

A RECONSIDERATION OF NICOLAS POUSSIN'S DRAWINGS FOR A *CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL*

BY

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ALTHOUGH never explicitly hailed as among the high points of Nicolas Poussin's *œuvre*, the five drawings for his lost or never executed painting of the *Conversion of St. Paul* (figs. 1-5) have frequently been the object of attempts to reconstruct their chronological sequence. Naturally, the authors of catalogues listing the paintings and drawings of the French Master, such as those of Walter Friedländer, Anthony Blunt, Doris Wild and, recently, Pierre Rosenberg and Louis-Antoine Prat, preponderate. But even Kurt Badt, a scholar more in-

terested in an artistic and intellectual monography than a "mere" catalogue raisonné, proposed such a possible reconstruction of Poussin's development of the St. Paul theme. The assumption or rejection of the idea that Poussin executed and dispatched at least one finished painting to its orderer, Paul Fréart de Chantelou, has gradually turned out to be the pivotal question for each undertaking: if Poussin is thought to have abandoned the whole project after producing only preparatory drawings, the sheets (dispersed among collections at Chantilly, London and St Petersburg:



FIG. 1. — Nicolas POUSSIN.
Study for the *Conversion of St. Paul*. Chantilly, musée Condé. Photo Giraudon.

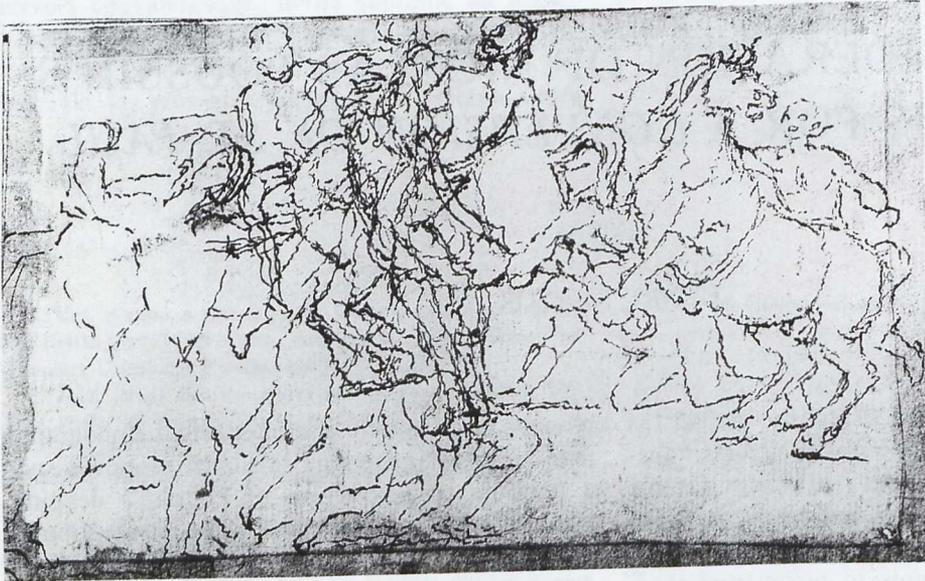


FIG. 2. — Nicolas POUSSIN.
Study for the *Conversion of
St. Paul*. St. Petersburg,
Hermitage. Photo Keyr
Paravelle.

figs. 1-5) would testify to one single, though interrupted work process. If, on the other hand, Poussin is to be considered as actually having delivered a finished painting, any attempt at reconstructing the chronological sequence of the five drawings must deal with the possibility that they stem from two distinct creative phases, datable on the evidence of epistolary references to around 1649/50 (the date of the presumed delivery of the finished picture) and to 1655/58 (the period in which Poussin still spoke of a projected "St. Paul" painting for Chantelou).

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In the last fifty years generally held opinions have shifted from refusal to acceptance of the possibility that Poussin actually delivered the painting: Friedländer, in 1939, denied outright the possibility that Poussin could have executed the painting¹, while Blunt, in 1960, wrote already far more cautiously that the references found in Poussin's letters of the decisive years 1649/50 were quite obscure and so difficult to interpret that "*on ne voit pas très bien si Poussin exécuta le tableau*

ou non"². But several years later, he had changed his mind, now listing the *Conversion* under the lost paintings, and saying that "*it seems almost certain that Poussin did execute a 'Conversion of St. Paul' for Chantelou in 1649/50*"³. The reason for Blunt's change of mind is found in the fragment of a rough draft letter (fig. 6), dating from around 1650 and written by Poussin in French to an unknown person, presumably the orderer, to whom he reports the speedy dispatch of a "*tableau de St. paul*"⁴. Moreover, the painter apologizes to this anonymous customer for having made him wait six weeks: according to him, the culprit was the merchant Petit⁵ who, as the middleman, forgot to inform Poussin about the arrival of "*cinquante pistoles*", the payment for the painting, as well as about the request of the patron to send him the picture immediately. Since Blunt (and, subsequently, other scholars) identified the addressee as Chantelou, it seemed obvious that Poussin, in this letter of 1650, was speaking of the finished painting depicting the *Conversion of St. Paul*. A possible confusion with his *Ecstasy of St. Paul*, also painted for Chantelou, was ruled out by the fact that this work had been executed and de-

livered seven years earlier⁶. Later on, in 1974, Blunt also argued against the possibility of identifying the work in question with Poussin's *Ecstasy of St. Paul*, commissioned by Pierre Scarron and painted in that same year, 1650, by pointing out that this composition was mentioned explicitly in the already cited letter fragment, some lines apart from the "tableau de St. paul"⁷.

