

# Iconoclasm and the Enlightenment Museum<sup>1</sup>

James Simpson

English Department, Harvard University

## KEY WORDS

Iconoclasm; art gallery; museums; iconoclastic aesthetics; Kant; Calvin.

## ABSTRACT

The Enlightenment would seem to prize and protect images. On the contrary, the Enlightenment attitude to art is intimately *responsive to*, and shaped by, iconoclasm. Not only that, but, more interestingly, the Enlightenment is *itself* an iconoclastic movement. After 150 years or so of failed iconoclasm, Northern Europeans were exhausted. They invented three alternatives to literal iconoclasm: the scientific Enlightenment exercised a philosophical iconoclasm by describing ideology as an idol that entralls the naive and that must be broken; the sentimental Enlightenment neutralized the image by placing it in the museum and by calling it Art; and thirdly, Enlightenment taste commodified the image under the market's hammer. This essay focuses on the second of these alternatives to iconoclasm, the formation of the gallery.

## Iconoclasm and the Enlightenment Museum

On the face of it, the Enlightenment museum is the place where images are protected from the iconoclast's hammer. That persuasion is part of a larger narrative: the Enlightenment protects us against religious violence. In this short essay I argue that the deeper history of the image's passage from church to museum is more complex. The Enlightenment attitude to art is intimately *responsive* to, and shaped by, iconoclasm. Not only that, but, more interestingly, the Enlightenment is *itself* an iconoclastic movement in three profound ways. After 150 years or so of failed iconoclasm, Northern Europeans were exhausted. They invented three alternatives to literal iconoclasm. In the first place, the scientific Enlightenment exercised a philosophical iconoclasm by describing ideology as false consciousness, an idol that entralls the naive and that must be broken. Secondly, the sentimental Enlightenment neutralized the image by placing it in the museum and by calling it Art. And thirdly, Enlightenment taste commodified the image under the market's hammer. In the short space of this essay, I focus only on the second of these alternatives to iconoclasm that, one way or another, concedes the force of the iconoclast's case.

### I

Let me approach the principal high-cultural visual tradition of the eighteenth century, a tradition apparently *favorable* to images, via this painting:

**Link to:** <http://www.mfa.org/collections/object/picture-gallery-with-views-of-modern-rome-34215>

**Figure 1:** Giovanni Paolo Pannini, *Picture Gallery with Views of Modern Rome* (1757). Oil on canvas, 170.2 cm x 244.5 cm

For here we see that, if some eighteenth-century traditions repudiate the image through violent aggression,<sup>2</sup> others, such as the tradition exemplified here, create cultural spaces for the loving, though detached apprehension of error.

This painting is by Giovanni Pannini, a celebrated view painter of Rome. Pannini painted it in 1757 as one of four souvenir paintings commissioned by the Duc de Choiseul, who had been French Ambassador to the Vatican. On the one hand, the work celebrates the image as the central locus of culture. On the other, it works very hard to neutralize the image.

To suggest that this painting celebrates the image is uncontentious: above all, we observe that paintings fill every wall. Even where the ekphrastic paintings stop, that boundary only produces yet more images, painted as frescoes, onto the architectural fabric itself, in the dome. These images promise a cultural garland of salvation, as held by the topmost figure in the dome, and as lying nonchalantly in the right foreground, just to the left of the lion's paw. If the picture does promise cultural salvation, the focus of that salvation is unquestionably the central figure of the duke himself. The duke's

extended arm runs along the perspectival axis of the painting, and itself encourages us to enter the perspective of passing from Michelangelo's Moses back to Bernini's Apollo and Daphne, via Bernini's David. The duke, as the man of unprejudiced taste and means, is clearly among the saved, and offers salvation to others.

