

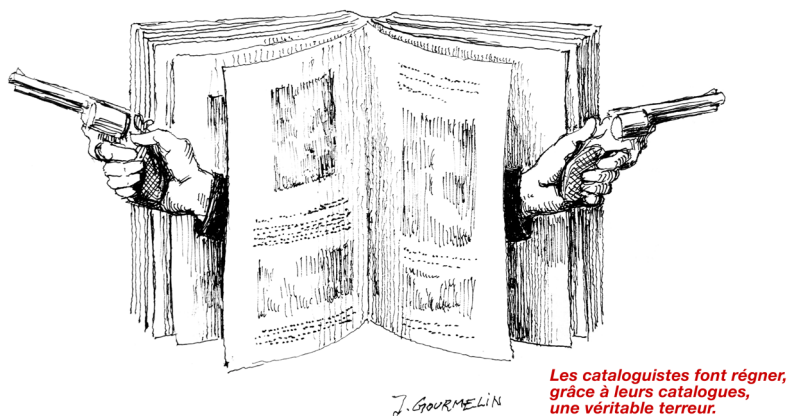
Catalogue raisonné or Catalogue contaminé?

Art Historians at the Crossroads

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The second half of the nineteenth century was a crucial period for the consolidation of art history as an academic discipline in German-speaking countries. That period also witnessed a sharpening of attitudes toward the genres of the discipline's literature—attitudes sometimes shaped by the different tasks art historians confronted when working in a museum or university. The status of the catalogue raisonné cannot be viewed in terms of a simple dichotomy between these two fields of activity, however, the less so as the opinions of individual protagonists occasionally changed over time and according to circumstances. As such, the numerous voices assembled in this contribution reveal an interesting variety of methodological approaches. The artist's biography emerges here as a telling counterpoint to the evolution of the catalogue raisonné at a time of elated nation-statehood that was of paramount importance for the history of art history.

In 1989, the French journal *Connaissance des arts* published an article the title of which—“The Dictatorship of Cataloguers” (La dictature des cataloguistes)—reads like a manifesto. Its author, François Duret-Robert, evidently felt that he had to go to war over serious grievances on the art market. He was ably assisted by a stinging artillery, a series of illustrations by Jean Gourmelin (1920-2011) that pinpoint the problems confronting authors of catalogues raisonnés, such as doubts about the authenticity of specific works, the power of the artists' heirs or the striving for an unattainable completeness. Gourmelin's polemics culminated in a cartoon showing an open book from which two hands emerge, each with an outward pointing pistol (Ill. 1)—a striking image that intensifies Duret-Robert's vitriolic attack on the catalogue raisonné.



ILL. 1

Jean Gourmelin: “Les cataloguistes font régner, grâce à leurs catalogues, une véritable terreur”.
Published in: *Connaissance des Arts*, 1989, p. 143

The article in question is only one among the countless incidents where a general collusion between authors of catalogues raisonnés and agents of the art market is asserted or at least suspected—a widespread notion that can be traced back to the first half of the nineteenth century and whose many symptoms form an instructive chapter in the history of the catalogue raisonné. The present contribution will not, however, look into the origins of this concern at the dawn of institutionalized art history, a concern perhaps best captured by the term “contamination.” Instead, it will consider the status of the catalogue raisonné during the slightly later period, which brought a first consolidation of art history in German-speaking countries, and it will focus on two of the art historians’ principal sites of activity: the museum and the university.

I.

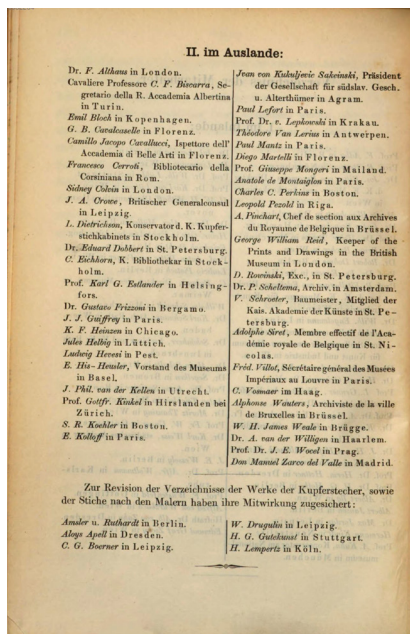
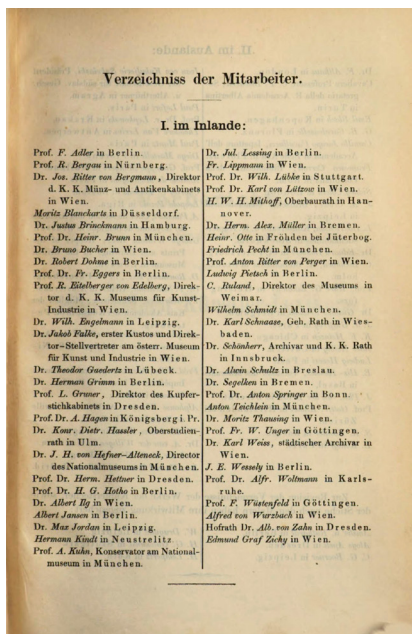
Allgemeines Künstler-Lexikon (*General Dictionary of Artists*) is the rather prosaic title of a publication edited by Julius Meyer (1830-1893), the first installment of which appeared at Wilhelm Engelmann’s publishing company in Leipzig in 1870. This newcomer on the book market could count among its ancestry the several dictionaries of artists of the eighteenth century and, from the first half of the nineteenth century, the compendium by

