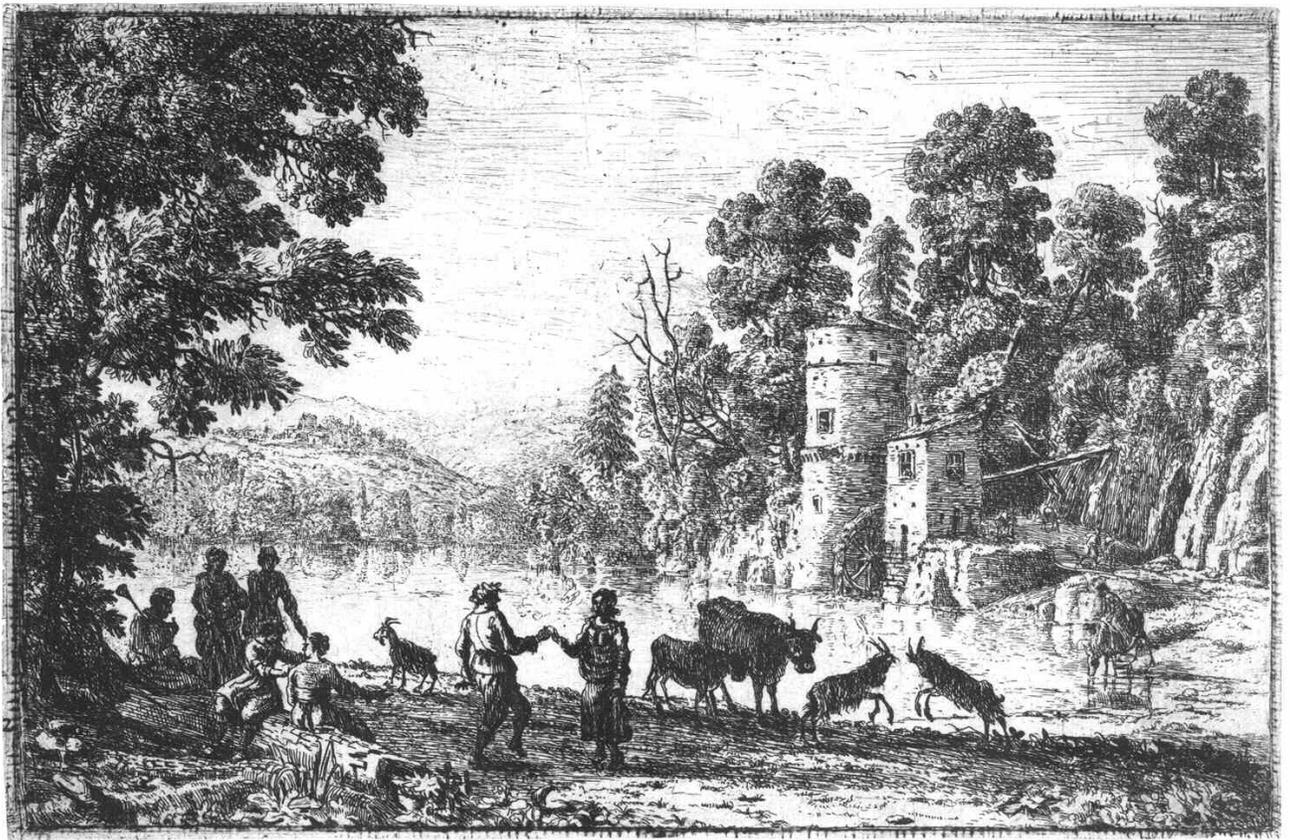


SEARCHING FOR CLAUDE



Claude Gellée (1600-1682)
The Dance on the River-Bank (c.1634)
etching, 5" x 7 11/16" (sheet)
[Mannocci 13, viA (of vii)]

(Mannocci says of state viB, "There are both contemporary and posthumous impressions of this state", implying that this viA state is a lifetime impression.)

