Copied Value: The Reproductive Print in Early Modern England

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In their book *Paper Museums: The Reproductive Print in Europe, 1500-1800*, Rebecca Zorach and Elizabeth Rodini summarize the role of the reproductive print in early modern Europe:

> Prints, particularly reproductive prints... reached a wider audience of collectors, aficionados, and students of art throughout Europe and beyond, enabling an unprecedented communication among artists, dissemination of ideas and motifs, and refining of compositional and drawing techniques."[1]

In their malleability and ability to be produced in multiples, prints had the capacity to rapidly spread copies of other works of art throughout European art spheres. This phenomenon of reproduction is well documented in continental Europe; in the Netherlands, Peter Paul Rubens used an in-house engraver to produce print reproductions to increase his revenue, Albrecht Dürer famously fought a constant battle against unauthorized reproduction of his works in Northern Europe, and a large industry of print reproductions existed in France by the seventeenth century.[2] However, little scholarship exists on the reproductive print's place in early modern England, possibly because of the stigma relating to early English art in the art historical world.[3] That is the topic this paper addresses, and in so doing, it also attempts to explore the general nature of the relationship that existed between the reproductive print and the user of the reproductive print during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. This paper asks whether the early modern English art world considered the reproductive print differently from other types of prints. To focus the question, this paper will explore the relationships between reproductive prints and print users in three particular groups: English art collectors, artists, and print-sellers. The answer seems to be that these groups did acknowledge reproductive prints as different from non-reproductive prints, and this difference appears to have had varying significance to each group.

The term "reproduction" has historically been a difficult scholarly term to pin down when applied to printing of the early modern period. Part of the problem lies in how reproductions of art are viewed today compared to how they were perceived during the early modern period. Traditionally in the literature, prints made after other pieces of art have been written off as unoriginal and unworthy of study, or at least have been given less attention than works categorized as "original." However, this distinction does not reflect how such prints were viewed contemporarily. Zorach and Rodini rightly cite the influence of later artistic movements—chiefly Romanticism—as a leading cause of this difference. Specifically, they pin the blame on the work of Romantic era print scholar, Adam von Bartsch, who "considered true art to rest only in the work of the so-called *peintre-graveur* (painter-engraver)."[4] Von Bartsch effectively split the category of prints into two groups—original and reproduction—that were not necessarily so pronounced during the early modern period.

Von Bartsch's notion of reproductive prints as unoriginal and unworthy of study not only ignores how such objects were treated at the time of their making, but blinds the print scholar to the difficult mechanics of creating reproductions in print. This activity actually required a great deal of ingenuity and skill due to the limitations of the print medium. Zorach

1. Elizabeth Rodini and Rebecca Zorach, *Paper Museums: The Reproductive Print in Europe, 1500-1800* (Chicago: The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, 2005), 1.

2. Carl Goldstein, *Print Culture in Early Modern France: Abraham Bosse and the Purposes of France* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 36-37; Fritz Eichenberg, *The Art of the Print* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers, 1976), 91 and 187; Lisa Pon, *Raphael, Dürer, and Marcantonio Raimondi* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), 39-41; and Michel Melot, "The Artist Coping With Reproduction," in *History of an Art: Prints*, ed. Michel Melot, Antony Griffiths, Richard S. Field, and André Béguin (New York: Skira Rizzoli, 1981), 46-47.

3. This stigma is best expressed in the first line of chapter one in Richard T. Godfrey's book *Printmaking in Britain*: "Nothing is less becoming to the history of British printmaking than its belated and uncouth beginnings." Though later British printmaking has received considerable attention in the scholarly world, English printmaking during the early modern period has been relatively neglected. Fortunately this appears to be in the process of changing, with the appearance of works like Antony Griffiths' *The Print in Stuart Britain*. Antony Griffith, *The Print in Stuart Britain: 1603-1689* (London: The British Museum Press, 1998); and Richard T. Godfrey, *Printmaking in Britain: A General History from its Beginnings to the Present Day* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1978), 13.

