NINETEENTH-CENTURY EUROPEAN PAINTINGS AT THE STERLING AND FRANCINE CLARK ART INSTITUTE

VOLUME ONE

Edited by Sarah Lees

With an essay by Richard Rand
and technical reports by Sandra L. Webber

With contributions by Katharine J. Albert, Philippe Bordes, Dan Cohen, Kathryn Calley Galitz, Alexis Goodin, Marc Gotlieb, John House, Simon Kelly, Richard Kendall, Kathleen M. Morris, Leslie Hill Paisley, Kelly Pask, Elizabeth A. Pergam, Kathryn A. Price, Mark A. Roglán, James Rosenow, Zoë Samels, and Fronia E. Wissman

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Beardsley of New Hampshire in 1976 and another cleaning in Williamstown in 1981. The sky is still problematic due to the extent of repaint, and uneven texture and gloss. Some of the older oil retouches, still in place around the hull, sails, and edges, are yellowed and can be detected in normal and ultraviolet light. The red stamp in the lower left corner is solvent sensitive and damaged from repeated cleanings.

The cream-colored ground is visible in the right foreground and below many sketchy areas of paint. Under low magnification, charcoal lines are seen in the boat and sail outlines, some of which remain as part of the final image. Also visible in infrared reflectography are slight changes in the pitch of the three masts in the front vessels and the typical fractured nature of the torn paper edges in the larger damage. The radiograph shows a large dense circle in the right center sky, possibly indicating the sun. The paint, ranging from thin to moderately thick, is very sketchy and dry throughout. There are large particles of white in the gray paint, and round, clear particles, possibly oil salts, appear occasionally; some of the latter have dropped out, leaving small craters in the paint.

1. Paris–Ottawa–New York 1996–97, p. 93.
2. Baedeker 1909, p. 38.
3. Leuchtturmseiten von Anke und Jens, *http://www.leuchtturmseiten.de/home.htm* (accessed 10 Oct. 2006).
4. R 766. Both can be seen from the dunes surrounding the town in R 2116.
5. R 2119.
6. Northampton–Williamstown 1976–77, p. 88.
7. Tokyo–Osaka–Yokohama 1989–90, p. 141.
8. R 221.
9. R 2116–19, 2121, 2295.
10. Conservation laboratory report, 1981, in the Clark's curatorial file.
11. Museum of Fine Arts, Boston,1982.385. Desbarolles evidently enjoyed travel. In 1846, he went to Spain with Alexandre Dumas, Louis Boulanger, and Eugène Giraud; the latter recorded sights along the way. Giraud and Desbarolles traveled together before meeting Dumas in Madrid. Desbarolles recounted their adventures in *Deux artistes en Espagne* (1862), a book illustrated by Giraud.
12. E-mail from Susie Wager, Art of Europe, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 6 Sept. 2006.
13. R 240, 256, and 669.

84 | Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome c. 1830–32

Oil on canvas, 34.3 x 45.7 cm
Lower left: COROT / COROT / Corot
1955.555

Camille Corot came late to painting; he was twenty-six in 1822, when his parents allowed him to forsake the profession of cloth merchant they had hoped for him. He did not strike out on his own but studied with two academic landscape painters, first but only briefly with Achille-Etna Michallon (1796–1822), then with Jean-Victor Bertin (1767–1842), from September 1822 through sometime in 1824. From these teachers he learned how to paint in oils in the out of doors, as a means both of recording sites under specific meteorological conditions and of training oneself to work quickly. Far from being a radical technique practiced by young rebels, in the early nineteenth century painting out of doors was an established part of the academic curriculum, promoted by artists whose finished paintings may to twenty-first-century eyes appear dry and stiff. But if painting *en plein air* was common practice, the resulting landscapes were considered private works, used for study and as aids in composing the larger pictures destined for exhibition or sale.

