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## FACSIMILES OF HOLBEIN'S DRAWINGS

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### *The trois crayons manner*

One of the most famous humanist scholars in Europe, Erasmus of Rotterdam, lived in Basel between late October 1521 and 1529. In 1523 he had already asked Holbein to execute portraits that he intended to send to his friends in England and France.<sup>1</sup> In June 1524, Erasmus wrote to Willibald Pirckheimer, Dürer's friend in Nuremberg: "I recently sent two portraits of myself to England, painted by a very skilful artist. This same also carried a picture of me to France."<sup>2</sup> Nothing is known about the original destination or the whereabouts of the portrait that the painter had to bring with him to France, and unfortunately the portrait itself has disappeared. It is obviously not the portrait of Erasmus in the Louvre, as this was in the collection of Sir Adam Newton and was acquired by Louis XIV at the Jabach sale in 1671.<sup>3</sup>

It was in France during the years 1523/1524 that Holbein the Younger adopted the technique of coloured chalks, the *trois crayons* manner, for his portrait drawings. This replaced the silver-point and red chalk that he had used until then for portrait preparatory drawings. For stained glass, wall-paintings, pieces of jewellery and table fountains he continued to use pen, wash and watercolour. He first adopted the *trois crayons* manner in Bourges in order to draw two coloured statues; this may indicate that he had been instructed in this

<sup>1</sup> On the Erasmus portraits see Pascal Griener, "Le portrait sculptural. Erasme et ses portraitistes", in *Lecture, représentation et citation. L'image comme texte et l'image comme signe (X<sup>e</sup>-XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, ed. Christian Heck, Lille, Université Charles-de-Gaulle, 2007, p. 171-209.

<sup>2</sup> Author's translation. For the original text see Percy Stafford Allen and Helen Mary Allen, *Opus epistolarum Des. Erasmi Roterodami. Denuo recognitum et actum*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1906-1958, vol. 5, 1924, p. 470, nos. 1452: 40-42.

<sup>3</sup> John Rowlands, *The Paintings of Hans Holbein the Younger. Complete edition*, Oxford, Phaidon, 1985, p. 129-130, no. 15.

technique in France.<sup>4</sup> On a sheet that is now in the *Codex Atlanticus* in Milan's Biblioteca Ambrosiana, Leonardo da Vinci surprisingly noted that the French artist Jean Perréal (Jean de Paris) had introduced him to the use of coloured chalks during the French artist's stay in Milan. Perréal arrived there in 1499 with the French King Louis XII.<sup>5</sup> The few drawings attributed to Jean Perréal, executed in silver-point, reveal no trace of coloured chalks.<sup>6</sup> Leonardo's notebook contains a recipe to produce "punte da colorire a secco" as he called it.<sup>7</sup>

Holbein the Younger preferred the Leonardesque *trois crayons* technique to Jean Clouet's less complicated combination of black and red chalk. In Basel, and then in England, Holbein the Younger used the *trois crayons* manner to perfection for portraits: in Basel for the members of the Meyer family, in England for his numerous patrons and clients. In nearly every case the drawings made served for the execution of painted portraits. Most of these coloured portrait drawings disappeared for nearly 200 years, and were only rediscovered in 1728 by the spouse of King George II, Caroline of Ansbach, the Queen, at Kensington Palace.<sup>8</sup> In 1735 Queen Caroline had nearly completed a new picture closet of drawings and paintings and invited her friends to visit it. Lord Egmont wrote in his diary: "I saw in the Queen's Closet the famous collection of Holbein's heads of eminent persons in King Henry 8<sup>th</sup> reign. They are 63 in number, upon half sheets of paper, and seem the sketches made for his portraits in oil."<sup>9</sup>

### Imitations

In the new edition published in 1829 of his successful *General Dictionary*, Matthew Pilkington commented on Holbein's drawings and Bartolozzi's imitations:

<sup>4</sup> Christian Müller and Stephan Kemperdick (eds), *Hans Holbein the Younger. The Basel Years 1515-1532*, exhibition catalogue, Munich, Prestel, 2006, p. 316-320, nos. 100, 101; in this catalogue see especially Christian Müller, "Hans Holbein the Younger as Draughtsman", p. 20-33.

<sup>5</sup> Leonardo da Vinci, *Codex Atlanticus*, Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana, fol. 247.

<sup>6</sup> The two portrait drawings by Jean Perréal in the Musée Condé at Chantilly, dated to the last quarter of the fifteenth century, are executed in silver-point.

<sup>7</sup> Leonardo da Vinci, *The Literary Works*, ed. Jean Paul Richter, London, Low, Marston, Searle & Rivington, 1883, reprint: Leonardo da Vinci, *The notebooks of Leonardo da Vinci*, ed. Jean Paul Richter, New York, Dover, 1970, vol. 1, p. 315, no. 612.

