ECONOMIA E ARTE
SECC. XIII-XVIII

 Atti della "Trentatreesima Settimana di Studi"
30 aprile - 4 maggio 2001

a cura di Simonetta Cavaciocchi
Gary Schwartz

The Structure of Patronage Networks in Rome, The Hague and Amsterdam in the 17th Century

This paper signals a certain pattern that emerged in the course of a comparative study of art production and patronage in the 17th century. Whether or not the pattern is significant and how one might proceed to test its value are questions that are still at issue.

The pattern concerns the relations between four kinds of players in the 17th-century art world:

1. patrons who were primary wielders of political power
2. secondary patrons from the family of a main power holder whose position depended on that of the prime figure
3. mediators between patrons and artists working for them
4. producers of the art that was commissioned or purchased by the patrons.

The existence of some of these roles is now acknowledged routinely in art-historical literature, but the manner in which they functioned as a system has never been studied as a subject on its own, as far as I know. Moreover, the distinction here drawn between patrons with a fairly autonomous power base and a more dependent class of related patrons does not seem to be taken into consideration in all but the most specialized literature on particular courts.

The starting point was a counting and ordering of the individuals involved with Barberini patronage. Their names and functions were derived from a founding study on art patronage systems in the 17th century, Francis Haskell's *Painters and patrons: a study in the relations between Italian art and society in the age of the Baroque*, supplemented by the work of Marilyn Lavin on the Barberini inventories and John Beldon Scott's study of the painted ceilings of the Palazzo Barberini. The central figure is of course Maffeo Barberini, who from 1623 to 1644 reigned as Pope Urban VIII. The mutual positions and
functions of the patrons in the ambience of Urban, their advisors concerning art patronage and the artists whose work they acquired can be visualized as a sphere with four concentric orbs (the tables reduce the image of concentric orbs to flat, subdivided rectangles.)

**TABLE I. Barberini patronage under Urban VIII, Maffeo Barberini (1623-1644)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Anthony van Dyck</th>
<th>Andrea Camassei</th>
<th>Angelo Giori</th>
<th>Gianlorenzo Bernini</th>
<th>Luderic Campanella</th>
<th>Matteo Preti</th>
<th>Peter Paul Rubens</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nicholas Poussin</td>
<td>Guido Bentivoglio</td>
<td>Tommaso Campanella</td>
<td>Enzo Bentivoglio</td>
<td>Valentia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agostino Tassi</td>
<td>Giulio Rosciglioni</td>
<td>Duke Carlo Barberini (brother)</td>
<td>Cardinal Francesco Barberini (nephew)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Filippo Napoletrano</td>
<td>Lelio Guicciarini</td>
<td>Cardinal Antonio Barberini (nephew)</td>
<td>URBAN VIII Barberini Pontifex Maximus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orazio Grattacensi</td>
<td>Francesco Braccioli</td>
<td>Taddeo Barberini, prefect of Rome (nephew)</td>
<td>Donna Anna Colonna (nephew's wife)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guido Reni</td>
<td>Cardinal Angelo Giori</td>
<td>Cassiano del Pozzo</td>
<td>Giolamo Tei</td>
<td>Virginia Cesati</td>
<td>Simon Vezut</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lanfranco</td>
<td>Claude Lorrain</td>
<td>Pietro Testa</td>
<td>Andrea Sacchi</td>
<td>Francesco Borromini</td>
<td>Carlo Maratta</td>
<td>François Duquesnoy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PRIMARY PATRON**

Power client-patrons (family)

At the center was the curia, with the pope at its head. It was from this base that Urban engaged in his continuous campaign of papal patronage. However, the curia was not the only Barberini court in Rome during his reign. As was the custom, the pope patronized his family, setting up relatives in palaces of their own, each with his or her own circle of dependants. Without going into the quality of the specific relations concerned, we observe that four Barberinis became cardinals, while Maffeo's nephew Taddeo was made prefect of Rome. He and his wife Anna Colonna, from an old Roman family more distinguished than the Tuscan newcomers, ran a double court that was less powerful than the curia, but more Barberini. Distinguished visitors to the papal court, even state visitors, were all taken there, to be guided through Taddeo and Anna's Palazzo Barberini, with its nearly blasphemous glorification of Urban - no, it was really blasphemous - in the form of Divine Wisdom. In other words, the way in which Taddeo and Anna decorated and ran the palace was an essential element of dynastic policy and personal power that Maffeo could not exercise within the Vatican.

