

“COPPIES BIEN QUE MAL FETTES”:
NICOLAS POUSSIN’S
RINALDO AND ARMIDA RE-EXAMINED

PAR

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IN a letter dated 12 January 1644 Nicolas Poussin informed Paul Fréart de Chantelou of his intention to reverse a decision he had made only a few days earlier concerning Chantelou’s wish to have a set of copies made after the *Seven Sacraments*¹ that Poussin had painted for Cassiano dal Pozzo between ca. 1635 and 1642². While the French artist had previously agreed to seek out a painter capable of executing these copies³, he suddenly withdrew from this project and offered instead to copy the seven paintings himself or, even better, to do seven new (in Poussin’s own later opinion, better) pictures⁴. It has never been sufficiently demonstrated that Poussin’s sudden change of heart was provoked by anything other than the frustration he suffered while supervising the painters whom Chantelou

had sent to Rome to make copies after prestigious masterpieces such as Raphael’s *Transfiguration* and Giulio Romano’s *Madonna della gatta* (then still believed to have been done by Raphael)⁵. Not only did he have to deal with the lack of motivation and the excess of envy⁶ on the part of artists such as Nicolas Chaperon⁷, Jean Noret⁸ and Pierre Mignard⁹, he also deplored the carelessness with which they worked – if they ever did. Thus, observing these “*copistes à la dozeine qui ne feroient rien qui vaille*”¹⁰, he went back on the decision that he had conveyed to Chantelou only five days before, on 7 January, to entrust the reproduction of his paintings to two of these copyists, Claude le Rieux and Ciccio Napoletano¹¹. However, observing the results of their work, he reviewed his decision and



FIG. 1. – Angelo CAROSELLI. Copy after Nicolas POUSSIN's *Plague of Ashdod*. London, National Gallery. Photo museum.

specifically, in the letter that accompanied the case containing these poor paintings on their way to France, Poussin wrote: “Jay pensé mille fois au peu d’amour au peu de soin et netteté que nos copistes de proffession aporte à ce quil imitent(...) et me suis esmerueillé tout ensemble comme tant de personnes s’en délectent. Il est vrai que voyant les belles choses et ne les pouuant auoir l’on est contrains de se contenter des coppies bien que mal fettes chose qui à la verité pouroit diminuer le nom de beaucoup de bons peintres si se n’estoit que leurs originaux se voient de plusieurs, qui cognoissent bien l’estrême différence qui est entre eux et les coppies. Mais ceus qui ne voyent autre chose que une mauuaise imitation croient facilement que l’original ne soit pas grande chose. et mesme les malings se scauent bien seruir de ses copies mal fettes pour décréditer seux qui scauent plus que eux”¹². And he concludes: “Pensant en moymesme toute ses choses jay creu faire bien et

pour mon honneur et pour vostre contentement de vous faire scauoir que (demourant icy) je souhetteroies estre moymesme le copiste des tableaux qui sont chés Mr. Le Cheuallier du puis ou de tous les sept ou d’une partie. ou bien les faire d’une autre disposition. Je vous assure Monsieur qu’il vaudront mieux que des coppies (...)”¹³.

That Poussin’s distrust of such bad copies, executed without love or care, and that only served to ruin the reputation of the original painter, was sometimes founded, can be understood if we look, for example, at the copy of Poussin’s *Plague at Ashdod* (fig. 1), attributed to Angelo Caroselli and today conserved in the National Gallery in London¹⁴. In his days Caroselli was considered as a fair copyist; according to Filippo Baldinucci he was even capable of deceiving Poussin with the copy of a Raphael Madonna. The French master is said to have confessed that if he had not known where the original painting was, he would have taken the copy

for the original¹⁵. Nevertheless, even though Caroselli's *Plague*-copy is listed in a 1716 inventory as "*originale di Nicolò Pusino*"¹⁶, in 1660, thirty years after it was made, Mazarin's agent, Elpidio Benedetti described it as "*una Copia (...) che fa vergogna all'originale*"¹⁷.

