



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

VOLUME TWO

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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Details:

TITLE PAGE: Camille Pissarro, *The Louvre from the Pont Neuf* (cat. 253)

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PRECEDING PAGE 474: Pierre-Auguste Renoir, *Onions* (cat. 280)

PAGES 890–91: Sir Lawrence Alma-Tadema, *The Women of Amphisa* (cat. 3)

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is a coarsely woven linen (approximately 13 threads/cm). In 1983, an old glue lining was removed and replaced with a transparent wax-resin lining onto a three-layer composite of fiberglass fabric. A transparent lining was chosen to reveal paint on the reverse, which may be part of a sketch. There remains a weave impression from the earlier lining, caused by the original fabric. The old seven-member stretcher was also replaced with a four-member redwood ICA spring tension design. The 1983 report noted traction crackle in the foreground water, flattened impastos, overcleaning, and solvent sensitivity in the bright reds. The picture may have been treated by Madame Coince in 1935. Thick layers of discolored and locally toned varnish were removed along with a moderate grime layer in 1983. There are large dark vertical cracks in a band through the center, possibly due to the weight of the thick white lead paint on the surface. Some of these cracks have older yellowed retouchings. The brown rigging lines, possibly ink, and the transparent brown signature are abraded. The appearance of the surface in ultraviolet light is unusual, with large old repainted areas between the left edge and the ship and several vertical areas in the center of the sky. There are patches of old varnish in the gondola, water, buildings, and the ship. The present varnish has a low gloss, partly due to the painting technique.

The ground is a cream-colored layer. There was no underdrawing detected, but there may be a thin painted sketch. In infrared viewing and in raking light, artist's changes are visible in the sky as pentimenti, which previous restorers, and possibly the artist, had glazed out. The banner flying off the stern of the center ship was originally longer, passing diagonally in front of the buildings. The small domed church at the far left was initially placed higher above the horizon, visible now in infrared as a faint ghost in the sky at the level of the taller ship's topmasts. Daubs of wet-into-wet paint, rather than drawn outlines, create the forms. After the sky was completed, the campanile was painted, and scattered thin glazes were applied throughout the image.

1. Ruskin 1903–12, vol. 11, p. 38.
2. See Technical Report.
3. B-H 145.
4. Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, 1955.75–5 and 1955.580.
5. *Galleons and Gondolas, Basin of San Marco* was no. 80 in Moreau-Nélaton's 1900 sale.
6. The information regarding Reid owning the picture comes from the Scott & Fowles invoice dated 3 Feb. 1934. See the Clark's curatorial file.
7. Miquel 1978 erroneously listed this work twice; it also appears as vol. 2, p. 157, no. 1024, as *Le Grand Canal, à Venise*, with some correct provenance information given, and some belonging to a different painting.

355 | Le Pont Royal, Paris c. 1859

Oil on panel, 24.6 x 37.7 cm

Lower right: Ziem

1955.904

Best known for his Venetian scenes, Félix Ziem painted in many other locations throughout Italy, France, North Africa, and Turkey. Ziem was a prolific artist who studied architecture at the École des Beaux-Arts in Dijon. Despite being expelled for bad behavior, Ziem developed into a master draftsman and incorporated architecture of all sorts—buildings, bridges, and complicated rigged ships—into his pictures throughout his career. He exhibited for the first time at the Salon in 1849 and continued to exhibit there regularly until 1868. In 1853, Ziem started making visits to the forest of Fontainebleau near Barbizon, outside Paris, and became friendly with Jean-François Millet, Narcisse Diaz de la Peña, Théodore Rousseau, and Charles-Émile Jacque.

Le Pont Royal, Paris depicts a very informal view of the bridge of the title, seen from approximately water level, as if the artist were painting from the type of boat he shows in the foreground. The heart of the capital here looks distinctly unglamorous, although in addition to the bridge, built in 1685, a number of important landmarks do appear along the horizon, from the Louvre at the left, to the two towers of Notre-Dame in the center distance, to the dome of the Institut de France near the right of center. The painting's sketchiness and informality point to Ziem's affinities with the Barbizon painters, who were more interested in the organic life and visual details of a landscape site than its picturesque qualities. Ziem worked in layers of different colors, especially visible in the water, which reflects the blue sky above, and he used a rough, sponge-like application of green paint for the trees in the center right of the picture.

The palette of *Le Pont Royal* is an unusual one for Ziem, its muted grays and blues suited to the northern climate of the location, in contrast to his warmer Mediterranean color scheme. Anne Burdin-Hellebranth catalogues only twenty-six paintings of Paris by Ziem, which seems clearly to indicate his preference for more southerly climes. His Paris scenes include the windmill of Montmartre, the Eiffel Tower, the Arc de Triomphe, the Champs-Élysées, the Bois de Boulogne, the Tuileries, and one other bridge, the Pont



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des Arts.¹ Nearly always, architecture is the focus, and the images tend to be painted with the same sketchy handling and subdued palette as the *Pont Royal*. This picture probably dates to about 1859, since Ziem was in Paris in March of that year. At the end of the month, he left Paris for the Midi and by July he was in Tunisia. He also returned to Paris in 1860. With its focus on water and the boats that fill it, this work is perhaps one of the most Venetian of his Paris scenes, despite the overcast skies.

