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Eakins of an Antique Cast and a Male  
Model**

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## An Introduction to ATINER's Conference Paper Series

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President  
Athens Institute for Education and Research

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**Abstract**

The Columbus Museum in Georgia owns a large, double-sided charcoal drawing by American painter Thomas Eakins, which shows a plaster cast of a helmeted warrior on one side and a nude male model on the other. While it is clearly a student drawing, it has been assigned to either Eakins' years as a student at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia (1862-66) or his years of study in Paris at the École des Beaux-Arts (1866-69). The demonstrated skill of execution of the drawing, particularly of the side with the cast drawing of the bust of Menelaus in the Vatican, is far superior to the undeveloped execution of three cast drawings that must belong to Eakins' early student days in Philadelphia. It is instead comparable to a bust drawing of a man in a turban that is generally believed to belong early in Eakins' Paris days. While Eakins seems to have studied without regular instruction at the Pennsylvania Academy, he received rigorous training in cast and figure drawing at the École des Beaux-Arts under Jean-Léon Gérôme between 1866 and 1867. Thereafter, he began his study of painting, and expressed a vehement aversion to cast drawing. Thus, the Columbus Museum drawing can best be assigned to Eakins' early years in Paris, between 1866 and 1867.

**Keywords:**

**Corresponding Author:**

In an 1879 interview with art critic William C. Brownell, American painter Thomas Eakins stated: ‘I don’t like a long study of casts, even of the sculptors of the best Greek period. At best, they are only imitations, and an imitation of imitations cannot have so much life as an imitation of nature itself.’<sup>1</sup> By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, artists had been drawing plaster casts of ancient sculptures for over four centuries,<sup>2</sup> and the practice was standard at art academies in Europe and America.<sup>3</sup> Therefore, in spite of his aversion to the study of plaster casts of ancient sculptures, Eakins was required to draw them as a student, both in Philadelphia and in Paris.

Several of Eakins’ cast drawings survive, and demonstrate his reaction to the antique, along with his increasing skill in rendering it. Two cast drawings in graphite, executed on two pages ca. 7 by 10 inches from the same sketchbook of wove paper,<sup>4</sup> appear to be Eakins’ earliest cast drawings. Both drawings are likely to have been executed shortly after Eakins received his first admissions ticket on October 7, 1862, to study at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia (hereafter referred to as PAFA), which granted him permission to ‘DRAW FROM THE CASTS FROM THE ANTIQUE AND ATTEND THE LECTURES ON ANATOMY.’<sup>5</sup>

The casts that are depicted in the two drawings can be linked to ones that are listed in the 1868 *Catalogue of the Paintings, Statuary in Marble, Casts in Plaster, etc. the Property of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts*. The first drawing (Fig. 1) shows a nude kneeling youth who raises both arms, with his right arm held up higher than his left, as he looks fearfully up to his right. This figure’s unusual pose matches that of the PAFA cast identified as the ‘Son of Niobe.’ The 1868 catalogue provides this description of the cast, which is no longer in the PAFA collection:

*The original is in the Uffizi Gallery at Florence. It is one of the figures of the group of Niobe and her children. He kneels and looks up, seeking to avert the anger of Apollo. The group was found beyond the gate of S. Giovanni at Rome.*<sup>6</sup>

While this catalogue entry does seem to describe the figure in Eakins’ drawing, it is inaccurate in terms of the location that is given for the statuary model for the cast. The marble statue that was the source for the cast is actually in the Glyptothek in Munich. Nor is it certain that the statue shows one of the doomed children of Niobe. He could instead be a fallen warrior, threatened by

<sup>1</sup>Brownell, September 1879, p. 742.

<sup>2</sup>Marchand, 2010, p. 61.

<sup>3</sup>Boime, 1986, pp. 27-32. Fahlman, 1991.

