

CRITICAL APPROACHES TO THE DIFFICULTIES OF ATTRIBUTION AND DATING OF FRANCESCO GUARDI'S VEDUTE

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Abstract

The Venetian *veduta* or view, became popular in the Settecento when Venice had turned into a regular stop on the Grand Tour. The foreign market's interest in *vedute*, prompted Venetian artists to follow in Canaletto's path. Francesco Guardi (1712-1793) is today famous for such views, and his paintings hang in museums around the world. One of his *vedute*, *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, was bought by the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm in 1964. In 1990, however, the Nationalmuseum changed the attribution of the painting. What prompted such a change? This thesis critically discusses the difficulty of attribution and dating of *vedute* in the Eighteenth century, specifically of paintings by the artist Francesco Guardi. Moreover, it presents and examines the strengths and weaknesses of the different attributional methods based on documentary, stylistic, topographic and technical approach, and with what success scholars have used them to establish a chronology of Francesco Guardi's oeuvre. Due to its well documented history, the painting, *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, will serve as a case study for the difficulties of attributing and dating Francesco Guard's *vedute*, and the thesis will present evidence to *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, 's authenticity as a Francesco Guardi autograph.

Keywords: Francesco Guardi, attribution, vedute, connoisseurship, iconography, style, technical art history, topography, Venice, workshop, art history

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INTRODUCTION

Venice, this unique city on water with its gondolas, *piazzettas*, and masquerades, is the subject of a myriad of paintings by different artists from the *Settecento*. The Venetian *veduta* or view, became popular for the foreign market when Venice got to be a regular stop on the Grand Tour. Today, *vedute* by artists like Luca Carlevarijs (1663 - 1730), Michele Marieschi (1710 – 1744) and Giovanni Antonio Canal (1697-1768), more known as Canaletto, can be seen in museums all over the world. Francesco Guardi (1712-1793) is also mostly famous for such scenes, and one of his paintings, *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, [Image 1] hangs in the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm. It was bought in 1964, as a Francesco Guardi autograph, but interestingly, in 1990, the Nationalmuseum changed the attribution of the painting from Francesco Guardi to *Francesco Guardi or Giacomo Guardi*. What prompted such a modification? The change in attribution opened up questions about the difficulty of attribution and dating of *vedute* in the Eighteenth century, specifically of paintings by the artist Francesco Guardi. What is it that complicates dating and attribution and what are the strengths and weaknesses of the different attributional methods based on documentary, stylistic, topographic and technical approaches?

The Francesco Guardi *vedute* with vivid colours, elongated figures and an un-exact style of portraying architecture, fell out of favour in the Nineteenth century. He was constantly compared to Canaletto, who was deemed as a superior *vedutista* by Pietro Edwards (1744-1821) and the art historian Luigi Lanzi (1732-1810). The interest for Francesco's *vedute* was revived in the late 1800s, perhaps, as George A. Simonson proposes, because Francesco's "aims and ideals are the same as those of modern landscape artists", and a precursor to Impressionism.¹ During the early quest to understand the artistic and stylistic development of his oeuvre, Francesco was found to have started out as a figure painter working in the workshop of his brother Gian Antonio (1699-1760), and this information prompted a pursuit to determining the date when Francesco started to paint *vedute*. As the popularity of, and demand for Francesco's paintings increased in the Twentieth century, the matter of attribution came into focus and his oeuvre were being studied and discussed extensively by scholars like Fiocco, Shaw, Zampetti, Pignatti and Morassi. Different hypotheses of attribution and dating based on style, topography, and even fashion were proposed. But even as late as 1973, Antonio Morassi in his impressive collection of Gian

¹ George A. Simonson, "Francesco Guardi." *Monatshefte Für Kunstwissenschaft* 1, no. 7/8; 620-24, (1908), 624, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24495280>.

Antonio and Francesco's oeuvres in Guardi: *L'opera completa di Antonio e Francesco Guardi*, lamented that he had not been able to accomplish what he had done with Titian and other artists; to complete a chronology of Francesco Guardi's works.

Since the signed and dated (1758) painting, *La Festa del giovedì grasso in Piazzetta*, [Image 2] appeared in sales, in 1981 and then in 1990, there appear to be a wider unity behind Guardi's artistic stylistic development and timeline for Francesco's works. The dated painting especially provided clarity about Guardi's early *vedute*, but a complete understanding of Francesco Guardi's entire oeuvre has yet been reached.

AIM

This thesis attempts to exemplify and critically assess different approaches for attribution and dating of Francesco Guardi's views. It will provide a general understanding of the complexities concerning attribution of *vedute* paintings, and help realise different factors that play a part in establishing a chronology and date of completion. Furthermore, it hopes to distinguish general factors that have turned out to be critical in establishing the attribution and the dating of a painting. Moreover, it aims to ascertain the correct attribution of *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, in the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm.

THEORY AND METHOD

As this thesis deals with the difficulties of attribution, two theories apply, Connoisseurship and Technical Art History. Connoisseurship as a theory relies on visual analysis of artworks, that is, to physically distinguish one artist's work from another.² The analysis is performed by the connoisseur who relies on his knowledge in art to form an opinion. This can be achieved by for example determining similarities and differences in style and assessing the quality in works of art.³ One method of connoisseurship is stylistic analysis, where the style of an artist is understood and synthesised in order to distinguish the artwork from forgeries, as well as from other artists' work. The analysis of the technical application of paint, as well as the artist's rendering of figures and architectural features, are stylistic elements used to establish an autograph work by the connoisseur. Stylistic analysis is also connected to formal aspects that are investigated through

² David Carrier, "In Praise of Connoisseurship." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 61, no. 2, 159–69. (2003), 160, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1559160>.

³ H. Chapman, Thijs. Weststeijn, *Connoisseurship as knowledge. An introduction. Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art/Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek Online*. 69, (2020), 7, 10.

the method of iconography. At its simplest level the practice of iconography means identifying motifs and images in the works of art, where, as Panofsky states, “‘form’ cannot be divorced from ‘content.’”⁴ This in turn is related to Topography, which is another approach to creating a chronology of artworks. It can be considered as an application of an iconographic analysis because when dealing with *vedute* paintings the topography is strictly connected with the subject. For the *veduta*, Panofsky’s pre-iconographic analysis is applicable to make basic identifications of places, figures, certain architectural buildings and topographical changes, which can help the dating and attributing a painting.⁵

The theory of Technical art history is an interdisciplinary study of art which combines a technical and/or an experimental analytical approach, in combination with the study of documentary and literary sources.⁶

Studies of support, paint layers and pigmental analyses can be crucial tools to verify authenticity. Documented sources are essential for verification of the visual and technical analysis, as well as an extensive knowledge of art historical culture. Furthermore, the knowledge of the technical process of imagemaking has proven imperative when analysing *vedute* paintings.

For the purpose of this thesis, four methods used for attribution and dating of *vedute* will be analysed in regards to Francesco Guardi’s oeuvre; documentary, stylistic topographic and technical.

MATERIAL

The material consists of a) primary sources and b) artworks:

a) Beyond birth and marriage licences, there are very few primary sources related to Francesco Guardi’s life that can help to establish chronological references which can be used to date his paintings. The few but important sources collected here concern Francesco’s life and his connection to the family workshop, the patronage and his clientele in Venice, his working methods and commissions, and are connected to the issue of attribution and the reconstruction of Francesco Guardi’s oeuvre.

⁴ Anne D’Alleva, *Methods & Theories of Art History*, (Laurence King Publishing Ltd, London, 2005), 19-20.

⁵ Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology*, (Routledge, Oxfordshire, UK, 2019).

⁶ David Bomford, *Looking through Paintings, The study of painting techniques and materials in support of art historical research*. Edited by Erma Hermens, (Uitgeverij de Prom and Archetype Publications, Belgium, 1998), 9.

Establishing a dated reference to Francesco's activity as an artist, is the testament of count Benedetto Giovanelli (1652-1731), dated 15 December 1731.⁷ It attests that Gian Antonio and Francesco, who was nineteen years old at the time, were collaborating as painters at this time, and connects the Guardi brothers with the practice of copying, an aspect which shall be examined further on.

The early activities in the workshop are also disclosed by the records of payments addressed to Gian Antonio between 1730 and 1745 by Marshal Matheus von Schulenburg (1661-1747). These payments appear to be rather modest and could be interpreted more as a salary rather than a fee for individual artworks.⁸

The letters between the lawyer Carlo Cordellina di Montecchio Maggiore and Francesco Guardi, dated between September 18 and November 26, 1750, are also of interest as they establish that Francesco was conducting some business independently before his brother's death in 1760.⁹ Moreover, the letters connect Francesco to a member of the illustrious Grimani family, who had commissioned one or several works from him, and is speculated to have been influential for Francesco's later career.¹⁰

The statement given by Francesco's brother Nicolò in the *Stato libero*¹¹ , dated 11 February

⁷ Dario Succi, *Francesco Guardi - Itinerario dell'avventura artistica*. (Amilcare Pizzi S.p.A., Silvana Editoriale, Milano, 1993), 10.

Giovanni Paolo (1658-1734) and Giovanni Benedetto (1652-1731).

Archivio Venice, Atti. Marcello Girolamo – Testamenti 612, No. 345: "Al sunnominato Sigr. Antonio de Caroli mio amorevole...lascio le copie de quadri, che egli tiene di mia ragione, fatte dalli Fratelli Guardi..."

⁸ F. J. B. Watson, "The Guardi Family of Painters", in "Journal of the Royal Society of Arts", vol. 114, no. 5116: 266–89, (Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce, 1966), 268, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41369643>.

⁹ Succi, *Francesco Guardi - Itinerario*, 11.

Carlo Cordellina di Montecchio Maggiore and Francesco Guardi, "The Cordellina Letters dated September 18 and November 26, 1750". First published by F. Aglietti, "Giornale, Venice", [1798] then printed in George A. Simonson, *Francesco Guardi, 1712-1793*, 79. The originals are lost.

¹⁰ Giuseppe Fiocco, *Francesco Guardi, con 128 tavole fuori testo*. Editore Luigi Battistelli, (Firenze, 1923), 9.

¹¹ *Stato libero - is an inquiry made by the state*, where in this case just a few days before Francesco Guardi's wedding, Nicolò (Guardi) and Domenico Faggion were formally asked to act as "testimoni" (witnesses). And from their testimonies which are included in the "stato libero" (probably a sort of certificate issued before the wedding to legally claim the celibacy of the man soon to be married and make sure he is not hiding some other wife from a previous marriage). From these documents we can grasp the information regarding the location of Francesco's home etc.

Di Monte di Michele, "Guardi, Francesco", *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani - Volume 60* (2003) Treccani. it, Encyclopedia; https://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/francesco-guardi_%28Dizionario-Biografico%29/

1757, is also of interest, because if true, it would establish that Francesco did not study abroad, but had up until 1757 always worked in Venice.

“Francesco è mio fratello e siamo sempre stati insieme nella casa paterna
né mai è partito da Venezia.”¹²

The diary of Pietro Gradenigo (†1776) is one of the most important primary sources, as it establishes that Francesco Guardi was a known *vedutista* by 1764, exhibiting two paintings in Piazza San Marco at this time. Moreover, Gradenigo records that at this point Francesco had a workshop in Fondamenta Nuova, near Santi Apostoli, which is the same area where his brother Gian Antonio had his workshop. This establishes Francesco’s connection to the workshop as well as the tutelage from his brother. The diary also contains notices of architectural importance for topographic analysis as will be discussed below.¹³

Documents and contracts related to the commission of four paintings in 1782, made by Pietro Edwards (1744-1821), inspector of public paintings in Venice on behalf of *La Serenissima*, are also of relevance as they reveal a date of execution for these paintings.¹⁴ In the contract Edwards had written detailed descriptions of the four pictures, even specifying where the figures were to be placed, and he also ordered Guardi to take sketches *in situ*. The explicitness of the contract could indicate that Edwards mistrusted Guardi’s abilities and in fact were dissatisfied with Guardi as the choice for the job. This in turn opens up for speculations that a prestigious patron close to Francesco Guardi might have insisted on the commission.¹⁵ Federico Montecuccoli degli Erri suggests the patron to be Federico Maria Giovanelli (1726-1800), as his family had been the patron of the Guardi workshop from an early stage.¹⁶

¹² Succi, *Francesco Guardi - Itinerario*, 11.

Translation from the Stato Libero:

Francesco is my brother and we have always been together in our father's house, nor did he ever leave Venice.

¹³ Pietro Gradenigo, *Notizie d'arte tratte dai Notatori e dagli Annali del N. H.. Edited by Lina Livan, Introduzione di Giuseppe Fiocco, (Venezia La reale deputazione editrice, 1942), XX.*

¹⁴ Catherine Whistler, *Baroque & later Paintings in the Ashmolean Museum*. (Modern Art Press in association with the Ashmolean Museum, London, 2016), 174.

Little is known of the commission despite the details in the contract, it was published by Simonson in 1904, but is of today missing.

La Serenissima=The Republic of Venice (AD677-1797)

¹⁵ Whistler, *Baroque & later*, 181.

¹⁶ Federico Montecuccoli degli Erri, “Nuovi dettagli sull’attività dei fratelli Guardi”, in *I Guardi, Vedute, capricci feste, disegni*, ed. Alessandro Bettagno, (Venice, 2002), 66-67.

Edwards' dislike of Francesco's art is also illustrated in a letter addressed to Antonio Canova, June 23, 1804. Edwards laments that, in the shortage of paintings by Canaletto and Belotti, he must sell Guardi paintings. He describes the artist as poor, working "for his bread everyday", and painting on used pieces of canvas, and he indicates that because of Francesco's use of thin diluted paint, the paintings will have faded in 10 years.¹⁷

From the text in the catalogue (1790) belonging to the house of Abbé Giovanni Vianelli of Chioggia, we learn that Francesco was working up in his very late age.¹⁸

Francesco Guardi - "spiritoso nell'inventare, esperto nell'architettura, nel contraffare i terreni, nell'espressione dell'aria e dell'orizzonte ... lavora eziandio nell'età sua senile in Venezia, ch'ebbe per Patria fortunatamente."
(Don Giovanni Vianelli, 1790)¹⁹

By permission from the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, unpublished documentations pertaining to the attributional history of the painting *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, are also primary sources used in this thesis.²⁰ The first document is the Nationalmuseum Inventory. The purchase and price of the painting *Piazza San Marco, Venice* is recorded there, December 22, 1964.²¹ Furthermore, on January 10, 1990, a change of authorship was registered in the same inventory, from "Francesco Guardi" to "Guardi, Francesco or Giacomo, Italian, 1764-1835."²²

Three letters from 1965 are also of interest because they illustrate scholars' different opinions regarding attribution of the painting. Pietro Zampetti, Director of the Ufficio Belle Arti of the City of Venice, and Terisio Pignatti the then director of Musei Civici de Veneziano, are both certain that the painting *Piazza San Marco, Venice* was made by Francesco Guardi, while Michelangelo Muraro questions the attribution.²³

¹⁷ Pietro Edwards, "Letter dated 23 June 1804 from Pietro Edwards to Antonio Canova". Succi, *Francesco Guardi - Itinerario*, 10.

