

AMERICAN LATIUM

American Artists and Travelers in and around Rome
in the Age of the Grand Tour

Proceedings of the International Conference edited by

Christopher M.S. Johns, Tommaso Manfredi, Karin Wolfe



ACCADEMIA NAZIONALE DI SAN LUCA

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Thomas Hiram Hotchkiss, *Torre di Schiavi*, 1865, detail.

Smithsonian American Art Museum, 1977.52

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Contents

- 7 Introduction
Karin Wolfe
- THE AMERICAN GRAND TOUR: FROM OLD MASTERS TO THE NEW WORLD**
- 17 Copying Old Masters for the New World: American Painters in Eighteenth-Century Rome
Jonny Yarker
- 31 James Bowdoin III and Ward Nicholas Boylston in Italy: American Collectors in the Later Eighteenth Century
Sarah Cantor
- 43 John Singleton Copley in Rome: The Challenge of the Old Masters Accepted
Christopher M.S. Johns
- 53 London Between America and Continental Europe: Art and Academies
Martin Postle
- 67 The Prince and the President: Antonio Canova and Benjamin West at the Royal Academy in London
Francesco Moschini
- 79 John Neal, the Old Masters, and the American Muse
Francesca Orestano
- 91 ‘In the Beginning there was the Word’: American Writings on Raphael from the Founding Fathers to the Gilded Age
Linda Wolk-Simon
- AMERICAN LATIUM: SITES AND ITINERARIES IN AND AROUND ROME**
- 103 American Itineraries in Rome and the Campagna
Fabrizio Di Marco
- 113 A Grave in a Foreign Land: Early American Presence at the Protestant Burying-Ground in Rome
Nicholas Stanley-Price
- 123 Thomas Cole and the Aqueducts: *Plein Air* Painting in the Roman Campagna
Lisa Beaven
- 139 Thomas Cole, Desolation, and the Ruins of Rome
David R. Marshall
- 153 Scenery Found: John Gadsby Chapman and Open-Air Oil Sketching in and around Rome, 1830-1882
Mary K. McGuigan
- 165 American and European Artists and Intellectuals in Nineteenth-Century Latium: the “School of the *Castelli Romani*” and the Locanda Martorelli in Ariccia
Francesco Petrucci
- 169 Living and Creating in Antiquity: Roman Residences and Studios of Thomas Gibson Crawford, William Wetmore Story and Moses Jacob Ezekiel
Pier Paolo Racioppi
- AMERICANS AND THE ARTISTIC CULTURE OF ROME: TOWARD AN AMERICAN ART**
- 183 Americans on the Grand Tour and Angelica Kauffman in Rome
Wendy Wassyng Roworth
- 195 Championing Liberty: the Roman Sculptor Giuseppe Ceracchi in Britain and in America
Karin Wolfe
- 215 The Rome of Charles Bulfinch
Tommaso Manfredi
- 229 Thomas Jefferson: Rome in America
Maria Cristina Loi
- 239 A Painter and Diplomat: The Two Careers of James Edward Freeman and their Correspondences
John F. McGuigan Jr
- 257 Forgotten Fervor: Paul Akers in Rome
Arlene Palmer
- 269 Undressing America: Nineteenth-Century Expatriate Sculptors in Rome and the Problem of Nudity
Kevin Salatino
- 287 Bibliography
- 303 In memoriam and acknowledgements

In 1785 at the age of twenty-two, Charles Bulfinch (1763-1844), the first great American native-born architect, took a trip to England, France and Italy that included a short stay in Rome in the spring of 1786. This trip is the least examined episode of his life and work, and it is on this that this paper will focus.¹

From the limited information we have about his youthful years in his autobiography, which was written in old age and published after his death by his niece Ellen Susan in 1896, and in the few letters he sent to parents and friends, we know that Bulfinch undertook his trip to Europe from his native Boston primarily to resolve family affairs.² His reasons for the trip were linked to an inheritance from a maternal uncle, George Apthorp, who had lived in the London suburb of Croydon, and to take care of the interests of the merchant Joseph Barrell, for whom he was reluctantly employed at the behest of his father, Thomas, a renowned Boston physician. From the moment of his arrival in London, on 20 July 1785, until his departure for Paris at the end of that year, Bulfinch lived in close contact with relatives and with the American community, as a young exponent of the enlightened Bostonian upper class. He was a Harvard graduate, with sufficient funds to be able to freely indulge all his social and cultural interests, including an amateur passion for architecture that followed the lead of other members of the Apthorp family.³ In this amateur spirit, in the first letter written to his father from London, dated 12 August 1785, the architecture of the city was the object of Bulfinch's curiosity rather than the subject of more methodical study: 'I have been engaged ever since my arrival in gratifyng my curiosity with the sight of buildings &c &c, & find I have still a great deal to see.'⁴

The time Bulfinch spent in England was part of an European itinerary, like the one undertaken by his uncle John Apthorp with his wife and children.⁵ Bulfinch himself stressed this in a passage from his autobiography:

'the time of my visit to Europe was passed, partly in London & in visits to friends of my family in different parts of England; in a visit to France & through that country to Italy. At Paris I tarried some time to view its buildings & other objects of curiosity, to wich I was introduced by letters from the Marquis La Fayette & Mr. Jefferson, then minister there.'⁶

These recollections by the elderly Bulfinch of the illustrious figures in contemporary American history that he met in his youth in Paris, such as Gilbert du Motier, the Marquis de Lafayette (1757-1834), and especially President Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), with whom he had in common a

glorious architectural career, was a way of establishing the continental part of his European travels as a formative Grand Tour. But it was also a literary device to compare himself after the event to a known connoisseur like Jefferson in his development as a young architect.

