Tiepolo
Lecture by Bernard Smith

Giovanni Battista Tiepolo—or Giambattista, as he was commonly known—was, in his own day, undoubtedly the most famous artist in Europe. Certainly he could command the highest prices. But in English-speaking countries he is today not as well known as Hogarth, Reynolds and Gainsborough—which is understandable—nor as well known perhaps as Watteau and Boucher or even his fellow-countryman, Piranesi and Canaletto. Tiepolo is seen and enjoyed, if he is seen and enjoyed at all, as an end not a beginning. Since the romantics we have been trained to enjoy innovators rather than those who gather fruit from old wood. Tiepolo, as Rudolf Wittkower has neatly put it, ‘was the last link in a long chain’. Certainly when one looks at the historical record everything seems to point that way. But was he really the last link in a chain? I shall come back to this point towards the end of the lecture.

Certainly Tiepolo was linked by an unbroken master-and-pupil workshop tradition which passes back through Agnolo Bronzino, the great mannerist, to the masters of the High Renaissance. And when we compare his Last Supper,* now in the Louvre, painted in 1745, a year or so after Melbourne’s Banquet of Cleopatra, with Leonardo’s Last Supper* we become immediately aware of his close link with the High Renaissance. True there is something of Rembrandt in Tiepolo’s Supper, for he knew and admired the Dutch master and much of Veronese*, whose work he adored and emulated above all others, but above all it is the innovating genius of Leonardo: the centralisation of the group upon Christ, the architectural setting, the dignified groupings, the studied gestures—certainly Tiepolo is linked to the Leonardoesque chain, the Renaissance-Baroque tradition of naturalistic painting in the grand manner.

Tiepolo felt secure in that tradition. His life was a success story from the start. His father Domenico Tiepolo was part-owner of a trading vessel, a small-time merchant of Venice, whose fortunes like that of Salarino in Shakespeare’s play, were ‘in one bottom trusted’. Domenico’s trading vessel brought in enough income to provide for a family of six children, and leave his wife with a small competence when he died a few months after Giambattista was born. But not much, so that the boy, at quite an early age, having shown a capacity for drawing, was apprenticed to the painter Gregorio Lazzarini, whose workshop was, as it were, just around the corner, in the parish of San Pietro in Castello, where Tiepolo lived.

He was a success from the beginning. At 19 he received his first commission; at 21 he was a full member of the Fraglia, that is, the guild of Venitian painters, and known for the force and spirit of his work. And so he continued. It was a life of indefatigable energy, consummate skill, unquestioning devotion to his native city, his religion and the pictorial tradition, which he had begun to master in the workshop of Lazzarini. He died at the age of 74 on the 27 March 1770 in Madrid, where for the preceding eight
years he had been in the personal service of Charles III of Spain. Death was quite sudden, while he was painting at his easel; there was no time for the priest to administer the last sacrament. It was only during those last 8 years in Spain—aging and tiring in his seventies—that he found the excellence of his paintings called into question and voices raised against him. It may, so it is said, have shortened his life. At any rate, by 1765, Tiepolo’s kind of painting was going out of fashion and I think that it may fairly be said—even when one takes into consideration the revived interest in the baroque and the rococo of more recent times—that it has never again really came back into fashion.

Yet the call to Spain might be seen as the high point of Tiepolo’s career; and Charles III as his ideal patron. Devout, sober, ambitious, highly conscious (like another great Charles of recent times) of himself as head of state, Charles III of Spain had declared his intention, before he came to the throne, of leading Spain back to greatness. Not that the views of the Enlightenment touched him or Tiepolo. Charles’s absolutist views may be seen in the advice he gave to his son: ‘Anyone who criticizes the actions of the government, even though they are not good, commits a crime’. But Tiepolo was happy with his family in Venice, and busy on the frescoes in the Villa Pisani,* and did not want to go to Spain. He delayed for months, until the Venetian state, afraid of offending Spain, instructed him to go. So at last he set out by land with his two painter sons Domenico and Lorenzo, leaving his wife and remaining sons to his son Giuseppe, a priest. They were two months on the road before they reached the house of the Venetian Ambassador in Madrid.

