RACAR : Revue d'art canadienne
Canadian Art Review

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Revue d'art canadienne | Canadian Art Review

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Volume 14, numéro 1-2, 1987

URI : https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1073460ar
DOI : https://doi.org/10.7202/1073460ar

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Éditeur(s)

UAAC-AAUC (University Art Association of Canada | Association d'art des universités du Canada)

ISSN

0315-9906 (imprimé)
1918-4778 (numérique)

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Citer ce compte rendu

Stewart, J. D. (1987). Compte rendu de [Malcolm Rogers, *William Dobson, 1611-46*. London, National Portrait Gallery, 1983, 92 pp., 79 illus., £3.95 (paper)]. *RACAR : Revue d'art canadienne / Canadian Art Review*, *14*(1-2), 163–165. https://doi.org/10.7202/1073460ar

MALCOLM ROGERS *William Dobson, 1611-46*. London, National Portrait Gallery, 1983, 92 pp., 79 illus., £3.95 (paper).

The only previous comprehensive Dobson exhibition was organized by Sir Oliver Millar for the Tate Gallery in 1951. Most discoveries about Dobson in the last forty years have been due to Sir Oliver, who has written eloquently about him in the Tate and later exhibition catalogues. As Dr. Rogers says, "It is impossible to write about Dobson without Sir Oliver's well-chosen words ringing in one's ears." It says much for Dr. Rogers as a scholar that in this catalogue he finds a lot to say which is not an echo of Sir Oliver's words, but which, building on the work of his predecessor, adds greatly to our understanding of William Dobson. Dr. Rogers does this by publishing new documentary material, by a great deal of subtle iconographical analysis, and also by illuminating suggestions concerning Dobson's chronology as a painter, based on visual analysis and re-interpretation of documents.

A radical aspect of Dr. Rogers's reassessment of Dobson is his suggestion that "a handful of works which are usually taken to have been painted in Oxford ought to be considered as works of the early 1640's, painted in London" (p. 13). These include the Tate Gallery's *Endymion Porter*, one of Dobson's finest and best-known portraits. The stylistic arguments advanced by Dr. Rogers seem to me very reasonable. Moreover, the fact that the *Porter* is a "wholehearted celebration of the arts of peace rather than of war" (p. 35) is very much in keeping with Dr. Rogers's idea that it was painted in London, about 1642 or perhaps even earlier.

Dobson's use of accessories in his portraits has always attracted attention from scholars. Dr. Rogers is no exception and his comments on this feature deserve close attention:

> If Dobson's characterizations tend to be strong and direct, his use of accessories is in contrast subtle and allusive, and calculated to appeal to a taste for the esoteric which had been starved during Van Dyck's reign, but which was a feature of English portraiture in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Sir Ellis Waterhouse has suggested that Dobson was fortified in this respect by sixteenth-century Italian theoreticians such as Lomazzo, who had written: "First you must consider the quality of the person who is the subject of the portrait, and, according to the quality, give the portrait its appropriate symbol." This is certainly Dobson's practice, and it gives to the more elaborate of his portraits their resonance and depth. At times the symbol is no more than a piece of armour, a faithful hound or a glimpse of a distant battle; but his favourite and most distinctive form of expression was the feigned sculptural relief or bust. Ultimately the use of such motifs derives from Titian, but he was probably also influenced by the later example of Rubens. (p. 18)

Dr. Rogers is very right to link Dobson, in his use of symbolic accessories, with the Elizabethan and Jacobean past—with the worlds of Hilliard, Gheeraerdts, and Van Somer, all of whom could produce portraits with elaborate accessories. Dr. Rogers is also quite right to reduce the passage in Lomazzo to the point of merely "fortifying" a strong tendency already present in the English tradition.

However, in stating that this English "taste for the esoteric . . . had been starved during Van Dyck's reign," I think Dr. Rogers has gone astray. Van Dyck, of course, painted numerous "straight" portraits, as did Dobson. But many of Van Dyck's English portraits are laden with the "esoteric"—with symbolism, open and hidden.

Yet there is an accessory, of which Dobson is very fond, which Van Dyck does not use: the *grisaille* feigned sculptural relief. It is also worthy of note that the use of the feigned relief in portraiture in late sixteenth-century England appears to have been rare. I know of only one example, in a full-length of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (Parham; R. Strong, *NPG Tudor & Jacobean Portraits*, pl. 384), apparently painted when the sitter was in the Low Countries, ca. 1585-86.

Hence Dobson's penchant for the feigned sculptural relief as an accessory for portraits was a highly personal one within the English context. Yet it had its roots in the traditional English love of emblems and symbols. Moreover, many later seventeenth-century painters, such as Michael Wright, Lely, Riley, and Kneller, were to make use of the device.

