

From Sequence to Scenario. The Historiography and Theory of Visual Narration

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy

University of East Anglia
School of World Art Studies and Museology
2010

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Abstract

When visual narratives first became the focus of study in art history in the late nineteenth century, they were believed to be such a strong phenomenon that they effected the formation of styles. Today, visual narratives are regarded as significant forms of knowledge in their own right, appearing both within and beyond the artistic context. Between these two ideas there is a century-long story of historiography, an almost unknown tradition of academic writing.

One of the major aims behind the research presented in this thesis is to trace this tradition: to show the main trends, ideas, persons and methods that formed this particular discourse. In the first part of the thesis, two fundamentally different traditions are identified: one where narratives were regarded as illustrations and one which treated them as elements of a visual language. Special attention has been devoted to the ideas of two scholars, G. E. Lessing and Franz Wickhoff. This is because Lessing's ideas had particularly strong and lasting effects, and Wickhoff's ideas were visionary and exemplary.

The second major aim of the thesis, relying on this historiographical survey, is to expand our concept of visual narration as it has been dealt with until now. The second part of the dissertation thus proposes that this concept should be expanded in three different ways: first, a definition is presented for sequential or formal, and perceptual narratives, and a perception-based explanation is offered to demonstrate their *raison d'être*. Second, a notion of a scenario-type pictorial storytelling is introduced. This includes an attempt to draw into analytical focus not just the story presented by the image but the story of the image too. Third, aiming to overcome concentration on episodic narration, a referential system is elaborated and its usage is demonstrated by means of a statistical analyses.

Thus, in general, this thesis aims to illuminate certain crucial aspects of storytelling when understood in a broad sense: time and narration, the types of narrative images, and the domain of visual narrativity.

Acknowledgments

Many people, institutions, and friends helped me to complete this thesis.

First and foremost, I would like to mention Professor John Onians who initially invited me to the School of World Art Studies and Museology. As a supervisor he was a continuous source of inspiration. His encouragement, guidance and criticism was invaluable, his amazing intellectual freedom will always be an example to follow. Dr. Margit Thøfner, my other supervisor also contributed in a fundamental way to my academic development. She kept me focused on the thesis, challenged, corrected and encouraged; her generosity in sharing ideas is exceptional. Furthermore, I would like to express special gratitude to Professor Sandy T. Heslop, my interim supervisor for his stimulating remarks, Professor Stefan Muthesius for his continuing encouragement, and Elisabeth de Bièvre for her support and wisdom. I must also thank all the staff and students at the School. Thanks to the wonderful discussions among the participants of the Research Seminars, these meant much to me. Many thanks to Beverley Youngman and Lyn Marsh who helped me remain in close contact even when I was far away from Norwich and the UEA.

The support from the Moholy-Nagy University of Art and Design in Budapest, my workplace in the recent years, has also been important. I want to thank to colleagues and students, who kept in touch and accepted electronic management and advising over the periods I was in England. I would also like to thank László Tóth, a former student of mine at the Moholy-Nagy University, who helped me with the design of the diagrams in Chapter 7.

My dissertation research and writing was generously supported by a number of organizations and grants. The Arts and Humanities Research Council provided the fees for my course; various grants from the School of World Art Studies helped me to stay in England. Minor grants came from the Hungarian State (Eötvös Scholarship, Ernő Kállai scholarship) and from the Open Society Institute.

Finally, I must give special thanks to my mother and to numerous friends and colleagues who have been wonderfully supportive over these years.

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Introduction

The dissertation deals with visual narratives. It has a double aim: to look back and to look forward. As its title suggest, by looking back the thesis outlines the major trends in research into visual narratives and reviews both past and present approaches and ideas. Yet, by looking forward, the aim is to advance our understanding of visual narrativity on a theoretical level: to reflect on some well known and lesser known theoretical issues, to make suggestions about how they can be better handled and to give examples of how narrative images can be treated in art history.

WHY HISTORIOGRAPHY?

Currently, three main disciplines are involved in shaping our conception of visual narratives. They are the interrelated and sometimes overlapping fields of art history, literary criticism, or rather the sub-field of narratology, and semiotics.

The history of art has a long, but little studied tradition of engaging with visual narratives. It is the field that still produces the largest quantity of work on this topic but it does not seem strong enough to have a significant impact on, or to generate much response in the other cognate disciplines. The currently dominant field is the huge and constantly growing domain of narratology – many of whose practitioners on the basis of a supposed primacy and of the more elaborate theoretical framework developed for literature and film – feel authorized to make general claims about the visual arts. The third discipline is the relatively new one of semiotics, where visual narratives are studied as part of the broader area of visual modes of communication. Semiotics offers a more purely theoretical approach with a balanced view of the visual and verbal, although it favours the latter, but operates often without a historical perspective.

Given this state of affairs, one would expect there to be lively theoretical debates and dynamic co-operation, resulting in interdisciplinary studies. However, in reality, this seldom happens – certainly much less frequently than one would expect. The map of the disciplines remain fragmented. Islands and enclaves exist of groups of scholars whose knowledge and activities remain unknown to those other groups or disciplines with whom they share an interest. The main reason for this is most probably the fact that no book has been written and no detailed study has ever been devoted to the historiography of narrative research.

Consequently, as a rule, art historians themselves are not aware of the issues related to visual narratives that have already been addressed and dealt with. Parallel notions exist in the terminology, many ideas are left unreflected upon or in an underdeveloped state, and important publications remain

relatively unknown. There are still no studies that attempt to summarize and bring closer to the scholarly public the general knowledge available in the field. Moreover, art historians studying visual narratives are not effective at representing themselves. Although in recent years a number of conferences and symposiums have again taken place in the topic, they have been isolated, single events.¹ They come over as occasional rather than directed by an ambition to map the field systematically. Moreover, to my knowledge, there is no professional organization which might bring together scholars with an interest in visual narratives. It is no surprise then that visual narrative has never become a major or popular field of study in art history but has remained a subsidiary topic, one among many others.

Nevertheless, art history has developed a significant body of knowledge about visual narratives. If I was to sum up in one sentence the objective of the historiography section of this thesis, I would say, it is to disprove Wendy Steiner's recent claim that 'In fact, the narrativity of pictures is virtually a non-topic for art historians'.² To counter this assertion, the historiography section focuses mainly on art historians and explores the different ways they offer of interpreting visual narratives. As their contribution is, in fact, much greater than those of narratology and semiotics, these two latter areas will be summarized more briefly, reviewing only current topics and approaches. Whilst surveying past publications on visual narratives, I shall of course also discuss both the potentials and the limitations of previous scholarship. It is generally known that research on visual narration began in art history in the last quarter of the 19th century, but rarely is this paired with an awareness that this makes for a much longer scholarly tradition than within the study of literature or film theory. There is also a general lack of understanding that there was a continuous interest in visual narratives throughout the twentieth century and that this generated different approaches. For example, beyond the more traditional art historical approach of finding the characteristics of narrative images of different periods and geographic areas, there was another that regarded narrativity as part of visual language. As I argue, when the two main methodologies developed in art history for the study of narrative images are brought together with those from within semiotics and narrative theory, there opens up many new and interesting possibilities for narrative readings.

Both the form and function of the historiography section in this thesis is slightly different from what might otherwise be expected from such sections. The original aim was simply to find out more about the individual scholars who were engaged with visual storytelling and about their ideas. However, soon it appeared that, because of the volume of material found, and due to the esoteric nature of this knowledge, the initial sections of this thesis had to become more than a compulsory review of past achievements. Moreover, for the same reasons, it emerged that the discourse on visual storytelling is comprehensible only if presented in a structured way.

¹ These events will be detailed later in the Conclusion.

² Steiner, 2004, 146.

Philip Sohm has summarized the difficulties of writing about the concept of style in art, saying ‘discoursing about love was like falling in love’.³ A similar difficulty arose when attempting to excavate our extant knowledge arising from the interest in visual narratives in art history. Discoursing about narrative was, in itself, creating a narrative, constructing the state of knowledge as if it were a kind of story-form. This narrative is, however, not a traditional one: it is an untold and rather long story with many supporting characters and with very few, but very independent protagonists. Moreover, the characters do not necessarily interact and share either their knowledge or their worlds. The story of the topic’s historiography has a clear beginning but no end. It is not linear but runs along at least two parallel, even divergent threads and it opens up only gradually. Nevertheless, the story of the historiography provides a starting point, a significant foundation for any later research. Furthermore, this story offers a frame on which new forms of visual narratives and new methods dealing with them can be overlaid. These new definitions and approaches will be introduced in the second part of the thesis, in the theory section.

WHY THEORY?

One significant part of the existing research on narrative images was engaged with classification. This issue will be introduced and studied in detail in the historiography section. Classification is a problem captured in the conceptual cage of ‘episodic’ narration and in the frequently voiced dichotomy between ‘single’ images (single-framed pictures) and ‘sequences’ of images (cycles). In fact, the concept of the ‘single’ image is in itself problematic. The majority of the images discussed in the theory section of the present thesis come from the Italian Renaissance and the early modern period. In these periods, one common type of representational image is the altarpiece. Yet the altarpiece, whether supported by a predella or a polyptych, is evidently not a ‘single’ image. Thus it is often not a single narrative but rather a single entity consisting of a structured hierarchy not just of images, but of stories too. The other frequently produced type of image is the book illustration. Here ‘single’ images operate both as single units and as parts of a larger visual context. The concept of the ‘single’ image will thus be used in this broader sense throughout the thesis.

Another key term is ‘episodic’ narration. By this, I refer to an approach which sees the complexity of visual narration as depending on the number of episodes or moments of the storytime that a narrative image presents. In this way, narrativity is reduced to merely counting temporal moments against spatial arrangements in a time-space coordinated system. In the theory chapter, the particular contribution to knowledge in this area that I hope to make, is to transcend such attitudes and offer an alternative which dissolves this dichotomy between the single and the sequential.

³ Sohm, 2001, 1.

Anachronism is one area where this may happen. As a concept, it demonstrates that the temporality of images does not necessarily depend on the number of depicted moments. In fact, pictures are especially appropriate for fusing different temporal levels into a seemingly uniform spatial reality. Accordingly, the first section of the second half of my thesis deals with anachronism as a narrative phenomenon and draws attention to pictorial examples where such a fusion is the principal characteristic of the depicted story. The aim is to show that anachronistic temporal solutions not only have great impact on narrative meaning but are, in fact, the main constituents of the visual tale. Indeed, the relation between time and narration is one of the basic axioms of narratology. This is supported by Paul Ricoeur's frequently quoted opinion: 'Narrativity and temporality are closely related – as closely as, in Wittgenstein's terms, a language game and a form of life. Indeed, I take temporality to be the structure of existence that reaches language in narrativity and narrativity to be the language structure that has temporality as its ultimate referent. Their relationship is therefore reciprocal.'⁴

To put it simply, reciprocity is a strong mutual relationship. However, in the case of images, reciprocity does not mean that a depicted story necessarily belongs to only one time. In complex narrative images multiple temporal layers usually occur and the number of depicted 'moments' becomes irrelevant. So anachronism, one way of generating temporal multiplicity in images, will be studied here in a narrative context, the more general relation between time, narration and image will be touched upon only briefly.

It is clear that episode-based classifications are not able to deal with rich and complex visual narratives, such as those with anachronistic temporal solutions. Indeed, they do not even operate well for simple or average narratives either, as they cannot account for painterly elements that transcend the episodic. The problem is that there are very large numbers of visual elements in even very simple images, such as, for example, body language, facial expressions, gestures, movements or signs which point outside the primary story-level as determined by the written source (here, these will be called metanarrative signs). And these all have a narrative role; they contribute to the narrative meaning. To address this problem, in the third part of the theory section, a referential system will be introduced as part of a statistical analysis. This is one way of escaping the limits of episode-based classifications.

THEMES, MODIFICATIONS, TELLABILITY

Throughout the theory chapters, I shall mainly focus on 'single' narrative images, mostly from the Renaissance and early modern periods. I have chosen to study such images for two reasons. First, they are underrepresented in the existing research, and second, their narrativity does not seem as obvious as that of picture cycles. The narrative capacities of picture cycles or sequences has never been questioned. This is perhaps because sequentiality brings the experience of these images closer to the

⁴ Ricoeur, 1981, 165.

act of reading and also because picture cycles are akin to cinematic art forms. Many sequential images have already been examined in terms of their narrative structures. For example, medieval pictorial systems and stained glass windows have been studied by Wolfgang Kemp,⁵ manuscript illustration by Kurt Weitzmann,⁶ fresco cycles by Marilyn Aronberg Lavin,⁷ early comics by David Kunzle,⁸ early Buddhist narratives by Vidya Dehejia.⁹ There are certain works of art, such as the Trajan's column,¹⁰ the *Ara Pacis*,¹¹ the Bayeux tapestry,¹² Venetian narrative cycles,¹³ the frescoes of the Ajanta cave,¹⁴ and Hogarth's series, which are frequently considered. However, the narrative properties of single images have rarely been studied independently in art history. Wolfgang Kemp's work is an exception, but it is limited to the early Christian and Medieval context.¹⁵

The nucleus of the stories referred to in single images usually derives from biblical, mythological or historical narratives. However, what is represented visually is most often a reinterpretation. Wolfgang Kemp draws attention to the 'long chain of transmission' of the tradition in question, which leads from oral narration through the written before becoming visual.¹⁶ Kemp claims that this is what happened throughout the middle ages. As regards the Renaissance and Early Modern periods, as discussed in the theory section, the approach is slightly different. Visual narratives became more independent and many visual narratives had no precise written source. The examples presented for the study of anachronism in the theory section show that some religious narratives formed only a vague basis for the visual story, which indeed is more about contemporary historical events.

It is worth reiterating here that retold stories change. They change even when there are no restrictions brought on by a change of narrative medium. Barbara Tversky, a psychologist at Stanford University, conducted an experiment that demonstrated that retold stories were distorted in 60% of cases. There were many types of alteration, the most usual distortions being adding, exaggerating, minimizing or omitting information. The alterations varied, depending on the objectives and the audience of the storyteller. Her conclusion is absolutely clear: '[d]istorting seems to be the norm, not an aberration.'¹⁷ In the Renaissance, complex narratives would change even more radically. For example, religious narratives could be historicized in order to make the biblical event part of the present. Not only is the structure of the visual tale modified, including the initial events, causes or

⁵ Kemp, 1993, and Kemp 1997.

⁶ Some of his writings: Weitzmann, 1970 and Weitzmann, 1977.

⁷ Lavin, 1990.

⁸ Kunzle, 1970 and Kunzle, 1973.

⁹ Dehejia 1990, Dehejia 2005.

¹⁰ Brilliant, 1984, Chapter 3, especially 90- 108.

¹¹ Kellum, 1994.

¹² Brilliant, 1991, and Heslop 2009.

¹³ Fortini Brown, 1994.

¹⁴ Dehejia, 1991.

¹⁵ Kemp, 2003.

¹⁶ Kemp, 2003, 62.

¹⁷ Tversky, 2004, 386, on the experiment see pages 385-390.

consequences, but this modification could also occur on the level of the characters, as will be shown in my discussion of anachronism chapter.

These modifications raise the issue of the tellability of a visual tale. Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen formulated an important problem in relation to medium-based narrative modifications when they worried about the lost details of visual stories when these are verbalized.¹⁸ Their question is of great significance, since there is a tendency to underscore only the losses of a written tale when it is depicted. Kress and van Leeuwen emphasize the multiplicity of readings generated by abstract visual stories, but their point is even more of an issue for non-abstract narratives. In visual stories, in fact, multiplicity seems to be an essential feature, and when such stories are verbalized, it tends to disappear. The difficulty of translating a non-linear visual narrative into linear written form can be seen for example in Elizabeth Rodini's attempt at doing so with Gentile Bellini's *Procession in Piazza San Marco*.¹⁹ Whether intentionally or not, Rodini's article shares many features with the story it seeks to analyse. As they progress, both the story of Bellini's painting and the scholarly article on it tend to dissolve, and both end without a proper closure.

PICTORIAL NARRATION VERSUS VISUAL NARRATION

In the whole field of research both visual narration and pictorial narration are used as terms of description. Sometimes these terms are used interchangeably. However, in other cases, the distinction comes with a double reference. First, the term 'visual narration' covers a much broader area of study than pictorial narration. In narratology, Mieke Bal uses the term not only for the narrativity of visual arts (as 'illustrations of classical texts') and perhaps for films (as is evident from her references) but also for visuality in literature as well.²⁰ In contrast, 'pictorial' narration is usually a more restricted category, standing solely for still images in Werner Wolf's writings. Even so, the boundaries of the two terms are rather obscure.²¹ Second, in art history the differentiation between these terms reflects the origins of the scholarship. In the case of German scholars, scholars of German origin, or from areas where the German tradition of research is more prevalent, for example, in Greek and Roman art or in the medieval context, there is a tendency to use the 'pictorial narration' formula. One can see this in the work of Otto Pächt, Herbert L. Kessler and Marianna Shreve-Simpson, Wolfgang Kemp, Laura Weigert, Mark Stansbury-O'Donnell, and, recently, in Henrike Manuwald.²² The term 'visual narration' is of more recent origins, a creation of the last few decades and it probably has its roots in the currency of the term 'visual culture'. Although the thesis does not deal with moving images, I prefer to

¹⁸ Kress and Leeuwen 2006, 61. On the tellability of abstract narrative processes, see pages 60-62.

¹⁹ Rodini, 1998.

²⁰ Bal, 2005, 629.

²¹ Wolf, 2005, 431-435.

²² Pächt, 1962; Kessler and Shreve-Simpson, 1985; Kemp 1993 and 2003; Weigert 1995; Stansbury-O'Donnell 1999; Manuwald, 2007.

use the term ‘visual narration’. The only reason for this is that nowadays visual narration evokes a broader meaning, which I would like to preserve for the full range of imagery discussed in this thesis.

CONTEXT OF STUDY

Narratology, which began as a way of studying literature, like feminism or (post)structuralism, soon became a transdisciplinary field of study, offering general theories with possible application to many areas. Narrative approaches may now be found not only in the humanities but also in music, psychology, cognitive sciences, medicine, legal theory, and even in the natural sciences and mathematics.²³ Because of its widespread dissemination, after the ‘linguistic turn’ and ‘pictorial turn’, some scholars even talk about a ‘narrative turn’.²⁴

Compared to these disciplines, art history has a rather unusual relationship to narratology. In art history, the interest in visual narratives dates back to the end of the nineteenth century. This interest appeared at a point in time when no-one was as yet using terms such as ‘narratology’, ‘paradigms’ or ‘turns’. However, as Stansbury-O’Donnell and Wolfgang Kemp remarked, art history in its early stages already addressed those issues that would later characterize narratology, as is evinced by the work of Carl Robert and Alois Riegl, respectively.²⁵ However, this early interest in art history, which was connected to Formalist approaches, was soon upstaged by iconography. Iconography as a method tended to focus on the historical, social and political background of images rather than on their purely formal characteristics, characteristics which not only characterized Formalism but the early narratologists’ approaches as well. Unfortunately, though, the story of narrative research in art history has not yet been written and so is almost completely unknown. Many today would argue that an interest in narrative has only reached art history in the last few years. Some would say, it has not reached art history at all.²⁶ A few would even question the ability of images to convey narratives. Recently Werner Wolf wrote in one of the most prestigious publications of narratology, the *Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, that ‘the pictorial medium offers considerable resistance to narrativity.’²⁷ This in itself shows the distance between the disciplines. The ambiguous relationship of narratology and art history is thus reflected in fundamental theoretical issues concerning visual narratives. The overall objective of this thesis is to contribute to bridging the gap between the existing

²³ For narrative psychology see Laszló 2009; for narrative theory and the cognitive sciences Herman 2003; for narrative medicine for example Greenhalgh and Hurwitz 1998; for narrative and law see Jackson 1988; on the relation of narrative and the sciences see Artigiani, 2007; on narrative mathematics see the organization Thales and Friends (<http://www.thalesandfriends.org/en/index.php>) and a review on the conference ‘Mathematics and Narrative’: http://thalesandfriends.org/en/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=41&Itemid=76 (2010 06 08)

²⁴ A concept developed by Gerald Prince, see Wolf, 2003, 180 and 193, ft 2; also used in the Introduction of the ENT, 2005, ix.

²⁵ Stansbury-O’Donnell, 1999, 1, and Kemp, 1999, 1-57, especially on Riegl and narrative, pages 38-50.

²⁶ My own discussion in Chapter 4 will give a detailed account of these views.

²⁷ Wolf, 2005, 431.

disciplines that study visual narratives. It aims to show how, although in different ways from texts, images are definitely narrative, that the stories they tell are complex, and that their narrativity is worth studying. Throughout it is important to remember that the research presented here fits more closely with the art-historical tradition than with postmodern narrative theory. This is because, as I will argue, art history, when deploying the achievements of narratology and semiotics, is in itself able to throw a new and revealing light onto the whole subject of narrativity.

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE CHAPTERS

Although the title of the thesis is structured two areas, historiography and theory, the thesis actually consists of three sections. These three sections use different methodologies. Part One is concerned with historiography and uses an historical and roughly chronological approach. Part Two, which examines theoretical questions, is more abstract and analytical in its nature. This is followed by Part Three, a section named Practice, a case study, which is more experimental.

PART ONE: HISTORIOGRAPHY

Part One presents a general outline of the historiography of visual narratives in four chapters. The first concerns ideas in art theory before the development of art history as an academic discipline, especially the ideas of the two most influential theorists, Leon Battista Alberti and Lessing.

Chapter One begins with Leon Battista Alberti's notion of *istoria* as introduced in his *De Pictura* in 1435. The research often relates this concept to visual narratives. However, there are different views on what *istoria* exactly means. In my interpretation, Alberti's concept is crucial for theorizing the scenario-type visual narration, which superseded medieval pictorial systems. For Alberti, *istoria* is the target of a hierarchical system, a pictorial universe whose members are human figures prepared to carry out actions. *Istoria* is an intellectual achievement, which, at its very best, may overcome the spatial and temporal limitations of human life. As I argue, with this notion, Alberti created a theoretical model for an ideal Renaissance narrative painting.

The Chapter continues with a short summary of the ideas of those two theoreticians from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who strongly influenced painterly narratives. Here Anthony, Earl of Shaftesbury's aesthetic theory will be reviewed in relation to Aristotle's conception of the unity of time, space and action, and then Charles le Brun's lectures on Poussin held at the French Academy in Paris, 1667. Both formed part of the *ut pictura poesis* debate.

This premodern theory chapter then changes scope and focuses in on Lessing and the ideas presented in his *Laocoön* (1766). The reasons for more thorough approach is Lessing's influence: he is still one of the most widely cited aestheticians in the study of visual narratives. For some authors,

especially for narratologists, Lessing's ideas serve as absolute reference points. His arguments are usually presented very restrictively and often being treated as commonplaces. Almost exclusively, they serve to prop up arguments detailing the narrative restrictions of images rather than those which focus on their potentialities. Particularly important in this context is Lessing's perception of painting as an art-form that can depict its subject only in a momentary fashion and from a single point with a single view. Lessing himself disproves this idea later in the book, but this passage is still the most frequently repeated 'absolute truth' in the studies about visual narratives. This leads me to identify what I call a 'one moment syndrome'. There are two reasons for this. First, it brings to the fore the issue of whether images can represent only a single moment of action, and secondly, it generates reflections on the way that the question is treated. So this part of the chapter is not a critique of Lessing's ideas, but rather a critique of the reception of his ideas. The aim is to deconstruct certain stereotypes of visual narratives often attributed to Lessing and also to offer a critique of certain scholarly perceptions of visual narratives.

Chapter Two moves on to modern theories about visual narratives. First, it focuses on Franz Wickhoff and his contribution to the theory of narratives. Wickhoff is known as the founder of the Vienna School, which, in turn, was crucial in developing general methods for art history as it emerged as an independent discipline. In the field of visual narratives, Wickhoff is mentioned in relation to typologies of narrative images. Here, however, Wickhoff is studied as a theorist in the broader sense, as one of those with whom the modern interest in visual narratives began. The reason for choosing him lies in the fact that – apart from identifying and describing different types of narrative images, including the widely used concept of continuous narration – Wickhoff provided a theoretical framework for his types. His ideas are unique in the sense that there were no other attempts over the course of more than a century to raise and answer the general question of what purpose narratives have in the history of art. Wickhoff's idea was that different types of narratives are style-generating elements. His theory may not be valid anymore, but his questing and visionary approach is still exemplary.

The discussion of Wickhoff is followed by a section dealing with subsequent attempts at classifying narrative images, an issue launched by early German scholarship. These attempts began at the end of nineteenth century and were present throughout the twentieth; the last typology dates from the 1990s. As I argue here, due to the fragmentation of the field, these typologies did not result in a gradual improvement. This section also demonstrates the gradual simplification of the inheritance of Wickhoff's theories. Typology-making practices thus can be regarded as functioning as *pars pro toto*, for they effectively map the current situation in narrative research.

Then, the last part of Chapter Two briefly introduces the first major trends of research in the twentieth century, the concept of visual narration as based on book illustration. This trend investigated narratives in terms of geographical areas and chronological periods, the approach already present in Wickhoff's theory. Kurt Weitzmann seems to be a key figure here. With him, the centre of research

moved from Germany to the United States, revolving around the two universities of Chicago and Princeton.

Chapter Three argues that there was another trend in art history during the twentieth century which regarded visual narratives not primarily as historical or geographical phenomena but as modes of visual expression. In the work of these scholars, one can find two recurring concepts, time and movement, to which, though in different ways, narrative is related. Formulated in the simplest way, narrative is a time-related element of visual language that can be expressed through movement. The aesthetization of movement actually began in the nineteenth century, and in this Paul Souriau played an important role so his ideas will be introduced here. His son, Etienne Souriau went on to define time-related concepts of perception and thus to prove that the contemplation of an image indeed has a duration in time.

Rudolf Arnheim is the next scholar on whom the chapter focuses. Arnheim's contribution is twofold. First, his concept of stroboscopic motion help us gain a deeper understanding of continuous narration. Second, the notion of *directed tension*, together with the idea of perceptual causality that Arnheim used to explain how abstract forms are perceived, form the very basis of abstract narratives. Ernst H. Gombrich is also studied here because of his interest in the relationship between time, expression and movements in painting. Gombrich again disproved the idea of *punctum temporis*, now not only on aesthetic grounds but also on a psychological level. As I argue, the 'principle of the primacy of meaning', which Gombrich refers to and which is supported by psychological experiments as well, helps us to comprehend how narrativization might occur in relation to images. Further, it is to Gombrich's credit that after him movements in painting began to be regarded as detached from classical or religious narratives, as elements that might stand alone and thus create meaning.

Chapter Four, the final chapter in the historiography section, investigates the most recent research into visual storytelling. Its three parts focus on the latest developments in art history, in narratology and in semiotics, respectively. It treats only the English scholarship; recent German views will be touched upon only briefly. The chapter aims to summarize roughly the contribution of each field and discuss the benefits, the possibilities and the limitations of each. In art history, research in recent decades has become methodologically more diverse, and this has brought about an expansion of the researched themes, periods and methods. For example, the study of narrative finally embraced topics in Renaissance and non-European art. This is also when the first thorough surveys (Early Buddhist narrative art, Roman art, Italian narrative murals), and the first notion-based research (indirect narration, continuous narratives) have been undertaken. Further, this was when art history began to borrow theoretical concepts and models from narratology.

There is also a section examining the most typical questions coming up in narratology regarding visual narratives. I argue that there are two main approaches toward images in the field, one 'liberal' and one 'orthodox'. Besides the categories of area or period-based and abstract narratives, a new

approach has appeared in semiotics, where narratives are understood simply as communication. The last section will focus on this particular approach.

PART TWO: THEORY

Part Two of the thesis moves on to discuss the theoretical issues raised by the study of visual narration. It consists of two chapters, both aimed at expanding the field of research. Chapter Five finds its firm foundation in Chapter Three. On the basis of previous work, the research presented here is meant to expand the meaning of the term narrative in the context of the visual by developing the notion of abstract narratives. By abstract narratives I refer here to two related phenomena: first, formal narratives, and second, perception-based narratives. Formal narratives cover primarily abstract or non-figurative pictures that, through the perceived sequence of their formal elements, elicit narrative interpretation. The concept of perception-based narratives derives from the fact that the aesthetic experience is an active and indeed an interactive process, and thus that spectatorship might well have a narrative aspect. This idea is supported by psychological, philosophical and narratological arguments. The main conclusion drawn here is that the category of narrative imagery does not necessarily coincide with the figurative.

Chapter Six reflects on the general question of time and narration. The themes addressed are those most often discussed in narratology. I propose to study visual narratives in a broader sense, including not only the depicted story, but the story of the image as well. Further, the chapter attempts to show the multiple levels on which rich and complex narrative images work. The starting point for these theoretical investigations will be a single altarpiece, Carlo Crivelli's *Ascoli Annunciation*. Thus the chapter can also be regarded as a case study. Using previous typologies, Crivelli's painting would have been classified as a single monoscenic image and thus would not arouse much interest. However, it is not the episodic narration that makes this painting interesting but rather its setting, its temporal arrangement, the seemingly subsidiary microscenes and the role of the additional characters. I argue that Crivelli's narrative should be interpreted in a wider context, since the story of the image, with all its political, historical and social allusions, is crucial for the narrative understanding of the depicted theme. Crivelli's altarpiece plays with time: anachronism is the phenomenon that links together all the temporal layers that the painting operates with. The phenomenon of visual anachronism, along with *mise-en-abyme* will thus be studied from a narrative point. These pictorial traits can make visual tales temporally very complex. One role of anachronism at the end of fifteenth century in Italy was to historicize religious narratives, to make them present for their beholders. In this sense, Crivelli's painting is not unique: such anachronisms were quite frequent, as the chapter will show. Further, I argue that the very experience of time is different in different periods of history, and this also has consequences for the narrative understanding of the image. The key term for understanding the historicization of the biblical Annunciation in Crivelli's altarpiece is presentness, a theological concept

emphasizing the effects of the biblical stories in the present rather than seeing them merely as historical events. This concept is studied in detail by reference to St Augustine, some medieval sources and also with regards to its contemporary realizations, for example the cult of the Casa Sacra in Loreto. Moreover, a new term, narrative ramification, will be introduced. This term describes what visual anachronism does to religious narratives, as in the case of the Crivelli altarpiece. Ramification occurs when a new character in a narrative makes an intervention which radically modifies the original (written) story structure, and, in the process, creates a new story. The chapter will then discuss one typical visual ramification from the very same Renaissance context as Crivelli's altarpiece.

PART THREE: PRACTICE

Part Three, the final section of the thesis, is an experiment, a statistical survey of images. It aims to give both the relative frequency and the distribution of certain narrative models within single images. Chapter Seven will outline how the dataset was chosen, its preparations, as well as the process of making and the results of the survey. It was carried out on more than eighty depictions of an otherwise rarely represented story, that of Atalanta and Hippomenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. The dataset includes all available pictorial variants of this story, ranging in date from 1410 to 1946. Among the images one can find paintings, engravings and decorative objects but the majority are manuscript or book illustrations.

The general idea behind the survey is twofold. The already existing taxonomies of narrative images are based exclusively on the concept of episodic narration which is simply not adequate for comprehending the complexity of visual narratives. My purpose is to improve this method by elaborating a multidimensional referential system including a wide range of those pictorial elements and signs that contribute to the construction of a visual tale. This is an additive system meant to supplement rather than displace the episodic system. The referential signs operate on a narrative level in images, just as verbs, nouns and adjectives do in sentences: they might give additional information about the story, about the circumstances of the events, the context, about earlier or later actions or events; they also identify the characters or help in keeping contact with the viewer. Moreover, the survey is meant to be another death-knell for the one-moment syndrome, the notion that that narrative images can represent only one moment and from a single point of view. The last section of the chapter presents the results and the conclusions of the survey. It analyses the distribution of both the episodes and the narrative references in relation to different periods, geographical areas, and categories of size and technique. Finally, this chapter is supported by an appendix detailing the dataset.

There is another, less obvious structural line behind the theoretical chapters of Parts Two and Three. There are three main sources for visual narratives in the periods that the thesis deals with: historical, biblical and mythological. In the theoretical chapters the thesis touches upon all three types. Religious narratives are mentioned in Chapter Six in relation to time and narration. Purely historical

images were rare in the periods covered; history was represented mostly in a religious frame, the theme dealt with in Chapter Six; whilst Chapter Seven contains a case study of a mythological narrative. Furthermore, while Chapter Six deals with complex and rich narratives, Chapter Seven sets out a rather mechanical method for treating simpler, more average narrative images, which may or may not appear in groups. Chapter Six hopefully gives further reasons why special narrative images need special treatment and study.

The thesis concludes by placing the overall aims, the results and the main propositions of the thesis in a broader context. It offers a critical consideration of the theory of narratives, its interdisciplinarity and applicability to the visual arts. This final part also discusses in particular the place of narrative research in the history of art history, its place among the changing paradigms of the discourse. Finally, this section raises a number of questions about the current interests in the narrative research, and formulates few topics for further investigation.

Part One Historiography

Chapter 1 Premodern Theories of Visual Narration

This chapter is part of the general historiography and will introduce theories on the question of painting and storytelling developed before the institutionalization of art history as an academic discipline. It deals first with the theory of Leon Battista Alberti, then gives a brief summary of the ideas of Shaftesbury and Charles Le Brun. Finally, it focuses on the issues raised by Lessing in his *Laocoön*. All of these theorists were engaged with problems that today would be studied within narratology, for example the relation of time and action, movements in paintings that denote actions, the acting characters in a visual story, constructions of the pictorial setting for events, and how written narratives can be transformed into visual stories. Each of these issues relate to the three main constitutive elements of any narrative: characters, locations and actions.

ALBERTI AND THE CONCEPT OF *ISTORIA*

For almost a thousand year narratives in medieval pictorial systems were organized according to the same theoretical and practical rules. As argued here, Alberti's importance lies in the fact that, through the concept of *istoria*, he theorized a new pictorial type, one which surpassed and replaced medieval forms of visual narration. As Wolfgang Kemp has shown, medieval pictorial systems deployed two different representational modes, narrative and symbolic, and were ruled by two orders, narrative and thematic.¹ These rules can be seen in ivory panels, tapestry works, reliefs, ceiling paintings, etc. The new model, which was applied mostly to altarpieces and panel paintings, and even to individual sections of fresco cycles, was introduced at the beginning of the quattrocento in Italy, after a 'millenium of multiple images'; now when 'creative energies were directed toward the making of individual pictures.'² This new model of narration can be characterized by less dependence on the written source (if one exists at all), and by more carefully constructed pictorial scenes. Alberti, by elaborating the theoretical concept of *istoria* for constructing these scenes, helped painters to develop in practice what would become the conventional technique of visual narration in the Renaissance; this mode will here be called a scenario-type narration.

¹ Kemp, 1993.

² Kemp, 1993, 121.

ALBERTI'S SOURCES

Alberti is most famous today for giving the first written explanation of how to construct proper linear perspective.³ His pioneering treatise, *De Pictura* was published first in Latin in 1435 and was dedicated to Giovanfrancesco Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua. A year after the book was translated into Italian and was published with slight changes. *Della Pittura* was now dedicated to Alberti's fellow architect, Filippo Brunelleschi. In the treatise, Alberti revived the ancient term *istoria* yet filled it with new content, and this is what makes him interesting from the point of visual narratives. Alberti was a Florentine humanist, an *uomo universale*: a theorist who studied law, wrote literature, designed architecture, practiced painting and sculpture. As Jacob Burckhardt stated, he was not only an 'all-sided man', but one of those who 'tower above the rest'.⁴ Alberti's treatise was and still is regarded as a milestone in many ways: *De Pictura* was the first of such treatises written since classical antiquity, and with Alberti's other treatises on architecture and sculpture, it laid the foundations of Renaissance art theory and hence had an impact on the pictorial arts of Europe for centuries onward. Furthermore, Alberti was a mediator between the sciences and the arts. He was educated at the university in Bologna, and later became interested in mathematics, especially in geometry.

Two main sources are usually identified for Alberti's *De Pictura*: rhetoric and mathematics.⁵ The later seems more important for Alberti's discussion of narrative images. In the treatise, he transformed the core of current mathematical knowledge and made it available for painters. For achieving this, Alberti turned to the most important book in the history of mathematics, Euclid's *Elements*. Euclid (323-283 BC) in his revolutionary book invented and introduced axiomatic thinking and was the first to construct a coherent world of abstract mathematics. This world was based on abstract geometrical elements: points, lines and surfaces; additional basic relations and axioms defined their relationship. Euclid's constructed mathematical world was later inhabited by new elements, such as angles, triangles or circles, all introduced by definitions. Their characteristics were proved by theorems, deduced from the initial axioms and from previous theorems. In Book I, Alberti followed Euclid's method, but described from the standpoint of a painter. Points, lines and surfaces, together with colours, lights and shades, were the basic elements that constructed illusionistic pictorial space. Euclid himself had transformed common mathematical knowledge to create an uncontradictable mathematical universe. Alberti transformed common painterly knowledge so as to build an uncontradictable pictorial universe. This was done by linear perspective, based on a visual pyramid.

³ For Alberti's description on linear perspective and a detailed study of Book I of the *De Pictura* see Martin Kemp, 1990, 21-24.

⁴ See Burckhardt, 1878, Part Two, on the development of the individual:
<http://www.boisestate.edu/courses/hy309/docs/burckhardt/2-1.html>

⁵ These sources were extensively researched. There is broad scholarly agreement on Alberti's use of these sources. See, for example, Westfall, 1969, 487.

But what was the purpose of linear perspective? What kind of painting, what kind of visual universe was it that Euclid's mathematical knowledge served?

ISTORIA AND SCENARIO-TYPE NARRATION

A thesis on narrative paintings would certainly yearn for an answer saying these paintings were narrative paintings. Indeed, what Alberti created was a bit more. The pictorial world that was unified by the linear perspective was prepared to receive an *istoria*. Scholars generally agree that *istoria* is related to visual narratives. Usually, the term is translated as narrative painting or narrative theme, but there is actually little consensus on what exactly the term denotes.⁶ The most recent, profound study of Alberti's Book II of *De Pictura* and its influence on Mantegna's painting *Circumcision of Christ* is by Jack M. Greenstein. He relates Alberti's concept to the medieval interpretation of the antique term *istoria*.⁷ Greenstein claims that '[t]he understanding of history in Alberti's *On Painting* grew out of the late medieval tradition that linked *historia* with pictorial representation. Like Dante and many of his own contemporaries, Alberti used the word *historia* as a metonymic synonym for a pictorial work of art that depicted a narrative scene.'⁸ Here, clearly, Alberti's *istoria* is linked to visual narrative.

Alberti sees *istoria* as the ultimate purpose of painting, both in terms of an intellectual achievement and in terms of painterly construction: 'the great work of the painter is the 'historia'; part of the 'historia' are the bodies, part of the body is the member, and part of the member is surface.'⁹ As a painterly construction, *istoria* is the result of a hierarchical system where more significant and more complex parts (bodies, members) derive from smaller and more basic parts, following the structure provided by Euclid's model.¹⁰ In a composition grace and beauty keep the members of the structure together. Parts should correspond in four aspects: 'in size, function, kind, colour'.¹¹ From the examples used it is clear that these members are human figures and their parts are faces, bodies and muscles

⁶ For earlier discussions of the Albertian *istoria* see Greenstein, 1992, 236, ft 2 for Chapter 2. For Joan Gadol *istoria* is a 'narrative theme', which is ruled by the composition and expresses the Renaissance ideas of decorum. (Gadol, 1969, 88-89.) In the scholarship the term *istoria* became credited with different meanings. To illustrate this, I quote Carroll W. Westfall's passage: 'The *istoria* acted as poetry in that it conveyed didactic messages as effectively as eloquence does. It also acted as rhetoric, in that it depended on invention and on the presentation of discovered material; as grammar, in that it conveyed relationships between things; as history, in that it showed the actions of men affecting history and based its invention on ancient poets; and as strict moral philosophy in that it spoke of vice and virtue and of the goodness of men and of God.' (Westfall, 1969, 501-502.)

⁷ Greenstein, 1992, Chapter 2, especially 34-40.

⁸ Greenstein, 1992, 39.

⁹ Alberti, II, 33, Grayson transl. 1991, 67-68. Alberti put a strong emphasis on the ultimate purpose of painting, the idea occurs again with almost the same words in Book II, 35.

¹⁰ In his construction of the scenario, Alberti also relied on other sources. Greenstein, following Baxandall's interpretation, suggests that Alberti followed Latin rhetoric and modelled his treatise on Quintilian's *Institutio oratorio* (p 57): 'In rhetoric, composition was a technical term used to describe the artistic structuring of a periodic, or complex, sentence. This structuring involved a four-level hierarchy of elements: words were put together to form phrases, phrases to form clauses, and clauses to form the period. Alberti merely transferred this principle of organization from writing to painting by using composition as a technical term to describe the artistic structuring of *historia*.' (Greenstein, 1992, 55-56.)

¹¹ Alberti, II 36, Grayson transl. 1991, 72.

although the members could be animals as well. The correspondence of the parts enables the bodies to carry out actions: ‘we must ensure that all the members fulfil their proper function according to the action being performed.’¹²

So far, we have the pictorial space with acting bodies in it. Their number is limited to not more than ten, which shows that Alberti envisioned quite large dimensions for an *istoria*, and also prescribed ‘plentiful variety’ for it. This variety concerns both the characters and elements of the stage (a ‘properly arranged mixture of old men, youths, boys, matrons, maidens, children, domestic animals, dogs, birds, horse, sheep, buildings and provinces’¹³), and also body movements. The bodies in the pictorial space should all have their own attitudes, gestures, movements and positions. Body movements convey not just actions, but states of the mind and humans emotions, the ‘movements of the heart’ as well.¹⁴ Every action or gesture in the pictorial space should be subordinated to *istoria*: ‘Everything the people in the painting do among themselves, or perform in relation to the spectators, must fit together to present and explain the ‘historia’.’¹⁵ Alberti gives the painter three further devices which, as Greenstein says, are ‘involved a three-stage process’¹⁶: composition, circumscription, and lights and colours. With these, artists may unite all the pictorial elements in the hierarchical construction of *istoria*.

In Albertian terms, *istoria* is the highest intellectual achievement. Greenstein argues that the intellectual content of painting is a form of allegory, and Alberti’s *istoria* had its final significance in conveying moral and intellectual teachings.¹⁷ This is certainly the case. It is hard to underestimate the significance of moral and intellectual teachings as communicated through stories and narratives. However, visually formulated stories can do something that written ones can never possess: they make the dead alive. By reviving its constitutive elements, *istoria*, at its best, is omnipotent; it overcomes human limitations both temporally and spatially. ‘Painting possesses a truly divine power’, says Alberti, ‘in that not only does it make the absent person present (as they say of friendship), but it also represents the dead to the living many centuries later (...) Through painting, the faces of the dead go on living for a very long time.’¹⁸ This intellectual achievement always depends on the depicted bodily actions. In painting movements bear the sense of life. Alberti supports this argument with the exemplary description of the dead Meleager.¹⁹ And, as Alberti remarks, ‘[t]his is the most difficult thing of all to do, for to represent the limbs of a body entirely at rest is as much the sign of an excellent

¹² Alberti, II 37, Grayson transl. 1991, 73.

¹³ Alberti, II 40, Grayson transl. 1991, 75.

¹⁴ Alberti, II 42, Grayson transl. 1991, 77.

¹⁵ Alberti, II 42, Grayson transl. 1991, 78.

¹⁶ Greenstein, 1992, 43.

¹⁷ Greenstein, 1992, Chapter II, especially 41-43 and 49-58.

¹⁸ Alberti, II 25, Grayson transl. 1991, 60.

¹⁹ Alberti, II 37, Grayson transl. 1991, 73. Greenstein explains this well: ‘The opposite of death is life. If the painter understood why the body of Meleager appeared dead, he would know what made a body appear alive. Since in a corpse every member fell insensibly and without movement, in a living body every member, even the smallest joint, should appear to fulfil the functions of life—feeling (*sensus*) and movement.’ (Greenstein 1992, 44, and further on body movements in *istoria*, 44-52.)

artist as to render them all alive and in action.’²⁰ The highest achievement of *istoria* is thus essentially visual, and it is attached to the represented actions. Alberti gave a further, additional argument for *istoria* being the greatest painterly performance. He was a proud author. He understood the significance of his book very well. And he wanted to be rewarded by being commemorated through the highest intellectual achievement he himself had proclaimed in his treatise: he wanted to be rewarded by having his portrait painted in an *istoria*: ‘[i]f it is such as to be of some use and convenience to painters, I would especially ask them as a reward for my labours to paint my portrait in their ‘historiae’, and thereby proclaim to posterity that I was a student of this art and that they are mindful of and grateful for this favour.’²¹

The Albertian term *istoria* could be best captured through the notion of the ‘scenario’. It is not only the subject matter of the painting and it is not exactly the narrative of the painting. Rather, the phrase scenario both enables and prepares a painting to serve as a narrative. Alberti wanted to define a complete and coherently constructed pictorial universe: *istoria* is, for him, an umbrella term under which all the pictorial elements of a narrative scene are assembled. According to Alberti, this assemblage works on two levels: first, when the stage is constructed with linear perspective, and second, when the stage is inhabited by acting figures. Certainly, bodies interact. The variety of body movements, attitudes, gestures, emotions and glances ensure that the characters both perform actions and show reactions. This also allows for representing events, more complex human interactions and relationships. And it is the scenario that unifies the three essential elements of any narrative: characters, locations and actions. *Istoria* is therefore the visual representation of a narrative, moreover, it is ‘preeminently a visual form of knowledge.’²²

The scenario Alberti offered was imaginary and the guidance he gave for *istoria* was purely theoretical. He wanted to avoid his theories being associated with any well-known compositions. This was emphasized by his references: to cite paintings, he turned to ekphrastic literature, mostly to Pliny the Elder’s *Historia Naturalis*. The majority his examples (except his sole contemporary point of reference, Giotto’s *Navicella*) did not exist and so were non-available for sight or inspection.²³ More than three centuries later, Lessing in his *Laocoön* follows the very same alienating strategy, evading concrete and particular painterly examples, examples that can be seen and against which the theory might be verified. However, Lessing, despite writing on the visual arts, was not really interested in them. But Alberti was. He planned buildings, sculpted portrait medals, and perhaps painted as well.²⁴ He would have met Brunelleschi and Donatello, and he probably collaborated with Mantegna. In

²⁰ Alberti, II 37, Grayson transl. 1991, 73.

²¹ Alberti, III 63, Grayson transl. 1991, 95.

²² Greenstein, 1992, 49.

²³ Greenstein’s thoughts on Alberti’s use of the theme of the ‘Calumny of Apelles’ support this idea: ‘Alberti’s description of Apelles’ painting was an adaptation, rather than a mere paraphrase, of Lucian’s *ekphrasis*. (...) Alberti thought that the invention would be even more powerful if the *historia* could be seen, and hence, tried to make his *ekphrasis* as visual as possible. (Greenstein, 1992, 54.)

²⁴ See Alessandro Parronchi’s study on Alberti’s oeuvre as a painter: Parronchi, 1962.

addition, he must have seen Masaccio's revolutionary *Trinitá* fresco in Santa Maria Novella completed less than a decade earlier by the time he returned from Rome to Florence in 1434. Or, if the *Trinitá* did not present enough actions in its *istoria*, there were the frescoes of the Brancacci Chapel by Masolino and Masaccio in Santa Maria del Carmine in Florence (Figure 4). However, he did not refer to any of them in *Della Pittura*. It is probably his faithfulness to his mathematical source that made him keep his distance to real imagery. Euclid was the first in the history of mathematics who, when writing about points, lines and surfaces, did not actually refer to real, recognizable elements of the three-dimensional world, but used them as abstract entities. Although not revealing the entire process in detail, in Book I Alberti gave technical instructions for constructing pictorial space, the prerequisite for *istoria*,²⁵ yet in Book II he himself adhered to strict abstraction by designing ideal scenarios. These scenarios might have carried narratives (war scenes, mythological scenes, etc.),²⁶ or might have contained narrative elements, but only general principles, such as variety and decorum, were prescribed to be necessarily followed in their design.

ALBERTI'S SIGNIFICANCE

Alberti's notion of *istoria* had three characteristics which, later, would become significant for the understanding of narrative pictures. First, Alberti's idea that creating a scenario is the highest purpose of painting influenced the hierarchy of artistic subjects or genres developed in the Academies. For example, in the French Academy, the two most important subjects were history painting and religious painting, both relying heavily on such scenarios.

Second, Alberti regarded movements as pictorial elements which convey narrative meaning. Moving bodies in a scenario are either acting or reacting bodies, or bodies expressing feelings or emotions. This happened to be an extremely progressive idea. In art history, Ernst H. Gombrich and Rudolf Arnheim studied movements as expressions of narrative events, furthermore, semioticians have found narratives even in abstract paintings. Both Gombrich's and Arnheim's ideas, and the notion of abstract narratives, will be examined later in this thesis. Alberti's requirement of variability made the depicted movements unavoidable in rendering different reactions given on the very same event in a visually interpreted tale. The scale of such reactions, expressed by movements in Poussin's *Gathering the Manna*, would set off a whole academic debate, to be discussed presently in connection with Le Brun's ideas about visual storytelling.

Third, Alberti lays stress on the coherence of forms (both on a spatial coherence and in terms of figures and their representation), but never on temporal coherence. The possible reasons for this will be

²⁵ Alberti's mediatory position in explaining the construction of the linear perspective is formulated by Martin Kemp: 'Alberti was, to adapt his own words, demonstrating the basic 'roots in nature', which he was then happy 'to place in the hands of artists'.' (Kemp, 1990, 24.)

²⁶ See Greenstein for further details. Greenstein 1992, 47-52.

examined within the discussion of painterly anachronisms in Chapter Six. However, the lack of any requirements for temporal coherence is a perfect indicator that temporal and spatial qualities were not given the same emphasis in Renaissance painting. While central perspective unified pictorial spaces, it did not necessarily entail unified temporal solutions. On the contrary, complex architectural settings made possible the accommodation of many episodes of the story, often with a repetition of the heroes. Indeed, the fifteenth century experienced a huge peak in the production of images showing continuous narration, a narrative mode that, in its present definition, denotes visual tales told by the repetition of figures.²⁷ The flourishing of the continuous narrative mode in painting is just one example of the great freedom that can be seen in temporal rendering within the visually interpreted, and often reinterpreted stories of the Renaissance. Another example is anachronism, which this thesis will focus on in detail in a later section. The requirement that pictorial narratives should be temporally coherent was formulated only by the late sixteenth century. However, it was only by the time that they became so important, in the eighteenth century, that these requirements became one of the central issues of aesthetics.

The Albertian notion of *istoria* was a powerful idea that combined the technical skills of perspective with intellectual knowledge in order to create scenarios for depicting events and narratives in the Renaissance. *Istoria* was a potential theoretical model for an imaginary narrative painting. Alberti's ambitious theory raised important questions about how visual stories should be rendered in a coherent pictorial space. It also had great impact on the answers to these questions given by his successors.

THEORIES ON MOMENT AND NARRATION IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

If Alberti's *istoria* is the key word for understanding the scenario-type narratives of the Renaissance, it is the 'moment' that was most frequently referred to by early modern theorists on visual narratives. This shift indeed characterized the broader interests of these theoreticians. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, narratives were studied in relation to a newly rediscovered phenomenon, time. It is beyond the aim of the present thesis to find the reasons for this shift, however, it is certainly true that it was influenced a great deal by new technologies developed within clock making. Small portable clocks for personal use appeared from the end of the fifteenth century but were rare for a long time, and it was only at the end of the seventeenth century when portable clocks could be fitted with minute hands.²⁸ Being able to measure the minutes and other, similar new technologies fundamentally changed how Europeans experienced actual time and thus how they conceived of the general phenomenon of time. Accordingly, the moment, in various ways, became a core element in these theories.

²⁷ Lew Andrews' book focuses on the phenomenon of continuous narration in Renaissance painting: Andrews, 1995.

²⁸ Prékopa, 2009.

Following the Renaissance period, the issue of time and pictorial narration were investigated under the broad category of *ut pictura poesis*.²⁹ During the seventeenth century, in this general theoretical debate, two rather different views manifested themselves, as Francis H. Dowley has shown. One view emphasized the fundamental dichotomy of the sister arts (as in Castelvetro or Franciscus Junius), the other had them as almost interchangeable (for example, Giovanni Battista Marino and Charles Alphonse Dufresnoy).³⁰ Those who argued for the differences between the two arts of poetry and painting contrasted how they conveyed time and temporal succession. A new idea emerged, albeit with its roots in the Aristotelian triple rule of unities; the trecento and quattrocento ways of depicting narratives were no longer deemed acceptable. This new idea, also based on drama theory, was properly formulated by Henri Testelin in 1675. He demanded that visual narratives should be reduced to a single instant, shown in a particular space and focusing on a single action. The key device for achieving this demand was the concept of the significant moment. Dowley enumerated the different theoretical views on how the significant moment can be achieved. For example, Giovanni Pietro Bellori gave an account of how, in one of Maratti's paintings, the painter, illustrating an Ovidian story, depicted the climatic moment, which actually encompassed the entire plot with prior and later incidents too.³¹

Lord Shaftesbury raised the question of the best painterly choice of the possible moments in the process of constructing an ideal composition when illustrating a written story.³² Shaftesbury's advice was to choose the most significant point, a 'single Instant', the real climax of the narrative. Dowley noted that there were two essential criteria for such a selection: first, 'it should be a moment of directed, but not final, action', and second, 'it should be internal and psychological, not external and physical'.³³ However, just as in Bellori, the climactic high-point in Shaftesbury's argument anticipates the next moment and refers backwards to earlier stages.³⁴ What was inconceivable was the visual doubling of such instants. In practice, this meant a suppression of the use of continuous narration, as Lew Andrews has noted: '[f]or Shaftesbury continuous narrative is the ultimate and absurd consequence of an approach to painting in which the unity of time and place is not strictly observed'.³⁵ For the purposes of the present argument, it is important to see that Shaftesbury, like Lessing, was formulating the current expectations for painters and not their real possibilities when rendering written stories. Gombrich has pointed out these ambiguities in Shaftesbury's views: 'Shaftesbury admits that this rigorous standard of

²⁹ On the *ut pictura poesis* debate see Rensselaer W. Lee's classic study (Lee, 1940.).

³⁰ Dowley, 1976, 317-318.

³¹ Dowley, 1976, 317-321

³² The story was the Choice of Hercules, published first as 'Le jugement d'Hercule' in 1712, and in English in 1714 as *Characteristicks of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (Dowley, 1976, 321-324, Gombrich, 1964, 293-294). For more detailed accounts of Shaftesbury's aesthetic theory in Steegman, 1950, Tuveson, 1953, Uphaus, 1969, Townsend, 1982, and Pestilli, 1993.

³³ Dowley, 1976, 322.

³⁴ Dowley, 1976, 323.

³⁵ Lew Andrews, 1995, 21.

instantaneous action is often sinned against.’³⁶ The ‘sin’ mentioned here is indeed the exploitation of the otherwise widely used visual devices, for example the practise of condensing several instants into one scene, or the use of flashbacks and foreflashes, ‘means, which are employ’d to call to mind *the Past*, we may anticipate *the Future...*’.³⁷ Shaftesbury turned to humans biology to explain those complex movements which call to mind both past and future moments: as the body may move slower than the mind, ‘more sprightly parts of the Body (such as the Eyes and Muscles about the Mouth and Forehead) taking the alarm, and moving in an instant, may leave the heavier and more distant parts to adjust themselves, and change their Attitude some moments after.’³⁸ Much later, Warman Welliver argued on the very same basis when he analysed the extremely complex bodily poses of the figures of Peter and Christ in Masaccio’s *Tribute Money*.³⁹ Recent investigation in neurosciences support these observations.

Poussin’s painterly solutions were the recurring objects of those theoretical investigations which focused on the choice of the right moments. Apart from Le Brun, who will be discussed presently because of his enormous influence, Jonathan Richardson the Elder, the Abbé Du Bos and Henry Fuseli all studied Poussin’s paintings as well.⁴⁰ Passionate debates centered around Poussin’s famous *The Israelites Gathering the Manna* (Figure 3) at the French Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture. Charles Le Brun, who had a fundamental role in developing the theories of the Academy, discussed the painting in detail in a lecture given in 1667.⁴¹ Le Brun was interested in the way Poussin applied the element of time in the narrative and in the variety of the reactions to the main event, the falling of the manna, detectable in the group of characters. Le Brun says, ‘[i]t is sometimes necessary to join together several incidents which have preceded in order to make comprehensible the subject that is being staged.’⁴² In Poussin’s painting the starving family in the foreground would be interpreted as a preceding phase, which is overcome by the miracle and used to contrast with the depicted later stages, evoked by displaying the joy of relief. Le Brun’s ideas and their meaning were discussed broadly. For example, Jacques Thuillier examined Poussin’s rejection of the unity of time and instead emphasised his ‘unity of subject’ and his concerns with emotional variety.⁴³ Louis Marin studied from a linguistic point of view the concept of ‘reading the painting’ that had already been mentioned by Poussin.⁴⁴ Thomas Puttfarken, who relied on Félibien’s texts, interpreted Poussin’s composition as ‘an example of

³⁶ Gombrich, 1964, 294. Apart from Shaftesbury, Gombrich discusses briefly the related ideas of Lessing and John Harris. Similar ambiguities can be found in Lessing’s writings, discussed in detail later in this chapter.

³⁷ Gombrich, 1964, 294.

³⁸ Gombrich, 1964, 294.

³⁹ Welliver, 1977.

⁴⁰ Dowley, 1976, 324-326.

⁴¹ Both Le Brun’s lecture and Poussin’s own letters on the subject are known through Félibien’s later publications. More on Le Brun’s lecture in Lee, 1940, 223-226, in Marin, 1988; on Le Brun and Félibien in Puttfarken 1985, Chapter I, especially 1-24. Roger de Piles’ ideas, who contrast with those of Le Brun in this debate, were studied in detail by Puttfarken, 1985. The most recent study on Poussin and the theories of his art, including those pertaining to narratives, is by Jonathan Unglaub (Unglaub, 2006.).

⁴² Quoted by Dowley, 1997, 330.

⁴³ Dowley, 1997, 332.

⁴⁴ Dowley, 1997, 334-344.

dramatic sequence', where the arrangement of the groups and their different reactions allow the beholder to construct a sequence of causal moments in the narrative.⁴⁵ Francis H. Dowley, while criticizing the three previously mentioned authors, argued that Poussin followed the idea of unity of time, that is, that in his painting the depicted groups were treated as simultaneous, but these groups could nevertheless be regarded as signs referring to past and future moments. 'Narrative in the present moment only becomes possible on the same canvas if certain figures or objects in the action also serve as appropriate signs of conditions at other times. Such a symbolic group would be the family starving while the manna is falling: the group becomes a symbolic reference to itself in a former condition.'⁴⁶ Without agreeing that narratives can operate only in the way Dowley understood them, or being convinced whether his separation of the past 'proper' and a mere sign of the past is helpful, it is important to see that both Le Brun, Félibien and modern scholars saw the variety of reactions in Poussin's painting as a kind of visual tool which could fundamentally contribute to the expansion of the narrative moment. The theories that depended on the idea of the temporal moment culminated in Lessing's ideas expressed in his famous treatise on the Laocoön statue.

PARADOXES IN LIMITATIONS IN LESSING'S *LAOCOÖN*

The previous section has demonstrated that, as in the case of Shaftesbury and Le Brun, the idea of the moment played a crucial role in the art theories of the seventeenth century. However, the requirement of the instantaneous painterly expression, along with the strict differentiation between poetry as the art of time and painting as the art of space, is generally treated as an idea originating from Lessing's *Laocoön* (1766). First formulated as requirements, the idea of the *punctum temporis* or *pregnant moment*,⁴⁷ and the notion of painting as spatial art, today are often referred to not as requirements but as describing the true possibilities of painting.

Although Lessing's strict differentiation and his time-space notions were regarded as restrictive polarizations and were already widely criticized by his contemporaries (for example by Johann Gottfried Herder) and more recently by W.J.T. Mitchell,⁴⁸ his ideas – or, rather, what we think his ideas are – have become commonplaces regarding visual narratives. In the argumentations that lead towards this restrictive view of the possibilities or even impossibilities of visual narratives, narratology has given Lessing a crucial role. Many scholars still, especially from literary criticism, regard Lessing as the ultimate reference, either by referring to him as an authority, or by relying on one of the famous quotes from his *Laocoön*, such as the one on the narrative potentials of images: '[t]he artist can never

⁴⁵ Dowley, 1997, 336.

⁴⁶ Dowley, 1997, 348.

⁴⁷ The view was foreshadowed by Shaftesbury in the *Characteristics* (1714), and first formulated by James Harris in his *Three Treatises* in 1744. (Nyíri, 2009, 12, and also Gombrich, 1964, 294.)

⁴⁸ Mitchell, 1984.

use more of ever-changing reality than one single moment of time and, if he is a painter, he can look at this moment only from one single aspect. But since their works exist not only to be seen but also to be contemplated, contemplated at length and repeatedly, it is clear that this single moment and single aspect must be the most fruitful of all that can be chosen'.⁴⁹ There is a tendency to commence an argument with Lessing's passage and, using his strong differentiation of the arts, claim that poetry is temporal and successive, while painting is spatial and simultaneous. The argument is then usually concluded with a statement along the lines of Werner Wolf: '[y]et, as G. E. Lessing already made clear in his *Laokoon*, in spite of the long-established tradition of speaking of 'narrative pictures' the pictorial medium offers considerable resistance to narrativity',⁵⁰ and 'the question as to whether a work of the basically non-temporal visual arts can be called narrative',⁵¹ or, as Wendy Steiner formulated, '[t]he inability of painting to include temporally or logically distinct moments is, of course, the basis of Lessing's distinction between the spatial and the temporal arts (*Laocoön*).'⁵² Lessing's famous distinction between poetry and painting therefore still plays a significant role in the study of visual narratives, especially when the visual is regarded as less capable when compared to the verbal.⁵³

In the background of this 'resistance' stands the question, whether images can represent only a single moment of action. From the point of view of narratology, the answer is usually yes, as it is generally assumed that images can only show one moment of a story and that they do this in the manner of a photographic still image. From the point of view of art history, one image is enough to disprove this idea (although it has, in fact, been done several times). Masaccio's *Tribute Money* (Figure 4) depicts three episodes in one scene. The conversation of Jesus and Peter about the tax collector's request is shown in the middle as the main scene. On the left, Peter is extracting the coin and on the right he is giving it to the tax collector. Warman Welliver has demonstrated that, in the gestures and poses of Peter and Jesus, in the main scene there unfolds seven consecutive moments or phases of the story.⁵⁴ Since disproving does not mean persuading, the idea that images cannot visualize narratives in a 'proper way' is still recycled extensively even in such prestigious recent publications as the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*.⁵⁵ It is this omnipresent rejection that has induced me to coin the phrase 'one-moment syndrome'. In my view, the ambiguous relationship of art history and narratology

⁴⁹ Lessing, III, quoted in Gombrich, 1964, 295. (Lessing, 1984, 19.)

⁵⁰ Wolf, 2005, 431.

⁵¹ Wolf, 2003, 189.

⁵² Steiner, 2004, 145.

⁵³ Following Lessing's distinctions, the usual accusations levelled at pictures are: 'being static', 'excluding time components', or 'being purely spatial'. McClain's sentence is typical: 'Lessing meant that the visual arts are essentially spatial and simultaneous whereas literature is temporal and successive.' (McClain. 1985, 41). Apart from Werner Wolf and Wendy Steiner, there are scholars whose argumentation relies on or refers to this distinction (for example Bryson, 1988, 183.). There are a very few who understand that Lessing's distinctions are mere requirements not absolute rules (Andrews, 1995, 20.), and there are some who see the need for surpassing Lessing's categories, for example Baetens, 2005, 236; and Nánay, 2009, 122.

⁵⁴ Welliver, 1977, 51-53.

⁵⁵ See, for example, Wolf, 2005, as quoted above.

is reflected today in such argumentations, and, more generally, in the repeated incantation of Lessing's *dicta*.

In order to question the commonplaces assigned to Lessing, first the relevance of his aesthetics to painting, second his strong differentiation of the genres of poetry and painting, and third the conception of painting as a non-temporal art, I would suggest now re-reading his famous *Laocoön* from the point of view of visual narratives. First, I will show that, apart from being unbalanced, Lessing's strict notions of time and space form part of his rhetorical style, and, in any case, the meanings of these terms change throughout the essay; then I will examine the treatment of visual narratives in the *Laocoön*, and will specify their place in the hierarchy of the genres. In my view, Lessing is setting up a frame for what should be conceived as 'good manners' in art, serving to satisfy the criteria of *decorum*, rather really exploring the true possibilities open to visual storytellers. Thus, this section of the thesis does not aim to disprove Lessing's ideas, but does criticise their interpretation and reception.

LESSING'S POSITION

Lessing's *Laokoon oder Über die Grenzen der Malerei und Poesie* was published in 1766 in Berlin. The main purpose of the book was to comment on current debates concerning various issues in aesthetics in eighteenth-century Europe: that of the *paragone*, by addressing the hierarchy of the artistic genres; the notion of *ut pictura poesis* by determining the proper limits of poetry and painting; the debate on the nature of artistic expression by questioning the exact moment represented by the *Laocoön* group; and certain more specific issues concerning the ancient statue, such as its source of inspiration (whether it was based on Virgil's famous description of the same story in the *Aeniad*), and determining the correct date and period of the statue.

The starting point for Lessing in his essay was a classical Greek statue, the *Laocoön* group (Figure 5). Lessing had good reasons for this choice. It was a highly admired artwork from classical antiquity, and from its discovery in 1506 onwards, it was widely known and esteemed. It was a highly prestigious piece, whose importance matched Lessing's own ambitions. Thanks to Pliny who referred to the work as 'of all paintings and sculptures, the most worthy of admiration',⁵⁶ it was regarded as the greatest masterpiece next to the Apollo Belvedere. Indeed, Goethe, in his essay *Über Laokoon*, used this statue to characterize the true masterpiece of art thus extending its fame for centuries. In addition, the *Laocoön* group had already been discussed a decade earlier by Johann Joachim Winckelmann, to whom Lessing was responding.⁵⁷ And above all, it was a narrative piece. Lessing could have chosen one of several other famous ancient statues: the *Belvedere Torso*, the *Medici Venus*, the *Farnese*

⁵⁶ Quoted in Haskell and Penny, 1981, 243.

⁵⁷ Winckelmann addressed the question in two places: Johann Joachim Winckelmann: *Gedancken über die Nachahmung der Griechischen Werke in der Mahlerey und Bildhauer-Kunst*, 1755, *Geschichte der Kunst des Alterthums*, 1764.

Hercules, the *Dying Gladiator*, or even the *Niobe Group*. Yet the story of the Trojan priest whose agony was the subject of the *Laocoön* group is one of the most frequently retold tales of ancient literature, thus providing a good basis for comparison. Even so, the group was admired ‘for the realism of the anatomy and physiognomy’, for ‘the variety of expression in the figures, one suffering, one dying, one moved by compassion’,⁵⁸ but never for its narrative qualities.

After its initial discovery, the *Laocoön* group was placed by Pope Julius II in the Belvedere courtyard in Rome, the most prestigious place that anyone could imagine at the time. Hundreds and thousands set off for an artistic pilgrimage to witness it. Many have seen it, but not Lessing. In 1755, he departed for a Grand Tour accompanying Johann Gottfried Winkler, but the Seven Years’ War forced them to return.⁵⁹ Up to the time when he wrote his essay, Lessing had not seen the original statue, nor any copies, only a few of the engravings that were circulating across Europe.

