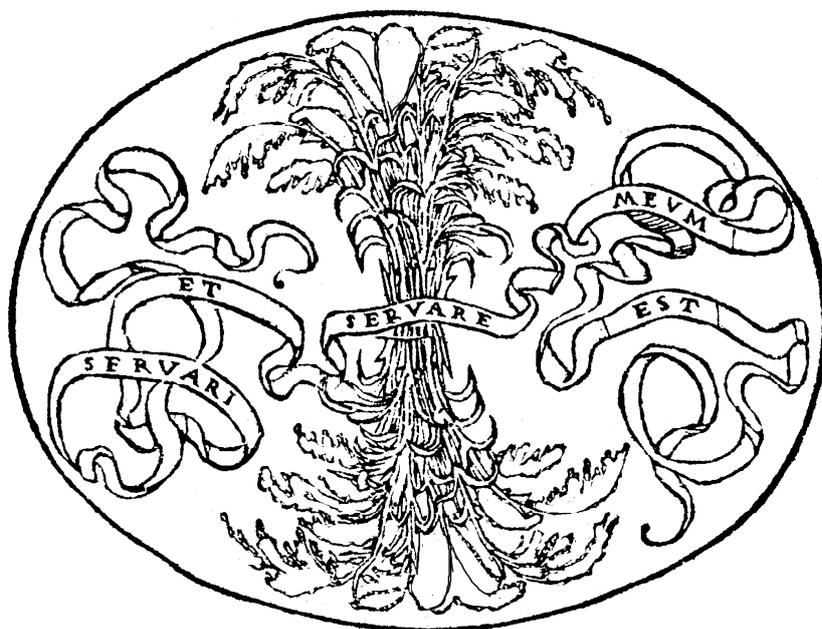


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EYESIGHT, KNOWLEDGE, ARGUMENT: CHARLES FAIRFAX MURRAY ON «SCIENTIFIC» CONNOISSEURSHIP

Introduction

In the concluding essay of *The Ephemeral Museum*, his posthumously published study of the history of the art exhibition, Francis Haskell remarks that when «the publications inspired by or associated with exhibitions are reviewed, it must be conceded that independent reviews are often of greater interest than the official catalogues»¹. Acknowledging that this is somewhat more true of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century exhibitions of contemporary art than it is of the Old Master exhibitions whose history more immediately concerns him, he cites one notable exception, «as of crucial significance for the history of connoisseurship»².

The review in question, a pamphlet by the then not quite thirty-year-old Bernhard Berenson, presented a critical survey of the earlier among the paintings included in the large Venetian exhibition held at London's New Gallery during the winter of 1894-1895. It was offered as an «emendation or supplement to the catalogue»³, in «rectification» of the «superannuated connoisseurship» and «abuse of famous names» which in Berenson's view severely limited the official publication's «value to students of pictures or to those who are interested in the history of Renaissance art»⁴. While pausing to note that Berenson's «scathing account» of the exhibition, or rather of the claims advanced in the catalogue, was in fact «by no means fair», Haskell emphasises the superior aims and credentials of this «ambitious young man who happened to be the most brilliant connoisseur of his time», aims and credentials that have ensured that this Old Master exhibition at least is remembered today:

Berenson [...] did more than ridicule the pretensions of the lenders to the exhibition. Again and again, he produced ingenious solutions to some of the puzzles presented by the over-ambitiously attributed pictures that he had been able to examine. In fact, he made use of the exhibition as a tool for proposing a tentative, but dogmatically expressed reconstruction of the styles of a number of early Venetian artists⁵.

The present paper aims to supplement Haskell's assessment of the pamphlet's significance, by considering a near-contemporary essay by the painter, connoisseur, collector and dealer Charles Fairfax Murray (1849-1919) which took issue with some of the premises of

A first version of this essay was presented as a talk to the National Gallery History Group on 26 July 2012. I am grateful for permission to quote from unpublished manuscript material by Murray, granted by Daniela Dinozzi, his great-granddaughter, and the following libraries and archives: the Dulwich Picture Gallery, London; Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge; the National Art Library, London; the National Gallery Archive, London; the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, Austin, Texas; the John Rylands Library, Manchester; and the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz-Zentralarchiv. I should also like to thank Monica Cavicchi, Ilaria Della Monica, Jill Dunkerton, Cecilia Frosinini, Donata Levi, Eckart Lingenauber and Aidan Weston-Lewis for their generous response to my requests for information and opinion.

¹ HASKELL 2000, p. 152.

² *Ibidem*.

³ BERENSON 1895a (BERENSON 1901, p. 92). The «supplementary» aims of the pamphlet were reiterated in the *Preface* by Berenson's friend, the businessman and art historian Herbert Cook, one of the organisers of the exhibition, who encouraged the pamphlet's composition and (apparently) subsidised its publication.

⁴ *Ivi*, pp. 90, 92. The catalogue was headed by what Haskell (*ivi*, p. 152) terms «the traditional caution: "The works are catalogued under the names given to them by the Contributors. The Committee cannot be responsible for the attributions"».

⁵ *Ivi*, p. 154.

Berenson's review. Though indirectly related to it – indeed, pre-dating it by about a year – and though never brought by its author to a state fit for publication, Murray's text helps flesh out a sense of what was at stake in the contest for critical authority the pamphlet so blatantly, if brilliantly, enacted – what was entailed, that is, in terms of moral face, social prestige and financial gain, but also gnoseologically, in terms of claims to knowledge and truth.

Murray's essay is of special interest on account of the rarity of his writings. Given by temperament to a role of enabling collaboration rather than authorial protagonism, and to a form of practical historiography exercised through collecting and dealing rather than to theoretical or methodological reflection, Murray rarely recorded – perhaps infrequently verbalised – the critical thinking that guided those activities. His method of study was principally visual and graphic. In *What's What* (an alternative *Who's Who*) the painter, collector and journalist Harry Quilter wrote of his friend's «unrivalled and almost unexampled knowledge of Italian pictures», acquired «systematically» by making «hundreds, if not thousands, of copies and outlines»⁶. Around the same time Murray himself told a younger dealer and connoisseur, Robert Langton Douglas, that his knowledge of painting derived «partly from a technical point of view and partly from a trained eyesight»⁷. His essay affords valuable evidence of a kind of technical analysis or diagnostic which could hardly have been recorded only through drawing, but which it seems he was reluctant to work out in writing.

The essay exists in two drafts. I shall refer to these as MS A and MS B⁸. The manuscript of a different though related essay, drafted a decade or more later, will be referred to as MS C⁹. All three manuscripts are largely unpublished¹⁰. MS B is a revised version of part only of MS A, and for this reason will be the draft I shall focus on here. MS A must date from around May 1894, since its immediate occasion was an article published that month by Berenson's then companion and collaborator, Mary Costelloe¹¹. *The New and the Old Art Criticism* was one of a series of writings¹² in which, under her own (married) name or the pseudonym Mary Logan, she programmatically «buttressed»¹³ the connoisseur's first substantial publications¹⁴. Especially here and in an article of the following year¹⁵, the campaigner for political and moral

⁶ QUILTER 1902, p. 920. Without considering the surviving sketchbooks, tracings and drawings, around sixty such copies in watercolour or oil exist in public and private collections, while about another fifty, so far untraced, known to have been made. From a young age Murray was also an avid collector of photographs of paintings (see TUCKER 2008).

⁷ C.F. Murray to R.L. Douglas, 25 (?) November 1904 (John Rylands Library, University of Manchester [English MSS 1281]).

⁸ Private collection, Italy.

⁹ MS C, now in the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, must have been written shortly after the appearance (in a periodical in 1907, as a book in 1910) of Paul Bourget's novella *La dame qui a perdu son peintre*, to which it alludes in terms suggesting still recent publication.

¹⁰ David Elliott included a pot pourri culled from all three MSS in an appendix to his biography, inaccurately describing them as «unfinished drafts of three articles» (ELLIOTT 2000a, p. 205).

¹¹ COSTELLOE 1894a.

¹² Also comprising COSTELLOE 1894b, LOGAN 1894, LOGAN 1895a and LOGAN 1895b.

¹³ See SAMUELS 1979, p. 215.

¹⁴ These include: the pamphlet and review discussed above; BERENSON 1894, based on an essay and on research of Mary's own (SAMUELS 1979, pp. 149, 159, 169; M. BERENSON–STRACHEY–SAMUELS 1983, pp. 54–55; STREHLKE 2013, p. 57); BERENSON 1895d and BERENSON 1895c, the framework for which was provided by COSTELLOE 1894b (signed «M.C.»). BERENSON 1895c (signed «Z») is not listed in MOSTYN-OWEN 1955, but identified as his own work in a letter from Berenson to his sister, cited in SAMUELS 1979, p. 221.

¹⁵ LOGAN 1895b. The article is misleadingly entitled «The New Art Criticism». Costelloe was perhaps inadvertently, perhaps deliberately appropriating a label coined by D.S. MacColl and much agitated in the press in the spring of 1893, in the course of a controversy concerning art and morality provoked by the exhibition in London of Degas' *L'Absinthe* (see the anthology of articles on the Tate Gallery's webpage for the exhibition *Degas, Sickert and Toulouse-Lautrec*, London, Tate Britain, 5 October 2005–5 January 2006 (www.tate.org.uk <last accessed 20 April 2014>).

reform¹⁶ turned art student champions the «new method of art criticism»¹⁷, which, she explains, «regards art as being the same sort of human product as language, or as political institutions, and it studies the art of a nation in the same scientific spirit in which philology or history is now studied»¹⁸. Costelloe's articles echo and expound Berenson's developing sense of the Morellian method – of which he set out a systematic account in a «fragment» on the *Rudiments of Connoisseurship*¹⁹ written about the same time as *The New and the Old Art Criticism* – as the «merely initial step in Constructive Art Criticism»²⁰, exemplified in the monograph *Lorenzo Lotto*²¹.

In 1895 Murray was among those slighted by Berenson's «scathing» New Gallery pamphlet, not only as a member of the exhibition's Executive Committee, but also as a contributor and as an expert on early Italian art²². By implication at least he was lumped among the purveyors of «old connoisseurship» and equated with those collectors whom Herbert Cook in his Preface to the pamphlet exhorted «to take a more critical interest in their family treasures»²³. The previous year, on the other hand, Murray very probably did not know who Mary Whitall Costelloe was, let alone of her connection with Berenson, of whom he may equally as yet have been unaware. His own target in replying to Costelloe's article was the assumption there did indeed exist a «new method» of art criticism, founded by Giovanni Morelli, and that this had in fact placed «the study of art nearly on a level with the accuracy of the natural sciences»²⁴.

¹⁶ M. BERENSON–STRACHEY–SAMUELS 1983, pp. 30-41.

¹⁷ LOGAN 1894 (*Preface*).

¹⁸ COSTELLOE 1894a, p. 835.

¹⁹ First published in BERENSON 1902, pp. 111-148.

²⁰ *Ivi*, p. viii.

²¹ BERENSON 1895d. In her review of the monograph, published in French, Costelloe defines the criticism it exemplifies as «psychologique». She distinguishes this from three other types: «documentaire», «comparative» and «subjective» (LOGAN 1895a, pp. 362-363).

²² After a devastating preliminary survey of the exhibition's thirty-three supposed Titians, the first of Berenson's «rectifications» regarded the only work contributed by Murray, a panel of the *Virgin and Child*, «lent [...] under the name of Stefano da Zevio» (BERENSON 1901, pp. 93-94). The attribution was almost certainly Murray's own: the previous year he had informed an important client, Wilhelm Bode, that he was in possession of a «fine picture» by this painter (C.F. Murray to W. Bode, 1 August 1893 [Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz-Zentralarchiv, 3832/1+2]). The attribution must have been based on a comparison with the *Virgin and Child in a Rose Garden* at Verona (Museo di Castelvecchio), a painting Murray knew well, having copied it for Ruskin in 1881 (his watercolour of the whole composition is in the Collection of the Guild of St George [Museums Sheffield CGSG00372], while a sketch of a group of four angels is held by Tate Britain [TO9721]). In correspondence with Ruskin (Pierpont Morgan Library, New York [MA 2150]) the Verona painting is referred to as a work by Pisanello, evidently following CROWE–CAVALCASELLE 1872, I, p. 453n. Ironically (as will be seen) Murray's later attribution of his own panel to Stefano da Zevio must have been founded on Giovanni Morelli's suggestion that the Verona *Virgin and Child* was by this painter (MORELLI 1883, p. 357n). In his pamphlet Berenson argued that Murray's panel must be recognised as the work of Michele Giambono if it could be viewed alongside Sir Frederic Leighton's signed picture by this artist, concurrently on show at the Royal Academy. A note in Berenson's hand to this effect is found opposite the entry for the next listed exhibit, a *Virgin and Child with Donor* ascribed to Bartolommeo Montagna and lent by Henrietta Hertz, in the copy of *VENETIAN ART* 1894 preserved in the Berenson Library at Villa I Tatti: «colour light & gay. This & former very close to Leightons signed Michele Giambono» (p. 15). On the previous page of the same copy, opposite the entry for Murray's panel, Mary Costelloe wrote sarcastically comment «done by the owner». The remark was probably provoked by the «unnecessary» repainting of the Virgin's mantle (ironically) attributed by Murray, in the letter to Bode of 1 August 1893 cited above, to the previous «owner», who, he surmised, was displeased by the Virgin's high forehead. Murray's panel is now in the Worcester Art Museum, Massachusetts, which acquired it from Richard Norton in 1912. Its attribution to Stefano has been retained, as has that of the Verona *Virgin* to the same painter in the Museo di Castelvecchio's recent catalogue (*MUSEO DI CASTELVECCHIO* 2010, p. 92; cf. DAVIES 1974, p. 476). Berenson himself would come to accept the attribution of both paintings to Stefano (BERENSON 1932, p. 550).

²³ BERENSON 1895a (*Preface*).

²⁴ COSTELLOE 1894a, p. 834.

