

# Thirty Famous People: Drawings by Sergent-Marceau and Bosio, Milan, 1815–1818

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DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF ANTHONY M. CLARK

WHILE PREPARING an exhibition of The Metropolitan Museum of Art's holdings of French Empire objects, I had occasion to investigate a curious assortment of once-famous people. Colleagues in the Print Department called attention to thirty neoclassical portrait drawings, acquired in 1949.<sup>1</sup> Twenty-seven have penciled ascriptions to G. B. Bosio on their mounts and three bear the name Sergent-Marceau. Only three portraits, those of the soprano Catalani, Benjamin Franklin, and the Polish patriot Kosciuszko, had been positively identified (Figures 4, 7, 12). Upon examination, more names came to mind; the painter Pompeo Batoni, for example, was eminently recognizable (Figure 23). A few of my identifications were secure—the poet Alfieri and the naturalist Buffon (Figures 14, 17)—but they brought with them a treacherous confidence.

Discovering that the drawings were produced for

1. I am grateful to Janet S. Byrne and Mary L. Myers for their help with the study of these drawings, three of which were included in the Metropolitan Museum exhibition, *The Arts under Napoleon* (New York, 1978) nos. 47–49.

three volumes entitled *Serie di vite e ritratti de' famosi personaggi degli ultimi tempi*, a Milanese publication of 1815–18, I had a humbling lesson in the need to establish certainties when dealing with portraiture, for half of the identities I had proposed would have been madly wrong. Not Frederick the Great but his brother, Prince Henry of Prussia, is represented in Figure 26, and not Lafayette but General Dumouriez in Figure 19. A man strolling on the shores of Lake Geneva, who appeared to be a peculiarly corpulent Rousseau, proved instead to be the Swiss naturalist and philosopher, Charles Bonnet (Figure 27). For that matter, hardly anyone today could have succeeded in identifying all thirty of these celebrities of an earlier age by mere intuition or clues such as lakes and battlefields, plumed hats and scrolls.

Fame and greatness had a strong fascination for the neoclassical age of Napoleon, when books about the lives and deeds of the great, illustrated with their portraits, proliferated. The Museum's thirty drawings brought to light one of these publication ventures, and two engaging French draughtsmen active

in Milan at a critical moment in her history. The key-stone of Napoleon's Italian conquests, Milan was the scene of his coronation as king of Italy. The vice-regency of his stepson, Eugène de Beauharnais, introduced French organization, industry, and fashion as a matter of course. The news of Napoleon's defeat at Leipzig led to a popular uprising and the flight of Prince Eugène. Austrian troops entered the city under Count Heinrich von Bellegarde on 20 April 1814, but even during the lengthy Austrian domination it would have been impossible to uproot all signs of modern French culture.

## THE PUBLICATION

The series of portraits, while encyclopedic in intent, was not particularly expensive to produce. The three small volumes, handsome but by no means luxurious, were designed for intimate consultation. Each portrait, etched on a copper plate with the use of stipple, accompanies a biographical essay of two to three pages.

The first volume, with one hundred portraits, appeared in 1815. It was amassed rapidly, in view of the brisk pace of military and political events in Milan—which will be familiar to readers of Stendhal's *The Charterhouse of Parma*—and was dedicated to the Austrian viceroy, Bellegarde. Bosio's not very flattering drawing of the viceroy (Figure 22) was considerably glamorized by the engraver.

The dedication observes that

Nessuna età fu, quanto la nostra, feconda di potentissimi ed illuminati monarchi, di ardentissimi e sapientissimi condottieri d'esercito, di abili ministri, di profondi filosofi, di faticose e felici collaboratori delle scienze, delle lettere e delle arti.

This is hardly an arguable assessment of the period covered, the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century (*degli ultimi tempi*, as indicated in the title), incomparable for its geniuses and persons of distinction.

Although the scope of the series was European, even global, and its aim was primarily to educate, not to spread nationalistic propaganda, there is a slight predominance of northern Italian subjects, frankly acknowledged in the foreword. The mathematician

Maria Gaetana Agnesi and the economist Cesare Beccaria figure among the Lombards of genius in the drawings (Figures 9, 10). These heroes of the recent past having set lofty examples, the writer of the foreword anticipates a new generation that will spread "un qualche nuovo raggio di gloria!" If a tinge of chauvinism is not absent, the inclusion of Kant and Swedenborg, to cite just two, shows how discerning the selection was on a broader scale.

The compiler identified himself only as the "Editore de' poemi inglesi di T. Gray recati in verso italiano." Penciled in the New York Public Library's copy of the *Serie* is a notation identifying him as Davide Bertolotti. Bertolotti (1784–1860) was an indefatigable journalist, editor of periodicals (the *Spettatore*, the *Ricoglitore*, and *Nuovo Ricoglitore*), a dramatist (*Tancredi*, *Ines de Castro*), poet, travel writer, pamphleteer, and translator of Dryden, Pope, Gray, and Madame de Staël.<sup>2</sup> Even before the *Serie* appeared, he was vociferously anti-French, incensing the Bonapartes with his polemic *Alla culla di S. M. il Re de Roma*. Stendhal, however, that mine of observations on the Italian scene, admired Bertolotti's style: "... de tous les journalistes de la Lombardie, il est celui qui a le plus de verve (si quelqu'un peut avoir de la verve sous l'engourdissante domination de l'Autriche)."<sup>3</sup>

