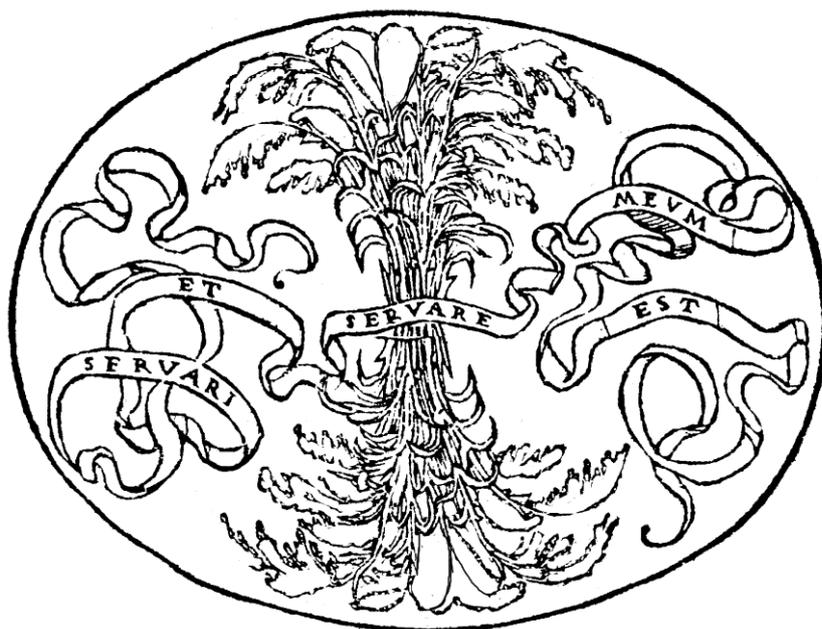


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**FLAGGING A RED FLAG: CONTEXTUALIZING THE ACTIVITIES OF
ALESSANDRO MORANDOTTI BETWEEN 1939 AND 1945 IN LIGHT OF THE ART
LOOTING INVESTIGATION UNIT REPORT (1946-1947)**

«Uomini e meloni hanno questo in comune, che dal di fuori non si capisce se sono buoni»¹.

Alessandro (Sandro) Morandotti (1909-1979)

The Office of Strategic Services (OSS) Art Looting Investigation Unit's (ALIU) *Biographical Index of Individuals Involved in Art Looting*, or list of *Red Flag* names, is a tool frequently used by provenance research practitioners for identifying objects with potentially problematic ownership histories relative to the Nazi era². Compiled from the ALIU's reports of 1945 and 1946, the list includes the names of individuals interrogated, investigated, or mentioned during the unit's investigation into art looting on the European continent during the Second World War³. While the list is often a starting place indicating further provenance research might be necessary, scholars and provenance researchers recognize that the list is not comprehensive, should be used judiciously, and with additional historical context on the individuals, their involvement, and objects associated with them. The inclusion of Dr. Alessandro (Sandro) Morandotti (1909-1979)⁴, art dealer, antiquarian, and publisher, exemplifies this.

According to the ALIU reports Morandotti was an Austrian national resident in Italy with bases in Venice and Rome; he was instrumental in introducing Walter Andreas Hofer, the curator of *Reichsmarschall* Hermann Göring's collection, and Josef 'Seppe' Angerer, another dealer working on behalf of Göring, to a number of Italian dealers; he was the partner of Feruccio 'Ildebrando' Bossi, a Genoese dealer; and he had travelled to Berlin in 1943, where he acted as a liaison between Göring and a Florentine dealer, Eugenio Ventura (1887-1949), in the trade of pictures⁵. Since the ALIU investigations, there has been little attention paid to Morandotti. Discussion is limited to his posthumous publication of aphorisms, *Minime* in 1979-1980 (introductions by Paolo Volponi and Italo Zingarelli), and within *Scrittori Italiani di*

¹ As quoted in RUOZZI 1994, p. 1236.

² Formed by the American government in 1944, and administered by the OSS, the ALIU was a specialist unit charged with investigating the wide scale art loss, plunder and destruction of cultural property under the Nazi regime and its European allies. Sixteen reports detail the results of their investigation. The term 'Red flag' name has more recently been applied by modern day art historians, historians, provenance researchers and other practitioners investigating art loss to denote individuals included within the reports. See: *Post-War Reports: Art Looting Intelligence Unit (ALIU) Reports 1945-1946 and ALIU Red Flag Names List and Index, The Central Registry of Information on Looted Cultural Property 1933-1945*, www.lootedart.com/MVI3RM469661, <September, 2014>.

³ Throughout the present text there is reference to the Nazi era and Second World War: Nazi era refers to the period starting January 30, 1933, when Hitler became Chancellor of Germany and antisemitic and racial persecution began. Second World War refers to September 1st, 1939, with the invasion of Poland; within the context of this paper, although Italy and Germany had been linked politically and militarily since Hitler and Mussolini signed the Axis Pact of Steel, May 22nd, 1939, Italy did not formally enter the war until June 10th, 1940.

⁴ Dates for contemporary figures in the present text are included where known.

⁵ ROUSSEAU 1945, part 1, pp. 104-105; College Park, Maryland, National Archives and Records Administration, M1944 Record Group 239 Roll 0047, Records of the American Commission for the Protection and Salvage of Artistic and Historic Monuments in War Areas, 1943-1946, Card File on Looting Art Suspects. For additional biography on Göring see: FRAENKEL-MANVELL 1962, FRISCHAUER 1951 and HOLLMANN-MÄRZ 2014.

Aforismi by Gino Ruozzi and James Geary's *Guide to the World's Great Aphorists*⁶. Most recently, his grandson, the art historian Fabiano Colletti, published small notebooks of his aphorisms in a two-part series, *Aphoristikon* and *Satirikon*, in 2013. However, there is little mention in these publications of Morandotti's activities during the war. In publications that discuss the art trade in Italy during the Second World War, which are few and far between, his name is generally missing⁷. The present paper is thus a brief historical account of Morandotti during the Second World War⁸. In addition to characterizing and classifying his engagements and dealings with Göring and agents working on Göring's behalf, looking beyond the investigations of the ALIU, discussion will include some of his other activities: between 1940 and 1943, Morandotti organized four exhibitions at the art gallery Antiquaria at Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne in Rome, and in 1942 he began a publishing venture, the culmination of which was the weekly journal «Cosmopolita», first published in 1944 following the liberation of Rome, and which circulated until 1946.

In the field of Nazi-era provenance research and the art market during the Second World War, it is often noted that closer examination should be paid to Italy⁹. In seminal texts on the topic, activities in Italy are paid minimal attention, and apart from the ALIU investigations, there is lack of a central text or resource that documents or analyses the market in Italy at this time and the individuals involved. In addition therefore to shedding light on a figure who in later years was described as *affascinante*, and a «many sided being», with «great moral courage», the present paper seeks, through its presentation of Morandotti's personal acquaintances and professional relationships, to identify resources and to suggest avenues for further research in order to gain a better understanding of this neglected geography within provenance research and histories of the art market¹⁰.

Biography

Alessandro Morandotti was born in 1909 in Vienna to Margarethe (Margherita) Zucker (b. circa 1875-1877), a Viennese woman, and Amedeo Morandotti (1871-1924), an Italian

⁶ MINIME 1979-1980; RUOZZI 1994; GEARY 2007.

⁷ Morandotti is not mentioned, for example, in the following: NICHOLAS 1995; PETROPOULOS 1996; EDSEL 2009; EDSEL 2013; *DONATELLO AMONG THE BLACKSHIRTS* 2005; nor is he included in *DONATELLO AMONG THE BLACKSHIRTS* 2005, which deals with visual culture in Fascist Italy or in *L'OPERA DA RITROVARE* 1995, an inventory of the Italian art treasures lost and a number of collections plundered during the period of concern; while he is included in the provenance for the paintings sold to Göring in YEIDE 2009, he is not discussed in the section on Göring and Italy, pp. 14-15; he is given brief biographical treatment in HAASE 1991, p. 130, and HAASE 2000, p. 95.

⁸ The present paper has been developed from a presentation for the Transfer of Cultural Objects in the Alpe Adria Region in the 20th Century's (TransCultAA) Workshop at the IMT Lucca School for Advanced Studies, Italy, September 18-19, 2017, and is part of an ongoing research project by the author into the activities of Morandotti during the Second World War.

⁹ Prior to the efforts of the TransCultAA, and proceedings at Lucca, the Provenance Research Training Program, in Conjunction with the Italian Presidency of the Council of the European Union, Workshop, Rome, Italy, December 8th-12th, 2014, and the Holocaust Art Restitution Symposium, Palazzo Turati, Milan, on June 23rd, 2011, presented by Christie's and Union Internationale des Avocats, are two examples of efforts to spark more conversation and encourage research in this field in Italy.