¹⁸ Giovanni Vianelli, "Catalogo di quadri esistenti in casa il signor dn. Giovanni dr. Vianelli, canonico della cattedrale di Chioggia", (Venezia, Carlo Palese, 1790); published in Simonson, "Francesco Guardi." 622.; Fiocco, *Francesco Guardi*, 11.; Succi, *Francesco Guardi - Itinerario*, 7.

¹⁹ Francesco Guardi - "witty in inventing, expert in architecture, in counterfeiting the land, in the expression of the air and the horizon ... he also works in his senile age in Venice, which he fortunately had for his homeland." (Don Giovanni Vianelli, 1790)

²⁰ I would like to thank the research department at the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, and Martin Olin, for giving me access to its material pertaining to the painting *Piazza San Marco, Venice*.

²¹ NM Inventarier, no. 5830; NM Nämndprotokoll, p. 409, 22 December 1964.

²² Ibid, January 10. 1990.

²³ Terisio Pignatti, "Letter, January 28, 1965 answering an inquiry from Bo Wennberg, first curator at the Nationalmuseum", Nationalmuseum Stockholm Archives.

Pietro Zampetti, "Letter, November 1, 1965, a reply to a letter from the superintendent of the Nationalmuseum

b) The material will also consist of a selection of artworks which are suited to provide an overview of the scholarly attempts to establish a chronological order of Francesco Guardi's oeuvre, and the difficulties of attribution and dating of eighteenth century *vedute*. One of the artworks is *La Festa del giovedì grasso in Piazzetta*, which appeared on the art scene when it was sold to a private collector in 1981.²⁴ The signed and dated (1758) painting has a significant impact on creating a timeline for Francesco's oeuvre.²⁵ *The Piazza San Marco, Venice*, now in the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, will be analysed in detail in the second chapter to serve as an example for the different scholarly approaches for attribution.

DELIMITATIONS

For the purposes of this thesis, a full and extensive analysis of the Settecento *vedute* paintings can not be performed. The attribution and dating of Francesco Guardi's *vedute* are, however, suitable to use as examples for this study since there are very few sales document and other primary sources to link his works to specific dates or locations, like there are for Canaletto, for example, whose life is more thoroughly documented, and many paintings were ordered by buyers in advance or sold and documented by his agent Joseph Smith. Furthermore, until 1981, no dated painting had been discovered, which left the scholarly community without a date of reference for stylistic comparison, especially for the early works.

LITERARY REVIEW

As mentioned, Francesco Guardi lost his renown only a few decades after his death in 1793. In an article from 1908, George A. Simonson draws attention to what he thinks was a naive comment made by Giovanni Rosini (1776-1855) in his *Storia della Pittura Italiana* (1849).²⁶ Rosini meant that Francesco's paintings only could appeal to those who had no understanding,

Carl Nordenfalck, affirming the attribution to Francesco Guardi", Nationalmuseum Stockholm Archives.
 Michelangelo Muraro, "Letter, July 29, 1965, to the superintendent of the Nationalmuseum Carl Nordenfalck, questioning the attribution in favour of Giacomo Guardi", Nationalmuseum Stockholm Archives.

²⁴ Sotheby Parke Bernet, New York, 11 January 1990, lot no. 121.

"In comparison to the earlier views, this work shows a darkening and softening of Canaletto's cool hardness with atmospheric effects, reminiscent of Luca Carlevarij (1663-1730), and looks 'forward to Francesco's style of the 1760s."

La Festa del giovedì grasso in Piazzetta, 51x86 cm, dated 1758, signed "Francesco Guardi F".

²⁵ Dario Succi, "Una eccezionale veduta datata di Francesco Guardi", in *Guardi - metamorfosi dell'immagine, (Problemi Critici per Antonio, Francesco e Giacomo)*, La mostra e il catalogo sono stati realizzati con il contributo dell'Ente Regione Friuli-Venezia Giulia. (Castello di Gorizia, Venice, 1987).

²⁶ Simonson, "Francesco Guardi", 624.

“più piace di ogn'altro ai non intendenti.”²⁷ With the publication of Simonson’s monograph of Francesco Guardi in 1904, the scholarly interest in Guardi’s oeuvre grew, and the public interest was sparked with the three Francesco Guardi *vedute* being exhibited in Berlin in 1906.²⁸ Giuseppe Fiocco in his monograph *Francesco Guardi*, (1923), established that Francesco had also painted figures, like his brother Gian Antonio Guardi, and not only landscapes which had been the common belief. Fiocco’s remarks would have a significant impact on the critical debate surrounding the stylistic analysis of Francesco’s *vedute*, as they induced scholars to make comparisons between the figures in history paintings and in the *vedute*.²⁹ There was a quest to establish a date when Francesco started to paint *vedute*, in order to create a timeline for Francesco’s work. But while Fiocco saw a later beginning of Francesco’s start as a *vedutista* (the 1760s), Victor Lasareff in “Francesco and Gianantonio Guardi. I.-Figure Compositions”, hypothesised that Francesco started to paint *vedute* as early as the 1740s when Francesco still worked in the Guardi family workshop.³⁰ In an article published in *Emporium* 1951, Antonio Morassi, like Lasareff, also argued that Francesco began this genre long before his brother’s death, as early as the 1730-40s.³¹ For attribution, Morassi used a stylistic approach, comparing the way Francesco handled the brush, his palette etc, but he also relied on the signature, in combination with some topographic renderings of buildings, like for example the distinction between a thin or a squat bell tower, of which the latter he believed was a feature that belonged to paintings which were imitations of Francesco’s work.

Morassi would have to abandon his hypothesis of an early dating in his extensive two volume work of the oeuvre of Antonio and Francesco Guardi published in 1973, due to the topographical evidence and the stylistic analysis, presented by Denis Mahon.³² In an article in *Problemi Guardeschi*, (1967), and in “When Did Francesco Guardi Become a ‘Vedutista’? (1968), Mahon settles Francesco’s earliest *veduta* to the 1750s.³³

²⁷ Giovanni Rosini, *Storia della Pittura Italiana*, Pisa, 1849. Tomo VII

²⁸ George A. Simonson, *Francesco Guardi, 1712-1793*, Meuthen & Co, London, England, (1904).

Three landscapes and ruins by Francesco Guardi were exhibited in the exhibition Berlin exhibition of May 1906, held in Schulte’s Gallery.

²⁹ Giuseppe Fiocco, *Francesco Guardi, con 128 tavole fuori testo*, editore Luigi Battistelli, (Firenze, 1923).

³⁰ Victor Lasareff, “Francesco and Gianantonio Guardi. I.-Figure Compositions.” *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 65, no. 377:53–72 (1934), 63, 67, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/865920>.

³¹ Antonio Morassi, “Conclusione su Antonio e Francesco Guardi”, (*Emporium*, CXIV, n. 683, 1951).

³² Antonio Morassi, *Guardi: L’opera completa di Antonio e Francesco Guardi*, Venice, vol I, II; 236, (Alfieri, Milano, 1973), 236.

³³ Denis Mahon. “The Brothers at the Mostra dei Guardi: Some Impressions of a Neophyte” in *Problemi Guardeschi*: 67-155, (Alfieri Edizione D’Arte, Venice, 1967).

The important and ambitious exhibition “La Mostra dei Guardi”, in Palazzo Grassi in Venice, 1965, was dedicated to the works of the brothers Gian Antonio and Francesco, and dealt mostly with the assessment of authorship through stylistic analysis.³⁴ However, the exhibition also expanded into Francesco’s *vedute*, displaying the views and capricci together, proposing a kind of evolutionary order based on the “maturity” of the works. The exhibition also introduced paintings that had rarely or never been seen in public, like *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, on loan from the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm: which attained much scholarly interest, both pertaining authorship, but especially for its composition and the distinct enhanced perspective.

In his article “Giacomo Guardi”, published in the catalogue of the Fundacao Calouste Gulbenkian in 1974, Michelangelo Muraro claims that several paintings attributed to Francesco Guardi actually were painted by his son, Giacomo Guardi (1764-1835). Basing his theories on stylistic analysis, and disregarding signatures, he interprets several stylistic features differently than other connoisseurs.³⁵

With the appearance of the dated *La Festa del giovedì grasso in Piazzetta* (1758), Dario Succi attempts to date and establish a chronological order of Francesco Guardi’s work, in the monograph *Francesco Guardi - Itinerario dell’avventura artistica* (1993).³⁶ Succi’s contribution summarises one century of scholarly attempts to date the beginning of Francesco *vedute* career and continues on to assemble scholarly and credible proofs based on topographical, historical and stylistic features, all in connection to *La Festa del giovedì grasso in Piazzetta*, and its date of completion, 1758.

I. CRITICAL APPROACHES TO ATTRIBUTION

When Domenico Guardi, an artist from Trentino who had moved to Venice around the 1700s, died in 1716, his oldest son Gian Antonio, then only seventeen, took over the family workshop.³⁷ Francesco was only four at the time of his father’s death, too young to start his training, but he would later join his brother in the workshop. The youngest brother Nicoló (1715-1785), whose

Denis Mahon. “When Did Francesco Guardi Become a ‘Vedutista’?”, *The Burlington Magazine* 110, no. 779: 69–73, (1968). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/875521>

³⁴ The exhibition was curated by Pietro Zampetti, and he also edited the illustrated catalogue *La Mostra dei Guardi - Catalogo della Mostra*, (Edizione Alfieri Venezia, 1965), which contained all the exhibited paintings as well analyses made by Zampetti.

³⁵ Michelangelo Muraro, “Giacomo Guardi”, Fundacao Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbonna, 1974.

³⁶ Succi, *Francesco Guardi - Itinerario*.

³⁷ Watson, “The Guardi Family”, 267.

artistic oeuvre is little known, might also have joined later. The activity of the Guardi workshop consisted mostly in the production of devotional and mythological paintings, and the designs were often based on works by famous Renaissance artists like Veronese, Titian and Tintoretto. There are some artworks with devotional and mythological motifs that are signed by Francesco. These works, although not dated, have played a significant role in scholar's stylistic attribution and dating. It is important to acknowledge the working method of the Guardi workshop, because it most likely influenced Francesco in the creation of some of his *vedute*. For example, he based some of his views on paintings, drawings and prints after other artists' work, like Canaletto and Marieschi. From *The Stato libero* records of February 11, 1757, it was established that Francesco had been educated in Venice, and due to the stylistic similarities with Marieschi, both Morassi and Lugina Rosso Bortolatto tie him to the Marieschi workshop. But this hypothesis will later be disputed due to stylistic and topographic analysis.³⁸

The critical approaches adopted by scholars for establishing the attribution and dating of the Guardi artworks, can substantially be summarised around four main aspects: a) attributional evidence based on documentary ground, that is the use of primary sources, which includes documented events like festivals and public ceremonies, as well as the material primary sources of the artworks; b) the application of stylistic analysis for attribution and to determine Francesco's artistic development; c) the use of topographic analysis (connected with an iconographic method within the theory of connoisseurship), to help determine the dating of the *vedute*; and, d) a technical approach to attribution, based on analysis and data from technical investigations (based on the theory of Technical Art History).

1.1 DOCUMENTARY APPROACH

Dating and attribution can be based on documentary grounds. Primary sources, in the manner of documents pertaining to the artist's life, training, and preferably sales and commissions, or indeed contemporary inventories, can provide valuable evidence for art historians. When such documentation is scarce, scholars have to rely on stylistic analysis to a greater extent and corroborate their theories with the little documentation there is, in order to hypothesise a timeline for the artworks, and the artistic development of the artist. In the case of Francesco Guardi, there are several additional problems on top of the lack of documentation, (briefly illustrated in the

³⁸ Morassi, *Guardi: L'opera completa*, 210.

Lugina Rosso Bortolatto, *L'Opera completa di Francesco Guardi*, (Rizzoli, Milano, 1974), 87.

section “Material”), in particular the fact that he belonged to a family of painters. Moreover, there were no publicly known dated works by Francesco Guardi until 1981. Nonetheless, the scholarly dependence on documented sources is illustrated by how much relevance has been put on the very scarce, and sometimes unreliable, information that is available about Francesco Guardi. Sources are to some extent always up for interpretation. As mentioned, from *The Stato Libero* documents, it can be deduced from the statement made by his brother Nicoló in 1757, that Francesco had trained and always worked in Venice, but there is a possibility he did not, for some reason or other, speak the truth in his testimony. There are of course sources of a more reliable nature as the testament of count Benedetto Giovanelli. It establishes an important chronological reference in the year 1731, since according to the text, by this date Francesco was already active in the family workshop. Therefore, it should be possible to date and attribute works to him from the 1730s. With several primary sources tying Francisco to Venice in his youth, and placing him in the family workshop with his brother by 1731, it can be concluded that he performed his training locally, and scholars have tried to ascertain with whom Francesco trained as an artist, as this information could help establish a timeline for his *vedute*. Gradenigo suggested in his *Notizie d’arte*, April 25, 1764, that Francesco was a "buon Scolaro del rinomato Canaletto."³⁹ It would be convenient to interpret *scolaro* to literally mean that Francesco in fact was an apprentice in Canaletto’s workshop. In fact, Morassi primarily did so, and consequently he dated the many copies Francesco did after Canaletto’s work, to have been made before Canaletto travelled to England in 1746. On the other hand, *scolaro* can also have a more general meaning, that Francesco was a *follower* of Canaletto's style like many other artists at the time. To complicate the matter, Francesco’s “primitive” style of *vedute*, as shall be discussed later, is also connected stylistically to Canaletto.