The considerable artistic requirements of the central court and its satellites were met by a limited number of architects, sculptors and painters. An inner circle of advisers, mainly poets, mediated their relations to the patrons. Exceptionally, in the case of Urban VIII the main adviser was himself an artist, Gianlorenzo Bernini. The other insiders were poets or scholars, men like Tommaso Campanella and Giulio and Marcello Sacchetti, who might be patrons in their own right. A more typical relation of an artist to a great patron was that of Poussin, whose access to Urban was mediated through two levels: his patron Cassiano del Pozzo and the cardinal to whom Cassiano acted as secretary, Francesco Barberini, the pope's nephew. The lines in the table do not indicate who is protecting whom, which would have made it illegible. Some of the individuals who occupy a cell in the table were more active than others. Cardinal Angelo Giori, a commoner who was raised to eminence by Urban, managed some of his main artistic projects, while manifesting himself as well as the main supporter of Claude Lorrain in Rome.

One impressive feature of this system is the dominant role played by poets. A poet was much more likely than an artist to be a familiar of a Barberini nephew. The painters, sculptors and architects, with the notable exception of Bernini and Rubens, were simply on a lower social and intellectual level. Poets were also responsible in the main for the recherché iconographic programs favored by the Barberini. The custodian of the Palazzo Barberini had to consult a poet to print a little brochure explaining the program of Pietro da Cortona's ceiling in the salon, so he would no longer be annoyed by visitors, as he somewhat ungraciously said in the text itself.
and that Dutch art is visual and not literary. This set of attitudes is well known to all readers of Svetlana Alpers's book *The art of describing.*

Yet, if we leave aside the question of what is quintessentially Dutch and what not and look at the structures of patronage as we encounter them, we shall see that the difference between Holland and Italy is more one of degree than of nature. The single most important patron of the arts in the country during the period covered by the papacy of Urban VIII was Stadholder Frederik Hendrik. Their reigns overlap, with the 22 years of Frederik Hendrik's stadholdership beginning two years later than Urban's papacy and ending three years later (1625–47). Their behavior as central figures in a 17th-century power system is strikingly similar.

**TABLE II. Orange-Nassau patronage under stadholdership of Frederik Hendrik (1625-1647) and Willem II (1647-1650)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Antwerp</th>
<th>Jacob</th>
<th>Abraham</th>
<th>Jacob</th>
<th>Jan</th>
<th>Rembrandt</th>
<th>Peter</th>
<th>GARM SCHWARTZ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>van Dyck</td>
<td>Jordaens</td>
<td>Bloemaert</td>
<td>van Campen</td>
<td>Lievens</td>
<td>van Rijn</td>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Rabens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob Lais</td>
<td>P.C. Hooft</td>
<td>Constantijn Huygens</td>
<td>Caspar Barlaeus</td>
<td>Reiner Anloo</td>
<td>Salomon de Bray</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartholomeus van Bassen</td>
<td>Petrus Sallotus</td>
<td>Amalia van Solms (wife)</td>
<td>Willem II (son)</td>
<td>Jacob van der Burgh</td>
<td>Pieter Saenredam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michel van Mussveel</td>
<td>Samuel Coster</td>
<td>Willems Frederik van Nassau-Dietz (son-in-law)</td>
<td>FREDERIK HENDRIK prince of Orange</td>
<td>Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen (cousin)</td>
<td>Teesslach</td>
<td>Roemers</td>
<td>Visscher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob van Swanevanger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob van Vianen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wybrand de Geest</td>
<td>Jan Zoet</td>
<td>Joannes Brosterbeyn</td>
<td>Jan Jansz.</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pieter Post</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham van Denpenheuvel</td>
<td>Gonzales Cogius</td>
<td>Adri注 van de Venne</td>
<td>Gerard van Honthorst</td>
<td>Pieter de Grebber</td>
<td>Cawso van Everdingen</td>
<td>Frans Post</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PRIMARY PATRON**

Poet clients
Artists (client-brokers)

Power patrons (family)

Poet clients
Artist clients

---

Like Urban, Frederik Hendrik too surrounded himself with courts run by relatives. In one regard he was at a disadvantage to Urban: most of his nephews were illegitimate sons of his half-brother Prince Maurits and could not well be put in charge of family courts. But he was lucky with his wife and cousins, who ran patronage networks with great skill without getting into serious conflicts with him or the outside world. One of his cousins and one of his nephews indeed enjoyed major reputations as patrons of the arts: Johan Maurits van Nassau-Siegen, the governor of Brazil and builder of the Mauritshuis, and Kurfürst Friedrich V von der Pfalz. Friedrich was the husband of Elizabeth Stuart, the sister of Charles I of England. After the death of Frederik Hendrik, his widow Amalia van Solms became an important dispenser of patronage.

