

## Several Drawings by Jacopo Tintoretto and their Connection with his Paintings <sup>1</sup>

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Since the publication of the standard catalogue of Tintoretto drawings by Prof. Paola Rossi in 1975, <sup>2</sup> our knowledge on this subject has been occasionally enriched both by the appearance of unpublished drawings and by new observations on the connection between extant drawings and finished paintings. In fact, some of the drawings which had been rejected either by the Tietzes <sup>3</sup> or Rossi on a stylistic basis can be maintained as Jacopo's autograph works because of their direct link with painted works.

A typical example is a sheet representing a standing nude at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (inv. 2248) which Mr. David Scrase has recently identified as an autograph study for one figure in the vast and crowded canvas of the *Golden Calf* at the Church of the Madonna dell'Orto, Venice.<sup>4</sup> In light of this connection, the drawing's authenticity seems quite convincing and its style, with all of its laconic characterization, appears entirely consonant with that of the unanimously accepted sheet at the Hessisches Landesmuseum, Darmstadt (inv. A E 1439), a preparatory work for the same painting.<sup>5</sup> This case clearly suggests the potential for the further discovery of authentic drawings among those which earlier authors rejected on a stylistic basis or for their "weakness."

Such a review is not only possible, it is obligatory before we can reach a revised *corpus* of Jacopo's graphic production, and this short paper, in its observations on a few drawings which I believe to be by Jacopo, will continue in this vein of supplemental material, revising some former interpretations and adding information to others.

My first example is a black chalk drawing of a *Seated Man* presently in an American private collection (fig. 1).<sup>6</sup> This sheet appeared at Christie's, London in 1974 as a possible study for a figure of the seated old man in Jacopo's youthful masterpiece, *The Presentation of the Virgin* in the Church of Madonna dell'Orto.<sup>7</sup> Then, in 1976, the drawing was exhibited at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, this time as a study for Isaak in the *Abraham and Isaak*

painted for the ceiling of the upper hall of the Scuola di S. Rocco, Venice, and by necessity was assigned a date in the late 1570s.<sup>8</sup> Neither of these interpretations is convincing, and, in fact, the drawn figure exactly corresponds to the figure of Christ in the small altarpiece representing *Dead Christ with St. John, Mary Magdalene and Donors*, first published by Pallucchini in 1969 as dating to the early 1560s (fig. 2).<sup>9</sup> The prototype for the posture of this seated figure can be found in the old man in the Madonna dell'Orto *Presentation*. This *Seated Man* drawing must have been a modified version of a now-lost preparatory study for the *Presentation* which the artist kept in his workshop. Such a process of re-using the same posture with slight modification in different contexts is quite common in Tintoretto's working method.

The quality of this drawing is quite high, and its style can be compared, among others, to a powerful study of a *Man Fallen on the Ground* in the Fitzwilliam Museum which was recently identified by Prof. W. R. Rearick as a study for a right foreground figure in the enormous *Last Judgement* in the Church of Madonna dell'Orto.<sup>10</sup> Such comparison seems to confirm the dating of both the drawing and the finished painting to the early 1560s.

My second example is a sheet in the British Museum, representing a seated, clothed man drawn in black chalk (fig. 3).<sup>11</sup> Tietze and Tietze-Conrat observed certain weaknesses in this sheet and assigned it to the category of "Drawings by Tintoretto shop",<sup>12</sup> and consequently this drawing has never been mentioned in the Tintoretto literature. Quite recently, however, an interesting painting attributed to Tintoretto appeared in the London market (fig. 4).<sup>13</sup> The composition of this painting is nearly identical to Jacopo's well-known late work in the Christ Church Picture Gallery,<sup>14</sup> *The Martyrdom of St. Lawrence*. Allowing for clothing differences, it is clear that the figure in the British Museum sheet is a preparatory study for the central figure of the elders seated in the background of the painting. This figure was so modified in the Christ Church painting that

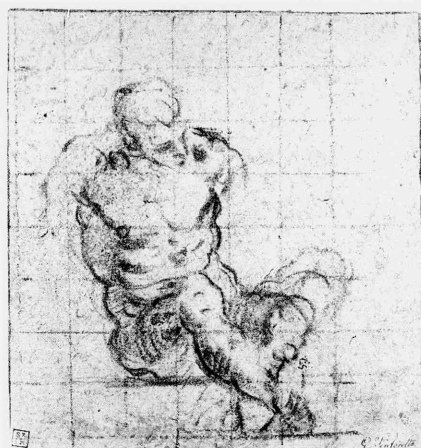


fig. 1  
Jacopo Tintoretto, *Study of a Seated Male Nude*, private collection. (Photo: by courtesy of Christie's, London)