In what possible ways could this painting be said to neutralize the image? There are two answers to this question. Firstly, the relation between viewer and image is insistently, consistently, cool. The very colors imply evenness of response: paintings, fabrics and statues all participate in the same, narrow, cool chromatic range. Taste produces, and is produced by, perspectivized distance and detachment. The duke is no less cool about his collection than the splendid women depicted in the painting on the far left who admire the vast, naked male forms in the Piazza Navona without apparent fright or loss of decorum. All these images are exterior images of baroque Rome – we see things from afar, without entering into the interior of churches and experiencing the sacral image at closer quarters.

Secondly, Rome is miniaturized and commodified. Moses loses all his force as iconoclast, and, indeed, all his force as lawgiver. Here Moses is good for you not because he delivers the law, but because he was sculpted by Michelangelo. The religious force of the image is recategorized as Art. Moses is no less good for the soul than Daphne and Apollo, if one is sculpted by Michelangelo and the other by Bernini. The curtain framing the entire gallery might evoke the veil of the mysteries, but opens only onto transportable commodities.<sup>3</sup>

Look also to the image of St Peter's, whose painful construction costs Luther had attacked so vividly more than two hundred years earlier. The fiftieth of Luther's ninety-five theses (1517) expressed an intensely compacted, poetic appreciation of the relation of magnificent ecclesiastical architecture and the hidden, human suffering upon which that magnificence rose: Christians should be taught that the Pope would rather that 'the basilica of St Peter's were burned to ashes than built up with the skin, flesh, and bones of his sheep'.<sup>4</sup> Here, by contrast, St Peter's is small, entirely manageable, framed, portable and ready for purchase. In fact it can't even be fully seen, crowded out as it is by other possible mementoes of the Grand Tour. This image, part of a northward *translatio imperii*, registers the neutralization of St Peter's as a radio-active space.

Before we can have a proper relation with the image, this painting says to us, we need to delimit its force. The task of the Enlightenment with regard to the image is to drain the object of power, to delimit the 'work of art', in this sense: to delimit the way art works on us. The space that protects art from the iconoclast's hammer also empties art of what had been its *raison d'être*. Here that work of neutralization is effected especially by intense work of framing: the images of the religious spaces are literally framed as Rome is broken up into bits by all those gilt frames. The architectural frame of the image is no longer the church, but the fantastic classicizing gallery. This gallery is ungrounded (it somehow floats), and the columns of its principal arch do not actually stand on the same plane. The whole is, furthermore, framed socially: the figure who admires the image is now the detached and cultivated aristocrat.

## II

This, the central eighteenth-century visual tradition, then, did love and protect the image, against iconoclasts of either evangelical or scientific cast. This tradition decisively protected the image by recategorizing its function as Art. No longer was painting numinous and salvific; it was now framed, buyable, socially specific, and a fit ground for the cultivation of the gentleman's taste. No longer, indeed, was the image a representation, let alone an idol, but it was Art. The space of the image shifted from the church to the private, though semi-public space of the gallery, but that passage also drained the image of much of its life.

Why should I be saying that this tradition achieved that autonomous space '*against* iconoclasts of either evangelical or scientific cast'? Why should we seek any kind of dialogue between these antithetical traditions? What could the enlightened connoisseur have to do with the puritan, hammer-wielding iconoclast or the scientific empiricist? Might it not be the case that the autonomous space of art is indeed autonomous?

I think not. The Enlightenment, in all its forms, is, rather, a reflex of the Reformation. I now turn to that argument as it applies to the image. One way of underlining the Enlightenment's dialogue with the Protestant Reformation is via eighteenth-century definitions of taste. Hume and Kant, for example, were both trained

