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Kristel Smentek, *Mariette and the Science of the Connoisseur in Eighteenth-Century Europe*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2014. 342. pp. Figures (20 color, 40 b & w), notes, bibliography, and index. \$119.95, U.S. (cl). ISBN: 978-1-4724-3802-7.

Review by Rochelle Ziskin, University of Missouri, Kansas City.

Pierre-Jean Mariette (1694-1774) was surely among the more fascinating and important figures in the Parisian art world from the 1720s through the 1760s—art dealer, historian, *connoisseur*, renowned collector, and—after he retired from commerce—honorary *amateur* at the Académie royale de peinture et sculpture. Not only a supremely successful seller of prints and illustrated books, he was also the author of an important treatise on sculpted gems, a primary collaborator on the *Recueil Crozat* and other important collections illustrated through engravings and etchings, the compiler of a significant mass of biographical and critical notes on artists' careers and *oeuvres* assembled for a compendium on artists and for a history of modern printmakers, still quite valuable to art historians (much of it published in the nineteenth century as the *Abecedario*).<sup>[1]</sup> He was an amateur draughtsman and etcher, and he is known especially for his remarkable collection of drawings, set in his distinctive mounts. Art historians, in particular, will welcome Kristel Smentek's engaging new study.<sup>[2]</sup> There is much to learn from this book, about Mariette's family and the trajectory of its social rise, the origins of modern notions of an artist's oeuvre, how empirical methods focusing on objects came to displace textual accounts in assessing authorship, the importance of an extensive web of European experts in the conducting of Mariette's research, and the larger historical models to which so many eighteenth-century writers subscribed.

Smentek's first chapter explores in detail the history of the family business, beginning in about 1630 with Mariette's great-grandfather Pierre, an engraver and print dealer who established a presence on the rue Saint-Jacques, the center of the book and print trade. She describes how each generation enlarged the business through purchases of the shops and stock of other dealers and strategic alliances. Mariette's grandfather Pierre II (1634-1716) substantially expanded the business, wedding the widow of another prominent print dealer and thereby acquiring a large stock and the boutique at the sign of the "Colonne d'Hercule," which became so famous.<sup>[3]</sup> Even more remarkable was Mariette's father Jean (1660-1742), who had studied painting before turning to engraving and was clearly a man of keen intellect, highly respected among prominent collectors. He considerably enhanced the prestige of the firm and assured that his son was well educated at the Jesuit Collège Louis-le-Grand.

Jean Mariette's expertise attracted the attention of prominent collectors, including Prince Eugene of Vienna, who asked him to catalogue and organize his extensive collection of prints, a commission followed soon after by a similar request from king João V of Portugal. Smentek assesses the profound importance to the young Pierre-Jean of his trip to Vienna (1717-18), resulting in over 200 bound albums, organized mostly by artist (rather than the conventional organization by subject), thereby establishing what would be a lifelong concern with authorship and artistic biography. In Vienna, he was exposed to—among other works of art—prints by Albrecht Dürer and the remarkable collection of sculpted gems assembled by Charles VI. Mariette then embarked on a trip to Italy, from late 1718 to

mid-1719, making purchases and establishing contacts with dealers, artists, and connoisseurs, some of whom became lifelong friends and key contacts. Father and son were also quite interested in architecture, and their shop sold topographical and architectural prints. Jean Mariette did engravings for and published the first of the famous *recueils* of modern French architecture entitled *L'Architecture française* (1727-c.1739). In 1738, his son (who took over the running of the business in the early thirties), revised again Augustin-Charles d'Aviler's *Cours d'architecture* (1692-93; revised ed. 1710) to bring it up-to-date in the realm of interior décor. He also added significant revisions to the first three volumes of the 1752 edition of Germain Brice's *Description de la ville de Paris et tout ce qu'elle contient de plus remarquable*, which included architectural and art criticism (and occasionally implicit social and political appraisals). Smentek, oddly, does not mention it, although she notes that the Mariette shop was known as the place to purchase that guidebook and others.[4]

Smentek stresses the importance of the Crozat circle for the young Mariette, where he “would rub shoulders with Bachaumont, ... the comte de Caylus, Charles-Antoine Coypel, the painter, playwright, and future director of the Académie royale de peinture et sculpture...[,] gem engraver Jacques Guay, and the artists Rosalba Carriera, Giovanni Antonio Pellegrini, and Edme Bouchardon, among many others” (p. 25). This is an interesting list, spanning more than a decade, focusing on those Smentek considers important to Mariette's future. This is understandable, but it also provides a rather limited, and perhaps too simple, picture. Notably left out are the important French colorists who also assembled there, especially the brilliant Jean-Antoine Watteau (who appears only in passing in the book), but also others, including François de Troy (1645-1730) and his son Jean-François (1679-1750) and Nicolas de Largillière (1656-1746), as well as the dazzling rococo architect and draughtsman Gilles-Marie Oppenord (1672-1742). Bouchardon, who joined this group rather late (shortly after his return in 1733, after a decade in Rome), probably had much to do with its increasing interest in classical antiquity.