This was a topic he had been eager to address in print for some time. Since the mid-1880s he had contemplated writing a book in which he recorded – «with a “brass pen”!», as he wrote to his friend William Spanton – his «opinions on art»²⁵. Whether he had intended from the start to deal there with the figure and writings of Morelli – indeed, whether these had antagonised him to the extent of *impelling* him to consider writing in response – is not known. Yet by the summer of 1891, even as Lady Eastlake in the «Quarterly Review» proclaimed the recently deceased *Commendatore* «the ablest connoisseur of art of his time», one responsible for «a revolution in the history of criticism»²⁶, Murray apparently had determined to devote to Morelli a portion at least of his book, still unwritten. In August of that year, the banker R. H. Benson, one of the private collectors with whom Murray was most closely associated – himself opposed to «the “scientific” method»²⁷ – advised, «I have a letter from L[ad]y Eastlake who wrote the article about Morelli in the Quarterly. I hope whenever you come to write your book that you will deal tenderly with Morelli & not antagonize his many friends!»²⁸.

A «difficulty with Lotto»

Two sets of events contributed finally (if not definitively) to overcome Murray’s reluctance to commit his opinions concerning Morelli and «scientific» connoisseurship to paper. The first of these was the publication in 1890-1891 of the first two volumes of I. Lermoliev’s (alias Morelli’s) *Kunstkritische Studien über italienische Malerei* – a revised and expanded edition of *Die Werke italienischer Meister in den Galerien von München, Dresden und Berlin* (1880) – of which an English translation, by his follower Constance Jocelyn Ffoulkes, appeared in 1892-1893. Murray had read this translation by the middle of May 1893, or enough of it to set him thinking of himself doing the round of the German and Italian galleries «to add to the literature on the subject»²⁹. The book had determined him to have his

²⁵ C.F. Murray to W.S. Spanton, undated fragment [Jan or Feb 1881?, certainly before 1883], 18 December 1881 (Dulwich Picture Gallery, London).

²⁶ EASTLAKE 1891, pp. 235, 238.

²⁷ See his Introduction to the catalogue of the Burlington Fine Arts Club’s *Exhibition of Pictures, Drawings & Photographs of Works of the School of Ferrara-Bologna, 1440-1540*, held in 1894-1895. Berenson published a review of the exhibition, to which Murray was again a contributor, in the «Revue critique d’histoire et de littérature». Though his criticisms were largely directed at the guest curator, Adolfo Venturi, and though Murray was not this time named, Berenson again questioned attributions almost certainly due to him. Berenson was doubtful, for instance, of the drawings ascribed to Ludovico Mazzolino in the *Catalogue Raisonné of Works by Masters of the School of Ferrara-Bologna* included in the general catalogue, of which that lent by Murray was the only one actually exhibited (FERRARA-BOLOGNA 1894, p. 27 [cat. 85]). And he made a special point of disbelieving the attribution to Dosso of a work not among the exhibits but in the National Gallery’s collection, where it was the only painting currently representing this artist (BERENSON 1895b, p. 351). *A Poet and his Muse*, now known as *A Man Embracing a Woman* (NG 1234), had been acquired from Murray in 1887. Previously ascribed to Giorgione, he had offered it to the Gallery as a «Bust group of two figures formerly known as Boccaccio and Fiammetta – attributed to Dosso Dossi» (see the Minutes of the Trustees’ Meeting for 11 July 1887 and the receipt of payment, dated 18 July 1887 and made out by Murray, in the National Gallery Archive, respectively NG I VI, 40 and S 028). In a manner important to him and typical of his mode of dealing, this re-attribution enabled him to make a large profit on the sale (he had bought it for twenty-five guineas and sold it for a hundred and fifty), while filling in a gap in the collection. (The same holds for the *Blood of the Redeemer* [NG 1233], the earliest Giovanni Bellini in the collection, also attributed by Murray, which the Gallery acquired from him together with the Dosso.) As in the case of the *Virgin and Child* attributed to Stefano da Zevio, Berenson would later accept the attribution to Dosso of NG 1234 (BERENSON 1932, p. 174).

²⁸ R.H. Benson to C.F. Murray, 23-29 August 1891 (John Rylands Library, University of Manchester [English MSS 1281]).

²⁹ C.F. Murray to W. Bode, 12 May 1893 (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz-Zentralarchiv, 3832/1+2).

say, perhaps to retaliate. In his revised text, though without actually naming him, Morelli had derided Murray's attribution of two paintings at Dresden to Lorenzo Lotto, as reported or endorsed in the Gemäldegalerie's catalogue. The paintings in question were a *St Sebastian*, which Murray had suggested to the Director Karl Woermann was a work of Lotto's maturity³⁰, and a signed *Santa conversazione*, purchased from Murray (through Wilhelm Bode³¹) in 1883 and since 1884 catalogued as an original work by the painter, a replica (*Wiederholung*) being said to exist in Lord Ellesmere's gallery at Bridgewater House in London³². Morelli ruled out the attribution to Lotto of the «coarse and uncouth [*ungeschlachten, wiisten*]» *St Sebastian*, assigning it rather to «some inferior Bolognese artist of the seventeenth century»³³. As for the *Santa Conversazione*, this was a mere «counterfeit [*Fälschung*]» of the painting in the Bridgewater gallery, coarsely executed by some Flemish painter³⁴.

Morelli's not actually naming Murray hardly attenuated his all but explicit accusation of incompetence, even fraudulence, given that the 1887 edition of the Dresden catalogue did do so in either instance³⁵. Like Constance Ffoulkes in her *Handbook to the Dresden Gallery* (1888)³⁶, Morelli probably followed the lead given by another of his disciples, the German art

³⁰ Woermann preferred to catalogue it as «Art der Spätzeit des Lorenzo Lotto », arguing the point as follows: «Die Prüfung dieser Werke in der Umgebung Ancona's, die wir daraufhin vorgennomen, hat allerdings eine Verwandtschaft derselben mit unserem Bilde ergeben, die uns jedoch nicht nah genug erschien, um es mit Sicherheit dem Lotto selbst zuzuschreiben. Man vergl. übrigens auch Lotto's schon ziemlich späten heil. Sebastian im Berliner Museum» (WOERMANN 1887, p. 98 [194B]).

³¹ In a letter of 31 May 1883 (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz-Zentralarchiv, 3832/1+2), Murray thanked Bode for his «kind offices in the matter of the Lotto», adding, «It has been of the greatest use to me & has enabled me to buy several things I have long wanted». WOERMANN 1896, p. 97 specifies that the painting had, exceptionally, been bought unseen on the recommendation of two reliable authorities.

³² WOERMANN 1884, p. 457. The panel representing the *Virgin and Child with St Jerome, St Peter, St Francis and St Clare* (?), signed «L.LOTVS.F», was de-accessioned by the Gemäldegalerie in 1922 and the following year entered the Pasini collection in Rome. After passing by inheritance to the Lupi family, it was sold to a Swiss collector in 1928. In November 1996 it was with the Galerie Lingenauber, Düsseldorf and it is now in a private collection in Italy. Following RICHTER 1887, FFOULKES 1888 and MORELLI 1893 (see below in the text), it has generally been accounted a copy of the Bridgewater painting (now in the National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh [NG 2418]). Exceptions include COLETTI 1953 (undecided between replica and «copia nordica», with reference to MORELLI 1893), BERENSON 1956 and BERENSON 1957b, where it is listed as a replica (BERENSON 1957a and BERENSON 1990, however, give it as a copy) and, most recently, MAZZONI 2009, where, despite the apparently poor condition of the relevant portion of the Dresden panel, it is argued that the figure usually identified as St Peter is not in fact holding a key and represents the prophet Isaiah. Though failing to identify the painting in question with that once at Dresden, Federico Zeri (expertise of 28 February 1998, Fondazione Zeri, Bologna) considered it a faithful copy by an unidentified sixteenth-century artist. Having had the opportunity to compare the two paintings directly at the National Gallery of Scotland in the late 1990s, the Gallery's Chief Curator Aidan Weston-Lewis (private communication) confirms the faithfulness of the ex-Dresden painting while also remarking a distinct difference in quality in the heads and hands and further emphasising that the colour of Murray's picture is uncharacteristic of Lotto. It was apparent, he states, to those present at the comparison that the ex-Dresden painting could be no more than a later copy, dating from the end of the sixteenth century at the earliest.

³³ BENATI 1996 attributes the painting to Annibale Carracci on documentary and stylistic grounds (the latter anticipated by Roberto Longhi), and this is the attribution currently favoured at Dresden. The attribution to Lotto would be endorsed by Charles Loeser in a review of WOERMANN 1896 (LOESER 1897, p. 334) and later in BERENSON 1932 and COLETTI 1953. On the other hand, as recorded in WOERMANN 1896, BERENSON 1895d, p. 303 assigned the painting to an «unknown imitator of Lotto's style of about 1533». In the copy of WOERMANN 1887 preserved in the Berenson Library at Villa I Tatti an annotation by Berenson opposite the portion of the entry for this painting reporting Murray's suggestion (p. 98), probably dating from the late 1880s, reads «not at all unlikely».

³⁴ MORELLI 1893, pp. 256-257.

³⁵ WOERMANN 1887, p. 98.

³⁶ Of the *Santa conversazione* she scornfully remarks, «The coarseness of the drawing of the hands, especially of the figure on the left, makes it apparent, even to the inexperienced student, that this is not the production of a great artist» (FFOULKES 1888, pp. 141-142).

historian and dealer Jean Paul Richter³⁷, in a review of the 1887 edition of the Dresden catalogue published that same year. Richter also named Murray in connection with both paintings, pointedly classifying him as a *painter* and calling into question Woermann's definition of him as a connoisseur (*Kenner*) by ironically placing the latter term within inverted commas³⁸.

Whether the reference in the 1887 Dresden catalogue to the Bridgewater picture as a replica of the gallery's *Santa conversazione*³⁹ is to be imputed to Murray himself is unclear. Certainly, a letter to Spanton of around 1881 suggests he *had* believed it an early work by Lotto, «painted under mixed Lombard & Venetian influence»⁴⁰. On the other hand, Frederic Burton's reply to a still earlier but unfortunately lost letter from Murray, written in December 1879 and evidently containing a sketch of his «Lotto», shows that he (Murray) was aware of its connection with the Bridgewater picture, but had not yet had the opportunity to investigate this. «I too,» Burton commented, «should like to compare it with the picture in the Bridgewater Collec[tio]n which I do not recollect at all – But it is difficult to get into Bridgewater Ho[use] without knowing its owner, who is a man that cares for nothing but horses»⁴¹.

That the damage inflicted on his reputation by Morelli and his «satellites»⁴² was both real and lasting⁴³ is shown by two publications of the 1890s. The first, a letter to the editor of the «Pall Mall Gazette», published on 13 January 1893, was evidently written in his defence by a friend or admirer and in immediate response to the appearance in English of Morelli's revised text. A propos of the contemporary debate over the attribution to Giorgione (by William Armstrong, Bode and others) of the Glasgow City Council's *Christ and the Adulteress*, then on show at the Royal Academy, the writer advised that judgments of authenticity in the case of Giorgione be guided by the seventy-sixth edition of the catalogue to the National Gallery⁴⁴ and by the «published remarks» on the painter by «Mr Fairfax Murray, [who] in spite of a difficulty with Lotto, is the best authority in England now living; and even the aesthetic Pharisees of Chelsea and elsewhere repose confidence in his judgment»⁴⁵.

The second publication appeared in a *Supplement* to the «Saturday Review» for 26 February 1898 and was a minutely critical (unsigned) account by Herbert Horne⁴⁶ of Edward Poynter's acquisitions for the National Gallery in the four years since his appointment as Director in 1894. Horne concludes that in that time Poynter had failed to add a single «picture of first-rate importance» to the collection, but only «a large number of third and fourth-rate pictures [...] bought for small sums», among them «the works of inferior masters, who have no

³⁷ Richter's American wife Louise had translated *Die Werke italienischer Meister* into English (MORELLI 1883).

³⁸ RICHTER 1887, p. 191. As well as the «deep-pitched» colour, not to be found in original works by Lotto, Richter, like Pfohlke after him, instances the drawing of the hands, and in particular of the thumbs of St Jerome on the left and of St Francis on the right, in justification of the claim that the Dresden painting was a copy.

³⁹ Duly corrected in WOERMANN 1896, p. 97, which states that the painting had subsequently «shown itself to be a copy».

⁴⁰ C.F. Murray to W.S. Spanton, n.d. [January-February 1881] (Dulwich Picture Gallery, London).

⁴¹ F.W. Burton to C.F. Murray, 18 December 1879 (Harry Ransom Research Center, Austin, Texas).

⁴² Murray's expression (MS B); no names are given.

⁴³ On the other hand, in endorsing the attribution to Lotto of the Dresden *St Sebastian*, LOESER 1897 does not make the connection between the «English connoisseur» and Murray (whose name was removed from the relevant entry in WOERMANN 1896).

⁴⁴ *DESCRIPTIVE AND HISTORICAL CATALOGUE* 1892.

⁴⁵ *GIORGIONE AT THE OLD MASTERS* 1893. The reference to Murray's published remarks on Giorgione is to his footnoted commentary in *OLD ITALIAN MASTERS* 1892. Possibly the letter was written by W.J. Stillman (compare the reference to Murray's «list of recognisable Giorgione's» in *VENUS AND APOLLO* 1897, p. 41).

⁴⁶ Not, as stated in ELLIOTT 2000a, p. 156, by Berenson. The article is attributed to Horne in SUTTON 1985, p. 131 and the attribution is maintained in NETHERSOLE–HOWARD 2010, p. 376.

place in a gallery of the great masters»⁴⁷. One such was Filippo Mazzola's signed *Virgin and Child with Two Saints*, which had been purchased from Murray for £120⁴⁸. «The interest of this picture,» Horne remarks, «begins and ends in the fact that it was painted by the father of Parmigiano».

