



Jacopo Tintoretto  
Venetian, 1518 or 1519 - 1594

# *The Conversion of Saint Paul*

c. 1544

oil on canvas

overall: 152.7 × 236.3 cm (60 1/8 × 93 1/16 in.)

framed: 193 × 276.2 × 14.9 cm (76 × 108 3/4 × 5 7/8 in.)

gross weight: 106.595 kg (235 lb.)

Samuel H. Kress Collection 1961.9.43

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## **ENTRY**

The conversion of Saint Paul, known as Saul in his earlier life, is described in Acts 9:3–7. Saul, a persecutor of Christians, was sent from Jerusalem to Damascus to stamp out the churches there. As he neared the city with his troops, a great light flashed around him; he fell to the ground and heard a voice speak, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” The theme was a popular subject for artists in the 16th century. From a religious perspective, the image of Christ winning over Saul represented divine power and specifically the victory of the Church over its enemies. For artists, the story provided an opportunity to show off their skills in what often came to be treated as a battle scene, although the biblical text states only that Saul’s companions heard the sound but saw nothing. [1]

In the Gallery’s painting, the high drama of the episode is raised to the level of pandemonium. In the moment immediately after the thunderous voice of the divinity has sounded, shock waves still reverberate through the scene. A mighty wind whips banners, sails, and trees; the waves roil; clouds roll down from the sky to hide the distant mountains. Horses plunge in terror, throwing their riders and trampling men underfoot. Three horses fall down a fantastic outdoor stairway, one

upside down, his rider beneath him. On the far shore a riderless group gallops away in panic. A soldier holds his hands to his head. A ruptured drum lies on the ground. [2]

The picture is unmistakably an early work by Jacopo Tintoretto and has been accepted as a key document of the artist's youthful career for the past half century. [3] As in other works from this phase, such as the *Supper at Emmaus* (Szépmvészeti Múzeum, Budapest) and *Christ among the Doctors* (Museo del Duomo, Milan), the extreme dynamism seems intended to challenge and even shock, as does the unconventional pictorial technique. [4] The brushwork in some passages is strikingly varied, bold, and free—for example, in the horses galloping in the background and the sailboat just beneath them, painted so gauzily that only a ghost of the original image remains today. Other parts of the picture are unfinished in a conventional sense: the head of the mounted soldier on the bridge silhouetted against the banner is represented with a single circular brushstroke; the waves in the water are rendered with a few quick strokes of dry white paint, clearly showing the mark of the individual brush hairs. Tintoretto's familiar early palette of isolated, high-keyed colors—bold greens, yellows, blues, pinks, and reds—is set off here against areas of brown and gray, which have darkened over the centuries, making the bright colors appear out of key. The increased transparency of the paint layers over the centuries has made it evident that Tintoretto painted the figure of Saint Paul first in the nude, then added the garment on top of the nude figure (see Technical Summary). The same is true of the figure of Apollo in the *Contest of Apollo and Marsyas* (Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford), which shows a similar palette and figure types. Although any chronology of Tintoretto's early works must remain somewhat speculative, the Gallery's picture might reasonably be placed shortly before the Hartford painting, which is the subject of a letter by Pietro Aretino of January 1545. [5]

As in other early paintings, the ambitious young artist sets up an implicit challenge to the great masters of the present and recent past through references to some of their most celebrated works. [6] His Saul is based on the same figure in what would have been the most famous depiction of the scene at that time, Raphael's design for the Sistine Chapel tapestry of the subject [fig. 1], the cartoon for which was then in Venice in the collection of the patricians Giovanni and Vettor Grimani. Also, a version of the tapestry was in the collection of Zuanantonio Venier. [7] The setting and battle imagery are derived from one of the most prominent paintings in Venice, Titian's *Battle of Spoleto* in the Sala del Maggior Consiglio in the Palazzo

