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Documenting Art, Writing Biography: Construction of the Silvestre Family History, 1660–1868

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Abstract

This article concerns six generations of the Silvestre family: a succession of artists, royal drawing masters, and art collectors whose social ascent began in the late seventeenth century in parallel with the Bourbon Monarchy and continued after its fall. In this article, we show how the Silvestres legitimized a path of social mobility from seventeenth-century artisans to nineteenth-century aristocrats by narrating and documenting the family's history in three texts—two *catalogues raisonnés* that recorded the Silvestre art collections and a family biography that traced the dynasty through the French Revolution. By establishing and advancing the family's reputation or *crédit*, the Silvestres built a narrative bridge that carried them across the revolutionary divide.

Keywords

artistic dynasties, art collecting, France, social mobility, prints and drawings, art auctions

Over the course of a month in the winter of 1811, the art collection of Jacques-Augustin Silvestre was auctioned off in the Hôtel de la Rochefoucault on Paris's Left Bank. The 1,352 lots of paintings, drawings, prints, and *objets de curiosité* were the product of more than a century of collecting by four generations of the Silvestre family, comprising what was said to be the oldest art collection in private hands in post-Revolutionary France.[1] The collection was the material representation of a Silvestre dynasty that had risen to impressive heights in parallel with that of the Bourbons—as well as its major financial asset (See Appendix, figure A1). The heirs, Augustin-François Silvestre and his nephew Augustin-Henry Bonnard, were hoping to settle the debts they had accrued following the Revolution of 1789.

Selling the family legacy, however, did not close the door on that past. In this article, we show how the Silvestres undergirded and legitimized a path of social mobility from seventeenth-century artisans to nineteenth-century aristocrats through narrating and documenting a family history of artists, collectors, drawing masters, and royal servants. Through the production of this history, the

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Silvestres established and advanced the family's *crédit*: that discursive link between the moral and the material which historian Clare Crowston has shown to be at the heart of the Old Regime. "The French attached not one but multiple closely interrelated senses to the word *credit* (or *crédit*)," she explains. "They used it to describe the informal workings of influence and reputation in politics, social life, religious faith, and cultural production." Talent, taste, and service maintained over time were the key components of the Silvestre family's *crédit*, but these interconnected values were never entirely separate from financial success, security, and integrity. As social, political, and economic regimes rose and fell, the Silvestres engaged in "the constant conversion of one kind of credit into another," enriching the family's reputation over the course of six generations. This process of continuity and conversion extended the Silvestres' *crédit* well into the nineteenth century, building a bridge that carried them across the revolutionary divide.[2]

In what follows, we first outline the story of the Silvestre family in the long eighteenth century and then focus on three texts out of which a meaningful family history was constructed in the nineteenth century: a *catalogue raisonné* published in advance of the auction of Jacques Silvestre's collection in 1811; a second *catalogue raisonné* produced for the sale of the collection of Jacques's son, François, at his death in 1851; and a family history in the guise of an art historical monograph written in 1868 by François's son, Edouard.

The Old Regime and the Silvestres's Revolution

The rise of the Silvestres was similar to that of other families who benefited from the expansion of royal offices intended to create a new aristocracy loyal to the Bourbons. In 1662, Louis XIV named Israël Silvestre *dessinateur* and *graveur du Roi*. Six years later, Silvestre was awarded the *brevet* of drawing master for the royal pages, and in 1673 Louis XIV created for him the post of royal drawing master. The Silvestre dynasty of artists, teachers, and collectors was bracketed by this post: Israël Silvestre was France's first royal drawing master, and his great-grandson, Jacques Silvestre, who was still holding the *brevet* when the monarchy was abolished in 1792, was its last.[3]

In recognition of his work as an engraver, Louis XIV also awarded Israël Silvestre "the honor of lodging with the other well-respected artisans in the gallery of his château of the Louvre designated for this purpose."[4] The Louvre apartment brought the Silvestres into the world of the cultural elite of artists, artisans, and savants: what the historian of science Bruno Belhoste has called "a vast caravanserai, housing painters, sculptors, architects, engravers, writers, and scientists," as well as their various academies.[5] On a practical level, a residence in the Louvre allowed the Silvestres to engage in the practice of engraving and the pleasure of collecting while they pursued a strategy of upward mobility through royal service. After the death of Israël Silvestre in 1691, his eldest son, Charles-François, and then his eldest son, Nicolas-Charles, divided their time between Versailles, where they taught the royal pages and royal children to draw, and the Louvre, where they practiced the art of engraving, attended meetings of the academy, sold prints, and built a collection of old master drawings, prints, and paintings. With each generation of Silvestres and Bourbons, royal favor was reaffirmed through the renewal of *brevets* that guaranteed the succession from father to eldest son, both of the Louvre apartment and of the post of royal drawing master.

Also passed down from father to son were the skills of the engraver and draftsman, the activities of buying and selling prints, and the art collection. Israël Silvestre's uncle Israël Henriet had been the printer for the most important artists of his day. When he died in 1661, his nephew inherited both the business (which he brought with him to the Louvre) and a virtually complete set of plates and engravings of Jacques Callot and Etienne La Belle, to which his own drawings, plates, and engravings added additional luster.[6] Fine drawings and engravings were the point of origin for the Silvestres's professional and connoisseurial expertise, and they formed the backbone of the family art collection.

As the emoluments and rewards of the royal drawing master increased over the years, the art collection grew as well. The collection inventoried at Israël's death in 1691 was already notable: Noël Coypel, first painter to the king, was called in to estimate the value of the paintings; the esteemed engraver and print dealer Pierre Mariette was consulted for the prints.[7] Seven years later, Germain Brice made special note of the collection in the entry he wrote on Charles-François Silvestre in his Paris guidebook: "Draftsman whose *cabinet* is decorated with a very beautiful ceiling painted by Boulogne and several excellent paintings; it is he who is teaching the Duke of Burgundy and the Dukes of Anjou and Berry how to draw."[8] Already, the main components of the family *crédit* were in place: taste manifested in collecting, talent manifested in drawing and teaching, and service to the royal family.

Charles-François's son, Nicolas, made the cultivation of taste through collecting his main occupation. In 1734, at the age of only thirty-five, he gave over his duties as drawing master of the royal pages to his fourteen-year-old son, Jacques; soon Jacques took on the rest of his father's duties as well. Nicolas retreated to the Louvre, the company of other artists, and what Pierre-Jean Mariette (grandson of Pierre Mariette), called his "insatiable thirst" for the acquisition of prints and drawings—a thirst he would not have been able to satisfy had his former pupil, the Dauphin, "not, as it was often claimed, bailed him out and paid his bills."[9] The inventories made after Nicolas' death in 1767 show that the collection had grown considerably by then. In the Louvre apartment were 130 paintings, many framed presentation drawings, and a variety of other objects including medals, enamels, porcelains, and bronzes. In a house he had furnished for his mistress in Valenton, about twenty kilometers from Paris, there were another 80 paintings, as well as almost all the drawings and prints. By the end of his life Nicolas had retired there, living the life of a gentleman, surrounded by the collection of prints and drawings that reflected several generations of Silvestre taste, artistic talents, and the generosity of their royal masters.[10]

After his father's death, Jacques continued to teach and collect art, but he had long since abandoned the artistic practice on which the family's distinction and fortune had been based.[11] Instead, Jacques added to the family's wealth, privileges, and honors by building strong patronage ties with the children and grandchildren of Louis XV. Soon after Louis XVI took the throne in 1774, he ennobled his former drawing master as chevalier of the Order of Saint Michel, the oldest chivalric order in France, which Louis XIV had revived to create a new nobility of talent and service loyal to the crown—especially writers, artists, and magistrates. In granting Jacques this honor, the king recognized his personal merit but even more, "the services of his family who have always been worthy of us and our predecessors, and who remain distinguished in the art of painting in which several of them achieved the greatest fame."[12] Like other forms of *crédit*, that of the Silvestre family gained currency as a function of time, what Crowston calls "the notion of an uninterrupted current or track."[13] Sustaining repute and artistic authority over multiple generations increased the conversion value of their *crédit* and provided a means of social elevation. The noble particle that Jacques was now entitled to use and pass on to his children marked the culmination of a century of the Silvestre family's steady progress in social ascent.

Jacques then secured for his son the succession to the position of royal drawing master and, following family tradition, sent him off to Rome to learn his trade.[14] Before François's training was complete, however, the succession was withdrawn in favor of a protégé of the governess of the royal children.[15] François was granted a royal pension of 1,500 livres to compensate for the retracted *brevet*, but this individual pension could not compensate the family for the loss of a dynastic career in royal service established over the course of a century and four generations. To sustain the family trajectory, a new branch was grafted onto the family tree. In 1782, François was granted the succession to his maternal grandfather's post: librarian to the king's brother, the Comte de Provence, known as Monsieur.[16] (This would prove to be a lucky improvisation when Monsieur ascended to the throne as Louis XVIII in 1814.)

Now twenty years old, François Silvestre moved into the family apartment in the Louvre. He was asked to prepare a catalog of the library entrusted to him, which included a substantial number of scientific works. "In order to be in a better position to understand them and to be able to work on his own account toward the progress of the applied sciences," a eulogist later wrote, Silvestre "gave himself over to the study of mathematics, physics, chemistry, and natural history. Welcomed with kindness by the celebrated scientists of that time, he devoted himself completely to the interests of science."[17] As François forged ahead on this new career path, his father established new ties to the Orléans branch of the royal family through the marriage of François' sister, Sophie, to the chevalier de Bonnard, tutor to the sons of the Duc de Chartres.[18] When Bonnard died in 1784, Sophie and her two young sons moved back to Versailles to live with her father, bringing with them the substantial dowry the Duc de Chartres had provided to facilitate the marriage.[19]

When the monarchy fell in August 1792, all the income the family had built up through the acquisition of *brevets*, honorific offices, marriages, and pensions was lost overnight, along with the hard-won noble *particule*: Jacques de Silvestre was again plain Jacques Silvestre. By 1795, he was reduced to requesting a certificate of indigence, declaring that "he possessed no more for all his fortune than 264 livres of revenue from 4000 livres that he had used for food and maintenance."[20] The art collection, which remained with François in the family's apartment in the Louvre, was not mentioned.

After Thermidor, the family regrouped in the Louvre. The household now included François's wife, Constance Julie Garre, and soon their two children: Adèle, born in 1798, and Edouard, in 1800. Three months after the birth of Adèle, however, Sophie and her younger son died of pneumonia, and not long after Edouard's birth, François and Julie separated; they divorced in April 1802.[21] A month later, twenty-one-year-old Henry Bonnard took up his first posting as an engineer in the French mining corps, leaving behind the small ménage of his uncle, grandfather, niece, and nephew. He was in Saarbrucken, on the left bank of the Rhine, in 1805, when François wrote to say that the family would have to vacate the Louvre to make way for the future museum. "I do not yet know where we are going to live," he wrote,

> I would like my father to have a reasonably pleasant place so that he won't miss the one he has been forced to leave after ... 86 years. This is practically the only thing I think about. We are very difficult to house because of all our stuff. My father wants to sell his art collection. He has talked to me about this several times, and I am no longer trying to dissuade him, first because we have waited in vain for a better time to sell for the last fifteen years, and so he won't worry about it anymore, and [second], because finding room for this collection is one of the main difficulties in finding a suitable place to live.[22]

As a family friend noted, "Poor papa Silvestre is really grieving ... [the art collection] was the only thing that the Revolution had not taken from him and which he could pass on to his son."[23] A month later, however, François was sounding upbeat. "Don't worry about our housing," he reassured his nephew, "I have rented in the Hôtel de la Rochefoucault on the rue de Seine. There is a garden, and room to develop my father's collection. He is very satisfied, and we all are, because one always must be."[24]

When Jacques Silvestre died four years later at the age of eighty-nine, François was finally forced to liquidate the only asset his father had managed to hold on to: his enormous art collection. The proceeds would be divided equally between him and his nephew Bonnard. They hired François-Léandre Regnault-Delalande, the foremost *expert* on prints and drawings, to prepare a catalog and organize the sale, but the size of the collection and Regnault's thoroughness meant that it would be another eighteen months before the auction took place.[25] Not until the following August was François finally able to report that Regnault had finished cataloging the prints, drawings, and paintings and was sending the first sheet of the catalog to the printer. "Meanwhile, he will look over the