While other scholars had claimed that all five drawings were studies for the second, never accomplished version of the *St. Paul*⁸, Blunt for the first time made a statement concerning the sheets which prepared the preceding, presumably finished picture. His choice fell upon the two drawings at St Petersburg (Hermitage 8050) and Chantilly (figs. 1 and 2)⁹. Rosenberg and Prat in their recent catalogue followed Blunt's idea of identifying those sketches which belonged to Poussin's first and successful work phase, but ac-

cepted only the Chantilly composition as evidence of such¹⁰, while they listed the remaining four sheets under the never completed second project¹¹.

As convincing as Blunt's hypothesis of a carried-out, but then lost first version of Poussin's *Conversion of St. Paul* might appear at first sight, if considered more closely, it turns out to be rather problematic. First, it is indeed hard to imagine that such an important painting could have vanished from Chantelou's collection without leaving any trace of evidence, whether documentary such as inventories, sale contracts, or mere references by visitors; or artistic, such as engravings, copies, or adaptations in sculptured relief. Blunt was well aware of this dilemma when he tried to anticipate these objections, saying that Chantelou possibly gave the picture away before it could be mentioned in sources such as the account of Bernini's visit in 1665.



FIG. 3. — Nicolas POUSSIN. Studies for the *Conversion of St. Paul*. London. Photo Courtauld Institute of Art.



FIG. 4. — Nicolas POUSSIN. Study for the *Conversion of St. Paul*. St Petersburg, Hermitage. Photo Keyr Paravelle.

But to whom could Chantelou have given the picture? And why would he have ordered a new version only five years later? How is it possible that Poussin — so sensitive to potentially dissatisfied customers¹² — seems not to have reacted in his letters to Chantelou's behaviour of giving away a painting, which he had initiated exclusively for him¹³? And why doesn't Poussin, while occupied with the second version, ever mention this first version in his correspondence, as he does regarding the two series of the *Seven Sacraments*, painted for Cassiano Dal Pozzo and Chantelou which he sometimes compared¹⁴? And why, if he had already delivered a painting in 1650, for which the commission and planning dated from

1649, is he apologizing in 1657 for having delayed for so long the completion of the promised work¹⁵? If he had begun a second version as late as 1655, he would not have felt any reason to make such excuses, since he usually allowed waiting-periods of three years to pass with no explanation to the necessarily patient customers¹⁶.

Moreover, Blunt's reading of the above cited letter fragment also poses problems, since, if interpreted as addressed to Chantelou, some parts remain completely incomprehensible: Poussin first mentions the "*cinquante pistoles pour un tableau que j'avois fet pour Mr Scarron*", of which Petit should have informed him six weeks earlier. Four lines later he explicitly refers to this sum, paid by Scarron for his *Ecstasy of St. Paul*, when



FIG. 5. — Nicolas POUSSIN. Study for the *Conversion of St. Paul*. St Petersburg, Hermitage. Photo Keyr Paravelle.

he writes of it as the “*susdits Cinquante pistoles* (...) *qui fut le payment du St paul que je vous ay depeint*”. Hence, Poussin seems to refer in both cases to the Scarron picture. But why, if he wrote this letter to Chantelou, does he say that he painted the *Ecstasy* for him? And why does he then apologize to Chantelou for having made him wait so long, when it was actually Scarron who had to show patience? To which painting is Poussin really referring when he writes in the first line “*vostre tableau de St. paul*”? Could he really have been referring to the presumed Chantelou *Conversion*, when the rest of the letter refers only to Scarron’s picture and its hurried dispatch?

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and muddled parts suddenly become clear and sensible: Poussin announces to Scarron the speedy dispatch of his painting depicting the *Ecstasy of St. Paul*, which is to be sent by a special courier to make up for lost time; he then tells Scarron about his encounter with one of the Petit brothers, relating the sentences pronounced by the person with whom he was speaking partly in indirect speech, and writing therefore of “*un tableau que j’avois fet pour Mr Scarron*” without intending to make any distinction between it and the previously, as well as subsequently, mentioned picture in the transport box (“*caisse dans laquelle est vostre tableau de St. paul... St paul que je vous ay depeint lequel je conseyney audit Sr. Petis bien conditionne, enferme dans un Canon de fer blanc et*



FIG. 6. — Nicolas POUSSIN. Drafted letter written on a sheet with two drawings. London, British Museum. Photo museum.

Since Blunt identified Chantelou as the supposed addressee of the letter without any evidential support, one is tempted to suggest a different reading: Poussin may well have written the fragmented letter from 1650 not to Chantelou, but to Paul Scarron himself. If his lines are considered in this light, all the above indicated unintelligible

and muddled parts suddenly become clear and sensible: Poussin announces to Scarron the speedy dispatch of his painting depicting the *Ecstasy of St. Paul*, which was paid by Scarron *via* the Petit brothers, who informed Poussin about the payment and the wishes of his customer only after a delay of six weeks. It was perhaps this omission that made Poussin write and

apologize to Scarron in such a humble tone, although he disapproved of him¹⁷.

But if the presently discussed letter can thus be proved to speak only of Scarron's *Ecstasy of St. Paul* and not, as Blunt believed, of Chantelou's *Conversion of St. Paul*, there is no evidence for the existence of a finished painting of the *Conversion*. As a consequence, the reconstruction of the chronological order of Poussin's sketches for the *Conversion* project has to take into account that in all probability there never was a first, executed version.

