

Carducho's drawings

Madrid

by MARK McDONALD

THE EXHIBITION *Vicente Carducho: teoría y práctica del dibujo en el Siglo de Oro* at the **Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid** (to 6th September), establishes Vicente Carducho (c.1576–1638) as the most innovative and influential draughtsman working in and around Madrid during the first half of the seventeenth century. Drawn mainly from collections in Spain, sixty-six sheets are exhibited alongside prints and books to document Carducho's career and trace his development as a draughtsman. The subtitle of the exhibition 'theory and practice of drawing' indicates a broader concern, Carducho's engagement with the intellectual aspects of art. The principles of artistic training and the status of the artist were subjects that greatly concerned him. These are matters Carducho addressed in his treatise the *Diálogos de la pintura* (Madrid 1633).¹ For Carducho, drawing was the basis of art and the measure of an artist's diligence.

Vicente moved from Florence to the Escorial in 1585 with his older brother Bartolomé (1560–1608) and Federico Zuccaro (c.1542–1609). They were among the artists who came to Spain to decorate Philip II's monastery and mausoleum north of Madrid. At the Escorial, Vicente experienced first hand the drawing practices of artists around him, a subject that provided a starting point for the exhibition. The initial section could, however, have been strengthened with more examples showing the variety of drawings made there. After following the court to Valladolid in 1601 and later moving to the



62. *Cavalry battle scene from the Trojan war*, by Vicente Carducho. 1610–12. Black chalk, wash and touches of highlight, 26.7 by 40.5 cm. (Museo de la Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, Madrid, D-2135; exh. Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid).

royal residence at El Pardo, we see Carducho's own style emerging. Even though there are no secure drawings from Carducho's years at the Escorial, his modest works from the first decade of the seventeenth century reflect the practices of his older peers and his approach to drawing as the basis of design. In 1607 Carducho was contracted to paint the cupola of the royal chapel in El Pardo. A highly finished presentation drawing with the *Triumph of the Eucharist* in the centre (cat. no.12; Fig.61) demonstrates the maturity of his early work when he was barely in his twenties.

When his brother died in late 1608, Vicente took over some of his work at El Pardo. A major commission was the frescos depicting the Story of Achilles in the Galería del Mediodía. Several highly finished sheets for individual scenes demonstrate a type of drawing not before seen in Spain (no.16.6; Fig.62). Vicente's drawings from the first decade of the century initiate a method that

he followed throughout his entire career where different types of drawing had specific purposes. He used quick sketches for preliminary ideas. A few of these survive, but there are many more fully resolved compositions, sometimes on prepared or coloured paper, often with highlights. Their practical use is demonstrated by the fact that most of his drawings are squared for transfer.

In Madrid, Vicente received royal commissions in addition to those from ecclesiastical clients. He provided painted decoration for the exequies of Philip III in the church of S. Jerónimo el Real in Madrid in 1621 for which a number of preparatory drawings of heraldic kings survive, displayed in the exhibition to reflect the original arrangement of the paintings (nos.24.1–24.13). Carducho also accepted commissions in towns outside Madrid, sometimes in collaboration with Eugenio Cajés (1574–1634) whose drawings have sometimes been confused with his.



61. *Triumph of the Eucharist*, by Vicente Carducho. c.1607–09. Pen and brown ink over black chalk, red and blue wash, blue bodycolour, gold, with touches of lead white, 36.3 by 36 cm. (Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, DIB/13/1/73).



63. *Expulsion of the Moriscos*, by Vicente Carducho. 1627. Blind stylus, pen and brown ink and blue wash, 38 by 50.5 cm. (Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, D-3055; exh. Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid).



64. *Demon*, by Vicente Carducho. 1632. Black chalk with touches of highlight on blue paper, 41 by 26.1 cm. (Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid, DIB/13/1/56).

Bringing together so many of Carducho's drawings allows us to more easily differentiate their individual styles.

The most remarkable body of his drawings are for the cycle of fifty-six paintings for the cloister of the Carthusian Monastery of El Paular near Segovia, a commission Carducho received in 1626 and brought to completion six years later. He meticulously prepared drawings for each work. They include individual figures (no.P.10; Fig.64) and complete compositions often inscribed with extensive notes in his hand for the benefit of the patron to explain what is shown. Understanding the relationship between the preparatory drawings and the paintings is facilitated in the exhibition through reproductions of the latter arranged in the order they hung in the cloister. The nucleus of drawings for the commission provides a touchstone for understanding the complexity of Carducho's style as a mature artist and his analytical approach to drawing.

The 1620s were artistically Carducho's most intense years. In 1627 Diego Velázquez, Carducho, Cajés and another Italian painter, Angelo Nardi, were involved in a competition to determine who best could paint Philip III expelling the Moriscos from Spain to decorate a room in the Alcázar dedicated to extolling the virtues of the Spanish Habsburgs as defenders of the faith. Velázquez won the competition, but the only surviving record is Carducho's pen-and-wash drawing that reveals his ability as a master draughtsman working in an up-to-date style (no.42; Fig.63).

