

One Year of Research

Part II

FERLI

Antoine Feix - Nicola Sarli

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PREFACE

We are pleased to publish the second part of this first year of research. As with the first selection, the aim is to explore our field of specialization, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, through different schools, media, and styles. Satisfied with this first year of Ferli Fine Art, we look ahead to the coming year and warmly thank all those who have followed and supported us along the way, collectors and colleagues alike.

Antoine Feix & Nicola Sarli

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Ferli Fine Art was founded in 2022 following the meeting of Antoine Feix and Nicola Sarli at the Sorbonne, during their Master's program in Art Expertise and the Art Market. This specialized training, combining academic rigor with immersion in market realities, marked the beginning of an intellectual partnership and a shared vision of the art world. Both with a background in art history, they share a high standard in the selection of artworks and a meticulous approach to collection management. Their paths, both parallel and complementary, form the DNA of Ferli.

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Cover: Georg Emil Libert (1820 - 1908), *View from the Blue Grotto, Capri*, pastel on paper, H. 24 cm; W. 33 cm, signed lower right.

Next page: Olof Thunman (1879 - 1944),
Motif de Bilingen, oil on canvas, H. 34,5; W. 46 cm



I. OSKAR BERGMAN (1879-1963)

Winter view of Henriksdal

1929

Watercolor, H. 35 cm (13 ¾ in); W. 50 cm (19 ¾ in)

signed lower right « OSKAR BERGMAN 1929 »

This watercolor depicts a quiet Swedish village immersed in winter. Snow covers the gently rolling hills and wooden houses, while bare trees punctuate the landscape under a pale, reddish northern sky. The low winter sun barely illuminates the scene, reinforcing the sense of stillness and seasonal suspension. Human presence is suggested only indirectly, through winding paths and traces of daily life, which remain subordinated to the vast rhythm of nature. As in much of Bergman's work, architecture and human activity are absorbed into the natural order, governed by the cycle of seasons and light rather than by narrative or anecdote.

Born in Stockholm in 1879 into a modest family, Bergman was largely self-taught and formed his eye through repeated visits to the Nationalmuseum. After studies at Stockholm's Technical School, he travelled widely in Europe, where he discovered German Romantic painting – above all Caspar David Friedrich – and later the enduring impact of Arnold Böcklin. Back in Sweden, the banker and patron Ernest Thiel noticed his work, acquired a drawing, and supported him, eventually introducing him to the Symbolist artist Armand Point, who invited Bergman to join him in Italy for further instruction. Returning to Sweden, Bergman pursued an independent path, remaining largely untouched by modernist fashions and devoting his practice to a sustained exploration of Swedish landscape in watercolor. His works are represented in the collections of the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm, and the Musée d'Orsay.



II. ARTHUR CRACO (1869-1955)

Bust of a young woman

Early twentieth century

Glazed stoneware, H. 30 cm (11 $\frac{3}{4}$ in)

signed on the back « AT CRACO »

A glazed stoneware bust depicting a young woman, modelled with an emphasis on overall mass rather than descriptive precision. Anatomical features are softly suggested, remaining deliberately imprecise, while transitions between planes are blurred, creating an atmosphere of quiet ambiguity. The irregular glaze, combining bluish and earthy tones, further dissolves contours and unifies surface and volume, enhancing the work's restrained sense of mystery. The sculpture belongs to Arthur Craco's experimental ceramic production, though it cannot be dated with precision.

Arthur Craco (Brussels, 1869 – Etterbeek, 1955) was a Belgian sculptor and ceramist trained at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Brussels. After an early career in drawing and traditional sculpture, he turned in the mid-1890s toward glazed stoneware, developing an original practice that combined sculptural modelling with experimental glazing. He collaborated with the stoneware workshops of Andenne, where several of his monumental public fountains are still preserved, and produced both decorative objects and autonomous sculptural works. His works are held in Belgian public collections, notably at the Musée de la Céramique d'Andenne and the Musée d'Ixelles, as well as in various private collections.