Frederik Hendrik did not have an artistic familiar like Urban's Bernini, but he had something nearly as good: a devoted secretary with extensive artistic knowledge and taste as well. This was the poet Constantijn Huygens, who worked for the stadholder throughout his reign. Aided by the architect Jacob van Campen, he had the ability to conduct the artistic affairs of the court with considerable distinction. This included the construction and decoration of palaces on a scale that rivaled that of the royal courts of his time.

The role of the poet intermediaries in the Netherlands, aside from that of Huygens, was not as essential as in Rome. The lines were shorter, with less need for recommendation and brokerage. Yet, the professions and relative place in the social hierarchy of the individuals involved are perfectly comparable to those in the Rome of Urban VIII.

One might account for the resemblance of Barberini to Orange patronage by observing that the court of the stadholder, while being Dutch and republican, was also an aristocratic court with European pretensions. Turning to Amsterdam, one would have no reason to expect to find anything comparable. Yet, this turns out to be the case. One reason this was not noticed earlier is that the central figure in Amsterdam did not exercise his power from a prominent public office. Yet there was an oligarch in Amsterdam who on his turf was as powerful as were the stadholder in The Hague and the pope in Rome. Indeed, later in the century an English diplomat remarked of the man filling this office that he exercised more arbitrary power than the Grand Turk in Constantinople. The office that conferred this behind-the-scenes authority was an informal one; everyone in the city knew it as the magnificat, and everyone knew that for decades in the mid-17th century it was held by a burgomaster named Cornelis de Graeff.
TABLE III. Bicker-de Graeff patronage under chief burgomastership of Andries Bicker (1628-1650) and Cornelis de Graeff (1650-1664)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direct Bicker</th>
<th>Joachim van Sandri</th>
<th>Juriaan Ovens</th>
<th>Jacob van Campen</th>
<th>Jan Livens</th>
<th>Rembrandt van Rijn</th>
<th>Govert Flinck</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cornelis Claz, Moyart</td>
<td>P.G. Hooft</td>
<td>Joost van den Vondel</td>
<td>Caspar Barlagus</td>
<td>Jan Vos</td>
<td>Bartholomeus van der Helst</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Slaapart</td>
<td>Samuel Coster</td>
<td>Burgomaster Andries Bicker (brother of brothers-in-law)</td>
<td>CORNELIS DE GRAEFF, chief burgomaster of Amsterdam</td>
<td>Burgomaster Joan Huydecoper (distant cousin)</td>
<td>Tessel schade Roemers Visscher</td>
<td>Ferdinand Bol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacob van der Uijl</td>
<td>Jacob Lescalle</td>
<td>Burgomaster Frans Banning Cocq (brother-in-law)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Geerard Brandt</td>
<td>Cornelis van der Voort</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan Jansz van Bronckhorst</td>
<td>Reinier Ansdol</td>
<td>Jan Zoet</td>
<td>Jacob Westerbaen</td>
<td>Thomas Asselijn</td>
<td>Tobias van Domelaer</td>
<td>Jacob Backer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cornelia Briey</td>
<td>Edens Neisi</td>
<td>Artus Quellinus</td>
<td>Gerard van Houten</td>
<td>Willem Stricker</td>
<td>Nicolaes de Helt en Stockhoud</td>
<td>Nicolaes Eliasz, Pickemey</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PRIMARY PATRON

Power client-patrons (family)

No clue to this is provided by the art-historical literature, where Amsterdam politics is never discussed as an issue of importance for the functioning of the art world. For example, this is how K. Fremantle introduces de Graeff in her seminal study, *The Baroque town hall of Amsterdam*: "... a patron of the arts in Amsterdam who, as a member of the committee set up in the early stages to consider plans for the Town Hall, and as a burgomaster in 1648, 1651, 1652 and 1655 and treasurer in the intervening years, must have been concerned with its scheme throughout its development." She adds that he was the son-in-law of the poet and historian P.C. Hooft through his second marriage of 1635 with Cornelia Hooft.