The series opens with Frederick the Great and contains distinguished monarchs, soldiers, and statesmen among the Allies (for example, Alexander I, Wellington, Fox). Louis XVIII and the Duchesse d'Angoulême are there, and so is the pathetic Princesse de Lamballe. Napoleon is glaringly absent; neither he nor Prince Eugène appears in any of the volumes. But several lights of the Empire are present, including members of the imperial family, and the texts are conciliatory under the circumstances. Josephine's is the fifth portrait, and the text for her concludes: "La Religione ha chiuso nella pace i suoi occhi, e le lagrime degli sventurati ch'ella asciugava, sono cadute sulla sua tomba ed hanno giustificato la sua memoria." Joseph Bonaparte (Figure 25, looking

2. For Bertolotti, see G. Ponte, *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* IX (Rome, 1967) pp. 613–615.

3. Stendhal, *Courrier anglais*, *New Monthly Magazine* II, ed. H. Martineau (Paris, 1935) p. 250.

very like Napoleon), is said to have found in America “un asilo, dove goder potrà forse la quiete che da lui fuggiva sotto il peso di uno splendente, ma a lui non appropriato diademo.” As for Joachim Murat, executed so very recently, a matter-of-fact account of his career (Vol. I, no 70) ends by saying that he offered “un terribile esempio . . . del vano sogno delle umane prosperità.”

The chief draughtsman in Volume I was Jean-François Bosio. His engravers for the series were Giovanni Antonio Sasso, Antonio Zecchino, Angelo Biasioli, Testadura, and Torchiana. Bosio himself engraved Charlotte Corday (Figure 18). A few other draughtsmen participated, but the collaboration of Bosio and Sasso is dominant, and was ideal. Sasso interpreted the highly individual style of Bosio very faithfully, setting forth the Abbé de l'Épée, Marat, Pasquale de' Paoli, and Algarotti portraits most ably in dramatic lights and darks (Vol. I, nos. 76, 78, 88, 97).

Volume II, with 108 portraits, and III, with 100, appeared in 1818. Bosio drew roughly half the images for Volume II, using mainly Luigi Rados as his engraver. Volume II also contains several portraits by Sergent-Marceau, engraved by a variety of collaborators. But Sergent-Marceau's beguiling manner of drawing (see especially Figure 5) seldom found adequate expression in the hands of other printmakers.

The last two volumes are otherwise filled with prints after artists whose drawings do not appear among the Museum's thirty. Most of the remaining designs are by the little-known Antonio Bramati and V. de Marchi. They appear to have been less skilled imitators of Bosio, but very occasionally each got off a good shot—de Marchi's drawing of an elegant Vivant-Denon sketching pyramids (Vol. III, no. 97), or Bramati's Montgolfier holding onto the ropes of a balloon suspended in air (Vol. III, no. 45). The entire effort attracted the attention of a draughtsman greater than either of these two, the Roman Bartolommeo Pinelli. The Museum owns a Pinelli album containing thirty-six tiny pencil copies after various engravings in the *Serie*. As copies, they do not begin to convey Pinelli's talent, but Bramati's Montgolfier portrait is amusing even in Pinelli's notational form (Figure 1).



FIGURE 1  
Bartolommeo Pinelli (1781–1835). The aeronaut Montgolfier. Sketch after engraving in *Serie di vite e ritratti de' famosi personaggi degli ultimi tempi* III (1818), no. 45. Pencil,  $5\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{8}$  in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 49.19.1, p. 19

The designers of 308 portraits had the task of compiling a vast iconography, consulting prints, paintings, and medals, before they could proceed with their likenesses. Sergent-Marceau appears to have been more original than the others, who often combined existing portraits with the amplified circumstances in which they envisioned a character.

Bosio in particular found specific sources for the heads and then added bodies and accumulated attributes to color the images. In the case of Batoni (Figure 23), Bosio knew the unfinished self-portrait in

the Uffizi<sup>4</sup> and simply extended it to a seated full-length. From a painting of Cesare Beccaria's head,<sup>5</sup> he moved to equip his subject with an elegant garb and office (Figure 10). He used a Saint-Aubin print of Beaumarchais's head in profile,<sup>6</sup> added a figure, and set him in motion on a hill with Paris in the background (Figure 30). Saint-Aubin's well-known oval portrait engraving of Benjamin Franklin peering through his spectacles served Bosio even better. He had but to add the seated figure and a Franklin stove mounted upon a desk (Figure 7).<sup>7</sup> If other likenesses are not especially convincing, lack of ready sources may have forced the artists to rely on memory and traditional imagery to fortify their designs: an open shirt signified artistic or poetic inspiration; a military uniform quickly disclosed the nationality and rank of a soldier in that war-torn period.

In the last two volumes of the *Serie*, the compilers sought out every sort of greatness. Marat is present as well as Charlotte Corday, Washington as well as Cornwallis. There are pashas and priests, Erasmus Darwin, Moses Mendelssohn, Ch'ien Lung and "(Christoforo) Enrico I, Re di Haiti" (Vol. II, no. 15). For Dr. Gall, the craniologist, an additional plate shows one of his charts of the skull (Vol. III, no. 2). There are more northern Italian poets and Austrian generals, to be sure, but also more artists and musicians. No neoclassical enthusiast would have much quarrel with the eight great artists chosen: Batoni, Piranesi, Canova, Appiani, David, Reynolds, Mengs, and Angelica Kauffmann. The writer's estimate of Batoni (Figure 23) is concise and quotable: "... la

scuola romana dovrà venerarlo sempre, come il restauratore dell'antico suo lustro."

Naturally, the omissions are as fascinating as the inclusions in a work of this ambition. The compilers, based in Italy, could not always be prescient: apart from Napoleon, banned for political reasons, Beethoven and Goya are missing among the titans, neither having yet attained glorious reputation outside his own country.

The *Serie* appeared at the climax of the European vogue for portraits of all sorts and of a passionate urge to immortalize genius as a matter of public instruction. The desire to commemorate famous people and their deeds had become a particularly French trait, born in the ancien régime and expanding during and after the Revolution.<sup>8</sup> Its spread abroad was abetted in this case by two Frenchmen unlike in taste and philosophy, Sergent-Marceau and Bosio.