III. GEORG EMIL LIBERT (1820-1908)

View from the Blue Grotto, Capri

c. 1846

Pastel on paper, H. 24 cm (9 ½ in); W. 33 cm (13 in)

signed lower right « GEORG EMIL LIBERT »

After its rediscovery in 1826, the Blue Grotto of Capri quickly became an essential destination for Northern European travellers. From the second decade of the nineteenth century onward, Romantic voyagers increasingly sought not only ancient ruins and historic cities, but also the wonders of nature, in accordance with their aspiration toward the sublime. The Blue Grotto answered this desire perfectly. Its narrow and often treacherous entrance, accessible only with the help of experienced sailors, opened onto a subterranean world long considered mysterious and unsettling. Once inside, a phenomenon of light refraction transformed the vast rocky vault into an intense blue, creating the illusion of a hidden and boundless realm.

The grotto's visual fortune began with the German painter August Kopisch, whose exploration of the cave helped bring it to the attention of artists and travellers from across Europe. Among those drawn to the site was the Danish landscape painter Georg Emil Libert. Trained at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, Libert travelled extensively through Germany, Italy, and Switzerland, developing a refined pictorial language marked by a subtle palette and a keen sensitivity to light and atmosphere. His Italian views—particularly of Rome, Naples, and Capri—rank among his most admired works and exemplify a Romantic conception of landscape as an emotional and aesthetic experience. His works are preserved today in major public collections, including the Statens Museum for Kunst in Copenhagen and the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C.

This pastel, datable to the mid-nineteenth century, belongs to Libert's repeated engagement with the subject of the Blue Grotto. Compared to his painted versions, the work on paper heightens the site's visionary and sublime dimension. The immense rocky vault, rendered in warm, dark tones, rises like a natural cathedral above the calm, reflective sea, while the small boat appears almost fragile beneath it. Human presence is reduced to a minimal sign, emphasizing the disproportion between mankind and nature, and between the transience of life and the monumentality of geological time. Rather than a picturesque view, the composition conveys the vertigo of a Romantic sublime experience, where awe and fear coexist before the overwhelming power of nature.



IV. OLOF THUNMAN (1879-1944)

Motif de Billingen

1915

Oil on canvas, H. 34,5 cm (13 ½ in); W. 46 cm (18 ⅞ in)

signed lower left « OLOF THUNMAN »

M*otif de Billingen* presents a late-winter Swedish landscape in transition. Two bare tree trunks close the composition like a proscenium, while patches of snow retreat across the ground, exposing bands of earth and waterlogged thaw. The low light casts elongated shadows that structure the foreground and guide the eye toward the distant ridge, giving the scene both stillness and a restrained sense of movement.

The work is characteristic of Olof Thunman's solitary, intensely personal approach to landscape. A remarkable draftsman, Thunman's drawings often rely on a free pencil arabesque: a seemingly spontaneous weave of lines that, at the proper distance, resolves into a coherent image. In painting, that graphic intelligence is transposed into colour. Instead of linear modelling, the surface is built from small, discrete strokes of relatively pure pigment, creating a vibration that recalls the Neo-Impressionist / pointillist method less as a strict system than as a practical way to secure both *en plein air* vitality and a controlled, reasoned construction.

Olof Thunman (1879–1944) was a Swedish artist and writer whose activity encompassed painting, drawing, and poetry. He studied at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Stockholm between 1902 and 1906, where he distinguished himself particularly in landscape studies and drawing. From an early stage, the Swedish countryside became the central subject of his visual work, approached with a highly personal and introspective sensibility.

Alongside his visual practice, Thunman gained increasing recognition as a poet and lyricist within Swedish cultural life. Although literary activity gradually occupied a more prominent place in his career, he continued to paint over the following decades. His pictorial work remains a distinctive contribution to early twentieth-century Swedish landscape art, valued for its lyrical restraint, formal clarity, and sustained engagement with nature.