Tiepolo, after he had recovered from the journey, began to paint the frescoes in the Throne Room of the new Palace, which had been recently completed. He had already made a sketch painting or modello for it before leaving Venice. It is probably identical with the canvas now in the National Gallery, Washington. The ceiling itself was enormous, about 35 x 80 feet, and over it Tiepolo painted the Apotheosis of Spain.*

Spain is enthroned in the clouds, the allegorical figures of peace and justice. Above, jubilant angels trumpeting, seen more clearly in this next slide. On the cornices are the Spanish provinces and the four quarters of the earth paying homage. In one we see Columbus meeting Neptune, and offering the goods of the new world, not to Neptune, but to Spain.

But times of course had changed. Tiepolo painted this, the last of his many apotheoses, between 1762 and 1764; the very years during which Charles III, though far from being an incompetent ruler, sadly miscalculated British power and entered the Seven Years war on the side of France, only to lose Florida and all the Spanish possessions in North America East of the Mississippi to Britain at the Treaty of Paris a year later in 1763.
Tiepolo was celebrating past glory, you might say, not contemporary performance. He is the last painter of Europe who could, as he did, dedicate his art to absolutism, to the divine right of Kings, the aristocratic principle of government, the reception of the saints in glory, and still produce work of—by common consent undoubted quality. And if we are to appreciate his art we must first it seems to me, face the fact of his traditionalism, his temperamental conservatism.

He sought, as we know, a special class of patron. Just before he left for Spain he gave a kind of press interview to the local newspaper *Nuova Veneta Gazzetta*—he was, after all, a Very Important Person, who could keep princes and kings waiting, and ask very high sums for his great frescoes—and in it he said that ‘painters must try and succeed in large-scale works capable of pleasing the rich and the nobility because it is they who make the fortunes of artists and not the other sort of people who cannot buy valuable pictures’, and he proceeded to complain about young apprentice painters who stop studying when they think they know a little (*quando credono di saper qualche cosa, piu non vogliono studiare*) and go off on something of their own. Tiepolo had learnt his craft thoroughly and worked for his chosen patrons—state, church and nobility—happily and industriously for fifty years; and they supported him, until those last few years in Spain, when his style was becoming unfashionable and he had to face, at the age of 70, a formidable rival. This was the young Czech, Anton Raphael Mengs,* who had come to Madrid as Court Painter to Charles III one year before the arrival of Tiepolo. Mengs came to Spain as the standard-bearer of the new neoclassical style which was being spread about Europe through the writings of his close friend Johann Winckelmann*. No other partnership between consenting adults was quite as important for the history of taste in Western Europe as that established between Mengs and Winckelmann; and at the Spanish Court Mengs found an influential champion in the padre Joachim de Electra*. Electra was Charles III’s confessor and secret manager of court affairs. It was Electra who succeeded in humiliating the old painter by causing seven of Tiepolo’s altarpieces or the Church of St Pascal at Aranjuez to be removed and replaced by works by Mengs and Bayeu—Goya’s teacher.

An unpleasant ending to a brilliant career, you might say, but it was, at least, exceptional. For the greater part of his life his chosen patrons were able to provide him with a busy, industrious and happy life: the life, we might conclude, of the last great master-craftsman in the service of the ancien régime. It could not have lasted, when you come to think of it, a moment longer than 1770. Those young apprentice painters who refused to master the great art of ceiling fresco painting, who began to direct their art to, as the old man put it, ‘the other sort of people’ who ‘cannot buy valuable pictures’; these of course were the young men who were to live through the days of the French Terror of 1793; and things were never going to be the same again. When Tiepolo died in 1770, Jacques-Louis David, atheist and regicide, was 32 and soon to be the most powerful and influential artist in Europe; Goya was 24, William
Blake 18. A bitter, angry generation. And after them came the neurotics and dreamers, the young men who, as David’s students, set up their own studios in the Palace of the Louvre, the first, longest and most successful art-student sit-in in history; it altered the course of European painting. There was Antoine Gros, 21 at the height of the Terror, who painted the Napoleonic legend and later for the Restoration Bourbons, but who felt himself a cheat and turncoat and in despair both over his life and art, finally drowned himself. There was Anne-Louis Girodet, 27 at the height of the Terror, a dreamy romantic who finished his life composing unreadable poems on aesthetics in a house shuttered against the daylight; Proudhon, unbalanced and melancholic, 35 in 1794; Theodore Gericault, a mere child at the time, who lived a wild, dissolute life, killing himself at the age of 33 from the effects of a fall from a horse. These were the men, the first French romantics, who really set nineteenth-century French painting and European painting upon its new course—or so the text books unite in telling us. At any rate they were certainly the new men, the first Bohemians, the alienates, who could no longer turn unquestioningly to a stable state, aristocracy or church for a lifetime of work, the forerunners of those artists who became increasingly convinced as the nineteenth century lengthened into the twentieth century that it was necessary not only to train your hand and eye as Tiepolo did, but also to blow your mind, in order to become and artist.

