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Lomazzo and France. Hilaire Pader's Translation: Theoretical and artistic issues

par Stéphanie Trouvé

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Résumé : The *Traicté de la proportion naturelle et artificielle des choses* par Jean-Pol Lomazzo (1649), written by Hilaire Pader, is one of the earliest pieces of writing on art published in seventeenth century France. It is the first of the seven books that composed Lomazzo's *Trattato della pittura* (1584). It concerns proportion. Pader hoped to translate the other six books of Lomazzo's treatise if the first was successful. Although the translation of the *Trattato* was never completed, Pader nevertheless followed up the ideas it contained in other works. In 1658, he published his *Treatise on Painting* in two parts: the *Peinture parlante* and the *Songe énigmatique sur la peinture universelle*. The aim of this article is to discuss the social and artistic stakes of Lomazzo's translation.

In 1649, Hilaire Pader (1617-1667), an artist from Toulouse, a major city in the South West of France, published his *Treatise of Natural and Artificial Proportion of Things* by Giovan Paolo Lomazzo (*Traicté de la proportion naturelle et artificielle des choses* par Jean-Pol Lomazzo),¹ one of the earliest pieces of writing on art printed in the seventeenth century France. It is the translation of the first of the seven books that composed the *Trattato della pittura* (first edition 1584) written by the Milanese painter, Lomazzo, on the subject of proportion.² Like Lomazzo, Pader was a painter, not a professional writer. Having been trained in the studio of the Municipal painter Jean Chalette (1581-1644), Pader went to Rome in 1635, where he worked in the workshop of the Sienese painter Niccolò Tornioli (1598-1652/1653), the official painter of Maurice of Savoy (1593-1657) from 1637 on. The Roman sojourn was decisive for Pader and transformed both his approach to his work and the way he

* I would like to thank Virginia Ricard and Laurel Boyle for their help with the translation of this article.

¹ Hilaire Pader, *Traicté de la proportion naturelle et artificielle des choses* par Jean-Pol Lomazzo, peintre milanois. Ouvrage nécessaire aux Peintres, Sculpteurs, Graveurs et à tous ceux qui prétendent à la perfection du dessin, traduit d'Italien en Français par Hilaire Pader Tolosain, peintre de l'Altesse du serenissime Prince Maurice de Savoye, Toulouse, Arnaud Colomiez, 1649.

² Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, *Trattato dell'Arte de la Pittura, diviso in sette libri, Ne' quali si contiene tutta la Theorica, & la prattica d'essa pittura*. Milan, 1584. According to R. Klein (Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, *Idea del tempio della pittura*, Milan, 1590, ed. Robert Klein, Florence, 1974, II, 468). There are four printed versions of the first edition. Pader translated the 1585 version.

thought about painting. It was during his five-year stay in the Eternal City that he discovered the writings of Lomazzo. Just as Lomazzo's *Trattato* was dedicated to Charles Emmanuel, Duke of Savoy, Pader's translation was dedicated to his son, Maurice of Savoy. However, Pader was not the first to translate Lomazzo: at the very end of the sixteenth century, an Oxford scholar, Richard Haydocke had already translated the first five books of the *Treatise* into English.³ Although Pader had hoped to translate the six following books of Lomazzo's *Treatise*, he stopped after the first, but developed the ideas it contained in his other works. He published a *Treatise on Painting* in two parts: the first in 1653, *La Peinture parlante*⁴ and the second in 1658, *Le Songe énigmatique sur la peinture universelle*.⁵ The first is a didactic poem in which he develops the idea of proportion as the "first lesson" in painting. Pader was also largely inspired by the theory of passions (*moti* theory) used by Lomazzo. The second work used another of Lomazzo's books, the *Idea del Tempio della pittura* (1590). The diffusion of Lomazzo's ideas was, then, the result of an encounter between two men, the French artist Pader and his first patron Maurice of Savoy. It also raises a number of questions as to artistic and social issues. By what means did Pader make Lomazzo's theory accessible and how did he disseminate Lomazzo's ideas? Did knowledge of the rules developed by Lomazzo guarantee the quality of a painting? Finally, how was Lomazzo's theory used by the artist to invent himself as a scholar-painter?

Translation and Assimilation of the Ideas of Lomazzo

Pader mastered the Italian language well enough to translate the technical terms and specific vocabulary of art. The *Book of Proportions* is a largely faithful translation of the thirty two chapters of Lomazzo's book which deal, in an encyclopedic manner, with the proportions of the human body, of women, of children, of horses and of architecture. Each of Lomazzo's precepts is based on the module of length of face. Depending on the canons used, there are figures whose body height is equivalent to that of six, seven, eight, nine or ten heads, according to principles established by Leonardo da Vinci and Albrecht Dürer. For Lomazzo, a human body equivalent to ten faces in height approached perfection.

