

English Abstracts of essays in: "Myzelien" II (2018)

(translation Christiane Wrwa)

I) The Strategies of Young Tintoretto (2016)

The essay, intended as a contribution for the exhibition catalogues in Cologne 2017 and Paris 2018, examines the ambitious measures the young artist took in order to draw visual attention to himself either by presenting frescoes and unusually decorated altars in selected trouble spots of the city or by undercutting financial offers for the brotherhoods. After humble beginnings as decoration painter and "Madonnero" he gained the approval of his intellectual milieu by the *Miracle of the Slave* 1548, the promotion of Pietro Aretino and the more influential public and private clients of his society. Instead of combining the dramatic action as usual with a group portrait of dignitaries of the Scuola, he designs a provocative cross section through the artistic and intellectual elite by awarding grades in order of their favourable or hostile inclination towards himself – pretending to be the supposedly inferior but miraculously victorious slave: what followed was a well calculated tumult for the benefit of the new born star.

His insatiable greed for learning and knowledge, of technical and theoretical sources and models extended his intellectual preferences, a mimetic talent collected the artistic characteristic traits of forerunners like Dürer and Michelangelo or contemporaries like Pordenone, Bordone, Bonifacio, Schiavone, Veronese and of course, Titian, who is said to have sent him from the door of his workshop out of jealousy.

His study of religious sources bordering on the limits of unorthodox texts led him to produce daring iconographic experiments that will finally make him lose the earlier label of a gullible believer in the aims of the Counter-Reformation.

His unselfconsciousness in designing made him not only benefit from the influences of Tuscan and Roman mannerism or colleagues from the north but also expressions and techniques from a Byzantine background. So the Bamberg *Ascension of the Virgin* ended up as an uncommon "Unio mystica" in the north, while only the variation imitating Veronese could satisfy the clients of the Crociferi brotherhood

II) Robusti's Equipment for Drawing (2018)

In the oeuvre of Jacomo Tintoretto the methods of drawing in the process of making the paintings are relatively easy and traditional, but they are different in their cursive and fleeting manner due to the singular speed and impatience of the master. Only recent reflectograms, transmitted light photos and radiographies permit a more comprehensive picture of his actions which differ from the careful *disegno* of the Tuscans. The future collocation of a work with reference to lighting, perspective, proportionality of volume always has the highest priority. It is followed by a simple order of the canvas by partings and weightings by means of the Golden Sections, markings of vanishing points and often invisible networks of "piedi Veneziani", in which separate designs of figures in a Quadrettatura are inserted. In the framework of supposed early designs for theatrical stages and decorations for festive holidays, Jacomo created models from patterns in the books of Sebastiano Serlio for early experiments in space and scenes (for example backgrounds of biblical scenes). The

traditional use of puppets in clothing in illuminated stage boxes made the observation of flight positions and complicated figurations easier.

A consequent re-drawing of the virtual principles of design permits in many cases to exclude or convict foreign hands in the process of creation, to recognize the main focus of content in the composition and to reconstruct changes in size.

III) Tintoretto and the Pentimento (2009)

The innumerable pentimenti in the designing of his figures are due to the hurried rapidity of apostrophizing their outlines; but others were able to change the iconographic context: for example, in the *Ultima Cena* of San Marcuola, the female allegories of Fides and Caritas at the side are changed into secular servants, or in the *Ultima Cena* of San Polo, the administration of the eucharist with bread and wine, or rather: "in both forms" is changed by the overpainting of the chalice into a picture more suited to the Tridentinum. For the *Adultera Chigi* (and similar representations) the radiographically proved evolutionary changes in the architectural context are a proof of the priority of the spatial experiment over the content. Also the topics of *Susanna* or of *Venus, Vulcan and Mars* seem to have developed originally from motives of other topics.

IV) The measures of Tintoretto's Canvases (2006)

Tintoretto's moveable oeuvre has been preserved in its integrity only in very few cases: the rigours of the climate, adventurous transports, new framings into set decorative frames, the hanging and ordering principles of Baroque collections, restorations of obsolete ethics – all these have brought about irrecoverable losses to the stock of his work. Only his paintings in Venice that have survived in their original context (mostly Scuole) permit comparisons about their former size. The meticulous measuring of the works following the Venetian piedi-measures, the width of the used bales of the sorts of canvas (normal and diagonal weaving and frequent mixtures), and the precise graphic-geometrical breakdown of the compositions by analogous comparisons, workshop-traditions, study of sources and history of tradition, and finally the consulting of copies, graphic prints, repetitions of the workshop.

