

Rudolf Freiherr Hiller von Gaertringen: Raffaels Lernerfahrung in der Werkstatt Peruginos. Kartonverwendung und Motivübernahme im Wandel (*Kunstwissenschaftliche Studien*, 76); München, Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag 1999; 431 S., 270 SW-Abb., 32 Farbtaf.; ISBN 3-422-06242-4; DM 198,-

The book under review is an edited version of the author's Tübingen Dissertation of 1996, although it is a far more substantial contribution than that simple statement would imply.

Hiller's basic assumption is that the pupil learns working-habits and methods from his master, and the cartoon was the decisive technique characterizing the relationship between Perugino and Raphael. The discussion is clearly structured in three main sections, Raphael's apprenticeship in Perugino's workshop, Perugino's varied use of the cartoon, and Raphael's subsequent manipulation of the cartoon process. A brief review can do justice to only a proportion of the arguments in this densely-argued book.

Raphael's apprenticeship in Perugino's *bottega*, undocumented, but reported by Vasari, is demonstrated by the recurrence of the master's motifs in the pupil's works. He probably spent 1495-1500 with Perugino and learnt widely during Perugino's most creative and busy period.

In Perugino's preparation for painting, the cartoon played a crucial rôle. The cartoon may be defined as a full-scale drawing conceived for transfer to the pictorial ground. The cartoon itself very rarely survives, while the application of the cartoon transfer technique is abundantly documented. Lost cartoons may however be partly reconstructed, and their method of application thus more easily assessed. Hiller scrutinizes the paintings themselves, surviving preparatory drawings, sketches after the originals and technical examination for signs of *spolvero*, *calcho* and underdrawing to establish the use of cartoons. Evident similarity and measurement of representative parts may suggest the existence of a cartoon, but tracing is more reliable. Using of the strong linear character of the cartoon Hiller attempts to reconstruct systematically lost cartoons by tracing the outlines of individual figures or groups. This is a pioneering enterprise. By overlaying schematic tracings he further convincingly demonstrates multiple re-use of cartoons in Perugino's *bottega*. The reversal, enlargement, reduction and recombination of different cartoons is examined. Hiller reveals the cartoon as the perfect end-product of Perugino's creative drawing procedure, and the repeated, reproductive usage of the cartoon as the outstanding characteristic of Perugino's prolific *bottega*. Widespread use of cartoons certainly facilitated the delegation of work and efficient shop organization. It may also have provided a certain predictability, clearly appreciated by Perugino's wide spectrum of patrons. They could be confident in the end product.

Under the impact of this training Raphael initially assimilated a Peruginesque vocabulary and basic working practices. Yet the younger artist rapidly developed his own techniques, often reintegrating the cartoon in a continuous creative process and constantly refining his *disegno*. Apart from a few early cartoon reversals, only one

minor example of the cartoon-based re-use of a figure has been detected in Raphael's Roman commissions. Far more imaginative than his mentor, he preferred to work contemporaneously with multiple drawings. For Hiller this change from a somewhat reactive to a more dynamic and creative graphic process exemplifies two generations, marking the transition from what he (somewhat inappropriately) describes as the late medieval to the modern world.

Training as restorer explains Hiller's deep interest in artistic procedures and his thorough understanding of the technical and scientific evidence. It also facilitated access to the originals and, most importantly, afforded him the opportunity of making trustworthy tracings. This book is thus a very valuable contribution to a rapidly expanding field of research: The use of complex cartoons for specific compositions spread rapidly throughout central Italy during the second half of the Quattrocento. Perugino appears to have been the first, or at least a pioneer in re-using cartoons systematically for large-scale panels. Perugino re-employed cartoons in representations of the „Madonna and Saints“ and semi-narrative compositions, such as the „Assumption of the Virgin“. The Sansepolcro „Ascension“ remains, indicatively enough, the only complete replica high-altarpiece to have survived from Perugino's workshop. While the artist determined the technique, it was in this case the patron who almost certainly insisted on replication, *modo e forma*¹.

