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1996: The Tiepolo Year

The celebrations attending the three-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Giambattista Tiepolo have created a remarkable burst of activity, with exhibitions at Berlin – and Cappenberg, Cambridge, Mass. – and New York, Cologne – and Stuttgart, Moscow, Rotterdam, Stuttgart – and Cologne, Udine – and Bloomington, Venice – and again New York, and Würzburg. Further exhibitions are planned at Berkeley and Paris. There has been a colloquium at Rotterdam and the *Convegno internazionale di studi Giambattista Tiepolo* at Venice, Vicenza, Udine and Paris, from 28 October to 4 November 1996 (here referred to henceforth as 'CIST'). The *atti* of CIST will be published in due course, and some of the exhibitions have been reviewed, and other reviews will be forthcoming, but meanwhile it may perhaps be helpful to offer a broad overview of these events, with some reference to other recent publications relating to Tiepolo studies.

Documentation

The study of documents continues to throw much light on the Tiepolo family in general, and occasionally to raise problems concerning the paintings. Federico Montecuccoli degli Erri, following his brilliant work on the relations between the Guardi family and the Giustinian, including details relating to the secret marriage between Cecilia Guardi and Giambattista (Pedrocco & Montecuccoli degli Erri, *Antonio Guardi*, Milan 1992, 25. etc.), has turned his attention to the Tiepolo family, with striking results ('Giambattista Tiepolo e la sua famiglia: nuove pagine di vita privata', *Ateneo veneto*, 32, 1994, 7-42; CIST). Giuseppe Ellero has revealed that the fifteen year old Cecilia Guardi's talents as a singer gained her admittance to the Ospedaletto in 1717, which may or may not have led to her meeting with Giambattista and their marriage in 1719 ('Idillio al Ospedaletto ...', *ARTE/documento*, 10 [1996], 106-9). Keith Christiansen reports documents

found by Douglas Lewis (exh. cat. *Giambattista Tiepolo 1696-1996*, Venice/New York 1996/97: 16a) which seem to show that the Edinburgh 'Finding of Moses' was painted for Ca' Corner della Regina. Giandomenico Romanelli's study of a 1746 Corner inventory (*CIST*) gives a reference to a Tiepolo 'Tasso Room' in Ca' Corner-Mocenigo a S. Polo. Alessandro Bettagno's study (*CIST*) of the various manuscript title-pages of the *Diversarum Iconum* of Zanetti reveals one, including the 'Capricci' with the date 1742. Giovanni Munerati has published an enormous amount of material about the Tiepolo family from 1755 onwards (*Documenti miranesi*, 2-5, Milano 1992-96), including an inventory of the contents of Cecilia Guardi's house, dated 7 May 1771 (*ibid.* 5, 63-9). These legal documents may not throw much light on Giambattista as a painter, but they do much to illuminate the family background. Nothing here seems to lend any credence to the rumour (Knox 1960, 8) that Cecilia was a compulsive gambler.

Iconography

On the iconographical front, some new suggestions have been made, which may or may not prove acceptable. The very early sketch in the Locatelli collection at Pordenone (Gemin & Pedrocco, *Giambattista Tiepolo: i dipinti*, Venice 1993, 10) has been identified as 'Samuel reproving Saul after the defeat of the Amalekites' (Knox, *Apollo*, November 1996). The much-discussed 'Repudiation of Hagar' (Gemin & Pedrocco, 22) has been identified as 'Mordecai at the palace gate urging Esther to offer herself to Ahasuerus' (Knox, *Apollo*, November 1996). The painting at Baltimore (Gemin & Pedrocco, 28) has changed again to 'Scipio Africanus releasing Massiva, the nephew of Massinissa, after the Battle of Baecula' (Knox, *Apollo*, May 1996, 15-17). Further studies of the decorations of Ca' Dolfin by Valentina Conticelli and Monica Centanni (*CIST*) have led to the

suggestion that the two battlepieces in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Venice/New York 1996, nos. 12f & g) should be identified as the capture of Rome by the Gauls (Florus I,vii), though this, I think, still presents difficulties. Keith Christiansen (*CIST*) very neatly resolved the problems which have grown up surrounding 'The Kingdom of Flora' (Gemin & Pedrocco, 307) by quoting Bellori's account of Poussin's painting, which provides the programme for the Tiepolo.

