

Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide

a journal of nineteenth-century visual culture

Francesco Freddolini

Marketing Nineteenth-Century Italian Sculpture across the Atlantic: Artists, Dealers, and Auctioneers, ca. 1800–1840

Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide 14, no. 1 (Spring 2015)

Citation: Francesco Freddolini, “Marketing Nineteenth-Century Italian Sculpture across the Atlantic: Artists, Dealers, and Auctioneers, ca. 1800–1840,” *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 14, no. 1 (Spring 2015), <http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/spring15/freddolini-on-marketing-italian-sculpture-across-the-atlantic>.

Published by: [Association of Historians of Nineteenth-Century Art](#)

Notes:

This PDF is provided for reference purposes only and may not contain all the functionality or features of the original, online publication.

License:

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License Creative Commons License](#).

Abstract:

By studying two newspaper advertisements for auctions organized in the first two decades of the nineteenth-century, and two auction catalogues printed in the 1830s, this article explores the role of auctions as a means of fostering a market for Italian sculpture in North America in the first decades of the nineteenth century. These sources cast light on the way such auctions were promoted and organized, on the roles of auction organizers, and on the works that were sent to America. Furthermore, this essay investigates the instrumental role of advertisement and catalogue writers in creating the value of the lots to be sold by developing sophisticated rhetorical strategies of description.

Marketing Nineteenth-Century Italian Sculpture across the Atlantic: Artists, Dealers, and Auctioneers, ca. 1800–1840 by Francesco Freddolini

In the late spring of 1802, the auctioneer Samuel Bradford announced a major sale of Italian sculptures in Boston:

ON THURSDAY, 8th July next, will be SOLD at XI o'clock, at the subscriber's office, Liberty Square, *Boston*,
A Number of very valuable *MARBLE STATUES*, and alabaster ornamental *FIGURES*, executed by the first artists in Italy, among which are Antiques from St. Peters and the Vatican Library in Rome, viz. –
Venus de medici, large size; bust of Apollo of Belvedere; Cleopatra bitten by the asp, bust of Franklin; - By *Francis Lazzerini*.
Diana; Apollo and Daphne, group figure; Venus de Medici, small size; Venus del Bagno; - By scholars of *Michel Angelo*
Bacchus and Ariadne, a group figure, with its proper pedestal, from the Vatican Library—a real antique; - By *Michel Angelo*.
Bust of Pope Clement XVI, commonly called Ganganelli, an antique, from St. Peter's church at Rome; - by *Michel Angelino*.
2 setts elegant Alibaster Chimney Ornaments, consisting of five pieces each.
3 elegant figures, representing *Contemplation* and *Silence*: a pair elegant do. Vases: 1 pair do Agate do: 1 Alibaster Clock case: 100 Marble Mortars—Also, 4 *Italian Paintings, Views, &c.*
Boston, June 19 S. BRADFORD, Auct.[\[1\]](#)

The Bradford sale is an early example of an auction on American soil including a group of sculptures imported from Italy. Although auctions specifically devoted to art represented only a minor portion of all auctions that took place in cities such as New York and Boston in the first half of the nineteenth century, they contributed to the consumption of Italian art across the Atlantic.[\[2\]](#) Thus far, the development of a market for Italian sculpture in the United States during the first half of the century has been associated almost exclusively with the involvement of Italian sculptors in early nineteenth-century American public commissions,[\[3\]](#) on the one hand, and with the participation of wealthy Americans on the grand tour on the other.[\[4\]](#) This focus on the patronage of Italian artists on American soil and on the import of works by elite travelers, has drawn attention away from the significance of auctions and their role in developing a market for Italian sculpture.

Two newspaper advertisements for auctions organized in the first two decades of the nineteenth century and two auction catalogues printed in the 1830s, offer significant case studies to explore the role of auctions as a means of fostering a market for Italian sculpture in North America in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The newspaper advertisements cast light on the way such auctions were promoted and organized. The advertisements, often describing the objects in hyperbolic language, shed light on how the dealers crafted their messages to attract potential buyers. Furthermore, both advertisements and catalogues often reveal who were the persons involved in this trade, how dealers gathered the works, and what

their network of contacts was in Italy, information that this article expands through archival documents.

The catalogues were produced for an auction organized in Boston in 1834 by the painter Chester Harding, and another promoted by the dealer John Clark in New York in 1839. They cast further light on the roles of auction organizers; on the works that were sent to America; and on the instrumental role of catalogue writers in creating the value of the lots to be sold by developing sophisticated rhetorical strategies of description, as well as by forging falsities that the American audience could hardly verify.

During the period explored in this essay, a discourse on artistic value on American soil was the domain of very limited societal segments engaging with informed debates on connoisseurship, while the desire to possess luxury objects was much more widespread. By looking at the import of Italian sculptures into post-Federalist America through the lens of public auction advertisements and catalogues, I hope to increase our understanding of the taste for, and consumption of, Italian art in America during the first four decades of the nineteenth century. Both advertisements and auction catalogues suggest that there was a considerable market for copies in marble or alabaster, often reduced in scale. As we will see, Italian sculptors copied classical statuary and busts of well-known historical figures (such as Roman emperors) as well as contemporaries, including, for example, Benjamin Franklin and George Washington. Authentic works by contemporary Italian sculptors—or by sculptors active in Italy—also made their way to America. However, none were by the truly great of the day, Antonio Canova (1757–1822) or Bertel Thorvaldsen (1770–1844), though copies of their works (especially Canova’s) were common. Auctioneers did not hesitate to bend the truth in advertising their lots. Aware that most of their clients were familiar only with the names of a few prominent artists of the Italian tradition and contemporary scene, the auctioneers inserted these artists’ names wherever possible in both auction advertisements and catalogues. Similarly, in listing the provenance of the works, they would hint at world-famous public and private collections known to the general public through articles in newspapers and popular magazines. In so doing, they exploited the desire in middle-class America to possess art, and the absence in middle-class America of a discourse on artistic value, connoisseurship, and authenticity.

Auctions were a fast and effective method for distributing works of art, and newspaper advertisements show that such sales were promoted on a quite large scale. Although not as detailed and textually complex as catalogues, these advertisements reveal some of the methods employed by dealers and artists.^[5] The long list of works in the newspaper advertisement quoted above reads like a very succinct catalogue and, as no printed catalogue has been found, probably no real auction catalogue was ever printed by Samuel Bradford. In terms of marketing strategy, it is significant that the first name on the list is that of an artist able to capture the attention of a relatively large audience. Francesco Lazzarini (1748–1808), active in Carrara, Italy, had been known to the American public since 1791, when he had carved the statue of Benjamin Franklin commissioned by William Bingham for the facade of the Library Company Building in Philadelphia.^[6] As contemporary newspaper articles reveal, this commission garnered considerable attention in Philadelphia and beyond,^[7] and Bradford, in his ad, clearly attempted to leverage the sculptor’s reputation to fuel the curiosity and attention of his audience. Similarly, Bradford attributed several works to “scholars of Michel Angelo,” a vague attribution that was surely aimed solely at catching readers’ eyes with the

presence of an iconic name on the page.^[8] Michelangelo was also mentioned—implausibly—as the author of a *Bacchus and Ariadne*—a sculptural group that came with its pedestal, ready to be installed in the house of a wealthy Bostonian. The classification of the marble as “a real antique” from the Vatican collections—the most important repository of classical statuary—was misleading in employing a term that alluded to classical antiquity, rather than to the Renaissance. Clearly, Bradford not only hoped that his public could be lured by famous names, but also he believed that his potential bidders would not accurately verify the information provided in the text. The provenance of the objects—Saint Peter’s and the Vatican Library—could be read in the same way: the auctioneer mentioned two unlikely places of origin of the works to be auctioned, but a place and a collection which Americans could readily identify as renowned repositories of art and, especially, antiquities.

The advertisement for the Bradford auction raises further questions related to the origins of the works sold: under what circumstances did the artworks leave Italy to cross the Atlantic? How were they chosen, and by whom? By establishing connections with artists based in Italy, and by embarking on trips to Europe to gather artworks to be auctioned on the American art market, dealers retraced the steps of the grand tourists,^[9] positioning themselves as intermediaries between the European supply of art and the demand that developed among those who could not spend years traveling about Europe.

American travelers always relied on the help of diplomats to be introduced to artists and nobles in Italy, in order to visit their ateliers and collections and possibly purchase works of art.^[10] The network of diplomatic relations between Tuscany and the United States was structured along the lines of the well-established official connections between Great Britain and the Grand Duchy. Since the late seventeenth century, British diplomats were settled in both Leghorn, the port, and Florence, the capital, and had always been involved in the cultural and artistic relations between England and Tuscany.^[11] British consular and commercial arrangements set a useful example for America: in 1798 the United States assigned a consul to Leghorn, Thomas Appleton,^[12] and in 1819 a vice-consul, Giacomo Ombrosi,^[13] was appointed in Florence.^[14] Consul Appleton’s key role as an artistic agent between American travelers and sculptors in Tuscany has been explored by Philipp Fehl, while Ombrosi’s activity in Florence has been neglected thus far. Nonetheless, it is certain that he also acted as an artistic agent. Significant evidence is provided by a passage in a heretofore-unpublished letter he received in 1828 from the engraver William Main (1796–1876), who recommended Rembrandt Peale upon his visit to Italy:

M.r Peale visits Italy for the purpose of making copies of some of the finest paintings in Italy and by them giving the people in this country a correct idea of those works of art that for so many years have been the admiration of the world. . . . Please present my respectful compliments to Mess.r Benvenuti and Morghen and also have the goodness to make M.r Peale acquainted with them, as M.r Peale’s project is so intimately connected with the advancement of the fine arts in their country as well as spreading the fame of your much loved Italia.^[15]

The nineteenth-century export permits preserved at the Uffizi Gallery Archives reveal the names of many American travelers who applied to export works from Florence. In 1833, a Samuel Kettel of Boston exported 22 “ancient paintings”; the American vice-consul to Florence, Giacomo Ombrosi, exported a painting representing Judith with the Head of

Holofernes; an “Andre Ritchie of Boston” exported 24 paintings; and “Mr Burns from America” exported 12 copies of paintings in the Uffizi collections.[16] In the same year, William Main exported 20 paintings, and Henry and Horatio Greenough obtained permission to send an impressive number of paintings, drawings, and prints to their country.[17] If some of these artworks had been acquired by American collectors, probably those exported by the vice consul or by the Greenough brothers—both based in Florence—were not motivated by collecting agendas, but rather by the ambition of resale in the American market.

The advertisement for another early auction, organized in 1818 in New York, sheds further light on the praxis of dealers to travel to Italy for the specific purpose of gathering works to sell. The announcement, published in the *Mercantile Adviser* (New York) and entitled “Italian Gallery of Fine Arts,” promoted the auction of Mr. Nicholas Fiengo:

After several years of fatigue and industry, activity, and at great expense, having been obliged to travel through the principal cities of Italy, and search in the cabinets of the sovereigns and princes of Italy, to procure a curious collection of the Fine Arts, worthy the attention of amateurs, he has finally succeeded in collecting one of the most elegant, most curious and richest collections . . . that has ever been exhibited in any country.[18]

The auction included a remarkable number of busts of emperors copied after the antique; thirteen medallions with portraits of members of the Medici family; other medallions with portraits of emperors; a mosaic model of the Borghese Palace in Rome, supposedly acquired from the collection of Prince Borghese; together with other busts and the astounding number of 600 paintings.