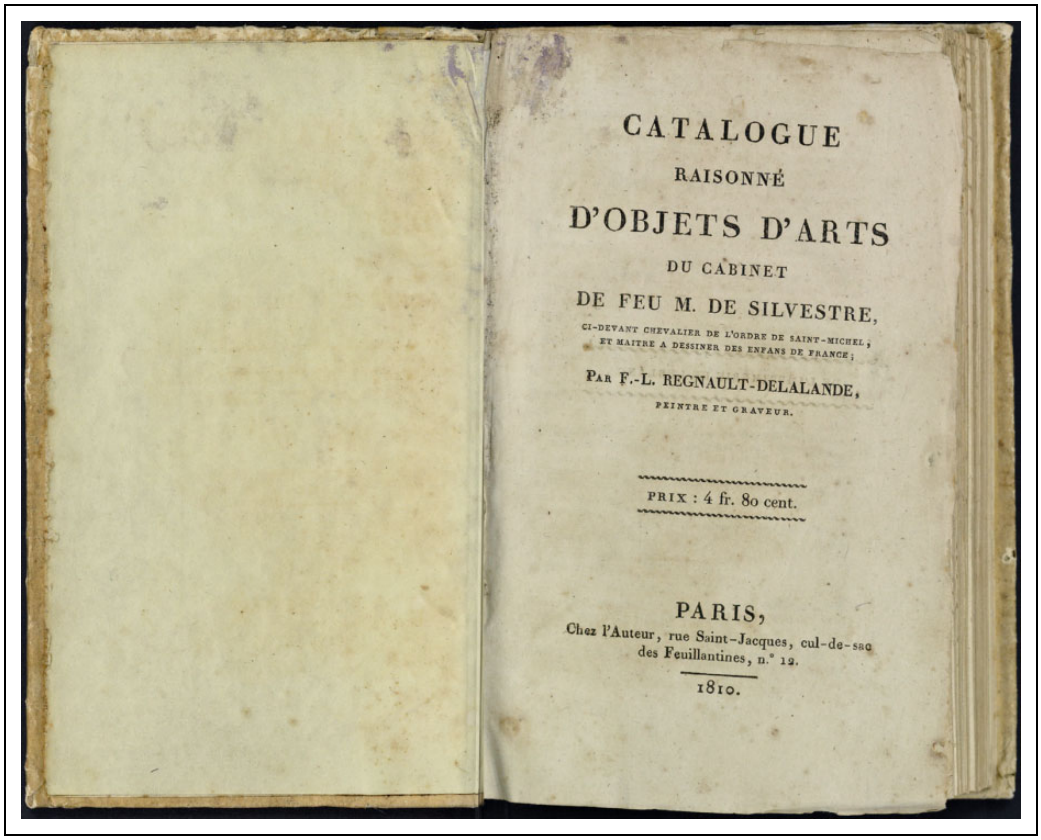

CATALOGUE
RAISONNÉ
D'OBJETS D'ARTS
DU CABINET
DE FEU M. DE SILVESTRE,
CI-DEVANT CHEVALIER DE L'ORDRE DE SAINT-MICHEL,
ET MAITRE A DESSINER DES ENFANS DE FRANCE;
PAR F.-L. REGNAULT-DELALANDE,
PEINTRE ET GRAVEUR.
PRIX : 4 fr. 80 cent.
PARIS,
Chez l'Auteur, rue Saint-Jacques, cul-de-sac
des Feuillantines, n.° 19.
1810.

Figure 1. Title page, *Catalogue raisonné d'objets d'arts du cabinet de feu M. de Silvestre*, Paris, 1810. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute (1811 Feb. 28 PaReS).

rest and catalog the objects, curiosities, and perhaps in an appendix, my collection. That will depend upon whether he sees any advantage in profiting from the occasion to sell it. . . . Whatever happens, I see at least six weeks for printing and two months between the publication and the sale."[26]

A week after its scheduled opening date of February 28, 1811, the sale finally began. A month later, Bonnard reported to an uncle in Burgundy: "The sale ended two days ago, and it did not do as well as we expected. I think that after the commission is paid, a sum more or less equal to that which I owe against my mother's dowry will be left. Thus, I'll be free, but I won't come away with anything."[27]

The *Catalogue Raisonné* as Family Biography

The lackluster results of the auction must have been all the more disappointing, given the monumental effort and expense of the sale catalog and the central place it accorded the collection in the history and identity of the Silvestre family. The 555-page *Catalogue raisonné d'objets d'arts du cabinet de feu M. de Silvestre* (Figure 1), published by Regnault-Delalande a few months in advance of the sale, situated the value of the collection in the *crédit* of the Silvestres, established through a family history that began with Israël Silvestre in the seventeenth century and ended with Jacques de Silvestre, to whom Regnault restored the noble *particule* of which he had been stripped by the Revolution.[28]

The publication identified and formalized the Silvestres's immaterial assets of talent, taste, and royal service through the documentation of a collection of fine art, acquired and maintained—like the

family's reputation—over an extraordinary period of time. The function of *crédit* in the *catalogue raisonné* was in fact reciprocal; the Silvestres's personal characteristics endowed the works of art they owned with particular and personal meanings, while the collection certified the family's taste and social standing in tangible terms. By weaving the values of credit through nearly every aspect of the Silvestre *catalogue raisonné*, Regnault produced a historical narrative that was preserved and mobilized by later generations of the family even after the collection itself was dispersed.[29]

The sale catalog was an ideal site through which to establish the family's significance, as the dynamics of the art market depended upon analogous systems of associative value. Catalogs were structured to perform this task by opening with an introductory *notice* or foreword describing the life of the collector, followed by an *avertissement* or preface detailing the highlights of the collection and the list of objects or lots on offer, sorted by medium and artist or national school. The remarkable stability of this format throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries suggests the efficacy of this biographical approach to selling art. Over the course of the eighteenth century, slight modifications to the textual entries devoted to each lot reinforced the importance of credit in the assessment of works of art: artists' names were shifted to the top of each entry, set prominently apart from the rest of the text, while details of ownership history or *provenance* began to be included as part of the description of a work of art.[30] Every object was located between two poles of associative meaning—the reputation of the artist and that of the owner—which anchored the value of a collection. Through the alchemy of credit, the *catalogue raisonné* translated these meanings into a market value that could be cashed in through a public sale.

Notice sur Jacques-Augustin de Silvestre

Regnault established the terms of the Silvestre family's *crédit* in the first sentence of his introductory *Notice sur Jacques-Augustin de Silvestre*. Yet rather than beginning with the life of Jacques himself, as was standard practice, Regnault reached back in time to position the collection as the product of not one but four successive collectors, each of whom had served as drawing master to the French royal children. To emphasize the longevity of the collection, the primary characteristic that set it apart from any other, the *notice* took the form of a family history that began with the owner's great-grandfather:

> The study of the fine arts requires particular dispositions for the different arenas of which it is composed; it would be audacious to wish to pursue all the arts at once, but it is sufficient to dominate one area particularly well in order to achieve an elevated rank among artists. It is by distinguishing himself in the domain of drawing that Israël Silvestre (to whom the Silvestre family owes, in a sense, its renown) acquired his great reputation.[31]

Regnault followed this introduction with an account of Israël's sons, who were "destined" to follow in their father's path. He describes how inherited talent was reinforced by lessons given in every generation by the father to his sons, and perfected in a three-year sojourn in Italy in contemplation and emulation of the great masters.[32] The *brevet* of royal drawing master granted by each king in succession to each eldest Silvestre son confirmed that talent, which allowed for the transfer and renewal of the *crédit* based on it.

In light of this family legacy, Regnault positioned Jacques's artistic proclivity as an inevitable, even biological imperative. Finding "too many commendable examples in his family not to follow the career in which his ancestors had acquired such a reputation," Jacques was encouraged by his father to develop his "natural talent for the study of drawing, and to cultivate the love of painting which had become hereditary in his family."[33] Regnault interpreted Jacques' assumption of his father's teaching duties at the age of fourteen as evidence of this talent. He attested to Jacques's

success as a teacher in terms that emphasized the *crédit* it produced through his ability to "inspire in his august students the taste for the fine arts that several of them maintained all their lives."[34] In so doing, Jacques increased his own *crédit* by imbuing his royal pupils with the Silvestre taste on which it was based. Once the children were duly formed, Jacques requested the king's permission to go to Rome to "perfect" his own art and taste.[35] In securing it, he received royal approval for what had become a family tradition, like the renewal of the family *brevets*. Upon his return, Jacques took on a new role for the royal children, becoming the "advisor and arbiter of all their decisions related to works of art."[36]

The linear narrative of building and improving the family art collection was paralleled by Jacques's own trajectory from artist and teacher to connoisseur and royal advisor, professional and social achievements that Regnault took pains to record. He concluded the *notice* with the fall of the monarchy and the collapse of Jacques's career, decrying the injustice by which the Revolution stripped the scion of this great family of everything but this very collection, which he has catalogued only so that it can be sold.[37]

The Taste of Collecting

Rather than relegating family history solely to the biographical *notice*, Regnault returned to the lives of the Silvestres in his preface (*avertissement*), positioning the personal and historical circumstances of the family as the primary lens through which to interpret the works of art he presented. After asserting that the Silvestre collection was so well known that one could dispense with praising it, he then explained the matchless combination of factors that shaped the Silvestre *cabinet* in terms of the *crédit* of the family that built it:

> This collection, the first that was built in France, was started by Israël Silvestre around 1690 [sic] and continued by Charles-François, Nicolas-Charles, and Jacques-Augustin de Silvestre, his son, grandson and great-grandson, who became its successive owners. The talent which gave them the positions they occupied, the gifts of fortune with which they were favored, the bonds of friendship that united them with the most celebrated artists of the century, and the endless opportunities to acquire precious items with which they were presented over such a long period of time, everything seems to have come together to enrich it.[38]

The relationship between the family and the objects they owned was exemplified through a small oil sketch by Raphael, first mentioned in the preface at the head of a list of the most important painters represented in the collection. Alone among them, Raphael's name is followed by an asterisk that leads the reader to a footnote in which the work is situated within the Silvestres' own history: "Study of a head of St. Michael, a finished oil sketch on paper; this precious work was brought back from Italy by Israël Silvestre."[39]

The iconic status of the Raphael became all the more apparent within the lot descriptions that followed, showing how social aspirations were encoded in the cataloging of the collection. While the majority of the catalog entries included basic identification information along with a short description of the work's aesthetic qualities and exhibition or provenance history, Regnault went much further in his treatment of the Raphael. After describing the picture's subject matter, he inserted another footnote in order to discuss the finished painting to which the Silvestre oil study related: Raphael's *St. Michael Vanquishing Satan* (1518; Figure 2), the jewel of the former royal collection, then housed in the Musée Napoléon (now the Musée du Louvre).