¹⁰ Laura Laureati, Email message to author, November 25th, 2014. Laureati, the step-daughter of Giuliano Briganti, to be discussed later in this text, has described Morandotti as fascinating; Loewi Robertson, the daughter of Adolph Loewi, also to be discussed presently has described Morandotti as a multi-faceted human being with great moral courage; both Laureati and Loewi Robertson knew Morandotti personally. These sentiments are similarly reflected in RUOZZI 1994, p. 1234.

journalist and correspondent for the «Corriere della Sera» in Paris, Vienna and Berlin¹¹. Morandotti was raised in Berlin, but was educated in Italy. Following graduation from the Bocconi University in Milan with a degree in economics and trade, he worked for a brief period at the Milanese manufacturing corporation Pirelli, and then, as he was an avid pianist, at the *Teatro La Scala* in Milan, albeit in a secretarial capacity¹². He resigned from his position at the opera, however, when in 1937 he refused to wear the *camicia nera* sported by the Fascist regime¹³. The exact circumstances surrounding the 1937 date and Morandotti's resignation, and whether it was in relation to specific events, are not clear; however, the Fascist regime had had a link to the *Teatro* for some time: in 1921, the Ente Autonomo Teatro alla Scala was founded to manage the theater. In 1929, the Fascist government gave the chief of state the power to choose the Ente's president, and imposed the presence of a representative of the Ministry of National Education in the board. It is possible that there was a correlation between Morandotti's resignation and the fact that Hitler had recently been given the position as *Caporale Onorario* in the same year, since as shall be discussed, Morandotti has been described as a fierce «anti-fascist» and «anti-nazi»¹⁴.

In 1937 Morandotti began working for German dealer Adolph Loewi (1888-1977) as director of Loewi's firm Adolph Loewi, Inc., at Palazzo Nani Mocenigo in Venice¹⁵. Loewi's firm specialized in a variety of objects including paintings, textiles, decorative arts, furniture and sculpture, and had an international clientele spanning museums, private collectors, galleries, and dealers in continental Europe, the United Kingdom, and the United States¹⁶. According to Gabriela Kay Loewi Robertson (b. 1920), the daughter of Adolph Loewi:

Father told me that although Morandotti was not schooled in art, but rather was a musician (he played the piano beautifully) he thought that he would fit into our very international business, because he spoke four languages (a requirement in our international work) – ‘he could learn the rest’ – well, he did!¹⁷

¹¹ Morandotti Senior published an account of the First World War in Berlin, but there is no mention of Morandotti Junior: MORANDOTTI 1915.

¹² As part of ongoing investigations into Morandotti, I have visited and contacted a number of archives, museums and individuals in Austria, Italy, Germany and the United States who had some relation to Morandotti. In addition to indicating those that were fruitful with providing information, I will include those that were contacted, but either did not have information or from whom there was no response. The archives of the Scala did not have any information with respect to Alessandro Morandotti; the archives pertain only to opera singers and some musicians (Matteo Sartorio, Archivist, Email message to author, September 9th, 2014).

¹³ Loewi Robertson, Email message to author, August 13th, 2014.

¹⁴ Loewi Robertson, Email message to author, August 13th, 2014.

¹⁵ Born in Munich, Adolph Loewi was the son of Jacob Loewi (1856-1960) and Emma Bernheimer (1865-1950). Emma was the only daughter of Lehman Bernheimer (1841-1918), an art dealer, and the discoverer of a plant that supplied high quality textiles, with whom Loewi apprenticed as a young man. Bernheimer's three sons, Max, Ernst and Otto were also dealers, based out of Munich. Between 1904 and 1905 Loewi worked for an art dealer in New York and then between 1908 and 1909, for a dealer in Spain (both unknown). With three uncles in the business in Munich, and seeing no future for himself there, in 1911 he opened his first gallery at the *Abbazia di San Gregorio*, Venice. After Italy entered the First World War in 1915, he spent three years with the Bavarian Royal Army. He returned to Venice after his service and married in 1919. In 1920 Gabriela (Kay) Loewi (Robertson) was born. That same year, he leased Palazzo Nani Mocenigo and started a voluntary position September 19th, 1921 as honorary German consul in Venice. His position as consul was terminated September 30th, 1933 following Hitler's rise to power. Loewi Robertson, Email message to author, August 22nd, 2014; RAGGIO 1999, p. 180; Berlin, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amts, PA AA, RAV Rom (Quirinal), No. 520d, Letter from Adolph Loewi to the German Consulate, Trieste, August 13th, 1921.

¹⁶ RAGGIO 1999, p. 180, Letters between Adolph Loewi, and his daughter; Loewi and Morandotti; and Loewi and Paul Byk of Arnold, Seligmann and Rey, who acted as his agent in New York, show the unusual breadth of Loewi's business. The letters are kept in a US Archive, which is presently inaccessible; analysis of various US public collection print and online catalogues confirm the broad nature of items which were sold by Loewi.

¹⁷ Loewi Robertson, Email message to author, August 13th, 2014.

Loewi Robertson continues to characterize Morandotti as a man with «great moral courage», and noted that his anti-fascist stance had been attractive in hiring him to work for the firm.

In 1938, following Italy's implementation of the *Leggi Razziali*, as part of an Italian Police search of Loewi's office, the Loewi firm's stock books were destroyed¹⁸. Although Loewi was alleged to have engaged in illegal currency transactions, circumstances suggest he was being harassed as a Jewish foreign national: the punitive Italian Racial Laws, which enforced racial discrimination against Italian Jews saw an influx of isolated incidents and threats both to Italian natives as well as to foreign nationals of Jewish heritage. Shortly thereafter, Morandotti made arrangements to assist the family's flight from Italy writing telegrams in coded German so that they could not be deciphered by censors. Sailing from Le Havre, France, on February 1st, 1939, the Loewi family fled to the United States, arriving in New York on February 9th; they did not return to Venice until after the war. Morandotti proceeded to turn the Loewi firm into a corporation, and sold the shares 'anonymously' to two family friends who held them in their names in order that the business not be closed or confiscated.

According to Loewi Robertson:

When my father, a Jew, had to leave Italy, the danger of having his Jewish business seized was enormous. Morandotti was sending telegrams, which had to be coded in such a way that censors would not understand them (nor did my father) [...] We had nicknames for everybody we were doing business with, I do remember, but a few – “Acco” was Accorsi of Turin, and I am pretty sure the other was Ciolli, our forwarder and export specialist in Florence (Universal Express) ... At that time, they were closing Jewish businesses and marking them “ebreo” [Jew] – Sandro was frantic, so he went to Lugano, wrote a long letter and airmailed it. Father immediately sent an answer “Yes”, and Sandro proceeded to turn the private business into a corporation, *Societa Anonima*, then moved it to Rome (keeping Venice where Father had a lease on Palazzo Nani until 1953)¹⁹.

Fearing that Venice would be bombed, and knowing Rome to be an 'open city' due to the centrality of the Vatican, Morandotti left the firm and Palazzo Nani Mocenigo in the care of Loewi's book-keeper (name unknown) and another dealer from Turin, Pietro Accorsi (1891-1982). He subsequently leased the Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne in Rome, calling the new firm Antiquaria in order that Loewi's ownership not be revealed. Although he continued to oversee the Venetian firm, Morandotti resided in Rome throughout the war. During this time, he organized four exhibitions of art at Antiquaria between 1940 and 1943. He also published the weekly periodical «Cosmopolita» in 1944. As it would be revealed decades later, Morandotti was simultaneously responsible for hiding a number of Jews and members of the resistance in the Palazzo Massimo during the spring of 1944.

The Göring Report: Sales

According to investigations by the ALIU, Morandotti sold eight paintings to Hofer and Göring between 1941 and 1943²⁰:

¹⁸ RAGGIO 1999, p. 7 At the time this unfolded, Loewi and his daughter were in Paris, as part of a two year project to redecorate the Italian consulate; Loewi Robertson, Email message to author, August 13th, 2014.

¹⁹ Loewi Robertson, Email message to author, August 13th, 2014.

²⁰ The paintings are in many ways archetypal of the paintings collected by Göring as the emphasis of his collection was on German Old Masters, Italian Renaissance Painting and sculpture, Dutch and Flemish Old Masters and tapestries, and art of the eighteenth century French courts; in terms of subject matter and

- Alessandro Varotari, called Padovanino, *Nude Bust of a Young Woman* (1941) <20.000 lire>
- School of Fontainebleau, *Portrait of Gabrielle d'Estree and Her Sister, the Duchess of Villars, in the Bath* (1941) <200.000 lire>
- Giovanni di Paolo, *Madonna and Child* (January, 1941) <190.000 lire>
- Theodor Rombouts, *Alexander and Roxane* (December 2nd, 1941) <25.000 lire>
- Sebastiano Ricci, *Jupiter and Venus* (December 1st, 1941) <150.000 lire>²¹
- Frans Floris, *Adam and Eve* (December 1st, 1941) <100.000 lire>
- Jacopo Tintoretto, *Danae* (1943) <350.000 lire>
- School of Antonello da Messina, *Annunciation* (circa 1943) <unknown>

Of the eight works, three, by Padovanino, Ricci and Floris, are recorded as having been sold on behalf of the dealer Ferruccio 'Ildebrando' Bossi²². When Morandotti and Bossi came to be acquainted is not clear, but as we shall see the pair collaborated outside these sales, as Bossi loaned paintings to the third exhibition held at Antiquaria in 1943. Of the eight paintings sold by Morandotti, the Rombouts, Ricci, and Floris were sold directly to Göring, and the Padovanino and Giovanni di Paolo were sold to Hofer on behalf of Göring. The three remaining paintings were 'gifts' arranged for Göring²³: the Fontainebleau painting from *Reichskommissar* in Norway *Gauleiter* Josef Terboven (1898-1945) for use as a birthday gift to Göring on January 12th, 1942; the Tintoretto from the city of Berlin, and was used as a birthday gift for Göring the following year; the School of Messina painting from Dr. Friedrich (Fritz) Görnert, a member of Göring's staff, for use as a gift to Göring on March 24th, 1944. However, at least two of the sales may not have been carried out by Morandotti after all: according to a letter of August 5th, 1941 from Hofer to Göring, the Rombouts was possibly sold by Florentine dealer Luigi Bellini²⁴, and according to the Berchtesgaden inventory of the Göring collection the Fontainebleau painting was acquired from Bossi²⁵.

