LODOVICO CARDI (CALLED IL CIGOLI)
Castelvecchio di Cigoli (near San Miniato al Tedesco, Pisa) 1559–1613 Rome

9 Reclining Male Figure, 1593, study for the painting The Dream of Jacob (1593)
Verso: Reclining Male Figure, 1593, study for the same painting

Red chalk on white antique laid paper
Verso: Pen and brown (probably iron gall) ink
Watermark: None
243 x 373 mm (9 ¾ x 14 ¼ in.)
Inscribed verso, at center of upper edge in pen and brown ink: in the hand of Giovanni Battista Cardi: di man di Lodovico Cigoli; at upper edge, immediately to the right of Cardi’s inscription, in pen and brown ink, in the hand of William Gibson: 4 ½ (his price code for 15 shillings)!

PROVENANCE Probably among the drawings bequeathed by the artist to his nephews (Giovanni Battista Cardi, b. c. 1593; Costimo, d. 1611; and Francesco, date of will, 1697) in 1615; Sir Peter Lely (b. Pieter van der Faes) (1618–1680), London (Lugt 2092, lower right corner, recto); to his estate (possibly in sale, London, 11 April 1688 and following days or London, 15 Nov. 1694 and following days); possibly to William Gibson (c. 1642–1702);3 probably to Jonathan Richardson, Sr. (1665–1745), London (Lugt 2183, lower right corner, verso); possibly to his heirs and in his sale, London, directed by Cock, 23 Jan. and following days 1747 (1746 old style); Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723–1792) (Lugt 2564, lower right corner, recto); to his heirs; anonymous owner; to (Richard Omanen), sale, Oninen Book Auctions, Northampton, Mass., 12 Nov. 1996, lot 182; sold to SCMA in 1996

LITERATURE GBA 1998, no. 190, repr. (recto)

EXHIBITION Northampton 1997 (recto and verso)


Cigoli was a prolific and inventive draughtsman for whom drawing was a fundamental creative activity. His diligence in the study of anatomy and perspective, and his dedication to drawing as a means of preparing for painting were remarked on by his early biographers: “Disegno senza termine o misura” (He drew without end or moderation), according to Filippo Baldinucci (1625–1695), the Florentine connoisseur, collector, and scholar.4 Over five hundred drawings by Cigoli are preserved in the Uffizi, the principal repository of his drawings.

Lodovico Cardi was born in Tuscany at Castelvecchio di Cigoli, from which his nickname is derived. Cigoli’s first biographer, his nephew Giovanni Battista Cardi, records that the talented youth was placed at about age thirteen in the Florentine studio of the painter Alessandro Allori (1535–1607), where he began his study of anatomy. In the 1580s he trained with the architect Bernardo Buontalenti (1531–1608) and with the painter Santi di Tito (1535–1603), who was leading Florentine art away from mannerist complexity toward a new naturalism and clarity of expression. Cigoli’s work with these artists brought him into contact with the ruling Medici family and other important patrons, and by the early 1590s Cigoli had established himself as an independent artist.

This drawing, which was discovered mounted in a book in 1996, preserves two studies for the figure of Jacob in Cigoli’s painting The Dream of Jacob, now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Nancy (fig. 1).4 Although multiple versions of this composition are known, the Nancy canvas is the only signed and dated one: Cigoli’s monogram and the date appear on the rock at lower right. Unfortunately, it is no longer possible to make out the final digit of this date, which has been variously read — most often as 1593 or 1598 — with individual scholars justifying their reading on stylistic grounds. Most scholars accept the 1593 dating proposed by the Musée des Beaux-Arts and accepted by Miles Chappell.
In the story of Jacob’s dream, told in the book of Genesis (28:10–22), God’s promise of land to the Israelites is renewed. The third of the great Hebrew patriarchs, Jacob was the son of Isaac and the slightly younger twin of Esau, whom he cheated of their father’s blessing, securing authority over their tribe for himself. Fleeing his brother’s wrath, Jacob set out for the home of his maternal uncle Laban in Mesopotamia. As he slept at the side of the road, a pile of rocks for his pillow, Jacob dreamed of a ladder reaching to heaven. As angels ascended and descended, God addressed Jacob from atop the ladder saying: “I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed.” Awakening, Jacob took the stones that had pillowed his head and constructed a pillar, which he anointed with oil, calling the site “Bethel” (the House of God).

The two drawings on the SCMA sheet, both preparatory for the figure of Jacob, are studies of significantly different kinds. The recto drawing is a red chalk study from life of a reclining, lightly bearded young man, probably an assistant (gargone) posed in the studio. The background, only lightly indicated, suggests a support against which he leans. Except for his footwear, which resembles theatrical costuming all’antica, he wears contemporary dress—a short jacket and breeches. The warm red chalk, which can be blended to atmospheric effect, allowed Cigoli to study the play of light on the volumes of the figure.