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Therefore, the reconstruction proposals presented by Blunt in 1974, as well as the suggestions submitted recently by Rosenberg and Prat would at least have to be reconsidered. A closer look at the propositions of the other important authors reveals, however, that they also should be reexamined, since their hypotheses exclude each other without showing the slightest compatibility. An important factor here seems to be the practice whereby scholars seldom exposed openly the main

ideas which guided their reconstructive arrangement of the sheets; thus, instead of engaging in a discussion with the propositions of their colleagues, they merely added their own hypotheses to those already existing¹⁸. But given the obvious pointlessness of consulting stylistic criteria for the chronology of the sketches (due also to the fact that Poussin's drawing style didn't change either dramatically or gradually enough between 1649 and 1658), it seems all the more astonishing that no one ever tried to consider the Poussin drawings for the *Conversion* in light of the possible sources the French Master might have consulted during his lengthy, though finally incompleting work process. Only Friedländer tended to do so in his first attempt to put the five sheets in chronological order; but he made only casual references to possible borrowings from famous prototypes, such as Michelangelo's Cappella Paolina fresco in the Vatican, Francesco Salviati's efforts in wall- and easel- painting (fresco and picture in Rome, Palazzo della Cancelleria, resp. Galleria Doria Pamphili), and Raphael's tapestry composition (Rome, Vatican). Moreover, they were never cited as reasons for the chronological arrangement es-



FIG. 7. — Nicolas POUSSIN.
The Crucifixion. Hartford,
Wadsworth Atheneum.
Photo museum.



FIG. 8. – Roman sarcophagus. *Endymion*. New York, Metropolitan Museum. *Photo museum*.

established by Friedländer. Nevertheless, he was the first to attempt a systematic comparison between the five existing drawings and the known letters in which Poussin informs Chantelou about the progress of his work¹⁹. He dated the sketches which he had identified as opening the cycle (London, private collection: fig. 3) to about 1650²⁰. But when a letter on the back of this drawing was correctly dated by Blunt to 1657²¹, the problem of opening the series of drawings with this sheet should have become obvious, since the project is mentioned by Poussin in his correspondence long before that date²²: thus, eight years were thought to have been elapsed between Poussin's tackling the project and the first surviving sketch for it.

But Blunt nevertheless accepted and adopted Friedländer's position. According to the latter, the squared *modello* in the Hermitage 5128 (fig. 4) followed next, although probably executed under his instructions by a pupil, rather than by Poussin himself²³. Appearing then in Friedländer's reconstruction are Hermitage 5134²⁴ and 8050 (figs. 5 and 2), followed by the Chantilly drawing (fig. 1). Even if this arrangement seems to be justified in some ways by connected motifs unmentioned on by Friedländer himself (see the kicking horse in Hermitage 5128, seen in an inverted position on the upper right side of the London sheet: figs. 3 and 4), given the lack of continuity between the so arranged drawings, it is no wonder that Blunt tried an alternative sequence in 1960. Like Friedländer, he opened up his series with the London drawing (fig. 3) and finished with the Chantilly

sketch (fig. 1), but proposed that Hermitage 5134 (fig. 5) should be followed by Hermitage 8050 (fig. 2), and the Hermitage *modello* (fig. 4). But actually, Hermitage 5134 (fig. 5) breaks into the coherent compositional texture of the other drawings, introducing a totally new idea, so that it is difficult to imagine it in the very middle of the creative process. Moreover, Blunt ignored the motif connection between the *modello* and the London sheet (figs. 3 and 4), and, like Friedländer before him, took no notice of the fact that Hermitage 8050 (fig. 2) seems not to be intended to prepare the whole composition itself, but rather to outline its left side: unlike the other drawings it does not represent St. Paul, but only his rearing horse, while its thrown-off rider must be imagined beyond the right border of the sheet, being observed by the horseman in the centre²⁵. Furthermore, it seems more plausible to seek a connection between this sketch and the Chantilly drawing (fig. 1), where the same type of rearing horse can be observed²⁶. Even though in Blunt's reconstruction it is difficult to trace any real compositional development in Poussin's work, his scheme established a generally accepted solution to the problem²⁷. It was Blunt himself, in 1974, who revised this arrangement, which needed to be corrected, since its author in the meantime believed in two separate work phases²⁸. Hence, he now attached Hermitage 8050 and the Chantilly drawing (figs. 1 and 2) to the first and apparently accomplished project, while relative to the other drawings, he chose the grouping proposed earlier



FIG. 9. — Etienne DELAUNE. The *Conversion of St. Paul*, engraving. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale. Photo B.N.

by Friedländer. So the London sheet, the Hermitage *modello* (now accepted as from Poussin's own hand), and Hermitage 5134 (figs. 3, 4, 5) again formed a sequence, this time considered as reconstructing the development of the supposed second version²⁹. But since Blunt again withheld his arguments for this arrangement, his reconstruction was

challenged by Rosenberg and Prat. Like him, they considered the Chantilly sheet to be a survival from the first phase, but listed in their catalogue all the other drawings under the second version, thus tearing apart the apparent connection between the Chantilly drawing and Hermitage 8050 (figs. 1 and 2). Furthermore, they only accepted



FIG. 10. — Nicolas POUSSIN. Study for *Moses defending the daughters of Jethro at the well*. Paris, Louvre. Photo R.M.N.