Recently, it has been speculated that Caroselli's copy not only could have been painted in Poussin's studio, but that its different architectural background could, perhaps, document an earlier state of the original (Paris, musée du Louvre; fig. 2)¹⁸. In fact, from the proceedings of the trial of the first owner of the *Plague*, Don Fabrizio Valguarnera, we know that the original painting was unfinished when Valguarnera saw it in Poussin's studio¹⁹. Infrared examination of the canvas has shown that the painter changed some iconographic

details as well as the architectural background²⁰. Since in the Caroselli copy these buildings differ greatly from those in the original, it has been suggested that the copy, commissioned by Valguarnera himself²¹, could reflect the original appearance of Poussin's painting prior to the changes he made in the backgrounds. But since the architecture in the London painting does not correspond to the traces visible under infrared examination, it is very difficult to accept this hypothesis even on a purely technical level. Moreover, it is also difficult to reconcile our conception of even the young Poussin with the – in historical terms – heterogeneous buildings in the background of the Caroselli picture where a Medieval palace with ogival windows, an ancient temple and some ruins stand together. While one



FIG. 2. – Nicolas POUSSIN. *The Plague of Ashdod*. Paris, Louvre. Photo museum.



FIG. 3. – Nicolas Poussin. *Armida carrying off Rinaldo*. Berlin, Staatliche Museen, Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie. Photo Jörg P. Anders.

can already only wonder why ruins should ever appear in a depiction of the center of a prosperous ancient city, the temple with the muddled arrangement of the columns (it is unclear as to whether the fifth column on the right is around the corner or if it is in line with the other front columns, standing, however, free without supporting the entablature) definitely arouses doubts about the painter's architectural knowledge²². Finally, we must ask why Valguarnera would have wanted a copy of a painting he already owned, and in which all other details would have been unchanged with the sole exception of the architectural background. Since even the smallest item (down to the position of the rats) had been faithfully copied in Caroselli's picture, it seems rather plausible to assume that the copyist only had the original canvas at his disposal for a limited time so that when he came to the background he had to improvise.

Unlike this instance, however, there is a case in Poussin's œuvre where a copy can really tell us something about the appearance of a painting that was later modified – and in this specific example we

also obtain information on the authenticity of the picture in question.

There are various known copies of Poussin's *Armida carrying off Rinaldo*, according to Félibien, painted for Jacques Stella in 1637²³: while the one in Berlin (formerly Bode-Museum, now in the

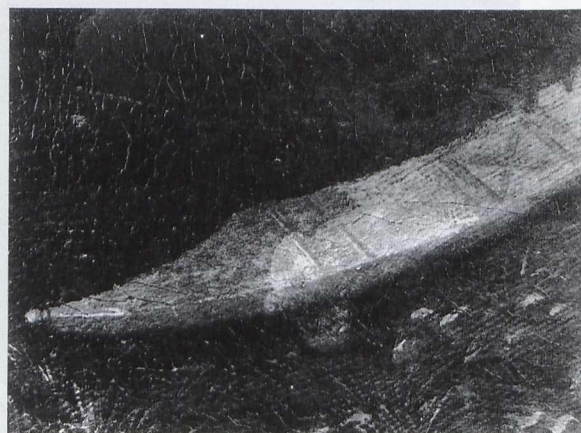


FIG. 4. – Detail of fig. 3: infrared photography of the scabbard. Photo museum.



FIG. 5. – Guillaume CHATEAU. Engraving after POUSSIN's *Armida carrying off Rinaldo*. Photo author.

storerooms of the new Gemäldegalerie; fig. 3) is disputed as being perhaps the (retouched) original²⁴, the one in Argentina (Buenos Aires, museo de Bellas Artes) has always been considered

a faithful if rather stiff copy. The other hitherto known copies are untraceable today²⁵.

In 1991 Rainer Michaelis published an observation made during close examination of the



FIG. 6. – Charles MASSÉ. Engraving after POUSSIN's preparatory drawing for *Armida carrying off Rinaldo*. Photo author.



FIG. 7. — ANONYMOUS. Copy after POUSSIN's *Armida carrying off Rinaldo*. Whereabouts unknown. Photo author.

