

An Allegory in Grey and a Dutch Clue A Painting Attributed to Franciszek Smuglewicz from the Collection of the National Museum in Warsaw

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ABSTRACT

The article is an analysis of an allegorical *en grisaille* painting attributed to Franciszek Smuglewicz. In the article, I refer to earlier interpretations of the work and present new findings. Throughout its exhibition history, the piece, now listed in the museum inventory under the title *Emperor Titus Granting Rights to Rome* (1785, MP 3174), was also known as *A Reception (Captio) of a Vestal*, and since 2017 as *The Captio of Rhea Silvia*. However, the iconographic model for the main scene is the reverse legend on a Roman coin minted during the reign of Emperor Vespasian with a depiction of Roma resurgence (c.71 A.D.). Therefore, I propose the tentative title *Allegory of Rome Raised from its Fall by Emperor Vespasian*. Furthermore, the existence of a drawing which is a template for this composition, attributed to the Dutch artist Gérard de Lairesse (1641–1711) or his workshop, discovered in past catalogues of two British auction houses, casts doubt on the traditional attribution of the painting.

KEYWORDS

Franciszek Smuglewicz, Classicism, reception of antiquity, eighteenth-century Polish painting, Gérard de Lairesse, seventeenth-century Dutch painting, numismatics, The National Museum in Warsaw

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The oeuvre of Franciszek Smuglewicz (1745–1807) has long been a subject of interest to researchers studying art in the reign of King Stanisław August, Classicism, the reception of antiquity in Polish art, and, finally, artistic contacts between Poland and Italy. The unsigned, undated and untitled paintings considered to belong to this painter's legacy continue to pose a challenge for art historians. It is therefore necessary for further research on particular works to focus on their style and iconography (including the identification of Smuglewicz's original paintings and/or graphic compositions), provenance and conservation.

This article aims to demonstrate the complexity of the above issue. It serves to indicate that comprehensive research has begun on a set of paintings by Smuglewicz held at the National Museum in Warsaw. The text contains an analysis of an *en grisaille* allegorical painting attributed to Smuglewicz (fig. 1) with reference to its earlier interpretations, and a presentation of new findings.

Information about the history of the painting in question goes back to the mid-nineteenth century. In a 1851 publication, Edward Rastawiecki listed a painting entitled *Emperor Titus Grants Rights to Rome* among works by Smuglewicz that were known to him, adding that it was large in size and belonged to Tomasz Zieliński's collection in Kielce.¹ A monographic study on Zieliński and his collection contains a catalogue compiled by

Jacenty Sachowicz in 1859, where this painting was attributed to Franciszek Smuglewicz and listed under the title *Titus Granting Freedoms to the Romans*.² Later, the work appeared in an 1881 catalogue of Feliks Gebethner's collection of paintings exhibited in the Merchants' Resource Association hall for the benefit of the Music Society [*Katalog zbioru obrazów Feliksa Gebethnera wystawionych w Sali Resursy Obywatelskiej na rzecz Towarzystwa Muzycznego*] as a work by 'Smuglewski' [sic] entitled *Titus Grants Rights to the Romans*.³ In the catalogue of an exhibition staged in Lviv in 1894, in turn, the work bears the title *A Reception (Captio) of a Vestal*, although the detailed description of the present scene and the technical data on the canvas leave no doubt that this was indeed the Warsaw work.⁴ As opposed to other works by Smuglewicz presented during this exhibition, the name of its owner was, unfortunately, not stated.

In his study on a century of painting in Poland (spanning the years 1760–1860), Jerzy Mycielski considered the work to be one of the 'utterly ancient compositions by Smuglewicz', observing that 'the lines of the painted sculpture, that ideal of Winckelmann's, [are] correct, and the face of the Vestal herself [is] a very interesting portrait, being that of the famous Helena née Massalska [...]'.⁵ It ought to be added here that a portrait of Helena Massalska entitled *The Sacrifice of a Vestal* is held in the collection of the National Museum in Kraków. The sitter is shown *en face*



fig. 1 Franciszek Smuglewicz (?), *Allegory of Rome Raised from its Fall by Emperor Vespasian* (?), c.1791 (?), The National Museum in Warsaw
photo Muzuem Narodowe w Warszawie

and it is quite impossible to find any similarity between her features and those of the kneeling woman in the Warsaw painting. It must also be noted that Mycielski refers to a discovery made by Jan Bołoz Antoniewicz, according to whom the *en grisaille* work was to be 'nearly a copy of one

of the most beautiful drawings by Andrea Mantegna'; yet he does not explain precisely which drawing it was supposed to be.⁶ Feliks Kopera, in turn, in a book published in 1926, titled the work *The Reception of a Vestal by a Priest* and deemed it to be 'an artefact worthy of David'.⁷



fig. 2 ROMA RESURGES, after Jacques Oisel, *Thesaurus Selectorum Numismatum Antiquorum quo, Præter Imagines & Seriem Imperatorum Romanorum a C. Iul. Caesare, ad Constantinum Magnum [...]* Cum singulorum succincta Descriptione & accurata Enarratione (Amstelodami, 1677), p. 127, plate XXIX

fig. 3 Gérard de Lairesse or workshop, *Allegory of Rome Raised from its Fall by Emperor Vespasian (?)*, Bonhams auction house, London photo Bonhams, London



