

tion, suggesting that 'from the fresco of the Fall and Expulsion onward [. . .] Michelangelo freed himself of the Vatican theologians'. Elsewhere, he even claims that Botticelli insinuated a contemporary reference into the most obviously puzzling episode in the chapel – the prominent temple sacrifice in the *Temptation of Christ*. This would appear to be the sacrifice for the purification of a leper described in Leviticus, in which one bird is killed and the other escapes – a parallel, Pfeiffer ingeniously argues, to the fate of the two Medici brothers attacked in the cathedral of Florence by the Pazzi conspirators (identified as the three young men, one of whom has a dagger, on the far left of the painting).

Pfeiffer otherwise draws on theological sources rather than contemporary history, principally the colour symbolism of Pseudo-Hugh of St Victor and the *Liber concordiae* of Joachim of Fiore. On the basis of the former he argues that a single colour code operates throughout the painted decoration in which red signifies love, green hope, white faith, blue heavenly contemplation, silver eloquence, violet penitence, and so on. As the colourless drapery of the newly resurrected dead in the *Last Judgment* implies, colour and meaning go together, but the need for formal variety is often the stronger imperative. For example, on the side walls, Christ always wears red and blue, while Moses on the opposite wall always wears golden yellow and green, with the result that the other figures (including both God the Father and the Egyptian taskmaster) often appear in contrasting reds and blues as well. Christ wears traditional colours replete with theological significance, but when the Egyptian taskmaster wears similar colours they do not have the same meaning, or, in all probability, any meaning at all.

Pfeiffer's reluctance to leaven his learning with even a hint of scepticism is equally evident in the case of Joachim. There are obvious generic similarities between the organisation of the ceiling and the Joachite way of conceiving history as a linear progression foreshadowed in the events of the Old Testament, foretold by the prophets, and calibrated by generations of the ancestors of Christ. Specific parallels are striking but few, and it is therefore difficult to know how far to push a Joachite interpretation of the iconography. Pfeiffer is very confident, using Joachim to explain the distribution and depiction of the ancestors across six bays of the chapel, specific gestures in the creation of Adam, and the arrangement of several figures in the *Last Judgment*.

On the other hand, Pfeiffer makes little of Joachim's central idea of the Trinitarian division of history. Yet this symbolism would not have been foreign to the artist himself, for as Marco Collareta has pointed out, the artist's personal sign of three interlocking circles, which by the time of his death was interpreted as the unity of the three professions of painting, sculpture and architecture, was derived from Joachim's figure of the three *status* of Father, Son and Holy Spirit which

also influenced Dante.

Somewhere during Michelangelo's long life, this Trinitarian symbol acquired a new, specifically artistic significance. It is tempting to see the ceiling, which divides the stories from Genesis into three groups and proceeds from God the Father's painterly division of light from darkness, waters from firmament, through the sculptural climax of the formation of Adam and Eve (the types of Christ and the Church), to the building work of Noah (who sends forth the dove from the ark – the type of the procession of the Holy Spirit) and his family, who construct the altar, the ark and a shelter for the drunken patriarch, as an unconscious step towards the reinterpretation of this threefold pattern. Were this so, it would be a good example of the way in which theology fades imperceptibly into art.

Del piacere della virtù. Paolo Veronese, Alessandro Magno e il patriziato veneziano. By Claudia Terribile. 150 pp. incl. 66 b. & w. ills. (Marsilio, Venice, 2009), €24. ISBN 978-88-317-9800-6.

Reviewed by XAVIER F. SALOMON

IN 1978, to mark Cecil Gould's retirement as Keeper, the National Gallery in London organised a display of Veronese's *Family of Darius before Alexander* (Fig. 32) – the painting Ruskin had described as 'the most precious Paul Veronese in the world'. X-rays of the canvas were exhibited next to it and the small exhibition was accompanied by a booklet written by Gould.¹ In it, he admitted that 'for so marvellous – and so large – a picture we are, nevertheless, frustratingly ill informed of the circumstances of its origin'. Gould proposed that the *Family of Darius* had been painted for the Palazzo Pisani at Este during the autumn of 1573, when Veronese was recuperating after his interrogation by the Inquisition. The suggestion sparked a fierce exchange of opinions between Richard Cocks and Gould in the pages of this Magazine.² This represented the first serious attempt to understand and discuss the historical events surrounding the creation of Veronese's canvas.