The archives of the Antiquaria, which might establish earlier provenances or confirm the dates and methods of acquisition for the objects sold by Morandotti, are presumed lost²⁶. Examining published literature on each painting, and the paintings discussed that Morandotti sold on behalf of other dealers, with the exception of one, there is no known provenance

iconography, Göring had a particular taste for nudes, mythologies, and allegorical figures. For a complete reconstruction of his collection, see: YEIDE 2009. A detailed summary including known provenance for the paintings sold or exchanged by Morandotti is provided in *Appendix I*.

²¹ ROUSSEAU 1945, part 1, p. 105, lists the date of purchase as 1942; December 1st, 1941, is listed on an inventory compiled by Göring's collection secretary, Gisela Limberger, College Park, Maryland, National Archives and Records Administration, RG260 Box 437 Folder VI; there is the same discrepancy for *Adam and Eve*, attributed to Frans Floris.

²² According to the ALIU report, Bossi was a Genoese dealer whose establishment Hofer visited on one occasion. Hofer noted that the dealer had a bad reputation in the art world, although he paid him commissions, sometimes jointly with Morandotti. ROUSSEAU 1945, part 1, p. 103 Hofer's comments on Bossi's character would appear to ring true: the dealer had a criminal record dating back to 1924, with a five-year conviction for art smuggling, and had been banned from dealing. In the 1960s, he was implicated in the illegal smuggling of a Raphael from Italy to the US, which was donated to the Museum of Fine Arts of Boston. For discussion in brief of Bossi, see: MACLEAVE 1981, pp. 214-215. For discussion in full on the Raphael affair, see: RATHBONE 2014.

²³ As he preferred art to other presents, and as a means to bolster his collection, Göring's dealers implemented a process where he would flag objects he coveted in dealers' stocks, and when Nazi officials would contact Göring's office in anticipation of giving a gift, they would be put in touch with the dealers in whose stock Göring had earmarked objects. See: YEIDE 2009, p. 9.

²⁴ College Park, Maryland, National Archives and Records Administration, RG239 Box 78 Letter from Walter Andreas Hofer to Hermann Göring, August 5th, 1941.

²⁵ As cited in YEIDE 2009, p. 380.

²⁶ Alessandro Morandotti Jr, Email message to author, October 5th, 2014.

prior to Morandotti²⁷. Loewi Robertson has suggested that the paintings came from the stock of the Loewi firm, an irony given that the firm was Jewish owned and that German funds ultimately allowed the gallery to flourish²⁸. That Morandotti sold on behalf of other dealers, suggests he had sources outside the Loewi stock, however. Moreover, as will be discussed presently regarding the exhibition at Antiquaria, analysis of the lending pool for each exhibitions shows that Morandotti had an extensive and international clientele, encompassing private collectors, galleries, dealers and museums with far reaching arms within the art trade. It cannot be excluded therefore that Morandotti acquired or sold objects on behalf of these individuals. Export permits filed by Morandotti and held with the Archivio Centrale dello Stato likewise suggest a flourishing trade; however, the source of the items – whether a third party or Antiquaria – is not indicated, and the items – chiefly decorative arts and furniture – yield few clues or avenues to uncover additional provenance²⁹.

In addition to the sales that Morandotti made to Hofer and Göring, he was instrumental in introducing the pair to other dealers and collectors, and acting as intermediary on Italian dealers' behalf to negotiate sales or exchanges with Hofer and Göring. Morandotti introduced Hofer and Göring to such notable figures and dealers as: Countess Galletti Spiridon, Rome, a noble from whose collection a Leonardo da Vinci *Leda and the Swan* was sold to Hitler³⁰; Prince Massimo, Rome, a nobleman and collector; Ferruccio Asta (1900-1952), Milan and Venice, a dealer; Giovanni (Giannino) Marchig, Florence, a restorer, and part-time dealer who worked for the Florentine Museums; Dr. Ettore Sestieri, Rome, an established dealer, historian and director of the Barberini Gallery, Rome, who later became implicated in the sale of a painting to Hitler for the *Sonderauftrag Linz*, and offered paintings to Hofer from the Barberini collection; and Albert Maier, dealer from Munich resident in Italy who acted as Hofer's chief intermediary and guide when in Florence. Despite these introductions, however, no known sales or exchanges of art works to Hofer or Göring came to fruition from these individuals, and Morandotti does not appear to have been involved in the various sales to the *Sonderauftrag Linz*³¹. Morandotti did apparently introduce Hofer and Göring to a number of other individuals who seized the opportunity to benefit financially from the Germans, and for whom on more than one occasion he acted as the point of contact or intermediary for sales. These individuals include: Ugo Jandolo, Rome, an antiquities dealer who sold sculpture to Hofer for Göring with Morandotti as intermediary; Attilio Simonetti, Rome, an antiques dealer, who sold antique jewelry to Hofer for Göring, with Morandotti as the point of contact; and Luigi Grassi and Sons, Florence, a firm of dealers started by Luigi Grassi and his brother Giulio, who sold a number of pieces to Hofer and Göring. Perhaps the most important instance where Morandotti acted as intermediary was on behalf of Eugenio Ventura of

²⁷ To this end, *catalogue raisonnés* on each artist, exhibitions in Italy published between the early to mid-twentieth century, and photoarchives at the Frick, Witt Photo Library, London, and Fondazione Zeri and Berenson photoarchives online have been checked. The *Portrait of Gabrielle d'Estree and Her Sister, the Duchess of Villars, in the Bath* is the lone painting that has a (partial) known provenance prior to Morandotti: it has been recorded to have been with the Marchese Negrotto-Cambiaso Family, Genoa. The Negrotto-Cambiaso family was a noble Genoese family, descended from the Pallavicini, a Genoese noble family. It was later listed as with an unknown private Florentine Collection PLOGSTERTH 1991, no. C 22.

²⁸ Loewi Robertson, Email message to author, August 13th, 2014.

²⁹ For this information, I am grateful for discussions with colleague and TransCultAA researcher, Daria Brasca.

³⁰ The painting has more recently been attributed to Circle of da Vinci.

³¹ Although Hitler and Göring had contacts and sources, which overlapped, Hitler had his own forces and network of dealers or advisers acquiring objects. Many of the acquisitions that were made in Italy for the *Sonderauftrag Linz* were negotiated by Prince Philip of Hesse, a German national resident in Italy, and married to Princess Mafalda of Savoy, the daughter of King Vittorio Emanuele III of Italy. For more background on Hesse's activities, see NICHOLAS 1995, pp. 156-157, 159, 230.

Florence, an antique dealer, who according to Hofer, had the second best quality of paintings after Contini-Bonacossi³².

The Göring Report II: Morandotti as Intermediary

While Göring's collection is well-known for including a number of looted objects, or items that had been subject to forced sales or sales under duress³³, exchanges were a significant aspect in the formation of Göring's collection. To this end, Morandotti acted on behalf of Ventura to facilitate the exchange of eleven old master paintings and works of decorative art for nine nineteenth-century paintings taken from the Jeu de Paume repository of the *Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg* (ERR) in Paris³⁴. The exchange was negotiated between December 6th, 1942, and March 8th, 1943³⁵. Exactly when Morandotti became an intermediary is not clear. According to the ALIU investigations, Ventura had a German secretary and confidant, Frau Hertha Kessler, who communicated with Hofer and kept him apprised of Ventura's movements, so it is possible she was involved in the initial communications with Hofer and Göring, especially as Ventura had already sold at least one painting to Göring in December, 1941³⁶. Reconstructing the events from Hofer's personal notes and his statements during interrogation, the height of Morandotti's involvement was on January 28th, 1943, when he met with Hofer and Ventura in Berlin³⁷. On February 21st, 1943, Morandotti telephoned Hofer from Florence, and forwarded Ventura's request that Hofer bring the paintings in question with him on his next trip to Italy: Ventura had agreed to the exchange. This exchange is frequently cited within the study of Nazi theft and plunder, as the nineteenth-century paintings had all been confiscated from notable Jewish collections, including those of Paul Rosenberg (1881-1959), Alfred Weinberger (d. 1977), Alphonse Kann (1870-1948), and Alfred Lindenbaum (d. 1948), considered the foremost art dealers in Paris prior to the Nazi occupation. The exchange is also important because when the paintings were confiscated, they were valued by the Foreign Currency Control at 37,750 *Reichsmark* each; Hofer's total value for the paintings in negotiating with Ventura, however, was 540,000 *Reichsmark*, showing a blatant manipulation of prices. Furthermore, when Ventura received the paintings, they were presented with a letter stating that they were pictures for restoration by Ventura's wife, so that Ventura could avoid paying import tax on them³⁸. As the trade took place after a May 9th, 1942 law, implemented by the Minister of Education, Giuseppe Bottai, which prohibited the export of works of art without a permit, and which was broadcast specifically citing Göring as a threat to Italian cultural patrimony, the Ventura exchange shows Hofer and Göring conspiring to evade the recent Italian export law, and alongside Italian citizens. Investigations into this exchange were conducted by both American and Italian officials after the war. According to Rodolfo Siviero, *ministro plenipotenziario*, the investigation conducted by the Italian offices

³² ROUSSEAU 1945, part 1, p. 106.