Berlin canvas. Although visible to the naked eye, an infrared photograph even more clearly revealed that a *pentimento* is discernible in the left lower edge of the painting where the weapons of the lulled Rinaldo lay (fig. 4)²⁶. As also shown in the engraving by Guillaume Chasteau (fig. 5)²⁷ the painting today shows a flat, curved scabbard where there was once a sheath whose straight, tubular barrel ended in a golden hemisphere. Even though Michaelis tended to interpret this finding as a hint of the authenticity of the Berlin canvas, he refrained from drawing such a conclusion and instead proposed a hypothesis which tries to explain the change as having been made by an anonymous painter who, while having decided to copy Poussin's composition, wavered between two models. Thus, he first followed the engraving, after Poussin's preparatory drawing, executed by Charles Massé (fig. 6)²⁸ where the scabbard is still straight and tubular. According to Michaelis, the copyist then, immediately after having painted the sheath, changed his mind and turned to Chasteau's engraving that he copied entirely, painting over the scabbard. Even if one is disposed to accept the

possibility of such a copyist wavering between the entirely different compositions of the Massé – and the Chasteau – engravings, the fact that the colours of the Berlin painting correspond to those discernible in other copies (such as the one in Buenos Aires) strongly argues against the probability that he ever used the engravings rather than a coloured painting as his model. However, since the *pentimento* could only be related to the Massé-engraving, its significance regarding the authenticity of the canvas has remained quite limited.

In 1984 another (and since then untraceable) copy appeared on the art market (Art Gallery Trapp Cayen, New York; fig. 7). This copy contributes an important and helpful document in this issue²⁹. At first sight it seems to be just another reproduction of Poussin's composition, executed in a rather stiff manner, faithfully rendering the figures, but freely varying certain details (such as the wooded background with its rhythmic sequence of trunks) or even omitting them (e.g. the column with the two squires waiting for Rinaldo)³⁰. But on closer examination, the canvas turns out to be closely



FIG. 8. – Detail of fig. 3: landscape in the background, showing the remaining traces of a branch. *Photo museum.*

related to the painting in Berlin: given the fact that in the Trapp copy there is a straight, tubular and hemisphere-topped scabbard such as the one that can be discerned under the curved sheath in the Berlin picture, it seems that the Trapp canvas shows us the former state of the Berlin painting, before the scabbard was changed.

That this is actually the case is confirmed by yet another observation. In the Berlin painting, just above the two waiting squires, the uppermost layer of colour has been rubbed off, so that in this section a wedgeshaped trace can be noted (fig. 8). Interestingly, as a superimposition of the two pictures (fig. 9) shows, the position of this trace



FIG. 9. – Superposition of fig. 3 and fig. 7, showing the matching of the remaining branch in fig. 8 with the landscape of the anonymous copy. *Photo author.*

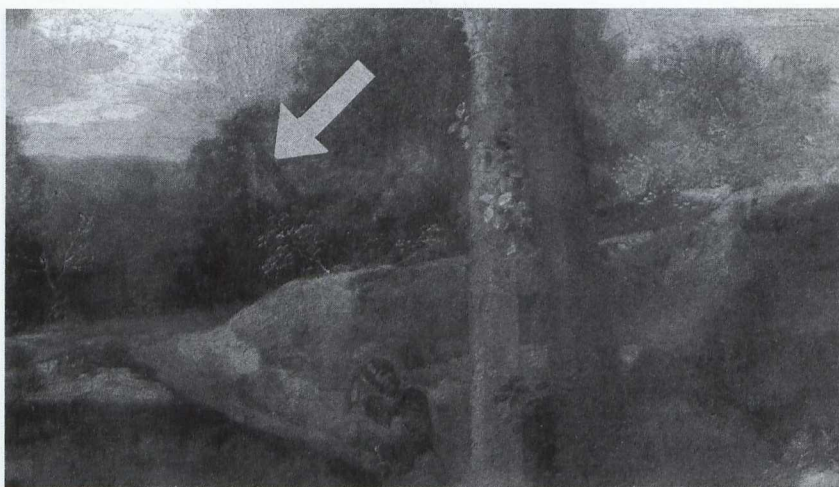


FIG. 10. – Infrared photography of the landscape shown in fig. 8, revealing the remaining traces of the branch in fig. 3. Photo museum.

corresponds exactly to the place where the branch of a slender tree rises in the Trapp copy. Infrared examination (fig. 10) of this part of the Berlin painting has shown that not only the position, but also the exact shape of the trace corresponds perfectly to this branch in the Trapp copy (in the Berlin canvas we also can vaguely make out the remains of the stronger trunk in the blurred vertical strip at the left of the trace, standing beside the slender tree in the Trapp copy).