Jefferson, who during his time in Paris had deepened and refined his knowledge of architecture,⁷ favored Bulfinch for his visits to the ‘buildings & other objects of curiosity’ of the French capital. French architecture has been considered by modern scholars to be the true source of Bulfinch’s architectural language, and indeed the reason why he chose to become an architect, given the Francophile culture of Boston and the young American nation generally.⁸ As Bulfinch himself wrote, he made use of letters of introduction written by Jefferson and Lafayette, probably at the urging of their friend John Adams (1735-1826), then American ambassador in London, to whom Bulfinch frequently refers in his correspondence.⁹

Bulfinch’s reference to these letters of introduction has been considered an indication – if not proof – that Jefferson prepared an actual written guide for his young compatriot for the continuation of his journey to the south of France and Italy.¹⁰ But this does not take into account the fact that at the time when he met Bulfinch, 1785, Jefferson had not visited the south of France, Italy, or even England. In fact it would have been the other way around: Bulfinch preceded Jefferson to the south of France and Italy, and also to London, where Jefferson stayed for the first time from 12 March to 26 April 1786.¹¹ Bulfinch would therefore have been in a position to have been a precious source of information for Jefferson’s trip planned for 1786 – a month after their last meeting in Paris – but postponed until February of 1787 due to an injury. In any event, while Jefferson made his way alone by private carriage to Italy and did not venture beyond Piedmont, Lombardy and Liguria,¹² Bulfinch quickly crossed Northern and Central Italy using public conveyances between May and June of 1786, and then remained in Rome for three weeks. Leaving Rome he returned to Paris¹³ and then London, as noted in a passage from his autobiography:

‘From Paris I proceeded in the spring of 1786 through Nantz & Bordeaux & by the canal of Languedoc to Marseilles & then to Antibes, from which place I crossed in an open feluca to Genoa, thence to Leghorn & Pisa, by Viterbo & Sienna to Rome, where I remained three weeks, & then returned by Bologna, Florence, Parma, Placentia and Milan over the Alps by Mont Cenis, to Lyons & again to Paris: after a short stay there, I returned to London by way of Rouen & Dieppe, crossing the channel to Brighton.’¹⁴

Bulfinch wrote to his mother that he had traveled happily and without incident or ill-health, having spent less than he had anticipated, and with



1. Mather Brown, *Charles Bulfinch*, 1786, oil on canvas, 74.9 x 62.9 cm. The Harvard Art Museums, Harvard University Portrait Collection, H428.

the exciting realization that a knowledge of French – widespread among wealthy Bostonians – had served him well everywhere:

‘It is needless for me to say that the satisfaction I have received in this tour has amply compensated for any fatigue I have undergone in making it. ... It would be in vain to attempt to give here a particular account of such a country; the subject is too copious & must be left till we meet in y^e winter.’¹⁵

Sadly, Bulfinch’s preference for oral communication over written means that little personal commentary about his Roman stay has come down to us, apart from a passage written by his grandson: ‘I have heard my father say that my grandfather was so much affected by the first sight of St. Peter’s that he could not restrain his tears.’¹⁶ This fascinating glimpse has fueled much speculation about his experience in the papal city, all inferred from the supposed derivation from Roman models of his architectural work, without taking into account the probable influence of engraved reproductions. According to Johann Wolfgang Goethe, who arrived in Rome on 1 November 1786, six months after Bulfinch, it was the prior knowledge of printed reproductions of paintings and architecture that distinguished foreign visitors who, like him, were already in possession of an idea of Rome, from those who acquired an immediate, but superficial perception of the city, like the many Goethe had seen arrive and leave during the first month of his stay in Rome.¹⁷

Bulfinch belonged to the multitude of tourists who spent less than a month in Rome. But there are several clues that suggest that his perception of Rome was far from superficial, thanks to his careful preparation of visits and meetings that took place both in London and in Paris, to-

gether with his engagement with progressive artistic and architectural culture. The first clue refers to the end of Bulfinch’s European stay on 17 September 1786 when, about to leave London to return to America, he wrote to his mother about his recently executed portrait by Mather Brown (1761-1831) (Fig. 1): ‘very rough, but that is the modish style of painting, introduced by Sir Joshua Reynolds. Mr. Copeley indeed paints in another manner, his pictures are finished to the utmost nicety, but then they are very dear.’¹⁸ This competent comparative evaluation of the artistic personalities of the young Brown – also author of a portrait of Jefferson (Fig. 2) – and John Singleton Copley (1738-1815), also a Bostonian, situates Bulfinch in the American artistic circle in London associated with the Royal Academy of Arts centred on Copley and above all Benjamin West (1738-1820), the first American painter to settle in Europe and the co-founder of the Academy in 1768.¹⁹

At the urging of Ambassador Adams, both West and Copley could have instructed the young Bulfinch on the artistic implications of his trip to France and Italy, especially Rome. This could have happened either directly, by recalling to him their respective travels in the 1760s

2. Mather Brown, *Thomas Jefferson*, 1786, oil on canvas, 90.8 × 72.4 cm. National Portrait Gallery, Washington, NPG.99.66.



and 1770s,²⁰ or indirectly by putting him in contact with artists who had recently returned from the continent.