Antony Roux (1833–1913), who purchased this picture from the artist himself, was a significant collector who owned dozens of works by Ziem. In fact, his 1914 sale at Galerie Georges Petit included thirty-seven works by the artist. He also owned a large number of paintings by Gustave Moreau and Camille Corot, and was the first to collect works by Auguste Rodin. Knoedler acted as the buyer for Sterling Clark at the Roux sale, which represented one of the first significant buying campaigns at the start of Clark's collecting career. In addition to the Ziem, Clark bought several other significant pieces at the sale, including Corot's *Castel Sant'Angelo, Rome*

(cat. 84), and both the bronze and the plaster cast of Rodin's *Man with a Serpent*.²

Ziem was the recipient of numerous awards in his lifetime, including being named *chevalier* of the Legion of Honor in 1857; and he became an *officier* in 1878. Perhaps even more significantly, in 1910, Ziem became the first living artist to have his work enter the collection of the Musée du Louvre in Paris. KAP

PROVENANCE The artist, sold to Roux; Antony Roux, Paris (d. 1913, his sale, Georges Petit, Paris, 19 May 1914, no. 58, sold to Knoedler); [Knoedler, Paris, sold to Clark, 23 May 1914]; Robert Sterling Clark (1914–55); Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 1955.

EXHIBITIONS Williamstown 1959b, ill.; Williamstown–Hartford 1974, pp. 105–6, no. 66, ill.; Williamstown 1980a, no cat.; Williamstown 1987–88, no cat.; Williamstown 1988–89, no cat.

REFERENCES Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute 1963, no. 158, ill.; Miquel 1978, vol. 2, p. 69, no. 186, ill.; Burdin-Hellebranth 1998, vol. 2, p. 30, no. 1075, ill.

TECHNICAL REPORT The support is a walnut panel 0.2 cm thick, with wavy edges and rough saw marks on the upper surface. These attributes suggest that the support is not a commercially prepared or thinned panel, but a scrap the artist picked up from another source. The wood grain runs horizontally, and the panel appears to have been stained, together with the cradle. The softwood cradle, probably installed sometime after the work's purchase in 1914, may be the cause of the rolling distortions seen in the thin panel. Horizontal cracks in the paint and ground follow the wood grain. There is some active flaking at the horizon on the right edge. An old scuff to the right of the man poling the boat was made when the paint was wet. There are bits of reddish crystalline resin scattered in the sky, although the varnish layers are discolored toward the grayish yellow. There is no evidence of a previous cleaning, so the surface probably retains its first coating. Grime trapped below the varnish suggests that the picture was left unvarnished for a period of time prior to receiving this layer. In ultraviolet light, there appears to be a synthetic resin or wax layer on top of the older natural resin varnish. Overpaint runs across the top in a band increasing in width from 2.5 to 5.1 cm from left to right. There are poorly matched or aged retouches in the sky and the water, and the lower edge is also repainted, especially in the left corner. The surface reflectance is uneven, and matte areas in the clouds and foreground may be watercolor retouches.

The ground is a rough, uneven layer of what appears to be white paint, probably applied by the artist. The wood color shows in some foreground details, where lower sections of the image have no ground layer at all. There was no underdrawing detected. The paint is fairly vehicular, and the strokes are principally executed wet-into-wet, with impastos scattered throughout. The foreground is more choppy and thin, and perhaps even unfinished, which may have inspired the rather extensive restoration. There are bits and pieces of different colors below the paint in the lower third of the image, suggesting that this may be a reused panel. The signature was done in black ink.

1. B-H 1070–1095.

2. The plaster is in the collection of the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, 1955.1023; the bronze is now in a private collection. See Williams-town–New York 2006–7, pp. 50–51, 65–66, 342, 354.

356 | The Grand Canal, Venice (Gondola before San Giorgio) c. 1865

Oil on panel, 37.9 x 56.5 cm; original dimensions,

36.2 x 54.6 cm

Lower right: Ziem

1955.903

Although he was an experienced traveler who journeyed throughout Europe as well as to Constantinople and Egypt, Ziem was known in his time as the painter of Venice. Highly regarded by critics and collectors, Ziem continued in the tradition of other Venetian view painters of earlier centuries, such as Francesco Guardi and Canaletto. Théophile Gautier described Ziem's predilection: "Each artist has an ideal homeland, often far from his true country. . . . Ziem's homeland is Venice. . . . He has portrayed his cherished city at all hours of the day, from the first glimmers of dawn to the last blush of evening, from the front, in profile, at three-quarters, from every angle."¹ From the start, Ziem made the waters of Venice his home, renting a barge, or *topo*, on which he lived and worked.

Ziem painted numerous views of the Palladian Church of San Giorgio Maggiore, which sits opposite the center of Venice, on its own island. Many of these works are similar in nature to the Clark picture. He regularly used the same ingredients of prominent and well-known architecture, large sailboats, and gondolas in his Venetian views. Rather than repeatedly depicting the same scene, Ziem took those essential elements and varied the composition by painting the boats in a different configuration or by viewing the same site from a different perspective. In fact, many of the paintings from this series depicting San Giorgio Maggiore view the church from the east looking west, which situates the dome and the campanile at the left side of the canvas, rather than from the west looking east, so that the church appears toward the right side as in the *The Grand Canal, Venice*. Two other works have compositions very similar to the Clark picture—both depict San Giorgio with a gondolier directing his boat to the right, in the direction of the church in the distance.² Some of these scenes are clearly just rough sketches, which Ziem could later work up in his studio. He also painted San Giorgio at night, which allowed him yet another variation in his depictions of this famous landmark.

It is difficult to date Ziem's work. He signed only a