

Virginia Bertone, ed., Disegni del XIX secolo della Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Torino: Fogli scelti dal Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe

Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2009. ISBN 978-88-222-5900-4. 2 vols. in slipcase, 718 pp., with 553 illus. in color (43 mostly color illus. in two introductory essays; 390 color illus. of 390 drawings in catalogue, as well as comparative material; 15 color illus. of collectors' marks; 50 illus. of tracings of watermarks). €120

This two-volume publication of the little-known collection held in Turin by the Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea di Torinopart of the Fondazione Torino Musei-fills a gap in the scholarship on Italian drawings of the Ottocento (nineteenth century) and late Settecento (eighteenth century). The set also documents a landmark leap in cataloguing this trove and making it available to the public. The editor, Virginia Bertone, is a curator at the museum and an acknowledged authority on Piedmontese art of the period; for example, her 2000 exhibition on Giuseppe Pietro Bagetti (the artist responsible for Nos. 33-53 of the present catalogue) served as an incremental step toward this larger undertaking.1 The volumes are also significant as they constitute one of the few catalogues of a nineteenth-century drawing collection published in the last thirty years, although there have been many monographic studies on artists of this period.

These volumes in their elegant slipcase reflect the results of a ten-year-long scientific study undertaken by the museum. They represent a selection just shy of 400 works—drawn from its over 22,000 drawings and watercolors (over 8,426 from the nineteenth century)—that illuminate the growth of the collection. (Their publication dovetailed with the Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna's decision in 2009 to exhibit their collection thematically instead of chronologically.) While the museum has a website and has entered its drawing collection in an internal database, these volumes are intended to serve as a transitional step toward the accessibility of the entire collection on the web. Thus, they are a Janus-

faced endeavor that fulfills a present need: a continuation of the tradition of high-quality collection catalogues and a prelude to the future convenience of an online database or e-museum.

The volumes were also linked to the preparations for a new Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe facility, which opened in March 2013, exactly 150 years after the establishment of Turin's Museo Civico in 1863. That sesquicentennial event followed on the heels of another: the anniversary celebration of Italy's founding in 1861, when nearly all the regions of the Italic boot were joined for the first time since the Roman Empire. The opening of Turin's Museo Civico in 1863 was a direct result of that nationalistic movement, known as the Risorgimento, and was a revolutionary step for the city, predating the founding of the Galleria d'Arte Moderna in Rome in 1883 (now the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea [GNAM]).

PRELUDE TO THE CATALOGUE: BACKGROUND OF TURIN AND ART IN THE RISORGIMENTO

In fact, Turin was a very progressive center during the Risorgimento, and the first Italian city to promote the acquisition of modern art. Capital of the Piedmont region, Turin is sometimes known as "the cradle of liberty," because it was the birthplace and home of important individuals of the Risorgimento, among them the statesman Camillo Benso di Cavour and the landscape artist, writer, and patriot Massimo d'Azeglio (Nos. 107–35). Turin was also a hotbed for liberal political ideas. After the French captured Turin and Napoleon annexed it in 1802, the city enjoyed an intellectually enlightened period until 1814. Subsequently, it became part of the Kingdom of Piedmont-Sardinia and home of the House of Savoy, Italy's royal family, which in 1861 produced the first king of a united Italy, Victor Emanuel II. The city also briefly served as Italy's first capital, succeeded by Florence (1865) and

then, after the conquest of the Papal States, Rome (1870). As these volumes demonstrate, even after the unification of Italy, regional centers and mentalities prevailed, ensuring that local donors made Turin's Museo Civico the repository of Piedmontese art—works by artists and works given by donors in one way or another associated with Turin.

As the Risorgimento matured, Italian artists began to enjoy less hierarchical and more democratic and commercial exhibition venues than those provided by the established academies, stimulating contemporary subjects and new middleclass purchasers. Among them was a series of Società Promotrice delle Belle Arti, each with its own regional "landscape." That of progressive Turin led the pack (1842), followed by others in Florence (1844), Genoa (1850), and Naples (1861). With the formation of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861, regional governments began patronizing artists through other public venues; temporarily, patriotism and the art market seemed inseparable. That same year the Esposizione italiana, agraria, industriale e artistica, the first nationally inclusive exhibition, opened in Florence at the train station, the Stazione Leopolda, which was converted into a palazzo esposizione for the occasion.2 The unjuried Belle Arti section was organized not by the traditional hierarchy of subjects but rather by media, including the large category of "Disegno." Although it was naturally weighted to contributors from the host city, it allowed for comparisons of regional traditions that before unification had experienced little interaction, thus affording an opportunity for the discovery and redefinition of a cultural identity. Moreover, Victor Emanuel and the state bought a large number of works that were exhibited.

