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## The Acts of the Apostles: Raphael' design process for tapestries in the Sistine Chapel

Arnold NESSELRATH

In the summer of 1515 Raphael was a very busy man. He continued painting in the papal apartment, the enterprise which had set him off in Rome seven years before and where he embarked on constant new adventures. Just a year before he had been appointed architect of the new basilica of St Peter's, succeeding his mentor, the great Bramante, who had died precisely a year and one month after the election of the new Pope, Leo X. This son of Lorenzo the Magnificent, with his Florentine humanistic background, had entrusted Raphael with his archaeological research and with extensive surveys of ancient buildings. The artist ran his own image printing press with many new incentives. In fact, the range of his artistic creativity seemed to have no limit. Nobody could foresee, of course, that the 32 years old artist would have only five more years to go and that he was reaching the peak of his artistic career. He had a well-organized workshop with very distinguished branches of high standards relating to different media.

### The commission of the tapestries

In the middle of all these activities and only half a month, before his other associate, on whom he relied because of his competence, the elderly Fra Giocondo, died, Pope Leo X commissioned from Raphael a series of cartoons for tapestries, to be hung on special occasions in the Major Palace Chapel of the Vatican Palace, known today as the Sistine Chapel, requiring the artist to become also a designer on a large scale. There was a special challenge in projecting a transformation of Raphael's works into Flemish textiles and in their juxtaposition with the frescoes of the generations of his teachers and with the last hit of the recently finished frescoes by Michelangelo.

The first payment documented was made to Raphael on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1515, and the second one on December 20<sup>th</sup>, 1516. The two dates mark most probably the beginning and end of the design period. Each tapestry is composed of a large scene from the *Acts of the Apostles*, either from the life of Peter or from the life of Paul, a lateral border with *grotteschi*, which stretches over the full height, and a monochrome frieze, which accompanies the main scene at the bottom, as well as ornamental borders and frames. Only for the huge biblical scenes, autograph preparatory material has survived. This includes seven cartoons in scale for the ten extant tapestries. Neither for the other typologies nor for the arrangement of the various

elements nor for the overall display any evidence is preserved which might give an insight. According to widely known, contemporary sources, the tapestries were not delivered all together, but in different lots. Seven of them were displayed in the Chapel for the vespers on Boxing Day of 1519, all ten preserved today had arrived in Rome before Pope Leo's death on the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 1521<sup>1</sup>.

### Design made to measure

The reconstruction of how the tapestries were displayed in the Chapel and consequently how many were envisaged has been discussed for a long time (fig. 1). During the last restoration of the 15<sup>th</sup> century frescoes and the decorative elements of the Sistine Chapel, produced with them, evidence came to light that has a crucial impact on this issue. When Pope Sixtus IV vaulted, painted and refurnished the room, the marble screen, which divides the space of the clergy from the space for the laity, was placed near the middle of the room intersecting with the *cantoria*, the pulpit for the singers. Since on the front of the bench, which is running along the walls, the devices of the Della Rovere family were discovered precisely in the original position of the screen, the screen must have been moved after the pontificate of Sixtus IV, the first Della Rovere pope (1471-1484), and before or during the pontificate of Pope Julius II, the second Della Rovere pope (1503-1513). As the narrow strip of the tapestry showing St Paul in Prison fits the space between the *cantoria* and the new, current position of the screen so precisely, it must have been made to measure for this place



fig. 1. The Sistine Chapel showing the reconstructed display of the tapestries in 2010.  
© Vatican Museums, 2010

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The notes are kept to the minimum, since the paper was put together from the research I have conducted for my contributions in the publication of Raphael's tapestries which is currently edited by Anna Maria De Strobel for the Vatican Museums.

<sup>1</sup> SHEARMAN J., *Raphael's cartoons in the collection of Her Majesty the Queen and the tapestries for the Sistine Chapel*, London, 1972, p. 138; DE STROBEL A. M and NESSELRATH A., *The Sistine Chapel Tapestries and Their Setting*, in BROWNE C., EVANS M. and NESSELRATH A., *Raphael – Cartoons and Tapestries for the Sistine Chapel*, London, 2010, pp. 26-27.