This painter, we are told, was called Filippo dell'Erbette, because he succeeded best in painting fruit and flowers. Judging, however, from the picture in question, we should have imagined that he was so nicknamed because his figures resemble vegetables rather than human beings. However, the cheery thought remains that its acquisition greatly redounds to the genius of Mr Fairfax Murray as a dealer, though scarcely, perhaps, as much as his famous «Lotto» at Dresden⁴⁹.

A «second to Poynter»

The other set of events that must have had a part in encouraging Murray to give expression to his «opinions» on Morelli and Morellianism was his significant (though publicly inconspicuous) role in the search for a successor to Sir Frederic Burton as Director of the National Gallery, in the period immediately prior to the latter's retirement in March 1894. This proved the occasion not only for a «battle», widely debated in the press, «between the rising profession of art historical scholarship and the obsolescent but still vigorously supported school of painter-connoisseurs»⁵⁰, but also for institutional reform: the Liberal Prime Minister Lord Rosebery, who succeeded Gladstone at a crucial juncture in the contest in April 1894, redefined the Director's role in a Treasury minute and so effectively «shifted the balance of power between Director and Trustees»⁵¹.

Two principal candidates for the post emerged early on in the proceedings. The painter Edward Poynter, who as we have just seen was subsequently appointed, had been the first Slade Professor of Fine Art at University College, London and Director for Art at the Science and Art Department. His name was put forward in December 1892 by George Howard (Lord Carlisle), himself a painter and a Trustee of the National Gallery. Poynter's candidature was supported by Edward Burne-Jones (his brother-in-law) and William Holman Hunt⁵². The other principal candidate was Sidney Colvin, former Cambridge Slade Professor and Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum, now Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum. He was proposed by a leading spokesman of the rival faction, the critic Humphry Ward, who reminded Gladstone that the study of art history «rapidly [was] being placed on a scientific basis – but not, it is to be feared, by Englishmen, still less by the Directors of English galleries»⁵³.

Murray was recommended by Howard, as a second choice after Poynter, towards the end of September 1893. Specifying that he «would not wish to compete with Poynter», Howard stated that if Poynter should prove ineligible then there was «much to be said for

⁴⁷ HORNE 1898, p. 278.

⁴⁸ NG 1416.

⁴⁹ HORNE 1898, p. 276.

⁵⁰ BELL 1975, p. 278.

⁵¹ CONLIN 2007, pp. 97-98: «The Minute determined that Burton's successor would be “chief executive and administrative authority of the Gallery”. When it came to taking any decision, “whether on the acquisition of new pictures, the preservation of those already in the Gallery, or the management of the institution,” however, he would merely have a vote on the Board, who would collectively decide what course to take.» On the Rosebery Minute and its implications see also GEDDES POOLE 2010, especially pp. 57-76.

⁵² G. Howard to W.E. Gladstone, 11 December 1892 (Rosebery Papers, National Library of Scotland [MS 10150]), quoted in ELLIOTT 2000b.

⁵³ Quoted in BELL 1975, p. 281.

Murray, who in many respects knows more than anyone else»⁵⁴. Murray's friend, mentor and patron, William Morris also testified to his qualities:

I am quite sure he has a remarkable and altogether unusual instinct for *style* in art, and he has cultivated that gift assiduously until he has, to my mind, gained an unrivalled knowledge of the history and qualities of pictures [...] I believe his appointment would be a great gain to the public⁵⁵.

Murray's candidature was agitated most vigorously, by Burne-Jones, almost at the last minute, when the question of Poynter's eligibility seemed likely to become a decisive issue, given the demands in terms of time which Rosebery's Treasury minute, now in preparation, ostensibly imposed on the new Director. This turn of events prompted a statement of Murray's own, dated 11 April and addressed to the President of the Board of Trade, A. J. Mundella, with whom he was well acquainted through his dealings with the South Kensington Museum⁵⁶. Without putting forward any personal claim, Murray set out the case for a Director who had «knowledge of pictures as well as the history of art»⁵⁷ – who was, in other words, «both an artist and an expert», which is precisely how Burne-Jones had described Murray himself in a letter to Lord Rosebery written only days before⁵⁸. And this combination of skills was undoubtedly Murray's peculiar strength. In failing to emerge as a valid *alternative* to Poynter Murray perhaps fell victim to the painter/scholar polarization that characterised the entire contest. Things might perhaps have turned out differently if he had attracted allies among those influential painters, such as Sir Frederic Leighton and G.F. Watts, who adamantly supported the appointment of a scholar-Director⁵⁹. In any case, eight years into the much criticised Poynter Directorship, Harry Quilter would comment:

We hold a strong opinion that it is a piece of sheer idiocy on the part of the Government and the nation not to utilise the services of such a man; entrusted with the directorship of the National Gallery, he would in ten years make it the most celebrated collection in Europe, and in such a position his great gifts would find much more honourable exercise than in those commercial transactions in which he is at present almost wholly occupied⁶⁰.

Murray's «commercial transactions» had begun to intensify in the early 1880s and had soon become the principal focus of his professional life, centred on the London auction-rooms. They almost certainly told against him in 1894⁶¹. His business relations with Wilhelm Bode were significantly glossed over in Burne-Jones' letter of recommendation of 8 April, in which the painter wrote of him, not quite accurately, «His reputation as a judge of art is so good that some years since he received an invitation through Dr Bode of Berlin to go there

⁵⁴ G. Howard to S. Lyttleton, 25 September 1893 (Rosebery Papers, National Library of Scotland [MS 10150]).

⁵⁵ Quoted in BELL 1975, p. 278. Also quoted in ELLIOTT 2000a, p. 173, where it is stated that Morris' statement was addressed to the Trustees of the National Gallery and is held in the Gallery's archive, where it has not, however, been located.

⁵⁶ TUCKER 2002.

⁵⁷ Quoted in ELLIOTT 2000b.

⁵⁸ E. Burne-Jones to Lord Rosebery, 8 April 1894 (Rosebery Papers, National Library of Scotland, Glasgow), quoted in ELLIOTT 2000b.

⁵⁹ BELL 1975, pp. 282-283.

⁶⁰ QUILTER 1902, p. 921.

⁶¹ It is tempting to think the «firm, polyglot testimonial» addressed by Abraham Bredius, the Dutch art historian and museum curator, to Colvin, and quoted in Bell 1975, pp. 281-282, contains a reference to Murray, with whom Bredius was certainly acquainted by this time (he figures in Murray's correspondence with Bode): «I really do not know whom they could better make Keeper of the National Gallery but you. C'est vrai, il n'y a pas de grand Choix mais où trouve-t-on des BONS connaisseurs des tableaux anciens? There are not a dozen in the world. In England there are VERY FEW, and one of the best is of course a dealer.»

and examine and pronounce on the early pictures in the Gallery»⁶². And while in his own statement Murray stressed the crucial importance of appointing an artist-expert Director if the National Gallery wished to keep abreast of its «one important rival as a growing gallery viz that of Berlin», he of course gave no hint that his close knowledge of the rival collection and of its acquisition methods and achievements (which would have stood him in very good stead as a Director with authority to purchase) was in large part due to his commercial dealings with Bode. Though indeed «under no illusions about his place in the tactical struggle»⁶³, Murray took his own candidature very seriously. This is shown by the steps adopted in the latter part of 1893, of which he informed Bode in January of the following year:

I have withdrawn from all business matters for some months as I am one of the candidates for the Nat[iona]l Gall[er]y Directorship[.] I am only running as a second to Poynter[;] more than anything else to oppose Colvin[,] who seems to me the least capable of all who are trying for it [...]

Most of the pictures I had an interest in I have made over – some others I shall sell by auction as soon as I can⁶⁴[.]

In addition to suspending his activities as a dealer Murray seems to have made a more determined effort to promote recognition of his standing as an expert through publication. For what the «Times» wrote of him in 1897 – «we may at least say that he has not given, by published writings, many opportunities to the world to test the value of his opinions»⁶⁵ – was still more the case prior to 1894. The book of «opinions of art» he planned to write in 1885 but never produced has already been mentioned. Around the same time he discussed a collaborative project with the archaeologist John Henry Middleton, proposing as initial topics a number of «small matters [...] weighing on [his] mind». These included the relation between the London and Paris versions of Leonardo's *Virgin of the Rocks* (to which we shall return), drawings by Francia in the Louvre and by Francesco di Giorgio in Florence and «an engraving of Podesta's possibly unique in the BM», which Murray thought might be after a lost work by Titian⁶⁶. And since some of the drawings he planned to discuss were falsely attributed to Mantegna, he threw in the possibility of a critical survey of all known drawings by this artist: «there are many that want clearing away»⁶⁷. This project too failed to come to fruition, possibly as a result of Middleton's appointment as Slade Professor of Fine Art at Cambridge in 1886. Still earlier plans on Murray's part to publish a catalogue of his own collection of paintings, illustrated with plates etched by himself or with platinum photographic prints⁶⁸, were similarly never realised. While his privately supplied opinions were absorbed into the publications of eminent

⁶² E. Burne-Jones to Lord Rosebery, 8 April 1894 (Rosebery Papers, National Library of Scotland, Glasgow), quoted in ELLIOTT 2000b.

⁶³ ELLIOTT 2000a, p. 173.

⁶⁴ C.F. Murray to W. Bode, 20 January 1894 (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz-Zentralarchiv, 3832/1+2). The auction of which he writes is not known to have taken place. For a note on the transcription of this and other manuscript letters, see the Appendix.

⁶⁵ «The Times», 11 February 1897, a propos of the strangeness of Murray's being «the "expert" authority most favoured by Mr. Stillman» in *VENUS AND APOLLO* 1897.

⁶⁶ The impression of G.A. Podesta's etching of *Venus Embracing Adonis* (1661) held by the British Museum (BM X,1.92) is indeed believed to be a unique. Murray reasoned as follows: «this engraving looks singularly like a companion picture to the Madrid Offering to Fecundity & I will show you a passage in one of Titians letters referring to a picture he was painting for Alfonso of Ferrara at the same time as the famous bacchanals which Cavalcaselle believes to be a reference to a lost work – after reading it I sent a sketch I made of our engraving to C. & he thought it the picture in question» C.F. Murray to J.H. Middleton, 28 November 1885 (National Art Library, London [NAL 86 QQ Box I]).

⁶⁷ C.F. Murray to J.H. Middleton, 28 November 1885 (National Art Library, London [NAL 86 QQ Box I]).

⁶⁸ C.F. Murray to W.S. Spanton, n.d. [January-February 1881, certainly before 1883] and 18 December 1881 (Dulwich Picture Gallery, London).

writers on art, most notably the extensively revised Italian edition of Crowe and Cavalcaselle's *New History of Painting* and Wilhelm Bode's 1884 edition of Burkhardt's *Der Cicerone*, for which Murray was invited to draft the section on the early Sieneese painters⁶⁹, his first and (prior to 1894) only autonomous publication was a brief contribution – hitherto unrecorded – to Harry Quilter's innovative but short-lived illustrated monthly miscellany, the «Universal Review», entitled *The Two Holy Mothers*⁷⁰. This reproduced (in autogravure) a painting by Correggio he had recently sold, again through Bode⁷¹, to Prince Leopold von Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen: the «Mantegnesque» *Virgin and Child with St Elizabeth and St John the Baptist*⁷². Murray's short accompanying text (preceded by a note of the editor's) presented a list of early works by the painter, in which those already instanced by Giovanni Morelli in *Die Werke italienischer Meister*, in relation to the «famous signed “Madonna and Saints” in the Dresden Gallery», were supplemented by a further three. Two of these, the Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen *Virgin and Child* and *Christ Taking Leave of his Mother*, now in the National Gallery⁷³, had passed through Murray's hands⁷⁴.

In 1894 he brought to completion a critical catalogue of the pictures in the collection of the Duke of Portland, printed by the Chiswick Press at the end of the year⁷⁵. Murray had been recommended for the task by R. H. Benson, whom the Duke had consulted in the spring of 1892 as to the possibility of having someone produce a catalogue possessing «some artistic, historical, & literary value». Benson outlined the job to Murray in a manner that managed to be both complimentary and patronising. The «hack-work» of describing the pictures, he suggested, could be dictated by «any body [...] to a shorthand writer rapidly with the dimensions», while «the date & particulars of the respective painters might be taken from the National Gallery Catalogue»:

⁶⁹ TUCKER 1998, pp. 266-276. In addition, Murray's «very valuable assistance [...] in the arrangement of the Exhibition and the preparation of the Catalogue» is acknowledged in the Burlington Fine Arts Club's *Exhibition of the Work of Luca Signorelli and his School* (1903, p. vi), to which he was also a contributor. A letter from R.H. Benson to C.F. Murray of 6 February 1893 (John Rylands Library, University of Manchester [English MSS 1281]), reporting his wife Evelyn's opinion that the descriptions in the catalogue of the photographs of Signorelli's work «abroad» were «characteristic of [Murray's] style», suggests he was responsible for some at least of this part of the publication.

⁷⁰ MURRAY 1889.

⁷¹ C.F. Murray to W. Bode, 9 July 1914.

⁷² Now in the Museum of Art, Philadelphia (1173a).

⁷³ NG 4255. This painting was probably the cause of later animosity between Richter and Murray. Richter stated (in letters to Augustus Daniel of 20 February 1928 and 5 November 1932, in the dossier for NG 4255, National Gallery) to have found it in the collection of Vitale de Tivoli (1815-1883) in Brixton in 1879 and to have recognised it as an early work by Correggio. He also claimed that it was thanks to his «account of the picture in “Art and Letters” [probably either RICHTER 1879a or RICHTER 1879b]» that Murray «took hold of it and sold it to Benson». It is not clear, however, whether Murray did ever own the painting himself. It seems to have been in Florence with the heirs of Professor Filippo Parlatore (1816-1877), from whom de Tivoli is said previously to have acquired it, by December 1884 (F.W. Burton to C.F. Murray, 21 December 1884 [Harry Ransom Research Center, Austin, Texas]). Shortly afterwards (5 January 1885) Richter informed Morelli that Murray had put the painting up for sale (MORELLI-RICHTER 1960, pp. 360). Murray indeed seems to have had a commission from the heirs to sell the painting, which was on display at his home or in his studio for a period. A year later (*ivi*, p. 458) it was seen there by Richter, who Murray feared was attempting to buy it privately from the owners (C.F. Murray to W. Bode, 18 March [1886] [Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz-Zentralarchiv, 3832/1+2]). It was purchased from the Parlatore heirs by Benson through Murray some time before 14 February 1887 (C.F. Murray to W. Bode [Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz-Zentralarchiv, 3832/1+2]).

