

Brigitte Volk-Knüttel. *Peter Candid (um 1548–1628): Gemälde — Zeichnungen — Druckgraphik.*

Berlin: Deutscher Verlag für Kunstwissenschaft, 2010. 486 pp. index. illus. chron. bibl. €89. ISBN: 978-3-87157-229-6.

It will come as no surprise to those who know Brigitte Volk-Knüttel's indispensable research on the Munich Residence in the *Corpus der Barocken Deckenmalerei* (1989) that her comprehensive study of Peter Candid provides an

important contribution to the emerging picture of one of the most vibrant centers for court art in the late Renaissance. In *Peter Candid*, Volk-Knüttel revives the fabric of a time and place that all but disappeared in the vicissitudes of the Thirty Years War, and just as importantly, the changing tastes of the seventeenth century.

Peter Candid, also known as Peter de Witte, is one of many foreign artists who worked at the Munich court under Duke Wilhelm V and then his son Maximilian I, later Prince Elector of Bavaria. Candid stands out as one of the most prolific artists of the period, whose talents became evident in a variety of media. Entrusted to oversee a large workforce, Candid was the quintessential court artist in the style of Giorgio Vasari, and, indeed, had his training in Florence, as did his compatriot whom he replaced, Friedrich Sustrius. Unlike many Netherlandish artists who traveled to Italy from the north, Sustrius and Candid were raised and trained in Italy as second-generation immigrants, making their art and their experiences a unique international blend.

Although Candid was born in Bruges, he arrived in Florence as a child where his father had immigrated in 1558. At an early age, Candid was singled out for praise in an atmosphere teeming with high talent and ambition in Vasarian Florence. But it may have been his training in the production of tapestry cartoons while working with Stradanus that brought him to the attention of his northern patrons. In 1586, along with Antonio Maria Viani, Candid was called into ducal service in Munich. There he became the leading artist after Sustrius, and indeed, seems to have left behind a much more tangible body of work than the first Bavarian court artist.

Trained in a system where multiple artists worked together on big projects, Candid's boundless artistic energy and broad training found an eager reception. Perhaps best-known for the stunning tapestry cycle on the history of the Bavarian Wittelsbach dukes that he designed for the Munich Residence, Candid also was responsible for programmatic painted cycles in several ducal residences, as well as for altar and panel paintings for the newly constructed Jesuit church of St. Michael's. He devised designs for the burgeoning printmaking enterprise under the Sadeler family and may even have worked in sculpture.

Volk-Knüttel's opus is organized in the tradition of the catalogue raisonné, consisting of an orderly progression from bibliographic overview, biography, early training, major projects, and a generous catalogue of what she claims are all of the known works by Candid. The catalogue, which augments hundreds of black and white images with many sumptuous color plates and details, also presents for the first time many images that were only illustrated as black-and-white thumbnails in the 1989 *Corpus*. The exhaustive treatment of each catalogue item makes *Peter Candid* an indispensable resource for generations of scholars to come.

Although Volk-Knüttel already published Candid's tapestry cycle in an earlier work, she includes it here in abbreviated form in order to provide a complete picture of the breadth of Candid's oeuvre. In addition to the visual sources, Volk-Knüttel also provides numerous archival sources, some of them published for the first time, which will be an excellent resource for further study of this period and add to our understanding of patron-artist collaborations. For example, court documents

reveal that Duke Maximilian, when he commissioned the Wittelsbach tapestry cycle, played an important role in an often lively debate over content and qualitative issues of production.

Volk-Knüttel has created more than a simple biography of life and works. She fleshes out the picture of the fluid nature of artistic exchange in the late sixteenth century. Our understanding of the quality and extent of the art produced in Munich in the years leading up to Bavarian involvement in the Thirty Years War has long been fragmented. Volk-Knüttel's impressive volume creates a solid picture not only of the life's work of this important artist, but also of the vibrant artistic culture during a period often overshadowed by the catastrophic events of later years.

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