Thus, the Trapp copy obviously records a former condition of the Berlin painting which later underwent several changes: the shape of the scabbard was altered, the trees were effaced, and instead, the scene of the two squires waiting at the column was inserted. Interestingly, both details – even though they might appear totally unrelated at first glance – are actually closely connected inasmuch as they both refer to events prior to the scene of Rinaldo being carried off by Armida. In Canto XIV, Stanza 53 Tasso narrates how Rinaldo used the trick of camouflaging himself in the armour of the Saracen enemy in order to deceive his adversaries, and it is in this disguise that he reached Armida's island. Since curved scabbards were often depicted as typical weapons for Saracens³¹, replacing the straight, tubular scabbard with the flat, curved sheath could have been prompted by the

painter's desire to respect and follow the details described in Tasso's narrative. The same is true about the background with the two squires waiting for Rinaldo in front of a white column at the other side of the river, and meanwhile reading the inscription, a clear reference to Canto XIV, Stanza 57 where the "*colonna eretta (...) Del bianco marmo*" is described. Having read the invitation, "*in lettere d'oro*" to come and see the neighbouring island, Rinaldo immediately left his "*scudieri*" (Stanza 58) behind and crossed the river.

If we do not want to follow the complex and twisted hypothesis that the Trapp canvas is a copy made after just another copy (i.e. the Berlin picture) which first freely varied several aspects of the original (and presumed lost) Poussin painting only to correct them later according to this original version as recorded by the Chateau engraving, the obvious conclusion is that the Berlin canvas is nothing other than the original by Poussin³². The French master, after having created a version of Tasso's narration in which only the immediate events, i.e. Armida carrying off Rinaldo, were depicted, was obviously dissatisfied with this limited portrayal. He returned to his composition³³ and added references to previous episodes, such as Rinaldo's disguise as a Saracen soldier and the scene of the two squires waiting beside the column

and reading the inscription³⁴. Thus, he followed a contemporary esthetic which demanded such references. Even though already Pomponius Gauricus had established (in his *De sculptura*, published in 1504) that each work of art should arouse thoughts in the viewer that go beyond the things, and particularly the moment represented by the artist³⁵, during the course of the seventeenth century, this concept was again picked up and developed in French art theory. Thus, the Abbé d'Aubignac in his *Pratique du Théâtre*, published in 1657, claimed that the painter could and should show all the other events that precede, accompany and follow the main action portrayed in his picture³⁶.

Finally, there remains the fundamental question about the origins of the Trapp copy. Since it is not very likely that Poussin overpainted his painting for Stella long after he had delivered it, the author of the copy seems to have had access to Poussin's studio. Even though the following reference may not be considered a fully reliable source, it should be remembered that Pierre-Daniel Huet (1630-1721),

archbishop of Avranches, in his *Mémoires sur Christine de Suède* (only published in 1806 in a dubious edition by P.J.B. Chaussard)³⁷ delivered an interesting description of Poussin's home and studio. Confirming other documents on the arrangement and size of the rooms, he adds one most intriguing piece of information when he speaks about one room where Poussin kept a "*collection de ses ouvrages, en originaux, en copies, en dessins*" (boldface mine)³⁸. If this description could ever have been proved true, the Trapp canvas would have to be taken into consideration as a possible former component of this collection. Given its style it was certainly not done by Poussin himself, but it could, nevertheless, have been painted in Poussin's studio at a time when the master had not yet decided to change the above described details in the Berlin canvas that has been handed down to us in this way.

This, at least, would contrast with Poussin's negative opinion about copies and would show that, obviously, he did not consider all copies as "*bien que mal fettes*"³⁹.