⁷⁴ The third is listed by Murray as a *Flight into Egypt* once belonging to J.P. Richter and having possibly been sold by him to a Milanese collector. The painting in question must be the *Nativity* which Richter bought from J.C. Robinson and had restored by Luigi Cavenaghi in Milan. In 1887 it was acquired by Benigno Crespi and is now in the Pinacoteca di Brera (Reg. Cron. 6030) (BACCHI ET ALII 1991, pp. 22-24). For Richter's attribution of the painting to Correggio see MORELLI-RICHTER 1960, p. 293 (letter of 25 November 1883).

⁷⁵ MURRAY 1894b.

But all this must be commanded by some one who will settle authoritatively the nomenclature distinguish copies from originals & write a short preface taking the responsibility thereof [...]

The historical part ought perhaps to be done by some authority fresh from the history schools at Oxford who would be subordinate to whoever undertook the responsibility for the final result.

The final literary revision might be submitted to some master of style like Andrew Lang if necessary. As to the artistic part, I see that Waagen says the chief pictures are «Netherlandish» & perhaps it might be possible to get Bredius & Bode some time down to decide anything that you might not feel sure of in their special schools⁷⁶.

Murray did consult Bode about a bust portrait of a boy bearing Rembrandt's signature, which he (Murray) thought genuine⁷⁷. He also made a trip to Amsterdam in the spring or summer of 1894 in which, he told Bode, he had «found out a few things»⁷⁸; and he may well have consulted then with Bredius. I know of no evidence, however, that anyone but Murray himself was directly responsible for the final, very substantial and carefully documented catalogue. Three years later the «Athenaeum» approved his «exemplary care, knowledge and perspicacity», noting that «his historic notes on the paintings possess unusual value, because they are due to original researches and close observation of the examples themselves»⁷⁹. In addition to individual entries for over five hundred paintings the volume includes a Biographical List comprising potted lives of more than a hundred painters. These certainly were not cribbed from the rather staid, verbose and unfocused biographical entries in Frederic Burton's National Gallery catalogue, but written in a style both terse, wry and critically engaged. The commission gave Murray the opportunity to broaden his range of scholarly and collecting interests. Shortly after his death in 1919, C.H. Collins Baker paid intelligent tribute to the «inspired» attribution by Murray to Samuel Cooper of a portrait subsequently recognised as the work of Gerard Soest:

The portrait now is part of the Dulwich Gallery collection, thanks to the generosity of Fairfax Murray, who, if he shared our common humanity of fallibility in attribution, must always be honoured as a serious pioneer in the study of English portraiture. His interest in this minor vein of his art scholarship awoke when he was commissioned to catalogue the Welbeck [i.e. Portland] collection. Thence onward he made a practical study of the subject, buying examples as he met them, always with the view of giving them, when they should have become sufficiently valued, to public galleries. The National Gallery, so famously ill-equipped with specimens of early English painting, was not lucky enough to benefit by his generous intention in this direction⁸⁰.

In the letter of 20 January 1894 announcing his temporary withdrawal from «business», Murray also informed Bode that he had been reviewing «the Old Masters Exhibition» in the «St James's Gazette»⁸¹. The issues for 1 and 18 January 1894 indeed carry unsigned reviews of

⁷⁶ R.H. Benson to C.F. Murray, 7 February 1892 (John Rylands Library, University of Manchester [English MSS 1281]).

⁷⁷ C.F. Murray to W. Bode, 5 April 1892 (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz-Zentralarchiv, 3832/1+2). The painting is catalogued as by Rembrandt in MURRAY 1894b, p. 62 (cat. 216), BODE-HOFSTEDER DE GROOT 1899, p. 105 (cat. 181) and GOULDING-ADAMS 1936, p. 82 (cat. 216). It is now generally excluded from his catalogue.

⁷⁸ *Ivi*, 23 July 1894.

⁷⁹ No. 3535, 27 July 1895.

⁸⁰ COLLINS BAKER 1919, p. 150.

⁸¹ A conservative evening newspaper then edited by Sidney Low and owned by Edward Steinkopf (or Steinkopff; 1841-1906). Murray might have met the German-Jewish Director of the Apollinaris mineral water firm through Bode. Steinkopf seems to have been close to Bismarck and his entourage. According to the «Liverpool Mercury» (1 March 1890) he bought the «Gazette» because he wished to own «a newspaper which should bear an English name but should be a German organ». On the other hand, «The Press» (18 July 1889) claimed that Bismarck

the annual winter loan exhibition at the Royal Academy normally referred to in this way. In another letter to Bode, however, Murray uses the expression in explicit reference to the New Gallery's Early Italian Art exhibition⁸². The unsigned reviews of this exhibition in the «St James's Gazette» for 2 and 19 January are undoubtedly his⁸³. They rapidly and incisively consider a wide range of exhibits, frequently correcting attributions, though without the theatrical dogmatism of Berenson's signed pamphlet. Of particular interest is Murray's treatment of two *cassone* panels with episodes from the story of Jason and the Argonauts, lent by the Earl of Ashburnham and both ascribed to Filippino Lippi⁸⁴. Noting first that these are by two different hands, he goes on to state that the painter responsible for the panel showing the *Argonauts in Colchis* is «known to us by numerous works without a name; he was a journeyman of both Ghirlandajo and Botticelli»⁸⁵. And he proceeds to give a sketch of this anonymous personality in a way that anticipates aspects of Hermann Ulmann's reconstruction of the figure of David Ghirlandaio and Berenson's of «Alunno di Domenico», alias Bartolommeo di Giovanni⁸⁶:

A predella to a picture by the former is in the Florentine Academy⁸⁷; and he painted the group of figures representing the Massacre of the Innocents in the great altar-piece for the church of the same name – now removed to the public gallery⁸⁸. He assisted Botticelli in the frescoes of the Villa Lemmi – now in the Louvre; and the picture of a young man introduced to a party of ladies, representing the Sciences, is, with the exception of the principal figure, mainly by him. He also painted some of the hands in the companion picture, so unlike both in drawing and colour to those by Botticelli himself, that it is difficult to understand how the master could leave his work so disfigured⁸⁹. The unknown is also the painter of the third picture in the series of *cassone* pictures relating to the story of Nastagio degli Onesti in the Barker and Leyland collections⁹⁰, of which one is exhibited here (No. 156)⁹¹, but not the one in question. Two small

himself had been interested in acquiring an English paper through Steinkopf. Murray certainly knew (of) him as a collector. On 14 June 1893 he wrote to Bode, «I think Mr Steinkopf must have purchased the fine Berghem on Saturday – Donaldson who I understand is his present agent bought it for 650 g[luinea]s[;] it is a fine picture». Pictures, prints and drawings, books, furniture and *objets d'art* from Steinkopf's collection were sold at Christie's in 1935 following the death of his daughter Mary Margaret, Lady Seaforth, in 1933. A second connection with the «St James's Gazette» was probably through one of its regular regular art-critics, H. Arthur Kennedy, a friend of Murray's from the late 1870s or early 1880s (C.F. Murray to W.S. Spanton n.d. [January-February 1881], 9 November 1885, [Dulwich Picture Gallery, London]; «The Bookman», November 1897).

⁸² C.F. Murray to W. Bode, 22 March 1894 (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz-Zentralarchiv, 3832/1+2): «If I understand your letters you will now come over before the New Gallery exhibition of old masters closes on the 7th April». The Early Art exhibition was the immediate forerunner (or first instalment) of the following winter's Venetian exhibition, the object of Berenson's pamphlet. Murray was a member of the Executive Committee on this occasion also.

⁸³ ELLIOTT 2000a, p. 171 mentions only the review of 19 January, dedicated to drawings, printed and illuminated books, bronzes and other art objects, omitting to refer to that of 2 January, which focuses on the paintings.

⁸⁴ Pietro del Donzello, *The Departure of the Argonauts* and Bartolomeo di Giovanni, *The Argonauts in Colchis*, both now in the Mari-Cha Collection.

⁸⁵ MURRAY 1894a, p. 12.

⁸⁶ ULMANN 1896, pp. 58-62; BERENSON 1903, p. 12.

⁸⁷ Predelle to the *Virgin and Child with Saints* (Inv. 8388), representing the *Martyrdom of St Dionysius*, a *Miracle of St Dominic*, a *Pietà*, a *Miracle of st Clement* and *St Thomas Teaching* (Inv. 8387), now in the Uffizi.

⁸⁸ Ghirlandaio, *Adoration of the Magi*, Museo dello Spedale degli Innocenti, Florence. Berenson starts his reconstruction of «Alunno» with this detail from the background.

⁸⁹ Murray had made watercolour copies of both frescoes for Ruskin in 1880-1881, before their removal from the villa. The drawings are now in Oxford (Ashmolean Museum and Somerville College). When working on his copy of it Murray had expressed his belief that the fresco with the young man was not by Botticelli in a letter to Dante Gabriel Rossetti of 10 September 1881 (copies of Murray's letters to Rossetti are in the Bodleian Library, Oxford [MS Facs d. 273]).

⁹⁰ Murray refers to the panel representing the banquet at which Nastagio shows his guests the consequences of rejected love, now in the Prado, Madrid. It is attributed to «Alunno» in BERENSON 1903, p. 12.

panels belonging to the Liverpool Institution, Nos. 17 and 18 in the 1860 catalogue, attributed in turn to almost every painter of note in the Florentine School, are also by him⁹². A long list might be compiled of his pictures abroad. Cavalcaselle recognised the Liverpool pictures as of the school of Botticelli⁹³.

Like some of the carefully constructed biographical entries in the Duke of Portland's catalogue, this minimal but precisely drawn portrait of an as yet unnamed artistic personality makes one doubt the accuracy of A.C. Benson's again appreciative but patronizing assessment of Murray's character and abilities – with its oblique, disdainful hints at his activities as a dealer:

What I liked about him was his perfect sincerity and naturalness, his entire absence of pose. He did not want to surround himself with mystery, to be pontifical, to make himself out to be somebody. He did not want to glorify his powers of discrimination; and indeed, he was not a critic in the creative sense, he was rather a perfect appraiser. Like William Morris, he could have said, «I am bourgeois; I have not the point of honour.» The interest of his position was the interest which belongs to all very successful enterprises, based on a single highly-developed faculty. Apart from that he had one great touch of idealism – his regard for Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelite group; and yet his enjoyment and admiration, though very real, were essentially dumb. He could illustrate, he could not analyse⁹⁴.

When he came to read Mary Costelloe's article on *The New and the Old Art Criticism* in May 1894, Murray would have known the outcome of the contest for the National Gallery Directorship. Thus, the essay he now began to draft cannot strictly be seen as part of the related effort to sharpen his profile as connoisseur and expert through publication. Yet it was surely in part a consequence of that effort and of the impetus the contest had supplied to overcome his native reluctance to write. At the same time, his need to counter above all Costelloe's celebration of Morelli as the founding father of the «new» art criticism, while fuelled by personal offense and by intolerance of the self-regarding mystique of methodological infallibility, may also have stemmed from frustrated resentment at her reiteration of that dichotomy between art and science which had obscured his special combination of qualities and hampered his chances of recognition, ultimately of appointment. Certainly, his clear-sighted and level-headed sense of what Max Friedländer called the «unstable nature of critical judgment»⁹⁵, was in one sense of the word eminently 'scientific':

I have a good deal to say on the subject [of art] – mostly criticism on ancient pictures as to authorship but it is a difficult subject – I don[']t know any work which is not full of errors[;] one is obliged to modify ones judgement from day to day – The critical faculty requires so many qualities almost impossible to find in the same individual. First you require some knowledge of art technical & historical – sufficient imagination to discern the quality in another & not to mistake chalk for cheese & yet not so much as to carry your judgement along with it under special circumstances – you require to be enthusiastic & yet coolheaded there's the difficulty [...]⁹⁶

⁹¹ *Marriage of Nastagio degli Onesti and the Daughter of the Traversari*, lent by G. Donaldson and now in a private collection in America.

⁹² Bartolomeo di Giovanni, *Martyrdom of St Sebastian; St Andrew Saves a Bishop from the Temptations of the Devil Disguised as a Woman*.

⁹³ Compare CAVALCASELLE–CROWE 1894, p. 306: «Queste due tavolette, parte di una predella, hanno caratteri che escludono essere lavori di Andrea del Castagno o di Masaccio [as had been suggested in the Liverpool catalogue]: a noi sembra invece che mostrino la mano di Sandro Botticelli e dei suoi seguaci».

⁹⁴ BENSON 1924, p. 220.

⁹⁵ FRIEDLÄNDER 1942, p. 179.

⁹⁶ C.F. Murray to W.S. Spanton, 9 November 1885 (Dulwich Picture Gallery, London).