in Reformation cities (Edinburgh and Königsberg respectively). Their discussion of taste is silently informed by evangelical disgust at idolatrous Catholic treatment of the image. For Kant, for example, taste is focused on the *form*, not the content of the image. Kant, whose definition in his *Critique of Judgment* (1790) is the most thoroughgoing in its severance of taste from truth, defines taste as contemplative, or 'indifferent to the existence of an object'.<sup>5</sup> Above all, the experience of beauty is free and independent, without interest in the object of its attention: 'The cognitive powers brought into play by this representation are here engaged in a free play, since no determinate concept restricts them to a particular rule of cognition' (Section 9, p. 48). That free judgment of taste, which amounts to the recognition of beauty, is made in response to the form of the object: 'For...the ground of pleasure', Kant says, 'is made to reside merely in the form of the object for reflection generally, consequently not in any sensation of the object, and without reference, either, to any concept that might have something or other in view' (Introduction, Section 7, p. 25). At a stroke, though without ever saying so, Kant, consistent with a long sequence of principally British discussions of taste, opens the way up for contemplation of the Catholic image, while carefully fencing out the dangers of the Catholic image. Because we consider only form, not the rational truth content or intention of the admired object, the range of objects that are now capable of producing beauty is infinite, from the Catholic image to the beauties of Nature. We are now permitted to contemplate an infinitely wider range of objects than would have been permitted by the evangelical iconoclast, but we are simultaneously protected from them.<sup>6</sup>

Kant's discussion of the freedom of taste's judgment is everywhere concerned to neutralize the image's power to enchant and enslave us. For the judgment of taste is free and wholly disinterested, in no way subject to the enthralling power of the image. Kant preserves a space for the 'work of art', but he delimits that work very neatly and strictly.

Kant's account of the beautiful negotiates, I suggest, without ever mentioning, idolatry (he barely mentions painting at all).<sup>7</sup> In his account of the sublime, however, Kant is explicit about the aniconic ideals of his aesthetics. He defends abstraction by reference to the Deuteronomic prohibition on the making of graven images:

We have no reason to fear that the feeling of the sublime will suffer from an abstract mode of presentation like this, which is altogether negative with regard to the sensuous. For though the imagination, no doubt, finds nothing beyond the sensible world on which it can lay hold, still this thrusting aside of the sensible barriers gives it a feeling of being unbounded; and that removal is a presentation of the infinite. As such it can never be anything more than a negative presentation – but still it expands the soul. Perhaps there is no more sublime passage in the Jewish Law than the commandment: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven or on earth...The fear that, if we divest this representation of everything that can commend it to the senses, it will thereupon be attended only with a cold and

lifeless approbation and not with any moving force or emotion, is wholly unwarranted. (Section 29, p. 104)

The Enlightenment understanding of taste is, I contend, deeply indebted to Protestant accounts of the Catholic image as capable of working on us and enthralling us. The cool detachments of enlightened Taste, within the larger field of aesthetics, is shaped as a concessive Enlightenment response to evangelical critiques of the image. By defending the image as a training ground for taste, by creating an autonomous space for Art, Enlightenment thinkers conceded the fundamental critiques of Protestant iconoclasts. Taste is the product of a Western Europe whose artistic tradition had been profoundly fractured by theological difference. Taste, with its focus on form, is a strategy designed to reunify that artistic tradition at least. Taste is a strategy designed to look at Rome again. But one could only look at Rome by neutralizing its power to enthrall. Focus on the form, ignore the content. Experience freedom, even as you look at religious art. The category of the aesthetic is itself, in sum, a historical product of iconoclasm.

To understand the Enlightenment's neutralization of the image more deeply, we need momentarily to look backward. English sixteenth-century iconoclastic legislation initially insisted that images be only for remembrance. Of course that tactic failed; already by 1547 all images in churches were to be destroyed, since it had become clear that distinguishing between those images subject, and those not subject to idolatry was impossible. By 1550, when the blanket destruction of images was reissued, a distinction

was made that was crucial for the future direction of English art. Each parson shall 'deface or destroy...images and every of them [i. e. religious images]', though one class of images was to be protected, for the first time. The act was not to extend to 'any image or picture set or graven upon any tombe in any church or chapel or church yard, only for a monument of any king, prince, nobleman or other dead person which hath not been commonly reputed for a saint'. Such pictures and images 'may stande and continue...as if this act had never been made'.<sup>8</sup> Injunctions of this kind were repeated in the Revolutionary iconoclasm of the seventeenth century.<sup>9</sup> This exception draws a protective circle around one class of images, but only by insisting that the carved or painted portrait had no numinous force whatsoever.