Peter Galassi, in his magisterial book *Corot in Italy,* has established the primacy of plein-air painting to the academic method as well as the central place of Italy in the artistic formation of artists from all over Europe.[1] Corot's first study trip to Italy, from 1825 through 1828, then, was simply another traditional step on his way to becoming a landscape painter. By the time he got to Rome, the city had been painted, drawn, etched, and engraved for centuries. Earlier artists had determined which locales were the most picturesque, and Corot's choices of motifs followed the established roster of sites. Among his Roman views are multiple versions of the Trinità dei Monti, one of five French churches in Rome, as seen from the grounds of the Villa Medici, home of the French Academy in Rome, on the Pincio; the Forum from the Farnese Gardens; the fountain in the grounds of the French Academy, with the dome of Saint Peter's and the Castel Sant'Angelo in the distance; and the Castel Sant'Angelo itself, both with and without the dome of Saint Peter's.[2]

This view of the Tiber River with the Castel Sant'Angelo on the right and the dome of Saint Peter's

84

in the middle was one of the most frequently recorded scenes in Rome.[3] It succinctly demonstrates the ongoing coexistence of pagan and Christian times. The round structure on the right was built about 130–39 C.E. as a mausoleum for the emperor Hadrian. After an underground passage was excavated to connect it with Saint Peter's, it was used by the popes as a fortress and a prison. A chapel dedicated to Saint Michael was added on top of the mausoleum as thanks to the holy angel for his ending an outbreak of the plague in 590; a bronze sculpture of the angel surmounts the structure to the present day. These facts may or may not have been known to Corot when he painted the structures; more important to him would have been the tradition of painting this scene and the desire to paint outdoors, following his teachers' instructions and the practice of his fellow painters.

Corot painted three versions of this view encompassing the two monuments. One is on paper, now mounted on canvas (fig. 84.1),[4] and the other two were painted directly on canvas (the Clark painting and one in a private collection).[5] The version on paper is the smallest. As it was Corot's habit to paint out of doors on paper rather than on the more unwieldy stretched canvas, the version on paper in San Francisco was the one painted on the spot in 1826 or 1827. Also as was Corot's habit, he painted only architecture and landscape elements: multistory apartment buildings to the left, a muddy riverbank establishing the foreground, the reflective river, and, above the strong horizontal of the Ponte Sant'Angelo, the castle and upper part of Saint Peter's. The painting in Williamstown and the one in a private collection, by contrast, feature boats in the river and people on the riverbank, elements that add anecdotal interest but, especially in the case of the work in the private collection, with its trees added at left and right and its hillock to the right, distract from the immediacy and geometry of the plein-air view. This last painting has traditionally been dated 1828–35, beginning with Alfred Robaut and Étienne Moreau-Nélaton's 1905 catalogue raisonné.[6] The dating of the picture in the Clark, however, proves something of a problem.

The canvas support suggests, but does not prove, that the Clark work, like the one in the private collection, was painted when the artist was back in France.

Fig. 84.1. Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, *View of Rome: The Bridge and Castel Sant'Angelo with the Cupola of Saint Peter's*, c. 1826–27. Oil on paper, mounted on canvas, 26.7 x 43.2 cm. Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Museum purchase, Archer M. Huntington Fund (1935.2)

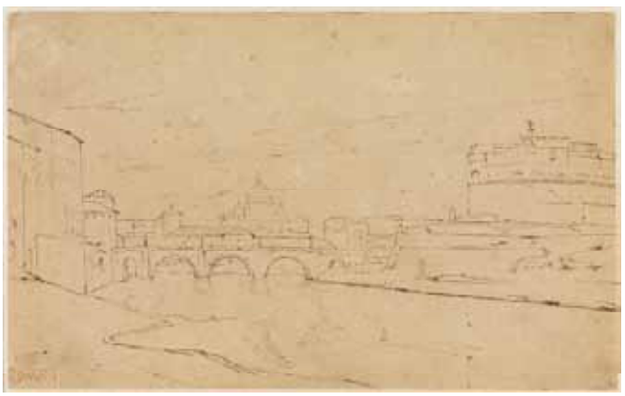

Fig. 84.2. Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot, *View of Saint Peter's and the Castel Sant'Angelo*, c. 1826–28. Brown ink on laid paper, 13.4 x 21.8 cm. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam; loan Stichting Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen

The handling of the upper part of the painting, in particular, in its freshness and confidence, is close to other works Corot painted in Italy. Vincent Pomarède has posited that Corot began the Williamstown painting in Italy but completed it later in France, perhaps as late as 1835.[7] This contention is supported by the painting's condition. Yet the surface of the lower part of the picture is troubled by overpaint, presumably applied by the artist. Some of this overpaint is still evident on the leftmost figure, a twin of the figure on the right. Corot seems to have painted the two figures on the left and then changed his mind. He painted a figure in the same clothes on the right, painted out the figure on the left, and used the same paint to make adjustments elsewhere in the buildings and foreground.