The painting joined the collection of the National Museum in Warsaw in 1939, from the Society for the Encouragement of Fine Arts. It features as item no. 719 in a handwritten list of artworks received from that institution, identified as a work by Smuglewicz titled *Titus Grants Rights to the Romans*. In the museum's inventory the painting was given the title *Emperor Titus Grants Rights to Rome* and dated to 1785.⁸ The catalogue for the exhibition *W kręgu wileńskiego klasycyzmu* [In the circle of Vilnius Classicism] mentions its alternate historical appellation containing the reference to a vestal virgin.⁹

In an article published in 2017, Mikołaj Baliżewski proposed a new title for the painting, *The Captio of Rhea Silvia*, identifying its central scene as the appointment of the first vestal virgin.¹⁰ This version of the title was included in the biographical note on Smuglewicz in a dictionary of Polish artists.¹¹

In the course of my research, I established the iconographic basis for the painting's central scene as the legend on the reverse of a coin minted during the reign of Emperor Vespasian: ROMA RESURGE[N]S (circa 71 A.D.) (fig. 2). The interpretation of the painting is further complicated by the existence of a drawing attributed to the Dutch artist Gérard de Lairesse (1641–1711) or his workshop (fig. 3), which I discovered in the offer of two British auction houses, whose composition is identical to that in Smuglewicz's painting. This compounds the unknowns regarding the template for this allegory, its actual contents and the historical context – even to the extent of putting the authorship of the work into question.

The newly established data does not change the fact that for a century and a half the painting was associated with Emperor Titus, and the kneeling figure was perceived to be a vestal virgin. Due to the attribution of the painting to Smuglewicz, it was also interpreted as an

apotheosis of the reign of King Stanisław August. Until my discovery of the drawing by de Lairese and the subsequent establishment of a link between this work and the painting by Smuglewicz, I perceived this elaborate composition as an allusion to the situation in Poland at the time of the Great Parliament (Polish: Sejm Wielki), and even to the adoption of the Constitution of 3 May or an anniversary thereof.

Smuglewicz's painting shows a military commander – the Roman emperor – taking the hand of a woman kneeling before him. He is accompanied by a group of *signiferi* (standard bearers), legionaries wearing lion masks and carrying banners and *fasces*. Above them hovers the winged personification of Fame. Between the emperor and the kneeling woman stands a centurion (?) in a helmet with a sphinx, shown frontally, holding a liberty cap (Phrygian cap) above the kneeling woman's head. An excited crowd is visible at the bottom right. Forming the background is a triumphal arch, the pediment of a temple, an obelisk and a statue of Apollo, the patron of the Muses. The monochrome painting, executed in the *en grisaille* technique, imitates a marble bas-relief and stylistically alludes to ancient relief sculptures. Since the emperor served as the high priest (*pontifex maximus*), the kneeling woman may be a vestal virgin, but she can also be a personification of Rome or, in an interpretation that takes into account the Polish context, a personification of the Republic of Poland in an ancient guise.

The symbolic raising of the state from its fall refers to iconography on a coin dating from the reign of Vespasian, which served as a form of visual political propaganda. Suetonius described Vespasian as an emperor who revived the state destroyed by civil wars, repaired public finances, supported the arts and brought the city back to its former glory by restoring old buildings and funding new ones.¹² The coin and its reverse legend are described in modern numismatic compendiums, many of which are richly illustrated.¹³ The eighteenth-century edition of a 1674 numismatic publication contains a concise description: 'ROMA. RESURGENS. Imperator togatus stans, figuram muliebrem ad genua procumbentem sublevat; alia galeata stans adsistit, sinistra clypeum gerens'.¹⁴ Here, like in the painting, there is a third figure,

standing between the emperor and the kneeling woman; this figure is certainly important for the interpretation of the whole. In the case of the coin, she is a second Rome. In her analysis of the numismatic representation, Judyta Ścigała notes: 'The two Romes on the reverse play entirely different roles. The first one, kneeling before the emperor, can be interpreted as a symbol of the City; the second, standing in the background, appears there as a goddess'.¹⁵

