

Carpaccio as a Draftsman

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The fortunate survival of so many of Carpaccio's drawings raises intriguing questions about the artist and his interests. In some respects, his drawings reveal innovative and experimental tendencies, yet they also testify to pragmatic, conservative methods in composition and representation as he moved towards the final painting. Vittore's wide range of visual and intellectual references, including Netherlandish paintings, drawings or prints by Andrea Mantegna, Pietro Perugino and Albrecht Dürer, practices in contemporary Venetian theatre, and advances in mathematical studies, suggest a cultivated artist who must have owned books, prints and mathematical instruments. The evolution of his signature in paintings by the 1490s, from a conventional vernacular to a Latin form inscribed on a fictive piece of paper (*cartellino*), points to his sense of identity as a cosmopolitan artist proud to assert his inventive talents and his virtuosity in creating convincing illusions of reality. His use of various forms by about 1500 included the verb '*ingere*' signalling the artist's creative talents, and '*faciebat*', evoking Pliny the Elder's descriptions of the signatures of ancient artists, while he was pioneering in his playful use of the *cartellino* as an active element within the narrative - for instance, being mauled by a dog in the Two Women on a

Balcony (cat. 00).¹ His inventive flair and experimental character emerge in a number of compositional drawings and in his use of red chalk, as will be discussed further below. Carpaccio's mastery of perspective in representing complex architectural structures and urban spaces was admired long after his death -- Daniele Barbaro (1514-70), a leading Venetian intellectual, wrote in his Pratica della prospettiva of 1567 that the artist merited eternal fame in this regard -- and his command of geometrical forms such as the many-faced *mazzocchio* no doubt contributed to his continuing reputation.² He must have made technical drawings relating to the construction of complex geometric solids and to the elaborate variations he contrived, which appear as architectural forms, sculptural ornaments or on a miniature scale as jewellery. Similarly, Vittore's topographical accuracy in representing aspects of the city of Venice, such as the Rialto bridge in the Miracle of the Possessed Boy of 1494 (fig. 00) for the Scuola di San Giovanni Evangelista, or the interior of the church of Sant' Antonio di Castello in the Vision of Prior Francesco Ottobon (cat. 00) suggest that he must have made sketches in and out of doors in front of the motif, even though nothing of the kind survives. Our understanding of Carpaccio's talents and capabilities in drawing depends very much on the visual and material evidence of the sheets that have come down to us, which can be surprisingly diverse in quality and appearance.

In specialist drawings studies, Carpaccio has often been viewed as a magpie-like figure, combining carefully-studied motifs from a variety of visual sources into colourful narratives or devotional paintings, as though trapped in the practices of earlier generations. Indeed, his habit of re-using figures has led to the constant application of the term 'simile' to Carpaccio's drawings, placing them in a pattern-book or model-book tradition that stretches back to medieval times.³ As a result, the artist is presumed to have employed highly systematic, even rigid working methods, with constant reference to a codified figural vocabulary. This image requires some modification, taking account of Carpaccio's pragmatism and of similarities in contemporary drawing practice, but also recognizing his strategic approach and, importantly, the role of memory and experience in designing paintings.

In the 1490s and 1500s repetition was a feature of many Italian workshops in and beyond Venice, such as those of Filippino Lippi (1457-1504), Lorenzo di Credi (1456/59-1537) or Perugino (fl.1469- 1523), as well as that of Giovanni Bellini. Copying drawings was a vital element in artistic training, and the provision of exemplars to assist the workshop in producing paintings was routine.⁴ We have considerable evidence for Carpaccio's methods because of

the preservation of so much material, compared with the paucity of surviving drawings by leading Venetian artists in his lifetime, but his practice was probably similar to that of contemporaries such as Cima da Conegliano (?1459/60-1517/18), Vincenzo Catena (active 1506 -1531), or Vittore Belliniano (active 1507-29). Although we have relatively little evidence for their preparatory procedures, compositions that juxtapose separate motifs and figures in an assemblage were common, while the re-use of figures in paintings was a regular practice.⁵ The few drawings known by those artists indicate their close study of the drawings of Giovanni Bellini, whether or not they were associated with his workshop, and Bellini's techniques and methods had a strong impact on Carpaccio. Unlike Cima, Catena or Belliniano, who did not hand on the contents of their workshops to family members, Carpaccio had two sons who became painters so that his drawings provided the artistic capital for their respective enterprises. Although little is known of the activities of Pietro and Benedetto during their father's lifetime, it is clear that Benedetto continued to mine Vittore's drawings for figures and compositions in the 1530s and 1540s.