Notwithstanding such a large quantity of paintings, it is remarkable that the text of the advertisement was carefully crafted to draw the attention primarily to the sculpture. Fiengo, who probably authored, and certainly approved the text, did not mention any painting individually, focusing instead on the description of the sculptures, thus promoting these lots as the highlights of the collections:

This collection surpasses all that has ever been produced in the United States, and will perhaps never be equalled in this country. It consists of 8 Busts of Marble, 6 of which represent different Emperors and 2 Empresses of Rome, formerly the capital of the world, and at present the seat of the fine arts. . . . Beside these, there are *six hundred Pictures*, chiefly designed by the most eminent artists of Italy.[19]

As with the 1802 auction, no catalogue for this sale survives. Perhaps the lengthy and informative advertisement, certainly aimed at capturing the attention of potential bidders, doubled as catalogue. The textual strategy of the advertisement includes magniloquent—and again quite ambiguous—references to the classical tradition, aimed at arousing the curiosity of the public. Take the case of the claimed provenience of an unspecified number of works, “taken from the ruins of Pompeia and from ancient Greece, which recalls to our recollection so many illustrious men, the friends of man and of human civilization, whose sight alone ought to electrify the human heart.”[20]

The advertisement also reflects the hierarchy of objects, as well as on a potential hierarchy of buyers, by mentioning that different categories of lots were exhibited in different spaces, with specific entrance requirements. The alabaster objects, sold at lower prices, were displayed in a space freely accessible, whereas the other lots were exhibited in the “Gallery,” access to which required an entrance fee of 25 cents.[\[21\]](#)

By defining as a “gallery” the space in which, presumably, the best objects on sale were displayed, Nicholas Fiengo established a connection with the long-standing tradition of European collecting and displaying art.[\[22\]](#) Furthermore, he strategically defined the status of the works inside as a collection, as he more fully articulated in the first paragraph of the advertisement. The objects on display were not amassed randomly, but had been carefully selected and gathered together to form an ensemble that embodied quality and taste according to the highest standards of the European nobility (alluded to in the text with the Borghese family, a name that evoked the recent Napoleonic empire) and of the classical tradition.

Nicholas (or Nicola) Fiengo was a dealer of Italian origin based in Baltimore, who employed fellow immigrants as collaborators in his endeavors. One of his collaborators was Vito Viti, a native of Volterra, in the Grand Duchy of Tuscany, who immigrated to Virginia in 1817 and later started his own business as dealer of luxury goods imported from Italy.[\[23\]](#) These dealers were undoubtedly relying on their connections with Italy to import sculptures, paintings, and other luxury goods to the United States. Vito Viti established a fruitful trade and in 1853 and 1854 organized two sales in New York comprising a significant amount of sculpture. On November 11, 1853, together with the auctioneer William Irving, he advertised for sale a collection “of superb marble statuary . . . part of Signor Vito Viti’s assortment, selected during his recent visit to Italy, Germany, France, and England.”[\[24\]](#) One year later, on December 27, 1854, another auctioneer, Henry H. Leeds, advertised “a sale of superb fancy goods, including a large assortment of real statuary, marble, alabaster and other goods, the importation of Sig. Vito Viti Sons; also several valuable invoices from the Crystal Palace.”[\[25\]](#) Later in his career, Vito Viti was celebrated in Italy as the major exporter of alabaster sculptures and *objets d’art* across the Atlantic, confirming that even though he had settled in the United States where he established a reputation, he always maintained strong connections with his birthplace.[\[26\]](#) On the occasion of the *Esposizione Italiana* that took place in Florence in 1861, Viti’s role in the international market for alabaster was publicly acknowledged:

The first laboratory [of alabaster] was opened at the beginning of this century by Cavalier Marcello Inghirami, who—we could assert—inaugurated the new era of this very illustrious industry, which later Vito Viti introduced abroad thanks to his long travels. After settling in Philadelphia, he based there his business, which provided him with wealth, and opened a thriving commerce with the inhabitants of the new world.[\[27\]](#)

As the examples of Fiengo and Viti show, auctions of Italian art, for the most part, did not exclusively feature sculptures, but also included paintings and luxury goods. Though sculptures often were highlighted in auction advertisements, the majority of the works to be auctioned were generally paintings, less expensive, easier to transport, and therefore more readily marketable than statuary.

A sale organized in 1834 by the painter Chester Harding (1792–1866) is a notable exception, as it was devoted entirely to sculpture imported from Tuscany. By the early 1820s, Chester Harding had already established a reputation for himself as a prominent painter.[\[28\]](#) In 1832, he purchased a building in Boston at 22 School Street, where he set up his studio and rented out some rooms to other artists. The following year, in the same building, he opened a gallery, which soon became an exhibition space for its owner as well as for other painters. Harding exploited his reputation as an artist to promote his activity as a dealer, and “Harding’s Gallery” became one of the most prestigious auction rooms in Boston, selling paintings by local artists, as well as works imported from overseas.[\[29\]](#) The catalogues, published regularly from its inauguration until 1841,[\[30\]](#) are a significant source for the gallery’s activity. Harding’s catalogues often carried an introduction providing information on the collections and the lots auctioned. The individual entries comprised extensive descriptions of most works, explaining their subjects or providing information on their makers and provenance.

Chester Harding’s initial strategy for promoting his gallery was to exhibit paintings that could attract a large public and to auction only major collections. In 1833, the year the gallery opened, he exhibited a copy of Gericault’s *The Raft of the Medusa* together with other copies after Old Masters, and organized a sale of Thomas Jefferson’s collection of paintings.[\[31\]](#) Harding also promoted his gallery by alternating between art auctions and exhibitions of American painting without an explicit commercial purpose. In 1839, for example, a major show in honor of the painter and poet Washington Allston took place at Harding’s Gallery.[\[32\]](#)

In 1834, Chester Harding organized two major events: an exhibition and sale of paintings by Boston artists, including Francis Alexander, Alvan Fisher, and himself;[\[33\]](#) and an auction devoted entirely to Italian sculpture (fig. 1).[\[34\]](#) The eight pages of the catalogue listed works on display but lacked illustrations.[\[35\]](#) No author is credited for the catalogue, but we can assume that Harding played a role in writing the text for a sale that took place in his gallery, or at least vetted it. As we will see, there is some variation in the density and accuracy of the information provided in the catalogue, and I argue that in some of the descriptions deliberate inaccuracies were intended to fabricate authorships as well as connections among artists.

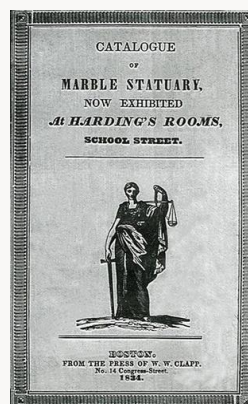


Fig. 1, Cover, *Catalogue of Marble Statuary, now Exhibited at Harding’s Rooms, School Street* (Boston: W.A. Clapp, 1834). [\[larger image\]](#)

The 1834 sculpture sale comprised 148 items, and the most prominent and widely recurring artist's name in the catalogue was Antonio Canova's, though no original works by him were exhibited. Canova, who gained international stardom, was well known to the American public; one of his last works, now lost, was *Monument to George Washington* for the Virginia Capitol, and his Roman studio was a grand tour destination.^[36] Harding exploited Canova's fame in an unscrupulous promotional strategy. Not only were numerous copies of his works among the lots for sale, but works by other artists were frequently linked to Canova by referring to their authors as students of Canova or sculptors in the artist's circle, even if they had never collaborated with him.

The most important work offered for sale at Harding's sculpture auction was the first lot in the catalogue, a copy of the *Medici Venus* in the Tribuna of the Uffizi (fig. 2), commissioned in 1803 to replace the original, which had been moved to Paris on Napoleon's orders. The lot's catalogue entry described it as a work "nearly finished" by Canova.^[37] According to the catalogue, the work was begun by Canova, who abandoned it due to a "defect in the marble," and finished by Canova's pupil Vanelli. The entry's text matches in several crucial details the history of Canova's copy of the *Medici Venus*.^[38] It is known that after some negotiations with Giovanni degli Alessandri, president of the *Accademia di Belle Arti* in Florence, Canova accepted the commission to carve an exact copy of the *Medici Venus*.^[39] However, he was extremely reluctant to sculpt a mere copy after the Antique, considering it a degrading practice for an artist of his reputation. For this reason, he concurrently worked on a different statue, the *Venus Italica* (fig. 3), in overt competition with the ancient marble. Furthermore—and this fact coincides with the narrative of the auction catalogue—we know that the marble provided to Canova for the copy of the *Medici Venus* turned out to be imperfect.^[40] This provided Canova with an excuse to abandon the carving of the copy and to work only on his own invention. Since the whereabouts of the work sold at Harding's 1834 auction are unknown, we cannot verify whether it was the copy begun by Canova and finished by Vanelli, or a copy carved entirely by Vanelli and sold as Canova's statue. Vanelli may be Pietro Vanelli, a student and assistant in Canova's studio, so close to the master that the latter even mentioned him in his will.^[41] Vanelli was a member of a dynasty of sculptors and marble merchants from Carrara, and the family as a whole was involved in the market for sculptural copies from the late eighteenth century onwards.^[42] Chester Harding obtained other copies after Canova by Vanelli: a *Psyche* (original carved in 1793; Bremen, Kunsthalle), and a group of *Fighting Gladiators*, a copy of his master's *Creugans and Damoxenos* (original carved in 1795–1806; Vatican Museums).^[43]

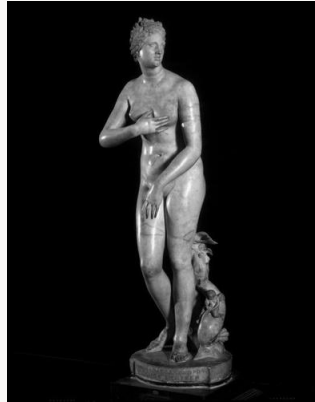


Fig. 2, *Medici Venus*, ca. 200 BCE. Marble. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. Photo Alinari/Art Resource, NY.
[\[larger image\]](#)



Fig. 3, Antonio Canova, *Venus Italica*, 1811. Marble. Galleria Palatina, Florence. Photo Alinari/Art Resource, NY. [\[larger image\]](#)

The catalogue's textual strategy for enhancing the value of the *Medici Venus* was not limited to its deliberately ambiguous attribution ("nearly finished"). The text also included information on the provenance, mentioning that the work had been sold to a "Russian prince."^[44] This provenance could not be easily verified in Boston at the time of the auction and was almost certainly fictional. It may have been intended as a vague reference to the famous Demidoff family, based in Florence at the time,^[45] or to a group of marbles by Canova that indeed found its way to Russia. A series of works commissioned by Empress Josephine from Canova was acquired by Czar Alexander I in 1815. A list of those sculptures is extant, but Canova's copy after the *Medici Venus* was not among them.^[46] The catalogue even included a price supposedly paid by the unidentified Russian prince. This price, 20,000 crowns, was exorbitant if compared to the other lots, and the significance of the sum was stressed by listing the US dollar equivalent of \$15,000.^[47] If we consider that in the same year, 1834, the Boston dealer William J. Davies sold four large views of Rome by Giovanni Paolo Panini to the Boston Athenaeum for a total of \$6,000,^[48] we can get a sense of how this statue was valued.

The strategy adopted in the catalogue to define the value of the marble attributed to Vanelli and Canova was extremely clever: the sum of \$15,000 was mentioned within the body of the entry as the price paid by the Russian prince, suggesting that a higher price would have to be paid by subsequent purchasers. However, such higher price was only implied; indeed, unlike the other entries in the catalogue, the one for the first lot did not list a minimum bid. A masterpiece's price could not be quantified, at least publicly and officially on the printed page of a catalogue. Furthermore, the minimum bid of \$15,000 mentioned in the body of the entry was much higher than that of any other item listed in the auction catalogue. The first three lots were the most expensive ones. The work following the statue ascribed to Canova and Vanelli was another *Venus*, by Pietro Tenerani, a sculptor from Carrara and one of the prominent sculptors on the Roman art scene of the 1830s, had a minimum bid of \$1,500.^[49] The third lot was a pair of anonymous statues representing *St. Joseph* and *Virgin Mary*, priced respectively \$2,000 and \$1,500, or \$3,000 if bought together.

The (at least partial) attribution to Canova of the first lot of the 1834 sale conferred a special status on the *Medici Venus*, but the sculptor's name was used in other contexts in this catalogue, especially in relation to lesser-known artists. The work by Tenerani is a case in point. The sculptor was probably not well known to those Americans who had not traveled to Rome and, who, therefore, would not know that the catalogue of the Harding sale erroneously introduces him as a student of Canova. In fact, Tenerani was the most accomplished pupil of Canova's rival Bertel Thorvaldsen.^[50] Was this a simple and thoughtless mistake by Harding? Or, was the use of Canova's name a strategy to enhance the value of the lots on sale? If we consider that even Bertel Thorvaldsen himself, the second most important artist on the early nineteenth-century European sculptural scene, was mentioned in the catalogue as a copyist after Canova, the catalogue author's bona fides may be questioned.^[51] Harding may have assumed that the majority of the visitors to his gallery were familiar with Thorvaldsen's name, as the artist claimed descent from the first European born on American soil,^[52] but that few of them were aware of the Thorvaldsen's fame in Rome and of his rivalry with Canova. Therefore, connecting the two artists in one way or another was important. Harding realized that few readers of the catalogue had enough knowledge about either artist's career and *oeuvre* to approach it critically.

