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A Newly Discovered Drawing by Giambattista Tiepolo in Adelaide

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WHEN DA CANAL wrote in 1732 that the drawings of Giambattista Tiepolo are held in such high estimation that they are sent to far distant countries¹ he could not, of course, have realized that some of these would one day be kept, in high esteem, in Australia.

The public collections of Australia have two fine Tiepolo oils, the *Banquet of Cleopatra* in the National Gallery of Victoria, and the *Marriage Allegory of the Cornaro Family* in the Australian National Gallery, Canberra.² Also, less well known, are a small number of drawings: the Art Gallery of New South Wales has a pen and wash figure of a man in a cap and cloak,³ the National Gallery of Victoria a similar caricature of a man, as well as a fine chalk portrait of a bearded soldier after Veronese, and a pen and wash composition of *St. Prosdocimus Baptizing S. Giustina*,⁴ and the Art Gallery of South Australia at Adelaide in addition to recently purchasing a late chalk study, *St. Peter of Alcantara*,⁵ has discovered among its holdings an early finished composition in pen and ink of *St. Jerome in the Desert* (Pl. 19). The *St. Jerome* is a large work, 45.0 x 29.5 cms., with black underdrawing, pen and ink wash and white highlights, on brown paper.

The provenance of this drawing is unknown before 1908 when one David Murray, an Adelaide businessman, bequeathed it to the Gallery. He had purchased numbers of prints and drawings throughout Europe and particularly in Italy in the nineteenth century, but no records of his buying survive.

This drawing can be added to the number of images of *St. Jerome* made by Tiepolo early in his career: the three paintings now in Chicago, Stuttgart, and Milan⁶ and a number of drawings—in Bassano,⁷ Paris⁸ and Trieste⁹—as well as an early etching.¹⁰ All these works, if dated at all, are placed in the 1720's to early 1730's by various scholars¹¹ and the Adelaide

some drawings, but more particularly because, it was found that the heads of the girls have been altered so that they all have the unusually large noses which are typical of his work. As regards the date of the drawing there is no evidence, except that it must have been made after Colombel's return from Rome, as the picture had been in Paris since it was painted in 1647 and sent to Pointel.¹⁰

1. "Nicolas Colombel," *Revue de l'Art*, 9, 1970, p. 27.
2. The drawing measures 361 x 257 mm., and is in black chalk, heightened with white, on brownish paper.
3. L. Memries, *The Saints in Italy*, London, 1924, p. 209.
4. *ibid.* p. 349.
5. Blunt, *op. cit.*, figs. 4, 5, representing *Christ Healing the Blind and Christ Driving the Traders out of the Temple*.
6. *Ibid.*, fig. 10.
7. The drawing measures 206 x 164 mm., and is in red chalk with white chalk.
8. Inventory 706; Blunt, *Critical Catalogue*, London, 1966, no. 13.
9. This is probably the version in the Loewenfeld sale of 1897 (copy no. 2 in my catalogue) which was previously at Schloss Kyburg, near Winterthur. It measures 73 x 91 cms.
10. After Pointel's death in 1660 it was bought by the duc de Richelieu who sold it to Louis XIV in 1665.

drawing stylistically conforms with this. The finished composition, the chalk underdrawing with wash and white highlights, the sightless eyes,¹² and the slight faltering of some of the parts—despite the freedom of handling of most of the work—all relate to the other versions of this subject dated up to ca. 1732.

St. Jerome in the desert was a consistently popular figure with Venetian painters of the sixteenth century who often exploited the possibility of the wilderness for their interest in brooding landscapes. The discovery of this drawing confirms Tiepolo's interest in this subject and in turn is another instance of his continuation of the traditions of his forebears.¹³