Carpaccio's career straddled a period when many patrons and viewers enjoyed or expected familiar yet appealing renditions of subjects, while a humanist

elite made different demands, seeking sophisticated allusiveness or novel effects in works of art. Inventiveness and expressiveness became increasingly prized in works of art, sacred or secular, so that the next generation of artists such as Raphael and Titian, while embedding references to notable works of art in their own paintings, ensured that their individuality and modernity was recognized. Perhaps because Carpaccio catered so successfully in the 1490s and early 1500s for a market of confraternities and churches, his patrons continued to expect similar kinds of representations in narratives and altarpieces over the next two decades, prizing the variety and ornamental richness that characterized his work. Hence he aimed for consistency through adapting or recalling figures and motifs already captured in drawings.

The cycles of *scuola* paintings involved substantial compositions with varied protagonists and settings, and they often included portraits or crowd scenes with figures in contemporary dress, each requiring distinctive features. In particular, preparation for the ambitious St Ursula cycle (cat. 00?) allowed Carpaccio to build up in drawings a considerable repertoire of standing and moving figures who could function as actors and chorus in different scenes, to be adapted as needed. Thus on the verso of the sheet in Princeton (cat. 00), he portrayed a mature man, his head tilted, who appears at the left of The

Leavetaking of the Betrothed Pair (fig. xx), and the same characterful head would have served in further narrative scenes. On the other side of the sheet, the sensitively-drawn woman in profile, her drapery in elegant folds, who is derived from one of Erhard Reuwich's woodcuts, acts as part of the retinue of the princess in the Triumph of St George (fig. xx) and appears in different guises in the Presentation of the Virgin drawing (fig. 1) and in the Ordination of St Stephen of 1511 (cat. 00).⁶ Moreover, allusions to Venetian architecture and to Venetian public life with processional groups of patricians, or gatherings of elegant young men, imbued Vittore's paintings for the *scuole* of St Ursula and of St Stephen with a sense of communal activity that in some respects mirrored Venice's civic ritual and social life.⁷ This might have encouraged the recurrence of similar protagonists, since viewers could see familiar characters inhabiting both the fictional and actual city spaces. The fact that Carpaccio drew probably in the same session a portrait-type study and a study of two youths on the recto and verso of a sheet in the British Museum (cat. 00) indicates his strategic approach to various narrative subjects, where the expressive head of the dignified man and the loping, feline quality of the casually posed youths could easily serve in crowd scenes, as distinctive Venetian types.⁸ This way of thinking relates to the sophisticated theatricality of his major *scuola* paintings: Carpaccio would make such detailed studies of

potential protagonists who could be moved about or adapted, as in his vision of three types of standing bishops (cat. 00 – BM) to be deployed in a tighter group, with one transformed into the Pope, in the Arrival in Rome (cat/ fig. 00), or his representation of a speaking youth in heavy drapery (cat. 00 – Valletta), who appears as a stiff-lipped older man with the same stance and gesture in the Reception of the Ambassadors. However, the more additive approach he adopted in other kinds of paintings, notably religious allegories, involving the combination of separately-studied elements, could create more stilted effects where his attention to eye-catching detail undermined the unity of the composition.⁹

While his quest for illusionism may have involved the repetition of recognisably Venetian types, equally the pressures of producing multiple narrative scenes in overlapping commissions for the *scuola* of San Giorgio and that of the Albanesi required efficient working methods. Carpaccio's figural drawings certainly acted as archives of his inventions, which could be re-cycled or re-interpreted as appropriate, and functioned effectively as guides for his assistants. Little is known of his workshop or pupils in the 1500s though he clearly had assistance with major projects, and his sons may have been active from about 1510. Many Venetian workshops relied on family members, who may have had

limited talents but could be trained to replicate albeit mechanically the 'house style'. This training would have involved copying drawings and details from paintings, so as to understand methods of representation and to internalize the master's individual handling of the medium: a sheet in the British Museum vividly demonstrates how in a series of head studies the student would create a useful repertoire (cat. 00).¹⁰