The way Thorvaldsen's and his pupil Tenerani's marbles are introduced and discussed in the catalogues highlights Harding's strategy. If few Americans knew much about Thorvaldsen, probably an even smaller number knew anything about the other sculptors mentioned in the catalogue. For this reason the catalogue linked the works and the artists to Antonio Canova: on the one hand, training in Canova's studio represented an assurance of quality for the little-known Tenerani, while on the other hand Thorvaldsen's reputation signified a guarantee of excellence for the copies after Canova's popular masterpieces.

Further information in the catalogue entries was used to create narratives that inflated the value of the works and enticed the potential buyers to acquire groups of lots. Lot no. 2, Tenerani's *Venus*, was catalogued as a commission "for the Gallery of Florence, for which he was to receive 3500 crowns."^[53] Since much is known about Tenerani's career as well as the Grand Dukes' patronage, we can assume that the information in this entry was incorrect. Although the Carrarese sculptor did receive a commission for a statue to be installed in the Grand Ducal collections, it was not a *Venus* but an *Abandoned Psyche*, a work that is still displayed

in the Galleria d'Arte Moderna, Palazzo Pitti, Florence.^[54] Therefore, although the catalogue description of the *Venus* by Tenerani mentions Florence, the statue auctioned in Boston was instead probably linked to Rome. The description (“receiving the Apple from Paride”) suggests that this was a copy after Thorvaldsen’s *Venus with the Apple* (fig. 4), modelled in Rome between 1813 and 1816, when Tenerani was studying under the Danish sculptor.^[55] Harding forced—and forged—the facts in an attempt to create a *pendant* for the Canova and Vanelli *Venus*, exploiting the fame of the Florentine public collections. The narrative created by the sequence in the list of lots is also remarkable, as this *Venus* directly followed the masterpiece of the auction, thus establishing a close connection with it on the first page of the catalogue. In this case, the textual proximity created a potential connection between two statues that, according to the catalogue, had been commissioned for the same collection in Florence: what better opportunity for distinction than acquiring two statues allegedly commissioned by the Grand Dukes of Tuscany and on sale at the same auction?



Fig. 4, Berthel Thorvaldsen, *Venus with the Apple*, 1813–16. Marble. Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen.
Photo Gunnar Bach Pedersen [\[larger image\]](#)

As we have seen, as in the case of Vito Viti, dealers and auctioneers often collaborated and shared the responsibility for sales, on both financial and organizational levels, and Harding was no exception. On the occasion of this major Italian sculpture sale, he relied on the agency of a merchant, whose identity is uncovered by another auction catalogue, as well as by archival documents. In 1839, the New York Academy of Fine Arts auctioned the collection of Mr. John Clark, who, as stated in the introduction to the catalogue, had built his collection in Italy itself: “having spent a very long period of time in travelling through Italy, and visiting all the public and private *Pinacothecas*, [he] has spared no trouble or sacrifice in order to exhibit . . . a collection really worthy of the public patronage.”^[56] This was a vast auction, comprising both sculptures and paintings,^[57] and if we compare the catalogue entries of the major sculptural works with those auctioned by Chester Harding in 1834, we notice that they are identical. The masterpiece of Harding’s sale, the alleged Canova-Vanelli *Venus*, was auctioned again in New York; though the narrative of the commission and execution is more detailed in the 1839 catalogue, both the dimensions and the catalogue entries coincide in every crucial detail:

The Venus of Medicis, 4 feet 11 inches in height, marble of Carrara. The original statue of this Venus has a proverbial reputation in all the civilized world; it is the best specimen

of sculpture ever performed by the human hand, and can hardly be equalled by the celebrated Apollo of Belvedere. Both these invaluable statues exist in the Imperial Gallery at Florence, where they have been restored in 1815, after an absence of about 18 years spent in the Gallery of the Louvre at Paris, among the treasures of fine arts, with which the French conquest had enriched the capital of France. The original is by Praxiteles, who has performed his work uniting together all the beauties of forms and features, which he had discovered in seven of the handsomest women of Athens. This is a copy made by the immortal Canova, before he undertook to make the celebrated Chaste Venus of his own invention. Canova had almost finished this invaluable copy, when he discovered a defect in the marble in the right hip of the figure, which had to be taken off and replaced with another piece of marble. For this unexpected accident he yielded to his pupil Vanelli, who has finished it in a manner to give great credit to the instructions received of his immortal master. It is impossible to describe all the beauties of this statue, which must be examined with a peculiar attention to be well appreciated.
[\[58\]](#)

The “Chaste Venus” in this entry is the already-mentioned *Venus Italica*. Although the title was inaccurate, the text did not fail to provide a careful account of the facts, situating this work within the context of Canova’s production and competition with the Antique: this was the commission that inspired Canova to carve a new *Venus*. The sculptor aimed to replace in the Uffizi the iconic work brought to Paris by Napoleon, and—more importantly—to replace it in the history of art.[\[59\]](#) However a new and more flagrant error—obvious for the art historian but probably much more difficult to spot by potential bidders—was introduced in this entry, once again probably intentionally, to inflate the value of the work. The *Apollo Belvedere*, here referred to as a work in the “Imperial Gallery” in Florence, had never been in Florence, since it was reinstalled in the Vatican after Waterloo.[\[60\]](#) Nonetheless, the fame of this statue, together with the fame of the Florentine artistic collections, reflected on the prestige of the *Venus* in the Clark auction catalogue. This fabricated coexistence of the two works in the same collection magnified the value in spite of the truth.

In addition to the *Medici Venus*, the *Venus* by Tenerani, along with other works auctioned by Chester Harding in 1834, were part of the Clark sale again in 1839.[\[61\]](#) At first glance, we could hypothesize that Clark acquired several pieces at the 1834 auction, and then attempted to sell them in 1839. But a passage in the Clark catalogue’s introduction informs us that the same collection had been previously exhibited, and partially sold, in Boston, thus connecting Clark’s sale with the auction organized at Harding’s Gallery: “The warmest patronage which the noble citizens of Boston have bestowed on those very articles, when exhibited there some years ago, affords us a sufficient guarantee that the same favour will not fail to them in the city of New York.”[\[62\]](#)

The Italian provenance of the works is unquestionable, but the Clark collection catalogue, together with archival evidence, demonstrates also that Florence had been the center where the collection had been amassed, examined, and prepared for export. In 1833, the year before the Harding sale in Boston, an export permit was granted in Florence to “Mr. Clark from America.”[\[63\]](#) This document suggests that Clark was the agent who helped Harding organize the sale in Boston, and then offered the unsold items again in New York five years later. Furthermore, the introduction to the catalogue provides us with another precious clue. In order to certify the quality, the provenance, and the originality of his works, Clark had his

collection examined by a group of artists active in Florence before shipping it across the Atlantic.[64] Such a close relationship to the local artists suggests that many errors in the 1834 and 1839 catalogues did not stem from ignorance, but had been intentionally introduced to increase the collection's prestige and value. After spending time in the Tuscan capital to gather works of art, how could Clark not know, for example, that the *Apollo Belvedere* was never in Florence? How could both Harding and Clark ignore the fact that Tenerani's statue in Florence was the *Abandoned Psyche*, and not the copy of Thorvaldsen's *Venus with the Apple* that they sold?

The appraisers hired by Clark included two Florentine painters, Giovan Francesco Corsi (d. 1845) and Giuseppe Collignon (1776–1863), and two sculptors, Lorenzo Bartolini (1777–1850) and Luigi Pampaloni (1791–1847), who were not only known to those who traveled to Italy, but were also included in both the 1834 and 1839 catalogues as authors of several works on sale.[65] In the 1830s, Lorenzo Bartolini was the leading sculptor of Florence, relatively well known to the American public for his original creations, and popular among grand tourists.[66] Travelers visited his studio and acquired replicas of his most famous works, such as *The Trust in God*, commissioned in 1834 by the Milanese Marchioness Rosa Trivulzio Poldi.[67] For example, a reduced-scale version, now preserved at the Gibbes Museum of Art, was purchased in Florence by John Izard Middleton (1785–1849), a Charlestonian collector who studied at Trinity College, Cambridge and in 1823 settled in Paris, to spend in Europe the last two decades of his life.[68] However, for the 1834 auction organized at Harding's Gallery, Bartolini's works were mostly reproductions of other artists' work or of his own sculptures. Some of his works are catalogued as copies after Canova: "A Madonna of Canova" and a "[Bust] of Eve of Canova" were attributed to the Florentine artist, who was also the author of a "A Bust of Lord Byron," a replica of the portrait he had carved in 1822.[69]

Luigi Pampaloni, who had studied under Bartolini, sent instead works of his own invention: a "Samuel Praying," two busts representing *Paris* and *Ariadne*, a "Cupid, holding a bird, Laughing," "One d.o [*Cupid*] holding the Nest, Crying" and "A figure of Moses Praying." [70] The *Samuel Praying* may be identified with a replica of Pampaloni's most famous work, a *Boy Kneeling*, which he carved between 1826 and 1827 as part of a funerary monument, formerly in a church in Zbaraz, Poland.[71] This work became so famous that the sculptor executed several replicas, with different titles, such as *The Orphan*. In addition, countless plaster casts were made by Tuscan merchants to be sold on the market, and a marble version of it is preserved at the Chrysler Museum, Norfolk, VA.[72]

It is clear that Florence was a major center for the export of sculpture to America, as it had long been for Great Britain.[73] Both merchants and artists took advantage of the proximity of Florence to Carrara, where the sculpture workshops produced high-quality copies after famous masterpieces as well as busts of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin, often copied from the prototypes by Giuseppe Ceracchi and Jean-Antoine Houdon.[74] By the first decade of the nineteenth century, Lorenzo Bartolini had established a collaboration with the Lazzarini workshop in Carrara, devoted to the carving and commercialization of copies to be sold to travelers and shipped to foreign countries.[75] Other sculpture workshops in Carrara specialized in the production and commercialization of copies, both after Antique and contemporary sculptures. The 1834 catalogue shows that a good number of copies after both antique and contemporary works were produced by a sculptor from Carrara called Baratta. He may be identified with Lorenzo Baratta (born 1782), son of Giuseppe Antonio Baratta (active

until 1818), a nephew of the late Baroque sculptor Giovanni Baratta (1670–1747).[76] Little is known about Lorenzo, but by the late eighteenth century, his father had commercial relations with Giacinto Micali, the merchant who pioneered the export of sculptures to America, as Cinzia Sicca has demonstrated.[77] Giuseppe Antonio Baratta’s agreement with Micali, signed in 1797, concerned copies after the Antique to be sold by the merchant, and it is plausible that his son Lorenzo, a few decades later, developed the family workshop’s activity by producing, in addition, copies after Canova’s masterpieces and busts of famous historical figures. Baratta sent to Boston “A group of Three graces, copied from the Ancients, called the Grecian Group,” a bust of Washington, “A Bust of Diana,” “A Bust of Napoleon,” and other copies, the most important of which was “A group of Three Graces of Canova.”[78] It is not surprising that the catalogue entry written for the latter marble not only emphasized the quality of Baratta’s work, but also aimed at catching the visitors’ attention with details about the commission of the original group from Canova.[79]

Sculpture workshops were located not only in Florence or Carrara, but also in Leghorn, the Tuscan port. A sculptor who exhibited several works at Harding’s Gallery, “Benassae,” was Giuseppe Benassi. Even though he has been almost completely neglected by art historians, Benassi was popular among nineteenth-century American travelers to Tuscany. Elizabeth [?] Thompson, a Bostonian traveler whose diary is preserved at the Massachusetts Historical Society, during her 1848 grand tour, commissioned a portrait bust from Benassi. Thompson’s journal provides us with details concerning the commission and the shipment from Leghorn: “On Friday visited the Studio of Bennesai found my bust finished. Whether it is a good likeness my friends must judge it but so considered by many who saw it. The D.o has been sent to home by the Reliance which sails from Leghorn. directed to Father, care of Mr. Fessenden.”[80] It is not surprising that Benassi was renowned as a portraitist, the most popular genre among nineteenth-century travelers. In a document drawn up in preparation for the 1851 Great Exhibition in London, he was listed as an alabaster sculptor, as well as “talented portraitist, also in marble” (valente ritrattista anche in marmo).[81]