However, not this lack of an immediate and genuine response to the *Laocoön* is the reason why one would question Lessing’s relevance to the issues of painting and visual storytelling. Nor is it because seeing an artwork seems essential to writing about it, nor is it because, as Gombrich pointed out, Lessing himself, as a man of theatre, theology and philosophy, was not interested in the visual. But because much of his argument simply has nothing to do with painting or with pictures in general.

Lessing applied the category of the visual arts to cover both sculpture and painting. Although he emphasized he is going to compare poetry and painting, in the essay the relation of the verbal and visual is not balanced: the major part of the essay deals with literature in general, and with comparing it to that of the *Laocoön* group in particular. Painting only appears in his conclusions. According to Lessing, the criterion of a good story is that it cannot be illustrated. In contrast, the primary aim of a painting is to depict beautiful bodies in space and to invoke passion, thus eliciting sensuous rather than intellectual impulses – and the latter are inevitably needed for unfolding narratives. Like Alberti, Lessing refers to dozens of ancient painters but their works do not survive and were known to him only from their descriptions in Pliny, Pausanias and Philostratus. As opposed to Winckelmann, who frequently relied on painters of the Renaissance and Early Modern period, Lessing was not interested in more recent art and his references to his contemporaries are certainly deficient. He mentions only four ‘modern’ painters but none of their works are an object of a detailed analysis: they are the rather unknown Mazzuoli and Andrea Sacchi, the latter referred to ‘one of the greatest Italian painters’, Titian, and Pordenone. Significantly, all four of them carry negative connotation in the essay, and contradict the single moment rule set up as the only right way of depicting narratives. In narratology, Lessing’s general conclusions are invariably associated with Renaissance and post-Renaissance Western painting, which is seen as problematic and even inappropriate in the light of his sources and interests.

⁵⁸ Quoted in Haskell and Penny, 1981, 244.

⁵⁹ Fisher and Fox, 2004, 23.

Lessing was obsessed with clear categories. Strong differentiation of opposite or complementary notions is often discussed in his writings. For example, in 1755, with a friend Moses Mendelssohn, he anonymously published an essay where they ‘argue that poetry and philosophy represent two distinct modes of discourse, and that one cannot submit the former to the rules of the latter’.⁶⁰ In 1763 Lessing published an essay on Spinoza’s union of body and soul, arguing that ‘it is necessary to establish strict boundaries between the phenomenal and the noumenal realms, between the universe of objects we can perceive through the sense organs and the imperceptible, spiritual province’.⁶¹ His comedy, *Minna von Barnhelm*, whose premiere inaugurated the first German National theatre in Hamburg in 1767, ‘depicts a conflict between two strongly held positions: the ‘male’ insistence on honor, and the ‘female’ insistence on love’.⁶² And again, in the *Laocoön* there are passages operating with distinct and separate categories of poetry and painting or time and space, respectively. These passages might suggest that Lessing’s formal categories belong to a complete, well-elaborated and consistently logical system of thought. But they do not. The notions in the *Laocoön* are not strict at all. Lessing uses them as part of his rhetorical style, that is, as devices that take his argument further.

I will observe one pair of Lessing’s opposing categories here, namely painting and poetry. Throughout the essay, Lessing describes four significantly different points in their relationship. How this relationship shifts around is best illustrated by a sequence of quotations, whereby painting begins the competition from an inferior position, then reaches equality, and then finally overcomes poetry. At first, poetry, having a much broader realm, simply contains painting: ‘In some instances they force poetry into the narrower limits of painting; in others they allow painting to fill the whole wide sphere of poetry’.⁶³ And, ‘but if the lesser [i.e. painting] cannot contain the greater [i.e. poetry], it can itself be contained in the greater’.⁶⁴ Here Lessing actually gives the proper mathematical definition of a subset, stating that the set of poetry entirely contains the set of painting. From being the dominant and the oppressed, the relationship moves towards painting being part of the same family. With a malicious remark Lessing gives painting the role of the wicked little sister in the *ut pictura poesis* debate: ‘[i]f painting claims to be the younger sister of poetry, at least she should not be a jealous sister and should not deny the older one all those ornaments unbecoming to herself’.⁶⁵ However, when referring to an imaginary painting depicting the banquet of gods from the *Iliad*, Lessing suggests a healthy balance between the two genres: ‘Homer here is as inferior to the painter as the painter was beneath him

⁶⁰ Fisher and Fox, 2004, 27-28.

⁶¹ Prizer, 1994, 55.

⁶² Fisher and Fox, 2004, 27-28.

⁶³ Lessing, 1984, Foreword, 4-5.

⁶⁴ Lessing, 1984, VI, 40-41.

⁶⁵ Lessing, 1984, VIII, 54.

earlier'.⁶⁶ Thus painting and poetry, with their own advantages and limits, are on two sides of an equilibrium. Finally, Lessing admits that there are areas where painting overcomes poetry, and that the latter becomes mute and helpless without the power of the former: '[y]et what is this but an admission that language in itself is powerless here; that poetry falters and eloquence grows mute unless art serves as an interpreter in some degree?'⁶⁷

Lessing makes deductions of this kind, and sometimes even sharper ones, in numerous cases throughout the essay. His method is as follows: the argumentation begins by making a very strong first statement that implies the words 'all', 'always', or 'never' depending on the content. Once this firm statement has been accepted, there follows more subtle related claims, which do not necessarily come right after the first one but can often be found in later sections. The first claim is thus changed, eased or neutralized by the following ones, either by showing other aspects or characteristics of the notions or phenomena, or by declaring it as an exception or a subsidiary case. The last statement usually serves to relativize the problem in general or to contradict the initial statement.

An appropriate label for this method of argumentation may be *easing until contradicting*. Arguments can be framed either by formal logic or by rhetorical style. Analysed by formal logic, Lessing's third and fourth phase in the relationship of poetry and painting can be regarded as denials of the very first statement; together they are paradoxical and form a contradiction. However, paradoxes represent the utmost danger in logic. They mean that contradictory statements can be deduced from the system they are part of and, as such, the system is in itself meaningless. On the other hand, considering Lessing's passages from the point of view of rhetoric, they represent a device called the formal fallacy, which makes his deductions invalid. Thus, the argument does not imply anything about the premises or about the conclusion. Both the premises and the conclusion may be true in themselves, but no conclusion can be drawn from the premises. Hence, if one is to avoid a biased reading of a typical Lessingian feature of separation and discussion, he or she should not read the passages on strict distinctions without their relativizing counterparts.

Lessing probably had a twofold interest when applying this method. First, there was his personal interest. Not being a systematic thinker, for him the process of thinking and the beauty of method had greater importance than the actual outcome of an argumentation. As his biographers point out, 'Lessing suggests that just as language allows a multiplicity of significations, our multiple approaches to truth should coexist without hierarchy',⁶⁸ moreover, 'he believed in development through contradiction'.⁶⁹ Lessing himself emphasized this approach both by using the metaphor of a wanderer when looking at himself as an author⁷⁰ and by explicitly declaring that his approach is unsystematic:

⁶⁶ Lessing, 1984, XIII, 72.

⁶⁷ Lessing, 1984, XX, 110.

⁶⁸ Fisher and Fox, 2004, 35.

⁶⁹ Fisher and Fox, 2004, 14.

⁷⁰ 'I shall return now to my old path, if indeed a man who takes a stroll can be said to have one' (Lessing, 1984, XX, 104).

‘[my notes] were written as chance dictated and more in keeping with my reading than through any systematic development of general principles. Hence they are to be regarded more as unordered notes for a book than as a book itself’.⁷¹ Gombrich traced a rather strange attitude confessed by Lessing: ‘if my ideas satisfy me in the end, I tear the paper up; if not, I send it to the printers’.⁷² Lessing’s approach to thinking clearly coincides with the classical rules of rhetoric: according to Quintilian, the good rhetorical speech is committed, and a good speaker can see with the eyes of his opponent.⁷³ And this is exactly how Lessing deals with his subject.

The *easing until contradicting* type of argumentation might have had other justifications as well. Lessing as an author declared that the *Laocoön* was not intended to be read as a whole. The treatise offered knowledge constructed through juxtaposed pieces of thought, which, in themselves, were free-standing and uncontradicted. In this way, the *Laocoön* resembles the most famous and influential intellectual product of the era, the *Encyclopédie*, published in France from 1751. The *Encyclopédie* presented knowledge in the form of taxonomies, which, technically, were arranged into articles. This arrangement would come to determine the modernist attitude towards knowledge: a similar attitude can be traced, for example, in Mendeleev’s periodic table put together a century later. In short, Lessing’s attempt to clarify and purify categories fitted with the broader positivist trend. Probably this is why his ideas, and especially those on classification, have survived for so long in the period of modernism.

It is also worth noting that reading, as a human activity, was a different practice during Lessing’s lifetime, well before the internet-era. Rogier Chartier, when discussing the reading habits of the ancien régime, argued that:

A history of reading must not limit itself to the genealogy of our own contemporary manner of reading, in silence and using only our eyes; it must also (and perhaps above all) take on the task of retracing forgotten gestures and habits that have not existed for some time. The challenge matters because it reveals not only the distant foreignness of practices that were common long ago but also the specific structure of texts composed for uses that are not the uses of today’s readers of those same texts. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the reading style implicit in a text, literary or not, was still often an oralization of the text, and the ‘reader’ was an implicit auditor of a read discourse. The work, which was addressed to the ear as much as to the eye, plays with forms and procedures that subject writing to demands more appropriate to oral ‘performance’.⁷⁴

The specific structure of Lessing’s *Laocoön* and its method of argumentation too reminds us that the aim of his treatise was not necessarily to convince its readers with a coherent piece of writing as a whole, but to operate on a piecemeal level. Both the changing nature of the formal categories discussed by Lessing and the stream and structure of the text emphasizes this intention.

⁷¹ Lessing, 1984, Foreword, 5.

⁷² Quoted in Gombrich, 1957, 135.

⁷³ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria*, 7, 1, 4.

⁷⁴ Chartier, 1994, 8-9.

The question of narrative paintings is merely one side-issue addressed by Lessing alongside his main topics. Obviously, the word narrative is not mentioned in the essay: the author takes it for granted that the temporal aspects of images correspond to the story-time of the fable depicted. Lessing thus orchestrated a double offensive against visual narratives. First there is the general idea that images, being spatial, must necessarily lack temporal aspects. So their narrative possibilities are questioned on the basis of their 'atemporality'. Second, by prescribing beauty as a supreme law to be followed, Lessing leaves no place for the real depiction of actions.

The differentiation of temporal and spatial arts is another pair of notions usually conceived strictly yet handled loosely in Lessing's essay. *Decorum*, the principle of appropriateness, was applied both for art and for general morality. Thus, the limitations of painting as spatial art are defined by the requirements of good behaviour: painting is expected not to be a 'jealous sister', or a 'mute poem', there should be no attempts to move outside its borders, and certainly this should not be done 'without actually knowing what it could and ought to paint'.⁷⁵ Thus, painting 'must renounce the element of time entirely, progressive actions, by the very fact that they are progressive, cannot be considered to belong among its subjects'.⁷⁶ W.J.T. Mitchell has pointed out Lessing's unbalanced relation of time and space in painting and regarded Lessing's ideas as driven by the 'argument from desire', as opposed to the 'argumentation from necessity'. This argumentation would set forth the natural rather than the artificial limits for the two genres, and it aims to see the verbal as superior to the visual. Mitchell concludes that 'there would be no need to say that the genres should not be mixed if they could not be mixed.'⁷⁷

On the other hand, according to Lessing, the main role of painting is to promote, or be the bearer of sensuous pleasure by depicting bodies and by no means should it activate the intellectual part of the brain, as thinking extinguishes desire. However, visual narratives do require this 'laborious reflection and guessing' that Lessing tried to avoid – namely, *thinking* in the form of recognizing the subject, unfolding the story, clarifying the word-image relations, relating the subject to the present time or situation, etc. Bodies, represented in painting, may thus be much more than agents of beauty, but they can convey actions as well. Even so, by attacking both religious and historical painting, Lessing leaves no place for visual narratives. Religious painting is rejected as art since it was not made under the new criterion of *l'art pour l'art*. Paintings illustrating historical subjects are also rejected, now because of the supremacy of literature and due to incompetent beholders, and because it may jeopardize Lessing's supreme law for painting, the idea of pleasure gained from depicted beauties. By assigning

⁷⁵ Lessing, 1984, Foreword, 5.

⁷⁶ Lessing, 1984, XV, 76-77.

⁷⁷ Mitchell, 1984, 105.

beauty as the utmost requirement, Lessing simply ignore both the genre of history and religious painting, which had the two highest rank from the Renaissance to the nineteenth century.

Strangely enough, for Lessing ignoring does not mean not knowing or not offering help in improving: one can still find a few pieces of good advice in the essay on how to make a visual narrative work more effectively. Treating a well-known subject, and doing it with invention and originality, might well improve painterly expression. Besides, in addition to the *pregnant moment* generally conceived as Lessing's principal recommendation on painterly storytelling, Lessing mentions five other methods for rendering narratives in the visual arts, all of them being more complex than the *punctum temporis*. Although regarding them as mistakes, Lessing himself admits that these narrative-temporal techniques may increase and enrich painterly expression when the painter's ultimate job is to bring the expression to perfection.⁷⁸ The types are: (1) showing a condition, an episode or a moment with reference to the previous and/or following moments as precedents and/or consequences; (2) extending the moment of the main action; (3) showing two consecutive episodes of a story regardless of whether these episodes are close or distant in time; (4) showing an entire story with its several episodes; (5) showing simultaneous episodes separated by spatial elements.

In order to demonstrate conclusively that Lessing had a rather paradoxical approach to the limitations of painting, one more quotation from the *Laocoön* will be juxtaposed to the one this section began with, the one claiming that depicting a single moment from a single aspect is the only possibility for a narrative painting. This is to prove that, in narrative imagery, the recommendation of the *pregnant moment* is merely desirable, not a naturally existing rule and that it does not concern the real potential of narrative pictures but the artificially determined borders of the genre of painting. 'To support this I will not cite the fact that in great historical paintings the single moment *is always somewhat extended*, and that perhaps there is *not a single work* comprising a wealth of figures in which each one of them is in exactly that motion and position it should be in at the moment of the main action; some are represented in the attitude of a somewhat earlier, others in that of a somewhat later moment'.⁷⁹

Despite all of this, Lessing's ideas are still cited as simplified yet authoritative commonplaces in current scholarly writings on narrative imagery. Michel de Certeau was right when he said: 'the text has a meaning only through its readers; it changes along with them'.⁸⁰ Those scholars who would still consider Lessing's ideas to be rigorous and stable would be better off by imitating painters, who in the past commonly ignored prescriptions such as Lessing's. These might have made their art decent but that seems not to have been their aim; instead it was to make paintings, including narrative pictures, more potent.

⁷⁸ Lessing, 1984, XVIII, 91-92.

⁷⁹ Lessing, 1984, XVIII, 91-92, my italics.

⁸⁰ Quoted in Chartier, 1994, 2.

Chapter 2 Modern Theories of Visual Narration I

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose behind this chapter is to excavate two traditions of writing about visual narratives. These traditions developed across the twentieth century and had their roots in the earlier periods discussed in the previous chapter. The first of these traditions is embedded in writings about distinct art-historical periods whilst the other is more general, pertaining to the qualities of narrative generally rather than to particular moments in time. The point of this is twofold. First, the aim is to showcase the considerable, albeit somewhat piece-meal achievements of art historians in developing an understanding of how visual narratives work. In a way, what follows is not a historiography as such, but rather an inventory of important but relatively unknown insights about pictorial storytelling. The second aim is to build a firm foundation for the second half of the present thesis, which seeks to expand further our understanding of how to approach visual narratives.

THE ORIGINS AND EARLY DEVELOPMENTS OF IDEAS ABOUT PICTORIAL NARRATION

The foundations of modern scholarly research on visual storytelling were laid in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Over the twentieth century, two essentially different approaches to the study of visual narratives has emerged within art history.

Scholarly interest in visual storytelling arose in the same cultural circle. The first analyses of pictorial narration were undertaken by a generation of German-speaking Formalist or Vienna-School art historians such as Carl Robert, Franz Wickhoff and Alois Riegl. Their research concerned the mythological representations in ancient Greek and Roman art, the periods still most often studied for its visual narratives. Later, medievalists, byzantinists and classical archaeologists would also study visual storytelling, primarily in book illustration and vase paintings. Their approaches emerged from the need to understand how artefacts that belong to particular periods or geographical areas operate when they are presenting narratives. The method these scholars followed was inductive: general conclusions about narrativity were generated from a close and careful observation of certain groups of artefacts. As it was mostly pursued within a Formalist framework, it was to a great extent the work of the eyes. These initial inquiries were deliberately meant to establish a frame and foundation for narrative research, and were concerned with fundamental questions and issues still current and valid today. The topics art historians have been engaged with are: the characteristics of visual narration in different periods and geographical areas, the different narrative strategies and questions of classification of narrative images,

the evolution of narrative types and their possible role in the formation of styles of certain artistic periods and cultures, the relationship between visual and verbal narratives in general, and especially between an artwork and its literary source, and, finally, various general theoretical concepts pertaining to narration, including basic terminology.

At this point, it is pertinent to quote a passage from Wolfgang Kemp, a passage which, in some ways, was the starting point of the present inquiry. Here, Kemp is calling attention to the early contributions of art historians to narrative research in general and suggests their wide range of interest and activity in this topic. Furthermore, he points out the subsequently lost dominance of art history, as well as the consequences of the decline of interest.

In this context, I would like to expand on one contribution made by art history. At the turn of the century, the analysis of pictorial narratives was much farther advanced than that of literary narratives. The archaeologists Franz Wickhoff and Carl Robert, and the art historians August Schmarsow and Dagobert Frey (the latter in the 1920s), concentrated on narrative form: i.e., the formation of narrative units, and the way in which pictorial narrative deals with the issue of time-lapse and narrated time – distinguishing, continuing, completing (Wickhoff), cyclic sequence and cyclic linkage (Schmarsow), and so on. At which point, art history rested on its laurels and largely missed out on the rise of structuralism and of hermeneutic approaches. This unfortunate state of affairs has tended to obscure the fact that Alois Riegl, in his last work (published in 1902 under the title *Das holländische Gruppenporträt*), had laid the foundations of a method of analysis that was to be revived from the 1970s onward in the discipline of film studies, with the use of such terms as diegesis, gaze structure, and “scopic regime” (Metz).¹

Wolfgang Kemp’s critical words about the ‘unfortunate state of affairs’ in a discipline which has been resting on its laurels sadly still seem to be true. This is true not only regarding research on visual narratives but also on the historiography of that research. The writings of the scholars mentioned by Kemp are rather inaccessible. They were originally published in German and very little has been republished or translated. Furthermore, there are practically no later studies that set out to focus on their progressive ideas. Thus, very little is known about this early research. The archaeologist Carl Robert elaborated the basic terminology in his *Die Entwicklung des griechischen Mythos in Kunst und Poesie* published in 1881 when he was a professor in Berlin. Robert was ‘the first scholar to discuss illustration directly’.² Kemp has at least written a short section on Alois Riegl and his ideas on narratives.³ Also a member of the Vienna School, but of a later generation, Dagobert Frey compared the successivity of Gothic art with the simultaneity of the Renaissance (*Gotik und Renaissance: als Grundlagen der modernen Weltanschauung*, 1929). Lessing was, quite naturally, of interest to these early scholars, demonstrated by the fact that August Schmarsow, chair of the art history department at Leipzig University, wrote a commentary on the *Laocoön* in 1907.⁴

¹ Kemp, 1996, 71-72.

² Lavin, 1990, 1. Carl Robert is mentioned in Stansbury-O’Donnell, 1999, 1-3.

³ Kemp 1999, 38-50.

⁴ Schmarsow, 1907.

Although this new interest in visual narratives was to continue across the twentieth century, the early initiatives spearheaded by the Vienna School remained isolated attempts and had little influence on the later development of art history, and had even less impact outside the field. The possible reason for that is because these scholars focused on areas of art history at that time conceived as rather peripheral (for example Roman sarcophagi, Early Christian codex illumination, Netherlandish group portraits). More importantly, however, because a paradigmatic change in the field took place through the introduction of the method of iconography. From amongst those scholars listed by Wolfgang Kemp, the present thesis will focus in detail on Franz Wickhoff's theories. This is because his ideas on the role and function of visual narratives are very significant in the broader historical context, and because they set off an enduring interest in typology-making.

There was, however, another tendency in art history over the century, a tendency which saw narratives as abstract products or idioms of visual language. Here storytelling is a more universal phenomenon, present in the visual realm regardless of art-historical periods and geographical areas. Here, narratives are conveyed through compositional elements and the movements of figures within images. Movement, as an abstract form of narration in visual language, had also been analysed at an early stage of research by Paul Souriau (1889). Later, in the view of Rudolf Arnheim and Ernst H. Gombrich, the phenomenon of narration exposes itself through the temporal aspects of images and is studied in relation to human perception. These initiatives will be the focus of the next chapter of the present thesis. It should be noted here that the two major trends in the research on visual narratives began nearly at the same time, that is, at the end of the nineteenth century, and they ran in two parallel flows throughout the next century. Although many other art historians have dealt with visual narratives, their studies were not systematic. One might have the feeling that their interest arose only when they stumbled upon the theme of narration and could not avoid dealing with it. Such studies, forming a significant body of the more recent scholarship, are often grounded on the most accessible rather than the most appropriate past achievements.

In keeping with this, rough outlines of the historiography can be found in some later studies. Kurt Weitzmann's book was the first which was definitely built upon earlier accounts of narratives and aimed at the further refinement of the already existing terminology.⁵ Meyboom investigated the origins and the evolution of narrative representations in Greek art. He gave the first full account of the Carl Robert – Franz Wickhoff – Kurt Weitzmann evolutionary line in narrative typology, whilst also refining their four basic types.⁶ Later, Marilyn Aronberg Lavin would offer a brief review of ideas on the function of narrative cycles and on the earlier discussions of storytelling in the visual arts, which includes the thought of Lessing, Carl Robert, Wickhoff and Weitzmann, and also refers to the first few important conferences on the topic.⁷ Jutta Karpf, in her study of medieval narrative cycles, relies on the

⁵ Weitzmann reviewed the achievements of Carl Robert and Wickhoff: Weitzmann, 1947, 12-36.

⁶ Meyboom, 1978.

⁷ Lavin, 1990, 1-3.

ideas of Wickhoff, Weitzmann, and other Formalists such as Wölfflin and Dagobert Frey, and on the more recent studies by Gombrich and Wolfgang Kemp. Her excellent and extremely useful introduction has nevertheless remained rather unknown, most probably because it was published in German.⁸ Shapiro also pays homage to Carl Robert's pioneering study on narrative literature and art as corresponding fields.⁹ Most recently Stansbury-O'Donnell reviewed briefly those aspects of the research which are important in the context of the ancient Greek and Roman art.¹⁰

Whereas a study of the complete historiography of research on visual narratives would grow well beyond the objectives of the present thesis, the target the thesis tries to achieve is to give a general outline of the major figures and approaches in order to convince its readers why, at present, the expansion of both the methods deployed and the questions raised in relation to research on narrative imagery is so necessary.

FRANZ WICKHOFF AND THE BEGINNING OF MODERN RESEARCH

Narratologists often accuse art history of not being able to develop a theory for visual narratives. However, whilst not as rich as the those elaborated for literature and film, art history has actually produced theoretical frameworks for the study of story-telling images. At the time of the foundations of the tradition, already in the late nineteenth century, the theory of Franz Wickhoff was the most interesting. Wickhoff was unique in having a creative, even visionary approach to narratives. He was studying different types of pictorial narration, and, on this basis, gave an extremely significant role to so-called continuous narrative type in the formation of artistic styles. Since then, no one has seen narratives as being such an important feature in the history of art. Accordingly, the present section offers a brief exposition of Wickhoff's terminology and argumentation, it also concentrates on the context and nature of his work alongside consideration to the concept of process in his theory, and his reception, and finally, it will outline subsequent research on the typology-making in relation to narrative images, an issue set off by Wickhoff's questions.

WICKHOFF'S TERMINOLOGY AND ARGUMENTATION

A founder of the Vienna School, the Formalist Franz Wickhoff is generally acknowledged as the art historian who, with his colleague Alois Riegl, was reevaluating periods of art such as the Late Roman and Early Christian, that, – driven by the idea of classicism –, were at that time considered as decadent. The late nineteenth century was, more generally, a moment when art historians dared to have ambitious

⁸ Karpf, 1994, 9-20.

⁹ Shapiro, 1994, 1-10.

¹⁰ Stansbury-O'Donnell, 1999, 1-8.

projects. Amongst other things, they tried to answer why art, as a universal phenomenon, might be subject to change and what might cause such changes. Wickhoff's theory was part of this general tendency. However, due to the fact that the historiography of the study of visual narratives is rather neglected, Wickhoff's important contributions here are much less known.

In 1895 Wickhoff published *Die Wiener Genesis* with Wilhelm Ritter von Härtel. Shortly after the book was translated into English, and published in London in 1900 under the title *Roman Art: Some of Its Principles and Their Application to Early Christian Painting*. Its new title covered more precisely the subject discussed in it. Wickhoff's main purpose was to understand the transition from Late Roman to Early Christian art, not through its social context, nor from its history or literature, but through its style and visual language. Methods of pictorial narration were studied as part of the latter.

Three different principles of narration were distinguished in Wickhoff's theory. These were elaborated on the basis of stories represented in ancient vase painting, and in reliefs and book illumination.

(1) The first model is the *complementary method*. Here the main hero appears without repetition. Narrative complexity is achieved through the presence of other episodes, actions, or signs that happen before or after the central action. The beholder is expected to read the artwork as a puzzle by relating all the details to the main action. As Wickhoff said: 'in order to bring out the totality of the event in question we are shown its preparatory stages as if by a retrogression from the main point.'¹¹

(2) The second, the *isolated method*, shows more scenes from a story. Each captures a scene using only single, isolated moments, but the scenes are distinguished from each other. This isolation, for Wickhoff, was not simply a compositional differentiation to isolate scenes by frames, but rather it was interpreted in a narratological sense, as involving gaps or jumps in the depicted storyline. Here the scenes can be viewed as multiple snapshots.¹²

(3) The third and most significant method, *continuous narration*, was defined through a study of the most outstanding of Roman reliefs, Traian's column. Images and reliefs belonging to this type show episodes of a story without separating boundary lines and without division of the background. Here the scenes run 'smoothly and unbroken, one into another, just as during a river voyage the landscape of the banks seems to glide before our eyes.'¹³

The methods Wickhoff defined were not only abstract elements of the grammar of visual narratives, but were also located in a specific historical, geographical and cultural context. Indeed, they were seen as forming three different stages of an evolutionary process. The first, the complementary type belonged to what Wickhoff called 'Asiatic and Oriental art', including Egyptian imagery; the isolated method was adopted by the ancient Greeks, and the continuous method was the innovation of the Romans and was later perfected by Early Christians. Wickhoff, in his evolutionary scheme,

¹¹ Wickhoff, 1990, 14.

¹² Wickhoff, 1900, 13, and footnote on page 16.

¹³ Wickhoff, 1900, 8.

followed the Hegelian developmental model of the three stages in art, where the symbolic form belonged to pre-Greek art, the classic to Greco-Roman, and the romantic to Christian art. In addition, Wickhoff's model corresponded to that of his fellow Vienna School art historian, Alois Riegl, who also contributed to the study of pictorial narration in his lengthy work on Dutch group portraiture.¹⁴

Nevertheless, in the *Wiener Genesis* Wickhoff did not create a full or consistent typology for narrative images. He created a typology of progression that reached its evolutionary summit in continuous narrative, the method that concluded the evolution. The principle of continuous narration was, moreover, embedded in a specific argument, in which Wickhoff intended to claim a legitimacy for Late Roman and Early Christian art. His argumentation ran as follows.

From Vasari onwards, the refined taste of connoisseurs especially esteemed two periods of art which were seen as zeniths, ancient Greece, and its putative rebirth, the Italian Renaissance. Periods labelled as 'late' or 'early' were necessary supplements to these 'peaks'; between them were placed those transitory periods where a metamorphosis in style took place. While accepting that fluctuations may happen in the quality of artistic productions, Wickhoff's argumentation was meant to refute the idea of devaluation of the 'transitory' periods. The method of continuous narration was represented as a new invention generated in Late Roman art. By referring to the major artworks of the Roman period, Wickhoff was asserting on parallel artistic forms, comparing the new method with absolutely well known and appreciated reference points. The strategy of raising the appraisal of continuous narration was very much needed, as this type, along with others that did not satisfy the Aristotelian triple unity of time, space and action, was strongly rejected by the eighteenth-century Academicians, which instead, highly recommended the exclusive use of the *punctum temporis*, the type described today as a momentary snapshot.

One of Wickhoff's absolute reference points was the vaulted ceiling, then regarded as a unique form of perfection in architecture. It also symbolized the achievement with which the Romans had allegedly surpassed Hellenistic art. For example, both the Pantheon and the Basilica of Maxentius in Rome were roofed in this way. According to Wickhoff, the artistic problem of the vaulted ceiling engaged architects for fifteen centuries afterwards, until finally the High Renaissance gave it a complete solution in Michelangelo's dome of St Peters. Wickhoff regarded the method of continuous narration as a parallel phenomenon, one also introduced by the Romans. This was the method adapted for the portrayal of Christian themes and it dominated pictorial narration across the very same centuries that the problem of the vaulted ceiling occupied architects. Repeated references to Michelangelo – who used this method of narration in his frescoes in the Cappella Sistina, not by mistake as early aesthetes thought but because he had, as Wickhoff said, 'nothing better to put in its place'¹⁵ – cast equal glory on both phenomena and effectively validated this method of pictorial narration.

¹⁴ Kemp, 1998, 184.

¹⁵ Wickhoff, 1900, 11.

Wickhoff designated another route of promoting continuous narration. He argued that it was a consequence of illusionism, a technique which, in Wickhoff's view, had perfected Roman portraiture. According to his argument, continuous narrative, earlier regarded by Philostratus as an innovation developed on the reliefs of sarcophagi, had actually been a general method of painting. Consequently, Wickhoff claimed this method to be glorifying Roman art in general.

THE ROLE OF PROCESS IN THE METHOD OF NARRATION

The main idea that lies behind Wickhoff's approach is the concept of process. This notion was included in his definition of continuous narration, which, as shown above, relied on the metaphor of a journey, a river voyage. The notion of process was fundamental for Wickhoff, both in creating his developmental model of narrative principles and for his understanding of the aesthetic perception of a narrative work of art. This idea appeared in the change of artistic style as well. It is worth quoting at length from Wickhoff's the passage on Traian's column, since it describes very well the impression on the beholder given by a veritable crescendo of directed repetition, when he or she follows the events of the war that lead up to victory:

Twenty-three times does the Emperor appear in the representation of this campaign, and if we follow the twenty-three windings of the column's spiral, we find that he comes in more than ninety times, so that on some windings he occurs more than four times. This repetition is far from wearisome. If we wind round and round the pillar, or, as we men of books are content to do, turn over Fröhner's plates, and have once grasped how Trajan is present everywhere, decides everything, orders everything, and sees his orders carried out, takes every kind of toil upon himself, and then in the triumph of victory becomes the centre of all homage – nay, so soon as we even begin to grasp this, all accessory interest shrinks before the interest in *him* everywhere; wherever war is going on we want to know what he is doing, and in every fresh event we are dissatisfied till we have found out his striking person. The method of constant repetition, though to the reflective faculty it may seem to break up artistic unity, excites the imagination of the spectator who, after following his hero through so many dangers and finally seeing him gain the great end of his labours, the subjugation of Dacia, carries back the impression that he has really been through the campaign at the Emperor's side.¹⁶

It is important to see, first, that here the notion of process reflects the changing points of view offered by early cinematic experiences, and second, that Wickhoff describes the perception of the story in Traian's column as akin to an illustrated book. In *situ*, the column actually does not reveal the story in this manner because the upper parts simply cannot be seen.

Wickhoff's dependence on the notion of process preceded the importance of the very same notion in Formalist art history as pioneered by the Vienna School. The early Formalists promoted *Kunstwissenschaft*, that is, art history as an independent discipline. They were the first to develop new methods to obtain and study knowledge available in visual form, methods independent of those of history and literature. To further this aim, the leading figure of the period, Heinrich Wölfflin, published

¹⁶ Wickhoff, 1900, 112-113.

The Principles of Art History: The Problem of the Development of Style in Later Art in 1915. In it, he introduced two new concepts, the painterly and the linear, which he saw as fundamentally opposing characteristics of the Baroque and Renaissance art.

The notion of the painterly played a key role in the process of institutionalization of art history within the German academic milieu at the turn of the century. According to Daniel Adler, the ‘painterly’ came into being ‘in contrast to the perceived elitism of traditional art history, which had become too preoccupied with philological source materials’.¹⁷ This concept had a central role in art education as well, in the process of refining the students’ eyes, which was needed for examining questions of style. Wölfflin believed that focusing on the historical context of artefacts would prevent students from attending to inherently visual characteristics. The learning process students had to experience was seen as the narrative of a perceptual journey into the deep and spiritual world of the visual. Wölfflin stated that ‘rather than being occupied with the specific details of literary characters’ lives, the art history student becomes immersed in a far more abstract narrative sequence, inhabited by protagonists that are not individual characters, but modes of aesthetic perception – like the painterly, the linear and the primitive.’¹⁸ Thus the narrative-evolutionary concept of process, which originated in Wickhoff’s theories, became a process of learning itself in the Formalists’ rhetoric, the process of taming the unconscious and irrational visuality of Formalist pedagogy: ‘the self [of the student] is engaged in a constant state of ‘becoming’ (*werden*) rather than a static condition of ‘being’ (*sein*). The educator ascribes mystical, moral, or spiritual significance to this formative process’.¹⁹

Furthermore, both Wickhoff and Wölfflin applied the notion of process to perceptual experience. Visual perception, as evinced by the above quotation on Traian’s column, is a gradual flow. The analogous example in Wölfflin’s theory is his perception of Baroque architecture, in this case the Asam brothers’ church of St. John Nepomuk in München. The ‘painterly’ is experienced when ‘the viewer sacrifices that feeling of coherent tangibility, and goes through a comparatively painful – and spiritualizing – process.’²⁰ It is in this process that ‘the true life of the building is expressed’.²¹ In this way, in Formalist art theory the concept of process links the method of continuous narration with the notion of the painterly, and with the nature of aesthetic experience.

THE RECEPTION OF WICKHOFF’S THEORY

Wickhoff’s *Wiener Genesis* provoked extreme reactions over the twentieth century, both pro and contra. His early reputation cannot be separated from the general critical reception of the ideas developed by the Vienna School. Formalists, including Wickhoff himself, broke the tradition of

¹⁷ Adler, 2004, 433.

¹⁸ Adler, 2004, 446.

¹⁹ Adler, 2004, 445-446.

²⁰ Adler, 2004, 438.

²¹ Quoted by Adler, 2004, 437.

regarding art history as a minor, subsidiary field of history or literature. Their clear aim was to establish *Kunstwissenschaft*, the independent academic study of art. Obviously, new disciplines need new frameworks, vocabularies and methods. The narrative principles elaborated by Wickhoff formed part of this.

In the last quarter of the nineteenth century, two significantly different points of view were prevalent amongst German-speaking scholars. One was that of the Formalists, including Wickhoff; the other rival approach was that of the so-called 'traditional art historians', who promoted a seemingly non-committed positivist approach, and who kept their distance from theoretically driven interpretations (Herman Grimm, Eduard Dobbert or Georg Dehio).

The first serious rejection of Wickhoff's ideas echoed this anti-Formalist view although it came from Percy Gardner, an English scholar. Gardner not only questioned Wickhoff's proficiency and relevancy, but also denigrated the method of continuous narration. Gardner's approach is important to us, as it corresponds to those of many literary critics who (unfortunately still today) see the *punctum temporis*, the snapshot-type narration of images as the only viable form.

Gardner, by referring to its 'anthropological aspect', regarded the method of continuous narration as undeveloped and imperfect, thus setting off an almost century-long denunciation of this type of narration. As he says '[i]t flourishes in the first sketch-books of clever children: it is in fact a childish method, and wherever art is in a childish condition, it may be found. (...) And the infant art of Christianity took it quite naturally.'²² Hence, continuous narration, which was 'the bright, waving flower that grew on the strong root of realism' in Wickhoff,²³ in Gardner's account became a childish and primitive technique of childish and primitive societies.²⁴

One might understand the reason why Wickhoff appreciated so much the method of continuous narration if one considers the age in which his book was written. The greatest innovations of the time and ones that were having enormous impact on painting were photography and film. No matter how innovative the new technique of photography was, it was indeed unable to improve upon or bring new methods to visual narration. Photography seems to offer only one way of representing a story: by freezing the passing instance. As a medium, it can only very rarely condense into a single image all those episodes, moments or references to a story that a painting or book illumination can do. On the other hand, by taking on the role of showing instantaneous expression, photography actually liberated painting from the *punctum temporis*, something which had been demanded by the Academies for at least two centuries.

Wickhoff died in 1909; most probably, he was acquainted with Bergson's ideas, and saw paintings by Cézanne and Toulouse-Lautrec, where some parts of the moving body is blurred in order

²² Gardner, 20-21.

²³ Wickhoff, 1900, 144.

²⁴ Gardner, 21.

to give a sense of motion. But unfortunately he was not able to witness Cubists' response to this problem, for example Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* from 1912 (Figure 7).

Reading Gardner's critique of Wickhoff in the mirror of the wide-spread view in narratology, that art history lacks a theoretical apparatus for studying pictorial narration, the discipline is caught in the crossfire: from one side, art history is accused of not being able to elaborate a theoretical approach, while from the other it is seen as having too much of a theory. However, in art history, what seemed to the early critics a disadvantage of Wickhoff's *Wiener Genesis*, actually turned out to be a strength a century later. Michael Ann Holly sees a painful separation of history and theory in recent art-historical practice, and brings up *Kunstwissenschaft* (that is, early German art history) as an example of the union of these two categories. 'Not one' she says 'avoided explanations for the process on the ground that theorizing was something extrinsic to the study of art as art.'²⁵ It is precisely its interpretative character that makes Wickhoff's Formalist approach so important in the historiography of pictorial narration.

TPOLOGY-MAKING PRACTICES

It was not Wickhoff's ultimate objective to establish a terminology for studying visual narratives – his typology was rather developed to understand changes in artistic styles. And, in fact, Wickhoff was not the first to deal with pictorial narration in art history. It was the archeologist Carl Robert, whose triple scheme of narrative modes from 1881 was refined by Wickhoff (although his name remains unmentioned throughout Wickhoff's book), and later developed further by Kurt Weitzmann and Paul Meyboom. These first steps proved to be the beginning of a very long trajectory: even a hundred years after the first attempts, scholars were still engaged with the problem of refining the early typologies of narrative images or making new ones. In the early stages of the research, classification was a natural need, since the Vienna scholars were raising new questions and trying to establish a disciplinary framework. These early categories were, as shown in Wickhoff's work, sensation-based or experimental rather than formal. Moreover, they were elaborated for certain well-defined groups of artefacts of the ancient Greek, late Roman and Early Christian periods, something that their successors, although applying the same concepts, tended to overlook.

After Weitzmann, the study of narrative methods became more of an obsession with categories, lacking the visionary and exemplary characteristics of Wickhoff's theory, which offered ideas about the function and role of visual narratives in the process of forming a new style. Subsequent attempts, although to some extent they achieved clarification and refinement, were reduced to the study of forms and became technical; they have lost their grounding historical context as well as their interpretive character. Trying to avoid the trap of ambiguity, later typologies, for example Kibédi Varga's, were

²⁵ Holly, http://muse.jhu.edu/books/guide/free/art_theory.html (2005 01 20)

grounded in more abstract notions of time and space. Older types were expanded and applied to other media like panel paintings and early Buddhist reliefs. New types were defined, and were sorted out on the basis of the number of images involved, or the number of scenes or moments depicted, or whether the characters were repeated or not, or whether there is any unity of time, space and action. Such categories were developed by analysing various technical and compositional solutions, such as divisions between scenes, landscape backgrounds, or repeated main figures. In this case, generalization caused simplification.

The interpretation of the continuous narrative type is a good indicator of this process of simplification. In Wickhoff's theory the definition of this narrative method was based on a perceptual experience and compared to a journey on a river, with a changing set of perspectives. In its recent use, continuous narrative is seen simply as one type involving the repetition of the protagonist. For example, as the definition of Lew Andrews' says, it is 'a single composition, in the generally understood sense, indicated by a frame or related device (even if the limit is only implied); when more than one moment is represented within such a limit, that image can be regarded as continuous.'²⁶ In these later typologies, methods and principles have become simply elements of a vocabulary, set against an abstract time-space system. They are in fact distinguished by noting the different ways that images can transgress the Aristotelian rule of the unity of time, space and action. What Stansbury-O'Donnell wrote about early typologies emphasizing the process of abstraction, is actually much more valid for these later attempts: '[t]hroughout these studies, there is a predominant concern for the nature of time and space within a picture, and whether their link in the real world is maintained in art.'²⁷ These later studies of narrative types followed separate trajectories and thus created parallel notions and developments of the technical vocabulary. One trajectory was the work carried out by scholars of ancient Greek art, the other by medievalists, or early modernists, another again by scholars of non-European art.

The chart (Table 1.1.) lists the names of those who have contributed to the study of typologies of narrative imagery, with the dates of their work, the period that their typology was elaborated for, and the main types identified.

²⁶ Andrews, 1995, 123.

²⁷ Stansbury-O'Donnell, 1999, 1.

Date	Name	Period	Types of narrative images
1881 1919	Carl Robert ²⁸	Ancient Greek and Roman art	Completives Verfahren Situationsbilder Chroniken-Stil / Bilderzyklen
1895	Franz Wickhoff ²⁹	Late Roman and Early Christian art (reliefs, manuscripts)	Complementary Isolated Continuous
1947	Kurt Weitzmann ³⁰	Early Christian and medieval art (illustration)	Simultaneous, monoscenic, cyclic method
1977	Warman Welliver ³¹	Renaissance painting	Continuous action
1978	Paul Meyboom ³²	Ancient Greek art (unifying the R-W-W line)	Monoscenic, cyclic, complementary, continuous
1990	Marilyn Aronberg Lavin ³³	Medieval and Renaissance Italian fresco cycles (patterns of dispositions)	Double parallel, wraparound, counterclockwise, apse pattern, cat's cradle, boustrophedon, straight-line vertical up-down, straight line vertical down-up, festival mode, interlock, doorview
1990	Vidya Dehejia ³⁴	Early Buddhist art	Monoscenic, continuous, being in action / being in state, synoptic, conflated, frieze, narrative network
1993	Áron Kibédi Varga ³⁵	Early Modern art, Western European painting (rhetorics)	Single monoscenic, single pluriscenic, sequence of monoscenic, sequence of pluriscenic images
1995	Lew Andrews ³⁶	Renaissance painting (detailed study of one type)	Continuous narration

²⁸ Robert, 1881.

²⁹ Wickhoff, 1900, 11-16.

³⁰ Weitzmann, 1970, 12-36. Weitzmann criticized and refined Wickhoff's types, but he still included three types, which more or less coincided with Wickhoff's.

³¹ Welliver, 1977, 43, 55, ft 17. Welliver introduced a new type called continuous action based on the compressed actions, gestures and movements of Peter, Christ and the tax collector in the central scene of Masaccio's *Tribute Money*.

³² Meyboom, 1978, 70-72. Meyboom revised the question of typology and united the triple scheme of Robert, Wickhoff and Weitzmann into a system of four types. He also offered more exact definitions for them and noticed certain subdivisions.

³³ Lavin, 1990, 6-9. Lavin, based on a statistical survey, classifies fresco cycles. Lavin remarks that there is no trace of these patterns in the written tradition, and as she claimed, the knowledge of dispositions might have been common knowledge and could have formed part of the orally transmitted skills of the workshop tradition in the middle ages (1990, 5.). Lavin's book is extremely important, not only because it presents narrative patterns, but because of it prepares the ground for further questions concerning narrative cycles.

³⁴ Dehejia, 1990, 378-392. Dehejia works with eight different categories found in Indian monuments, such as the reliefs of Sanchi or the murals of Ajanta. Some of the types had been already defined in the context of Roman and Greek art, however, these categories work surprisingly well with Buddhist narratives.

³⁵ Kibédi Varga, 1993, 170-175. Kibédi Varga's typology is a typical response from the field of literary criticism. He approaches images from a verbal point of view and sees visual narratives merely as illustrations or as history paintings depicting written stories in a simplified way. Without referring to any previous scholarship, Kibédi Varga created a quadrinomial system for narrative images: he first distinguished between argumentative and narrative images. Narrative images were further classified as single images and a sequence of images, both subdivided into the monoscenic (without repeating the main character) and pluriscenic (with repetition). In his view, these four types cover all the possibilities of visual narration. Yet, in his view, all have only restricted possibilities for conveying narratives when compared with texts, and especially with novels. Giving the typical examples of Poussin, Gozzoli, Sassetta and Rembrandt, Kibédi Varga's visual range does not go beyond widely-known images. Although admitting that modern media might produce visual narratives without verbal aids, their independence ceases when their stories are rendered verbal. Kibédi Varga's views will be further discussed in the 'Narratology' section of Chapter Four of the present thesis.

³⁶ Andrews, 1995. Andrews studied continuous narration in the Italian Renaissance context. At the moment of writing, this is the only study to focus on one narrative type. However, Andrew's work has broader consequences. One would think that, in painting, exact spatial relations would imply an unambiguous handling

1996	Gunther Kress, Theo van Leeuwen ³⁷	Semiotics (elements of visual language)	Action, reactionary, speech, mental, conversational processes, geometrical symbolism
1999	Mark Stansbury-O'Donnell ³⁸	Ancient Greek art (summary and standardization of archeologists' approach)	Monoscentic, synoptic (Snodgrass), cyclical, continuous, progressive (Harrison), unified (Shapiro), episodic (Connelly), serial (Hurwit)

Table 1.1. Typologies for narrative images

In connection with these classifications, it is appropriate to call attention to some problematic issues. First, the use of terminology today is rather chaotic and arbitrary, for example parallel notions exist. There is no one widely accepted typology but there are many in use by fairly isolated scholarly communities, who exist like enclaves, unaware of the achievements of other groups (for example archaeologists). This may be demonstrated well by referring to the closing sentence of Kibédi Varga's article from 1993, who pleads for the study of typology and the relevance of his types, however, without referring to any of the previous studies in the topic.³⁹ The only narrative method that is used widely in a general context, is continuous narration. Second, in many cases in literary criticism these typologies are not used for, but against images. This is true of such argumentations as that of Werner Wolf, who tries to prove that each type of image noted by Kibédi Varga is less capable of expressing a story than its textual equivalent. Wolf thus concludes that images generally are somehow less able to carry narratives than texts.⁴⁰ In this way, typologies are used to emphasize the limitations, rather than the benefits of visual storytelling. Third, the more refined typologies, such as Lavin's or Dehejia's, certainly generate further questions, for example how and when each of these types spread, what kind of ideas lay behind them, why did type X appear only in certain areas but not others, why did type Y disappear after this or that date, and so forth. However, these questions and so too the answers are still missing. Four, the existing typologies work well for the mass of average images. These classifications mainly rely on episodic visual narration, thus they are not capable of capturing the complex framework that operates in visual storytelling, for example, elements such as facial expressions, gestures and movements. The richness and the peculiar properties of certain individual images that could arouse special interest from the point of visual narratives (such as, for example, Carlo Crivelli's altarpiece, which will be studied later in this thesis), remain unnoticed by these typologies. Furthermore, the whole business of typology-making springs from the very same modernist ambitions that drove Lessing

of the temporal dimensions of a story. Andrews shows that the new emphasis on spatial unity had the opposite effect, it actually enabled various temporal solutions. A good summary of the types of narrative imagery can be found in the Appendix (1995, 120-126), however, his use of the terms in the main text is not consistent.

³⁷ Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, 63-72. The types defined by Kress and van Leeuwen will be considered later in this thesis, in the 'Semiotics' section of Chapter Four.

³⁸ Stansbury-O'Donnell, 1999, 1-8. Stansbury-O'Donnell in his book on Greek narrative art summarizes recently developed categories and put together a chart to unify the vocabulary in use for Greek narrative art. The scholars that he reviewed (Snodgrass, Harrison, Shapiro, Connelly and Hurwit) are thus not studied separately here, to avoid duplicating his work.

³⁹ Kibédi Varga, 1993, 177.

⁴⁰ Wolf, 2005.

to discuss painting and poetry as distinct categories. By contrast, the present thesis argues, that in the future more weight should be placed on individual cases of peculiarly complex visual storytelling than on the perfection of such classificatory systems.

The study of visual narratives is often accused of being only a study of forms. At present, the typology is indeed not much more than a system for formal classification. However, at its outset, typology was understood by Wickhoff in a much broader context, whereby narrative modes played an important role in the formation of styles and in the transitions of artistic periods. Although most of Wickhoff's ideas have been supplanted by now, his inductive-interpretive approach could stand as an excellent guide for reinstating art history as a fundamental discipline for the study of visual narratives.

KURT WEITZMANN: NARRATIVES IN BOOK ILLUSTRATION

My study of the history of research leads me to think that Kurt Weitzmann was the figure whose work and scholarly activities link early German scholarship and more recent contributions of art historians to research on visual storytelling, which will be the focus of Chapter Four.

Weitzmann graduated in Berlin but left Germany for Princeton in 1935 to avoid the Nazi regime. He spent the rest of his life in Princeton as a professor of archeology, and there he devoted himself to the study of early Christian and Byzantine manuscript illuminations. Weitzmann was very productive, publishing dozens of articles and a number of books (*Principals of Byzantine Book Illumination*, 1938, *Illustrations in Roll and Codex: A Study of the Origin and Method of Text Illustration* 1947, *Late Antique and Early Christian Book Illumination*, 1977). The broad spectrum of his interests included visual narration, although only rarely in the form of independent theoretical investigation. Considering narrative was, for him, one effective tool for exploring manuscript illumination. In *Illustration in Roll and Codex*, which is regarded as his major work, he critically evaluated and refined Carl Robert's and Franz Wickhoff's terminology. This application to manuscripts further developed the study of narrative modes. In these manuscripts, through narrative modes, Weitzmann identified evolutionary changes and localized the appearance of certain types in certain artistic periods. For example, the simultaneous method was seen as belonging to the archaic period and he cyclic method to the Hellenistic period. In particular, he developed two distinct categories, the Egyptian 'papyrus style' and the Greek 'continuous style'. Texts and images usually have a close and mutually dependent relationship in manuscripts. This was especially so in religious books of the early Christian period where illustrations are subordinate to textual meaning. Weitzmann promoted the view that such illustrations were capable of offering 'supplementary evidence which he [the reader] cannot gather from the study of the text alone.'⁴¹ Weitzmann's interests were persistently

⁴¹ Weitzmann, 1971, 270.

focused on narrative and illustration. He studied the manner of narration within illustration, the way images create meaning not only through their contents but also their disposition, the evolution of the relationship between texts and images in certain types of books, for example illustrated lectionaries, and the various impacts this had on illustration. His *ars poetica* on narratives may be summed up as follows: ‘the art of storytelling in pictures became inextricably linked with the history of book-illumination.’⁴²

Apart from his achievements as a researcher, Weitzmann is an important figure in the history of narrative research in other ways as well. Weitzmann’s ideas and activities widely influenced his students, many of whom became famous medievalists. Some of these students inherited Weitzmann’s interest in narratives. In terms of our interests, Herbert L Kessler is particularly important, since he too has been interested in book illumination and in visual narratives. Kessler made significant contributions to the discipline: he published his *Studies in Pictorial Narrative* in 1994, edited the book *Studies in Classical and Byzantine Manuscript Illumination* in 1971, and co-edited a volume of ‘Studies in the History of Art’ with the title *Pictorial Narrative in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* in 1985. The latter is still one of the best collections of essays on antique and medieval narrative art. Other students or colleagues of Weitzmann, such as Ernst Kitzinger and Richard Krautheimer, also touched upon narrative themes. In general, Weitzmann’s activities and scholarly achievements made Byzantine studies the leading field for research into visual narratives over the period from around 1930 to 1980.

Weitzmann was one of the participants of the first ever conference on narrative art, organized in 1955 in Chicago. Six of the speakers’ articles were later published in the *American Journal of Archaeology* in 1957. The main subject of this conference was ancient narrative art. The themes covered the main geographical areas of the ancient art: Egypt, Babylonia, Anatolia, Syria, Greece, Rome and the areas of early Christianity. Blanckenhagen studied continuous narratives in the context of Roman art,⁴³ Weitzmann addressed some aspects of the relation of literature to its pictorial representation,⁴⁴ Hanfmann wrote about generalizations in the representation of actions and gestures and gave additional hints on how the artists of ancient Greece made their story recognizable⁴⁵, and Güterbock offered a comparative analysis of the narrative art across the three regions of Anatolia, Syria and Assyria.⁴⁶ As all of this suggests, visual narratives were regarded by these scholars as a sub-set of representational art. They all emphasized the intentional character of pictorial narrative solutions: ‘narrative art, strictly speaking, could be identified as such only where the purpose of the artist was to represent a specific event, involving specific persons, an event, moreover, that was sufficiently

⁴² Weitzmann, 1957, 83.

⁴³ Blanckenhagen, 1957.

⁴⁴ Weitzmann, 1957.

⁴⁵ Hanfmann, 1957.

⁴⁶ Güterbock, 1957.

noteworthy to deserve recording. That action and the persons might be historical but would not always necessarily be so. They might belong also to the realms of myth or legend.⁴⁷

A particular interest in visual narratives can be localized in two places: at Princeton University, where Weitzmann was a professor for almost six decades between 1935 and 1993, and at Chicago, where the first conference on the topic was held. Princeton was definitely under Weitzmann's influence. Otto Pächt spent the academic year 1956-57 in Princeton, in the Institute of Advanced Study where Weitzmann was a permanent member. A few years later Pächt published a book on pictorial narrative in English manuscripts.⁴⁸ Herbert L. Kessler, one of Weitzmann's most outstanding students, spent time both in Chicago and Princeton during his studies and his academic career. Another important figure was a colleague of Weitzmann, Ernst Kitzinger, a scholar at Dumbarton Oaks, a research centre which Weitzmann was also associated with for long. All of these individuals addressed issues of narration. A longer chain of interest in narratives can be traced through Kitzinger's student, Irving Lavin, a Princeton scholar. Irving Lavin was married to Marilyn Aronberg Lavin, who was a visiting professor at Princeton in 1975 and later the author of the first book on Renaissance narrative cycles. In her other book, *Eye of the Tiger*, she worked up the early years of the history of the art department at Princeton.⁴⁹ Like Lavin, Patricia Fortini Brown is a scholar of a younger generation. Fortini Brown, also a professor at Princeton, extensively researched Venetian narrative painting.⁵⁰ 1974 is a date of particular importance when, in this context, non-European art was considered for the first time from the narrative viewpoint; that year Princeton hosted a conference on Chinese narrative theory.⁵¹ A little later, the first interdisciplinary conference was held in 1979 in Chicago, which this thesis will deal with in Chapter Four.

Kurt Weitzmann was definitely one of the major protagonists in the story of the historiography of narrative research. He owes this position not only to his concepts of the role of narratives in relation to book illustration, but to his activity as an organizer of research, generating new interest and promoting the topic amongst his disciples and colleagues. He thus stands for a continuity of scholarly interest in narratives, constituting the link between early German scholarship on narrative and the latest research now undertaken mainly in the United States. The other major trend playing a role in the story, one that involved fewer, but not less important characters, such as Gombrich and Arnheim, is going to be studied in the next section.

⁴⁷ Kraeling, 1957, 43.

⁴⁸ Pächt, 1962. Interestingly, Pächt's views on the potential of narrative imagery are quite restrictive, raising questions like Lessing's. See Pächt, 1962, 1.

⁴⁹ Lavin, 1983.

⁵⁰ Fortini Brown, 1994.

⁵¹ For the details see Plaks, 1977.

Chapter 3 Modern Theories of Visual Narration II

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this chapter is to reconstruct, or rather, construct an ‘evolution’ of certain phenomena pertaining to narrative: time, movement, perception, sequentiality, action and motion. A study of each of these phenomena contributes substantially either to the interpretation of narrative images, or to the narrative interpretation of images.

The aim is to gather together the ideas of a number of scholars who were dealing with these phenomena in a general manner, not tied to specific historical periods. Not all of them were primarily interested in visual narratives. However, each of them used narrative paintings or relied on the experiences that narrative paintings evoke to explain their ideas. Together, they constitute a tradition of writing about narrative imagery which has many virtues and the purpose of this chapter is to showcase those. These interpretations authorize theoretical approaches that are different both in their objectives and methods from those introduced in the discussion of narratives as book illustration in the previous chapter. For the detailed historiography a few names have been chosen, those who from today’s viewpoint seem most influential: Paul and Etienne Souriau, Rudolf Arnheim and Ernst Gombrich. Without their ideas no one would be able today to categorize as visual narratives imagery as disparate as a Malevich painting, photographs depicting a sequence of movements, or a spiral form with an arrow at one end. At the end of this evolution stands the idea, roughly stated, that narrative is a matter of perception and of construction, with even abstract paintings being seen as narratives. This latter idea will be elaborated in the next, theory section, for which this current chapter provides some theoretical foundation.

The scholars introduced in the previous chapter tended to regard visual narratives as a historical phenomenon, one which appeared with certain characteristics in certain periods and in certain geographical areas. What this new group of thinkers wished to express was different. They were intending to say something generally about visual expression by concentrating on some time-, or perception-related phenomena that are not culture-specific but transcend these borders. In terms of visual expression, the components of images that were investigated were ones that linguists would call elements of the grammar of visual language: form, composition, hierarchy, spatial and temporal arrangements.

Two general themes were studied: the different time concepts related to images,¹ and the representation of (often minimal) movements. The aim of disproving the idea of the importance of the instantaneous *punctum temporis* served as starting point for some scholars. Time concepts, more generally led them to examine the nature of aesthetic experience and visual perception. The need for interdisciplinarity seemed obligatory when the questions of perception came up, as can be seen in the way scholars readily embraced the new knowledge of psychology and Gestalt theory. The universality of the issues raised naturally expanded the objects of study. Broader in their view, these studies are usually cross-cultural or cross-period theoretical investigations. As a result, the image is understood in a broader sense and is taken to include not only old and figurative art, but contemporary and abstract art, photography, comic strips, folk art, diagrams, or sometimes scientific imagery as well. Although, apart from a very few exceptions, the emphasis was still only on 'Western art'.

THE AESTHETIZATION OF BASIC MOVEMENTS: PAUL SOURIAU

The new technique of photography drew a new attention to instantaneous motions and challenged painting in the representation of movement.² Photography opened the way to studying systematically human and animal movements and the phases of movements; it started a trend of interest toward the study of basic and mechanical motions. The photographic sequences of Eadweard J. Muybridge and Étienne-Jules Marey revealed the nature of movements that had previously been beyond human perception. In 1877 Muybridge experimented with instantaneous photography of a galloping horse in California, producing a sequence of images, and so providing a positive solution to the initial problem of whether there is a moment when all the four legs of the galloping horse are off the ground. In Marey's photography, forms of motion were even more abstract: among others, he was interested in minimalizing the points from which a moving body is recognizable.

Paul Souriau was one of the first theorists responding to the new challenge of photography.³ In his book *The Aesthetics of Movement* (1886), not surprisingly, he found the source of aesthetic experience and 'beautiful' movements not in complex motions such as dance or ballet, but like

¹ This chapter does not aim to study, or even to summarize the general issue of time in the visual arts, or time and space. This has been done many times. See Francastel, 1964, or Bértola, 1972. A rather simplified (and at some points plainly wrong) summary is in James Elkins's unfinished essay (Elkins, 2006), while an especially good recent text, accompanying an exhibition held in 2000 at the National Gallery in London (Sturgis, 2000). Sturgis studies in detail movements of falling figures, blurs and sequential movements (35-59). On temporal aspects of the ancient Near Eastern art see Groenewegen-Frankfort, 1978.

² In the scholarship chronophotography is often referred to as demonstrating the difference between instantaneous photography and the density of painting (Gombrich, 64, 296). As Sturgis remarked, to describe photography as instantaneous is indeed 'misleading if not meaningless: in the late 1850s the fastest exposure time was about one-tenth of a second.' (Sturgis, 2000, 35.)

³ Souriau was one of the most significant figure of the French movement aesthetics. See the Foreword by Francis Sparshott (Souriau, 1983, vii-xv.). Souriau's book was considered a response to Kant's aesthetic theory (1790, *Critique of Judgement*). The English translation from 1983 was illustrated with Muybridge's photo sequences.

chronophotographers, in basic human and animal motions, in mechanical and repetitive movements, and in goal-oriented simple but expressive activities.⁴ For example, he studied the movements of walking and rowing men, flying birds, crawling snakes, galloping horses, or rolling discs. His method of analysis was to break down the movements first, in the same way as was done in contemporary photography.

The differentiation Souriau made between objectivity and subjectivity in the experience of movements helped him to give advice to painters on how to represent movements effectively in a way that is supported and perfected by human perception. Some of his recommendations had long been known and practiced by painters. The persistence of retinal images gives a certain duration to seeing and this influences perception, since humans, as Souriau explained, see what they expect to see in, in terms of today's terminology, a short period recognition.⁵ He thought painters make a mistake if they try to capture the instant as this might lead to unnatural or grotesque solutions. Instead, snapshots and instantaneous representation of motions should belong to photography, which for him was a metaphor of the mechanical eye: '[t]hese errors [of painting] should no longer be tolerated, now that we have at our disposal the technology of photography. The camera, pointed at objects in motion, is like an ideal eye that sees everything at one glance and permanently retains what it has seen.'⁶ Souriau recommended to painters to give an impression of movements by the use of essentially painterly solutions, such as cheating the eye with illusions, or giving the 'optical equivalent' of movements. Practically, painters are better to avoid very sharp lines and too great details and should prefer sketchy compositions. Since for the watching eye rapid movements imply blurs and diaphanous images, this is the solution that psychological perception supports.⁷ What Souriau advised was very much a reflection on the solution chronophotography gave to the problem of the nature of instantaneous motion, which indeed, even if for a period of time, resulted in the division of representational modes. Souriau was not the only scholar who saw photography in the light of human perception: Eugène Véron, too, wanted art 'to accommodate the physiological conditions of humanity', just as W. de W. Abey, who, according to Sturgis, claimed that 'such [instantaneous] images failed to take into account the limits of normal

⁴ Souriau's idea, that body movements and gestures express not only physical actions, but moods of the soul was already present in Alberti's *De Pictura*. However, Alberti's movements were part of a scenario, a larger entity framing narratives. Even so, both of them considered only quite basic movements or gestures, as Souriau said: '[a]ny particular expressive gesture, for the very reason that it is expressive and whatever the importance of the feeling is expressed, has a specific, superior beauty, for what it interprets for us is no longer just material life, but the life of the soul.' (Souriau, 1983, 105.)

⁵ Souriau turns to philosophy here: '[h]aving in the eye, so to speak, the series of attitudes that an animal of a man takes when in motion, they would recognize them as they go by and seize their rhythm and sequence better. As the philosopher Tyndall remarks somewhere, you can only see a thing well when you know in advance what is going to happen. And that is even truer about movement perception than about any other kind of observation.' (Souriau, 1983, 119.)

⁶ Paul Souriau, 1983, 118.

⁷ 'The rule to follow, it seems to me, is to give the parts that must appear mobile a more sketchy execution; and in order that these blurred parts should not make a hole in the painting, give them a secondary place. In this way, we will not be tempted to look too hard at something we are supposed not to see well.' (p121), PS p 121, the section on this p118-121.

vision'.⁸ Blurred and sketchy compositions were often found not only among Souriau's contemporaries, but long before in painting. Alexander Sturgis wrote a short but impressive section on blurs in painting and photography and on the theory of the persistence of vision.⁹ Moreover, there are studies examining the different reaction of end-nineteenth century painters such as Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec to Muybridge's sequences,¹⁰ or on the origin of distortions and the presence of time in Cézanne's painting.¹¹

Souriau's distinction between the motion represented in photographic sequences and the density of painterly moment, which reflected human perception, will acquire importance in the discussion of perceptual narratives. Both his approach to mechanical beauty and his view according to which aesthetic delight can be seen in minimal motions, will contribute to the idea of abstract sequential narratives, a concept that will be elaborated in the theory section of the present thesis.

Engagement with abstract notions of movement, time and questions of perception must have been a family obsession in the Souriau's. Paul Souriau's book was translated into English in 1983 by his grandchild Manon Souriau, a former director of the American Dance Guild.¹² Paul's son, Etienne, professor of aesthetics at the Sorbonne, wrote extensively on aesthetic experience.¹³ Furthermore, possibly another family member, Anne Souriau also authored a study on the relation of time and space in drama.¹⁴

WHEN CONTEMPLATION EXPANDS THE INSTANT: ETIENNE SOURIAU

Etienne Souriau's study, the *Time in the Plastic Arts* (1949) is significant in our historiography for two reasons: first, he developed two different time concepts related to the visual arts, which were later reflected in the formation of narrative understanding, and at the same time disproved the idea of

⁸ Sturgis, 2000, 43.

⁹ The section titled 'Moment and Movement' (Sturgis, 2000, 35-59, and especially 43-49.).

¹⁰ Lincoln studied the paintings of Degas and Toulouse-Lautrec from this point of view. According to him, view, Lautrec achieved the sense of movement by cuts, shapes and lines: he 'managed to express the movement convincingly through the shape, its angle of inclination, its position in the picture plane, even by the elements of the picture surrounding it.' (Lincoln, 1956, 15.) While Degas achieved the same effect by capturing his figures in expressive poses and 'by presenting a synopsis of the phases of the movement.' (Lincoln, 1956, 19). The effect is nevertheless different: 'Degas graphs the whole movement and insists on the continuity; Lautrec shows the terminal points only and depends on the tension between them to express movement.' (Lincoln, 1956, 20.)

¹¹ Hamilton studied Cézanne and the influence of the Bergsonian term 'duration' on his painting. He claimed that 'If we can go so far as to say that actual three-dimensional space, which we must enter and move within in order to experience it at all, necessarily includes the experience of time, then it is possible that time is necessarily a component element in Cézanne's representation of space, and that it can be restored to his work if we are willing to bring together the two aspects which have been separated in criticism, the realization that his distortions are related to his concerns for deep space and the fact that the multiple points of view, which are durational in the painter's own experience, are the means by which he arrives at a profounder visual expression of such space.' (Hamilton, 1956, 7.)

¹² Snoeyenbos, 1987, 121.

¹³ On his biography see Unknown 1949, 380-381.

¹⁴ Souriau, 1949, 298, ft 7.

punctum temporis. Second, he linked these time concepts to those painterly elements that also contribute to the narrative meaning: movements, actions, gestures or poses.

Souriau examined the *time of contemplation* on the part of the spectator, and defined the *intrinsic time*, which is inherent to a work of art. These concepts helped him arguing against the idea that visual arts are exclusively timeless, and generally against the separation of arts into two sets, the ‘arts of space’, and the ‘arts of time’. For Souriau this separation was not just ‘banal’, but ‘dangerous’,¹⁵ because the denial of the temporal aspects of the visual arts fundamentally contradicted the manner of the universal human aesthetic experience, which was his frame of study.