<sup>8</sup> Joanna Marschner, *Queen Caroline. Cultural Politics at the Early Eighteenth-Century Court*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2014, p. 94-97.

<sup>9</sup> John Perceval, *Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont. Diary of The First Earl of Egmont (Viscount Percival)*, London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1923, vol. 2, p. 190.

Soon after the accession of George the Second, a noble collection of the drawings of Holbein was found in a bureau at Kensington, amounting to eighty-nine. These, which are of exquisite merit, have been admirably engraved by Bartolozzi, in a work published by John Chamberlain, F. R. A., which is one of the most interesting collections of portraits ever executed.<sup>10</sup>

Francesco Bartolozzi studied with the painter Ignazio Hugford at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Florence.<sup>11</sup> Bartolozzi, who specialised in print-making, was working circa 1763 in Bologna and Venice for Richard Dalton, an engraver and librarian to George III. The Scottish engraver Robert Strange, a Jacobite, met Dalton and Bartolozzi in 1763 in Bologna and told them about his projects for drawings after paintings in several collections and churches in both Bologna and Parma. When Strange arrived back in Bologna after a stay in Parma, he realised that Dalton and Bartolozzi had already convinced the owners of the paintings to let them make drawings after their works in order to produce reproductions. Strange complained about this intrigue in a long letter published in 1775 addressed to John Stuart, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Bute and former Prime Minister of Great Britain.<sup>12</sup>

In 1764, Bartolozzi completed in Venice a series of twelve reproductions of Guercino drawings and was subsequently appointed *Incisore del re* to George III to work on the reproduction of the Guercino drawings in the royal collection (Fig. 43).<sup>13</sup> In London, Bartolozzi rapidly embarked on a successful career; he was one of the foundation members of the Royal Academy and

<sup>10</sup> Matthew Pilkington, *A General Dictionary of Painters; containing Memoirs of the Lives and Works of the Most Eminent Professors of the Art of Painting*, London, Thomas Tegg, 1829, vol. 1, p. 477.

<sup>11</sup> See Barbara Jatta (ed.), *Francesco Bartolozzi. Incisore delle Grazie*, exhibition catalogue, Rome, Artemide Edizioni, 1995, p. 45-47; Alessandro Baudi de Vesme and Augusto Calabi, *Francisco Bartolozzi. Catalogue des estampes et notice biographique d'après les manuscrits de A. de Vesme entièrement reformés et complétés d'une étude critique par A. Calabi*, Milan, Modiano, 1928; see article Giovanni Gori Gandellini, "Francesco Bartolozzi", in Giovanni Gori Gandellini, *Notizie istoriche degli Intagliatori*, Siena, Onorato Porri, 1808 [1771], vol. 1, p. 52-55.

<sup>12</sup> Robert Strange, *An Inquiry into the Rise and Establishment of the Royal Academy of Arts. To which is prefixed, A Letter to the Earl of Bute*, London, for E. and C. Dilly &c., 1775, p. 20-29. See Timothy Clayton, *The English print 1688-1802*, New Haven/London, Yale University Press, 1997, p. 174-175, on Strange: "In Italy he was dogged by the Prince's librarian, Richard Dalton, who hired Francesco Bartolozzi to make drawings of precisely the same paintings that Strange intended to engrave."

<sup>13</sup> Published 1764 by Giovanni Battista Piranesi in Rome, see Barbara Jatta (ed.), *Francesco Bartolozzi. Incisore delle Grazie*, *op. cit.*, p. 94-99, cat. 20, 1-12.

a very skilful engraver of paintings and drawings and a collaborator of the important engraver and print seller John Boydell.<sup>14</sup>

From 1792 onwards, Bartolozzi made engravings after seventy-eight portrait drawings by Holbein at Windsor Castle for John Chamberlaine, the successor to Richard Dalton who had died in 1791.<sup>15</sup> Chamberlaine published the plates in London between 1792 and 1802 in Imperial folio under the title: *Imitations of Original Drawings, by Hans Holbein, in the Collection of His Majesty, for the Portraits of the Illustrious Persons of the Court of Henry VIII, engraved by Bartolozzi, with Biographical Tract*. It was the second attempt in the eighteenth century to reproduce Holbein's drawings; the first, organized by Richard Dalton, resulted in thirty-five engravings which were published in 1792 but considered of poor quality.<sup>16</sup> In 1812, John Chamberlaine published a new edition in-quarto of *Imitations of Original Drawings* by Hans Holbein with reproductions by various engravers in different techniques.<sup>17</sup> In 1884 Hamilton, Adams & Co. published in London a reproduction of Bartolozzi's folio edition, and a paperback reprint is still available.<sup>18</sup>