The evidence suggests that Carpaccio - rather like Perugino, who was taken to task by critics for his re-cycling of compositions - maintained and developed his distinctive manner, without making radical changes to his design practice. Nor did Vittore have the kind of talented, ambitious student whose activity could have instituted a stimulating dialogue with the master, even triggering new directions in drawing.¹¹ However, in response to innovations in the graphic arts and in painting in early sixteenth-century Venice, Carpaccio to some extent loosened his handling in drawing and sought more unified effects in envisaging his drawn compositions as finished works. We see this in his detailed head studies, and in some elaborate designs. The sensitive execution of the graceful, idealised heads of female saints of c.1490, where lucid, sculptural effects are achieved through the meticulous application of fine washes and white heightening (cat. 00 Ashmolean recto and verso) contrasts with the

broader handling seen later in the meditative Head of an elderly man (cat. 00 Custodia Paris) or with the fresh, vibrant strokes that portray the Youth in Adoration of about 1515 (cat. 00 – Bonna), which despite its small scale has a compelling presence. Carpaccio's controlled use of variegated washes in the finely-delineated Vision of St Augustine (cat. 00) similarly contrasts with his approach in a later altarpiece design in the Louvre, where he allowed his grainy black chalk sketch to interact with the rich ink washes (fig. 2, Louvre RF 437).¹² He sought radiant effects, with a strong play of light unifying the figure group around the enthroned Virgin and Child, and he brushed in sprightly trees and landscape elements behind, while heavy parted curtains reveal the sacred gathering.

How did Carpaccio formulate his thoughts in drawing when approaching a painting commission? A few rough sketches setting out possible lay-outs have come down to us on the versos of more appealing drawings. He often conceived of representations within their frames, efficiently fitting the subject to the given format from the outset. This is evident as he jotted an idea, red chalk in hand for an altarpiece with a unified field on the verso of an elaborate design in Copenhagen (fig. 3).¹³ His procedure of thinking within drawn boundaries continued in more worked-up drawings (for example, see cat. 00 –

Adoration of the Magi, Uffizi 1692F, or fig. 5, Triumph of St George).

Envisaging figures and spatial relationships, Vittore sketched schematic figures as geometric forms turning or moving, whether in a shorthand notation for an altarpiece with St John the Baptist in the centre and a stepped row of saints (fig. 4, Louvre RF 437 verso), or in abbreviated graphic form in an extensive exploratory sketch for the Martyrdom of the Ten Thousand (cat. 00 - NGA).¹⁴

From these rapid thoughts (pensieri), Carpaccio would move to a closer consideration of the main figure groups and their potential interactions, setting out a possible design in chalk and then revising and developing the group in ink. His focus was often on the primary narrative: the study for The Leavetaking of the Betrothed Pair (fig. 00, cat. 00) shows him fixing the disposition of the principal figures, rounding them out by sketching appropriate costumes and expressions. He sought a careful balance between the affecting moment of the kneeling son embraced by his father and the restrained interest of the courtiers who press forward as witnesses of this momentous event. The entourage of prince and king separates at the edges into ostensive figures who would serve to direct the viewer's gaze: a swaggering pair in conversation towards the left, and what seems to be a jester at the right, while Carpaccio also set out the picturesque detail of the

long grassy jetty with its wooden struts and indications of carpets draped at the appropriate points. Pursuing the idea of a diminishing crowd of spectators fading towards the city gate, and the blaring animation of the ceremonial trumpeters, he jotted a range of schematic figures. Since the main action stretched across the foreground, Carpaccio needed to provide extensive visual interest to fill the height of the canvas, hence his attention to the detail of city and harbour in the vigorous study in the British Museum drawn in pen and ink over red chalk (cat. 00). The complex architectural detail of the fortified city on the hillside derives from his favoured print source at this time, the woodcuts by Reuwich that could give a suitable foreign flavour to the scene, and Vittore needed to make only minor revisions to his red chalk sketch as he built up the city's details in ink. By contrast, for the harbour area he worked freely with a spirited handling of the red chalk, sketching the possible sweeping curves of the pier and jetty, and placing different types of boats, before making radical changes in pen.