Based on the nature of the aesthetic experience Souriau claims that paintings, just like to statues and architecture, need time for their contemplation. In sculpture, time is needed for moving around the object to unfold all of its aspects; in architecture, time is needed to grasp the different views and the changing perspectives of a building.¹⁶ In painting, scanning the compositional scheme takes time.¹⁷ Contemplation always includes movement: either the whole body moves, or, as in painting, the eye can do the work.¹⁸ Recent studies reveal how eye movements really work and these experiments reinforce Souriau’s thought that scanning an image is indeed a time-consuming action.¹⁹ However, Souriau takes the argument further: he is claiming that the time of contemplation is not only a duration in a psychological sense that a spectator might feel, but it is inherent in an image: ‘an artistic time inherent in the texture itself of a picture or a statue, in their composition, in their aesthetic arrangement’ and it is ‘*the intrinsic time of the work of art.*’²⁰

The notion of the *intrinsic time* in painting is not as clear as Souriau would like, but rather his examples reveal the meaning of this notion.²¹ The intrinsic time is the time span that the subject of the painting implies, or determines, but on the level of associations. Souriau gives an example of Poussin’s *Et in Arcadia Ego* (Figure 8), where the associated temporal arc of the intrinsic time stretches far

¹⁵ Souriau, 1949, 294.

¹⁶ Francastel in his entry on ‘Time and Space’ (1964, 116) presents a sequence of photographs of S. Ivo alla Sapienza in Rome, with the purpose of showing the phases of aesthetic experience and how the change of sight during the observation of the building while walking into the chapel from the outside court.

¹⁷ Souriau, 1949, 295-296. Souriau counts a few minutes (‘during the period of from thirty seconds to ten minutes’, 301), but regards only those spectators with a ‘purely aesthetic attitude’. Longer acts of contemplation, for other reasons (for example religious experience or scholarly study) were excluded from his study.

¹⁸ Souriau, 1949, 295-6.

¹⁹ The classic article in the subject is by Molnar, 1983. Molnar distinguished three temporal levels in visual perception: the time for electrophysiological phenomena, the time for stimulus perception and the time for contemplation. See also a recent study on the eye movements of artists by Miall and Tchalenko, 2001, and a short section called ‘Time to Look’ in Sturgis, 2000, 61-65.

²⁰ Souriau, 1949, 296-97.

²¹ To describe the nature of intrinsic time, Souriau drew a parallel with literature (and with theatre as well), and distinguished three time-related concepts for a novel. These were (1) the time of the novel, which is the chronological sequence of the events, ‘the order in which its events are supposed to follow each other’, (2) ‘the order in which the narration is unfolded’, and (3) ‘the time it takes to read it’. (Souriau, 1949, 297.) With these distinctions Souriau anticipated narratological terms which are still in use today. These, as defined by Todorov (1966), and later Chatman (1968), are the story (including story time), and the discourse (or *sjuzet*), respectively (Shen, 2005, 566-568). In visuality, the range of these distinctions might be broader than in a depicted story.

beyond the time span of the depicted actions and even beyond the story time, and does this in the spectator's mind:

If I look at the *Shepherds in Arcadia* of N. Poussin, I am obliged to be aware of an immense stretch of time. One may even wonder if it is not excessive. In any case, it is obligatory: no artistic comprehension of the work is possible if one does not take account of the temporal basis implied by the ages of the various persons, the presence of the tomb recalling those who lived formerly in the same place, and in the future, that inevitable death (*et in Arcadia ego*) whose shadow falls upon love and present happiness, saddens and adds greater meaning to the tender gesture of the young woman and the expression on the face of her lover. This rhythm of life and death, in the past, the present, and the future, this return in thought to the past, with a corresponding movement toward the future are all part of the fundamental aesthetic structure of the work. And the vastness of this double movement (one of the most outstanding in art) gives to the time of this painting certain artistic traits that are essential to it.²²

Even with Poussin, who presents only minimal actions and is usually seen as rather verbal, this temporal extension works. Souriau called the source of this temporal extension a 'prerogative moment'. This term was formulated to replace the inaccurate 'pregnant moment'. The prerogative moment denotes an action in the painting that is capable of operating as an origo around which the temporal stretch occurs: '[a]s for this intrinsic time of the plastic work, one can say that its organization, in general is *stellar* and *diffluent*. The time of the work radiates, so to speak, around the prerogative moment represented. The latter makes a structural center from which the mind moves backward to the past and forward to the future in a more and more vague fashion until the moment when the image fades gradually into space.'²³ Souriau characterized the stellar structure of the intrinsic time as a 'continuous time with misty edges',²⁴ which, during the action of an aesthetic contemplation, in the spectator's mind lasts not more than a few minutes. One might recall here 'retention', the term in Husserl's phenomenology for short time memory, which is different in structure but very similar in its operation. In Husserl, the retention is an interval of the extended present time, although only its furthest point that falls into the past has 'misty edges'.²⁵

What makes Souriau's argument interesting from the point of visual narratives is that, in images, the prerogative moment is attached to acting figures. An example is Mary's 'slow and gentle rhythm of movement'²⁶ up the stair in Tintoretto's *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple* (Figure 9). These are those 'studio poses taken without any fusion with an action which might prepare them and prolong them' within an unsuccessful 'academicism' as Souriau characterizes it, in Raphael's

²² Souriau, 1949, 299-300.

²³ Souriau, 1949, 301.

²⁴ Souriau, 1949, 301.

²⁵ Husserl elaborated his theory for sounds, however, it can be easily applied to movements and sights as well. For Husserl, the perception of the present is embedded into an interval, which consists of the absolute present moment, retention (a temporally extended present, an interval while the perceptual sign is conceived of as present), and protention (the expectation and perception of the next moment). This theory was elaborated during lectures given in Göttingen in 1904-05 and published only in 1928 by Heidegger. See Husserl, 2002, 15-45. There is an interesting link between pictorial narration and human memory, see for example Andrews, 1995, 26-29.

²⁶ Souriau, 1949, 301.

Entombment.²⁷ Thus, translating Souriau's thoughts into narrative painting, temporal radiation caused by a successfully applied prerogative moment necessarily includes analeptic and proleptic moments or episodes that either anticipate or follow the movement or the gesture of the acting figure. These prolonging characteristics of the prerogative moment imply a temporal shift in the spectator's mind. With this idea, Souriau introduced questions of visual perception, which were soon answered by a Gestalt psychologist, Rudolf Arnheim, and an art historian, Ernst H. Gombrich.

DIRECTED TENSION AND ABSTRACT NARRATIVES: RUDOLF ARNHEIM

Rudolf Arnheim's views on visual perception, especially of motions and movements, profoundly influenced later semioticians in defining the abstract forms of visual narratives. Apart from this, two other aspects of Arnheim's research are remarkable here: the study of stroboscopic motion and the perception of movements.

'Motion is the strongest visual appeal to attention.'²⁸ Arnheim opens Chapter VIII on Movement with these words in his famous book, *Art and Visual Perception* (1957). Arnheim presumes there to be evolutionary reasons behind this, since noticing visual information of the environment is essential in survival for both humans and animals. For Arnheim, it is obvious that not only movements in the environment but also movements in art evoke the same 'strong and automatic response'.²⁹ Arnheim was interested not only in the origins or effects of represented movements but in their nature as well. But the nature of the represented movements differs from what is seen in nature, as Souriau and many others already noticed. Arnheim, like almost all authors this chapter deals with, ran into the issue of the *punctum temporis*. He noted that 'snapshots, authentic though they are, often fail badly to convey a sense of action. Furthermore, sometimes the most effective representation does not correspond to any phase of the depicted event.'³⁰ Instead, he pointed out that images operate by compacting different events or actions into a scene or different motions into a pose.³¹

Stroboscopic motions play important role in Arnheim's ideas. Such motions are created by a series of discrete still images, which depict different but successive positions of a movement and give the illusion of a continuous motion. It might be a sequence of photographs depicting the mechanics of simple movements, and it gives the basis for perceiving continuity in cinematic images. Arnheim defined stroboscopic motions as follows: it 'occurs between visual objects that are essentially alike in their appearance and function in the whole field, but differ in some perceptual feature – for example,

²⁷ Souriau, 1949, 303.

²⁸ Arnheim, 2002, 372.

²⁹ Arnheim, 2002, 372.

³⁰ Arnheim, 2002, 423.

³¹ Arnheim, 2002,424.

location, size, or shape.³² For art historians, this definition would naturally recall a large number of abstract paintings of Op Art or other minimalist tendencies, paintings of Mondrian, Bridget Riley, Victor Vasarely, or some sculptures of Donald Judd. However, Arnheim, being interested in the psychology of perception, started his investigation not with abstract paintings but with short experimental films, which revealed the way humans react on sequences of motions. Max Wertheimer's experiments with lit objects proved that human perception links identical or similar forms and interpret them as a temporal sequence, even if they are very simple or fragmentary.³³ This is due first to psychological reasons, as 'we always experience perceptual wholes, not isolated parts.'³⁴ And second, the sameness of the environment enhances, or even secures this effect. As Arnheim said, 'similarity of location produces a visual link between neighbors.'³⁵ The phenomenon can now be better understood through the results of recent neurobiological research.

This idea can be usefully applied to narrative painting: it explains how the type of continuous narration functions. In this type, repetition of the main characters is used as a strategy to depict more than one episode of a story. This narrative mode, where the hero is present many times in the picture space in front of a landscape or in an urban setting, was flourishing in Renaissance painting.³⁶ Jacopo del Sellaio's cassone panel with *The Story of Cupid and Psyche* (around 1473, Figure 10) is an example where fifteen episodes are told from the ancient story of Psyche, who as a beautiful young lady appears ten times in the panel. To be recognizable, Psyche is always depicted in the same white dress, thus satisfying Arnheim's criteria of stroboscopic motion in its similarity (the dress) and difference (in posture). The horizontal rectangular form of the cassoni did enhance rendering a theme with repetition of figures and with using many episodes. Two effects described by Gestalt psychology operate here: 'similarity grouping', a tendency to see elements together that are looking alike, and to experience perceptual wholes instead of isolated parts.³⁷ For Sellaio's Psyche is very much true to what Arnheim said about Wertheimer's experimental films: 'under favorable structural conditions, objects appearing at successive moments in time at different locations will be perceived as two states of one identical object.'³⁸ However, Arnheim did not go that far in his treatment of narratives. In his examples, sequential movements form either purely motion-based composition such as Marcel Duchamp's famous *Nude Descending the Staircase*, or supplement traditional narratives which are based on a written story. In this later case sequentials form a secondary storyline, in narratologists' terms, a subnarration.

Arnheim proposed a new, broad term 'directed tension', which later seemed essential in the formation of the definition of visual narratives in semiotics. Directed tension is applied exclusively to images (and not for films), and was regarded as a key pattern in achieving visual dynamics. Arnheim

³² Arnheim, 2002, 434-435.

³³ Arnheim, 2002, 388.

³⁴ Arnheim, 2002, 300.

³⁵ Arnheim, 2002, 388.

³⁶ Andrews, 1995.

³⁷ Behrens, 1998, 300-301.

³⁸ Arnheim, 2002, 390.

says that it is as much inherent to images as size, shape and color,³⁹ as opposed to being part of a percept. For example, stroboscopic motions and obliqueness fall under this category. Arnheim did not invent the term, it was borrowed from Kandinsky's writings, who regarded the notion of movement as imprecise and replaced it with tension, and also proposed to add direction to tension.⁴⁰ In Arnheim's analyses of Giotto's *Lamentation* (Figure 11), directed tension is an umbrella term that covers not only compositional streamlines and contrasts in movements, but narrative components, such as opposite narrative actions as well. Arnheim sees Giotto's fresco as 'interpreted by the painter as a story of death and resurrection, which in formal terms calls for an interplay between the horizontal and the vertical.'⁴¹ Oblique position, for example Christ's arms, or the line of the hill, is what links horizontal (the body of Christ, for example) and vertical (the tree, the direction of the resurrection) parts. The role of the diagonals is to direct horizontals into the vertical climax both compositionally and thematically.

Even more importantly, the notion of directed tension contributed to later definitions of abstract (nonfigurative) narratives. The boundaries between narrative and nonnarrative images do not correspond with the boundaries of figurative and nonfigurative images. Since Arnheim was interested in movements and dynamics in a more extensive field than that of narrative images, this view was not formulated by him so clearly (nor later by semioticians). However, this can be deduced from Arnheim's and others' research and examples. Through a process of narrativization, humans empower abstract, geometrical forms with certain human characteristics, and perceive their motions as causal relations, even interpreting their interaction as a story. Albert Michotte's animation films demonstrated that this occur even on a very simple level. The film showed simple moving squares; their motion was seen by the observers as driven by cause-effect relations. Arnheim calls this phenomenon 'perceptual causality' and claims that this happens even when physical causality does not occur at all.⁴² The reasons behind such causalities could be assigned to general human experiences: 'the mind assumes the connection to be necessary and expects it to be made every time. The quality of cause and effect is thus added secondarily to the percept by an association formed over a lifetime.'⁴³ However, opposed to the view that originated from Hume, there is another view on the origin of causality and this was proved by Michotte's experiments, which says that 'causality is as much an aspect of the percept itself as the shape, color, and movement of the objects. Whether and to what extent causality is seen depends exclusively upon the perceptual conditions.'⁴⁴ Perceptual causality operates on more complex levels as well. This was proved by an experimental short film from 1944 made by Fritz Heider and Marianne Simmel, a film that became a well known example in narrative psychology by today.⁴⁵ The film presents geometrical objects, a big and a small triangle, and a small circle moving in and around an

³⁹ Arnheim, 2002, 416.

⁴⁰ Arnheim, 2002, 416.

⁴¹ Arnheim, 2002, 441, the complete analysis is on pages 441-443.

⁴² Arnheim, 2002, 395.

⁴³ Arnheim, 200, 395.

⁴⁴ Arnheim, 2002, 395, and on directed tension, page 416.

⁴⁵ See for example László, 2009.

enclosed construction. As the experiment describes, on the basis of the motion of the forms viewers interpret the film as a story of love, hatred and jealousy, where the big and aggressive triangle pursues the couple. They try to escape into the house, but when the big triangle fails, he destroys the house in anger.⁴⁶ The experimental films Arnheim referred to demonstrate that the processes of narrativization do occur even in visual situations lacking human or animal figures. As Chapter Five will clarify, based on Arnheim's ideas, semioticians went further and showed that abstract paintings have similar effects. However, not only semiotics, but recently neuroscience as well developed explanations for the origin and operation of this phenomenon.

THE TRUE NATURE OF THE DEPICTED MOMENT: ERNST H. GOMBRICH

Ernst H. Gombrich, who was also sensitive to the emerging field of neuroscience, in his well-known study, *Moment and Movement in Art* (1964) expanded the time concepts Etienne Souriau examined on the side of both the image and the spectator.⁴⁷ Gombrich's approach was more scientific, as he said, 'both technological and psychological variables must be considered', however, he arrived at similar conclusions.⁴⁸ As a true historian, Gombrich was very much interested in the historical treatment of the subject, for example in the theories of Shaftesbury and Lessing, but he confronted the ideas of pre-modern scholars with recent technical and psychological achievements.

Gombrich brought forward examples to show that, although not necessarily, the instantaneous moment in photography or in film stills might seem unnatural, an idea that was already present in Paul Souriau's and Arnheim's writings. Thus the public and the critics had ambivalent reactions on seeing Muybridge's sequence of a galloping horse taken in late 1870s, noting the 'strangely frozen effect of instantaneous photographs.'⁴⁹ The sequences Muybridge created mirrored the instants of the movements but did not convey the essence of the movements. One could find a similar idea behind Alfred Brehm's illustrated *Tierleben* or *Life of Animals*, one of the most famous popular books on the taxonomy of animals, which, even in its twentieth century editions, did not use photographic snapshots, but drawings. Surely, drawings could capture not the momentary, but the typical motions of the animals. Gombrich suggested that instead of an instant it is more advantageous to arrange a 'readable entity which fulfils Shaftesbury's and Lessing's demands for anticipation and repeal'.⁵⁰ The first key point of the article of Gombrich is on the side of the image: for a better visual appearance an extended

⁴⁶ Arnheim, 2002, 403; Bruner 1986, 18.

⁴⁷ There is a good summary of Gombrich's views on movement and time, and time and images in Nyíri, 2009, 1-14, and especially 12-14. However, I cannot agree with his conclusion: 'Images are incomplete unless they are moving ones – unless, that is, they happen in time. (...) That only the moving image is a full-fledged one is a fact that was fully recognized and articulated by Ernst Gombrich.' (2009, 1.)

⁴⁸ Gombrich, 1980, 183.

⁴⁹ Gombrich, 1964, 296.

⁵⁰ Gombrich, 1964, 296.

moment should be housed in a scene, where not only the movements but the represented environment as well enhance its expression. Clearly, what Gombrich suggested, is the scenario-type narration.

The other key point in Gombrich's argument is on the side of the beholder. It says that 'the idea of the *punctum temporis* is not only an absurdity logically, it is a worse absurdity psychologically.'⁵¹ Gombrich refers to a number of fascinating psychological experiments and events, which support the idea that humans do not perceive instants but some kind of interval, a brief temporal span that operates as a unit. Short time memory makes humans capable of keeping sense impressions for some time, even when the stimulus is past. However, this time span includes not only the immediate past, but the immediate future moments, just as Paul Souriau argued with the persistence of vision. What was the time of contemplation in Etienne Souriau's interpretation, is in Gombrich's argument the time of perception. According to him, scanning an image with eyes and brains is a dynamic process: '[w]e build it up in time and hold the bits and pieces we scan in readiness till they fall into place as an imaginable object or event, and it is this totality we perceive and check against the picture in front of us. Both in hearing a melody and in seeing a representation what Bartlett called the 'effort after meaning' leads to a scanning backward and forward in time and in space, the assignment of what might be called the appropriate serial orders which alone give coherence to the image.'⁵² The consequence of this psychological tenet is that the perception of an image 'is a process in time, and not a very fast process.'⁵³ The process for narrative images works the same way: 'successful illustration of a narrative will always suggest and facilitate repeat and anticipation, the scanning backward and forward in time that comes from the understanding of an action.'⁵⁴

Gombrich makes an interesting point that has direct implications for narrative imagery. This is, as he says, 'the principle of the primacy of meaning'. This principle defines itself and indeed has much broader range of reference than just narrative images: to understand the logic of the represented situation is the purpose that lies behind the process of comprehension. It has a time aspect. Gombrich says, that '[w]e cannot estimate the passage of time in a picture without interpreting the event represented.'⁵⁵ However, in the light of the dynamic nature of the meaning-making process described above, it seems that this sentence should be supplemented with its counterpart to be true: we cannot interpret the event represented without estimating the passage of time in a picture. In the process of comprehension, future expectations extend the depicted action or movement: '[m]any pictures portraying action result in an image where the action is carried to completion.'⁵⁶ Interpreting gestures and movements plays the most significant part in this completion process. A question comes up:

⁵¹ Gombrich, 1964, 297. According to James Elkins, with reference to two articles from *Science* (1991 and 1992), recent neurobiological research has proved that humans do not see only one moment in time, as the retina anticipates what will be seen next. (Elkins, 2006, 35.)

⁵² Gombrich, 1964, 302.

⁵³ Gombrich, 1964, 301.

⁵⁴ Gombrich, 1964, 303.

⁵⁵ Gombrich, 1964, 302.

⁵⁶ Gombrich, 1964, 302.

whether those gestures and movements that suggest the purpose or the reason of an action can be interpreted universally, that is, whether these expressions are valid and readable in art of different periods and areas. The examples Gombrich used suggest a positive answer.⁵⁷

Gombrich's approach to the represented movements is an important phase in the study of the development of abstract narratives. The movements Gombrich studied in paintings may form actions in religious or mythological stories, but they are not necessarily part of any traditional narratives. They could be dance movements as in Donatello's *Cantoria*, sculpted body motions such as those of the *Discobolos*, or very basic human motions, such as turning a head or raising an arm, that can be seen in Picasso's portraits. Gombrich did not claim that all these movements would be narratives. However, his method and his interest in focusing on the understanding of the processes behind the visual perception of motions, naturally classified all depicted movements under the same category. His claims do not take into consideration where the action or movement belongs to, for example: 'incompleteness can contribute to the impression of rapid movement.'⁵⁸ As will be studied in the next section of the thesis, the job of detaching movements from their iconographic meaning but still regarding them as narratives, would later be done by the semioticians. However, this would not have happened without the work of both Gombrich and Rudolf Arnheim.

⁵⁷ Gombrich wrote more on expressive movements and gestures and on their legibility. He set up at least two requirements for expressive movements to be readable: there should be easily understood configurations and their context should be 'sufficiently unambiguous'. (Gombrich, 1982, 79.)

⁵⁸ Gombrich, 1964, 305.

Chapter 4 Postmodern Theories of Visual Narration

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explores the latest developments in the discourse on visual narration. The period around 1980 marks a change in the directions of the research. The contours of those trends, which have been introduced to discussion in the previous chapters, tend to be indeterminate, or even to dissolve. Around this time, there was a great increase in the quantity and diversity of research, and it began to be organized not only along different conceptions of narrative, but along different disciplinary boundaries, those of art history, narratology and semiotics. Important changes occurred: studies in art history began to make use of narratology, both in terms of ideas and terminology; visual narratives, and visuality in general became an interesting topic for non-art historians: scholars from narratology, philosophy, literary criticism and semiotics began to write about visual narratives.

The aim of this section is to draw a rough map of the current state of affairs, one covering the last three decades, and to explore what is dealt with in each field. The structure of what follows is determined by how the knowledge belonging to each discipline is organized. For art history, due to the huge quantity of studies, only a general outline will be given. The section on narratology will focus on major topics as well as on the dynamics and politics of the field. The section on semiotics describes certain general tendencies and some possible benefits.

ART HISTORY

In the last three decades in art history there has been a great expansion in the study of visual narratives. It became a more attractive field of study, and, as a result, scholarship has experienced a huge growth both in terms of quantity and in diversity. The aim of this section is to give a brief summary of the main areas and trends, and of publications. Following the usual period-based structure of art history, recent research has clustered around three main areas: the classical tradition, medieval art and the renaissance fresco and pictorial cycles.

It was perhaps due to the influence not only of Wickhoff's and Carl Robert's contributions, but that of the 1955 conference on Ancient Art that in the 1980s, when the first truly thorough studies on narrative art appeared, that writings focused on ancient Greek or Roman art. Narrative studies of the art of classical antiquity actually seems to be a quite separate area with its own organic development, but without much connection to other similar areas in art history, as already noted in relation to questions of

typology. Among the general studies, there is for example Snodgrass's *Narration and Allusion in Archaic Greek Art* (1982), Carol G. Thomas's on *Greek Geometric Narrative Art* (1989), H. A. Shapiro's work on *Narrative in Archaic Art* (1998), or Jocelyn Penny Small's *Narrative in Classical Art* (1999). Later, studies appeared on specific artworks, such as Barbara A. Kellum's study of the Ara Pacis Augustae (1994), Hurwit Jeffrey's study of the Chigi Vase (2002), and also on specific pictorial elements such as G. Hedreen's study of the narrative functions of setting in Greek art (2000), and on spectator figures in Pompeian painting (Katharina Lorenz, 2007). Here two authors stand out: Richard Brilliant (*Visual Narratives: Storytelling in Etruscan and Roman Art*, 1984), and Stansbury-O'Donnell (*Pictorial Narrative in Ancient Greek Art*, 1999). Brilliant's book is organized around four topics: Etruscan urns, Trajan's column, Pompeian pendant paintings, and mythological sarcophagi. Brilliant incorporated narratological methods and studied general issues pertaining to visual narratives, such as word and image relations. He emphasized the greater freedom and the different reception of visual storytelling and so gave broader spectrum and range to the field. Like Brilliant, Stansbury-O'Donnell relies on recent theories of narratives and also semiotics. His study, concentrating mainly on ancient vase paintings, offers an extended form of narration. Analogous to the narrator-story-reader triangle known in narratology, he examines pictorial narration with respect to the artists, object, and viewer. He does this on two levels, exploring what he called the micro and macro structures of narration.

It was only by the end of 1980s when analytical research finally reached the *grand narratif* of art history, Renaissance painting. There are still very few systematic studies of narration: those available focus on specific periods and geographical areas (late fifteenth-century Venice, for example), on special genres (murals in Italy) or on a specific narrative schemes (continuous narration). Patricia Fortini Brown's thorough study of Venetian narrative cycles of Carpaccio and of the Bellini's, examined Alberti's notion of the painted *istoria* but in a Venetian context (*Venetian Narrative Painting in the Age of Carpaccio*, 1988). The novelty of Fortini Brown's approach lies in the fact that she studied these narrative cycles in their social and political context and thus she regarded them as painterly documents of contemporary Venetian life, history and visual culture. A larger period is covered in Marilyn Aronberg Lavin's *The Place of Narrative, Mural decoration in Italian Churches 431-1600* (1990). Lavin, as already noted, follows the categories used by Wickhoff and Weitzmann. Lavin discovered narrative patterns, and based on these patterns she constructed a typology for fresco cycles in relation to the narrative disposition of such cycles in their architectural settings. Her most important finding is, in my view, that although not referred to in written sources, certain visual patterns clearly underpinned the planning of frescoes and their use was wholly intentional. These were spatial patterns, which provided the discourse or *sjuzhet* or theme of the visual stories, not their *fabula* or chronology.¹ Lavin also added another important insight to word-image relations in general when she

¹ Lavin says: 'The patterns were formed by rearranging the chronological order of the episodes in familiar stories. In some instances the patterns could be associated directly with particular liturgical practice, providing explanations for what otherwise might seem strange or arbitrary sequences. In other cases the relationship

tried to describe what is actually visual as opposed to verbal. As she said, ‘visual reading order rarely (rather than usually) followed literary prototypes without deviation. Therefore “out of order” visual sequence was the rule rather than the exception.’² Later Lew Andrews examined the treatment of the most widely accepted narrative type, the continuous narrative, in Renaissance art (*Story and Space in Renaissance Art*, 1995). Until now, this is the only publication that deals with a specific mode of visual narration. Unified pictorial space, constructed by means of central perspective is often thought to imply unified pictorial time as well, the depiction of a single instant. Andrews, however, relying on the treatises of Alberti, Leonardo and others, demonstrates that structured and layered perspectival pictorial space actually enhanced the use of multiple temporal solutions and variations, especially the use of continuous narration. He claims that regarding continuous narration as an error only shows the influence of later theoretical observations on time and narration, for example Lessing and Shaftesbury. Andrews notes further, that the painters of the Renaissance were more concerned with creating motion in pictures, where ‘the figures must seem to be *alive*, seem to be in motion or capable of motion, both in space and in time, even if they are not. So too must time seem to flow between one figure and another.’³ The connection of liveliness and motion was present already in Alberti. There are also further short studies on particular Renaissance topics, including Gregory Martin’s on the narratives presented in Sieneese predella and Christina Olsen’s of Botticelli’s *Nastagio degli Onesti* panels. Finally, there is a brief summary on Renaissance treatment of pictorial time in Fowler.⁴

Here, I should draw attention to the German contribution to this field of research. From as early on as the 1960s, German-speaking art historians, fairly independently of the English-speaking world, began to elaborate a method for close image analysis, which was applied to the study of visual narration as well. Until recently, these efforts remained rather isolated from the Anglophone research. This is why they are not covered in detail in the present thesis, however, some reference will be made to the writings of Lorenz Dittmann, Max Imdahl, Gottfried Boehm, Jutta Karpf and Götz Pochat. One exception is made here in the case of Wolfgang Kemp, for two reasons: first, many of his studies are translated into English, and thus they became part of the broader flow of research, and second, it is he who has recently made the most substantial contributions to the theory of visual narratives. With expertise in recent issues pertaining to narratology, he has actually produced some of the most intelligent studies on narrative art, focusing on medieval pictorial systems and visual narratives in relation to painterly space (*Sermo corporeus: Die Erzählung der mittelalterlichen Glasfenster*, 1997, *Die Räume der Maler. Zur Bilderzählung seit Giotto*, 1996).

between narrative patterns and religious practice, though logical, lacks real proof. (...) Moreover, the patterns themselves show a historical development concomitant with changes in the history of architecture. Although they have remained all but unnoticed in modern times, their ubiquity indicates that the patterns were probably common knowledge, perhaps even part of the professional training of artists.’ (Lavin, 1990, 5)

² Lavin, 1990, 4.

³ Andrews, 1995, 26.

⁴ Fowler, 2003, 20-26.

Medievalists continue to study of narratives, honouring the tradition started by Wickhoff and Weitzmann. In 1985, a collection of essays was published on various medieval topics, edited by Herbert L. Kessler and Marianna Shreve-Simpson. In this collection, Hans Belting's study on trecento painting is especially important as it concentrates on both allegorical and narrative paintings in a religious context. Kessler's long interest in medieval narratives resulted in another volume in 1994 (*Studies in Pictorial Narrative*). A more general approach to medieval narratives can be found in Laura Weigert's *Reconstructing Medieval Pictorial Narrative* (1995). Yet Sixten Ringbom is one of only very few to discuss general narrative phenomena in the medieval context. He has investigated the methods and conventions of indirect narration, which was applied for recounting thoughts, dreams, visions and experiences. Ringbom takes a broad view, focusing on both the artworks, mainly book illumination, and on theoretical issues (*Some Pictorial Conventions for the Recounting of Thoughts and Experiences in Late Medieval Art*, 1980, and later *Action and Report: The Problem of Indirect Narration in the Academic Theory of Painting*, 1989). His first study was the result of a symposium on medieval iconography and narrative organized in 1979 at Odense University. Wolfgang Kemp's article on framing events is another of the very few attempts at a concept-based study.⁵

As already noted, the study of non-European narrative art began as early as the mid-seventies. By now there are studies on narratives in Egyptian art (Gaballa, 1976), on Khmer visual narratives (Vittorio Roveda, 2002), and recently on narrative art in early Java (Marie-Louis Totton, 2005). Vidya Dehejia systematically studied visual narrative in India, especially early Buddhist narrative art. She concentrated not only on questions of typology, as reviewed earlier in this thesis, but also on works of art, examining one of the most important painterly monuments in India, the Ajanta caves, and especially Cave 17. Her main contribution is a book, *Discourse in Early Buddhist Art: Visual Narratives of India* (1997). There is also a more recent general study by Patricia Eichenbaum Karetzky, on the illustrations of the life of Buddha in South Asia (2000).

In spite of the growing interest in visual narrative, very few scholars maintain life-long interest. Most have come across the topic of narratives at a certain point in their career and have felt it a challenge or necessity to deal with them. It is thus no surprise that they hardly ever go back to the roots of the research, and usually reference to the broader issues of narratology are made by chance. Although in the last decades, insights from narratology have begun to be applied in art history, systematic research remains rare. A full theory for dealing with narrative imagery is still waiting to be developed. As a general conclusion it may be noted that, within art history, an interest in visual narratives came much earlier than within literary theory, and also that this interest remained continuous over the twentieth century. In spite of the richness of the field, however, perhaps due to its fragmented nature, the interest in visual narratives never caused a paradigmatic change in a Kuhnian sense in art history.

⁵ Kemp, 1986.

NARRATOLOGY

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, the period around 1980 can be regarded as a milestone in the research in visual narratives. This is true not only for art history but also for narratology. In 1979, narratology discovered images, when the first interdisciplinary event was organized. To my knowledge this was the first moment of interaction between narratology and art history, the first occasion when narrative theory, already worked out for literature and film, would be applied to fine art and still images. An interdisciplinary symposium entitled *Narrative: the Illusion of Sequence* was organized at the University of Chicago. It brought together scholars from diverse background: philosophy, literary theory, psychology, anthropology, etc.⁶ Nelson Goodman, a speaker at the conference, with his *Twisted Tales; or, Story, Study, and Symphony*, led off a series of studies on visual narrative in art by non-art historians.

By today there are a dozen of texts written by non-art historians, which address the very same general question: how can images narrate. These are: Sol Worth's *Pictures Can't Say Ain't* (1981), Mieke Bal's section on 'Visual Stories' in her *Narratology* (1985) and later *Visual Narrativity* (2005), Áron Kibédi Varga's *Stories Told by Pictures* (1988) Emma Kafalenos' *Implications of Narrative in Painting and Photography* (1996), Werner Wolf's *Pictorial Narrativity* (2005), Wendy Steiner's *Pictorial Narrativity* (1988 and later in 2004), and Bence Nánay's *Narrative Pictures* (2009). The titles illustrate fairly well the narratologists' interest and their main ideas. They usually focus on what visual narration is in a very general sense, on what pictures cannot do when they are compared to texts, and on what the implications of narratology are for images. It is crucial to address elementary or framing questions about visual narratives. Such questions had, in fact, been touched upon already in art history but only as subsidiary topics. Apart from Wolfgang Kemp's study,⁷ they were not considered independently. Taking advantage of this seemingly unexploited field of research, narratologists began to address such questions. These studies also bring out the common standpoint from which images are looked at by these authors.

The main questions narratology posed are: how can images narrate and what constitutes the domain of narrative images?⁸ Since until recently, such questions held much more interest for those studying verbal narratives than for those studying the visual, we know much more about the deficiencies of visual narratives in comparison to their verbal equivalents than about their advantages. Werner Wolf has even questioned the fundamental ability of images to tell stories.⁹ As the passage cited in the Introduction of this thesis has already shown, Wolf asserts that images offer 'considerable

⁶ The papers were published in a special issue of *Critical Inquiry* in 1980 (Vol 7, No 1, Autumn) and later in a book edited by W.J.T. Mitchell. See more in the Foreword, Mitchell, 1980, vii-x.

⁷ Kemp, 1996.

⁸ Bal, 2005, 629.

⁹ Wolf, 2005, 434.

resistance' towards narrativity. For Wolf, narrativity is mostly attached to pictorial cycles or sequential images, and he shares the unusual views of the art historian James Elkins, who stated that: '[i]t can seem as if narrative really belongs to the realm of the verbal rather than the visual.'¹⁰ For Wolf abstract art cannot be narrative, because 'representationality is a major characteristic of narratives'; for him, it seems that representationality and abstraction are mutually exclusive categories.¹¹ Further, he thinks that single images can carry narratives, but when discussing them, it seems that their only benefit is to demonstrate why written stories operate better. Wolf's main counter-argument is that single images depend on a (literary) story that 'lies outside themselves'; they thus leave 'gaps of meaning', and can only infer the story, and 'can never actually represent a narrative but at best metonymically point to a story.'¹² What he forgot is that written stories are also constructs and are always the result of some kind of selection, a selection of few important moments from thousands of unimportant ones. In fact, knowledge is always fragmentary. Neither films, nor even novels ever say everything clearly nor do they have a perfectly continuous flow of time. Cinematic plain jump cuts are a good example for such interruptions, not to mention the technical realization of films.

Another narrative scholar, Wendy Steiner, is at pains to prove that, in accordance with Seymour Chatman's view, images are not narrative, or as she remarked, the visual arts are 'definitionally antinarrative'.¹³ According to her, this is because narration needs multiple events – at least two represented episodes – and a temporal ordering, or temporal sequence, or, more precisely, a distinction between chronological and narrated order. One must remember here that such principles have been generated solely from the study of written narratives. The reason why certain scholars see a multiplicity of events, double temporal ordering and especially linear ordering as principal or as minimal criteria for narratives is because these properties belong to written narratives. Visual narratives do not necessarily work in the same way and there is no reason to assume that the textual should automatically have priority over the visual. Steiner could have referred to other narratologists whose otherwise less strict definitions would have fitted visual narration better. For example, H. Porter Abbott, in agreement with others, emphasizes the representational aspect of narratives. Abbott calls this a 'bare minimum', and defines narratives as 'the representation of an event or a series of events'; he also says: 'In my own view and that of still others (Genette, Smith), the field of narrative is so rich that it would be a mistake to become invested in a more restrictive definition that requires either more than one event or the sense of causal connection between events. Both of the latter are more complex versions of narrative, and in their form and the need that brings them into being they are well worth study in their own right. But in my view the capacity to represent an event, either in words or in some

¹⁰ Elkins, 2006, 4.

¹¹ Wolf, 2005, 431.

¹² Wolf, 2005,432-433. I quote Kibédi Varga's initial remark: 'Thus understood, every single painting representing a tale is, in the final analysis, a commentary; it is an illustration, with the difference that the text is missing;' Kibédi Varga, 1988, 204.

¹³ Steiner, 2004, 150.

other way, is the key gift and it produces the building blocks out of which all the more complex forms are built.¹⁴ Building complex narratives from simple forms is indeed what Alberti suggested for the scenario-type of visual narration. It may be said more generally that the major principles used within narratology for defining the concept of visual narration are reduction, restriction and exclusion.¹⁵

Nevertheless, there are narratologists who indeed have used Porter Abbott's broader definitions. As already mentioned in the Introduction, Mieke Bal operates with three areas of visual narratives: visuality in literary narratives, in films and in images.¹⁶ For Bal, focalization,¹⁷ is a key concept for examining visual narrativity, 'the most important, most penetrating, and most subtle means of manipulations.'¹⁸ Bence Nánay also considers the key question: what is a narrative picture and what is narrative engagement with pictures? His investigations are those of a naive viewer, who, from literary criteria slowly reaches the point where 'the representation of one single event, or at least a subcategory thereof, of one single action, can count as narrative.'¹⁹ The action category he formulates is rather restrictive when compared to the vector-based narratives discussed in semiotics since it represents only goal-directed activities. However, in Nánay's approach, the domain of narrativity is nevertheless broader, as even non-narrative images may be perceived as narratives through the beholder's engagement.²⁰

At first glance, the degree of narrativity seems to be a useful concept. Certainly, images should be compared, based on their narrative complexity. However, since the already mentioned concepts are rather loose, the objectivity of such criteria seems problematic, and their purpose is unclear. Werner Wolf uses degrees of narrativity to distinguish not only between different media and genres, but, more importantly, between series of images and single images: sequences can be narrative, single images are only 'indexically' narrative.²¹ Bence Nánay linked goal-directed and non goal-directed actions when applying the idea to the comparison of single images. His comparisons are somehow intuitive and work well when the examples are rather distant both in subject and period: '[a] Vermeer is less narrative than a David, but it is more narrative than a Cezanne still life.'²² In fact, the concept of degree would work properly only if any two narrative images could be compared, not accidentally or intuitively, but

¹⁴ Abbott, 2008, 13.

¹⁵ As in case of Nánay, 2009, and Kibédi Varga, 1988. Kibédi Varga states: 'Among fixed images there are obviously some which do not have narrative character. Thus the landscape and the portrait are two pictorial genres which remain outside of pure investigation. The tale necessarily implies the presence of living beings engaged in an action, the landscape does not include living beings, and the portrait includes only one.' (Kibédi Varga, 1988, 195.)

¹⁶ Bal, 2005, 629-633, and Bal, 1997, 161-174.

¹⁷ According to Gerald Prince, focalization describes the position from which the narrated events are presented (Prince, 2003, 31.).

¹⁸ Bal, 1997, 171. A detailed argument may be found in Bal, 1997, 162-164.

¹⁹ Nánay, 2009, 123.

²⁰ Nánay, 2009, 125-126, and especially Chapter VII.

²¹ 'Yet the limitations of the pictorial medium do not prevent it from realising various degrees of narrativity: it comes relatively close to typical narratives in picture series, some of which can be called genuinely narrative, while a single picture can at best be termed indexically narrative.' (Wolf, 2005, 434-435.)

²² Nánay, 2009, 125. This idea is based on Gregory Currie's definition.

logically and unambiguously. A necessary criterion would be to determine a scale and to list images in some kind of (probably linear) order, and most importantly, to formulate clearly what is 'more' and what is 'less' in the narrative sense. This arrangement is rather hypothetical, and indeed, what would actually be achieved by determining a specific degree of visual narrativity? However, as part of the Practice section of this thesis, one such scale will be introduced, not calibrated towards any degrees of narrativity, but rather for the transcendence of episodic narration.

The issue of the definition and the domain of narrative images demonstrate well that, among literary critics, there are two different approaches to visual narrativity. These approaches can be best captured by political terms, one as 'liberal', the other as 'orthodox'. The liberal view is more open, acknowledging the potential of images and it treats visual narrativity as something which might even benefit literary studies. It is nicely exemplified by Mieke Bal's point: 'Visual narrativity is culturally pervasive, not least because reading itself requires constant visualisation. Accordingly, it is not the novel that is obsolete, but the idea that narrative and imagery are *essentially* different cultural expressions. This 'visual essentialism' along with the literary elitism that is its counterpart, only encourages the repressions that constitute intrapsychic, interpsychic or cultural, and political forms of censorship. Narrative and image need each other as much as cultures need both of them.'²³ Bal and also W.J.T. Mitchell belong to a group of scholars described by Michael Ann Holly in the following terms: 'in the last couple of decades many well-known literary thinkers have turned toward the study of visual art, such a development does not imply a move away from literature, but rather stands for an acknowledgment of the many aspects images and verbal artefacts, in spite of their differences, share.'²⁴ These scholars were indeed the first to urge interdisciplinarity for the study of narratives and they have since enriched our understanding of narratives with interesting ideas.

As a counterpole, there is another, rather iconophobic view of narrative images, the 'orthodox'. When comparing pictorial and written storytelling some literary scholars invariably emphasize the deficiencies of the visual rather than its advantages. Such scholars tend to work with stricter definitions, and they generally think that images have a subsidiary role in expressing narratives, sometimes even questioning the narrative ability of images. According to this view, images are, by their very nature, incapable of carrying narratives or, as Werner Wolf stated it, it is rooted in 'the limitations of the pictorial medium as a whole.'²⁵ Usually, this is based on a not very diverse understanding of the pictorial medium. Narratologists' examples are almost exclusively panel paintings, mostly by Hogarth, Rembrandt, Poussin, or David; mixed genres, such as illustrated volumes or emblem books are never studied. This group of scholars have a predilection for seeing images as 'purely spatial' and nearly all use Lessing as a reference point. Purely spatial in this context means atemporal, and atemporality means roughly non-narrative, since the relation of time and narration is

²³ Bal, 2005, 632.

²⁴ Holly, online, 6-7.

²⁵ Wolf, 2005, 432.

considered essential. In Manfred Jahn's words: '[a]s for painting and photography, they are prevented by their purely spatial nature from explicitly representing what Paul Ricoeur regards as the proper subject matter of narrative: the temporal nature of human experience'.²⁶ The historiography section of this thesis has already argued that Lessing's *Laocoön* should not be considered the final word on the distinction between the spatial and the temporal arts. Moreover, a later section will discuss in more detail on the complex relationship between images and temporality.

Independently of how open or strict their views are, there are some general issues that, to a greater or lesser extent, characterize narratologists' approaches to visual narratives.

First, there is a recurrent practice of approaching the phenomenon of visual narrativity from a literary perspective. In one sense, this seems inevitable given their starting point. The theoretical framework used by these authors was developed within narratology, the theory of narrative texts. Therefore concepts defined and issues raised originally for novels are forcibly transported to the domain of the visual. But can one really compare and judge by the same criteria, for example, a novel by Thomas Mann or James Joyce and an Italian Renaissance altarpiece? The studies outlined above on visual narration usually compare images to texts. They use the properties of verbal narratives to account for visual narratives, noting what visuality fails to satisfy.²⁷ One of the most obvious and best-known cases is Aristotle's triple rule for drama, the unity of time, space and action. This criterion has been insisted on for images over and over again but it has been equally constantly abandoned or transgressed upon. The other such issue is the order of narration. Some scholars require that images should produce a linear form of storytelling like (some) literary texts, however, might it not be that spatial arrangements have their own logic of telling?²⁸ Another issue is temporality. Wendy Steiner's claim can be regarded as a typical narratologist effort: 'The discreteness of temporal events is still not enough to create the equivalent of literary narrativity.'²⁹ Instead of emphasizing what images cannot do and blaming them for not satisfying criteria developed for verbal narratives, or trying to 'create the equivalent of literary narrativity', it would be more beneficial to study narrative concepts that fit the domain of the visual and to determine what is especially visual in the concept of narration. One such attempt will be made later in this thesis, focusing on the phenomenon of anachronism.

Second, those who apply the concepts of narratology to imagery, as in the case of the most vehement author on this topic, Werner Wolf, do so without showing sufficient knowledge of existing art-historical scholarship and apparently without a will to incorporate this body of knowledge.³⁰ In narratology, the scholarly environment seems to consist of a network of fairly closed groups, which does not necessarily promote any attempts to surpass old truisms. One reason for the lack of familiarity

²⁶ Jahn, 2005, 291-292.

²⁷ In Bal's words: '[a]lthough such accounts have great usefulness, the underlying presupposition seems to be that images are a priori handicapped in this competition'. (Bal and Bryson, 1991, 202.)

²⁸ See Arnheim on the role of centre in painterly compositions (Arnheim, 1988) and Goodman, 1981. For the formulation of the requirement see Kibédi Varga, 1988, 196-199, and Steiner, 2004, 150-154.

²⁹ Steiner, 2004, 150.

³⁰ The case of narrative typology seems to be typical, as was shown in Chapter Two.

might be, that albeit hints of historiography may be found in almost all art-historical texts exploring visual narratives from a more theoretical perspective, until now there has been no attempt to present a reasonably complete and detailed overview of this research. Scholarly reviews touch merely on those issues strictly relevant to the theme in hand. This lack of general knowledge of the field might be why, for example, the very question of visual narrativity can still be represented as a novelty.³¹

One reason behind the views of the ‘orthodox’ narratologists may be the pervasive effect of photography and cinema: still images are perceived as imperfect moving images.³² Their instantaneity have had an enormous effect on our perception. Francastel expresses it very well:

If today the mechanism of seeing, observing, and interpreting representational works gives rise to so many false theories, this is mostly because the greater part of the public in viewing images follows criteria that are entirely different from those current during the past five centuries. For our contemporaries, photography and films are the chief reference points for the visual arts. Photography has spread the idea of the complete and instantaneous reading of any image. In this field, as elsewhere, the multiplication of images has resulted in the transformation of the very nature both of the image and of the act of perception. (...) Traditionally pictures always contained a whole series of allegorical or allusive meanings. It never occurred to anyone to question their value as an expressive language; (...) All the subjects [of the Middle Ages] were drawn from religion, in other words, from a fund of knowledge to which the very structure of medieval existence gave lifelong familiarity. They demanded not the subtle deciphering practiced today but instantaneous reference to certain standards, which, however, involved the time element for any precise perception of the image. Pictures directed both the senses and the mind of the observer not to the passing spectacle of the exterior world but to knowledge that had evolved on a cultural level. They were the sum of experience and tradition. They impressed themselves upon the imagination in the course of prolonged contemplation or ceremonial presentation.³³

This prejudiced view is characteristic of the ‘orthodox’ branch of literary criticism. Interestingly, it cannot be found in semiotics.

SEMiotics

Essentially, semiotics is a language-based theory assuming the priority of the verbal. Yet, from amongst the disciplines where visual narratives are currently studied, semiotics offers one of the most balanced approaches. This is the reason why – despite the relatively small number of relevant publications – the contribution of semiotics can be regarded as important and thus is reviewed here. Semiotics does not efface the differences between the two media, but by mapping some of the signs and conventions used in both, this newer discipline considers art and literature merely as two different forms of human communication. Both media, or systems of semiotic codes, form part of a larger

³¹ Nánay, 2009.

³² ‘[S]till images are, psychologically speaking, but limited cases of dynamic ones’. Nyíri, 2009, 1, ft 1.

³³ Francastel, 1964, 183.

communicational system. Elements of pictorial space are regarded as signs of a visual language and their relations, which are seen as belonging to the grammar of language, are observed through formal connections.

For writers such as Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen, the question of the hierarchy of the visual and verbal, well-nigh a narratological obsession, simply becomes irrelevant. I quote a passage to illustrate their view:

The semiotic modes of writing and visual communication each have their own quite particular means of realizing what may be quite similar semantic relations. What in language is realized by words of the category 'action verbs' is visually realized by elements that can be formally defined as *vectors*. What in language is realized by locative prepositions is visually realized by the formal characteristics that create the contrast between foreground and background. This is not to say that all the relations that can be realized linguistically can also be realized visually – or vice versa, that all the relations that can be realized visually can also be realized linguistically. Rather, a given culture has a range of general, possible relations which is not tied to expression in any particular semiotic mode, although some relations can only be realized visually and others only linguistically, or some more easily visually and others more easily linguistically. This distribution of realization possibilities across the semiotic modes is itself determined historically and socially as well as by the inherent potentialities and limitations of a semiotic mode.³⁴

This balanced view echoes W.J.T. Mitchell's argument about Lessing's distinction between painting and poetry. Mitchell considers the 'economy of signs' and of the 'degree of effort' that each genre puts into representation, and calls attention to hard-won achievements.³⁵ Thus, with its more balanced approach, semiotics offers one way of dissolving the tiresome opposition between verbal and visual narratives. However, there is a sense that this is an attempt to 'raise' images to the level of texts rather than an enquiry into the salient characteristics of visual narration. This can be noticed from the frequent and consistent use of the formula 'reading images', despite the fact that semioticians underscore the importance of visual perception in these studies.³⁶

A semiotics of visual narration draws attention to the structure and construction of the visual tale. Accordingly, recent publications tend to focus on two areas: they provide useful concepts for identifying the agents of the depicted narrative and also for exploring its context. For example, Kress and van Leeuwen discuss in detail the participants in certain narrative processes pertaining to visual stories.³⁷ Bal and Bryson analyze the viewer's position in relation to the narrator-focalizer-actor triangle.³⁸ They claim that narrative semiotics allow us to specify agents in a visual story, their nature, and also identify signs of negation, syntactical connection, focalization and causality.³⁹ Semiotic theory also places the story and the scene in a specific social context. Kress and van Leeuwen did this by

³⁴ Kress and Leeuwen, 2006, 46.

³⁵ Mitchell, 1998, 102-103.

³⁶ For example Bal, 1988, 81, chapter title; Kress and Leeuwen, 2006, book title.

³⁷ Kress and Leeuwen, 2006, 47-59, on narrative processes 59-73.

³⁸ Bal and Bryson, 1991, 204-205. and again Bal, 1988, 79.

³⁹ Bal, 1988, 80, and later again in Bal Bryson 1991, 205-206.

applying well-known communicational models to the visual.⁴⁰ A more subjective sense of context can be found in Mieke Bal's work. Roland Barthes had identified five codes activated by the reader when a story is read and Bal rephrased these codes in relation to the viewer of a visual narrative. These are the proairetic, the hermeneutic, the semic, the symbolic and the referential codes, all of which may be activated in the process of constructing a visual tale.⁴¹ This subjective and viewer-oriented approach makes semiotics comparable with hermeneutics.⁴² In fact, the concept of context in these studies is a rather vague frame for enquiry: it deals with either the context of the agents of the story or that of the postmodern viewer, but is not directed toward the reconstruction of the historical context of production as done, for example, within iconology.

In their research on visual narratives, art historians may fruitfully integrate these semiotic approaches into their more properly historical investigations. In reality, this seldom happens. Already in 1991, Bal made the following, still relevant remark: '[o]f all the disciplines in the humanities, art history seems to me the most likely to benefit from a semiotic perspective. Given over the deploying language to "reach" visual images, the daily struggle of art historians with the inability of language to do justice to visuality – images, acts of looking, regimes of vision – inevitably leads them to look for a theoretical framework in which language does not have primacy, and in which concepts are developed for the explicit purpose of overcoming such predicaments. Yet, surprisingly, art history has been more resistant to semiotics than any other discipline I know of. With few exceptions, attempts to use semiotics in art history are scarce, rarely go beyond introductory expositions, or remain isolated.'⁴³ The reason why art historians seem to be averse to semiotics is perhaps because semioticians disregard, or, at best, merely ignore, the deep historical roots of artefacts (and they also usually ignore the 'aura' of the work of art). Here it should be emphasized that semiotics offers a viewer-oriented set of tools for analysing narratives not only as tales, but as acts of communication, and this may well enhance understanding. However, historical context and the historicity of vision, especially for earlier periods, may still add another narrative layer to the represented story. How this works in practice will be suggested in Chapter Six.

⁴⁰ Kress and van Leeuwen (2006, 48-52) use three models of communication (Shannon and Weaver's and two from Watson and Hill). They apply these models to describe the participants in a narrative situation.

⁴¹ Bal, 1988, 78, 82-83, and later in Bal and Bryson, 1991, 203. On the questions of the context see Bal and Bryson, 1991, 176-180.

⁴² Bal, 1988, 74, and Bal and Bryson, 1991, 205. Bal claims that semiotics 'is not a historical but rather a hermeneutic discipline'. (Bal, 1988, 74).

⁴³ Bal, 1999, 112.

SUMMARY

Although narratives may be either visual or verbal or both, at present it is rare to find a section on visual storytelling in textbooks on narrative theory. For narratology, visual means primarily moving images (films) or, to a much lesser extent, genres mixing the verbal and the visual (comics, maps etc.). The underrepresentation can well be illustrated with the most important recent publishing project in narratology. The comprehensive *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory* (ENT)⁴⁴ has about for and a half hundred entries on narratives. Yet, the book includes only two entries on visual narratives, which indeed mapped the two approaches to visual narratives presently to be found in narratology, here labelled as ‘orthodox’ and ‘liberal’.⁴⁵ In narratology, visual narration is evidently a minor, subsidiary area. Within art history, the study of visual narratives is also a disproportionately small, subsidiary field. This unbalanced position may be improved by greater interdisciplinarity, hitherto practiced only in a very limited sense. Art history, for one, needs to become more open to the terminology and methodology of semiotics and narratology; these should be incorporated into already existing methods of enquiry. The next section of the present thesis tries to show some ways of exceeding these existing limitations.

⁴⁴ ENT, 2005.

⁴⁵ Bal, 2005, and Wolf, 2005.

Part Two Theory

Chapter 5 Abstract Narratives

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapters summarized already existing notions of visual storytelling and showed how scholars have treated such narratives. Part Two, the Theory Section of the present thesis, and also Part Three, named Practice, seek to develop new concepts of the visual narrative and new ways of dealing with them. Three different proposals will be introduced in order to expand our concepts of visual storytelling. The first aim is to determine the minimum constituents needed for a visual narrative. A concept, that of abstract narratives, will be introduced and elaborated; sequentiality and processes of perception will play a key role here. The second proposal is a thematic expansion, where a new term, ramification, will be developed. This term describes narratives which came into being through the significant modifications of previous stories. The term has been developed in relation to religious narratives from late quattrocento Italy, in which context describes actualized religious narratives. The third and final aim is to dispose of the pre-eminence of episodic narration. This consists of a statistical analysis that, in practice, proves that instantaneous narration is not the only way of rendering stories in the visual.

FORMAL AND PERCEPTUAL NARRATIVES

In Rome, there is a fresco by Francesco Salviati of the story of Bathsheba (Figure 12). The painter has represented the middle phase of the narrative, where Bathsheba, by the invitation of King David, climbs the high steps of his palace. In the tower that rises above the culmination of the story is depicted, where David seduces her. Salviati's fresco is part of decorations of a private palace in Rome. Marcel Duchamp's painting, *Nude Descending the Staircase* (Figure 7) is the now-classic but once scandalous example of Cubism, one of those works that were found shocking by spectators at the time. One has to think very hard to find any relationship between these two works. But there is one. The way that the female figure is treated in both outlines a minimal narrative through sequential movement. In the Salviati, this sequential movement is directed upwards, in the Duchamp downwards.

This chapter aims to develop a new concept, that of abstract narratives, within which these two images may be understood as two variations on the same pictorial problem. The problem is addressed here in a narratological context. The term abstract narrative is an umbrella, covering both sequential or formal narratives, such as those seen in Salviati's and Duchamp's. It also covers perceptual narratives, a type of narrative more closely related to human perception; in turn, the definition of this term relies

heavily on the ideas of Souriau, Arnheim and Gombrich as discussed in Chapter Three. Both sequential, formal and perceptual narratives will be defined more precisely in due course. The images which fall into these categories will be labelled 'abstract narratives': not because they necessarily lack human figures, but because they usually lack pre-existing religious, mythological or historical texts, which would imply the presence of human figures.

Narrative is 'a form not only of representing but of constituting reality',¹ says Jerome Bruner. This sense of a 'constitution' will play a key role in the narrative categories either introduced or further elaborated in this chapter. The approach deployed here allows us to locate narrative images within a much broader conception of storytelling, one which dispenses with the assumption that this type of human activity is necessarily verbal.

ABSTRACT NARRATIVES

The emergence of narrative theory in the last two decades has begun to influence the study of the visual arts in general. Thus, certain previously introduced features and characteristics of images were reinterpreted in the narrative sense. Of those characteristics, two will be studied here. On the one hand, the temporal aspects of visual perception have been reconsidered. These aspects may serve as the basis of narratives created interactively by the beholder during the aesthetic experience. Mieke Bal and others regard spectatorship as a narrative involvement and this is supported by narrative psychology as well. The term perceptual narratives will be used here to describe such phenomena. The notion reflects Etienne Souriau's idea of intrinsic time and it covers activity over the time of contemplation.

On the other hand, the narrative is also inside the image. As already noted in connection with the films discussed by Rudolf Arnheim, represented movements, sequences or scenarios of abstract, geometrical forms may be considered narratives too, since they are regarded as goal-oriented activities. This, the fully formal narrative, is where visual storytelling reaches its farthest point of development, radically breaking with the expectation that a narrative image is simply the illustration of a written story.

PERCEPTION AS NARRATIVE

In her book *Quoting Caravaggio, Contemporary Art, Preposterous History* Mieke Bal proposes a new term, 'nonfigurative narrative', to describe David Reed's paintings. David Reed (1946-) works on huge canvases, depicting colourful folded and waving draperies. The picture plane is usually geometrically divided. As the colours and the brushwork are different in each segment, the overall

¹ Bruner, 1991, 5.

impression is as if there are different layers. By her new concept, Bal is trying to describe the effects of Reed's artworks. She regards Reed's paintings and especially one horizontal piece titled #275 (Figure 13) as 'a prototypical example of that genre, if not a "theoretical" elaboration and creative invention of it.'² Bal sees that the sense of a nonfigurative narrative is rooted in Reed's brushwork. It appears as if it were a rich and impastoed surface, similar to that of Abstract Expressionist painting, but instead it is 'smooth and shiny'.³ The brushwork deceives its spectators:

Reed's relation to abstract expressionism of the "I"-oriented kind is part of a development in viewing time that helps the painting become narrative. The eye bounces off but then returns right away, for there is something so emphatically "tugging" in the surface that after having been kicked off it because one came with the wrong – expressionist, tactile – assumption, one is drawn back into the surface on new terms. Then, the second "episode" of looking takes place, the one that engages the eye in a different kind of tactility. This time, the eye stays longer, thus subjectively modifying the quality time. The painting asks that the viewer at first "think" abstract expressionism, that he step back, then return; without the false start, the effect that replaces it would not so easily take hold. This is one of the reasons why, here and there, the waves are made to "look like" brushstrokes, to represent these, so as to emphasize that they only evoke them, without *being* them.⁴

Reed's canvases seem to tell a story of misinterpretation and revision; they elicit a particular form of perception. A similar story, but written one, can be found in the Bible. In the story of Mary Magdalene, there is an episode of a mistaken identification followed by proper recognition. She met Christ after the Resurrection and first she could not recognize him, thinking he was a gardener; this happened just before the words 'Noli me tangere' were said to her (John 20, 14-16).⁵ However, the story of misinterpretation in Reed's paintings, at least in Bal's account, happens not within the image, but actually in the spectator's eye and mind, and it unfolds during scanning and contemplation. It is a 'narrative outside of figuration',⁶ and it is external in the same way as it is outside the painting.⁷

There are further arguments for seeing perception as a narrative process. *Trompe l'oeil* paintings tell similar narratives to David Reed's paintings. Playing with the boundaries of real and

² Bal, 1999, 176.

³ Bal, 1999, 180.

⁴ Bal, 1999, 180-181.

⁵ 'And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.' Sixteen Ringbom discussed this iconographic type in his article on pictorial conventions used in Medieval art to express the feelings, thoughts, experiences or dreams of the characters. The challenge of this scene is to 'conceal Christ's identity from Mary Magdalen without concealing it from the beholder'. Ringbom claims that this problem was first raised in liturgical drama. In pictures it appeared in the fourteenth century, and usually 'two phases of the episode were condensed into a single image, where Mary Magdalen's mistake is suggested by giving Christ the attributes of a gardener.' This attribute is often a spade or a hatchet. (Ringbom, 1980., 48-50, Fig. 9, Fig. 10)

⁶ Bal, 1999, 181.

⁷ Based on the horizontal forms of Reed's paintings, Bal associates them with films and also with Japanese and Chinese scrolls, which are basically narrative (Bal, 1991, 184.). Bal also uses other terms and concepts in her analysis of Reed's paintings, for example eroticism, baroque and second person narrative (Bal, 1999, Chapter 6, 165-207.).

pictorial space, Samuel van Hoogstraten's *Still Life* (Figure 14) gives an extremely realistic view of the painted objects. The bubble of hyperrealism is pricked when the beholder gets too close and realizes that it is indeed a pure illusion. A change takes place, during the process of perception. Wolfgang Kemp regarded change or transformation as a basic criterion for narrative and called attention to the different meanings of the term in ancient poetics and in modern aesthetic theory. The ancients recognized change as 'maximal forms of transformation: abrupt reversal (*peripeteia*), sudden recognition (*anagnorisis*), misfortune (*pathos*). They recognized change solely in terms of a dramatic change for the better or for the worse.' Its meaning in modern theory is 'more neutral and descriptive', it might be any change in pose, mood, position; the minimal criteria for this being 'a transformation in time and of time'.⁸ Kemp cited Arthur Danto's tripartite formula, the exactness of which is like those applied in physics: first, X (the character) is in state F in t_1 moment, then the character is transformed from state F into state G by t_3 moment as a consequence of E, an event that happened to the character in t_2 moment. Kemp's visual example of this is the transformation of Moses in the scene of the burning bush carved onto one of the panels of the 5th century wooden gate of the church of Santa Sabina in Rome.⁹ In this example the change happens in the life of the character of the story. However, Kemp also made a suggestion that takes us back to the story of the eye as presented by Mieke Bal. He formulated a critique of current views saying that '[s]tructural narratology tends to overlook the fact the narrative is a form of communication', and urged that narratologists must take into account that a narrative situation has not two but rather three parties. It is 'a *narrative* by a *narrator* for an *audience*.'¹⁰ In this expanded form of narrative, the viewer / reader / listener and the character of the story have analogous positions. They are 'fused like Siamese twins'¹¹ since they share their experience during the story, for example both are unaware of the end. This sharing has a clear effect on us, the viewers: it causes an 'analogous formation of our own identity through processes of perception and identification.'¹² It is in this sense that the process of perception is a narrative.

Ernst van Alphen has also used the concept of perception-as-story in his analysis of Francis Bacon's paintings.¹³ Bacon's triptychs have several properties that make them susceptible to a narrative analysis. These include: the triptych format, the spatial and temporal continuity of the panels, sequentiality, the 'strong dramatic charge' of the figures, the fact that 'heads or bodies are "in motion"

⁸ Kemp, 2003, 67.

⁹ Cf. Kemp, 2003, 66-68. This change happens on many levels. With Moses a 'decisive shift takes place: from sinner to savior; from possessor to man possessed; out of the purposeless contemplativeness of pastoral life to the purposeful, arduous path of secession. Or, as we might also put it, from the static to the ecstatic; from earthbound origin to purposive beginning. Thanks largely to the lowest register of the panel, the pictorial narrative conveys a transformation that mediates a whole array of polar opposites, from shod/unshod, by way of sitting/standing, passive/active, profane/sacred, to man-and-beast/man-and-God.'

¹⁰ Kemp, 2003, 70.

¹¹ Kemp, 2003, 71.

¹² Kemp, 2003, 74. Arnheim accounts for a similar thing, a parallel story of the reader when s/he reads Hamlet: 'Thus, while unfolding the dramatic conflict, the play also deals with man's ways of discovering the facts of life – a secondary plot, of which the spectator is the protagonist.' (Arnheim, 2002, 377.)

¹³ Van Alphen 1990.

at their places, and that the bodies are afflicted by movement of some kind.’¹⁴ Yet, van Alphen is chiefly interested in the process of perception and the story created during this process. For him, Bacon’s paintings are ‘representations of the narrative of perception’,¹⁵ their ‘[s]equentiality does not characterize the object of perception but the subject. The narrative is not the content of perception; it defines the structure of perception itself.’¹⁶ The process of narrativization and narrative processes are, in fact, enormously important subjects in narrative psychology and in narratology itself, and it is surprising that Bal and van Alphen do not refer to them. They will be discussed in the next section.

FORMAL NARRATIVES

It was in semiotics that the notion of abstract, non-figurative narratives first introduced by Gestalt theorists became fully incorporated into the analysis of narratives. Represented movement was the key concept in the definition proposed for visual narratives by Gunther Kress and Theo van Leeuwen. The minimum criterion for an image to be classified as narrative is that it should contain a vector,¹⁷ a term borrowed from the sciences. In mathematics, vectors are basic elements of linear space and denote direction; in physics movements and orientations are modelled with vectors. Using such a broad and general definition allows one to include images that do not illustrate some well-known story. Narrative processes, or ‘transactional relations’ are realized through vectors. These can be formed by bodies, parts of bodies such as limbs, gestures or glances, tools used for action, roads or paths, and, in abstract compositions, by indications of directionality such as lines, triangles, or other elements.¹⁸ This is, in essence, simply a redefinition of Arnheim’s notion of directed tension in a narrative context.

In Kress and van Leeuwen’s theory, abstract narrative pertains to ‘abstract visual’ images, as distinct from ‘naturalistic images’. This expansion of the category is an important development: it includes not only abstract paintings but diagrams as well. However, to determine the place of abstract narratives within their model one has to go through a labyrinth of terminology. As Kress and van Leeuwen represent narrative processes, abstract narratives would be classified as one of the six narrative modes they defined: action processes, reactional processes, speech and mental processes, conversion processes, circumstances, and geometrical symbolism. El Lissitzky’s *Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge* (1919-20, Figure 15) is a good example of an action process. It tells a story with basic geometrical shapes: Reds are represented by a red triangle, Whites by a white circle. Knowing El Lissitzky’s engagement with Russian and Soviet propaganda one cannot avoid the political

¹⁴ Ernst van Alphen is aware of the narrative elements of Bacon’s paintings. However, in opposition to the views of Hugh M. Davies (*The Black Triptychs*, 1975), whom he refers to (1990, 486-488.), for van Alphen these elements only ‘create the illusion of narrativity’ (1990, 496.). Nevertheless, his argument rests only on the philosophy of perception and not on its psychology. See van Alphen, 1990, 484-485.

¹⁵ Van Alphen, 1990, 499.

¹⁶ Van Alphen, 1990, 491.

¹⁷ Kress and Leeuwen, 2006, 59.

