David Bowie's Tintoretto

Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria

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Edited by Benjamin van Beneden and Nicola Jennings

Preface

Colnaghi has over the past 250 years sold many masterpieces to well-known clients on both sides of the Atlantic. One of these sales was Jacopo Tintoretto's *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria* which in the 1980s we sold to the legendary rock star David Bowie. When Bowie died early last year, the painting was auctioned along with the rest of his collection at Sotheby's, London. In a remarkable twist of fate, the Tintoretto sold by Colnaghi was bought by a good friend and client of ours, who has now generously placed it on long-term loan at the Rubenshuis in Antwerp. We were delighted, then, when we were asked to collaborate with the Rubenshuis to produce a scholarly monograph on the work and its wider influence.

Given the profound influence of Tintoretto and Venetian art on Rubens, Van Dyck, and many other Baroque artists from northern and southern Europe, the *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria* is a work of considerable importance. It was commissioned by members of the Scuola di Santa Caterina for the Church of San Geminiano in the Piazza San Marco in Venice. Sadly this exquisite church, designed by Jacopo Sansovino, was destroyed under Napoleon. The catalogue includes articles not only on the altarpiece itself, but also on the church and on other painters including Rubens, Van Dyck, and Maerten de Vos whose work was influenced by Tintoretto. We are particularly pleased to include a report on the recently-completed scientific study of the altarpiece which reveals an astonishingly complete underdrawing.

The final chapters of the book look at some of the other major works by Tintoretto, Titian, Rubens, and Van Dyck sold by Colnaghi over the years, and at David Bowie as an art collector. The chapters on Bowie will surprise some readers. He was an extraordinary, chameleon-like character, and this was also true of his approach to art collecting. The final three chapters give us a vivid insight into Bowie the man as well as Bowie the collector, as recounted by three people who actually met him. It was in one of these encounters that Bowie was first acquainted with Colnaghi, a meeting that ultimately led to his acquisition of the Venetian masterpiece that is the subject of this publication.

We are extremely grateful to a former Chairman of Colnaghi, Viscount Norwich, whose contribution to the conservation of La Serenissima is unequalled, for agreeing to write the preface. We are also fortunate to count amongst the contributors Stijn Alsteens, Benjamin van Beneden, Matt Collings, Christina Currie, Nicholas Hall, Jeremy Howard, Riccardo Lattuada, Maja Neerman, Xavier Salomon, and Serge Simonart. We hope you will enjoy this rich mix as well as the beautiful painting now hanging in the Rubenshuis for all the world to see.

Jorge Coll and Nicolás Cortés

Jacopo Comin,* called Jacopo Robusti or Tintoretto

(Venice 1518-1594)

Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria

1560s
Oil on canvas, 177.1 x 99.3 cm (69¾ x 39⅛ in)

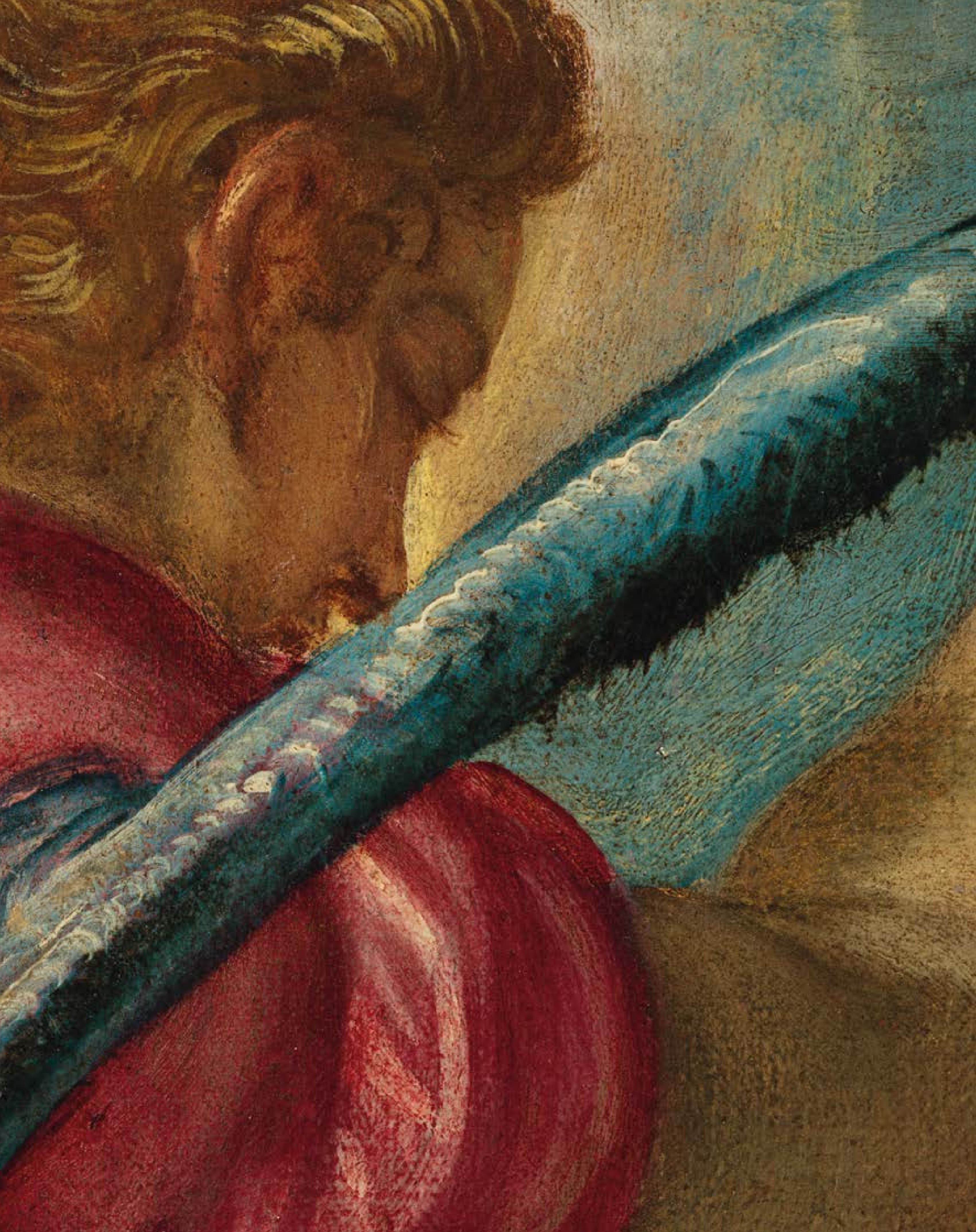
Provenance:
Commissioned by the Scuola di Santa Caterina for the altar of the Church of San Geminiano, Piazza di San Marco, Venice.
Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice, after the destruction of San Geminiano in 1807.
Acquired by the art dealer Angelo Barbini in 1818, in exchange for Bartolomeo Schedoni's *Deposition*.
Colonel T.H. Davies, and then by descent to Lieutenant Colonel H.R. Davies, Elmley Castle, Pershore, Worcestershire.
Sold at Christie's, London, 26 July 1957, lot 148 to Betts for £1100.
Ernest Joresco, Chicago, by 1959.
Anonymous sale, New York, Christie's, 18 January 1983, lot 169 (as Jacopo Robusti, il Tintoretto).
With Colnaghi & Co. Ltd., London, from whom acquired by David Bowie, 1980s.
Sold at Sotheby's, London, Bowie/Collector Sale, 10 November 2016, lot 38 (as Jacopo Robusti, called il Tintoretto, and Studio), where acquired by present owner.

Exhibited:
London and New York, Colnaghi, *Gothic to Renaissance, European Painting 1300-1600*, 26 October - 12 November 1988 in London and 13 November 1988 - 28 January 1989 in New York, no. 19 (lent by a private collection); County Durham, Bowes Museum, March 1990 - May 1992, on loan.
On long-term loan to the Rubenshuis, Antwerp, from a Private Collection in Luxembourg.

Literature:
Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia citta nobilissima et singolare* (Venice: 1581), p. 43; Raffaello Borghini, *Il Riposo*, Book IV (Florence, Giorgio Marescotti: 1584), p. 554, and subsequent editions ("in San Gimignano una tavola entrovi Santa Caterina, e l'Agnolo, che la conforta, acciò vada à disputare"); Carlo Ridolfi, *Le Maraviglie dell'arte, Ovvero Le Vite degli Illustri Pittori Veneti e Dello Stato*, vol. II (Venice: Giovan Battista Sgana, 1648), p. 33; Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia citta nobilissima et singolare*, II (Venice: Steffano Curti, 1663), p. 110; Marco Boschini, *Le minere della pittura* (Venice: Francesco Nicolini, 1664), p. 101, and (Venice: 1674 ed.), p. 77 ("La Tavola à mano sinistra, entrando in Chiesa per la porta Maggiore, con Santa Catterina, e l'Angelo, che gli annuncia il martirio, e del Tintoretto"); Marco Boschini, *Il Gran Teatro delle Pitture e Prospettive di Venezia*, vol. I (Venice: Domenico Lovisa, 1720), tav. 38; Pietro Antonio Pacifico, *Cronica veneta sacra e profana, o sia Un compendio di tutte le cose più illustri ed antiche della città di Venezia* (Venice: Francesco Pitteri, 1736), p. 243, and (Venice: 1793), p. 49 (mistakenly as *Saint Helen*); Antonio Maria Zanetti, *Della pittura veneziana e delle opere pubbliche de veneziani maestri*, vol. V (Venice: Giambatista Albrizzi, 1771), p. 156 ("in S. Geminiano, è cosa sua la tavola parimente di Santa Catterina, a cui da un leggiadrissimo angelo viene annunziato il martirio"); Henry Thode, "Tintoretto. Kritische Studien über des Meisters Werke," in *Repertorium fur Kunstwissenschaft* XXIV, 1901, p. 442; Joshua Reynolds, *Discours sur la Peinture, Lettres au Flâneur, suivis des Voyages Pittoresques* (Paris: Editions Librairie Renouard, H. Laurens, 1909), p. 344; Erich von der Bercken & August L. Mayer, *Jacopo Tintoretto*, vol. I (Munich: R. Piper & Co, 1923), p. 236; Mary Pittaluga, "Opere del Tintoretto Smarrite o di Malsicura Identificazione," *L'Arte* XXIX, 1926, pp. 39-40; Gert Adriani, *Anton van Dyck: Italienisches Skizzenbuch*, (Vienna: Schroll, 1940), p. 10, 6v; Sandra Moschini Marconi, *Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia. Opere d'arte dei secoli XIV e XV* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, 1955), p. XVI; Rodolfo Pallucchini, "Contributi alla Pittura Veneta del Cinquecento: IV, La Pala del Tintoretto per S. Geminiano," in *Arte Veneta*, XII-XIV, 1959-60, pp. 51-54; Carlo Bernari & Pierluigi De Vecchi, *L'opera completa del Tintoretto* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1970), p. 100, cat. no. 126; Rodolfo Pallucchini & Paola Rossi, *Tintoretto: le opere sacre e profane* (Milan: Electa, 1982) vol. I, p. 178, cat. no. 220, reproduced in vol. II, p. 433, reproduced at pl. 286; Claudio Ridolfi, *The Life of Tintoretto and of his Children Domenico and Marietta*, trans. Catherine & Robert Enggass (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University, 1984), p. 46; P&D Colnaghi & Co. Ltd., *Gothic to Renaissance, European Painting 1300-1600* (London: Colnaghi, 1988), p. 102, cat. no. 19; Peter Humfrey, "Competitive Devotions: The Venetian *Scuole Piccole* as Donors of Altarpieces in the Years around 1500," *The Art Bulletin* LXX, no. 3, 1988, p. 416, p. 417, fig. 18, p. 421, no. 34; Daniel Arasse, "Les Annonciations de Veronese ou l'atelier de la Devotion," in *Nuovi studi su Paolo Veronese*, ed. Massimo Gemin (Venice: Arsenale Editrice), 1990, p. 210, p. 211, fig. 167; Michele di Monte, "La morte bella, Il martirio nella pittura di Tiziano, Tintoretto e Veronese," in *Venezia Cinquecento* IX, 17, 1999, pp. 118-121, p. 119, fig. 20; Maria Agnese Chiari Moretto Wiel, *Jacopo Tintoretto e i suoi incisori,* exh. cat. Venice, Palazzo Ducale, 12 May - 7 August 1994 (Milan: Electa, 1994), p. 69; Michael Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection of Northern European Drawings* (Turin/ London/ Venice, Allemandi, 2002), vol. I, p. 76, under cat. no. 998, 6 verso b (mistakenly as lost); Raffaello Borghini, *Il Riposo*, ed. Lloyd H. Jr. Ellis, Book IV (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), p. 262; Robert Echols & Frederick Ilchman, "Toward a New Tintoretto Catalogue, with a Checklist of Revised Attributions and a New Chronology," in *Jacopo Tintoretto: Actas del Congreso Internacional Jacopo Tintoretto - Proceedings of the International Symposium Jacopo Tintoretto*, Madrid 2009, eds. Bernard Aikema and Miguel Falomir (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado), p. 128, cat. no. 208 (as possibly Jacopo's design; considered to be studio execution); Sotheby's, *Sotheby's Bowie/Collector* sale catalogue (London: Sotheby's 2016), cat. 38 (as Tintoretto and Studio).

Engraved: Andrea Zucchi, in *Il Gran Teatro delle pitture & prospettive de Venezia,* 1720, vol. II, plate 38.

* His real name "Comin" was discovered by Miguel Falomir of the Museo del Prado, Madrid, and was made public on the occasion of the retrospective of Tintoretto in the Prado in 2007.



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Foreword

Considering that the Emperor Napoleon I was in Venice for only ten miserable days in his life – in November and December 1807, and he hated every moment of it – the damage that he did was remarkable. The good news is that much that he snatched – the four bronze horses of Saint Mark's, for example – was subsequently returned to the city; the not-quite-so-good-news is that quite a bit – including Veronese's glorious *Marriage at Cana* from the refectory of San Giorgio Maggiore – has at least been preserved, even though it is still in France; the very worst news is that much was deliberately destroyed, and in this last category the most tragic loss of all is the church of San Geminiano.

Thanks to Canaletto, we know exactly what it looked like: a small, vaguely Palladian church standing in the centre of the west side of the Piazza, directly facing the great basilica, with a circular window above the entrance and a lion of Saint Mark above it, the whole thing crowned by a modest triangular pediment. Nothing very remarkable by Venetian standards, perhaps – but the interior was a very different story. Not many churches, even in Venice, could compete with two altarpieces respectively by Giovanni Bellini and Tintoretto, with a pair of organ shutters by Veronese.

The Tintoretto altarpiece, *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria*, was commissioned by the Scuola di Santa Caterina in the 1560s, and it is this that we are celebrating – yes, celebrating – today. Nearly thirty years ago Colnaghi included it in their *Gothic to Renaissance* exhibition, after which they sold it to the late David Bowie – a passionate art lover, some 65% of whose collection was sold last November at Sotheby's for nearly £33 million. Recently the painting was sold again to another Colnaghi client, who has most generously presented it to the Rubenshuis – the former house and studio of Peter Paul Rubens – in Antwerp. Thus, after years in private hands, it will once again be on public view, and in a magnificent museum; if that isn't a cause for celebration, I don't know the meaning of the word.

John Julius Norwich

Tintoretto's *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria*: "nelle cose della pittura stravagante, capriccioso, presto e risoluto et il più terribile cervello che abbia avuto mai la pittura."

Riccardo Lattuada

Fig. 1. Jacopo Tintoretto, *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1588, oil on canvas, 63 x 52 cm, Paris, Louvre.

When Jacopo Tintoretto (Venice, 29 April 1519 – 31 May 1594) (fig. 1) executed *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria* (or *The Vision of Saint Catherine of Alexandria*) for the church of San Geminiano in Venice, around 1560-1570, his fame was at its peak, and his energy still strong. He was in his forties, enjoying an extraordinary vitality. One of the first authors to understand the importance of Tintoretto's innovations was Giorgio Vasari. Vasari was highly critical of Tintoretto, who represented for him the epitome of all that he was not: "*capriccioso, presto, e risoluto*" ("bizarre, swift, and steadfast"). Vasari regarded Tintoretto's works as executed "*a caso e senza disegno*" ("at random and without design"). To Vasari Tintoretto seemed to show that "*quest'arte è quasi una baia*" ("this art [i.e. painting] is like a prank"). Nevertheless, Vasari had to admit that Tintoretto was "*il più terribile cervello che abbia avuto mai la pittura*" ("the most awesome brain the art of painting ever had").[1]

Paradoxically, Vasari's expert – if negative – criticism explains why Tintoretto is today considered one of the greatest Venetian masters of all times.

Venice: a legendary Republic in never-ending crisis

No one can choose the age in which to live; Tintoretto had the luck to express his genius in one of the most vibrant European cities of the sixteenth century. At the beginning of the century the Venetian Republic was one of the most prominent European powers: the abilities of its generals, the efficiency of its diplomatic corps, and the high standing of its political institutions made Venice a paradigm of good government, and trade with the Middle East continued to flourish despite continuing struggles with the Ottoman Empire.

Tintoretto was born in 1519, the year of Emperor Maximilian of Austria's death. At that time, following a ten-year military campaign against the Austrian Empire and some dizzying shifts in alliances, Venice had consolidated its possessions in the Terraferma, Venice's territorial possessions on the mainland, which included part of Lombardy, Istria, and other territories on the Croatian Coast. The Adriatic Sea was still under the Republic's control, while the Aegean Islands and other territories as well as some military bases in the Eastern Mediterranean – which were still governed by "*la Serenissima*" – were increasingly threatened by the Ottomans. The victory in the Battle of Lepanto (1571) (fig. 2), in which 4500 Venetian soldiers and sailors died fighting heroically, marks a high point in Venice's power and fame.[2] However, this triumph was to be short-lived. Despite the energy of the Venetians and sagacity of their leaders, the Republic was unable to compete with the growing expansion of the Turks on the Eastern Mediterranean and, in the same year as Lepanto, Venice lost Cyprus. Venice was also unable to compete with the growing military might and wealth of her continental rivals. When Tintoretto died in 1594, the Ottoman Empire's military pressure on the commercial routes of the Venetian vessels was more pronounced than ever before and, with the growth of the Atlantic trade, Venice became increasingly marginalized. The Republic entered a period of slow decline[3] whose effects were only partly mitigated by the strong cohesion of its society and institutions, and the loyalty and industry of the inhabitants of the Terraferma.[4]

These problems were compounded by religious dissent within Italy itself. The Council of Trent (1563) gave formal recognition to a dramatic schism within Christian Europe, the Protestants on one side and the Roman Catholic Church on the other. Venice had to struggle to protect her position in this increasingly-divided Europe. Although the majority of Venetians were Catholic, the city also housed substantial communities of Protestants, Jews, and Muslims, whose presence was of grave concern to the Vatican. The Republic had a policy of not prosecuting those who professed faiths other than Catholicism. Its position was exemplified by the priest Paolo Sarpi (Venice, 1552-1623), one of the greatest intellectuals of his times who – despite efforts to kill him, more or less indirectly organized by the Vatican – survived to become, through his political and historical writings, a powerful apologist for Venetian religious tolerance.

Fig. 2. Giorgio Vasari, *The Battle of Lepanto*, 1572, fresco, Vatican City, Vatican, Sala Regia.

The arts in Cinquecento Venice

Despite these unpropitious political and economic conditions, sixteenth-century Venice became the centre for one of the most creative and prolific phases in the development of the arts. As Jacopo de' Barbari's woodcut shows, the city was more splendid than ever (fig. 3) and, around the mid-century, public and private institutions patronized some extraordinarily ambitious artistic programmes. With the encouragement of two eminent Tuscans resident in Venice – Pietro Aretino and Jacopo Sansovino – three Mannerist masters arrived in the city from Tuscany between 1537 and 1541: Francesco Salviati, Giuseppe Porta, and Giorgio Vasari.[5] In 1548-1549, Paolo Pino, the Florentine Anton Francesco Doni resident in Venice, and the Venetian doctor Michelangelo Biondo sparked a debate over the relative importance of drawing and painting. Pino's views were articulated by the fictitious character of a certain Fabio, who informs his interlocutor Lauro that "Bronzino is an expert master and I like his ways and his abilities; but I prefer Tiziano, and if Tiziano and Michelangelo were united in one person, with Michelangelo's design and Tiziano's colour, they would be the God of Painting; however they are Gods on their own, and whoever thinks differently is a stinking heretic."[6]

In Venice the most cultivated patrons were ready to give opportunities to the most experimental and modern artists of their times. From 1550 onwards the city was teeming with painters, and the *Scuole Piccole* and *Grandi*, which represented the middle class and artisan congregations, had accumulated great wealth, vying with each other to achieve social visibility by patronizing works of art for their chapels and headquarters.[7] Tiziano Vecellio, known as Titian, was regarded as an international star, whose main patrons were Philip II of Spain and his court, much more so than the Venetians themselves. There were a number of younger painters crowded into the Lagoon: Paris Bordone, Jacopo Bassano, Domenico Theotokopoulos (El Greco), Andrea Meldolla, and Paolo Veronese, the latter having lived in the city since 1551. Veronese had arrived in time to become the main rival of Tintoretto, and to establish a monopoly on artistic commissions in the villas of the Terraferma. Additionally, as was usual in almost all the Italian towns of the time, there was a substantial community of Flemish, Dutch, and German artists whose presence encouraged a cross-fertilization of artistic ideas between northern Europe and Italy.

Fig. 3. Jacopo de' Barbari, *View of Venice* (detail), 1500, woodcut on paper, 134 x 280.8 cm, London, British Museum.

Fig. 4. Tintoretto, *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1546-1548, oil on panel, 45.1 x 38.1 cm, Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Figs. 5 & 6. Tintoretto, *Miracle of Saint Mark Freeing the Slave*, 1548, oil on canvas, 415 x 541 cm, Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia di Belle Arti.

Tintoretto in the Venetian arena

Within this stimulating artistic environment, from 1548 onwards, Tintoretto (fig. 4) transformed the course of Venetian painting with his extraordinary inventions. His ability to combine Titian's palette with Michelangelo's powerful design, and his talent for staging highly-dramatic visual narratives, made Tintoretto Titian's most powerful rival, causing the older artist to focus increasingly on his commissions from the Habsburg emperors and their courts. The only other serious rival, able to reach the same heights, but very different in character, was Paolo Veronese, whose fresco decorations became a *sine qua non* for Venetian villas on the Terraferma. If in Tintoretto's paintings the action is emphasized by the articulation of space, the chiaroscuro, and the position of the figures within the composition, in Veronese it is architecture which plays the principal role in defining the spectator's experience. Both artists became masters in the creation of large imaginary spaces within Venetian interiors and, abandoning the usual fresco technique used on the mainland (which was unsuited to the damp climate of the Lagoon,) transformed this very limitation into an expressive resource.

Tintoretto was an artist noted for his flexibility and he eagerly undertook a wide range of commissions from the Republic, the religious orders, the *Scuole,* and private patrons. But his artistic practice went far beyond an ability to respond prolifically to market demand in an era hungry for images. His compositions were characterized by something completely new in the Italian art: viewers seem to be drawn into the stories that he depicts, becoming participants rather than mere spectators in relation to the narrative. One famous example is the *Miracle of Saint Mark Freeing the Slave* (Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia di Belle Arti)[8] where Tintoretto creates the illusion that we are lying on the floor of the courtyard in which an angry crowd is mutilating the slave. The drama of the scene and the hysterical gestures of the figures are eclipsed by the arrival of the flying saint (figs. 5 and 6).

Fig. 7. Tintoretto, *Study after a Statuette of Michelangelo's "Dusk"*, ca. 1545-1550, charcoal heightened with white lead on bluish paper, 26.2 x 42.3 cm, London, The Courtauld Institute of Art.

We can see the front of the saint's body; he is like a skydiver caught from below after jumping from an aeroplane. Not even Giulio Romano or Correggio had depicted flying figures so effectively, and this reflects Tintoretto's highly original and idiosyncratic approach. In one of his famous studies of Michelangelo's sculpted allegories for the Medici tombs in San Lorenzo (Florence) – *Dusk* [9] – Tintoretto did not draw the figure from the conventional viewpoint, but instead from above, and from very close so that the figure seems to be taken from a live model that we can reach out to and touch (figs. 7 & 8).[10]

This method was also used in his paintings to convey the impression of figures that are like sculptures seen from close by. Indeed, Tintoretto calls constantly for the viewer's physical and emotional involvement. There are other aspects too which account for Tintoretto's complexity as an artist: his theatricality in the rendering of space, his use of light, and the novel way in which he interpreted traditional iconography. In the *Miracle of the Slave,* the agitated gestures of the torturing crowd reflect Tintoretto's attention to the staging of the scene. Nothing in this work can be reduced to a mere question of style: the aim is to shock the viewer by action that he can see in close-up, appealing to the eye and to the mind. This approach was both original and highly topical: on 11 September 1548, the same year that Tintoretto painted the *Miracle of the Slave*, Antonio Blado published in Rome the *Spiritual Exercises* of Saint Ignatius of Loyola,[11] one of the most renowned handbooks of mystical meditation of the Counter-Reformation, in which the verb "to see" recurs at least twenty times in connection with the mind and the imagination:

> "The First Prelude is a composition, seeing the place. Here it is to be noted that, in visual contemplation or meditation – as, for instance, when one contemplates Christ our Lord, who is visible – the composition will be to see with the sight of the imagination the corporeal place where the thing is found which I want to contemplate."[12]

Fig. 8. Tintoretto, *Study after a Statuette of Michelangelo's "Dusk"*, ca. 1545-1550, charcoal heightened with white lead on bluish paper, 37 x 27.1 cm, Florence, Uffizi, Gabinetto Disegni e Stampe.

This method – mind and senses working together to make visible facts and stories that are not – is key to understanding the passage from Counter-Reformation to Baroque. There were almost no other artists in the sixteenth century who were as effective as Tintoretto in conveying such powerful emotional and narrative effects through a combination of realism and imagination annexed to superb painting ability. This explains why, as is often the case when viewing a work by Tintoretto:

> "We lack the tools of the traditional iconography and the advantages of an image's comparison with textual sources and other images; and it becomes even more crucial to recall the coordinates of the context, and to evaluate the figurative signals, the semiotic paths and the rhetorical arguments."[13]

And this is also the case with the painting under discussion here.

Fig. 9. After Tintoretto, *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria,* engraving by Andrea Zucchi based on a drawing by Silvestro Manaigo, in *Il Gran Teatro delle pitture & prospettive di Venezia*, 1720, 54.5 x 34 cm.

Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria

The *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria* was first published by Francesco Sansovino in a guidebook of 1585 and, since then, has been among the more frequently-cited works by Tintoretto (fig. 9). Commissioned by the Scuola di Santa Caterina for the altar of the church of San Geminiano in Piazza San Marco, Venice, it was transferred to the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice after the destruction of San Geminiano in 1807. It was then sold in 1818 to the art dealer Angelo Barbini in exchange for Bartolomeo Schedoni's *Deposition* and, after a number of appearances on the international art market, found its way, after 1983, into the collection of David Bowie. Following the sale of his collection in late 2016, it is now in the Rubenshuis in Antwerp (fig. 10).

Ridolfo Pallucchini was the first art historian to rediscover the painting which he published in an article entitled "Contributi alla Pittura Veneta del Cinquecento" in the 1959-1960 issue of *Arte Veneta*. In this he cited the engraving by Andrea Zucchi after Silvestro Manaigo's drawing of the painting, which had been published in the eighteenth century in *Il Gran Teatro delle pitture & prospettive di Venezia (*1720) (see fig. 9).

Pallucchini reconstructed the movements of the painting and dated it ca. 1557-1560, pointing out that,

> "As usual Tintoretto renders the action with the utmost immediacy, using the expressive vocabulary of Mannerism which he masters and uses in a highly personal way to create a particularly violent effect. In the foreground are the protagonists: the falling angel who brings the vision of the future martyrdom – the wheel carried by the cherubs – and the saint receiving the message, interrupting her prayers and recoiling in a movement of great pathos. In the background are the old men waiting to put Catherine to the test; their figures, wrapped in cloaks are made transparent by the intense light. It is an annunciation of great pathos and drama, a well-balanced composition of figures shown in an intensely lit space."[14]

Fig. 10 Kunstkamer, Rubenshuis, Antwerp, with Tintoretto, *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria* in situ.

For Pallucchini "*il colorismo sgargiante e luminoso*" (the luminous and brilliant colourism) of the *Vision of Saint Catherine* is indebted to Paolo Veronese. As early as 1648, Ridolfi pointed out the links between Tintoretto and Veronese when discussing Tintoretto's *Assumption of the Virgin* for the church of the Padri Crociferi in Venice (now in the church of Santa Maria Assunta, Venice):

> "In the main chapel of [the church] of the Padri Crociferi he [Tintoretto] made the altarpiece depicting the Ascension of Our Lady. And, despite the fact that the Fathers had decided that Paolo Veronese would paint the picture, Tintoretto managed to secure the commission by arguing that he would execute so much in the style of Paolo that everybody would think that it had been painted by him. Tintoretto got the job and his promise was not vain: in the painting he succeeded in creating a blend of wildness and grace which showed that he knew how to paint in any style and could adopt whatever manner that would be agreeable."[15]

Fig. 11. Anthony van Dyck, *Sheet of Studies after Titian and Tintoretto* (fol. 6 verso of the Italian Sketchbook) (detail), 1621-1627, pen and brown ink, London, British Museum.

This quote reveals both the level of competition for commissions in mid-Cinquecento Venice[16] and Tintoretto's ability to modify his style in order to sideline a strong competitor like Veronese. Pallucchini also drew attention to the drawing of 1622 by Van Dyck (fig. 11), now in the British Museum, inspired by our *Saint Catherine*. This had been published in 1940 by Gert Adriani, providing evidence of how modern Tintoretto's altarpiece must have seemed in the age of the Baroque.[17]

The attribution of our altarpiece to Tintoretto has been confirmed more recently by Pierluigi De Vecchi in *L'opera completa di Tintoretto* (1970), and by Pallucchini and Paola Rossi in 1982 in their fundamental study of Tintoretto's *Opere sacre e profane*.[18] In 2009 Robert Echols and Frederick Ilchman offered a critical revision of Tintoretto's catalogue as presented by De Vecchi, Pallucchini and Rossi,[19] proposing a new date for the *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria* of "before 1581, probably late 1570s."[20] In a letter to Sotheby's of 10 November 2016, prior to its acquisition by the present owner, Ilchman reiterated, following first-hand inspection, his view that the picture was executed "in the later 1570s" by Tintoretto with some assistance from the studio:

> "Consistent with Tintoretto's practice was the delegation to his studio of substantial elements of the composition, including here the architectural setting of colonnade and chessboard paving, much of the upper composition and sky (though the edges of the lower clouds are rendered skillfully), and the row of background figures that constitute a screen behind the main action; these elements lack Tintoretto's confident and deft brushwork and were painted by studio assistants. By contrast, Jacopo seems to have actively participated in the execution of the foreground protagonists, perhaps sketching them in, completing key passages, and leaving other parts for assistants to finish. Recalling the more common iconography of the Annunciation to the Virgin Mary, the powerful and eloquent gestures here convey the urgency of the message of the angel, who announces Catherine's impending martyrdom yet insists on her eventual welcome in Heaven. To be sure, even these primary figures display an apparent inconsistency in their placement in depth, and some of their drapery is also rendered indifferently. Saint Catherine's facial features seem uncharacteristic of Tintoretto as well. Yet the confident handling of anatomy seen in the angel's muscular shoulders and gesturing right arm, and the answering gesture of Catherine's left arm and hand grasping the crucifix, also skillfully foreshortened, seem to be by Jacopo himself. Other appealing touches include the good head of the angel in profile, shown in shadow to add drama but then surrounded by a golden glow, as well as his curly hair. Close examination confirms that Tintoretto first painted the angel as a nude figure (e.g. the right arm) and then clothed him with an additional layer. The angel's pose seems to be recycled from that of the topmost angel in Tintoretto's *Apparition of the Cross to Saint Peter* of ca. 1556 (Venice, Madonna dell'Orto) (fig. 12)."[21]

Fig. 12. Tintoretto, *Apparition of the Holy Cross to Saint Peter*, 1552-1556, oil on canvas, 420 x 240 cm, Venice, church of the Madonna dell'Orto.

Fig. 13. Sebastiano Serlio, *Sette libri di Architettura*, volume 3, frontispiece, 1540.

Technical examination carried out by Christina Currie during the preparation of this publication has revealed that – contrary to Ilchman's opinion – the execution of the painting shows a method fully consistent with Tintoretto's working practice. The unevenness of execution alleged by Ilchman is not evident to the present writer, and it will be argued here that the painting under discussion is, in fact, an autograph work by Tintoretto. One important point in the argument involves the circumstances of the commission. The painting must have been executed between 1557, when Jacopo Sansovino was at work on the dome and façade of the church of San Geminiano, and 1581, when Francesco Sansovino records Tintoretto's painting in situ,[22] though there is no known documentation of the commission. In writing that the church of San Geminiano "even if small in size, ... is possibly the most ornate of any other in the city,"[23] Sansovino was obviously biased in favour of his father Jacopo, who is said to have been very proud of his work and wanted to be buried in the church. But there can be no doubt of the fact that the little church in the heart of Venice, facing the Basilica di San Marco, was one of the most prestigious monuments in town, often visited by travellers and connoisseurs, and famous for its musical performances. Moreover, around 1560 Paolo Veronese had executed for San Geminiano the outstanding painted doors of the organ (now in the Galleria Estense in Modena).[24] Given that our altarpiece would have been placed in the same church where his rival had painted the doors of the organ, it seems improbable that Tintoretto would have delegated to the workshop the execution of the altarpiece for the Scuola di Santa Caterina. As noticed by Pallucchini, the ability to produce 'Veronese-like' paintings without losing his own artistic identity is epitomized by the *Saint Catherine*. Here the influence of Veronese's palette is undeniable, but the iconography is highly unconventional. The present author is not aware of another example in which Saint Catherine is told by the angel that she will suffer the torture of the breaking (or spiked) wheel commanded by the Emperor Maxentius.[25] She foresees what will happen, while the pagan philosophers in the background are like a silent crowd, unaware of the fact that the saint's eloquence will convert them to the Christian faith, and that eventually they will be martyred because of their conversion. The choice of such an original episode must have been governed by the wishes of the Scuola di Santa Caterina for reasons which, for the time being, remain unexplained.