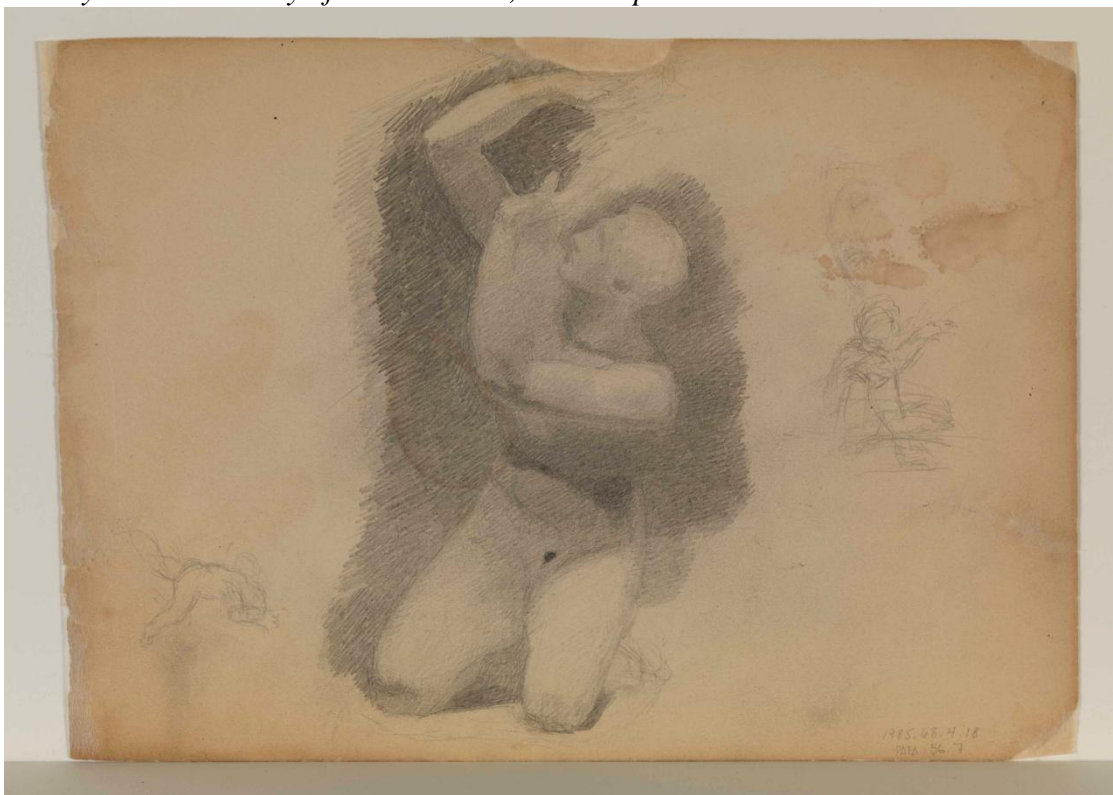
<sup>4</sup>On the sketchbook, see Foster et al., 1997, 295-296, no. 15.

<sup>5</sup>Rosenzweig, 1977, pp. 28-29.

<sup>6</sup>*Catalogue*, 1868, p. 21, no. 256, where it is listed under the heading ‘GALLERIES OF CASTS FROM THE ANTIQUE ETC IN THE LOWER STORY.’ Compare Foster et al., 1997, pp. 296-297, no. 15c, who suggests that ‘this kneeling youth probably was drawn from a marble copy of *Son of Niobe*, owned—along with *Daughter of Niobe*—by PAFA by 1855.’

a standing opponent.<sup>1</sup> The statue in Munich in its current condition lacks the arms and head that are shown in Eakins' drawing. These were restored in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century by Austrian sculptor Johann Martin Fischer,<sup>2</sup> and casts were made of this restored version of the statue. Such casts are rare, since shortly thereafter Fischer's restorations were removed from the marble statue itself.<sup>3</sup> However, since the cast in Eakins' drawing exactly matches Fischer's restored version of the statue (Fig. 2), it is clear that this was the version once owned by PAFA. A photograph from about 1890 that shows a PAFA drawing studio includes a cast of the kneeling youth with Fischer's restorations and proves this assertion.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 1.** *Thomas Eakins, Cast drawing: Nude Man, Crouching, ca. 1862-63, graphite on cream wove paper. 7-1/16 x 10-1/4 in. Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia*



<sup>1</sup>Vierneisel-Schlörb, 1979, pp. 431-434, no. 39, figs. 210-215.

<sup>2</sup>See Poch-Kalous, 1949.

<sup>3</sup>Fiser; Vierneisel-Schlörb, 1979, p. 431.

<sup>4</sup>Foster et al., 1997, p. 24, fig. 28; Leibold, 2010, p. 186, fig. lower right. By the time that this photograph was taken, the kneeling youth in the cast had lost his left arm.