Bartolozzi used skilfully all kinds of contemporary techniques to produce plates for the graphic reproduction of paintings and the imitation of drawings. He became the undisputed master of stipple engraving, while Valentine Green became the most renowned mezzotint engraver at the time, celebrated for his reproduction of paintings, especially of the Düsseldorf gallery.<sup>19</sup> In 1987, Constance Harris characterised stipple as:

a less difficult process than mezzotint since it chiefly requires a willingness to incise millions of specks; assistants usually filled in large areas after the master engraver indicated the general outlines. [...] Brownish red or various pastel inks were applied selectively with rags directly onto the metal, in a technique known as *à la poupée*.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>14</sup> For John Boydell see Timothy Clayton, *The English print 1688-1802*, *op. cit.*, p. 209-210.

<sup>15</sup> See Barbara Jatta (ed.), *Francesco Bartolozzi. Incisore delle Grazie*, *op. cit.*, p. 182-183, cat. 118, 1-18; Francesco Bartolozzi, *Stipple Engravings of Portraits by Hans Holbein from the Royal Collection*, Uppingham Rutland, Goldmark Gallery, 2007.

<sup>16</sup> *The Court of Henry the Eighth*, London, W. Richardson, 1792.

<sup>17</sup> See the digitised book in the National Library of the Netherlands.

<sup>18</sup> *Facsimiles of original drawings by Hans Holbein, in the Collection of His Majesty [...] engraved by Francis Bartolozzi. With biographical notices by Edmund Lodge*, London, Hamilton, Adams & Co., 1884.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas W. Gaehtgens and Louis Marchesano, *Display & Art History: The Düsseldorf Gallery and its catalogue*, Los Angeles, The Getty Research Institute, 2011, p. 15 and *passim*.

<sup>20</sup> Constance Harris, *Portraiture in prints*, Jefferson N.C./London, McFarland & Company, 1987, p. 134-135; for the technique see also Barbara Jatta (ed.), *Francesco Bartolozzi. Incisore delle Grazie*, *op. cit.*, p. 29-33.

Many more impressions could be printed from stipple plates than from mezzotint plates. The technique was brought from France to England by William Wynne Ryland, who had learned it with François Boucher. Ryland used it for the reproduction of works by Angelica Kauffmann but also for the forgery of bills of exchange, for which he was sentenced to death.<sup>21</sup>

Bartolozzi preferred a combination of aquatint and stipple engraving for the reproduction of paintings and drawings. For printing he first used red or brown ink; from the beginning of the 1780s onwards he had enough experience to produce prints in colour. Sometimes watercolour was used in order to finish the prints. The costs of these imitations *à la poupée* were three times higher than monochrome prints.<sup>22</sup> Stipple plates could be used to produce monochrome as well as coloured prints. An example is Bartolozzi's reproduction of *Queen Katherine's dream* (Pl. XXIX) after Henry Fuseli's painting for *Macklin's British Poets*; both brown and coloured impressions from this plate are known.<sup>23</sup>

Bartolozzi's imitations of Holbein's portrait drawings were mostly executed in stipple engraving, etching or aquatint, printed in colours. Some of the impressions, like that of William Parr, marquess of Northampton (Pl. XXX), had additional hand-colouring.<sup>24</sup> Most of Bartolozzi's impressions have the very high quality of facsimiles.

### Facsimilia of drawings

In 1991 Evelina Borea published a major essay on the imitation of drawings from the woodcuts by Ugo da Carpi until the generation of Francesco

<sup>21</sup> For examples of Ryland's stipple engravings see Timothy Clayton, *The English print 1688-1802*, *op. cit.*, pl. 234, 275, 292, 293.

<sup>22</sup> See Barbara Jatta (ed.), *Francesco Bartolozzi. Incisore delle Grazie*, *op. cit.*, p. 32-33, p. 154, cat. 76, 77.

<sup>23</sup> David H. Weinglass, *Prints and Engraved Illustrations By and After Henry Fuseli. A catalogue raisonné*, Aldershot, Scholar Press, 1994, p. 85-87, cat. 77-78.

<sup>24</sup> See the various elements of technical information given by the British Museum, Collection online, and Barbara Jatta (ed.), *Francesco Bartolozzi. Incisore delle Grazie*, *op. cit.*, no. 118, 1-18. See Andrew W. Tuer, *Bartolozzi And his Works: A Biographical and Descriptive Account of The Life and Career of Francesco Bartolozzi, R.A. (illustrated), with Some Observations on The present Demand for and Value of his Prints; the way to detect Modern Impressions from Worn-out Plates and to recognise Falsely-tinted Impressions; Deceptions attempted with Prints; Print Collecting, Judging, Handling, &c.; together with a List of upwards of 2,000 – the most extensive record yet compiled – of the Great Engraver's Works*, London, Field & Tuer, [1881].