The right side of the altarpiece is framed by Doric columns which seem to echo a similar motif in Titian's *Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence* (ca. 1557), although in the Titian altarpiece the columns are Corinthian rather than Doric, recalling the pillars shown in the engraved frontispiece of Sebastiano Serlio's third volume of the *Sette libri di Architettura* (1540) (fig. 13).

The light step of the angel in the air is an idea originating in Titian's *Annunciation* (ca.1535, Venice, Scuola Grande di San Rocco) (fig. 14), but the design of the angel's body is clearly the same one used for the corresponding figure in the *Apparition of the Holy Cross to Saint Peter* by Tintoretto himself in the Venetian church of the Madonna dell'Orto (1552-1556) (see fig.12).[26]

Fig. 14. Titian, *Annunciation,* ca. 1535, oil on panel, 166 x 266 cm, Venice, Scuola Grande di San Rocco.

Fig. 15. Jacopo Caraglio after Titian, *Annunciation*, ca. 1537, engraving, 45.3 x 34.4 cm, London, The British Museum.

In general, the position of the figure of Saint Catherine is indebted to that of the Virgin in another *Annunciation* by Titian, for the church of Santa Maria degli Angeli (Murano, 1536-1537); this was donated by the artist to the Empress Isabella of Spain and then lost, but is known through a print by Jacopo Caraglio (fig. 15).[27] As already noticed by Ilchman, the facial type of the saint is similar to those in the *Voyage of Saint Ursula* (Venice, church of San Lazzaro dei Mendicanti, ca. 1554-1555).[28] The type of Saint Catherine appears to be almost the same (in reverse) as that of Saint Ursula in the Lazzaro dei Mendicanti altarpiece. (figs. 16 & 17).

The foreshortened head of the angel (fig. 18) is based on the drawing used for the head of Saint George in *Saint George and the Dragon* (London, The National Gallery, ca. 1555) (fig. 19).[29] All the comparisons proposed here are with works by Tintoretto executed between the sixth and the seventh decade of the sixteenth century, in the years termed by Robert Echols "*los años decisivos*."[30]

The infrared images of the painting executed by the KIK-IRPA laboratories reveal a compelling similarity with Tintoretto's technique in the *Saint George and the Dragon* (figs. 20, 21 & 22). It appears undeniable, furthermore, that the drawing used for the princess in the London painting has been reused for Saint Catherine's figure, albeit with obvious variants in the position of the bust, the arms and the head.

Fig. 16. Tintoretto, *Voyage of Saint Ursula* (detail), ca. 1554-1555, oil on canvas, 330 x 178 cm, Venice, church of San Lazzaro dei Mendicanti.

Fig. 17. Tintoretto, *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria* (detail), 1560s, oil on canvas, Antwerp, Rubenshuis.

Fig. 18. Tintoretto, *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria* (detail), 1560s, oil on canvas, Antwerp, Rubenshuis.

Fig. 19. Tintoretto, *Saint George and the Dragon* (detail), ca. 1555, oil on canvas, London, The National Gallery.

Fig. 20. Tintoretto, *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria*, infrared reflectography (IRR).

Fig. 21. Tintoretto, *Saint George and the Dragon* (detail, IRR), ca. 1555, London, The National Gallery.

Fig. 22. Tintoretto, *Saint George and the Dragon*, ca. 1555, oil on canvas, 158.3 x 100.5 cm, London, The National Gallery.

The last element of the painting to be examined is the line of the pagan philosophers and doctors who will dispute with Saint Catherine, be converted by her to the Christian Faith, and ultimately pay with their lives for having converted (fig. 23). These figures are not just the backdrop of the image; they are central to the picture's conception, and enrich the spatial depth of the composition. Here we see an acquaintance with the Mannerist strand of mid-Cinquecento painting exemplified by the Tuscans in Venice. As usual, Tintoretto played with the reflections of light on the fabrics and the bald heads of the old men. The vibrant palette of the clothes and the pronounced *hanchement* of these sketched figures has a direct correspondence in the series of *Philosophers* in the Libreria Marciana (Venice, before 1571) (figs. 24a & 24b)[31] where Tintoretto collaborated with the Tuscan/Venetian Mannerists Battista Franco and Giuseppe Porta as well as with Lambert Sustris, Paolo Veronese, and Andrea Meldolla.

Christina Currie discusses elsewhere in this publication the technical evidence resulting from these investigations. It is therefore not my aim to engage with these arguments, except to say that it appears evident that the same complexity of layers, *pentimenti*, and slight repositioning of details executed *dal vivo* in our painting and in the London *Saint George* suggest that the present altarpiece is a fully autograph work by Tintoretto executed between 1560 and 1570. The angel (fig. 25), conceived initially as a naked figure with broad contours and afterwards covered by the clothes, provides evidence of Tintoretto's working methods, and Saint Catherine's figure has been conceived exactly in the same way. Even more impressive is the use of the broad lines to draw the perspective of the floor and the columns. These lines provide a grid for the composition, exactly as found in the unfinished sketch of *Doge Alvise Mocenigo Presented to the Redeemer* (New York, Metropolitan of Arts, 1571-1574) (figs. 26a & 26b).[32] Here Saint Mark's sketched figure presents to the naked eye what the infrared reflectographs reveal in the *Saint Catherine*.

Fig. 25. Tintoretto, *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria*, (detail, IRR).

Fig. 26b. Tintoretto, *Doge Alvise Mocenigo Presented to the Redeemer* (detail), ca. 1577, oil on canvas, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Arts.

Fig. 23. Tintoretto, *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria* (detail), 1560s, oil on canvas, Antwerp, Rubenshuis.

Fig. 24a. Tintoretto, *Philosopher*, before 1571, oil on canvas, 250 x 160 cm, Venice, Libreria Marciana.

Fig. 24b. Tintoretto, *Philosopher*, before 1571, oil on canvas, 250 x 160 cm, Venice, Libreria Marciana.

Fig. 26a. Tintoretto, *Doge Alvise Mocenigo Presented to the Redeemer*, ca. 1577, oil on canvas, 97.2 x 198.1 cm, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Arts.

Fig. 27. Workshop of Paolo Veronese, *Annunciation*, ca. 1585, oil on canvas, 104.5 x 82.9 cm, Austin, Texas, The Blanton Museum of Art.

The dimensions of the *Angel Fortelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria* (177.1 x 99.3 cm) are very close to the ones of *Saint George and the Dragon* in the National Gallery of London (158.3 x 100.5 cm). These dimensions are quite small for an altarpiece, and are presumably due to the little scale of San Geminiano's chapel where the painting hung until 1807. It is difficult to imagine Tintoretto leaving to his studio the execution of whatever details in a work so well visible by a short distance.

The *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria* for San Geminiano was to exercise an influence on the evolution in the iconography of the *Annunciation* in the Venetian area. In fact, we can see that its composition was almost entirely reused in the *Annunciation* (Austin, Texas, The Blanton Museum of Art) ascribed to the workshop of Paolo Veronese (fig. 27).[33]

The *Saint Catherine* provides a good case study for understanding Tintoretto's method of composing an altarpiece, which is absolutely in line with Counter-Reformation ideology. However, as was typical with this artist, the painting also shows a perfect blend of careful planning combined with amazingly creative improvisation. This blending was no longer consistent with the late-Mannerist mentality; instead it vigorously looks forward to the Baroque, in which visual and emotional wonder touch the viewer's sensibility in a way far beyond the limitations of the *Maniera,* and ushers in a far more realistic and powerfully effective approach. It is clear why Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony van Dyck were so fond of Tintoretto's emotionally charged images; and it is hard to doubt that Caravaggio did not know of Tintoretto's methods when he started to produce his most radical works, in many respects unconceivable without the example of "*il più terribile cervello che abbia avuto mai la pittura*".

NOTES

1 The quotations come from Giorgio Vasari's *Le vite de' più eccellenti pittori, scultori, e architettori* (Florence: I Giunti, 1568), vol. V, pp. 468-469: "Nella medesima città di Vinezia, e quasi ne medesimi tempi, è stato, ed è vivo ancora, un pittore chiamato Iacopo Tintoretto, il quale si è dilettato di tutte le virtù e particolarmente di sonare di musica e diversi strumenti, et oltre ciò piacevole in tutte le sue azzioni: ma nelle cose della pittura stravagante, capriccioso, presto e risoluto, et il più terribile cervello che abbia avuto mai la pittura, come si può vedere in tutte le sue opere e ne' componimenti delle storie, fantastiche e fatte da lui diversamente e fuori dell'uso degl'altri pittori; anzi ha superata la stravaganza con le nuove e capricciose invenzioni e strani ghiribizzi del suo intelletto, che ha lavorato a caso e senza disegno, quasi mostrando che quest'arte è una baia. Ha costui alcuna volta lasciato le bozze per finite, tanto a fatica sgrossate, che si veggiono i colpi de pennegli fatti dal caso e dalla fierezza, più tosto che dal disegno e dal giudizio. Ha dipinto quasi di tutte le sorti pitture a fresco, a olio, ritratti di naturale, et ad ogni pregio, di maniera che con questi suoi modi ha fatto e fa la maggior parte delle pitture che si fanno in Vinezia. E perché nella sua giovanezza si mostrò in molte bell'opere di gran giudizio, se egli avesse conosciuto il gran principio che aveva dalla natura, et aiutatolo con lo studio e col giudizio, come hanno fatto coloro che hanno seguitato le belle maniere de suoi maggiori, e non avesse, come ha fatto, tirato via di pratica, sarebbe stato uno de' maggiori pittori che avesse avuto mai Vinezia".

2 The battle also figures in the background of Tintoretto's *The Doge Alvise Mocenigo Presented to the Redeemer* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1571-1574). See fig. 26a.

3 See *Venezia e la difesa del Levante. Da Lepanto a Candia, 1570-1680*, exh. cat. (Venice: Palazzo Ducale, 1986).

4 For an overview of the history of Venice in the sixteenth century, see *Storia di Venezia. Dal Rinascimento al Barocco,* vol. VI, eds. Gaetano Cozzi and Paolo Prodi (Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Treccani, 1994).

5 Rodolfo Pallucchini and Paola Rossi, *Tintoretto. Le opere sacre e profane* (Venice: Electa, 1982), I, pp. 12-14.

6 "Bronzino è un perito maestro, e mi piace molto il suo fare, e li son anco parzial per le virtù sue, ma a me più sodisfa Tiziano, et se Tiziano, et Michel Angelo fussero un corpo solo, over al disegno di Michelangelo, aggiontovi il colore di Tiziano, se li potrebbe dir lo dio de la pittura, sì come parimenti sono anco dèi propri, e chi tiene altra openione è eretico fetidissimo." Paolo Pino, *Dialogo di pittura di Messer Paolo Pino nuovamente dato in luce* (Venice: Paulo Gherardo, 1548), p. 127.

7 Silvia Gramigna Dian and Annalisa Perissa Torrini, *Scuole grandi e piccole a Venezia tra arte e storia* (Venice: Grafiche 2am, 2008).

8 See at least the remarks of Augusto Gentili, *Tintoretto. I temi religiosi*, (Florence/ Milan: Giunti Editore, 2006), pp. 5-7; Robert Echols in *Tintoretto*, ed. Miguel Falomir, exh. cat. (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2007), pp. 37-39, fig. 9; and the entry of Margaret Binotto in *Tintoretto*, ed. Vittorio Sgarbi, exh. cat. (Rome: Scuderie del Quirinale, 2012), pp. 76-78, n. 2, with previous bibliography.

9 See Frederick Ilchman and Edward Saywell in *Tintoretto*, exh. cat. 2007, pp. 385-415; G.C.F. Villa in *Tintoretto*, exh. cat. 2012, pp. 30-31.

10 It is known that Tintoretto studied Michelangelo's sculptures for the Medici tombs on small terracotta modelli.

11 Ignatius de Loyola, *Exercitia Spiritualia* (Rome, 1548).

12 "El primer preámbulo es composición viendo el lugar. Aquí es de notar, que en la contemplación o meditación visible, así como contemplar a Cristo nuestro Señor, el qual es visible, la composición será ver con la vista de la imaginación el lugar corpóreo, donde se halla la cosa que quiero contemplar". Paragraph 47 of the First Preamble to "The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius of Loyola," *Ejercicios espirituales Ignacianos* (San Ignacio de Loyola, Managua: Centro de Pastoral Universitario UCA, 2013), p. 9.

13 "Ci vengono a mancare finanche i meccanismi dell'iconologia tradizionale, finanche i vantaggi del confronto di un'immagine con fonti testuali e con altre immagini; e diventa allora più che mai fondamentale chiamare a raccolta le coordinate del contesto, valutare e valorizzare nella giusta misura i segnali figurativi, le tracce semiotiche, le indicazioni retoriche." See Augusto Gentili's warnings about the interpretation the *Miracle of Saint Mark: the Saint Resuscitates a Young Man, Exorcizes a Possessed Man and Defeats the Devil* (Milan, Pinacoteca di Brera) in Gentili, *Tintoretto*, p. 8.

14 Rodolfo Pallucchini, "Contributi alla Pittura Veneta del Cinquecento," in Pallucchini, Rossi, *Tintoretto*, p. 52: "Come al solito Tintoretto rende con la massima evidenza fenomenica l'azione, valendosi di quei mezzi espressivi che la cultura manieristica gli aveva suggerito e che va dominando e personalizzando con una violenza particolare. In primo piano i protagonisti, l'angelo che precipita mostrando la visione del futuro martirio – la ruota portata dagli angioletti – e la santa che riceve il messaggio, interrompendo la preghiera e volgendosi indietro in modo quasi patetico: in fondo la schiera dei vecchi intabarrati, resi più leggeri da una intensità luminosa, che dovranno mettere alla prova la Santa. Un'annunciazione in chiave più patetica, anzi addirittura drammatica: con il colloquio delle figure ben bilanciate nello spazio, intensamente illuminato".

15 Carlo Ridolfi, *Le meraviglie dell'arte, ouero. Le vite de gl'illvstri pittori veneti, e dello stato: Oue sono raccolte le opere insigni, i costumi, & i ritratti loro. Con la narratione delle historie, delle fauole, e delle moralità da quelli dipinte* (Venice: Presso Gio. Battista Sgaua, 1648), vol. II, p. 30: "Ne' Padri Crociferi, nella maggior Cappella fece la tavola con lo ascendere di Nostra Signora al Cielo: & tutto che que' Padri hauessero terminato, che Paolo Veronese facesse quella Pittura, seppe il Tintoretto tanto dire, promettendogli, che l'hauerebbe fatta su lo stile medesimo di Paolo, sì che ognvno l'hauerebbe creduta di sua mano, che ne ottenne lo impiego. Ne vanamente promise, poiche in effetto fece un misto in quella tavola di fiero, e di vago, che bene dimostrò, che per ogni modo sapeua dipingere, trasformandosi in ogni qual maniera fosse aggradeuole" .

16 See *Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese. Rivals in Renaissance Venice*, ed. Frederick Ilchman, exh. cat. (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 2009).

17 Pallucchini, "Contributi alla pittura veneta del Cinquecento," pp. 51, 52, fig. 66; p. 54, footnote 10.

18 Pallucchini, Rossi, *Tintoretto*, vol. I, p. 178, cat. no. 220; vol. II, p. 433, pl. 286.

19 Robert Echols and Frederick Ilchman, "Toward a new Tintoretto Catalogue, with a Checklist of Revised Attributions and a New Chronology," in *Jacopo Tintoretto: Actas del Congreso Internacional*, eds. Bernard Aikema and Miguel Falomir (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2009), p. 128, cat. no. 208. The entry is: "no. 208 - *Angel Announcing Martyrdom to Saint Catherine* – Private Collection (probably originally San Geminiano; sold Christie's, New York, January 18, 1983, lot 169 – [dated] Before 1581, probably late 1570s – Jacopo design; Jacopo and studio execution. Shows similarities in facial types and surface pattern on the fabrics to no. 206, *Saint Ursula Altarpiece*, ex-Incurabili. Facial types are also close to those in passages by studio hands on the ceiling of the Sala Superiore at San Rocco, e.g. no. 183, *Elisha Distributing the Loaves*. The relation of the principal figures to one another may be derived from no. 170, *Washing of the Feet*, ex-Santa Margherita, of 1576". The present writer's questions with regard to this entry are as follows: 1. Why "*probably* originally San Geminiano"? This provenance appears to be undisputed on the basis of all the elements available in the literature on the painting. 2. I see a very passing "relation of the principal figures to one another with respect to the *Washing of the Feet* of 1576. 3. Why date the painting "Before 1581, probably late 1570s"?

As discussed here, all the possible comparisons seem to set the painting between the second half of the 1550s and the first half of the 1560s.

20 Pierluigi De Vecchi in Carlo Bernari and Pierluigi De Vecchi, *L'opera completa del Tintoretto* (Milan: Rizzoli, 1970), p. 100, cat. no. 126; Pallucchini, Rossi, *Tintoretto*, vol. I, p. 178, cat. no. 220; vol. II, p. 433, pl. 286.

21 The letter of Robert Ilchman to Sotheby's, almost entirely reflected in the Auction House entry on the painting, has been shared with me by the current owners.

22 Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare* (Venetia: Appresso Iacomo Sansovino, 1581), p. 43.

23 Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare*, p. 42: "Quantunque piccola, è forse la più ornata di qual si voglia altra nella città."

24 See Xavier Salomon's chapter in this book.

25 The present author has not been able to find this iconography in either Louis Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien. Iconographie des Saints* (Paris: PUF, 1958), vol. III.1 pp. 262-272; or in Dante Balboni and G.B. Bronzini – M.V. Brandi, "Caterina di Alessandria, santa, martire," *Bibliotheca Sanctorum*, vol. III, coll. 954-978. The unusual iconography of the painting has been noticed and analysed by Michele di Monte, "La morte bella: Il martirio nella pittura di Tiziano, Tintoretto e Veronese," *Venezia Cinquecento* 17 (1999): pp. 118-120. The spiked wheel was broken by a thunderbolt and in this way Saint Catherine was beheaded.

26 This comparison has already been proposed by Robert Ilchman in the above mentioned letter to Sotheby's.

27 Valentina Frascarolo and Emanuele Pellegrini, "L'ombra di Tiziano: l'*Annunciazione* che visse più volte," *Studiolo* 10 (2013): pp. 93-110.

28 Binotto, *Tintoretto*, exh. cat. 2012, pp. 90-91, no. 6.

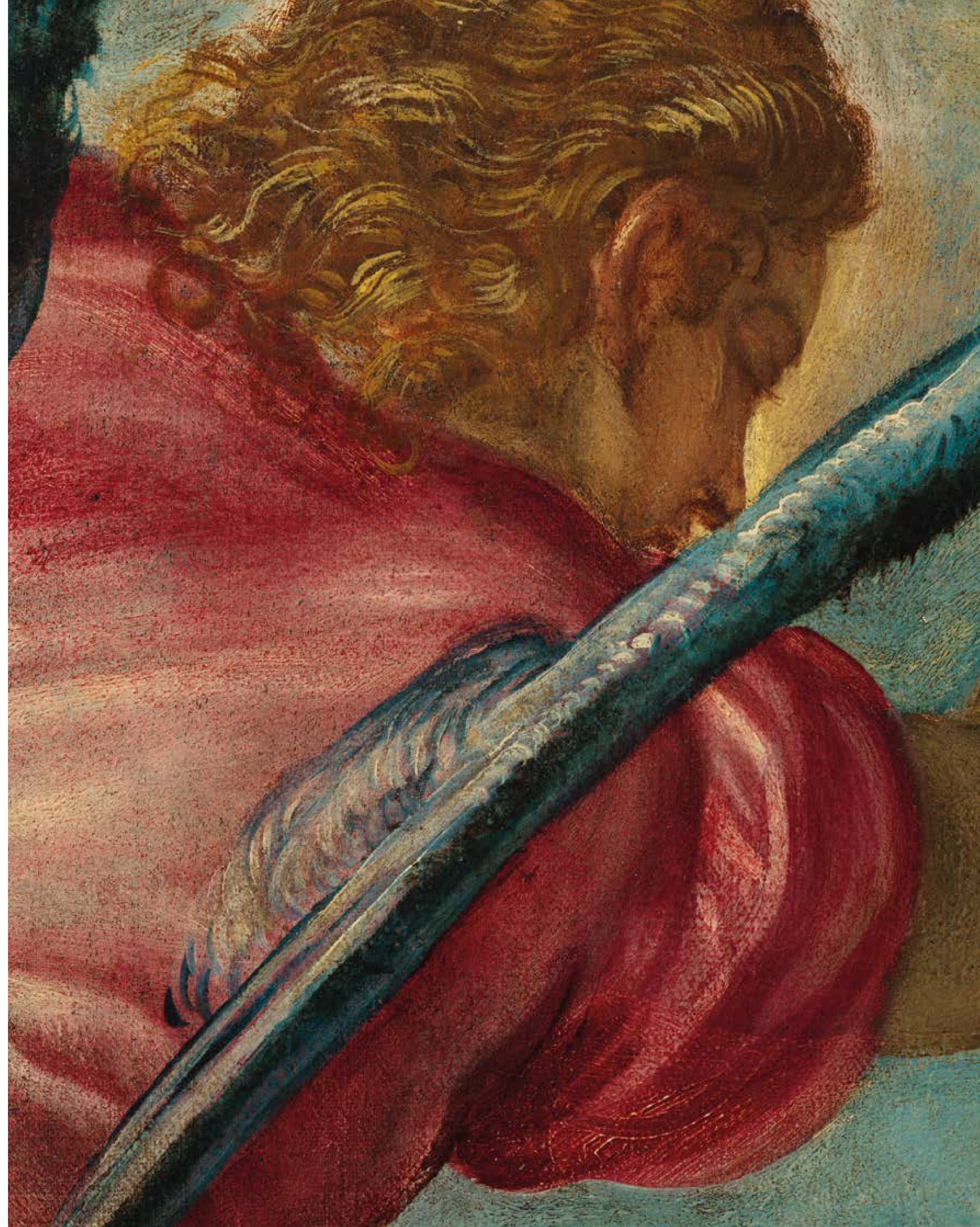
29 Binotto, *Tintoretto*, exh. cat. 2012, pp. 86-89, no. 5, with previous bibliography.

30 Echols, *Tintoretto*, exh. cat. 2007, pp. 212-217.

31 De Vecchi, *L'opera completa del Tintoretto*, pp. 112-113, cat. no. 189, with previous bibliography.

32 Falomir, *Tintoretto*, exh. cat. 2007, pp. 324-329.

33 Formerly in New York, Suida Manning Collection. See Terisio Pignatti, *Veronese* (Venice: Alfieri, 1976), vol. I, p. 162, no. 315; vol. II, fig. 678, who reports Bernard Berenson's opinion on the "parziale autografia" of the work, endorses a full attribution to Paolo Veronese, compares the work to Caliari's version of the same subject in Cleveland, Museum of Art, (ibid., vol. I, p. 163, n. 317; vol. II, figs. 679-682), and thinks that "il colore fratto e ricco di lumi caratterizza appunto le ultime tele del maestro." Daniel Arasse, "Les Annonciations de Véronèse ou l'atelier de la dévotion," in *Nuovi studi su Paolo Veronese*, ed. Massimo Gemin (Venice: Arsenale Editrice, 1990), pp. 210-211, was the first scholar to notice the derivation of Austin's *Annunciation* (given to the "atelier Véronèse") from Tintoretto's *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria*, and also discussed the iconographic implications of Tintoretto's painting (see footnote 13 above). Terisio Pignatti and Filippo Pedrocco, *Veronese* (Milan: Electa, 1995), vol. I, p. 451, no. 346, replicated the opinion already expressed by Pignatti in 1976. Also see Jonathan Bober, "The Suida-Manning Collection in the Jack S. Blanton Museum of Art of the University of Texas at Austin," *The Burlington Magazine* CXLI (1999): p. 448, tab. XI; and Sheree Scarborough, *Blanton Museum of Art: guide to the collection* (Austin: Blanton Museum of Art, 2006), p. 39, dates the *Annunciation* ca. 1585 and speaks of "A small altarpiece probably for private devotion, this picture sets the Virgin and the archangel Gabriel in a handsome loggia, like that of an actual villa by Palladio, with whom the artist often collaborated. It is one of numerous late versions of the subject, with no sign of the workshop participation that had become frequent by then." Hans Dieter Huber, *Paolo Veronese. Kunst als soziales System* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2005), pp. 77, 429, footnote 99, links the painting in Austin to a drawing by Alvise del Friso (Milan, Collezione Rasini; fig. 88, p. 78) and thinks that "wie sie im kompositorischen Aufbau typisch für Formulierungen der Veronese-Werkstatt Anfang der achtziger Jaher ist." In the online database of the Blanton Museum the painting is ascribed to the "Workshop of Paolo Caliari, il Veronese." Sheree Scarborough's entry (in which the painting is considered a fully autograph work of Veronese) reads as follows: "The highlights have lost little of their energy, coursing across the surfaces and infusing the work with a metaphoric vitality. The figures, however, have been simplified in shape, their cadence slowed and their gesture subdued. And the palette is relatively restricted and uniform in value. In such paintings, the heroic splendor of the artist's mature style yields to something less calculated and more reflective. […] The composition depends upon a painting by Tintoretto. Infrared examination by Stephen Gritt (Feb. 2010) revealed no variation between underdrawing and execution." (http://collection.blantonmuseum.org/Obj16449?sid=891254&x=14866000).



From audacious sketch to polished painting: Tintoretto's working process revealed

Christina Currie

Although many of Jacopo Tintoretto's more well-known paintings have been investigated by scientific imagery and analysis, the altarpiece with the *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria* has never received the same attention. The recent campaign at the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage in Brussels (KIK-IRPA), which documented the painting with infrared reflectography and X-radiography, uncovered not only the steps in the working process, but also brought to light an astonishingly fresh, virtuoso underdrawing (figs. 28a & 28b).[1]

The work is painted on a twill-weave canvas, probably linen, with two weft threads for every warp. Although the painting measures 177.1 cm by 99.3 cm, there are no seams, which means that the support is made up of a single piece of cloth. Examination with the binocular microscope reveals that the support was primed with a white or light ochre-coloured ground, probably gesso.

Figs. 28a & 28b.
Tintoretto, *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria*, a. infrared reflectography (IRR), b. normal light.

Fig. 29a. IRR, annotated with grid lines, perspective lines and incised markings (in red).

Fig. 29b. IRR, showing former positions of motifs in first phase of underdrawing.

The very first step taken by the artist appears to have been the application of a series of grid lines, certain of which are seen in the infrared image (fig 29a). This may well have been a partial grid for the floor and figural area. The presence of such markings presupposes that the design was transferred by eye from a preliminary, squared-up drawing or drawings of details. The grid lines are in a dry, black medium, probably black chalk. The artist then used the same drawing material to roughly sketch in the composition. Wiry, rapidly applied contour lines can be seen in the figures, for example in Saint Catherine, where they wrap around the bodice and breasts, and in the angel, where they encircle the buttocks. This first drawing stage is most clearly visible where the underdrawn motifs diverge from the final paint layer, for example in the lower left, where several positions for the angel's leg have been tried out, in early outlines for Saint Catherine's drapery, and in the lower sky, where there are sketchy outlines of abandoned torsos and heads, presumably the former position for the philosophers (fig. 29b). Saint Catherine's left hand clasping the crucifix can also be made out to the left of its final position.

The artist then took a broad, soft brush loaded with dilute black paint and swiftly laid in a series of perspective lines (see fig. 29a). He reinforced the steps in the lower right with the same brush using similarly bold strokes. It is not possible to make out any underdrawing in the classical colonnade in the upper right due to the presence of grey paint, although it is likely that the artist also reaffirmed this motif.

Fig. 30. IRR (detail).

The next phase is likely to have been carried out immediately afterwards, as the artist used the same type of brush and paint to establish the naked forms of Saint Catherine and the angel (figs. 30 & 31). These broad, virtuoso outlines describe supremely muscular human bodies, which were later concealed beneath modest clothing. In the manner of a sculptor, the artist also reinforced the twisting pose of the angel with a single bold stroke along the backbone and down through the buttocks. He then dressed the figures using the same type of wide sweeping brushwork. This distinctive style of underdrawing for figures has also been discovered in other paintings by Tintoretto, such as the princess in the painting *Saint George and the Dragon*, ca. 1555 (fig. 32 and see fig. 22).[2]

Fig. 31. Saint Catherine (detail), IRR.

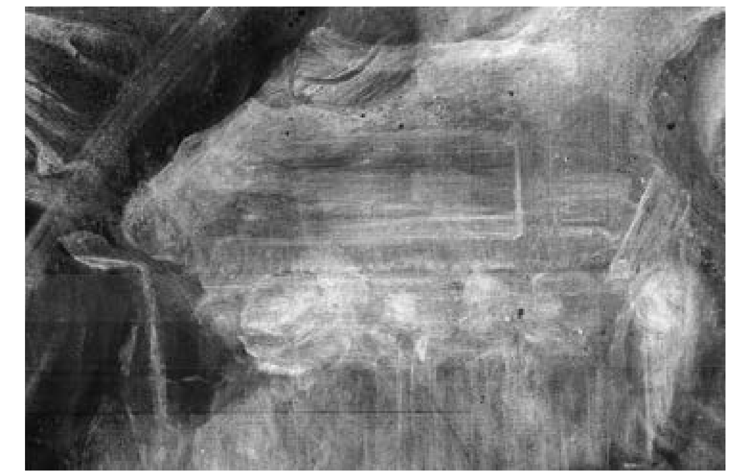
Fig. 32. opposite page: Tintoretto, *Saint George and the Dragon* (detail), IRR, ca. 1555, London, The National Gallery.

Fig. 33. X-radiograph, showing painted forms modified or dropped in the final paint layer.

His underdrawing firmly established, the artist proceeded to apply the background, roughly painting in the clouds and turning around the forms with lead-white based paint. But we can see that he was not content to simply follow his underdrawing. The composition continued to evolve, as the X-ray image makes clear (fig. 33). He initially painted a colonnade that appears to include a fourth column. This continues down in sharp perspective to the centre of the composition, culminating in a backdrop of architectural stonework that is now entirely concealed behind the blue sky and group of philosophers. There are also additional underpainted forms in the upper sky area that may relate to former positions for the spiked wheel and clouds.

The underdrawing of the figures of the philosophers in the centre background is more precise than that of the sketchy first stage (figs. 34 a, b & c). This third phase of drawing, which appears to have been carried out on top of the painted architectural backdrop, is executed in a dry, black medium such as black chalk. The functional, somewhat angular, abbreviated drawing lines are quite different in appearance to the sensuous flowing brushwork of the second phase. The figure outlines have been closely followed in the subsequent paint layer. It may also have been during this stage of development that the artist incised two short converging lines leading to a vanishing point, somewhat higher up than the perspective lines of the fluid underdrawing stage. The incised line to the right is marked with a pinhole at the lower end, suggesting perhaps the use of dividers.

Much of the paint layer has been applied using the time-honoured system of reserves, as can be seen from the X-ray image where there are often small gaps between forms. This would have prevented the formation of premature drying cracks and ensured that the colours retained their luminosity. Nonetheless, where the artist carried out adjustments or additions the paint layer is considerably thicker, for example in the sky, where most of the putti have been painted directly on top of the clouds. One of the more prominent additions during painting is the stone cornice above the colonnade. In this area, the arch has also been shifted left slightly.



Figs. 34a, 34b & 34c. *Philosophers* (detail), a. IRR, b. X-radiograph, c. normal light.

Fig. 35a. Tintoretto's *Apparition of the Holy Cross to Saint Peter* (detail), ca. 1556, oil on canvas, Venice, church of the Madonna dell'Orto.

Fig. 35b. Angel (detail), X-radiograph.

Fig. 35c. Angel (detail), normal light.

The angel's wings, although quite significant in size, are not reserved in the paint layer of the sky or the dress and the dark pinkish paint of the latter can be glimpsed through them. It is unlikely that the wings were an afterthought, however, as unreserved angel wings are seen in another painting by Tintoretto, *The Apparition of the Holy Cross to Saint Peter* (Venice, church of the Madonna dell'Orto, ca. 1556) figs. 35 a, b & c, and see fig. 12.)

The angel's head has also been rethought, as it was originally placed further to the right and at a different angle (figs. 36 a, b & c). In addition, the artist added the drape over the angel's right arm and moved the profile of the left arm down slightly. In the figure of Saint Catherine, her proper right elbow is no longer visible and where she shields her right breast with her hand, there was originally more of the dress fabric in evidence. The folds in the hem of her red robe have also been altered during painting to smooth over a clumsy transition with the stonework on which she appears to be kneeling. Catherine's blue skirt would appear to be painted in azurite, given its hue and its dark appearance in the infrared photograph (fig. 37).