**Figure 2.** *Casting from Johann Martin Fischer's restoration of 'Ilioneus' (youngest son of Niobe), cast-iron. Chateau Park, Heldenberg, Austria. Photograph courtesy of Jindřich Čeladín*





Kathleen Foster notes as early features in this drawing (Fig. 1) ‘the tight, automatic hatching and the tentative contour.’<sup>1</sup> The small scale of this and the other drawings from the same sketchbook and the medium of graphite also differ from the larger scale and the use of charcoal in other drawings from Eakins’ student days at PAFA and in Paris. A further reason for an early dating of the drawings from this sketchbook is the presence of a cloaked, grieving female on the upper right of the second side of Figure 1<sup>2</sup> that resembles in pose and dress the personification of Europe on the Gardel Monument. This tomb was erected in the Mount Vernon Cemetery in Philadelphia in 1862 for the wife of a friend of Eakins’ family.<sup>3</sup>

The second cast drawing from the same sketchbook (Fig. 3) can also be linked to casts in PAFA’s 1868 catalogue that are not in their current collection. The mask in the center of Fig. 3 may correlate to the catalogue’s ‘Mask of a Daughter of Niobe,’ as proposed by Kathleen Foster.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, in Eakins’ drawing, the raised position of the head, the profile of the face and the arrangement of hair strands along the side of the face resemble the head from one of the statues in the Uffizi that was once believed to depict one of Niobe’s daughters but is now believed to represent a Muse.<sup>5</sup> In this drawing, the closely-spaced hatching both on and off the cast are similar to the hatching in Fig. 1, and the contour of the chin and neck has been redrawn several times. On the upper left in Fig. 3, Eakins sketched a second head, this time viewed from the front. Surely this anguished, uplifted head is that of the Uffizi’s Niobe, mother of the daughter whose face Eakins evidently thought he was executing in the center of the drawing. PAFA’s 1868 catalogue includes a ‘Bust of Niobe (the original at Florence),’<sup>6</sup> which would have been the source of the sketched head in Eakins’ drawing. The Ashmolean Museum at Oxford still possesses such a bust of Niobe (Fig. 4).<sup>7</sup> Contrasting with the two dramatic dramatic heads in Eakins’ drawing are the sketches of peaceful sleeping dogs that are stretched out around the cast drawings.

A third cast drawing by Eakins that has survived is executed in charcoal on a sheet of laid paper measuring 24 x 18-1/2 inches (Fig. 5). At the base of the sheet, it bears the label ‘HERCULES.’ This drawing is inscribed with Eakins’ initials (TE) on the back, and it has the watermark in which the letters E B

<sup>1</sup>Foster et al., 1997, p. 296, cat. 15c.

<sup>2</sup>Foster et al., 1997, pp. 296-297, cat. 15c recto with illustration. For a larger view, see PAFA’s online Albert M. Greenfield American Art Resource Online:<http://www.pafa.org/museum/The-Collection-Greenfield-American-Art-Resource/1065/> (do a “Quick Search” under the inventory number, 1985.68.4.18r).

<sup>3</sup>For correspondence that dates the monument, see Wainwright, 1974, p. 67; see also Keels, 2003, p. 55.

<sup>4</sup>*Catalogue*, 1868, p. 26, no. 346; Foster et al., 1997, p. 297, cat. 15d.

<sup>5</sup>Mansuelli, 1958, pp. 130-131, no. 95, illustrated.

<sup>6</sup>*Catalogue*, 1868, p. 23, no. 284.

<sup>7</sup>Frederiksen & Smith, 2011, p. 194, no. C 254; see also p. 183, no. C 195.

flank a winged caduceus inside a shield.<sup>1</sup> Kathleen James distinguishes in the drawing ‘six views of a man’s neck and jaw.’<sup>2</sup> The most obvious are on the upper left and lower right. Due to the beardless condition of the chin and the fleshy lips, the Hercules depicted here cannot be the ‘Bust of Hercules (middle life)’ in the 1868 PAFA catalogue,<sup>3</sup> and may instead be the ‘Young Hercules’ that James states is included in ‘first complete catalogue of the school’s collection, published about 1877-78,’ a cast that is no longer in PAFA’s collection.<sup>4</sup>

**Figure 3.** *Thomas Eakins, Cast drawing: Mask in Profile, ca. 1862-63, graphite on cream wove paper. 7-1/16 x 10-1/8 in. Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia.*



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<sup>1</sup>For an image of this watermark, see Siegl, 1978, Appendix B, fig. 1c. According to Siegl, p. 61, the handmade paper in Eakins’ drawings with this watermark was French in origin, but was imported to America for use by artists there.