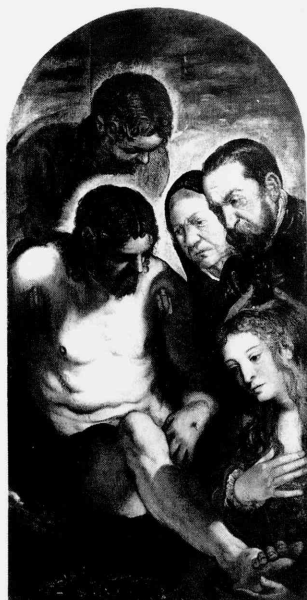


fig. 2  
Jacopo Tintoretto, *Dead Christ with St. John, Mary Magdalene and Donors*, private collection.



fig. 3 Jacopo Tintoretto, *Study of a Seated, Clothed Man*, The British Museum.  
(Photo: Trustees of the British Museum, London)



fig. 4 Attributed to Jacopo Tintoretto, *The Martyrdom of St. Lawrence*, private collection, London.

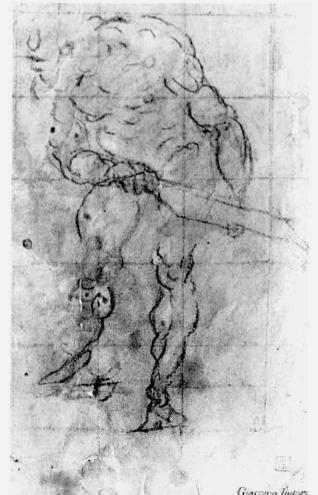


fig. 5 Jacopo Tintoretto, *Study of a Nude Man Stooping*, Victoria and Albert Museum.  
(Photo: the Board of Trustees of the Victoria & Albert Museum, London)

the connection with the drawing has never been noted.

The relationship between the two painted versions of the *Martyrdom of St. Lawrence* is rather complicated. While the pictorial quality of the London painting seems to suggest a considerable degree of workshop intervention in the execution, this version, as Rossi rightly observed, seems to reflect Jacopo's own initial compositional ideas. Ridolfi relates that Jacopo received a commission for an "istoria di San Lorenzo" for the Bonomo family chapel in the Church of S. Francesco della Vigna, Venice, and when Jacopo's painting was rejected, it was replaced by a painting of the same subject by Girolamo da Santacroce.<sup>15</sup> According to Rossi, the size of a copy of the original replacement by Santacroce is very similar to that of the London painting.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the figure of the executioner on the right in the London painting, rather than the same figure in the Christ Church painting, corresponds more closely to Jacopo's authentic preparatory study now in the Victoria and Albert Museum (fig. 5).<sup>17</sup> Rossi concluded that the two versions, one small and the other large, are not the *modello* and the final canvas; rather, the London version may be identified as that begun for the chapel in

S. Francesco della Vigna probably in the 1570s, while the Christ Church version was painted independently in the late 1580s.<sup>18</sup>

Returning to the British Museum drawing, comparison with the Victoria and Albert drawing reveals stylistic similarities, e.g. in the summary depiction of forms in chalk lines with broad, light hatching, and particularly in the characterization of the face. In my opinion it is reasonable to consider that both sheets were drawn as studies for the Bonomo family commission during the 1570s.

My third example, whose present whereabouts are unknown, is a sheet which appeared at Sotheby's, London in 1977 (fig. 6)<sup>19</sup> as a study for the figure in the lower left corner of the *Last Judgment* in Madonna dell'Orto. This sheet shows a foreshortened figure in black chalk. The left arm and shoulder are quite deformed, and this detail might be enough to make one doubt the attribution to Jacopo. The old inscription "G. Tintoretto" at one corner of the sheet shows that a collector believed that the sheet represented a standing man leaning sharply backward (and Sotheby's catalogue repeats this interpretation, regarding it as preparatory for a standing figure). But this is a misreading of the pose. This squared study is actually

