

Introduction: *Marcantonio Raimondi, Raphael and the image multiplied*

Edward H. Wouk

Marcantonio Raimondi's (c.1480–c.1534) work in the early sixteenth century changed the way we see art now. As the only printmaker to be given a biography in Giorgio Vasari's *Lives of the Artists* (1568), Marcantonio has long been considered the leading figure in a print revolution which transformed the visual arts in the Renaissance. Harnessing the technical achievements of copperplate engraving and the printing press – two modern inventions only about fifty years old at the time – he was instrumental in driving a proliferation of images that still reverberates in our own information age.¹ For Vasari, as for subsequent generations of writers, Marcantonio's greatest accomplishments grew out of his relationship with Raphael.² Translating some of Raphael's designs into spectacular engravings at a time when relatively few artists worked with print media, Marcantonio broadened the circulation of Raphael's art far beyond the palaces and churches of Rome. The results of their collaboration, such as the *Judgment of Paris* (cat. 41) and *Massacre of the Innocents* (cat. 34–6), secured the international reputation of both Raphael as artist and Marcantonio as engraver. Advertising their engagement with ancient art and Christian tradition, these prints disseminated Marcantonio's and Raphael's shared vision of a modern style which became emblematic of Italian Renaissance culture.

Yet for all its importance, Marcantonio's close working relationship with Raphael represents only one facet of his career and its impact. This catalogue asserts Marcantonio Raimondi's own status as a creative artist who not only designed engravings of learned subjects which had few precedents in the visual arts since antiquity, but also brought an unparalleled graphic intelligence to the task of working with and translating other artists' designs into the new medium of print.³ Travelling from Bologna to Venice in about 1506 brought Marcantonio from a rarified world of humanist scholarship to the heart of Italian publishing. Several years later, his move to Rome, a city long regarded as the centre of western culture and religion, speaks to his ambition to learn from antiquity and to work in close proximity to the greatest living artists of his day. Whether engraving from his own designs, interpreting the antique or translating the designs of contemporary artists, including Raphael, Michelangelo, Dürer, Jacopo Ripanda, Baldassare Peruzzi and Giulio Romano, Marcantonio reconfigured his visual sources to produce compelling images tailored to the black-and-white medium in which he

excelled. At once bound to inventions in other media and entirely novel, his prints heralded a new independence for the image and allowed for an unprecedented mobility of visual knowledge.

Marcantonio's engravings placed art in the hands of new audiences, making visible a vast visual culture to those who were unable to travel to Italy or who lacked access to many of the ecclesiastical and aristocratic spaces in which art was traditionally housed and displayed. As inherently mobile objects, his prints expanded the sphere of artistic exchange in a period historically associated with the rediscovery of antiquity, the growth of Protestantism, wars of religion and continued European expansion on a global scale. Circulating throughout Europe, his prints also encouraged new modes of collecting, as printed media, and engravings in particular, claimed a privileged status in libraries and the so-called cabinets of wonder that are often cited as forerunners of the modern museum.⁴

Marcantonio Raimondi, Raphael and the image multiplied expands upon earlier literature on Marcantonio Raimondi, including the monumental studies of Henri Delaborde (1887) and Innis Shoemaker and Elizabeth Broun (1981). Privileging thematic questions over strict chronology, the essays and entries in this catalogue examine the arc of Marcantonio's geographic movements, stylistic and technical development, and evolving responses to the works of other artists, especially Raphael. Each group of entries treats a topic or phase of Marcantonio's work as follows: (1) Bologna and humanism; (2) Encounters with Dürer, Giorgione and Michelangelo: Venice, Florence and Rome; (3) Working with Raphael in Rome; (4) Antiquity and mythology; (5) Virtue: antique and Christian; (6) Faith and devotion; (7) *I Modi*; (8) After the death of Raphael: Marcantonio and his circle. The catalogue also examines selected prints by Marcantonio's 'followers', including Agostino Veneziano, Marco Dente da Ravenna and the so-called Master of the Die.

Autograph drawings by Raphael are juxtaposed with Marcantonio prints to foster close looking at the dialogue between these two artists, revealing the nature of their collaboration. We are also fortunate to exhibit Marcantonio's only known corrected proof, an impression of the *Reconciliation of Minerva and Cupid*, also called *Allegory of Peace* (cat. 69), which permits unparalleled insight into his working practices. In addition, this exhibition looks at the afterlife of Marcantonio's images in other

media, especially colourful majolica, and considers his importance through the prism of later collecting practices, particularly in England. Exhibited for the first time is the spectacular album of Marcantonio Raimondi prints from the Spencer Collection in The John Rylands Library, which has been studied and conserved for the occasion. Formed by an English aristocrat in the eighteenth century, it offers a significant counterpoint to the Whitworth's own collection, which was amassed in large measure by George Thomas Clough (1839–1928), who was descended from a Manchester-based commercial family. Motivated by an ethos similar to that of Enriqueta Rylands, who acquired the Spencer Collection to open its cultural riches to the city in which her husband John had made his fortune, Clough presented his prints to the Whitworth Institute, as it was then known, to bring an international perspective to the art collection and offer the people of Manchester a visual history of the rise of printmaking in the West.

If Marcantonio Raimondi's career began in the learned atmosphere of his native Bologna, where he produced prints for artists and humanist scholars who frequently exchanged works of art and poetic texts, then it is fitting that this exhibition of his work should also emanate from the context of a dynamic university community. *Marcantonio Raimondi, Raphael and the image multiplied*, published to coincide with the exhibition *Marcantonio Raimondi and Raphael*, exemplifies the collaborative model of scholarship, teaching and curating which distinguishes The University of Manchester. It demonstrates the collective strengths of The University of Manchester's artistic and cultural institutions, including The John Rylands Library, The Rylands Research Institute, the Whitworth and Whitworth Studies, as well as Manchester University Press. Crucially, this volume also attests to the unusually close collaboration between gallery and library professionals at the Whitworth and The John Rylands Library, respectively, and students and staff in the Department of Art History and Visual Studies as well as the Departments of History and Italian Studies. Both the exhibition and the catalogue are a tribute to the discussions and shared enthusiasm of staff, students and scholars who have helped bring this project to fruition.

- 1 W. Ivins, *Prints and Visual Communication* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953); B. Latour, 'Visualisation and Cognition: Drawing Things Together', in H. Kuklick (ed.), *Knowledge and Society: Studies in the Sociology of Culture Past and Present* (Greenwich, CT: Jai Press, 1986), pp. 1–40.
- 2 G. Vasari, *Lives of the painters, sculptors, and architects*, trans. G. du C. de Vere, 2 vols (New York: Knopf, 1996), vol. 2, pp. 74–101.
- 3 L. Pon, *Raphael, Dürer, and Marcantonio Raimondi: Copying and the Italian Renaissance Print* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2004).
- 4 See, for instance, P. Parshall, 'Art and the Theater of Knowledge: The Origins of Print Collecting in Northern Europe', *Harvard University Art Museums Bulletin*, 2 (1994), 7–36; T. DaCosta Kaufmann, 'From Treasury to Museum: The Collections of the Austrian Habsburgs', in J. Elsner and R. Cardinal (eds), *Cultures of Collecting* (London: Reaktion, 1994), pp. 137–54.