<sup>2</sup>Foster et al., 1997, p. 299, cat. 16.

<sup>3</sup>*Catalogue*, 1868, p. 25, no. 315.

<sup>4</sup>Foster et al., 1997, p. 299, cat. 16, note 1.

**Figure 4.** *Plaster cast of bust of Niobe from statue of Niobe and her youngest daughter in Uffizi Gallery, Florence. Ashmolean Museum Broadway, Worcestershire*



**Figure 5.** *Thomas Eakins, Cast drawing: Hercules, charcoal on tan laid paper, ca. 1862-63. 24 x 18-1/2 in. Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia*



Although the Hercules drawing is on larger paper than Figs. 1 and 3 and is executed in charcoal rather than graphite, it seems to be either contemporary

with these drawings or not much later in date. Kathleen Foster notes in Fig. 5 the ‘short, tight and delicate hatching,’ and suggests a dating of 1862-63.<sup>1</sup> Other characteristics in common with Figs. 1 and 3 reinforce Foster’s early dating. For example, Eakins’ repeated effort at achieving an accurate facial contour in the upper rendering of Hercules’ lower face and neck is a feature also evident in the chin of the mask in Fig. 3. Also, the harsh contrasts of dark and light shading in Hercules’ neck in the upper rendering are similar to the unobtrusive shading on the waist and stomach of the kneeling youth (Fig. 1).

A further reason for accepting a date of 1862-63 for Fig. 5 lies in Eakins’ stated dislike of ‘a long study of casts.’ We know from a class register at the PAFA Archives that Eakins first enrolled in a life drawing class at PAFA on February 23, 1863.<sup>2</sup> It seems unlikely that he continued to draw from casts when he was thereafter able to draw from nude models three evenings a week. It is not known how long Eakins attended life drawing classes at PAFA. In her dissertation of 1986, Elizabeth LaMotte Cates Milroy concludes that ‘Eakins had to be in attendance at least until 1864.’<sup>3</sup> Kathleen Foster suggests that he made life drawings through ‘the conclusion of classes in the spring of 1866.’<sup>4</sup>

We do know that conditions at the life drawing class at PAFA were not ideal. Eakins’ friend Earl Shinn describes the situation for PAFA students drawing casts and for those enrolled in the life drawing classes:

*It was not until 1855 that an attempt was made, though in a rather perfunctory fashion, to put some classes in operation. Students were permitted to draw from the cast in the daytime all the year round, and on three evenings in the week, during six months in each year. A dark and ill-ventilated cellar was fitted up as an amphitheatre, and here, on three evenings in each week, from the first of October to the last of April, the students who were regarded as being sufficiently advanced, drew from the living model when one was procurable. No instruction was provided, but the older students assisted their juniors to the best of their ability.<sup>5</sup>*

Shinn goes on to state that in 1865, painter and lithographer Christian Schussele ‘was invited to take charge of the classes’ at PAFA, but that he was in infirm health.<sup>6</sup> Other, evidently more reliable sources, including the PAFA Committee on Instruction Minutes, date the beginning of Schussele’s instruction at PAFA to 1868, i.e. considerably after Eakins had sailed to France on September 22, 1866.<sup>7</sup> It seems likely that if Eakins was not provided with

<sup>1</sup>Foster et al., 1997, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup>Milroy, 1986, p. 70, note 31. Eakins’ PAFA admission ticket ‘to draw from the LIVE MODEL’ is undated; see Rosenzweig, 1977, pp. 28-29.

<sup>3</sup>Milroy, 1986, p. 55.

<sup>4</sup>Foster et al., 1997, 25-26.

<sup>5</sup>Shinn, January 1884, p. 32.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Lippincott, 1976, pp. 166 and 266, note 8. For the date of Eakins’ departure for France, see Homer, 2009, p. 19.

instruction for PAFA life classes,<sup>1</sup> none was offered for his study of casts of ancient statues.