In Goethe's account of his visit to Venice in the autumn of 1786, he mentioned only one painting, the *Family of Darius*. In his *Italienische Reise*, Goethe described his visit to Palazzo Pisani Moretta, where he admired the painting, and reported on the legend that Veronese had been a guest of the Pisani's for some time, and in gratitude for their hospitality, had painted in secret the *Family of Darius*, rolled it up and left it under his bed as a gift. The story was a celebrated one and flourished with further embellishments. For Antoine Joseph Dezallier d'Argenville – the first to refer to the story – Veronese had taken refuge in the Palazzo Pisani at Este during a violent thunderstorm; for later writers the painter was recovering from a bad fall from a horse, or escaping the

Inquisition. As unlikely as these events can seem, Gould was still dependent on them and his account of the painting was reasonably queried by Cocks. As Nicholas Penny has recently written, 'it is unlikely that Veronese could have found a suitable canvas waiting for him, unlikely that he would have been able to work on such a large painting in secret, unlikely that he would have rolled it up while still wet, and very unlikely that any bed would have been large enough to conceal it'. Ridolfi mentioned the painting – in the Palazzo Pisani in Venice – in 1648 and, before that, in 1632, Giovanni Antonio Massani had written about it in a letter to Cardinal Francesco Barberini, in which he listed paintings by Veronese that he thought could be on the market. The *Family of Darius* was for Massani 'a most beautiful thing, and worthy of a Prince'.³

Following Gould's and Cocks's speculations regarding the canvas, Claudia Terribile's impeccable research on the painting – already partly presented in an article – provides key pieces of evidence finally to understand for whom, when and why the *Family of Darius* was painted.⁴ Penny's recent catalogue of the National Gallery's Venetian paintings repeatedly cites Terribile's arguments and pays homage to her archival discoveries.⁵ Both Penny and Terribile have produced exhaustive accounts of the painting, which will be of immense help for future studies on the picture and on Veronese. Terribile's book expands on her previous article and looks at the *Family of Darius* comprehensively, and Penny's catalogue entry is so detailed and thorough that it could be published as an independent booklet (much longer than Gould's of 1978).

Terribile's book is divided into two parts. The first deals with the original commission, context and history of the painting, while the second focuses on its iconography and meaning. By navigating through the family trees of various branches of the Pisani family, the author identified the patron of the canvas, Francesco Pisani (1514–67), and the painting's original location, in the Palazzo Pisani at Montagnana, designed by Palladio. This had been tentatively suggested in the 1930s, but Terribile provides further proof to confirm it.⁶ When Francesco died, without children, he left his property to his cousin Zan Mattio, and through him to his heirs, whom he wished would assume the first name Francesco in his honour. In 1568 a lawsuit was underway between Zan Mattio and Francesco's widow, Marietta Molin, who had been effectively disinherited. Zan Mattio complained that Marietta, in an attempt to regain her husband's property, tried 'even to remove the canvases and iron [fixtures] of the most precious picture of the story of Alexander the Great', providing a *terminus ante quem* for Veronese's painting. The picture is reasonably dated by Terribile (and by Penny) to the mid-1560s. Francesco must have been an important patron of both Palladio and Veronese, and the contract for Veronese's early *Transfiguration* for the high altar of the cathedral of Montagnana was signed in

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Pisani's house in 1555.