Here too, where outright iconoclasm did not dominate, licit spaces and functions were defined for the image in such a way as to neutralize it. The Lutheran position was less hostile to religious images than the Calvinist. For Luther images were *adiaphora*, things indifferent, but needed all the same to be removed from churches and placed in private homes, where they would be both protected and neutralised.<sup>10</sup> That this transfer of images from church to private home did in fact occur in Elizabethan England seems certain: the Queen herself complained in 1561 (in the wake of the 1559 legislated iconoclasm) of the contrast between the pitiful sight of the despoiled churches on the one hand and the extraordinary beauty of private homes on the other.<sup>11</sup> The beauty of the homes had, she said, been achieved at the expense of the churches.

In any case, royal and noble portraiture is protected even as the religious imagery is destroyed: we can see both in this recollection of Edward's reign, painted in c. 1570, where the royal portraits are framed by the act of destroying the religious image in the upper right.<sup>12</sup>

Link to: <http://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw00459/King-Edward-VI-and-the-Pope>

**Figure 2:** Artist Unknown. *King Edward VI and the Pope* (c.1570). Oil on panel, 62.2cm x 90.8cm, National Portrait Gallery, London

This protection of the portrait was of signal importance for the directions of painting in Britain from the middle of the sixteenth century, since portraiture, especially royal portraiture, was one class of permissible imagery in Elizabethan England. This account of English art remains enshrined in many popular histories of British art, which begin with Holbein portraits in the 1520s, often with no mention of the massive iconoclastic background to those portraits.<sup>13</sup> The Tate Gallery, whose official title is the National Gallery of British Art (founded in 1897) itself enshrines and effaces the iconoclasm, since the Tate, like the popular art history books, also begins the story of British art from the early sixteenth century.

English response to images was clearly influenced, not to say determined, by Continental polemic against images. Calvin's position on religious images is

notoriously hostile; it produced those utterly whitewashed churches, of the kind described by Zwingli as beautiful.<sup>14</sup> Calvin (1509-1564) locates idolatry deep within the human psyche, describing the imagination as 'a perpetual workshop of idols'.<sup>15</sup> The busy workshop produces not only images of God; Calvin says that superstition is also arises through images of the dead.<sup>16</sup> Faced, however, with the idolatry of the vast category of the religious image, and recognizing that image-making can be a gift of God,<sup>17</sup> Calvin limits the power of images. He restricts them to representation of things that could have been perceptible to the eye. Within this category, 'some are histories and events', and some 'images and fashions of bodies, without expressing any of the things done by them'.<sup>18</sup>

What Calvin precisely means by this rather opaque formulation is, presumably, history painting and non-history painting. That he felt the formulation to be unclear is, however, suggested by the fact that his own French translations expanded it. The 1560 French translation of the *Institutes* runs as follows: 'Quant à ce qui est licite de peindre ou engraver, il y a les histoires pour en avoir memorial, ou bien figures, ou médalles de bestes, ou villes, ou pais'.<sup>19</sup> Calvin's 1545 vernacular edition had been explicit about what genres of painting he has in mind, and what value he attaches to them. After specifying history painting, he goes on: '...en la seconde, les arbres, montaignes, rivières, et personnages qu'on paint sans aucune signification'.<sup>20</sup>

In this second set of licit subjects, then, Calvin clearly designates landscape and portraiture, and clearly permits still life. Subjects such as these provide nothing but

pleasure, nothing 'praeter oblectationem'. They have no didactic or other function; in fact they are, in Calvin's account, without meaning of any kind, 'sans aucune signification'. By this blunt expression I presume he means without allegorical significance, but even tempered thus, the bluntness of the expression 'sans aucune signification' unsettlingly survives.<sup>21</sup> Once again, as with permissible portraiture, we can see future directions in Northern European painting: documents such as these give an enormous impulse to landscape, portraiture, and still life. What we had taken as a new secular culture is in fact in silent dialogue with a repressed religious culture.<sup>22</sup>

