Abstract

This dissertation examines a group of Venetian Renaissance paintings created for domestic furniture and decorative settings, including chests, friezes, bedsteads, covers, doors, and musical instruments, among other types. While a tradition of painted furniture existed in the city as early as the thirteenth century, surviving examples from the mid-1460s to the later Cinquecento compose an integral genre with an established idiom that holds significance for the broader development of Venetian art. The typical decorative picture was a small panel or canvas illuminating an ancient legend, allegory, poetic reverie, or scene of everyday life; subjects such as landscape, the gods of classical mythology, the nude female figure, and rarely depicted episodes from religious writings recurred in this context. Giovanni Bellini was the first painter known to sign a work belonging to this local tradition, which continued through the time of Jacopo Tintoretto and Paolo Veronese, and involved figures such as Cima da Conegliano, Vittore Carpaccio, Giorgione, Lorenzo Lotto, Bonifacio de’ Pitati, Titian, and Andrea Schiavone. Other examples were produced by associates within their workshops, and by epigones and independent painters working on speculation.

Close examination of extant artifacts and documents assists in understanding the original settings of these pictures; the iconographic and stylistic relationships among them; the environments in which they were made and seen; and their later vicissitudes. In addition, this study explores the novel themes and techniques that found their way into canonical works of Venetian painting through the secondary vehicle of ornament, which offered a platform for artistic license and experimentation. The subjects, moods, and manner of decorative images anticipate and complement well-known poetic pictures and mythologies, such as Giorgione’s Tempesta (ca. 1505-1508) and the bacchanals completed by Bellini and Titian between 1514 and 1529 for Alfonso d’Este of Ferrara. In turn, many furniture panels themselves were detached and framed as easel paintings during the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Analysis of these overlapping types offers insight into the emergence of particular themes, styles, and formats in Venice and their importance to the history of Italian painting.

The first chapter of the manuscript provides an introduction to this genre and explores its characteristic subjects and techniques, with an emphasis on early pictures of Bellini, Carpaccio, and Cima that set the tone for subsequent production in both ornamental and independent fields.
The chapter also addresses workshop and guild practices that gave rise to decorative pictures; explains variations in quality through mechanisms of manufacture and the art market; and discusses contemporary accounts of the works’ reputation and value. Such accounts are revealing in their negotiation of shifting aesthetic attitudes, and suggest the emergence of the framed easel picture as a standard for painting.

The second chapter establishes a basic typology of Venetian domestic furniture pictures, and explores their relationships with objects for ecclesiastical and devotional use. Reconstructions of original cycles are made on the basis of stylistic and thematic continuities, documentary evidence, and on-site technical examination where possible. The third chapter explores patterns of taste and transformations undergone by these pieces over time, as well as their later provenance.

The appended catalogue assembles a corpus of representative examples of Venetian ornamental painting, ca. 1465-1570, and discusses their iconography, composition, technique, and other issues. The primary aims of the catalogue are to reconstitute various ensembles, in some cases involving multiple component pictures that have not been considered together before, and to facilitate future, synthetic study of this under-explored genre of Venetian painting.
# Table of Contents

Abstract ..................................................................................................................................... iii  
Acknowledgments..................................................................................................................... vi 

## Chapter 1: Ornamental Painting and Venetian Art ............................................................ 1  
Introduction ............................................................................................................................... 1  
Early Subjects ........................................................................................................................... 10  
Patterns and Hierarchies of Content ......................................................................................... 24  
Styles and Techniques............................................................................................................... 39  
Workshops and Authorship....................................................................................................... 46  
Reputation and Value ................................................................................................................ 62  
**Chapter 1 Illustrations** ........................................................................................................ 71  

## Chapter 2: Origins and Settings ........................................................................................ 89  
Origins and Analogues .............................................................................................................. 89  
Renaissance Developments ....................................................................................................... 97  
Chests and Boxes ...................................................................................................................... 98  
Friezes ........................................................................................................................................ 106  
Beds .......................................................................................................................................... 118  
Doors and Shutters ................................................................................................................... 130  
Picture Covers ........................................................................................................................ 142  
Musical Instruments .................................................................................................................. 146  
*Restelli* .................................................................................................................................. 156  
*Spalliera* Cycles ..................................................................................................................... 158  
Conclusion ................................................................................................................................ 160  
**Chapter 2 Illustrations** ........................................................................................................ 161  

## Chapter 3: Transformations and Provenance .............................................................. 199  
Furniture to Frame .................................................................................................................... 199  
Reasons for Detachment .......................................................................................................... 208  
Venice to Vienna ....................................................................................................................... 215  
Lotto and Titian ......................................................................................................................... 224  
Later Provenances ..................................................................................................................... 235  
Conclusion ................................................................................................................................ 243  
**Chapter 3 Illustrations** ........................................................................................................ 244  

Conclusion and Guide to the Catalogue .................................................................................... 265  
List of Artists and Paintings ...................................................................................................... 267  
**Catalogue of Venetian Ornamental Paintings, ca. 1465-1570** ............................................ 270  
Selected Bibliography ............................................................................................................... 432
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Introduction

The traditional history of Venetian painting in the Renaissance encompasses a rich variety of genres, from monumental altarpieces, civic narratives, and mythological canvases to portraits, votive images, and precious works for personal devotion. During the same period, minor types of ornamental painting also figured in the life of the city and in the development of its art. Created for domestic furniture settings such as chests, bedsteads, friezes, and doors, Venetian decorative pictures have received comparatively little scholarly attention. Yet their poetic, legendary, and anecdotal subjects offer insight into the emergence of new categories of imagery, and their formats and styles reveal much about the related histories of painting, furniture, and architectural design in early modern Europe. Specialties of Venetian art of the High Renaissance, including the pastoral landscape, classical mythological narrative, and female nude, were adumbrated and explored at an early date in decorative fields. Over time, ornamental works continued to flourish in tandem with independent pictures of similar themes and techniques. During the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, moreover, decorative paintings underwent notable changes in value and status, which corresponded to the emergence of the portable secular panel and canvas. The paintings thus belong to a tradition that merits study against the backdrop of Renaissance art and taste.

Perhaps the best known early reference to this genre appears in the life of Giorgione published in 1648 by Carlo Ridolfi (1594-1658), the Baroque painter and writer, in his collection of Venetian artists’ biographies entitled Le Maraviglie dell’Arte. Ridolfi relates that the young Giorgione (ca. 1476/78-ca. 1510) worked as a painter of bed frames [recinti da letto] and cabinets [gabinetti], which were enjoyed by all for their beauty; the author also refers to
Giorgione’s adornments for chests [casse] and closets or cupboards [armari].

The attribution of multiple furniture paintings to the artist is problematic, as only one example definitely from his hand survives (Figs. 1.1-1.2; cat. no. 19). However, Ridolfi provides a useful description of this type and its historical relevance. In a lengthy passage, he enumerates the characteristic subjects of Venetian ornamental pictures: the golden age, in which, among “glad greenery and streams cascading over pleasant cliffs, covered by leafy branches, and in the agreeable shade of plants, men and women lived in delight, enjoying the tranquil air”; tales of Giants felled by Jupiter’s thunderbolts; creation myths, such as the story of Deucalion and Pyrrha; and stories of the loves, disguises, and crimes of the gods. “Long would be the recounting,” he continues, “of all the fables that Giorgione painted on so many chests, of Hercules, Achelous, and the beautiful Deianeira, ravished by Nessus the centaur, who in turn was struck in flight by the arrows of that same Hercules; of the loves of Apollo, and of Hyacinth, of Venus and Adonis…”

Rather than a factual inventory, Ridolfi’s account is a poetical expansion on the genre of ornamental painting as a whole and its association with Giorgione’s style and followers. The seventeenth-century author’s narrative is also infected by his familiarity with later domestic decorative works from the circles of Bonifacio de’ Pitati (1487-1553), Titian (ca. 1488-1576),

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2 “Uscito dalla Scuola del Bellino si trattenne per qualche tempo in Venetia, dandosi à dipingere nelle botteghe de Dipintori, lavorandovi quadri di divotione, recinti da letto e gabinetti, godendo ogn’uno in tali cose della bellezza della Pittura” (Ridolfi, Maraviglie, vol. 1, 97). For Ridolfi’s references to casse and armari painted by Giorgione, see n. 4 below. Ridolfi’s account of the young Giorgione’s training in the “school of Bellini” has not been substantiated. Rather than officially learning his craft with Bellini or another artist, Giorgione probably informally absorbed the elder painter’s influences, along with those of Carpaccio, Leonardo, and masters from northern Italy, Germany, and the Netherlands: he “was not a disciple in the traditional sense of either Bellini or Carpaccio, or of any other great Venetian master active around 1500” (Ferino-Pagden, “From Venice to Vienna,” 14). See also Rearick, “Chi Fu il Maestro di Giorgione?” Lucco, however, argues for a closer link between Bellini and Giorgione than has been acknowledged previously; he notes similarities among the two artists’ underdrawings, which suggest a possible workshop relationship (“Uscito dalla Scuola del Bellino”).

3 See the section on Doors and Shutters in Ch. 2, and catalogue entry below.

4 “Seguiva in tanto Giorgio à dipingere nella solita habitazione, ove dicesi, che aperta havesse bottega, dipingendo rotelle, armari e molte casse in particolare, nelle quali faceva per lo più favole d’Ovidio, come l’aura età divisandovi liete verude, rivi cadenti da piecavi rupi, infrascate di fronde & all’ombre d’amene piante si stavano dilitiando huomini e donne godendo l’aura tranquilla: qui vedevasi il Leone superbo, colà l’humile Agnellino, in un altra parte il fugace Cervo & altri animali terrestri. Apparivano in altre i Giganti abbattuti dal fulmine di Giove, caduti sotto il peso di dirupati monti, Pelio, Olippo & Ossa; Decalione e Pirra, che rinovavano il Mondo col gettar de’ sassi dietro alle spalle, da quali nascevano groppi di fanciullini. Haveva poi figurato Pitone serpente ucciso da Apolline & il medesimo Deo seguendo la bella figlia di Peneo, che radicate le piante nel terreno, cangiava le braccia in rami & in frondi d’alloro; e più lungi fece lo tramutata in Vacca data in custodia dalla gelosa Giunone ad Argo, & indi addormentato dalla Zampogna di Mercurio, venivagi da quello tronco il Capo, versando il sangue per molte vene, poiche non vale vigilanza d’occhio mortale, dove asiste la virtù d’un Nume del Cielo […] Lungo sarebbe il raccontar le favole tutte da Giorgio in più casse dipinte, di Alcide, di Acheloo e della bella Deianira rapita da Nesso Centauro saetato nella fuga dall’istesso Alcide; degli amori di Apollo, e di Giacinto, di Venere e di Adone…” (Ridolfi, Maraviglie, vol. 1, 98-99).
Andrea Schiavone (ca. 1510/15-1563), Jacopo Tintoretto (ca. 1518-1594), and others. Many of these pictures, too, treat mythological and pastoral themes, and throughout his biographies, Ridolfi testifies to the varied narratives, arcadian settings, and allusive imagery of such paintings across the full span of their development in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. His descriptions are supported by the appearance of extant works, with their animate skies, lush groves, and streams trickling through hilly gaps: faraway lands populated by pale nymphs, aggrieved lovers, and fallen gods. In addition to depicting such evocative and lyrical subjects, decorative paintings illuminate scenes of everyday life, little-known episodes from Christian and Jewish sources, civic and classical narratives meant to honor and to instruct, and a range of other themes befitting the homes these works once adorned.

Although Ridolfi wrote his _Maraviglie_ at a century’s remove from the period under consideration, and although he embroidered details of artists’ lives and accomplishments, the author was well informed about the Venetian tradition of domestic ornamental painting. His consistent use of terms such as _cassa_, _fregio_, and _recinto da letto_; his explanations of the subjects and settings of decorative pictures; and his discussions of the works’ later fortunes all accord well with other evidence. His text therefore provides a helpful basis for understanding these paintings. Another significant source of this period is Marco Boschini (1605-1681), the critic and dealer who mentions ornamental art and artists in his writings on Venetian painting. In the sixteenth century, the connoisseur Marcantonio Michiel (ca. 1484-1552) penned notes on monuments and private collections in Venice and the Veneto; his records span the years 1521-1543 and offer a privileged glimpse into the homes of patrons and art lovers, several of whom owned decorative pictures. Also important are Paolo Pino’s _Dialogo di Pittura_ of 1548, and the

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5 For Ridolfi’s reliability as a source of information about Venetian painters, Carroll, “On the Credibility of Carlo Ridolfi’s ‘Lives of the Venetian Painters’”; Finocchi Ghersi, “Una Data per le Tavole di Andrea Schiavone ai Carmini”; and Gould, “Ridolfi the Historian.” For Ridolfi’s consistent references to defined genres of ornamental painting and his accurate accounts of provenance, see Chs. 2 and 3 respectively. Ridolfi was, admittedly, better informed about artists closer to his time than about earlier painters. His life of Giorgione includes numerous paintings that cannot be identified or bear scant relation to the artist, but even so, the text provides one of the earliest attributions of the Castelfranco _Madonna_ (see Gould, op. cit., 198, and Anderson, _Giorgione_, 70-72).

6 See Boschini, _Carta del Navegar Pitoresco_, his monumental dialect poem of 1660 in praise of Venetian painting. This study cites Anna Pallucchini’s 1966 edition, which also includes another important text by Boschini, the _Breve Istruzione_ (a prelude to the 1674 edition of his guidebook, _Le Ricche Minere della Pittura Veneziana_). For Boschini, Fletcher, “Marco Boschini and Paolo del Sera”; Sohm, _Pittoresco_; Merling, _Marco Boschini’s La Carta del Navegar Pitoresco_.

7 The manuscript of Michiel’s so-called _Notizia d’Opere del Disegno_ was discovered in the Biblioteca Marciana of Venice by Jacopo Morelli and published in 1800. Michiel’s notes provide a wealth of information about art
1568 edition of the *Vite* of Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574). Pino, who trained as an artist under Giovanni Girolamo Savoldo, was a knowledgeable theorist whose fictionalized, vernacular dialogue between a Tuscan and Venetian painter situates furniture decoration within contemporary debates about artistic practice.\(^8\) Vasari’s accounts of domestic furniture pictures in Florence supply generally reliable points of comparison with Venice, and his life of Dello Delli provides a survey of local ornamental painting traditions parallel to that found in Ridolfi’s biography of Giorgione.\(^9\)

The evidence of documentary sources and paintings themselves is central to this study.\(^10\) Although Giorgione and his school are the first in Ridolfi’s *Maraviglie* to be identified with the genre of decorative pictures, its roots in Venice reach back at least to the thirteenth century, when painters of furniture are recorded in a document of the Arte dei Depentori.\(^11\) The earliest surviving artifacts of Venetian ornamental painting coincide with the inception of Renaissance style in the city, particularly the art of Giovanni Bellini (ca. 1435-1516). According to a will of 1525, the master’s follower, Vincenzo Catena (ca. 1470/80-1531), owned a walnut *restello*, a type of mirrored rack for hanging personal cosmetic implements, which was decorated “with certain little figures inside, painted by the hand of M. Giovanni Bellini.” These pictures were likely similar to the extant group of small *Allegories* signed by the artist (Figs. 1.3-1.6; cat. no. 2). Catena, guardian of the painted *restello*, is identified by an early inscription as a colleague of

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\(^8\) Pino’s birth and death dates are not known; he was active from approximately 1534 to 1565. See the critical edition of the *Dialogo* by Rodolfo and Anna Pallucchini (*Pino, Dialogo di Pittura*), and the translation and commentary by Mary Pardo (*Paolo Pino’s Dialogo*).

\(^9\) The primary source of information about Tuscan furniture painting in Vasari’s *Lives* is the biography of Dello Delli (*Vite*, vol. 2, 147-153), although references to this genre are peppered throughout the text. For Vasari as a source of information about this subject, see for example Barriault, *Spalliera Paintings*, 9-21, and Campbell, *Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence*, 48-50.

\(^10\) Archival findings regarding Venetian ornamental pictures appear in Ludwig, “Archivalische Beiträge zur Geschichte der Venezianischen Malerei” (1903) and (1905), and idem, “Venezianischer Hausrat”; see also Bode et al., “Archivalische Beiträge zur Geschichte der Venezianischen Kunst aus dem Nachlass Gustav Ludwigs,” and Paoletti, *Raccolta di Documenti Inediti per Servire alla Storia della Pittura Veneziana*. Further archival and documentary sources discussed below.

\(^11\) For early painters of furniture in Venice, see the discussion of Workshops and Authorship in the present chapter, and the section on Origins and Analogues in Ch. 2 below.
Giorgione, and therefore provides a link between Bellini’s decorative production and examples in the Giorgionesque style.\textsuperscript{12} Numerous contemporaries and later followers of these painters – including Andrea Mantegna (ca. 1430/31-1506), Cima da Conegliano (ca. 1459/60-ca. 1517/18), Vittore Carpaccio (ca. 1460/66-ca. 1525/26), Lorenzo Lotto (ca. 1480-1556), and Paolo Veronese (1528-1588), as well as the aforementioned Bonifacio, Titian, Schiavone, and Tintoretto – made similar pictures. Still other examples were produced by associates or students within their workshops, and on speculation by \textit{botteghe} devoted specifically to the genre. Many of these pieces are in modern collections; although problems of survival and attribution questions remain, the present corpus permits exploration of this chapter in Venetian art and suggests avenues for further investigation.\textsuperscript{13}

The extant works elude precise reconstruction: unlike Florence, where guild regulations and other forces gave rise to relatively distinct types such as the painted \textit{spalliera} and \textit{forzieri} (later known as \textit{cassone}), and where ornamental pictures were often incorporated into rituals of marriage and childbirth, Venice saw many loosely defined kinds of decorative painting that served a corresponding diversity of purposes.\textsuperscript{14} The tradition of painted furniture ornament also lasted in the lagoon city much longer, with production beginning in the medieval period and persisting in varied forms until about 1560-1570, the approximate dates of the latest cycles in

\textsuperscript{12} Catena’s will of 15 April 1530, copied with additions from his earlier will of November 1525: “Item laso al sovrascrito miser Antonio tuti i mie aneli ligati in oro, prima et el mio diamante et la mia prasma [prasina], e do chorniole ligate in oro, et anchora laso el mio restelo di nogera con zerte fegurete dentro depinte de mano de mi ser Zuan Belino, et anchora tuti i miei nudi di relievo fati di tera chota” (Ludwig, “Archivalische Beiträge zur Geschichte der Venezianischen Malerei” (1905), 85-86; see also Goffen, \textit{Giovanni Bellini}, 322 n. 14). For information on this will, Robertson, \textit{Vincenzo Catena}, 6-8. For Catena’s \textit{restello} decorated by Bellini, see discussion of this type in Ch. 2, and cat. no. 2 below. The relationship between Catena and Giorgione is documented in a sixteenth-century inscription on the reverse of the latter artist’s painting of \textit{Laura} (1506; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie): the inscription refers to Giorgione as the “cholega de maistro vizenzo chaena” (Robertson, op. cit., 5; Anderson, “Giorgione a Venezia,” 137).

\textsuperscript{13} The quantity of surviving examples of this genre is likely to be far smaller than the original number, due to damage caused by quotidian use and the changes imposed on furniture objects over time. See Ch. 3 below and Binotto, “La Pittura Mitologica di Cima da Conegliano,” 51. For attribution issues, see the discussion of Workshops and Authorship in the present chapter, and appended catalogue entries.

\textsuperscript{14} Schubring describes Venetians’ varied taste in interior decorations and furnishings, compared to their Florentine counterparts (\textit{Cassoni}, 165-166). The difference may be due to the fact that, in Florence, furniture sizes were standardized by the woodworkers’ guild (Schiaparelli, \textit{La Casa Fiorentina e i suoi Arredi}, 233-236; but see also Campbell, \textit{Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence}, 12-16, noting that even in Florence the categories of furniture painting were not entirely fixed). Musacchio discusses the part played by \textit{cassoni} and other objects in Florentine marriage rituals (\textit{Art, Marriage, and Family in the Florentine Renaissance Palace}, esp. 122-162), and the role of \textit{deschi da parte} and related works in the ceremonies of childbirth (\textit{Art and Ritual of Childbirth}). See also Bayer, \textit{Art and Love in Renaissance Italy}; Baskins et al., \textit{The Triumph of Marriage}; and review of scholarship below.
this study (cat. nos. 76, 77). In Florence, by contrast, these genres had fallen out of fashion by
the early 1500s, several decades before Vasari memorably described the cassone and related
types.\textsuperscript{15} Eventually, however, decorative painting declined in Venice as well. In the mid-
seventeenth century, about one hundred years after Bonifacio and Schiavone were active, Ridolfi
looked back on Bonifacio’s ornaments for beds and chests “used in those times,” and on
Schiavone’s practice of adorning furniture “according to the custom of those times.”\textsuperscript{16}

The Florentine term cassone – frequently used as a catch-all in scholarship, although it is
anachronistic even with respect to Tuscan chests of the Quattrocento – did not appear in Venice
before the late sixteenth century and does not apply to most of the objects in this study. In 1581,
the local guidebook writer Francesco Sansovino (1521-1583) consistently employed the word
cassa rather than cassone, as did Ridolfi in the mid-Seicento.\textsuperscript{17} Contemporary records also refer
to painted gabinetti, credenze, armari, forzieri, fregi, porte, sportelli, banche, scatole, lettiere,
recinti da letto, restelli, and cofani, among others. The variation possible within even one of
these settings is suggested by John Florio’s 1611 English translation of the word cassa: “a chest,
a coffin, a shrine, a hutch, a bin, a trunke, a marchants cash or counter…also a cace for any
thing.”\textsuperscript{18}

Along with differences prescribed by setting, there were those imposed by patronage and
later transplantation. Some ornamental pictures were specially commissioned for particular
locations or occasions, and carried customized meanings (cat. nos. 8, 27, 70). Others were
intended as general-purpose decoration for the home, and could be modified to meet changing
needs. Often irregularly shaped at the start, these panels and canvases were frequently cut down,
damaged through use, framed for display, or otherwise altered over time. The surviving

\textsuperscript{15} The systematic production of painted chests in Florence probably began in the later fourteenth century, and the
genre enjoyed its greatest popularity between about 1400 and 1475 (Campbell, \textit{Love and Marriage in Renaissance
Florence}, 14, 16, 24). Florentine domestic spalliera painting flourished from about 1470 through the first two
decades of the sixteenth century (Barriault, \textit{Spalliera Paintings}, 3).

\textsuperscript{16} Ridolfi, \textit{Maraviglie}, vol. 1, 295, 253; for further discussion of these passages, see the section on Reputation and
Value below.

\textsuperscript{17} Thornton, “Cassoni, Forzieri, Goffani and Cassette”; Brown, \textit{Private Lives}, 100; Palumbo Fossati, “La Casa
Veneziana,” 470-471. In his guidebook to the city, Sansovino wrote of Venetian palaces, “le camere per lo piu sono
adornate di lettiere & di casse fatte a oro,” and “non è persona cosi miserabile con casa aperta, che non habbia casse &
lettiere di noci…” (\textit{Venetia Citta Nobilissima}, 142v.); Ridolfi wrote that Giorgione painted “molte casse in
particolare,” and that Schiavone painted “in sei casse ancora altre inventioni…” (\textit{Maraviglie}, vol. 1, 98, 252). For
further discussion of the terminology used to describe chests and boxes in Venice, see discussion of this type in Ch.
2 below.

\textsuperscript{18} Florio, \textit{Queen Anna’s New World of Words}, 87.
paintings have shed most traces of their original configurations, although technical examination can help to illuminate the contexts in which they were first seen. On the basis of the works’ dimensions, supports, and techniques, as well as existing documentation and visual comparisons, the intended settings of such paintings can be inferred and their relationships to other examples of the genre clarified.

In addition to drawing on the primary evidence of paintings, documents, and early texts, this study is indebted to extensive scholarship on the subject of Renaissance furniture decoration in other areas of Italy. The founding text of this tradition is Paul Schubring’s *Cassoni* of 1915 (second edition 1923), a detailed catalogue of painted and decorated chests and associated objects of the Italian Renaissance.19 As a later scholar of Florentine marriage chests has noted, Schubring not only set out the empirical groundwork for the study of Renaissance furniture painting, but also defined modern discussion of the subject by directing attention away from questions of decoration – coloring, patterns, and costumes – and toward the erudite programs and rich textual sources underlying these ostensibly ornamental images.20 His effort to anchor decorative painting within the art-historical canon facilitated studies such as Ellen Callmann’s *Apollonio di Giovanni*: working from a copy of an account book from the studio of this fifteenth-century Florentine painter and his colleague, Marco del Buono Giamberti, Callmann built an oeuvre and artistic personality for Apollonio.21 Such in-depth treatments have been joined in recent decades by catalogues, surveys, and studies of regional schools of furniture carving and decoration.22

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19 See also the supplements to Schubring’s catalogue, including “Cassone Pictures in America,” “Neugefundene Cassonebilder,” and “New Cassone Panels.”
20 For discussion of the ways in which Schubring “redirected art historical scholarship on domestic painting from questions of costume to questions of content,” Baskins, Cassone *Painting, Humanism, and Gender*, 13-16; see also Campbell, *Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence*, 61-62. Schubring’s study opened the way for iconographic and humanistic analyses: within an extended response to Schubring’s classifications and attributions, for example, Ernst Gombrich noted that the humanist poet Ugolino Verino had composed an ekphrasis of the work of the furniture painter Apollonio di Giovanni (see Gombrich, “Apollonio di Giovanni”).
Many scholars have shown that Renaissance ornamental paintings, today isolated against the backdrop of the museum, originally belonged to complex physical environments. Working from inventories, other documents, and surviving artifacts, Attilio Schiaparelli, Wilhelm von Bode, Frida Schottmüller, and Terisio Pignatti have treated furniture paintings as part of a larger body of objects in the Renaissance home.23 Similarly, Martin Wackernagel devises the beginnings of a typology of painted interior decoration.24 John Kent Lydecker uses local archives to explore the disposition of art in Florentine palazzi; Peter Thornton provides a comprehensive survey of the material culture of the Italian Renaissance home; and Renato De Fusco explores six centuries of Italian painting in conjunction with contemporary interior decorations of all kinds. Anne Barriault has defined and studied the type of the Florentine spalliera painting and has reconstructed individual cycles from documentary, visual, and literary evidence. Focusing on the related genre of domestic wall painting, Anne Dunlop traces the emergence of novel secular themes in early mural cycles decorating palaces throughout Italy.25

Additional studies have attended to ornamental painting not only in its original locations, but also in its social and cultural contexts. Scholars such as Christiane Klapisch-Zuber and Richard Goldthwaite have demonstrated the role that fine objects played in the political and economic life of Renaissance Italians.26 More focused studies include Cristelle Baskins’s treatment of the painted wedding chest and its traditional subject matter within the negotiations of financial and gender authority that permeated fifteenth-century Florentine marriage rites, and Jacqueline Musacchio’s accounts of the many objects, including painted furniture, devoted to

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23 Schiaparelli, La Casa Fiorentina e i suoi Arredi; Bode, Die Italienischen Hausmöbel der Renaissance; Schottmüller, Wohnungskultur und Möbel der Italienischen Renaissance; and Pignatti, Mobili Italiani del Rinascimento (with further early bibliography). See also Pedrini, Il Mobilio.
25 Lydecker, Domestic Setting of the Arts in Renaissance Florence, employs documents primarily from the Ufficio dei Pupilli in Florence; Thornton, Italian Renaissance Interior; De Fusco, Storia dell’Arredamento. For Barriault’s study, Spalliera Paintings, and for Dunlop, Painted Palaces. For further specific case studies, McIver, Women, Art, and Architecture in Northern Italy. Recent books and exhibitions focusing on this subject are Aynsley and Grant, Imagined Interiors; Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, At Home in Renaissance Italy; Bayer, Art and Love in Renaissance Italy; and Baskins et al., The Triumph of Marriage. See also Ajmar-Wollheim et al., Approaching the Italian Renaissance Interior, and Currie, Inside the Renaissance House.
26 Klapisch-Zuber, Women, Family, and Ritual, esp. 213-246; Goldthwaite, “The Empire of Things,” and idem, Wealth and the Demand for Art. Among many associated works are Schama, Embarrassment of Riches; essays collected in Birmingham and Brewer, Consumption of Culture; Jardine, Worldly Goods. Rowland, however, criticizes Jardine’s approach (“The Renaissance Revealed”). See also Welch, Shopping in the Renaissance.
wedding, childbirth, and family rituals. A recent exhibition and series of studies by Caroline Campbell examine the display and use of furniture paintings in the Florentine Renaissance home, and their innovative synthesis of a wide variety of visual conventions and textual sources into exemplary and entertaining images suitable for the members of prominent households.

In the Venetian setting, works by scholars including Pompeo Molmenti, Jaynie Anderson, Patricia Fortini Brown, Isabella Palumbo-Fossati, and Monika Schmitter explore domestic art and collecting, while others elaborate on workshop practice and guild structure in the Republic. Further analyses of humanist culture, literature, and collecting in Venice during the sixteenth century offer insight into the social history of early aesthetic attitudes. The present research also belongs to a broader effort to recover and interpret little explored genres of Venetian Renaissance domestic painting. For example, Schmitter has described the type of the quadro da portego, typically a large, horizontal narrative painting that adorned the public space of the main hall on the piano nobile of Venetian homes; and Chriscinda Henry explores the emergence in Venice and north Italy of domestic genre pictures inspired by contemporary comedy and other entertainment forms.

The specific study of ornamental painting in Venice has benefited from the work of

27 Baskins, Cassone Painting, Humanism, and Gender; Musacchio, Art and Ritual of Childbirth, and idem, Art, Marriage, and Family in the Florentine Renaissance Palace. See also De Carli, I Deschi da Parto, for a catalogue of birth trays, and Randolph, “Gendering the Period Eye,” for their distinctive role in Renaissance visual culture. Other studies emphasize ways in which works of art not only documented but also gave historical meaning, permanence, and gravity to transient events in the lives of families (Rubin, “Art and the Imagery of Memory”). For a survey of recent scholarship on Tuscan domestic art, Janson-La Palme, “Painting and Sculpture for the Tuscan Household.”


29 The first extended treatment of this subject is Molmenti, Storia di Venezia nella Vita Privata, esp. vol. 2. More recent works are Anderson, Giorgione, esp. 127-189; Palumbo-Fossati, “Il Collezionista Sebastiano Erizzo,” “L’Interno della Casa dell’Artigiano,” and “La Casa Veneziana”; Mazzariol and Dorigato, Intérieurs Vénitiens; Romano, Housecraft and Statecraft, exploring the relationships between servants and masters in the Venetian household; Brown, “Behind the Walls,” and idem, Private Lives; Schmitter, Display of Distinction, and idem, “Virtuous Riches.” For guild structure and the status of artists in the Republic, Favaro, L’Arte dei Pittori in Venezia, and Monticolo, Capitolari delle Arti Veneziane.

30 The literature on these topics is extensive, including efforts to link specific paintings with the more general environment of appreciation and contemplation fostered by educated patrons (for example, Anderson, Giorgione, and Campbell, “Giorgione’s Tempest, Studiolo Culture, and the Renaissance Lucretius”). Studies of the collectors and patrons associated with Giorgione include Battilotti and Franco, “Regesti di Committenti e dei Primi Collezionisti di Giorgione,” and idem, “La Committenza e il Collezionismo Privato”; Borean, La Quadreria di Agostino e Giovan Donato Correggio; Borean and Mason, Figure di Collezionisti a Venezia; and the series, Il Collezionismo d’Arte a Venezia.

scholars including Brown, Caroline Campbell, Philip Cottrell, Benjamin Couilleaux, Robert Echols, Frederick Ilchman, Tom Nichols, and Catherine Whistler, who have addressed problems of attribution, subject, context, and documentation. In general, however, works of this type have been treated as a footnote to developments in history and religious painting, or have been considered mainly in terms of their disputed authorship. This scholarly tendency reflects a longstanding uneasiness about the status and artistic value of furniture paintings, and belongs to an ambivalent critical discourse that arose during the heyday of this genre in the sixteenth century. Early accounts and judgments of decorative pictures are discussed in the section on “Reputation and Value” later in this chapter; while as a whole, this study provides the first focused examination of Venetian ornamental paintings and their characteristic subject matter, settings, production, and vicissitudes during and after the Renaissance.

Early Subjects

Despite their initial variety and subsequent alterations, Venetian ornamental paintings share many features. A single picture originally decorating a chest or the headboard of a bed

32 A recent essay by Caroline Campbell, “When is a Cassone Painting not for a Cassone?”, provides an introduction to the genre of Venetian furniture paintings and suggests useful comparisons with the Florentine tradition. I would like to thank Dr. Campbell for her guidance and for sharing her article. Other scholars who have addressed this subject are Joannides, who provides an introductory discussion of “small panels,” possibly by the young Titian, in relation to secular furniture painting (Titian to 1518, 73-82); Brown, who explores the place of ornamental panels in the visual culture of the Venetian Renaissance home (Private Lives, esp. 99-112); Cottrell, who addresses decorative paintings from the circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati (Bonifacio’s Enterprise, “Painters in Practice”); Echols and Ilchman, who provide a checklist of ornamental works associated with Tintoretto (“Toward a New Tintoretto Catalogue,” 115-116, 137-138); Couilleaux, who discusses works of this genre by Bonifacio, Schiavone, Tintoretto, and Lambert Sustris (Delieuvin and Habert, Titien, Tintoret, Véronèse, 328-343); Nichols (Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity, esp. 94-99); and Catherine Whistler, who addresses a recently rediscovered portrait cover by Titian (“Titian’s ‘Triumph of Love’”; “Uncovering Beauty”).

33 For example, Gombrich declared “the relative independence of the cassone tradition vis-à-vis the achievements of monumental art” in Florence (“Apollonio di Giovanni,” 25), and noted that the chests lagged behind stylistically: “it is as if Masaccio or Donatello had never lived and the International Style, as exemplified by Gentile da Fabriano, had been allowed to develop, undisturbed, into the next generation” (ibid., 18). Bernard Berenson’s catalogue of Venetian pictures classifies a substantial group of works as “Giorgionesque Furniture Paintings,” whose attributions have subsequently been passed back and forth among various known artists (Venetian School, vol. 1, 86). The landmark 1955 catalogue, Zampetti, Giorgione e i Giorgioneschi, documents a number of Venetian furniture paintings, but is concerned mainly with the identification of autograph Giorgiones. Richardson, in his monograph on Schiavone, argues that furniture panels “often functioned more as incidental decoration than as independent works of art,” not identifying the changing stature of the works themselves (Andrea Schiavone, 27). He seeks to distance the painter from involvement in the less respectable craft of furniture painting, despite evidence that this is the genre in which Schiavone made his name. In a related vein, Hans Tietze, in a review of a 1942 exhibition of Giorgione’s works, declares the inclusion of an ornamental picture to be “particularly catastrophic” from a connoisseur’s and aesthete’s point of view (“La Mostra di Giorgione,” 140). More recently, studies of Giorgione and his legacy have treated this subject only in passing.
Fig. 1.7; cat. no. 67) shows significant affinities with a dispersed series of oblong canvases, illuminating episodes from ancient mythology, once set in a continuous band at the level of a frieze (Figs. 1.8-1.13; cat. no. 76). Common scale, coloring, mood, and patterns of content characterize these paintings, which also may be compared with independent easel pictures of the same period. Giorgione, for example, retained the subject matter and sensibility of ornamental art throughout his career, painting “players, poets, and other fantasies,” as Ridolfi wrote.34 During and after his short lifetime, the artist was known for recondite, atmospheric landscape pictures such as the Tempesta (Fig. 1.14; ca. 1505-1508; Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia) and the Three Philosophers (Fig. 1.15; ca. 1504-1508; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie), and for portraits and half-length paintings whose imagined or idealized protagonists were drawn from the worlds of pastoral, myth, and ancient history (Fig. 1.16; ca. 1506-1508; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie).35 Giorgione’s novelty lay, in part, in his imaginative synthesis of themes from diverse literary and visual sources, including those belonging to the marginal context of furniture painting. The collective oeuvre of the artist and his successors demonstrates the migration of motifs and styles from subsidiary, functional settings to independent fields.36 As poesie and mythologies flourished in mainstream Venetian painting of the sixteenth century, moreover, a dynamic relationship developed between autonomous and decorative works. Subjects and techniques passed back and forth among these genres, and individual pictures themselves crossed the boundary between ornamental and framed

34 On a palace façade, Ridolfi claims, Giorgione “fece alcuni ovati entrovi suonatori, Poeti, & altre fantasie...” (Maraviglie, vol. 1, 97).
35 In his Dialogo della Pittura (1557), Lodovico Dolce remarked that Giorgione’s oeuvre consisted mostly of half-length figures and portraits: “per lo piu non faceva altre opere, che meze figure, e ritratti” (Roskill, Dolce’s Aretino, 188-189). Hope notes that in Marcantonio Michiel’s sixteenth-century records of Venetian private collections, only four of the fifteen compositions associated with Giorgione are traditional religious paintings; the rest are mythological landscapes and portraits of various kinds (“Giorgione nei Documenti e nelle Fonti,” 180). For Giorgione’s fame as a painter of portraits and half-lengths, Holberton, “Varieties of Giorgionismo,” 34-40. For the artist’s innovations in portraiture and self-portraiture, Garas, “Bildnisse der Renaissance II”; Anderson, “The Giorgionesque Portrait,” “Bittersweet Love,” and “The Giorgionesque Portrait II”; Sheard, “Giorgione’s Portrait Inventions”; Holberton, “To Loosen the Tongue of Mute Poetry.”
36 Hope notes Giorgione’s role in bringing classical and non-religious subjects, previously confined to marginal settings such as furniture, into the mainstream of Venetian painting (“Classical Antiquity and Venetian Renaissance Subject Matter,” 52-53). The artist’s Man in Armor (ca. 1501-1508; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie) offers a particularly rich example of a poetic image related to ancient literary and contemporary visual sources, including furniture pictures and the drawings of Leonardo. David Alan Brown interprets the painting as a representation of a general in confrontation with a servus publicus, or “public slave,” who traditionally appeared in Roman triumphal processions to remind the victor of his vanity and mortality; this theme was discussed in classical texts and also was illuminated in Florentine furniture ornaments of the Renaissance (Brown, “Giorgione’s Man in Armor”). Further examples discussed below.
As norms of content and display changed, so too did the identity and status of decorative images.

Giovanni Bellini’s *Allegories* (cat. no. 2) present an example of an early ornamental ensemble, dated ca. 1485-1495, that anticipates significant strains of Cinquecento Venetian painting. *Melancholy* (Fig. 1.3), one of the series of four small vertical panels originally belonging to a *restello*, depicts a woman aboard a narrow boat in choppy waters, set against a crepuscular landscape of hills and sky. Her craft is weighed down by a consort of *putti*, one of whom shelters against her lap, foreshadowing the mother and infant of the *Tempesta* (Fig. 1.14).

Both works are secularized Madonna and Child compositions, in which a female of uncertain identity protects a baby, who is shielded from the viewer by his placement behind the maternal figure. Rather than directly quoting the elder artist’s painting, however, Giorgione alludes to a shared tradition of allegorical, mythological, and generic imagery. Bellini’s panel evokes the symbolism of Atlas, melancholy, fortune, and the ship of fools, while the *Tempesta* recalls representations of gypsies and satyr families, elements of the oneiric prose poem *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1499), signs of the zodiac, and the figures of Adam and Eve or Fortitude and Charity, among others.

Both scenes are characterized by the quality of “poetic brevity” or “poetic density,” the concentration of various sources into concise, wholly original inventions, harboring a potency and abundance of meaning expressed as much by form and composition as by symbols. Narrowly defined subjects give way to broader visual meditations.'
on time and change, conveyed in the movement of water through land and air, and in skies tinted with the colors of nightfall and an oncoming storm.\(^{41}\) Both works convey an effect of incompleteness or interruption, achieved by the truncation of the boat in Bellini’s panel and by the charged triangle of gazes among man, woman, and spectator in Giorgione’s canvas. Denied the iconographic cues of a conventional religious painting, the viewer faces instead a single, puzzling frame from a larger story of uncertain outlines and import. Whatever their ultimate significance, both scenes suggest themes of maternity, fertility, and the life cycle that then resonate in later works of Venetian decorative painting, such as the Giorgionesque *Rustic Idyll* (Fig. 1.46; cat. no. 20), and the *Mother with Suckling Infants* from the circle of Titian (Fig. 1.17; cat. no. 72).

Bellini’s *Truth* (Fig. 1.4), another enigmatic and seemingly fragmentary element of the *Allegories*, portrays a standing woman elevated on a pedestal surmounted by a drum; she holds a mirror and, like the character of *Melancholy*, is surrounded by children. In Venice, this is a very early – perhaps the earliest – surviving example of a panel painting of the nude female figure, which was to become a subject of great importance to the city’s artists during the sixteenth century. The only prior known work of this type is a picture of Venus, recorded in the bedroom of the nobleman Pietro Loredan by the Triestine humanist Raffaele Zovenzoni (b. 1434) in his *Istria* of 1474-1475.\(^{42}\) This painting, which no longer survives and may have been lost at an

\(^{41}\) “The earlier landscapist reveals forms in their normative aspect, and tries to avoid the suggestive or the ambiguous. Giorgione overthrows this stability, and gives us a glimpse whose very essence suggests the fleeting passage of time” (Turner, *Vision of Landscape in Renaissance Italy*, 90).

\(^{42}\) For Loredan’s *Venus*, Fletcher, “Harpies, Venus and Giovanni Bellini’s Classical Mirror,” 170, 172. The poem is addressed to “Petro Lavredano Lavrentii Filio cum Veneris Pictura” and reads, “Vecta Paphon fuit haev super aequora concha / quouis in hoc albo corpora, Petre, vides. / Spumigeram Venerem prisci dixere poetae / quae deprehensa fuit Martis adulterio. / Hinc pudibunda tegit tenui, viden?, inguina panno: / forsitan in thalamo sic cupit esse tuo” (Ziliotto, *Raffaele Zovenzoni*, 123). The manuscript of the *Istria* is now in the Biblioteca Trivulziana, Milan, cod. 776. Fletcher identifies a portrait cutting in the same library as the likeness of Zovenzoni, painted by Bellini (“The Painter and the Poet”). Dillon Bussi, however, refutes this attribution (“Due Ritratti di Raffaele Zovenzoni”). See also Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 185-188. For Bellini’s relation to humanists including Zovenzoni and Leonico Tomeo, Goffen, “Bellini Archeologico.” The only other claim I have found regarding the
early date, likely hung on or near the bed, as did many subsequent portrayals of Venus and the nude in Venetian homes. Visual and literary evidence suggests that this theme in its first unfolding was associated with domestic decorative and furniture settings, such as restelli and beds. The same pattern applied in Florence, where precedents for imagery of the reclining female figure appeared on the inner lids of marriage chests.

Despite its position near the beginning of the Venetian tradition of painted nudes, Bellini’s *Truth* is rarely discussed in studies of this genre, perhaps because of her apparently chaste and unclassical appearance. The artist’s sources for the standing, attenuated figure with rounded stomach, small breasts, and downcast gaze probably lay in northern prototypes, such as

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43 For the hanging of many Venetian Renaissance paintings of female nudes in proximity to beds, see discussion of this type in Ch. 2 below. Later works of this genre, too, may have been created for interior decorative schemes of fixed dimensions, as suggested by the presence of narrow zones of black running continuously around their borders. Examples include Titian’s *Sacred and Profane Love* (ca. 1515-1516; Rome, Galleria Borghese; see Lazzarini, “Indagini Scientifiche sui Materiali e la Tecnica Pittorica dell’Amor Sacro e Profano,” 345), and Tintoretto’s *Susannah and the Elders* (ca. 1555-1556; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie; see Wald, “Tintoretto’s Vienna Susannah and the Elders,” 183).

44 Rosand links paintings such as Giorgione’s Dresden *Venus* and Titian’s *Venus of Urbino* to the reclining female figures on the inner lids of Florentine cassoni (“So-and-So Reclining on Her Couch” (1997), 44-45); see also Randolph, “Unpacking Cassoni,” 25-28. An example of this type of work dating to the 1440s is in the Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen. However, there are no surviving examples of chests with female nude figures on their inner lids from Venice; this was a Florentine tradition, and it is not clear that Giorgione or Titian would have been strongly influenced by such works.

Jan van Eyck’s *Eve* in the Ghent altarpiece. A now lost image by the same painter of a nude woman emerging from the bath, and beautifully reflected in a mirror on the opposite wall, was known in Italy and praised by Bartolomeo Fazio. Bellini’s invention is also similar to the late Gothic statue of *Eve* by Antonio Rizzo for the Arco Foscari in the courtyard of the Palazzo Ducale (Fig. 1.18; ca. 1470-1475). The placement of *Truth* like a sculpture in a niche suggests that the painter may even have been looking directly at this model. Though the gesture of Rizzo’s *Eve* follows the ancient type of the *Venus pudica*, her elongated figure displays medieval and northern canons of proportion. Like *Truth*, she seems unrelated to the later tradition of classically inspired, voluptuous women in paintings of Giorgione, Titian, Tintoretto, and even Bellini himself. The *Lady with a Mirror* of 1515 (Fig. 1.19; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie) is antique in cast, recalling and implicitly rivalling a fabled painting of Venus by the Greek artist Apelles; while Giorgione’s Dresden *Venus* (Fig. 1.20; ca. 1507 with later alterations by Titian; Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister) evokes ancient visual exempla of the slumbering Ariadne and other dormant beauties, as well as Latin epithalamia describing the sleeping or resting Venus.

Yet, differences of style and sources between Bellini’s *Truth* and later Venetian representations of nude women do not preclude common intentions and responses. In the fifteenth century, the Flemish and late Gothic ideal of the female form, as exemplified by *Truth* and Rizzo’s *Eve*, was considered highly sensual and provocative, even by humanists such as

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47 For comparisons between *Truth* and Rizzo’s *Eve*, Robertson, *Giovanni Bellini*, 105. Bellini must have been familiar with Rizzo and his work: the social connections between these two artists are revealed by a document showing that in 1476, Giovanni’s brother, Gentile, collaborated with Rizzo on the design and execution of a pulpit for the Scuola Grande di San Marco (Sohm, *The Scuola Grande di San Marco*, 242, 261 doc. 24). Schulz dates Rizzo’s *Adam* and *Eve* to the early 1470s, on the basis of stylistic factors and Marc’antonio Sabellico’s reference to the sculptures in his *Res Venetae* (1487), which implies that they had already existed for some time (Antonio Rizzo, 32). Pincus, however, argues that the sculptures belong to a program planned for the Arco around 1483 (Arco Foscari, 298-316). The original sculptures are now housed inside the Palazzo Ducale.

48 McHam identifies the sophisticated classical allusions latent in Bellini’s later *Lady with a Mirror*. By the inclusion of a painted *cartellino* containing the imperfect verb *faciebat*, Bellini likens himself to Apelles and his subject to a lost masterpiece of this artist, the *Venus (Aphrodite) Anadyomene* (Venus Rising from the Sea), which likewise depicted a partial figure; Bellini also challenges sculptors from Praxiteles to his own day through the use of painted mirrors to reveal multiple sides of the female figure, ultimately asserting his greatness to artists in all media and all ages (“Reflections of Pliny”). For the relation of Giorgione’s Dresden *Venus* to ancient visual models and the Latin literary conceit of the sleeping Venus, Anderson, “Giorgione, Titian and the Sleeping Venus.”
Zovenzoni. He addressed a poem to Rizzo’s statue, declaring, “if your beauty were as it lives in this marble, Eve, who would be amazed if man submitted to you?” To Zovenzoni, the female form as realized by Rizzo was not merely beautiful, but the very source of original sin. Her appeal probably lay in the curve of her stomach and hips, suggestive of fertility, and in the graceful oval of her face, her long trailing ringlets of hair and delicate gesture. Bellini’s *Truth* invites a similar interpretation, and the work’s connotations of love and fecundity are only heightened by the presence of children and the strange male figure reflected in the protagonist’s mirror. These overtones suit a picture originally displayed in a private setting and juxtaposed with three other poetic, intimate, and mysterious paintings in a *restello* holding a lady’s tools of beautification.

*Truth* is in fact a direct forebear of Venetian pictures of the licentious female nude, a domestic genre that, over time, increasingly drew on classical sources for formal and literary inspiration. The figure aside, Bellini’s own early picture is incipiently classical in its inclusion of a round mirror, an attribute of Venus commonly appearing in later portraits of women (Fig. 1.21; ca. 1513-1515; Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures). *Truth* also anticipates numerous representations of the female figure, not only in autonomous pictures, but also within the category of Venetian furniture painting. This motif appears in at least eighteen of the cycles in this study, from the mysterious women who flank an elegant youth in *Page and Nymphs in a Landscape* (cat. no. 9), to Boccaccio’s story of uncouth Cimon and the sleeping beauty Iphigenia (cat. no. 33), to satyr families and anonymous maidens (cat. nos. 25, 39), to Leda, Andromeda, Callisto, Deianeira, Europa, Psyche, Semele, and Venus. Their prevalence reveals the genre’s overall preoccupations with pastoral verse and classical tales of love, beauty, and divinity manifest in human form.

Among the deities also frequently appearing in Venetian decorative paintings is Bacchus, a third protagonist of the *Allegories* (Fig. 1.5). Recognizable by the clusters of grapes hanging

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49 Clark notes that in general, the Gothic nude was “intended to embody sensual charm, unabashed and irresistible…the very degradation the body has suffered as a result of Christian morality [serving] to sharpen its erotic impact” (*The Nude*, 321). In the verses entitled “Evae Marmoreae Laus,” Zovenzoni writes, “Si tua forma fuit quae marmore vivit in isto, / quo mirum si vir paruit, Eva, tibi?” (Ziliotto, *Raffaele Zovenzoni*, 116). For Zovenzoni’s poem, Schulz, *Antonio Rizzo*, 12 n. 69, 32; Goffen, *Giovanni Bellini*, 323 n. 23; Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 185-186.

50 For the functions of the *restello*, see discussion of this type in Ch. 2 below.

51 For the theme of the woman with a mirror in Venetian painting, see most recently Ilchman et al., *Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese*, 184-187.
from his garland, Bellini’s god carries a dish of fruits and leaves, and rides in an open triumphal car pulled by children. Himself an overgrown putto, whose girth has been augmented during the painting process, Bacchus stands in contrast to the lithe, largely nude man who strides in advance of the chariot and turns his head back; sometimes identified as Mars or Virtue, he carries a spear, reminiscent of the many staffs and croziers that structure the surfaces of Bellini’s religious paintings. The composition as a whole clearly recalls passages from Jacopo Bellini’s sketchbooks, including a wall medallion of a figure standing on an open chariot and bearing an offering (Figs. 1.22-1.23), and a procession in which the wine god wears grapes and holds a bowl overflowing with fruit (Fig. 1.24). As opposed to Jacopo’s young and muscular divinity, Giovanni’s Bacchus is a quasi-comic character who prefigures subsequent images of this deity, though his expression remains intent and earnest, rhyming with the mood of the other three Allegories.

Like the figure of Truth, Bacchus marks the early appearance in Venetian panel painting of a theme, in this case the gods of classical mythology, that would become widespread in the Cinquecento. Bellini himself depicted Bacchus again as an infant in his late canvas for Alfonso d’Este of Ferrara (1476-1534), The Feast of the Gods (Fig. 1.25; 1514/1529; Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art). Enriched by associations with divine inspiration and artistic creation, among other concepts, Bacchus was portrayed by sculptors and painters from Michelangelo to Caravaggio and beyond. In Venice of the later fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, the ancient deities enjoyed a renaissance in sculpture, drawings, printed texts, and the margins of manuscripts, while their representation in panel painting developed in the context of furniture.

52 The outline of the lower region of Bacchus’s stomach was augmented during painting, a pentiment that has become visible on the picture surface. I thank Charlotte Hale for analysis of the technique of this work (July 2010). For the representation of staffs and croziers in Bellini’s works, Tempestini, “Giovanni Bellini e l’Oreficeria,” and Pincus, “Bellini and Sculpture,” 122.

53 For the similarity of Giovanni Bellini’s Bacchus to the medallion depicted in a sketch of The Death of the Virgin by his father (Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, Book of Drawings, f. 28r.), see Ruggeri et al., Giorgione a Venezia, 36. For Jacopo’s drawing of the Triumph of Bacchus (Paris sketchbook, f. 36r.) in the context of contemporary representations of this god in art and literature, Emmerling-Skala, Bacchus in der Renaissance, vol. 1, 327-330. The Louvre sketchbook is typically dated from the 1440s to the 1460s; for summary of scholarly opinions, see Eisler, Genius of Jacopo Bellini, 99-104.

54 Colantuono argues that the infant Bacchus in the Feast of the Gods represents the winter solstice, the period of peak male fertility and also the time of the halcyon days, when certain animals mate and nest; he associates this symbolism with the camerino paintings as a whole and their nuptial and procreative connotations (“Dies Alcyoniae: The Invention of Bellini’s Feast of the Gods,” and Titian, Colonna and the Renaissance Science of Procreation, 45-73). Another small painting of the infant Bacchus, related to the figure in the Feast of the Gods, is sometimes attributed to Bellini and dated ca. 1505-1510 (Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art); see Walker, National Gallery of Art, 203.
decoration.\textsuperscript{55} For example, Cima da Conegliano’s *Endymion Asleep* of ca. 1505-1510 (Fig. 1.60; cat. no. 12), a painted cassa ornament narrating the love of the moon-goddess Selene for the beautiful youth, counts among the earliest known representations of this subject in the Italian Renaissance.\textsuperscript{56}

Bellini’s *Bacchus* panel anticipates two pictorial cycles (cat. nos. 10, 11), also attributed to Cima, dated on stylistic grounds ca. 1495-1497 and 1505-1510 respectively, and both originally belonging to chests.\textsuperscript{57} These scenes center on the life of King Minos’s daughter, Ariadne, and two of her suitors, Theseus and Bacchus. The works thus represent some of the first examples of full-fledged classical mythological narrative in Venetian painting, a poetic genre that would achieve monumental form in the canvases completed and revised by Bellini, Dosso Dossi, and Titian between 1514 and 1529 for the camerino d’alabastro of Alfonso at Ferrara.\textsuperscript{58} In turn, these works prepared the stage for the poesie painted by Titian later in the sixteenth century for King Philip II of Spain. The artist’s poesie then generated replicas within the genre of Venetian ornamental painting itself.\textsuperscript{59}

Cima’s earliest mythological group (cat. no. 10) chronicles the arrival of Theseus at Minos’s palace, where he greets the king in the foreground and, in the distance, surreptitiously receives from Ariadne the ball of thread with which he will find his way through the labyrinth (Fig. 1.26).\textsuperscript{60} An adjacent, smaller panel depicts the hero within the labyrinth, preparing to slay

\textsuperscript{55} For the Renaissance identification of Bacchus with artistic inspiration and creation, Moffitt, *Inspiration*, esp. 151-179. In Florence, too, figures from classical mythology such as Diana, Actaeon, Mercury, and Europa first appeared in paintings on cassoni: see Miziolek, *Soggetti Classici sui Cassoni Fiorentini*.

\textsuperscript{56} Anderson dates Cima’s *Endymion* roundel to ca. 1506 and compares it with other very early representations of the theme by Pinturicchio and Marcantonio Raimondi (Anderson in Brown et al., *Bellini, Giorgione, Titian*, 152-153). See also catalogue entry below.

\textsuperscript{57} For the dating of these two cycles, see catalogue entries below; for their original furniture settings, see discussion of Chests and Boxes in Ch. 2.

\textsuperscript{58} Humfrey notes the early dating of Cima’s cycles and their contribution to the tradition of mythological imagery in Venetian painting (*Cima da Conegliano*, 54).

\textsuperscript{59} Titian’s poesie for Philip II (ca. 1550-1562) and related works discussed by, among others, Keller, *Tizians Poesie für König Philipp II*; Rosand, “*Ut Pictor Poeta*”; Gentili, *Da Tiziano a Tiziano*, 105-160; Fehr, *Decorum and Wit*, 88-129; Rogers, “Decorum in Lodovico Dolce and Titian’s Poesie”; Puttfarken, *Titian and Tragic Painting*, 137-181; Checa, “Titian’s Mythological Inventions and Poesie”; Unglaub in Ilchman et al., *Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese*, 229-233. For ornamental replicas after Titian’s poesie for Philip II, see discussion of Reasons for Detachment in Ch. 3, and cat. no. 74 below.

\textsuperscript{60} The subject of this panel was first identified by Humfrey, “Two Fragments from a Theseus Cassone by Cima.” For the theme of Theseus and Ariadne in the Renaissance, Emmerling-Skala, *Bacchus in der Renaissance*, vol. 1, 449-458. Cima’s *Tale of Theseus* is roughly contemporary with a painting by Carpaccio depicting Theseus receiving the embassy of Hippolyta (ca. 1500; Paris, Musée Jacquemart-André); this work, however, depicts an
the Minotaur (Fig. 1.27). Primarily a painter of religious works, Cima must have sought inspiration for this novel subject in the antiquarian culture of Venice’s elite, who filtered their knowledge of archaeology, history, and literature through a collective poetic imagination.\textsuperscript{61} On the island of Crete, a colony of the Venetian maritime empire since the thirteenth century, sites such as the palace at Knossos and the mazelike complex of natural caves at Gortyna conjured associations with the mythical Labyrinth of the Minotaur. Enterprising magistrates from Venice had toured the Gortyna formations as early as the 1420s, and Bartolommeo dalli Sonetti, a cartographer of the late fifteenth century, described the tunnels as “the labyrinth, / where the Minotaur, slain by the son of Aegeas, was kept…”\textsuperscript{62} Encompassed by La Serenissima’s vast network of trade and exploration, Gortyna and other features of the Cretan landscape allowed Venetians to claim the topography of Theseus’s adventures for their own. In Cima’s \textit{Tale of Theseus}, the myth was embraced within the city’s distinctive visual idiom, as well.

To represent a theme for which little precedent in painting existed, Cima skillfully appealed to diverse sources. Young Theseus wears a knightly costume similar to those seen in the \textit{Resurrection} of Giovanni Bellini (ca. 1475-1477; Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie), and kneels before Minos in a scene akin to the \textit{Reception of the Ambassadors} from Carpaccio’s narrative cycle for the confraternity of St. Ursula (ca. 1490-1500; \textit{episode from Boccaccio’s epic-romantic Teseide} rather than a sequential mythological narrative based on classical texts.\textsuperscript{61}\textsuperscript{62}
Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia). The presentation of Minos and members of his retinue in turbans and rich robes suggests an identification of the ancient past with the Islamic east, and recalls the Mamluk costumes in Cima’s own Healing of Anianus (Fig. 1.28; ca. 1497-1499; Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie), part of a group dated to the same period as the Theseus paintings. For the particolored architecture of the palace courtyard, Cima looked to the style of the Lombardo family workshop of sculptors and architects, and especially the recently completed revetment of the church of Santa Maria dei Miracoli (1481-1489). The partially ruined labyrinth in the smaller panel, meanwhile, recalls representations of this legendary prison in maps and other sources. A 1576 map of Crete depicts the “Laberintho” in its traditional form, a circular structure enclosing an intricate network of passages (Figs. 1.29-1.30; Venice, Biblioteca Marciana). The design is similar to the plan of Cima’s maze, which appears in an elevation view. In the illustrations of the 1497 vernacular printed edition of Ovid’s Metamorphoses, too, the labyrinth is an above-ground building with a rounded shape, although little of its interior is shown (Fig. 1.31; 1497; Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek). Ovid himself, however, describes the labyrinth’s “innumerable windings” and “deceptive twistings.” For his inventive cutaway view of the depths of the maze, Cima drew on both literary evocations and visual traditions. His imaginative rendering of the story as a whole shows a sophisticated understanding of the Theseus legend in its many forms.

The Tale of Bacchus and Ariadne (cat. no. 11), dated ca. 1505-1510, describes a

63 Brown, Venetian Narrative Painting, 279-282; Humfrey, Cima da Conegliano, 56; Binotto in Villa, Cima da Conegliano, 144. Theseus at the Court of Minos also recalls the portico scene at the far left of Carpaccio’s Healing of the Possessed Man in the True Cross cycle for the Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista; however, this painting may have been completed after Cima’s ornamental group, as work on the narratives for San Giovanni Evangelista began ca. 1494 and continued until ca. 1505/10 (see Brown, op. cit., 282-286).

64 The Healing of Anianus was part of a narrative cycle commissioned by the Venetian Arte dei Setaiuoli for a chapel in the church of Santa Maria dei Crociferi (later Gesuiti); other artists involved included Lattanzio da Rimini and Giovanni Mansueti (Humfrey, Cima da Conegliano, 82-84; Brown, Venetian Narrative Painting, 286-287; Schmidt Arcangeli in Carboni et al., Venice and the Islamic World, 125-126; Villa, Cima da Conegliano, 148-150, with further bibliography).


66 For the 1497 printed edition of Giovanni Bonsignori’s translation of Ovid’s Metamorphoses, see the section on Patterns and Hierarchies of Content below. For the visual and literary influence of this text on Cima’s composition, Binotto, “La Pittura Mitologica di Cima da Conegliano,” 52-54. Binotto suggests that Cima used the woodcut illustration of the labyrinth from this book as a direct source for his own image of the maze. However, the artist clearly was aware of a broader tradition of representations of the labyrinth, and his image more closely reflects views and descriptions in early maps and textual sources.

67 Metamorphoses, VIII.167-168; translation by Humphries, Ovid’s Metamorphoses, 186-187.
contiguous event, the union of Bacchus and Ariadne after he has rescued her from abandonment by Theseus on the isle of Naxos. In the largest surviving segment (Fig. 1.33), the couple appear together in their triumphal car, Bacchus crowning his bride as she kneels before him. Their chariot is drawn by panthers wearing harnesses of red leather with golden hoops and studs; a satyr and maenad costumed in grape vines walk alongside, holding staffs and thyrsi. The bacchant at rear, with his goat-like visage, carries a basket of grapes of varying ripeness. In another fragment (Fig. 1.32), Bacchus’s drunken tutor, Silenus, rides his donkey in the company of satyrs, who eye his wine-filled gourd and whip the beast with a branch to propel him forward. Two smaller fragments (Figs. 1.34-1.35) display a bacchant carrying a wine barrel, and a pipe-playing faun, who may be Pan.

Together, these panels constitute an exquisite ensemble that, in its mood of bacchic joy tinctured with melancholy, looks forward to Bellini’s *Feast of the Gods* (Fig. 1.25), as well as to Titian’s more raucous version of the Bacchus and Ariadne subject (Fig. 1.36; 1520-1523; London, National Gallery). Titian’s canvas is more than five times the height of Cima’s group, yet it shows substantial points of contact with the earlier composition. Both works represent the vessel of Theseus departing in the distance, and both include the carriage of Bacchus decorated with foliage, delicate scrolls in Cima’s version and bunches of grapes in Titian’s. The cars are drawn by exotic animals – panthers in Cima and cheetahs in Titian – recalling the wine god’s journey from the east. In both scenes, the simultaneous presence of Theseus’s ship and Bacchus’s foreign retinue evokes two different encounters between Ariadne and Bacchus, his initial arrival on Naxos and his second homecoming from India after their marriage. Thus, both works weave multiple legends into allusive visual poems. The paintings include Silenus with

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68 Among the extensive writings on the bacchanals for the *camerino d’alabastro* of Alfonso d’Este are Wind, *Bellini’s Feast of the Gods*; Walker, *Bellini and Titian at Ferrara*; Hope, “The ‘Camerini d’Alabastro’ of Alfonso d’Este”; Barolsky, *Infinite Jest*, 158-164; essays in Cavalli-Björkman, *Bacchanals by Titian and Rubens*, esp. Holberton, “The Choice of Texts for the Camerino Pictures”; Bull and Plestres, *Feast of the Gods*; Fehl, *Decorum and Wit*, 46-87; Jaffé, *Titian*, 100-111; Puttfarken, *Titian and Tragic Painting*, 128-137; Anderson in Brown et al., *Bellini, Giorgione, Titian*, 172-183; Colantuono, *Titian, Colonna and the Renaissance Science of Procreation*. 69 For the eastern connotations of the cheetahs in Titian’s picture, Panofsky, *Problems in Titian*, 143-144. Tresidder, however, argues that the cheetahs do not signify Bacchus’s return from the east, but are based upon associations between this animal and Bacchus in the *Imagines* of Philostratus the Elder (“The Cheetahs in Titian’s ‘Bacchus and Ariadne’”). Several writers, including Philostratus and Ovid, identify Bacchus with exotic animals such as tigers, leopards, and cheetahs; I infer that this attribute is an allusion to his Indian triumph. 70 There has been much disagreement about which encounter between Bacchus and Ariadne is represented in Titian’s painting: Bacchus’s initial rescue of Ariadne after Theseus’s departure from Naxos, as described by Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, I.525-564, and *Metamorphoses*, VIII.174-182 (e.g., Easson, “The Source of Titian’s *Bacchus and*
satyrs, and a bacchant at rear carrying a barrel or basket of wine. Finally, both artists depict the
crowning of Ariadne, Cima by the wreath Bacchus places on her head, and Titian by the
constellation in the sky, summoning Bacchus’s words according to Ovid: “As a reward I offer
you the heavens; as a new star, your glittering crown shall serve as a guide to the uncertain
navigator.”

It is unlikely that Titian used Cima’s *Bacchus and Ariadne* directly as a source: the tenor
of the works is dramatically different, and Titian’s scene emphasizes the climactic rescue of
Ariadne over the celebration of marriage. Nonetheless, the paintings share an incipient
iconography of the triumph of Bacchus, and their affinities are all the more compelling given the
lack of direct visual models for this subject. Both artists probably appealed to a variety of texts,
including the *Carmina* of Catullus and the *Ars Amatoria*, *Fasti*, and *Metamorphoses* of Ovid.

Catullus’s poem, an ekphrasis of scenes on the coverlet of a bridal couch, supplies many specific
details of the bacchic procession; Ovid narrates the two meetings of Bacchus and Ariadne across
several writings. Both authors describe the parade of cymbals and drums, “struck by frenzied
hands,” that is so riotously evoked in Titian’s image. Cima, however, transmutes the episode
into a solemn procession accompanied by just two small musical instruments. His rendition is
closer in tone and formal arrangement to the dignified debauchery of Bellini’s *Feast of the Gods*,
a poetic visualization of related passages from Ovid’s *Fasti*.

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*Ariadne”), or Bacchus’s second homecoming after he too abandons Ariadne for the east, as described by Ovid, *Fasti*, III.459-516 (e.g., Wind, *Bellini’s Feast of the Gods*, 57-58). Both Cima and Titian, however, include
Theseus’s ship in the distance and the exotic animals drawing Bacchus’s chariot. The coincidence of these details
suggests that both artists are alluding to and fusing the two encounters.


72 The primary classical source for the triumph of Bacchus and Ariadne is the ekphrasis of scenes decorating the
coverlet of the bridal couch of Thetis, as described by Catullus, *Carmina*, LXIV.254-265; this text was possibly
available to Titian or his advisor in a 1521 edition and commentary by Battista Guarino (see Holberton, “Battista
Guarino’s Catullus and Titian’s ‘Bacchus and Ariadne’”). Other accounts are Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, I.525-564, *Fasti*,
III.459-516, and *Metamorphoses*, VIII.174-182. For summary and discussion of these sources, Wind, *Bellini’s Feast

73 “Some again with flattened palms were beating on drumheads / or drawing thin rattle and clash from the rounded
bronze. / Many were blowing horns…” (Catullus, *Carmina*, LXIV.261-263; translation by Green, *Poems of
Catullus*, 149). “Suddenly the cymbals and the drums, struck by frenzied hands, make the whole length of the shore

74 The source of Bellini’s painting (later revised by Dosso Dossi and Titian) of the drunken feast at which Priapus
lusts after Lotis is usually agreed to be the *Fasti*, I.391-440 and VI.319-348 (Wind, *Bellini’s Feast of the Gods*, 27-
35; Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, vol. 1, 41). Humfrey compares the tone of Cima’s cycle with that
of the *Feast* (*Cima da Conegliano*, 57), and Emmerling-Skala contrasts the quiet air of Cima’s cyle with the riotous
activity contained in many Roman sarcophagus reliefs of Bacchus (*Bacchus in der Renaissance*, vol. 1, 466).
Collectively, these scenes are inspired not only by texts but also by visual fantasies of pagan triumph and worship, such as appear in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Fig. 1.37; 1499), and by small bronzes, engravings, and contemporary book illuminations of fauns and drunken satyrs (Fig. 1.38, before 1481, New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art; Figs. 1.39-1.40, 1483, New York, Pierpont Morgan Library). Relief sculptures of satyrs appear prominently on a column base of Tullio Lombardo’s tomb for Doge Andrea Vendramin (1392-1478), completed by about 1493 (Fig. 1.41; Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo). Also evident is the influence of Jacopo Bellini’s sketchbooks, which display Bacchus in a horse-drawn car accompanied by satyrs: a motif related both to Cima’s cycle and to Giovanni Bellini’s representation of the wine god in his earlier *Allegories* (Fig. 1.5). The format of Cima’s panels recalls ancient sarcophagi depicting bacchic themes, and the artist’s attention to Ariadne’s drapery shows knowledge of ancient sculpture and contemporary bronze plaquettes. Titian’s composition, meanwhile, is famously indebted to the *Laocoön* sculpture group, of which the artist likely possessed a plaster cast or other studio model.

The correspondences between these two cycles foster a more complete understanding of the artistic background of Titian’s masterpiece. By the same token, Cima’s ornamental ensemble can be appreciated more fully in light of its innovative role in the tradition of painted mythologies in Venice. The story of the rise of this genre culminates in Annibale Carracci’s frescoes on the ceiling of the Galleria Farnese, completed between 1597 and ca. 1608 (Fig. 1.42; Rome, Palazzo Farnese). This composition was likely inspired at least in part by Titian’s own *Bacchus and Ariadne*, which had entered the possession of Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini in Rome by the autumn of 1598, and which Carracci would have been able to see through the

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75 Cima’s procession recalls the triumph of Vertumnus and Pomona in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Colonna (trans. Godwin), *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, 191). Several contemporary or slightly earlier miniatures include drunken satyrs: for instance, Girolamo da Cremona’s illumination of an incunabulum of Aristotle’s *Opera* (Venice: A. Torresanus and B. de Blavis, 1483), New York, Pierpont Morgan Library, Inc. E. 41. A., f. 1r. See also Canova, *La Miniatura Veneta del Rinascimento*, 55-58, 154.


78 For the influence of sculpture and plaquettes on Cima’s design, Gregori, *In the Light of Apollo*, vol. 1, 430. For his *Laocoön*-like figure wreathed in snakes, Titian may also have been inspired by Antonio Lombardo’s marble relief of the *Forge of Vulcan* (ca. 1508-1516), which was completed for the ducal palace at Ferrara and included a similar quotation from the *Laocoön* (Jaffé, *Titian*, 102).
intercession of a friend and secretary to Aldobrandini. As Rudolf Wittkower has argued, Carracci’s placement of this episode in a monumental *quadro riportato* reflected his belief that “the mythological representation, as belonging to the highest class of painting, should be rendered objectively and in isolating frames.”\(^79\) The artist’s apotheosis of Bacchus and Ariadne at the focus of a major fresco program, similar to the position of the creation of Adam and Eve in the Sistine chapel early in the sixteenth century, reveals how completely this subject had migrated from the margins to the center.

**Patterns and Hierarchies of Content**

Early Venetian ornamental pictures offered a platform for the development of themes such as the Giorgionesque pastoral, nude figure, and heroes of classical mythology, and for establishing the visual conventions of these novel types. Throughout its development, this medium hosted a great variety of eclectic subjects. Landscape prospects and bucolic scenes, genre imagery and related depictions of contemporary life, tales of love from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and Virgil’s *Aeneid*, episodes from Trojan and Roman history, astrological signs, *trompe l’oeil* and still life elements, allegories, musical gatherings, and rarely illuminated episodes from Jewish and Christian writings – all number among the contents of Venetian furniture paintings. As a secondary genre, domestic decorative pictures presented opportunities for artistic experimentation, the exploration of unusual themes, and the elaboration of subjects belonging to the lower tiers of the traditional hierarchy of painting.\(^80\) The substance of these works was molded by ancient customs regarding the decorous adornment of homes, and the images also served salutary and didactic purposes that further influenced their composition.

Among the earliest writers to enumerate the characteristic themes of paintings for private houses is the Roman architectural theorist Vitruvius (1st century B.C.). In his *De Architectura Libri Decem* of ca. 30-20 B.C., the author states that the walls of homes once were painted with scenes of “ports, promontories, seashores, rivers, springs, straits, shrines, sacred groves,

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\(^{79}\) For the paintings of Annibale Carracci (with the assistance of his brother, Agostino) at the Palazzo Farnese and their influences, Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1600-1750*, vol. 1, 33-37, and Ginzburg, *La Galleria Farnese*, esp. 38-39. Carracci would have been able to see Titian’s painting with the help of Giovanni Battista Agucchi, secretary to Aldobrandini. Ginzburg, noting that the central scene alludes not only to Bacchus and Ariadne but also to Silenus and Venus, entitles it *Triumph of the Union of Celestial and Earthly Love*.

\(^{80}\) For the status of decorative painting as a secondary or minor genre, see the section on Reputation and Value below.
mountains, herds, and shepherds,” as well as “monumental painting with the likenesses of the
gods or the skillfully arranged narrations of myths.” Following Vitruvius, Pliny the Elder
(23/24-79) describes in his Natural History of ca. 77 an ancient painter “who first introduced the
most attractive fashion of painting walls with pictures of country houses and porticoes and
landscape gardens, groves, woods, hills, fish-ponds, canals, rivers, coasts…people going for a
stroll or sailing in a boat…and also people fishing and fowling or hunting or even gathering the
vintage.”

The lists of Vitruvius and Pliny define an array of acceptable subjects for secular painting
in the domestic sphere, with an emphasis on images of gods and myths, pleasant landscape and
pastoral episodes, and entertaining scenes of everyday life: themes later reborn in the fields of
Venetian ornamental paintings. With the exception of subjects from mythology (discussed
below), these topics correspond to the lower ranks of the classical hierarchy of dramatic poetry.
Earlier in his treatise, Vitruvius summarizes this hierarchy in an account of the three types of
theatrical sets. Tragic sets, the most noble form, “are represented with columns and gables and
statues and the other trappings of royalty,” he writes. Comic sets, the middle type, “look like
private buildings with balconies,” while satyric sets, the humblest, “are ornamented with trees,
caves, mountains, and all the other rustic features, fashioned to have the appearance of
landscape.” The two lower tiers of dramatic poetry – the comic, focusing on the lives of
private citizens, and the satyric, centering on landscape and rural life – inform the conventional
subjects of domestic painting described by Vitruvius and Pliny. Their catalogues comprise
episodes from the lives of ordinary people, “going for a stroll or sailing in a boat…fishing and

81 Granger, Vitruvius on Architecture, vol. 2, 102-105 (Book 7, chapter 5, pt. 2); Vitruvius, Ten Books on
Architecture, 91. See also Barbaro, Vitruvio: I Dieci Libri dell’Architettura, 319-320, and Gaehtgens,
Genremalerei, 54-60.
82 Pliny the Elder, Natural History, 35.37.116-117; see also Jex-Blake and Sellers, The Elder Pliny’s Chapters on
the History of Art, 146-147. For the relation between these passages from Vitruvius and Pliny, Isager, Pliny on Art
and Society, 131-132. See also McHam, Pliny and the Artistic Culture of the Italian Renaissance (forthcoming),
and n. 85 below.
83 Granger, Vitruvius on Architecture, vol. 1, 288-289 (Book 5, chapter 6, pt. 8); Vitruvius, Ten Books on
Architecture, 70. See also Barbaro, Vitruvio: I Dieci Libri dell’Architettura, 256-257, and Gaehtgens, Genremalerei,
54-60. In his Poetics, Aristotle distinguishes comedy from tragedy on the basis of their different objects of
imitation: “we differentiate comedy from tragedy, for the former takes as its goal the representation of men as
worse, the latter as better, than the norm” (Golden and Hardison, Aristotle’s Poetics, 5 (Chapter II), and
commentary, 84). The moral distinction between the objects represented in comedy and tragedy implicitly parallels
the status of these two genres, tragedy being the more elevated form and comedy the baser one. Aristotle’s
distinctions form the basis of the hierarchy of dramatic literary genres as later elaborated by Vitruvius and others.
For discussion of this subject, I am indebted to Chriscinda Henry and to the introduction of her dissertation,
Buffoons, Rustics, and Courtesans, 1-21. See also Hochmann, “Genre Scenes by Dosso and Giorgione,” 75-76.
fowling or hunting,” and scenes of the natural world and pastoral arcadia: “shrines, sacred groves, mountains, herds, and shepherds.”

Fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Venetian painters of furniture may not have been directly familiar with Vitruvius and Pliny, but all Renaissance artists worked in a tradition shaped by the ancient authors’ words. Their writings enjoyed a vigorous afterlife in manuscripts, printed editions, and commentaries appearing in Venice and elsewhere, and their texts were reinterpreted in art and theory. In his architectural treatise, De Re Aedificatoria (1485), the humanist Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472) echoes and expands upon Vitruvius’s classifications. Alberti writes that “three types of drama are performed in a theater: tragedy, recounting the misfortunes of tyrants; comedy, unfolding the cares and anxieties of the head of a family; and satire, singing of countryside delights and pastoral romance.” The Renaissance author then takes the additional step of applying this hierarchy to paintings and their appropriate settings, writing that majestic pictures of “the memorable deeds of great princes” befit public works and the buildings of eminent people, scenes of “the manners of private citizens” belong on the walls of their homes, while images of “the life of the simple farmer” and “pleasant landscapes or harbors, scenes of fishing, hunting, bathing…and flowery and leafy views” are suitable for private gardens. Alberti thus codifies the association between secular domestic painting and the two lower types of dramatic poetry.

The categories of satyric and comedic, as described and exemplified in the writings of

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84 See n. 82 and 81 above, respectively.
85 For Vitruvius in the Renaissance, including surviving manuscripts and editions of De Architectura printed in Venice in 1497 and 1511, Rowland, “Raphael, Angelo Colocci, and the Genesis of the Architectural Orders,” and idem, “The Fra Giocondo Vitruvius at 500,” with further bibliography. Also in Venice, the patrician humanist Daniele Barbaro published a translation of and commentary on Vitruvius (first edition 1556): see D’Evelyn, Venice and Vitruvius: Reading Venice with Daniele Barbaro and Andrea Palladio (forthcoming). Pliny the Elder was much revered by Renaissance Italians: his encyclopedia was printed in Venice for the first time in 1469, and the cities of Verona and Como vied for the claim as his birthplace and honored him prominently in sculptures (McHam, “Renaissance Monuments to Favourite Sons,” 476-486). In a forthcoming study, Pliny and the Artistic Culture of the Italian Renaissance, Sarah Blake McHam discusses the expansive legacy of Pliny in Renaissance art; for a case study of Bellini, idem, “Reflections of Pliny.”
86 Alberti (ed. Orlandi and Portoghesi), De Re Aedificatoria, vol. 2, 738-739 (Book 8:7); Alberti, On the Art of Building, 273. Alberti’s treatise was first published after his death, though it circulated earlier in manuscript and was probably composed between 1445 and 1452 (see Rykwert in Alberti, On the Art of Building, xviii). Following Vitruvius and Alberti, Sebastiano Serlio (1475-1554) famously elaborates on and illustrates the three types of theatrical sets in the second book of his architectural treatise, published in 1545: see Serlio, Tutte l’Opere d’Architettura et Prospetiva, 44r.-47v., and Hart and Hicks, Sebastiano Serlio on Architecture, vol. 1, 83-91.
Vitruvius, Pliny, and Alberti, supply useful connecting threads among the highly diverse subjects of Venetian furniture painting. Vitruvius’s inventory of natural scenes, such as “seashores, rivers, springs, straits, shrines, sacred groves, mountains, herds, and shepherds,” evokes details of many works in this study: the woodland prospects and shepherd protagonists of the Tale of Thyrsis and Damon by a follower of Bellini (Figs. 1.43-1.44; cat. no. 5), the setting of the enigmatic Duel on a Seashore from the circle of Cima (Fig. 1.45; cat. no. 15), and pastoral views in the Rustic Idyll and related scenes from the circle of Giorgione (Figs. 1.46-1.49; cat. no. 20). The Maiden’s Dream of Lorenzo Lotto (Fig. 1.50; cat. no. 25), similarly, describes a dusky locus amoenus in which an enraptured young woman consorts with a winged putto and satyrs; while the Page and Nymphs from the circle of Carpaccio (cat. no. 9) stand among diminutive trees, shading pools of water, flanked by long grasses and framed by hills. Two small panels by imitators of Giorgione show figures in country landscapes dotted with streams, ponds, bridges, and small villages: these recall Pliny’s description of images of “people going for a stroll” in rural settings (Figs. 1.51-1.52; cat. nos. 22-23).

Such works belong to the type of the satyric, “singing of countryside delights and pastoral romance,” as Alberti writes. The lightest and most pleasant variety of painting, domestic scenes of landscape and rustic life serve to charm the beholder and to promote physical health and spiritual refreshment. Standing in for the restorative experience of nature itself, they offer their urban viewers a portal into the restful arcadian world of singing shepherds and their maidens, as evoked in the poetry of Petrarch and Jacopo Sannazaro and in live performances of pastoral eclogues in the public squares and patrician homes of Venice.

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88 According to Alberti, rural scenes are the most delightful type of domestic painting: images of the life of country people are “the most lighthearted of them all,” and, “we are particularly delighted when we see paintings of pleasant landscapes or harbors, scenes of fishing, hunting, bathing, or country sports, and flowery and leafy views.” Alberti also writes that “paintings of springs and streams may be of considerable benefit to the feverish” and that mental visualizations of these images are a remedy for insomnia. See Alberti (ed. Orlandi and Portoghesi), De Re Aedificatoria, vol. 2, 804-807 (Book 9:4), and Alberti, On the Art of Building, 299-300; see also discussion of Beds in Ch. 2 below. For the Renaissance understanding of pleasant landscape imagery as a means to physical health and spiritual refreshment, Wood, Albrecht Altdorfer and the Origins of Landscape, 54-57, and Goodchild, Towards an Italian Renaissance Theory of Landscape, 19-67.

89 Jacopo Sannazaro (1456-1530) was a poet of Neapolitan origin whose Arcadia was first published in an unauthorized version in Venice in 1502. This enormously popular pastoral work opens in the springtime on Mt. Parthenius and includes prose narrative interspersed with eclogues performed by poet-shepherds: see Sannazaro, Arcadia, ed. Enrico Carrara. A related pastoral text is Gli Asolani (1505) of Pietro Bembo (1470-1547). Numerous theatrical performances of pastoral eclogues and “rustic” comedies in the city of Venice are recorded in the diaries of Marin Sanudo: on June 14, 1512, for example, a pastoral eclogue was performed at Sant’Alvise on the occasion...
decorative paintings, Ridolfi notes both their natural subjects – “glad greenery and streams cascading over pleasant cliffs, covered by leafy branches”\textsuperscript{90} – and their enjoyable effects. Bonifacio, for instance, made furniture pictures of satyrs, landscapes, and other agreeable themes to enhance the “delights of home” \textit{per delitie delle habitationi}.\textsuperscript{91}

The prevailing pastoral tone of these works contrasts with the more heavily peopled and intricately plotted scenes of Florentine furniture painting. Furthermore, many Venetian decorative pictures of ostensibly religious, historical, or mythological subject matter share an emphasis on rich landscape backgrounds and bucolic settings. Giorgione’s \textit{Judith} (Fig. 1.1; cat. no. 19), originally a door ornament portraying the heroine of this apocryphal book of the Old Testament, defines a new relation between figure and landscape in Venetian painting of the early sixteenth century. Judith stands before a vista of town and mountains, bathed in a pearly atmosphere that softens contours and blurs distant views. At her feet grow identifiable species of wildflowers and plants, including white grape hyacinth and sylvan tulips.\textsuperscript{92} The maiden herself is a blooming flower in this landscape, her fertile beauty extending through its folds of fields and shrouded peaks. The glorious weather and Judith’s serene enjoyment of it serve to soothe and delight the beholder; they also manifest the well-being and security of the people of the distant town of Bethulia (Fig. 1.2), whom she has rescued from the onslaughts of Holofernes. The standard narrative of Judith’s victory is thus absorbed subtly into her surroundings, its laborious exposition skillfully avoided; textual precision gives way to subjective effects of oil, the optical experiences and moods that are the province of the Cinquecento Venetian brush.\textsuperscript{93}

\textsuperscript{90} “Segueva in tanto Giorgio à dipingere nella solita habitazione, ove dicesi, che aperta havesse bottega, dipingendo rotelle, armari e molte casse in particolare, nelle quali faceva per lo più favole d’Ovidio, come l’aurea età divisandovi liete verdure, rivi cadenti da piacevoli rupi, infrascate di fronde...” (Ridolfi, \textit{Maraviglie}, vol. 1, 98). For further discussion of this passage, see the Introduction above.

\textsuperscript{91} “Si sono vedute ancora dipinti da questa mano recinti di letto, casse e simili cose poste in uso in que’ tempi per delitie delle habitationi, ov’erano figurate historie sacre e profane; le Muse con l’insegne loro, i Pianetti, Veneri con Amorini, Satiri, paesi e si fatte gentilezze...” (Ridolfi, \textit{Maraviglie}, vol. 1, 295). For further discussion of this passage, see the section on Reputation and Value below.


\textsuperscript{93} Hall notes, “in the heavy, humid air found in a city built in a lagoon, one perceives shapes as slightly imprecise and with softened contours...the Venetian painters were more alert to the subtle variety of what the eye perceives – and more willing to incorporate these variations into their pictorial system – than the central Italians” (\textit{Color and Meaning}, 199). The unique optical experience of Venice and its effect on the style and technique of the city’s painters is explored by Hills, \textit{Venetian Colour}.
As a minor domestic art form with the express purpose of refreshment and entertainment, decorative paintings such as *Judith* provided an early venue for creative elaboration of the traditionally humble themes of landscape and satyric imagery. Like other marginal zones of art, including altarpiece predelle and the edges of manuscript pages, Venetian ornamental pictures nurtured the genre of landscape before its graduation to independent fields. With their changeful skies and varied backdrops of water, mountains, and walled town, Bellini’s Accademia *Allegories* look forward to the atmospheric drama of Giorgione’s *Tempesta*. Ornamental paintings and full-scale easel pictures also share landscape motifs: the vegetation in the Giorgionesque *Leda and the Swan* (Fig. 1.47; cat. no. 20) shows marked affinities of technique with the natural background of the *Three Philosophers* (Fig. 1.15), a monumental secular landscape of the first decade of the sixteenth century. The attention given to representation of the natural world persists through the history of Venetian decorative painting, only increasing with the rise of the pastoral landscape tradition in the city’s art as a whole. A cycle of mythological frieze canvases from the circle of Veronese, dating to the 1560s, shows a characteristically rich range of arcadian settings (Figs. 1.8-1.10; cat. no. 76).

The category of comedy, second in the hierarchy of dramatic poetry and centering on the lives of everyday people, informs several groups of Venetian ornamental painting. Carpaccio’s *Ladies on a Balcony* and *Hunting and Fishing on the Lagoon* are two linked fragments, once vertically stacked to form a single, continuous wing of a double-hinged door or shutter (Fig. 1.53; cat. no. 7). The reconstructed panel portrays a pair of Venetian ladies seated on a balcony, surrounded by a menagerie of birds and dogs, and backed by a view out to the *valli*, the lagoons surrounding the city. In this setting, where water and sky mingle, a party of gentlemen spends the day fowling and fishing, with the help of cormorants. These scenes recall Vitruvius’s remark that “comic sets look like private buildings with balconies,” as well as Pliny’s description of domestic paintings showing “fishing and fowling or hunting.” The painting is an engaging image of “the manners of private citizens,” in Alberti’s words, and evokes his description of

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94 For early marginal settings of landscape imagery, Wood, *Albrecht Altdorfer and the Origins of Landscape*, 33-45. See also the discussion of decorative paintings as *parerga* in the section on Reputation and Value below.

95 In his comparative technical analysis of paintings by Giorgione and his circle, Poldi observes that the execution of landscape in *Leda and the Swan* is very similar to that in the *Three Philosophers*: in both works, vegetation is rendered with a darker green underlayer followed by touches and smudges of a lighter green to indicate individual branches and leaves (Poldi, “Dalle Opere in Mostra alla Tecnica di Giorgione,” 233, 235).

96 See discussion of Doors and Shutters in Ch. 2, and catalogue entry below.
comedy, “unfolding the cares and anxieties of the head of a family” – with the crucial difference that Carpaccio’s male heads of family have fled their domestic responsibilities and left their discontented wives at home.

Together, *Ladies on a Balcony* and *Hunting and Fishing on the Lagoon*, dated ca. 1490-1500, constitute an early surviving example of a pure genre subject in Venetian panel painting. The use of the term “genre” as a designation for pictures of individuals engaged in quotidian activities, as opposed to its primary meaning of “type” or “kind,” dates only to the eighteenth century. However, the origins of genre painting lie in the comic art of antiquity, particularly representations of the occupations of ordinary people, as described by the elder Pliny.97 Scenes of everyday life persisted through the Middle Ages in manuscript illuminations and architectural details of the labors of the months and the pastimes of peasants and nobles. Carpaccio’s group marks the early elaboration of such a vignette into the exclusive subject of a large panel painting, which prefigures autonomous representations of genre themes in Venetian Renaissance art.98 Indeed, like many later examples of genre painting, *Ladies on a Balcony* and *Hunting and Fishing* prove susceptible to multiple, sometimes conflicting interpretations: potentially understood either as an innocent portrait of the recreations of the elite, or as an allegory replete with moralizing symbols. The vernacular source material of Carpaccio’s ensemble, its place in the history of genre, and debates over the work’s meaning are explored in the catalogue entry.

97 During the eighteenth century, the term “genre” was appropriated by French academic writers to describe paintings of everyday life. This word was probably chosen to emphasize the anonymous or “generic” quality of the people and activities portrayed in these works. The term “genre painting” was not used by the seventeenth-century Dutch, who widely popularized this type. They referred to such pictures with descriptive phrases including “merry companies” and “guardroom pieces” (Franits, *Dutch Seventeenth-Century Genre Painting*, 1-2). For the meaning of “genre,” Stechow and Comer, “History of the Term Genre”; Blankert, “What is Dutch Seventeenth Century Genre Painting?”; and Gaehagens, *Genremalerei*. For the elder Pliny’s remarks on painters of “sordid subjects” such as barbers’ shops and cobblers’ stalls, see for example his *Natural History*, 35.37.112; see also discussion of Reputation and Value below. For the early history of genre painting in Venice, including Carpaccio’s picture, Fomiciova, “Giorgione e la Formazione della Pittura di Genere,” and Hochmann, “Genre Scenes by Dosso and Giorgione.” I thank Wayne Franits and Ruth Yeazell for discussing the Dutch genre tradition with me and for providing references.

98 Like other subjects of Cinquecento Venetian painting, comic genre imagery found an early proving ground in furniture ornament before graduating to the ranks of independent pictures. The years between 1500 and 1550 saw the emergence in Venice of framed paintings inspired by the contemporary literary forms of comedy, macaronic poetry, and bawdy songs. Depicting popular characters such as the buffone, bravo, villano, and courtesan, these works actively interpreted local entertainment culture in a variety of registers: see Henry, *Buffoons, Rustics, and Courtesans*. Such “low paintings” are continuous with the tradition of Venetian furniture pictures illuminating comic themes, and indeed, several artists, including Bonifacio de’ Pitati, Paris Bordone (1500-1571), and Bartolomeo Veneto (active 1502-1531), were involved in both furniture decoration and the production of independent genre scenes.
below (cat. no. 7).

The terms of comedy and genre apply to other Venetian decorative pictures, such as the scene of *Antiochus and Stratonice* by Bonifacio de’ Pitati and his workshop (Fig. 1.54; cat. no. 30). Long known only as “The Doctor’s Visit,” this *cassa* painting is actually a representation in contemporary guise of the ancient story of the passion of young Antiochus for his stepmother Stratonice, as recounted by Valerius Maximus and Plutarch. Lovesick Antiochus is confined to a Venetian Renaissance bedchamber decorated with a period chair [*sgabello*] and rich carpet, while the youth’s attendants wear current fashions. Bonifacio’s presentation of this episode from classical history in a present-day setting offers a visual analogue to retellings of the story in Renaissance texts, including Petrarch’s *Trionfi* and the *Novelle* of Matteo Bandello.99

Two small *cassa* panels by a follower of Cima likewise fuse classical subjects with scenes of modern life (Figs. 1.55-1.56; cat. no. 17). The paintings may portray Artemisia and Marcus Plautius, exemplars of conjugal loyalty; their stories are set among distinctively Venetian furnishings, such as a wall-mounted *restello* similar to the one that probably housed Giovanni Bellini’s *Allegories*. Many Florentine decorative pictures, too, situate ancient events within a continuous universal history that encompasses the costumes and scenery of the Renaissance present, thus inviting viewers to reenact classical virtues in their own affairs.100

A related group of Venetian ornamental pictures treats themes from ancient mythology. In his account of Giorgionesque furniture paintings, Ridolfi notes that in these works the artist “for the most part treated fables from Ovid” [*faceva per lo più favole d’Ovidio*].101 Although this passage echoes Vasari’s sixteenth-century description of the subjects of Florentine domestic art, the generalization nonetheless holds true: among surviving examples of Venetian ornamental imagery, mythological heroes and tales from the *Metamorphoses* compose the largest single class of subjects.102 As explored above, early pictures of this type supplied a field for pioneering

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99 For the sources of Bonifacio’s invention and related works from the artist’s studio, Vertova, “La Visita del Medico”; see also catalogue entry below.
100 For the merging of the ancient past and Renaissance present in Florentine *cassone* paintings, Campbell, *Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence*, 35-45.
101 “Seguiva in tanto Giorgio à dipingere nella solita habitazione, ove dicesi, che aperta havesse bottega, dipingendo rotelle, armari e molte casse in particolare, nelle quali faceva per lo più favole d’Ovidio...” (Ridolfi, *Maraviglie*, vol. 1, 98). For further discussion of this passage, see the Introduction above.
102 In the life of Dello Delli, Vasari writes of the subjects of Florentine furniture painting: “…le storie che nel corpo dinanzi si facevano, erano per lo più di favole tolte da Ovidio e da altri poeti; ovvero storie racccontate dagli storici greci o latini; e similmente caccie, giorstre, novelle d’amore, ed altre cose somiglianti, secondo che meglio amava ciascuno” (*Vite*, vol. 2, 148).
representations of classical myths, and legends such as the triumph of Bacchus and the sleep of Endymion are reborn here for the first time in Venetian panel painting. 103

Unlike satyric themes and representations of comedy and genre, painted myths were traditionally a more distinguished category of art. Vitruvius describes “the likenesses of the gods” and “the skillfully arranged narrations of myths” as a form of “monumental painting” found on the walls of ancient houses. In his sixteenth-century translation of this passage from Vitruvius’s treatise, the Venetian patrician Daniele Barbaro (1514-1570), too, writes that such works “are more dignified pictures, more highly wrought, and show grander things” than other types of painting for the home. 104 In rendering the exalted themes of mythology, however, Venetian ornamental painters often returned to the satyric mode, situating the feats of Jupiter, Actaeon, Diana, Narcissus, and Europa in a rustic arcadia of sacred groves and meadows. Compared with representations of ancient myths in Florentine furniture paintings, these works generally show less emphasis on narrative and more on setting. The paintings of Deucalion and Pyrrha and the Judgment of Midas from the circle of Schiavone (Figs. 1.57-1.58; cat. no. 53), for example, display pleasing vistas of temples, woods, and gentle slopes, against which the fabled renewal of the human race and the Apollonian musical contest unfold. A single brook trickles through the backgrounds of Cima’s pendant roundels, the Judgment of Midas and Endymion Asleep (Figs. 1.59-1.60; cat. no. 12), whose elysian worlds are presided over by paired divinities, Apollo, god of the sun, and Selene, goddess of the moon. The slumbering youth Endymion and his sylvan surroundings recall a canzone of Petrarch, in which the speaker wishes to be “with the lover of the moon / fallen asleep somewhere in a green woods.” 105 Similarly, the Birth of Venus from the circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati (Fig. 1.61; cat. no. 38) shows the goddess floating toward a primeval “green woods” inhabited by a family of satyrs. Cima’s Bacchus and Ariadne (Figs.

103 See the discussion of Early Subjects above.

104 The 1567 edition of Barbaro’s translation of Vitruvius, De Architectura Libri Decem, Book 7, chapter 5, pt. 2: “…dipingono i porti, le Promontore, i Liti, i fiumi, le fonti, gli tratti delle acque, i tempij, i boschi sacri, i monti, le pecore, i pastori, & in alcuni luoghi anche si fanno pitture piu degne, & che hanno piu fattura, che dimostrano anche cose maggiori, come sono i Simulacri de i Dei, le ordinate dichiarationi delle fauole, le guerre Troiane, gli errori d’Vlisse per li luoghi, & altre cose…” (Barbaro, Vitruvio: I Dieci Libri dell’Architettura, 319-320). For this passage in relation to Renaissance concepts of style and decorum, Summers, Michelangelo and the Language of Art, 455. The first edition of Barbaro’s translation of and commentary on Vitruvius was published in 1556, the second in 1567 (Cellauro, “Daniele Barbaro and Vitruvius,” with further bibliography). See also the forthcoming Venice and Vitruvius: Reading Venice with Daniele Barbaro and Andrea Palladio, by Margaret D’Evelyn (Yale University Press, 2012).

105 “Deh, o foss’io col vago de la luna / adomentato in qua’ che verdi boschi...” (Canzone 237; see Petrarch, Canzoniere, 336-339, and catalogue entry below).
Like many forms of Venetian ornamental painting, representations of the classical gods consistently emphasize the natural backdrops associated with satyric theater: “trees, caves, mountains, and all the other rustic features, fashioned to have the appearance of landscape.”

Despite their elevated themes, these decorative mythologies maintain a poetically allusive quality and a mood of bucolic leisure in keeping with their essentially recreational purpose.

The enjoyment fostered by such works is entirely consistent with their didactic and auspicious imagery: as accessible and delightful versions of ancient tales of honor and love, the paintings are intended to shape the character and fortunes of their Renaissance owners and to reinforce values of prudence and familial devotion. Both Deucalion and Pyrrha and the Birth of Venus evoke stories of natural fecundity and regeneration appropriate for a conjugal chamber where children are conceived and lineages perpetuated; the pictures are cognates to Bellini’s Truth, an early example of a painted fertility talisman.

Cima’s Bacchus and Ariadne is a triumphal celebration of marriage, based in part on Catullus’s description of scenes decorating a nuptial bedspread and on the love poetry of Ovid, as discussed above. The work’s epithalamic theme suggests that it was commissioned on the occasion of a marriage, although in Venice – unlike Florence – very little evidence of the role of decorated furniture in Renaissance wedding rituals survives.

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106 Granger, Vitruvius on Architecture, vol. 1, 288-289 (Book 5, chapter 6, pt. 8); Vitruvius, Ten Books on Architecture, 70.
107 See the section on Beds in Ch. 2 below.
108 See the section on Early Subjects above.
109 In Venice, there is far more evidence for the use of decorated furniture in medieval wedding rituals than in Renaissance ones. In the early centuries of the Republic, it was customary for brides to present their dowry in a chest called an arcella. In his 1581 account of the city’s habits and traditions, Francesco Sansovino writes that brides formerly brought these chests to the cathedral of San Pietro di Castello, where the women awaited their grooms in a ritual that later gave rise to the Festival of the Twelve Marys. Sansovino notes, however, that this custom was confined to a time when dowries were smaller: “le donzelle si ridecevano a S. Pietro in Castello Olivo, per la festività di Santa Maria di Febraio. Et portando con loro la dote in una cassa chiamata arcella (perche allora non si davano le migliaia) si stavano aspettando gli sposi” (Sansovino, Venetia Citta Nobilissima, 148v.). The construction, decoration, and use of such arcelle in the medieval period is also recorded in guild statutes and in a twelfth-century document: see n. 180 below. By the Renaissance, Venetian dowries had become too large to fit in chests, and I have not found any evidence in civic or family chronicles of the use of painted casse for this purpose during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Sanudo instead records, for example, a lavish wedding dinner at which 4,000 ducats’ worth of the enormous dowry was displayed in six open basins (Sanudo, Diarii, vol. 7, col. 161; see also Labalme and Sanguineti White, “How to (and How Not to) Get Married in Sixteenth-Century Venice,” 48). However, there is evidence for the commissioning of paintings on the occasion of local marriages, the most important examples being Giorgione’s Dresden Venus (likely commissioned for the Marcello-Pisani marriage of...
Cima’s *Endymion Asleep* and the *Judgment of Midas*, too, may once have belonged to a chest commissioned for a marriage: the probable patron of these panels, jurist Bartolomeo Prati of Parma (1471-1542), wed in 1501 and subsequently fathered eighteen children. The paintings’ imagery pertains less to the values of love than to those of discretion and wisdom, which might guide a newly joined couple and members of their burgeoning family. Both pictures promote virtue by negative example, for they center on protagonists who must pay for their preposterous desires and lack of discernment. *Endymion’s* wish for eternal youth is granted in the form of endless sleep, while *Midas* is rewarded with the ass’s ears for his misjudgment of the musical competition between Apollo and Pan. By including the king’s delicate golden crown, Cima alludes simultaneously to a misadventure of *Midas* recounted earlier in the *Metamorphoses*, when he is granted his request for the power to turn anything to gold at his touch. Midas’s daft longing after wealth is analogous to *Endymion’s* vain desire for childlike immortality, and both characters suffer precisely because their wishes come true. In examining these images and laughing over the travails of their foolish heroes, beholders are reminded to seek insight and to exercise decorum in their own conduct.

The prevalence of mythological and poetic imagery in Venetian furniture decoration owes much to the city’s vibrant culture of print and performance, which catalyzed the production of secular painting by making the *favole* of Ovid and other writers available to artists and the public. The early decades of printing in the city, from about 1470 to 1500, witnessed the publication of four editions of the *Metamorphoses*, four of the *Fasti*, and two of the *Ars Amatoria*, as well as other classical texts of central importance to the subjects of furniture.

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1507: see Anderson, “Giorgione, Titian and the Sleeping Venus,” 340-342), and Titian’s *Sacred and Profane Love* (for the Aurelio-Bagarotto marriage of 1514: see most recently Brown, “Picturing the Perfect Marriage”). The nature of surviving objects such as the *Bacchus and Ariadne* group suggests that painted chests were made for a similar celebratory purpose, and the lack of documentation may reflect the fact that fewer family chronicles and personal accounts survive in Venice and the Veneto than in Florence. I plan to address this problem at greater length in a future study. It is hoped that the present survey, which assembles extant examples of this genre for the first time, is a step toward fuller understanding of the role of painted furniture in Venetian marriage rituals.

10 Prati married Margherita Brugnoli in August of 1501: see Binotto in Villa, *Cima da Conegliano*, 56, 164. For further information on Prati and his family, see cat. no. 12 below. There is no direct documentary evidence that the paintings were commissioned as part of the Prati-Brugnoli nuptials. If this link were confirmed, the works’ traditional dating of 1505-1510 would require adjustment.

11 Ovid describes Midas’s foolish exploits in two contiguous tales of the *Metamorphoses*: his golden touch (XI.100-145), followed by his retreat to nature and presence at the musical contest between Apollo and Pan (XI.149-193). For further discussion of the subject matter and textual sources of Cima’s *Endymion* and *Midas* panels, see cat. no. 12 below.
paintings.\textsuperscript{112} During the last years of the fifteenth century, moreover, two significant early examples of the illustrated print book appeared in Venice: the \textit{Ovid Metamorphoseos Vulgare} of 1497 and the \textit{Hypnerotomachia Poliphili} of 1499.\textsuperscript{113} The latter volume, whose title can be roughly translated as “Polifilo’s Strife of Love in a Dream,” supplied visual models for paintings such as Cima’s \textit{Bacchus and Ariadne}, and also inspired representations of dreams and reveries across several Venetian ornamental works. In its spirit of erudite play and intellectual diversion, the book constitutes a literary counterpart to decorative pictures offering a keyhole view into the entranced world of mythic antiquity.\textsuperscript{114}

The 1497 edition of \textit{Ovid Metamorphoseos Vulgare}, meanwhile, provided a Bible of pagan themes and a font of creative motifs for painters. As the first printed edition of Giovanni Bonsignori’s fourteenth-century Italian translation of and commentary on Ovid’s poem, this work renders ancient myths into lyrical vernacular prose and accessible woodcut images, whose impact is evident in several groups of local ornamental painting.\textsuperscript{115} \textit{Perseus and Andromeda} from the circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati follows the printed illumination of this story, which shows the hero wheeling in vertiginously from above to defeat the sea-monster who threatens the enchained Andromeda (Fig. 1.62, cat. no. 35; Fig. 1.63, 1497, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek). This detail, in turn, is inspired by passages of Bonsignori’s translation

\textsuperscript{112} Seventeen printed editions of Virgil’s works, eleven of a compilation including the poetry of Catullus, and thirteen of Valerius Maximus were also issued during this period, as well as editions of Renaissance writers such as Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio, suggesting that these texts already enjoyed popularity and circulation in manuscript. A particularly important mythological source was Boccaccio’s \textit{Genealogiae}, published in 1472 in Venice and appearing in seven subsequent editions by 1511 (see Brown, “Picturing the Perfect Marriage,” 240). For a summary of the content of Venetian incunabula produced between ca. 1470-1500, Gerulaitis, \textit{Printing and Publishing in Fifteenth-Century Venice}, 57-127, esp. 75 table 8.

\textsuperscript{113} Venetian printers did not produce illustrated books intensively until the last decade of the fifteenth century: see Gerulaitis, \textit{Printing and Publishing in Fifteenth-Century Venice}, 18.

\textsuperscript{114} For the \textit{Hypnerotomachia Poliphili} as a narrative romance informed by concepts of play and intellectual diversion, Oettinger, “The \textit{Hypnerotomachia Poliphili}: Art and Play in a Renaissance Romance,” with further bibliography. For the \textit{Hypnerotomachia} as a product of Venetian antiquarianism, Brown, \textit{Venice and Antiquity}, 207-222. For the influence of the \textit{Hypnerotomachia} on Cima’s \textit{Bacchus and Ariadne} cycle, see the discussion of Early Subjects above. Examples of Venetian decorative cycles that take up the theme of dreams and sleep are: Lotto’s \textit{A Maiden’s Dream}, the \textit{Sleeping Shepherd} from the circle of Titian, and \textit{Endymion Asleep} by Cima, all discussed elsewhere in this chapter. \textit{Leda and the Swan} from the circle of Giorgione has also been linked to the representation of this theme in the \textit{Hypnerotomachia}: see Dal Pozzolo and Puppi, \textit{Giorgione}, 418.

\textsuperscript{115} For the 1497 edition of Giovanni Bonsignori’s translation of Ovid’s \textit{Metamorphoses}, printed in Venice by Giovanni Rosso Vercellese for Lucantonio Giunta, see Bonsignori da Città di Castello (ed. Ardissino), \textit{Ovidio Metamorphoseos Vulgare}, esp. XXIV. The second edition was published in 1501, followed by further editions in 1508, 1517, and 1523 (Ardissino, “Saggio per L’Edizione Critica dell’\textit{Ovidio Metamorphoseos Vulgare},” 107). For discussion of the woodcut illustrations, their iconography and possible author, see Blattner, \textit{Holzschnittfolgen zu den Metamorphosen des Ovid}, esp. 88-91.
describing the wing-footed Perseus as he repeatedly swoops down from the sky to attack the beast.\textsuperscript{116} The woodcuts of the 1497 incunabulum also influenced the Birth of Hercules associated with Bonifacio (Fig. 1.75; cat. no. 31); Deucalion and Pyrrha from the circle of Schiavone (Fig. 1.57; cat. no. 53); and the Birth of Adonis and possible Tale of Erysichthon from the ambit of Titian (cat. no. 71).\textsuperscript{117}

More broadly, the Bonsignori Metamorphoses and other vernacular translations allowed the sensibility of Ovid’s poem to infuse many decorative works. The so-called Contest between Apollo and Marsyas from the circle of Tintoretto (Fig. 1.64; cat. no. 57) conflates the musical rivalry of Apollo and Marsyas with that of Apollo and Pan, thus invoking an Ovidian aesthetic of transformation whereby the stories themselves are “changed into new bodies” [mutate in nuovi corpi], as Bonsignori writes in the opening pages of his translation.\textsuperscript{118} Both Midas and Endymion by Cima allude to other myths: Midas to the king’s golden touch, as discussed above, and Endymion to the Land of Sleep, a dark and quiet world where a murmuring branch of the river Lethe invites souls to slumber.\textsuperscript{119} In turn, the Land of Sleep belongs to the tale of Ceyx and Alcyone, illuminated by Carpaccio in another ornamental cycle for a spalliera setting (cat. no. 8). The evocative quality of Ovid’s text encouraged such mingling of stories, which also could occur in the formal realm. For example, Cima’s Midas shows affinities with the composition of a bronze plaquette representing a different episode from Metamorphoses, Orpheus’s rescue of

\textsuperscript{116} “…Perseo se levò da terra ed incominciò a volare sopra della bellua; e, vedendo la bellua la sua merigia, incominciò a seguire la merigia. Allora Perseo tolse el falcione e percose la bellua sul collo fortemente…Perseo fugiva dalli suoi morsi, volando in su, e poi descendea e percotea la bestia quando in lo dosso e quando nelle coste e quando nella coda…allora Perseo salì suso in uno scoglio ch’era lì e percose la bellua tre o quattro volte intanto che ll’uccise…” (Bonsignori da Città di Castello (ed. Ardissino), Ovidio Metamorphoseos Vulgare, 247-248). My translation: “Perseus raised himself from the earth and began to fly over the beast, who, seeing the shadow of the hero, began to follow the shadow. Perseus removed his blade and hit the monster hard on the neck…Perseus fled from the beast’s snapping jaws and, flying high, descended and hit it on the back and on the ribs and on the tail…Perseus ascended on a rock that was nearby and hit the beast three or four more times while he killed it.”

\textsuperscript{117} For the relation of the Birth of Hercules to the illustrations of the 1497 vernacular Ovid, see catalogue entry below. The scene of Deucalion and Pyrrha from the circle of Schiavone shows affinities with the woodcut illustration of this theme in the same volume, f. Vlr.: both include a circular temple in the background, and full-fledged adults being born from stone. For comparison of the Birth of Adonis and Death of Polydorus/Tale of Erysichthon (?) from the circle of Titian with the 1497 Ovid, see Joannides, Titian to 1518, 77-79.

\textsuperscript{118} The invocation at the beginning of Book One: “L’animo mio desidera de dire di forme mutate in nuovi corpi…” (Bonsignori da Città di Castello (ed. Ardissino), Ovidio Metamorphoseos Vulgare, 101). For the Ovidian concept of metamorphosis as a shaping force in Renaissance art and aesthetics, Barolsky, “As in Ovid, So in Renaissance Art.”

\textsuperscript{119} Metamorphoses, XI.592-649; see also Binotto, “La Pittura Mitologica di Cima da Conegliano,” 56. The story of Endymion himself is recounted by Lucian, Dialogues of the Gods, and Propertius, Elegies, among other sources; see cat. no. 12 below.
Eurydice from the underworld.\textsuperscript{120}

Not only texts and images on paper, but also live performances in the city of Venice nourished the mythical and poetic themes of decorative paintings. The \textit{momaria}, derived from the Latin \textit{Momus}, was a quintessentially Venetian spectacle involving masked pantomimes, dancing, music, jousting, acrobatics, and \textit{tableaux vivants}.\textsuperscript{121} These displays included some of the earliest recorded representations of the pantheon of ancient gods in Venice. Already in 1441, \textit{momarie} of gods and nymphs were performed for a local wedding celebration.\textsuperscript{122} Similar festivities in the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries comprised many of the same deities and heroes appearing in ornamental pictures: Jupiter, Venus, Paris, Aeneas, Dido, Perseus, and Andromeda, as well as personifications, allegories, and figures dressed in the antique.\textsuperscript{123} In February of 1520, an elaborate \textit{momaria} in front of Ca’ Foscari narrated the myth of Troy and included a cast of jousters, a Laocoön, an idol, and a performer mounted on a hydra.\textsuperscript{124} This ancient, nine-headed monster recalls representations of hybrid creatures in several early decorative works: \textit{Envy} from Bellini’s \textit{Allegories}, which portrays a nude figure emerging from a shell and hissing at a snake (Fig. 1.6; cat. no. 2), and \textit{Fortune} from the circle of Bellini (Fig. 1.65; cat. no. 3), representing a harpy with lion’s paws. Other performances involved triumphal

\textsuperscript{120} The possible inspiration of the plaquette from the workshop of Moderno (Venice, Museo Civico Correr) on Cima’s composition discussed by Humfrey, \textit{Cima da Conegliano}, 140 (with further bibliography), and Binotto, “La Pittura Mitologica di Cima da Conegliano,” 56-57.

\textsuperscript{121} Related performance types were the \textit{bombaria}, \textit{fabula}, \textit{demonstratione}, and \textit{rapresentation} (Labalme, Sanguineti White, and Carroll, \textit{Venice: Cità Excelentissima}, 488-489 n. 4). For the origins and etymology of the \textit{momaria}, see Molmenti, \textit{La Storia di Venezia nella Vita Privata} (1973), vol. 2, 393-401; Branca, “Poliziano a Venezia e l’Origine Veneziana della \textit{Fabula di Orfeo}”; Muraro, “La Festa a Venezia e le sue Manifestazioni Rappresentative,” 328-341; Brown, \textit{Venice and Antiquity}, 183-185.

\textsuperscript{122} In a letter of 1441 \textit{more veneto}, the brothers Ramberto and Giacomo Contarini wrote to their brother Andrea in Constantinople about the wedding of their sister Lucrezia to the son of the Doge: “…and there were many dances, and many \textit{mumij} of gods and nymphs, that would be too long to recount…” [\textit{….e fu danze assai, & fonno assai mumij di dei e ninfe, che longa cosa saria a dirvi…}] (see Muraro, “La Festa a Venezia e le sue Manifestazioni Rappresentative,” 319, 329, and Brown, \textit{Venice and Antiquity}, 183). Fletcher notes that in Venice “during the quattrocento classical and mythological subject-matter was more common in the festival context than in mainstream painting” (“Fine Art and Festivity,” 138).

\textsuperscript{123} A \textit{momaria} held in 1497 included a court of gods and heroes, e.g., Jupiter, Hercules, Venus, Pallas Athene, Phoebus, Ulysses, Alcinous, Aeneas, and Dido (Muraro, “La Festa a Venezia e le sue Manifestazioni Rappresentative,” 335-336, and Brown, \textit{Venice and Antiquity}, 184). The diaries of Marin Sanudo record numerous \textit{momarie} and related spectacles narrating the Judgment of Paris (19 February 1515), Jason and the golden fleece (14 October 1507), Neptune and allegories of the seasons (7 February 1526), Hercules and Persephone (29 May 1520), Perseus and Andromeda (28 February 1527), and others. On 13 February 1526, he records, “at an hour and a half after sunset there was a \textit{momaria} of eighteen people wearing leaves of light blue paper, so that they looked like men from ancient times.” For excerpts, summary and discussion, see Labalme, Sanguineti White, and Carroll, \textit{Venice: Cità Excelentissima}, 487-533.

cars similar to that of Bellini’s *Bacchus* (Fig. 1.5), and large globes of the old and new worlds, evoking the blue sphere of *Melancholy* (Fig. 1.3).\(^{125}\)

At heart, the *momaria* was a mysterious and hermetic spectacle that communicated the *venezianità* of Venetians to themselves. Upon observing one production in 1495, the foreigner Philippe de Commynes wrote perplexedly of its “great number of mysteries and characters” *(grand nombre de misteres et de personaiges)*.\(^{126}\) Perhaps by design, no visual representations of this inherently transient art form survive.\(^{127}\) Yet the fantastical and recondite spirit of the *momaria* informs works such as Bellini’s *Allegories*. These small paintings, too, have a “great number of mysteries and characters,” and their symbolism proves difficult to interpret by outsiders. The panels belong to Venice’s elaborate interior mythology, which runs parallel to the public myth of the Most Serene State and finds early expression in the enigmatic figures and plots of the *momaria*. The *Allegories* thus mark the passage of arcane and mystical elements from the ephemeral realm of festival into the more lasting medium of painting, a movement culminating in the *Tempesta* and related easel pictures of obscure iconography and poetic tenor. The costume of the male figure in the *Tempesta* has long been identified with the dress of the *compagnie della calza* who performed *momarie* and other dramas in Venice.\(^{128}\) However, a broader and more fruitful comparison can be drawn between the mysterious quality of such spectacles and the symbolic indeterminacy of Giorgione’s painting.

Along with other traditionally marginal subjects such as landscape and scenes of everyday life, the themes of pagan performance joined Venetian painting via the minor vehicle of domestic furniture decoration. The mechanism that permitted this migration to occur was the classical hierarchy of dramatic genres as applied to painting, a scheme engaged by Renaissance Italians to distinguish the appropriate settings for the various subjects of art. The categories of comedic, satyric, and mythological representation prove useful for comprehending and

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\(^{125}\) For a performance involving a triumphal car, Sanudo, *Diarii*, vol. 23, col. 583 (see also Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 173), and for the performance of the old and new worlds with globes, Sanudo, *Diarii*, vol. 44, col. 171-172 (see Labalme, Sanguineti White, and Carroll, *Venice: Città Excelentissima*, 509-510).

\(^{126}\) In 1495, Commynes witnessed local celebrations of the league among Venice, the pope, the Holy Roman emperor, the king of Spain, and the duke of Milan against the invading French king. The performances included allegorical representations of Italy, the queen of Spain, and other kings and princes, before the league was proclaimed at a porphyry stone (Commines, * Mémoires* (2007), vol. 1, 602-603, and idem, *Memoirs*, vol. 2, 500-501). See also Muraro, “La Festa a Venezia e le sue Manifestazioni Rappresentative,” 335.

\(^{127}\) For the complete lack of surviving representations of the *momaria*, and of the musical parts and scripts that would have accompanied it, Muraro, “La Festa a Venezia e le sue Manifestazioni Rappresentative,” 337.

\(^{128}\) See, for example, Moschini Marconi in Ruggeri et al., *Giorgione a Venezia*, 104.
organizing Venetian ornamental pictures, though the full variety of content embraced by this
genre can be understood only through the study of individual pieces. For example, another
major class of subjects within decorative painting is religious in nature, involving Jewish themes
or those seldom appearing in canonical Christian art (cat. nos. 19, 70, 77). And whether they
display Biblical stories, landscapes, genre scenes, myths, or other topics, Venetian ornamental
works share an emphasis on the values of love, family, lineage, and honor appropriate to the
domestic world in which they would have been seen and used. The appended catalogue further
explores questions of subject matter and draws connections among specific images, while Ch. 2
below discusses the content of these pictures in relation to their original settings.

**Styles and Techniques**

Venetian painters of furniture worked in a variety of modes, from precise, miniature-like
description to brushy abbreviation. Tintoretto and his associates, for example, created both
richly detailed, finely wrought decorative pieces such as *Esther and Ahasuerus* (also known as
*Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*; Fig. 1.66; cat. no. 64), and expressive, broadly realized,
painterly works (Fig. 1.64; cat. no. 57). Cima’s ornamental pictures show elaborate care and
finish, and Titian’s *Christ and the Pharisee* (Fig. 1.67; cat. no. 70), originally the adornment of a
door, has long been recognized as one of the most immaculate and polished works of his
career.¹²⁹ On the whole, however, the genre of Venetian decorative painting was associated with
fast execution, free brushwork, and relatively simple juxtapositions and repetitions of color.
These qualities are evident in one of the earliest surviving ornamental cycles from the city,
Bellini’s *Allegories*. Examination of these panels with infrared reflectography reveals precise
underdrawing of the outlines of forms, with parallel hatching to establish modelling. The artist
also used incision to define some architectural details and the circular mirror of *Truth*. But after
the planning stage, the pictures were completed quickly, with a limited range of colors and very
few layers. The loosest application of paint is seen in the landscapes, particularly the fields in
the backgrounds of *Bacchus* and *Envy*.¹³⁰ A palette of repeating blues, greens, reds, paler flesh

¹²⁹ As Crowe and Cavalcaselle wrote of *Christ and the Pharisee*, “the most perfect easel-picture of which Venice
ever witnessed the production, this is also the most polished work of Titian” (*Titian*, vol. 1, 121). For further
discussion of the work’s highly finished quality, see Ch. 3 and catalogue entry below.
¹³⁰ For the technique of Bellini’s *Allegories*, Gloria Tranquilli in Goffen and Nepi Scirè, *Il Colore Ritrovato*, 70-71;
for an analysis of the pictures in the context of the artist’s overall painting practice, Dunkerton, “Bellini’s
tones, and yellows unifies the four panels, and throughout the scenes, Bellini employs shorthand to represent surfaces of marble, relief, water, and glass. Considering the artist’s usually meticulous technique, the overall rapid and economical treatment of paint in these works suggests a deliberate adjustment to their intended furniture setting. The Allegories reflect an enduring aesthetic for Venetian decorative pictures and anticipate the sketchy style of ornamental works from the circles of Giorgione, Bonifacio, Schiavone, and Tintoretto.

By the time Paolo Pino composed his dialogue on Venetian painting in the 1540s, he saw fit to embed furniture decoration within a broader discussion of prestezza, or “quick execution.” Indeed, numerous local decorative pictures of the sixteenth century demonstrate a swift and brushy technique. The Astrologer from the circle of Giorgione (Fig. 1.49; cat. no. 20) exhibits thin layers of paint and summary swathes of color. Schiavone’s Tales of Aeneas (Figs. 1.68-1.69; cat. no. 51) were completed in fast, open strokes, with areas of ground left exposed to produce exaggerated lighting effects – a lively, improvised style corresponding to the artist’s broad and informal interpretation of Virgil’s poem. In Diana and Callisto (Fig. 1.70; cat. no. 40), Schiavone employed characteristic loops and arabesques of color to render drapery, and long, flowing strokes for the extended lines of his figures. Several of the Biblical Tales from the workshop of Tintoretto display similarly bold application of paint (Figs. 1.78-1.80; cat. no. 58). In these works, the quick and inexact movement of the artist’s brush leaves a material trace that renders the pictures painterly and sketchy in appearance; rather than concealing his labor with a polished finish, the artist leaves evidence of his hand. This palpable technique is consonant with the haptic quality of the objects to which the works originally belonged: the Astrologer was likely part of a small cassetta, the Tales of Aeneas decorated a bed, and Diana and Callisto and the Biblical Tales were originally attached to chests. As moveable pieces meant to be used and manipulated with the hands, such furniture items were a natural site for the display of pictures.

Technique,” 216. X-rays reveal that the panels were very thinly painted: see Tranquilli, op. cit., 70, and Ruggeri et al., Giorgione a Venezia, 37. The paintings were executed in a “reserve technique,” in keeping with Bellini’s typical method: all elements of the composition were painted directly on the picture ground rather than layered over each other (Bagarotto et al., “La Tecnica Pittorica di Giovanni Bellini,” 193). However, the overall application of paint is much more rapid and economical than usual for the artist. I thank Charlotte Hale for her analysis of the technique of the Allegories (July 2010).

131 Pino, Dialogo di Pittura, 113-121; Pardo, Paolo Pino’s Dialogue, 342-351. See also Nichols, Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity, 72-74, and further references discussed below.
with a free and perceptible touch.\textsuperscript{132}

Decorative painters such as Schiavone were known for their tactile techniques. Ridolfi praised the “scornfulness and boldness” of the artist’s brush [sprezzo & arditezza del pennello], arguing that “he was without doubt one of the greatest colorists of the Venetian school…spreading out his colors so felicitously as to induce marvel.”\textsuperscript{133} Vasari noted Schiavone’s practice of “blotting or rough sketching, with no finish whatsoever” [certa pratica…di macchie ovvero bozze, senza esser finita punto], while a speaker of Pino’s Dialogo di Pittura described disparagingly the artist’s tendency to smudge or smear his paint [empiastrar].\textsuperscript{134} In a letter of 1548 to Schiavone, Pietro Aretino (1492-1556), the notorious Venetian author and critic, both praised and denigrated the painter’s rapid style. Admiring the “knowing quickness” [prestezza saputa] of Schiavone’s “intelligent handling” [fare intelligente], Aretino nonetheless chided the artist for his impatient execution: “the sketches [bozze] of your compositions…are so well conceived and well organized that, if the haste of the sketching were changed into diligence in finishing the works, you too would confirm the excellence of my judgment.”\textsuperscript{135}

Aretino’s letter reveals a widespread ambivalence toward the quality of prestezza that characterizes Venetian ornamental painting. On one hand, a fast style suggests poor training, haste, and carelessness, as well as the inferior status of artists who work on speculation and are obliged to finish and sell their works quickly.\textsuperscript{136} On the other hand, prestezza carries

\textsuperscript{132} For example, Catherine Whistler explores the material and tactile qualities of Titian’s Triumph of Love, originally a moveable decorative cover for a portrait (“Uncovering Beauty,” esp. 12-13).
\textsuperscript{133} Ridolfi wrote that the artist “fù senza dubbio un de’ migliori coloritori della Scuola Venetiana…stendendo egli i suoi colori con tale felicità, che rende maraviglia” (Maraviglie, vol. 1, 258).
\textsuperscript{134} Vasari, Vive, vol. 6, 596. Pino’s Fabio declares, “et ancho quest’empiastrar, facendo il pratico, come fà il vostro Andrea Schiavone, è parte degna d’infamia, & questi tali dimostrano saperne puoco, non facendo, mà di lontano accennando quello, chè fà il vivo”; “that smearing about to display skill of hand, such as is done by your Andrea Schiavone, is an infamous approach, and those who follow it show how little they know, only remotely suggesting, rather than actually making, that which the live model does” (Pino, Dialogo di Pittura, 114; Pardo, Paolo Pino’s Dialogo, 343).
\textsuperscript{135} “…io ho sempre laudato la prestezza saputa del vostro fare intelligente. Anzi il si degno pittore [Tiziano] si è talora istupito de la pratica che dimostrate nel tirare giuso le bozze de le istorie, si bene intese e si bene composte che, se la frettà del farle si convertisse ne la diligenzia del finirle, anche voi confermareste il mio ricordo per ottimo” (Aretino, Lettere sull’Arte , vol. 2, 221; trans. Klein and Zerner, Italian Art 1500-1600, 55-56; see also Pardo, Paolo Pino’s Dialogo, 107-108).
\textsuperscript{136} Sohm, Pittoresco, 16-18; for the quality of prestezza in relation to the sale of ornamental pictures on speculation, see the discussion of Workshops and Authorship below. Interestingly, in a letter to Pietro Bembo, Aretino himself described his own writing style as “sketchy” and flawed due to the exigencies of composing numerous letters to the powerful: see Sohm, op. cit., 17. For the range of views on prestezza in sixteenth-century Venice and the relation of this concept to the market-driven literary culture of the poligrafi, Nichols, “Tintoretto, Prestezza and the Poligrafi”,}
connotations of poetic furor, unrestrained expressiveness, and inspiration, with spontaneity and speed of execution signifying the assured realization of a divine gift. Tintoretto, for example, the most uninhibited genius of Cinquecento Venetian painting and the hero of Ridolfi’s *Maraviglie*, elevated the quality of *prestezza* to high art. According to Ridolfi, the artist developed his audacious personal style in part by emulating the techniques of ornamental painters. As a young man, Tintoretto worked for lowly decorators of furniture and learned from their methods; he also admired Schiavone and labored for him without pay, in order to learn “that beautiful way of coloring” [*quella bella via di colorire*]. Tintoretto then applied the lessons of decorative art to his monumental works for the churches and confraternities of Venice, vast paintings realized with quick and bold strokes of strongly contrasting color. Whether or not the artist formally trained with Schiavone or other furniture painters (a question addressed in the section on Workshops and Authorship below), Tintoretto’s mature pictures certainly show the attributes of *prestezza* traditionally associated with ornamental works. For example, in the large *Baptism of Christ* in the Scuola Grande di San Rocco in Venice (1579-1581), he executed the background figures with rapid, elongated sketches of lead white paint directly on the brown preparation, a method that recalls Schiavone’s *Tales of Aeneas*. In *Christ Carried to the Tomb* for the church of San Francesco della Vigna (1563/1564; Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland), Tintoretto deliberately departed from the harmonious balance of other altarpieces in

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137 For the association of rapid, spontaneous execution with *furia* and other concepts of poetic inspiration, Roman d’Elia describes this term in its literary context and suggests that a swift technique was perceived by contemporary writers and artists as a metaphor for God’s inspired creative process (“Tintoretto, Aretino, and the Speed of Creation”). For the discussion of Workshops and Authorship below, see Pardo, *Paolo Pino’s Dialogo*, 108.

138 “Praticava in oltre co’ Pittori di minor fortuna, che dipingevano alla piazza di San Marco le banche per dipintori, per apprendere i modi loro. Piacevole nondimeno più il colorire dello Schiavone, quale coadiutava volontieri ne’ suoi lavori, senza veruna mercede, per impadronirsi di quella bella via di colorire” (Ridolfi, *Maraviglie*, vol. 2, 15). See also Echols, “Tintoretto the Painter,” 35, and the discussion of Workshops and Authorship below.

139 For the technique of the *Baptism*, Dunkerton, “Tintoretto’s Painting Technique,” 155. Both this passage of Tintoretto’s *Baptism* and Schiavone’s *Tales of Aeneas* are rapidly and sketchily executed with substantial areas of ground left exposed. Tintoretto’s technique could vary purposefully within even a single work, and the foreground figures of the *Baptism* are executed with much greater care and detail than those on the far bank.
the same building, painting a vertiginous composition in swift, bodied strokes verging on a wash in the deep background. The artist did not always enjoy critical approbation for his spontaneous style, but Vasari, for one, praised Tintoretto’s technique and suggested its origins in his inspired mind: “in the matter of painting he is extravagant, capricious, swift and resolute…[his is] the most extraordinary brain that the art of painting has ever produced.”

In their passages of prestezza, Tintoretto’s large-scale works display remarkable affinities with the tradition of Venetian furniture decoration. In fact, many of the city’s greatest artists were known for a similarly coloristic and material style typified by free brushwork and a rich fabric of differentiated strokes, the visual equivalent of their poetically allusive and imprecise subjects. In his life of Giorgione, Vasari remarked on the painter’s innovative technique, which exploited the possibilities of the oil medium and emphasized color and soft unity of form. Technical analyses of Giorgione’s full-scale works support Vasari’s observations, revealing brushy application of bodied oil paints, the dissolution of contours along the boundaries of figures, and much experimentation and revision in the course of execution. These methods show a freedom and spontaneity that are largely unprecedented in monumental Venetian art of the first decade of the sixteenth century, but find parallels in the open and improvisational techniques of early decorative pictures. For instance, the Astrologer (Fig. 1.49; cat. no. 20) from

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140 For the technique and composition of Christ Carried to the Tomb in comparison with paintings in San Francesco della Vigna by Paolo Veronese and others, de Maria, Becoming Venetian, 79-81.
141 “…nelle cose della pittura, stravagante, capriccioso, presto e risoluto, e il più terribile cervello che abbia avuto mai la pittura” (Vasari, Vite, vol. 6, 587). However, Vasari, like other authors, showed ambivalence toward the quality of prestezza. He criticized Tintoretto’s method of working “at haphazard and without design” [a caso e senza disegno], and for leaving “as finished works sketches still so rough that the brushstrokes may be seen, done more by chance and vehemence than with judgment and design”: “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, piuttosto che dal disegno e dal giudizio” (ibid.). Aretino, too, disapproved of Tintoretto’s excessive speed of execution [prestezza del fatto]: see Aretino, Lettere sull’Arte, vol. 2, 204-205). For the range of early critical opinions about Tintoretto’s technique, Lepschy, Tintoretto Observed, 15-55.
142 For the association of painterly brushwork with the Venetian school, Sohm, Pittresco, 2-9. Dunkerton notes, however, that “the development of a looser approach to paint handling with openly visible brushwork was not solely a Venetian innovation as is too often suggested” (“North and South,” 101).
143 Vasari writes, “Giorgione da Castel Franco…sfumò le sue pitture, e dette una terribil movenzia alle sue cose, per una certa oscurità di ombre bene intese” (Vite, vol. 4, 11); “egli nel colorito a olio ed a fresco fece alcune vivezze ed altre cose morbide ed unite e sfumate talmente negli scuri…” (ibid., 92). For technical analyses of Giorgione’s works, see Oberthaler, “On Technique, Condition and Interpretation of Five Paintings by Giorgione and his Circle”; Oberthaler and Walmsley, “Technical Studies of Painting Methods”; Poldi, “Dalle Opere in Mostra alla Tecnica di Giorgione.” Hope notes that “when Vasari defined the nature of Giorgione’s contribution…he saw it exclusively as a technical one, involving a new manner of painting that exploited the distinctive characteristics of oil…while at the same time discounting the Central Italian preoccupation with disegno” (“Classical Antiquity and Venetian Renaissance Subject Matter,” 52). For Giorgione’s techniques in the context of the emergence of painterly style in Venice during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Sohm, Pittresco, 3-4.
the artist’s circle displays both sketchy, evident brushwork and substantial *pentimenti*: conceived at the underdrawing stage as a scene of Orpheus surrounded by animals, the composition was later altered to the less definite and more suggestive theme of a twilight colloquy between a musician and an aged man holding an hourglass.\(^{144}\) Furniture pictures from the circle of Titian, such as the *Death of Polydorus/Tale of Erysichthon (?)* (Fig. 1.71; cat. no. 71), display similarly inexact techniques and subjects, which in turn find analogies in the artist’s large-scale works. The richly poetic and iconographically elusive pictures of Titian’s maturity are realized with evident brushwork and lively application of pastose paints to textured supports (Fig. 1.72; ca. 1570-1575; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie). Though contemporary critics often noted the artist’s painstaking habits of execution in contrast to Tintoretto’s speed, the final appearance of Titian’s works is one of inspired ease: the painterly counterpart to courtly *sprezzatura*.\(^{145}\) According to Vasari, the artist’s late paintings “are dashed off in bold strokes, broadly applied in patches in such a manner that they cannot be seen up close, but from a distance appear perfect.”\(^{146}\)

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the bold and swift tactility of Venetian painting was increasingly prized by art lovers, and became the subject of a sophisticated critical discourse comprising terms such as *pittorese*, *sprezzato*, and *abbozzato*.\(^{147}\) In his *Breve Istruzione* of 1674, Boschini admired the novelty of Giorgione’s “soft impasto of the brush” [*impasto di pennello così morbido, che nel tempo addietro non fu*], Titian’s “decisive brushstrokes loaded with color” [*colpi rissoluti, con pennellate massiccie di colori*], and Schiavone’s “painterly handling, with a scornful touch of the brush” [*tratto Pittoresco, con il colpo sprezzante di pennello*] – all techniques that recall the fast execution and brushy styles of

\(^{144}\) In the underdrawing, the musician was originally accompanied by a group of animals – two deer, a hind, and a buck – which would have identified him as Orpheus; at some point, however, the artist removed this menagerie, leaving behind only the buck, and painted in the aged man holding an hourglass, thus eliminating details that would have given the picture a more definite subject (Anderson, *Giorgione*, 119-120; Poldi, “Dalle Opere in Mostra alla Tecnica di Giorgione;,” 233).


\(^{146}\) “…queste ultime [pitture], condotte di colpi, tirate via di grosso e con macchie, di maniera che da presso non si possono vedere, e di lontano appariscono perfette” (Vasari, *Vite*, vol. 7, 452). For the increasingly evident and poetic quality of Titian’s brushwork over the course of his career, see Rosand, “Titian and the Eloquence of the Brush,” and Oberthaler, “Titian’s Late Style as Seen in the *Nymph and Shepherd.*”

\(^{147}\) Sohm describes how the meaning of the term *pittorese* evolved from “pictorial” to “painterly” during the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, as Boschini and his contemporaries celebrated painterly brushwork and established it as a distinct category of artistic discourse encompassing terms such as *abbozzato*, *macchiato*, and *sprezzato*. See Sohm, *Pittorese*, esp. 25-62, 88-157.
ornamental art. Boschini’s commentaries suggest that over time, the methods conventionally ascribed to furniture painters were embraced by well-known artists of the Venetian school. Accordingly, the multivalent concept of prestezza began to be understood more in its positive aspects – poetic fury and the confident facility born of God-given inspiration – than in its negative ones – haste, poverty of invention, and lackadaisical habits of execution. Thus, in his Carta del Navegar Pitoresco of 1660, Boschini described Schiavone’s style with exalted terms such as furia and terribilità: “the Dalmatian fury of the ferocious and terrible Schiavone will frighten you; his brush is truly faster than a Saracen’s arrow.”

The elevation of techniques from the lowly realm of ornament into high art of the Venetian Renaissance parallels the passage of minor subjects from decorative media into the fields of full-scale paintings, as described earlier in the present chapter. In both cases, traditionally humble and debased motifs find a proving ground in the secondary genre of ornament before their acceptance within the mainstream of Venetian painting. And in both decorative and monumental contexts, a free and open style corresponds to suggestive and inexact subject matter, with content and execution equally governed by principles of improvisation and poetic license.

At the same time, however, the styles and subjects of Venetian decorative paintings were shaped by practical concerns. In the intensely competitive art world of Renaissance Venice, many painters created their wares for sale on the open market. Their livelihoods depended on continuous production and a steady stream of purchases, and their choices of subject and habits of execution were partly a response to economic pressures. As explored in the sections that follow, the styles, techniques, formats, and contents of Venetian decorative pictures reflect a variety of external conditions: the demands of individual patrons and the local art market, the various ways in which these objects were traditionally manufactured, and the stature and value of furniture decoration compared to other types of painting.

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148 Boschini, Carta del Navegar Pitoresco, 709, 711, 754.
149 Spaventerà la furia Dalmatina / De quel Schiaon teribile e feroce, / Penelo veramente più veloce / Che frezza, trata da man sarasina” (Boschini, Carta del Navegar Pitoresco, 62). For the history and meaning of the terms furia and terribilità, Summers, Michelangelo and the Language of Art, 60-70, 234-241.
150 See the sections on Early Subjects and Patterns and Hierarchies of Content above.
Workshops and Authorship

Like devotional images, Venetian decorative paintings ranged across several levels of status and quality, varying from fine autograph works to lesser artifacts quickly produced for sale on speculation. The pictures in this study fall into three main categories: collectible pieces of high quality, secondary workshop products, and inexpensive ornaments painted by specialized craftsmen known as cofaneri or depentori da casse. All three types involved collaboration (and sometimes competition) between the painters and the artisans who supplied the objects to be decorated. These craftsmen were either carpenters [marangoni], who built interior woodwork such as cabinets, wainscoting, and doors; or chest-makers [casselleri], who constructed casse that were then purchased ready-made and adorned by painters.151

The first and highest category of ornamental pictures comprises works by major artists in response to specific commissions or intended for particular recipients. In some cases, evidence of patronage and ownership has survived, such as the presence of Cima’s Judgment of Midas and Endymion Asleep (Figs. 1.59-1.60; cat. no. 12) in the collection of the Prati family of Parma; Titian’s creation of Christ and the Pharisee (Fig. 1.67; cat. no. 70) for the door of a coin cabinet belonging to Duke Alfonso d’Este of Ferrara; and the sculptor Alessandro Vittoria’s possession of paintings of scenes from the Aeneid, made by Schiavone for the decoration of a bedstead.

151 The guild of marangoni (Venetian dialect for falegname or carpenters) was divided into four columns, indicating the degree of specialization and expertise that this art had achieved by an early date. The four groups were marangoni da case or house carpenters, who executed interior domestic woodwork; marangoni da soaze, who made fine walnut furniture; marangoni da noghera, who made picture frames and various types of window and gondola casements; and marangoni da rimessi, who executed veneers and intarsia (Brunello, Arti e Mestieri a Venezia, 71). The first two types, marangoni da case and da noghera, most directly collaborated with furniture painters. The supports of the painted doors and shutters discussed in Ch. 2 below, for example, were probably made by marangoni da case: in 1451, a carpenter named Baldassera executed interior carpentry, including wooden doors, for the home of Lorenzo Dolfin at S. Justina (ASV, Proc. di San Marco de Citra, B. 282, Comm. L. Dolfin, fasc. 1; see Connell, Employment of Sculptors and Stonemasons, 159). The structure of Vincenzo Catena’s fine walnut restello with paintings by Bellini was most likely the work of a marangoni da noghera. The chest-makers or casselleri belonged to their own guild, among the earliest documented in Venice; in addition to making domestic chests, the casselleri constructed boxes for the shipping industry (Alberici, Il Mobile Veneto, 6). From an early date, the relationships among carpenters, chest-makers, and painters of furniture were fraught, and the marangoni and casselleri frequently tried to trespass the boundaries of their art and to paint such objects themselves. A 1308 statute of the painters’ guild prohibited the casselleri from painting chests and selling them in Venice or elsewhere, and these rules were refined and changed again a number of times through the sixteenth century, indicating that the problem was ongoing (Favaro, L’Arte dei Pittori in Venezia, 72 n. 1). Further disputes among these guilds are recorded in ASV, Arti, B. 93: Casselleri, Capitolare (1581-1788); ASV, Arti, B. 97, A: Per l’Arte de Casselleri cto. L’Arte de Marangoni; ASV, Arti, B. 104, A-B, E: Per Arte Depentori co: Arte de Casselleri, e Marangoni.
Carpaccio’s Hunting and Fishing and Ladies on a Balcony (Fig. 1.53; cat. no. 7) also resulted from a distinguished commission; the ensemble has been linked to several Venetian families, including the Mocenigo, Preli, and Torella, though definitive evidence is lacking. Another group likely ordered or bestowed as a gift are Bellini’s Accademia Allegories (Figs. 1.3-1.6; cat. no. 2), which were signed by the artist and, as noted above, once belonged to a restello similar to the object prized by Vincenzo Catena. In 1521, Marcantonio Michiel described a picture of a nymph displayed as a door decoration in the home of the citizen Francesco Zio. After his death in 1523, the work was inherited by his nephew, Andrea Odoni, who also used it as a door ornament and, as recent technical findings show, imposed changes on the image to bring it into harmony with the iconography of his palace. Two comparable sets of door paintings from the circle of Giorgione, Judith (Fig. 1.1; cat. no. 19) and the Trial of Moses and Judgment of Solomon (Figs. 1.73-1.74; cat. no. 18), also likely appeared in the houses of sophisticated citizens, scholars, or clerics.

Pictures of this type are distinguished by the quality of their materials – Carpaccio’s Hunting and Fishing, Cima’s Judgment of Midas, and Schiavone’s Aeneas Recalled from Dido all employ costly ultramarine and by their skillful design and coloring, links to contemporary literary and humanist culture, and unusual subjects, suggestive of enlightened patrons who supported forays into new themes and styles. By electing to work in decorative genres, figural artists enjoyed an inventive and poetic license lacking in the more prescriptive fields of the altarpiece, portrait, and devotional image. These works set the standard for the genre of Venetian ornamental pictures, and also most directly influenced the development of independent easel paintings during the same period.

152 For the patronage of Cima’s roundels, see catalogue entry below. For the commission of Titian’s Christ and the Pharisee, see discussion of Doors and Shutters in Ch. 2, and catalogue entry below. For Alessandro Vittoria’s role in commissioning Schiavone’s paintings for a recinto da letto, see the section on Beds in Ch. 2, the discussion of Venice to Vienna in Ch. 3, and catalogue entry below.

153 See discussion of Doors and Shutters in Ch. 2 below.

154 The sportello painting recorded by Michiel in the homes of Zio and Odoni – first described as a “Nymph” in 1521, then as “Ceres” in 1532 (Michiel, Notizia d’Opere del Disegno (ed. Frimmel), 55, 53) – can now be linked to a surviving picture in Berlin, Gemäldegalerie, on the basis of scholarship by Monika Schmitter and neutron autoradiography conducted in 2005; for full discussion and illustration, see the section on Doors and Shutters in Ch. 2 below.

155 For the use of ultramarine in the sky of Carpaccio’s Hunting and Fishing, see Szafran, “Carpaccio’s ‘Hunting on the Lagoon,’” 156. Pigments used in Cima’s Judgment of Midas are discussed in a conservation report of Clelia Alessandrini, 2006; see cat. no. 12 below. The presence of ultramarine in Aeneas Recalled from Dido is noted by Robert Wald; see cat. no. 51 below.

156 See the discussion of Patterns and Hierarchies of Content above.
The second category of decorative images belongs to the ambit of well-known workshops, particularly those of Bonifacio de’ Pitati and Jacopo Tintoretto. Bonifacio, who was born in Verona in 1487 and arrived in Venice ca. 1505, built a large studio known for collaborative endeavors and for harboring novice and subsidiary artists. The large cycle of paintings completed under his supervision for the Venetian Palazzo dei Camerlenghi, for example, involved the participation of numerous assistants over a more than twenty-year period. Bonifacio provided training and work to a variety of up-and-coming painters, including Tintoretto, who according to Ridolfi had practiced with the elder artist and imitated his style. Echols and Cottrell have proposed that the two painters’ engagement was more extensive than Ridolfi acknowledged, with Tintoretto laboring as an apprentice during the 1530s in Bonifacio’s shop, where the young artist developed aspects of his trademark style. Both Bonifacio and Tintoretto, in turn, had connections to Andrea Schiavone: marked compositional affinities between works of Bonifacio and Schiavone suggest a relationship between these two artists, while, as noted above, Tintoretto reputedly admired Schiavone’s method of coloring. Others who likely worked for Bonifacio include Antonio Palma, Jacopo Bassano, Stefano Cernotto, Giovanni Galizzi, and Polidoro da Lanciano.

The extensive network of artists associated with Bonifacio’s studio included both talented

157 For the corporate nature of Bonifacio’s workshop as manifest in the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi commission (1529-1553), Cottrell, “Corporate Colors.” For Bonifacio, idem, Bonifacio’s Enterprise; Ludwig, “Bonifazio di Pitati da Verona, Eine Archivalische Untersuchung”; Westphal, Bonifazio Veronese; Simonetti, “Profilo di Bonifacio”; and further sources in following notes.

158 “Dipinse il Tintoretto, mentre era giovinetto, nelle case de’ Miani alla Carità un fregio intorno a un mezzato, in una parte del quale figurò il corso dell’umanità vita. Nelle altre il ratto di Elena con altre invenzioni, contrafacendo in quelle la maniera di Bonifacio e dello Schiavone, con li quali praticato haveva” (Ridolfi, Maraviglie, vol. 2, 51-52; idem, Vite dei Tintoretto, 78). For Tintoretto’s frieze, see discussion of this genre in Ch. 2 below.

159 For the young Tintoretto’s likely involvement with Bonifacio, Echols, Tintoretto and Venetian Painting, 30-60; Cottrell, Bonifacio’s Enterprise, 247-311; idem, “Painters in Practise.”

160 For Ridolfi’s remarks on Tintoretto’s admiration of Schiavone’s method of coloring, see the section on Styles and Techniques above. Richardson discounts the theory, first proposed by Berenson, that Bonifacio was Schiavone’s teacher; he suggests instead that the artist received his earliest training in the studio of the brothers Luzzo from Feltre (Andrea Schiavone, 16-25). Cottrell, however, notes convincing affinities between Schiavone’s Christ Raising the Daughter of Jairus (ca. 1545; Norfolk, Chrysler Museum) and Bonifacio’s Raising of Lazarus (ca. 1540; Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures), and suggests the possibility that Schiavone was “a member of Bonifacio’s team at some point in his youthful development” (Bonifacio’s Enterprise, 30-31, 274-276). Rossi, too, argues against the hypothesis that Schiavone studied with the Luzzo brothers, and suggests instead a program of self-education based largely on the study of Parmigianino’s prints (“Andrea Schiavone,” 218-226). See also Echols, Tintoretto and Venetian Painting, 40-42, 91-93; Herman, Out of the Shadow of Titian, 191; Penny, National Gallery Catalogues, vol. 2, 114-115; Couilleaux in Delieuvin and Habert, Titien, Tintoret, Véronèse, 331.

161 For members of Bonifacio’s workshop, Echols, Tintoretto and Venetian Painting, 58-59, and idem, “Tintoretto, Christ at the Sea of Galilee, and the Unknown Later Career of Lambert Sustris,” 98; see also Cottrell, Bonifacio’s Enterprise, 201-212, and idem, “Painters in Practise,” 51.
students and second-tier assistants, who came and went according to both their need for work and the varying demands of large-scale commissions. Decorative pictures played a role in this give-and-take of collaboration and training. Bonifacio created some exemplary pieces – Ridolfi wrote that “there are seen recinti di letto, casse, and similar things painted by his hand” – and delegated others to minor painters or trainees. These provided an opportunity for younger or lesser members of the workshop to practice their art, and expanded the range of Bonifacio’s production to include ornamental images at affordable prices. *Antiochus and Stratonice* (Fig. 1.54; cat. no. 30), for example, was probably painted as a *cassa* decoration by Bonifacio with some studio assistance. The master’s involvement is visible in the judicious grouping of figures, richly differentiated details of clothing and furniture, and sense of dramatic development, as in the hand of Stratonice poised over the tray held by a servant boy. *Antiochus and Stratonice* was then used as a template for other ornamental paintings. The *Birth of Hercules* (Fig. 1.75; cat. no. 31) is of the same shape as *Antiochus*, and also displays a cluster of caretakers around a seated or reclining figure whose vestments are parted; in both paintings a bed is shown, and a landscape with figures opens outward at right. The *Birth of Hercules* is more summary in execution than *Antiochus*, however, with an incomplete integration of foreground and background and a less convincing treatment of the figures’ costumes and anatomy, particularly their arms. These differences suggest a mid-1540s workshop piece created on the basis of the earlier exemplar.

Similarly, the *Finding of Moses* in the Pitti Palace and *Legend of the Infant Servius Tullius* in New York (Figs. 1.76-1.77; cat. nos. 32, 34) are kindred compositions originating in a common design of Bonifacio. The two works share an oblong format structured by vertical elements such as trees or columns, and in both scenes, dynamic assemblies of figures enact a drama centering on the future of a prodigious child. Perhaps, as Cottrell suggests, the Pitti *Finding of Moses* was derived from Bonifacio’s larger version of this theme (ca. 1540; Milan, Brera). In turn, *Servius Tullius* was conceived on the basis of the Pitti painting. Several known versions of *Perseus and Andromeda* and *Cimon and Iphigenia* from the artist’s circle

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163 Cottrell, *Bonifacio’s Enterprise*, 228-230; see also catalogue entry on the *Finding of Moses* below.
When Tintoretto launched his own studio, he followed the model of his former teacher, creating some fine examples of ornamental painting himself while distributing others among a workshop staff of assistants and followers.\textsuperscript{165} \textit{Esther and Ahasuerus} (also known as \textit{Solomon and the Queen of Sheba}; Fig. 1.66; cat. no. 64) is an autograph cassa picture similar in composition to Tintoretto’s ceiling painting of \textit{Apollo and Marsyas} for Pietro Aretino (1544-1545; Hartford, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art).\textsuperscript{166} The eloquent gesture of the queen, the veristic fall of her garments over her anatomy, the galvanized sky framing her head and shoulders, and the attenuated figures of the king and his attendants all show Tintoretto’s characteristically bold and assured activation of his subject matter. The master probably also authored at least one of the seven \textit{Biblical Tales} in Vienna (cat. no. 58), panels which once adorned a series of cassa recorded in the seventeenth-century collection of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham.\textsuperscript{167} Of these, \textit{Solomon and the Queen of Sheba} (Fig. 1.78) shows a fineness of execution and overall spatial logic suggestive of Tintoretto’s hand, while the other panels are more summarily executed with schematic, sketchy figures and costumes, and in some cases, atmospheric landscapes dotted with blue-tinged peaks. Echols suggests the possible involvement of Tintoretto’s assistant Giovanni Galizzi in the \textit{Feast of Belshazzar} (Fig. 1.79), while others have proposed that the northerner Lambert Sustris played a role in the background views, such as that of the \textit{Carrying of the Sacred Ark} (Fig. 1.80).\textsuperscript{168} Tintoretto likely conceived the overall design of this series, carefully painted \textit{Solomon and the Queen of Sheba} himself, then delegated some or all of the remaining panels to associates in his workshop.

Sustris, who may have participated in the \textit{Biblical Tales}, offers a case study in the role of

\textsuperscript{164} For versions of \textit{Cimon and Iphigenia} and \textit{Perseus and Andromeda} associated with Bonifacio, see catalogue entries below.


\textsuperscript{166} For the authorship and technique of \textit{Esther and Ahasuerus}/\textit{Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (?)}, Echols, \textit{Tintoretto and Venetian Painting}, 154-156, and idem, “Tintoretto the Painter,” 34-35; see also catalogue entry below.

\textsuperscript{167} For the provenance of these paintings, see the section on Venice to Vienna in Ch. 3, and catalogue entry below.