In 1788, Hugo Kołłątaj wrote letters to the Marshal of the Parliament, Stanisław Małachowski, that centred around the theme of reviving the fallen state, as indicated by the subtitle of their published edition: 'O Podźwignieniu Sił Krajowych' [literally: On the Uplifting of National Forces].¹⁶ Kołłątaj considered national consensus and civic unity to be the prerequisites for improving the situation in the country, without which 'the uplifting of the Commonwealth's forces cannot even be considered'. In his appeal, Kołłątaj cited, first and foremost, the unity of all estates, as well as faith, freedom, the king and the army.¹⁷ In the context of raising the funds for the army, he emphasized the role of Polish women, who, seeing the civic attitude of their husbands and sons, must be ready to renounce luxury: 'Now is the time for our ladies to show whether they truly have the soul of Spartan women and the virtue of Phocion's wife'.¹⁸

The patriotism of women from magnate families, who would be compared to Spartan women rather than to the vestal virgins, was crucial at the time. The opera *Matka Spartanka* [The Spartan mother], written by Franciszek Dionizy Kniaźnin, was staged at the theatre in Puławy in 1786, with Princess Izabela Czartoryska herself in the title role. The roles of the Spartan Mother's sons were played by the princess's own sons, Adam and Konstanty.¹⁹ Sending her son Lycanor to war, the titular mother, Theona, professes she would rather see him die a heroic death than bring shame upon his mother, his male ancestors and Sparta itself: 'His honour, my pride:/ His disgrace, my ruin'.²⁰ She helps her son don the armour and, handing him a shield, commands him: 'Return with this, or upon this'.²¹ The staging of the play, with its message of independence, became an important demonstration of patriotism in Poland.²²



fig. 5 Johann Georg Holtzhey, *Medal in Honour of the Constitution of 3 May from the Citizens of Amsterdam*, 1791, The National Museum in Warsaw
photo Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie

Polish women, recited a poem whose message expressed ideas similar to those in the opera *Matka Spartanka*.²⁵

The iconography of the painting in question matches the rhetoric of the Four-Year Parliament, and is also ideologically close to the symbolism and metaphoric imagery of freedom depicted on the medal minted to celebrate the adoption of the Constitution of 3 May, the funds for which were donated by the Dutch bankers Gülcher and Mülder from Amsterdam.²⁶ The *Gazeta Narodowa i Obca* newspaper reported that this unique piece (fig. 5) was presented to King Stanisław August via the Warsaw banker and royal bursar Piotr Blank. The article also included a description of the medal with a detailed explication of its legend: 'On one side, the face of His Majesty the King is depicted, with an oaken wreath round his temples, and an inscription: *Stanislaus Augustus, Dei Gratia Rex Poloniae, Patriae Parens*; the other side shows a terrestrial globe on which the Polish coats of arms are engraved; on the same globe, there is the sign PX expressing Christian tolerance, as well as a *corona muralis*, which alludes to the privileges of cities. To the side, a winged angel (which signifies the genius of the revolution) trampling with its feet a broken yoke and chains (*emblemata* of foreign ravishments and violence); in one hand, the angel holds the cap of freedom, in the other,

an olive branch and the caduceus of Mercury to signify the general happiness that falls from that event onto the entire state. Leaning against the globe are the consular rods of the Senate, and the knightly estate, with a balance scale and the sword of justice, as proof that magistrates and tribunals are to deal equal justice in all the Commonwealth, with no regard for person or office. Above there is the eye of divine Providence, throwing rays of brightness onto all these objects as a sign of its miraculous power [evident] in the restoration of reasoned freedom to all the nation, in the buttressing of tolerance and raising of a barrier against harmful fanaticism. Above, the inscription *terrore libera*, meaning "free from all fear"; below, the inscription *ex perhonorifico comitorum decreto 3. maji 1791.*, meaning 'the respected parliamentary verdict of the 3rd day of May 1791'.²⁷

In constructing his allegorical image with a victorious personification of Freedom, Smuglewicz made use of a similar repertoire of freedom-related symbols. A standing woman holds in one hand a spear with a Phrygian cap stuck on it and in the other a broken yoke; she is trampling on a female figure collapsed on the ground, next to whom there is a peacock (a symbol of pride) and shackles (a symbol of servitude) (fig. 6). An iconographic analysis of the *en griseille* composition reveals its thematic similarity

to engravings published in defence of the May Constitution.²⁸ One example is a copperplate engraving attributed to Karol Gröll (fig. 7), depicting the king dressed as a Roman commander; in his left hand he holds a sheet of paper bearing the title *Konstytucja D: 3 maja 1791* [Constitution of 3 May 1791], and in his right, a pennant with the inscription: 'The nation with the king – the king with the nation'. This motto echoes the theme of the ruling king/emperor helping to raise the state/nation from collapse, with its citizens taking part in the process. This is all the more supported by the fact that the painting attributed to Smuglewicz seems to contain symbolic representations of various estates, including the 'knightly' and 'senatorial' (namely, the *signiferi* bearing *fascēs* – emblems of national consent and unity).

