

SPECTACULARLY SMALL: JACQUES CALLOT AT THE MEDICI COURT

Nina Eugenia Serebrennikov

In his short twelve-year reign, the Grand Duke of Tuscany Cosimo II de' Medici sponsored numerous public spectacles for the entertainment of his subjects. To commemorate these events Jacques Callot developed considerable skill in rendering throngs of spectators admiring that princely largesse. The apogee of this lexicon of spectacle was Callot's Fair at Impruneta. Dedicating it to the grand duke, he depicted well over a thousand figures engaged in nearly as many separate activities. But there would be no place for the large writ small in seventeenth-century academic theory; it was a taste and skill that was virtually extinguished with the death of Cosimo II and Callot. DOI: [10.18277/makf.2015.12](https://doi.org/10.18277/makf.2015.12)

In the second volume of Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* the young Marcel recounts his first experience of the theater. He accompanies his grandmother to a matinee performance of Racine's *Phèdre* starring the renowned actress Berma, whom the boy idolizes,

I told my grandmother that I could not see very well; she handed me her glasses. Only, when one believes in the reality of a thing, making it visible by artificial means is not quite the same as feeling that it is close at hand. I thought now that it was no longer Berma at whom I was looking, but her image in a magnifying glass. I put the glasses down, but then possibly the image that my eye received of her, diminished by distance, was no more exact; which of the two Bermas was the real?¹

The issue of which version to believe—that seen by the naked eye, or that seen through a lens—rises repeatedly in the history of optics. Certainly one of the better-known instances is the case of Galileo Galilei's seemingly heretical assertion in his 1609 *Sidereus nuncius* that when the moon was observed through his telescope it was clear that the surface is not perfectly smooth. Instead, like the earth, it is covered with jagged mountains and deep craters.² Galileo dedicated that text as well as the telescope with which he had made his discoveries to the Grand Duke of Tuscany Cosimo II de' Medici, who was known to be both a generous and discerning patron. His gifts were rewarded. In the spring of 1610 Galileo applied for and was appointed to the position of chief mathematician and philosopher of the Medici court.³ That appointment, I believe, sparked a surprising rivalry.

In the tradition of his powerful ancestors, Cosimo II was also an active patron of the visual arts. No doubt in part because his indomitable mother, Christine de Lorraine, was French, the duke looked upon Northern European artists with favor. It was he who sent emissaries not once, but twice, to Rome to purchase Adam Elsheimer's small, multipaneled altarpiece *The Finding and Exaltation of the True Cross*. It was almost certainly he who commissioned Cornelis van Poelenburgh to copy Elsheimer's nine-centimeter-high copper panels of *Holy Figures* onto plates just a fraction larger. And it was he who in 1614 provided a studio in the Uffizi for a young artist from Lorraine, Jacques Callot, in order to execute engravings of the life of his father, Grand Duke Ferdinand I. In the seven years that he spent at Cosimo II's court Callot etched numerous festivities that the grand duke commissioned for his subjects in Florence. Through his repeated rendering of vast, celebratory audiences on small sheets of paper, Callot developed an

unsurpassed skill in the depiction of the miniscule, a skill much appreciated by his patron. In a city whose artists had inspired Leon Battista's *De pictura*, and where Giorgio Vasari had established his Accademia del Disegno, there existed another pictorial lexicon, which might be called the vocabulary of polemical spectacle. It was from this perspective that Callot would issue his own optical challenge to the Italian astronomer and mathematician.

Little is certain about Callot's early years. Born in 1592 in Nancy to a family ennobled by Duke Charles III, he would have been familiar with princely spectacles from an early age, as his father had been appointed court herald. André Félibien and Filippo Baldinucci agree that the young Callot was a precocious draftsman, but they differ in their accounts of his arrival in Rome, where sometime between 1608 and 1611 he entered the workshop of a successful engraver and print publisher from Troyes, Philippe Thomassin.⁴ Amid his early works for Thomassin is a series of reproductive engravings of the paintings and statuary found in Saint Peter's and San Paolo Fuori le Mura. Each print is approximately eleven centimeters high, which suggests that they were intended for a larger plate, where they might have surrounded some text, views of the two churches, or perhaps a map of Rome. At this point Callot was still an inexperienced draftsman, so it is unlikely that he was the one who converted the large altarpieces and sculpture to drawings that would serve as models for the engravings.⁵ In all probability he seized this opportunity to better understand the task of reproductive printmaking. One can imagine the young artist from Lorraine bringing the model drawing of, for example, Michelangelo's *Pietà* to Saint Peter's in order to compare it with the original sculpture, working out the scale of reduction and registering the omissions in the smaller format.⁶ This would have been his first exposure, albeit a somewhat mechanical one, to an issue that would preoccupy him throughout his career: how to produce the monumental in miniature.