4. Rodini and Zorach, *Paper Museums*, 6-7.

and Rodini discuss a reproduction by Niccolò Boldrini (Figure 1) of Giovanni Antonio de Sacchi's painting *Milo of Croton Attacked by Wild Beasts*, painted between 1534-1536 (Figure 2). Boldrini altered the composition of the painting to be more conducive to the medium of print: he removed the background forest because chiaroscuro tones were difficult to replicate in print form and replaced it with trees.[5] According to Zorach and Rodini, Boldrini's print differs in that "landscape contains the action rather than presenting, as it might in a sixteenth century Venetian painting, significant visual and aesthetic interest in its own right."[6] Boldrini's print is by necessity actually quite different from the original painting. Printmaking brought with it a set of unique technical problems, and the process of reproduction required more skill and artistry than von Bartsch indicated.[7]

Furthermore, the early modern relationship between "original" art and "reproductions" was far less established than might be deduced from Bartsch. The early modern art world was more at ease with the copying of artwork as a matter of practice; the Renaissance and early modern culture of art was a "culture of copying," to borrow a term from print scholar Lisa Pon.[8] Copying designs was an accepted practice during this period, whether on commission from the original artist as in the case of an artist like Peter Paul Rubens, or through the copyists' own volition.[9]

For the aforementioned reasons, the term "reproductive print" will be taken here to mean any print that copies another artwork. This is a wider definition of reproductive print than has been traditionally established in the literature of the past, though recent scholars have begun to recognize the artificiality and problems posed by the modern label of "reproduction."[10] The remainder of this paper will consider case studies from the three groups outlined in the introduction: the English art collector, represented by King Charles I of England, nobleman Nicholas Lanier, and middle class collector Samuel Pepys; the English artist, represented by limners Nicholas Hilliard and Edward Norgate; and the English print-seller, represented by London printer and print-seller Peter Stent.

Records of King Charles I's collection gives some evidence supporting the claim that reproductive prints were more highly prized than other varieties in the collecting world in the King's treatment of such prints almost in the manner of paintings. These records come in the form of an inventory of the King's art holdings compiled at some point before 1640 by the keeper of Charles's collection, Abraham van der Doort.[11] This inventory is particularly useful for determining attitudes toward the artwork described within because Van der Doort produced it before the King's bloody regicide in 1649, meaning it is more likely to accurately reflect the attitudes of Charles than inventories produced after the King's death.

Within the inventory, prints and printing plates are only definitively recorded eight times in 182 pages. Of these eight, six are reproductions in copper after other works of art. The first of these entries describes a print after an altarpiece: "Item. In a black ebony frame, a piece (from copper) printed upon paper, which was copied from the KING's old altarpiece."[12] Another, a printing plate executed by Lucas Vorsterman, depicts Charles's "picture painted by Vandyke."[13] A third print is described as "Christ in the garden, engraven after one of the KING's little painted pictures, being done by Hannibal Carach, in a black frame."[14] The fourth describes a print "engraven by one of my Lord Marshal's drawings, of Permensius...in a wooden frame," while a fifth entry describes a Van Vorst engraving "done after Honthorst...in a black wooden frame."[15] Finally, the sixth entry describes a print "engraven from a painted picture of the Emperor Otho, being set in a black frame, the principal whereof being done by Titian."[16] Not only is it remarkable that these prints were even recorded—Charles undoubtedly owned many more prints that went unrecorded—but every print, save the one plate by Vorsterman, is recorded as being framed. These particular prints were treated in a manner usually reserved for painting. Furthermore, Van der Doort took extra care to list Titian as the original artist of the design featured in the final print: its stature as a reproductive print was enhanced by the stature of the artist whose work it reproduced.

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5   Rodini and Zorach, *Paper Museums*, 4

6   Rodini and Zorach, *Paper Museums*, 4-6.

7   Reproducing printings accurately became more achievable with the invention of the mezzotint process, which gained widespread popularity during the eighteenth century. Until then, the printer had engraving, etching, or wood cut to choose from. Michael Twyman, *Printing 1770-1970: An Illustrated History of its Development and Uses in England* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode Publishers Ltd.,1970), 91-93.

8   Pon, *Raphael, Dürer, and Raimondi*, 22.

9   Rodini and Zorach, *Paper Museums*, 6-7.

10   Lisa Pon is one such scholar.

11   Poor Abraham met an unfortunate fate due to his station. Supposedly,

after having lost one of the king's favorite portraits, Van der Doort committed suicide in 1640. If nothing else, this serves as a testament to how seriously Charles took his art collection. Jerry Brotton, *The Sale of the Late King's Goods: Charles I and His Art Collection* (London: Macmillan, 2006), 18 and 195.

12   Abraham van der Doort, George Vertue, Horace Wapole, *A Catalogue and Description of King Charles the First's Capital Collection of Pictures, Limnings, Statues, Bronzes, Medals, and Other Curiosities: Now First Published From an Original Manuscript in the Ashmolean Musaeum at Oxford* (London, 1758), 72.