In this substantial, two-paragraph footnote, Regnault situated Raphael's large-scale masterwork as the apex of Renaissance art. We learn that Charles Le Brun gave a lecture about it at the Academy in 1667, while Paul Lamazzo, a Milanese painter, encouraged other artists to make a pilgrimage to see it in order to study the figure's ideal proportions, which "set the standard for the most perfect

Figure 2. Raphael (Raffaello Sanzio) (1483-1520). *Saint Michael striking down the Demon, called The Large Saint Michael*. Oil on canvas, 268 × 160 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris (Inv. 610). Photo: René-Gabriel Ojéda. © RMN-Grand Palais/Art Resource, NY.

imitation of nature." Regnault further underscored the painting's importance by positioning it within scholarly discussions about its classical models, and concluded by reviewing debates regarding its early provenance. He noted that Vasari believed Raphael had painted it specifically for François I, while Pierre Dam suggested—incorrectly—that it was a gift to the king from Pope Clement VII.[40]

This extensive accounting of Raphael's *St. Michael Vanquishing Satan* did not provide information about the painting actually for sale in the Silvestre auction. Instead, by insinuating proximity to the royal collection under the auspices of documentation, Regnault enhanced the value of the work of art by linking the family's history to art historical and royal prestige. Associating an oil sketch

owned by the Silvestres with an enormously celebrated masterwork from the royal collection reinforced the analogy between the two paintings and the two families to which they belonged.[41]

In addition to its aura of nobility, the Raphael *St. Michael* established the superior taste of the collector, passed down, as we have seen, from Israël, who acquired it, to his descendants who perhaps were shaped by it. The Italian Renaissance had long been situated as the origin of modern art, with Raphael in particular credited with reinvigorating the status of painting through the introduction of new standards of likeness and sophistication, as the chevalier de Jaucourt explained in the article on modern painting in the *Encyclopédie*.[42] A collection strong in works of art from Italy established the prestige of the collection and the social standing of the person who assembled it. This is demonstrated by art dealer Pierre Rémy, who wrote in his 1756 preface to the catalog of the Duc de Tallard's collection: "paintings of the great Masters of Italy have always been regarded as the Masterpieces of the Art of Painting. They alone are able to secure for a collection the esteem of true *Connoisseurs*."[43]

Despite the high status of Italian masterworks from an art historical perspective, however, beginning in the 1760s the French art market seemed to favor paintings from the Low Countries. Between 1789 and 1820, Italian pictures made up no more than 9 to 15 percent of total sales, in comparison to Dutch and Flemish works which garnered 35 to 50 percent of the market and consistently commanded the highest prices.[44] The prominence accorded the Raphael *St. Michael* in the catalog distinguished the elevated, informed taste of the Silvestres from the capricious values of the art market, even though the collection itself reflected those values fairly well, at least in terms of the paintings, of which sixty-two were French, thirty-five Flemish, thirty-two Dutch, and only twenty-one Italian. The rhetoric of the catalog defied those values by privileging those upon which the *crédit* of the family, and by extension its collection, was based. The tragedy of its going on the market at all was the contradiction at the heart of the catalog and could be explained only by the calamity of the Revolution. It was Regnault's job to establish the value of the objects based on those of the family forced to sell them, rather than those of the market into which they were reluctantly introduced.

Beyond the elevated taste denoted by the Raphael *St. Michael*, it was the drawings, and especially Italian drawings, that gave the Silvestre collection its particular character. The family's focus on Italian drawings reflected not only the art historical prestige of such works but also a domain of the Silvestres's expertise that derived from the travel, training, and professional identities that had defined the family for over a century—terrain they alone occupied at the intersection of artistic practice, royal service, and connoisseurship. Indeed, it was on the basis of the drawings he made in Italy that Israël Silvestre established his reputation as an artist and came to the attention of Louis XIV. As Mariette contended, he documented his travels so well that "one could, as it were, follow him step by step, and find oneself alongside him every place he went." His drawings, and the engravings he later made based on them, such as the charming *View of the Capitoline Hill in Rome from the East* (Figure 3), "became effectively an account of his travels," that gave a better idea of the places he visited than "all the descriptions found in books, however exact they may be."[45]

Drawings had been of interest to collectors since the Renaissance, but, as Kristel Smentek has shown, only in the eighteenth century did they become fundamental to the process of connoisseurship. As "purer, less mediated expressions of an artist's characteristic *manière* than paintings," drawings were considered a more reliable basis for attributions and art historical taxonomies.[46] Of the 1,352 total lots in the Silvestre sale, 1,168 lots were works on paper, of which 515 were drawings.[47] The Silvestres collected widely, acquiring works on paper by old masters such as Michelangelo and Rembrandt, French contemporaries like Fragonard and Oudry, and the work of their own students, such as Alexandre-Jean Noël, who studied with both Jacques and his father Nicolas in the 1760s.[48] The collection also held drawings by three generations of Silvestres,

Figure 3. Israël Silvestre, *View of the Capitoline Hill in Rome from the East*, mid- to late seventeenth century. Etching, sheet: 4 13/16 × 9 3/4 inches. (12.2 × 24.8 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Purchase, Joseph Pulitzer Bequest, 1917, www.metmuseum.org.

further blurring the boundary between the practice of collecting and the documentation of the family's own history.

Collections of drawings, particularly those put together by artists, were perceived as being less oriented to public appeal and the requirements of the market, qualities that substantiated their aesthetic, rather than financial, merits. Mariette spoke persuasively about the advantages of an artist's collection in the foreword to his catalog of the collection of Charles-Antoine Coypel, first painter to the king and director of the Royal Academy. "Freed from the tyranny which fashion and caprice exert on the majority of men," he explained, "artists notice only that which conveys faithfully the true character of beauty." The works of art selected by an artist thus "teach [the viewer] to make stylistic distinctions and to place each object in the class and level to which it belongs. If an honest fortune supports the views of the artist, his collection will be enriched by the very best pieces; few will be as perfect, or as instructive."[49] Wealth was necessary to build such a collection, but its value lay within the realm of integrity and connoisseurship, not the market. In these elite circles of aesthetic appreciation, an artist's collection of drawings garnered interest both because the medium offered a more direct experience of the artist's hand and because the artist-collector was associated with a particularly discerning eye, privileging objects of aesthetic or instructional interest.[50]

The association of drawings with pedagogy demonstrated a further connection between the Silvestres and their collection. From Germain Brice, we know that Charles-François Silvestre opened his collection to visitors;[51] Regnault similarly emphasized Jacques's keenness to make his collection of drawings useful to others, both to cultivate skills of connoisseurship and as an expression of generosity. He notes that it was "always open to artists and amateurs;" if a visitor expressed the "slightest desire to copy some pieces from it," Jacques was only too eager to "lend them for an unlimited time, always considering himself to be indebted to the person who allowed him to render this service."[52] The anecdote artfully brings the expertise of the artist and drawing master into the service of noble generosity, thus bridging the social worlds and identities cultivated by Jacques Silvestre through his collection of drawings. Whether such discursive acts also enhanced the monetary value of the drawings is impossible to know, but in the long run they contributed to the family's *crédit* in

the social economy of post-Revolutionary France by documenting the ineffable noble qualities of those who collected them.

The Importance of Provenance

As Sophie Raux has shown, formal interest in documenting the ownership history of works of art emerged in the mid-eighteenth century, following the pioneering work of Mariette on the catalog of Crozat's drawings.[53] In 1783, François-Charles Joullain published the first compendium on provenance, the *Répertoire de tableaux, dessins et estampes, Ouvrage utile aux Amateurs*, partly in order to track the relationship between value and ownership in a volatile and expanding art market. By the early nineteenth century, provenance was considered a standard aspect of an auction entry, so it is not unusual that Regnault included these details whenever possible in his catalog of the Silvestre collection. He described an ink and wash drawing of a Madonna and child by Frederico Barocci as having belonged previously to the collections of Victoria, Crozat, and Jullienne, and traced a sanguine drawing of the Virgin holding a rose to the collections of Coypel and Tallard, even providing the catalog numbers from those previous sales for further confirmation.[54] In some cases, provenance details provided an engaging historical narrative for the object in question. One entry tracked a pair of pastel drawings by Rosalba Carriera from their origins in Italy through their purchase "long ago" by Cardinal de Polignac who brought them to France, and their subsequent entry into the Pasquier and Tallard collections in the eighteenth century.[55]

A notable history of ownership translated into tangible value on the French art market, encouraging *experts* like Regnault to prioritize these details over aesthetic descriptions of works of art. In his entry for a gouache drawing by Correggio, known by its nickname, the "Madonna of the Rabbit," Regnault began with two brief sentences praising "the grace, lightness, and intelligence of execution of this subject," noting that the "contours are delicately rendered, and [that] each part is articulated by its form and local color, detached from the areas that surround it without the aid of any lines."[56] He quickly moved on to quote at length the description of the work from the 1756 catalog of the Duc de Tallard sale. There, the drawing was characterized in terms of the history of the French collectors who owned it: the renowned theorist Roger de Piles, the distinguished history painter Antoine Coypel, and the prominent *amateur*, the Duc de Tallard:

> This beautiful work originally comes from the celebrated collection of Monsieur de Piles. This famous connoisseur, who has written so well on painting, and who joined practice with theory, thought so highly of this drawing that he did not believe it possible to show a greater mark of the friendship that existed between him and the late Monsieur Antoine Coypel than to bequeath it to him in his will. Indeed, it merits in many respects the same esteem as the most beautiful paintings by Corregio. This excellent master appears to have painted it with enough care to satisfy whichever amateur it was who ordered it. We don't believe that one can find another of the same quality anywhere. The late Duc de Tallard acquired it from the sale of Monsieur Coypel.[57]

The accomplishment of Correggio's work is accounted for in this entry, but it is presented within the context of the relationships between de Piles, Coypel, and Tallard, an impressive succession of owners that, like Raphael's *Head of St. Michael*, validated its place within the history of French taste.

The inclusion of provenance details in the Silvestre *catalogue raisonné* corroborated the historical and financial worth of the collection in familiar and publicly agreed-upon terms of *crédit*. Yet drawing attention to provenance served a secondary benefit for the Silvestre collection, since the provenance of an item could often be established simply by reference to the particular Silvestre who had acquired it. This *internal* provenance distinguished the collection from all others and increased the perceived value of individual items in it, framing the text and emerging from the individual

entries for which provenance was asserted. In his entry for Raphael's *Head of St. Michael*, for example, Regnault interrupted the description of the painting to incorporate the family's acquisition of it into the account: "A head of St. Michael; study by Raphael for the subject in which this great master presented St. Michael casting off Satan. This precious work, in which some slight variations in the hair and the pose may be found, was brought back from Italy by *Israël Silvestre*. It is painted on paper and mounted on wood."[58]

Provenance also revealed the hidden dynamics of a collection constructed over the course of multiple generations. For example, in the lot descriptions devoted to Correggio's drawings, a sanguine drawing of the Virgin and Child, noted as purchased from the Lempereur sale in 1773, is sandwiched between drawings acquired from the Duc de Tallard sale twenty years earlier.[59] Nicolas-Charles Silvestre, who died in 1767, most likely acquired the drawings from the Tallard sale, while his son Jacques was responsible for the Virgin and Child. Thus, while the surface impression of the catalog presented the collection as an atemporal whole, beneath it the narrative of family history laid out in the biographical *notice* could be captured in the fragments of discrete entries. Accounts of internal provenance emphasized the personal connections between individual Silvestres and particular objects; not just the Raphael that Israël Silvestre acquired in Italy, but a painting of Bacchus and Ariadne by Felix Tibaldi that we are told was "painted for the late M. [Jacques] de Silvestre," and two landscapes by Claude-Joseph Vernet likewise described as being made for Jacques in Italy.[60]

The attention to provenance shows that the value of the collection lay first in transmission—of objects, taste, expertise, and wealth—from one generation to the next. But the *crédit* the family accumulated over time provided an additional dynamic by which the collection grew in both size and significance. References to provenance reiterated the link between the family's social ascent and the collection they built, in a continuous cycle of transmitted and converted credit that, it was hoped, would translate into cash at the 1811 auction. While the sale was less successful on this front than François Silvestre and Henry Bonnard had anticipated, the narrative captured in the accompanying publication established the family's *crédit* in persuasive terms, documenting their achievements in perpetuity for the benefit of subsequent generations of Silvestres.[61]

1811–1851: The Collection of Augustin-François de Silvestre

On paper, the Silvestre collection was dispersed in its entirety in 1811. The *table des prix*, a list of the auction results printed after the sale, provides prices earned for every lot in the catalog.[62] This included François's own fledgling collection, just under 100 paintings, drawings, prints, and albums that appeared as an appendix to the 1810 *catalogue raisonné*.[63] The collections of father and son were listed separately because the proceeds of the sale of Jacques Silvestre's *cabinet* had to be divided between the two heirs, each of whom was required to purchase any works he wished to keep. François would receive all of the proceeds of the sale of his own collection.