This first glimpse of Tintoretto's *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria* through the eyes of scientific imagery has brought to light the hidden stages in its development from a rough sketch guided by gridlines through numerous modifications of composition to the polished final painting. The rediscovered brush underdrawing also serves to anchor the painting within Tintoretto's oeuvre, as described by Ricccardo Lattuada in the present volume. Further research and analysis will be conducted at the KIK-IRPA, including cross-sectional analysis to identify the layer structure and pigments and X-ray fluorescence scanning to help decipher Tintoretto's early ideas in the upper sky and better visualize the suppressed architectural stonework. This research will be submitted for publication in the Bulletin of the Royal Institute for Cultural Heritage, Brussels, in 2018.

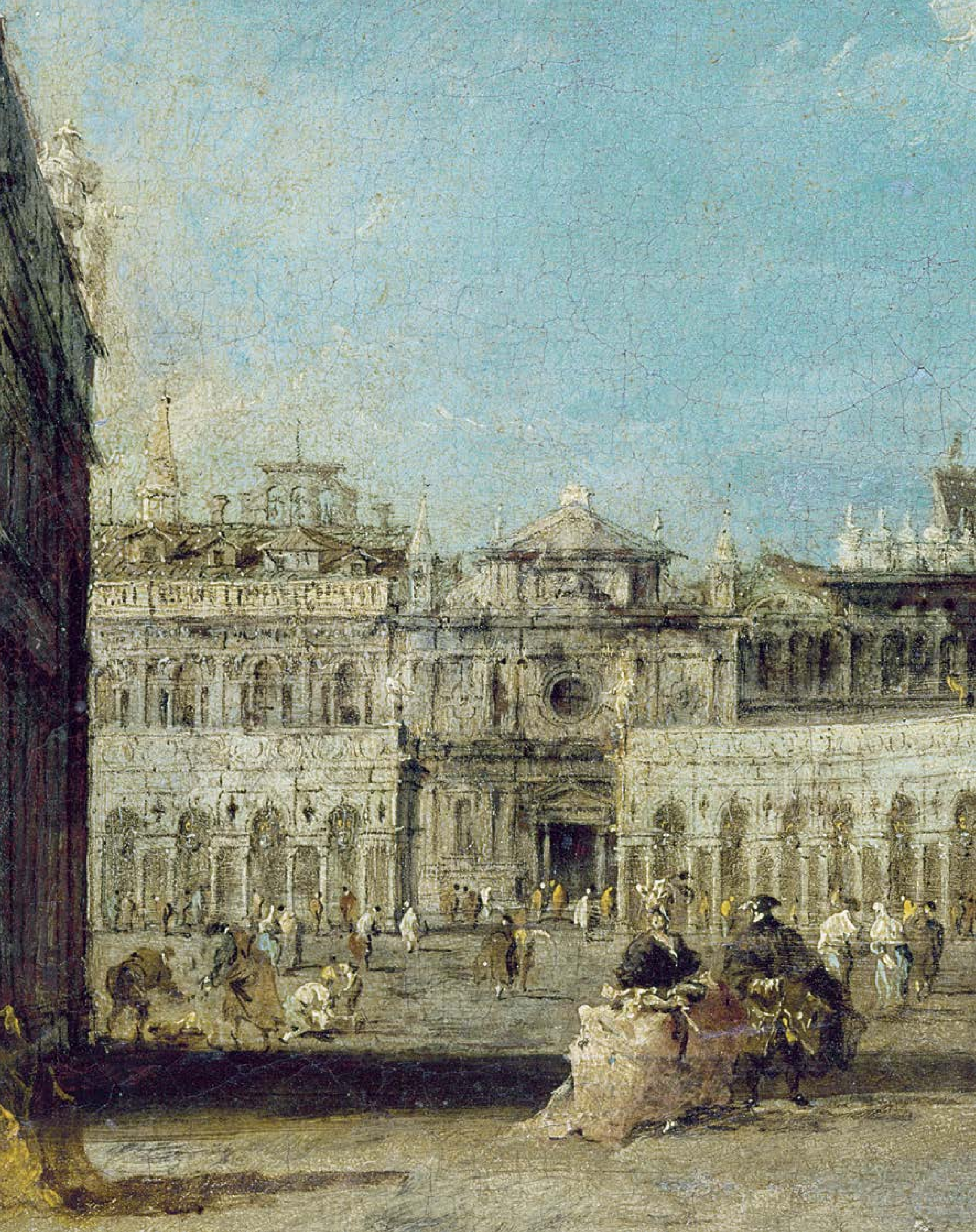
Figs. 36 a. Angel (detail), IRR, 36 b. X-radiograph, 36 c. normal light, with former position of head marked in white.

Fig. 37. Infrared photograph.

NOTES

1 I would like to thank my colleagues Sophie De Potter for the infrared reflectography and diagrams, Catherine Fondaire for X-radiography and Jean-Luc Elias for photography. The infrared reflectogram was made by Sophie De Potter using a Lion Systems infrared camera with an InGaAs captor (900-1700 nm), 512 x 640 focal plane array, 35 mm SWIR lens and 1.1-1.7 µ narrow band width filter. X-radiography was carried out by Catherine Fondaire using GE Structurix D4 film and the film scanned with an Array corporation Laser Film Digitizer 2905HD and a Hasselblad H6D-100C. The effect of the stretcher bars was digitally reduced using Adobe Photoshop.

2 London, National Gallery, inv. NG16. Jill Dunkerton, "Tintoretto's Underdrawing for *Saint George and the Dragon*", *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 28 (2007), 26-35.



"A ruby among many pearls": The lost church of San Geminiano in Venice and its sixteenth-century decoration

Xavier F. Salomon

Fig. 38. Francesco Guardi, *Piazza San Marco* (detail of San Geminiano), after 1766, oil on canvas, 29.5 x 44.7 cm, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

Fig. 39. (Overleaf) Giovanni Antonio Canal, called Caneletto, *Piazza San Marco Looking Towards San Geminiano,* ca. 1735, oil on canvas, 68.5 x 93.5 cm, Roma, Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica (Palazzo Barberini).

Across from the Basilica of Saint Mark's, at the western end of Piazza San Marco, between the Procuratorie Vecchie and the Procuratorie Nuove once stood the small parish church dedicated to Saints Geminianus and Menna, commonly known in Venice as San Geminiano.[1] A byzantine church dedicated to Geminianus Bishop and Menna Knight had originally been built around 554 in a different location in Piazza San Marco near the present-day Campanile. According to legend its construction had been sponsored by Narses, Emperor Justinian's general, after his victorious war against the Goths. With the enlargement of the Piazza in the twelfth-century, the small medieval church was demolished and moved to the western end of the square, where it functioned as parish church for the area.[2] In 1505, under Doge Leonardo Loredan, the church was rebuilt, following designs by the architect Cristoforo del Legname. The parish priest Matteo de' Eletto, who had been involved with the church since 1504, followed the work on the church until his death in 1523. At that time, the structure of the church was essentially built but the façade was still missing.

The church of San Geminiano, as it was described until its destruction in the early nineteenth century, took its form from the decorating campaign of the mid-sixteenth century. The Senate and the Procurators of San Marco oversaw payments for all work on the church, but the main drive for the redecoration came from the church's ambitious parish priest, Benedetto Manzini (1500-1570).[3] Manzini was a canon of San Marco and had become the parish priest of San Geminiano in 1545. He seems to have been linked to the aristocratic Barbaro family, as he was elected first rector of the church of San Paolo at Maser, and was documented in that capacity in November 1554, as the family was building the nearby villa designed by Andrea Palladio, and subsequently decorated by Paolo Veronese. The priest worked single-handedly on the redecoration of San Geminiano during the second half of the 1550s, and put the architect and sculptor Jacopo Sansovino in charge of the works.

Fig. 40. Vincenzo Coronelli, *Interior View of San Geminiano,* 1710, engraving, 18.4 x 25.9 cm.

Already in 1552, a physician from Ravenna, Tommaso Rangone (1493-1577), had proposed to sponsor the new façade for San Geminiano, on condition that a statue in his honour should be placed over the façade of the church. Not surprisingly, the proposal was rejected by the government. By 1557, the parish priest Manzini had managed to convince the Senate and the Procurators de Supra, de Citra and de Ultra to pay for the new façade, and two of them – Vettor Grimani and Antonio Cappello – were put in charge of the project. Both Procurators were close allies of Jacopo Sansovino, who lived in the Procuratorie Vecchie, and was therefore a parishioner of San Geminiano. Sansovino designed the dome and the façade of the church on the Piazza around 1557. Sansovino was so attached to the church, that he was buried, together with other members of his family, in the chapel of the Crucifix, a structure contiguous to San Geminiano. Sansovino's façade of the church, on the short side of the Piazza where the edifices of the Procuratorie Vecchie and Procuratorie Nuove met, is visible in many subsequent depictions of the Piazza, such as Guardi's view of 1777 (fig. 38) and Canaletto's from around 1735 (fig. 39) .

The result of Manzini's redecoration of San Geminiano was so magnificent that in his 1581 guidebook to Venice, Francesco Sansovino concluded that "the said church, even if small in size, is possibly the most ornate of any other in the city."[4] In another early seventeenth-century guidebook to Venice, Leonico Goldioni compared San Geminiano to other churches in the city, and concluded that it was "a ruby among many pearls".[5] The shape of the small church and its interior are known from eighteenth-century views such as engravings by Vincenzo Coronelli of 1710 (fig. 40) and ground plans (fig. 41). The church was centrally planned and articulated in three naves by columns around a dome. The high altar was inset in a deeper chapel at the west end of the church. The central door, in axis with the high altar, led to the Piazza, while a secondary door into a vestibule and the sacristy connected the church to the back of the Piazza, towards the church of San Moisè. According to Francesco Sansovino, San Geminiano was not only "possibly the most ornate [church] of any other in the city" but was "inside and outside encrusted with marbles and Istrian stone, and it is most rich and well structured".[6] It is, therefore, not surprising that when the church's structure was demolished in the nineteenth century, most of the art works which were contained in it were spared and preserved; they are now housed in other churches, museums and collections in and out of Venice. Thanks to early guidebooks and sources it is possible to reconstruct what was contained inside San Geminiano with a fair degree of precision.

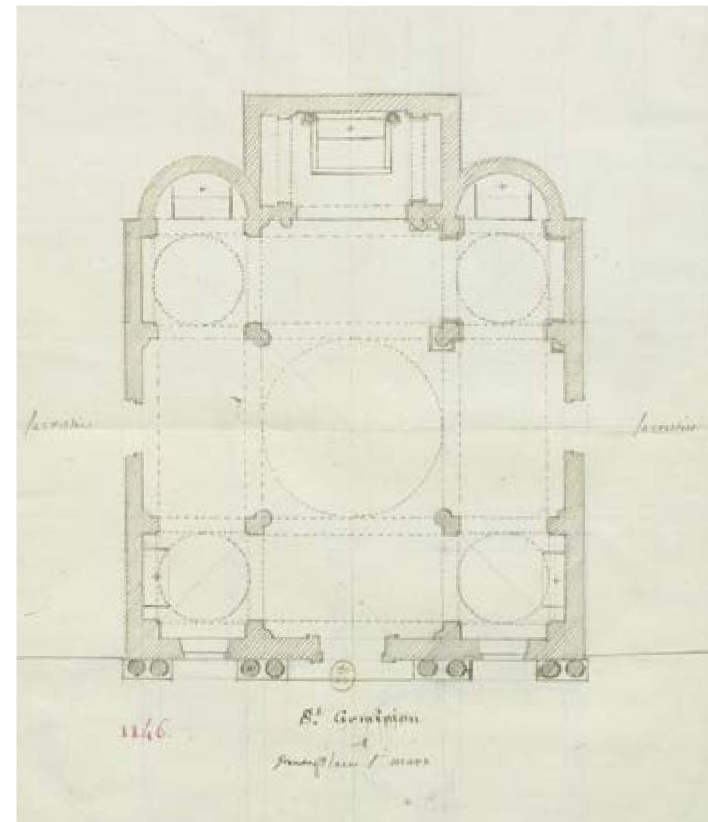


Fig. 41. Plan of San Geminiano, before 1807, 38.1 x 26.2 cm, Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

Fig. 42. Bartolomeo Bergamasco, High altar from San Geminiano, ca. 1520, marble, Venice, San Giovanni di Malta.

Fig. 43. Bartolomeo Bergamasco, *Matteo de' Eletto*, ca. 1520, marble, 56 cm high, Venice, Galleria Giorgio Franchetti alla Cà d'Oro.

Francesco Sansovino described the high altar of the church with its sculptural decoration: "in this church are three beautiful sculptural figures placed in niches on the high altar, with very attractive draperies and attitudes, by Bartolomeo Bergamasco."[7] The decoration of the high altar by Bartolomeo Bergamasco (d. 1528) must date to the first sixteenth-century campaign at San Geminiano, under the parish priest Matteo de' Eletto. The architectural structure is likely to have been designed by Cristoforo del Legname, while the three statues by Bergamasco probably represent saints connected to the dedication of the church. After the destruction of San Geminiano the altar was moved and is now preserved in the church of San Giovanni di Malta in Venice (fig. 42).

While the altar followed the model of similar structures in the city, the two busts that flanked it were more unusual. Images of both parish priests who had been involved with the redecoration of San Geminiano flanked the high altar, according to sixteenth-century, and later, guidebooks. On the left was the bust of Matteo de' Eletto by Bartolomeo Bergamasco, but attributed by Sansovino to the architect Cristoforo del Legname: "a bust from life in marble of Matteo de' Eletto, who was the parish priest of this site, carved by Cristoforo del Legname who was also architect of the church" (fig. 43).[8] Eletto died in 1523 and it is unclear if the bust had been commissioned by him while he was alive, or if it was a posthumous commission and served as a funerary monument to the priest.

What is clear is that forty years later, Benedetto Manzini commissioned a matching bust, to be placed to the right of the high altar, with his portrait by Alessandro Vittoria (fig. 44).[9] Sansovino, again, described the position of the bust: "another bust also in marble of Benedetto Manzini made by Alessandro Vittoria, and placed also between two other columns at the right of the altar."[10] The bust is already mentioned as in the church in another guidebook by Sansovino - *Delle cose notabili che sono in Venetia* – the introduction of which is dated September 1561. The bust must, have therefore, been commissioned by Manzini soon after the façade of the church had been completed, around 1560, at a time when, as we will see, he was commissioning other artworks in the church such as the organ shutters and choir stalls. We know that in 1552 Manzini had commissioned a funerary inscription for the site in the church where he planned to be buried, but we do not know if this location was in any way close to the bust. The portrait was a celebrated object soon after it was unveiled. Sansovino described it: "you will see then in the same church a portrait on the wall, as you enter to the right, of the said parish priest in marble, so expressive in its similarity to the sitter, that Alessandro Vittoria, who was the sculptor, claims that he had never made anything better."[11] Manzini's features in Vittoria's bust are hauntingly described by Adolfo Venturi in 1937 in an article on Vittoria: the "powerful jaws, the deformed nose, the tempestuous eyebrows, the pronounced lips which seem to betray Moorish blood, in this bust of a resolute commander of crews, rather than pastor of souls."[12]

Fig. 44. Alessandro Vittoria, *Benedetto Manzini*, ca. 1560, marble, 72 cm high, Venice, Galleria Giorgio Franchetti alla Cà d'Oro.

Fig. 45. Alessandro Vittoria, *Tommaso Rangone,* ca. 1575, terracotta model for bronze cast (painted), 81 cm high, Venice, Museo Correr.

A third bust, in the vestibule that connected the church with the sacristy, commemorated another man who was deeply involved with the church, Tommaso Rangone (fig. 45).[13] As we have seen, the physician had proposed to sponsor the façade of the San Geminiano in 1552. From 1562, he was guardian of the Scuola Grande di San Marco and a patron of Tintoretto. He also lived in the Procuratorie, and San Geminiano was his parish church. His bronze bust, also by Vittoria, was placed in the church in the mid 1570s. It was positioned in a niche, over a door, where it was mentioned in Rangone's own will of August 1577: "my beautiful and faithful bronze portrait which, with my notable inscriptions, is above the door at San Geminiano."[14] Rangone was given permission to place the bust in the church in 1571, but it was probably executed around 1575.[15]

The organ shutters at San Geminiano, however, were no doubt the most impressive art works in the building commissioned by Benedetto Manzini.[16] The church already had a pre-existing organ by 1533. Marin Sanudo recorded on 20 April 1533 in his *Diaries*: "we went to listen to the hours in the church of San Geminiano, which had been decorated with beautiful tapestries, and the organ was played by the German."[17] On 9 October 1558, however, Manzini set aside 200 ducats to build a new organ "fit for such beautiful church, without which the said church, apart from being in great need of it would lack its chief ornament."[18] At the same time Manzini commissioned the choir stalls for the church which were also to cost another 200 ducats. The documents demonstrate, however, that the new organ at San Geminiano proved to be more expensive than expected. In the *condizione di decima* of 1564 the priest declared that "I made an organ all at my expense in my church, and it is among the best and most beautiful that are in the city, and it costed me 600 ducats".[19] Sansovino in his 1561 guidebook confirmed Manzini's patronage of the organ and the large sum of 600 ducats spent on it: "[Manzini] to demonstrate to others that he loves with his heart everything that pertains to this church, has with great generosity built at his expense in the said church, a marvellous organ both for its architecture and for its harmony, and for its painted decoration, spending on it more than six hundred ducats. Which organ, built with that greatness of character which is of his nature, he has Claudio, most excellent organist of the State, play."[20] The organist – Claudio – mentioned as playing the organ at San Geminiano was Claudio Merulo, second organist at San Marco since 1557, and from 1566 the church's first organist.

The organ in the church is visible in Vincenzo Coronelli's engravings of San Geminiano from 1710 (fig. 46, and see fig. 40). It was placed above a door in the left nave, which led to a vestibule and to the sacristy of the church. It appears in both the view of the church and in the section, and the height at which it was placed, usual for organs in churches, is clearly visible. Coronelli's engravings are evidently schematic and the organ is not described as precisely as one would wish for. In any case, it must have been a wooden structure, probably gilded, flanked by three-dimensional columns and surmounted by a triangular pediment. The painted decoration of the organ was entrusted to Paolo Veronese (1528-1588), who had only recently completed the decoration of another organ, at San Sebastiano.

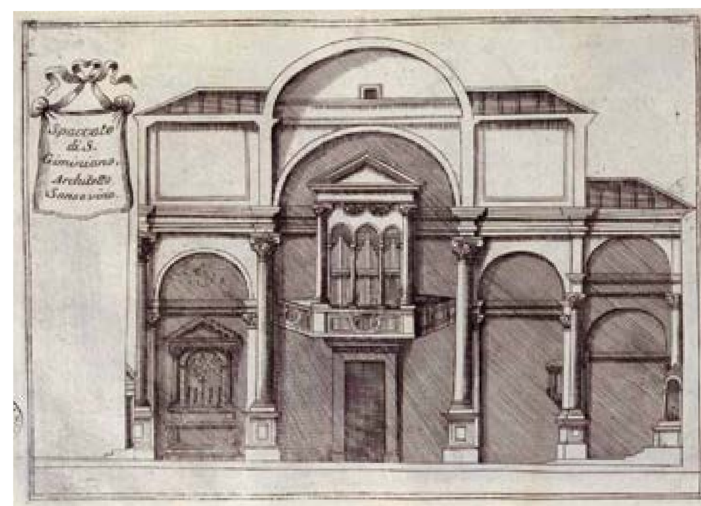


Fig. 46. Vincenzo Coronelli, *Interior Section of San Geminiano,* 1710, engraving, 18.4 x 25.8 cm.

Fig. 47. Paolo Veronese, *Saints Geminianus and Severus,* ca. 1560, oil on canvas, 341 x 240 cm, Modena, Galleria Estense.

Fig. 48. Paolo Veronese, *Saint John the Baptist*, ca. 1560, oil on canvas, 247 x 122 cm, Modena, Galleria Estense.

The canvases were the most important artworks in the church. They were removed in 1807, when the church was demolished, and after their peregrinations between Venice, the Villa Reale at Stra, the Akademie der Bildenden Künste in Vienna, and the church of San Gottardo in Milan, they were reunited in 1924 at the Galleria Estense in Modena, where they remain.

When the organ was shut and not functioning, the two columns would have framed the large niche within which Veronese painted two bishop saints (fig. 47). When the organ was open and functioning, *Saint John the Baptist* (fig. 48) and *Saint Menna* (fig. 49) would have flanked it. John the Baptist appears in his traditional guise, dressed in animal skin, and accompanied by the two standard attributes of the lamb and the reed cross. Iconographically his presence is difficult to explain, as the church of San Geminiano and Benedetto Manzini seem to have had no particular connection to the cult of the Baptist. Saint Menna, instead, was, together with Saint Geminianus, one of the two saints to whom the church was dedicated. His presence close to the high altar was therefore fully justified. Menna was an Egyptian martyr from the third-century. A soldier in the Roman army, he converted to Christianity and became a hermit. The depiction of the saint is particularly memorable in Veronese's oeuvre. The saint is dressed in a contemporary armour, of a design produced in Italy between 1540 and 1560, a type that recurs often in Veronese's paintings.

The two bishop saints on the closed shutters were originally painted on two separate canvases, which were united as one after the dismantling of the organ. The two saints on the shutters are lit from the left. This would have echoed the natural lighting in the church, where the window on the façade would have provided a direct source of light for the shutters. Like the Baptist and Menna, the two bishops are also placed with their bodies towards the altar. But their heads look down to the book held open by the young deacon, and indirectly to the congregation praying below. These saints present an iconographic problem. All of the early sources who described them, including Carlo Ridolfi and Marco Boschini, mention them as "Bishop Saints". The first time both saints are directly identified is in the engraving after the painting by Silvestro Manaigo and Andrea Zucchi, published by Domenico Lovisa in 1720, where the inscription recognises them as "Li due SS. Vescovi Geminiano e Severo". That one of the two saints has to be Saint Geminianus is clear. Geminianus was the bishop saint of Modena in the fourth-century. Together with other bishops of the region (all later saints) – Mercuriale in Forlì, Rufillo in Forlimpopoli, Leo in Montefeltro, and Gaudenzio in

Fig. 49. Paolo Veronese, *Saint Menna*, ca. 1560, oil on canvas, 247 x 122 cm, Modena, Galleria Estense.

Rimini – Geminianus had been active in battling the Arian heresy at the time. Severus was also one of these bishops, based in Ravenna at the same time and often associated with Geminianus. Modena and Ravenna were quite close as cities, and Severus was said to have been present at Geminianus's death bed. It is impossible to establish which saint is which in the painting, as both wear generic bishop's outfits.

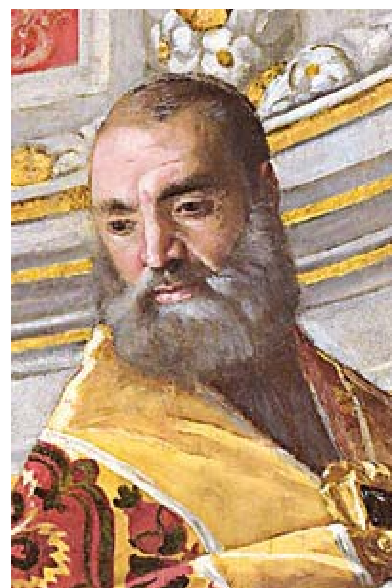


Fig. 50a. Paolo Veronese, *Saints Geminianus and Severus* (detail of Saint Geminianus), ca. 1560, oil on canvas, Modena, Galleria Estense.

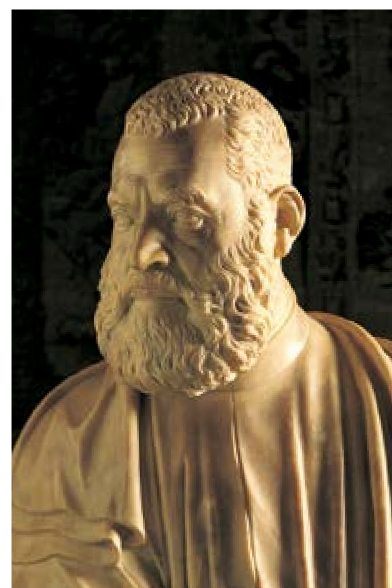


Fig. 50b. Alessandro Vittoria, *Benedetto Manzini* (detail), ca. 1560, marble, Venice, Galleria Giorgio Franchetti alla Cà d'Oro.

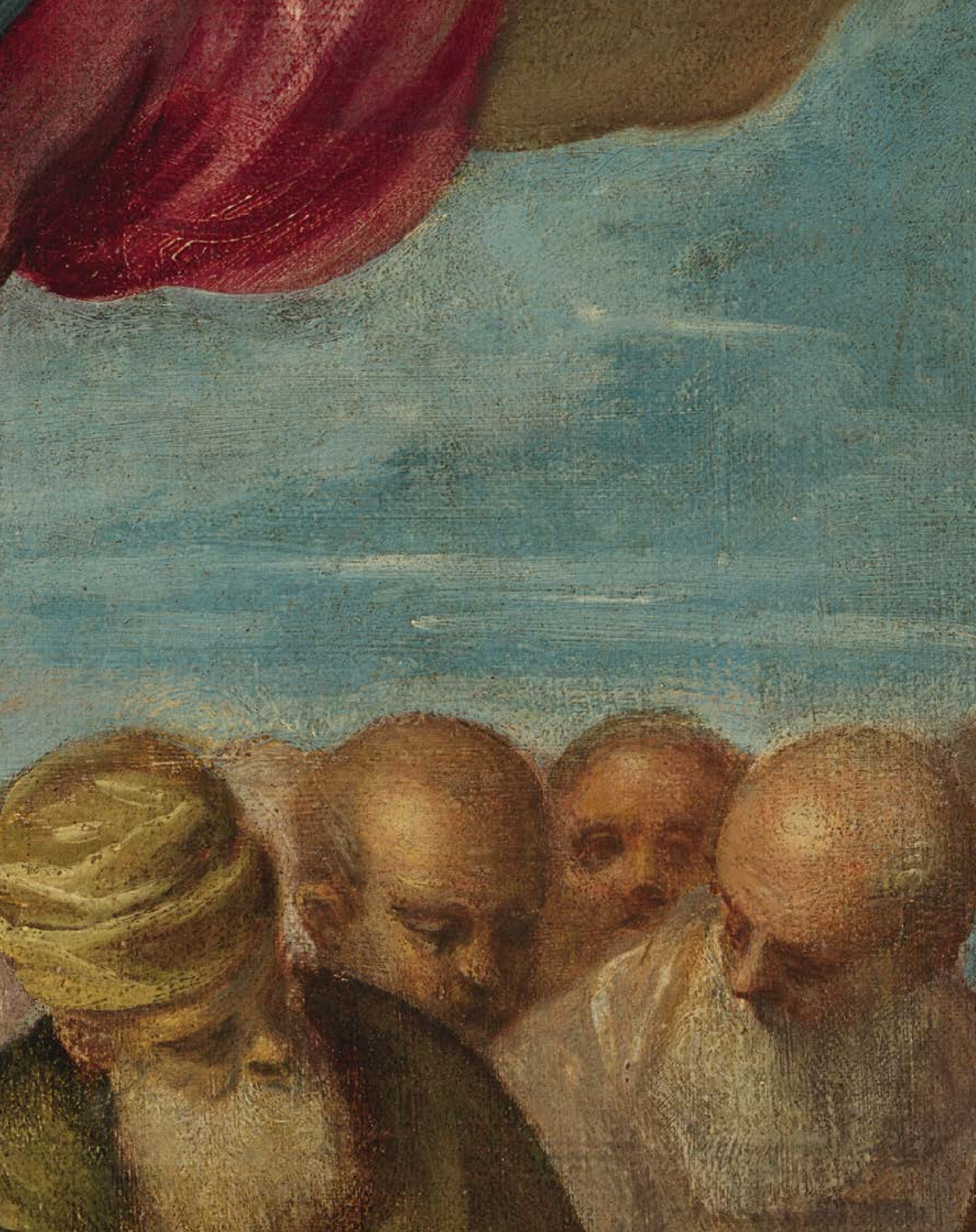
As far as I know the only scholar who has attempted to identify them precisely is Thomas Martin, who recognized the saint on the left as Geminianus and the one on the right as Severus. I would like to propose that it is the other way around. The saint to the right would have been closer to the high altar and therefore more important. He is also not wearing a mitre – even though he has a crozier – and this is usually what bishops do while celebrating mass, when they remove the mitre. It is thus possible that Geminianus as the titular of the church would also be represented in a less formal way than his companion. Even more importantly, as Thomas Martin first noted in his book on Alessandro Vittoria, and everyone in the subsequent Veronese scholarship has ignored, the saint on the right has the features of the man who commissioned the organ, the parish priest Benedetto Manzini.[21] This is immediately clear when one compares the features of Veronese's bishop saint with those of Manzini's bust by Vittoria also made for the church (figs. 50a & 50b). The *paragone* between Manzini alive and celebrating mass, in stone in his bust to the side of the high altar, and in paint on the organ shutters, must have been remarkable for the faithful attending mass in the church during the decade up to Manzini's death in 1570. Clearly the only two saints appropriate for Manzini would have been Geminianus as titular saint, or his own name saint, Benedict (who was not a bishop).

The last major sixteenth-century work that was added to the church, after Manzini's death, was Jacopo Tintoretto's *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria* (fig. 51). The altarpiece was commissioned by members of the Scuola di Santa Caterina.[22] The Scuola's altar was the first on the left nave, visible in Vincenzo Coronelli's eighteenth-century print (see fig. 40). It was here that Van Dyck sketched the painting in 1622, during his visit to Venice. Tintoretto's painting probably replaced a previous image of Saint Catherine by Giovanni Bellini; Sansovino had already described Tintoretto's canvas where the Bellini was.[23] The Bellini must have been part of a previous scheme for the decoration of the church, and probably dated to the early sixteenth-century restoration of San Geminiano. Across the nave, on the first altar to the right, was another painting from the early sixteenth century, *Saint Helena with Saints Geminianus and Menna*, by Bernardino da Murano (fig. 52). This was placed over an altar that contained a relic of the True Cross, which had been given to the church by the procurator Melchiorre Michiel in 1570.[24]

Fig. 51. Jacopo Tintoretto, *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria*, 1560s, oil on canvas, Antwerp, Rubenshuis (on loan from a private collection in Luxembourg).

Fig. 52. Bernardino da Murano, *Saint Helena with Saints Geminianus and Menna*, ca. 1510, tempera on panel, 220 x 110 cm, Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia.

With the fall of the Venetian Republic and the Napoleonic invasion of Italy, San Geminiano was one of the victims of the transformation of Venice under the new regime. By 19 May 1807 the church was closed to the public, and it was demolished soon after that. The space once occupied by the parish church was destined to be used for a new grand staircase and ballroom for the Royal Palace, built to connect the Procuratorie Vecchie with the Procuratorie Nuove, and to provide a continuous façade for the west end of Piazza San Marco. Today the lost church of San Geminiano is remembered in Venice by a marble slab on the floor, near the staircase of the palace, which records "Jacopo Sansovino here built in 1557 the new church of San Geminiano, demolished in 1807".[25] The art treasures of the church, however, survive and witness the glories of this small church, once suitably described as "a ruby among many pearls."



NOTES

1 For the church, see Alvise Zorzi, *Venezia scomparsa* (Milan: Electa, 1972), vol. 2, pp. 332-337; Deborah Howard, *Jacopo Sansovino. Architecture and Patronage in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven/ London: Yale University Press, 1975), pp. 81-84.

2 For a history of Piazza San Marco, see Iain Fenlon, *Piazza San Marco* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2009).

3 For Manzini, see Thomas Martin, *Alessandro Vittoria and the Portrait Bust in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 55, 119.

4 "La qual Chiesa quantunque piccola, è forse la più ornata di qual si voglia altra nella città," Francesco Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima et singolare* (Venice: Sansovino, 1581), p. 42.

5 "Per la leggiadria e per vaghezza di bella compositura fra l'altre è giudicata da tutti quasi come un rubino tra molte perle," Leonico Goldioni, *Le cose maravigliose dell'inclita città di Venetia* (Venice: Imberti, 1603), p. 36.

6 "Era forse la più ornata di qualsivoglia altra nella città: perciò che essendo di dentro et di fuori incrostata di marmi, et di pietra istriana, è ricchissima et bene intesa per struttura," Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima*, p. 42.

7 "Sono in questo Tempio tre belle figure di Scoltura poste su l'altar grande in tre nicchi, con panni & con attitudini molto vaghe, di mano di Bartolomeo Bergamasco," Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima*, p. 43.

8 "Una testa al naturale di marmo di Mattheo Eletto gia Piovano di questo luogo, scolpita da Christoforo dal legname che fu anco Architetto della Chiesa," Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima*, p. 43.

9 For the bust, see Martin, *Alessandro Vittoria*, pp. 118-120, cat. 16.

10 "Un'altra [testa] pur di marmo di Benedetto Manzini fatta da Alessandro Vittoria, e posta anco fra due altre colonne dalla destra [dell'altare]," Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima*, p. 43.

11 "Vedreto poi nella medesima chiesa un ritratto nella facciata entrando a man destra, di detto piovano di marmo, cosí espressivo della sua somiglianza, che Alessandro Vittoria, che n'è stato lo scultore, confessa tal hora di non haver a far mai meglio," Francesco Sansovino, *Delle cose notabili che sono in Venetia* (Venice: Comin da Trino di Monferrato, 1561), p. 22.

12 "Mandibole possenti, il naso deforme, le sopracciglia tempestose, le grandi labbra che sembran rivelare del sangue moro in questa testa di risoluto condottiero di ciurme, piuttosto che di pastor d'anime", Adolfo Venturi, "Alessandro Vittoria,' in *Storia dell'arte italiana* (Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1937), vol. 10/3, p. 148.

13 For Tommaso Rangone, see Erasmus Weddigen, "Thomas Philologus Ravennas: Gelehrten, Wohltäter und Mäzen," *Saggi e memorie di storia dell'arte* 9 (1974), pp. 7-76.