But if you were a young artist in your 20s in the 1720s and in Venice, the old patrons, state, church and nobility were still—if a little precariously—there. Not that the Venetian state could help much; its direct patronage of the arts was almost at an end. Tiepolo, in fact, received only one commission directly from the State, and we do not know he details of it. It is, not surprisingly, a state allegory: *Neptune Paying Homage to Venice*, and is now in the Ducal Palace. Venice is shown as an imperious mistress of the seas to whom the god pours out his cornucopia of gold. And this just at the time when the Venetian Empire in the Eastern Mediterranean had been finally absorbed by the Turks. By the Treaty of Passarowitz of 1718, signed two years before the painting was completed, Venice ceased to be a European Power and abdicated her political role in Europe. This painting, too, we must surely conclude, like Tiepolo’s *Apotheosis of Spain*, is really a dream about a golden past.

The Venetian state was poor, but the Venetian aristocracy, though firmly segregated by law from the swarming tourists in the city—Gibbon complained how difficult it was to make contact with influential Venetians because of the laws—retreating increasingly from its historical, civic, military and diplomatic roles into family and social interests could still provide a painter with a good livelihood.

It had long been customary for the Venetian nobility to cover the walls of their palaces with paintings. One year after Tiepolo died, that is, in 1771, an unknown Englishwoman wrote to her friend in France: ‘the Venetians cover their walls with paintings, and never think their apartments properly finished until they have such as
shall fill all the spaces from top to bottom.’ And this they had been doing since the early sixteenth century. Two hundred years later, most of the older families had filled most of their walls; and their support of contemporary art in Venice began to fall off. It was the new families admitted to the nobility, many during the late seventeenth century, who were the most active supporters of Tiepolo and his generation. It cost a family 30,000 zecchini to be enrolled among the nobility. It has been estimated that a bare subsistence was possible in Venice of the eighteenth century on 15 zecchini a year. Tiepolo was paid about 100 zecchini for a large altar piece, and about 500 zecchini for a dome fresco in a church. But for his great ceilings, such as the Throne Room in the Residenz at Wurzburg, he was able to ask much more. Of course, the new nobles often bought old paintings for the prestige they conferred and their firmer values. But you could not buy old frescoes for your new walls and ceilings. These, only an artist like Tiepolo could provide, and if they looked like a Paolo Veronese, all the better.

It was Dionisio Dolfin, youngest brother of these two Dolfins, who gave Tiepolo the crucial commission of his early career. The Dolfins enjoyed a virtual monopoly of the northern Venetian province of Aquileia and Dionisio obtained the Bishopric and went to live at Udine in the extreme north of the Republic of Venice, close to the Julian Alps, residing there for 36 years. When Tiepolo had finished his paintings in the family palace at Venice, Dionisio called him to paint frescoes in the Cathedral and Archepiscopal Palace at Udine. For the Palace, Tiepolo drew upon eight stories from Genesis. It was while he was painting scenes from the life of Abraham that he gradually changed his style. Actually some of his first paintings were devoted to the Abraham story. Here is his Repudiation of Hagar painted in 1719 when he was 23. Its heavy use of chiaroscuro and the strong diagonal composition are typical of the late seventeenth-century baroque which Tiepolo had learned in the studio of his master Lazzarini. When we compare it with his Angel Appearing to Sarah,* painted seven years later in the Palace at Udine, we notice the heavy dark shadows thinning away, the atmosphere becoming more sunny, and a lively line emerging. Tiepolo’s depiction of Sarah* is a delightful illustration of Genesis 18.12. Incredulous at being told that she would give birth to a child at the good round age of 90: ‘Therefore Sarah laughed within herself saying, After I am waxed old shall I have pleasure, my Lord being old also?’ And Tiepolo depicts her, surely, her 90 years and toothlessness notwithstanding, as a woman every bit capable both of pleasure and a son. Some years later Tiepolo took up the Abraham story again, in 1732, to paint a Hagar and Ishmael.* The baroque conventions still hold: the strong diagonal composition, the stylised gesture of supplication: but what stops us are the realistic touches: Ishmael’s belly* beginning to swell, the fingers drawn in, the closed eyes, the open mouth filling with a swollen tongue.* Or take this detail from the painting of the Education of the Virgin* in the Chiesa della Fava, Venice, where St Anne appears as a rather formidable Venetian Jewess solicitous for the piety and education of her daughter. All worth noting because Tiepolo is rarely, if ever, given credit for a gift for fine characterisation, like
Rembrandt, David or Goya, and with some justice, too, because in Tiepolo the gift remained incipient. He pressed his art towards decoration, not characterisation; that, after all was what his patrons wanted; and he was not the kind of artist to place his own interests above those of his patrons.