INTRODUCTORY ESSAYS

After a one-paragraph introduction, the initial volume of *Disegni del XIX secolo* commences with two informative essays. Bertone wrote the first and longest that bears the beguiling title "Le austere gioie del bianco e nero: Per un profile del Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe della GAM di

Torino" ("The austere joys of white and black: Towards a characterization of the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe of the GAM of Turin"). The author of the second essay is Piera Giovanna Tordella, a professor at the Università degli Studi di Torino, who specializes in drawings and prints and who has curated exhibitions at the GAM, for example, one on Giuseppe Mazzola (Nos. 7-18), an artist whose style resembles that of Anton Raphael Mengs.3 In her essay ("Declinazioni tecnico-linguistiche del disegno italiano dal secondo Settecento al primo Novecento: Sul corpus grafico della GAM di Torino"), Tordella addresses the swift transformation of the practice of drawing-from the end of the Settecento through the Ottocentodue to technology and the introduction of industrially produced drawing tools and machine-made paper. Among the topics she touches on are: laid, wove, and colored papers; the introduction of the conté crayon by Nicolas-Jacques Conté in 1795 (to replace the high quality Borrowdale graphite that was unavailable due to the English blockade); synthetic colors; and the general industrialization of media, especially "black media."

In her lengthier essay, Bertone surveys for the first time the fascinating history of this mixed collection, which actually predated the founding of the Museo Civico. As Italy and Turin defined their identities, the museum moved and morphed periodically, depending heavily throughout its history on donations. Its nucleus can be traced to the bequest of Giovanni Battista De Gubernatis bibliophile, connoisseur, collector, and researcher of Old Master prints who worked as a public administrator, first for Napoleon and then for the House of Savoy. In the shadow of his professional life, he became a landscape watercolorist of distinction with luminous works enshrining the sublime (No. 57; Fig. 1).4 In fact, he was one of the few great Italian landscapists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (along with Luigi Basiletti and Giovanni Battista Lusieri). De Gubernatis was influenced by Pietro Giacomo Palmieri (Nos. 1-6) and Bagetti (Nos. 33-53), who played a decisive role in the renascence of landscape painting in Piedmont. De Gubernatis



Figure 1
GIOVANNI
BATTISTA DE
GUBERNATIS

Sacra di San Michele from below against the Light, c. 1804

Turin, Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea

also visited Paris in 1805, where in 1812 he won a gold medal at the Salon. Later, he served in the French government during the restoration before returning to Turin in 1818. Although at his death in 1837 De Gubernatis left his works to his widow, Maria Luisa Lombardi, he stipulated that after her demise they should pass to the municipal school of drawing, which the French had established in 1805. Pietro Giovanni Palmieri (son of Pietro Giacomo) sped up this gift by acquiring in 1840 for the city over 886 works in various media from Lombardi in exchange for a pension. A few months later, an exhibition of them was held in the Palazzo Civico, after which they were deposited in the municipal archive to save the delicate watercolors from being used as De Gubernatis had envisioned.5

With the opening of the Museo Civico in 1863 came an impetus to collect "modern" art, followed by debates about what should be acquired and about modern art itself, topics that continued to smolder after Turin lost its status as the capital of Italy. Predictably, the winds of patronage and politics played a prominent role in determining the nature of the collection. Between 1876 and 1911 a series of important gifts swelled its holdings, which in 1913-14 would fall under the umbrella of the Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna (GAM). The first was the cache by Massimo d'Azeglio (Nos. 107-35) that his nephew and heir Emanuele Taparelli d'Azeglio (1816-1890) gave in 1876. It included twentyseven albums with 1,300 drawings, together with 256 paintings and oil sketches. A few years later, Emanuele assumed the museum's directorship. The 1905 bequest of Giovanni Camerana (1845-1905), magistrate and poet, brought works by Antonio Fontanesi (Nos. 179-99)-who had been influenced by the French Barbizon Schoolincluding bold, atmospheric drawings from the



Figure 2

ANTONIO
FONTANESI

Landscape with
Trees and Stream,
c. 1859

Turin, Galleria
Civica d'Arte
Moderna e
Contemporanea

artist's studio (e.g., No. 184; Fig. 2). Then in 1911, the museum received the bequest of Old Master and modern art from Vittorio Avondo (1836–1910), a significant connoisseur and a subsequent director of the Museo Civico.