V) Tintoretto's House (1984)

It has escaped the notice of vivid historical writers of the 20th century, that Tintoretto could not have created his oeuvre together with a group of external assistants and family members in the present narrow Palazetto at the Rio della Sensa. His vanished workshop or *tezza* was situated in a rear building added at the north presumably making use of the more spacious entrance to the Palazzo Mastelli. The representation of an *Adultera* in Copenhagen shows this view from his former studio: painted by his son and heir Domenico, who assembled himself and the whole family in the picture – presumably as a gift for his sister, the novice Perina for her reception in the convent of St. Anna as a *ricordo* – the family under the pretext of a religious subject – the only permitted form of a private painting in the convent.

VI) The Cà Bolani Erizzo (2017)

Pietro Aretino lived in the Cà Bolani at the Canal Grande from 1529 until 1551, and he was Jacomo's first promotor – receiving paintings as his compensation. The two

paintings with subjects from musical theory, that - according to a letter from 1545 - the man of letters had built into the *Soffittà* of his Piano nobile are difficult to identify until the present day. A *Punizione di Marsia* - published by R. Palluchini in 1981 - today in the Palazzo Altieri in Rome - could cast doubt on the traditional classification of the eponymous painting in Hartford. The view - praised by Aretino - from the balcony of his house towards the Mercato di Rialto is even nowadays one of the most beautiful scenes of Venetian city life, it pleased the Futurist Marinetti in 1944, the builder of Scalzi-bridge Ravà as well as his descendants as happy inhabitants.

VII) Tintoretto - maître trompeur (2017)

History tells us that Tintoretto had developed an understanding of reality closer to the *trompe-l'oeil* (*piu vero que finto*), but this is hardly ever recognized, because his miniaturism at times seems to vanish before the impact of his great gestures. Some examples will complete the outlines of his character, giving proof of his tromperies, either in his business actions or in the sense of his painting, apart from his tendency to immortalize himself in portraits growing out of his religious striving for self-salvation, or to undermine several orthodox topics by a sense of humour. So he managed to deceive pious brethren of the Scuola, snoopers of the Inquisition, expert advisers in competitions, sever abbesses, the treasury, manipulated graphic models, usurped the style and composition of his painter colleagues, undercut his competitors, read forbidden religious literature, for instance like his family-bible in volgare by the Dominican Marmochino who was suspicious of heresy being a fervent Savonarolien.

VIII) Tintoretto and Dürer (2017)

For Tintoretto, as for so many artists of the 16th century, Dürer's graphic art served as an inspiration. Whereas so many smaller masters almost usurped the models, Robusti's adoptions consist of intelligent re-coinages, thematic disguises, laterally inverted allusions, but there is also an admiring omaggio of the great role model, whose traditional popularity suited so well to the wishes of Jacomo's rather popular patrons. His resort to more out-of-date compositions stems from an intention to be illustrating, just as the reminiscences of iconic Byzantine traditions correspond to a popular taste that remained familiar in Venice.

IX) Jacomo as Self-Promoter (2017)

Rembrandt has presumably left the highest number of self-portraits of any artist. They were used for the investigation of his whole being, of his mood, age and his fate. With Tintoretto, the situation is different, his *autoritrattistica* must have been a constant dialogue with his religious conscience. To commit himself to the divinity was a ritual of self-salvation that was meant to be secret, was perhaps well-founded in a guilty consciousness taking into account his revolutionary nature, his intransigent, reckless behaviour. His apocryphal portraits since the *Disputa* of Milano keep looking at us from multiple pictorial contexts, and they remain anonymous and contestable, as long as they cannot be revealed by psychology and hypostatized in iconological and pictorial geometric concepts. His self-portrait as *Jacobus maior* with the pilgrim's staff in the *Ascension of the Virgin* in Bamberg is as evident as the profile