The neutralization of art is not only a challenge for both Lutheran and Reformed Protestants. Already the Council of Trent, in its final session in 1563, had dictated the form of Counter-Reformation Catholic painting by neutralizing the image. Certainly saints are to be worshipped as intercessors, but the language about images is very cautious, and could not more clearly express a silent dialogue with Protestant attacks on the image. Reverence for saints should in no way spill over into belief that any 'divinity or power' resides in the images themselves; neither is anything to be expected from the images, and confidence should not be 'placed in images as was done by the pagans of old'.<sup>23</sup> The decree even goes so far as to draw on the hygienizing language of modernity, as it expresses the Church's earnest desire to 'root out utterly any abuses that may have crept into these holy and saving practices'; all superstition is to be removed from the invocation of saints...and the use of sacred images'. The decree also directs the style of sacred art, in what was to become the dominant, sober, not to say

sombre, tone of early Catholic, Counter Reformation art: 'all sensual appeal must be avoided, so that images are not painted or adorned with seductive charm'.<sup>24</sup>

Catholic Europe, indeed, actively contributed to the formation of the gallery in Northern Europe, the gallery that served simultaneously as the site of protection for the image and the place of its neutralization and transformation. A small sequence of paintings, known as Cabinets d'Amateurs, dates from between 1617 and 1630 or so. Our example was painted by Jerome Francken and Jan Breughel the Elder between 1621 and 1623

**Link to:** [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jan\\_Brueghel\\_the\\_Elder\\_-\\_The\\_Archdukes\\_Albert\\_and\\_Isabella\\_Visiting\\_a\\_Collector%27s\\_Cabinet\\_-\\_Walters\\_372010.jpg#mediaviewer/File:Jan\\_Brueghel\\_the\\_Elder\\_-\\_The\\_Archdukes\\_Albert\\_and\\_Isabella\\_Visiting\\_a\\_Collector%27s\\_Cabinet\\_-\\_Walters\\_372010.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jan_Brueghel_the_Elder_-_The_Archdukes_Albert_and_Isabella_Visiting_a_Collector%27s_Cabinet_-_Walters_372010.jpg#mediaviewer/File:Jan_Brueghel_the_Elder_-_The_Archdukes_Albert_and_Isabella_Visiting_a_Collector%27s_Cabinet_-_Walters_372010.jpg)

**Figure 3:** Hieronymus Francken II and Jan Brueghel the Elder, *The Archdukes Albert and Isabella Visiting a Collector's Cabinet* (1621-1623). Oil on panel, 94 x 123.3 cm. The Walters Art Museum, Baltimore

The scene represents a visit by the Habsburg rulers of the Southern Netherlands, the Archduke Albert and his wife Isabella, to a private collection. The collection is in part a Wunderkammer (note the shells and strange flowers and animals), but principally a space of art.<sup>25</sup>

Paintings such as these offer a clear model for the kind of thing we saw in the Pannini painting of Roman views, painted more than a century later: in both we have the cool aristocratic figures permitting access to art, in the protected space of the gallery. Here, however, the dialogue with Calvinist hostility to the image is explicit. One painting is given exceptional, literally oblique place in the gallery: just to the right of the Archduchess's shoulder we are taken by surprise by an image that represents the reverse of the larger image in which it is set. Whereas all is order and protection for the image in the larger scene, the smaller represents the short but extraordinarily violent iconoclasm that occurred in the Netherlands in 1566.<sup>26</sup> Here the donkey figures, dressed in the costumes worn by Dutch iconoclasts, smash images and musical instruments. That built-in reference drives the rest of the scene in the larger image: this is a place of protection for culture. There are soldiers waiting outside. And the largest painting of the gallery replicates the theme of protection, as Fame and Minerva raise the personification of painting from the ground, after the attack by the now defeated donkey figure in the bottom left of that painting. That theme of patronal protection is also underlined by the presence of many religious paintings among the collection, paintings that, the image as a whole encourages us to assume, have been taken from despoiled churches. It is also underlined by the broken statues on the bottom left that have now found a place of protection.