AND DUGHET IN ROMAN PALAZZI

BY PATRICK HARRINGTON

My wife Nancy Patz and I were sitting in the great hall of the Palazzo Colonna, beneath the huge ceiling painting of the 1571 Battle of Lepanto, where a Colonna commanded the papal forces. We were looking back over a week in Rome, searching out the paintings of Claude Lorrain and Gaspard Dughet. It had been a successful search, but we thought we had come to its end when we were approached by a gallery staff member who was about to provide us with an unexpected opportunity to discover more than we had hoped for. But first, you might ask: Who were Claude and Dughet, and why should I care? So here's the background:

Claude Lorrain

“Claude Lorrain has at all times been considered the greatest of the landscape painters.” This is the unqualified opening sentence in Marcel Roethlisberger’s 1961 catalog raisonné of Claude’s paintings. ⁽¹⁾ His real name was Claude Gellée, but he was known as Claude Lorrain, after the dukedom of Lorraine where he was born in 1600. Claude went to Rome when he was about 13 years old. He traveled some in his twenties, but from 1627 until his death he remained in

Rome, living in the artists’ quarter between the Piazza del Popolo and the Spanish Steps.

HIS PAINTINGS & DRAWINGS

In 1975 when I first encountered the wonderful collection of Claudes at the National Gallery in London, I wasn’t aware of Claude’s stature. What attracted me to his paintings was the unity of the effect he achieved. He created an ideal world, pastoral and antique, one with no distractions to break the spell. If the arrangement of his framing trees and distant mountains strike contemporary viewers as somehow trite, it may be because generations of lesser artists have used him as their model. Claude’s paintings are unrivaled in their renderings of light, especially that light at day’s end, or as it touches the mist lingering in the morning air. But many contemporary viewers, looking for more spontaneous art, turn from his paintings to his drawings. And they have a very different greatness, with their direct response to nature. This was the focus of last year’s show at the Louvre. ⁽²⁾

HIS ETCHINGS

Claude also produced a small body of etchings. The catalog raisonné by Lino Mannocci ⁽³⁾ lists 44 [just 27 if we discount a rare pamphlet on a Roman fireworks display and a few sketches that

were clearly just test plates]. Critics have puzzled why he did any etchings at all as he had more lucrative commissions for paintings than he could handle. Perhaps he initially wanted to make his talents better known outside of Rome. In any case, they are wonderful etchings and were collected and reprinted until the worn-out plates disappeared after 1826. I had not been interested in his etchings until I came across a couple of his prints at the 1998 IFPDA Print Fair in New York. At first glance they seemed a little “scribbly” and careless. (I later read that in 1768 the critic William Gilpin wrote, “His execution is bad; there is a dirtiness in it, which is disgusting. ...”) But they were by Claude, and I was surprised that they were not prohibitively expensive. I looked at them with new eyes and have been collecting them ever since. We now have over 20.

Many of Claude’s etchings are similar to one or another of his paintings and thus display grand vistas. But he was a pioneer in trying to achieve in etching the effects of atmosphere and lighting that were the hallmark of his paintings. And because these effects are subtle, it is important to see lifetime impressions with their delicate lines—lines lost in the later printings. Some of the early impressions have in some areas plate tone—where some ink was left on the plate outside the etched lines—while other areas were wiped clean. Discussing one such etching, Richard Wallace writes, “Here, as in many of Rembrandt’s prints, it seems that Claude was virtually painting with printer’s ink, much as he would have applied wash to a drawing.”⁽⁴⁾

Claude’s etchings were neglected in the first part of the 20th century, and it was not until they were given a prominent place in the great Claude show at the National Gallery of Art in Washington in 1982 (and in the accompanying catalog by H. Diane Russell⁽⁵⁾) that interest in them revived. This was followed in 1988 by Manocci’s indispensable catalog raisonné. This profusely illustrated catalog distinguishes the many different states, often on the basis of the tiniest scratches. Yet he does not attempt to identify which states were printed by Claude. While it is clear that the earliest states showing substantive

changes must have been done by Claude, the plates were kept together and there were excellent printings in the early 1700s, probably in Paris. Many editions followed, and finally in the early 1800s most of the now worn plates were re-etched with great skill. What happened to them finally is a mystery.