FIG. 11. – Roman marble relief. *Marcus Curtius Rufus flinging himself into the Gulf.* Rome, Villa Borghese. Photo Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione.

the sequence of the London sheet and the Hermitage *modello* (figs. 3 and 4), assigning Hermitage 8050 and 5134 (figs. 2 and 5) to a new, albeit largely unintelligible sequence. Nevertheless, like Blunt they considered Hermitage 5134 to be the “*autre pensée*” which Poussin announced to Chantelou in November, 1658³⁰, thus rejecting the already fixed and apparently final composition of which he had spoken to Chantelou in March, 1658³¹.

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But why was Poussin so suddenly displeased with such a hard earned result? What had he invented – or seen – that made him abandon a nearly completed work and wish to start anew, even at the risk of lacking the strength to live again through all the troubles he had just overcome³²?

In the case of the *St. Paul* drawings, as already mentioned above, there have been astonishingly few attempts to examine the possible impact upon Poussin of previous interpretations of this subject, as well as that of other visual sources upon an artist searching for inspiration. Blunt, in 1974, noticed the parallel between the figure of St. Paul in the Chantilly drawing (fig. 1) and that of Adam

in the *Crucifixion* from 1645/46 (Hartford, Connecticut; fig. 7)³³, but he failed to specify that both were due to the antique prototype of Endymion, as often represented on Roman sarcophagi (illustrated here with an example from a sarcophagus in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; fig. 8)³⁴. Since Poussin finished the painting with the *Crucifixion* only three years before he turned to Chantelou’s *St. Paul* picture, this double recourse to the same antique relief figure could support the hypothesis³⁵ that the Chantilly sheet formed the starting point for Poussin’s *St. Paul* project. Hermitage 8050 (fig. 2) could then be considered as following next, since it represents a kind of re-arrangement of the main motifs developed in the Chantilly drawing, which were then used to create only the left part of the missing principal scene: hence, we find again the rearing horse (now shifted to the right) checked from behind by a man, as well as the group of kneeling and stumbling prisoners being beaten by a soldier (here entering the scene from the left). But the Chantilly sheet also announces still another visual source which Poussin might have consulted during his search: the opening in the clouds out of which Christ is addressing St. Paul



FIG. 12. — Pierre MIGNARD. *Moses and the Brazen Serpent*. Oldenburg, Gemäldegalerie. Photo museum.

is possible evidence that he knew Étienne Delaune's engraving with the *Conversion of St. Paul*, distributed in Rome in 1567 by Mario Cartaro (fig. 9)³⁶. This becomes even clearer if the left side of the London sheet is considered as the third sketch of the series (fig. 3), where St. Paul is not yet (as in the Chantilly drawing) being thrown off, but is slipping from the saddle of his fallen horse and being helped by an assistant in the same way as in the Delaune engraving³⁷. Poussin only slightly changed the position of St. Paul's left arm and turned the horse in the opposite direction³⁸ (fig. 10). On the right side of the London sheet, he tried an amalgamation of the hitherto developed motifs: we find the rearing horse from the Chantilly drawing on the right, being checked from behind, while its rider, St. Paul, now lies in a similar position on the ground, as inspired by the Delaune engraving. But above this composition, Poussin has noted the image of a kicking horse, seen from behind, as he had already shown in the second sketch, Hermitage 8050 (fig. 2), where it is being ridden by the soldier who is looking to the right edge of the sheet. In this way, Poussin prepared the Hermitage *modello* (fig. 4),

which, apart from its squaring, also corresponds to Poussin's announcement to Chantelou in March, 1658 "*Je i arresté la disposition de la Conversion de St paul*"³⁹ in so far as it joins together all the main motifs of the previous sketches: the kicking horse from Hermitage 8050 and the London drawing (figs. 2 and 3) now belongs to St. Paul, who is lying on the ground in a position achieved through a combination of the Eudymion and Delaune's St. Paul (see the legs pedalling in the air). Also derived from the Delaune engraving are the protruding, U-shaped clouds out of which Christ points down. The figure of the man beside the horse, kneeling and protecting himself from the horse's hooves, has its origin in the second sketch, Hermitage 8050 (fig. 2), where he is seen from the side. Finally, the group with the beaten prisoners, developed in the Chantilly drawing and Hermitage 8050 (figs. 1 and 2) now serves as a background scene.

Given this intricate interplay of carefully developed and selected motifs, Hermitage 5134 (fig. 5), with its completely new and dramatic design of St. Paul being flung from horseback to the ground, appears that much more a strange in-

truder. Interestingly enough, apparently after having sketched the "startling"⁴⁰ idea of a thrown rider in 1658, Poussin no longer writes in his letters of the *Conversion*, but for the first time, indeed now rather appropriate, of the "*Chutte de St. Paul*"⁴¹.