¹⁸ Kress and Leeuwen, 2006, 59.

connotations of the story: ‘the revolution, represented by a red triangle, is an active, dynamic force, wedging itself into the inert, self-contained, ‘organic’ society of White Russia.’¹⁹ Kress and van Leeuwen illustrate geometrical symbolism with a painting by Malevich: *Suprematist Composition: Red Square and Black Square* (1914, Figure 16). The oblique position of the small red square evokes the sense of escape, thus the big square is identified as the source of its motion. Therefore the latter, like the big triangle in the animated film by Heider and Simmel, is described as being ‘oppressive’.²⁰ At present, there are areas where the narrativity of abstract stories is taken for granted: Barbara Tversky, a psychologist from Stanford University, has used geometric figures in an experiment on the segmentation of events.²¹

Something similar to what occurs in these abstract works is found in earlier paintings, as has been realised for some time. For the purposes of the present argument, it is helpful now to return to these examples. Tintoretto’s *Presentation of the Virgin* (Figure 9) was analysed by Etienne Souriau and then by Gombrich. Both of them emphasized one compositional element, the wide oblique staircase. For Souriau, this element enhanced the rhythm of Mary’s upward motion. The depicted moment of ascent is the stellar centre of the image, around which time expands to include Mary’s complete movement: ‘[o]ne feels that she has just climbed the three steps that separate her from St. Anne. One accompanies her in thought to the threshold.’²² Gombrich was interested in the ‘objective time span’, the unit created by the meaning of the painting. He emphasized the role of gestures in unfolding the narrative, both the pointing and the High Priest’s gesture of welcome.²³ A similar upward movement on a staircase is present in Salviati’s *Bathsheba goes to King David* (Figure 12). Here the time span covers Bathsheba’s long way up, including the love-making scene in the tower. Salviati links the rhythm of two distinct elements: her body and the staircase. He pictured Bathsheba three times on the stairs, suggesting that her ascent was difficult and anxious – as it is in the Bible.²⁴ Salviati’s fresco treats the heroine as a kind of abstract element: her form is multiplied and empowered with rhythm and directionality. This entwining of rhythm and directionality is also the main theme in Edward Burne-Jones’s *The Golden Stairs* (Figure 17). This painting has no pre-existing written source but it is nevertheless a narrative according to Kress and van Leeuwen’s definitions. It may be said to belong to the action process type: the vector of the procession is not outlined by gestures as in the Tintoretto, but by directed sequentiality, by the bodies pointing downwards. Or it may belong to the geometrical symbolism: the similarity of the women enhances the feeling that this is in fact the movement through space of only one female figure. Paul Souriau made a distinction between graceful and mechanical

¹⁹ Kress and Leeuwen, 2006, 55.

²⁰ Kress and Leeuwen, 2006, 57.

²¹ Tversky, 2004, 385.

²² Souriau, 1949, 301.

²³ Gombrich, 1964, 304.

²⁴ On the gender specificity of movements in the 16th century Italian painting see Fermor, 1993.

motions.²⁵ Salviati's and Burne-Jones's compositions are certainly examples of graceful movement, whereas Muybridge's snapshot of the Nude is mechanical, and Duchamp's *Nude Descending the Staircase* is machine-like.²⁶ Even so, the main action in all of these examples is a simple and basic movement: stepping on a staircase either upwards or downwards. The last example to be discussed here is a nonfigurative painting, which problematizes that very same movement (Ilona Keserü's *Event IV-VII*, Figure 19). Here vertical motion is indicated through the shading of colour and a change of tonality. The same form is repeated, one above the other, and the gradual change of colour evokes gradual motion. Narrative, in all of these examples, is primarily expressed through sequential movement. Obviously, the aim is to show a simple motion, and the repeated or similar forms indicate causal relation. In the story-based examples, this motion helps to add depth and richness to the narrative.

Using abstract forms as characters in a story is not unique to the visual arts. One can bring to mind similar examples from literature. For example, the novel *Flatland: A Romance in Many Dimensions* was written by Edwin A. Abbott (1838-1926) in 1884. Here geometrical shapes are the characters of an imaginary society, meant to refer to Victorian England. This society is inhabited by triangles, squares, regular polygons, and infertile circles who top the hierarchy. The story traces the life path of a protagonist who unfortunately ends up in the madhouse: he is a square, who had a unique experience of three-dimensionality and a sense of the direction upwards, which differs from the direction pointing to North. However, he is unable to make himself understood by his fellow residents of Flatland. The choice of geometrical shapes as stand-in for characters enriches the storyline: in a way the novel is a didactic tale about the nature of dimensionality as applied in mathematics.

Kress and van Leeuwen offer a brief but not entirely convincing explanation of how abstract narratives are perceived and where meaning-making process originates in such cases. Their explanation is vague. 'The meanings of the basic geometrical shapes, then, are motivated in two ways. First, they derive from the properties of the shapes or, rather, from the values given to these properties in specific social and cultural contexts. (...) Second, these meanings derive from the common qualities we may detect in such objects in our environment as would be circular and rectangular when abstracted to their underlying basic shape, and from the values attached to these qualities in different social contexts.'²⁷ Some answers to this question – why do we (humans in general) create narrative meanings in such situations – have been generated from within narratology, philosophy and especially narrative psychology.

²⁵ Souriau, 1983, 91.

²⁶ More on modernism and time in McClain, 1985. For observing Kinetic and Op art and time experiences in images see Bértola, 1972.

²⁷ Kress and Leeuwen, 2006, 56-57.

NARRATIVIZATION

Although in different ways, the interpretations already offered of both David Reed's and El Lissitzky's paintings, were directed by what Gombrich described as 'the principle of the primacy of meaning'. While viewers are scanning an image they move from being observers to become interpreters. In the case of these two pictures, viewers even become narrators, who constitute events either from the perceptual experience itself or from the forms seen. Narrativization is the term used to describe this process; the term is usually credited to Hayden White and later to Monika Fludernik.²⁸ Jan Alber defines it precisely: 'the process of narrativization consists of giving narrative form to a discourse for the purpose of facilitating a better understanding of the represented phenomena.'²⁹ It is a process that makes a story out of a plot. As J. David Velleman remarked: 'A story does more than recount events; it recounts events in a way that renders them intelligible, thus conveying not just information but also understanding. We might therefore be tempted to describe narrative as a genre of explanation.'³⁰ In the case of abstract narratives, explanation is 'storification'. This process includes seeing directions, seeing causally related events in sequences, or personifying geometrical forms.

Hayden White, a famous historian whose activities included submitting history to narratological interpretation, raised the question of narrativization in relation to certain forms of medieval source material. This included annales or chronicles consisted of ordered lists of recorded real events without the characteristics usually associated with narratives, such as a beginning, a middle, and an end. These lists of events also lack a centre, or a hierarchy. Even so, in the formal sense, a chronicle is essentially an ordered succession of units or things, like Burne-Jones's *The Golden Stair* and Muybridge's sequential photographs; the succession is either chronological, forward or backward, or it is spatial, top to bottom or the other way around. White argues that the events listed in the 'annales' are actually conceived of as a story, and that such a list

...arises out of a desire to have real events display the coherence, integrity, fullness, and closure of an image of life that is and can only be imaginary. The notion that sequences of real events possess the formal attributes of the stories we tell about imaginary events could only have its origin in wishes, daydreams, reveries. Does the world really present itself to perception in the form of well-made stories, with central subjects, proper beginnings, middles, and ends, and a coherence that permits us to see "the end" in every beginning? Or does it present itself more in the forms that the annals and chronicle suggest, either as mere sequence without beginning or end or as sequences of beginnings that only terminate and never conclude?³¹

²⁸ See White 1980 and 1981. Fludernik uses the term in the context of literature and reading. she 'argues that in the process of narrativisation readers engage in reading texts as narratives, i. e. as manifesting human experientiality. Recipients then actively construct texts in terms of their alignment with experiential ('real-life') cognitive parameters.' (Alber, 2005, 387.)

²⁹ Alber, 2005, 386-387.

³⁰ Velleman, 2003, 1.

³¹ White, 1980, 27.

No such weight of authority and morality may be found in the images discussed here. Their narrativity is not attached to historicity to the same extent as White's chronicles, yet narrativization still occurs. This tendency to make narratives arises from the fact that humans find it hard not to see narratives in sequential forms or sequential phenomena.

PERCEPTION AS ACTION

Alva Noë, a philosopher at Berkeley working on cognitive science, has introduced the notion of an enactive approach to perception. He argues that consciousness, and, more broadly, perception is not a passive experience inside us or the work only of the brain. Rather, these phenomena come out of human interaction with the environment, with the world around us. 'Perception is not something that happens to us, or in us. It is something we do.'³² Perception is a skilful activity, it is an 'intrinsically active' process involving the whole body.³³ Noë's thoughts further support the views already voiced by Souriau, Gombrich, Bal and van Alphen, namely that perception is an active process. It happens in time, it involves movement and, as Hayden White argued, it can be perceived as a kind of narrative. However, Alva Noë's approach to perception is different from Bal's: she noted the effect of the image on perception while Noë asks how this process takes place and how it give us access to the image.

Noë further argues that movements are essential in perception. Not only is perception realized through movement, but it is constituted through our understanding of the sensorimotoric effects of movement. The character of perception is sensory-determined. Bal described the process that the eye and the body undergo while watching a David Reed painting. These changes, argues Noë, produce sensory changes that effect the perception of an object, or of the visual world.

You aren't given the visual world all at once. You are *in* the world, and through skillful visual probing – what Merleau-Ponty called “palpation with the eyes” – you bring yourself into contact with it. You discern its structure and so, in *that* sense, represent it. Vision is touch-like. Like touch, vision is *active*. You perceive the scene not all at once, in a flash. You move your eyes around the scene the way you move your hands about the bottle. As in touch, the content of visual experience is not given all at once. We gain content by looking around just as we gain tactile content by moving our hands. You enact your perceptual content, through the activity of skillful looking.³⁴

There is one more gap to be filled in the chain of this rough argument for the existence of formal and perceptual visual narratives. Why should we consider the perceptual process described by Noë as a narrative process? Narrative psychology may be used to justify this view.

³² Noe, 2004, 1. Noe uses perception and consciousness interchangeably: in an interview he says: 'Consciousness is not something that happens in us. It is something we do.'

http://www.edge.org/3rd_culture/noe08/noe08_index.html (2010 04 05)

³³ Noe, 2004, 3. Compare his terminology with Souriau's.

³⁴ Noe, 2004, 73.

THE NARRATIVE CONSTRUCTION OF REALITY

Jerome S. Bruner, a cognitive psychologist, claims that humans experience the world and endow experiences with meaning in two ways. As he has it, humans construct reality in two ways; one is narrative, the other paradigmatic or logico-scientific. In this dichotomy, a 'good story' is set against a 'well-formed argument', and further, 'believability' against 'testability'.³⁵ The paradigmatic mode is the language of science and mathematics. It is a formal system where empirical truth is tested through observation, description and explanation, and by creating hypotheses and verifying them. Whereas the narrative mode deals with human intentions. This mode is more imaginative and intuitive, but also sequential, action- and detail-oriented. It 'leads instead to good stories, gripping drama, believable (though not necessarily "true") historical accounts. It deals in human or human-like intention and action and the vicissitudes and consequences that mark their course. It strives to put its timeless miracles into the particulars of experience, and to locate the experience in time and place.'³⁶ The relationship of these two modes is complementary, one is not reducible to the other. Although being envisioned as an adjustment of the linearism of Western forms of written narratives, Bruner's points are still very helpful.

In fact, Jerome Bruner's description of the narrative mode of thought fits with the views advanced by Arnheim and Gombrich, and can be taken up by semiotics. On similar lines to Arnheim's argument (and partly using Arnheim's psychological examples), Bruner claims that even on a basic perceptual level humans cannot resist seeing causal relations between the elements of these situations, and he claims this view on a visual basis.³⁷ However, to determine the general features of the narrative mode Bruner turns to great stories by gifted writers. A 'story must construct two landscapes simultaneously. One is the landscape of action, where the constituents are the arguments of action: agent, intention or goal, situation, instrument, something corresponding to a "story grammar." The other landscape is the landscape of consciousness: what those involved in the action know, think, or feel, or do not know, think, or feel. The two landscapes are essential and distinct'.³⁸ Within semiotics, the model proposed for visual narrative situations intentionally employed a linguistic story structure. This is comparable and indeed quite similar to what Bruner calls the 'landscape of action': vectors stand for the actions between 'represented participants', and additionally there is a 'locative' relation (realized by elements expressing spatial arrangements), and an 'instrumental' relation (realized by gestures of

³⁵ Bruner, 1986, 14. The idea is expounded earlier: 'arguments convince one of their truth, stories of their lifelikeness. The one verifies by eventual appeal to procedures for establishing formal and empirical proof. The other establishes not truth but verisimilitude.' (Bruner, 1986, 11). Bruner takes this argument further in his study, *The Narrative Construction of Reality*, where identifies ten features of narrative texts. (Bruner, 1991.)

³⁶ Bruner, 1986, 13.

³⁷ Bruner, 1986, 17.

³⁸ Bruner, 1986, 14.

holding, or with objects that are ‘tools’).³⁹ Bruner’s ‘landscape of consciousness’ – that is, the place where one may find the agent’s thoughts, feelings and knowledge – is also to be found in the realm of the visual. Sixteen Ringbom has studied pictorial conventions for expressing the characters’ intentions, feelings, beliefs, visions and dreams in narrative situations. Ringbom focused on late medieval art, but many of the devices that he identified would survive into the early modern period, albeit in refined form.⁴⁰

As Bruner says, the narrative form of knowledge prevails in human experience: ‘we organize our experience and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative – stories, excuses, myths, reasons for doing and not doing, and so on.’⁴¹ This narrative experience enables us to perceive sequential and abstract forms as narrative, and explains why the time of contemplation should be considered as narrative time. Indeed, Hayden White’s concept of narrativization and Bruner’s narrative mode of thoughts both have consequences beyond formal or perceptual narratives. These processes also occur when we perceive story-based narratives, although in these cases, due to the context provided by the pre-existing stories, they do not seem quite so crucial.

David Herman has also tried to explain how written stories are perceived and how the associative field of a storyworld is created. His points are equally relevant for both formal and story-based narratives.

In trying to make sense of a narrative, interpreters attempt to reconstruct not just what happened but also the surrounding context or environment embedding storyworld existents, their attributes, and the actions and events in which they are involved. Indeed, the grounding of stories in storyworlds goes a long way towards explaining narratives’ immersiveness, their ability to ‘transport’ interpreters into places and times that they must occupy for the purposes of narrative comprehension. Interpreters do not merely reconstruct a sequence of events and a set of existents, but imaginatively (emotionally, viscerally) inhabit a world in which things matter, agitate, exalt, repulse, provide grounds for laughter and grief, and so on – both for narrative participants and for interpreters of the story. More than reconstructed timelines and inventories of existents, then, storyworlds are mentally and emotionally projected environments in which interpreters are called upon to live out complex blends of cognitive and imaginative response.⁴²

In conclusion, it is important to note that sequentiality plays a key role in the concept of both formal and perceptual narratives. Sequentiality, in a formal sense, is mostly represented by gradual changes. This gradual process evokes the experience of causal relations, which then reaffirms the particular phenomenon in question by creating a link between the formal elements. This was evident in Salviati’s fresco, and in the work of Duchamp and Muybridge as well. Sequentiality in perception occurs while a painting is being looked at, through the process of narrativization. As Herman remarked, cognitive and imaginative responses are intrinsic to the process of interpretation. The existence of

³⁹ Kress and van Leeuwen, 2006, 46. See the section ‘Visual structures and linguistic structures’ (pages 76-78), which is to my knowledge the best available summary.

⁴⁰ Ringbom, 1980.

⁴¹ Bruner, 1991, 4.

⁴² Herman, 2005, 570.

formal and perceptual narratives is not self-evident, but these concepts may be justified by recent scholarship in psychology and cognitive science. Neuroscience may advance this issue further by considering the biological bases for these processes.

Chapter 6 Anachronism and Narrative Ramification

INTRODUCTION

So far, the relationship of time and narration has been a recurrent topic within the present thesis. This relationship has been addressed in many forms: as the idea of *punctum temporis*, as moments in episodic narration, as the time of perception and contemplation. It is certainly clear that visual narratives set up a different experience of time from that of written narratives. Images are extremely good at fusing different moments (they can work simultaneously, proleptically or analeptically) into a scenario. As already discussed, in some periods, warnings against such practices were formulated within art theory and that, in itself, is evidence of widespread application. It must be concluded that images are able to span not only short intervals but also long periods of time and that they can fuse different locations as well.

This chapter focuses on a particular aspect of the relationship of time and narration in imagery, an aspect that is related to temporal-spatial fusions. One phenomenon, that of anachronism, will be studied especial detail. Pictorial anachronisms have never previously been studied in a narrative context. As I argue, pictorial anachronisms, at least as they were rendered in late quattrocento Italy, would contribute profoundly to the narrative effect of paintings. This was a device that enabled painters, patrons and spectators to make religious narratives seem actual, efficient and present. There is a difference in narrative perception between the ‘that-time’ and the ‘present-day’ viewer, and in both cases, this depends on the beholder’s experience of time. As I shall argue here, in fifteenth-century Italian painting the theological principle of a living presence justified the use of such anachronisms. Moreover, with anachronisms, biblical stories could be radically changed. This happened in the case of Carlo Crivelli’s *Ascoli Annunciation*, which deploys a whole range of visual devices to set up anachronisms. This is why this altarpiece is the starting point of the present chapter. In it, Crivelli created an atmosphere of presentness with an up-to-date scenery, and he did this to encourage active participation in the Biblical event. This ahistorical rendering of the story fuses multiplied temporal and diegetic levels. To describe the new narratives set into play by fusing different temporal layers, a new term, narrative ramification will be introduced and then examined in relation to other relevant examples. Although not fully theorized here, a particular conviction lies behind this chapter: to show that the analysis of a narrative image should not only involve the depicted story but also the story of the image itself.

THE ASCOLI ANNUNCIATION: ITS HISTORY AND FUNCTION

According to St Luke (1, 26-38), the Annunciation took place in the town of Nazareth in Galilee. Gabriel, the angel of God, visited Mary and informed her about the Incarnation. In a short conversation Gabriel explained the miraculous manner of Christ's conception and foretold the birth of the child named Jesus, who, according to prophecy, will bring the eternal kingdom onto Earth. The biblical text is brief yet substantial. There is no description of any specific details of the scene.

Having studied the iconography of the Annunciation in fourteenth and fifteenth century painting, David M. Robb considers its basic structural elements to be almost constant: 'the Virgin is seated, in the act of reading or interrupted by the angle kneeling before her. They are thus more or less alike if they are judged by the iconographic rules applicable to earlier art. But the settings all differ'.¹ Crivelli's *Ascoli Annunciation* from 1486 roughly follows Robb's scheme: the kneeling Mary is depicted in her chamber at a prayer-desk, Gabriel approaches from the left. The humble gestures of Mary's hand and her pose suggest that the conversation has already finished and the Virgin is ready to conceive: from above, the dove of the Holy Spirit arrives, entering the Virgin's chamber through a small hole in the entablature. What makes Crivelli's *Annunciation* interesting is the setting, that which Robb noted to be an open factor. Crivelli, like many of his contemporaries, took advantage of the indeterminacy of the Biblical passage on this point. The stage is the contemporary town of Ascoli inhabited by local citizens. These are dressed in the latest fashion, as are Gabriel and the Virgin. Not only are the citizens of Ascoli eyewitnesses to the Annunciation, the intimacy of the scene is further disturbed by St Emidius, patron of Ascoli, who holds a model of the city.

Thomas Tolley characterizes the citizens, their contemporary costumes and the presence of St Emidius in Crivelli's painting as 'extra-narrative elements'.² In fact, the citizens and especially St Emidius are not extradiegetic, as Tolley thinks. As I argue, they are the most important constitutive elements of the narrative, not of the story of the Annunciation, but of the story Crivelli offers to us. Indeed, these pictorial elements clearly indicate that the Biblical episode has been fully reinterpreted. The key to this new interpretation is the making visible and the actualization of the Annunciation; the free rendering of the temporal layers constitutes an intentional anachronism. Anachronism is used here as a narrative device to reframe the religious scene. In the religious paintings of Renaissance Italy, as I argue, anachronisms were often used visually to historicize biblical, that is, textual narratives.

As is frequently the case, the story of Crivelli's painting and the story that it represents are not separable. Thus, the place to begin is with a brief review of the historical context and the circumstances of the painting's commission.³

¹ Robb, 1936, 480.

² Tolley, 1996.

³ For the basic facts and provenance see Davies, 1961, and Tolley, 1996.

The *Ascoli Annunciation* was ordered in 1486 for the church of the Santissima Annunziata in Ascoli Piceno to commemorate an important event in the history of the city. Ascoli had requested a kind of self-government from Pope Sixtus IV in 1481. The letter conveying that this had been granted reached the town on 25 March 1482, the day of the feast of Annunciation. This day now became a double feast: of the Annunciation and of Ascoli's special privilege, the *Libertas Ecclesiastica*. This, 'Freedom under the Church', was a newly constructed category⁴, a special right that gave Ascoli a certain freedom, the right to self-determination regarding internal civic issues, although the city remained under the papal throne.

Celebrating the new status of the town, two paintings were ordered, both of the Annunciation. The first was painted in 1484 by a follower of Crivelli, Pietro Alemanno; it hangs now in the city museum.⁵ According to records quoted by Davies, Alemanno's painting was originally for the Chapel of the Town Hall. That the new privilege was increasingly considered important is indicated by a second commission, for a more representative commemorative painting. This is the work by Crivelli, finished in 1486 for the church of Santissima Annunziata.

Crivelli's name was recorded in the city of Ascoli from 1471, when he probably painted a polyptych, now lost, for the church of San Gregorio. The next commission dates to 1473, an altarpiece for the Cathedral of San Emidio, still in situ with its original frame. By 1483, Crivelli had settled in Ascoli, and his presence in the town was recorded until 1488.⁶

Crivelli completed the *Ascoli Annunciation* in 1486. Strange to say, the city actually surrendered the privilege of *Libertas Ecclesiastica* in 1502,⁷ and perhaps Crivelli played a political role in this.⁸ Ascoli, then the leading town of the Marches, was situated near the border of the Kingdom of Naples, which constituted a constant political threat. In 1490, pro-Neapolitan forces took power in the city, and giving up the privilege may have been one consequence of this. Crivelli's role in this process is indicated by the fact that Prince Ferrante of Capua, later king of Naples, knighted him in the same year. Furthermore, Crivelli was referred to as the Prince's 'familiaris', without there being any evidence that he painted for Prince Ferrante. This suggests some sort of service done by Crivelli. He did not return to Ascoli till 1495, the year of his death.

To return now to the privilege of the *Libertas Ecclesiastica* in Ascoli, from the first anniversary of its granting an annual procession went out on the Feast of the Annunciation to the church of the SS. Annunziata, where Crivelli's painting would eventually be displayed.⁹ Since it is an altarpiece devoted to the patron saint of this church, Crivelli's piece was most likely placed on an important altar, or at

⁴ Tolley, 1996.

⁵, Davies 1961, ft 3., Ghisetti Giavarina 1996.

⁶ Tolley, 1996.

⁷ Davies, 1961, ft 1.

⁸ The idea is from Rushforth (1900), quoted by Tolley, 1996.

⁹ Davies, 1961, ft 2., and Tolley 1996.

some other significant location. Even if only for a short period, before the city surrendered its liberty in 1502, the altarpiece most likely played an important role in the church's liturgy.¹⁰

We do not know how this annual procession was choreographed, but it was probably similar to other late medieval processions and devotional practices related to the feast of the Annunciation. One such devotional practice is well known, that connected to Giotto's *Annunciation* fresco commissioned by Enrico Scrovegni for the Arena chapel in Padua. Although the 'chapel's dedication ceremony in 1303 was performed on the Feast of the Annunciation, underlining the association with the Annunciate Virgin', the cult can be traced 'well before 1278.'¹¹ This is how the dramaturgy of the *representatio salutationis angelicae* was set up in Padua:

The procession began at the chapel of the Palazzo della Ragione, where two boys were dressed to represent the Virgin and the Angel Gabriel, the latter with wings and a lily. Meanwhile, the bishop, captain, and clergy of Padua, including the religious orders, gathered at the cathedral and processed with crosses to the Palazzo della Ragione, where they were joined by the *podestà*, judges, knights, doctors, and other notable citizens of Padua. The boys acting as the Virgin and the Angel Gabriel were then carried in procession to the arena on heavily ornamented chairs. Preceded by the trumpeters of the commune and the clergy and followed by the *podestà*, stewards of the goldsmiths' and merchants' guilds, and the rest of the procession, they arrived at the prepared place in the arena. Here, the Angel gave Mary the angelic salutation.¹²

As Jacobus remarks, '[i]t is likely, that the ancient *representatio salutationis angelicae* underwent some changes in consequence of Enrico Scrovegni's building a Marian church on the rim of the arena',¹³ and changes probably occurred in the subsequent two centuries too. However, these changes were most likely not radical in terms of content or form, importance or grandeur. Thus, Jacobus's description offers helpful hints of how an Annunciation feast was celebrated, especially since, both in Ascoli and Padua the procession had both civic and religious significance.

Furthermore, Crivelli's version of the Annunciation – both in terms of its general composition and its inner frame, the stone ledge – clearly foregrounds its stage-like nature. It may be that it played a role in a so-called Golden Mass, or *Missa Aurea*. This involved a special sermon on the Feast of the Annunciation given in particular churches; the Santissima Annuziata in Ascoli, for obvious reasons, may have been such a church. As Jacobus notes: '[t]hroughout Europe, the Golden Mass had a special nature, often expressed through the employment of musical arrangements and dramatic embellishments that were not strictly part of the Annunciation Mass as it would have been celebrated from the service

¹⁰ 'Recorded *ca.* 1724 in the SS. Annuziata, Ascoli; the altar over which it had hung was at that time dedicated to the Immaculate Conception, and the picture had been transferred to the Capella domestica.' (Davies, 1961, and ft 10.)

¹¹ Jacobus, 1999, 93.

¹² Jacobus, 1999, 93.

¹³ Jacobus, 1999, 93.

books of a particular church. At major churches the Golden Mass was often elaborated by a small musical play in which members of the clergy enacted the roles of the Angel and the Virgin Mary.¹⁴

As shown by Hans Belting, an altarpiece was not merely a decorative panel. Instead, it was an institution, a cultic centre, a living object. 'The altarpiece represents the church on a number of levels. It symbolizes the mystery of the sacrificial cult, and on another level, the church as an institution that administered the mystery. Finally, it represents a local community – a parish, a monastery, or a foundation – that supported its church. The cult of a saint was always a symbol of a social body, and the altarpiece was the stage of a saint's cult. In this sense the carved altars of the late Gothic period, with their extravagant increase in size and decoration, can be seen as a means of competition. They stand both for ideas of the church in general and for the social claims of a local institution. In this tendency the monasteries and foundations took the lead in the fourteenth century, followed by the towns and parishes in the fifteenth.'¹⁵

Belting's general description of this double commitment, both civic and religious, fits both the Arena Chapel in Padua and also Crivelli's *Annunciation*. So it is probable that the altarpiece was not only a liturgical centrepiece but also an important element in the constitution of local, Ascoli identity.

EPISODES AND PICTORIAL SIGNS OF PRESENTNESS

The altarpiece was most probably a civic commission and that is why many features in Crivelli's picture refer to events in and the environment of contemporary Ascoli, and, more generally, to the time when the painting was made.

First, there is the painted inner frame below the scene bearing the inscription *LIBERTAS ECCLESIASTICA* and thus referring directly to the grant of 1482. Such an inscription is also present in the earlier painting by Pietro Alemanno. In Crivelli's work, the inscription is, on the right, accompanied by the coat of arms of the city of Ascoli. In the middle appears the arms of Innocent VIII, Sixtus IV's successor as overlord of Ascoli, who was in office when the painting was completed, and on the left are the arms of Prospero Caffarelli, Bishop of Ascoli between 1464 and 1500.

The painting also carries Crivelli's signature and the date of its completion. The signature indicates the painter's Venetian origins; it was a clear sign for the market used by such painters when trying to further their reputations. The inclusion of the word 'Veneti' is related to the fact that Crivelli left Venice around 1457 and lived most of his life outside the Veneto in the Marches.¹⁶

¹⁴ Jacobus, 1999, 93.

¹⁵ Belting, 1994, 452.

¹⁶ 'Carlo Crivelli's signatures are solidly Venetian in terms of their frequency, form, and placement. They are most often "engraved" into fictive architecture. (...) His insistence in using "Veneti" is to be expected, given that most of his works were painted in the Marches after his exile from Venice around 1457. The wording of his signatures is most similar to those of Bartolommeo Vivarini from the 1450s and early 1460s, although the form is more vividly illusionistic, stony surfaces depicted lovingly, and hence closer to the manner of early Mantegna.' (Matthew, 1998, 624.)

Another sign of contemporaneity is the presence of St Emidius, referring to the local legend that the privilege was granted through his intercession. Emidius or Emygdus was an early Christian martyr and also bishop of Ascoli; he later became a patron saint of the city, protecting it from plague, earthquake, and war. ‘The martyrs were fellow human beings who, precisely because of their death, now enjoyed intimacy with God. And through that intimacy came their power to intercede with god on behalf of their devotees.’¹⁷ In Crivelli’s painting, Emidius is acting accordingly, although he is not actually interceding with God, but with the God-mother, the Virgin Mary, through Gabriel. Emidius holds a model of the town in his hands which makes it explicit that his presence here is as an advocate for the city, a depository of the local community’s trust.

There is another, seemingly minor episode, both visually and thematically related to the main scene, yet it can also be regarded as a consequence of it. Gabriel’s delivery of the divine message to Mary is referenced in a *mise-en-abyme* motif above the main scene. On the vertical axis, right above Gabriel’s head, at the top of the arch Antonio Benincasa can be seen, the notary of Ascoli.¹⁸ In front of him lies an open book, indicating that he, like Mary, has been interrupted by a messenger. Benincasa is shown receiving the letter in which the Pope informs the city of its new privilege. This episode has a crucial role in the understanding of the visual renarration of the story of the Annunciation, as will be shown later.

The presence of Franciscan monks is another pictorial element referring to the town’s contemporary history. Although the question of their role has been addressed by previous scholars,¹⁹ because of their importance, I shall dwell on them in a little more detail. Franciscan monks stand at the top of the staircase opposite Mary’s house, almost level with the hole in the rim where the Holy Ghost is entering the chamber. Apart from Gabriel and Emidius, the Franciscans are the closest eye-witnesses to the scene. There are good historical reasons for the significance given to them pictorially.

First, the SS. Annunziata, for which Crivelli’s altarpiece was painted, was a Franciscan church. Secondly, Sixtus IV, formerly Francesco della Rovere, who granted Ascoli the *Libertas Ecclesiastica*, was a Franciscan friar prior to becoming pope. Rona Goffen has researched those actions and decisions made during his papacy which relate to his Franciscan identity. She argues that he had an enduring loyalty to his Order and that this has bearing on the fresco decorations that he commissioned for the Sistine Chapel in Rome. Goffen claims, that from the beginning of his papacy, Sixtus IV promoted Franciscan ideas and supported the Order of Friars Minor in all sorts of ways. One example of this was the canonization of St Bonaventura in 1482.²⁰ Furthermore, Sixtus had a special interest in the cult of the Virgin Mary. Goffen summarizes what this pope did to enhance and advance admiration for her, beginning with the Sistine Chapel:

¹⁷ Marshall, 1994, 493.

¹⁸ Lightbown, 2004, 342.

¹⁹ Lightbown, 1994.

²⁰ Goffen, 1986, 227.

(...) its fresco decoration completed by 15 August 1483, the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin, on which date the chapel was dedicated. The Assumption was the subject of Perugino's fresco altarpiece, destroyed some years later to accommodate Michelangelo's *Last Judgement* (1537-41). The feast of the Assumption, indeed the Marian cult in general, has especial significance for the Franciscans. (...) Sixtus' devotion to the Madonna is (and was) also well known. The pontiff prayed for hours before her image (...). He dedicated or re-dedicated churches and chapels to her throughout Rome and elsewhere. He promoted the cult of the Madonna, prescribing the feast of the Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple as a feast for the entire church in 1472, confirming the statutes of the Confraternity of the Rosary in 1475, instituting the feast of the Visitation in the same year, making the Marian shrine at Loreto a parish in 1482, and in 1484 placing it under papal protection. And it was Sixtus who made the first papal declarations regarding the cult of the Immaculate Conception.²¹

Crivelli's *Annunciation* is surely part of the Franciscan cult of Mary, paired with pope Sixtus's grant-giving act, and that is why Franciscan friars are included.

The passage from Goffen quoted above shows how Sixtus IV promoted the Virgin's Immaculate Conception. The pope's contribution to this cult is further described by Goffen: 'In 1475, Sixtus arranged a debate on the Conception, with Franciscans defending and Dominicans opposing belief in Mary's immaculacy. This resulted in the pope's inviting the friar Leonardo Nogarolli to write an office for the feast of Conception, which the pontiff approved in the following year. *Cum prae excelsa*, dated 28 February 1476, represented the first official act from the Curia in favor of Mary's privilege.'²²

In light of the Franciscan cult of the Virgin, let us now examine Crivelli's *Annunciation* scene in detail. Gabriel is approaching from the outside. He kneels with the lily and his hands raised in salutation. Mary is inside the house, kneeling in front her prie-dieu, her arms crossed over her breast. In the spiritual process of the *Annunciation* Baxandall described five successive phases, or five 'Laudable Conditions', as Fra Roberto named them in the quattrocento. These phases roughly correspond with the narrative stages in the sequence of actions associated with the *Annunciation*. From the position and gestures of Mary, Crivelli seems to have represented the Virgin in the fourth mystery, the *Humilitatio – Submission* stage. This is when Mary accepts the divine decision, as she states in the Biblical narrative: 'be it unto me according to thy word' (Luke, 1:38).²³ Then follows the departure of Gabriel and the actual Incarnation of the Word. Indeed, Crivelli's *Annunciation* includes a reference to Christ's conception: the Holy Ghost descends from the sky along a golden ray originating from God in the heavens, and in this manner reaches the Virgin's body. Thus, the beholder is able to see the beginning of the life of Christ, too, the concluding moment of the *Annunciation* and the *raison d'être* of the life of the Virgin. This pivotal addition in the altarpiece may well have its origins in Franciscan thought.

²¹ Goffen, 1986, 228-29.

²² Goffen, 1986, 230.

²³ According to Fra Roberto, the five 'laudable conditions' are: *Conturbatio – Disquiet*, *Cogitatio – Reflection*, *Interrogatio – Inquiry*, *Humilitatio – Submission*, *Meritatio – Merit*. See Baxandall, 1972, 49-55, and especially page 51.

Finally, and most obviously, the entire *mise-en-scène* provided by Crivelli is contemporary, Renaissance. The style of Mary's house, the street scene with the citizens of Ascoli and all the details of the urban environment are quattrocento. Of all elements within the picture that emphasize present time, this is the most striking. It is thus the main constituent of the diegetic realm that embeds all. Crivelli is specific not only about the domestic interior where the message is delivered to Mary, but also about geographical placement in general. The structure of the Virgin's house follows contemporary Italian Renaissance architecture; it is similar to the two-storey building in Piero della Francesca's *Flagellation* (Figure 24).²⁴ The decoration of the house is also typically Renaissance.²⁵ The rosettes and the garlands, the gilded capitals of the doorway, the flowers, the fruit and acanthus foliage, putti, masks, the frieze with classical motifs on the entablature, the cut stones and the use of *pietra serena*, all strengthen the beholder's feeling that this particular Annunciation takes place in quattrocento Ascoli. As Lightbown observed, '[t]he loggia above the Virgin's chamber is another indication of his transmutation of contemporary realities into the magnificence of the new architecture, for loggias were frequent on the houses of fifteenth-century Ascoli'.²⁶ Moreover, this environment is inhabited by local people, all of them, including the main characters, dressed according to late fifteenth-century fashion.

ANACHRONISM AS A VISUAL PHENOMENON

Evidently, many features in Crivelli's painting refer to the contemporary, to the grant of *Libertas Ecclesiastica*, the event that provided the reason for commissioning the altarpiece. However, one still do not expect the Annunciation to take place in a quattrocento environment.

The Annunciation happened in the town of Nazareth, and certainly not in fifteenth-century Ascoli. Moreover, St Emidius, as an early Christian bishop and martyr, neither fits with the decorative detailing on the Renaissance architecture nor with the Biblical narrative. At the time of the Annunciation, the Virgin did not wear Renaissance garments and her house was not decorated with Anatolian carpets. And certainly, Franciscan monks did not witness Gabriel's salutation to Mary. The visual tale presented in Crivelli's altarpiece clearly conflicts with the Biblical version.

Such a temporal admixture, incoherence or inconsistency – the placing of an ancient story into a modern environment (or vice versa) – is best described by the concept of visual anachronism. This phenomenon involves several compressed temporal layers and combines all into one (often contemporary) scenario. Anachronism also covers the use of different signs to evoke another temporal realm, different from the main 'reality' of the artwork. Formerly defined as an 'error in chronology;

²⁴ Lightbown, 2004, Figures 9, 23, 30.

²⁵ Lightbown, 2004, 334.

²⁶ Lightbown, 2004, 333, ft 5.

esp[ecially] a chronological misplacing of people, events, objects, or customs'²⁷, in the realm of visual storytelling it is better characterized as an elegant painterly device to compress and overlap different periods, eras, or styles.

Annette and Jonathan Barnes have studied anachronism as a general cultural phenomenon in literature, bringing in film, theatre, opera, and the visual arts. They specified those chronological mix-ups that were regarded as anachronistic, and through various examples, they crystallized a set of definitions for such phenomena. Regarding the Crivelli, the Barneses definition for objects and events fits best:

Something is an anachronism or anachronistic if and only if it implies

- (1) the ascription of "*F*" to *a* at *t*, where
- (2) "*F*" is not of a sort to hold of anything at *t*, and
- (3) "*F*" is of a sort to hold of something at a time other than *t*.²⁸

This rather abstract definition can be translated for the picture studied here:

a denotes the person of the Virgin Mary

"*F*" is the event of the Annunciation, Gabriel's delivery of the divine message

t designates quattrocento Ascoli

This suggests that the *Ascoli Annunciation* is anachronistic, since the event of the Annunciation ("*F*") happens in Nazareth to the Virgin Mary (*a*) in ancient times and in the town of Nazareth (time other than *t*), so it does not pertain the Virgin Mary in fifteenth-century Ascoli (at *t*).

Historically and logically, it is not possible for the Annunciation to happen in Quattrocento Italy. Even if the precise date of the Annunciation is not known, it must have happened before the birth of Christ, the terminus ante quem for the Annunciation. The birth of Christ is thus the origo for our chronology. Crivelli clearly states in the inscription on the frame that the present time of the painting is 1486 AD. The letters AD have a special importance here: the anachronism is wholly deliberate since Crivelli clearly indicates how many years have elapsed since the Annunciation took place.

It is important to note three things here. First, for the anachronism to work, a specific date is needed, and this date needs to be fixed. When examining an anachronistic event, object, or person, all other dates, or events with dates should be compared to this fixed date. However, if this date is not implied by the context of the work of art – be it a novel, a film or a painting – this date may be merely optional.

Second, what is anachronistic in a picture, and what is not, does not necessarily correspond with the division between diegetic and extradiegetic pictorial realms. For example, in Crivelli's painting, the Franciscans and the Virgin belong to the same diegetic (and temporal) world. However, in any reasonable verbal representation, they would have to belong to different temporal layers. Crivelli

²⁷ Quoted from the *New Penguin English Dictionary*, Barnes and Barnes, 1989, 253.

²⁸ Barnes and Barnes, 1989, 258.

placed the Franciscans in the picture precisely to enable them to witness the Annunciation. Thus these, otherwise different, diegetic realms are fused into one in the visual. Furthermore, there exists another, extradiegetic level in the altarpiece. That is presented by the inner frame, where the coats of arms are placed. These elements are clearly not part of the scene where the Annunciation is represented, as they are not visible either to the Franciscans, or to the Virgin. So, the inner frame forms another diegetic layer. To make the existing painterly realms more complex, such elements as the signature and the date in the lower zone of the columns (which otherwise belong to the first diegetic level), are clearly extradiegetic elements if understood from the viewpoint of the Virgin or the Franciscans. These elements belong to the level of the inner frame. The function of this extradiegetic level, as well as that of the *trompe l'oeil* elements in the foreground, will be analyzed presently.

Third, anachronisms in the visual realm are usually generated on more than one level, partly due to the narrative density of the depicted events, and also because of the reciprocity between the events and their setting. Or, more generally stated, because of the possible ambiguity of the reference points. As shown above, from the viewpoint of the Virgin and the Annunciation, both the quattrocento *mise-en-scène* and the presence of St Emidius are anachronistic. From the quattrocento cityscape in general, or in particular from the viewpoint of the Ascoli notary receiving the papal message, it is anachronistic to be simultaneously witnessing the Annunciation and seeing the town's patron saint actively intervening in this scene. Naturally, the same can be said when one takes St Emidius as a reference point. Consequently, the Barneses' formula described above can be applied here in at least three different ways. Anachronism is actually tripled in Crivelli's painting, theoretically, each temporal layer is relativized. If other elements do not seem to relate to the main temporal layer, it is the viewer's decision as to which temporal layer should be understood as embedding all the others. In Crivelli's altarpiece, the quattrocento setting is thus the painterly device that suggests the primary temporal level and establishes the principal narrative. However, this could have been achieved by purely compositional means as well.

To summarize, anachronism is a device to achieve temporally complex painterly structures. As the Barneses noted, 'chronological inaccuracies could be used for some artistic purposes. If this purpose is clear, the obvious anachronism can be non-vicious. In some cases they might be virtuous. If the artist was primarily interested in painting a visually rich, structurally complex work, then the presence of obvious anachronisms might not be vicious.'²⁹

Crivelli's *Ascoli Annunciation* gives an almost complete inventory of the methods with which anachronism can be achieved visually. Before moving to other relevant examples, it is useful first to list the most common painterly strategies for setting visual anachronisms into play. All of these are here related to the main event of a narrative picture.

²⁹ Barnes and Barnes, 1989, 259.

- (1) Architectural styles or elements referring to the present (or any other) historical period, which does not coincide with the actual time of the event
- (2) Figures dressed in costumes belonging to different historical time(s) than that of the event
- (3) Referencing the contemporary or any other time with heraldic elements (coats of arms, shields, *imprese*)
- (4) Including events that are not simultaneous with the main action, but rather in the distant past or future
- (5) Including eye-witnesses, such as a patrons, donors, or other historical figures not synchronic with the main event
- (6) Characters (including painters themselves) depicted in the guise of some other (mostly historical or mythological) figure

ANACHRONISTIC SETTINGS IN ITALIAN PAINTING

In the painterly tradition of the Italian Renaissance, the *mise-en-scène* provided by Crivelli is not an isolated case; it is the norm rather than an exception.

David M. Robb, in his thorough study of the iconography of Early Renaissance Annunciation panels, also examined the question of the setting. He lists three types and relates them to certain geographical areas. The first is:

(...) employed in Italy, where the setting usually contains some implication of an exterior, being either a portico or entirely in the open. The second is the ecclesiastical interior type, the evolution of which, and final definitive statement by the Boucicaut master, we have followed, and which was employed almost exclusively in France during the fifteenth century, exceptions usually being of the Italian exterior type. But if we now turn to examples of the Annunciation such as those in the Mérode altarpiece by the Master of Flémalle/Campin or the Ghent altarpiece by Jan van Eyck, it is clear that the scheme there employed has little if anything in common with the French and Italian types. In them, the setting is a bourgeois interior, a room in a Flemish house..³⁰

From this it is clear that Crivelli is not alone in updating the scenery – and thus the context – of the Biblical event. All Robb's examples are contemporary, and this suggests that such settings were commonly used for Annunciation scenes in the period.

Trecento Italian fresco and panel paintings provide some early examples of this custom, both in terms of general scenery, architectural detailing and costumes. Giotto's *Annunciation* in the Scrovegni Chapel (1306) has been thoroughly researched; it deploys the setting and costumes of contemporary liturgical drama.³¹ Turning to early quattrocento Italian examples, it seems that, whenever the setting is clearly defined, it is contemporary. Fra Angelico's early panel of the *Annunciation* (1433-34, Figure 25) stages the scene in an open portico. The narrative is made quite complex by setting up typological relations, evoked in the sculpted effigy of the prophet Isaiah and the Expulsion scene in the background. Such compositional devices can be found in certain other Fra Angelico Annunciations too. Fra Filippo

³⁰ Robb, 1936, 500.

³¹ Laura Jacobus gives a detailed examination of the contemporary dresses, hairstyles etc. and their use in the Golden Mass. (Jacobus, 1999.)

Lippi also produced a number of anachronistic Annunciation scenes. The examples from the 1440s certainly belong to this tradition. They are staged within rich architectural settings decorated with Renaissance ornaments. For example, the one in Rome (*The Annunciation with two Kneeling Donors*, ~1440, Figure 26) shows two contemporary characters witnessing the scene, the donors Folco Portinari and Folgonaccio. Further examples are Piero della Francesca's fresco of the *Annunciation* (Arezzo, San Francesco, ~1455), which reveals his classical tastes, or Ghirlandaio's *Annunciation* fresco in the Tornabuoni Chapel (1486-90, Santa Maria Novella, Florence), where an unmistakably Tuscan landscape can be seen through the double-arched Renaissance painted window.

Finally, it is worth noting two examples from Venice since Crivelli is most closely related to this painterly tradition. Both are specific because their architectural settings are closely related to the architecture of the churches where they were originally placed. The church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli in Venice used to house an organ shutter with the subject of the Annunciation, now attributed to Giovanni Bellini (~1500, Figure 27). The Annunciation scene is set in a corner where the walls are covered with colourful painted marble slabs: '[a] similar sensitivity to the glowing polychromy of the marbles had been displayed in the original organ shutters, now in the Accademia where the *Annunciation* scene is set in a marbled interior decorated with polychrome panels like those of the church itself.'³² The second Venetian example is definitely by Giovanni Bellini, his well-known *San Giobbe altarpiece* (~1487, Figure 28). Although it depicts a 'Sacra Conversazione', not an Annunciation, it is still the best example of how the real architecture of the church and the fictive architecture of the scenery could be made to interact in late fifteenth-century Venetian tradition. The architectural setting of the altarpiece consists of a coffered vault supported by richly decorated *all'antica* columns. They serve a very similar role to the inner frame of Crivelli's painting, that of imitating decorated carved stone work. The painted architecture of the *San Giobbe altarpiece* is contemporary to such an extent that it elongates and frames the real architecture of the church wall. At the same time, it opens up the wall to an imaginary scene of the Enthroned Virgin flanked by saints who were especially venerated in the church.

Several similar examples could be adduced, where the depicted characters share the beholder's space and time. The late fifteenth-century examples given here, which, as in Crivelli's altarpiece, use Renaissance architecture and ornaments, actually mark the summit of a long and consistent tradition. This tradition would be seriously modified by the Counter Reformation, when for the first time the Church urged painters to be more historically accurate when representing religious subjects.

³² Howard, 1989, 691.

TIME EXPERIENCED IN THE RENAISSANCE

Why so much anachronism? The experience of time underpinning in the Barneses' definition of anachronism reflects today's habits of viewing. Most of us would see Crivelli's painting as an artwork fusing together different periods and places: the moment when Mary conceived in Nazareth, the early Christian period of St Emidius, and the 1480s when Ascoli obtained its privilege and later commissioned the painting.

But how might the original viewers have experienced time? For a different area and period, that of sixteenth century France, Lucien Febvre has developed the concept of 'fluid time'. He uses it to describe temporal experiences based on the cyclical repetition of days and nights and of seasons, the same astronomy-based alternations that we experience, however, with a level of precision radically different from ours.³³ Many did not know their own age precisely because births were associated not with certain dates but mostly with seasons and agricultural duties. Dates were also problematic since calendars were not standardized. Clocks were rare, most of them being in public use. Hours were indicated by the so-called watchmen who rang the bell in the tower, and the time was then repeated in the streets by guards. Hourglasses filled rather with water than sand were in private use, but in minimal numbers.³⁴ Sundials and mechanical clocks were also in private use but were not very common either. The rare possession of clocks and watches distinguished the educated from the poor and were used as symbols of wealth: '[s]till regarded as *Kunstkammerstück* in the 16th and 17th centuries, mechanical table clocks and pocket watches featured prominently as status symbols in painted portraits of the aristocracy.'³⁵ So, in some cases, the aristocracy may have had the means of measure time more precisely but, as certain examples show, precision was seen more as a burden than a freedom.³⁶ Amongst the poor and uneducated, as Febvre concludes, 'we find fancifulness, imprecision, inexactness everywhere'.³⁷

However, absolute precision was not needed for grasping an epoch or for making distinctions between present and past. Based on relative, before-and-after temporal relations, chronology could still work as a comparative rule even without precise dates. The past, even if regarded as mythological, was nevertheless the past. As Febvre wrote: '[f]or many men of that time the historical was confused with the mythical. In the indefinite past that they called "former times" or "olden times" or "a very long time ago" without more precision, who knows how many still accepted without much difficulty the presence

³³ Febvre, 1982, 393-400.

³⁴ 'The family and the parents remembered that the baby had come into the world at haymaking time, at the time of the wheat harvest or grape harvest; there had been snow, or else it was the month "when the ears of wheat began to come out... and the stalks were already starting to grow"', quoted by Febvre from John Calvin (Febvre, 1982, 395-6, see more in pages 393-395.). In contrast, Febvre describes the birth certificates of the aristocracy, full of 'astonishingly accurate details.' Such certificates stated not only the exact time of birth, but the moment of conception to the minute. (Febvre, 1982, 396.) This, of course, is as mythical as the uncertainty of the masses.

³⁵ Prékopa, 2009, 39.

³⁶ When writing about this resistance, Febvre refers to Friar John Theleme, see Febvre, 1982, 397.

³⁷ Febvre, 1982, 395.

of mythical personages existing side by side with “mythified” (if I may say that) historical personages in a sort of fluid promiscuity that shocks us but did not bother any of them?³⁸ So France in the sixteenth century was an era of fluid time, with a ‘sort of fluid promiscuity’. Italy, a century earlier, most likely did not offer significantly different temporal experiences.

Differentiating between the past and the present must have been part of that equipment which formed the cognitive style ascribed by Baxandall to those fifteenth century beholders who possessed the skills to understand pictures. This, according to him, was a ‘rather a small proportion’.³⁹ So, references to the contemporary, whether they were made in the architecture, in decoration, by means of style or a historical event, most probably were apparent only to the educated. As Febvre says, present and past were distinctive categories, however, the presence of mythical or historical persons in a Renaissance environment, as we saw in Crivelli’s painting, still needs further explanation. I shall return to this in due course.

PAST SEEN AS PAST, PRESENT SEEN AS PRESENT

There is a group of artefacts from the end of fifteenth century, from the same Venetian circles that Crivelli belonged to, which thematize the distinction between past and present. In a recent article on these, Lorenzo Pericolo introduced the concept of Renaissance ‘heterotopia’, by which he means painted architecture that is a hybrid of modern and antique elements. He traces this kind of heterogeneous architecture back to the Middle Ages. One of his three examples is of use here.

Cima da Conegliano’s *Madonna and Child with Saints Michael and Andrew* (1496-98, Figure 29) contains antique fragments juxtaposed with ornaments from contemporary Venetian architecture. Visually, the fragments of ‘slivers of rosettes, cornices, and modillions’ were understood as ruins, and ‘the viewer cannot avoid feeling both the effect of majesty and the impression of the building’s ongoing disintegration.’⁴⁰ Other motifs, for example the free-standing porphyry columns, allude to the façade of the church of San Marco. However, other elements of the architecture, such as the carved pilaster, the porphyry architrave and the wall covered with marble, or the pair of marble columns and pilasters with *all’antica* motifs, may well have been familiar to Venetian citizens. They echoed the recently finished elevated chancel of Santa Maria dei Miracoli designed by Pietro Lombardo and Mauro Codussi’s monumental arches at the Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista.⁴¹ The architectural setting designed by Cima de Conegliano for this *Madonna and Child* is not, however, an exact copy of any Venetian edifice, but a heterogeneous, hybrid architecture drawing on motifs that resemble famous Venetian buildings from the past and the present. As Pericolo remarks, these elements ‘deliberately

³⁸ Febvre, 1982, 399.

³⁹ Baxandall, 1972, 38-39.

⁴⁰ Pericolo, 2009, 2.

⁴¹ Pericolo, 2009, 2.

present the architecture as ambivalent compounds in which antiquity and modernity intersect each other without fusing together'.⁴² Despite showing hybrid forms, Cima da Conegliano's painted ornaments and architectural setting clearly invoke both past and present. This visual rendering of separate temporal entities is close to the temporal experiences described by Febvre.

By incorporating typical Renaissance ornaments and motifs taken from the contemporary vernacular architecture of Ascoli, Crivelli's *Annunciation* intentionally refers to the present. In this way it corresponds to Cima da Conegliano's *Madonna and Child*. However, Cima's setting is more of an architectural *capriccio* of antique and modern, while Crivelli's setting is an assemblage of truly up-to-date architectural components.

In the Crivelli, there is further element directly related to present time, divulging something of the artist's understanding of his own period. This is the signature: 'OPVS CAROLI CRIVELLI VENETI' in Latin, accompanied by the date of completion, 1486, in Arabic numerals. Both are carved at the base of the columns in Mary's chamber in the painting's foreground. Louisa C. Matthew's study of signatures in Venetian Renaissance pictures traces this kind of behaviour to a social circle to which both Crivelli and Cima da Conegliano belonged. As she says, Venetian painters signed their pictures 'more consistently than their counterparts elsewhere in Italy'⁴³, which is perhaps because of their more conscious relation to the present time, as already argued. The evolution of signatures is particularly noteworthy after 1440s. Their growing number and the new Renaissance approach, where signatures become an inherent part of the illusionistic painted space, is associated with the workshops of Jacopo Bellini and Antonio Vivarini. Matthew has discerned two types of signature. The first is the *cartellino*, a painted slip of paper with an inscription usually attached to an architectural frame or to the bottom of the painting. It was first used by Fra Filippo Lippi. The second type, to which Crivelli's signature belongs, is the 'engraved' inscription.⁴⁴ This type imitates carved stone, allowing the painter to include illusionistic sculpted forms. These kind of painted inscriptions, imitating stone surfaces, were especially the hallmark of Andrea Mantegna, who is frequently regarded as Crivelli's artistic predecessor.⁴⁵

Artists' signatures are forms of representation that establish and preserve reputation; they are the clear, legible and definite marks of a painter. As Matthew says, '[t]he placing of a signature on a painting is a conscious act by the painter that establishes his or her presence. That presence

⁴² Pericolo, 2009,1.

⁴³ Matthew, 1998, 616.

⁴⁴ As Matthew remarked, Crivelli frequently uses the engraving-type signature. For example, in *Madonna and Child* of 1482 (Fig. 14 in Matthew) bears the signature 'OPUS CAROLI CRIVELLI VENETI 1482' (Matthew, 1998, 624.), or the signature of the *The Madonna of the Swallow* (London, National Gallery) is 'CAROLVS CRIVELLVS VENETVS MILES PINXIT'.

⁴⁵ See Matthew, 1998, 616-629, and especially 624: 'Carlo Crivelli's signatures are solidly Venetian in terms of their frequency, form and placement. They are most often "engraved" into fictive architecture (...) His insistence in using "Veneti" is to be expected, given that most of his works were painted in the Marche after his exile from Venice around 1457. The wording of his signatures is most similar to those of Bartolommeo Vivarini from the 1450s and early 1460s, although the form is more vividly illusionistic, stony surfaces depicted lovingly, and hence closer to the manner of early Mantegna.'

communicates outward to the viewer, but it also communicates information about the painter's relation inward, to the painting itself: its form, subject, and even the process of its creation.⁴⁶ This is fully the case for Crivelli's signature. Furthermore, apart from referring to his presence and to the present time, his inscriptions on the painting help to unfold both the narrative of what the painting presents, and the story of the painting itself. The narrative role of such inscriptions will be analyzed later.

It is not just the presence of the signature and the Arabic numerals of the date that refer to the present but also the Roman capitals that Crivelli used. This 'very up-to-date, Renaissance element' was introduced in Giovanni Bellini's *S. Giobbe Altarpiece* in the 1470s, replacing the Gothic letters formerly used.⁴⁷ Both the signature and the date, carved into the architecture, are part of the lower zone where Crivelli uses *trompe-l'oeil* effects, most notably the cucumber and the apple. This is where one finds the strongest illusion of presence, and it is closest to the viewer, both in physical and narrative terms.

FORMER THEORIES EXPLAINING PAINTERLY ANACHRONISMS

The previous section argued that Crivelli intentionally set the *Ascoli Annunciation* in his own present. Furthermore, I listed some similar examples of pictorial anachronism, some geographically and temporally close to Crivelli's work, some from his own artistic circle. Now it is time to explore the reasons behind this phenomenon. Why were painters using 'present-time' to tell or retell their stories? Why did Renaissance artists intentionally update Biblical events?

Febvre describes the phenomenon of anachronism in sixteenth-century France, arguing that this occurred because 'men of the past lacked a historical sense' (or, as one would properly say, they had a different sense of the past), so they had no discomfort at seeing the besiegers of Jericho painted in modern clothes.⁴⁸ Ronald Lightbown, in a recent monograph on Crivelli noted that, despite the fact that Mary's chamber in Nazareth 'is rough and humble', in fifteenth-century pictorial traditions it had become a rich and noble mansion. This had happened because certain textual sources, especially the *Protoevangelium of James* and the *Liber de nativitate S. Mariae* had described it this way. Moreover, as Lightbown argues, representations like the Crivelli *Ascoli Annunciation* are due to 'characteristic medieval disregard for observable realities, or what were believed to be realities'.⁴⁹ It seems to me that disregarding reality or a lack of historical sense are much too simple explanations for such a recurrent phenomenon.

⁴⁶ Matthew, 1998, 616.

⁴⁷ Matthew, 1998, 618.

⁴⁸ '[I]t was with no discomfort at all that they saw their painters depict the besiegers of Jericho in the garb of the men-at-arms of Marignano or clothe the bystanders at Golgotha in slashed doublets?' (Febvre, 1982, 398.)

⁴⁹ Lightbown, 2004, 333.

To my knowledge, there are two theories which offer more comprehensive explanations for painterly anachronisms. Neither is fully applicable to Crivelli's painting, but both have consequences for the present argument, so both will be reviewed here.

In his *Early Netherlandish Painting*, Panofsky discussed the phenomenon of anachronism in a narrow sense, as a stylistic pluralism to be found in the architectural setting of many late medieval religious paintings, especially in northern Annunciation scenes.⁵⁰ In the case for Melchior Broederlam, Jan van Eyck, and other Flemish painters, the use of different architectural styles was related to the symbolic role of these images. Such a mixture of styles was used as an iconographic device, which indicated the typological connection between the biblical Old and New Testaments. Panofsky analyzed the coexistence of different styles in one pictorial realm under the umbrella of 'disguised symbolism'. He set up a dichotomy between Gothic and non-Gothic (in his terms oriental, usually Roman or Romanesque) architectural style and he endowed these with symbolic meaning. Romanesque buildings or architectural elements were meant to recall the Old Testament and Judaism (or 'Synagogue', the Jewish, or generally Eastern tradition), while Gothic architectural elements stood for the New Testament and for the Christian faith (for the Church, and generally for the Western tradition).⁵¹ This kind of dichotomy is not evident in Crivelli's *Annunciation*. Yet Panofsky gave a relevant description of a growing consciousness of the historical past:

Northern artists of the fourteenth century had become more conscious of differences between architectural styles than their predecessors had been. Previously the Gothic style, having attained a kind of monopoly from the middle of the thirteenth century, had been taken for granted. Now it came to be thought of as something native and Christian as opposed to something foreign and oriental, whether Saracenic or Jewish. And with the gradual emergence of a naturalism which made a direct appeal to optical experience this stylistic contrast had begun, as we have seen, to be exploited as a new symbol of the old antithesis between the Church and the Synagogue. However, when this naturalism had reached the proportion of a basic postulate, when everything presented to the eye was put to the test of verifiability, so to speak, the vague orientalism of Broederlam's or the Boucicaut Master's circular towers, cupolas and bulbous domes no longer satisfied the hunger for reality. And it was by looking around in their actual environment that the fathers of Flemish fifteenth-century painting made the surprising discovery that the required contrast to the Gothic style could be found right at hand in the accurately observable monuments of the indigenous past instead of in dubious records of distant Asia.⁵²

Panofsky does not probe the reasons for this deployment of contemporary architectural styles in painting. However, his key concept, naturalism, points towards some kind of answer, albeit insufficient and rather speculative. If this 'hunger for reality' was an all-embracing concept underpinning Flemish art, one might easily link this with presentness, and then presentness with present architectural styles. If this transitivity is indeed applicable, the need for naturalism led artists to take the contemporary

⁵⁰ Panofsky mentioned the kind of anachronism with which this chapter deals, but without any profound thought: 'In High Medieval representations, personages of the remote past of the distant future could share the stage of time – or, rather, timelessness – with characters of the present.' (Panofsky, 1953, 140.)

⁵¹ Panofsky, 1953, ft 5. Nagel and Wood, 2005, 131-48.

⁵² Panofsky, 1953, 134-135.

architectural style, that of Gothic, for granted. Thus they represented it quite naturally as part of the setting.

Elaborating the so-called ‘principle of substitution’, Nagel and Wood recently came up with a slightly more satisfying explanation of the broad Renaissance phenomenon of anachronism. Their starting point was a statue of Resurrected Christ shown in a niche in the background of Carpaccio’s *The Vision of Saint Augustine* (1502-3, Figure 30). This pictorial detail refers to a bronze statue of the same theme, now in Milan, but then in S. Maria della Carità in Venice. The bronze was made in the early 1490s. However, in Carpaccio’s painting it functions not as a modern, but as an antique work and, in itself, the statue was regarded as such.⁵³ For Nagel and Wood the statue was a ‘philologically sensitive replica’, whose ‘double historicity’ was anachronistic, and this means that ‘one might *know* that they [such objects] were fabricated in the present or in the recent past but at the same time value them and use them *as if* they were very old things’.⁵⁴ Following Patricia Fortini-Brown’s arguments, Nagel and Wood also connected the statue of the Resurrected Christ with *spolia*, a term referring to a later reuse of an earlier monument.

Their precise explanation for the anachronistic use of the statue is as follows:

Images and buildings, as a general rule, were understood as tokens of types, types associated with mythical, dimly perceived origins and enforcing general structural or categorical continuity across sequences of tokens. One token or replica effectively substituted another; classes of artifacts were grasped as chains of substitutable replicas stretching out across time and space. Under this conception of the temporal life of artifacts, which we call the principle of *substitution*, modern copies of painted icons were understood as effective surrogates for lost originals, and new buildings were understood as reinstatiations, through typological association, of prior pictures. (...) the artifacts functioned by aligning itself with a diachronic chain of replications. It substituted for the absent artifacts that preceded it within the chain.⁵⁵

The reasons behind such anachronisms are much less elaborated than the principle of substitution. The first reason given by Nagel and Wood is rather vague: ‘the idea that form would be legible to the beholder as the trace of an epoch, a culture, a world – as a “style”, in other words’.⁵⁶ The second reason is no less vague; it is related to the new social situation of the artists: ‘[a]n artist was now conceived for the first time as an author, an *auctor* or founder, a legitimate point of origin for a painting or sculpture, or even a building. The author, more generally the entire context of fabrication, leaves traces in the fabric of the work.’⁵⁷

Nagel and Wood’s model explains why certain works were regarded as antique when they were the last in a long sequences of replicas. Such works still bore the characteristics of the very first element in the chain. However, this idea of substitution does not help with the updated setting, with retold Biblical events, or the juxtaposition of historical and living figures, as seen in Crivelli’s *Ascoli*

⁵³ Nagel and Wood, 2005, 405.

⁵⁴ Nagel and Wood, 2005, 405, their italics.

⁵⁵ Nagel and Wood, 2005, 405.

⁵⁶ Nagel and Wood, 2005, 403.

⁵⁷ Nagel and Wood, 2005, 404.

Annunciation. Nevertheless, Nagel and Wood offer a point of departure. First, they show that, in the Venetian circle that Crivelli belonged to, anachronisms were certainly deployed and that such devices might relate to antique works. Second, they operate with a useful idea of multiple temporalities: some objects, such as the statue of the Resurrected Christ in Carpaccio's *St Jerome*, do not reference one singular temporal layer.⁵⁸ This idea has bearing on the *Annunciation* that Crivelli set in Ascoli. The event seems to belong to several historical moments and geographical areas: to ancient Nazareth and to fifteenth-century Italy.

THE PRINCIPLE OF 'PRESENTIA' AND THE LIVING FAITH

In *Ascoli Annunciation*, Crivelli used anachronism as a narrative device to historicize the religious story and to relate it to the present time. As we have seen so far, neither Panofsky's, nor Nagel and Wood's theories for Renaissance anachronisms can explain Crivelli's up-to-date environment and the presence of contemporary Ascoli figures in the same realm as the Biblical *Annunciation*. However, there is a concept in Christian theology that fits with the notion of multiple temporalities deduced from Nagel and Wood's arguments. As I will argue here, this is one possible explanation for Crivelli's narrative strategies. Christianity operates with the idea of living faith, the principle of 'presentia', meant to promote an intimate but active experience of the religion amongst the faithful. This sense of presentness does not stress the historicity of the Biblical events but rather encourages the believers to see such events as related to their personal faith and individual experiences. It is a practice that enhances the viewer's imagination, helping him or her to eye-witness the Life of Christ and that of the Virgin Mary, and furthermore, to visualize himself/herself as part of the diegetic realm, as a character present in these stories.

AUGUSTINE

The idea of presentness and generally the question of time has roots in very early Christian thought. Augustine discussed the question of time in his *Confessions* (Book XI). According to him, humans can perceive only the present; the past exists merely as a memory, and the future only as an expectation, a desire. As he says, '[t]hus it is not properly said that there are three times, past, present, and future. Perhaps it might be said rightly that there are three times: a time present of things past; a time present of things present; and a time present of things future. For these three do coexist somehow in the soul, for otherwise I could not see them. The time present of things past is memory; the time present of things

⁵⁸ 'To perceive an artifact in substitutional terms was to understand it as belonging to more than one historical moment simultaneously.' (Nagel and Wood, 2005, 407.)

present is direct experience; the time present of things future is expectation'.⁵⁹ Augustine holds this in contrast with God, who bears the absolute, the whole, and whose viewpoint simultaneously covers past, present and future. For humans, experience is limited and is related to the present. Thus for us, the present is the origo, the sole reference point, the one moment to which all our experiences are related and compared.

For if they are there as future, they are there as “not yet”; if they are there as past, they are there as “no longer.” Wherever they are and whatever they are they exist therefore only as present. Although we tell of past things as true, they are drawn out of the memory - not the things themselves, which have already passed, but words constructed from the images of the perceptions which were formed in the mind, like footprints in their passage through the senses. (...) we generally think ahead about our future actions, and this premeditation is in time present; but that the action which we premeditate is not yet, because it is still future. When we shall have started the action and have begun to do what we were premeditating, then that action will be in time present, because then it is no longer in time future. Whatever may be the manner of this secret foreseeing of future things, nothing can be seen except what exists. But what exists now is not future, but present.⁶⁰

The concept of presentness in Augustine’s philosophy is embedded in a more complex set of arguments about general time experience, self-awareness, memory, eternity, creation, etc. What is important here is that time in the Augustinian sense is that which much later would be understood as narrative time, primarily by Ricoeur. According to the *Confessions*, events that have happened in the past can be perceived only in the present, as past actions have vanished and only memory can revive them. To reverse this line of thought, the past – and we might legitimately extend Augustine’s arguments to the narrated Biblical past as well – can be perceived through memory; memory makes it present. The human mind is conscious of succession. It recognizes past as past but experiences it only as present. This is another reason for using anachronisms in biblical narratives. It is also worth noting that the medieval doctrine of Transubstantiation equally relates to the idea of the living faith. In fact, the presentness of Christ in the Eucharist is a central mystery of several branches of the Christian faith, and, in the Middle Ages, it was certainly the very core of the Christian liturgy. During Mass, Christ is present, again and again, in the Eucharist.

AELRED OF RIEVAULX

Less philosophical than Augustine, medieval commentators on the Bible offered presentness as part of devotional practices most probably developed for ordinary believers. This involved the promotion of a direct way of understanding and experiencing the Biblical past by emphasizing not the historical value of the stories, but rather their effects on the present of their readers. The very essence of religious anachronism is that the characters of the Biblical stories remain alive, accessible and active for the

⁵⁹ Augustine, Book XI, Chapter XX, 26.