While Terribile and Penny agree that the *Family of Darius* was painted for the Palazzo Pisani at Montagnana, they do not attempt to identify the specific room in which the canvas was displayed. The building still retains its original Palladian plan, and a visit to the palace makes it clear that Veronese's large canvas could have only been painted for one of the two side walls of the main *sala* on the *piano nobile*.⁷ The picture was probably on the left wall; the visitor would have entered the room and followed the direction of the narrative, proceeding, like Darius' women, towards Alexander. The painting is lit from the right, which is fitting considering that the only source of light in the *sala* are the three large windows on the end wall, to the right of the picture. The presence of two small – original – doors in the middle of the walls indicates that the *Family of Darius* was displayed above them, at a certain height, and was intended to be seen *di sotto in su*. An analogous arrangement appears in Battista Zelotti's, almost contemporary, frescos for the main *sala* of Villa Emo at Fanzolo, where scenes of the *Continence of Scipio* and the *Sacrifice of Virginia* were painted on the side walls, above doors. It seems unlikely that the wall opposite the *Family of Darius* would have been left empty, and Francesco Pisani's death in 1567 might account for the lack of a pendant canvas, by Veronese or by another artist.

Terribile rightly argues for the importance of *terrafirma* commissions for Veronese in the 1550s and 1560s. Many of his Venetian patrons – Francesco Pisani but also, for example, Marcantonio and Daniele Barbaro – lived in the countryside (at Montagnana and at Maser) and only occasionally resided in Venice in rented apartments. The *Family of Darius* was probably only moved to Venice after 1629, when the Pisani bought their palace on the Grand Canal. It was eventually sold in 1857 to the National Gallery by Vettore Pisani. The events surrounding the acquisition – fully discussed by Penny in his catalogue – provoked Lord Elcho's parliamentary attack on what he absurdly perceived as a 'second-rate specimen [. . .] of a second-rate artist' and resulted in Otto Mündler's dismissal as the Gallery's travelling agent.

The painting represents the celebrated event following Alexander the Great's defeat of Darius, King of Persia, at the Battle of Issus. Sisigambis, Darius' mother, together with the queen, Stateira, and her two daughters, make obeisance to their victor, but in doing so mistake Hephaestion – Alexander's closest friend – for Alexander. As a eunuch makes this mistake apparent to the queens of Persia, Alexander magnanimously forgives them. It is a rare subject in paintings before Veronese and the artist himself had tackled the theme once before in the, now destroyed, frescos for the Villa Soranza. In its composition, Veronese's painting looks back to Sodoma's fresco for Agostino Chigi's bedroom at the Farnesina in Rome. This seems to confirm that the painter did indeed travel to Rome in 1560. The Renaissance taste for Alexander was directly



32. *Family of Darius before Alexander*, by Paolo Veronese. c.1565. Canvas, 236.2 by 474.9 cm. (National Gallery, London).

related to the discovery and translation of texts by ancient authors, these sources stressing Alexander's magnificence and liberality rather than only his military deeds, and presenting him as an avid reader of Homer and, most importantly, as Aristotle's illustrious pupil. Alexander became an *exemplum virtutis* to be emulated by a modern public. The episode of Alexander and Darius' women was the epitome and *summa* of his virtuous behaviour. Veronese, however, is not faithful to any of the ancient sources. While generally most closely following Valerius Maximus' account of the episode, he adapts the events for his grandiose composition. Terribile is surely right in pointing out that the artist combined the well-known episode with a subsequent one, when Alexander and Hephaestion take Darius' daughters, Stateira and Dripeti, as wives. Veronese's pictorial intelligence manifests itself in the painting, where the viewer is confronted with the same dilemma as Darius' women. Which one is Alexander? Terribile and Penny settle for the general (probably correct) view that the young man in red is Alexander, pointing to Hephaestion to his left. But some scholars believe the man in crimson to be Hephaestion indicating the rightful ruler.⁸ Surely the fact that modern viewers still debate the issue is a proof of Veronese's wit.

In discussing the painting's narrative, Terribile pays homage to David Rosand's reading of the canvas. She coins the definition of 'ethical hedonism', agreeing with Jean Paul Richter that the subject of the picture 'was evidently conceived to serve as an example to be emulated by the Venetian nobility, and especially by the Pisani family and by their descendants'.⁹ Gould had described the *Family of Darius* as a 'paean to nobility: nobility of spirit, of race, of conduct, of setting'. The iconography of the painting reflects Pisani's view of his family's nobility and his wish to set an example for future generations.