Baldinucci reports that Callot, recognizing his own lack of skill in the graphic media, left Rome for Florence to attend an informal academy run by Cosimo II's court architect, stage designer and engineer, Giulio Parigi; an academy where Euclid, mechanics, perspective, and civil and military architecture were taught.⁷ Parigi's early etchings display the fusion of perspective, topography, and military might that seems to have been characteristic of the curriculum, which attracted, again according to Baldinucci, scores of noblemen in military service.⁸ In that academy Callot would also have become acquainted with Parigi's assistant Remigio Cantagallina, who was, as Félibien records, very skilled in making both large and small compositions.⁹ Similarly, Baldinucci recounts that Parigi, upon noticing how skilled Callot was in depicting small figures, but in an affected and extravagant style, urged him to study nature to improve his drawings.¹⁰ In fact, Callot would spend the remainder of his productive years sketching miniature figures from life, such as the nine-centimeter-high drawing of a snake charmer, which he later included among the crowds in his etchings (fig. 1).



Figure 1. Jacques Callot, Snake Charmer, n.d., red chalk on paper, 8.8 x 8.4 cm. Florence, Gabinetto disegni e stampe degli Uffizi, inv. no. 2505 (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by Polo Museale Fiorentino)

Under Parigi's tutelage Callot was also introduced to the extravagant and polemical realm of ceremonial stage design, so favored by the Medici. Parigi was an impresario in the tradition of Bernardo Buontalenti, whose post at the Medici court he had inherited on the latter's death in June of 1608, scarcely four months before Cosimo II was to marry the Hapsburg archduchess Maria Maddalena. It had fallen to Parigi to hurriedly design the stage scenery and decorations for the occasion. The highlight of the four-week-long celebration took place on October 25, when Michelangelo Buonarroti the Younger's pastoral play *Il Giudizio di Paride* was performed in the Teatro Medicio in the Uffizi. It was

not, however, the familiar story of Paris's choice of the most beautiful goddess that the storied guests were anxious to see. Of considerably more interest to the audience were six elaborate *intermezzi*, or allegorical tableaux, that were interspersed between the acts. Over the years these *intermezzi* had become the principal entertainment, at the expense of the narrative action that characterized the plays. Each included music, singing, and dancing and each traditionally required a separate and richly decorated setting.¹¹

The six *intermezzi* are Parigi's most widely known stage designs, primarily because the etchings he and Cantagallina made after them were widely circulated throughout the courts of Europe. By far the most elaborate of the six was the last one, *The Temple of Peace*, etched by Parigi himself (fig. 2). A spectacular fusion of richly costumed singers, dancers, and musicians who seemingly appeared magically from above and below with the aid of trap doors and cloud machines, the *intermezzo* exemplified the polemical nature of Parigi's stage design. In the etching the stage is framed by six *periaktoi*, or revolving prisms, each of which depict two colossal columns, with their entablatures forming orthogonals that are continued by the barrel-vaulted arches painted on the backdrop. In front of the vanishing point Peace sits on a throne, surrounded by a large cloud that envelops twelve personified Blessings singing and playing musical instruments. Amphitrite and Proserpina are shown below the stage in front of subterranean caverns. Surrounding Peace are four chariots, borne by colored clouds, bearing Neptune, Cybele, Bellona, and Pluto. Still higher in the heavens the Assembly of the Gods emerges, flanked by twelve Gentle Breezes dancing on their suspended clouds. In his report on the performance to the Duke of Mantua, the courtier Gabriele Bertazzuolo marveled that nine stage machines operated simultaneously in order to display an estimated three hundred performers on stage. After an epithalamium to Cosimo and Maddalena, the four-hour spectacle concluded with everyone on stage singing and dancing. According to all reports, the entire audience was entranced by this panegyric to the glory of the grand duke and his new bride.¹²



Figure 2. Giulio Parigi, *The Temple of Peace*, 1608, etching, 19.7 x 26.7 cm (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the British Museum)