Gaspard Dughet

Any discussion in the literature of 17th-century landscape painting will mention three artists: Nicolas Poussin, Claude Lorrain and Gaspard Dughet. Poussin is of course known to most art lovers as an artist with a very classical style and “serious” subjects. Recall his painting *Et in Arcadia ego*—where even in Arcadia death is present! Poussin did not do any prints; so we pass on to Dughet. He is unfamiliar to most museum goers, although you will find a few of his paintings in the major museum collections. Gaspard Dughet was born in 1615, the son of Jacques Dughet, a Parisian who had settled in Rome. When Poussin fell ill, he was taken in by the Dughet household, and Gaspard’s older sister, Anna Maria, nursed him back to health. Poussin and Anna Maria were married in 1630, and young Gaspard went to live in Poussin’s household. Poussin recognized his talent for drawing and gave him instruction. Within a few years Gaspard was able to go off on his own. His big commission to do frescoes for the Carmelites in the ancient church of San Martino Ai Monti launched a very successful career during which he produced hundreds of paintings and, more importantly, frescoes for the major noble palaces of Rome. All his biographers emphasize the speed with which he worked. He died in 1675 after a few years’ illness.

HIS PAINTINGS & FRESCOES

Dughet painted views of the countryside near Rome, not of the sweeping Campagna like Claude, but rather of the regions to the east: Tivoli and the rough, wooded Apennines. He kept houses at Tivoli and Frascati and dogs for hunting. His paintings do not feature ancient ruins, just the contemporary farm houses and travelers tramping the dirt roads



Gaspard Dughet (1615-1675)
Landscape with Horseman (c.1645)
 etching, 8" x 11 15/16"
 inscribed "Gasparo Duche in. sculp. Romae"
 (1st state, before the address of Mauperche)
 [Boisclair No. 34, p 179]

or resting by lakes. Dughet has been credited with the introduction of the "storm landscape." To the frustration of art historians, he never signed or dated his paintings. I liked his paintings and have sought them out, but his best work was considered to be his frescoes still on the walls where they were painted.

HIS ETCHINGS

Dughet did do a few etchings: four rectangular and four circular. In an exhibition catalog from the Boston Fine Arts Museum, *Italian Etchers of the Renaissance & Baroque*, I found a very positive description by Richard Wallace of one of his etchings. (It is the etching reproduced here.) So I was on the lookout for a Dughet, and in 2007 I saw one up for auction at Galerie Gerda Bassenge

in Berlin. Since then I've been able to acquire six of his eight etchings. They are quite different from Claude. They are done with a rapidity and have an openness, with dramatic lights and dark shadows.

Our Journey to Rome

So with my involvement in the etchings of Claude and Dughet, I had developed a yearning to see what remains of their work in the city where it was produced. Our focus would be the art of the 16th and 17th centuries. Nancy was especially interested in Caravaggio, and of course we wanted to seek out Claude and Dughet.

Rome is so rich in art and antiquity that even though tourists flood in and swamp the Colosseum

and other Top Ten attractions, elsewhere you can visit spectacular places that are nearly empty. And while antiquities draw crowds, there are wonderful things in the palazzi built by the popes and nobility from the Renaissance on. Of course some are in the Top Ten: for instance the Borghese Gallery, where advanced timed tickets are needed to see its wonderful collection of sculpture. Ditto for Villa Farnesina, where visitors swarm to see its spectacular (and erotic) frescoes by artists including Raphael.

In addition to the palaces, the Roman churches hold world-renowned artistic treasures. Near the Pantheon in San Luigi dei Francesi we found Caravaggio's *The Calling of Saint Matthew*, a truly great painting.

Following our agenda to search out Dughet, one morning we visited San Martino ai Monti, a beautiful church with an ancient crypt. While a few prayed and a priest played the pipe organ, we examined the dozen or so frescoes painted by Dughet early in his career. Compared to other works of that period, they seem to me a breath of fresh air. Although the Carmelites demanded the frescoes illustrate the stories of their saints, the figures are secondary to the landscapes. The colors are cool and refreshing.

Two palazzi in the heart of Rome—Palazzo Doria Pamphilj and Palazzo Colonna—are still privately owned by the princely Roman families who commissioned many of the 17th-century paintings that crowd their walls. Both families rose to their greatest prominence when one of their own became pope. The Doria Pamphilj Gallery is more accessible and has the greater collection of paintings. The Pamphilj pope was Innocent X, and a small room is reserved for Velazquez's portrait of him, along with a bust of him by Bernini. (Bernini hired Dughet to do frescoes in his own residence!) The bust is great, but the Velazquez portrait is amazing—much more forceful on the wall than in all the reproductions we've seen.