In addition to the chronological historiography of the collection, Bertone touches on other topics, including the incidental works by French and English artists, such as Horace Vernet and Paul Delaroche, which punctuate the large constellations by Italian artists. In the process, she recounts many fascinating stories and anecdotes. Among the most intriguing is the disappearance of the collection's jewel: a haunting watercolor by De Gubernatis depicting the interior of his studio (No. 61; Fig. 3).7 On 21 July 1921, it was stolen from the gallery in which it was exhibited; although it was returned, the means of its repatriation are not documented and remain a mystery to this day.8 Bertone also credits the escalating status of drawings in the late nineteenth century to Symbolist-oriented artists, for whom the graphic arts signaled an expression of modernity. The III Esposizione internazionale di Venezia (1899) even had a "Sala di Bianco e Nero." Soon after followed the Esposizione internazionale del bianco e nero in Rome (1902) that had a pan-European participation. The idea that drawing media embodied modernity also occurred to artists simultaneously in other centers in Europe and the United States.9

Bertone recounts the genesis of the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe and its lengthy gestation between 1930 and 1965. She traces the germ to the "Galleria dei disegni" mentioned in 1913 by Enrico Thovez (1869–1925), poet, critic, artist, and director of the museum. Thereafter, the vast donation by Ruy d'Andrade (1880–1967) in 1930, consisting of 16,646 drawings and objects by his father, Alfredo, gave it further impetus and a certain urgency. During the difficult years of World War II, the museum continued to acquire works by artists of the Ottocento, such as Giovanni Migliara (Nos. 85–104), known for his charming scenographic works, and Felice Giani (Nos. 20–32), draftsman extraordinaire, decorator,

Figure 3

GIOVANNI BATTISTA DE GUBERNATIS

Studio of the Painter in Parma, 1812

Turin, Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea

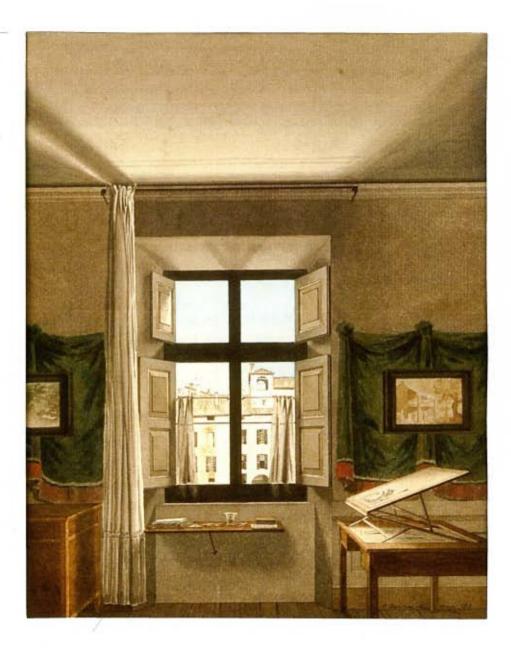




Figure 4
FELICE GIANI
Self-portrait with
the Image of Diana
of Ephesus, 1789

Turin, Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea and founder of the Accademia dei Pensieri. Some of the sheets by Giani are folios from a dismembered sketchbook (e.g., No. 27; Fig. 4), which have a provenance from the prestigious Milanese collection of Francesco Dubini (1848–1932). The museum also purchased single drawings to fill perceived holes in their holdings, for example, a work by the important Divisionist Pellizza da Volpedo. Among the post-war treasures that the museum acquired were the two albums with drawings and watercolors by Bagetti, *Vues des Campagnes des Français*, *Italie 1796 e Italie 1800*, which the artist, while in the service of France, drew after the conquest of the Piedmont in 1798.

Commissioned by Napoleon and with a provenance from Eugène de Beauharnais, they consist of 104 views of battles in the First and Second Italian Campaigns (Nos. 43–49).¹¹ Benedetto Fiore, the "faithful friend" of one of the gallery's most inspired directors, Vittorio Viale (1891–1977), who championed a Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, helped fill other lacunae, Examples of his generosity include: a study by the Futurist Umberto Boccioni for *The* City Rises (repr. as fig. 18) and sketchbook drawings by the Macchiaioli painter Giovanni Fattori (Nos. 264–66), including a study for the galvanizing painting Lo Staffato, depicting a horse galloping off obliquely while dragging his dead rider by the foot, which is caught in a stirrup.