An annotated copy of Regnault's catalog for the Silvestre sale reveals that François bought at least two of the lots: a series of four landscapes by Brueghel, and the very first lot, a painting by Étienne Aubry entitled *Les Adieux de Coriolan à sa femme (Coriolanus' Farewell to his Wife*; Figure 4).[64] Aubry had been Jacques Silvestre's student; in fact, he was practically a member of the family. In 1764, he represented the godfather at the baptism of Jacques's daughter Sophie; in 1777, Jacques sent fourteen-year-old François to Rome under the supervision of his former pupil.[65] The purpose of the trip was twofold: the boy would complete his artistic education, and Aubry would realize his ambition to be accepted as a history painter by steeping himself in classical models. Things turned out quite differently for François, as we know, but also for Aubry, who died six months after his return to France. *Coriolanus' Farewell to his Wife* was the sole history painting Aubry completed in Rome, and it was well received upon his return to Paris.

Figure 4. Étienne Aubry (French, 1745–1781), *Les Adieux de Coriolan à sa Femme au moment qu'il part pour se rendre chez les Volsques. (Coriolanus Taking Leave of his Wife to Join the Volscians in their Attack upon Rome)*. Oil on canvas, ca. 1780. Purchase with funds given in honor of Helen Leidner Chaikin by her daughter Joyce Chaikin Ahrens, Class of 1962. Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, South Hadley, Massachusetts (2014.32). Photograph Laura Shea.

Reporting on the Salon in which the *Coriolanus* was shown two months after the painter's death, the *Mémoires secrets* wrote that is was "justly admired" for its "true color, a wise composition, a clear effect, and above all excellent classical taste. One can only regret such an artist, for whom this painting was his début as a history painter, and dead at 36 in his native city."[66] Jacques acquired the picture soon after his student's untimely death.[67]

Although the *Coriolanus* may have been a settlement of Aubry's financial debt to him, it clearly also meant much more than that to Jacques, as a note found in his papers after his own death almost thirty years later suggests:

> My son returned from Rome with M. Aubry in the month of December 1780, after a three-year stay in Italy. Aubry died six months after his return. A few days before his death we closed out our affairs together. He owed me five thousand livres that doubtless will never be paid me, but this is a small misfortune in comparison with his loss, which I will regret always for as long as I live.[68]

François's acquisition of *Coriolanus' Farewell* in the 1811 sale connected him not only to his companion and mentor Aubry, and to his own education as an artist and connoisseur, but to his father and the multigenerational collection to which the painting had belonged. From this beginning, François began to build a new collection, which is documented in the sale catalog produced at the time of his

death in 1851. Organized by *commissaire-priseur* Bonnefons de Lavialle, the sale of François's collection was a much more modest affair than the sale of his father's collection forty years earlier.[69] It was split into four *vacations* held over a three-day period, with the catalog's contents organized conventionally by medium and national school in a concise fifty-two pages.[70] This brevity reflected not only the smaller size of François's collection, but also a change in cataloging practice. By the mid-nineteenth century, impressive tomes such as those produced by Regnault had gone out of fashion, and catalog entries were pared down to the essentials: an artist's last name, a title, and occasionally a description of the work's subject matter or medium, descriptive details that were intended to convey a sense of objectivity based on facts rather than authority based on taste.[71]

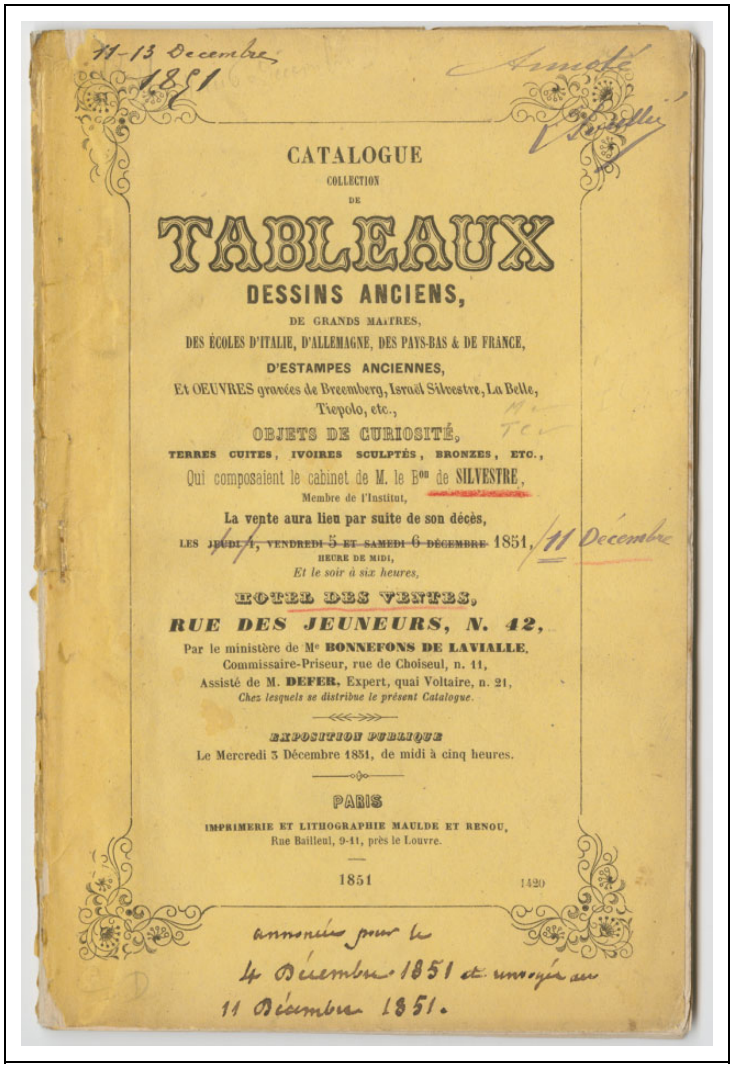
Coriolanus' Farewell was not among the paintings in the 1851 sale, but at least twelve of the most important works of art from Jacques Silvestre's collection were listed in the catalog of his son's collection.[72] These include Correggio's esteemed *Madonna of the Rabbit*, Peter Paul Rubens' drawing *The Fall of the Damned*, and the iconic Raphael *Head of St. Michael*, the latter given prime position as lot number one in the new catalog. Since his name does not appear as buyer of these works in annotated copies of the 1810 catalog, it appears that François either bought the objects back later or acquired them from his father's auction by employing dealers to bid on his behalf, a common practice that allowed an heir to buy in the collection without suggesting the impression of a failed sale to the public.[73]

Bonnefons's spare descriptions make it impossible to confirm how many of the other lots derived from the 1811 sale, but there are striking similarities between the collections of father and son: both included landscape paintings by Paul Pannini, an *Adoration of the Shepherds* by Corneille Poelemburg, a pen and ink drawing by Leonardo da Vinci, and an *Ascension of the Virgin* by Castiglione, as well as drawings by Israël, Louis, and Charles-François Silvestre.[74] If François did not acquire these pictures directly from his father's sale, he clearly pursued work that was resonant of family taste.

Bonnefons de Lavialle highlighted this continuity between the two collections in his catalog entries. Only the important works of art from the family collection were accompanied by textual commentary in Bonnefons' lot descriptions, and these texts were drawn almost entirely from Regnault's 1810 catalog. In his entry for the Raphael *Head of Saint Michael*, for example, Bonnefons eliminated Regnault's extensive account of the finished masterwork to which the Silvestre study related, but he copied verbatim the final paragraph from the earlier catalog that tied it to Israël Silvestre: "A head of St. Michael, study by Raphael, for the subject in which this great master represented St. Michael vanquishing the demon. This precious piece in which one finds some minor changes in the hairstyle and composition was brought back from Italy by *Israël Silvestre*. It is painted on paper and mounted on wood."[75] For Rubens' *Fall of the Damned*, Bonnefons simply reproduced Regnault's description, adding only that the drawing came from the collection of Israël Silvestre to reiterate the continuity between François's collection and that initiated by his illustrious forebear.[76]

This interpretation of François's collection as the perpetuation of the Silvestre family legacy was advanced within the catalog's introductory texts as well. François is presented as coming from a family "known for more than two centuries for their taste and practice of the arts," whose collection formed the *noyau* [heart or kernel] of the present sale.[77] Bonnefons could not position François—whose own career of public service culminated in more than a decade as head of the Bureau of Agriculture in the Ministry of the Interior—as an artist or drawing master whose expertise was cultivated through practice, so he focused on the continuity of taste that defined his illustrious family. Dealing delicately with the unexpected withdrawal of the *brevet* of royal drawing master Bonnefons declared:

> From the artist he had been up to then, M. de Silvestre became the most enlightened amateur, the most skilled at researching and discovering riches that could be added to the collection of paintings and drawings, the precious heritage transmitted by Israël Silvestre to his descendants, ceaselessly augmented by their efforts and placed, in the opinion of connoisseurs, in the first rank of artistic collections by the perfection of the taste of Jacques-Augustin Silvestre.[78]



11-13 Décembre 1851

CATALOGUE

COLLECTION

DE

TABLEAUX

DESSINS ANCIENS,

DE GRANDS MAITRES,

DES ÉCOLES D'ITALIE, D'ALLEMAGNE, DES PAYS-BAS & DE FRANCE,

D'ESTAMPES ANCIENNES,

Et OEUVRES gravées de Breemberg, Israël Silvestre, La Belle, Tiepolo, etc.,

OBJETS DE CURIOSITÉ,

TERRES CUITES, IVOIRES SCULPTÉS, BRONZES, ETC.,

Qui composaient le cabinet de M. le Bon de SILVESTRE,

Membre de l'Institut,

La vente aura lieu par suite de son décès,

LES ~~JEUDI 4, VENDREDI 5 ET SAMEDI 6 DÉCEMBRE~~ 1851, 11 Décembre

HEURE DE MIDI,

Et le soir à six heures,

HOTEL DES VENTES,

RUE DES JEUNEURS, N. 42,

Par le ministère de Me BONNEFONS DE LAVIALLE,

Commissaire-Priseur, rue de Choiseul, n. 11,

Assisté de M. DEFER, Expert, quai Voltaire, n. 21,

Chez lesquels se distribue le présent Catalogue.

EXPOSITION PUBLIQUE

Le Mercredi 3 Décembre 1851, de midi à cinq heures.

PARIS

IMPRIMERIE ET LITHOGRAPHIE MAULDE ET RENOU,

Rue Bailleul, 9-11, près le Louvre.

1851

1420

annoncés pour le 4 Décembre 1851 et renvoyés au 11 Décembre 1851.

Figure 5. Title page, *Catalogue. Collection de tableaux, dessins anciens, . . . objets de curiosité . . . qui composaient le cabinet de M. le Bon de Silvestre*, Paris, 1851. Courtesy of the Frick Art Reference Library (December 11, 1851 [Dec. 04, 1851]).

François's deviation from the family profession is papered over by seamlessly folding him into an ongoing history in which the Silvestres were *amateurs* as much as artists, members of a cultural elite whose taste was cultivated through the practice of collecting itself.[79] By positioning François as an *amateur*, Bonnefons protected the collector against any loss of connoisseurial authority he might have appeared to suffer by leaving a professional career in the arts, while elevating him socially out of the world of artisans from which the Silvestres had definitively emerged.