Countering Pomarède's suggestion that the Williamstown painting was begun in Italy are the facts that the sky was painted around the buildings and, importantly, that the water was painted around the boats. This approach is very different from what we see in the picture in San Francisco. It includes but a single small boat with two figures at left that was obviously added last, in dark paint, on top of the water. By contrast, Corot began the Williamstown version with the intention of including the boats; unlike the figures or the boat in the San Francisco picture, they were not afterthoughts. The boats and figures do more than add anecdotal interest to the foreground of the Williamstown canvas. They provide a visual base for a triangular shape that has as its apex the dome of Saint Peter's. The proportions of the Williamstown painting, more square than the San Francisco version, likewise emphasize the central motif. These factors, while weakening the strong horizontality of the plein-air sketch, probably made the picture more salable in the 1830s. Also different in the pictures in San Francisco and Williamstown is the light, more golden and more specific in the former work, bluer and more general in the latter. Coming from the southwest, the light in the San Francisco picture gilds the drum of Saint Peter's dome, turns the Castel Sant'Angelo tawny pink, and blanches the interior of the arches of the Ponte Sant'Angelo. The whiter light of the Williamstown picture, by contrast, lacks color and crispness, suitable for its reminiscent function. Rather than having been begun in Italy and reworked in Paris, this picture more likely was painted entirely in France, perhaps shortly after Corot returned home, about 1830–32, when the experience of Italy was still relatively fresh.

Although he had painted this view before, Corot nonetheless drew careful outlines of the arches and shadows and reflections in the water before applying paint. This was his habit in these early years. As Galassi has explained, the preparatory drawing allowed Corot to establish a "logical hierarchy of forms," which in turn endows his small works with "the authority of big pictures."[8] Corot early on acknowledged his reliance on underdrawing. "I have learned from experience that it is very useful to begin by drawing one's picture very purely on a blank canvas . . . next, to paint the picture part by part, each as finished as possible from the start, so as to have little left to do once the whole can-

vas is covered."[9] With this method, Corot "separat[ed] the problem of form from the problem of color."[10] This, Galassi points out, was an advance over the academic method of drawing a site, even with extensive color notes, to use as an aide-mémoire while painting. Corot's paintings, no matter how vaporously executed, are distinguished by their solid structure and sure sense of form. The drawings and underdrawings he made on this first trip to Italy laid the foundation for the success of his subsequent work.

A drawing of this view toward Saint Peter's and the Castel Sant'Angelo lays bare the structure of the paintings (fig. 84.2). Cubic buildings on the left are balanced by the drum of the fort on the right. Between them stretches the bridge, which unites in its functional form the opposing geometries to either side. In this rendition, the drum and dome of Saint Peter's seem smaller, farther away, marking the middle rather than providing the focal point. The lack of color and the drawing's small size (almost half the size of the sketch in San Francisco) only emphasize the powerful geometry of the happy confluence of the built environment and the southward bend of the Tiber. Carefully done in brown ink, it suggests a clarification of thought after the fact rather than an initial response, as Galassi hypothesizes.[11]

The Clark's painting was in the memorial exhibition of Corot's work held in May 1875 at the École des Beaux-Arts. It was lent by Paul Tesse, a well-known collector. He owned thirteen other paintings by Corot[12] in addition to Jean-François Millet's *Angelus* (1857–59) and that artist's *Shepherdess with Her Flock* (c. 1863) (both Musée d'Orsay, Paris), which he commissioned. A subsequent owner, Antony Roux, collected sculptures by Auguste Rodin. The painting has a long history in the Clark family. Robert Sterling Clark, although wanting the painting for himself, bought it on behalf of his older brother Edward in 1914, from whom it descended to another brother, Stephen Carlton Clark, from whom Sterling was estranged. Sterling was able to buy it in 1946, when Stephen decided to sell it to buy a landscape by Paul Cézanne. Sterling was thrilled. He had remembered seeing the picture at Edward's "as a symphony of blues and greys" and judged it "certainly among the first 3 or 4 [Italian Corots] I have seen."[13] It is indeed a lovely painting, but it is also true that the acquisition was made sweeter because Sterling got what he had thought rightfully his. He, after all, would appreciate the painting, which Stephen did not, a clear coup for Sterling.[14] FEW