⁶⁰ Augustine, Book XI, Chapter XVIII, 23-24.

worshippers, helping them on their way to Redemption. In this literary tradition, worshippers were encouraged to approach and join the ever-present reality of the Virgin and Christ.

Aelred of Rievaulx, a twelfth-century Cistercian monk active in Yorkshire, advised a symbolical entry into the space of the sacred as an aid to effective meditation on the past. He promoted this approach in his treatise *A Rule of Life of a Recluse*, which he wrote for a sister recluse around 1160-62.⁶¹ In the section *A Threefold Meditation*, this is how Aelred guides his reader on a journey back to the past, right into the chamber of the Virgin to live through the Annunciation with her:

When your mind has been cleansed by the practice of the virtues from all the thoughts which clogged it, cast your eyes back, purified as they are now, to the past. First enter the room of blessed Mary and with her read the books which prophesy the virginal birth and the coming of Christ. Wait there for the arrival of the angel, so that you may see him as he comes in, hear him as he utters his greeting, and so, filled with amazement and rapt out of yourself, greet your most sweet Lady together with the angel. Cry with a loud voice: "Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among women."⁶²

As Sandro Sticca remarked, in contrast to Passion texts whose audience 'was "ecclesiastical, male and monastic", there also existed, very early on, other Passion works that, in the tradition of the *cura animarum*, were directed to women for their spiritual guidance.'⁶³ Aelred of Rievaulx's Treatises belong to this latter tradition. The device of directness is meant to release emotions. Note also the rarely used second-person narration: the text consists of alternating passages addressing not only the reader but also the Virgin. In this spiritual journey, Aelred's fictive reader is not entirely passive, but his/her perception is restricted to the visual, as would have been the case for a devotional image. He/she admires the Virgin, joins her, utters the words of joy, sings and contemplates, but he/she is only an eye-witness and never a participant. There are no direct interventions into the scenes, and the devotee is not likely ever to be noticed by the Virgin Annunciate. 'Be present' is Aelred's advice, 'and help her', but this help is purely spiritual, just like the kiss which the devotee might plant on the Virgin's feet.⁶⁴ Meditation on the past as if it were present is part of the 'threefold meditation', a practice 'to enable you to stir up the love of God in yourself, feed it and keep it burning.'⁶⁵

MEDITATIONES VITAE CHRISTI

Another relevant source that emphasizes presentness when engaging with Biblical narrative is the medieval devotional text, the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*. Possibly written by a Franciscan, it was extremely popular throughout Europe. It was 'a book which must always rank among the texts which have most vitally affected popular religious thought, as it seems to have been one of the most potent

⁶¹ Rievaulx, 1971, Introduction, xi.

⁶² Rievaulx, 1971, 80.

⁶³ Sticca, 1998, 1111.

⁶⁴ Rievaulx, 1971, 81.

⁶⁵ Rievaulx, 1971, 102.

influences in bringing about what from today's distance would appear to have been that humanizing of the pictorial story of the Passion which took place between the beginning of the thirteenth and the end of the fifteenth century.'⁶⁶ This humanization of the Bible was achieved primarily by language and style.

The text is not about religious dogma; it is a storybook with commentaries. It contains alternating sections of retold stories from the Bible ordered chronologically, as well as passages where the author explains and interprets these stories. The book supplies many innovative details that cannot be found in the Bible. These additions include minor episodes, conversations, imagined moments, details of everyday life, and so forth. This is mainly to render accessible the otherwise short, severe and substantial Biblical passages. The book focuses on the human side of these stories. It promotes an immediate, emotional religious experience, and, like Aelred's approach, it invites its readers to become eye-witnesses, to contemplate from an intimate position on the Life of Christ and especially of Mary, by describing her emotions, thoughts and feelings.

Furthermore, the *Meditationes Vitae Christi* provided narrative techniques that may have strengthened the feeling of presence, and activated living experience. The informal language and the use of second person narration and the imperative mode, just like Aelred of Rievaulx, are only some of those techniques. Another one that refers to presentness is 'the frequent change of tense, sometimes within one sentence, seemed to us at times related to the author's purpose of making past events immediately present to the reader'.⁶⁷ Here are just two short passages from the story of the Incarnation, where the author stresses immediacy and presentness. 'Let us pause here and remember what I told you in the beginning, that you must learn all the things said and done as though you were present.'⁶⁸ And: '[n]ow give heed to understand everything that was said and done, as though you had been present.'⁶⁹

Yet another technique for evoking living faith and living presence is to make the stories refer to the present. For example, the day of the Incarnation is represented as if the event has just happened, on the very day that the text is being read:

Today is the festivity of the whole celestial court because this is the beginning of their restoration. Today is even more the festivity of human nature, for its salvation and redemption have begun, and the reconciliation of the whole world is taken up and sanctified. Today the Son bore anew obedience to the Father in order to effect our salvation. Today, leaving supreme heaven, He rejoices like a giant racing (Psalm xviii, 6) and encloses Himself in the garden of the virginal womb. Today He has become one of us, our brother, and has begun to go on pilgrimage with us. Today the true light has descended from heaven to lift and expel our darkness. Today the living bread that animates the world has begun to be baked in the oven of the virginal womb. Today the Word has become flesh that it may live within us (John, I, 14). Today the entreaty and the desires of the patriarchs and prophets are heard and fulfilled. (...) This is the day that was awaited with great desire. Today is the beginning and the foundation of all festivities and the inception of all our welfare. Up to now God had been indignant with the human race

⁶⁶ Ivins, 1921, 213.

⁶⁷ Bonaventure, 1977, Introduction, xxv.

⁶⁸ Bonaventure, 1977, 15.

⁶⁹ Bonaventure, 1977, 16.

because of the fault of the first parent, but now, seeing the Son become a man, He will no longer be angry. Today is said to be the fullness of time.⁷⁰

As Ivins argued, the *Meditationes Vitae Christi* ‘became one of the most important of the starting points for the vast changes in Christian iconography which took place between the beginning of the Middle Ages and the close of the fifteenth century.’⁷¹ One of these starting points was surely the idea of presentness, to encourage and enliven the imagination and help in contemplation. Certainly, it is a concern in religious art across the Middle Ages, and often it is precisely anachronism which is used to achieve presentness, by depicting Biblical stories as if they are part of the beholder’s time. Thus the contemporary setting and signs in Crivelli’s altarpiece, and in many other Annunciation scenes, are visually analogous to the written accounts on the living presence. They are meant to solicit an active religious engagement from the beholder, as is suggested by the literary sources discussed here.

ZARDINO DE ORATION

The principle of presentness was still effective in the Renaissance. Moreover, from a book printed in Venice in the fifteenth century, we know how this activity, how this process of visualisation, was meant to work. This is the *Zardino de Oration*, the *Garden of Prayer*, written again for female readers. It was published in 1454 and gave advice on how to visualize, memorize and imagine Biblical stories, this time to aid prayer. It is likely that such activities took place in front of an image. Certainly, the book seeks to make of the reader an active beholder, to help her to experience passion, to activate her imagination and to raise her piety. It advises the devotee to find in her local environment appropriate places to serve as the scene for the lives of Mary and Christ, especially of his Passion. She is also to identify people to act the roles of Christ, Mary and other saints in her mind. Automatically, this would update the Biblical stories in the course of meditation.

The better to impress the story of the Passion on your mind, and to memorise each action of it more easily, it is helpful and necessary to fix the places and people in your mind: a city, for example, which will be the city of Jerusalem – taking for this purpose a city that is well known to you. In this city find the principal places in which all the episodes of the Passion would have taken place – for instance, a palace with the supper-room where Christ had the Last Supper with the Disciples, and the house of Anne, and that of Caiaphas, with the place where Jesus was taken in the night, and the room where He was brought before Caiaphas and mocked and beaten. Also the residence of Pilate where he spoke with the Jews, and in it the room where Jesus was bound to the Column. Also the site of the Mount Calvary, where he was put on the Cross; and other like places... And then too you must shape in your mind some people, people well-known to you, to represent for you the people involved in the Passion – the person of Jesus Himself, of the Virgin, Saint Peter, Saint John the Evangelist, Saint Mary Magdalen, Anne, Caiaphas, Pilate, Judas and the others, every one of whom you will fashion in your mind.⁷²

⁷⁰ Bonaventure, 1977, 20-21.

⁷¹ Ivins, 1921, 217.

⁷² Quoted in Baxandall, 1972, 46.

The capacity to visualize was regarded as central to the process of perception in Baxandall's *Painting and Experience in fifteenth-century Italy*. Baxandall distinguishes between two types of visualization. The first is the painter's, who was a professional, 'exterior visualizer of the holy stories'. The other is that of the beholder, who was the 'interior visualizer', whose 'mind was not a blank tablet on which the painters' representations of a story or person could impress themselves; it was an active institution of interior visualization with which every painter had to get along.'⁷³ This model stresses active perception, and gives an idea how visual tales were perceived in the Renaissance. Furthermore, Baxandall claimed that fifteenth century paintings are 'generalized and yet massively concrete'⁷⁴ since they offered up a space for interior vision and for individual responses. This explains the use of the 'concrete and patterned', a recognizable but still generally Renaissance style to be found not only in Crivelli's architectural setting, but in fact in most of the pictorial examples mentioned above.

LORETO, THE CULT OF THE CASA SACRA

There are several connections to be drawn between Crivelli's *Ascoli Annunciation* and the cult of the Casa Sacra in Loreto. These connections concern the importance of the principle of 'presentia', geographical proximity, the existence of parallel events, the involvement of the same participants in these events, and also the possibility of artistic influence.

The cult object of the Casa Sacra is the home of the Virgin in Nazareth, where Gabriel announced her divine maternity and where Christ incarnated. Due to repeated threats to the Holy Land, and the slow collapse of the Crusader States, as the legend has it, in agreement with the Virgin, angels raised the Holy House. They took it first to Dalmatia in 1291, then to the Marches in 1294, where, after two further relocations, it was finally settled in Loreto over the night of 9-10th December 1295. By the end of fifteenth century the miraculous event of the Translation of the Virgin's House had made the Loreto shrine one of the most important Marian pilgrimage sites in Western Europe. The first pictorial representations date from the fifteenth century; these lasted by by the late eighteenth century. The latest representation on a large scale was a ceiling fresco by Tiepolo, the *Translation of the Virgin's Holy House* in the S. Maria di Nazareth (or Chiesa degli Scalzi) in Venice. This was executed between 1743 and 1745 but ruined by bombing in 1915. The legend was officially confirmed by Julius II in a 1507 bull entitled *In sublimia*.⁷⁵

⁷³ Baxandall, 1972, 45.

⁷⁴ Baxandall, 1972, 47-48.

⁷⁵ Barcham, 1979, 430.

The late fifteenth century was a particularly important period for the cult and for the Loretan pilgrimate site. Two popes were involved, the same who granted the *Libertas Ecclesiastica* to Ascoli: Sixtus IV and Innocent VIII. William Barcham accounts for this moment in the history of the cult:

One of the first chronicles on the *Santa Casa* was published in the 1480's by Battista Spagnoli, the Vicar General of the Mantuan Congregation of the Carmelite Order; Spagnoli dedicated his work to Cardinal Girolamo Basso della Rovere, nephew of Pope Sixtus IV and Protector of the Holy House in Loreto. The friendship between Della Rovere and Spagnoli was ultimately responsible for the Carmelite Order being granted full custody of the Holy House in 1489. The Carmelites thus became the first religious Order so honored at the Loretan shrine. Historical facts alone, however, do not fully account for the devotion of the Order to the *Santa Casa*; where fact stops, legend begins. One of the most ancient of such legends relates that the Order had had the guardship of the *Santa Casa* not only in Loreto but in Nazareth as well. Indeed, Innocent VIII happily gave the Loretan shrine into the hands of the Carmelites, because the latter had proved to Innocent's predecessor, Sixtus IV, that they had had jurisdiction of all Christian holy sites in Palestine.⁷⁶

As we remember Sixtus IV was the pope to whom Ascoli applied for the grant. Innocent VIII's coat of arms can be seen in the inner frame of the *Ascoli Annunciation* since he was regnant when the painting was completed in 1486. It is a strange coincidence that the Carmelites left the Loretan shrine only ten years later and shortly thereafter Ascoli renounced its *Libertas Ecclesiastica*.

Moreover, the town of Ascoli was inspired by the Loreto cult and its shrine, just as Crivelli was. In Ascoli, '[e]ven the simplest houses were often embellished with portals and windows of notable artistic quality. Renaissance architecture was brought to the city mainly by Lombard sculptors, who took their inspiration from the decorative motifs of the Ducal Palace in Urbino and the nearby sanctuary of Loreto.'⁷⁷ And as Tolley notes, Crivelli might have been directly influenced by art at Loreto, as 'musician angels in the *Coronation of the Virgin* may owe something to Melozzo da Forlì, whose work of the 1480s at Loreto was accessible to him'.⁷⁸

Historical parallels exist, too, in the nature of the cult. The Holy House of Loreto recalls the same principle of presentness that guided Crivelli in his *Annunciation*. The Virgin's House venerated in Loreto was (meant to be) the same house as that in Nazareth. It was not similar to the Holy House in Nazareth, nor did it resemble it, nor was it a copy or a simulacrum. It was considered to be the very same house where the Annunciation and the Incarnation had happened. The Holy House cult was revived exactly because the house was present in Loreto. In the 1730s, this point of view was further justified by traveller antiquarians. They had visited Palestine and declared that the Casa Sacra fitted with building materials found at the original site in Nazareth, 'thereby documenting the genuineness of the relic at Loreto.'⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Barcham, 1979, 434-435.

⁷⁷ Ghisetti Giavarnia, 1996.

⁷⁸ Tolley, 1996.

⁷⁹ Barcham, 1979, 437.

In all of these examples, the principle of 'presentia' is supported by subjective time experiences, that is, the past is experienced as being present. One has to acknowledge the truth of Febvre's claim that 'in the great longstanding duel fought between experienced time and measured time, it was the first that kept the advantage.'⁸⁰ However, the presentness offered by Crivelli and others was not eternal. They invoked time and reality as experienced in the late fifteenth century.

ALBERTI'S WINDOW-METAPHOR

Even if not understood in a religious context, the most influential and enduring metaphor of pictorial space developed in the the fifteenth century, that of Alberti's window, also constitutes a form of presentness. In *Della Pittura*, Alberti wrote about painting an image with central perspective: '[l]et me tell you what I do when I am painting. First of all, on the surface on which I am going to paint, I draw a rectangle of whatever size I want, which I regard as an open window through which the subject to be painted is seen.'⁸¹ Based on this, Panofsky already compared viewing a Renaissance painting with viewing reality: '[t]he application of perspective, we remember, implies that the painting surface is understood as a "window" through which we look out into a section of space. If taken seriously, this means no more nor less than that pictorial space is subject to the rules that govern empirical space, that there must be no obvious contradiction between what we do see in a picture and what we might see in reality'.⁸²

The relationship between the window, the surface of the painting, and the perception of reality can be taken even further. It means more than a lack of contradiction between the pictorial space and our sense of reality. If the image functions as a window, the scenery of the painting not only correlates with the spectacle seen through the window, but it is always a view into the present. The view in the window frame is the key, a token of the simultaneity of the beholder and the things seen. The scenery of an image painted in strict linear perspective, according to the best Renaissance model, is an analogue of the view seen through the window. The image thus reflects the present, furthermore, this reflected present will become the origo, a spatial and temporal reference point. From temporal simultaneity there is a direct path to the presentness of the events represented in a painting where the space is controlled by the laws of linear perspective. Randolph already noted this when he examined the window motif in Crivelli's *Annunciation* in terms of gender. Randolph drew a partial conclusion which fits neatly into the present argument: 'Alberti's window was a practical metaphor with a concrete goal in mind, but it has come to suggest far more than simply a studio strategy, for it seems to sum up the mimetic mentality that marks progressive fifteenth-century Italian painting – a spectatorial presentness at the

⁸⁰ Febvre, 1982, 397.

⁸¹ Alberti, Book 1, 19. quoted by Randolph, 2007, 26.

⁸² Panofsky, 1953, 140-141.

threshold of performance, which draws together both the viewer and the viewed into an imagined synchronicity and “synspatiality.”⁸³

Crivelli’s painting is particularly strong in emphasizing the Albertian system of linear perspective. The inner frame, which houses the coats of arms, also enhances the sense of looking through a window. There is more to this: the influence of Alberti on Crivelli is not only general. A direct link between the two may be made through a drawing by Jacopo Bellini. Davies has observed that the drawing, of *St John the Baptist Preaching* from the British Museum sketchbook might be a possible influence on Crivelli’s spatial arrangement. Bellini’s drawing actually uses the motif of the Arco de Cavallo, Alberti’s early work in Ferrara.⁸⁴

THE STORY OF CRIVELLI’S ANNUNCIATION

Finally, it is time to address the question of what story it is that is being told in the Ascoli altarpiece. How is the Annunciation renarrated here and how is this visual tale constructed by pictorial means?

Structurally, the story of the Annunciation, as written in the Gospel of Luke, is a sequence of verbal exchanges between two characters. Its main theme is Christ’s Incarnation in the Virgin. Using the two main models of story grammar (that of Mandler and Johnson and of Stein and Glenn),⁸⁵ there are seven steps in the scheme of a story: the protagonist is Mary, a descendant of David, the *setting* is defined as the house in Nazareth. The *initiating event* is Gabriel’s appearance and the words of the salutation. The *initial response* is Mary’s wonder and her disturbance, the *goal* is to convince the Virgin to accept her divinely appointed role. An *attempt* is made by the Virgin to understand the content of the message: she asks what will happen and how. The *first consequence* is her acceptance of her role in the divine plan, and, finally the *reaction* is Mary’s conception, the Incarnation of Christ.

In the table below I have tried to harmonize Fra Roberto’s five ‘Laudable conditions’, or as Baxandall described them, ‘a series of five successive spiritual and mental conditions’⁸⁶, with the seven steps of story grammar detailed above.

⁸³ Randolph, 2007, 26.

⁸⁴ See Parronchi, 1962.

⁸⁵ Kissel and Stein, 2005, 568.

⁸⁶ Baxandall, 1972, 51.

SEVEN STEPS Narrative theory	FIVE STEPS Fra Roberto, Baxandall	INTERPRETATION
1. Setting		Gabriel and Mary in Nazareth
2. Initial event		The appearance of Gabriel, salutation
3. Initial response	a. Disquiet	The Virgin's disquiet
4. Goal		Gabriel tries to convince Mary to accept her role
5. Attempt	b. Reflection	Attempt to understand: What would this be?
	c. Inquiry	How this shall be done?
6. First consequence	d. Submission	Her acceptance of the role
7. Reaction	e. Merit	The Incarnation

Table 2.1 Story grammar of the Annunciation

In fact, the short episode of the Annunciation can be regarded as a story within a story. It is part of the Biblical story of the Salvation, one of a few particularly significant moments in the causal chain leading from Genesis to the Last Judgement. Seeing the Annunciation in a broader Biblical context means that it fits into the story of mankind rather than that of Mary. Then, the *setting* would be the Paradise with the Fall as an *initiative event*, the *response* is the Expulsion and the Jews' long years of suffering. Mary as the Second Eve would come as part of the *goal*, when God's *attempt* is to lead mankind closer to Salvation. The Virgin's role is to bring the story forward to its *consequence*, when, with the death of Christ, there comes the *reaction*, the redemption of the Original Sin.

In the *Ascoli Annunciation*, by his inclusion of certain episodes and several anachronistic details, Crivelli makes clear that the correspondence between the verbal tale and its visual representation is not obvious. Instead, a new visual tale is invented, distinct from the textual narrative. The story Crivelli depicted is about the delivery of a message and what preceded it. However, the content of the message is not the arrival of the Redeemer as told in the Bible, but rather the arrival of a privilege *Libertas Ecclesiastica* with crucial importance for the history of Ascoli. In this renarrated story, the main role is played not by Gabriel or Mary, but by St Emidius, who interrupts Gabriel to intercede with Mary.

The character of St Emidius thus turns the well-known plot of the Annunciation in a completely different direction. An intervention takes place in the original storyline of the Annunciation. A new character not recorded in any of the previous visual or written versions of the event steps into the scene and affects the course of events in a radical way. St Emidius stands for an intrusion: the universal course of Redemption is interrupted and the chain of events is distracted by local historical and political interest. This intrusion indicates the moment when the original story arrives at a crossroad. A certain interference or ramification happens here. Before the intrusion, the Annunciation followed the Biblical storyline with Gabriel and the Virgin, but the appearance of Emidius conjoins the Biblical and the

contemporary. With his presence, the viewer's attention is diverted away from the religious content and is led into Ascoli's history. Let us call this phenomenon *narrative ramification*.

In general, narrative ramification can be defined as a radical step taken by a character in the story to change the course of events. This intervention results in the ramification of the storyline, often there is a change in the ending of the tale, an altered conclusion.

As a result of ramification, Crivelli's story of the Annunciation possesses a double historicity. This is that characteristic earlier developed on the basis of Nagel's and Woods 'principle of substitution'. The anachronistic details included in the pictorial realm as signs of presentness enhance this double historicity. Crivelli's *Annunciation* belongs not only to biblical Nazareth, but, due to the architecture it encloses, the costumes, the coats of arms, the view of the street, and the eye witnessing citizens of the town, it also belongs to Renaissance Ascoli. A multiple temporality is achieved by applying anachronistic features. As we have seen earlier, such a representation of the Biblical events is analogous to the principle of presentness in theology.

In this actualization, there is one episode which carries special significance. This is the episode with Antonio Benincasa at the top of the arch, where he receives the papal letter granting the *Libertas Ecclesiastica*. The main motif of the picture, the delivering of the message by Gabriel to the Virgin, is repeated as a *mise-en-abyme* motif just above the main episode. It is a repeated thematic unit, a microscene, and it revises the act of delivering, receiving and accepting the message, but now in a smaller scale. From the notary's costume, it is clear⁸⁷, that he is an important and dignified person in the history of the town, as is the Virgin in the biblical story. Benincasa has just been interrupted by the young papal messenger, just as the Virgin is interrupted by the salutation of Gabriel.

The term *mise-en-abyme* is used for a motif in a narrative which is 'referring to any part of a work that resembles the larger work in which it occurs'.⁸⁸ The term coined by the writer André Gide in 1893, and in its original sense it described the visual effect of a formal repetition, such as that used in heraldry, where an enclosing major form contains the same form but on a smaller scale. In painting, the *mise-en-abyme* motif is primarily identified as mirror reflections, for example, in Van Eyck's Arnolfini double portrait. This is the canonical example of this phenomenon, a portrait 'in which a mirror within the painting reflects the painted scene from another angle'.⁸⁹

Mise-en-abyme, as a formal motif, also appears elsewhere in Crivelli's altarpiece. A small model of the city is carried by St Emidius, but the model is embedded in the larger cityscape forming the setting of the painting. This is an architectural version of the more general phenomenon of the image within an image. Lightbown describes the houses on the model as *case torri*, this is a 'tall,

⁸⁷ In Lightbown's description (2004, 342): he is 'Antonio Benincasa, the *cancelliere* of Ascoli, receiving on 25 March 1482 the papal brief gratuitously interpreted by Ascoli as granting the city *Libertas Ecclesiastica*. As its *cancelliere*, it was he who would have received in the first instance all official letters sent to Ascoli for the attention of the magistrates, and the great open folio has been studying is of the majestic format reserved for official records, such as *riformanze* and civic statues – hence the respect with which it has been laid on a carpet.'

⁸⁸ Nelles, 2005, 312-13.

⁸⁹ Nelles, 2005, 312.

narrow-fronted type, with three storeys, topped by a gable⁹⁰, of which one appears in the background of the painting as well.

The first, episodic *mise-en-abyme* motif is applied by Crivelli as a device of a narrative expansion. Through ramification it opens a new storyline. The ‘accidental’ historical coincidence that brought Sixtus IV’s letter to Ascoli on 25 March, exactly on the feast of the Annunciation, appears visually as a response in a ‘cause and effect’ sequence, where the cause is the intercession of the figure of St Emidius. This is strengthened both by compositional and thematic means: the consequence is carefully positioned in the pictorial space, it appears on the vertical axis, just above the cause, the scene with Gabriel and Emidius. The fine linear perspective constructed by Crivelli is subordinated to this narrative unit: the vanishing point is placed exactly on the same axis. The intercession and its consequence, the arrival of the papal message, is not the only thing threaded on this vertical line. There one also finds the golden whirl of clouds and cherubim indicating the divine presence. Any visually acute viewer, whether of the present or an ‘interior visualizer’ of the fifteenth century, should be able to link the two episodes conjoined by the composition with the third, highest power. Thus we are to understand a visual suggestion, namely that the cause and its consequence, the intercession of St Emidius in the lower zone and the symbolic act of obtaining the grant in the upper, both have divine mandate. This corresponds with Moshe’s point on this particular narrative device: ‘[m]ise en abyme is also a rebellion against scale in the quantitative sense. It is a small part carrying “as much” significance as the whole that contains it.’⁹¹

The contract between the Virgin and the heavenly realm is traditionally established by the use of a golden ray. The new contract between the humans, living in Ascoli, and the superhuman, God the Father, hidden behind the golden whirl, is evoked by both compositional and episodic means. St Emidius is the key figure here. The Biblical story has to be reinterpreted because of his intervention. Furthermore he provides a viewpoint that the citizens of Ascoli could share. In this new visual tale, he is the focalizer whose viewpoint prevails in the scene and he is also figure who serves as the compositional pivot between the different temporal layers.

The reason why Crivelli’s storytelling deserves more attention is that his characters, and especially St Emidius, who otherwise exist in a different temporal realm, are not only present, but they also interact. With this interaction Crivelli establishes a link between different temporal realms. From a narratological point of view, this makes for a very rich and very unusual tale. We have already seen examples where contemporary characters are present, usually donors. But in most cases they are passive, like the readers of the medieval devotional literature discussed earlier.

Crivelli’s rich townhouse interior is echoed in Domenico Ghirlandaio’s fresco, the *Birth of The Virgin* in the Tornabuoni chapel in Santa Maria Novella (1486-90, Figure 31). Ghirlandaio’s scene is perhaps the closest relative of Crivelli’s altarpiece, not only because it was painted at the same time, but

⁹⁰ Lightbown, 2004, 339.

⁹¹ Moshe, 1987. 430.

because of its narrative richness. Ghirlandaio set the scene on a contemporary stage and added members of the Tornabuoni family as well. The daughter of the donor, Ludovica Tornabuoni enters the room with her female companions to visit the newborn Mary. Ghirlandaio thus also created an image of the living faith. Ludovica is doing literally what Aelred of Rievaulx advised symbolically for the process of meditation: ‘first enter the room of blessed Mary.’⁹² Moreover, there is some interaction between the figures: the kneeling nurse has eye contact with Ludovica. However, here we do not find the same narrative interference as that of St Emidius. The fresco does not suggest whether Ludovica’s visit has any consequences.

There is one further set of elements in Crivelli’s altarpiece that plays a narrative role. This is the inner frame that houses the coats of arms and the inscription. As discussed earlier, this frame creates an extradiegetic realm inside the pictorial space. It has a similar function to curtains in modern drama performances, it emphasizes that the altarpiece is staged, that a story is told. Crivelli’s signature reveals the person of the narrator and his role as the interpreter of the story. The visual tale that is told is unambiguously presented by him. Moreover, the date included is the point of reference for the represented event. But here everything goes backwards from the present. The most striking temporal realm is the date of completion of the painting. Then we go back to the inscription on the stone ledge, which refers to the grant, then there is the intercession of St Emidius which caused it, and finally the Annunciation, which enabled Emidius to put his request in the name of the city.

Painted with great illusionism, as Lightbown suggests, the apple and the cucumber in the foreground certainly carry symbolic meanings.⁹³ The apple invokes the Fall, referring back to events leading up to the Annunciation, and it reveals the Virgin’s role as the Second Eve. According to Lightbown, the cucumber also has typological significance. It is the attribute of Jonah the prophet, who stayed for three days in another world, just as Christ did, his antitype. However, since these objects lie on the semantic borderline of the image, their primary role is as much to emphasize the transition between extradiegetic and diegetic pictorial reality. Both their size, which fits better with the real world of the viewer rather than with Crivelli’s pictorial realm, and their trompe-l’oeil character clearly supports this.

All the episodes and elements studied here – Emidius’s intercession, the updated environment, the extradiegetic elements of the painting – suggest that the visual story is a radical reinterpretation of the Biblical Annunciation. Crivelli’s version celebrates the freedom of the city, which is seen as the fulfilment of the Annunciation, and thus it represents civic ambition. In its time, it was a large and expensive altarpiece, accessible to the general public. It most likely played a role in contemporary liturgical activity. So, with this altarpiece the citizens of Ascoli could actively experience not only the religious narrative, but, with the help of the anachronistic details, they were offered a historicized, retold story of the Annunciation. The presentness stressed by Crivelli’s altarpiece must have enhanced

⁹² Rievaulx, 1971, 80.

⁹³ Lightbown, 2004, 336.

their understanding of the effect of the original story on their city, and perhaps on their own personal histories as well.

NARRATIVE RAMIFICATIONS

I have already presented some examples where contemporary figures are depicted in the picture but as passive eye-witnesses who do not intervene in the main actions, like the citizens in the background of Crivelli's *Annunciation*. Such figures usually denote some form of patronage, whether the donor him/herself, or a family member. There are also a few properly contemporary eye-witnesses such as Ludovica Tornabuoni and Lucrezia Tornabuoni in Ghirlandaio's *Birth of the Virgin*, and *Birth of John the Baptist*, respectively.

Even so, interventions, especially radical interventions into the biblical narratives are rare. Art, as it seems, had to reach the post-religious era of the twentieth century to be permitted the slightly impudent lightness in the treatment of religious narratives, evident, for example, in Max Ernst's deliberately scandalous painting, *The Blessed Virgin Chastises the Infant Jesus Before Three Witnesses: A.B., P.E. and the Artist* (1926, Figure 32). However, there is a body of images from the Renaissance, where one may find interventions with narrative ramifications, where an active character is included into the picture to change the course of events. Typically, such narrative ramifications appear in images of intercession. Such pictures are usually of local or regional interest; they have their origins in a particular historical situation. Thus they can be regarded to some extent as documentary. The narrative structure of such pictorial stories follows a particular pattern: there is the expected and hoped-for request from the local community, directed at a local saint to be petitioned to the Almighty. In a few cases not only the cause but also the consequences can be seen: the benefits of the act of intercession are shown within the same image, as was the case for Crivelli's. Citizens are often included as eye-witnesses. Moreover, the city appears either as part of the background or as a *mise-en-abyme* compositional motif, in the form of a model, by which the pictorial narrative is positioned in time and place.

In Italy, the plague was one such an historical event, where intercessions were definitely needed. It appeared in 1348 and later reappeared repeatedly up until the end of the seventeenth century. Louise Marshall has researched plague images as one type of source for studying this epidemic in Europe. She examined pictures of Saint Sebastian, Saint Roch and the Madonna della Misericordia, all treated as protectors, to investigate the psychological effects of the terrible disease. In what follows I draw on her research and some of her examples, but these are analyzed in terms of their narrative features.

The Black Death increased demand for heavenly defences in the form of images, which 'functioned to secure protection from the plague by soliciting the intervention of some powerful

heavenly protector.’ The people who lived during the epidemic ‘were taking positive – and in their eyes effective – steps to regain control over their environment.’⁹⁴ One such step, taken by individual worshippers, confraternities and the clergy alike, was the ordering of a painting, a ‘Pestbild’ to request divine protection. Bartolomeo della Gatta’s *St Roch interceding with Christ on behalf of Arezzo* is one such image, probably from the 1470s (Figure 33). It represents St Roch as the protector of Arezzo. His intervention results in a miraculous change, averting the divine decision to punish Arezzo’s sinful population by the Black Death. Thus the plague saint accomplishes a narrative ramification in the story structure of Arezzo’s history. This rendering of the intervention is described by Marshall: ‘Christ’s determination to exact punishment from a sinning humanity is met by Roch’s insistent petition that his devotees be spared. Divine implacability dissolves in the face of saintly resistance, and Christ countermands his own orders, sending a second pair of angels to intercept and break the plague arrows before they reach the town of Arezzo.’⁹⁵ In the story of Arezzo, the character of St Roch can thus be compared to that of Emidius in the history of Ascoli. However, while both of them were interceding for the sake of their cities, Roch’s intercession was directed at Christ himself to reverse the city’s bad faith. In the case of Emidius, who advocated the Virgin through Gabriel, the aim was to achieve a beneficial political status; had he failed this would have had rather less dramatic effects.

Applying to the merciful Virgin, as in the *Ascoli Annunciation*, denotes a different way of searching for protection. In plague paintings, this iconographic type, known as the ‘Madonna della Misericordia’, follow a rather uniform compositional schema. The Almighty or Christ appear in the upper part of the picture, shooting plague arrows toward the sinful town, positioned in the lowest zone of the image. Between the action of shooting and the action of diminishing, both spatially and temporally, there stands the merciful Madonna, diverting the arrows. Covering tiny citizens with her cloak, the huge Madonna della Misericordia is shown as a highly effective narrative agent, who, seemingly without much effort, powerfully reshapes the course and the contents of the originally fatal story. ‘In a striking reversal of traditional hierarchies of scale, the tiny figure of the enraged divinity is dwarfed by the Virgin, whose towering presence dominates the image. Serenely calm, she neither petitions nor even acknowledges the divine presence. Instead, her gaze is directed outward to the contemporary beholder as she effortlessly intervenes to thwart the divine purpose. Plague arrows rain down uselessly and break upon her outstretched mantle. With a simple act, terrible anger of the divine judge is reduced to impotency: God’s chosen victims are safe from punishment within the charmed circle of her protection.’⁹⁶

In these images, the arrows of the plague operate both literally and semiotically. Kress and van Leeuwen describe narrative actions in pictures with arrows, that is, with vectors.⁹⁷ An arrow in a narrative episode usually points from the beginning of the action to its end-point. In this way, the

⁹⁴ Marshall, 1994, 488.

⁹⁵ Marshall, 1994, 506.

⁹⁶ Marshall, 1994, 506-518.

⁹⁷ Kress and Leeuwen, 2006, 46.

arrows in the plague images drive the sequence of actions from God through the Madonna to the city. The arrow semiotically describes a sequence of episodes beginning with one action (God's wrath), then the reaction (the Madonna averts the danger), and finally the result (avoiding the plague).

The narrative scheme of plague images with the figure of the Madonna – the powerful averter of the disease who can act on behalf of individuals, communities or cities – can be found in several trecento and quattrocento paintings, such as in Barnaba da Modena's panel (1370s, Genoa, Santa Maria dei Servi),⁹⁸ in two versions by Benedetto Bonfigli's *Plague Madonna della Misericordia* (1464, Perugia, San Francesco al Prato and 1472, Corciano, parish church),⁹⁹ and in Pietro Alemanno's panel (*Plague Madonna della Misericordia*, 1485, Figure 34).¹⁰⁰ The latter example is of particular interest here, since Pietro Alemanno was first commissioned to paint an *Annunciation* for the city of Ascoli, a few years before Crivelli. In his plague Madonna of 1485, the consequences of the devotion of Mary are strengthened both visually and by words placed on a ribbon in the form of an ancient prayer. His version of the plague story also emphasizes the contrast in fate between those protected under the mantle of the Madonna, and those outside, who did not have faith in her, and thus were abandoned to the Black Death. The Virgin as the Madonna della Misericordia again thwarts the divine decision: '[w]ilfully intervening to overturn justly merited divine chastisement for the sake of "her" sinners, the Virgin effectively functions as an autonomous power.'¹⁰¹

In terms of narrative structure, the 'gonfalone' painted by an anonymous Marchigian around 1458-60, *The Virgin and Saint Bernardino petition Christ on behalf of Fabriano* (Figure 35)¹⁰² is the closest to Crivelli's *Annunciation*. Although much less official in tone, here the events of the Incarnation and of the salvation of the town are conjoined into one pictorial narrative, structured around an act of intercession. The Virgin Mary and Saint Bernardino both pray on behalf of the city in order to deflect the plague arrows; the model of Fabriano is now held by the Christ-child. Again, there is a Franciscan present and the picture was clearly meant to be used in processions. Thus its commission may have come out of similar circumstances to the Crivelli altarpiece.

Jörg Rösen specified three qualities that characterize historical narratives. Each of them is valid for Crivelli's *Annunciation*. A historical narrative operates with memory, it 'mobilizes the experience of past time'; then it 'serves to establish the identity of its authors and listeners'; and finally establishes continuity between the past, present and future, in order to make the present understandable and the future imaginable.¹⁰³ In spite of being primarily a religious object, commissioned for a local church by the community of Ascoli, Crivelli's altarpiece bears all these characteristics. The greatest achievement of Crivelli's altarpiece is the shift from religious to historical narratives. The narrative devices with

⁹⁸ Marshall, 1994, Fig. 11.

⁹⁹ Marshall, 1994, Fig. 10 and Fig. 14.

¹⁰⁰ Marshall, 1994, Fig. 12.

¹⁰¹ Marshall, 1994, 515.

¹⁰² Marshall, 1994, 525 and Fig. 17.

¹⁰³ Rösen, 1987, 89.

which this shift was achieved were anachronism and ramification. This chapter aimed to theoretically establish these narrative devices and to point out their essentially visual character.

Part Three Practice

Chapter 7 The Relative Frequency and Distribution of Different Narrative Models

INTRODUCTION

This chapter questions some elementary assumptions relating to visual narratives and imagery usually taken for granted in the past. As a whole, this third and final section of the thesis will outline the preparations, the process and the results of a statistical survey in narrative imagery. The survey was carried out on more than eighty single images,¹ all depictions of the story of Atalanta and Hippomenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.² The database includes all pictorial variants on this theme known to the present author, ranging from 1410 to 1946. The general idea behind the survey was twofold. Already existing typologies of narrative images are solely based upon episodic narration. As the previous sections of this thesis have shown, this is simply not adequate for expressing the complexity of visual narratives. My purpose is thus to improve our present understanding of such narratives by developing a multidimensional referential system, including a much wider range of those pictorial elements that may carry a visual story or may contribute to the construction of a visual story. Second, the survey aims to disprove, once and for all, the one-moment syndrome, the idea derived from Lessing that narrative images can only function from a single point of view or represent only the momentary.

To prove a general statement in art history, it is usually sufficient to show that it functions on a more or less random (or astute) selection of images and assert that it works universally. One is often left with the suspicion that, with another set of images, the exact opposite claim could have advanced. This is not to dispute the importance of anecdotal or specialist knowledge about art, but there comes a moment when this has to be tested on more firmly established ground. Accordingly, the questions posed here will now be tested in a more objective way, even if this objectivity is unlike that of a scientific experiment. One scholarly commonplace has it that a field of study is not fully academic before it can make use of mathematics. Art history and mathematics actually have a long tradition of cross-disciplinarity, however, this is constituted in geometry, restricted mostly to the study of linear perspective. Statistics do not share with geometry the advantage of being essentially visual. Perhaps this is why it has only really been used in limited cases for analyzing images. As will be shown in due course, in almost all cases its application was related to the study of visual narratives.

¹ In a few cases, 'single' here means a pair of single images.

² Ovid, 1951, 101-117.

With the statistical survey presented in this chapter I argue that, in European painting from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries, there are a great diversity and variety of visual narratives. Improvements in narrative techniques and methods were not developed in a linear fashion, that is to say, there is no positive correlation between time and narrative complexity. The increasing number of pre-existing visual examples of the same story does not automatically lead to stronger or more developed narrative responses. Put simply, the most complex visual narratives are not the newest ones. Peaks and troughs occur in the chronology of narrative complexity. This uneven development seems to be due to theoretical, technical and social factors. These can only be referred to in a cursory manner here, but they certainly need further investigations.

Statistics are not alien or new to art history.³ Roger de Piles pioneered a taxonomy of modes of visual narration in his *Balance des Peintres* (1708). He operated with four visual categories and, with these, he classified paintings and tried to analyse objectively, in order to determine painterly merits. His categories were composition, design, colouring and expression. The survey covered 57 individuals, including Tintoretto, Rubens, Rembrandt, Leonardo, Caravaggio, and Dürer, to name but a few. The analysis was numerical, painters were given a score in each category. Based on these scores, their position were determined in a four-dimensional model. The intentions of De Piles were partly driven by the *colore e disegno* debate at the French Academy of Painting and Sculpture, where his views were opposed to Le Brun's. De Piles's general objective was to put aesthetic values and judgements on a firmer ground, however, his tastes clearly had an impact on his classifications.⁴ Much more recently, Marilyn Aronberg Lavin has studied the underlying principles of pictorial narrative cycles in medieval and Renaissance Italy.⁵ Based on statistical methods, she distinguished eleven types of disposition for narrative fresco cycles in Italian churches. Her research was made possible by a huge computer database of narrative fresco cycles, named NARRART, without which she could not have been able to find patterns in the dispositions. These two examples are, however, quite unusual and isolated attempts. However, their methodology has certainly informed my own attempt at applying statistics to art history.

PREPARATIONS

The first general requirement for a statistical survey is a comparable set of data from a well-constructed database. In the case of the present argument, comparable data means that the pictures included have to share certain characteristics, but at the same time they have to show variety in their rendering of the narrative theme. One such set of data could have been a group of paintings originating from a certain period or place, as was the case for Marilyn Aronberg Lavin's database. However, given the general

³ See Vaughan (1998) for a review of and a methodology for recent uses of computers in art history.

⁴ For more on de Piles's analysis, see Davenport and Kennedy, 1972, and Ginsburgh and Weyers, 2002.

⁵ For a description of her method and the database called NARRART DATA, see Lavin, 1990, 261-292.

point of my argument, the database should allow for the investigation of time and place factors. The best approach thus seemed to be to examine paintings with the same narrative subject but painted by different artists and from different periods and places.

Usually a stratified sample is chosen for statistical surveys, a subset of data of a complete database. This subset should have all the characteristics of the original data to be examined in the survey and should present this in a proportional way. Here this possibility had to be rejected as no such 'complete', thematic database exists for images. Thus, the first step was to build a database, which can be regarded in some ways as 'complete' and which fits the purposes of the present argument, that is, focusing on narratives.

In finding the appropriate set of data I have relied on available thematic collections of images. The most time-consuming part of the research was to assemble these images and to find basic information relating to them. Only then were the images ready to be examined and categorized one by one, and the decision taken as to which type of narrative they belong to. For this reason, the assembled database had to be of a reasonable size. This latter criterion was of a primary importance when a suitable narrative theme was being chosen. This theme had to be relatively rare to generate a manageable database. Certain examples, such as Saint George and the Dragon, or a Passion theme, obviously had to be rejected because of the vast number of existing images. On the other hand, as suggested in the second section of this thesis, historical topics usually belong to a specific context and they quickly lose their *raison d'être* once outside that context, so history painting was not an appropriate type of image either. Finally, I decided to use a rather uncommon mythological subject, the story of Atalanta and Hippomenes from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*.

One may advance several arguments both for and against this choice. It seemed helpful to have a relatively rare topic and to have several ancient written narratives of the story, giving a good basis for a text-image comparison. Still, the source for the painters was most probably Ovid. Moreover, it is an extremely complex narrative, even when compared with other Ovidian stories. Being a mythological subject, there is a lot of diversity in its pictorial renditions. However, it was of concern that the story is perhaps too complex, which raised the question of whether visual versions could actually convey this level of complexity. Because of the relative rarity of depictions of the story, the database does not include any canonical paintings from the European artistic tradition, only rather unknown examples.

SOURCES

There are several variations on the story of Atalanta. Again, to remain manageable, the database includes only those depicting or related to the running of the race; it does not cover other Atalanta-related stories, such as the boar-hunt with Meleager, Atalanta wrestling with Peleus, or Cybele's chariot with two lions (although the latter usually refers to our story). It does include images linked with another version of the running of the race, where Melanion (or Milanion) competes with Atalanta.

Regarding medium, 'imagery' was understood in the broad sense, to include paintings, drawings, book illustrations and prints. Depictions serving as decoration and low reliefs were included, but not sculptures or preparatory drawings for sculpture.

To compile the database four sources were used, three of them already existing databases.

(1) Warburg Institute, London, Photographic collection

Category: 'Gods and Myths / Atalanta and Hippomenes'

This photographic collection has not been built up by systematic research but by chance and by the repeated checking of few accessible sources. The collection includes most well-known examples, images from art market sales, some engravings from Bartsch and images from private and public collections in and around London. None of these sources are fully represented, and unfortunately the archive contains only hints about the sources of the images. Even so, a little more than forty thematically appropriate entries were found, but because of duplications and the exclusion of sculpture, only 34 images were used for the database. They are marked as W1-W34.

(2) Pigler's *Barokthemen*⁶

Category: 'Hippomenes besiegt Atalante im Wettlauf'

The list of images in Pigler's *Barokthemen* is more systematic but still not complete. Paintings and some engravings are listed chronologically and grouped by geographical areas (Italy, Germany, France, the Netherlands). The major disadvantage of this, otherwise extremely useful, book is that its sources are not referred in full. Moreover, by now these sources are rather old, not commonly known, and thus not easily accessible. Also, even finding these old sources did not mean accessing the images themselves. I could not find the relevant image in the cases of Andrea Meldolla, Santi di Tito, Benedetto Caliari, Luca Bertelli, Jacopo Palma, Daniel Vertangen, Gerard Hoet, Paul II van Somer, Arnold Houbraken, Hendrick van Limborch and Louis Fabritius Dubourg, even though they were registered in the list. Thus numbers P1 to P35 refer to Pigler's list, but with gaps, because certain images are not available. From *Barokthemen*, 18 images are in the database.

(3) Reid, *Oxford Dictionary of Classical Mythology*⁷

Category: 'Atalanta'

⁶ Pigler, 1974, 133-134.

⁷ Reid, 1993.

This Dictionary is not restricted to the visual arts. The images listed here are based on Pigler list but updated with examples from the last two centuries and with English works of art as well. Full references are given, however, in the problematic entries noted above, the Dictionary simply refers back to Pigler and thus passes on the difficulty. The images from the Dictionary are numbered as R1-R32. This list also has gaps: lost examples (Mantegna, Luca Cambiaso), duplicates, and those that could not be found (a Sienese painting from Northampton, Andrea Schiavone, Edward Burne-Jones) have empty references. Altogether 23 images come from Reid's Dictionary.

(4) Ovid Illustrated. The online database of the University of Virginia, US⁸

Category: 'Ovid Illustrated: The Renaissance Reception of Ovid in Image and Text'

Ovid's *Metamorphoses* was one of the most widely published books in early modern Europe. This means that there are hundreds of illustrated editions (and reeditions) from many different countries. So far, only few editions have been studied in detail. Therefore it is virtually impossible to give a complete list of all the illustrations. This online database from the University of Virginia offers the fullest available list of the illustrated editions. When the database was researched, the website was a bit clumsy and chaotic, teeming with redundant cross-references. At that time it had 55 editions online (although not all illustrated), but this number has grown and the available editions have been changed as well. In most of the cases even the most basic information was missing, for example the date, the place and the language of each edition. Images from this database are marked as O1-O23.

(5) Other sources

Other sources cover either articles on the subject, or studies of the iconography of the story, or examples found randomly whilst searching the internet (museum websites, different databases or sales on the art market). The source is indicated by each image. These eleven images from various sources are marked as E1-E11.

There are overlaps: images listed in more than one database have multiple references. For example, Simone Cantarini's painting is listed as W14/P15/R21: it is the fourteenth in the Warburg list, the fifteenth from Pigler and the twenty-first in Reid's list. Once the database had been assembled, most of the images were checked and cross-checked in the Witt Library of the Courtauld Institute in London. Difficulties would arise if one wished to see or gather together all these images. Most of them are not available in good quality images, and even those in museum collections remain hidden. Several are now in private collections or have simply disappeared in the traffic jam that is the art market. As a consequence, it was difficult to find high quality or coloured reproductions. For example, the majority

⁸ <http://etext.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/about.html> (March 2007)

of images found in the Warburg collection are palm-sized black and white photographs, and the situation is even worse in the case of books. For some items, this made the work of deciphering all the details extremely difficult. Therefore, due to this unstable factor, the issues and outcomes of this survey will be presented in terms of the minimum requirements for certainty.

THE DATABASE

THE CONTENT OF THE DATABASE

The database was created to accommodate all available images of the story of Atalanta's race. 83 images were collected from the different databases. Five main types of images were found: cassone paintings from the early Renaissance; Renaissance and Baroque paintings; illustrations from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* or from a reworked version of the text; decorative art objects (majolica plate, glass, carpets, metalwork, tapestry, relief); and a few modern examples from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, mainly paintings and drawings. The database contains basic information about these images and also two narrative indices: the *Narrative code* and the *Narrative Complexity Number* (NCN), which will be explained in due course. The images in the database are listed on the basis of their narrative complexity, from the simplest to the richest. Images sharing the same NCN are listed chronologically. The database is supported by an Appendix, where, apart from giving the basic information, I explain any questionable cases and categories. The database includes the following categories:

(1) Column A *Ordinal number of the image*

(2) Column B *Name*

The author's name is normally the name of the painter, printmaker or illuminator. If it is not known, and it is a book illustration, the publisher or the author of the book has been entered as an author. If there is no such detail available it is simply listed as anonymous.

(3) Column C *Registration number*

The registration number shows where the image was found: W for Warburg, P for Pigler, R for Reid, O for Ovid, E for the other sources. A double or triple register number shows overlap.

(4) Column D *Date*

If the date is not available but the author is known, his/her life interval has been included. If neither form of data is available, a century is indicated, to offer some sense of time.

(5) Column E *Date category*

Date categories are radiant, each cover fifty years. For example, 1450 stands for images made between 1426 and 1475, 1500 stands for images from 1476 to 1525, 1550 for images between 1526 and 1575, and so on. When the date is unknown, the most probable was used, based on the author's life span. Usually it is close to the middle date of the author's life.

(6) Column F *Place category*

This category indicates the geographical area where the work was produced. Sometimes it is rather vague, to allow for the vagaries of political history. The categories used are: Italy, Germany, France, England, US, and the Low Countries, the latter covers both Dutch and Flemish artworks.

(7) Column G *Technique category*

Five different techniques are listed: paintings (oil or fresco), drawings, prints (etching, woodcuts, engravings, but not if part of a book), book illustrations (those published in a book, whether painted or printed), and the decorative arts (majolica, glass, metalwork, tapestry, reliefs, furniture).

(8) Column H *Dimensions*

These are given when available. The dimensions are in cm, height first, then width.

(9) Column I *Dimensions category*

Four categories are used for different sizes, based on the surface area of the image. There is a question mark when exact dimensions were not available, but were instead estimated, as in the case of the book illustrations. The Appendix lists the individual choices.

S (Small): 0-600 cm² (the maximum is roughly an A4 format)

M (Medium): 600-6000 cm² (the maximum is roughly 75 x 80 cm)

L (Large): 6000-16000 cm² (the maximum is roughly 125 x 130 cm)

XL (extra Large): 16000 cm² and above.

(10) Column J *Pairs of images and images that are part of a cycle*

S stands for single, D for double images. This category shows whether the image is part of a bigger cycle: CO means an Ovid cycle, CM stands for mythological cycles not strictly following Ovid, and CE for any other cycle.

(11) Column K *Narrative code*

Will be explained below.

(12) Column L *Narrative complexity number (NCN)*

Will be explained below.

(13) Column M *Number of episodes*

The first number in the ordered pair of the NCN

(14) Column N *Number of references*

The second number in the ordered pair of the NCN

(15) Column O *Direction of the narrative*

The direction of the story is usually marked visually by the direction of the race, or, if it is not depicted, by other successive elements. LR stands for left to right, RL for the opposite; 'front' for frontal images (from background to foreground), 'back' for the opposite direction. Subcategories are explained when the direction is examined in detail.

NARRATIVE INDICATORS AND THE PROCESS OF THE MAPPING

Doing statistics necessarily involves numbers. The key point of this survey was to create a system of mapping that turns images into numbers in a way that is sensitive to individual visual responses to the story. This is crucial because, in the traditions covered here, the process of image-making allows for, even encourages, creative solutions. Thus, due to their individual character, this type of imagery very much resists categorization.

To resolve something of this problem, two indices or narrative indicators have been defined. These are directly related to the images and measure their narrativity. The first is the *Narrative code* and the second is the *Narrative complexity number* (NCN). This process of mapping had to satisfy certain theoretical criteria: it had to be complete (working for all the images in the database); it had to be based on rules related to narrativity; it had to categorize in an unbiased way; and it had to be coherent. Further, for technical reasons, it was desirable to end up with one number assigning a single positive value to each of the images. Both the *Narrative code* and the NCN operate as a function defined on narrative images: they generate a unique numeral outcome when the input is a narrative image. This function must be monotonically increasing, that is, it has to preserve the given order of the

images when they are listed in the order of increasing narrative complexity, which simply means that a more complex image has to be given a larger number.

The process of coding the images into numbers has been done by means of two steps. First, each image is assigned a unique *Narrative code*, based on the narrative elements present in the picture. These elements are either episodes of, or references to the story. Then the *Narrative code* is turned into an ordered pair of numbers, the NCN, which appears as the ‘value’ of the image.

The images can then be ordered based on their NCN. Indeed, they are listed in this way in the database. In itself, this order outlines how complexity is treated in this additive system. A simple but nevertheless questionable definition stands for complexity: a story is more complex when it shows more elements or more aspects of the Ovidian narrative, i. e. it gives more episodes or more references. This is one of the few quantitative dimensions that can be applied to narrative imagery. This survey will not be able to cover the relationship between the elements depicted, which, as shown in section two of the present thesis, is often indicative of the richness of visual a story. However, here I am concerned only with the presence or absence of narrative elements. Then, to turn this quantitative factor into a qualitative dimension, further examination of each image is necessary. Based on the order given by the NCN, a degree of narrativity may be determined. However, before explaining the episodes and references examined in this context, it is necessary first to familiarize the reader with the details of the Ovidian story.

CONTEXT

THE STORY AND ITS STRUCTURE IN OVID’S *METAMORPHOSES*

The subject of the narrative is from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*.⁹ It fits into the sorrowful tales of Book Ten (X. 519-739). After the stories of Orpheus and Eurydice, Pygmalion, and then Myrrha, that of Atalanta and Hippomenes is the last about love won and lost.

According to a number of ancient sources, Atalanta was a beautiful maiden, a skilled huntress and an excellent runner. She had received a foreboding prophecy about her marriage: so she lived in the wild forests to evade suitors but these nevertheless found her. Atalanta challenged each suitor to run faster than her if they wished to win her hand; the penalty for the loser was death. She beat them all until Hippomenes arrived, a beautiful youth and a descendant of the gods. First he was disdainful, but suddenly he fell in love with her and agreed to the contest. Before the race, Hippomenes invoked the

⁹ Other versions of the story of Atlanta can be found in Hesiod (*Catalogue of Women* 14), Propertius (*Elegies* 1.1.9.), Apollodorus (*Bibliotheca* 1.8.2-3, 3.9.2.), Pausanias (*Description of Greece* 8.35.10), and Hyginus (*Fabulae*, 70, 99, 185.). None of these are as detailed as the one in the *Metamorphoses*, besides, Ovid’s version was the best known in the Renaissance and early modern periods. Hence Ovid’s version is used here.

Goddess of Love for help. Venus listened and gave him three golden apples from the garden of Tamasus in Cyprus. During the race Hippomenes put the goddess's ruse into practice, throwing the apples one by one. As one should be aware, a race in which Venus is involved is irretrievably lost: Atalanta stooped to pick up the apples and consequently lost valuable time. Her competitor took advantage of this, reaching the finishing-line first and thus he won the race and Atalanta's hand.

The story does not end here, since Hippomenes forgot to thank Venus or make an offering to her. In revenge, she raised the sexual desire of the couple. In turn, their lust defiled a sacred place, Cybele's temple. In punishment they were turned into lions and, furthermore, Cybele made them pull her chariot. Besides, the legend of Atalanta and Hippomenes is embedded in the story of Venus. She tells Adonis this tale as a warning not to be irresponsibly bold and to keep him away from beasts armed well by nature. Still, Venus's warning was in vain, a wild boar savaged Adonis to death. In her deep sorrow, Venus changed him into a flower.

In Ovid's interpretation, in the race of Atalanta and Hippomenes, two unequal competitors measure their speed and strength. Both would like to reach the same aim: Hippomenes's victory (and life). Their positions and their stakes are different but their goal is shared. Not even with the help of Venus can Hippomenes be certain how Atalanta will react to the golden apples. The race for him is a struggle for survival, a question of life and death. When Atalanta decides to pick up the golden apples, she not only accepts the trick and her defeat; she also surrenders to Hippomenes's love. So she fights not against but for a husband, for Hippomenes. In this myth the main male character plays the active role and the female a passive one, yet she possesses both knowledge and has the better prospect. Atalanta's secret obedience, her tacit, yet active acceptance of Venus's intervention makes this a story of desired defeat.

The Ovidian text is a successive and chronological sequence of events, built up by alternations of monologues, dialogues and a narrator's voice. It is very much concentrated on speeches and acts. The narrative structure works first and foremost to link the episodes, to account for the acts and the feelings of the main characters; it does not contain description of the environment or the landscape. The story takes place on three levels, has a double frame and two narrators, and from time to time it changes point of views. The first narrative voice, the narrator of the Tenth Book begins with the story of Venus and Adonis. This is the external frame for the tale of Atalanta and Hippomenes, beginning with Cupid's accident which made Venus fall in love with a mortal. Adonis then enters the stage. There follows the dialogue between Venus and Adonis, which forms the next section of the text. Here, on the second or middle level, Venus takes on the role of the (second) narrator and addresses Adonis, who poignantly remains silent throughout the whole story. Finally we reach the internal level, the most embedded yet direct part of the story. Here Ovid allows the actors, Atalanta and Hippomenes, to speak to each other with their own words in a form of dialogue. This dialogue is enriched by internal monologues concerning hesitations, the planning of actions and consideration of the odds. This is where the positions of the race (and of the whole story) are decided. It is here that Hippomenes falls in

love and decides to race. He eggs himself on and asks the help of the Goddess. Also, here the earlier narrator, Venus, turns into an active character. Hippomenes's next speech is then directed to Atalanta, in the form of an introduction. At this point she realizes her emotions and tries to decide whether to conquer or to be conquered, rather than express her own desires. What follows is the consequence of Atalanta having confessed her love. After this culmination the narrative slowly recedes to the indirect second and then third level.

EPISODES AND REFERENCES IN IMAGES

For describing how the images in the database render the story of Atalanta and Hippomenes, an empirical set of characteristics were defined and tested against the images. These characteristics are elements that depict or enrich the narrative. They are classified either as episodes or as references.

'Episodes' constitute an action-based category. There are 17 different episodes, listed in two sets. First, there are those mentioned in Ovid's, marked with numbers (0-9). Then there are episodes either not mentioned or not significant in Ovid story, but they nevertheless frequently appear in images (A-G). These are only those episodes that relate directly to the story. Other episodes, filling up the pictorial space are not included, like an old man ploughing with an ox in the background of the main scene.

'References' are signs that contribute to the narrative meaning. The signs, altogether 25 of them, are classified into six groups: textual signs appearing in or around the image; pictorial signs for identifying the characters or the environment; references for the stage or landscape setting; proper narrative references that mark special visual phenomena; metanarrative signs that point out of the realm of the story; and signs of anachronism. References are marked with small letters. The complete list of the episodes and references are below:

Episodes mentioned in Ovid's text

- (0) an episode from the framing narrative, the story of Venus and Adonis (e.g. Adonis hunting, Venus and Adonis flirting etc.)
- (1) Hippomenes receiving the apples from Venus
- (2) flirting
- (3) the course of the race
- (4) winning the race or the end of the race
- (5) marriage or apotheosis
- (6) on the way to the temple
- (7) making love in the temple
- (8) as lions
- (9) Venus witnessing the story, either the race or the marriage

Other frequently added episodes not significant or not present in Ovid

- (A) beheading of the defeated suitors
- (B) boys sounding the horn
- (C) Venus forcing Atalanta to pick up the apples
- (D) Atalanta admiring an apple
- (E) the figure of Victory giving the laurel wreath to, or crowning, Hippomenes

- (F) the statue in Cybele's temple turning its face away ashamed
- (G) other or unidentified (the lovers on their way to the temple secondly, another episode from the frame narrative)

Text references

- (a) an inscription inside the image (identifying persons, places etc.)
- (b) a short text belonging to the image (title, but only when it has importance etc.)
- (c) a text by the image: the whole story or a shortened version of it

Pictorial signs

- (d) attributes, elements identifying the characters, even if the story itself is not depicted (the apple in Atalanta's hand, the temple, the chariot or swans of Venus)
- (e) elements identifying the ancient (Greco-) Roman world (architecture, costumes)

Elements of the stage setting

- (f) objects (one or two) included as part of the stage setting
- (g) additional elements (three or more), for example a pillar marking the end of the race, a barrier, Schoeneus's throne, Atalanta's basket etc.
- (h) landscape elements (sea, castle, ruins)
- (i) new characters included (putti, boys with horn, courtiers, soldiers, other emphasized characters, animals)

Narrative elements

- (j) flashback, analepsis, retrospection: reference to earlier stages of the story
- (k) foreflash, prolepsis, anticipation: reference to future episodes of the story
- (l) gestures playing a significant role in the narrative
- (m) indirect narrative, the fable is presented as staged
- (n) external narrator (i.e. author as narrator), the image is presented by the painter (signed images)
- (o) internal narrator: a character interpreting the story inside the realm of the image; or the composition is designed for an imaginary viewer inside the image
- (p) mediator present (a figure inviting the viewer into the scene with eye contact, pose or gestures)
- (q) the viewer in the position of any of the main characters (usually it is the position of the judge)
- (r) communication transgressing the frame (Hippomenes to Venus, or Venus to Atalanta)

Metanarrative signs

- (s) text or sign included to point outside (numbering the image or an inscription), referring to other images in the cycle
- (t) image in the image (another artwork – a relief or an image – is depicted within a scene)
- (u) new framing narrative (moral, alchemical, historical, allegorical, astrological etc.)

Anachronistic signs

- (v) reference to the present historical time using contemporary costumes
- (w) reference to the present time using contemporary architectural elements
- (z) heraldic elements included (crown, coat of arms, shield, impresa)
- (x) a patron, or any other contemporaries of the painter depicted as a character

THE PROCESS OF CODING

In the process of coding each image is given two codes, first the *Narrative code* and then, based on this code, a *Narrative complexity number* (NCN).

The Narrative code consists of two types of indices, numbers (0-9) or letters (A-G or a-x). It is simply a list of those episodes (numbers or capital letters) or references (small letters) that can be found in the image. No index is given for images with only one figure, without an action (for example, a portrait of Atalanta). Behind the differentiation between the action and non-action categories lies an

attempt to decide whether the picture depicts only one or more moments or actions of the story. Thus an additive system with 17 x 25 dimensions was elaborated to categorize the images.

The Narrative Complexity Number (NCN) is an ordered pair that makes the narrative code numerical: the first number of the ordered pair shows the number of the episodes depicted, and the second shows the number of references used in the image. In this way the images have become comparable and they have a number (actually an ordered pair, so two numbers) that can be used for statistics.

The list of the images in the database is arranged by increasing numbers of episodes, and then by the order of the references. Images having the same NCN are arranged by their date. Among the 83 images in the database, when examined according to the system described above, there are only two alike. The other 81 have different narrative codes. This shows the great variety of painterly responses to the original story.

On the basis of two examples, let me demonstrate how the system of coding works. Frederic Lord Leighton's painting, *Atalanta* (No 2 in the database) is a portrait, painted around 1893, now possibly in a private collection. Against a purple background, a young lady is depicted in profile. She wears a blue mantle over a white blouse that leaves her shoulder bare. On her right upper arm, she has a piece of jewellery, a golden ring with an ornamental end, possibly Greek in style. This is the only element suggesting that a model was used for representing an ancient subject. As the painting lacks attributes and narrative actions, the title has a special importance: it clearly identifies the character and the subject. Although it is not a narrative image, with *Atalanta* as a title, it clearly demonstrates its connection to the ancient story. The narrative code of the painting is `_be`, since there is no episode shown from the fable (so there is no number or capital letter in the code). Yet there are two references: the title (b) and the jewellery associated with antiquity (e). With more information about the model, we would be able to add 'x' to the code, as possibly somebody amongst the painter's contemporaries sat as a model. Having the code (`_be`), the next step is to turn it into a number. Since there are no episodes there, the first number of the ordered pair is zero. The second one is two, as there are two references, 'b' and 'e'. So the NCN is (0, 2).

A historiated letter A, from a fifteenth century illuminated *Ovid Moralisatus* (No 9) has been assigned the code `3cdkuv`. First, it depicts the course of the race (3) and this is the only episode from Ovid's account. Then, by the image, the written story appears, since it is an illustration in an Ovid edition (c); there are apples in Atalanta's hand to identifying her (d); there is another apple in Hippomenes's hand referring to the future moment when he is going to throw it (foreflash, k); the story has a moralizing interpretation (u stands for the new framing); and, finally, the characters are in Renaissance costumes, an anachronism that is used to strengthen the moral message to contemporary viewers. Listing all the elements related to the story and thus generating the code (`3cdkuv`), this may then be turned into numbers. One episode (the race) gives the first number of the ordered pair (1), the

number of the references, altogether five of them, gives the second element (5). (1, 5) is thus the NCN of the image.

RESULTS

In this part of the results of the survey are presented. The direction of the visual narrative is dealt with first, then the episodes and the references are analysed separately. Afterwards episodes and references are tested against each other and against date categories.

THE DIRECTION OF THE NARRATIVE

The direction of the narrative in monoscenic images can be determined by movements or by action-based episodes. Of the episodes 0-9 and A-H that turn up in the story of Atalanta and Hippomenes, two may indicate clearly the direction of the narrative, *The Race* (3 or 4) or *The Way to the Temple* (6). As the latter only occurs very rarely and never forms the subject of an image on its own, in most of the cases the direction of the two runners settles the direction of the narrative. Apart from the direction of the contest, in images with more episodes the chronology of these may also determine the direction. If the arrangement of the episodes is occasional, incoherent or random (as in the case of Michael Maier's engraving), the direction of the race is taken into account. When the direction is determined, but contradictory, no direction has been counted. These examples are sufficiently complex that each should be examined individually.

Of the 83 images in the database, eight have no direction: these are the two portraits by Galestruzzi and Lord Leighton (No 1 and 2). Four do not show movement at all: Virgil Solis's print (No 18), van Neck (No 22), Benjamin West (No 47) and the marriage scene by Louis Boullogne (No 75). In the case of No 64 (follower of Titian), the direction of the episodes cannot be determined, just as is the case for one double image (No 78) engraved by Mycillus, where the race scene is left-right, but the lions are stepping out of the temple right-left. The racecourse in three cases is perpendicular to the picture plane, therefore the runners approach the viewer directly. The direction in these cases is marked as 'Front'.

The table below (Table 3.1) gives the distribution of the four categories of direction existing in the database: frontal, left-right (LR), right-left (RL), and those without direction. In the first column there is the number of images for each type (altogether 83), the second column gives the result in percentages compared to the total number of images in the database.

