

Part 11

Horology *in* Art

By Bob Frishman (MA)

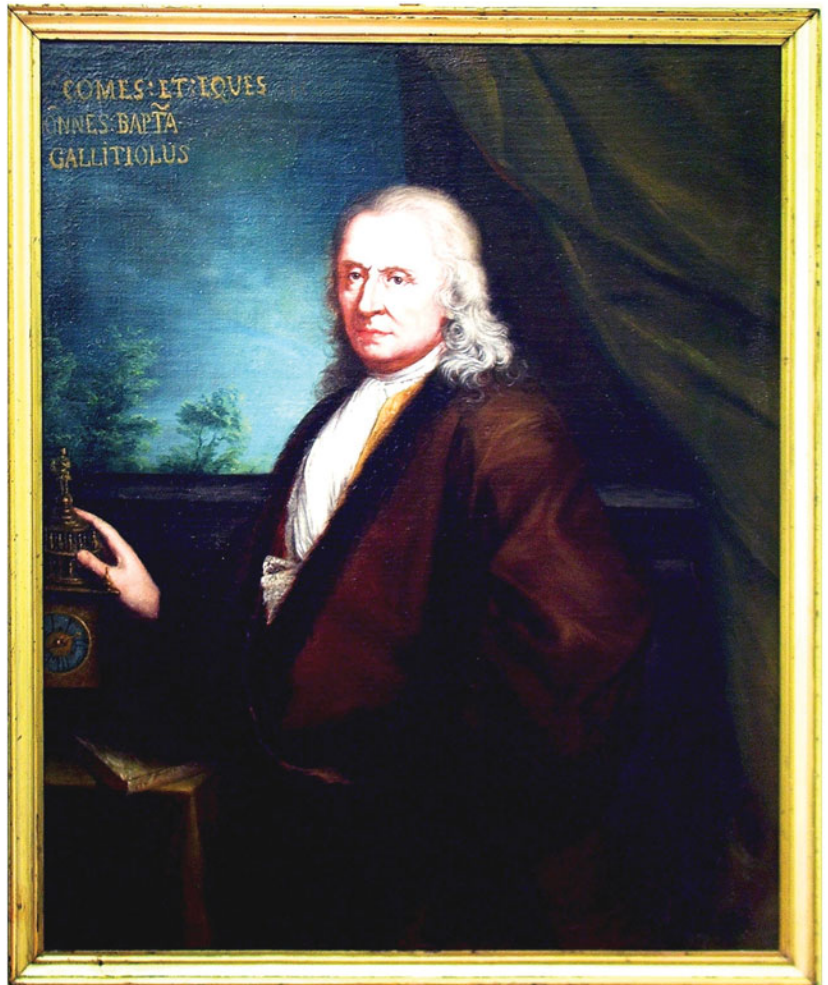
In this series of articles, I have been presenting iconic paintings by famous artists. My search for horology in art images also extends to the less prominent. One recent addition to my digital collection is the portrait of Count and Knight Giovan Battista Gallizioli (1723-1797) by an unknown Lombard painter.

In July 2013 in the northern Italian town of Clusone, I visited the Museo Arte Tempo di Clusone, which houses an amazing collection of 58 Italian tower clock movements from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. My hosts, Marisa Addomine and Daniele Pons, curated this exhibit and authored a 2008 book *Orologi da torre* in both English and Italian, with extensive details and descriptions of these machines. As I revealed when interviewed on-site by an Italian television reporter, I am among the many American horologists who know far too little about Italian clockmaking, and I was fascinated by these many examples from the land where mechanical timekeeping probably originated. (Excerpts of the interview may be viewed on YouTube, with some large cast-iron birdcage movements visible).

Also in the museum's collection is this undated 116 cm x 93 cm oil-on-canvas portrait of a local Bergamo nobleman. The prominent letters at the top leave no doubt about the subject, but a card on the back of the canvas that suggests that Bartholomew Nazzari of Clusone was the painter, is suspect. Thanks to a recent analysis of the painting by Amalia Pacia (I relied on a rough Google-supplied translation of her Italian text), we know much about it.

In a rare example of a more intimate, peaceful, and casual eighteenth-century portrait, the Count is posed wearing a simple robe in a somber private chamber. He is without the usual wig or other outward signs of his high station. Near the end of life, he sits pensively by an open window showing a landscape filling with early morning light.

His left hand rests on a large Renaissance clock, certainly symbolic of the inexorable passage of time and his impending death. The clock's details are unclear but are like many known examples, including a few recently sold at Sotheby's on July 3, 2013, "Treasures" sale in London. Likely to be German from the late 1500s or early 1600s,



Count and Knight Giovan Battista Gallizioli (1723-1797).

Artist Unknown. MAT - MUSEO ARTE TEMPO "DIPINTI, SCULTURE, ARREDI"

EDITED BY M. CRISTINA RODESCHINI, MILANO, SKIRA, 2008. COURTESY MARISA ADDOMINE.

the clock has a gilt-metal case that echoes the appearance of public clock towers where most timekeepers existed in that era. Its daily-wind spring-driven movement probably struck the hours, and possibly the quarters, on bells, which also were frequent reminders of time's passage.

About the Author

Bob Frishman has restored and sold vintage clocks since 1980 and is a past-president of New England Chapter 8. He is a frequent contributor of articles and news-worthy items to the *Watch & Clock Bulletin*. His "Clocks in Art" program was presented at the 2011 NAWCC National Convention. He is head of publicity for the upcoming NAWCC Symposium "Time for Everyone,"