Of course Dobson did not invent the feigned sculptural relief. Dr. Rogers states that "ultimately the use of such motifs derives from Titian, but he [Dobson] was probably also influenced by the later examples of Rubens" (p. 18). But Titian did not invent the feigned sculptural narrative relief, although he employed it extensively. It was common during the quattrocento in the works of Mantegna, Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, and others. In the north it is seen as early as Van Eyck, above the Adam and Eve panels of the Ghent altarpiece.

Yet it may have been one of Titian's works which acted as a stimulus to Dobson in his development of a taste for the feigned narrative relief. One of Titian's earliest and most elaborate uses of the device is in his *St. Peter Enthroned, Adored by Pope Alexander VI and Jacopo Pesaro* of about 1512, now at Antwerp, but in Dobson's time in Charles I's collection.

The portrait of Sir Richard Fanshawe includes large details of Solomonic columns, which also appear in the backgrounds of portraits of John, 1st Lord Byron, and Henry Mordaunt, 2nd Earl of Peterborough. Dr. Rogers suggests that the columns are present, in all pictures, "as an assertion of the legitimacy of the Royalist cause" (p. 41). Dobson's employment of the Solomonic column is often linked to the presence of the Raphael

cartoons in England. But they were purchased from Genoa in 1624. Earlier instances of the columns on a large scale in pictures painted for English patrons are, as Dr. Rogers notes, Rubens's *Countess of Arundel and Her Retinue* (Munich, 1620) and Van Dyck's *Continence of Scipio* (Christ Church, 1620-21).

The problem arises when one considers the implications of the fact that the Arundel group portrait was painted long before the Civil Wars: before the split between royalist and parliamentarian had occurred or, to put it another way, when everyone was a royalist. Why should the Earl of Arundel (who commissioned the Munich picture from Rubens and who, we may be sure, was in large part responsible for its programme) make a great issue out of something which was universally accepted?

Moreover, one finds the Solomonic column used in England extensively in the 1620s and 1630s, in architecture, painting, and sculpture. To give only a few examples, it occurs in Rubens's Whitehall ceiling, and that of York House; Mytens's *Charles I* of ca. 1628 (New York, Metropolitan Museum), Cornelius Le Neve's 1637 *5th Earl of Dorset and the Hon. Edward Sackville* (Knole); William Marshall's engraving of the royal family, ca. 1637-38 (Corbett & Norton, *Engraving in England . . .*, pl. 54); as sculptural reliefs beside the mantel in the North Drawing of Ham House (1637); and as fully three-dimensional columns in the "Virgin Portico" at St. Mary's, Oxford (1637). This last is noticed by Dr. Rogers on p. 11, but without any attempt at interpretation. In some comments on the Arundel group, published in the *Burlington Magazine*, February 1981, p. 123 (to which reference might have been made in Dr. Rogers's Dobson catalogue), I wrote that the Solomonic columns there "may convey ideas of support for the 'primitive' church, and the throne."

One of the burning issues which eventually led to Civil War in England was the question of religious policy, of how the Church of England was to be governed, how Catholic or Protestant it was to be, and where the ultimate sources for doctrine and authority were to be found. High Church Anglicans under the leadership of Archbishop Laud sought a return to Catholic doctrine and ritual, yet purified from later "abuses," and a reunion of Christianity without the domination of Rome. To Laud, the English crown and the church were inseparable. "Jerusalem," as he said, "stands not for the City and the State only . . . nor for the Temple and the Church only; but jointly for both . . . both are but one Jerusalem" (see R. Ashton, *The English Civil War* [1978], 114).

For the High Church party (which existed even before Laud) the Solomonic column must have seemed a potent and elastic emblem. Historically, the Temple of Solomon preceded all Christian churches, yet it was also a royal chapel, adjacent to Solomon's palace. Moreover, its form and proportions were held to be divine, to be those of the Temple of Heaven. Further, Solomon was a "type" of Christ.

Graphic evidence that these ideas could be associated with the Solomonic column is provided by the title-page of Marco Antonio de Dominis's *De Republica Ecclesiastica*, the first volume of which appeared in London in 1617. The author was the former archbishop of Spalato, who had converted to Anglicanism and come over to England where he had been well received by King James I, who made him Dean of Windsor. De Dominis's book, which he dedicated to the king, was a defence of national churches against the Roman "monarchy."

Dobson appears to make strong religious allusions, which have not been noticed, in two more portraits, no. 19, *Sir William Compton*, and no. 23, *James Compton, 3rd Earl of Northampton*. The two brothers were members of a family of fervent royalists which was also very religious.