Callot proved himself to be an apt pupil of this copious vocabulary of spectacle. For the 1616 carnival season Cosimo II commissioned a festival that included a mock equestrian battle performed in the Piazza Santa Croce. Parigi designed the production, and Callot executed the four etchings that accompanied the souvenir program. The plot of the *War of Love* revolved around the rivalry between the king of the Asians and the king of the Africans for the beautiful Indian queen Lucinda. It was a resplendent cast: the king of the Asians, who arrived in a chariot pulled by elephants, was played by the grand duke himself, and his younger brother Don Lorenzo, drawn by camels, took the role of the king of the Africans. In one of his etchings Callot depicted the entry of the two chariots, Cosimo on the left and his brother on the right (fig. 3). Legions of soldiers march in formation behind them. The oval stands are packed with the duke's subjects. But outside the stands he placed a number of comic entertainers and revelers who perform, seemingly oblivious to the elaborate festivities within the arena. In the center two *zanni*, or comic buffoons, dance for their own king, who sports a paper crown and is accompanied by his court musician. A dog lunges in excitement at the buttocks of one of the dancers. To the right the driver of a cart raises his whip over two rearing horses, as one of his

passengers vomits over the side. Behind him one man urinates under the stands, while another defecates. Assuredly Cosimo and his court would have enjoyed the indecorous carnivalesque antics while simultaneously admiring the ceremonial rituals within the arena.¹³



Figure 3. Jacques Callot, *The Entry of the Chariots from The War of Love*, 1616, etching, 22.7 x 30.3 cm (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the British Museum)

Callot was to probe the relationship between the spectacle and the observer in a number of compositions. His 1619 etching *The Fan* seems at first to be a witty riposte (fig. 4). Cosimo had decreed the Feast of San Jacopo would be commemorated that year by a mock naval battle on the Arno. The victors were to steal an offering meant for Vulcan, thereby incurring the god's wrath, which would be demonstrated by a spectacular fusillade of fireworks.¹⁴ Callot's etching was executed and printed before the celebration, and five hundred impressions were pasted to a backing to produce actual fans, which were handed out to the ladies as souvenirs. Accordingly he depicted the occasion within an appropriately shaped grotesque cartouche. Twelve well-dressed spectators with their backs to us are arrayed along the lower margin. Beyond them crowds gather along the banks of the Arno and along the two bridges, the Ponte Santa Trinità and the Ponte alla Carraia. Callot's principal manipulations were designed to accommodate the admiring crowds. He eliminated buildings from the southern bank of the Arno that would have blocked the view, leaving a wide expanse for a horde of spectators. The throngs on the two bridges and the far bank are miniscule, giving the impression that the river is far wider than is actually the case. Similarly, the diminutive Duomo and Campanile appear very distant. The vista has become vast. As one commentator noted, it is as if we are looking through the wrong end of a telescope.¹⁵ And indeed, Callot depicts one onlooker at the left of the cartouche peering through that instrument. On the opposite side another waves one of Callot's fans.¹⁶



Figure 4. Jacques Callot, *The Fan*, 1619, etching with engraving, 23.1 x 30.6 cm (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)

A decade had passed since Galileo had presented to Cosimo II the telescope with which he had discovered what he named the Medicean stars and dedicated his *Sidereus nuncius* to the grand duke. Much has been written about the contentious reception of that small text, but it is Galileo's friend, the artist Lodovico Cigoli, whose comments are most useful in this context. Cigoli had read a copy of a letter that the mathematicians of the Jesuit Collegio Romano had written in March of 1611 in response to a request that they confirm Galileo's observations. By and large they endorsed his discoveries: "The great inequality of the Moon cannot be denied. But it appears to Father Clavius [the senior mathematician and follower of Ptolemy] more probable that the surface is not uneven, but rather that the lunar body has denser and rarer parts, as are the ordinary spots seen with the natural sight."¹⁷ Cigoli responded in a letter to Galileo,

I was most astonished by the opinion of Father Clavius about the Moon: that he doubts its unevenness because it appears to him more probable that it is not of uniform density. Now, I have thought and thought about this, and I find nothing to say in his defense except that, be he as great as he wants, a mathematician without disegno is not only a mediocre mathematician, but also a man without eyes.¹⁸

It is precisely those two modes of knowledge that Callot depicts on either side of his cartouche—the philosopher and mathematician viewing the combatants through his telescope on the left, and the master of *disegno* waving his fan on the right. And while the philosopher's telescope makes distant objects such as the moon or sunspots appear close by, the artist here places nearby monuments as if they were very distant. As the young Marcel would wonder, who is to be believed?¹⁹

