





STÄDEL
MUSEUM

TITIAN
and the
RENAISSANCE
in **VENICE**

EDITED BY BASTIAN ECLERCY
AND HANS AURENHAMMER

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY MARIA ARESIN, HANS AURENHAMMER, ANDREA BAYER, ANNE BLOEMACHER,
DANIELA BOHDE, BEVERLY LOUISE BROWN, STEFANIE COSSALTER-DALLMANN, BENJAMIN COUILLEAUX, HEIKO DAMM,
RITA DELHÉES, JILL DUNKERTON, BASTIAN ECLERCY, MARTINA FLEISCHER, IRIS HASLER, FREDERICK ILCHMAN,
ROLAND KRISCHEL, ANN KATHRIN KUBITZ, ADELA KUTSCHKE, SOFIA MAGNAGUAGNO, TOM NICHOLS, TOBIAS BENJAMIN NICKEL,
SUSANNE POLLACK, VOLKER REINHARDT, JULIA SAVIELLO, FRANCESCA DEL TORRE SCHEUCH,
CATHERINE WHISTLER AND MATTHIAS WIVEL

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VENETIAN PAINTING IN THE AGE OF TITIAN

HANS AURENHAMMER

TWO ALTARPIECES, TWO EPOCHS: TITIAN AND GIOVANNI BELLINI

Lodovico Dolce opens his dialogue *L'aretino* (1557; cat. no. 67) – the most important theoretical text on painting written in the Venetian Renaissance – by staging a ‘contest’ between two altarpieces. The point of this exercise was to show the extent to which Titian, the leading painter of the sixteenth century, had surpassed the art of preceding generations. The setting is the nave of the large Dominican church of Santi Giovanni e Paolo in Venice. Over the first side altar on the right was a *sacra conversazione* by Giovanni Bellini (c. 1470). This work is the earliest example of the altarpiece schema that would remain standard until the beginning of the cinquecento and would be further developed by the painter himself later on in the *Pala di San Giobbe* (c. 1480–85; fig. 1) and his painting in San Zaccaria (1505). Diagonally opposite, over the second side altar on the left, church-goers could admire an innovative painting by Bellini’s pupil Titian, the highly dramatic *Death of St Peter Martyr* (1526–30; see cat. nos. 103, 104).¹

Pietro Aretino was a friend of Titian’s, well known as a man of letters and notorious for his sharp-tongued invectives. In the *Dialogue on Painting*, published a year after his death and named after him, he takes on the role of spokesman and discourses with the Tuscan Giovan Francesco Fabrini, who – portrayed as somewhat narrow in his judgement of art – is evidently fascinated with Bellini’s painting. By the standards of his own time, Aretino points out that Bellini had undoubtedly been “a good and careful master”. Titian, however, had left him far behind – in the “heroic majesty” of his figures (a quality attributed to the epic poems of Homer, Virgil and Ariosto) and his “soft colouring”.² As the dialogue continues, Aretino faults Giovanni Bellini, his brother Gentile and the members of the Vivarini family for their “dead and cold creations”.³ Titian’s paintings, by contrast, were suffused with the warmth, movement and pulsating vitality of nature herself. Dolce’s dialogue thus draws a clear line between Titian and the Venetian painters of the fifteenth century. Just a few years earlier, in the first edition of his *Lives* (1550), Giorgio Vasari had contrasted the *maniera moderna* of contemporary artists with the art of the quattrocento, citing very similar categories, if with a more idealistic conception of mimesis.



Fig. 1 | Giovanni Bellini, Pala di San Giobbe, c. 1480–85, Venice, Gallerie dell'Accademia

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TITIAN

Pieve di Cadore c.1488/90–1576 Venice

Madonna and Child, St Catherine and a Shepherd (Madonna of the Rabbit), c.1530

Oil on canvas, 71 × 87 cm | Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures, inv. no. 743

BIBLIOGRAPHY | Beguin 1980; exh. cat. Venice/Washington 1990/91, pp.209–212, cat. no. 23 (Jean Habert); exh. cat. Paris 1993, pp.566f., cat. no.160 (Jean Habert; with previous lit.); exh. cat. Venice 1999, pp.514f., cat. no.147 (Bert W. Meijer); Zeitz 2000, pp.48–51; Pedrocco 2001, p.147, cat. no.85; exh. cat. London 2003, pp.118f., cat. no.18 (David Jaffé); exh. cat. Brescia 2004/05, pp.36–39 (Marie-Anne Dupuy-Vachey); exh. cat. Bordeaux/Caen 2005/06, pp.212f., cat. no.93 (Mickaël Szanto); Humfrey 2007, p.137, cat. no.88; exh. cat. Boston 2009, pp.126f. (John Marciari); Partridge 2015, pp.192f.; exh. cat. Madrid 2017, pp.139f., 167, cat. no.42