\textsuperscript{168} For the fine execution and decorative quality of \textit{Solomon and the Queen of Sheba}, and the possible role of Galizzi in the \textit{Feast of Belshazzar}, Echols, \textit{Tintoretto and Venetian Painting}, 219-226, 286-287, and idem, “Giovanni Galizzi and the Problem of the Young Tintoretto,” 100-101; see also catalogue entry below. For Sustris’s possible authorship of the landscapes of the \textit{Biblical Tales}, see n. 176 below.
secondary artists in Venetian ornamental production during the sixteenth century. A painter of Netherlandish origin who had arrived in Rome by the mid-1530s, he was active in Venice for a number of years thereafter and, according to Ridolfi, worked for both Titian and Tintoretto as a specialist in landscapes.\(^{169}\) The technique of Lambert’s *Diana and Actaeon* (ca. 1550-1570; Oxford, Christ Church Picture Gallery) is comparable to that of Titian, suggesting ties to the star painter’s busy shop.\(^{170}\) In addition, it has been convincingly proposed that as a newcomer to Venice, Sustris first found support and sustenance in the studio of Bonifacio, who in turn nurtured the young Tintoretto, and may have introduced the two artists. Sustris went on to participate in a number of works produced by Tintoretto’s atelier, and his collaboration with Schiavone was mentioned by Vasari and noted in a contemporary document.\(^{171}\) As a workshop member who played a supporting role in the practices of several masters, Lambert was called upon to create decorative paintings bearing their imprimatur. A number of ornamental pictures from the circles of Titian, Tintoretto, and Schiavone can be associated with Lambert’s name, including the *History of Troy* (cat. no. 54),\(^{172}\) *Nessus and Deianeira* (cat. no. 48),\(^{173}\) the *Ordeal...\(^{169}\) “Lamberto si trattenne per qualche tempo in Venetia, servendo medesimamente alcuna volta a Titiano & al Tintoretto nel far paesi” (Ridolfi, *Maraviglie*, vol. 1, 225). For Sustris, Peltzer, “Lambert Sustris von Amsterdam”; Berenson, *Venetian School*, vol. 1, 167-169; Ballarin, “Profilo di Lamberto d’Amsterdam”; idem, “Lamberto d’Amsterdam (Lamberto Sustris): Le Fonti e la Critica”; Sgarbi, “Giovanni De Mio, Bonifacio de’ Pitati, Lamberto Sustris”; Mancini, “Note sugli Esordi di Lambert Sustris”; Freedberg, *Painting in Italy 1500-1600*, 534-535; Echols, “Tintoretto, *Christ at the Sea of Galilee*, and the Unknown Later Career of Lambert Sustris”; Penny, *National Gallery Catalogues*, vol. 2, 124-125.

\(^{170}\) Massing, “Technical Examination of Lambert Sustris’s *Diana and Actaeon*”; see also Dunkerton, “North and South,” 102. Also suggestive of a link between the two artists is Lambert’s later version of Titian’s *Venus of Urbino* (ca. 1548; Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum).


\(^{172}\) For the attribution of the *History of Troy* to Sustris, Ballarin, “Profilo di Lamberto d’Amsterdam,” 80 n. 33, and Richardson, *Andrea Schiavone*, 201.

\(^{173}\) *Nessus and Deianeira* is attributed to Sustris by Berenson, *Venetian School*, vol. 1, 167; Ballarin, “Profilo di Lamberto d’Amsterdam,” 80 n. 35; idem, “Lamberto d’Amsterdam (Lamberto Sustris): Le Fonti e la Critica,” 364, 366; and Couilleaux in Delieuvin and Habert, *Titien, Tintoret, Véronèse*, 331-332. *The Rape of Europa* in Amsterdam (cat. no. 49) has also been attributed to Sustris; see catalogue entry below.
of Tuccia (cat. no. 65),\textsuperscript{174} and the infernal scene of Lot and His Daughters (cat. no. 73),\textsuperscript{175} in addition to several of the Vienna Old Testament panels (cat. no. 58).\textsuperscript{176} Some of these works show a Mannerist extension and exaggeration of figures, comparable to that of Schiavone but linear and clearly outlined, in the idiom of central Italian painters; others display a more Venetian, brushy and loose application, and their swathes of landscape are commensurate with Sustris’s northern training and presumed métier in Titian’s workshop. At least one of the works contains a Roman monument, recalling the artist’s earlier experience in that city. The individual scenes vary considerably, however, and each remains “in the style of” a recognized master.\textsuperscript{177} These tendencies indicate that Lambert largely subordinated his personal manner to a workshop brand, as did other assistants involved in the studio manufacture of decorative paintings.

Because they were intended to be sold as products of Bonifacio, Tintoretto, or other major artists, the Venetian ornamental pictures linked to Sustris and similar workshop associates often elude precise attributions. The procedure for assigning and painting these pieces was flexible, with assistants picking up such work when grander commissions had slowed or been fulfilled.\textsuperscript{178} The unified front presented by studio decorative paintings complicates the recognition of hands; while key claims about attribution are addressed in the catalogue entries below, establishing the individual authorship of all works in this group is beyond the scope of the present study. Instead, the paintings are organized around the artistic personalities who most clearly influenced their composition and style. Evident from analysis of the surviving pictures is that a network of relationships flourished among established, up-and-coming, and secondary artists, and that ornamental genres enlarged both the range of merchandise offered by well-

\textsuperscript{174} For the attribution of the Ordeal of Tuccia to Sustris, Echols, Tintoretto and Venetian Painting, 333-334, 336, and idem, “Tintoretto, Christ at the Sea of Galilee, and the Unknown Later Career of Lambert Sustris,” 132, 135.
\textsuperscript{175} Lot and His Daughters is attributed to “Schiavone (?)” in the Hermitage catalogue of 1992 (Fomichova, The Hermitage, 289), while a recent catalogue of the Egidio Martini collection at Ca’ Rezzonico suggests Sustris (Martini, Pinacoteca Egidio Martini, 288); see also Couilleaux in Delieuvin and Habert, Titien, Tintoret, Véronèse, 338.
\textsuperscript{176} Tietze, for example, suggests that in the landscape of the Carrying of the Sacred Ark “we can perceive traces of Northern conception and a certain similarity with the earlier works of Sustris, e.g. the Baptism of Christ at Caën” (Tintoretto, 379). For concurring opinions, Bernari, L’Opera Completa del Tintoretto, 88, and Meijer, “Flemish and Dutch Artists in Venetian Workshops,” 142.
\textsuperscript{177} Echols notes, “Lambert had the ability to absorb with ease the styles of other artists, and...he varied his own manner according to the expectations of his patrons” (“Tintoretto, Christ at the Sea of Galilee, and the Unknown Later Career of Lambert Sustris,” 100).
\textsuperscript{178} It has also been suggested that this type of work was given to the same artists who executed manuscript illuminations and altarpiece predelle: see Bauer-Eberhardt, “Cima, Benedetto Bordon e il Maestro delle Sette Virtù”; Gentili, “Amore e Amorose Persone,” 88; Binotto, “La Pittura Mitologica di Cima da Conegliano,” 59 n. 16.
known workshops and the opportunities available to painters within them.

The third type of Venetian ornamental painting was produced by minor artists called *cofaneri* or *depentori da casse*, who specialized in the decoration of furniture and sold their wares on speculation from open shops and stalls.\(^{179}\) Unlike assistants in the shops of Bonifacio or Tintorettto, they worked independently and constituted a distinct branch of the Arte dei Depentori. The *cofaneri* were highly subject to the guild’s regulations, and their status and production are linked to the history of this institution. The earliest statutes of the Arte, dating to 1271, record *pictores arcellarum* among painters of various objects, including shields, mirrors, and altarpieces. There are no surviving examples of the secular work of the medieval *pictores arcellarum*, although a chest of this kind is mentioned in a twelfth-century document.\(^{180}\)

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the guild subdivided into specific *colonnelli*, comprising different categories of artists such as *figureri* or figure painters, *cofaneri*, illuminators, gilders, and playing-card makers.\(^{181}\) In 1436, the *cofaneri* appealed to the Giustizia Vecchia, the civic authority that governed the guilds, “with great quarrels and lamentations, explaining that in a short time their trade had been undone and ruined” by the incursions of foreigners. The Giustizia responded by prohibiting the import by non-Venetians of any chest,

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\(^{179}\) Guild documents of the fifteenth through the seventeenth centuries refer to painters of furniture as *cofaneri*, *depentori da casse*, and also, confusingly, *casselleri* or *casselleri depentori*. The term *casselleri* conventionally designated not painters, but the artisans who built chests and boxes; the *casselleri* belonged to their own guild, which supplied the chests subsequently decorated by painters (see n. 151 above). The varying terms applied to furniture painters in the guild’s records may simply be synonyms, or they may reflect distinctions among types of ornamental painting which are now unclear. I plan to explore this question in further detail in a future study. In the present discussion, the terms *cofaneri* and *depentori da casse* are used to describe guild-affiliated painters specializing in the decoration of furniture.


\(^{181}\) The division of the guild into three *colonnelli* occurred in 1436 (Favaro, *L’Arte dei Pittori in Venezia*, 40-41); by the end of the sixteenth century, the number of columns had expanded to eight (Brown, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice*, 42; Cecchini, *Quadri e Commercio a Venezia*, 149-152). See also Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, 7-8, and Shaw, “Institutional Controls and the Retail of Paintings,” 110-111. The *colonnello* system was not unique to the painters, but was found in virtually all the artisan guilds of Venice (Mackenney, “The Guilds of Venice,” 24). The place of furniture painters within the Venetian guild system was similar to the situation in Florence, where *pittori di casse* were included in the Guild of St. Luke during the fourteenth century, and were recognized as a distinct subgroup by about 1420 (Campbell, *Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence*, 16-17).
shield, or other specialty of the cofaneri. In 1457, the mariegola or rule-book of the guild recognized “tutti i Maestri Coffaneri” and granted them the right to paint chests and shields with their own hands, but not to decorate these objects with engraving, pastiglia, or clay. A later regulation prohibited these artists from pasting prints to the surfaces of chests and then painting over them. In 1482, the furniture painters enjoyed a significant advance when the governing board of the Arte expanded to include one representative from their ranks; in 1517, the gastaldo or chief steward of the organization was a coffener named Domenego Draghia.

The guild’s internal divisions were not strict, and members could move among different colonnelli to work in various genres. Thus, as noted above, figureri or figural artists such as Cima, Titian, and Bonifacio occasionally painted furniture in addition to altarpieces and other framed pictures, and they sometimes delegated ornamental pieces to members of their shops. In general, however, such works were less prestigious than independent figure painting produced on commission: the figureri operated primarily at the upper level of the art market, commanding higher prices and executing important projects through exclusive channels. In 1511, they campaigned for additional representation on the guild’s governing body, implying a desire for

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182 "Che nisun forestier possa condur Schudi, ne Targhe, ne Coffani in questa Citta de Venetia &c. El’ Mille cccc.xxxvi. adi del mexe de Aprile Conciosia cosa che i Maestri dai Schudi, e Coffani de Venexia avanti de noi Provedadori de Comun, & Iustixieri vecchi siano comparsi con gran querelle, & lamentation exponendo, & dicendo, che da poco tempo in qua ’el mestier suo vien disfato, e ruuinado, e questo solamente per alguni maestri i quali stano fuora de questa terra, e fano dei ditti Schudi, & portali in questa terra...” (Mariegola dei Depentori, cap. 30, f. 9v.-10r.). For information about the document of the Mariegola dei Depentori, Vanin and Eleuteri, Le Mariegole della Biblioteca del Museo Correr, 117-118.

183 “...tutti i Maestri Coffaneri i quali posano far el suo mestier di coffani e quello prociede a’ Coffani, & a’ Schudi, & depenzerli quantu che i ditti sapia lavorar cun le so man proprie” (Mariegola dei Depentori, cap. 40, f. 14v.). For the prohibition on engraving, pastiglia, and clay, Alberici, Il Mobile Veneto, 19.

184 For the prohibition on attaching prints to chests and then painting over them, Mariegola dei Depentori, cap. LXII, dated 20 October 1512; see also Favaro, L’Arte dei Pittori in Venezia, 67, and Shaw, “Institutional Controls and the Retail of Paintings,” 108.

185 Beginning in 1436, the governing board [banca] was composed of three compagni or representatives: one ‘figurer,’ one ‘cortiner,’ and one ‘dorador.’ In 1482, one furniture painter was added to the board (Mariegola dei Depentori, cap. LII; Favaro, L’Arte dei Pittori in Venezia, 40). For the role of the coffener Domenego Draghia as gastaldo of the guild in 1517, Monticolo, Capitolari delle Arti Veneziane, vol. 2, CLXXXVI n. 1; see also Favaro, op. cit., 32. For the functions of the gastaldo and governing board in the guild, Favaro, op. cit., 39-43.

186 Brown notes one feature of the colonnello system: “individual painters might work in several of the fields recognized by the guild” (Art and Life in Renaissance Venice, 42). For further information about major painters’ engagement with the cofaneri, see the discussion of Tintoretto and Schiavone later in this section.

187 Cecchini identifies two levels of the art market in early modern Venice: the elite, private world of connoisseurs and brokers (exemplified by the correspondence of Isabella d’Este regarding the purchase of antiquities and paintings by the greatest masters), and the popular sector where decorative pictures were sold along with many other kinds of goods. Painters working in the latter sector were far more subject to guild regulation (Cecchini, Quadri e Commercio a Venezia, 204-205; see also Shaw, “Institutional Controls and the Retail of Paintings,” 114, and the section on Reputation and Value below).
their elevated status within the institution to be formalized.\(^{188}\) The greater repute of the *figureri*, combined with intensifying competition among painters of all kinds during the sixteenth century, meant that beginning students and artists of lesser caliber were often consigned to practice as *deponenti da casse*.\(^{189}\)

Rather than creating fine works on commission, the Renaissance furniture painters labored quickly on speculation from stalls set up near the porticoes of Piazza San Marco. During the sixteenth century, some worked in the vicinity of the Procuratie Vecchie along the square’s north side, which had been rebuilt by Bartolommeo Buon after a fire in 1512. Others clustered in the arcades of the Doge’s Palace and in the Piazzetta.\(^{190}\) These zones also housed panel painters selling their works on the open market, and the entire area was replete with booths and stalls, from purveyors of meat, vegetables, and cheese to bakeries and money-changing kiosks. The presence of painters here indicates that they were hawking their products much like food and other ordinary wares. Beginning around 1529, architects and urban authorities sought to clear the Piazza and Piazzetta of these vendors, as part of an overall attempt to separate the city’s governing and commercial sectors. This effort was not completely successful, and as late as 1611, the English visitor Thomas Coryat described pictures for sale “in a painters shop in Saint Markes.”\(^{191}\)

\(^{188}\) In 1511, Cima da Conegliano led a campaign to add a second *figurer* to the governing board of the guild, thus weighing its representation in favor of this *colonnello* (Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, 7-8). Nichols notes that by this time, the figure painters “already possessed a certain *de facto* prestige and influence not recorded in the guild statutes” (*Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity*, 15). The request was denied, but the higher status of the figure painters was eventually formalized in the later seventeenth century with the establishment of the Collegio dei Pittori, for those who practiced painting as a liberal art (Favaro, *L’Arte dei Pittori in Venezia*, 119-127).

\(^{189}\) See discussion of the passage of Pino’s *Dialogo di Pittura* below.

\(^{190}\) In his life of Schiavone, Ridolfi writes that the artist worked for the furniture painter Rocco della Carità, who was among the “dipintori da banche, che per antico privilegio del Senato havevano le loro habitationi sotto à portici della Piazza di San Marco” (*Maraviglie*, vol. 1, 248). Boschini further specifies that Rocco “teneva bottega sotto le Procuratie Vecchie” (Boschini, *Carta del Navegar Pitoresco*, 724). Rocco della Carità and his activity discussed at more length in the present section, below. A colonnade along Piazza San Marco was known as the *porticum pictorum* and may have been occupied by various painters (Cecchini, “Troublesome Business,” 128). Nichols suggests that some furniture painters operated from the area around the columns and arcades of the Palazzo Ducale and in the Piazzetta (“Tintoretto’s Poverty,” 100-101). For the architectural history of Piazza San Marco, the Procuratie Vecchie, and the Piazzetta during this period, Howard, *Jacopo Sansovino*, 10-16. While the *cofaneri* seem to have clustered in Piazza San Marco during the Cinquecento, not all painters on speculation worked here: some sellers of easel pictures were located near Rialto and in other areas. By the early seventeenth century, furniture painters had also appeared in various parts of the city (Cecchini, op. cit., 126-129).

\(^{191}\) In 1502, Marc’antonio Sabellico described shops and stalls in the vicinity of San Marco (*Del Sito di Venezia Città*, 31). For the mercantile activity in Piazza San Marco and the Piazzetta, and the efforts of the government and Jacopo Sansovino to remove *botteghe* from these spaces, Howard, *Jacopo Sansovino*, 11-14, and Nichols, “Tintoretto’s Poverty,” 100-101. As late as 1569, the Council of Ten sought to ban shopkeepers from the columns...
The cofaneri worked in a fast, brushy, and abbreviated style, comparable to the overall manner of Venetian ornamental painting discussed above, but often in greater haste and with a correspondingly reduced level of quality. Because they also decorated shields, their work involved heraldic ornaments and coats of arms, while their figurative scenes imitated the subjects and styles of known masters. Decorators of furniture acquired their pigments from the same vendecolori who served the figure painters; these merchants offered colors in a range of purities and values, allowing their clients to purchase affordable lower-grade materials. Efficiency and economy of labor permitted the cofaneri to sell these pieces rapidly and at low cost. Their work was comparable to that of the sixteenth-century poligrafi, popular writers in the vernacular whose livelihoods depended on prolific production for Venice’s presses.

The reputation of the cofaneri during the Cinquecento is suggested by Pino in several passages of his Dialogo di Pittura. The Venetian speaker Lauro laments the competitiveness of the contemporary art market and the difficulty of earning one’s living as a painter. “Poverty is an assassin, I tell you,” he says,

and a work is never so well paid that the money will suffice until the completion of the next one. Anyone’s request will do, and worse, for at times one must stoop to painting furniture, there being no other profitable way to support oneself, since ours is not a necessary art.

Lauro describes here primarily the third category of decorative painting, completed on speculation for want of more prestigious works on commission; he may also be referring to the

and arcades of the Palazzo Ducale: “Si attrovano attorno le colonne del Palazzo nostro, et sotto li porteghi di esso alcuni botteghini, banchi et altri impedimenti che deturpano il loco, et impediscono il transito alli molti nobili et altri che vi concorrono…” (ASV, Consiglio dei Dieci, parti Comuni, reg. 29, c. 66v.; see Lorenzi, Monumenti per Servire alla Storia del Palazzo Ducale, 361). In 1611, Coryat wrote, “The manuary artes of the Venetians are so exquisite and curious, that I thinke no artificers in the world doe excell them in some, especially painting. For I saw two things in a painters shop in Saint Markes, which I did not a little admire…” (Crudities, vol. 1, 393). For the broader history of this area and attempts to separate civic and commercial regions of the city, Calabi, “Il Rinnovamento Urbano del Primo Cinquecento,” and Crouzet-Pavan, “La Maturazione dello Spazio Urbano.”

192 For the characteristic manner of Venetian ornamental works, see the section on Styles and Techniques above.
193 For the trade of the vendecolori, Matthew, “Vendecolori a Venezia”; for the availability of different grades of pigment for painters of various kinds, Berrie and Matthew, “Venetian ‘Colore,’” 307. Similar trends in cost and execution were seen in seventeenth-century Dutch painting: pictures rapidly completed in a brushy style were less expensive than more finely finished, precise, and linear works (Montias, “Cost and Value in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art,” 458-462).
194 Nichols, “Tintoretto, Prestezza and the Poligrafi”; idem, Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity, 71-78; idem, “Understanding Tintoretto’s Prestezza.”
195 “La povertà c’assassina dicovi, & non si paga tanto un’opera, che li danari soppliscano sino al fine dell’altra. Solleciti chi può, & peggio, ch’alcune fieate vi convien dipignere fino alli sedili, non havendo con qual altra utilità intrateneresi, per non esser tal arte necessaria” (Pino, Dialogo di Pittura, 114-115; translation in Pardo, Paolo Pino’s Dialogo, 344).
second type, ornamental pieces taken up by assistants in larger workshops. When his Florentine interlocutor, Fabio, asks why he does not “make panels, rather than this foolishness [furniture painting] which we consider reprehensible and inappropriate,” Lauro declares in part, “if I were to wait around for a commission, I would paint more seldom than comets are sighted.”

In addition to suggesting the challenges facing painters in sixteenth-century Venice, Pino presents an implicit hierarchy of genres, in which decorative works – painted quickly, sold on the open market, and belonging to objects of use rather than hanging autonomously as quadri – rank below commissioned easel pictures. While he characterizes principally the works of cofaneri and other secondary painters, his judgment applies to some extent to all Venetian ornamental works, and is significant for an understanding of their contemporary status and later fortunes, discussed below.

Also significant is Pino’s placement of a dialogue on furniture decoration within the section of his treatise devoted to prestezza. As noted in the section on Styles and Techniques above, this fast and brushy technique of painting was identified with ornamental art from an early date. While the impetus for a quick and brushy style could range from poetic inspiration to brute necessity, Pino equates this manner exclusively with economic exigency. The speaker Fabio describes ancient painters’ custom of “setting aside all their panels…once they were finished; and after some time had passed they would reexamine them and emend them.” Lauro comments caustically on this careful practice: “And when would we draw our pay?” In an exceedingly crowded market, artists lack the time and leisure to polish their works; desperate to make a living, furniture painters must execute their pieces quickly and sell them just as fast. A swift and painterly style therefore reflects the urgency of the artist’s situation and his imperative to produce at high volume. He has no hope of living up to the ideal of the masterpiece, according to which “what is judged is not the amount of time spent on a work, but only that

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196 “Et per che non fate voi delle tavole, & non tal gofferia appresso noi vituperosa, & impropia? … s’aspettasse esser richiesto, dipignere più di raro, che non appaiono le stelle criute” (Pino, Dialogo di Pittura, 115; translation in Pardo, Paolo Pino’s Dialogo, 344-345).

197 See discussion of Reputation and Value in the present chapter, and Ch. 3 below.

198 For the link between prestezza and the economic exigencies of painting furniture on speculation, Nichols, “Tintoretto’s Poverty,” 100-101; idem, “Tintoretto, Prestezza and the Poligrafi”; idem, Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity, 71-78; idem, “Understanding Tintoretto’s Prestezza.” See also Spear and Sohm, Painting for Profit, 24-26.

work’s perfection.” Yet, as discussed previously, the concept of _prestezza_ also informed aspects of Venetian technique that had become widespread by the middle of the sixteenth century, even in paintings of the highest repute. In the Seicento, pictures showing quick execution would be championed by art writers and prized by collectors.

Interactions between the style of major works of Venetian painting and that of decorative pictures find a parallel in the direct involvement of famous artists in this craft. According to Ridolfi, both Tintoretto and Schiavone had commerce with the _depentori da casse_. As a young man, Tintoretto contrived “to be wherever painting was done,” working in fresco and practicing “with the artists of minor fortune who decorated furniture for the painters in Piazza di San Marco, in order to learn their methods.” In Ridolfi’s telling, Tintoretto joined the furniture painters not merely out of necessity, but also to study their techniques, which informed the style of his later masterpieces. Thus, the artist’s involvement with decorative painting formed part of a larger program of self-education, in which he ingeniously borrowed from popular traditions to conceive his own mature manner. While Ridolfi’s account is undoubtedly exaggerated – Tintoretto probably labored for at least some length of time as a traditional apprentice or assistant in Bonifacio’s shop, where he also may have painted decorative works – it remains possible that the adolescent painter created some furniture pieces for the shops at San Marco. Tintoretto’s extant autograph ornamental paintings, such as the Courtauld _Esther and Ahasuerus_ and the Vienna _Solomon and the Queen of Sheba_ (Figs. 1.66, 1.78; cat. nos. 64, 58), have been

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200 “…non si giudica nell’arte nostra la quantità del tempo ispeso nell’opera, ma sola la perfettion d’essa opera” (Pino, _Dialogo di Pittura_, 113; translation in Pardo, _Paolo Pino’s Dialogo_, 343).

201 “‘Procurava ancora, per farsi pratico nel maneggiar colori, (non bastando lo studio senza il praticarlo) di ritrovarsi in ogni luogo, ove si dipingesse…Praticava in oltre co’ Pittori di minor fortuna, che dipingevano alla piazza di San Marco le banche per dipintori, per appendere i modi loro’ (Ridolfi, _Maraviglie_, vol. 2, 15; see also idem, _Vite dei Tintoretto_, 9, and _Life of Tintoretto_, 17). Ridolfi’s description of the lengths to which Tintoretto was willing to go in order to “be wherever painting was done” echoes Vasari’s biography of the artist: “he always has work to do, for the reason that when his friendships and other means are not enough to obtain for him any particular work, even if he had to do it, I do not say at a low price, but without payment or by force, in one way or another, do it he would” (_Lives_, vol. 2, 513; _Vite_, vol. 6, 593). Ridolfi’s account is also substantiated by documented occasions on which Tintoretto took extraordinary measures to win commissions, for example in the competition to decorate the ceiling of the Sala dell’Albergo of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco in 1564 (Ilchman, “Venetian Painting in an Age of Rivals,” 25-27).

202 See the section on Styles and Techniques above.

203 Ridolfi’s biography of Tintoretto, which presents the artist essentially as an autodidact, probably reflects the author’s aim to mythologize his subject, and does not accurately account for his early years (Echols, “Tintoretto the Painter,” 32-33; Ilchman et al., _Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese_, 111). For the artist’s likely affiliation with Bonifacio’s workshop, see discussion of the second category of Venetian ornamental painting above. Nonetheless, Echols notes, Ridolfi probably would not have referred to Tintoretto’s involvement with furniture painters “without some basis in truth or tradition” (_Tintoretto and Venetian Painting_, 29-30).
securely dated to the 1540s, when the artist was in his twenties and already working independently. If he did execute earlier works for the cofaneri, these pictures likely no longer survive.204

Schiavone, too, served as a furniture painter, but for more evidently financial reasons. The artist struggled professionally, Ridolfi writes, his avant-garde style unappreciated by the public, which preferred the “pious and diligent figures” of an earlier generation of Venetian painters. Vasari, too, spoke of Schiavone’s disgrazia or misfortune, and declared that the majority of the artist’s works were found in private homes rather than public settings.205 Recent archival discoveries have substantiated these claims, showing that Schiavone was accused late in his career of seeking recognition for a prized ecclesiastical commission at the expense of another artist.206 His talent generally unacknowledged and unrewarded, the poor Schiavone was often reduced to begging master Rocco della Carità, a furniture painter at San Marco, for a day’s worth of work. Boschini adds that Schiavone earned 24 soldi per day from Rocco for decorating up to two chests.207

204 For the dating of the Courtauld Esther and Ahasuerus (also known as Solomon and the Queen of Sheba) and the Vienna Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, Echols and Ilchman, “Toward a New Tintoretto Catalogue,” 137, and see also catalogue entries below. Many early examples of the work of the cofaneri apparently have been lost; see discussion of this issue at the end of the present section.

205 Ridolfi writes, “Non erano le opere sue per all’hora molto stimate, apprezzandosi solo quelle di Gio. Bellino, tenendo la Città ancora dell’antica opinione di gradire quella sorte di figure divote e diligenti” (Maraviglie, vol. 1, 249). Indeed, as noted in the section on Styles and Techniques above, Pino had criticized Schiavone’s brushwork. For further discussion of Ridolfi’s passage, see section on Reasons for Detachment in Ch. 3 below. Vasari wrote of Schiavone, “…ha pur fatto talvolta per disgrazia alcuna buon’opera…la maggior parte delle sue cose sono stati quadri che sono per le case de’ gentiluomini” (Vite, vol. 6, 596; Lives, vol. 2, 515).

206 Richardson discounts the reliability of Ridolfi’s statements about Andrea’s poverty and professional difficulties, taking up von Hadeln’s suggestion that the author was actually referring to the struggles of another artist, Andrea di Nicolò da Curzola (Andrea Schiavone, 3; see also Ridolfi, Maraviglie, vol. 1, 247 n. 1). Finocchi Ghersi, however, discusses a document of 1552 m.v. in which the painter Camillo da Urbino, with whom Schiavone had been collaborating on pictures for the church of Santa Maria dei Carmini, lodged a complaint alleging that the Dalmatian artist had excluded him from the enterprise before its completion. This information suggests that as late as a decade before his death in 1563, Schiavone was laboring alongside artigianal painters such as Camillo, and was involved in professional disputes that demonstrated his desire to dominate a prized ecclesiastical commission (Finocchi Ghersi, “Una Data per le Tavole di Andrea Schiavone ai Carmini”).

207 Ridolfi writes, “…riducevasi spesso il povero Andrea à pregar maestro Rocco dalla Carità suo compare, dipintor da banche, à dargli l’impiego d’una giornata non havendo il misero, con che vivere” (Maraviglie, vol. 1, 248-249). Boschini writes, “…ebbe così poca fortuna che concambìo le sue ricchezze Virtuose in povere e vili mercedi (così volse il suo fiero Destino), che di quando in quando gli conveniva, in mancanza d’opere, assoggettarsi a dipingere Casse ad un Rocco della Carità, che teneva bottega sotto le Procuratie Vecchie; che appunto un Figliuolo di questo Rocco, chiamato Marco, avendo io conosciuto nella mia giovenile età, me lo confirma, dicendomi che a quei tempi da suo Padre gli venivano corrisposti giolarmente soldi ventiquattro; e che questo Schiavone gli dipingeva sino du Casse al giorno con istorie, favole, fogliami, arabeschi, grotteschi, e cose simili, che egli faceva (per così dire) scherzando…” (Carta del Navegar Pitoresco, 724-725). For further discussion of this passage and the later change in value of Schiavone’s cassa paintings, see section on Furniture to Frame in Ch. 3 below.
The figure of Rocco della Carità, mentioned by both Ridolfi and Boschini in relation to Schiavone, provides a point of reference for the work of the largely anonymous cofaneri. Little is directly known of Rocco except that he died before 1595, when his son, Marco, witnessed a contract as “I, Marco, son of the former Rocco known as Bagioni, painter at the sign of the Carità” [Io Marcho q. (quondam) Rocho do. (detto) Bagioni pitor a la insegna de la carità].\(^{208}\)

Unlike his father, Marco left evidence of involvement in the painters’ guild. His name is inscribed twice in a surviving roll of members, first as “Marco de Rocco alla Carità 1584-1597,” and then as “Marco dalla Carità 1584-1616.”\(^{209}\) Marco also appears several times in the mariegola of the Arte in various official capacities, including gastaldo. In 1593, he was elected to a commission charged with the ongoing handling of Vincenzo Catena’s 1531 bequest to the guild.\(^{210}\)

These records suggest that Marco was active in the Arte dei Depentori and knew many of his fellow painters, including the young Ridolfi and Boschini. Boschini himself declared in writing that he had been acquainted in his early years with Marco.\(^{211}\) It is highly likely, therefore, that both of these authors obtained from Marco their information about Rocco della Carità: the fact that he labored beneath the Procuratie Vecchie, in the vicinity of other furniture painters; that Schiavone sometimes came to him for work, and earned about 24 soldi per day; and that Schiavone adorned up to two chests daily with histories, fables, and other playful subjects. As Rocco’s son, Marco provides a reliable source of evidence about his father’s activities and relation to Schiavone.\(^{212}\) His testimony strongly suggests that some extant furniture paintings from Schiavone’s ambient, perhaps even mature works by the artist, were

\(^{208}\) Marco signed these words in March 1595 as witness to an agreement regarding the supply of stones for the floor of the sanctuary of the church of San Giorgio Maggiore (Cicogna, *Delle Inscrizioni Veneziane*, vol. 4, 268, 346 n. 248). I thank Daniel Maze for assistance in interpreting this document.

\(^{209}\) Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Correr, ms. Moschini XIX, f. 4v., 16v.; see also Favaro, *L'Arte dei Pittori in Venezia*, 141, 150. This document is a nineteenth-century transcription of lists of painters registered in the guild from 1530 onwards. The meaning of the dates appended to some of the names on the roll is debated; possibly the first date records the artist’s inscription in the guild and/or payment of dues (ibid., 132).

\(^{210}\) Marco appears in the Mariegola dei Depentori, f. 54v., 56v. On f. 59r., he is mentioned as part of the commissaria elected to handle the Catena bequest (see also Favaro, *L'Arte dei Pittori in Venezia*, 111 n. 2). For Catena’s bequest to the guild, ibid., 110, and Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, 8, with further references.

\(^{211}\) For Boschini’s acquaintance with Marco della Carità, see his quote in n. 207 above.

\(^{212}\) For Ridolfi’s and Boschini’s accounts of Rocco della Carità, see n. 207 above. Von Hadeln agrees that Ridolfi and Boschini probably obtained their information about Rocco from his son Marco, but casts doubt on Marco’s reliability, since he could have been only a boy when Schiavone was still alive (*Maraviglie*, vol. 1, 249 n. 1). However, it is entirely plausible that after Schiavone’s death, Rocco passed accurate information about the artist to his son, who then relayed it to Ridolfi and Boschini. See also the section on Furniture to Frame in Ch. 3 below.
produced in the shop of Rocco. Candidates include the *Tale of Diana and Callisto* ensemble (cat. no. 40), and pieces such as *Narcissus, Midas and Pan (?)*, and the *Priesthood and Force of Arms* (cat. nos. 50, 47, 46).

Equally probable is that Rocco employed artists less talented than Schiavone and his immediate followers, but working in a similar idiom. A scene of *Apollo and Daphne* (Fig. 1.81; cat. no. 43) is characteristic of such an author: small in size, it is executed in summary swaths of color, with little modulation of flesh tones and heavy abbreviation of the background foliage and landscape. The figures and their windblown garments are conceived in the manner of Schiavone, but the work is imitative of the artist rather than an artifact of his hand or workshop: the picture is the product of a *cofaner* acquainted with his style. Other furniture painters likely worked as epigones of Tintoretto, creating undistinguished pieces in his manner (cat. no. 60). Earlier in the century, Giorgione, too, served as an example for the *cofaneri*, and ensembles such as the *Pastoral Scenes* (Figs. 1.46-1.49; cat. no. 20) may be representative of furniture painters emulating his art.\(^\text{213}\)

Compared to other types of decorative painting, the works of the *cofaneri* were ephemeral and more subject to the wear and tear of daily use, and fewer examples survive. The membership rolls of the guild list numerous artists practicing in this specialty; they must have composed a large faction within the Arte, and created far more pieces than are known today.\(^\text{214}\) The outlines of this category and its place in the larger genre of Venetian ornamental painting must therefore be inferred from the workings of the guild, and associated writings and documents.

In fact, Ridolfi’s and Boschini’s discussions of the participation of Schiavone and

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\(^{213}\) Pignatti and Pedrocco suggest that the *Pastoral Scenes* are the work of the young Giorgione (*Giorgione*, 42). Anderson, however, sees paintings of this type as “a popular reflection of Giorgione’s imagery” (*Giorgione*, 70, 335). As “popular” works, these panels could have been executed by furniture painters imitating the artist’s subjects and manner.

\(^{214}\) The furniture painters on the guild membership rolls are sometimes labelled *cofaneri*, sometimes *casselleri* or *depentori da casse* (for discussion of this issue, see n. 179 above). They include “Battista casseller alla Ca’ de Dio 1587,” “Domenico quondam Mattio casseller 1589-1595,” “Marco de Nicolò cofener 1530,” “Nicoleto quondam Paulo Vincenzo casseller,” “Zaneto de Andrea da Lago cofaner 1530,” “Zaneto de Vido caseler,” and “Francesco quondam Batista casseler 1608-1623” (Venice, Biblioteca del Museo Correr, ms. Moschini XIX, f. 2r., 2v., 4v., 5r., 7r., 13r.; see also Favaro, *L’Arte dei Pittori in Venezia*, 138, 139, 140, 141, 143, 148). Since members’ specialties are not always listed after their names on the rolls, it is likely that many other registered individuals also practiced as *cofaneri*. Furniture painters also appear in the mariegola or statute book of the Arte dei Depentori: one “Andrea Cofanario” appears in connection with the bequest of Vincenzo Catena to the guild (Mariegola dei Depentori, f. 37r., 38r.), and “Oane Coffanario” is mentioned nearby (ibid., f. 40r.-40v.).
Tintoretto in the work of the cofaneri are entirely consistent with the history of the Venetian Arte dei Depentori, and the means by which younger and struggling artists sought to establish themselves. These accounts also suggest that a degree of overlap existed among categories of ornamental painting. Tintoretto, for instance, painted furniture both in a subsidiary capacity at San Marco, and as an independent master with his own shop; in addition, he delegated ornamental pieces to members of his studio. He was thus involved in all three main types of Venetian decorative painting: fine pieces produced on commission, workshop products, and the labor of the cofaneri. Schiavone retained ties to the cofaneri throughout his career, but also executed a sophisticated autograph example of this art for Alessandro Vittoria (Figs. 1.68-1.69; cat. no. 51). Such patterns suggest that the boundaries among the three categories are not absolute, but instead provide a basic framework for understanding attribution and provenance. While ornamental pictures usually can be associated with the styles of particular masters, variations in authorship and quality among individual pieces reflect the demands of the art market and the structure of the painter’s profession in Renaissance Venice.

**Reputation and Value**

During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, writers on the arts rendered diverse verdicts on the quality and status of Venetian ornamental pictures, judgments that are telling in their negotiation of contemporary attitudes toward painting. In his life of Bonifacio, Ridolfi declares that the artist’s paintings for beds, chests, and similar objects “were held in much esteem, there being no better way to spend one’s money than on pictures by excellent men.” In the same passage, however, Ridolfi alludes to the scant rewards Bonifacio reaped for his work in this genre: “he made numerous pieces, attending with much diligence to his art and never knowing rest, yet always experienced limited fortune, as do all who eat the bread of Virtue.”

Tintoretto, similarly, began his career by working for furniture painters “of minor fortune,” and

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215 “Si sono vedute ancora dipinti da questa mano recinti di letto, casse e simili cose poste in uso in que’ tempi per delitie delle habitations, ov’erano figurate historie sacre e profane; le Muse con l’insegne loro, i Pianetti, Veneri con Amorini, Satiri, paesi e si fatte gentilezze, dalle quali si sono tratti utili di considerazione, essendo tenute in molto pregio, non vi essendo il meglio impiegato danaro, che nelle pitture degli huomini eccellenti, e fece in fine opere numerose attendendo eglì con molta assiduità all’Arte sua, non conoscendo giamai riposo, che nondimeno provò sempre una ristretta fortuna, come avviene di tutti coloro, che mangiano il pane della Virtù” (Ridolfi, *Maraviglie*, vol. 1, 295). See also Cottrell, *Bonifacio’s Enterprise*, 242; idem, “Painters in Practise,” 55; Herman, *Out of the Shadow of Titian*, 218-219.
Schiavone created decorations for a bed “for slight recognition.” In his biography of Giorgione, Ridolfi praisefully elaborates on ornamental works of the artist’s school, yet then abruptly declares, “but let us tell of more worthy things,” such as portraits.

In addition to describing the meager public approbation and financial rewards enjoyed by practitioners of decorative painting, Ridolfi in these accounts voices the conventional view of such works as less distinguished than other types.erving as subsidiary elements of useful objects, ornamental pictures are parerga or “by-works”: they are pleasing supplements, not essential to the practical functions of the furniture to which they belong. An autonomous painting, by contrast, enjoys the status of an independent artifact to be valued on its own terms; it is embellished with its own parergon, its wooden frame. Compared to the free-hanging painting, the ornamental picture suffers by virtue of its incorporation into a utilitarian article and consequent affiliation with the traditionally humble mechanical arts.

The inherently modest status of ornamental pictures, in turn, gives rise to conventions and conditions that further debase the genre. The subjects of furniture decoration can be considered parerga themselves: marginalia such as landscape and comedy that stand low in the pictorial hierarchy and are extraneous to the themes of monumental art. Painters consigned to

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216 Ridolfi’s life of Tintoretto: “Praticava in oltre co’ Pittori di minor fortuna, che dipingevano alla piazza di San Marco le banche per dipintori, per apprendere i modi loro” (Maraviglie, vol. 2, 15); see also discussion of Workshops and Authorship above. The life of Schiavone describes “...picciole historie de’ fatti d’Enea...fatte dall’Autore per un recinto da letto (conforme accostumavasi in que’ tempi) per lieve ricognitione” (ibid., vol. 1, 253).


218 The role of the frame as parergon or extrinsic addition to the work of art was elaborated by Kant in the Critique of Judgment, 72; for a critique, Derrida, “The Parergon.” The definition, classification, and ranking of the mechanical and liberal arts were momentous issues for Renaissance theorists, and were undergoing argument and redefinition long before Ridolfi’s Maraviglie. See the discussion of Aretino, Vasari, and Ridolfi at the conclusion of the present section.

219 The term parergon can refer both to physical ornaments such as frames and decorative motifs applied to an object, and to pleasant or enjoyable additions within a work itself: landscapes, small figures, and other playful details. Pliny the Elder describes Protogenes’s drawings of battleships as parergia or incidental additions to his monumental paintings (Natural History, 35.36.101). In 1527, Paolo Giovio echoed Pliny in characterizing the art of the Ferrarese court painter Dosso Dossi: “the elegant talent of Dosso of Ferrara is proven in his proper works, but most of all in those that are called parerga...jagged rocks, green groves, the firm banks of traversing rivers, the flourishing work of the countryside, the joyful and fervid toil of the peasants...” (Barocchi, Scritti d’Arte del Cinquecento, vol. 1, 18, and Gombrich, “The Renaissance Theory of Art and the Rise of Landscape,” 113-114; see also Wood, Albrecht Altdorfer and the Origins of Landscape, 54-65, Bayer, “Dosso’s Public,” 45, and Humfrey, “Two Moments in Dosso’s Career as a Landscape Painter”). Landscapes and comic imagery are examples of parergal or marginal subjects that frequently appear in Venetian decorative works, which are themselves parerga or supplements to the objects they adorn. As Derrida observed (“The Parergon”), the parergon is an extraneous addition that nonetheless reveals a deficiency in the object it complements: the parergon thus constantly threatens to
adorn furniture are usually lacking in talent and experience, and many labor from open shops rather than contracting their services privately. The bias against such modes of business in Renaissance Italy was commonplace: in his life of Perino del Vaga (1568), Vasari referred dismissively to the artist’s first master as “one of those who stand openly and publicly in their shops, executing any kind of work, however mean,” and in his letters, Michelangelo emphatically declared that he “never was the sort of painter or sculptor who kept shop…I have guarded against doing that, for the honor of my father and my brothers.”

Paolo Pino, too, had disparaged ornamental artists working in this way, openly declaring that they “stoop to painting furniture” because they cannot win exclusive commissions.

At the same time, however, Ridolfi’s descriptions of ornamental painting show appreciation for the inventive themes and techniques of this art: he enumerates the varied subjects and evocative landscapes of decorative works from the schools of Giorgione, Bonifacio, and Schiavone, and describes the “delight” and “enjoyment” fostered by these scenes. Often, he casts painters of furniture as unrecognized talents who are forced by circumstance, not want of skill, to practice in this genre. And he claims that Tintoretto, the hero of the Maraviglie, turned exigency to advantage in his early career by actively seeking work with the cofaneri, and learning from their techniques. Ridolfi’s statement that Bonifacio’s decorative works “were held in much esteem” directly contradicts his account of the artist’s incessant labors and limited success in this field, suggesting that the author himself harbored conflicting views about the status and significance of such pictures.

Similar ambiguities are expressed in a 1548 letter of Pietro Aretino to Bonifacio de’ Pitati. Aretino writes that he has been moved to compose the letter by his admiration for several

overwhelm and supplant the ergon. In the case of Venetian decorative works, exactly this displacement occurred: the subjects and styles of ornamental paintings migrated to independent fields, and the paintings themselves were eventually detached and framed as autonomous works of art, as explored in Ch. 3 below.


\footnote{See discussion of Workshops and Authorship above.}

\footnote{Ridolfi describes the pleasant scenery in Giorgionesque furniture paintings: “l’aurea età divisandovi liete verdeure, rivi cadenti da piacevoli rupi, infrascate di fronde & all’ombra d’amene piante si stavano dilitiando huomini e donne godendo l’aura tranquilla” (\textit{Maraviglie}, vol. 1, 98). In the life of Bonifacio, Ridolfi remarks on the enjoyable effects of the artist’s decorative works: “si sono vedute ancora dipinti da questa mano recinti di letto, casse e simili cose poste in uso in que’ tempi per delitie delle habitazioni…” (ibid., 295). See also the discussion of Patterns and Hierarchies of Content above.}

\footnote{For Ridolfi’s accounts of painters forced to practice as cofaneri by economic necessity, and of Tintoretto’s involvement with this craft, see the section on Workshops and Authorship above.}

\footnote{See n. 215 above.}
“little histories” istoriette painted by Bonifacio for the home of the procurator Giovanni da Legge (da Lezze). As discussed in Ch. 2 below, Aretino is most likely referring to a domestic frieze cycle arranged within the panelling of a room. He praises Bonifacio’s ensemble for “the beautiful order of its little figures, disposed with gracious charm of invention in their poesia,” and notes that the owner previously had guarded the paintings dearly; only after hearing their praises sung had Giovanni da Legge opened to Aretino the chamber where they were displayed. Yet the author also asks to see “panels that you [Bonifacio] are working on at home for this and that church,” which apparently are “of greater study and greater splendor” than the artist’s domestic istoriette. Thus, while ornamental works furnish the occasion for Aretino’s praise, they also constitute a pretext for his ultimate request to view religious paintings of superior repute. The diminutive terms istoriette and figurine convey not only the small size of Bonifacio’s decorative pictures and their figures, but also the works’ inherently lesser stature; Ridolfi, too, refers to such paintings with terms of belittlement, including picciole historie and historiette.

Aretino’s and Ridolfi’s texts reveal a tension between aesthetic judgments rooted in genre, and those based on quality alone. In 1541, Aretino had made this tension clear in a letter to Padovano, a tarot-card painter who also occupied a low rung on the ladder of pictorial types. Aretino had come into possession of several of Padovano’s tarocchi, whose innate

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225 See the section on Friezes in Ch. 2 below.
226 Letter of May 1548: “Nel vedere alcune istoriette del cavaliere da Legge, di vostra mano propria, in cambio del compiacermi l’animò in si dilettevole magistero, divengo rosso nel viso. Il quale atto fa segno de la vergogna presa da me stesso nel subito pensare a la villania ch’io uso col non mai venire a vedervi, sì per la virtù che avete in voi, come per l’amicizia che teniamo insieme; benché passa via cotale accidente, non senza rallegrarmi del bello ordine de le figure disposte in la loro poesia, con graziosa vaghezza d’invenzione. Certamente, s’elleno fussero istampate in tante carte, potrieno comparire tra qualunque foglio si vede di pregio in la compra, bontà del disegno. Teneva il clarissimo procuratore su detto, prima ch’io vedessi opre si degne, molto cara la camera dove elle sono in rispetto loro; ma, da che la signoria de la Sua Magnificenza senti lodarle da quel giudizio che tutti i professori de l’arte vostra vogliono ch’io tenga, è la più stimata gioia che egli abbia. Io so bene che d’altro istudio e d’altro splendore appaiono le tavole che andate lavorando in casa per quel tempio e per questo; onde in causa de la qual cosa mi muovo a pregarvi che, deposto lo sdegno, che invero merito che mostriate con meco, non vi sia noia che domani dopo vespro venga e a confessare l’errore e sodisfarmi la vista di ciò che vi parrà ch’io vegga, con patto però che, venendo l’amico che sapete in mia compagnia, non mi dicate ne l’orecchio, ma forte, ch’egli pare una figura di legno colorita in secco. Io verrò senza fallo, e caso che mi neghiate il venirci, andrommente in Palazzo, godendomi del contemplare le vivacità de le cose che nei bei vostri fregi si veggono” (Aretino, Lettere sull’Arte, vol. 2, 239; see also ibid., vol. 3, pt. 1, 412-413, and Cottrell, Bonifacio’s Enterprise, 22-23, 242-243).
227 Maraviglie, vol. 1, 253, 248.
228 By the early sixteenth century, cartoleri numbered among the various columns of the painters’ guild (for the colonnelli, see discussion of Workshops and Authorship above). However, they enjoyed little prestige, involved as they were in making products associated with gambling and fortune-telling: even Aretino professed to oppose the
excellence prompted him to extremes of admiration: “within his own genre, as much can be said [of Padovano] as of Michelangelo regarding the things that he carves or paints,” the author declared. While such acclaim might be construed as the rhetorical flourish of an author given to insincere flattery, the fact that Aretino wrote to Padovano at all suggests the esteem in which he held this humble painter. The quality of the cartoler’s work defied conventional judgments of his art, forcing Aretino to acknowledge the possibility of virtuosic accomplishment within it. Yet he continued to see card-painting as a field of intrinsically limited scope, which circumscribed the achievement of even its greatest master. However vast his talent, Padovano continued to operate “within his own genre,” rather than competing with Michelangelo directly. Likewise, Bonifacio’s istoriette, though laudable, could never rival the artist’s own works in grander formats.

Vasari, too, had struggled to reconcile his admiration for the beautiful execution of individual ornamental pictures with their lowly position in the hierarchy of art. In his Vita of Jacopo Pontormo, the author tempered his praise of the artist’s paintings for the bedroom of the Florentines Pierfrancesco Borgherini and Margherita Acciaiuoli: cassone decorations and panels incorporated “into the wooden ornament” [nell’ornamento di legname] of the chamber. Of one of these, Joseph with Jacob in Egypt (Fig. 1.82; ca. 1518; London, National Gallery), Vasari wrote, “it would be impossible to see another picture done with such grace, perfection, and goodness,” if only the scene were on a grander scale, and painted “on a large panel or a wall, instead of being small.” In other words, the scale and setting of Pontormo’s composition

activities of the giocatori di carte (Lettere sull’Arte, vol. 2, 348). In 1504, a cartoler was added to the governing board of the painters’ guild; however, his status was inferior to that of the other representatives, and he did not have voting rights (Mariegola dei Depentori, cap. LIX; see Favaro, L’Arte dei Pittori in Venezia, 40-41). During the sixteenth century, an item of the mariegola decreed that “li Cartoleri...siano equali agl’altri” (Mariegola dei Depentori, 29v.-30r.): the very need for such a proclamation suggests that the cartoleri suffered from the prejudice of other guild members.


In a letter of July 1541, Aretino writes of tarocchi by Padovano, “cotali opre sono di mano del Padovano, che in suo genere tanto è a dire quanto di Michelagnolo ne le cose che egli scolpisce o dipinge” (Lettere sull’Arte, vol. 1, 189). Aretino corresponded with Padovano on a number of other occasions: see ibid., vol. 2, 34-35, 119-120, 396, 428-429. For Padovano and his brother, Alessandro, ibid., vol. 3, pt. 2, 281-282, 315-316. 230 “Lavorò anco Iacopo nell’ornamento di legname che già fu magnificamente fatto, come si è detto altra volta, in alcune stanze di Pierfrancesco Borgherini, a concorrenza d’altri maestri; ed in particolare vi dipinse di sua mano in due cassoni alcune storie de’ fatti di Ioseffo in figure piccole, veramente bellissime. Ma chi vuol veder quanto egli facesse di meglio nella sua vita, per considerare l’ingegno e la virtù di Iacopo nella vivacità delle teste, nel compartimento delle figure, nella varietà dell’attitudini e nella bellezza dell’invenzione, guardi in questa camera del Borgherini, genitiluomo di Firenze, all’entrare della porta nel canto a man manca, un’istoria assai grande pur di figure piccole; nella quale è quando Josef in Egitto, quasi re e principe, riceve Iacob suo padre con tutti i suoi fratelli, e figliuoli di esso Iacob, con amorevolezze incredibili...se questa storia fosse nella sua grandezza (come è
confined his potential masterpiece to the less ambitious realm of decoration. Vasari’s immediate appreciation of the picture – which he freely admitted was “the best work that [Pontormo] ever did in all his life” – thus gave way to his ingrained preconceptions of artistic genres and their relative importance.

The tradition of qualified praise for skilled artists laboring in minor subjects and formats can be traced to Pliny the Elder, who lists a number of such painters and describes their works. Piraeicus, for example, represented “barbers’ shops and cobblers’ stalls, asses, viands and the like, consequently receiving a Greek name meaning ‘painter of sordid subjects.’” Nonetheless, “although adopting a humble line, he attained in that field the height of glory.”

Pliny’s judgment clearly anticipates Aretino’s letter to Padovano, who likewise attained glory within his own limited field. The Roman author goes on to declare that Piraeicus’s subjects gave “exquisite pleasure”; this account finds a later echo in Ridolfi’s accounts of the gratifying and pleasant subjects of ornamental pictures of the Venetian Renaissance, and in Alberti’s descriptions of the “lighthearted” and “delightful” air of domestic paintings showing landscapes and country people. Despite – or indeed because of – the pleasure they incite, such themes are considered less serious than other kinds. As noted above, these assessments are rooted in classical theories of dramatic poetry, which rank history and tragedy above comedy and episodes from rural life.

The problem implicit in the accounts of Pliny the Elder, Aretino, Vasari, and Ridolfi was a subtle one, exposed only by the growing range and complexity of the Italian Renaissance painter’s profession. For the most part, practitioners in minor genres were not outstanding but pedestrian painters, and the merit of their works neatly corresponded to their places in the accepted hierarchy. As a reputedly lesser type, Venetian Renaissance ornamental painting

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231 Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, 35.37.112; see also Jex-Blake and Sellers, *The Elder Pliny’s Chapters on the History of Art*, 144-145.
232 According to Alberti, images of the life of country people are “the most lighthearted of them all,” and, “we are particularly delighted when we see paintings of pleasant landscapes or harbors, scenes of fishing, hunting, bathing, or country sports, and flowery and leafy views.” See Alberti (ed. Orlandi and Portoghesi), *De Re Aedificatoria*, vol. 2, 804-805 (Book 9:4), and Alberti, *On the Art of Building*, 299. These passages are also discussed in the section on Patterns and Hierarchies of Content above.
233 See the section on Patterns and Hierarchies of Content above.
attracted little-known or untalented artists, who had no hope of executing altarpieces or portraits of great men; the products of these laborers were of a predictably middling quality. Yet gifted painters sometimes chose or were forced for economic reasons to work in ornament, and produced decorative pieces whose skillful conception and execution belied their lowly status. In these cases, more complicated relationships among genres of painting were exposed. Giovanni Bellini, for example, created his small furniture pictures (Figs. 1.3-1.6; cat. no. 2) at a point in his career when he was occupied with prestigious civic and ecclesiastical commissions, and enjoyed choice over prospective projects. Giorgione’s early involvement with the themes and styles of ornamental painting exerted a decisive influence on the later output of framed pictures from the Venetian school. The underappreciated Schiavone painted elaborate and beautiful decorative works out of financial need, and Tintoretto sought to learn from the art of the cofaneri, ultimately translating their manner into that of his most accomplished paintings for Venetian churches and confraternities.

Such evidence suggests that decorative genres involved multiple, shifting interactions of high and low. Both great and mediocre painters created ornamental pieces, out of motives ranging from sheer necessity, to convenient opportunity, to personal artistic license. Over time, the brushy styles and lesser subjects of these works migrated to the fields of independent pictures of high distinction. And the reputation and physical fortunes of ornamental works themselves changed: during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, many such pieces were detached from their subsidiary furniture settings and framed as quadri, a phenomenon explored in Ch. 3 below. At the levels of content, style, production, reputation, and display, Venetian decorative pictures constituted a labile tradition that interacted in revealing ways with the larger history and theory of painting and ornament.

The ambivalence of Aretino, Vasari, and Ridolfi toward ornamental works suggests that

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234 See the discussion of Workshops and Authorship above.
235 The Allegories are dated ca. 1485-1495, when Bellini was a well-established painter involved in some of the most important civic and ecclesiastical commissions of his day. In 1479, he had been engaged to paint narrative canvases in the Palazzo Ducale and had been promised a sanseria, or sinecure, by the Venetian government (Hope, “Titian’s Role as Official Painter to the Venetian Republic,” 302). By the mid- to late 1480s, Bellini was still working at the Palazzo Ducale, and was also involved in the Frari triptych, the Barbarigo votive painting, and other significant commissions (Goffen, Giovanni Bellini, 226). Later in his career, Bellini also expressed his desire to execute paintings as he pleased rather than according to the exigencies of patrons (see correspondence between Michele Vianello and Isabella d’Este, 25 June 1501, in Brown and Lorenzoni, Isabella d’Este and Lorenzo da Pavia, 159; translation in Goffen, Giovanni Bellini, 266).
they were witnessing significant, long-term changes in the definition and status of the arts. The most important of these were the establishment of painting as a humanistic pursuit on par with poetry, and the emergence of the framed, portable easel picture as the standard for this discipline.236 Both Vasari in the mid-sixteenth century and Ridolfi in the mid-seventeenth refer to furniture pictures as old-fashioned or outdated, relics of an earlier era in which painting was not clearly set off from other media. Vasari fully appreciates the historical value of decorative painting and describes numerous cycles with honor and praise, yet he sees this genre as belonging to a previous, immature epoch in the triumphal development of Italian art.237 The author writes that the most excellent artists once did not disdain to paint domestic objects and wall ornaments, such as cassoni grandi, lettucci, spalliere, and cornici; in his own time, however – that is, around 1568 – most would be ashamed “to paint and gild such things.”238 Writing in the 1640s, Ridolfi, too, refers to decorative genres in a retrospective mode, noting that Schiavone had painted works of this type “according to the custom of those times,” and that Bonifacio adorned recinti da letto, chests, and similar objects “used in those times.”239

These offhand remarks imply that both Vasari and Ridolfi understood the involvement of major painters in decorative cycles to be a thing of the past. Before and during the eighty-year period spanning their respective accounts, artists and theorists had consistently sought to elevate painting into an independent discipline, both conceptually and physically detached from manual labors such as interior carpentry and the making of furniture. Where medieval classifications of the arts had placed painting, sculpture, and architecture within these mechanical fields, the Renaissance witnessed sustained efforts to establish the three arti del disegno as liberal endeavors: a campaign culminating in the eighteenth century with the establishment of the modern system of the fine arts.240 Caught in the midst of this sea change, Aretino, Vasari, and

236 For discussion of these developments in the definition and status of painting, see Ch. 3 below.
237 Campbell, Love and Marriage in Renaissance Florence, 48-50.
238 “…usandosi in que’ tempi per le camere de’ cittadini cassoni grandi di legname a uso di sepolture, e con altre varie fogge ne’ coperchi, niuno era che i detti cassoni non facesse dipignere…E che è più, si dipignevano in cotal maniera non solamente i cassoni, ma i lettucci, le spalliere, le cornici che ricignevano intorno…E per molti anni fu di sorte questa cosa in uso, che eziandio i più eccellenti pittori in così fatti lavori si esercitavano, senza vergognarsi, come oggi molti farebbono, di dipignere e mettere d’oro simili cose” (Vasari, Vite, vol. 2, 148-149).
239 Ridolfi’s life of Schiavone describes “…piccole historie de’ fatti d’Enea…fatte dall’Autore per un recinto da letto (conforme accostumavasi in que’ tempi)” (Maraviglie, vol. 1, 253). The life of Bonifacio: “Si sono vedute ancora dipinti da questa mano recinti di letto, casse e simili cose poste in uso in que’ tempi per delitie delle habitationi…” (ibid., 295).
Ridolfi responded to hybrid ornamental paintings with telling inconsistency. While roundly
denigrating the genre as a whole, they nonetheless admired the intrinsic quality and historical
value of individual artifacts, and chose to include them in their comprehensive histories of
painting and painters. These authors’ complicated attitudes show the reputation and value of
decorative pictures to be inextricable from broader developments in genres and hierarchies of
painting, the fine arts, and the definition of the quadro during the Renaissance and following
centuries. These trends, in turn, are fundamentally connected to the fortunes of ornamental
pictures as objects.

To this end, the following chapters consider the complex histories of Venetian decorative
paintings: at first as elements of useful objects and architectural schemes that can be studied in
depth by category, later as independent pictures to be understood against the background of
changing tastes and modern art collecting.
Chapter 1 Illustrations

1.1-1.2 Cat. no. 19, Giorgione, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*, and detail (images courtesy of the Hermitage, St. Petersburg)

1.3-1.6 Cat. no. 2, Giovanni Bellini, *Allegories: Melancholy, Truth, Bacchus, Envy* (images courtesy of the Polo Museale Veneziano)
1.7 Cat. no. 67, Circle of Titian, *Sleeping Shepherd*
(image courtesy of the Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia)

1.8-1.13 Cat. no. 76, Circle of Paolo Veronese, *Mythological Cycle* (excerpts)
1.14 Giorgione, *La Tempesta*  
Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia  
(image source: Pignatti and Pedrocco, *Giorgione*)

1.15 Giorgione, *The Three Philosophers*  
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie  
(image source: Pignatti and Pedrocco, *Giorgione*)

1.16 Giorgione, *Boy with an Arrow*  
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie  
(image source: Ferino-Pagden and Nepi Scirè, *Giorgione: Myth and Enigma*, 185)
1.17 Cat. no. 72, Circle of Titian, *Mother with Suckling Infants*
(image source: Zampetti, *Giorgione e i Giorgioneschi*, 125)

1.18 Antonio Rizzo, *Eve* (copy)
Venice, Palazzo Ducale, Arco Foscari
(photo by the author)

1.19 Giovanni Bellini, *Lady with a Mirror*
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie
(image source: Goffen, *Giovanni Bellini*, 253)
1.20 Giorgione and Titian, *Sleeping Venus*
Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie
Alte Meister
(image source: Pignatti and Pedrocco, *Giorgione*, 173)

1.21 Titian, *Lady with a Mirror*
Paris, Musée du Louvre,
Département des Peintures
(image source: Goffen, *Titian’s Women*, 69)

1.22-1.23 Jacopo Bellini, *Death of the Virgin*, and detail of wall medallion
(image source: Eisler, *Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, 371)
1.24 Jacopo Bellini, *Triumph of Bacchus*
(image courtesy of the Réunion des Musées Nationaux)

1.25 Giovanni Bellini and Titian, *The Feast of the Gods*
Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art
(image source: Hills, *Venetian Colour*, 128)

1.26-1.27 Cat. no. 10, Cima da Conegliano, *Tale of Theseus*
1.28 Cima da Conegliano, *Healing of Anianus* (detail)
Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie
(image source: Villa, Cima da Conegliano, 149)

1.29-1.30 Tommaso Porcacchi and Girolamo Porro, Map of Crete (Candia) and detail, from *L’Isole Più Famose del Mondo*, 1576
Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana
(image source: Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venice)

1.31 Giovanni Bonsignori, *Ovidio Metamorphoseos Vulgare*, f. LXIVv., *Theseus before the Labyrinth*
(image source: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich)
1.32-1.35 Cat. no. 11, Cima da Conegliano, *Tale of Bacchus and Ariadne* (image sources: Philadelphia Museum of Art; Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan; Humfrey, *Cima da Conegliano*, pl. 137b)

1.36 Titian, *Bacchus and Ariadne* London, National Gallery (image courtesy of the National Gallery, London)

1.38 Andrea Mantegna, *Bacchanal with a Wine Vat*
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art
(image source: Metropolitan Museum of Art)

1.39-1.40 Girolamo da Cremona, Aristotle, *Opera* (Venice: A. Torresanus and B. de Blavis, 1483), f. 1r., and detail of bas-de-page
New York, Pierpont Morgan Library
(image source: Canova, *La Miniatura Veneta del Rinascimento*, 55)

1.41 Tullio Lombardo, Tomb of Doge Andrea Vendramin, detail of right-hand column base
Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo (originally in S. Maria dei Servi)
(photo by the author)
1.42 Annibale Carracci, *Bacchus and Ariadne*
Rome, Palazzo Farnese, Galleria Farnese
(image source: Wittkower, *Art and Architecture in Italy 1600-1750*, vol. 1, 35)

1.43-1.44 Cat. no. 5, Follower of Giovanni Bellini, *Tale of Thyrsis and Damon: Damon Broods, Thyrsis Implores Damon, Damon Takes His Life, Thyrsis Discovers Damon’s Death* (images courtesy of the National Gallery, London)

1.45 Cat. no. 15, Circle of Cima da Conegliano, *Duel on a Seashore* (image source: Humfrey, *Cima da Conegliano*, pl. 179a)
1.46-1.49 Cat. no. 20, Circle of Giorgione, *Pastoral Scenes: Rustic Idyll, Leda and the Swan, Venus and Cupid in a Landscape, Astrologer (Orpheus and Time)*
(image sources: Padua, Museo Civico; Pignatti and Pedrocco, *Giorgione*)

1.50 Cat. no. 25, Lorenzo Lotto, *A Maiden’s Dream (Allegory of Chastity)*
(image source: Brown et al., *Lorenzo Lotto*, 84)

1.51 Cat. no. 22, Follower of Giorgione, *Landscape with Figures*
(image courtesy of the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo)
1.52 Cat. no. 23, Follower of Giorgione, *Landscape with Figures* (image source: Pagnotta, *Bartolomeo Veneto*, 193)

1.53 Cat. no. 7, Vittore Carpaccio, *Ladies on a Balcony, Hunting and Fishing on the Lagoon* (image source: Sgarbi, *Carpaccio*, 102)

1.54 Cat. no. 30, Bonifacio de’ Pitati and Workshop, *Antiochus and Stratonice* (image source: Brown, *Private Lives*, fig. 103)

1.55-1.56 Cat. no. 17, Follower of Cima da Conegliano, *Woman Drinking, Funeral Fire* (image source: Humfrey, *Cima da Conegliano*, pl. 200)
1.57-1.58 Cat. no. 53, Circle of Andrea Schiavone, *Deucalion and Pyrrha, The Judgment of Midas* (images courtesy of the Polo Museale Veneziano)

1.59-1.60 Cat. no. 12, Cima da Conegliano, *The Judgment of Midas, Endymion Asleep* (images courtesy of the Galleria Nazionale, Parma)

1.61 Cat. no. 38, Circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati, *Birth of Venus* (image courtesy of the Pinacoteca, Castello Sforzesco, Milan)
1.62 Cat. no. 35, Circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati, *Perseus and Andromeda* (image source: Simonetti, “Profilo di Bonifacio,” 265)


1.64 Cat. no. 57, Circle of Jacopo Tintoretto, *Contest between Apollo and Marsyas (?)* (image source: Pallucchini and Rossi, *Tintoretto*)

1.65 Cat. no. 3, Circle of Giovanni Bellini, *Fortune* (image courtesy of the Polo Museale Veneziano)
1.66 Cat. no. 64, Jacopo Tintoretto, *Esther and Ahasuerus (Solomon and the Queen of Sheba?)* (image courtesy of the Courtauld Gallery, London)

1.67 Cat. no. 70, Titian, *Christ and the Pharisee*  
(image courtesy of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden)

1.68-1.69 Cat. no. 51, Andrea Schiavone, *Tales of Aeneas: Aeneas Recalled from Dido, Aeneas Takes Leave of Dido*  
(images courtesy of Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)
1.70 Cat. no. 40, Andrea Schiavone, *Tale of Diana and Callisto* (excerpt)
(image courtesy of the Musée de Picardie, Amiens)

1.71 Cat. no. 71, Circle of Titian, *Death of Polydorus/Tale of Erysichthon* (?)
(image courtesy of the Museo Civico, Padua)

1.72 Titian, *Nymph and Shepherd*
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie
(image source: ARTStor)

1.73-1.74 Cat. no. 18, Circle of Giorgione, *Trial of Moses, Judgment of Solomon*
(image source: Anderson, *Giorgione*, 25, 28)
1.75 Cat. no. 31, Circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati, *Birth of Hercules* (image source: Simonetti, “Profilo di Bonifacio,” 262)

1.76 Cat. no. 32, Bonifacio de’ Pitati, *Finding of Moses* (image courtesy of the Polo Museale Fiorentino)

1.77 Cat. no. 34, Circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati, *Legend of the Infant Servius Tullius* (image courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

1.78-1.80 Cat. no. 58, Jacopo Tintoretto and Assistants, *Biblical Tales* (excerpts): *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, Feast of Belshazzar, Carrying of the Sacred Ark* (images courtesy of Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)
1.81 Cat. no. 43, Circle of Andrea Schiavone, *Apollo and Daphne*  
(image courtesy of the Princeton University Art Museum)

1.82 Pontormo, *Joseph with Jacob in Egypt*  
London, National Gallery  
(image source: Berti, *Pontormo e il suo Tempo*, 200)
Chapter 2
Origins and Settings

Origins and Analogues

In 1271, the earliest statutes of the Venetian Arte dei Depentori recorded the activity of *pictores arcellarum*, or painters of chests.¹ Secular examples of their work do not survive, but the origins of this genre may be explored via related artifacts, particularly ecclesiastical furniture, which developed in parallel with domestic ornamental painting from the medieval period onwards. The *cassa* of the Beata Giuliana di Collalto (Fig. 2.1; ca. 1290-1300; Venice, Museo Civico Correr), dating to the same era as the thirteenth-century guild rules, exemplifies the early history and significance of decorated chests in Renaissance Venice. Giuliana (1186-ca. 1262) was a founder of the Benedictine monastery of Saints Biagio and Cataldo on the Giudecca.² Thirty-five years after her death, according to legend, her remains were exhumed from the convent cemetery and discovered to be uncorrupted, a sign of sainthood. Giuliana’s body was removed to the church and placed in this *cassa*, which was decorated and fitted with a hinged cover for display to her devotees.³

The *cassa* is not only an early artifact of Venetian furniture ornament, but also possibly the oldest known example of panel painting from the city. Its inner lid depicts Biagio and Cataldo as bishops, with the diminutive Giuliana in Benedictine habit kneeling before them. The figures are labelled and set against a deep green background framed by strips of frieze design. Despite overall damage and later repainting, the central portraits are apparently original, and show a Romanesque style unusual in Venice during this period. The chest and its paintings were visible for centuries at Santi Biagio e Cataldo, then transferred to the church of Sant’Agnese and

¹ For documentation of the thirteenth-century *pictores arcellarum*, see discussion of Workshops and Authorship in Ch. 1 above.
² For the original site of the church and monastery, Lorenzetti, *Venezia e il suo Estuario*, 725; Tassini, *Curiosità Veneziane*, 78-79; Zorzi, *Venezia Scomparsa*, vol. 2, 319-321. As abbess, Giuliana was joined in mystic marriage to both Christ and Saint Biagio, an event celebrated in an early seventeenth-century painting now in the church of the Spirito Santo (Tofolo, *Art and the Conventual Life*, 67-68). See also Musolino, *La Beata Giuliana di Collalto*.
³ I thank Marta Minelli for information about this chest. It has been proposed that the surviving *cassa* is the one in which Giuliana was interred in 1262; this possibility is discounted by Moretti in Bettini et al., *Venezia e Bisanzio*, cat. no. 74. See Marconi, “La Cassa della Beata Giuliana”; Musolino, *La Beata Giuliana di Collalto*, 32-36; Pallucchini, *La Pittura Veneziana del Trecento*, 11; Bellinati and Bettini, *L’Epistolario Miniato di Giovanni da Gaibana*, vol. 1, 103-106; Bianchi et al., *Piazza San Marco and Its Museums*, 130; Dorigo, “Venezia,” 62; Fossaluzza, “Pittura Architettonico-Decorativa,” 280-281. Decorated “nuns’ chests” appeared elsewhere in Italy, for example at Santa Maria Nuova in Florence in the early fifteenth century (Schubring, *Cassoni*, 92-93, 225; Wackernagel, *World of the Florentine Renaissance Artist*, 159).
from there to the civic museums.⁴

Viewed in isolation today, the *cassa* once belonged to an established genre of decorated tombs and other ecclesiastical furniture, which in turn informed the design of household fixtures. A similar chest, known as the *cassa* of San Secondo and dating to the early 1300s, was still being used as a mensa during the eighteenth century.⁵ In the church of San Lorenzo, the marble tomb of St. Leo Bembo was adorned with a series of painted covers, including one of the mid-Trecento and another attributed to Lazzaro Bastiani.⁶ The monument erected to Doge Francesco Dandolo after his death in 1339 comprises a sarcophagus richly decorated with narrative sculptural relief, color, and gilding, which complement Paolo Veneziano’s lunette above (after 1339; Venice, S. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, chapter house).⁷ These works were closely related to wooden and stone chests for the storage of vestments and instruments of the liturgy, and their influence on the Italian domestic *cassa* is evidenced by the use of phrases such as “a sepoltura” or “a moda di tomba” to describe the latter.⁸

All of these types followed the form of ancient sarcophagi, altars, and urns, which were known in Venice, the exchange and acquisition of antiquities being documented there as early as the thirteenth century.⁹ By the mid-Quattrocento, Jacopo Bellini was regularly sketching Roman

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⁴ For the original portions and later retouchings, Marconi, “La Cassa della Beata Giuliana,” 81. Decoration of the front areas of the chest has been damaged from use. During a restoration of 2004, some later overpainting was removed (conservation record, courtesy of Marta Minelli, February 2007). For the work’s later provenance, Bettini et al., *Venezia e Bisanzio*, cat. no. 74. For the church of Sant’Agnese, which was suppressed in 1810 and reopened several decades later as an oratory for the Cavanis friars, Lorenzetti, *Venezia e il suo Estuario*, 494.


⁶ For the painted covers of the tomb of St. Leo Bembo, Muraro, *Paolo da Venezia*, 18-21. These images were, in turn, closely related to the painted cover of the Pala d’Oro by Paolo Veneziano and sons (1345; Venice, Museo di San Marco). See ibid., 46-50, 124-125; Cooper, *A Study of the Cover to the Pala d’Oro*; Pedrocco, *Paolo Veneziano*, 170-173.


⁸ For the use of terms such as “a sepoltura” and “a moda di tomba,” Thornton, “*Cassoni, Forzieri, Goffani and Cassette,*” 248. Vasari also described Florentine chests as “cassoni grandi di legname a uso di sepolture” (*Vite*, vol. 2, 148).

monument blocks and historiated sarcophagi, either transcribing them from his own distinctive
views or reimagining them as elements of new inventions (Figs. 2.2-2.3).\textsuperscript{10} The 1593 Grimani
bequest of ancient sculpture to the Republic encompassed several funerary objects, of which the
best known was a second-century sarcophagus fragment depicting two \textit{putti} holding a garland,
with the rape of Proserpine above (Fig. 2.4; sketch from Zanetti catalogue of 1736, Venice,
Biblioteca Marciana).\textsuperscript{11} In the same vein, a predella panel from the circle of Giovanni Bellini
portrays Doge Pietro Orseolo I and his wife praying in a loggia adorned with ancient artifacts,
among them a chest carved with marine motifs (Fig. 2.5; ca. 1490; Venice, Museo Civico
Correr). This detail suggests that classical sarcophagi were displayed as works of art by the late
1400s; like the detached bas-reliefs frequently exhibited in Renaissance collections, their
scrolling designs anticipated the composition of \textit{cassa} paintings, including Cima’s \textit{Bacchus and
Ariadne} group (Figs. 2.6-2.9; cat. no. 11).\textsuperscript{12}

In addition to chests and tombs, liturgical objects such as tabernacles and reliquaries bore
affinities with Venetian domestic furniture decoration. As containers of the Host, tabernacles
typically consisted of a cabinet fronted by an ornamented door or curtains, flanked by columns or
pilasters, and crowned with a pinnacle (Fig. 2.10; ca. 1480; Venice, S. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari,
sacristy).\textsuperscript{13} They presented a clear counterpart to paintings for doors \textit{[sportelli]} and related

\textsuperscript{10} The plates illustrated here in London, British Museum, \textit{Book of Drawings}, f. 81v., 82, 83; see also Paris, Musée
da Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, \textit{Book of Drawings}, f. 13, 48 (Eisler, \textit{Genius of Jacopo Bellini}, 190,
188, 262, 260, 198). For Jacopo’s recordings of ancient tombs and other monuments as part of the humanist \textit{sylloge}

\textsuperscript{11} Giovanni Grimani’s 1593 bequest to Venice, which would constitute the Statuario Pubblico, included works such
as “45. Urna o ara sepolcrale, con iscrizione di Q. Cecilio Primo…,” “184. Ara, ovvero, urna sepolcrale con
iscrizione in due nicchie…,” and “199. Ara, ovvero, urna sepolcrale, con iscrizione di A. Orcivio…,” as described in
the Zanetti catalogue of 1736 (Perry, “The Statuario Publico of the Venetian Republic,” 138, 145, 146; for the
Grimani provenance, ibid., 121, 126, 127). For the Zanetti catalogue illustration of the sarcophagus relief depicting
\textit{putti} and the rape of Proserpine, Favaretto and Ravagnan, \textit{Lo Statuario Pubblico della Serenissima}, cat. no. 65; the
work is described in the 1736 document as “117. Bassorilievo con due putti che sostentano un festone di frutta.
Nell’alto evvi espresso il rapimento di Proserpina…” (Perry, op. cit., 141).

\textsuperscript{12} For the predella panel, formerly belonging to an altarpiece in the church of San Giovanni Battista on the
Giudecca, Fletcher, “Harpies, Venus and Giovanni Bellini’s Classical Mirror,” 171, and Brown, \textit{Venice and
Antiquity}, 246. For the collecting and display of antiquities during the sixteenth century, and their influence on
artists, Beschi, “Collezioni d’Antichità a Venezia ai Tempi di Tiziano.” Sheard explores the relationship between
well-known sarcophagus reliefs and Titian’s later version of \textit{Bacchus and Ariadne} (“Antonio Lombardo’s Reliefs
for Alfonso d’Este’s \textit{Studio di Marmi},” 315-320).