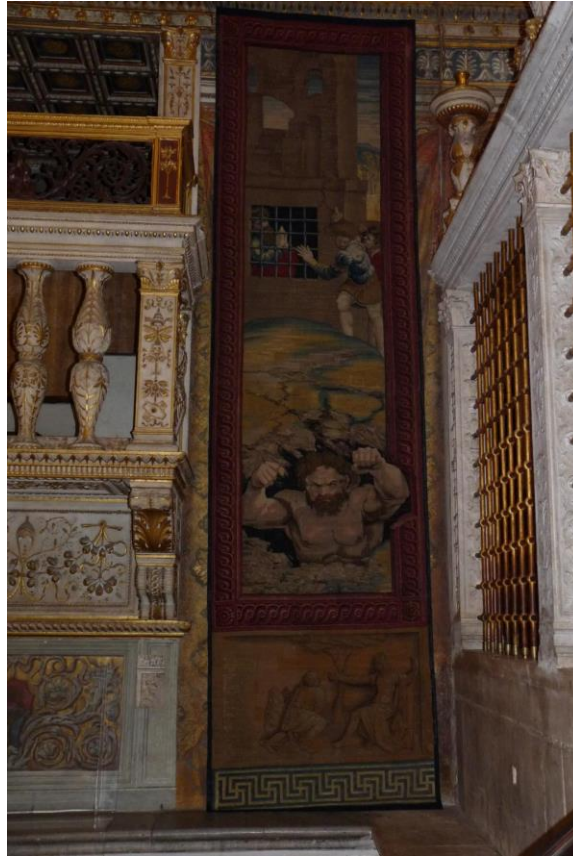


fig. 2. The location of the narrow tapestry showing Paul in Prison in the Sistine Chapel.  
© Vatican Museums, 2010

Thus, the entire series with the Life of Paul was intended for the right wall of the Chapel underneath the 15<sup>th</sup> century fresco cycle with the life of Christ and the series with the *Life of Peter* for the left wall of the Chapel underneath the 15<sup>th</sup> century fresco cycle with the life of Moses. This follows amongst others the tradition claimed by Leo's master of ceremonies, Paris de Grassis, that Peter relates to the *ecclesia ex populo*, which means the Old Testament and Moses, and Paul to the *ecclesia ex gentibus*, which means the New Testament and Christ. Of the ten existing tapestries, at least one from the Pauline series had to hang outside the screen in the lay area and it is lacking its counterpart<sup>2</sup>. As this is not a properly balanced arrangement, there is no reason to doubt the notice by Antonio De Beatis, the secretary to Cardinal Luigi d'Aragona, who visited Pieter van Aelst's workshop in Brussels in the company of the Cardinal on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 1517 and reports in his diary that 16 tapestries were being woven for 2,000 ducats each. It was hence intended that the entire lower register of the Sistine Chapel be covered on the great feasts of the Church and that the tapestries be arranged in parallel to the 15<sup>th</sup> century frescoes in the register above them. There are, of course, questions regarding iconography, preparatory material, or the cause for the interruption, and it is perhaps not decisive in the context of this paper to find answers to them. I should rather focus on three other issues in my paper, for instance: the design process and dynamics in Raphael's workshop, the execution of the painted cartoons

<sup>2</sup> NESSELRATH A., *Vaticano - La Cappella Sistina. Il Quattrocento*, Milan 2003, p. 37;  
DE STROBEL A. M and NESSELRATH A., *The Sistine Chapel... op. cit.*, pp. 27-29.

by the different hands of Raphael or his collaborators in Rome, and finally the function and use of Raphael's works in Pieter van Aelst's manufactory in Brussels.

### Design of the cartoons

During the year and a half between June 1515 and December 1516, Raphael seems to have designed the entire set, and all cartoons were probably sent more or less together to Flanders. Raphael must have worked at different elements of the set contemporaneously and interactively. He might for example, have changed the figure of Christ in the *Handing over of the Keys*<sup>3</sup> to avoid repeating the same gesture of pointing up in two scenes, when he decided to quote his *School of Athens* in the *Death of Ananias*.

The only overall decision that affected the composition of the entire project becomes tangible in the drawings for the *Miraculous Draught of the Fishes*. Here the design had already reached the stage of the *modello* when a major change was introduced (fig. 3, 4, 5, 6). 4).

