

LE CLAIRE
KUNST SEIT 1982



MAGDALENENSTRASSE 50 · 20148 HAMBURG · TELEFON +49 (0)40 881 06 46 · FAX +49 (0)40 880 46 12
LECLAIRE@LECLAIRE-KUNST.DE · WWW.LECLAIRE-KUNST.DE

LE CLAIRE
SEIT 1982
KUNST

GIOVANNI BATTISTA TIEPOLO

Venice 1696 – 1770 Madrid

Allegorical Figures of Valour and Fame: The Apotheosis of a Warrior

Pen and brown ink and brown wash, over an underdrawing in black chalk.

Inscribed *M. Fauchier Magnan / J. B. Tiepolo / Allegorie* on a label pasted onto the old backing board.
216 x 289 mm.

PROVENANCE: William Bateson, Merton House, Grantchester, nr. Cambridge, in 1910 – Adrien Fauchier-Magnan, Neuilly-sur-Seine – Winterfeld collection – Anonymous sale ('*The Property of a Gentleman*'), London, Sotheby's, 9 December 1936, lot 59 (as '*The Genii of Victory and Fame*'), bt. Walford Wilson for £90 – E. V. Thaw and Co., New York – John R. Gaines, Lexington, Kentucky – His sale, New York, Sotheby's, 17 November 1986, lot 23 – Private collection

LITERATURE: Eduard Sack, *Giambattista und Domenico Tiepolo, ihr Leben und ihre Werke*, Hamburg, 1910, p.252, no.103

EXHIBITION: *Exhibition of Venetian Painting of the Eighteenth Century*, Burlington Fine Arts Club, London, 1911, no.65 (as *The Genii of Victory and Fame*, lent by Bateson)

'Tiepolo originally drew mainly for himself, but this does not prevent his drawings from being aesthetically completely autonomous. Far from constituting mere preparatory exercises for paintings, they can be seen as independent and distinctive works of art in their own right which exist in many cases alongside his paintings as a vast and exceptional body of work. Going through them page by page is like reading an extraordinary adventure of the imagination.'¹

This splendid drawing by Giambattista Tiepolo may be dated to the late 1740s or 1750s, and can be related to a handful of other drawings by the artist that depict the apotheosis of a bearded man in military dress (sometimes identified as representing Valour), accompanied by an allegorical female figure of Fame. These include two drawings in the Pierpont Morgan Library in New York² and another in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, also in New York³, as well as drawings in the Yale University Art Gallery in New Haven⁴ and the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin⁵. Also to be included in this group are two

¹ Adriano Mariuz, 'The Drawings of Giambattista Tiepolo', in Giandomenico Romanelli et al, *Masterpieces of Eighteenth-Century Venetian Drawing*, London and New York, 1983, p.21.

² Inv. IV, 104 and IV, 105 (The Apotheosis of an Aged Warrior or The Apotheosis of Merit); J. Pierpont Morgan Collection of Drawings by the Old Masters formed by C. Fairfax Murray, London, 1912, Vol.IV, unpaginated, pls.104-105; Jacob Bean and Felice Stampfle, *Drawings from New York Collections III: The Eighteenth Century in Italy*, exhib. cat., New York, 1971, p.62, nos.140-141, pls.140-141; Bernard Aikema, *Tiepolo and His Circle: Drawings in American Collections*, exhib. cat., Cambridge and New York, 1996-1997, pp.172-173, no.64.

³ Inv. 37.165.26 (*The Apotheosis of a Warrior*); Bean and Stampfle, *ibid.*, p.62, no.139, pl.139; Jacob Bean and William Griswold, *18th Century Italian Drawings in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, 1990, p.235, no.228.

⁴ Inv. 1941.295 (*The Apotheosis of Merit*); Egbert Haverkamp-Begemann and Anne-Marie S. Logan, *European Drawings and Watercolors in the Yale University Art Gallery 1500-1900*, New Haven and London, 1970, Vol.I, p.173, no.321, Vol.II, pl.173; George Knox, *Tiepolo: A Bicentenary Exhibition 1770-1970*, exhibition catalogue, Cambridge (MA), 1970, unpaginated, no.77 (where dated c.1758); Aikema, *op.cit.*, pp.174-175, no.65.

compositionally related drawings of *The Apotheosis of a Venetian Hero*, in the collections of the Courtauld Gallery in London⁶ and the Nationalmuseum in Stockholm⁷.