\textsuperscript{13} For fifteenth-century tabernacle designs and related works of the Lombardo workshop, Wilk, \textit{Sculpture of Tullio
Lombardo}, 98-106. The placement of tabernacles in Venetian churches discussed by Humfrey, \textit{The Altarpiece in
Renaissance Venice}, 52-53. For the development of Venetian confraternities of the sacrament during the sixteenth
century and concomitant changes in tabernacles and church paintings, Cope, \textit{Venetian Chapel of the Sacrament}, and
Hills, “Piety and Patronage in Cinquecento Venice.” In addition to appearing as physical objects on or near the
altar, tabernacles were associated with the holy womb of Mary, and their form is intimated in Bellini’s half-length
types, and indeed, several works from the circles of Bellini and Cima possibly served as tabernacle doors. *The Blood of the Redeemer* (Figs. 2.11-2.12; ca. 1465-1470; London, National Gallery) depicts a theme common in this setting from the fourteenth century onwards, Jesus pouring blood from his side-wound into a chalice held by a mourning angel. A symbol of the Mass and reminder of the cult of the precious blood of Christ, this image would have befit a cupboard holding the Eucharist. The panel has been planed down and shows no traces of this use today, though a lost wooden frame with lock and hinges has been posited. Others, however, have dismissed a liturgical function and argued that the work hung independently. In any case, the design descends from tabernacle iconography, revealing Bellini’s awareness of pictures belonging to such objects. These may have influenced the conception of his own furniture paintings for private use. The *Redeemer* resembles ornamental works from Bellini’s circle: the *Pagan Allegory* (Fig. 2.13; cat. no. 1), for instance, a probable restello panel, is executed in a gold and black color scheme that recalls the painted parapet reliefs in the background of the London scene (Fig. 2.12). The reliefs’ subjects, ambiguous scenes of ancient homage whose sources have been variously identified, in turn evoke the *Allegory*, which depicts a recondite exchange between an anonymous ruler and supplicant. These works are usually dated to the devotional paintings (Goffen, “Icon and Vision,” 505), many of which were probably hung in tabernacle frames (Kasl, “Holy Households,” 66-68, 71).


15 The tabernacle setting is proposed by Robertson, *Giovanni Bellini*, 34; Braham et al., “Bellini’s ‘The Blood of the Redeemer,’” 12; Goffen, *Giovanni Bellini*, 82, 224; and Dunkerton et al., *Giotto to Dürer*, 22. For a possible lost wooden frame with hinges and lock, as well as the suggestion that the painting adorned the inside rather than the outside of a tabernacle door, Braham et al., op. cit., 12. Eisler proposes that the panel belonged to a predella, akin to that of the Pesaro altarpiece (“The Golden Christ of Cortona,” 236). Christiansen argues that the identification of a tabernacle door “hardly seems credible” given the painting’s “detailed treatment and the emphasis on the affective relationship of the figures”; he suggests a devotional picture for a priest or theologian with an interest in the contemporary debate over the holy blood (“Bellini and Mantegna,” 62, 284 n. 27). This controversy would have been highly relevant in the later Quattrocento, for a relic of the blood of Christ was donated to the church of the Frari in 1480 and kept in a tabernacle designed by Tullio Lombardo (Wilk, *Sculpture of Tullio Lombardo*, 99; McAndrew, *Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance*, 189-190; Goffen, *Piety and Patronage*, 21). In her technical summary of Bellini’s painting, Dunkerton does not comment on its possible function, but notes the careful underdrawing and use of ultramarine and shell gold, which suggest that the work was valuable and meant to be viewed in detail (“Bellini’s Technique,” 196-197; see also Braham et al., op. cit., 22-24). For further review of scholarship on the picture and its original setting, Lucco and Villa, *Giovanni Bellini*, 152-155.

16 For the likeness between the color schemes of the *Pagan Allegory* and the *Redeemer* reliefs, Robertson, *Giovanni Bellini*, 48. The subjects of the reliefs are identified by Saxl as Mucius Scaevola on the right, and a scene of pagan sacrifice on the left (“Pagan Sacrifice in the Italian Renaissance,” 351-352). Robertson disputes the identification of Mucius Scaevola (op. cit., 35), as does Davies (*Earlier Italian Schools*, 60). See also Thomas, “The Pagan Reliefs
same decade, and the latter is an early example of a pure classical theme in Venetian painting. Perhaps in the context of a secular decorative commission, Bellini or a follower felt license to create a version of the Redeemer reliefs writ large.¹⁷

A similar, somewhat later work from Cima’s shop that may have adorned a tabernacle portrays Christ as Redeemer, holding a chalice (Fig. 2.14; ca. 1490-1510; Pavia, Civici Musei, Galleria Malaspina).¹⁸ Despite some abrasion of the paint surface, the scene corresponds in scale and style to the artist’s decorative pictures of the same period, particularly the single panel of Theseus Slaying the Minotaur once belonging to a chest (Fig. 2.45; cat. no. 10).¹⁹

Related to tabernacle pictures were decorated reliquaries, of which the Beata Giuliana’s cassa could be considered an early example. Renaissance reliquary covers reveal close ties to Venetian furniture paintings. Gentile Bellini’s portrait of Cardinal Johannes Bessarion in prayer (Fig. 2.15; after 1472-1473; London, National Gallery) originally served as the protective door of a tabernacle enclosing the Byzantine reliquary cross that he had donated to the Scuola Grande di Santa Maria della Carità in 1463 (Fig. 2.16; late 1300s-1460s; Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia). The right side of this panel still bears two keyholes, analogous to the traces of keyholes found in ornamental pictures from the circle of Giorgione (Figs. 2.58, 2.105; cat. nos. 19, 20).²⁰

Moreover, the narrow, vertical orientation of Gentile’s painting evokes the proportions of decorated doors and shutters, including Carpaccio’s Ladies on a Balcony and Hunting and

in Giovanni Bellini’s Blood of the Redeemer.” Further review of opinions regarding the reliefs’ subjects in Lucco and Villa, Giovanni Bellini, 152. Both the Redeemer reliefs and the Pagan Allegory appear to be generic in subject and not identifiable with any specific source, though the motif of flaming sacrifice in the former picture is consistent with its eucharistic subject, emphasizing the replacement of pagan burnt offerings by the Mass (for this theme in later Venetian painting, Hills, “Tintoretto’s Fire,” 269-270).

¹⁷ This experiment in the independent representation of antique subject matter would be consistent with the young artist’s interest in the achievement of his brother-in-law, Mantegna: see Christiansen, “Bellini and Mantegna.”

¹⁸ I thank Francesca Porreca and Fiorenzo Cantalupi for information about this painting. Its small size and eucharistic connotations are suggestive of an image framed within a sacrament cupboard, though an altarpiece predella is another possibility. The panel was cradled in 1953, complicating analysis of its original configuration (correspondence of Francesca Porreca, 23 October 2006; see also Bicchi, “Dipinti Restaurati delle Civiche Raccolte d’Arte,” 128). For the suggestion of a predella setting, Coletti, Cima da Conegliano, 81. Humfrey notes the eucharistic iconography and identifies a tabernacle door as another possibility (Cima da Conegliano, 140).

¹⁹ Two other works comparable to Cima’s ornamental production have also been identified as potential tabernacle doors. One, illustrating the dead Christ with his arms crossed in front of him, exhibits wood damage commensurate with hinges (ca. 1490-1510; Birmingham, City Museum and Art Gallery); the other, slightly smaller, is a variation on the same theme that includes two angels (ca. 1490-1510; location unknown). For these paintings, Coletti, Cima da Conegliano, 82, and Humfrey, Cima da Conegliano, 86-87, 172-173.

²⁰ For Gentile’s painting and the reliquary donated by Cardinal Bessarion (1403-1472), Marconi, Gallerie dell’Accademia, vol. 1, 191-194; Polacco, “La Storia del Reliquiario Bessarione”; Prohaska, Kunsthistorisches Museum, 16-19; Evans, Byzantium, 540-541; Campbell and Chong, Bellini and the East, 36-44, with further bibliography. For recent provenance issues surrounding Gentile’s painting, Lillie, Was Einmal War, 657-666. For the seat of the Scuola della Carità, Rosand, Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice, 97-106, 165-175.
Fishing on the Lagoon (Fig. 2.18; cat. no. 7). These two images were once vertically stacked to compose a single narrow leaf; both this composite and the London reliquary panel are roughly 2.7 times tall as they are wide.\(^{21}\) The consonances among these apparently disparate works might be expected, given that Gentile himself was engaged in painting interiors, including perhaps furniture, at the palace of Mehmed II in Istanbul from 1479 to 1481.\(^{22}\)

Bellini’s picture of Bessarion belonged to a larger, compound assembly that had been built up over time. The fourteenth-century *staurotheke*, or container of the True Cross, was attached to a silver-gilt crucifix and decorated with portraits of Byzantine royalty, as well as later Passion scenes, Venetian metalwork, and a handle. This piece also enjoyed the protection of a sliding lid, dating to the latter part of the Trecento and adorned with a painting of the Crucifixion (Fig. 2.17; Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia).\(^{23}\) By the time Gentile’s *sportello* was added in the 1470s, the reliquary had become a layered, composite object, much like the painted furniture in found Venetian homes. When he viewed Bessarion’s bequest in the Scuola della Carità during the sixteenth century, Michiel wrote that part of it “seems to have been a door of a cupboard” [par essere stata vna porta dun armaro]. This phrase echoes Michiel’s use of the term *porta* elsewhere in his notes to describe domestic ornamental pictures.\(^{24}\)

Other cognates for the works in this study can be found in altarpieces, organ shutters, and church cupboards, genres in which many authors of decorative paintings practiced. The serried rows of images in altarpiece predelle mirror the linked framing of furniture panels; in both

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\(^{21}\) Gentile’s painting measures 102.3 x 37.2 cm (Campbell and Chong, *Bellini and the East*, 38). For the dimensions of Carpaccio’s original panel, which was probably once attached to another leaf to form a hinged shutter, see cat. no. 7 below. Giorgione’s *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (cat. no. 19) is another example of a door painting with dimensions similar to those of Gentile’s reliquary panel; its height-to-width ratio is approximately 2.12.

\(^{22}\) According to an Italian contemporary at the court of Mehmed, Gentile painted “cose di lussuria” during his stay there (Meyer zur Capellen, *Gentile Bellini*, 109-110, doc. 14g). This account has been interpreted in various ways, but it is usually thought that the artist was engaged in painting a pavilion, scenes of festivities or banquets (or possibly erotic images), and other decorations for Mehmed’s vast palace (Brown, *Venetian Narrative Painting*, 55; Campbell and Chong, *Bellini and the East*, 110-111). Though the exact nature of these commissions is unknown, it is conceivable that they included furniture.


\(^{24}\) “El quadretto della passion del nostro signore cun tutti li misterii in piu capitolii a figure picole alla Grecca, cun el texto delli euangelii Grecco sotto, fu opera Costantinopolitana, et par essere stata vna porta dun armaro. Et fu donata dal cardinal Niceno alla scola, della qual volse esser fratello. Per il che essi lo fecero ritrar nel ditto quadro della questa passion, de sotto inzenochiato cun la croce in mano cun dui altri fratelli della scola similitmente inzenochiati, et cun le cappe in dosso” (Michiel, *Notizia d’Opere del Disegno* (ed. Frimmel), 59). For Michiel’s use of the word *porta* to describe secular ornamental paintings, see the sections on Beds and Doors and Shutters below. The Bessarion reliquary was also described by Sansovino in 1581 (*Venetia Citta Nobilissima*, 99v.-100r.); for comparison of Michiel’s and Sansovino’s accounts, von Hadeln, “Sansovinos Venetia,” 155-157. For Michiel’s notes on the nearby church of the Carità, Lauber, “‘Ornamento Lodevole’ e ‘Ornatissima di Pietre.’”
settings, these *historiette* served as fields for the development of landscape and narrative subjects on a small scale.\(^{25}\) *Portelli d’organo* – from Bellini’s *Annunciation* at Santa Maria dei Miracoli (ca. 1490; Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia) to Veronese’s likenesses of Saints Menna and John the Baptist for San Geminiano (ca. 1560; Modena, Galleria Estense) – constitute a major type of Venetian ecclesiastical art with connections to decorative pictures.\(^{26}\) Tintoretto, a frequent painter of organs, also ornamented the doors of a silver cabinet in the church of San Rocco with the scene of *Christ Healing the Ill* (1559).\(^{27}\) According to Ridolfi, these *portelli* were executed in competition with Pordenone, who previously had painted the doors of a nearby cupboard with the figures of Saints Martin and Christopher (ca. 1527).\(^{28}\) These works belonged to a tradition of paintings for *armari*, of which an early example is Jacobello del Fiore’s *Justice* (Fig. 2.19; 1421; Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia). This triptych once hung above a cabinet in the Magistrato del Proprio of the Palazzo Ducale. Ridolfi’s description of its location, *sopra un’armaio*, recalls his

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\(^{25}\) Ridolfi uses the term *historietta* to describe both predella panels (*Maraviglie*, vol. 1, 37, 143) and domestic ornamental paintings (ibid., vol. 1, 248). Renaissance predella pictures served as early sites of “pure” landscape, similar to the landscape themes developed in Venetian decorative works (cat. nos. 22, 23). For example, Longhi described the predella of Lotto’s *Assumption* altarpiece (1506; Asolo, Duomo) as “un paesaggio puro e silenzioso: anzi, per la sua apparenza inamena, direi quasi la prima ‘natura morta’ di paese” (*Viatico per Cinque Secoli di Pittura Veneziana*, 18). See also Wood, *Albrecht Altdorfer and the Origins of Landscape*, 38; for the Asolo altarpiece and its original location, Humfrey, *Lorenzo Lotto*, 7, 20, 25, 27. For rows of images on church furniture, similar to those of altarpiece predelle, Schulz, *Venetian Painted Ceilings of the Renaissance*, 8.

\(^{26}\) In Bellini’s *Annunciation* (probably completed with studio assistance), the imagery of opened shutters rhymes with the intended function of the *portelli* themselves (Howard, “Bellini and Architecture,” 157-160). For Veronese’s *Saint Menna* and *Saint John the Baptist*, which accompanied the artist’s paintings of Saints Geminianus and Severus on the exterior of the shutters, Rearick, *Art of Paolo Veronese*, 68-71; Bentini et al., *Paolo Veronese: Le Portelle d’Organo di S. Geminiano*; Pignatti and Pedrocchi, *Veronese*, vol. 1, 137-138; Ichman et al., *Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese*, 137-139. For further discussion of organ shutter decoration, see section on Musical Instruments below.

\(^{27}\) Tintoretto’s two *portelli* were detached from the *armadio* in the late seventeenth century and stitched together to form a single work, which also underwent eliminations and repaintings; this ensemble is still at San Rocco (Pallucchini and Rossi, *Tintoretto*, vol. 1, 179-180). For circumstances of the original commission, Massimi, “Jacopo Tintoretto e i Confratelli della Scuola Grande di San Rocco,” 66-74, who argues that the scene conflates several episodes of miraculous healing and suggests the title of *Christ Healing the Ill*. See also Nichols, *Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity*, 155-157, and Ichman and Ichman, “Toward a New Tintoretto Catalogue,” 123.

\(^{28}\) “A mezza Chiesa dipinse ne’ portelli di grande armario, (ove si conservano voti di pij divoti, in concorrenza del Pordenone, che un simile nel dirimpetto haveva dipinto), Christo, che comanda al paralitico, che prenda il suo letto e camini…” (Ridolfi, *Maraviglie*, vol. 2, 26). For Ridolfi’s description of Pordenone’s paintings for the nearby silver cupboard, ibid., vol. 1, 121. For Pordenone’s ensemble and its problematic original configuration, including the presence of supplicants in fresco as illustrated here, Cohen, *Pordenone*, vol. 1, 265-272, vol. 2, 623-627. These *armadio* paintings, too, were detached and framed in the seventeenth century but still remain at the church of San Rocco. Ridolfi’s claim of a *concorrenza* between Tintoretto and Pordenone (though the latter was long deceased by the 1550s) is borne out by *Christ Healing the Ill*, which responds formally to the earlier composition. For Pordenone’s San Rocco paintings and the role of competition as a motivating force among Venetian artists during this period, Ichman et al., *Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese*, 107-108.
accounts of pictures displayed above beds in Venetian homes. These images, while not physically attached to furniture, were closely associated with the moveables below; Jacobello’s work provided a civic and religious paradigm for such integral ornamental ensembles. In addition, the *armaio* above which his triptych appeared was a forerunner of the modern cupboard and *credenza*, household forms that evolved from ecclesiastical and municipal prototypes during the later Quattrocento, and soon came to have their own decorated covers.

A last analogue to secular cabinets and their designs can be found in private altarpieces and devotional works, which were a major vehicle of figurative painting in Venetian homes. In her will of 1401, a widow named Catherucia bequeathed to her confessor a small article, described as “armarolium meum a Sanctis cum anchonis in eo existentibus.” This *armarolium* was apparently a cupboard or cabinet inlaid with views of saints. Another will of 1421 described “my cupboard with the altarpiece” [*el mio armaruol con lanchona*]. Such items were akin to later *armari* and to the *restello*, a vanity cabinet framing a mirror and hooks for grooming implements; in fact, the term *restello* was also regularly used to describe holders of sacred images. In the Quattrocento and beyond, devotional paintings were often equipped with elaborate tabernacle frames, holy water buckets, and other tools, and illuminated by attached candelabra or oil-burning lamps of Murano glass. “Effectively self-contained oratories,” these assemblies facilitated all aspects of personal prayer, and their composite construction informed the arrangement of vernacular paintings and furniture.
Renaissance Developments

The emergence of a Renaissance tradition of ornamental painting from these interrelated genres was partly due to new varieties of furniture and the refinement of existing types. From the late fourteenth through the sixteenth centuries, Venice witnessed an extraordinary expansion of house-building, accompanied by the invention of secular moveables such as the credenza, armario, restello, and restelliera, and by a new artistry and sophistication in the execution of longstanding models, particularly the cassa. These objects, which met rising standards of comfort and civilized private life, supported a broader range of painted decoration than had previous incarnations of household furnishing.34 Inspired by examples from the churches and government buildings of Venice, as well as by existing traditions of domestic devotional imagery, painters began to adorn a wide variety of household fixtures with figurative scenes. This development complemented an increase in interior art of all kinds, from tapestry and fresco to linens, glass, sculpture, and small items imported from the east or manufactured in a cosmopolitan style by native craftsmen. In these dense environments, objects in many media commingled to create an impressive aesthetic unity (Fig. 2.20; ca. 1506; Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia).35

Despite the diversity of Renaissance home decorations, it is possible to discern a basic typology of ornamental painting in Venice from the later fifteenth through the sixteenth centuries. The relevant categories are chests and boxes, friezes, beds, doors and shutters, picture covers, musical instruments, restelli, and spalliera cycles. These settings involved specific kinds of pictures that can be distinguished by their size, shape, composition, and physical condition. However, the terms are also sufficiently broad to accommodate the range of surviving paintings. These groups do not include tables, chairs, or shields, which rarely contained framed pictorial decoration, but rather were adorned with family arms or abstract designs.

34 For the expansion of domestic building in Venice from the fourteenth century onwards, McAndrew, Venetian Architecture of the Early Renaissance, 194-211; Crouzet-Pavan, Venice Triumphant, 30-33, with further bibliography; Howard, Architectural History of Venice, 103-111, 120-123; Brown, Private Lives, 22-51; Goy, Building Renaissance Venice. Hills notes that this period saw not only an increase in palace construction, but also a change in materials from primarily wood and plaster to brick and Istrian stone (Venetian Colour, 74). Florence witnessed a similar general rise in construction beginning in the thirteenth century, with the urban palace emerging as a distinctive architectural form in the later fourteenth (Goldthwaite, Building of Renaissance Florence, esp. 1-26). For the invention of new moveables and refinements of existing types in Venice, Brown, op. cit., 20, 73, 100-112, and Palumbo Fossati, “La Casa Veneziana,” 446. For Renaissance ideals of politia, splendor, and economy as expressed in the design and decoration of Venetian homes, Brown, op. cit.
35 For the material culture of Venetian homes during this period and the marriage of different art forms in domestic space, Brown, Private Lives, esp. 53-121.
Chests and Boxes

By far the most common type of painted furniture in Renaissance Venice was the chest, or cassa, a rectangular box housing everything from clothes and papers to money and flour. In a society that prized stability, tradition, and preservation, this architectonic object assumed both practical and metaphorical importance, as the container of family possessions across generations.\(^{36}\) Versions included the arcella, an early form of trunk; forzieri, or strong box; and banca, a flat chest that doubled as a bench for sitting. In addition, there were smaller variations of the standard cassa, such as the cassetta, scatola, scrigno, and cofano (Fig. 2.21; ca. 1570-1600; New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art).\(^{37}\) The word cassa was also used more generally to describe cases, such as timber window frames and protective containers for paintings and maps.\(^{38}\) The term cassone, however, was largely confined to Florence and rarely used in Venice before the later Cinquecento, long after the golden age of painted chests in Tuscany had ended. As noted in Ch. 1 above, both Sansovino in the late sixteenth century and Ridolfi in the mid-seventeenth regularly used the term cassa rather than cassone.\(^{39}\)

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\(^{37}\) For the use of arcella, see see n. 180 in Ch. 1 above. The term forzieri or forzieretto was used, for example, to describe strongboxes protecting the cameos in the Grimani family collection during the mid-1500s (Perry, “Wealth, Art, and Display: The Grimani Cameos in Renaissance Venice,” 272). For the banca (also known as panca or cassapanca), Thornton, *Italian Renaissance Interior*, 114, 171. In his lives of Schiavone and Tintoretto, Ridolfi writes that these artists first worked for “dipintori da banche” or painters of chests and benches (Maraviglie, vol. 1, 248, vol. 2, 15). For the Metropolitan Museum cofanetto, Alberici, *Il Mobile Veneto*, 61, and Brown, *Private Lives*, 109-110. For a similar example of a small coffer, Bayer, *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy*, 108-110.

\(^{38}\) In June 1436, a carpenter was commissioned by Marin Contarini to make timber window surrounds (“le casse di le mie fenestre da verij”) at the Ca’ d’Oro (Goy, *The House of Gold*, 240). The term cassa also described protective cases for valuables; it differed from the words soaza and cornice, which usually referred to frames. Gabriel Vendramin, for instance, owned “un quadretto con sua cassa de un giovene sbarbato, de man de Zuan Belin a guazo” (Ravà, “Il ‘Camerino delle Antigaglie’ di Gabriele Vendramin,” 170). For further discussion of the variability of the term cassa, see Ch. 1 above.

\(^{39}\) For the terminology used to describe early chests, Thornton, “Cassoni, Forzieri, Goffani and Cassette”; Brown, *Private Lives*, 100; Palumbo Fossati, “La Casa Veneziana,” 470-471. The prevalence of cassone in modern scholarship is due to Vasari’s use of the word in the life of Dello Delli: “E che è piu, si dipingevano in cotal maniera non solamente i cassoni, ma i lettiucci, le spalliere…” (Vite, vol. 2, 148). The Florentine tradition of cassone painting lasted only until the late fifteenth century, although pieces of this type continued to be displayed in homes during the Cinquecento (Baskins, *Cassone Painting, Humanism, and Gender*, 4; McIver, *Women, Art, and Architecture in Northern Italy*, 141-142). The term cassa (as opposed to cassone) was employed not only in
A rich element of Venetian domestic life, chests and boxes were often ornately layered in decorative and dramatic configurations. The merchant Gabriel Vendramin owned a large wooden scatola containing a smaller ivory box [bosolo de avolio]; in turn, there was “another little box in said ivory box” [un altra scatoleta in dito bossolo de avolio], housing a small jar of white chalcedony, jewels, and a chain enclosed in a leaf of paper made from inscribed tree bark. This ensemble was kept along with similar items inside an armaro or cupboard in his collection. In addition to declaring the preciousness of his possessions by successive degrees of concealment, Vendramin’s arrangement bespeaks an unhindered pleasure in containers themselves, as works of art and as instruments of presentation; it is a secular version of the Bessarion reliquary with its accretion of vessels and covers.

Boxes might also carry emblematic significance, as indicated by events surrounding the death of Ireco Aleardi, a nobleman who served as a governing agent in Verona. Upon Ireco’s passing in 1407, his son Gasparo had a coffer in the main bedroom of their house repainted with four large figures. The identity of the new figures is not described, but their appearance at this occasion implies that the bereavement of a paterfamilias involved noteworthy renovations of the family furniture and its ornaments. Whether these changes were symbolic or merely reflected the preferences of the heir is unknown, though a combination of factors was probably involved.

Containers like those owned by Vendramin and Aleardi had appeared in Venetian homes as early as the twelfth century, when a document specified the contents of a bride’s dowry kept in an arcela. In addition to trousseaux, these objects held a variety of quotidian household
countless Venetian documents, but also by Sansovino in 1581: “non è persona cosi miserabile con casa aperta, che non habbia casse & lettiere di noci…” (Venetia Citta Nobilissima, 142v.). It was also used by Ridolfi in 1648: “seguiva in tanto Giorgio à dipingere nella solita habitazione, ove dicesi, che aperta havesse bottega, dipingendo rotelle, armari e molte casse in particolare” (Maraviglie, vol. 1, 98). Ridolfi also records that Schiavone painted “in sei casse ancora altre inventioni” (ibid., 252).

A 1567 inventory of Vendramin’s collection records, among other items “nel armaro del pilastro sotto el primo capitello,” “una scatola de legno granda con un bosolo de avolio con un altra scatoleta in dito bossole de avolio con un vaseto de calcedonia bianco et altra zogia con una cademneleta drento un sfogio de carta de scorzo de alboro scritta” (Ravà, “Il ‘Camerino delle Antigaglie’ di Gabriele Vendramin,” 167). For Vendramin’s armari, see discussion of Doors and Shutters below. A similar example is documented in a 1569 inventory of the possessions of Julia Lombardo: a “scritto de Noghera” containing “una schatolleta bianca piccola” and “una schatoleta con trinelle d’arzento et tondini d’arzento,” among other objects (Santore, “Julia Lombardo, ‘Sotuosa Meretrize,’” 71). Yet another such configuration is recorded in a 1613 inventory of the collection of Federico Contarini: “un scrittoreto de nogara” housing numerous boxes, including a cassa, bossole, casselleta, and two scatole (Cipollato, “L’Eredità di Federico Contarini,” 226).

40 For the cofano repainted after the death of Ireco Aleardi, Cipolla, “Libri e Mobilie di Casa Aleardi,” 36.
41 For the arcela recorded in a document of 1145, see n. 180 in Ch. 1 above. For the early use of arcelle in Venetian marriage rituals, see n. 109 in Ch. 1 above.
items. An inventory of 1308 lists table linens “in uno cofano,” while the 1366 record of Marco Polo’s family possessions notes numerous *bosoli, chasele*, and *cofani* for everyday storage. Similar evidence of general-purpose domestic use multiplies through the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; by the early Seicento, the English visitor Thomas Coryat was noting the “many faire painted coffers” decorating the typical Venetian courtesan’s bedroom.\(^4\) As this range of functions and settings indicates, the iconography of early painted chests is not confined to marriage, though poetically rendered tales of love and family frequently appear.\(^4\)

The ornamental detailing of *casse* varied from carving, gilding, inlay, and *pastiglia* to monochrome painting, coats of arms, and narrative scenes. These last, the focus of this study, were usually small panels or canvases integrated into apertures at the front or sides of the chest. They could be rectangular, emulating the scrolling registers of sarcophagi; round, recalling the shape of ancient coins and medals, and offering a keyhole view into enchanted landscapes; or oval-shaped. Oblong rectangular chest paintings sometimes shared the dimensions and form of *fregi*, another type of decorative panel described below, and certain works may have been conceived with either final setting in mind (Figs. 2.22-2.26; cat. nos. 56, 34).\(^4\)

Though most painted chests of the Venetian Renaissance have long since been dismantled, clues about their original disposition are provided by a few surviving figured *casse*. These artifacts, too, probably have been altered since the sixteenth century, but they present a general idea of how now-detached ornamental paintings first would have been integrated into furnishings.\(^4\) One example (Fig. 2.27; cat. no. 78), dating to around 1500, frames three

\(^4\) For the 1308 inventory of linens “in uno cofano,” Molmenti, *Venice*, vol. 2, 182-183. For the 1366 record of Marco Polo’s family holdings in chests and boxes, Orlandini, “Marco Polo e la sua Famiglia,” 56-59. Painted chests appear frequently in inventories and wills during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries; these objects were involved in networks of patronage and gift-giving among members of different social classes (Romano, “Aspects of Patronage,” 718-724). Coryat’s observations of the contents of a Venetian courtesan’s chamber published in 1611 (*Crudities*, vol. 1, 405).

\(^4\) Though some Venetian chests may have been commissioned for marriages, documents reveal that by the Renaissance, the majority of these objects were everyday furniture pieces intended to hold linens, clothes, and household supplies. The chests depicted in the background of Titian’s *Venus of Urbino*, for example, were probably used for this purpose (Brown, *Private Lives*, 170). This trend stands in contrast to the Florentine tradition of *cassoni* created specifically to celebrate marriages (see, for instance, Bayer, *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy*, 133-134, and the works discussed in Baskins et al., *The Triumph of Marriage*). See also n. 109 in Ch. 1 above.

\(^4\) Panels that may have served as either chest or frieze decorations are labelled *Cassa/Fregio* in the catalogue entries below. For further information about this hybrid genre, see the section on Friezes below. Smaller rectangular panels, which were usually framed separately in a single chest, typically measured about 15 x 40 cm; longer, *fregio*-like panels could be 100 cm or more in length.

\(^4\) The chests discussed here are largely intact, though some underwent renovations during the nineteenth century (see catalogue entries below). This period witnessed significant reworking of many Renaissance furniture pieces,
rectangular scenes from Roman history: the slaying of Julius Caesar, the flight of Aeneas and Anchises from Troy, and the head of Pompey given to Caesar. The paintings are set like predella panels into windows at the front of the chest, and separated by slender panes of gilded pastiglia decoration. Most likely, other small panels belonging to groups of three, such as the Page and Nymphs in a Landscape from the circle of Carpaccio (Figs. 2.28-2.30; cat. no. 9), were first framed in the same manner.

Another surviving chest (Fig. 2.31; cat. no. 81) suggests how single paintings, especially those of rounded profile, appeared in their initial settings. An oval-shaped image of Romulus and Remus, comparable in format to works such as Bonifacio’s Antiochus and Stratonice (Fig. 2.32; cat. no. 30) and Esther and Ahasuerus by Tintoretto (also known as Solomon and the Queen of Sheba; Fig. 2.33; cat. no. 64), occupies the center front window, flanked by smaller rectangles of grotesques and tracery. In this way, the inserted painting is married to the overall furniture design through the use of linked decorative motifs. Such pictures would have been produced in standard sizes, and the accompanying chests ready-made to frame them.

Painted roundels, including Endymion Asleep and the Judgment of Midas by Cima da Conegliano (Figs. 2.34-2.35; cat. no. 12), the Scene of Sacrifice from Cima’s circle (Fig. 2.36; cat. no. 14), and the later Lot and His Daughters from the circle of Titian (Fig. 2.37; cat. no. 73), probably first belonged to chests similar to one now in Milan (Fig. 2.38; cat. no. 28). It portrays female heroines, Bilia and Tuccia, in tondi with prominent golden frames, set into square panels whose corners are decorated with foliate tracery, and separated by gilded colonnettes; the center segment contains a coat of arms in pastiglia on a gold ground. The chest almost certainly once belonged to a pair; two detached roundels, depicting other paragons of female virtue (Figs. 2.39-2.40; cat. no. 28), adorned its now-dismantled pendant.\(^4\)\(^7\)

A second intact chest, also in Milan, provides another example of a cassa with tondi – a now nearly-vanished genre that must once have been widespread (Fig. 2.41; cat. no. 80). Somewhat smaller and less well-preserved, these paintings of battle and sacrifice flank a central coat of arms identified with the Porto family of Vicenza; perhaps this chest, too, once belonged including the wholesale invention of chests to surround previously detached Florentine ornamental paintings (Callmann, “William Blundell Spence and the Transformation of Renaissance Cassoni”).

\(^4\)^ For the relationship of Cima’s tondi to the Milan chest, Humfrey, Cima da Conegliano, 58; see also catalogue entry below.
Some Venetian *casse* were painted not with figurative or narrative scenes, but with foliage or grotesques. Several such works appear in the background of Titian’s *Venus of Urbino* (Fig. 2.42; 1538; Florence, Uffizi): chests of convex profile, whose fronts display silvery scrolls against dark grounds. Related motifs appear on a claw-footed *cassa* (Fig. 2.43), whose three front panels are painted with grotesques and *putti*. Such elements were, however, less likely to be conserved after the artifacts’ disassembly than were those depicting stories or figures, and surviving examples remain rare.

Among the oldest historiated *casse* that can be reconstructed from detached panels are two ensembles by Cima da Conegliano, who used the vehicle of furniture ornament to explore classical themes, as discussed in Ch. 1 above. The first group describes episodes from the life of Theseus: his arrival at the court of King Minos, followed by his discovery and slaying of the Minotaur (Figs. 2.44-2.45; cat. no. 10). The rectangular reception scene, in which the young hero supplicates before the king beneath a portico, likely appeared on the front of the *cassa*, while the smaller image adorned one end; perhaps another, now lost pendant decorated the opposite end.

Cima’s second group, the *Tale of Bacchus and Ariadne* (Figs. 2.6-2.9; cat. no. 11), executed slightly later, presents a more complicated arrangement involving four extant fragments. The principal segment, portraying the god and his betrothed in their triumphal car, may have appeared to the right of a smaller panel, depicting Silenus and his entourage. The backgrounds of these two pieces match, and together, the panels form a single procession, moving from right to left. With Silenus at its head, as per traditional scenes of the triumph of Bacchus, the parade offers a whimsical and drunken prelude to the more solemn prospect of Ariadne’s crowning. Two smaller panels, a bacchant carrying a wine barrel and a faun playing the pipes, would have decorated the chest’s lateral ends.

An alternative reconstruction of these fragments proposes a pair of chest fronts, each about 70 centimeters long: one containing the single panel of Bacchus and Ariadne, the other composed of the remaining three segments representing Silenus and his retinue. The smallest

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48 Pirovano et al., *Museo Poldi Pezzoli*, 123.
49 For the chests depicted in this painting, see n. 44 above.
50 For the traditional arrangement of the triumphal procession of Bacchus and Ariadne, Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols*, 38.
piece, a faun playing the pipes, faces Silenus’s procession as it moves from right to left, a detail inspired by a passage in one of Jacopo Bellini’s sketchbooks. The backgrounds of these latter three panels do not match closely, but their discrepancies may be due to trimming and other alterations in the smaller fragments. As casse sometimes appeared in pairs, this dual configuration also appears fitting.

During the sixteenth century, cassa painting continued to develop alongside independent pictures of classical subjects, and a later example of a complete cycle, illustrating the tale of Diana and Callisto, survives from the hand of Schiavone (Figs. 2.46-2.48; cat. no. 40). Dated ca. 1545-1550, the group comprises a long central episode and two smaller ones, which originally either flanked the main scene on the front of a chest or adorned its lateral ends. The three paintings are unified by style and coloring, a common narrative, and a shared provenance.

Originally at left, the small work now in the National Gallery, London, depicts Jupiter and Callisto together in the forest. According to Ovid’s tale, Jupiter dons the disguise of Diana, but here he appears as a white-bearded man, who caresses the nymph’s chin and seems to whisper her a secret. In the central panel, Callisto, wearing the same costume, congregates with Diana’s nymphs in a pool presided over by a sculpture of a wet-bearded river god. Having discovered Callisto’s pregnancy, the goddess points at her in wrath. The right end panel chronicles a much later event: the adolescent Arcas, Callisto’s son by Jupiter, is hunting in the forest when he comes upon his mother, roaming the wilds as a bear. In the foliage at the left of the picture, a bear’s head is visible, its snout close to the ground. Perhaps this is the moment when Callisto, still afflicted with human emotions, “stood still, looking at him, and seemed almost to know him” (Metamorphoses, II.500-501). In Ovid’s story, Jupiter stays Arcas’s hunting hand, and mother and son are whisked into the sky as neighboring stars.

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51 This reconstruction is proposed by Humfrey, Cima da Conegliano, 56-57. For the influence of Jacopo Bellini’s sketchbooks on the composition, see catalogue entry below. Yet another possibility is that the panel of a lone bacchant carrying a wine barrel originally appeared to the right of the main scenes of Silenus and Satyrs and Bacchus and Ariadne; the small panel of the piping faun decorated one end of the chest, and a lost pendant decorated the other (suggestion of Patricia Fortini Brown, verbal communication, Dec. 2009).

52 For the provenance of Schiavone’s paintings, see cat. no. 40 below. The dimensions of Schiavone’s smaller accompanying canvases are similar to those of Cima’s cassa panels depicting a lone bacchant and faun: Schiavone’s end canvases measure 18.7 x 18.7 cm each, Cima’s end panels 24 x 19.5 cm and 20.8 x 11.2 cm respectively. I thank Carol Plazzotta for information about Schiavone’s Diana and Callisto group.

53 This panel has previously been described as Callisto Hunting, but the presence of the bear, along with the masculine appearance of the hunting figure, identify it with the later episode of Arcas and Callisto. This identification was made by Carol Plazzotta; see Penny, National Gallery Catalogues, vol. 2, 119. The story of Diana and Callisto appears in Metamorphoses, II.441-507.
Schiavone’s central scene appeared often in furniture paintings. According to Ridolfi, Giorgione painted for an ornamental setting the very moment when Diana and her nymphs “discovered the beautiful Callisto’s violated body.” By adding the end panels, however, the artist elaborates the human element of this archetypal story, tracing events that span over sixteen years, from the meeting of Jupiter and Callisto to the adolescence of their son. Taking advantage of the cassa’s scrolling format, he treats a well-known episode as an incident in a continuous history, having preceding causes and subsequent reverberations. The three-part narrative emphasizes the theme of metamorphosis, as Callisto changes from virgin nymph, to mother, to bear – “the huntress become the hunted,” as Ovid recounts.

While the format of a large cassa afforded Schiavone space to enrich the story of Callisto, his contemporary, Tintoretto, elaborated multiple tales across a set of seven chests (Figs. 2.49-2.55; cat. no. 58). These panels, dated ca. 1545-1550, represent episodes from the Old Testament in oblong picture fields, which permit a bold, panoramic view of events. They monumentalize the cassa form by size – each of the segments was initially over a meter in length – and serialization. In their original configuration, the works presented an imposing suite of furniture; unusual for their documentation over a period of centuries, the pictures are known to have remained in their associated chests at least until the 1630s, when they were part of the Buckingham collection. They were most likely executed with workshop assistance, providing insight into Tintoretto’s compositional methods and the participation of other hands in paintings produced under his name.

In contrast to this large narrative assembly, smaller chests and coffers contained briefer, often enigmatic and allusive scenes. Among these works, four panels now conserved in Washington, D.C., and Padua, depicting pastoral and mythological characters in pocket-sized landscapes, are exemplary (Figs. 2.56-2.59; cat. no. 20). All measuring about twelve by nineteen to twenty centimeters, they share details of provenance, and appear to have descended from the same original ensemble.

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54 Ridolfi’s account of ornamental paintings in the life of Giorgione: “Diana con molte Ninfe ignude ad una fonte, che della bella Calisto le violate membra scoprivano” (Maraviglie, vol. 1, 98).
55 For Tintoretto’s Biblical cycle, its composition, original dimensions, and later history, see Ch. 3 and catalogue entry below.
56 Documents frequently record small painted boxes, such as the “schatola con certi colorj” listed among the possessions of Jacopo Palma il Vecchio in 1529 (Ludwig, “Archivalische Beiträge zur Geschichte der Venezianischen Malerei” (1903), 76). The Washington-Padua cycle represents a rare survival of this type of work.
Physical traces suggest that at least one of the panels, *Venus and Cupid* (Fig. 2.58), adorned the front of a moveable drawer. On the right and left edges of its support, the remnants of eight dovetail joins appear. These devices, developed by Italian woodworkers during the fourteenth century, allowed lengths of wood to be attached perpendicularly to the edges of a flat panel, fixing it in place as the front of a box or drawer. Over the next two hundred years, the techniques of dovetail joining underwent successive refinements, culminating in the invention of the modern chest of drawers at the turn of the seventeenth century.57

Was *Venus and Cupid* originally conceived as a drawer front of this type? The joins are flush with the edge of the painted surface, indicating that the painting and carpentry were coordinated; but it is also possible that the panel was decorated independently, and that a skilled woodworker added the joins later. Whatever the arrangement, the picture was likely first executed inside an engaged frame, as signified by clear barbes on the edges of the paint surface.58

Further clues are provided by changes imposed on *Venus and Cupid*. The panel once contained a keyhole, now visible in X-ray as a small area of wood loss at the upper center of the picture, above and between the heads of the figures. At some point, the gap was filled and overpainted. The keyhole’s location, not interrupting the appearance of the figures, further strengthens the panel’s identification as an early drawer front, and connects the picture with another ornamental work from Giorgione’s circle that also displays traces of a keyhole (Fig. 2.105; cat. no. 19).59

The evidence of the remaining works in this group is less uniform. The panel supports of the *Idyll* and *Leda* (Figs. 2.56-2.57) bear no signs of dovetail joins; it is possible that their edges were trimmed slightly to remove traces of such elements, since the panels are about 1.3 cm shorter in the horizontal direction than the Washington *Venus and Cupid*. The upper area of the

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All four panels come from the Falier collection at Caselle d’Asolo near Castelfranco (Banzato, *La Quadreria Emo Capodilista*, 62; Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, vol. 1, 216-217).

57 For the development of dovetail joins and the chest of drawers, Thornton, *Italian Renaissance Interior*, 92, 201, and Santini, *Mille Mobili Veneti*, vol. 3, 53-57. The presence of dovetail joins excludes the possibility that the panel formed the lid of a box, since the joins would have fixed the panel in place rather than allowing it to be hinged or removed. I thank Joanna Dunn for her extensive analysis of *Venus and Cupid*. Further information provided by an unpublished conservation report by Carol Christensen (1992).

58 Barbes, or raised lips of gesso and pigment, are created along the edge of a painted surface when the gesso and pigment layers are applied after the frame has been attached; they are typical of pictures painted within engaged frames.

59 Giorgione’s *Judith* also harbors evidence of a filled-in keyhole; see discussion of Doors and Shutters, and catalogue entry below.
Idyll’s reverse displays incisions or notches, which were probably used as guides for inserting the panel into its original decorative configuration. The Astrologer (Fig. 2.59) is fixed to a wooden surround, making its reverse and panel ends difficult to analyze. All three pictures display barbes, revealing that they, too, were probably painted in contact with engaged frames.

Overall, the four works’ shared dimensions and format imply that they were conceived as an ensemble, although only Venus and Cupid may actually have decorated a drawer. Perhaps the panels were attached to a piece of furniture containing a single painted drawer flanked by fixed pictures of a similar size. A cassetta of this kind would have been novel in the early sixteenth century; the modern art of cabinetry developed out of such specialized designs.

Friezes

The frieze, or fregio, was an element of Venetian interior decoration derived from ancient architecture. The classical frieze belonged to the entablature resting on the load-bearing columns of a building, allowing ornament to play freely across its surface. Fragments of sculpted friezes were present in Venice, as evidenced by the “medium-relief frieze with figures, made of marble...an ancient work,” noted by Michiel in the home of Francesco Zio in 1521. These designs were recreated on Gothic and Renaissance exteriors, such as the façade of the Ca’ Foscari on the Grand Canal (ca. 1452), and they soon migrated indoors as well. There, the frieze constituted a horizontal zone running across a wall or around a room; it could be sculpted, gilded, painted, or outfitted as a shelf. In this setting, it was conflated with the cornice [soaza], the projecting surface that traditionally lay just above the frieze.

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60 The edges of the Idyll and Leda show some darkening, suggesting that they have been altered. I thank Antonella Daolio of the Museo Civico for conducting this analysis. I am also grateful to Patricia Favero of the Phillips Collection for access to the Astrologer. For the presence of incisions or notches on the Idyll’s reverse, Pellegrini in Dal Pozzolo and Puppi, Giorgione, 419.

61 Venus and Cupid displays different handling than the other three panels and also reveals traces of underdrawing, but these differences do not exclude the works’ belonging to the same set; see catalogue entry below. For the ornamental cassetta and cabinetmaking during the sixteenth century, Thornton, Italian Renaissance Interior, 204.

62 “El frizo de mezo rilieuo a figure, de marmo. è opera antica” (Michiel, Notizia d’Opere del Disegno (ed. Frimmel), 55). Zio’s frieze has not been identified with any surviving works (Schmitter, Display of Distinction, 109). Though transcribed as “1512” in most print editions of the Notizia, the date of Michiel’s visit to Zio’s collection was probably 1521 (ibid., 39 n. 5; Fletcher, “Marcantonio Michiel, ‘Che Ha Veduto Assai,’” Mi. 602; Rylands, Palma Vecchio, 19-21). Similar fragments of scrolling reliefs (though not necessarily originally belonging to friezes) were found in the Grimani collection of ancient statuary, bequeathed to the Republic in 1593; examples listed in Perry, “The Statuario Publico of the Venetian Republic,” 120-128. For the classical entablature with its architrave, frieze, and cornice, Parker, Concise Glossary of Terms, 82-83, 113, 125.

63 See, for example, an oblong sculpted interior frieze now in the Princeton University Art Museum (inv. no. 1947-340). For Ca’ Foscari and the frieze on its façade, Goy, Venice, 261, 262-263; Concina, History of Venetian...
The Venetian fregio or soaza often took the form of a simple bracket or ledge supporting a row of objects for display. In Gabriel Vendramin’s collection, antiquities stood on a “large high cornice” or soazon de sopra, and another “large cornice” [cornison] was installed in the Sala delle Teste of the Palazzo Ducale around 1524 to support marble busts. The same use is recorded in a variety of sixteenth-century paintings and prints. The front bedroom of Carpaccio’s Birth of the Virgin (Fig. 2.60; 1504; Bergamo, Accademia Carrara) contains a cornice shelf holding jars, a candle and bowl, and fruits; a related device in the adjacent chamber carries a row of plates (Fig. 2.61). These two soaze hang at different heights, unlike the frieze and cornice of classical architecture. By Carpaccio’s time, these elements had floated away from their ancient structural context and begun to operate independently in the decorative vocabulary of the home. During the later sixteenth century, they became increasingly elaborate; a pinewood soaza originally from the Palazzo Benci in Florence is richly carved with cartouches, egg-and-dart mouldings, and human faces (1581-1621; London, Victoria & Albert Museum).

The functional cornice sometimes held hooks for hanging utensils or ornaments below, an apparatus which recalled the contemporary restello. A surgery textbook published in Venice in 1583 includes a woodcut illustration of a bedroom, here serving as an operating theater, whose left wall supports two cornices running close to the ceiling. The upper ledge holds assorted containers, while the lower is fitted with hooks from which dangle a picture and

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64 In an inventory of 1567, a listing of Vendramin’s antiquities is followed by the note, “le qual tutte cose erano nel soazon de sopra con tempani atorno depinti de man de misier Titian come hanno ditto” (Ravà, “Il ‘Camerino delle Antigaglie’ di Gabriele Vendramin,” 161). See also Lauber, “Per un Ritratto di Gabriele Vendramin,” 61-62. For the tempani painted by Titian, see discussion of Picture Covers below. This documentary reference to Vendramin’s soazon is rare, as most cornices were considered part of the fixed carpentry of the house and were not listed by notaries (Palumbo Fossati, “La Casa Veneziana,” 466). For the cornice in the Sala delle Teste of the Palazzo Ducale, Perry, “Cardinal Domenico Grimani’s Legacy of Ancient Art to Venice,” 220, 224, and Luchs, Tullio Lombardo, 155 n. 72. Similar cornice shelves appeared elsewhere in Italy, and were described by Ulisse Aldovrandi and Raffaello Borghini; see Franzoni, “Rimembranze d’Infinite Cose,” 312-313; Thornton, Scholar in His Study, 103-104; and n. 76 below.

65 Cornice shelves appear in other works of Carpaccio, as well. The foreground left wall in his Vision of St. Augustine includes a shelf at shoulder height. In addition, Carpaccio’s drawing of musicians in a chamber depicts a high shelf holding instruments and books (see discussion of Musical Instruments below). For the cornice shelf from the Palazzo Benci, Brown, “The Venetian Casa,” 56, and Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, At Home in Renaissance Italy, 353.

66 For the restello and its hooks, see the section below. For the use of hooks on the soaza, Palumbo Fossati, “La Casa Veneziana,” 466.
another object, perhaps instruments of devotion (Fig. 2.62; Venice, Biblioteca Marciana). A comparable arrangement appears in Carpaccio’s *Vision of St. Augustine*: the small room at rear left is bordered by a high *soaza* with projecting rungs, to which geometrical tools are attached (Figs. 2.63-2.64; ca. 1502-1507; Venice, Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni). Such hooks, or *uncini*, might also hold tapestries or leather wall hangings in place beneath the cornice.

In addition to providing shelf and display space, the Venetian interior frieze could be a purely ornamental sculpted, gilded, or painted detail. An inventory of 1569 refers to a “room where the painted cornices are” [camera dove sono le soaze depente]. In 1829, Emanuele Cicogna viewed a similar chamber in the former home of the Renaissance collector Andrea Odoni on the Fondamenta del Gaffaro: “an upstairs room which served as a bedroom with an alcove, the frieze of which is carved and painted in chiaroscuro with little nude Venuses and *amorini*, I know not by what hand, but certainly of the Cinquecento.” This frieze may have been a remnant of decorations by Girolamo da Treviso the Younger, who frescoed the façade of Odoni’s house in 1531-1532, and, according to Vasari, painted an upper room of the palace as well. The same bedchamber probably contained, besides Girolamo’s detailing, a painted bedstead, doors, and chests, which are discussed below. Together, these elements would have constituted a sumptuous assembly of pictorial ornament in color and chiaroscuro.

While Cicogna was the last to record the frieze decoration of Odoni’s “upper room,” another well-known example of this type is still visible *in situ* in a chamber of the Casa Giorgione in Castelfranco Veneto (Fig. 2.65; ca. 1500). Positioned just beneath the ceiling and executed in chiaroscuro of yellow monochrome with white highlights and bistre shading, the Giorgionesque fresco depicts an assortment of cryptic symbols and written maxims, alluding to the liberal and mechanical arts, the devouring effects of time, and the vanishing power of

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67 G.A. della Croce, *Cirugia Universale e Perfetta di Tutte le Parti Pertinenti all’Ottimo Chirurgo* (Venice, 1583); see Alberici, *Il Mobile Veneto*, 86 (which, however, focuses on the bed represented in this woodcut). For the apparatus typically accompanying Venetian devotional pictures, see section on Origins and Analogues above.

68 For the 1569 inventory describing the room with painted cornices, Santore, “Julia Lombardo, ‘Somtuosa Meretrize,’” 75.


70 For the decorative paintings attributed to Calcar and Savoldo in Odoni’s bedroom, see the section on Beds below.
virtue. Some of the painted objects appear to stand illusionistically on a cornice at the fresco’s lower border, just as actual objects rested on the soaze of many homes. The design belongs to a rich northern Italian tradition of interior friezes, many of which have vanished or survive only in fragments today.71

Frieze details of this kind once completed larger decorative programs: Sansovino’s guide to Venice evokes the bedrooms whose cornices, “loaded with gold,” complement the gilded beds and chests in these chambers. The camera d’oro of a Cornaro family palace displayed a mantelpiece supported by gilded caryatids, cloths of gold on the walls, and a gilded cornice estimated at eighteen thousand ducats in value. Carved and gilded soaze could also be found at the Mocenigo palace at San Stae and the Palazzo Donà dalle Rose at Santi Apostoli. 72 In Mansueti’s Healing of the Daughter of Ser Nicolò Benvegnudo (Fig. 2.20), the upper back wall of an imagined bedroom is adorned with a strip of gold, black, and red foliate design, above a corbelled motif. It unifies the ornately wrought fireplace hood with the gilded and painted ceiling, a common role for domestic friezes. Whether abstract or figurative, fregio elements were closely connected to embellished ceilings, quadri riportati, fireplace decorations, and overdoor paintings. 73

71 For the Castelfranco fresco, whose attribution is controversial, Rearick, “Chi Fu il Maestro di Giorgione?,” 191; Sgarbi, “Il ‘Fregio’ di Castelfranco e la Cultura Bramantesca”; Brown, Venice and Antiquity, 253-254, 256-259; Anderson, Giorgione, 324, 326; Hope, “The Attribution of Some Paduan Paintings,” 95; Pignatti and Pedrocchi, Giorgione, 200-201; Gentili, “The Castelfranco Frieze”; D’Amicone, “Le Arti dell’Oracolo”; Dal Pozzolo and Puppi, Giorgione, 286-291, 420-421. A precedent for this work is the fresco cycle by Pisanello uncovered at the Palazzo Ducale of Mantua in 1969; usually dated ca. 1436-1444, it includes a frieze depicting a repeating pattern of English royal livery collars (see Toesca, “A Frieze by Pisanello”). Also in the Ducal Palace at Mantua, Isabella d’Este’s Appartamento di Santa Croce in the Corte Vecchia was decorated during the 1520s with several painted friezes, some attributed to Giulio Romano (Brown, Isabella d’Este in the Ducal Palace in Mantua, 125-127, 192-193, 195-199). A fragment of another sixteenth-century frescoed frieze survives from the Palazzo del Podestà in Rimini, suggesting that this genre was widespread during the period (Pasini, “Un Frammento di Fregio Cinquecentesco a Rimini”).

72 “Et le camere per lo piu sono adornate di lettiere & di casse fatte a oro, con pitture, & con cornici parimente cariche d’oro” (Sansovino, Venetia Citta Nobilissima, 142v.). For the camera d’oro of the Palazzo Cornaro, Molmenti, Venice, vol. 4, 49. Bistort notes the gilded wooden cornices of the Mocenigo palace and the Palazzo Donà dalle Rose (Il Magistrato alle Pompe, 14 n. 2).

73 Venetian ceiling decorations discussed in Schulz, Venetian Painted Ceilings of the Renaissance; Echols, “Titian’s Venetian Soffitti”; Wolters, Architektur und Ornament, 232-263; Brown, Private Lives, 71, 248-250; and Rossi, “I Soffitti Veneziani.” Among the best known examples of Venetian ceiling or soffitto decoration is Tintoretto’s canvas of the Contest between Apollo and Marsyas (1544-1545; Hartford, Wadsworth Athenæum Museum of Art), which once appeared along with a pendant work in the home of Pietro Aretino, and was praised by him in a letter of February 1545 (Lettere sull’Arte, vol. 2, 52-53). See Schulz, op. cit., 25, 117; Pallucchini and Rossi, Tintoretto, vol. 1, 143-144; Cadogan, Wadsworth Athenæum Paintings II, 244-247; Echols in Falomir, Tintoretto, 196-199; Ilchman et al., Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, 116-119. For Venetian fireplace ornaments, Kaszubowski-Manych, Studien zu Venezianischen Kaminen der Renaissance; Wolters, op. cit., 163-175; and Attardi, Il Camino Veneto del Cinquecento.
During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the interior frieze evolved from a marginal detail into a venue for painted narrative cycles, individual panels or canvases built into wooden wainscoting or mounted in a continuous ribbon around the room. These were shorter than \textit{spalliera} paintings and longer in length; though the precise height at which they hung on the wall is unknown, it was likely well above eye level, similar to the position of many devotional pictures (Figs. 2.66-2.67; ca. 1490-1500; Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia).\textsuperscript{74} Vasari alludes to early Tuscan examples in his life of Dello Delli, describing the Quattrocento practice of painting on “the cornices that went all around” [\textit{le cornici che ricignevano intorno}].\textsuperscript{75} In the 1580s, the theorist Giovanni Battista Armenini wrote that pictured friezes, while mostly “partitioned with diverse fantasies of bizarre and cheerful things,” also could be filled with histories and poems, “which in themselves have some subject.” Giovanni Paolo Lomazzo, too, discussed these works, dedicating a chapter of his 1584 treatise to friezes in a variety of settings.\textsuperscript{76}

While Vasari, Armenini, and Lomazzo focused on \textit{fregi} from diverse regions, particularly Florence and Rome, pictures of the same type soon appeared in Venice as well. They proved popular in homes, where they quickly outnumbered \textit{spalliera} paintings.\textsuperscript{77} Examples from the circles of Bonifacio de’ Pitati, Schiavone, Tintoretto, and Veronese, among others, still survive. Incorporated into the wall articulation, these images inevitably recalled the ancient cornice and frieze, and their lengthy format allowed for narrative elaboration. Yet they were divided into

\textsuperscript{74} The term “wainscoting” refers generally to wooden panelling that lines the interior walls of a house or other edifice (Parker, \textit{Concise Glossary of Terms}, 320; see also Barriault, \textit{Spalliera Paintings}, 13). It was common across Europe, emerging as early as the fourteenth century in England and reaching its apex in the salons of eighteenth-century France (Braudel, \textit{Structures of Everyday Life}, 296). For Venetian carpentry and the construction of interior panelling, see n. 85 below. For \textit{spalliera} paintings, see section below and cat. nos. 8, 77. For the hanging of devotional paintings high on the wall in Venetian homes, Kasl, “Holy Households,” 66.

\textsuperscript{75} “E che è più, si dipignevano in cotal maniera non solamente i cassoni, ma i lettucci, le spalliere, le cornici che ricignevano intorno” (Vasari, \textit{Vite}, vol. 2, 148). This passage discussed by Barriault, \textit{Spalliera Paintings}, 9-11. Wackernagel suggests that many Florentine paintings today identified as chest decorations actually belonged to the genre of wainscoting, \textit{cornici}, or \textit{cornicioni} (\textit{World of the Florentine Renaissance Artist}, 156-158); see also Schiaparelli, \textit{La Casa Fiorentina e i suoi Arredi}, 168-174. For the Florentine genre of \textit{cornice} and \textit{cornicione} paintings, Barriault, op. cit., 42-44.


\textsuperscript{77} In Venice, \textit{fregio} paintings were more common than \textit{spalliere}; see catalogue below.
sectioned compartments along the space of the wall, thus resembling framed works of art. Ultimately, these cycles spanned the divide between fixed architectural ornament and moveable easel pictures. The present study focuses on this neglected genre, which emerged in the city during the first decade of the sixteenth century.

The best known example of Venetian domestic fregi is a distinguished pair of works, dating from 1505-1510, by Andrea Mantegna and the workshop of Giovanni Bellini (Figs. 2.68-2.69; cat. no. 27). Oblong canvases of several meters in length each, they are fictive relief friezes, the figures rendered in monochrome against feigned backgrounds of colorful stone. The paintings are similar in height to the Giorgionesque frieze in Castelfranco and, likewise, meant to be positioned high on the wall and seen from below, as indicated by the way in which the figures at the rear sink behind those in the foreground. Mantegna’s image is spotlighted dramatically from the upper left, while Bellini’s is more ambiguously lit from a location close to the viewer’s; perhaps the pictures appeared to the right of a single window on the same wall, or adorned opposite sides of a room. Together, the pair would have presented an impressive register of antique scenes.

The history of these works’ commission illuminates their subsequent importance as a model for Venetian fregio paintings. Francesco Cornaro (ca. 1476-1541), who ordered the cycle for the decoration of a private palace, was a nephew of Queen Caterina Cornaro (1454-1510) and a scion of one of the great patrician families of Venice, claiming descent from the Roman gens Cornelia. From the aging Mantegna, he requested a painted celebration of his clan’s august origins. The immediate precursor of such a work would have been Botticelli’s spalliera cycle of the life of Saint Zenobius, dated circa 1500, which was commissioned by the Girolami family of Florence to suggest an illustrious genealogy including this patron saint of their city. The Cornaro, too, were eager to demonstrate their founding status in their native Republic; they averred a lineage going back through i lunghi – those few families who had established the first settlements at Rialto – to the Roman Cornelii themselves. Glorification of their roots was,

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78 Mantegna’s and Bellini’s canvases are both close to 74-75 cm in height, while the Castelfranco frieze measures from 76 to 78 cm high; see catalogue entry below and Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 257-258. For similarities between the two ensembles, Knox, “The Camerino of Francesco Corner,” 84 n. 13. Christiansen notes that Mantegna’s canvas was meant to be viewed di sotto in su (Martineau et al., *Andrea Mantegna*, 416); the same is true of Bellini’s matching work.
therefore, tantamount to a celebration of Venice’s own Roman beginnings.  

Mantegna answered with a scene from the Second Punic War of the third century B.C., in which Publius Cornelius Scipio Nasica, purportedly Francesco’s ancestor, receives a litter bearing a bust of the mother goddess Cybele. The young Scipio Nasica, at center, falls to his knees as the image of the goddess is carried forward, demonstrating the virtue that has earned him this honor. In the background at left, against the vivid yellow and red stone of the wall, appear the tombs of other prominent Cornelii – Scipio Nasica’s father and uncle. Itself commemorative of deceased family heroes, the event described by Mantegna thus forms a distant link in a chain of honorific remembrances of the Cornelian line.

The second canvas, completed by Giovanni Bellini and assistants after Mantegna’s death, narrates the virtuous action of another member of the family, Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus, who freed and restored the dowry of an Iberian hostage girl whom he could have acquired as a concubine. This episode, well known due to its appearance in Petrarch’s Africa, was often depicted on wedding chests and other images for the home. Bellini elaborated it into a full-scale procession over three meters long, in which the general and his soldiers demonstrate their continence and mercy as they receive the grateful maiden.

An innovative and prized commission, this ensemble offers a rich precedent for the genre of domestic fregio paintings. In Venice, these are the first major pictures to replace traditional sculpted, frescoed, or gilded decorative friezes, transforming the upper walls of an eminent home into a painted celebration of ancient virtue. Mantegna’s and Bellini’s scenes evoke strange settings far from the chamber in which they hang; in these distant times and places, valiant characters enact historic deeds and provide pointed examples for present-day action. Subsequent Venetian fregio cycles offer similar forms of visual and temporal escape while expounding on

79 For the Cornaro and their purported Roman origins as celebrated in this cycle, Brown, Venice and Antiquity, 232, 252-253. For further information about the commission, which was originally planned to include four canvases, see catalogue entry below and Brown, “Andrea Mantegna and the Cornaro of Venice.” The project was set in motion when Francesco’s brother, Cardinal Marco Cornaro (1478-1524), wrote to the Duke of Mantua requesting permission to commission a work from Mantegna (Barcham, “Il Caso Cornaro,” 184). The paintings of Botticelli’s St. Zenobius cycle are in London, National Gallery; New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art; and Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister (Barriault, Spalliera Paintings, 96, 153-154).

80 Braham, however, identifies the kneeling figure as Claudia Quinta, who proved her chastity by freeing the ship carrying the image of the goddess from a shoal at the mouth of the Tiber (“A Reappraisal of The Introduction of the Cult of Cybele at Rome,” 461), while others hold that the painting conflates the episodes of Claudia Quinta and Scipio Nasica. For the tombs of other members of the Cornelia family on the wall at left, Christiansen in Martineau et al., Andrea Mantegna, 415.

81 For the Continence of Scipio as a theme in Renaissance art, Hall, Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols, 275, and Anderson in Brown et al., Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, 158.
the exploits of mythological and historical heroes – from the fearsome Diana, punisher of lust and pride; to Judith, whose virtue and guile confound the lascivious Holofernes; to Coriolanus, who yields to his wife’s and mother’s entreaty not to attack his fellow Romans; to Psyche and Cupid, sufferers for a fated love (cat. nos. 75, 29, 52). Against appealingly remote backdrops, these protagonists face predicaments and passions familiar to their viewers.

While the format and historical bent of the Cornaro canvases remained a pervasive influence through the Cinquecento, later Venetian frieze paintings tended to be substantially reduced in scale, and may have been placed slightly lower on the wall for ease of viewing. Elements of a single, extensive ensemble of this type from the circle of Veronese survive today (Figs. 2.70-2.77; cat. no. 76). In addition to oblong paintings – “bislonghi” or “fregi,” as they were described in early inventories of a Genoese collection – the series originally included a number of complementary, narrower pictures portraying allegorical figures. These likely formed a frieze of at least seventeen small canvases hung around the margin of a room.

Portions of the cycle are dispersed across museums in Italy, Russia, and the United States, allowing a glimpse of its effect as a whole. Five long paintings, all under thirty centimeters in height, represent mythological episodes in landscapes, while the narrower allegorical pictures set the single figures of Minerva, Diana, and Painting in deep arched niches. In a miniature version of the artist’s frescoes at the Villa Maser, dating to around the same period, the canvases depict fanciful tales in an expansive scenery of trees, lakes, and mountains giving way to large skies. The accompanying personifications of wisdom and chastity, most likely interspersed with the longer works, underscore the artful and didactic nature of these stories, which illustrate the loves of Actaeon, Atalanta and Meleager, and Jupiter, among others.

Veronese’s paintings can be identified as fregi on the basis of visual and documentary evidence, but others require inference from their framing and format. A group of small Biblical scenes from the circle of Tintoretto (Figs. 2.78-2.81; cat. no. 55), for instance, appear within

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82 For further discussion of these fregio cycles, see catalogue entries below. Mantegna’s and Bellini’s paintings may also have inspired Dosso Dossi’s series of ten frieze canvases (ca. 1517-1522), depicting scenes from the Aeneid; the works hung on the upper walls of the camerino of Duke Alfonso d’Este. For this group, Humfrey and Lucco, Dosso Dossi, 130-132, 147-153.

83 For documentary evidence of the Veronese cycle, see catalogue entry below. From the late sixteenth century onwards, the term bislengo was frequently used to describe frieze-like pictures. Two inventories of 1656, for example, note “quattro quadri bislunghi con soaze d’ebano” and “sette quadretti bislunghi con soazette dorate” (Levi, Le Collezioni Veneziane d’Arte e d’Antichità, vol. 2, 30, 32). Veronese’s fregi were probably similar to the frieze of sixteen landscape paintings displayed in a bedroom of the Este palace at Ferrara in 1598; see Hope, “The ‘Camerini d’Alabastro’ of Alfonso d’Este,” 643.
frames of scrolled and fluted wood, the apertures having a distinctive lobed shape. These frames are original, as indicated by the picture outlines, which yield to the wooden profiles, and by the presence of barbes signifying that the paint was applied after their engagement.\textsuperscript{84} Hung end to end in horizontal sequence, the segments would have appeared as if set into a continuous pattern of wooden panelling, and may have been designed to match existing wainscoting installed by a carpenter or \textit{marangon}.\textsuperscript{85}

Other \textit{fregi}, meanwhile, give away their function by their elongated lateral dimensions and short height, following ancient friezes. In 1607, the artist Gaspare Mola described four such paintings from the circle of Schiavone as “quattro quadri a uso di fregi,” revealing an intuitive association between this format and the frieze setting (Figs. 2.82-2.85; cat. no. 54). The panels, depicting scenes from the Trojan War, are about 35 centimeters in height and over a meter long each; in their backgrounds, opulently colored views of wooded lands and open sea set off the dramatic events of the war and suggest their mythic scale. Together, these works probably hung as a running frieze in a Venetian interior, before passing to the Duke of Savoy in the early seventeenth century.

In some cases, the study of dimensions and format reveals that a panel could have served as either a frieze or a chest decoration. The \textit{Legend of the Infant Servius Tullius} and \textit{Finding of Moses} from the circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati (Figs. 2.26, 2.86; cat. nos. 34, 32), for example, are single paintings over 100 centimeters in length each, and would have fit within both a large \textit{cassa} and a \textit{fregio} configuration. The occasional difficulties in distinguishing between these types are suggested by Schubring, who argues that a number of Venetian ornamental paintings traditionally identified as chest ornaments were in fact built into wainscoting. The two genres were closely related; in some instances, an artist may have created a generic panel to be differentiated as a \textit{cassa} or \textit{fregio} picture at a later stage. In the absence of definitive evidence, it is assumed here that such panels were meant to fill either setting, in accordance with the painter’s or customer’s final preference; these works are labelled “\textit{Cassa/Fregio}” in the

\textsuperscript{84} The original framing of these paintings was verified by Gianni Peretti, Curator, Museo di Castelvecchio, communication of 31 January 2006.

\textsuperscript{85} Carpenters were often commissioned to construct interior elements such as staircases, partitions, floors, walls, and ceilings. In 1451, for example, a carpenter named Baldassera contracted to make canopied beds, cupboards, dividing walls, window frames, and wooden doors, and to enclose part of a room to create a wooden closet in the house of Lorenzo Dolfin at S. Justina; a wood-carver was also hired to provide decorative moulding (Connell, \textit{Employment of Sculptors and Stonemasons}, 159).
In addition to surviving in detached form, Venetian frieze paintings are recorded by contemporary sources and later biographies. In his life of Tintoretto, Ridolfi describes a picture by the artist narrating the departure of Queen Caterina Cornaro from the isle of Cyprus: “there on the beach are represented the troops of cavaliers and ladies who attend her as she boards the galley on the arm of her brother,” he writes. The scene is set “into the frieze of a room” \[nella parte di fregio d’una stanza\] in the \[casa grande\] of the Cornaro family; whether Mantegna’s and Bellini’s friezes hung in the same building is unknown, though that earlier cycle must have provided the inspiration for Tintoretto’s work. A possible candidate for this painting portrays Caterina disembarking from a boat in the company of crowds (Fig. 2.87). Despite some superficial differences between this scene and the one described by Ridolfi, the image was clearly once intended as an historical frieze recounting the Queen’s abdication.  

In the same house, Ridolfi records, members of Veronese’s family workshop created a “lovely frieze” \[vago fregio\] – probably as a pendant to Tintoretto’s – depicting a meeting between the Queen and Doge Agostino Barbarigo. This work can be securely identified with a painting that appeared on the Venetian antiquities market in 1992 (Fig. 2.88); its location is now unknown. Overall, despite the loss of associated pictures, the records of these two friezes substantiate Ridolfi’s reports of ornamental paintings in particular homes. They also suggest that the Cornaro favored the \[fregio\] form, with its ancient pedigree and distinguished connotations, for

\[86\] As noted in the discussion of chests above, smaller \[cassa\] paintings typically measured about 15 x 40 cm, while panels that could function as either \[cassa or fregio\] decorations were 100 cm or more in length. Schubring argues that Giorgione’s series of mythological pictures, described by Ridolfi as \[cassa\] decorations, were \[fregi\] instead (\[Cassoni\], 168, 176). Schubring also identifies Titian’s \[Sacred and Profane Love\] and other Venetian paintings as “Cornicebilder” (ibid., 393, 417). Wackernagel makes similar claims about Florentine ornamental paintings (see n. 75 above).

\[87\] “…nella casa detta la grande de’ Cornari nella parte di fregio d’una stanza vedesi la Regina Caterina Cornara partirsì dall’Isola di Cipro, e sopra la spiaggia finte schiere di Cavalieri e di Dame, mentre ella monta in galea à mano col fratello” (Ridolfi, \[Maraviglie\], vol. 2, 55; idem, \[Vite dei Tintoretto\], 82; translation in idem, \[Life of Tintoretto\], 61). The “casa detta la grande de’ Cornari” was the family palace on the Grand Canal at San Maurizio, one of several impressive properties owned by the Cornaro in Venice; for this house, Howard, \[Jacopo Sansovino\], 138-146; Romanelli, \[Ca’ Corner della Ca’ Granda\]; Brown, \[Private Lives\], 37-39. For discussion of the uncertain original location of Bellini’s and Mantegna’s Cornaro friezes, see cat. no. 27 below. According to von Hadeln, Tintoretto’s work later appeared in the Palazzo Giustiniani-Recanati (Ridolfi, \[Maraviglie\], vol. 2, 55 n. 1). The proposed candidate for this \[fregio\] is illustrated in Romanelli, op. cit., 90-91, where it is entitled “The Disembarkation of Caterina Cornaro at Venice after her Abdication” and attributed to Antonio Vassilacchi (l’Aliense). It may be in Palazzo Mocenigo in Venice (Patricia Fortini Brown, verbal communication, Dec. 2009).

\[88\] Ridolfi’s life of Carlo, Gabriele, and Benedetto Caliari notes: “In Venetia nella casa detta la grande de’ Signori Cornari colorirono un vago fregio, in cui la Regina Caterina Cornara viene incontrata dal Doge Agostino Barbarigo e dal Senato, seguita da nobili Matrone vestite di bianco, servite da veggosi fanciulli” (\[Maraviglie\], vol. 1, 356). For the work’s provenance, history up to 1995, and attribution, Pignatti and Pedroc, \[Veronese\], vol. 2, 524.
commemorations of their family and its achievements. By representing Caterina’s abdication and her meeting with Doge Barbarigo in this setting, Tintoretto and Veronese link recent events in the lives of the Cornaro and their city to the mythic history recounted in Mantegna’s and Bellini’s earlier frieze paintings. They imply a continuity between the late exploits of the Cornaro clan and the heroism of their legendary ancestors, Scipio Nasica and Scipio Africanus. Conversely, by depicting recorded, verifiable episodes in the contemporary memory of Venetians, they lend Mantegna’s and Bellini’s ancient stories a similar patina of immediacy and truth.

In addition to Tintoretto’s fregio portraying Caterina Cornaro, Ridolfi’s biography notes youthful paintings by the artist on “a frieze around a mezzanine” [un fregio intorno a un mezzato] in the home of the Miani family at the Carità. Representing a variety of stories, including the course of human life, the abduction of Helen, and “other inventions,” the images were conceived by Tintoretto in the style of Bonifacio and Schiavone – two other prominent practitioners of fregio painting whose works he would have seen during his training.89

While the friezes enumerated by Ridolfi in the life of Tintoretto no longer remain in situ, his notes reveal that they comprised a significant part of the young painter’s production. Elsewhere in the Maraviglie, Ridolfi describes pictures of the same kind by Paolo Veronese, Jacopo Palma il Giovane, and Pietro Malombra. This last, according to the author, created several “friezes for rooms” [fregi per Camere] illuminating marine and mythological themes.90 Veronese painted in Palazzo Trevisan on the island of Murano, “in four embrasures in the frieze” [in quattro vani nel fregio], the figures of Music, Study, Astrology, and Fortune.91

89 “Dipinse il Tintoretto, mentre era giovinetto, nelle case de’ Miani alla Carità un fregio intorno a un mezzato, in una parte del quale figurò il corso dell’humana vita. Nelle altre il ratto di Elena con altre inventioni, contrafacendo in quelle la maniera di Bonifacio e dello Schiavone, con li quali praticato haveva” (Ridolfi, Maraviglie, vol. 2, 51-52; idem, Vite dei Tintoretto, 78). The cycle is now lost (Pallucchini and Rossi, Tintoretto, vol. 1, 261); for its relation to other decorative works by the artist, Echols, Tintoretto and Venetian Painting, 220-221. For the influence of Bonifacio and Schiavone on Tintoretto, and the young artist’s likely training with Bonifacio, Cottrell, Bonifacio’s Enterprise, 247-311, and idem, “Painters in Practise.” See also discussion of Workshops and Authorship in Ch. 1 above.

90 Ridolfi’s life of Malombra: “…tra le singolari cose da lui dipinte furono alcuni fregi per Camere, ch’egli fece in casa Grimana alli Servi, in casa Molina à San Gregorio, & in casa Giustiniana à San Mosè con Dei Marinî e Tritoni con lunghe barbe e marinesche carni, coronati di giunchi, che suonano corni ritorti, altri portano trofei de’ pesci, di perle, e di coralli, e tra questi miransi Galatea, Venere, le Nereide, che festeggiano con gli amanti loro, rappresentate con molta vaghezza, & in quelle più deliciose forme, che si soglion descrivere dalle penne de’ Poeti, & in casa Gradenico se ne veggono degli amori di Psiche; & in altre molte; ma basteranno gli accennati per dimostrare quanto fosse il Malombra valoroso in tali spiegature” (Maraviglie, vol. 2, 158).

91 On the island of Murano, “nel Palagio del Signor Camillo Trivisano,” Veronese painted “in quattro vani nel fregio…la Musica, lo Studio, l’Astrologia e la Fortuna…” These pictures complemented a cycle of ceiling paintings
Giovane, meanwhile, adorned one Venetian home with friezes depicting children [*fregi con fanciulli*]. These works were mentioned earlier, as well. As noted in Ch. 1 above, in a letter of 1548 to Bonifacio de’ Pitati, Pietro Aretino praised the “little histories” or *istoriette* by the artist in the home of the procurator Giovanni da Legge. Although these paintings have occasionally been identified as *spalliere*, their description as small, combined with the variety of known *fregi* in the style of Bonifacio, strongly imply the latter configuration. The *istoriette* were probably serial friezes resembling the *History of Rome* or *Astrological Scenes* from his circle (cat. nos. 29, 37). This identification is reinforced by the author’s remark that “if [the paintings] were printed on many sheets, they could appear in any edition and be sold dearly.”