New discussion and discoveries

Giuseppe Maria Pilo's long and detailed discussion of the young Tiepolo (*ARTE/documento*, 10 [1996], 111-90) seems to show that Giambattista's contribution to the 'apostoli' at the Ospedaletto was limited to one pair, 'Ss Thomas and John the Evangelist'. In the same volume, Pietro Scarpa publishes a new portrait of the young artist by Rosalba Carriera (*ibid.* 198). Luisa Cogliati Arano draws attention (*CIST*) to the remarkable series of photographs of the frescoes of the Palazzo Archinto and the Palazzo Dugnani at Milan, published in 1898 by Molfese-Centelli, which have never been republished or discussed except very sporadically. She also offers some details about a newly discovered series of frescoes by Domenico Tiepolo at Brescia. Perhaps the most extraordinary new revelation was Catherine Whistler's presentation (*CIST*) of the frescoes by Livio Retti in the chapel at Schloss Ludwigsburg, painted in 1747. These are based upon three *modelli* apparently commissioned for this purpose from the Tiepolo studio in 1746-47: the Rotterdam 'Crucifixion'; the Richmond 'Ascension'; and 'The Last Judgement', now in the Cassa di Risparmio at Venice (Morassi 1962, 57; Gemin & Pedrocco, 396, 117). All these have been given in the past to Domenico (Knox 1980, P. 332, 224, 77), though I was forced to recant on the last item when it was shown to have been copied by Franz Martin Kuen, also in Venice in 1746-47. It would seem that this commission,



Abb. 1 Giambattista Tiepolo, *The Assumption of the Virgin*, a study for the ceiling at Biadene, c. 1716, brush drawing, 260 x 318 mm. Charles Town, West Virginia, private collection

given the exalted rank of the patrons, was one that could not be refused, and that no doubt Giambattista devised the programme and made some drawings – I can not believe that Domenico made the marvellous drawings at Boston at the age of nineteen – and that Domenico executed these *modelli*.

The reference in Stählin's notebooks that clears up most of the problems relating to the ceilings for the Worontzoff palace in Saint Petersburg was discussed by Irina Artemieva (CIST). It appears that they arrived in Lübeck in June 1759, and that they are recorded in the

three large etchings which Domenico marked 'in Petroburgo', and which Mariette, jumping to an inappropriate conclusion, marked 'per la Tsarina'. For these ceilings, two by Giambattista and one by Domenico, we have an array of sketches and drawings. We still have no information about origins of the ceiling 'il soffittino di Marte' which later was placed in the central room of the Chinese Pavilion at Oranienbaum, and remained there until it was removed for safety in the second world war, with the sad consequence that it then disappeared while all the other ceilings,

together with the building, survived. There is evidence that this was painted earlier, before the visit to Würzburg (Knox 1980).

The intriguing problem of Giambattista's ceiling for the Throne-room of the Winter Palace was raised by Sergei Androssov (*CIST*). Tiepolo accepted the commission for the ceilings of both the Throne-room and the Chapel on 1 August 1760. In September 1761 Fontebasso signed a contract to paint the ceiling of the Chapel, and this was carried out. On 25 December 1761 Elizabeth Petrovna died, and Rastrelli's career came to a close. The ceiling of the Throne-room was apparently never carried out by Fontebasso or anyone else. This apartment was located in the north-west corner of the building, and measured some 18 x 32 meters. Thus the ceiling would have approximately the same size as that of the staircase at Würzburg.

By September 1761 it appears that Tiepolo had received detailed instructions for the ceiling of the Throne-room at Madrid, and yet the sketch for this project, which perfectly matches the requirements for the Throne-room of the Winter Palace, completely ignores the proportions and usage of the apartment at Madrid. At Saint Petersburg, Rastrelli's Throne-room stood at the end of the long enfilade of the five anterooms, leading from the head of the Jordan staircase, and the throne itself stood at the end of the vista. At Madrid, it appears that the throne was always placed in the centre of the long wall, facing the windows, so that the orientation of Tiepolo's ceiling is completely wrong, with a figure tumbling out of the sky on the royal head. The implication of all this is that the sketch appears to offer essentially the concept of the Saint Petersburg project.