Georg Nagler (Nagler, 1835-1852, 22 vols.) actually cited in its subtitle. It was eventually to be succeeded by the so-called Thieme-Becker (*Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Künstler*, 1907-1950, 37 vols.) currently re-published as the “AKL” (AKL, 1983-, 113 vols. to date), which shares with Meyer’s dictionary the title *Allgemeines Künstler-Lexikon*.

The aims of this publication are carefully explained by Meyer in a *Preliminary Report on the Plan of the General Dictionary of Artists* (*Vorbericht über den Plan des Allgemeinen Künstler-Lexikons*) of November 1869:

To begin with the biographies of the masters of the first and second order, the entries shall fully convey all facts regarding both their lives and their works [...] in a historical yet concise account [...], so as to render a full and clear impression of their artistic individuality, their entire work, and its impact. This will necessitate (for the actual text of the biographies) an approach that unites life and work and that demonstrates how they interact [...]. At the same time, however, we will have to supplement these biographical texts, which examine the works of the masters in the course of their lives, with complete catalogues of their works, their ‘œuvres’: with a considered examination of their authenticity or spuriousness, ordered chronologically, joined by information on the places where these works—whatever their nature—are kept today. As this will only concern eminent masters, the catalogues will also include destroyed and lost works. Finally, the history seen by several artworks, the whole of their wanderings, their injuries, restorations etc. shall be briefly given here.—This shows how, on the subject of excellent masters, one will have to allow for the participation of several collaborators who will draw from their specific studies. The catalogue will frequently be by another hand than the biographical text. [...] As such our work will attempt to publish concise yet—as far as presently possible—comprehensive monographs of all major masters (Meyer, 1869, p. VIII, Nr. 1-3).¹

This ambitious project secured the collaboration of notable experts in Germany and abroad, a circle including exponents of several disciplines (Ill. 2). More or less all art historians at German-speaking universities seem to have been involved. Other participating scholars were active both at universities and in museums, while many museum officials also agreed to contribute. In addition, the project relied on some connoisseurs, art critics and dealers. In 1872, Meyer was appointed director of the Berlin *Gemäldegalerie*, and in 1883 the project was joined by Hugo von Tschudi (1851-1911), who eventually became director of the Berlin *Nationalgalerie*.



ILL. 2
Allgemeines Künstler-Lexikon, edited by Julius Meyer, vol. I, List with names of collaborators in Germany and abroad

While Tschudi initially worked as assistant editor, he later became co-editor and was finally designated as the dictionary's sole editor.²

The effort to provide a highly precise empirical analysis is documented by the entry Meyer devoted to the Italian painter Antonio Allegri (1489-1534), called after his native town "Correggio" (Meyer, 1870). At the core of that entry's first part stands a thorough connoisseurial appreciation of every work in chronological order. This appreciation is framed by a discussion of the master's art-historical significance, of the sources, and of the contemporary and subsequent reception of his work, to which the author added an equally substantial "characterization." The entry's second part again revolves around "the master's works," and consists of catalogues of the paintings and drawings ordered along their putative proximity to, or distance from the artist. Finally, a topographical index of the works and a list of reproductions provide additional means to access Correggio's complete work. This text, which runs to no fewer than 145 printed pages,

appeared in the following year in slightly modified form as a separate monograph (Meyer, 1871), a book which Wilhelm Bode (1845-1929) was to call an “epoch-making work” in his obituary of Meyer (Bode, 1894, p. 88).³ An English edition of Meyer’s *Correggio* was published in 1876.

II.