In more conventional or clear-cut subjects, Carpaccio could reach a solution quite rapidly in a lucid compositional study: for the commemorative painting of Pope Alexander III presenting a ceremonial umbrella to Doge Sebastiano Ziani, he set out in red chalk with pen and ink his thoughts for a crowd scene with a

central historical event, making only slight adjustments when he turned over the sheet to develop the group with pen and wash in terms of pose, costume, expression and the fall of light (cat. 00 recto and verso - Crocker). In the case of interior scenes, Carpaccio was concerned to resolve at an early stage the perspective, lighting conditions and domestic detail, creating in The Dream of St Ursula (cat. 00) a spacious room with coffered ceiling, furnishings and elaborate windows before adding rapid indications of the animals and the rather too tall angelic figure. The glowing intimacy of Ursula's chamber is beautifully captured through the variegated washes, and, despite inevitable fading, this drawing conveys a sense of luminosity as Carpaccio considered the effects of light from different sources.

Depending on the needs of a particular project, Carpaccio would move from relatively abbreviated studies of narrative groups to larger designs in which figures and landscape or city setting were integrated, as we can see in the case of two compositional drawings for the Scuola di San Giorgio, the Triumph of St George (fig. 5) and the Death of St Jerome (cat. 00). Interestingly, these drawings display different approaches to the final painting that seem to depend on the subject and the pictorial sources as well as on the interests of the particular patron.¹⁵ The Triumph contains Carpaccio's notes on scaling up,

suggesting it came at an advanced stage of the process – indeed one can detect his expert fusion of different visual sources for the architectural setting and the many spectators - yet it is relatively freely handled with many visible revisions. By contrast the Death of St Jerome is more tightly executed, with the scenographic setting clearly presented and precise topographical details included; although the figures are more minimally presented, Carpaccio gives full indications of their disposition and character.

As he approached resolution in terms of the detailed design, Carpaccio would prepare studies of individual figures or small groups. Thinking in terms of scale and prominence in the painting, he would jot small motifs in pen or pen and wash of figures in motion or in conversation (see cat. 00, *Christ Church*), sometimes gathering them on one sheet for easy reference, as in a series of studies of monks and some exotic figures including a turbaned man on horseback on the recto and verso of a drawing in the Louvre.¹⁶ More careful studies were made on a larger scale with brush, wash and white heightening, usually on blue paper, for characterful heads and for foreground figures or those who would help to direct the viewer's gaze. Many were made for specific paintings, and Carpaccio's concern with the fall of light is evident, as in the studies of the graceful gondolier (cat. 00) who would stand out in his

colourful costume against the dark waters of the Canal Grande in the Miracle of the Possessed Boy (fig. 00), or the kneeling monk holding a taper (cat. 00 – Rotterdam), to be centrally placed in the Funeral of St Jerome (fig. 00); others were more generic in type, as mentioned above. His attentive consideration of salient elements clearly included observation from the life, in a rare surviving study for the near-nude seated body of Christ (cat. 00 -- BM) and the careful depiction of a horseman's body armour with its reflective surface and ornamental details (cat. 00 – MMA NY). In head and figure studies, which are often quite elaborate, Carpaccio modelled the forms through gradations of tone in a chiaroscuro technique that Giovanni Bellini had earlier used, as in his study of the head of an elderly bearded man in the Royal Collection of the 1460s.¹⁷ Vittore made this layered technique his own, whether using it with finesse or more pictorially, producing finely modelled studies that would later appeal to collectors.