13   Ibid., 73.

14   Ibid.

15   Ibid.

16   Ibid.

An English noble and fellow collector in Charles I's court, Nicholas Lanier also exhibited habits that pointed to reproductive prints occupying a special place in his collection. Lanier travelled extensively for Charles and collected drawings from a number of Italian artists, especially from Giulio Romano and Parmigianino.[17] Among these drawings that made up a large portion of Lanier's collection are a remarkable series of reproductive prints: etchings of drawings that Lanier made himself. One made after a drawing by Giulio Romano depicts a grotesque mask, another made after a drawing by Parmigianino depicts a bearded man in profile, while yet another also after a drawing by Parmigianino depicts a naked female figure from behind. These reproductive prints may have provided a means of "stretching out" Lanier's collection, and thus could have retained some of the aura of the drawings. Furthermore, the fact that Lanier executed these etchings himself suggests that reproductive printmaking, in certain circumstances, was an aesthetic activity worthy of the time of a nobleman.[18]

Journal entries pertaining to the collection of seventeenth-century London bureaucrat and print collector Samuel Pepys also suggest an affinity for reproductive prints. Specifically, Pepys wrote more extensively and in more detail about his reproductive prints from France than any other type of print he collected.[19] In an entry from Saturday, July 7th, 1660, Pepys writes that he visited the "Change," or the Royal Exchange in London, where he "bought two fine prints of Ragotts by Rubens."[20] In this rare example of Pepys giving the name of a printmaker and artist, he is describing a reproductive print executed by French printmaker François Ragot after a painting by Peter Paul Rubens. It is telling that here he chooses to record the artist and printmaker where elsewhere in his diary such information is left out: this print was particularly important to Pepys.

Another rare example of Pepys name-dropping in relation to his collecting habits comes in an entry from January 25, 1668/1669:

> So home, and my wife shewed me many
> excellent prints of Nanteuil's and others,
> which W. Batelier hath, at my desire,
> brought me out of France, of the King, and

Colbert, and others, most excellent, to my
great content.[21]

French engraver Robert Nanteuil, whose prints Pepys describes here, did produce prints of King Louis XIV (Figure 3) after his own portrait of the King in pastels (Figure 4), and did produce prints of Jean Baptiste Colbert (Figure 5) after a portrait by Philippe de Champaigne.[22] Pepys once again gives additional attention not afforded other print types in his diary, possibly indicating this print's particular importance to the collector.

Evidence from instructional literature used by English artists suggests that they also held reproductive prints in higher regard for the reason that reproductive prints gave the artist-in-training a means of developing his skills through copying. Artistic manuals on "limning," or miniature painting, written in sixteenth and seventeenth-century England make reference to the use of prints as instructional tools. In his 1598 work, *A Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning*, Elizabethan limner Nicholas Hilliard mentions the copying of prints as the first step to becoming a master limner: "Wherfore hatching with the pene in Imitation of some fine well graven portrature of *Albertus Dure* small peeces, is first to be practised and used, b[e]fore one begine to Limne."[23] While this does not overtly describe the use of reproductive prints, it does establish that the print was an indispensable tool for the beginner English artist. More substantial evidence for the use of the reproductive print in the teaching process can be found in a later limning manual written by Edward Norgate, an artist working in the court of Charles I.

Norgate's book, *Miniatura, or The Art of Limning* written before 1650, mentions reproductive prints in ways very similar to that seen in Hilliard. The first is a brief mention of a reproductive print after a Raphael fresco. Norgate writes about "that incomparable Gallatea done in Fresco by Raphael, and cut in Copper by Goltzius."[24] Norgate almost places Goltzius at the same level as Raphael here; the "incomparable" piece exists both in fresco and copper.

Another instance from Norgate's book more directly addresses how the fledgling artist should use reproductive prints to hone drawing abilities:

> To begin then as the best beginners doe,

[17]   Jeremy Wood, "Nicholas Lanier (1588-1666) and the Origins of Drawings Collecting in Stuart England," in *Collecting Prints and Drawings in Europe, c. 1500-1750*, ed. Christopher Baker, Caroline Elam, and Genevieve Warwick (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 104-7.

[18]   Lanier hired other printmakers at other times to make prints of drawings in his collection, but the fact that he participated in the process himself is still telling. Wood, "Nicholas Lanier," 105-6.

[19]   Thank you to Dr. Brian Britt for pointing me toward Samuel Pepys as a source. Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: Daily Entries from the 17th Century London Diary*, accessed 24 March 2015, http://www.pepysdiary.com.