Direction	Total	In % of 83	In % of 75
No direction	8	9.64%	0%
Left to right (LR)	40	48.19%	53.33%
Right to left (RL)	32	38.56%	42.67%
Frontal	3	3.61%	4%
	=83	=100%	=100%

Table 3.1. Direction of the narrative

The results show that most narratives (40 of 83) in the database follow the left-right direction, the direction of the reading in Western Cultures. For this reason it is surprising that it is not a decisive majority, as the LR images amount to less than half of the total. Altogether 32 of the 83 images go RL, and 3 of the 83 are Frontal. The ratio of the LR and RL images is 5:4. Simply expressed, of nine narrative images with either LR or RL direction, in this database, five go left to right, and four go right to left. The results are more marked when focusing only on those images that have a clear narrative direction. The third column shows the percentages of the RL, LR and Frontal images compared to the total number of images with a clear direction in this database, that is 40+32+3=75 images. Here, a little more than half of the images show LR (53.33%), the percentage of the RL is 42.67% and 4% is for the Frontal-type. We can go even further by reducing the categories: unifying RL and Frontal types under a 'non-LR' category against LR, the ratio of the LR and non-LR images is 40:35 (35 comprises 32 RL+3 Front).

Refining the LR and RL types further, two supplementary categories were introduced for diagonal directions. 'LR front' means that Atalanta and Hippomenes are running from the left background to the right foreground, 'RL back' means the opposite diagonal path. Of the total number of 32 RL images, four are in the 'back' subcategory, and two are in the 'front' type. From the 40 LR images, there are two examples of the 'LR front' and the 'LR back' types. In practice, the diagonal form can be a clearly indicated straight path to the background, as in the painting by Poynter (No 28), or a curved 'RL front' path following the circular form of the field, as in the case of Giulio Romano's fresco (No 59).

A particular kind of direction has been identified in the database under LR types of images, the so-called circular type. Three multiscenic images use this arrangement, Bonsignori (No 83), Wickram (No 77), and de Bindonibus (No 72). Here the episodes are either arranged clockwise or anti-clockwise around an imaginary centre in the picture plane and the last episode joins up with the first one. The narrative is read in clockwise direction.

Often, as is indicated in the Appendix when appropriate, the engravings or drawings illustrating Ovid's *Metamorphoses* were re-engraved or otherwise reworked. In some cases, this means a new, reversed version in the negative; this naturally causes a change of direction. Antonio Tempesta's engraving (No 19) was enriched by Jean Mathieu (No 51) with the two lions in front of the round temple. The two main figures and thus the direction of the race was reversed. Virgil Solis re-engraved the Salomon-Simeoni (No 80) LR composition in reverse, and Bonsignori's LR circular composition comes in a later RL circular version. In case of Front types, the reversal into a negative image does not cause a change of direction. The composition of Gèrard de Jode's 1579 emblem (No 24) was modified by Joos van den Vondel in 1622 (included here only as a variation), yet the main characters are still running to the front.

The principal conclusion to be drawn from this is that the Western direction of reading has no exclusive or conclusive impact on the direction of visual narratives. The direction of the narrative can be placed under three main categories (Frontal, RL and LR), and among the RL and LR types and three more subcategories have been introduced (diagonal and circular arrangements). The observed examples support the relevance of these types, as well as showing the plentiful possibilities with which visual narration can work. Second, the above categories are not rigid: the alterations in the direction of the reworked images show their flexibility. The right and the left side have a special function and meaning in visuality, especially in sacred images; however, in certain cases the lifetime of the image can be prolonged by modifying its direction. Third, as the statistical results prove, even if the LR images outnumber the RL images, the priority of the LR images is not significant. The ratio of the RL and the LR are four to five, and the ratio of the LR and non-LR images is closer to half and half. The influence of reading on the direction of visual narratives is undeniable, but as the pattern in this database shows, this influence is not strong enough to serve as the basis for a general rule.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE EPISODES

The images contained altogether 17 episodes. A few of them occurred in Ovid's original but some of them are invented, added, or enhanced and used only by painters and engravers. The next table (Table 3.2.) shows the distribution of episodes based on the narrative code: the first column lists the numbers of images using zero, one, two etc. episodes. There were no images with seven or eight episodes. The second column shows the same number in percentages of the total 83 elements in the database. The highest number in the first column is 37 (with 44.58%) pertaining to images that show only one episode of the story. The second highest is the number 22 with 26.51%, images showing two episodes, etc. It is surprising that images with one episode comprise only 44.58%, less than half of the total images in the database leaving exactly 53.01% of the total for non-monoscenic pictures. Further, what may seem unusual, images showing three or more episodes, constitute more than one fourth of the total (22 or 26.5%). Extremes at both ends, images with no episodes or those with more than five, making up 2.4%

each of the total. What is clear here is that, although using one episode is the most common form of imagery when depicting the story of Atalanta and Hippomenes, monoscenic images are in the minority. Therefore, the widely accepted notion of a mass of monoscenic images with only a few pluriscenic exceptions (seen sometimes as a deviation) is not supported by this database.

For the average number of episodes, the third numerical column, ‘Episodes total’ will be used in Table 3.2. This column gives the full number of episodes used by each type. For example, 22 images depict two episodes each, so with multiplication, they contribute 44 episodes to the total sum, etc. Adding up the numbers in the third column (0+37+44+30+20+25+6+9=171) and dividing by 83 (the number of images in the database), the average becomes 2.06, giving more than two episodes as the average value for an image representing the story of Atalanta and Hippomenes. In the last column, the highest rate is for the two-episode type, their share is 25.73%. These two facts clearly demonstrate how this database undermines the single-moment theory.

Episodes	Total	In % of 83	Episodes total	Episodes in %
Zero episode	2	2.41%	0	0%
One episode	37	44.58%	37	21.64%
Two episodes	22	26.51%	44	25.73%
Three episodes	10	12.06%	30	17.54%
Four episodes	5	6.02%	20	11.7%
Five episodes	5	6.02%	25	14.62%
Six episodes	1	1.2%	6	3.51%
Nine episodes	1	1.2%	9	5.26%
	=83	=100%	=171	=100%

Table 3.2. Distribution of the episodes among the different types of images

The next issue is the distribution of the different episodes. First, there is a table summing up the different episodes used by the different types of image. In the rows of Table 3.3, the different episodes are listed, beginning from Episode 0 to Episode G, the columns show the different types of image, ‘1’ means the images with one episode, etc. At the intersection of a row Episode X and column ‘y’, the number in the box shows the occurrence of that episode among ‘y’ type of images. For example, the number 5 in the intersection of Episode E and column ‘2’ means that episode E (*Victory is crowning Hippomenes*) occurs five times among the images with two episodes. The total number of episodes deployed in each type of image can be seen in the line labelled ‘Total’. Further, the column named ‘Total’ gives the number of occurrences of each episode in the complete database. The last column gives these numbers in percentages, compared to the total number of episodes used by all images in the database, that is 171. In this column one sees the most common episodes and pictorial variations across all the images.

Episode type	'1'	'2'	'3'	'4'	'5'	'6'	'9'	Total	% of 171
Episode 0	0	3	3	1	1	0	0	8	4.68
Episode 1	1	6	2	2	5	1	1	18	10.53
Episode 2	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	3	1.75
Episode 3	26	13	5	4	4	1	1	54	31.58
Episode 4	9	8	2	0	1	0	0	20	11.71
Episode 5	0	1	0	3	0	0	1	5	2.92
Episode 6	0	0	2	2	0	0	1	5	2.92
Episode 7	0	0	2	0	4	1	0	7	4.09
Episode 8	0	1	4	2	5	1	1	14	8.19
Episode 9	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	3	1.75
Episode A	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.58
Episode B	0	2	1	1	1	1	1	7	4.09
Episode C	0	3	1	0	0	0	1	5	2.92
Episode D	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	1.18
Episode E	0	5	0	1	0	0	0	6	3.51
Episode F	0	0	2	0	3	1	0	6	3.51
Episode G	0	2	2	1	1	0	1	7	4.09
Total	37	44	30	20	25	6	9	171	100%
Types Nr	4	10	14	11	9	6	9		

Table 3.3. Detailed distribution of the episodes

As one would expect, some of the episodes are commoner than others. It is generally known that certain iconographic and compositional types of European painting were repeated again and again by generations of painters and engravers. There are also exceptions, rare variations and strange compositions without visual models or successors. There is a similar situation to be found with the episodes of the story of Atalanta and Hippomenes: some enjoy great popularity, but a few unusual or unprecedented solutions can also be found. The bar chart (Table 3.4.) arranges the episodes in decreasing order, the commonest followed by the rarer examples.

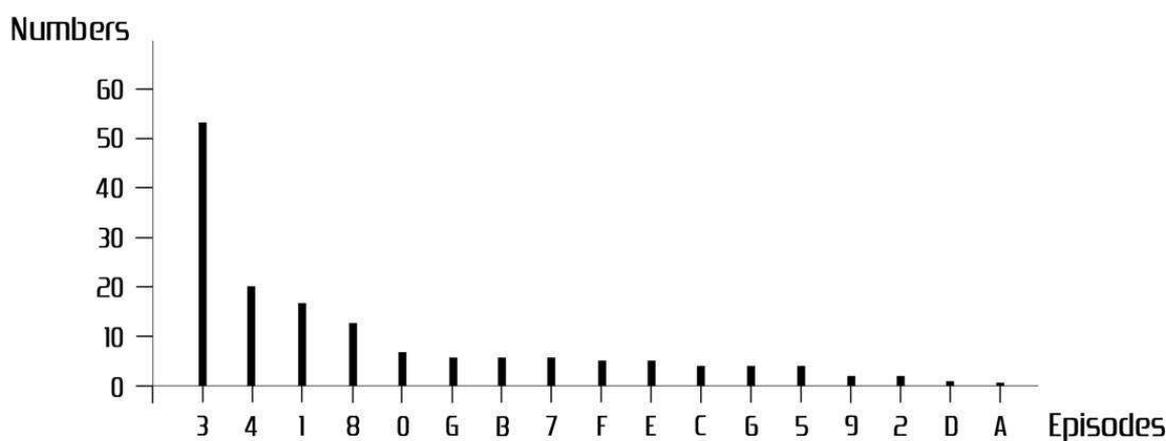


Table 3.4. Decreasing order of the episodes

In the first place, the most frequent example, is episode No 3, *The course of the race*, used in 54 images. The next is a variation on the first episode, No 4, *The end of the race*, which was used in 20 different images. *The course of the race* and *The end of the race* are two distinct events. They are never depicted together. Therefore the sum of the two numbers, 74, means that 74 of the 83 images in the database shows an episode with the race, leaving only 7 images without this episode (apart from the two portraits). With this, the race itself is the most commonly depicted episode from the story. The main reason for this is surely its central position in Ovid's text. Ovid not only gives a very detailed account of the race, but he also draws the attention to it by subordinating to it all the other episodes. Apart from that, the ever-narrowing narrative structure emphasizes it as well: from the general narrator, through the speech of Venus and the internal monologues of the two main characters, and finally to the dialogue of Atalanta and Hippomenes, all point towards the race.

However, this scene would not have been so popular among painters if it did not have certain important visual features. The race is between a man and a woman, both descendants of the gods, young and beautiful. What could be a more attractive (and difficult) subject than showing them in a dynamic scene where the movements of their bodies play an important role? Depicting bodies in motion was from the sixteenth century onwards a highly ranked skill in European painting, a bigger challenge than depicting genre or landscape scenes. Further, the end of the race is the best of all episodes of the story to evoke the feeling of catharsis, especially when represented with moments leading up to and off it. Moreover, showing Atalanta and Hippomenes in a static composition with the apple, the device that has a crucial role in the race, would have led the less educated viewers into trouble: they might have confused the scene with the sacred topic of the Fall.

Given the narrative and pictorial advantages of the *End of the race* episode, one might expect this to top the list. However, as the numbers show, the *Course of the race* episode was chosen almost three times as often as the *End of the race* (20 to 54). To understand the logic of this let me explain first how the episodes were distinguished in the process of categorizing. Episode 4 (*End of the race*) is a more elaborated version of episode 3 (*Course of the race*). The end of the contest was clearly indicated by painters with pictorial elements or with other episodes. A *meta* or obelisk can be at the end of the path, sometimes with Hippomenes touching it, as in the case of Giulio Romano's fresco (No 59); the end can also be marked by a column or an altar with the head of the former suitors beheaded on it as in Francesco Morone's panel painting, (No 30). In Francesco del Cossa panel (No 32) Hippomenes is just arriving at a gate where the King and his companions are waiting. Again, the royal couple and the courtiers are waiting for the winner in Agostini's woodcut (No 54). Hippomenes ahead, reaching out his empty hands, may also indicate not only that the apples have been thrown and the distance that Atalanta cannot regain, but also Hippomenes's victory in itself (Baur, No 58). Nicholas Colombel (No 46), Joseph Deschamps (No 53), Guercino (No 57) and others used the figure of Victory ready to crown Hippomenes as a winner to show that the contest has already been settled. All these images give the

story far more elements, richer landscape settings or more characters than the simple ones deploying episode 3. Of the 54 occurrences of episode 3, almost half (26 exactly) are found in images with one episode. These are the simplest examples. Most of them only show the two runners, set in a simple landscape scene indicated by trees and clouds (Wouters No 3, Master of the Cité des Dames No 13, Bartolozzi No 12). The above-mentioned difference between episodes 3 and 4 is clearly indicated in their narrative codes, by the number of references they use. Among the images with one episode, the number of references by episode 3 run from two (i. e. the simplest narrative code is (1, 2)), but for episode 4 the smallest number of references is six. This means that, on average, more references were used by episode 4 than episode 3. The complex relationship between episodes and references will be studied presently.

Although *The course of the race* and *The end of race* top the list of the episodes, together they comprise only 43.29% of all episodes depicted, leaving more than half to represent other parts of the fable. There are two more episode in the first, top quarter: episode 1 (*Hippomenes receiving the apples*) and episode 8 (*Atalanta and Hippomenes as lions*). The middle of the bar chart groups together nine episodes that occur eight times (episode 0), seven times (episodes B, F and G), six times (episodes E and F) and five times (episodes 5, 6, and C) in the images in the database. The last four rarely depicted episodes came up less than four times (episodes 2, 9, D and A).

Among the episodes there seem to be two large sets: one formed around the race, the other around the transformation. There are quite a few other episodes in the list related to the 'race' (3 and 4), some of which never form a subject of a single image alone. Ovid does not say much about death as the penalty for being slow in the contest. Apart from the sentence, 'Wife and couch shall be given as prize unto the swift, but death shall be the reward of those who lag behind'¹⁰, said by Atalanta herself, Ovid mentions only those paying the penalty, and those who already perished. Among painters beheading is generally understood to be as the direct cause of death, since many of the images show decapitated heads as a flashback. Only once is this depicted as an independent episode and it is thus the last in the list, the *Beheading of the defeated suitors* (episode A). This forms a pair with the *End of the race* in a cassone painting (now in the Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris, No 69).

As shown earlier in this thesis, to this day images are still accused of having a narrative flaw, namely that they can show only one moment of a story. Here this can easily be checked and refuted by focusing on one episode, episode B (*Boys sounding the horns*). According to Ovid, musicians from the court would sound trumpets as a signal for beginning the race. This episode occurs seven times in the images in the database: once in the marriage scene by Louis de Boullogne the Younger (No 75) as a flashback, and six other times accompanying the race scene. However, apart from Platzer's painting (No 71), where the moment depicted could be the beginning of the contest, all the other pictures definitely do not show the very first moments of the race since the apples have already been thrown.

¹⁰ Ovid, 1984, 105.

Therefore, these examples include (at least) two, successive events from the myth, or they do not follow the original text exactly.

Episode C is an excellent example of a verbal allusion turned into a visual quote. Accompanying episodes 3 and 4, episode C (*Venus forcing Atalanta to pick up the apple*) is the visual equivalent of the Ovidian sentence spoken by the goddess of love at a crucial point during the contest: 'The girl seemed to hesitate whether or no she should go after it. *I forced her to take it up*, and added weight to the fruit she carried...' ¹¹ This was first given visual form in Bonsignori's engraving for an illustrated edition of the *Metamorphoses*, published in 1497 (No 83). Venus, depicted as a naked woman behind Atalanta, forces the hesitating girl to stoop for the fruit. Another four examples exist, all from Italy and all from the first half of the sixteenth century, where Venus imposes her will on Atalanta in this strange, but effective way (one is an illustration from 1546, another is by Agostini from 1522, one is by Baldassare from 1534, and finally there is one by Dolce from 1553). Dolce's engraving goes even further by having the goddess creep up on to Atalanta's back on all fours. Episode C, used to express Venus's active involvement in the race, does not at all appear in this form in the Ovidian text. It should instead be regarded as a new addition to the old story.

Episode E is in the lower middle part of the list in Table 3.4., with its six appearances constituting 3.51% of the total episodes. It is another instance closely associated with the end of the race. Likewise episode C, *Cupid or Victory crowning Hippomenes*, is also missing from the Ovidian story. Interestingly, the episode about Venus's intervention appears only on majolica plates and in book illustrations. In contrast, the crowning scene, with the one exception of Alvisè Friso's drawing (No 49), is found only in larger paintings and reliefs. The episode with Cupid and the laurel wreath, depicted by Colombel, Giulio Romano and Deschamps, has been already mentioned in the discussion of episode 4. A slightly different version can be seen in Louis Boullogne the Younger's marriage scene (No 75), where it is not Cupid or Victory but Hymen who crowns Hippomenes. At the same time Hippomenes is crowning Atalanta, as she has also won, not the race but a husband and love.

Episode D, *Atalanta admiring an apple* is penultimate in the list; is not at all mentioned in Ovid but it appears twice in a Virgil Solis engraving. Once it is the main subject (No 18), but it is also a supplementary moment in the background (No 67), possibly carrying negative connotations. Episode 2, *Flirting of Atalanta and Hippomenes*, which is seldom depicted, forms an additional moment to the courting scene. In Bonsignori's engraving the flirting couple is a connecting link between an earlier episode, Hippomenes receiving the apples, and a later one, the race itself. Depicted altogether three times, the two later examples are actually derivations of Bonsignori's composition. Already mentioned above and related to Boullogne's painting in the Hermitage, episode 5, the marriage ceremony, turns up five times, yet it is the main subject of a painting only once.

¹¹ Ovid, 1984, 113.

The second largest group of episodes are grouped around the transformation of Atalanta and Hippomenes into lions. In contrast to better-known examples of Apollo and Daphne, Myrrha or Diana and Actaeon, where artists show the process of transformation, the actual metamorphosis of Atalanta and Hippomenes is never depicted. Instead, they are shown embracing in the darkness of the sanctuary, and later stepping out from the shrine, but the moment between remains unseen.

Episode 6, *On the way to the temple* is a supplementary motif used to fill the gap between the marriage ceremony and the temple scene in engravings where episodes are piled up (as in Bonsignori, No 83). The relatively uncommon episode of *Embracing in the temple* (episode 7) appears seven times, usually together with a more popular episode of *Atalanta and Hippomenes as lions* (episode 8, 14 times). The interesting intermezzo economically described by Ovid only as ‘the sacred images turned away their eyes’¹² was much used by engravers, thus placing episode F in the middle of the list. References to the framing narrative of Venus and Adonis are found in three episodes (0, 1 and 9). Episode 9, *Venus witnessing the actions*, usually places her on clouds above the scene from whence she controls the course of events (used 3 times). A very popular scene, yet almost always joined to the race itself, is episode 1, the *Receiving the apples*, third in the decreasing order of episodes. Episode 0 stands for all the remaining scenes of the frame story not specified in episodes 1 and 9, including Adonis hunting, Venus and Adonis in love, Venus mourning over the dead body of Adonis etc. The very wide category of episode G serves as a kind of joker episode, covering all unidentified scenes or those not marked as an individual episode. This includes Niccoló Giolfino’s version (No 56) discussed in more detail in the Appendix, as well as episodes with putti gathering around helping or holding back Venus.

Based on the Ovidian narrative of Atalanta and Hippomenes, 17 different episodes were identified as being a main or subsidiary subject in the pictures of the myth gathered together in the database. Apart from the first ten episodes, which more or less follow the chronology of the text (episodes 0-9), there are seven more not emphasized or not even mentioned by Ovid yet added by the artists (episodes A-H). An average of two episodes are depicted in each image, typically *The Race* is the first. So, apart from a mass of fairly simple illustrations, artists often reinterpret the original story, either by changing the original scene by including new episodes, or by shifting the emphasis. In short, when given in visual form, the story of Atalanta and Hippomenes involves a great deal of variety and many inventive solutions. Moreover there is no slavish subservience to the *punctum temporis*; this is not a law governing the construction of narrative imagery but rather one of many artistic options.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE REFERENCES

The References will be analysed as the episodes were. Table 3.5. shows the general distribution of the references in terms of the different types of images. The first numerical column in the chart shows total

¹² Ovid, 1984, 113.

number of references found in each type of image, in the next column these have been turned into percentages. A total of 652 references found in the database. Considering the total of images examined, this results in an average of 7.86 (=652/83) references in each image. This means, first, that these pictorial and textual signs are widely employed in the images as allusions to the story. They outnumber the episodes quite considerably, proving that the strength of images lie in their properly pictorial qualities, in visual details. The second significant outcome, which is evident from the averages, is that the most typical image from the database has two episodes and eight references. Thus the average Narrative complexity number has a value of (2.06, 7.86). Statistically, this is the commonest way of depicting the Ovidian story of Atalanta and Hippomenes.

Looking more closely at the distribution of references, the following points emerge. The highest average number of references are used in images with five episodes (11.4), in the second place are images with six episodes (10), then follows the images with four episodes (9.8), etc. This shows that, roughly, more episodes go together with more references. Even the most frequently occurring type of image, those showing only one episode, still use quite a high number of references (7.24), although slightly less than the average.

References	Ref Total	In % of 652	Nr of Images	Average
Zero episodes	4	0.61%	2	2
One episode	268	41.1%	37	7.24
Two episodes	177	27.15%	22	8.05
Three episodes	79	12.12%	10	7.9
Four episodes	49	7.52%	5	9.8
Five episodes	57	8.74%	5	11.4
Six episodes	10	1.53%	1	10
Nine episodes	8	1.23%	1	8
	=652	=100%	=83	

Table 3.5. Distribution of the references among the different types of images

The detailed distribution of the references is given in Table 3.6. In the rows of the table all the 25 references are listed, in the columns are the different types of image. For example, number 9 at the intersection of column 2 (images with two episodes) and the row of references r gives the number of times a frame-transgressing communication (reference r) was found among two-episode images. The column marked 'Total' lists the number of times that each reference occurs and the last column gives the distribution in percentages.

Ref type	'0'	'1'	'2'	'3'	'4'	'5'	'6'	'9'	Total	% to 652
Ref a	1	3	3	1	1	1	0	1	11	1.69
Ref b	1	5	4	1	0	2	0	0	13	1.99
Ref c	0	11	7	3	1	5	1	1	29	4.45
Ref d	0	33	20	7	5	5	1	1	72	11.04
Ref e	1	8	4	2	1	1	0	0	17	2.60
Ref f	0	15	13	5	4	4	0	0	41	6.29
Ref g	0	12	9	3	0	0	0	0	24	3.68
Ref h	0	28	13	7	3	4	1	0	56	8.59
Ref i	0	18	16	7	4	5	1	0	51	7.82
Ref j	0	25	13	3	5	4	1	1	52	7.98
Ref k	0	28	18	9	5	5	1	1	67	10.28
Ref l	0	9	4	3	1	1	0	0	18	2.76
Ref m	0	7	4	2	2	1	0	0	16	2.45
Ref n	0	10	5	2	2	1	0	0	20	3.07
Ref o	0	5	8	2	3	2	1	1	22	3.37
Ref p	0	9	4	2	3	2	0	0	20	3.07
Ref q	0	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	5	0.77
Ref r	0	1	9	4	3	4	1	1	23	3.53
Ref s	1	6	2	0	0	1	1	0	11	1.69
Ref t	0	5	3	1	0	0	0	0	9	1.38
Ref u	0	6	5	5	1	2	0	0	19	2.91
Ref v	0	9	3	3	2	2	0	1	20	3.07
Ref w	0	11	7	5	1	3	1	0	28	4.29
Ref x	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0.31
Ref z	0	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	6	0.92
Total	4	268	177	79	49	57	10	8	652	100%
Nr Types	4	25	24	22	20	21	10	8		

Table 3.6. Detailed distribution of the references

Organising the detailed distribution of references into the order given in Table 3.6. enables us to determine the most and least frequent references. Table 3.7. presents the frequency, in decreasing order, of the references based on how often they occur in the entire database. The range varies between 2 (reference x) and 72 (reference d). When compared to the frequency of the episodes, the first noteworthy point is that, amongst the references there are no extreme examples such as episode 3. The distribution of references is much more moderate and balanced. In both the upper and the lower quarter there are six references, leaving 13 in the middle region.

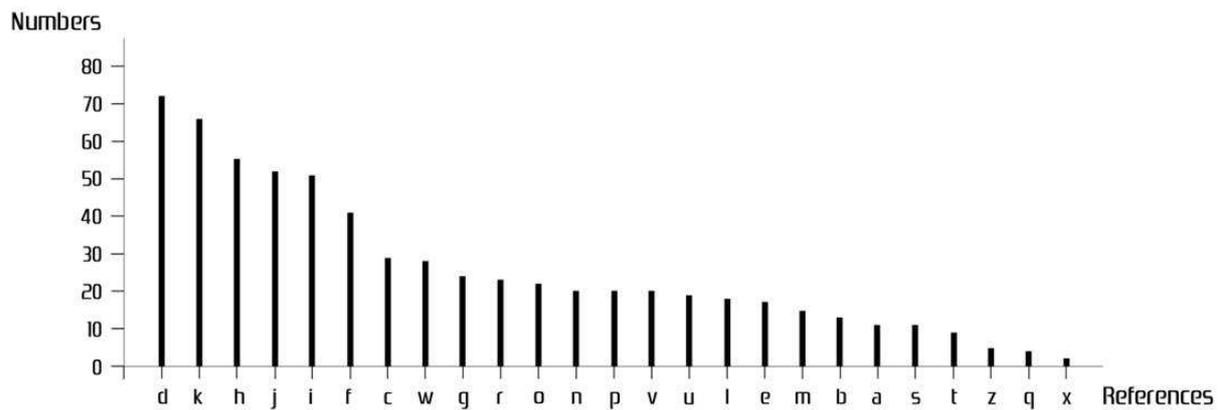


Table 3.7. Decreasing order of the references

The analysis of the system of references will focus on six groups or sets. The first set, *Text references*, covers any form of textual element in or related to the image. Despite my preliminary expectations, both reference a and reference b appear in the lower quarter of the list of frequencies. Reference a, that is texts, was used only 11 times, usually to identify or denote the different characters (for example, there are inscriptions such as ‘Atalanta’ or ‘Hippomenes’, mainly in book illustrations) or places (as for the temple of Cybelé with ‘Templvm Sibellis’ in Lemaire’s painting, No 70) or give extra information in a text ribbon, found only once referring to Atalanta’s victory (Cirro Ferri, No 60). Reference b (used 13 times) signals images where the title is crucial for identifying the story, as in the case of Leighton’s portrait (No 2) or the engraving made after Benjamin West’s painting. Here Atalanta and Hippomenes are not present at all but Venus tells their story. Besides, reference b is also used when the image is accompanied by a short sentence or epigram. Reference c is the seventh in the list, occurring 29 times. It is used mainly in book illustrations, where the whole story (or a shortened version of it) is printed by the image.

Reference d from the group of *Pictorial signs* is the most frequent of all. Of the total of 83 images 72 involve some sort of attributes to help the viewer recognize the story. Examples of these include the apples in either Atalanta’s or Hippomenes’s hand, a carriage or a swan for Venus or a quiver with arrows for Cupid. Approximately one fifth of the images place the story in an ancient environment. This is usually identifiable by the Greco-Roman style of the temple or by the *all’antica* dress of the figures (reference e, used by 17 images).

The third set of references comprises *Elements of the stage setting*. As one would expect, all four elements (f, g, h and i) in this group occur very frequently. Ovid, concentrating on actions and feelings, is rather sparing when describing persons and objects in or around the landscape setting. All we know is that the race takes place in a meadow called Tamasus where the tree with golden apples stands. There is also a shrine somewhere in a dense forest and from Ovid’s limited references one may infer that people from the court and trumpeters accompanying the King. Even elements not mentioned clearly by Ovid are mostly depicted in detail. Artists could and did benefit from Ovid’s economic

phrasing, which leaves more space for their imagination and invention. Reference f (used 41 times) stands for new elements included in the stage setting, but only for one or two. Reference g is added (in 24 images) to f when more than two elements are used or a significant architectural landscape has been depicted. With this increase of references I wanted to make a distinction between images with only a few elements added and those with a lot more. These additional elements may include a barrier bordering the path for the race, a throne for Schoenus and the canopy above it, an obelisk or the ancient *meta* forming the end of the stadium, a well etc. Compared to the original, roughly outlined Ovidian environment, there is no image that does not add something to his setting. However, only those that make the landscape significant or very elaborate were given the mark h. This includes 56 images, taking third place from the top in the list. Like the landscape, the number and type of the characters present at the race are also not clearly indicated by Ovid. The mark i (*new characters*) was given only if a large number of spectators were included in the scene, or when some of these were made distinct from the crowd. The new characters include courtiers, soldiers, musicians, putti, or even animals.

There are nine types of references included in the fourth group, that of *Narrative elements*, ranging from j to r. The first two, j and k stand for analepsis and prolepsis, i.e. flashbacks and flashforwards. First, we have to distinguish two very different forms. Painters can refer backwards or forwards either with pictorial elements or with episodes. When pictorial elements are put into the scene, they can be compared with the main action. In such cases it is easy to decide in which direction they point. However, when more than one episode is depicted, flashback and flashforward can be detected only if there some sort of hierarchy between the depicted scenes and this is usually made clear by the composition. Otherwise there is no present moment which allows one to determine whether the other episodes are earlier or later. Thus foreflashes or flashbacks are always compared to the main scene or main action. The richness of the Ovidian fable makes it possible to use a lot of analeptic and proleptic signs and actions. As real jokers in the pack, the apples often serve as a device both for flashbacks and flashforwards. When the apple is in Hippomenes's hand, we know that he is going to throw it immediately. When it is on the ground, we know that Atalanta is going to reach down for it. When it is in Atalanta's hands, we know that she has already stopped once to pick it up. A very large number of images show these refined little devices: reference k, which occurs 67 times is in the second place of the frequency list, followed by reference j for foreflashes in the fourth place (occurring in 52 images).

Gestures (reference l) of the depicted persons allow for a clearer narrative flow. Its 18 occurrences place reference l into the lower middle range of the scale. The category of indirect narrative (reference m) is the least successful. Noted 16 times, I devised it to denote a situation where, through a particular form of composition, the scene is not directly available to the viewer. Instead, one has to pass through a number of pictorial obstacles to get to the main scene. The arrangement of such a scene is often supplemented by mediator or *sprecher* figures (reference p), who make eye contact with the viewer. Besides, these figures usually gesture outwards from the pictorial realm or their posture

alludes to that of the viewer or they introduce the viewer in some other way. Mediator figures can be main characters as well: Nicolas Colombel (No 46) endowed Hippomenes with this playful role. Reference p stands for such mediators; it occurs 20 times. The external narrator (reference n) in this database is always the artist. If there is a signature the careful viewer cannot ignore that the painting or drawing is only a created world, filtered through somebody's work and vision. Reference n was also used for the Ovidian double frame, especially when this appears in synoptic tables. The category of the internal narrator (references o) is used in two different ways in 22 images. The first is when there are figures in the scene interpreting or retelling the story depicted at the same time as they talk; the second is when the composition is designed to meet the requirements of an internal, almost exclusively unseen viewer inside the pictorial realm. In this case, viewers are placed in the middle of the internal stage (for example, see the engraving made by Bonsignori, No 83). Reference q (viewer in the position of any of the characters) similarly involves a particular relationship between the viewer and the characters inside the image. When the runners of the race move directly towards the picture plane, thus towards the viewer, the viewer finds himself or herself in the position of those standing at the finishing line. We are thus invited to judge or otherwise consider the outcome of the contest. Addressing the viewer in this way is highly effective (images No 24 and No 44).

The category of communication transgressing the frame (reference r) stands for those interventions made by Venus to ensure that the outcome of the race will fit her expectations. The goddess of love is involved actively when she gives Hippomenes the means of defeating Atalanta, and once again when she holds Atalanta back. These acts of communication happen across two different realms of the story: as a narrator, Venus comes from the level framing the other characters, having the power to comprehend the scene as a whole and to manage the events as a *Dea ex machina*. Reference r is found 23 times, more than a quarter of the images.

The next set of elements comprises *Metanarrative references*, all used to point out from the scene either towards the other stories in the larger sequence (reference s) of the *Metamorphoses*, or towards stories and events originally not linked to the story of Atalanta and Hippomenes, or to the actual historical period when the image was made. A picture depicted within the original picture usually implies links with other stories, artworks or historical events. Reference t (image in the image) occurs 9 times in the database. It was often assigned when the meaning of such elements is not entirely clear but it is nevertheless likely that a close iconographical analysis would reveal such links. Schönfeld placed the story in the garden of the Villa Tivoli (No 39), there is an unidentified figurative scene on the pillar of Guercino's drawing (No 57) and a statue in Giolfino's double image without a clear meaning (No 57). Reference u (new framing narrative) marks a re-interpretation of the story in a rather general way. The legend is sometimes given a new frame, either by appearing in a moralised version of the *Metamorphoses* or by being linked to contemporary poetics (as in the case of the Trionfi bowl, No 45) or to an alchemical work (Michael Maier, No 79). This always entails a much broader

domain for iconographic analysis. Such reinterpretations are surprisingly common, giving 19 new frames for the story.

The last group is named *Anachronistic signs*. They usually include elements making allusions to the time when the image was made. References v and w, together with reference e, denote images that place the story in a specified time and/or place in history. Whether emphasizing the ancient character of the story (reference e) or re-interpreting it by means of a contemporary architectural setting (reference w), such images often use stage-setting to give a general frame for the narratives (17 for e, plus 28 for w). Reference u, for contemporary costumes, turns up 20 times, but not always together with reference w. Reference z (heraldic elements) denotes clearly marked contemporary, historically specific connections. This is usually done by including in the image the patron's impresa (Castelli, No 15), a shield with a heraldic sign (the Medici shield in Ciro Ferri's engraving, No 60) or a full coat of arms. This specific reference was used six times in the database. The hardest to determine with certainty of all the references, reference x (Patron depicted as a character), denotes images that place a real person in the role of one or more characters from the Ovidian story. For example, Sebastiano Marsili (No 76) depicted Francesco Vecchio as the King and father of Atalanta, thus reinterpreting and up-dating the story in the context of a Renaissance court.

In conclusion, narrative images, apart from showing episodes, use a rich and highly sophisticated system of pictorial and textual signs, here called references. Altogether 25 different references have been identified, and, as their distribution indicate, they were found very frequently in the images. These references are used to point to or suggest parts or elements of the story. They also identify or specify places, characters or objects, even in those areas where the Ovidian story does not determine a setting. The references serve to indicate narrative functions and they invoke either the historical time when the story was written or a broader contemporary context, when and where the image was made. Finally, they set up the relationship between viewer and image. On average, each image uses around 8 of these references; the commonest were used by 72, 67 and 56 images (references d, k and h). Such references help to identify the characters (d) or the setting (h), or, fulfilling the viewers' expectations, they allude to future moments. According to the averages listed here, in the database, images with a higher number of episodes come with a higher number of references. This, however, should be understood only on a very general level. References seem to be more inherent to images than episodes.

Thus it may be argued that the references designate the area where narrative images are highly inventive, since the meaning expressed by these references is, in most cases, not even mentioned by Ovid. Apart from the first three references for textual signs, they are purely pictorial devices: they add, emphasize or modify meaning in the visual realm. As opposed to the system of the episodes, the set of references can be used much more creatively because these qualities are not determined by the story as much as the episodes. While the number and the content of the episodes must vary according to the

specific subject of the story, the system of references developed here may actually serve as a fixed, general framework for studying visual narratives.

EPISODES AND REFERENCES – THE DISTRIBUTION OF THE NCN

In the next few sections, the relationship between the episodes and the references will be examined, mainly by help of the Narrative complexity number (NCN). As already defined, the NCN is an ordered pair assigned to each image in the database. Its first element gives the number of depicted episodes, its second element the number of references. Each pair can be found in the NCN column of the database (Column L).

The numeric scatter graph (Table. 3.8.) shows the distribution of the NCNs. On the x axis of the graph are the numbers of episodes (the first number of the ordered pair), on the y axis are the numbers of references (the second number). Each ordered pair from the database are shown as a circle or a point where the axes intersect. The frequency of each code is also determined: larger circles indicate the greater frequency of that particular NCN. For clarification, the circles are accompanied by a number stating the occurrence of the ordered pair in question. The most frequent is (1, 8) with seven occurrences, closely followed by two other NCNs, (1, 7) and (2, 8), both found six times. Another three NCNs appear four times in the database: (1, 5), (1, 6) and (2, 6). It is not a surprise that all of these are crowded around the average NCN, which, as noted earlier, is (2.06, 7.86). Less frequent NCNs can be seen away from the average; (5, 16) and (9, 8) clearly constitute the extreme examples in the database.

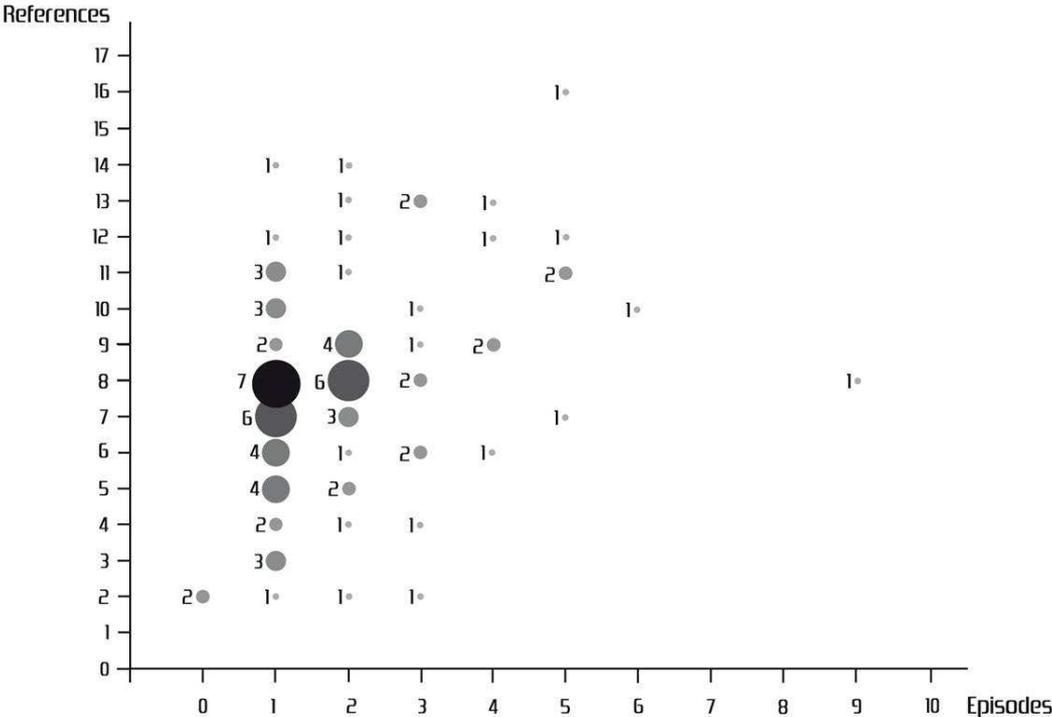


Table 3.8. Scatter graph of the NCN

The range of the references (the difference between the lowest and the highest number of references) for each image-type can easily be grasped from this scatter graph. For example, the references for images with one and two episodes range between 2 and 14, with the lowest, (1, 2) and (2, 2), and the highest, (1, 14) and (2, 14), respectively. The range of references for three-episode images (the vertical line above 3 on the x axis) lies between two and thirteen, but three-episode images use only seven different references (2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 13). As one moves away from the average, both the range and the number of references used is less and less, although the number of the references go higher and higher. Thus, images with four and five episodes use only four different numbers for references. Only one example exists for images using six or nine episodes respectively, so there is only one number on their vertical lines. The range of references vary according to the number of episodes, and they show an interesting kind of convergence. Looking at the bottom numbers for references, the numbers show an increase: 2, 2, 2, 2, 6, 7, 10. Looking at the top number of references and omitting the zero episodes and the one extreme example with the NCN (5, 16), the numbers decrease: 14, 14, 13, 13, 12, 10. The range is narrowing and both lines tend towards 10. This is evinced by the overall triangle-form of the graph, pointing to the right. The reason for this convergence is related to the use of references in high-episode images.

THE NCN BY DATE CATEGORIES

This section examines the distribution of episodes and references by date categories. The earliest image in the database is a book illustration from around 1410-11, the latest is another book illustration from 1946. Between these dates twelve date categories have been placed, each covering a fifty-year period. The first column in Table 3.9. shows the distribution of the images in the database by date, the second the same number in percentages of the total of 83 images.

One of the clearest results of the present survey is the distribution by time intervals. It conveys a lot about the use of Ovidian topics, and about fluctuations in the interest in narrative art in Western Europe. Considering the first and second columns, the numbers in both show a marked peak between 1550 and 1650. Around 60% of all the images in the database are found in these three intervals, which actually cover the time period between 1525 and 1675. The dates before this peak come with only a few examples, indicating that the interest in Ovid arose suddenly in the early sixteenth century. After a century and a half of marked interest, from the early eighteenth century onwards, there is a slow but constant decline. The period of the peak coincides with what it is called the printing revolution. Following Gutenberg's inventions, the new technique of printing spread from Germany all across

Europe, and resulted in the availability of a great quantity of printed books.¹³ However, the relationship is not straightforward. As will be seen from the distribution of images across different countries, Ovidian topics were more favoured in Italy and the Low countries than in Germany.

Date cat	Nr Images	In % to 83	Average Ep	Average Ref	NCN
1400	1	1.21%	1	6	(1, 6)
1450	4	4.82%	1.5	8.25	(1.5, 8.25)
1500	4	4.82%	3.25	8.25	(3.25, 8.25)
1550	15	18.07%	3	7.8	(3, 7.8)
1600	17	20.48%	2.47	7.76	(2.47, 7.76)
1650	18	21.68%	1.5	8.05	(1.5, 8.05)
1700	9	10.84%	1.89	8.22	(1.89, 8.22)
1750	5	6.02%	1.4	9.2	(1.4, 9.2)
1800	4	4.82%	1.75	7.5	(1.75, 7.5)
1850	1	1.21%	1	8	(1, 8)
1900	3	3.61%	0.67	6	(0.67, 6)
1950	1	1.21%	1	6	(1, 6)
Unknown	1	1.21%	2	4	(2, 4)
		=83			=100%

Table 3.9. Episodes and references by time categories

The average of episodes and references, and the NCN that they form, are given according to temporal intervals in the last three columns of Table 3.9. They are, however, visualized more effectively in the circular diagram (Table 3.10.). Here, on the radiating axes the two coordinates of the NCN can be seen in relation to date category. That is, the value inside the inner circle, which is at value 4, shows the average episode belonging to each date to which the axes point. The higher value inside the outer circle, which is at 10, gives the average references at that date. For example, the date category 1500 comes with an average of 3.25 episodes and 8.25 references. The internal polygon connects the average episodes and the external one draws together the average reference numbers.

As evident from the date categories, the peaks in averages of episodes and the same peaks for references are close for each date category but do not coincide. Actually, there are two peaks in episodes: the first is between 1500 and 1600, then, after a small drop around 1650, there is another peak, if not as high as the first one, around 1700-1750-1800. The average of references also show a rough, wavy distribution. As with episodes, references also have two peaks. However, these are slightly different the peaks of episodes. The first is around 1450-1500, a bit earlier than the peak of the episodes. The drop in references around 1550-1600 happens exactly when there is a peak in the number of images. The next peak is around 1700, topping 9.2 as an average for the 1750 date category. This time the references come later when compared with the peak in episodes. Around 1750, when

¹³ On the effects of printing in early modern societies see the books of Elizabeth Eisenstein, for example Eisenstein, 2005.

there is a drop in the numbers of the images (5 only), and a drop in episodes (1.4 only, much less than the average 2.06 for the whole database), references reach their top-value, 9.2. This is very high compared to the average of 7.86 for the entire database.

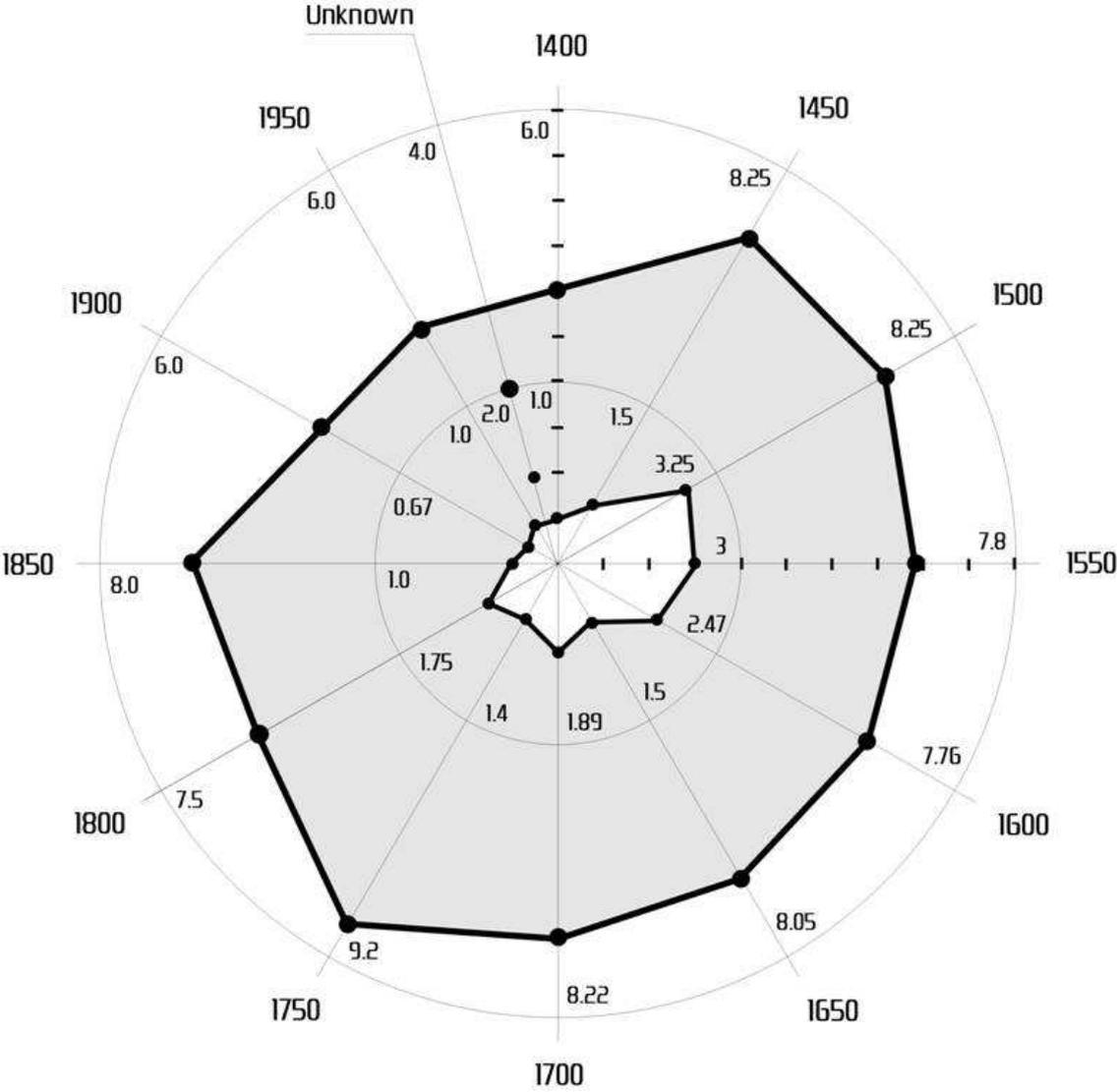


Table 3.10. Circular diagram of episodes and references

The results emerging from the distribution over time are hard to explain. Behind the divergence of the averages there must be social and historical factors, and perhaps also theoretical notions, which need to be investigated further. Apart from that, it must be noted that the database only covers 83 images, all depicting a relatively unusual story. So one must be careful not to draw overly general conclusions about the general tendencies of Western European paintings across the last few centuries. However, some hints and speculations are offered here on the possible reasons behind these numbers.

The Ovidian story very much determined the beginning (early fifteenth century) and the end of the date categories, showing exactly when the classical tradition began to be of significant interest for

painters, as well as the decline of such an interest with the emergence of modern art. The first peak in the fifteenth century is probably related to Renaissance enrichments of the painterly 'language'. Episodic narration has its peak around 1500. This is the period between 1475 and 1525, the peak in references came a bit earlier. In this period, the objects, mostly paintings and book illustrations, are primarily from Italy. The frequent use of references and multi-scenic narration presumably has to do with Alberti's theoretical elaboration of scenario-type narration. When there are more episodes, the images usually belong to the continuous narration type and, as Lew Andrews's entire book has proved,¹⁴ the quattrocento was indeed a period when this mode of narration flourished.

The high numbers around 1550 and 1600 are probably due to the emergence of book illustration. The average values in these date categories are raised by the very rich pictorial material found in printed books, material covered only rarely by art historians. Around 1550, most books originate from Italy, but around 1600, they were printed mainly in Germany and the Low Countries. Accordingly, after these dates Italy is less and less significant, however, the number of the objects from France and later from England grows. Further, episodic narration tends to be less important after the Renaissance. Around 1750 and 1800, possibly due to art theoretical promotions of instantaneous depiction, the average number of episodes decrease, but, almost as a kind of compensation, the use of references rises to a new peak. This shows that the use of such properly pictorial devices became much more refined in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The decline, as one would expect, comes around the mid-nineteenth century, when episodic narration is almost exclusively monoscenic. However, as is evident from the high numbers of references, the rich and elaborate pictorial 'language' of the early modern period would remain in use for a considerable period of time.

DISTRIBUTION BY PLACE, TECHNIQUE AND SIZE

The database can be run using three other categories, those of place, technique and size. This means that one can explore the correlation between these categories and narrative complexity. In practice, this provides answers to for questions like 'are prints or paintings more complex in their narratives?', 'which country/period was most interested in narratives?', and 'does size matter for narrative complexity?'

The second circular diagram (Table 3.11.) and the table supporting it (Table 3.12.) give the range of episodes and references as well as their distribution by geographical area and technique, all checked against date categories. The range of episodes and references, which are denoted by the size of the angle in the inner circle of the circular diagram, are given numerically in Table 3.12. The results are what one would expect from the previous discussion of the data. In the case of episodes, the culmination is around 1500, and in references it is in the period between 1550 and 1700. The same

¹⁴ Andrews, 1995.

Table shows the numerical distribution of areas and techniques. These are given in colour in the two outer circles of the circular diagram. The abbreviations for countries used here are: I (Italy), L (Low Countries), G (Germany), F (France), E (England). For the techniques they are: B (book illustration), P (painting), D (decorative arts), W (drawing) and R (prints).

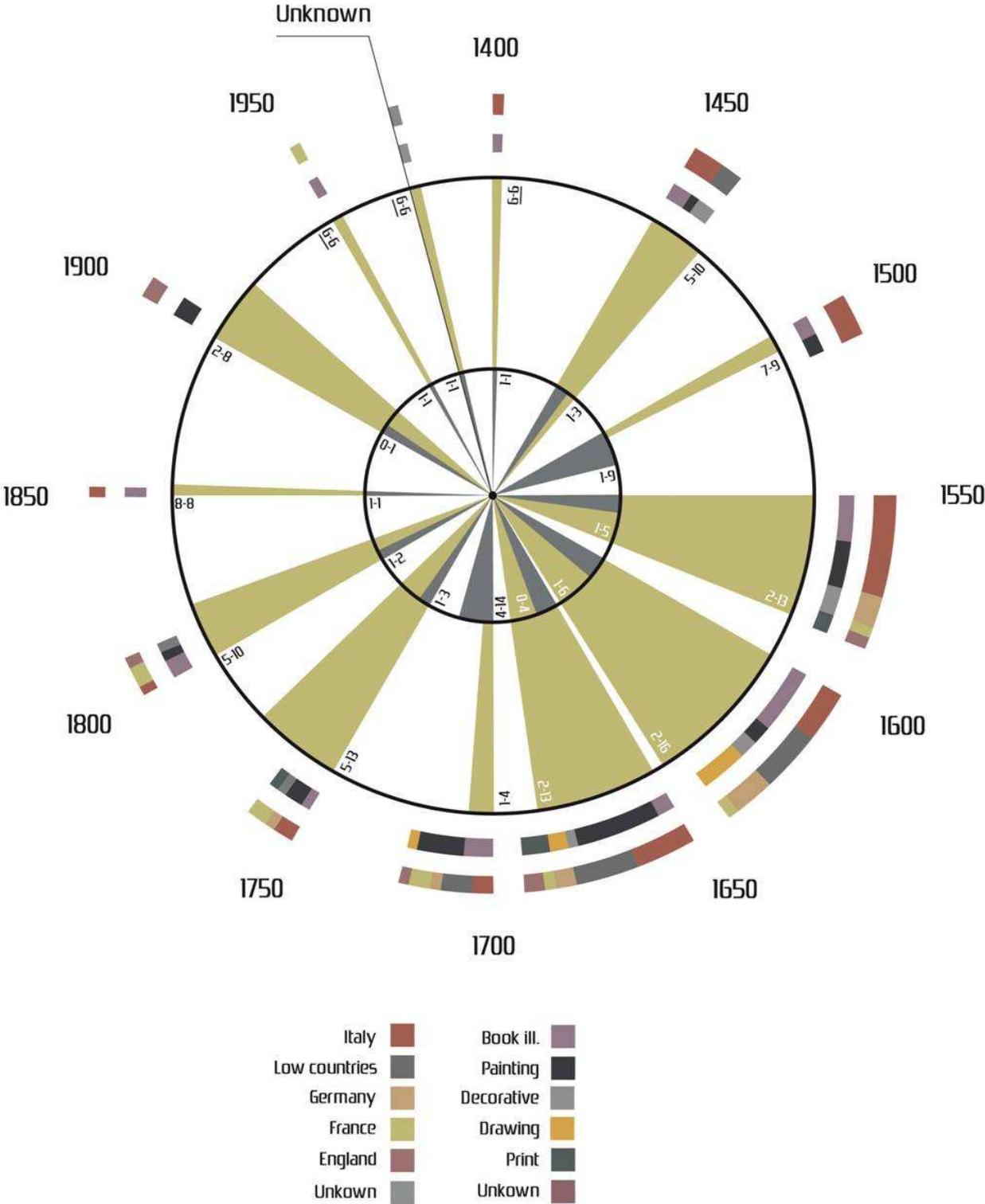


Table 3.11. Circular diagram for range, area and technique

Date cat	Nr	Country	Technique	Ep min-max	Ref min-max
1400	1	1F	1B	1-1	6-6
1450	4	2I+2L	2B+1P+1D	1-3	5-10
1500	4	4I	2B+2P	1-9	7-9
1550	1	10I+3G+1F+1E	5B+5P+3D+2R	1-5	2-13
1600	17	6I+6L+4G+1F	8B+2P+2D+5W	1-6	2-16
1650	18	7I+6L+2G+1F+2E	3B+9P+1D+2W+3R	0-4	2-13
1700	9	2I+3L+1G+2F+1E	3B+5P+1W	1-4	4-14
1750	5	2I+1G+2F	1B+2P+1D+1R	1-3	5-13
1800	4	1I+2F+1E	2B+1D+1R	1-2	5-10
1850	1	1I	1B	1-1	8-8
1900	3	3E	3P	0-1	2-8
1950	1	1F	1B	1-1	6-6
Unknown	1	1	1D	2-2	4-4
		=83	=35I+17L+11G+11F+8E+1	=29B+29P+10D+8W+7R	

Table 3.12. Countries, techniques and the range of episodes and references by date

Three further numerical tables are to be presented here, in support of this particular analysis. They show the correlation between the simplicity or complexity of an image and its origins, technique and size. The first table gives the distribution of the NCN by country of origin (Table 3.13.). There are five place categories: Germany, France, Italy, England and the Low Countries. The numbers of images from each area are given in the first numerical column. Italy, as was expected, has the highest number (37) of all the areas, a little less than half of all images. As the table also shows, the origins of an image have an impact on its narrative complexity, German products outnumber all the other countries both in episodes and in references. This is certainly due to the complex narratives presented in illustrated editions of Ovid. The case of Italy is thought-provoking, as it comes with low values both for episodes and references. A possible reason for this may be the great number and variety of Italian pictures. Great variety necessarily comes with many simple examples, which lessen the average.

Country	Nr Images	In % of 83	Average Ep	Average Ref
England & US	8	9.64%	2.25	7.25
France	11	13.25%	2.18	9
Germany	11	13.25%	2.64	9.09
Italy	35	42.17%	1.94	7.17
Low Countries	17	20.48%	1.76	8.24
Unknown	1	1.21%	2	4
		=83	=100%	

Table 3.13. Episodes and references by countries

Five categories, book illustration, decorative art, drawing, painting and print have been used for the distribution of images by technique (Table 3.14.). With these categories I have tried to refer to the function of the images as well. For example etchings, woodcuts and engravings can be found either under book illustrations if they are in an Ovid edition, or under prints, if they are single images not included in a book (or if there is no information on whether they were part of a book). There are significant differences in how book illustrations and paintings handle the subject of the narrative: the average number of episodes for book illustrations is 2.69. This is the highest value, much above the average. The average number of episodes for paintings is considerably lower (1.59). Paintings usually come with only few episodes but are fond of references, but this difference cannot be seen here: painting actually is second to book illustration in the use of references. The interesting issue arising from these results is that the distribution clearly shows that certain techniques come with strong preference for narrative complexity; and there are also some which show a preference for narrative simplicity, in terms of a number of episodes. Prints, when standing alone, clearly adopted very different ways of depicting narratives compared to those made for inclusion in a book.

Technique Category	Nr Images	In %	Average Ep	Average Ref
Book illustration	29	34.94%	2.69	8.48
Decorative	10	12.05%	2.5	6.6
Drawing	8	9.64%	1.5	7.5
Painting	29	34.94%	1.59	8.1
Print	7	8.43%	1.42	6.42
	=83	100%		

Table 3.14. Episodes and references by technique categories

Four labels were assigned for size: small, medium, large and extra large, as explained earlier. When the size of book illustration was not available, they were categorized as 'S?'. Apart from a few examples, S size images are book illustrations: 40 of them may be found in the database, almost half of the total. As the size grows, the number of images become less and less. Because of my previous finding, that book illustrations are more complex than other pictorial forms, one would expect the S size to have the highest values. However, the highest average episode (2.64) and the highest average reference (9) both pertain to L size images. These images are all paintings. Again, the variety in the complexity of book illustrations, including the many simple examples, forms the basis for this result.

Size Category	Nr Images	In %	Average Ep	Average Ref
S size	40	48.19%	2.35	7.325
M size	23	27.71%	1.43	7.87
L size	11	13.25%	2.64	9
XL size	9	10.85%	1.67	8.78
	=83	100%		

Table 3.15. Episodes and references by size categories

CONCLUSION

The main aim behind this survey was to challenge the entrenched idea that single images cannot adequately convey narratives or any progression in time since they can only depict one frozen moment from an episode of a story. To transcend the concept of episodic narration, in this research project references were introduced, to allow me to pay attention to certain narrative qualities of images not studied in this way before. References, along with the episodes, constituted a multidimensional additive system, similar in its nature to that generated by de Piles early in the eighteenth century. Based on how episodes and references were deployed by the images in my database, a Narrative code and a Narrative complexity number was defined. The narrative complexity number was invented to project the narrative qualities of images into numbers and thus prepare them for a statistical analysis. In the survey, the correlations of four parameters were tested against narrativity: date, place, size and technique. Based on the outcomes of the statistical survey, the following general conclusions can be drawn.

The outcomes of the survey fully justify the use of the notion of references by showing their usefulness as supplementary devices for analysing visual narratives. Images show a great variety in representing narratives; they come with a high degree of formal freedom. Image-makers have to choose not only characters, actions and locations for their story, but these also have to be enhanced with references in both details and expression. As is evident from my survey, images certainly make use of such devices. And these are generated not only on the basis of the original textual source. Many new episodes and new elements have been invented, to add to and enrich the story when represented in visual form. The pictorial solutions usually chosen for depicting the Ovidian story are usually strongly visual, following a different logic to that of textual narratives. Pictures therefore cannot be analysed by using only concepts developed for textual narratives.

It should also be noted that the average image in the database has two episodes and eight references. Evidently, the Aristotelian rule of the unity of action ‘fails’ here. It would seem that these images follow independent pictorial laws when representing visual narratives.

The method used here can surely be applied more generally. It would work for most images but it cannot register and take into an account unique and complex solutions found in images, such as Crivelli's *Ascoli Annunciation* discussed earlier in this thesis. Complex cases – and there are quite a few of these - should be treated individually.

As the number of variations is so high (there were only two images in the database with the same code), it is absolutely clear that the original text has only general but not limiting effect on painterly responses to it. There are differences to be found in relation to the origins, date, and function of these visual narratives. The differences are sometimes quite marked. To determine the reasons for such differences, perhaps on the level of single images, further research is needed, especially on the effects of art theory and criticism.

Yet, based on the analysis carried out here, a pattern in preferences has emerged. If one wishes to see a complex narrative, one should chose a small book illustration produced in Germany around 1500; if one wishes to explore simple narratives, one should look for a medium-sized Italian drawing, an artwork from the Low Countries, or a picture from around 1900.

It is also worth pointing out that narrative complexity was not always an important issue. There were certain periods in time when simplicity was definitely preferred over complexity. Thus, the development of visual narratives was not a linear process. This means that narratives constructed at one point in time not necessarily influence those made later. Shifts towards both simplicity and complexity occur in the history of visual narratives. Clearly, this history needs further study.

Finally, the complexity of visual narratives does not depend on pictorial style. Moreover, as all the images in the database depict the same story with great variety, the pictorial responses to the Ovidian narrative do not constitute a purely iconographic interpretation of the story. Therefore, visual narrativity is an individual and independent characteristic of these images.

Conclusion

‘Study the past if you would define the future.’ This passage from Confucius describes most properly the trajectory the present thesis. The broad topics of historiography, which formed the first half of the thesis, are the past. These constitute, I hope, firm foundations for future research into visual storytelling.

The past of art history can be characterized by a dynamic change of paradigms; each paradigm came with its own types of questions and its own favourite works of art. For Wickhoff, a Vienna School art historian, it was the *Wiener Genesis* codex. Aby Warburg, the father of iconography, analysed the residence of the Este family in Ferrara, the Palazzo Schifanoia. Panofsky applied a similar method to Dürer’s *Melancholia* (1943). Sigmund Freud’s essay on Leonardo’s childhood, focused on the *Virgin and Child with St Anne and John the Baptist* is the definitive example of a psychoanalytic interpretation (1910). Frederick Antal, a social art historian, in his *Florentine Painting and Its Social Background* (1948) compared altarpieces by Gentile de Fabriano and Masaccio. Hermeneutics have favoured Rembrandt (as is the case for Mieke Bal), just as feminist art historians have canonized Artemisia Gentileschi or Angelica Kauffmann. Rosalind Krauss applied Saussure’s semiotics to Picasso’s collages (*In the Name of Picasso*, 1985). It is clear that certain pictures form a good basis for exploring certain types of question. Or it may be the case that they seem particularly interesting from certain points of view. Clearly, there are some narrative paintings that might be assigned a similar status in the discourse on visual storytelling. Masaccio’s *Tribute Money*, Bellini’s *Procession in Piazza San Marco*, or, as was proposed in the present thesis, Crivelli’s *Annunciation with Saint Emidius* fall into this category.

However, the study of narratives never caused paradigmatic change in art history. The possibility of such a change was there in the early stages. In the Vienna School, a generation of art historians shared an interest in narratives. Wickhoff could perhaps be regarded as having a role like that played by Warburg in relation to iconology. Yet the lack of a subsequent breakthrough for his methods is possibly due to the fact that no one acted for Wickhoff as Panofsky did for Warburg, using his ideas to elaborate a method for general scholarly use. Only much later would Weitzmann rework Wickhoff’s early typological categories, but, as was the case for Panofsky and Warburg, Weitzmann lacked Wickhoff’s visionary abilities. Still, Weitzmann’s contributions remain invaluable; he certainly disseminated an interest in visual narratives.

At the moment of writing, the study of visual narratives is a rapidly developing and vivid scholarly field. The year 2000 could not but help to provoke thoughts on time. These were not only spiritual or technological, but also theoretical, of which some were related to narratives. The CIHA

conference in 2000, held in London, was entitled *Art history for the Millenium: Time*. It had a section on *Visual Narrative Time* chaired by Götz Pochat. This section addressed questions with which art historians had been engaged from the end of nineteenth century, discussed in detail in the historiography chapters of the present thesis: movements, modes of narration, history painting, and generally the topic of time in the visual arts from structural and narrative points of view.¹ The conference had an accompanying exhibition in the National Gallery, *Telling Time*.² This recent event was not an isolated one. There was a research seminar in 1996 on *Visual Narrative* at the Courtauld Institute, London,³ and a section *Visual Narratives* chaired by Steve Thunder-McGuire in the conference *Storied Lives – Lived Stories* in Kentucky in 1998.⁴ In 2005 The Courtauld Institute again housed a narrative conference, now on manuscripts, with the title of *Illuminating Narrative: Visual Storytelling in Gothic Manuscripts*.⁵ A series of symposia entitled *Telling Stories* were organized in 2007 at Loughborough University.⁶ In 2010, Manchester Metropolitan University organized a one-day event: *The Story of Things: Reading Narrative in the Visual*, which was to accompany an exhibition of the same title.⁷ The two latter events involved contemporary artists. In contrast, in recent narratology conferences, there are usually no sections on the visual; if there are any, these are focused on comics and films. In the last decades, two scholarly journals, *The Art Bulletin* and *Art History*, have published the most papers on narrative-related topics. From 1985 onwards, *The Art Bulletin* contains more than thirty such papers, possibly not unrelated to the fact that this journal had previously published many of Weitzmann's articles. In 2000, a new online journal, *Image [&] Narrative*, was launched. It defines itself as a journal on 'visual narratology' and uses the term in broad sense, publishing mostly articles on narratives in films and comics and on the new forms of narratives of the digital era. However, it published very little material of a historical nature.

Today plurality prevails within academic disciplines, interdisciplinarity and cross-disciplinarity are fashionable. Yet this seldom works properly. Because of its nature, the field of visual storytelling ought to be fully interdisciplinary. The disciplines that cover visual narratives – art history, semiotics and narratology, and to a small extent narrative psychology – are not isolated from one another yet, as this thesis has demonstrated, there is precious little communication and cooperation. This is why the dynamics and the politics of research on pictorial storytelling are of equal interest. While in quantity

¹ This was Section 13. According to my knowledge the talks of this section were not published. The program, although not a detailed one, can be seen here: <http://www.dolff-bonekaemper.de/ciha2000/ciha2000.htm#top>

² Sturgis, 2000.

³ The Courtauld Institute of Art, London, 22 March 1996.

⁴ *Storied Lives – Lived Stories. The Seventh International Conference on Narrative*. November 6-8, 1998, Department of Communication, University of Kentucky. The program is available online: http://www.uky.edu/~jknuf/narrative_conference/98program.htm

⁵ The Courtauld Institute of Art, 9-10 July 2005. It was an RCIMS event organized by Dr. Alixe Bovey. The program can be seen here: <http://www.courtauld.ac.uk/research/rcims/index.shtml>

⁶ *Telling Stories* were a series of three symposia, where visual storytelling was understood in broader sense, including film as well. <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/ac/mainpages/Research/staff%20groups/arts.htm>

⁷ Jonathan Carson and Rosie Miller organized both the exhibition and the conference. More information is available on their blog: <http://carsonandmiller.blogspot.com/> or at the University webpage: <http://www.adelphi.salford.ac.uk/adelphi/p/?s=23&pid=99>

(and perhaps in quality), work within art history far outreaches that undertaken within narratology, it is clear that the primarily verbal field is in a better 'political' position: its knowledge is more easily accessible, the field is more organized and better able to exploit existing possibilities, furthermore, it consists of mutually loyal scholarly groups. Were it more active and ambitious, the discipline of art history could actually play a major role. The question is how to effect this?