«Crude and untenable dicta»

As stated earlier, in *The New and the Old Art Criticism* Costelloe traces the origins of the «new scientific school» to the writings of the recently deceased Giovanni Morelli. She does not, however, attempt a thorough account of his application of «the scientific method» to the study of pictures, limiting herself instead to the (questionable and question-begging) remark that he was «the first art-critic who went to work with the aid of photographs to study Italian art in a really scientific way»⁹⁷. Nor does she discuss the «detailed methods» of Morelli's «school», noting only that «the differences that arise between [its] various students [...] are only such as must inevitably arise upon the borderland of any new science», and that its distinctive technique is «continually gaining in precision, and at the same time in elasticity»⁹⁸. To the enlightened Morellian revolutionaries she opposes those conservative lovers of art who cling to an antiquated notion of genius⁹⁹ and the need to isolate «the workaday world of cause and effect» from an unexamined «fairyland» of the «inexplicable and the incalculable»¹⁰⁰. Equally conservative, in her view, was the old school of critics, led by Ruskin and Pater, whose eloquence and poetic fervour was exercised indiscriminately on works of radically divergent quality. The critic, she asserts, must «be able to distinguish the genuine pictures from the imitations, and to know to what school and to what master to assign them»¹⁰¹. In this way people might be kept «from wasting their time and thought on inferior material» and be led directly to «what is most enjoyable in», or specific to, «an unfamiliar art», which is «part of the autobiography of the human race»¹⁰². She identifies a further, major impediment in the innate conservatism of gallery directors, whose wilful misnaming of works is declared to encourage ignorance and, in Britain especially, an inadequately literary approach to the appreciation of pictures¹⁰³.

Costelloe illustrates her argument by examining «the Louvre “Raphael” and the National Gallery “Botticellis”»¹⁰⁴. Applying the trenchant method and manner of Berenson's New Gallery pamphlet, she proceeds categorically to divide genuine pictures from school-pieces and wholly misattributed works. Of the fourteen paintings then «unhesitatingly ascribed» to Raphael in the Louvre, four are decreed genuine: the two small panels with *St Michael* and *St George*, the representation of the Virgin and Child known as *La Belle Jardinière* and the portrait of Baldassare Castiglione:

Of the remaining ten ascribed to Raphael, one is by Perugino, one by Bacchiacca, one by Sebastiano del Piombo, one probably by Innocenzo da Imola, one, if not actually by Pierin del Vaga, at any rate by some pupil of Raphael who stood close to him, while no less than five are by Giulio Romano¹⁰⁵.

Pleading lack of space, Costelloe does not offer detailed proofs of authorship but analyses the incoherent and, she claims, aesthetically corrupting view of Raphael that results from misnaming the pictures.

A similar complaint is made of the National Gallery «Botticellis». The collection is said to contain five genuine works by this painter. Only three of these, however, are explicitly

⁹⁷ COSTELLOE 1894a, p. 834.

⁹⁸ *Ivi.* p. 835.

⁹⁹ Compare LOGAN 1895a, p. 266.

¹⁰⁰ COSTELLOE 1894a, p. 834.

¹⁰¹ *Ivi.* p. 836.

¹⁰² *Ivi.* pp. 835, 836.

¹⁰³ *Ivi.* pp. 832-833.

¹⁰⁴ *Ivi.* p. 828.

¹⁰⁵ *Ivi.* p. 829.

cited: the two panels representing *The Adoration of the Magi*, «hidden» under the name of Filippino Lippi¹⁰⁶, and *Venus and Mars*¹⁰⁷. In Costelloe’s view, «considering how little Botticelli changed his style», this group «should be quite sufficient to give us, if not an idea of his range, at least a distinct impression of his quality»¹⁰⁸. By associating with this painter «horrors» such as the reclining *Venus and Cupids*¹⁰⁹, the two *tondi* with the Virgin and Child¹¹⁰ and the large *Assumption* from the Hamilton collection¹¹¹ – which in her opinion (shared by Berenson at this period¹¹²) was «clearly» by a follower of Cosimo Rosselli – the catalogue had «probably done more to corrupt taste in a certain set of “cultured” English and American people than volumes of bad art criticism could possibly have done»¹¹³.

Murray’s essay opens with a quotation from Swinburne – «We live in an age when not to be scientific is to be nothing»¹¹⁴ – and immediately dismisses the new criticism’s claim to scientific status as mere «pretence». In his view there is «really nothing new» in «Morelli’s system so called» except this claim:

Every art critic before Morelli was born knew that «except the face no part of the human body was more characteristic than the hand»¹¹⁵ & without making such a fuss about it took into account, the manner of drawing the drapery, the peculiarities of the landscape background & when judging pictures the method of painting, colour, indeed every detail of the picture which would help to a conclusion as to the author¹¹⁶.

As is apparent from this opening attack, Murray is not concerned to discuss Costelloe’s views purely on their own merit, but rather as representative or symptomatic of the «school» to which she professes allegiance: in a deleted phrase, he labels her a «puppet» of Morellian doctrine. Her opinions are said to echo a «deservedly nearly forgotten» work of criticism, itself a «reflection» of Morelli’s writings – almost certainly a reference to Richter’s *Italian Art in the National Gallery* published eleven years earlier¹¹⁷. «[B]ut surely,» Murray retorts, «it is time these parrot like utterances ceased & something more than assertion backed up by impudent ridicule of what they don’t understand was demanded of such writers».

The essay thus targets not only – nor primarily – Costelloe herself, but Richter too, who persisted in attempting to bring Murray into discredit¹¹⁸. Above all, however, Murray’s essay

¹⁰⁶ NG 592 and 1033, catalogued under Filippino Lippi in *DESCRIPTIVE AND HISTORICAL CATALOGUE* 1892, pp. 258, 259; cf. KUGLER/EASTLAKE/LAYARD 1891, p. 157, which reports the attribution of the paintings to Botticelli in MORELLI 1883, p. 236.

¹⁰⁷ NG 915. Costelloe’s two remaining genuine Botticellis are almost certainly the signed *Mystic Nativity* (1034) and the portrait of a young man (626) formerly ascribed to Masaccio and attributed to Botticelli in CROWE–CAVALCASELLE 1864, p. 548.

¹⁰⁸ COSTELLOE 1894a, p. 831.

¹⁰⁹ NG 916.

¹¹⁰ NG 226 and 275.

¹¹¹ NG 1126.

¹¹² BERENSON 1895c, p. 94.

¹¹³ COSTELLOE 1894a, p. 830.

¹¹⁴ SWINBURNE 1872.

¹¹⁵ MORELLI 1892, p. 76n: «Except the face, probably no part of the human body is more characteristic, individual, significant, and expressive than the hand [...]».

¹¹⁶ Unless otherwise stated all passages hereafter quoted from Murray’s essay are taken from MS A.

¹¹⁷ RICHTER 1883.

¹¹⁸ Within weeks of the appearance of Costelloe’s article he would name Murray as the purchaser, at Lady Eastlake’s posthumous sale, of a portrait ascribed to Paris Bordone but declared by Richter to be *eine geschichte Imitation* dating from the early nineteenth century (RICHTER 1894, p. 470). And long after Murray’s death, in the letter to Augustus Daniel of 5 November 1932 (National Gallery) cited earlier, Richter would remark spitefully, «He used to be to Mr Burton what Egeria had been to Numa». The disesteem and slurring was mutual, though never publicly expressed on Murray’s part: on 21 July 1887 the latter wrote to Bode, «I don’t think Richter worth powder & shot. I take every opportunity now of letting people know what a blackguard he is. Mr [Charles] Butler

circles obsessively around the figure of Morelli himself, in repeated attempts to show not only that his method was neither new nor scientific but that its results were often mistaken and the personal prestige he gained from it unwarranted. Not that Murray dismisses Morelli's views wholesale or *a priori*. In a pointed comparison to Ruskin (no more reliable a critic in Murray's estimation), he admits that Morelli was «sometimes right». In discussing Morelli's views on Botticelli, for instance, he writes, «I only know of three cases however in which he doubts an authentic picture» (he is thinking chiefly of the so-called *Bella Simonetta* portrait in the Pitti Palace, to whose soubriquet Morelli had affixed an ironical question mark¹¹⁹). Again, Morelli is said to be «perfectly right» to have rejected the four *Triumphs* now in the Museo Bandini in Fiesole and attributed to Jacopo del Sellaio, or the Corsini *tondo* with the *Virgin and Child and Angels*¹²⁰ (though «it needed little discrimination» to do so).

A necessary condition of being sometimes right is being sometimes wrong. And it is the claim to *infallibility* to which Murray chiefly objects. Not that this claim, he recognises, was advanced by Morelli himself: «Morelli in theorizing is careful to allow his fallibility[;] only his followers are so blind as to make an infallible pope of him». On the other hand, the critic's declared fallibility is held a mere rhetorical ploy: «Morelli's modesty is used as sauce throughout his book to correct the obvious contemptuous scorn which he showed for all who differed with him». His profession of fallibility must thus be taken at face value:

When people gradually come to understand that Morelli can only be taken as an experimental critic & that his [dictas] are more than usually liable to error something will be gained. Then and then only his suggestions may be discussed for what they are worth with those of others[;] but it is an unfortunate symptom of [the] state in which he has left the whole subject of criticism that his writings excite the most incapable people to take up his books & having themselves no critical capacity [these] insist on cramming his crude & untenable dicta down the throats of others with an impertinence & tone of assertion which is always in proportion to the incapacity of the writer for any original observation[.]

Murray deplores Morelli's attitude towards his predecessors, particularly towards Crowe and Cavalcaselle, who, he stresses, «did much to clear up ancient mistakes & committed fewer gross ones themselves than was ever done by any writer with a similar range». Morelli failed to acknowledge, and prevented others from seeing «we are still at the beginning of knowledge with regard to the early painters» and that progress here as elsewhere must be grounded in collaboration. By disregarding the work of others and by «starting the fallacies with which he is identified» Morelli had «put back matters for 20 years or more». For example,

He thought he knew something of Giorgione & not content with attributing to him & accepting the works of at least 5 different painters of merit finished by ascribing to him a worthless portrait in the Borghese collection which even his most devoted admirers cannot accept [...]¹²¹.

In citing this and other «fallacies», Murray deals obliquely with Costelloe's remarks on «the Louvre "Raphael's"». Her incidental reference to the fact that the museum's catalogue

took a dislike to him as soon as he saw him, but his impudence takes in a good many people – he is believed to know so much» (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz-Zentralarchiv, 3832/1+2).

¹¹⁹ MORELLI 1892, p. 84. Murray returns to the «*Bella Simonetta*'s defence in MS C.

¹²⁰ *Ivi*, p. 86.

¹²¹ MORELLI 1892, pp. 248-249. Lermollieff-Morelli's narration of the divinatory moment in which the identity of the painter of this «mysterious portrait» (apostrophised in the original German as *mein freund*) manifests itself to him, is central to the reading of *Kunstkritische Studien* as «a satire of connoisseurship» forcefully presented in UGLOW 2012. Murray returns to this example in MS C.

named Perugino as Raphael's «only master» is indirectly countered by Murray's dismissal¹²² of Morelli's theory that the painter's first teacher had been Timoteo Viti:

He prided himself on his knowledge of the ed[ucation] of Raphael & couldn't see the rottenness & baselessness of his whole theory in the face of the earliest known work of Raphael[']s, showing the strongest influence of Perugino, (I mean the Crucifixion¹²³) & the impossibility of assigning it a later date than the numerous small pictures that followed it.

In assigning to Bacchiacca the «sentimental» portrait of a boy¹²⁴ long regarded as a likeness of Raphael, Costelloe was again following Morelli. Murray calls on the «parrots» who repeat his «conviction», based on «the form of hand» and «technical treatment of the hair»¹²⁵, to specify the *nature* of the likeness between the hand on which the sitter leans his head and those in authenticated paintings by Bacchiacca.

Costelloe's remarks on the «National Gallery “Botticellis”» are also answered indirectly, providing Murray with further ammunition against Morelli. Her criticism of the Gallery for preventing «a Botticelli-loving public from gazing with delight upon two of his genuine works» by masquerading them as Filippino Lippi¹²⁶, derived from Morelli and Richter¹²⁷, is used by Murray to counter Morelli's exclusion of the *Tobias and the Three Archangels* in Turin from among Botticelli's genuine works¹²⁸. In Murray's view this was «by the same hand as the many pictures in the Nat[ion]al Gallery & elsewhere usually assigned to Filippino but which accord[in]g to the Morelli school are by Botticelli»¹²⁹. The whole Botticelli-Filippino problem, he added, was far from settled, «the pros and cons being so equally balanced». Its solution must depend on the correct dating of the altarpiece in the Badia in Florence. Above all, the question would have to be «very carefully thrashed out» and argued: «reason & not assertion is required to convince».

Of the paintings then catalogued under the name of Botticelli but whose genuineness she disputes, Costelloe little more than refers to the *Venus and Cupids*, «with their bunches of stiff paper roses», and the larger of the two *tondi*¹³⁰. Manifesting a curiously *unscientific* attitude, especially in one who was shortly to argue that the *Venus* was a major work by Jacopo del Sellaio, she declares them «beneath notice»¹³¹. Murray concurs that the *Venus* is «an inferior school picture»¹³², adding «but that has been no secret for a long time». He alludes

¹²² Also expressed in the biographical entry on Raphael in MURRAY 1894, p. 191.

¹²³ Presumably NG 3943, then recently purchased by Ludwig Mond at the sale of Lord Dudley's collection.

¹²⁴ COSTELLOE 1894a, p. 829; cf. MORELLI 1892, pp- 106-107.

¹²⁵ *Ivi*, p. 107.

¹²⁶ COSTELLOE 1894a, p. 830.

¹²⁷ MORELLI 1883, p. 236; RICHTER 1883, p. 24; MORELLI 1892, p. 23.

¹²⁸ MORELLI 1892, p. 86.

¹²⁹ Aside from NG 592 and 1033, already mentioned, Murray may be thinking of NG 1124, another *Adoration of the Magi* acquired like the *Assumption* at the Hamilton sale and, as polemically stated in RICHTER 1883, p. 28, «officially assigned to Filippino Lippi», though formerly ascribed to Botticelli; and NG 598, *St Francis of Assisi with Angels*, then catalogued as by Filippino Lippi (*DESCRIPTIVE AND HISTORICAL CATALOGUE* 1892, p. 258), more recently as by a follower of Botticelli and now, following its restoration, by Botticelli himself. RICHTER 1883, p. 29 disputes the ascription to Filippino of this work.

¹³⁰ NG 226.

