brussels, for 300 fl

23. Jan II Brueghel, Landscape (Tobit's Farewell to his Mother)
Oil on panel, diameter 18.3; Hermitage, GE 431

24. Jan I Brueghel, Country Road. c. 1610
Oil on panel, 47.8 x 66.7; Hermitage, GE 2246
Provenance: Jacques Dorn; acquired late 1762, probably via the dealer T'Sas

25, 25. Lucas van Uden and David II Teniers, Two Landscapes. 1640s
Oil on canvas, 87.5 x 141, 89 x 137; Hermitage, GE 626, GE 630
Provenance: in or before 1762, possibly from Van Schorel

27. Cornelis van Poelenburgh, Bacchus and Ariadne
Oil on canvas, 58 x 64; Gatchina State Museum Reserve
Provenance: by June 1767

28. (Fig. 14) **[Poelenburgh]** Isaac Jansz. Van Ostade, Winter Scene. c. 1648
Oil on panel, 71.5 x 113.5; Hermitage, GE 906

29. Adriaen van Ostade, Village Festival. 1640
Oil on panel, 36.5 x 48.5; Hermitage, GE 903
Provenance: possibly April 1765, from Philip Vergeloo

30. Nicolaes (Claes) Pietersz. Berchem, A Ford by Ruins
Oil on copper, 28 x 37; Pushkin Museum, Moscow, GMII 2817
Provenance: Hofstede de Groot suggested it was in the Lormier sale 4 July 1763, The Hague, lot 46; coll. Meunier, Paris, but this is hard to fit with the demonstrable Cobenzl provenance; possibly acquired April 1765 from Philip Vergeloo
Post-Hermitage: allocated by the state to Antikvariat in 1929; unsold, returned to the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

31. Nicolaes (Claes) Pietersz. Berchem, Halt Before an Inn
Oil on canvas, 81 x 66; Kunstmuseum Basle, G 1995.34
Provenance: probably June 1762, from the dealer Van Langheren, Antwerp
Post-Hermitage: allocated by the state to Antikvariat 1930 for sale; Fischer, Lucerne, 18-20 August 1931, lot 230; Phillips, London, 5 December 1989, lot 33; New York, private collection; Colnaghi; acquired by the Kunstmuseum, Basle, in 1995

32. (See fig. 90) Rembrandt van Rijn, A Polish Nobleman
Oil on panel, 96.8 x 66; National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1937.1.78
Provenance: December 1765, from Rotterdam, via Philip Vergeloo
Post-Hermitage: allocated by the state to Antikvariat in 1930; February 1931 sold via dealers to Andrew W. Mellon; 1932 deeded to The A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust; 1937 gift to the National Gallery of Art

33. (Fig. 79) Philips Wouwerman, Rider on a White Horse
Oil on panel, 32 x 28; Hermitage, GE 846
Provenance: 1 June 1763 de Schryvere sale Bruges lot 4; acquired between February and May 1764 via the Antwerp dealers Both

34. Philips Wouwerman, '*Un grand Paysage, représentant une Marine, avec beaucoup de figures, de Batteaux et animaux. Les figures sont d'une très petite proportion et le detail n'en est que plus intéressant'*
Oil on panel, 73 x 65
Not identified in inventories. It is possible that the painting was not in fact by Wouwerman, making identification difficult.

35. (See fig. 78) Philips Wouwerman, Riding at the Cat
Oil on canvas, 68 x 97.5; Amsterdam/Rijswijk, Instituut Collectie Nederland, NK 3065
Provenance: April 1765 from the Rubempré sale, Brussels
Post-Hermitage: Allocated by the state to Antikvariat 19 September 1933 for sale, acquired at auction by Fritz Mannheimer, Amsterdam; his collection acquired on behalf of the German authorities; restituted to The Netherlands 1946

36. (Fig. 3) Gerard Dou, Old Woman Unreeling Threads. 1660–65
Oil on panel, 32 x 23 (originally 26 x 20); Hermitage, GE 887
Provenance: sale Nicolaas Cornelis Hasselaar, Amsterdam, 26 April 1742, lot 3, bought by the comte de Vence; sale comte de Vence 9 February 1761, Paris, lot 80; purchased by Remy for the duc de Choiseul for 2, 567 livres; acquired by Cobenzl after April 1765

37. (Fig. 4) Peeter Gysels, Garden. c. 1685
Oil on copper; 52.5 x 64.5; Hermitage, GE 662
Provenance: probably sale Johann van Schuylenburg, 20 September 1735, The Hague, lot 85, sold for 410 florins; when acquired by Cobenzl unknown

38. Jan van der Heyden, Landscape with Fortified Castle
Oil on panel, 51.5 x 68; Hermitage, GE 1897
Provenance: late 1762 to early 1763, from a dealer in Antwerp

39. (See fig. 60) Anthony van Dyck, St Sebastian
Oil on panel, 145.5 x 107.5; destroyed during World War Two
Provenance: Martyn Robyns, Brussels; Ange Laurent Lalive de Jully, Paris; acquired by Cobenzl between January and February 1766

40. (Fig. 81) Peter Paul Rubens, The Institution of the Eucharist. c. 1631
Oil on oak panel, 45.8 x 41; Pushkin Museum, Moscow, GMII 653
Provenance: January–February 1764, a gift from Jacques Dorn
Post-Hermitage: Transferred to The State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, in 1924

