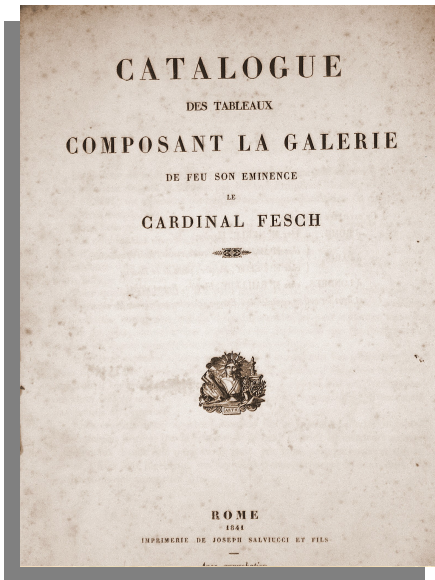


LA GALERIE DU CARDINAL FESCH – TWO CATALOGUES OF THE HIGHLY-SIGNIFICANT COLLECTION OWNED BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF LYON AND UNCLE OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

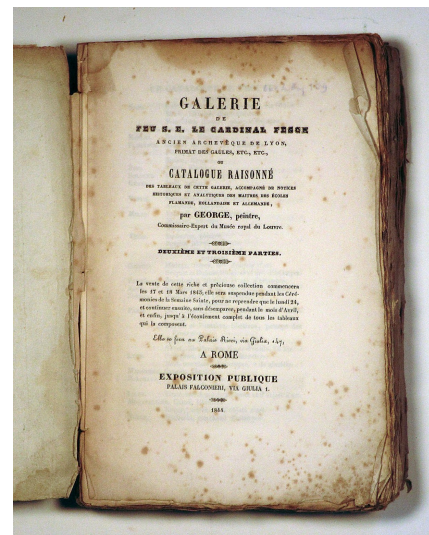


Two catalogues of the art owned by French Cardinal Joseph Fesch (1763-1839) – a collection with a magnitude and importance on par with the most famous European princely collections throughout history. A French nobleman, politician, and clergyman from the highly-prominent Fesch family of Switzerland and the uncle of Napoleon Bonaparte, Fesch was the Cardinal-Archbishop of Lyon, Primate of the Gauls, and eventually a Prince of France. He was a great art lover, amassing what has been called “the most important collection of paintings ever formed”¹ financed by both family riches and the wealth accumulated from the series of plum positions his nephew granted him in the First Empire of France. At the time of his death, Fesch owned over 17,000 works of art, a small portion of which became the collection of his Musée Fesch in his birthplace of

Ajaccio, Corsica.² The remaining works were left to his heirs or sold off, and many are now owned by major museums.

Camuccini, Vincent et al. *Catalogue des Tableaux Composant la Galerie de Feu Son Eminence Le Cardinal Fesch*. Rome: Imprimerie de Joseph Salviucci et fils, 1841. Softbound, 130 pages, 3326 lots. This catalogue provides a simple list of the paintings in Fesch’s collection at the time of his death. Size dimensions are given in feet and inches along with a simple, one-sentence description of each painting. According to the catalogue’s introduction, Fesch’s collection was “so well-known that a long description of the paintings would be unnecessary”.³ An ex-libris bookplate on the inside of the cover reads "ex-bibliotheca Seminarii Sancti Sulpitii Parisiensis". The Seminary of Saint Sulpice in Paris was founded in 1641 by the Society of Saint -Sulpice and is dedicated to Saint Sulpitius the Pious. The catalogue is in fair condition with several rips on the cover and some discoloration of the deckled pages. The binding is weak. The text, however, is undamaged and quite legible.

George. *Galerie de Feu S.E. le Cardinal Fesch Ancien Archevêque de Lyon Primat des Gaules, etc., etc., ou Catalogue Raisonné des tableaux de cette galerie, accompagné de notices historiques et analytiques des maitres des écoles Flamande, Hollandaise et*



Allemande. Rome, 1844. Softbound, 448 pages, 478 lots. Volumes two and three of a four-part catalogue raisonné published to accompany the sale of Fesch's collection on March 17-18, 1845 at Palais Ricci in Rome. Part two lists Flemish, Dutch, and German paintings, and part three lists French paintings. Each entry includes a short biography of the artist and a description of each painting, ranging from a few lines to several pages. This copy is annotated with the prices realized for each painting in the auction. Notable artists include Peter Breughel the Elder, Albert Cuyp, Anthony van Dyck, Henrick Goltzius, Frans Hals, Nicolas Maas, Gabriel Metsu, Paulus Potter, Rembrandt, Rubens, Salomon and Jacob Ruysdael, Jan Steen, Jacques-Louis David, Jean-Baptiste Greuze, Charles Lebrun, Louis and Antoine Le Nain, Claude Lorrain, Nicolas Poussin, and Antoine Watteau. The binding is poor but the interior of the catalogue is in very good condition and is quite legible. An interesting contemporary commentary on this catalogue, the sale, and Fesch's collection in general can be found here: <http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/1st-february-1845/19/sale-of-cardinal-fesch-pictures>

There are fewer than a dozen copies of these two volumes in American museums and libraries, making them rather scarce for such important books. They are rarely seen on the market.

\$1,100.00

Notes:

1. http://www.musee-fesch.com/index.php/musee_fesch/Collections
2. http://www.napoleon.org/en/magazine/museums/files/Musee_Fesch-Ajaccio.asp

— (21) —

NUM. d'ordre	HAUTEUR des tableaux.		leur LARGEUR		
	pieds	ponces	pieds	ponces	
419	7	3	7	3	<i>Les Hébreux dans le désert rassemblant les Cailles.</i> Bon tableau du même auteur.
420	7	3	7	3	<i>Les Explorateurs de la terre promise.</i> Pour prouver à Moïse la fertilité de cette contrée, ils lui offrent les fruits qu'ils y ont recueillis: même maître et même mérite indiqués plus haut.
421	2	6	2	»	<i>Saint Joseph, baisant respectueusement la main de l'enfant Jésus qu'il tient dans ses bras:</i> cette peinture est empreinte de la suavité qui distingue l'école de Sasso ferrato.
422	2	6	2	»	<i>La Vierge incline avec une tendre dévotion sa tête sur celle de Jésus qui dort;</i> composition peinte par le même artiste et dans le faire de Sasso ferrato.
423	1	9	1	6	<i>Portrait grand comme nature;</i> à la savante finesse du dessin, et à la pureté de son exécution, on le croit un original flamand.