One of the most difficult issues regarding the painting is the supposed presence of portraits. William Hazlitt described it as a 'family-picture', and Richter, followed by subsequent scholars, believed that 'the heads are portraits taken from life. They evidently represent Venetian patricians and, according to tradition, they are members of the distinguished Pisani family'. Penny, on the other

hand, concluded that this is 'more probably the ideal family of Veronese's imagination', and that none of the characters is meant to be recognisable. Terribile suggests that the man behind Alexander might be 'a portrait of Veronese in disguise: bohemian look and manner, pride and dignity in displaying and inscribing his own excellence in the aura of Alexander's glorious and immortal one'. It seems unlikely that the man in armour is Veronese, and he does not look like other (presumed) images of the painter. The only figure that seems to be a possible portrait is the old man in blue behind Darius' family. Often confused with Darius (who was not present at the event), he also is an implausible eunuch. He is most likely the patron himself, Francesco Pisani, centrally placed as an external, yet vital, actor on the stage, like Tommaso Rangone in Tintoretto's canvases for the Scuola di S. Marco.

Following the iconographical tradition of the University of Venice, Terribile identifies the significance of every figure, animal and object in the painting. This is the weakest part of her argument. While the overall presentation of the meaning of the painting is well argued and convincing, she seems to give too much prominence to some of the features in it. The horses refer to animal instincts and their taming, the dwarf represents everything bad and evil, the monkey is a symbol of female lust, while even the siren on the shield to the right is 'a special space' for Veronese 'to lay claim to the prerogatives of his profession, glorify his art, state his own intellectual autonomy'. It is more tempting, however, to believe that even though the painting was carefully and intelligently planned to provide an important message, many of its details were purely decorative. The youngest princess – who Goethe described as 'a pretty little mouse with a defiant expression' who 'looks as if she was not at all pleased at coming last' – seems to be more worried about her toy-dogs, which a court dwarf is shielding from the nearby monkey, than about her family's tragic reversal of fortune. Surely this is a witty vignette that cannot be charged with a substantial meaning. The monkey is interesting in itself as an animal. As noticed before, the same exact creature appears in other paintings by Veronese, most notably in the *Feast in the*

house of Simon in the Galleria Sabauda in Turin, in the Sala dell'Olimpo at Villa Barbaro at Maser, in *Sebastian exhorting Marcellus and Marcellianus to go to their martyrdom* in S. Sebastiano in Venice and in the *Feast of Gregory the Great* at Monte Berico in Vicenza. This is a very specific animal, faithfully represented, and it is worth considering that Veronese may have portrayed a precise monkey, owned maybe by one of his patrons – possibly a diplomatic gift from the East.

Thanks to Terribile's research – and to Penny's exemplary catalogue entry – the *Family of Darius* has come out of the historical fog, which still shrouded it only thirty years ago. Such a fundamental and beautiful picture deserves so much attention and study. What Henry James wrote about the painting holds true to this day: 'You may walk out of the noon-day dusk of Trafalgar Square in November, and in one of the chambers of the National Gallery see the family of Darius rustling and pleading and weeping at the feet of Alexander. Alexander is a beautiful young Venetian in crimson pantaloons, and the picture sends a glow into the cold London twilight. You may sit before it for an hour and dream you are floating to the water-gate of the Ducal Palace'.

¹ C. Gould: 'The Family of Darius before Alexander' by Paolo Veronese. A résumé, some new deductions and some new facts, London 1978.

² R. Cocke: 'Veronese's "Family of Darius" at the National Gallery', *THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE* 120 (1978), pp.325–29; and C. Gould: 'Veronese and "The Family of Darius"', *ibid.* 120 (1978), p.603.

³ W.L. Barcham and C.R. Puglisi: 'Paolo Veronese e la Roma dei Barberini', *Saggi e memorie di storia dell'arte* 25 (2001), pp.57–87.