¹³¹ COSTELLOE 1894a, p. 831; cf. LOGAN 1899, p. 480 («œuvre importante de Sellaio, avec les plis, le paysage et le coloris caractéristiques»).

¹³² Compare RICHTER 1883, p. 26: «one of the most instructive – and, we might add, one of the most costly – specimens of bottega production». *An Allegory* had been acquired together with *Venus and Mars* (NG 915) in 1874 at the sale of Alexander Barker's collection. Scott Nethersole comments, «If price can be used as an indicator of aesthetic value, “An Allegory” was the more highly regarded painting when it was sold – it cost £600 more than “Venus and Mars” (£1,627 10s as opposed to £1,050)» (NETHERSOLE 2010).

furthermore to «a picture by the same hand in the Louvre», still incorrectly catalogued as a school work, whereas in his view it should simply be labelled «as of the Florentine school»¹³³.

With regard to the Hamilton *Assumption*, Murray recalls that when it was first exhibited in London (even) Ruskin had «objected with scorn» to its ascription to Botticelli¹³⁴. It belongs, he claims, to «a group of pictures well known to many besides the “alumni” of Morelli for many years past». Deploring its purchase as a Botticelli, he nevertheless recognises its value and expresses himself «very pleased to see it permanently placed where it is».

The smaller of the two tondi with the *Virgin and Child* was something of a special case. Prominently displayed on a screen¹³⁵, Costelloe remarks that «it is evidently meant to be taken for the Botticelli of the gallery *par excellence*, and is actually so taken»¹³⁶. Gleefully anticipating the «howl of indignation» always raised, she says, when this «Botticelli» is questioned, Costelloe interprets the «carefully hidden» signature of Giuliano da Sangallo on the back as that of its real author (and not of its owner, as suggested in the catalogue¹³⁷), adducing the would-be Botticellian qualities of the architect’s drawings. Indeed, in her view this *tondo* visibly betrays Sangallo’s calling – «the evenly balanced lines of the two cheeks connected by a ruler-like line between, which does duty for a chin» – while it misses Botticelli’s «one great quality as an artist, the exquisite quality of his line»¹³⁸. Murray dismisses this attribution as «pure moonshine»¹³⁹, arguing (as if it were necessary) that there is no relation between the *tondo* and Giuliano da Sangallo’s drawings at Siena, while those attributed to him elsewhere «show a very decided influence of Fillippino as well as Botticelli[.] but as works of art they are of the mildest description». Murray further uses Costelloe’s observations on this painting, which he himself considers the «finest [Botticelli] in quality in the gallery», as an object lesson in the gap

¹³³ Presumably the Botticelli workshop *Venus and Three Putti* whose relation to NG 916, now catalogued as Florentine School under the title *An Allegory*, is also discussed in NETHERSOLE 2010.

¹³⁴ Cf. J. Ruskin to C.F. Murray, 14 February 1873, in RUSKIN/COOK-WEDDERBURN 1903-1912, vol. XXXVII, pp. 59-60 (referring to copies of Botticelli’s paintings in the Sistine Chapel which Murray was to undertake for and with Ruskin): «I hope you know Botticelli already well enough not to think you’ll have to copy stuff like that arms-akimbo thing. By the way, what have they all got, like truncheons? They look like a lot of opera-directors.»

¹³⁵ As can be seen in a watercolour view of the room in the Gallery of around 1885 by Henry Tidmarsh, reproduced in CROOKHAM 2009, p. 47.

¹³⁶ COSTELLOE 1894a, pp. 831-832; compare MORELLI 1883, p. 236 on NG 226 and 275: «pupils of Botticelli’s» and RICHTER 1883, p. 26 («evidently the work of one of Botticelli’s scholars»), where it is nevertheless reproduced, along with those paintings «which best illustrate the growth of Art in Italy as represented in the National Gallery» (p. vii) (but see note no. 130 here).

¹³⁷ DESCRIPTIVE AND HISTORICAL CATALOGUE 1892, p. 60. The same deduction is made in Richter 1883, p. 26.

¹³⁸ COSTELLOE 1894a, p. 832. Compare RICHTER 1883, p. 26: «The composition of the picture is worthy of Botticelli, but the execution is so feeble that it would be unjust to make Botticelli himself responsible for it. The eyes of St John are very much out of proportion. The head of the infant Christ is hydrocephalous; his nose is of ridiculous vulgarity. There is no life in the fingers of his right hand nor in the toes of his right foot; the foreshortening of the lower part of the thigh is a failure – defects which would scarcely be noticed if, in following Sandro’s own hints, the picture were not brought so close to the spectator’s eye. In the reduced size of the heliograph, of course, the defects will not strike us». KUGLER/EASTLAKE/LAYARD 1891, p. 157, also singles out the Christ child for criticism: «In a “tondo” by him in the National Gallery, the Virgin, an Angel, and the little St. John are of great beauty; but the clumsy and ill-drawn Infant Christ is not worthy of his hands.»

¹³⁹ Her attribution and inculpation of the Gallery were shortly afterwards the object of ridicule by Maurice Hewlett, in a review of Ulmann’s *Botticelli* published in the «Athenæum» (HEWLETT 1894, p. 137). A propos of «the magnificent *tondo* in the National Gallery (which Herr Ulmann, by some inconceivable aberration of insight, denies to Botticelli)». Hewlett comments in a footnote, «This beautiful piece has also led Mrs. Costelloe astray in the serious pages of the *Nineteenth Century*. She there announced three discoveries concerning it: first, it was signed on the back by Sangallo the architect; second (and consequently), it was painted by him; third, the National Gallery authorities had wickedly concealed the signature. It is only necessary to say that a signature on the *back* of a fifteenth-century picture does not denote authorship, but ownership; and that, if printing the signature in the Catalogue be concealment, then the Gallery has “wilfully hidden” Sangallo’s name.»

between theory and its practical application in the criticism of individual works. To assertions such as the following –

I am aware that nothing is a better test of the cultivated eye than an appreciation of a really fine line, and that therefore these pictures that catch what I may call the «literature» of Botticelli, even while they miss his line, may be said to do as well for the people¹⁴⁰

– Murray retorts,

In wandering through the pages of any writer on art[,] Morelli or another, there is little to object to as long as the writer confines him or herself to theorizing[:] it is only when the excellent rules come to their application that we quarrel[:] & then one is inclined to quote [their] own sentences against them [...] the author is great upon the effect [of] beauty of line upon the cultivated eye & then proceeds to fall foul of the one picture by Botticelli in the N[ational] G[allery] in which it is most obvious.

More than once in the essay Murray stresses the *necessity* of aesthetic argument, the giving of reasons in support of opinion, with a view to persuading one's interlocutors. Costelloe's observations also prompt a revealing comment on its futility:

it is one of the most extraordinary problems I know[,] this question of eyesight[.] I know of no reasoning that you can appeal to, that will make another see what you see[. I]t is useless to say a line is beautiful or otherwise[:] how demonstrate it? [Y]ou may say copy it[:] the answer is I do not draw, but I feel that the line is weak[. A]s a matter of fact it requires not merely an artist but a very good one to perceive the relative values of lines[. A]nyone who has no real gift of eyesight can pitch upon an inaccuracy, a mannerism of drawing[. S]uch things do not weigh against a great work of art, and it is certain no theory however elaborate will enable a tyro to detect the differences between a school picture & a masterwork[:] the differences are too subtle to define in words.

Improvements and alterations

In introducing the *tondo* just discussed, Costelloe notes that the screen on which it hangs «effectually cuts off the view of the sham Leonardo»¹⁴¹. This passing shot at the Gallery's version of the *Virgin of the Rocks* prompts Murray to «say here something in defence of the present attribution», seeing that «the previous writer upon whose book the whole of this article is founded,» i.e. Richter, «has devoted a few words to this picture».

In his *Italian Art* of 1883 Richter had disparaged the «surprising unanimity» with which English art critics had expressed themselves in favour of the painting's genuineness, urging rather «something *a priori* in favour of the Louvre picture», confirmed by certain «palpable proofs of authenticity»: the «drawing of the right hands of the Virgin and the angel, both hands of the infant Christ, the rendering of the details in the foreground, the tone of the colours so peculiar to him, the treatment of the hair and the chiaroscuro in the flesh colours». He found the «discrepancies of the London picture with regard to these points [...] very great indeed». He furthermore denied that there was any «single instance in support of the fact that a great master», above all Leonardo, who produced fewer paintings than any, «should have painted twice the same picture»; and he reported that «a well-known English connoisseur» had suggested to him that a copy of the Louvre picture might have been ordered «before it went to France, and that Leonardo himself might have given the copyist some suggestion as to how to

¹⁴⁰ COSTELLOE 1894a, p. 832.

¹⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

execute the painting.» This theory, he noted, «if accepted, would give special interest to the copy in the National Gallery»¹⁴².

Murray prefaces his remarks on the painting by stating that he had written them «at the time the picture was added to the gallery», i.e. in 1880. However, as this portion of MS A appears only a little less worked over than the others, it cannot represent the insertion *en bloc* of an earlier, definitive text. And Murray must repeatedly have returned to the subject, in his mind at least, in the intervening years. As we saw, he proposed an essay on the topic to J.H. Middleton in 1885-1886. Earlier still, in June 1883, a letter from Frederic Burton, to whom Murray had perhaps written of Richter's *Italian Art* and his comments on the Leonardo, no doubt prompted him to think further, if not to write, about the relation between the London and Paris versions of the painting. «I have not read Dr Richter's book on the N[ational] G[allery,] scarcely seen it», Burton wrote:

I entirely disbelieve in his having any critical powers or real knowledge – & my contempt keeps me silent – But, as you truly say, his «Leon[ardo] da Vinci», is likely to make him an authority on that subject – & I should be glad someone capable of dealing with the question of the *Vierge aux Rochers* pictures, took it up – A hint you give of your views as to the two leads me to think that they agree with mine¹⁴³.

This inference seems borne out by the present manuscript. After regretting that «the retired Director of the Gallery» had not written up the history of the London picture beyond the brief account given in the catalogue¹⁴⁴, Murray sketches a position that tallies with Burton's carefully worded entry in so far as this avoids any hint of priority or preference between the London and Paris pictures¹⁴⁵:

writers have been content hitherto as far as I know to either accept it & even, as if it were necessary to its acceptance, prefer it to the Louvre picture, or to reject it summarily as a copy with variations from the original. I am not aware that anything has been advanced that is convincing either way [-] one critic limiting himself to the statement that Leonardo never repeated a picture¹⁴⁶ as if he had been his bosom friend & knew all about his sentiments on this subject.

Murray goes on to outline Leonardo's painting method, deduced from close autoptic study of the Uffizi's *Adoration of the Magi*. This method, he asserts, must be borne in mind when considering «the alterations in our own picture»:

Leonardo must have frequently begun his pictures in the hasty way shown in the unfinished *Adoration of the Magi* in the Uffizzi. This picture is roughly sketched on the panel[,] the shadows washed in lightly with terra verde & reinforced in the darker shadows with brown. He appears to have then darkened the background to its full force before defining the forms. Parts of the sketch are now almost invisible from the dark ground colour having nearly absorbed the filmy grey lights superimposed where he altered his design¹⁴⁷.

¹⁴² RICHTER 1883, pp. 101-103.

¹⁴³ F.W. Burton to C.F. Murray, 19 June 1883 (Harry Ransom Research Center, Austin, Texas).

¹⁴⁴ *DESCRIPTIVE AND HISTORICAL CATALOGUE* 1892, p. 539-540.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibidem*. Burton limits himself to establishing the identity of the painting owned by the Gallery with the picture by Leonardo described by Lomazzo when hanging in the chapel of the Conception in the church of S. Francesco, Milan.

¹⁴⁶ Probably a reference to the passage in RICHTER 1883, p. 102, just quoted.

¹⁴⁷ A comparison with the descriptions in BELLUCCI *ET ALII* 2013 of the technique exemplified in this and other unfinished paintings by Leonardo, including parts of the London *Virgin of the Rocks*, confirms the basic validity of Murray's observations, crucially limited though these are by the difficulty of correctly determining by the eye alone the chronology of the different phases in the making of a painting whose appearance was even in his time

Murray's argument now takes a decisive and perhaps unexpected turn, which confirms his distance from champions of the priority and superiority of the National Gallery picture¹⁴⁸. It incidentally illustrates the justice of Bode's characterization of Murray in terms of «künstlerisch Geschmack» and «historische Sinn»¹⁴⁹, further showing how on occasion the former could prevail over the latter.

«One cannot help being struck,» Murray starts out, «with the numerous improvements in the design of the Paris picture as compared with our own». Inviting the reader to place photographs of the two paintings side by side and carefully note the differences, he points first to the right hand of the angel, unsatisfactorily hidden and uncertain in outline in the National Gallery picture. In the Louvre's painting, by contrast,

[h]owever much one may object to the hand pointing to St John & the head being turned to the spectator [...] there can be no question of the gain to the lines of the composition¹⁵⁰. [N]ot less striking is the improvement by the add[iti]on of the folds of the cloak turned over the shoulder [...] How much quieter is the picture for the omission of the fold of the Virgins cloak turned over & shewing the yellow lining above the head of St John[.] The head of Christ is better placed on his shoulder & much finer in expression, the outstretched hand of the Virgin is changed & improved, the folds of the cloak on the ground are more carefully arranged, the forward movement of St John is more eager & lifelike leaves across the sky break the pointed outlines of the rocks in the backg[roun]d, & the flowers are better grouped & there are other minor points of difference[.]