Ducale, completed in 1538, and now known only from a compositional drawing (Département des Arts Graphiques, Musée du Louvre, Paris) [fig. 2], copies, and prints (the painting was destroyed by fire in 1577). From Titian's lost masterpiece Tintoretto took his arrangement of water, bridge, hillside, and distant panorama, as well as his vision of nature echoing the maelstrom of men and horses. The white horse plunging out of the picture space at left evokes another much praised Venetian work, Pordenone's facade fresco for the Palazzo Talenti (later d'Anna), depicting Martius Curtius leaping on horseback into the void, known today only from prints [fig. 3] and a compositional drawing. Pordenone had been Titian's chief rival up until his death in 1539, and the young Tintoretto seems to have sought to set himself up as the inheritor of that mantle. Tintoretto's painting is also similar to a drawing by Pordenone of the *Conversion of Saint Paul* (Morgan Library and Museum, New York). [8] Indeed, the whole atmosphere of explosive violence and chaotic action in Tintoretto's picture embodies the characteristics that Pordenone brought to Venetian painting during the brief period of his ascendancy in the mid-to late 1530s. In addition, the figure in the water in the lower right seems to echo one of the fallen giants in Giulio Romano's *Sala dei Giganti*, which Tintoretto probably saw on a visit to Mantua in the early 1540s. [9]

Tintoretto's picture also documents the relationship of his early works to the art of Andrea Schiavone, who is mentioned by Carlo Ridolfi and others as a painter whom Tintoretto especially admired and emulated. Although Schiavone's *The Conversion of Saint Paul* (Pinacoteca Querini-Stampalia, Venice) [fig. 4] cannot be dated firmly, it was probably executed at roughly the same time as Tintoretto's version. [10] By this point in their respective careers, Schiavone may have taken as much inspiration from Tintoretto as the younger artist did from the elder. While Tintoretto's waving banners show something of the cursive elegance and free brushwork of Schiavone's, the latter's treatment is more dynamic than is usual for him, and may reflect an earlier version by Tintoretto, such as the one painted in fresco on the facade of the Palazzo Zen ai Crociferi, where, according to Ridolfi, Tintoretto had assisted Schiavone in order to learn his techniques. [11]

Although the Gallery's *Conversion of Saint Paul* is the only known surviving example of the subject by Tintoretto, he painted it a number of times: as a fresco on a Venetian palace facade (Palazzo Zen ai Crociferi, mentioned previously); on the outer doors of the organ shutters for Santa Maria del Giglio; [12] in a version purchased by Diego Velázquez for King Philip IV; [13] and in several works documented in Venetian private collections. Descriptions of the latter suggest that

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they shared the large cast, explosive drama, and panoramic vista of the Washington picture. The Gallery's picture was probably painted for the central hall of a private Venetian palace, which were frequently adorned with large pictures in a horizontal format, many with a martial cast. [14] A 1632 inventory of the collection of Roberto Canonici lists a "Saint Paul by Giacomo Tintoretto, who falls from his horse, accompanied by many others also on horseback, who from fear are driven to flight and rush away precipitously in different directions." [15] (This version is presumed to have been lost in a fire that destroyed the collection in 1638.) Ridolfi describes in the collection of Senator Gussoni a "Saint Paul being converted by the voice of Christ, and as he falls from his horse we see his followers fleeing in terror in many directions." [16] (This is unlikely to be the Washington picture because Ridolfi describes it as one of two "piccole historiette.") A version in the collection of Nicolo Cornaro was described as "beautifully large, with many horsemen." [17] The Washington picture's early provenance seems most likely to be related to a version of almost exactly the same dimensions in the picture gallery of the Palazzo Pisani a Santo Stefano, inventoried by Pietro Edwards in 1809. [18] However, no link can be established between the Pisani painting and the first documented appearance of the Gallery's painting in the Kinnaid collection in 1857.