PROVENANCE Paul Tesse, Paris (by 1875–76, his sale, Drouot, Paris, 11 Mar. 1876, no. 22, as *Rome*); Ernest May, Paris (until 1890, his sale, Georges Petit, Paris, 4 June 1890, no. 18, ill., sold to Roux); Antony Roux, Paris (1890–1914, his sale, Georges Petit, Paris, 19 May 1914, no. 4, ill., sold to Knoedler, as agent for Robert S. Clark, on behalf of Edward S. Clark); Edward Severin Clark (1914–d. 1933, by descent to Stephen C. Clark); Stephen Carlton Clark (1933–46, sold to Durand-Ruel, 1946); [Durand-Ruel, New York, sold to Robert S. Clark, 28 June 1946]; Robert Sterling Clark (1946–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS Paris 1875, no. 77, lent by Tesse; New York 1934b, no. 5, ill., lent by Stephen C. Clark; New York 1936a, no. 11, ill., lent by Stephen C. Clark; Williamstown 1956a, no. 90, pl. 7; Williamstown 1959b, ill.; New York 1967, no. 6; London 1969, p. 63, no. 181; Williamstown 1984a, p. 63, no. 63; San Diego–Williamstown 1988, no. 11, fig. 18; South Hadley 1992, no cat.; Williamstown 1995a, p. 14, no. 41; Paris–Ottawa–New York 1996–97, pp. 48–50, no. 11, ill. (French ed., pp. 88–89, no. 11, ill.); Rome–New York 2003, not listed in Italian ed. (English ed., p. 62) (exhibited in New York only); Williamstown–New York 2006–7, pp. 66, 136–37, fig. 113.

REFERENCES Rousseau 1875, p. 245, ill.; Roger-Milès Paris 1895a, pl. 24; Michel 1905, p. 12, ill.; Robaut 1905, vol. 2, pp. 28–29, no. 71, ill.; Bazin 1942, p. 45, ill. (2nd ed., p. 23, pl. 6; 3rd ed., pp. 277, 294); Philadelphia 1946, p. 25, under no. 2; *Emporium* 1959, p. 76; Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute 1963, no. 15, ill.; Paris 1975, p. 32, under no. 21; Morse 1979, p. 64; Brooks 1981, pp. 38–39, no. 15, ill.; Varriano 1991, pp. 215–17, 264, fig. 18; New York 1992–93, p. 172, under no. 41; London 1993, p. 103, under no. 30; Pomarède 1996a, p. 226n33; Wallens 1996, p. 46, ill.; Brooke 1997, p. 502; Stefani, Pomarède, and Wallens 1998, pp. 78, 390; Rand 2001a, pp. 14–15, fig. 1.

TECHNICAL REPORT The original fabric support is a moderately coarse linen (13 threads/cm), with occasional irregular threads. It has been glue-lined to a canvas of similar weight, and held by a five-member mahogany stretcher. A section of old wood with the "PT" wax seal of Paul Tesse has been reattached to the new stretcher. Age cracks, both large and hairline in size, are dark with suffused glue. Short disconnected cracks follow the vertical threads of the canvas, and a few traction cracks appear in the foreground. Some impastos are flattened, and the surface may have an enhanced weave impression from the lining process. The ground color is white, and thin enough to allow the somewhat coarse canvas texture to show. Areas of charcoal underdrawing are visible in normal light, especially along the architectural outlines. Multiple lines in the reflections below the bridge were detected with infrared reflectography. The paint is applied in a thin paste consistency with some washes or glazes. The buildings and the boats were painted before the sky and the water.