Callot was to produce one more magisterial etching for the duke, one that I believe can be considered a response to the challenge he invokes in *The Fan*. A year or so before the publication of that etching Cosimo II had invited the painter Filippo Napoletano to his court and, in September of 1618, commissioned him to execute a painting, *The Fair at Impruneta*. Sometime in the next three years Napoletano painted a two-meter-wide canvas, which was to hang in the grand duke's apartments (fig. 5). The Tuscan town of Impruneta was, and still is, the site of an annual celebration on the Feast Day of Saint Luke, October 18. On that day a miraculous image of the Virgin, said to be by the hand of Saint Luke, is transported through the town in a procession in order to protect the population from the plague and worse disasters and then returned to the Basilica Santa Maria. Napoletano shows the procession just leaving the church, about to make its rounds. In the piazza in front of the church he painted hundreds of revelers, including at the lower right, the grand duke himself, who has arrived to observe the antics of his subjects. Resplendent in red, he gestures toward his wife, Maria Maddalena. Or is he pointing with amusement at the bucking horse that is trampling a display of the terra-cotta pottery that Impruneta is famous for? Callot must have noticed such details, for a comparison of the painting with his own etching of the same subject uncovers too many similarities to be coincidental (fig. 6). Art historians disagree as to whether Napoletano's colossal rendition preceded or was executed at the same time as Callot's contribution. In either case, however, I think it would be fair to surmise that in Callot's mind this would have been a highly charged competition.²⁰



Figure 5. Filippo Napoletano, *The Fair at Impruneta*, ca. 1620, oil on canvas, 114.5 x 205 cm Florence, Pitti Palace, inv. no. 776 (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by Polo Museale Fiorentino)



Figure 6. Jacques Callot, *The Fair at Impruneta*, 1620, etching, 42.4 x 67 cm (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)

The etching of *The Fair at Impruneta* is universally hailed as Callot's preeminent achievement. Over two hundred drawings of single figures and small groups have survived. It is worth noting that the last of his known preparatory drawings, the one traced with a stylus, is not actually a precise rendering of what he would etch. Once the drawing had been transferred, Callot worked directly on the plate, adding figure after figure and reaching, according to the late-nineteenth-century print cataloger Gottfried Kinkel, a remarkable total of 1,138 men, women, and children.²¹ Here he makes use of every dramatic sleight of hand that Parigi had taught him. Both the painting and the etching depict the church in the center background, with an outbuilding to the left, and place a multistoried shop on the left margin. Callot closes off the right margin with a large tree and lines up the trees behind it like stage wings, so that the crowd is encompassed by the piazza instead of spilling across it. At the lower right he replaced Napoletano's portrait of Cosimo with a trestle stage. On it the snake charmer of the red chalk drawing gesticulates broadly next to a quack doctor. He seems to point to the area where Napoletano had depicted pottery crushed to shards by a bucking horse; Callot instead shows a fallen horse, with spilled wares on the ground, as his owner pulls the reins to help the animal right itself. Below the trestle stage a soldier with his back to us urinates. In the opposite corner Callot depicts customers inspecting a display of terra-cotta. A drunken brawl erupts underneath a canopy. At the far left a crowd gathers around a merchant strung up on the scaffold for cheating his customers by altering the apparent weight of his goods.²² In the right background another crowd gathers around eight dancers, four men and four women. Three young men climb a ladder for a better view. In the distance the procession enters the church, suggesting it is late in the festive day, and the autumnal Tuscan sun will soon be casting long shadows on the revelers in the piazza.

This was Callot's virtuoso performance, his *paragone* demonstrating what etching could accomplish. No painting, certainly not Filippo Napoletano's, rendered so many individual figures from every rung of society, engaged in so many different activities, from the charitable to the avaricious, from the comic to the cruel. On the Feast of the Assumption, March 25, 1620—and the first day of the new year, as it was then celebrated—the master of *piccole figure* proffered *The Fair at Impruneta* to its dedicatee, the grand duke.²³ Little by little, perhaps in successive evenings while his health was failing, as his eyes traveled from group to group, Cosimo would have garnered the variety of experiences and human vicissitudes that his subjects enacted at the fair. Callot is undoubtedly the master of the large writ small. And, from that perspective, I think the *paragone* was directed not merely at Napoletano but at Galileo as well.