The situation was different for Eakins once he was admitted in late October 1866 to the studio of Jean-Léon Gérôme at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. We know exactly when he started his studies with Gérôme from a letter that Eakins wrote to his father on Friday, October 26, 1866: 'I'm in at last and will commence to study Monday under Gérôme.'<sup>2</sup>

Just two weeks after his admission into Gérôme's studio, Eakins was already benefiting from the exacting critiques that he and other students received from the revered painter:

*Gerome comes to each one, and unless there is absolute proof of the scholar's having been idle, he will look carefully and a long time at the model and then at the drawing, and then he will point out every fault. He treats all alike good and bad. What he wants to see is progress. Nothing escapes his attention[.] Often he draws for us. The oftener I see him the more I like him.*<sup>3</sup>

In a letter to his father of December 23, Eakins spells out his schedule and the advantages of study at the École des Beaux-Arts:

*I do not think I have overrated the advantages of the Imperial School. From 8 to 1 we have the living model. We have a palace to work in. We have casts from all the good antique and many modern statues. Twice a week our work is corrected by the best professors in the world.*<sup>4</sup>

Clearly, once Eakins was permitted to do life drawings, he did not immediately cease doing cast drawings. On March 7, 1867, he wrote to his father: 'This week has been a holyday one. Monday & Tuesday they shut up our studios and have given us no model for the rest of the week and so we draw from the antique.'<sup>5</sup> Five days later, on March 12, Eakins wrote to his father about a compliment that Gérôme paid him:

*The biggest compliment he ever paid me, was to say that he saw a feeling for bigness in my modeling (Il y a un sentiment de grandeur là dedans) and some times he says, "there now[,] you are on the right track, now push."*<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Susan Macdowell Eakins, Thomas Eakins' widow, denied that her husband had ever studied privately with Schussele; see Milroy, 1986, p. 58.

<sup>2</sup>Homer, 2009, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 70: letter to Eakins' father of November 11, 1866.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

Nine days afterwards, on March 21, Eakins was proud to report to his father: ‘Gerome has at last told me I might get to painting & I commence Monday.’<sup>1</sup> As Katherine Foster notes, ‘Gerome kept him at charcoal and paper for only five months before promoting him to brush and canvas.’<sup>2</sup> Once Eakins was allowed to start painting, he made no further reference to his own execution of cast drawings. In fact, in an undated letter to his father of late 1867, Eakins expressed a vehement dislike for the École’s practice of setting aside a week every month for all students, regardless of their level, to draw from the antique:<sup>3</sup>

*Gerome is very kind to me & has much patience because he knows I am trying to learn & if I stay away he always asks after me & in spite of advice I always will stay away the antique week and I often wish now that I had never so much as seen a statue antique or modern till after I had been painting for some time.*<sup>4</sup>

A fourth extant cast drawing, now in the collection of the Columbus Museum (Georgia), is likely to date to Eakins’ first five months of studies with Gérôme, i.e. between late October 1866 and late March 1867—the only period when he is known to have done cast drawings while at the École. The drawing, executed in graphite and charcoal on laid paper measuring 23-5/8 by 18 inches, is double-sided; this is unusual because Eakins only used the backs of sheets one-fifth of the time.<sup>5</sup> The sheet has a watermark that is otherwise unknown on the drawings by Eakins;<sup>6</sup> it is a monogram, possibly of the letters “GE”. The drawing on one side shows a cast of the helmeted head of a Greek warrior who is usually identified as Menelaus (Fig. 6). On the second side of the sheet is a nude male model, shown seated on a block-like seat with his right arm lowered and his left arm raised and supported by a sling that is suspended from a rope (Fig. 7).

Kathleen Foster dates the cast drawing to Eakins’ PAFA days, specifically ‘after his entrance into life class in February 1863.’<sup>7</sup> One of her reasons is that a cast of the bust of Menelaus was in PAFA’s cast collection when Eakins was a student there.<sup>8</sup> Although PAFA’s cast does not survive today, an example is in existence in Rome (Fig. 8).<sup>9</sup> This cast, and undoubtedly the one once at

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> Foster et al., 1997, 36.

<sup>3</sup> On this practice, see Weinberg, 1984, p. 23.

<sup>4</sup> Homer, 2009, p. 174.

<sup>5</sup> Foster et al., 1997, p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 1997, p. 236, note 8.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 1997, p. 25.