This formulation becomes all the more intelligible, if one considers a model that seems to have intrigued Poussin so much that he even rejected the hitherto laboriously developed composition fixed in the Hermitage *modello*: his "*autre pensée*" follows down to the smallest details the famous high relief, shown in the seventeenth century on the southern facade of the Villa Borghese in Rome, representing *Marcus Curtius Rufus flinging himself into the Gulf* (fig. 11)⁴². Like the antique hero, but twisted in the opposite direction, St. Paul is now hurled down the crouching back of his horse, widespread arms and straddling legs stretched out in the air⁴³. How impressed and fascinated Poussin seems to have been by this pose can be deduced from the fact that he repeated it directly behind the figure of St. Paul (fig. 5), depicting this time one of his companions, half trying to help the falling rider, half being thrown

off himself. But unfortunately, at this point, Poussin seems to have been so exhausted that he was no longer able to create a coherent scene based on this inspiration. In August, 1660, while lamenting his worsening illness, which sometimes forced him "*de mettre les couleurs et les Pinceaux à part*", he resigned, booking the sum, paid in 1657 by Chantelou, as an advance on the "*St. Paul*" picture, towards another painting⁴⁴.

Just as in the *Crucifixion* (fig. 7), where the figure of Endymion served as the model for the resurrection of Adam, for his *Conversion of St. Paul*, Poussin again transformed two antique heroes into a Christian personality, when he created his St. Paul based on the gestures of Endymion and Marcus Curtius. Thus, what Badt said about Poussin's practise, seems to be confirmed: "*Aus gleichem antiken Geiste (...) sind bei ihm auch die Gestalten der Bibel, des Alten und des Neuen Testaments hervorgegangen. (...) überall herrscht die gleiche, gleichmäßig durchgehaltene Höhe des antiken Götter- und Menschenbildes*"⁴⁵.

H.K.

NOTES

I am gratefully indebted to Cullen Zimmerman and Fred Benedegossian for having revised and corrected my English text.

1. Anthony BLUNT and Walter FRIEDLÄNDER, *The Drawings of Nicolas Poussin. Catalogue raisonné*, vol. I and II, London, 1939-1974, p. 35f.

2. Anthony BLUNT, exh. cat. "Nicolas Poussin", Paris, 1960, p. 182, n° 234.

3. Anthony BLUNT, *The Paintings of Nicolas Poussin*, London, 1966, p. 161, n° L 42. He was later followed by Jacques THUILLIER, *Tout l'œuvre peint de Poussin*, Paris, 1974, p. 107, n° 175 and ID., *Nicolas Poussin*, Paris, 1994, p. 261, n° 194, who states – with each time the same formulation – that the painting was "*sans doute exécuté mais... a disparu*". Pierre ROSENBERG and Louis-Antoine PRAT, exh. cat. "Nicolas Poussin. La collection du musée Condé à Chantilly", Paris, 1994, p. 130, n° 35, accept this point of view, but remain cautious, saying only with reservation that the Chantilly drawing corresponds "*peut-être à un tableau perdu*". Only Doris WILD, *Nicolas Poussin. Leben, Werk, Exkurse*, Zurich, 1980, 2 vol.: II,

p. 185, n° 197, disagrees openly with Blunt, stating, however without any argument, that there has never been an executed first version.

4. The draft is written on a sheet, today conserved at the British Museum, London (Inv. 1937-12-11-1), which bears also two sketches for a "Holy Family"; see BLUNT/FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, p. 28, n° 55, and Pierre ROSENBERG and Louis-Antoine PRAT, *Nicolas Poussin, 1594-1665. Catalogue raisonné des dessins*, Milan, 1994, p. 638, n° 329. The complete text, to be reconstructed partly where the left border of the letter has been cut, runs as follows: "*ca]iss[e dan]s laquelle est votre tableau de St. paul vou[s]/[deu]oit estre envoyee par un extraordinaire, pour recompenser [du t]emps qui s'est escouste depuis que vous donnates l'ordre aux/[sieurs] Petis de me la payer et vous l'envoyer. Jetois de jour en jour/[attend]ans de vos nouvelles quand par car(cas) fortuit dimanche passe/[je] fis rencontre dun des Petis. lequel en me voyans me dit/[que] je*

le fesois souvenir de lordre quil avoit de me donner/[cinq] ante pistoles pour un tableau que javois fet pour Mr/[Scar]ron, quil y avoit bien six sepmaine qui(l) men devoit avertir/[mais] que ayant este en prison il en avoit perdu le souvenir/[N'y] a il pas un fidelle banquer? Vous scaures. Maintenant/[d'où] est procede le s< i long > retardement qui peut estre/[vo]us met en inquietude.[...] di dernier je resues des susdits Cinquante pistoles [d'It]alie Comme vous veres par ma quittance/[qui] fut le payement du St paul que/[je] vous ay depeint lequel je conseigney/[audi]t Sr. Petis bien conditionne, enferme/[dan]s un Canon de fer blanc et unel/[ca]isse par dessus ils mont assure del/[vou]s lenvoyer par lordinaire qui se part/[dem] jain amen/[Je v]ous suplie tres humblement quand vous aures veu fet voir et/[con]sidere Cet ouvrage de men escrire se qui vous en aura semble/[san]s rien deguiser affin que je me rejouisse si vous en etes content". Since Poussin reports the completion of Scarron's picture with the "Ecstasy of St. Paul" also in a letter to Chantelou from the 29th of May 1650, the letter fragment can also be dated to 1650: see Charles JOUANNY, *Correspondance de Nicolas Poussin* (Archives de l'art français, nouvelle période, vol. V), Paris, 1911, p. 414f., n° 181. For the painting with the "Ecstasy" itself see Pierre ROSENBERG, exh. cat. "Nicolas Poussin 1594-1665", Paris, 1994, p. 434ff., n° 192.

5. A "Monsu Petit mercante" is mentioned for the first time in a letter, written by Poussin to Cassiano dal Pozzo the 27th of June 1642: see JOUANNY, *op. cit.*, p. 163f., n° 68.