In Royal Academy circles the use of letters of advice was customary in order to inform the winners of the residential prizes instituted in 1771 about Rome (and Italy in general). The best known of these is the letter of 1774 from Sir William Chambers to his pupil Edward Stevens.²¹ Chambers was one of the founding members of the Royal Academy and a leading figure in British architecture who inspired Bulfinch's work, together with Robert Adam (1728-1792), James Wyatt (1746-1813) and John Soane (1753-1837). In 1785, five years after his stay in Rome (1778-80), Soane would have been a useful informant for Bulfinch even before his original decorative and spatial interpretations of antiquity influenced American architectural culture.²² At that time Soane was in a position to transmit to others the first results of his archaeological researches on Roman and Campanian sites in London, which now rivaled Paris as the center for research into the ancient architecture of Italy and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Following the path trodden by Chambers and Soane, the Rome frequented by Bulfinch would therefore have been the Rome experienced by other young foreign architects who, following the example of the *pensionnaires* of the Académie de France established in the Palazzo Mancini in the Via del Corso from 1725-1802, stayed in Rome for prolonged periods animated by the idea of creating from ancient remains a universal, modern, sober and functional architectural language.²³

The Rome of transient students was closely connected to that of resident foreign artists. In 1787 the German Alois Hirt listed over 160 foreign artists residing or passing through Rome, many of them British.²⁴ Among the resident British artists some, such as the painters Thomas Jenkins (1722-1798) and Gavin Hamilton (1723-1798) and the architect James Byres (1733-1817) had also assumed the roles of agents and merchants of ancient sculptures and paintings of the old masters. Others produced series of copies of masterpieces, including the sculptor Christopher Hewetson (c.1737-1798) and the painter James Durno (c. 1745-1795). All were active in the service of wealthy British travelers, which, according to the Irishman Henry George Quin in April 1786 numbered 130.²⁵

Durno, a student of West at the Royal Academy, may have been a contact for the young Bulfinch, as was certainly the painter Angelica Kauffmann (1741-1807), a friend of West, who in 1782 had definitively moved from London to Rome, where in 1764, during her first stay, she had portrayed Bulfinch's uncle John Apthorpe and his cousins Grizzell and Catharine.²⁶ Kauffmann in turn was linked by friendship to the young sculptor Antonio Canova (1757-1822), who had moved to Rome from Venice in 1780. Canova was preparing to succeed Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778), who had died in 1778, as the main Italian reference point for artistically inclined Grand Tourists, the British in particular.

Presumably Bulfinch's itinerary in Rome had privileged architecture, in accordance with Jefferson's expectations as recorded by William Short (1759-1849), his personal secretary and successor in the post of American ambassador in Paris in 1790 (Fig. 3). In November 1788 Short was sent to Italy by Jefferson to replace Thomas Lee Shippen (1765-1798), who



3. Rembrandt Peale, *William Short*, 1806, oil on canvas, 77.5 x 63.9 cm. Muscarelle Museum of Art at William & Mary in Virginia, Williamsburg, 1938.004.

from June 1788, in the company of John Rutledge Jr (1766-1819), had been traveling in Europe on Jefferson's account, in a journey of knowledge that Jefferson himself had conceived and organised in order to extend the one that had been cut short the year before, and, above all, to compensate him for his not having reached Rome.

According to the *Traveling Notes for Mr. Rutledge and Mr. Shippen*, expressly written by Jefferson, the two envoys would need to pay careful attention to the subjects that were of most interest to an American in Europe: '1. Agriculture, 2. Mechanical arts, 3. Lighter mechanical arts and manufactures, 4. Gardens, 5. Architecture, 6. Painting. Statuary, 7 Politics of each country, 8. Courts.'²⁷

The letters sent by Short and Rutledge to Jefferson from Rome beginning on the the day after their arrival on 22 December 1788 are therefore to be read as regular reports intended to satisfy the curiosity of Jefferson in Paris, giving the American point of view of the papal city, the same point of view that Bulfinch could have disclosed to both Jefferson and Short a year earlier with particular attention to architecture.

For Jefferson, architecture was 'the most important art' for the American people, much more important than painting and statuary: "Too expensive for the state of wealth among us. It would be useless therefore, and preposterous for us to make ourselves connoisseurs in those arts. They are worth seeing, but not studying."²⁸

Jefferson had developed this point of view well before his arrival in Europe, but its application to architecture was explored in Paris on the occasion of

the design project for the Virginia State Capitol in Richmond, for which he consulted Charles-Louis Clérisseau (1721-1820), 'who perfectly fulfills my wishes.'²⁹ The reason Clérisseau was considered by Jefferson to be the ideal architect to employ was less his skills as a designer than his extraordinary knowledge of ancient Roman architecture. This knowledge had been acquired during a long stay in Rome that began in 1749 as a *pensionnaire* of the Académie de France, was communicated to other architects, including Chambers and Adam, and, after his return to Paris in 1767, made him famous as a designer of real and ideal views of the antique (Fig. 4).

In the eyes of Jefferson, as well as being the most trustworthy interpreter of the glories of Roman architecture, Clérisseau was the author of a publication on the Maison Carrée of Nîmes, published in Paris in 1778 as *Monumens de Nismes*.³⁰ Clérisseau proposed this substantially intact Roman temple as the model for the Virginia Capitol and indeed for the new architecture of the young American nation. Considering that the drawings of the Virginia Capitol were completed in January 1786 and the wooden model was already ready by June (although sent to America only in December),³¹ it is evident that the

4. Charles-Louis Clérisseau, *Capriccio with figures by a great arch*, signed and dated 'Clérisseau 1786', oil on canvas, 47.7 x 36.9 cm. Christie's, Auction 27 Sep 2016, lot 53.



attendance of Bulfinch on Jefferson in Paris coincided with the decisive phase in the design of the building. Bulfinch's involvement in the creative process of such a symbolically important work must have had a strong impact on his belief that architectural composition should be based on antique models, and he would have been aware that the *Maison Carrée* would be the first Roman monument that he would meet on his journey to Italy, as would be the case with Jefferson two years later. It is probable, therefore, that Bulfinch's itinerary in 1786 helped in the preparation of Jefferson's itinerary in 1787, and it is also probable that Bulfinch's itinerary was at least partially informed by Clérisseau, perhaps by means of travel notes similar to those he provided to the *pensionnaire* Antoine-Laurent-Thomas Vaudoyer (1756-1846) before his departure for Rome at the end of 1783.³²