Even as the painting protects the religious image from the evangelical breakers of the image, however, it also underlines the neutralization of the religious image. The

image is now recategorized, along with other precious and strange things. The very category of taste comes into focus as the generic term that will permit acceptance of a wide range of collectible, saleable items. Here the homogenizing forces of the market are held discreetly at bay, like the little monkeys playing innocently in the foreground.

The intellectual and material spaces of Enlightenment taste, then, have their origins in the space of imagined idolatry and the space of actual violence.<sup>27</sup> They originate in the church in which iconoclasts had destroyed the image. As with the museum culture of late Antiquity after the iconoclasm of pagan statuary, the Enlightenment manages and replicates key aspects of the iconoclastic activity out of which the museum arises.<sup>28</sup> Even as it protects the image, the Enlightenment museum manages and replicates Protestant fear of image.<sup>29</sup>

## Endnotes

---

<sup>1</sup> This essay is an abbreviation of Chapter 4 of James Simpson, *Under the Hammer:*

*Iconoclasm in the Anglo-American Tradition* (Oxford, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> For eighteenth-century traditions hostile to the image, see Simpson, *Under the Hammer*, Chapter 4, pp. 117-30.

<sup>3</sup> For the iconography of the veil of the mysteries, see Simpson, *Under the Hammer*, Chapter 1, footnote 41.

---

<sup>4</sup> Martin Luther, *Ninety-five Theses*, in *Luther's Works*, 31, *Career of the Reformer*, 1, ed. Harold J. Grimm (Philadelphia, 1957), p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. James Creed Meredith, rev. Nicholas Walker (Oxford, 2007; first published in German, 1790), Section 5, p. 41. All further citations of this work will be from this translation, cited by section and page number in the body of the text. For Kant's severance of taste from truth, see Joel Weinsheimer, *Eighteenth-Century Hermeneutics: Philosophy of Interpretation in England from Locke to Burke* (New Haven, 1993), p. 199.

<sup>6</sup> For a survey of eighteenth-century conceptions of taste, see Walter Jackson Bate, *From Classic to Romantic: Premises of Taste in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York, 1961).

<sup>7</sup> One of Kant's very rare references to painting in the *Critique of Judgment* insists that the form or design is essential, dismissing even colour (let alone content, or the painting's designs upon us) as contributing to the aesthetic effect. See Kant, *Critique of Judgment* Section 14, p. 56.

<sup>8</sup> *Statutes of the Realm*, ed. T. E. Tomlins, et al. 11 vols. (London, 1810-1828; repr. 1963), 3 and 4 Edward VI, c. 10; 4:110-11 (at p. 111).

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, the ordinance of May 1644. After having ordered the 'utter demoli[tion]' of various kinds of religious image, it goes on: 'Provided, That this ordinance...shall not extend to any Image, Picture, or Coat of Arms...graven onley for a Monument of any King, Prince or Nobleman, or other dead person which hath not been

---

commonly reputed or taken for a Saint'. *Acts and Ordinances of the Interregnum*, eds. C. H. Firth and R. S. Rait, 3 vols. (London, 1911), 1: 425-6; see also 1:265-6. The second of these ordinances is cited in Julie Spraggon, *Puritan Iconoclasm during the English Civil War* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2003), p. 261.