6. BLUNT, 1966, cat. cit., p. 161, n° L 42. Blunt's view was also accepted by ROSENBERG/PRAT, *op. cit.* (Milan, 1994), p. 638, n° 329.

7. BLUNT/FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, V, p. 83f., n° 408.

8. See BLUNT/FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, I, p. 35f. and BLUNT, 1960, cat. cit., p. 181f., n° 234; Kurt BADT, *Die Kunst des Nicolas Poussin*, Cologne, 1969, p. 240 passed over the early work phase of 1649/50 in silence, considering also the five drawings to belong to the years 1655/58 and stating that they did not lead up to a finished painting. Like him, THUILLIER (as note 3) considers the five subsisting drawings as studies for the second, never accomplished project.

9. See the sheets at St Petersburg, Hermitage (8050): pen and brown ink, 112 × 184 cm, and at Chantilly, musée Condé (AI 171; NI 206): pen, brown ink and bistre wash, 187 × 285 cm; for Blunt's statement, see BLUNT/FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, V, p. 84, n° 408.

10. ROSENBERG/PRAT, *op. cit.* (Milan, 1994), p. 662, n° 340 and ROSENBERG/PRAT, cat. cit. (Paris, 1994), p. 130, n° 35.

11. ROSENBERG/PRAT, *op. cit.* (Milan, 1994), p. 710ff., n° 368-371.

12. See for example his letter from the 22nd of November 1648 where he begs the Chantelou brothers to tell him their judgement about a painting he had executed for the elder brother, Jean Fréart: JOUANNY, *op. cit.*, p. 391, n° 165. Likewise, Poussin again and again claims to get Chantelou's opinions on the pictures of the *Seven Sacraments* he painted for

him: see for example *ibid.*, p. 364, n° 153 (*Baptism, Penitence*), p. 380, n° 159 (*Marriage*).

13. See JOUANNY, *op. cit.*, p. 402, n° 172, with Poussin's letter to Chantelou from the 20th of June 1649 where the *St. Paul* project, suggested by Chantelou, is mentioned for the first time: "... vous poués vous assurer que trèsvolontiers j'embrasserois le subiect que vous me proposés de la Conuersion de St Paul vostre Patron car outre que le subiec est trèsbeau je ne scaurois rien faire pour personne qui cognoisse si bien que vous le choses bien fettes".

14. JOUANNY, *op. cit.*, p. 440f., n° 195, letter from the 20th of December 1655 where Poussin praises the pictures for Chantelou as "plus riches et... plus du grand sans paragon" against the Dal Pozzo versions.

15. JOUANNY, *op. cit.*, p. 445, n° 199, letter from the 24th of December 1657: "... la Conuersion de St. Paul que il i a longtemps que vous désirés que je vous représente en un tableau...".

16. See as one example the case of the *Baptism of Christ* (New York, private collection), ordered in 1645 by Chantelou's brother Jean Fréart de Chantelou, but painted and delivered only in 1648. Poussin confirms the order the 15th of May 1645 and, in a letter written three months later, reserves to himself the adequate time for the execution; in August of still the same year he explains to Jean Fréart why he hasn't yet found the time to start the picture – but then we only have an epistolary echo of this order again when Poussin, three years later, on 22nd June, 1648 tells of a preparatory sketch he has made for the painting; the dispatch of the finished picture is documented by Poussin's letter from the 13th of September 1648. For these letters, see JOUANNY, *op. cit.*, p. 303, n° 122; p. 317f., n° 127; p. 321, n° 129; p. 385, n° 162 and p. 388, n° 164. For the painting, see ROSENBERG, cat. cit., p. 395f., n° 172.

17. See Poussin's letter from January, 1649 to Chantelou where he gives an account of a letter from Scarron who reminded him of his promise to paint a picture for him – Poussin concedes but emphasizes to Chantelou that he does so rather "à vostre sollicitation plus qu'à la sienne car il ni a rien en quoy je ne m'engageasse pour vostre respect": JOUANNY, *op. cit.*, p. 394. That Poussin actually despised Scarron becomes clear from two letters from 1647/48 where he criticizes the satirical writings of Scarron: *ibid.*, p. 350, n° 145 and p. 378f., n° 158. Nevertheless, he corresponded frequently between 1646 and 1649 directly with Scarron: see *ibid.*, p. 332, n° 135; p. 341, n° 140; p. 369f., n° 155; p. 378, n° 158 and p. 394, n° 168.

18. An exception from this is made by ROSENBERG/PRAT, *op. cit.* (Milan, 1994), p. 662, n° 340 where they are partly discussing Blunt's reconstruction.

19. See BLUNT/FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, I, p. 37, n° 71.

20. London, private collection: pen and brown ink, 105 × 160 cm.; for Friedländer's statement, see BLUNT/FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, I, p. 36, n° A 15; he knew the composition by then only through a reproduction in the *Magasin Pittoresque*, 1856, p. 195; the original drawing reappeared before 1960 and was

then fully discussed by Blunt in BLUNT, 1960, cat. cit., p. 181f., n° 234 where he corrected the previous errors concerning the wrong date given to a letter on the backside of the sheet (see the following note).