The initial composition reversed the emphasis within the episode which is being conveyed. It places the main event, when the Apostle Peter recognizes the miracle and turns to Jesus, into the far distance (fig. 3). This puts the onlooker in the midst of the crowds gathered on the shore in the foreground and makes him share the experience of following what is happening out on the Sea of Galilee. The draughtsman has created quite an intense interaction with the image.



fig. 3. Giovanni da Udine: *Miraculous Draught of the Fishes*, c. 1515, pen, brush and wash over black chalk, white heightening, Vienna, Albertina, inv. 192 r.



fig. 4. Giovanni da Udine: *Miraculous Draught of the Fishes*, c. 1515, pen over blind stylus, Vienna, Albertina, inv. 192 v.

Perhaps in a moment of discussion, this idea must have been abandoned fairly spontaneously, since the sheet of paper was simply turned back to front and the whole arrangement was altered in a quick sketch. The main event of the actual draught of the fishes is pulled to the foreground and a more conventional composition is rapidly established (fig. 4). The *pentimento* in the head of the Apostle Andrew, which was turned around in a second moment to look towards the second boat, confirms the sequence from *modello* to the sketch, since the cancelled position

<sup>3</sup> SHEARMAN J., *Raphael's cartoons in the collection...* op. cit, pp. 96-97.

was one taken over from the *modello*. This second approach with the boats in the foreground was then pursued for the final solution, for which once again the *modello* has been preserved<sup>4</sup> (fig. 5).



fig. 5. Giovanni da Udine, *The Miraculous Draught of Fishes*, c.1515, pen brush and wash and white heightening over black chalk and stylus on pale buff washed paper. Windsor, Royal Collection, R.L. 12749. (The Royal Collection © 2010, Her Majesty Queen Elisabeth II)

Although Raphael remains attracted by the space and tries to expand the action right across it as initially attempted, for example, in the *Death of Ananias*, or, in a different way, in *Paul preaching in Athens*, the foreground remains the established stage.

One would imagine that not only the artist, but different counterparts, most certainly the patron, perhaps the master of ceremonies, the Maestro del Sacro Palazzo or the likes, wrestled to achieve a decision. That this was not left to the artist's inspiration or mood alone, is suggested, since the same discussion can be observed and must have taken place already before in the Stanze, in particular during the definition of the Leonine version of the *Encounter between Pope Leo the Great and Attila, the Hun*<sup>5</sup>. One might get the impression that Raphael is experimenting with a more challenging arrangement between the protagonists and their environment, in which they perform; but he can obviously not overcome a traditional opposition in order to get an agreement on his unconventional inventions.

The final choice for the *Miraculous Draught of the Fishes* had an impact on the entire cycle (fig. 6). While it seems difficult to unravel a relative chronology in which the sequence of the single scenes were planned, it seems, however, that the principle laid down for this scene requires it to be one of the first designs, if not the first one altogether.

<sup>4</sup> Vienna, Albertina, inv. 192 (= SR 226).

SHEARMAN J., *Raphael's cartoons in the collection... op. cit.*, pp. 94-96 and 118, fig. 44;

GNANN A., *Raffaël*, Munich 2017, pp. 310-312, no. 101; WHISTLER C., THOMAS B., ACETO A. and GNANN A., *Raphael – The Drawings*, Oxford, 2017, pp. 220-221.

<sup>5</sup> NESSELRATH A., *Raphaël et Pinturicchio. Les grands décors des appartements du pape au Vatican*, Paris 2012, pp. 150-155, figs. 51-53.



fig. 6. Cartoon bodycolour over charcoal underdrawing on paper mounted on canevas, 319 x 399 cm. Victoria and Albert Museum, loan from HM Queen Elisabeth II, RCIN 912944. (The Royal Collection © 2010, Her Majesty Queen Elisabeth II)

The attribution of the first, later abandoned *modello* for the *Miraculous Draught of the Fishes* has been subject to much discussion, since it is a rare and lively sheet with a finished *modello* on the recto and a doodle sketch on the verso (fig. 3 and fig. 4); both even seem to contradict each other, and their relative chronology is reversed to their typological succession. Raphael's authorship of the recto is almost unanimously rejected. The attributions of the sketch, however, vary, mainly between Raphael's two favourite pupils, Giulio Romano and Giovan Francesco Penni. Without considering stylistic features properly, the verso is often given to Raphael himself, primarily based on the assumption that a major decision in the set-up of the compositions could only be imagined by the master<sup>6</sup>.