Moving from this aesthetically motivated premise, he then considers the condition of the London picture, necessary, he emphasises, «to prove [his] point». Taking each of the figures in turn, he lists the «alterations» revealed under close examination, effectively comparing and contrasting under this term a) changes in the design attributable to Leonardo himself, b) modifications due to a contemporary hand not Leonardo's and c) the results of

severely affected by the overlaying and darkening of (sometimes tinted) varnish, glue, *patinature* and retouching (ivi, p. 49). Cecilia Frosini of the Opificio delle pietre dure, which is carrying out the restoration of the *Adoration*, writes (ivi, p. 53), «Sullo strato di preparazione Leonardo eseguì, a mano libera, il disegno grafico preliminare a punta secca. Tirò le linee guidate di costruzione architettonica grazie all'ausilio di un chiodino che segnalava il punto di fuga [...] Raffermò poi il segno grafico con una stesura acquerellata nera, data a pennello (che già apporta le prime modifiche rispetto al progetto originario). Con tratti veloci e larghi segnalò poi le ombreggiature e andò costruendo i volumi, col pennello intriso in una acquerellatura blu [what Murray understandably took for *terra verde*]. Si tratta verosimilmente di un colorante di origine vegetale (forse indaco) e non un pigmento, dato che non vengono rilevati elementi chimici nella sua composizione [...] Passò infine a “sigillare” questa fase con la stesura di una imprimitura trasparente fatta di bianco di piombo disciolto in un legante. Su questa imprimitura Leonardo iniziò la fase pittorica vera e propria, con una generale stesura giallo bruna, modellata e modulata con aggiunta di tonalità più calde, a seconda delle funzionalità, a definire rilievi, aree e figure. In alcuni punti di massimo chiaro Leonardo iniziò anche a dare alcune pennellate di bianco, per poi interrompersi definitivamente per le ben note vicende storiche che lo portarono a Milano».

¹⁴⁸ LAYARD 1885, an unsigned article on the Director of the National Gallery's Annual Report for 1885, cites a «written statement by Sir Charles Eastlake that he, M. Passavant, and Dr. Waagen – no mean authorities on such matters – who examined together the National Gallery picture when in the possession of Lord Suffolk, concurred in the opinion, that it was far superior to that in the Louvre». Layard continues, «However this may be – and our opinion coincides with that of these three eminent connoisseurs – it is highly probable that the principal portion of both pictures is by the master's own hand; whilst parts, such as the background, may have been painted by his pupils or assistants. It may be added that the National Gallery picture appears to us to be in better condition – to have suffered less from the fatal brush of the restorer – than its “replica”». Layard's authorship is confirmed by letters to him from Lady Eastlake (EASTLAKE/SHELDON 2009, pp. 556, 559-560). For Waagen's published comments on the English *Virgin of the Rocks* see WAAGEN 1854, III, p. 168.

¹⁴⁹ BODE 1919.

¹⁵⁰ Compare WAAGEN 1854, III, p. 168: «In the composition also this picture is favourably distinguished from that at Paris from the circumstance that here is not the same action of the right hand of the angel which in the Paris picture so uncomfortably disturbs the beauty of the lines».

repainting or restoration. This detailed description is too long to be quoted here: the whole passage is given in the Appendix. What requires noting is the kind of visual scrutiny and analysis which it so vividly documents. For in many ways this explains Murray's irritation and impatience with Morellian «scientific» connoisseurship.

In a footnote to *Die Werke italienischer Meister*, one instantiating his general antagonism towards the avowedly authoritative work of Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Morelli counters their attribution to Andrea Schiavone of a *Virgin and Child with Saints* at Dresden traditionally ascribed to Titian by declaring it «a splendid painting of the early time of the master». Explicitly rejecting «aesthetic and technical proofs» as aids in determining authorship, he adduces instead «a purely material sign, but one very characteristic of Titian»: the abnormal development of the thumb in his men's hands, as exemplified in this painting, Morelli claims, in the hand of St John the Baptist¹⁵¹. This rejection of argument informed by the technical analysis of paintings yields a reason for his divergence from Crowe and Cavalcaselle additional to that «repugnance to a bookish study of art» averred (with little conviction) in the Preface¹⁵², one particularly pertinent in the case of the Italian connoisseur, whose pictorial investigations mainly provided the empirical base and critical substance of the pair's books. The character of those investigations is abundantly documented in Cavalcaselle's innumerable drawings and in the textual annotations with which they are often densely inscribed, but most extensively and exploratively, because discursively, in the Italian draft or *minuta* which formed the basis for the *History of Painting in North Italy* (1871-1872). Donata Levi has defined this «una straordinaria storia "visiva"» of its subject, of enormous interest for reasons lexical, linguistic and historiographical¹⁵³:

Sostanzialmente, in una sequenza organizzata secondo uno schema per scuole ed artisti, la minuta presenta descrizioni stilistiche di dipinti, connotate da un'estrema analiticità e da una precisa volontà dimostrativa, vuoi della ricostruzione del percorso di un pittore, vuoi della plausibilità di un'attribuzione, vuoi del rapporto tra singole personalità artistica e scuola¹⁵⁴.

Levi notes the «elementary» character of the language employed by Cavalcaselle in his pictorial analyses, stressing its dissociation from literary models and also its exhibition of practical familiarity with traditional technique. A significant passage from this last point of view, of particular interest and pertinence here is one in which Cavalcaselle «reconstructs» the painting method of Pellegrino da San Daniele in his frescoes. Again, for reasons of length, but also for ease of comparison with Murray's text, this is given in the Appendix. For it is surely plausible to consider such a passage, recording arduous but patient, exact and sensitive ocular archaeology of the painted surface, as a sort of model for Murray's analysis of the *Virgin of the Rocks* – not certainly in the strict sense of having been imitated by him, but in so far as it exemplifies a mode of «reading» paintings which he would have recognised as specific to the older connoisseur and which he shared. Indeed, it may well be that that combination of «a technical point of view» with «a trained eyesight» defining his own form of connoisseurship (as he told Langton Douglas) was in part developed directly through Cavalcaselle's example. Having been initiated as a very young man into the historiography and criticism of art by Crowe and Cavalcaselle's writings, in the mid-1870s he had come to know the Italian personally, afterwards accompanying him to study paintings in Tuscany and contributing directly to his later researches and writings¹⁵⁵.

¹⁵¹ MORELLI 1883, p. 172 and n. The passage recurs, slightly revised and toned down, in MORELLI 1893, p. 229 and n.

¹⁵² MORELLI 1883, p. vi.

¹⁵³ LEVI 2011.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibidem*.

¹⁵⁵ TUCKER 1998.

After attempting his own reconstruction of the painting's technical history, Murray comes to his conclusion, which inverts the to our eyes stylistically evident ordering of the two paintings. Leonardo, he argues, used the National Gallery picture as a «draught [*sic*] of his subject», abandoning it

when he found the alterations required in the design became too numerous & important to be made without difficulty on the dark ground. It was essential in Leon[ard]o's system of painting flesh that he should have the panel at least clear from any heavy paint if not a transparent ground and he would have had to paint the outstretched hand of the angel over the dark blue of the Virgin's cloak on a rough surface or else clear the ground to the panel.

Before summing up, Murray enumerates some of those aspects which indicate that the London painting was not due to Leonardo in its entirety, owing, he surmises, to much of it having been left in an unfinished state. He compares the execution of the rocks in the distance to those of a school picture in the Brera traditionally attributed to Salaino¹⁵⁶, adding that the distant rocks in the London picture are «not by Leonardo but are fine in colour [...] & contemporary or nearly so & certainly not to be attribut[ed] to restoration». Again,

some shapeless shadows in the foreground of our picture contrast ill with the carefully studied lines of the stratified rock in the Louvre picture; on the other hand there is the gain of freshness in the less studied head of the angel. I prefer the head of the Virgin in the Louvre picture¹⁵⁷.

All told, «the N[at]ional G[allery] panel cannot be as has been hastily asserted a copy of the Louvre picture[,] nor can the Paris canvas be called a copy of ours, nor do I see any reason for the confident assertion that Leonardo never made a replica of one of his own pictures[.]».

The draft concludes emphatically: «the importance of this unfinished work to the student can hardly be overestimated».

Coda

Murray, it seems, abandoned his essay after revising most of MS A¹⁵⁸. Why he did so is a matter of speculation. One factor may well have been the need to devote himself to completing and overseeing the publication, in the latter part of 1894, of the Duke of Portland's catalogue. Another reason he failed to revise the final portion of MS A may have been that the conclusions he came to there regarding the London *Virgin of the Rocks*, though not of course the reasoning justifying them, were soon afterwards expressed by others. An article by Richter in the June issue of the «Art Journal»¹⁵⁹ reported the recent discovery by Emilio Motta of a document in which Leonardo and Ambrogio De Predis jointly petitioned the Duke of Milan to intervene in a dispute with the commissioning Confraternity over the value of the S. Francesco altarpiece (with its accompanying angel musicians¹⁶⁰). Richter used the discovery as external evidence to sharpen the case against the genuineness of the version

¹⁵⁶ A now anonymous Lombard *Virgin and Child with St Peter and St Paul*, the S. Andrea della Pusterla altarpiece (SLAVICH 1988, p. 422 [cat. 204]).

¹⁵⁷ Cf. WAAGEN 1854, III, p. 168, where the «decisive evidence» that the English version is «the original picture» is said to consist «in the incomparably nobler expression, in the greater delicacy of drawing, and in the masterly modelling of the heads».

¹⁵⁸ MS B breaks off just after turning to discuss the two versions of the *Virgin of the Rocks*.

¹⁵⁹ RICHTER 1894.

¹⁶⁰ The two side panels, by Ambrogio and another associate of Leonardo's, were acquired by the National Gallery in 1898 (NG 1661, 1662).

in London. The article prompted a reply from Burton in the «Nineteenth Century»¹⁶¹, on this occasion overcoming, though with palpable difficulty, his contempt for Richter. And this was almost immediately followed by a reply in the «Art Journal» itself by Burton's successor, the newly appointed Edward Poynter. Ignoring Richter's earlier admonition – «Those who do not wish to face the question, *which* of the two pictures is the original, will scarcely evade it by saying both may be original works»¹⁶² – Burton and Poynter argued that the new document did not constitute conclusive evidence either way. And in the absence of such evidence the genuineness or otherwise of the London version remained a matter of opinion. In expressing his own Poynter came close to that put forward by Murray in his essay:

I would venture to hazard an opinion that the Madonna in the National Gallery is an earlier work by Lionardo than the one in the Louvre ... The picture in the Louvre has so suffered from repainting that it is not quite fair, perhaps, to judge of its merits. The body of the angel especially, through the almost entire repainting of the red drapery, is now quite out of drawing, but it is to me certain that the addition of the right hand, and of the green drapery over the left shoulder, and *not* the omission of them, is the afterthought¹⁶³.

This mild coincidence might not suggest anything other than that Murray and Poynter (and Burton too) shared views that were circulating among British connoisseurs at the time, had the position set out in Murray's essay not been even more closely echoed, five years later, by Herbert Cook, in the Introduction to the catalogue of the Burlington Fine Arts Club's Milanese exhibition of 1899. Adducing, like Poynter and Murray before him, the aesthetic criterion of compositional «improvement» in discussing the major differences in design between the two versions, in particular the change in position and gesture of the angel's hand, Cook goes on to suggest technical reasons why the change might have necessitated the start of a new panel:

It may be that the change of motive in the Angel was too radical to be embodied on the original panel. Certain it is that the Angel's hand could not have been successfully painted upon the surface of the draperies of the Madonna. The transparency and play of the flesh tones could not have been secured with the strong colour underneath¹⁶⁴.

The relation between these various opinions will need to be worked out in detail.

Murray's failure to complete and publish his essay may also have had to do with his not being appointed Director of the National Gallery, leading him to shelve aspirations to public notoriety as an authority and dedicate himself to «business». A stiff and vehemently worded letter to Bode written about a year after Poynter's appointment, evidently in response to a demand to be informed as to his business relations with the National Gallery¹⁶⁵, betrays keen disappointment:

With regard to the National Gallery, I thought I replied quite clearly some time since when you put the question to me before I have absolutely no connection with it – whether the commission to buy for them at the Eastlake sale was given purposely «as a sop in the pan», immediately after Mr Poynter's appointment, I know not, but one thing is certain – they have not consulted me again. Poynter is wobbling between Agnews & Davis¹⁶⁶ as a representative at auctions & we are just on speaking terms & nothing more; in future I shall under no

¹⁶¹ BURTON 1894.

¹⁶² RICHTER 1883, p. 102.

¹⁶³ POYNTER 1894, p. 232.

¹⁶⁴ COOK 1899, p. lvi.

¹⁶⁵ And also with Alfred Beit, whom Bode advised and whose collection he would later catalogue.

¹⁶⁶ Charles Davis was a Bond Street dealer.

circumstances tender any advice to them. I intend to devote myself entirely to business & shall treat my clients of whatever nationality on the same footing – until I get some one who will really take advice who has sufficient means to form a collection – until this «rara avis» turns up, I am free¹⁶⁷.

This letter perhaps also suggests that Murray's disappointment was less in not himself being appointed than in the new Director's apparent disinclination to benefit from his advice, thus denying him an eagerly anticipated opportunity for variously profitable *collaboration*¹⁶⁸.

Did Murray cease to believe that the London *Virgin of the Rocks* preceded that of Paris, an assumption fundamental to his argument? Did he come rather to share the view that the painting in the Louvre was more «archaic»¹⁶⁹ in appearance and evidently «the early work»¹⁷⁰? Was it rather (or in addition) that the first part of his essay dissatisfied him? Did his sense of the futility of aesthetic argument and of the ineffability and incommunicability of judgements of «eyesight» prevail over the conviction that «reasoning» was a crucial necessity, that «something more than assertion» must be demanded of critics in the interests of a properly dialogical cultivation of the knowledge of art? Did that part of the essay appear insufficiently «coolheaded»? Did he sense that its angry protest at Morellian claims to infallibility betrayed a kind of conversational pusillanimity, a fear of being written out of the dialogue, a failure to respond in an adequately rational way to conversational arrogance?