Bonnefons reinforced this account of François' elevated social status by focusing more on the family's association with the Bourbon monarchy than on the Silvestres's artistic talents and achievements. The title page of the catalog set the tone for this approach by identifying the owner of the collection by the title that had been bestowed on him by Charles X in 1826: Baron de Silvestre (Figure 5).[80]

Since François's title was technically invalid at the time of the sale—along with all titles of nobility following the Revolution of 1848—its inclusion here suggests that a connection to the aristocracy still registered value on the art market. Within the catalog, Bonnefons further underscored François's proximity to the monarchy by describing him as the "former reader and librarian of Louis XVIII and Charles X." He then placed François in a lineage that began with Louis XIV's drawing master, Israël Silvestre, and continued through his son Charles-François, tutor to the sons of Louis XIV: the Duc de Bourgogne, "cherished disciple of Fénelon and the great hope of the throne of France;" the Duc d'Anjou, who "later became Philip V of Spain;" and the Duc de Berry.[81] Although the dynasty of royal drawing masters had come to an end with Jacques, a footnote informed the reader that Jacques' grandchildren were still in possession of a set of drawings made by these princes for their tutor, royal gifts that would preserve materially the Silvestre family's connection to the French monarchy.[82]

Through these various rhetorical strategies, Bonnefons produced a narrative of continuity in which François Silvestre not only inherited and perpetuated the family's *crédit* but elevated and enhanced it through his own ties to the restored monarchy. This narrative of consistent and ongoing improvement was very similar to the one employed by Regnault in his description of the Silvestre collection sold in 1811, yet there are significant differences between the collections that these texts elide. The 1810 catalog represented four generations of collecting during which time tastes and acquisition priorities shifted and evolved. By presenting the collection as the product of shared—indeed inherited—taste, Regnault imposed coherence on the Silvestre *cabinet* that it may never have had. The inclusion of François's "starter" collection as an appendix to the 1810 catalog challenges the idea of simple dynastic succession in which each Silvestre in turn picked up where his father left off. Like Jacques and François, earlier Silvestre fathers and sons probably collected simultaneously and separately, the collections merging only at the father's death. The continuity in taste asserted by both Regnault and Bonnefons was thus an idealization that concealed particularities in collecting choices as well as the dynamics of collecting practice itself, which includes selling as well as buying. The result, as put forward in the 1810 catalog, is the perception of a single collection embodying an idealized "Silvestre" dynasty and taste, continuity that bolstered a straight line of uninterrupted and ever-accumulating Silvestre credit.

A comparison between the 1810 and 1851 catalogs shows that François actively promoted this ideal and chose, over the course of the nineteenth century, to acquire art in this spirit. While his collection was smaller than his father's and oriented toward paintings and drawings rather than drawings and prints, many of the same artists and subjects are represented, in addition to the key family objects acquired from his father's collection. Notably missing from the collection is art contemporary to the period in which he was buying; the nineteenth century is represented only by a pen drawing attributed to Ingres and an 1827 watercolor by Pierre-Alexandre Wille (known as Wille *fils*), an artist who exhibited in the 1770s alongside Aubry.[83] There are practical reasons for this—François's professional art training ended in 1780, and thus his access to artists and knowledge of contemporary art was much more limited than that of his forebears—but it also suggests the conscious desire to acquire works of art legitimized by the taste he was purported to have inherited.[84] Through the process of acquiring works of art owned or admired by his family, François preserved the family's identity and extended its legacy, and his own role within it, into the mid-nineteenth century.

Information about Certain Painters and Engravers of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

"Due to my advanced age and the poor state of my health, I have decided to make a testament, more to make suggestions and advise my two children who will of course inherit my property, than to lay out unalterable wishes," François Silvestre wrote in his own shaky hand in May 1851, four months

before his death. He wanted to explain to his children the meaning of this inheritance and how he hoped they would handle it. He apologized for not yet having cleared up all his debts. "The main satisfaction that I will take to the grave," he wrote, "is that of leaving to my children a greater fortune than I received from my parents," despite the difficulties presented by a half century of social and political turmoil. He urged Adèle and Edouard to do the same for their children. By his accounting, he had inherited a total of 236,673 francs and was leaving to his children 653,700. However, this estimate was based on his own valuation of his art collection at 100,000 francs—almost as much as his father's much larger one had brought in and four times what the collection brought at auction seven months later.[85]

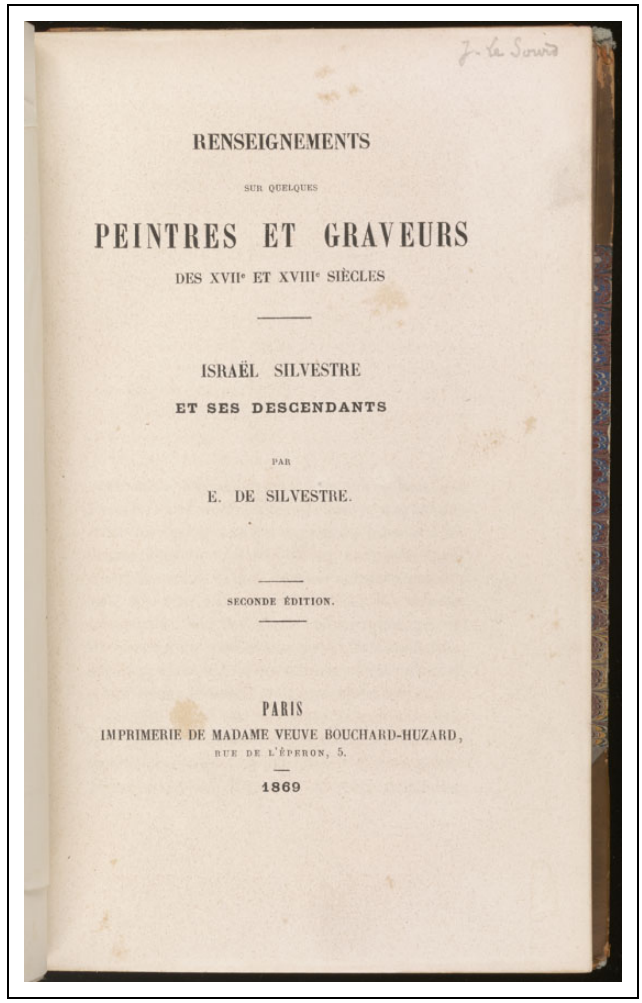
François had encouraged his children not to put his collection up for sale, but they did so anyway.[86] And yet, just as François had held on to remnants of his father's collection forty years earlier, Edouard took steps to preserve his own version of the family legacy: he kept the family portraits and the two drawings made by the Bourbon princes, none of which had ever been put up for sale, as well as a few drawings and engravings by Israël Silvestre. Then, in 1868, he published a history of his family under the title, *Renseignements sur quelques peintres et graveurs des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles: Israël Silvestre et ses descendants* (Figure 6).

Edouard's idea to write a family history may have been spurred by his contact with L. E. Faucheux, a librarian who published the first *catalogue raisonné* of the prints of Israël Silvestre in 1857. In the biographical *notice* that serves as introduction to his catalog, Faucheux acknowledged Edouard's generosity in sharing family documents with him.[87] Faucheux also acknowledged an 1852 publication by M. E. Meaume, *Recherches sur quelques artistes lorrains: Claude Henriet, Israel Henriet, Israël Silvestre et ses descendants*, whose title Edouard adapted to his own purposes by omitting the reference to Lorraine and the Henriets to focus his book—just as Regnault and Bonnefons had done—squarely on the Silvestre dynasty that began with Israël.[88]

Regnault's catalog was an important source for Meaume.[89] While he seems not to have had access to the documents Edouard shared with Faucheux a few years later, Meaume included François among the descendants of Israël Silvestre and echoed Bonnefon's claim that although he had "abandoned his artistic studies" for the natural sciences, the Silvestre sensibility lived on in him, and that he continued to demonstrate "a pronounced taste for the arts." Although Edouard had not demonstrably inherited that taste, Meaume still saw in him "a worthy heir to the virtues of his ancestors."[90]

Professionally, Edouard had followed the path advocated by his father, studying at the Ecole Polytechnique and then entering public service as a captain in the artillery.[91] However, by the time of his father's death, his profession was given simply as "propriétaire," and he had recently joined the administrative council of a charitable organization of which his father was a founding member.[92] His cousin followed more closely his uncle's vision for the future: Henry Bonnard achieved a successful career in state service, election to the scientific society his uncle had founded in 1788, and then to the Institut (to which Silvestre had been elected in 1806), and the Légion d'honneur in 1834—thirteen years after his uncle was awarded it.[93] Edouard earned none of these honors, but he did inherit his father's crowning achievement, the title of "Baron de Silvestre," which had been restored, along with all other noble titles, by Louis Napoleon, and set himself the task of writing and preserving a family history to explain it, undergird it, and give it the luster it deserved. Thanks to Edouard, succeeding generations of Silvestres would be able to show the world that their title of nobility was backed by *crédit* earned through talent, taste, and service to the French monarchy going back to Louis XIV.

"Several biographers have written sketches of Israël Silvestre and his family," Edouard wrote in his preface to the *Renseignements*, "but, not having in their hands all the documents relevant to their work, they have, despite their research and their talent, made certain mistakes which I have thought it necessary to rectify. It will be by sticking to the authentic documents in my possession that I will make known, to the degree that it is possible, what concerns Israël Silvestre and his descendants, all



RENSEIGNEMENTS

SUR QUELQUES

PEINTRES ET GRAVEURS

DES XVII^e ET XVIII^e SIÈCLES

ISRAËL SILVESTRE

ET SES DESCENDANTS

PAR

E. DE SILVESTRE.

SECONDE ÉDITION.

PARIS

IMPRIMERIE DE MADAME VEUVE BOUCHARD-HUZARD,

RUE DE L'ÉPERON, 5.

1869

Figure 6. Title page, *Renseignements sur quelques peintres et graveurs des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles: Israël Silvestre et ses descendants*, Paris, 1869. Special Collections, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA (N6853 .S5 S6).

of whom cultivated the arts."[94] He then assured the reader that he would not discuss the *oeuvre* of Israël Silvestre or its artistic merits, deferring here to Faucheux, but he would enrich the biographies of his lesser-known descendants with the elements of a *catalogue raisonné*, "indicating their principal productions, both those which are known to me, and which I possess in large part, and those which I have not yet seen, but which are mentioned in the specialized works that discuss them." And here he acknowledged both Meaume and Prosper de Baudicour, a collector who published a *catalogue raisonné* of eighteenth-century French painter-engravers in 1859.[95] Edouard concluded his preface by reiterating that all the "titles, *brevets*, and diverse documents which will be found at the end of this sketch in chronological order, are for the most part unpublished, and have been copied, I repeat, from the originals which I have in my hands and which bear the signatures of the people, princes or ministers, who signed or countersigned them."[96]

Regnault had documented the family history by cataloging the works of art that filled the Silvestre apartment in the Hôtel de la Rochefoucault when Jacques died in 1809; Edouard now laid the archival foundation of that history by cataloging the documents that had accumulated

over the course of the same 150 years that Silvestres were collecting art. For Edouard, collecting art, like making or teaching it, was now only family history. In writing the *Renseignements*, he preserved the artistic legacy of the Silvestres through documenting and writing that history before all personal memory of it was lost with his death and that of his sister Adèle, who had known their grandfather Jacques as small children and spent their earliest years surrounded by his art collection.[97]

The purpose of Edouard's preface was to establish both his aims and his authority as heir to the Silvestres about whom he was writing. He made no claim either to artistic sensibility or to taste. Instead, he presented himself as a gentleman who was consulted by experts and connoisseurs because he was descended from these other Silvestres and was the guardian of their legacy, both documentary and artistic. The *Renseignements*, like the *catalogues raisonnés* before it, aimed to establish a definitive version of that legacy in the same way that other aristocrats might record the military campaigns and battles in which their ancestors demonstrated their nobility and loyalty to the crown. Edouard corroborated the artistic past of his ancestors in order to build upon it a future in which art, in the form of family portraits, was itself primarily documentary, while asserting the continuity of succession on which all claims to nobility necessarily rested. Lineage and merit established over the course of two centuries, supported by voluminous documentation signed by kings and their ministers, would establish that the Silvestres' claims to nobility were both earned and deeply rooted in the Old Regime, delayed until 1826 only by the misfortune of the Revolution.[98]

The building of the art collection is one of the threads that run through Edouard's narrative. He paid little attention to the works that comprised it, but he made sure to associate it with "the liberality of the princes" the family served.[99] When he came to the career of his grandfather, Edouard deferred to Regnault, quoting in particular the long passage in which Regnault discussed the respect shown to Jacques by his royal pupils.[100] Later, however, he emphasized a crucial moment in Jacques's life that Regnault had skipped over entirely: the death of his second wife and the decision to marry a third time at the age of forty-three. What motivated him to remarry, according to Edouard, was the desire to leave to a son "the riches of that general respect that his talents and the pleasantness of his character had earned and brought to him."[101] Edouard's own father, of course, was the product of that third marriage, which thus preserved the Silvestre *crédit* and dynasty. Similarly, Edouard interpreted the tragedy of the Revolution not just in terms of Jacques's own losses, but in the loss of his hopes and dreams for his son. Edouard passed over quickly the misfortune of the sale of the family art collection without comment or casting blame.[102]

When Edouard died in 1881, he left his own testament.[103] To his daughter Fanny, he bequeathed a portrait of her sister, Emma, who had died two years earlier, and a set of decorative objects from Emma's room. To his son Franz, he left all the family papers, charging him to share with his sister any that might interest her. He asked his two children to divide up as they wished the family photos, but left to his son "all the framed family portraits, painted in oils or pastel, or miniatures, that portray the members of the family bearing the name Silvestre" (except the portrait of Emma), and "two pen-and-ink drawings, framed together, which were made by the Ducs d'Anjou and Bourgogne, for their master François de Silvestre," which he believed "ought never to leave the family." The final page of the testament records the line of the Silvestre succession from Israël through Franz and the portraits associated with each, the artists who painted them, and where to find them, with a reference to the *Renseignements* for more details. For Franz and Fanny, the *Renseignements* would serve as a *catalogue raisonné* of the paintings that remained in their possession and documented the family dynasty visually, just as Israël had documented his travels through Italy with his drawings.