Titian's famous *Madonna of the Rabbit* can be traced back to the patron who commissioned it, making for a provenance that is virtually without gaps. A letter of 1530 to Federico II Gonzaga mentions an almost finished painting that is very probably identical with the work by Titian now located in Paris. There is evidence of it having belonged to the Duc de Richelieu, who in 1665 sold it to Louis XIV. By 1785 it was already in the Louvre.¹

The Virgin, seated on a red cushion in an expansive, verdant landscape, gently cradles the head of her infant son, carefully held out to her on a white cloth – to avoid touching the holy body – by the opulently clad figure of St Catherine of Alexandria. Catherine's knee is resting on a large fragment of a wheel, the instrument with which she should have been tortured, according to the legend. Inscribed on this attribute is the artist's signature: "Ticianus·F.". In a natural, typically baby-like gesture, Jesus gently bats Catherine's face. With his other hand, he reaches for the prominently positioned white rabbit, kept in check by Mary on her blue cloak. Rabbits alongside the Virgin are not uncommon and can be read as symbolising both her immaculate conception and the purity of her love.² Still more Christian symbols can be made out in this work, among them the grapes and the apple in the basket or the red strawberries to the left of it, which traditionally are read as allusions to the Eucharist, the Fall and Paradise.³

At the same time, the shepherd with his flock, the pan pipes hanging in the tree behind him and the laurel wreath in the right middle ground all belong to an iconographic tradition inspired by bucolic poetry (see cat. nos. 13–15). The shepherd's facial features are probably those of Federico II Gonzaga, the subject of a portrait by Titian of c. 1529, now in the Prado in Madrid.⁴ Perhaps what Titian intended this hidden portrait to convey was his patron's Humanist education and his role as the 'good shepherd' of the people of Mantua.

The diagonal slant of the composition with its raised horizon line accords a great deal of space to a Giorgionesque landscape that is as idealised as it is atmospheric. Titian's morning or evening sky is therefore streaked with radiant shades of yellow, orange and blue, while the entire scene is bathed in a warm light that brings what is happening to life, infusing it with atmosphere, even divinity.

As the X-ray image reveals, the artist altered his composition during the painting process; among the changes he made was one to the Virgin herself, who was originally turned to face the shepherd.⁵ That would have had the effect of involving him in the religious narrative, whereas, in the final version, the saints are preoccupied with each other. The work nevertheless blends a religious theme, a *sacra conversazione*, with a purely secular invention that evokes an idyllic Arcadia. Mickaël Szanto sees the work as a painterly equivalent of sacred poetry, which in literature included works such as *De partu Virginis* of 1526, in which Jacopo Sannazaro set episodes from the life of the Virgin in a distant Arcadian age.⁶ | **ADELA KUTSCHKE**

1 | On the provenance see exh. cat. Paris 1993, pp.566f., cat. no.160 (Jean Habert), and exh. cat. Bordeaux/Caen 2005/06, pp.212f., cat. no.93 (Mickaël Szanto); the date 1530 is based on the mention of the painting in the letter of that date. Joannides 2004, pp.7f., has doubts about the provenance, however, and postulates a date of c. 1520 based on stylistic grounds; Humfrey 2007, p.137, cat. no.88, sees the confirmation for the common 1530 dating in Catherine's puffed sleeves, which were in vogue at that time.

2 | Dittrich/Dittrich 2004, pp.195, 198. Rabbits as symbols of virtuous love are to be found in Titian's secular scenes, too, among them the painting *Sacred and Profane Love* at the Galleria Borghese; see *ibid.* p.201. A second rabbit is cut off at bottom right; a third, originally part of the background, was painted over by Titian himself; see Beguin 1980, p.480.

3 | See exh. cat. Bordeaux/Caen 2005/06, pp.212f., cat. no.93 (Mickaël Szanto).

4 | See exh. cat. Paris 1993, pp.566f., cat. no.160 (Jean Habert).

5 | Beguin 1980, p.480.

6 | Exh. cat. Bordeaux/Caen 2005/06, pp.212f., cat. no.93 (Mickaël Szanto).





NYMPHS IN ARCADIA – SAINTS IN THE WILDERNESS

The Invention of Landscape

Landscape painting counts among the greatest achievements of the Venetian Renaissance. Although invariably tied to narrative scenes with figures, it far surpasses the status of mere backdrop, and carries weight as both stage set and atmosphere. The lyrical landscapes of early Titian and Palma il Vecchio, like the dramatically charged ones of Veronese and Bassano, prepared the ground for the emancipation of landscape as a genre in its own right.

Alongside the study of nature, the literary tradition of bucolic poetry was also a key factor in this development. When painting mythological subjects, artists revived the Arcadia extolled by the bucolic poets of both classical antiquity (Theocritus and Virgil) and the early modern age (Jacopo Sannazaro). The motif of the saint in the wilderness was a popular one in Venetian religious painting as well, not least because it provided an opportunity to revel in atmospheric landscapes composed entirely of colour and light. The print medium, too, eventually discovered landscape, even developing giant, painting-size woodcuts.