NOTES

Research on this topic was incited by a seminary at the Villa Medici in Rome on "Il problema della copia a Roma nel Seicento", organized in April 1999 by Olivier Bonfait and Emmanuel Coquery to whom I am grateful for having invited me. I would like to express my gratitude especially to Rainer Michaelis, Curator at the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin, who in the most obliging manner kindly arranged the possibility to study and analyse the Berlin painting scientifically under the most ideal conditions. Finally, I am gratefully indebted to Donatella Spati for her helpful suggestions.

1. For this letter see Ch. JOUANNY, "Correspondance de Nicolas Poussin", *Archives de l'Art français*, N.P., vol. V, Paris [1911], p. 245, no. 100.

2. While the date for the execution of the last painting with the *Baptism* is documented by a letter of Poussin addressed to Cassiano dal Pozzo 27 March 1642, the date as well as the subject of the first painting is still a hotbed for debates: see P. ROSENBERG and L.A. PRAT, *Nicolas Poussin 1594-1665*, exh. cat. Paris [1994], pp. 240ff.

3. Letter from 7 January 1644 (JOUANNY, *op. cit.* at note 1 above, p. 239, no. 97).

4. Letter from 12 January 1644 (JOUANNY, *op. cit.* at note 1 above, p. 245, no. 100): "(...) j'ay creu faire bien et pour mon honneur et pour vostre contentement de vous faire scavoir que

(demourant icy) je souhetterois estre moymesme le copiste des tableaux qui sont chés Mr. Le Cheuallier du puis ou de tous les sept ou d'une partie. ou bien les faire d'une autre disposition. Je vous assure Monsieur qu'il vaudront mieux que des coppies (...)." For Poussin's judgment about the Chantelou-series where already the *Extreme Unction* alone is considered to outdo the whole Dal Pozzo-series see his letter to Chantelou from 14 May 1644 (JOUANNY, *op. cit.* at note 1 above, p. 268, no. 108). In another letter from 20 December 1655 (JOUANNY, p. 440, no. 197) Poussin explains Dal Pozzo's refusal to participate in an exchange of copies of both "Sacraments" series with the suspicion that Dal Pozzo feared the direct comparison between the two series: "d'un costé celuy seroit de l'aduentage d'auoir la coppie des vostres tant pourceque il sont plus grands le

double que les siens que pourceque les compositions sont plus riches et ont plus du grand sans paragon. Mais peut estre creindroit il que la comparesson ne diminuas le prix des siens".

5. For Nicolas Chaperon, charged with copying the *Transfiguration* (today in the Vatican, Pinacoteca) see J.-P. CUZIN, *Raphaël et l'art français*, exh. cat., Paris [1983], pp. 195f.; for the *Madonna della gatta* (today Naples, Museo di Capodimonte), to be copied by Ciccio Napoletano, see S. POLANO, *Giulio Romano*, exh. cat. Milan [1989], p. 269. For the whole enterprise see also the report furnished by A. FÉLIBIEN, *Entretiens sur les vies et sur les ouvrages des plus excellens peintres*, Trévoux [1725], Entretiens VIII, p. 52.

6. "Ceux qui coppient à Farnèse ne se monstrent pas plus affectionnés à faire leur debuoir que Chaperon [,] principalement Noret[,], Le Maire [,] Le Vieux et Mignard qui tous de commun accord se veulent faire payer à leur mode, et ne veulent pour rien faire les secondes coppies quil auoint commensées". See Poussin's letter from the 25 August 1643 (JOUANNY, *op. cit.* in note 1 above, p. 210, no. 87).

7. "(...) ayans de propos délibéré et sans aucun subiect, abandonné l'œuvre". See Poussin's letter from 25 August 1643 (JOUANNY, *op. cit.* in note 1 above, p. 209, no. 87).

8. "Le sieur Noret fet le diable [-] je ne sais pourquoi il a fini la vierge à destenpre d'après le parmesan tellement quellement. [Néanmoins que depuis je luy ay fet retoucher en plusieurs lieux (...)"]", see Poussin's letter from 4 August 1643 (JOUANNY, *op. cit.* in note 1 above, p. 205, no. 86).