Pen drawings

The Tiepolo year opened with the exhibition in Moscow of drawings from the former collection of Frans Koenigs, with a catalogue in English, the Tiepolesque material being

items 167-181. Most of this has been recorded as missing from the Boymans-van Beuningen Museum, but it includes a fine new townscape (Moscow 1995-96, 175), that appears to be by Domenico.

The exhibitions of drawings at Cambridge, Rotterdam and Udine have thrown up some remarkable new items. Perhaps the most sensational is the study for Biadene (Cambridge 1996; *Abb. 1*). Bernard Aikema also draws attention to a series of studies for engravings by Giambattista in the Metropolitan Museum, and a corresponding series of engravings by Zucchi at Dresden. At Rotterdam, Aikema showed a admirable new drawing from the Boymans Museum, 'The Deposition' or perhaps better, 'The Finding of the True Cross', with a preparatory study for the tondo from the Cappuccini di Castello (Gemin & Pedrocco, 259), of the early 1740s, on the verso (Rotterdam 1996, no. 52, as Domenico). The exhibition of drawings by Domenico Tiepolo at Udine also introduced a remarkable new drawing by Giambattista, a study for the ceiling of the 'Pieta' of 1754 (Udine 1996, no. 32; *Abb. 2*).

Aikema has also drawn attention to documents that indicate that there were, from the twenties onwards, perhaps as many as ten or twelve 'students' in the Tiepolo studio, some of them quite middle-aged men (Cambridge 1996; *CIST*). From this two suggestions follow: first, that Giambattista had more ambitions as an art educator than has been suspected; second, that a great deal of caution is necessary when assigning works to a specific Tiepolo assistant. Quite a number of these are familiar figures: Francesco Guardi (Knox in *Atti ... Guardi*, forthcoming), Giovanni Raggi, Giustino Menescardi (Rotterdam 1996, under No. 22; Knox in *ARTE/documento*, X [1996], 208-220), Francesco Lorenzi (Andrea Tomezzoli, 'L'autobiografia del pittore Francesco Lorenzi', *Arte veneta*, 48 [1996], 127-135), Franz-Martin Kuen (exh. cat. Weissenhorn 1992), Georg Anton Urlaub (exh. cat.



Abb. 2 Giambattista Tiepolo, *The Triumph of Faith, a study for the ceiling of the Pietà*, 1754, brush drawing, 240 x 319 mm. Switzerland, private collection

Würzburg 1996). This is clearly a theme that will go on being discussed.

Chalk drawings

Catherine Whistler's article ('Aspects of Domenico Tiepolo's early career', *Kunstchronik*, August 1993, 385-98) has led to some far-reaching proposals concerning the function of the chalk drawings (Würzburg 1996, *passim*). To be very brief, the consensus now seems to be that the detailed chalk drawings related to the works of Giambattista are not copies, but *disegni operativi*, sometimes given to Giambattista, but more often to Domenico, according to the eye of the beholder. This leads to the conclusion that Domenico played a con-

siderable, but somewhat ill-defined role in the execution of the frescoes of Ca' Labia, supposedly dated 1747, and Würzburg, and even those of the Villa Cordellina of 1744 (Barbara Mazza, in *CIST*). The clarification of the *giornate* at Würzburg (Matthias Staschull in Würzburg 1996; *CIST*) has led to objections to the proposals (Knox 1980) that these drawings may be related to the *giornate* (Massimo Bonelli, in *CIST*). I have already offered some brief comments on these developments ('Tiepolo in Würzburg', *Apollo*, April 1996, 62; 'Giandomenico Tiepolo: disegni', in Udine 1996, 39-40, 43-44). Valuable discussions about the chalk drawings of Lorenzo Tiepolo have been offered by Christel Thiem ('Lorenzo Tiepolo as a draughtsman', *Master Drawings*,

32/4, 1994, 315-50; in Würzburg 1996, 162-171; II, 114-119; and in *Ein Zeichnungsalbum der Tiepolo in Würzburg*, Munich 1996).