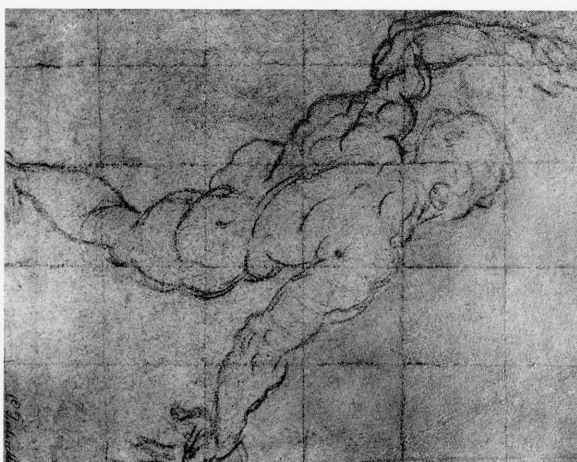


fig. 6 Jacopo Tintoretto, *Study of a Male Nude*, private collection.  
(Photo: by courtesy of Sotheby's, London)



fig. 7 Jacopo Tintoretto, *Virgin Appearing to St. Jerome*, Ateneo Veneto, Venice (detail).

preparatory for the figure of one of the flying angels in the *Virgin Appearing to St. Jerome*, painted for the Scuola di S. Fantin, Venice, now the seat of the Ateneo Veneto (fig. 7).<sup>20</sup> The correspondance of form, especially in the right arm and hand, seems exact enough to confirm the direct connection between the drawing and the painting, while also providing an explanation of the deformation of the left arm of the figure in the drawing. In the finished painting this section is completely hidden behind the Virgin's clothes, and it would seem that the left arm in the drawing is a later addition by another, less experienced hand.

The S. Fantin altarpiece has been variously dated by scholars: the 1560s (Rearick), the 1570s (von der Bercken, Pallucchini, De Vecchi), or 1582-83 (Rossi).<sup>21</sup> The style of the drawing comes close to that of the group of drawings for the paintings in the Sala Superiore of the Scuola di S. Rocco (1575-81),<sup>22</sup> and this may suggest the later date. A similar flying posture was adapted, in the usual repetitive use of stock motifs, for the *Resurrection* in the Sala Superiore and for the *Origin of the Milky Way* (National Gallery, London), both roughly from the same period.

These three examples, somewhat marginal in their status, are nonetheless significant in that their connection with finished paintings can be firmly established. They once again underline how figural studies functioned in the working process of Tintoretto. While these studies are primarily working tools destined to be enlarged in a specific oil painting through squaring, their characteristically "abstract" quality, in the sense that each figure is isolated, devoid of scarcely any secondary motifs to show its compositional context, produces the impression that they were sheets from some voluminous pattern-book. Thanks to this very character, these "patterns" could be slightly modified for easy and repeated use in different compositions. Undoubtedly, the accumulation of such patterns in the workshop provided a firm basis for the facile and speedy execution of large, complicated compositions populated by innumerable figures showing a great variety of postures.

The fact that single-figure studies occupy an overwhelmingly high proportion of the surviving drawings by Jacopo seems to attest to their utilitarian importance for the heirs of the Tintoretto workshop. The son Domenico, who inherited from Jacopo "tutte le cose pertinenti alla professione mia",<sup>23</sup> left, in his turn, all of his workshop equipment to his principal heir Sebastian Casser and to his brother Marco. A salient part of this legacy consisted of "schizzi dal natural" and "tutti li schizzi... de mio padre".<sup>24</sup>