This is inaccurate and misses the basic point. De Graeff's second wife was not Cornelia but Catharina Hooft, whom Frans Hals painted as a baby in a famous painting in Berlin. She was the daughter not of Pieter Cornelisz. Hooft but of his cousin Pieter Jansz. Hooft. Only in the historical and archival literature does one discover that Cornelis de Graeff was not just one Amsterdam burgomaster of many, but together with his cousin Andries Bicker the central figure in Amsterdam politics from the 1620s to the 1660s. Around him we find the same kind of bastion of client-patrons as in the Roman and Hague courts. Despite the rather strict rules prohibiting brothers and brothers-in-law from serving simultaneously on the Amsterdam town council, de Graeff managed to install in positions of power his brother Andries de Graeff and his brothers-in-law Cornelis Bicker and Roelof Bicker and a third brother-in-law who is better known in art history than any of these or indeed than himself, Frans Banning Cocq. The constellation was filled out by a brother of his Bicker brothers-in-law and a more distant relative, Joan Huydecoper, who like Angelo Giori in Rome took on the political management of de Graeff's larger patronage projects. The largest was the construction and adornment of the town hall of Amsterdam, designed by the same Jacob van Campen who was one of the main artistic advisers to several courts in The Hague. Needless to say, a gifted main patron will take account of the personal qualities of his lieutenants. This could explain why Cornelis de Graeff encouraged his distant relative Joan Huydecoper rather than his brother Andries de Graeff to develop his instincts as a mecenas. Andries made himself immortal in the art world by refusing to accept a full-length portrait of himself by Rembrandt, while Joan was the first known patron of the artist in Amsterdam.

Because Cornelis de Graeff, in contrast to Frederik Hendrik, was personally interested in art and learning, more poets and artists had direct access to him than to the stadholder. His circle was the foremost patronage network in Amsterdam. These were the poets and painters and their patrons who created the projects that exalted the status of Amsterdam, its corporations, institutions and clans at the height of the city's power. The numbers of artists involved are not vast. As we have seen, there are important overlaps among the
Dutch painters in the charts for the statholder and the Amsterdam network. Eliminating those, we have thirty painters, some of whom were also architects. However, they do include the most productive and influential painters in the country: men like Abraham Bloemaert, Gerard van Honthorst and Rembrandt.

In itself, it is not surprising that the Barberinis and Oranges and de Graeffs furthered the fortunes of their relatives. People in all walks of early modern life formed clan constellations of this kind. The art world was no exception. Nonetheless, the pattern discussed here raises some interesting questions, such as:

How characteristic is this structure for major art collecting?

To what degree is a reliable family network a condition for success in early modern Europe?

What other examples can be added to a four-sphere structure, with a primary power base, clan satellite centers, brokers and clients? Do the ratios of the individuals in these roles fall into a general pattern?

Were practitioners of other crafts and trades also bound to the courts of Europe in similar ways? Is the situation of the artist exceptional in any way?

How can one compare the functioning of different circles of this kind? Might such a comparison provide a basis for a European-wide analysis of court, government and perhaps even private patronage?

What are the outer chronological and geographical limits of this form of patronage? Or might it be of all times and places? If it is, can we find a meaningful connection between the history of art and the anthropology of kinship?

References:


K. Fremantle, The Baroque town hall of Amsterdam, Utrecht 1959.

F. Haskell, Patrons and painters: a study in the relations between Italian art and society in the age of the Baroque, London 1963.

M. Aronberg Lavin, Seventeenth-century Barberini documents and inventories of art, New York 1975-

I have no answer to the second question. I have not found any treatises hostile to painting in seventeenth-century Spain. But there is a constant debate, as I suggested, about lavish expenditure in times of difficulty, and about the need for the Prince to be prudent. This goes back to a sixteenth-century and earlier tradition, in which purchase, and magnificence, are set within a moral context. What I am asking for is a systematic study of this debate about expenditure on luxury and display within that moral context, and the different arguments used. It could be done, I think, by studying the treatises and by taking particular occasions, like the building of the Escorial or the Buen Retiro, when the debate surfaces over a particular issue. It would be very interesting to have a study of this kind, that is both generalized and specific.

PRESIDENTE: Sull'ultima relazione abbiamo tre interventi. Il primo è di Paul Klep.

KLEP: Thank you. You would like to evoke reactions when writing a paper, and you pose a lot of questions at the end. Well, the audience can too. I will try to pose some questions for you and it's about the relative share. The relative share percentage share so to say of art of patronage art production to total art production in your 3 regions, Rome, the Hague and Amsterdam. Is this percentage of patronage art production maybe very different in terms of employment of artisans for instance or maybe not so different in terms of capital invested in art? So, that would be interesting because we discussed earlier on Monday these monde de l'art that has been discussed by L. Fontaine. I think it is an interesting thing to know from the viewpoint of the economy whether there are important relative differences in the sizes of these monde de l'art. The second point is would there be some difference in the working of the economy in your networks? And I refer to something like pricing. Would it be audacious to say that popes never pay and the Graf always paid or something like that? So, I would like to know about differences in negotiating prices in the three networks and the way people would pay. The delays with that and the level of prices for the same kind of objects for instance since I understand that you would say that in the Dutch case the lines are very short. There are not that many intermediaries and intermediaries cost enormous amounts of money. So, you could think that the same art investment in Rome would result in much less employment in the artisan sphere that in the Dutch case.

