CHAPTER 4

Actualizing the Ancients: Junius, Vossius, Lampsonius

Let us call to mind those of old with grateful memory and use them, as far as is appropriate, as a comparison.

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Writing to his brother-in-law, Gerardus Vossius stated that he author of The Painting of the Ancients would be commended by “the entire Republic of Letters and . . . future centuries.”1 One wonders whether this article of faith came to pass: how did the various editions reach their intended audiences? Let us first address the Latin edition of the treatise and its learned readers.

Its most immediate reception was among the scholars who received presentation copies in 1637. It should be noted that, besides Johan van Heemskerck, they were all internationally renowned academics: Grotius, Gomarus, Caspar Barlaeus (1584–1648), and the Groningen professor Joachim Borgesius (1585–after 1663). The historiographer of Scandinavia, Johannes Meursius (1579–1639), based at Denmark’s Sorø University, also received a copy [see Table 2]. Their reactions have not come down to us, except for Grotius’ letter, which may have been representative. He lavished praise on the treatise. Instead of commenting on Junius’ art theory in a general sense, he proposed an alternative reading of one phrase from Claudian.2

These scholars were part of extensive networks, by means of which Junius’ treatise gained fame in the European Republic of Letters within just a few decades. One example involves the Leiden classicist Salmasius, with whom Junius had corresponded in the 1630s about reproductive prints of the Arundel artworks and to whom he sent his book.3 The Painting of the Ancients seems to have made an impression, for when Salmasius entered Christina of Sweden’s service in 1650, the queen instructed Junius’ nephew, Isaac Vossius, to buy any remaining Arundel statues.4 Moreover, as discussed above, Schefferus’ treatise The Art of Painting (1659) was modeled on Junius’ example.5

Another conduit for broadcasting the Dutch scholar’s fame was a learned Amsterdam periodical, the Journal des savants, which included reviews of artistic theories such as Bellori’s.6 The French