What his aristocratic Venetian patrons wanted, above all else, was the glorification of family: which he gave them in great allegorical frescoes. The new families needed his services most. There were for example the Sandi, ennobled in 1685, who were among the first to employ Tiepolo. They had made their fortune in the lucrative profession of the law, and the subject with which, appropriately, Tiepolo decorated the Sandi Palace was the Power of Eloquence*. Here is a detail.* It provides a clear impression of Tiepolo’s colour schemes at this time: russet reds, creams and gold, pale blue and greens and also the characteristic baroque perspective device known as sotto in su, that is to say, viewed from below upwards. In drawing and composing the perspectives for his vast ceiling pieces Tiepolo had, as his devoted assistant, Geralamo Mengozzi Colonna, who followed him about faithfully for forty years. Though at 74 he sensibly refused to make that last trip to Spain, and died two years later. (Slide of Tiepolo, 57, and Mengozzi, 72).

But, the most popular form of family Apotheosis was the marriage allegory. Tiepolo used it first in the Residenz at Wurzburg, which I shall mention later, and on the ceiling of the Rezzonico Palace. The Rezzonico were Genoese and nouveau riche by Venetian standards, having been ennobled in 1687. In 1758, Lodovico Rezzonico married Faustina Savorgnan, of an impeccable lineage, and Lodovico’s brother Carlo was elected Pope Clement XIII in the same year. Seven years before the marriage and papal election, the Rezzonico had purchased one of the greatest palaces in Venice and employed Tiepolo to decorate it. And he proceeded to celebrate the marriage as only he could do. He placed Lodovico and Faustina in the chariot of the sun and gave them the god Apollo, as their coach driver.* They are surrounded by personifications of beauty, honour and military valour, with fame trumpeting the great event to the world.* Quite recently, Sir Kenneth Clark has compared Tiepolo’s painting with Handel’s music, and while in terms of the total effect such comparisons can be muddling and misleading—and in Tiepolo’s case a better parallel may perhaps be found in his fellow Venetian and contemporary, Vivaldi—still in the conventions employed by music and painting, if not, in the total effect, one can find close parallels between Tiepolo and the musical forms of his day. Consider, for examples, the rising cadences in the final chorus of the Messiah:

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing and honour, glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever’.
This both in the way in which the words are re-arranged from the Apocalypse, and in the rising and stirring music is nothing else surely than an apotheosis: and it is with precisely the personification of power, riches, honour and so forth that Tiepolo repeatedly surrounds his apothesised patrons.

We know from contemporary memoirs that Venetian nobles used to compete among themselves as to who could offer the most elaborate and expensive banquet. The Labia family, for whom Tiepolo painted his most elaborate banquet, and he painted many, were famed for their banquets. They were business men, of Catalan origin, who built themselves an enormous palace between 1720 and 1750, and displayed their great wealth ostentatiously. Maria Labia was famed for her beauty and high-spiritedness, and possessed a great collection of jewels. It is not at all unlikely that she saw herself as a kind of Cleopatra which Tiepolo painted for the Palazzo Labia. This was the most elaborate fresco cycle which he painted for a private palace. It made intricate use of perspective and illusionistic devices. Into the painting of the Banquet he has introduced a portrait of himself at the extreme left. Beside the Moor, and the man beside him is said to be his faithful assistant Mengozzi-Collona.