Robert Echols

March 21, 2019

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## COMPARATIVE FIGURES



**fig. 1** After Raphael, *The Conversion of Saint Paul*, based on a cartoon by Raphael from the series *Acts of the Apostles*, 16th century, tapestry, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua. © DeA Picture Library / Art Resource, NY



**fig. 2** Titian, Preparatory drawing for the *Battle of Spoleto*, c. 1538, charcoal and black chalk, brown wash, heightened with white, squared for transfer, on blue paper, Musée du Louvre, Paris. © RMN-Grand Palais / Michèle Bellot / Art Resource, NY



**fig. 3** Niccolò Vicentino, after Pordenone, *Marcus Curtius*, 1530/1560, chiaroscuro woodcut from three blocks in green, British Museum, London. © Trustees of the British Museum



**fig. 4** Andrea Schiavone, *The Conversion of Saint Paul*, 1540/1545, oil on canvas, Museo Querini-Stampalia, Venice. De Agostoni Picture Library / A. Dagli Orti / Bridgeman Images

## NOTES

[1] On the history of this theme in Renaissance painting, see generally Thomas Martone, *The Theme of the Conversion of Saint Paul in Italian Paintings from the Earlier Christian Period to the High Renaissance* (PhD diss., New York University, 1978; New York, 1985); see also Guillaume Cassegrain, “‘Ces choses ont été des figures de ce qui nous concerne’: Une lecture de la ‘Conversion de Saint Paul’ du Tintoret,” *Venezia Cinquecento* 6 (1996): 56.

[2] Thomas Martone, *The Theme of the Conversion of Saint Paul in Italian Paintings from the Earlier Christian Period to the High Renaissance* (PhD

diss., New York University, 1978; New York, 1985), 214–215, related the staircases in the painting to Jacob’s ladder, citing associations between Saint Paul and Jacob’s dream made in sermons by Saint Jerome, where the rock that serves as Jacob’s pillow is seen as a prefiguration of Christ, the foundation rock of the Church, and the ladder arising from it embodies an image of descent from and ascent to heaven. Martone pointed out that in Tintoretto’s painting, the rock upon which Paul lies is shaped as a stairway, while behind him another stairway leads up to the vision of Christ. Guillaume Cassegrain, “‘Ces choses ont été des figures de ce qui nous concerne’: Une lecture de la ‘Conversion de Saint Paul’ du Tintoret,” *Venezia Cinquecento* 6 (1996): 55–84, building in part on this argument, offered a detailed interpretation that defines the painting as providing a moral lesson that goes beyond the narrative limits of the theme, invoking but standing apart from two traditions of representation of the conversion of Paul: one portraying Saul overcome by the violence of the divine light and word, and the other emphasizing the moment of revelation and the ecstatic quality of the conversion experience. For Cassegrain, the falling and drowning figures represent false paths to God, and Paul’s conversion becomes an act of divine grace. Jonathan Goldberg, *The Seeds of Things: Theorizing Sexuality and Materiality in Renaissance Representations* (New York, 2009), 17–30, discusses the painting as the starting point for an interpretation of the Lucretian strain in early modern painting and poetry, as well as contemporary theory.

- [3] Recent scholars have uniformly accepted the painting as an autograph work by Tintoretto dating from somewhere in the years before 1545: Pierluigi De Vecchi, *L’opera completa del Tintoretto* (Milan, 1970), 89, no. 27 (c. 1544/1545); Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings* (Washington, DC, 1979), 1:468 (c. 1545); Rodolfo Pallucchini and Paola Rossi, *Tintoretto: Le opere sacre e profane* (Venice, 1982), 1:142–143 (c. 1544); Francesco Valcanover and Terisio Pignatti, *Tintoretto* (New York, 1985), 72 (c. 1545); Roland Krischel, *Tintoretto* (Reinbek, 1994), 18 (c. 1539); Guillaume Cassegrain, “‘Ces choses ont été des figures de ce qui nous concerne’: Une lecture de la ‘Conversion de Saint Paul’ du Tintoret,” *Venezia Cinquecento* 6 (1996): 55 (1543/1545); Tom Nichols, *Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity* (London, 1999), 28 (1540/1542); W. R. Rearick, *Il disegno veneziano del Cinquecento* (Milan, 2001), 118, 219 (c. 1542); Robert Echols, in *Tintoretto*, ed. Miguel Falomir (Madrid, 2007), 192–195 (c. 1544); Robert Echols and Frederick Ilchman, “Toward a New Tintoretto Catalogue, with a Checklist of Revised Attributions and a New Chronology,” in *Jacopo Tintoretto: Actas del congreso internacional/Proceedings of the International Symposium, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, February 26–27, 2007* (Madrid, 2009), 121, no. 32 (c. 1544); Guillaume Cassegrain, *Tintoret* (Paris, 2010), 12 (1539/1544). Among the earlier scholars listed in the references, the only ones assigning the picture a post-1545 date are Erich von der Bercken, *Die*