In Dobson's portrait of Sir William there is a feigned relief at the base of a column. It is usually said to be simply a battle scene, with the figures dressed *all'antica*. However, the prostrate figure at the lower right wears a toga, part of which is drawn over his shoulders and head. This is the so-called *sinus*, which indicates that the figure is a priest (see L. M. Wilson, *The Roman Toga*, 44-45). Thus the relief is probably an allusion to the High Anglican clergymen who were ejected from their livings during the Civil Wars by parliamentary committees, a process which was often accompanied by violence (see R. S. Bosher, *The Making of the Restoration Settlement*, 5). The close proximity of Sir William's right hand and stick show that he is defending the fallen priest—just as in real life he defended the Church of England against its attackers.

It would appear that Dobson composed his narrative reliefs, rather than simply copying them directly from other sources. As yet no specific sources for his reliefs have been identified. However, invention need not preclude the borrowing of individual figures. In the case of the relief in the *Sir William Compton*, it would seem that the rushing figure looking back over his shoulder at the top of the relief derives from Rubens, from a figure in *The Battle of the Milvian Bridge*. This composition was part of the set of tapestries, *The History of Constantine the Great*, produced in Paris from the 1620s. Although this item does not seem to appear in any of the extant inventories of Charles I's possessions, it seems incredible that, given the artist and the subject, the king would not have owned it. Hence it may well have been available to Dobson for study in the Royal collection. Moreover, Dobson would have been particularly aware of tapestries since his first master, the German artist Francis Cleyn, designed borders for tapestries at the Mortlake factory.

Another dashing military portrait, recently acquired by the National Portrait Gallery, is now identified as Colonel Richard Neville. At the top right is a relief of Mercury "conversing" with Mars. According to the catalogue, "Mercury (swiftness) rousing Mars (war) is appropriate to a military commander." The two figures are certainly correctly identified (Mercury has wings on his helmet). But the interpretation is questionable—indeed it is probably the reverse of the real meaning. Mars is almost always a hot, impetuous figure, not one to need rousing (of course he can be calmed by Venus, but there is no sign of her here). In fact, in the famous letter of Marsilio Ficino to Lorenzo di Pier Francesco de'Medici (see E. H. Gombrich, *Symbolic Images*, 41-42) it is Mars who stands for Speed. By contrast, Mercury stands for Reason or Good Counsel. Hence, the idea in Dobson's "conversation" may be that, in order to gain Victory (indicated by the trophy beside Mars) one must moderate excessive speed, or, as it was so often put in the Renaissance, *festina lente*—make haste slowly!

Yet it seems very likely that, because of the presence of Mercury and Mars, along with a cavalry charge in the background of Dobson's *Colonel Richard Neville*, there is yet a further meaning in the conjunction of these two gods. They are also, for astrology, planetary deities, and equine astrology, like other forms of that science, was still very much alive in Dobson's day. According to the theories of equine astrology, all horses are subject to Mars, but this influence is modified according to their colours by other planets. Thus Mercury is responsible for grey and dappled horses. For this reason Mercury and Mars are present in the large Jordaens *Riding Academy* in the National Gallery, Ottawa (see J. Held, *Rubens and His Circle*, 33-34). And it seems reasonable to suppose that Dobson has included Mercury, at least in part, to oversee the grey-white horses charging behind Colonel Richard Neville.

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MARIANNE GRIVEL *Le commerce de l'estampe à Paris au XVII^e siècle*. Coll. « Histoire et civilisation du livre », n° 16. Genève, Librairie Droz, 1986, xxxv + 448 p., 100 ill.

Le commerce de l'estampe à Paris au XVII^e siècle vient s'ajouter à la prestigieuse collection « Histoire et civilisation du livre » et aux nombreuses études érudites issues de la IV^e section de l'Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes à Paris. Cet ouvrage est à coup sûr une des publications majeures des dernières années dans le domaine de l'estampe du XVII^e siècle. Ce livre a l'avantage, notamment, de regrouper des informations sur le monde de l'estampe parisien que le chercheur devait glaner auparavant à travers les notices des huit tomes parus de l'encyclopédique *Inventaire du fonds français* consacrés aux graveurs du XVII^e siècle.