The establishment of a full professorship for Anton Springer (1825-1891) at the Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in Bonn in 1860 is seen as the founding act of that high-flying period in the development of art history when universities began to endow chairs for this subject.⁴ Springer’s view of art history is indeed marked by a spirit of discovery, even combat. He fights for the self-assertion of a still young discipline aiming to establish itself alongside other academic subjects, above all art history’s “older sister,” the study of history.⁵ This situation provides the context for Springer’s remarks on the catalogue raisonné, a genre which he counts among the discipline’s “youthful follies and developmental diseases” (“Jugendsünden und Entwicklungskrankheiten”; Springer, [1881] 1886, p. 396). Juxtaposing biography and catalogue in 1881, he criticizes “the confusion between the historical task and that of a catalogue raisonné,” adding that:

The historian’s account can only provide room for those works which reveal the essential nature and development of the artistic character. Their assessment has to be embedded in the biography, which must consequently be treated more thoroughly than is usually done. The faults of the currently prevailing method become obvious in the fact that it is possible to thumb randomly through its products: even if we start with the end and finish at the beginning, even if we consult volume three before looking at volume two, we will not perceive a noticeable difference to a proper consultation and will not forfeit any insight. The individual chapters of these works are merely held together by that most superficial and scanty of historical adhesives, the chronological sequence (Springer, [1881] 1886, pp. 398-399).

III.

Among the books still read today is one by an author whose name is not on Meyer’s list. This is Carl Justi (1832-1912) who took over the art history

chair in Bonn in 1872 when Springer, after a brief stint in Strasbourg, accepted a call to Leipzig. The book, *Diego Velazquez and His Century* (*Diego Velazquez und sein Jahrhundert*) was defined as a “painter’s biography” by its author (Justi, 1888, I, p. 19). During his work on this publication, researched in the course of many trips, Justi disassociated himself from Wilhelm Bode, his junior by thirteen years, who at that time was working at the Berlin museums, not only in the sculpture collection but also in the *Gemäldegalerie*, where he assisted its director, Meyer.⁶ After Justi had met with Bode in October 1881 in Madrid for a visit of the collections, he wrote about the Dutch painters of the seventeenth century in a letter: “I find them boring, they always paint the same family, even the same picture. It would overtax my patience to follow Ostade’s peasants with their potato noses and their almost non-human faces and to record the small changes year by year” (Justi, 1923, p. 150).⁷

Justi’s biography of Velazquez (1599-1660), which appeared seven years later in 1888, has been the subject of several analyses within the context of art history’s history. The “genre-like use of historic tableaux and descriptions of paintings, rife with scenic immediacy” was discerned as one of its outstanding characteristics by Johannes Rößler.⁸ As such, he diagnosed a contradiction between the biography and “contemporary theorems of academic history,” and more specifically, the latter’s “ideal of the unity of the general view.”⁹ Thus Rößler sets Justi’s cultural horizon primarily within *Lebensphilosophie* (Life Philosophy), emphasizing in this context the importance of Arthur Schopenhauer (1788-1860) and Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911).¹⁰ In his introductory discussion of the earlier literature on Velazquez, Justi himself directs attention to a catalogue published in 1883, about which he writes:

Recently a type of work has been dedicated to Velazquez (and Murillo) which might be desirable for more artists, I mean the remarkable book by Charles B. Curtis in New York [...]. The product of unusual love and industry of about twenty years, it intends to provide a descriptive overview of everything which has ever been baptized (at least by the printing press) by the name of Velazquez [...]. As a matter of principle the author has refrained from a critical review, something which would have spared the book’s users many superfluous errands, but which would also have more than doubled

his own labor and would have brought the book very close to the ideal that seems to inspire today's scholarship on art. What may be counted among the work's most prudent qualities is that he gave it the form suited to its content: that of a catalogue—whereas others had assumed to be able to turn into a history material which at most sufficed for a reasoned catalogue. He could say with Börne: "I might just as well have welded them (the [catalogue] numbers) and the readers to a communal galley chain of boredom." [...] His book spares the present one the task of providing a catalogue of the works (Justi, 1888, I, p. 18-19; cf. Justi, 1889, p. 13).¹¹