In addition to the written record, limited physical evidence about the hanging of Venetian *fregi* survives. In the Sala del Maggior Consiglio of the Palazzo Ducale, Tintoretto and his pupils decorated the cornice just beneath the ceiling with a series of portraits of the Republic’s first sixty-six Doges, paintings described by Ridolfi as “a number of Doges divided in the frieze of the cornice” [*un numero di Dogi divisati nel fregio della cornice*]. These paintings replaced earlier dogal portraits, also positioned above a cornice around the upper zone of the room’s walls; the paintings were begun by Guariento in the fourteenth century and renewed by Gentile

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93 Letter of May 1548: “Nel vedere alcune istoriette del cavaliere da Legge, di vostra mano propria, in cambio del compiacermi l’animo in sì dilettevole magistero, divengo rosso nel viso…certamente, s’elleno fussero istampate in tante carte, potrino comparire tra qualunque foglio si vede di pregio in la compra, bontà del disegno” (Aretino, *Lettere sull’Arte*, vol. 2, 239); for the full text of the letter, see n. 226 in Ch. 1 above. The editors of Aretino’s letters propose a link between these *istoriette* and Bonifacio’s decorative paintings (ibid., vol. 3, pt. 1, 413). By contrast, the friezes to which Aretino refers at the end of his letter are probably Bonifacio’s large-scale paintings for the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi. For translation and discussion of this letter in the context of Bonifacio’s ornamental production, Cottrell, *Bonifacio’s Enterprise*, 22-23, 242-243, and idem, “Painters in Practise,” 55. Herman identifies the *istoriette* as *spalliera* paintings (*Out of the Shadow of Titian*, 133-135).
Bellini and other artists beginning in 1474. Other chambers of the Ducal Palace, such as the Sala del Collegio and the Sala del Consiglio dei Dieci (Fig. 2.89), contain similar running motifs in the narrow horizontal space above grand history and religious pictures. Mostly dating to the era of reconstruction after the 1577 fire at the Palazzo Ducale, these works can be considered a conscious response to and monumentalization of the Cinquecento Venetian domestic frieze form.⁹⁴

Some private homes, too, contain intact *fregio* paintings. In a room of the Palazzo Contarini delle Figure at San Samuele, rectangular and oval pictures in gilded frames run as a band over Alessandro Vittoria’s ornately carved fireplace (Fig. 2.90). The Sala dei Cuoi d’Oro of the Palazzo Vendramin-Calergi, likewise, contains a long painted frieze above its *camino* (Fig. 2.91). The latter ensemble is most likely composed of two separate *fregi* from another location, which were transplanted to the palace during the nineteenth century; the dating and authorship of the Contarini frieze are uncertain.⁹⁵ Like surviving chests, these cycles offer a general sense of how decorative works appeared in their initial settings, but are inadequately documented and show signs of possible alteration since the sixteenth century. The historian must turn instead to period sources and the many small paintings, now framed as easel pictures in museums and private collections, of which this once widespread genre was composed.

*Beds*

In 1476, Venice’s sumptuary authorities condemned the “immoderate and excessive monies that are being spent in this land” on the adornment of beds, a sure sign that, by the later Quattrocento, *letti* had become objects of noteworthy splendor.⁹⁶ Their magnificence only increased over the next century: the visitor Philippe de Commynes marvelled at the plethora of

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“gilded beds” in Venetian chambers upon his visit of 1494, and in 1581, Sansovino too boasted of the city’s bedsteads of gold. By 1615, Vincenzo Scamozzi was describing an ebony and jewel-studded bedstead among the treasures of the Republic’s grand homes. Such accounts, distributed widely through print, lent a highly public dimension to what were ordinarily the most private objects in the house. Gilded, carved, bejewelled, and painted, then decked with precious linens and hangings, Venetian beds possessed a material richness that symbolized and advertised the copiousness and fertility of the families who owned them.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the term *letto* referred to a structure supporting a mattress for sleeping, while *lettiera* described a more massive bedstead with headboard. The Venetian *lettiera* was typically composed of a basic frame, the *fondo*, sometimes elevated on a platform or surrounded by chests, and attached to an architectural headboard. Carpaccio’s *Dream of St. Ursula* (Fig. 2.92; ca. 1490-1500; Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia) depicts a representative though especially lavish bedstead, admiringly called “sumptuous” by Ridolfi in his life of the artist.

Inventories, wills, and other documents reveal the bed to be the most important piece of furniture in the Venetian Renaissance home. One 1534 inventory, for example, lists “letti de diverse sorte no. quatordese” before any other item in the house, and also describes the bed coverings in detail (ASV, Proprio-Mobili, reg. 5, c. 370, IV; reprinted in Molmenti, *Venice*, vol. 4, 276-279). In many inventories and wills, beds are described individually, while other pieces of furniture are treated cumulatively. For the symbolic value of beds in Venetian culture, Palumbo Fossati, “La Casa Veneziana,” 468-470. McIver discusses the significance of beds in the female sphere in northern Italy (Women, Art, and Architecture in Northern Italy, esp. 145-148).

Related forms were the *carriola* (or *caviola* in Venetian dialect), a wheeled trundle bed that could be stored under a great bed, and the *lettuccio*, a daybed used as a seat (see discussion of Botticelli’s *Primavera* below). The mattress, pillows, linens, and other adornments were usually called the *fornimento* of the bed. For the structure, ornament, and terminology of Renaissance beds, as well as famous examples of this art, Bode, *Die Italienischen Hausmöbel der Renaissance*, 54; Schottmüller, *Wohnungskultur und Möbel der Italienischen Renaissance*, xxiii-xxiv; Covi, “A Documented Lettuccio for the Duke of Calabria”; Braham, “The Bed of Pierfrancesco Borgherini”; Alberici, *Il Mobile Veneto*, 33-35, 93; Trionfi Honorati, “A Proposito del ‘Lettuccio’”; Wackernagel, *World of the Florentine Renaissance Artist*, 158-159; Thornton, *Italian Renaissance Interior*, 111-167; Barriault, *Spalliera Paintings*, 28-30; Donatone, “Il Lettuccio Donato da Filippo Strozzi a Ferrante d’Aragona”; Sricchia Santoro, “Tra Napoli e Firenze”; Palumbo Fossati, “La Casa Veneziana,” 468-470; Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, 20-21; and Brown, “The Venetian Casa,” 60-61, among others (see notes below for further references).

Ridolfi writes of Carpaccio’s *St. Ursula* cycle: “Nel sesto [quadro] entro nobile stanza giace in sontuoso letto Sant’Orsola dormiente” (Maraviglie, vol. 1, 46). Syson discusses some pitfalls of using scenes from paintings as...
reminiscent of the façade of the church of San Zaccaria (ca. 1458-1490). Its main fields are painted green, a common color scheme associated with fertility, while a coat of arms further emphasizes themes of family and lineage. The bed includes a decorated footboard, considered a Venetian detail during this period. It also displays a relatively recent innovation, the four slender posts rising from the older structure of the lettierea, which support a tester and valance, and might hold curtains as well.\textsuperscript{101}

By Carpaccio’s time, the tradition of painted bedsteads in Venice was well established. Small pictures of the Madonna and Christ child, angels, or other sacred themes frequently decorated the headboard or adjacent wall; thought to influence the conception of beautiful and healthy children, this arrangement was widespread in medieval and Renaissance Europe. It received a uniquely Venetian formation in a local poem:

\begin{quote}
Sia benedeta l’arte del pitore,  
Ch’el m’à depento la camara mia;  
El m’à depento la camara e el leto,  
El m’à depento un anzolo parfeto.\textsuperscript{102}
\end{quote}

This custom lasted at least into the eighteenth century, as evidenced by the “little picture for the bed” [quadretino da Letto], portraying Christ and St. Roch, described in one Venetian inventory of 1709.\textsuperscript{103} Many extant devotional paintings must once have hung as quadrettini da letto, though these settings remain difficult to recover.

During the Renaissance, the range of paintings on beds expanded to include vernacular and literary subjects, coats of arms, and other personal devices. Few of these pictures are known today, though records hint at a tantalizing array of ornaments dating back to the early

\textsuperscript{101} The headboard of Ursula’s bed recalls not only contemporary church architecture, but also altarpiece frames such as that of Giovanni Bellini’s Frari triptych (1488; Venice, S. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari). For the common use of green as a symbolic bed color, Palumbo Fossati, “La Casa Veneziana,” 469. For the Venetian type of footboard, Thornton, \textit{Italian Renaissance Interior}, 114. The posted bed, which arose during the later Quattrocento, was at first called \textit{una cuccia}; over the next century, it supplanted the standard \textit{lettiera} and took on the latter name (ibid., 134-144). The bed of Carpaccio’s \textit{Dream of St. Ursula} further discussed in Brown, \textit{Private Lives}, 80-81.


\textsuperscript{103} The 1709 inventory of paintings owned by Giorgio Bergonzi notes “una quadretino da Letto, cioè un Christo con S. Rocco…” (Branca, \textit{Il Collezionismo Veneziano nel ’600}, 178).
Cinquecento. In the 1800s, according to Molmenti, the Casa dei Proverbi at Santi Apostoli still contained a sixteenth-century room with a bed decorated by an artist of the Bellini school. Demolished in 1840, this house may have harbored the last intact painted *lettiera* of Renaissance Venice. The original appearance of such ensembles must therefore be reconstructed from documents, detached works, and the comparative evidence of cycles from other regions.

Among the most important sources of information about this genre is Michiel, who describes two painted bedsteads in his notes on Venetian and nearby mainland collections. In the Paduan house of the humanist Alvise Cornaro (1484-1566), he writes, “the heads painted in the ceiling of the room, and the pictures in the bedstead ([li quadri in la lettiera]), copied from drawings by Raphael, were by the hand of Dominico Venitiano, brought up by Julio Campagnuola.” Domenico Campagnola, known primarily as a landscape draughtsman and printmaker, was the apprentice and adopted son of Giulio Campagnola in Venice; by the 1520s, Domenico had relocated to Padua, where he became a successful artist in his own right. Michiel’s attribution is likely accurate, though the paintings after Raphael’s designs do not survive, and their subject is unspecified. Perhaps they were devotional images, similar to the kind common on Venetian bedsteads for centuries, or mythological or pastoral scenes. They were almost surely representational, for Michiel rarely listed abstract painted ornaments in the *Notizia*. His wording suggests that Domenico’s *quadri* were integrated into the bedstead, as part of a coordinated program of decoration that incorporated a coffered ceiling; around 1531, Campagnola executed comparable *soffitto* paintings for the confraternity of Santa Maria del Parto in Padua.

According to a recent study of Michiel’s manuscript and its dating, the author would have seen Alvise Cornaro’s room not long after 1525 and before 1529, during or upon the first

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104 For the intact Cinquecento bedroom of the Casa dei Proverbi, Molmenti, *Venice*, vol. 4, 54 n. 3, with an unspecified reference to Cicogna. Tassini also cites Cicogna in his description of the house (*Curiosità Veneziane* (1872), 591-592). See also Lorenzetti, *Venezia e il suo Estuario*, 387.


107 Schmitter notes Michiel’s preference for recording figurative paintings, and suggests that the pictures on Cornaro’s bedstead were of this type (*Display of Distinction*, 215). For Campagnola’s *soffitto* paintings for the *scuola* of Santa Maria del Parto, Colpi, “Domenico Campagnola,” 88; Marconi, *Gallerie dell’Accademia*, vol. 2, 101-103; and Schmitter, “The Dating of Marcantonio Michiel’s ‘Notizia’ on Works of Art in Padua,” 570 n. 38.
renovation and redecoration of his magnificent fifteenth-century palace, which subsequently underwent further alterations.\textsuperscript{108} This dating provides an approximate \textit{terminus ad quem} for Domenico’s paintings, which accords with the artist’s arrival and early career in Padua in the 1520s.

Several years later, in 1532, Michiel recorded a second bedstead in the palazzo of the prosperous Venetian \textit{cittadino} Andrea Odoni (1488-1545).\textsuperscript{109} His \textit{camera de sopra} or upstairs room contained an ensemble of furniture – “the chests…the bedstead and doors” – painted by one Stefano, a student of Titian. This is usually thought to be the Flemish artist Jan Steven van Calcar, who began working for Titian in the 1530s, and was also known for his contributions to the anatomical texts of Vesalius.\textsuperscript{110} In the same chamber, Michiel noted an image of a “large reclining nude” by Giovanni Girolamo Savoldo, which hung “behind the bed” [\textit{da driedo el letto}].\textsuperscript{111} This account is substantiated by a 1555 inventory of the same house, which had passed to Andrea’s brother, Alvise. It records, in addition to the bed, “six painted and gilded chests with walnut covers,” and “a portrait of a nude woman in the \textit{callesella} of the \textit{lettiera],” the \textit{callesella} being the space between the bedstead and the wall behind.\textsuperscript{112}

Michiel’s listings and the later inventory reveal that Odoni’s \textit{lettiera} was decorated in multiple ways. Calcar’s paintings, of an unknown but likely figurative subject, adorned the structure of the bedstead, chests, and doors; Savoldo’s work appeared immediately behind the

\textsuperscript{108} For the dating of Michiel’s notes on Alvise Cornaro’s palace, and their relation to the structure’s various renovations, Schmitter, “The Dating of Marcantonio Michiel’s ‘Notizia’ on Works of Art in Padua,” 569-571.


\textsuperscript{110} “Le casse in ditta camera, la lettiera et porte furono dipinte da Stephano discipulo di Titiano” (Michiel, \textit{Notizia d’Opere del Disegno} (ed. Frimmel), 52). See also Schubring, \textit{Cassoni}, 166. The room was also called the \textit{camera dalla scala} or “room of the stairway” (Schmitter, \textit{Display of Distinction}, 214). For Calcar, who was known as “Giovanni Stefano” in Italy, Rosand and Muraro, \textit{Titian and the Venetian Woodcut}, 211-235; Heinemann, “La Bottega di Tiziano,” 435; Muraro, “Tiziano e le Anatomie del Vesalio”; and Dacos, “Jan Stephan van Calcar en Italie.” For the painted doors in this ensemble, see discussion of Doors and Shutters below.


lettiera, on or above the headboard, but probably was not physically incorporated into it.\textsuperscript{113} These images belonged to a larger ensemble encompassing a frieze, linens, draperies, gilding, and silver details. According to Cicogna, the chamber contained a carved and painted fregio, which may have been executed in the early 1530s by Girolamo da Treviso the Younger.\textsuperscript{114} The room also held easel pictures, including Lotto’s renowned portrait of Odoni (1527; Hampton Court, Royal Collection), and several boxes and smaller chests.\textsuperscript{115} Perhaps it was this assembly of expensive woods, lush fabrics, and paintings that led Aretino to praise Odoni’s “rich beds,” “rare pictures,” and “royal habiliments” in a letter of 1538.\textsuperscript{116}

In her study of Odoni’s life and collecting practices, Schmitter has convincingly proposed that the ornamental paintings by Calcar were commissioned on the occasion of a marriage.\textsuperscript{117} Indeed, the surviving evidence of this chamber reveals a conscious design to celebrate and foster love and family. The overall sumptuousness of the bed, the focus of the room, manifests its patron’s affluence, status, and position as a founder of his clan; the reclining nude on the headboard, a profane analogue to the holy effigies traditionally occupying this space, serves to arouse desire and promote fertility.\textsuperscript{118} This image belongs to an established genre of painted erotic nudes, many of which were probably also displayed in bedroom settings, though not

\textsuperscript{113} For the likelihood that Calcar’s paintings were figurative, Schmitter, Display of Distinction, 215. Motture and Syson discuss pictures, including this one, that were positioned above bedsteads but probably not physically attached to them (“Art in the Casa,” 272-273). See also the discussion of Ridolfi’s phrase, “sopra il recinto del letto,” below.

\textsuperscript{114} For Girolamo da Treviso the Younger’s possible decoration of this room, see n. 120 below and discussion of Friezes above.

\textsuperscript{115} Michiel famously describes Lotto’s portrait of Odoni in the camera de sopra: “el retratto de…M. Andrea a oglio, meza figura, che contemple li fragmenti marmorei antichi…de man de Lorenzo Lotto” (Notizia d’Opere del Disegno (ed. Frimmel), 52). The 1555 inventory of this bedroom also mentions “un retratto de m. Andrea di Odoni, con le soaze dorade…Un fornimento da letto de damasco zallo, recamado attorno tutte le coltrine, con dui cussini d’oro, et el suo covertor d’arzento…Un scrigno de ferro…Due cassellette compagne delle casse,” among other furnishings (Bode et al., “Archivalische Beiträge zur Geschichte der Venezianischen Kunst aus dem Nachlass Gustav Ludwigs,” 66-67).

\textsuperscript{116} Aretino wrote to Odoni that he knew of no prince who owned “si ricchi letti, si rari quadri e si reali abigliamenti” (Lettere sull’Arte, vol. 1, 125).

\textsuperscript{117} Schmitter, Display of Distinction, 220. Though the date of his marriage is uncertain, Odoni left property to his wife, Isabetta, in his will of 1545 (Bode et al., “Archivalische Beiträge zur Geschichte der Venezianischen Kunst aus dem Nachlass Gustav Ludwigs,” 55).

\textsuperscript{118} Odoni never had children, but, as Schmitter notes, “was in many ways the founder of his family”; a prominent and ambitious cittadino, he established the Odoni clan’s reputation in Venice, and provided generously for his nephews (Display of Distinction, 159). For the creative construction of cittadino identity by Odoni and his uncle, Francesco Zio, see also idem, “Virtuous Riches.” The theme of family and fecundity is further elaborated in Lotto’s portrait of Odoni in the same room; the iconography of this painting has been associated with ancient fertility gods and rites (Martin, “Amica e un Albergo di Virtuosi,” 155, 157, with related references). For the role of images of reclining women as auguries of fertility, Schmitter, Display of Distinction, 219-220, with further bibliography; see also Freedberg, Power of Images, 317-344.
necessarily on the letto itself. Giorgione’s Sleeping Venus (Fig. 2.93), perhaps the best known early example of this type, was hanging as an independent canvas [tela] in the home of Girolamo Marcello in 1525. Nonetheless, Savoldo’s painting demonstrates that such images were naturally associated with the lettiera, and in some cases actually adorned it. It is likely that other familiar representations of beautiful nudes once hung in similar locations.

Despite their centrality to our understanding of sixteenth-century bed decoration in Venice, the paintings on Odoni’s lettiera have not been successfully linked to extant works. Calcar’s ornaments were presumably lost upon the dismantling or removal of the bedstead, chests, and doors. Cicogna visited the Odoni house in 1829, but his account of the bedroom does not specifically describe its furniture. The painting by Savoldo, meanwhile, has been connected with a Sleeping Venus (by 1523; Rome, Galleria Borghese), which presents various conflicts of dating and attribution. Now generally given to Girolamo da Treviso the Younger, the work cannot be identified conclusively with the “large reclining nude” of Michiel’s Notizia. More likely, the image he saw has gone missing or remains unrecognized. Precisely because of such subsequent losses, however, Michiel’s notes on Venetian lettiera paintings provide an invaluable guide to the early history of this Renaissance genre.

About painted beds of the middle and later sixteenth century, the most significant source of clues is Ridolfi, who consistently refers to pictures belonging to the recinto da letto or “enclosure of the bed.” Writing in the mid-1600s, Ridolfi declares that Andrea Schiavone painted ornaments for the recinto da letto “according to the custom of those times,” thus

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119 Michiel writes: “La tela della Venere nuda, che dorme in uno paese cun Cupidine, fo de mano de Zorzo da Castelfranco, ma lo paese, et Cupidine forono finiti da Titiano” (Notizia d’Opere del Disegno (ed. Frimmel), 53). He does not specify where in the house the picture is located (see Anderson, Giorgione, 228). For the Venetian Renaissance tradition of painted erotic reclining nudes, its ancient literary roots and contemporary nuptial connotations, idem, “Giorgione, Titian and the Sleeping Venus,” and Giorgione, 217-233.

120 In 1829, Cicogna recorded in the Casa Odoni a “camera superiore che serviva da letto con arcòva il cui fregio intagliato è dipinto a chiaro scuro con picciele Veneri ignude ed amorini, non saprei di qual mano, ma del 500 certamente” (Delle Inscrizioni Veneziane, vol. 3, 436). As noted in the discussion of Friezes above, this decoration may have been completed in the early 1530s by Girolamo da Treviso the Younger, who also frescoed the façade of Odoni’s palace (Schmitter, Display of Distinction, 167-174, 214; Martin, “Amica e un Albergo di Virtuosi,” 157, 160). In any case, Cicogna did not mention paintings on the bed, doors, or chests, which had probably long been dismantled when he saw this chamber.

121 Schmitter reviews the debate over this painting, and suggests that Michiel may have misattributed the work (Display of Distinction, 217-218). Meiss writes that Michiel’s entry is “perhaps” identical with the Borghese painting (“Sleep in Venice,” 218); he also notes that early versions of the reclining nude motif appeared during the Quattrocento on the lids of chests, further associating this pictorial type with ornamental painting (ibid., 213-214). Gilbert definitively attributes the Borghese picture to Girolamo da Treviso the Younger (Works of Girolamo Savoldo, 197-198, 483). For the work’s dating, Coliva, Galleria Borghese, 60. See also von Liphart-Rathshoff, “Girolamo da Treviso, Die Schlafende Venus.”
identifying a defined genre of Cinquecento bed decoration, and implying that this particular
tradition of domestic art had faded away by his own era. In this regard, his remarks echo
Vasari’s historical account of the painted chests, daybeds, and other furniture of fifteenth-century
Florence, which “the citizens of those times used to have in their apartments.”

Ridolfi’s recinto da letto is a complex term that encompasses not only the bedstead and
headboard but also adjacent wall panelling; in his text, the words recinto, recingere, and cingere
describe interior panelling of various kinds, and are also used for paintings set into the ceiling.

The phrase recinto da letto thus describes pictures originating with the bed and, in some cases,
extending into the enclosure of the surrounding chamber as well. Like Michiel’s account of “the
chests…the bedstead and doors” painted by Stefano for Andrea Odoni, it suggests that pictures
for Venetian beds frequently belonged to unified ornamental programs comprising nearby walls
and furniture. Elsewhere in Italy, too, it was not uncommon for bed decorations to reach beyond
the confines of the lettiera. The Story of Joseph, a sequence completed between 1515 and 1518
by Florentine artists for Pierfrancesco Borgherini and his wife, Margherita Acciaiuoli, adorned
their nuptial bed, contiguous wainscoting, and chests. At several points in his Lives, Vasari
implies that the group was considered a single, integral bed ornament, despite the fact that it
filled an entire room: when Margherita heroically defended the pictures from confiscation as a
gift to the king of France, for example, she referred to them collectively as “this bed.”

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122 Ridolfi’s life of Schiavone describes “…picciole historie de’ fatti d’Enea…fatte dall’Autore per un recinto da letto
(conforme accostumavasi in que’ tempi) per lieve ricognitione” (Maraviglie, vol. 1, 253); see below for further
discussion of this cycle. Vasari’s life of Dello Delli: “…usandosi in que’ tempi per le camere de’ cittadini cassoni
grandi di legname a uso di sepolture, e con altre varie fogge ne’ coperchi, niuno era che i detti cassoni non facesse
dipignere” (Vite, vol. 2, 148). Vasari goes on to describe the similar painted lettiucci, spalliere, and cornici
appearing in homes of this older period, and writes that the art was in such fashion for many years that prominent
painters engaged in it in their time, however, most would be ashamed to decorate such objects (ibid., 148-149). For
further discussion of this passage, see section on Reputation and Value in Ch. 1 above.

123 For instance, Ridolfi records domestic ceiling paintings by Tintoretto: “…in casa Barbo à San Pantaleone miransi
nell’intavolato d’una stanza un capriccio de’ sogni, & alcune Deità in un Cielo, con varie imagini delle cose
apportate nel sonno alle menti de’ mortali, e le quattro stagioni in figura nel recinto” (Ridolfi, Maraviglie, vol. 2, 55;
idem, Vite dei Tintoretto, 82-83; translation by Enggass in idem, Life of Tintoretto, 61). For these paintings as
ceiling decoration, and Ridolfi’s use of the terms recinto, cingere, and recingere to denote such works, Schulz,
Venetian Painted Ceilings of the Renaissance, 117-118. The term intavolato is also employed here and elsewhere
by Ridolfi to describe ceiling pictures: see his account of soffitto paintings for Palazzo Pisani (Maraviglie, vol. 2,
52).

124 The paintings of the Story of Joseph for the Borgherini-Acciaiuoli bedroom were completed by Andrea del Sarto,
Jacopo da Pontormo, Francesco Granacci, and Bacchiacca, and set into walnut woodwork by Baccio d’Agnolo.
According to Vasari, Margherita Acciaiuoli defended the cycle from confiscation by saying, “Questo letto che tu vai
cercando per lo tuo particolare interesse e ingordigia di danari…è il letto delle mie nozze” (Vite, vol. 6, 263). Vasari
also writes that the whole work would be “spoiled” [guasta] if any of the paintings were removed from their fixed
settings (ibid., vol. 5, 27). See Braham, “The Bed of Pierfrancesco Borgherini”; Barriault, Spalliera Paintings, 120-
Ridolfi ascribes *recinto da letto* paintings to a number of Venetian artists, from Giorgione to Bonifacio de’ Pitati and Schiavone.\(^\text{125}\) The quantity of these attributions is probably too generous, particularly with respect to Giorgione, whose decorative production came before the heyday of *recinto da letto* art in the mid-Cinquecento. However, Ridolfi’s accurate acquaintance with later examples of this genre is attested by the survival of associated pictures and documents. A pair of canvases now in Vienna (Figs. 2.94-2.95; cat. no. 51) belong to an ensemble described in the life of Schiavone: “little histories of the deeds of Aeneas...made by the artist for a *recinto da letto*…”\(^\text{126}\) Ridolfi writes that the paintings were owned by the sculptor Alessandro Vittoria (ca. 1525-1608), and fell after his death into the possession of Bartolomeo della Nave (1571/79-1632); from there, they moved to England. This history tallies with the provenance of the Vienna canvases, which were sold from the estate of della Nave – who was known to have acquired paintings once belonging to Vittoria – to the Marquis of Hamilton during the seventeenth century. They later passed to the Habsburg Archduke Leopold Wilhelm (1614-1662), and eventually into the Kunsthistorisches Museum.\(^\text{127}\)

The two surviving paintings are rectangular, and slightly taller than most Venetian ornamental works – about 63 x 114 centimeters each – providing a guideline for the typical dimensions of such decoration. They depict scenes from the fourth book of the *Aeneid*: the hero’s dramatic recall to his Roman destiny, and his ensuing departure from Carthage. These fragmentary episodes apparently once belonged to a larger group, for when the initial cycle went up for sale in the 1630s, an English agent described it as “a part of a Room with the History of Eneas in 25 figures,” and noted that it was at least six times as long as it was high. Ridolfi, too, records a lengthy series, encompassing more canvases than the two known today; the other components must have gone missing during the works’ later travels.\(^\text{128}\) Originally “part of a

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\(^{122}\) 134-135, 158-161; Plazzotta and Billinge, “The Underdrawing of Pontormo’s ‘Joseph with Jacob in Egypt’”;
Preyer, “The Florentine Casa,” 42-44. For Vasari’s critical assessment of this cycle, see discussion of Reputation and Value in Ch. 1 above.

\(^{125}\) 122, 134-135, 158-161; Plazzotta and Billinge, “The Underdrawing of Pontormo’s ‘Joseph with Jacob in Egypt’”; Preyer, “The Florentine Casa,” 42-44. For Vasari’s critical assessment of this cycle, see discussion of Reputation and Value in Ch. 1 above.

\(^{126}\) 122, 134-135, 158-161; Plazzotta and Billinge, “The Underdrawing of Pontormo’s ‘Joseph with Jacob in Egypt’”; Preyer, “The Florentine Casa,” 42-44. For Vasari’s critical assessment of this cycle, see discussion of Reputation and Value in Ch. 1 above.

\(^{127}\) For Ridolfi’s remarks, see n. 122 above and catalogue entry below.

\(^{128}\) For Ridolfi’s remarks, see n. 122 above and catalogue entry below.
Room,” the paintings would have decorated the headboard of a bed, then extended horizontally along either side of the wall adjoining it, thus unifying and enclosing the chamber as a recinto.

Ridolfi refers not only to images “for” and “on” the recinto da letto, but also to works hanging on the headboard above it. In the life of Schiavone, he mentions scenes “above” the bed enclosure [sopra il recinto del letto], a phrasing often used in Renaissance Italy to describe bed decorations. According to a Florentine inventory of 1498, Botticelli’s Primavera (ca. 1478-1481; Florence, Uffizi) hung over [sopra] a daybed in a room of the Medici townhouse on the Via Larga. Whether this renowned painting was physically attached to the lettuccio, or merely displayed above it, has been a matter of controversy. In any case, the two items were closely associated, for in 1503, the panel was recorded as having a large white frame, which likely rendered it the width of the daybed beneath; Botticelli’s figures also appear on a rising plane appropriate for viewing the picture from below. The Primavera may have been conceived specifically for this location: such arrangements were common in Florence, for Vasari also refers to a painting by Granacci hanging above a daybed in the aforementioned Borgherini bedroom.

Although writing later and in the Venetian milieu, Ridolfi is similarly revealing in his use of the word sopra to refer to bed paintings. He suggests that recinto da letto pictures could be hung purposefully above or behind the bedstead and identified as its decoration, even if they were not actually part of its structure. Indeed, this is the probable configuration of Odoni’s painting of a reclining nude, which, as discussed above, was located “behind” a bed in 1532. Considered alongside such earlier evidence, Ridolfi’s varying terminology – per un recinto da

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129 For Ridolfi’s account of paintings sopra il recinto del letto, see n. 132 below. As noted in the discussion of Origins and Analogues above, Ridolfi used the same phrasing to describe the hanging of Jacobello del Fiore’s Justice over a cupboard in the Palazzo Ducale.

130 The 1498 inventory describes the Primavera as “uno quadro di lignamo apicato sopra el letucio, nel quale è depinto nove figure de donne ch’omini…” (Shearman, “The Collections of the Younger Branch of the Medici,” 17-18, 25 n. 38; see also Smith, “On the Original Location of the Primavera,” 34, 37 n. 9). The painting and its relation to the lettuccio discussed by Lightbown, Sandro Botticelli, vol. 1, 72-81, vol. 2, 51-53; Thornton, Italian Renaissance Interior, 97, 149; Barriault, Spalliera Paintings, 28-30; Kemp, Behind the Picture, 8; Cecchi, Botticelli, 148; and Motture and Syson, “Art in the Casa,” 272-273, among others. Bayer reviews recent literature on the Primavera and discusses the issue of its original hanging (“From Cassone to Poesia,” 233). See also Grafton, “Botticelli and the Built-In Bed.” A surviving example of the kind of object above which the Primavera appeared is discussed by Calderai and Chiarugi, “The Lettuccio (Daybed) and Cappellinaio (Hat Rack).” For further sources on the Renaissance lettuccio, see n. 99 above.

131 “…dipinse il Granacci a Pierfrancesco Borgherini, nella sua casa di borgo Santo Apostolo in Fiorenza, in una camera (dove Jacopo da Puntormo, Andrea del Sarto e Francesco Ubertini avevano fatto molte storie della vita di Ioseffo) sopra un lettuccio una storia a olio de’ fatti del medesimo…” (Vasari, Vite, vol. 5, 342-343). As with the Primavera, it is difficult to tell how exactly Granacci’s painting and the lettuccio below were related. Perhaps the picture hung freely above the daybed, or, as Thornton suggests, was physically incorporated into it (Italian Renaissance Interior, 380 n. 7). See also Barriault, Spalliera Paintings, 30, 160-161.
letto, sopra il recinto del letto – implies that beds and paintings could be meaningfully juxtaposed in different ways, depending on the overall design of the room and its furniture.

In his account of pictures located “above the enclosure of the bed,” Ridolfi notes their subject: “several fables alluding to the birth of an infant.” His description recalls a pair of works from the circle of Schiavone, *Deucalion and Pyrrha* and the *Judgment of Midas* (Figs. 2.96-2.97; cat. no. 53). Whether these panels are identical with the *recinto da letto* cycle recorded in the Maraviglie is uncertain, but their dimensions and subjects are consistent with this setting. At over forty centimeters in height and about 118 centimeters long, they are taller than most *fregio* and *cassa* paintings, yet similar in overall dimensions to the *Aeneas* canvases (cat. no. 51). According to the tale of Deucalion and Pyrrha (*Metamorphoses*, I.313-415), a classic fertility myth befitting a conjugal chamber, the son of Prometheus and his wife regenerate the human race after a great flood by throwing behind them the stones of the earth, which soften and form themselves into human beings. In Schiavone’s painting, the couple appear with their heads veiled and their clothes loose about them, as Ovid recounts, bending and casting rocks, from which are born both full-fledged adults and infants. New couples consort in the landscape, dotted with obelisks and an ancient temple.

The *Judgment of Midas* (*Metamorphoses*, XI.146-193), of the same size as *Deucalion and Pyrrha*, provides an apt pendant to that tale. King Midas, seated beneath a tree and proleptically wearing the ass’s ears, listens to the music of Pan’s pipes and Apollo’s strings. At right, a woman plays a horn, and a satyr at Midas’s side holds a syrinx. The subject of music in this rustic ambience forms a coda to the tale of Deucalion and Pyrrha, before whom the world was, as Ovid wrote, “all emptiness, all silence.” The re-creation of the human race from emptiness is a formative act akin to the fashioning of music from silence. Like its companion panel, the *Judgment* is set in a blue-green landscape containing an ancient rotunda; the circular plans of both buildings allude to the original Temple of the Muses and, thus, to the enshrinement of the arts in the classical tradition. In this way, they reinforce the two paintings’ shared theme.

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133 Winternitz suggests that the woman at right is Athena playing the *zampogna* or bagpipes (“The Curse of Pallas Athena,” 189), but inspection of the painting in person revealed that the figure was playing a single curled horn. I thank Alfeo Michieletto for access to and discussion of the work.
of inspired creation. Drawing an analogy between human fertility and the imaginative fecundity of the artist, the pictures would have offered rich blessings for a marriage bed.

Another panel of comparable format, but slightly different dimensions, may also have been a *recinto da letto* decoration. The *Sleeping Shepherd*, from the circle of Titian (Fig. 2.98; cat. no. 67), shows a young goatherd in blue and white, luxuriantly sprawled on the bank of a stream, and making a pillow of his arms. In this pose, he is a feature of the landscape, as unthinkingly present as an animal or tree. The goats, his errant charges, laze among sheaves of rocks at left, while behind at right, a profusion of dark green and brown foliage gives way to a village and mountain peaks. The young man is not sleeping, exactly, as his eyes are open, but his look suggests the last moments before a willing surrender to slumber. Though he has sometimes been identified as Endymion, there is no sign of his companion, the moon; he more closely evokes the conscious yet somnolent figure of Lotto’s *A Maiden’s Dream* (Fig. 2.128; cat. no. 25), as well as the reclining or drowsy shepherds who begin to appear in the backgrounds of devotional works by Giovanni Bellini during the early sixteenth century (Figs. 2.99-2.100; 1510; Milan, Brera). Affixed to the head of a bed, this image of a figure on the cusp of sleep, lolling in a calming countryside with a rippling brook, recalls Alberti’s advice on pictures for the bedroom: “paintings of springs and streams may be of considerable benefit to the feverish...if some night as you lie awake in bed, unable to sleep, you visualize in your mind the clearest springs and streams you have ever seen, that dryness of insomnia will be quenched immediately, and sleep will steal you away into the sweetest slumber.”

The *Sleeping Shepherd* may be related to another panel (Fig. 2.101; cat. no. 38), depicting the newborn Venus, who rides toward a rocky shore inhabited by a satyr family. In the sky, the sleeping Uranus is castrated by his son, Saturn; according to tradition, his genitals fell to the sea, and Venus was born of their foam. Compounded of slumber and the scattering of seed, this tale would have possessed obvious appeal for a bed ornament. Whether it served as a

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134 For the domed temple structure as an attribute of the arts in sixteenth-century iconography, Fabiański, “Iconography of the Architecture of Ideal Musae,” 100.

135 Humfrey interprets the sleeping shepherd in the Brera painting as a reference to the Book of Isaiah’s condemnation of lazy shepherds who fail to care for their flocks (Isaiah 57:10-11; Humfrey in Brown et al., *Bellini, Giorgione, Titian*, 64). Alberti’s quote from *De Re Aedificatoria*, 9:4; idem, *On the Art of Building*, 299-300. The Italian translation of 1565 reads, “A coloro che hanno la febre, giova grandissimamente il veder dipinte fontane, & rivi di acqua vive, che caschino, del che si può fare esperienza, che se alcuno tal volta non potrà nella notte dormire, standosi nel letto, poi che egli harà cominciato a rivoltarsi per la fantasia alcune limpidissime acque, o fontane, che altra volta harà viste in alcun luogo, o qualche lago si inumidirà subito quella siccità dello star desto, & ne verrà il sonno, tanto che si addormenterà dolcissimamente” (idem, *L’Architettura*, 334).
pendant to the *Sleeping Shepherd*, however, is unknown. Although the paintings are of similar size, and share a composition of open central landscapes parenthesized by rocky forest, their styles diverge. The *Birth of Venus* is executed in the manner of Bonifacio de’ Pitati, whose production in this genre Ridolfi described.\(^{136}\) It is also less finely colored than the *Sleeping Shepherd*. Perhaps it was devised as a later complement, or, more likely, both panels belonged to a common class of *lettiera* and *recinto da letto* decorations.

**Doors and Shutters**

Several well-known paintings of the Venetian Renaissance once adorned the doors of cupboards, closets, or rooms. These were not full-sized exterior portals, but marked private thresholds such as the space between two chambers, the front of a cabinet, or the opening of a small study or wardrobe. A related genre was the decorated shutter, a hinged device covering a window or other aperture. The terms for these works varied from the simple *porta*, used by both Michiel and Vasari, to *uscio* and the diminutive forms *sportello*, *portello*, and *portella* – known as *portelo* or *portela* in Venetian dialect. In this account, *sportello* is used for consistency.\(^{137}\) The same words were employed to describe tabernacle and reliquary covers, altarpiece wings, and organ shutters, revealing the affinities between liturgical and secular doors.\(^{138}\) During the later fifteenth century, as noted above, domestic standing cabinets and their decoration had evolved from ecclesiastical and civic furniture. All the surviving examples of painted doors in this study date from approximately 1490 to 1516, the same period when household moveables such as the *credenza* and *armario* began to emerge from more public models.\(^{139}\)

These upright, relatively shallow cupboards provided an alternative to the flat chest,

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\(^{136}\) For Bonifacio’s *recinto da letto* paintings, see n. 125 above.

\(^{137}\) For Michiel’s and Vasari’s use of the word *porta* to describe this genre, see below. The Venetian terms for small doors listed by Boerio, *Dizionario del Dialetto Veneziano*, 527. The word *sportello* is distinct from *sporta*, *sportella*, and *sportela*, which refer to a shopping basket or bag.

\(^{138}\) For instance, Michiel noted in the home of Pietro Bembo a “quadretto in due portelle” by Memling, depicting Saint John the Baptist on one leaf and the Madonna and Child on the other (*Notizia d’Opere del Disegno* (ed. Frimmel), 30-31). Ridolfi frequently refers to the painted *portelli* of organs, altarpieces, and church cabinets (*Maraviglie*, vol. 1, 37, 62, 70, 118, 119, 121, 287; vol. 2, 17, 26, 60). Synonyms for such elements were *anta* or shutter, and *ala* or wing. Painted church furniture and organ doors are also discussed in the sections on Origins and Analogues above, and Musical Instruments below.

\(^{139}\) As noted in the discussion of Origins and Analogues above, domestic devotional objects were also precursors of the domestic *credenza* and *armario*. For the emergence and characteristics of these types, Schottmüller, *Wohnungskultur und Möbel der Italienischen Renaissance*, xxi-xxiii; Braudel, *Les Structures du Quotidien*, 263-266; Santini, *Mille Mobili Veneti*, vol. 3, 35-38, 119-121. The term *armario* is derived from the ancient *armarium*, a storage cupboard of the Hellenistic period (Riccardi-Cubitt, *Art of the Cabinet*, 19).
because they could be used for the display and vertical organization of dishes, clothing, and papers, among other objects. The credenza, originally a side table on which the eucharistic elements were placed before consecration, functioned in the home as a sideboard with shelves for vessels and tableware; it often appeared in the portego or kitchen. Sansovino described the innumerable Venetian credentiere holding silver, porcelain, pewter, and brass or damascened bronze. The armario or armadio (also known as armèr in dialect), on the other hand, was a broader category encompassing cabinets and cupboards of different sizes and formats. Often quite tall and conceived architecturally with cornices and fluted pilasters, they could be among the most substantial pieces of furniture in the house (Fig. 2.102; mid-1500s; Venice, Fondazione Giorgio Cini). Cupboards might also be small, and intended only for valuables or personal storage. In Carpaccio’s Dream of St. Ursula, an armaretto mounted in the bedchamber’s lower right corner holds books, papers, and a candlestick behind four doors (Fig. 2.103). Similar devices were sometimes integrated into the wall like miniature closets, as in Vincenzo Catena’s St. Jerome in His Study (Fig. 2.104; ca. 1510-1513; London, National Gallery).

Overall, the typology of early Venetian cupboards was not fixed. In 1592, an armaro containing drinking cups stood in the portego of one house at Santa Fosca; these features are reminiscent of a standard credenza, and in fact, the cupboard was accompanied by two credenze with shelves in the same room. This fluid use of terminology suggests that furniture cabinets

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142 For the armario or armadio, see n. 139 above, as well as Fleming and Honour, Penguin Dictionary of Decorative Arts, 38-39; Palumbo Fossati, “La Casa Veneziana,” 471, 475; and Campell, Grove Encyclopedia of Decorative Arts, vol. 1, 29. Thornton notes, “the term used to describe a cupboard, irrespective of its size, was uno armario (sometimes written as armaro or armadio, but not often). Small cupboards might be called armaretti” (Italian Renaissance Interior, 221). For the Venetian term armèr, Boerio, Dizionario del Dialetto Veneziano, 44. For the armario in walnut illustrated here, Santini, Mille Mobili Veneti, vol. 3, 121.

143 The built-in closet of this type was sometimes known as an armadio a muro. Catena’s painting is dated ca. 1513 by Robertson, who also compares it with a related version in Frankfurt, Städelisches Kunstinstitut (Vincenzo Catena, 50-51).

144 The 1592 inventory of the possessions of Alessandro Ram lists “uno armaro de gotti in portego rosso,” followed by “doi credenze in ditto portego con le sue scantie” (Bode et al., “Archivalische Beiträge zur Geschichte der Venezianischen Kunst aus dem Nachlass Gustav Ludwigs,” 75). A similar example of an armaro used to store
of the period took a variety of forms, and went by diverse names. *Armari* and *credenze* were closely related to the *gabinetto, guardaroba, studiolo, salvarobba,* and *ripostiglio,* words which described both furniture pieces and small rooms intended for the common purpose of storage and display.\(^{145}\)

The outer doors of such containers supported a range of ornament, from varnishing of the rich wood surface to carving, intarsia, and painting in monochrome or figures. The cabinet doors in Carpaccio’s *St. Ursula* are decorated with a stellated wheel design, perhaps in gold or inlay (Fig. 2.103). Documents also refer to *armari* or *armaretti depenti: in the later sixteenth century,* the musician Gioseffo Zarlino owned “a little painted cupboard with a piece of red leather with a gilded border,” another “little painted cupboard,” and several “cupboards of painted wood.” Julia Lombardo’s country house contained “a cupboard attached to the wall, with painted shelves,” which held vases, kitchen implements, and a container for washing hands.\(^{146}\) In 1491-1492, Isabella d’Este paid a painter to embellish the interiors of a number of cabinets or *armarioli* in her apartments in the ducal palace in Mantua. Back in Venice, the writer Francesco Gradenigo kept an *armadio* with an image of St. Jerome painted on it, a fitting adornment for a piece of furniture located in a study or reading room.\(^{147}\)

Further information about pictorial decoration of Venetian cabinets comes from surviving works that have been detached from these settings. Giorgione’s *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (Fig. 2.105; cat. no. 19), now in the Hermitage, once contained a keyhole near its right edge and traces of hinges; the painting’s vertical format, derived from altarpiece wings of standing saints, is also consistent with the door of a cupboard or related piece of furniture (the

\(^{145}\) Braudel explains the difficulty of tracing strict typologies of Renaissance furniture: “comment suivre la biographie compliquée de chacun de ces meubles? Ils apparaissent, se modifient, mais ne s’effacent guère ensuite. Sans fin, ils subissent les tyrannies du style architectural et de la disposition interne des maisons” (*Les Structures du Quotidien,* 264).


\(^{147}\) For the decoration of cabinets in the apartments of Isabella d’Este, Brown, *Isabella d’Este in the Ducal Palace in Mantua,* 44. For the painted *armadio* of Francesco Gradenigo, Palumbo Fossati, “La Casa Veneziana,” 481. Similarly, in Florence, *spalliera* paintings were sometimes attached to or hung above cupboards (Barriault, *Spalliera Paintings,* 30-33).
panel was probably not tall enough to cover the entrance of a room). This evidence corroborates Ridolfi’s statement that the artist painted *armari*, though no other ornamental works by his hand are known.\(^{148}\)

Giorgione’s picture may have appeared alone on a single cabinet about two and a half feet wide; or, as discussed in the catalogue entry below, it may have been accompanied by a pendant leaf portraying David, Judith’s frequent counterpart in Renaissance painting and sculpture. In this case, the two scenes would have served as matching doors of a relatively tall and broad cupboard, perhaps one devoted to books or precious objects. This type of furniture was documented in the homes of Venetian writers and antiquarians: Marin Sanudo referred in his will to the more than 6,500 incunabula and manuscripts kept “in the cupboards of my room” [*neli armari di la mia camera*], and the library of the sixteenth-century collector Sebastiano Erizzo was housed in six *armadi*.\(^{149}\) In 1567, Gabriel Vendramin’s collection included several *armari* containing books of drawings, an illuminated breviary, and other items, and by the early seventeenth century, Federico Contarini kept a similar *armer* of naturalia and precious stones.\(^{150}\) The novel subject matter and accomplished technique of the Hermitage scene suggest the involvement of a distinguished patron who owned books or collectibles of this type, and sought a sophisticated picture to adorn their container. Among the earliest representations of the Judith story in Venetian painting, Giorgione’s work demonstrates the role of decorative art as a platform for iconographic innovation and for the development of landscape and oil technique in early sixteenth-century Venice.\(^{151}\)

Another significant achievement in oil that once served as a door ornament is Titian’s *Christ and the Pharisee* (Fig. 2.106; cat. no. 70), which was commissioned around 1516 by Duke

\(^{148}\) Ridolfi’s life of Giorgione: “seguiva in tanto Giorgio à dipingere nella solita habitacione, ove dicesi, che aperta havesse bottega, dipingendo rotelle, armari e molte casse in particolare...” (*Maraviglie*, vol. 1, 98). For physical evidence of the painting’s use as a *sportello*, see catalogue entry below.

\(^{149}\) Sanudo wrote, “Voio et ordeno che tutti li miei libri a stampa et quelli a penna nel armari di la mia camera che sono in numero piu di 6,500, i quali mi ha costà assai dinari, et vi è cose bellissime et rare, siano venduti al pubblico incanto” (quoted in Molmenti, *Venice*, vol. 3, 281; for Sanudo and his library, Fulin, *Diariti e Diaristi Veneziani*, xviii-xix). For Erizzo’s library, Palumbo-Fossati, “Il Collezionista Sebastiano Erizzo,” 208, which also notes that extensive domestic libraries were comparatively rare in Renaissance Venice.


\(^{151}\) For the novelty of this subject in Venetian painting, Anderson, *Giorgione*, 195-196; see also Ch. 1 above, and catalogue entry below.
Alfonso d’Este of Ferrara to decorate a coin cabinet in his palace. The 1568 edition of Vasari’s Lives records that the picture was located “in the door of a cupboard” [nella porta d’un armario], suggesting that the work had remained in situ after the death of Alfonso in 1534. In 1559, a servant of the Ferrarese court wrote to the Duke’s successor, Ercole II, telling him to visit the studio delle medaglie, and “once you have entered it…look above the said fireplace, where you will find a key to the door on which Signor Jesus is portrayed by the hand of Titian [una chiave di gl’uscio dov’è ritratto del Signor Hiesù di mano di Titiano]; when this portrait is removed there are some small chests [cassettini] inside.” According to a 1543 inventory, the same room contained a walnut cabinet or studio di noce holding over three thousand coins and medals. This must have been a rather large standing cupboard with shelves supporting the smaller boxes. It was almost certainly the object on which Titian’s painting appeared, even though the two were mentioned separately in the inventory.152

A hypothetical reconstruction of Alfonso’s original commission frames Christ and the Pharisee in the middle of the cabinet’s hinged door, which contains a keyhole on one side, in accordance with the 1559 letter referring to the chiave di gl’uscio. Titian’s panel itself contains no known evidence of a keyhole, so this element must have been part of the surrounding woodwork. The leaf swings open to reveal many rows of shelves on which the cassettini of medals and coins are arranged. In the closed position, Titian’s scene becomes visible. The painting dramatizes Alfonso’s personal motto: DEI DEO + QVAE SVNT, “And to God the things that are God’s,” from the episode of Christ and the Pharisee (Matthew 22:21). At the same time, the painting cleverly indicates the cupboard’s contents; indeed, the picture was long called Cristo della Moneta or “Christ of the Coin.” This virtuosic composition, unfortunately now damaged, is rich in religious, political, and aesthetic allusions, which are deftly interwoven with the painting’s function as a furniture ornament; these issues are explored in the catalogue entry below.

As the documentation surrounding Christ and the Pharisee suggests, the ensemble was well-known in the sixteenth century, and served as a model for later royal cabinets of collectibles. The stanzino of Francesco I in Florence (1570s; Palazzo Vecchio), for example, housed natural, artificial, and exotic objects in opulent cupboards, whose painted doors provided an index to the types of articles inside. Since Vasari knew and praised Cristo della Moneta, and

152 For documentary references to Titian’s painting and its location, see Ch. 3 and catalogue entry below.
was also directly involved in the planning of Francesco’s study, it seems likely that Titian’s
design provided a template for this pictorial program. The same may be true of the earlier
Guardaroba Nuova of Cosimo I (1563-1565; Florence, Palazzo Vecchio), whose cupboard doors
were fronted by extraordinary maps describing the regions where the artifacts within had
originated.\footnote{The influence of Titian’s painting on Francesco I’s \textit{stanzino} suggested by Gilbert, “Some Findings on Early Works of Titian,” pp. 63. For Vasari’s praise of \textit{Christ and the Pharisee}, see catalogue entry below. A 1570 letter of Vincenzo Borghini to Vasari regarding Francesco’s \textit{stanzino} envisions objects “resting in their own cupboards, each with its own type” [\textit{riposte ne’ propri armadi ciascuna nel suo genere}] (De Benedictis, \textit{Per la Storia del Collezionismo Italiano}, 176). For Cosimo I’s Guardaroba Nuova in the Palazzo Vecchio and its iconographical program, Fiorani, \textit{Marvel of Maps}, 16-137; for the Duke’s artistic patronage, Cox-Rearick, “Art at the Court of Duke Cosimo I de Medici.”} In both cases, the decorative scheme of Alfonso’s coin cabinet – a piece of
furniture paired with a painting describing its contents – was elaborated into the organizing
principle of an entire room of valuables.

Titian’s own door painting, in turn, may have been inspired by precocious fifteenth-
century examples of this type. Carpaccio’s ensemble of \textit{Ladies on a Balcony} and \textit{Hunting and Fishing on the Lagoon} (Figs. 2.107-2.108; cat. no. 7), now in the Correr and Getty Museums respectively, dates to the 1490s and thus marks the early emergence of independent genre and \textit{trompe l’oeil} subjects in Venetian art.\footnote{For details of Carpaccio’s subject, see catalogue entry below.} These fragments, which once comprised a single tall, narrow panel, depict the divergent recreations of well-heeled men and women of the city: ladies seated on a balcony overlooking the lagoons, where gentlemen catch fish and fowl (Fig. 2.18). An illusionistic motif of papers affixed to a stone surface decorates the latter image’s reverse; the design must have continued on the verso of \textit{Ladies} as well, but disappeared upon thinning of the wood at an unknown date.\footnote{For the thinning of the Correr panel, Dorigato, \textit{Carpaccio, Bellini, Tura, Antonello}, 177.}

The paintings probably once belonged to a bifold hinged shutter covering the entrance to
a small room. Extensive technical analysis published by Dorigato and Szafran has revealed
details of the initial configuration, including the use of nails, hinges, and horizontal supporting
battens. The two surviving pieces originally constituted a single narrow panel of about 170
centimeters in height. It was then attached with hinges to a second, now missing leaf, which
depicted a continuation of the existing balcony and lagoon scenes. This inference is based on the
fact that \textit{Ladies} and \textit{Hunting and Fishing} display evidence of hinges on both their right and left
sides, indicating that the integral panel did not swing free, but rather was joined to another
This two-part folding shutter would have been anchored to a wall on its far right end, allowing the left end to be manipulated for opening and closing. Extended across the full length of a doorway, the paintings displayed a view from the window of an island palace on the front, and the feigned wall of a study on the reverse. This hypothetical arrangement led Szafran to propose that the panels once served to cover the entrance of a small studiolo, such as that in the background of Carpaccio’s *Vision of St. Augustine* (Figs. 2.63-2.64).

These physical remnants reveal an impressively engineered work of art that must have been planned for a specific location and an urbane patron, who would have permitted Carpaccio substantial iconographic license. The use of careful underdrawing, pouncing, a perspective scheme, and valuable ultramarine pigment in the landscape all point to a refined commission meant to be admired in detail. However, no original owner has been established with certainty. The word “Mozenigo” appears to be written on one of the slips of paper on the reverse of *Hunting and Fishing*, leading some to connect the picture with that distinguished lineage, and particularly with the young Andrea Mocenigo, who entered the Maggior Consiglio of Venice in 1491. But this side of the Getty panel is damaged, and the writing is fragmentary and without context. Others have studied the coat of arms painted on the vase resting on the balcony of the Correr scene; the ensign has been variously recognized as that of the Preli and Torella families. The discovery that Carpaccio altered the coat of arms during the painting process further complicates its identification with any specific household.

If the commission’s exact nature remains unknown, nonetheless, the survival of other door pictures by Venetian artists suggests that this early example was available to and imitated by the painter’s contemporaries and followers. Perhaps, despite the work’s presumed location in a private home, the owner enjoyed showing it off as a novelty to fellow connoisseurs and

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156 For details of the original configuration, see Dorigato, *Carpaccio, Bellini, Tura, Antonello*, 74-81, 177-185; Szafran, “Carpaccio’s ‘Hunting on the Lagoon’”; and catalogue entry below. For the later provenance of the two surviving fragments, see Ch. 3 below.

157 For proposals about the painting’s original setting, see catalogue entry below.

158 For the underdrawing, pouncing, perspective, and use of pigments, Szafran, “Carpaccio’s ‘Hunting on the Lagoon,’” 152-157.

159 For the word “Mozenigo” on the Getty panel reverse, as well as damage to this surface, Busiri Vici, “Vicenda di un Dipinto,” 347; Goldner, “A Late Fifteenth Century Venetian Painting of a Bird Hunt,” 27; Szafran, “Carpaccio’s ‘Hunting on the Lagoon,’” 150. Arguments for Mocenigo patronage by Lauts, *Carpaccio*, 248, and Busiri Vici, op. cit., 347. Andrea Mocenigo is listed as the patron in the Getty curatorial files (courtesy of Scott Allan, February 2008).

160 For identification of the coat of arms and the *pentimenti* discovered during technical examination, Dorigato, *Carpaccio, Bellini, Tura, Antonello*, 78, 79, 179.
interested artists, including Titian.

Another pair of scenes exhibiting evidence of a one-time *sportello* configuration, similar to Carpaccio’s, are the *Trial of Moses* and *Judgment of Solomon* from the circle of Giorgione (Figs. 2.109-2.110; cat. no. 18). In 2002-2003, the reverses of these panels were discovered to contain painted designs and wood damage, which imply that the works originally functioned as doors or shutters of some kind. The backs of both pictures display an allegorical motif of plants on a *finto marmo* background, along with horizontal unpainted areas where, as in Carpaccio’s assembly, battens or cleats were likely attached (Figs. 2.111-2.114). Along the edges, patterns of wood clefts are consistent with the past presence of hinges or nails, although these changes may have resulted from later trimming. The designs on the reverses are clearly interrupted, indicating that the panels were once taller: possibly twice as tall, which would have brought their dimensions in line with those of known *sportelli* of the same period, including Giorgione’s *Judith* and the Carpaccio ensemble. In this case, the recto scenes of *Moses* and *Solomon* each would have been accompanied by a second painting on the bottom half of the panel, depicting a related holy story. This configuration recalls yet another probable *sportello* group, the *Tale of Thyrsis and Damon* from the circle of Bellini (Figs. 2.115-2.116; cat. no. 5), which is comprised of two narrow panels containing vertically organized pairs of images.

Overall, while further study of the kind that has been performed on Carpaccio’s *Ladies and Hunting and Fishing* would be necessary to understand the nuances of their initial arrangement, *Moses* and *Solomon* present a convincing addition to the Venetian *sportello* genre. This association still leaves open the question of their initial setting. Lucco and Anderson have proposed that, considering their common theme of a child’s salvation in the context of a judgment, the works adorned a judicial space or were commissioned by a magistrate. Conceivably they served as doors to the private study of a judge or religious scholar, or decorated a cabinet within such a room. Along with Giorgione’s *Judith*, these Jewish subjects were comparatively new to Venetian painting of the early sixteenth century, though the *Trial of Moses* was preceded by a mosaic design (begun ca. 1275-1285) in the atrium of San Marco and

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161 This discovery was made by David Alan Brown and Jaynie Anderson, to whom I am grateful for permission to share these findings. Further technical details and possible initial settings are discussed in the catalogue entry below.

162 Considering their subject, these paintings may have served as doors to a portative organ or other instrument; see discussion of musical instruments and catalogue entry below.

the *Judgment of Solomon* by the Quattrocento sculpture group on the façade of the Palazzo Ducale.\textsuperscript{164} Painted versions of these themes might have been introduced first to the libraries of prelates or judges who wished to adopt their lawful and civic lessons.

On the other hand, Moses and Solomon were also considered paragons of judiciousness and enlightened rule in general, and were taken as models by figures in other fields. Their portraits hung together, for example, on the most prominent wall of Federico da Montefeltro’s *studiolo* at Urbino. Painted probably during the 1470s for the Duke’s gallery of likenesses of distinguished men across the ages, Moses and Solomon symbolized his aspirations and pretensions to justice, learning, and wisdom.\textsuperscript{165} Perhaps the Uffizi scenes, too, decorated the working space of a patron who valued these qualities in his political or business affairs. Usually dated just before the turn of the sixteenth century, the paintings stand near the beginning of an illustrious tradition of both private and public images. The *Judgment of Solomon*, in particular, soon reappeared in monumental works of Sebastiano del Piombo (ca. 1506-1509; Dorset, Kingston Lacy, Bankes Collection) and Bonifacio de’ Pitati (1533; Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia). The former picture is thought to have hung first in a house, while the latter embellished the civic space of the Venetian Palazzo dei Camerlenghi.\textsuperscript{166}

The initial location of the Uffizi Moses and Solomon remains speculative, but evidence about the siting of Venetian painted doors in general can be found in the writings of Michiel. In 1532, as noted above, he recorded a series of decorated porte in an upstairs chamber of Andrea Odoni’s home.\textsuperscript{167} These doors likely covered the entrance of the room, as well as closets or cabinets within it. They formed part of a unified ornamental ensemble, including chests and a bedstead, all painted by a Flemish disciple of Titian. This report indicates that some pictured doors belonged to larger programs of domestic interior decoration, although no such assemblies

\textsuperscript{164} For the *Trial of Moses* mosaic at San Marco, Demus, *The Mosaic Decoration of San Marco, Venice*, 175-178. The sculpture group of the *Judgment of Solomon* on the Palazzo Ducale is typically dated ca. 1435 (Manno, *Il Poema del Tempo*, 52-54).

\textsuperscript{165} The attribution and dating of the paintings of famous men in the *studiolo* of Urbino are controversial. For this group and the inclusion of Moses and Solomon, Cheles, *Studiolo of Urbino*, 35-49.

\textsuperscript{166} For the *Judgment of Solomon* attributed to Sebastiano del Piombo, with review of scholarship, Lucco in Strinati et al., *Sebastiano del Piombo*, 102-105. Hirst convincingly suggests that the painting was commissioned by Andrea Loredan in the early sixteenth century for his palace at San Marcuola, and remained there even after the property had changed hands several times; Ridolfi saw it there in the seventeenth century (Hirst, *Sebastiano del Piombo*, 17-20). For Bonifacio’s *Judgment of Solomon* and its setting in the second room of the Magistrato del Sale at the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi, Cottrell, “Corporate Colors,” 664-665. The theme was also depicted during the sixteenth century in mosaic at San Marco (Hirst, op. cit., 18).

\textsuperscript{167} For these paintings, see discussion of Beds above, esp. n. 110.
are known today.

Michiel also described a separate, single painting of this type in Odoni’s home: an image of the goddess Ceres located “in the door halfway up the stairs.” He attributed the work to Jacopo Palma il Vecchio, and noted that it was “the one that Francesco Zio had in the door of his room.”

Indeed, during his visit to Zio’s collection over a decade earlier, Michiel had recorded a picture by Palma of a nymph, also framed “in the door” of a chamber. Odoni, Zio’s nephew, inherited this and several other works of art upon the elder’s death in 1523. The painting’s position was described on both occasions as nella porta, revealing that the panel was first framed inside a larger door surround. This composite object was probably then transported whole to Odoni’s home and reinstalled. In its new setting, “halfway up the stairs,” it may have adorned the entrance to a mezado or mezzanine level, or storage space on the landing.

In addition to providing an early provenance for the sportello painting of Zio and Odoni, Michiel’s writings suggest that the work was substantially altered. First described as a “Nymph” in 1521, the painting was then baptized “Ceres” in 1532, implying that the iconography of the scene changed after its entrance into Odoni’s collection. The frescoes on the façade of Odoni’s house, completed circa 1531-1532, contained allusions to Ceres: perhaps the transplanted picture was modified some years after its acquisition to match these new frescoes. If so, the work would have been purposefully incorporated into a larger decorative scheme, much like the painted porte in Odoni’s upstairs bedroom.

Though various possibilities for the painting described by Michiel have been raised, recent technical findings allow for a more convincing identification. In 1992, Rylands proposed a link between the Nymph/Ceres and a picture of a reclining nude attributed to Palma (1518-1520; Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister). Schmitter,
however, notes that this work is of horizontal format, difficult to reconcile with a standard door, and that its subject is more often found in bedrooms; she introduces a different, now much damaged image of a female nude by Sebastiano del Piombo (Fig. 2.117; ca. 1510-1512; Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie). 173 Seated on a fountain and turned modestly in profile, the figure is recognizable as Ceres by the heads of grain in her right hand. The picture’s dimensions of about 74.5 x 45.5 centimeters, its vertical orientation, theme, and dating are all congruous with the piece owned by Zio and his nephew, and it is equally possible that the attributes of Ceres are later additions reflecting the symbolism of Odoni’s house.

Schmitter’s suggestion can now be substantiated by analysis of the painting with neutron autoradiography, conducted by Claudia Laurenze-Landsberg in 2005. 174 This study showed that the figure was first conceived with her right arm positioned along her back, the bare hand propped on the stone fountain. Originally, therefore, the painting depicted a simple nude or “Nymph,” much like the image viewed by Michiel in Zio’s house in 1521. At a later point, the right arm was moved to the front of the figure, the three grains were added, and the arm at the back was hidden by a scarf. This pentiment is consistent with the new name given the painting in 1532, “Ceres.” Despite alterations to the work’s dimensions and a probable transfer from panel to canvas which has erased potential traces of a functional setting, these findings strongly corroborate the picture’s identification with the work twice described by Michiel. 175 They also provide a convincing explanation for the two titles bestowed on the same painting, and suggest an approximate dating of the pentimento between 1521 and 1532.

The cumulative evidence of early door paintings, in fact, indicates that these works may

174 I thank Claudia Laurenze-Landsberg for sharing the findings of her analysis with neutron autoradiography, which also confirms the attribution to Sebastiano on the basis of similarities to the technique of his Portrait of a Young Roman Lady (ca. 1512-1513; Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie). She first presented her analysis at the Convegno Internazionale di Studi su Sebastiano del Piombo (Rome, April 2008), and we discovered the link to Michiel and Schmitter’s argument in summer 2010. I am also grateful to Babette Hartwig for discussing these results. For further information about the painting’s technical and ownership history (its recent provenance begins only in 1934), Lucco in Strinati et al., Sebastiano del Piombo, 100.
175 Laurenze-Landsberg cites X-radiography indicating that the painting was probably originally wider on both the right and left sides, longer at the bottom and shorter at top. The work is described in the curatorial file as having been transferred from panel to canvas, but there is no documentation or date given for this procedure. Laurenze-Landsberg notes that the only indication of a transfer from panel is the pattern of cracks in the paint of the sky, which are roughly vertical and may have been caused by an original wood grain.
have been more widespread in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries than is now realized, and that later losses of physical and written information have impeded understanding of the genre. The Berlin Ceres, like Giorgione’s Judith, presents a case for the re-evaluation of other vertical images of single figures that might have fit within door spaces: for example, Temperance and Prudence from the circle of Carpaccio (Figs. 2.118-2.119; ca. 1505-1515; Atlanta, High Museum of Art), pendants which have been proposed as a pair of sportelli, and are composed on hardwood supports commensurate with this function. Titian’s Christ and the Pharisee, too, belongs in its formal composition to a broader type, the “confrontation portrait” initiated by Giorgione and involving the close interaction of two figures in a confined picture space. Possibly other, oft studied paintings of this kind, too, were once framed in ornamental settings. Moses and Solomon continue to raise questions of attribution, but they certainly exhibit aspects of the Giorgionesque manner prevalent in Venice and Padua in the years around 1500; this style may have been specifically correlated with decorative contexts such as doors. The panels’ clear similarities of subject to the St. Petersburg Judith hint at a wider range of iconographically novel works that appeared first in this capacity.

Overall, our knowledge of door pictures from this period calls for a second look at Ridolfi’s description of ornamental painting in his life of Giorgione. The number and variety of works it cites offer a guide, if not to Giorgione’s autograph production in this field, then to its association with his style and its popularity during and after his lifetime. The present facts, both physical and documentary, point to an array of early door paintings that either have not survived or currently hang unrecognized in museums.

176 I thank Monica Azar for information about these paintings. The hardwood supports are noted in a conservation report of 2002. The panels were thinned and cradled in 1929, possibly effacing information about their function (ibid.). For the suggestion of a sportello setting, Fiocco, “New Carpaccios in America,” 117-118. See also idem, “Nuovi Documenti intorno a Vittore Carpaccio,” 125; Morris, Selected Works in the High Museum of Art, 12; Brown, Private Lives, 83.

177 The rise of the secular half-length “confrontation picture” in Venice explored by Gould, “Lorenzo Lotto and the Double Portrait,” and Holberton, Poetry and Painting in the Time of Giorgione, esp. 66-99; Titian’s Il Bravo in the context of this genre discussed by Anderson, “Bittersweet Love,” 87. See also Brown, “Portraits of Men,” 241-242, and Anderson, “The Giorgionesque Portrait II.” The type is described as the “half-length fancy picture” by Gronau (Titian, 46). Some examples associated with Giorgione are Giovanni Borgerini and His Tutor (Nicolò Leonico Tomeo) (date unknown; Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art) and Man in Armor (ca. 1508-1510; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie). Such pictures probably emerged from the type of the half-length devotional image that had become especially prevalent in Venice and northern Europe during the fifteenth century; see Goffen, “Icon and Vision,” and Ringbom, Icon to Narrative. For Christ and the Pharisee’s relationship to the genre of confrontation pictures, see catalogue entry below.

178 For this passage, see Ch. 1 above.
Picture Covers

The Venetian picture cover, usually called *coperchio*, *coperto*, or *timpano*, was related to the genre of doors and shutters.\(^{179}\) It also belonged to a larger class of decorative objects appearing throughout Europe during this period. Before the use of glass screens over paintings became common, smaller panels and canvases were often shielded by fabric sleeves or covers of wood or canvas. In 1492, a scene of *St. Jerome in His Study* belonging to the Medici (Fig. 2.120; ca. 1435; Detroit, Detroit Institute of Arts) was protected by *una guaina*, a sheath. During the sixteenth century, a green taffeta curtain covered a royal portrait by Bronzino, while a small painting in a case of red leather was recorded in Venice in 1613.\(^{180}\) Lorenzo Lotto’s accounts reveal that he frequently delivered pictures with *ornamenti* such as gilded and carved frames, inscriptions, and covers. The artist’s image of Venus for a relative included a gilded walnut frame and black *timpano* embellished with letters, while other panels were fitted with reflective covers to be used as mirrors.\(^{181}\)

Lotto also completed some painted *coperchi*. Slender pieces of wood that slid in and out of the space between picture and frame, they were inspired by northern

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\(^{179}\) I thank Catherine Whistler for discussing the genre of Venetian Renaissance picture covers with me and for providing references. Other terms for picture covers were *coverchio* (see Boerio, *Dizionario del Dialetto Veneziano*, 205) and *coperta* or *coverta*. The latter two words usually describe a blanket or bed covering, and in some cases may have specifically denoted fabric covers for paintings. The term *timpano*, on the other hand, referred to a tightly stretched canvas or other textile cover (this word also describes the taut surface of the kettle drum and the eardrum). See Dülberg, *Privatporträts*, 45-58, and Penny, *National Gallery Catalogues*, vol. 1, 99-101 (cf. Brown, *Private Lives*, 175). My account of Venetian picture covers is indebted to Dülberg’s important study.

\(^{180}\) For the use of glass to protect paintings, Thornton, *Italian Renaissance Interior*, 266. The inventory of Lorenzo de’ Medici (copied in 1512 from an inventory made at his death in 1492) records “una tavoletta di Fiandra, suvi uno san Girolamo a studio chon uno armarietto di più libri di prospettiva e uno lione a’ piedi, opera di maestro Giovanni di Brugga, cholorita a olio, in una guaina” (Spallanzani and Bertelà, *Libro d’Inventario dei Beni di Lorenzo il Magnifico*, 52). For the identification of this entry with the Detroit *St. Jerome*, usually attributed to Jan van Eyck, Kemp, *Behind the Picture*, 144-145, and Syson, “The Medici Study,” 292-293. For the covering of Bronzino’s portrait of Eleonora da Toledo, wife of Duke Cosimo de’ Medici, Thornton, op. cit., 266. “Un quadreto imminiado in una cassella de cuoro rosso” was recorded in a Venetian collection in 1613 (Cipollato, “L’Eredità di Federico Contarini,” 233). A closely related genre was the decorative book cover, such as the one of crimson velvet and gilt silver made by Alessandro Vittoria to protect the Grimani Breviary (Molmenti, *Venice*, vol. 3, 280-281).

\(^{181}\) The Venus was painted for Mario d’Armano: “…e fu per lo inanti per l’ornamento del quadro de la Venere, che jo li donai, zöe de ligname / de noce doratura e timpano de tella negra de Lion con le letere in tuto quale lui / me ordinò facesse fare che pagaria lui lire 32” (Lotto, *Libro di Spese*, 211). Humfrey associates this painting with the *Venus and Cupid* of ca. 1540 in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Lorenzo Lotto, 139-141, 177). This work has been dated 1513-1526 by Christiansen, however (“Lorenzo Lotto and the Tradition of Epithalamic Paintings”). Several pictures covered with mirrors are mentioned in Lotto’s *Libro di Spese*: “In Ancona, / adì junio 1552, di haver mastro Domenico Salimbene mastro de lignami per un quadretino con l’ornamenti / de noce et suo coperto a uso de specchio,” as well as the “due quadreti / piccoli forniti de noce ad uso di spechio” (Lotto, op. cit., 45, 69). Pictures with mirrored covers or “leaves” are also recorded in inventories of the collection of Marcantonio Michiel: portraits of Michiel’s father and of Ariosto are described as “a foggia di specchio” (Fletcher, “Marcantonio Michiel’s Collection,” 385 n. 30).
ensembles, of which Dürer’s portrait of Hieronymus Holzschuher, covered by a panel recording the year and the sitter’s coat of arms, is an intact later example (Fig. 2.121; 1526; Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie). Such additions functioned, like tabernacles or collectors’ cabinets, to adorn and safeguard prized artifacts, and to build an element of suspense and unveiling into the spectator’s experience.

In addition to the works of Lotto, several well-known Venetian pictures enjoyed the protection of covers. According to early seventeenth-century inventories, Giorgione’s *La Vecchia* (Fig. 2.122; ca. 1505; Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia) was once accompanied by a cover depicting a man, transforming this penetrating portrait of an aged individual into a far-reaching allegory of the depredations of time. An earlier inventory of Gabriel Vendramin’s collection, where *La Vecchia* was housed, recorded a portrait of Giovanni Bellini covered by an image of his student, Vettore. Similarly, a letter from the patron of Titian’s *La Bella* (Fig. 2.123; 1536; Florence, Palazzo Pitti, Galleria Palatina)

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182 Lotto’s *Libro di Spese* mentions a variety of other picture covers. For Dario Franceschini da Cingoli: “item die dar per racontatura de un suo ritrato fato da altri et un coperto in esso / con doi figurene: lo abatimento de la forteza con fortuna” (Lotto, *Libro di Spese*, 42; for the subject of the strife of strength and fortune and its relation to Lotto, Pulini, “*La Fortuna Infelice* di Lorenzo Lotto”). Other listings of decorated covers in Lotto’s account books include: “adi 23 settembrio del 47, die dar el sopra dito misser Zuane della Volta mio patron de casa / per un quadro de pictura con el suo retrato de naturale et la donna con doi fioli tuti / inseme cioè no. 4, qual quadro era judicato e per bontà e per colori finissimi / con el coperto suo sul timpano ducati 50...” (ibid., 98; for this painting, Penny, *National Gallery Catalogues*, vol. 1, 92-102); “di novembre del 45, die dar el magnifico misser Zuan Lipomano per un retrato de misser Joan Aurelio Augurello / con il roverso et coperto como stava el proprio originale” (Lotto, op. cit., 102); “in Treviso adì ultimo febrar del 44, die dar misser Ludovico Avolante per un quadro de un suo / retratto del qual non fu fatto precio alcuno: valse ducati in 15, poi facemo in / ultimo al pretio qui sotto scritto...” (ibid., 122); “adi 10 april 1552, notto che già un anno e più fecci un retratto al signor Vincentio de Nobili / signor in Ancona, nepote de sua Santità, un quadro de suo retratto naturale et con suo ornamento et / coperta del quale gliene feci un presente, pensando haveria qualche poco recompenso et / non me ha dato mai alcuna cosa né favore alcuno et dito quadro fu judicato da / universali scuti quaranta” (op. cit., 186). For Dürer’s portrait of Hieronymus Holzschuher and its configuration, Dülberg, *Privatporträts*, 190-191.