Francesco’s emancipation from the family workshop run by his brother, is also of importance for dating his early *vedute* as well as for understanding the distribution of work within the workshop. Was it always a collaboration between the two brothers, or did they work independently? As will be discussed further on, information about the brothers’ division of labour is important for the interpretation of results from stylistic analysis of the figure paintings where the distinction of several hands have been detected. The *Cordellina letters* from 1750, (of which the originals are lost), have proven to be influential as they indicate that Francesco was working outside of the

³⁹ Gradenigo, "Notizie d’arte, 106.

family workshop in the 1750s.⁴⁰ This fact corroborated some scholars' hypothesis of Francesco beginning his career as a painter of *vedute* before his brother's death in 1760. However, Muraro disputed the validity of this source, and speculated that Gian Antonio as the head of the workshop would not have conceded to letting Francesco work outside the shop, nor would he have permitted Francesco to put his signature on works of his own. Following this reasoning, no signed paintings by Francesco could therefore be dated before 1760, and all the known signed *vedute* by Francesco, like the painting *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, in Stockholm, must then have been done after this date. Muraro explains his theory by suggesting that the *Cordellina letters* were misunderstood by Aglietti who printed them, and that the signatures on the letters were not that of Francesco but of Gian Antonio instead.⁴¹ At this time, Muraro and no other scholars had seen the signed *veduta* dated 1758 which did not turn up until 1981. With its discovery, documentary based theories like for example Muraro's case discussed above, were put into question. I will return to this dated painting below.

The paintings themselves can serve as documents in several ways, for example written documentation on the front or back in the form of marks or numbers. Some of Francesco's Guardi's *vedute* have a written signature on the painting, but the signature has different significance for scholars in regards to validating attribution. Francesco Guardi was disregarded by scholars in the 1800s in favour of other *vedutisti*, which rendered his oeuvre more or less secured from forgeries, at least up until the mid-twentieth century when his fame had risen. Therefore many scholars deem the signed works as almost undisputable autographs. However, it will become obvious that stylistic analysis often takes precedence over a signature for many connoisseurs. I will return to the signature in the section *Technical approach* below.

As mentioned earlier, there is only one dated painting among Guardi's *vedute*. However, it must be mentioned that there exists a disputed dated work by Francesco which has been documented and used in scholarly analyses. The pendant to *La Carità* in the Ringling Museum at Sarasota, *La Speranza* is signed "F. Guardi F." and it had a date written on it which Fiocco believed to be 1747, even though the numbers had disappeared due to cleaning when he observed it. Fiocco

⁴⁰ Cordellina and Guardi, "The Cordellina Letters", 1750.

⁴¹ Michelangelo Muraro. "The Guardi Problem and the Statutes of the Venetian Guilds." The Burlington Magazine 102, no. 691: 421–29, (1960), 424, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/873220>.

based at least half of his conjecture on the writings of Detlef Von Hadeln who had seen the painting in 1927.⁴² But even then, according to Von Hadeln, only the two first numbers of the date were entirely legible; 17__.⁴³

By Fiocco hypothesising that *La Speranza* was dated 1747, the figures on the Ringling paintings could be used comparatively for dating works which had stylistically similar figures. Other connoisseurs were more reluctant to believe Fiocco's assumption, and in 1993 Succi dated *La Speranza*, to 1787, using a stylistic approach.⁴⁴

Returning to the problem of Francesco belonging to a family of artists, it can be difficult to ascertain attribution to a painting done in a workshop environment. The disputed attribution of the altarpiece of Vigo Anaunia in Trento, was partly, but not completely solved by documented sources. *The Madonna and the saints Antonio Abbot, Carlo Borromeo and Rocco* [Image 3], a copy of Francesco Solimena's (1657-1747) *The Madonna and Child, the Guardian Angel and St. Francis of Paola*, was up until the mid-twentieth century attributed to Francesco. Antonio De Maffei, date the execution of the painting to between 1731 and 1737 based on his interpretation of documents, and Fiocco suggests that it could also have been made a little later, as another written source indicates that *The Madonna and the saints Antonio Abbot, Carlo Borromeo and Rocco* replaced another painting in 1742, that had been sold by the parish priest.⁴⁵ Due to the dating and Gian Antonio's status as master in the workshop, the altarpiece was attributed to him. Attribution of paintings done in workshops are today usually analysed with a combination of stylistic and technical approaches.

A secure attribution based on documentary grounds, is the case of the *Miracle of a Dominican Saint*. [Image 5] The painting was put up in the church of S. Pietro Martire at Murano in 1763, three years after Gian Antonio's death, and must necessarily be by Francesco, and provides an approximate, but still uncertain date of execution.⁴⁶

Documented events can also help determine a timeline, especially when there is a commission, as the above mentioned four paintings dated through the commission of 1782, by Pietro

⁴² Detlev Baron von Hadeln, "Two Allegorical Figures by Francesco Guardi." *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 50, no. 290: 254–59, (1927), 254, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/863314>.

⁴³ Hadeln, "Two allegorical", 254.; Lasareff, "Francesco and Gianantonio, 53.

⁴⁴ Succi, Francesco Guardi - Itinerario, 233.

⁴⁵ Fiocco, Francesco Guardi, con 128, 19.

⁴⁶ Watson, "The Guardi Family, 268.

Edwards. But an event in itself does not assure a date of execution for the artwork as Francesco often used the method of basing a painting on other artist's works. For example, Canaletto made several drawings from the solemnities organised in 1763 during the election of Doge Alvise IV Mocenigo (1763-1778), and Francesco ended up painting twelve views from these festivities. But since he didn't base his paintings on his own sketches and not even on Canaletto's work but on the prints after Canaletto's drawings made by Giovanni Battista Brustolon (1712-1796), Guardi's paintings must have been produced after the prints began to be published starting in April 1766. The date is again provided by Gradenigo.⁴⁷ Furthermore, it is documented that only four plates had been published by 1768 and it is therefore very likely - taking into account the large format and the technique used by Brustolon - that the Guardi series was not completed before 1770.⁴⁸

Another problem pertains to the identifying and connecting a painting to the specific event. The "Festa del giovedì grasso" for example, was an annual festival, and it occurs in several paintings by Francesco, and can therefore be difficult to date. The two paintings *Feast of Shrove Thursday in the Piazzetta (Festa del giovedì grasso in Piazzetta)* belonging to the Crespi collection [Image 6], and *The Doge of Venice Attending the Shrove Thursday Festivities in the Piazzetta*, now in the Louvre [Image 7], have been identified as part of the twelve paintings depicting the 1763 "Festa", and are therefore dated to no earlier than 1766. Corroborating this is also the clearly visible coat of arms of Alvise IV Mocenigo [Image 7a], who was in office from 1763 to 1778.⁴⁹ But that in itself does not provide a secure dating as we shall see.

The dated painting *La Festa del giovedì grasso in Piazzetta* (1758) depicts the same subject of a *giovedì grasso* festivity, but it displays the coat of arms of doge Pietro Grimani (in office 1741-1752) [Image 2a], which, if it wasn't for the date signed on the painting, would indicate that it was executed before 1752.⁵⁰ How can this be explained? In 1758, the Doge Francesco Loredan (1752-1762) was in office, but from the *Cordellina letters* we know that Francesco had connections to the Grimani family, and he might have put their coat of arms in the picture to

⁴⁷ Gradenigo, *Notizie d'arte tratte*, 135-136.

C. "53 - 8 Aprile 1766".. "each sheet sold for 4 lire"

Morassi, *Guardi: L'opera completa*, 354; Succi, *Francesco Guardi - Itinerario*, 32.

⁴⁸ Succi, *Francesco Guardi - Itinerario*, 28.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 29.

⁵⁰ *La Festa del giovedì grasso in Piazzetta*, dated 1758, signed Francesco Guardi F.

impress the family. This example serves as a caution for basing dating of a Guardi *veduta* to such details as coat of arms.

To reiterate, the documented references play, as shown, a role in scholars' dating and providing a chronology of Francesco's work, but they leave much up for speculation, and require support from stylistic, topographic, and sometimes technical analysis to provide a credible hypothesis to support a timeline for the dating and attribution of a *veduta*. But it must be stressed, the importance of a dated painting, either from a signed date or through indisputable documentation, has shown to be detrimental for scholars, both for validating and overturning many theories, and in the case of Francesco Guardi. The appearance of the dated painting *La Festa del giovedì grasso in Piazzetta* (1758), from the J. Watkins' collection in the sale at Sotheby's in New York on May 20, 1981 and January 11, 1990, has been of great importance, as it finally provided a date and thereby fixing a style and artistic technical maturity for Francesco's early *vedute*.⁵¹

1.2 STYLISTIC APPROACH

The theory of Connoisseurship, as Chapman points out, can be regarded as subjective and intuitive.⁵² To a certain point this is true, because the conclusions are often based on stylistic methods which in order to be objective must be drawn with care and without generalisation. However, stylistic analysis is a method continuously being used as a means for attribution, and in the case of Francesco Guardi's oeuvre the approach has proved essential due to the lack of relevant primary sources. But because of the relative subjectivity of Connoisseurship, the history of the search to ascertain Francesco Guardi's stylistic development is rather complicated. The theory of Connoisseurship is based on the study of the object, and more specifically in the case of Francesco Guardi, to apply methods to be able to physically distinguish a genuine Guardi from a "near-discernable twin", to "seek a systematic analysis" and to ascertain his distinctive style.⁵³ The stylistic methods in the attribution and the dating of Guardi's *vedute*, can be synthesised into two parts: a) comparative analysis, determining stylistic similarities and differences between features like figures, tonality, colour and hue, application of paint, and brush work in *vedute* within Francesco's oeuvre as well as in relation to other artists' work; and b)

⁵¹ Succi, Francesco Guardi - Itinerario, 28.

⁵² Chapman, "Connoisseurship as", 6,

⁵³ David Carrier, "In Praise of Connoisseurship." *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 61, no. 2 159–69, (2003), 160, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1559160>.

determining the quality and the technical artistic maturity shown in the artwork. With the application of these systematic methods, paintings from Francesco's *vedute* oeuvre can be grouped together based on style, and then placed in order from early and "primitive", to late and "mature works."

Francesco was at the beginning of the twentieth century only known for his *vedute*, and his work as a figure painter in the family workshop had been overlooked, and it is important to acknowledge how little knowledge there was about Francesco Guardi and the Guardi workshop in the first part of the twentieth century. As previously illustrated, identifying the stylistic characteristics of Francesco's figures played an important part in the early stylistic analysis of his work, where connoisseurs conducted comparative analyses between his figure paintings and *vedute* and used their results to determine when Francesco started to paint *vedute*, and to distinguishing between his "primitive" and "mature" works. The signed *Madonna* (collezione Tecchio, Milano signed on the back "F.Guardi") [Image 4], and the altarpiece in Vigo Anaunia were often used for such comparative analyses and each artwork demonstrates a precarious problem for both attribution and dating. First, the altarpiece was attributed to Francesco but documented sources suggested that it was done within the Guardi workshop, and it is therefore likely to have been a collaborative work. Consequently, the altarpiece in Vigo Anaunia is an unreliable subject for comparative analysis based on style to establish attribution of other paintings. Secondly, the signature on the *Madonna* can imply that it is an autograph work by Francesco, however, as it does not have a signed date, nor can be dated based on references provided by contemporary sources, its style can reveal nothing about a specific timeline for Francesco's artistic development.

Regardless of these obstacles, Lasareff compares the small heads of the *macchiette* in the painting *The View of San Giorgio Maggiore*, [Image 8] in the Pinacoteca of Treviso, to the facial features of the *Madonna*, and deduces from these similarities that the *veduta* was made by Francesco.⁵⁴ To clarify, Lasareff tried to solve the problems of Francesco Guardi's artistic development and chronology by relating Francesco's figure compositions to his *vedute*. He interprets the stylistic discrepancies between the primitiveness of Francesco's execution of the

⁵⁴ *View of San Giorgio Maggiore from the Piazzetta*, 49x83,5, signed "Fran.co Guardi / Fecit", Museo Civico, Treviso.

cityscapes and the more sophisticated and adept rendering of the figures within the same painting as a factor for determining if it is an early or later *veduta*. Based on the theory that at the age of twenty-six, Francesco would have been more experienced in figure painting than in landscape, Lasareff dates *The View of San Giorgi Maggiore* to around 1740 and regards it as one of Francesco's earliest *vedute*.

Scholars continued to use the figures in the *vedute* both for dating and attribution, and were occupied by trying to ascertain Francesco's distinctive style, collecting a toolbox of typical Guardesque features which could then be used for attribution in themselves. Fiocco, in contrast to Lasareff, was among the group of scholars who anticipated a later start for Francesco as a *vedute* painter, dating it to after Gian Antonio's death, about the year 1760, believing that he before that time painted figure compositions exclusively. Fiocco's stylistic arguments were based on his assessment of the artistic maturity and quality shown in the celebrated series of 1763, which he concluded to be part of Francesco's "primitive" style.⁵⁵

Returning to the *View of San Giorgio Maggiore*, Treviso, instead of deeming it to be a "primitive" work of Francesco and grouping it with the 1763 series, Fiocco draws the conclusion based on stylistic analysis that the painting is of "poor quality, and attributes the *veduta* to Francesco's younger brother Niccolò, blatantly disregarding its signature " Fran. co Guardi /fecit". Later he changed his opinion, and recognized it to be of the hand of Francesco, due to the liveliness of the figures.⁵⁶ Zampetti uses the phrase the "vivacity of the figures," when analysing the Treviso painting, and regards this *vivacity* to be a stylistic trait of Francesco's. He dates it to circa 1750.⁵⁷

As the research progressed along the century, a stylistic vocabulary regarding Francesco's stylistic traits, began to be collected. Morassi (1951) and other connoisseurs recognized the *vivacious, elongated* figures, inspired by Marieschi and Carlevarijs, as a marker for attribution to Francesco.⁵⁸ Regardless of the different opinions of dating, where *early* could either mean everything between the 1740s to the 1760s depending on the scholar, connoisseurs began to

⁵⁵ Succi, *Francesco Guardi - Itinerario*, 63

⁵⁶ Fiocco, Giuseppe. "La Piazza di S. Marco di F. Guardi", in *Allgemeines Lexikon der bildenden Kunstler*, (Thieme-Becker, Leipzig, 1922), 169.

Fiocco, "Francesco Guardi", 35.

⁵⁷ Pietro Zampetti, (cura di) *La Mostra dei Guardi - Catalogo della Mostra*, (Edizione Alfieri Venezia, 1965), 148.

⁵⁸ Morassi. "Conclusione su Antonio", 213-214.

group paintings together based on stylistic similarities and placed them in a supposed order in the attempt to create a chronology of Francesco's *vedute*.