<sup>10</sup> Victor Ieronim Stoichita, *L'Instauration du Tableau: Métapeinture à l'Aube des Temps Modernes* (Paris, 1993). Stoichita puts the matter crisply. Having argued that Luther does not want to destroy, but only to neutralize the image, he goes on: 'On a relevé à juste titre, dans la neutralisation opérée par Luther, l'un des points les plus saillants et riches en repercussions de l'imaginaire moderne. Cette neutralisation se traduit dans les faits par un processus de dé-contextualisation des anciennes images. En d'autres termes: ce qui fonctionnait comme une "idole" dans une église sera contemplé comme une "oeuvre d'art" dans un milieu séculier' (p. 105). For the Lutheran culture of the image, see Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Reformation of the Image* (Chicago, 2004). See also Hans Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A History of the Image before the Era of Art*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Chicago, 1994; first published in German 1990), Appendix, Section 40.

<sup>11</sup> Cited in Margaret Aston, *England's Iconoclasts; Laws Against Images*. Vol. 1 (Oxford, 1988), p. 317.

<sup>12</sup> For expert detective work on this painting, see Margaret Aston, *The King's Bedpost: Reformation and Iconography in a Tudor Group Portrait* (Cambridge, 1993). For a remarkable account of the dialectic between image making and image breaking, in

---

which iconoclasm has to be invented in an astonishingly creative artistic environment, see the essay by Anna Kim in this volume.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, Andrew Wilton, *Five Centuries of British Painting: From Holbein to Hodgkin* (London, 2001) (whose title declares its start date, without a single mention of any pre-16c tradition beyond one reference to 'Popish images' on p. 9), or Richard Humphreys, *The Tate Britain Companion to British Art* (London, 2001), which discusses one pre-Reformation artifact. An honorable exception, among the popular histories, is Andrew Graham-Dixon, *A History of British Art* (London, 1996).

<sup>14</sup> For Zwingli's comment on the beauty of the whitewashed church wall ('...die Wänd sind hüpsch wyss'), see Stoichita, *L'Instauration du Tableau*, p. 105.

<sup>15</sup> John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. John T. McNeill, trans. Ford Lewis Battles (Philadelphia, 1975), 1:11.8, p. 108. I have altered the translation of 'fabricam' to 'workshop.' This is an edition of the 1536 edition of Calvin's *Institutio Christianae Religionis*. The Latin reads: 'Unde colligere licet, hominis ingenium perpetuam, ut ita loquar, esse idolorum fabricam' (cited from the 1576 edition of the *Institutio Christianae religionis* (London, 1576), 1:11.8 (RSTC 4414, image 34). The 1551 French edition of the *Institutes* for this passage reads as follows: 'Dont on peut voir que l'esprit de l'homme est une boutique perpétuelle et de tout temps pour forger idoles'. Cited from Jean Calvin, *Institution de la Religion Chrestienne*, ed. Jean-Daniel Benoit, 5 vols. (Paris, 1957), 1:11.8, 1:129.

<sup>16</sup> Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. McNeill, 1:11.8, pp. 107-08.

---

<sup>17</sup> Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, ed. McNeill, 1:11.12, p. 112.

<sup>18</sup> The Latin text, from which the Latin phrase is drawn, reads as follows: ‘In eo genere partim sunt historiae ac res gestae, partim imagines ac formae corporum, sine ulla rerum gestarum notatione. Priores, usum in docendo vel admonendo aliquem habent; secundae, quid praeter oblectationem afferre prosint non video’. Cited from the 1576 edition of the *Institutio Christianae religionis*, 1:11.12, image 36. The translation of the Latin is mine, not McNeill’s, who offers this: ‘...some are histories and events, some are images and forms of bodies without any depicting of past events’ (Calvin, *Institutes*, ed. McNeill, 1:11.12, p. 112). For discussion, see Stoichita, *L'Instauration du Tableau*, p. 107.

<sup>19</sup> ‘With regard to that which is licitly painted or engraved, there are histories as a memorial, or figures, engraved animals, towns, and villages’. Cited from Calvin, *Institution de la Religion Chrestienne*, ed. Benoit, 1:11.12, p. 135.