183 *La Vecchia* was also adorned with a walnut frame on which the owner’s coat of arms was painted. The picture was described in an inventory of 1569 as “il retrato de la madre de Zorzon de man de Zorzon cum suo fornimento dipinto con l’arma de chà Vendramin”; an inventory of 4 January 1602 (1601 more veneto) listed “uno quadro d’una dona vecchia con le sue soaze de noghera depente alto quarte 5 1/2 et largo quarte 5 in circa con l’arma Vendramina dipenta nelle soaze / il coperto de detto quadro dipento con un homon con una veste de pelle negre” (Hochmann et al., *Il Collezionismo d’Arte a Venezia: Dalle Origini al Cinquecento*, 371; see also Anderson, “A Further Inventory of Gabriel Vendramin’s Collection,” 643, 647). A third inventory dated 26 January 1602 (1601 more veneto) describes the painting and its cover as “un quadro in retratto della mare de Zorzon de man de Zorzon con suo fornimento dipento con l’arma Vendramina con il suo timpano còe coperto dipento con un ritratto d’un homon” (quoted in Lauber, “Una Lucente Linea d’Ombra,” 195; for this document, idem in Dal Pozzolo and Pappi, *Giorgione*, 262, 401-402, and see also Hochmann et al., op. cit., 374). For Giorgione’s *La Vecchia* as an allegory of time, Vescovo, “Col Tempo.” A 1567 inventory of the Vendramin collection also notes “un...quadretto con il retrato de Zuan Belin et de Vetor suo dixipulo nel coperchio” (Ravà, “Il ‘Camerino delle Antigaglie’ di Gabriele Vendramin,” 169). Vendramin’s collection also included “un quadro de una sumercion de Faraon con un adornamento negro dorado col suo timpano soazato et dorado” (ibid., 179).
requested “the portrait of the woman with the blue dress...well finished all around and with the cover [con il Timpano].”\textsuperscript{184} Ornaments of this sort appeared often in documents: for instance, the “portrait of a lady with frame on top with its cover,” and the “portrait of a man of arms with its cover” in a 1569 listing of the property of a Venetian courtesan. These devices were also attached to devotional pictures, such as the “new picture with the head of Christ...with its timpano” recorded in a will of 1522.\textsuperscript{185}

Artists painted covers for other purposes, as well. An early Portrait of a Boy by Giovanni Bellini (ca. 1475; Birmingham, Barber Institute of Fine Arts) likely decorated the cover of a wooden box holding a sonnet and a marble bust of the Neapolitan ambassador Angelo Probi, who died in 1474 while on a mission in Venice; it has been proposed that the subject of the portrait is Angelo’s son, Giovanni Andrea, and that the ensemble was given to him by the Venetian Republic in honor of his father’s service. Another example of sculpture juxtaposed with painted covers was found in Gabriel Vendramin’s collection, where antiquities stood on a running cornice decorated with tempani by Titian: “all these things were on the large high cornice with covers all around [con tempani atorno] painted by the hand of M. Titian.”\textsuperscript{186} What these tempani represented, or how they were arranged in conjunction with the antiquities on view, is unknown. However, their appearance and disposition are suggested by paintings from the artist’s circle that likely served as covers, including the Allegory of Prudence (Fig. 2.124; ca. 1550-1570; London, National Gallery) and the so-called Allegory of Fortune and Patience (Fig. 2.125; ca. 1520; Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art). The Triumph of Love (Fig. 2.126; ca. 1543-1546; Oxford, Ashmolean Museum) has recently been recognized as an autograph work of Titian that served as the cover of a portrait of a woman in the Vendramin collection, which

\textsuperscript{184} The 1536 letter reads, “…direte al Titiano…che quel’ retratto di quella Donna che ha la veste azura, desideriamo che la finisca bella circa il Tutto et con il Timpano…” (quoted in von Hadeln, “Zum Datum der Bella Tizians,” 69).
\textsuperscript{185} The “retrato de donna con soaze ut supra con la sua coverta” and the “retrato de homo d’Arme conla sua coverta” in a 1569 listing of the property of Julia Lombardo (Santore, “Julia Lombardo, ‘Somtuosa Meretrize,’” 62). The will of 1522 lists “uno quadro novo cum una testa de Christo passo, cum el suo timpano” (Gilbert, “The Last Will of a Venetian Grand Chancellor,” 513).
\textsuperscript{186} For the Birmingham Portrait of a Boy and its probable function, Benedicenti, “Per Giovanni Bellini: Una Nuova Lettura del Ritratto di Birmingham.” In the Vendramin inventory of 1567, a listing of antiquities is followed by the note, “le qual tutte cose erano nel soazon de sopra con tempani atorno depinti de man de misier Titian come hanno ditto” (Ravà, “Il ‘Camerino delle Antigaglie’ di Gabriele Vendramin,” 161). See also Lauber, “Per un Ritratto di Gabriele Vendramin,” 61-62. For the soazon de sopra, see discussion of Friezes above. Catherine Whistler suggests that the timpani did not actually cover the antiquities, but rather were displayed above or near them in a frieze-like arrangement (verbal communication, December 2010; see also Whistler and Dunkerton, “Titian’s ‘Triumph of Love,’” 540).
also included the cornice of antiquities with their tempani, as well as Giorgione’s La Vecchia and its cover.\textsuperscript{187} Comparable to emblems in their terse, suggestive symbolism, these scenes adumbrate broad concepts such as love and the ages of man. The Triumph, which has been cut down from its original rectangular shape, depicts a dark wall pierced by a fictive oculus from which a lion threatens to spring; his pride and wrath have been subdued by the amorino bearing a quiver of love’s arrows. The Allegory of Fortune and Patience is a monochrome rendering of a windswept Cupid clutching a wheel: perhaps the covers for Vendramin’s antiquities, too, were adorned with classicizing subjects in grisaille, alluding to the sculptures nearby.

Similar themes appear in three early portrait covers by Lotto, completed shortly after his arrival in Treviso from his native Venice during the first decade of the sixteenth century (Figs. 2.127-2.129; cat. nos. 24-26). Although now separated from their pendant pictures, the panels bear physical and formal evidence of their original use as coperchi for portraits.\textsuperscript{188} Carefully detailed in composition yet evocatively open-ended in subject, they depict allegorical, mythological, and saintly figures who elicit the viewer’s attention and sustain his curiosity about the likenesses beneath. As visual puzzles hinting at the characters of their distinguished subjects, these pictures, too, are analogous to emblems; but Lotto uses the painted medium to expansive effect, elaborating traditional devices into eloquent poesie that can be appreciated on their own terms. In fact, records of these commissions suggest that the works were displayed independently from an early date.\textsuperscript{189} Cumulatively, Lotto’s surviving portrait covers reveal the richness of this once-common pictorial type, and the opportunities it afforded for exploration of

\textsuperscript{187} For the Allegory of Prudence, see von Hadeln, “Some Little-Known Works by Titian,” 179-180; Wethey, Paintings of Titian, vol. 2, 50-51, 145-146; Panofsky, “Titian’s Allegory of Prudence”; Campbell, “Old Age and the Politics of Judgment”; and Penny, National Gallery Catalogues, vol. 2, 236-247, with further bibliography. For the Allegory of Fortune and Patience (?), Wethey, op. cit., vol. 3, 209; Shapley, Catalogue of the Italian Paintings, vol. 1, 481-482; and Brown, Venice and Antiquity, 230. The recently rediscovered Triumph of Love is discussed by Whistler and Dunkerton, “Titian’s ‘Triumph of Love.’” This picture is recorded in an inventory of the Vendramin collection dated 4 January 1602 (1601 more veneto): “uno quadro con un dio d’amor sopra un lion con soazette de legno dorade, qual quadro è il coperto del soprascritto quadro de retratto della donna con la mano al petto” (Hochmann et al., Il Collezionismo d’Arte a Venezia: Dalle Origini al Cinquecento, 371; see also Lauber, “Memoria, Visione e Attesa,” 66-71). The portrait for which the Ashmolean painting served as a cover is described in the same inventory as “un altro quadro de retratto d’una donna con la mano destra al petto vestita de negro con soaze de noghiera con li suoi filli d’oro a torno altro quarte cinque e 1/2 et largo quarte 5 in circa” (Hochmann et al., op. cit., 371; see also Lauber, op. cit.). Whistler suggests that the subject of this portrait was Elisabetta Querini Massola (d. 1559), a Venetian patrician known for her beauty, learning, and virtue (“Uncovering Beauty”). I thank Catherine Whistler for information about the Triumph of Love and its associated portrait.

\textsuperscript{188} For conservation evidence of these works, see catalogue entries below.

\textsuperscript{189} For the analogy between Lotto’s portrait covers and imprese on portrait medals, Humfrey, Lorenzo Lotto, 11. The detachment and individual display of these paintings are discussed in Ch. 3 below.
novel, captivating themes in a highly personal style.

Musical Instruments

When Sansovino wrote in 1581 that Music had found in Venice her true and proper home, he recognized the Republic’s involvement in every aspect of European musical culture, from sacred and secular performance to the printing of scores and the manufacture and collecting of instruments. The previous two centuries had witnessed remarkable changes in these fields, with the emancipation of instrumental from vocal music and the rise of musica da camera for the home. Accompanying these developments was an increase in the production of portable instruments for private ownership, analogous to the emergence of small, secular easel pictures. During the sixteenth century, by one estimate, ninety percent of Venetian merchant and patrician households possessed at least one musical instrument. Carpaccio’s drawing of a chamber of musicians, accompanied by lutes, a viol with its bow, tambourine, and pipes, represents the type of intimate gathering for practice and conversation that must have been common in this period (Fig. 2.130; ca. 1518; London, British Museum). Paintings such as Titian’s Concert (Fig. 2.131; ca. 1510-1512; Florence, Palazzo Pitti, Galleria Palatina), a poetic portrait of three men with a virginal and viola da gamba, emphasized the consonances between art and music; while similar themes in public settings declared the cosmic harmony and beauty of La Serenissima.

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190 I am grateful to Mia Awouters, Zdravko Blažeković, Peter Jeffery, Laurence Libin, Gianni Peretti, and Hopkinson Smith for information and research advice about early Venetian musical instruments. Sansovino wrote, “…essendo chiarissima & vera cosa, che la Musica ha la sua propria sede in questa cittá” (Venetia Citta Nobilissima, 139r.). For the relationship between Venetian painting and music, Groos, Ars Musica in Venedig, esp. 52-64. The first complete printed musical score in Europe appeared in Venice in 1501 (Barblan, “Aspetti e Figure del Cinquecento Musicale Veneziano,” 59); for the city as a center of early musical printing, Gallico, L’Età dell’Umanesimo e del Rinascimento, 30-32, and idem, “Il Laboratorio di Ottaviano Petrucci.” Howard and Moretti explore the innovative relationship between sacred music performance in Renaissance Venice and contemporary church architecture and acoustics (Sound and Space in Renaissance Venice).

191 For the rise of instrumental music and intimate song forms such as the madrigal, Gallico, L’Età dell’Umanesimo e del Rinascimento, 39-42, 49-55. The prevalence of instruments in Venetian households during the sixteenth century is discussed by Palumbo-Fossati (“L’Interno della Casa dell’Artigiano,” 126-127; “La Casa Veneziana,” 476-477); for the home of a musician with its books and instruments, idem, “La Casa Veneziana di Gioseffo Zarlino.” For the musical culture of the Venetian house, Toffolo, Strumenti Musicali a Venezia, 45-67; Brown, Private Lives, 123-125; and Dennis, “Music.” See also Bode, Die italienischen Hausmöbel der Renaissance, 60-61. Toffolo provides a selection of Venetian documents in which domestic musical instruments and books appear (op. cit., 55-64). Henry explores the presence of instruments in the Venetian household and their relation to various types of musically themed paintings on the walls (Buffoons, Rustics, and Courtesans, 49, 70, 92-141). See also Howard and Moretti, The Music Room in Early Modern France and Italy (forthcoming).

A center of music appreciation and performance, Venice was also a key producer of instruments for the European market; the government encouraged this industry by welcoming foreigners and granting patents. Venetian specialists were known across Italy, one appearing in Rome in 1563 to repair a ruined organ. The instruments of Giovanni Antonio Baffo, Alexander Bertolotti, Guido Trasuntino, and Domenico da Pesaro, among others, were composed of richly carved cypress, cedar, beech, and ebony; meant to charm the eye as much as the ear, they were collected as works of art unto themselves. In his guidebook to the city, Sansovino discussed studi di musica along with prominent collections of books, arms, and antiquities, suggesting that these studies served as arenas of visual display in addition to performance.

Sansovino’s account recalls Sabba da Castiglione’s well-known comment, in his 1546 excursus on various types of musical instruments, that such objects not only “delight the ears and refresh the spirits” but also “please the eye just as much, when they are executed diligently and by the hands of excellent and ingenious masters.” One such master, Alessandro Trasuntino, was engaged in 1540 by Titian to build a small organ for the painter’s house at Biri Grande, in exchange for a portrait. It is unlikely that Titian knew how to play the organ; he acquired it as a work of art to furnish his home, an entertainment for his musical friends, and a prop for representing in his pictures. In several canvases by the artist, a reclining Venus appears beside

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194 For Giovanni Antonio Baffo as a maker of instruments, Toffolo, Antichi Strumenti Veneziani, 155-157. For the instruments of Alexander Bertolotti, Boalch, Makers of the Harpsichord and Clavichord, 16, 238. For Guido Trasantino and Domenico da Pesaro respectively, Toffolo, op. cit., 165-166, 159-160. For the diversity of woods used in this craft, Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, At Home in Renaissance Italy, 354; I thank Laurence Libin for further information on this subject.

195 Sansovino, Venetia Citta Nobilissima, 138v.-139r. For the visual presence of musical instruments in Renaissance studies and homes, Thornton, Italian Renaissance Interior, 272-274, and Thornton, Scholar in His Study, 121-123. For the role of music and instruments in early cabinets of art and wonders, Seipel, Für Aug’ und Ohr.

196 “…questi tali instrumenti dilettano molto all’orecchie e ricreano molto gli animi, i quali, come diceva Platone, si ricordano dell’armonia, la quali nasce dalli moti dei circoli celesti; ancora piacciono assai all’occhio, quando sono diligentemente e per mano di eccellenti ingegnosi maestri lavorati” (Castiglione, Ricordo cerca gli Ornamenti della Casa, 2919). See also Dennis, “Music,” 233-234.
an organist and his instrument (Fig. 2.132; 1545-1548; Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado). The decoration of such objects varied with the surface field available. The organ depicted by Titian is elaborately carved and gilded, but painted only with abstract flourishes above the keyboard. Likewise, curved or handheld instruments, such as the lute, viol, *lira da braccio*, and cittern, did not display much figurative imagery, and instead were lacquered or covered with patterns along the back, soundboard, or neck. However, they were sometimes protected by ornamented cases. A sixteenth-century Venetian woodcarver owned a “liuto con la sua cassa,” which was probably composed either of plain or punched leather, or of painted wood.

Larger, flat instruments such as the harpsichord, virginal, and spinet, on the other hand, could support extensive painted scenes on both their lids and cases. These designs were usually executed in a thin layer of finely ground pigment mixed with egg white, which rendered the color both dense and pellucid, and were applied directly to the wood of the instrument or its container. They conformed to a repertoire of musical and mythological themes, later enumerated by Lomazzo. The inner cover of a Venetian *clavicembalo* or harpsichord by Joseph Salodiensis, for instance, depicts the flaying of Marsyas on its wing, and a pastoral scene of music and dance on the upper rectangular portion covering the keyboard (Fig. 2.133; 1559; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Sammlung Alter Musikinstrumente). A comparable instrument by Baffo fits into an elaborate outer case adorned with grotesques, the arms of the Strozzi family of Florence, and a cartouche containing a scene of Apollo and the Muses, inspired by an engraving of Giorgio Ghisi after Raphael’s *Parnassus* (Fig. 2.134; 1574; London, Victoria & Albert Museum). These represent the most ornate type of domestic harpsichord; Venetian

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199 For technical details of painted musical instruments, Griffini, “La Decorazione degli Strumenti Musicali,” 436-437. Some variations in the pigment and support were also seen: for example, a sugar base was sometimes substituted for egg white, and the support could be a custom-cut piece of canvas later applied to the instrument or its case (ibid.). In his treatise of 1584, Lomazzo described appropriate decorations for sacred and secular instruments, the latter including “tutte le sorte di pitture, come d’Anfione, d’Arione, di Zeto, di Saffo, di Orfeo, di Mercurio, di Apolline, e delle Muse” (*Trattato dell’Arte della Pittura*, vol. 2, 195-196). Instruments could also be painted in monochrome: for example, the “Arpichordo verde” recorded in the home of Julia Lombardo in 1569 (Santore, “Julia Lombardo, ‘Somtuosa Meretrise,’” 58, 69).
homes contained many more modest examples, such as the *claucimbano piccolo* recorded in the home of Federico Contarini in 1613.\(^{200}\)

The spinet and virginal, smaller and more affordable versions of the harpsichord, were equally popular ornaments for the Venetian Renaissance home, though few early examples survive today.\(^{201}\) In his copy after Titian’s *Venus of Urbino* (Fig. 2.135; ca. 1548; Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum), Lambert Sustris added a detail of a woman sitting at a table and playing a portable spinet. The object appears in proximity to clothing chests, implying its connection to other common domestic furniture types. It is unclear whether Sustris’s instrument is painted, but related evidence suggests that such works often exhibited pastoral or musical scenes on their covers. In several versions of *Tarquin and Lucretia* (Fig. 2.136; 1578-1580; formerly Cologne, Kunsthau Lempertz), Tintoretto included a pentagonal virginal, splayed open in an echo of Lucretia’s violently compromised position, to reveal a painted landscape on its inner lid.\(^{202}\)

Two rare early instruments of this type are now in London (Fig. 2.137; ca. 1600; Victoria & Albert Museum) and Brussels (Fig. 2.138; Museum of Musical Instruments). The former, a quadrangular octave spinet, is decorated on its lid with a frieze of musical *putti* and the story of Arion and the dolphin. The latter, also an octave spinet, has an outer case contrived to look like a rectangular folio volume; it opens to display a pastoral landscape, containing an Orpheus-like figure seated against a tree and playing a bass viol.\(^ {203}\) This work is probably Venetian or

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\(^{202}\) For the London spinet, Thornton, *Musical Instruments as Works of Art*, 8; Schott and Baines, *Catalogue of Musical Instruments*, 46-47; Dennis, “Music,” 230; and Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, 354, with further bibliography. For the Brussels spinet, Mahillon, *Catalogue Descriptif et Analytique du Musée*
northern Italian in origin; though its dating and history are ambiguous, its imagery clearly recalls early Venetian cabinet pictures. *Orpheus in a Wood* from the circle of Giorgione, for example, likewise portrays a figure leaning against a rock or stump and bowing a stringed instrument (Fig. 2.139; ca. 1515; Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art).204

On the basis of such continuities, scholars have frequently proposed that surviving Venetian ornamental paintings and cabinet pictures once belonged to musical instruments. Schubring identified Cima da Conegliano’s two paintings of the *Judgment of Midas* (Figs. 2.35, 2.140; cat. nos. 12, 13) as possible harpsichord lids. The *Birth of Venus* at the Castello Sforzesco, Milan (Fig. 2.101; cat. no. 38), was advertised in the mid-nineteenth century as a virginal cover from the collection of Doge Grimani, while in 1956, Otto Benesch described a little-known painting by Tintoretto as the decoration of an organ.205 In most cases, however, the primary evidence linking these works to musical instruments is their poetic or lyrical subject matter. The *Contest between the Muses and Pierides* from Tintoretto’s studio (Fig. 2.141; late 1570s; Verona, Museo di Castelvecchio), for instance, was listed as the cover of a virginal in the nineteenth-century catalogue of the Bernasconi collection. Chiarelli and Magagnato repeated this classification in their 1969 publication, and a similar suggestion has been raised in a recent reassessment of the Tintoretto catalogue raisonné.206 While the panel may have served this function, and is iconographically similar to another work from the artist’s circle that shows physical signs of attachment to a keyboard instrument (discussed below), in this case comparable

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204 The Washington *Orpheus* was at one time attributed to Giovanni Bellini, but is now generally given to a colleague or follower of Giorgione. For discussion of the painting’s attribution and iconography, Sheard, “The Widener Orpheus.”

205 For Schubring’s proposals regarding the two *Judgment of Midas* paintings by Cima, Cassoni, 168. The Milan *Birth of Venus* was acquired in 1844 as a work of Giorgione and a one-time virginal cover belonging to Doge Grimani (Pirovano et al., *Museo d’Arte Antica del Castello Sforzesco*, 98). For Benesch’s discussion of Tintoretto’s painting of the Trinity (formerly held by a Viennese art dealer), showing the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost enthroned in a choir stall-like edifice, “Some Unknown Early Works by Tintoretto,” 161.

206 For Tintoretto’s *Contest between the Muses and Pierides*, Pallucchini and Rossi, Tintoretto, vol. 1, 148; for a related work and its iconography, Slim, “Tintoretto’s ‘Music-Making Women’ at Dresden.” Echols and Ichman explore different versions of the *Concert of the Muses* theme from Tintoretto’s circle and their implications for artistic exchange between Venice and the North (“Toward a New Tintoretto Catalogue,” 107-109). In the Bernasconi catalogue of 1869, the Verona painting is described as a “tavola che un tempo serviva di coperta ad una spinetta” (Ferrari, *Catalogo Bernasconi*, no. 189). For the 1969 publication, Chiarelli and Magagnato, “Castelvecchio e le Arche Scaligere,” 131. Echols and Ichman suggest that the Verona painting adorned the inside cover of a keyboard instrument (op. cit., 107). Weddigen also proposes that this and other paintings by Tintoretto originally belonged to musical instruments, and argues that their fluid style of execution is consistent with ornamental settings (“Jacopo Tintoretto und die Musik,” 76-78).
conservation or documentary information is lacking. With dark strips at its upper and lower edges, the panel appears to have been reworked at some stage, but it is not known whether these changes reflect a one-time musical instrument setting. This identification is based mainly on the story depicted, the Pierides’ transformation into magpies after challenging the Muses to a contest of song (Metamorphoses, V.294-678), and on the presence of instruments within the scene.\textsuperscript{207}

Possibly, rather than adorning instruments themselves, the Verona painting and related works appeared in rooms where music was played, either hanging as easel pictures or attached to other furniture pieces such as chests and bedsteads. Only a few Venetian musical instrument ornaments have survived apart from the original objects; in addition to iconographic clues, they present physical signs consistent with such settings. Due to the paucity of comparative material, however, understanding these works requires the use of evidence from other regions, including Flanders, Florence, and Germany.

Among examples from the Venetian ambient, Pordenone’s picture of a satyr family (Fig. 2.142; cat. no. 39) gives away its initial function as a virginal or spinet cover with its odd trapezoidal shape and intact painted border.\textsuperscript{208} The survival of this work in its previous dimensions is rare, as most such panels were squared off after their detachment. One case of this type of alteration survives from the circle of Tintoretto: a Concert with Muses and other Divinities, executed by a northern artist working in Venice during the 1570s (Fig. 2.143; private collection). Probably once a keyboard instrument decoration, it has since been altered from a pentagonal to a rectangular shape by panel additions at upper right.\textsuperscript{209} Similarly, an image of Orpheus from the southern Netherlands (Fig. 2.144; ca. 1600; private collection) was once part of a larger, wing-shaped piece of wood functioning as the cover or lid of a harpsichord. The existing, rectangular painting was clipped out of the lid’s bottom corner; it retains a triangle of black paint on its upper right edge, which belonged to the border trimming the curved rim of the

\textsuperscript{207} “L’ipotesi che la tavolletta di Tintoretto fosse sul coperchio di uno strumento musicale si basa solo sul soggetto del dipinto e non ci sono altri elementi per confermarla (o per smentirla)” (Gianni Peretti, curator, Museo di Castelvecchio, communication of 20 October 2006).

\textsuperscript{208} For further details of the original setting of Pordenone’s painting, see catalogue entry below.

\textsuperscript{209} For this painting, Pallucchini and Rossi, Tintoretto, vol. 1, 148, and Weddigen, “Jacopo Tintoretto und die Musik,” 86, 113 n. 129. Formerly in a private collection in Neuilly, the work is now in a different private collection; its attribution, dating, and original setting discussed by Echols and Ilchman, “Toward a New Tintoretto Catalogue,” 107, 147. Echols suggests the possible involvement of Lambert Sustris and also notes quotations from the works of Marten de Vos (“Tintoretto, Christ at the Sea of Galilee, and the Unknown Later Career of Lambert Sustris,” 148 n. 101).
Bronzino’s *Apollo and Marsyas* (ca. 1530-1532; New York, private collection), too, originally decorated the rectangular area of a harpsichord lid, covering the keyboard; it was later cut off, leaving the wing-shaped portion behind, and framed as an independent painting. A likely copy of this work now survives in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg (Fig. 2.146).

A Venetian ornamental picture, of the same shape as Bronzino’s detached work and narrating the same story, possibly also functioned as the cover of a keyboard instrument (Figs. 2.147-2.148; cat. no. 42). This panel from the circle of Schiavone displays Apollo flaying Marsyas on one side, and an abstract foliate design on the other: a hallmark of harpsichord painting that is also exhibited by the Flemish *Orpheus* noted above. The vegetal pattern would have appeared on the instrument’s outer case, probably above the keyboard, with the scene of Apollo and Marsyas becoming visible when the cover was opened for playing; or the reverse arrangement might have been used, with the musical theme decorating the exterior. However, scant documentary evidence and a vague provenance make it impossible to ascertain this setting.

A third Venetian ornamental work that may have been attached to a musical instrument, the *Tale of Thyrsis and Damon* (Figs. 2.115-2.116; cat. no. 5), presents equal difficulties. The two narrow panels apparently served as a pair of doors or covers, but scholars can only surmise what type of object they protected. It may have been a cupboard or chest, or a small organ. Early domestic keyboard instruments were sometimes stored in chests or fitted out like cabinets, with their vertically oriented pipes or strings concealed inside a decorated wooden box. An example of this type of organ from seventeenth-century Germany is adorned with painted doors depicting the *Dismissal of Hagar* and the *Sacrifice of Abraham* (Fig. 2.149; ca. 1627; London, Victoria & Albert Museum).

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210 For the picture of *Orpheus*, Bader, *Detective’s Eye*, 70-73. The reverse of the panel is decorated with painted foliage, further suggesting its role as an instrument cover. I thank Robert Wald for this reference.

211 For the harpsichord setting of Bronzino’s *Apollo and Marsyas*, Spike, “Rediscovery: Apollo and Marsyas by Bronzino,” 20. McCorquodale, however, associates the Hermitage painting with Bronzino’s original and dates it 1531-1532 (*Bronzino*, 34-36).

212 For further details of the Milan *Flaying of Marsyas* and its initial setting, see catalogue entry below.

213 For the German organ, Schott and Baines, *Catalogue of Musical Instruments*, 49-50. The 1594 inventory of the home of the *cittadino* Martino II d’Anna noted an old organ kept in a painted chest, though this object may have been used for generic storage rather than custom-designed to contain the instrument: “una cassa d’albo depenta nella qual vi era un’organo vecchio desfatto” (de Maria, *Merchants of Venice*, 180, 324). For further discussion of...
appearing on instruments, the Thyrsis and Damon story is self-consciously musical and would have befit such a setting. However, without more concrete documentation, the panels’ function remains conjectural.

These problems of historical reconstruction expose the uncertain boundary between musical instruments and other types of furniture in Renaissance Europe. In the Venetian home, instruments moved around the house much like chairs or chests; sometimes set up in the *portego*, they were also hidden away in *camere* or even, in the case of one organ, in the kitchen. Domestic instruments often included secret drawers or painted doors, and doubled as cabinets or writing desks. The Medici inventories record a spinet serving as a safe for jewelry [*una spinetta ad uso di forzierino di perle e rubini*]. Other instruments were disguised to look like chests and cupboards: one sixteenth-century claviorgan took the shape of a *credenza*. In fact, domestic cabinetmakers were sometimes commissioned to make the separate, outer cases of large instruments.  

Because musical instruments of this period were conflated with furniture, and furniture with easel pictures, the painted decorations of these various types were closely consonant. But these very similarities obscure the nature of Venetian artists’ involvement in the embellishment of instruments. Ridolfi records that Pietro Malombra painted on a harpsichord a scene of Apollo, Pan, and nymphs in a landscape, but otherwise provides few clues. The structure of industry further complicated these connections. Unlike cities such as Antwerp, where instrument makers were incorporated into the painters’ guild in 1559, Venice required its musical craftsmen to belong to the guild of the *marzeri*, who sold items ranging from linens and hats to perfumes and gold. Thus, artists and instrument makers occupied different sectors of the city’s economy.

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214 For the organ in a Venetian kitchen in 1546, Dennis, “Music,” 232. For musical instruments as furniture, Winternitz, “Musical Instruments,” 427-432; for the Medici *spinetta ad uso di forzierino* and the claviorgan in the shape of a *credenza*, ibid., 428. See also Griffini, “La Decorazione degli Strumenti Musicali,” 436. Similarly, a portrait of a young man by Lorenzo Lotto includes a quadrangular, furniture-like box which has been identified as the case of a virginal (ca. 1530; Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia; see Lucco, “Lorenzo Lotto and the Interpretation of Venetian Sixteenth-Century Portraits,” 80-82, and Anderson, “Bittersweet Love,” 90). For the involvement of cabinetmakers in constructing the outer cases of harpsichords, Winternitz, op. cit., 426.


manufacturing economy. While famous painters were frequently given separate commissions by religious bodies to decorate the doors of large church organs, it is unlikely that they would have entered the shops of independent craftsmen to adorn small, portable instruments. The decoration of most domestic harpsichords was probably undertaken “in house,” or contracted out to furniture painters.\(^{217}\)

Despite the functional divide between picture- and instrument-making, however, the two crafts were intimately associated by literary and visual traditions. In Venice, the union of painting and music implied a special role for artists in the creation and playing of instruments. A drawing attributed to Titian (Figs. 2.150-2.151; ca. 1510; London, British Museum) eloquently intertwines these arts: in an arcadian landscape, a young man bows a fantastical *viola da gamba* decorated with an image of a female nude, who in turn rhymes with the pipe-playing maiden seated nearby. Music and art, pictured and actual worlds are married in this enigmatic scene, whose silent sounds manifest the rich paradoxes of the Venetian pastoral imagination.\(^{218}\)

Half a century later, Veronese created a similar analogy in his monumental *Marriage at Cana,* portraying a group of artists – himself, Tintoretto, Titian, and Bassano – as instrumentalists entertaining the party’s legions of guests (1562-1563; Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures). This distinguished ensemble was first recognized in 1674 by Boschini, who had earlier written in his *Carta del Navegar Pitoresco* that “the Venetian painter, expert musician, plays and tunes his instrument well,” rendering *fantasie* and *bizzarie* for the delight of all.\(^{219}\) In turn, Boschini’s verses hark back to the writings of Vasari, who famously declared that the sound

\(^{217}\) Decorations for church organ doors constitute a rich genre of Venetian art which has not been fully explored. Among many examples are Tintoretto’s paintings for the organs of S. Maria dei Servi, S. Maria del Giglio (both lost; see Ridolfi, *Maraviglie,* vol. 2, 17, and Pallucchini and Rossi, *Tintoretto,* vol. 1, 263), and the Madonna dell’Orto (Ilchman et al., *Tiziano, Tintoretto, Veronese,* 37-38, 135); and Veronese’s designs for the organs of S. Sebastiano (Molmenti, *Venice,* vol. 4, 32) and S. Geminiano (see n. 26 above). Such works are closely related to both secular musical instrument decoration and *sportello* paintings (see section above). For “in house” decoration of musical instruments, Thornton, *Italian Renaissance Interior,* 101. For the possibility that furniture painters decorated instruments, Griffini, “La Decorazione degli Strumenti Musicali,” 436.


\(^{219}\) Boschini’s account of the portraits in the *Marriage at Cana:* “l’Invenzione del Concerto Musicale figurato sul piano, di quei quattro Musici, non può esser più bene inteso…Il Vecchio, che suona il Basso, è Tiziano; l’altro che suona il Flauto, è Giacomo da Bassano; quello che suona il Violino, è il Tintoretto, ed il quarto vestito di bianco, che suona la Viola, è lo stesso Paolo” (from the *Breve Istruzione,* see Boschini, *Carta del Navegar Pitoresco,* 755). See also Fletcher, “Fine Art and Festivity,” 145-147, and Brown, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice,* 104-105. In the *Carta del Navegar Pitoresco,* Boschini writes, “El Pitor venezian, musico esperto, / Ben sona un istrumento e ben l’acorda…” (op. cit., 324-325).
of the lute gave Giorgione marvelous pleasure; he played and sang so divinely that he was employed as a musician at noble gatherings. The painter’s musical skills, whether documented or invented, complement the melodious subjects and lyrical style of his known works, and enhance Vasari’s prose portrait of Giorgione as a lover and gentleman-hero – akin to the protagonists of contemporary novelle, often lauded as singers and players, and Baldesar Castiglione’s courtier, who counts musical skills among his many social talents.\textsuperscript{220}

Tintoretto, too, was praised by early biographers for his musical abilities. According to Vasari, the painter “delighted in all the virtues, and particularly in playing music and diverse instruments.”\textsuperscript{221} Ridolfi further heralded Tintoretto’s reputation in this field, writing that the young artist took delight in playing bizarre instruments that he had invented himself. With this carefully chosen detail, Ridolfi joined Tintoretto to the musical-instrument craft, making it the medium of his earliest imaginative productions, and identifying the common creative element of the two arts. Though likely apocryphal, Ridolfi’s story resonates with Tintoretto’s musically themed paintings, his many pictures for church organs, and his documented relationships to prominent musical figures.\textsuperscript{222} The tale also recalls the manifold tradition of imagery available to the artist. Musical subjects pervade Venetian ornamental paintings, from Bellini’s \textit{Truth} (Fig. 2.153; cat. no. 2), the Giorgionesque \textit{Astrologer} (Fig. 2.59; cat. no. 20), and Cima’s \textit{Midas} and \textit{Bacchus and Ariadne} (Figs. 2.35, 2.6, 2.9; cat. nos. 12, 11), to Lotto’s \textit{Allegory of Virtue and Vice} (Fig. 2.127; cat. no. 24) and Schiavone’s \textit{Allegory of Music} (cat. no. 45). Whether or not these pictures actually adorned instruments – for evidence suggests that few did – they offer rich testimony to the sisterhood of painting and music forged in the city on the lagoon.

\textsuperscript{220} Vasari’s life of Giorgione: “…piacqueli il suono del liuto mirabilmente e tanto, che egli sonava e cantava nel suo tempo tanto divinamente, che egli era spesso per quello adoperato a diverse musiche e ragunate di persone nobili” (\textit{Vite}, vol. 4, 92). Hope notes the inaccuracies in Vasari’s versions of the life of Giorgione and argues that most of the biographical details about the artist were invented (“Giorgione in Vasari’s \textit{Vite},” 21). Barolsky, however, explores the imaginative verity of Vasari’s account and its relationship to the Giorgionesque style (\textit{Walter Pater’s Renaissance}, 120; \textit{The Faun in the Garden}, 47-56). Anderson discusses Vasari’s sources and his “network of informants” about the artist’s life (Giorgione, 60-68). For Giorgione’s relationship to contemporary musical culture, Strinati, “Giorgione e la Musica.” For the role of music in characterizing the gentlemen of contemporary novelle, Dennis, “Music,” 235. Similarly, a character of the \textit{Cortegiano} declares, “io non mi contento del cortegiano s’egli non è ancor musico e se, oltre allo intendere ed esser sicuro a libro, non sa di vari instrumenti…” (Castiglione, \textit{Il Libro del Cortegiano}, 92).

\textsuperscript{221} “…si è dilettato di tutte le virtù, e particolarmente di sonare di musica e diversi strumenti” (Vasari, \textit{Vite}, vol. 6, 587). Vasari also notes the early musical achievements of Paris Bordone (ibid., vol. 7, 461).

\textsuperscript{222} Ridolfi wrote of Tintoretto, “Si dilettò in sua gioventù suonare il liuto & altri bizzarri strumenti da lui inventati, dipartendosi in qualunque cosa dalla commune usanza” (Maraviglie, vol. 2, 69). See also idem, \textit{Vite dei Tintoretto}, 103, and Weddigen, “Jacopo Tintoretto und die Musik,” 68. For the artist’s involvement in the musical culture of Venice, Fenlon, “Public and Private.”
Restelli

The restello was a carved and painted device, which first appeared in the inventory of a Murano household in 1457, and enjoyed a successful career in Venice over the next century. Its name, the diminutive of rastro or rake, referred to a characteristic row of pegs or prongs from which objects could hang. The term restello was also sometimes used to describe the apparatus surrounding a devotional painting, which carried candles and offerings. Rather than framing a holy image, however, the secular restello usually supported an expensive mirror, and its prongs held grooming tools such as horsehair brushes, combs, and clips. It was a private vanity altarpiece, decorated with paintings, sculpted detail, or gilding. Aside from the mirrored type, there were many varieties: one sixteenth-century inventory recorded a restello with hourglass, and others of the same period noted restelli da scrittura, for stationery and office implements, and da calze, for stockings.\(^{223}\)

Of all types of furniture in the Venetian home during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the restello most nearly approached a work of art; as an ostentatious frame for costly cosmetic implements and paintings, it soon drew the ire of the Republic’s sumptuary authorities. In a law of 1489, they forbade the object and declared that no utility could be derived from it [nè mai se ne pol trazer alguna utilità], condemning this lavish artifact whose ostensible purpose paled before its splendor.\(^{224}\) In his will of 1525, Vincenzo Catena listed his restello, decorated with paintings by Giovanni Bellini, along with precious possessions – “all my rings, mounted in gold, first my diamond and my emerald and two carnelians mounted in gold...and also all my nudes in relief made of terracotta” – implying that he viewed it as a unique and prized article.\(^{225}\)

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\(^{223}\) The mention of a restello in a Murano inventory of 1457 recorded by Ludwig, “Venezianischer Hausrat,” 199. The abbey of San Zeno in Verona contained a Madonna “dal rastello”: “un manto della B. V. dal rastello di canevazetta biancho e rosso a opera con il suo passaman d’oro.” In addition, an inventory of 1533 lists “un restello vecchio con un Christo dentro,” and a domestic inventory of 1541 records “un quadro da nostra dona dorato vecchio con suo restello” (ibid., 188-189). The “restello de noghera et uno orologio da sabion” is mentioned in a 1557 document (ibid., 211). For further discussion of restelli, Bode, Die Italienischen Hausmöbel der Renaissance, 54-55; Bistort, Il Magistrato alle Pompe, 369-370 n. 3; Morazzoni, Le Cornici Veneziane, 26-27; Alberici, Il Mobile Veneto, 18-19; Goffen, Giovanni Bellini, 224-237; Thornton, Italian Renaissance Interior, 239-241; Brown, Private Lives, 111-112; and idem, “The Restello,” 188-189.

\(^{224}\) The same condemnation included gilded chests; see Ludwig, “Venezianischer Hausrat,” 310-312, and Bistort, Il Magistrato alle Pompe, 369-370.

\(^{225}\) Catena’s will of 15 April 1530, copied with additions from his earlier will of November 1525: “Item laso al sovraschrito miser Antonio tuti i mie aneli ligati in oro, prima el mio diamante et la mia prasma [prasina], e do chorniole ligate in oro, et anchora laso el mio restelo di nogera con zerte fegurete dentro depinte de mano de miser
Catena’s description indeed evokes a device of art and display: “my restello of walnut with certain little figures inside, painted by the hand of M. Giovanni Bellini.” The paintings are inside [dentro], meaning that the object has a cover or curtains to protect the images; the pictures themselves exhibit “little figures,” rather than abstract detailing; and the ensemble is carved of rich walnut, setting off Bellini’s designs and heightening the beauty of the whole.

Catena’s restello has long been circumstantially associated with the four Allegories by Bellini, now in the Accademia (Figs. 2.152-2.155; cat. no. 2). Though probably not a direct reference to these paintings, the written record indicates the kind of object to which the Allegories belonged. In fact, artists in his circle may have painted several restelli, of which the detached Accademia panels and the object documented by Catena are only two examples; several other works, such as the small Fortune (Fig. 2.156; cat. no. 3) and Pagan Allegory (Fig. 2.13; cat. no. 1), likely served a similar purpose. Bellini himself was reputed to be fond of mirrors: Pirro Ligorio twice claims that a classical mirror was excavated on the artist’s property on the Esquiline in Rome, and says that the object was loved by Giovanni for its perfection. This account is probably apocryphal, for it is highly unlikely that Bellini ever lived in Rome. Nonetheless, Ligorio suggests that the artist harbored an archaeological and contemplative interest in mirrors, and kept classical themes in mind when decorating them – as in restelli – or representing them – as in the scene of Truth in the Accademia group (Fig. 2.153), or his later Lady with a Mirror (Fig. 2.157).

For his designs, Bellini may also have been influenced by northern examples of mirrors framed by paintings. In Jan van Eyck’s Arnolfini Portrait, for instance, the famous mirror hanging on the back wall of the merchant’s chamber is surrounded by a cycle of roundels illuminating the stages of the Passion (Fig. 2.158; 1434; London, National Gallery). Perhaps a version of Jan’s painted specchio, itself embelished by the painter’s art, inspired Bellini’s...
Accademia Allegories, with their poetic and playfully allusive inventions.\textsuperscript{228}

In Venice, surviving examples of restello painting are confined to the late fifteenth century and to Bellini and his circle. These early pieces provided a platform for innovative small mythological scenes, cornerstones of the Venetian tradition of poetic cabinet pictures. As the sixteenth century progressed, however, painted restelli declined in popularity; by the 1580s, the genre had given way to independently framed mirrors, and the subjects first explored by Bellini in the restello setting, too, had long graduated to frames of their own.\textsuperscript{229}

\textit{Spalliera Cycles}

The term \textit{spalliera}, derived from \textit{spalle}, referred to the area of wall just at or above shoulder level. It could be decorated in various ways, with instarsiated wood, fine fabrics, or narrative paintings, such as Botticelli’s rendering of the tale of Nastagio degli Onesti. Florentine domestic \textit{spalliera} painting flourished from 1470 through the first two decades of the sixteenth century.\textsuperscript{230} In Venice, however, most \textit{spalliera} ornaments were tapestries; inventories list items such as the “piece of spaliera with a white coat of arms,” or the “three pieces of spaliere with foliage and figures.”\textsuperscript{231} Sansovino noted that hangings of this kind decorated the city’s finest homes, according to the season, and Sanudo testified that these objects were singled out by state officials in 1504 in a condemnation of excessive household furnishings.\textsuperscript{232} \textit{Spalliere} also appeared in religious settings: an account of the visit of Archdukes Ferdinand and Maximilian to Venice in 1578 recorded that, for the occasion, the choir of San Marco was outfitted with the

\textsuperscript{228} For the influence of Jan van Eyck’s works in Venice, Weiss, “Jan van Eyck and the Italians” (I) and (II); Campbell, “Notes on Netherlandish Pictures in the Veneto”; Aikema and Brown, “Painting in Fifteenth-Century Venice and the \textit{Ars Nova} of the Netherlands.”

\textsuperscript{229} For the decline of the restello, see Ch. 3 below. For examples of sixteenth-century mirror frames, Santini, \textit{Mille Mobili Veneti}, vol. 3, 239-244.

\textsuperscript{230} Botticelli’s paintings of the story of Nastagio degli Onesti, completed with Jacopo del Sellaio and Bartolomeo di Giovanni ca. 1482-1483, are now in Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, and a private collection (Barriault, \textit{Spalliera Paintings}, 142-144). For \textit{spalliera} paintings, see also Bayer, “From Cassone to Poesia,” 233-235.

\textsuperscript{231} The “pezzo di spaliera con un’arma bianca in mezo de brazza 5” and “spaliere vecchie del portego pezzi no. 9” appear in the inventory of Alessandro Ram in Santa Fosca of 1592 (Bode et al., “Archivalische Beiträge zur Geschichte der Venezianischen Kunst aus dem Nachlass Gustav Ludwigs,” 74). “Tre pezzi de spaliere à foggiami et figure, che fornisce la camera della scala” appear in a 1555 inventory of the home of Alvise Odoni, and \textit{spalliere} are also listed in his servant quarters: “spaliere vecchie per la camera da famegli” (ibid., 64, 66). Other appearances of \textit{spalliere} in domestic inventories noted in Brown, \textit{Private Lives}, 81, 85-86.

“spaliere, et tapedi” customarily reserved for feast days. Carved wooden spalliera decorations appeared in Venetian churches and homes, as attested by a 1518 statement of the carpenters’ guild, reserving their right to make such pieces and specifically prohibiting the box-makers from engaging in this art.233

Painted spalliere appeared less often in Venice, except in the important setting of the confraternities. The narrative cycle in the albergo of the Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista (ca. 1494-1510), for example, was built into wooden surrounds and hung just above benches, whose backs formed a wainscot several feet high; an earlier cycle in the sala capitolare of the same institution included paintings by Jacopo Bellini placed “all the way around” [atorno atorno] the room, likely in a similar position above eye level.234 In private homes, similar arrangements were seldom recorded, the genre of small, oblong frieze paintings being more prevalent. Only two secular spalliera cycles have been definitely identified in this study, one from Carpaccio’s hand (Figs. 2.159-2.160; cat. no. 8), and another by Veronese that is lost, but documented by Ridolfi and Boschini (cat. no. 77). Carpaccio’s series recounts the Ovidian tale of Ceyx and Alcyone, while Veronese’s paintings once depicted scenes from the Book of Esther inside monumental, arched picture fields. Both sets of works are substantially taller and squarer in shape than typical Venetian frieze paintings, setting them off from this genre. Moreover, both recall the textile form of spalliere: the Ceyx and Alcyone paintings by the inclusion of millefiori vegetation in the foreground, similar to the designs commonly appearing in woven tapestries, and Veronese’s pictures by the use of cloth as a support. The cycles probably hung above wooden wainscots or benches, which were documented in Venetian homes of the period: a local miniature painter, for example, placed four benches of painted fir along the walls of his

233 The account of the “spaliere, et tapedi” adorning the choir of San Marco upon the visit of Ferdinand and Maximilian to Venice in 1578 recorded in ASV, Commerciali, B. 24, c. 79; see Bratti, “Notizie d’Arte e di Artisti,” 479-480. Similarly, Michiel noted spalliere in the form of intarsia decorations in the choir of the church of the Santo in Padua (Notizia d’Opere del Disegno (ed. Frimmel), 27). The Venetian carpenters’ guild asserted in 1518: “Item che li Casselleri non possano far spalliere di sorte alcuna, ne le possano tener fatte in bottega” (ASV, Arti, B. 97, A: Per l’Arte de Casselleri cto. L’Arte de Marangoni, 12v.).

234 The paintings of the narrative cycle in the albergo of the Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista are now in the Gallerie dell’Accademia, Venice (for their original arrangement, Brown, Venetian Narrative Painting, 136-137, 282-286). For the earlier sala capitolare cycle (1421-ca. 1460s; now lost) and its original placement, ibid., 266-268. An idea of the placement of such pictures can be gained from the narrative cycle at the Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni; the cycle has been moved downstairs but is arranged along the upper registers of the wall in a manner very similar to its original arrangement.
Little else is known of these ensembles or their original placement, however. The primary evidence comes from Ridolfi’s descriptions and, in Carpaccio’s case, the pictures themselves. These reveal their makers’ awareness of the exigencies of domestic painting, during a period of significant developments in Venetian secular art.

Conclusion

The pictures considered in this chapter reveal the rich variety of settings in which Venetian Renaissance paintings could appear, including chests and boxes intended for valuables or ordinary domestic use, doors and shutters protecting cabinets or private thresholds, friezes and spalliera paintings attached to the upper registers of a wall, large furniture items such as beds and musical instruments, and restelli designed for the complementary purposes of artistic display and personal beautification. Firsthand observation of surviving artifacts, together with technical and documentary evidence, allow us to identify the probable original settings of these paintings and to place them in discrete categories based on function. These reconstructions permit a fuller comprehension of the pictures’ subject matter and styles, and make it possible to consider the range of meanings these images would have conveyed to their earliest viewers. The diverse origins of these works now established, the concluding chapter of this essay explores the paintings’ converging fates during the decades and centuries after their creation.

<sup>235</sup> Completed after Gasparo Segizzi’s death in 1576, the inventory of his home in the parish of San Barnaba lists “quattro panche di abete dipinte di rosso disposte lungo i muri” in the portego (Palumbo-Fossati, “L’Interno della Casa dell’Artigiano,” 138-139). For the prevalence of benches in the portego, Brown, Private Lives, 73. It is possible that other such works survive, or that pictures today identified as quadri originally hung as spalliere, but they are of more standard dimensions, and thus difficult to distinguish from typical easel paintings.
Chapter 2 Illustrations

2.1 Cassa of the Beata Giuliana di Collalto
Venice, Museo Civico Correr
(image courtesy of the Museo Civico Correr, Venice)

2.2-2.3 Jacopo Bellini, Altar with Candlestick; Rearing Equestrian Group on Base
London, British Museum, Book of Drawings, f. 81v., 82
(image source: Eisler, Genius of Jacopo Bellini, 190, 188)

2.4 Sketch of sarcophagus fragment from the Statuario Pubblico, Venice
Zanetti catalogue (1736), cat. no. 117
Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, ms. It. IV. 65
(image source: Favaretto and Ravagnan, Lo Statuario Pubblico della Serenissima, cat. no. 65)

2.5 Circle of Giovanni Bellini, Doge Pietro Orseolo I and his Wife Felicita Malipiero at Prayer
Venice, Museo Civico Correr
(image source: Brown, Venice and Antiquity, 246)
2.6-2.9 Cat. no. 11, Cima da Conegliano, *Tale of Bacchus and Ariadne* (image sources: Philadelphia Museum of Art; Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan; Humfrey, *Cima da Conegliano*, pl. 137b)

2.10 Tullio Lombardo, *Tabernacle of the Holy Blood* Venice, S. Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, sacristy (photo by the author)

2.13  Cat. no. 1, Circle of Giovanni Bellini, *Pagan Allegory*  
(image source: Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 198)

2.14  Workshop of Cima da Conegliano, *The Redeemer*  
Pavia, Civici Musei, Galleria Malaspina  
(image courtesy of the Civici Musei, Pavia)

2.15  Gentile Bellini, *Cardinal Bessarion before the Reliquary of the True Cross*  
London, National Gallery (image courtesy of the National Gallery, London)

2.16  Reliquary of Cardinal Bessarion  
Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia (image source: Campbell and Chong, *Bellini and the East*, 39)

2.17  Cover for the Reliquary of Cardinal Bessarion (14th century)  
Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia (image source: Campbell and Chong, *Bellini and the East*, 43)
2.18 Cat. no. 7, Vittore Carpaccio, *Ladies on a Balcony, Hunting and Fishing on the Lagoon*  
(image source: Sgarbi, *Carpaccio*, 102)

2.19 Jacobello del Fiore, *Justice triptych*  
Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia  
(image source: Schneider, *Venezianische Malerei der Frührenaissance*, 12-13)

2.20 Giovanni Mansueti, *Healing of the Daughter of Ser Nicolò Benvegnudo*, detail  
Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia  
(image source: Brown, *Private Lives*, 78)
2.21 16th-century Venetian *cofanetto*
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art
(image source: Alberici, *Il Mobile Veneto*, 61)

2.22-2.25 Cat. no. 56, Circle of Jacopo Tintoretto, *Ovidian Tales*

2.26 Cat. no. 34, Circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati, *Legend of the Infant Servius Tullius*
(image courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

2.27 Cat. no. 78, 16th-century Venetian chest with *Three Scenes from Roman History*
(image source: Pirovano et al., *Museo Bagatti Valsecchi*, vol. 1, 97)
2.28-2.30 Cat. no. 9, Circle of Vittore Carpaccio, *Page and Nymphs in a Landscape*  
(image sources: Sgarbi, *Carpaccio*, 216; Accademia Carrara, Bergamo)

2.31 Cat. no. 81, 16th-century Venetian chest with scene of *Romulus and Remus*  
(image source: Schottmuller, *Furniture and Interior Decoration*, 42)

2.32 Cat. no. 30, Bonifacio de' Pitati and Workshop, *Antiochus and Stratonice*  
(image courtesy of the Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan)

2.33 Cat. no. 64, Jacopo Tintoretto, *Esther and Ahasuerus (Solomon and the Queen of Sheba?)*  
(image source: Braham, *Princes Gate Collection*, 82)

2.36 Cat. no. 14, Circle of Cima da Conegliano, *Scene of Sacrifice*  
(image courtesy of the City Museum and Art Gallery, Northampton)

2.37 Cat. no. 73, Circle of Titian, *Lot and His Daughters*  
(image courtesy of the Hermitage, St. Petersburg)
2.38  Cat. no. 28, Circle of Bartolomeo Montagna, Chest with scenes of *Duilio* and *Bilia* and *Tuccia with a Sieve*
(photo by the author)

2.39-2.40  Cat. no. 28, Circle of Bartolomeo Montagna, *Claudia, Antiochus and Stratonice (?)*  
(image source: Puppi, *Bartolomeo Montagna*, figs. 72, 73)

2.41  Cat. no. 80, 16th-century Venetian chest with *Scenes of Battle and Sacrifice*  
(photo by the author)
2.42 Titian, *Venus of Urbino*
Florence, Uffizi
(image source: Brown, *Private Lives*, 170)

2.43 16th-century
Venetian chest with
inlaid panel paintings
(photo by the author)

2.44-2.45 Cat. no. 10, Cima da Conegliano, *Tale of Theseus*
2.46-2.48  Cat. no. 40, Andrea Schiavone, *Tale of Diana and Callisto*  
(images courtesy of the National Gallery, London, and Musée de Picardie, Amiens)
2.49-2.55 Cat. no. 58, Jacopo Tintoretto and assistants, *Biblical Tales* (images courtesy of Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

2.56-2.59 Cat. no. 20, Circle of Giorgione, *Pastoral Scenes: Rustic Idyll, Leda and the Swan, Venus and Cupid in a Landscape, Astrologer (Orpheus and Time)* (image sources: Padua, Museo Civico; Pignatti and Pedrocco, *Giorgione*)
2.60-2.61 Vittore Carpaccio, *Birth of the Virgin* and detail of background
Bergamo, Accademia Carrara

2.62 Plate from G.A. della Croce, *Cirugia Universale e Perfetta di Tutte le Parti Pertinenti all’Ottimo Chirurgo* (Venice, 1583)
Venice, Biblioteca Marciana
(image source: Alberici, *Il Mobile Veneto*, 86)

2.63-2.64 Vittore Carpaccio, *Vision of St. Augustine* and detail of background
Venice, Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni
(image source: Sgarbi, *Carpaccio*, 119)
2.65 Detail of interior frieze, Casa Marta Pellizzari, Castelfranco
(image source: Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 256-259)

2.66-2.67 Vittore Carpaccio, *Tale of St. Ursula: The Reception of the Ambassadors* and detail
Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia
(image source: Humfrey, Carpaccio (2005), 55, 57)

2.68-2.69 Cat. no. 27, Andrea Mantegna, *Introduction of the Cult of Cybele at Rome*;
Giovanni Bellini and assistants, *Continence of Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus* (detail)
(image sources: National Gallery, London; Brown et al., *Bellini, Giorgione, Titian*, 156, 158-159)
2.78-2.81 Cat. no. 55, Circle of Jacopo Tintoretto, *Old Testament Scenes* (images courtesy of the Museo di Castelvecchio, Verona)
2.82-2.85  Cat. no. 54, Follower of Andrea Schiavone, *History of Troy*  
(images courtesy of the Galleria Sabauda, Turin)

2.86  Cat. no. 32, Bonifacio de’ Pitati, *Finding of Moses*  
(image courtesy of the Polo Museale Fiorentino)

2.87  Jacopo Tintoretto (?), *Abdication of Queen Caterina Cornaro* (?)  
Location unknown  
(image source: Romanelli, *Ca’ Corner della Ca’ Granda*, 90-91)

2.88  Workshop of Paolo Veronese, *Meeting of Queen Caterina Cornaro and Doge Agostino Barbarigo*  
Location unknown  
(image source: Romanelli, *Ca’ Corner della Ca’ Granda*, 90-91)
2.89 Sala del Consiglio dei Dieci, Palazzo Ducale, Venice
(image source: Bianchi, *Piazza San Marco and Its Museums*, 79)

2.90 Palazzo Contarini delle Figure, Venice
(image courtesy of Patricia Fortini Brown)

2.91 Sala dei Cuoi d’Oro, Palazzo Vendramin-Calergi, Venice
(image source: Attardi, *Il Camino Veneto del Cinquecento*, fig. 194)
2.92 Vittore Carpaccio, *Tale of St. Ursula: The Dream of St. Ursula*
Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia
(image source: Sgarbi, *Carpaccio*, 75)

2.93 Giorgione and Titian, *Sleeping Venus*
Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister
(image source: Pignatti and Pedrocco, *Giorgione*, 173)

2.94-2.95 Cat. no. 51, Andrea Schiavone, *Tales of Aeneas*
(images courtesy of Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)
2.96-2.97 Cat. no. 53, Circle of Andrea Schiavone, *Deucalion and Pyrrha, The Judgment of Midas* (images courtesy of the Polo Museale Veneziano)

2.98 Cat. no. 67, Circle of Titian, *Sleeping Shepherd* (image courtesy of the Barnes Foundation, Merion)


2.101 Cat. no. 38, Circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati, *Birth of Venus* (image courtesy of the Pinacoteca, Castello Sforzesco, Milan)
2.102 Armadio
Venice, Fondazione Giorgio Cini
(image source: Santini, Mille Mobili Veneti, vol. 3, 121)

2.103 Detail of fig. 2.92

2.104 Vincenzo Catena, St. Jerome in His Study
London, National Gallery
(image source: Robertson, Vincenzo Catena, cat. no. 20)
2.105 Cat. no. 19, Giorgione, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* and detail (image sources: Hermitage, St. Petersburg; Pignatti and Pedrocco, *Giorgione*, 123)

2.106 Cat. no. 70, Titian, *Christ and the Pharisee* (image courtesy of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden)

2.109-2.110 Cat. no. 18, Circle of Giorgione, *Trial of Moses, Judgment of Solomon*  
(image source: Anderson, *Giorgione*, 25, 28)

2.111-2.112 Reverses of *Trial of Moses* and *Judgment of Solomon*  
(images courtesy of the Polo Museale Fiorentino)
2.113 Author sketch of *Trial of Moses*, panel reverse
2.114 Author sketch of *Judgment of Solomon*, panel reverse
2.115-2.116 Cat. no. 5, Follower of Giovanni Bellini, *Tale of Thyrsis and Damon* (images courtesy of the National Gallery, London)

2.118-2.119 Circle of Vittore Carpaccio, *Temperance, Prudence*
Atlanta, High Museum of Art
(images courtesy of the High Museum of Art, Atlanta)

2.120 Attributed to Jan van Eyck, *St. Jerome in His Study*
Detroit, Detroit Institute of Arts
(image source: Raggio, *The Gubbio Studiolo*, vol. 1, 127)
2.121 Albrecht Dürer, *Portrait of Hieronymus Holzschuher* and sliding cover
Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie
(image source: Dülberg, *Privatporträts*, pl. 444)

2.122 Giorgione, *La Vecchia*
Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia
(image source: Pignatti and Pedrocco, *Giorgione*, 183)

2.123 Titian, *La Bella*
Florence, Palazzo Pitti, Galleria Palatina
(image source: Dülberg, *Privatporträts*, pl. 632)
2.124 Titian and Workshop, *Allegory of Prudence*  
London, National Gallery  
(image source: Valcanover et al., *Titian, Prince of Painters*, 349)

2.125 Circle of Titian, *Allegory of Fortune and Patience (?)*  
Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art  
(image source: Dülberg, *Privatporträts*, pl. 298)

2.126 Titian, *Triumph of Love*, reconstruction by Jill Dunkerton of the original rectangular format  
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum  
(image courtesy of Catherine Whistler)
2.127 Cat. no. 24, Lorenzo Lotto, *Allegory of Virtue and Vice*  
(image source: Brown et al., *Lorenzo Lotto*, 77)

2.128 Cat. no. 25, Lorenzo Lotto, *A Maiden’s Dream*  
(image source: Brown et al., *Lorenzo Lotto*, 84)

2.129 Cat. no. 26, Lorenzo Lotto, *St. Jerome in the Desert*  
(image source: Brown et al., *Lorenzo Lotto*, 89)
2.130 Vittore Carpaccio, *Musicians*  
London, British Museum  
(image source: Brown, *Private Lives*, 127)

2.131 Titian, *Concert*  
Florence, Palazzo Pitti, Galleria Palatina  
(image source: ARTStor)

2.132 Titian, *Venus and Cupid with an Organist*  
Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado  
(image source: ArtStor)
2.133 Joseph Salodiensis, Harpsichord
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum,
Sammlung Alter Musikinstrumente
(image source: Fillitz et al.,
*Kunsthistorisches Museum Wien*, 377)

2.134 Giovanni Antonio
Baffo, Harpsichord
London, Victoria & Albert
Museum
(image source: Schott and
Baines, *Catalogue of Musical
Instruments*, 32)

2.135 Lambert Sustris,
Venus
Amsterdam,
Rijksmuseum
(image source: Brown,
*Private Lives*, 172)
2.136 Jacopo Tintoretto, *Tarquin and Lucretia*
formerly Cologne, Kunsthauz Lempertz
(image source: Pallucchini and Rossi, *Tintoretto*, vol. 2, 595)

2.137 Octave spinet
London, Victoria & Albert Museum
(image source: Schott and Baines, *Catalogue of Musical Instruments*, 46)
2.138  Octave spinet
Brussels, Museum of Musical Instruments
(image courtesy of the Museum of Musical Instruments, Brussels)

2.139  Follower of Giorgione (?), *Orpheus*
Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art
(image source: ARTStor)

2.140  Cat. no. 13, Cima da Conegliano, *The Judgment of Midas*
(image source: Humfrey, *Cima da Conegliano*, pl. 179b)
2.141 Studio of Jacopo Tintoretto, *Contest between the Muses and Pierides* (image courtesy of the Museo di Castelvecchio, Verona)


2.143 Circle of Tintoretto, *Concert with Muses and other Divinities* Private collection (image source: Pallucchini and Rossi, *Tintoretto*, vol. 2, 345)
2.144 Flemish artist, *Orpheus*
Private collection
(image source: Bader, *Detective’s Eye*, 71)

2.145 Flemish artist, *Orpheus*, reconstruction of original harpsichord cover
(image source: Bader, *Detective’s Eye*, 73)

2.146 Copy after (?) Bronzino, *Apollo and Marsyas*
St. Petersburg, Hermitage
(image source: McCorquodale, *Bronzino*, 34)
2.147-2.148 Cat. no. 42, Circle of Andrea Schiavone, *Apollo Flaying Marsyas* (r.); *Foliate Design* (v.)
(images courtesy of the Pinacoteca, Castello Sforzesco, Milan)

2.149 German organ with painted doors
London, Victoria & Albert Museum
(image source: Schott and Baines, *Catalogue of Musical Instruments*, 49)

2.150-2.151 Attributed to Titian, *Musicians in a Landscape* and detail
London, British Museum
(image source: Wethey, *Titian and His Drawings*, pl. 4)
2.152-2.155 Cat. no. 2, Giovanni Bellini, Allegories: Melancholy, Truth, Bacchus, Envy (images courtesy of the Polo Museale Veneziano)

2.156 Cat. no. 3, Circle of Giovanni Bellini, Fortune (image courtesy of the Polo Museale Veneziano)
2.157 Giovanni Bellini, *Lady with a Mirror*
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie
(image source: Goffen, *Giovanni Bellini*, 253)

2.158 Jan van Eyck, *Arnolfini Portrait*, detail of mirror
London, National Gallery
(image source: Pächt, *Van Eyck*, pl. 10)

2.159-2.160 Cat. no. 8, Vittore Carpaccio, *Tale of Ceyx and Alcyone*
(images courtesy of the National Gallery, London, and the Philadelphia Museum of Art)
Chapter 3
Transformations and Provenance

Furniture to Frame

Venetian ornamental pictures originated in the specific settings described in Chapter 2 above, but during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, many of these works underwent significant changes of location and framing. In conjunction with the rise of the easel picture, the growth of collecting and the European art market, and the emergence of distinctions between painting and other media, decorative images were removed from their architectural and furniture surrounds for independent display. This ongoing phenomenon was noted in the mid-1600s by Ridolfi and Boschini, whose historical accounts are substantiated by documents, art catalogues and writings, and technical evidence. The present chapter traces shifts in the definition and status of these paintings, and reconstructs the provenance of selected artifacts during the Cinquecento and beyond.

The most suggestive reference to the practice of framing ornamental panels appears in Ridolfi’s *Maraviglie*, at the close of his discussion of Giorgionesque furniture pictures.1 Having described the typical subjects and styles of such paintings, the author adds, “three of these fables are with the Signori Widmann; in one is the birth of Adonis, in the second he is seen in sweet embraces with Venus, and in the third he is killed by the boar.” Ridolfi goes on to declare that other examples of this genre “likewise have been reduced to small pictures and placed in various studies” [altre delle descritte furono ridotte parimente in quadretti e poste in vari studij].2

With this brief conclusion, Ridolfi connects Venetian decorative paintings to developments in art appreciation from the sixteenth century down to his own day. The Widmann family, to whom he ascribed ownership of the three detached furniture pictures, were prominent collectors in Seicento Venice. Of Austrian extraction, they had settled in the city during the 1500s, and made their fortune in the metals trade; in 1646, two years before the publication of

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1 For discussion of this passage (Ridolfi, *Maraviglie*, vol. 1, 98-99), see Ch. 1 above. As noted there, Ridolfi’s account provides a description of the genre of Giorgionesque ornamental works, rather than a list of paintings attributable to the artist himself.
2 “…tre di queste favole si trovano appresso de’ Signori Vidmani; in una è la nascita d’Adone, nella seconda vedesi in soavi abbracciamenti con Venere, e nella terza vien ucciso dal Cinghiale: & altre delle descritte furono ridotte parimente in quadretti e poste in vari studij” (Ridolfi, *Maraviglie*, vol. 1, 99). See also the discussion of Boschini and n. 8 below.
the *Maraviglie*, they achieved noble status through a large payment to the Republic. Their palace at San Canciano (Fig. 3.1) was designed by Baldassare Longhena and contained a rich assembly of art, including works of Paris Bordone, Dosso Dossi, and Veronese, as well as earlier pictures attributed to Giovanni Bellini and Giorgione, and contemporary Baroque pieces. No paintings of Adonis appear in later Widmann inventories, but Ridolfi’s account of these works is nonetheless credible: his precise and detailed descriptions of extant canvases from the same gallery demonstrate that he had seen and studied it in person. Moreover, a 1659 survey of Widmann holdings lists a number of *quadretti* similar in character to the Adonis scenes, indicating that small mythologies and landscapes were a familiar component of this collection.

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4 The Adonis scenes are not recorded in the 1659 inventory of the Widmann collection compiled by Nicolas Régnier and Pietro della Vecchia (Magani, “Il Collezionismo e la Committenza Artistica della Famiglia Widmann,” 33-38; see also Anderson, *Giorgione*, 356 n. 6). However, other pictures recorded by Ridolfi do appear in the 1659 document: a work of Paris Bordone belonging to “gli Signori Conti Vidmani” and depicting “una femina col seno scoperto, che si mira in ispecchio, tenutole da una vecchia con una bella giovine à canto” (*Maraviglie*, vol. 1, 234) is described in the later inventory as “due donne che si guardano allo specchio di Paris Bordon,” and is now in the National Gallery of Scotland (Magani, op. cit., 34, 40; Humfrey et al., *The Age of Titian*, 148-149; Borean and Mason, *Il Collezionismo d’Arte a Venezia: Il Seicento*, 322). Likewise, Ridolfi notes in the life of Veronese, “li Signori Conti Vidmani possiedono tre historie del Paralitico, di Lazaro risuscitato e di San Paolo convertito...” (op. cit., 340). Two of these paintings are mentioned in the 1659 inventory, and the Conversion of St. Paul has been identified with a work now in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg (Magani, op. cit., 34-35, 39, 48; Fomichova, *The Hermitage*, 379; Borean and Mason, op. cit., 322). Additional statements made in the *Maraviglie* about paintings in the Widmann collection are substantiated by the 1659 inventory and by Martinioni’s 1663 edition of *Venetia, Città Nobilissima*, lending credence to Ridolfi’s record of the Adonis pictures (see n. 3 above; Branca, *Il Collezionismo Veneziano nel ’600*, 288-290; and Magani, op. cit.). The author also accurately describes a portrait by Tiberio Tinelli of Count Lodovico Widmann, which is now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. (*Maraviglie*, vol. 2, 280; Fletcher, “Marco Boschini and Paolo del Sera,” 422, 424; Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*, vol. 1, 458-460; Magani, op. cit., 23-24; De Grazia et al., *Italian Paintings of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, 318-321).

5 The inventory notes “quadretti piccoli sei di misura con figure in bianco,” “due paesetti di Monsi Montagna,” “dei quadretti sopra porte di paesetti...” “due quadretti per sopraporte di donne giacenti,” “due...quadretti di...Palma il Vecchio” “quattro paesetti di un fiammingo,” “tre paesetti piccoli d’un fiammingo,” “cinque quadri compagni di Bonificacio,” “quadretto di Palma il Vecchio,” “cinque quadretti e sotto finestre del Bombella,” “cinque quadri compagni con cornici dorate di paesi,” “sei quadretti compagni di pianetti con cornici dorate del Palma il Giovane” (Magani, “Il Collezionismo e la Committenza Artistica della Famiglia Widmann,” 34-38, 46). It is possible that one of these generically described items corresponds to the pictures of Adonis recorded by Ridolfi.
In all likelihood, Ridolfi accurately refers to Giorgionesque furniture paintings of this type hanging alongside easel pictures in the Widmann palace. These images, which anticipate both full-scale and ornamental representations of Adonis from the circle of Titian (Fig. 3.2, 1554, Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado; Figs. 3.3-3.4, cat. nos. 71, 74), have been transformed from dependent decorative elements into autonomous quadretti for a gallery setting. Further, the custom is widespread, rather than confined to a single ensemble, for “others…likewise” have been modified in this way.

In fact, Ridolfi noted the same trend with regard to other artists. Schiavone began his career by painting “on the customary chests for sale [nelle casse solite à vendersi] little histories, foliage, grotesques and other bizarre things.” Some of these ornaments “are conserved as rare things by those who possess them, and many have been transported elsewhere.” In the Breve Istruzione, an introduction to the 1674 edition of his guidebook, Le Ricche Minere della Pittura Veneziana, Boschini added a telling detail to this account. In his youth, he had known Marco della Carità, son of the furniture painter Rocco della Carità, Schiavone’s former employer.

Marco had confirmed that when Andrea worked for Rocco, he earned only twenty-four soldi per day for decorating up to two chests. In Boschini’s time, however, Schiavone’s cassa paintings fetch as much as one hundred ducats each; they can hardly be found to buy, but rather “are seen decorating many Galleries, as precious things.” Indeed, at one hundred ducats, a single such...
work by Schiavone is selling for several hundred times his daily salary as a young artist.9

Boschini, an astute art dealer and writer, understood the vicissitudes of the contemporary paintings market. In his *Carta del Navegar Pitoresco* of 1660, he remembered a time when pictures were plentiful and inexpensive; in the present age, those who wished to own such treasures would have to pay dearly.10 In this environment of high costs and limited availability, Schiavone’s early works enjoyed a remarkable retrospective appreciation in value. As Paolo Pino had observed during the previous century, furniture painting was traditionally the province of unfortunate artists who could not earn their living through stand-alone commissions.11 The results of their labors were not pictures, but subsidiary elements of useful articles. By the mid-1600s, however, Schiavone’s lowly ornamental productions had been recast as independent pieces, and assessed by the standards of the market for portable easel paintings. At up to one hundred ducats each, they sold for the “super prices” associated with competitive art acquisition.12 Many of them had been “transported elsewhere,” joining the international movement of artifacts that fostered the creation of European museums and later would characterize the phenomenon of loan exhibitions. At the same time, though, Schiavone’s works were difficult to find for purchase; “conserved as rare things” and “decorating many Galleries, as precious things,” they had been sequestered from the quotidian circulation of goods.13 In these respects, the paintings now showed classic features of objects belonging to an art collecting

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9 In the fifteenth century, the ducat’s value was fixed at 6 *lire* and 4 *soldi*, or 124 *soldi* (Lane, *Venice: A Maritime Republic*, 326-327; Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World*, vol. 1, 471). At one hundred ducats, therefore, a work by Schiavone was selling for about 516.67 times his daily salary as a young artist. This estimate does not take into account the devaluation of the Venetian ducat during the seventeenth century (see Sella, *Commerci e Industrie a Venezia nel Secolo XVII*; Pullan, *Crisis and Change in the Venetian Economy*; Balestrieri, *Banche Pubbliche e Problemi Monetari a Venezia*; Rapp, *Industry and Economic Decline*; Fantacci, “The Dual Currency System of Renaissance Europe”). Even considering this decline, however, the difference between the young Schiavone’s salary of 24 *soldi* per day and the later cost of his ornamental paintings was at least two orders of magnitude. For painting prices and the art market in Venice, Hochmann, *Peintres et Commanditaires à Venise*, 15-40.


11 For Pino’s remark, see discussion of Workshops and Authorship in Ch. 1 above.

12 For “super prices” as a characteristic of art collecting cultures, Alsop, *Rare Art Traditions*, esp. 17-18, 162-163.

13 For the practice of “enclaving” commodities, Appadurai, “Commodities and the Politics of Value,” 88-89. Related to this phenomenon is the characterization of art as secluded or removed from social exchange (for example, Adorno, “Aesthetic Theory,” 245-246).
Central to this process of redefinition was the removal of pictures from their intended functional contexts for autonomous display, a renovation that involved distinctions between painting and the decorative arts. This practice was documented in the home of the artist and restorer Michele Pietra, who according to an inventory of 1656 had hung detached ornamental panels in his "study of original paintings." The works were described as "two little cassa pictures historiated by the hand of Bonifacio," and "six small ones of this type by the same hand with frames of ebony." Removed from their previous decorative settings and richly framed, the paintings appeared among portraits and religious scenes attributed to Lotto, Pordenone, Titian, and Bassano. Though little else is known of Pietra’s gallery, its likely configuration can be inferred from visual records kept by other collectors. The Venetian antiquary Andrea Vendramin (ca. 1565-1629), for example, built up his holdings in both ornamental and traditional easel paintings, as well as classical sculpture, pottery, and natural curiosities, during the later sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. In 1615, Vincenzo Scamozzi observed that these

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14 Among the extensive bibliography on the theory and practice of collecting, museums, and fine art culture in Venice and elsewhere are Burckhardt, “Die Sammler”; Levi, Le Collezioni Veneziane d’Arte e d’Antichità; Murray, Museums; Schlosser, Die Kunst- und Wunderkammern der Spätrenaissance; Taylor, Taste of Angels; Branca, Il Collezionismo Veneziano nel ’600; Bazin, The Museum Age; Alsop, Rare Art Traditions; Findlen, “The Museum: Its Classical Etymology and Renaissance Genealogy”; Pomian, Collectors and Curiosités; De Benedictis, Per la Storia del Collezionismo Italiano; Pearce, Interpreting Objects and Collections; Brown, Kings and Connoisseurs; Schmitter, Display of Distinction; Borean, “Appunti per una Storia del Collezionismo a Venezia nel Seicento”; Haskell, The Ephemeroid Museum; Mai, Die Zukunft der Alten Meister; Mason, “Per il Collezionismo a Venezia nel Seicento”; Shiner, Invention of Art; Borean and Mason, Figure di Collezionisti a Venezia e Il Collezionismo d’Arte a Venezia: Il Seicento; McClellan, Art and Its Publics; Preziosi and Farago, Grasping the World; Aikema et al., Il Collezionismo a Venezia e nel Veneto ai Tempi della Serenissima; Pollock and Zemans, Museums after Modernism; Hochmann et al., Il Collezionismo d’Arte a Venezia: Dalle Origini al Cinquecento.

15 “In una camera contigua al sopradetto camerino, et e studio de quadri originali…Due quadretti di casse di man di Boniffatio historiadi. Sei detti piccoli di man del sudetto con soazze d’ebano…” (Branca, Il Collezionismo Veneziano nel ’600, 137). Though the term cassa also can refer to a framing device, the remaining entries in this inventory invariably use the word soaza to describe frames; in this case, cassa must refer to a chest. It is possible that two other works described in the inventory, “due quadretti piccoli de Andrea Schiavon con soazeta d’ebano,” originally were ornamental pictures as well (ibid., 138). For Pietra and his collection, ibid., 49-50, 134-140, 259, and Cecchini, “I Modì della Circolazione dei Dipintì,” 152, 159 n. 92, 160 n. 100. Pietra’s name appears in a number of records of the Venetian painters’ guild during the seventeenth century: see Favaro, L’Arte dei Pittori in Venezia, 150, 162, 165, 175, among other references.

16 Andrea Vendramin, who may have been distantly related to the well-known collector Gabriel Vendramin, likely began acquiring works of art and antiquities shortly after 1590 (Jacobs, “Das Museo Vendramin und die Sammlung Reynst,” 18). For his collection and catalogue, Borenius, Picture Gallery of Andrea Vendramin; idem, “More About the Andrea Vendramin Collection”; Branca, Il Collezionismo Veneziano nel ’600, 285; Logan, The ‘Cabinet’ of the Brothers Gerard and Jan Reynst, 67-75; Zorzi, Collezioni di Antichità a Venezia, 78-79; Thornton, Scholar in His Study, 98-100; Favaretto, Arte Antica e Cultura Antiquaria, 143-151; Brown, Private Lives, 235-241; Mason, “By the True Hand of this Master Very Few Things are Seen,” 34-36; Lauber in Hochmann et al., Il Collezionismo d’Arte a Venezia: Dalle Origini al Cinquecento, 316-317, with further bibliography.
items were arranged “with triplicate order” in two rooms of Vendramin’s palace at San Gregorio, revealing that the collection had been carefully organized and set apart from other spaces and objects of the house.\(^\text{17}\) A series of seventeen manuscript catalogues, completed by 1627 and illustrated with drawings in pen and bistre with bistre wash, accompanied this prototypical museum and supplied information about attributions, genres, and the presentation of individual artifacts; paintings received their own volume, indicating that they were seen as a discrete category of the collection.\(^\text{18}\) The book, entitled \textit{De Picturis} and now in the British Library, notes several decorative paintings that have been refashioned as independent works. These include small, rectangular scenes by Schiavone of the slaying of the Calydonian boar, Diana and Callisto, the flaying of Marsyas, and the judgment of Midas, among other subjects (Figs. 3.5-3.8). Recognizable by their dimensions, themes, and styles as records of detached ornamental pieces, the drawings appear on four consecutive leaves of the catalogue; this layout implies that the associated paintings descend from a single continuous frieze or series of chests. For display in Vendramin’s collection, however, they have been \textit{ridotte…in quadretti}, and now hang as easel pictures along with portraits and mythological narratives (Figs. 3.9-3.10). Two of these ornamental scenes have been identified with paintings located in a Berlin private collection during the 1930s, and the group as a whole is similar to extant works from the artist’s circle (Figs. 3.11-3.15; cat. nos. 48, 49, 47, 53).\(^\text{19}\)

\textit{De Picturis} also records two small roundels portraying figures standing before a

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{17} “Il clarissimo Signor Andrea Vendramino à San Gregorio nella sua casa sopra Canal grande hà disposto due stanze, dove con triplicato ordine si ritrovano, non poche statue, e 140. petti di varie grandezze, e torsi, e bassi relievi, e vasi, e pietre nibili, e altre petrificate, e buon numero di Medaglie antiche, e sette statue del Vittoria in un suo Scrittorio d’Olivo, & Ebeno, e forsi 140. quadri grandi, e piccoli di buone pitture” (Scamozzi, \textit{Dell’Idea della Architettura Universale}, vol. 1, 305).