#### SERGEANT-MARCEAU

The contribution of Sergent-Marceau to the *Serie* began only with the second volume (1818), but as he was considerably Bosio's senior, he commands precedence. Born Antoine-François Sergent at Chartres in 1751,<sup>9</sup> he became a student of Augustin de Saint-Aubin in Paris, 1768. He returned to Chartres after three years but the association with Saint-Aubin left a lasting impression on his style, always delicate, wiry, and informal. A drawing with watercolor, inscribed *A Fr Sergent delin. 1783*, shows this influence at a

4. *Pompeo Batoni*, exhibition catalogue (Lucca, 1967) no. 49.

5. A Colquhoun, *Manzoni and His Times* (London, 1954) pl. facing p. 12.

6. After C.-N. Cochin. E. Bocher, *Augustin de Saint-Aubin* no. 14, *Les Gravures françaises du XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle* (Paris, 1879) pp. 6–7.

7. Saint-Aubin after C.-N. Cochin. Bocher, *Saint-Aubin* no. 85, pp. 33–34. See A. Pace, *Benjamin Franklin and Italy* (Philadelphia, 1958) pp. 293–294, for further information on Italian portrait series.

8. A lively trade in portrait volumes had existed in Italy since the sixteenth century, but immediately preceding the *Serie* a French influence is implicit in such titles as: *Portraits des grands hommes, femmes illustres et sujets mémorables de France* (Paris, 1786–92); *Les Illustres français, ou Tableaux historiques des grands hommes de la France, pris dans tous les genres des célébrités jusqu'à l'époque de 1792* (Paris, 1790–1816, prospectus 1785); *Collection de por-*

*traits, représentant les personnages les plus célèbres dans la poésie, la littérature, les sciences, les arts, la politique, la médecine, l'église et la magistrature* (Paris, 1801); *Collection complète des tableaux historiques de la Révolution française* (Paris, 1802–04). A measure of the French fascination with fame is indicated by the title of a genre picture by Marguerite Gérard, *Une jeune femme méditant sur la vie des grands hommes*, in the Salon of 1810 (no. 363 of the *Livret*—apparently lost). Very likely, Mlle. Gérard showed the girl in reverie, perusing a book about famous people.

9. For Sergent-Marceau, see N. Parfait, "Sergent (Antoine-François) et Marie-Jeanne-Louise-Françoise-Suzanne Marceau-Desgravières son épouse; en premières noces, femme Champion de Cernel," *Le Bulletin des Beaux-Arts* II (1884–85) pp. 71–162; M. Tinoy, *Sergent-Marceau (1751–1847), une curieuse figure de la Révolution* (Paris, 1943).



fairly early moment (Figure 2). A greyhound and poodle are snoozing comfortably in a parlor at mid-day in summer; the floor is stripped of carpet and the fireplace is fitted with a *devant de cheminée*.<sup>10</sup> The ease and refinement of this watercolor are also encountered in Sergent's early color prints, such as a view of the crowded Place des Espars at Chartres, dated 1784.<sup>11</sup>

Foreshadowing his later work for the Milanese publication, from 1786 Sergent produced numerous designs for an important collection of historical portraits, *Portraits des grands hommes, femmes illustres et su-*

*jets mémorables de France*.<sup>12</sup> The color plates—bust-length portraits and robust vignettes—would not in themselves prepare us for the leaner and sparer Milanese work, but the wiry line is present. This series of French portraits, dedicated to Louis XVI, was not completed until 1792.

In the meantime, Sergent had developed into a pronounced Jacobin and one of the most active of all revolutionary artists.<sup>13</sup> At the very outbreak of the Revolution, he etched four tumultuous little scenes to accompany a short text, *Tableaux des Révolutions de Paris, depuis le mois de juillet 1789* (Paris, 1789). He was successively president of a revolutionary district, a secretary of the club of the Jacobins and, in 1792, an administrator of the police. As a delegate at the National Convention, Sergent voted for the death of the king. It is said, however, that he helped to save the lives of the numismatist Abbé Barthélemy, the actor Larive, and the painter Hubert Robert. As a member of the Committee of Public Instruction, he was influential in protecting art monuments, and he was a founder of the Musée français.

For years, Sergent was in love with a married woman of Chartres, Marie Desgraviers, sister of the republican general, Marceau. After her divorce, she