Two years before Tiepolo began his fresco in the Labia palace he had painted a Banquet and Cleopatra subject for the Count Algarotti, a friend who was one of the most influential art critics and art agents of his day. Algarotti procured the painting for August III of Saxony, for whom he was acting as agent. It hung for some years in Dresden and later in the King’s hunting lodge at Hubertusburg in Saxony, until it was sold at auction with other paintings from the lodge on the Amsterdam market, where it was purchased by Catherine the Great’s agent. Thus it passed into the great collection at the Hermitage, where it hung until its sale in London by the Soviet Government in 1932, when it was purchased by the Felton Bequest, London advisor, Randall Davies, for the National Gallery of Victoria. The Melbourne Banquet represents a classical phase in Tiepolo’s work under the influence of his friend Algarotti, who saw him as a kind of Veronese born again. Certainly the painting has a close spiritual affinity with the Veronese’s great painting the Feast in the House of Levi, which is now in the Academia, Venice.

Tiepolo’s third source of patronage was the Church. The Venetian church in the eighteenth century was rich, and growing in wealth, particularly the religious orders. When it was decided by the Venetian state in 1716 to stop secular property passing into clerical hands, it was estimated that the Venetian clergy which represented 2 per cent of the population controlled land revenues estimated at 50 per cent of the wealth of the Republic. In consequence, the Church as in a position to be, and more importantly, was, the leading patron of contemporary art in Venice.

I shall take but one example of Tiepolo’s religious commissions. This is the ceiling for the Church of the Gesuati fathers, a branch of the Dominicans. The frescoes,
painted between 1737 and 1739, represent *St Dominic instituting the Rosary*. It is a fine example of Tiepolo’s *sotto in su* perspective and his blonde palette. Note the way in which he makes the transition from real to painted architecture and thence to the sky: a typical baroque illusionistic device. But the whites, pinks, greens and pale blues, are typical of the rococo colour which supplants the warmer colour range of the baroque from the 1720s onwards.

Late in 1750 Tiepolo accepted the commission for his most famous commission, the decoration of the new Residenz at Wurzburg, designed by the great Franconian architect, Balthasar Neumann. Tiepolo, at the height of his powers and fame, extorted a very favourable contract from the Prince-Bishop of Wurzburg, Karl Philip von Greiffenklau. Since it was Frederick Barbarossa who in the 12th century had created the Bishopric of Wurzburg the theme chosen or the decoration of the great ceiling of the Dining Room of the Residenz was the marriage of Barbarossa to Beatrice of Burgundy. Apollo is seen* conducting Beatrice in his chariot to Frederick who is perched upon his throne high in the clouds, while all around the sky bellies, bums and splayed legs tumble about in a kind of frolicsome Halleluiah chorus, celebrating the happy event. It took Tiepolo a year to paint, and when he had completed it, the Prince-Bishop asked Tiepolo to paint the staircase as well.* The theme he chose was the ultimate in grandiosity even for Tiepolo: it represented the Four Continents paying homage to Karl Phillip von Greiffenklau; Apollo and the pagan deities, and representatives of all the four continents of the world, their peoples—including this fine personification of America,* and the fauna and flora all pay homage to the Prince-Bishop of Wurzburg. The ultimate in decoration and self-glorification, one wants to say, but in the days of Voltaire and Diderot, how unreal.

So that we might want to agree with Wittkower that Tiepolo is the last link in a long chain. A painter working with amazing fluency and virtuosity at the end of a great tradition, for petty principalities and ancient monarchies untouched by the Enlightenment. Indeed, Arnold Toynbee chose eighteenth century Venice as one of his example of a society which idolised its dead self, for him one of the signs of the breakdown of civilizations; and he might well have chosen, Tiepolo in this context, though he did not, preferring the much less appropriate figure of Caneletto, as the painter which encouraged and promoted self-idolatry. And we might want to pass judgement upon Tiepolo, in the light of his subject matter and his patrons, as a skilful painter of the Venetian decadence. And that, even though it is grounded largely upon political and moral grounds would not be all that far from the position he is allotted still in general textbooks on the history of European painting.

Yet there is another point of view, one upon which little yet been written in detail, and I can only suggest here by way of concluding. When I was in London in 1968, I paid a visit to one of my former teachers, Ernst Gombrich; and shortly after he greeted me he said: ‘I’ve just come back from Spain. I swore I’d never go there while Franco
remained in power, but in the end I realised that if I didn’t go now I might never go to Spain at all.’ And then he added: ‘I’ve come back with the strong feeling that we shall have to rewrite the history of European painting.’ And then he got to talking about other things and I was unable, or forgot to, get him back to his point about rewriting the history of European painting. But I feel sure that I know what he was getting at.