JACOPO PALMA IL VECCHIO
Serina near Bergamo 1479/80–1528 Venice
Two Reposing Nymphs, c. 1510–15

Oil on poplar, 98.3×152.4 cm | Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum, inv. no. 1417

BIBLIOGRAPHY | Phillips 1907; Swarzenski 1908; Spahn 1932, pp.39–43; Mariacher 1968, p.47, cat. no. 6; Settis 1982, pp.160f.; Rylands 1992, pp. 102, 130f., 176f., cat. no. 34; Rapp 1998, p.46 with note 25; Sander 2004, pp.206–216 (with previous lit.); Attardi 2015a, p.95; exh. cat. Bergamo 2015, p.336, cat. no. 8; Heinze 2016, p.115; exh. cat. Cologne/Paris 2017/18, p.194, cat. no. 54 (Bastian Eclercy)

PARIS BORDONE
Treviso 1500–1571 Venice
Venus and Cupid, c. 1545–60

Oil on canvas, 93.7×143.3 cm | Warsaw, Muzeum Narodowe, inv. no. M.Ob.628

BIBLIOGRAPHY | Canova 1964, p.114; Ważbiński 1987; exh. cat. Rimini 2012, pp.118–121 (Joanna Kilian); Donati 2014, pp.48, 340f., cat. no.129; Heinze 2016, pp.118, 122f.; Deiters 2017, pp.36f.

Reposing in an Arcadian, Giorgionesque landscape are two voluptuously nude nymphs. One lies on her side with her legs outstretched and her left arm propped on a little mound hidden underneath a pink cloth, which, as the only bright colour in the whole work, occupies the middle of the composition. Her right hand clutches at her left shoulder, as if she were trying to conceal her breasts. Her head crowned with impeccably waved red hair is turned to face her companion, whom she gazes at longingly. Thus the attention of any (male) viewer who might have been contemplating the rise and fall of her body is diverted to the right-hand nude, who, in a finely calibrated play of proximity and distance, is positioned at her side. Looking furtively over her shoulder, the second nymph answers not her companion's gaze, but rather that of the viewer, whom she sizes up out of the

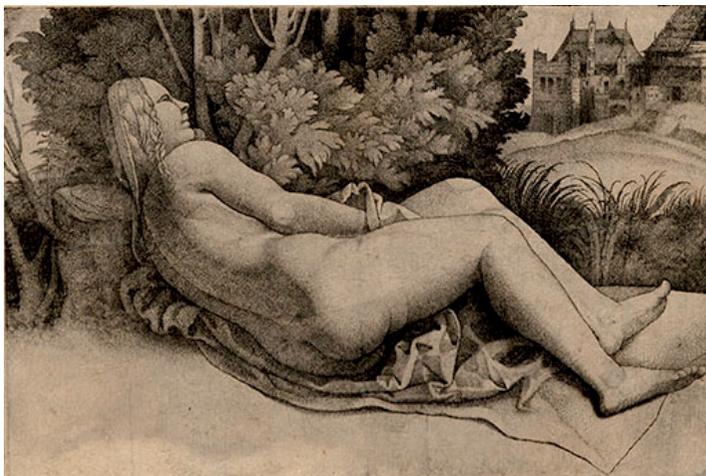


Fig. 34 | Giulio Campagnola, *Reclining Nude in a Landscape*, c. 1510–15, engraving, London, British Museum

corner of her eye. She sits on the ground in a somewhat awkward pose with one leg tucked under her buttocks, the other leg angled, and her left arm resting on her right knee. A white cloth emphasises the elegant curvature of her back. The two nymphs are separated from the viewer's sphere by a stream running parallel to the picture plane with a drake swimming on it at left. The bank is overgrown with a vast array of plants, reproduced realistically and in meticulous detail. The nymphs are set against a leafy rosebush and a tree, while an opening at left affords us a view of the landscape beyond with a walled town, two tiny figures and in the far distance the sea with a ship sailing on it.

Inspired by the bucolic poetry of the ancients (see cat. nos. 13–15), Palma il Vecchio envisions an Arcadian world that is at once harmonious and shot through with erotic tension. The viewer's involvement is ingeniously ambivalent, for while he sees the nudes in front of him, he remains cut off from them by the water, able only to return their gaze, which is thereupon unmasked as that of a voyeur. Some scholars have interpreted the Frankfurt painting as a translation into art of a literary *favola*, specifically the seduction of the nymph Callisto by Jupiter in the guise of Diana, described in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (2, 401–532).¹ Yet in the absence of any concrete pointers to this story in the painting itself, such a reading cannot amount to more than an optional set of associations for the viewer.