³³ Forced sales typically refer to objects forcibly sold at auction, whereby owners received minimal proceeds or proceeds were placed in block accounts; these items were also typically sold at below market value. Forced sales can also refer to the sale of objects in order to pay the punitive *Reichsfluchtsteuer*, which allowed Jews and other citizens deemed as enemy of the state to leave Germany. Sales under duress typically refer to sales made under coercion by the Nazis.

³⁴ For a reconstruction of the plundering and collections targeted in France by this specialist task force headed by the Nazi ideologue Alfred Rosenberg and designed to plunder cultural valuables in Nazi-occupied countries, see: *Cultural Plunder by the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg: Database of Art Objects at the Jeu de Paume* <https://www.errproject.org/jeudepaume/>, <September, 2014>.

³⁵ The Ventura Exchange has been recently examined in PELLEGRINI 2014 and 2017.

³⁶ ROUSSEAU 1945, part 1, p. 106.

³⁷ ROUSSEAU 1945, part 2, attachments 56-62.

³⁸ College Park, Maryland, National Archives and Records Administration, M1946 Record Group 260 Roll 126.

provided the Italian dealers with «their first embarrassments», and the affair «provoked unbelievable polemics and unexpected situations»³⁹. On October 2nd, 1945, the High Commissioner for Italy, Rear Admiral Ellery W. Stone (1894-1981), wrote a letter to the President of the investigating Italian Council, in which he notes that it had been established that Ventura was fully aware of the origin of the property which he was acquiring, and that other prominent persons in Florence, including an official of the Superintendence of Galleries, were acquainted with the transaction⁴⁰. The Carabinieri lodged an accusation against Ventura for his involvement, although he was ultimately cleared by a Florentine criminal court. Morandotti is not mentioned in communications regarding these investigations or exchanges.

As we have seen, it appears that Morandotti may have only directly sold three paintings to Hofer rather than the eight initially suggested, and while we do not know the extent of his awareness in the Ventura affair with regard to the origins of the confiscated Jewish property, as Loewi Robertson suggested, Morandotti was a fierce «anti-fascist» and «anti-nazi». Although the importance of these events should not be discounted, nor that Morandotti was involved in the sale of paintings to Hofer and Göring after Bottai's 1942 law, it can be argued that war has a way of forcing people to choose between greater and lesser evils, and that an individual targeted by Göring and his agents would have found it very difficult to refuse cooperation entirely. Notes from Hofer's interrogation and details from the ALIU report on the exchange indicate that Ventura had voiced objections to the high prices posed by Hofer, which were met by subtle threats: Hofer warned that Göring might find Ventura «anti-nazi»—thus the deal was accepted⁴¹. Another episode involving Contini Bonacossi similarly highlights threats made by a group of Göring's agents: when Angerer and Gerhard Wolf, German consul in Florence, went on a tour of Contini-Bonacossi's collection, Angerer supposedly said to Contini-Bonacossi, «What a pity you're not a Jew!», and drawing a finger across his throat continued, «If you were a Jew, we could do just that! And all the paintings would be ours!». Unbeknownst to Angerer, however, Contini-Bonacossi was in fact half-Jewish⁴². Examination of Morandotti's own ancestry poses a parallel consideration: records of the *Israelitische Kultusgemeinde Wien* (IKG) in Vienna suggest that Morandotti's mother was Jewish-born, as their birth index includes a 'Margarethe Zucker' (May 3rd, 1877), daughter of Dr. Josef Zucker and 'Mrs. Atlas'⁴³. Loewi Robertson has suggested that partial incentive for Morandotti's engagement with Hofer and Göring was the allowance to travel with covered protection to Germany, where his family remained. Morandotti furthermore was not alone in selling items to the enemy. Contini-Bonacossi, for example, is recorded to have sold the largest number of works of art to Hofer for the Göring collection of any individual in Italy, forty-nine works in total⁴⁴. Luigi Bellini sold over twenty; the dealers Jandolo and Grassi sold around a dozen works each; the dealer Giorgio Sangiorgi sold seventeen – and all after the 1942 law implemented by Bottai. When we compare Morandotti with other dealers who were selling to Hofer and Göring, he is further distinguishable as he appears to have been the only one active

³⁹ *SECONDA MOSTRA NAZIONALE* 1950, p. 17. Siviero directed the diplomatic mission to the Allied military Government in Germany to establish the principle of returning artworks looted in Italy by the Germans. For additional biography on Siviero, his efforts to protect monuments and works of art during the war and recover objects after, see: BOTTARI 2013 and SIVIERO 1984.

⁴⁰ *SECONDA MOSTRA NAZIONALE* 1950, p. 17.

⁴¹ ROUSSEAU 1945, part 2, p. 96.

⁴² SAMUELS–SAMUELS 1987, pp. 478-479.

⁴³ Sabine Loitfellner, IKG, Email message to author, August 7th, 2018. Ancestry and Geni.com however list the wife of Amedeo Morandotti as 'Margarethe Zucker,' b. May 3rd, 1877 – the source for this information is not clear, and while a daughter Adelaide (Morandotti) von Hoerschelmann (1901-1976) is included, there is no mention of Alessandro <March, 2019>.

⁴⁴ For recent examination of Bonacossi, see: PAZZI 2016.

in planning, executing and publishing large-scale exhibitions during the war, both in and outside of Rome⁴⁵.

Exhibitions at Antiquaria

The inaugural exhibition of the Galleria Antiquaria at Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne, Rome, *Mostra del Paesaggio Veneziano del Settecento*, opened December 19th, 1940. The exhibition included forty paintings, largely Venetian cityscapes, pastoral scenes, and classical ruins in the Veneto. The artists included Luca Carlevarijs, Giovanni Richter, Marco Ricci, Antonio Canal, called Canaletto, Francesco Zuccarelli, Giuseppe Zais, Michele Marieschi, Francesco Guardi, Antonio Diziani, Bernardo Bellotto, called Canaletto, and Jean Honore Fragonard. The paintings were on loan from a number of private collectors in Italy: Baron Edgardo Lazzaroni (b. 1892), Rome, brother of dealer Baron Michele Lazzaroni (1863-1934), who descended from a prominent family of financiers; Tullio Gasparini, Venice, a Medieval scholar and art historian; Italo Brass (1870-1943), Venice, a painter, collector, and dealer, who had a considerable collection of Renaissance and later Italian paintings, who loaned ten paintings to the exhibition, and who would continue to loan a substantial number of pictures to subsequent Antiquaria exhibitions; and Pietro Accorsi, Turin, the collector and antiquarian who oversaw the former Loewi firm at Palazzo Nani Mocenigo in Venice. A catalogue of the exhibition was published, including entries for each painting with the title, dimensions, medium, collection, a short bibliography, and a brief essay. Images were included for the majority of the works of art. The catalogue begins with an essay by Morandotti outlining the scope of the exhibition, providing an introduction to landscape painting in Venice and the Veneto in the eighteenth century and to the artists included within. A preliminary text by Morandotti introduces the firm, the name Antiquaria, its intentions, and scope:

Antiquaria: sa di Latino e di Cinquecento. Per noi significa: culto dell'antico. Nome di fantasia. Ma razionale e preciso il programma dell'impresa. Espresione del contrasto, tra immaginazione e realtà, che accende ed alimenta la passione per l'antico. Un desiderare che non si placa finché l'antitesti non sia superata, e risolta, nel soddisfacimento⁴⁶.

Morandotti continues to describe the firm as one devoted to the antique: to the joy of ownership and pleasure of rare things, and to the love of beauty, form, color and materials that are the spiritual essence of this passion that survive from the past. He pledges the gallery as one that will serve to provide constant enjoyment to its clientele in the objects that he offers, and asks that the client give their trust to Antiquaria, alluding to the commercial enterprises and sales of the business. Yet, he pledges a commitment to the art, suggesting an academic and intellectual agenda: in addition to the everyday work of advising collectors and selling objects, he vows to organize exhibitions that bring the beauty and history of the unknown to the everyday, emphasizing that all exhibitions will be non-selling.