looking straight at the altar in *Miracle of Bread and Fish* in the Scuola di San Rocco or in the great *Crucifixion* at that place, where the visual axis of a male profile meets Christ's nailing at the Cross along the exact horizontal partition. In the *Giudizio* of the Madonna dell'Orto, an angel - in the lowest right corner looking towards the former sepulchral tomb of the Episcopi and Robusti - saves a sinner from doom, whose features can be seen again in the *Marriage at Cana* in the Salute in the absolute centre of the painting looking at the spectator, or also in an analogous position as the lame man in the *Miracle of Augustinus* in Vicenza staring from the center bottom. Regarding these and also further examples just as entertaining anecdotes in guide-books of art, can only be accepted, if the complex psychogram of Jacomo is bluntly refused.

X) Ecce homicida (2016)

The essay examines the figure of *Judas* in the Last Supper paintings of San Marcuola, San Trovaso, San Polo and the Scuola grande di San Rocco with appendices to the *Ultima Cena* in St.François in Paris and in San Giorgio Maggiore as well as the *Lavanda dei Piedi* in Madrid and London, where the interest of criticism for Ischarioth is usually faded down. While in San Marcuola a traditional, almost Byzantine spirit can be seen, the drama in San Trovaso is completely set around the traitor and his emotions in the middle foreground. In San Polo, an original Judas receives the wine of the eucharist, but the heretic wine glass is exchanged for a morsel of bread and Judas put into the coat of an alms-giving disciple to do justice to the verdict of the Tridentinum. The *Ultima Cena* of the Scuola di San Rocco presents a half-hidden Judas in the pose of an attentive spectator of the distribution of the Host, while the *Lavanda* of the Prado lets him improperly go down to the floor in order to strip off his trousers. In London the *Lavanda* from San Trovaso shoves him to the right side, his look turned away. In San Giorgio, Domenico Tintoretto returns to the classical villain with quarrelsome gestures. Jacomo's treatment of Judas undergoes a psychological change which must be interpreted. It is perhaps not absurd to see in Jacomo's Judas a figure stimulating for self-analysis that exceptionally delighted his restless spirit.

XI) Jacomo fra i Dottori (2009)

Saint Jerome, favourite saint of Venice, seems to have been another leading figure for Jacomo, whose physical athleticism coupled with magnificent knowledge encouraged him to top-level representations. At a time of book-programs hostile to the Jews he did not shrink from showing the scholar with a recognizable *Tenach* in a portrait for a vote image of the Camerlenghi (today Accademia) - (the folio volumes in the *Disputa* of Milano are already incised with unambiguous right-to-left Hebrew initials). Perhaps Jacomo saw himself as the „atleta della fede“ of the *Vison of Mary* in the Ateneo Veneto as a book lover of elective affinities. The masterly study of St. Jerome makes us perhaps understand that Robusti must have felt a craving if not a justified elevation as a „pictor doctus“.

XII) Venus "measured out" (2000)

After his experiment with the dialogue "Des Vulkan paralleles Wesen" of 1994, Weddigen returns in a lecture to the Munich farce of *Venus Vulkan und Mars* and illustrates Tintoretto's image of women in the framework of *Venus-Venezia, celeste, terrena*, "Astrea" and "altra Roma" and so forth. With the aid of the accessory design

drawings in Berlin, the development of the composition is graphically and geometrically explained, and the *Leda*-variations in Florence are pointed out as humorous motives of comparison. Tintoretto the mocking satirist is supplemented as a characteristic person.

XIII) Une morale ovidisée (1988)

In the course of researches for *Venus, Vulkan und Mars* in Munich, a hypothetical model came into the foreground of W.'s pictorial analysis: the *September frescos* of the Palazzo Schifanoia in Ferrara by Ercole Roberti. It seems to be not unlikely, that Giacomo Tintoretto, while on one of his journeys to Mantova on the river, might have stopped off in Ferrara, and thus became acquainted with the astrological illustrations there, particularly as the appropriate literary sources were to be found in the library of his patron Tomaso Rangone.