While portraits were the works most frequently commissioned by travelers, public sales required different types of sculpture and Benassi adapted his production to the demand, sending to Boston several copies, again after Canova’s masterpieces, as well as many alabasters. His prominent pieces in 1834 were two copies after Antonio Canova’s *Dancers*, described in a long entry that not only praised their formal qualities, but also insisted on their status as pendants, inviting the buyers to acquire both of them as companions. The text is quite sophisticated and reads like an ekphrasis, explaining the narrative of the action (“Ballerina stands in the attitude of one who has need of repose after the fatigue of dancing”) and rendering on the printed page the posture of the body and the flow of the drapery.[82] Furthermore, the entry articulated the work’s position in Canova’s *oeuvre* with a reference to Giovanni Battista Sartori (1775–1858), Antonio Canova’s half brother and secretary: “It is said by the brother and confident of Canova, that no work ever employed more of his thoughts or resulted more to his perfect content than the Dancer now before us.”[83]

The auctioneers’ use of famous names—like Canova and Thorvaldsen—and iconic artworks—like the *Medici Venus* and the *Belvedere Apollo*—as well as their manipulation of attributions and provenances in catalogues and newspaper advertisements, reveals both their intent to create inflated values for the lots, and their lack of scruples when it came to dealing with the

American public. Though these strategies seem particularly evident in the case of the advertisements and auction catalogues discussed here, they were not new. Indeed, a tradition of voluntary inaccuracy in the information provided by the auctioneers to the buying public dated back to eighteenth-century England and the very beginning of art auctions. Like Samuel Bradford, Nicholas Fiengo, Chester Harding, and John Clark, British auctioneers took advantage of a lack of sophisticated art knowledge among the buyers, who had some knowledge of prominent artists' names but could not really locate them in time and space, and could therefore be easily deceived.^[84] A satirical engraving published in London in 1804 and entitled *A Lilliputian Auction* (fig. 5) shows an auctioneer calling the public's attention to "that charming specimen of the fine arts, Queen Cleopatra painted by that great Egyptian master Correggio."^[85] Two potential buyers scrutinize the work, and one of them concludes that it is unquestionably an original painting, stating that he had previously seen it in Egypt. Here the auctioneer is using two famous names—Cleopatra and Correggio—to capture the public's attention, and providing overtly false information to an audience that is not familiar enough with the Italian artistic tradition to know that Correggio was not an Egyptian master, and that this painting could not have an Egyptian provenance.

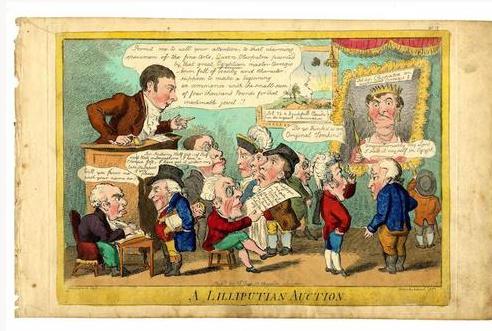


Fig. 5, Isaac Cruikshank, *A Lilliputian Auction*, 1804. Hand-colored etching. British Museum, London. © Trustees of the British Museum [\[larger image\]](#)

The difference in their approaches to the art market, between Great Britain and America, was primarily one of timing. America lagged behind in all areas related to art collecting and consumption: art auctions and middle-class consumption of art, as well as a more sophisticated attitude towards art, came decades later than in Britain. As late as 1855, an anonymous article in the *Crayon*, an American periodical catering to a readership of artists and connoisseurs and aiming at creating an arena for intelligent artistic discourse, acerbically criticized the artistic naiveté of parts of American society that did not belong to the elite that traveled to Europe.^[86] The article focused on the American market for European paintings—defining it as “an important branch of European industry”—but its arguments could be extended to sculpture as well:

There is probably no country in the world where the want of critical taste in pictures is accompanied to such an extent by credulity as to their worth and disposition to buy them. . . . Probably there are in the country . . . ten thousand works of the old masters, Raphaels, Murillos, Claudes, Salvators, whose possessors procured that wonderful picture, by a lucky chance, from somebody who had brought it without its origin being

known, and had been compelled to smuggle it out of Italy or Spain in order to get off with his prize. In this way it is safe to affirm that there is not another land under the sun which contains so many worthless, smoky, and dirty old daubs as this, nor another that offers so good a market to the busy manufacturers of such impostures. The supplying of the United States with pictures by the old masters is, accordingly, an important branch of European industry.[\[87\]](#)

As the case studies explored in this article show, this “industry” was not solely European. It was rather a joint initiative involving artists, intermediaries, dealers, and auctioneers on both sides of the Atlantic. Auctions organized by dealers based in the United States offered opportunities for re-distributing artworks imported from Europe—and from Italy in particular—and contributed significantly to the development of European art consumption on American soil. If the networks of relations with artists and agents based in Italy was crucial to supply the demand for art, the newspaper advertisements and the auction catalogues that described the works proved to be key factors. Through these texts, the dealers fostered and enticed such consumption with rhetorical and narrative strategies that catered to an audience that was still developing a true engagement with artistic discourses on authenticity, connoisseurship, and value.

Appendix:

I. Advertisement for an auction organized by Nicholas Fiengo in the *New York Mercantile Adviser*, June 27, 1818, 3.

Italian Gallery of Fine Arts.

Mr. Nicolas Fiengo, lately arrived from Rome, takes the liberty of informing the amateurs of the Fine Arts, and the citizens on N. York and its vicinity generally, that after several years of fatigue and industry, activity, and at great expense, having been obliged to travel through the principal cities of Italy, to procure a curious collection of the Fine Arts, worthy the attention of amateurs, he has finally succeeded in collecting one of the most elegant, most curious and richest collections – (taken from the ruins of Pompeia and from ancient Greece, which recalls to our recollection so many illustrious men, the friends of man and of human civilization, whose sight alone ought to electrify the human heart) – that has never been exhibited in any country. This collection surpasses all that has ever been produced in the United States, and will perhaps never be equalled in this country. It consists of 8 Busts of Marble, 6 of which represent different Emperors and 2 Empresses of Rome, formerly the capital of the world, and at present the seat of the fine arts; 13 very ancient Marble Medallions, representing the family of Medicis in full size; other Marble Medallions, representing 5 ancient Roman Emperors, and 3 others representing different Popes, &c. A piece of Furniture (Mosaic) representing the model of the Palace of Borghese at Rome. In this piece, composed of many very rare and precious stones, the artist has distinguished himself as well by the variety of its stones, as for the perfection of their arrangement, which nothing can equal – it belonged to Prince Borghese. The amateurs are invited to examine this piece with attention; it is a masterpiece of modern taste. The Gallery contains also the Busts of the most celebrated Authors, Artists, Philosophers

and most distinguished men of that country. Besides these, there are *six hundred Pictures*, chiefly designed by the most eminent artists of Italy; six pieces of Tapestry, with figures of needlework, representing the different scenes of the Trojan war; also, three very ancient Porphyry Heads, found under the Trajan Ark at Ancona on the Adriatic Sea; with an extensive collection of Alabaster Images, Chimney Ornaments, Crowns, Urns, Vases, Busts, and a great number of other curiosities, too numerous to detail in the limits of an advertisement.

The public are informed that the lower front room contains the Alabaster, which is to be sold at a low price, and in lots to suit purchasers. – It will be open *gratis* at all times, from 9 A.M. to 6 P.M. The other apartments are reserved for the exhibition of the Curiosities of the Gallery, and will be open during the same hours. – Admittance 25 cents – at No. 292 Broadway, 2 doors above the corner of Reed St. and Washington Hall.

[Return to endnotes: [18](#), [21](#), [35](#)]

II. Catalogue of the Harding's Gallery Auction, 1834

[Frontispiece]

Catalogue of Marble Statuary now Exhibited at Harding's Rooms, School Street, Boston. From the Press of W.W. Clapp. No. 14 Congress-Street. 1834

[p. 1]

Visitors are respectfully requested not to handle the Statuary.

Catalogue, &C.

No. 1. represents the VENUS of MEDICIS. The height of this figure is 4 feet 11 inches. It was nearly finished by Canova, when he discovered a defect in the marble on the right hip of the figure, which had to be taken off and replaced with another piece of marble. On account of this unexpected accident he sold it to his pupil Vanelli, who finished it, and afterwards sold it to a Russian prince for the sum of 20,000 crowns.--\$15,000. It is the most charming invention in the Mythology of the Ancients, says Mirabeau the elder, to have personified and rendered divine the soul of nature and to have made beauty the Goddess of love and the graces. This is the Anadyomene or Marine Venus, supposed to have been formed from a mass of white foam, which was first seen floating on the sea near the island of Cytherea, but was afterwards driven by the billows to the island of Cyprus, where the mass suddenly opened and this beautiful Goddess issued from it. Venus is supposed to have just landed on the enchanting island of Cytherea, her hair dressed with care and elegance by the hours. The attitude of this figure is the same Praxiteles gave to his Venus of Gnidus, the fame of whose beauty was so great that travellers often went to Asia for the purpose of seeing it.

[p. 2]

No. 2. is a full length figure of Venus, 3 feet in height, receiving the Apple from Paride. It was executed by Tenerani, another pupil of Canova. It was made for the Gallery of Florence, for which he was to receive 3500 crowns. This figure, which is beautiful, speaks for itself, and no description can do justice to the perfection of its form or to the exquisite grace of its attitude. \$1500.

- No. 3 & 4. Represents a figure of JOSEPH and MARY returning from Egypt. These are full figures, 3 feet in height. Joseph carrying in his arms the infant JESUS. The expression of Joseph and the infendixnt JESUS is beyond description. It is only in its presence we can appreciate the excellence of the artists. It is stated that 2000 guineas has been refused for the same. The attitude of Mary, the resigned expression of her face, and the humble beseeching posture of her person is beautiful. She shows her deep contrition and perfect abandonment to the will of her Lord and Master. They possess great merit and are very ancient. The more they are viewed the more they are admired. For Joseph \$2000, for Mary \$1500--or for both \$3000.
- No. 5. MARCUS AURELIUS, a beautiful Equestrian, very ancient \$ 500.
- No. 6. A SLEEPING CUPID with a Bow and Arrow, executed by Cardelli of Rome. The figure is well executed, the face and body is very fine, and breathes an air of content and happiness which enchants the beholder. \$ 350.
- No. 7&8. Two ETRUSCAN VASES.- Also, 2 do. the form of Medicis. These vases were made of Alabaster, for Charles the Tenth, and the artists were to have for both pair, when finished, 20,000 francs. There were two artists working on them for nearly three years, and they were not finished when Charles the Tenth was obliged to leave France. The beauty of these Vases cannot here be described; especially the Etruscan. It will require at least a day to view one of them, before an idea can be formed of their value. They are taken from the originals in the Vatican at Rome, and are superbly executed. The price for the Medicis \$ 800 per pair; for the Etruscan, \$ 1000 per pair.
- No. 9. is a Venus from the Bath, a full figure, 2 feet, executed by Cardelli; it is a beautiful figure and well executed. \$150.