<sup>8</sup> *Catalogue*, 1868, p. 23, no. 275.

<sup>9</sup> Morricone, 1981, p. 68, no. 11 above.

PAFA, is of a famous marble bust in the Vatican, Rome, that was discovered in Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 6.** *Thomas Eakins, Head of a Warrior, ca. 1866-67, graphite and charcoal on laid paper. 23-5/8 x 18 in. Collection of the Columbus Museum, Georgia.*



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<sup>1</sup>Amelung, 1908, 506-508, no. 311. For a discussion of this and the other ancient Roman replicas of the Menelaus head and the statuary group that it was once a part of with Menelaus holding up the corpse of Patroclus, see Ridgway, 2001, 275-281.



**Figure 7.** *Thomas Eakins, Seated Nude (verso of fig. 6), ca. 1866-67, graphite and charcoal on laid paper. Collection of the Columbus Museum, Georgia.*



**Figure 8.** *Plaster cast of bust of Menelaus in the Vatican. Museo dell'Arte Classica, Università di Roma.*



Foster does, however, note the ‘breadth and bravado’ of Fig. 6, and ‘the progress made between *Hercules* [Fig. 5 in this article] and *Menelaos*.’<sup>1</sup> These striking improvements are very apparent in the more confident contours of the warrior in Fig. 6, the more subtle and dramatic shading, the suggestion of bone structure, particularly in the left cheek and brow, the skillful twist of the head, and the overall convincing three-dimensionality of the head and its hair and helmet that is successfully achieved in the drawing. Also notable is the fact that unlike Eakins’ other cast drawings, the figure is not fragmented and included with other images; rather, the composition encompasses the entire sheet. It does not seem likely that Eakins would have made this type of progress working on his own in the cast studios at PAFA. Instead, such improvements could have been achieved under the critical eye of Gérôme, who was known for his exacting critiques.

William Innes Homer also dates this drawing to Eakins’ Paris study. In fact, his label for the illustration of the cast drawing (Fig. 6) in his *The Paris Letters of Thomas Eakins* (published in 2009), dates it to ca. 1867, ‘an example of Eakins’ drawing style at the École des Beaux-Arts, Paris.’<sup>2</sup> Homer also illustrates the cast drawing and the drawing on the back of it (Fig. 7) in an earlier study, *Thomas Eakins: His Life and Art* (1992).<sup>3</sup> Here, he does not seem to realize that the two drawings are on the front and back of the same sheet of paper, for he gives different dimensions for them. Also, in his discussion of them, he implies that the cast drawing was executed earlier than the drawing of the nude male model: ‘Starting with charcoal drawings of casts [Fig. 6 in this article], then progressing to the nude [Fig. 7 in this article], Eakins made slow progress in Gérôme’s class.’<sup>4</sup>

Since one of the reasons Kathleen Foster dated the double-sided drawing to Eakins’ student days at PAFA was that PAFA possessed a cast of the Menelaus bust, the question needs to be raised of whether a cast of the bust might also have been available in Paris. There are a number of reasons to think that this would have been the case. For one thing, the marble bust of Menelaus was brought from Rome to the Louvre by Napoleon, and remained there until its return to the Vatican in 1816.<sup>5</sup> A cast of it is listed in a sales catalogue for the cast studio in the Louvre (1883).<sup>6</sup> A cast of the same bust is pictured in an earlier photograph dated 1839-1840 of Hippolyte Bayard’s cast collection.<sup>7</sup> Such casts were commonly purchased by French painters, sculptors and photographers, and served as models and inspiration for their work.<sup>8</sup> The surviving cast collection of Gustave Moreau shows that many such casts were sold by private establishments, while the large ones were purchased from the

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<sup>1</sup>Foster et al., 1997, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>Homer, 2009, fig. 19.

<sup>3</sup>Homer, 1992, pls. 26-27.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>5</sup>Amelung, 1908, p. 507.

<sup>6</sup>Rionnet, 1996, p. 202, no. 651.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., 89, fig. 63.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

Louvre.<sup>1</sup> We know from Fanny Field Hering's 1892 study on Gérôme that the painter also had such a collection of casts, along with costumes and books.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, we do not know exactly what casts he owned.