[20]   Pepys, *Diary*, 7 July 1660, accessed 24 March 2015, http://www.pepysdiary.com/diary/1660/07/07.

[21]   Pepys, *Diary*, 25 January 1668/1669, accessed 24 March 2015, http://www.pepysdiary.com/diary/1669/01/25.

[22]   Though the print depicted in Figure 3 dates to the year after this diary entry by Pepys, it is extremely similar to earlier prints of Louis XIV by Nanteuil. The artist produced prints of the king from as early as the first half of the 1660s. Pepys, *Diary*, 25 January 1668/1669, accessed 24 March 2015, http://www.pepysdiary.com/diary/1669/01/25.

[23]   Linda Bradley Salamon and Nicholas Hilliard, *Nicholas Hilliard's Arte of Limning: A New Edition of A Treatise Concerning the Arte of Limning, Writ by N Hilliard* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1985), 37.

[24]   Edward Norgate and Martin Hardie, *Miniatura, or The Art of Limning* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1919), 74-75.

> I would advise you to get a good hand in hatching, by Copying the best prints cut in Copper you can get, vizt., of Henry Goltzius, John Sadler, with his Brother Egidus, excellent Gravers, Harman and John Muller, Sanredame, Vorsterman, &c., but principally that excellent booke in folio of Jacomo Palma and graved by Edwardo Phialetti, my old acquaintance in Venice.[25]

Not only does Norgate recommend copying from the work of printmakers who were known to have produced reproductive prints—Henrick Goltzius and Lucas Vorsterman—he outright recommends the use of a folio of prints engraved after the work of Jacomo Palma, an Italian Mannerist painter. Clearly Norgate considers reproductive prints to be a crucial tool for the fledgling artist.

A third group to examine in relation to the discussion of the reproductive print is print-dealers. Evidence suggests that English print-sellers of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries favored reproductive prints for two reasons: reproduction aided quick production and reproduced designs that were popular with audiences.[26] Seventeenth century London printer and print-seller Peter Stent left records suggesting an affinity for the reproductive print rooted in its value as a time-saving measure.[27] Stent sold a number of prints that borrowed very heavily from painted and printed sources. He worked extensively with an engraver named Richard Gaywood who produced plates or reworked old plates to meet constantly changing demands in the market. Several of Gaywood's prints copy directly from prints made after painted works. An etched portrait of "Mahomet" (Muhammad) by Gaywood (Figure 6) is an almost exact copy of an etching after Rembrandt's *Bust of an Oriental* by Jan Gillisz van Vliet (Figure 7).[28] Another Gaywood etching, this one titled *Democritus and Heraclitus* (Figure 8), conflates two Rembrandt/van Vliet creations: an etching of a Rembrandt-school portrait (Figure 9), and a van Vliet etching of a groveling Judas isolated from Rembrandt's *Judas Returning the Thirty Silver Pieces* (Figure 10).[29] These examples illustrate the place of the reproductive

print as a timesaving measure in the world of the printer and print-seller. Though Stent did not directly identify these works as reproductions after Rembrandt, their presence in his stock suggests an affinity based on the Rembrandt designs' "tried and true" nature: reproductive prints represented a ready means of producing designs.

Stent also advertised reproductive prints more aggressively than other types of prints in certain cases, suggesting that at least part of his audience was interested in the overtly reproductive print. There are one hundred and sixty prints listed on his 1653 broadside advertisement, with only two printers given by name: "Mr. Hollar" and "Sir Anthony Vandyke."[30] It remains inconclusive whether the advertised prints of Hollar's were reproductive prints, though Hollar was known for that type of work in England so it is possible they fell into this category. The prints listed under Van Dyke's name, however, were almost certainly selections from his *Iconographie*, which were made after painted portraits.[31] The fact that Van Dyke's reproductions are featured so prominently suggests that such prints represented a sound enough product to take up valuable space on the advertisement.

In conclusion, the reproductive print appears to have occupied a different place from other types of prints in early modern England. Collectors' attitudes seem to have been more favorable toward the reproductive print than other types. They were more likely to record reproductive print holdings; and treated such prints in a manner more aligned with the high arts. English artists seemed to value the reproductive print highly as a teaching tool. Finally, the English print-seller valued the reproductive print as a resource for print production, as well as a sound economic investment. These prints represented value to different groups and in some cases even overstepped the bounds traditionally occupied by prints.