The drawing, however, does not present Raphael's characteristically sure hand. Especially the second boat seems a bit clumsy, and, leaving the *pentimento* of the oarsman's head aside, his arm and his thorax do not convince anatomically. The drawing of *Orpheus Singing to the Animals* by Giovanni da Udine represents the birds in quite a similar manner to the figure at the distant shore by indicating them through elongated loops (fig. 7)<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> GNANN A., *Raffael... op. cit.*, 2017, pp. 310-312;

WHISTLER C., THOMAS B., ACETO A. and GNANN A., *Raphael... op. cit.*, pp. 220-221.

<sup>7</sup> Munich, Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, inv. 2250 v.

NESSELRATH A., *Giovanni da Udine disegnatore*, in *Monumenti Musei e Gallerie Pontificie - Bollettino IX*, 1989, pp. 278-282, fig. 38; OBERHUBER K. and GNANN A., *Raphael und der klassische Stil in Rom – 1515-1527*, Milan 1999, pp. 272-273, cat. 192.

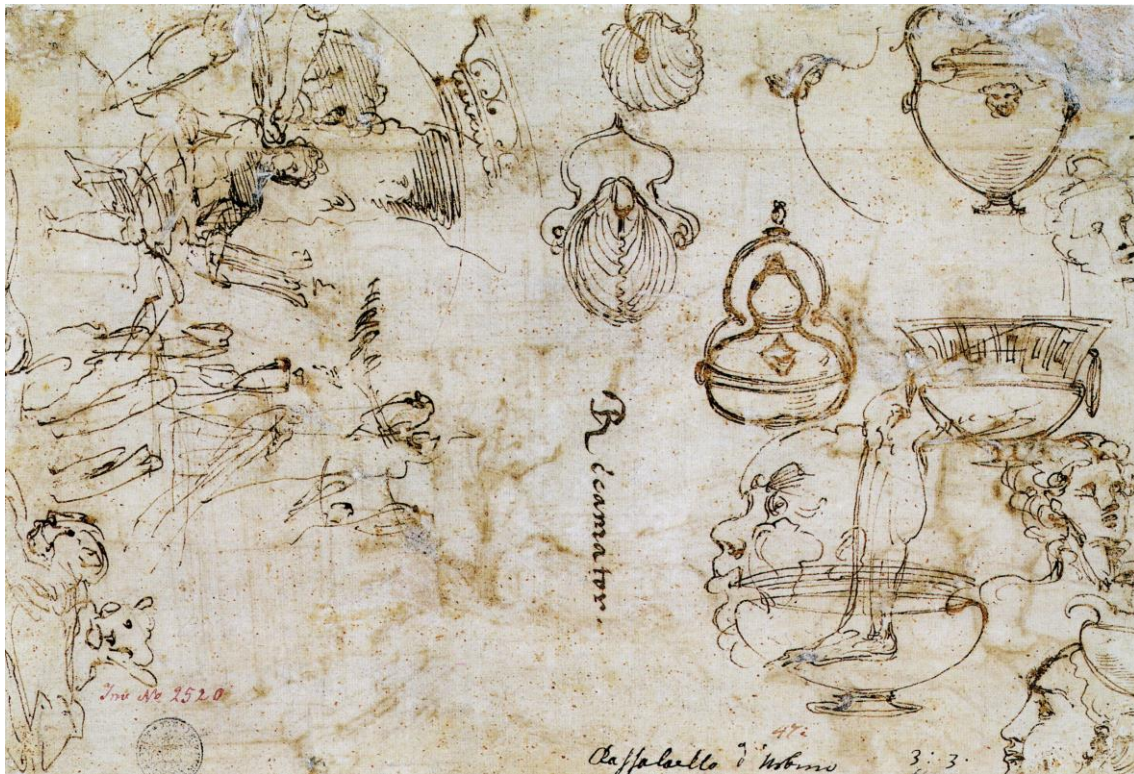


fig. 7. Giovanni da Udine: *Orpheus singing to the animals and various sketches of vases and beads*, c. 1515-1525, pen and brown ink, Munich, Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, inv 2250 v.