**Figure 9.** *Thomas Eakins, Man in a Turban, ca. 1866-67, graphite over charcoal on blue-green laid paper. 23-1/8 x 16-7/8 in. Achenbach Foundation for Graphic Arts, The Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco*



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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 86-88, figs. 59-61.

<sup>2</sup>Hering, 1892, p. 251.

The only drawing that is generally accepted as belonging to Eakins' early Paris years is a large graphite and charcoal study of a *Man in a Turban* (Fig. 9).<sup>1</sup> This drawing is on laid paper with the French watermark of MICHALLET, also found on other drawings by Eakins.<sup>2</sup> Gordon Hendricks supports this dating by citing 'the relative naïveté of the technique [that] suggests the artist's first months in Paris.'<sup>3</sup> The subject matter of 'an exotically turbaned black or Arab' is further basis for accepting a date of 1866-1867 for Eakins' drawing.<sup>4</sup> Gérôme had recently shown his painting *Prayer on the Rooftops* in the Paris Salon of 1865; this painting features turbaned Arabs in various positions of prayer on the rooftops of Cairo.<sup>5</sup> Gérôme is believed to have used Parisian models wearing costumes from his collection for the Arabs in the painting.<sup>6</sup> It seems likely that he would have also encouraged students like Eakins to draw local Arab models in his turbans. That Gérôme valued drawings as well as paintings of Arabs in turbans is indicated by his gift of his own drawing of the principal figure from his painting to William Thompson Walters in 1864.<sup>7</sup>

Stylistically, the turbaned head by Eakins has a number of characteristics in common with Eakins' drawing of the bust of Menelaus (Fig. 6), such as a similar treatment of the tufts of hair, defined by energetic bands of shadow. Furthermore, the bold strokes of charcoal across the undefined shoulders of the figure (Fig. 9) are similar to the shading to the viewer's right of Menelaus' neck and left shoulder. The overall confidence of conception is another common feature of the two drawings, and suggests they may be contemporary.

There are further reasons for dating the Columbus Museum's double-sided drawing to 1866-67. From Eakins' correspondence we know that he was studying from life and from the antique at the same time during his first few months at the École. The fact that the nude and the cast are drawn on the same sheet suggest that they were done very close in time, and their top orientations being different might point to the fact that Eakins turned over a page in his sketch book to draw on the back of the page. The drawing of the male nude (Fig. 7) is surely the work of a student; although the lines are strong and the shading subtle, there are problems with the foreshortening of the left knee and elbow. Furthermore, the way in which the nude's raised left arm requires a sling to support it suggests that he had to pose for an extended time. Eakins' testimony that the life drawing classes lasted five hours is consistent with this supposition. Students of Gérôme and at the École des Beaux-Arts in general worked on a single life drawing for an entire week.<sup>8</sup> The emphasis in this drawing on outlines is a final reason for assigning Figs. 6 and 7 to Eakins' early Paris years. Gérôme is known to have stressed to his students that the

<sup>1</sup>Johnson & Goldyne, 1985, p. 200.

<sup>2</sup>Siegl, 1978, Appendix B, fig. 1a.

<sup>3</sup>Hendricks, 1974, p. 316, no. 5.

<sup>4</sup>Johnson & Goldyne, 1985, p. 200. See also Foster et al., 1997, p. 236, note 8; and Braddock, 2009, 61-65.

<sup>5</sup>Ackerman, 1986, pp. 67-71 and 216 no. 152.