'La fortuna critica'

The rediscovery of Tiepolo in the 19th century was explored by Rosella Mamoli Zorzi, Stéphane Loire, and Nicolas Sainte Fare Garnot (CIST), but the whole story waits for a full treatment. It seems to begin with Prince Nicolai Yousouppoff (1751-1831) and his purchase of seven canvases for a Tiepolo room on the theme of 'Anthony and Cleopatra' for his palace in Saint Petersburg in 1800 (Knox 1979). The Yousouppoff catalogue of 1834 lists a substantial group of smaller Tiepolo canvases, apart from the two surviving items from the 1800 purchase which are still at Archangelskoye (Gemin & Pedrocco, 379, 380). The Orloff Album of Tiepolo drawings (Knox 1961) may apparently be traced back to Gregory Vladimirovitch Orloff (1777-1826).

The revival of interest in Tiepolo in France seems to be linked with the rather shadowy figure of Camille Rogier, whose possessions were sold in Paris in 1896 (Knox 1960, 8). He inspired M. Fayet to buy the album of large religious drawings by Domenico in Venice in 1833 (Knox in Udine 1996, 51), and later persuaded him to bequeath the 'Receuil Fayet' to the Louvre. Rogier's name is also linked with M. Luzarches of Tours (*ibid.*), and his similar holding of 'large religious drawings', which may have been acquired in Venice at much the same time. According to de Chennevières, Rogier was also a friend of 'le vieux comte Corniani degli Algarotti' who sold nine albums of Tiepolo drawings to Edward Cheney (1803-84) in 1852. However Cheney's first purchase of Tiepolo drawings is recorded in 1842. All these were sold in the Cheney sale at Sotheby's in 1885, and at the similar sale of paintings at Christie's in the same year, it became clear that Cheney had purchased at least two Tiepolo ceilings, those now at Pasadena and Canberra (Gemin & Pedrocco, 364, 381) and a number of sketches.

In the later 1850s it seems that the Rothschild family purchased the ceiling from the Palazzo

Vecchia in Vicenza and installed it in the Château de Ferrières, near Paris (Knox 1980). At the same time they no doubt acquired one, if not both of the two sketches for the Russian 'Anthony and Cleopatra', which had been so much admired by Fragonard at the Palazzo Vecchia. They also bought other Tiepolo ceilings, among them one from the Ca' Manin which recently made a sensational appearance on the art market at the Zitelte in Venice in 1992 (Succi, *Uno straordinario capolavoro commissionato nel 1748 per il Palazzo Dolfin Manin a Rialto*, Milan, Galleria Salomon 1992). Around 1860 the five canvases from Ca' Barbaro passed into a French collection, and later, from 1874 until 1893, they passed to Isaac de Camondo (Stéphane Loire in CIST), before being dispersed. In 1870 Ca' Dolfin lost its magnificent set of Tiepolo canvases to Vienna, and in the early 1890s the Villa Contarini at Mira lost its frescoes to M. André (Nicolas Sainte Fare Garnot and Cristina Gianini in CIST). Now Berwind and Vanderbilt appear on the scene, buying the canvases by Pellegrini and others from Ca' Corner and Ca' Pisani for 'The Elms' (Knox 1979) and 'The Marble House' at Newport, Rhode Island, and for Biltmore at Asheville, North Carolina (Knox 1995). It is a sad story, but one that deserves telling in full.

George Knox

Exhibitions:

The Mask of Venice. Masking, theatre, and identity in the art of Tiepolo and his time. Berkeley, CA., University Art Museum, 11.12.1996-2.3.1997. Cat. by James Steward.

Kalkül und Phantasie. Giovanni Battista Tiepolo und sein Atelier. Werke im Berliner Kupferstichkabinett. Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, 30.11.1996-2.3.1997; Cappenberg, Schloß Cappenberg, 24.4.-15.6.1997. Cat. by Hein Th. Schulze Alt cappenberg, Berlin, Gebr. Mann 1996.

Tiepolo and his circle. Cambridge, Mass., The Fogg Art Museum, 15.10.-15.12.1996; New York, NY, The Pierpont Morgan Library, 15.1.1996-13.4.1997. Cat. by Bernard Aikema, English and Italian editions.

Five Centuries of European Drawings: the former collection of Franz Koenigs. Moscow, Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, 2.10.1995-21.1.1996. Cat. in English.