For Bulfinch the recommendation of Chambers and Soane through Ambassador Adams, that of Clérisseau through Jefferson, and his ability to express himself fluently in French, allowed his possible contacts in Rome to include the young British and French architects who were staying there, and more widely to include all the contemporary Italian and other architects engaged in the study of ancient monuments as part of their cultural and professional training.³³

Among the British Royal Academy scholarship holders present in Rome at that time, in addition to the painters James Irvine (1757-1831) and Samuel Woodforde (1765-1817) and the sculptor John Charles Felix Rossi (1762-1839), were the architects Thomas Johnson (c. 1762-1814) and Willey Reveley (1760-1799).³⁴ Reveley, Chambers' protégé, had recently returned from a trip to southern Italy, Greece and Turkey as a draftsman in the entourage of the expedition of Richard Worsley.³⁵ He was the author of some Roman views depicting glimpses of Bulfinch's Rome: the canonical one of the Forums near the temple of Venus and Rome (Fig. 5), and the less usual ones of the Aurelian walls at Santa Croce in Gerusalemme (Fig. 6). Other drawings that Reveley was refining in the spring of 1786 belong among the extensive graphic repertoire that resulted from increasing reportage of southern Italy and the Mediterranean inspired by the work undertaken more than three decades earlier by Julien-David Le Roy (1724-1803), Nicholas Revett (1720-1804) and James "Athenian" Stuart (1713-1788).

Among the French architectural *pensionnaires* present in Rome in the spring of 1786, in addition to the above mentioned Vaudoyer, were Jean-Charles-Alexandre Moreau (1762-1810)³⁶ and Auguste Cheval de Saint-Hubert (1755-1798).³⁷ These could have been useful contacts for the young Bulfinch because of their knowledge of Roman antiquities, given that in that year the Académie Royale for the first time asked the *pensi-*



5. Willey Reveley, *The Temple of the Sun and Moon [Venus and Rome] as seen from the Amphitheatre [Colosseum]*, Rome, c. 1784-85, watercolor over graphite, with pen in brown ink and gum arabic, on laid paper, 48.9 x 37.5 cm. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.19455.

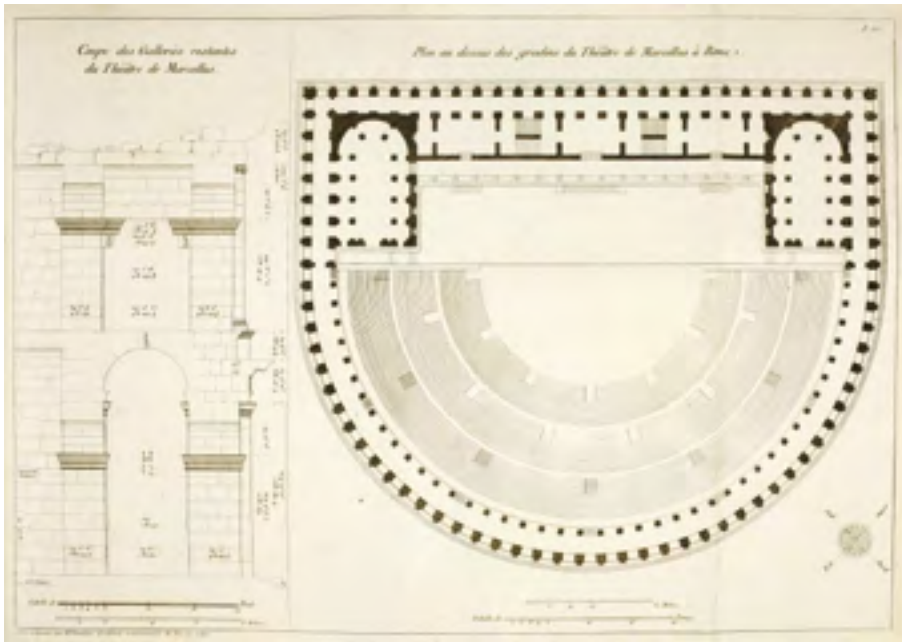
6. Willey Reveley, *The Aurelian Wall, Porta Maggiore, the Temple of Venus and Cupid and the Church of S. Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome*, c.1784-85, watercolor, with pen in brown ink, over graphite, with white gouache and gum arabic, on laid paper, 31.6 x 48.7 cm. Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection, B1977.14.19411.



onnaires to produce renderings of monuments rather than design projects.³⁸ In particular, Vaudoier was engaged on a reconstructive rendering (*restauration*) of the theater of Marcellus, which was sent to Paris at the end of 1786³⁹ (Figs. 7-8), as well as a rendering of the Villa Madama of Raphael which is documented in a drawing that recently appeared on the art market (Fig. 9). And in April 1787 de Saint-Ubert would continue the reconstructive rendering of the Pantheon left unfinished by the *pensionnaire* Louis-Étienne Deseine on his departure from Rome in 1782.⁴⁰ The Pantheon, that icon of ancient Rome and the subject of countless representations that transmitted its image internationally, was the focus of interest of scholars and every kind of tourist. The extraordinarily emotional impression conveyed by Short to Jefferson in his first letter written from Rome just after visiting the Pantheon must reflect the expectations aroused by Bulfinch's conversations with Jefferson, at the point when the building was chosen as a "sublime" model for American neoclassical culture. Short's account is neither critical nor analytical, but it is imbued with the same pure emotion that had been aroused in Bulfinch by the sight of the equally symbolic Vatican basilica, which not by chance is also referred to by Short:

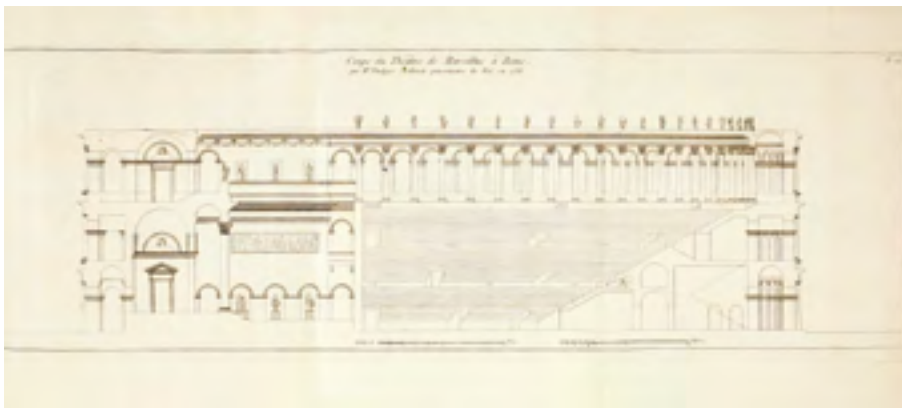
'We were about fourteen miles distant when we first saw the dome of St. Peter's which is the first part that you see of this mistress of the world. Of it I cannot yet undertake to say any thing. I find myself so fully possessed by the objects which surround me, and so stunned as it were by the pleasure of considering myself on that classical ground which I have so long been accustomed to admire, that I cannot call my attention to any particular object. I am just now come from the Pantheon. I felt there emotions, and a glow of enthusiasm which I never before experienced. I never felt before the effect of the true sublime. I feel this moment in writing to you vibrations in my mind which were occasioned three hours ago by my entrance into this grand rotunda.'⁴¹

An excerpt from Short's next letter, dated 31 December 1788, offers a precious testimony of the Rome of the Grand Tour by a sensitive and well-educated inhabitant of the New World, prepared to select the aspects



7. Antoine-Laurent-Thomas Vaudoyer, *Section of the remaining Galleries and Plan above the terraces of the Theater of Marcellus in Rome* (*Description du théâtre de Marcellus rétabli dans son état primitif d'après les vestiges qui en restent encore. Mémoire joint aux plans, coupes, élévations et détails mesurés à Rome et adressés à l'Académie royale d'architecture de Paris en 1786*, Paris, 1812, tab. 26).

8. Antoine-Laurent-Thomas Vaudoyer, *Section of the Theater of Marcellus in Rome* (*Description du théâtre de Marcellus rétabli dans son état primitif d'après les vestiges qui en restent encore. Mémoire joint aux plans, coupes, élévations et détails mesurés à Rome et adressés à l'Académie royale d'architecture de Paris en 1786*, Paris, 1812, tab. 28).



considered most curious and interesting for American society:

'It is the custom here for travellers to put themselves under the conduct of an antiquarian of whom there are several at Rome who live by the business. The antiquarian is paid so much a day and he conducts the traveller to all the videnda ancient and modern of Rome. For some days back we have been in this train and shall continue so for several days more. The great tour as it is called here, that is to say to see every picture, statue &c. in Rome and its environs, requires six weeks, but we do not intend remaining so long under the hands of our antiquarian and therefore have got a list of the more remarkable only. We have already seen the Vatican and St. Pierre. In the former are the Laocoon, Apollo Antinous or rather Meleager, the chambers of Raphael where are some of the finest remains of his pencil, as the connoiseurs say. – In the latter there are many things to admire in detail but it is the whole which fills every body with enthusiasm. I cannot undertake to describe this chef d'oeuvre of modern architecture, nor the sensations it excited in me, but I felt then if ever I did the force of the true sublime. We were in time here to see the great ceremony of the Christmass mass performed by the Pope in all his pomp surrounded by his cardinals. – I have been several times to see the Campidoglio. I have looked there in vain for what I expected to find on a spot where formerly was deliberated the fate of empires, but as yet it has not

come into the tour to be made with the Antiquarian so that I have not legally a right to say any thing about it. ... Modern Rome is many feet higher than the ancient; in digging down to the ancient surface they often find the remains of antiquity. In this Pope's reign they have been particularly industrious in their searches. In the Vatican are seen a great variety of statues and remains lately found. The most remarkable is a tomb of Scipio Africanus with his bust.⁷⁴²

On the same day, 31 December 1788, Rutledge in a kind of competitive narrative with Short offered Jefferson an even more enthusiastic version of their first week in Rome. His enthusiasm seems to be especially American when compared with the disappointment at the reality of Rome felt by many French and even English travelers, their expectations aroused by the engravings of Piranesi and others:

'I have not words which can express my admiration of Rome and every thing in it, indeed every thing seems like enchantment. I expected much, but it much surpasses what I had expected; and wherever I go I seem to be on fairy ground. As yet I have seen little of Rome but have seen enough to persuade me that of all the places in this world it is the most agreeable and charming.'⁷⁴³

The Rome that emerges from the accounts of Short and Rutledge is the touristic one of the lesser aristocracy and upper-class gentlemen for whom merchants and agents prepared intense and tiring daily itineraries of as long as six weeks, individually calibrated according to the time and money available. Such itineraries are well documented in the case of James Byres, the most popular cicerone, who had been the guide of John Apthorp in 1764 and probably also of his nephew Bulfinch.

