

By this period Catherine was one of the most popular of female saints and also one of the principal representatives of the *vita contemplativa*, and the event symbolizes the mystical marriage of the Christian soul to the Saviour. It is represented in the arts occasionally in the fourteenth century (Museo di Castelvecchio, Verona; Van Marle, *Italian Schools*, IV fig. 100) derived from the *sacra conversazione* (Virgin and saints) type, and frequently in the fifteenth and sixteenth century, particularly in Italy. Parmigianino follows the standard iconography for the main group and each of the main features in the picture derives from the work of other painters – the Christ Child and foreground figure from Correggio, the Madonna from Michelangelo and the St Catherine from Raphael (Gould 1975). However, the dramatic juxtaposition of St Joseph and the wheel upon which St Catherine was tortured, in the foreground, is his own innovation. The popularity of his composition is shown not only by the numerous copies and engravings, but also by its impact on other artists. An etching by Schiavone, for example, is very closely based on the Parmigianino composition.

CONDITION Some retouching on St Catherine's yellow robe above left hand; otherwise good.

PROV. Collection of Pompeo Leoni, Madrid, until 1608; first certainly recorded in the Spanish royal collection, c. 1755, Buen Retiro, Madrid (Ponz 1772–94, p. 122, hanging in a corridor leading from the Oratory to the king's study); Royal Palace, Madrid, 1794 inventory: hanging in the King's dressing room; captured at Vitoria, 1813.

EXH. Birmingham Society of Arts, 1831

LIT. Ponz 1772–94, VI, p. 122; G. Copertini, *Il Parmigianino*, Parma, 1932, I, p. 78–79, pl. 39; Freedberg 1950,

pp. 70–71; M. Fazio, *Dall'Arte. Il Parmigianino. Roma, 1950*, p. 61; A. Ghidella Quintavalle, *Gli ultimi affreschi di Parmigianino*, Parma, 1951, pp. 10–11; **from Catalogue of Paintings in the Wellington Museum, Apsley House, by C. M. Kauffmann, rev. by S. Jenkins (English Heritage, 2009)**

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and other works by Parmigianino in Pompeo Leoni's collection', *The Burlington Magazine*, CXXXVI, February 1994, pp. 110–12; C. Gould, *Parmigianino*, New York and London, 1994, p. 98; M. Vaccaro, *Parmigianino, The Paintings*, Turin, 2002 (no. 17); M. Di Giampaolo and E. Fadda, *Parmigianino, catalogo completo dei dipinti*, Santarcangelo di Romagna, 2003, pp. 104–47, no. 32; Ekserdjian 2006, p. 76

Jean-François-Pierre PEYRON (1744–1814)

French School

Born in Aix-en-Provence, he was a pupil of Louis Lagrenée, winning the Prix de Rome in 1773 and settling in Rome from 1775–82. He painted classical subjects much influenced by Poussin and enjoyed considerable success in his early years. At the Salon of 1787 his *Death of Socrates* suffered in comparison with David's treatment of the same subject, and his career remained marred by the unequal rivalry with David.

LIT. P. Rosenberg and U. van de Sandt, *Pierre Peyron, 1744–1814*, Neuilly-sur-Seine, 1983

126 *Athenian Girls drawing Lots to determine which among them shall be sent to Crete for Sacrifice to the Minotaur*

Paper on canvas, 56 × 99 cm

WM 1625–1948

According to Plutarch, Minos, King of Crete, exacted a tribute from the Athenians every nine years of seven youths and seven maidens to be devoured by the Minotaur, a monster, half man, half bull. Theseus eventually delivered his country from this tribute by destroying the monster. The picture represents the Athenian girls drawing lots as to who should be sent to Crete. In the centre, in front of the statue of Athena, Theseus stands and watches.

This work is described as a 'sketch', and it was painted during Peyron's stay in Rome. It is typical of the themes adopted by neoclassical artists from Greco-Roman legend and history, though Peyron was one of the few to have painted this particular subject. He reworked the theme over twenty-five years, twice earning commissions to paint a large-scale composition (in 1782 for the comte du Nord, the future Paul I of Russia, and in 1787 for the French king), and once a smaller version, also in 1787, for the comte d'Angiviller, works which remained unexecuted. He exhibited a large drawing of the same composition in the Salon of 1798 (see below), and in 1801 he was reported to be working yet again on a painting of the subject.