Of all the courtiers who surrounded the grand duke, Galileo was by far the most renowned. Like a mythological figure, he had an attribute, the telescope, and he took great pains to keep it associated only with himself. Upon the publication of his discoveries in the *Sidereus nuncius*, "Italian dukes, German princes, the queen of France, the Holy Roman Emperor [and], half the cardinals in Rome wrote to Galileo asking for one of the instruments that made the celestial wonders visible," as Richard S. Westfall has noted.²⁴ Better than most, Galileo knew the value of a coveted gift sent to a powerful personage, and he obliged repeatedly. A decade later he had not found reason to alter that strategy.

In May of 1618, for instance, he sent Cosimo II's brother-in-law, Archduke Leopold of Austria, three telescopes, one to observe the heavens, the second, smaller one to observe phenomena here on earth, and a third, even smaller one, to wear on the head. Of the last he wrote, "I beg you to keep it secret as much as you can, on account of some interests of mine."²⁵

But in his etching Callot may have outmaneuvered Galileo. One fact is virtually certain: Cosimo would have needed a strong magnifying glass to sort out distant figures such as the three bishops that head the festival procession, or the onlookers that encircle the prisoner tied to a stake at the far left.²⁶ The grand duke may or may not have made the association—that instead of peering through a lens to study previously unseen bodies in the infinite ether, he was using his glass to examine each and every one of his infinitesimal subjects as if they were on stage. *The Fair at Impruneta* is the rustic counterpart to Parigi's *Temple of Peace* of two decades earlier. This is a lexicon—of multitudes, of festivity both decorous and indecorous, of variety—that Cosimo II de' Medici had enjoyed repeatedly as a paean to his dynasty. Galileo's gifts, the Medician stars, or the pocked surface of the moon, might well have appeared stubbornly mute in comparison.

The death of Cosimo II less than a year later marked the end of an era of fertile patronage. The grand duke's taste for both lavish spectacle and the exquisite miniature was not sustained by his widow, Maria Maddalena, and her mother-in-law, Dowager Duchess Christine. Shortly thereafter Callot reluctantly returned to Lorraine, settling in Nancy, where eventually he joined the court of Duke Charles IV. Although there he would virtually replicate his plate of *The Fair at Impruneta*, in effect he was looking through the wrong end of the telescope. The heyday of *copia* had been sixteenth-century Northern Europe, when Erasmus published his manual on copious expression *De duplici copia verborum ac rerum*, which went through more than 150 printings in that century, when Rabelais drafted the endless enumerations found in his *Gargantua*, and when Pieter Bruegel the Elder painted the *Procession to Calvary*. Copious variety may have reached its apogee in Callot's etching, but shortly thereafter the depiction of vast numbers of varied figures in miniature lost its persuasive power. There would be little room in seventeenth-century academic theory for the depiction of a far-flung panoply of the vagaries of human experience. Even those who were eventually to rebel against the strictures of the academies never explored its possibilities. It was a taste and a skill that was virtually extinguished with the death of Cosimo II de' Medici and Jacques Callot.

Nina Eugenia Serebrennikov is Professor of Art History at Davidson College. She has published primarily on Pieter Bruegel the Elder and his circle, including an annotated bibliography of the artist in the Oxford University Press series "Renaissance and Reformation." Presently she is completing a study of the transition in sixteenth-century landscape painting from the representation of a myriad of places to the depiction of continuous space.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. Jacques Callot, *Snake Charmer*, n.d., red chalk on paper, 8.8 x 8.4 cm. Florence, Gabinetto disegni e stampe degli Uffizi, inv. no. 2505 (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by Polo Museale Fiorentino)

Figure 2. Giulio Parigi, *The Temple of Peace*, 1608, etching, 19.7 x 26.7 cm (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the British Museum)

Figure 3. Jacques Callot, *The Entry of the Chariots* from *The War of Love*, 1616, etching, 22.7 x 30.3 cm (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the British Museum)

Figure 4. Jacques Callot, *The Fan*, 1619, etching with engraving, 23.1 x 30.6 cm (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)

Figure 5. Filippo Napoletano, *The Fair at Impruneta*, ca. 1620, oil on canvas, 114.5 x 205 cm Florence, Pitti Palace, inv. no. 776 (artwork in the public domain; photograph provided by Polo Museale Fiorentino)