The Doria Pamphilj Gallery has five paintings by Claude Lorraine. Two are very large: *Landscape with Mill and Dancing Figures* and *Imaginary View*

of Delphi. There is a Claude in the National Gallery in London called *Landscape with the Marriage of Isaac and Rebecca* that is nearly identical to the *Landscape with Mill*, and thereby hangs a tale. It seems that *Landscape with Marriage* was commissioned by Camillo Pamphilj, Innocent X's nephew, to commemorate his marriage to Olimpia Aldobrandini, a marriage that compelled him to renounce his cardinal's rank. The pope was furious and exiled him to Frascati, and Claude's commission was rescinded. The painting went elsewhere and ended in England. But when Camillo worked his way back to favor, he commissioned Claude again for the nearly identical *Landscape with Mill*. Unfortunately, both these large paintings are hung high and so are not too easy to see. There are two small, intimate Claudes at eye level near them, however, and another lovely one across the way.

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There are really enormous riches in the Doria Pamphilj Gallery, and, if you are in Rome, it is not to be missed. We enjoyed the three Caravaggios on one wall, especially *The Rest During the Flight into Egypt*, where an angel (with black wings!) plays a violin while Joseph holds the music for him. There is a Poussin Room in the Doria Pamphilj, with the walls filled with paintings by Dughet (it's called the Poussin Room because Gaspard took his ~~step-brother's~~ name and was called "Gaspard Poussin"). I found these works rather disappointing; dark and huge, they seem badly in need of cleaning.

brother-in-law's

I knew there were other works by Claude and Dughet in Rome, but some are in private collections that are simply not open to the public. One is becoming more accessible. In his monograph on Dughet written in 1975, Roethlisberger noted that "... a number of major works and archives are practically inaccessible; this is in particular the case of the fundamentally important paintings and frescoes of the Doria and Colonna collections. ... The Colonna frescoes have been seen by very few historians." ⁽⁶⁾ Looking into the online information on the Palazzo Colonna website (www.galleriacolonna.it), I saw that the gallery was open to the public, but only from 9:00 to 1:15 on Saturdays. We reserved our Saturday for a visit.

The gallery turned out to be a spectacular space. These Roman palaces have an almost unreal richness of marble. The builders stripped marble from the ancient city; the Colonna Palazzo is built on the site of the ancient Temple of Serapis. At the far end of the main gallery is the Hall of Landscapes, a room hung with a wonderful collection of paintings by Dughet. Twelve of them, in fact! And they are, for the most part, in good condition. It looked like a fine end to our search for Claudes and Dughets in Rome.

But as they say in the late night TV ads: "Wait! There's more!"

As we were sitting in the Great Hall, resting after a couple of hours of close scrutiny of every crowded wall, we were approached by one of the staff: "Would you like to have a private guided tour?" At first we thought we were being offered an English-speaking guide to go over what we had been looking at all this time. We said OK and came up with an additional fee. And Nancy and I and two others were led through the door with the "No Admittance" sign to begin a tour of the private apartments! It turns out this is where much of the good stuff is: well-known paintings like Annibale Carracci's *The Bean Eater*, amazing rooms, and finally The Dughet Hall. This is a room decorated with frescoes done by Gaspard Dughet circa 1650—some of his finest work and in excellent condition. Wonderful! I had never seen reproductions of these frescoes. (You can get a glimpse of them on the Colonna website referenced above.)

It seems that the Colonna family is trying to make their treasures more accessible. The gallery bookstore has new volumes like *The Colonna Family* by Prospero Colonna. But it would be difficult to handle the sort of crowds that visit Doria Pamphilj in the Colonna private apartments. Thus the small guided tours, which they now advertise on their website. At the end of the tour, we were offered juice and a chance to sit on the patio. With us were two French visitors who had joined our group. They seemed to know a lot about the Colonna. They had been discussing who's who in the photographs that were in the apartments. They said that these tours had only started a few weeks ago. As we talked, our guide was down the way speaking with an immaculately dressed man. The older Frenchman looked over and said, "You know, I think that's the Prince!" A perfect ending.

REFERENCES

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You can find scans of our collection of etchings by Claude and Dughet on my webpage at http://www.astro.umd.edu/~jph/Claude_Etchings.html