Adding a Polish context to the Warsaw painting is a fairly new development.²⁹ The catalogue of the aforementioned exhibition in Lviv (1894) contained a reproduction and detailed description of a painting entitled *Poland in Chains* (fig. 8). It was better received than the monochrome Classicist composition, seen as a work that was 'native' in spirit, politically engaged, and speaking of Polish matters through the use of national costumes: 'We are now firmly in a different era, 1795–1855', writes the author of the introduction. 'The Roman toga gives way to national dress, the *sukmana* and *krakuska*, the short Roman sword and round shield replaced by the Kościuszko sabre and the improvised weapon of a scythe-man. The broad masses, called upon by the Constitution of 3 May to cooperate, are becoming a political and social factor, and thus also the subject of artistic production. Smuglewicz is the most characteristic example of this revolution. [...] and he has created the first ideational patriotic painting in post-partition Poland'.³⁰ In the painting *Poland in Chains*, the personification of Poland was depicted as a vestal virgin. On the pedestal of the altar, the artist painted a bas-relief depicting Cornelia, mother of the Gracchi, handing one of her sons a shield with the inscription *Aut cum hoc, aut in hoc* (Lat. 'Either with it or on it')³¹ – the words which, as we remember, were also spoken by the Spartan mother in Książnin's opera. This painting must have been considered truly contemporary, unlike the *en grisaille* piece,



fig. 6 Karol Michał Gröll, after a drawing by Franciszek Smuglewicz, *A Personification of Freedom*, 1791, The National Museum in Warsaw photo Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie

fig. 7 Karol Michał Gröll, *Stanisław August with a Page of the Constitution of 3 May, 1792*, The National Museum in Warsaw photo Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie

which referred to a distant past in a foreign language. Unfortunately, the canvas *Poland in Chains* has been lost; it is known to us only from a black-and-white photograph. Yet this photograph reveals enough formal differences in the execution of the two paintings to make it difficult to link them stylistically to one artist.

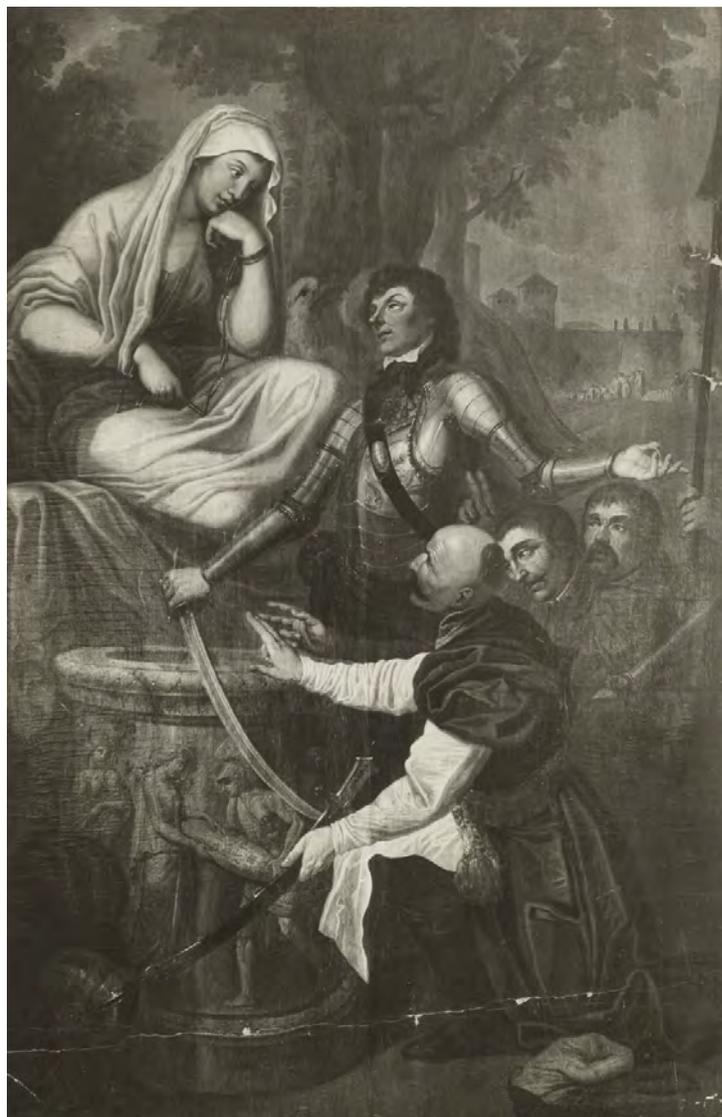
Another issue that requires clarification is the commander in the painting being identified as Emperor Titus. As described by Mikołaj Getka-Kenig, this historical figure held an important place in the ideological and political programme envisaged by Stanisław August, as did the concept of 'resurrection'.³² In one of his odes in honour of the king, dated to 1771, Adam Naruszewicz called the king a 'second Titus' and extolled his virtues by saying: 'God, who placed him on the Polish throne,/ gathered all noble qualities in him,/ so that we have him for a faithful friend,/ and king too, and a citizen. [...] So, measuring all matters by that standard,/ these pastimes he considered most pleasant/ when, doing good like a second Titus,/ counted his days by acts of grace and favours'.³³