Figure 6. Jacques Callot, *The Fair at Impruneta*, 1620, etching, 42.4 x 67 cm (artwork in the public domain; photo-

graph provided by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Biagioli, Mario. *Galileo, Courtier: The Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993.
- _____. "Galileo's System of Patronage." *History of Science* 28 (1990): 1–62.
- Blanchard, Jeffrey. "Theater." In *Jacques Callot. Prints and Related Drawings*. Exh. cat. H. Diane Russell et al., 59–83. Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1975.
- Blumenthal, Arthur R. *Giulio Parigi's Stage Designs: Florence and the Early Baroque Spectacle*. New York: Garland Publishing, 1986.
- Booth, Sara Elizabeth, and Albert van Helden. "The Virgin and the Telescope: The Moons of Cigoli and Galileo." *Science in Context* 13 (2000): 463–86.
- Chiarini, Marco. *Teodoro Filippo di Liagno detto Filippo Napoletano 1589–1629: Vita e opera*. Florence: Centro Di, 2007.
- Choné, Paulette, ed. *Jacques Callot, 1592–1635*. Exh. cat. Nancy: Musée historique lorrain, 1992.
- Finocchiaro, Maurice A., ed. and trans. *The Galileo Affair: A Documentary History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.
- Galilei, Galileo. *Sidereus nuncius, or The Sidereal Messenger*. Translated by Albert van Helden. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989.
- Hewitt, Bernard, ed. *The Renaissance Stage: Documents of Serlio, Sabbattini and Furttenbach*. Translated by Allardyce Nicoll, John H. McDowell, and George R. Kernodle. Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1958.
- Lattis, James M. *Between Copernicus and Galileo: Christoph Clavius and the Collapse of Ptolemaic Cosmology*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.
- Loire, Stéphane. "Les Tableaux de Rome gravés par Jacques Callot: Leurs sources et leur contexte." In *Jacques Callot (1592–1635): Actes du colloque organisé par le Service culturel du musée du Louvre et la ville de Nancy*. Edited by Daniel Ternois, 93–135. Paris: Musée du Louvre, 1993.
- McTighe, Sheila. *The Imaginary Everyday: Genre Painting and Prints in Italy and France, 1580–1670*. New York: The Bownes Library, 2007.
- Nagler, A. M. *Theatre Festivals of the Medici, 1539–1637*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964.
- Negro Spina, Annamaria. *Giulio Parigi e gli incisori della sua cherchia*. Naples: Società Editrice Napoletana, 1983.
- Proust, Marcel. *Remembrance of Things Past*. Translated by C. K. Scott Montcrieff. 2 vols. New York: Random House, 1934.
- Reeves, Eileen. *Painting the Heavens: Art and Science in the Age of Galileo*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997.
- Serlio, Sebastiano. *The Five Books of Architecture: An Unabridged Reprint of the English Edition of 1611*. New York: Dover Publications, 1982.
- Westfall, Richard. S. "Science and Patronage: Galileo and the Telescope." *ISIS* 76 (1985): 11–30.

Winkler, Mary G., and Albert van Helden. "Representing the Heavens: Galileo and Visual Astronomy." *ISIS* 83 (1992): 195–217.

Woodall, Dena M., and Diane Wolfthall. *Princes and Paupers: The Art of Jacques Callot*. Exh. cat. Houston and New Haven: The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and Yale University Press, 2013.

¹ Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff (New York: Random House, 1934), 1:345.

² Reporting on his discovery of spots on the surface of the moon through his telescope, Galileo wrote, "By oft-repeated observations of them we have been led to the conclusion that we certainly see the surface of the Moon to be not smooth, even, and perfectly spherical, as the great crowd of philosophers have believed about this and other heavenly bodies, but on the contrary, to be uneven, rough and crowded with depressions and bulges." See his *Sidereus nuncius* or *The Sidereal Messenger*, trans. Albert van Helden (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 40.

³ Maurice A. Finocchiaro, ed. and trans., *The Galileo Affair: A Documentary History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 298

⁴ Félibien's entire text and Baldinucci's abbreviated biography are both reproduced in *Jacques Callot, 1592–1635*, exh. cat., ed. Paulette Choné (Nancy: Musée historique lorrain, 1992), 84–89. Baldinucci's text is translated into French. For the most recent bibliography on Callot, see Dena M. Woodall and Diane Wolfthall, *Princes and Paupers: The Art of Jacques Callot*, exh. cat. (Houston and New Haven: The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and Yale University Press, 2013), 139–43.