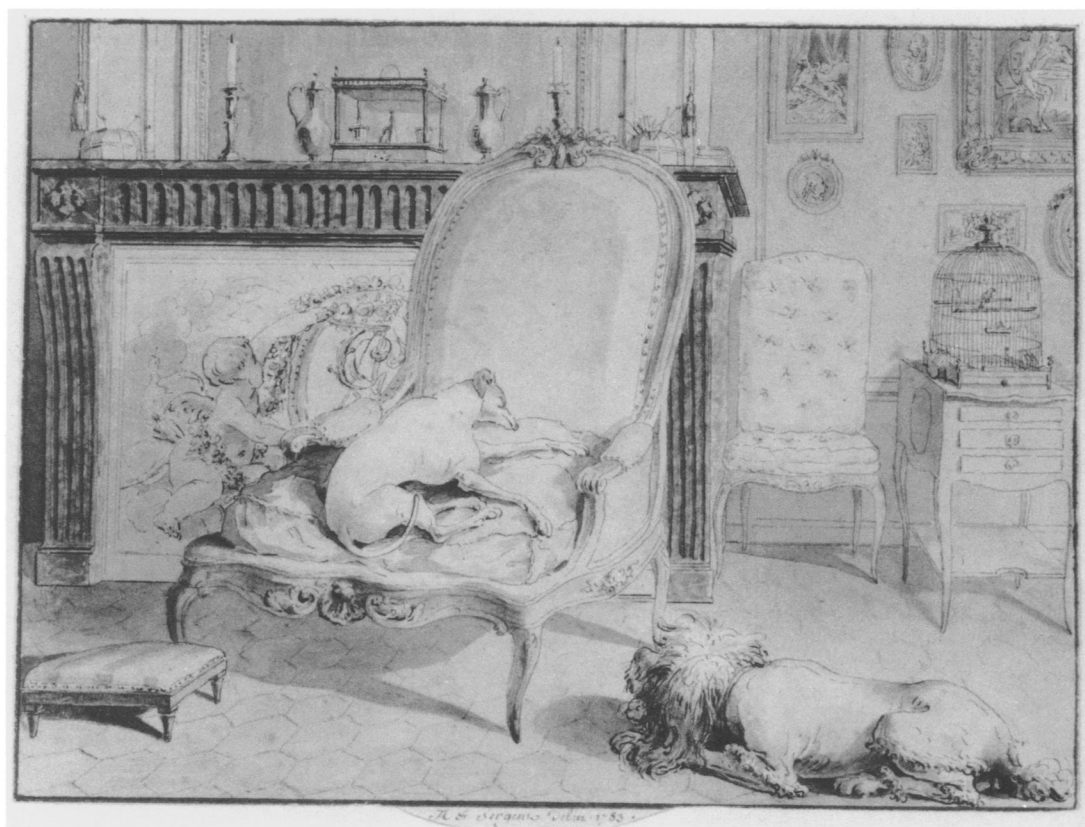
10. Two other early drawings are *La Rose mal défendue*, conventionally amorous but with a whirlwind pattern and hints of an interior similar to that in the Wrightsman drawing (formerly in the collection of Marius Paulme, *Exposition de la vie parisienne au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, catalogue, Musée Carnavalet [Paris, 1928] no. 223; p. 45); and *Le Marchand de marrons du Palais Royal*, signed and dated 1786 (A. Bourgairel sale, Hôtel Drouot, 15–16 June 1922, no. 223, p. 152). Photos in Frick Art Reference Library.

11. Parfait, "Sergent," pl. facing p. 152.

12. Sergent contributed about 138 of the designs and etched about 47 of the plates. His wife also worked on this series.

13. D. L. Dowd, "Art and Politics During the French Revolution: A Study of Three Artist Regicides," *Studies in Modern European History in Honor of Franklin Charles Palm* (New York, 1956) pp. 105–128.

FIGURE 2  
Antoine-François  
Sergent[-Marceau]. Two  
Sleeping Dogs in an  
Interior. Pen and ink  
with watercolor,  $4\frac{1}{4} \times$   
 $5\frac{3}{4}$  in. Collection of Mr.  
and Mrs. Charles  
Wrightsmen, New York  
(photo: Taylor & Dull)



FIGURES 3–5

Sergent-Marceau. Drawings for the *Serie*, pen and ink, brown wash, each about  $6\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{2}$  in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949

married Sergent in 1795, but only in time to share his exile. As good republicans, he had taken the name Androphile (friend of man) and she the name Emira (anagram of Marie), but their connections and republicanism were not proof against the tyranny of the Convention. When the order for Sergent's arrest was issued, he and his wife fled to Switzerland. Out of respect for his brother-in-law, Sergent joined Marceau's name to his own.<sup>14</sup> Sergent-Marceau returned to Paris in 1797 and was employed by General Bernadotte as an inspector of hospitals. In 1801, he was implicated in a sensational attempt on Napoleon's life. He fled again and led a migratory existence across northern Italy, in Turin, Milan, Brescia, and Venice, finally settling in Nice.

The later career of Sergent-Marceau was given over increasingly to encyclopedist literature. At Milan, he began a *Tableau de l'univers et des connaissances humaines*, which apparently did not work out happily. A rare collection of his illustrations, *Costumi dei popoli antichi e moderni*, was published at Brescia between 1813 and 1817. He is credited with introducing copperplate engraving in three colors to Milan, in 1818.<sup>15</sup> He was translator of Filippo Pistrucci's *Iconologia* (1819), but this updated neo-classical derivation from Ripa is more notable for Pistrucci's own magnificent color plates.<sup>16</sup> Sergent-Marceau turned retrospective, writing memoirs of his wife (she died in 1843), his brother-in-law, and his own eventful life.<sup>17</sup> He was pensioned by Louis-

14. His portrait of General Marceau, uniformed as he was the day he died at Altenkirchen in 1796, was etched the same year; see *La Révolution française*, exhibition catalogue, Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris, 1928) pl. XX, no. 654, pp. 185–186.

15. A. Bertarelli and A. Monti, *Tre secoli di vita milanese nei documenti iconografici, 1630–1875* (Milan, 1927) pp. 621, 623.

16. F. Pistrucci, *Iconologia ovvero immagini di tutte le cose principali a cui l'umano talento ha finto un corpo* (Milan, 1819).

17. *Notices historiques sur le général Marceau* (Milan, 1820); *Fragments de mon album et nigrum* (Brignoles, 1837).



FIGURE 3

Edmund Burke (1729–97), English statesman (*Serie* II, no. 4) 49.19.112

Philippe in 1830 but never returned to France, dying at Nice aged ninety-six in 1847.