The late Tiepolo scholar George Knox related several of these drawings to Tiepolo's ceiling fresco of an *Allegory of Merit Between Nobility and Virtue* in one of the rooms of the Ca' Rezzonico in Venice⁸, painted in the spring of 1757 to celebrate the forthcoming marriage of Ludovico Rezzonico and Faustina Savorgnan, and one of the last major decorative works completed by the artist in Italy before his move to Spain in 1762. As James Byam Shaw has noted of Tiepolo's drawings of this type, however, 'there is seldom an exact correspondence with the finished work, so that sometimes it is difficult to decide whether the drawing is a preliminary idea, or a return to an earlier motive.'⁹ As such, some of these drawings may perhaps also be related to a number of other ceiling paintings of analogous subjects. Indeed, as Knox has pointed out, 'The theme of the apotheosis of the hero recurs often in the Tiepolo oeuvre, both in his painting and in his drawings'¹⁰, a statement echoed by another recent scholar, who writes that '[A] type of figure, where a member of a patrician family is shown with the attributes of Valor, would prove to be one of Tiepolo's most durable creations.'¹¹

A similar laurel-wreathed soldier accompanied by a trumpet-bearing figure of Fame, for example, appears in Tiepolo's ceiling canvas of *The Glorification of the Barbaro Family* (or *Valour with Virtue and Fame and Other Virtues*) of c.1750, painted for the Palazzo Barbaro in Venice and now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York¹². Other ceiling paintings of similar subjects executed in the 1750s include a vast *Apotheosis of Francesco Morosini* (or *Fame with Valour and Virtue*), painted for the Palazzo Morosini a Santo Stefano in Venice and now in the Palazzo Isimbardi in Milan¹³, and a fresco of *The Apotheosis of Orazio Porto* (or *Valour Crowned by Virtue Overcoming Time*), painted for the Palazzo Porto in Vicenza and now in the Seattle Art Museum¹⁴.

As a draughtsman, Giambattista Tiepolo favoured pen, ink and brush, and the present sheet is a superb example of his abilities. As James Byam Shaw has described the artist's technique, 'Often he used a hard black chalk, or a lead point, to indicate first, very roughly, the main character of the composition; then comes the finely cut quill – more rarely a reed – to sketch the forms; and finally a brush, with a tawny bistre or greyish-brown colour, for the shadows. This wash is often the lightest possible, and of a single tone, or varying only according to the fullness of the brush; but often,

⁵ Inv. 181-1928; Hein-Th. Schulze Altcappenberg, *Giovanni Battista Tiepolo (1696-1770) und sein Atelier: Zeichnungen & Radierungen im Berliner Kupferstichkabinett*, exhib. cat., Berlin, 1996-1997, pp.30-31, no.7, repr. p.17, pl.III (where dated 1748-1750).

⁶ Inv. D.1978.PG.157; Count Antoine Seilern, *Italian Paintings and Drawings at 56 Princes Gate London SW7*, London, 1959, Vol.I, pp.131-132, no.157, Vol.II, pl.CXVII.

⁷ Inv. NM 24/1914; Per Bjurström, *Drawings in Swedish Public Collections 3. Italian Drawings: Venice, Brescia, Parma, Milan, Genoa, Stockholm*, 1979, unpaginated, no.224, repr. in colour p.xv.

⁸ Keith Christiansen, ed., *Giambattista Tiepolo 1696-1996*, exhib. cat., Venice and New York, 1996-1997, pp.181-185, no.25b.

⁹ James Byam Shaw, 'Introduction', London, Arts Council, *Drawings and Etching by Giovanni Battista and Giovanni Domenico Tiepolo*, exhib. cat., 1955, p.6.

¹⁰ Knox, *op.cit.*, unpaginated, under no.77.

¹¹ Beverly Louise Brown, *Giambattista Tiepolo: Master of the Oil Sketch*, exhib. cat., Fort Worth, 1993, p.244, under no.33.

¹² Christiansen, ed., *ibid.*, pp.157-168, no.21a.

¹³ Guido Piovene and Anna Pallucchini, *L'opera completa di Giambattista Tiepolo*, Milan, 1968, pp.128-129, no.270, fig.270. A line reproduction of this painting is illustrated in Seilern, *op.cit.*, Vol.I, unpaginated, fig.53.

¹⁴ Antonio Morassi, *A Complete Catalogue of the Paintings of G. B. Tiepolo*, London, 1962, no.48, fig.331.

LE CLAIRE
KUNST SEIT 1982

*and especially in more pictorial compositions, there are two distinct tones...strong accents being added with a drier brush, over the lighter and more transparent wash, before this was completely dry...there is a remarkable degree of volume and solidity, which, with his delicate line and apparently casual washes, the artist is able to impart to all his forms.'*¹⁵

The first known owner of this superb *Apotheosis of a Warrior* was the eminent biologist William Bateson (1861-1926), who owned a choice group of pen and ink drawings by Giambattista Tiepolo. In 1911 Bateson lent this drawing, along with several others by the artist, to the important *Exhibition of Venetian Painting of the Eighteenth Century* at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in London. The present sheet, however, does not seem to have been included in the posthumous sale of Bateson's collection of drawings, held at Sotheby's in London on 23-24 April 1929, which included twenty-six drawings by Tiepolo.

¹⁵ Byam Shaw, *op.cit.*, pp.6-7.