The second exhibition at Antiquaria, *Mostra di Pittura Veneziana del Settecento*, opened December 20th, 1941. The exhibition included one hundred paintings by twenty-eight artists and masters of the eighteenth century, including Sebastiano Ricci, Giovanni Battista Piazzetta, Giovanni Battista Tiepolo, Pietro Longhi, Francesco Guardi, Giovanni Antonio Guardi, and

⁴⁵ In order to establish this, I ran a variety of searches via worldcat and scipio entering the various dealers' or gallery names of those included in the OSS report conducted by the ALIU and published in ROUSSEAU 1945 without result; while it was common in the early through mid-twentieth century in Italy to hold exhibitions of a similar nature of those at Antiquaria, it seems none were replicated by the other dealers during this time to the scale of Morandotti's ventures. The antiquarian dealer's milieu is explored in BELLINI 1947.

⁴⁶ *MOSTRA DEL PAESAGGIO VENEZIANO* 1940, p. 1.

Francesco Zuccarelli. The exhibition was largely made up of paintings, although a few drawings were included, and it incorporated a range of subjects popular within eighteenth-century Venetian fine art: religious painting, history painting, mythology, portraiture, pastoral landscapes and genre painting. Again, and as highlighted in the introductory essay, the exhibition was not intended for selling or profiting from the works; rather, the exhibition was designed for greater enrichment, education and enlightenment, with works of art on loan from a number of private collections and dealers throughout Italy, including: the Contessa Marianna Prampolini di Reggio Emilia, biographer, celebrated art collector, and wife of the engineer Natale Prampolini; Alessandro Brass, Venice, the father of the painter Italo Brass; and Arturo Grassi, Florence, of the aforementioned dealers, Grassi Brothers. Pietro Accorsi, Turin, again contributed a number of works. In addition to private collections in Rome, Milan, Florence, Venice, Modena and Turin, works of art were loaned by private German collectors, including: Dr. Wilhelm Reuschel, Munich, founder of the bank Reuschel and Co. and collector of Baroque art; H. Vollert, Munich, and Senator Robert Scholz-Forni, Hamburg⁴⁷.

Once again, a catalogue was produced for the exhibition, including cataloguing for each piece, images of the majority of the works, and a short biography for each artist. Morandotti introduces the exhibition and catalogue with an essay, in which he explains that the exhibition is to be a continuation of the former one, in order to allow for a deeper understanding of Venetian painting of the seventeenth century. The intended audience is scholars and collectors: he notes that many of the works are previously unpublished and are presented now so that scholars can make effective comparisons and so the dilettante can gain a balanced view of this period, which he acknowledges has been the subject of extensive investigation in recent years. Indeed, throughout the publication, the references and bibliography include scholarship from recent years, such as the work of art historians and experts on Italian Baroque art Max Göring and Antonio Morassi (1893-1976)⁴⁸.

The third exhibition at *Antiquaria, Mostra di Giuseppe Bernardino Bison*, opened on June 20th, 1942⁴⁹. Ninety-two works of art were included, and as implied by the title, all were by the eighteenth and nineteenth-century northern Italian painter, Giuseppe Bernardino Bison⁵⁰. Lenders to the exhibition included public and private collections, art historians and dealers, including: the Pinacoteca Civica di Treviso; Ferruccio Asta, Venice and Milan; the Coletti Family, Treviso; Professor Giuseppe Fiocco (1884-1971), Padova, an art historian; Carlo Marchiori, Rome, Ambassador of Italy, resident in Bern, Switzerland; Antonio Morassi; Dr. Leo Planiscig (1887-1952), Rome, former director of sculpture and decorative arts at the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, and specialist on Italian Renaissance sculpture and decorative arts; Ugo Procacci (1905-1991), Florence, art historian, academic and theorist on restoration and conservation; Antonino Rusconi, Royal Superintendent for the Monuments of Trento; and the descendants of the artist himself⁵¹. Again, the Contessa Prampolini loaned a

⁴⁷ The collections of Reuschel and Scholz-Forni have been recorded in the following, but there is no inclusion of Morandotti: *DIE SAMMLUNG WILHELM REUSCHEL* 1964 and *VON SCHNEIDER* 1937.

⁴⁸ Morassi was an Italian art historian and an expert on Venetian art: his archive is held at the Ca Foscari University in Venice, but aside from two photographs in the archives with 'Morandotti, Milano, 1964' on their verso, there is no inclusion of correspondence, or material pertaining to the exhibition, or otherwise. Barbara Lunazzi, Archivist, Email message to Author, November 17th, 2014.

⁴⁹ *MOSTRA DI GIUSEPPE BERNARDINO BISON* 1942.

⁵⁰ Influenced by the eighteenth century painters Tiepolo and Guardi, and associated with Canaletto's studio, Bison was mainly known for his historical compositions, genre scenes, and landscapes, including *vedute di fantasia*, or capricci, largely created while working in Venice, and neighboring areas including Ferrara, Trieste and Padova. For additional scholarship on the artist, BERGAMINI-MAGANI-PAVANELLO 1997.

⁵¹ The Coletti Family, Treviso, almost certainly refers to Luigi Coletti, art historian, critic and director of the Biblioteca Comunale, housed with the Pinacoteca di Treviso, who loaned paintings of the same period to the great exhibition at Palazzo Pitti in 1922: see *MOSTRA DELLA PITTURA ITALIANA* 1922. Regarding Antonino Rusconi, Trento: he had been embroiled in the gift of the *Vipiteno Altarpiece* to Göring; according to period

number of works of art. As with the other exhibitions, Morandotti opens the catalogue with an essay explaining the incentive for the exhibition, and in this instance, explaining the choice for focusing on Bison, whom he acknowledges is not particularly well-known, either by academics or collectors. He explains that it is not for a lack of ideas, or materials, but in the belief of serving culture, providing justice to the artist and in bringing Bison the attention he believes should be due. He acknowledges recent studies on the artist, including an exhibition at Palmanova, Bison's birthplace, and that a few museums in the Veneto and at the Albertina in Vienna possess his works. Meanwhile, he also acknowledges that a group of cutting edge, passionate collectors have recognized the quality of Bison's oeuvre, but that there is a considerable absence of knowledge in both erudite and lay circles. He further acknowledges recent studies by Antonio Morassi and Carolina Piperata and the desire to take this work further.⁵² He draws comparisons between Bison and many of the artists represented in the previous exhibitions at Antiquaria, as a way of placing him in the context of eighteenth century painting, and to provide a frame of reference for viewers of the exhibition and readers of the catalogue.

The fourth and final exhibition at Antiquaria, *Cinque pittori del Settecento*, opened April 21st, 1943⁵³. Eighty-five works of art were included by the eighteenth century artists, Fra Vittore Ghislandi, Giuseppe Maria Crespi, Alessandro Magnasco, Giuseppe Bazzani and Giacomo Ceruti. Lenders to the exhibition included a range of notable public and private collections, dealers, and art historians, both Italian and German, including, among others: Museo Civico di Pisa; Ildebrando Bossi, Genoa; Dr. Aldo Briganti, Rome, art historian, dealer and father of Giuliano Briganti; Professor Roberto Longhi (1890-1970), Florence, an art historian and theorist; Andrea Busiri Vici Jr, Rome, an architect; Vittorio Cerruti, Italian Ambassador to Moscow; Count Albertino Palma di Cesnola, Florence; Marchese Enico Visconti Venosta (1887-1945), Rome, nobleman and writer; and Gallery Jacob Schweidwimmer, Munich⁵⁴. The painter Italo Brass, Venice, once more contributed over twenty paintings to the exhibition. Morandotti introduces the exhibition and catalogue with a lengthy essay outlining motivations and incentives for the exhibition and artist choices: to continue on the theme of eighteenth century painting, but this time focusing on the Lombardy region, where he acknowledges many of the artists felt a Venetian «pull», and to enlighten both the intellectual community and public regarding artists who are important for the period, but are perhaps not as well-known as they might be. He again draws comparisons between the artists in the present exhibition and those whose works were on view in exhibitions from 1940 through to 1942, reiterates that the commercial importance of these works is minimal and that they have been borrowed from private collections and placed on view in order to develop greater learning. Perhaps most notable in the 1943 exhibition catalogue essay is that Morandotti commences the text by acknowledging that the exhibition has opened in a time of war.

Although Morandotti had started Antiquaria from the Loewi firm, which had been established in the early twentieth century, when we consider that Morandotti did not have an art background, that Loewi had not been an exhibiting gallery, and that Morandotti had only been in Rome for a couple years when the first exhibition opened, it seems remarkable that he

documentation and post-war reports, he had, however, raised «every conceivable objection». Records of the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives (MFAA) Section of the Preparations and Restitution Branch, OMGUS, 1945-1951, Cultural Property Claim Applications, Compiled 1946-1948, Vipiteno Paintings by Hans Multscher, Italy, Appendix A, Letter HQ Alcom, 20909/25/MFAA, September 18th, 1945, accessed via fold3.com October 5th, 2014.