Perhaps because of his strong literary bent, Sergent-Marceau did not develop a markedly new or different manner of seeing. In his illustrations for the *Serie* (Figures 3–5) the draughtsmanship of the year 1783 (Figure 2) lingers unimpaired. The ardent republican owed nothing to David and never lost a somewhat aristocratic and thoroughly eighteenth-century style of drawing. The first Sergent-Marceau design in the collection is of his brother-in-law General Marceau (Vol. II, no. 3), and the spirited, light portrayal is refreshing after so much of Bosio and the more solid school of the day seen in the first volume. Sergent-Marceau drew several French generals, including Hoche and Joubert (Vol. II, nos. 28,



FIGURE 4  
Angelica Catalani de Valabrègue (1780–1849), Italian soprano (*Serie II*, no. 17) 49.19.114

31), but only his marvelous Garrick (Vol. II, no. 13) was really well treated, the etcher Biasioli catching the nuances of his line.

Sergent-Marceau's three drawings in the Museum's group constitute precious evidence of his later style. The Edmund Burke (Figure 3) has a fine nervous line and opulent foliage appearing fully eighteenth-century in character. The words "Orphan's House," inscribed in reverse below the Gothic window, are intended to reflect a statesmanlike philanthropy. The drawing of the celebrated diva Angelica Catalani (Figure 4) is painfully allegorical.<sup>18</sup> Joseph

18. The portrait, reduced to an oval bust length, exists in a separate print signed and dated 1816. The Metropolitan Museum of Art Print Dept., 20.80.285.



FIGURE 5  
Joseph Hilarius Eckhel (1737–98), Austrian numismatist (*Serie II*, no. 67) 49.19.113

Hilarius Eckhel (Figure 5) provided an evidently sympathetic subject and is the treasure of the Museum's group as a whole. The Jesuit systematizer of numismatics, cataloguer of the Austrian imperial collections, and author of *Numi Veteres Anecdota Doctrina Numorum* is shown tenderly poring over the objects in his keeping while a cat curls up on a pile of books. The inventive composition, enlivened by open cabinet doors and trays with their half-seen treasures, was engraved by D. Klemi-Bonatti in a print that shows excellent shading but fails to capture the essential wiriness of line. The watercolorist is in evidence in the varying tonalities of wash employed in the drawings: the Burke has a greenish brown hue, the Catalani a grayed tone, and the Eckhel a rich reddish brown tone.



FIGURE 6

Jean-François Bosio. Interior Scene with a Dog Performing Card Tricks. Pen and ink with watercolor, 14 $\frac{5}{8}$  × 19 $\frac{5}{8}$  in. The Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Mass.

## BOSIO

Jean-François Bosio, born in Monaco in 1764, used the name Giovanni Battista Bosio during his Milanese period.<sup>19</sup> He was five years older than his better-known brother, the sculptor François-Joseph Bosio, who was eventually created a baron by Charles X. A David pupil whose early pictures ap-

pear to be known only by name, Bosio's numerous entries in the Salon of 1793 ranged from genre portraits (his wife, born Mlle. Rioud, as *Une Mère engageant son enfant à toucher du pianoforte*) to nobler history (*Cornélie, mère des Gracques, montre ses enfants à Campanie en lui disant: ce sont là mes bijoux*).<sup>20</sup> He showed fewer things at the Salons of 1798, 1801, and 1804.<sup>21</sup>

19. Bosio's life has not been sufficiently well understood. Owing to the peculiar change of his name in Italy, he was treated as two different artists in Thieme-Becker, IV, p. 397. L. Barbarin, *Etude sur Bosio, sa vie et son oeuvre* (Monaco, 1910), a monograph on Baron Bosio, contains a useful account of Jean-François (pp. 47–49) but ignores his work between 1804–19, and thus his Milanese period. The same is true of J. Laran and J. Adhémar, *Inventaire du fonds français après 1800 III*, catalogue, Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris, 1942) pp. 157–158. A serious attempt to see

the two artists as the same (or as two brothers “magari gemelli”) was made by E. Legnani, “Ingresso trionfale in Milano del Generale Domenico Pino da Porta Romana (28 febbraio 1808),” in R. Caddeo, R. Calzini, et al., *Milano napoleonica* (Milan, 1950) text facing color plate of painting of General Pino in the Museo del Risorgimento, Milan.

20. *Livret* of the Salon of 1793, nos. 666, 512.

21. Lists of his exhibited works in Barbarin, *Bosio*, pp. 47–48.

A drawing with watercolor signed BOSIO. D-S. and dated *année 1801*, shows Bosio's talent for caricatured genrescenes (Figure 6).<sup>22</sup> Formally composed but very active, the domestic Directoire interior fairly ripples with humor and eccentricities. In the exceptionally broad head and fat belly of the host, at the right, there is more of the spirit of Debucourt<sup>23</sup> than of David. The icily smooth surfaces suggest a still for an animated cartoon. This important substrain of late French neoclassicism affected many artists; its lighter manifestations can readily be seen in the work of Debucourt, Bosio, and the Prague-born Opiz.<sup>24</sup> But Girodet and the younger Fragonard, too, even at their most heroic reaches, may show the impulses of the cartoonist, with fanciful imagery and exaggerated gestures set in bold contours and strong, simple colors.