Moreover, the hatching with the little hooks on the right appear as well in both sheets to shade zones laying it over a preliminary modelling. The slightly flaky figures in the second boat have a counterpart in the two-seated figures which appear on a sheet with a design for a huge wall decoration of a chapel, which is also an autograph drawing by Giovanni da Udine<sup>8</sup>. Considering that Giovanni also designed the cranes as *repoussoir* on the shore of the *Miraculous Draught of the Fishes*, as the preparatory drawing documents<sup>9</sup>, and that the fish in the net and in the boats are almost an ichthyic encyclopaedia of the various species, there are miscellaneous elements that suggest, that Giovanni da Udine made major contributions to the design of this tapestry.

The stylistic similarities between an additional and more advanced version of the new composition and the abandoned first *modello* suggest an attribution of both of these sheets to the same hand. This further drawing does not seem to be the definite *modello* either, as the position of the oarsman, although in the second boat, does not correspond to the final one, the landscape with the buildings in the background is not defined, yet, and the foreground with its plants and elaborate birds is still lacking<sup>10</sup>. Nevertheless, if one accepts these and other attributions to

<sup>8</sup> Formerly collection of Richard and Trude Krautheimer, current whereabouts unknown.

NESSELRATH A., *Giovanni da Udine... op. cit.*, p. 267, fig. 25;

Christie's, 10. 1. 1996, pp. 20-21, lot 5.

<sup>9</sup> Present whereabouts unknown.

SHEARMAN J., *Raphael's cartoons in the collection... op. cit.*, pp. 96 and 116, fig. 40; Nesselrath A.,

*Giovanni da Udine... op. cit.*, p. 282, fig. 39.

<sup>10</sup> Windsor Castle, Royal Collection, inv. 12749.

Giovanni da Udine, this artist really takes shape as Raphael's senior collaborator, a roll in Raphael's workshop, which remained vacant, when Lorenzo Lotto left for Bergamo in 1514 or 1515. As Giovanni was probably hired by Raphael, because he was a fully-fledged artist, he might really have taken up this roll of his Venetian predecessor and filled it much more creatively because of Raphael's many mentioned engagements during those years<sup>11</sup>.

There are, of course, autograph drawings by Raphael in different techniques, for example red chalk for the *Feed my Sheep*<sup>12</sup> or metal point for the *Blinding of Elymas*<sup>13</sup>, or the repositioning of the drawings from life models as for the *Conversion of Saul*<sup>14</sup>, and there is no doubt that Raphael participated intensely in the design process. The dynamics in the workshop and the individual contribution can, however, be understood more precisely, even if the surviving preparatory drawings are relatively few. The same applies to the painted cartoons in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. It would be desirable to obtain a series of photographic details, comparable to the ones produced during the restoration of the Vatican Stanze over the last 30 years, while they were being restored. This documentary material would be essential to get beyond Vasari's statement, that Raphael himself took part in the execution of the paintings and to perform a scholarly analysis of the execution of this monumental cycle of Renaissance painting, the greatest one outside Italy<sup>15</sup>.

The cartoons are a patchwork of relatively small sheets measuring of 42 cm x 28 cm which were glued together amounting to a surface between 319 cm x 399 cm for the *Miraculous Draught of the Fishes* as the smallest and 353 cm x 542 cm for the *Sacrifice at Lystra* as the largest surviving cartoon (fig. 8).

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CLAYTON M., *Raphael and His Circle – Drawings from Windsor Castle*, London, 1999, pp. 99-103, no. 25;

EVANS M. and DE STROBEL A. M., *Catalogue (The Story of St Peter & The Story of St Paul)*, in BROWNE C., EVANS M. and NESSELRATH A., *Raphael... op. cit.*, p. 70.

<sup>11</sup> NESSELRATH A., *Lotto as Raphael's collaborator in the Stanza di Eliodoro*, in *The Burlington Magazine*, CXLVI, 2004, p. 741.

<sup>12</sup> Paris, Louvre, inv. 3854 and New York, inv. 1993.51.2.