Short's letter of 31 December introduces us to another Rome, the pleasant and seductive one of the French ambassador to Rome Cardinal François-Joachim de Pierre de Bernis (1715–1794), a Rome of which Short and

Rutledge, and before them Bulfinch, found themselves legitimately part as envoys of the American ambassador in Paris. Short writes that '[the letter of Madame de Tesse] to Cardinal de Bernis has been of service in procuring very pointed attentions. His civilities and hospitality are extended in common to all strangers of whatever nation.'⁷⁴⁴

In this Rome Cardinal de Bernis (Fig. 10), a character with a stormy past that led him to be called a libertine by the prince of libertines Giacomo Casanova (1725–1798), through his popular salon exercised an undisputed dominance over the world of Roman sociability while exercising strategic control over the flow of foreign visitors, including Americans.⁷⁴⁵ This was certainly

9. Antoine-Laurent-Thomas Vaudoyer, Plan of Villa Madama in Rome, watercolour, over graphite. Artprecium, sale 5 October 2021, lot. 82.



what Short believed, since he supposed that a young New Yorker named Seton whom he met in an important Roman salon had been welcomed thanks to the intimacy of the cardinal with the hostess.⁴⁶

For Short, Rutledge, and earlier Bulfinch, Cardinal de Bernis was also the means of accessing the occult world of Freemasonry, which was officially persecuted by the papacy. This world was frequented by Short and Vaudoyer, who had been Freemasons from 1781 and 1783 respectively, and probably also by Bulfinch, although his membership of the Freemasons has not been proven.⁴⁷ Just a year after Short and Rutledge's stay, on 15 September 1789, de Bernis would have been the principal guest at the meeting of the mysterious Egyptian lodge arranged by the Count of Cagliostro at Villa Malta on the Pincio, together with many well-known members of Roman society, including Abbot Ennio Quirino Visconti and Princess Giuliana Falconieri Santacroce, both close friends of the cardinal.⁴⁸ These people represented another Rome, that of Italian scholars open to international culture thanks to the protection of noblemen like Sigismondo Chigi, Baldassarre Odescalchi (1748-1810), Camillo Massimo and Marcantonio IV Borghese. This Rome on the one hand opened its doors to anyone, as did Prince Borghese in his palace, the favored goal of foreigners,⁴⁹ and on the other closed them in order to protect groups that under the guise of conviviality and literary conversation nourished the most liberal and heterodox ideas. One such group was the Accademia dei cioccolatai (Academy of Chocolatiers), or Società cioccolataria (Chocolate Society), which is little known in spite of the notoriety of the eight characters who founded it in 1779: Philippe Wacquier de la Barthe, Ennio Quirino Visconti, Bartolomeo Pacca, Alessandro Lante, Domenico Coppola, Nicola Spedalieri, Vincenzo Monti and Francesco Milizia.⁵⁰ The Accademia dei cioccolatai was short-lived, but its progressive spirit continued to guide its members. One of these was Ennio Quirino Visconti, who made erudite descriptions of the masterpieces of the Pio Clementino museum, founded by his father Giovanni Battista, designed to affirm the image of Rome as the capital of matters antique, as opposed to "Baroque" Rome. Another of its members, Francesco Milizia (1725-1798), attacked Baroque art in his *Roma delle belle arti del disegno* in 1787. In this Rome, simultaneously enlightened and dark and hidden, Milizia, a Freemason from the beginning, was the key figure for the history, theory and criticism of architecture. He had the protection of his great friend, the Spanish ambassador José Nicolás de Azara, who commissioned a fresco by Francisco Javier Ramos in the Spanish ambassador's residence, the Palazzo di Spagna, which portrays them both in the guise of ancient philosophers. Milizia stands at the left, while Azara is seated at the right, with between them Princess Santacroce as Minerva, and in the right background a portrait of the late Anton Raphael

10. Antoine François Callet, *Cardinal de Bernis*, c. 1771, oil on canvas, 214 x 165 cm. Private Collection.



11. Francisco Javier Ramos, *Minerva (Giuliana Falconieri Santacroce) e due filosofi (Francesco Milizia and José Nicolás de Azara)*, 1786, fresco, palace of the Spanish Embassy, ceiling of the private apartment.



Mengs (1728-1779), whose writings Milizia had edited on behalf of de Azara (Fig. 11).⁵¹

Milizia, described in 1786 by Andrea Memmo as ‘the colonel of the architect philosophers’, owed his fame to the treatise *Principi di architettura civile* published five years earlier in 1781. This was imbued with a British conception of architecture as a pragmatic expression of philosophy and natural science that was worthy of practice by a learned gentleman, such as the author himself,⁵² or Jefferson or Bulfinch. The fascination of Milizia for these circles is well expressed by the praise of Jefferson in 1824 on receiving a copy of Milizia’s *Principi* as a gift from Joseph Coolidge Jr:

‘I ought sooner to have thanked you for the valuable work of Milizia, on Architecture, searching, as he does, for the sources and prototypes of our ideas of beauty in that fine art, he appears to have elicited them with more correctness than any other author I have read.’⁵³

Knowledge of the work of Milizia gave access to yet another Rome, one where Baroque architecture was repudiated in favor of the somber grandeur of the remains of ancient Rome, provocatively reflected in the comparison between the ‘best’, as represented by the Cloaca Maxima, and the ‘worst’, represented by the Vatican Sacristy. This building was considered to be the last striking manifestation of the distorted continuity of traditional Roman architecture perpetrated by Roman academic architects, including its designer: Carlo Marchionni (1702-1786), who died at the age of eighty-four on 28 July 1786, about two months after the departure of Bulfinch from Rome.