Scholars like Morassi also used the stylistic similarities between Francesco's *vedute* and other artists' works to determine a timeline, and by doing so also tied the artist to both a date as well as a connection to a workshop. The six paintings from the Buccleuch collection, had according to Morassi "an identical character, a dry chromatically sharp look; and a close connection with Michele Marieschi's landscape style, which is known to us in his surest works."⁵⁹ Morassi consequently drew the conclusion that Francesco Guardi must have painted them in Marieschi's workshop, and this provided Morassi with a suitable *terminus post quem* for the group that is the date of Marieschi's death, 1740. However, it seems plausible that Guardi in his earliest attempts to paint *vedute*, would try to imitate the style of acclaimed artists, like Marieschi and Canaletto, because of the market's preference, and imitation is therefore not a very reliable factor for establishing an evolutionary order in the oeuvre. The use of stylistic comparison to the works of other *vedutisti* is thus problematic as it really cannot confirm any dating. It is possible for an artist to copy another artist's work long after the original was made, and this working method was, as pointed out, used by the Guardi family workshop as they copied old masters, like for example Veronese, who were active 200 years earlier.

As we have seen, there are difficulties using stylistic analysis as a method for attribution and dating, because it is subjective, and can lead to varied conclusions. If only the figures were used as stylistic markers, there exist certain correlations between paintings, but there is not a consensus among the connoisseurs. As described, some connoisseurs attribute "poorly" executed figures to an early phase of Francesco's career, and others use it as a marker that the painting cannot have been made by Francesco at all but should be attributed to his brother or his son Giacomo. The handling of the brush and architectural renderings seem a more secure way to establish an evolution of style. The palette has proven to be a bit more inconsistent, as the preference of a colder or warmer hue is not only determined by the artist's aesthetic goals but by a shifting market. In view of this, let's return to the dated painting *La Festa del giovedì grasso in Piazzetta* (1758). By comparing the brushstrokes, and rendering of paint and architectural execution of the dated painting to other *vedute* made by Francesco, it was possible to establish a

⁵⁹ Morassi, *Guardi: L'opera completa*, 210.

plausible chronological order of Francesco's early *vedute*. Furthermore, because the dated painting is stylistically considered to be a primitive work, the start date of Francesco Guardi as a *vedutista*, is thereby set to the 1750s. It is clear that the stylistic method used in the theory of connoisseurship has its flaws, and it should be combined with other theories and methods, for example iconography, documentary evidence and topography to establish dating and attribution. However, stylistic analysis is still a very important tool, and Succi provided in the 1990s a brief summary of Francesco's early style where the figures have the characteristics of the Guardiesque which are slender and elongated, but they are depicted as calmer, devoid of excitement, perhaps even fragmentary. He points out that this early style which can be seen in *La Festa del giovedì grasso in Piazzetta* (1758), is different from "the dazzling interpretation that the artist will come to offer about twenty years later, carrying out the same theme in the famous series of Dogal Festivals."⁶⁰ However Succi had the advantage of being able to assess a century of research, and had a dated and signed painting to compare with.

To demonstrate earlier scholars difficulties and showcase the problems of subjectivity in connoisseurship using a stylistic method, the history of attribution of the painting *The Rialto Bridge with the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi* [Image 9] in a private collection in Milan, may serve as an interesting example. In the exhibition in the Lorenzelli Gallery in Bergamo, 1966, Morassi, curator of the exhibition, attributed the Milan painting to Michele Marieschi, based on style. Rodolfo Pallucchini did instead attribute the Milan and two other paintings from the Baltimore museum of art, as early works of Francesco Guardi, urging Morassi to rectify this error.⁶¹ However, Morassi, for unknown reasons, did neither file nor publish the Milan painting in his monograph of Francesco Guardi (1973), but only made a brief reference to it in the commentary on a painting of a similar subject belonging to the collection of the Duke of Buccleuch, as possibly being connected to Francesco.⁶² *The Rialto Bridge with the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi*, (private collection in Milan) is today attributed to Francesco Guardi. The painting belonging to the Buccleuch collection, mentioned above will prove to be of great importance in establishing a chronological order of Francesco's *vedute*, as will be shown in the next section.

⁶⁰ Succi, *Francesco Guardi - Itinerario*, 32.

⁶¹ Rodolfo Pallucchini, "Considerazione sulla mostra bergamasca del Marieschi", in *Arte Veneta, Annata,xx Alfieri Edizioni d'Arte*, 314-324, (1966), 319.

⁶² Morassi, *Guardi: L'opera completa*, n. 533.; Succi, *Francesco Guardi - Itinerario*, 34.

1.3 TOPOGRAPHIC APPROACH

Topography can be divided into two categories, subject and surface topography, where the first is connected to the theory of connoisseurship and the method of iconography, and the second to technical art history. Subject topography has proved to be a successful method to help establish a chronology of Guardi's *vedute*. The application of a pre-iconographic method, that is, identification of places, figures, certain architectural buildings and topographical changes, in combination with textual sources can provide a *terminus post quem* for a painting, that is, it cannot have been made before a specific date. Topographic discoveries, in combination with stylistic analysis, were crucial for determining the date when Francesco began to paint *vedute*.

Ponte di Rialto con Palazzo dei Camerlenghi, [Image 10] is part of the Buccleuch series. While iconographically studying the painting, Denis Mahon, noted that the church bell tower of San Bartolomeo appeared with an "onion-shaped" spire in the *veduta*.⁶³ Primary sources revealed that the old tower, which had had a cone shape, had been demolished in 1747. In Gradenigo's diary from 1754 he confirms the completion of the new tower.

C.94 - 1 Aprile 1754. Il nuovo, alto e molto bello campanile della Chiesa Parrocchiale di S. Bartolomeo fu del tutto fabbricato e compito. (Il Campanile fu incominciato nel 1747)⁶⁴

April 1, 1754 would then stand as the *terminus post quem* for the execution of the painting *Ponte di Rialto con Palazzo dei Camerlenghi* (Buccleuch collection). Furthermore, since the six paintings belonging to the Buccleuch collection were regarded by scholars to be more or less stylistically homogeneous, the *post quem* implies that they must all have been painted within a similar timeframe. Moreover, connoisseurs had agreed that the artistic quality and technical maturity shown in the six artworks of the Buccleuch collection placed the paintings at the beginning of Francesco's *vedute* timeline. Following this line of evidential reasoning, the 1754 *post quem* established for the *Ponte di Rialto con Palazzo dei Camerlenghi* consequently ruled out all theories for a much earlier beginning of Guardi's *vedute*. Morassi amongst others had to revise their earlier assumptions and settle for the 1750s as the starting point for Francesco as a *vedutista*. Later, Succi chronologically ordered the paintings within the Buccleuch group

⁶³ Mahon, "The Brothers at the", 124.

⁶⁴ Gradenigo, *Notizie d'arte*, 11.

"The new, tall and very beautiful bell tower of the Parish Church of S. Bartolomeo was completely built and completed. (The bell tower was begun in 1747)"

stylistically, with the dated 1758 painting as a stylistic reference point. In relation to the dated painting, *Ponte di Rialto con Palazzo dei Camerlenghi* (Buccleuch collection), is regarded as a little more mature, and Succi considers it to have been executed circa 1762-1763. Another topographic evidence provided a *terminus post quem* for *Il Canal Grande con Fabbriche nuove*, also part of the Buccleuch collection, [Image 11]. The Palazzo Balbi visible on the right, is depicted with the new marble facade which according to Gradenigo was unveiled in 1751, and it can thus not have been painted before 1751.

C.2 - 22 Ottobre 1751 “Casa fabricata della Contrada di S. Apostoli dà Giorgio Smith Mercante Inglese, La di cui bella Facciata Marmorea in bocca del Rio sopra Canal Grande, oggi fu scoperta, e comandata ed era ottimamente addobbata ad uso di sua nazione. (v. Coggiola Pittoni - Op. cot., pag.9)”⁶⁵

However, since it is stylistically similar to *Ponte di Rialto con Palazzo dei Camerlenghi*, Succi dates it to around 1762-1763 as well.⁶⁶

Other paintings from Francesco's oeuvre can also be afforded *post quem* by topography, like for example *The Grand Canal with Palazzo Grimani*, (*Il Canal Grande con il Palazzo Grimani*) [Image 12] formerly in the Koetser Gallery in Zurich. It must, like the *Camerlenghi*, certainly be made after 1754 due to the presence of the onion-shaped bell tower of the church of San Bartolomeo. It is considered to be earlier than the *Camerlenghi* though and dated by Succi to c.1758-1759.

Piazza San Marco towards the Basilica, (*Piazza San Marco verso la basilica*) [Image 13] in the Rothschild collection, Paris, dates to after 1755, as Byam Shaw detected some silver tones on the facade of the clocktower, revealing the new marble surface made by Giorgio Massari (1687-1766).⁶⁷ Gradenigo remarks in his diary for August 1755, that it was on the 13th of that month that the scaffolding was removed and the wings were revealed for the first time.⁶⁸

Pignatti, remarks that it can be uncertain to rely too much on topographic evidence for dating as

⁶⁵ Gradenigo, *Notizie d'arte*, 5.

“House built in the Contrada di S. Apostoli by Giorgio Smith (Joseph Smith), an English merchant, whose beautiful marble façade at the mouth of the Rio above the Grand Canal was today uncovered and commissioned, and was excellently decorated for the use of his nation”.

⁶⁶ Succi, *Francesco Guardi - Itinerario*, 29.

⁶⁷ James Byam Shaw, “Guardi at the Royal Academy.” *The Burlington Magazine* 97, no. 622: 12–19, (1955), 15, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/871488>.

⁶⁸ Gradenigo, Pietro. *Notizie d'arte*, 17-18. ; James Byam Shaw, “Guardi at the Royal”, 15.

As a reference to how it looked before, it can be compared to the *View of the Clocktower From the Piazzetta*. No 35 in the exhibition catalogue, *Guardi at the Royal Academy*, in 1955.

Francesco Guardi was not as meticulous as Canaletto when reproducing architecture, but he could be more arbitrary, and use a freer painting style. This looseness can be seen both in his sketches and drawings, as well as paintings after 1760.⁶⁹ Furthermore, Lasareff points out that in Francesco's maturer works from the 1780s, the outlines of the architecture "vanish in light and air, [and Francesco] succeeds in fixing the most complicated form with two or three strokes, while the uncommon brilliancy of handling and the almost monochrome scheme of colours can be equalled only by the late works of Franz Hals."⁷⁰

However, it is difficult to dispute the *post quem* for *Ponte di Rialto con Palazzo dei Camerlenghi*, (Buccleuch) based on the completion of the tower of San Bartolomeo. Meticulous or not, if Francesco painted it earlier he would have had to guess the shape before it was even made. The identification of certain features like the new Belltower, does not in itself reveal any date, but it must be verified with other materials like primary sources. Topography can therefore only provide an approximate timeline for its execution and must be used together with stylistic features, and in corroboration with documents.

Fashion is sometimes used by the connoisseur to date a painting. It is a disputed method, since it is too speculative, and can be subjective in a reversed way, as the artist or indeed the model portrayed might be fashionably unaware. However, since the timeline of three of Francesco's paintings were set with the help of fashion in combination with topographic, stylistic and documentary analysis, it is worth bringing to attention. The subject, of the paintings in question, are views of the popular town of Dolo, which also had been portrayed by Canaletto, Belotto and Cimaroli. In her article from 2004, Andria Derstine presents a case based on comparative analysis which resulted in the re-attribution of a painting from Canaletto to Cimaroli.⁷¹ This in itself highlights the market's preference for Canaletto during the nineteenth century, where many views probably were sold as Canalettos, but were in fact made by other artists. Three very similar Dolo paintings by Francesco Guardi, and a preparatory drawing probably made *in situ*, are also examined. All three paintings are called *Dolo on the Brenta*, one is from a private collection in Paris, one belongs to Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, and the third hangs in

⁶⁹ Terisio Pignatti, "An eighteenth-century workshop collection: the Guardi acquired by Teodoro Correr" in *Drawings Defined*, (Abaris Books Ltd. New York, 1987), 403.

⁷⁰ Lasareff, "Francesco and Gianantonio Guardi", 68.

⁷¹ Andria Derstine, "Views of Dolo by Canaletto, Bellotto, Cimaroli and Guardi", *The Burlington Magazine* 146, no. 1219 (2004): 675–82. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20073719>. 681

the Detroit Institute of Art. These paintings had, during the twentieth century, been variously dated 1760, c. 1770, and c. 1780, by scholars.⁷² However, F.J.B. Watson, analysing the quality and artistic maturity of the paintings, determined the Detroit version [Image 14] to be stylistically weaker and therefore regarded as the earliest of the three. Topography also helped to date the three paintings. After arduous research, documents were found with evidence that the old church in Dolo had been demolished and then rebuilt between 1770 and 1776. This provided a *terminus post quem* for the Dolo paintings since the new church is visible in all the three of them. Using fashion, Watson then narrows down the date and proposes that the three Guardi's be dated c.1776 as he had identified what he interprets to be the famous plumes that were made fashionable by Mme du Barry (1743-1793) in Paris in 1774. He then hypothesised that the "fashion reached London in 1775, [and] might have arrived by 1776 in Venice, 'always a little behind the two great Western European capitals.'" ⁷³ Fashion as a dating tool is risky, as it is known that parts of older paintings often were overpainted, or added to in an attempt to become more contemporary, and only a technical analysis of the painting could rule out such changes. And if a specific fashion attribute has been added this would change the dating, making the method interesting but unreliable.

1.4 TECHNICAL APPROACH

Most of the observations of a painting can be made without any technical help, but more often simple devices are used like raking light to analyse the surface. In the theory of technical art history, a painting can only be understood completely if analysed in depth from surface through the layers to the support. Raking light and microscopes are tools used to observe the surface topography in order to detect details of both features in the composition and the artist's painting technique, handling of the brush etc. Attribution and dating based on a technical approach requires knowledge and experience in observing and analysing technical images, for example made with infrared, ultraviolet, x-ray, and false colour. The method of using technical apparatus to reveal what lies under the surface has in recent decades proved to be invaluable for analysing artworks. Regarding works by Francesco Guardi, conducting analytical observations of the

⁷² *Dolo on the Brenta*, 67.5x104 cm, private collection in Paris; *Dolo on the Brenta*, 34x55, Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon; *Dolo on the Brenta*, 47x66, Detroit Institute of Art.