Impaired by the retouching of lacunae and excessive cleaning, the panel first published by Claude Phillips in 1907 has quite rightly been identified as a work of Palma il Vecchio's early period, when he was still very much engaged with Giorgione.² The posture of the right nymph, especially, is an almost exact borrowing from Giorgione's famous *Tempest* (fig. 4).³ The figures' fleshy bodies and the landscape background might also have been influenced by Giulio Campagnola's engraving of a reclining nude (fig. 34).⁴



Pieve di Cadore c.1488/90–1576 Venice

The Triumph of Love, c.1543–46

Oil on canvas, laid on panel, diameter 88.3cm | Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, University of Oxford, inv. no. WA2008.89

BIBLIOGRAPHY | Wethey 1975, p.181f., no. X-35; Humfrey 2007, p.217, cat. no.159; Lauber 2008a, p.69; Lauber 2008b, p.247; Borean 2009a, p.201; Borean 2009b, p.348; Lauber 2009, p.249; Whistler 2009 (with previous lit.); Bolzoni 2010, pp.291–293; Whistler 2012; Dunkerton 2013; Dunkerton/Spring 2013a, pp.100–105, cat. no.13; Simons 2013, pp.39–42; Whistler 2013, pp.203–207

Unusually, this poetic painting can be securely identified as a *timpano*, or canvas cover, associated with a portrait of a noblewoman by Titian displayed with other works attributed to the master in a *camera* in the palace of Gabriele Vendramin at Santa Fosca.¹ The rectangle was cut to a *tondo* in the late seventeenth century. The *timpano* protected the portrait from casual viewing, while its allegorical import could be teased out in conversation as an overture to the revelation of the image beneath. The young god of love balances precariously on the back of a roaring lion; the lagoon view and distant Dolomites provide a Venetian setting. The line of bushes is also a motif in Titian's *Portrait of Clarice Strozzi* (cat. no. 48) and *Danaë* (fig. 8). The scene is viewed through a round window: the lion's front paws rest on the curved ledge, bringing the noble beast into the beholder's space – an illusionistic effect more striking in the painting's original rectangular format.

Titian depicted the familiar Virgilian subject of *Omnia vincit Amor* in an inventive manner, providing a note of ambiguity in Amor's unstable pose. The subjugation of powerful human passions by true or virtuous love was generally represented by the boyish Cupid or Amor riding on a tamed lion. Titian's concept of a balletic Cupid in control of a ferocious lion delightfully references an antique bronze prized (as Anton Francesco Doni recorded) by Vendramin.² By framing the dynamic group within an oculus, Titian deftly evoked the imagery of antique and modern medals for which Vendramin's collection was celebrated. Medallic portraits of women often featured imagery relating to love and chastity on the reverse, such as that by Giovanni Antonio Pommedelli with the theme of *Amor superat omnia* (Washington, National Gallery of Art).³

Titian's underpainting (see fig. 16), visible through the thin paint layers, reveals changes made to the position of Cupid, his bow and arrows, and the size of his wings.⁴ Stylistically the painting is close to the first phase of execution (c. 1540–43) of *The Vendramin Family* (c. 1540–43, London, National Gallery), notably the boy clutching a dog, and to the *Danaë* (where the Cupid was also inspired by an antique sculpture), suggesting a dating of 1543–46 for the Oxford canvas.

The portrait concealed by this *timpano* was probably a version of one of two lost representations of Elisabetta Querini Massolo (d. 1559), muse and intimate friend of Pietro Bembo, and patron of Titian. The first, for Bembo, was painted in 1543, while the second,

for the papal nuncio Giovanni della Casa, dates from 1545.⁵ Both were the subject of Petrarchan-style sonnets praising Elisabetta's beauty and virtue: that by Aretino alluded to her "sacro volto" and nobility of soul. Playfully, in one of his two sonnets Della Casa suggested that Elisabetta's glances had the power of Cupid's arrows. Titian's appealing *timpano* wittily enhanced the literary aureole surrounding the portrait it concealed. | CATHERINE WHISTLER

1 | Accepted by HM Government in lieu of Inheritance Tax and allocated to the Ashmolean Museum, purchased (Virtue-Tebbs, Madan and Russell Funds) with the assistance of the Art Fund (with a contribution from the Wolfson Foundation), Daniel Katz Ltd, the Friends of the Ashmolean, the Tradescant Group, the Elias Ashmole Group, Mr Michael Barclay, the Highfield family, the late Mrs Yvonne Carey, the late Mrs Felicity Rhodes and other private donors, inv. no. WA2008.89. See Whistler 2009 with full bibliography and provenance details.

2 | *Ibid.*, pp.538f., with references.

3 | See Pollard 2007, I, cat. no. 204.

4 | Dunkerton 2013, pp.116–121; Dunkerton/Spring 2013a, pp.100–105, cat. no.13. See also the essay by Jill Dunkerton in this publication.