⁵ Stéphane Loire, "Les Tableaux de Rome gravés par Jacques Callot: Leurs sources et leur context," in *Jacques Callot (1592–1635): Actes du colloque organisé par le Service culturel du musée du Louvre et la ville de Nancy*, ed. Daniel Ternois (Paris: Musée du Louvre, 1993), 100.

⁶ Illustrated in Jacques Callot, exh. cat. (Nancy), 135, cat. 8.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 88–89.

⁸ See, for example his 1606 etching of military maneuvers in the courtyard of the Pitti Palace, illustrated in Annamaria Negro Spina, *Giulio Parigi e gli incisori della sua cherkhia* (Naples: Società Editrice Napoletana, 1983), fig. 1.

⁹ Jacques Callot, exh. cat. (Nancy), 85.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 89.

¹¹ Some indication of the social and political role these magnificent spectacles played is evoked by Sebastiano Serlio in his discussion of satiric stage scenery: "the more such things cost, the more they are esteemed, for they are things which stately and great persons doe, which are enemies to niggardlinesse. This have I seene in some Scenes made by Ieronimo Genga, for the pleasure and delight of his lord and patron Francisco Maria, Duke of Urbin: wherein I saw so great liberalitie used by the Prince, and so good a conceit in the workeman, and so good art and proportion in things therein represented, as ever I saw in all my life before. Oh good Lord, what magnificence was there to be seene . . . but I leave all these things to the discretion and consideration of the iudicious workeman; which shall make all such things as their pattrons serve them, which they must worke after their owne devises, and never take care what it shall cost": Serlio, *The Five Books of Architecture: An Unabridged Reprint of the English Edition of 1611* (New York: Dover Publications, 1982), fol. 26r.

The description of the Medici celebrations by the German architect and onetime student of Parigi's Joseph Furtenbach was less generous. Rather than seeing them as an expression of the duke's liberality, he bridled at the cost: "Sometime as many as seven changes of scene are built at no little expense. Especially in Italy no expense is spared. It is well known that there as much as a half ton of gold has been spent for a play that would have only one performance

at a princely celebration of marriage and would be seen only by the great lords present”: *Mannhafter Kunst-Spiegel* (Ulm, 1663), as translated by George R. Kernodle, in *The Renaissance Stage: Documents of Serlio, Sabbattini and Furtentbach*, ed. Bernard Hewitt (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1958), 203.

¹² A. M. Nagler, *Theatre Festivals of the Medici, 1539–1637* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 109–11; and Arthur R. Blumenthal, *Giulio Parigi’s Stage Designs: Florence and the Early Baroque Spectacle* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1986), 144–48. Nagler depends primarily on Camillo Rinuccini’s official description of the 1608 festivities, which was published the same year, while Blumenthal relies mainly on the etchings by Parigi and Cantagallina.

¹³ It was a juxtaposition of subject matter that was not unusual at Cosimo II’s court. In *Jacques Callot*, exh. cat. (Nancy), 190–91, Daniel Ternois points out that the accompanying text written by Andrea Salvadori, *Guerra d’Amore Festa del Serenissimo Gran Duca di Toscana Cosimo II*, includes comparable contrasts. Similarly, Mario Biagioli refers to what he calls Galileo’s occasional Rabelaisian literary style, which he sees as an “antidote to an overworked courtly sprezzatura which edged over into pedantry.” See Biagioli, *Galileo, Courtier: The Practice of Science in the Culture of Absolutism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 115.

¹⁴ Jeffrey Blanchard, “Theater,” in *Jacques Callot: Prints and Related Drawings*, exh. cat., H. Diane Russell et al. (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art, 1975), 70.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁶ As Blanchard pointed out, this male figure is often mistaken for a woman (*Ibid.*, 82, n. 56). Given the fine clothing the men are wearing, it would have been indecorous for women of the same class to straddle the cartouche.

¹⁷ As quoted in Sara Elizabeth Booth and Albert van Helden, “The Virgin and the Telescope: The Moons of Cigoli and Galileo,” *Science in Context* 13 (2000): 471. See also Eileen Reeves, *Painting the Heavens: Art and Science in the Age of Galileo* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 151; and James M. Lattis, *Between Copernicus and Galileo: Christoph Clavius and the Collapse of Ptolemaic Cosmology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 190–93.

¹⁸ “Ora io ci ò pensato et ripensato, nè ci trovo altro ripieghe in sua difesa, se non che un matematico, si grande quanto si vole, trovandosi senza disegno, sia non solo un mezzo matematico, ma ancho uno huomo senza ochi.” I use the translation in Booth and Van Helden, “The Virgin and the Telescope,” 473.