In populating his narrative paintings from the foreground into depth, or in orchestrating saintly figures in his devotional works, Carpaccio clearly called upon the repertoire provided by his earlier inventions. That this was not always the case is seen in his study in Washington (cat. 00) for the group of spectators in the St Stephen Preaching (cat. 00/ fig. 00), where he shaped

figures specifically for that painting. His strategy of considering his figures as actors or chorus is clear in this sheet: although knowing they would be clothed in exotic costume in the painting, he envisaged them with their bodies fully visible (albeit not nude). The nimble youths, gathered in groups, wear tight-fitting everyday dress of a type associated with *garzone* studies where workshop assistants would pose for the master. Possibly Vittore had earlier developed the habit of drawing from the model which in turn enabled him later to imagine or recall a variety of standing or leaning poses; the same *garzone* costume appears in other studies such as the British Museum sheet discussed above (cat. 00). In general, his paintings attest to the fact that he turned regularly to his existing vocabulary of figures and head studies for stimulus and adaptation. However, on the whole his practice of repetition in autograph works is creative rather than routine or inattentive, with figures altered to suit the specific painting. While he may have turned to his store of earlier drawings in search of the right motif (as his assistants undoubtedly did) it is highly unlikely that he needed to keep his drawings for reference in the form of orderly model-books. Like many other painters of his generation, Carpaccio was visually alert with a keen memory for his own drawings as well as for other sources, and could no doubt call to mind previously studied figures. Additionally, the repetition that has sometimes been identified in

certain paintings is based on generic resemblances rather than precise correspondences; more often than not, inventive variations are involved rather than the mechanical insertion of the same figure in a new painting, which suggest that memory and experience were at play.¹⁸ Later, his heirs very likely ensured that his drawings were kept for easy reference, arranged loosely in portfolios, glued onto canvas rolls or bound in books, since their production would have depended strongly on these visual resources.¹⁹

Carpaccio's procedures in planning his paintings were purposeful and economical, which also permitted delegation. However, he could also be experimental at the initial exploratory or pensiero stage. In looking at the conventional devotional theme of the Virgin and Child around 1490 in two small studies (cat. 00, recto and verso -- CIA), he used red chalk freely and broadly to shape his thoughts, before working up his design with pen and ink, using dotted, broken lines to suggest the play of light. This may be one of the earliest Venetian drawings in which red chalk is actively used as a tool, and it is a pioneering work in the considered combination of red chalk with ink to create atmospheric and expressive effects; additionally the idea of showing the Virgin from behind is quite unusual.²⁰ His increasingly vigorous use of warm red chalk overlaid with lavish pen and ink reaches its apex in the spectacular

compositional drawing in the Morgan Library (cat. 00) where the freedom of execution is striking, notably the pictorial effects of the dramatic bridge of natural rock.

An inventive spirit is especially evident in Carpaccio's explorations about 1505 of the conventional sacra conversazione gathering of the Virgin and Child with saints. Take the intimacy, sensitivity and humour of the representation in Washington (cat. 00), where the isolated Virgin is absorbed in reading and meditation, while the young St John rushes forward with delight, propelled by his mother Elizabeth, catching the attention of the turning Christ Child and the other protagonists. This is beautifully treated in decisive broken pen lines that suggest movement and emotion, over a black chalk sketch setting out the design, with some gentle modelling in wash. Yet the uninhibited childish energy captured in the drawing would not have been appropriate for a substantial devotional painting. Carpaccio moved towards a more complex composition with similar protagonists in a related sheet in the Uffizi (fig. 6 = 1692F verso) that houses a representation of the Adoration of the Magi on the other side (cat. 00, linked to the painting now in Lisbon (fig. 00). Here he developed the idea of a low wall as an organizational element, creating an enclosure within a garden where the figures could be dispersed inside or

outside – interestingly the three male saints are contained within the enclosure.²¹ The energy of both children now generates interactions with the Virgin and St Elizabeth, creating a circular rhythm between the women and the small boys. Towards the right, St Joseph and St Zacharias are likely protagonists, while strikingly the third male saint is busying himself before a blank rectangular form which more or less frames the Child, suggesting he may be St Luke about to paint the Virgin and Child. Carpaccio's placing of this well-known subject out of doors, additionally setting up an unusual relationship with the viewer who must also face St Luke, is remarkable. Although the figures are rapidly and schematically treated, with lively touches for the foliage and light modelling in wash, the composition was already planned within a border, and scaling indications in black chalk are corrected and reinforced in pen and ink, suggesting that Carpaccio viewed this as a satisfying design, in an established 4:6 format. These proportions differ from the elaborate *sacra conversazione* painting now in Avignon (cat. 00) and its related compositional drawing (cat. 00 - Morgan Library), suggesting that the Uffizi drawing might be connected with an unknown commission, perhaps one where St Luke was the name saint of the client.