The Silvestre art collection now exists only through the catalogs produced to facilitate its sale, and many of the objects that comprised it—including the Raphael oil study—can no longer be

traced.[104] For Edouard, family historian, the essential works of art were the family portraits and the two drawings given by the royal princes to their Silvestre drawing master, objects that served most directly to guarantee the Silvestres's noble status.[105] Should another revolution ensue—as indeed it did only a couple of years after the *Renseignements* were published—the *crédit* the family had earned over the course of two centuries, and the title that rested upon it, would be secure. The work of documentation carried out by Regnault-Delalande, Bonnefons de Lavialle, and Edouard de Silvestre was successful in reinvesting the values represented by the art collection back into the family itself and producing a family history securely grounded in artistic achievement, royal service, and educated taste. Rather than marking revolutionary rupture through the memorialization of loss, these three texts laid a foundation deep in the Old Regime on which to build family success in a changing world.

Appendix

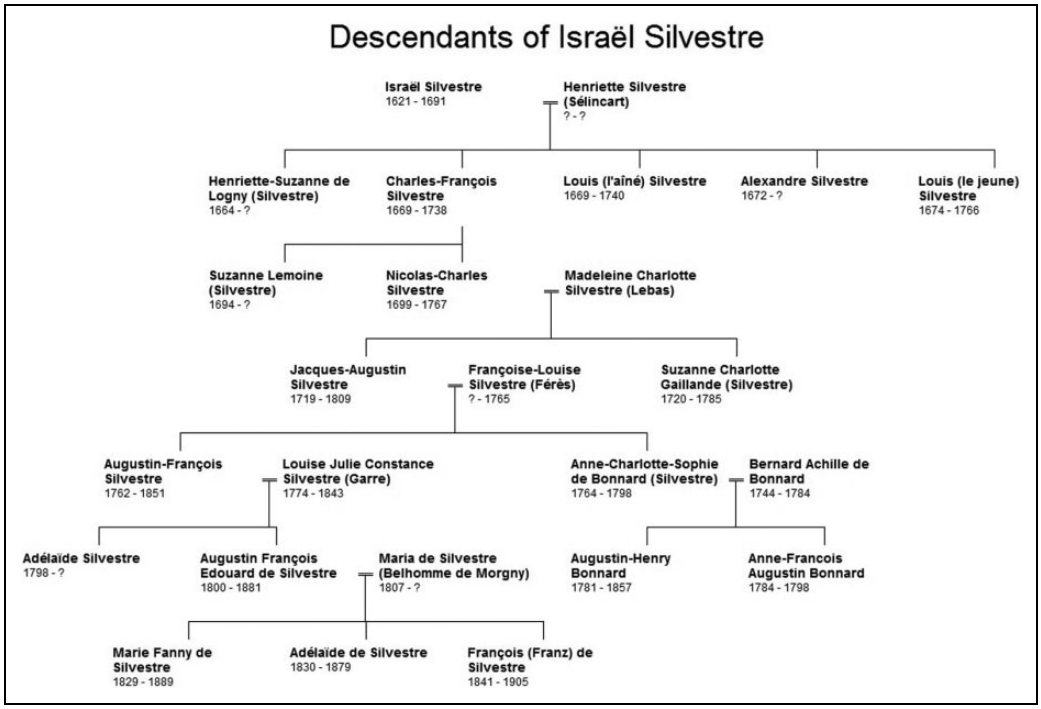


Figure A1. Descendants of Israël Silvestre.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank Burton Fredericksen, Darius Spieth, and Scott Allan for their generosity in sharing with us crucial documents and especially their deep knowledge of the arcane field of the history of art sales and catalogs. We benefited greatly from the discussion of an early draft of this article by University of Michigan's Eighteenth-Century Studies Group and from comments provided by Charles Talbot and the two anonymous peer reviewers of the manuscript itself. Our thanks also to Mia Jackson and Hannah Williams, animators of the conference, ''The Louvre before the Louvre: Artists, Artisans, and Academies,'' held at the Wallace Collection (London) in July 2013, in which some of the material here was first presented.

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Notes

1. F. L. Regnault-Delalande, *Catalogue raisonné d'objets d'arts du cabinet de feu M. de Silvestre* (Paris, France: F. L. Regnault-Delalande, 1810), ix [Lugt 7932].
2. Clare Haru Crowston, *Credit, Fashion, Sex: Economies of Regard in Old Regime France* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), 1–2.
3. See L. E. Faucheux, "Notice sur la vie de Israël Silvestre," *Catalogue raisonné de toutes les estampes qui forment l'œuvre d'Israël Silvestre* (Paris, France: Vve Jules Renouard, 1857), 6–9. Israël Silvestre's uncle and teacher, Israël Henriet, taught Louis XIII to draw, but without an official appointment or *brevet*. We use the term "royal drawing master" to describe the various *brevets* that Israël Silvestre and his descendants held from 1663 to 1792: *maître à dessiner de Mons. le Dauphin, maître à dessiner des ducs de Bourgogne, d'Anjou et de Berry, maître à dessiner des enfants du roi, maître à dessiner du Roi, maître à dessiner du Dauphin et des enfants de France*, in addition to *maître à dessiner des pages de la Grand-Ecurie*. For the texts of these *brevets*, see Edouard de Silvestre, *Renseignements sur quelques peintres et graveurs des XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles: Israël Silvestre et ses descendants*, 2nd ed. (Paris, France: Madame veuve Bouchard-Huzard, 1869). The originals are in Archives nationales (AN) 383 AP 1.
4. In Silvestre, *Renseignements*, 145. Henri IV initiated the granting of apartments in the Louvre to artists in 1608. See J. J. Guiffrey, "Logements d'artistes au Louvre," *Nouvelles archives de l'art français* 2 (1873): 7.
5. Bruno Belhoste, *Paris Savant: parcours et rencontres au temps des Lumières* (Paris, France: Armand Colin, 2011), 10–12.
6. The definitive catalog of Israël Silvestre's work is Faucheux, *Catalogue raisonné*. Catalogs of discrete sections of Israël's oeuvre include Jean Pierre Babelon, *Israël Silvestre: Vues de Paris* (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1977) and Cesare Nissirio, *Incisioni romane di Israël Silvestre* (Rome: Centre Culturel Francais de Rome, 1979). Israël's work remains the best known and most widely disseminated among the Silvestre artists.
7. *Inventaire après décès* in AN 383 AP 1; Silvestre, *Renseignements*, 155–56.
8. Quoted in Guiffrey, "Logements d'artistes au Louvre," 78–79, n. 5.
9. Silvestre, *Renseignements*, 109, 93–95. Jacques did not receive the *brevet* of royal drawing master until the death of his father in 1767. It was confirmed by the king in 1769 in response to Jacques' complaint that "since the death of his father he has experienced the greatest difficulties in being paid the wages of 300 livres and other compensation that goes with this charge, despite having requested at that time, a *brevet* for the said succession and having been omitted in his capacity of successor from the roster of wages of the King's household." Ibid., 207–208; P. de Chennevières and A. de Montaiglon, ed., *Abécédario de P. J. Mariette et autres notes inédites de cet amateur sur les arts et les artistes*, (Paris, France: Dumoulin, 1858–1859), 5, 219–20.
10. Ibid., 95–96. Although Edouard de Silvestre simply calls Valenton a "country house," Mariette, who, we are told, knew Nicolas-Charles personally, says he "died on 30 April 1767 in the village of Valenton, in the house of a young lady among his women friends which, following his custom, he had furnished at great expense." Chennevières and Montaiglon, *Abécédario de P. J. Mariette*, 5, 219. On the furnishing

of such *petites maisons* see Kathryn Norberg, "Goddesses of Taste: Courtesans and Their Furniture in Late-Eighteenth-Century Paris," in *Furnishing the Eighteenth Century: What Furniture Can Tell Us about the European and American Past*, ed. Dena Goodman and Kathryn Norberg (New York: Routledge, 2011), 97–114.

11. Silvestre, Renseignements, 114.
12. *Lettres d'anoblissement en faveur du sieur [Jacques] Augustin Silvestre*, October 1775, AN 383 AP1. On the Order of St. Michel, see J. J. Guiffrey, "Lettres de noblesse accordées aux artistes en France au XVIIe et au XVIIIe siècles," *Revue historique nobiliaire et biographique*, n. s., 8 (1873): 1–44. By this time Jacques had also acquired two honorific offices: first valet of the wardrobe of the king's brother and *porte-arquebuse du Roi*. Silvestre, *Renseignements*, 202.
13. Crowston, *Credit, Fashion, Sex*, 127.
14. Silvestre, *Renseignements*, 135–36, n.19. Israël Silvestre made three trips to Rome: the first before 1640, the second probably between 1643 and 1644, and the third around 1653. Ibid., 8–9.
15. Joseph-Marie Vien to Charles Claude de Flahaut, Comte d'Angiviller, June 28, 1780, in Anatole de Montaiglon and Jules Guiffrey, ed., *Correspondance des directeurs de l'Académie de France à Rome avec les surintendants des bâtiments* (Paris, France: Jean Schemit, 1887–1908), 14, 32; Silvestre, *Renseignements*, 118. The beneficiary was a member of another family of artists, the Van Blaremberghes. He never had the opportunity to take up the position, since Jacques held it until 1792 when it was abolished along with the monarchy.
16. Ibid., 209–10. See also [Antoine-Jean] Amelot [de Chaillou] to Silvestre, December 24, 1780, AN O^1 687.
17. [J. F.] Payen, *Notice nécrologique sur de Silvestre* (Paris, France: Imprimerie de la veuve Bouchard-Huzard, [1851]), 6.
18. Bernard de Bonnard to Maurice-Jean de Bonnard, July 22, 1780. AN 352 AP 40.
19. Bernard de Bonnard to Maurice-Jean de Bonnard, September 3, 1780.
20. 11 and 14 pluviôse an 3. AN 352 AP 42. There were other assets, including rental property in Paris and Versailles and vineyards in Burgundy. The expense of maintaining these various properties seems to have exceeded the income they produced for several years. See, for example, François Silvestre to A. H. de Bonnard, January 20, 1810. AN 352 AP 43.
21. The marriage, births, deaths, and divorce were all recorded in the *état civil*. Archives de la Seine, Accessed August 5, 2014, http://canadp-archivesenligne.paris.fr/archives_etat_civil/avant_1860_fichiers_etat_civil_reconstitue/index.php. The deaths and divorce are discussed by Charlotte Hazon Coquebert de Montbret in letters to Aimée Guichelin Steck, [September 25, 1798]; 1 brumaire [an 7] (October 22, 1798); and May 5, [1802], in Bernard Poujeaux and Pauline Poujeaux, ed., *Correspondance adressée à Mme Steck, née Aimée Guichelin, par la famille Coquebert de Montbret (1797–1821)*, vol. 2 (typescript, Paris, 2004), 1, 36–40. The separation is reported to Mme Steck by Mme Coquebert's daughter Cécile on 17 brumaire [an 9] (November 8, 1800). We are grateful to Madame Poujeaux and Catriona Seth for sharing this typescript with us.
22. Silvestre to Bonnard, 24 germinal an 13 (April 14, 1805).
23. Mme Coquebert to Mme Steck, April 29, 1805.
24. Silvestre to Bonnard, 28 floréal an 13 (May 18, 1805).
25. Silvestre to Bonnard, December 26, 1809. For a short biography of Regnault-Delalande see Benjamin Peronnet and Burton B. Fredericksen, eds., *Répertoire des tableaux vendus en France au XIXe siècle* (Los Angeles, CA: The Provenance Index of the Getty Information Institute, 1998), 1, xix. According to Darius A. Spieth, the Silvestre catalog was the longest Regnault ever produced. *Netherlandish Golden Age Art in Revolutionary Paris: A History of Old Masters, Finance, and the Rise of the Bourgeoisie* (unpublished mss, 823). We are grateful to the author for sharing this manuscript with us.
26. Silvestre to Bonnard, August 29, 1810.
27. A.-H. de Bonnard to Maurice-Jean de Bonnard, April 2, 1811. AN 352 AP 40. The 3,000 livre dowry in the form of *rentes* had been liquidated by the state in the general liquidation of the year IV (1796). In 1822,