*Gemälde des Jacopo Tintoretto* (Munich, 1942), 96 (1546/1552); and Antonio Morassi, “Review of *La giovinezza del Tintoretto*, by Rodolfo Pallucchini,” *Emporium* 115 (1952): 240 (1560/1570). Only Edoardo Arslan, *Le pitture del Duomo di Milano* (Milan, 1960), 20, showed some hesitation about the attribution.

- [4] Rodolfo Pallucchini and Paola Rossi, *Tintoretto: Le opere sacre e profane* (Venice, 1982), 1: cat. nos. 41 and 42; 2: figs. 48–49 and 50; Miguel Falomir, ed., *Tintoretto* (Madrid, 2007), 189–191, cat. no. 2. (*Christ among the Doctors*); Frederick Ilchman et al., *Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese: Rivals in Renaissance Venice* (Boston, 2009), 150–152, cat. no. 22 (*Supper at Emmaus*).
- [5] Rodolfo Pallucchini and Paola Rossi, *Tintoretto: Le opere sacre e profane* (Venice, 1982), 1: cat. no. 82; 2: fig. 103; Miguel Falomir, ed., *Tintoretto* (Madrid, 2007), 196–199, cat. no. 4.
- [6] For example, *Christ among the Doctors* (Museo del Duomo, Milan) is obviously modeled upon Raphael’s *School of Athens*; indeed, Paul Hills, “Decorum and Desire in Some Works by Tintoretto,” in *Decorum in Renaissance Narrative Art*, ed. Francis Ames-Lewis (London, 1992), 109, saw it as a parody of Raphael’s famous work.
- [7] Monika Schmitter, “The *Quadro da Portego* in Sixteenth-Century Venetian Art,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2011): 716.
- [8] The influence of Raphael’s cartoon for the *Conversion of Saint Paul*, Titian’s *Battle of Spoleto* (or *Battle of Cadore*, as it is sometimes called), and Pordenone’s compositions was noted by Wilhelm Suida, “Zwei unbekannte Werke Tintoretto,” *Pantheon* 23 (1939): 122, and Rodolfo Pallucchini, *La giovinezza del Tintoretto* (Milan, 1950), 86, and has been discussed by many subsequent scholars. For a detailed analysis of how Tintoretto’s painting reflects these and related sources, see Robert Echols, “Jacopo Tintoretto and Venetian Painting 1538–1548” (PhD diss., University of Maryland, 1993), 130–143. On the Louvre drawing for the *Battle of Spoleto*, see *Le Siècle de Titien. L’Âge d’Or de la Peinture à Venise* (Paris, 1993), 574–575, cat. no. 225. Roland Krischel, *Jacopo Tintoretto, 1519–1594* (Cologne, 2000), 10, pointed out that Tintoretto’s painting seems closer in some details to the drawing than to the painting as known from copies and prints. On the print after Pordenone’s *Marcus Curtius*, see David Rosand and Michelangelo Muraro, *Titian and the Venetian Woodcut* (Washington, DC, 1976), 248, cat. 74. The compositional drawing of the entire facade is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (inv. no. 2306 PD 114); see Miguel Falomir, ed., *Tintoretto* (Madrid, 2007), fig. 97. A very similar figure of a horse also appears in a drawing by Pordenone of the *Conversion of Saint Paul* (Morgan Library and Museum, New York); see Tom Nichols, *Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity* (London, 1999), 30, fig. 9. As Krischel in *Tintoretto: A Star Was Born*

(Cologne, 2017), 84, noted, Tintoretto also seems to have looked closely at an earlier, anonymous, four-block Venetian woodcut of the same subject.