Art history, in order to expand the study of visual narratives, should be ready to borrow theories, methods and terminology from both semiotics and narratology. Apart from offering a balanced point of view on the relationship between visual and verbal narratives, semiotics comes with both the terminology and the methods for exploring visual narratives on more general levels, beyond the anecdotal. Narratology also has much more to offer. For images, the methods of structural analysis and the range of topics and narrative phenomena already defined and refined within in narratology would be of great use for art historians. However, it is questionable whether general theories of narratology are easily applicable to the visual field. Werner Wolf is the only scholar who has raised this highly important question.⁸ He tested Gerald Princes' and Monika Fludernik's frameworks against images. It is enlightening to see how Wolf criticizes the use of the term 'narrative' in art history, as this shows how he imagines its applicability. 'What most scholars have in mind when using the terms 'narrative' or 'narrativity' in discussions of pictures is still either the reference by means of a visual representation to some literary narrative, or the representation of any kind of action in a picture, as opposed to static, descriptive images, but a hardly ever the *representation of a story proper*.'⁹ This is problematic on at least two counts: for Wolf, only literary narratives are the only 'proper' ones and the narrativity of images depends on representing 'proper' (written) stories. Not surprisingly, images do not perform very well in this contest. In Wolf's view, serial, or multiphase images, which 'depict at least two temporally and causally connected phases'¹⁰ may be considered as having strong narrativity, however, the narrativity of single images (or single-phase images) is 'tendential or quasi narrative'.¹¹ This, for Wolf, evidently means deficiency: '[t]he lack of narrative precision, which the medium of a single-phase painting entails, stems from an inability to realize some central narratemes without the support of other media or of inference: the representation of change as such, and, in connection with this, chronology, repetition of identical elements, causal and teleological organization.'¹² So, apart from operating with an obsolete distinction between single phase and multiphase images, from the point of view of narratology, the narrativity of single images is defined through their imputed deficiency. From this it follows that theoretical frameworks which emphasize the deficiency of single images but without considering their beneficial features are not suitable for studying narrative imagery. Instead of

⁸ Wolf, 2003.

⁹ Wolf, 2003, 180, his italics.

¹⁰ Wolf, 2003, 192.

¹¹ Wolf, 2003, 193.

¹² Wolf, 2003, 191.

adopting broad theoretical frameworks from narratology for this purpose, it seems more appropriate to adapt only those methods which help us to understand what is peculiar about narrative imagery.

It is important to see that the strengths of textual and visual narratives do not correspond; one's strength might be the other's weakness. For example, verbal narratives are better at separating temporal layers. Images, as the phenomenon of anachronism showed, are better at fusing such layers. When studying visual narratives, one must bear these differences in mind.

The present thesis has introduced two concepts, sequentiality and scenario, as instruments for theorizing visual narrativity. Sequential and scenario-type narratives are not exclusive categories, sequential narratives, for example, may form a subnarrative within a scenario-type image. In Antonio del Pollaiuolo's *Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* (Figure 36) the scenario with St Sebastian comprises an abstract sequential narrative as well. The sturdy bodies of the soldiers are placed around the column in a form which, through their similar poses, suggests a rotational sequence. This rotational sequence has effects similar to stroboscopic motion. However, while in stroboscopic motion the forms change but their position remains the same, in rotational sequences different viewpoints are generated when the same forms are shown in different positions. These are placed around a central axis, in the present case Sebastian's column. A similar example is the story of Diana in Domenichino's canvas (Figure 37), where the main tale is supplemented with a sequential narrative. The central episode with the nymphs shows a deft pictorial solution for invoking stroboscopic motion: when one scans the movements of the nymphs from left to right, one sees the different phases of the shooting of an arrow. The motion begins with taking the arrow out from a quiver, this is followed by the tightening of the bow and then by the flying arrows, and the sequence ends with showing the bird that has been hit and the dog leaping to catch it.

The broader concept of urban narratives also connects scenarios and sequential narratives. In Dirk J. van den Berg's definition, urban narratives are images in which cities supply the narrative frame. Or they can be images, where the sequence of events moves through a set of urban addresses.¹³ The concept of urban narratives, which is of considerable interest, is not yet fully developed. One important example of such urban sequences is constituted by images of procession. Here sequentiality as well as directionality is given by the stages or the route of the procession. Gentile Bellini's *Procession in Piazza San Marco* (Figure 1) emphasizes the right-left direction in the form of the procession. This reflects the East-West direction, which is inherent in Venetian trade, religion and identity.¹⁴

In a broad sense, the present thesis has aimed to surpass traditional kind of narratives: beginning-end, instantaneous, or episodic. Scenarios and sequentials, the notions first introduced here, are actually characteristic of complex, rich or peculiar narratives. The existing typologies or systems of categorisation, however, deal mainly with average narrative images. Apart from sequences and

¹³ Van den Berg, 2001, 3.

¹⁴ Rodini, 1998.

scenarios, my expanded typology, supplemented by a referential system, was meant to show a third and new way of examining narratives. The aim was here to critique the restricted viewpoint of narratology, as well as to introduce hitherto unexamined types of narrative experience. Such an experience may be elementary or fundamental, as in the case of perceptual narratives, or it may even constitute a founding myth for a community, as in the case of Crivelli's scenario, the *Ascoli Annunciation*. In these examples, images and their spectators both contribute to the creation of a story. These mutual, two-directional stories may be described as follows: 'The stories we tell to ourselves and others, for ourselves and others, are a central means by which we come to know ourselves and others, thereby enriching our conscious awareness. Narrative pervades our lives – conscious experience is not merely linked to the number and variety of personal stories we construct with each other within a cultural frame but is also consumed by them.'¹⁵

With the study of narratives, art history may advance further in answering one of its fundamental questions: what are images for? Narrative imagery raises both traditional, historical questions and more radical ones. More traditional historical research would find answers for questions such as: how and why narrative images are found in certain societies; what are the differences between narrative painting in Italy and in the North; whether different modes of narration exist independently of geographical areas; how certain types formed, spread or changed; how religious ideas, for example those promulgated by the Council of Trent, influenced narrative representation; what were the narrative characteristics of certain artists, areas, or periods, etc. Any intellectual enquiry raising such questions should relate narrative issues to broader questions about human perception. This would enable us to find answers for essential questions such as: what are the fundamental functions of narratives in art, and what is the function of art in general?

¹⁵ Fireman, 2003, 3.

Appendices

Illustrations



Figure 1. Gentile Bellini, *Procession in Piazza San Marco*, 1496, tempera and oil on canvas, 367 x 745 cm, Venice, Gallerie dell' Accademia (Fig. 11. in Rodini, 1998)



Figure 2. Carlo Crivelli, *Annunciation with Saint Emidius (Ascoli Annunciation)*, 1486, oil on wood transferred to canvas, 207 x 146.5 cm, London, National Gallery



Figure 3. Nicolas Poussin, *The Israelites Gathering the Manna In the Desert*, 1637-39, oil on canvas, 149 x 200 cm, Paris, Louvre



Figure 4. Masaccio, *Tribute Money*, 1426-27, fresco, 255 x 598 cm, Florence, Santa Maria del Carmine, Cappella Brancacci (Fig. 1. in Welliver, 1977)



Figure 5. Hagesandros, Polydorus and Athenodoros, *Laocoön Group*, copy after a Hellenistic original, 1st century, marble, 184 cm, Vatican, Cortile del Belvedere



Figure 6. *Trajan's column*, 2nd century, Rome

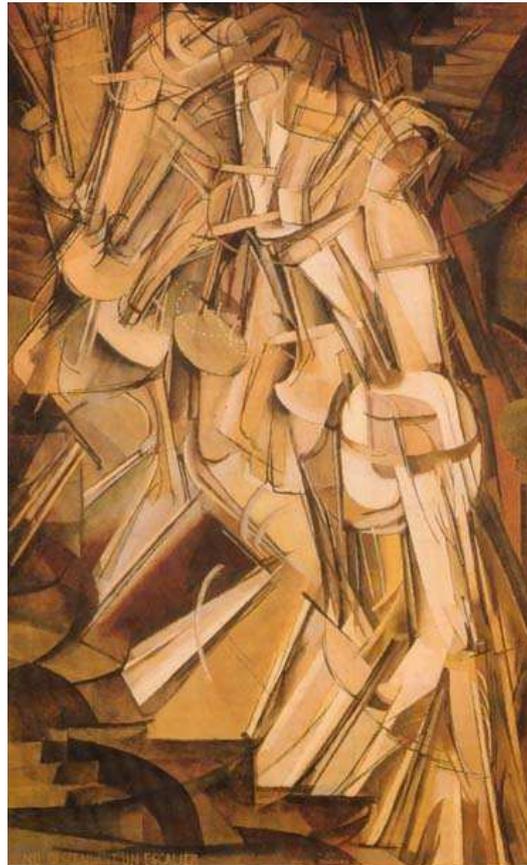


Figure 7. Marcel Duchamp, *Nude Descending a Staircase (No. 2)*, 1912, oil on canvas, 147 x 89.2 cm, Philadelphia, Museum of Art



Figure 8. Nicolas Poussin, *Et in Arcadia Ego*, 1637-39, oil on canvas, 185 x 121 cm, Paris, Louvre



Figure 9. Tintoretto, *The Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*, 1553-56, oil on canvas, 429 x 480 cm, Venice, Madonna dell'Orto (Fig. d on page 30, Gombrich, 1964)



Figure 10. Jacopo del Sellaio, *Cupid and Psyche*, ~1473, tempera and gold on panel, 58.4 x 178.8, Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum



Figure 11. Giotto, *Lamentation*, 1304-06, fresco, 200 x 185 cm, Padova, Cappella Scrovegni (Fig. 276. in Arnheim, 2002)



Figure 12. Francesco Salviati, *Bathsheba Goes to King David*, 1552-54, fresco, Rome, Palazzo Sacchetti

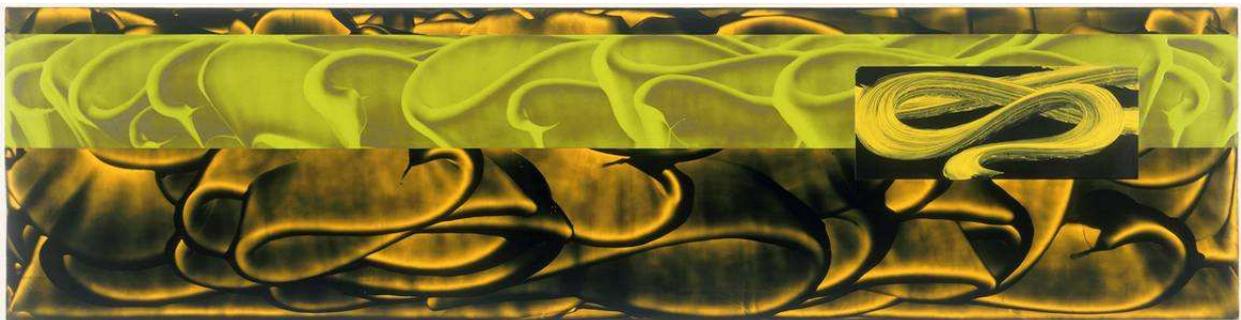


Figure 13. David Reed, #275, 1989, oil and alkyd on linen, 66 x 206 cm, Collection of Ronald and Linda Daitz, New York (Fig. 6.2. in Bal, 1999)

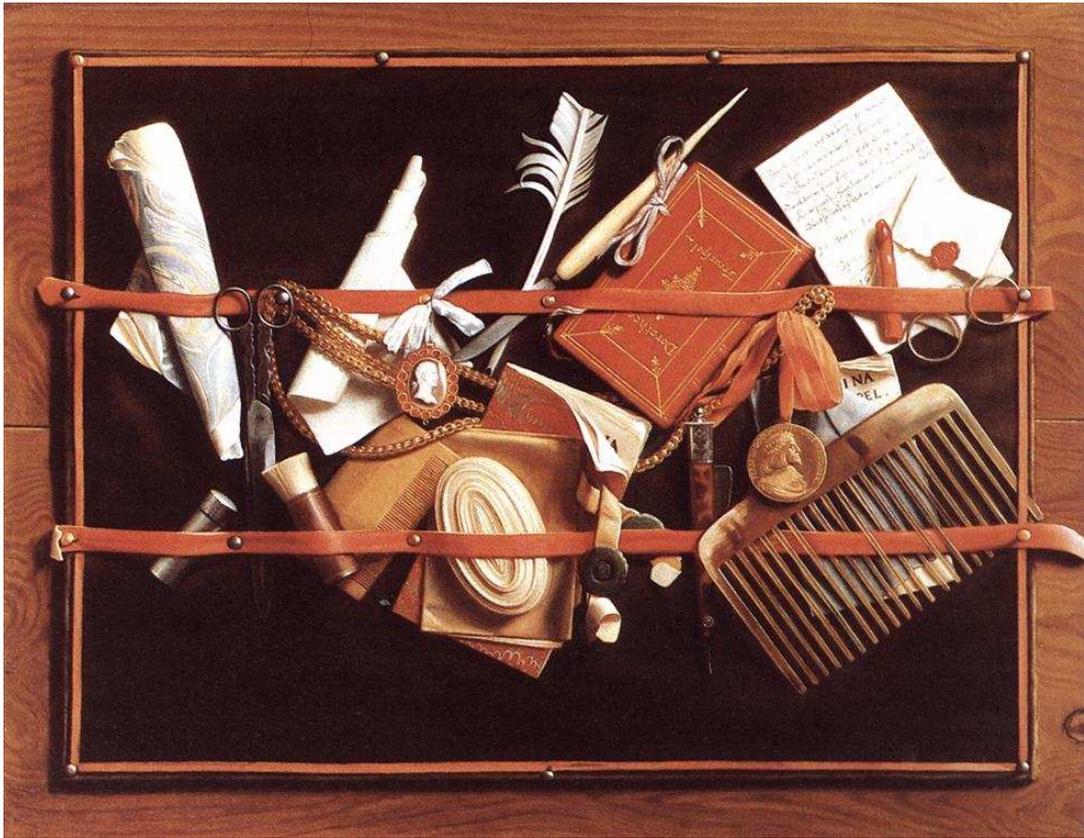


Figure 14. Samuel van Hoogstraten, *Still Life*, 1666-1668, oil on canvas, 63 x 79 cm, Karlsruhe, Kunsthalle



Figure 15. El Lissitzky, *Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge*, 1919-20, litograph (Fig. 2.10. in Kress-Leeuwen, 2006)

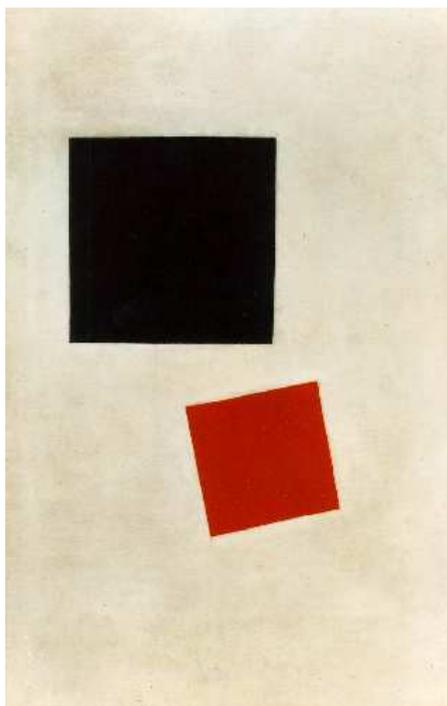


Figure 16. Malevich, *Suprematist Composition: Red Square and Black Square*, 1915, oil on canvas, 71.4 x 44.4 cm, New York, The Museum of Modern Art (Fig. 2.11. in Kress-Leeuwen, 2006)



Figure 17. Edward Burne-Jones, *The Golden Stairs*, 1880, 269 x 117 cm, oil on canvas, London, Tate Collection

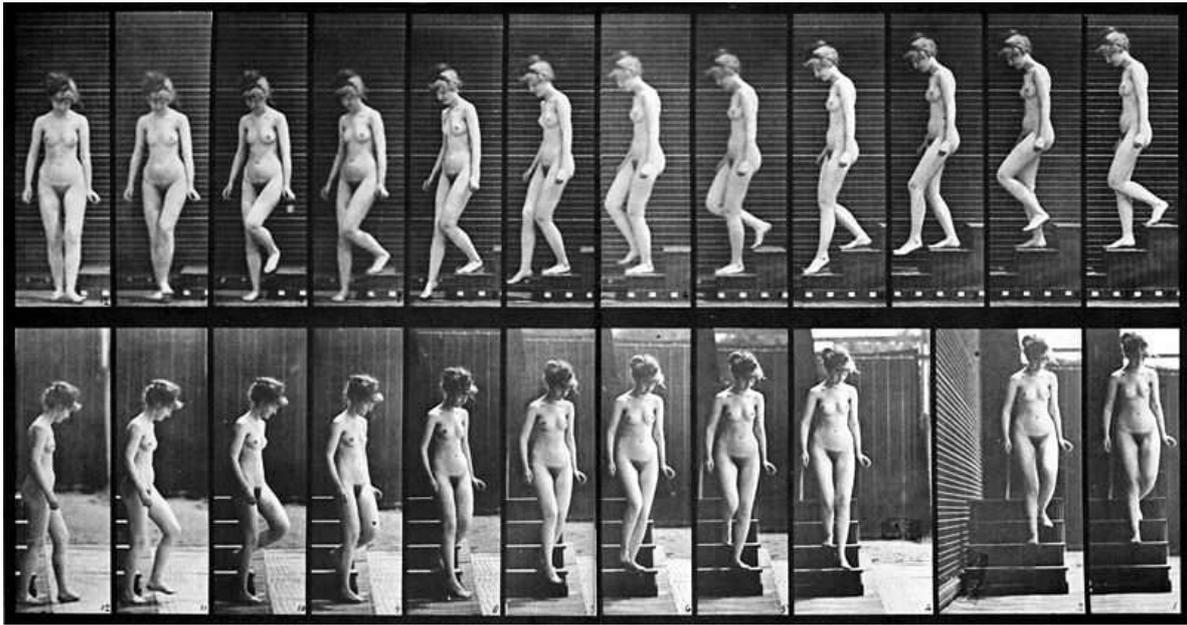


Figure 18. Eadweard Muybridge, *Woman Walking Downstairs*, from *The Human Figure in Motion* series, ~1887.

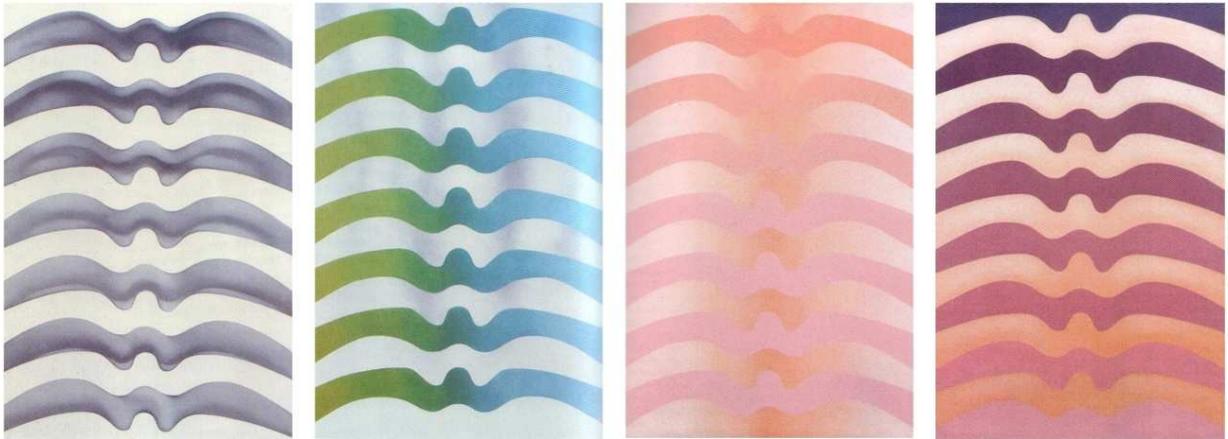


Figure 19. Ilona Keserü, *Event (Történes) IV-VII*, 1975, Kolozsváry Collection



Figure 22. Pietro Alemanno, *The Annunciation*, 1484, Pinacoteca Civica di Ascoli Piceno



Figure 21. Giotto, *Annunciation*, 1306, fresco, 150 x 195 cm each, Padova, Cappella Scrovegni

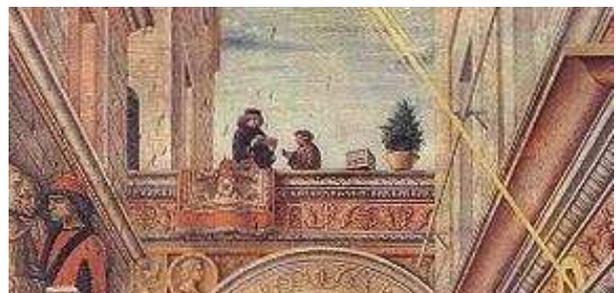


Figure 22. / Figure 23. Crivelli, detail of Figure 2.
Signature and date / The episode with Antonio Benincasa

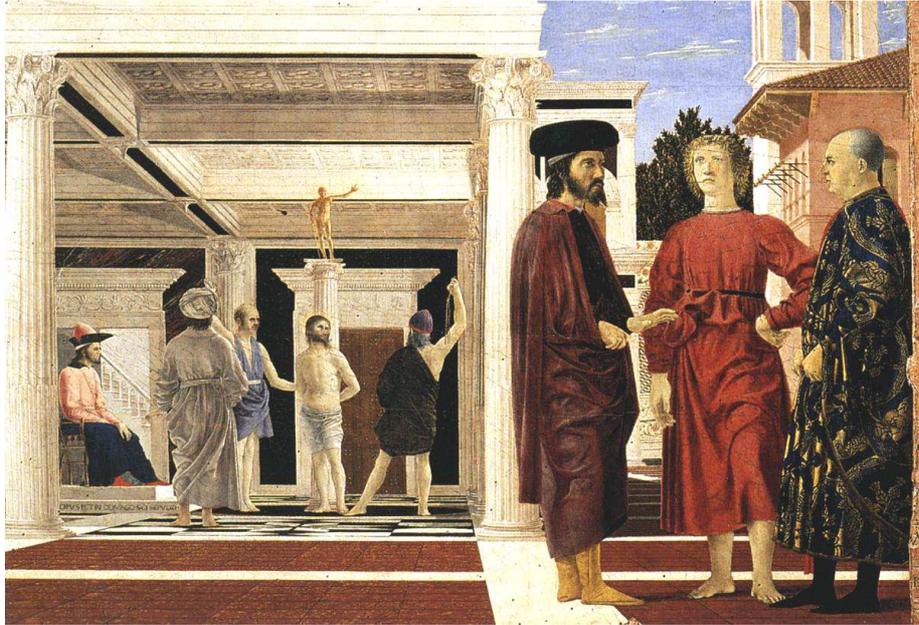


Figure 24. Piero della Francesca, *The Flagellation*, 1455, oil and tempera on panel, 59 x 82 cm, Urbino Galleria Nazionale delle Marche



Figure 25. Fra Angelico, *Annunciation*, 1433-34, tempera on wood, 150 x 180 cm, Cortona, Museo Diocesano



Figure 26. Fra Filippo Lippi, *Annunciation with Two Kneeling Donors*, ~1440, oil on panel, 155 x 144, Rome, Galleria Nazionale D'Arte Antica



Figure 27. Giovanni Bellini, *Angel Announcing and Virgin Announced*, ~1500, oil on canvas, 224 x 105 cm each, Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia

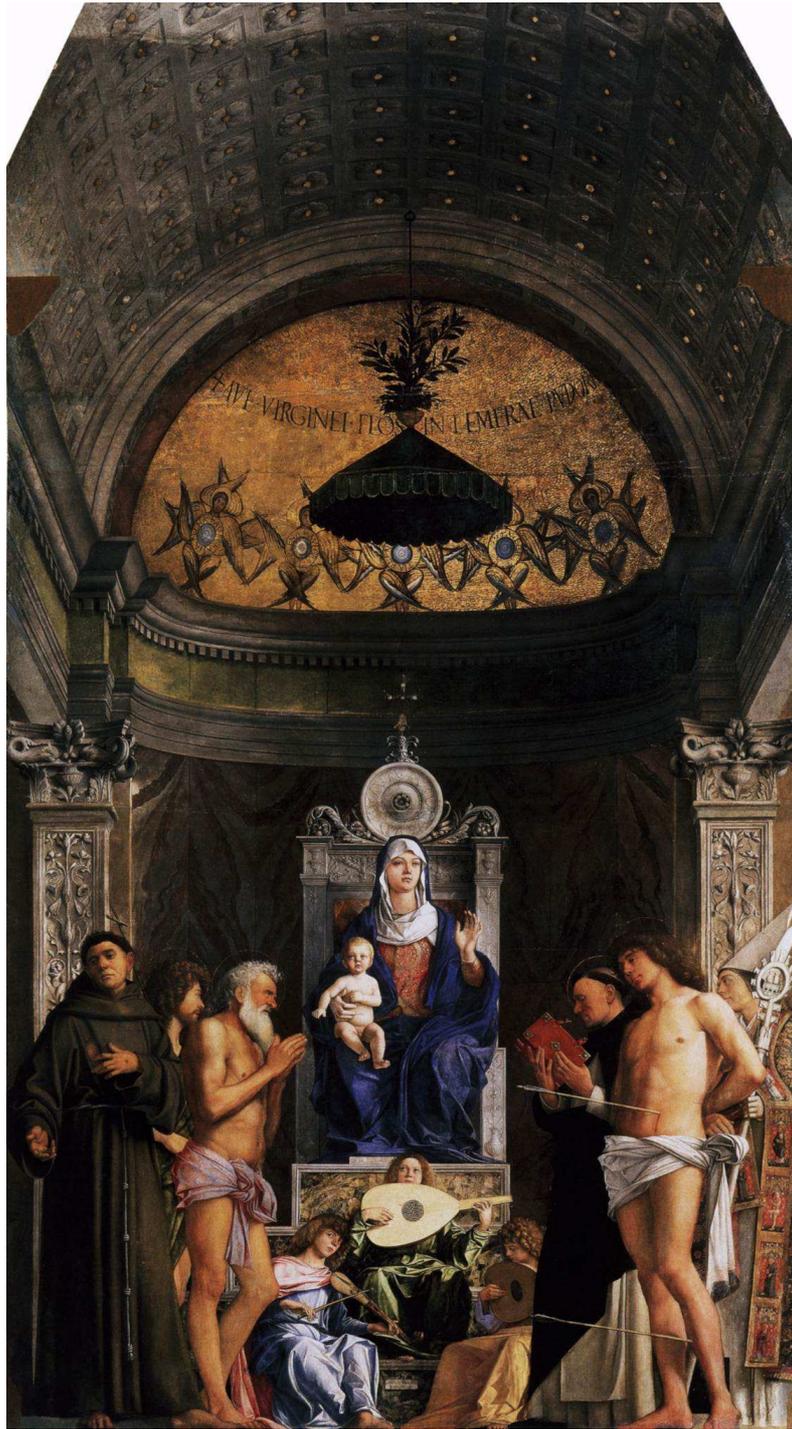


Figure 28. Giovanni Bellini, *San Giobbe Altarpiece*, ~1487, oil on panel, 471 x 258 cm, Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia



Figure 29. Giovanni Battista Cima da Conegliano, *The Madonna and Child with Saints Michael and Andrew*, ~1496-98, 194 x 134 cm, Parma, Galleria Nazionale (Fig. 1. in Pericolo, 2009)



Figure 30. Vittore Carpaccio, *The Vision of Saint Augustine*, 1502-3, tempera on canvas, 141 x 210 cm, Venice, Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni (Fig. 1. in Nagel and Wood, 2005)



Figure 31. Domenico Ghirlandaio, *Birth of Mary*, 1486-90, fresco, Florence, Santa Maria Novella, Cappella Tornabuoni



Figure 32. Max Ernst, *The Blessed Virgin Chastises the Infant Jesus Before Three Witnesses: A.B., P.E., and the Artist*, 1926, oil on canvas, 196 x 130 cm, Cologne, Ludwig Museum



Figure 33. Bartolomeo della Gatta, *Saint Roch interceding with Christ on behalf of Arezzo*, 1470s, tempera on panel, Arezzo, Museo Medievale e Moderno (Fig. 8. in Marshall, 1994)



Figure 34. Pietro Alemanno, *Plague Madonna della Misericordia*, 1485, tempera on panel, San Gineso, Collegiata (Fig. 12 in Marshall, 1994).

Figure 35. Anonymous Marchigian, *The Virgin and Saint Bernardino petition Christ on behalf of Fabriano*, 1458-60, canvas gonfalone, Fabriano, Chiesa del Buon Gesù (Fig. 17. in Marshall, 1994).

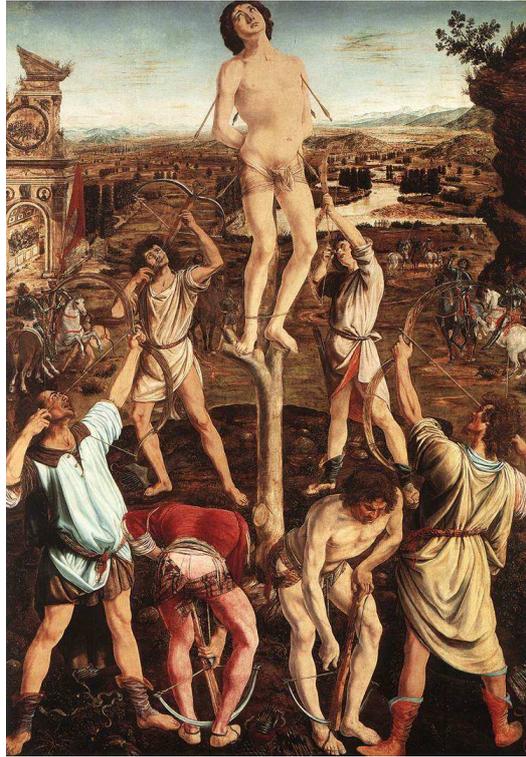


Figure 36. Antonio del Pollaiuolo, *Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*, 1473-75, panel, 292 x 2023 cm, London, National Gallery



Figure 37. Domenichino, *Diana and her Nymphs*, 1616-17, oil on canvas, 225 x 320 cm, Rome, Galleria Borghese

Database

A	B	C	D	E
NR	AUTHOR/NAME	DATABASE	DATE	DATE CAT
1	G. B. Galestruzzi	W1	1657-59	1650
2	Frederick Lord Leighton	R32	~1893	1900
3	Frans Wouters	R22	16162-59	1650
4	Hendrik Goltzius	R15	1595-1600	1600
5	Guido Reni	W21/P12/R16	1616-18	1600
6	Stephano della Bella	W12	1644	1650
7	Francesco Albani	W29/R23	1578-1660	1650
8	Benedetto Luti	W34/P18a	~1715	1700
9	Anonymus	O1	15th C.	1450
10	Herman Weyer	E1	1618	1600
11	Luca Giordano	P16	~1682	1700
12	F. Bartolozzi	W17/P18b	After 1763	1750
	Master of the Cité des			
13	Dames	W28	1410-11	1400
14	Anonymus Italian Albertina	P13	17th C.	1650
15	G. G. Castelli	W23	1755	1750
16	Jean A. Mercier	O23	1946	1950
17	Vittore Carpaccio, school of	E9	1460-1525/6	1500
18	Virgil Solis	W2	1540-62	1550
19	Antonio Tempesta	W24/O10	~1585	1600
20	P. F. Cittadini	W11	1613/6-1681	1650
21	Willem van Herp	R24	1614-1677	1650
22	J. van Neck	W4	~1635-1714	1700
23	J. Miélot; de Pisan	W3/R1	~1460	1450
24	Gèrard de Jode	W10	1579	1600
25	Jan Tegnagel	R18	1610	1600
26	Johann U. Krauss	O14	1690	1700
27	Anonymus-Anguillara	E11	1840	1850
28	Edward J. Poynter	R30	1875-76	1900
29	Richard Dadd	W8/R31	~1877	1900
30	Francesco Morone	W6	1471-1529	1500
31	Bartholomeus Breenbergh	W15/P24/R17	1630	1650
32	Francesco del Cossa	P2/R4/R5	~1435-77	1450
33	J. P. Gowy after Rubens	W19P19/P20/R19	1636-38	1650
34	Ademolli	O18	1824	1800
35	Crispijn de Passe	W13/O17	1620-1677	1650
36	Noël Hallé	P34	1765	1750
37	Le Mire	O19	1770	1750
38	Johann Heinrich Schönfeld	P36	1650-60	1650
39	Simone Cantarini	W14/P15/R21	~1641	1650
40	Anonymus Italian	W9	1546	1550
41	Anonymus glasswork	W16	?	?
42	Alessandro Paganini	O3	1526	1550
43	Anonymus	O16	1801	1800

44	Jacob Jordaens	P21/R20	1646	1650
45	Christoph Jamnitzer	E6	1603-05	1600
46	Nicolas Colombel	E10	1680-1699?	1700
47	Benjamin West, John Hall	R28	1769	1800
48	Marten de Vos	E5	1532-1603	1600
49	Alvise Friso	W7	~1550-1609	1600
50	Giacomo Franco	O20	1584	1600
51	Jean Mathieu	O11	1619	1600
52	F. Ertinger	O15	1697	1700
53	Joseph Descamps	E2	1788	1800
54	Niccolo degli Agostini	E7	1522	1500
55	Manara Baldassare	E3	1534	1550
56	Niccolò Giolfino	W5/P4/R8	1476-1555	1550
57	Guercino	E4	1621-25	1600
58	Johan Baur	O12	1641	1650
59	Giulio Romano	P5/R7	1527-28	1550
60	Ciro Ferri & B. Farjat	W27/R25	17th C.	1650
61	Anonymus BM	P25	18th C. or earlier	1700
62	North Italian goldsmiths	W31	~1550-1600	1600
63	North Italian painter	W33	16c.	1550
64	Titian, follower of	R12	1530-1600	1550
65	Klein-Savrij Sandys	O21	1632	1650
66	Lodovico Dolce	O6	1553-1561	1550
67	Virgil Solis	W26	1540-62	1550
68	Samuel Garth	O22	1717	1700
69	Veronese School	W18/P1/R2	~1460	1450
70	Jean Lemaire	W32	1597-1659	1650
71	Johann Georg Platzer	P37	1704-61	1750
72	Bernadinum de Bindonibus	O4	1540	1550
73	Anonymus woodcarver	W20	1485-1603	1550
74	Anonymus V&A carpet	W25ab	~1650-75	1650
75	Louis Boullogne	W30/R26/R27	1720s	1700
76	Sebastiano Marsili	R11	1570	1550
77	Jörg Wickram	O5	1545	1550
78	Micyllus	W22ab/O8	1582	1600
	Michael Maier, Theodor de			
79	Bry	E8	1617	1600
80	Salomon-Simeoni	O7	1559	1550
81	Crispijn de Passe I	O13	1602	1600
82	Van der Borcht	O9	1591	1600
83	Giovanni Bonsignori	O2	1497	1500

A	B	F	G	H	I	J
NR	AUTHOR/NAME	PLACE CAT	TECH CAT	SIZE	SIZE CAT	S/D/CO/CM/CE
1	G. B. Galestruzzi	Italy	print	12.9x10.1	S	S/CE
2	Frederick Lord Leighton	England	painting	68.5x49.5	M	S
3	Frans Wouters	Low Countries	painting	9x21.5	S	S
4	Hendrik Goltzius	Low Countries	drawing	16.6x11.6	S	S
5	Guido Reni	Italy	painting	206x297	XL	S
6	Stephano della Bella	Italy	print	8.7x5.5	S	S/CM
7	Francesco Albani	Italy	painting	52.7x95.9	M	S
8	Benedetto Luti	Italy	painting	60x72	M	S
9	Anonymus	Low Countries	book ill	?	S?	S/CE
10	Herman Weyer	Germany	drawing	?	M?	S
11	Luca Giordano	Italy	painting	?	L?	S
12	F. Bartolozzi	Italy	print	?	M?	S
13	Master of the Cité des Dames	France	book ill	?	S?	S/CE
14	Anonymus Italian Albertina	Italy	drawing	19.7x28.4	S	S
15	G. G. Castelli	Italy	decorative	?	M?	?
16	Jean A. Mercier	France	book ill	?	S?	S/CO
17	Vittore Carpaccio, school of	Italy	painting	101.6x127	L	S
18	Virgil Solis	Germany	print	11.1x8.3	S	S/CM
19	Antonio Tempesta	Italy	book ill	10.3x11.8	S	S/CO
20	P. F. Cittadini	Italy	drawing	22.2x35.5	M	S
21	Willem van Herp	Low Countries	painting	115x169	XL	S
22	J. van Neck	Low Countries	painting	63.5x91.5	M	S
23	J. Miélot; de Pisan	Low Countires	book ill	15.6x23.3	S	S/CE
24	Gèrard de Jode	Low Countries	book ill	?	S?	S/CE
25	Jan Tegnagel	Low Countries	painting	55.8x89	M	S
26	Johann U. Krauss	Germany	book ill	?	S?	S/CO
27	Anonymus-Anguillara	Italy	book ill	?	S?	S/CO
28	Edward J. Poynter	England	painting	?	M?	S
29	Richard Dadd	England	painting	59.7x49.5	M	S
30	Francesco Morone	Italy	painting	18.5x63.5	M	S
31	Bartholomeus Breenbergh	Low Countries	painting	49x79.5	M	S
32	Francesco del Cossa	Italy	painting	30x28	M	S?
33	J. P. Gowy after Rubens	Low Countries	painting	181x200	XL	S/CO
34	Ademolli	Italy	book ill	?	S?	S/CO
35	Crispijn de Passe	Low Countries	book ill	15.9x22.9	S	S/CO
36	Noël Hallé	France	painting	321x712	XL	S/CM
37	Le Mire	France	book ill	?	S?	S/CO
38	Johann Heinrich Schönfeld	Germany	painting	123x200.5	XL	S

39	Simone Cantarini	Italy	painting	106.5x143	L	S
40	Anonymus Italian	Italy	decorative	9.5 fragm	S	S?
41	Anonymus glasswork	?	decorative	?	S?	?
42	Alessandro Paganini	Italy	book ill	?	S?	S/CO
43	Anonymus	France	book ill	?	S?	S/CO
		Low				
44	Jacob Jordaens	Countries	painting	111x88.5	L	S
45	Christoph Jamnitzer	Germany	decorative	53x64.7	M	S/CM
46	Nicolas Colombel	France	painting	127x140.5	XL	S
47	Benjamin West, John Hall	England	print	45.7x57.8	M	S
		Low				
48	Marten de Vos	Countries	drawing	20.3x32	M	S
49	Alvise Friso	Italy	drawing	12x42.3	S	S
50	Giacomo Franco	Italy	book ill	14.9x9.3	S	S/CO
51	Jean Mathieu	France	book ill	?	S?	S/CO
		Low				
52	F. Ertinger	Countries	book ill	?	S?	S/CO
53	Joseph Descamps	France	decorative	264x516	XL	S/CE
54	Niccolo degli Agostini	Italy	book ill	?	S?	S/CO
55	Manara Baldassare	Italy	decorative	22.8 diam	S	S
56	Niccolò Giolfino	Italy	painting	24.4x28.6, 24.5x28.7	M	D/CO
57	Guercino	Italy	drawing	28.5x159.5	M	S
58	Johan Baur	Germany	book ill	?	S?	S/CO
59	Giulio Romano	Italy	painting	?	XL?	S/CE
60	Ciro Ferri & B. Farjat	Italy	print	38.5x27	M	S
		Low				
61	Anonymus BM	Countries	drawing	34.3x45.9	M	S
62	North Italian goldsmiths	Italy	decorative	?	S?	S
63	North Italian painter	Italy	painting	64.8x146	L	S/CM
64	Titian, follower of	Italy	painting	76.2x132.1	L	S
65	Klein-Savrij Sandys	England	book ill	23.6x17	S	S/CO
66	Lodovico Dolce	Italy	book ill	?	S?	S/CO
67	Virgil Solis	Germany	print	5.8x8.9	S	S
68	Samuel Garth	England	book ill	32.6x21.2	M	S/CO
69	Veronese School	Italy	decorative	?	L?	D
70	Jean Lemaire	France	painting	74.5x96.5	L	S
71	Johann Georg Platzer	Germany	painting	39.4x61.6	M	S/CE
72	Bernadinum de Bindonibus	Italy	book ill	?	S?	S/CO
73	Anonymus woodcarver	England	decorative	?	L?	S
				230.5x263.3,		
74	Anonymus V&A carpet	England	decorative	231.8x389.3	XL	D/CO
75	Louis Boullogne	France	painting	74x97.5	L	S
76	Sebastiano Marsili	Italy	painting	151x83	L	S/CE
77	Jörg Wickram	Germany	book ill	8.2x14.6	S	S/CO
78	Micyllus	Germany	book ill	?	S?	D/CO
	Michael Maier, Theodor de					
79	Bry	Germany	book ill	17.7x13.4	S	S/CE
80	Salomon-Simeoni	France	book ill	?	S?	D/CO
		Low				
81	Crispijn de Passe I	Countries	book ill	7.5x13	S	D/CO
		Low				
82	Van der Borcht	Countries	book ill	?	S?	D/CO
83	Giovanni Bonsignori	Italy	book ill	?	S?	S/CO

A	B	K	L	M	N	O
NR	AUTHOR/NAME	NARR CODE	NCN	EP	REF	DIR
1	G. B. Galestruzzi	as	(0, 2)	0	2	No
2	Frederick Lord Leighton	be	(0, 2)	0	2	No
3	Frans Wouters	3hl	(1, 2)	1	2	LR RL
4	Hendrik Goltzius	3djn	(1, 3)	1	3	front LR
5	Guido Reni	3djk	(1, 3)	1	3	front
6	Stephano della Bella	3cds	(1, 3)	1	3	LR
7	Francesco Albani	3dhjk	(1, 4)	1	4	LR
8	Benedetto Luti	3dhjk	(1, 4)	1	4	RL
9	Anonymus	3cdkuv	(1, 5)	1	5	LR
10	Herman Weyer	3dhijn	(1, 5)	1	5	RL back
11	Luca Giordano	3dhjkw	(1, 5)	1	5	RL
12	F. Bartolozzi	3dghjk	(1, 5)	1	5	RL
13	Master of the Cité des Dames	3cdh kuv	(1, 6)	1	6	LR
14	Anonymus Italian Albertina	3dgjkqw	(1, 6)	1	6	Front
15	G. G. Castelli	3adhiuz	(1, 6)	1	6	RL
16	Jean A. Mercier	3cdehjk	(1, 6)	1	6	RL
17	Vittore Carpaccio, school of	3dghjkvw	(1, 7)	1	7	LR
18	Virgil Solis	Dadfkmnw	(1, 7)	1	7	No
19	Antonio Tempesta	3bdhjkos	(1, 7)	1	7	RL
20	P. F. Cittadini	3dhjkmop	(1, 7)	1	7	RL
21	Willem van Herp	4dfhijkl	(1, 7)	1	7	LR back
22	J. van Neck	1dfhiknr	(1, 7)	1	7	No
23	J. Miélot; de Pisan	3cghjluvw	(1, 8)	1	8	RL
24	Gèrard de Jode	4abcdfi qu	(1, 8)	1	8	Front
25	Jan Tegnagel	3dhiklnov	(1, 8)	1	8	RL
26	Johann U. Krauss	3bcdfhiks	(1, 8)	1	8	RL
27	Anonymus-Anguillara	4cdefhjls	(1, 8)	1	8	LR
28	Edward J. Poynter	3defgijkt	(1, 8)	1	8	LR back
29	Richard Dadd	3defhiknt	(1, 8)	1	8	RL back
30	Francesco Morone	4fghijptvw	(1, 9)	1	9	LR
31	Bartholomeus Breenbergh	4ghijkmpnw	(1, 9)	1	9	LR
32	Francesco del Cossa	4dfghijktvw	(1, 10)	1	10	RL
33	J. P. Gowy after Rubens	4defijkl npx	(1, 10)	1	10	LR
34	Ademolli	3bcddeghjkns	(1, 10)	1	10	RL
35	Crispijn de Passe	3bcdhijklopv	(1, 11)	1	11	LR
36	Noël Hallé	4dfghijklmpw	(1, 11)	1	11	LR
37	Le Mire	3cdefhijkmps	(1, 11)	1	11	RL
38	Johann Heinrich Schönfeld	4dfghikmnp tuw	(1, 12)	1	12	LR
39	Simone Cantarini	3defghijklmopvw	(1, 14)	1	14	RL back
40	Anonymus Italian	3Chr	(2, 2)	2	2	LR
41	Anonymus glasswork	13dijk	(2, 4)	2	4	LR
42	Alessandro Paganini	35acdfk	(2, 5)	2	5	RL
43	Anonymus	3Bcdfhk	(2, 5)	2	5	RL
44	Jacob Jordaens	3Bdfiknq	(2, 6)	2	6	Front
45	Christoph Jamnitzer	13defioru	(2, 7)	2	7	LR
46	Nicolas Colombel	4Edeghjkp	(2, 7)	2	7	RL
47	Benjamin West, John Hall	0Gbd fhijo	(2, 7)	2	7	No

48	Marten de Vos	14dfikmopr	(2, 8)	2	8	LR front
49	Alvise Friso	4Edfijknow	(2, 8)	2	8	RL
50	Giacomo Franco	03achmnsuw	(2, 8)	2	8	RL
51	Jean Mathieu	38bcdghjko	(2, 8)	2	8	LR
52	F. Ertinger	13cdfhijkr	(2, 8)	2	8	LR
53	Joseph Descamps	4Edefgjikl	(2, 8)	2	8	RL
54	Niccolo degli Agostini	4Ccdgijkrvw	(2, 9)	2	9	LR
55	Manara Baldassare	4Cdghikoruz	(2, 9)	2	9	LR
56	Niccolò Giolfino	3Gdghikotvw	(2, 9)	2	9	RL
57	Guercino	4Edghijkptw	(2, 9)	2	9	LR
58	Johan Baur	13bcdfhijklrs	(2, 11)	2	11	LR RL
59	Giulio Romano	4Ebdafhijkmpuw	(2, 12)	2	12	front
60	Ciro Ferri & B. Farjat	13adefhijklnrz	(2, 13)	2	13	LR
61	Anonymus BM	03dfgijklmnortvw	(2, 14)	2	14	RL back
62	North Italian goldsmiths	78Fkw	(3, 2)	3	2	RL
63	North Italian painter	78Fghkw	(3, 4)	3	4	LR
64	Titian, follower of	09Gdhipru	(3, 6)	3	6	no
65	Klein-Savrij Sandys	038cdhkuw	(3, 6)	3	6	RL
66	Lodovico Dolce	46Ccdfikrvw	(3, 8)	3	8	LR
67	Virgil Solis	3DGbdhiknuv	(3, 8)	3	8	LR
68	Samuel Garth	038cdfhikuwz	(3, 9)	3	9	RL
69	Veronese School	14Afijkloruvz	(3, 10)	3	10	LR
70	Jean Lemaire	369adefghijklmpt	(3, 13)	3	13	RL
71	Johann Georg Platzer	13Bdefghijklmnor	(3, 13)	3	13	RL
72	Bernadinum de Bindonibus	2356acdjko	(4, 6)	4	6	LR cir
73	Anonymus woodcarver	1235dfijkmprv	(4, 9)	4	9	LR
74	Anonymus V&A carpet	038Gdfhijknop	(4, 9)	4	9	LR
75	Louis Boullogne	59BEdefhijklmopr	(4, 12)	4	12	No
76	Sebastiano Marsili	1368dfhijknruvwzx	(4, 13)	4	13	LR
77	Jörg Wickram	0138Bcdijkov	(5, 7)	5	7	LR cir
78	Micyllus	1378Fcdfhijkpqrw	(5, 11)	5	11	No
79	Michael Maier, Theodor de Bry	1378Gacdefhiknru	(5, 11)	5	11	RL
80	Salomon-Simeoni	1378Fbcdhijkqrsw	(5, 12)	5	12	LR
81	Crispijn de Passe I	1478Fbcdhijklmopruvw	(5, 16)	5	16	LR
82	Van der Borcht	1378BFcdhijkorsw	(6, 10)	6	10	LR
83	Giovanni Bonsignori	123568BCGacdjkorv	(9, 8)	9	8	LR cir

Appendix

This Appendix lists all the eighty-three images in the database. The images are accompanied with all the relevant information that was needed for the analysis (including bibliography, sources, information on different editions, description, problems of categorizing, or short comments on their narrative codes as well). The images can be viewed on a CD attached to the present thesis.

Images with zero episodes

1/W1

<p>Giovanni Battista Galestruzzi <i>Atalanta</i> Engravings for Leonardo Agostini's book <i>Le gemme antiche figurale</i> Rome, 1657-9 Dimensions 12.9 x 10.1 cm Etching</p>	<p>Narrative code _as NCN (0, 2) Print S size S/CE No direction</p>	
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Bibliography: *The Illustrated Bartsch, Italian Masters of the Seventeenth Century*, Vol 46, 159 S2.

Remarks: This is a second state etching. The first had the inscription 'Testa Incognita' on the top with number 99. Later both the number and the inscription have been abraded and replaced with ATALANTA and '40'. According to the Bartsch, the first edition of Agostini's book (1636) might have included the first state engraving. In the second edition many of the engravings were altered, this is the reason why in this database the date of the later edition is used. The number at the upper right corner gives the place of the engraving in the sequence that contains both historical and mythological characters.

2/R32

<p>Frederic Lord Leighton <i>Atalanta</i> England, ~1893 Oil on canvas Dimensions 68.5 x 49.5 cm</p>	<p>Narrative code _be NCN (0, 2) Painting M size S, no direction</p>	
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Source: Witt Library

Bibliography: Ormond, Leonée and Richard: *Lord Leighton*. Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1975, Nr. 375.

Remarks: The painting was sold at the Sotheby's on 24 May 1988, its present location is unknown. It has no narrative action, the title identifies the main character. The style of Atalanta's jewellery is the only reference to the ancient times.

Images with one episode

3/R22

Attributed to Frans Wouters <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> Flemish, date not known On panel Dimensions 9 x 21.5 cm	Narrative code 3hl NCN (1, 2) Painting S size, S, LR	
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Source: Witt Library

Remarks: Sold at Sotheby's London in 1980, now probably in a private collection. There is no date available for the painting. I used ~1640 based on the following information 'In spring 1637, however, he [Wouters] was in England, working on various commissions for Charles I, including ceiling paintings with mythological themes. At the same time he executed a number of small landscapes with figures'.¹ R22 actually refers to another painting attributed to Wouters in The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art (Sarasota), depicting a woman running to the front. The subject of this painting is uncertain: it can be either Atalanta running, or, as the water spout on the right suggests, the story of Hero and Leander. The bad condition of the painting makes impossible a more precise attribution.²

4/R15

Hendrik Goltzius <i>Atalanta</i> Dutch, 1595-1600 Drawing Dimensions 16.6 x 11.6 cm Rotterdam, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Printkabinet, Inv. Nr. Goltzius 10.	Narrative code 3djn NCN (1, 3) Drawing S size S, RL front	
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Bibliography: Reznicek, E. K. J.: *Die Zeichnungen von Hendrick Goltzius*. Utrecht, Haentjens Dekker & Gumbert, 1961, Nr. 113.

5/W21ab/P12/R16

Guido Reni <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> Italy, 1618-19 Oil on panel 206 x 297 / 191 x 264 cm Two copies: Museo del Prado, Madrid and Museo di Capodimonte, Naples	Narrative code 3djk NCN (1, 3) Painting XL size S, LR front	
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Bibliography: Pepper, D. Stephen: *Guido Reni*. Oxford, Phaidon, 1984.

Remarks: There are two versions of that painting, probably both authentic. The one in the Prado is slightly bigger in size, but otherwise there is no significant difference between the two. The painting depicts the race, the play with the apples marks a flashback and a flashforward in the story.

¹ Hans Vlieghe: Wouters, Frans. Grove Art Online, www.groveart.com (2007 06 03).

² See Franklin W. Robinson and William H. Wilson, *Catalogue of the Flemish and Dutch Paintings 1400-1900*. The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida, 1980.

6/W12

Stephano della Bella <i>Hippomenes and Atalanta – Gioco della Mitologia</i> Italy, 1644 Engraving (?) Dimensions 8.7 x 5.5 cm	Narrative code 3cds NCN (1, 3) Print, S size S/CM LR	 An engraving depicting the mythological scene of Hippomenes and Atalanta. Hippomenes is shown in a dynamic, almost dancing pose, while Atalanta is in a similar pose, both appearing to be in a race or a moment of intense action. The scene is set outdoors with some foliage. Below the illustration is a block of text in French, which is a short summary of the story.
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Bibliography: Tempesti, Anna Forlani: *Mostra di incisioni di Stefano Della Bella*. Firenze, L.S. Olschki, 1973, 62-74.

Remarks: In 1644, Cardinal Mazarin commissioned from Bella a set of playing cards with mythological subjects for Louis XIV. The title of the set was *Gioco Della Mitologia*. All the 52 cards were depicting a scene from the Greek mythology from Ovid's, and the images were accompanied by a short summary of the story. This card is thus part of a series ('s').

7/W29/R23

Francesco Albani (Albani) <i>Hippomenes and Atalanta</i> Italy, date not known Painting Dimensions 52.7 x 95.9 cm Weston III, Collection of the Earl of Bradford, B61/411.	Narrative code 3dhjk NCN (1, 4) Painting M size S, LR	 A painting by Francesco Albani depicting the mythological scene of Hippomenes and Atalanta. The scene is set outdoors with a large tree in the background. Hippomenes is shown in a dynamic, almost dancing pose, while Atalanta is in a similar pose, both appearing to be in a race or a moment of intense action.
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Source: Warburg Institute Photographic Collection

Remarks: The source of Albani's composition is Guido Reni's painting, the *Atalanta and Hippomenes* (Nr. 5). This is the reason why the date category was chosen to be 1650.

8/W35/P18a

Benedetto Luti <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> Italy, ~1715 Painting Dimensions 60 x 72 cm	Narrative code 3dhjk NCN (1, 4) Painting M size, S, RL	 A painting by Benedetto Luti depicting the mythological scene of Atalanta and Hippomenes. The scene is set outdoors with a large tree in the background. Atalanta is shown in a dynamic, almost dancing pose, while Hippomenes is in a similar pose, both appearing to be in a race or a moment of intense action.
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Source: Warburg Institute Photographic Collection

Bibliography: Carlsen, Hanne and Mejer, Jorgen: Benedetto Luti: *Atalanta and Hippomenes* and other mythological paintings. *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici*, X, 1981, 33-40.

Remarks: Carlsen and Mejer mentions at least two other paintings of Luti with the same subject. The one included here is listed in Pigler as 'lost', but reappeared in the private collection of Arthur Kauffmann and was shown in Rome (Rome, Galleria Mario dei Fiori, 1980).³ The present location of the painting is unknown, it could still be part of Kauffmann's collection or can be in another private collection. There is an engraving by Bartolozzi made after this painting, where the format and the background is changed (Nr. 12). The subject of the painting is the race, the apple serves as an attribute. The motif of the pair of winding tree-trunks in the background is repeated in some other engravings as well (for example in Ciro Ferri, Nr. 60). This motif can be regarded as a visual sing suggesting the interrelated fate of the main characters.

³ See the record of Luti's painting in the Warburg Photographic Collection.

9/O1

<p>Anonymous <i>An 'A' initial with Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> Illustration in <i>Ovidius Moralisatus</i> (a French adaptation), Flanders, Belgium, 15th century The precise technique and the dimensions are not available BN Richelieu MS. Français 137, Fol. 143. Nr. 94.</p>	<p>Narrative code 3cdkuv NCN (1, 5) Book illustration S size S/CE, LR</p>	
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Source: (09 05 2007)

Book <http://gallica.bnf.fr/scripts/Notice.php?O=08100128>

Image <http://gallica.bnf.fr/scripts/mediator.exe?F=C&L=08100128&I=000094>

Remarks: The illustration accompanies a moralizing version of the fable (reference 'u'). It depicts the two characters in the race with reference to the immediate future when Hippomenes is going to throw the apple still in his hand. The protagonists wear contemporary costumes. The book was published in the 15th century, so 1450 stands for the date category as a mean of the two end date. The proper dimension is not available, however, as being a book illustration, the size was marked as S.

10/E1

<p>Herman Weyer <i>The Race of Atalanta</i> Germany, 1618 Drawing, dimension unknown Signed and dated: 1618 and HEW Musée des Beaux-Arts, Bordeaux. Inv. 913bis/92</p>	<p>Narrative code 3dhijn NCN (1, 5) Drawing Size M (?) S, RL back</p>	
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Bibliography: Starcky, Emmanuel: Un dessin d'Herman Weyer (1596-ap.1621) [A drawing by Hermann Weyer (1596-after 1621)]. *Revue du Louvre et des Musées de France*, Vol 35, No 1, 1985, 21-24.

Remarks: Weyer depicted episode 3, the race, with a number of spectators. The composition is diagonal, thus the direction of the race is 'RL back'. The dimensions of the drawing were not available, here 'M' was chosen.

11/P16

<p>Luca Giordano (Giordani) <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> Italy, ~1682 Fresco, dimensions unknown Florence, Collezione Marchese Francesco Riccardi (private collection)</p>	<p>Narrative code 3dhjkw NCN (1, 5) Painting Size L (?) S, RL</p>	
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Bibliography: Trkulja, Meloni, *Paragone XXIII*, No 267, March 1972, 34, 60, 71, Fig III, 32.

Ferrari, Oreste and Scavizzi, Giuseppe: *Luca Giordano. L'Opera Completa*, Napoli, Electa, 1992, 392.

Remarks: Based on an inventory note about Luca Giordano from 1715, Trkulja dated this fresco around 1682. It was probably part of a cycle, and only later was transferred onto canvas. The proper dimensions are not available. Based on the information that it is 'circa braccia 2 (poco piú di un metro)', size L was chosen. The course of the race is depicted with Atalanta (Episode 3) holding an apple and reaching out for another one. In the left foreground former suitors can be seen beheaded.

12/W17/P18b

Francesco Bartolozzi <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> Italy, after 1763 Engraving Dimensions unknown	Narrative code 3dghjk NCN (1, 5) Print, size M (?) S, RL	
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Bibliography: Dowley, Francis H.: Some Drawings by Benedetto Luti. *The Art Bulletin*, Vol 44, No 3, September 1962, 219-236. Carlsen, Hanne and Mejer, Jorgen: Benedetto Luti: Atalanta and Hippomenes and other mythological paintings. *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici*, X, 1981, 33-40.

Remarks: Based on Benedetto Luti's painting, this engraving was made around 1763 (date category 1750). Bartolozzi altered the format to vertical and added some new elements (buildings and on obelisk in the background), but the motif of the tree-trunk was kept.

13/W28

Master of the Cité des Dames and workshop <i>Hippomenes racing against Atalanta with golden apples</i> . Illustration of Christine de Pisan's <i>L'Epître d'Othéa</i> France, 1410-11 Miniature, dimension not known London, BL Harley, 4431, Fol. 128.	Narrative code 3cdhkuv NCN (1, 6) Book illustration Size S (?) S/CE, LR	
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Source: (03 02 2007)

<http://www.imagesonline.bl.uk/britishlibrary/controller/textsearch?text=4431&&idx=1&startid=13459>

Remarks: The illustration shows Atalanta and a suitor, both dressed according to the court fashion. The updated setting strengthens the new, moral interpretation given by Christine de Pisan: it is a warning against attempting the impossible.

14/P13

Italian artist (Neapolitan or Florentine) <i>Race of Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> Italy, 17 th century Chalk, bistre Dimensions 19.7 x 28.4 cm Vienna, Albertina, Inv. Nr. 24540.	Narrative code 3dgjkqw NCN (1, 6) Drawing Size S S, Front	
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Bibliography: Stix, Alfred and Spitzmüller, Anna (eds): *Beschreibender Katalog der Handzeichnungen in der Staatlichen Graphischen Sammlung Albertina. Band VI. Die Schulen von Ferrara, Bologna, Parma und Modena, der Lombardei, Genuas, Neapels und Siziliens: mit einem Nachtrag zu allen italienischen Schulen*. Wien, Anton Schroll & Co., 1941, Nr. 575. Birke, Veronika and Kertész, Janine (eds): *Die Italienischen Zeichnungen der Albertina. Generalverzeichnis Band IV*. Inv. 14326-42255. Wien-Köln-Weimar, Böhlau, 1992-1995, Inv. 24540, B575.

Remarks: Italian drawing from the collection of the Albertina. The place of origin is discussed, it is a work either a Neapolitan or a Florentine artist. Pigler dated for the first half, the catalogue of the Albertina for the second half of the 17th century, thus for the date category 1650 is chosen. The race is depicted in a Renaissance setting ('w'). The characters are running from a gate toward the front, the viewer is thus placed into a position of the king and his companions.

15/W23

Giacomo Gentili Castelli <i>Hippomenes and Atalanta</i> Italy, 1755 Maiolica plate Dimensions not available	Narrative code 3adhiuz NCN(1, 6) Decorative art Size M (?), S, RL	
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Source: Warburg Institute Photographic Collection

Remarks: This plate was sold at Sotheby's Milan (14 June 2005, lot 287), its present location is unknown. The scene is showing the race with a landscape background, Atalanta is bending down for the apple. The inscription on the bottom of the rim identifies the characters and the topic. An impresa on the top of the rim refers to the patrons, and also gives a new, anachronistic framing for the narrative.

16/O24

Jean A. Mercier <i>Atalanta and the Golden Apples</i> Illustration in <i>Les Métamorphoses d'Ovide, choix de seize fables</i> Paris, translated by l'Abbé Banier France, 1946, dimensions not available	Narrative code 3cdehjk NCN (1, 6) Book illustration Size S (?) S/CO, RL	
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Source: (10 05 2007)

Book <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/metamorphosesdovide.html#1946>

Image <http://etext.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/jm/0009.html>

Remarks: This is the latest work in the database, an illustration from the mid-twentieth century. Atalanta is shown from a very low viewpoint. Both her veil and the Greek-type temple in the background emphasize the ancient character of the image.

17/E9

School of Vittore Carpaccio <i>Hippomenes and Atalanta in the Race</i> Italy, date unknown On panel Dimensions 101.6 x 127 cm	Narrative code 3dghjkw NCN (1, 7) Painting, size L S, LR	
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Source: Witt Library

Remarks: The Witt Library knows about two other versions of this painting. The first is listed under the name of Giorgione but attributed to Carpaccio. Was sold at Christies in 1985 (26-27th September), now possibly in private collection. The second version is attributed to Vittore Carpaccio, and is in the Italic Brass Collection, Venice. The contest was placed into a Renaissance landscape with a town, the characters are dressed in contemporary clothes. For the date category, 1500 was chosen based on Carpaccio's and Giorgione's life interval.

18/W2

Virgil Solis <i>Atalanthe-Atalanta</i> Engraving for the cycle <i>Twelve Mythological Women</i> Germany, date unknown Dimensions 11.1 x 8.3 cm Signed: Monogram VS	Narrative code Dadfkmnw NCN (1, 7) Print, size S S/CM, no direction	
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Source & Bibliography: *The Illustrated Bartsch, German Masters of the Sixteenth Century*, Vol 19, 257.96.

Remarks: Atalanta is admiring the golden apple (Episode D). Her figure was placed in a niche, the composition has a richly decorated late-Renaissance frame ('w'). On her left there is a rounded temple referring to the future episode of the embracing. This episode is unique in the database, and is appearing only once more as a subsidiary episode in another engraving by the same engraver, Virgil Solis. The bottom of the frame bears his monogram. The engraving is part of a cycle. The exact date is not known, Virgil Solis's earlier secure works from the 1540s and the date of his death (1562) gives 1550 for the date category.

19/O10

<p>Antonio Tempesta <i>Atalantum Veneris ope vincit Hippomenes</i> <i>(Hippomenes Winning the Race with Atalanta)</i> Published first in 1606 by Wilhelmus Janssonius in <i>Metamorphoseon ... Ovidianarum</i>, Nr. 97 Italy, ~1585, etching, dimension 10.3 x 11.8 cm Mr and Mrs Marcus Sopher Collection 1989.1.224.</p>	<p>Narrative code 3bdhjkos NCN (1, 7) Book illustration Size S S/CO, RL</p>	
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Sources: (12 05 2007)

Book <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/tempestabaurnew.html>

Image <http://search.famsf.org:8080/view.shtml?record=58500&=list&=91&=temp>

Bibliography *The Illustrated Bartsch*, New York, 1984, Volt 36, 638-787.

Remarks: Tempesta's etching was not published until 1606, but was available to other engravers who copied the composition and especially the two runners. The course of the race is depicted, in the background, presumably in front of a royal building, spectators with heavy gestures comment on the events.

20/W11

<p>Pier Francesco Cittadini <i>Atalanta's Race</i> Italy, date unknown. Pen and bistre Dimensions 22.2 x 35.5 cm London, Mond collection</p>	<p>Narrative code 3dhjkmop NCN (1, 7) Drawing Size M S, RL</p>	
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Source: Warburg Institute Photographic Collection

Bibliography: Borenius, Tancred (with Rudolf Wittkover): *Catalogue of the Collection of Drawings by the old Masters formed by Sir Robert Mond*. Eyre and Spottiswoode Limited, East Harding Street, London, Nr 59.

Remarks: Based on the life interval of the artist the date category is 1650. The figures are running on a curved path in a forest. There are a number of mediator figures in the foreground having a conversation about the race and helping the viewer to place him or herself in the scene.

21/R24

<p>Willem van Herp <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> Flemish, date unknown On canvas, dimensions 115 x 169 cm National Museum Warsaw, Inv. Nr. 129890.</p>	<p>Narrative code 4dfhijkl NCN (1, 7) Painting, size XL S, LR back</p>	
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Bibliography: *Catalogue of Foreign Schools*, National Museum Warsaw, 1969.

Remarks: The life interval of Willem van Herp (1614-1677) gives the date category (1650). Herp was a Flemish painter working on mythological subjects. Only a very small and bad quality image was available in the catalogue of the National Museum in Warsaw. The apple is a device of creating a

foreflash and a flashforward. On the right, a column designates the point where he race will end. The strong gestures of the figures indicate the heat of the moment.

22/W4

<p>J. van Neck <i>Hippomenes receiving three golden apples from Venus</i> Dutch, date unknown Oil on canvas, dimensions 63.5 x 91.5 cm</p>	<p>Narrative code 1dfhiknr NCN (1, 7) Painting, size M S, no direction</p>	
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Source: Witt Library

Remarks: Jan van Neck (~1635-1714) is a Dutch painter. The location of the painting is unknown, it was sold at Christies in London, 1957. The painting is signed. Hippomenes is kneeling in front of Venus, who arrived on a carriage. Two putti give the apples to Hippomenes (Episode 1). This episode can frequently be seen with Episodes 3 or 4, but only once as a main theme.