\textsuperscript{18} Of the seventeen original catalogues, six are known today. Four of these, including \textit{De Picturis} and \textit{De Annulis et Sigillis Aegyptiorum}, are in the British Library, and \textit{De Sacrificiorum et Triumphorum Vasculis} is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford; for these and other volumes of the series, Jacobs, “Das Museo Vendramin und die Sammlung Reynst,” 19-22, and Logan, \textit{The ‘Cabinet’ of the Brothers Gerard and Jan Reynst}, 69-71 n. 70. A similar, little-known illustrated catalogue of a Venetian paintings collection is held today at the Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques. Entitled \textit{Piture di Ca Grimani}, it is roughly contemporary with the Vendramin catalogues, and probably documents paintings belonging to a minor branch of the Grimani family at San Boldo (see Jestaz, “Les Collections de Peinture à Venise,” 188-201).

\textsuperscript{19} In 1932, Borenius identified drawings after the \textit{Contest of Apollo and Marsyas} and \textit{Judgment of Paris} (appearing in the \textit{Picture Gallery of Andrea Vendramin}, pl. 59, 60 or f. 71, 72) with works in the collection of Robert Neumann in Berlin (“More About the Andrea Vendramin Collection”). The paintings’ current whereabouts are unknown, as are the locations of other ornamental pictures documented in Vendramin’s catalogue. However, the overall accuracy of \textit{De Picturis} is attested by the survival of several artifacts recorded in it; the paintings closely match the catalogue drawings (for discussion of these works and the effort to identify objects appearing in \textit{De Picturis}, see the two publications of Borenius noted here).}
sacrificial altar (Fig. 3.16); these recall decorative *tondi* of the same subject from the circles of both Cima da Conegliano in the early 1500s and Schiavone later in the century (Figs. 3.17-3.19; cat. nos. 14, 46). An ensemble of smaller panels (Figs. 3.20-3.23), meanwhile, evokes the dimensions and serial arrangement of surviving friezes, such as the *Tale of Psyche* (Figs. 3.24-3.29; cat. no. 52).

An especially significant rehanging of ornamental paintings in Vendramin’s collection involves a pair of works depicting pastoral scenes of music and dancing (Figs. 3.30-3.31). These panels have the elongated, rounded shape typical of several *cassa* decorations from the circles of Bonifacio de’ Pitati and Tintoretto (Figs. 3.32-3.33; cat. nos. 30, 64). For exhibition on the walls of Vendramin’s gallery, they have been propped on shallow ledges inside rectangular frame boxes. The imposed, rectilinear outline suggests a conscious attempt to redefine these works as easel paintings, which during this period were almost universally associated with simple geometric shapes – either circles or, more commonly, rectangles. The words *tavola*, *quadro*, and *quadretto* derive from Latin terms referring to flat, rectangular forms, and pictorial fields of this kind emerged as a norm of western art by an early date.\(^{20}\) It was deemed necessary, therefore, to square off these decorative images with frames before hanging them as paintings. The same principle governed direct modifications of Venetian ornamental pictures for gallery display: many extant works show signs of cropping, panel additions, and other interventions meant to achieve regular shapes. Likewise, during the seventeenth century and beyond, site-specific altarpieces of varying outlines were divided into squares and rectangles for separate exhibition or sale.\(^{21}\)

\(^{20}\) O’Malley notes the origin of terms such as *tavola*, *pala*, and *ancona* in Latin words describing planar, rectilinear objects (*Business of Art*, 28, 283 n. 8). For the invention of the smooth, prepared rectangular field as a standard for paintings and drawings in the western tradition, Schapiro, “On Some Problems in the Semiotics of Visual Art.” Burckhardt discusses rectangular and square formats for the Renaissance altarpiece, and their relation to the easel picture (*The Altarpiece in Renaissance Italy*, 64; see also idem, “Format und Bild,” and for an interpretation of Burckhardt, Nagel, Review of *The Altarpiece in Renaissance Venice*). For flat picture surfaces and rectangular frames in relation to the viewer, Arnheim, *Power of the Center*, 49-62. Summers discusses the historical emergence of planar surfaces, perpendicular grids, and rectilinear formats, and their shaping of cognitive, representational, and social processes (*Real Spaces*, esp. 343-430). The *tondo*, like the rectangle, is a simple geometric shape that has developed historically as a field for particular kinds of images, particularly in Florence (see Olson, *Florentine Tondo*). Several examples of roundel paintings also appear in Vendramin’s collection and are discussed above. The curved ornamental scenes considered here fell between the norms of circle and rectangle, and therefore were adjusted to fit one of these forms.

\(^{21}\) For later renovations of Venetian ornamental paintings, see text of this chapter below and numerous individual examples in the catalogue. A similar alteration was imposed on Antonello da Messina’s San Cassiano altarpiece (discussed in the section on Venice to Vienna, below). For the display of altarpieces in art galleries beginning in the
Related conventions guided the arrangement of Vendramin’s myriad antiquities, recorded on facing leaves of a catalogue titled *De Sacrificiorum et Triumphorum Vasculis* (Fig. 3.34; Oxford, Bodleian Library). Greek and Apulian vases stand in wooden niches along the wall, each item “framed” in its own rectangular compartment as an individual artifact. Like ornamental paintings, moreover, these pieces have been transplanted from functional to contemplative settings. Removed from their original context of use as containers for libations, perfume, wine, water, or food, they have been isolated for aesthetic and historical study and appreciation.

In his presentation of both decorative pictures and ancient objects as works of art, Vendramin followed established models for the definition and display of collectibles. Perhaps the most influential of these was the museum of the Grimani family, whose activities as architectural patrons, connoisseurs, and antiquarians inspired generations of Venetian art lovers. Initiated by Cardinal Domenico (1461-1523) during the early sixteenth century, the family’s holdings in paintings and Greek and Roman sculpture had grown to occupy much of their *all’antica* palace at Santa Maria Formosa (Figs. 3.35-3.36). Statues, busts, reliefs, and cameos, as well as works attributed to Giorgione, Raphael, and Bosch, appeared in carefully planned rooms, some with customized lighting and classicizing decorations (Figs. 3.37-3.38).

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22 The illustration appears in *De Sacrificiorum et Triumphorum Vasculis*, Vv.-VIr. The majority of antiquities in this display stand in rectangular, picture-like compartments, with some in larger arched niches, and a few on the right in reduced or triangular spaces dictated by the angle of the wall. See n. 18 above for this catalogue and related sources.

23 For the original functions of Greek vases, Cook, *Greek Painted Pottery*, 207-229. The removal of objects from contexts of use to contemplative settings is a defining characteristic of art collecting (Alsop, *Rare Art Traditions*, 36-40).


25 During the late 1560s, Giovanni Grimani supervised the construction of a *tribuna* to hold the most important pieces in the family’s antiquities collection. The hall was topped by a coffered cupola containing a lantern that illuminated the sculptures indirectly (see Tafuri, *Venezia e il Rinascimento*, 15-17, and Brown, *Private Lives*, 229-
During the later 1500s, Domenico’s nephew, Giovanni Grimani, Patriarch of Aquileia (ca. 1500-1593), bequeathed the family’s ancient sculptures to the Republic for the creation of a communal gallery known as the Statuario Pubblico.\(^{26}\) In a directive to the government, Giovanni declared his desire that “foreigners, after having seen both the Arsenale and the other marvelous things of that city, for another notable experience might view these antiquities gathered in a public place [ridotte in un luogo pub.co].”\(^{27}\) This telling phrase anticipates Ridolfi’s remark that ornamental paintings have been *ridotte...in quadretti* or “reduced to small pictures.” In both cases, the term *ridurre*, meaning “to reduce” or “to gather or concentrate,” signifies the separation of objects from an undifferentiated, everyday environment, and their exhibition as unique artifacts in places specifically devoted to aesthetic observation and enjoyment. For the Statuario Pubblico, one of the first civic museums of the post-classical age, this privileged site would be the anteroom of the Biblioteca Marciana (Fig. 3.39; ca. 1591-1596). In 1611, Coryat described the space as “a faire chamber...assigned to no other use, but onely to containe these auncient monuments.”\(^{28}\)

Vendramin’s cabinet, too, continued to be housed as an ensemble in locations intended solely for the viewing of art. Sometime after the collector’s death in 1629, his paintings, antiquities, and curiosities were purchased by the Dutch connoisseurs Gerard and Jan Reynst, and transported to Amsterdam.\(^{29}\) The catalogues followed, indicating that the assembly was seen

\(^{26}\) Giovanni Grimani’s 1593 bequest supplemented a smaller gift to the city by Domenico in 1523; Giovanni sought to unite these two legacies in a single, public space for the enjoyment of citizens and visitors (Perry, “The Statuario Publico of the Venetian Republic,” 78-80).


as a single entity. Enriched by further acquisitions, the Reynst gallery gained renown as a salon for artists, antiquarians, and royalty; Ridolfi remarked on its fame, and dedicated the 1648 edition of his *Maraviglie* to Gerard and Jan. 30 Twenty-four Reynst pictures and twelve sculptures were included in the so-called Dutch Gift to King Charles II of England in 1660, while other works passed to prominent figures such as Jan Six, patron of Rembrandt.

Eventually, the family’s holdings were dispersed across private and municipal galleries in Leiden, Dresden, Berlin, and elsewhere. By virtue of their initial hanging in Andrea Vendramin’s museum, therefore, Venetian decorative paintings joined developments in the international sale, exchange, and display of art during the seventeenth century. 31 As Ridolfi had noted, numerous ornamental works witnessed the same fate; indeed, despite their variety and the many paths of their provenance, nearly all surviving examples of this genre are kept today as easel pictures in public and private collections.

_Reasons for Detachment_

The transformation and display of decorative pictures was only one consequence of broader changes in the definition and reception of art during the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Foremost among these developments were the differentiation of painting from other media, and its elevation from the realm of mechanical labor through comparisons with the humanistic art of poetry. 32 These advances corresponded to the rise of the framed, “pure” picture, defined as a two-dimensional image that could be enclosed in an ornamental border and hung anywhere on the wall, then packed flat or rolled for sale or transport. Purposefully set apart

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31 For the later fortunes of works in the Reynst collection, including the loss of some pieces, see n. 29 above. For the inclusion of ornamental pictures in the Reynst purchase from Vendramin’s estate, Logan, _The ‘Cabinet’ of the Brothers Gerard and Jan Reynst_, 173. As discussed in n. 19 above, two of these paintings were located in a private collection in Berlin during the 1930s.
32 This account is indebted to the classic study of Lee, “_Ut Pictura Poesis_,” exploring the history of comparisons between painting and poetry from the Renaissance to the eighteenth century. See also Hulse, _The Rule of Art_; Kristeller, “The Modern System of the Arts”; Ames-Lewis, _Intellectual Life of the Early Renaissance Artist_, 162-176; Puttfarken, _Titian and Tragic Painting_, esp. 1-40. For the development of discourses unique to the visual arts out of classical rhetoric (encompassing poetics), Baxandall, _Giotto and the Orators_, and Summers, _Michelangelo and the Language of Art_. The following account is also based upon discussions of Giorgione and the emergence of the Venetian easel painting by Crowe and Cavalcaselle (_Painting in North Italy_, vol. 3, esp. 2-3), and Walter Pater (“The School of Giorgione,” in _The Renaissance_, 102-122; see also Barolsky, _Walter Pater’s Renaissance_, 169-180).
from its surroundings by a frame, the quadro or tableau was detached from traditional domestic art installations, in which sculptures, furniture, paintings, gold, tapestries, and other objects commingled in variegated programs. In Venice, the rise of the quadro coincided with the emergence of the framed, unified field altarpiece from earlier altar decorations embedded in rich polychrome surroundings, such as the fabric of the basilica of San Marco.33

Unlike an altarpiece, however, an easel picture was inherently portable and meant to circulate as an object of discussion and interest. The invention of this type owed much to Bellini and Giorgione, whose small masterpieces fostered the taste for poetic paintings that could be studied and admired at close range.34 Michiel’s notes on local collections reveal how frequently cabinet pictures by these artists and their followers were exchanged, inherited, bought, sold, and altered, according to the preferences of early Cinquecento connoisseurs.35 These practices

33 For the layered ensembles of objects in many media that constituted much Renaissance art, Thornton, Italian Renaissance Interior; Syson and Thornton, Objects of Virtue; Brown, Private Lives; Belozerskaya, Luxury Arts of the Renaissance, esp. 13-45; Ajmar-Wollheim and Dennis, At Home in Renaissance Italy. A rich literature explores the emergence of the framed easel picture from such composite programs and from other sources, and discusses its significance for art theory. Alberti described the picture field as a two-dimensional surface confined by lines intersecting the visual pyramid (On Painting, 47-48). The role of the frame as parergon or extrinsic addition to the work of art was elaborated by Kant in the Critique of Judgment, 72: the transformation of ornamental paintings into framed pictures can be understood as a change from parergon to ergon. See also Schapiro, “On Some Problems in the Semiotics of Visual Art”; Arnheim, Power of the Center, 42-70; Derrida, “The Parergon”; Mitchell, “Italian Picture Frames 1500-1825”; Bal and Bryson, “Semiotics and Art History”; Wood, Albrecht Altdorfer and the Origins of Landscape, esp. 59-65; Belting, Likeness and Presence, esp. 470-478; Belting and Kruse, Die Erfindung des Gemäldes; essays in Duro, Rhetoric of the Frame; Penny, Frames; Stoichita, The Self-Aware Image; Puttfarken, Discovery of Pictorial Composition; Brown, op. cit., 217-247; Bloom, “Why Painting?”; Motture and Syson, “Art in the Casa,” among many other sources. See also n. 14 and 20 above. For the emergence in Venice of the large painted altarpiece field, surrounded by a defined architectural frame and set against a neutral wall space, Humfrey, The Altarpiece in Renaissance Venice, 55.

34 As Pater wrote, Giorgione invented “those easily movable pictures which serve neither for uses of devotion, nor of allegorical or historic teaching – little groups of real men and women, amid congruous furniture or landscape – morsels of actual life, conversation or music or play, but refined upon or idealised, till they come to seem like glimpses of life from afar. Those spaces of more cunningly blent colour, obediently filling their places, hitherto, in a mere architectural scheme, Giorgione detaches from the wall. He frames them by the hands of some skilful carver, so that people may move them readily and take with them where they go, as one might a poem in manuscript, or a musical instrument, to be used, at will, as a means of self-education, stimulus or solace, coming like an animated presence, into one’s cabinet, to enrich the air as with some choice aroma, and, like persons, live with us, for a day or a lifetime. Of all art such as this, art which has played so large a part in men’s culture since that time, Giorgione is the initiator” (The Renaissance, 110-111). Recent discussions of the role of Bellini and Giorgione in the invention of the collectible easel picture in Venice include Belting, Giovanni Bellini, Pietà; Holberton, Poetry and Painting in the Time of Giorgione; Anderson, Giorgione, 19-20; Ferino-Pagden, “From Venice to Vienna.”

35 Among the works described by Michiel that had been traded or passed among Venetian connoisseurs were a painting by Giorgione of a boy holding an arrow, previously owned by “M. Zuan Ram” and held by Antonio Pasqualino in 1532 (Michiel, Notizia d’Opere del Disegno (ed. Frimmel), 51, and see also Holberton, Poetry and Painting in the Time of Giorgione, 143, 146); a half-length Madonna by Giovanni Bellini whose background had been altered by Vincenzo Catena, also in the Pasqualino collection (Michiel, op. cit., 51); numerous items in the collection of Andrea Odoni that had been acquired from his uncle, Francesco Zio, including “Linferno cun el
accompanied a vibrant discourse on painting, which was praised as a “noble art” by Lodovico Dolce in his *Dialogo della Pittura* of 1557, and called Venice’s oldest and finest art form by Sansovino in his treatise, *Delle Cose Notabili che Sono in Venetia* (1561). Indeed, Venetians had been recognized for their skill in painting “panels and figures” as early as the fourteenth century, and in 1506, Albrecht Dürer praised the city’s residents as “knowledgeable in painting” [ferstendig jm gemell]. The development of an independent local discipline of painting with its own terms of discussion and judgment accompanied the rise of the framed picture, which, like a piece of literature or music, offered a pure experience of a particular art for the delectation and contemplation of educated spectators.

In Venice, nascent distinctions between painting and other media were manifest in the fortunes of the *restello*, a hybrid object typically incorporating fine carved wood, pictures, and mirrored surfaces. First documented in the mid-fifteenth century, this once popular type declined during the sixteenth, disappearing completely from inventories by the late 1580s. The same period saw a commensurate increase in both detached, free-hanging mirrors and individually framed pictures, as elements of the *restello* evolved into separate genres. Where paintings once had been conflated with *restelli*, the easel picture now held its own as a category of domestic art. The physical history of Bellini’s *Allegories* (Figs. 3.40-3.43; cat. no. 2)

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Cupidine che tiene l’arco...de man de Zuan de Zanin Comandador” (Michiel, op. cit., 52); and Bellini’s *St. Francis* now in the Frick Collection, commissioned by “M. Zuan Michiel” and owned by Taddeo Contarini in 1525 (Michiel, op. cit., 53; see Fletcher, “The Provenance of Bellini’s Frick ‘St Francis’”). Michiel also described the frame of at least one easel painting: a portrait of Gabriel Vendramin in his collection had “l’ornamento attorno del fogliame a oro maxenado...de mano de Pre Vido Celere” (Michiel, op. cit., 57). In addition, Michiel recorded the circulation among *cognoscenti* of easel paintings by non-Venetian artists, as well as of antiquities and books, including an illuminated manuscript by Jacometto that had “andati per diuerse mani d’antiquarii longamente” before landing in the collection of Francesco Zio (Michiel, op. cit., 55).


37 See discussion of this type in Ch. 2 above.

38 In his study, Ludwig found that the *restello* was already occasionally considered “antico” by the end of the fifteenth century, about fifty years after its inception; he found no mention of this once common object in Venetian inventories after 1587. Across the same period, he documented the rise of independent *specchi* or mirrors in private inventories; these were the fruit of rapidly developing glassmaking technology on Murano (Ludwig, “Venezianischer Hausrat,” 190, 301-309). Also during this period, the number of independent painted panels or *quadri* was increasing: Palumbo-Fossati notes that the framed painting was “la più grande novità della casa
exemplifies these changes: the panels were salvaged from their original ornamental complex and established as quadretti, to be hung alongside conventional paintings. Initially composed on extremely thin hardwood surfaces, allowing for precise integration into the restello, the panels were later glued to thicker planks of fir; these were no doubt added to strengthen the supports and to allow for the scenes’ autonomous display. On at least one panel, the alteration left intact small pins, which likely had been used to position the work in its intended furniture setting.39

Though the date of the Allegories’ detachment is unknown, the documentary record suggests that the concepts and values underlying this renovation arose during the sixteenth century, just as the restello itself was waning. The lyrical quality of Bellini’s diminutive scenes, their tenebrous atmosphere and brushy technique anticipated early examples of secular easel painting; the panels’ eventual transformation into poetic pictures, therefore, was a natural development in the life cycle of the restello.40 By the early nineteenth century, the Allegories belonged to Count Girolamo Contarini, the collector of noble stock whose substantial holdings—including such masterpieces as Bellini’s Madonna degli Alberetti (Fig. 3.44; 1487)–entered the Gallerie dell’Accademia in 1838.41 There, they were joined by closely related Venetian cabinet pictures, most notably Giorgione’s Tempesta (Fig. 3.45), which upon its arrival at the museum in 1932 was the subject of a celebratory article by Roberto Paribeni in the Bollettino d’Arte, emphasizing Giorgione’s engagement with the culture of poetry, philosophy, and music of the early Venetian Cinquecento, and declaring the work’s significance to the artistic patrimony of the emerging Italian nation.42 The Allegories’ safekeeping alongside such landmark artifacts of veneziana cinquecentesca,” with at least one example appearing in 90% of surveyed domestic inventories of this period (“L’Interno della Casa dell’Artigiano,” 131; “La Casa Veneziana,” 478; see also Cecchini, Quadri e Commercio a Venezia, 20). For examples of independent picture and mirror frames of the Venetian Cinquecento, Santini, Mille Mobili Veneti, vol. 3, 239-244, and Morazzoni, Le Cornici Veneziane.

39 The presence of perni or pins on one of the original supports noted by Pierpaolo Monfardini, verbal communication, February 2007; see also Monfardini, “Supporti Lignei e Sistemi di Struttura,” 171-172. For further details of the panel construction, see catalogue entry below.

40 An additional factor in these developments may have been sumptuary laws discouraging excessive luxury and splendor; newly constituted as pictures, Bellini’s panels would have been transformed from elements of an objet de luxe into autonomous subjects of contemplation, appreciation, and discussion. This change in status resulted from emergent characterizations of painting as an elevated humanistic discipline of practice and study, as opposed to a symptom of conspicuous consumption. For the sumptuary law of 1489 regarding restelli, see the discussion of this type in Ch. 2 above.

41 Contarini left his gifts of paintings, sculpture, manuscripts, and books to Venice in 1838. For his bequest and the early history of the Accademia, Marconi, Gallerie dell’Accademia, vol. 1, vii-xxiv.

42 For the provenance and acquisition by the Accademia of Giorgione’s Tempesta, Ferino-Pagden and Nepi Scirè, Giorgione: Myth and Enigma, 188-196; see also Lauber, “Et è il Nudo che ho io in Pittura,” 101-102, and idem in Dal Pozzolo and Puppi, Giorgione, 427-431. In the Bollettino d’Arte, Paribeni wrote, “la figura del pitto
Venetian cabinet painting reinforced their associations with the sovereign easel picture, emancipated from an architectural or decorative context and appreciated for its erudite content, gemlike colorism, and evocative musicality.

The development in Venice of this sophisticated genre had international reverberations, leading to a competitive market for portable pictures executed in the style of recognized masters: first Bellini and Giorgione, then Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, and their followers. This phenomenon, in turn, further motivated renovations of decorative paintings. In their successful quest to win new audiences and patrons, to spread their reputation beyond the lagoon, and to become “collectible” artists – all while working conveniently from their studios – sixteenth-century Venetian painters established an extraordinary demand for moveable pictures on canvas. Assisted by the rise of galleries and an artistic canon, the prices of works by Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese increased dramatically, and their availability diminished. These conditions created a thriving trade in secondary works associated with famous painters: if
autograph canvases were expensive or unavailable, then collectors purchased copies, models, or reproductive prints instead. As recent research has shown, replicas, pastiches, and works in the “maniera di” figured prominently in domestic inventories of this period.45

Many Venetian ornamental pictures were executed by workshop assistants or trade painters in the styles of revered artists, and counted among such highly coveted, yet comparatively obtainable auxiliary works. Removed from a chest and framed, an ornamental painting in the manner of Giorgione or Tintoretto was aggrandized from a decorative object of the kind denigrated by Paolo Pino, into a collectible item identified with a master.46 The surviving panel of *Venus and Adonis* (Fig. 3.4; cat. no. 74), for example, was composed after Titian’s famous canvas for Philip II (Fig. 3.2); once detached from its original *cassa* and hung on the wall, it would have constituted a miniature framed version of this masterpiece, a “Titian” for a less exalted patron. To a family such as the Widmann, *nouveaux arrivants* in Venice who sought to build a gallery of their own, renovated furniture pictures offered an analogous opportunity to possess multiple works in the Giorgionesque style; and Michele Pietra, who owned “quadretti di casse,” was also a collector of replicas and school paintings.47 Like copies, ornamental works that had been created in the ambience of major workshops could be associated with important artists, though not directly attributed to them; as the market burgeoned, these pieces became ever more attractive to amateurs.

Such was the critical trajectory of the decorative works of Schiavone, which bore affinities to the art of Titian and Tintoretto. As Ridolfi explained, Schiavone’s *cassa* paintings earned little respect during the artist’s immediate lifetime: though done in a good style and “touched with great art,” they were more pleasing to fellow artists than to the public.48 Not until later did the painter’s technique of brushy colorism, characteristic of Venetian ornamental art from an early date, come to be esteemed and in high demand. During the later sixteenth and

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46 For Pino’s remarks on furniture painting, see the discussion of Workshops and Authorship in Ch. 1 above.

47 For Pietra’s ownership of copies and works “in the style of,” Cecchini, “I Modi della Circolazione dei Dipinti,” 152. See also n. 15 above.

48 “Non erano le opere sue per all’hora molto stimate…le piture d’Andrea, benche di buona maniera e tocche con molt’arte più dilettavano à Pittori, che all’universale” (Ridolfi, *Maraviglie*, vol. 1, 249). See also sections on Workshops and Authorship, and Reputation and Value in Ch. 1 above.
seventeenth centuries, a comparable manner was increasingly prized in the monumental works of Titian, Tintoretto, and their followers, who had perfected the technique of discontinuous oil paint application on textured canvas supports (Fig. 3.46; ca. 1565-1575; London, National Gallery; Figs. 3.47-3.48; ca. 1600-1625; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie). Boschini championed the sketchy and tactile quality of these compositions, which were sought after by Seicento collectors.\footnote{For the style of Venetian ornamental art and its relation to Cinquecento painting technique, see Ch. 1 above. For Boschini’s promotion of “painterly” qualities in Venetian art, Sohm, \textit{Pittoresco}.} Venetian decorative paintings such as the \textit{Tale of Diana and Callisto} (Figs. 3.49-3.50; cat. no. 40), similar in execution and effect, benefited from this vogue; hence the appearance of such works in the catalogue of Andrea Vendramin’s collection. Likewise, as the varied mythological, pastoral, and generic subjects of decorative art graduated to the mainstream of Venetian painting, these once lowly themes came to be seen as appropriate for small, independent pictures formed by detaching ornaments from their associated furniture.

Also facilitating these conversions was a longstanding local tradition of altering works of art, from the refashioning of Byzantine \textit{spolia} into symbols of the Venetian state (Fig. 3.51; Venice, Piazzetta), to the restoration of antiquities (Figs. 3.52-3.53; Venice, Museo Archeologico) and paintings, to the relocation of votive and devotional pictures from palaces to ecclesiastical spaces (Fig. 3.54; 1488; Murano, San Pietro Martire).\footnote{The lion of Saint Mark atop a column in the Piazzetta is a late fourth or early third century B.C. bronze of eastern Greek or Near Eastern origin, most likely looted from Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade; the sculpture was refashioned into a symbol of Venice by the addition of wings, a book of the Gospel, and an extended tail (Perry, “Saint Mark’s Trophies,” 48-49; Pincus, “Tullio Lombardo as a Restorer of Antiquities,” 40; Brown, \textit{Venice and Antiquity}, 18-19; Belozerskaya and Lapatin, “Antiquity Consumed,” 86-87). For the Venetian synthesis of elements of diverse historical periods and cultures into a unified civic narrative, Brown, “Renovatio or Conciliatio? The late Hellenistic sculpture of the Muse of Philiskos, at one time in the collection of Giovanni Grimani, was restored with additions in fresh stone by Tullio Lombardo in the early 1490s (Pincus, op. cit.; see also Gregori, \textit{In the Light of Apollo}, vol. 1, 433-434). For the practice of antiques restoration in medieval and Renaissance Venice, see also Brown, “Una Testa de Platone Antica con la Punta dil Naso di Cera”; Wolters, \textit{La Scultura Veneziana Gotica}, vol. 1, 259, vol. 2, pl. 719, 722; Roani, “Restoration of Ancient Sculptures in the Renaissance”; Conti, \textit{History of the Restoration and Conservation of Works of Art}, 31-37, 114-120. In Venice, it was also common practice “to restore” [\textit{ristaurare, riconzare}] outdated or destroyed paintings by replacing them with new, stylistically current versions of the same subjects (Tietze-Conrat, “Decorative Paintings of the Venetian Renaissance”; Brown, \textit{Venetian Narrative Painting}, 84-85). The transplantation of paintings from settings of personal devotion to public churches was also known: in his will of 1501, Doge Agostino Barbarigo directed that Giovanni Bellini’s votive picture of him be reframed and transferred from the Palazzo Ducale to the high altar of the nuns’ church of Santa Maria degli Angeli on Murano (Chambers and Pullan, \textit{Venice: A Documentary History}, 418-419; Humfreys, \textit{The Altarpiece in Renaissance Venice}, 83). Similarly, Girolamo Hollivier bequeathed a private devotional painting by Giovanni Bellini to the church of Santa Maria dell’Orto in 1528 and ordered it reframed as an altarpiece; he followed in the footsteps of Luca Navagero, who gave a devotional work of Bellini to the same church for display on an altar around 1485-1486 (Christiansen, “Giovanni Bellini and the Practice of Devotional Painting,” 10-13; Kasl, “Holy Households,” 81-82).} These highly developed
practices of creative import, addition, modification, and reinstallation set the stage for changes of the later Renaissance and Baroque periods, as paintings began to move freely to and from Venice through vast purchases and the activities of professional dealers.

Venice to Vienna

The history of the Venetian ornamental paintings now held in the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna, illuminates the fortunes of this genre in the art world of the late sixteenth century and beyond. These pictures from the circles of Tintoretto and Schiavone – the Tales of Aeneas, Venus and Cupid and Allegory of Music, Biblical Tales, and Tales of Apollo – left Venice to enter the mainstream of European collecting, passing first to England and then into the galleries of the Austrian Habsburgs.51 Their travels were reported in inventories, published catalogues, and painted copies, indicating the advances in art-historical recordkeeping made during this era of acquisitive collecting.

The Tales of Aeneas (Figs. 3.55-3.56; cat. no. 51), the most completely documented of the Venetian decorative paintings in Vienna, were first noted by Ridolfi, who apparently had seen the works in person during the early seventeenth century. His 1648 life of Schiavone provides a colorful account of the paintings’ entrance into the artistic canon, employing the trope of an unknown talent’s discovery by an influential figure. He writes that the unfortunate and poorly esteemed Schiavone was laboring for the painters’ workshops when he met the renowned sculptor Alessandro Vittoria, “the one who with lucid effects showed that the transformation of stone into man was not mere myth.” Alessandro compelled the painter to present a sample of his works, decided that he wished to have the greatest of the artist’s efforts for himself, and offered Schiavone a more attractive price than did the bottegai. Among these paintings, Ridolfi writes, were “little histories of the deeds of Aeneas...made by the artist for a recinto da letto,” which, along with drawings by Parmigianino, eventually passed to the collector Bartolomeo della Nave and then to England.52

Though Ridolfi may have embroidered details of the fateful encounter between Vittoria

51 I thank Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann and Robert Wald for research advice regarding the Vienna collections. For a recent survey of Venetian paintings in Vienna, Ferino-Pagden and Orr, Masters of Venice. The scene of Gaius Mucius Scaevola before Porsenna (cat. no. 59), another ornamental painting from the circle of Tintoretto now in Vienna, has eluded the documentary record.

52 For Ridolfi’s account of Schiavone’s recinto da letto paintings and their provenance, see cat. no. 51 below.
and Schiavone, the outlines of his story are confirmed by a surviving inventory of the della Nave collection, which shows that the *Aeneas* paintings for a *recinto da letto* belonged to this merchant-amateur. In turn, della Nave built his impressive collection by purchasing from the estates of artistic and literary luminaries, including Vittoria.\(^53\) By relying on the tastes of well-known figures, whose collections he often acquired *en bloc*, della Nave both borrowed and reinforced the aesthetic preferences established by arbiters of culture during the previous hundred years. Vittoria’s liking for the works of Schiavone legitimized this underestimated artist in the eyes of della Nave, a connoisseur eager to rely on the tastes of a well-known sculptor. Moreover, Vittoria’s forward-looking appreciation of Schiavone’s decorative paintings as works of art, at a time when the painter himself was enjoying little commercial success, ultimately ensured their passage into della Nave’s possession and subsequent safekeeping in a series of distinguished European collections.

By the later 1630s, della Nave’s estate itself had come up for sale in Venice, where it attracted the attention of the Whitehall Group, a cluster of noblemen surrounding the English King Charles I (1600-1649). Competitively engaged in the purchase of Old Masters at a favorable moment, these figures were building some of the most extensive paintings collections of the seventeenth century. Prominent among the group’s members was James, Marquis (later Duke) of Hamilton (1606-1649), who bought the della Nave collection wholesale through his brother-in-law, Basil, Viscount Feilding.\(^54\) In an inventory compiled for the Marquis,

\(^{53}\) Ridolfi’s claim that the *Aeneas* paintings belonged to della Nave is substantiated by their appearance in a seventeenth-century inventory of his collection compiled in Venice for the Marquis of Hamilton (see n. 55 below). Moreover, Ridolfi’s statement that della Nave obtained paintings from the estate of Alessandro Vittoria is supported by the presence of Moroni’s portrait of the sculptor in della Nave’s collection (Waterhouse, “Paintings from Venice for Seventeenth-Century England,” 5 n. 6, 19; Borean, *La Quaderia di Agostino e Giovan Donato Correggio*, 87). For della Nave (1571/79-1632) and his collection, Garas, “Giorgione et Giorgionisme au XVIIè Siècle” (I), 64-78; Branca, *Il Collezionismo Veneziano nel ’600*, 251-254; Garas, “Die Entstehung der Galerie des Erzherzogs Leopold Wilhelm,” 52-58; Zorzi, *Collezioni di Antichità a Venezia*, 74; Hochmann, “Bartolomeo della Nave”; Mason, “‘By the True Hand of this Master Very Few Things are Seen,’” 34; Furtlehner and Lauber in Borean and Mason, *Il Collezionismo d’Arte a Venezia: Il Seicento*, 258-261, with further bibliography; Lauber, “Una Lucente Linea d’Ombra,” 195-197. Scamozzi recorded that della Nave had acquired antiquities from Cardinal Pietro Bembo, and his collection of paintings was praised by Vincenzo Scamozzi and Giambattista Marino (Hochmann, op. cit.).

Schiavone’s *Aeneas* scenes were described as “a part of a Room with the History of Eneas in 25 figures,” with dimensions of 18-20 piedi in length and 3 piedi in height. The group travelled with the rest of the della Nave treasure – over two hundred paintings including Giorgione’s *Three Philosophers* and Titian’s *Nymph and Shepherd* – to England in 1638-1639. It was most likely just prior to this shipment that the *Aeneas* scenes were dismantled from their ornamental setting for flat or rolled packing in crates; by the time they arrived in England, the pictures would no longer have been “part of a Room.” Instead, they were mounted on the walls of Hamilton’s London home as easel pictures, their departure from Italy also marking their passage into the realm of the modern paintings collection. Other works of della Nave provenance underwent a similar transition: Antonello da Messina’s San Cassiano altarpiece (Fig. 3.57; ca. 1470-1476; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie), most notably, was cut into five pieces for display as a series of independent quadri, and some of its figures were lost.

In addition to the *Aeneas* scenes, two other ornamental pictures from the circle of Schiavone passed to Hamilton during the early seventeenth century, very possibly from the della Nave collection as well. The *Venus and Cupid* and *Allegory of Music* (Figs. 3.58-3.59; cat. no. 45), which originally served as chest or frieze paintings and are now attributed by some to Battista Agnolo del Moro, belonged to Hamilton between 1638 and 1649; they may be identical with two works described in a 1649 inventory of his collection, “un petit Cupidon” and “un petit tableau d’une femme nuee.” These works, along with Schiavone’s *Aeneas* scenes, joined a burgeoning collection, which by the year 1643 comprised six hundred paintings. Absorbed into Hamilton’s extensive holdings and transformed into “petits tableaux,” these works were thereby assured ongoing sanctuary in the private and public collections of England and continental Europe.

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56 For further detail on the dismantling of the *Aeneas* cycle and possible surviving fragments, see catalogue entry below. Upon reaching England, the works were most likely displayed in Hamilton’s family home at Wallingford House, between Whitehall and Charing Cross (Rubinstein, *Captain Luckless*, 22). For the cutting of Antonello’s San Cassiano altarpiece, Waterhouse, “Paintings from Venice for Seventeenth-Century England,” 10, 18 (nos. 119-123), and Lucco, *Antonello da Messina*, 226. It is not clear when these alterations took place.

57 For the provenance of the *Venus and Cupid* and *Allegory of Music*, Haja, *Gemäldegalerie des Kunsthistorischen Museums*, 85. The two pictures once belonged to a group of three; see catalogue entry below. For the 1649 inventory, Garas, “Die Entstehung der Galerie des Erzherzogs Leopold Wilhelm,” 80. For the growth of the Hamilton collection, ibid., 69-75, and Brown, *Kings and Connoisseurs*, 57.
In his eager acquisition of Italian Old Masters, Hamilton followed the lead of another Whitehall Group member, George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (1592-1628), who also came to own several Venetian ornamental pictures in the early 1600s. A flamboyant favorite of the court who had risen from modest origins, Buckingham saw art collecting as a means of enhancing his acquired noble status; he freely dispatched the unscrupulous agent Balthasar Gerbier on buying expeditions to Italy, Madrid, and Paris. Perhaps during one of these trips, Gerbier purchased from an unknown source Tintoretto’s seven *Biblical Tales* (Figs. 3.60-3.66; cat. no. 58), which moved to England, eventually appearing in a 1635 inventory of Buckingham’s possessions at York House (Fig. 3.67; Cambridge, Pepysian Library). The panels remained intact in their original *cassa* settings, and were described in the inventory as “Seven Italian Painted Chests.” These were arrayed in the palace’s Gallery along with pictures attributed to Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, and Rubens. In the Duke’s custody, the *Biblical Tales* thus occupied an intermediate position between ornament and fine art: retaining their functional setting, but purchased, displayed, and documented together with a rich assortment of over three hundred easel paintings. In addition to filling the Gallery, these hung in the main hall, closets, drawing room, and vault of York House, transforming the residence into a *de facto* museum and its owner into the prototype of the modern gentleman collector.

However enduring the influence of Buckingham and the Whitehall Group on the history of taste, their dominance in the art world was short-lived. By 1649, the English Civil War had put an end to the reign and the life of Charles I, and thousands of paintings owned by members of his circle poured into the market. The holdings of Hamilton and the heirs of Buckingham were the first to go: many of their pictures left England to be sold in Antwerp, among the oldest venues in Europe for the purchase of independent pictures. In this propitious environment for wholesale art acquisitions, large swathes of both collections were bought up by the Habsburg

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59 Davies, “An Inventory of the Duke of Buckingham’s Pictures,” 381; see also Garas, “Le Tableau du Tintoret du Musée de Budapest,” 46 n. 47, and cat. no. 58 below.

Archduke Leopold Wilhelm (1614-1662), whose museum was later to constitute much of Vienna’s modern paintings gallery.

Although the Archduke eagerly capitalized on the liquidation of the Whitehall collections, his purchase of so many Venetian pictures, including ornamental ones, was far from fortuitous. Leopold Wilhelm was the heir of a long tradition of royal collecting and patronage of the arts, dating back to the Habsburgs’ medieval treasury or Schatz. During the sixteenth century, Emperor Ferdinand I (1503-1564) had gathered paintings and precious objects into one of the first formally designated Kunstkammern in Central Europe. His successor, Maximilian II (1527-1576), set aside a gallery for his collection on the upper floors of the royal stables at Vienna, the Stallburg, which served as a model for future such exhibition spaces in Dresden and elsewhere. And during the late sixteenth century, Maximilian’s son, Emperor Rudolf II (1552-1612), had established one of the most important arts complexes on the continent at his Hradčany Palace in Prague. Rudolf, in fact, once had owned many of the Venetian paintings that later passed to the Duke of Buckingham via the Dutch art market. Leopold Wilhelm’s triumphant repossession of these very same works from Buckingham in the wake of the English Civil War signalled the resurgence of the house of Habsburg as royal protectors of the arts.

Overall, during the short period after the demise of the Whitehall Group, the Archduke acquired at least four sets of Venetian decorative works: the Tales of Aeneas and the Venus and Cupid and Allegory of Music pair from Hamilton; the series of Biblical Tales from Buckingham; and the Tales of Apollo (Figs. 3.68-3.71; cat. no. 44), unlisted in inventories before 1659 but likely obtained from one of these two English sources. All of these paintings stayed in the Archduke’s primary collections, with the exception of Tintoretto’s Biblical Tales. That ensemble of seven panels travelled by 1685 to the Castle of Prague, whose walls Leopold Wilhelm and his brother sought to repopulate after the palace’s looting by Swedish forces in


1648. It was probably during this transfer that Tintoretto’s scenes were finally detached from their cassa settings for display as easel pictures, their fate thus aligning with that of the Habsburg paintings collection as a whole.

The remainder of Leopold Wilhelm’s decorative pictures were transported from Brussels to Vienna around 1656 and mounted in the Stallburg (Fig. 3.72), the same space where Emperor Maximilian II had kept his art works during the later sixteenth century. Leopold Wilhelm’s collection differed from its precursor in significant respects, however. The new gallery was aesthetic in emphasis, containing paintings, drawings, and sculptures of various kinds, and excluding objects such as mirabilia and naturalia; it thus marked an early step toward the bifurcation of Vienna’s collections into artistic and scientific sectors. The Archduke’s emphasis on painting and sculpture had less to do with a categorical distinction between art and science than with a simple love of Kunst: in his will of 1661, he included his “pictures and statues” among “the most distinguished and most beloved part of all my belongings.” Yet this preference would have remarkable consequences for the taxonomy of collections under Habsburg rule, leading ultimately to the separate institution of the art and natural history museums in Vienna.

Leopold Wilhelm’s passion for painting, particularly Venetian painting, did not go unrecognized by contemporaries. In 1660, Boschini dedicated his Carta del Navegar Pitoresco to the Archduke, and included a long encomium to the Vienna picture galleries. This exceptional act of homage – a Venetian dedicating his praise of Venetian painting to a Habsburg – was in part the result of a program of publicity orchestrated by Leopold Wilhelm himself. Shortly after the acquisitions of the late 1640s, the Archduke had charged his court painter, David Teniers the Younger (1610-1690), with spreading the fame of the royal collections.

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63 For the Biblical Tales’ appearance in the 1685 inventory of the Castle of Prague, see catalogue entry below. For the 1648 sack of the Castle of Prague, Brown, Kings and Connoisseurs, 180; Klinge, “David Teniers and the Theatre of Painting,” 14; Salomon, Veronese’s Allegories, 10.
65 Boschini, Carta del Navegar Pitoresco, 3-5. See also Garas, “Collecting Venetian Painting in Central Europe,” 29.
Teniers first produced a number of painted views of the archducal galleries, depicting a rich stock of works packed floor to ceiling and admired by handsomely clad connoisseurs. At least two of these pictures include Venetian decorative works. One records the *Infancy of Apollo*, hanging halfway down the room’s right wall, separated from the other paintings in the Apollo series, and sandwiched between unrelated mythological and religious pictures (Figs. 3.73-3.74; ca. 1660; Schleissheim, Neue Schloss, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen). Another depicts Schiavone’s *Tales of Aeneas*: two canvases on the upper left and right walls of the vestibule, canted for viewing from below (Figs. 3.75-3.76; ca. 1651; Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado). Only these two members of Schiavone’s once-larger ensemble are included, suggesting that by this date, the cycle had been disassembled and the individual pieces separately displayed. Both the *Apollo* and *Aeneas* paintings, indeed, have been dissociated from their origins and hung as individual framed pictures, intended for appreciation in the context of a prominent royal paintings collection.

Teniers’s efforts to record and publicize Leopold Wilhelm’s picture holdings extended beyond individual gallery views, to include the *Theatrum Pictorium*, one of the earliest printed and illustrated catalogues in the history of art (Fig. 3.77). First published in 1660, the *Theatrum* gathers together etchings of over two hundred Italian pictures in the archducal collection. Sorted into regional schools, they are then arranged roughly chronologically, providing a capsule history of Italian painting through the lens of Leopold Wilhelm’s holdings. Among the pieces included are the four *Tales of Apollo* (Figs. 3.78-3.81) and the two *Tales of Aeneas* (Figs. 3.82-3.83), all illustrated individually on non-consecutive pages, their printed form thus echoing their mode of display. Certain details of the etchings differ from those of the original paintings: the scenes of Apollo are elongated in the vertical direction, while those of Aeneas are shortened in the horizontal, and the dragon-like figure depicted in *Apollo and Cupid* has become a docile goat.

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67 For the Schleissheim painting, Vegelin van Claerbergen, *David Teniers and the Theatre of Painting*, 64-65, and Klinge, *David Teniers the Younger*, 228-231. For the Prado painting, Vegelin van Claerbergen, op. cit., 74-77. For the dismantling of the *Tales of Aeneas*, see cat. no. 51 below.

68 The plates are also labelled with the name of the printmaker who executed them. For the organization of the *Theatrum*, Klinge, “David Teniers and the Theatre of Painting,” 30. For the publication as a precursor of the modern presentation volume, Waterfield, “Teniers’s *Theatrum Pictorium*,” 41.
in the printed version. These discrepancies are probably the result of the process by which
Teniers transcribed the hundreds of paintings designated for inclusion in the Theatrum. He first
created a series of small-scale oil copies, or pasticci, after the chosen pictures; many of these
survive, including one after Aeneas Recalled from Dido (Fig. 3.84; ca. 1655; private collection).
The pasticci were given to Teniers’s team of fourteen printmakers, who used them as models for
their etched reproductions. The collaborative nature of this massive effort – 247 etchings in all –
virtually assured the introduction of errors; the degree of accuracy finally achieved is
remarkable, and the Theatrum continues to be used today as evidence for the disposition of
Leopold Wilhelm’s collection and the fortunes of its constituent pictures during the seventeenth
century.69 The inclusion of Venetian furniture pictures in this landmark volume reveals the
extent of their integration into the European fine art world, only a century after their inception as
embedded decorative elements.

By the time of the Archduke’s death in 1662, his collection comprised about 1,400
paintings, which were partially dispersed, some going to castles and galleries across Habsburg
territory, others remaining in Vienna.70 The Tales of Aeneas, Tales of Apollo, and related works
apparently stayed in the capital city, where the advances in collecting initiated by Leopold
Wilhelm reached their fulfillment over the next two hundred fifty years. However, the
reformation of the Vienna paintings collections as independent galleries was not a linear process,
and the era after Leopold Wilhelm in fact saw a return to older styles of display. Under a series
of rulers of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, “fine art” works such as paintings
and sculptures were reunited with traditional elements of the Kunstkammer: gold, precious
stones, clocks, and scientific instruments. At the Stallburg, these variegated objects were
attached to compartmentalized decorative ensembles set into carved and gilt wainscoting, which
subordinated individual works of art to larger visual schemes, much as the Austrian rulers of that

69 For the pasticcio after Aeneas Recalled from Dido, Klinge, David Teniers the Younger, 290-291. For the
production process of the Theatrum, idem, “David Teniers and the Theatre of Painting,” 21-32. The Theatrum
inspired a number of eighteenth-century imitations, including the Prodomus zum Theatrum Artis Pictoriae of 1735,
a visual compendium of the Stallburg galleries which included hundreds of small-scale reproductions. Plate 7
depicts the Aeneas scenes, while Plate 14 includes several of the Tales of Apollo along the lower left and right edges;
however, these are hardly legible within the tightly packed presentation. For this publication, Zimerman,
“Prodomus zum Theatrum Artis Pictoriae.”
70 Garas, “Das Schicksal der Sammlung des Erzherzogs Leopold Wilhelm,” 181-200. These works were transferred
to Hungary, present-day Bratislava, and Buda, among other locations; the Habsburg pictures now in the Museum of
Fine Arts, Budapest, for example, came there from the castles of Pozsony and Buda (idem, “Collecting Venetian
Painting in Central Europe,” 29-30).
period sought to subsume multiple, culturally diverse territories within their empire. These renovations took place while the Dresden painting collections, by contrast, were being given their own spaces and inventories.\textsuperscript{71}

One consequence of these developments was that the Venetian decorative paintings in Vienna joined ornamental exhibits quite similar in concept to those from which they had originally come. Two elements of the Tales of Apollo, for instance, were mounted in narrow segments of wall panelling between a pair of windows, as documented in Storffer’s illustration of 1730 (Figs. 3.85-3.86). Meanwhile, other paintings were juxtaposed with sculptures, coins, and elaborately carved cabinets (Fig. 3.87). To the historian, this late echo of the Renaissance and Baroque “cabinet of wonders” serves to emphasize the uneven pattern of changes in the Habsburg collections: rather than developing teleologically, they followed a model of inward and outward flow, with each subsequent monarch seeking to differentiate in a noticeable way the holdings he had inherited from his predecessor.

The tide turned again under the reign of Empress Maria Theresa (1717-1780), who worked to bring the Vienna galleries in line with Enlightenment intellectual trends. By 1748, the contents of the royal collections had been formally sorted into divisions of the arts, natural sciences, and mechanical instruments, thus institutionalizing the dissolution of the universal Kunstkammer begun by Leopold Wilhelm in the previous century.\textsuperscript{72} After the revolutions of 1848, the family eventually reestablished almost all the galleries as public museums, and over

\textsuperscript{71} The analogy between the Stallburg installation of this period and Habsburg imperial ambitions made by Robert Wald (verbal communication, June 2008). For the early eighteenth-century display of paintings in the Stallburg, Distelberger, “The Habsburg Collections in Vienna During the Seventeenth Century,” 46; Meijers, Kunst als Natur, 21-29; Kaufmann, “From Treasury to Museum,” 298-299; Belozerskaya, Luxury Arts of the Renaissance, 27-29. For the relative dates of establishment of independent paintings galleries at Dresden and Vienna, Kaufmann, op. cit., 299, and see also the discussion of the provenance of Titian’s Christ and the Pharisee below.

\textsuperscript{72} For the growth and organization of the galleries during the later 1700s and their relationship to intellectual developments of the period, Meijers, Kunst als Natur, and Kaufmann, “From Treasury to Museum,” 298-300. These philosophically motivated changes coincided with a major reordering of the Habsburgs’ picture holdings and an effort to incorporate them into the public sphere. By 1776, a number of pictures had been placed on open display at the Belvedere, the royal residence in the city’s suburbs. For the formation of the public sphere during the eighteenth century and its relation to art appreciation, Habermas, Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, esp. 31-43, 151-159, and Kaufmann, op. cit., 306. While the reign of Maria Theresa witnessed significant developments in the Habsburgs’ exhibition and organization of Italian paintings, it also saw cavalier treatment of art works and major losses of Venetian cabinet pictures. See Anderson, Giorgione, 237-242, and Conti, History of the Restoration and Conservation of Works of Art, 100. Alterations made during this era to Giorgione’s Laura are now visible in X-ray (Oberthaler and Walmsley, “Technical Studies of Painting Methods,” 291-292). Many works of Venetian masters in collections throughout Europe were modified in similar ways: for a case study of Tintoretto, Weddigen, “The Works of Tintoretto: Sewn, Designed, Patched and Cut.”
the next seventy-five years, the collections were slowly converted from royal to civic institutions. By 1891, Gottfried Semper’s present-day art museum building was completed, facing the natural history museum along Vienna’s Ringstrasse; a separate museum of Angewandte Kunst was established elsewhere in the city. Within the new scheme, the Habsburgs’ Venetian ornamental works remained in the paintings museum rather than the applied arts division.73 At this time, too, Tintoretto’s Biblical Tales, which had been sent to Prague in the seventeenth century, returned to Vienna’s Gemäldegalerie.74

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the definitive lodging of Venetian decorative paintings at the nerve center of the Vienna collections ensured their ongoing documentation. Founded in 1882, the Vienna Jahrbuch made available a variety of archival materials that, even today, facilitate understanding of the early history and provenance of the works discussed here. The 1659 inventory of Leopold Wilhelm’s collection, for instance, transcribed by Adolf Berger for the 1883 Jahrbuch, names the Tales of Aeneas, Venus and Cupid and Allegory of Music, and Tales of Apollo.75 Through their inclusion in such publications, these paintings were incorporated into the annals of Italian art. At the same time, however, they participated in the development of modern art history itself, as sure a sign as any of the remarkable transformation they had undergone during the previous three and a half centuries.

Lotto and Titian

Two small scenes by Lorenzo Lotto, the Allegory of Virtue and Vice and St. Jerome in the Desert (Figs. 3.88-3.89; cat. nos. 24, 26), further exemplify the early transformation of Venetian decorative paintings into autonomous works. Originally conceived as portrait covers, these panels belonged to the larger class of picture ornamenti – a category including fabric sleeves, sculpted and gilded frames, and other embellishments for paintings.76 Within a few years of

73 Kaufmann, “From Treasury to Museum,” 302-305.
74 For the transfer of the Biblical Tales from Prague to Vienna in 1880, see cat. no. 58 below.
76 For the functions of early picture covers and their status as ornamenti, see discussion of this genre in Ch. 2 above.
their composition, however, the two panels apparently had been removed from their associated portraits, and were being displayed independently in the collection of Bishop Bernardo de’ Rossi of Treviso. In an inventory of 1510, the Allegory was listed as a “cover for the picture of the portrait”; its pendant, an image of Rossi also painted by Lotto (Fig. 3.90; 1505; Naples, Museo di Capodimonte), did not appear. At this point, the Allegory was still identified as a coverta, although evidently hung apart from the painting it was intended to protect. An inventory of 1511, meanwhile, recorded the portrait without its cover: “a picture on which is portrayed the figure of the most Reverend Monsignore de’ Rossi.”

Over time, the separated panels fell into different hands. The portrait of Rossi passed to the Farnese family of Parma by 1680, and later departed for Naples; the Allegory remained in north Italy, travelling through collections in Parma and Bergamo before entering the London art market during the early 1900s. In the late eighteenth century, Rossi’s biographer, Ireneo Affò, viewed the Allegory without its pendant in the Bertioli collection in Parma. On the basis of a reference to Rossi inscribed on the panel’s reverse, Affò described the painting as a “bel monumento” to the bishop’s character and accomplishments. Ostensibly unaware of the Naples portrait, Affò treated the Allegory as an integral work of art – a symbolic portrait of Rossi – which demonstrated his commitment to history, the arts, and science. Thus canonized as a self-sufficient picture, indeed a portrait unto itself, Lotto’s painting would not be reassociated with the Naples panel until 1934.

A similar fate awaited Lotto’s St. Jerome (Fig. 3.89; cat. no. 26), also completed during the artist’s early career in Treviso. While physical evidence suggests that this work initially functioned as a sliding coperchio for a portrait, documents indicate that it was on individual

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77 The “coverta del quadro del retratto” is recorded in a 1510 inventory; “uno quadro dove è retratato suso la figura de Monsignore rev.mo di Rossi” appears in a 1511 inventory (Liberali, “Inventari delle Suppellettili del Vescovo Bernardo de Rossi,” 78, 83). Brown notes that “since Lotto’s portrait cover is listed separately in the Rossi inventories of 1510-1511, it may, in fact, have been physically detached shortly after it was painted” (Brown et al., Lorenzo Lotto, 76). Another inventory of April 1511 notes “uno quadro cum uno retrato del Rev.mo vechio,” which could refer either to the portrait of Rossi now in Naples (see below), to another portrait of him taken before Lotto’s 1505 image, to a different portrait of his elder uncle Bernardo, Bishop of Cremona, or to another work altogether (Liberali, op. cit., 90, and idem, “Lotto, Pordenone e Tiziano a Treviso,” 24-27). Lotto’s A Maiden’s Dream (cat. no. 25) likely underwent a similar transformation from picture cover to independent painting, but is undocumented.

78 For the provenances of the two paintings, Galis, Lorenzo Lotto, 402-403, 447; Shapley, Catalogue of the Italian Paintings, vol. 1, 278, 280 n. 13; and Brown et al., Lorenzo Lotto, 74, 80.

79 Affò, Memorie degli Scrittori e Letterati Parmigiani, vol. 3, 200-201. For Affò’s remarks, the inscription on the reverse of the Allegory, and the twentieth-century rediscovery of the link between the Washington painting and the Naples portrait, see catalogue entry below.
display in Rossi’s collection as early as 1510. An inventory of that year records “uno sancto Hieronimo” among the bishop’s belongings, while one of 1511 mentions “uno quadro del Santo Gieronimo.”

The circumstantial evidence linking Lotto’s panel to these entries is strong, for the painter completed at least one other portrait cover of similar dimensions and composition for Rossi; moreover, Girolamo Bologni, a close associate of the prelate’s, composed a poem advising artists to represent the theme of Jerome in the wilderness. Perhaps Lotto intended the picture as the cover for a portrait of a humanist in Rossi’s circle. In any case, by 1510, the work appeared to have been framed as a quadretto in the bishop’s residence.

One reason for the painting’s transfer to this setting can be found in Rossi himself, an admirer of Jerome. In addition to Lotto’s panel, he owned “uno Sancto Hieronimo de bronzo,” as well as lives and writings of the saint. An ecclesiastic of humanistic inclinations, who had dedicated himself to both a Christian life and the study of art and literature, Rossi would have identified with Jerome’s struggles to reconcile his spiritual and secular identities: according to legends of his life, the saint had experienced a dream in which the “supreme judge” accused him of being not a Christian but a Ciceronian. Lotto’s intricate, multivalent image of Jerome’s study and self-mortification in the desert presented a visual enactment of a personal conflict that Rossi would have well understood. Like the Allegory, then, St. Jerome may have been perceived by its early viewers as a metaphorical or spiritual portrait of Rossi, which expressed the most essential elements of his character, and to which the addition of a literal portrait would have been superfluous; hence its detachment and framing only a few years after its creation.

Rossi’s inventories provide further clues to the later history of Lotto’s St. Jerome. The

80 For physical evidence of the panel’s use as a portrait cover, see catalogue entry below. Rossi’s inventories mention “uno sancto Hieronimo” in 1510 and “uno quadro del Santo Gieronimo” in 1511 (Liberali, “Inventari delle Suppellettili del Vescovo Bernardo de Rossi,” 78, 83). Liberali definitively identifies these two entries with the Louvre panel (ibid., 75). See also Brown et al., Lorenzo Lotto, 88.

81 For Bologni and his relationship to the theme of St. Jerome, Ceserani, “Girolamo Bologni”; Béguin, “A Propos des Peintures de Lorenzo Lotto au Louvre,” 100; Gentili, I Giardini di Contemplazione, 129-131; and Brown et al., Lorenzo Lotto, 90. Candidates for St. Jerome’s pendant portrait are discussed in the catalogue entry below.

82 Rossi’s bronze statue of St. Jerome recorded in a 1511 inventory (Liberali, “Inventari delle Suppellettili del Vescovo Bernardo de Rossi,” 90). An inventory of Rossi’s library records the “primo libro da Sancto Hieronimo zoe le Pistole,” and “par[s] epistole seconda Sancti Hieronimi”; it also notes the first and second parts of “la vita de li sancti,” which probably contained Jacobus de Voragine’s biography (ibid., 87).

83 “…about halfway through Lent, he came down with a fever so sudden and so violent that his whole body was cold and the vital heat throbbed only in his chest…abruptly he was haled before the judge’s tribunal. The judge asked him what his profession was, and he professed without hesitation that he was a Christian. ‘You lie!’ the judge said. ‘You are no Christian, you are a Ciceronian, for where your treasure is, there is your heart also’” (de Voragine, Golden Legend, vol. 2, 212). See also Rice, Saint Jerome in the Renaissance, 3.
1511 document, in which “uno quadro del Santo Gieronimo” is mentioned, records a group of works travelling with the bishop to the island convent of Santo Spirito in Venice. With its themes of seclusion and penitence, Lotto’s picture would have served as a fitting ornament for Rossi’s chambers at this monastic institution. In its new location, the painting probably was understood not only as a manifestation of Rossi’s individual character and values, but also as a general lesson in the value of self-abnegation for God and church.

From Venice, St. Jerome travelled to Parma; it next surfaced in nineteenth-century Rome, in the extensive collection of Cardinal Joseph Fesch, also owner of Carpaccio’s Hunting and Fishing on the Lagoon (Fig. 3.97; cat. no. 7). In an 1841 inventory of Fesch’s holdings, Lotto’s “Saint Jérome dans le désert” was listed along with thousands of other works, and praised for its expressiveness and remarkable execution: its formal and painterly qualities thus favored over its religious message or historical function. From this point on, the painting was to be displayed exclusively in French collections, with their emphasis on the easel picture as objet d’art. From the Moret galleries in Paris, the panel passed by 1857 to the Louvre, thus entering the nexus of European collecting and playing a part in the genesis of the modern art museum. Like the Allegory, Lotto’s St. Jerome would not be reinstated in the historical and physical record until the twentieth century. For nearly four hundred years, both panels enjoyed the status of pictures, to be viewed and interpreted on their own complex terms: a status likely conferred on them not by posterity, but by the young Lotto’s own patron.

Titian’s Christ and the Pharisee (Fig. 3.91; cat. no. 70), too, underwent an early transition from decorative painting to framed picture, a change that can be followed through the accounts of distinguished writers from Vasari to Goethe. The panel spent its first eighty years in its original position within the door of a coin cabinet in the Este palace at Ferrara. In the 1568 edition of his Lives, Vasari described the work as “a half-length picture of Christ, marvelous and stupendous, to whom a base Jew is showing the coin of Caesar,” located “in the door of a

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84 The 1511 inventory is entitled, “Inventario de la roba portata a Sanco Spiritu in Venezia de monsignore Rev.mo di Rosi...” (Liberali, “Inventari delle Suppellettili del Vescovo Bernardo de Rossi,” 82-83). For the transfer of Lotto’s St. Jerome to this location, ibid., 75, and Béguin in Lacлотte et al., Le Siècle de Titien, 274-275.
85 For Fesch, see discussion of Later Provenances below.
86 The 1841 inventory entry reads, “Saint Jérome dans le désert; l’expression est pleine de sentiment et l’exécution tout à fait remarquable” (Fesch, Catalogue des Tableaux, 61, #1367). For the painting’s ownership by Cardinal Fesch and later passage to Moret and the Louvre, Béguin in Lacлотte et al., Le Siècle de Titien, 275.
cupboard” [nella porta d’un armario] in the ducal palace. In 1598, however, the duchy of Ferrara devolved to the papacy and the riches of its court were dispersed. While some paintings were seized – the mythologies of Titian and Giovanni Bellini in the camerino d’alabastro went to the Aldobrandini collection in Rome – the Estensi managed to retain a number of works, including Christ and the Pharisee, which they transported to their new seat at Modena and eventually rehung in a lavish gallery. Titian’s panel was most likely detached and separately framed at this time, for period texts never subsequently identified it as a sportello; instead, it joined the Renaissance and early Baroque works displayed together in the royal collection, which stood as a symbol of the steadfast glory of the Estensi at a time when their political reputation had been severely tested.

A mecca for connoisseurs and historians of art during the seventeenth century, the picture gallery at Modena presented a living history of north Italian painting. Seen in conjunction with paintings by Correggio, Veronese, and the Carracci, Titian’s picture came to be identified primarily as a masterful example of the Venetian school: a bellissimo quadro to be positioned within the painter’s career and compared to the art of his contemporaries and rivals, rather than a painted sportello with a local meaning tied to its initial purpose. In 1648, for example, Ridolfi gave Christ and the Pharisee pride of place in his biography of Titian; apparently unconcerned with the work’s original setting, he discussed the panel along with other paintings completed by the young artist for Alfonso d’Este, and recounted an anecdote in which its workmanship was compared favorably with that of a picture by Dürer. In 1657, Francesco Scannelli (1616-1663), the physician, priest, and writer in the service of the Este court, described the painting in

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87 “Similmente nella porta d’un armario dipinse Tiziano dal mezzo in su una testa di Cristo, maravigliosa e stupenda, a cui un villano ebreo mostra la moneta di Cesare: la quale testa, ed altre pitture di detto camerino affermano i nostri migliori artefici che sono le migliori e meglio condotte che abbia mai fatto Tiziano: e nel vero sono rarissime” (Vasari, Vite, vol. 7, 434-435). For further details of the painting’s original sportello setting, see discussion of Doors and Shutters in Ch. 2 above, and catalogue entry below.


89 “A contemplazione del Duca medesimo figurò Nostro Signore, à cui un vecchio Hebreo dimostra la moneta interrogandolo, se dar dovevasi il tributo à Cesare? condotto con rarissimo finimento, di che stupì l’Ambasciador Cesareo, che si trovò à quella Corte, stimando non potersi equiparare la diligenza del suo Durero, che si conserva nella Chiesa del Castello di Modona” (Ridolfi, Maraviglie, vol. 1, 161-162).
his encyclopedic treatise, the *Microcosmo della Pittura*.\(^90\) A work of “superhuman perfection,” akin to the holy perfection of Christ himself, the painting was “easily the most singular image that the divine Titian ever expressed in colors.” Marvelling at the artist’s ability to fit two figures into a picture field of such small size, Scannelli recognized how the visual contrasts between these characters dramatized the essential themes of the Biblical story. The “majestic, grave, and venerable” face of Christ provoked the viewer “as equally to love, as to awe and reverence.” The Pharisee, by contrast, presented a “horrible and menacing face,” which, resembling “the essence of the most crude and wicked inhumanity,” induced in the spectator “a violent discord of the spirit.” In sum, Scannelli wrote, Titian’s painting expressed the “humanized Divinity” of Christ, which shone all the more brilliantly against the evil physiognomy of his enemy.\(^91\) With its emphasis on the way in which Titian gave human form to good and evil and on the passionate, spiritual responses these embodiments elicited in the viewer, Scannelli’s description surpassed mere summary and ventured into the terrain of pictorial psychology. The passage, which anchored the *Microcosmo*’s chapter on Titian, underscored the emotive power of Venetian painting as evinced by the youthful masterpiece of its greatest practitioner.

Just three years after the publication of Scannelli’s treatise, Boschini, having also seen *Christ and the Pharisee* in the galleries at Modena, extravagantly praised the picture in his *Carta del Navegar Pitoresco*. The living quality of Titian’s brushwork and his dramatic rendering of divinity in human form – Venetian qualities both – were, he claimed, enough to bring viewers to their knees. Yet Titian as exponent of the Venetian school was not the only protagonist of Boschini’s verses; the Duke of Modena himself, proprietor of this rare and singular work, also


\(^91\) “…l’ultimo oggetto di questa mentoata Galeria, ed anco di ultima, e soprahumana perfettione, il famosissimo dipinto detto communemente per eccellenza il Quadro della Moneta, opera facilmente la più singolare, che mai esprimesse co’ colori il divino Titiano, e che si ritrovi fra le maggiori maraviglie della Pittura...ed in vero non sò che meglio si possa argomentare l’unica eccellenza del gran Titiano, che da questo singolarissimo dipinto, il quale in poco spatio palesa il tutto della perfettione; ed opera tale, che in fine non eccede la longhezza d’un braccio, con latitudine proportionata, rappresenta alla vista l’istoria del Benedetto Redentore....” Christ’s face presents “un’effige, che appare quasi di tutto aspetto maestosa, grave, e veneranda, che mostra insieme col naso eguale, e rifilato, faccia partecipante il longo, che provoca egualmente il riguardante all’amore, come al timore, e riverenza,” contrasted with the Pharisee’s “faccia horribile, e minacciante, che rassembla al vivo l’estraeto della più crude, e malvagia inhumanità, che induce ad un tempo in qualsivoglia riguardante un violento sconcerto dell’animo, in modo che alterato in eccesso non ha sufficienza per oggetto in estremo abominevole.” Scannelli further describes Titian’s representation of “l’humanata Divinita del Benedetto Redentore” and the artist’s ingenious fitting of “due meze figure” into a “spatio cotanto angusto” (*Il Microcosmo della Pittura*, 228-231).
came in for praise as a “hero” to art lovers.92 Boschini thus implicated the Duke in Titian’s achievement, distinguishing the practices of connoisseurship and collecting as art forms unto themselves; his words implicitly acknowledged the growing scope and influence of the seventeenth-century art world, in which paintings served not only as objects of admiration but also as agents of their owners’ financial, political, and social advancement. Boschini’s verses completed a transition that had begun with the detachment and framing of Cristo della Moneta as a painting to be accorded value within the norms of contemporary art appreciation.

The political and pecuniary worth of Christ and the Pharisee became especially evident during the eighteenth century, when the picture was sold by the financially strapped Este family to Augustus III, Elector of Saxony and King of Poland. The 1746 transaction, which involved the exchange of the hundred greatest paintings in the ducal collection for one hundred thousand Venetian zecchini (gold ducats), marked a coup for Augustus, an ardent collector whose holdings formed the core of Dresden’s present-day Gemäldegalerie.93 The departure of Titian’s painting and other masterpieces for Saxony occasioned intense bitterness among Italians, however, who rightly believed the deal to be a loss impossible to recoup in currency.94 Perhaps no author so poignantly documented the magnitude of the event as one who at first knew nothing of it: Pietro Ercole Gherardi (1687-1752), the abbot and tutor to the children of Francesco III d’Este. A connoisseur and intellectual of eighteenth-century Modena, Gherardi was charged by the Duke in

92 Ma la divinità del Paradiso, / Retrata da Tician, fa genuflesso / Ognun piegarse. Oh Cristo ben espresso! / No puol più de cusi splender un viso! / Xe in Galaria sta imagine divina / De quel Eroe, che con serenità / Modena reze: e ch’abia chi sarà / Pitura mai si rara, e pelegrina? / Concore aura comun, che chi se sia / Mai sepe far del nostro Redentor / Imagine, che renda tal splendor, / Nè in divin forma tal fisonomia. / Lentulo ha scrito ben, no gh’è risposta, / Che ’l ve fa veder Cristo con la mente. / Ma Tician coi colori vivamente, / E con l’ochio e col tato a quel ve acosta. / E Pitori e scritori a quela cieda; / El grido xe cumun, nissun ghe ariva; / Nè se puol nominar cosa più viva, / Che ’l quadro singular dela Moneda” (Boschini, Carta del Navegar Pitoresco, 336-337). Depending on the date when the lines were composed, “quel Eroe, che con serenità / Modena reze” was either Francesco I d’Este, who died in 1658, or his successor, Francesco II (ibid., 336 n. 25).

93 Augustus III (1696-1763) was also known as Frederick Augustus II. The 1746 purchase constituted the single most important set of acquisitions ever made for Dresden, including Christ and the Pharisee, four large altarpieces by Correggio, Veronese’s Cuccina series, and paintings by Dosso and Battista Dossi, Andrea del Sarto, Velázquez, and Rubens, among others (Marx, “Thoughts and Observations on the Dresden Gemäldegalerie,” 18-19). For the price of this group, Gherardi, Descrizione di Cento Pezzi di Pitture Passanti nell’anno 1746 dalla Galleria Estense in Modena a quella di Federico Augusto III Re di Polonia ed Elettore di Sassonia pel valore e prezzo di zecchini veneziani centomila. This manuscript was composed by Pietro Ercole Gherardi after the sale (Ricci, “Pietro Ercole Gherardi,” 581, and see below for further discussion of Gherardi).

94 As late as 1885, G. Frizzoni wrote in the Rivista di Storia Italiana: “Si trattò di vicende deplorevoli e ignominiose, quando si pensò che per vile denaro un sovrano si risolvette di far mercato della parte più scelta della Galleria, la quale ai nostri giorni più che mai attirerebbe alla città di Modena l’attenzione del forestiero e dell’amatore in genere, ora rivolta alla magnifica Pinacoteca dell’Atene dell’Elba” (quoted in Gherardi, Descrizione delle Pitture Esistenti in Modena, viii).
the 1740s with compiling a detailed inventory of paintings in the Galleria Estense. Its true purpose (unbeknownst to him, though obvious in hindsight) was to serve as a sales list for Augustus III. Gherardi, however, conceived the work as a panegyric to Modena’s cherished art treasures, in which painstaking historical and biographical study were conjoined with devoted ekphrastic attention. According to his text, *Christ and the Pharisee* hung in the sixth room of the ducal gallery along with paintings by Correggio, Dürer, and Rubens; it was positioned below a *sacra conversazione* of Titian. In a lengthy entry on the picture, which he described as the work that had earned the young artist Duke Alfonso’s favor, Gherardi first cited Vasari’s *Lives* as historical testimony of the panel’s original location and authorship. The writer’s “information and words…explain to us the time, the place, the subject and the maker of this work and authenticate it.” Despite his uncritical reading of the older source, Gherardi here showed regard for primary texts and an interest in the circumstances in which Titian’s painting had been conceived; as a result, for the first time since the sixteenth century, the work’s original *sportello* setting came back into view as a salient element of its history and meaning. So, too, did its initial reception. Noting Vasari’s remark that “our best craftsmen” had declared the head of Christ “the finest and best executed that Titian has ever done,” Gherardi confirmed that this consensus had endured: “a concept and just decision of ancient professors corresponding to that of modern *intendenti.*” Although less interested in the painting’s reputation over time than in its transcendent status as an undisputed masterpiece, Gherardi employed Vasari’s text to place present-day *intendenti* in the shoes of the picture’s early viewers, an effort of historical imagination that anticipated the work of modern Titian scholars.

Vasari was not Gherardi’s only source, however; he cited the later texts of Ridolfi, Scannelli, and Boschini, and further noted that Borghini had omitted discussion of the work from his writings. These citations, in turn, were interwoven with his own description and interpretation of the painting. Christ’s “truly noble, venerable and majestic air” was

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95 For Gherardi’s life and works, Riccioni, “Pietro Ercole Gherardi.” For the deception behind the commission of his 1744 text, Gherardi, *Descrizione delle Piture Esistenti in Modena*, viii-ix.
96 For *Christ and the Pharisee* as the painting that earned Titian the favor of Alfonso, Gherardi, *Descrizione delle Piture Esistenti in Modena*, 4. For the work’s location in the sixth room of the ducal gallery, ibid., 262. In his entry on the painting, Gherardi describes Vasari’s words as “notizia e parole che ci scuoprono il tempo, il luogo, il suggetto e l’autore e ne autenticano l’opera” (ibid., 208).
97 “La qual testa affermano i nostri migliori artefici che è delle migliori e meglio condotte che abbia mai fatto Tiziano: concetto e giusta decisione d’antichi professori corrispondente a quella dei moderni intendenti” (Gherardi, *Descrizione delle Piture Esistenti in Modena*, 208).
complemented by “soft flesh so natural as to seem animated.” Taking a cue from Scannelli, Gherardi explained how the Pharisee’s appearance betrayed his character: “in the lineaments and contours of the face of the Pharisee, Titian, exact observer of customs and practical master of physiognomies, aimed to express guile, malice, and cunning in living form.” By contrast, Christ’s holy visage transmitted “grace and celestial sweetness, well revealing his divine being and infinite knowledge of every dark thought in human minds.”  

Finally, Gherardi raised issues of connoisseurship. Noting Titian’s signature on the Pharisee’s collar, he mentioned the painting’s known copies, then concluded by firmly asserting the originality of the Modena panel: “Cristo della Moneta in the Galleria Estense is beyond doubt the same painted two hundred thirty and more years ago by the hand of Vecellio in Ferrara, transported in 1598 to Modena with the arrival of Duke Cesare, and later hung by Duke Francesco I with the other pictures in the newly created Galleria Ducale.”