XIV) Tintoretto's Susanna in Vienna (2009)

Jacomo's most popular painting of a woman *Susanna and the Elders* has usually been only a topic for incomplete, even pathetic interpretations of art history. Its deeper meaning, the allusions and the symbolisms are still waiting for explanation, no less than the complex *allegories* of the Atrio Quadrato. This essay attempts to throw light on the iconographic furnishings of the painting and thus prepare the way to further interpretations. The discussion treats the ideas of the five senses, the four platonic elements, the three transcendental concepts of the Good, the Beautiful and the True, the antithesis of sculpture and painting, of disegno and colour, space and time, *vita activa* and *contemplativa* and so forth.

XV) The Assunta of Bamberg (1985)

A single work of art has rarely attracted such undivided attention from several disciplines as Giacomo Tintoretto's *Ascension of the Virgin*, formerly in the Cathedral, today in the Upper Parish Church of Bamberg. In 1988, the Bavarian Office for the Preservation of Monuments published a report of 250 pages in their academic magazine about a preliminary symposium and the restoration, but this printing was not widely recognized, especially in Italy, where in 1994 the famous affiliated painting of the Chiesa di Santa Maria Assunta dei Gesuiti - formerly of the Crociferi - was restored without any reference to the rich results of the experts from Bamberg. The renewed publication of Erasmus Weddigen's essay wants to stimulate the reading of all other essays by F.Valkanover, R.Baumgärtel, H.v. Sonnenburg, M.Koller, E.Emmerling and others. The conclusion of these examinations will lead to a renewed debate of an earlier date of the painting, and the *teloni* of the Madonna dell'Orto must also be taken into account, because some details taken over directly connect the work of Bamberg with the equipment of the chancel in Venice.

Jacomo's use of the religious texts of Pietro Aretino, the inclusion of his self-portrait as Jacobus maior with the pilgrim's staff, the miniature representation of the „family bible“ of the Robusti - a Volgare edition by the Dominican monk and follower of Savonarola Sante Marmochino of 1538 which was set on the index - showing autobiographical page references to Giacomo - these are only a few discoveries that should start of further research.

XVI) *Jesus, Mary and Martha* (2010)

The rather sternly protestant account in Munich of the dispute about the higher value of *Vita contemplativa* against *Vita activa* or between the Salvator, Mary and Martha is an export painting with a signature, it was Jacomo's attempt to settle down in Augsburg, dominated by Titian. The gesture of finger-spelling - perhaps owed to Dürer - is knowingly directed to „The one“ that only counts in spiritual life. In Post-Tridentinum days in Venice, this portrayal might have caused trouble, and therefore it must be counted among the more daring denominational expositions of the unconventional person Tintoretto.

XVII) *Tintoretto and Music* (1984)

The publication of the two collections on the oeuvre of Tintoretto by R.Pallucchini and P.Rossi in 1982 managed to present an equipment of illustrations never attained before. Especially the numerous examples of musical themes stand out, encouraging a separate viewing and commentary of the stock, in spite of the attributions that should lead to later controversies. „Tintoretto musico“ remains a concern completing the outlines of the Master's character, even though he can no longer be regarded as the author of several presentations. After all, questions remain unsolved, particularly as the approved musical expert Colin Slim has spoken up about the *Concert of the Nymphs* in Dresden voicing criticism of the score, specially about Andrea Gabrieli and he permitted to date the painting as „after 1566“.

The authenticity of many paintings is underlined by the actual illustration of several instruments and the inventions of some others, as Jacomo was said to have specially „invented“ some of these. As the discussion about musical topics in the paintings in Aretino's house has started again, and as the exhibitions of 2018/19 transported the topics of the *Muses and the Pierides* (Munich and Verona) into the focus of debates about the dedications, this essay is perhaps worth resuming a chastened reading.

XVIII) *Tintoretto's Tarquin and Lucretia* (2010)

The second version of *Tarquin and Lucretia*, devalued in Madrid 2007, that was stolen in 1984 during the restoration process from a workshop in Zürich and has been reported missing since then, needs a closer view in absentia and a comparison with the better known work in Chicago. Art criticism usually ignores the auditory components of both pictures, especially the spinetto tilted from the table in the background, that instrument can be seen much more clearly in an enlarged workshop-version in the Prado. The tumultuous „auditive picture“ supports compositions like *Narcissus (and Echo)* in the Galleria Colonna in Rome, the *concert of the nymphs* (or: the Graces and the Horae) in Dresden, the musical *contest of the Muses and Pierides* in Munich and Verona, or *Apollo and the Muses* of Hampton Court.