#### Notes

- 1 This article is a revised version of a paper read at the XIV Convention of the International Committee of Keepers of Public Collections of Graphic Art, held in London 29 May — 2 June 1994. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Mr. David Scrase of the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, president of that convention, who offered me the chance to read my modest contribution at such a prestigious meeting. My special thanks go to Mr. Nicholas Turner, formerly Deputy Keeper of the Department of Prints and Drawings of the British Museum, for his kind help during my research on Tintoretto drawings in British collections in 1991.
- 2 P. Rossi, *I disegni di Jacopo Tintoretto*, Florence, 1975.
- 3 H. Tietze and E. Tietze-Conrat, *The Drawings of the Venetian Painters in the 15th and 16th Centuries*, New York, 1944.
- 4 See "Two Drawings from the Ricketts and Shannon Collection at the Fitzwilliam," in *Master Drawings*, XX, 1982, pp. 30-33 and *Id.*, in *Da Pisanello a Tiepolo: Disegni veneti dal Fitzwilliam Museum di Cambridge* (exh. cat. Fondazione G. Cini, Venice), Milan, 1992, p. 62, no. 22. See also P. Rossi, in L. Moretti, A. Niero and P. Rossi, *La chiesa del Tintoretto: Madonna dell'Orto*, Venice, 1994, pp. 111-115.
- 5 Rossi, *I disegni...*, pp. 17-18, fig. 67.
- 6 Black chalk on grey paper, squared. 226 × 213 mm. I am grateful to Mr. Hugo Chapman for providing me with a good photograph of this work.
- 7 Christie's, London, March 28, 1972, lot 43 ("Perhaps a study for the old man seated at the feet of the High Priest in The Presentation of the Virgin").

- Rossi (in *La chiesa del Tintoretto...*, pp. 97-98) accepts this view.
- 8 E. Feinblatt, *Old Master Drawings from American Collections* (exh. cat. Los Angeles County Museum of Art), New York, 1976, p. 48, no. 49 cites Mr. Frederick Schab's ideas regarding the purpose of this drawing.
  - 9 R. Pallucchini, "Inediti di Jacopo Tintoretto," in *Arte Veneta*, XXIII, 1969, pp. 48-50; see also Rossi, in R. Pallucchini and P. Rossi, *Tintoretto: le opere sacre e profane*, Milan, 1982, p. 180, no. 229.
  - 10 Inv. PD. 34-1959; see Scrase, in *Da Pisanello a Tiepolo...*, p. 74, no. 28.
  - 11 Inv. Fawkener 5212-11. Black chalk heightened with white on faded blue paper, squared. 236 × 171 mm.
  - 12 Tietze and Tietze-Conrat, *The Drawings...*, no. 1839.
  - 13 P. Rossi, in *The Cinquecento*, Walpole Gallery, London, 1991, pp. 44-47, no. 18.
  - 14 For the Christ Church painting, see Rossi, in Pallucchini and Rossi, *Tintoretto: le opere sacre...*, p. 230, no. 453.
  - 15 C. Ridolfi, *Le meraviglie dell'arte*, Venice, 1648, ed. D. F. von Hadeln, Berlin, 1924, vol. II, p. 52.
  - 16 See note 13 above.
  - 17 Inv. Dyce 241; see Rossi, *I disegni...*, pp. 44-45, fig. 179.
  - 18 According to Rossi, the chronological range for the execution of the painting is 1569-1576 (her entry cited in note 13 above, p. 47, note 5). In my opinion, however, the actual appearance of the London painting does not justify the full authorship of Jacopo. Its nocturnal representation conveys a rather prosaic feeling, and one may find similar stylistic characteristics in the scene of the *Circumcision* in the Sala Terrena of the Scuola di San Rocco, Venice, generally attributed to Domenico Tintoretto and dated ca. 1587. It may be suggested, therefore, that the painting was once left incomplete, only to be finished (or virtually repainted) by the son many years later.
  - 19 Sotheby's, London, December 5, 1977, lot 28. Black chalk on blue paper, squared. 225 × 174 mm. I am grateful to Mrs. Elizabeth Llewellyn for providing me with a good photograph of this work.
  - 20 Rossi, in Pallucchini and Rossi, *Tintoretto: le opere sacre...*, pp. 222-223, no. 425.
  - 21 See Rossi's entry cited in note 20 above.
  - 22 Cf. Rossi, *I disegni...*, figs. 105-116.
  - 23 The testament of Jacopo Robusti, cited in C. Ridolfi, *Vite dei Tintoretto da Le meraviglie dell'arte* [1648], Venice, 1994, pp. 127-128.
  - 24 The testament of Domenico Robusti, cited in Ridolfi, *ibid.*, pp. 132-133.

付記:本稿は、1994年5月29日～6月2日にロンドン、大英博物館およびヴィクトリア・アンド・アルバート美術館を会場として行なわれた第14回国際版画素描学芸員会議における口頭発表原稿に手を加えたものである。その内容は、平成6年度科学研究費補助金(一般研究(A)、「西洋美術研究支援画像データベースと画像処理」、研究代表者:波多野宏之)による、ティントレット素描作品のデータベース化作業の成果の一部である。