In contrast, the verso study is in pen and brown ink, a medium well adapted to rapid sketching and Cigoli’s preferred medium for setting out preliminary ideas for entire compositions or individual figures. It is a free and fluid sketch executed directly from his imagination, in which he explores certain details of the figure, whose basic pose he had studied in earlier drawings. Here Cigoli indicates features of the costume that will appear in the final painting (the capped sleeves of Jacob’s tunic, the cut of his pantaloons) and makes adjustments to the position of Jacob’s left hand.

The rediscovery of SCMA’s sheet brings the number of drawings that can be associated with Cigoli’s Dream of Jacob to nine (seven sheets, two of them with drawings recto and verso). Establishing their sequence and dating, however, is complicated by the existence of multiple versions of the painting whose interrelationships remain uncertain. Miles Chappell has convincingly shown that one variant composition can be assigned to Cigoli (in conception if not necessarily in execution) on the basis of drawings. Two of these sheets hold studies for the figure of Jacob. The Louvre’s drawing (in black and red chalks with white heightening on blue paper; fig. 2) corresponds closely to this variant. Jacob is drawn as a full-faced, beardless youth who wears a rustic costume that has slipped from his right shoulder—a white blouse under a tunic styled vaguely all’antica that drapes over his thighs and is held with a shoulder clasp. The position of his arms and hands is studied several times in a double-sided sheet in the Uffizi executed in the same medium on blue paper. Like the Louvre drawing, these appear to be studies from a live model (as suggested by the figure’s contemporary clothing). As Chappell proposes, the variant composition to which these drawings relate is probably earlier than the Nancy version.

Two nearly identical composition drawings with blue wash (one in the Gabinetto Nazionale della Grafica in
Rome, the other in the Uffizi, fig. 3, are closely related to the Nancy painting, where Jacob's ladder recedes diagonally toward the upper right corner of the composition. These drawings still represent Jacob as a beardless youth, who wears generic "ancient" costume with full sleeves and what appears to be a long tunic; but here his left arm is extended along his leg. 10

Between the two composition drawings and the Nancy painting, Cigoli transformed Jacob into a somewhat older, bearded figure. A red chalk drawing of a reclining nude may be crucial to understanding this change (fig. 4). 11 A study from life, the drawing has long been associated with The Dream of Jacob, as the position of the figure is so near to that used in the painting. However, as marks on the red chalk figure's hands clearly suggest the stigmata, it may have been created instead as a study for the dead Christ. The use of this figure as the basis for Jacob would have been a perfectly logical choice iconographically, as it would underline the theological significance of the subject. Jacob was taught by the Church as a prefigurative "type" of Christ, and his dream was interpreted in the Renaissance as prefiguring Christ's promise to Nathaniel (John 1:51): "Hereafter ye shall see Heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."
The SCMA studies for Jacob, both of which are closer in detail to Cigoli’s final solution for the Nancy painting, are the latest in the sequence of known drawings for this work. The sheet almost certainly remained in Cigoli’s studio for his lifetime, passing at his death to his nephews, who were his sole heirs; it bears an inscription in the hand of Giovanni Battista Cardi identifying it as an autograph work by the master. By the late seventeenth century the drawing had gone to England, where it can be traced from the collection of the painter Sir Peter Lely through a succession of important British collections up until the end of the eighteenth century. When rediscovered in 1996, it was inlaid in Charles Rogers’s publication A Collection of Prints in Imitation of Drawings. The sheet had been mounted along all four edges into a WINDOW created by excising from one page a print after a drawing by Baccio Bandinelli (1493–1560), so that Cigoli’s pen and ink study, with its inscription di man di Lodovico Cigoli, would fall on the verso while the red chalk drawing would be visible on the verso of the page. The careful preservation of the print’s engraved inscription identifying the owner of the Bandinelli drawing as Sir Joshua Reynolds suggests that whoever mounted the drawing was well aware that it had belonged to the famous collector, whose mark is stamped at the lower right corner of the red chalk study. The fact that the Cigoli was a single drawing inlaid into this volume suggests, however, that the owner who placed it there was probably not a significant collector of drawings.