14 "D. atque giminiani sub porticu aere meo honestiori, meis cum insignibus inscriptionibus, cupreaque imagine, pulcherimoque," Martin, *Alessandro Vittoria*, p. 123.

15 For the bust, see Martin, *Alessandro Vittoria*, pp. 123-124, cat. 20.

16 For the organ and its decoration, see Massimo Bisson, *Meravigliose macchine di giubilo. L'architettura e l'arte degli organi a Venezia nel Rinascimento* (Venice: Scripta, 2012), pp. 93-98; Xavier F. Salomon, *Veronese*, exh. cat. (London: The National Gallery, 2014), pp. 94-99.

17 "Si andò a udir le hore in chiesa di S. Zuminian qual era ben conzata con belle tapezarie, et l'organo fu sonato per il Todesco," Bisson, *Meravigliose macchine di giubilo*, p. 93.

18 "Condecente a cusì bella chiesia, senza il quale la predetta chiesia, oltre che ne ha gran bisogno mancarebbe certo del suo precipuo ornamento," Bisson, *Meravigliose macchine di giubilo*, p. 93.

19 "Ho fatto uno organo à tutte mie spese nella mia chiesa delli buoni, e belli, che sono nella città, che mi costa ducati 600," Bisson, *Meravigliose macchine di giubilo*, p. 98 n. 4.

20 "Per mostrare altrui che egli ama di cuore le cose appartenenti a questo Dominio: ha con larga mano, fabricato col suo proprio nel predetto Tempio, un'organo maraviglioso per architettura per harmonia, e per ordine di pittura, spendendovi più di 600 ducati. Lo qual egli condotto da quella grandezza d'animo che è di sua propria natura, fa sonare a Claudio, organista eccellente della Signoria," Sansovino, *Delle cose notabili che sono in Venetia*, p. 22.

21 Martin, *Alessandro Vittoria*, p. 119.

22 Riccardo Lattuada dates the painting in this publication to the late 1560s. It is my view that the altarpiece was produced instead in the 1570s.

23 "Di pittura, vi dipinse altre volte Gian Bellino in quella palla dove si vede hoggi Santa Caterina, di mano di Iacomo Tintoretto," Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima*, p. 43.

24 Sansovino, *Venetia città nobilissima*, p. 43.

25 "Jacopo Sansovino qui eresse nel 1557 la Chiesa nuova di San Geminiano demolita nel 1807."

Fiamminghi a Venezia: Maerten de Vos, a pupil of Tintoretto?

Maja Neerman

The interest and admiration of southern Netherlandish artists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries for their Italian colleagues is well known. Painters from the North were inspired to assimilate, copy, and collect the works of the Italian masters, and travelling to Italy – or at least gaining in-depth knowledge of Italian artists and styles – became a fundamental part of the training of Netherlandish artists. Peter Paul Rubens and Anthony van Dyck lived in Italy for several years and closely studied works *in situ*. However, whereas the interest in Italy shown by these early seventeenth-century masters is well-documented, many questions remain unanswered regarding their predecessors, earlier artists who paved the way particularly to Venice and the studios of its greatest masters. One of this early group was Maerten de Vos.

According to Carlo Ridolfi's 1648 *Maraviglie dell'arte,* Tintoretto had Flemish disciples in a house filled with eager pupils, although he only tolerated those who would be of any use to him. Amongst them was the young Maerten de Vos (1532-1603), who again according to Ridolfi spent a considerable amount of time in the studio as an apprentice, and painted the landscapes in Tintoretto's paintings.[1] This apprenticeship with the great Venetian master has been published many times, but – charming as it may seem – there appears to be no evidence to support such a bold claim. There are no paintings by Tintoretto in which De Vos's hand can be detected, no sketchbook or single pages made during his Italian journey, and no further references to the matter by other biographers. In 1567 the historian Francesco Guicciardini describes De Vos as a good colourist and portraitist; in 1590 Gian Paolo Lomazzo gives him the title of *"pittore Grandissimo"*; and in 1604 Karel van Mander mentions his journey to Italy where he visited Rome and Venice.[2]

Fig. 53. Aegidius Sadeler II, *Portrait of Maerten de Vos*, 1590, engraving, 29 x 22.9 cm, San Francisco, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco.

Not one of them links De Vos to the Venetian master. This lack of substantive evidence, combined with the often misleading character of Ridolfi's claims, seems to indicate that the putative time De Vos spent working with Tintoretto might be nothing more than a fictional anecdote. Nevertheless, Ridolfi's claim deserves further thought. Was De Vos ever in Venice? If his hand cannot be detected in works by Tintoretto, can a 'Tintorettesque' influence be detected in those by De Vos?

The leading painter in Antwerp after the death of Frans Floris in 1570, Maerten de Vos (fig. 53) was a highly competent advocate of the Roman style, he contributed greatly to the further development and spread of the Italian manner in the southern Netherlands. In terms of style, De Vos's work seems to show Italian influences, but this was hardly innovative. Indeed, these Italianesque elements might not even have been inspired by works he saw in Italy, but perhaps by those he saw at home in Antwerp. Previous generations of Flemish masters had travelled to Florence, Venice, and Rome, incorporating motifs and styles they had seen in Italy, Italian art being very much in vogue in the first half of the sixteenth century. A mere glance at works by Frans Floris, Pieter Coecke van Aelst, Jan van der Straet (Stradanus), Michiel Coxcie, and Maarten van Heemskerck makes it plain that with regard to style, use of colour, and general Italianesque character, De Vos might well have been influenced by, for example, Floris, without ever crossing a border. Furthermore, there was transmission of models through prints, and the presence of Italian paintings in the Netherlands resulted in increasing interest in southern style.[3] There are, however, reasons to suppose that De Vos might have had first-hand experience of Italian art.

Though documentary evidence about De Vos's youth and education is scarce, it is likely that he visited Italy, as was customary for aspiring young artists at the time. De Vos was born in 1532, the youngest of the four children of Pieter de Vos and Anna de Heere. Both Maerten's father and his oldest brother were registered master painters in the city of Antwerp.[4] After training in his father's workshop with a possible apprenticeship in the studio of Frans Floris, he appears to have embarked on his journey South around 1552.[5] He was presumably accompanied by fellow artist Pieter Bruegel: both men were in Lyon by mid-March 1552, subsequently crossing the Alps via Mont Cenis.[6] It is likely but not certain that they went to Rome. De Vos's date of return is unclear, but he must have been back in Antwerp before October 1558, since he registered that year as a master painter in the *Liggeren* (archives) of the Guild of Saint Luke.[7] Bruegel had returned to Antwerp a few years earlier.

Fig. 54a Scipio Fabius, Letter to Abraham Ortelius, 16 June 1561, Bologna.

Fig. 54b Scipio Fabius, Letter to Abraham Ortelius, 14 April 1565, Bologna. Digitalized by Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin.

The assumption that De Vos and Bruegel travelled together is based on two letters written in 1561 and 1565 by Scipio Fabius from Bologna to his friend, the cartographer Abraham Ortelius, in Antwerp (figs. 54a & 54b). On both occasions, the Italian doctor (who supplied Ortelius with material for a map) requests that the recipient pass on his greetings to Maerten de Vos (Martino Vulpe)

Fig. 55. Frontispiece of Karel van Mander, *Het Schilder-Boeck*, 1604 (1618 edition), Amsterdam.

and Bruegel (Petro Bruochl). Fabius appears to have met both artists in Italy and knew them well enough to refer to De Vos as "the most excellent painter, dear to him as a brother."[8] The implication that De Vos and Bruegel were travelling companions cannot however be confirmed. Nothing is known about the circumstances of the encounter between Fabius and De Vos, but the friendly tone suggests they spent a meaningful amount of time together. If this was at Fabius's residence, De Vos can be placed in Bologna, a mere 160 km from Venice.

The reasons for a young artist to undertake a journey to Italy were multiple and varied. The new anthropocentric world-view central to humanism sparked increasing interest in Antiquity. The contemporary painter and art historian Karel van Mander affirmed that in order to develop as an artist one had to leave the boundaries of one's own country and head South. In his 1604 *Schilder-Boeck* (fig. 55) he advises young painters to "study drawing in Rome and painting in Venice."[9] This idea was already in fashion at the beginning of De Vos's training, and coming from a family of artists, it is likely that he was encouraged to comply. Fellow artist Jan van Hemessen, for instance, sent both his sons to Italy in the same year, on 7 April 1552.[10]

If De Vos was a pupil of Frans Floris, he might have found further encouragement and could perhaps have benefitted from his master's contacts. Mentioned by both Guicciardini and Van Mander, Floris's Italian journey has been placed between 1540-1541 and 1548, the date of Floris's marriage in Antwerp.[11] There is no definitive proof of Floris's visit to Venice, but it has been convincingly argued that he spent some time there and might have worked not for Tintoretto but in his ambit.[12] If De Vos spent time, however brief, in Floris's workshop, it must have been directly after the master's return and before his own departure for Italy in 1552. He would thus have been exposed to the vibrant Italian style brought back by Floris, with its naturally-foreshortened figures, skilled rendering of muscles and the naked body, and innovative themes such as appear, for example, in *The Banquet of the Gods* (fig. 56).

There are, furthermore, an additional set of arguments in favour of a stay in Venice as well as Rome and/or Florence. Strategically positioned between North and South, Venice had important economic ties with major northern centres of commerce such as Bruges in the fifteenth century and Antwerp in the sixteenth. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, maritime trade between Italy and the Low Countries declined, replaced by slightly more expensive but safer and faster transcontinental routes through Germany.[13] Venice was one of the largest cities in Europe and one of the busiest centres for all types of exchange – economic, cultural and artistic. Artists who returned to the Netherlands incorporated strong Venetian influences into their work, leading to a growing awareness of Venetian style in northern Europe, which is apparent in De Vos's paintings and, especially, in many of his drawings (fig. 57 and page 90).

Titian gained fame in the North and was summoned to Augsburg to work for the Habsburg court. Like other Venetian masters, he maintained a workshop in Venice that included, in addition to relatives and other Italian assistants, a number of German and Netherlandish collaborators. This paved the way for northern artists to head south. The growing awareness in the Netherlands of what Venice had to offer was reciprocal.

Inventories of prosperous Venetian households indicate that the taste for Netherlandish pictures had increased by the mid-sixteenth century, leading Venetian masters to recruit northern assistants in order to diversify their stock and occupy a growing niche in the art market.[14]

Fig. 56. Frans Floris, *Banquet of the Gods*, ca. 1550, oil on panel, 150 x 198 cm, Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten.

Fig. 57. Maerten De Vos, *Theological and Cardinal Virtues* (detail), brown ink on paper, 6.2 x 24.1 cm, Luxembourg, Private Collection.

There is considerable evidence of painters active in Venice in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, suggesting the existence of an active and fairly large community of settled expatriates. In the case of northern artists who came to Venice in the sixteent century, the highest concentration is recorded in the workshops of Titian and Tintoretto.[15]

Tintoretto is known to have used assistants, and it is likely that he did so from the late 1540s onwards, if not before. He became an independent artist a little before 1539, and, although his earliest works can only be dated with certainty to 1545, a large number of his paintings were in all likelihood executed at an earlier stage. By the 1540s it was necessary for the master to secure assistance in his workshop, as he began at this time to receive commissions that required him to produce large works in short periods of time.

Fig. 58. Pauwels Franck, *Love in the Golden Age*, 1585-1589, oil on canvas, 159 x 257.5 cm, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

The organisation of his workshop and the involvement of assistants became more systematised as Tintoretto's career progressed. A later shift in its functioning is detectable around the late 1570s. By then approaching sixty, Tintoretto started to involve his adult children Marietta and Domenico in the enterprise.

Amongst the northern artists registered in the workshop of Tintoretto we find Pauwels Franck (Paolo Fiammingo) and Lodewijk Toeput (Ludovico Pozzoserrato).[16] Other northern assistants can also be situated, albeit speculatively, in his vicinity. Many more remain anonymous. De Vos's putative stay in Tintoretto's workshop remains an enigma – indeed, there are no traces of his presence anywhere. The reason that Franck and Toeput can be associated with Tintoretto with more certainty is their later arrival in Venice. Franck probably only arrived around 1570, and Toeput around 1574-1575 – two decades after De Vos. Almost all the assistants in the workshop in the early days remain anonymous. Another reason for our knowledge about Franck and Toeput might be that they stayed in Italy after apprenticeship, establishing themselves and integrating into Venetian society, adopting Italian names, and pursuing careers as independent artists (figs. 58 & 59).

Northerners who worked in the larger workshops of painters such as Titian and Tintoretto rarely evolved from the status of apprentice or assistant. As a consequence of the abundance of foreign apprentices working unenrolled, guild regulations became stricter. If a northern artist reached the point of wishing to enrol as a master, he was likely to be discouraged by the registration fee, two times higher than for an Italian artist.[17]

The abundance of northern painters and their anonymity partly explain the difficulty in finding pictorial evidence of their presence in Venetian studios. Delegating certain elements of the composition to the studio was customary for Tintoretto. In the attempt to identify contributions by northern apprentices or assistants, scholars have always pointed to the landscapes: Venetian sources record Tintoretto as having tasked his northern apprentices with that particular part of the composition. Pursuit of the identification of a particular hand in these landscapes is, however, complicated by the problematic determination of what exactly a landscape by Tintoretto himself looked like. This is due to an extensive and at times unclear corpus, with uncertain attributions and dating. Without a comprehensive and systematic study, the contributions by northern artists to Tintoretto's landscapes cannot be assessed. Scholars have proposed a possible intervention by De Vos in the background of a number of paintings, focusing solely on the landscape elements.[18] The proposed examples not only differ considerably from autograph works by De Vos but also from each other, and as such remain unconvincing.

Identifying the makers of one or more of these *paesi* (landscapes) would result in a better understanding of the division of labour, artistic practice in the studio, and the question of specialisation. It would also shed light on whether the sub-contracting of a landscape corresponded to a recognition of the chosen artist's skill or, on the contrary, to responsibility for a compositional element that, by Venetian standards, was less important than the remainder of the painting. Landscapes were considered the strong suit of Netherlandish artists: not only were northern landscapes as a genre very popular, but a reciprocal influence within landscape paintings can be detected between North and South. Statements made by authors such as Giorgio Vasari and Michelangelo show a certain contempt for landscape, even if the market was in favour.[19]

A clear perspective on the contribution of De Vos to the works of Tintoretto will probably never be possible and the question will inevitably remain highly speculative. Since his legacy in the Venetian studio remains a mystery, it might be worth looking at the influences in his own works, and at how he contributed to the popularity of Italian – and particularly Venetian – style in the Netherlands, a style that was to reach a high point with Rubens a few decades later. Although documentary evidence is scarce, considering this in conjunction with some of his works leads to the conclusion that De Vos was directly influenced by the Italian style *in situ* and not merely through his peers. Indeed, Venetian elements can be pinpointed throughout De Vos's oeuvre.[20]

Early on in his career in particular, De Vos seemed eager to demonstrate his in-depth knowledge of the Antique and southern style. In *Rebecca and Isaac at the Well* from the Rebecca-cycle in the Museum of Rouen, he included in his composition detailed statues of Zeus, aqueducts, Italian clothing, and Venetian vases (fig. 60).

Fig. 59. Lodewijk Toeput, *An Italian Bridge*, 1565-1610, pen and brown ink, with grey-brown wash and watercolour, heightened with white, 15.3 x 26.6 cm, London, British Museum.

Fig. 60. Maerten De Vos, *Elizier and Rebecca at the Well*, 1562, oil on panel, 96.8 x 199.5 cm, Rouen, Musée de Beaux Arts de Rouen.

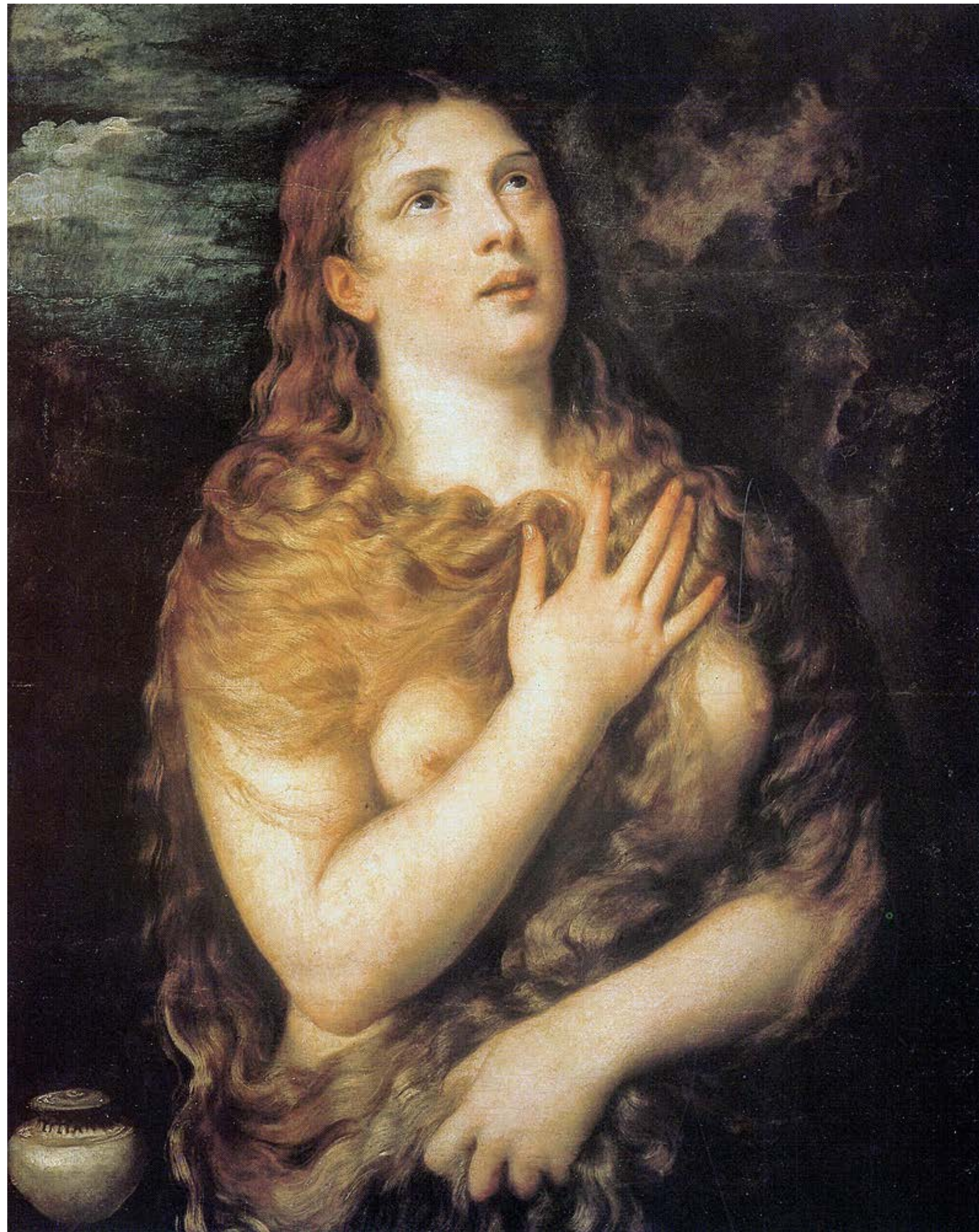


Fig. 61. Titian, *Penitent Mary Magdalene,* 1530-1535, oil on canvas, 85 x 68 cm, Florence, Palazzo Pitti.

Fig. 62. Maerten De Vos, *Penitent Mary Magdalene,* oil on panel, 105 x 74 cm, Antwerp, Rubenshuis (on loan from a private collection in Luxembourg).

A strong but more subtle affinity is to be found, for example, between Titian's *Mary Magdalene* (fig. 61) and the depiction of the same theme by De Vos (fig. 62). The primary attraction of both paintings is the great sensuality of the saint. Although the gesture of the right arm – attempting without success to cover the breasts – suggests modesty, both paintings are overt in the sensuality of their appeal, at once charming and inspiring devotion. While in Titian's painting the cave has been discarded altogether and the focus lies solely on the close-up figure of the saint, De Vos creates a marked distance between her and the onlooker by incorporating a stone parapet as well as multiple attributes, and by making the cave more visible. Although such alternations might seem obvious, they also make good sense. Up until around the mid-sixteenth century, known depictions of the saint in the Netherlands show her clothed and often placed in an interior. Few renderings predating De Vos's accord with the popular Italian depiction. Titian's painting is dated around 1530-1535 and would become one of his major pictures.[21]

Fig. 63. Maerten De Vos, *Calumny of Apelles,* (detail) ca. 1594, oil on panel, 118 x 179.9 cm, Antwerp, Rubenshuis (on loan from a private collection in Luxembourg).

With long golden hair, milky-white neck, and small firm breasts, both depictions fully correspond to the mid-sixteenth-century Venetian ideal of female beauty[22] which De Vos takes over – and which remains dominant throughout his work until the end of his career. In his late paintings, such as, for instance, the *Calumny of Apelles* (fig. 63), these same ladies appear with intricate hairstyles featuring braids, pearls, and flowers, and with jewellery and textiles that accord with Italian fashion (fig. 64).

Many Netherlandish artists who left for Italy seemed to retain a strong sense of their northern identity. The bond between De Vos and the Flemish artistic tradition is strong enough for him not to surrender entirely to the more loose and spontaneous Italian style. Throughout his entire career De Vos's works would be characterised by a very strong sense of detail, in both the main and secondary elements of his compositions.

Fig. 64. Paolo Veronese, *Lucretia,* ca.1580, oil on canvas, 109 x 90.5 cm, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

Fig. 65. Maerten De Vos, *The Transfiguration*, ca. 1570, oil on canvas, 347 x 119 cm, Celle, Schlosskapelle.

Another possible indication of De Vos's stay in Venice are his multiple depictions of the Transfiguration. De Vos painted a vertical rendition of the theme for the Schlosskapelle in Celle between 1565 and 1576 (fig. 65). Three drawings of the Transfiguration by him are known: one, dated 1578, at the Groeningemuseum in Bruges (fig. 66); another, from 1589, at the Albertina Museum in Vienna; and a third in a private collection. All of these designs were etched and published by Jan Sadeler.

The Transfiguration was a popular theme for large-scale paintings in Venice in the mid-sixteenth century. The Venetian church of San Salvador, located in the Campo San Salvador near the Merceria, housed a version by Titian (fig. 67). According to Harold Wethey, it might have been commissioned around 1534 to replace the severely-damaged *Transfiguration* by Bellini that covered the central panel of relief sculpture of the altar up until then, but was not completed till around 1560.[23] Another *Transfiguration* by Titian's older brother Francesco Vecellio, dated 1530-1534, was painted on canvas to decorate the organ shutters of San Salvador's organ (fig. 68). Veronese painted a *Transfiguration* between 1555 and 1556, as did many other Venetian artists around the same time.

The theme of the Transfiguration was well-known in the North with paintings, for example, by Gerard David and Dirk Bouts, and it appeared in many illuminated manuscripts. Titian's *Transfiguration* was engraved by Beatrizet shortly after its completion. By the 1570s prints such as one by Harmen Jansz Muller after Titian (published by Gerard de Jode) must have been in circulation in the North as well. But although De Vos might have seen renditions of the theme in the North, it is also likely that he experienced the Italian version first-hand, finding in this a much more moving and visually-engaging way to depict the mystical event. In the Bruges drawing, De Vos emphatically embraces the narrative aspect of the composition which is absent in the very static northern paintings and manuscript illuminations.The Bruges drawing resembles Titian's composition, as does the upper half of the Celle composition, particularly in the figures of Christ and Moses holding the stone tablet.

The decoration of the Schlosskapelle in Celle in Germany was one of De Vos's first major assignments. The works made for this prestigious project, commissioned by the Protestant count of Brunswick-Luneburg, are dated between 1565 and 1576 and display a strong northern atmosphere. However, many of the compositions reflect a strong Italian influence as well. The vigorous luminosity of the colours that characterize Venetian painting are apparent in De Vos's early works. Experimenting with the use of colours throughout his career, De Vos's work evolves from a warm tonality in the 1560s to harsher, colder tones in the 1570s. Because of the process of assimilation – a judicious selection of specific elements within an otherwise detailed and meticulously-painted composition, rather than a straightforward copy – the parallels are hard to detect. They are, nevertheless, there.

Fig. 66. Maerten De Vos, *The Transfiguration*, 1578, brown pen, white gouache and traces of black chalk on paper, 16.7 x 24.9 cm, Bruges, Groeningemuseum.

Fig. 67. Titian, *The Transfiguration*, ca. 1560, oil on canvas, 245 x 295 cm, Venice, church of San Salvador.

Fig. 68. Francesco Vecellio, *The Transfiguration*, 1530-1534, oil on panel, 430 x 240 cm approx, Venice, church of San Salvador.

Fig. 69. Maerten De Vos, *The Last Supper,* ca. 1565-1576, oil on panel, 50.5 x 80 cm, Celle, Residenzmuseum am Celler Schloss.

Fig. 70. Tintoretto, *The Last Supper,* 1547, oil on canvas, 157 x 443 cm, Venice, church of San Marcuola.

Fig. 71. Tintoretto workshop, *The Last Supper,* ca. 1550, oil on canvas, 148.8 x 297.3 cm, Madrid, Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando.

The *Last Supper* De Vos painted for Celle is a perfect example of his search for balance between Italian and Netherlandish styles (fig. 69). De Vos's rendering is based on a workshop copy of Tintoretto's first version of the theme, painted in 1547 for the church of San Marcuola (fig. 70). The anonymous copy of the painting at the Academia de San Fernando in Madrid has been identified as an example of his early workshop production, and dated 1550 (fig. 71).[24] The San Marcuola works had put Tintoretto on the map as a painter and, given the resulting increased demand for his work, he had to restructure his workshop and delegate work to apprentices. While X-rays and infrared reflectography show that Tintoretto's working methods are respected, the secondary character of the copy is clear, with a simplified composition and, in particular, poorly-executed faces.[25] It is highly likely that De Vos saw either the original *Last Supper* painted in 1547, or the copy dated a few years later and executed in Tintoretto's studio, or even, perhaps, both of these works.

In the paintings by De Vos, Tintoretto and Tintoretto's studio, the table is set parallel to the picture plane with the apostles sitting around all four sides. At its left and right edges groups are engaged in rather agitated conversations, while the viewer's gaze is directed to the central group of three figures: Peter, Jesus, and John. This particular composition is not innovative and was well-known in the Netherlands through, for example, the popular composition by Pieter Coecke van Aelst. The pose of the figure seen from the back on the right side of De Vos's painting is inspired by the figure placed in the same spot in Tintoretto's and the atelier work. In all versions Judas is seen from the back as well, hiding from Jesus but unknowingly showing the viewer his purse, a clear sign of his corruptibility. De Vos, however, focuses on the narrative aspect of the scene rather than on its intensity. To stress the breach of faith, he opts for a vibrant red and green for Judas's clothing, and places him directly opposite Jesus.

This narrative emphasis is in the Netherlandish tradition to which De Vos remains loyal. The same can be said for a more precise definition of the space. Whereas Tintoretto's dark background is of little significance, De Vos places the scene in a clear and well-defined space. The symmetrical backdrop underlines the division of the three groups at the table, and the pitchers in the foreground as well as the room at the back on the upper left side are used to enhance the sense of depth. The posture and musculature of the figures as well as the drapery in De Vos's painting are definitely Italianesque, while concern for perspective, sense of detail, and emphasis on narrative are faithful to Netherlandish renderings of the theme.

Conclusion

Although we will probably never know what Ridolfi knew when he wrote his *Maraviglie dell'arte*, it is safe to assume that De Vos was in Italy and spent some time in Venice. If he worked in the studio of Tintoretto, it was in the most discrete way, as an anonymous apprentice whose imprint is still unclear. However, even if he did not know the master himself, he certainly knew Tintoretto's works and the works of other Venetian masters such as Titian, Veronese, and Vecellio.

De Vos was not the first to travel to Venice, and many artists after him, including Rubens and Van Dyck, followed in his footsteps. Although many questions remain unanswered, De Vos is a perfect example of his generation of artists. His predecessors discovered and brought back the new Italian (mostly Roman) style; his successors would explore it with ease, surrendering to its spontaneity. But it was artists like De Vos who helped pave the way to Venice.

De Vos's works enjoyed a popularity that reached far beyond the borders of his beloved city of Antwerp. Even though the second half of the sixteenth century was a very tumultuous and challenging time, De Vos's artistic output was immense, and, unlike most of his colleagues, he managed to have a prosperous career. His Italian journey resonates surely but discretely through his works, visible in compositional elements and detailed motifs borrowed from Italy, even when his artistic freedom was restricted by the dictates of the Church. In the medium of prints – in which De Vos was a key figure in the sixteenth century, with around 1600 designs known today – the influence of Italy is even stronger.

De Vos embraced new ideas but remained loyal to the Netherlandish tradition. His works do not display the impetuous, uninhibited Venetian style – something he surely admired, but to which he would never surrender. This is clear from a comparison of Titian's sumptuous *Rape of Europa* (later copied by Rubens) with De Vos's elegant and polished version (fig. 72). Many of De Vos's painted works are a testament to his knowledge and admiration of southern style, offering the best of what both North and South had to offer.

Fig. 72. Maerten de Vos, *Rape of Europa*, ca. 1590, oil on canvas, 133.7 x 174.5 cm, Bilbao, Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao.

NOTES

1 Carlo Ridolfi, *Le maraviglie dell'arte: overo le vite degli illustri pittori veneti e dello stato* (Padua: Tipografia e Fanderia Cartallier, 1835), pp. 262-266.

2 Lodovico Guicciardini, *Descrittione di m. Lodovico Guicciardini patritio fiorentino, di tutti i Paesi Bassi, altrimenti detti Germania Inferiore: con tutte le carte di geographia del paese, et col ritratto naturale di molte terre principali: con amplissimo indice di tutte le cose più memorabili* (Antwerp: Guglielmo Silvio, 1567), p. 144; Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, *Idea del tempio della pittura di Gio. Paolo Lomazzo pittore: nella quale egli discorre dell'origine, & fondamento delle cose contenute nel suo trattato dell'arte della pittura* (Milan: Paolo Gottardo Pontio, 1590), p. 19; Karel van Mander, *Het leven der doorluchtighe Nederlandtsche, en Hooghduytsche schilders* (1604), fol.265r.

3 Designs by Raphael for tapestries destined for the Sistine Chapel were sent to Brussels for their execution in 1517. Others were brought on more than one occasion by Tommaso Vincidor. The cartoons were accessible to artists from the Netherlands and were a real attraction. Works by Titian were in Binche, in the collection of Mary of Hungary and were seen by Coxcie. See Nicole Dacos, "Om te zien en te leren," in *Fiamminghi a Roma 1508-1608: Kunstenaars uit de Nederlanden en het prinsbisdom Luik te Rome tijdens de Renaissance*, ed. Nicole Dacos (Brussels and Ghent: Vereniging voor Tentoonstellinge van het Paleis voor Schone Kunsten and Snoeck-Ducaju & Zoon, 1995), pp. 14-31.

4 Jos. F. Van den Branden, *Geschiedenis der Antwerpsche schilderschool*, (Antwerp: Drukkerij Buschmann, 1883), pp. 216-258.

5 There is no unanimity amongst scholars concerning De Vos's apprenticeship with Floris. See Carl van de Velde, *Frans Floris (1519/1520-1570): leven en werken* (Brussels: Paleis der Academiën, 1975), p. 118; Armin Zweite, *Martin de Vos als Maler, Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der Antwerpener Malerei in der zweiten Hälfte des 16.Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Gerbr. Mann Verlag, 1980), p. 21.

6 Michael Auner, "Pieter Bruegel. Umrisse eines Lebensbildes," *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen in Wien* 52 (1956): p. 66.

7 Alberto Cottino, Georgio T. Faggin and Armin Zweite, *L'incontro di Rebecco e Eleazaro al pozzo* (Vicenza: Alfonsi Dipinti Antichi, 1993), pp. 13-37.

8 The letter dated 16 June 1561 reads: "Tanto dolui quod de Martino Vulpe pictore excellentissimo mihique aeque ac frater meus carissimo nihil ex tuis litteris intellexi, de quo ac de Petro Bruochl itidem mihi dillecto quid agat scire cupio, quos ambos et meo et Ottauiani fratris mei nomine fraterne deosculaberis." See Jan Hendrik Hessels, *Ecclesiae Londino-Batavae Archivum* (Cambridge: University Press, 1887-1897), p. 25.

9 "Brengt van Roome mede teyckenen zedich, En t'wel schilderen van de stadt Venedich." Van Mander, *Het schilder-boek*, fol.7v.

10 Burr Wallen, *Jan van Hemessen, An Antwerp Painter between Reform and Counter-Reform* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1976), p. 339, n.77.

11 Guicciardini, *Descrittione*, p. 99. Van Mander, *Het leven*, fol. 239.

12 Bert W. Meijer, "Flemish and Dutch Artists in Venetian Workshops: The Case of Jacopo Tintoretto," in *Renaissance Venice and the North: Crosscurrents in the Time of Bellini, Dürer, and Titian*, eds. Bernard Aikema and Beverly L. Brown, exh. cat. (Venice: Palazzo Grassi, 1999), pp. 136-137.

13 Peter Stabel, "Venice and the Low Countries: Commercial Contacts and Intellectual Inspirations", in Aikema and Brown, *Renaissance Venice and the North: Crosscurrents in the Time of Bellini, Dürer, and Titian*, p. 31.

14 Louisa C. Matthew, "Working Abroad: Northern Artists in the Venetian Ambient", in Aikema and Brown, *Renaissance Venice and the North: Crosscurrents in the Time of Bellini, Dürer, and Titian*, p. 69.