<sup>20</sup> ‘...in the second [category], trees, mountains, rivers, and people who are painted without any meaning [attributed to them]’. Cited from Calvin, *Institution de la Religion Chrestienne*, ed. Benoit, 1:11.12, p. 135.

<sup>21</sup> Richard Strier supplied the plausible suggestion ‘non-allegorical’ in a private communication. While he disagrees with my account, Professor Strier was exceptionally generous and tenacious in holding me to precise account in this passage. I thank him.

<sup>22</sup> For a more relaxed account of Calvinists and art, see Keith Thomas, ‘Art and Iconoclasm in Early Modern England’, in *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England*:

---

*Essays in Honour of Nicholas Tyacke*, ed. Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 2006), 16-40. The essential point of Thomas' richly sourced essay is that although Calvinists were hostile to the religious image, they were not hostile to art. I think that relaxed position is untenable, for the following reasons: (i) an attack on such a large tranche of the image cannot be without powerful consequence for the entire category of the image; (ii) the rhizome-like way in which the word 'idolatry' spreads across a very large field of practices, many not specifically visual, will also powerfully inflect reception of the image *tout court*; and (iii) that many examples of post-Calvinist art, both painting and poetry, exemplify profound problems with image making, whether or not the image be religious.

<sup>23</sup> '...quod non credatur inesse aliqua in iis divinitas vel virtus, propter quam sint colendae, vel quod ab eis sit aliquid petendum, vel quod fiducia in imaginibus sit figenda, veluti olim fiebat a genitibus, quae in idolis spem suam collocabant.' See *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, ed. Joseph Alberigo (Bologna, 1973), Session 25 of the Council of Trent, 3-4 December 1563, p. 775. For discussion of which, see Belting, *Likeness and Presence*, pp. 554-5.

<sup>24</sup> '...omnis denique lascivia vitetur, ita ut procaci venustate imagines non pingantur nec ornentur,' *Conciliorum Oecumenicorum Decreta*, ed. Alberigo, pp. 775-6.

<sup>25</sup> For discussion of these paintings, to which I am indebted, see Stoichita, *L'Instauration du Tableau*, pp. 126-43.

---

<sup>26</sup> For a brief narrative of the iconoclasm in the Netherlands in August 1566, and its larger European context, see Carlos M. N. Eire, *War Against the Idols : The Reformation of Worship from Erasmus to Calvin* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 280.

<sup>27</sup> For a fascinating, later example of an intimate relation between revolutionary and iconoclastic violence and the shaping of museums, see the study of Andrew McClellan, *Inventing the Louvre: Art, Politics, and the Origins of the Modern Museum in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Cambridge, 1994). Jamal J. Elias' essay in this volume on Taliban iconoclasm reveal the profound, unbridgeable asynchrony between the religious violence of the iconoclasm and the protection offered under the aegis of "world heritage." Proponents on either side will never understand each other. His essay points, however, to the fact that the violence and the protection are, seen from a long distance, part of the same spectrum. See also Simpson, *Under the Hammer*, chapters 1-3.

<sup>28</sup> For the museum culture of late Antiquity in fourth- and fifth-century Gaul especially, see Lea Stirling, *The Learned Collector: Mythological Statuettes and Classical Taste in Late Antique Gaul* (Ann Arbor, 2005), Chapters 5-7. For the fifth-century Christian legislation about the destruction of pagan statuary (directed only to statues to which worship was being paid), see pp. 158-63. For other, documented examples of a late Antique, Christian collecting culture, using the language of art with regard to statues of pagan deities, see Helen Saradi-Mendelovici, 'Christian Attitudes toward Pagan Monuments in Late Antiquity', *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 44 (1990), pp. 47-61.

---

<sup>29</sup> The function of the museum in this very mobile history is, of course, to stop history and time, for which see the essay by Simon Cane and Jonathan Ashley Smith in this volume.