In assessing the importance of Crozat's circle, Smentek specifically cites, and adheres fairly closely to, Thomas Crow's account of that group, calling it “the site from which some of the most significant eighteenth-century theory and connoisseurship emerged” (p. 25).[5] Smentek avoids the term “advanced” that Crow employed to describe theory emanating from this circle, but it still seems implied; that may be so from the vantage point of later neoclassical styles, but the earliest critiques of the reigning rococo style could also be construed as rather conservative.

Clearly, however, association with the Crozat circle was fundamental to Mariette's formation and it provided the opportunities and contacts that would establish his reputation. First there was the *Recueil Crozat* (reproductive prints, accompanied by artistic biographies and descriptions of Italian paintings and drawings in the collections of the king, the regent, and select individuals, especially Crozat, 1729 and 1742, the second volume published by Mariette two years after Crozat's death).[6] Mariette apparently provided many of the descriptions and much of the introductory text; he also bought up the plates after Crozat's death and brought out a new edition, with a second volume (the plates for which were probably already completed). His 1741 catalogue to the sale of Crozat's drawings, which was organized by the school and included an important introduction, set a new standard for sale catalogues and was widely emulated.

Among those associated with the Crozat circle to whom Mariette grew especially close was the comte de Caylus (1692-1765), and some of the most interesting sections of Smentek's study demonstrate just how often, and closely, they collaborated. Both were among the primary contributors to the *Recueil Crozat*. A year after the first volume appeared, they produced a *recueil* of reproductive prints by Caylus after a series of character studies Mariette's father had acquired (plus a portrait of Savonarola), with a text by Mariette [*Recueil de testes de caractère & de charges dessinées par Léonard de Vinci Florentin & gravées par M. le C de C* (Paris: Jean Mariette, 1730)]. Mariette also must have assisted Caylus with research for the lives of painters that Caylus read in the late forties and fifties at the Academy of Painting and Sculpture. Their most extended collaboration, and Mariette's most important historical work, was the *Traité des pierres gravées* (2 vols.), actually conceived by Caylus when he made etchings

after drawings of sculpted gems in the royal collection. Dissatisfied with the quality of the drawings he had reproduced, Caylus resolved to begin again after 1733, with Bouchardon as his draughtsman.

Caylus had apparently expected from the outset that the kind of project he envisioned would require consultation of savants from the royal Academy of Inscriptions, but that more extensive collaboration (absolutely necessary given the ancient inscriptions) slowed the progress of the *recueil*; at one point, the philologist abbé Sallier insisted on the retranslation of a Greek epigram that had already been printed. Smentek also reveals the many ironies of Mariette's (and Caylus's) insistence on the superiority of line and expression in ancient Greek sculpted gems (*vis-à-vis* both ancient Roman and modern examples). The foundation of their method for identifying place and date of production was empirical, based on careful visual analysis of a multitude of specimens, as opposed to reliance on textual sources. Yet their conviction that Greek art (and architecture) was superior was very much textual in origin. In fact, the sculpted gem both men considered the epitome of Greek perfection is now believed to date to the sixteenth century.

Smentek's account reveals the extent and remarkable breadth of Mariette's epistolary contacts with *connoisseurs*, collectors, and historians, in many respects his closest intellectual colleagues and invaluable sources of information. They included Anton Maria Zanetti in Venice, Niccolò Gaburri in Florence, Giovanni Gaetano Bottari and Paolo Maria Paciaudi in Rome, Carl Heinrich von Heineken in Dresden, and several Englishmen, among them Horace Walpole.

As noted above, Smentek stresses the importance of the "Crozat circle" in Mariette's formation and subsequent pursuits. This is surely valid, but a focus on that group alone presents too limited a view of the art world of Paris. Her account would have benefited from some indication of the kinds of divergent interests and competing discourses that emerged from other groups of *amateurs* in the French capital. Most significant among them was the one that assembled around the comtesse de Verrue and Jean-François Lériget de La Faye, collectors who embraced contemporary painting in a way Crozat's coterie did not. Mariette does not seem to have been close to most members of that circle, but he had certainly visited and studied their collections, and he clearly knew quite well one of those associated with them—Jean de Jullienne (1686-1766).<sup>[7]</sup> Yet Jullienne appears only in passing in this study (with just two entries in the index), despite many points of contact and similarities in social rank that might have made for an illuminating comparison. Jullienne produced a *recueil* of prints after the drawings and paintings of his close friend Watteau, published during the late twenties and early thirties, the same period that Mariette was at work on the *Recueil Crozat*.<sup>[8]</sup> Although the projects competed for the most skillful engravers, Mariette and Jullienne clearly remained on good terms. In 1732, when Gaburri wrote seeking a drawing by Watteau, Mariette promised to ask "M. de Jullienne, my friend"<sup>[9]</sup> (who made a gift of two drawings); in his biography of the painter, Mariette offered details that could have only come from Jullienne.<sup>[10]</sup> Finally, Mariette's annotations to his own copy of Jullienne's 1767 sale catalogue reveal deep familiarity with the collection, including prices paid and provenances through private sales; in at least one case, he recalled conversations with the collector.<sup>[11]</sup> Also mentioned only in passing were Mariette's relations after about 1750 with Mme Geoffrin's *lundis*, assemblies at which artists, *connoisseurs*, patrons (including Caylus and the marquis de Marigny) and collectors discussed current issues in the visual arts and assessed works brought by collectors. Mariette seems to have been a conduit between Jullienne and that salon. Thus, one feels that a more extended consideration of Mariette's relations with Jullienne (and collectors of the works of Watteau and other rococo artists) might have provided a more nuanced and fuller picture of Mariette's complex web of relations, and influence, in the art world of Paris.