41. (Fig. 59) Peter Paul Rubens, Charles de Longueval
Oil on oak panel, 62 x 50; Hermitage, GE 508

42. (See fig. 51) **[Rubens]** Lucas van Uden, String of Carts. First half of the 1630s
Oil on panel, 26.7 x 43; Pushkin Museum, Moscow, GMII 341
Provenance: acquired April 1763 from Martin de Brauwer for 1800 fl de change
Post-Hermitage: Transferred 1862 to the Rumyantsev Museum, 1862, from there to the State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow

43. (Fig. 58) Peter Paul Rubens and Frans Snyders, Statue of Ceres. c. 1615
Oil on panel, cradled; 90.5 x 65.6; Hermitage, GE 504
Provenance: possibly coll. Gerard Hoet, The Hague, his sale 25 August 1760, lot 30, 1210 florins (Hoet, Terwesten 1752-70, III, p. 224)

44. (Fig. 44) Peter Paul Rubens and workshop, Venus and Adonis. c. 1614
Oil on panel, 83 x 90.5; Hermitage, GE 462
Provenance: before May 1763, when engraved by Tassaert, possibly before January 1761

45. (See fig. 33) Peter Paul Rubens, school, The Virgin Giving the Rosary to St Dominic
Oil on canvas, transferred from panel, 206 x 156; Pushkin Museum, Moscow, GMII 647
Provenance: between September 1766 and January 1767
Post-Hermitage: Transferred to The State Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, in 1924

46. (Fig. 52) Peter Paul Rubens, Roman Charity (Cimon and Pero). c. 1612
Oil on canvas, transferred from panel, 140.5 x 180.3; Hermitage, GE 470
Provenance: mid-17th century Carel van den Bosch, Bishop of Bruges; acquired by Cobenzl December 1763 to January 1764, for 50 ecus

Appendix II: Cobenzl's acquisition transactions by type

This appendix lists only those acquisitions where the transaction type is known. Individual paintings are listed as separate acquisitions unless they form a set, i.e. the Smeyers paintings.

Objects marked in bold formed part of the Cabinet sold to Catherine II

1746 May	'petit image' by Durer	GIFT
1754	Garemyn Coupure	COMMISSION
1754 Dec	Two Paolo Anesi	GIFT
1758 May	Three enamel miniatures	PRIVATE SALE
	Aegidius Smeyers, Eight Paintings	AUCTION
1760 July	Michelangelo	GIFT
1760 Oct/Nov	Paintings from Cardon	STUDENT WORK
1761	Prints, drawing and book	GIFT
1761 Aug	**Borremans drawings**	**PRIVATE SALE**
1761 Oct	? Rubens, Head of Bacchus	AUCTION
	? Rubens Portrait of Gevartius	AUCTION
	Cardon Christ	STUDENT WORK
1761 Nov	Pompe Carved Christ	PRIVATE SALE
1761 Dec	Ivory Crucifix	PRIVATE SALE
1761–62	Le Jeune Hercules, sculpture	SENT ON SPEC BY ARTIST
1762	Lonsing copy of Guercino	STUDENT WORK
1762 Mar	**Tournai drawings**	**PRIVATE SALE**
1762 April	**Rubens print and letter**	**GIFT**
1762 May	Cardon studies and paintings	STUDENT WORK
1762 June	**Berchem**	**PRIVATE SALE**
1762 July	? Quellinus two marble children	PRIVATE SALE
1762 Sept	**Van Uden Landscape**	**GIFT**
1762 Nov	**Drawings**	**PRIVATE SALE**
1762–63	**van der Heyden**	**PRIVATE SALE**
	+1 painting	**PRIVATE SALE**
	+1 painting	**PRIVATE SALE**
	+1 painting	**PRIVATE SALE**
	Jan I Brueghel Landscape	**PRIVATE SALE**
	60 drawings	**PRIVATE SALE**
	Rubens St Roch	**GIFT**
	Lonsing drawings	STUDENT WORK
1763 Jan	Poelenburch landscape	AUCTION (DEAL)
	Molijn landscape	AUCTION (DEAL)
	Drawings from Paris	**PRIVATE SALE**
1763 Mar	**Gripello sculptures**	**PRIVATE SALE**
1763 April	**Rubens (Van Uden) landscape**	**PRIVATE SALE**
1763 spring	Raphael	GIFT
1763 June	**Lairesse**	**PRIVATE SALE**
	Cardon	STUDENT WORK
	Lonsing	STUDENT WORK
	Valltravers drawings	**PRIVATE SALE**
1763 Aug	**Valltravers drawings**	**PRIVATE SALE**
1763 Sept	**van der Neer Landscape**	**PRIVATE SALE**
	Ghezzi drawings	**PRIVATE SALE**