Suetonius described Titus, 'of the same surname as his father' (i.e., Vespasianus), as 'the delight and darling of the human race'.³⁴ He considered him a just ruler, who ratified all the privileges granted by his predecessors with a single edict.³⁵ This may have given rise to the belief that Smuglewicz depicted Titus in the act of granting rights or freedoms to the Romans. Suetonius also reported that after a great fire in Rome, the generous emperor rebuilt the city with his own funds and 'set aside all the ornaments of his villas for the public buildings and temples'.³⁶ In the introduction to the Polish edition of Metastasio's libretto for the opera *La clemenza di Tito* from 1779,³⁷ we read: 'Antiquity knew no better or more beloved monarch than Titus Vespasianus. His virtues made him so universally beloved that he was called the delight of the human race'.³⁸

fig. 8 Franciszek Smuglewicz, *Poland in Chains*, 1795 (?), whereabouts unknown, from *W kręgu wileńskiego klasycyzmu*, eds Elżbieta Charazińska, Ryszard Bobrow, exh. cat., The National Museum in Warsaw (Warsaw, 2000), p. 200

Summing up the above considerations, it must be stated that the suggestion posed by Baliszewski – that the kneeling woman in Smuglewicz's painting is the first vestal virgin, Rhea Silvia – is questionable, as that would mean that the commander/emperor is Amulius, a usurper of power and murderer of his nephew.³⁹ It would be difficult to assume that such a character would be depicted in such an *entourage* and at the height of glory.

All of the above facts and circumstances seem to suggest a Polish context for the *en grisaille* allegory and to confirm the traditional attribution of the painting. However, the discovery of a drawing that appears to be a design for the painting forces us to change our research perspective. A more critical approach to nineteenth-century historical sources is



needed; the interpretation of Smuglewicz's paintings should also be preceded by a thorough formal analysis.

The drawing attributed to de Lairese was twice exhibited at auctions: in 2013 at Bonhams under the title *A Roman General Receiving Obeisance from a Queen*, attributed to an artist from the circle of de Lairese,⁴⁰ and in 2014 at the British auction house Gorrings⁴¹ under the title *A Roman General Receiving Tribute from a Queen*, attributed to the master himself.⁴² Auction information indicates that the drawing bears the ownership mark used by Jean-Baptiste-Florentin-Gabriel de Meyran, Marquis de Lagoy (1764–1829).⁴³ His collection included over 3,000 prints by many artists from different

periods and schools.⁴⁴ Significantly, he also owned two paintings by de Lairese.⁴⁵

Gérard de Lairese was a painter and printmaker, a representative of Classicism in seventeenth-century Dutch painting, a creator of historical and allegorical paintings, including numerous *en grisaille* works, and the author of two treatises on the theory and practice of painting and drawing. Print reproductions of his paintings and his books serving as textbooks for art students were well known in the European artistic community of the eighteenth century. Stanisław August is known to have had German-language editions of these works (published in Nuremberg in 1727 and 1728) in his library.⁴⁶ From the beginning of the century until

fig. 9 Gérard de Lairese, *Allegory of the Triumph of Rome*, 1689, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam. Loan City Hall Rotterdam photo Studio Tromp © Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam

fig. 10 Gérard de Lairese, *Allegory of the Fall of Rome*, 1689, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam photo Studio Tromp © Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam



the 1780s, numerous editions of these works were printed in Amsterdam, Berlin, Haarlem, Leipzig, Nuremberg, London (the treatise on painting in 1738 and 1778; the treatise on drawing in 1777) and Prague.⁴⁷ The great esteem in which Gérard de Lairesse was held in the eighteenth century is also evidenced by a celebratory engraving: *Allegory of the Glory of Gérard de Lairesse* by Jean Antoine Pierron, after a drawing by Carlo Maratta (1791, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam), published in 1791 in Paris. It must also be mentioned that in the first half of the eighteenth century, guild artists in Gdańsk and Toruń were familiar with de Lairesse's books and print versions of his compositions.⁴⁸ It can therefore be concluded that during the period in question, many creators made use of the Dutch artist's inventiveness.