21. Friedländer, being misguided as well by the article in the *Magasin Pittoresque* (see note 20 above), as by JOUANNY, *op. cit.*, p. 183, n° 76, interpreted the writing as a letter, addressed by Poussin in 1642 to Chantelou. In BLUNT, 1960, cat. cit., p. 181f., n° 234, Blunt could show that the letter was actually written by Antoine Bouzonnet-Stella to Poussin in November, 1657.

22. See the letters from the 8th of October 1649: JOUANNY, *op. cit.*, p. 409, n° 176, from the 29th of August 1655: p. 438, n° 195 and from the 26th of December 1655: p. 443, n° 198.

23. St Petersburg, Hermitage (5128): pen, brown ink and bistre wash over red chalk, heightened with white, squared with black and red chalk, 310 × 227 cm.; for Friedländer's statement, see BLUNT/FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, I, p. 36, n° A 16.

24. St Petersburg, Hermitage (5134): pen and brown ink, 128 × 90 cm.

25. Only BADT, *op. cit.*, p. 240 seems to have already detected this when he describes the scene as "zwei Reiter mit ihren Pferden aus der Begleitung des Heiligen" whereas ROSENBERG/PRAT, *op. cit.*, p. 714, n° 370 identifies St. Paul – hardly convincing – in the totally subordinated figure at the right, trying to protect himself against the horse's hooves: the same figure with the same position, now seen frontally upon, also occurs in the Hermitage *modello* (fig. 4) representing there an assistant. Since Poussin draws his thrown-off St. Paul always as lying on his back, it seems more plausible to read the figure in Hermitage 8050 likewise as an assistant.

26. See for this already BLUNT/FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, V, p. 84 and Hugh BRIGSTOCKE, exh. cat. "A Loan Exhibition of Drawings by Nicolas Poussin from British Collections", Oxford, 1990/91, n° 61.

27. See for example the arrangements from BADT, *op. cit.*, p. 239f. and WILD (as note 3), II, p. 185, n° 197 which are both literal repetitions of Blunt's conception; Badt only singled out the Hermitage *modello* (fig. 4) which he dismissed as a pupil's work. Recently, on grounds of stylistic consideration, Martin Clayton has again risen doubts on the authenticity of this sheet (see his review of the Rosenberg/Prat-catalogue in the *Burlington Magazine*, CXXXVIII, 1996, p. 469, No. 369); its solidity as well as its density of figuration, however, fits well in this period (see e.g. Rosenberg/Prat, *op. cit.*, n° 364 resp. the other St. Paul-drawings).

28. BLUNT/FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, V, p. 83f., n° 408.

29. See *ibid.*, I, p. 35f. and V, p. 84.

30. See *ibid.*, V, p. 84, and ROSENBERG/PRAT, *op. cit.* (Milan, 1994), p. 662, n° 340 and p. 714, n° 371; nevertheless Rosenberg and Prat are hesitating to identify the "autre pensée" alternatively with Hermitage 5134 and 8050 (fig. 2): see *ibid.*, p. 714, n° 370. Concerning Poussin's letter to Chantelou, see JOUANNY, *op. cit.*, p. 449, n° 201.

31. See JOUANNY, *op. cit.*, p. 447, n° 200 with Poussin's letter from the 15th of March 1658: "Je i arresté la disposition de la Conversion de St Paul et la dépeindrei en temps d'élection".

32. Poussin in the end actually resigned to the accomplishment of the St. Paul project: the 2th of August 1660 he definitively places the fifty pistoles, paid by Chantelou in 1657 in advance, to his credit: see *ibid.*, p. 450f., n° 202 and, concerning Chantelou's advanced payment, the letter from the 24th of December 1657, *ibid.*, p. 445, n° 199.

33. Concerning the *Crucifixion*, see ROSENBERG, cat. cit., p. 355ff., n° 146 and, most recently, the leaflet which accompanied the small exhibition held in 1994 at the Wadsworth Atheneum. A painting with *Moses and the Brazen Serpent* in the picture Gallery at Oldenburg, attributed to Pierre Mignard (fig. 12), forms an original example of the *fortuna* of Poussin's Adam: Mignard transforms him into an Israelite wrestling with a snake that has wound around his arm. For this picture see Herbert Wolfgang KEISER, *Gemäldegalerie Oldenburg*, Oldenburg, 1967, p. 68.

34. See Anna Mc CANN TAGGART, *Roman Sarcophagi in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, 1978, p. 34-38, n° 3 as well as Hellmut SICHTERMANN, *Die antiken Sarkophagreliefs*, vol. XII/2: *Die mythologischen Sarkophage*, Berlin, 1992, p. 112f., n° 48. The St. Paul in the Chantilly drawing in fact even shares the same position of the legs with the sarcophagus-Endymion illustrated here. Anthony BLUNT, *Nicolas Poussin*, New York, 1967 (The A.W. Mellon Lectures in the Fine Arts 1958), p. 122 supposes indeed that such Endymion-sarcophagi were known to Poussin and his friends. Judith COLTON, "The Endymion Myth and Poussin's Detroit Painting", in *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XXX, 1967, p. 429 relates – unfortunately without any proving evidence – that Poussin instantly copied several motifs from Endymion-sarcophagi when he arrived in Rome.

