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KANAZAWA, Fumio. A Study of Bernardo Bellotto's Political Allegories: The Court Art of the Polish-Saxon Union in the Eighteenth Century

The Venetian view painter, Bernardo Bellotto (1722–1780), worked as a court painter for the Elector of Saxony, Friedrich August II, in the Saxon capital, Dresden, in the mid-eighteenth century. Bellotto returned to Dresden at the end of 1761, after a stay in Munich and Vienna for part of the Seven Years' War (1756–1763). In 1762, he executed two allegorical paintings, *Inclinata Resurgit* and its pendant *Ex Arduis Immortalitas* (both currently in Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden). Previous studies have regarded these two works as political allegories representing the situation of the Seven Years' War involving Saxony at the time, and have interpreted the large figures depicted in the paintings as personifications of the countries with which Saxony formed an alliance. However, such an interpretation involves several significant contradictions between the iconographic elements, and provides insufficient explanation of Bellotto's creative intent. This paper, then, focuses on the hitherto over-looked fact that Bellotto's patron Friedrich August II also held the title of King of Poland, under the name, August III, and elucidates the context in which Bellotto produced the two works, providing a reinterpretation of the significance of the allegories in terms of the dual structuration of the court art of the Polish-Saxon Union (1697–1763) in the eighteenth century.

The first section of the paper discusses the client for and original location of Bellotto's pendant paintings, in the context of the artistic circumstances surrounding Bellotto in the Dresden court, with consideration of the related inventory of the Electoral Collection and the visual sources for Bellotto's production. On this basis, the second section provides a reinterpretation of *Inclinata Resurgit* through analysis of the difference in political representations of Saxony and Poland in the visual media of the time. The third section focuses on the respective art policies of the two countries during the period of the Polish-Saxon Union, and locates the function of Bellotto's works in their political context by proposing a reinterpretation of *Ex Arduis Immortalitas*. Finally, the fourth section considers congruencies between the personifications discussed in the previous sections, and the other iconographic elements and the Latin inscriptions depicted in the works.

Bellotto's political allegories were executed on commission from Bellotto's main patron, the Elector of Saxony, Friedrich August II, as the King of Poland August III, for the interior decoration of one of his residences in the Polish capital, Warsaw, where the monarch stayed in 1762, the year of the two works' production. Therefore this decoration project was executed in the historical context of Poland, not Saxony, and the purpose of the companion pieces' iconographic program was to suggest, to the Polish viewers, the relationship with countries important to eighteenth-century Poland. In *Inclinata Resurgit*, for example, the personifications of Poland, Lithuania and Saxony emphasized the close political connection between the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and Saxony, which formed a personal union in the eighteenth century. On the other hand, in *Ex Arduis Immortalitas*, the personifications of Austria and Turkey evoked the memory of Poland's most glorious past, when King Jan III Sobieski defeated the Ottoman Empire (Turkey) and defended the Holy Roman Empire (Austria) and Christian Europe from the Islamic world, in the late seventeenth century; an event which still remains one of the most important sources of Polish national identity.

With the outbreak of the Seven Years' War, the foreign sovereign from the Saxon dynasty was forced to abandon Dresden and reside permanently in Warsaw, where it was necessary for him to join Polish society immediately and strengthen his unstable position as ruler of Poland. The artistic activities in the Warsaw court during his reign, including Bellotto's pendant paintings, functioned as part of this domestic political strategy. Importantly, these Warsaw projects were executed by Saxon court artists at the sovereign's request, and therefore inevitably reflected a mixture of the two different cultural contexts. The present case study proposes a novel view of such dual structuration in the court art of the Polish-Saxon Union in the eighteenth century.

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