⁵² PIPERATA 1940; MORASSI 1930-1931.

⁵³ *CINQUE PITTORI* 1943.

⁵⁴ The Roberto Longhi archive is in Florence; however, at the time of research and writing, it was closed and inaccessible to the public. Paolo Benassai, Archivist, Email message to author, November 13th, 2014.

was not only able to put the exhibitions on, but also draw in an international clientele, and continuously gather more than forty works of art for each. Although the exhibitions were not for profit, each exhibition catalogue in its content and physicality suggests that Antiquaria was successful, growing and able to support itself financially during these years. For the first exhibition which contained forty paintings, those collections which are identified as lenders were perhaps accessed through relationships from Venice. The second exhibition included one hundred paintings, and again drew on various collections from Venice, perhaps individuals known to the Loewi firm, but also German collections, and the collection of the Prampolini outside Rome. The catalogue is lengthier and larger, with 94 pages and measuring 30 cm, whereas the first catalogue was only 31 pages by 25 cm. The catalogue includes a brief biography of each artist, while the first did not. Although the third exhibition was devoted to one artist, ninety-two works of art were nonetheless included, and again borrowed from an even broader spectrum of international and well known private collectors, scholars and dealers. The catalogue is more substantial than the first two, with an introductory essay to the catalogue, biography on the artist, lender's list at the back and list with the 1940 and 1941 exhibitions held at the gallery. The fourth exhibition has the most sophisticated and comprehensive catalogue of the four and is the longest and largest at one-hundred and sixteen pages and 32 cm. Similar to the third exhibition, the catalogue has a full lender's list and list of the past exhibitions put on by Antiquaria, but it has at least two pages of biography for each artist, in addition to introduction, and the type-face is larger and in bold.

In the March 1942 issue of «Pantheon», Italian art historian and former director of the Galleria Estense, Modena, and Superintendent of Venetian Museums, Rodolfo Pallucchini (1908-1989), wrote *Unbekannte Werke Piazzettas*, discussing the previously unpublished paintings by Piazzetta included in the 1941 exhibition at Antiquaria⁵⁵. Pallucchini, who had written his thesis on Piazzetta, and published his first book on the artist in 1934, describes the exhibition as «äusserst interessanten und gelungenen», and the catalogue as «sorgfältig verfassten und wissenschaftlich dokumentier[t]»⁵⁶. He emphasizes that the paintings under examination had been previously unknown and that their importance for the history of the development of styles of Venetian masters prompted him to speak more about them – fulfilling the ambition that Morandotti had expressed in the exhibition catalogue.

When we consider that the exhibitions at Antiquaria were held during a time of war, the efforts appear even more noteworthy: art exhibitions under Mussolini and the fascist regime were difficult. Transportation at this time was limited, costs constrained, and public collections had been closed since 1940. It is therefore an important question to ask – although with the absence of gallery records difficult to confirm – how Morandotti was able to not only transport the works of art, but also convince lenders of their safety during this tumultuous time. It is possible that he used the Ciolli shipping firm in Florence, which the Loewi firm had used prior the family's escape in 1938, to secure transport, and which was active during the war⁵⁷. One way of confirming this would be to examine the *versi* of the paintings that were included within the exhibitions to see whether they bear labels of Ciolli or any other transport

⁵⁵ For additional biography, see: BOUCHER 1989. An important conference also recently presented information from Pallucchini's archive, the proceedings of which are to be published later in 2019: *Rodolfo Pallucchini: risultati delle ricerche sugli archivi dello storico dell'arte veneta*, 12th to 13th of March 2019, University of Udine.

⁵⁶ PALLUCCHINI 1942, p. 49.

⁵⁷ Although Morandotti and Ciolli are not mentioned in tandem, nor are any of the works of art that Morandotti sold to Hofer or Göring included, the Ciolli firm was also investigated by the OSS as they had been involved in the transfer of works of art purchased in Italy by the Germans and had sent a number of cases to the Commercial Office of the German Embassy in order that exemption of export duty might be obtained. *Italy, Records Concerning the Central Collecting Points (Ardelia Hall Collection): OMGUS Headquarters Records, 1938-1951*, p. 157, accessed via fold3.com December 3, 2014.

firms from the period⁵⁸. Likewise, and as previously discussed, since Rome was an open city, it is plausible that collectors and other dealers saw the city as a location with less risk for bombing and where their objects would be safe⁵⁹. Indeed, some years earlier, it had been observed that Italians were «not easily persuaded to reveal the contents of their collections»⁶⁰.

That Morandotti's ventures with Antiquaria were not only successful during a time of war, but also that he opened the gallery in the first place, is likewise noteworthy. Despite a number of dealers in Rome, Rome as a commercial art-center in the 1930s and 1940s was less developed than other areas of Italy. As discussed by Giuliano Briganti, during this time Italy was a country «molto regredito» and Rome «un provincione»⁶¹. He describes one of the rare examples, the Galleria della Cometa, devoted to modern Italian and expressionist art, founded by Corrado Cagli, a painter, and Libero de Libero, a poet and art critic, which was active between 1935 until the summer of 1938, when it was closed as a result of the *Leggi Razziali*. But he recalls seeing sheep passing along the via Giulia nearby, one of the main strips in Rome, attesting to how provincial the city still was.

The decision to exhibit Venetian and Lombard painting of the 17th and 18th centuries in Rome is also an interesting one. A number of exhibitions of a similar nature were held in Venice as early as 1929, and over subsequent decades until the present day, and an exhibition of *Sei* and *Settecento* painting had been held at Palazzo Pitti, Florence in 1922⁶². However, consulting bibliographies on the period suggests that the exhibitions in Rome held at Antiquaria were not only unique during the 1940s, but were also not replicated in the following decades, whether at a gallery or otherwise⁶³. In 1980, reflecting upon the revision and reprint of his text published in 1959, Michael Levey notes that even when the first edition was published, the subject of eighteenth century painting in Venice was still in its infancy⁶⁴. Comments made by Roberto Longhi, in his review of a 1952 exhibition held in Milan at Palazzo Reale, *Pittori della Realtà in Lombardia*, suggest that Morandotti was ahead of scholarship on the subject of eighteenth century painting⁶⁵. He notes the 1943 exhibition as one of the few to have works of art by Ceruti who saw a surge in popularity scholarly interest in the 1950s, and who he heralds as «one of the greatest artists of Italy»⁶⁶. Additional reflection on the Florentine and Venice exhibitions makes for an interesting comparison: Francis Haskell has commented that from one point of view the Florentine exhibition is one of the most important of the twentieth century⁶⁷. He notes that the exhibition was designed to celebrate a victory recently won by Italy against Austria, and in addition to restoring national pride, demonstrated that Italian art had remained at the very centre of European culture long

⁵⁸ At the time of publication, inquiries are currently pending with a number of institutions, which retain paintings that were included in the exhibition.

⁵⁹ This practice was pervasive throughout the Second World War, and there are numerous examples in and outside Italy of museum, galleries and private collectors sending works of art to the country-side or to areas that were safe from bombing or risk of spoliation. The Palazzo Pitti and Uffizi Gallery, Florence, were just two of countless examples in Italy. Internationally examples include the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, sending objects to the Worcester Museum; private collectors in Paris sending their art-works to Wildenstein for safe-keeping; and the National Gallery, London, sending their collections to the Manod slate mines in North Wales.

⁶⁰ BROCKWELL 1922, p. 128. Brockwell discusses the large 1922 exhibition on Sei and settecento art at the Palazzo Pitti in Florence, to be discussed presently.

⁶¹ «molto regredito», «un provincione», CARAMORE–GULINUCCI 1995, p. 65.

⁶² While the Pitti exhibition is significantly larger than any of the exhibitions put on at Antiquaria, and has a greater number of works of art on loan from public collections (mainly museums and churches), there is less of a presence from the private domain. Moreover, the works of art are presented with little attention paid to cataloguing, essays, or artist biography. *MOSTRA DELLA PITTURA ITALIANA* 1922.

⁶³ Bibliography consulted in: MARTINEAU–ROBISON 1995.

⁶⁴ LEVEY 1980, p. 1.

⁶⁵ LONGHI 1953, p. 35.

⁶⁶ «uno dei grandi artisti d'Italia», LONGHI 1953, p. 36.

⁶⁷ HASKELL 2000, p. 130.

after it had generally been supposed, dying out at the end of the sixteenth century. The organisers of the exhibition pushed for the placement of artists such as Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, Orazio Gentileschi, Annibale Carracci, Guido Reni, and Domenichino Zampieri, who had recently been overlooked, as inseparable from the understanding of the development of such artists as Rembrandt van Rijn, Vermeer, Diego Velazquez, Peter Paul Rubens, Antony Van Dyck and Nicolas Poussin. They further tried to argue that the Italian masters of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries had not only been of utmost importance to their contemporaries in Spain, France, Flanders and Holland, but had anticipated the modern movement of the nineteenth century in France, and a lesser extent, England. One must wonder whether there was any element of choice behind the exhibition to continue this distillation of national pride, especially during a period of conflict, by situating an overlooked area of Italian artistic production within a strictly Italian tradition.