⁷³ Derstine, "Views of Dolo by", 682.

visible surface as well as the layers below are important in order to establish attribution, and three distinct examples of this will, in various lengths, be discussed below.

The issue regarding the difficulty of attribution within a workshop, is relevant both in regards to Francesco's *vedute*, as well as his figure paintings. The problems pertaining attribution and the differentiation of “hands” used within the Guardi workshop was already highlighted and examined by Mahon after visiting the exhibition, *Mostra dei Guardi* in 1965. Mahon proposed in 1966, that “both brothers excelled in a particular style of painting, and that connoisseurship was able to distinguish between their individual personalities.”⁷⁴ But as discussed earlier, connoisseurs were not always in agreement when attributing the figure paintings. In the example of *Vigo Anaunia*, some connoisseurs regarded the stylistic features to be that of Gian Antonio and others interpreted it to be the hand of Francesco. Observations of the handling of the brush, layering, contours etc, are all stylistic features used to establish authorship but since the artists working in the same workshop trained to paint identically, the visual analyses can not always provide the information needed to differentiate between one hand from another, or determine if it is a collaborative work or an autograph. However, with a technical examination of the painting, the surface topography can be examined, revealing details not visible by usual observation. Paint layers under the surface can be visualised with images taken with Infrared, and False colour photography, and can assist in determining if it is an autograph or a workshop collaboration, or as Merling puts it; “two autonomous personalities who worked closely but separately.”⁷⁵ Moreover, deeper examination, with images taken with x-ray, can provide the technical art historian with further understanding of Francesco’s technique, which might help with attribution.

Technical examinations done with x-rays can also determine an artist’s working method and help with authenticity and attribution. For example, x-rays taken of one of the four paintings commissioned by Edwards in 1782, *Temporary Tribune in the Campo San Zanipolo*, (*Il Tribuno in Campo San Zanipolo*) [Image 15] National Gallery of Art, Washington, showed that it was painted on an already used canvas [Image 16], revealing decorations of flowers beneath.⁷⁶ The technical art historian must also rely on documentation to substantiate its findings, and

⁷⁴ Mitchell Merling, “Problems in the Organization of the Guardi Firm: Evidence from the Tasso circle”, in *I Guardi, Vedute, Capricci, feste, disegni e <quadri turcheschi>* curated by Alessandro Bettagno, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venice, (2002), 98.

⁷⁵ Merling, “Problems in the Organization”, 95.

⁷⁶ Ibid, 95. Image n.101 show the mentioned x-ray, p100.

documentary evidence found in Edwards' letter to Canova, corroborate that Francesco in fact worked on used canvases.⁷⁷ In combination, the documentation and the result from the technical investigation attest the attribution of *Temporary Tribune in the Campo San Zanipolo*, and furthermore, it provides an insight to the working method of Francesco Guardi.

Another problem, that has divided scholars, is the meaning of Francesco's signature. It has been used to affirm attribution by some, and been completely discarded by others. When the connoisseur disregards the signature and attributes the painting to another contemporary artist, it must be deduced that the signature is counterfeited and the painting is either a forgery, or as in the case of Fiocco's first opinion on the Treviso painting, a possible division of labour within a family workshop. In the case of a painting done in a workshop, the signature itself may not ascertain authorship due the division of labour on the painting. It can also be hypothesised that a signature could have been added to increase the prize on a painting perhaps because one artist's work was more valuable than the others. In Francesco Guardi's case, it is unlikely that another artist during his lifetime would have signed their work with his name, because paintings by Francesco were not sought after like for example Marieschi or Canaletto.⁷⁸ Today however, his work is worth millions. One way to ascertain that a painting is not a modern forgery, is to establish that the signature on the picture was painted on at the same time as the rest of the paint. This can be difficult to establish without technical assistance.

Another difficulty can be a painting's poor state of conservation, which can prevent a clear reading of a signature, as in the case of the dated painting *La Festa del giovedì grasso in Piazzetta* (1758). The date on the painting was almost illegible and first thought to be 1756, and only after a technical investigation and cleaning, it was clear the date written was 1758. Technical investigations can also reveal a faded signature or other features which could be essential for attribution.

The technical approach also entails investigation into the artist's working method, which can include underdrawings, layering, which pigments are used etc. In relation to Francesco Guardi's *vedute* two more technical issues will be addressed, a) dating and attribution related to wide angle views, and b) Francesco Guardi's use of the *camera ottica*.

⁷⁷ Edwards, "Letter dated 23."

⁷⁸ Letter, "November 1, 1965".

a) Some of Francesco Guardi's *vedute*, like *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, *Feast of Shrove Thursday in the Piazzetta*, of the Crespi collection, and the dated 1758 painting, are among a group of views, many of which are signed, that are all described as having a *wide view*, also called enlarged, forced or a wide angle perspective. Many scholars regard the forced perspective as a possible stylistic marker for early, or relatively early views of Francesco, and Morassi even mentions the feature among other of Francesco's stylistic characteristics, like the elongated figures etc. Muraro, however, provides a contrary interpretation of the wide view. In his publication from 1973, Muraro attributes *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, to Francesco's son Giacomo Guardi instead, who "in regards to the wide angle perspective was then influenced by Canaletto."⁷⁹

In itself the wide angle view can not be used for attribution, but it must be regarded as a technical tool that Francesco used, as it is mentioned in primary sources.

b) The visual observation of a wide angle composition is often interpreted in relation to the artist's use of a *camera ottica*. Francesco Guardi's use of the *camera ottica*, is referred to in two documentary sources which may provide conflicting information. Pietro Gradenigo, makes a remark in 1764, in connection to Francesco displaying two much praised paintings on the sides of the Procuratie Nuove, that Guardi's success is related to his use of the *camera ottica*.⁸⁰ Lanzi, on the other hand, does not specify whether Francesco uses the device or not. But he does describe Canaletto as a user of the *camera ottica* to create the exactness of the architecture, and that Francesco "considered himself another Canaletto in recent years." However, Lanzi laments Francesco's lack of exactness of proportions in comparison with the master Canaletto, and this in turn could be interpreted as an indication that Francesco did not use the apparatus.⁸¹ It can however, be deduced that Francesco at least knew of the *camera ottica* from a drawing of his,

⁷⁹ Michelangelo Muraro, "Giacomo Guardi", "Fundacao Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbonna, 1974), 10, 14.

⁸⁰ Gradenigo, *Notizie d'arte*, 106.

"Francesco Guardi pittore della contrada dei SS. Apostoli sulle Fondamenta Nove, buon scolare del rinomato Canaletto, essendo molto riuscito per via della camera ottica, dipingere sopra due non piccole tele, ordinate da un forestiere inglese, le vedute della piazza S. Marco verso la chiesa e l'Orologio, e del ponte di Rialto e sinistre fabbriche verso Cannaregio, oggi le rese esposte sui laterali delle Procuratie con universale applauso" (25 aprile 1764).

Fiocco, Giuseppe. *Francesco Guardi, con 128*, 10.; Succi, Dario. *Francesco Guardi - Itinerario*, 7

⁸¹ Luigi Lanzi, *Storia Pittorica della Italia*, (Venice, 1795 - 1796), 289.

https://www.memofonte.it/home/files/pdf/lanzi_storia_pitt1795.pdf

now in the Van Regteren Altena collection in Amsterdam: *Man operating a camera ottica*.⁸²
[Image 17]

The leading *vedute* painter of the *Settecento*, Canaletto, and an early inspiration for Guardi, has been connected to the *camera ottica*, in fact, he had one in his possession. But when technical analyses were done on works by Canaletto for the exhibition *Canaletto & the Art of Venice, at The Queen's Gallery*, Buckingham Palace opening in May 2017, the infrared photography of six drawings provided an extraordinary insight into Canaletto's artistic practices. The results of the infrared photography “clearly show that Canaletto was not tracing the outlines of buildings in the open air but was carefully plotting out the scene with pencil and ruler in the studio,” which would imply that he did not use the *camera ottica*.⁸³ This of course opens up the questions to how Guardi used the *camera ottica* in his work. Pignatti has suggested that the slightly panoramic view in *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, in Stockholm Nationalmuseum, was the result of Francesco Guardi using a *camera ottica*. Furthermore, Pignatti believes that Francesco most likely had worked *in situ*, taking one sight from the left of the west side of the square, and a second one, from one of the windows of the Procuratie Vecchie “perhaps the 10th from the west”, and then combined the views.⁸⁴ Unfortunately, no deeper technical analysis has been made on *Piazza San Marco, Venice*. However, in raking light it is possible to see the incisions of the lines for the creation of the architecture. But nothing is known of the underdrawing, nor is there a preliminary drawing found for this painting like there are for other of his works like for example *Le Campo santi Giovanni e Paoli* (1765) 73x121 Musee du Louvre, Paris.⁸⁵ This painting has been x-rayed and shows a change or rather replacement of the architectural composition moving it to the left. So how and to what extent Guardi used the *camera ottica* and other methods to achieve perspective, and especially the wide angle itself, is still unresolved.

⁸² Bernard Aikema, “Guardi and Canaletto: Venice and Paris.” *The Burlington Magazine* 155, no. 1319 (2013): 123, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23395533>.

Now dated to c. 1780 but with a question mark behind it. Black chalk, 9,8 y 13,4 cm.

⁸³ Secrets of Canaletto's Drawings revealed ahead of New Exhibition.” Royal Collection Trust, Release date: Tuesday, 18 April 2017, www.rct.uk/about/news-and-features/secrets-of-canalettos-drawings-revealed-ahead-of-new-exhibition

⁸⁴ Pignatti “Letter, January 28, 1965”.

⁸⁵ Anna Bozena Kowalczyk, “Canaletto Guardi - Les deux maîtres de Venise”, (Fonds Mercator, Bruxelles et les auteurs. 2012), 102

II. REGARDING ATTRIBUTION OF PIAZZA SAN MARCO, VENICE

This chapter focuses attention on the painting *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, which belongs to the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm.⁸⁶ It is interesting to follow the timeline of the attribution of *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, as it provides examples of the difficulties in interpreting the theories pertaining to the chronology and attribution of Francesco Guardi's works in the vast amount of scholarly texts printed in the last 70 years. Moreover, it provides an insight to how the contents of museum catalogues, or the labels adopted by museums, might reflect such theories.

Among Francesco Guardi's great oeuvre, *Piazza San Marco, Venice* is part of the select paintings that has regularly been used in scholarly discussions throughout the twentieth century, in order to understand the chronology of Francesco's work. Furthermore, its attributional history is significant since it curiously had its attribution changed in 1990, from "Francesco Guardi", to "Francesco or Giacomo Guardi", by the Nationalmuseum.⁸⁷ The first part of this chapter will examine the history of the *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, its provenance, and the curatorial discussions and publications regarding its attribution. This will be followed by an examination of the approaches discussed in the previous chapter and how they relate to the Stockholm painting.

Like many of Francesco Guardi's works, the painting *Piazza San Marco, Venice* has a gap in its provenance: it is not recorded until 1831 when it was part of the collection of Thomas Hope (1769-1831) Deepdene, Dorking (UK). The Grand Tourists did not always buy per commission but through agents like Joseph Smith, or by visiting the artists' studios, which would explain the lack of documents that could have otherwise assisted in setting a date of execution for the painting. Gradenigo noted that Francesco exhibited two paintings in the Piazza in 1764, and it can only be speculated on how regularly Francesco sold his work uncommissioned in this way. Its history before 1831 is still unknown, however, the painting *Piazza San Marco, Venice* stayed in the Hope family until 1917, when it was sold in the Deepdene sale as an autograph by Francesco Guardi to a private owner whose name is annotated in the sale catalogue as Buttery.⁸⁸

⁸⁶ Inventory nr: NM 5830, Francesco Guardi 1712-1793 or Giacomo Guardi 1764-1835), Italy, Piazza San Marco, Venice, Oil on canvas h/b 50x85cm , with frame 62x98x5 h/b/d.

⁸⁷ NM Inventarier, no. 5830; NM Nämndprotokoll, p. 409, 22 December 1964.

⁸⁸ Christie, Manson and Woods Ltd, *Catalogue of Important Pictures by Old Masters and Family Portraits, being a portion of The Hope Heirloom - Removed from Deepdene , Dorking, the Property of Lord Francis Pelham Clinton Hope*, p 17, London, (July 20, 1917).

Lot no. 92, property of the late Lord Henry Francis Pelham-Clinton-Hope.

This could in fact have been Horace Buttery, as noted by James Byam Shaw in a letter of January 1955.⁸⁹

In December 1941, the painting was sold to 'Victor' (annotation included in the sale catalogue) as part of the collection of Harold Sidney Harmsworth, 1st Viscount Rothermere (1868-1940).⁹⁰ Keeping its attribution, the painting resurfaced again in June 1956, when it was sold by Geoffrey S. Boston, Esq. to Leggatt.⁹¹ Subsequently, on 2nd December 1964, *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, was sold as part of the collection of Mrs L. Bootle Wilbraham to Faerber & Maison Ltd, bought perhaps on behalf of Nationalmuseum, Stockholm. Finally, by December 22, 1964, it was part of the Nationalmuseum collections, inv. no. 5830.⁹² It was purchased for £ 34000.⁹³

This documentation highlights that even in modern times, it is difficult to assemble an unbroken chain of ownership. In some cases, buyers are only annotated in the sales catalogue, and where there is a gap, the painting may have shifted ownership privately. Identification of the material, in this case the painting, is often provided by a description of the subject in the catalogue, and by its measurements. Very seldom is the painting illustrated, as in the catalogue of 1951 and 1964. It is also interesting to follow the increase of monetary value for *Piazza San Marco, Venice*. There is no documentation of the price it was sold for in 1917, but in 1941 it was purchased for £ 1575, in 1956 the price had more than doubled to £ 4000, and in 1964 the Nationalmuseum bought it for £ 34000. As mentioned, Francesco Guardi had been nearly disregarded in the Nineteenth century, but was in the early 1900s rediscovered by scholars and the public. The steep increase in price from 1941 to 1964, illustrates the public's relative disregard for Francesco at the beginning of the century and his exponentially rising fame in just two decades. Today a work by Francesco

⁸⁹ Whistler, *Baroque & later Paintings*, 174.; Morassi, *Guardi: L'opera completa*, no 319.

⁹⁰ Christie, Manson and Woods Ltd. *Catalogue of Important Ancient and Modern Pictures and Drawings, sold by the order by Rt. Hon Viscount Rothermere, also Old Pictures, formerly the property of Miss Agnes Clayton-East*, p. 14, London, (December 19, 1941), 14.