It may follow then that the reproductive print occupied a more complicated social space than even Rodini and Zorach surmised in pointing out the communicative and disseminative role that such prints played. The reproductive print may be better understood through a model of intertextuality

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[25]   Ibid., 80-81. The artists cited by Norgate are: Hendrick Goltzius (1558-1617); Jan Sadeler I (1550-1600); Aegidius Sadeler I (*c*.1555-*c*.1609); Jan Harmerisz Muller (1571-1628); Pieter Jamsz. Saenredam (1597-1665); Lucas Vorsterman (1595-1675); Jacopo Palma il Giovane (1548/50-1628); and Odoardo Fialetti (1573- *c*.1638).

[26]   The printmaker described below, Peter Stent, got his start as a printer through the purchase of a large number of printing plates from other printers, for money-saving reasons. Even if these plates required retouching (and they very often did), reprinting from old plates was a far cheaper endeavor than engraving or etching new ones. There is no evidence that Stent had the skills required to cut plates—his name never appears next to *fecit* on his prints—so the cutting of new plates had to be commissioned from a dedicated printmaker, usually Richard Gaywood or Wenceslaus Hollar. Alexander Globe, *Peter Stent London Printseller, Circa 1642-1665: Being a Catalogue Raisonné of His Engraved Prints and Books with an Historical and Bibliographical Introduction* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985), 3 and 5-7.

[27]   The broadside advertisements Stent produced to bring in more customers suggests his business targeted lower to middle class customers; it indicates Stent did not have the word-of-mouth clout that would bring in buyers from the upper class. Globe, *Peter Stent*, 5-6.

[28]   Thank you to Dr. Michelle Mosely-Christian for directing me toward the source of this piece. Globe, *Peter Stent*, 117-118; and Gary Schwartz, "323 The Rákóczy Identity," *The Schwartzlist*, 23 October 2012, accessed 22 April 2015, http://www.garyschwartzhistorian.nl/schwartzlist/?id=175.

[29]   Globe, *Peter Stent*, 119.

[30]   Ibid., vi.

[31]   Ibid., 11 and 92-93.

similar to that put forward by Lisa Pon, that is that such prints form a part "of a dynamic dialogue between many texts."[32] In other words, the relationship between reproductive prints and the larger art world particularly in early modern England was a more complicated one than described by the von Bartschian categories of "original" and "copy," or even by more contemporary scholarly study.

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[32]   Pon, *Raphael, Dürer, and Raimondi*, 5.

Figure 1. Niccoló Boldrini, after Giovanni Antonio de Sacchi, *Milo of Croton Attacked by Wild Beasts*, after Pordenone, wood cut, 1550- after 1566, 11 5/8 x 16 3/8 inches. The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. H.W. Janson. Image © 2016 courtesy of The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago.

Figure 2. Giovanni Antonio de Sacchi Pordenone, *Milo of Croton Attacked by Wild Beasts*, 1534-1536, oil on canvas, 80 ½ x 93 ¾ inches. The David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago. Purchase, The Cochrane-Woods Collection, Image © 2016 courtesy of the David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago.

Figure 3. Robert Nanteuil, Portrait de Louis XIV, 1670, engraving, 17 15/16 x 15 3/16 inches. Yale University Art Gallery, Gift of Sammel Duryee.

Figure 4. Robert Nanteuil, Portrait de Louis XIV, 17th century, pastel. Bibliothèque nationale de France.

Figure 5. Robert Nanteuil, after Philippe de Champaigne, Portrait of Jean Baptiste Colbert, 1660, engraving. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

Figure 6. Richard Gaywood, after Rembrandt, *Mohammed*, 17th century, etching. Fine Prints Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress, LC-USZ62-52262.

Figure 7. Jan Gillisz van Vliet, after Rembrandt, *Bust of an Oriental*, 1634, etching, 9 x 7 ½ inches, The British Museum, released under a Creative Commons Attribution, Non Commercial-Share Alike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) license.

▶ Figure 9. [*facing page, bottom left*] Jan Gillisz van Vliet, after Rembrandt, *Bust of a Laughing Man in a Gorget*, 1634, etching, 8 7/8 x 7 ½ inches, The British Museum, released under a Creative Commons Attribution, Non Commercial-Share Alike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) license.

▶ Figure 10. [*facing page, bottom right*] Jan Gillisz van Vliet, after Rembrandt, *Man Wringing His Hands (Judas)*, 1634, engraving. Princeton University Art Museum, Gift of Junius S. Morgan.

Figure 8. Richard Gaywood, after Rembrandt, *Democritus and Heraclitus*, 1650- 1660, etching, 9 ½ x 12 ¾ inches. The British Museum, released under a Creative Commons Attribution, Non Commercial-Share Alike 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) license.