No book, however, can treat everything. Smentek's study offers a multitude of new material on Mariette and thoughtfully situates him within a larger context of connoisseurship, artistic associations, European-wide networks of expertise, and early calls for a shift from the contemporary (rococo) style. The book is well written and elegantly produced, with twenty color plates (many illustrating Mariette's

distinctive--and, from a modern standpoint, controversial – mounts for his drawings). Scholars and students of the art world of eighteenth-century France will find it a most welcome contribution.

## NOTES

[1] *Abecedario de P.-J. Mariette ...*, ed. P. de Chennevières and A. de Montaiglon, 6 vols. (Paris: J.-B. Dumoulin, 1851–62).

[2] Other important studies of Mariette include the catalogue by Roseline Bacou, Françoise Viatte, and others, of an exhibition at the Louvre, but now nearly fifty-years old: *Le Cabinet d'un grand amateur, P.-J. Mariette, 1694-1774, dessins du XVe siècle au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 1967); an older study by Antoine Jules Dumesnil, dated but still useful, is available in digital form in *Gallica* ([www.gallica.bnf.fr](http://www.gallica.bnf.fr)): *Histoire des plus célèbres amateurs français et de leurs relations, avec les artistes. I: Pierre-Jean Mariette, 1694-1774* (Paris: E. Dentu, 1856).

[3] For more detailed accounts, see Smentek's "Pierre II Mariette, or the Mariette Dynasty Revisited," in Peter Fuhring ed., *L'Estampe au grand siècle: études offertes à Maxime Préaud, et. al.* (Paris: École nationale des chartes, Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2010), pp. 539-48; Maxime Préaud, "La dynastie Mariette: de l'Espérance aux Colonnes d'Hercule" in Marie-Thérèse Mandroux-França and M. Préaud eds., *Catalogues de la collection d'estampes de Jean V, Roi de Portugal* (Lisbon and Paris: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian; Bibliothèque nationale de France; Fundação de Casa de Bragança, 2003), I: pp. 331-71, and Roger-Armand Weigert, "Le Commerce de la gravure au XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle en France: les deux premiers Mariette et François Langlois," *Gazette des beaux-arts* 41 (March 1953): 167-188.

[4] The fifth edition of Brice's guidebook appears in Smentek's bibliography, but without Mariette's name (not part of the standard bibliographic listing, but certainly pertinent here). Scholars have long recognized his authorship; see, for example, Alfred Bonnardot, *Gilles Corrozet et Germain Brice. Études bibliographiques sur ces deux historiens de Paris* (Paris: Champion, 1880), p. 63, and Michel Fleury's preface to a reprint of the 1752 edition (Geneva: Droz, 1971), p. xli.

[5] See Thomas E. Crow, *Painters and Public Life in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1985), 40.

[6] *Recueil d'estampes d'après les plus beaux tableaux et d'après les plus beaux dessins qui sont en France dans le cabinet du Roy, dans celui de Monseigneur le duc d'Orléans et dans d'autres cabinets*, 2 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie nationale, 1729 and Pierre-Jean Mariette, 1742).

[7] On Jullienne, see especially Isabelle Tillerot, *Jean de Jullienne et les collectionneurs de son temps: un regard singulier sur le tableau* (Paris: Maison des sciences de l'homme, 2011).

[8] See Émile Dacier, Jacques Hérold and Albert Vuaflart, *Jean de Jullienne et les graveurs de Watteau au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, 4 vols. (Paris: Société pour l'Étude de la Graveur Française, 1921-29).

[9] Quoted by Dumesnil, *Histoire des plus célèbres amateurs... Pierre-Jean Mariette*, 50.

[10] For example, Mariette wrote that it was Watteau who persuaded Jullienne to give up painting and pursue his family's thread-dyeing and wool-production enterprises (*Abecedario*, III: 15).

[11] Mariette's comments are discussed and transcribed by Edouard Kopp and Jennifer Tonkovich, "The Judgment of a Connoisseur: P.-J. Mariette's Annotations to the 1767 Jullienne Sale Catalogue: Part 1 (Paintings)," *Burlington Magazine* CLI: 1281 (Dec. 2009): 821-24 (and the appendix to it, 1-10);

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they are also transcribed in the Getty Provenance Index [Sale Catalog F-A191, 30 March-22 May 1767], <http://piprod.getty.edu/starweb/pi/servlet.starweb>, accessed July 25, 2015.

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