5 | On this identification and the related poetry, Whistler 2012, pp.233–242.



BARTOLOMEO VENETO

documented 1502–1530, active in the Veneto and Lombardy
Ideal Portrait of a Young Woman as Flora, c.1520 (?)

Oil on poplar, 43.6×34.6 cm | Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum, inv. no. 1077

BIBLIOGRAPHY | Morelli 1891, p.223; Huysmans 1905, pp.70–86; Swarzenski 1922; Michalski 1928, pp.283f., 303–305; Michalski 1932; Held 1961, p.216; Verheyen 1968, pp.223f.; Panofsky 1969, pp.137f.; Von Götz-Mohr 1987, pp.39–41, 51–55; Gentili 1995, p.97; Pagnotta 1997, pp.39–47, 170f., cat. no. 8; exh. cat. Venice 1999, pp.368f., cat. no. 83 (Enrico Maria Dal Pozzolo); Sander 2004, pp.308–321 (with previous lit.); Lüdemann 2008, pp.265–267; exh. cat. Venice 2016, pp.306, cat. no. 73 (Sergio Momesso)

With her extravagant appearance and disarmingly direct gaze, this young woman has always had the power to transfix visitors to the Städel Museum. The French Symbolist Joris-Karl Huysmans (1905) was at once so fascinated and repelled by her androgynous charms that he called her the “evil spirit” of the heathen Renaissance. In his imagination, she became Giulia Farnese, mistress of the notorious Pope Alexander VI. Städel director Georg Swarzenski (1922), by contrast, identified the enigmatic beauty as Lucrezia Borgia, Alexander’s daughter, albeit with historical arguments that have since proved untenable. More recent scholars tend to rank Bartolomeo Veneto’s *Young Woman* among the *belle donne*, a sub-genre of erotic, half-figure portraits



Fig. 47 | Titian, *Flora*, c.1515–17, Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi

of beautiful women that was very popular in early sixteenth-century Venice. Parallel motifs are to be found in two other works traditionally called *Flora*: one by Titian (fig. 47), the other by Palma il Vecchio (London, National Gallery, c.1520). In Bartolomeo’s painting, too, the sitter wears the kind of loose-cut, white chemise or *camicia* that was generally worn under a gown and here has slipped down off her shoulder to expose one of her breasts. Such a revealing style of dress is redolent of the nymphs of antiquity. The posy of flowers held in her right hand could, therefore, be interpreted not just as a love token, but also as an attribute of Flora, the flower goddess of the spring.

Could this be a courtesan cast in the role of Flora – or even a bride? Most interpretations of this work opt for one of these two alternatives. Those who read the work as a bridal portrait¹ cite the coronet of leaves adorning the sitter’s head. Yet this wreath is made of twisted box sprigs rather than the myrtle leaves that traditionally symbolised marriage. And to interpret the turban-like headdress as a bridal veil seems like a leap too far. The courtesan hypothesis² for its part is premised on a mythocritical unmasking of Flora. Following Giovanni Boccaccio’s *De claris mulieribus* (*On Famous Women*), Flora was originally a prostitute, who bequeathed her entire fortune to the Roman people.³ The senate thereupon declared her a goddess, if only to legitimise the frivolous games held in her honour. But the fact that both the *voluptas* of a chaste bride – a privilege normally reserved for the husband alone – and the seductive wiles of a courtesan can be seen in one and the same painting throws any specific interpretation of this work into doubt. Besides, there is no evidence of an established genre of bridal portraits or portraits of courtesans in Venice. Setting aside the aforementioned alternatives, Bartolomeo’s painting should rather be understood as part of the general discourse on beauty, love, poetry and painting – even at the price of not being able to unlock the work entirely.⁴

The young woman is presented in portrait format. Her suggestively intimate, unmediated presence is further intensified by her bared breast, her hint of a smile, and, above all, her potentially fateful gaze. Sight beams, it was widely believed, had the power to arouse feelings of love in the one thus gazed at. Yet far from being the likeness of a real, flesh-and-blood woman, this portrait shows only the ideal beauty that had been the stuff of love poetry since time immemorial – albeit



CESARE VECELLIO

Pieve di Cadore c.1521–1601 Venice

De gli habiti antichi, et moderni di diverse parti del mondo libri due

Venice: Damian Zenaro, 1590 | Düsseldorf, Universitäts- und Landesbibliothek, Sign. 20 H 32
BIBLIOGRAPHY | Kuhl 2008; Rosenthal/Jones 2008

Portrait of Degnamerita, Duchess of Porcia, 1575

Oil on canvas, 112×89.5 cm | Belluno, Palazzo Piloni
BIBLIOGRAPHY | exh. cat. Belluno 2001, pp. 190f.