In conclusion, it pleases me to think that Milizia’s philosophy might have influenced Bulfinch’s decision, upon his return to Boston in January of 1787, to dedicate himself to a ‘season of leisure, pursuing no business but giving gratuitous advice in architecture, and looking forward to an establishment in life.’⁵⁴

[Translated by David R. Marshall]

Notes

This study began as my contribution ‘The Rome of Charles Bulfinch: A Cultural Itinerary of 1786’, presented at the 46th American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS) Annual Meeting, Los Angeles, 19–22 March 2015 in the session *American Latium: American Artists in and around Rome in the Age of the Grand Tour* (convened and chaired by Karin Wolfe). It was revised and developed in the conference *American Latium: American Artists and Travelers in and around Rome in the Age of the Grand Tour*, Rome, 7–8 June 2018.

- 1 On the work of Bulfinch see especially Kirker 1998.
- 2 Bulfinch 1896, pp. 34–57.
- 3 In his posthumously published autobiography Bulfinch situates his transition from being a person with a taste for architecture to amateur practitioner at the time of his unsuccessful employment with the merchant Joseph Barrell: ‘My time passed very idly and I was at leisure to cultivate a taste for Architecture, which was encouraged by attending to Mr. Barrell’s improvement of his estate ... & the houses of some friends’ (Bulfinch 1896, pp. 41–2).
- 4 Bulfinch 1896, p. 44. Bulfinch’s arrival in London at 11 p.m. on the evening of 20 July 1785 aroused his enthusiasm for picturesque spectacle: ‘This is, in my opinion, the best time to enter London, you are astonished with the splendour from the immense number of lamps, & there is a sufficient degree of obscurity to make a sublime scene’ (*Ibidem*).
- 5 For aspects of the travels of John Apthorp in Italy see Wendy Wassyng Roworth in this volume.
- 6 Bulfinch 1896, p. 42.
- 7 For the reconstruction of the context of the presence of Jefferson in Paris, see Rice 1976; Thompson 2013.
- 8 In this regard see Conroy 2006.
- 9 On Adams see McCullough 2001.
- 10 Kirker 1998, p. 12.
- 11 The fact that for Jefferson ‘both town and country fell short of my expectations’ could indicate that it was Bulfinch who fueled his expectations of London by praising its architecture, which instead appeared to Jefferson to be ‘in the most wretched style I ever saw.’ Letter, From Thomas Jefferson to John Page, 4 May 1786, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-09-02-0374>, accessed 2 September 2020.
- 12 See Maria Cristina Loi in this volume and Loi 2021.
- 13 On his return from his trip to Italy, Bulfinch passed through Paris again, where Jefferson issued him with a passport and entrusted him with goods to take home. Conroy 2006, p. 112.
- 14 Bulfinch 1896, p. 42.
- 15 Bulfinch 1896, pp. 55–6.
- 16 Bulfinch 1896, p. 56, n. 1.
- 17 J.W. Goethe, *Italienische Reise*, 5 December 1786, <https://www.projekt-gutenberg.org/goethe/italien/ital164.html>, accessed 20 April 2021.
- 18 Bulfinch 1896, p. 57.
- 19 See Martin Postle in this volume.
- 20 On the nature of West and Copley’s presence in Rome with earlier bibliography see Jonny Yarker and Christopher M.S. Johns in this volume.
- 21 The full version of the letter is published in Bolton 1927, pp. 10–12 and in Harris 1970,

- pp. 21-2. On the cultural context see Manfredi 2006-2007, I, 2006, pp. 33-5.
- 22 Bradbury 2016, pp. 235-6.
- 23 For an overview of the evolution of the educational Grand Tour to Rome of foreign architects, and in particular British architects from Chambers to Soane, see Manfredi 2006-2007. For the situation in the 1780s see Kieven 2007.
- 24 Meyer and Rolfi 2002, p. 261.
- 25 Bignamini and Hornsby 2010.
- 26 On the Roman sites frequented by the British and the Americans see Fabrizio Di Marco in this volume. On the portrait of John Apthorp and his daughters Grizzell and Catharine see Wendy Wassing Roworth in this volume.
- 27 Harbaugh 2013, pp. 125-6, *Traveling Notes for Mr. Rutledge and Mr. Shippen*, 3 June 1788. L. and B, vol. XVII, pp. 290-3. Jefferson's Hints to Americans Travelling in Europe, 19 June 1788, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-13-02-0173>, accessed 2 September 2020.
- 28 *Ibidem*.
- 29 McCormick 1990, pp. 191-9.
- 30 Clérisseau 1778.
- 31 McCormick 1990, p. 193.
- 32 B. Bergdoll, *Vaudoyer, Antoine-Laurent*, 2009, <https://www.inha.fr/fr/ressources/publications/publications-numeriques/dictionnaire-critique-des-historiens-de-l-art/vaudoyer-antoine-laurent-thomas.html>, accessed 13 September 2021.
- 33 For a general picture of young foreign architects in Rome see Kieven 2007. For the situation of the Italians see Pasquali 2007, pp. 31-4. For that of the Spanish see Sambricio 2007.
- 34 Ingamells 1997, pp. 543-4, 560, 807-8, 824, 1017. In 1786 the architect John Thomas Grove was also probably established in Rome. *Ibidem*, p. 436.
- 35 Salmon 2012.
- 36 Pinon and Amprimoz 1988, pp. 24-6, 285-6.
- 37 For the Italian stay of Auguste Cheval de Saint Hubert, or Auguste Hubert, see Pasquali 2019; Pasquali 2020.
- 38 Pinon and Amprimoz 1988, pp. 285-6.
- 39 *Description du théâtre de Marcellus rétabli dans son état primitif d'après les vestiges qui en restent encore. Mémoire joint aux plans, coupes, élévations et détails mesurés à Rome et adressés à l'Académie royale d'architecture de Paris en 1786*, published in 1812. Pinon and Amprimoz 1988, p. 263; David 2002, p. 144.
- 40 Not even de Saint Hubert was able to complete the survey of the Pantheon having decided to embark on a journey to discover the antiquarian sites of Campania and Sicily that excluded him from continuing as a *pensionnaire*. Pasquali 2020.
- 41 To Thomas Jefferson from William Short, 23 December 1788, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-14-02-0157>, accessed 2 September 2020.
- 42 To Thomas Jefferson from William Short, 31 December 1788, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-14-02-0175>, accessed 2 September 2020.
- 43 To Thomas Jefferson from John Rutledge, Jr, 31 December 1788, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-14-02-0174>, accessed 2 September 2020.