Tiepolo in Holland: works by Giambattista Tiepolo and his circle in Dutch collections. Rotterdam, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, 17.8.-20.10.1996. Cat. by Bernard Aikema & Marguerite Tuijn (in English).

Tiepolo und die Zeichenkunst Venedigs im 18. Jh. Stuttgart, Württ. Staatsgalerie, 7.12.1996-16.2.1997; Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, 12.3.-11.5.1997. Cat. by Corinna Höper and Uwe Westfehling.

Giambattista Tiepolo: Forme e Colori. La Pittura del Settecento in Friuli. Udine, Chiesa di San Francesco, 14.9.-31.12.1996. Cat. by Giuseppe Bergamini.

Giandomenico Tiepolo: Maestria e Gioco, disegni dal mondo. Udine, Castello, 14.9.-31.12.1996; Bloomington, Ind., University Art Museum, 15.1.-9.3.1997. Cat. by Adelheid M. Gealt & George Knox, Italian and English editions.

Giambattista Tiepolo 1696-1996. Venice, Museo del Settecento, Ca' Rezzonico, 6.9.-8.12.1996; New York, NY, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 24.1.-27.4.1997. Cat. Italian and English editions.

Der Himmel auf Erden. Tiepolo in Würzburg. Würzburg, Residenz, 15.2.-19.5.1996. Cat. ed. by Peter O. Krückmann

Tiepolo. Vom Umgang mit einem Erbe. Würzburg, Otto-Richter-Kunsthalle, 8.6.-7.7.1996.

Georg Anton Urlaub, ein fränkischer Maler im Banne Tiepolos. Würzburg, Mainfränkisches Museum, 24.4.-23.6.1996. Cat.: Mainfränk. Heft, 95, 1996 der Freunde Mainfränkischer Kunst und Geschichte e. V

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Massimo Gemin, Filippo Pedrocchi, *Giambattista Tiepolo. I dipinti. Opera completa*, Venice, Arsenale 1993

George Knox, 'Francesco Guardi in the studio of Giambattista Tiepolo', in: *Atti del congresso su Guardi*, November 1993 (forthcoming)

George Knox, *Antonio Pellegrini, 1675-1741*, Oxford, Clarendon 1995

George Knox, 'Tiepolo in Würzburg', *Apollo*, April 1996, 62

George Knox, 'Giambattista Tiepolo in Baltimore: a painting in search of a subject', *Apollo*, May 1996, 15-17

George Knox, 'The drawings of Giustino Menescardi', *ARTE/documento*, X, 1996, 206-220

George Knox, 'Tiepolo in Venice', *Apollo*, November 1996, 53-54

Matthias Kunze, exh. cat. *Vorbild Tiepolo: Die Zeichnungen des Franz Martin Kuen aus dem Museum Weissenhorn*, Weissenhorn 1992

Federico Montecuccoli degli Erri, 'Domenico e Antonio Guardi e i loro patroni', in: Filippo Pedrocchi e Federico Montecuccoli degli Erri, *Antonio Guardi*, Milan, Berenice 1992, 7-66; Federico Montecuccoli degli Erri, 'Giambattista e la sua famiglia: nuove pagine di vita privata', *Ateneo veneto*, 32, 1994, 7-42

Giovanni Murerati, *La famiglia dei Tiepolo a Mirano, in sedici atti notarili inediti, settembre 1762-agosto 1778*, Documenti Miranesi 2, Comune di Mirano 1963

Giovanni Murerati, *I beni patrimoniali dei Tiepolo tra Venezia e Mirano, in quindici atti notarili inediti, aprile 1763-marzo 1767*, Documenti Miranesi 4, Comune di Mirano 1994

Giovanni Murerati, *La successione testamentaria di Giovambattista Tiepolo*, Documenti Miranesi 5, Comune di Mirano 1996

Giuseppe Maria Pilo, 'Per la giovinezza di Giovan Battista Tiepolo', *ARTE/documento*, X, 1996, 110-190

Pietro Scarpa, 'Rosalba Carriera: un ritratto a olio di Giambattista Tiepolo', *ARTE/documento*, X, 1996, 197-203

Karl Stählin, *Zapiski Jacoba Stalina ob iziatchnyk i musstvah v Russia*, ed. K. V. Malinovskii, Moscow 1990

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