Radiographies from Zürich permit comparison and analysis of close operations in the workshop.

An appendix lets Eduard Hüttinger (†1998) get a word in the process about the loss of the work, as an example of an expert's assessment in a parti pris about the artistic and commercial value of a Tintoretto, in which Erasmus Weddigen is rudely reviewed

XIX) *The Antependium of 1609* (2017)

The Paliotto with the copy of the *crucifixion* of the Scuola grande di San Rocco, reported missing since 1946, because it was stolen from the war deposit of the Kunsthistorisches Museum Vienna in the cloister Stams in Tirol – is a frequently quoted silk embroidery of Jacomo Tintoretto's daughters Perina and Ottavia in the convent Sant'Anna close to the Arsenale in Venice. The author discovered this work in the fine arts trade of Geneva and denounced his find to the rightful owner, the Kunstammer of the KHM at Vienna. At present, negotiations about the recuperation are under way, and hopefully, the universally known piece can be won back in the years of the Tintoretto jubilee 2018/19. As a by-product, the reasearch could prove that the original of the Scuola was not used as the pattern for the embroidery, but a very precise graphical copy by Agostino Carracci.

XX) El Greco's Elder Ego (2013)

To establish an elective affinity between the characters of a Jacomo Tintoretto and Dominiko Theotokopuli seems to be rather daring, especially in view of the complex structure of their personalities. But they are connected by opposites and contradictions as well as by congruencies. They were "Gemelli dissimili", their magical attraction seemed to grow the more they found each other repulsive. „To divide“ them to each other, this oxymoron-action serves best in order to lead us to a new view of their single characters and measure their pictorial worlds at their profiles.

XXI) Max Raphael's view on El Greco und Tintoretto (2008)

One special voice has so far hardly been heard on the topic of a comparison of the two giants of painting: Max Raphael, the outsider in the realm of art history, who believed that he knew those two outsiders in the world of art of the 16th century like nobody else.

XXII) Max Raphael's Visual School (2008)

An appreciation of the outsider and Iconomaniac Max Raphael (1889-1952).

XXIII) Philipp the second and his *Vision of the Crusade* (2007)

The flight caprioles of angels and saints in Tintoretto's oeuvre were occasionally only exceeded by those of El Greco, before the trends of Baroque und Rococo broke open the gates of heaven, and flying developed into the pricipal enjoyment of the painters, especially of Venetian artists craving for bravura. It was rather a spiritual high-altitude flight that led the author into the temptation to study the concept of El Greco's paintings in the Escorial with their various titles and his design in the London National Gallery that still goes without a definite interpretation.

XXIV) Jacomo Tintoretto in Rangone's "Libreria miraculosa"? (1964...)

A fragment. Excerpts from the last will and testament of Tomaso Rangone with a listing of his books, arranged in categories. The question here to be discussed is: how far did Tintoretto have access to the book collection of his patron and whether he could use these books for his study of sources. As the lists of the "Libreria miraculosa" have still not been edited and commented (!) and the task thereof seems to have been passed on to a younger generation, this incomplete and certainly faulty records are meant to have the effect of an incentive to deal at last with this valuable

document of a private library of the 16th century that perhaps intended to realize the public foundation of Petrarca.....

Textfree Illustrations: "Excursions" in the digital appendix attend to stimulate observers to come to own conclusions and further questions...

XXV) To "Young Tintoretto" in Cologne and Paris (Exhibition-tour, Cologne 2017)
Questions as to sizes and datings, graphic analyses, comparisons.

XXVI) La Scuola Grande di San Marco
A recapitulation of the analyses and spatial reconstructions.

XXVII) La Scuola Grande di San Rocco
Tour of the Sala Terrena, Albergo, self-portraits, graphic analyses.

XXVIII) Ex-Scuola della Trinità
Hypotheses as to the pictorial size of the series in the Gallerie dell'Accademia and the fragment in Florence.

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