Bartolozzi.<sup>25</sup> The reproduction of drawings that had a growing effort towards *facsimilia* in the eighteenth century has seldom attracted a great interest in art history. Pascal Griener concluded his excellent book *La République de l'œil* with a chapter on “La culture du fac-similé” – as far as I can see this constitutes a unique analysis of the production and the cognitive function of facsimiles that began in the eighteenth century.<sup>26</sup> Especial importance is attributed to the *Recueil de Testes de caractere & de Charges, dessinées par Léonard de Vinci*, engraved by Anne-Claude de Caylus and published by Pierre-Jean Mariette in 1730: “Jamais la publication de copies en fac-similé n’aura été plus fructueuse: Mariette a créé un modèle unique de publication scientifique.”<sup>27</sup> Earlier, in 2001, Cecilia Hurley and Pascal Griener had pointed out that eighteenth-century connoisseurs believed that drawings and sketches “betrayed the true hand of a master” and therefore that “the faithful reproduction of drawings was intended to be a cognitive tool” for the study of drawings, and more generally for art history.<sup>28</sup>

The production of facsimiles of drawings multiplied in the second half of the eighteenth century, especially in England. A few striking examples stand alongside Bartolozzi’s imitations of Holbein’s drawings: in 1762 John Boydell started in London the first of many publications of *A Collection of Prints in Imitation of Drawings*, made in *crayon* manner by Ryland after drawings by Antonio Correggio, Leonardo da Vinci, Andrea Sacchi, François Boucher and others.<sup>29</sup> In 1777 Boydell published the reproduction of Claude Lorrain’s *Liber veritatis* in three volumes. The imitations of Lorrain’s drawings had been executed between 1774 and 1777 by Richard Earlom in aquatint and etching. Griener pointed out the importance of the *Collection of Prints in Imitation of Drawings*, published by Charles Rogers in 1778 in London, and the *Disegni di Leonardo da Vinci*, published in Milan in 1784

<sup>25</sup> Evelina Borea, “Le stampe che imitano i disegni”, *Bolletino d’arte*, 67 (1991), p. 87-122.

<sup>26</sup> Pascal Griener, *La République de l’œil. L’expérience de l’art au siècle des Lumières*, Paris, Odile Jacob, 2010, p. 225-246. See the review by Claire Mazel, in *Histara les comptes rendus*, <http://histara.sorbonne.fr/cr.php?cr=1119>, accessed 27 July 2017.

<sup>27</sup> Pascal Griener, *La République de l’œil, op. cit.*, p. 233-234.

<sup>28</sup> Pascal Griener and Cecilia Hurley, “A matter of reflection in the era of virtual imaging: Caylus and Mariette’s *Recueil de Testes de Caractere & de Charges, dessinés par Léonard de Vinci* (1730)”, in *Horizons. Beiträge zur Kunst und Kunstwissenschaft. 50 Jahre Schweizerisches Institut für Kunstwissenschaft*, ed. Jürg Albrecht, Ostfildern-Ruit, Hatje-Cantz, 2001, p. 337-344.

<sup>29</sup> See The British Museum, Collection online, inv. 1902,1011.4071.

by Carlo Giuseppe Gerli.<sup>30</sup> In 1796, when Bartolozzi had already started the reproduction of Holbein's drawings, John Chamberlaine published facsimiles of Leonardo da Vinci's drawings in the King's collection.<sup>31</sup>



Fig. 43. Francesco Bartolozzi after Guercino, *Four women and a child*, 1764, etching, printed in brown, 20.8 x 27.9 cm, London, British Museum, inv. S,5.28.  
© London, British Museum.

<sup>30</sup> See Pascal Griener, *La République de l'œil*, *op. cit.*, p. 238-240, with bibliographical references p. 323.

<sup>31</sup> *Imitations of Original Designs by Leonardo da Vinci [...] Published by John Chamberlaine*, London, W. Bulmer & Co., 1796.



Pl. XXIX. Francesco Bartolozzi after Henry Fuseli, *Queen Katharine's dream*, 1788, stipple engraving, coloured impression, 35.3 x 53 cm, Zurich, Zentralbibliothek, inv. WGL 400.  
© Zurich, Zentralbibliothek.



Pl. XXX. Francesco Bartolozzi after Hans Holbein, *Portrait of William Parr Marquis Northampton*, 1796, stipple, etching, colour, 36.5 x 25.3 cm, London, British Museum, inv. 1853,0112.2070. © London, British Museum.