CORDELLIER D. and PY B., *Raphaël, son atelier, ses copistes*, Paris, 1992, p. 264, no. 379;

MORGAN GRASSELLI M. (ed.), *The Touch of the Artist – Master Drawings from the Woodner Collections*, New York, 1995, pp. 159-161, no. 34;

CLAYTON M., *Raphael and His Circle... op. cit.*, p. 104, figs. 47-48;

EVANS M. and DE STROBEL A. M., *Catalogue... op. cit.*, p. 78.

<sup>13</sup> Windsor Castle, Royal Collection, inv. 12750

CLAYTON M., *Raphael and His Circle... op. cit.*, pp. 108-111, no. 27;

EVANS M. and DE STROBEL A. M., *Catalogue... op. cit.*, p. 108.

<sup>14</sup> Geneva, Collection Jean Bonna.

STRASSER N., *Dessins Italiens de la Renaissance au Siècle des Lumières – Collection Jean Bonna*, Geneva, 2010, pp. 40-42, no. 10; JACOBY J., *Katalog*, in JACOBY J. and SONNABEND M. (eds.), *Raffaël – Zeichnungen*, Munich, 2012, pp. 193-195, no. 33.

<sup>15</sup> VASARI G., *Le Opere*, vol. IV, ed. by Gaetano Milanesi, Florence 1906, p. 370.



fig. 8. Photogrammetry of *Christ's charge to Peter* with individual sheets of paper numbered.  
© Victoria and Albert Museum

Whether the sheets are only half an imperial size, because they were recycled, or whether the assistants used new material, which they cut in the middle, could only be partially investigated so far<sup>16</sup>. In which location Raphael would have produced such large paintings, is entirely unknown. Such enterprises require a lot of space, especially if work proceeds on more than one cartoon at a time. In those years, Raphael lived in a palace built by Bramante, the famous Palazzo Caprini, in the Borgo in front of St Peter's<sup>17</sup>. There is, however, no evidence to get an idea, whether his studio was there as well, what space was available in his workshop, what it looked like, how it was arranged, or how many people could work there together or side by side. Since the paint drips run downwards, Raphael and his collaborators seem to have painted the cartoons in a vertical position<sup>18</sup>. This required fixing the cartoons to a wall – consecutively or several at once - and getting access right across the huge dimensions by climbing ladders or else. The size of the cartoons is comparable to a fresco; technique and organization are not.

There is a black chalk underdrawing, although rather generic, underneath the paint, but no squaring up has been found with which the composition is usually enlarged and transferred from the *modello* to the final size<sup>19</sup>. The varying quality of the

<sup>16</sup> FERMOR S. and DERBYSHIRE A., *The Raphael tapestry cartoons re-examined*, in *The Burlington Magazine*, CXL, 1998, pp. 238-239.

<sup>17</sup> RULAND C., *The Works of Raphael Santi*, Weimar 1876, p. 297; TAFURI M., *Anonimo del primo '500, Veduta prospettica parziale, profilo di un capitello e particolare di una bottega di Palazzo Caprini a Roma*, in *Raffaello Architetto*, exh. cat., Milano, 1984, pp. 239-240, no. 2.14.4.

<sup>18</sup> SHEARMAN J., *Raphael's cartoons in the collection... op. cit.*, p. 113;

FERMOR S. and DERBYSHIRE A., *The Raphael... op. cit.*, p. 239.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 240.

execution of the paintings suggests that different hands were involved.

Cartoons for tapestries to be woven on a low-wrap loom are cut into strips for weaving, since they are put underneath the loom to enable the weaver to follow the design accurately. These cuts can still be traced in the cartoons at the Victoria and Albert Museum. The widths of the strips vary between 41 and 66 cm<sup>20</sup>. The cartoons were only reassembled in the 1690s and regarded and exhibited as paintings since then<sup>21</sup>. It has never been convincingly explained, why they were pricked before they were cut<sup>22</sup>. This is required only for cartoons for frescos or easel paintings, when their composition needs to be transferred to the surface on which the painting is to be executed. Pricking can also be used in a copying process.

Moreover, some major changes were introduced between the cartoons in London and the tapestries in the Vatican. For instance, in the *Feed my Sheep* Christ's robe is no longer plain white, but has been covered with golden stars and adorned with a rim of stars, and this entire decoration follows the complex folds in a sophisticated fashion (fig. 9a and fig. 9b).



fig. 9a and 9b: comparison of the tapestry cartoon and the tapestry of the *Miraculous Draught of Fishes* (details).