⁴ C. Terribile: 'La "Famiglia di Dario" di Paolo Veronese: la committenza, il contesto, la storia', *Venezia Cinquecento* 15 (2005), pp.63–107.

⁵ N. Penny: *National Gallery Catalogues. The Sixteenth Century Italian Paintings. Volume II. Venice 1540–1600*, London 2008.

⁶ B. Brunelli and A. Callegari: *Ville del Brenta e degli Euganei*, Milan 1931, p.337.

⁷ I would like to thank the owner of the palace for allowing me to visit the interior of the house in September this year.

⁸ For this reading, see J. Fletcher: 'Review of "Painting in Renaissance Venice" by Peter Humfrey', *THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE* 138 (1996), p.135.

⁹ J.P. Richter: "'The Family of Darius" by Paolo Veronese', *ibid.* 62 (1933), pp.181–83.

Le 'Stanze' di Guido Reni: Disegni del maestro e della sua scuola. By Babette Bohn, with a preface by Charles Dempsey. 235 pp. incl. 116 col. + 83 b. & w. ills. (Leo S. Olschki, Florence, 2008), €48. ISBN 978–88–222–5777–2.

Reviewed by CATHERINE JOHNSTON

AS THE TITLE suggests, this catalogue of an exhibition of drawings from the Uffizi examines the graphic *œuvre* of Guido Reni and his

pupils. In addition it includes a handful of drawings by his teachers, Denys Calvaert and the three Carracci, and others by his contemporaries trained at Palazzo Farnese, who in turn assisted Reni in the execution of frescos for the Borghese in Rome. The selection of material was entrusted to the able hands of Babette Bohn, author of the catalogue raisonné of the drawings of Lodovico Carracci. There were a number of loans from other Italian institutions and the accompanying catalogue boasts a new, enlarged format reproducing drawings for the most part in colour. It features fifty-two sheets traditionally, and occasionally newly, attributed to Reni. Curiously, there is also a questionable cartoon for *Erigone* (cat. no.52) from an American private collection, taking us into the realm of tempera and oil when the inclusion of a drawing from the nearby Marucelliana Library, identified by a former Director of the Uffizi print room as Reni's proposal for the cupola of the Cappella Paolina in S. Maria Maggiore, would have better served the argument.¹

A similar number of drawings are devoted to Reni's assistants Gessi, Sementi and the faithful Sirani, as well as to other, lesser-known pupils who passed through his studio, however briefly. It is no secret that none of these artists attained the status of the master. When this reviewer prepared an earlier catalogue of Bolognese drawings at the Uffizi (1973), few of Reni's students were yet studied. The exceptions were Simone Cantarini of Pesaro and Domenico Maria Canuti, the first a prolific draughtsman favouring red chalk with a surprisingly fertile imagination who died prematurely; the second a ceiling fresco painter of renown both in Rome and Bologna. They are still the only ones to have risen above provincial status, with the possible exception of Cagnacci who finished his days in Vienna, but who is ill-represented in this catalogue. Nevertheless, it is in the work of the pupils that the novelty of the selection lies, in that Reni's drawings are already known through exhibitions in Vienna² and Frankfurt³ and various articles published in this Magazine.⁴ In the intervening years much literature has appeared on these Bolognese followers, most of it local, but faithfully cited by Bohn in her entries. Not all the students were slavish imitators seeing things only through their master's eyes as the name of the Italian optometrist, *Guidoreni vision group*, might suggest. Rather, drawings by Cervi, Savonanzi, Tamburini, Boulanger, Brunetti, Bolognini, Cittadini and Canuti display an independent spirit perhaps due to the fact that the artists moved on from the immediate sphere of Reni's influence. An appendix comprises seventy-six drawings with summary entries, all of them illustrated.

Given the nature of much of the Uffizi material emanating from Bologna over a relatively short period, and the current print room Director's long experience in Bologna, it might have been helpful to address the question of the makers and suppliers of paper in that city, systematically recording paper

marks where discernible.