Bosio wrote a *Traité élémentaire des règles du dessin*,<sup>25</sup> and held the chair of drawing at the Ecole Polytechnique. In Paris, he continued to produce prints in the manner of the Williamstown drawing until at least 1804.<sup>26</sup> In 1807, using the name Giovanni Battista, he was in Milan, doubtless lured there by the French occupation under the viceroy, Eugène de Beauharnais. His portrait of the viceroy bears wit-

ness to his partnership with the engraver Luigi Rados. It is inscribed: *Bosio D.S. antico Prof. della Scuola Politecnica di Parigi dis. Deposto alla Bibliot. R. Gaspare Cagnoni incise in Milano l'anno 1807* and *Si Vende in Milano dalli Proprietari Luigi Rados e G.B. Bosio in Piazza del Duomo sopra al coperto de' Figini N. 407*.<sup>27</sup> The same year, the first planned fascicules of an updated Milanese version of the Carracci *Cries of Bologna* were issued by Bosio and Rados under the title *I costumi di Milano e suoi circondari*. Bosio's work for it foreshadows his work on the portrait series in the skillful filling of planes with figures set in diagonals.<sup>28</sup>

His largest undertaking was a many-figured painting, the Triumphal Entry of General Domenico Pino into Milan via the Porta Romana, an event that took place in February of 1806.<sup>29</sup> Stendhal, who saw it in 1818 in the home of General Pino near Oggiono, noted the painting's size as well as that "Le geste du général Pino est bien pensé: il montre les troupes et leur renvoie la gloire. . . . L'action du général Pino est un peu estropiée."<sup>30</sup> The active poses of the figures with their heavily stressed silhouettes continue the semi-cartooning style begun in Paris. Legnani noted that a magnificent self-portrait dated 1809 belonged to the painter's heirs and that he exhibited at the

22. E. Haverkamp-Begemann, et al., *Drawings from the Clark Art Institute* (New Haven, 1964) I, no. 83, p. 62; II, pl. 68: as *Un Salon Parisien en 1801*. The spectators are said to be watching a trained dog named Minuto, celebrated as a performer of card tricks. Two closely related Bosio compositions, *L'Escamoteur* and *La Bouillotte*, are illustrated in P. Lacroix, *Directoire, Consulat et Empire. Moeurs et usages, lettres, sciences et arts* (Paris, 1884) fig. 31, p. 47, and pl. facing p. 136. This publication is a valuable guide to the fashions and faces of the period (for example, the stylish gentleman in a portrait drawing by L.-L. Boilly at Cambridge [*Cent Dessins français du Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge*, exhibition catalogue, Galerie Heim, Paris, 1976, no. 3] can be identified as the actor Thénard on the basis of the print by Debucourt after Boilly [Lacroix, fig. 162, p. 169]). Another early watercolor, *Les Présents*, more evidently a genre caricature, (G. André sale, Hôtel Drouot, Paris, May 18-19, 1914) shows a similar interior with a frieze of swans, in which an old man gives a purse to one maiden and a jewelbox to another. A drawing attributed to Bosio, *Un Salon parisien sous le Directoire (Exposition de la vie parisienne au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, no. 120, p. 30, lent by G. B. Lasquin), is openly lewd and would show Bosio studying Rowlandson very intently. Photos in Frick Art Reference Library.

23. There are strong formal connections between the Williamstown drawing and a Debucourt spoof on the judgment of Paris, *L'Orange ou le moderne Pâris*, a print of 1800 (H. Bouchot, *P.-L. Debucourt* [Paris, 1892] pl. facing p. 32).

24. These are not at all political cartoons: Bosio's domestic scenes are usually too refined to have a very pointed satirical thrust. He was treated fairly by A. Alexandre, *L'Art du rire et de la caricature* (Paris, n.d.) p. 124, but his elegancies escaped P. Mantz, "La Caricature moderne," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* I (1888) pp. 292-294, who found them to have too much "préoccupation du bas-relief et de la forme sculpturale. . . . Le pauvre Bosio a toujours été amoindri et paralysé par son respect pour les doctrines de David."

25. *Traité élémentaire des règles du dessin par le Citoyen Bosio (élève de David), Peintre d'Histoire, et Professeur du Dessin à l'Ecole Polytechnique* (Paris, an IX). The text of this little manual is preceded by a profile self-portrait, contains anatomical details, and urges the student "Etudiez avec soin les ouvrages de Jean Cousin, Léonard de Vinci, Gérard Audran et Torteat, et ne considérez ce petit ouvrage, que je vous prie de recevoir avec indulgence, que comme un souvenir journalier de principes" (p. 12). A heavily doctrinaire, "Davidian" aspect is not to be found in the *Traité*.

26. He made four genre scenes for the *Journal des Dames* in 1804 and several more after his return to Paris. Laran and Adhémar, p. 158.

27. Bertarelli and Monti, fig. 324, p. 502.

28. For the Umbrella-Man, the Whitewasher, the Knife-Grinder, and the Porter, see Bertarelli and Monti, figs. 455-458.

29. Legnani, "Ingresso trionfale."

30. Stendhal, *Journal d'Italie*, ed. P. Arbelet (Paris, c. 1911) p. 371.





FIGURE 7  
Bosio. Benjamin Franklin, (1706–90). Drawing for *Serie I*, no. 34. Pen and ink, brown and gray washes,  $6\frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{9}{16}$  in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of János Scholz, 49.13.1



FIGURE 8  
Giovanni Antonio Sasso after Bosio. Benjamin Franklin, *Serie I*, no. 34. Etching with stipple. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gift of William H. Huntington, 83.2.2025

Brera in 1812 and 1814 (portraits, sacred subjects, and a landscape).<sup>31</sup> In Milan, Bosio lived in the via Morigi, and did other work for prints, but chief among them were surely those for the *Serie*.

The majority of plates in Volume I and perhaps half of Volume II are after Bosio's designs. The Museum's drawings for them are all executed in finely modulated brown and gray washes, the success of

which can be judged in the seated Franklin (Figure 7). The etching with stipple by Sasso (Figure 8) indicates how faithfully the printmakers followed the draughtsmen, although the process did harden Bosio's fluid line and shading; a comparison of the heads of Franklin shows the arch countenance a bit diluted in the etching.