44 See note 42.

45 Ingamells 1997, p. 792. Henry George Quin, on 1 April 1786, recorded 130 British and Irish visitors in Rome: ‘The quantities of English I met last night at Cardinal Bernis’s’, he then explained, ‘put me in the head of making out a list of such Names as I know & who have been here [in Rome] this Winter. I may have omitted several of them & there are many others whose names I do not yet know.’ On 4 January 1789 Short wrote to Jefferson: ‘Few dinners are given to strangers except by Cardinal de Bernis who keeps open house for them, and does the honours of it in the easiest and most agreeable manner imaginable.’ Letter, From William Short to Thomas Jefferson, 14 January 1789, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-14-02-0219>, accessed 2 September 2020. On the role of de Bernis in Roman society see Montègre 2011, *passim*; Montègre 2019.

46 ‘I was surprized last evening on being presented at an house in Rome to find there a young American. He has been about three weeks here and seems on a perfectly easy footing at this house which is among the first in Rome, I suppose, as the mistress is on an intimate footing with Cardinal de Bernis, by whom we were presented to her. Rutledge had an opportunity of speaking more with him than I did. He learned that he was the son of a Mr. Seton at New York, that he had been sent to Europe for his health and landed a few months ago somewhere in the Mediterranean. He told us also he had lately recieved a letter from his father which mentioned that the new Congress would certainly sit at New York.’ Letter, From William Short to Thomas Jefferson, 17 February 1789, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-14-02-0325>, accessed 2 September 2020. For the identification of Seton, see Fucilla 1949, p. 101.

47 In 1782 Vaudoyer was a member of the Parisian Masonic lodge L’Harmonie. B. Bergdoll, *Vaudoyer, Antoine-Laurent*, 2009, <https://www.inha.fr/fr/ressources/publications/publications-numeriques/dictionnaire-critique-des-historiens-de-l-art/vaudoyer-antoine-laurent-thomas.html>, accessed 13 September 2021. In 1787 Vaudoyer was among the founders of the French Freemasons in Rome, entitled *La réunion des amis sincères*, of which in 1788 de Saint Hubert was also a member (Montègre 2015; Pasquali 2020, p. 86).

48 Donato 2009, p. 65.

49 ‘The Prince Borghese for instance who is said to have 30, or 35,000 pounds stlg. of revenue, who possesses one of the richest Palaces, and the most superb Villa in Rome, is the first merchant of the city. His house is one of the many here which are open to every body and where strangers go as they go to a tavern. Every night in the week is public. Those who chuse to sup, stay and sup, and during the evening ices and iced punch are carried round to all the company. Gaming tables are in every room and most people make use of them, particularly the strangers. It is a manner of living which one cannot conceive before coming here. Few dinners are given to strangers except by Cardinal de Bernis who keeps open house for them, and does the honours of it in the easiest and most agreeable manner imaginable.’ Letter, William Short to Thomas Jefferson, 14 January 1789, *Founders Online*, National Archives, <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-14-02-0219>, accessed 2 September 2020.

50 Visconti and Waquier de la Barthe 1806, pp. 69–71. ‘Sopra vari scientifici argomenti sonosi aggirati gli Esercizj de’ Consocj, ciascuno de’ quali si obbligó a pronunciare un Discorso, quando l’ordine successivo il richiedesse. La Metafisica, la Morale, l’Eloquenza, la Poesia, la Storia del tempo, l’Antiquaria somministrarono ai liberi ragionamenti ampla materia.’ *Ibidem*, pp. 69–70.

51 Manfredi 2010.

52 Manfredi 2013.

53 O’Neal 1954, p. 12.

54 Bulfinch 1896, p. 58.



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This volume brings together the proceedings presented at the international conference *American Latium: American Artists and Travelers in and around Rome in the Age of the Grand Tour*, sponsored by the Accademia Nazionale di San Luca, and hosted by the Centro Studi Americani in Rome on the 7-8 June 2018, convened by Christopher M.S. Johns, Tommaso Manfredi and Karin Wolfe. The premise of the conference was to examine the concept of cultural exchange between America and Rome and its surrounding territory not as a bilateral transfer of culture, but rather as an entangled and reciprocal history of cultural transmission, including the importance of London with its powerful art academies as an intermediate destination for Americans making their way to the continent. Travel to Rome engaged American artists, collectors, scientists, writers and diplomats in dialogue with a network of European artists, intellectuals and statesmen. The remarkable degree of cosmopolitanism found in Rome signalled its importance not simply as a cultural destination, but as a place of experiment and creativity for travelers of differing nationalities who gathered there – a place where ancient history and tradition was cross-pollinated with the experience of the modern.

Divided into three parts: *The American Grand Tour: From Old Masters to the New World*; *American Latium: Sites and Itineraries in and around Rome*; *Americans and the Artistic Culture of Rome: Toward an American Art*, the book addresses the pioneering origins of the artistic relations between America, Rome and its environs from the eighteenth century up until 1870. Interdisciplinary in nature, these proceedings present new, and at times unexpected, research on the experience of reciprocal cultural exchange.