V. PIERRE-ADRIEN DALPAYRAT (1844-1910)

Dante Alighieri

c. 1900

Stoneware , H. 18 cm (7 ⅛ in)

signed on the back « DALPAYRAT »

The present stoneware mask depicts the well-known and iconic face of Dante Alighieri, rendered through the essential features that have defined his physiognomy for centuries. The aquiline nose, the sharply delineated profile, the compressed mouth, and the concentrated gaze are all faithfully derived from a traditional and widely disseminated model. This model ultimately refers to the so-called funerary mask of Dante, today preserved at the Uffizi, long believed to be a cast taken from the poet's face after his death in 1321. Although modern scholarship has demonstrated that the mask is not medieval in origin and should instead be dated to a later period, it nonetheless became, from the eighteenth and especially the nineteenth century onward, one of the most authoritative visual sources for Dante's likeness. Dalpayrat does not seek to reinterpret or reinvent the poet's image; rather, he consciously adheres to this established iconographic type, already perceived by nineteenth-century culture as canonical. The mask thus presents Dante not as an individualized portrait, but as a historically codified image, immediately recognizable and anchored in a long tradition of representation.

From the Romantic period onward, Dante emerged as a central cultural figure, admired not only as the author of the *Divine Comedy* but also as a symbol of moral authority, poetic genius, and national identity. In Italy, especially during the *Risorgimento*, he was elevated to the status of founding father of the language and spiritual ancestor of the nation. This renewed attention was accompanied by an intense visual production: monuments were erected, commemorations organized, and images multiplied, seeking to give a face to a poet who embodied both historical depth and modern relevance.



FIG.1 Pierre-Adrien Dalpayrat,
Mask of Dante Alighieri, glazed
stoneware, H. 18 cm, Germany,
Private collection

Within this climate, the desire for an “authentic” likeness became particularly strong. The funerary mask despite its uncertain origins offered a powerful response to this need. It promised proximity to the poet, a direct physical trace that could bridge the distance between past and present. Even as doubts about its authenticity emerged, the mask retained its symbolic potency, precisely because it condensed into a single object the nineteenth century's fascination with origins, relics, and genius.

A glazed version of this Dante mask is known and reproduced in the monograph *Adrien Dalpayrat (1844–1910): Französische Jugendstil-Keramik. Kunst aus dem Feuer / Céramique française de l'Art nouveau. Art du feu*, confirming the existence of more than one variant of the model within Dalpayrat's sculptural production (fig.1)

While Dalpayrat is best known for vessels and decorative forms, his sculptural works – masks and busts in particular – are far rarer and have long attracted special interest among collectors and historians. In several of these masks, often depicting anonymous or ordinary faces, one may detect affinities with non-Western theatrical traditions, especially the economy and expressive restraint of Noh masks, where individual features are subordinated to typology and emotional universality. The present mask of Dante, however, occupies a singular place within this group. Unlike the anonymous heads, it engages directly with a figure of immense cultural authority, merging Dalpayrat's material experimentation with a subject already saturated with historical meaning.

Pierre-Adrien Dalpayrat was a French ceramist and sculptor, one of the most significant figures in artistic stoneware at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Born in Limoges in 1844, he received early training in drawing and porcelain painting, beginning his apprenticeship in 1859. He subsequently worked in several ceramic manufactories, gradually refining a personal approach centered on the expressive possibilities of stoneware.

In 1889 Dalpayrat established his own workshop at Bourg-la-Reine, near Paris, where he devoted himself primarily to high-fired stoneware. It was there that he developed the experimental glazes that would secure his reputation, most notably the copper-based red later known as *Rouge Dalpayrat*. His work is characterized by a strong integration of form and glaze, in which colour and surface play an active structural role rather than serving a purely decorative function.

Dalpayrat exhibited regularly at major international exhibitions and achieved wide recognition around 1900. He was awarded a gold medal at the Exposition Universelle in Paris and was made a Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur.

Dalpayrat died in 1910. His work is preserved in important public collections, including the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, and continues to be regarded as a major contribution to the renewal of French ceramic art in the Art Nouveau period.