1763 Nov	**Greuze drawing**	**COMMISSION**
1763 Dec	**Rubens Roman Charity**	**PRIVATE SALE**
	Valltravers drawings	**PRIVATE SALE**
	Rubens drawings, Van Orley plates	**PRIVATE SALE**
	Guglielmi drawings	**SENT ON SPEC BY ARTIST**
1764 Feb	**Rubens Last Supper**	**GIFT**
1764 Mar	Rubens Portraits Albert and Isabella	PRIVATE SALE
	Piazzetta drawings	**PRIVATE SALE**
	Drawings from The Hague	**AUCTION**
1764 Apr	**Wouwerman marine**	**PRIVATE SALE**
	Valltravers drawings	**PRIVATE SALE**
	De Troyes drawings	**AUCTION**
1764 May	**Drawings**	**GIFT**
	Valltravers drawings	**PRIVATE SALE**
1764 July	Lonsing Iphigenia	STUDENT WORK
1764 Aug	**Boekchorst drawings**	**GIFT**
1764 Sept	**Valltravers drawings**	**PRIVATE SALE**
	Teniers	PRIVATE SALE
1764 Oct	**Menabuoni drawings**	**PRIVATE SALE**
1764 Dec	**Drawings from Paris**	**PRIVATE SALE**
1764–65	**Greuze painting**	**PRIVATE SALE**
1765 Feb	**Drawings from Paris**	**PRIVATE SALE**
1765 Apr	Descamps drawing of Cobenzl	GIFT
	Ostade	**PRIVATE SALE**
	Berchem	**PRIVATE SALE**
	Wouwerman	**AUCTION (DEAL)**
	Brueghel I	**AUCTION**
	? After Reni	AUCTION
	Dou philosopher	AUCTION
	Natoire drawings	**GIFT**
1765 June	**Balen, Breughel**	**PRIVATE SALE**
1765 Oct	**Drawings from Paris**	**PRIVATE SALE**
1765 Dec	**Rembrandt**	**PRIVATE SALE**
1766 Jan-Feb	**Van Dyck**	**PRIVATE SALE**
	Cardon prints	STUDENT WORK
1766 Apr	**Roquet drawings**	**GIFT**
	Duquesnoy figures of children	PRIVATE SALE
1766 June	**Louis Watteau drawings**	**GIFT**
1766 Aug	‘Depere’ sculpture	GIFT
1766 Oct	**Rubens Virgin of Rosary**	**PRIVATE SALE**
	Cardon prints	STUDENT WORK
1767 June	Rubens sketch	PRIVATE SALE
1768 Jan	Teniers	GIFT

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Cobenzl executor papers, files 2641–2648, including the house inventory in 2643

AGR, Ch.A. = Archives générales du Royaume et Archives de l'Etat
Chancellerie autrichienne des Pays-Bas

Gorizia

CA = Archive of the Fondazione Palazzo Coronini Cronberg onlus, on deposit at the Archivio di Stato di Gorizia

London

NA = National Archives, Kew

Ljubljana

ARS = Arhiv Republike Slovenije, Ljubljana

Moscow

RGADA = Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts
Particularly Fund 1263, Golitsyn family

Paris

Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris

St Petersburg

Hermitage Museum, Department of Drawings
Catalogues and inventories

Hermitage Museum, Archive of the Hermitage Museum

RGIA = Russian State Historical Archive
Particularly Fund 468, Court Office

Vienna

AAbK = Archiv der Akademie der bildenden Künste, Vienna
HHStA = Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv des Österreichischen Staatsarchivs, Vienna

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[? Bertin, F. X. de,] Catalogue des tableaux vendus à Bruxelles, depuis l'année 1773; avec les noms des maitres mis en odre alphabetique, et la désignation du sujet, de la grandeur et du prix de chaque pièce en argent de change, avec l'extrait de la vie de chaque peintre. A Bruxelles, Brussels, [1803]

Hoet, Gerard, Catalogus of naamlyst van schildereyen, met derzelver pryzen, zedert een langen reeks van jaaren zoo in Holland als op andere plaatzen in het openbaar verkogt ... , 2 vols, 's-Gravenhage, 1752; third vol.: Pieter Terwesten, Catalogus of naamlyst van schilderyen… zedert den 22 aug. 1752 tot den 22 Nov. 1768… verkogt…,'s-Gravenhage, 1770

+ 1732 Luarca Antwerp; Lugt 417: Cabinet des Estampes en taille douce. Contenant diverses desseins, portraits & autres gravées par les plus excellens maîtres, tant en feuilles qu'en livres trés-proprement liez en veau. Soigneusement recueillies depuis l'an 1690. jusqu'à l'an 1708. par Sr. P. de Luarca. Qu'on vendra publiquement en argent de change chez feu D. la Veuve de Sr. F. Coget rue long d'Hospital à Anvers le 19. d'Aoust 1732, Antwerp, 1732

1738 Fraula Brussels; Lugt 488: Catalogue d'un grand et tres beau Cabinet des tableaux… assemblées depuis longues années par Feu le Comte de Fraula, en son vivant Conseiller d'Etat de S.M.I. et C., et Directeur Général de ses finances aux Pays-Bas… qui se vendront... à Bruxelles le 21 juillet 1738 et les jours suivants, à la maison mortuaire dudit Comte sur le Sablon, Brussels, 1738

1741 Crozat drawings Paris; Lugt 536: Description sommaire des desseins des grands maistres d'Italie, des Pays-Bas et de France, du Cabinet de feu M. Crozat. Avec des réflexions sur la maniere de dessiner des principaux peintres. Par P. J. Mariette, [sale 10 April – 13 May 1741,] Paris, 1741