15 Caterina Limentani Virdis, *La pittura fiamminga nel Veneto e nell' Emilia* (Verona: Banca Populare di Verona-Banco S. Germiniano e S. Prospero, 1997), pp. 42-54.

16 Ridolfi identified Sustris, De Vos and Paolo Fiammingo as the artists who painted landscapes for Tintoretto. They allegedly worked in the studio at different periods of time. On Sustris, see Meijer, "Flemish and Dutch Artists in Venetian Workshops," pp. 133-135.

17 The entrance fee for a Venetian master in 1494 was 9 lire while a foreigner was asked 18 lire. See Elena Favaro, *L'arte dei pittori in Venezia e i suoi statuti*, (Florence: Olschki, 1975), pp. 26, 59.

18 Eramus Weddingen proposed a possible intervention by De Vos in the landscape of Tintoretto's *Crucifixion* in the Museo Civico in Padua and his *Contest Between the Muses and the Pierides* in Munich. See Erasmus Weddingen, "Jacopo Tintoretto und die Musik," *Artibus Historiae* V (1984): pp. 86-89.

19 Ernst H. Gombrich, "The Renaissance Theory of Art and the Rise of Landscape," in Ernst H. Gombrich, *Norm and Form*, (London: Phaidon, 1966), p. 114.

20 For instance the Venetian vases placed in the foreground of the *Marriage at Cana*, 1597, Cathedral of Our Lady, Antwerp. A print by Sadeler after a design by De Vos includes the three main characters of the Italian Comedia dell'Arte, which was particularly popular in Venice in the sixteenth century.

21 On compositions that could have served as a prototype for Titian's composition, see Bernard Aikema, "Titian's Mary Magdalen in the Palazzo Pitti: An Ambiguous Painting and its Critics," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 57 (1994): p. 48. Prints of the Titian *Mary Magdalen* possibly circulated in the southern Netherlands, but only at a later stage.

22 Federico Luigini da Udine, "Il libro della belle donna," in *Trattati del Cinquecento sulla donna*, ed. Giuseppe Zonta (Bari: Laterza, 1913), pp. 221-308.

23 For the dating of the *Transfiguration*, see Harold E. Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian, I: The Religious Paintings* (London: Phaidon, 1969), p. 163; Francesco Valcanover, *L'opera completa di Tiziano* (Milan: Rizzoli,1978), p. 128.

24 Miguel Falomir, *Tintoretto*, exh. cat. (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2007), pp. 233-236.

25 Falomir, *Tintoretto*, exh. cat. 2007, pp. 233-236.

Rubens and Tintoretto

Benjamin van Beneden

"Fittingly, Rubens came to own a self-portrait by Tintoretto; for if his love for Titian's art was to develop over a much longer period, he became in Italy, it seems by a *coup de foudre*, an ardent disciple of Titian's one-time pupil."[1]

Michael Jaffé's striking assessment reminds us of Tintoretto's significance to Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), whose debt to Italian art has long been acknowledged. As early as 1628, Lope de Vega, the Spanish poet and playwright, proclaimed him the heir to the painterly *colorito* tradition practised by Titian and his followers.[2] His earliest critics and biographers seem to have shared this view. According to Giovanni Bellori, writing in 1672, Rubens introduced "*il buon colorito veneziano*" to Antwerp.[3] Roger de Piles, following in Bellori's footsteps, declared that Rubens took everything he could from Venetian artists in order "to enhance his style".[4] Elsewhere De Piles characterized Tintoretto's work as possessing "*force*" and Veronese's as having "*magnificence,*" which helps to explain what he meant when he called Rubens's work Venetian.[5]

Tintoretto's influence certainly went well beyond the issue of *colorito*. Although Tintoretto's palette is often exciting, even bizarre, colour is not the fundamental component of his compositions, but just "one element in a bravura system of picture-making as varied and inventive as any in the history of art."[6] His complex, multi-figure paintings, were – among much else – advertisements for his "*prestezza*" (swiftness of the brush), his mastery of elaborately posed and ingeniously foreshortened figures, and – above all – his extraordinary powers of invention. It is hardly surprising that Rubens was interested in Tintoretto. Throughout his career, Rubens would strive for an intensity of effect comparable to that obtained by the great Venetian, albeit one achieved less through *colorito* and *prestezza* than through a heightened emphasis on *disegno* and expression.

Fig. 73. After Tintoretto, retouched by Rubens, *Virgin as the Woman of the Apocalypse with the Battle Between Saint Michael and Satan*, ca. 1620, drawing, 36.7 x 25.8 cm, Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts.

Fig. 74. After Rubens, after Tintoretto, *Saint Michael and Four Flying Angels*, De Ganay Ms., fol. 58r, ca. 1650-1700, 21.2 x 14.6 cm, Antwerp, Rubenshuis.

Unlike the teenage prodigy Anthony van Dyck (1599-1641), who signed and dated his first portrait at the age of thirteen,[7] "*il vero Rubens*" did not come to life until he travelled to Italy. In his early years he received a humanist education, gained experience as a page in a noble house, and trained in the studios of three Antwerp painters, most importantly that of Otto van Veen (1557-1629), a Romanist who probably encouraged Rubens's trip to Italy in 1600. Much of the evidence of Rubens's engagement with Italian art lies in the painted and drawn copies of works as varied as Raphael's early sixteenth-century portrait of Castiglione and Caravaggio's *Entombment*,[8] as well as in the vast number of drawings by or after Italian masters that he acquired and compulsively retouched throughout his career.[9] These not only provided Rubens with a store of visual ideas on which he could draw (often literally) as needed for specific projects, but also allowed him to analyze how Italian artists had organized and refined the complex process of designing and executing a composition.

Rubens's use of drawn copies as a means of developing his own compositional ideas is shown by his treatment of a sheet drawn by an unknown artist after Tintoretto's *Virgin as the Woman of the Apocalypse with the Battle Between Saint Michael and Satan* (fig. 73).[10] As Wood has convincingly argued, Rubens's aim in retouching the drawing was to make the figures of Saint Michael, the angel in the foreground, and the demons opposing them as prominent as possible, thereby adding greater clarity of detail to the composition and enhancing its spatial depth. The figures of Saint Michael and four of the angels surrounding him in Tintoretto's composition can also be found in one of the known copies of Rubens's lost notebook, or pocketbook, which he must have begun in Italy (fig. 74).[11] Although there are few specific borrowings from Tintoretto's composition, the drawing clearly informed Rubens's treatment of the subject in the altarpiece of the *Virgin as the Woman of the Apocalypse*, now in the Staatsgemäldesammlungen in Munich.[12] In the last decade, scholarship has concentrated on Rubens's copies and adaptations, but these are only one aspect of a much larger absorption of Italian art.

Rubens set out from Antwerp for Italy in early May of 1600, shortly before his twenty-third birthday. His nephew later wrote that he went first to Venice.[13] Probably soon after his arrival (sometime between early July and early October), he became court painter to Vincenzo I Gonzaga, Duke of Mantua (1562-1612),[14] and it was in Mantua that he painted the astonishing *Freundschaftsbild*, or *Self-Portrait with Mantuan Friends*, one of his first fully mature works (fig. 75).[15] While the legendary Gonzaga court remained Rubens's main base in Italy, he also travelled extensively. During his eight-year sojourn he spent two long periods in Rome, as well as ten months in Spain as a member of a diplomatic mission, and made trips to the major Italian cities, including Florence, Verona, Genoa, Milan and Bologna.[16]

Fig. 75. Peter Paul Rubens, *Self-Portrait with Mantuan Friends*, ca. 1602-1604, oil on canvas, 77.5 x 101 cm, Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum.

Before his move to Mantua, however, Rubens would have had time to explore Venice and to study the work of its great painters. Surprisingly little is known about the artworks he looked at or his contact with other artists in the city, but a certain amount can be inferred from influences detectable in his subsequent work. It is worth noting that, when Rubens arrived in *La Serenissima*, Veronese and Tintoretto – the major, competitive heirs to Titian – had been dead for only twelve and six years, respectively. While the Veronese workshop, known as the *"Haeredes Pauli"* (heirs of Paolo), had ceased to exist in 1598, after the deaths of his son Carlito and his brother Benedetto,[17] the Tintoretto family business was still in good working order: founded by Jacopo, it had been inherited by his sons Domenico (the shop's foreman) and Marco, who in turn were succeeded by their apprentice and brother-in-law, the German-born Sebastian Casser.[18] It is possible that Rubens visited the studio, where he would have seen the plaster, wax and clay figures from which Tintoretto worked, a technique he later adopted.[19] He may also have seen some of Jacopo's drawings and oil sketches.

Although Rubens became interested in Titian early in his career, his subsequent work suggests that his experience of Venetian painting was mediated principally by Tintoretto. After all, it was not until Rubens's second visit to the Spanish court, in 1628-1629, that he copied many of Titian's paintings in the royal collection and this Venetian master became an absorbing preoccupation.[20] The effect of this encounter on Rubens's stylistic development from 1629 onwards is well-known from the literature.

Fig. 76. Tintoretto, *Miracle of Saint Mark Freeing the Slave,* 1548, oil on canvas, 415 x 541 cm, Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia.

An extremely prolific painter, Tintoretto focused almost exclusively on large-scale narrative paintings, or *teleri*,[21] for public buildings, working in the Palazzo Ducale and for the major *scuole* (Venetian devotional confraternities), as well as executing portraits of prominent citizens of Venice.[22] It stands to reason that Rubens saw the large *Miracle of Saint Mark Freeing the Slave* (fig. 76), one of Tintoretto's most explosively-dramatic paintings, made in 1548 for the very public setting of the Scuola Grande di San Marco. From the *Miracle of the Slave* Rubens "filed" the key figures – the foreshortened nude and Saint Mark hurtling down from the sky – in the previously mentioned notebook (figs. 77 & 78),[23] and used both motifs in later paintings. In the Courtauld version of the *Conversion of Saint Paul* (ca. 1614),[24] for example, the figure of Paul – who has fallen off his sprawling horse but still has his feet in the stirrups – is an obvious echo of Tintoretto's slave (fig. 79).

Fig. 77. After Rubens, Johnson Ms., fol. 16r, ca. 1650-1700, 20.9 x 16 cm approx, London, The Courtauld Institute of Art.

Fig. 78. After Rubens, Chatsworth Ms., fol. 32r, 1618-1620, 21 x 16 cm, Chatsworth, Devonshire Collection.

Fig. 79. Peter Paul Rubens, *The Conversion of Saint Paul*, ca. 1614, oil on panel, 95.2 x 120.7 cm, London, The Courtauld Institute of Art.

Fig. 80. Tintoretto, *The Crucifixion*, 1565, oil on canvas, 536 x 1224 cm, Venice, Scuola Grande di San Rocco.

Rubens must also have seen the monumental *Crucifixion* (1565), extending over twelve metres *sopra la banca* of the *albergo* (boardroom) in the Scuola Grande di San Rocco (fig. 80). Although he probably knew the *Miracle* and the *Crucifixion* from black-and-white reproductions by Jacob Matham and Agostino Carracci,[25] nothing could have prepared his eyes for the paintings themselves.[26] The sheer scale of these ambitious artistic endeavours must have stimulated his own aspirations as an artist.[27]

Fig. 82. Tintoretto, *Hercules and Antaeus*, ca. 1570, oil on canvas, 152.4 x 101.6 cm, Hartford, Connecticut, Wadsworth Atheneum.

Fig. 83. After Rubens, Chatsworth Ms., fol. 40r, 21 x 16 cm, Chatsworth, Devonshire Collection.

Tintoretto's *Crucifixion* in San Rocco has long been recognized as the major inspiration for Rubens's diagonal placement of the Cross in the *Raising of the Cross*, his first major altarpiece in Antwerp (Antwerp, Cathedral, ca. 1610-1611) (fig. 81).[28] Rubens, however, turned the axis of the Cross into a more upright and frontal position, thereby giving the faithful a full view of the suffering Christ. The poses of some of the figures are also derived from the San Rocco painting, notably those of the executioner pulling the rope and the kneeling man bending over the Cross.[29]

The Crucifixion is, however, not the only Tintoretto source on which Rubens drew: for the specific pose of the executioner supporting the Cross, Rubens turned to the figure of Hercules in Tintoretto's *Hercules and Antaeus* (fig. 82).[30] Rubens was fascinated by complicated poses and must have seen the potential of the backward-bending figure as he explored this pose at the upper right and lower left corners of a sheet in his notebook (fig. 83).[31]

Fig. 81. Peter Paul Rubens, *The Raising of the Cross* (central panel), ca. 1610-1611, oil on panel, 460 x 340 cm, Antwerp, Cathedral.

Fig. 84. Peter Paul Rubens, *The Descent from the Cross* (central panel), 1611-1614, oil on panel, 421 x 311 cm, Antwerp, Cathedral.

Shortly afterwards, in the *Descent from the Cross* painted in 1611-1614 for the altar of the Harquebusiers in the Antwerp Cathedral, he used a similar pose, albeit in reverse, for the figure of Saint John supporting the dead body of Christ (fig. 84). Besides Tintoretto, the influence of antique sculpture is evident in the figure of the Saviour, which is based on the *Laocoon* (Rome, Vatican Museums), while the straining bodies of the executioners possess a physical weight and density that owes much more to Michelangelo's Rome than to Tintoretto's Venice. The way in which light and shade create dramatic contrasts and articulate the different planes of the muscular forms is reminiscent of Caravaggio. Within the traditional Netherlandish triptych format, Rubens successfully combined Venetian and central Italian influences, thereby melding in his own style the polar worlds of *colore* and *disegno* – a merger that Giorgio Vasari regretted did not exist in the works of Titian and Tintoretto.[32]

Rubens's first visual engagement with the art of Tintoretto is seen in the dazzling light effects in some of his earliest Italian productions, such as the Borghese *Lamentation* and *Susanna*, both of which are probably datable to 1601-1602,[33] and above all in the *Duke of Lerma on Horseback*, his first great triumph (fig. 85).[34] Painted in Spain in 1603, during an interlude in which Rubens served as Gonzaga's cultural ambassador at the court of Philip III,[35] *Lerma* is one of the most profoundly original and mature works of his Italian period. Clad in gold-damascened armour with a ruff typical of fashionable Spanish dress, the Duke, a powerful favourite of the king, rides confidently into our space, his right arm – brilliantly foreshortened – thrust boldly towards us. Although the compositional model for the picture is generally thought to derive from Titian's *Charles V at Mühlberg* (Museo del Prado, 1548), Rubens's *Lerma* finds its closest precedent in El Greco's *Saint Martin and the Beggar* (1597-1599), then in a private chapel in Toledo (the Capilla de San José), but now in the National Gallery of Art in Washington.[36] During his stay in Valladolid, Rubens may well have met the Greek, who, while in Venice (1567-1570), had himself become a disciple of Titian and an avid student of Tintoretto. In Rubens's picture, however, Tintoretto's influence is primarily felt in the application of colour and light.

The *Duke of Lerma on Horseback* thus points the way to Rubens's first important Gonzaga commission: the decoration for the *cappella maggiore* of the Jesuit Church in Mantua, the Santissima Trinità.

Fig. 85. Peter Paul Rubens, *The Duke of Lerma on Horseback*, 1603, oil on canvas, 290.5 x 207.5 cm, Madrid, Museo del Prado.

Fig. 86. Peter Paul Rubens, *The Transfiguration*, 1605, oil on canvas, 407 x 670 cm, Nancy, Musée des Beaux-Arts.

In iconography and style, the Mantuan Altarpiece, as it came to be known, is strongly marked by Rubens's efforts to emulate the Venetian. Over the high altar, the central canvas represented the *Gonzaga Family Worshipping the Holy Family*, flanked by the *Transfiguration* and the *Baptism*.[37] Completed in 1605, the three large canvases remained in the church until the decoration of the chapel was removed, in 1797, during the Napoleonic wars. At that time the central canvas, the scene of which is set in a splendid Venetian exterior with Solomonic columns and a balustrade that is highly indebted to Veronese, was cut up in order to remove a number of the side portraits (the main fragments stayed in Mantua and are now in the Palazzo Ducale).[38] Although the composition of *The Transfiguration* (fig. 86) as a whole follows Raphael's famous painting of the subject now in the Vatican Museums, the style is an overt response to the energy and approach of Tintoretto.[39] Rubens's representation of the miraculous event is shot through with emotional and spiritual drama. The agitation experienced by the crowd is reflected in the gestures and bold foreshortening of the figures, and in the bursts of light, both real and supernatural, that illuminate the scene. On a formal level, the light has a fragmenting rather than a unifying effect, thereby assuming a dramatic role in the narrative. Here is incontrovertible proof of the influence of Tintoretto on Rubens's manner of painting.[40]

The main figure group of the *Baptism* (fig. 87) is close to that of Tintoretto's *Baptism of Christ* (fig. 88), now in the Cleveland Museum of Art in Ohio,[41] while the treatment of light, with the highlighted silhouettes and foliage, strongly recalls the San Rocco paintings.

Fig. 87. Peter Paul Rubens, *Baptism of Christ*, 1605, oil on canvas, 411 x 675 cm, Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten.

Fig. 88. Tintoretto, *Baptism of Christ*, ca. 1580, oil on canvas, 169 x 251.4 cm, Ohio, Cleveland Museum of Art.

It should be remembered, however, that in the case of Rubens, a number of converging influences are likely to be found: the bulky, half-naked men at right seem to fuse reminiscences of the heroic nudes in Michelangelo's *Last Judgement*. Its figures provided an unsurpassed repertoire of poses that Rubens, like all his contemporaries, mined for ideas. The pose of the man leaning against the tree and holding his foot is based on the *Spinario* (or *Thorn Puller*), now in the Musei Capitolini in Rome. The way in which Rubens assembled a composition by Tintoretto, figures from Michelangelo, and a guidebook quotation from a Roman sculpture is a reminder of just how broad his interests were.

Rubens's eclectic taste for antique and Italian art is also reflected in the *Massacre of the Innocents* (fig. 89), which was possibly painted ca. 1610 for Giacomo Antonio Carenna, a prominent Milanese merchant-financier living in Antwerp.[42] It is a work of unparalleled compositional dynamism and pictorial virtuosity, offering a dense texture of cultural, historical and artistic allusions. As David Jaffé has observed, Rubens, in conceiving the composition, was inspired by Tintoretto's *Massacre of the Innocents* in the Scuola Grande di San Rocco (fig. 90).[43] The composition of Tintoretto's *telero* is more fragmented (the figures in Rubens's picture are grouped more tightly), but it shares the intensity of violence that is expressed in the Toronto panel. In both paintings, the backdrop to the horrendous scene is an urban view receding into the background, while Rubens's small running figures with billowing draperies in the distance, trying to escape the horror, as well as the motif of the woman grabbing the blade of a sword, are also reminiscent of Tintoretto's painting in San Rocco. However, here, as in the *Raising of the Cross* and the *Baptism of Christ*, Rubens drew in equal measure on other sources, including antique sculpture, Raphael, and Michelangelo.

Fig. 89. Peter Paul Rubens, *Massacre of the Innocents*, ca. 1610, oil on panel, 142 x 182 cm, Toronto, The Art Gallery of Ontario, The Thomson Collection.

Fig. 90. Tintoretto, *Massacre of the Innocents*, 1582-1587, oil on canvas, 422 x 546 cm, Venice, Scuola Grande di San Rocco.

Fig. 91. Peter Paul Rubens, *Minerva Protects Pax from Mars* ("*Peace and War*"), 1629-1630, oil on canvas, 203.5 x 298 cm, London, The National Gallery.

Throughout his career, Rubens continued to explore Tintoretto's art, borrowing compositions and refining his imagery and his ideas. Two striking examples from the 1620s, both very different in presentation – the *Conversion of Saint Bavo* (Ghent, Saint Bavo's Cathedral, 1624)[44] and *Minerva Protects Pax from Mars* ("*Peace and War*"; ca. 1629-1630)[45] – illustrate his borrowing of entire compositions. The essentially vertical design of the *Conversion* harks back to Tintoretto's *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple* of ca. 1556 in Madonna dell'Orto in Venice.[46] A striking detail is the motif of the mother and child, seen from behind in the foreground, which seems to be based on a similar pose in Veronese's *Martyrdom of Saint Marcus and Saint Marcellinus* (1565) in San Sebastiano, Venice,[47] though models can also be found in Tintoretto's *Miracle of the Slave.* Many of these extracted single figures seem to lean into the viewer's space, revealing how Rubens intentionally borrowed motifs that could both enliven and add depth to a composition. Rubens's predilection for Venetian art is just as much in evidence in his great allegorical composition *"Peace and War"* (fig. 91), the traditional title of which refers to the purpose of the picture: a gift given to Charles I as a means of furthering Rubens's aims as envoy of Philip IV of Spain in the peace negotiations between England and Spain. The painting is executed in a technique that copies Titian's almost religiously, whereas the composition – which shows Minerva pushing Mars away from Pax, with Mars, in the upper right-hand corner, looking back over his shoulder – was inspired in part by Tintoretto's depiction of a similar encounter, which is still part of the wall decoration of the Sala dell'Anticollegio in the Doge's Palace in Venice (fig. 92). Rubens's choice of models cannot have been accidental: like other members of the Caroline Court, including such acquisitive and well-travelled nobles as the Earl of Arundel and the Duke of Buckingham, the king had distinguished himself as an avid collector of Venetian art.

In designing his pictures, Rubens could undoubtedly rely on his astonishing visual memory and acute sense of observation. But although he may have used Agostino Carracci's engraving after Tintoretto's *Minerva Sending away Mars* (fig. 93)[48] (as he may have used Agostino's print after the San Rocco *Crucifixion*), these examples indicate that he probably returned from Italy with more than just his notebook to commemorate his trip.

That Rubens was a great admirer of Tintoretto is attested to by both his work and his princely collection, which was particularly strong on antique sculpture and Venetian art.[49] The famous *Spécification* of 1640, which lists the artworks put up for sale shortly after Rubens's death,[50] mentions no fewer than six paintings by Tintoretto, including two oil sketches, three portraits and a self-portrait – "Vn pourtrait de Tintoret fait de sa main".[51] A seventh picture – a *Last Judgement* that Rubens bought in Paris in 1622 – had already been sold to the Duke of Buckingham in 1626, together with a large number of exquisite works from the artist's collection. Today, none of the Tintoretto originals can be properly identified. The *Spécification* also records "Vn visage [by Rubens] apres Tinctoret."[52]

Fig. 92. Tintoretto, *Minerva Sending away Mars from Peace and Prosperity*, 1576-1577, oil on canvas, 148 x 168 cm, Venice, Sala dell'Anticollegio, Palazzo Ducale.

Fig. 93. Agostino Carracci after Tintoretto, *Minerva Sending away Mars from Peace and Prosperity,* 1589, engraving, 18.7 x 24.7 cm, London, British Museum.

Fig. 94. Peter Paul Rubens after Tintoretto, *Head of a Bearded Man, called Doge Giovanni Cornaro*, ca. 1628-1629, oil on panel, 59 x 48 cm, Amsterdam, Private Collection.

Fig. 95. Christoffel Jegher after Rubens, *Head of a Bearded Man*, 1630s, chiaroscuro woodcut, 28.4 x 21.5 cm, London, British Museum.

As mentioned earlier, Rubens copied works by other Cinquecento artists too – including Mantegna, Raphael and Caravaggio – and made copies after Titian's mythologies, particularly the *poesie*. The practice of copying enabled artist-collectors such as Rubens to enrich their collections with artworks they coveted but could not acquire, thus creating the ideal picture gallery. The striking and fluidly-painted head of a dark-eyed, bearded, fur-clad man, currently in a private collection in Amsterdam (fig. 94), was copied by Rubens after a Venetian prototype, and may well qualify as the previously mentioned "visage apres Tinctoret," although this identification is by no means certain.[53] As Wood has argued, the portrait (probably of a prominent person) clearly interested Rubens, because he had it reproduced in a chiaroscuro woodcut by Christoffel Jegher (fig. 95). Surprisingly, however, he did so without identifying either the painter or the sitter. At some time in the later nineteenth century, the painted version and the print came to be known as portraits of Doge Giovanni I Cornaro (1551-1629), but there is no solid evidence to support this identification.

Rubens's collection was not the only one in early seventeenth-century Antwerp that was rich in Venetian art. It was matched by Van Dyck's, whose collection was so dominated by the work of one great Venetian master that it was referred to by contemporaries as his "Cabinet de Titien".[54] Van Dyck's almost single-minded passion for the work of Titian is confirmed by "*le cose de titian*" that he listed in his Italian sketchbook. Like that of Rubens, Van Dyck's collection was, in effect, a self portrait that reflected his ambitions with regard to homage and influence.[55] There was, admittedly, considerably more Venetian art in seventeenth-century Antwerp and Flanders than there is today: the only Venetian pictures now in Flemish public collections are Titian's early *Jacopo Pesaro Being Presented by Pope Alexander VI to Saint Peter* in the Royal Museum of Fine Arts in Antwerp (see fig. 107) Tintoretto's portrait of *Giovanni Paolo Cornaro* in the Museum of Fine Arts, Ghent (fig. 96),

Fig. 96. Tintoretto, *Giovanni Paolo Cornaro*, 1561, oil on canvas, 102 x 81.2 cm, Ghent, Museum voor Schone Kunsten.

Fig. 97. Giovanni Cariani, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, ca.1516-1517, oil on canvas, 59 x 69 cm, Antwerp, Rubenshuis (on loan from a Private Collection in Luxembourg).

Fig. 98. Titian, *Portrait of a Lady and her Daughter,* ca. 1550, oil on canvas, 88.3 x 80.7 cm, Antwerp, Rubenshuis (on loan from a European Private Collection).

Christ Carrying the Cross by Giovanni Cariani (ca. 1485-after 1547) in the Rubenshuis in Antwerp (fig. 97), and Titian's unfinished masterpiece *Portrait of a Lady and her Daughter*, formerly in the Cobbe Collection (Hatchlands Park, England), but now in the Rubenshuis (fig. 98). Slightly older than Titian, Cariani – who divided his time between Venice and Bergamo – is rarely mentioned in the same breath as his Venetian peers. Yet his sensitive and at the same time powerful *Cristo Portacroce*, a painting which has only recently been discovered,[56] proves that he was an extremely talented artist. Christ is intimately portrayed at close quarters, his questioning eyes boring into our thoughts and thus involving us in the scene. Most surprising, however, is the absence of idealisation in the depiction of Christ's face, to the extent that the work resembles a portrait of a real sitter.[57] Yet the most remarkable addition to the small corpus of Venetian pictures is Titian's exquisite, unfinished double portrait of a patrician woman and her daughter. The identity of the radiant young mother and her small daughter, a very rare subject in Venetian portraiture of the time,[58] is an intriguing mystery, as is the reason for the work's abandonment.[59] The fact that it remained unfinished implies that it was not a special commission; it might actually depict members of Titian's immediate circle. Soon after his death in 1576, the painting, which probably dates from about 1550, was reworked in his studio as a *Tobias and the Angel*, presumably for commercial reasons. The woman was given wings and became the archangel Raphael, while a boy's hairstyle effected the daughter's transformation into Tobias. The T*obias and the Angel* was first recorded in the mid-eighteenth century, as part of the famous Barbarigo Collection in Venice, a collection that had been enriched with works by Titian in 1581 when Cristoforo Barbarigo purchased the artist's house and studio in the Birri Grande with all their remaining contents. The collection was subsequently put on display in the Palazzo Barbarigo della Terrazza, where Rubens and Van Dyck may have seen *Tobias and the Angel*.[60] The underlying composition was discovered only in 1948, and careful restoration in recent decades has revealed Titian's tender depiction of mother and child. Like many portrait painters, including Van Dyck, he began by concentrating on the heads, bringing the features of mother and child to a high degree of finish. Both bodies, however, were left at the initial stages of painting, blocked in with large strokes, and the flower (and/or ostrich fan) the woman holds is only roughly indicated. But even in its unfinished state, *Portrait of a Lady and her Daughter* is a work of outstanding quality.

Fig. 99. Jacob Harrewijn, *The Rubens House in Antwerp*, 1684, engraving, 28.5 x 35.1 cm, Antwerp, Rubenshuis.

The collection Rubens assembled served his social, aesthetic, scholarly and financial interests, even while it stimulated his creativity and demonstrated his own leading place in art history. By 1620 the collection was on display in his Italianate house in Antwerp (fig. 99), which he remodelled and extended in the second half of the 1610s as a residence designed to impress his artistic and intellectual peers and his potential patrons with his expertise as a scholarly artist.[56] A unity of architecture, painting and sculpture, this *Gesamtkunstwerk* paid homage to what Rubens saw as the two great periods of art: Antiquity and the Renaissance. The sophisticated setting emphasized not only the brilliance of the collection on display but also Rubens's personal genius.

Fig. 100. Peter Paul Rubens, *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1638-1640, oil on canvas, 109.5 x 85 cm, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

Fig. 101. Titian, *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1562, oil on canvas, 85 x 65 cm, Madrid, Museo del Prado.