9. "(...) Mignar ha fet sa copie différente de colloris de l'original autans comme il y a du jour à la nuit". See Poussin's letter from 4 August 1644 (JOUANNY, *op. cit.* in note 1 above, p. 204, no. 86).

10. Letter from 4 August 1644 (JOUANNY, *op. cit.* in note 1 above, p. 207, no. 86).

11. Letter from 7 January 1644 (JOUANNY, *op. cit.* in note 1 above, p. 239, no. 97).

12. Letter from 12 January 1644 (JOUANNY, *op. cit.* in note 1 above, pp. 244f., no. 100).

13. *Ibid.*, p. 245.

14. See H. WINE, "'Poussin Problems' at the National Gallery", *Apollo*, I, March [1995], pp. 25-28.

15. F. BALDINUCCI, *Notizie dei professori del disegno*, vol. III, Florence [1846], p. 744.

16. Inventory of D. Filippo Colonna, 15 December, 1714-6 March 1716 (Rome, Archivio di Stato, Not. Giuseppe Perugino 5782, vol. I, Thursday, 10 January, 1715), also cited by M. DAVIES, *National Gallery Catalogues: French School*, London [1957], p. 185 and by O. BONFAIT, *Roma 1630. Il trionfo del pennello*, exh. cat., Milan [1994], p. 171.

17. Letter addressed to Mazarin from 22 November 1660 (Paris, Ministero degli affari esteri, CP, Roma, 140, f° 178r), cited here after *Roma 1630*, *op. cit.* at note 16 above, p. 171.

18. Reported by Olivier BONFAIT in *Roma 1630*, *op. cit.* at note 16 above, p. 171 as a hypothesis voiced already in 1962 by Sir Denis Mahon and then repeated by Mahon himself in

Nicolas Poussin. I primi anni romani, exh. cat., Milan [1998], pp. 28f.

19. See Jane COSTELLO, "The twelve pictures 'ordered by Velasquez' and the trial of Valguarnera", *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XIII, [1950], pp. 237-84.

20. See J. THUILLIER, "Perspectives du XVII^e siècle", *Art de France*, II, [1962], pp. 252-54 where on p. 254, note 8 the visible changes are listed. For the iconographical implications of some of these changes see H. KEAZOR, "À propos des sources littéraires et picturales de la Peste d'Asdod (1630/31)", *Revue du Louvre*, XLV, [1996], pp. 62-69.

21. For the documentation of this copy see COSTELLO, art. cit. in note 19 above, p. 271 (12 luglio 1631).

22. This reserve is all the more valuable concerning Mahon's theory that the author of the original cityscape could have been Le Maire who certainly was rather an expert on such architectural backgrounds. For this hypothesis, voiced earlier also by Andrea Busiri Vici, see M. FAGIOLO DELL'ARCO, *Jean Lemaire, pittore "antiquario"*, Rome [1996], p. 14.