PRESIDENTE: Abbiamo una richiesta d'intervento da M. Welch.

WELCH: This is a question for Gary Schwartz. What you've described for artistic patronage sounds very similar in many ways to the work that has been done on familial strategies in 14th and 15th century Italy, particularly for papal families. Could you speculate on what happens when you remove the central figure or patron, which of course happens in Rome with remarkable frequency? How far do you see the ripples from this shift displacing your exterior circles? Clearly individual family members might change but even that's not a guarantee. They may just be displaced from this particular network and create networks of their own. But do these other intermediaries stay fixed and just move to serve a new central figure?

PRESIDENTE: L'ultima domanda è del Prof. Montias.

MONTIAS: I like the approach pursued by Gary Schwartz in his paper, to the extent that I understand it. I wish he had said more about the relationships of the people represented in his scheme. In the 17th century family relationships were broadly interpreted. A godfather or godmother could be counted in the family circle, as well, of course, as a brother-in-law or a nephew by marriage. One would like to see more attempts to draw the sort of concentric circles he has diagrammed, using a broad-gauged definition of what constituted a family relation.

SCHWARTZ: The first question gives me an opportunity to provide some figures which I wasn't able to bring into the talk. I did use the actual numbers of paintings. The limitation to paintings may be unfortunate, but that was also the limitation that was accepted by Marilyn Lavin in her publication of the Barberini inventories. The best comparison for the period I was working in, the second quarter of the 17th century, was offered by the inventory of the goods of Cardinal Francesco Barberini of 1626-27, with addenda to 1631, and that of Stadholder Frederik Hendrik of 1632, with addenda to 1634. The Barberini inventory covers the first eight years of the pontificate of Urban VIII and the cardinality of his nephew Francesco, whereas that of Frederik Hendrik ends in the ninth year after he became stadholder. Well, Francesco Barberini had 310 paintings. The holdings of Frederik Hendrik in the inventories of 1632 and 1635 counted 315 paintings. So, these turn out to be perfectly comparable holdings.

The quality of patronage as such, when we look more closely, was actually more impressive in Frederik Hendrik's court. The Barberini spread their patronage over the market. Mainly they bought small numbers of works from individual artists, many of them deceased. These purchases were being fed to them, I had the feeling, by middlemen. In The Hague, Frederik Hendrik spent almost all of his painting-buying money on works by living Dutch artists and some Flemish artists as well. His purchases reflected a strong preference for certain masters above others. He seems to have practiced a personal brand of patronage, more informed by taste and personal relations than were the purchases of the Barberini.

The possible difference in price level is more difficult to investigate. There are no prices in the Hague inventories and very few in the Barberini inventories. As far as getting payment is concerned: this was a problem for all artists working for royal courts. Rembrandt had to dun Frederik Hendrik to get payment for his paintings of the Passion. I'm sure the Barberini too took advantage of their position of power to delay payment when it suited them. I am reminded of the remark of a Jewish banker
in the ancien régime: "Never lend to sovereign states." This wasn't a policy that an artist was able to stick to. In effect, artists were advancing money to creditors who retained the prerogative of simply walking away from the bill.

Evelyn Welch asked: what happens when you remove the central figure? I think the network collapses. The essential importance of a central figure came up in talks yesterday as well. The example of somebody who took the arts seriously and spent good money on it empowered the lower levels as well. It challenged them to do the same in imitation of the big honcho. This is a delicate matter. People at lower levels had to emulate their masters without surpassing them. What happens if you outshine your prince we know from the example of Nicholas Fouquet. When this finance minister of Louis XIV built a palace at Vaux le Vicomte that was considered more splendid than Louis's palaces, Louis locked him up and threw away the key. There is a kind of hierarchy of magnificence built into these systems, with the central figure always defining the top.

Michael Montias, first of all the answer to your practical question is no: in my tables I did not try to show exactly which lines were leading from whom to whom. That would have involved a three-dimensional model, which I did not even think of producing. The names are inserted where they fit on each of the four concentric areas.

I'm thankful for your comment about the importance not only of clan and blood relationships but also of larger family concepts like godparent. I certainly agree.

PRESIDENTE: Bene. Credo che abbiamo concluso. A me non resta che ringraziare tutti per il lavoro e per l'attenzione. Credo che abbiamo posto un altro tassello in questo cammino laborioso, qualche volta contorto, ma, mi sembra, molto produttivo. Buon pranzo a tutti.