23/W3/R1

<p>Jean Miélot <i>Les prétendants d'Atalanta s'efforçant en vain de la vaincre a la course.</i> Illustration of Christine de Pisan's <i>Épître d'Othéa</i> Belgium, 1460 or later Dimensions 23.3 x 15.6 cm Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, Bruxelles, Ms 9392, fol. 75v.</p>	<p>Narrative code 3cghjluvw NCN (1, 8) Book illustration Size S S/CE RL</p>	
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Source & Bibliography: J. van den Gheyn SJ: *Christine de Pisan: Épître d'Othéa, déesse de la prudence, à Hector, chef des Troyens; reproduction des 100 miniatures du manuscrit 9392 de Jean Miélot.* Bruxelles, Vromant & Co., 1913, Nr. 72. Frédéric, Lyna: *Les principaux manuscrits à peintures de la Bibliothèque royale de Belgique.* Bruxelles, Bibliothèque Royale Albert, 1989, Vol 3, part 1, 110-114, part 2, 431-432.

Remarks: Christine de Pisan's *Épître d'Othéa*, a moralizing version of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, was written around 1400, and was extremely popular at the Burgundian Court. The current, luxurious edition was illustrated by Jean Miélot for Philip the Good. Miélot was his secretary from 1449. The scene is placed into a contemporary setting. The race is taking place in a hilly, charming landscape, a city with a gothic cathedral can be seen in the background. Two suitors are present, one is in competition, the second candidate, as a result of his failure, is lying on the ground. His hat is rolled away giving a visual equivalence to the forthcoming event, his beheading. Atalanta is depicted as an elegant princess from the court, whose flirtatious gestures invite Hippomenes to follow her.

24/W10

<p>Gèrard de Jode <i>Hippomenes and Atalanta.</i> An illustration of Laurentius Haechtanus' <i>Microcosmos</i> Antwerp, 1579 Engraving, dimensions not known</p>	<p>Narrative code 4abcdfigu NCN (1, 8) Book illustration Size S (?) S/CE, front</p>	
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Source: (14 04 2007)

Book <http://www.uni-mannheim.de/mateo/desbillons/mikro.html>

Image <http://www.uni-mannheim.de/mateo/desbillons/mikro/seite28.html>

Remarks: Two versions of this composition are available:

(1) A drawing by Crispin van den Broeck: *Competition between Atalanta and Milanion*, in reverse, (Amsterdam, Printroom of the Rijksmuseum, Nr. A1914). Broeck lived until 1589/91, so this composition might be later than the illustration made by Jode.

(2) An emblem in *De Gulden Winckel der konstlievende Nederlanders* by Joos van den Vondel from 1622. This was first printed in 1613.

Gèrard de Jode's engraving is part of an emblem book, which gives a moral interpretation of the story. The composition with the barriers, similarly to the drawing from the Albertina (Nr. 14), puts the viewer in the position of the king and his companies.

25/R18

<p>Jan Tengnagel <i>The Race between Atlanta (sic) and Hippomenes</i> Dutch, 1610, on panel Dimensions 55.8 x 89 cm. Signed and dated Historisches Museum, Amsterdam, inv. A27278.</p>	<p>Narrative code 3dhiklnov NCN (1, 8) Painting, size M S, RL</p>	
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Source & Bibliography: A. Tümpel, Claes Cornelisz, Moeyaert. *Oud-Holland*, Vol 88, 1974, 1-163, Fig 89. Blankert, Albert: *Amsterdams Historisch Museum: schilderijen daterend van voor 1800: voorlopige catalogus*. Amsterdam, 1975/1979.

Remarks: Tümpel emphasizes the role of the gestures in Tengnagel's oeuvre: 'Subsequently he developed a distinctive gesticulatory style, with bodies and hands shown in violent movement, creating a sense of extreme agitation not found in any other contemporary Amsterdam painter's work; the *Race between Hippomenes and Atalanta* (1610; ex-art market, London; see Tümpel, fig. 89) and the *Raising of Lazarus* (1615; Copenhagen, Stat. Mus. Kst) are good examples.'⁴

26/O14

<p>Johann U. Krauss <i>Atalanta</i>. Illustration in <i>Die Verwandlungen des Ovidii: in zweyhundert und sechs- und zwanzig Kupffern</i> Augsburg, 1690 Engraving, dimensions not known</p>	<p>Narrative code 3bcdfhiks NCN (1, 8) Book illustration Size S (?) S/CO, RL</p>	
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Source: (06 03 2007)

Book <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/lebrunleclerc.html>

Image <http://etext.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/krauss/460a.html>

Remarks: There is a reengraved version of Isaac de Benserade's *Métamorphoses en rondeaux*, illustrated by Le Clerc, Chauveau, and Le Brun, Paris, 1676. I could not find out whether Atalanta was included in the 1676 edition. A reengraved version of this image was published in *Les Métamorphoses d'Ovide ornées de 138 gravures d'après Sébastien Le Clerc, précédée de la vie d'Ovide et d'une abrégé de l'histoire poétique*, Paris, 1801.⁵ The illustrations of the book do not follow strictly the Ovidian story. The previous image is the scene of the transformation of Adonis into a Flower, the framing scene with Venus and Adonis is missing. Here the figures run parallel with the picture plane, a barrier sets apart them from the crowd. Atalanta is bending down for the first apple behind Hippomenes. The page includes a number and an inscription identifying the female character.

⁴ Tümpel, Astrid: Jan Tengnagel. In Grove Art Online, Oxford University Press, www.groveart.com (03 06 2007).

⁵ The source of this engraving is <http://etext.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/hp2/HisP2198.html> (07 03 2007).

27/E11

<p>Anonymous <i>Atalanta corre con Ippomene</i>. Illustration in <i>Le Metamorfosi di Ovidio</i>. Translated by Giovanni Andrea dell'Anguillara, published by Antonio Zezon Naples, 1840 Technique and dimensions not known</p>	<p>Narrative code 4cdefhjls NCN (1, 8) Book illustration Size S (?) S/CO, LR</p>	
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Source: Warburg Institute Photographic Collection

Remarks: In this 19th century edition, the otherwise cruel race of Atalanta and Hippomenes is depicted as a waltz. A small column with fruits marks the finish line, but Hippomenes is touching the trunk of a tree. In the background, the king is sitting on his throne.

28/R30

<p>Sir Edward John Poynter <i>Atalanta's Race</i> England, 1876 Oil on canvas Dimensions 152 x 396 cm</p>	<p>Narrative code 3defgijkt NCN (1, 8) Painting, size M (?) S/CM, LR back</p>	
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Source: Witt Library

Bibliography: Inglis, Alison: Sir Edward Poynter and the Earl of Wharncliffe's Billiard Room. *Apollo*, CXXVI, October 1987, 249-255.

Remarks: The painting of Poynter (1836-1919) was destroyed in the Second World War, and only a sketch has survived (dimension 21.9 x 65.4). This sketch was on sale at Christies, London, 9 February 1990. In 1871, Earl of Wharncliffe ordered it for the decoration of his Billiard Room at Wortley Hall, near Sheffield. The subject was chosen to be a mythological cycles with references to the family history. This was matching the heraldic decoration of the rest of the house. Four paintings were ordered, *Perseus and Andromeda*, *The Fights between More of More and the Dragon of Wortley* and two others with the story of Atalanta. According to the information in the Witt Library '[t]he chosen theme was the story of Atalanta, the race with her suitor Milarion (sic), and then the marriage procession. The hope being for the Atalanta pictures to compliment the two dragon pictures on the other side of the room. As it happened, only the 'Atalanta Race' was used, the final picture being 'Nausicaa and her Maiden'. This sketch relates directly to the completed work, which was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1876 and hailed as one of the most outstanding paintings of the year. Critics applauded the tension of the arrested energy of the two running lovers, and the sense of frozen movement. (...) Dated 1878 the sketch represents Poynter's initial ideas for the scheme, although it is clearly explained in letters of Autumn 1876 that he finished the sketch after the full picture had been exhibited. Surviving letters from the artist show that in August 1876 W. H. Doeg paid Poynter one hundred pounds for completing the sketch of Atalanta.'⁶ Although the sketch was finished only in 1876, Poynter started to work on the whole scheme in the winter of 1871-71.

29/W8a/R31

<p>Richard Dadd <i>Atalanta's Race</i> Broadmoor Hospital, Berks, England, ~1877 Oil on canvas, dimensions 60 x 49.5 cm Signed and dated: Rd. Dadd pinxit, Broadmoor 1875.</p>	<p>Narrative code 3defhiknt NCN (1, 8) Painting Size M S, RL back</p>	
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Source: Witt Library

Bibliography: Allderidge, Patricia: *The Late Richard Dadd*. Tate Gallery, 1974, Nr. 210.

⁶ Witt Library information, no other source is mentioned.

Remarks: Although the painting bears an inscription 1875, Allderidge dated it around 1877. The reason for this is perhaps Dadd's reflection from 1877 on Poynter's picture with the same subject. The present location of Dadd's work is not known, it was sold at Sotheby's London, first 17 November 1976, then again on 19 June 1990. Possibly the same painting was sold twice, since Allderidge's catalogue listed only one painting with this theme in Dadd's oeuvre. Further, the dimensions of the two correspond. The scene is placed in a forest, but there is a classical-type fountain. Atalanta is armed, Hippomenes is advancing towards the king, who, with his company can be seen in a distance. Richard Dadd described his painting in 1877 in relation to Poynter's *Atalanta and Hippomenes*: 'His [Poynter's] is a more ambitious treatment than mine. He depicts the race as occurring in the stadium, I, you will observe, place it in a forest-glade. Probably both interpretations will pass muster. (...) Mr. Poynter's picture belongs to the historic period; mine to the heroic ... [his] is in truth a royal and imposing picture. Mine is more simple and pastoral.'⁷

30/W6

Francesco Morone <i>The Race of Atlanta (sic) and Hippomenes</i> Italy, date unknown Oil on panel Dimensions 18.5 x 63.5 cm	Narrative code 4fghijptvw NCN (1, 9) Painting size S, S, LR	
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Source: Warburg Institute Photo Collection, Sotheby's Catalogue, 8 July 1987, lot 29.

Remarks: The present location of the painting is unknown, it is possibly in a private collection. Based on Morone's life period (1471-1529) the date category is 1500. The race was placed in a seaside landscape. On the left, there is a Renaissance castle, perhaps another one on the right. The king and his companions are watching the competitors on horseback. The runners are at the end of the race, Hippomenes is touching the pillar, and thus winning Atalanta as his wife. On the top of the pillar, the heads of the former suitors can be seen. There is a relief on the front side of the pillar, presumably Cupid with his arrows.

31/W15/P24/R17

Bartholomeus Breenbergh <i>Landscape with Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> Dutch, 1630, painting on oaktree panel Dimensions 49 x 79.5 cm Signed and dated Barto s Breenborch 1630. Kassel, Staatliche Gemäldegalerie. Inv. 1749 ff. Nr. 685.	Narrative code 4ghijkmpw NCN (1, 9) Painting Size M S, LR front	
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Source & Bibliography: Stechow, Wolfgang: *Jahrbuch der Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, Vol 51, 1930, 36. Kassel, Staatliche Gemäldegalerie, Cat. 1958, Nr. 207.

Remarks: The race is in the far, represented with tiny figures as a stage scene in a rich landscape setting. In the foreground, several defeated suitors are already killed. Breenbergh perhaps made it on his tour to Rome.

32/P2/R4/R5

Francesco del Cossa <i>Atalanta's Race</i> Italy, date unknown Oil on wood, dimensions 30 x 28 cm Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, No. 113A.	Narrative code 4dfghijktvw NCN (1, 10) Painting, size M S, RL	
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⁷ Allderidge, Patricia: *The Late Richard Dadd*. Tate Gallery, 1974, 135-6.

Bibliography: Schrubring, P.: *Cassoni*, 1915, Fig 126, Nr. 572. *Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz Staatliche Museen Gemäldegalerie. Verzeichnis der Ausgestellten Gemälde des 13. bis 18. Jahrhunderts im Museum Dahlem*. Berlin, 1966, 34.

Remarks: The attribution of this small cassone-painting is problematic. The sources mention two painters, Francesco del Cossa, or his pupil, Ercole de' Roberti. Based on its style, the 1966 catalogue suggests a link to Cossa's Griffel altarpiece. The painting perhaps belonged to a wedding furniture. The date category was decided based on Cossa's lifetime (1450). The painting depicts the end of the race in a Renaissance setting. Three figures stand at the richly decorated gate, one of them might be Atalanta's father. In the background, there is another gate-like building with Renaissance architectural elements. Between the two runners, there is a puzzling figurative relief.

33/W19/P19/P20/R19

<p>Jacob Peter Gowy after Rubens <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> Flemish Oil on canvas, dimensions 181 x 220 cm Prado, Madrid, Nr. 1538.</p>	<p>Narrative code 4defijklpx NCN (1, 10) Painting, size M S/CO, LR</p>	
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Bibliography: Alpers, Svetlana. *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard Vol IX. The Decoration of the Torre de la Parada*. London, Phaidon, 1971, Nr. 4. (Fig. 64) and 4a. (Fig. 65).

Remarks: Rubens's oil sketch is one of those mythological scenes from the *Metamorphoses* that were commissioned by Philip IV for the decoration of the Torre de la Parada between 1636 and 1638. It is now in Paris (Collection of Mrs. Henri Heugel, 28 x 31.5 cm). The painting in the database was executed by Jacob Peter Gowy following Rubens's sketch (now in the Prado, Madrid). Another version, a small oil sketch exists in the Kunsthau Heylshof (Worms, Inv. 19.). Gowy's painting depicts the end of the contest (Episode 4), when Hippomenes is reaching the final post while Atalanta is holding up her skirt and bending down for the last apple. The spectators are standing beyond the barrier and waving. The obelisk is signed: I.P.GOWI F. Atalanta's face and figure is perhaps modelled after Hélène Fourment.

34/O18

<p>Ademolli <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes</i>. Illustration in <i>P. Ovidii Nasonis Metamorphoseon Libri XV Cum Appositis Italico Carmine*</i> <i>Interpretationibus ac Notis</i>, Fig. 87. Florence, 1824, reprint 1832 Engraving (?), dimensions not available</p>	<p>Narrative code 3bcdeghjkns NCN (1, 10) Book illustration Size S S/CO, RL</p>	
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Source: (31 03 2007)

Book <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/ademolli.html>

Image <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/ademolli/adem087.jpg>

Remarks: A Greek-style temple stands in the background as a foreflash to the future episode when Atalanta and Hippomenes will embrace each other in a forbidden place.

35/W13/O17

<p>Crispijn de Pass <i>Atalanta's Race</i>. Illustration of the <i>Les metamorphoses en latin et françois, divisées en XV. livres, avec de nouvelles explications historiques, morales & politiques sur toutes les fables</i> Translated by Pierre Du Ryer, published by François Foppens, Brussels, 1677 Engraving, dimensions ~ 15.9 x 22.9 cm</p>	<p>Narrative code 3bcdhijklopv NCN (1, 11) Book illustration Size S S/CO, LR</p>	
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Source: (07 03 2007)

Book <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/CadresFenetre?O=IFN-2200093&M=notice>

Image <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/CadresFenetre?O=IFN-2200093&I=97&M=imageseule>

Bibliography: Reitlinger, Henry: The de Pass illustrations of Ovid. *Gazette de Beaux-Arts*, No 935, Vol XXVII, January 1945, 15-26, fig 2.

Remarks: The illustration was republished in 1702 in Amsterdam by J. Blaeu. There are three images from the Venus-Adonis story. The date of this engraving cannot be exactly determined. Reitlinger remarks, that 'At first glance it is evident that these engravings [published in 1677 in the Froppens edition of the *Metamorphoses*] must be divided into at least two sections or families. The first of these is in style and sentiment to be dated from about the year 1620, whereas the second class is quite obviously later in date and may be taken as contemporary with the publication of the book, namely 1677.'⁸ About the engraving in this database Reitlinger says, 'there can be no doubt that a certain number of the plates in the Froppens *Metamorphoses* are important and typical examples of the work of the elder Crispin de Pass, free from external assistance. Such are those reproduced here (Fig. 2, 4 and 6)'.⁹ The description of Figure 2 (*Atalanta's Race*) states, that it is by 'Crispin de Pass, after Adrian van de Venne'. De Venne lived between 1589 and 1662, de Passe de Elder between 1564 and 1637. Bearing these dates in mind and looking at the style of Nr. 81, which is surely by de Passe the Elder, I am not convinced that Nr. 81 and this piece is by the same hand. For this reason, the 1650 date category was chosen.

36/P34

<p>Noël Hallé <i>The Race between Hippomenes and Atalanta</i> French, ~1765 Oil on canvas, dimension 321 x 712 cm Paris, Louvre, Inv. 5270.</p>	<p>Narrative code 4dfghijklmpw NCN (1, 11) Painting Size XL, S, LR</p>	
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Bibliography: Diderot, *Salons*; J. Secneq and J. Adhémar, II, 1960, Plate 20.

Remarks: The painting belonged to the collection of Louis XV. It was part of a cycle on the theme 'Love of the Gods'. It was perhaps a design for a tapestry, but was never woven. Diderot wrote a description of this painting.

37/O19

<p>Le Mire and Basan <i>Atalanta -- Hippomenes</i>. Illustration in <i>Les Métamorphoses d'Ovide gravées sur les desseins des meilleurs peintres français</i> Paris, 1770 Engraving, dimensions not known</p>	<p>Narrative code 3cdefhijkmps NCN (1, 11) Book illustration Size S (?) S/CO, RL</p>	
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Source: (12 03 2007)

Book <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/metamorphosesgravees.html>

Image http://etext.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/vaf1770/0234_pg111r.html

⁸ Reitlinger, 1945, 16.

⁹ Reitlinger, 1945, 20.

Remarks: The engravings of this edition were republished in a separate volume in Banier's translation of the *Metamorphoses* (French version, 1767-71). It is a rococo style illustration, framed with garlands. The illustration is accompanied by a short description of the story. Many pictorial elements emphasize the ancient (and Mediterranean) character of the story, for example the palm trees. Mediator figures are placed in the foreground leading the viewer into the scene. The episode is part of a cycle, framed by two other episodes from the story of Venus and Adonis, just as in the Ovidian description (*Adonis loved by Venus and Adonis transformed into Anemone flower*).

38/P36

<p>Johann Heinrich Schönfeld <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> Germany, 1650-60 On canvas, dimensions 123 x 200.5 cm Remainders of a signature Brukenthal Museum, Sibiu, Nr. 1059.</p>	<p>Narrative code 4dfghikmnpwtuw NCN (1, 12) Painting Size XL S, LR</p>	
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Bibliography: Kat. d. Schönfeld-Ausst., Ulm 1967, Abb. 77. Vgl. Sandrart, Teutsche Academie, 1675, hg. v. A. R. Peltzer, 1925, 205.

Remarks: The race is placed in the garden of the Villa Tivoli.

39/W14/P15/R21

<p>Simone Cantarini <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> Italy, ~1641 Dimensions 106.5 x 143 cm Ferrara, Collezione Dell'Acqua (private)</p>	<p>Narrative code 3defghijklmopvw NCN (1, 14) Painting, size L S, RL back</p>	
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Bibliography: *Maestri della pittura del Seicento emiliano*. Bologna 1959, Nr. 54. Mancigotti, Mario: *Simone Cantarini il Pesarese*. Pesaro, 1975, 131, Fig. 70.

Remarks: The oval form is unique in this database. The painting is dated around 1640 based on Cantarini's visit to Rome. The scene is depicted in a typical roman urban landscape. The landscape is especially rich in architectural elements: the Temple of Vesta, an obelisk (marking the finish post of the contest), the rounded temple of Cybele, and some ruins are placed in the background. On both sides of the path, the crowd of lively spectators with vivid gestures follows the race. Atalanta's father, the king is seated on the right. The apples are again devices of foreflashes and flashbacks.

Images with two episodes

40/W9

<p>Anonymous <i>Atalanta's Race</i> Italy, 1546, width 9.5 cm Fragment of a maiolica plate. Victoria and Albert Museum, Inv Nr. 1000. C.624-1917.</p>	<p>Narrative code 3Chr NCN (2, 2) Decorative art Size S, S, LR</p>	
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Source: Warburg Institute Photographic Collection

Bibliography: Rackham, Bernard: *Catalogue of Italian Maiolica, Victoria and Albert Museum, Department of Ceramics*. London, 1940, Plate 161.

Remarks: This is a fragment of a dish. There is an inscription on the back 'ATELATA 1546'. The fragment shows Atalanta picking up the apple and Hippomenes looking back. The third figure must be Venus, who is pressing Atalanta to accept the trick, the episode not present in the Ovidian story. There

is a painted landscape on the back of the dish. It might be part of a series, as there are other dishes by the same hand with similar inscriptions, and their subjects are also related to Roman history.

41/W16

Anonymous <i>Hippomenes and Atalanta</i> Date, place and dimensions not known	Narrative code 13dijk NCN (2, 4) Decorative art, size S (?) S, LR	
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Source: Warburg Institute Photographic Collection

Remarks: The present location of the glass is unknown, possibly owned by a private collector. It was sold at the Sotheby's, 17 May 1965. On the upper part of the glass there are (at least) two scenes: on the left Hippomenes is receiving the apples from Venus (Episode 1), and the main scene of the race is also depicted (Episode 3). There is a dog and two spectators in the background, and a temple.

42/O3

Anonymous Illustrated Latin Edition of the <i>Metamorphoses</i> , Nr. 44. Published by Alessandro de Paganini Italy, 1526, woodcut (?), dimensions not known	Narrative code 35acdfk NCN (2, 5) Book illustration, size S S/CO, RL	
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Source: (10 05 2007)

Book <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Gallica&O=IFN-2200052>

Image <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/CadresFenetre?O=IFN-2200052&I=44&M=imageseule>

Remarks: There are two inscriptions that identify the race and the marriage. There is an unidentified vertical element on the right hand side, occupying almost a quarter of the image, perhaps a gate of the final post of the race. The date category is 1550.

43/O16

Anonymous <i>The Race</i> Illustration in <i>Choix des Metamorphoses</i> Paris, 1801 Technique and dimensions not known	Narrative code 3Bcdfhk NCN (2, 4) Book illustration Size S (?), S/CO, RL	
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Source: (07 03 2007)

Book <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/choixdesmetamorphoses.html>

Image http://www.inrp.fr/she/images/lej_img2/a_1/ano_choixmet_42.html

Remarks: The full title of this edition is: *Choix de métamorphoses, gravé d'après différens maîtres, par Huet l'aîné; avec la simple exposition de chaque sujet, terminé par un quatrain propre à le fixer dans la mémoire des Enfans. Première suite de 50 planches. Bound with Réflexions sur la science des fables, et sur ce qu'il faut en développer dans l'éducation.* This illustration is a reworked and enriched version of Nr. 26, which probably derives from the 1676 edition by Le Brun & et al. The reason for including this new version is a small change, episode B (the trumpeters sound the start of the race) is depicted in the background. The previous scene is the death of Adonis, thus the sequence of the original Ovidian story-line was changed. The apple again gives a foreflash.

44/P21/R20

Jacob Jordaens <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> Flemish, ~1646 Oil on canvas, dimensions 111 x 88.5 cm Signed and dated: J. Jor 1646.	Narrative code 3Bdfiknq NCN (2, 6) Painting, size L S, front	
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Source: Witt Library

Remarks: The painting was sold at the Sotheby, London, 2 July 1986. There are two other versions (Reid) with the same title and with similar compositions. Most probably all three paintings can be found in private collections. The Witt Library holds three photographs, all in bad quality. Based on them one cannot decide whether they are from the same hand. Atalanta and Hippomenes are running towards the front, the first apple is already thrown. The trumpeters on the left refer to an earlier episode of starting the race.

45/E6

Christoph Jamnitzer <i>Trionfi basin with the scene of Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> Germany, 1603-1605 Metal, dimensions 53 x 64.7 cm Kunthistorisches Museum, Wien, Inv. no. 1104.	Narrative code 13defioru NCN (2, 7) Decorative Size M S/CM (pair), LR	
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Source: <http://www.khm.at/staticE/page1821.html> (06 05 2007)

Bibliography: Irmscher, G.: Christoph Jamnitzer Trionfi-Lavabo im Kunsthistorischen Museum Wien. *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien*, Vol 85/86, 1989-90, 135-54.

Remarks: The Trionfi-ewer and the basin was commissioned by Rudolf II, it is based on Petrarch's *Trionfi*. The main scene of the basin is the Triumph of Cupid, where Cupid is leading a procession. On the wide rim, there are four sitting putti personifying the four continents, and another four animals in medaillons represent the four ancient empires (Babylon, Persia, The Empire of Alexander the Great, and the Roman Empire). Four mythological scenes can be found on the rim from the *Metamorphoses*: Apollo and Daphnis, Pluto and Proserpine, Atalanta and Hippomenes, and an unknown one. The story of Atalanta is depicted in two scenes: Hippomenes is receiving the golden apples from Venus, and the race.

46/E10

Nicolas Colombel <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> France, 1699 or before Oil on canvas Dimensions 140.5 x 127 cm	Narrative code 4Edeghjpk NCN (2, 7) Painting, size XL S, RL	
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Source: (07 05 2007)

<http://www.invaluable.com/PartnerPages/Lot.aspx?SaleHouseID=1040019&SaleID=1141043&UNID=220980660>

Remarks: Sold at Sotheby's, London, 6 December 2006 (Old masters paintings, Lot 41). In 1699, Colombel exhibited a painting with the same subject at the Salon, most probably this one. This painting was made perhaps during his stay in Italy, from where he came back in 1693. A new episode can be seen, Cupid is holding a laurel wreath with a torch above Hippomenes.

47/R28

Benjamin West (after) <i>Venus Relating to Adonis the Story of Hippomenes and Atalanta</i> Engraving by John Hall (in reverse) England (the engraver) or US (West), 1769 Engraving, dimensions 45.7 x 57.8 cm The Baltimore Museum of Art Garrett Collection, BMA 1946.112.15443	Narrative code 0Gbdfhijo NCN (2, 7) Print Size M S, no direction	
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Bibliography: Erffa, H. von and Staley, A.: *The Paintings of Benjamin West*. New Haven, 1986, No. 112. Staley, A.: *Benjamin West: American Painter at the English Court*. Exh. cat. Baltimore, MD, The Baltimore Museum of Art, Mus. A., 1989. Nr. 56.

Remarks: The original painting is available only in bad quality. The engraving shows a reversed composition. Venus, the internal narrator is telling the story of Atalanta and Hippomenes to her lover, which we know from the title. A lion, a reference to the main characters is in the left foreground. Putti are playing in the right middle ground.

48/E5

Maarten de Vos <i>Atalanta's Race</i> Flemish, date unknown Pen and ink, watercolour, bodycolour on paper Dimensions 20.3 x 32 cm Courtauld Institute of Art Gallery, London, D.1952.RW.98	Narrative code 14dfikmopr NCN (2, 8) Drawing Size M S, LR front	
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Remarks: In the upper right corner, Hippomenes is receiving the apples from Venus (Episode 1), who can be identified by her swan-led carriage. The main scene shows the End of the race (Episode 4). The composition is presented as a stage scene with mediator figures in the left foreground. De Vos lived between 1532 and 1603, so the date category is 1600.

49/W7

Alvise (dal) Friso, attributed to (sometimes as Benfatto Luigi or Alvise Benfatto) <i>The Race of Atalanta</i> Italy, date unknown Pen, brown ink, black chalk, blue paper, dimensions 12 x 42.3 cm Signed: Alvise del Friso	Narrative code 4Edfijknow NCN (2, 8) Drawing Size S S, RL	
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Source & Bibliography: Colnaghi: *An Exhibition of Master Drawings at our NY Galleries*, 3rd-26th May, 1995.

Remarks: The present location of the drawing is unknown, probably in private collection. Sold at Colnaghi, Spring 1995. Based on the life interval of Alvise del Friso (~1550-1609), the date category is 1600. Elizabeth McGrath's letter to Mr. Ongpin (at the Colnaghi, New York, 27 February 1995) confirms the subject of the drawing as above. On the left, King Schoeneus is sitting on his throne. A large number of courtiers including musicians, horsemen and athletes are watching the race. Hippomenes is touching the statue of Victory winning the race. It is not clear to whom Victory is giving the laurel wreath, as it is above Atalanta's head. The function of the cylindrical objects in the right foreground is not identified.

50/O20

Giacomo Franco <i>Synoptic tableau for Book X</i> <i>Le Metamorfofi</i> , translated by A. dell'Anguillara. Published by B. Giunti, Venice, 1584 Engraving, dimension 14.9 x 9.3 cm	Narrative code 03achmnsuw NCN (2, 8) Book illustration, size S S/CO, RL	
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Source: (12 06 2007)

Book <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/others.html#Venice1584>

Image <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/vaam1584/large/pg353.html>

Bibliography: Huber, G., Lütkemeyer, S., and Walter, H.: *Ikonographisches Repertorium zu den Metamorphosen des Ovid. Die textbegleitende Druckgraphik. Band II: Sammeldarstellungen*. Berlin, Mann Verlag, 130-133, Type 1.

Remarks: It is a synoptic tableau, a one-page illustration preceding each book of the *Metamorphoses*. It comprises the stories of the following book in one or two episodes. Three synoptic tableaus are included in the database, Giacomo Franco's engraving is the first. It shows eleven episodes from Book X, including Orpheus, Cypris, Ganymedes, Myrrha, Venus and Adonis, and the Race of Atalanta and Hippomenes (and thus for the double frame all synoptic tableaus got reference u). Several versions exist of Franco's engraving, the *Ovid Illustrated* website mentions one, Mattheus Merian's version for Ludwig Gottfried's *P. Ovidii Nasonis Metamorphoseon ... Historica Moralis Naturalis Ekphrasis* from 1619. <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/1619/161910.jpg> (12 06 2007)

51/O11

Jean Mathieu <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> <i>Les Métamorphoses d'Ovide</i> , no. 97, 296. Paris, published by Langelier, 1619 Engraving, dimensions unknown	Narrative code 38bcdghjko NCN (2, 8) Book illustration, size S (?) S/CO, LR	
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Sources: (12 05 2007)

Book <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/CadresFenetre?O=IFN-2200082&M=notice>

Image <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/CadresFenetre?O=IFN-2200082&I=97&M=imageseule>

Remarks: Jean Mathieu reworked and enriched the narrative of Antonio Tempesta's engraving, but changed the direction of the narrative. Also placed a new episode in the background (Episode 8) depicting the lions stepping out of the temple.

52/O15

F. Ertinger <i>Hippomenes and Atalanta into Lions</i> Illustration in <i>Les metamorphoses d'Ovide mises en vers françois</i> , translated by Thomas Corneille, Liege, 1698 1697, technique and dimensions unknown	Narrative code 13cdfhijkr NCN (2, 8) Book illustration Size S (?), S/CO, LR	
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Source: (07 03 2007)

Book <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/1698/index.html>

Image <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/1697/10k.html>

Remarks: The composition of Ertinger's illustration is based on Le Brun's compositions from 1676. There is another version of this composition from 1698:

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/1698/10k.html> (12 06 2007)

Behind and above the main scene Venus can be seen giving the apples to Hippomenes (Episode 1, reference r). The spectators of the race are separated by a barrier parallel to picture plane.

53/E2

Joseph Deschamps <i>The Race of Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> Saint-Cloud, France, 1788 Limestone relief Dimensions 264 x 516 cm	Narrative code 4Edefgijkl NCN (2, 8) Decorative, size XL S/CE, RL	
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Source & Bibliography: Diskant Eda: Les bas-reliefs de l'escalier de la Reine à Saint-Cloud, I. De Saint-Cloud à Philadelphia. *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de l'art français*, 1992, 113-121. Ypersele De Strihou, Anne van: Les bas-reliefs de l'escalier de la Reine à Saint-Cloud, II. De Saint-Cloud à Laeken. *Bulletin de la Société de l'histoire de l'art français*, 1992, 123-130.

Remarks: In Saint-Cloud (near Paris) Joseph Deschamps designed two large low-reliefs for a staircase called 'de la Reine' with the subject of 'Triumph of Flora' and 'The Race of Atalanta and Hippomenes'. It was commissioned probably by Marie-Antoinette. The reliefs were partly destroyed in a fire in 1870, and were remodelled for Leopold II in 1904. The preparatory plasters for this restoration are now in Philadelphia Museum of Art, these are used in this database. Three versions exist:

- (1) An engraving by Marius Vachon ('Le chateau de Saint-Cloud', Paris, 1880). And two reliefs,
- (2) *La Course d'Atalante*, Philadelphia Museum of Art
- (3) *La Course d'Hippomene et Atalante*. A relief probably based on the plaster, and perhaps in France.

54/E7

Niccolo degli Agostini <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> . Illustration in <i>Tutti gli libri de Ovidio Metamorphoseos tradutti...</i> , Fol. R1v, Nr. 61. Venice, 1522 Woodcut (?), dimensions unknown	Narrative code 4Ccdgijkrvw NCN (2, 9) Book illustration Size S (?) S/CO, LR	
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Source & Bibliography: Guthmüller, Bodo: Bild und Text in Lodovico Dolces Transformationi. In Hermann Walter und Hans-Jürgen Horn (eds): *Die Rezeption der 'Metamorphosen' des Ovid in der Neuzeit: der antike Mythos in Text und Bild*. Internationales Symposium der Werner Reimers-Stiftung, Bad Homburg v. d. H. (22-25 April 1991). Berlin: Mann, 1995, 58-78, Fig 21a.

Remarks: Agostini's illustration put the race scene (Episode 4) into a flowery Renaissance court with semicircular arcades, and surrounded by a palace. Hippomenes is only few steps away from the King and the Queen, who are sitting far right on a throne. The new episode of Venus forcing Atalanta to bend down is again present here (Episode C).

55/E3

Manara Baldassare <i>Atalanta's Race against Hippomenes</i> Italy, 1534 Maiolica plate, dimensions 22.8 diameter Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, Nr. EC.23-1939 Signed and dated on the back 1534 BM	Narrative code: 4Cdghikoruz NCN (2, 9) Decorative, size S S, LR	
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Source: Fitzwilliam Museum (13 05 2007)

<http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/opac/search/cataloguedetail.html?&preref=80701&function=xs&limit=10#1>

Remarks: A third person is present in the race whose identity and gender cannot be identified. Although having similar clothes to Hippomenes, I assume that it is Venus pushing Atalanta to pick up the apple. The reason for this is that there are several examples with an active Venus but no one where another suitor is running with Hippomenes. Further, the source cited by the Fitzwilliam museum website is a 1522 Venice edition, which has a similar composition. In this edition, Venus is present and

is forcing Atalanta. There is a heraldic sign in the foreground, not yet identified. The website says: ‘n the foreground there is a cartouche containing a kite-shaped shield charged with the arms or, a griffin segreant to sinister sable, in chief an inverted label of four points gules (shown orange) with three barrels (?) gules (shown orange) above’.

56/W5a /P4/R8

<p>Giolfino, Nicola (or Niccolò) <i>Venus Handing a Golden Ball to Hippomenes (or to Atalanta?)</i> <i>Atalanta's Race</i> Italy, date unknown, tempera on panel, dimensions 24.4 x 28.6, 24.5 x 28.7 cm Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, Inv. Nr. 208, 210.</p>	<p>Narrative code 3Gdghikotvw NCN (2, 9) Painting Size M D/CO, RL</p>	
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Bibliography: Schubring, P.: *Cassoni*, 1915, Nr. 693-4, 378. Earp, F. R.: *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Pictures in the Fitzwilliam Museum*. Cambridge, 1902, 205-206. Goodison, J.W.: *Catalogue of Paintings in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, Italian School*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1967, 62-64.

Remarks: These small paintings probably belonged to a cassone (Schubring) and were part of a larger series (Goodison). Date category is 1550, based on the painter's life interval (1476-1555). The first painting of the pair shows Atalanta and Hippomenes in the contest, but the subject of the second is rather puzzling. To clarify its subject, a letter was sent by Jack W. Goodison from the Fitzwilliam Museum to Mrs. Frankfort in the Warburg Institute in 1961. Most probably there was no answer since another letter was sent to Frances A. Yates in 1965 with the same question. Yates, the curator of the Photographic Collection, suggested that the painting depicts the handling of the golden apples. This view did not match with the opinion of Mr. Goodison, who thought that the ball was much bigger than the one on the other painting and stated that 'the scene evidently shows a ceremonial occasion'.¹⁰ I agree with Schubring, who said that 'Atalanta presents the golden apples to the winner'.¹¹ This view fits into the logic of the narrative since the figure, who presents the golden apples, wears the same clothes as Atalanta in the first composition (yellow dress with red stockings). The figure, who receives the golden apples, seems to be a female figure – it might be Venus herself. One interpretation for this rather strange choice might be that Atalanta becomes a bride and won love, thus her life from that point on continued under the aegis of Venus. This is strengthened by the seating figure on the right, who is in the same dress but part of the group accompanying Venus. She could also be Atalanta after giving up her virile life and being accepted by the group of women. Another, obvious explanation could be that the painter simply misunderstood the subject and mixed up the characters. There is a statue on both painting the top of the pillar in the background. Goodison suggests that it might be Bacchus, but there is no reasonable explanation for presence. Both scenes are depicted in a Renaissance setting.

57/E4

<p>Guercino <i>The Race of Atalanta</i> Italy, 1621-23 or later Pen and ink on paper Dimensions 28.5 x 159.5 cm London, Courtauld Institute of Art Gallery, Witt Fund, D.1953.WF.4593.</p>	<p>Narrative code 4Edghijkptw NCN (2, 9) Drawing Size M S, LR</p>	
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¹⁰ Goodison, 1967, 62.

¹¹ Schubring, 1915, 378.

Bibliography: Brooks, Julian: *Guercino. Mind to Paper*. Exh. cat. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, 2006, Nr. 8. Exhibition at the Courtauld Institute of Art Gallery, London, 22nd February-13th May, 2007.

Remarks: The technique of this work is mixed: pen and brown ink, brush with brown wash, on five joined pieces of paper, laid on canvas. The date category was chosen as 1600: ‘Turner and Plazzota date the drawing to about 1621 to 1623, when the artist was working in Rome, “or possibly a little later”; the latter seems more likely, given the similarity in the handling of wash between catalogue number 8 and two genre scenes now at Windsor Castle.’¹² The composition is full of details, mostly not mentioned in the Ovidian version: ‘the artist has also taken obvious delight in the subsidiary figures. People follow the race on foot and horseback, and at the palace where the race ends, onlookers – including one animated character waving the victor’s wreath – shout and encourage the runners. At the balustrade, two seated figures wearing turbans – perhaps Atalanta’s parents – express shock at the imminent result, while a third person wipes away a tear. In front of them, a child playfully prepares to ride a dog’.¹³

58/O12

Johan Wilhelm Baur <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> . Illustration in <i>Ovidii Metamorphosis</i> , Fol. 98r. Germany, 1641 Engraving, dimensions unknown	Narrative code 13bcdfhijklrs NCN (2, 11) Book illustration Size S (?), S/CO, LR	
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Source: (30 03 2007)

Book <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/tempestabaurnew.html>

Image http://etext.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/vabaur/0306_plate98r.html

Remarks: Johan (or Johannes) Baur designed 151 illustrations for the *Metamorphoses*, published first in Vienna possibly before 1639. The illustrations were republished several times later. For the 1703 Aubry-edition (*Ovidii Metamorphosis, oder Verwandlungs Bucher*, Nüremberg, <http://www.uvm.edu/~hag/ovid/baur1703/baur1703b10p98.jpeg>), the Baur-images were reengraved, strictly following the original version. Another engraving is dated from 1681 by Melchior Küssel. (<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/kuesel/kue098.html>) Two episodes are framing the race-scene, the *Love of Venus and Adonis* and the *Adonis transformed into Anemone flower*. Behind the race, Hippomenes is receiving the apples from Venus.

59/P5/R7

Giulio Romano (designed), executed by Girolamo <i>The Hare (Atalanta and Hippomenes)</i> Mantua, Palazzo Del Té, Sala dei Venti 1527-28 Ceiling fresco, medallion, dimensions unknown	Narrative code 4Ebdffghijkmpuw NCN (2, 12) Painting, size XL (?) S/CE, RL	
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Bibliography: Hartt, Frederick: *Giulio Romano*, I-II. New Haven, Yale University Press, 1958, 115-123, fig 198. Egon Verhagen/Verheyen: *The Palazzo del Te in Mantua. Images of Love and Politics*. Baltimore & London, 1977, 119.

Remarks: There is a preparatory drawing for this composition in Hartt, 1958, Cat Nr. 148. The medaillons are part of a decoration scheme of the ceiling, the cycle was probably designed by Giulio Romano. There are sixteen tondi with figurative compositions, they are unified under an astrological framework having references to the Gonzaga family. This medaillon depicts the end of the race with the figure of Victory crowning Hippomenes. The competition takes place in a closed garden, it is probably in the palace of Atalanta’s father. An obelisk-form *meta* marks the end of the race. The composition follows the curve of the tondo. The fresco with the race is executed by Gerolamo (or Girolamo) da

¹² Brooks, 2006, 37.

¹³ Brooks, 2006, 36-37.

Pontremola (Pontremoli). It was damaged, and replastered around 1973. The dimensions of the medaillon is not available, but compared to the size of the door leading to the room the diameter could be around 1-1.5 meters.

60/W27/R25

<p>Cirro Ferri (after), Benoît Farjat <i>Hippomenes and Atalanta</i> Engraving Italy, date unknown Dimensions 38.5 x 27 cm British Museum no. 1951-4-7.51.</p>	<p>Narrative code 13adefhijklnruz NCN (2, 13) Print, size M S, LR</p>	
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Remarks: The engraving is perhaps close to de Maria de Medici cycle of Rubens, since it bears the Medici shield, a crown and a lion. In the upper scene, Venus was replaced by the armed Minerva, the goddess of war, who is forcing the outcome of the race. With the help of the putti, she is giving the apple to Hippomenes. The apples are taken off from the Medici shield. Another shield with a small lion is placed into the foreground. The same shield with balls and putti can be seen in some of the paintings of the Maria de Medici cycle, for example in the *Arrival of Marie de' Medici at Marseilles* (1622-5, Paris, Louvre). Above the crown, the putti held a ribbon with the inscription PRAETERITA EST VIRGO DUXIT SVA PRAEMIA VICTOR, which might be a reference to Maria de Medici. The recurring motif of the embracing trunks can be seen here as well. The date of the work is not known, however, as being close to the Medici cycle (1622-25), but perhaps later, the date category is 1650.

61/P25

<p>Anonymous Flemish or Dutch artist (K.G.?) <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> 1726 or earlier Black chalk, dimensions 34.3 x 45.9 cm British Museum, K. G. 1726.</p>	<p>Narrative code 03dfgijklmnortvw NCN (2, 14) Drawing, size M S, RL back</p>	
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Bibliography: Hind, A. H.: *Catalog Of Drawings...*, IV, 1931, 178, Nr.1.

Remarks: The only information available is from the Hind-catalogue. The composition shows a crowded scene: the couple is running in a garden, above them Venus can be seen with Cupid whom Hippomenes addressed as the gesture of his hand clearly shows. The originality of the inscription '1726' is questioned suggesting an earlier date, so 1700 was chosen for the date category.

Images with three episodes

62/W31

<p>North Italian <i>Hippomenes and Atalanta</i> Italy, 2nd half of the 16th century Jewellery, dimensions not available</p>	<p>Narrative code 78Fkw NCN (3, 2) Decorative art, size S (?) S, RL</p>	
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Source: Warburg Institute Photographic Collection

Remarks: This small oval jewellery is probably in Wien, as the inscription on the photography held in the Warburg is 'Vienna 234'. The jewellery has a decorative frame. The composition shows a couple in the gate of a Renaissance-type temple. They are making love, while on their right the statue is ashamed by their improper behaviour as they pollute a sacred place. The lower zone shows the punishment, the couple is transformed into lions.

63/W33

North Italian painter <i>Hippomenes and Atalanta transformed into lions for polluting the temple</i> Italy, 16th century Dimensions 64.8 x 146 cm Saltram House, Courtauld Institute of Art, No B 64/148.	Narrative code 78Fghkw NCN (3, 4) Painting, size L S/CM, LR	
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Source: Warburg Photographic Collection, Witt Library

Remarks: 1550 was chosen for the date category. There is another painting also at the Saltram House with the story of Pan and Syrinx. The two paintings possibly belonged together, since they are from the same painter and have the same size. This one with the story of Atalanta shows two scenes, the love-making in the temple of Cybele and the couple as transformed into lions. Perhaps there is a lost painting depicting Venus giving the apples to Hippomenes and the race, as often these four episodes are placed together forming a 2+2 type.

64/R12

Follower of Titian <i>Mythological scene</i> Italy, 1530-1600 Oil on wood Dimensions 76.2 x 132.1 cm National Gallery, London, Inv. Nr. 1123.	Narrative code 09Gdhipru NCN (3, 6) Painting, size L S, no direction	
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Source & Bibliography: *National Gallery Illustrated General Catalogue*, London, 1973, 623.

Remarks: The subject of this painting is rather obscure. The catalogue of the National Gallery says 'The central figures may be Hippomenes and Atalanta, whose story Ovid (*Metamorphoses*, X) interrupts to tell the story of Adonis. Incidents of the birth and death of Adonis in the background.' Reid also lists the painting under 'Atalanta' as a mythological scene by the follower of Titian, depicting either Atalanta and Hippomenes or Venus and Adonis. In any case, it is clear that the subject is linked to the Book X of the *Metamorphoses*. Two figures are running in the background, they could be either Atalanta and Hippomenes, or Myrrha when expelled from the house of her father. The two lovers in the foreground might be Venus and Adonis, or Hippomenes and Atalanta, however, the apple in the hand of the male character indicates the later. They could even be Venus and Hippomenes in an episode when Hippomenes is receiving the apples. The presence of Cupid does not settle the question, as he is involved in both scenes. Another, smaller version of the painting exists by Andrea Schiavone, it was sold on the art market in Milan, 1928 (from the Witt Library).

65/O21

Franz Klein and Salomon Savrij (sometimes as Savery-Clein) <i>Synoptic tableau for Book X</i> Illustration in <i>Ovid's Metamorphosis. Englished, mythologized, and represented in figures</i> . Translated and comments by George Sandys. Oxford, 1632, dimensions 23.6 x 17 cm	Narrative code 038cdhkuw NCN (3, 6) Book illustration Size S S/CO, RL	
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Source: (12 06 2007)

Book <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/sandys/contents.htm>

Image <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/sandys/bk10start.htm>

Bibliography: Huber, G., Lütkemeyer, S. and Walter, H.: *Ikonographisches Repertorium zu den Metamorphosen des Ovid. Die textbegleitende Druckgraphik. Band II: Sammeldarstellungen*. Berlin, Mann, 134-137, Type 2.

Remarks: Compared to the first synoptic tableau (Nr. 50), there is a change in the number of the episodes. A second episode of the story is included but the inscription that was identifying the characters is omitted. This is indeed a more detailed engraving, for example, here the apples clearly show a flashforward. Another version of this engraving is listed in Ovid's website, it is a reengraved version for Thomas Farnby's 1637 edition, and was later republished by Sandy in 1640. <http://www.uvm.edu/~hag/ovid/sandys1640/sandys1640.html> (12 06 2007)

66/O6

<p>Lodovico Dolce <i>Atalanta weighted down by Venus races with Hippomenes</i>; Illustration in <i>La Transformationi di Metamorphoseos</i> Venice, 1561 Woodcut, dimensions unknown München, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek Res. 4 P.o.it. 134, Nr. 73</p>	<p>Narrative code 46Ccdfikrvw NCN (3, 8) Book illustration Size S (?) S/CO, LR</p>	
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Source: (11 05 2007)

Book <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/dolce.html>

Bibliography: Guthmüller, Bodo: Bild und Text in Lodovico Dolces Transformationi. In Hermann Walter und Hans-Jürgen Horn (eds): *Die Rezeption der 'Metamorphosen' des Ovid in der Neuzeit: der antike Mythos in Text und Bild*. Internationales Symposion der Werner Reimers-Stiftung, Bad Homburg v. d. H. (22-25 April 1991). Berlin, Mann, 1995, 58-78, Fig 18a.

Remarks: The first edition of Dolce's *Transformationi...* was published in 1553. This was followed by another five editions; here I refer to sixth edition from 1561. The pressure Venus employs to ensure that Atalanta will accept the trick in form of the apples is rather symbolic in Ovid's fable. In the images, this pressure becomes more effective when the goddess herself is seen on the back of Atalanta holding her down to ensure the success of Hippomenes in the race. The finishing line of the race is marked by an obelisk offering a visual analogy to the vertical lances of the soldiers. The couple approaches Cybele's temple on the top of the hill, this is a proleptical episode.

67/W26

<p>Virgil Solis <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> German, date not known Engraving, dimension 5.8 x 8.9 cm</p>	<p>Narrative code 3DGbdhiknuv NCN (3, 8) Print, size S, S, LR</p>	
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Source and Bibliography: *The Illustrated Bartsch*, vol. 19, pt. 1. *German Masters of the Sixteenth Century*: Virgil Solis, 255. 87.

Remarks: This is one of the few examples where Atalanta's role could be interpreted as being a negative heroine. The bearded man, probably Hippomenes, seems to run away from Atalanta and towards her, and he shows his back to the viewer. Atalanta is running naked, further, she is admiring the apple alone on the seashore (this is the background scene). On the far left, a lower part of a female (?) body can be seen in a disgraceful posture. The VS monogram can be seen on the right lower corner. The inscription below the image says 'Quam Cupidj nequiere proci, Schoeneida umcut / Deutctam nullis, aurea mala, mails'.

68/O22

<p>Anonymus <i>Synoptic tableau for Book X</i> Illustration in <i>Ovid's Metamorphoses</i> Translated by Samuel Garth et al London, 1717, dimensions 32.6 x 21.2 cm</p>	<p>Narrative code 038cdfhikuwz NCN (3, 9) Book illustration, size M S/CO, RL</p>	
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Source: (12 06 2007)

Image <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/va1717/Bk10.html>

Bibliography: Huber, G., Lütkemeyer, S., and Walter, H.: *Ikonographisches Repertorium zu den Metamorphosen des Ovid. Die textbegleitende Druckgraphik. Band II: Sammeldarstellungen*. Berlin, Mann Verlag, 138-140, type 3.

Remarks: This composition was reengraved for later editions in smaller format (for example the 5th, 1751, London): <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/va1751/Bk10.html>

Eleven episodes are depicted in the synoptic tableau, although not all related to the story of Atalanta. One episode shows the race with cheerful people waving behind the barrier, then a pair of lion steps out of the temple of Cybele. On the left, Venus is mourning over the dead body of Adonis. Below there is a coat of arms, probably belongs to an English family.

69/W18/P1/R2

Anonymous Italian, Veronese school <i>Atalanta's race with Hippomenes</i> Italy, ~1460 Painted furniture, dimensions not known Paris, Musée Jacquemart-André	Narrative code 14Afijkloruvz NCN (3, 10) Decorative Size L (?), D, LR	
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Source: Warburg Institute Photographic Collection

Bibliography: Schubring, P.: *Cassoni*, 1915, Fig CXLI, Nr. 658.

Remarks: The story is depicted as a decoration of a wooden cassone. The front is divided into three fields, and has a plastic relief decoration in form of carved candelabers and floral motifs. The middle field contains a heraldic sign, a griffin of the Moncelice's (Monselice?). The left panel shows the beheading of a former suitor, the right shows the victory of Hippomenes. On the column that marks the finishing line of the race, the heads of the former defeated suitors can be seen. Above, on the mountain, Venus gives the apples to Hippomenes.

70/W32

Jean Lemaire <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> France, dimensions 74.5 x 96.5 cm Private collection	Narrative code 369adefghijklmpt NCN (3, 13) Painting, size L, S, RL	
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Source: Warburg Institute Photographic Collection

Bibliography: Pontus, Grate and Bjurström, Per (eds): *Fem sekler fransk konst. Miniaturer, malningar, teckningar 1400-1900*. Exh. Cat. Nr 247. Stockholm, National Museum, 1958, Nr. 41.

Remarks: Jean Lemaire lived between 1597 and 1659, this gives 1650 for the date category. The painting is in the collection of Sven Alfons and was shown in the Exhibition of French Art (*Fem sekler fransk konst. Miniaturer, malningar, teckningar 1400-1900*, Stockholm, 1958). The main scene shows the hesitation of the couple in front of the entrance of the temple. The temple is identified by the inscription *TEMPLVM SIBELLIS*. Venus, arriving on her chariot, is watching them from above. In the left background, perhaps the race is taking place; there are mediator figures in the left foreground.

71/P37

Johann Georg Platzer <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes</i> Germany, first half of the 18 th century On copper, dimensions 39.4 x 61.6 cm	Narrative code 13Bdefghijklmnor NCN (3, 13) Painting, size M, S, RL	
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Source: Witt Library

Remarks: The date category is 1750 as Platzer lived between 1704 and 1761. Platzer went to Vienna after 1726 and was enrolled in the Akademie der Bildende Künste, this is the reason why Germany was

chosen as place category. Two paintings existed with approximately the same dimensions. The other depicted Mercury and Herse. It was sold at the Sotheby's on July 5 1967 (Lot 87). Later both appeared at the Christies auction in London (9 December 1988). Signed, on the dogs collar the painters initials I.G.P. can be seen. Above the race, Venus can be seen intervening with throwing the golden apples. The former suitors can be seen already killed in the left foreground.

Images with four episodes

72/O4

Anonymous Illustration in the Latin Edition of Ovid's <i>Metamorphoses</i> , Nr. 46. Published by Bernadinum de Bindonibus, Venice, 1540 Technique and dimensions not known	Narrative code 2356acdjko NCN (4, 6) Book illustration, size S (?) S/CO, LR	
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Source: (10 05 2007)

Book <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Gallica&O=IFN-2200051>

Image <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/CadresFenetre?O=IFN-2200051&I=46&M=imageseule>

Remarks: Four scenes are arranged around the centre: the flirting couple is introduced on the left (they can be identified by inscriptions), the main scene shows the race, the marriage takes place on the right with the confirmation of the king, and finally the couple enters the temple.

73/W20

Anonymous <i>Hippomenes and Atalanta</i> English, Tudor style Lime wood overmantel Date unknown	Narrative code 1235dfijkmprv NCN (4, 9) Decorative, size L (?) S, LR	
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Source Warburg Institute Photographic Collection

Remarks: The object was on sale at Bonhams, the advertisement is in *Apollo*, August 1976, 21. The date is not known, thus the middle date (1550) of the Tudor style (1485-1603) was chosen. The story is presented as a stage scene, two figures are watching it on the left. The direction of the narrative is LR (giving the apple, flirting, the race, and finally the marriage).

74/W25ab

Anonymous <i>Atalanta's Race with Hippomenes</i> (T. 75-1949), <i>Venus and Adonis watch Atalanta and Hippomenes as Lions</i> (T. 76-1949) Tapestry, Mortlake English, 3rd quarter of the 17th century Dimensions 230.5 x 263.3 cm, 231.8 x 389.3 cm	Narrative code 038Gdfhijknop NCN (4, 9) Decorative Size XL D/CO, LR	
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Remarks: The mark of the Mortlake's can be seen on the lower right side. There are two more carpets of this series, both in the Victoria and Albert Museum: *Venus watches Adonis hunting* (T. 74-1949) and *Adonis killed by a Boar* (T. 77-1949). There is no published information available about this series at the moment, but all the four tapestries will be included in the catalogue of the 17th century English tapestries currently being written by Wendy Hefford.¹⁴ The tapestries show the race, with Hippomenes looking back to Atalanta, and the framing story, where Venus, an internal narrator, tells the story to Adonis pointing at the two lions.

¹⁴ Information given by Clare Browne, curator for textiles, V&A.

75/W30/R26?/R27

Louis the Boullogne <i>The Marriage of Hippomenes and Atalanta</i> France, 1720s Painting, dimensions 74 x 97.5 cm Hermitage, St Petersburg, inv. Nr. 1210.	Narrative code 59BEdefhijklmopr NCN (4, 12) Painting, size L S, no direction	
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Remarks: The painting was formerly attributed to Bon Boullogne. Reid mentions another painting at the Hermitage by Bon Boullogne (*The Race of Atalanta and Hippomenes*) as untraced. In this painting, Hippomenes is holding Atalanta's hand, while Atalanta is holding the golden apples. Hymen, the patron of marriages, is placing a golden crown on Hippomenes' head for winning the contest. At the same time, Hippomenes is crowing Atalanta for winning love and a husband. Cupid is pointing to the apples, which were the devices of the victory of love. King Schoeneus and other figures are sitting on the left under a drapery. In the far distance the river-god can be seen and a rounded temple indicating the future moments of the story. Above the scene, Venus, accompanied by the child Zephir, is lying on a cloud.

76/R11

Sebastiano Marsilli (also as Marsili) <i>The Race of Atalanta</i> Studiolo di Francesco I, Palazzo Vecchio Florence, ~1570 Painting, dimensions 151 x 83 cm, oval Signed: Sebastiano Marsilli	Narrative code 1368dfhijknruvwzx NCN (4, 13) Painting, size L S/CE, LR	
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Bibliography: Schaefer, J. Scott: *The Studiolo of Francesco I de' Medici in the Palazzo Vecchio in Florence*. PhD dissertation, 1976, 345-348.¹⁵

Remarks: The decoration of the Studiolo in the Palazzo Vecchio was commissioned by Francesco I Medici in 1570. This was part of Francesco's private apartment and was used as a Kunst- or Wunderkammer. The program of the decoration was designed by Giorgio Vasari and Vincenzo Borghini. In the realization over thirty artists were involved, the story of Atalanta was painted by Sebastiano Marsili. All the narrative scenes presented here were reinterpreted according to the Medici representation. According to Schaefer, Marsili followed previous compositions in illustrated Ovid editions (for example, Dolce, Venice, 1561). Four scenes are presented: Hippomenes receives the golden apples, the race where Hippomenes overtakes Atalanta, the lover's way to the temple of Cybele and finally the lovers transformed into lions. Behind the race the crowd of spectators can be seen including Schoeneus, Atalanta's father dressed as Cosimo I Medici. The heraldic signs of the Medici appear in form of a crest, and an impresa. The protagonists of the story are presented as members of the Medici family. According to Schaefer, '[i]t is very likely that he [Francesco] kept gold in the cabinet behind Marsilli's panel.'¹⁶

Images with five episodes**77/O5**

Jörg Wickram <i>Hippomenes and Atalanta</i> . Illustration in <i>Metamorphosis</i> , German edition. Published by Ivo Schöffer, Mainz, Germany, 1545 Woodcut, Nr. 31., dimensions: 8.2 x 14.6 cm Stuttgart Landesbibliothek HBb 537 Gr.	Narrative code 0138Bcdijkov NCN (5, 7) Book illustration, size S S/CO, LR	
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Source: (10 05 2007)

¹⁵ The thesis can be found in the library of the Warburg Institute, London.

¹⁶ Schaefer, 1976, 346-347.

Book <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Gallica&O=IFN-2200026>

Image <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/CadresFenetre?O=IFN-2200026&I=31&M=imageseule>

Bibliography: Blattner, Evamarie: *Holzschnittfolgen zu den Metamorphosen des Ovid: Venedig 1497 und Mainz 1545*. München, Scaneg, 1998.

Remarks: Wickram gives a rare example of presenting an episode from the framing narrative in the same pictorial space as the embedded narrative. Here the episode of Adonis hunting a wild boar is juxtaposed with the episode of the race. The court is represented by a group of people with lances. Another episode is depicted with the couple as lions in the forest.

78/W22ab/O8

<p>Jacobus (?) Micyllus <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes: the race and Atalanta and Hippomenes: they make love in the temple of Cybele</i>. Illustration in Ovid's <i>Metamorphoses</i>, Pub. Ovidii Nasonis <i>Metamorphoseon Libri XV</i> Leipzig, Johannes Steinman edition, 1582 Technique and dimensions not available</p>	<p>Narrative code 1378Fcdfhijkpqrw NCN (5, 11) Book illustration Size S (?) D/CO (LR and RL), no direction</p>	
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Source: (12 05 2007)

Book <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/ovidillust.html#frontmatter>

Images: Nr. 714 <http://etext.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/1582/714.html>

Nr. 716 <http://etext.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/1582/716.html>

Remarks: This pair is following the Bernard Salomon-type of 1+2+2+1 episodes (Nr. 80), but with fewer references.

79/E8

<p>Theodor de Bry (engraver and publisher), Michael Maier (author) <i>Atalanta Fugiens</i>, title page Germany, in Latin, 1617 Engraving, dimensions 17.7 x 13.4 cm</p>	<p>Narrative code 1378Gacdefhiknrw NCN (5, 11) Book illustration Size S, S/CE, RL</p>	
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Source: (06 05 2007) <http://www.levity.com/alchemy/atalanta.html>

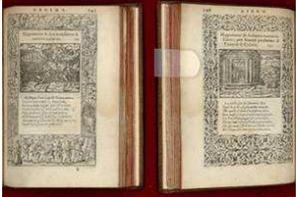
Bibliography: Landwehr, John: *German Emblem books 1531-1888. A bibliography*. Utrecht, Leyden, Haentjens Dekker & Gumbert, 1972.; Klossowski de Rola, Stanislas: *The Golden Game. Alchemical Engravings of the Seventeenth Century*. London, Thames and Hudson, 1988.; Roberts, Gareth: *The Mirror of Alchemy. Alchemical Ideas and Images in Manuscripts and Books*. London, The British Library, 1994.

Remarks: *Atalanta Fugiens* is an alchemical emblem book written by Michael Maier, whose principal patron was Rudolf II. The book incorporated fifty alchemical emblems, along with the same number of epigrams and fugues. The book was first published in 1617, then republished in 1618 by Theodor de Bry, who added the portraits of the authors; in 1708, it was translated into German. The tendency to reinterpret classical authors for alchemical literature began as early as the 14th century.¹⁷ Here in the 'Epigramma authoris' Maier gives an alchemical interpretation of the Ovid's story. As Klossowski wrote, 'The tale [of Atalanta Hippomenes], in alchemical terms, illustrates the rivalry of Male and Female, Sulphur and Mercury, the initial domination of the Female, the victory of the Male, and the conversion of both principles into Fixity (the Red Lions). The vivacity of the Mercury of the Wise is therefore fixed by the action of its own Sulphur, which is of the same nature and of the same origin

¹⁷ See Klossowsky, 1988, 16.

(both Atalanta and Hippomenes were of royal and divine ancestry).'¹⁸ The title-page illustration links two stories where golden apples played a crucial role, both related to the garden of the Hesperides as well. The first is the story of Hercules, the other is our story, where the transformation gained special significance.

80/O7

<p>Gabriello Simeoni & Bernard Salomon <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes and Hippomenes and Atalanta into Lions</i>. Illustration in <i>La vita et metamorfoseo d'Ovidio</i> Lyon, 1559 Woodcut, dimensions not known</p>	<p>Narrative code 1378Fbcdhfjklqrsw NCN (5, 12) Book illustration Size S D/CO, LR</p>	
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Sources: (12 05 2007)

Book <http://etext.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/salomonsimeoni.html>

Images Nr. 156 <http://etext.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/vasim1584/0156.html>

Nr. 157 <http://etext.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/vasim1584/0157.html>

Remarks: Bernard Salomon's illustrations are one of the most famous ones. The first edition with his illustrations was published in French (Lyon, 1557). It was a simplified edition of the *Metamorphoses* entitled *La Métamorphose d'Ovide figurée*, and was reprinted in 1583 with minor changes. Most of the woodcuts were reused in Simeoni's *Vita et metamorfoseo d'Ovidio* (Lyon, 1559, reprinted in 1584), with some alterations. I have chosen the images from the later Simeoni's edition, since here the illustration had a new, figurative frame. The images in these editions are rather strictly following the original text developing the recurrent 1+2+2+1 type of illustration: the first is *Venus and Adonis* showing a scene from the frame narrative, where perhaps the goddess tells the story of Atalanta and Hippomenes to her lover (1); the next episodes are related to *Atalanta and Hippomenes*: Hippomenes receiving the apples and the race (2); the third, *Hippomenes and Atalanta into Lions* shows the couple making love in the temple and turned into lions (2), and the story steps back to the framing narrative in the fourth scene, *Adonis into Anemone Flower*, where Venus is mourning over the body of Adonis (1). Shortly after its first appearance, Salomon's 1+2+2+1 type became one of the most frequently used and reused pictorial model for the story; sometimes with minor alterations. Here the images are accompanied with a title and the shortened version of the story. The frame of the race scene is showing a procession.

81/O13

<p>Crispijn de Passe the Elder <i>The Race of Atalanta and Hippomenes, and Hippomenes and Atalanta Changed into Lions</i>. Illustration in <i>Metamorphoseon Ovidianarum</i>, Fol. 96v and 97v. Cologne, 1602 Pen and ink on paper, wash Dimensions ~7.5 x 13 cm</p>	<p>Narrative code 1478Fbcdhfijklmoprsvw NCN (5, 16) Book illustration Size S D/CO, LR</p>	
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Source: (06 03 2007)

Book <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/dePasseNew.html>

Images <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/dp/10-13.jpg>

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/dp/10-14.jpg>

Remarks: Some of the de Passe drawings are based on the unfinished series of engravings by Goltzius (however, it is not known whether it applies for the Atalanta story). Most of these sketches are now in the Royal Collection, Windsor (probably Nr. 14965 and 14903). The two illustrations in our database

¹⁸ Klossowski, 1988, 97.

follow the middle two of the 1+2+2+1 type (handling the apples, the race, the embrace in the temple and the transformation into lions). The images have a moral subscription in two Latin distiches. All the sources attribute these two images to de Passe, although in the race scene the inscription mentions Martin de Vos's name, who indeed designed some parts of the series. The book was republished in 1607 with some extra commentaries in Dutch.

Image with six episodes

82/O9

<p>P. van der Borch <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes and Hippomenes and Atalanta into Lions</i>. Illustration in <i>P. Ovidii Nasonis Metamorphoses Expositae</i>, Fol. 129r and 130r. Antwerp, 1591, dimensions not known</p>	<p>Narrative code 1378BFcdhijkorsw NCN (6, 10) Book illustration Size S (?) D/CO, LR</p>	
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Sources: (12 05 2007)

Book <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/book10.html>

Images <http://etext.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/1591/OviNa263.html>

<http://etext.virginia.edu/latin/ovid/1591/OviNa265.html>

Remarks: It is the Bernard Salomon-type 1+2+2+1 composition, although with some changes: the start of the race is marked with sounding the horn and the landscape is more elaborated.

Image with nine episodes

83/O2

<p>Giovanni Rosso, Giovanni Bonsignori <i>Atalanta and Hippomenes</i>. Illustration in <i>Ovidio Metamorphoseos Volgare</i> Published by Zoane Rosso, Venice, 1497 Woodcut, dimensions not known Bibliotheca Nazionale Marciana Venedig, Inc. Ven. 578. Fol. 89v. Nr. 35.</p>	<p>Narrative code 123568BCGacdjkorv NCN (9, 8) Book illustration Size S S/CO, LR</p>	
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Source: (10 05 2007)

Book <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/Visualiseur?Destination=Gallica&O=IFN-2200018>

Image <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/CadresFenetre?O=IFN-2200018&I=35&M=imageseule>

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Remarks: A remarkable example both for the number of the episodes depicted and for its cyclical narration. The story begins at the upper left corner, where Venus handles the apples to Hippomenes. This is followed by the flirting scene in the lower left corner. The race, as the main scene, is taking part in the front. Here the nude Venus is again forcing Atalanta to pick up the apples. Then comes the episode of the marriage, later the couple accompanied by courtiers proceeds to the temple. Close to the initial episode, they can be seen again as lions. Versions: the same print is included in the 1501 edition of the *Ovidio Metamorphoseos Volgare* published in Venice by Christoforo de Pensa (Nr. 35). Source: (10 05 2007) <http://visualiseur.bnf.fr/CadresFenetre?O=IFN-2200050&I=35&M=imageseule>

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