To assess Perugino's handling of the cartoon more fully it might have been helpful to have compared Perugino's practices with those of his busy contemporaries, Ghirlandaio, Signorelli and Antoniazio Romano. This could also have provided more information about contemporary patronage, market-forces, cost-effectiveness and possible regional preferences, although this is perhaps too much to ask of any book, however stimulating, which derives directly from a doctoral dissertation. The technically inventive generation of Perugino's teacher, Verrocchio, would have merited more sustained examination. Perugino's supervisory rôle, relatively early in his career, in the Cappella Sistina must also have been technically a defining moment.

In the first two decades of the Cinquecento the working procedures and underlying attitudes of artists and the expectations of their patrons both seem to have changed, as Hiller's analysis of Raphael's paintings suggests. In 1550 Vasari vehemently castigated Perugino for his *maniera medesima*, his lack of originality and variety, in short his sameness, and Hiller's findings partly substantiate Vasari's critique. However, Vasari's negative interpretation also distorted and deeply influenced modern judgement, to whom the technical processes were unclear. Contra Vasari, the Servites of SS. Annunziata could never have reversed their double-sided high altarpiece simply because they disliked Perugino's „Assumption“. In a fresh and well-informed discussion, taking issue with Vasari's bias, Hiller shows how Perugino, at the apex of his career, largely created the Vallombrosan pala from recombined car-

1 CHRISTA GARDNER VON TEUFFEL: Niccolò di Segna, Sassetta, Piero and Perugino at Sansepolcro: cult and continuity, in: *Städel Jahrbuch* N.F. 17, 1999, S. 163-208.

toons producing an altarpiece of outstanding quality. But the youthful Raphael should perhaps not, as tentatively suggested here, be associated with the adaptation of the Cambio cartoon for the Saint Michael. It was Perugino himself who adjusted his original figure-formula from the Cambio fresco for the subsequent panels for Vallombrosa and the Certosa at Pavia². As his Windsor drawing proves, Perugino directly responded in each case to the paintings' specific patronage and destination, – aspects of a broader historical context which Hiller has at times insufficiently considered.

Hiller's text reads easily, although the first part could with advantage have been shortened. The 270 monochrome reproductions, mainly of panel-paintings and drawings, are generally well-integrated into the text. Particularly helpful is the rich technical documentation, difficult of access and partly unpublished. The student is given X-radiographs, photographs in raking light, infra-red and infrared-reflectograms. Three extremely informative schematic „trees“, for Raphael's Gavari „Crucifixion“ and Perugino's San Pietro and Decemviri complexes, succinctly illuminate the author's argument. There are twenty-four beautiful, informative plates superimposing multicoloured tracings of various painted figures, notably angels. (The majority of Hiller's tracings were done from the originals save for a few clearly stated cases where slides served as a basis). These tracings strongly support the author's contention that the workshops of Perugino and Raphael made wide and routine use of cartoons. Here, it might be said that Hiller's title is a trifle misleading, and that it might have focussed more directly on his leading argument, the cartoon. This is however to carp: Hiller's book is an original, provocative and significant contribution to a subject of great artistic significance.

CHRISTA GARDNER VON TEUFFEL
Coventry

- 2 CHRISTA GARDNER VON TEUFFEL: The contract for Perugino's 'Assumption of the Virgin' at Vallombrosa, in: *The Burlington Magazine* 137, 1995, pp. 307–12.

Louis Marin: Sublime Poussin, transl. Catherine Porter (*Meridian, Crossing Aesthetics*); Stanford: Stanford University Press 1999; 267 pages, 17 b/w ill.; ISBN 0-8047-3477-1 (pbk.); \$ 16,95

Classicism, nature, artistic practice and its theoretical discourse are the four cliffs that the modern scholar has to sail around to end up with any text concerning the painter Nicolas Poussin. Having been claimed by all sorts of artistic currents from the seventeenth century until well into the nineteenth century, his work and his artistic

1 For a discussion of the nineteenth-century views on Poussin, see JOHN HOUSE: 'Cézanne and Poussin: Myth and History' in: *Cézanne & Poussin. A Symposium*; Richard Kendall (ed.), Sheffield 1993, p. 129 f.