It would be tedious to dwell at length on each of the Bosio drawings; the illustrations will reveal their merits or faults. Bosio was capable of some very elegant effects, as in the relaxed pose of Count Rumford (Figure 13). For standing figures, he often preferred a dramatic use of diagonals, as in the Prince Henry of Prussia (Figure 26). In his limited

31. Legnani, "Ingresso trionfale." A composition showing the solemn entrance of Francis I and Maria Luisa into Milan in 1815, the coaches and riders spiralling in five bands from Porta Orientale to the steps of the Duomo, was printed that year and inscribed: *G.B. Bosio fecit A. Gerli direxit* and *G[aetano] Lancon inc.* Bertarelli and Monti, fig. 352.

purpose of showing each celebrity in a typical moment of activity, Bosio used the seated figure in an astonishing variety of ways, as it enabled him to focus more closely upon the subject. Beccaria and Cambacérès at their desks (Figure 10, 21) are fairly conventional in character. Maria Gaetana Agnesi is forcefully dramatic in her contemplations (Figure 9) while Condorcet (Figure 32) is contained energy personified. Mark Akenside (Figure 29) is a compelling illustration of Bosio's simple means of expressing poetic inspiration, which seems to come to Akenside from the very sky. The romantic portrait of Alfieri (Figure 14) shows Bosio at his monumental best. In the Charlotte Corday (Figure 18), only the dagger helps to identify the figure outlined against the sky, but in the Buffon (Figure 17), the air explodes with creatures under the great man's observation.

Other plates besides those represented by the drawings show Bosio's fertile imagination: a fine Mozart seen from behind, executed by the faithful Sasso (Vol. I, no. 68); and a Dr. Jenner, most monumental of all the prints, engraved by Testadura (Vol. I, no. 64). All Bosio's figures show his tendency to cartoon; not that he caricatured or lampooned, but he projected characters by forcefully stressed outlines, slightly exaggerated movements, and smoothly modulated shading.

In the third volume, a figure of the scientist Laplace (no. 12) is inscribed *Bosio dis. In Parigi, Rados inc.*, proof that Bosio had already left Milan and was forwarding designs from Paris. He may have found the Austrian occupation of Milan oppressive, or may simply have decided on a change of fortunes. He appears to have found plenty of employment upon his return. More of his genre scenes appeared in the *Journal des Dames* (1817) and more portraits of soldiers in a *Galerie militaire (ou Galerie des Militaires français qui, à différentes époques, se sont signalés par leur courage)* (1818). He sent three pictures to the Salon

of 1819, including a *Death of the Virgin for Chartres*.<sup>32</sup>

In 1822, Bosio contributed an interior scene, *Bonaparte chez le Duc de Florence*, to a collection of lithographs surveying the life of Napoleon.<sup>33</sup> It is a symmetrical composition, broadly modeled and dramatically lit. Although less merry than his early works, it still recalls their eccentric use of diagonals and juxtapositions of scale. The Salon of 1822 saw his full-length portrait of Louis XVIII, painted for the Palais de Justice at Rouen, and another tantalizing entry, a *Poésie érotique écrivant sous la dictée de l'Amour*. The latter was shown again in 1824 at Bosio's last Salon that included his *Achille faisant renvoyer Briséis à Agamemnon*, which remained unfinished.<sup>34</sup> He died in 1827, leaving a son, Astyanax-Scévola (d. 1876), who turned to sculpture under the tutelage of his uncle the Baron.

The career of our second draughtsman shows in retrospect the utmost political pliancy. With the exception of the lengthening Austrian occupation of Milan, he appears to have been at ease with a variety of governments. Not every French artist was threatened like David or Sergent-Marceau, who braved exile, or more exceptionally, the sculptor Ceracchi, guillotined for his share in a plot to assassinate Napoleon. Bosio was part of the larger community of artists who, to maintain their livelihood, worked as steadily as they could despite the most daunting political shifts. In the elevated vocabulary of the day, Bosio himself described the benefits accruing to the artist working in tandem with the state:

Si les arcs de triomphe que la victoire établit sur les trophées des vaincus fixent votre admiration, en vous rappelant de glorieux souvenirs, ces édifices vous montrent que le même art qui honore le conquérant, prépare de même un asyle à l'industrie, sous ces toits où le laborieux artisan consacre ses momens à des travaux qui répandent l'abondance dans cette patrie que vient de défendre le soldat, du haut de ces mêmes remparts que des artistes ingénieux eurent le talent de construire.<sup>35</sup>

*On the following pages:*

#### FIGURES 9–34

Bosio. Drawings for the *Serie*, pen and ink, brown wash, each about 6¾ × 4½ in. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Elisha Whittelsey Collection, The Elisha Whittelsey Fund, 1949

32. Laran and Adhémar, p. 158; Barbarin, p. 48.

33. A. Arnoult, ed., *Vie politique et militaire de Napoléon I* (Paris, 1822) pl. XIII. This did not type-cast the artist as a Bonapartist, of course. The next year he produced two prints of the Duc de Bordeaux: a scene of his baptism, and one of him being bathed by his mother's tears. Laran and Adhémar, p. 158.