Alluding to "the ideal that seems to inspire today's scholarship on art," Justi marks a certain distance from a culture prevalent in his discipline—a stance which is probably typical for him. When speaking of those who did not content themselves with a "reasoned catalogue," but who, in obvious overconfidence, believed "to be able to turn" such material "into a history," he may have thought of the author and publisher Eugène Plon (1836-1895), whose book of 1887 on Leone Leoni (1509-1590) and Pompeo Leoni (ca. 1530-1608) he had condescendingly reviewed (see Justi, 1887). The quotation from the political writer and satirist Ludwig Boerne (1786-1837) ultimately leaves no doubt that Justi delights in polemics. Yet he does not quite levy the reproach of "galley chains of boredom" against Charles Boyd Curtis (1827-1905), even though he places Boerne's words in the context of a discussion of his catalogue. Why he himself refrained from adding a "catalogue of the works" to his book is not plausibly explained by Justi, however, although it should be mentioned that, unlike many colleagues, he was deeply skeptical of the concept of artistic development (see Justi, 1888, I, p. 124; II, p. 164, n. 1; and Justi, 1903, pp. XXVIII-XXIX).¹² Such skepticism would probably have resulted in unproductive tensions with regard to the catalogue raisonné, at least if such a catalogue aspired to establish a chronology of the works. Justi similarly avoided the task of compiling a catalogue raisonné when writing about Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1618-1682), the subject of a smaller monograph of 1892. In doing so he stated, perhaps not without a pinch of irony: "catalogues are among the most difficult, commendable and occasionally most entertaining achievements of art scholars, but only in their natural form, not when clad by historical accounts" (Justi, 1892, p. VI).

IV.

Justi particularly admired Wilhelm Thoré-Bürger (1807-1869) and his skill as a connoisseur. Interestingly, it is a catalogue raisonné devoted to the previously forgotten Jan Vermeer (1632-1675) that testifies to these abilities. The role played by Thoré-Bürger in the artist's re-discovery has been investigated by several scholars.¹³ Following Thoré-Bürger's initiative, the *Palais des Champs-Élysées* in Paris mounted, in the summer of 1866, an exhibition with paintings from private collections, a show which featured no fewer than eleven paintings attributed to Vermeer.¹⁴ In its wake, the *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* published the catalogue raisonné which concluded a series of three articles on the artist by Thoré-Bürger.¹⁵ Of the articles' eight reproductions, four show paintings owned by the author; indeed, no fewer than nine of the ca. eighty entries in the primarily iconographically ordered "Catalogue de l'oeuvre" (Bürger, 1866, p. 470) describe works that belonged to the author.¹⁶ The numbers are approximate because the catalogue presents work in progress: several of the entries include remarks such as "à retrouver," "à vérifier et à retrouver," "à rechercher, à vérifier, à étudier."¹⁷ As such, Thoré-Bürger rolled out an entire corpus of works labeled "Vermeer," his efforts on behalf of this forgotten artist betraying a strong commercial interest. Two years before the publication of this catalogue, in November 1864, the director of the London *National Gallery*, Charles Eastlake (1793-1865), had informed his trustees about the author's expertise on Vermeer in the following terms: "[Bürger] is now so well acquainted with all the works of this painter that he is well qualified to give an account of him, and a catalogue of his pictures... I have strongly recommended him to do so" (cited after Jowell, 1995, p. 125).

V.

Soon after, Anton Springer was also to refer to Thoré-Bürger's Vermeer catalogue, praising the author as the "finest connoisseur of Dutch art in our days" (Springer, 1867, p. 218). This accolade did not prevent him from assigning a subordinate position both to the catalogue raisonné (as mentioned above) and to connoisseurs in general, however. In his scathing review of

The Life of Raphael of Urbino (Das Leben Raphaels von Urbino, 1872)—a bilingual edition of Giorgio Vasari’s life of the artist translated and extensively commented by Herman Grimm (1828-1901), soon after appointed professor in Berlin—Springer haughtily asks whether “a simple catalogue raisonné of Raphael’s works would not have been more appropriate” here (Springer, 1873, p. 65).¹⁸ In *Art Connoisseurs and Art Historians*, where he had also diagnosed the discipline’s “youthful follies and developmental diseases,” Springer likens the connoisseur to the archivist:

The work of the connoisseur constitutes an indispensable prerequisite for the art historian. [...] It does not replace the art historian’s work, however—just as the most perfect mastery of archival research cannot altogether replace the efforts of the historian. [...] In some cases involving monographic studies the historian must also independently test his abilities as a connoisseur, but this activity will always be of a merely preparatory nature for him (Springer, [1881] 1886, pp. 395-396).

Contrary to what one might expect from these statements, Springer accepted catalogues raisonnés as qualifications for research degrees. The dissertation on Albrecht Altdorfer submitted by Max Friedländer (1867-1958) in 1891, for instance, is fundamentally a catalogue raisonné that explicitly builds on the entry in Meyer’s dictionary.¹⁹ In the following year, Ulrich Thieme (1865-1922) also received his doctorate at Springer’s chair with a catalogue raisonné of the paintings by Hans Schäufolein (Thieme, 1892). Equally instructive is the occasional “Habilitation,” the post-doctoral degree qualifying for academic teaching in German-speaking areas: the first part of Alfred Woltmann’s (1841-1880) *Holbein and His Time (Holbein und seine Zeit)* was accepted for his habilitation in Berlin in 1867; part two of this work, published in 1868, was to include a “Catalogue of the Works.”