[p. 3]

10. A Bust of CICERO, by Tenerani. \$ 350.
12. One of FRANKLIN by do. \$ 350.
11. One of ARIANA, very ancient. \$ 350
13. One of NERONE, do. \$ 150.
14. A Pillar of Statuary Marble. \$ 30.
- 15&16. 2 Figures, Study of Canova from Canova, by Benassae. Per pair \$ 75.
17. Greek Amazon, by Benassae 65.
18. Paris, by do. 65.
19. A Flying Mercury, by do. of Alabaster, 55.
20. Samuel Praying, by Pampaloni, 100.
21. Venus from the Bath, by Benassae, 55.
22. A group of Three Graces, copied from the Ancients, called the Grecian Group, by Barratta, 100
23. A group of Three Graces of Canova, by Barata, the original was first executed by Canova for the Empress Josephine, who it is said, proposed to him to unite his three Dancers in one group, but in attitudes differing from those of the Graces of the ancients, and no one can deny that he has succeeded in designing positions, the Grace of which is not to be surpassed, even in imagination. This copy is very good. The figures speak for themselves, and no description can do justice to the perfection of their forms or to the exquisite grace of their attitudes. \$ 75.
92. One ditto by Bombardi, 90
46. One do Dancing, of Marble, by Bellucci, 125
24. Bust of Christopher Columbus, by do. 85
25. Do. Chlopitzki do. 95

- 26. Do. Skrzynetzky, do. 85
- 27. Do. Washington, by Barata. 125

[p. 4]

- 28. Do. Franklin, do 125
- 29. A group of Laocoon & Sons, by Tenerani; a true copy, from the original in the Vatican in Rome \$ 150
- 30. A Tower of Piza, of a solid Block of Alabaster. 60
- 31. A Madonna of Canova, by Bartolini, 100.
- 32. A Bust of Lord Byron, do 100
- 33. A group of Fighting Gladiators, by Vanelli. 150
- 34. A Bust of Diana, by Barata, 95
- 35. Do. of Madame Letitia, mother of Napoleon, by Barata. 80
- 36. Do. of Eve of Canova, by Bartolini, 100
- 37. Do. Paride, by Pampaloni, 85
- 38. Do. Ariana, do. 100
- 39. A figure of Venus coming out of the Shell, of Alabaster. The shell holding Venus, is supported by two Dolphins; by Fidia. 65
- 40. A Bust of Napoleon, by Barata. 150
- No. 41. A figure of the Magdalen of Canova, by Fidia; it is a beautiful figure and a good copy of an excellent work. In the resigned expression of her face and the humble beseeching posture of her person, she shows her deep contrition and perfect abandonment to the will of her Lord and Master. 150
- 42. A Time Piece, runs 15 days, strikes the hours and half hours, and is warranted a good article. 50
- 43. A group of Three Graces, carrying baskets of Flowers. They are beautiful figures and well executed, by Orzalezi of Florence. 125
- 44. A Bust of Lafayette, by Baelandi, of do. 75
- 45. One do. of Paride of Canova, by Fidia. 150
- 47. A Bust of Indimione, by Bombardi. 100
- 48. Do. Lord Byron, by Benassae. 90

[p. 5]

- 49. Do. a Madonna of Canova, by Thorwaldsen. This figure is excellent, and does the artist great credit. \$ 150
- 50. A Bust of the Venere of Venus of Canova, by Fidia. 150
- 51. Do. Tersicore, by do. These figures are rich and beautiful, and speak for themselves. 150
- 52. A Bust of Bacchus, by Benassae. 100
- 53. Do. Venere del Bagno of Canova, by Barratta. 100
- 54. Do. of Diana, by do. do. 100
- 55. Do. of Achimede, do. do. 100
- 56. Do. of Amazone, by Fidia. 125
- 57. A Temple of Apollo, of Bardilia, Agate and Alabaster. 60
- 58. A Bust of Louis Philippe the 1st. by Barratta. 150
- 59. Do. Psiche of Canova, by Vanelli. 125
- 60. Elena, do do 125
- 61. Do. Maria Louisa, by Bombardi. 125
- 62. A Bust of Apollo of Canova, by Thorwaldsen. 175

63. A group of Pandora, by a French Artist. 60
64. A Cupid, holding a Bird, laughing, by Pampaloni. 125
65. One do. holding the Nest, crying. No description can do justice to the perfection of the two preceding figures; their form, or to the exquisite grace of their attitudes, which enchants the beholder. 125
66. A figure of Venus receiving the Apple from Paride, by Benassae. 100
67. A group of Bacchus and Ariana, by Bombardi. 75
68. A figure of Venus holding a Butterfly, by do. 65

[p. 6]

No. 69& 70. Two figures of Canova's *Ballerina*, one who is commencing the dance and the other reposing; executed by Benassae. It is said by the brother and confident of Canova, that no work ever employed more of his thoughts or resulted more to his perfect content than the *Dancer* now before us. Benassae has in this, attempted to copy, in its most minute parts, the clay formed by the hand of his great master, and few things are more alike than Canova's model, the statue executed by him and the one under consideration.

Ballerina stands in the attitude of one who has need of repose after the fatigue of dancing. For this purpose she leans against the trunk of a tree, which, with the left foot, supports her whole person. Her right foot is placed over the left, and her left hand rests upon her side; a garland of flowers encircles her arm and falls toward the wrist--the upper half of the other arm adheres closely to the body, while the lower half turns toward the breast, and the fingers are stretched with an exquisite grace in the direction of the cheek, which, as if it would move to meet them, bends a little toward them, but in a manner so endearing, so lovely, that words seek in vain to describe it. The arms are uncovered as also the neck, feet, and a small part of the legs, her dress falls in natural folds about her, and seems yet to move as if she had hardly ceased her dance.

Any description must be cold and unavailable, and it is only in her presence we can appreciate her excellence. Each 60

99&100. Two do. by Barratta, each 75

71. A figure of Canova's *Venus*, from the Bath, by Cardelli. 65

72. A figure of Moses praying, by Pampaloni. 75

73. A figure of *Venus* coming out the Shell, of Alabaster. The shell which *Venus* comes out of, is supported by two *Dolphins*; by the same artist. 35

74. A Bust of Napoleon, by Bombardi. 35

75. One do. of Washington, do. 35

76. One do. of Franklin, do. 35

77. One do. of Rossini, do. 100

78. One do of madame Letitia, mother of Napoleon. 35

79. One do. of Vespucci, by Barratta. 100

80&81. Two Vases of Jaune Antique, forms, Medicis. each 100

[p. 7]

82&83. 2 do. do. each 75

84. A Bust of Lord Byron, by Bombardi. \$ 100

85. One do. of Plautilla, do. 90

87. A group of Europe, by Bellucci. 75

88. Figure of *Apollo Belvedere* of Canova, by Fidia. 100

89. One do. of Paride do. do. 85

- 90. Group of Venus and Cupid, by Orzalezi. 50
- 91. Group of Bacchus and Ariana, by Tenerani. 100
- 93. Venus coming out of the Shell, of Alabaster, 50
- 94. Bust of Napoleon, by Barratta. 100
- 96. One do. of Canova, by Thorwaldsen, in his crowned robe. 150
- 97&98. Are Two Pitchers of Jaune Antique, each 25
- 101. Is a Group of the Rape of the Sabines, made of Verde Antique, copied from the original, by Tenerani. This group is very fine, and universally admired; and the stone of which these are made, is rare, and very difficult to trace with the chisel, being exceedingly brittle. 175
- 119. Is one do. larger Group. 125
- 102. A true copy of the Warwick Bowl, of the same kind of stone, by Cardelli. 100
- 103. a Genius, with his torch, reposing on a Time Piece. 100
- 104&105. Two Bowls taken from the Antique in the Vatican at Rome, do. each 35
- 106. A Wild Boar, copied from the original in Florence, and is a superior piece of sculpture. 35
- 107. One do. do. 30
- 108. One do. do. 25

[p. 8]

- 109&110. are two Agate Vases, of a single piece, each \$ 15
- 111&112. 2 do. of Alabaster, do. 10
- 113&114. 2 do. of Agate do. each 10
- 115&116. 2 do. of Alabaster, do. each 8

The above are copied from the originals in the Vatican at Rome, with the inscriptions in Greek on them. They are very ancient.

- 117&118. Two beautiful Vases of Alabaster, also copied from the original in the Vatican at Roma, executed by Bienaime, each 75
- 120. A Mosaic Table Top, with a description of the different stones of which it is composed, amounting to upwards of 300 specimens. An explanation will be given to the purchases, when delivered. 100
- 121. One Bowl of Ariana do. of Verde Antiquie, 50
- 122. One do. do. 65
- 123. One do. Antique 75
- 124. One do. do. 70
- 125. Two Vases of Jaune Antique, each 55
- 126. Two Bowles of Ariana, of do. do. 35
- 127. One do. do. do. do. 35
- 128. One do. solid agate, snake handles, 45
- 129. Two Lions, copied from Canova, ea 15
- 130. Two do. ditto, each 8
- 131. A Sleeping Cupid, by Baratta, 15
- 132. A Group of Graces, by Benassae, 45
- 133. One Antique Pitcher of Alabaster, 35
- 134. One do. do. do. 35
- 135 to 143. Eight Dogs, jaune antique, ea. 5
- 144 to 148 Four ditto of Alabaster, \$ 3,50

Francesco Freddolini received his PhD from the University of Pisa, Italy, and is Assistant Professor of Art History at Luther College, University of Regina. His recent publications include his monograph *Giovanni Baratta, 1670–1747. Scultura e Industria del Marmo tra la Toscana e le Corti d'Europa* (Sculpture and Industry from Marmo to Tuscany and the Courts of Europe) (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2013), contributions to *Display of Art in the Roman Palace, 1550–1750*, edited by Gail Feigenbaum with Francesco Freddolini (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2014), and the special section of the *Journal of Art Historiography* (2014) entitled “Inventories and Catalogues: Materials and Narrative Histories,” guest edited with Anne Helmreich. He has received fellowships and grants from the Smithsonian American Art Museum, the Huntington Library, the Getty Research Institute, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Email the author francesco.freddolini[at]uregina.ca

Notes

[Return to endnotes: [34](#), [37](#), [43](#), [44](#), [49](#), [51](#), [53](#), [55](#), [69](#), [70](#), [78](#), [79](#), [82](#)]

In my transcriptions I have maintained all the spelling errors and typos in the original sources. I have also maintained the original abbreviations, in particular of the term “ditto,” often abbreviated as “do.”

I wish to express my gratitude to Cinzia Maria Sicca, who first encouraged me to pursue this research under her direction at the University of Pisa, and over the past years has extensively discussed the contents of this article with me. The research for this article was supported by a short-term visiting scholarship at the Smithsonian American Art Museum in 2006, and an earlier version of this essay was presented at the Association of Art Historians Conference in Manchester, UK, in 2009. I would also like to thank Petra ten-Doesschate Chu for her insightful reading of an earlier version of this text, the anonymous reader for many extremely valuable comments, and Robert Alvin Adler for his editing. All translations are mine, except as otherwise indicated.

[1] *New York Gazette and General Advertiser*, June 28, 1802, 2. The same advertisement was published in the *Independent Chronicle*, June 7, 1802, 3. No further information on this auction is available, but we know that Bradford was quite active as an auctioneer in early nineteenth-century Boston. He was listed as “auctioneer 5 Kilby street; house Atkinson street” in *The Boston Directory; Containing the Names of the Inhabitants, Their Occupation, Places of Business, and Dwelling Houses* (Boston: Edward Cotton, 1807), 40. In April 1802, he organized the sale of the effects of a Mr. John M’Lean, who had declared bankruptcy. Louis E. Grivetti and Howard-Yana Shapiro, eds., *Chocolate: History, Culture and Heritage* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2011), 1817.

[2] On auctions in early nineteenth-century America see Johanna Cohen, “‘The Right to Purchase is as Free as the Right to Sell’: Citizens in the Auction-house Conflicts of the Early Republic,” *Journal of the Early Republic* 30, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 25–62. For the contemporary debate on how auction houses affected the economy see, for example, the pamphlet entitled *An Examination of the Reason Why the Present System of Auction Ought to Be Abolished, as Set Forth by the Committee of New York Merchants, Opposed to the Auction System* (Boston: Beals, Homer and Co., Printers, 1828).

[3] On American sculpture before the mid-nineteenth century, see Wayne Craven, *Sculpture in America* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1968); W. Craven, “The Origins of Sculpture in America: Philadelphia, 1785–1930,” *American Art Journal* 9, no. 2 (1977): 4–33; J. S. Crawford, “The Classical Tradition in American Sculpture: Structure and Surface,” *American Art Journal* 11, no. 3 (1979): 38–52; and J. S. Hallam, “Houdon’s Washington in Richmond: Some New Observations,” *American Art Journal* 10, no. 2 (1978): 73–80. On the presence of Italian sculptors in early nineteenth-century America, see Pamela Potter-Hennessey, “A New World Pantheon: Italian Sculptural Contributions in the Capitol Rotunda,” in *American Pantheon: Sculptural and Artistic*

Decoration of the United States Capitol, ed. Donald R. Kennon and Thomas P. Somma (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2004), 59–71.