Although the design of the house was partly determined by an early form of museum curatorship – the garden screen, for instance, served as an entrance gate to the garden lying behind it and as an architectural backdrop to sculpture, both ancient and modern, while the "elegantissimo museo" (modelled on the Pantheon and the writings of Vincenzo Scamozzi, and lit by an *oculus* in the crest) anticipates the ideal sculpture gallery – frustratingly little is known about the presentation of the collection. The oil sketches (whether by Rubens or Italian masters), for example, formed part of his study material and were probably never framed or displayed on the wall. It is tempting to imagine, however, that Tintoretto's lost *Self-Portrait* hung in pride of place, flanked by the self-portraits of two equally illustrious artists: Titian and Rubens (figs. 100 & 101).[61]

NOTES

1 Michael Jaffé, *Rubens and Italy* (London: Phaidon, 1977), p. 36.
2 De Vega referred to Rubens as "el nuevo Ticiano" in a poem titled "Al Quadro y retrato de su Majestad que hizo Pedro Pablo de Rubens, Pintor excelentissimo," cited by Frederick de Armas, "Lope de Vega and Titian," *Comparative Literature* 30 (1978): pp. 341-342.
3 Giovanni Pietro Bellori, *Le vite de pittori, scultori et architetti moderni* (Rome: 1672), p. 248.
4 "Et en effet, il tira des ouvrages du Titien, de Paul Veronése, & du Tintoret, tout le profit qu'on en peut tirer, dont il embellit sa manière"; Roger de Piles, "La vie de Rubens," in *Dissertation sur les ouvrages des plus fameux pentres, dediée à Monseigneur le Duc de Richelieu* (Paris, 1681), p. 8.
5 Roger de Piles, *Abrégé de la vie des peintres, avec des reflexions sur leurs ouvrages, et un traité du peintre parfait, de la connaissance des dessins, et de l'utilité des estampes* (Paris, 1699), p. 276; cited by Jeremy Wood, *Copies and Adaptations from Renaissance and Later Artists. Italian Artists.* II. *Titian and North Italian Art. Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* XXVI, II, 2 vols. (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2010), p. 39.
6 John Steer, "Titian and Venetian Colour," in *The Genius of Venice: 1500-1600*, ed. Jane Martineau and Charles Hope, exh. cat. (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1983), p. 42; on Venetian colour in general, see Paul Hills, *Venetian Colour. Marble, Mosaic, Painting and Glass 1250-1550* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999).
7 See Stijn Alsteens's contribution in the present publication.
8 Rubens after Raphael, *Baldassare Castiglione*, panel, 89.5 x 67.5 cm, London, The Courtauld Institute of Art, Princes Gate Collection (inv. no. 24); Jeremy Wood, *Copies and Adaptations from Renaissance and Later Artists. Italian Artists.* I. *Raphael and his school*. *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* XXVI, I, 2 vols. (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2010), vol. 1, pp. 292-99, no. 47, pl. 1; Rubens after Caravaggio, *The Entombment*, oil on panel, 88.5 x 66.5 cm, Ottawa, National Gallery of Canada (inv. no. 6431); Richard Judson, *The Passion of Christ*. *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* VI, 243-245, no. 75; fig. 223; on Rubens and Caravaggio, see Wood, *Copies and Adaptations from Renaissance and Later Artists*, I, vol. 1, pp. 113-120.
9 For the most recent and thorough exploration of the subject, see Jeremy Wood, *Copies and Adaptations from Renaissance and Later Artists. Italian Artists. Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* XXVI, I-III, 6 vols. (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2010-2011).
10 See Wood, *Copies and Adaptations from Renaissance and Later Artists*, II, vol. 1, pp. 341-346, no. 147; vol. 2, figs. 170-173.
11 De Ganay Ms., fol. 58r. Rubens's original notebook, or "pocketbook" as it is sometimes referred to, was destroyed in a fire at the Louvre in 1720, while in the possesion of André-Charles Boulle, "*ébeniste*" to Louis XIV. Only two original sheets survived the fire. In addition to these sheets, four fragmentary copies of the book exist, two of which were probably made during Rubens's lifetime: the Chatsworth Ms. (Chatsworth, Devonshire Collection) and the Bordes Ms. (Madrid, Museo del Prado). The two remaining copies – the Johnson Ms. (London, The Courtauld Institute of Art) and the de Ganay Ms. (Antwerp, Rubenshuis) – date from the later seventeenth century; on Rubens's notebook, see David Jaffé and Amanda Bradley, "Rubens's 'Pocketbook': An Introduction to the Creative Process," in David Jaffé and Elizabeth McGrath, *Rubens. A Master in the Making*, exh. cat. (London: National Gallery, 2005), pp. 21-37; and Arnout Balis, *The Theoretical Notebook*. *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* XXV, forthcoming.
12 *The Virgin as the Woman of the Apocalypse*, oil on canvas, 554,5 x 370,5 cm; Fiona Healy, *The Holy Trinity, The Life of the Virgin, Madonna's, The Holy Family*. *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* IV, forthcoming.
13 Levi Robert Lind, "The Latin Life of Peter Paul Rubens by His Nephew Philip," *The Art Quarterly* IX (1946): p. 38. Although there is no evidence to support Philip's claim, it seems that in those days most Northerners travelled through Germany, crossing the Alps via the Brenner and from there on to Venice; see Carl van de Velde, "L'Itinéraire italien de Rubens," *Bulletin de l'Institut Historique Belge de Rome* XLVIII-XLIX (1978-1979): p. 241.
14 For the most recent account of Rubens and the Gonzaga, see Raffaella Morselli, "Rubens and the Spell of the Gonzaga Collections," in *The Age of Rubens. Diplomacy, Dynastic Politics and the Visual Arts in Early Seventeenth-Century Europe*, ed. Luc Duerloo and Malcolm Smuts (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2016), pp. 21-37.
15 For a recent discussion of the portrait, see Nils Büttner, "Self-Portrait in a Circle of Friends from Mantua, 1602-04," in *Rubens in Private. The Master Portrays his Family*, ed. Ben van Beneden, exh. cat. (Antwerp: Rubenshuis, 2015), pp. 146-147, no. 7.
16 Although there is no solid evidence to support a return trip, Rubens would also have been able to visit Venice relatively frequently from Mantua (in Lombardy); see Van de Velde, "L'Itinéraire italien de Rubens," pp. 248-249.
17 Xavier F. Salomon, *Veronese*, exh. cat. (London: National Gallery, 2014), pp. 36, 218.
18 Tom Nichols, *Tintoretto. Tradition and Identity*, revised and expanded edition (London: Reaktion Books, 2015), pp. 133-34.
19 Jaffé and McGrath, *Rubens*, p. 26.
20 Rubens's first visual engagement with Titian can be seen in the *Mocking of Christ* of 1602 for Santa Croce in Gerusalemme in Rome, the composition of which derives from Titian's painting of the same subject in the Musée du Louvre, formerly in Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan; Hans Vlieghe, *Saints*. *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* VIII, I-II (Brussels: Arcade Press, 1972), II, pp. 61-64, no. 111. In Mantua he also copied a Titian portrait – *Isabella d'Este, in red*, now in the Kunsthistorische Museum, Vienna – formerly Gonzaga Collection; Wood, *Copies and Adaptations from Renaissance and later Artists*, II, vol. 1, pp. 246-49, fig. 111; on Rubens's complex relationship to Titian, see Wood, *Copies and Adaptations from Renaissance and Later Artists*, II, vol. 1, pp. 26-38.
21 From the Venetian word for "frame", referring to the wooden structure over which the canvas was stretched.
22 See Riccardo Lattuada's contribution in the present publication.
23 Johnson Ms., fol. 16r and Chatsworth Ms., fol. 32r; cf. Jaffé and McGrath, *Rubens*, pp. 24, 27 note 30.
24 *The Conversion of Saint Paul*, ca. 1610-12, oil on panel, 95.2 x 120.7 cm, London, Courtauld Institute of Art; David Freedberg, *The Life of Christ after the Passion*. *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* VII (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, in conjunction with Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 114-118, no. 30, fig. 67.
25 Jacob Matham (1571-1631) after Tintoretto, *Saint Mark Rescuing the Slave*, 1593-1597, engraving, 427 x 588 mm; Agostino Carracci (1557-1602) after Tintoretto, *Crucifixion*, 1589, engraving on three plates, 509 x 1200 mm.
26 Jaffé, *Rubens and Italy*, p. 33.
27 Twenty years later, in a much-quoted letter in response to the challenge presented by the possibility of painting the decorations for the ceiling of the Banqueting Hall in London, Rubens wrote: "I confess that I am, by natural instinct, better fitted to execute very large works than small curiosities"; Ruth Magurn, *The Letters of Peter Paul Rubens* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955), p. 77.
28 Jaffé, *Rubens and Italy*, pp. 59-61.
29 Jaffé, *Rubens and Italy*, p. 60. The figures of the man pulling the rope and the man supporting the Cross were further explored in preparatory drawings; for the most recent discussion of these drawings, see Jaffé and McGrath, *Rubens*, pp. 121-125, figs. 51, 52.
30 The figure of the backward-leaning man supporting the Cross first appeared in Rubens's early *Raising of the Cross*, painted in 1602 for Santa Croce in Gerusalemme (see note 20), one of Rome's most famous and popular places of pilgrimage. The original composition is lost, but preserved in a copy; Vlieghe, *Saints*, II, pp. 65-68, no. 112; Jaffé, *Rubens in Italy*, p. 60.
31 Copy after Rubens (attributed to Anthony van Dyck), Chatsworth Ms., fol. 40v., Chatsworth, Devonshire Collection.
32 See Riccardo Lattuada's contribution in the present publication, p. 17.
33 *The Lamentation*, oil on canvas, 180 x 137 cm, Rome, Galleria Borghese; Judson, *The Passion of Christ*, pp. 211-214, no. 59, fig. 185; *Susanna and the Elders*, oil on canvas, 94 x 67 cm, Rome, Galleria Borghese; Roger-A. D'Hulst and Marc Vandenven, *The Old Testament*. *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* III (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, in conjunction with Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 200-202, no. 38, fig. 152; Jaffé, *Rubens and Italy*, p. 36.
34 *Equestrian Portrait of the Duke of Lerma*, oil on canvas, 290.5 x 207.5 cm, Madrid, Museo del Prado; Frances Huemer, *Portraits*. *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* XIX, I (Brussels: Arcade Press, 1977), pp. 21-25, 132-135, no. 20, fig. 67; Jaffé, *Rubens and Italy*, p. 60.
35 Rubens was sent as a cultural ambassador to the Spanish court, where he remained from May 1603 until the end of the year.
36 The first to link Rubens's *Lerma* with El Greco's *Saint Martin and the Beggar* was August L. Mayer, *El Greco* (Berlin: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1931), p. 104.
37 *The Transfiguration*, oil on canvas, 407 x 670 cm, Nancy, Musée des Beaux-Arts; *The Baptism of Christ*, oil on canvas, 675 x 411 cm, Antwerp, Royal Museum of Fine Arts; Healy, *The Holy Trinity, The Life of the Virgin, Madonna's, The Holy Family*, forthcoming.
38 On *Vincenzo Gonzaga and his Family Adoring the Holy Trinity*, see Huemer, *Portraits*, pp. 26-33.
39 Jaffé, *Rubens and Italy*, p. 26.
40 Jaffe, *Rubens and Italy*, p. 36.
41 Jaffé, *Rubens and Italy*, p. 73.
42 For the most recent and thorough analysis of the picture, see David Jaffé, *Rubens's Massacre of the Innocents* (Toronto: Skylet Publishing in association with the Art Gallery of Ontario, 2009).
43 Jaffé, *Rubens Massacre of the Innocents*, p. 77.
44 *The Conversion of Saint-Bavo*, oil on canvas, 475 x 280 cm, Ghent, Saint-Bavo's Cathedral; Vlieghe, *Saints*, I, pp. 106-09, no. 72, fig. 123.
45 Gregory Martin, *National Gallery Catalogues. The Flemish School*; *circa 1600 – circa 1900* (London: Publications Department, The National Gallery, 1970), pp. 116-125, no. 46; Elizabeth McGrath et al., *Mythological Subjects*. *Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* XI, II, forthcoming.
46 Cf. Vlieghe, *Saints*, p. 108.
47 As observed by Claire Janson, in Vlieghe, *Saints*, p. 108.
48 Gregory Martin, *Rubens in London: Art and Diplomacy* (London and Turnhout: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2011), p. 87.
49 On Rubens's collection, see Jeffrey M. Muller, *Rubens: The Artist as Collector* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989; and Kristin Belkin and Fiona Healy, *A House of Art. Rubens as Collector*, exh. cat. (Antwerp: Rubenshuis, 2004).
50 On the history of the *Specification*, see Muller, *Rubens*, pp. 91-93; Jeffrey Muller, "Rubens's Collection in History," in Belkin and Healy, *A House of Art*, pp. 11-12.
51 For Tintoretto's *Self-Portrait*, see Muller, *Rubens*, p. 97, no. 14.
52 Muller, *Rubens*, pp. 109-110, no. 70.
53 For Rubens's portraits after Tintoretto, see Wood, *Copies and Adaptations from Renaissance and Later Artists*, II, vol. 1, pp. 346-5, no. 148; pp. 353-354, no. 149.
54 On Van Dyck's collection, see Jeremy Wood, "Van Dyck's 'Cabinet de Titien': the Contents and Dispersal of his Collection," *The Burlington Magazine* 132 (1990): pp. 680-703.
55 On artist's collections in general, see Anne Robbins, *Painters' Paintings: From Freud to Van Dyck*, exh. cat. (London: National Gallery, 2016).
56 Interestingly, the picture is mentioned in the estate of Jan-Baptist van Brouchoven (1619-1681), Baron and later Count de Bergeyck, who married Rubens's widow Helena Fourment (1614-1673).
57 As Donati observed, Christ's head is very similar to that in a three-quarter-length portrait of a unidentified, beardless young man by Cariani at Chatsworth; see Andrea Donati, in Nuccio Barbone Pugliese, Andrea Donati, and Lionello Puppi, *Tiziano, Bordon e gli Acquaviva d'Aragona. Pittori veneziani in Puglia e fuoriusciti napoletani in Francia*, exh. cat. (Foggia: Claudio Grenzi editore, 2012), pp. 244-247, no. 4; Sotheby's, London, *Old Master & British Paintings*, 9 December 2015, lot 19, p. 68.
58 This is the only known work by Titian to show a mother and daughter. Another superb example of this genre is provided by Paolo Veronese's *Livia da Porto Thiene and her Daughter Porzia*, ca. 1551, in the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore.
59 On the possible identifications of the sitters, see Mattia Biffis and Mark Broch, *Tiziano: l'ultimo atto*, ed. Lionello Puppi, exh. cat. (Milan: Skira, 2007), pp. 201-202, no. 87.
60 In 1850 the Barbarigo Collection was bought by Tsar Nicholas I, but auctioned off a few years later. On the picture's fascinating history, see Jaynie Anderson, "Titian's unfinished 'Portrait of a patrician woman and her daughter' from the Barbarigo collection, Venice", *The Burlington Magazine* 144 (2002): pp. 671-679; Andrea Bayer, "Renaissance Views of the Unfinished", in Kelly Baum, Andrea Bayer, and Sheena Wagstaff, *Unfinished: Thoughts Left Visible*, exh. cat. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art; distributed by Yale University Press, 2016), p. 27; catalogue note, p. 322; p. 71, fig. 16; Benjamin van Beneden, Nico Van Hout and other authors, "Not an angel. Some new findings on Titian's unfinished *Portrait of a Lady and her Daughter*", forthcoming.
61 Titian, *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1562, oil on canvas, Madrid, Museo del Prado, see Belkin and Healy, *A House of Art*, pp. 92-94, no. 2; Rubens, *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1638-1640, oil on canvas, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, see Van Beneden, *Rubens in Private*, pp. 140-141, no. 4.

Anthony van Dyck and Venetian drawing

Stijn Alsteens

The influence of Venetian painting on the art of Anthony van Dyck is not a point of discussion, but a long-stated fact.[1] Giovan Pietro Bellori in 1672 already said as much, remarking that "in Venice […] he devoted his attention to the colour of Titian and Paolo Veronese."[2] There can still be debate over when Van Dyck was first exposed to Venetian art, and how its influence reached him; as argued recently, an awareness of Venetian portraiture – perhaps specifically of Jacopo Tintoretto's – is outspokenly present in Van Dyck's earliest preserved work, a painted portrait dated 1613.[3] The influence Venetian sixteenth-century art may have had on Van Dyck's drawings is a less well-explored subject. Indeed, Venetian drawing itself has not received the attention accorded to that in artistic centres such as Florence, Rome, and Bologna, despite the devotion to the subject of certain scholars.[4] In the work of Peter Paul Rubens, Roman and Bolognese drawings played a more prominent role.[5] In contrast to the fluctuating, but constant influence of Venetian painting on his work throughout his career,[6] Venetian drawing had only a limited significance for Rubens. Rubens, for instance, never seems to have used blue paper, perhaps the most obvious characteristic of Venetian drawings. In Van Dyck's drawings, Venetian art seems to have played a major role, and an exploration of its aspects is the subject of this contribution.

Fig. 102. Jan Erasmus Quellinus, *The Assumption of the Virgin (after Paolo Veronese)*, ca. 1655-1660, pen and brush and grey ink, over black chalk, 40.5 x 22.5 cm, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum.

Fig. 103. Jan Erasmus Quellinus, *The Distribution of the Franciscan Cords,* 1667, brush and black ink, grey wash, white, blue, and pink gouache, touches of red ink, over traces of black chalk, on brown paper, 28 x 18.4 cm, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

An accurate record of the art of his Venetian predecessors was not what Van Dyck was after, though. In his œuvre, we will not find drawn copies like those by the later seventeenth-century Flemings Valentin Lefebvre, who settled in Venice early in his life, or Jan Erasmus Quellinus, who visited Italy in the second half of the 1650s and brought back with him fairly detailed renderings of paintings such as Paolo Veronese's altarpiece for the church of Santa Maria Maggiore, Venice (fig. 102).[7] The influence of Veronese and other Venetians on these artists' original works was a direct – one could argue superficial – one, mostly visible in the compositions they designed; a good example is Jan Erasmus Quellinus's signed drawing, dated 1667, in New York (fig. 103).[8]

Venetian art had a more profound impact on Van Dyck's drawings. No better illustration of this can be found than the Italian Sketchbook from the collection of the Dukes of Devonshire, now at the British Museum.[9] It is a rare surviving record of a great artist at a decisive moment in his career. Although dismembered, every one of its over 120 pages and even its simple parchment binding are preserved, and provide an unparalleled insight into the voracious mind of the young artist, who sought inspiration in the art and life he experienced between Genoa and Palermo. Most of the drawings were made in pen; in some, van Dyck used only black chalk, later unfortunately gone over by a much less-skilled hand in an attempt to make them more legible. There are good reasons to believe he started the sketchbook even before going to Italy;[10] many of the drawings appear to be based on engravings, rather than on the original paintings these prints reproduce.[11] Among the most impressive sketches are those after parts of the woodcut of the *Crossing of the Red Sea*, designed by Titian.[12]

Fig. 104. Anthony van Dyck, *Sheet of Studies after Correggio, Raphael and an Artist from Raphael's School (recto),* 1621-1627, pen and brown ink, brown wash, 19.3 x 14 cm, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Fig. 105. Anthony van Dyck, *Study for a Portrait of Robert Shirley in Oriental Costume* (fol. 62 recto of the Italian Sketchbook), 1622, pen and brown ink, 19.9 x 15.7 cm, London, British Museum.

One also has to assume it is not the only sketchbook Van Dyck carried around with him in his Italian years, between 1621 and 1627; a double-sided sheet in New York can be considered a page from a lost sketchbook (fig. 104).[13] Like most others, the drawings are copied after Italian models – in this case, Correggio, Raphael, and Raphael's school.

Some of the sketchbook's most beloved pages are taken from life – a woman forced to expose herself in a procession as a witch in Palermo, a group of musicians and street comedians, or the annotated portrait of the elderly *pittricia* Sofonisba Anguissola – not, in the present writer's view, a study for the painting, but a drawing Van Dyck based on the oil sketch he must have made from life.[14] A very few pages were done for paintings van Dyck was working on – notably, the two ravishing full-length portraits of Sir Robert Shirley and his wife Teresa in oriental costume (fig. 105).[15] But most of the sketchbook is devoted to copies after Italian artists – Venetian in the first place, and Titian most of all. These copies tend to be loosely grouped by theme – the Virgin and Child and the Holy Family, Christ, gatherings of women, horses, draperies, portraits, etc. Van Dyck probably worked on several of these groups at the same time, and allowed these groupings of sources to grow whenever he encountered a work that suited his taste and interests.

Fig. 106. Anthony van Dyck, *Study Sheet after Titian* (fol. 19 recto of the Italian Sketchbook), 1621-1627, pen and brown ink, 15.4 x 20.2 cm, London, British Museum.

Unlike Jan Erasmus Quellinus, he did not seek to record a complete composition, but focused on poses, motifs, smaller groupings of figures, and used pen or chalk and a shorthand sketching style that he learned from Rubens.[16] Even when he did record the entire composition, he did not linger on details, as in his copy (fig. 106) of a painting by Titian, now in Antwerp (fig. 107).[17] He sketched the three figures within a loosely indicated architecture, and finished his drawing by adding a few colour notes (in Italian).

It is to this type of sketches after compositions by Italian masters that also belongs the drawing Van Dyck made on the verso of folio 6 of his sketchbook (fig. 108).[18] The upper study was done after a version painting by Titian depicting the Virgin and Child with Saint Dorothy;[19] the lower study, as will be immediately clear to any reader of this publication, is copied after the main figures of the painting at the centre of this catalogue. One can assume that Van Dyck studied the painting in its original location. As is characteristic of so many of the sketches, much of the detail of the composition – the architecture, the angels carrying the saint's attribute, the background figures – is not even hinted at. Even the poses of the angel and Saint Catherine are not entirely accurately rendered, and Van Dyck has given her body a somewhat more natural and expressive torsion, as if he was at the same time studying the original painting, and trying to make the composition his own – very much in the spirit of Rubens's copies and adaptations of other artists' works. It must have been influenced by the different manners in which his Italian predecessors depicted the encounter of two women in moments of tenderness or surprise. The sketches after the painting and the composition by Titian are flanked by one of Mary Magdalene to whom angels show the Passion instruments after a painting by Guercino which Van Dyck could have seen in Rome (fol. 6 recto), and one of the *Annunciation* by Titian at the Scuola di San Rocco, Venice.[20]

Fig. 107. Titian, *Jacopo Pesaro Being Presented to Saint Peter by Pope Alexander VI*, ca. 1512, oil on canvas, 147.8 x 188.7 cm, Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten.

Fig. 108. Anthony van Dyck, *Sheet of Studies after Titian and Tintoretto* (fol. 6 verso of the Italian Sketchbook), 1621-1627, pen and brown ink, 19.9 x 15.4 cm, London, British Museum.

Fig. 109. Anthony van Dyck, *Study of an Antique Sculpture of a Seated Man* (fol. 33 verso of the Italian Sketchbook), 1621-1627, pen and brown ink, brown wash, 19.9 x 15.4 cm, London, British Museum.

Fig. 110. Anthony van Dyck, *Study of a Man's Leg (after Titian?)* (fol. 48 recto of the Italian Sketchbook), 1621-1627, pen and brown ink, 19.9 x 15.5 cm, London, British Museum.

Not all of the drawings display the sparse style of the sketches discussed above. In some, Van Dyck used brush or a broader wash to enhance the subject's chiaroscuro, for instance in a sketch after an antique sculpture, formerly in the Borghese collection in Rome and now at the Musée du Louvre, Paris (fig. 109).[21] The choice for wash in addition to the penwork may have had to do with the three-dimensionality of the subject, and the way it was lit. In two other drawings, Van Dyck employed an elaborate form of hatching, unlike anything in his preserved graphic œuvre (fig. 110).[22] It has been suggested that, in contrast with most other sketches in the sketchbook, they were copied from drawings by Titian – or more precisely, taking into account recent scholarship, Titianesque drawings – to which Van Dyck would have gained access. One such figure study, now attributed to Domenico Campagnola and preserved in Frankfurt, is executed with similarly dense penwork.[23] Van Dyck may indeed have chosen to work after a Venetian drawing, not in the first place aiming to record a specific motif, but to make his own a drawing technique different from those he had learned to use himself.

Evidence of Van Dyck's familiarity with Venetian drawings can also be found elsewhere in the surviving body of his drawings. From at least the late 1620s, Van Dyck regularly used blue paper, undoubtedly inspired by Venetian models; the earliest known example is his portrait study in Edinburgh of the musician and courtier Nicholas Lanier (fig. 111).[24] It seems that such drawings, hastily done and focusing on the sitter's 'shape and drapery' – and further described by the banker and art collector Everhard Jabach, in conversation with the French art theorist Roger de Piles as done 'on grey paper, with white and black crayons' – became Van Dyck's favourite way of preparing a portrait; a good number of these survive.[25] In these portrait studies, Van Dyck was not only inspired by the grand manner of Italian, and first and foremost Venetian portraits, but also by the type of drawings the Italian painters made in preparation of them. The few surviving examples by the great Venetian sixteenth-century artists are closely comparable to Van Dyck's, as will be clear from one such sketch by Veronese (fig. 112).[26] One can assume that drawings like this were more abundantly present in Venetian collections when Van Dyck visited the city. The inspiration he took from his Venetian predecessors is here not limited to composition or colour of their paintings, but extends to their technique in a subtle homage to their importance for his art.

Fig. 112. Paolo Veronese, *Portrait Study of a Seated Man from the Soranzo Family,* ca. 1585-1588, black and white chalks, on blue paper, 30.1 x 20.7 cm, location unknown.

Fig. 111. Anthony van Dyck, *Portrait Study of Nicholas Lanier,* ca. 1628, black and white chalks, on blue paper, 39.4 x 28.8 cm, Edinburgh, Scottish National Gallery.

Fig. 113. Titian, *Landscape with a Castle on a Mountain*, ca. 1535, pen and brown ink, 13.6 x 26.7 cm, London, British Museum.

Fig. 114. Anthony van Dyck, *Landscape with a Gnarled Tree and a Farm*, ca. 1635-1640(?), pen and brown ink, 21.6 x 32.1 cm, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Even more subtle, perhaps, is the Venetian music that can be heard in Van Dyck's most personal and lyrical drawings – the small group of landscape drawings, most made in England in the later years of his life. Landscape sketches, done from life, also appear in the Italian Sketchbook and are remarkable for their directness and near-abstraction.[27] But it is in the later examples from his English period, when drawing in Kent, that Van Dyck appears to have found inspiration in the masters of Venetian landscape drawing, following both their imaginative vision of the north Italian countryside and their lively penmanship. Van Dyck could have had access to drawn landscape by the likes of Titian and Domenico Campagnola in the great English collections, the owners of which he knew well and shared his passion for Venetian art. (Later in the seventeenth century, they are also recorded in Antwerp collections, such as that of canon Johannes Philippus Happaert.)[28] The similarity of atmosphere, technique and style between an example of a landscape by Titian in London (fig. 113)[29] and one by Van Dyck in New York (fig. 114)[30] will make sufficiently clear how Van Dyck had interiorized lessons from Titian and other Venetians and applied these lessons even when drawing out in the English countryside. Arguably, no better proof can be found of how deeply Venetian art, including Venetian drawings, pervaded Van Dyck's work.

NOTES

1 For the influence of Venetian art on Rubens and Van Dyck, see, among others, Alan McNairn, *The Young Van Dyck /Le jeune Van Dyck*, exh. cat. (Ottawa: National Gallery of Art of Canada, 1980), pp. 18-23; Michael Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection of Northern European Drawings* (Turin / London/ Venice: Allemandi, 2002), pp. 70-71; and Ben van Beneden's chapter in the present publication.

2 Giovanni Pietro Bellori, *Le vite de' pittori, scultori et architetti moderni* (Rome, 1672), p. 222: 'in Venetia tutto riuolto al colorito di Titiano, e di Paolo Veronese'. English translation from Giovanni Pietro Bellori, *The Lives of the Modern Painters, Sculptors, and Architects. A New Translation and Critical Edition*, trans. Alice Sedgwick Wohl (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 216.

3 The present writer in *Van Dyck. The Anatomy of Portraiture*, exh. cat. (New York: The Frick Collection, 2016), pp. 7-8, 57. The painting is at the Koninklijke Musea voor Schone Kunsten van België/Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels (inv. 6858); see Nora De Poorter in Barnes *et al.*, *Van Dyck. A Complete Catalogue of the Paintings* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004), no. I.149; and *Van Dyck: Portraiture*, no. 1, ill.).

4 The most recent and thorough exploration of the subject is Catherine Whistler, *Venice and drawing, 1500-1800. Theory, Practice and Collecting* (New Haven / London: Yale University Press, 2016).

5 See Jeremy Wood, *Copies and Adaptations from Renaissance and Later Artists. Italian Artists. Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* XXVI, I-III, 6 vols. (London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2010-2011), for a thorough discussion of Rubens's strong interest in art from the various Italian schools.

6 For a recent discussion and catalogue, see Wood, *Copies and Adaptations*, vol. 2, which also documents the comparatively small number of drawings by Rubens related to the Venetian masters.

7 Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (inv. RP-T-1954-159). The drawing was hitherto given to Jan Erasmus's father Erasmus II Quellinus, who, however, never visited Italy. The correct attribution is evident from a comparison with works such as the signed drawing in New York, reproduced here as fig. 99. The painting copied by Quellinus is now at the Galleria dell'Accademia (inv. 430), see Teresio Pignatti and Filippo Pedrocco, *Veronese* (Milan: Electa, 1995), vol. 2, no. 356, ill. For Jan Erasmus Quellinus, see Marie-Louise Hairs, *Dans le sillage de Rubens. Les peintres d'histoire anversois au XVIIe siècle* (Liège: Bibliothèque de la Faculté de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Université de Liège, 1977), pp. 277-289. For Lefebvre, see Ugo Ruggeri, *Valentin Lefèvre*, 1637-1677. *Dipinti, disegni, incisioni* (Manerba / Reggio Emilia: Merigo, 2001).

8 Department of Drawings and Prints, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (inv. 62.147).

9 Department of Prints and Drawings, The British Museum, London (inv. 1957,1214.207.62). The main literature on the sketchbook remains Gert Adriani, *Anton van Dyck: Italienisches Skizzenbuch* (Vienna: Schroll, 1940); and Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection*, pp. 70-127, with further bibliographic references.

10 As suggested by McNairn in *The Young Van Dyck*, pp. 19-20.

11 As demonstrated, for instance, in connection with the drawing reproduced here as fig. 104, in David Ekserdjian, "Van Dyck and the Old Masters. A Drawing and its Sources," *Apollo* cdlv (2000): pp. 46-47.

12 Fols. 24 verso, 25 recto, 25 verso, 26 recto, for which, see Adriani, *Van Dyck: Skizzenbuch*, pp. 40-41, ill.; and Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection*, nos. 1031-1032, ill. For the woodcut, see David Rosand and Michgelangelo Muraro, *Titian and the Venetian Woodcut*, exh. cat. (Washington / Dallas / Detroit: National Gallery of Art, Washington, Dallas Museum of Arts, and The Detroit Institute of Arts, 1976), no. 4, ill.

13 Department of Drawings and Prints, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (inv. 2005.253); see Horst Vey, *Die Zeichnungen Anton van Dycks* (Brussels: Verlag Arcade, 1962), vol. 1, no. 149, vol. 2, figs. 190, 193; Ekserdjian "Van Dyck and the Old Masters," pp. 46-48.

14 Alsteens in *Van Dyck: Portraiture*, p. 17. For the drawing (fol. 110 recto of the sketchbook), see Adriani, *Van Dyck: Skizzenbuch*, pp. 72-73, ill.; Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection*, no. 1110, ill.; and Xavier F. Salomon, *Van Dyck in Sicily, 1624-1625. Painting and the Plague*, exh. cat. (London: Dulwich Picture Gallery, 2012), no. 5, ill. For the painting in the Sackville Collection at Knole House, Kent, see Susan J. Barnes in Barnes *et al.*, *Van Dyck. A Complete Catalogue*, no. II.27, ill.; and Salomon in *Van Dyck in Sicily*, no. 6, ill. For the 'striga in Palermo' (fol. 58 verso), see Adriani, *Van Dyck: Skizzenbuch*, p. 54, ill.; Elizabeth McGrath, "'Una striga in Palermo.'A Sicilian Document from the Italian Sketchbook," in *Van Dyck 1599-1999. Conjectures and Refutations*, ed. Hans Vlieghe (Turnhout: Brepols, 2001); Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection*, no. 1066, ill.; for the comedians (fols. 59 recto, 59 verso, 60 recto), see Adriani, *Van Dyck: Skizzenbuch*, pp. 54-55, ill.; and Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection*, nos. 1067-1068, ill.

15 Fols. 60 verso and 62 recto, for which, see Adriani, *Van Dyck: Skizzenbuch*, pp. 55, 56, ill.; Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection*, nos. 1069, 1070, ill. For the paintings at the Egremont Collection at Petworth House, Sussex, see Barnes in Barnes *et al.*, *Van Dyck. A Complete Catalogue*, nos. II.62, II.63, ill.

16 For these sketches (known as 'crabbelinghe') by Rubens and Van Dyck, and their stylistic similarities, see Anne-Marie Logan, "Distinguishing the Drawings by Anthony van Dyck from those of Peter Paul Rubens," in Vlieghe, *Conjectures and Refutations*, pp. 7-28.

17 For the drawing (fol. 19 recto in the sketchbook), see Adriani, *Van Dyck: Skizzenbuch*, p. 36, ill.; and Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection*, no. 1022, ill. For the painting at the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen, Antwerp (inv. 357), see Harold E. Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian* (London: Phaidon, 1969-1971), vol. 1, no. 132, pls. 144-146.

18 Fol. 6 verso, for which, see Adriani, *Van Dyck: Skizzenbuch*, p. 25, ill.; Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection*, no. 998, ill.

19 Wethey, *Paintings*, vol. 1, no. 64, fig. 32. A painting said to be a painted copy by Van Dyck after Titian's composition, formerly in the collection of Antoine Seilern and now in the Gemäldegalerie, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna (inv. GG 9798), can no longer be accepted as a work by the Fleming: *pace* Erik Larsen, *The Paintings of Anthony van Dyck* (Freren: Luca Verlag, 1988), vol. 2, no. 447, ill.

20 For the drawing on fol. 6 recto, see Adriani, *Van Dyck: Skizzenbuch*, p. 24, ill.; and Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection*, no. 997, ill. For the drawing on fol. 7 recto, see Adriani, *Van Dyck: Skizzenbuch*, pp. 25-26; and Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection*, no. 999, ill. For the related paintings by Guercino (Vatican City, Pinacoteca Vaticana) and Titian, see Luigi Salerno, *I dipinti del Guercino* (Rome: Ugo Bozzi Editore, 1988), no. 88, ill.; and Wethey, *Paintings*, vol. 1, no. 70, fig. 58.

21 Fol. 33 verso, for which, see Adriani, *Van Dyck: Skizzenbuch*, p. 45, ill.; and Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection*, no. 1043, ill.

22 Fol. 48 recto, for which, see Adriani, *Van Dyck: Skizzenbuch*, p. 51, ill.; and Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection*, no. 1059, ill. For the other drawing (fol. 47 recto), see Adriani, *Van Dyck: Skizzenbuch*, p. 50, ill.; and Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection*, no. 1058, ill.

23 Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum (inv. 4174); see Harold E. Wethey, *Titian and his Drawings. With References to Giorgione and Some Close Contemporaries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), no. A-14, fig. 187, pl. 22, as by Campagnola; Joachim Jacoby, *Raffael bis Tizian. Italienische Zeichnungen aus dem Städel Museum*, exh. cat. (Frankfurt am Main / Paris: Städel Museum and Fondation Custodia, Collection Frits Lugt, 2014-2015), no. 86, attributed to Campagnola. The drawing was also once ascribed to Giorgione.

24 Edinburgh, Scottish National Gallery (inv. D 1846); see Vey, *Die Zeichnungen*, vol. 1, no. 203, vol. 2, fig. 251; Alsteens and Eaker in *Van Dyck: Portraiture*, p. 19, no. 20, ill.).

25 See Alsteens in *Van Dyck: Portraiture*., pp. 19-20. The quote is taken from Roger de Piles, *Cours de peintures par principes* (Paris, 1708), pp. 292-293: 'avec du papier gris & des crayons blancs & noirs, il dessinoit en un quart d'heure sa taille & ses habits'.