Louis-Philippe acknowledged and renewed his father's promise to allocate half the dowry (1,500 livres), to the Bonnard children upon their death of their father. Both this document (dated February 22, 1822) and the Bonnard–Silvestre marriage contract (dated August 9, 1780), are in AN 352 AP 42. Although the art collection that had been his maternal legacy was gone forever, the ties that bound Bonnard to the Orléans through his father were now renewed both symbolically and materially.

28. Whereas the notary had recorded the death of Jacques-Augustin Silvestre, the *catalogue raisonné* established the provenance of each item in his collection as having belonged to "the late M. de Silvestre, formerly chevalier of the Order of Saint Michel, and drawing master of the royal children." Copy of *acte de decès* in AN MC/ET/XXIX/737/N° 137—2 août 1809; Regnault-Delalande, *Catalogue raisonné*, t.p. French titles of nobility were officially abolished in June 1790. Napoleon began handing out new titles of nobility in 1804, but prerevolutionary titles were not restored until the Bourbons returned to the throne in 1814. See William Doyle, *Aristocracy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010).
29. Eighteenth-century art dealers and experts also perceived the function of the *catalogue raisonné* as one of preservation. As François-Charles Joullain wrote, "without the publication of a catalog keeping the description of these objects, we wouldn't know such a cabinet had existed nor that its constitution had been the work of such a distinguished amateur." François-Charles Joullain, *Réflexions sur la Peinture et la Gravure, accompagnées d'une courte Dissertation sur le Commerce de la Curiosité, et les Ventes en général* (Paris, France: Demonville & Musier, 1786), 108, quoted in Sophie Raux, "From Mariette to Joullain: Provenance and Value in Eighteenth-Century Auction Catalogues," in *Provenance: An Alternate History of Art*, ed. Gail Feigenbaum and Inge Reist (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Research Institute, 2012), 87.
30. For a discussion of the evolution of the format of the auction catalog, see Krzysztof Pomian, *Collectors and Curiosities: Paris and Venice, 1500–1800*, trans. Elizabeth Wiles-Portier (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1990), 139–43. Prior to the mid-eighteenth century, catalogs had listed objects in no particular sequence, often burying the name of the artist within a description of the object's subject matter. Not until the 1740s did art dealers begin to organize their catalogs by national school and to print the name of the artist as the heading for each object. The pioneers were Pierre-Jean Mariette, grandson of the dealer who drew up the inventory of Israël Silvestre's prints after his death, and Edmé-François Gersaint. See, for example, Anonymous, *Recueil d'estampes d'après les plus beaux tableaux et d'après les plus beaux desseins qui sont en France, dans le cabinet du Roy, dans celuy de Monseigneur le duc d'Orleans, & dans d'autres cabinets, divisé suivant les différentes écoles, avec un abbregé de la vie des peintres, & une description historique de chaque tableau* (Paris, France: Imprimerie Royale, 1729).
31. Regnault-Delalande, *Catalogue raisonné*, iii. A later sales catalog that positions a collection as the result of multiple generations of collecting is Féral and [Paul] Durand-Ruel, *Catalogue de tableaux des principaux maîtres des écoles anciennes … composant la précieuse collection de feu M. R. Papin* (Paris, France: Hôtel Drouot, 1873), iii [Lugt 33825]. We are grateful to Scott Allan for bringing this example to our attention.
32. Regnault-Delalande, *Catalogue raisonné*, iii–iv.
33. Ibid., v.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., vi.
36. Ibid.
37. Ibid., vii–viii.
38. Ibid., ix. The collection likely dates from closer to 1660, since Israël Silvestre died in 1691. This error was corrected by Bonnefons de Lavialle in *Catalogue. Collection de tableaux, dessins anciens, … objets de curiosite … qui composaient le cabinet de M. le Baron de Silvestre* (Paris, France: Maulde et Renou, 1851), 5 [Lugt 20547].

39. Regnault-Delalande, *Catalogue raisonné*, ix. The only other artist to be flagged in this way in the preface was another Italian master, Correggio, for a gouache that we discuss below. Ibid., x.
40. Ibid., 15–16. The painting was in fact commissioned as a gift to François I from Pope Leo X. See the Louvre's short history of the painting, accessed January 23, 2015, http://cartelfr.louvre.fr/cartelfr/visite?srv=car_not_frame&idNotice=13966.
41. As Rochelle Ziskin has noted, copies "carried something of the aura of originals" and could elevate the status of a connoisseur's collection by association. Rochelle Ziskin, *Sheltering Art: Collecting and Social Identity in Early Eighteenth-Century Paris* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2012), 21.
42. Louis, chevalier de Jaucourt, "Peinture moderne," in *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc*, ed. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert (Paris, France: Briasson, 1765), 12, 275–76, viewed online at University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2013), ed. Robert Morrissey, accessed September 10, 2014, http://encyclopedie.uchicago.edu/.
43. Quoted in Ziskin, *Sheltering Art*, 32. Rémy made a similar point about the collector Pierre Crozat. Ibid., 276. For a discussion of Rémy in the context of contemporary dealers, see JoLynn Edwards, "Alexandre Joseph Paillet (1743–1814): Study of a Parisian Art Dealer" (PhD diss, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, 1982).
44. Burton B. Fredericksen, "Survey of the French Art Market between 1789 and 1820," in *Collections et Marché de l'art en France 1789–1848*, ed. Monica Preti-Hamard and Philippe Sénéchal (Rennes, France: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2005), 21. As Fredericksen points out, the works offered at auction did not necessarily reflect contemporary taste, since collections were often put together over many years and may have been sold out of necessity rather than the timeliness of their contents. Ibid., 20, 33–34. See also Ziskin, *Sheltering Art*, 11–13.
45. *Abécédario de P. J. Mariette*, 213.
46. Kristel Smentek, "The Collector's Cut: Why Pierre-Jean Mariette Tore up His Drawings and Put Them Back Together Again," *Master Drawings* 46 (Spring 2008): 36.
47. The other categories consisted of 158 lots of paintings, 653 lots of prints, and a smaller number of bronzes, ceramics, books, and optical instruments.
48. Neil Jeffares, *Dictionary of Pastellists before 1800*, accessed July 20, 2014, http://www.pastellists.com/Articles/NOeL.pdf?.
49. Pierre-Jean Mariette, *Catalogue des tableaux, desseins, marbres, bronzes, modeles, estampes, et planches gravées . . . du cabinet de feu M. Coypel, Premier Peintre du Roi & Monseigneur le Duc d'Orléans, & Directeur de l'Académie Royale de Peinture & Sculpture* (Paris, France: n.p., 1753), iii–v [Lugt 811].
50. Voltaire defined connoisseurship in relation to taste in his contribution to the multiauthored article, "Goût," in the *Encyclopédie*. Jean Le Rond d'Alembert, Denis Diderot, Charles-Louis de Secondat, baron de La Brède et de Montesquieu, and François-Marie Arouet de Voltaire, "Goût," in *Encyclopédie*, 7:761, accessed September 14, 2014.
51. Guiffrey, "Logements d'artistes au Louvre," 78–79, n. 5.
52. Regnault-Delalande, *Catalogue raisonné*, vii.
53. Raux, "From Mariette to Joullain," 88–91.
54. See lots 194 and 262, Regnault-Delalande, *Catalogue raisonné*, 36, 51.
55. Ibid., lot 65, 14–15. Nicolas-Charles purchased the Carriera pastels at the Duc de Tallard sale in 1756. See Lugt 910, lot 117, in the Getty Provenance Index, accessed January 26, 2015, http://piprod.getty.edu/starweb/pi/servlet.starweb.
56. See lot 159, Regnault-Delalande, *Catalogue raisonné*, 28–29.
57. Ibid., 29. Tallard acquired the drawing at Coypel's sale in April 1753. See Lugt 811, lot 234. Mariette was the *expert* for the sale.
58. Ibid., 15–16.

59. See lots 159–161, Ibid., 28–30.
60. See lots 73 and 75, Ibid., 17–18.
61. The poor results of the sale may reflect general ups and downs in the market in the post-Revolutionary period. As Burton Fredericksen has shown, while there was a marked increase in the number of Italian paintings on offer in 1807 following French occupation of the Italian peninsula, this glut of Italian work on the market was temporary; by 1812 it had returned to previous levels. Contiguously, the British market began to outpace the French one, such that by 1820 it was twice the size of that in France (and remained so going forward). Fredericksen, "Survey of the French Art Market," 27–28.
62. F.-L. Regnault-Delalande, *Table des prix des articles du cabinet de feu M. de Silvestre, vendus le jeudi 28 février 1811, et jours suivans* (Paris, France: F.-L. Regnault-Delalande, 1811) [Lugt 7932], Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie. We are grateful to Darius Spieth for providing us with a copy of this list.
63. Regnault-Delalande, *Catalogue raisonné*, 499–512.
64. AN 383 AP 1. Although first names are not given, there is no reason to believe that the Silvestre purchaser of these items (lots 1, 101a, and 101b), was anyone but François; Madame de Silvestre is listed as the buyer for a pair of Chardin paintings (lot 14).
65. Baptismal record of Anne-Charlotte-Sophie Silvestre, December 3, 1764, in Silvestre, *Renseignements*, 200. The godfather was Jacques' father, Nicolas. On Aubry and François Silvestre's stay in Rome, see Montaiglon and Guiffrey, *Correspondance des directeurs*, vol. 13; Silvestre, *Renseignements*, 117–18.
66. Entry for 27 September 1781 in *Mémoires secrets pour servir à l'histoire de la République des Lettres en France, depuis MDCCLXII jusqu'à nos jours; ou Journal d'un observateur* (London, UK: John Adamson, 1782; reprint Westmead, UK: Gregg International, 1970), 18, 71–72.
67. "Notice sur M. Aubry, peintre" in Sylvain Laveissière, "Les adieux de Coriolan à sa femme," in *Musée du Louvre: Nouvelles acquisitions du Département des Peintures (1983–1986)*, ed. Jacques Foucart (Paris, France: Editions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1987), 124.
68. Silvestre, *Renseignements*, 136, n. 21.
69. This sale, like the one in 1811, was also unexpectedly delayed. Advertised to begin on December 3, 1851, it did not begin until the 11th, no doubt because of Louis Napoleon's coup of December 1–2 that brought an end to the Second Republic. Archives de la Seine, minutes et dossiers des commissaires-priseurs, no. 3488: Vente Silvestre, décharge du 22 décembre 1851.
70. François's collection comprised 100 paintings, 210 lots of drawings, 113 lots of prints (including albums) and 44 miscellaneous objects including small sculptures (lots 434 and 435, among others), medallions (lots 432 and 463) and candelabras (lot 456). Bonnefons de Lavialle, *Catalogue*.
71. This streamlining of catalog entries was bemoaned at the time by a critic who wrote of a frequent *expert* at the Hôtel Drouot: "After today we will demand that M. Petit, whose auctions are always important, provide us in his catalogs less summary descriptions. . . . In its auction catalogs, the eighteenth century has left us models that are easy to imitate, and which are of great value to those who wish to reconstruct the history of art of that period." Philippe Burty, "Vente de tableaux modernes," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 4 (1859): 362. We thank Scott Allan for bringing this citation to our attention.
72. We do not know if Aubry's *Coriolanus' Farewell* was still in François's possession when he died in 1851. He did, however, keep an ink drawing of the same subject, presumably a study for the final painting, which appears as lot 263 in Bonnefons de Lavialle, *Catalogue*, 33. The painting's owners between then and now are not known. The Louvre appears not to have been aware of this painting when they acquired a picture of the same subject in 1983 and speculated on its being the version exhibited at the 1781 Salon. See Laveissière, "Les adieux de Coriolan à sa femme," 124–26. Fortuitously, the painting's reappearance on the market coincided with the preparation and publishing of this article. As we began our initial research on the Silvestre art collection, *Les adieux de Coriolan à sa femme* appeared in the March 2012 sale of the Parisian firm Beaussant & Lefèvre. See lot 228, *Mobilier du Château de Digoine en Bourgogne* (Paris, France: Drouot Richelieu, March 22–23, 2012), accessed May 15, 2015, http://www.beaussant-lefevre.