It should also be emphasized that de Lairesse's allegorical images often had a political context. Monochrome allegorical paintings were sometimes used as decorations for events and were presented during public ceremonies. Among de Lairesse's engravings we also find apotheoses of the reign of William III of Orange. If we assume that Smuglewicz's painting was based on a drawing by the Dutch artist or his workshop, it is not surprising that its message fits the political context of Poland at the end of the eighteenth century, despite the fact that about a hundred years had passed since the Dutchman produced his last works (he lost his eyesight in 1690 due to a congenital venereal disease). One of the scholars researching de Lairesse's work noted that his allegory of the fall of Rome (*The Fall of Rome*, a painting from 1689, discussed in more detail below) is 'functional' in the sense that it could refer to events from a century later, namely the fall of the United Provinces in 1795.⁴⁹ This interesting observation encourages us to reflect on general interpretative problems, particularly with regard to the iconography of the painting attributed to Smuglewicz.

Arnold Houbraken (1660–1719), a painter and biographer of Dutch artists, pointed out that some of de Lairesse's compositions are hermetic in nature. It is known that de Lairesse readily used Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*. He gained knowledge on antiquity in the intellectual and

literary circles of the era, partially owing to his acquaintance with the poet Andries Pels⁵⁰ and membership in the Nil Volentibus Arduum association. It is worth noting here that research on Ripa's work shows that he made fairly liberal use of images from ancient coins and medals, perceiving the communicative potential of the images featured on these pieces as more important than the historical or material context of the coins.⁵¹ The image- and idea-creating function of these representations, as applied in both art and rhetoric, is therefore significant. An example of the free adaptation of numismatic images is a drawing by Lambert Lombard, an outstanding predecessor of de Lairesse, active in Antwerp in the sixteenth century: this work is a collage of imagery taken from two different coins.⁵²

Let us therefore take a closer look at the Warsaw canvas and its parts, bearing in mind that it is a complex allegorical representation with an unclear message. The details, physiognomic types and poses of the figures, as well as its compositional solutions, can be traced back to specific works by de Lairesse. The allegorical, large-format monochrome compositions *Allegory of the Triumph of Rome* (fig. 9) and *Allegory of the Fall of Rome* (fig. 10), dated to 1689, were most probably made for William of Orange and intended for the Het Loo palace.⁵³ To the right of the enthroned Rome are three kneeling figures representing the subjugation of conquered peoples.⁵⁴ The female profile in the foreground is almost identical with the profile of the kneeling woman in the Warsaw painting. These two 'Roman' works by de Lairesse raise questions about the 'independence' of the creator of the painting at the National Museum in Warsaw. The openness of allegorical compositions of this type to continuation or completion on the basis of thesis and antithesis may suggest that the canvas attributed to Smuglewicz was also a pendant to another, or perhaps even a part of a series. This is all the more likely given that *en grisaille* works had a practical application, being incorporated into architectural settings in interiors or used as event decorations in public spaces. It is also worth mentioning that the Städel Museum in Frankfurt am Main holds a drawing attributed to de Lairesse (fig. 11) that is thematically and compositionally similar to the painting in the National Museum



fig. 11 Gérard de Lairese (?), *Triumphal Entry of an Emperor into Rome*, Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main
© Städel Museum, Frankfurt am Main

in Warsaw (the drawing has a grid on it but no painting of the composition is known to exist).

The kneeling female figure also bears a resemblance to that of Granida in de Lairese's painting *Granida and Daifilo* (circa 1665–1668) (fig. 12), both being representative of the same physiognomic type. The comparison of the monochrome painting with one in colour is all the more interesting because the differences stem not only from the restriction to greyscale inherent to the *en grisaille* technique, but also the harder modelling used to imitate sculpture. To sum up, the female profile from the painting attributed to Smuglewicz can be compared with at least two images from de Lairese's paintings (fig. 13). It must be emphasized that the physiognomies of the main characters in the painting are definitely different from those in the sanguine drawing.

The other noteworthy figures are the soldiers standing on the left, behind the emperor. In de Lairese's painting *Ecce Homo* (fig. 14), the

same place in the composition is occupied by a soldier wearing a lion mask; again, his facial features bear a close resemblance to those of one of the men in the monochromatic composition. His posture, leaning on the *fasces*, and the modelling of his forearm are also repeated in other paintings by the Dutch artist. The profile of the soldier visible behind the centurion standing in the centre, in turn, repeats the facial features from de Lairese's sanguine drawing (fig. 15).

Let us now turn to the question of composition in de Lairese's paintings, his treatment of depth and spatial relations. Distinctive to the work of this painter are a low viewpoint and a framing technique where the lower edge of the paintings cuts across the silhouettes of figures in the crowd visible in the background.⁵⁵ De Lairese used this method in, for example, his composition *The Anointing of Solomon* (circa 1668, Cartwright Hall, Bradford, United Kingdom). The etching made after it by the painter