¹⁹ The rhetorical nature of the juxtaposition is emphasized by the gesture of extending the fan, formally analogous to holding up the telescope. One doesn’t, after all, fan a distant vista. Galileo may not have appreciated the analogy, however. In their article “Representing the Heavens: Galileo and Visual Astronomy,” *ISIS* 83 (1992): 192–217, Mary G. Winkler and Albert van Helden argue persuasively that after 1613 Galileo sought to distance himself from his earlier naturalistic representations of the heavens, which they suggest would have labeled him as an artisan. As Mario Biagioli pointed out: “Actually Galileo succeeded in obtaining the status of a nobleman at court because—on top of the title of ‘Philosopher’—he managed to be included in the category of *Gentilhuomini senza provisione* (people of patrician status who had full access to court but were not paid as court workers) rather than in the category of *Artisti, architettori et altri manifattori* (in which we find artists, craftsmen, engineers, architects, teachers of mathematics, and geographers).” See Biagioli, “Galileo’s System of Patronage,” *History of Science* 28 (1990): 41.

²⁰ Baldinucci reported that Napoletano gave Callot a drawing, of which there is now no trace, of the fair at Impruneta. See Marco Chiarini, *Teodoro Filippo di Liagno detto Filippo Napoletano, 1589–1629: Vita e opera* (Florence: Centro Di, 2007), 497.

²¹ *Jacques Callot*, exh. cat. (Nancy), 242.

²² Sheila McTighe, *The Imaginary Everyday: Genre Painting and Prints in Italy and France, 1580–1670* (New York: The Bownes Library, 2007), 299.

²³ *Jacques Callot*, exh. cat. (Nancy), 70.

²⁴ Richard S. Westfall, “Science and Patronage: Galileo and the Telescope,” *ISIS* 76 (1985): 20.

²⁵ Finocchiaro, *The Galileo Affair*, 198–99.

²⁶ McTighe, *The Imaginary Everyday*, 295, notes that “It has been suggested that the tiny scale and the multiplicity of Callot’s figures was a deliberate call for viewing them through a magnifying lens,” but she does not document the suggestion.

Recommended Citation: Nina Eugenia Serebrennikov, “Spectacularly Small: Jacques Callot at the Medici Court,” *Midwestern Arcadia: Essays in Honor of Alison Kettering* (2015) DOI: 10.18277/makf.2015.12

CALLOT, JACQUES CALLOT, JACQUES (1592–1635), French (Lorraine) draftsman and printmaker. Born in Nancy, son of a herald-at-arms to Charles III, duke of Lorraine, Callot studied with a little-known court painter, Claude II Henri, and a goldsmith, Demange Crocq. In 1614 Callot moved to Florence, where he became an artist at the Medici court under Grand Duke Cosimo II, and he remained there for seven years. While in Florence, he honed his skill at using methods of perspective, probably during his studies with Giulio Parigi, the court architect, engineer, and impresario. Nina Eugenia Serebrennikov, "Spectacularly Small: Jacques Callot at the Medici Court". Larry Silver, "Pieter Bruegel's Symbolic Highlands in the Lowlands". Eric Jan Sluif, "Odd Man Out: Nicolaes Elias Pickenoy and Amsterdam History Painting in the 1630s and 1640s". Linda Stone-Ferrier, "Jacobus Vrel's Dutch Neighborhood Scenes". Elizabeth Sutton, "Bittersweet: Sugar, Slavery, and Science in Dutch Suriname". Previous: Museum The Lakenhal has acquired a rare Self Portrait by Jan van Mieris. Next: Bulletin of the Museo del Prado published with an article on Rubens. Jacques Callot, The Fair of Impruneta, 1620s. We all know that major work can be done in minor genres, but there nevertheless lingers some almost primitive feeling that the most important visions require a commensurate size or scale. How many people really believe that an ode by Keats can be as important as a play by Shakespeare? Within the relatively small compass of the exhibition at the MFA, Woodall and Wolfthal succeed in suggesting the extraordinary range of Callot's work: he produced some 1,400 prints. Although he began and ended his life in Nancy, the capital of the duchy of Lorraine, Duke Charles III had ennobled his grandfather and employed his father as court herald. Callot spent the years between 1610 or thereabouts and 1621 in Italy.