L'ouvrage est divisé en trois parties. Marianne Grivel nous présente dans un premier temps le contexte de la fabrication et de la vente de l'estampe, puis une étude de la production parisienne, abordée sur le plan statistique et à partir des données recueillies sur les fonds d'éditeurs et de marchands. La troisième partie est consacrée au marché de l'estampe à Paris, à la clientèle et aux conditions de vente, et enfin à la problématique de la diffusion de l'estampe parisienne au niveau national et international. Deux annexes constituant une importante contribution dans le domaine de l'estampe du XVII^e siècle viennent compléter l'étude : un « Répertoire des éditeurs et marchands parisiens » et un « Répertoire des enseignes » des graveurs, marchands et éditeurs.

On pourrait comparer avantageusement cet ouvrage, en ce qui a trait au monde de l'estampe, à l'étude monumentale de Henri-Jean Martin, *Livres, pouvoirs et société à Paris au XVII^e siècle*, parue également chez Droz en 1969. En fait, l'approche de Marianne Grivel s'y apparente en ce qu'elle tend à saisir la globalité du monde de l'estampe à Paris au XVII^e siècle, au niveau de la production, de la diffusion, et de la vie sociale des artistes et artisans en taille-douce, à travers le débat les confrontant, notamment, à la puissante corporation des libraires.

Cette comparaison s'avère d'autant plus juste, si l'on considère la problématique de l'auteur :

> Etudier la gravure à travers ses producteurs, ses vendeurs et ses amateurs, retrouver l'activité réelle des métiers de l'estampe, essayer de connaître exactement le processus commercial, telles furent nos préoccupations premières. Histoire sociale, donc, et histoire économique qui visaient à mettre en lumière quelques mécanismes classiques et apparemment simples—qui vend quoi, comment, à qui et à quel prix? (p. 271)

De fait, ces objectifs ont été atteints et dépassés par l'auteur, qui nous livre une fresque complexe et nuancée à partir d'une trame d'informations qui pourrait sembler extrêmement aride au départ.

Il ne s'agit pas ici d'une histoire de l'art de l'estampe au XVII^e siècle envisagée sur un plan esthétique. L'étendue du matériel documentaire mis à jour par l'auteur—qu'il s'agisse de données sur le milieu social des producteurs d'estampes ou d'informations inédites concernant la production elle-même, recueillies grâce à un imposant travail de dépouillement des archives notariales—et la justesse de ses analyses permettent toutefois d'entrevoir les possibilités qu'offre l'étude du XVII^e siècle français pour l'histoire des mentalités artistiques.

La première partie de l'ouvrage nous introduit de plein pied dans le monde complexe de la fabrication et de la vente de l'estampe à Paris. Dans un premier temps, l'auteur nous livre un condensé indispensable à la « lecture » correcte de l'estampe du XVII^e siècle et de la « lettre » en identifiant les divers producteurs : l'auteur du dessin, le graveur, l'éditeur, le marchand. Suivent une présentation et une analyse en profondeur des divers métiers et professions reliés à l'estampe, et de leurs interrelations. Cette étude des structures sociales des métiers de l'estampe nous révèle un monde dont la complexité a de quoi étonner, et une hiérarchie de production impliquant graveurs, imprimeurs en taille-douce, enlumineurs, dominotiers et « tailleurs d'images » ou d'« histoires » sur bois, papetiers, marchands, marchands-libraires, et colporteurs. Au sein de ce petit univers, on découvre de nombreux liens de parenté et d'amitié qui, après avoir pris racine à la fin du XVI^e siècle, poussent parfois leurs ramifications jusqu'au XVIII^e siècle.

Ce microcosme va de l'atelier du graveur aux étalages du Charnier des Saints Innocents, en passant par la hotte du colporteur. Il y est question du déplacement du centre de production de l'estampe de la rue Montorgueil vers la rue Saint-Jacques au début du XVII^e siècle, mais aussi des conditions d'apprentissage de l'art de la gravure, de l'organisation des ateliers, et même de l'installation des boutiques et des éventaires de marchands.

L'auteur retrace l'évolution des techniques de gravure et l'influence déterminante de l'école flamande à la toute fin du XVI^e siècle. L'arrivée à Paris de burinistes anversois, renommés pour la précision et la finesse de leurs compositions, joue un rôle de premier plan dans le renouveau de l'estampe française. Les Pierre Firens, Gabriel et Melchior Tavernier, Jaspar Isaac, et, quelques décennies plus tard, Gérard Edelinck, contribuent à développer en France un nouveau goût pour l'estampe religieuse raffinée, le portrait et le paysage gravés. On assiste alors au déclassement de la gravure sur bois par les techniques de la taille-douce, qui seront perfectionnées dans la première moitié du XVII^e siècle (notamment par l'utilisation du vernis dur pour l'eau-forte, initiée par Jacques Callot) et définies par divers traités, dont celui d'Abraham Bossa—la *Manière de graver a l'eau forte*