+ 1752 Snijers Antwerp; Lugt 792: Catalogue d'un cabinet choisi, consistant en tableaux, desseins, estampes, esquisses, figures de platre, et brochures, de tous le maîtres principaux, tant de l'Italie, que du Païs-Bas. Assemblés avec beaucoup de peine & de dépenses par le fameux peintre Pierre Snyers, lesquels seront vendus en argent de change, aux plus Offrans & derniers encherisseurs, à la maison mortuaire du susdit feu Pierre Snyers, situé à la Place de Meir à Anvers, le 22. du mois d'Août 1752 & jours suivans, Antwerp, 1752

1758 Robyns Brussels; Lugt 1006: Catalogue de tableaux du cabinet de feu Monsieur Martin Robyns; qui se vendront publiquement en argent de change Lundi 22. Mai 1758. & jj ss. En sa maison mortuaire ruë le Grecht à Bruxelles…, Brussels, 1758

1758 Steenhault Brussels; Lugt 1007: Catalogue de tableaux, d'estampes, desseins et autres raretés, du cabinet de feu Messire Augustin de Steenhault, en son vivant Chevalier, Seigneur de Felignies & de Godimont, Conseiller d'Etat de S.M.I. & R. Chef & President de son Conseil Privé, &c. &c. Qui se vendront publiquement en

argent de change, le lendemain de la vente des tableaux achévée de Feu Mr. Robyns, qui a commencée Lundi 22. May 1758., en sa Maison mortuaire, sur la Chancelerie à Bruxelles, Brussels, 1758

1761 Sanchez de Aguilar Brussels; Lugt 1160: Catalogue d'une collection de beaux tableaux delaissés par feu le Conseiller & Maitre des Comptes de S.M.I.R. & A. SANCHEZ DE AGUILAR. Dont la vente se fera en la maison mortuaire située vis-à-vis l'Eglise du Sablon à Bruxelles, en argent de Change, Lundi 27 Avril 1761, & jours suivant à 9 heures du matin & à 2 heures après-midi, Brussels, 1761

1761 D'Heyne sale Ghent 1761; Lugt 1179: Catalogus van Schilderyen. Nagelaaten door wylen den Hr. Gaspar D'Heyne, Heere van Leeuwerghe, Elene, &c. &c. Verkogs in Vlaams Courant Geldt, den 26. October 1761. binnen de Stadt Gent, Ghent, 1761

1763 Anonymous sale Frankfurt 1763; Lugt 1260: Catalogue d'un magnifique cabinet de tableaux des plus grands maitres, Flamands, Hollandais &c. Rassemblés avec beaucoup de Soin & grande Depense Par un Fameux connoisseur & Amateur Monsieur ***. La Vente se fera à Francfort Mecredi 19 janvier 1763 dans la grande Sale de Mr. Scharff, Frankfurt, 1763

1763 Peilhon Paris; Lugt 1295: Catalogue raisonné des tableaux du cabinet de feu M. Peilhon, Secrétaire du Roi. Cette vente se fera en la maison dudit défunt, rue Neuve-des-Petits-Champs, entre la rue de Gaillon, & celle d'Antin, par P. Remy, [16 May 1763,] Paris, 1763

1763 Schrijvere Bruges; Lugt 1299: Catalogue d'une très-belle collection de tableaux choisis, de plusieurs grands maitres du feu Sieur Charles Joseph de Schryvere, Procureur du France de Bruges &c. Qui se vendront publiquement en argent courant, en sa maison mortuaire à Bruges le 1. Juin 1763, Bruges, 1763

1763 Molinari book and drawings Brussels; Lugt 1308: Catalogue d'une belle collection des livres, estampes, cartes geographiques et desseins, très-bien conditionnés, delaissés par feu Son Ex^{ce} Monseigneur le Nonce, &c. &c. &c.. Dont la vente se fera en argent de change le Lundi 4 Juillet 1763 & les jours suivans, à neuf heures du matin & à deux heures l'après-midi, dans l'Hôtel de la Nonciature, Brussels, 1763

1763 Molinari paintings Brussels; Lugt 1311: Catalogue d'une collection des tableaux des plus excellens maîtres d'Italie et des Pays-Bas. Délaissés par feu son Ex^{ce} Monseigneur de Nonce, &c. &c. &c. Dont la vente se fera en argent de change le Vendredi 15 Juillet 1763 à neuf heures du matin & à deux heures après-midi dans l'Hôtel de la Nonciature à Bruxelles, Brussels, 1763

1763 Snijers Antwerp; Lugt 1315: Catalogue d'un tres-beau Cabinet de Tableaux, tout peints par le fameux feu Monsieur Pierre Snyers, et délaissés par le même, tous originaux, que l'on vendra publiquement à la Sale des Arquebusiers à Anvers, le 23. d'Août 1763., en argent de change, Antwerp, 1763

1764 Grimberchs Brussels; Lugt 1353: Catalogue d'une collection de Beaux Tableaux délaissés par feu Mr. Nicolas Grimberghs, Conseiller Receveur général de Domaines de Sa Majesté Imperiale Royale Apostolique, & Garde de la Monnoie à Bruxelles. Dont la vente se fera dans la Maison mortuaire, à la Monnoie, Mercredi le 29. Février 1764, Brussels, 1764