The picture was cleaned in 1981 to remove a discolored varnish and large passes of overpaint in the sky. It had already been noted that the leftmost figure in the group of three men had been uncovered in an earlier cleaning. The painting retains numerous slightly sloppy brushstrokes of purplish gray reworking in the buildings and foreground, including traces over the revealed figure. The reworking may have been done by the artist, which might explain the presence of four signatures in the lower left: one in brown below the large white signature, a trace of a smaller one in white, and an even smaller one near the lower edge which has been carved into the surface. Alternately, the reworking may be the result of a harsh early cleaning which forced a restorer to repaint substantial portions of the image. There are still areas of abrasion showing in the thinly painted boats, the water below them, and in the costumes of the three men on the shore. The X-radiograph does not show the three figures, although there may have been a small reserve left for one of them. The right shoreline and the landscape in the two lower corners are somewhat different than the final image. The X-ray film confirms that the dark architectural passages were painted first, followed by precisely placed highlights and the sky. The paint at the edges was also extended about 0.3 cm all around.

1. Galassi 1991.
2. For illustrations and discussion of these sites, see Paris–Ottawa–New York 1996–97, pp. 40–56, nos. 7–15.
3. Kroenig 1972.
4. R 70.
5. The work in the private collection is R 70 bis; it is reproduced in Schoeller and Dieterle 1948, p. 8, no. 2.
6. Robaut 1905, vol. 2, p. 28.
7. Paris–Ottawa–New York 1996–97, p. 49.
8. Galassi 1991, p. 157.
9. Galassi 1991, p. 154, translating Corot from his sketchbook (R 3103), dated by Robaut to c. 1825 (Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins, R.F. 6742 bis). The original French, quoted in Courthion and Cailler 1946, vol. 1, p. 87, reads: "Je reconnais d'après l'épreuve qu'il est très utile de commencer par dessiner très purement son tableau sur une toile blanche, d'en avoir auparavant son effet écrit sur un papier gris ou blanc, ensuite de faire partie par partie son tableau, aussi rendu que possible du premier coup, afin de n'avoir que très peu de chose à faire lorsque tout est couvert."
10. Galassi 1991, p. 153.
11. Galassi 1991, p. 158.
12. Paris–Ottawa–New York 1996–97, p. 399.
13. Robert Sterling Clark to Paul Lewis Clemens, 30 May 1946, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute Archives, Williamstown.
14. For a full discussion of the fraught relations of the Clark brothers, see Williamstown–New York 2006–7, especially pp. 65–66 and 137.

85 | **Louise Harduin** 1831

Oil on canvas, 55.1 x 46 cm
Lower right: C. Corot. / 1831
1955.539

Thanks to the research of Gilbert H. Brunet, the sitter of this fine, early portrait by Camille Corot has been identified as Louise Harduin (1816–1878).[1] In 1831, when Corot painted her, she was recently orphaned, and her guardian was Théodore Scribe, uncle on her mother's side and a friend of Corot (see cat. 83).[2] Four years after this portrait was painted, Harduin married Augustin Guillaumin, a lawyer. The portrait, not surprisingly, descended in the family until the early twentieth century.

Despite Harduin's serious mien and dark gray clothes, the painting is bright and full of light. A blue sky vaults over an expansive landscape, presumably near Chartres. By 1831, Corot was already experimenting with what would be his trademark spots of red, here in the form of flowers at lower right, and with his grayed-out greens, in the broad leaves at the right near the flowers. Harduin's bright white neck ruff, hat ribbon, and stockings keep the eye moving throughout the picture and then return it to the foreground, thereby emphasizing the vastness of the background, over which this small figure nonetheless presides.

The full-length format for a portrait is unusual in Corot's oeuvre. Because art does not spring from a vacuum, and because, especially at this early point in his career, Corot was searching for viable models for his painting, the temptation to find prototypes for such a singular work is strong. Vincent Pomarède has suggested an influence from the eighteenth-century British portraitists Thomas Gainsborough and Sir Joshua Reynolds.[3] It is difficult to see, however, how Corot could have known of the Englishmen's works. None of their pictures was in a French collection at the time, and none was exhibited at the Salon. The works by Reynolds that share features with *Louise Harduin*—youth and an outdoor setting—such as *Penelope Boothby* (1788; private collection), *Lady Caroline Howard* (1788; National Gallery of Art, Washington), *Lady Catherine Pelham-Clinton* (1782; Earl of Radnor), and *Master Parker and His Sister Theresa* (1779; The National Trust, Sattram) that were engraved nonetheless are not close enough to the depiction of Louise Harduin to serve as a convincing source.[4] Inaccessibility also rules out the portraits