He was, I feel sure, seeing Venice and its tradition of painterly painting, the animated, flickering brushwork, as central to the European tradition. It first enlivens the work of Giorgione and is passed on through Titian and the baroque masters, to Spain and Valasquez and Rubens, and through Tiepolo to Goya, and thence via the French romantics such as Delacroix, who admired Tiepolo, Rubens and Goya, to the Impressionist painters, and eventually the expressionists and abstract expressionists of our own times. On this view the classical tradition with its emphasis upon line and tone and chiaroscuro, the line of the Florentines, of Leonardo, and the classicists down to David, Poussin, Mondrian and the hard-edge schools of today, would be conservative, classicizing, anti-painting leaders in the pictorial tradition. On such a view, Tiepolo could occupy a significant place.

For Tiepolo, the crucial point for this argument would turn upon his use of colour. In the 1720s, like many other painters, he began to lighten his colour: that is itself is an early sign of the Rococo and not all that significant. But in returning to the techniques and methods of fresco painting, Tiepolo, it seems found less and less use for the chiaroscuro methods of painting which, invented by Leonardo, had come to dominate baroque painting. Instead of establishing mass and depth by breaking down local colours, using them untainted with heavy shadows, keeping his shades silvery and light, opposing cool colours to warm in an harmonic balance which would produce fresh, brilliant and at times scintillating effects. We can watch the progressive development of his chromatics, to some extent through this last sequence of colour slides.

The Temptation of St Anthony is a work of the 1720s at a time when his palette has begun to lighten. Soft greens, muted yellows and salmon pinks are related harmonically by a pervasive grey. Modelling is minimised. If one forgets the rhythmical baroque composition: this painting is not all that far from one by Manet.

This is Danae and the Shower of Gold painting, bought by Count Tessin, the Swedish minister for the King of Sweden and painted in 1736 about ten years after the St Anthony. A more elaborate painting. But the grey tonality is less in evidence, chiaroscuro and modelling more pronounced, in a sense more conventional than the earlier painting. But the colours are now brighter, and note how he opposes the blue of the sky and the sheet to bring luminosity and a chromatic balance to the warm colour. Colour balance is as least as important here as tonal balance.
The brilliance of his colour, his use of the primaries red, yellow and blue, and the sparkling sunshiny effects he could achieve are delightfully seen in his small Apollo Pursuing Daphne (c. 1755) in the National Gallery, Washington.

What is interesting in Tiepolo’s development as a colourist is the gradual heightening of the pitch of the colour over the whole surface, the disappearance of heavy compositional shadow and the use of cool against warm areas to establish a chromatic rather than a toned harmony. Of course he never entirely escaped the conventions of baroque chiaroscuro: but the early moves in the game that was to occupy the nineteenth centuries so much appear to be there.

Even his drawings, greatly admired in recent years, point to a similar conclusion. Line is reduced to a telling and eloquent calligraphy of the greatest economy: here one grasps the speed and precision with which the man worked: and tone is the merest suggestion for colour placement.

1. An allegorical figure for a composition
2. An old man and boy with a fishing rod
3. A street musician
4. A group of Punchinello
5. A caricature of a cavalier
6. Caricature of a cleric. Such drawings come close to the economy and penetration of Goya: who learnt much from Tiepolo both as a draughtsman and a painter.
7. Hunchbacked Punchinello. This, of course, is most Goya-esque.

Perhaps then we should reserve judgement as to Tiepolo’s place in the history of European painting. Perhaps he was not the last link in the chain, but a crucial link which joins the painterly tradition of Venice with the painterly tradition of modern times, just as when philosophers and artists sought desperately to escape from tradition and begin again, if they could, from scratch. But we shall have to leave it* to Time to discover the Truth about Tiepolo’s place in European art. He would I am sure approve: he painted the theme of Time discovering Truth more than once; for he loved any subject with a bit of a strip-tease in it. In this painting the old man has managed to discover most of her, but seems to have grown tired of the game and has become reluctant to strip her quite bare. And it would be undesirable to press the truth about Tiepolo beyond the point of modesty even if I could. So let us leave the subject covered by a little decent mystery.
Library Digitised Collections

Author/s:
Smith, Bernard

Title:
Giovanni Battista Tiepolo

Date:
1956-1966

Persistent Link:
http://hdl.handle.net/11343/56284