1764 Jaupain Brussels; Lugt 1371: Catalogue d'une collection de beaux tableaux delaissés par feu Mr. Jaupain, en son vivant Conseiller & Maître de la Chambre des Comptes de Sa Majesté I. & C. que l'on vendra publiquement à la Maison Mortuaire de feue Madame Jaupain, au grand Réfuge de la Cambre, ruë des Curés, près de l'Eglise de la Chapelle, le lundi 9. Avril 1764. en argent de change, Brussels, 1764

1764 De Troy sale 1764; Lugt 1372: Catalogue d'une collection de très beaux tableaux, desseins et estampes de maîtres des trois écolesl livres & suites d'estampes, dont les épreuves sont belles & anciennes; planches gravées, figures de marbre & de terre cuite, bagues de diamans, pierres gravées, boîtes montées en or, porcelaines, &c.. Partie de ces effets viennent de la succession de M. J. B. de Troy, Directeur de l'Académie de Rome. Cette vente se fera le Lundi 9 Avril 1764…, par Pierre Remy, Paris, 1764

+ 1764 Van Schorel Antwerp; Lugt 1394a: Catalogue d'une collection de tres beaux tableaux, desseins, et estampes de maitres des trois ecoles, livres, & suites d'estampes, dont les epreuves sont belles & anciennes, Les quelles de venderont à la Chambre des Arquebusiers par le crieur juré J. Van Lemens, à Anvers le 19. Juin 1764. en argent de change, Antwerp, 1764 [handwritten note in copy in RKD: 'Le tout rassemblé par Mr. van Schorel, Bourguemaître.']

1765 Rubempré paintings; Lugt 1449: Catalogue d'une fameuse collection de tableaux de différens maîtres François, Italiens, Flamands & Hollandois. Dont la vente se fera à Bruxelles Jeudi 11 Avril 1765 & jours suivans, en argent de change…, Brussels, 11 April 1765 [handwritten note on copy in RKD: (Cabinet de Rubempré)

+ 1765 Rubempré prints and drawings; Lugt 1450: Catalogue d'une tres-riche et tres nombreuse collection d'estampes et desseins, tant reliés qu'autres, contenant tout ce qu'il y a de plus rare des Maîtres et des Ecoles, Italienne, Lombarde, Allemande, Flamande, Françoise, Angloise & Hollandoise, recueillie depuis nombre d'années avec beaucoup d'exactitude, dont la vente se fera à Bruxelles Lundi 15 Avril 1765 & jours suivans, en Argent de change à 9 heures du matin & à 2 heures après-midi, Brussels, 1766

1765 Rubempré Paris; Lugt 1471: Catalogue d'une belle collection de tableaux, estampes et desseins, provenans de la vente du Prince de Rubempré faite à Bruxelles, & dont la vente se fera à Paris, dans le courant du mois de Juin 1765, deferred to 1–6 July, Paris, 1765

1765 Basan drawings Paris; Lugt 1486: Catalogue d'une belle collection de desseins et estampes de choix, des meilleurs maistres, italiens, flamans et françois. Par F. Basan, Graveur. Dont la vente se fera à Paris le 10 Décembre 1765, de relevée & jours suivans, en la maniere accoutumée, au plus offrant & dernier enchérisseur, Paris, 1765

1766 Justice The Hague; Lugt 1520: Catalogue d'une Très belle & grande collection d'ouvrages d'estampes, de desseins, et d'estampes detachés, parmis lesquels il y a nombre d'une grande rareté, de presque tous les Maitres anciens & modernes d'Italie, d'Allemagne, de la France, d'Angleterre et des Pays-Bas &c, Comme aussi d'une partie des cartes géographiques & quelques curiosités. Recueillis à grands fraix depuis plus de 40 ans par feu Monsieur Henri Justice de Rufforth, Ecuier, editeur de la belle edition du Virgile gravé. Lesquels seront vendus publiquement

aux plus offrans le Mardi 1 Avril 1766. & jours suivans à la Haye, dans la maison de Nicolas van Daalen, Libraire sur le coin du Hofcingel, The Hague, 1766

1766 van Heurck Antwerp; Lugt 1556: Catologue [sic] de tableaux de Jacques Jordaens et autres, et d'une collection d'estampes d'apres Rubens, Van Dyck, Jordaens &c. qui se vendront publiquement & aus plus offrant en argent de change par le crieur juré J. Van Immerseel, à la Chambre des Arquebusiers à Anvers, Mardi le 19. Aout 1766, Antwerp, 1766 [handwritten note in copy in RKD: Le tout rassemblé par M.r Van Heurck à Bruxelles]

1767 Jullienne Paris; Lugt 1603: Catalogue raisonné des tableaux, desseins & estampes, et autres effets curieux, après le décès de M. de Jullienne, Ecuyer, Chevalier de Saint-Michel, & Honoraire de l'Académie Royale de Peinture & de Sculpture. Par Pierre Remy. On a joint à ce catalogue celuis des porcelaines, tant anciennes que modernes, des lacques les plus recherchées, des riches meubles du célebre ébeniste Boule, & autres effets, par C. F. Julliot, [30 March – 22 May 1767,] Paris, 1767

1768 T'Sas paintings Brussels; Lugt 1682: Catalogue d'un très-beau cabinet des tableaux et basreliefs des plus habiles maîtres Italiens, Flamands & Français, rassemblées avec beaucoup de soin & depence, par M. F. T'Sas, Jouaillier de S.A.R. Mgr. le Duc Charles de Lorraine & de Bar, &c. &c. qui seront exposées en vente en arg. de change le 16 May 1768, & jours suivans, sur la grande Place à la Louve, Brussels, 1768