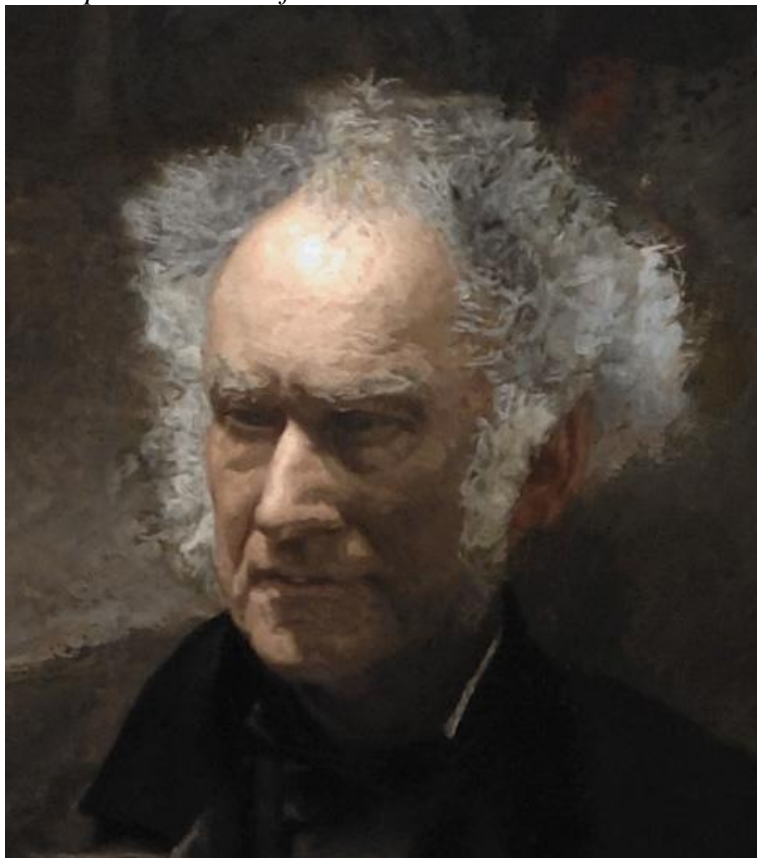
<sup>6</sup>Kelly, 2005, p. 244.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 244-245, no. 62 (Walters Art Museum).

<sup>8</sup>Weinberg, 1984, pp. 28-32; and Shinn, July 22, 1869, p. 68.

major outlines defining the pose of the model should first be blocked in, and the internal modeling achieved thereafter. For example, student Julian Alden Weir wrote in 1874 that Gérôme ‘makes his pupils practice blocking in and drawing in outlines with merely the principal shade, striving entirely for the action of the figure.’<sup>1</sup> In Eakins’ drawing (Fig. 7), there is an emphasis on outlines throughout, and the feet of the male remain unmodeled, as if the artist was unable to complete the drawing; nor did Eakins fill in the shoulders of Menelaus in the drawing on the other side of the sheet (Fig. 6).

**Figure 10.** *Thomas Eakins, Detail of Dr. Gross from Portrait of Dr. Samuel D. Gross (The Gross Clinic) (shown in thumbnail), 1875, oil on canvas. 96 x 78-1/2 in. Courtesy of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia and the Philadelphia Museum of Art*



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<sup>1</sup>Weinberg, 1984, p. 25.



If the proposed dating for the Columbus Museum's drawing is correct, then Eakins must have treasured it enough to bring it back to Philadelphia from Paris.<sup>1</sup> As it is a fully-realized, double-sided work showing both life and cast drawing, it would have been an excellent example of his work there.<sup>2</sup> In particular, the drawing of the Menelaus bust seems to have some of the 'bigness' or 'grandeur' that Gérôme saw in Eakins' work.

Eakins continued his distaste of drawing from the antique in his years of teaching at PAFA, reducing the time that his students spent on their drawing of casts before they embarked on their study of painting. He stated: 'If I had known what I know now, I would have been a painter in half the time it took me.'<sup>3</sup> Despite this regret, one wonders if Eakins' early studies of casts might have influenced his mature work. For example, in his first monumental painting, his portrait of 1875 of the esteemed Dr. Samuel D. Gross, Eakins may have used his drawing of the Menelaus bust as inspiration for the surgeon's helmet-like hair and the twist of his head away from his patient (Fig. 10). The portrait's heroic qualities have been widely noted and appreciated,<sup>4</sup> and Eakins' dramatic cast drawing might have helped the artist achieve the noble effect of the famous surgeon's head.

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<sup>1</sup>Maria Jo Chamberlin-Hellman finds this improbable. She concluded: 'I do not consider it likely that Eakins would have bothered to bring such an elementary exercise home with him from the École des Beaux-Arts, where he actively avoided sessions devoted to the antique.' Chamberlin-Hellman, 1981, p. 55, note 157.

<sup>2</sup>Perhaps he brought it back to show his parents. The fact that it survived past his student days is a testament to the support and encouragement that Eakins received from his parents, who must have treasured the extant childhood sketches, high school exercises, cast and life class drawings, and letters from Paris as proof of his early talent. See Foster et al., 1997, p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>Bregler, March 1931, p. 383.

<sup>4</sup>See, for example, Johns, 1983, p. 52.

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