Significantly, however, the title of the “Habilitationsschrift” (thesis submitted for a “Habilitation”) by Robert Vischer (1847-1933), *Luca Signorelli and the Italian Renaissance. An Art-Historical Monograph (Luca Signorelli und die italienische Renaissance. Eine kunsthistorische Monographie)*, does not reveal that it also consists of two parts, a biography and a catalogue raisonné (Vischer, 1879).²⁰ It received a devastating review by Hubert Janitschek (1846-1893), who in the same year—not least on the rec-

ommendation of Jacob Burckhardt (1818-1897)—had become an associate professor in Prague.²¹ Janitschek only exempts Vischer’s catalogue from his criticism as it offered, in his words, “a thorough description of Signorelli’s works, in many cases based on autopsy; their catalogue had not previously been established to such a degree of completeness, and the author deserves our full tribute for this” (Janitschek, 1879, p. 398). This summary praise, the only one accorded by the reviewer, indicates that Janitschek was unaware of the efforts involved in the compilation of such a catalogue, or that he perhaps did not want to acknowledge them.

VI.

Already in 1865, the year when his journal *Über Künstler und Kunstwerke* (*On Artists and Works of Art*) first appeared, Herman Grimm explained the “Necessity of a Photographic Library for the Entire Art-Historical Corpus” (Nothwendigkeit einer photographischen Bibliothek für das gesammte kunstgeschichtliche Material) and put forward “Proposals for Its Foundation in Berlin” (Vorschläge zu deren Gründung in Berlin).²² At the center of Grimm’s view of art history are, as its “core points,” the “great masters” around whom the “collection of the entire material” should be built: “It must be possible to see every existing stroke by their hands.” Photography provides the means, as he put it:

to instigate researches that would not have been possible ten years ago. Who was previously in a position to spread on a table the reproduction of a painting, all sketches for it, all prints after it, all studies for this, and to compare them in tranquility and without distraction? Who was the dreamer who previously thought that it would be a nice thing to see united the succession of all the works by a great master? (Grimm, 1865, pp. 37-38).

According to Grimm, the acquisition of photographs should be based on “complete catalogues, primarily of the works of the great masters.” In a collection thus assembled, where “the activities of the men are evident as in open books,” “every significant image” has to be accompanied by information on size, condition, color, attribution, and provenance. The gathering of such facts would be “an excellent exercise for those who intend

to study modern art history” (Grimm, 1865, pp. 36-39). Clearly, the idea of a catalogue raisonné becomes very tangible here.

VII.

About eight years later, in September 1873, the Austrian Museum for Art and Industry in Vienna hosted the first congress for art history on the invitation of its director and chairholder at Vienna University, Rudolf von Eitelberger (1817-1885).²³ The above-mentioned Woltmann, by then professor of art history at the polytechnic in Karlsruhe, presented a paper on the importance of catalogues for making collections scientifically accessible (see Woltmann, 1873). The lecture was greeted by a lively response, and the participants of the congress eventually agreed on a resolution recommending “most emphatically” that governments and ministries engage in “the scholarly cataloguing” of public art collections, and particularly of galleries of paintings (*Resolution*, 1873, p. 468).²⁴ Catalogues raisonnés were not mentioned here, and there does not seem to have been a general debate on the subject within the discipline at the time. The contemporary discussion was marked, however, by conflicts between representatives of the young discipline and artists who had traditionally been entrusted with the curating of collections. This pertains as much to the so-called Holbein-Controversy (“Holbein-Streit”) of 1871²⁵ as it does to the Rubens-Controversy of 1881 in Berlin.²⁶ In both instances, the art historians celebrated the outcome as a victory over the artists whose authority in matters of art was now permanently questioned.

VIII.