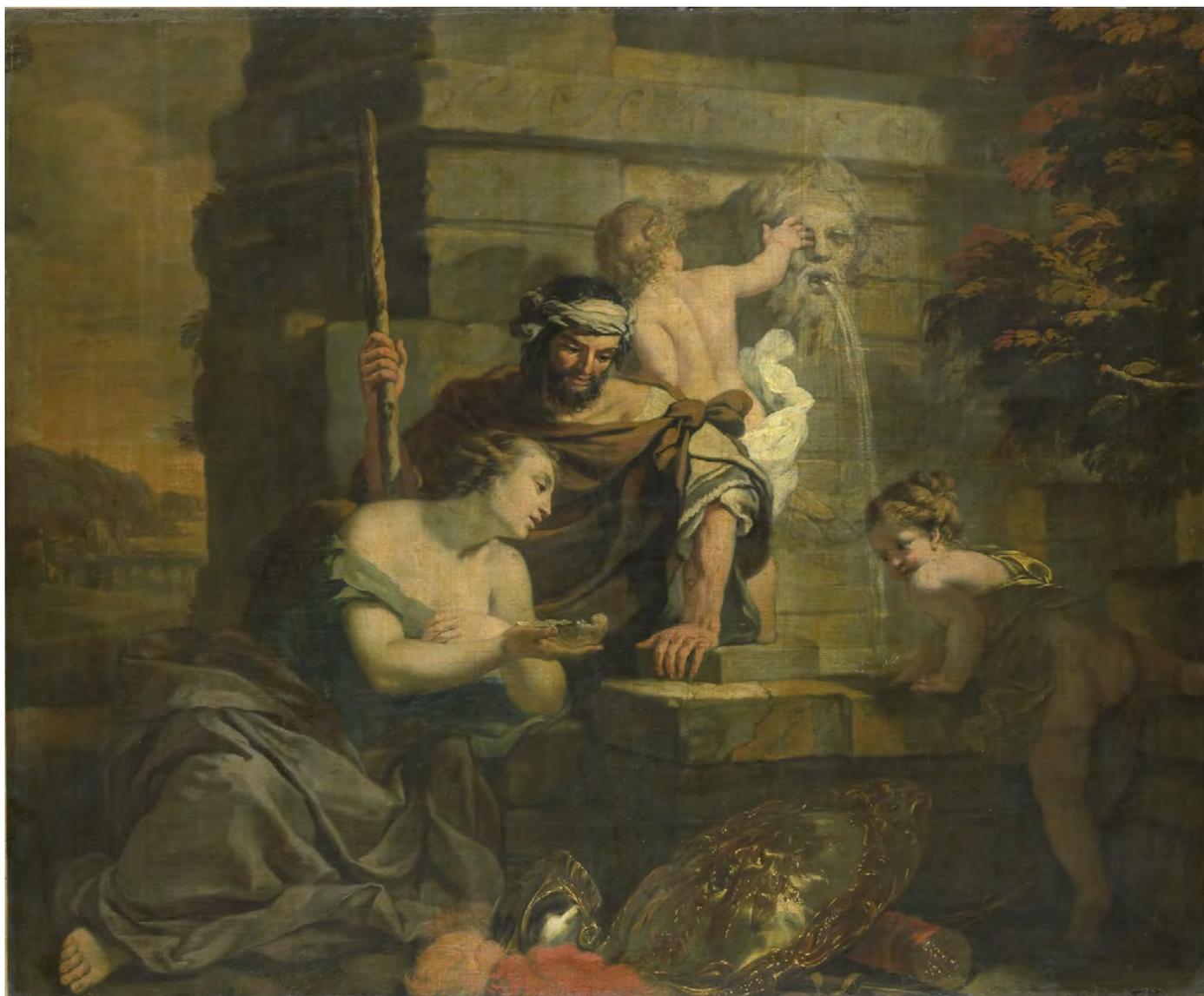


fig. 12 Gérard de Lairesse, *Granida and Daifilo*, c.1665–1668, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
photo Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

himself shows modifications to parts of the background, but constitutes a good example of his typical compositional style. The theatricality of the representation is striking, both in *The Anointing of Solomon* and in the Warsaw painting, where the most important figures stand as if on a stage. De Lairesse believed that the most important scene should be placed in the foreground and raised, the main motif or action should be the most strongly illuminated and executed in the most vivid colour, and spatial relations between the figures should depend on their status and merit.⁵⁶ The Warsaw painting complies fully with these principles.

Let us shift our focus for a moment to an engraving by Pieter van den Berge (fig. 16), a

reproduction of de Lairesse's painting *Odysseus Recognizes Achilles*. There is one other known version of the painting, entitled *Achilles Found Among the Daughters of Lycomedes* (Maurits-huis, The Hague), but the statue of Apollo to which I would like to draw attention is absent there. A comparison of the engraving and the Warsaw painting reveals that Apollo's pose and posture are similar in the two works, with the difference being that the figure is turned the other way. In the engraving, the statue closes the diagonal line running from the bottom right to the top left. In the painting, the arrangement is similar. In the sanguine drawing, which is the basis for the painting, the pedestal with the sculpture fills the right background. It must be