1. I am grateful to Nicholas Turner for identifying this inscription. For the meaning of the price code, see Popham 1967, no. 81.
2. William Gibson, a miniature painter, was a major buyer at the sale of Lely’s drawings. He marked the drawings he owned with price codes for the benefit of his widow, from whom the portrait painter and collector Jonathan Richardson, Sr., purchased many drawings in 1790.
5. Florence 1992, under no. 20. Safarik (1990) cites two paintings, formerly attributed to Domenico Fetti, that he considered likely to be or to reflect a painting by Cigoli. One of these, reproduced by Alberto Riccoboni in Venice 1947 (featuring paintings from [unidentified] private collections), is the work discussed by Chappell (fig. 20c).
6. See Viarte 1988, no. 141, repr. Once attributed to Barocci, the drawing was returned to Cigoli by Jacob Bean, who connected it with the painting in Nancy.
7. Studies for Jacob, black and red chalk, white heightening, on blue paper, 272 x 220 mm, Uffizi, inv. 9972F (see Florence 1992, no. 21 recto and verso, both repr.). Formerly attributed to Giovanni da San Giovanni (Giovannii Mannozzi, 1592–1636), the drawing was identified as a study for Jacob by Annamaria Petrolì Tofani (1979, p. 73, under no. 57). The position of the left hand (on the recto) corresponds fairly closely with that of the hand in the Lowre drawing, although the right hand and arm are positioned differently. The second study on the page, a further investigation of the left hand’s position, moves it closer to the position of the painting, with the thumb slightly extended. A third drawing, in brush and blue wash, depicts an angel that is virtually identical to the one nearest earth in the painting (Uffizi, inv. 996F; see Furanda 1985, no. 20, repr.).
8. Florence 1992, under no. 20. Raphael’s ceiling in the Vatican’s Stanza d’Eliodore is sometimes cited as a precedent for the Nancy painting, as is his sixth arcade of the Vatican Logge, which has more in common with this variant, where Jacob’s ladder rises vertically from the center of the composition. Cigoli could have known Raphael’s composition from the chiaroscuro woodcut traditionally attributed to Ugo da Carpi (see Illustrated Bartch, vol. 48, no. 3 [21], repr.).
10. The Uffizi drawing moves Jacob closer to the picture plane, making him somewhat more prominent, as he is in the painting, supporting Miles Chappell’s suggestion that this is the later of the two drawings. (Cf. Anna Forlini, in San Miniato 1999, who identified the Rome drawing as the modello for the Nancy painting and Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodinò, in Rome 1977, who thanks it as the more complete version.)
11. Study for Jacob, Uffizi, inv. 8967F (Furanda 1986, no. 394, repr.). A Bucci in San Miniato 1999, p. 76, listed this drawing (with the composition study and the angel) in connection with the Nancy painting.
12. That it remained in the studio is also suggested by the fact that echoes of the figure are to be found among Cigoli’s later works in Rome.
13. A connoisseur and collector, the friend of Horace Walpole, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Arthur Pond, and other prominent men of his day, Rogers inherited in 1740 from his mentor William Townsend a library and art collection that would form the basis for his own considerable collections, which came to include many prints and drawings. For his 1778 publication, A Collection of Prints in Imitation of Drawings, Rogers engaged 2500 printers to reproduce drawings by major British collections (including his own). The two-volume publication (which included the prints, plus his own critical commentary) was printed by J. Nichols and sold by J. Boydell. The volume in which the SCMA drawing was mounted is an edition without commentary, printed by Joseph Kay.
14. The framing line drawn in pencil around the edge of the sheet and the various points at which the paper is pinned on the verso suggest that the drawing had been mounted (and removed from) one or more supports before being inserted in the Rogers book. These would presumably include Lely, Richardson, and Reynolds mounts.
LITERATURE

Abbreviations

ArtD  Art Digest
ArtJ  Art Journal
ArtN  Art News
ArtQ  Art Quarterly
Burl  Burlington Magazine
FARL  Frick Art Reference Library
GBA  Gazette des Beaux-Arts
SCMA  Smith College Museum of Art
SCMA Bull  Smith College Museum of Art Bulletin
Smith AlumQ  Smith Alumnae Quarterly

Abbott 1934
Abbott 1938
Abbott 1939a
Abbott 1939b
Adhémar 1954
Adhémar 1965
Alinsworth 1998
Alazard 1950
Albertina 1933

Allen 1831
Amishai-Maisels 1985
Anaïoff 1961–70
Anaïoff and Wildenstein 1976
Andersson 1978
Angoulvent 1933
Apollonio 1947
Ariosto 1974
Art and Auction 1960a
Art and Auction 1960b
Art and Auction 1993
"Tunick Ups the Ante on Kornfeld." Art and Auction 15, no. 9 (April 1993), p. 18.
ArtD 1940
"Golden Gate Presents Magnificent Show of Old Master Drawings." ArtD (Golden Gate Special Number), 14, no. 18 (July 1, 1940), pp. 20–21.
ArtD 1953
ArtJ 1961–62
ArtJ 1969–70
ArtJ 1977
Friedlaender 1968

Fries 1964

Fromme 1981

Frommel 1998

Fuerstein 1930

Gallatin 1945

Gallo 1941

Gascoigne 1986

Gaudibert 1953

GBA 1960

GBA 1961
"La Chronique des Arts," supplement no. 1101 to *GBA* 56 (Feb. 1961), pp. 1–90.

GBA 1968
"La Chronique des Arts," supplement no. 1189 to *GBA* 71 (Feb. 1968).

GBA 1985

GBA 1991

GBA 1993

GBA 1998