VI. PIERRE-ADRIEN DALPAYRAT (1844-1910)

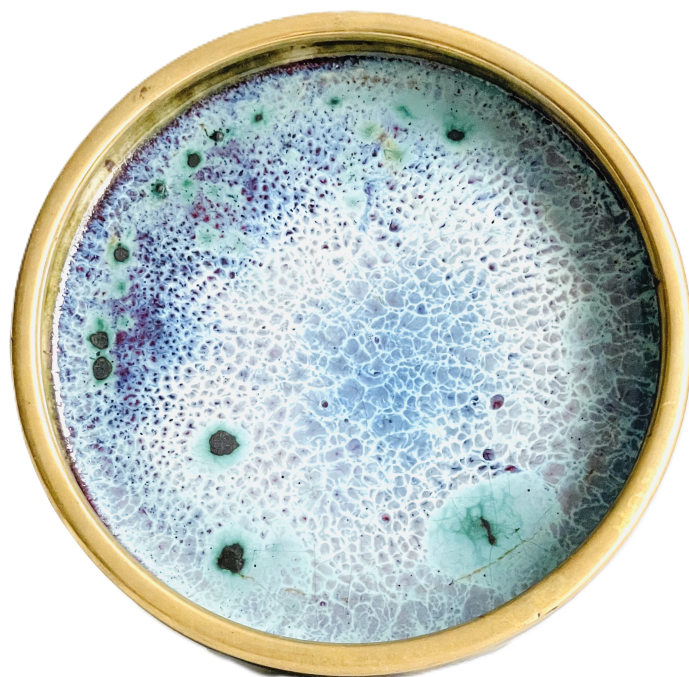
Goblet

c. 1900

Glazed stoneware and brass mounting, H. 17 cm (6 $\frac{3}{4}$ in); D. 15 cm (5 $\frac{7}{8}$ in)

This stoneware goblet exemplifies the remarkable formal diversity of Pierre-Adrien Dalpayrat's ceramic production. His work ranges from abstract and metamorphic shapes to more overtly sculptural and organic forms, as well as to classical objects such as the present vessel. Even within a traditional typology, Dalpayrat demonstrates an extraordinary freedom in his handling of glaze and surface.

Here, the form remains deliberately restrained, allowing the chromatic and textural qualities of the glaze to take precedence. The exterior is animated by Dalpayrat's characteristic interplay of deep reds, blues, and yellowish tones, distributed in an irregular and vibrant pattern that enhances the tactile presence of the object. Particularly successful is the interior of the goblet, where the glaze becomes a uniform turquoise, smooth and uninterrupted, creating a striking contrast with the more complex and variegated outer surface. This controlled opposition between exterior richness and interior calm underscores Dalpayrat's mastery of high-fired stoneware and his ability to balance form, colour, and surface within a single, coherent object.



VII. ERNST NORLIND (1877-1952)

Sturgeon

c. 1900

Ink on paper, H. 21 cm (8 ¼ in); W. 59 cm (23 ¼ in)

signed lower right: « EN^oRTD. »

A Swedish artist of many talents: painter, writer, illustrator, and engraver, Ernst Norlind occupies a singular position within the Scandinavian art scene of the early twentieth century. Born in Paris to Swedish parents and raised in Sweden, he received his artistic training at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen before continuing his studies in Paris, where he came into contact with Symbolist and post-Symbolist currents. This dual formation, Nordic and continental, played a decisive role in shaping his artistic language, which combines precision of observation with a poetic and introspective sensibility. Throughout his career, Norlind remained largely independent of dominant movements, pursuing a personal path that moved freely between visual art and literature.

Nature occupies a central place in Norlind's production, not as a picturesque motif but as a field of reflection on form, rhythm, and continuity. Landscapes, plants, and animals recur frequently in his work, treated with a balance of scientific attention and symbolic resonance. Animals in particular are never reduced to anecdotal subjects: they appear as self-contained presences, governed by their own internal logic and harmony. Norlind's interest in the natural world reflects a broader Symbolist attitude, in which observation becomes a means of accessing deeper, often universal meanings. His images suggest a quiet meditation on life cycles, instinct, and the silent order underlying natural phenomena.