com/html/fiche.jsp?id=2315787&np=3&lng=fr&npp=20&ordre=&aff=1&r=. Only as we were seeking image rights for the illustrations in December 2014 did a last-minute Google search reveal that the painting had been acquired by the Mount Holyoke Museum in South Hadley, Massachusetts, where it is now on view.

73. For example, in 1798 Henry-Louis Basan purchased 203 lots in this way from the collection of his late father, the *expert* Pierre-François Basan. See Spieth, *Netherlandish Golden Age Art*, 800. This was a common practice in the eighteenth century, and one that Jacques himself employed during his own stint as a dealer in the decade before the Revolution. This is suggested by his handwritten annotations on the catalog of a sale he organized in 1778, in which some buyers' names are appended with the note "pour moi." See Alexandre Joseph Paillet, *Catalogue de tableaux originaux de grands maîtres . . . dont la vente se fera le lundi 16 novembre 1778 . . .* (Paris, France: Imprimerie de Gueffier, 1778) [Lugt 2909]. The annotated copy is in the collection of the Hermitage. We would like to thank Burton Fredericksen for bringing this text to our attention. Without fully understanding the strategies employed, it is worth noting that the Raphael was auctioned off in the last group of paintings on the third day of the sale, and the Correggio and Rubens in the last group of drawings, on the eleventh day of the sale. *Annonce. Vente de tableaux, objets de curiosités, dessins de grands-maîtres, et collection considérable d'estampes après le décès de M. de Silvestre . . . le jeudi 28 février 1811, six heures de relevée, et jours suivans à pareille heure, jusqu'au lundi 25 mars suivant, inclusivement, hôtel de la Rochefoucault, rue de Seine, faubourg Saint-Germain*. Distributed in Paris by the auctioneer, Geoffroy, and Regnault-Delande. We are grateful to Darius Spieth for sharing with us a copy of this printed announcement, which is bound into the copy of Regnault's *Catalogue raisonné* in the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie [Lugt 7932].
74. These objects are listed in the two catalogs as follows: Pannini, lot 27 (1851) and lot 53 (1810); Poelemberg, lot 52 (1851) and lot 63 (1810); Leonardo, lot 105 (1851) and lot 572 (1810); Castiglione, lot 108 (1851) and lot 277 (1810). Drawings and gouaches by Israël, Louis, and Charles Silvestre are lots 212–218, 221–224 (1851).
75. Bonnefons de Lavialle, *Catalogue*, 7.
76. Ibid., 26.
77. Ibid., 3, 5.
78. Ibid., 4.
79. Gersaint, for example, observed the social mobility facilitated by collecting as early as 1744: "[w]hat advantages can a *curieux* not gain from the usual consequences of his collecting? . . . As a curieux, he becomes the equal of those who, sharing this noble passion, are above him by their rank or condition; but as such he may be invited and received with pleasure in their midst." Edmé-François Gersaint, *Catalogue raisonné des diverses curiosités du cabinet de feu M. Lorangère* (Paris, France: J. Barrois, 1744), 2–3 [Lugt 590] in Charlotte Guichard, "The Rise of the Amateur in Eighteenth-century Paris," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 45 (Summer 2012): 532-33.
80. Letters patent for the title of nobility are in AN 383 AP 1. Silvestre requested that the title be made hereditary in 1829 on the basis of the "substantial works and lengthy service of his forefathers." Silvestre to Monseigneur le duc de Doudeauville, February 28, 1829, in AN O/3/811/d. 114.
81. Bonnefons de Lavialle, *Catalogue*, 3.
82. Ibid., 4.
83. See lot 300, Ibid., 36 for the pen drawing attributed to Ingres, and lot 275, 34 for the 1827 watercolor by Wille *fils*.
84. A market for contemporary art in the nineteenth century did not begin to emerge until around 1825, when artists' supply shops started to sell paintings as well. The most prominent example of these *marchands* turned dealers is Jean-Marie-Fortuné Durand-Ruel, who, along with his son Paul, had become one of the most prominent art dealers in Paris by the mid- to late-nineteenth century. During the period in which François was collecting, it was necessary to cultivate relationships with artists directly in order to acquire their work. For a discussion of the dearth of contemporary art dealers in the early- to mid-nineteenth century

see Jacques Lethève, *La vie quotidienne des artistes français au XIXe siècle* (Paris, France: Hachette, 1968), 156–60 and A. Tabarant, *La vie artistique au temps de Baudelaire* (Paris, France: Mercure de France, 1963), 12–13.

85. AN MC ET XXIX 1138. The gross receipts totaled 26,855ff. Archives de la Seine: Vente Silvestre.
86. The meager proceeds of the sale relative to the size of the entire estate suggests that either one or both of the children could have held on to the collection had they wanted to. After the auctioneer's commission and expenses were deducted Adèle and Edouard cleared only 21,239ff. Ibid.
87. Faucheux, *Catalogue raisonné*, 2. The catalog was printed in a limited edition of 150 copies.
88. M. E. Meaume, *Recherches sur quelques artistes lorrains: Claude Henriet, Israel Henriet, Israël Silvestre et ses descendants* (Nancy, France: Grimblot et Veuve Raybois, 1852).
89. Ibid., 62, n. 23.
90. Ibid., 34.
91. Ecole Polytechnique, *fiche de matriculation* 3459, Augustin-François Edouard Silvestre, accessed June 27, 2014, https://bibli-aleph.polytechnique.fr/F/BV6VVF2KY9CITJA8A5DN6-NABDSR3LLPV5RR4DR8SYL2AKY91DE-06360?func=full-set-set&set_number=001225&set_entry=000011&format=999. On this typical career path, see Bruno Belhoste and Konstantinos Chatzis, "From Technical Corps to Technocratic Power: French State Engineers and their Professional and Cultural Universe in the First Half of the 19th Century," *History and Technology* 23 (September 2007): 214.
92. Inventaire après décès of Augustin-François Silvestre, dated September 24, 1851. AN MC ET XXIX 1138; M. E. Peligot, « Extrait du compte rendu des travaux du conseil d'administration de la Société d'encouragement pendant l'année 1851, » *Bulletin de la Société d'encouragement pour l'industrie nationale* 51 (1852): 506. Edouard had been a member of the society at least since 1832. See *Bulletin*, 31 (1832) 19. He is identified as a captain of artillery by the Bibliothèque nationale de France, accessed June 20, 2014, http://catalogue.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/cb31368037j/PUBLIC.
93. For Bonnard's accomplishments see *Note des travaux scientifiques de M. de Bonnard, Inspecteur Général des Mines* (Paris, France: Mme Huzard, 1834), prepared for his nomination to the Légion d'honneur. Silvestre's dossier for the Légion d'honneur is in AN O/3/828/d. 89.
94. Silvestre, *Renseignements*, 1.
95. [André]-Prosper [Collette] de Baudicour, *Le peintre-graveur français continué, ou Catalogue raisonné des estampes gravées par les peintres et les dessinateurs de l'école française nés dans le XVIIIe siècle* (Paris, France: Madame Bouchard-Huzard, 1859). Madame Bouchard-Huzard, who published this book as well as the *Renseignements*, specialized in science and agriculture. She was the publisher of the *Mémoires* of the Society of Agriculture, of which François Silvestre was the secretary for decades, as well as the *Bulletin* of the Society for the Encouragement of National Industry. It is therefore likely that Edouard assisted Baudicor in getting his work published.
96. Silvestre, *Renseignements*, 3–4.
97. The copy of the *Renseignements* in the University of Virginia Library is inscribed: "To My Sister, a Souvenir of My Very Tender Affection," and signed "Baron de Silvestre," accessed September 14, 2014, http://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/009794955.
98. On the importance of merit for the nobility in the eighteenth century see Guy Chaussinand-Nogaret, *La noblesse au XVIIIe siècle: de la féodalité aux Lumières* (Paris, France: Librairie Hachette, 1976); Jay M. Smith, *The Culture of Merit: Nobility, Royal Service, and the Making of Absolute Monarchy in France, 1600-1789* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996).
99. Silvestre, *Renseignements*, 94.
100. Ibid., 110–11.
101. Ibid., 113.
102. Ibid., 115. Marriage was another major theme in Edouard's account: marriages that allied the Silvestres with other families of academicians, and especially with families at court who were apparently pursuing the same kind of strategy of social mobility. For example, the marriage of Charles-François's daughter,

Suzanne, to the sculptor, J. B. Lemoyne, and of Nicolas-Charles's daughter (Jacques' sister), Suzanne-Charlotte, to Claude-Luc Gaillande, bailiff (*huissier de l'antichambre*) of the Dauphine.

103. "Testament du Baron Augustin François Edouard de Silvestre, décédé le 4 avril 1881." AN 383 AP 1.
104. All traces of the Raphael *Head of Saint Michael* disappear after 1863. A British collector named Evans purchased it at the 1851 sale for 820 francs. See the annotated copy of the catalog in the Archives de la Seine: Vente Silvestre. A catalog for the sale of the collection of the late M. Evans-Lombe in 1863 lists the Raphael as lot 21 with mention of the Silvestre provenance. The description of the painting is copied almost verbatim from Regnault's catalog. See L. Clément, *Catalogue des objets d'art et de haute curiosité, antiquités, estampes anciennes, dessins, aquarelles, tableaux de maîtres, composant la précieuse collection de feu M. Evans-Lombe* (Paris, France: Pillet fils aîné, 1863), 86 [Lugt 27301]. An annotated copy of this catalog in the Getty Research Institute collector files indicates that the Raphael was purchased by someone named Jabely (?), who is as yet unidentified. No mention of the sketch has appeared in the literature on Raphael since then, including Sylvie Béguin's definitive catalog *Les peintures de Raphaël au Louvre* (Paris, France: Editions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1984). The painting is now thought to have been a copy. We thank Burton Fredericksen for bringing these sources to our attention, and thank him and Vincent Delieuvin for their research assistance and consultation in this matter.
105. Edouard may have been the Silvestre listed as buyer of a number of objects from his father's 1851 sale, but there is no evidence that the art collection was perpetuated beyond this point. Lots purchased by "Silvestre" at the 1851 sale are: 155 (Rembrandt, "Return of the Prodigal Son"), 215 and 217 (pen drawings by Israël Silvestre), 224 (an album of drawings by Louis and Charles Silvestre), 229 (Coypel, "Danaë"), 290 (a seascape by Noël), 318 (5 drawings by Swebach), 433 (a gouache by Noël), and miscellaneous objects including Venetian glass, a bronze and marble pendulum clock, and some furniture. See the annotated sales catalog in Archives de la Seine: Vente Silvestre.

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