The vision for a Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe gained true momentum with the endowment of the Fondazione De Fornaris, followed by the 1998-99 legacy of the architect and Turin resident Domenico Soldiero Morelli (1900-1998), consisting of works by his grandfather, Domenico Morelli (Nos. 228-55). The latter corpus of 1,491 drawings and 17 albums had remained with the artist's family when the works from the studio had been acquired by the GAM in Rome. The Morelli legacy sparked the plan to catalogue this corpus on a database, as well as to digitize it for internal use and for an exhibition at the Turin GAM on the centenary of the artist's death in 2001.11 In a domino effect, it became the catalyst for a comprehensive inventory, conservation reporting, systematic numbering, and digital documentation of the Torinese patrimony in the graphic arts.

While the lion's share of the collection consists of large clusters by Italian artists, exemplified in the catalogue by a selection of them, a number of individuals, usually non-Italians, are represented in the catalogue by only one or two sheets, such as Jean-Léon Gérôme (No. 259) or Frederic, Lord Leighton (Nos. 286–87). In the mix there were also around 500 sheets by anonymous hands. During examination and the process of sifting and winnowing attributions, one sheet was identified as a copy by a young Edgar Degas of two saints in an altarpiece by Perugino in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Lyon (No. 312). A fake Medardo

Figure 5

DOMENICO

MORELLI

Study for The Sultana and the Slaves Returning from the Bath, c. 1880

Turin, Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea



Rosso was uncovered, while another drawing thought to be by Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (repr. as fig. 30) was reattributed; it had a collector's mark that had also been found on sheets refused for donation by the Musée du Louvre. The mark belongs to an artist who produced works for the market in the style of Corot. Another watercolor that had formerly been given to Eugène Delacroix was assigned to an anonymous French artist (repr. as fig. 29).

During the examination phase, the museum also mounted major exhibitions with scholarly catalogues to explore their holdings, among them the trove of drawings by Domenico Morelli presented to the public in 2001 (No. 249; Fig. 5),¹³ which became the departure for the selection in this catalogue (Nos. 228–55). Among them is a sketch for King Lear with the Body of His Daughter (No. 251) that Morelli executed directly on a musical score to demonstrate his rapport and friendship with Giuseppe Verdi. The next GAM project addressed the works of D'Azeglio for an exhibition in 2002–3 (Nos. 107–35).¹⁴

CATALOGUE

The catalogue, which consists of 390 entries and comprises the lion's share of the two volumes, is organized by artists in order of their birth dates.15 It encompasses forty-seven artists: from Pietro Giacomo Palmieri in the late eighteenth century, to Leonardo Bistolfi (Nos. 388-90), who was representative of the Liberty (Art Nouveau) taste in Turin, which came to prominence in the Prima esposizione internazionale di arte decorative moderna of 1902. By necessity Bertone excluded from the catalogue artists who were not represented by suitably characteristic examples-even those of first rank like Pelagio Palagi (see fig. 31), a major Piedmontese artist. Nevertheless, other artists are represented by one work, such as Eleuterio Pagliano by his portrait of Morelli (No. 269) or the Neapolitan sculptor Vincenzo Gemito by his Self-portrait (No. 387; Fig. 6),16 both of which intersect with the substantial Morelli holdings.

When organizing an exhibition or catalogue there are always difficult decisions to make about which works to include and which to exclude,



resulting in sins of omission. Disegni del XIX secolo was never intended to be encyclopedic, but rather representative, and the selection presents the mixed nature of the collection. It includes the wide variety of styles that both energized and divided the century, showing, for instance, the struggle between the academic tradition and the freedom of new styles and novel paths. The works of the Orientalist Alberto Pasini (Nos. 270–85) are representative of one exotic trend.