Poised between naturalism and stylization, the drawing exemplifies Norlind's ability to distill form to its essentials without losing expressive power. The work does not merely record an aspect of the animal world; it offers a concentrated reflection on life and its silent interactions, reaffirming Norlind's distinctive vision of nature as both observed reality and poetic construct.



VIII. ERNEST MEISSONIER (1815-1891)

Horse in profile

c. 1872-1875

Oil on panel, H. 11,3 cm (4 ½ in); W. 15,5 cm (6 ⅛ in)

monogrammed lower left « EM »

Provenance: vente Meissonier, Paris, galerie Georges Petit, 19-20 may 1893, n°125; private collection

Depicting a horse in strict profile, this oil on panel belongs to the group of preparatory studies undertaken by Ernest Meissonier for a major state commission. The work relates directly to the painting *Group of Cavalry in the Snow: Moreau and Dessoles before Hohenlinden* (1875), commissioned by the French State to commemorate the victory of General Moreau and General Dessoles over the Austrian forces at the Battle of Hohenlinden in 1800, and today preserved in the National Gallery of Ireland.

Rather than functioning as a finished autonomous image, the panel should be understood as a working study devoted to the precise analysis of equine anatomy, movement, and posture. The horse is isolated against a neutral ground, allowing Meissonier to concentrate entirely on structure, balance, and proportion.

The background bears visible pentimenti and reworked passages, evidence of repeated adjustments and revisions that testify to the artist's meticulous working method. Each correction reflects a sustained process of observation and refinement, through which Meissonier sought absolute accuracy in the rendering of form.

Such studies reveal the central role of preparatory work in Meissonier's practice. Known for his extraordinary attention to detail and historical exactitude, the artist approached large-scale compositions through an accumulation of focused studies, in which individual elements—figures, horses, equipment—were examined independently before being integrated into the final composition.



Ernest Meissonier, *Group of Cavalry in the Snow: Moreau and Dessoles before Hohenlinden*, oil on panel, 1875,
Dublin, National Gallery of Ireland



IX. LOUIS MOE (1815-1891)

Little Red Riding Hood

1905

Watercolor on paper, H. 31,5 cm (12 ¾ in); W. 41 cm (16 ⅛ in)

signed lower right « LOUIS MOE »

This watercolor by Louis Moe depicts the encounter between Little Red Riding Hood and the wolf, a subject that perfectly suits the artist's talent as an illustrator for children's literature. The scene is reduced to its essential elements: the young girl, still and attentive, holds her umbrella close to her body, visibly intimidated yet not indifferent, while the wolf advances toward her with an alert, ambiguous expression that subtly hints at concealed menace.

The composition is deliberately simple and uncluttered. Moe avoids anecdotal detail in favor of clear outlines and a restrained palette, allowing gesture and posture to carry the narrative tension. The wolf's physical proximity contrasts with the child's hesitant stance, creating a quiet but palpable sense of unease. Rather than dramatizing the moment, the artist captures the fragile balance between innocence and danger, a suspended instant in which the story has not yet turned tragic. The economy of means—light washes of color, fluid line, and minimal background—reinforces the immediacy and clarity of the image, qualities central to Moe's graphic language.

Louis Moe was a Danish-born illustrator and graphic artist who spent much of his career in Norway. Trained at the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen, he initially worked as a painter before turning increasingly toward illustration. From the late nineteenth century onward, Moe became one of the most distinctive illustrators of children's books and fairy tales in Scandinavia.

His work is characterized by a clear, expressive line and a remarkable ability to convey narrative and emotion through simplified compositions. Moe illustrated numerous folk tales, myths, and literary texts, developing an imagery that balances innocence and latent tension, often giving familiar stories a subtle psychological depth. His illustrations played a significant role in shaping the visual culture of Scandinavian children's literature around 1900, and his work remains admired for its graphic clarity, narrative intelligence, and enduring imaginative power.



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