[4] See, for example, Wendy A. Cooper, *Classical Taste in America* (New York: Abbeyville, 1993); Maurie D. McInnis, ed., *In Pursuit of Refinement: Charlestonians Abroad, 1740–1960*, exh. cat. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999); William W. Stowe, *Going Abroad: European Travel in Nineteenth-Century American Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); and Giovanna Capitelli, Stefano Grandesso, and Carla Mozzarelli, eds., *Roma fuori Roma: L'esportazione dell'arte moderna da Pio VI all'Unità (1775–1970)* (Rome: Campisano, 2012).

[5] On Auctions in Europe, and especially England, before the nineteenth-century, see Brian Cowan, "Auctioning Art in Later Stuart England," in *The European Art Market, 1400–1900*, ed. Michael North and David Ormrod (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 153–66; Satomi Ohashi, "The Auction Duty Act of 1777: The Beginning of Institutionalization of Auctions in Britain," in *Auctions, Agents, Dealers: The Mechanisms of the Art Market 1660–1930*, ed. Jeremy Warren and Adriana Turpin (Oxford: Beazely Archive and Archaeopress, and the Wallace Collection, 2007), 21–31. On the economic and legislative aspects of auctions in early nineteenth-century New York, see Ira Cohen, "The Auction System in the Port of New York, 1817–1937," *Business History Review* 45, no. 4 (Winter 1971): 488–510, while on auctions in late nineteenth-century New York, see John Ott, "How New York Stole the Luxury Art Market: Blockbuster Auctions and Bourgeois Identity in Gilded Age America," *Winterthur Portfolio* 42, no. 2/3 (Summer/Autumn 2008): 133–58.

[6] On Francesco Lazzarini, member of a dynasty of sculptors based in Carrara, see Luisa Passeggia, *Il gesso e la memoria: Il laboratorio Lazzarini, 1812–1942*, exh. cat. (Carrara: Società Editrice Apuana, 1997); Luisa Passeggia, "The Marble Trade: The Lazzarini Workshop and the Arts, Crafts and Entrepreneurs of Carrara in the Early Nineteenth Century," in Sicca and Yarrington, *The Lustrous Trade*, 156–73; and Luisa Passeggia, *Lo Studio Lazzarini: Viaggio a Carrara in Tre Secoli di Storia* (Pisa: Pacini Editore, 2012). On this commission, see Cinzia M. Sicca, "Livorno e il commercio di scultura tra Sette e Ottocento," in *Storia e attualità della presenza degli Stati Uniti a Livorno e in Toscana*, ed. Paolo Castignoli and Algerina Neri (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2003), 290–91. On William Bingham, see Robert C. Alberts, *The Golden Voyage: The Life and Times of William Bingham, 1752–1904* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1969); and on the Library Company see Charles E. Peterson, "Library Hall: Home of the Library Company of Philadelphia 1790–1980," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 53, no. 1 (1953): 129–47.

[7] See, for instance, *Gazette of the United States* 3, no. 100, April 11, 1792: 399: "Philadelphia, April 11 [1792]. The Statue of Dr. Franklin was left Saturday fixed in its niche, over the front door of the new library in Fifth-street. Francois Lazzarini is the sculptor, and Carrara the name of the place where it was executed. If the intrinsic merit of this master-piece of art did not speak its value, the name of the artist, where he is known, would evince it. Here perhaps its price may give the best idea of its worth. We have heard, but not from such a quarter, however, as positively to warrant the assertion, that it cost above 500 guineas. The statue of Dr. Franklin is a full length figure, erect, clad with a Roman toga—the position easy and graceful—in the right hand is a sceptre reversed, the elbow resting on books placed on a pedestal—the left hand, a little extended, holds a scroll."

[8] *New York Gazette and General Advertiser*, June 28, 1802, 2.

[9] On American grand tourists see McInnis, *In Pursuit of Refinement*; Stowe, *Going Abroad*.

[10] On the American consuls, see H. R. Marraro, *Relazioni fra l'Italia e gli Stati Uniti* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Ateneo, 1954); and C. S. Kennedy, *The American Consul: A History of the United States Consular Service, 1776–1914* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1990). Furthermore, Tuscany, with its artistic tradition and its cultural relations between its aristocracy and the American elite, set up a privileged cultural connection with the United States. For example, the Baltimore merchant Robert Gilmor, Jr. shared literary interests with Carlo Torrigiani. See Carlo Torrigiani to Robert Gilmor, Jr., Florence, October 10, 1835, Ms. Ch.I.6.51, Boston Public Library: "It is not without a very long delay that I answer to your polite letter dated 10th October last which reached me four months after. I hope you will be kind enough to forgive my apparent carelessness, especially if you will consider the great want of good opportunities of keeping alive a regular intercourse between our country and yours. I have lost so many letters and things since my return from the Un. St. that I have now become very venture and expedition whatever – I have been lucky enough to get you better together with some precious autographs which you have forwarded to me. They have been very well come to take a place in my collection, which is now perhaps superior to any other private one in Italy; and this privilege I owe almost entirely to you. I wish I could give you a proof of my sincere gratitude; and as I am aware that the best means would consist in sending you some autographs of our most celebrated men in Italy, I have done all what has been in my power to acquire for you as many as possible, according to your request. The difficulty of my pursuits has also been a reason of long delay in accomplishing my duty

towards you. I hope you may find my offer acceptable, and beg you to remember me most respectfully to M.rs Gilmore, and to present my best compliments, and those of my brother, to you nephew.”

[11] On the British Consuls, see G. W. Rice, “British Consuls and Diplomats in the Mid-Eighteenth Century: An Italian Example,” *English Historical Review* 92, no. 365 (1977): 834–946; and G. Pagano De Divitiis, “La “relazione” di Horace Mann del 1768,” in *Fonti per la storia di Livorno fra Seicento e Settecento*, ed. Lucia Frattarelli Fischer and Carlo Mangio (Livorno: Benvenuti e Cavaciocchi, 2006), 73–86. On the role of the British consuls as agents, see C. Avery, “Medals and Bronzes for Milords: Soldani, Selvi and the English,” in *Pittura toscana e pittura europea nel secolo dei Lumi*, ed. Roberto Paolo Ciardi, Antonio Pinelli, and Cinzia Maria Sicca (Florence: SPES, 1993), 90–98; and Elena Lazzarini, “The Trade of Luxury Goods in Livorno and Florence in the Eighteenth Century,” in Sicca and Yarrington, *Lustrous Trade*, 67–76.

[12] On Thomas Appleton, see Philipp Fehl, “Thomas Appleton of Livorno and Canova’s Statue of Washington,” in *Festschrift Ulrich Middeldorf*, ed. A. Kosegarten and P. Tigler (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1968), 523–52; Philipp Fehl, “The Account Book of Thomas Appleton of Livorno: A Document in the History of American Art, 1802–1925,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 9 (1974): 123–51; Maria Argerio, “Il console Thomas Appleton,” in Castignoli and Neri, *Storia e attualità*, 75–82; and Maria Argerio and Algerina Neri, *Bostoniani a Livorno: Il Console Thomas Appleton e i suoi Conterranei* (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2012).

[13] Ombrosi was a descendant of a Tuscan family. Bartolomeo di Iacopo di Domenico Ombrosi obtained Florentine citizenship in 1735. Poligrafo Gargani, 1423, no. 228, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale, Florence [hereafter BNCF]. In 1799 Giacomo Ombrosi published in Florence a pamphlet entitled *Discorso del Cittadino dott. Giacomo Ombrosi ai Toscani liberi*, and in 1844 he was living in the Ognissanti parish. Poligrafo Gargani, 1423, no. 251, BNCF.

[14] The whole area—together with the port of Genoa—was considered of vital importance, as we can infer from the number of officers appointed in this region: in 1852 a consul was settled in Carrara; in 1856 a second one in La Spezia; and since 1799 an American official was appointed in Genoa. All the official correspondence of the consuls is preserved in Record Group 059 at the National Archives, Washington, DC.

[15] William Main to Giacomo Ombrosi, New York, October 29, 1928, Nuove Accessioni 1205, no. 12, BNCF. On Rembrandt Peale’s sojourn in Italy, see Rembrandt Peale, *Notes on Italy Written During a Tour in the Year 1829 and 1830* (Philadelphia: Carey & Lea, 1831); and Lilian B. Miller, *In Pursuit of Fame: Rembrandt Peale 1778–1960* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1992), 191–206. At least two other letters of recommendation were sent to Ombrosi: Peter Cray to Giacomo Ombrosi, New York, October 25, 1828, Nuove Accessioni, 1205, no. 11, BNCF: “I have much pleasure in introducing to your acquaintance M.r Rembrant Peale. This Gentleman is a Painter by profession: and is among the few in our Country, who, notwithstanding the few advantages and small encouragement enjoyed here, remains constant to his profession.”; William Little to Giacomo Ombrosi, Boston, August 3, 1828, Nuove Accessioni, 1205, no. 19, BNCF: “This will be handed you by Rembrant Peale Esq.r, an eminent Painter in this country a particular friend of mine – His ardour in his profession induces him to visit your fine city. Your goodness I know will indulge me, in requesting your polite attention in showing him the fine paintings in la bella Firenze also your fine Cathedral Church, called santa Maria del Fiore, and other of your curiosities, not taking too much of your time. All Americans are full of the praise of my friend Jimmy Ombrosi Esq.r. I take pride in the acquaintance Mr Peale is accompanied by his amiable & accomplished lad and family. Mr Peale has the best likeness of Washington as he appeared in the revolution, of any that I have ever seen.”

[16] “Firenze li 14 Giugno 1833 . . . Samuel Kettell di Boston in America . . . Firenze li 17. Giugno 1833 . . . Giacomo Ombrosi di Firenze . . . 1. Quadro rappresentante Giuditta colla testa di Oloferne tela . . . Firenze li 30 ottobre 1833 . . . Andrew Ritchie di Boston Stati Uniti dell’America . . . Firenze li 28. Novembre 1833 . . . Sig.r M. Burns di America.” Filza, LVII, 1833, ins. 45, unpaginated, Archive of the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

[17] “Firenze li 22. Maggio 1833 . . . William Allen Main di Neu York. . . Firenze li 7 novembre 1833 . . . Sig.e orazio Grinot [*Greenough*] di America . . . Copia della madonna di Sassoferrato esistente nella I. e R. Galleria degli Uffizi – tela D.o della Giuditta di Allori – tela D.o della Sibilla di Guercino nella Tribuna – d.o D.o della Fornarina di Raffaello – d.o D.o della S. Agnese esistente nella galleria del palazzo – tela d.o della Madonna di Murillo – tela Tutte queste copie sono della grandezza degli originali . . . Firenze li 24 di Luglio 1833 . . . enrico Greenough di Boston Stati Uniti d’America . . . Una copia del Cavalier di Malta di Giorgione – Tela 2 Paesi – Rame Un ritratto del Buonaroti – Tavola Uno studio dipinto dalla Assunzione di Barroccio Cartone Una Cartella contenente studii in matita e altri pezzi. 54. e una cartella di stampe.” Ibid. On William Main’s Florentine sojourn, where he studied under Raffaello Morghen, see Carol Bradley, “Copisti americani nelle gallerie fiorentine,” in *L’idea di Firenze. Temi e interpretazioni*

nell'arte straniera dell'Ottocento, ed. Maurizio Bossi and Lucia Tonini (Florence: Centro Di, 1989), 63. On American artists copying European Old Masters, see Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, "Infesting the Galleries of Europe: The Copyist Emma Conant Church in Paris and Rome," *Nineteenth-Century Art Worldwide* 10, no. 2 (Autumn 2011), accessed December 2, 2014, <http://www.19thc-artworldwide.org/autumn11>. On the collecting of Italian painting in America during the 19th century, see Lillian B. Miller, "'An Influence in the Air': Italian Art and American Taste in the Mid-Nineteenth Century," in *The Italian Presence in American Art, 1760–1960*, ed. Irma B. Jaffe (New York & Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1989), 26–52; and Paul S. D'Ambrosio, ed., *America's Rome: Artists in the Eternal City, 1800–1900*, exh. cat. (Utica: Brodock Press, 2009).

[18] [Appendix, I](#). *Mercantile Adviser*, n. 8476 (June 27, 1818): 3.