Even so, the project of the *Allgemeines Künstler-Lexikon* also turned out to be a failure, as Meyer’s dictionary remained a torso. Of the twelve to fifteen volumes that were planned initially, three had appeared by 1885; the alphabetic sequence terminates at the end of the third volume with “BEZ” (Giuseppe Bezzuoli).²⁷ Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker (1864-1928) tersely commented on this with “vestigia terrent” (“the vestiges scare”) when they later again confronted the task of producing an artists’ dictionary (*All-*

gemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Künstler, 1907, Preface, p. V), while their reviewer, Friedländer, had this to say about the predecessor:

Very little was achieved because one had tried to do too much. One had not taken into account the particular character and function of a dictionary. Meyer's dictionary was a collection of monographs. Each monograph, authored if possible by the pre-eminent specialist, was intended to completely exhaust the subject, with a catalogue of all works of each master (one might just imagine the entry on Rubens!). If, against all the odds, one had completed this dictionary [...], it would have become a monster; by the time the last volumes would have appeared, the first ones would have been out-dated (if not already crumbled to dust because of the paper's poor quality) (Friedländer, 1908, pp. 354-355).

Meyer's dictionary is only rarely mentioned in studies on the history of art history.²⁸ And yet Carl von Lützow (1832-1897), who taught in Vienna, had voiced his conviction in 1870 "that this work, as it matures towards its completion, is to be counted among the monuments of scholarship of our times and possesses all the qualities which enable it to richly contribute to the maintenance of the worldwide standing of our literature" (Lützow, 1870, p. 157). Another review of the dictionary, published anonymously in the same year, makes similarly encouraging remarks but simultaneously cites the fundamental critique frequently levied against the kind of approach it adopts: "collecting and ordering, summarizing and classifying are seen by many as symptoms of mental decrepitude." Contrary to such reservations, the reviewer greets the enterprise as a real service to the discipline of art history, and more generally, to an academic life that boasts of "vital consciousness." He likens it to "encompassing encyclopedic works, wide-ranging repertoires, [and] quite generally great inventories of particular disciplines" (anonymous, 1870, p. 465).

IX.

With its martial rhetoric, Meyer's dedication of his dictionary to Friedrich Wilhelm (1831-1888)—Prussian heir to the throne and later German Emperor Friedrich III²⁹—testifies to the self-conception of the contemporary elite of historical research in an atmosphere of an exalted national identity.

This is by no means the only example of the significance of catalogues raisonnés in the context of cultural politics. The case of Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640) is similarly illuminating. After the London art dealer John Smith (1781-1855) had published the first catalogue raisonné of the paintings already in 1830—a work still referenced today—the task was taken up again half a century later by Max Rooses (1839-1914), curator and scientific director of the *Plantijn Museum* in Antwerp (Rooses, 1886-1892). Rooses (Ill. 3), an activist of the *Vlaamse Beweging*, was the subject of an article by Ulrich Heinen of 2009 entitled “Art History as an Instrument of Populist Ideology” (*Kunstgeschichte als Funktion populistischer Ideologie*). Just as in Thoré-Bürger’s case, Rooses’s catalogue forms part of an encompassing program which not only included an exhibition, but also the *Rubens-Bulletin* (1882-1910), co-founded by Rooses, the edition of Rubens’s correspondence—begun by Charles Ruelens—in six volumes (Rooses, 1887-1909), and a Rubens monograph (Rooses, 1890 in German; 1903 in French and Flemish editions), to name only the most important of his publications on Rubens.³⁰ While pursuing all these activities, Rooses remained faithful to his own—and indeed today’s—scientific standards.³¹ Nevertheless, his efforts on behalf of the artist, which had originated in the planned festivities for the master’s 300th birthday, were clearly politically motivated. Political interests were also to inform the reception of his *L’Œuvre de P.P. Rubens*, a publication that was even enthusiastically approved by a plenary session of Antwerp’s city council.³²

X.

When one spoke of Rubens in the nineteenth century, Rembrandt (1606-1669) could not be far away. While the first catalogue raisonné of Rembrandt’s paintings had been published in the first half of the century, once again by John Smith,³³ the young Wilhelm Bode later took advantage of his review of the “then most substantial monograph on Rembrandt”³⁴ by Carel Vosmaer (1826-1888)—*Rembrandt Harmensz van Rijn, sa vie et ses œuvres* (1868)—to attempt a completion of Vosmaer’s catalogue (Bode, 1870, p. 174). In his *Studies on the History of Dutch Painting of 1883* (*Studien zur Geschichte der holländischen Malerei*), Bode subsequently wrote of his