³ *Tracte Containing the Artes of Curious Paintinge Carvinge & Buildinge, Written First in Italian by Jo-Paul Lomatius painter of Milan and Englished by R[ichard] H[aydocke] Student in Physik*, Oxford, Joseph Barnes, 1598.

⁴ Hilaire Pader, *La Peinture parlante*, Toulouse, Arnaud Colomiez, 1653; reedited 1657; reprinted Geneva, Minkoff, 1973, as *La Peinture parlante, suivi du Songe énigmatique sur la peinture universelle, suivi du Contrat du Déluge*.

⁵ Hilaire Pader, *Le Songe énigmatique sur la peinture universelle*, Toulouse, Arnaud Colomiez, 1658; reprinted Geneva, Minkoff, 1973.

However, Pader attempted to make Lomazzo's theory more accessible by adding comments at the end of some chapters. He also simplified passages and made minor corrections in measurements.⁶ Pader naively said that these mistakes had been made by the printer since Lomazzo was blind and could not read the proofs:

Au demeurant, si dans la composition de ces mêmes figures, j'ai pris la liberté de corriger les faux préceptes qu'on a fait glisser dans l'impression de mon auteur, touchant les diverses proportions des corps ; ce n'est pas que j'ai oublié le respect que je dois à l'autorité d'un si grand homme ; ou que je veuille donner de nouvelles lumières à cet aveugle Soleil. Mais c'est parce que j'ai cru avec raison que les endroits où j'ai changé quelque chose, étaient contraires aux sentiments du Lomasse, qui n'avait pu corriger ces défauts à cause de celui de sa vue.⁷

Finally, for didactic reasons, and to illustrate the different canons, he added engravings after Dürer, which allowed the reader to better understand Lomazzo's precepts⁸. The illustrations also show the practical application of theory and demonstrate that it was not merely a constraint.

Pader did not continue the literal translation of the *Treatise*, but in his other writings, he used the theory of Lomazzo to write a discourse on art based on his own experience and culture. In the *Peinture parlante*, whose title refers to the aphorism of Simonides as reported in Plutarch that painting is silent poetry and poetry talking painting, Pader, who was also a poet, tries to explain in verse, how the painter, like the poet, can successfully imitate human nature in action. Pader imagines a discussion with his son and student to whom he gives advice on how to reach perfection in painting. He structures his poem in two lessons. The first is devoted to the study of proportion, the second to the *moti* which are the "movement of the body and soul or figurative expression," considered by Lomazzo as "the most difficult to attain in all art, and also the most important and necessary to know" (*Trattato*, p. 97-98). Pader describes the physiological characteristics of many emotions (melancholy, obstinate anger, cruelty, avarice, invincibility, strength, constancy, justice, devotion...), illustrating each of them with an exemple taken from sacred history".⁹

In the *Songe énigmatique sur la peinture universelle* (*An Enigmatic Dream about Universal Painting*), Pader tells of a dream that turns into an initiatory journey in the palace of painting surrounded by a mystical garden. In the garden, there is a tree at every corner symbolising the artist most accomplished in each of the six parts of painting. This recalls

⁶ Hilaire Pader, *Traicté de la proportion...*, 1649, chapter VIII: *De la Proportion extravagante de dix Testes*, 26.

⁷ Hilaire Pader, *Traicté de la proportion...*, 1649, *Discours sur le sujet de cette traduction*, unpagé.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ Jean Julia Chai, *Giovan Paolo Lomazzo: Idea of the Temple of Painting*, Pennsylvania State U.P., 2013, 39.

Lomazzo's *Idea del tempio della pittura*, itself inspired by the *Idea del theatro* (Florence, 1550) by Giulio Camillo, a humanist working first in Venice and later in France at the court of King Francis the First in the 1530s.¹⁰ The association of an idea and a place in the creation of a pictorial narrative had, of course, already been employed by orators in antiquity as a mnemonic device.¹¹ In his dream, Pader develops his argument as he leads us through each floor of the building, going from room to room, placing each idea in a part of the painting. The narrator enters the palace accompanied by Saturn. He climbs a staircase that is tortuous and dark on the way up, but less obscure on the way down: the staircase is a metaphor for the ascent to knowledge. The narrator is then led into galleries. In the first, young boys are busy preparing colors. Another staircase leads to the next stage in a gallery bathed in light. Pader also renews the governors of the Temple of the Painting cherished by Lomazzo, and includes contemporary painters like Guido Reni or Nicolas Poussin, the “French Apelle,” as well as Renaissance masters.