+ 1768 T'Sas drawings Brussels; Lugt 1698: Catalogue d'une tres-belle collection des estampes, desseins et planches de cuivre, des premiers maîtres Italiens, Francois & Flamands. Rassemblés avec grand soin & fraix par M. F. T'SAS Jouaillier de S.A.R. le Duc Charles de Lorraine &c. &c. &c. qui se vendront en argent de change Lundi 18 du mois de Juillet 1768 & jours suivans sur la Grande Place à la Louve, Brussels, 1768

+ 1768 Reps Brussels; Lugt 1699: Catalogue d'une collection des tres beaux tableaux, desseins & estampes de différens Maîtres delaissés par F. Reps. Dont la vente se fera publiquement en argent de change, dans la Maison mortuaire située près le Pont neuf à Bruxelles le 19 Juillet 1768, Brussels, 1768

1770 Cobenzl house sale Brussels; Lugt 1823: Liste d'une partie des effects precieux, bijoux, bijouteries, et raretes, Qui seront vendus à l'Hôtel de Feue S E. le Comte de Cobenzl Ministre Plenipotentiaire de S. M. l'Imperatrice Douairiere & Reine Apostolique pour le Gouvernement des Pais Bas &c. &c., [2–30 April 1770,] Brussels, 1770

1771 Cobenzl book sale Brussels; not in Lugt: Catalogue des livres, en toutes sortes de facultez et langues de feu S. E. le comte de Cobenzl, Chevalier de l'Ordre de la Toison d'Or, Grand Croix de l'Ordre de St. Etienne, Ministre Plenipotentiaire de S. M. l'Imperatrice Douairiere & Reine Apostolique pour le Gouvernement des Païs-Bas &c. &c., disposé par ordre des Matieres et avec quelques notes litteraires par Jos. Ermens, dont la vente se fera publiquement (en Argent de change) à Bruxelles à la maison du Roi le 10 juin 1771. & jours suivans, Brussels, 1771

1771 Salm-Reifferscheid Tournai; Lugt 1940: Catalogue raisonne des diverses curiosites du cabinet de feu son Excellence Monseigneur le comte de Salm-Reifferscheid, eveque de Tournay, Composé d'une nombreuse Collection d 'Histoire naturelle' de

Porcelaines anciennes & autres raretés; d'Instrumens de Phisique & de Mécanique; de Tableaux; d'Estampes; de divers Instrumens & Piéces de Musique de différens Maitres; & d'autres Effets curieux, [12 June 1771,] Tournai, 1771

1772 [Mols and Goubau] Brussels; Lugt 2048: Tableaux de différent maître flamands et hollandais... chez Grange…, 16 juin 1772, Brussels, 1772

+ 1773 de Hooghe Antwerp; Lugt 2176: Catalogue d'une très-grande et riche collection d'estampes des plus fameux maitres, Tant des Païs Bas que Hollandois, Italiens, & François, comme de P. P. Rubens, d'Ant van Dyck, & d'autres grands Maîtres, Dont il a grand nombre des premieres & meilleures Epreuves, & des plus célèbres Graveurs, et d'une belle collection de desseins et de tableaux, le tout recueilli avec grand soin & dépenses, par feu Sr. Jacques de Hooghe, dont la vente se fera publiquement, en argent de change, Lunde le 14. de Juin 1773, & jours suivans, à la Sale des Arquebusiers, dite Kolveniers-Hof, chez Sr. Caudron, Antwerp, 1773

1774 Platteborse Brussels; Lugt 2314: Catalogue d'un tres-beau Cabinet de Tableaux delaissé par feu M.r J. Platteborse dont la vente, se fera en Argent de Change, Mardi 19. Juillet 1774. & jours suivans… à la Maison Mortuaire sur le Crecht, Sous la direction de F. De Roy…, Brussels, 1774

+ 1774 Van Schorel Antwerp; Lugt 2299: Catalogue des tableaux, peintures à gouache, miniatures, desseins, estampes, medailles, sculptures, bronzes, ivories, porcelaines et autres effets provenants du cabinet de Monsieur van Schorel Seigneur de Wilryck, ancien premier Bourguemaître de la Ville d'Anvers, &c &c, dont la vente se fera en argent de Change à Anvers, à la Chambre des Arquebusiers & à celle des Arbâletriers, le 7 Juin 1774 & jours suivants, Antwerp, 1774

+ 1775 Anon book Antwerp; not in Lugt : Catalogue de livres bien conditionés et d'estampes, 18 May 1775, Antwerp. Not in Lugt; copy in Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, Brussels

1775 Mariette Paris; Lugt 2453: Catalogue raisonné des différens objets de curiosités dans les sciences et arts, qui composoient le Cabinet de feu Mr Mariette Controleur général de la Grande Chancellerie de France, Honoraire Amateur de l'Académie R.le de Peinture, et de celle de Florence, par F. Basan, graveur, [15 November 1775 – 30 January 1776,] Paris, 1775