ILL. 3

Max Roosees and his family in Flemish costumes in the section 'Oud-Antwerpen' at the world fair in Antwerp 1894, photography. Collection City of Antwerpen Letterenhuis



plan “to later publish an extensive work on Rembrandt’s paintings, which shall also include information on provenance, dimensions, technique of the pictures, their reproductions, etc.” (Bode, 1883, p. X). Bode eventually realized this project in his *Descriptive Catalogue* (*Beschreibendes Verzeichnis*), published between 1897 and 1906 in eight lavish volumes, richly illustrated with heliographic plates. In the preface to the first volume he voiced the following conviction: “The true, permanent monuments for the masters of art are the publications of their works, in reproductions of highest faithfulness and completeness, and in punctiliously critical assembly” (Bode, I, 1897, Preface). In this case, however, the expensive photographic campaigns, as well as the research and the printing, had been financed by the dealer-collector Charles Sedelmeyer (1837-1925) who, according to Bode, had handled nearly a tenth of Rembrandt’s paintings. This arrangement meant that museum director Bode’s judgment became compromised;³⁵ here indeed, the cliché of an expert corrupted by commerce became a

reality. Nevertheless, in the year of Rembrandt's 300th birthday (1906), the University of Amsterdam was to bestow on Bode an honorary doctorate, in particular for his "huge labor" in compiling the catalogue raisonné, which was celebrated as a unique reference work.³⁶

XI.

At the beginning of the last decade of the nineteenth century, Heinrich Wölfflin (1864-1945), Bode's junior by one generation, published a short volume entitled *The Early Works of Michelangelo* (*Die Jugendwerke des Michelangelo*, 1891). Opposition to this text was foreseeable, as Wölfflin contradicted the attribution of the so-called *Giovannino* (Ill. 4) to Michelangelo, thus questioning its acquisition by Bode for the Berlin museum.³⁷ Wölfflin made himself additionally vulnerable as he occasionally engaged in de-attributions on the basis of reproductions, i.e. without prior careful examination of the objects themselves.³⁸ The actual reason why this study received a mixed reception in the discipline is probably to be found in its structure, however. It is neither an artist's biography, as championed by Springer or Grimm, nor is it a catalogue raisonné in the proper sense of the term, even though Carl von Lützow likened it to that genre when stating that it constituted a valuable building block towards a highly desirable but still unwritten critical catalogue of the works of Michelangelo (Lützow, 1892, p. 267). Wölfflin's book of 1891 shows the author at the crossroads, as it were, yet he was not to follow Herman Grimm's plea to leave aside such "notes"—which were neither "frightening anyone" nor "bringing fear or joy to anybody"³⁹—and to seek merit by turning instead to Michelangelo's still largely unstudied drawings.⁴⁰

XII.

The material discussed here raises the general question of the value assigned to the genre of the catalogue raisonné by the academic community. Are catalogues raisonnés to be counted among the fundamental research projects worthy of public funding, or should they be relegated to private research? Interestingly, the digital age has reshuffled the cards, bringing



ILL. 4
Domenico Pieratti (attributed to; formerly ascribed to Michelangelo): *So-called "Giovannino"*,
marble sculpture. Berlin, formerly Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum (war loss)

new prestige to the catalogue, often decried as conservative. The catalogue raisonné also seems to profit from this development. In 2015 the *art libraries journal* published a special issue dedicated to “Catalogues raisonnés, collection catalogues and the future of artwork documentation” which explored some of the many practices and possibilities afforded by digital publication. It goes without saying that the information provided by university libraries nowadays includes digital catalogues raisonnés.⁴¹ The latter are certainly seen as an option for institutions such as the London based Paul Mellon Centre (Yale University), the Swiss Institute for Art Research (Zurich) or the Belvedere Research Center (Vienna). Other institutions, such as the privately funded Wildenstein Plattner Institute (New York), assert that the digital catalogue provides the only future in the publishing of catalogues raisonnés, while *The Art Newspaper* similarly states that “it is time for catalogues raisonnés to join the digital age” (Adam, 2020). More generally, it is revealing to consider the moment when an online catalogue raisonné goes live, and how its connection with the larger community on the internet is organized and moderated. Whether it is viewed as an instrument to facilitate and/or make visible work in progress or as a means to publish the finished catalogue at the end of a project, the online catalogue provides a fascinating array of different uses, not the least of which is the possibility of publishing updates.⁴²

Nevertheless, important questions persist. For instance, is the internet a suitable laboratory for thought and research in this context, and does a heterogeneous group of participants (art historians, art dealers, artists, conservators, laypersons) arrive at better, i.e. more accurate and reliable judgments than individual experts? What about the frequently called-for transparency of decisions? Who are the gatekeepers? Will the new media even have an effect on the very concept of authenticity, a notion that stands at the center of the ambitions of a catalogue raisonné? These and other problems will no doubt provide more food for thought in the future. It remains to be seen whether institutionalized art history will (further) eschew the much-needed debates of this kind, debates that should also be integrated into a more general discourse. The development of the catalogue raisonné, which in the past was already intimately tied to the history of media, deserves more attention as the discipline continues to evolve.