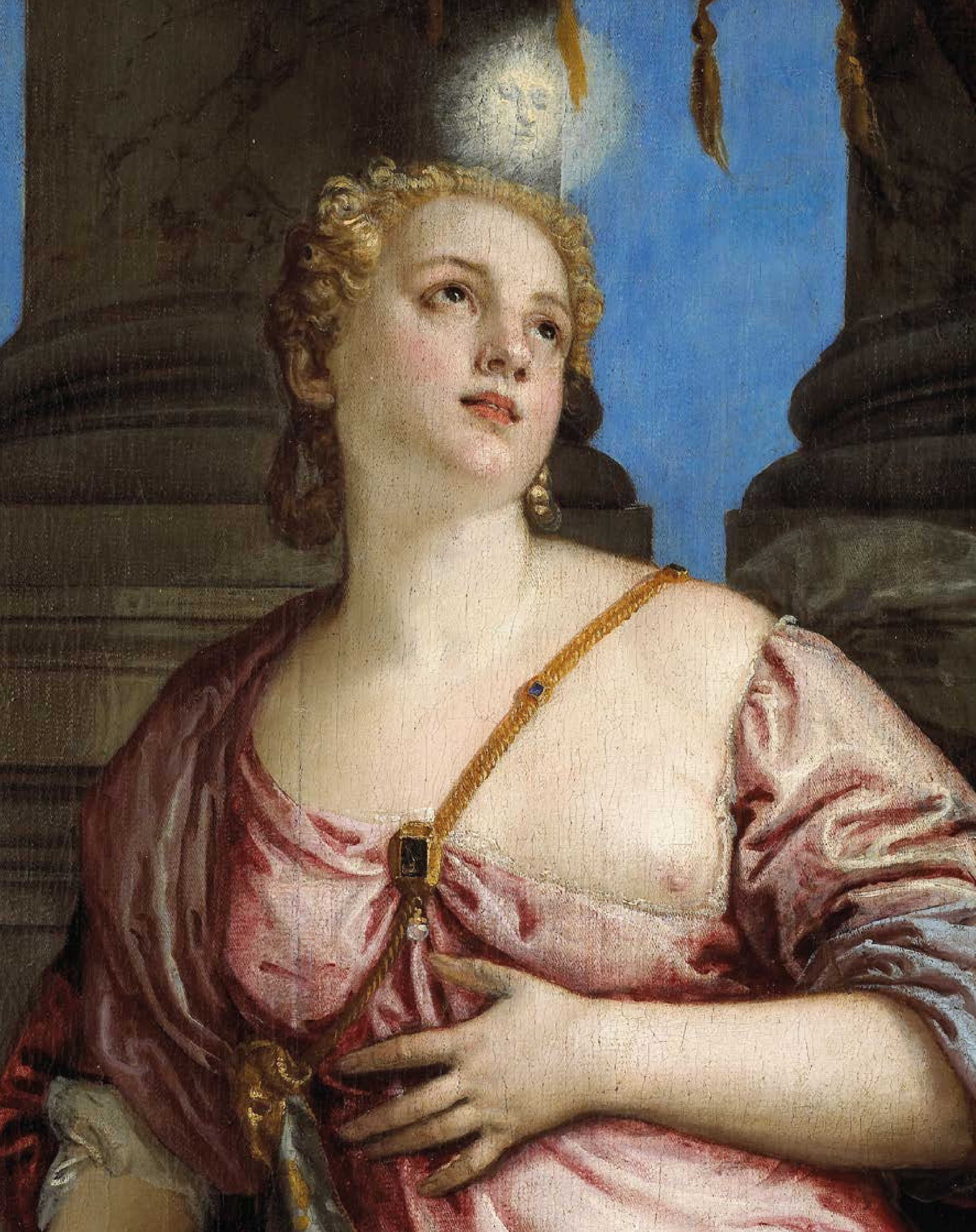
26 Location unknown, formerly in the sale New York, Sotheby's, 26 January 2000, lot 9. See Alsteens in *Van Dyck: Portraiture*, p. 19, fig; 21.

27 Fols. 1, 94 verso, 95 recto, 95 verso, for which, see Adriani, *Van Dyck: Skizzenbuch*, p. 21, ill.; and Jaffé, *The Devonshire Collection*, nos. 988, 1092-1094, ill.

28 For Happaert's remarkable collection of drawings, see the inventory published in Erik Duverger, *Antwerpse kunstinventarissen uit de zeventiende eeuw*. Fontis historiae artis neerlandicae / Bronnen voor de kunstgeschiedenis van de Nederlanden (Brussels: Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, 1984-2009), vol. 11, pp. 374-381. Several drawings are described as copies by the landscapist Lucas van Uden after Titian (ibid., p. 379), illustrating the continuing model Venetian landscapes set for Flemings. A drawing of a Venetian-inspired landscape bears an old attribution to Van Uden and can conceivably be identified with one of Happaert's sheets: Paris, Frits Lugt Collection (inv. 2003-T.1).

29 Department of Prints and Drawings, The British Museum, London (inv. 1895,0915.832); see Wethey, *Drawings*, no. 36, fig. 96, pl. 8. The affinities between this landscape drawing by Titian and Van Dyck's (as well as Giovanni Francesco Barbieri's, called Guercino) was already suggested by Martin Royalton-Kisch, *The Light of Nature. Landscape Drawings and Watercolours by Van Dyck and his Contemporaries*, exh. cat. (Antwerp / London: Rubenshuis and British Museum, 1999), p. 120, under no. 28.

30 Department of Drawings and Prints, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (inv. 1997.22); see Vey, *Die Zeichnungen*, vol. 1, no. 300, vol. 2, fig. 352; Royalton-Kisch, *The Light of Nature*, no. 25, ill.



From Venice to Antwerp: Colnaghi-Venetian Painting, Rubens and Van Dyck

Jeremy Howard

The present catalogue explores the history of a Venetian altarpiece which caught the eye of Van Dyck and is now on display in the Rubenshuis. It seems an appropriate opportunity therefore to reflect upon the important role played by Venetian painting in the history of Colnaghi as well as that of two great Antwerp masters whose art owed so much to Venice and to highlight some of the most important sales that have taken place over the last one hundred years and what they reveal about changing tastes and patterns of collecting.

The story really starts in 1894 with Colnaghi's first great American client Isabella Stewart Gardner. This was the period when the firm was being transformed from, in William Hazlitt's words, "a capital print shop"[1] to a major player in the market for Old Master paintings. Two men, above all, were responsible for this transformation: Colnaghi's energetic junior partner, the aptly-named Otto Gutekunst, and the brilliant young connoisseur Bernard Berenson who was to be the conduit for all the works of art that the firm sold to Isabella Stewart Gardner.[2] Although Gardner's first purchase from Colnaghi was a Florentine picture – Botticelli's *Tragedy of Lucretia* – she and Berenson shared a love of Venice and Venetian painting and it was, significantly, the gift of Berenson's *Venetian Painters of the Renaissance* in 1894 which re-established the relationship between the collector and the connoisseur. And it was also the sale of a Titian rather than a Botticelli, which really set the seal on that relationship. In 1896, Gardner bought the *Rape of Europa* (fig. 115) which had been sourced by Colnaghi from the collection of the Earl of Darnley.[3]

This once-famous painting, commissioned by Philip II and later in the Orléans Collection, had languished in the relative obscurity of Cobham Hall for almost a century before being offered to Colnaghi. The *Europa* was, Gutekunst informed Berenson excitedly, "a picture for a great coup. There is," he continued, "absolutely nothing against it except perhaps, for some scrupulous fool, the subject, which is very discreetly and quietly treated... condition is perfect, not considering a certain amount of dark varnish, and the landscape alone is a masterpiece of the first water... wouldn't it be jolly if Europa went to Amerika?"[4]

Gutekunst's concerns that the subject matter might be too erotic for American tastes is revealing, and this may be one reason why Titian's portraits tended to more popular with American collectors than his voluptuous subject pictures.[5] Mrs Gardner, however, had no such scruples and for her, who spent her summers in the Palazzo Barbaro on the Grand Canal and who liked to identify herself with her Renaissance namesake Isabella D'Este, the acquisition of this great Renaissance *poesia,* for over five times what she had paid for the Botticelli, marked her coming of age as a collector. In an age when the provenances of pictures (which were then referred to as "pedigrees") could be as important a selling point as the bloodlines of a racehorse,[6] the *Europa* had the added magic of an association with Charles I who had never actually owned the picture, but had been supposedly offered it as a wedding gift while he was negotiating (unsuccessfully) for the hand of the Infanta. This rather tenuous connection was exploited brilliantly by Berenson in a letter which was a masterpiece of salesmanship in which he concluded that "it would be poetic justice if a painting intended for a Stewart should rest at last in the hands of a Stewart,"[7] misspelling Charles I's surname to reinforce the connection. While some American collectors might have balked at the subject matter, this particular Bostonian collector seems to have relished its erotic charge. As so often in her relationship with Berenson, works of art became objects of sublimated desire, and art dealing became a form of seduction in which Berenson was cast by her in the role of the serpent while she was his "all too willing Eve."[8] When the picture finally arrived in Boston in the autumn of 1896, Gardner was ecstatic: "I am breathless about the *Europa,* even yet! I am back here tonight… after a two days' orgy. The orgy was drinking myself drunk with *Europa* and then sitting for hours in my Italian garden at Brookline, thinking and dreaming about her. Every inch of paint is full of joy."[9] Aside from the sensuous appeal of the Titian, Gardner also enjoyed her social triumph particularly over her male visitors, many of whom came "with grave doubts … to scoff; but all wallowed at her feet."[10] The painting had such a strong personal resonance for Gardner that she hung one of her favourite Worth gowns beneath the picture in a room at Fenway Court which became known as the Titian room.

In 1899 Colnaghi almost pulled off a coup to rival the sale of *Europa.* They had agreed to buy Titian's great masterpiece *Sacred and profane Love* from the Borghese family for a record £150,000, over seven times the price that Isabella Stewart Gardner had paid for the *Europa.* Berenson had been carefully priming her to buy the picture which he said would hang perfectly next to her first great Titian purchase. But, in the event, negotiations broke down for legal reasons – when the Italian government intervened and bought the villa and its contents for the nation – but also because the colossal price seems to have been a stumbling block with Gardner's trustees. And so *Europa* did not get her perfect pendant.[11] But Colnaghi and Berenson did succeed in selling Isabella Stewart Gardner a great Rubens portrait which Berenson assured her, would hang very well in the same collection as the Titian. "Now I am going to overwhelm you with another offer," Berenson wrote to her in June 1896 following the successful conclusion of the *Europa* sale. "Tis nothing less than the arch-famous portrait of the Earl of Arundel by Rubens. Who the Earl of Arundel was, the great ambassador and advisor of Charles I, great patron of art and letters, I need not tell you. Until the other day it belonged to Lord Warwick. Now it is for sale. It is life-size and in perfect condition. The price is £24,000 a trifle more or less. It is a huge price but not as Rubens now goes" (fig. 116).[12] Mrs Gardner seems to have balked at the original price quoted which was £4,000 more than she had paid for *Europa,* and a few days later Berenson wrote again saying that he might be able to get the picture for £21,000, the price she eventually paid for it: "it is Rubens's greatest portrait…You now have one of the great Titians; *Arundel* will be a match for it."[13]

Fig. 115. Titian, *Rape of Europa*, ca. 1560-1562, oil on canvas, 178 x 205 cm, Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

Fig. 116. Peter Paul Rubens, *Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel*, ca. 1629-1630, oil on canvas, 122.2 x 102.1 cm, Boston, Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

Fig. 117. Titian, *Pietro Aretino*, ca. 1537, oil on canvas, 101.9 x 85.7 cm, New York, Frick Collection.

In 1903 Henry Clay Frick took over from Isabella Stewart Gardner as Colnaghi's most important American client and his first major purchase, significantly, was a Titian, though Frick, in whose great collection there is a notable absence of female nudity, seems to have preferred Titian's portraiture to his erotic mythological paintings. Titian's magnificent portrait of his friend, the writer and notorious libertine Pietro Aretino (fig. 117) was the first great Renaissance painting sold by Colnaghi and Knoedler to Henry Clay Frick and a milestone in their triangular relationship. The price paid for the painting was 90,000 dollars (around 18,000 pounds) almost as much as almost as much Mrs Gardner's *Europa*, which was an index of how Titian prices were on the rise.

Frick's next important purchase of Venetian painting was a pair of beautiful Veroneses of *Wisdom and Strength* and *The Choice Between Virtue and Vice* (figs. 118a & 118b), for which he paid almost 200,000 dollars (40,000 pounds at the contemporary rate of exchange) which have hung either side of the door into the gallery since 1914, providing a climax to the enfilade. Given Frick's evident love for the Cinquecento and his preference for secular over religious subject matter, it is perhaps surprising that his most famous purchase of a Venetian picture that had passed through Colnaghi's hands was Bellini's *Ecstasy of Saint Francis*, a picture which is as austere as the Veroneses are sumptuous.

Frick does not seem to have had any appetite for the subject pictures of Rubens, whose figures may have been too voluptuous for his tastes, but, like many American Gilded Age collectors, he responded to the elegant portraiture of Van Dyck whose paintings drew so much of their inspiration from Venetian art. Around the middle of the nineteenth century there seems to have been a decline in Van Dyck's reputation which may explain why the artist was not included among the pantheon of painters on the Albert Memorial,[14] but since then, his star had been rising steadily linked to the revival of society portraiture by artists like Sargent, and the taste for British Golden Age portraiture. In an era when Gainsborough's *Blue Boy* was to become for a time the most expensive picture in the world, it was not surprising that Van Dyck's portraits, which provided the prototype for so many of Gainsborough's pictures, were eagerly sought after by American collectors. Although Van Dyck's *Portrait of Frans Snyders* (fig. 119) was probably painted before the artist's first visit to Italy, it shows very strongly the lessons that the Flemish master had absorbed from Venetian painting. Although Snyders was an animal painter, Van Dyck's portrait of him lends him a decidedly aristocratic air with the gentlemanly nonchalance, (what Castiglione called *sprezzatura)* which characterises such portraits as Titian's *Young Man with a Glove*. And this air of easy grandeur was entirely appropriate given that for much of its life the picture had hung

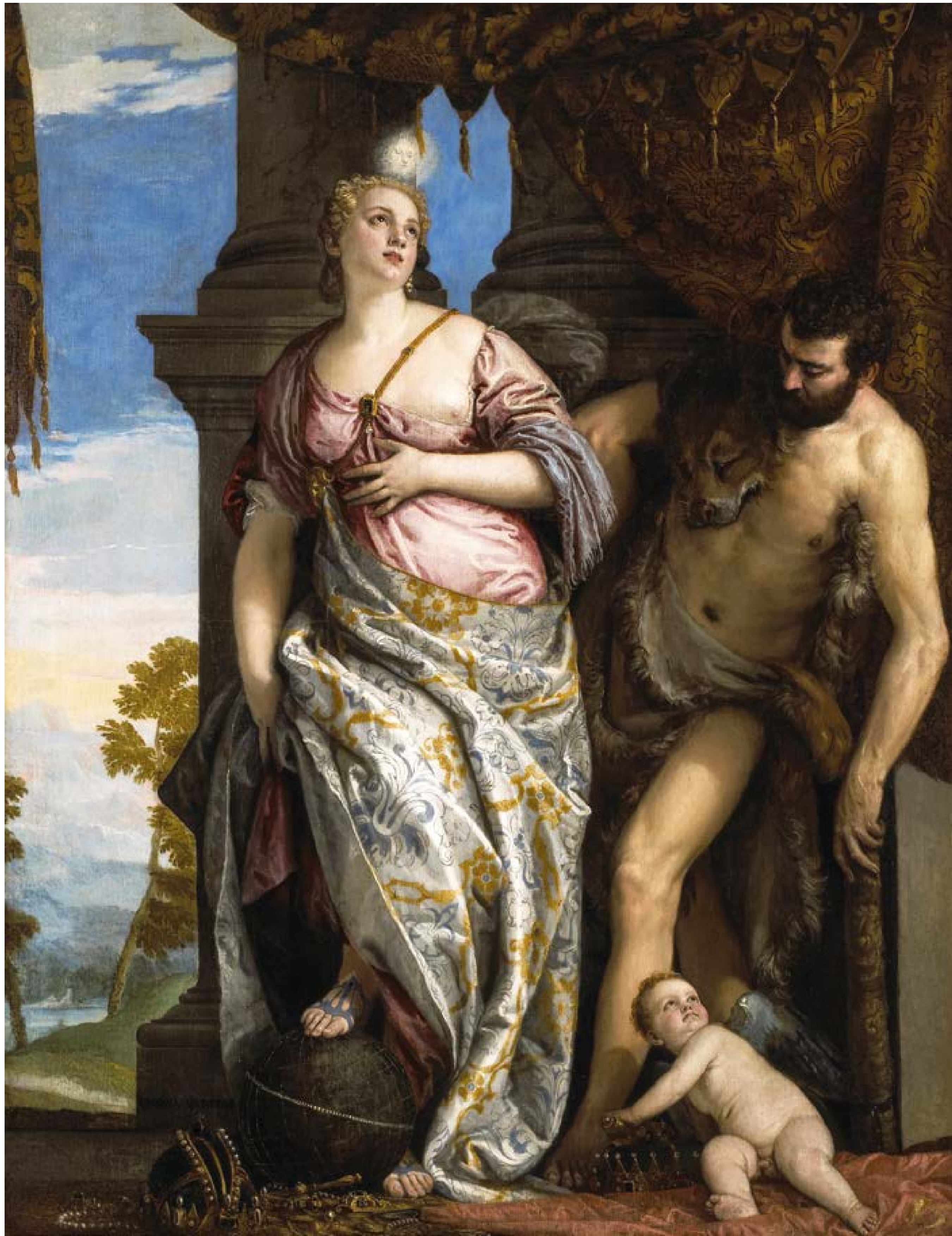


Fig. 118a. Paolo Veronese, *Wisdom and Strength,* ca. 1565, oil on canvas, 214.6 x 167 cm, New York, The Frick Collection.

Fig. 118b. Paolo Veronese, *The Choice Between Virtue and Vice*, ca. 1565, oil on canvas, 219.1 x 169.5 cm, New York, Frick Collection.

Fig. 119. Anthony van Dyck, *Frans Snyders*, ca. 1620, oil on canvas, 142.6 x 105.4 cm, New York, Frick Collection.

Fig. 120. Anthony van Dyck, *Marchesa Elena Grimaldi Cattaneo*, 1623, oil on canvas, 242.9 x 138.5 cm, Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art.

in the most exalted company, first in the famous collection of the Duc d'Orléans and then for a hundred years on the walls of Castle Howard. In 1857 it was one of the highlights of the blockbuster Manchester Art Treasures Exhibition, and was reproduced in Colnaghi and Agnew's pioneering photographically-illustrated catalogue of that exhibition.[15] So fond was its previous owner of the painting, that, having sold the picture to Colnaghi, Lord Carlisle had second thoughts and told Gutekunst that he wanted the Van Dyck back if not sold "as the empty space in his castle looks so bad."[16] Colnaghi's solution was to have a good copy made[17] and, having soothed the feelings of the reluctant seller, they sold the picture through Knoedler for 200,000 dollars cash taking a Gainsborough in part exchange from Frick.[18]

Another Van Dyck that Frick acquired from Colnaghi and Knoedler was his *Marchesa Elena Grimaldi Cattaneo* (fig. 120), one of

Fig. 121. Tintoretto, *Moses Striking the Rock*, 1563, oil on canvas, 118 x 182 cm, Frankfurt, Städel Museum.

a whole group of portraits from the Cattaneo collection in Genoa that Colnaghi had acquired in 1907. The finest of this group was undoubtedly the *Marchesa Elena Grimaldi Cattaneo* (Washington, National Gallery of Art) a portrait which has all the haughty grandeur and exoticism of a Veronese. Frick had originally been offered the picture, but when he turned it down on grounds of price,[19] it was sold to P A Widener and so, ultimately New York's loss became Washington's gain. Since the beginning of the century the art market had been increasingly dominated by American buyers, with the German museums, who had played an important role in Colnaghi's business in the 1890s, progressively marginalised. This trend was to be exacerbated by the outbreak of the First World War, but in the years leading up to the war Colnaghi sold two important Venetian pictures to German museums: one was Guardi's scintillating *Gala Concert in the Sala dei Filarmonici*, Venice, bought from the collection of the Dukes of Rutland and sold to the Alte Pinakothek, Munich; the other was an important early Tintoretto of *Moses Striking the Rock* (fig. 121) which had come from the Hamilton Palace Collection and was sold on the eve of the war to the Städel Museum in Frankfurt.[20] This painting is contemporary with the Bowie altarpiece and features similar ghostly figures in the background.

Colnaghi's third most important American buyer was Andrew Mellon, whose collection laid the foundations for the National Gallery of Art in Washington. The first masterpiece sold to him, in 1925, was not a Venetian picture but a portrait of Edward VI by Holbein (Washington, National Gallery of Art), a painter for whom Mellon, like his close friend Frick, had a great admiration. But in 1930/1931 Colnaghi and Knoedler, working in partnership with Matthieson Gallery in Berlin, pulled off the biggest art deal in the firm's history when they landed the sale of a group of highly

Fig. 122. Titian, *Venus with a Mirror*, ca. 1555, oil on canvas, 124 x 104 cm, Washington D.C., The National Gallery of Art.

important pictures from the Hermitage Collection which were being sold off secretly by Stalin. The Venetian pictures netted by this sale included such masterpieces as Titian's *Venus with a Mirror* (fig. 122), a picture which had been admired and copied by Rubens, and Veronese's *Finding of Moses*, both of which were sold to Mellon and are now in the National Gallery of Art in Washington along with Van Dyck's masterful portrait of *Philip, Lord Wharton*. One great Venetian picture, however, which Mellon did not acquire from the Hermitage collection was Tiepolo's *Banquet of Cleopatra* (fig. 123) sold to the National Gallery of Art in Victoria, which is one of the supreme examples of Tiepolo responding to the colour and pageantry of Veronese.[21]

During the years after the Second World War, Colnaghi continued to sell important Venetian and Flemish seventeenth pictures, such as Titian's *Penitent Magdalene* sold to the Getty in 1955 (the museum's earliest purchase from Colnaghi,) his *Venus and Adonis,* acquired by the Metropolitan Museum in 1949, and two other Titians – his *Pietro Bembo* and *Cardinal Cornaro Conferring a Benefice*, which were acquired by the National Gallery of Art in Washington in 1952 and 1960. But there was a noticeable change in the types of pictures that were being sold which reflected changing tastes and the professionalism of American museums. Whereas the Gilded Age private collectors such as Frick were prepared to pay top dollar for portraits by Van Dyck or Titian

Fig. 123. Giambattista Tiepolo, *The Banquet of Cleopatra*, 1743-1744, oil on canvas, 250.3 x 357 cm, Melbourne, National Gallery of Art.

Fig. 125. Paolo Veronese, *Resurrection of Christ*, ca. 1580, oil on canvas, 273.4 x 156.2 cm, London, Chelsea and Westminster Hospital Chapel.

Fig. 124. Anthony van Dyck, *Entry of Christ*, ca. 1617, oil on canvas, 150.4 x 229.2 cm, Indianapolis, Indianapolis Museum of Art.

(but had, with a few exceptions, relatively little appetite for subject pictures), the more academic approach of the post-war era saw some significant sales of a different type of picture, such as Van Dyck's marvellous *Entry of Christ into Jerusalem* (fig. 124), sold in 1958 to the Indianapolis Museum of Art. In 1976 the Kimbell acquired Rubens's *Modello for the Equestrian Portrait of the Duke of Buckingham*, a picture which would have hung very happily in the company of the artist's portrait of Buckingham's great rival, Arundel, which Colnaghi had sold eighty years earlier to Isabella Stewart Gardner.

The era of the 1950s and 1960s, when James Byam Shaw was Director of the firm, saw both a great revival of interest in baroque painting, in which Roderick Thesiger was to play a pioneering role, and simultaneously, an interest in Venetian art of the eighteenth century. This was to bear fruit in Byam Shaw's scholarly catalogues raisonnés of the drawings of Francesco Guardi and Giandomenico Tiepolo and the important *Sebastiano Ricci* exhibition (1978) and, in the same year, the exhibition *The Grand Tour*, the last of which featured a number of paintings by Canaletto, Guardi, and Bellotto. The revival of interest in the Italian Baroque was also reflected in taste for the dynamism and chiaroscuro of Tintoretto several of whose paintings passed through Colnaghi's hands during this period, and for the darker and more passionate late works of Veronese, so different in character to Frick's sun-drenched allegories, such as the *Resurrection of Christ* (fig. 125) which was acquired from Colnaghi in 1951 by Westminster Hospital.[22]

This magnificent, dynamic altarpiece was lent back for the 1984 Colnaghi exhibition *Art, Commerce, Scholarship*[23] in which the Tintoretto altarpiece of the *Angel Foretelling the Martyrdom of Saint Catherine of Alexandria* first caught the eye of David Bowie. And although the two pictures were painted about twenty years apart – the Tintoretto at the middle of his career and the Veronese in the older artist's final decade

– they share a similar dynamism and interesting points of convergence. While the Tintoretto, as Palluchini pointed out,[24] shows strongly the influence of Veronese in the bright colours and architectural setting, Veronese's altarpiece has a dramatic chiaroscuro and an emotionalism which, although primarily deriving from Bassano, is also somewhat redolent of Tintoretto's later work in the Scuola di San Rocco.

Also included in the 1984 exhibition were the important series of paintings by Van Dyck of *Five Apostles* from Althorp, one of which was acquired by the Getty Museum, and which were inspired by the example of Rubens and Tintoretto's *Portrait of a Cardinal in the Grimani Family*,[25] which harks back to Titian's famous papal portrait of Paul III.

These days it is not so easy to find great Venetian paintings as it was even thirty years ago. Colnaghi are unlikely to have the chance again of handling a Titian *poesia* such as the *Europa,* and the great portraits by Van Dyck and Rubens are mostly now in museums. Nevertheless, the firm has managed to handle some very fine pictures by Rubens such as his *Portrait of a Man as Mars* (fig. 126) which we sold about fifteen years ago to a private collector, and the Francesco Maggioto *Bacchus and Ariadne* acquired by the Liechtenstein Museum in 2007, provides a fitting homage by an eighteenth-century Venetian artist to the art of the great Venetian sixteenth-century masters who exercised such an important influence on Rubens and Van Dyck.

NOTES

1 "A capital print shop (Colnaghi's or Molteno's) is a point to aim at in a morning walk-a relief and satisfaction in the motley confusion, the vulgarity of common life," W. Hazlitt, *Picture Galleries of England,* 1824, quoted in *Art, Commerce, Scholarship: A Window on the Art World-Colnaghi 1760-1984*, ed. Donald Garstang (London/New York: Colnaghi, 1984), p. 16.

2 On the role played by Otto Gutekunst in the transformation of Colnaghi's business see the present author's "A Masterly Old Master Dealer of the Gilded Age: Otto Gutekunst and Colnaghi," in *Colnaghi - The History*, ed. Jeremy Howard (London: Colnaghi, 2010), pp. 12-19. For the most extensive study of the relationship between Gutekunst and Berenson see Jeremy Howard, "Art, Commerce, Scholarship; The Friendship between Otto Gutekunst of Colnaghi and Bernard Berenson," in *Bernard Berenson-Formation and Heritage*, eds. Joseph Conners and Louis Waldman (Fiesole/ Harvard: Villa I Tatti, The Harvard Center for Italian Renaissance Studies, 2014), pp. 33-68.

3 For more detail see Jeremy Howard, "Titian's Rape of Europa: Its Reception in Britain and Sale to America," in *The Reception of Titian in Britain from Reynolds to Ruskin,* ed. Peter Humfrey (Turnhout: Brepols, 2013), pp. 189-201.

4 Letter from Otto Gutekunst to Bernard Berenson, 19 February, 1896, *Colnaghi Letterbooks.*[Col.1/4/1]

5 As implied by Nicholas Hall in *Colnaghi in America*, ed. Nicholas Hall (New York: Colnaghi, 1992), p. 13: "Doubtless subject-matter ruled entire schools out of consideration."

6 For an illuminating study of the importance of provenance in the Gilded Age art market, see Elizabeth A. Pergam, "Provenance as Pedigree," in *Provenance-An Alternate History of Art*, eds. Gail Feigenbaum and Inge Reist (Los Angeles/ Chicago: Getty Research Institute, University of Chicago Press, 2012), pp. 104-122.

7 Berenson to Gardner, 10 May, 1896, quoted in *The Letters of Bernard Berenson and Isabella Stewart Gardner, 1887-1927, with Correspondence by Mary Berenson*, ed. Rollin van N. Hadley (Boston: Isabella Stewart Gardiner Museum, 1987), pp. 55-56.

8 Gardner to Berenson, 12 January 1898. Hadley, *The Letters*, p. 116.

9 Gardner to Berenson, 19 September 1896. Hadley, *The Letters*, pp. 65-66.

10 Gardner to Berenson, 19 September 1896. Hadley, *The Letters*, p. 66.

11 See the present author's 'Titian's Rape of Europa', p. 198.

12 Berenson to Gardner, 22 June 1896. Hadley, *The Letters*, p. 58.

13 Berenson to Gardner, 26 June 1896. Hadley, *The Letters*, p. 59.

14 As noted by Francis Haskell, *Rediscoveries in Art* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1977), p.17: "no Van Dyck on the Albert Memorial seems inexplicable, and makes one grudge the space occupied by Hubert van Eyck."

15 *Photographs of the Gems of the Art Treasures Exhibition, 1857 by Signori Caldesi and Montecchi*, published by P & D Colnaghi & Co, publishers to her Majesty and Thomas Agnew and Sons, printsellers to Her Majesty (London and Manchester, 1858), no. 85.

16 Gutekunst to Duveen, 20 May 1909, "Dear Duveen, Lord Carlisle told me today that he wants the Van Dyck back if not sold….as the empty space in his castle looks so bad." *Colnaghi Letterbooks*. [Col1/4/10].

17 Colnaghi to Earl of Carlisle, 24 May 1909, "I have given instructions for a trustworthy man to go to Castle Howard next Thursday and take the portrait directly to the copyist." *Colnaghi Letterbooks* [Col 1/4/10].

18 Telegram Frick to Knoedler, 29 September 1909. [*Frick Collection Curatorial Files*, 7.18.011].

19 The timing was also unfortunate because the financial markets were in a very unstable condition and Frick was one of the financiers who had been brought in by Morgan to try to stabilize the markets. See Cynthia Saltzman, *Old Masters New World, America's Raid on Europe's Great Pictures* (New York: Viking, 2008), pp. 205-206.

20 Although Echols and Ilchman in 2009 rejected the attribution of *Moses Striking the Rock* to Tintoretto, Bastian Eclercy, the Curator of Italian Paintings at the Städel Museum, has confirmed to Colnaghi that the Museum has no doubt about Tintoretto's authorship, and the painting is catalogued and displayed as a work by the great Venetian Master.

21 See David Eskerdjian, "Colnaghi and the Hermitage Deal," in Howard, *Colnaghi: The History,* 2010, pp. 37-41.

22 The *Resurrection* was purchased in 1951 by the Board of Governors and generous supporters of the hospital. It was unveiled in the chapel of Westminster Hospital in 1952 by the President of the Royal Academy, Sir Gerald Kelly. It was moved into the Chelsea and Westminster Hospital chapel in 1993, which was purpose-built to accommodate the painting. It is part of an extensive art collection of over one thousand works which are owned, managed and curated by the hospital's charity CW+, which aims to improve the patient experience and environment through art and design.

23 Garstang, *Art, Commerce, Scholarship*, cat. 11.

24 Garstang, *Art, Commerce, Scholarship*, cat. 8, p.78.

25 Garstang, *Art, Commerce, Scholarship*, cat. 9, pp.78-93.

Fig. 126. Peter Paul Rubens, *Portrait of a Man as Mars*, 1620-1625, oil on canvas, 82.6 x 66 cm, Private Collection.

Enthusiasm: David Bowie, the collector

Matthew Collings

Jean-Michel Basquiat, *Air Power* (detail), 1984, acrylic and oilstick on canvas, 167.5 x 153 cm, Private Collection.

I appreciate the organic way in which David Bowie became an art collector, eventually building an impressive group of works. During the period of time in which I knew him, which was about six years, he never appeared to be particularly knowledgeable about art. So I was partly surprised when his collection came up for sale after his death and the display of a large part of it at Sotheby's struck me as very good.

The degree to which it wasn't surprising was due to the particular nature of the work. Collections of good examples of art in the style known by the art market as Modern British, acquired in the years Bowie mostly acquired his, the 90s, are not rare. The prices in those days weren't high and with the aid of advice from a consultant or friendly dealer you could get works of high quality with relative ease.

He certainly had substantial paintings by Ivon Hitchens, David Bomberg and Peter Lanyon, in particular, as well as First World War work of great intensity, including a Harold Gilman exemplifying this artist's unusual combination of social observation and rich decoration. David's Tintoretto altarpiece showing an angel prophesying St Catherine's martyrdom, which has now found its way to Rubens's former studio in Antwerp, has some of the floating qualities of composition and delicious transparent handling associated not only with Tintoretto but also some of these British modernists. Possessing it at all added to the myth after David's death (such is the awesome power of publicity) that he had been an art expert. It is significant that in the late 1990s he called his record label 'Tintoretto Music.'

Henry Moore
Family Group, 1944 (cast 1956-1957), bronze, 15 cm high, Private Collection.

Damien Hirst with David Bowie
Beautiful, Hallo, Space-Boy Painting, 1995, household gloss on canvas, diameter 213.4 cm, Private Collection.

In an interview with the *New York Times* in 1998 he said he owned another Tintoretto besides this one as well as an oil sketch by Rubens (of *Christ on the Cross*). He also said something interesting about what collecting meant to him:

> Art was, seriously, the only thing I'd ever wanted to own. It has always been for me a stable nourishment. I use it. It can change the way that I feel in the mornings. The same work can change me in different ways, depending on what I'm going through.

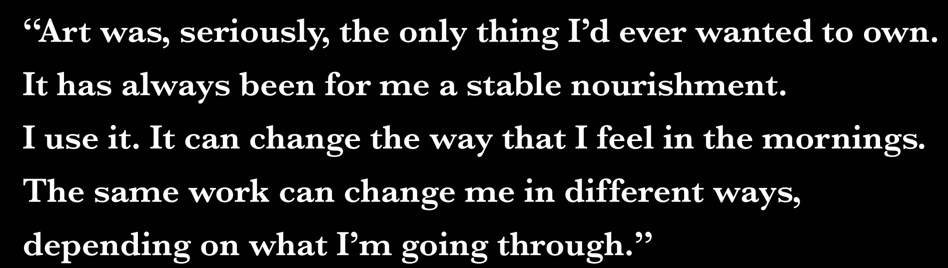
He was humble in his self-presentation when he wasn't in a public situation. And from his collection on show at Sotheby's it was clear he didn't buy art as trophies or for social climbing purposes. I can see how, as he suggests in this interview, it was a source of inner stability, something by which he could interpret his life.

It was curious on the open-days of the Sotheby's display to be milling with aging fans who I assumed saw the art as generic, the works of genius that a genius might be expected to be naturally drawn to. He was disconnected from Britain for most of his adult life and art was a form of connection.

I imagined him looking into the loose, free arrangements of Hitchens and Lanyon; strokes lying in deceptively simple colour structures in the first case, and paint put on with big brushes and scraped off again, making gouged and cut shapes, in the second. It's to David's great credit that when he bought these paintings there was little international prestige in owning them. And just as he controlled the meanings of his own death with his last record rather stunningly, so he has had a significant effect on the Modern British market generally, since his collection sold for three times its estimate just because of his name, and his association with the style has now in fact glamorized it.