34. Barbarin, pp. 48–49.

35. Bosio, *Traité élémentaire*, pp. 7–8.



FIGURE 9 Maria Gaetana Agnesi (1718–99), Milanese mathematician and philosopher (*Serie I*, no. 13) 49.19.104



FIGURE 10 Cesare Bonesana, Marchese di Beccaria (1738–98), Milanese economist and criminologist (*Serie I*, no. 16) 49.19.97

FIGURE 11 Antonio Botta-Adorno (1688–1774), Pavia-born general and diplomat in Austrian service (*Serie I*, no. 17) 49.19.92

FIGURE 12 Thaddeus Kosciuszko (1746–1817), Polish general and statesman (*Serie I*, no. 18) 49.19.87







FIGURE 13 Sir Benjamin Thompson, Count von Rumford (1753–1814), British-American scientist and minister in Bavarian service (*Serie I*, no. 19) 49.19.107



FIGURE 14 Count Vittorio Alfieri (1749–1803), Turin-born tragic poet (*Serie I*, no. 21) 49.19.101

FIGURE 15 Alexander I (1777–1825), Czar of Russia (*Serie I*, no. 22) 49.19.102

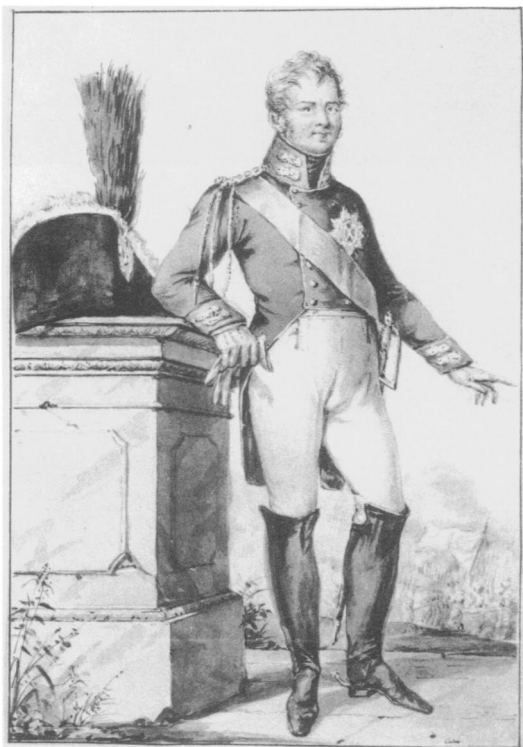


FIGURE 16 Gaetano Filangieri (1752–88), Neapolitan lawyer and statesman (*Serie I*, no. 48) 49.19.111





FIGURE 17 G.-L. Leclerc, Comte de Buffon (1707–88), French naturalist (*Serie I*, no. 60) 49.19.91



FIGURE 18 Charlotte Corday (1768–93), French, Marat's assassin (*Serie I*, no. 65) 49.19.86

FIGURE 19 C.-F. du Perier Dumouriez (1739–1823), French general (*Serie I*, no. 67) 49.19.108



FIGURE 20 Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand, Duke of Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Wolfenbüttel (1735–1806), field marshal in Prussian service (*Serie I*, no. 71) 49.19.89





FIGURE 21 J.-J. Régis de Cambacérès (1753–1824), French statesman and legal expert (*Serie I*, no. 74) 49.19.97



FIGURE 22 Count Heinrich Joseph von Bellegarde (1756–1845), field marshal in Austrian service, viceroy of Milan (*Serie I*, no. 85) 49.19.96



FIGURE 23 Cavaliere Pompeo Batoni (1708–87), painter of the Roman school (*Serie I*, no. 95) 49.19.19



FIGURE 24 Karl Ludwig Johann (1771–1847), Austrian archduke and field marshal (*Serie II*, no. 1) 49.19.88

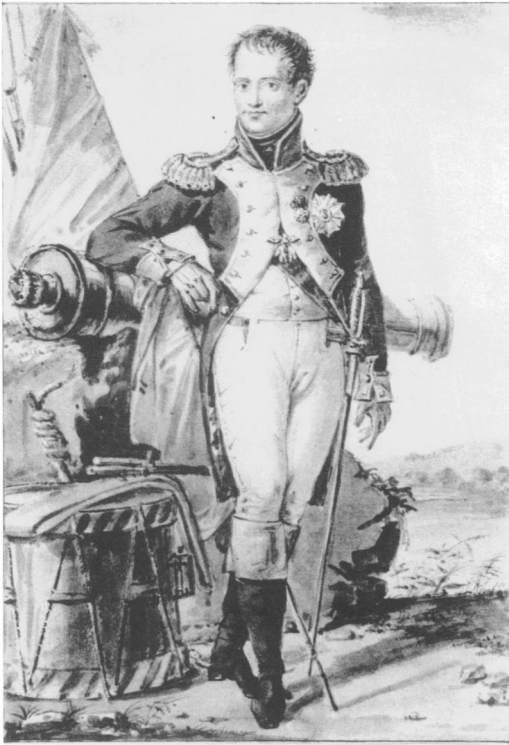


FIGURE 25 Joseph Bonaparte (1768–1844), King of Naples, afterwards of Spain, shown as a French general (*Serie II*, no. 2) 49.19.94



FIGURE 26 Prince Henry of Prussia (1726–1802), Prussian general (*Serie II*, no. 18) 49.19.109

FIGURE 27 Charles Bonnet (1720–93), Swiss naturalist and philosopher (*Serie II*, no. 20) 49.19.93



FIGURE 28 J.-B. de Boyer, Marquis d'Argens (1703–71), French novelist and essayist (*Serie II*, no. 49) 49.19.100







FIGURE 29 Mark Akenside (1721–70), English poet and doctor (*Serie II*, no. 50) 49.19.103



FIGURE 30 P.-A. Caron de Beaumarchais (1732–99), French dramatist (*Serie II*, no. 51) 49.19.98

FIGURE 31 Count Levin August von Bennigsen (1745–1826), Russian general (*Serie II*, no. 54) 49.9.95



FIGURE 32 M.-J.-A.-N. de Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet (1743–94), French mathematician, philosopher, and revolutionary (*Serie II*, no. 65) 49.19.105





FIGURE 33 Giovanni Fantoni, or “Labindo” (1755–1807), Tuscan poet and republican (*Serie II*, no. 95) 49.19.110



FIGURE 34 Jacques Delille (1738–1813), French abbé and poet (*Serie III*, no. 8) 49.19.106