Only a fool awaits the end of something that has no end. These are the words of caution that Cesare Vecellio addresses to those readers of his book, *De gli habiti antichi, et moderni di diverse parti del mondo*, published in Venice in 1590, who might consider it an unfinished work. It is, indeed, hard to imagine an exhaustive account of the author's chosen subject, especially as he approaches it from two different angles. For, as the title tells us, his concern is with the *habiti* – that is to say, the dress and customs – not just of different continents,¹ but of different periods, too. This historical interest in fashion, along with the author's clear structuring of his material, resulted in a book of great innovative potential, lavishly illustrated with 415 woodcuts.

What today's readers of Vecellio's work are likely to find surprising is the way he links the clothing worn by a given individual to certain personality traits. To his mind, clothes are a form of virtue-signalling on the part of not just the wearer but also an entire class or even an entire city. Thus Vecellio relates how young Venetian noblemen wore exquisite coloured silks only underneath their cloaks, as befit the modest image cultivated by the republic of Venice.

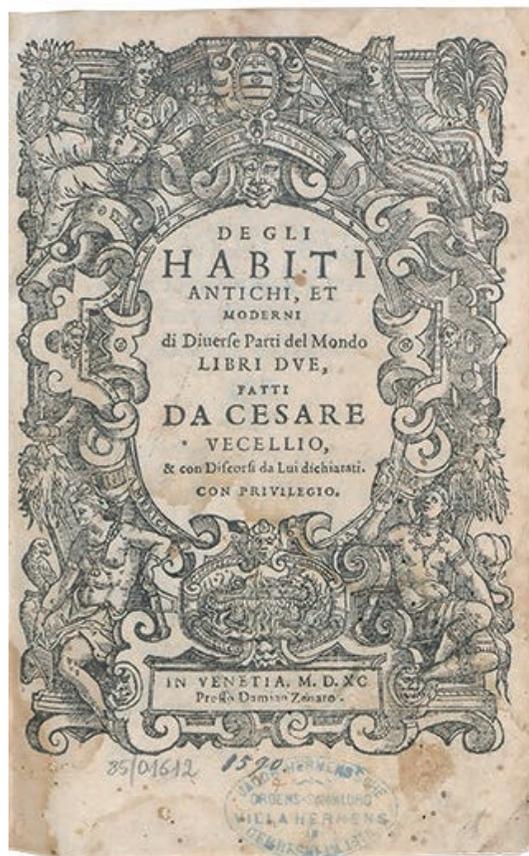
Not that the Serenissima owed its glory solely or even primarily to its well-dressed inhabitants. Venice's weavers of the new and much-coveted luxury fabrics and the merchants who traded in them also actively contributed to the city's worldwide reputation for excellence. The brocade shot through with gold and silver thread that features in Vecellio's description of the *Donne per case* (p. 139), for example, is identified as the work of the Venetian weaver Bartholomeo Bontempele, who we are told had received orders for it from no less a customer than the Ottoman sultan.

Vecellio himself took advantage of Venice's far-flung trading networks when collecting material for his ambitious book project. One special challenge for him was obtaining reliable information from faraway parts of the world, which he himself could not possibly visit in person. Fortunately for him, therefore, Venice's merchants, envoys and visitors passing through the city provided valuable eye-witness accounts of what they had seen on their travels, and in some cases wore outfits that gave him a direct visual impression of foreign dress codes. As Venice was a major centre of book-printing, moreover, Vecellio

could scarcely have been better placed when it came to the production and international marketing of his work.

The painting exhibited here rounds off our picture of Cesare Vecellio. A second cousin of the famous Tiziano Vecellio (whom we know as Titian), he was not only a pioneer of costume history, but also an enterprising artist. The woodcuts for the *De gli habiti* were produced by the Nuremberg block-cutter Christoforo Chrieger after Cesare's own drawings. His magnum opus as a painter was the interior of the Church of St Mary of the Assumption in Lentiai, completed in the 1560s and 1570s. The earliest known painting in his hand shows the three sons of his most important patron, Odorico Piloni, who was himself the subject of several portraits by Vecellio, too. The portrait exhibited here from Palazzo Piloni in Belluno shows Degnamerita, Duchess of Porcia, wife of Odorico Piloni's son Giorgio, and dates from the year 1575. The House of Piloni is described admiringly and in great detail in the chapter on the gentlewomen of Civaldi di Belluno in the *De gli habiti*, published fifteen years later. In the last paragraph of that chapter, Odorico's sons are praised for their exceptional virtue, matched only by that of his daughters-in-law, among them the fair Degnamerita. She is described as modestly dressed, friendly in her speech, prudent in her conduct, astute in her conversation, and virtuous in her manners. Vecellio then provides details of her dress, her coiffure and the jewellery she wears, once again implying the existence of a correlation between clothes, conduct and character. So detailed is the description of Degnamerita's appearance presented here that we might justifiably surmise that Vecellio's own painting was serving him as an aide-memoire while writing. | **SUSANNE POLLACK**

1 | Specifically Europe, Asia and Africa, although the second, enlarged edition of the work printed by Sessa as *Habiti antichi et moderni di tutto il mondo* in 1598 also included the New World. The historical periods covered include the Middle Ages, Ancient Rome, and even some examples from the Old Testament.