- [9] As proposed in Rodolfo Pallucchini and Paola Rossi, *Tintoretto: Le opere sacre e profane* (Venice, 1982), 1:143. On the likelihood of a trip to Mantua by the young Tintoretto, see Roland Krischel, “Jacopo Tintoretto and Giulio Romano,” in *Jacopo Tintoretto: Actas del Congresso Internacional/Proceedings of the International Symposium*, ed. Miguel Falomir (Madrid, 2009), 60 and 64 n. 23 with additional references. Several Leonardesque sources identified for the horses in the NGA painting are more speculative. Wilhelm Suida, “Zwei unbekannte Werke Tintoretts,” *Pantheon* 23 (1939): 122, cited a bronze statuette of a horse and rider by Leonardo da Vinci in Budapest (for the statuette, see Carlo Pedretti, *Leonardo: A Study in Chronology and Style* [London, 1973], fig. 175), while Guillaume Cassegrain, “‘Ces choses ont été des figures de ce qui nous concerne’: Une lecture de la ‘Conversion de Saint Paul’ du Tintoret,” *Venezia Cinquecento* 6 (1996): 59, and idem., *Tintoret* (Paris, 2010), 12–14, proposed the horses in the background of Leonardo’s unfinished painting of the *Adoration of the Magi* (Uffizi, Florence). W. R. Rearick cited a drawing of a horse formerly in the Tūrük Collection, Pittsburgh, as a preparatory drawing by Tintoretto for this painting. See W. R. Rearick, “Titian Drawings: A Progress Report,” *Artibus et Historiae* 23 (1991): 31–32, fig. 24; and W. R. Rearick, *Il disegno veneziano del Cinquecento* (Milan, 2001), 118, 219.
- [10] See Francis Richardson, *Andrea Schiavone* (PhD diss., New York University, 1971; Oxford, 1980), 176–177, cat. no. 296, fig. 61.
- [11] Carlo Ridolfi, *Le maraviglie dell’arte, ovvero Le vite de gl’illustri pittori veneti, e dello stato* (Venice, 1648), 2:7; Carlo Ridolfi, *Le maraviglie dell’arte, ovvero Le vite de gl’illustri pittori veneti, e dello stato*, ed. Detlev von Hadeln (Berlin, 1924), 2:15. Schiavone’s and Tintoretto’s paintings may both reflect a design by Francesco Salviati, preserved in an engraving by Enea Vico dated 1545 (*The Illustrated Bartsch*, ed. Walter L. Strauss, 166+ vols. [New York, 1978–], 30: no. 13). According to Giorgio Vasari, the drawing on which it was based was executed “much earlier, in Rome” (*molto prima in Roma*), and so could well have been known in Venice during his visit there. For additional analysis of the relationship between the print and the two paintings, see Robert Echols, “Jacopo Tintoretto and Venetian Painting 1538–1548” (PhD diss., University of Maryland, 1993), 138–140.
- [12] Noted by Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de’ più eccellenti pittori, scultori e architettori*, ed. Gaetano Milanesi (Florence, 1881), 6:591.
- [13] Antonio Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *El museo pictórico y escala óptica* (Madrid, 1988), 3:235.
- [14] Monika Schmitter, “The *Quadro da Portego* in Sixteenth-Century Venetian Art,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2011): 693–751, especially 716.