I don't think before this moment many people would have associated Bowie with the 50s. It's an era completely opposite to his public image.

Frank Auerbach, *Head of Gerda Boehm*, 1965, oil on board, 44.5 x 37 cm, Private Collection.



**"Art was, seriously, the only thing I'd ever wanted to own.
It has always been for me a stable nourishment.
I use it. It can change the way that I feel in the mornings.
The same work can change me in different ways,
depending on what I'm going through."**

David Bowie

Peter Lanyon
Witness, 1961, oil on canvas, 183 x 122 cm, Private Collection.

Harold Gilman
Interior (Mrs Mounter), 1917, oil on canvas, 38 x 33 cm, Private Collection.

But it was the period he grew up in. The mood of British art in those days was a vaguely-apprehended background to his own life and his collection was his exploration of himself. He asked artists of that period for his own ideal of himself, and from the grave they obliged.

He was fun about art in a light way, as when he gossiped on the phone about the eccentricities and perversions of Eric Gill and Keith Vaughan, whose aesthetic achievement we both admired – he tried to get a Channel 4 TV series off the ground once, in which we'd interview each other about Modern British painters, but alas they thought the subject wasn't ritzy enough for a popular audience. But he could also be stilted. I once asked if he collected anything by conceptual artists and he replied, bafflingly, that he didn't need to, he got assistants to make up a replica so he could contemplate it.

I changed the subject because I was embarrassed. Later I thought the remark demonstrated his positive relentless experimentalism. I never resented his pseudery about art. I thought he more than compensated for it by unquestionable achievement in other areas and by the genuine enquiry that drove his collecting. If he acted a bit phoney about art it was only because in his naivite he thought that was what art-people did, and it was politeness. Plus he could do it quite well because his natural mode was artificiality.

I never got the impression he came from art or ever had much to do with it in the past, contrary to the now widespread belief that he had an artistic background, benefitting from the assumption that all British rockers went to art school (he didn't). Lindsay Kemp's mime company wasn't really art but theatre. Writing a song about Andy Warhol didn't necessarily involve having any more knowledge than anyone else about Warhol. And playing Warhol in Julian Schnabel's *Basquiat* doesn't mean you're intimate with the world in which any of these names means not just something but many nuanced and complicated things, so it's possible to have thoughts about them that are a bit dialectical. Owning a Basquiat – he owned two, both good – doesn't mean it either.

I met David for the first time in April 1997 at the launch of a book I'd written. He was its publisher. Some years earlier he had developed an interest in contemporary art. I assumed it because his music career was a bit down (he drifted off once it was up again). And as a result he got himself involved with the editors of Modern Painters. Flattered, they put him on the board as a contributing editor. He encouraged them to set up an art publishing company and my book was the first imprint. His enthusiasm about the idea of it was decisive in it being commissioned.

The funny thing is that from my point of view there was only trepidation. I was bewildered. I had no idea how to write a book. But I was broke, having been ejected from a position at the BBC as a freelance art critic. I was part of a nightly culture programme called The Late Show, which had recently evaporated. For years I'd had a desk at the BBC and was there most of each week, so it was as if I was actually employed by them. But my status was technically that of an outsider, based on what's called an artist's contract.

Painting was the only art training I'd ever had. But I'd stumbled from art school by accident into working for an art magazine. I remained for many years and for a long time was the editor. By a purely pragmatic route I built up the knowledge that served me later at the BBC. I developed every aspect of the operation, commissioning and shaping articles, building up the ads and persuading formidable international figures to make special projects and cover images. I had no idea what I was doing but made it up as I went along.

I left eventually under a cloud, for hitting one of the staff. Even though I'd made the magazine over the years into quite an important publication I'd also given it up to some publishers who financed a marvellously glossy look for it, but drew the line at physical violence in the office. David's own ad hoc improvisatory relationship to art knowledge was mirrored in my own.

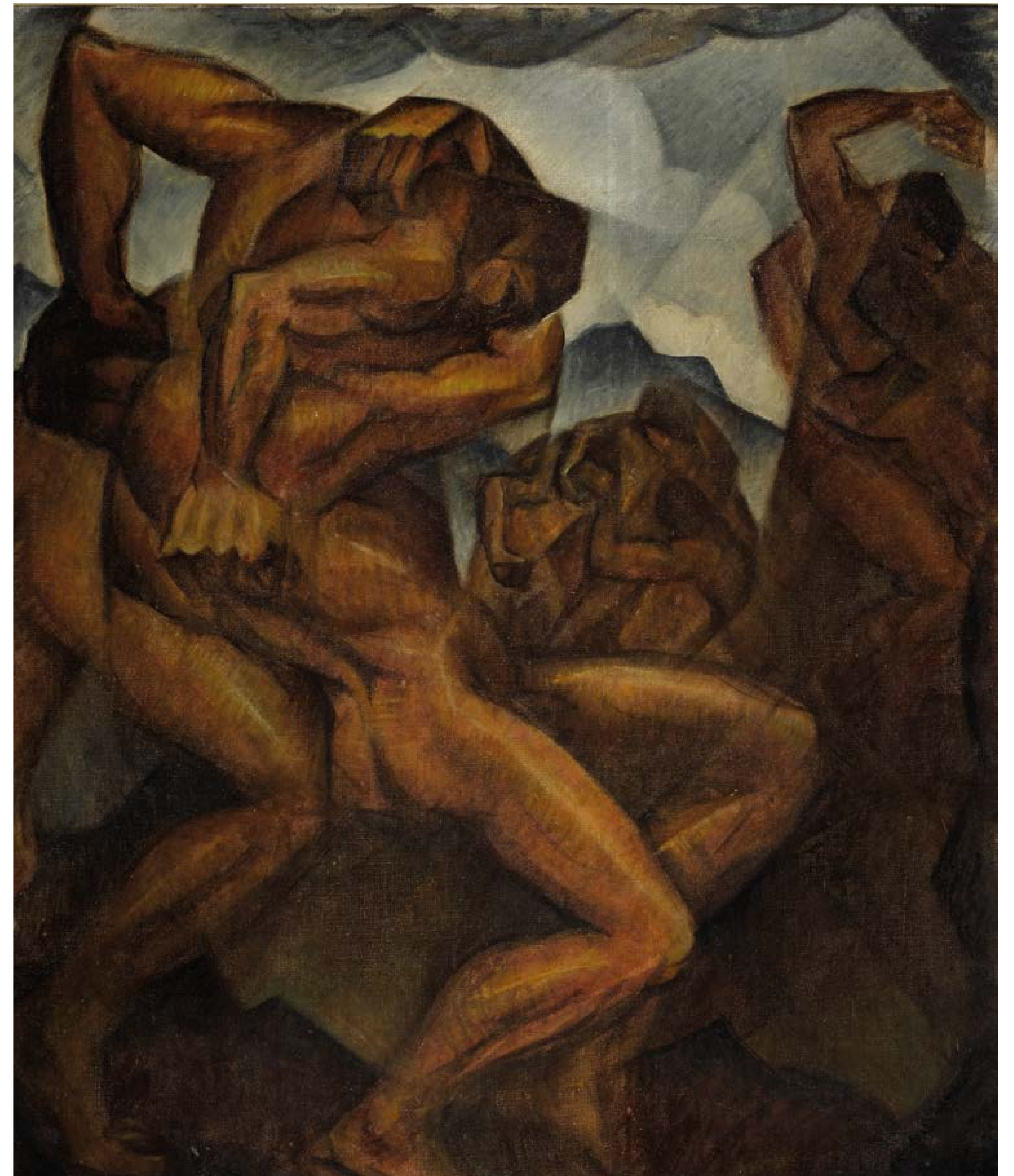
Lucky for me a BBC producer was attracted to my line in black-hearted cynical commentary on contemporary art, which managed also to include an equal proportion of energetic commitment. So I was rescued from the gutter, where I found myself not for the first or last time. Anyone who's been down there, if they also had anything to do with creativity, was attractive to David.

The board of the publishing company that David now led originally thought they should have something big, a book on Damien Hirst. But it turned out he had his own book planned. I was relieved because I thought it would be unbearable to be the facilitator of Hirst's self-expression, talented as he is. But I desperately needed money. So I said rather doubtfully that if they liked I could write about my bohemian parents who lived in squalor in Chelsea in the 1950s and knew the artists' scene in those days. That way I could make up my own book and say what I liked in my own language.

I had no idea at that time that David collected art, I never thought about him, and when I saw his articles in the magazine I glanced at them briefly then ignored them. But I learned later it was his enthusiasm for my tentative proposal that was key in it being accepted. And then even later – twenty years had passed by now – I realised the reason was that it accorded with the nature of his collection, geared as it was to an essentially 1950s look.

When the book was successful I was often asked if it was aimed at art-world insiders or outsiders. The fact is no one who really was an outsider could have had the thoughts in it. But they're aimed equally at both groups. The game of the writing is that its insights should be meaningful to both but in different ways. Insiders would be undermined. Outsiders would be intrigued and would learn something, though nothing obviously virtuous. David was firmly in the outsider group.

He loved the book being successful and I published a few more with him over the years. He bought art out of enthusiasm, and his enthusiasm made him likeable (he'd phone up and say, "Matthew we're on the third reprint!"). But it was difficult to ever know what to say to him.



Christopher Richard Wynne Nevison, *Conflict*, 1927, oil on canvas, 80 x 69 cm, Private Collection.

An encounter with David Bowie

Nicholas Hall

I think it was 1983. I was at Gaz's Rockin Blues, Gaz Mayall's now legendary Soho club in Meard Street with Sarah James, daughter of a British diplomat, and we had gone for a Straycats gig. The downstairs dive was thick with clouds of pale blue smoke and London accents, and a Lee Spike Perry tape was playing full volume. The room was filling with a steady stream of chisel-jawed brillcreamed rockabillies, crowding to the bar before the act got going. I had two cigarettes left and thought about offering one to Sarah, or Jamie as we called her. But I could see she was distracted. "You know who that is over there, right?" she said, clearly agitated. I peered through the thickening morass of bodies, feeling increasingly thirsty, and not entirely concentrating. "No," I went. "Who? Where?" "Straight ahead, you idiot! It's bleedin' Bowie." That woke me up. I had been a huge fan since I was at prep school and religiously bought his every album. Expecting the immaculate pop idol, in one of his various disguises, I noticed instead a regular featured, but nondescript man, older than the rest of us, with short, light brown hair (I think... it was pretty dark) who could indeed have been my hero. So, to make sure, I went over to where he was standing by the bar. He was evidently frustrated, not by admirers buzzing around him – everyone left everyone alone at Gaz's – but by the fact that no one behind the bar had change for the cigarette machine. So I interjected, "excuse mate, but if I give you a 50 P bit for the fags, will you buy me and my friend a drink?" "Sounds good," he said, and the deal was done. He got his fags and we got a drink. He seemed to be on his own, so I invited him to join us where we were sitting. By now, I realized he was indeed the great David Bowie. So he came over and sat with us. I had never been so starstruck, but then I had never been so close to a bona fide superstar. We talked about music (not his of course), about Weimar Germany and his fascination with the glitter and doom of *Neue Sachlichkeit.* As I was at Colnaghi at the time, I kept on trying to bring the conversation round to Old Masters, and how amazing it was you could still buy things by artists like Botticelli, Titian and Tintoretto. I spoke about my love for Venice and how I would loved to have lived there full-time. He spoke, not like a pop star but as an art lover. With a wide range of likes (British and German art) and dislikes (French Impressionism) he was both modest and passionate. It was the last sort of conversation I thought I would be having that night. Then the 'Cats' came on and that was the end of that, though I said that if he ever found himself on Old Bond Street, he should look me up at Colnaghi Gallery. He never did.

However, I found out that perhaps he had done. A little while later, he showed interest, via a mutual friend, to Edmondo di Robilant- a Venetian as it happens- in a small altarpiece by Jacopo Tintoretto. Edmondo told me, years later, that he had been summoned to discuss the deal at the Ritz Hotel, where he was to ask for 'Mr Underwood'. Edmondo was taken up to Bowie's suite where the deal was concluded. So, from Gaz's dive on Wardour Street to the Ritz Hotel on Park Lane, the conversation with David Bowie about Tintoretto continued.

Lust for life, lust for art

The Rubens House: A Museum Bowie loved

Serge Simonart

David Bowie initiated, produced and played on his friend Iggy Pop's album "Lust for life," and co-wrote the song of that title with him (on a ukulele, would you believe), so it may seem an obvious phrase and analogy, but if I think of David now, lust for life is the phrase that springs to mind. What made him such wonderful company, even more so than his talent and his obvious intelligence and great wit, was his lust for life. I am grateful to have met him a dozen times. Each encounter was a feast, at least for me, and he seemed to abide me and think me somewhat less of a moron than most other journalists. His attitude to life, art, and even leisure was anything but "been there, done that," even though he'd been everywhere and he'd done it all. I never knew him less than enthusiastic and inquisitive, eager to increase his knowledge on virtually anything even vaguely connected to culture, history, and the arts.

As famous, wealthy, talented and revered as he was, he could have been arrogant and pompous. Instead he was often self-deprecatory. When I, rather pompously, mentioned Zeitgeist in connection to his work, he typically joked "Oh, Zeitgeist, that used to be such a classy word, along with Angst, haha!"

This is a typical exchange which showcases both his sense of humour and his love of art:

> **Serge Simonart:** "Is there someone who you missed out on, an artist you would have loved to have exchanged views with but he or she died before your time?"
> **David Bowie:** "Any of the great artists and scientists and inventors, from Da Vinci to Einstein. But this week it would

be Jackson Pollock. I respect what Pollock was striving to do: drag the American art out of its European roots. And from my problems with drugs I can relate to his problems with alcohol."
SS (feigning ignorance): "You had problems with drugs?!"
DB: (Dryly) "I did." (Imitating a tabloid headline) "I own up! says Bowie."
SS: "At last a quote I can sell to the gutter press… They wouldn't pay me a farthing for anything you say about Willem De Kooning or Tintoretto…"
DB: "Ah, but Willem De Kooning did break Jackson Pollock's leg – now there's a story. (Laughs)."

Joseph Conrad wrote that every human being who dies is like a museum burning down. That is true twice over for an artist and thrice if that artist is also an avid, borderline obsessive art collector.

I believe that David, in his heart, would not have liked to have his collection auctioned off and dispersed after his death. I have a hunch he would have preferred his accumulated treasures to stay together in some museum, as the echo of an "eye," the result of the great taste of a sharp eye – some place like the Wallace Collection in London, which he once mentioned to me. He adored quaint little museums like the Museum of Jurassic Technology in Culver City which we talked about. I teased that I could picture him, the half senile, highly eccentric David Jones, as the curator of a small, bizarre wunderkammer. "Oh, absolutely," he grinned. "Like that Charles Darker character, this hermit in whose house they discovered cupboards filled with weird paintings and manuscripts about little girls with penises. I can't wait to be in that position. And then I'll harass visitors (adopts whiny, pathetic voice): 'Can I sing something for you? Please? I used to be very famous, you know…'" And then he laughed that infectious laugh that everyone who knew him misses so much.

However, I feel certain that he would have approved of a passionate maverick collector acquiring the Tintoretto and it, until further notice, ending up at the Rubenshuis in Antwerp, Belgium, of all places; let's be honest, plenty of other museums in sexier and more cosmopolitan cities would have jumped at the chance.

Because I happen to know for a fact that David visited and liked that museum. He visited Belgium, professionally and privately, on and off tour, at least a dozen times between 1976 and 2003. He must have visited the Rubenshuis more than once, actually, because one time he said to me, "I want to go to Rubens's house *again*." The fact that I visited it at a later date with him, resulted from the simple fact that I happened to mention the Renaissance during our first interview, which led to a long exchange about painting. I would interview him seven times in all, and every time I had to constrain his feverish enthusiasm.

That's the thing with Bowie: he was very aware of his own worth and status, but he was not a snob and he was anything but blasé. And he didn't buy art as an investment, he bought with his heart and his roving eye, and didn't care whether an artist was hip or trendy or a good investment or the "right" era, genre, movement or clique. I don't know of any other collector who had such eclectic, wide-ranging taste. As big a star he was, he often displayed fan behaviour, telling me how proud he was that Willem de Kooning was his friend, or highly praising Frank Auerbach – only years later did I learn he actually owned several Auerbachs.

But that first encounter, some time during the late eighties, he raved about the Tintoretto he had recently acquired. And about that era and Tintoretto's life and the story of and in the painting. Also, not coincidentally (nothing Bowie ever did was), he baptised one of his New York based companies the Jones/Tintoretto Entertainment Co, aka "Tintoretto Music."

Although he certainly appreciated conceptual art, he lamented with genuine outrage that classical, refined craftsmanship was no longer valued as it should be, like, he said, Bob Dylan was (at that time) derided as an old croaky moaning hippie has-been. In the same breath, he criticized contemporary trends in art schools:

> "Nobody is taught to draw anymore! Children aren't taught how to speak and read paintings, in fact, that approach is now looked upon as reactionary: 'What do you mean you're teaching this child about Renaissance art?!' I don't accept that. The idea that history must go forward and if you're not with history you're not with us… I refuse to denigrate Titian, Rubens or Tintoretto. It's bogus and shortsighted to say 'Well, that dates from 1620 so it's not worth a shit now!' That's a culturally-bankrupt approach. If you deny children those tools, letting them look at paintings is like showing a scientific journal in a foreign language they can't read and telling them to enjoy it. Put such a child in front of a Rembrandt and he'll say 'Boring!' (Raises his voice) It's not boring, it's a fantastic

3
1. Small Jean__ Ge-nie__ snuck off to the ci - ty, strung out on la - sers and
(Verse 2 see block lyrics)

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breakthrough! The whole idea of negating the past was bred by capitalism and cultural patricide and the lust for instant gratification. That I think is phenomenally wrong and it can only produce a despondent and unfullfilled people."

He also enthused to me about the Renaissance and how it had propelled humanity onto a higher level:

> "If I would be given a period that I would feel comfortable in, I would chose the fifteenth, early and middle sixteenth century. Not a wise choice because life expectancy was, what, twenty-three. But, say, Florence in 1440, the eclecticism of what was happening with the arts at that particular time must have been very inspirational: the Alberti treatise on the joining together of mathematics, science, humanist studies, perspective, coloration and the codes of beauty, trying to align them to the integral meaning of man on earth… The fight against the priesthood, the overpowering schadow of the Church on everybody's life, yet man revealing himself to being a force unto himself… That must have been a very exciting time…"

"So, to summarize," I joked, "you would have liked to have been a heretic who was burnt at the stake." He laughed and said:

> "Oh, I'm sure I would have paid for my sins. But I love that period because the painter as craftsman was, for the first time in history, allowed to dabble with his own mysticisms, to eradicate the whole idea of Church and State and Royalty determining what was to be painted and how. I saw a bunch of Bruegel and Bosch and Rubens paintings today and I found them quite overpowering."

That first conversation we had, I distinctly remember his long term PR man and friend Alan Edwards stepping in to ask Bowie to pipe down and remind him that, a mere two hours after our conversation, he had a taxing gig to sing and should rest his voice, not wear it out by raving about art to a Belgian.

We visited several museums. I remained silent often, thinking he might appreciate a bit of peace and quiet, as some art lovers, often the more passionate and obsessive ones, prefer to digest beauty in silence. But David was a failed teacher. I mean he would have been a great teacher as he was "an evangelist" (his own words) when it came to art. I was twenty years his junior and he couldn't help but venting his enthusiasm and pointing out little details to me – always passionate, never in a pedantic manner.

In his last year, he visited Venice with his daughter Lexie and Iman, and I'm sure Lexie got an ear-full, David hoping to instil in her his enthusiasm for all the other Tintorettos in Venice, the ones that haven't been stolen/exported/destroyed by Napoleon and lesser mortals/vandals. The Tintoretto removed from the church which Napoleon had demolished now hangs in a museum in the country where the emperor was defeated – that's some kind of poetic justice, I suppose.

It was after a rehearsal in U2's Windmill studios in Dublin I asked David with what feeling he would want fans to leave his concerts. His then drummer, the brilliant and boisterous Hunt Sales, butted in: "I'd like them to leave with more of themselves." David burst out: "That's such a great line, that's exactly what great art should do!" That time at Windmill I also remarked upon a small wooden Mexican Day of the Dead sculture on the rehearsal room wall: a bloodred devil (instead of a Christ) figure on the Cross. David joked, "Well, Mick has to do something when the Stones aren't touring."

I didn't record everything we talked about, in fact I made a point of not recording when the conversation drifted into something that resembled an informal chat, as I also refrained from taking photographs and asking him for an autograph, all actions that, I was very aware, cross a line and would have harmed the kindred spirit relationship. His assistant took one photograph of us in which David and I adopted a pose from a classical painting, though shamefully I have forgotten which one. I also have to point out, to younger readers, that three quarters of my encounters with David took place in an era, roughly between 1988 and 2004, when the self-centered navelgazing selfie craze and the equally dreaded social media were yet to emerge. My first interview with him was recorded on what us dinosaurs called a "cassette tape."
We talked about art numerous times when we were supposed to be talking about music. Here are some snippets of those conversations, from surviving tapes.

Once I mentioned that I had always thought it bogus, suspicious, that artists, particularly painters, sell their work – if they really put their heart and soul in it, surely it would be impossible for them to part with it?

> "Maybe that's why it became unfashionable to put one's soul in the work," said Bowie. "The Abstract Expressionists

> distanced themselves emotionally from their work, Jasper Johns and Warhol and Lichtenstein produced stuff that certainly had litle to do with their innermost feelings, soul and angst. And these days you have postmodernists who are ironic to such a degree that they themselves don't know whether they mean it or not. They don't believe in blood, sweat and tears, that's for sure. I do, which is one reason why I like the Old Masters, great craftsmen who nevertheless imbued their work with soul. Superegos like Titian, Tintoretto and Turner certainly injected a lot of themselves in the work. But everything goes in cycles, so I expect a new generation of angsty wristcutters pretty soon."

David had art dealer friends but retained a healthy suspicion towards anyone who made a buck from art: "I never attend auctions in person, I let others bid for me, and I never pay more than what the work is worth to me."

Once, we talked about how back in the day a painter based the price of his work on which paints he had used:

> "Let's see," joked David, "Three ounces of Prussian Blue, two ounces of gold and an ounce each of yellow and green… That's 14 ducats, please. Imagine if musicians would charge you in the same manner: 'This song is 7 minutes 31 seconds, that's… 4 pounds, please.' Interesting approach, but one which I fear would lead to an infinite amount of overlong, very boring songs. I always thought that rock 'n roll was at least twenty years behind the arts. That was my basic assumption. I tried to inject rock with science and old school craftsmanship and the fragmentation of sixties literature and high tech impressionism."

At the time of the "Outside" album, Bowie raved about Outside Art, visiting a Viennese mental ward with his friend Brian Eno. He told me what fascinated him about those patients/artists was "their expression is free because they have no concept of what art should be or is expected to be in the outside world." On that concept album he tackled Picasso's *Minotaur*, "Murder considered as one of the fine arts" by Thomas De Quincey, the Viennese Actionist movement of the sixties, and the importance of art critics. David and William Boyd staged a wonderul hoax, publishing a monograph on a certain Nat Tate, an obscure but brilliant and criminally neglected artist who committed suicide. There was a prestigious book launch at Jeff Koons's house. In reality, although many an art critic claimed to be aware of Tate's work, Tate was a made up personage. (Incidentally, that kind of hoax – staged in 1998 – would have been infinitely more difficult to stage a couple of years later, after the emergence of Google & co.)

I mentioned a (German, if I remember correctly) artist who had sued the art gallery which showed his work (a lump of grease on the floor), because they had failed to stop the cleaner who mopped it up and threw it away. A local judge had turned down the artist's demand for compensation. Bowie joked, "Now that's the difference between an amateur and a professional: if that had happened to Damien (Hirst), he would have made the whole thing into an installation, incorporating the judge and the entire legal system, hijacking and elevating the whole shebang to high art."

David also showed me several art works he had made himself. The paintings were mostly expressionist, the missing link between, say, Egon Schiele and Frank Auerbach. I also remember some kind of installation, a triptych which involved hospital-style light boxes and an X-ray of several steel dildos – I'm not making that up, I just mention it to show how eclectic David's taste was, as, arguably, one can't get further away from Tintoretto than an X-ray of a dildo. Although, taking into account the personality and healthy appetite (eight children) of Jacopo Robusti aka Tintoretto, that too is open for discussion.

Incidently, Bowie didn't care about comments like: "Of course his art sells, he's a rock star!" He told me:

> "Never refrain from doing anything because of what people might say. I'm an artist, there is no reason why I should limit my artistic expression to one discipline. When I did my first tour, I had a couple of little ideas for props, costumes, found noises, set pieces…and suddenly someone called it a multi media spectacle. I always believed that if one has talent and an understanding of the tools of art, one should be able to apply those tools to any of the existing art forms."

Francis Bacon once remarked that he conjured up images that an intellectual would never paint. I put it to David that, although he was very much an intellectual, he too had produced art, music and images, that an intellectual would never come up with:

"True. I have that in common with John (Lennon), he too made sure he didn't use weighty, deep words or ideas. I have antennae. I don't analyse or question what I do, at least not when making it. If I find myself doing something rational, stable or logical, I'm inclined to change course immediately. My first impulse is to thwart or obstruct any logic. Because if one follows logic, it's easier to predict where the idea is heading and what the end result will be. I work intuitively and I like being confused. Hence I liked Brian and me forcing musicians to switch instruments (on Berlin tracks like 'Boys keep swinging'). On 'Looking for satellites' I ordered a brilliant accomplished guitarist (Reeves Gabrels) to limit himself to using one string. On 'Station to Station' I made Earl (Slick) play a ridiculously simple Chuck Berry riff over and over again, until it became somewhat of a trance. All that stuff is freeing and I've learned that limitations often produce better results. It's hit and miss, of course, but I love that too. I love making mistakes. The echoey outro of 'Big Brother' was a mistake, the kiss in 'Furyo' was a camera that got stuck, and so on."

About the Tintoretto, David mentioned the following to me. I had asked him whether he, as a collector, was at all interested in the periphery of an artist, whether he cared at all where Magritte went on holiday, what kind of underwear Van Gogh wore, or how many mistresses Picasso had:

"In some cases I don't even care who made it, it's the inherent beauty and wonder of the thing itself that counts. But with, say, Marcel Duchamps, his life is part of his art, and what kind of underwear he wore may be related to him elevating a urinal to high art. When I was younger, I acquired a couple of Tintorettos. I was lucky in that I attended an auction during which the big art dealers seemed to be either asleep or on a toilet break. Now, that stuff is even beyond my means. One of the things that fascinates me about Tintoretto is how he agressively manipulated his career, pulling stunts to get the orders in. Tintoretto was to a certain extent the Damien Hirst of his time, he built his career as a proto rock star. I suspect Tintoretto was a very smart, charismatic, strongwilled, pigheaded, cocky opportunist, not unlike Julian Schnabel."

He then proceeded to spend ten minutes of our limited interview time raving about Stanley Spencer's palette which he had just acquired – not even a painting by Spencer, merely the piece of wood on which he mixed his paints. This almost childish enthusiasm from a superstar in his own right!

Another time, not long after he had played the role of Andy Warhol in the "Basquiat" movie, I asked him about what the painter Milo (played by David's great friend Gary Oldman) utters: "Never tell a painter who is working on a canvas that you like something, 'cause he'll immediately paint it out." Did David have such reflexes?

"Ah, that was a great line. And yes, I do: if someone raves about anything I do I immediately become suspicious. Maybe that's why I became depressed and felt insulted when I got too famous and too well-liked after 'Let's Dance'. Someone told me 'Oh, I love your 'Outside' album, I can't wait for parts two and three'. Well, I had parts two and three sort of ready, but I aborted them there and then. I'm not averse to a dialogue with a large audience, as long as that dialogue contains a level of friction and surprise and wilful obstruction. And that too is the kind of art I like."

In "Basquiat," the painter paints out parts of a painting made by his girlfriend and adds, uninvited, on her canvas, stuff of his own. Would Bowie have tolerated that? "I don't think so, I would fight them. Unless it's Julian (Schnabel) 'cause I would lose that fight as he is a big guy."

I also asked him whether he thought it some kind of betrayal when it was discovered after his death that Andy Warhol's house was stuffed with antiques and very little modern art. "Ha! Imagine if people would discover after my demise that, privately, I've only ever listened to bland muzak. Well, I do own a number of records by Brian Eno, haha." (Not a jibe – they were great friends.)

During our last encounter, we didn't talk about art: David instead spent a lot of time raving about his daughter. I asked him if he could invent a drug, what would it be, what effect should it have?

"A shot of hug. Preferably from a three-year-old like my daughter, that age, that brief window of time when a child hugs you with all its might and conviction and pure, undiluted love, without it expecting a reward. **The kind of gift that a great painting gives you: it's just there for you to marvel at, it lifts your spirits, instills you with hope and beauty, but it doesn't expect anything in return."**

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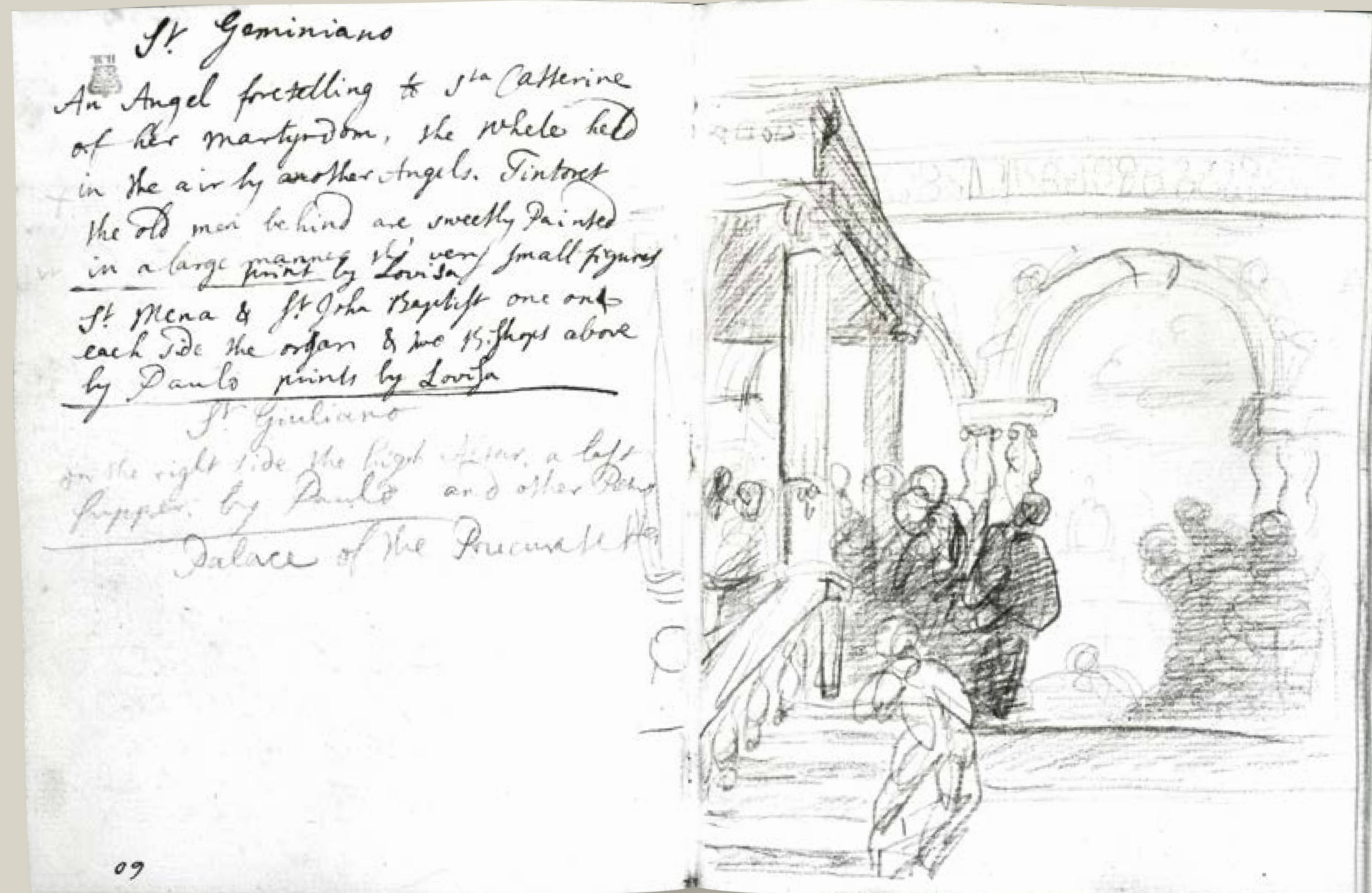

Joshua Reynolds, *Sketchbook*, bound in vellum, containing drawings of Old Masters and sculpture, made on the journey from Florence to Venice (1752), p. 60, black chalk, with some notes in pen and brown ink, on pages sewn.

"St. Geminiano
An Angel fortelling to Sta Catherine
of her martyrdom, the wheel held
in the air by other Angels. Tintoret.
The old men behind are sweetly Painted
in a large manner tho'very small figures.
Print by Louisa."

Jacopo Tintoretto." In *Renaissance Venice and the North: Crosscurrents in the Time of Bellini, Dürer, and Titian*, exh. cat., Palazzo Grassi, Venice, 5 September 1999 - 9 January 2000, edited by Bernard Aikema and Beverly L. Brown, pp. 136-137. New York: Rizzoli, 2000.

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David Bowie's Tintoretto

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