Similarly, around the same time as his elaborately detailed Vision of St Augustine study (cat. 00), Vittore pursued in some small sketches the theme of the scholar at work in his study, where a detailed interior would be required as the setting for a lone individual (cat. 00 – BM; figs. 7, 8 – Pushkin). There is no direct connection between these pensieri and the Scuola di San Giorgio painting, in that Carpaccio had in mind a new composition on a small scale with a quite different viewpoint, nonetheless there are affinities in style and approach. Three iterations show his concern with the materials and furnishings required for comfort, functionality and for intellectual stimulation, such as surfaces for writing, shelves with eye-catching objects, cabinets or bookstands.²² On one side of a sheet with an existing, unrelated letter, Carpaccio considered a frontal view of a St Jerome-type protagonist, pen in hand at an open book, his well-lit study opening onto a staircase behind (fig. 7, Pushkin recto).²³ As usual, the artist placed the composition within a drawn frame; a diagonal line through the composition may be a scoring-out, a line of dissatisfaction. On the other side, Carpaccio sketched a mathematically-inclined scholar at work, who has geometrical solids suspended behind, recalling elements of Jacopo de'Barbari's portrait of Fra Luca Pacioli of 1495 in Capodimonte, Naples (fig. 8, Pushkin verso). In a related study also drawn within a frame, we no longer view the scholar - here a younger figure - from

the other side of his desk, rather we are placed in an adjoining room, looking through an opening to his private, cluttered study (cat. 00, [British Museum](#)).

While it is plausible that Carpaccio was working on an unknown project that involved paintings of writers or philosophers, it may be significant that in the same period he reflected further on scholarship, since his imposing St Thomas Aquinas altarpiece of 1507 (fig. 00) features the meticulously-studied elements of an embellished red writing desk with a decorated cabinet beneath, its doors partially open to show books and an open casket.²⁴ Perhaps Vittore's pensiero sketches arose from the challenge of representing the intellectual interests of the theologian on a substantial scale. This he realized in the superb pen and wash study for the Vision of St Augustine (cat. 00), where the intimate details of the scholar's life, including the glimpse of a small, crowded reading-room, are skilfully integrated into a magisterial composition, articulated through light and shade.

Carpaccio's thoughts took him in an experimental direction on the other side of the British Museum sheet (cat. 00), where music provides the unifying theme for a scene with disparate figures. In a scholar's cabinet with musical instruments hanging from the shelves, a youth eagerly tunes a lute as a rather detached monk stands behind him, while two animated female musicians are

drawn on a larger scale, hardly fitting into the space. It is as though Carpaccio shifted register while in the midst of drawing, becoming preoccupied with the two performers to the detriment of compositional balance. Pursuing inventive ideas in drawing was not always successful, but elements could be recalled and re-used later: the pose of the monk with crossed arms recurs in figures in the Marriage of the Virgin (Brera) and the Ordination of St Stephen (Berlin), while the appealing youth became the source for the musical angel in an altarpiece for S. Francesco in Pirano of 1518 (cat. 00).