<sup>20</sup> SHEARMAN J., *Raphael's cartoons in the collection...* *op. cit.*, pp. 139-140;

FERMOR S. and DERBYSHIRE A., *The Raphael...* *op. cit.*, pp. 236 and 239.

<sup>21</sup> SHEARMAN J., *Raphael's cartoons in the collection...* *op. cit.*, pp. 148-149;

EVANS M., *The Commission and the Cartoons*, in BROWNE C., EVANS M. and NESSELRATH A., *Raphael...* *op. cit.*, p. 20; EVANS M., *The 'afterlife' of the Cartoons*, in BROWNE C., EVANS M. and NESSELRATH A., *Raphael...* *op. cit.*, p. 58.

<sup>22</sup> SHEARMAN J., *Raphael's cartoons in the collection...* *op. cit.*, p. 139;

FERMOR S. and DERBYSHIRE A., *The Raphael...* *op. cit.*, p. 236;

BAMBACH C., *Drawing and Painting in the Italian Renaissance Workshop – Theory and Practice, 1300-1600*, Cambridge, 1999, p. 294; CAMPBELL T., *The Acts of the Apostles Tapestries and Raphael's Cartoons*, in CAMPBELL (ed.), *Tapestry in the Renaissance – Art and Magnificence*, New York (The Metropolitan Museum of Art), 2002, p. 193 ; EVANS M., *The Commission...* *op. cit.*, p. 20.

Peter's clothes are not shown anymore in his usual iconographic colours blue and yellow, as Raphael had also designed them, but they were changed to blue and red<sup>23</sup> which are the traditional colours of the Virgin Mary. Moreover the buildings in the landscape have been shifted above the heads of the Apostles and are no longer seen in the distance through the gaps between them. In the *Sacrifice at Lystra* the lame man had been using crutches before Paul healed him, which are both lying on the ground in the cartoon, while in the tapestry the foremost one has been put further back and a pegleg has been located in its previous place<sup>24</sup>. While one can change colours spontaneously, the quite intricate details cannot be woven without a careful blueprint. The accuracy required cannot be achieved by weavers without a detailed model.

After John Shearman had already been perplexed by different measurements of the Leonine tapestries and later copies<sup>25</sup>, it was established recently on different occasions by Anna Maria De Strobel and Paola Brunori at the Vatican Museums as well as Tom Windross at the Victoria and Albert Museum, that the cartoons are not only larger than the tapestries, but that they are too large to have been used by the weavers. The just mentioned iconographic changes would sustain this. The various emerging questions need further research: Why were Raphael's original designs cut into strips, if they were not put under the loom by Pieter van Aelst? Is the pricking related to the production of presumed weaving copies? What was the normal procedure in Pieter van Aelst's workshop? How many versions of the cartoons were normally produced, and how were they valued? How do the series woven after the Leonine set for the Sistine Chapel relate to the cartoons and the Roman set, and how closely does their size conform? Since cartoons and tapestries have a very uncomfortable size and are extremely fragile, they stay in locations far apart, and cannot be manoeuvred, it is quite a challenge to analyse the relationship of the two sets. It is a case where employing new digital technologies with overlaying scans can perhaps advance our understanding of the issue in the future<sup>26</sup>.

In this context, a few works which have so far received sparse attention might be worth reconsidering. Besides the just mentioned later series woven in Brussels, these are in particular the two other versions of the cartoons of the *Healing of the Lame Man and the Blinding of Elymas* in Dublin<sup>27</sup> which Maighread McParland and Ranson Davey have presented during the conference in Brussels<sup>28</sup>. Moreover, there are the three interesting fragments of another version of the cartoon of the *Feed my Sheep* in Chantilly, which have been known since the days of Johann David Passavant<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> EVANS M. and DE STROBEL A. M., *Catalogue... op. cit.*, pp. 79, 86, and 92.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 115.

<sup>25</sup> SHEARMAN J., *Raphael's cartoons in the collection... op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>26</sup> Tom Windross and Richard Palmer at the Victoria and Albert Museum are working on a technology to render the various phases of the design process and to employ it in the display.