If Pader’s original purpose was to disseminate the ideas of Lomazzo through his writings, he must also have understood that theory was a way of promoting painting as a liberal art as well as a means of self-promotion.

Artistic Issues: Rules to Follow

At the beginning of the *Treaty of Proportions* Pader explains the reasons that led him to translate Lomazzo.¹² He says that the *Trattato* was the only book to use precepts on proportion, movement, color, light, and perspective in order to teach painting. It was the way forward that would bring the student “wisely to the Temple of Truth” and to “excellence in Painting.”¹³ It is the very complete nature of the *Trattato*, from the point of view of both practice and theory, that appealed to Pader because it allowed the young apprentice to perfect himself in all aspects of painting.¹⁴ The question of the importance of mastering proportions had also been discussed in Paris in 1634 because it corresponded to a need to represent forms invented by the intellect.¹⁵

¹⁰ On the symbolic use of the temple of painting, see: Sylvie Deswarte-Rosa, “*Idea et le Temple de la Peinture. I. Michelangelo Buonarroti et Francesco de Hollanda*,” *Revue de l’Art*, 92, 1991-1, 20-41; and “*Idea et le Temple de la Peinture. II. De Francesco de Hollanda à Federico Zuccaro*,” *Revue de l’Art*, 94, 1991-3, 45- 65.

¹¹ On the use of this method, see: Frances Amelia Yates, *L’art de la mémoire*, Paris, Éditions Gallimard, 1975 (English edition, 1966).

¹² Hilaire Pader, *Traicté de la proportion...*, 1649, *Discours sur le sujet de cette traduction*, unpagé.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ Hilaire Pader, *Traicté de la proportion...*, 1649, *Discours sur le sujet de cette traduction*, unpagé.

¹⁵ Jacques Thuillier, “Doctrines et querelles artistiques en France au XVII^e siècle : quelques textes oubliés ou inédits,” *Archives de l’art français*, Paris, F. de Nobele, 1968, XXXIII, 135.

At the time as Pader was writing, the status of painters in France, and especially in Toulouse, was that of craftsmen and their craft was regulated by strict rules. Thus, by introducing new theoretical precepts, Pader offered painters an opportunity to escape a routine based on image reproduction and to distance themselves from their practice.¹⁶ The desire to bring a change to methods so markedly different from the practices of traditional workshops was perceptible as of 1641 when, returning from Rome, Pader established at Toulouse an Academy of drawing from life with the painter Jean André and the sculptor Guillaume Fontan.¹⁷

There were no artistic treatises in French at the time even though Abraham Bosse had translated some artistic terms from the Italian, such as “*vaghezza*” translated to mean “union” in the *Sentiments sur la distinction des diverses manières de peinture (...)*.¹⁸ It was only in 1651 that Pierre Daret translated of the *Life* of Raphael according to Vasari,¹⁹ a task that Pader had also undertaken (he translated seven lives of Vasari that remained unpublished and are lost today). The same year, Roland Fréart de Chambray published a translation of the *Treatise on Painting* by Leonardo da Vinci. These works were written in the particular context of the creation of the French Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1648, where they contributed to developing a doctrine.²⁰ But gradually the French Academy changed its teaching so that it was more focused on direct observation of masterpieces, unlike Italian art theory, which was based on concepts.²¹

In addition to practical rules, Pader defended the idea of the liberal conception of painting, saying that ideas should come “before the painter took pencil in hand.”²² This ability to compose a *concetto* was reserved for the “great minds among scholars” (“*beaux esprits des hommes seulement litterez*”). The next phase, being the execution of the idea by the hand was deemed exclusively reserved for painters. In Pader's own practice, this led him to write projects for two paintings for the decoration of the chapel of the Black Penitents of Toulouse.

¹⁶ I develop this question in my book *Peinture et discours. La construction de l'école de Toulouse XVII^e-XVIII^e siècles* which will be published in October 2016 (Presses Universitaires de Rennes).

¹⁷ I have published the notarial deed marking the creation of this school (exhibition cat. *Les Collectionneurs toulousains*, Toulouse, Musée Paul Dupuy, 2001) as well as an online critical analysis of the project: <http://btholosana.univ-tlse2.fr/inside#!ouvrage/27/497>

¹⁸ Marianne Le Blanc, *D'acide et d'encre. Abraham Bosse (1604 ?- 1676) et son siècle en perspectives*, Paris, CNRS Éditions, 2004, 156.