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- [15] “San Paolo di Giacomo Tintoretto, che casca da cavallo accompagnato da molti altri pure a cavallo, che dalla paura spinti in fuga vano precipitando in diversi luoghi.” Giuseppe Campori, *Raccolta di cataloghi ed inventarii inediti: Di quadri, statue, disegni, bronzi, dorerie, smalti, medaglie, avori, ecc., dal secolo XV al secolo XIX* (Modena, 1870), 120–121.
- [16] “San Paolo convertito alla voce di Christo, e mentre ei cade da cavallo, si veggono i di lui seguaci fuggirsene spaventati in varie parti.” Carlo Ridolfi, *Le maraviglie dell’arte, ovvero Le vite de gl’illustri pittori veneti, e dello stato* (Venice, 1648), 2:44; Carlo Ridolfi, *Le maraviglie dell’arte, ovvero Le vite de gl’illustri pittori veneti, e dello stato*, ed. Detlev von Hadeln (Berlin, 1924), 2:52.
- [17] Wilhelm Suida, “Zwei unbekannte Werke Tintoretto’s,” *Pantheon* 23 (1939): 122 n. 1, reported that he took this reference to the Cornaro version from a list of Tintoretto’s lost pictures in an unpublished manuscript by Hans Thode in the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz. Suida suggested that the Cornaro picture and the Canonici picture may be the same. The Pisani version (below) could also conceivably be the same as the Cornaro painting.
- [18] As proposed by Lino Moretti, “I Pisani di Santo Stefano e le opere d’arte del loro palazzo,” in *Il Conservatorio di musica Benedetto Marcello a Venezia: 1876–1976: Centenario della fondazione*, ed. Pietro Verardo (Venice, 1977), 170. The 1809 inventory by Pietro Edwards of the painting gallery of the Palazzo Pisani a Santo Stefano lists a *Conversion of Saint Paul* attributed to Andrea Schiavone, measuring 157 × 235 cm. Tintoretto’s early paintings have often been attributed to Schiavone. In addition, the collection included one other major early painting by Tintoretto (the *Visit of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*, now Château de Chenonceaux) as well as a *Crucifixion* from Tintoretto’s studio in the mid-1550s (now Museo Civico, Padua). The origin of the paintings in the Pisani gallery, a large majority of which date from the cinquecento, is unknown. The palace itself dates from the first two decades of the 17th century. In 1679 Almorò Pisani (1615–1682) bound the paintings along with the palazzo and the rest of its contents to pass by inheritance without division according to male primogeniture. In the late 18th century, the palace was restored and decorated by Almorò Alvise Pisani (1754–1808) after his marriage to Giustiniana Pisani di Santa Maria del Giglio, who brought as her dowry the possessions of that line, which was extinguished with her. Almorò Alvise and his brother Almorò Francesco (1759–1836) fell into debt and in 1781 divided up all the family property not bound by the trust. They were forced to sell their villa on the *terraferma* to Napoleon in 1807. In 1809, after Almorò Alvise’s death, his son, also named Almorò Francesco, and Almorò Francesco (the brother of Almorò Alvise) divided up the remaining assets, the trust having been invalidated by Napoleonic law. The inventory was prepared at this time. The paintings were sold and dispersed, along with many of the other treasures of the

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palace, much of which was also sold off over the following decades. See Lino Moretti, "I Pisani di Santo Stefano," 138–139, 166, 170. The fact that the Pisani gallery contained at least two early paintings by Tintoretto, along with one from the mid-1550s, raises the possibility that these three pictures were originally purchased by the same early patron of Tintoretto, either a member of the Pisani family or someone from whom the Pisani eventually acquired them.

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### TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The support appears to be formed of at least two pieces of open, plain-weave fabric, joined with a horizontal seam. The seam is located approximately one-third from the bottom of the painting and stands slightly proud of the surface. The cusping along all four sides indicates that the picture probably retains its original dimensions. The x-radiographs indicate that the warm, off-white ground may have been applied with a spatula or knife in sweeping, arched lines. On top of this, the artist applied a dark layer, which he left visible in some areas. The lighter areas of the composition were then blocked in with light-colored paint. Fluid drawing is visible with the naked eye both on top of and under the paint. The increasing transparency of the paint allows us to see that the artist painted the figure of Paul first in the nude, then adding his armor, a technique that Tintoretto used throughout his career.

In places, the dark colors have deteriorated and darkened, making the highlights appear out of key. The paint surface is abraded, especially in the clouds and vegetation in the upper section and in the white horse on the left. There are numerous complex tears and areas of retouching, many of which have become discolored and have developed a glossier sheen than the surrounding areas. In 1955 Mario Modestini removed a discolored varnish, inpainted, and relined the picture.