35. See ROSENBERG/PRAT, *op. cit.* (Milan, 1994), p. 662, n° 340.

36. Concerning this engraving, indicated in ROBERT-DUMESNIL's *Peintre-Graveur*, Paris, 1865, vol. IX, p. 14 as "d'après Jean Cousin", see also François COURBOIN, *Histoire illustrée de la gravure française*, 3 vol., I, Paris, 1923, n° 285. BLUNT/FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, I, p. 37, n° 71 compares the form of the clouds with those in Salviati's fresco in the Palazzo della Cancelleria; there, however, the clouds are surrounding a perfect circled aperture in which Christ is entirely visible whereas both in the Delaune engraving and the Chantilly drawing they are thought to build a structure, intruding from above into the landscape and serving the appearing Christ, perceivable only in his upper part, as a kind of parapet.

37. BLUNT/FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, I, p. 36, n° A 15 referred the attending figure to Michelangelo's Cappella Paolina fresco: but the motif of Poussin's St. Paul being helped from behind by an assistant seen from the side, shows far more similarities to Delaune's engraving than to the Roman fresco where both position and gestures of the figures are totally different.

38. The pose of Delaune's St. Paul can also be detected in one of Poussin's sketches for the likewise never executed composition of *Moses defending the daughters of Jethro at the well* (Paris, Louvre 32432: bistre wash over chalk drawing; fig. 10): here, one fighter, falling down backwards at the right end of the scene, shows exactly the same gesture as the St. Paul in the engraving. Poussin projected the Moses composition in 1648 for Pointel but abandoned it in favour of the painting *Eliezer and Rebecca at the well* (Paris, Louvre). On the evidence of the preparatory drawings it can be deduced that the *Eliezer* picture has to be considered as the alternative project to the *Moses* scene; see for this: Henry KEAZOR, review of the Poussin-exhibitions 1994/95, *Kunstchronik*, XLVIII, 1995, p. 358f. Concerning the Louvre-drawing with the *Moses* composition as well as for the *Eliezer* painting, see ROSENBERG, cat. cit., p. 368f., n° 156, resp. p. 382ff., n° 166.

39. JOUANNY, *op. cit.*, p. 447, n° 200.

40. BLUNT/FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, V, p. 84.

41. See JOUANNY, *op. cit.*, p. 449, n° 201 with his letter from the 25th of November 1658. In his previous letter, Poussin is always speaking of the "*Conversion de St. Paul*".

42. Rome, Villa Borghese, Salone d'accesso, Inv. n° XLIII. Concerning this antique relief, restored perhaps by Agostino Penna in 1776 at the occasion of its transfer from the facade to the entrance hall, see first of all Francis HASKELL and Nicholas PENNY, *Taste and the Antique*, 4th ed., New Haven and London, 1994, p. 191ff., n° 27 where the relevant documents – descriptions starting with the year 1648 – as well as the historical backgrounds are fully discussed. For an illustration of the easily perceivable location of this relief until the late eighteenth century at the centre of the southern facade

of the Villa Borghese, facing the "Giardini segreti di Agrumi e di fiori", see Simone Felice's engraving in Giovanni Battista FALDA's *Li giardini di Roma* (*The Illustrated Bartsch*, vol. XLVII, p. 37, n° 070; the first edition of the "giardini" is there dated to "after 1677"). Only in 1744 doubts concerning the authenticity of the sculptured work arose, conducting modern scholarship to consider it as a pastiche, possibly dating from the two first decades of the seventeenth century (Pietro Bernini?) and combining the rest of the antique representation of a two-wheeled coach with the modern figure of Marcus Curtius. For the hypothesis of Pietro Bernini having restored (or rather created) the relief in 1617 see Cesare d'ONOFRIO, *Roma vista da Roma*, Rome, 1967, p. 210f. and 256ff.

43. BLUNT/FRIEDLÄNDER, *op. cit.*, I, p. 36, n° 69, compares the falling horse with the painting in the Galleria Doria Pamphilij, generally attributed to Francesco Salviati which – apart from the animal's likewise bowed neck – doesn't share any similarity with the Poussin-horse: while, for example, Salviati's horse seems to bow and cover its head between parallel outstretched forelegs, the horse in the Poussin drawing as well as in the Borghese relief shows the foremost leg bent. Concerning the painting and the denial of Salviati's authorship see recently exh. cat. "Fiamminghi a Roma 1508-1608", Rome, 1995, p. 252f., n° 178. For the many possible sources of the bowing horse, provided by antique relief and sculpture, see Wilhelm PINDER, "Antike Kampfomotive in neuerer Kunst", *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, N.F., V, 1928, p. 361ff.

44. See note 32.

45. BADT, *op. cit.*, p. 447.

RÉSUMÉ. – *Reconsidérant les dessins de Poussin pour une Conversion de saint Paul.*

Étonnant est le nombre de tentatives qui ont été faites pour déterminer dans quel ordre devaient se succéder chronologiquement les cinq dessins de Poussin relatifs à son projet d'une peinture représentant la *Conversion de saint Paul*, que Chantelou lui avait commandée en 1649. Alors que quelques historiens s'accordent à voir dans un fragment de lettre, adressée en 1650 par Poussin à un destinataire inconnu, la preuve que le tableau avait été achevé et délivré à Chantelou (ceci avant la seconde version de 1655, également pour Chantelou), d'autres auteurs envisagent ces dessins comme diverses études destinées à une seule commande qui ne vit jamais le jour. Ce que nous proposons ici est de restituer la genèse de ces cinq dessins: ainsi, pour la première fois est argumentée la manière dont évolua la composition de ce projet, d'un dessin à l'autre; nous avons également cherché à détecter les diverses sources formelles auxquelles Poussin a pu se référer tout au long de l'élaboration de cette œuvre.