Lot no. 74, property of the late Viscount Rothermere, sold to 'Victor', , for £ 1575.

⁹¹ Christie, Manson and Woods Ltd. *Catalogue of Pictures by Old Masters Sporting Pictures and Ancient and Modern Pictures and Drawings*, London, (June 1, 1956), 6.

Lot no. 18, property of Geoffrey S. Boston, Esq, sold to 'Leggatt' (annotated in the catalogue), for £ 4000.

⁹² Sotheby and Co. *Catalogue of Important Old Master Paintings*, New York, (December 2, 1964), 6-7.

Lot no. 11, property of Mrs. L. Bootle-Wilbraham, sold to Faerber & Maison Ltd (Nationalmuseum, Stockholm).

⁹³ NM Inventarier, 409.

Guardi is sold for between \$319 USD to \$42,707,494 USD, depending on the size and medium of the artwork.⁹⁴

Pertaining *Piazza San Marco, Venice* attribution, Morassi had studied the painting when it was in private ownership in the 1950s, and he had unequivocally asserted its authenticity as an autograph work by Francesco Guardi. Having been privately owned, when it reached the public in 1964, the painting obviously became the subject of much speculation and interest, both pertaining to its authorship and its place in the chronology of Francesco's *vedute*. The Nationalmuseum in Stockholm was not exempt from these speculations as is obvious from a couple of letters from the mid 1960s. In January 28, 1965, Terisio Pignatti, then director of Civici Musei Veneziani, answered an inquiry, presumably about the painting's authenticity, from Bo Wennberg, curator at the Nationalmuseum. In the letter, Pignatti congratulated the Nationalmuseum for such an important purchase, and he assured Wennberg that after viewing the painting at Sotheby's, he had no doubt about its authenticity, and its attribution to Francesco Guardi.

Then, in July 1965, Michelangelo Muraro, sent a letter to the superintendent of the Nationalmuseum Carl Nordenfalck, the content of which must have shook him a bit, because at the top of the letter there is a comment written by hand by Carl to Bo Wennberg saying;

“Vad säger du om detta?”⁹⁵ Muraro wrote that he had doubts about the attribution of the newly acquired painting, and he put himself at Nordenfalck's disposal to carry out a study and research to ascertain the true authorship of the painting. Muraro mentions his suspicions that the painting may have been made by Francesco's son Giacomo.

Nordenfalck must have felt the need to be reassured on the attribution after Muraro's letter. On November 1, 1965, Pietro Zampetti, Director of the Ufficio Belle Arti of the City of Venice and Curator of the exhibition *Mostra dei Guardi* at Palazzo Grassi, replied to a letter from Nordenfalck, reassuring him of the validity of the authorship. *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, had been lent to the great exhibition in Venice from June to October that same year, and Zampetti as the curator had had a first hand look at it. Zampetti writes to Wennberg, that he does not think the attribution to Francesco Guardi can be questioned and points out that the artistic journey of

⁹⁴ Mutual Arts, Auction , <https://www.mutualart.com/Artist/Francesco-Guardi/ED501A061FFDDAAC>

⁹⁵ Vad säger du om detta? - What do you think about this?

Francesco is not completely understood. Zampetti then speculates about style and date, and we shall return to this below.

In 1979, *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, was part of the exhibition *1700-tal Tanke och Form i Rokokon* in Stockholm, where it was attributed to Francesco Guardi.⁹⁶ But then a decade later, in January 1990, Nationalmuseum in Stockholm changed the attribution. In the inventory catalogue, the attribution to Francesco Guardi is crossed out and below it is written the name of his son, Giacomo Guardi (1764-1835). What reasons for the change of attribution is not stated, only that it was made in connection with the creation of a new catalogue.⁹⁷ This catalogue was most likely the Nationalmuseum's *Illustrerad katalog över Äldre utländskt måleri*, that came out in 1990. In this publication the painting is attributed to "Guardi, Francesco or Giacomo, Italian, 1764-1835", and refers to the article by Michaelangelo Muraro from 1973 in which he re-attributes several of Francesco's *vedute* in favour of the son.⁹⁸ What now follows is a curious inconsistency in attribution in the catalogues published by the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm.

In the catalogue for *Venetianskt måleri i Nationalmuseum och Stockholms Universitets tavelksamling*, published in 1990, the *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, is still attributed to Francesco Guardi but with an accompanying text that mentions Muraro's article and the possibility of the painting being by his son Giacomo Guardi instead. Finally, in the Reference catalogue from 1995, *Nationalmuseum Stockholm, Nationalmuseum*, the painting is described as an autograph work by Francesco Guardi, commenting that it is an early work of his.⁹⁹ However, by 2022, the attribution was still set to "Giacomo Guardi or Francesco Guardi" in the collection catalogue, by the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm.¹⁰⁰ The inconsistency in the attribution of authorship is surprising, but demonstrates the curatorial difficulties with attribution of Francesco Guardi's *vedute*, and how scholarly texts can be interpreted and valued subjectively. Because it is evident

⁹⁶ NM Exhibition cat. 1979, *1700-tal Tanke och Form i Rokokon*, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, 1979, p.61-63, nr 104.

⁹⁷ NM Inventarier, no. 5830; January 10. 1990.

⁹⁸ NM Cat. 1990. "Illustrerad katalog över Äldre utländskt måleri", (Ekblad, Västervik, 1990), 156.

⁹⁹ NM Ref Cat. 1995, *Nationalmuseum Stockholm, Nationalmuseum*, (Scala Publications Limited, London, 1995), 87. "Bildens återger ett klassiskt tema i Guardi's oeuvre. Konstnären har här valt att skildra hela piazzan genom att på ett verklighetsfrämmande sätt fälla ut perspektivet åt sidorna. Målningen är ett ungdomsverk av Guardi. Inköp 1964"

¹⁰⁰ Website of the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, "Giacomo or Francesco Guardi".

[http://collection.nationalmuseum.se/eMP/eMuseumPlus?service=direct/1/ResultListView/result.t1.collection_list.\\$TspTitleImageLink.link&sp=10&sp=Scollection&sp=SfieldValue&sp=0&sp=0&sp=3&sp=SdetailList&sp=0&sp=Sdetail&sp=0&sp=F&sp=T&sp=2](http://collection.nationalmuseum.se/eMP/eMuseumPlus?service=direct/1/ResultListView/result.t1.collection_list.$TspTitleImageLink.link&sp=10&sp=Scollection&sp=SfieldValue&sp=0&sp=0&sp=3&sp=SdetailList&sp=0&sp=Sdetail&sp=0&sp=F&sp=T&sp=2)

that the Nationalmuseum must have valued Muraro's theories over many other scholars' who regard *Piazza San Marco, Venice* to be a work by Francesco Guardi

Attributional evidence is often based on the grounds of one or several of the four critical approaches presented above, documental, technical, topographic and stylistic, and the Stockholm painting has been analysed with the means of all of them, either directly or in reference to other paintings to which it is linked. Written documentation is obviously in Francesco Guardi's case mostly the same for all his paintings, and the few existing ones are mentioned repeatedly in scholarly texts. Iconographic analysis of the subject, and identification of its location, architecture and figures, are the start of a stylistic and topographic analysis.

The oil painting *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, is a beautiful *veduta* of the Piazza San Marco in Venice. Looking down onto the square; to the far left is the Basilica facing east and the Campanile. The scene is enclosed by the long imposing repetition of architectural arches and windows of the southern part of the Procuratie Nuove, and because the composition has a forced perspective, visible is also a small part of the Nuova Fabbrica to the west. The masses of people, dressed in capes and masks seem to have gathered and halted on purpose in the shadowy parts of the square. Around the Campanile there are tents set up and a few of the *macchiette* have dared to stroll towards them despite the heat of the sun. The colour palette is cold with vibrant blue and yellows. The handling of the paint on the buildings is dry, while the elongated figures are touched with fluid brushstrokes of thinned paint, which depicts the characters' anticipation and joyfulness. Terisio Pignatti analysed the placement of the long shadows over the square and specified the time to be around "4-5 p.m. on a spring afternoon" where the sun hangs low over the church of San Geminiano¹⁰¹ to the east opposite the Basilica.¹⁰² Worth noting here is that Pignatti has only assumed that the church in question is San Geminiano, as it is not visible in the picture. As stated, connoisseurship is to some extent subjective as the conclusions are based on visual observations that are often compared to more or less reliable sources. And as in Pignatti's case, his assumption about the church is based on his preconceived idea that it is an autograph of Guardi made during his lifetime, and before San Geminiano was torn down by Napoleon in 1807.

¹⁰¹ San Geminiano was located opposite the Basilica of St Mark's, and destroyed by Napoleon in 1807 and replaced by Procuratie Nuovissime.

¹⁰² Pignatti "Letter, January 28, 1965".

Piazza San Marco, Venice, belongs to the group of *vedute* that are signed. Clearly visible, “Fran.co.Guardi”, is written to the right in the picture, on one of the three paintings on display in the arcades of the Procuratie Nuove. As demonstrated, scholars have over the century put varied reliance on the signed paintings by Francesco. Both Muraro, and the former curators of the Nationalmuseum join the group who renders a signature insignificant for attribution, while scholars like Zampetti use the signature as his main argument of attribution. As explained above, forgeries of Francesco’s *vedute* would most likely stem from the middle of the twentieth century when the monetary value of Guardi’s works had risen. To ascertain that the signature and the painting are genuine, or to better analyse stylistic traits of the painting, a technical examination is advisable. The *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, was cleaned before the re-opening of the Nationalmuseum in 2013, and was then studied by the conservator. The thick layer of mastix was removed with polar solvents and then a thin layer of natural dammar varnish was sprayed over the surface. The signature was regarded as painted at the same time as the rest of the painting.¹⁰³

No deeper technical analysis has been made on *Piazza San Marco, Venice*. Apart from the authenticity of the signature, a technical approach to attribution of the Stockholm painting can hardly be complete with so little data. However, it is important to acknowledge the importance of the state of conservation for the purpose of a correct and qualified observation. Visual markers can be indistinguishable without technical assistance. The incisions that were detected in raking light by the conservator, are interesting in regards to the wide view composition of *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, but without further investigation the use of the *camera Ottica* cannot be ruled out, nor confirmed.

The primary sources provide some information about the style of Francesco’s painting technique. Although written in a derogatory meaning, in his letter to Canova, Edwards actually describes the figures as being almost transparent, which corroborate Francesco’s technique of using diluted thinned paint for his figures, in contrast to the dry application of paint on the architecture of the earlier works.

Piazza San Marco, Venice, was of course subject to the same speculations about dating and attribution as the other paintings within Francesco’s oeuvre. In order to establish a timeline,

¹⁰³ The cleaning and analysis of the signature was made by Fernando Caceres, conservator at the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm.

Morassi connects the composition of the *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, to the Canaletto drawings now in Windsor Royal Collection.¹⁰⁴ As with the Brustolon prints mentioned above, it is problematic to date paintings made after drawings or prints. It can only set a *terminus post quem*, as the artist could have painted his version anytime after he had seen the original or print. It is also the matter of proving that Francesco saw the originals in question, and indeed when. James Byam Shaw for example hypothesised that Guardi knew the Windsor drawings from the collection of Consul Joseph Smith, “before it was sold to George III in 1762, and [Guardi] had studied Canaletto in these very examples, perhaps even before the Master's return from England” in 1755.¹⁰⁵ This only means that Guardi must have seen the drawings before 1762, but it provides no real proof of when Francesco painted the Stockholm painting.

In regards to the time when Francesco may have begun painting *vedute*, scholars either regarded *Piazza San Marco, Venice* as an early or a late work. As mentioned, Morassi in 1973 had to dismiss his hypothesis of the dating of 1730-40 for when Francesco started to paint *vedute* but he didn't change his opinion about *Piazza San Marco, Venice* being an early, primitive, work in the chronology of Francesco Guardi's *vedute*.¹⁰⁶ However, Morassi found several stylistic features that he considered to be similar to Canaletto, such as the rendering of the architecture, and the dry application of paint for example. The elongated figures he believed to be reminiscent of Marieschi and Carlevarijs.

In the assembling of a timeline, paintings were correspondingly stylistically grouped together after artistic maturity. Edoardo Arslan (1967), for example, connects the *View of San Giorgio Maggiore of Treviso*, to *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, and believes them to be part of Francesco's earliest *vedute* and proposes a date of execution to around 1745.¹⁰⁷ Quite contrary to Morassi and Byam Shaw, Denis Mahon (1967) strongly contested the hypothesis that *Piazza San Marco, Venice* could be ascribed to the early phase; “In fact, there are much more plausible reasons for associating it (together with other similar paintings) with the latest period rather than the earliest one.”¹⁰⁸ Dario Succi would later (1993) find this remark peculiar as it would suggest a sort of “involution of the development of Guardi's art” to regress so to speak, “from the

¹⁰⁴ Morassi, “Conclusione su Antonio”, 205.

¹⁰⁵ Shaw, “Guardi at the Royal”, 15.

¹⁰⁶ Morassi, Guardi: L'opera completa”, 236.

¹⁰⁷ Edoardo Arslan, “Considerazione sul Vedutismo di Francesco Guardi”. In *Problemi Guardeschi*, (Alfieri Edizione D'Arte, 1967), 10-11.

¹⁰⁸ Mahon, in “The brothers of the”, 129.

well-known and documented highly original masterpieces of the [seventeen-]seventies and eighties, to references very close to Canaletto's models t very close to Canaletto's models."¹⁰⁹

The most important feature for dating *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, is its similarities to the dated painting *La Festa del giovedì grasso in Piazzetta* (1958). Succi acknowledges these similarities: both have a similar wide-angle perspective, and a careful architectural rendering, and the figures are elongated, their palettes are cold. These features also stylistically connect them to several of the paintings from the Buccleuch collection, for example *The Grand Canal with Palazzo Corner* (*Il Canal Grande con il Palazzo Corner*) (dated by Succi to c. 1757). All these paintings are signed, and have the same dry and somewhat schematic youthful style. Moreover, they have similar measurements measuring about 50x80 cm to 60-100 cm. The measurements are of importance, as Francesco appears to have worked on these sizes early and for his later capriccis the canvases are very much smaller.¹¹⁰

Morassi, and Succi also connect the Stockholm painting to *A Night procession in the Piazza San Marco*, [Image 18] of the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford.¹¹¹ It is not signed but it had, like the Stockholm painting, been a part of the Hope collection and the two paintings were sold in the 1917 Deepdene auction. Furthermore, on account of its similar size, it has also been considered as a pendant to the Stockholm painting.¹¹²

Before the 1980s, Guardi's stylistic developments were not completely understood, and the grounds for attribution were not fully assessed. Museums approached these complications differently, like the Ashmolean using "manner of Guardi" as attribution. Today, with the 1758 dated painting, and further scholarly analyses, there exists a greater consensus regarding the chronology of Francesco Guardi's *vedute*, as well as his artistic style. *A Night procession in the Piazza San Marco* is now firmly attributed to Francesco Guardi in the Ashmolean Museum, and dated to the mid 1750s.