+ 1776 Knyff Antwerp; Lugt 2557: Catalogue d'une très-belle collection de desseins et estampes, de Maîtres Italiens, François, Anglois & Flamands, délaissés par feu Messire J. F. Knyff, chevalier et ancien premier bourguematire de la ville d'Anvers. Dont la vente se fera publiquement, en argent de change, à Anvers à la Sale des Arquebusiers, le 4. de Juin 1776, & jours suivants, Antwerp, 1776

1776 Anon paintings Brussels; Lugt 2562: Catalogue van eene Schoone Collectie van Schilderyen, van Rubbens, van Dyck, Breughel, van Balen, Rottenhammer, Teniers, Berghem, Brydel, Bredael, Pynacker, Poulbril, vander Heyde, Michau, Tilbourg, van Ude, Biscu, en menigte andere Schilderyen. De welke fullen verkogt worden Woensdags den. 17. Juli 1776, in S. Joris Hof, in de Celle-Broeders-straet tot Brussel, naer middat ten 2 ueren ende volgende dagen, in Wissel Geld… Naer de Schilderyen zal men verkoopen wel een groote menigte Printen, zoo van van Rubbens, van Dyck, Teniers, Wouwermans, Berghe, als van Italiaensche en

Fransche Meesters, benevens eene menigte schoone Teekeningen van verscheyde Meesters, Brussels, 1776

+ 1776 Beschey Antwerp; Lugt 2565: Catalogue van extra schoone schilderijen… als ook eeinge teekeningen ende printen, naergelaeten bij wijlen Balthazar Beschey, Antwerpen, J. F. de Bock, 1776, welkers verkoopinge publiekelyk zal geschieden ten Huyze van Sr. Caudron, op de Kolveniers-Kamer, op Maendag den 1. July 1776, Antwerp, 1776

1776 Schamp Ghent; Lugt 2587: Catalogue d'une très-belle & ancienne collection de tableaux des meilleurs & plus célébres maîtes de l'ecole Flamande, Hollandoise, Françoise & Italienne, delaissée par Monsieur G. L. Schamp de Gand, Où la vente s'en fera en argent de change à la Sale de la Confrérie de S. George le 28. 30. Septembre 1776, Ghent, 1776

1777 Randon de Boisset Paris; Lugt 2652: Catalogue des Tableaux & Desseins précieux des Maîtres célebres des trois Écoles, Figures de marbres, de bronze & de terre cuite, Estampes en feuilles & autres objets du Cabinet de feu M. Randon de Boisset, Receveur Géneral des Finances. Par Pierre Remy. On a joint à ce catalogue celui des vases, colonnes de marbres, porcelaines, des laques, des meubles de Boule & d'autres effets précieux, par C. F. Julliot. La vente se fera le Jeudi 27 Février 1777, à trois heures & demie précises de relevée & jours suivants aussi de relevée, rue Neuve des Capucines, près la Place Vendôme, Paris, 1777

1778 Van Schorel Antwerp; Lugt 2827: Catalogue de tableaux, desseins, estampes, livres, &c, délaissés par feu Monsieur Van Schorel Seigneur de Wilryck, Ancien premier Bourguemaître de la Ville d'Anvers; Dont la vente se fera en argent de change, à la Chambre des Arquebusiers, le 8. Avril 1778, Antwerp, 1778

1779 Verhulst paintings Brussels; Lugt 3038: Catalogue d'une riche et precieuse collection de tableaux des meilleurs & plus célébres Maîtres des écoles d'Italie, des Pays-Bas & de France, qui composent le Cabinet de Feu Messire Gabriel-François-Joseph de Verhulst, Dont les héritiers proposent l'acquisition en total & en masse, [16 August 1779,] Brussels, 1779

+ 1779 Verhulst drawings Brussels; not in Lugt: Catalogue d'une belle collection de desseins, estampes et livres, delaissés par Feu Monsieur le Chevalier de Verhulst. Dont la vente se fera (en argent de change) à sa mortuaire, située rue de l'Etuve immediatement après celle des Tableaux [16.8.1779], à neuf heures & demie du matin & à deux heures & demie de Relevée. On commencera par les Desseins & Estampes, Brussels, 1779

1781 Charles de Lorraine effets précieux Brussels; Lugt 3273: Catalogues des effets précieux de feue Son Altesse Royale Le Duc Charles de Lorraine et de Bar, &c. &c. &c. Dont la vente se fera publiquement à Bruxelles & commencera le 21 Mai 1781, Brussels, 1781

1781 Borremans, Lugt 3278: Catalogue d'une très-belle et riche collection de tableaux, des meilleurs & plus célébres maîtres des écoles flamande, italienne & hollandoise, délaissés par feu monsieur Humbert-Guillaume-Laurent Borremans, en son vivant Avocat du Conseil de Brabant: Dont la vente se fera publiquement (en argent de change) à la maison mortuaire située sur la fosse aux Loups de Bruxelles, le 5. Juin 1781, Brussels, 1781

+ 1781 Charles de Lorraine book Brussels; Lugt 3293: Catalogue des livres, estampes, et planches gravées, de la Bibliothèque du Palais de feue S.A.R. le Duc Charles-Alexandre de Lorraine et de Bar…. Disposé & mis en ordre par Jos. Ermens, Imprimeur-Libraire. La vente de cette Bibliothèque commerncera le 20 Août 1781, à la Maison du Roi, dite het Broodt-huys, Brussels, 1781