Some comments on specific works follow:

no.6: *Study for St Catherine in the 'Coronation of the Virgin'*.

No wheel is indicated for the saint, yet the arm and drapery beneath it seem to be supported by something as in the painting, where the wheel is evident, suggesting this may be a copy after it. No other red-chalk drawing by Reni is known from so early a date.

no.15: *Study for a prophet in the Cappella dell'Annunziata, Palazzo del Quirinale*. A copy.

no.17: *Nude half figure for the 'Triumph of Narses' fresco in the Cappella Paolina, S. Maria Maggiore*. By comparison with no.18, the softer and looser handling of the chalk points to a later period in the artist's career, perhaps at the time of the painting the *Fall of the giants*.

no.53: *Fall of the giants*. A recently discovered drawing for the same subject in black chalk on blue paper⁵ is more typical of Reni's hand and must date earlier in the creative process than this drier, more finished study in red chalk for the woodcut by Coriolanus.

no.55: *Study for Ariadne*. It is regrettable that this splendid red-chalk study was not reproduced in colour.

no.69: *Four male nude figures suspended in air*. Whether by Reni or Sementi, this group of intertwined figures is in direct relation to those in the upper right of Philippe Thomassin's engraving of *Rebel angels*, but in reverse.⁶

no.72: *Presentation study for the pediment fresco on the façade of S. Maria del Baraccano*. Stylistically this finished design strongly resembles the hand of Francesco Brizio and compares well with a pen study of the same subject in Stockholm there given to him.⁷ Perhaps a clue to the confusion over authorship can be found in the inscription on the verso of another sheet from the same source 'Disegno della facciata del portico del Barachano fatta rifare [. . .] l'anno 1621 / fatta dal Gessi', suggesting that climate had damaged the original fresco which thus required repainting.

no.104: *Study for Nessus and Dejanira*. A surprisingly vigorous study in wash for G.A. Sirani's painting of the subject.

nos.106 and 107: *An elderly bearded man looking up to the left* and *An elderly bearded man looking downwards left*: two fine head studies in black chalk also by Sirani.

no.111: *Draped female head study for the 'Allegory of Earth' fresco at S. Michele in Bosco*. A rare occasion when Canuti exhibits an obvious debt to Reni through his delicate handling of red and black chalks.

Appendix no.31: *Seated youth seen from behind*. Could this be the sheet Ranuzzi described as 'Bella fig.a, in schiena.lapis rosso/di Guido' (p.578v, no.55)? While Michael Jaffé published the drawing as Reni (and indicated a copy after it in Copenhagen), the present reviewer proposes instead it is by Cavalier d'Arpino (and not Boulanger as advanced in the catalogue).

¹ A. Forlani Tempesti: 'Guido Reni, Cerano, Giovanni di San Giovanni: tre schede seicenteschi . . .', *Antichità Viva* 33/5 (1994), p.43, fig.1.

² V. Birke: exh. cat. *Guido Reni: Zeichnungen*, Vienna (Albertina) 1981; reviewed in this Magazine, 123 (1981), pp.573–77.

³ S. Ebert-Schifferer, A. Emiliani and E. Schleier, eds.: exh. cat. *Guido Reni und Europa; Ruhm und Nachruhm*, Frankfurt am Main (Schirn Kunsthalle) 1988; reviewed in this Magazine, 131 (1989), p.168.

⁴ Most recently, see A. Sutherland Harris: 'Guido Reni's Royal patrons: a drawing and a proposal', *THE BURLINGTON MAGAZINE* 151 (2009), pp.156–59.

⁵ M.T. Caracciolo in G. Bora: *I disegni del Codice Bonola del Museo Nazionale di Belle Arti di Santiago di Cile*, Rome 2008, no.32.

⁶ M. Bury: exh. cat. *The Print in Italy 1550–1620*, London (British Museum) 2001, no.101.

⁷ P. Bjurström et al.: *Italian Drawings: Florence, Siena,*