According to the Wellington Catalogue, this painting was signed *J. Peyron 1778* on the lower step beneath the urn, but this signature is no longer visible, nor did it reappear when the picture was cleaned in 1951. In addition, Rosenberg and Van de Sandt mention an old inventory number 86 in red oil paint, bottom left (1983, p. 82). The date 1778 is plausible for the work, as one of the preparatory drawings is dated 1777, and it was apparently exhibited, amongst the works of the scholars at the French Academy, in the Palazzo Mancini in Rome in 1778, and again on the occasion of a visit there by the comte du Nord (the future Emperor Paul I of Russia) in 1782, then in the Paris Salon in 1783, though not listed in the *livret*, as it



was only inserted on the eve of its closure. There are five surviving ink drawings for this composition: (1) Paris, Louvre, Département des Arts graphiques (16.9 × 27 cm), inscribed '*première pensée des filles d'Athènes tirant au sort*', showing the whole composition and very similar to the painting, except that there are fewer figures in the background (Rosenberg, Van de Sandt 1983, p. 84 and *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, March 2000); (2) Musée Granet, Aix-en-Provence (48 × 62 cm), study for the right half of the composition, showing only the group round the urn (Rosenberg, Van de Sandt 1983, p. 85); (3) Musée Fabre, Montpellier (26 × 40 cm), showing the left half of the composition; (4) private collection, Charles Le Blanc sale, 3–6 December 1866, lot 509, (53.3 × 97 cm), signed and dated *Roma 1777*, very close to Apsley House composition (5) Leipzig, Museum der bildenden Künste (23.5 × 46.1 cm). **Peyron returned to the subject later in his career and exhibited a drawing of it at the Salon in 1798** (Rosenberg, Van de Sandt 1983, p. 86–87). This drawing is apparently no longer extant, but it was engraved by Etienne Beisson and shows an Egyptian rather than a Roman architectural background (Rosenblum 1967, p. 17, fig. 13).

CONDITION. Areas of retouched damage along upper edge, otherwise good. Cleaned by S. Isepp in 1951, and V&A Conservation Studio, 2007.

PROV. Sold by the artist in Rome in September 1782 to M. de Bures de Villiers, but retained by him until 1787, with the intention of making a full-scale version of it; the *citoyen D[e] B[ures]*'s sale, Paris, 21 Fructidor, an VI (=7 September 1798), lot 11; [?Moutaleau] sale, Paris, 30 Messidor, an X (=19 July 1802), lot 121; in a sale in Valencia in 1803 of part of a collection, probably of French origin, consigned from Genoa, lot 3, for 6,600 *reales*, one of the highest bids in the sale; (?) acquired by Charles IV of Spain (whence the red inventory number?, though this does not correspond to any known Spanish royal inventory); seized by Joseph Bonaparte; captured at Vitoria, 1813.

EXH. Rome, Palazzo Mancini, Sept. 1778 and March 1782; Paris, Salon, 28–29 September 1783; R.A., *France in the 18th Century*, 1968 (557, repr.)

LIT. Gaya Nuño 1964, no. 224; R. Rosenblum, *Transformations in late 18th-century Art*, Princeton, 1967, p. 17; J. Vilain in exh. cat., Paris, Grand Palais, *Le Neo-Classicisme Français. Dessins des Musées de Provence*, 1974–75, under no. 111.; Rosenberg, Van de Sandt 1983, pp. 81–89

Jan Willem PIENEMAN (1779–1853)

Dutch School

Largely self-taught, he became a well-known portrait, history and landscape-painter. From 1820 he was Director of the Amsterdam Academy, where subsequently Jozef Israëls became his pupil and Director of the Rijksmuseum, 1844–47. His *Battle of Waterloo*, now in the Rijksmuseum, for which the Apsley House portraits are preparatory studies, is perhaps his best-known work.

LIT. W.F. Rappard, 'Het historieschilderij *De Slag bij Quatre-Bras* van Jan Willem Pieneman', *Jaarboek van het Oranje-Nassau Museum*, 1983, pp. 15–71; *idem*, 'De Nationale bestemming van J.W. Pienemans tweede grote historieschilderij *De Slag bij Waterloo*', *Jaarboek van het Oranje-Nassau Museum*, 2001, pp. 77–91.