Robert Echols and Joanna Dunn based on the examination report by Ann Hoenigswald

March 21, 2019

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## PROVENANCE

Probably Palazzo Pisani a Santo Stefano until c. 1809.[1] George William Fox, 9th baron Kinnaird [1807-1878], Rossie Priory, Perthshire, Scotland, by 1857.[2] Count Alessandro Contini Bonacossi [1878-1955], Florence, by 1939:[3] sold June 1954 to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York:[4] gift 1961 to NGA.

[1] As proposed by Lino Moretti, "I Pisani di Santo Stefano e le opere d'arte del loro palazzo," in *Il Conservatorio di musica Benedetto Marcello a Venezia: 1876–1976: Centenario della fondazione*, edited by Pietro Verardo, Venice, 1977: 170. The 1809 inventory by Pietro Edwards of the painting gallery of the Palazzo Pisani a Santo Stefano lists a *Conversion of Saint Paul* attributed to Andrea Schiavone, measuring 157 x 235 cm. Tintoretto's early paintings have often been attributed to Schiavone. In addition, the collection included one other major early painting by Tintoretto (the *Visit of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*, now Château, Chenonceaux) as well as a *Crucifixion* from Tintoretto's studio in the mid-1550s (now Museo Civico, Padua). The origin of the paintings in the Pisani galleria, a large majority of which date from the Cinquecento, is unknown. The palace itself dates from the first two decades of the 17th century. In 1679 Almorò Pisani (1615-1682) bound the paintings along with the palazzo and the rest of its contents to pass by inheritance without division according to male primogeniture. In the late 18th century, the palace was restored and decorated by Almorò Alvise Pisani (1754-1808) after his marriage to Giustiniana Pisani di Santa Maria del Giglio, who brought as her dowry the possessions of that line, which was extinguished with her. Almorò Alvise and his brother Almorò Francesco (1759-1836) fell into debt and in 1781 divided up all the family property not bound by the trust. They were forced to sell their villa on the terra ferma to Napoleon in 1807. In 1809, after Almorò Alvise's death, his son, also named Almorò Francesco, and Almorò Francesco (the brother of Almorò Alvise) divided up the remaining undivided assets, the trust having been invalidated by Napoleonic law. The inventory was prepared at this time. The paintings were sold and dispersed, along with many of the other treasures of the palace, much of which was also sold off over the following decades. See Moretti 1977, 138-139, 166, 170. The fact that the Pisani galleria contained at least two early paintings by Tintoretto, along with one from the mid-1550s, raises the possibility that these three pictures were originally purchased by the same early patron of Tintoretto, either a member of the Pisani family or someone from whom the Pisani eventually acquired them. However, no link can be established between the Pisani painting and the first

documented appearance of the NGA's painting in the Kinnaird collection in 1857.

[2] Gustav Friedrich Waagen, *Galleries and Cabinets of Art in Great Britain: Being an Account of more than Forty Collections of Paintings, Drawings, Sculptures, Mss., &c.&c.*, London, 1857: 448.

[3] Published by William Suida, "Zwei unbekannte Werke Tintoretto's," *Pantheon* 23 (1939): 122, as in the Contini Bonacossi collection.

[4] On 7 June 1954 the Kress Foundation made an offer to Contini Bonacossi for sixteen paintings, including the NGA painting. In a draft of one of the documents prepared for the Count's signature in connection with the offer this painting is described as one "which came from my personal collection in Florence." The Count accepted the offer on 30 June 1954; the final payment for the purchase was ultimately made in early 1957, after the Count's death in 1955. (See copies of correspondence in NGA curatorial files and The Kress Collection Digital Archive, <https://kress.nga.gov/Detail/objects/2107>).

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## EXHIBITION HISTORY

2007 Tintoretto, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, 2007, no. 3, repro.

2017 Tintoret: Naissance d'un genie, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne; Musée du Luxembourg, Paris, 2017-2018, no. 5, repro.

2018 Tintoretto: Artist of Renaissance Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia and Palazzo Ducale, Venice; National Gallery of Art, Washington, 2018-2019, no. 70, repro.

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- 1857: 448.
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