23. Anthony BLUNT, *The Paintings of Nicolas Poussin - A Critical Catalogue*, London [1966], p. 141, no. 204.

24. For the provenance of the painting, bought in 1755 by Frederick the Great from the Pasquier collection in Paris, see Rainer MICHAELIS, "Ein Original von Poussin? 'Armida entführt den schlafenden Rinaldo'. Ein Werk aus dem Bestand der Berliner Gemäldegalerie", *Jahrbuch Preussischer Kulturbesitz*, XXVIII, [1991], pp. 207-22, here pp. 212f. The picture was for the first time considered as a good, old copy by J. MEYER and W. BODE in their *Beschreibendes Verzeichnis* of the paintings in the picture gallery of the Koenigliche Museen, Berlin [1878], p. 296. This verdict was shared by O. GRAUTOFF, *Nicolas Poussin. Sein Werk und sein Leben*, Munich/Leipzig [1914], vol. II, pp. 262f. (copy of the 18th century); W. FRIEDLÄNDER, *Nicolas Poussin-Die Entwicklung seiner Kunst*, Munich [1914], p. 115 (replica); Id., *Nicolas Poussin - A New Approach*, London [1966], p. 36 (original painting lost); J. THUILLIER, *L'Opera completa di Nicolas Poussin/Tout l'œuvre peint de Nicolas Poussin*, Milan/Paris [1974], no. 102 (good old copy); A. MÉROT, *Nicolas Poussin*, Paris [1990], p. 287, no. 194 (best copy of all); J. THUILLIER, *Nicolas Poussin*, Paris [1994], p. 255, no. 118 and P. ROSENBERG/L.-A. PRAT, *Nicolas Poussin 1594-1665. Catalogue raisonné des dessins*, Milan [1994], p. 262, no. 135 (good old copy) while D. WILD, *Nicolas Poussin, Leben, Werk, Exkurse*, Zurich [1980], vol. I, p. 68 (if not even the original, then an excellent copy) remained indecisive. In favour of the authenticity of the painting on the contrary É. MAGNE, *Nicolas Poussin, Premier peintre du roi*, Bruxelles & Paris [1914], p. 94 and Id., *Nicolas Poussin - Premier peintre du roi*, Paris [1928], p. 127; BLUNT, *op. cit.* in note 23 above, p. 141, no. 204; C. WRIGHT, *Poussin Paintings. A Catalogue Raisonné*, London [1985], pp. 180f., no. 90 and S. LAVEISSIÈRE in exh. cat. *Intorno a Poussin*, Rome [2000], pp. 66-71, no. 1.

25. LAVEISSIÈRE, *cat. cit.* at note 24 above, p. 70, n. 16 lists seven copies.

26. MICHAELIS, art. cit. at note 24 above, p. 217.

27. See G. WILDENSTEIN, *Les graveurs de Poussin au XVII^e siècle*, Paris [1957], pp. 297f., no. 164 where – Chasteau's death in 1683 notwithstanding – the year 1684 is indicated as *ante quem* date; for the engraving see also "Catalogue des graveurs de Poussin par ANDRESEN", *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 6-LX, [1962], 2, pp. 139-202, here p. 195, no. A 409; for the engravings by other authors see the nos. A 410 (Phil. Simoneau) and A 413 (P. Dupin, 1722).

28. WILDENSTEIN, *op. cit.* in note 27 above, p. 299, no. 165 and ANDRESEN, *op. cit.* in note 27 above, p. 195, no. A 411.

29. Published for the first time in H. KEAZOR, *Poussins Parerga. Quellen, Entwicklung und Bedeutung der Kleinkompositionen in den Gemälden Nicolas Poussins*, Regensburg [1998], fig. 113. My sincerest thanks to Mrs. Regina Thomas von Bohlen from the Trapp Associates, Inc. (New York) who kindly, if even vainly, tried to recollect information about the provenance as well as the present whereabouts of this copy.

30. For a correction of the erroneous explanation normally given in the wake of the misinterpretation furnished by BLUNT, *op. cit.* in note 23 above, p. 141 (recently also followed by LAVEISSIÈRE, *cat. cit.*, cited in note 24 above, p. 66) who understood them as Rinaldo's companions, Carlo and Ubaldo, see KEAZOR, *op. cit.* cited in note 29 above, p. 109, note 103 and in the main text above.

31. See for example Raphael's Vatican fresco with the *Battle at Ostia* (Vatican, Stanza dell'Incendio) where likewise a curved scabbard is exposed in the foreground in order to symbolize the defeat of the Saracens.

32. This is also the conclusion of LAVEISSIÈRE, *cat. cit.* cited in note 24 above, p. 69.

33. LAVEISSIÈRE, *cat. cit.* cited in note 24 above, p. 71, n. 29 and p. 80, following an idea by Jean-Claude Boyer, suggests that this could have taken place even in Stella's house during Poussin's stay at Paris in 1640/42. Boyer, however, thought these corrections to be limited to the scabbard while the evidence of the Trapp copy shows that Poussin also added the column and the waiting soldiers only in a later moment.