Despite the apparent success of the gallery, in a letter to Loewi dated October 2nd, 1944, in which he reveals his own passion and love for art, his desire to one day start a collection of his own, and perhaps be a client of Loewi's, Morandotti notes that he is not very optimistic about the future of the antique art market, and endeavours to pursue publishing, an old passion of his, instead⁶⁸.

Morandotti as Publisher: «Cosmopolita»⁶⁹

On June 25th, 1944, barely two weeks after the liberation of Rome by American forces on June 4th, 1944, Morandotti published «Cosmopolita. Settimanale di Vita Internazionale». Operations were conducted in Palazzo Lazzaroni, a short distance from Palazzo del Quirinale in Rome, with Morandotti as director of the publication. The editor was Giuliano Briganti, then still a student of art history, focusing on journalism, but who would become one of the foremost art historians of the twentieth century in Italy and an art critic for «La Repubblica», one of the widest circulating newspapers in Italy⁷⁰. Excerpts of Briganti's student thesis, *Il manierismo e Pellegrino Tibaldi*, were ultimately published in «Cosmopolita» in the June 30th, 1945, issue, and in full that same year, which became a point of reference for the rediscovery of mannerism in Italy⁷¹. Brunello Vandano (b. 1918), one of Briganti's peers, who would go on to be an author, worked on the publication in an editorial capacity, preparing the newspaper and contributing to the reports and stories with Briganti.

Each issue was eight pages long, with the exception of Christmas and New Year specials, in 1944 and 1945, which were double the length. Much of the publication was devoted to current affairs, including politics and economics. While Rome had been liberated at the time publication began, other parts of Italy were still under German or Fascist control. «Cosmopolita» continued to follow the events of the war until its end in 1945, and its aftermath through 1946. One such feature, from the second number to the fifth, focused on *Criminals of War*, specifically the life of Göring. While the content was more historical than opinion-oriented, outlining his growth from air captain to his position as second in command of the Third Reich, a cartoon in the August 19th 1944 issue highlights his greed and coveting of objects and art. Another assessment of current events, the September 7th 1944 issue

⁶⁸ Private Archive, United States.

⁶⁹ For a full list of the dates and numbers of «Cosmopolita» consulted in preparation for this text, see *Appendix I*.

⁷⁰ Laura Laureati has indicated that Morandotti and Briganti had particular incentive to establish «Cosmopolita»; this will, however, be treated in her forthcoming biography of Briganti, and she therefore does not wish to share this information prior to publication. Email message to author, November 25, 2014.

⁷¹ CARAMORE–GULINUCCI 1995, p. 54; see Laura Laureati, *Cosmopolita, settimanale di vita internazionale*, in <http://www.giulianobriganti.it/index.php?id=119>, <March, 2019> (first publication April 17, 2013, via <http://www.academia.edu>, p. 3 <October, 2014>).

included a re-print and translation of *Il Manifesto degli Italiani d'America*, written by a group of Italian émigrés to the United States: Giuseppe Antonio Borgese (1882-1952), a writer, journalist and literary critic, Arturo Toscanini (1867-1957), the renowned conductor, Lionello Venturi (1885-1961), a historian and art critic, Giorgio la Piana (1879-1971), a historian, theologian and Medievalist and Randolfo Pacciardi (1899-1991), a politician. The manifesto, a discussion of their disillusionment with the Italian government and condemnation of the Fascist regime, had initially been published in New York's «Life» magazine two months prior.

While «Cosmopolita» presented features on politics and current events, a range of additional fields and interests were addressed, including history, social issues, art, theatre, music, literature and cinema. *Roma sotto inchiesta*, for example, which ran from October 14th, 1944, to the last number, highlighted social concerns, or aspects of the city, whether hospital reform, education of youths, or restaurants, inns and taverns. Another social focus published in the July 12th 1945 issue was *Una Mezza Pagina per La Donna*, which featured women as protagonists of the changing economy, and which Laura Laureati has suggested may have had an impact on the decision for the first vote in Italy in June of 1946⁷². Most issues contained a section on recent cinema, music, or theatre, such as a focus on Soviet music in the June 13th 1945 issue, and cinema culture in New York in the March 1st 1945 issue. Although events in and topics pertaining to Rome and Italy were highlighted, as implied by the title, there was consistent and considerable discussion of international news and interests, whether political or otherwise. For example, the December 16th 1944 issue had a focus on Vienna and the September 30th 1944 issue on religious factors of life in America.

Italian contributors to «Cosmopolita» included such notable figures in political, social, intellectual and cultural history as Arrigo Benedetti (1910-1976), who would go on to found two weekly periodicals in Italy; Enzo Forcella (1921-1999), a historian and journalist for «La Repubblica» and «L'Espresso»; the film directors, screen-writers and critics, Carlo Lizzani (1922-2013) and Michelangelo Antonioni; art historians Roberto Longhi, Rodolfo Pallucchini, and Anna Banti; essayist, editor, and international intellectual, Giorgio Bassani; Italian painter and anti-fascist, Renato Guttuso; and banker, economist, and politician, Guido Carli, who would go on to direct the Banca d'Italia. A number of Italian artists provided illustrations, including: Giorgio de Chirico, Mario Mafai, Amerigo Bartoli, and Mino Maccari. Attesting to the international scope of «Cosmopolita», notable foreign contributors included: Vladimir Pozner, a Russian Jewish émigré to the United States who was a spy for the US during the war; Erich Maria Remarque, a German novelist, perhaps most well-known for *All Quiet on the Western Front*; Andre Malraux, a French novelist, theorist and Minister for Cultural Affairs under President Charles de Gaulle; John Steinbeck, an American author and later Pulitzer prize winner; John Rewald, a German Jewish émigré to the United States, art historian and perhaps foremost expert on Cézanne and the French post-impressionists; Emil Ludwig (1881-1948), a German author, known for his interviews and biographies of political figures of the twentieth century; Igor Stravinsky, Russian composer, conductor and pianist; and William Faulkner, an American author, Nobel laureate, and Pulitzer prize winner. International artists such as Pablo Picasso and Henri Matisse contributed illustrations.

In terms of content and format, «Cosmopolita» can be compared to the leading Italian publications «L'Europeo» or «L'Espresso»; however, the former was founded in 1945, and the latter in 1955, making «Cosmopolita» the earliest publication of its type. Laureati has suggested a comparison can be made to «Primato. Lettere e arti d'Italia», a fortnightly magazine started by Minister Bottai, which was circulated between 1940 and 1943 and sought to educate on Italian cultural aspects. But she notes that the latter did not have the same international

⁷² *Ibidem*.

perspective as «Cosmopolita»⁷³. Although Morandotti served as director of «Cosmopolita», his name is included in only a few volumes from the second year of the publication. The only issue which includes a piece explicitly by his hand is from March 29th, 1945, and was part of a series of interviews of various journal directors, *Come faccio il mio giornale*.

Morandotti explains:

Il giornale deve la sua impronta alla mia insofferenza per ogni forma di costrizione. Quindi, nessuna formula, indipendenza politica e avversione per le collaborazioni fisse, le rubriche fisse, l'impaginazione fissa. Il programma è sintetizzato dal titolo.... Apprezzo il linguaggio semplice, conciso e scarno, il tono equilibrato. C'è chi afferma che il giornale è impaginato male. Se per impaginar bene si intende costringere la materia in schemi simmetrici predisposti per il piacere degli occhi, l'appunto è giustificato. A me pare invece che sia tempo di smetterla con gli estetismi, di cui fu campione Longanesi, se è vero che egli ordinava gli articoli consegnando uno spago che ne fissava la lunghezza - dittatura dello spazio a mortificazione dello spirito e a detrimento del contenuto. Tra impaginare male e impaginare bene, preferisco allora impaginare peggio⁷⁴.

Rejection of compulsion and static form can be observed visually in «Cosmopolita»: there are no set columns and many of the structures of the articles overlap. Morandotti's criticism of Leo(pold) Longanesi (1905-1957), a Milanese journalist, painter, author, publisher and aphorist, is also interesting to note, as Longanesi was a long-term supporter of the Fascist regime and later critic of the Democratic government that was installed in Italy after the war. Laureati has suggested that Morandotti may also be the voice behind a number of epithets on the first page of several issues signed il «Cosmopolita»⁷⁵. These brief editorials consider themes such as 'Puritanism' vs. 'Machiavellian,' in the September 23rd, 1944 issue, alluding to the recent Battle of Rimini, and revolution in the December 2nd 1944 issue, alluding to the American liberation of Rome, and subsequent interim direction of Italy. They all show a political reformist attitude in the assessment of recent governmental actions⁷⁶. The editorials seem to appeal to or speak on behalf of the average Italian citizen, as for example in *Richiesta al Governo*, in the December 19th 1944 issue, which highlights the economic struggles of the population post war.