The Stockholm painting is attributed through style and comparison, and is part of a stylistically homogeneous group of paintings where topographic proofs secure them to be dated in the 1750s.

¹⁰⁹ Succi, *Francesco Guardi - Itinerario*, 26.

¹¹⁰ Russell, Francis. "Guardi and the English Tourist." *The Burlington Magazine* 138, no. 1114 (1996): 4–11.(1996), 123, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/886775>.

¹¹¹ Succi is even more specific and ties the Ashmolean picture to an event of the election to the papal throne of Clement XIII (Rezzonico) which took place on 6 July 1758.

¹¹² Whistler, *Baroque & later Paintings*, 174.

With its further stylistic links to the dated painting of 1758, the painting *Piazza San Marco, Venice* could by default not be a work of his son Giacomo, as he was born in 1765, and conclusively it must be attributed to Francesco Guardi.

II. CONCLUSION

Attribution and dating of *vedute* from the Settecento is complicated for a variety of reasons. In a general sense, the genre was very specialised for a certain market of Grand Tourists, who wanted paintings of views of the Venetian lagoon and piazzas as a souvenir from their travels. Moreover, because of the preferences expressed by the art market, many *vedutisti* were influenced by Marieschi, Carlevarijs, and especially Canaletto who was very popular abroad. This left behind a myriad of paintings of the same subject and in similar style.

Regarding the attribution of Francesco Guardi's oeuvre, very little was known about his life and work due to a century of neglect by the artworld. At the beginning of the twentieth century, as the interest for his work grew, a group of scholars put every effort into understanding and describing Francesco's style and artistic development, in order to establish a chronology of his work. Scholars utilised at least four different approaches for attribution and dating, and used them in different ways, singularly but mostly in combination, with various results. The documented approach is based on primary sources, but even though the lack of primary sources afforded little evidence regarding Francesco's life and artistry, scholars still put high value on the documents that existed and based their theories where they could on the textual sources. Francesco's connection to a family workshop contributed to the confusion and disagreement about attribution, both pertaining to the division of work between the brothers Gian Antonio and Francesco, and even Nicolò who sometimes was attributed paintings that scholars stylistically regarded as "poor" in quality.

The stylistic approach to attributing Francesco's work, elucidated the weaknesses of connoisseurship, its obvious subjectivity as conjectures are based on opinions on style, and the affinity for basing theories on too fragmented and uncertain evidence. This was illustrated by the very different conclusions connoisseurs drew from the same materials. The revelation of Francesco as a figure painter in the first half of the century brought scholars to put too much emphasis on figure style for attribution and even dating. Three theories on when Francesco started to paint *vedute* divided the art historians. Some believed that he started in the 1735-40s

based on the stylistic similarities to Marieschi etc. A second hypothesis was the late beginning, after the death of his brother in 1760, which was connected to the style of the series of paintings depicting the *Festa del giovedì grasso* in 1763, and also based on the disregard of the contents of the Cordellina letters and on the idea that Francesco was not allowed by his brother to sign a painting or to work independently. A third hypothesis proposed an intermediate date, 1750s, for Francesco's first *vedute*. This hypothesis was based on topographic analysis and on the discovery of the signed and dated *La Festa del giovedì grasso in Piazzetta* (1758), which finally provided a secure chronological reference for Francesco's early *vedute*.

Scholars began to recognize similar stylistic features, assessing both maturity and artistic technique, and grouping these paintings together. *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, was paired with several of the early *vedute*, and then also to the newly discovered dated painting. The topographical approach provided tangible dates for several other pictures. Identification of specific landmarks that were changed, and the corroboration of documented sources was detrimental for many scholars' theories that had interpreted that Francesco's early work began in his youth. Sometimes topographic evidence can seem a bit far-fetched, and not visually evident, like the identification of the silvery tones that are barely visible in the *Clock tower in Piazza San Marco* towards the Basilica, formerly Rothschild collection, Paris.

The technical approach proved to be able to bring clarity to the difficulty in differentiating the hands in collaborative or autograph work. This was one aspect that connoisseurs seemed to differ mostly in opinion, and it is of course a very delicate and detailed analysis that is needed to differentiate between one hand or another in a work. Therefore, it is essential that technical analysis becomes a regular approach in the attribution of a painting rather than just done in very special occasions. The technical approach also opens up a deeper understanding of both artwork, the artist and his technique.

The attributional history of the painting, *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, in the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, illustrates the difficulties of researching an artist's work that is poorly documented. It demonstrates that a signature is afforded both significance and disregard as an attributional tool. The reattribution of the Stockholm painting is also a curious example of disregard or ignorance of the latest research within art history.

The only official documented commission in Francesco's career is from 1782, and the absence of earlier dated works, to use as date of reference for the early style, made it impossible for

connoisseurs to agree on a chronology and completely establish Francesco's artistic development. The dated painting *La Festa del giovedì grasso in Piazzetta*, that appeared in 1981, became that point of stylistic reference which enabled scholars to come to a greater consensus about the dating of Guardi's work. The group of early paintings in which the *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, is included, could now be definitively dated to the 1750s, as they stylistically appeared similar to the 1758 painting. This means, in my opinion, that *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, in the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, can only be attributed to Francesco Guardi, and not to his son Giacomo, because he was not born until 1764.

It is evident that attribution and dating of artworks cannot rely on only one approach but should be multi-approachable so to speak, combining documental, stylistic, and topographic methods, and that technical analysis should be used more systematically. In a capitalist world it may sometimes seem that the attribution of an artwork is only important to ascertain its monetary value. As a technical art historian I consider the painting to be a puzzle from another time, and you cannot understand the whole picture without all the parts. So attribution and dating is not only about putting the right name to the right picture, but unearthing a bit of its history.

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V. LIST OF IMAGES

Image 1: Francesco Guardi, *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, 50x85, signed “Fran. co Guardi”, Nationalmuseum, Image 1b; Detail showing the signature.

Image 2: Francesco Guardi, *La Festa del giovedì grasso in Piazzetta*, 51x86 cm, dated 1758, signed “Francesco Guardi F.”, Private coll.

Image 2a: Detail, the Grimani coat of arms

Image 3: Gian Antonio Guardi, (and/or Francesco), *The Madonna and the saints Antonio Abbot, Carlo Borromeo and Rocco*, Vigo Anaunia in Trento. ‘

Image 4: Francesco Guardi - *Madonna*, 44x36 cm, Firmata sul retro : “F. Guardi”, Milano, coll. Tecchio.

Image 5: Francesco Guardi, *Miracle of a Dominican Saint* , 122 × 172 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Gemäldegalerie.

Image 6: Francesco Guardi, *Feast of Shrove Thursday in the Piazzetta* ,(Festa del giovedì grasso Piazzetta) belonging to the Crespi collection

Image 7: Francesco Guardi, *The Doge of Venice Attending the Shrove Thursday Festivities in the Piazzetta*, c. 1775, 67 x 100 cm, Louvre, Paris.

Image 7a: Detail of the coat of arms Alvise IV Mocenigo.

Image 8: View of San Giorgio Maggiore from the Piazzetta , 49x83,5, signed “Fran.co Guardi / Fecit”, Museo Civico, Treviso.

Image 9: Francesco Guardi, *The Rialto Bridge with the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi* , private collection Milano

Image 10: Francesco Guardi, *Ponte di Rialto con Palazzo dei Camerlenghi* , 60x91 cm, Buccleuch collection Edinburgh.

Image 11: Francesco Guardi, *Il Canal Grande con Fabbriche nuove*, (1762-1763), Buccleuch collection.

Image 12: Francesco Guardi, *The Grand Canal with Palazzo Grimani*, (Il Canal Grande con il Palazzo Grimani) - (1758-1759) formerly in the Koetser Gallery in Zurich.

Image 13: *Piazza San Marco towards the Basilica*, Piazza San Marco verso la basilica (1758-1759) formerly a Rothschild collection, Paris.

Image 14: Francesco Guardi, *Dolo on the Brenta* , by. Here dated 1774-76. 47 by 66 cm, The Detroit Institute of Art.

Image 15: Francesco Guardi - *Temporary Tribune in the Campo San Zanipolo, Venice* , 37,5x31,5 cm, (1782), National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Image 16: Francesco Guardi - X- ray of *Temporary Tribune in the Campo San Zanipolo, Venice* , 37,5x31,5 cm, (1782)National Gallery of Art, Washington.

Image 17: Francesco Guardi, “*Man operating a camera ottica*”, Black Chalk, 9,8x14,4 cm (Van Regerens Altena collection, Amsterdam.

Image 18: Francesco Guardi, *A Night Procession in the Piazza San Marco*, 48x85, (1758), Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

VI. IMAGES



Image 1: Francesco Guardi, *Piazza San Marco, Venice*, 50x85, signed “*Fran. co Guardi*”, Nationalmuseum, Stockholm. - Stylistically connected to the dated *La Festa del giovedì grasso in Piazzetta* (1758).



Image 1b; Detail showing the signature.



Image 2: Francesco Guardi, *La Festa del giovedì grasso in Piazzetta*, 51x86 cm, dated 1758, signed “Francesco Guardi F.”, Private coll. - Being dated, its appearance on the art scene 1981 and 1990, made a significant impact on creating a timeline for Francesco’s oeuvre.



Image 2a: Detail, the Grimani coat of arms



Image 3: Gian Antonio Guardi, (and/or Francesco), *The Madonna and the saints Antonio Abbot, Carlo Borromeo and Rocco, Vigo Anaunia in Trento*. - Attribution was partly, but not completely solved by documented sources.



Image 4: Francesco Guardi - *Madonna*, 44x36 cm, Firmata sul retro : "F. Guardi", Milano, coll. Tecchio



Image 5: Francesco Guardi, *Miracle of a Dominican Saint*, 122 × 172 cm, Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien, Gemäldegalerie. The painting was put up in the church of S. Pietro Martire at Murano in 1763, three years after Gian Antonio's death.

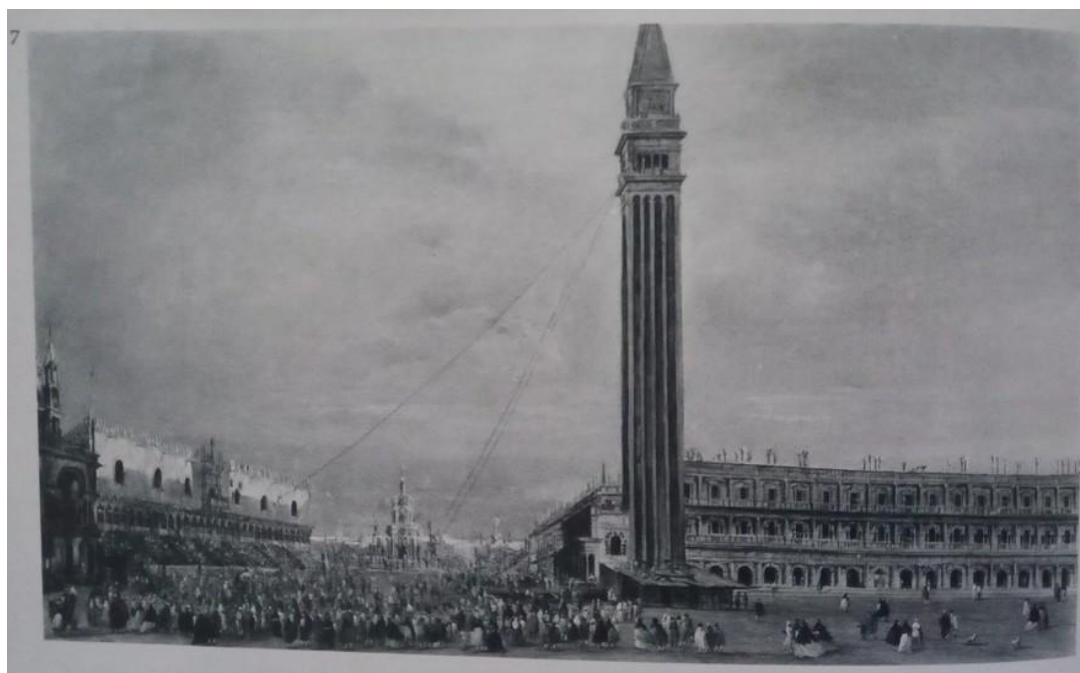


Image 6: Francesco Guardi, *Feast of Shrove Thursday in the Piazzetta*) *Festa del giovedì grasso in Piazzetta* belonging to the Crespi collection. Identified as part of the twelve paintings depicting the 1763 “Festa”, and is therefore dated to no earlier than 1766

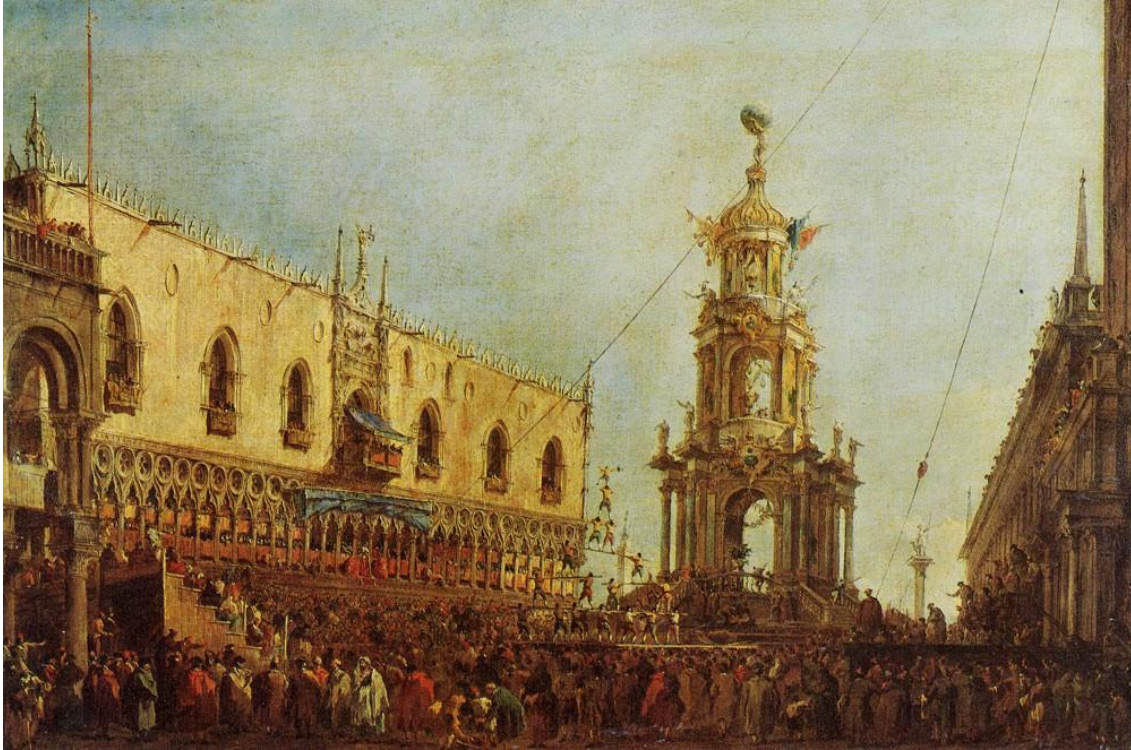


Image 7: Francesco Guardi, *The Doge of Venice Attending the Shrove Thursday Festivities in the Piazzetta*, c. 1775, 67 x 100 cm, Louvre, Paris. Identified as part of the twelve paintings depicting the 1763 “Festa”, and is therefore dated to no earlier than 1766.