Twenty-two art historians, prominent scholars in the field-among them, Luisa Martorelli,17 Anna Villari, Rosanna Maggio Serra, Vittorio Natale, and Silvia Bietoletti-wrote the short but scholarly biographical essays containing characterizations of the contributions and styles of the forty-seven artists; each is followed by an "essential bibliography." Because there are no discussions about attributions and subject matter following the tombstone technical data in the entries, in some cases, such as that of Giani, the biographies also contain critical texts that just begin to raise some of those complex issues. Most useful are the thorough, exemplary tombstones that begin with complex descriptions of the media and support of each drawing, followed by measurements, inscriptions, and watermarks, if applicable, provenance, recent conservation, exhibition history, and bibliography. To insure consistency, all the works were wisely surveyed and described by one person, Costantino Savio. Helping to compensate for the lack of a discursive section, when the sheet is preparatory for another work there are instead highly useful small reproductions of comparative works at the end of the tombstone information. And these, indeed, are worth a thousand words. One of the catalogue's most admirable features is that all 390 sheets are generally illustrated in a separate section following the entries on the artist, either on a full-page, if in the vertical, portrait format, or on a half-page, if in the horizontal, landscape format. While this choice indicates much forethought, not all the sheets reproduced have star quality or warrant that much space. After the entries in volume 2, the reader will find additional useful sections: a list of principal acquisitions and donations (1840–2008); an index of collection marks; an index of watermarks; a general bibliography; and an index of names. However, it would have been very useful if the biographical essays had also mentioned how many sheets by each artist were in the GAM.

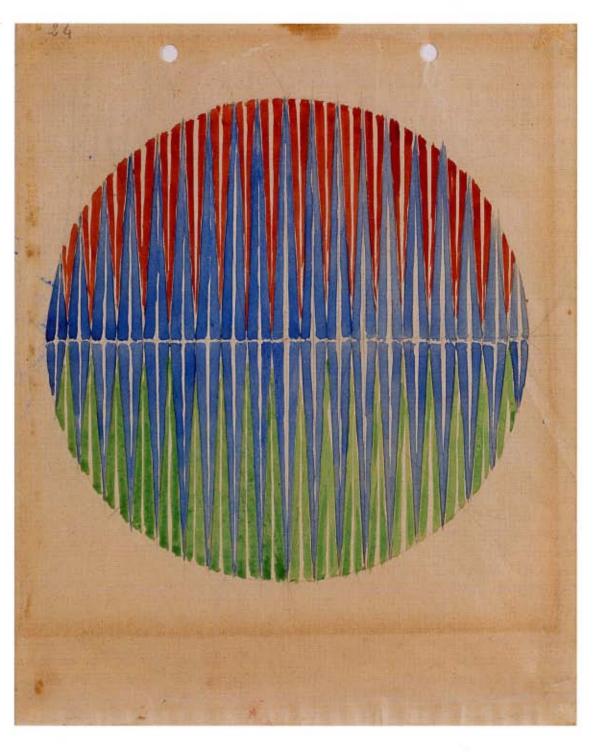
What has always been a drawback for any catalogue, but is now increasingly more apparent in our digital age, is that publication marks an emphatic terminus ante quem. Catalogues and books conceived as definitive are quickly outdated as new material surfaces. It is a problem with which everyone in the field has to contend. A case in point is the exhaustive publication in 2010 of the Morelli drawings in Rome, which could not be cited in the bibliography on the artist.18 That inclusive publication—unlike Disegni del XIX secolo whose small selection of works by Morelli are reproduced in color in a large format-illustrates all the sheets in small black-andwhite figures; thus it puts in relief the advantages and disadvantages of the approach taken by the GAM in these two volumes. If the database of the collection, perhaps as an e-museum, were available on the web, new bibliography could be constantly appended as a supplementary update to these two volumes, which demonstrate so clearly the importance of collection catalogues.

The two volumes of Disegni del XIX secolo also functioned as a prelude to the opening on 7 March 2013 of the GAM's new Department of Drawings and Prints, financially supported by the Fondazione Guido ed Ettore De Fornaris. Its inaugural exhibition was a doubleheader featuring: La Seduzione del disegno: Cartoni, acquerelli e dipinti dalle raccolte della GAM ("The Seduction of drawing: Cartoons, watercolors and paintings from GAM Collections") and Wundercamera: Giovanni Migliara: Acquerelli e preziosi fixé ("Wundercamera: Giovanni Migliara: Watercolors and precious fixés"). The new facility for the preservation, conservation, and consultation was conceived by and spearheaded by Bertone. Its holdings also include sheets from the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, such as the watercolor by Giacomo Balla (Fig. 7)19-which

Figure 7
GIACOMO BALLA
Iridescent

Interpenetration, No. 2, 1912

Turin, Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea



Tordella discussed in her essay (repr. there as fig. 8)—whose artistic roots are in the Ottocento. The museum's graphic holdings include over 39,000 pieces catalogued and digitized, one of Italy's largest public collections of works on paper. This state-of-the-art facility, located in the underground rooms that formerly served as storage for works not on display, can be seen on their website (http://www.gamtorino.it/en//mostra.php?id=375).