In planning his compositions Carducho often drew inspiration from prints, for example the work of Antonio Tempesta (1555–1630) and Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528). Several

were displayed, indicating the availability of such material in Madrid. Carducho himself is known to have owned a substantial print collection.² The penultimate section of the exhibition examines the role of drawing in relation to Carducho's intellectual interests. Various Italian treatises are shown to provide the basis and a context for his conception of the role of drawing. They include Giacomo Barozzi da Vignola's *Regla de las cinco ordenes de arquitectura* that had been translated into Spanish by Patrizio Cajés (c.1540–1612) an edition of which, as recorded on the title page, was published 'en casa de Vicencio Carducho'. The elegant design of the exhibition allows the distinct phases of Carducho's career and the development of his ideas to unfold.

The survival of a large number of drawings by Carducho (around 135), more than any other Spanish artist working during the seventeenth century, suggests the value they had as models for artists and collectors. The complex task of recognising the authorship of drawings by others in his workshop is highlighted through a telling comparison of a *Holy Family* by Carducho and a close copy (nos.60.1 and 60.2). The final section of the exhibition considers Carducho's legacy as a draughtsman and the artists who were most influenced by him. They include Félix Castello (1595–1651), and Francisco Rizi (1614–85), the most talented artist of the next generation whose commitment to drawing reflects the teachings of Carducho.

Scholarship on Spanish drawings over the past thirty years has focused on refining the Corpus established by Angulo and Pérez Sánchez.³ Scant attention has been paid to the broader intellectual and artistic context of drawing in Spain. Bringing together largely unknown drawings – many exhibited for the first time – to provide a panoramic view of Carducho's graphic achievement and legacy is revealing and should serve as a model for future study of the subject. Avoiding excessive discussion of attribution in favour of focusing on what is known and integrating that knowledge with a broader context of artistic practice results in a much more refined understanding of the role of drawing in Madrid during the first half of the seventeenth century. Written by the curators of the exhibition, the catalogue raisonné of Carducho's drawings doubles as its guide.⁴ The Centro de Estudios Europa Hispánica sponsored both exhibition and publication and its indefatigable support of the study of Spanish art is exemplary.⁵

¹ V. Carducho: *Diálogos de la pintura, su defensa, origen, esencia, definición, modos y diferencias* [1633], ed. F. Calvo Serraller, Madrid 1979.

² M.L. Caturla: 'Documentos en torno a Vicencio Carducho', *Arte Español. Revista de la sociedad española de amigos del arte* 26 (1968–69), pp.177–221.

³ D. Angulo Iñiguez and A.E. Pérez Sánchez: *A Corpus of Spanish Drawings*, London 1975–88.

⁴ A. Pascual Chenel and A. Rodríguez Rebollo: *Vicente Carducho dibujos. Catálogo razonado*, Madrid 2015.

⁵ <http://www.ceeh.es/>

Deccan India 1500–1700

New York

by MILO C. BEACH

WHILE EXHIBITIONS RELATING to the royal courts of India are by no means infrequent, *Sultans of Deccan India: 1500–1700: Opulence and Fantasy* at the **Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York** (to 26th July), is the first major show devoted to the sultanates of the Deccan – the central plateau of the subcontinent, a territory spanning both coasts. This does not mean that the area has been ignored. Past catalogues have frequently referred to contacts that the Mughal and Rajput rulers to the north had with the Deccan, an area inhabited in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries by Turkish and Persian communities fleeing Mongol attacks, and sometimes an exemplary painting or object might have been included to illustrate cross-influences within a broader survey. Now, however, this unprecedented exhibition allows museum visitors to examine the brilliance of artistic activity in these southern kingdoms.

The Deccan had contacts by sea with Arab, Persian, Turkish and European worlds to the west, and with south-east Asia and even China to the east. From 1526 the expanding Mughal Empire to the north became a rival and an inspiration, while the fall of the southern Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar in 1565 brought new artists, craftsmen and ideas into the sultanates. Over time, the area was divided and subdivided, a complicated history made crystal clear in the fine exhibition catalogue's introductory essay by Richard Eaton.¹ The Mughals conquered the last of these sultanates in 1687, so the exhibition concentrates on the years of their independence and greatest originality.

Sultans of Deccan India is organised around five distinct political and artistic centres: Berar, Ahmadnagar, Bijapur, Golconda and Bidar, with a further section on Mughal and European influences. Within these divisions, the rather dense placement of objects gives a visual sense of the opulence named in the exhibition's title, and allows examination of works that gain by close comparison. Therefore, to see multiple works by Farrukh Husain (Farrukh Beg) or such anonymous artists as 'The Bodleian Painter' or 'The Paris Painter' placed together encourages viewers to look carefully and to identify and assess their unique traits.

The exhibition opens with a group of diamonds and other jewels and, while they are among the most famous products of the region, and certainly evocative of a source of its wealth, they perhaps belong in a different exhibition. A series of objects that help define the character of the Bahmani dynasty (1347–1538) preceding the five sultanates follows, including a magnificent spherical container with spiral fluting (cat. no.2). Lent by the Mittal Museum in Hyderabad, its bold severity, a characteristic of this period, is beautifully emphasised by the museum lighting.