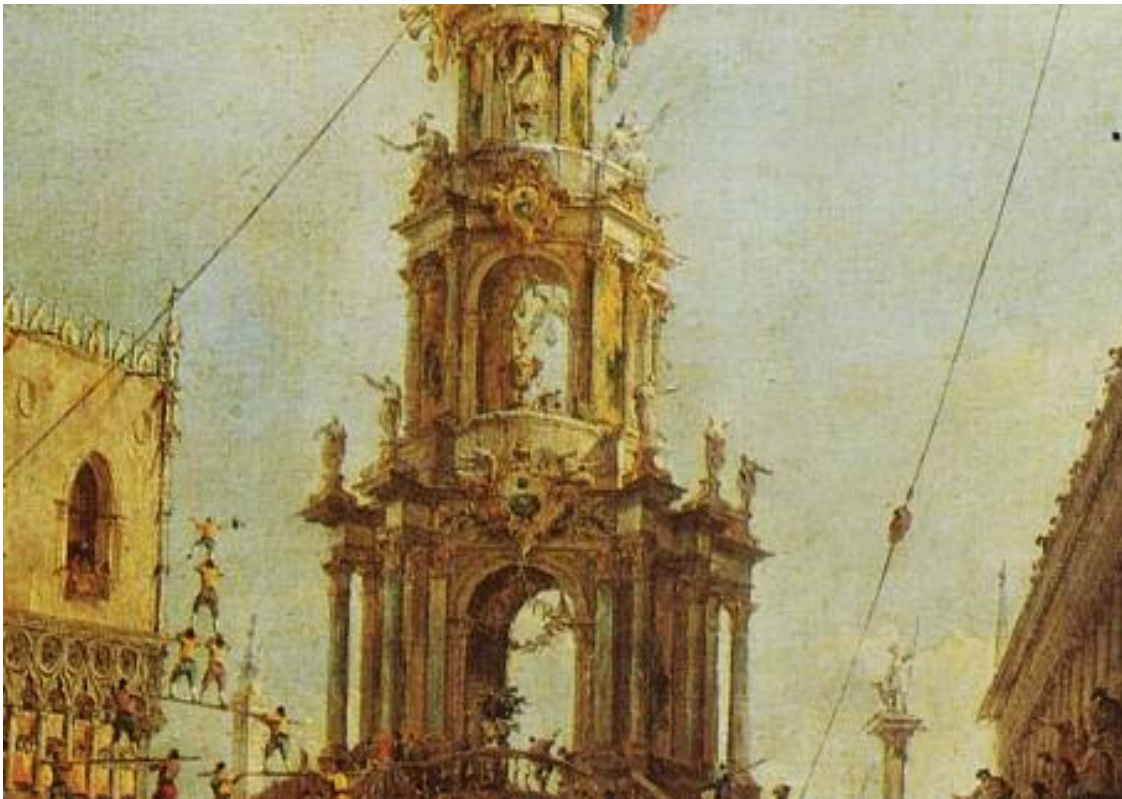


Image 7a: Detail of the coat of arms Alvise IV Mocenigo.



Image 8: *View of San Giorgio Maggiore from the Piazzetta*, 49x83,5, signed “Fran.co Guardi / Fecit”, Museo Civico, Treviso. Discussed stylistically, believed to be Francesco’s earliest *veduta*.



Image 9: Francesco Guardi, *The Rialto Bridge with the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi*, private collection Milano, serves as an example to the difficulties of attribution based on style as Morassi first attributed it to Michele Marieschi, at the Lorenzelli Gallery in Bergamo 1966 exhibition curated by Morassi.



Image 10: Francesco Guardi, *Ponte di Rialto con Palazzo dei Camerlenghi*, 60x91 cm, Buccleuch collection Edinburgh. - San Bartolomeo, which had been demolished in 1747, appeared with an “onion-shaped” spire completed in 1754.



Image 11: Francesco Guardi, *Il Canal Grande con Fabbriche nuove*, (1762-1763), Buccleuch collection. Topographic analysis - The Palazzo Balbi is clearly visible on the right, purchased in 1740 by Joseph Smith, after the radical renovations, according to the news provided by Gradenigo, on 22 October 1751 when the new facade was unveiled.



Image 12: Francesco Guardi, *The Grand Canal with Palazzo Grimani*, (*Il Canal Grande con il Palazzo Grimani*) - (1758-1759) formerly in the Koetser Gallery in Zurich. - Dated by topographic approach, certainly after 1754 due to the presence of the renewed bell tower of the church of San Bartolomeo.



Image 13: *Piazza San Marco towards the Basilica*, *Piazza San Marco verso la basilica* (1758-1759) formerly a Rothschild collection, Paris, orchestrated on very fine silvery tones and datable after 1755 due to the presence of the marble cladding on the side of the Clock Tower.



Image 14: Francesco Guardi, *Dolo on the Brenta*, by. Here dated 1774-76. 47 by 66 cm, The Detroit Institute of art. The dating is based on typographical research into the history of the town's architecture; Dating by fashion: the plumes were made fashionable by Mme Barry in Paris in 1774 and that the" fashion reached London in 1775, while he felt it might have arrived by 1776 in Venice.



Image 15: Francesco Guardi - *Temporary Tribune in the Campo San Zanipolo, Venice*, 37,5x31,5 cm, (1782) One of the four paintings commissioned by Edwards in 1782; *x-ray shows* that it is painted on a used canvas, revealing decorations of flowers beneath.

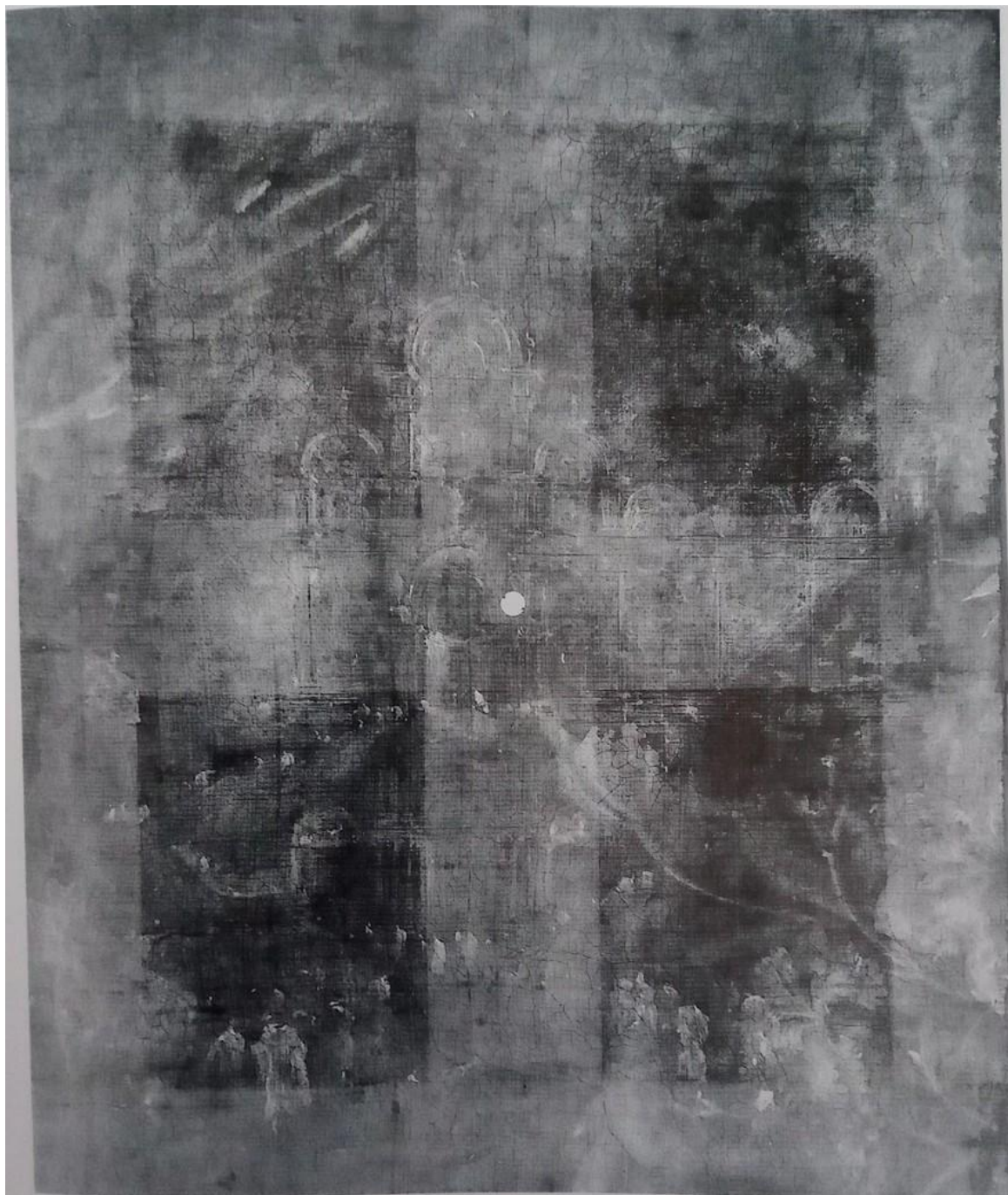


Image 16: Francesco Guardi - X-ray of *Temporary Tribune in the Campo San Zanipolo, Venice*, 37,5x31,5 cm, (1782); One of the four paintings commissioned by Edward in 1782; x-ray shows that it is painted on a used canvas, revealing decorations of flowers beneath.

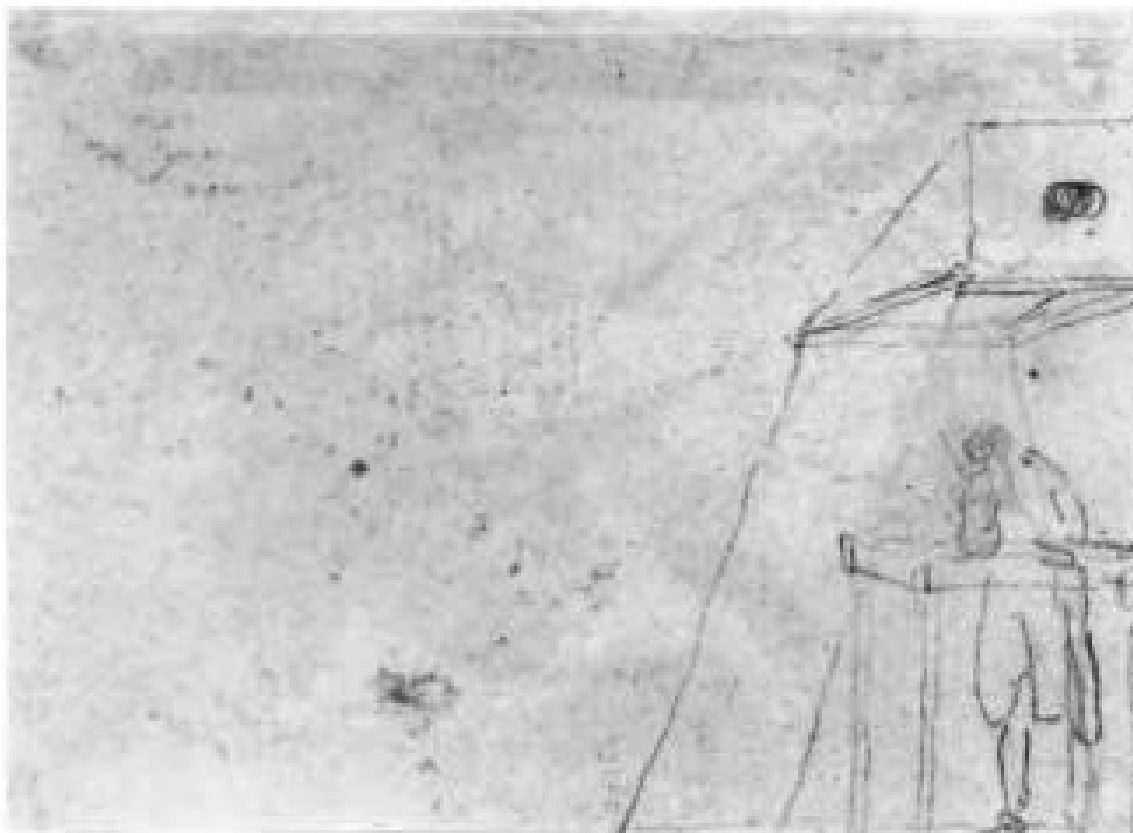


Image 17: Francesco Guardi, "Man operating a camera ottica", Black Chalk, 9,8x14,4 cm (Van Regerens Altena collection, Amsterdam).



Image 18: Francesco Guardi, *A Night Procession in the Piazza San Marco*, 48x85, (1758), Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. -The stylistically similar, and presumably pendant to Stockholm picture.

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