In conclusion, the two volumes edited by Bertone, a veritable sampler, report on the decade-long expedition to explore and map the former terra incognita of this large and important collection. As it developed, the project intelligently harnessed technology. This enlightened endeavor bodes well for future developments at the Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe, as museums worldwide re-evaluate their collections and consider how to share in multiple formats their treasures with the public.

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NOTES

- See Virginia Bertone, ed., Giuseppe Pietro Bagetti, pittore di battaglie: Vues des campagnes des Français en Italie (1796 e 1800): I disegni delle compagne napoleoniche della GAM di Torino, exh. cat., Turin, Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, 2000. It also includes the related watercolors in the Musée National des Châteaux de Versailles et Trianon and reconstructs Captain Bagetti's views in sequence, from sketches to preparatory drawings, elaborated drawings, watercolors, and finally, etchings.
- See Florence, Commissione Reale, Esposizione italiana, agraria, industriale e artistica tenuta in Firenze nel 1861:
 Catalogo officiale pubblicato per ordine della Commissione Reale, exh. cat., Florence, Stazione Leopolda, 1861; see also Marco Rosci, "Firenze, 1861: La prima esposizione nazionale italiana," Ottocento, 23, 1994, pp. 11–18; and Carlo Sisi, "1861–1899: Gli anni delle Esposizioni," in Maria Vittoria Marini Clarelli et al., Ottocento: Da Canova al Quarto Stato, exh. cat., Rome, Scuderie del Quirinale, 2008, pp. 47–71.
- 3. At the GAM from 16 March to 20 May 2012.
- 4. Inv. no. fl/16465. Watercolor; 149 x 155 mm.
- Today, only one retains its original mount (No. 59; inv. no. fl/16219; see p. xiii, fig. 3).
- 6. Inv. no. fl/1398. Charcoal and watercolor on ivory

- paper; 575 x 379 mm. It is related to an oil painting in a private collection, Milan (fig. 184a).
- Inv. no. fl/16509. Watercolor, with black ink wash; 239 x 188 mm.
- The watercolor was exhibited in 2011; see Sabine Rewald, Rooms with a View: The Open Window in the 19th Century, exh. cat., New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011, no. 45, repr. (in color).
- See, for example, Roberta J. M. Olson, "Drawings at the Armory: The Currency of Change and Modernism," in Marilyn Satin Kushner et al., eds., The Armory Show at 100: Modernism and Revolution, exh. cat., New York, New-York Historical Society, 2013, pp. 297–309.
- 10. Inv. no. fl/1950. Pen and black ink on originally ivory paper; 261 x 177 mm. For the album, the first sheet of which is the self-portrait reproduced here, see Anna Ottani Cavina, Felice Giani (1758–1823) e la cultura di fine secolo, 2 vols., Milan, 1999, vol. 2, pp. 928–30, nos. A1.3–17; see also Roberta J. M. Olson and Anna Ottani Cavina, "Identifying Felice Giani's Double Portrait with Michael Köck and the Friendship Portrait in Late Settecento Rome," Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz, 55, no. 3, 2013, pp. 122–41.
- All described and reproduced in Turin 2000, nos. 1–104.
- See Claudio Poppi, ed., Domenico Morelli: Il pensiero disegnato: Opera su carta dal fondo dell'artista presso la GAM Torino, exh. cat., Turin, Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, 2001.
- Inv. no. fl/15777. Pen and brown ink, with brown wash, on ivory paper; 207 x 328 mm. It is a study for an oil painting in the Fondazione Internazionale Eugenio Balzan, Milan (fig. 249a).
- See Virginia Bertone, Massimo d'Azeglio e l'invenzione del paesaggio istoriato, exh. cat., Turin, Galleria Civica d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, 2002.
- It does not include the museum's architectural studies, which are being saved for future consideration.
- Inv. no. fl/2291. Black chalk, pen and black ink, with black ink wash and tempera, on cardstock; diam.: 414 mm.
- See Luisa Martorelli, ed., Domenico Morelli e il suo tempo, 1823–1901: Dal romanticismo al simbolismo, exh. cat., Naples, Castel San'Elmo, 2005.
- See Rita Camerlingo, Il fondo Domenico Morelli: Catalogo delle opera su carta, Rome, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna e Contemporanea, 2010, which publishes and reproduces the museum's voluminous holdings, together with letters and documents.
- Inv. no. P/1814. Watercolor and black chalk; 220 x 177 mm.