<sup>27</sup> Dublin, National Gallery, inv. 171 and 172.

SHEARMAN J., *Raphael's cartoons in the collection... op. cit.*, pp. 145-146, 148 and 155;

BAMBACH C., *Drawing and Painting... op. cit.*, p. 295, fig. 245 ;

CAMPBELL T., *The Acts of the Apostles... op. cit.*, p. 193, fig. 78;

EVANS M., *The impact of the Cartoons*, in BROWNE C., EVANS M. and NESSELRATH A., *Raphael... op. cit.*, p. 53.

<sup>28</sup> See the contributions of Maighread McParland and Ranson Davey in this volume.

<sup>29</sup> Chantilly, Musée Condé, inv. 40 A, 40 B, 40 C.

PASSAVANT J. D., *Raphael d'Urbain et son père Giovanni Santi*, vol. 2, Paris, 1860, p. 478;

The fragments in Chantilly have a Flemish watermark of the late 15th or early 16th centuries, which tallies with their style. They seem to have been produced in Flanders. Their colours are quite pale compared to the cartoon in London. They stress the graphic elements; the contours are much more visible and correspond to the tapestry, while Raphael relies on the painterly qualities. As already mentioned, the weavers seem to have preferred to untangle the figures in the foreground from the landscape and in particular the buildings in the background. It would take too long to describe the present conditions of the respective area in the cartoon in the Victoria and Albert Museum. In the respective fragment in Chantilly, which luckily survives, this change has already occurred. Thus, it is not a copy after Raphael's original cartoon, but it reports or rather is the intermediate element. To verify this hypothesis an overlay of all three works is required, either using tracings or developing some digital tool.

A similar curiosity appears also in the *Blinding of Elymas* in Dublin, where the inscription on the throne of the proconsul has been mirrored, as required for weaving, which Raphael, however, had left still straight and legible.

In this research, also the later series will have to come into play. Whether they were woven from the original Raphael cartoons like the ones produced in Mortlake after 1620, whether they were possibly woven from the original Raphael cartoons in Brussels before 1620, or whether the intermediate copies of Raphael's prototype was used, will have had an impact on sizes, and thus will provide evidence on the production of the Leonine set for the Sistine Chapel and their relationship to the cartoons.

To understand the dynamics, the function of these materials in the production process, the rolls and the people involved better we need further data. It is extremely stimulating that our hosts had gathered us in exactly the city where 500 years ago Pieter van Aelst's artisans have created the Vatican tapestries by using the same materials physically which we need to contemplate in our discussions, if we want to understand them.

Leo X had his tapestries for the Sistine Chapel designed by the greatest artist in his realm. Far away in Brussels, he employed the greatest weavers of his times to translate them into splendid tapestries, a medium of totally different requirements and effects from painting. Right across Europe and without ever getting to know each other Van Aelst's weavers stood up to the challenge Raphael dared creating between mentalities and cultural environments and in view of a technique he never worked with himself. When such contrasting sovereigns as the Emperor Charles V in Vienna, the French King François I, King Henry VIII in England, or still a century later the Roi de Soleil, King Louis XIV, in Paris wanted genuine copies of the papal set, the art of those tapestries must have been so convincing, that they or rather the process of their creation established them as works of universal art, i.e. a visual demonstration of what Vasari means when he called Raphael "un ottimo universale", the universal artist. Beyond the exhibition in 2010 at the Victoria and Albert Museum, which was an official part of Pope Benedict XIV's visit to the

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PERONNET B., *Dessins italiens du Musée Condé à Chantilly, vol. II – Raphael e son cerle*, Paris 1997, pp. 76- 80, nos. 15-17, and 161-167; EVANS M., *The impact... op. cit.*, p. 53. I should like to thank specially Nicole Garnier, who has made it possible for me to study the works which are quiet difficult to manage.

UK<sup>30</sup>, and up to today, when the space the subject receives at the conference in Brussels, the process of their creation in the 16<sup>th</sup> century as well as their afterlife have achieved again a true European dimension. Pieter van Aelst's tapestries from Raphael's cartoons do not only reveal the common roots of our Western culture, but they also point to its future aims.

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<sup>30</sup> BROWNE C., EVANS M. and NESSELRATH A., *Raphael... op. cit.*