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] *Ibid.* On the difference between provenience (the original findspot of an object) and provenance (the chain of ownership of an object) see Rosemary A. Joyce, "From Place to Place: Provenience, Provenance, and Archaeology," in *Provenience: An Alternate History of Art*, ed. Gail Feigenbaum and Inge Reist (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2012), 48–60.

[21] [Appendix, I](#). *Mercantile Adviser*, 3.

[22] *Ibid.*

[23] On the partnership between Vito Viti and Fiengo, see Richard N. Juliani, *Building Little Italy: Philadelphia's Italians Before Mass Migration* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 266.

[24] *New York Daily Times*, November 11, 1853, 6.

[25] *New York Daily Times*, December 27, 1854, 7. On the New York Crystal Palace exhibition, see *Official Catalogue of the Pictures Contributed to the Exhibition of the Industry of All Nations, in the Picture Gallery of the Crystal Palace* (New York: G.P. Putnam and Co., 1853). In 1852, Viti was already collaborating with William Irving, who, on December 3, advertised a sale "of Marble and Alabaster Statuary and Parisian Fancy Goods (imported by Signor Vito Viti)" *New York Daily Times*, December 3, 1852, 4.

[26] *L'italia alla Esposizione Universale di Parigi nel 1867: Rassegna Critica Illustrata* (Florence: Le Monnier, 1868), 259.

[27] "La prima officina fu sul principio del secolo presente aperta dal cavalier Marcello Inghirami, il quale può dirsi che inaugurò la nuova èra di tale preclarissima industria, che dipoi Vito Viti fece conoscere all'estero, mercè i lunghi viaggi che intraprese. Avendo questi stabilito il suo soggiorno in Filadelfia, pose ivi il centro delle sue industriali operazioni, che produssero ad esso ricchezze, ed apersero un commercio attivissimo al proprio paese cogli abitanti del nuovo mondo, i quali furono talmente avidi dei pregevoli lavori volterrani, da fare sì che la domanda spesso soverchiava la possibilità di poterla soverchiare." *Esposizione Italiana tenuta in Firenze nel 1861: Volume Terzo; Relazioni dei Giurati, Classi XIII a XXIV* (Florence: Barbera, 1865), 200.

[28] On Chester Harding, see Leah Lipton, *A Truthful Likeness: Chester Harding and his Portraits*, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution, 1985).

[29] *Ibid.*, 33–35.

[30] See the catalogues in the Smithsonian Institution Pre-1877 Art Exhibition Catalogue Index, <http://siris-artexhibition.si.edu/ipac20/ipac.jsp?profile=acziall>.

[31] Lipton, *Truthful Likeness*, 34.

[32] The aim of this exhibition was explained in the introduction: "The friends of Mr. Allston, have desired to express in some public manner their high sense of his pre-eminence as an Artist and their esteem and affection for him as a man. No mode of doing this seemed so appropriate as to collect all his pictures which are accessible in an exhibition, the proceeds of which might be presented to him as a token of those feelings." *Exhibition of Pictures painted by Washington Allston, at Harding's Gallery, School Street* (Boston: John H. Eastburn, 1839), 1.

[33] *Catalogue of Paintings at the Artist's Exhibition, in Harding's Gallery, School Street* (Boston: J.H. Eastburn, 1834).

[34] [Appendix, II](#). *Catalogue of Marble Statuary, Now Exhibited at Harding's Rooms, School Street* (Boston: W.A. Clapp, 1834).

[35] [Appendix, I](#). The catalogue for the sculpture auction was printed by W. W. Clapp, a publisher in Boston that also printed the catalogues of the Boston Athenaeum. See, for instance, the catalogue of the exhibition at the Boston Athenaeum, in the summer of 1834, of four paintings by Giovanni Paolo Panini: *Descriptive Catalogue of the Four Magnificent Paintings of the Most Interesting Monuments of Ancient and Modern Rome, Being the Original Pictures Painted for the*

Duke of Choiseul, a Minister of Louis XV by the Cavalier Giovanni Paolo Panini (Boston: W. W. Clapp, 1834).

[36] The monument was destroyed by fire in 1830. See Robert D. W. Connor, *Canova's Statue of Washington* (Raleigh, NC: The North Carolina Historical Commission, 1910); Fehl, "Thomas Appleton of Livorno," 523–52. On Canova's popularity among grand tourists, see, for example, "Sketch of Italy. Concluded," *New Bedford Mercury*, November 22, 1822, 1: "My time in Rome was made more agreeable by the attentions of R. Trentanove, an eminent young sculptor, a pupil of Canova, and considered even now as the rival of Throwaldron, the next to Canova. He introduced me to his great master. His *Studio* is really one of the greatest attractions in Rome. I visited it almost every day."

[37] [Appendix, II](#). *Catalogue of Marble Statuary*, lot 1.

[38] On Canova's Venuses, see Hugh Honour, "Canova's Statues of Venus," *Burlington Magazine* 104, no. 835 (1972): 658–71; Douglas Lewis, *The Clark Copy of Antonio Canova's Hope Venus*, in *The William A. Clark Collection: An Exhibition Marking the 50th Anniversary of the Installation of the Clark Collection at the Corcoran Gallery of Art*, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: Corcoran Gallery, 1978), 105–15; Hugh Honour, "Canova e la storia di due Veneri," in *Palazzo Pitti: La reggia rivelata*, ed. Gabriella Capecchi, Amelio Fara, Detlef Heikamp, and Vincenzo Saladino, exh. cat. (Florence: Giunti, 2003), 193–209; Fernando Mazzocca, "Venere Italica," in *Maestà di Roma: Da Napoleone all'Unità d'Italia: Universale ed Eterna, Capitale delle Arti*, ed. Sandra Pinto, Liliana Barroero, and Fernando Mazzocca, exh. cat. (Milan: Skira, 2003), 106.

[39] Honour, "Canova's Statues," 658–61.

[40] Mazzocca, "Venere Italica," 106.

[41] Canova mentioned Pietro Vanelli in his will and left him 500 scudi. Hugh Honour, "Canova's Studio Practice-II, 1792–1922," *Burlington Magazine* 114, no. 829 (1972): 221.

[42] As we can infer from some unpublished documents, Vanelli descended from a dynasty of marble merchants active in Carrara since the seventeenth century. For example, a copy of a letter written to Andrea Vaccà of Carrara, and another one to Angelo Vanelli of Carrara, with the same text, reads: "March 3, 1696. We need to know, for the Royal Chapel of His Most Serene Highness, if we can have two loads of black marble from that place [Carrara]. The blocs should be at least 3 palmi [long] and 2 to 3 palmi large, and 1 1/2 palmo thick." (Adi 3 Marzo 1696 Copia di Lettera Scritta, una a S.r Andrea Vacca di Carara e una S. Angelo Vanelli di Carara dell' istesso tenore ambedue le lettere. Ci occorre per seruizio della Real Cappella di S.A.S. Sapere Se Si possa auere due Caratte di Marmo Nero di codesti Luoghi, che almeno i pezzi sieno di 3 palmj, e di larghezza 2 in 3- grossezza un palmo, e mezzo). The copies are preserved at 1089, fol. 9r, Guardaroba Medicea, Archivio di Stato, Florence. On other members of the Vannelli family in the eighteenth century, see Notaio Antonio Leonardi, III, fol. 103r, Notarile di Carrara 158, Archivio di Stato, Massa, "[January 10, 1719] Carlo Antonio Vanelli of Carrara agreed with Iacopo Vanelli to work together as a company in the quarry of veined and white marble that they jointly own, located in Torano, in the place called La Sponda, adjoining the property of the Vicinanza, the property of Giovanni Baratta, and the street." (Carlo Antonio Vanelli di Carrara si accordò con esso Iacopo Vanelli di far lauorare in sieme et in solidum a buona compagnia, nella Caua di Marmo Auenato e bianco, che haueuano a buona compagnia situata nelle pertinenze di Torano luogo detto la Sponda, confine li Agri della vicinanza et il Sig.r Gio. baratta, e la strada). In the nineteenth century, the Vanelli family as a whole was involved in the carving of copies, not only after Canova. Even if we don't know yet any sculpture executed by Pietro, a pair of busts of *Philosophers* after the Antique sold by Sotheby's in the early 2000s can be attributed to, Giacomo, another member of the family, as they are inscribed on the back "G.MO VANELLI DI LEOPOLDO SCULTORE IN CARRARA."

[43] [Appendix, II](#). *Catalogue of Marble Statuary*, lots 33, 59.

[44] [Appendix, II](#). *Catalogue of Marble Statuary*, lot 1.

[45] For the Demidoff family, see Francis Haskell, *Anatole Demidoff Prince of San Donato* (London: Wallace Collection, 1994).

[46] On the works acquired by Alexander I, see Hugh Honour, "Canova's Statue of a Dancer," *National Gallery of Canada Bulletin* 6, no. 1 (1968): 2–14.

[47] Giving a precise figure for the price contributed to buttressing the accuracy of the provenance.

[48] The four paintings (*Interior of St. Peter's, Rome; View of St. Peter's Square with the Departure of the Duc de Choiseul; Interior of an Imaginary Picture Gallery with Views of Ancient Rome; and Interior of an Imaginary Picture Gallery with Views of Modern Rome*) were painted in 1756–1757 for Étienne François de Choiseul-Stainville. See "Giovanni Paolo Panini, "Interior of St. Peter's, Rome," 1756–

- 1757,” Boston Athenaeum, accessed August 13, 2014, <https://www.bostonathenaeum.org/giovanni-paolo-panini-interior-st-peters-rome-1756-1757>
- [49] [Appendix, II](#). *Catalogue of Marble Statuary*, lots 2, 10, 12, 29, 101. Also, Tenerani’s pupil, Tommaso Cardelli (1807/8–1893), nephew of Pietro Cardelli who worked in Washington, DC and New Orleans from 1816 until his death in 1822, sent many works for this sale (lots, 6, 9, 71, 102). On Cardelli’s biography, see Paolo Venturoli, “Cardelli, Tommaso,” in *Dizionario biografico degli Italiani* (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1976), 19:771.
- [50] On Tenerani, see Stefano Grandesso, *Pietro Tenerani (1789–1969)* (Cinisello Balsamo: Silvana Editoriale, 2003). On Thorvaldsen and Canova, see David Bindman, *Warm Flesh, Cold Marble: Canova, Thorvaldsen and Their Critics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014).
- [51] [Appendix, II](#). *Catalogue of Marble Statuary*, lots 49, 62, 96.
- [52] Eugène Plon, *Thorvaldsen: His Life and Works* (Boston: Roberts Brothers, 1892), 145. I would like to thank Petra ten-Doesschate Chu for drawing my attention to this book.
- [53] [Appendix, II](#). *Catalogue of Marble Statuary*, lot 2.
- [54] Grandesso, *Pietro Tenerani*, 33–40.
- [55] [Appendix, II](#). *Catalogue of Marble Statuary*, lot 2. On Thorvaldsen’s work, see Stefano Grandesso, *Venere Vincitrice*, in Pinto, Barroero, and Mazzocca, *Maestà di Roma*, 107). Tenerani, in 1816, while studying under the direction of Thorvaldsen, executed a plaster model for a *Paris Offering the Apple to Venus*, pendant to Thorvaldsen’s statue. Grandesso, *Pietro Tenerani*, 30.
- [56] *Synopsis of a Valuable Collection of Old Italian Paintings, Marble Statuary and Other Rare Articles of Fine Arts in the Possession of Mr. John Clark, Now Exhibiting at the Academy of Fine Arts, in Barclay Street* (New York: Lesuer & Company, 1839), 3.
- [57] The complete list of works is accessible through the Smithsonian Institution Pre-1877 Art Exhibition Catalogue Index, siris-artexhibition.si.edu.
- [58] *Synopsis*, 18, lot 1.
- [59] On the *Venus Italica* see Honour, “Canova e la storia.”
- [60] Francis Haskell and Nicholas Penny, *Taste and the Antique: The Lure of Classical Sculpture, 1500–1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1981), 148.
- [61] *Synopsis*, 18, lot 2: “A statue in marble of Carrara, representing a Venus about 3 feet in height, receiving the Apple from Paris. Tenera, a pupil of Canova, is the author and shows not only the natural genius of the sculptor, but also the pure and refined taste of the Canova’s school.”
- [62] *Synopsis*, 4.
- [63] Filza LVII, 1833, ins. 45, unpaginated, Archive of the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.
- [64] *Synopsis*, 2.
- [65] On Bartolini, see Lorenzo Tinti, *Lorenzo Bartolini*, 2 vols. (Rome: Accademia d’Italia, 1936); *Lorenzo Bartolini: Mostra delle attività di tutela*, exh. cat. (Florence: Centro Di, 1978); and Franca Falletti, Silvestra Bietoletti, and Annarita Caputo, eds., *Lorenzo Bartolini: Scultore del bello naturale*, exh. cat. (Florence: Giunti, 2011). On Pampaloni, see Annarita Caputo Calloud, “Note su Luigi Pampaloni,” *Ricerche di Storia dell’Arte* 13-14 (1981): 57–68.
- [66] In 1815, he considered moving to the United States, if he could secure one or more public commissions. The American Consul in Leghorn, Thomas Appleton, acted as an intermediary between Bartolini and the former president, Thomas Jefferson. In a letter to Jefferson, Appleton introduced his thirty-eight year old “friend” as one of the most promising sculptors in Italy: “In drawing and modelling he stands unrivall’d in Italy, as he certainly will in sculpture at a period not far distant.” Thomas Appleton to Thomas Jefferson, Leghorn, October 25, 1815, quoted in D. K. S. Hyland, “Lorenzo Bartolini and Italian Influences on American Sculptors in Florence, 1825–1950” (PhD diss., University of Delaware, 1985), 33. Jefferson did not really trust Appleton, as he declared to Nathaniel Macon concerning George Washington’s statue carved by Canova for the State Capitol of North Carolina: “Appleton has a friend and great favorite in a sculptor of the name of Bartholini, whom he thinks equal to Canove, and his friendship may lead him to find difficulties with Canove and draw the job to Bartolini, of whose name I never heard but from Mr. Appleton. But I could not yield to his opinion alone against that of all Europe.” R. D. W. Connor, *Canova’s Statue of Washington* (Raleigh, NC: The North Carolina Historical Commission, 1910), 26. Bartolini’s reputation in the American artistic community is confirmed by the records of his death published in several periodicals. See, for example, “Death of Bartolini,” *Bulletin of the American Art Union*, April 1, 1850, 16.
- [67] Bartolini worked on the marble until 1836, and before shipping it to Milan he exhibited it in Florence, where the statue was a great success and almost immediately became Bartolini’s most