ALTRE DONNE DI VENETIA, MENTRE
si fanno biondi i capelli.

V SANO in Venetia sopra i tetti delle case alcuni edificij di legno quadri, in forma di logge scoperte, i quali edificij in terra ferma sono in uso di muro, & coperti, come si vede in Fiorenza, dove sono chiamati terrazzi. Et nella Città di Napoli anchora v' sono sopra le case alcuni luoghi scoperti, che tuti si chiamano battuti, & sono composti di sabbia grossa & di calcina tanto ben battuta, che regge ad ogni grossa pioggia. Hora per tornare al proposito nostro, conciosia che tutte le donne si mostrino desiderose d'acrescer la bellezza naturale con l'arte; desiderosissime fra l'altre se ne mostrano le Venetiane. Nel che fanno elle non poco torto a se stesse, si perche forse manco dell'altre hanno bisogno dell'arte; si anche perche risapendosi questa loro diligenza, fanno che anche la bellezza naturale perde nelle menti altrui gran parte della sua fede, & è giudicata artificiale. Con questo pensiero adunque hanno fra l'altre cose l'artificio che noi diciamo di farsi biondi, il quale è cagione ch' elle frequentino l'altana (che così chiamano l'edificio di legno già detto) al par della camera, o più tenendo la testa esposta le giornate intiere al Sole per questo effetto. A questo ministero, nel quale bisogna ch' elle stesse sieno le servite, & le serventi, se ne stanno ordinariamente su queste altane, quando il Sole è più cocente, & quindi scendendo, si bagnano con vna picciola spugna legata in cima d'un fuso, & intinta in vna acqua, ch' elle o comprano, o fanno elle medesime in casa; tutti i capelli pin, & più volte lasciandoli

Pieve di Cadore c.1488/90–1576 Venice

Portrait of the Colour Seller Alvise Gradignan dalla Scala, c.1561/62

Oil on canvas, 138×116 cm | Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, inv. no. 172

BIBLIOGRAPHY | Wethey 1971, pp. 120f.; Pedrocco 2000, p. 266, cat. no. 226 (Maria Agnese Chiari Moretto Wiel); Weber/Weddigen 2009; exh. cat. Dresden 2010, p. 76, cat. no. 3 (Andreas Henning); Weddigen/Weber 2010; Krischel 2011, pp. 331f.; Hochmann 2015, pp. 173f.; Hochmann 2016, pp. 698f.; DeLancey 2017

In view of the palm frond and the small pigment box placed in the window (compare this with the similar *scatola* in fig. 60), it was long presumed that this portrait depicted the Venetian painter Antonio Palma, of whom no other portraits are to be found. But in 1994, with the help of infrared reflectography, an inscription beneath the window – of which only fragments had been known up to that time – became completely legible: M·D·LXI·/ANNO·SVÍ·VARDÍANATVS/ÆTATÍS·SUA·XLVI·//TITÍANVS PÍCTOR ET/ÆQVES CÆSARIS. Apparently, this painting portrays the Venetian-born Alvise Gradignan dalla (or della) Scala, born according to the inscription in 1515 (but according to his gravestone in 1520) and who in the year 1561 mentioned was one of two *degni di mezz'anno* of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco.

The term “vardianatus” (guardianship) would give reason to expect that Alvise served as *guardian grande*, *vicario* or *guardian da matin*, and thus occupied one of the three highest offices bestowed by the six large confraternities of Venice (among them the Scuola Grande di San Rocco), which, however, was not the case. The attribute of the palm also anticipates a later resolution adopted by the confraternity of St Roch to present their departing *guardiani* and *vicarii* with a palm frond on the Sunday before Easter. With this thus slightly presumptuous ‘official portrait’, the citizen (*cittadino*) represented here seeks to emulate the Venetian nobility. The latter’s state hierarchy of offices

along with the associated election processes were reflected in the regular change of occupancy in a Scuola Grande’s offices. In addition to the role these *scuole* played in providing cooperative social security, this also contributed significantly to social peace in the aristocratic republic of Venice.

As the box of pigments together with a scoop indicates, Alvise dalla Scala practised a trade that was characteristic of Renaissance Venice, for he was a colour seller. Earlier than in other places, where artists long continued to buy from the pharmacy, around 1500 the pigment trade became specialised in the city of Venice. As the capital of the chemical and luxury industries Venice was at the same time the hub of a wide-ranging trade in pigments. The cult of colour and the frequently lavish use of pigments in Venetian painting attest to this local advantage. Even Raphael had painting materials sent to him from Venice. His colleagues there, Titian and Tintoretto, at times acted as agents in pigment purchases, for example by the Vatican.