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fig. 13 Left: Gérard de Lairesse, *Granida and Daifilo* (detail), centre: Franciszek Smuglewicz (?), *Allegory...* (detail), right: Gérard de Lairesse, *Allegory of the Triumph of Rome* (detail)

fig. 14 Left: Franciszek Smuglewicz (?), *Allegory...* (detail), right: Gérard de Lairesse, *Ecce Homo* (detail), Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels
photo J. Geleyns © Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, Brussels

fig. 15 Left: Franciszek Smuglewicz (?), *Allegory...* (detail), right: Gérard de Lairesse, *Heads of Two Soldiers and a Head of an Old Man* (detail), Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
photo Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam



fig. 16 Pieter van den Berge, after Gérard de Lairese, *Odysseus Recognizes Achilles*, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
photo Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

noted that the painter made a justified correction to the composition in the drawing (assuming that he used this version of the drawing and not some other): he moved the statue to the left, but without bringing it closer to the viewer (i.e., without changing the scale). In this way, he avoided the grotesque placement of Fame as trumpeting straight into Apollo's ear.⁵⁷ This detail also proves that the discovered drawing is a template (or possibly a version of the template) for the painting, and not a composition based on it and produced at a later date. Jasper Hillegers gave an example of a modification made to the composition of a painting relative to the original design, forced by the need to adapt the painting to its intended location. He compared two representations of the Allegory of Art – a preparatory drawing in sanguine and the final *en grisaille* painting (fig. 17).⁵⁸

Finally, I would like to mention the marbling technique. The veining visible in the Warsaw canvas looks very similar to that seen in de Lairese's monochrome allegorical paintings in the Rijksmuseum collection. It is well known that the Dutch painter was a master at imitating various materials, including different types of stone. He also achieved perfection in the illusionistic rendering of stone architecture with niches, as well as relief sculptures; a skill he used in creating decorations for events.⁵⁹ The sanguine drawing does not show any marble veining. Nor did de Lairese suggest marbling in other crayon designs for the *en grisaille* composition.

The following conclusions can be drawn as a summary to the above comparisons and analyses of similarities: if the painting was produced by Smuglewicz, the artist must have had access to a drawing by de Lairese himself or his



fig. 17 Left: Gérard de Lairesse, *Allegory of the Arts*, 1675–1683, Amsterdam Museum photo Amsterdam Museum
 right: Gérard de Lairesse, *Allegory of the Arts*, 1675–1683, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam photo Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

workshop, or a copy thereof (possibly having copied it himself), or to an engraving reproducing the composition (although it should be remembered that the composition of the painting is not reversed in relation to the drawing). Secondly, the formal details and the similarity of the physiognomic types indicate a familiarity with the Dutch artist's original works – his paintings and drawings, not just engravings. To produce a painting so similar to the works of de

Lairesse and his workshop, Smuglewicz needed a great deal of visual information.

It should also be noted that the Warsaw painting differs from de Lairesse's *en grisaille* composition in its harder chiaroscuro modelling, whereas the seventeenth-century master achieved an effect close to *sfumato*. However, paintings executed in the *trompe-l'œil* convention are somewhat resistant to stylistic analysis. To quote Mateusz Salwa, *trompe-l'œil*

'eludes [...] formal analysis – a successful illusion presupposes, so to speak, a zero level of style'.⁶⁰ According to de Lairese's aesthetic preferences, illusionism was a desirable effect in a painting, but it required the painter to abandon his own individual style.⁶¹

Let us return, however, to the painting in question. If it was indeed created in a Dutch workshop, how did it end up in Polish collections? A Dutch-Polish connection exists, for instance, in the figure of the aforementioned banker and art collector Piotr Blank, who acquired works for King Stanisław August; but this is only one of many possibilities. It would be necessary to explain how the painting found its way into Tomasz Zieliński's collection; could it have come from the collection of the painter and art collector Michał Bogoria Skotnicki (Elżbieta Skotnicka did, after all, provide care to Zieliński, who had been orphaned at an early age)? The painting by de Lairese – or, more convincingly, by his workshop – may have been brought to Poland by Smuglewicz himself. The drawing,

an unknown engraving based on the same composition, or the painting itself could also have reached Smuglewicz through the painter Szymon Czechowicz (1689–1775), who was his maternal uncle and taught him painting.

Commenting on her research on imagery related to personifications of Poland in art, Magdalena Górska wrote that 'Roman numismatics was a source of national self-creation'.⁶² Since the iconographic basis for the canvas attributed to Smuglewicz is the *Roma resurgens* motif taken from a Roman coin, the title which I propose for the work, albeit with a question mark, is *Allegory of Rome Raised from its Fall by Emperor Vespasian*. The interpretation of the scene, as well as the question of the painting's authorship, remain the subject of my further research, as well as of conservation research conducted at the National Museum in Warsaw.

Translated by Klaudyna Michałowicz

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