¹⁹ *Abrégé de la vie de Raphael Sansio d'Urbain, très-excellent peintre et architecte, où il est traité de ses œuvres, des estampes qui en ont été gravées, tant par Marc Antoine Bolognais, qu'autres excellents graveurs, traduit d'italien en françois par Pierre Daret*, Paris, 1651.

²⁰ See Marianne Le Blanc, “Abraham Bosse et Léonard de Vinci. Les débats sur les fondements de la peinture dans les premiers temps de l'Académie”, *Revue d'esthétique*, 31/32, 1997, 105.

²¹ Jacqueline Lichtenstein, “De l'idée de la peinture à l'analyse du tableau : une mutation essentielle de la théorie de l'art”, *Revue d'esthétique*, 31/32, 1997, 17-35.

²² Hilaire Pader, *La Peinture parlante, Explication des mots et termes...*, 1653, unpagéd.

The first picture represented the *Flood* (now lost), while the other represents the *Triumph of Joseph* (Toulouse, St. Stephen's Cathedral). Before painting this work of art, Pader formulated a *conchetto*. He meant to explain the outline of the composition, the arrangement of figures, the facial expressions to be represented, and the dominant colors.²³ Following Lomazzo's theory, Pader wanted to recount the story faithfully respecting the disposition of the figures. In the *Triumph of Joseph*, a frieze was required for the representation of triumph and it had to be as readable as possible. The painter also had to take into account the anatomy, age, dress appropriate to the wealth and rank of Joseph, and to include the various participants in the scene (musicians, common people, and citizens) with their expressions of triumph, joy, good cheer, and majesty.

The theoretical and artistic issues of translating and disseminating Lomazzo was also a way for Pader to affirm his status as scholar-painter in a quest for recognition from his peers at the Royal Academy.

Social Issues

This new interest in theory contributed to a rise in the social status of the artist. Pader was not merely attempting to train painters. He also wanted to provide the keys to understanding his own paintings, and he continued to paint as he developed his theory of painting. Theory, then, was a way to justify the quality of his paintings and place himself as a connoisseur. Thus, in a letter written to the Brotherhood of Black Penitents of Toulouse who had criticized one of his paintings representing the *Flood* [le 'Déluge'], he tried to explain that for a work of art the subject was not the only important thing. For example, to justify his use of dark colors in the painting he turned to the theory of propriety, claiming that colors should be appropriate to the subject. In the case of the *Flood*, which took place during the night, a black tone was the most suitable. Using Lomazzo's theory of proportion, he also wanted to convince spectators to observe the figures in the middle ground and background, rather than simply seeing the foreground.²⁴ Unlike other painters, Pader distinguished himself as a specialist in painting because he was well-acquainted with Lomazzo's theory.

He was thus one of the first artists to be admitted to the Royal Academy of Painting and Sculpture in 1659 with the presentation of a painting, *The General Peace under the Reign of Augustus* (which has disappeared), as well as his written works. The title of Academician

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ Hilaire Pader, *Plan ou Dessein idéal pour le tableau du Deluge qui doit être représenté dans la Chapelle de Messieurs les Penitens Noirs de Tolose*, undated; reprinted Geneva, Minkoff 1973, 9.

gave him the status of a true artist (“vrai artiste”) but he did not make a career in Paris. It was in Toulouse that he needed to display his knowledge of Lomazzo’s theory and to claim his status as scholar-painter. Pader aspired to the title of Municipal painter, a prestigious position in a provincial town that offered privileges, such as a salary, housing, and a workshop. In 1661, he was hired by the city to do the portraits of its representatives thanks to his sojourn in Italy and his reception at the Academy.²⁵

To conclude, what is important is to show how Lomazzo’s texts were transformed, what they became, and how they were reappropriated. Thus to translate Lomazzo was not only to find equivalents for Italian words in French, but to convey a new, liberal, conception of painting to French readers. By translating the first book of the *Trattato* and using passages from other books like the *Trattato* or the *Idea del Tempio della pittura* to build his own work, Pader contributed to the changing status of the painter that began in the middle of the seventeenth century in France. Pader’s books initially aimed to disseminate Lomazzo’s theory in France, but subsequently served his own artistic ambitions. This must be seen in the specific context of the beginnings of the French Royal Academy and the Toulousain circle. Because his status as an artist could not be established by his painting alone, Pader also used books and words.

²⁵ Toulouse, Archives Municipales, BB 37, fol. 173-174, “Délibération du 17 janvier 1661”; exhibition catalogue. Toulouse, 1953, 23. See Stéphanie Trouvé, “La leçon d’Hilaire Pader sur le portrait selon Lomazzo : l’introduction des albums des Portraits et armes des Présidents et Conseillers au Parlement de Toulouse (1664)”, *Studiolo*, 7, 2009, 139-160.