34. LAVEISSIÈRE, *cat. cit.* cited in note 24 above, pp. 69 and 80 puts these corrections in relationship to a change which also Charles-Alphonse Dufresnoy undertook when painting a (supposedly) second version of his "Armida discovers the sleeping Rinaldo" (the first version – in the catalogue no. 5 – being identified with the canvas in Moscow, Arkhangelskoye

Museum, while the second version – in the catalogue fig. 5a – today is lost and only known by a photograph in the Witt Library, London): while Rinaldo in the first version lies besides a straight "Christian" sword, in the second version the weapon, now hanging above him in the tree, has the Saracen "pagan" features. As Laveissière rightly states, it is impossible to judge which of the two French painters called the other's attention to the prior incorrectness of the weapons, depicted in the paintings. The case is rendered all the more difficult by the fact that Poussin introduced the column with the two squires only together with the changed weapon while Dufresnoy shows them already in both his versions. In addition, in one preparative drawing (London, British Museum; in the catalogue fig. 6b) he already shows the "pagan" sabre in the tree, but column and squires are still missing. However, in the refined drawing of the same composition (Paris, École nationale supérieure des Beaux-Arts; in the catalogue no. 6), column and squires do appear, but now the sword has the above mentioned "Christian" features!

35. See for this Norbert MICHELS, *Bewegung zwischen Ethos und Pathos. Zur Wirkungsästhetik italienischer Kunsttheorie des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, Münster [1988], pp. 78f. On this topic see also in particular Jonathan UNGLAUB, *Poussin, Tasso and the Poetics of Painting* (chapter "Poussin, Raphael, and Tasso: the emplotment of history painting"), Ph.D. thesis, New York University 1999.

36. L'Abbé d'AUBIGNAC, *La Pratique du Théâtre*, Paris [1657] (ed. Pierre Martino, Alger, 1927), p. 87. For parallel tendencies in Bellori and Félibien see KEAZOR, *op. cit.* in note 29 above, p. 149, note 120.

37. P.J.B. CHAUSSARD, *Les Anténors modernes ou Voyages de Christine et de Casimir en France, pendant le règne de Louis XIV: esquisse des mœurs générales et particulières du dix-septième siècle, d'après les Mémoires secrets des deux ex-souverains, continués par Huet, évêque d'Avranches*, Paris [1806], vol. II, chapter IX: "Intérieur du Poussin. Son atelier. Ses chefs d'œuvre". For a thorough examination of some historical details, reported erroneously in Chaussard's book, and an assessment of the range of its reliability see D.L. SPARTI, "La maison de Nicolas Poussin via del Babuino, à Rome", A. MÉROT (ed.), *Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665)*, actes du colloque 1994, Paris [1996], vol. I, pp. 45-69, here esp. pp. 53f.

38. CHAUSSARD, *op. cit.* in note 37 above, p. 65.

39. JOUANNY, *op. cit.* in note 1 above, pp. 244f., no. 100; see also note 12 above.

RÉSUMÉ. — « Copies bien que mal fettes » : une nouvelle analyse du Renaud et Armide de Poussin.

Bien que les historiens l'aient fréquemment étudiée, on n'a jamais établi de façon sûre l'origine de la seconde série des *Sept Sacrements* de Chantelou. Si Poussin se refusa à faire copier la première série par un autre peintre, préférant peindre lui-même une série nouvelle, c'est en réalité uniquement en raison d'une mauvaise expérience qu'il avait faite quand il dut diriger le travail des artistes envoyés par Chantelou à Rome pour y copier les grands chefs d'œuvre. Mais Poussin a-t-il toujours considéré les copies comme des « copies bien que mal fettes » ? Le cas de la copie de *La Peste d'Ashdod* par Angelo Caroselli semble confirmer cette piètre opinion de Poussin, copie considérée dès 1660 par certains comme trahissant l'original. Reprenant l'hypothèse selon laquelle cette copie aurait été faite dans l'atelier de Poussin, on pourrait appliquer la même hypothèse à la copie du « Renaud et Armide » découverte en 1984 sur le marché de l'art. En la comparant minutieusement à la version de la Gemäldegalerie de Berlin, on a la preuve irréfutable que c'est la version de Berlin (jusqu'à présent discutée) qui est authentique, ce que confirme une analyse technique. Qui plus est, cette seconde version étant manifestement la copie du tableau de Berlin mais dans un état antérieur, on trouvera d'autant plus intéressante la description (faite au XVII^e siècle) d'une pièce de la maison de Poussin où l'artiste conservait les copies de ses propres œuvres.