

- **Antonio Canaletto** (1697-1768) was a citizen of the Venetian Republic. His mother was Artemisia Barbieri, and his father, Bernardo Canal, was a painter of theatrical scenes. Since he followed in Bernardo's footsteps, he became known as Canaletto - 'little Canal.' Inspired by Giovanni Paolo Pannini, Canaletto went to Rome and began to portray what he saw in the city's everyday life. The first painting he signed, dated to 1723, was titled 'Architectural Capriccio' and beautifully defines his topographical style, but it is known that he began to work in this way when he returned home from Rome, in 1719. During this period, Canaletto was studying how to depict cityscapes with Luca Carlevarij, known for his urban paintings. Highly detailed, topographically accurate, panoramic views, or landscapes 'vedute' were greatly admired and avidly collected by English visitors to Venice, as souvenirs of the Grand Tour.

In 1746, when demand for Canaletto's work in his native city declined, he travelled to England, remaining there for nearly a decade, producing characteristically descriptive views of London and the English countryside. The artist completed five paintings of Warwick castle, the subject of the two scenic paintings below, for Francis Greville, Lord Brooke, and later earl of Warwick. The Lehman sheet appears to have served as a preparatory design for the canvas now in the City Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham, one of two versions depicting the castle from the east. George Vertue's first mention of Canaletto praises him as 'much esteemed' and proclaims that there is 'no doubt but what views and works He doth here [in England], will give the same satisfaction, as his Venetian views. However, by 1749 Vertue's enthusiasm had waned a little. 'On the whole of him something is obscure or strange. He does not produce works so well done as those of Venice or other parts of Italy, which are in Collections here, and done by him there'. (George Vertue, "*Vertue's Note Books: Volume III*", *The Walpole Society* 22 (1933-34): 130). In 2017 it was shown that Canaletto did not use the 'camera obscura', and thanks to infrared technology, the Royal Collection Trust confirms that the works they hold were brilliantly sketched with pencil and ruler instead. See: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/04/14/royal-collection-uses-infrared-prove-canaletto-did-not-trace/>



Fig. 119. Antonio Canaletto, 1697–1768, Venetian, active in Britain (1746–55), *Warwick Castle, the south front*. 1748-1749, Oil on canvas, Yale Center for British Art, Paul Mellon Collection. Accession no: B1994.18.2. It is thought that the commission, which eventually amounted to five oil paintings and three pen and ink drawings, was originally to furnish Lord Brooke's London home to allow him to present the newly improved castle to his London associates.



Fig. 120. Antonio Canaletto: *Warwick castle - The east front main entrance from the Outer Court*. 1752. Birmingham City Museum and Art Gallery. Medium: Oil on canvas. Accession number: 1978P173.



Fig. 121. Antonio Canal (Canaletto). 1747?. Alnwick Castle from the north (slightly cropped), showing wing walls leading up to the 'Keep', clearly seen here as a central tower-clustered citadel on an eminence; changes made to the north frontage in the 18th and 19th century means this view is no longer possible to re-create. Style: Rococo genre: landscape media: oil on canvas. Private Collection. Dims: 118 x 238 cm. Image via wikiart.org (public domain). The current duke doubts that Canaletto ever visited, claiming that the painting is out of perspective, particularly the 'staffage' figures on the hillside.



Fig. 122. Antonio Canal (Canaletto), mid to late 1720s. The Stonemason's Yard (formally known as Campo S. Vidal and Santa Maria della Carità) is an early oil painting by Giovanni Antonio Canal. It depicts an informal scene in Venice, looking over a temporary stonemason's yard in the Campo San Vidal set up for the construction of Andrea Tirali's façade of the church of San Vidal, and across the Grand Canal towards the church of Santa Maria della Carità. It is now in the collection of The National Gallery in London and is considered one of Canaletto's finest works. See: <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/canaletto-the-stonemasons-yard>.