1. Vincenzo Da Canal, *Vita di Gregorio Lazzarini* (1732) published by G. A. Moschini, Venice, 1809, p. 32: "già i di lui disegni sono in tanta estimazione, che ne spedi de' libri a' più lontani paesi."
2. *The Banquet of Cleopatra* is frequently published and is among Tiepolo's most famous paintings. *The Marriage Allegory* is published by Ronald Millen, "The Tiepolo Ceiling," *Art and Australia*, 14, 3 & 4, pp. 265-69.
3. Art Gallery of New South Wales, *Bearded Man in Cap and Coat*, pen and wash, 232 x 143 mm.
4. All three are discussed in Harley Preston, "A New Drawing by Giovanni Battista Tiepolo," *Annual Bulletin of the National Gallery of Victoria*, IV, 1962, pp. 9-15; and the *Baptism* further by Jaynie Anderson in "The Subject of a Drawing by Giambattista Tiepolo Reconsidered," *Art Bulletin of Victoria*, 1973-74, pp. 14-19. The *Caricature* is in pen and wash, 217 x 130 mm.; the *Study of a Bearded Soldier* in black chalk with white on blue-gray paper, 292 x 210 mm., and *St. Prosdocimus Baptizing S. Giustina* in pen and wash, 324 x 267 mm.
5. Illustrated in Christie's sale catalogue, November 29, 1977, lot 80, and in *Master Prints and Drawings in the Collection of the Art Gallery of South Australia*, 1978, p. 33. In red and white chalk on gray paper, 54.3 x 32.9 cms.
6. *St. Jerome in the Desert*, Chicago, Art Institute; *The Communion of St. Jerome*, Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie; and *The Death of St. Jerome*, Milan, Museo Poldi Pezzoli.
7. Bassano, Museo Civico: *St. Jerome*, pen and wash, 400 x 265 mm. (see Antonio Morassi "Opere Giovanili del Tiepolo," *L'Arte* 15, 1944, pl. 14 et al.); and *St. Jerome in Prayer*, sanguine and wash, 223 x 293 mm. (see Aldo Rizzi, *Disegni del Tiepolo*, 1965, cat. no. 6).
8. Paris, Louvre, 5471: *St. Jerome*, pen and wash heightened with white on brown paper (see Detlev von Hadeln, *The Drawings of G. B. Tiepolo*, n.d., pl. 3).
9. Musei Civici di Trieste, 1868, and 1929: *Page of Sketches*, pen, and *St. Jerome in the Desert*, pen and wash (see Giorgio Vigni, *Disegni del Tiepolo*, 1972, nos. 3b & 22; pl. 3b contains a sketch for a very similar figure to the Adelaide one).
10. See Aldo Rizzi, *The Etchings of the Tiepolos*, 1971, cat. no. 1. The series of engravings made by Pietro Monaco for his *Raccolta . . . di pitture di storia sacra* includes a print of St. Hilary of Arles after a now lost drawing by Tiepolo (see George Knox, "A Group of Tiepolo Drawings Owned and Engraved by Pietro Monaco," *Master Drawings*, 1965, III, 4, fig. 2). In view of the number of St. Jerome subjects and the iconographic closeness of this engraving to them, it is possible to suggest that Monaco made a mistake with his title. Perhaps we have another of the Jerome subjects, miscalled.
11. Antonio Morassi, in his *Complete Catalogue of the Paintings of G. B. Tiepolo* of 1962, places the Chicago work as early as ca. 1722-25, and the Milan and Stuttgart versions in the early 1730's. Other scholars vary only marginally in the acceptance of these dates.
12. Both the type of composition and the technique relate to the designs used by Pietro Monaco, universally dated before 1732; and George Knox in his *Catalogue of Tiepolo Drawings in the Victoria and Albert Museum*, 1960, p. 12, refers to the very obvious "sightless eyes" of Tiepolo's early drawings.
13. The most pertinent examples are the paintings of St. Jerome in the desert by Veronese, and one especially, now in the National Gallery, Washington, is reminiscent of Tiepolo's versions, not only in the feeling for the general subject and the formal elements of light and atmosphere but also for some important details, notably the wooden fence behind the saint.



Plate 19 GIAMBATTISTA TIEPOLO. St. Jerome in the Desert.
Adelaide, Art Gallery of South Australia. (147)