If the compositional studies relating to *sacre conversazioni* or to the scholar's life show Carpaccio in a freely exploratory mode, one of his most calculated, finished designs is the substantial Presentation of the Virgin (fig. 1). Such an elaborately-worked sheet must have functioned as a *modello* to be shown to an exacting patron or committee, hence it has been generally connected with a competition of 1504 held by the Scuola Grande della Carità.²⁵ An unusually large drawing, this would have made a powerful impression at the time, which is not so evident from its worn and faded appearance today. Here Vittore played to his strengths, conceiving of an architectural setting of grandeur and variety, including medieval monuments and an equestrian statue, in which a stately narrative unfolds of the tender young Virgin Mary ascending the

curving temple steps. He conveyed the fluttering excitement of the crowd, with distant spectators on the monumental loggia realized in calligraphic strokes, and animated groups of figures in flowing movement and conversation closer to the picture plane. White heightening is delicately brushed on, endowing the drawing with vibrancy. This ambitious and time-consuming drawing seems exceptional in his production, owing to its demonstrative function. Later, its scale and visual interest would have appealed to art-lovers who liked to display drawings on their walls. As Linda Borean notes in her essay, Carpaccio's work was known to seventeenth-century Venetian collectors, and in the correspondence of Paolo del Sera, Cardinal Leopoldo de' Medici's agent in Venice, one can hear the voices of connoisseurs and dealers who proposed sales or assessed potential acquisitions for the celebrated collector. In alerting Leopoldo on 10 September 1667 to the opportunity of purchasing this sheet, which he described as a 'drawing with a great quantity of figures and beautiful architecture, quite well finished and in good condition', Del Sera pointed out that although he felt it was by Vivarino, it was considered in Venice to be by 'Vetor Carpazio, called here lo Scarpazza'.²⁶ A number of sheets in the Uffizi's historic collection have inscriptions by Del Sera or his Venetian friends, and one senses the assurance with which attributions were confirmed by Florentine as much as Venetian connoisseurs, as when a fine

chiaroscuro drawing of two bearded men that relates to the lost Trial of St Stephen (fig. 00; see cat. 00) carried on its old support the inscription, 'in Venice by the hand of Carpaccio, whether here or there absolutely without a doubt'.²⁷ An awareness of Carpaccio's significance, together with Giovanni Bellini, at the head of a tradition of Venetian drawing is clear from Del Sera's letter to Leopoldo regarding the *Presentation*, where he suggests that the sheet should be purchased to illustrate this historical moment before the time of Giorgione.

In painting as in drawing Carpaccio's art is inevitably overshadowed by the poetic genius of Titian. Yet Titian's drawings in all their eloquence and sensuousness take root from an understanding of the older master's insights and technical virtuosity, as is evident from his early drawings. Other Venetian artists were stimulated by the luminosity and sculptural effects of Vittore's chiaroscuro studies, especially his more flickering later manner. Arguably, Sebastiano del Piombo (1485-1547) brought this tonal technique of black chalk with wash and white heightening on blue paper to Rome in 1511, while in Venice this method of drawing with light and shade was developed further by artists such as Lorenzo Lotto (c.1480-1556/7) and Andrea Schiavone (c.1510-63).²⁸ Carpaccio's innovative use of red chalk with pen and wash in

compositional drawings may also have impressed other artists although the rarity of surviving studies by mid sixteenth-century Venetian artists makes this impossible to judge; the technique was fully exploited in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Venice. Actually, the pictorial effects seen in the rugged landscape in the Morgan Library study (cat. 00) would not be out of place in a sketch by Piranesi. In his drawings, which above all enabled him to run an efficient workshop and to produce paintings striking for their richness and variety of detail, Carpaccio reveals his ambitions as well as his limitations as an artist. We can only speculate as to what we have lost, but the sheets that have come down to us today bear witness to the artist's technical accomplishment, inventive spirit, and to his fluency and vitality as a draftsman.

¹ See Matthew 1998, 630, 633 and 638 on Carpaccio's signatures.

² See Davis 1980, 184-85 on Barbaro's appreciation; Menato 2016, 47-60 for a detailed study.

³ The term simile was used by Tietze and Tietze-Conrat 1944: 10-11, to define 'highly finished figure studies retained in the workshop for re-use in paintings', but it has been applied in modern studies above all to Carpaccio's drawings, with the presumption that his design process is defined by systematic repetition, as explored by Lauts 1962 or Ames-Lewis 1990.