«A favourite phrase with Murray was 'On the contrary',» his friend Spanton later recalled: «it followed as a matter of course that he could not put up with contrariness in others¹⁷¹». When, after a decade or so, Murray returned to the topic of «scientific» connoisseurship in MS C, it was perhaps inevitable he should again accuse Morelli (in a significantly deleted phrase) of setting himself up as a «pope» or «infallible critic». The imputation of papal presumption is one recurrent in his correspondence with connoisseurs and curators in these final decades of his life. To Langton Douglas' remonstrance that, though «one of the three or four connoisseurs whose opinion really matter[ed]», even *he* (Murray) was not «infallible in all points» and must not expect to be regarded so, Murray retorted, «I should be the last person to claim infallibility which is reserved for popes, but I do know a few things about pictures¹⁷²». Towards the end of his life it was Berenson who in Murray's mind had inherited Morelli's self-appointed role as «the "pope" of criticism» together with Richter's «impudence», for motives whose complexity I have attempted to suggest and which, despite assertions to the contrary, emerges clearly enough in a letter to S.C. Cockerell, Director of the Fitzwilliam Museum:

Did Berenson (who I believe you receive with open arms as the duty is of public men who desire to make no enemies!) express to you his opinion of my Botticelli¹⁷³, because he sometimes changes his views, but he also once blessed another picture & damned it after. [I]t is of no importance to me except for commercial reasons. B. calls himself the «Pope» of criticism.

¹⁶⁷ C.F. Murray to W. Bode, 27 May 1895 (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin-Preussischer Kulturbesitz-Zentralarchiv, 3832/1+2).

¹⁶⁸ For reasons that are not clear, the lack of personal sympathy and understanding between Murray and Poynter was destined to deepen in the course of the latter's Directorship. A non-personal factor in Poynter's initial failure to consult and deal with Murray was probably the curtailment of his freedom to act independently by a mainly antagonistic board of Trustees, newly empowered by the Rosebery Minute (see GEDDES POOL 2010, pp. 80-84).

¹⁶⁹ Cf. REINACH 1912, p. 10.

¹⁷⁰ FRIZZONI 1898, p. 390.

¹⁷¹ SPANTON 1927, pp. 93-94.

¹⁷² C.F. Murray to R.L. Douglas, 25 November 1904 (John Rylands Library, University of Manchester [English MSS 1281]).

¹⁷³ A *Virgin and Child with St John the Baptist*, then on loan to the Fitzwilliam Museum, now in the De Navarro collection, Glen Head (New York).

[Stefano] Bardini told me a story of his which was not favourable to him but both his impudence & success are amazing¹⁷⁴.

¹⁷⁴ C.F. Murray to S.C. Cockerell, 13 October 1913 (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge [MS 1672/1977]). Compare Murray's letter to E.W. Forbes of 29 April 1916 (Harvard University Art Museums Archives), quoted in ELLIOTT 2000a, p. 157, in which he accuses Berenson of having «crabbed» his Botticelli, thus inducing the owner to return it to Agnew's, and proves culpable of anti-Semitism: «It is singular the unlimited confidence this gentleman of Jewish extraction enjoys in America despite his unblushing impudence and obvious “interest” in all the deals that go through with his connivance, however worthless the works of art which he backs. He is in regular pay for this useful quality» (Elliott's transcription has been corrected from my own). Unfortunately, it is not the case that anti-Semitism «did not intrude elsewhere either in Fairfax Murray's personal or business relationships» (*ibidem*). This is demonstrated by a remark made a propos of the (not long deceased) collector Rodolphe Kann (1845-1905) in an unpublished letter from Murray to Richard C. Fisher of 24 September 1913, currently offered for sale by Richard Ford and quoted in part on the dealer's website (www.richardfordmanuscripts.co.uk <last accessed 25 April 2014>).

APPENDIX

1. Charles Fairfax Murray, extract from MS A. For the present purpose the text is presented in a somewhat simplified and more legible form: cancelled text is omitted, interlinear and otherwise additional text is brought down to the line and tacitly inserted, abbreviations explicated and punctuation either supplied or standardised (Murray's characteristic multi-purpose diagonal stroke being sometimes transcribed as a full stop, elsewhere as a comma or as a dash). In all cases editorial emendations are enclosed within square brackets. A full transcription of MS A and B will subsequently be made available on the website of the Fondazione Memofonte.

[...] It is necessary to go at some lengths into the condition of the English picture & I will only ask my readers who are uninterested in such details to skip the following notes which are necessary to prove my point. The head of the virgin is in excellent condition as to the features but the crown of the head has been meddled with & the present outline of the hair at the top is very unsatisfactory. The end of the thumb of the outstretched arm has been repainted[,] the tips of the fingers are black[ene]d & the fourth finger is almost black as if painted over a very dark ground. [T]he outlines are strongly marked with black or a dark brown that has blackened[.] The head of the Angel is mainly in good cond[itio]n, but the shadow at the side of the nose near the corner of the eye is rubbed & marked with finger prints, the wings are unfinished, indeed the whole of the back of the angel & the drapery is an indefinite brown scumble. The Child Christ shews most signs of alteration in the outlines[,] the profile is everywhere taken up & corrected[,] the eye is hazy in outline[,] the raised hand is only lightly put in & the outlines of the folded fingers are very faint. The thumb of the left hand on which he rests is nearly double its proper thickness owing to the disappearance of the lower outline The nail of the little finger has been lowered & is outlined with black. The flesh colour in light doesn't quite meet the outline at the wrist never having been blended & shows the ground preparation[. T]he toes have all been moved & are uncertain in outlines. The hair of Christ originally lightly put in has been reinforced with touches of orange yellow by a later hand[. T]he hair of St: John has been treated the same way[:] note the monotonous badly drawn curls on the forehead[. T]his colour has been partially rubbed away in places by subsequent cleaning. The reed cross in relief raised with gesso & gilded on the rough surface is not likely to have been a freak of Leonardos. [J]ust by the hand of the virgin a piece of the preparation has fallen & shews the ground. [T]he hair of the child which partly covers the hand of the Virgin appears to be a later add[itio]n. [T]he hand of the Virgin on St: John's shoulder is very unsatisfactory itself & not by Leonardo I judge; compared with that in the Louvre picture it is poorly dr[aw]n, & modelled in an opaque grey colour quite unlike the best parts of the picture. The mouth & nose of St. John are damaged & restored[,] the nimbuses raised & gilt like the cross of St. John[,] whereas in the Paris picture they are absent. [T]he foot on which St John is resting is finely modelled & the outlines extremely pure. Here & there at the wrist of St John & the toes of Christ spots of red appear[,] probably traces of old retouching now mostly cleaned away. A careful consideration of the differences in the two pictures forced me to the conclusion that the National Gallery picture was used by the painter as a draught [*sic*] of his subject & that he abandoned it when he found the alterations required in the design became too numerous & important to be made without difficulty on the dark ground. It was essential in Leon[ard]o's system of painting flesh that he should have the panel at least clear from any heavy paint if not a transparent ground and he would have had to paint

the outstretched hand of the angel over the dark blue of the Virgin[']s cloak on a rough surface or else clear the ground to the panel. [N]o doubt the National Gallery picture was left in a very unfin[ishe]d state[.]. Some shapeless shadows in the foreg[roun]d of our picture contrast ill with the carefully studied lines of the stratified rock in the Louvre picture. [O]n the other hand there is the gain of freshness in the less studied head of the angel. I prefer the head of the virgin in the Louvre picture[.] To sum up[.], my observations point to the conclusion that the N[ational] G[allery] panel cannot be as has been hastily asserted a copy of the Louvre picture[.] nor can the Paris canvas be called a copy of ours, nor do I see any reason for the confident assertion that Leonardo never made a replica of one of his own pictures[.] Nothing is more common or natural for an artist than to abandon a picture when still incomplete[.] to recast & improve the design[.] & it seems to me specially characteristic of Leonardo a limitless care for his work[.]

In ancient times [?aut[henticate]d] pictures were rarely reg[arde]d with the same reverence as now & it seemed natural enough to his contempor[arie]s that [Julio] R[oman]o should complete the Tr[ansfiguraton] after Raphaels death/ we may have many more of these pictures than we are aware of & the preservation of such sketches as Le[onard]o[']s St Jerome & the A[doratio]n of the Kings may be due more to their not having been suff[icien]tly adv[ance]d to serve a successor than any sentimental feeling as to the undesirability of touching a great master[']s work. [T]he N[ational] G[allery] picture was probably in a suff[icien]tly forward state to support the advantage of completing it. Many unsatisfactory points may be due to this. [T]he rocks that fill the distance are not by L[eonard]o but they are fine in colour [-] the blue strikingly like in painting those in the backg[roun]d of an inferior picture of the sch[ool] of Leonardo in the Brera, att[ribute]d if I rem[embe]r rightly to Salaino [-] & contemporary or nearly so & certainly not to be att[ribute]d to restoration. [B]ut the importance of this unfin[ishe]d work to the student can hardly be overestimated.

2. Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle, extract from a draft or minuta preparatory to J.A. CROWE, G.B. CAVALCASELLE, *A History of Painting in North Italy*, London 1871-1872 (Biblioteca Marciana, Venice, Cod. It. IV 2027 [=12268], fasc. XVIII, ff. 728-732), quoted in LEVI 2011, p. 6.

In generale l'impressione di questa pittura è quella d'un artista abituato all'affresco. Il colore è posto alla prima. Sotto il colore delle ombre traspare una tinta bruna scura di preparazione calda. Si vede che da prima aveva bozzato con tinte a guisa di chiaro-scuro e definita la massa spaziosa della luce e delle ombre. Esso poi vi andava sopra con tinte a mezzo corpo e grasso di veicolo, modellandovi sopra e coprendo, e rubando di quelle tinte scure quanto conveniva per ottenere i passaggi e la dolcezza delle mezze tinte, e nel tempo stesso la rotondità e la forma delle parti. Per cui talvolta si vedono le pennellate (delle mezze tinte) sull'estremo confine dell'ombra, che sono crudette e di tinta ferrigna e sbiadita, le quali Pellegrino cercava di riscaldare e nascondere con tinte a guisa di velatura, ma che ben presto il sottoposto colore mangiando la parte colorante ritornava allo scoperto. Ciò produceva l'effetto ferrigno e crudo qui sopra notato, per cui talvolta vedesi una tinta fredda e sbiadita anco nelle carni e nei passaggi delle mezze tinte dalla luce alle ombre. Così pure usava quando aveva nella massima ombra della carnagione una tinta troppo forte di alleggerirla con colore di natura più chiaro la qual cosa pure portava l'effetto sopra indicato di ombre con tinte ferrigne. Esso lavorava con tinte a mezzo corpo e grasse ed impregnate di veicolo. Stendeva il colore col pennello ad

una direzione ed in senso trasversale con pennellate larghe e spaziose, ed a varie riprese, le quali colore veduto da vicino ha in se qualche cosa di vuoto, ma che pure, benchè non raggiunga il merito di Palma il vecchio ha qualche cosa che ricorda, o tiene, alla maniera di quel pittore e per quel vuoto notato nel valore delle tinte ricorda pure il L. Lotto. Si vede che cercava di trovare i toni sulla tavolozza per il loro giusto valore. A questi toni locali delle vesti arrivava col valore delle tinte della carne più per forza di chiaro-scuro, che per la vivacità e la vigoria delle tinte. La pittura (quanto a colore) è bilanciata per la forza e la giustezza dei contrapposti e del chiaro scuro, i quali mantengono un giusto equilibrio nelle diverse parti. Esso cercava negli occhi, nelle ombre e nelle guancie di rinforzarli con tinte accese, ove vedesi dei tocchi di tinta rossa, vigorosa. Il colore per questo (e per le cose dette sopra) prende una apparenza che talvolta tende al sanguigno pavonazzo essendo sotto di natura fredda la tinta nella luce, e di natura calda nelle ombre, e ripassate quelle con colore di natura opposta. Se noi dovessimo dire quale è l'impressione di quest'opera, sarebbe questa.

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ABSTRACT

In *The Ephemeral Museum* (2000) Francis Haskell remarked that independent reviews of art exhibitions are often of greater interest than the official catalogues, instancing the «crucial significance for the history of connoisseurship» of the young Berenson's «scathing» account of the exhibition of Venetian art held at the New Gallery in London in the winter of 1894-1895. This paper explores the implications of Berenson's aggressive bid for critical authority by considering an unfinished and largely unpublished essay by the painter, connoisseur, collector and dealer Charles Fairfax Murray (1849-1919), drafted in negative response to an apology for «scientific» Morellian connoisseurship – *The New and the Old Art Criticism* (1894) – by Berenson's partner and close collaborator, Mary Costelloe. Murray's essay affords valuable evidence not only of the ideological and personal divisions and variously conflicting interests characterizing the international world of connoisseurship at this period, but also of the mode of understanding and analysing paintings informing Murray's diverse activities, which he was otherwise reluctant to work out in writing.

In *The Ephemeral Museum* (2000; traduzione italiana 2008) Francis Haskell osservò come le recensioni autonome alle mostre d'arte spesso siano di maggiore interesse rispetto ai cataloghi ufficiali, citando come di «cruciale importanza per la storia della connoisseurship» lo «spietato» opuscolo che il giovane Berenson dedicò alla mostra di arte veneziana allestita presso la New Gallery di Londra nell'inverno del 1894-1895. Nel presente saggio si esamineranno le implicazioni di tale aggressiva rivendicazione di autorità critica, prendendo in considerazione un testo incompiuto e in gran parte inedito del pittore, conoscitore, collezionista e mercante d'arte Charles Fairfax Murray (1849-1919). Redatto quale risposta negativa all'apologia per la connoisseurship «scientifica», di stampo morelliano, pubblicata nel 1894 con il titolo *The New and the Old Art Criticism* dalla compagna e stretta collaboratrice di Berenson, Mary Costelloe, lo scritto di Murray non solo attesta le divisioni personali ed ideologiche, nonché i diversificati conflitti d'interesse che caratterizzavano il mondo della connoisseurship internazionale in quel periodo, ma offre un esempio prezioso del modo di intendere e di analizzare la pittura che informava le molteplici attività di Murray ma che raramente volle elaborare per iscritto.