+ 1782 de Haes Brussels; Lugt 3442: Catalogue de très-beaux ableaux, desseins & estampes des plus renommés maîtres, tant Flamands, Italiens que François, dîlaissîs par feu Maximilien de Hase. Dont la vente se fera dans la maison mortuaire, située proche la Porte de Laecken, le 10 du mois de Juin 1782 & jours suivans, (en Argent-de-Change), Brussels, 1782

1785 Knyff Antwerp; Lugt 3923: Catalogue de la riche, rare et célebre collection de tableaux des maîtres les plus renommés tant d'Italie, que des Pays-bas, France & autres pas, qui formoient le Cabinet de feu Mr. Pierre André Joseph Knyff , chanoine noble gradué de la Cathédrale d'Anvers, Dont la vente se fera en argent de change, le Lundi 18 Juillet 1785, & jours suivans, dans la maison mortuaire, près l'Abbaye de St. Michel dans la dite ville, Antwerp, 1785

+ 1789 Hazard Brussels; Lugt 4428: Catalogue raisonné de l'excellente et nombreuse collection d'estampes et de desseins qui composaient le cabinet de feu M. James Hazard, gentilhomme anglais, rédigé & mis en ordre par, & sous la direction de N.J.T. Sas Neg.t, avec une table alphabetique des maîtres. Suivi du détail des raretés & autres effets précieux. Dont la vente se fera publiquement (en argent de change) dans la Maison mortuaire, rue des Aveugles, Mercredi le 15 Avril 1789 & jours suivans, Brussels, 1789

+ 1791 Bruynincks Antwerp; Lugt 4777: Catalogue d'une tres-belle et riche collection de tableaux, sculptures en bronze et yvoire, desseins et estampes, provenants du cabinet de feu Monsieur F.A.E. Bruynincx, Chanoine gradué de la Cathédrale et archidiacre d'Anvers. Dont la vente se fera (au profit des pauvres) à Anvers à la maison mortuaire situé près l'Eglise Cathédrale le 1 & 2 d'Août 1791, Antwerp, 1791

1793 Anon Bruges; not in Lugt: Catalogue van eene extra schoone verzaemeling van schilderyen, konst-printen en teekeningen, zoo van Italiaensche, Fransche, Hollandsche als Neder-Duydsche beroemste meesters, met veel zorg en kosten by-een verzamelt door den Wel-edelen Heer , P.V.M. in zyn leven Vroed-Schap &c… 10 September 1793… Stad-huys in Bruges, Bruges, 1793

+ 1793 Blocqueau Brussels; Lugt 5065: Catalogue d'une très-belle collection de tableaux, desseins, estampes, mignatures &c. delaissés par feu Monsieur Boniface Gaspar Joseph De Blocqueau, Ecuier &c. Dont la vente se fera (en argent de change) vendredi 17 Mai 1793 dans la Maison du St Esprit, Brussels, 1793

1794 de Ligne sale in Vienna; Lugt 5245: Catalogue raisonné des desseins originaux des plus grands maitres anciens et modernes, qui faisoient partie du cabinet de feu le Prince Charles de Ligne, Chevalier de l'Ordre militaire de Mar. Therese, de S. George, Colonel du Corps de Genie de Sa Maj. I. et R. etc., par Adam Bartsch, Vienna, 1794

+ 1796 Reysschoot sale; Lugt 5412: Catalogue d'une très-belle et nombreuse collection d'estampes et dessins, toutes très-bien conditionnées & belles épreuves, par &

d'après les plus fameux Maîtres Italiens, François, Flamands, Hollandois, &c. suivie d'une collection de tableaux, &c, par differens Maîtres, délaissés par Monsieur P. van Reysschoot, en son vivant peintre & professeur d'Architecture de l'Académie de Dessein, Peinture & Architecture, établie à Gand. Dont la vente se fera publiquement en argent de change… dans la Maison mortuaire rue Filles-Dieu… Lundi 22 Février 1796, & jours suivans, Ghent, 1796

+ 1797 Wouters sale; Lugt 5685: Catalogue de la rare et nombreuse collection d'estampes et de desseins qui composoient le cabinet de feu M. Pierre Wouters, en son vivant prêtre, chanoine de l'Eglise Collégiale de S. Gomer, à Lierre en Brabant; Trésorier et Bibliothécaire de Sa Majesté Apostolique, etc., précédé d'une table alphabétique des maîtres. Par N. J. T'Sas, Négociant, Brussels, 1797 [1801]

+ 1797 Krafft sale; Lugt 2652: Catalogue d'estampes et de desseins délaissés par feu J.L. Krafft, en son vivant peintre et graveur ès-arts [sic], dont la vente se fera publiquement (en argent de change) le 2me. jour Complémentaire (18 September, v.s.), chez Rombaut, à la Salle de Vente, sur la Grande-Place, sous la direction de N.J. T'Sas, amateur ès-Arts [sic], Brussels, 1797

+ 1799 Garemyn sale; Lugt 5971: [information based on Domeniek Dendooven, 'Les collections d'artistes à Bruges au XVIII^{e} siècle: miroirs d'un goût changeaut et matériaux pédagogiques?', in: Sophie Raux, ed., Collectionner dans les Flandres et la France du Nord au XVIII^{e} siècle, Lille, 2005, pp. 107–23]

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