celebrated work. See the anonymous review “Esposizione di Belle Arti in Brera,” *Ricoglitore italiano e straniero*, March 3, 1837, quoted in Ettore Spalletti, “La fiducia in Dio,” in Falletti, Bietoletti, and Caputo, *Lorenzo Bartolini*, 50. On this statue, see Ettore Spalletti, “La fiducia in Dio,” in *Musei e Gallerie di Milano: Museo Poldi Pezzoli; Tessuti-sculture metalli islamici*, ed. Paola Slavich (Milan: Electa, 1987), 206–7.

[68] On this work, see McInnis, *In Pursuit of Refinement*, 225; and on John Izard Middleton see McInnis, *In Pursuit of Refinement*, 65–86. A passage in the travel diary of Charles Izard Manigault, another Charlestonian, reveals that Bartolini was renowned as a portraitist among the travelers: “Before leaving Bartolini’s we walked thro’ several rooms in the 2d story where on shelves under shelves & all over the floor we beheld a forest of bust in plaster of various distinguished individuals but 9/10ths of them of English ladies & Gentlemen who have passed thro’ this city in their travels.” McInnis, *In Pursuit of Refinement*, 225.

[69] [Appendix, II](#). *Catalogue of Marble Statuary*, lots 31, 32, 36. On the bust of Byron, see Ettore Spalletti, “George Gordon Byron,” in Falletti, Bietoletti, and Caputo, *Lorenzo Bartolini*, 74. Bartolini had established, since the 1810s, a collaboration with the Lazzarini workshop in Carrara, devoted to the carving and commercialization of copies. Passeggia, “Marble Trade,” 167–68.

[70] [Appendix, II](#). *Catalogue of Marble Statuary*, lots 20, 37, 38, 64, 65, 72.

[71] On this monument, destroyed in 1915, see Caputo Calloud, “Note su Luigi Pampaloni,” 57–68.

[72] H. Nichols B. Clark, *A Marble Quarry: The James H. Ricau Collection of Sculpture at the Chrysler Museum of Art* (New York: Hudson Hill Press, 1997), 47–49. On the replicas entitled *The Orphan*, see Caputo Calloud, “Note su Luigi Pampaloni,” 57.

[73] On the development of the Anglo-Tuscan sculpture trade between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see Sicca and Yarrington, *Lustrous Trade*.

[74] For Ceracchi’s bust, see Fehl, “Thomas Appleton of Livorno;” and Fehl, “The Account Book.” On Houdon’s bust, see D. Walker, “Benjamin Franklin,” in *Jean-Antoine Houdon: Sculptor of the Enlightenment*, ed. Anne L. Poulet, exh. cat. (Washington, DC: National Gallery of Art, 2003), 247–50.

[75] Passeggia, “Marble Trade,” 167–68.

[76] On the Baratta family, see Francesco Freddolini, *Giovanni Baratta e lo studio al Baluardo: Scultura, mercato del marmo e ascesa sociale tra Sei e Settecento* (Pisa: Pisa University Press, 2010); and Francesco Freddolini, *Giovanni Baratta, 1670–1747: Scultura e industria del marmo tra la Toscana e le corti d’Europa* (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 2013).

[77] Sicca, “Livorno e il commercio,” 275–97.

[78] [Appendix, II](#). *Catalogue of Marble Statuary*, lots 22, 23, 27, 34, 40. Lots 79, 94, 99, 100, and 131 were also attributed to Baratta.

[79] [Appendix, II](#). *Catalogue of Marble Statuary*, lot 23.

[80] Ms. SBd-23, E. Thompson Diary, 1848, unpaginated, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston. The first name of the author is not known.

[81] Maria Teresa Lazzarini, *Artigianato artistico a Livorno in età lorenese (1814–1959)* (Leghorn: Società Editrice Livornese, 1996), 74.

[82] [Appendix, II](#). *Catalogue of Marble Statuary*, lots 6, 69, and 70.

[83] *Ibid.* On Canova’s *Dancers*, see Honour, “Canova’s Statue of a Dancer”; and Ursula Schlegel, “Canovas Tänzerin,” *Jahrbuch Preussischer Kulturbesitz*, 18 (1981): 187–200.

[84] See, for example, Iain Pears, *The Discovery of Painting: The Growth of Interest in the Arts in England, 1680–1768* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988).

[85] On the narratives and rhetoric of auction catalogues, especially in eighteenth-century England, see Cynthia Wall, “The English Auction: Narratives of Dismantlings,” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 31, no. 1 (Fall 1997): 1–25.

[86] The *Crayon*, was published in New York from 1855 to 1861. Its editors were William J. Stillman (1828–1901) and John Durand (1822–1908), the son of landscape painter Asher B. Durand. On the periodical, see Janice Simon, “Imaging a New Heaven on a New Earth: ‘The Crayon’ and Nineteenth-Century American Covers,” *American Periodicals* 1, no. 1 (1991): 11–24.

[87] “Picture Buying,” *Crayon* 1, no. 7 (February 14, 1855): 100.

Illustrations

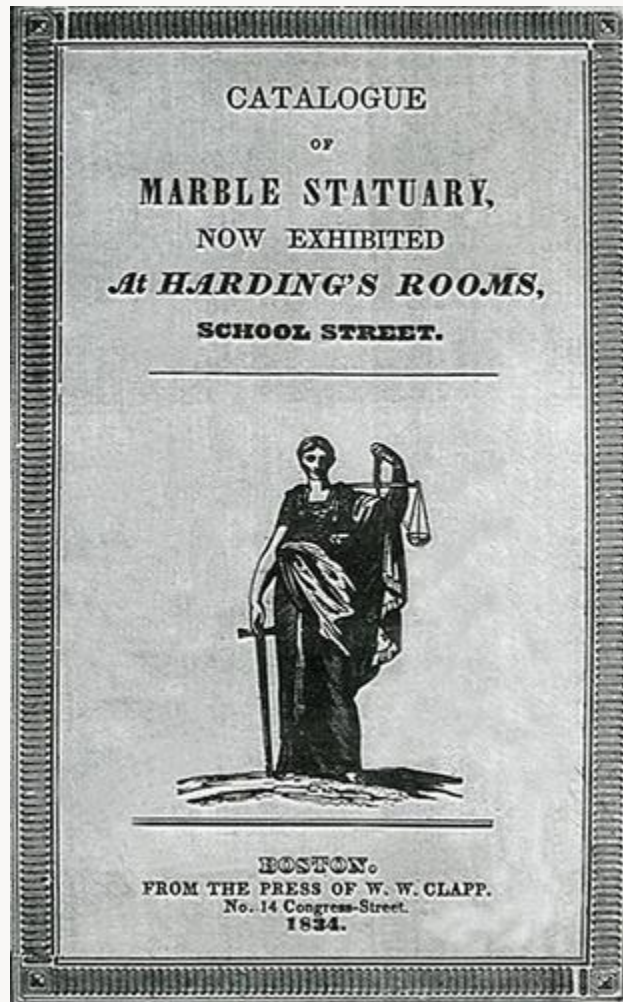


Fig. 1, Cover, *Catalogue of Marble Statuary, now Exhibited at Harding's Rooms, School Street* (Boston: W.A. Clapp, 1834). [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 2, *Medici Venus*, ca. 200 BCE. Marble. Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence. Photo Alinari/Art Resource, NY.

[\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 3, Antonio Canova, *Venus Italica*, 1811. Marble. Galleria Palatina, Florence. Photo Alinari/Art Resource, NY. [\[return to text\]](#)



Fig. 4, Berthel Thorvaldsen, *Venus with the Apple*, 1813–16. Marble. Thorvaldsens Museum, Copenhagen.
Photo Gunnar Bach Pedersen [\[return to text\]](#)

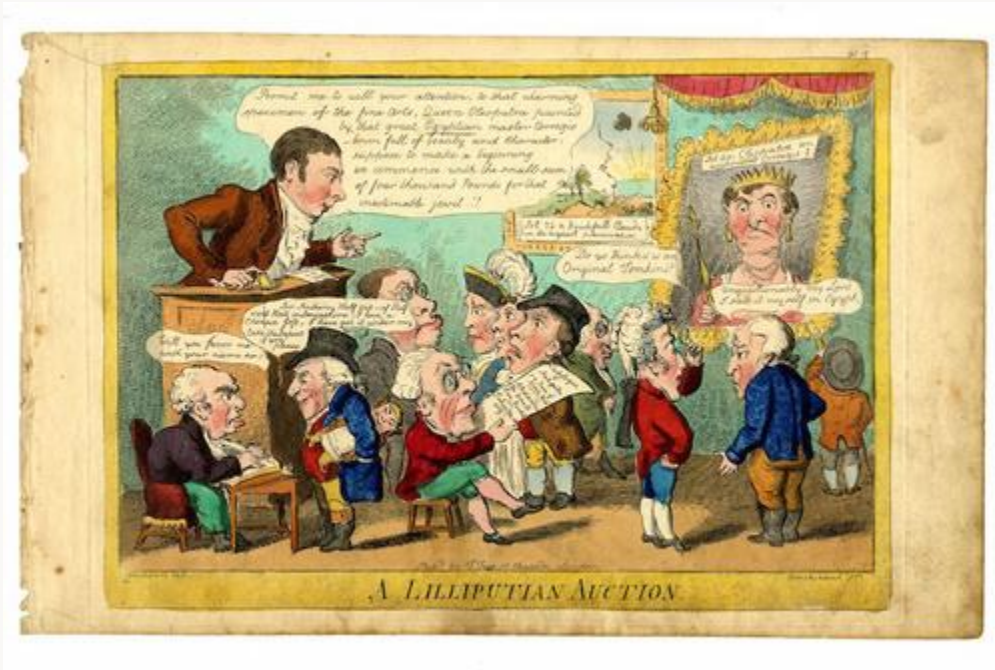


Fig. 5, Isaac Cruikshank, *A Lilliputian Auction*, 1804. Hand-colored etching. British Museum, London. © Trustees of the British Museum [\[return to text\]](#)