«Cosmopolita» ceased publication with its eighty-first number in March, 1946. Laureati has suggested that the times had changed and there was no longer reason to publish it, that Rome had already experienced a profound change in the two years since publication and that the fact that the various contributors followed different paths may have played a role⁷⁷. Nevertheless, although the publication may have been short lived, we once more have a remarkable enterprise which Morandotti directed, and which was unique during its lifetime. Based on the multitude of contributors, both inside and outside Italy, the broad range of topics included, and the title itself, we can surmise that this weekly publication aimed to have an international readership and reception, if not only give a global perspective to the Italian reader. One of the important contributions to «Cosmopolita», which may suggest that an international acknowledgment was indeed achieved, concerned the visit of a commission of ten British members of parliament to the recently liberated Buchenwald concentration camp

⁷³ Laura Laureati, *Cosmopolita, settimanale di vita internazionale*, in <http://www.giulianobriganti.it/index.php?id=119>, < March, 2019> (first publication April 17th, 2013, via <http://www.academia.edu>, p. 1 <October, 2014>).

⁷⁴ As quoted in RUOZZI 1994, p. 1234.

⁷⁵ See footnote 73.

⁷⁶ «The Rimini Corridor» and «The Capture of Rimini», in KAY 1967, pp. 211-227.

⁷⁷ Laureati, Email message to author, November 25th, 2014.

on April 11th, 1945. A report of this visit, which was signed by the ten from the commission, was published exclusively in «Cosmopolita» on June 7th, 1945.

After the War

Immediately after the war, Morandotti returned the Antiquaria firm, both in Rome and Venice, to Adolph Loewi, as a «well-running firm». As Loewi Robertson attests, «Sandro not only saved, but increased my father's business!»⁷⁸. Morandotti eventually purchased Antiquaria from Loewi in the 1950s, and the pair continued to work together, although in their respective locations – Rome and Los Angeles – selling objects to a varied international clientele including dealers, private collections and museums⁷⁹. Morandotti never came to America, nor did he meet with Loewi again. According to Loewi-Robertson, Morandotti was never granted a visa, a result of his visits to Berlin, and meetings with Göring and Hofer regarding the Ventura exchange. Morandotti organized one final exhibition at Galleria Antiquaria in 1950, *I bamboccianti, pittori della vita popolare nel Seicento*, along with Giuliano Briganti, with whom he would remain lifelong friends, and whom he would visit on a daily basis towards the end of his life⁸⁰. Morandotti continued selling works of art from Palazzo Massimo, and pursued writing, publishing a book of aphorisms, as well as the piano, until his death from throat cancer in Zurich in 1979. In 1998, in the November 11th and 12th issues of «Corriere della Sera», an article was published discussing Italian dealers and antiquarians who profited from art works spoliated from Jewish collections; Morandotti was included on this list. In the December 7th issue, the son of Ugo Volli, a Jewish member of the resistance in Rome, published an editorial in response to the earlier article, and with a sense of disbelief:

...per quanto riguarda Alessandro Morandotti manifesto la mia incredulità: mio padre, ebreo, resistente, clandestino, nella tragica primavera del 1944 ha trovato rifugio per mesi nella galleria di Palazzo Massimo alle Colonne, scelto perché dotato di sette diverse uscite oltre a quella principale, sì da poter consentire, a fronte di purtroppo numerose irruzioni del SS, e di poter tentare, come per fortuna è stato, di trovare salvezza [...]. Per la riconoscenza che mio padre ha manifestato per tutta la sua vita nei confronti dei Morandotti, non posso tacere questa testimonianza⁸¹.

In addition to Volli, Morandotti was harboring a number of Jews in Palazzo Massimo⁸². While the act was dangerous in and of itself, the palazzo's physical location added considerable risk: it was directly across the street from the Gestapo headquarters in Rome⁸³. According to Loewi Robertson, Morandotti was a private man, very secretive about his

⁷⁸ Loewi-Robertson described further: «We had a friend in the advance communications detachment of the US Army, who was one of the first to enter Rome, he made a bee-line to the Palazzo Massimo that Sandro had leased, and we heard that everything was fine and father ended up with two going galleries, one in Venice in the summer months and the seat in Rome». Email message to author, August 20th, 2014.

⁷⁹ Notable examples of post-war sales and clientele, include: The Los Angeles County Museum of Art; The Acquavella Galleries, New York; Prince Brancaccio, Rome; The Detroit Institute of Arts; Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York (National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC). Each of these can be found through their respective Museum Collection's websites.

⁸⁰ BRIGANTI–MORANDOTTI 1950; Laura Laureati, Email message to author, November 18th, 2014.

⁸¹ VOLLI 1998.

⁸² Loewi Robertson, Email message to author, August 13th, 2014.

⁸³ The Gestapo headquarters was located in the Villa Tasso on Via Tasso. For a reconstruction of the atrocities committed there and liberation of prisoners following the June liberation of Rome, see: *GESTAPO IN ROME 1944*.

personal life, but when he was asked about this, he responded: «well, the Palazzo had seven exits! [The Germans] couldn't cover them all!»⁸⁴.

Conclusion

In 1995, a draft of the Unidroit Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects, which aimed to halt the trade of artworks with problematic origins, highlighted the opposition of many art dealers to this significant international agreement. First published by «The Art Newspaper» (no. 51, September 1995), alongside a series of related articles, an international outcry of protest from the commercial art world argued that UNIDROIT would inhibit the ability of US museums to acquire and/or exhibit an array of objects, would virtually freeze the public market, and would encourage illicit black market transactions⁸⁵. In discussing the response, Elizabeth Simpson commented: «The age-old battle continues over the illegal transfer of cultural property, in times of war and peace, between those from whom property has been stolen and those who would profit from its theft»⁸⁶. Morandotti's sales to Hofer and Göring, and his involvement in the Ventura exchange, fall precariously between these lines: undeniably, Morandotti profited from sales to Hofer and Göring, and ostensibly received commission or compensation for his negotiation on behalf of Ventura, which directly involved the exchange of objects from spoliated Jewish collections. Whether or not Morandotti knew of the origins of these objects, investigations by the ALIU were justified, and his involvement of sales after Minister Bottai's declaration banning the export of Italian cultural heritage were illegal. However, Morandotti's sales to Hofer and Göring were through Antiquaria, a Jewish firm, and were ultimately returned to Adolph Loewi. Moreover, Morandotti's sales to the Germans were minimal, and none of the paintings which he sold present an obvious restitution claim or problem today; they are not registered as losses on public databases or inventories of looted art; and upon examination of published literature and exhibition history for each, they do not appear to have been from spoliated collections, or acquired by forced sale or under duress from known victims of spoliation. Further, as we have seen, Morandotti's activities during the war, and his interactions with the Germans, count for a small part of his activities: examination of the exhibitions at Antiquaria suggest a booming business and growth from his move to Rome in 1940, as well as one that was unique in Rome during the period. «Cosmopolita» finally presents itself as a successful, competent weekly, with both international contribution and readership, that was unique for the time period and its location, and which condemned and criticized the Nazi and fascist regimes, and their supporters.

In the field of Nazi era restitution and provenance research, when coming across a 'Red flag name' a researcher's natural response can be a slight panic. While hundreds of dealers, auction houses, and others involved in the art trade were investigated, whether by the OSS, ALIU, or otherwise, as seen in the case of Morandotti, it does not necessarily mean that all these individuals were guilty in looting, or in trafficking spoliated art. New information consistently comes to light and it may very well be that years from now new archives or discoveries will be made that demonstrate that Morandotti was knowingly complicit in the trafficking of stolen or looted property, or had a hand in the spoliation of property himself. With the information available today, however, evidence points to the contrary, and thus condemnations would be extreme and excessive.

⁸⁴ Loewi Robertson, Email message to author, August 13th, 2014.

⁸⁵ PETROPOLOUS 2000, p. 109, has further commented that art dealers have a long history of self-interested behaviour, although collaboration with Nazi leaders is one of the more extreme examples in modern history.

⁸⁶ *THE SPOILS OF WAR* 1997.

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ABSTRACT

The present paper investigates the activities of antiquarian, dealer and journalist Alessandro (Sandro) Morandotti (1909-1979), between the period 1940-1944. Characterised by the Art Looting Investigation Unit as an individual of interest with regard to the spoliation of cultural property during the Second World War, or 'Red Flag Name', through additional archival, biographical and historical research, the paper shares a historical summary of his activities that go beyond collaboration with Nazi officials.

Questo contributo si concentra sulle attività del mercante, antiquario e giornalista Alessandro, (Sandro) Morandotti (1909-1979) negli anni 1940-1944. I documenti dell'Art Looting Investigation Unit lo segnalano come personaggio avente ruolo di rilievo nelle deprezzazioni di opere d'arte durante la seconda guerra mondiale. Il lavoro si propone di fornire un inquadramento storico del suo operato che vada oltre la collaborazione con le autorità nazifasciste, anche grazie all'ausilio di ulteriori ricerche biografiche, storiche e d'archivio.