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NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS

All translations from the German are mine. They are meant to convey the occasionally somewhat convoluted style of their authors, often typical of their time.

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NOTES

- 1 Cf. the three-page “Prospectus” by the publisher Wilhelm Engelmann, dated November 1869; in *Allgemeines Künstler-Lexikon*, I, 1872.
- 2 Cf. “Vorläufige Mittheilung” by Wilhelm Engelmann, November 1885, found at the end of vol. 3.
- 3 See also the review by Bode 1871.
- 4 See Dilly, 1979, p. 236ff. For previous professorships for art history see also Beyrodt, 1991.
- 5 Cf. Hellwig, 2005, p. 168ff.; with further contemporary testimonies for the perception of art history as “Cinderella among the modern disciplines” (Bruno Meyer, 1872); cf. Rampley, 2011.

- 6 See Beyrodt, 1999, p. 24.
7 Already cited by Waetzoldt, 1924, p. 250.
8 Rößler, 2012, p. 499.
9 Rößler, 2012, p. 498.
10 Rößler, 2012, p. 500ff.
11 Also cf. Justi in letters to Bode, 11 February 1883 and 22 July 1883, in: Rößler, 2012, no. 48, pp. 235-236, and no. 49, pp. 237-238. The English translation published in 1889, revised by the author, leaves out the quote from Boerne. On the English edition see Petri 2016.
12 Cf. Rößler, 2012, pp. 497, 505.
13 Among others, Jowell 1995, 1998; Gaskell 2002.
14 See Jowell, 1995, p. 124 and no. 4.
15 The articles appeared in the October to December issues of the 1866 volume and were also published separately, see Jowell, 1995, note 3.
16 Within the group of figure paintings, there is also a classification according to size. Signatures are rendered in facsimile.
17 See for instance nos. 23 and 47.
18 On Grimm's publication see among others Schlink, 2001, pp. 89-91.
19 See Friedländer, 1891, preface and appendix I. Friedländer is also the author of the entry on this artist in the first volume of the so-called Thieme-Becker of 1907.
20 See Büttner, 2003, p. 83.
21 See Betthausen, 1999, p. 191.
22 On Grimm's use of photography and the so-called "Skioptikon" see among others Beyer, 2006; Rößler, 2010 (both with earlier literature).
23 The significance of the congress for the discipline has repeatedly been discussed in the literature, see among others Rampley, 2011; Scilipoti, 2019.
24 Cf. Dilly, 1979, p. 161ff.
25 See Dilly, 1979, p. 166; Bättschmann, 1996; Haskell, 2000, pp. 90-93; Griener, 2001; Prange, 2004, pp. 174-176; Bader, 2013.
26 See Bartmann, 1985, p. 236ff.; von Stockhausen, 2000, p. 60ff.
27 Work was stopped in 1888, a step that was officially justified by the death of the publisher Rudolph Engelmann (died 28.3.1888): see the relevant declaration in the periodical *Kunstchronik* of 1887/88; cf. von Stockhausen, 1997; Fork, 1999, p. 274.
28 See Ladendorf, 1957; von Stockhausen 1996, 1997, 2000; Fork, 1999.
29 To whom also Justi was to dedicate his monograph on Velazquez.
30 On further publications by Rooses see Heinen, 2009, pp. 56-57.
31 See Heinen, 2009, p. 57.
32 See Heinen, 2009, p. 72.
33 Smith, 1836; see Friedenthal, 2019.
34 Schatborn, 1989, p. 171.

- 35 See Scallen, 2004, pp. 214-218 and passim, also for sources and further literature; Ripps, 2013; Huemer, 2014.
- 36 See Peters, 2007, p. 167f.
- 37 For the acquisition history of this sculpture see Voci, 2010.
- 38 See Imorde in Wölfflin, 2020.
- 39 Grimm in a letter to Wölfflin of 18 November 1890; cited after Wölfflin, 2020, p. 183.
- 40 As suggested by Grimm in his review of 1891, p. 148.
- 41 See for instance Cornell University, Art History and Visual Studies: A research guide – Catalogues raisonnés (guides.library.cornell.edu).
- 42 Examples of collaborative research on a given artist and his workshop include Jan Brueghel (see Honig, 2014, with a critical view of the pre-digital catalogue raisonné in general), and Lucas Cranach the Elder (see Brinkmann, 2017). For another online catalogue, still in progress, see the revision of Otto Benesch's *The Drawings of Rembrandt* (6 vols., London, Phaidon, 1954-1957) by Martin Royalton-Kisch (rembrandt.catalogue.net).

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