⁴ See Bambach 1999, especially 82-94, 112-118. For recent discussions, see Munich 2018, under no.6, 146-7, no.62, 270, no.67, 280, no. 68, 282 and no.100, 352 for examples of head, drapery and figure studies for use as secondary figures or made as pedagogic workshop exercises; for Perugino, see the discussion of the Head of a man with a long beard (British Museum inv.Pp.1.28) in Chapman and Faietti 2010, no.47, 199.

⁵ See Blass-Simmen 1994 and Dunkerton 2010 on Cima's methods; Rearick 1998 on Belliniano and the re-use of Bellini inventions; Catena's close study of gesture and costume c.1515 is seen in the Drapery Study, Morgan Library inv.1973.40. See Rylands 2003 on his style and methods, and the curatorial notes by Rhoda Eitel Porter in the Morgan Library and Museum Drawings Online site, <https://www.themorgan.org/drawings/item/141139>.

⁶ Giles 2014 under no.4, p.10-13. **This is probably covered by Susannah's cat entry. Delete? Delete if so, otherwise please retain reference to Giles where there is a good discussion of the drawing**

⁷ See Ames-Lewis 1994 reviewing Carpaccio's 'eye-witness' style with comments on the role of drawings

⁸ See Chapman and Faietti 2010 under no.81, 268, on the difficulties of dating such a sheet which could have had multiple uses.

⁹ Blass-Simmen 2006 provides a detailed analysis of this collage-like approach.

¹⁰ See the curatorial notes by Hugo Chapman for British Museum inv.1892,0411.2, with which I concur, on the British Museum Collections Online site:

https://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=717722&partId=1&searchText=carpaccio&images=true&page=1

¹¹ Roger Rearick proposed that Giorgione might have learned the rudiments in Carpaccio's workshop in about 1495-98, see Rearick 2001, 23; other suggestions for his students have included Francesco Bissolo (see Fossaluzza 2012, 232, note 116 rejecting this), but these can only be speculative and in any case do not shed light on the use of drawings.

¹² See the discussion in Bihan and Ramade 2005, no.43, 114-5.

¹³ Fischer 2018, under no.1, 25-8.

¹⁴ An altarpiece as envisaged in the Louvre *pensiero* (fig. 4), with four saints on either side of St John the Baptist, would have involved a crowded space, although Antonello's San Cassiano altar featured the Virgin and Child with eight saints. The large altarpiece by Alvise Vivarini and Marco Basaiti dedicated to St Ambrose in the Frari, Venice, of c.1500-10 employed a stepped arrangement to accommodate eight saints on a level beneath the throne, see Humfrey 1993: pl.55 and.351, App.56. The six saints in Carpaccio's Pirano altarpiece are arranged on steps (cat.00).

¹⁵ See the close analysis by Brooke 2004.

¹⁶ Muraro 1977: 71-72, see Brooke 2004: 306-7 and fig.6-7.

¹⁷ Royal Collection, inv. RCIN 912800, Goldner 2004, 251-2.

¹⁸ In his extremely valuable study, Lauts 1962 occasionally finds repetition where none exists, e.g. in painted figures that he describes as composed from more than one drawing. The comments in Fossaluzza 2012, 134 on the workshop and repetition are helpful, see also Gentili 2015, 94, 101.

¹⁹ See Whistler 2016, 75 and 181-82 on how Venetian artists kept their drawings.

²⁰ See Whistler 2018 on Carpaccio's use of pen and ink in combination with red chalk.

²¹ Giovanni Bellini created an enclosed sanctuary in the open air in his *Sacred Allegory* (Uffizi) of the 1490s, with two male saints outside of the balustrade.

²² See Thornton 1998 for a detailed study.

²³ Lauts 1962, Catalogue of Drawings no.62; Muraro 1977, 61.

²⁴ Humfrey 1993, App.no.68, p.354, and p.235, pl.224.

²⁵ See Delieuvin and Habert 2009, 47-49.

²⁶ Whistler 2016, 219.

²⁷ Muraro 1977, 41-42, Uffizi inv.1471E (my transcription): 'a Ven.a di mano d[e]llo Scarpazza tanto di qua' [credo?] che di La' senza dubbio alcuno'.

²⁸ For Sebastiano, see Joannides 2008, 39.