In 1572 Titian’s son Orazio brokered a large purchase of pigments from Alvise dalla Scala by the Spanish court. His father knew the paint dealer from the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, of which he himself was also a member. In Alvise’s portrait, the transformation of the raw pigments into the evening landscape soaring above can quite likely be seen as a homage by Titian to his preferred pigment dealer.

The shop for artist’s supplies under the sign of the ladder (*scala*) in the Calle dei Stagneri near San Salvador is documented from 1534 to 1664 – always in family ownership. The Gradignan dalla Scala appear to have been the leading colour sellers in Venice (at least at the time of the wealthy Alvise, who died in 1581). Their social prestige was reflected in numerous offices. Already Alvise’s grandfather seems to have served as *degnano* of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco in 1525. Alvise’s nephews, Domenico and Anzolo, also held this office in 1572 and 1573 respectively.¹ | **ROLAND KRISCHEL**

1 | For a detailed presentation of the family and its business see DeLancey 2017 (with additional literature).



Fig. 60 | Jacopo Tintoretto and workshop, Ascension of Mary with Various Saints, detail with pigment box (*scatola*) and spatula, c.1576/77, Venice, San Polo



M D L X I I I
TITIANVS PICTOR ET
AERVS CAESARIS

105|106
THOMAS STRUTH
Geldern 1954

Louvre 3, Paris 1989, 1989

Chromogenic colour print, 155×172cm | Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum, inv. no. DZF 48

Galleria dell'Accademia 1, Venedig 1992, 1992

Chromogenic colour print, 184.5×228.3cm | Berlin, Atelier Thomas Struth

BIBLIOGRAPHY | Ohlsen 2002; Belting 2005; Grasskamp 2005; Seidel 2005; Emde 2008 (with previous lit.); HaCohen/Ezrahi 2010; Kruszynski 2010; Lingwood 2010; exh. cat. Frankfurt 2015/16, pp. 168–170, cat. no. 26 (Jana Baumann)

The exhibition comes to a close with a very recent example of the reception of Venetian Renaissance painting, now in its 'museified' form. In his series *Museum Photographs* (1989–2004), the German photographer Thomas Struth devoted himself to well-known art institutions in Europe and North America – their exhibition rooms, presentation modes, and above all the viewers in front of the works. Museums are venues of history and its conservation, each distinguished by a particular interior decoration and staging, and each also inspiring a certain mode of behaviour in its visitors.

Struth made his first *Museum Photographs* in the Paris Louvre, the quintessential museum. For *Louvre 3, Paris 1989*, he worked in the Salle des États – that is, the room featuring the large paintings by the Venetians of the cinquecento in two rows, one above the other, among them Titian's *Madonna of the Rabbit* (lower row, third painting from the right), on display here in the Frankfurt exhibition (cat. no. 10). In an evenly lit room, we see a wall densely hung with paintings. Visitors have taken seats on the benches in the centre to concentrate on the artworks or rest for a moment. The diagonals formed by the row of paintings and the row of museum visitors, the large expanse of floor, but also the composition of the spatial situation in such a way as to take the viewer into account, lend the photograph a stage-like quality. None of the persons depicted returns our gaze. On the contrary, a silent dialogue seems to ensue between the hundreds-of-years-old figures on the canvases and their viewers in the room. Several layers of time thus come together in Struth's photographs. There are the years in which the paintings were executed, the point in time at which the photograph was taken, and finally the moment in which we ourselves, likewise viewers in a museum, contemplate Struth's work. Particularly in *Galleria dell'Accademia 1, Venedig 1992*, the painted fiction merges with the photographed reality in a harmonious transition. The many tourists in the foreground discreetly overlap the festive banqueters in Paolo Veronese's large-scale *Feast in the House of Levi* (1573) in the background. Without bringing about jarring contrasts between the colours and clothing fashions of the different epochs, Struth has managed to blur the boundaries between painting and photography –

boundaries that have been a subject of discussion and investigation since the invention of the latter medium at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Thomas Struth, who trained in photography with Bernd Becher at the Kunstakademie in Düsseldorf, arrived at these elaborate arrangements by waiting patiently until the visitors "found their way into a composition" of their own accord, as he describes it.¹ The ceaseless movement of the people in front of the camera is manifest as haziness and thus alludes to the differing techniques of execution after all.

Regardless of whether the artist took them in the Louvre in Paris, the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice, the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna or the Art Institute of Chicago, what distinguishes these photographs – apart from their coloration and the apparently documentary nature of their pictorial language – is their unusually large scale. They frequently exceed two metres in height as well as width. Struth's *Museum Photographs* thus not only mirror the reception of art, but, perhaps even more importantly, claim the status of artworks for themselves, on a par with the paintings they depict. |

IRIS HASLER

1 | Belting 2005, p. 211.