If the sale of Christ and the Pharisee brought chagrin to north Italy, it offered cause for celebration at the royal court in Dresden, where the raft of newly acquired paintings were framed in identical gold surrounds with rich rocaille carving incorporating the king’s monogram and coat of arms. In addition to emphasizing Augustus’s ownership, this scheme imposed a uniform mode of display; attention to the unique history of each picture, as demonstrated in Gherardi’s...
text, was avoided in the interest of a consistent and homogeneous presentation.\textsuperscript{100}

While the Modena purchase was still under negotiation, Augustus III had arranged for the construction of a new collection space, one of the first buildings in Europe designed specifically for the public display of paintings.\textsuperscript{101} Following practices established at earlier Habsburg courts, where large stables were converted to exhibition halls, the king transformed his stables on the Jüdenhof into a gallery consisting of a single story nearly thirty feet in height, pierced by large windows. Interior rooms were removed to create a single area on an open, symmetrical floor plan, divided into two U-shaped hallways – overall, a hanging surface of more than 9,700 square meters (Fig. 3.92).\textsuperscript{102} The installation was described by a later observer as consisting of a white, unpainted ceiling and walls covered in green damask with gold skirtings and foliage, suggestive of modern galleries in which tasteful but relatively unobtrusive surroundings set off the paintings on display. The new Dresden exhibition hall differed from present-day museums, however, in its dense, tightly packed presentation, with smaller pictures hung at eye level and larger ones closer to the ceiling. \textit{Christ and the Pharisee} presumably hung by 1754 in the exalted inner hallway, devoted to the Italian school, as recorded in an etching and aquatint of the early nineteenth century (Fig. 3.93; 1830; Dresden, Kupferstich-Kabinett). The picture thus contributed to one of the most innovative collections in Europe, a paintings museum whose supervisors saw the design of installations as an art unto itself.\textsuperscript{103}

In its home on the Jüdenhof, Titian’s picture also enjoyed unprecedented exposure,

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\item \textsuperscript{101} The Dresden rulers were precocious collectors and exhibitors of painting: during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century, Augustus the Strong (1670-1733; also known as Elector Frederick Augustus I and King Augustus II) began to privilege the collecting of easel pictures. In 1722, Augustus commissioned the first separate inventory of royal pictures, which previously had been grouped with sculptures, furniture, and objects of science and nature. This event marked the rise of a true Dresden paintings gallery, well ahead of those in Vienna and other European courts (Kaufmann, \textit{Court, Cloister & City}, 330; idem, “From Treasury to Museum,” 299; Marx, “Thoughts and Observations on the Dresden Gemäldegalerie,” 14-16; Weber, “The Gallery as Work of Art,” 184).
\item \textsuperscript{102} Marx, “Thoughts and Observations on the Dresden Gemäldegalerie,” 19-21; Weber, “The Gallery as Work of Art,” 186. For further history of the gallery, Walther et al., \textit{Gemäldegalerie Dresden}, 12-24, and Heres, \textit{Dresdener Kunstsammlungen im 18. Jahrhundert}, 8-141. For earlier conversions of stables into gallery spaces (where paintings were, however, sometimes combined with diverse objects of science and nature) by Maximilian II in Vienna and Rudolf II in Prague, Kaufmann, “From Treasury to Museum,” 292-293; see also discussion of Venice to Vienna above.
\item \textsuperscript{103} For the description of the paintings gallery installation in Johann Christian Hasche’s \textit{Umständliche Beschreibung Dresdens} (1781-1783), Marx, “Thoughts and Observations on the Dresden Gemäldegalerie,” 21. The rehanging of 1754 and the segregation of Italian paintings in the Inner Gallery are discussed in Weber, “The Gallery as Work of Art,” 191. For the king’s paintings advisors and the notion of the installation as a work of art, Marx, op. cit., 19; Weber, op. cit., 192-197.
\end{itemize}
during a period of increasing esteem for museumgoing as a ritual of leisure and spiritual
cultivation. Painters, poets, and philosophers of the Enlightenment and Romantic eras visited the
Gemäldegalerie, many documenting their impressions of its holdings. The writer and critic
Friedrich Schlegel, inspired by the thoughtful comparative arrangement of paintings at Dresden,
composed a “Conversation in a Gallery,” which explored different artists’ representations of the
same subjects.104 Goethe, meanwhile, exalted the space as a temple for the worship of art. After
visiting the collection in 1768, he wrote:

This room turning back in on itself, reigned over by a magnificence and order amidst
perfect silence, the dazzling frames, which had hardly changed since the day they had
been gilded, the polished floors, the rooms visited by more viewers than people who
came to work – all this produced a unique feeling of solemn splendor that is more akin to
the sensation one has upon entering a church, particularly since the adornments of certain
temples, and certain objects of devotion, seemed to be displayed here solely for the holy
purpose of art.105

For Goethe, this “room turning back in on itself” – an allusion to the U-shaped viewing halls
designed by Augustus’s advisors – was a magnificent sanctuary for art, whose “solemn splendor”
testified to the holiness of aesthetic experience. In this temple, Goethe noted, the very images of
the old church had been turned toward the ends of the new: the experience of painting was now
itself a ritual to be undertaken in spaces of order, beauty, and silence.

Composed almost exactly two hundred years after the second edition of Vasari’s Lives,
Goethe’s testimony echoed that of the Italian author in significant respects. His account of the
sense of amazement elicited by the paintings gallery at Dresden recalled Vasari’s description of
Christ and the Pharisee as maravigliosa e stupenda – marvelous and stupendous.106 These
consonances were no coincidence, for, although described in the language of Romanticism,
Goethe’s experience of the Dresden Gemäldegalerie had roots in the aesthetic responses of
Renaissance viewers and writers. The space which elicited Goethe’s praise, moreover, was
reminiscent of the original location of Titian’s painting: Alfonso d’Este’s primo camerino
adorato, a “precious little room” filled with rare artifacts.107 Yet there were key divergences, as
well. The exhibition at Dresden was vast, public, and confined to easel pictures alone; in

105 Quoted in Heres, Dresdener Kunstsammlungen im 18. Jahrhundert, 127-128; translation in Marx, “Thoughts and
106 Vasari, Vite, vol. 7, 434.
107 For the primo camerino adorato of Alfonso and its contents, see catalogue entry below.
appearance and accessibility, it differed dramatically from the dense amalgamations of painting, sculpture, furniture, and coins that characterized the exclusive interiors of Alfonso’s Renaissance castle. For *Christ and the Pharisee*, the transformation from *sportello* decoration within this variegated and elite setting to framed element of an open Gemäldegalerie had begun early, upon its removal to Modena in 1598 and subsequent hanging in the Este museum of the early 1600s. By the mid-eighteenth century, *Christ and the Pharisee* had arrived in an altogether new “precious room”: a monumental civic space devoted to the veneration of painting.

**Later Provenances**

Titian’s distinguished picture numbered among the many Venetian ornamental works that were, as Ridolfi wrote, “transported elsewhere” [altrove trasportate] during the Cinquecento and Seicento. In the eighteenth century, several of these paintings resurfaced in well-known European collections, where their framing, condition, alterations, and attributions were documented. Giorgione’s *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (Fig. 3.94; cat. no. 19), for example, emerged among the holdings of Pierre Crozat (1665-1740), perhaps the most prodigious private collector in modern French history. In an inventory of 1740, *Judith* was noted among the pictures in his *hôtel* on the Rue de Richelieu in Paris, and described as having a frame of sculpted and gilded wood. Though the date of the panel’s removal from its original *sportello* setting remains uncertain, the work’s later provenance, physical history, and display can be reconstructed through Crozat’s records: above all, the *Recueil Crozat*, his monumental collaboration with connoisseur Pierre-Jean Mariette (1694-1774). One of the first official printed compendia of art, the *Recueil* constituted a survey of Italian painting and a sumptuous reference collection for amateurs. Conceived on the model of Teniers’s *Theatrum Pictorium*, it sought to surpass that earlier achievement in surveying the contents of multiple paintings galleries, in its detailed attention to geographical schools and historical chronologies, and in its inclusion of drawings. The *Recueil* eventually comprised two elephant folios of engravings, published in 1729 and 1742, after the greatest Old Masters then in French custody, along with

108 For Ridolfi’s remark, see n. 7 above.
109 The 1740 inventory of Crozat’s collection describes “un tableau peint sur bois de 4 pieds un pouce de haut sur deux pieds huit pouces et demi de large, dans sa bordure de bois sculpté doré, représentant Judith, fait par Raphaël, prisé 4 000 l” (Steffmann, “Tableaux de la Collection de Pierre Crozat,” 62). Crozat also owned two elements of a decorative frieze cycle by Veronese, *Minerva* and *Diana*, which, like *Judith*, eventually passed to Catherine the Great and are now held in Russian museums; see cat. no. 76 below.
Mariette’s remarks on *Judith*, published in the first volume of the *Recueil* in 1729, read much like a modern museum catalogue entry, including notes on the painting’s excellent state of preservation, its probable original function as a door or shutter – “du moins une marque de Serrure le fait conjecturer” – and questions about its attribution. While classifying the picture as a work of Raphael, Mariette observes the strong and vivid colors, the soft, modeled flesh tones, and the landscape background, all executed “precisely in the taste and according to the principles of Giorgione” and leading some connoisseurs to support his authorship. Thus leaving the problem of attribution open, Mariette anticipates debates among scientific art historians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries over the painting’s maker. His attention to condition, initial setting, and authorship anticipates Gherardi’s scholarly account of Titian’s *Christ and the Pharisee*, composed about fifteen years later.

Provenance, too, is a significant concern of the *Recueil*: Mariette writes that “the history of the destiny of the works of a great master both before and after his death is a natural consequence of his life,” and that “we provide the history of the Paintings and Drawings here engraved, giving the names of those who owned them successively, and moving back as close as possible to their first owners.” Such systematic attention to the histories of individual paintings – perhaps in the implicit interest of furnishing them with royal pedigrees of ownership that would aggrandize their present proprietors – marks an advance in the field of provenance studies, later to evolve into a consequential and even political domain of inquiry for collectors and museums. In fact, the partial provenance supplied by Mariette for Giorgione’s *Judith* forms the basis of modern knowledge of the picture’s origins. The panel was brought to France by one...

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111 “Il y a apparence que ce Tableau peint sur bois, a servi de porte ou de volet, du moins une marque de Serrure le fait conjecturer: Il est très fini & très bien conservé; mais les couleurs fortes & vives, les carnations fonduës & de beaucoup de relief, enfin le paysage qui sert de fond estant précisément dans le goût & dans les principes du Giorgion, tout cela a porté quelques Connoisseurs à soustenir qu’il estoit du Giorgion & non de Raphael” (Crozat and Mariette, *Recueil Crozat*, vol. 1, 13). For debates about the painting’s attribution, see catalogue entry below.

112 “…comme l’histoire de la destinée que les ouvrages d’un grand Maître ont eûé de son vivant, & celle qu’ils ont eûé après sa mort, est une suite naturelle de sa vie: on donne icy l’histoire des Tableaux & celle des Desseins qu’on a fait graver; on dit même les noms de ceux qui les ont possedez successivement, en remontant autant qu’il a esté possible jusqu’au premier propriétaire” (Crozat and Mariette, *Recueil Crozat*, vol. 1, preface, vii). For the significance of Mariette’s attention to provenance, Leca, “An Art Book and Its Viewers,” 634.
M. Forest, he writes, and eventually sold to M. Bertin, from whom Crozat purchased it. 113 Pierre-Vincent Bertin, a notable Parisian collector who also owned works of Titian and Veronese, died in 1711; it seems likely, therefore, that Giorgione’s painting came into Crozat’s possession before or during that year, and that the picture had left Italy by the later seventeenth century. 114

Innovative in its focus on attribution and provenance, the Recueil also serves as a manifesto for the modern art reproduction. Mariette’s preface exalts engraving as the best means of preserving and making known singular works of art, declaring its supremacy over ekphrasis and written records. “In the aim of making the masterpieces of Painting surviving today known to all the world, and of conserving them for posterity, we believed that it was necessary to have recourse to engraving, and to produce a body of prints after the pictures of the great painters,” he writes. “…For those inclined to study it with attention, this corpus would be a School of Painting as capable of perfecting taste and of forming young artists as any other.” 115 The catalogue engraving of Giorgione’s Judith is useful not only as a “School of Painting,” however, but also as an historical record of changes imposed on the work while it belonged to Crozat. Toinette Larcher’s image of 1729 displays a picture field much wider than the one visible today, containing an additional tree and extended landscape (Fig. 3.95). As Fomicieva has shown, Crozat apparently ordered the painting to be enlarged by the addition of approximately nine centimeter-wide strips on the left and right sides. 116 Perhaps he found the original proportions, which had been tailored to the sportello format, too narrow for standard gallery hanging, and sought to render them closer to those of a typical independent tableau. By tempering the painting’s strongly vertical orientation, he would have facilitated the work’s display alongside

113 “Ce Tableau a esté apporté en France par M. Forest, qui le vendit à M. Bertin; & c’est de ce dernier que M. Crozat, chez qui il est presentement, l’a acheté. Il avoit déjà esté gravé par Blotelinck, comme Tableau de Raphael” (Crozat and Mariette, Recueil Crozat, vol. 1, 13). The provenance listed by Mariette has been incorrectly transcribed in some subsequent studies (Fomiciova, “La Storia della Giuditta di Giorgione,” 258; idem, “History of Giorgione’s ‘Judith,’” 417).

114 For Bertin, Bonnaffé, Dictionnaire des Amateurs Français, 21; see also Fomiciova, “La Storia della Giuditta di Giorgione,” 258.

115 “Ainsi dans le dessein de faire connoistre à tout le monde, & de conserver pour la posterity les chefs-d’oeuvre de la Peinture qui subsistent encore aujourd’hui, on a crû qu’il falloit nécessairement avoir recours à la Graveur, & faire une espece de corps d’Ouvrage des Estampes gravées d’après les Tableaux des bons Peintres…cet ouvrage sera donc, comme on l’a déjà dit, pour ceux qui voudront bien l’estudier avec attention, une école de Peinture aussi capable de perfectionner le goût, & de former les jeunes Peintres qu’aucune autre leçon” (Crozat and Mariette, Recueil Crozat, vol. 1, preface, ij, vij).

116 Crozat and Mariette, Recueil Crozat, vol. 1, pl. 33; see Fomicieva, “History of Giorgione’s ‘Judith,’” 417.
pictures of more orthodox dimensions. Similar modifications of Venetian ornamental pictures occurred in other collections: an oblong frieze canvas of the *Ordeal of Tuccia* from the circle of Tintoretto (Fig. 3.96; cat. no. 65), for example, was substantially augmented in height by the attachment of a large horizontal strip along the top edge, probably during the seventeenth century. Such renovations, meant to reform site-specific ornaments into stock easel paintings of wider rectangular outline, suggest both adherence to and active shaping of norms for the exhibition of framed art works in a gallery setting.

*Judith* was to remain in its enlarged format for at least a century; after the collector’s death, his paintings passed to his nephews, whose heirs sold them to Catherine II of Russia in 1772. Giorgione’s masterpiece thus came, along with much of Crozat’s picture collection, to constitute the nucleus of the modern-day Hermitage, which was founded circa 1764 and opened as a public museum in 1852. A curator there noticed the panel additions as early as 1807, writing that “on both sides of the picture there were small areas painted by another hand,” and offering to cut the added pieces, leaving “only that part done by Raphael [sic].” This early attempt at historically accurate restoration anticipated developments in museum practice; campaigns to reinstate paintings’ original formats through technical study, archival research, and physical intervention would become widespread in the later nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Despite the recommendation, however, *Judith*’s side extensions were not removed until some time between 1838 and 1863, and details of the painting’s various transformations emerged fully only upon restoration in the late 1960s.

Another Venetian ornamental work to have undergone significant physical alterations during its later history is Carpaccio’s painted *sportello*, of which *Hunting and Fishing on the Lagoon* and *Ladies on a Balcony* are surviving fragments (Figs. 3.97-3.98; cat. no. 7). Together, these scenes once constituted the right half of a hinged, bifold vertical shutter. Sometime before the later eighteenth century, this ensemble was dismantled into at least three pieces. The left leaf went missing and is known only through a copy; the right leaf was sawn in half to create two

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117 For alterations to the *Ordeal of Tuccia*, see catalogue entry below.
independent pictures, *Hunting and Fishing* and *Ladies*. After the separation, the area of lagoon water behind the balcony in the latter scene appeared incongruous, so it was overpainted to create a dark or nocturnal background; perhaps at the same time, the reverse of *Ladies* was planed down, erasing probable traces of a *trompe l’oeil* design. However, *Hunting and Fishing* retained its painted reverse, and both pieces preserved vestiges of the hinges and battens that had anchored the panel in its original configuration. The prominent lily flower that previously had unified the two halves of the recto scene also remained visible and truncated on both fragments. This disassembly almost certainly was undertaken to transform Carpaccio’s functional painting into multiple easel pictures for sale or export. However, neither piece left Venice immediately; instead, they joined the history of collecting within the Republic itself, and one remains in the city today.

By the later 1700s, *Hunting and Fishing* – once the upper right section of Carpaccio’s door – had joined the collection of Count Francesco Algarotti (1712-1764), the Enlightenment connoisseur, theorist, and man of letters, who was among the first European collectors to advocate the classification of paintings according to school and chronology. He shared ties with other owners of Venetian ornamental works: Pierre Crozat, whom he met during a youthful stay in Paris, and Augustus III, whom he advised on the purchase of paintings for the royal gallery at Dresden. Algarotti probably acquired *Hunting and Fishing* between 1743-1745 or 1759-1764, when he was residing in his native Venice and, along with his brother, actively expanding his collection. A posthumously published catalogue of their pictures attributes the painting to Carpaccio, who “flowered together with the Bellini,” and describes it as a “hunt for mergansers on the water by means of boats.” The listed dimensions correspond to those of the Getty panel, revealing that by the later 1770s, the ensemble had been dismantled, and the two halves of its right wing were hanging separately. Carpaccio’s fragment is treated in the catalogue entry as an autonomous portrayal of a genre subject, and admired for its diligence of execution. As an independent quadro, it joins Algarotti’s historical register of the arts, which locates individual

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120 For the panels’ original configuration and later alterations, see discussion of Doors and Shutters in Ch. 2 above, and catalogue entry below. For the repainting of the background of *Ladies*, Dorigato, *Carpaccio, Bellini, Tura, Antonello*, 179. The location of the early copy of Carpaccio’s painting is unknown; see Szafran, “Carpaccio’s ‘Hunting on the Lagoon,’” 158.
works within the unfolding of schools and styles.\textsuperscript{121}

\textit{Hunting and Fishing} departed Venice by the early nineteenth century, resurfacing among the possessions of Cardinal Joseph Fesch (1763-1839), uncle of Napoleon and his companion in youth.\textsuperscript{122} Fesch served as France’s commissary of war under Bonaparte and later commanded the Armée d’Italie, which was responsible for extensive removals of paintings and antiquities from Italian soil beginning in the 1790s. In building his personal collection of thousands of works – including not only Carpaccio’s painting but also Lotto’s \textit{St. Jerome in the Desert} (Fig. 3.89; cat. no. 26) – Fesch partook of the Napoleonic rhetoric of spoliation, which held that France seized in order to liberate. “For too long these masterpieces have been soiled by the gaze of servitude,” wrote one of his contemporaries, declaring that “it is in the bosom of a free people that the legacy of great men must come to rest.” In 1798, the arrival of a convoy of confiscated works of art in Paris was greeted with citywide celebrations, during which plundered sculptures were paraded through the streets and the citizens sang, “Rome is no more in Rome, / It is all in Paris.”\textsuperscript{123}

How Fesch acquired \textit{Hunting and Fishing} is not known; his troops’ extensive seizures of Italian collections suggest that it may have been looted, but the Cardinal was also active as a purchaser of art at public sales and through dealers. A catalogue of his holdings describes the painting as an image of “hunters, mounted on small boats, making war with arrows against

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\textsuperscript{121} I thank Scott Allan for provenance information on the Getty painting. A note in the curatorial file indicates that the work “probably” belonged to Algarotti, given that some pieces were added to the collection after his death. Here, it is assumed that, like the vast majority of pictures noted in the ca. 1776 inventory, \textit{Hunting and Fishing} was acquired during his lifetime. The inventory lists works inherited by Francesco’s brother, Bonomo, and is entitled \textit{Catalogo dei quadri dei disegni e dei libri che trattano dell’arte del disegno della galleria del fu sig. Conte Algarotti in Venezia}, by G. A. Selva and Pietro Edwards. The entry reads, “Carpaccio Vittore, Veneziano. Caccia di smerghi sull’acqua col mezzo di battelli, diligentemente eseguita. In tavola, alto p. 2 onc. 6.1/2. l. p. 1. onc. 10” (quoted in Scarpa, “Fatti e Ritratti,” 27). Scarpa further discusses the measurements in Venetian \textit{piedi} and their correspondence to the dimensions of the Getty panel (ibid., 27). Algarotti owned a second Venetian ornamental cycle: the \textit{Tale of Diana and Callisto} by Andrea Schiavone (cat. no. 40), which was also framed independently in his collection during the eighteenth century (Penny, \textit{National Gallery Catalogues}, vol. 2, 119). Algarotti and his collecting and art-historical endeavors discussed in Haskell, \textit{Patrons and Painters}, 347-360.


Still surviving on the reverse of the panel are two nineteenth-century customs stamps, located near and in an empty inset at upper right, where a hinge originally was attached; this detail suggests that the hinge had been removed by the time of Fesch’s acquisition. His ownership and display of the picture reflected French museological norms, which dictated that works of art be divested of their historical and geographical settings and apprehended instead as pure specimens of the painter’s genius. Carpaccio’s panel was mounted rather incongruously in a gilded frame of Empire style, emphasizing its status as a framed *objet d’art* rather than an historically embedded artifact. This privileging of the museum piece over the archaeological entity had roots in Enlightenment ideals of art appreciation, expressed in the Louvre, where newly confiscated paintings were studied in relation to each other rather than to their original settings (Fig. 3.99; 1796; Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures).

During the nineteenth century, French imperial politics continued to determine the fortunes of Carpaccio’s painting. After Napoleon’s fall in 1815, Fesch transported much of his collection from Paris to Rome. Several years after his death, *Hunting and Fishing* was sold to the Marchese Gian Pietro Campana (1808-1880), a well-known Roman collector and archaeological enthusiast, member of the Institut de France, and friend of the future Napoleon III. Campana’s palace in Rome was a center of intellectual and artistic exchange, visited by Ingres and Queen Victoria, among others. In placing his collection perpetually on display to world powers, the Marchese sought to promote Italy’s aesthetic heritage, an effort that included sponsored digs for antiquities near Rome.

After passing to Campana’s great-nephew, *Hunting and Fishing* eventually reappeared for sale in 1944, shortly after the Allied liberation of Rome, in a shop on the Via di Campo...

125 For the inset and customs stamps, Goldner, “A Late Fifteenth Century Venetian Painting of a Bird Hunt,” 27; Szafran, “Carpaccio’s ‘Hunting on the Lagoon,’” 152.
126 For the earlier frame, Busiri Vici, “Vicenda di un Dipinto,” 351.
127 Bialostocki notes that “before photography permitted to substitute mechanical reproduction of the visual works for the originals, great collections allowing easily for comparisons were especially important for the early research in artistic history…[thus] the short-lived Musée Napoléon – how much we may dislike the dictatorial background and the brutal methods applied to its creation – played…a fundamental role in the development of art history in the first quarter of the XIXth century” (“Museum Work and History in the Development of the Vienna School,” 9-10).
128 For Hubert Robert’s plans for the design of the Louvre and the hanging of paintings there, Radisich, *Hubert Robert*. See also Duncan, “From the Princely Gallery to the Public Art Museum,” 250-262.
129 For Gian Pietro (Giampietro) Campana’s life and collection, Cappelli and Salvagni, *Frascati al Tempo di Pio IX e del Marchese Campana*, esp. 249-262.
Marzio. There, it was happened upon by the architect and connoisseur Andrea Busiri Vici, who was passing the days after the German surrender by riding his bicycle through the city. Reattributed to Carpaccio and published in 1955, the painting ultimately moved to the Getty Museum in 1979.\(^{129}\) Thus, *Hunting and Fishing* passed much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Paris and Rome, its ownership and display inextricable from the momentous political history of Europe during that time.

*Ladies on a Balcony* (Fig. 3.98), the lower half of the right leaf of Carpaccio’s original *sportello*, also played a part in the European theater of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries: it was acquired by Teodoro Correr (1750-1830), the Venetian aristocrat and collector who bequeathed his holdings to the city.\(^{130}\) Correr spent most of his life dodging public service, instead amassing memorabilia and historical curiosities at his palace near San Giovanni Decollato. In contrast to the owners of *Hunting and Fishing* – the aesthete Algarotti and the museum-minded Fesch and Campana – he occupied himself mainly with documentary and historical problems, seeking to create a visual compendium of the Republic from its beginnings. Situated among Correr’s bounty of prints, medals, books, manuscripts, and paintings, *Ladies on a Balcony* was probably valued as a reflection of the everyday life of Venetian nobles in centuries past. A poetic portrayal of historical recreations, it would have been seen in much the same light as the genre paintings of Correr’s elder contemporary, Pietro Longhi, which he also collected in abundance.

By late life, Correr had built his collection into a veritable temple to Venice’s departed glories, its poignancy heightened by the fact that much of it had been acquired cheaply from bankrupt noble families such as the Molin, Orsetti, and Pellegrini. Correr’s holdings survived the fall of the Republic intact, and upon his death in 1830, they passed to the municipality for the establishment of a public museum. In this way, *Ladies on a Balcony*, unlike its pendant, remains in Venice to be seen alongside a variety of historical objects. On some level, indeed, its appeal as an independent painting continues to rest on its suggestive vision of the life of a city left behind by the centuries.

\(^{129}\) For Busiri Vici’s rediscovery of the painting and later disputes over its ownership, see his “Vicenda di un Dipinto.” The painting was first republished in 1955 by Fiocco (“La ‘Caccia in Valle’ di Vittore Carpaccio”). For the Getty’s acquisition date, Szafran, “Carpaccio’s ‘Hunting on the Lagoon,’” 148.

\(^{130}\) For Teodoro Correr, Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, 381-383.
Conclusion

This chapter has investigated case studies in the transformation of Venetian decorative paintings from site-specific, embedded elements of larger domestic programs, into autonomous framed works belonging to the discourse on art in the sixteenth century and beyond. In addition to nurturing subjects and styles of painting that would later migrate to the fields of independent pictures, Venetian ornamental works themselves underwent transitions in identity and function. These individual examples demonstrate a broader pattern of change, for nearly all extant artifacts of this genre are now preserved in museums and private collections.

The “invention of art” in the western tradition during and after the Renaissance is a well-known phenomenon surveyed in a rich primary and scholarly literature. The present study has explored one facet of this development through attention to the vicissitudes of individual paintings. The later fortunes of these pictures, I argue, are as significant to their meanings as the original settings reconstructed in Chapter 2 above. Practices of safekeeping, research, and technical examination in modern museums and collections make inquiry into the works’ origins possible. To this end, the appended catalogue gathers representative surviving examples of this genre and examines their initial contexts, iconography, style, and place in the broader history of Venetian Renaissance painting.
Chapter 3 Illustrations

3.1 Baldassare Longhena, Palazzo Widmann, Venice (photo by the author)

3.2 Titian, *Venus and Adonis* Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado (image source: Ilchman et al., *Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese*, 186)

3.3 Cat. no. 71, Circle of Titian, *Birth of Adonis* (image courtesy of the Museo Civico, Padua)
3.4 Cat. no. 74, Follower of Titian, *Venus and Adonis* (image courtesy of the Museo Civico, Padua)

3.5-3.8 *De Picturis*, manuscript catalogue of Andrea Vendramin, f. 69-72
London, British Library, Sloane ms. 4004
(image source: Borenius, *Picture Gallery of Andrea Vendramin*, pl. 57-60)
3.9-3.10 De Picturis, manuscript catalogue of Andrea Vendramin, f. 69-70
London, British Library, Sloane ms. 4004
(image source: Borenius, Picture Gallery of Andrea Vendramin, pl. 57-58)

3.11 Cat. no. 48, Circle of Andrea Schiavone (Lambert Sustris?),
Nessus and Deianeira
(image courtesy of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

3.12 Cat. no. 49, Circle of Andrea Schiavone (Lambert Sustris?), Rape of Europa
(image courtesy of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)

3.13 Cat. no. 47, Circle of Andrea Schiavone, Midas and Pan (?)
(image source: Markova, “Inediti della Pittura Veneta nei Musei dell’U.R.S.S. (I),” 102)
3.14-3.15 Cat. no. 53, Circle of Andrea Schiavone, *Deucalion and Pyrrha, The Judgment of Midas* (images courtesy of the Polo Museale Veneziano)

3.16 *De Picturis*, manuscript catalogue of Andrea Vendramin, f. 73 London, British Library, Sloane ms. 4004 (image source: Borenius, *Picture Gallery of Andrea Vendramin*, pl. 61)

3.17 Cat. no. 14, Circle of Cima da Conegliano, *Scene of Sacrifice* (image courtesy of Northampton City Museum and Art Gallery)

3.18-3.19 Cat. no. 46, Circle of Andrea Schiavone, *Priesthood (?)*, *Force of Arms (?)* (images courtesy of the Kress Collection, Bucknell University)
3.20-3.23 *De Picturis*, manuscript catalogue of Andrea Vendramin, f. 74, 76-78
London, British Library, Sloane ms. 4004
(image source: Borenius, *Picture Gallery of Andrea Vendramin*, pl. 62, 64-66)

3.24-3.29 Cat. no. 52, Circle of Andrea Schiavone, *Tale of Psyche*
(images courtesy of the Polo Museale Veneziano and Staatliche Museen, Kassel)
3.30-3.31 *De Picturis*, manuscript catalogue of Andrea Vendramin, f. 61-62
London, British Library, Sloane ms. 4004
(image source: Borenius, *Picture Gallery of Andrea Vendramin*, pl. 49-50)

3.32 Cat. no. 30, Bonifacio de’ Pitati and Workshop,
*Antiochus and Stratonice*
(image courtesy of the Museo Poldi Pezzoli, Milan)

3.33 Cat. no. 64, Jacopo Tintoretto, *Esther and Ahasuerus (Solomon and the Queen of Sheba?)*
(image source: Braham, *Princes Gate Collection*, 82)

3.34 *De Sacrificiorum et Triumphorum Vasculis*
(manuscript catalogue of antiquities belonging to Andrea Vendramin)
(image source: Brown, *Private Lives*, 239)
3.35-3.36 Palazzo Grimani at Santa Maria Formosa, Venice, entrance and water views (image sources: photo by the author; Favaretto and Ravagnan, *Lo Statuario Pubblico della Serenissima*, 46)

3.37-3.38 Tribuna of Palazzo Grimani and light falling from lantern windows (photos by the author)

3.40-3.43 Cat. no. 2, Giovanni Bellini, *Allegories: Melancholy, Truth, Bacchus, Envy* (images courtesy of the Polo Museale Veneziano)

3.44 Giovanni Bellini, *Madonna degli Alberetti*  
Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia  
(image source: Goffen and Nepi Scirè, *Il Colore Ritrovato*, 59)
3.45 Giorgione, *La Tempesta*  
(image source: Pignatti and Pedrocco, *Giorgione*)

3.46 Titian, *Virgin Suckling the Infant Christ*  
London, National Gallery  
(image source: Penny, *National Gallery Catalogues*, vol. 2, 269)

3.47-3.48 Jacopo Palma il Giovane and Workshop, *Prophet Nathan and King David*, and detail of brushwork  
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie  
(image courtesy of Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)
3.49-3.50  Cat. no. 40, Andrea Schiavone, *Jupiter and Callisto*, and detail of brushwork (images courtesy of the National Gallery, London)

3.51  *Lion of St. Mark*, Piazzetta, Venice  
(image source: Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, 19)

3.52-3.53  Late Hellenistic sculptor with restorations by Tullio Lombardo, *Muse of Philiskos*, and detail of restored areas  
Venice, Museo Archeologico  
(image source: Pincus, “Tullio Lombardo as a Restorer of Antiquities,” 30-31)

3.55-3.56 Cat. no. 51, Andrea Schiavone, *Tales of Aeneas* (images courtesy of Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

3.58-3.59 Cat. no. 45, Circle of Andrea Schiavone (Battista Agnolo del Moro?), *Venus and Cupid, Allegory of Music* (images courtesy of Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)
3.60-3.66 Cat. no. 58, Jacopo Tintoretto and assistants, *Biblical Tales* (images courtesy of Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)


3.68-3.71 Cat. no. 44, Circle of Andrea Schiavone, *Tales of Apollo* (images courtesy of Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)
3.72 Etching of the Stallburg gallery in Teniers, *Theatrum Pictorium* (1684) (image courtesy of Marquand Library, Princeton University)

3.73-3.74 David Teniers the Younger, *Gallery of Archduke Leopold Wilhelm*, and detail of *Infancy of Apollo* Schleissheim, Neue Schloss Schleissheim, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen (image source: Vegelin van Claerbergen, *David Teniers and the Theatre of Painting*, 64)
3.75-3.76 David Teniers the Younger, *Archduke Leopold Wilhelm in his Picture Gallery in Brussels*, and detail of *Tales of Aeneas* canted on left and right sides
Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado
(image source: Vegelin van Claerbergen, *David Teniers and the Theatre of Painting*, 75)

3.77 Teniers, *Theatrum Pictorium* (1684), frontispiece
(image courtesy of Marquand Library, Princeton University)
3.82-3.83 Etchings after *Tales of Aeneas*
Teniers, *Theatrum Pictorium* (1684), pl. 137, 135
(images courtesy of Marquand Library, Princeton University)

3.78-3.81 Etchings after *Tales of Apollo*
Teniers, *Theatrum Pictorium* (1684), pl. 132, 128, 126, 129
(images courtesy of Marquand Library, Princeton University)
3.84 David Teniers the Younger, *Aeneas Recalled from Dido (pasticcio after work of Schiavone)*
Private collection
(image source: Klinge, *David Teniers the Younger: Paintings, Drawings*, 291)

3.85-3.86 Illustration of the Stallburg Gallery installation, Vienna, showing the *Tales of Apollo*
Ferdinand Storffer, *Neu Eingerichetes Inventarium der Kayl. Bilder Gallerie in der Stallburg...,* vol. 2 (1730), 177-178, f. 43
(image courtesy of Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)
3.87 Image of the Stallburg Gallery installation, 1720-1728
Ferdinand Storffer, *Specification deren in dem Schwarzen Kabinett...* (1730)
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie
(image source: Belozerskaya, *Luxury Arts of the Renaissance*, 28)

3.88 Cat. no. 24, Lorenzo Lotto, *Allegory of Virtue and Vice* (image source: Brown et al., *Lorenzo Lotto*, 77)

3.89 Cat. no. 26, Lorenzo Lotto, *St. Jerome in the Desert* (image courtesy of the Réunion des Musées Nationaux)

3.90 Lorenzo Lotto, *Portrait of Bishop Bernardo de’ Rossi*
Naples, Museo di Capodimonte
(image source: Brown et al., *Lorenzo Lotto*, 75)
3.91 Cat. no. 70, Titian, *Christ and the Pharisee*  
(image courtesy of the Staatliche Kunstsammlungen Dresden)

3.92 Floor plan of the Royal Gallery of Dresden  
Carl Heinrich von Heinecken, *Recueil d’Estampes*, vol. 1 (1753), Dresden, Kupferstich-Kabinett  
(image source: Heres, *Dresdener Kunstsammlungen im 18. Jahrhundert*, 125)

3.93 View of the Dresden Gemäldegalerie, Inner Hall  
Dresden, Kupferstich-Kabinett  
3.94 Cat. no. 19, Giorgione, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*
(image courtesy of the Hermitage, St. Petersburg)

3.95 Toinette Larcher, Engraving of Giorgione’s *Judith*
*Recueil Crozat*, vol. 1 (1729), pl. 33
(image courtesy of Marquand Library, Princeton University)

3.96 Cat. no. 65, Circle of Jacopo Tintoretto (Lambert Sustris?), *Ordeal of Tuccia*
(image source: Humfrey et al., *The Age of Titian*, 154)

3.99 Hubert Robert, *Plan for the Grand Gallery of the Louvre*  
Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures  
(image source: Radisich, *Hubert Robert*, 131)
**Conclusion and Guide to the Catalogue**

This essay has outlined a genre of Venetian Renaissance paintings for decorative settings such as chests, beds, doors, friezes, *restelli*, and other types dating from circa 1465 to 1570. In addition to describing the innovative styles and subjects of these pieces and reconstructing their original physical and social contexts, the study has explored these works’ later fortunes. The pictures collected here testify both to the range of functions served by painting during the Renaissance, and to the redefinition of those functions in the sixteenth century and beyond.

Much of this research has focused on recovering extant examples of Venetian ornamental painting, undertaking technical examination where possible, reassembling dispersed cycles, discerning a typology of initial settings and subjects, and tracing provenance. The present essay is a starting point for a more synthetic thematic analysis incorporating further comparison and contrast. Workshop relationships and authorship constitute a related set of issues meriting deeper examination, as does the kinship of decorative pictures with canonical works of Venetian painting. These ongoing analyses will contribute to a fuller understanding of the place of ornamental traditions in a broader history of Venetian art during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The appended catalogue provides a case-by-case analysis of Venetian decorative paintings, with further attention to specifics of function, attribution, physical condition, iconography, style, and provenance. Due to time and space limitations, it has not been possible to list every surviving artifact. I have described and summarized a representative array of examples, in the hope of demonstrating the richness and variety of this genre as well as continuities among individual pieces. Some paintings are treated in detail while others are discussed very briefly, depending on the information available and the exemplary status of certain works.

The catalogue is organized alphabetically by artist and in approximate chronological order within artist, with the probable type of each ensemble (*cassa, fregio*, etc.) listed after the title, and illustrations immediately following each entry. While some pictures can be recognized as autograph, others clearly were conceived by followers, workshop assistants, or members of the circles of particular artists. The paintings fall into groups under the leadership of individual personalities, most notably Bellini, Mantegna, Cima, Carpaccio, Giorgione, Bonifacio, Titian,
Tintoretto, Schiavone, and Veronese. As noted in Chapters 1 and 3 above, an active demand for paintings “in the style of” recognized masters ensured that many paintings created in the ambit of famous workshops, but of uncertain authorship, appeared on the market. Attributions to “assistant” and “workshop” suggest the master’s involvement in design, supervision, and/or sale; they do not exclude the possibility of autograph execution. “Circle” and “follower” imply a more distant relationship, such as an independent painter working on speculation in imitation of a recognized personal style. I have generally followed scholarly consensus in these issues; except where noted, attributions concur with the sources cited in the selected bibliography of each entry. Where relevant, I have also noted some areas of debate. Overall, the catalogue is intended as a resource for future study of attribution and dating; by assembling the works as a group, I hope to shed light on these challenging issues. Also included are a small number of surviving, intact chests (cat. nos. 28, 78-81). Despite later structural interventions, these objects provide evidence about the likely appearance of Venetian decorative paintings in their original settings.
List of Artists and Paintings

Giovanni Bellini and Circle
1. Pagan Allegory
2. Allegories
3. Fortune
4. Continence of Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus
5. Tale of Thyrsis and Damon

Circle of Paris Bordone
6. Ovidian Tales

Vittore Carpaccio and Circle
7. Ladies on a Balcony, Hunting and Fishing on the Lagoon
8. Tale of Ceyx and Alcyone
9. Page and Nymphs in a Landscape

Cima da Conegliano and Circle
10. Tale of Theseus
11. Tale of Bacchus and Ariadne
13. The Judgment of Midas (Copenhagen)
14. Scene of Sacrifice
15. Duel on a Seashore
16. Scenes from the Life of Coriolanus
17. Woman Drinking, Funeral Fire

Giorgione and Circle
18. Trial of Moses, Judgment of Solomon
19. Judith with the Head of Holofernes
20. Pastoral Scenes
21. Maiden with a Unicorn
22. Landscape with Figures (Bergamo)
23. Landscape with Figures (Paris)

Lorenzo Lotto
24. Allegory of Virtue and Vice
25. A Maiden’s Dream
26. St. Jerome in the Desert

Andrea Mantegna, Giovanni Bellini and assistants
27. Introduction of the Cult of Cybele at Rome, Continence of Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus
Circle of Bartolomeo Montagna
28. Chest and pendant roundels: Duilius and Bilia, Tuccia with a Sieve, Claudia, Antiochus and Stratonice (?)

Bonifacio de’ Pitati and Circle
29. History of Rome
30. Antiochus and Stratonice
31. Birth of Hercules
32. Finding of Moses
33. Cimon and Iphigenia
34. Legend of the Infant Servius Tullius
35. Perseus and Andromeda
36. Biblical Scenes
37. Astrological Scenes
38. Birth of Venus

Giovanni Antonio da Pordenone
39. Satyr Family

Andrea Schiavone and Circle
40. Tale of Diana and Callisto
41. Story of Joseph
42. Apollo Flaying Marsyas (r.); Foliate Design (v.)
43. Apollo and Daphne
44. Tales of Apollo
45. Venus and Cupid, Allegory of Music
46. Priesthood (?), Force of Arms (?)
47. Midas and Pan (?)
48. Nessus and Deianeira
49. Rape of Europa
50. Narcissus
51. Tales of Aeneas
52. Tale of Psyche
53. Deucalion and Pyrrha, Judgment of Midas
54. History of Troy

Jacopo Tintoretto and Circle
55. Old Testament Scenes (Verona)
56. Ovidian Tales
57. Contest between Apollo and Marsyas (?)
58. Biblical Tales (Vienna)
59. Gaius Mucius Scaevola before Porsenna
60. Jupiter and Semele, Perseus and Andromeda
61. Allegory of Fall and Winter
62. Raising of the Golden Calf
63. St. Helena and the True Cross
64. Esther and Ahasuerus (Solomon and the Queen of Sheba?)
65. Ordeal of Tuccia
66. Story of Judith

Titian and Circle
67. Sleeping Shepherd
68. Orpheus and Eurydice
69. Tales of Apollo
70. Christ and the Pharisee
71. Birth of Adonis, Death of Polydorus/Tale of Erysichthon (?)
72. Mother with Suckling Infants
73. Lot and His Daughters
74. Venus and Adonis

Paolo Veronese and Circle
75. Story of Judith
76. Mythological Cycle
77. Story of Esther

Anonymous
78. Chest with Three Scenes from Roman History
79. Chest with Baptism of Christ with St. John the Baptist, Stigmatization of St. Francis
80. Chest with Scenes of Battle and Sacrifice
81. Chest with Romulus and Remus
Catalogue of Venetian Ornamental Paintings, ca. 1465-1570

Cat. no. 1
Circle of Giovanni Bellini
Pagan Allegory
Tempera on panel, 31 x 25 cm
Paris, private collection

Type: Restello (?)

An enigmatic poem in gold on black, this work may be the earliest surviving example of Venetian furniture painting, most likely the decoration of a restello or related object. In its size and antique cast, the panel is comparable to other early ornamental pictures (cat. nos. 2, 3), whose lyrical and classical subjects were first essayed by members of Bellini’s circle in furniture settings. (1) The panel has been dated as early as the 1460s, during the young Bellini’s association with manuscript illuminators such as Lauro Padovano. With its hatchings of gold against a dark, sceneless background, the painting resembles miniatures of this period; the color scheme also evokes the black and gold cherubim in the early polyptych of Saint Vincent Ferrer (ca. 1465; Venice, SS. Giovanni e Paolo). (2)

The picture almost surely once belonged to a set, containing multiple panels of related design, which might have elucidated its subject matter. Alone, however, the scene is cryptic: a man wearing a tunic and diadem, seated on a plinth, reaches forward to accept a palm branch and orb from a supplicant. The palm and orb are traditional Christian symbols, here reinstated as elements of antique ritual. In Mantegna’s later Introduction of the Cult of Cybele at Rome (cat. no. 27), the effigy of the mother goddess is likewise accompanied by an orb and cluster of laurel branches, signs of her veneration. The right-hand relief in Bellini’s Blood of the Redeemer includes a similar scene, a figure making an offering to a ruler who holds a scepter. In all three images, fealty and respect are formally expressed; the nature of the rite in the Pagan Allegory may be specifically cultural or artistic, a poet revering his Maecenas. A drawing, sometimes attributed to Bellini, depicting a seated man in classical drapes who holds an orb-like object (Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans-van Beuningen), suggests that artists in his circle experimented with the formal possibilities of classical subjects, much as did Jacopo Bellini in his sketchbooks. (3) Whoever its protagonists, the episode is no doubt related to the gleaming, jewel-like character of the painting itself, an object of distinguished exchange like the palm and orb it depicts. Perhaps the panel belonged to a gift, in which case its imagery of homage would have been especially pertinent.

DATING: ca. 1465-1475

NOTES:
(1) For the Pagan Allegory as a probable restello painting, Goffen, Giovanni Bellini, 224. The work’s fine execution also recalls Vincenzo Catena’s restello, a valuable artifact that he classified with his jewels and terracottas; see the discussion of restelli in Ch. 2 above.

(2) The panel was attributed to Giovanni Bellini by Longhi in 1927 (“Un Chiaroscuro e un
Disegno di Giovanni Bellini,” 134), subsequently appeared in the monographic exhibition of 1949 (Pallucchini, Mostra di Giovanni Bellini, 84-85), and in recent decades has been identified as an early work from the artist’s circle. Before Longhi, the painting had been attributed to Ercole de’ Roberti. Goffen identifies it as autograph and discusses its technique and relationship to early works of Bellini (Giovanni Bellini, 224, 321 n. 5). However, some authors do not discuss the work (Heinemann, Bellini e i Belliniani; Tempestini, Giovanni Bellini: Catalogo Completo). Robertson believes it to be a work of Lauro Padovano executed in Giovanni’s studio (Giovanni Bellini, 27). Dating has also been a subject of controversy: on the basis of similarities with the polyptych of St. Vincent Ferrer (generally dated to the 1460s, though its attribution is uncertain), Goffen argues for the late 1450s or early 1460s, while others prefer the 1470s. As Goffen notes, however, even a slightly later dating would place the Pagan Allegory in the vanguard of Venetian mythological painting (op. cit., 321 n. 5).

(3) Goffen notes that the orb and palm frond are familiar in Christian imagery, but are here given a different meaning, the latter “restored to its ancient usage as a sign or offering of peace” (Giovanni Bellini, 225). For the possibility of “an intellectual or cultural offering” as the painting’s subject, ibid., 225. The Pagan Allegory’s similarities with the Cult of Cybele and the reliefs in Blood of the Redeemer extend beyond subject matter to include technique, as all three works are painted in monochrome. The “relief style” of painting was generally associated with ancient subject matter, as evidenced by many of Mantegna’s works. For the Rotterdam drawing, Pallucchini, Mostra di Giovanni Bellini, 219; Robertson, Giovanni Bellini, 27; Lugt et al., Le Dessin Italien, cat. no. 29, pl. 27; Agosti and Thiébaut, Mantegna, 134-135.

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Longhi, “Un Chiaroscuro e un Disegno di Giovanni Bellini,” 134; Pallucchini, Mostra di Giovanni Bellini, 84-85; Berenson, Venetian School, vol. 1, 31; Pallucchini, Giovanni Bellini, 26; Robertson, Giovanni Bellini, 27, 48; Carritt, The Classical Ideal, 12-13; Goffen, Giovanni Bellini, 224-226; Goffen, “Bellini Archeologico,” 178; Brown, Venice and Antiquity, 195, 198; Agosti and Thiébaut, Mantegna, 134-135.

Cat. no. 1
Circle of Giovanni Bellini
Pagan Allegory
(image source: Brown, Venice and Antiquity, 198)
**Cat. no. 2**  
Giovanni Bellini  
*Allegories*  
Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia, inv. no. 595

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<td>a)</td>
<td><em>Melancholy</em></td>
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<td>Oil on panel, 33.7 x 21.5 cm</td>
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<td>c)</td>
<td><em>Bacchus</em></td>
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<td>Oil on panel, 32 x 21.5 cm</td>
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**Type: Restello**

In their history of north Italian painting, Crowe and Cavalcaselle first associated this suite with the *restello* mentioned in Vincenzo Catena’s will of 1525. Though likely not identical with his “*restello* of walnut with certain little figures inside, painted by the hand of M. Giovanni Bellini,” the panels almost certainly once belonged to an object of the same type. (1) They are composed of hardwood, probably beech; delicate and rarely found in picture supports from the Bellini workshop, this material is consistent with paintings belonging to a small piece of furniture. Two surviving Venetian *cofanetti* of the sixteenth century, for example, are made partially or wholly of beech (Figs. 1-2; both ca. 1570-1600; New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art). The Accademia panels’ original thickness, only 3-4 mm each, further suggests that they were precisely integrated into a fixed ensemble. One of the supports contains vestiges of *perni*, or pins, which would have been used as guides to insert the painting into a furniture setting. (2)

Various reconstructions of the original *restello* have been suggested. Ludwig proposes a type of large, secular altarpiece with a convex mirror at center, designed after funerary monuments such as that of Doge Niccolò Marcello at SS. Giovanni e Paolo (after 1474). Another reconstruction by Burckhardt places the panels side by side, as if decorating wainscoting or the front of a chest; the frames are separated by fluted pilasters. (3) Whatever their exact setting, the pictures’ likely placement can be inferred from their matching compositions. Two feature female protagonists, the other two male; two have rightward-moving action, the other two point leftward. All four panels are lit from the left. In the most intuitive arrangement, the pictures of females adorn the upper part of the *restello*, facing each other, with *Melancholy* to the left and *Truth* to the right, while the pictures of males appear below, *Bacchus* at left and *Envy* at right. The action converges at the center, as two panels with rightward-moving groups, *Melancholy* and *Bacchus*, occupy the left side, while those with leftward-pointing figures, *Truth* and *Envy*, appear at right. Such compositional solutions take on importance in light of the strong lateral movements depicted in these panels – a boat cutting through turbulent waters, a Bacchic procession led by muscular *putti* – which are unusual in the oeuvre of Bellini. (4)

Small and narrow, the pictures have a fragmentary appearance, and several episodes appear to be cropped at their right or left edges, an effect favored by Bellini in many of his works. Nearly all of the original paint barbes remain visible, indicating that the panels have never been cut down. (5) Perhaps the artist intended them to appear suggestively incomplete, enigmatic in their shadings of character and action. The pictures’ liminal, time-bound landscapes and repeating...
motifs – women, children, shells and other circular forms, and animals – convey themes related to change and the life cycle; alternatively, the ensemble could represent a contraposition of Virtue and Vice, or of Virtue and Fortune. However, such allusions are vague at best, and the group as a whole offers no obvious allegorical program. The backdrops of these scenes vary from bluish hills to turbid waters and earth-hued towns; briefly light-tinged clouds skirt Bellini’s skies, which are pervaded by the tones of rising or setting suns. The characters’ identities seem as changeful and inscrutable as these panoramas, varying with their movements of light, cloud, and air.

The image of *Melancholy*, named for its resemblance to works such as Albrecht Dürer’s engraving of *Melencolia I* (1514), depicts a woman in a shallow bark, gliding through a misty waterscape bordered by hills and shelves of rock. With eyes downcast, she balances a sphere on one knee, and shelters several *putti*; the child who makes a show of supporting her globe between his shoulder blades mimics the figure of Atlas. Perhaps this pilotless boat and its whimsical passengers allude to Inconstant Fortune, or to the aimless drifting of the melancholic spirit. The vessel also recalls the ship of fools theme, although Bellini’s protagonist looks not foolish but world-weary, burdened by hermetic knowledge. She has also been identified as Wisdom, Caritas, Venus Genitrix, and Fortuna Amoris. (6)

Parallel in theme, and probably appearing next to *Melancholy* in the paintings’ original setting, is *Truth*, a nude woman who stands in a niche and holds a mirror. Like *Melancholy*, she avoids the viewer’s glance, and is surrounded by children, who play pipes and drum. As noted in the discussion of Early Subjects in Ch. 1 above, the mirror may have been inspired by a famous lost painting, described by Bartolomeo Fazio, in which Jan van Eyck depicted a nude emerging from the bath and reflected in a mirror. (7) The image as a whole evokes a variety of themes, from Truth to Vanity and Prudence. At the Palazzo Ducale, two carved capitals depict allegorical figures holding *specchi* – one perhaps identifiable as Venus (Fig. 3; 19th century copy after work of 1340-1355), the other as Luxury (Fig. 4; 19th century copy after work of 1422-1442). The mirror was also often interpreted during the Renaissance as an instrument of Knowledge or Self-Knowledge, and belonged to the standard apparatus of the humanist’s study. With her gesture, Bellini’s lady could be commanding a learned spectator to scrutinize his character and actions. Equally, however, the motif could represent Self-Ignorance: the figure regarding himself in the mirror was sometimes known as “Nemo” or “Nobody,” personification of the contemporary proverb, “Nobody knows himself.” (8) Whatever its significance, the design certainly plays on the painting’s original setting in a *restello*, which would have framed a prominent mirror.

*Bacchus*, probably displayed below *Melancholy*, wears a garland and carries a dish of fruit, and his triumphal car is pulled by children. Perhaps this figure embodies Sloth, opposed to the muscular nude personifying Perseverance, Virtue, or Self-Denial; or, the panel may evoke sensuous revelry as the reward of the virtuous life. (9)

The last panel, called *Envy* for its resemblance to Giotto’s allegorical figure in the Scrovegni chapel, is perhaps the most enigmatic of the group. Two men carry an oversized sea snail shell, from which emerges a nude man entwined with a snake, at which he hisses. The scene has been interpreted as the personification of both vices, such as Envy, False Prophecy, or the Unmasking of Shame, and virtues, such Courage, Wisdom, Knowledge, or themes associated with life and
regeneration. (10) Evocative of the grotesques of northern artists, but transplanted to a gentler Italian clime, the scene exhibits the play of the painter’s poetic faculty. The shell of the sea snail, commonly called garuzolo, bulo de mar or barusola, was well known in Venice and available from the city’s fishmongers. Bellini’s use of this marine specimen in the realm of a painted fantasia anticipates Ascanio Condivi’s tale of the young Michelangelo, who sought to enliven his copy of Schongauer’s Temptation of St. Anthony by visiting the local fish market, where he found inspiration for “strange forms and monstrosities.” (11) In a similar manner, Bellini employs the garuzolo as a point of departure for a rich poetic invention. Most evident in this last, signed panel, the artist’s faculty of fantasia is manifest throughout the series, and might be identified as its true subject.

DATING: ca. 1485-1495

NOTES:
(1) Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Painting in North Italy, vol. 1, 166. For Catena’s will, describing the restello painted by Giovanni Bellini, see discussion of this genre in Ch. 2 above. The evidence linking the Accademia panels to the ensemble recorded by Catena is only circumstantial, and Bellini and his circle most likely executed multiple restello paintings. For further discussion of the Accademia panels and their content, see the section on Early Subjects in Ch. 1 above.

(2) I thank Pierpaolo Monfardini for discussion of the Accademia ensemble and for details of its configuration, including the presence of perni (February 2007). For the original hardwood supports, Monfardini, “Supporti Lignei e Sistemi di Struttura,” 171-172. Poplar was the preferred support for paintings in the Bellini workshop (Fletcher and Skipsey, “Death in Venice,” 5). For the Metropolitan Museum cofanetti and their wood content, Brown, Private Lives, 109-110, and Carboni et al., Venice and the Islamic World, 338-339. As noted in Ch. 3 above, at some point in the history of the Allegories, the thin hardwood panels were glued to thicker panels of fir; consequently, some evidence of the original arrangement has been lost. The presence of the second support has caused warping, necessitating restoration of two of the panels.

(3) For the first reconstruction, diagram and descriptions in Ludwig, “Venezianischer Hausrat,” 212-220. The second, horizontal arrangement is described in a photo composite in Burckhardt, Italian Renaissance Painting according to Genres, 30-31. Both Ludwig’s and Burckhardt’s reconstructions include the panel of Fortune (cat. no. 3), which is now thought to have belonged to a separate cycle. Some scholars propose another panel, now missing, that once completed the Accademia group (for this possibility, Heinemann, Bellini e i Belliniani, vol. 1, 73, and Pächt, Venetian Painting, 236).

(4) For this hypothetical reconstruction, Goffen, Giovanni Bellini, 228-231. For the movements depicted in Bellini’s panels, Pächt, Venetian Painting, 238. Pächt further notes that the inner unity of these compositions “is generally achieved by exactly the same means as on a Greek relief, that is to say, by the lead figure turning back in towards the centre: a segment of lateral movement thus becomes a balanced whole.” Other exceptions to Bellini’s tendency toward stationary compositions are several of the predella panels of the Pesaro altarpiece (ca. 1471-
1474; Pesaro, Musei Civici), and the two versions of the *Assassination of St. Peter Martyr* (ca. 1509; London, National Gallery and Courtauld Gallery). See Fletcher and Skipsey, “Death in Venice.”

(5) Barbes were observed along the edges of the paint surfaces of *Melancholy*, *Bacchus*, and *Envy*, but not of *Truth* (July 2010). Since *Truth* is of approximately equal dimensions to the other three panels, its barbes may be missing due to abrasion. I thank Charlotte Hale for her analysis of these paintings.

(6) Pächt notes the similarity of the globe-bearing *putto* to Atlas, and further suggests the theme of inconstant Fortune: “the crucial point here is the impression of volatility, the inconstant nature of the relationship between the figures and their surroundings: the boat will pass by, the landscape will remain...if one were to give the picture a title it would have to be: The globe of *Fortuna* passes by (or, approaches?)” (*Venetian Painting*, 239-240). Ludwig also suggests the overall theme of Luck or Inconstant Fortune (“Venezianischer Hausrat,” 222-224); others name the female figure “Sapienza Divinatrice,” while Wind argues for “Fortuna Amoris” or “Fortuna Caritatis” (*Bellini’s Feast of the Gods*, 48 n. 14). Goffen identifies the expressive faces of the *putti* with the theme of melancholy, and notes that the woman’s voyage “is uncontrolled and unguided, aimless like her musings” (*Giovanni Bellini*, 231). For a summary of interpretations, Symeonides, *Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century Paintings in the Accademia*, 122-127.

(7) Baxandall, *Giotto and the Orators*, 107; see also the section on Early Subjects in Ch. 1 above.


Fifteenth Century Paintings in the Accademia, 125; Marconi, Gallerie dell’Accademia, vol. 1, 72; and Nepi Scirè, Treasures of Venetian Painting, 82.


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(illustrations next page)
1-2. Cofanetti containing beech
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art
(image source: Carboni et al., *Venice and the Islamic World*, 246-247)

3-4. Venus (?) and Luxury, Capitals of the Palazzo Ducale (19th century copies), Venice
(photos by the author)

Cat. no. 2, Giovanni Bellini, *Allegories: Melancholy, Truth, Bacchus, Envy*
(images courtesy of the Polo Museale Veneziano)
**Cat. no. 3**  
Circle of Giovanni Bellini  
*Fortune*  
Oil on panel, 27 x 18.5 cm  
Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia, inv. no. 595

Type: *Restello*

This picture has often been associated with Bellini’s four small *Allegories* (cat. no. 2), and was apparently displayed along with them in the collection of Girolamo Contarini, who donated all five works to the city of Venice in 1838. However, conservation and stylistic evidence suggest a different genealogy for this panel. It is painted directly on fir, rather than the thin hardwood support attached to fir of the *Allegories*; its dimensions are smaller; and its subject, a solitary creature elevated before a landscape, is more laconic. As early as 1946, Longhi rejected the attribution to Giovanni Bellini; however, the panel has retained its association with the artist’s workshop, and some have attributed it to Andrea Previtali. (1)

The beast depicted here is a hybrid of a hybrid: her upper half resembles that of a harpy, conceivably inspired by an ancient relief depicting this fabled creature in the church of San Martino in Venice, while her lion’s paws evoke the body of a griffin or sphinx, as well as the symbol of St. Mark. (2) Blindfolded, with skirt and wings of fiery feathers, she grasps a golden amphora in each hand, and perches on a pair of spheres. Perhaps she is Fortune, who rolls blindly along, haphazardly dispensing her bounty. In Dante’s *Inferno*, Fortune is described misogynistically as a woman who holds the wealth of the world in her clawlike clutches. (3)

In composition, the picture also recalls a different character from the *Inferno*: Geryon, the image of fraud, who has the face of a man, the trunk of a serpent, and two hairy paws, and whose body is covered with extraordinary knots and circlets – “Tartars or Turks never made fabrics with more colors in ground and embroidery, nor were such webs laid by Arachne on the loom.” (4) Like Dante’s beast, the figure depicted here has fearsome paws, and wears a costume vying with the stuffs of Arachne, nature’s artist. Rather than an exact identification with Geryon, however, the picture suggests an analogy with Dante’s vocation. In conceiving his richly attired creature, the artist enjoys the imaginative license of the poet. The painter’s creative wanderings are equally manifest in the landscape, whose hills, mirrored lakes, jutting rock formations, and bluish peaks give way to an aqueous sky that darkens toward its upper reaches: a varied, mobile backdrop that looks forward to the atmospheric drama of Giorgione’s *Tempesta*.

**DATING:** ca. 1485-1500

**NOTES:**

(1) I thank Pierpaolo Monfardini for conservation information about this painting. For Contarini’s ownership of the Accademia panels, Marconi, *Gallerie dell’Accademia*, vol. 1, 72. Longhi claims that the panel “really has nothing in common with the poetics of the grand master [Bellini]” (*Viatico per Cinque Secoli di Pittura Veneziana*, 13). Bottai, Huse and Pignatti also reject the attribution to Bellini (for summary, Tempestini, *Giovanni Bellini: Catalogo Completo*,...
For the possible attribution to Andrea Previtali, Heinemann, *Bellini e i Belliniani*, vol. 1, 73. For the differing support, Goffen, *Giovanni Bellini*, 322 n. 13.

(2) For the relief in San Martino, Fletcher, “Harpies, Venus and Giovanni Bellini’s Classical Mirror,” 170.

(3) Dante, *Inferno*, VII.67-69. The figure has also been identified as *Summa Virtus*, a composite of cardinal and theological virtues (Heinemann, *Bellini e i Belliniani*, vol. 1, 73); Temperance (Ludwig, “Venezianischer Hausrat,” 242-247); and Nemesis, the “winged goddess of chance, retribution, and temperance,” as described in Alciati’s *Emblemata* of 1531 (Wind, *Bellini’s Feast of the Gods*, 49 n. 14). For summary of the various interpretations, Symeonides, *Fourteenth and Fifteenth Century Paintings in the Accademia*, 125, and Marconi, *Gallerie dell’Accademia*, vol. 1, 72.

(4) “…con più color, sommesse e sopraposte / non fer mai drappi Tartari nè Turchi, / nè fuor tai tele per Aragne imposte” (Dante, *Inferno*, XVII.16-18). Ludwig, by contrast, identifies this passage with the Envy of the Accademia *Allegories* (“Venezianischer Hausrat,” 232-233).

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cat. no. 3, Circle of Giovanni Bellini, *Fortune* (image courtesy of the Polo Museale Veneziano)
Cat. no. 4
Giovanni Bellini and assistants
*Continence of Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus*
Oil and tempera on canvas, 74.8 x 356.2 cm
Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, inv. no. 1952.2.7

See entry under Mantegna, *Introduction of the Cult of Cybele at Rome*, below (cat. no. 27).
**Cat. no. 5**  
Follower of Giovanni Bellini (Andrea Previtali?)

*Tale of Thyrsis and Damon*  
London, National Gallery

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a) *Damon Broods;*  

b) *Thyris Implores Damon; Thyris Takes His Life*  

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Inv. no. 4884.1  

Inv. no. 4884.2

Type: *Sportello* (?)

These small scenes narrate the death of a lovelorn shepherd among his native woods and pastures. Each of the two panels contains a pair of images, vertically stacked, measuring about 19.8 x 18.5 cm individually. They are surrounded by black borders painted along incised lines, which indicate that the configuration is original. The panels must once have hung side by side, their four installments reading from upper left to lower right. In this arrangement, the pictures most likely functioned as doors or covers of a cupboard or closet, though further technical study would be needed to confirm this setting. Another possibility is that the London paintings adorned the case of a musical instrument. If so, however, they would still have operated essentially as *sportelli,* perhaps shutters or covers protecting a portative organ or other small instrument. The picture reverses may have been exposed to the viewer and therefore painted, though there is no surviving evidence of such decoration on the panel backs today. (1)

The paintings were acquired for the National Gallery in the 1930s by Kenneth Clark, who argued vocally for the authorship of Giorgione or one of his close followers. After extensive debate, the attribution to Andrea Previtali gained support. (2) A native of Bergamo, Previtali travelled to Venice around the year 1500, probably to train with Giovanni Bellini. The *Thyris and Damon* panels are commensurate with Previtali’s fondness for sylvan landscapes, and bear clear similarities with the backdrops of his paintings of the Madonna and Child. Working against the attribution to Previtali, however, are the dearth of vernacular scenes in the rest of his œuvre, and the lack of a signature, for Previtali frequently identified his pictures with his name or initials. (3)

In the 1930s, Ernst Gombrich identified the text illuminated here as the second eclogue of the Ferrarese poet Antonio Tebaldeo (1463-1537), whose writings circulated throughout Italy at the turn of the sixteenth century. (4) In the first scene, Damon, bereft of his Amaryllis, sits in a clearing as his sheep graze. In the second, having retreated more deeply into the wilderness and discarded his instrument, Damon stares into the distance as his friend and fellow shepherd, Thyris, implores him to explain his sadness. Damon, however, rebuffs Thyris’s ministrations, breaks his instrument – visible in the third panel – and, having forgiven Amaryllis, plunges a sword into his chest. In the final scene of the poem, Thyris discovers Damon’s deed, gives his companion a natural interment, and declaims verses in his memory.

The eclogue of Thyris and Damon belonged to one of the best-selling collections of contemporary Italian poetry. Tebaldeo’s collected *Rime* appeared widely in manuscript before their first publication in Modena in 1498, and were reprinted numerous times. In the dedicatory
letter to the 1498 editio princeps, Tebaldeo’s editor and relative, Jacopo, expressed his intention to compile Antonio’s works into a standard “little volume” or volumetto. Many subsequent editions of Tebaldeo’s Rime were in fact volumetti, printed in formats as small as dodicesimo and sedicesimo. They were conceived on a scale analogous to that of the National Gallery panels, which would likewise have been seen at close range in private settings. (5)

DATING: ca. 1510

NOTES:
(1) For the panel supports and other technical information, Penny, National Gallery Catalogues, vol. 1, 291. In his article of 1937, “Four Giorgionesque Panels,” Clark suggested that the London paintings belonged to the case of a musical instrument (199); later, however, he wrote that they adorned “the doors of a small cupboard” (Landscape into Art, 115). Charles Bell referred to the paintings as sportelli in a November 1937 issue of The Times (Penny, op. cit., 297), and in a 1938 letter to the Burlington Magazine, George Martin Richter, too, described the panels as sportelli (“Four Giorgionesque Panels,” 33). More recently, Penny, following Clark, suggests the possibility of a musical instrument case (op. cit., 291). Peter Jeffery of the Princeton Department of Music suggests that the paintings might have decorated a pipe organ or other instrument with cabinet-like doors (communication of 27 January 2006).

(2) See Clark, “Four Giorgionesque Panels” (the title of this article is inaccurate, as the four scenes are distributed across only two panels), and responses in the Burlington Magazine: Borenius, “Four Giorgionesque Panels,” arguing for Palma Vecchio, and Richter, “Four Giorgionesque Panels,” suggesting the attribution to Previtali, which was then supported by Borenius. The debate is summarized by Davies (Earlier Italian Schools, 453-454), who follows Gould (Sixteenth-Century Venetian School, 70-71) in “ascribing” rather than directly attributing the panels to Previtali. Supporters of the attribution to Previtali include Longhi (Viatico per Cinque Secoli di Pittura Veneziana, 64); Morassi, who argues for Previtali “ad un suo momento estremamente giorgionesco” (Giorgione, 147); Meyer zur Capellen (Andrea Previtali, 147-148); and Zanchi (Andrea Previtali, 16). For further discussion of the controversy, Anderson, Giorgione, 261-262, and Penny, National Gallery Catalogues, vol. 1, 291-294, 295-298.

(3) The Thyrsis and Damon panels are most often compared with Previtali’s Virgin and Child in the Detroit Institute of Arts (1500-1505), whose landscape details are quite similar; Penny also sees the rendering of foliage and steep, screen-like hills in the National Gallery paintings as typical of Previtali (see Zanchi, Andrea Previtali, 16, and Penny, National Gallery Catalogues, vol. 1, 291-294). The only other vernacular works generally attributed to Previtali, the frescoes of the Trades, Crafts, and Professions in the Villa Suardi at Trascore Balneario, near Bergamo, do not share the London panels’ poetic and humanistic subject matter (see Meyer zur Capellen, Andrea Previtali, 156-158, and Zanchi, op. cit., 72). For the signatures on Previtali’s works, Ludwig, “Archivalische Beiträge zur Geschichte der Venezianischen Malerei” (1903), 57-60. For Previtali (ca. 1470-1528), his training in Venice, and his later contributions to painting in Bergamo, Noris, Dizionario Biografico dei Pittori Bergamaschi, 425-427, Zampetti et al., I Pittori Bergamaschi, 87-97, and Rossi, Bergamo, L’Altra Venezia, 104-145.

(5) For early print and manuscript versions of Tebaldeo’s *Rime*, Basile, *Per il Testo Critico delle Rime del Tebaldeo*, 26-43, 69-127. Jacopo Tebaldi’s dedicatory letter reads, “havendo io già vedute in varii luoghi disperse le opere de M. Antonio Thebaldeo mio cugino, le quale legendo mi erano più de fastidio che de piacere per colpa de chi le havea transcritte corrottamente, il che credo non habia meno offeso altri che me, ho più volte exhortato il prefato mio cugino a redurle in uno volumetto et correctamente stampate darle fuori per più comodità de chi lo ama et apreza le cose sue” (quoted ibid., 22).

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cat. no. 5, Follower of Giovanni Bellini, *Tale of Thyrsis and Damon: Damon Broods, Thyrsis Implores Damon, Damon Takes His Life, Thyrsis Discovers Damon’s Death* (images courtesy of the National Gallery, London)
Cat. no. 6
Circle of Paris Bordone

*Ovidian Tales*

a) *Diana and Callisto*
Oil on panel, 28.5 x 110 cm
New York, Piero Corsini (as of 1991)

b) *Four Nymphs in a Wood*
Oil on panel, 30.5 x 40.6 cm
Jacksonville, Cummer Museum of Art

c) *Diana as Huntress*
Oil on panel, 27.9 x 65.4 cm
Alexander City, Adelia M. Russell Library

d) *Calydonian Boar Hunt*
Oil on panel, 31 x 110 cm
Milan, Finarte (as of 1968)

Type: *Fregio* (?)

The relationship among these works was recognized by Dabell in his catalogue of Venetian paintings in the Piero Corsini collection. (1) The two longer panels, *Diana and Callisto* and the lost *Calydonian Boar Hunt*, depict closely related mythological episodes. The remaining fragments, *Four Nymphs* and *Diana as Huntress*, appear once to have belonged to a single oblong panel; allowing for about four centimeters of lateral trimming at the time of cutting, it would have matched the other members of the series in height and width. These three *fregio* paintings may initially have been accompanied by other, similarly proportioned panels depicting Ovidian scenes.

**DATING:** ca. 1545

**NOTE:**
(1) Dabell, *Piero Corsini: Venetian Paintings*, 36-41. I am grateful to Holly Keris at the Cummer Museum for conservation and provenance information about the *Four Nymphs*.

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**
**Cat. no. 7**
Vittore Carpaccio

a) *Ladies on a Balcony*
Oil and tempera on panel, 94.5 x 63.5 cm
Venice, Museo Civico Correr, inv. no. Cl. I n. 0046

b) *Hunting and Fishing on the Lagoon*
Oil and tempera on panel, 75.2 x 63.6 cm
Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum, inv. no. 79.PB.72

**Type: Sportello or shutter**

Among the best known of Venetian ornamental paintings, this ensemble has been identified as a one-time hinged door or shutter, probably the decoration of a small interior entranceway. Originally, the single, narrow panel, about 170 cm in height, depicted the ladies on a balcony below, and the view out to the lagoon above, with a single lily – held in a vase on the carved railing and continuing into the painting’s upper half – elegantly joining these disparate scenes. Since 1989, when the panels were first conclusively identified as a pair, they have undergone extensive analysis, revealing evidence of their early disposition. The first part of this entry provides a summary of material in the records of the Correr and Getty museums, and of the technical findings published in the catalogue, *Carpaccio, Bellini, Tura, Antonello* (1993), and in an article by Yvonne Szafran in the *Burlington Magazine* (1995). The panels benefited from additional study on the occasion of their reunion in the 1999 exhibition, *Renaissance Venice and the North*. (1)

*Hunting and Fishing on the Lagoon* retains the vestiges of an iron hinge, located on the upper left side of the reverse and attached to the panel with four nails, while across from it and slightly below, on the right side, appears an empty inset with two nails where another hinge was once located. *Ladies on a Balcony* contains similar notches for hinges, located in a staggered arrangement on the panel reverse’s left and right sides, 17.2 cm and 6.3 cm from the bottom edge respectively. The left-side notch once contained four nails, identical in disposition to those of *Hunting and Fishing*, while the right-side notch contained two. (2)

In addition to traces of hinges, both panels bear evidence of horizontal battens, which would have been used to support a swinging door or shutter. Two members of this type are illustrated on the study door in the left background of Carpaccio’s preparatory sketch for the *Vision of St. Augustine*: horizontal wooden strips, attached to the back of the door near its top and bottom edges (Figs. 1-2; ca. 1505; London, British Museum). The reverse of *Hunting and Fishing* exhibits an unpainted area along the top section (Fig. 4): as Szafran suggests, this region was probably covered with a wooden cleat or batten performing a similar function. (3) *Ladies on a Balcony*, meanwhile, displays two parallel horizontal areas marked with lacunae and nail fragments, where supporting bars were once attached. One runs at the level of the face of the younger lady, the other at the height of the growling dog. (4) Overall, then, the original painting may have been supported by as many as three battens, one at the upper edge, one at the lower, and one towards the center: further evidence for the panel’s practical use as a moveable leaf.
Because they show traces of hinges on both vertical edges, the panels probably did not swing free, but were hinged on either side. Most likely, they belonged to a bifold configuration anchoring them to a wall or doorframe along one edge, and to a second, now missing painted leaf on the other. The general arrangement would have consisted of two tall panels, hinged to each other, which could be folded and unfolded as a single unit, similar to the window shutters depicted in Carpaccio’s *Dream of St. Ursula* (Fig. 3). Indeed, evidence for the existence of a second, companion panel, attached to the first, is provided by an early copy of the original painting. This version is twice as wide, suggesting that only half of the original image survives. (5) Compositionally, as well, the scene of *Ladies on a Balcony* implies a pendant panel: the women look across the space, as if toward a missing area of the balcony, which probably contained the body of the dog whose head appears in the foreground.

In such a bifold assembly, the panels would have been anchored to a wall or doorframe on their extreme right end, as seen from the front, with the extreme left end swinging free. They probably decorated the entrance of a small study or other chamber: Szafran observes that the trompe l’oeil design on the reverse of *Hunting and Fishing* (Fig. 4) probably originally extended across the entire back surface of both panels, and would have been visible in the room’s interior when the door was closed. Carpaccio’s image of letters held in place by a band is appropriate for a studiolo, appearing as it does in many contemporary paintings of saints in such settings. (6)

Others argue that the painting adorned a cupboard or cabinet, and its spruce support is indeed suggestive of a component of furniture. (7) However, as Szafran notes, in this setting, the design on the reverse would have been concealed both when the door was closed and when the leaves were folded open. The same would have been true of window shutters, which were typically fixed open in a folded position. It is easier to suppose that the panels decorated the threshold of a room, for both designs would have been visible when the door was closed: the cartellini to the occupant of the study or other space, and the window scene to persons in the adjacent chamber. A related possibility is that the painting served as the door of a composite studiolo, functioning as both room and furniture, of the sort depicted in Antonello da Messina’s *St. Jerome in His Study* (ca. 1475; London, National Gallery). (8)

The imagery of this complex ensemble has long been a source of controversy. Once identified as courtesans or witches, the women seated on the balcony are now usually agreed to be Venetian ladies, juxtaposed with their husbands on the lagoon; the younger, blond figure may be a recent bride, as suggested by her pearl necklace. She sits between potted plants, a lily and a myrtle, often associated with purity and loyalty. However, some elements of the scene carry double meanings – the dove, for instance, is both the companion of Venus and a symbol of fidelity – and the luscious fruit on the balcony has been identified as the goddess of love’s golden apple. Perhaps the artist sought above all to depict the typical trappings and entertainments of a wealthy household, in which the opposing themes of uxorial virtue and illicit passion are interwoven. (9)

The upper scene has also been variably identified. Usually labelled a bird hunt, it actually appears to depict both fishing and fowling: the men are pursuing a variety of aquatic fauna. They have trapped small waterfowl, probably ducks, which are draped over the edges of the boats in the left foreground and deep left background. In addition, as Elfriede Knauer has
shown, the party is using trained cormorants to catch fish, a practice long known in China and
imported to the West during the Middle Ages. After the birds dive to trap fish in their gullets,
their masters use bows to pelt them with clay balls, prompting them to return to the boats and
deliver their catch. In the foreground, one hunter has just shot his bow, sending a terracotta ball
toward the head of the bird in the center. Several other cormorants are visible standing on the
boats, meaning that they themselves are not being hunted. (10) Such empirical detail must have
required careful observation of fishing and fowling practices on the Venetian lagoon, and a
concern to transcribe them correctly.

As discussed in the section on Patterns and Hierarchies of Content in Ch. 1 above, Carpaccio’s
ensemble constitutes an early example of a pure genre subject in Venetian Renaissance panel
painting, and draws on a rich ancient and medieval tradition of images of everyday life. The
female figures are faithfully observed portraits of the type of the Venetian gentlewoman: their
wide-necked gowns and pearls match the costumes of contemporary ladies, as documented in
Cesare Vecello’s later Degli Habiti Antichi et Moderni (1590), among other sources. (11) The
women also recall Albrecht Dürer’s drawing of a Venetian lady, completed during his stay in the
city in the 1490s (Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina). And their postures and diversions
further evoke manuscript paintings of noble pastimes. In the Grimani Breviary, the illumination
of the month of April depicts an outdoor gathering of gentlefolk, including a pair of ladies,
similar to those in Carpaccio’s painting, who sit and play with small lapdogs (Figs. 5-6; ca.
1500-1515; Venice, Biblioteca Marciana). (12) Other images in the same manuscript, depicting
hunting and fowling, bring to mind the scene of men on the lagoon. These affinities reveal the
origins of Carpaccio’s genre imagery in the tradition of painted books of hours.

Along with vernacular media such as sketches, manuscripts, paintings, and prints, popular comic
literature provides a foundation for Carpaccio’s painting. In the preface to the Decameron (ca.
1349-52), Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375) presents a similar account of the respective pastimes
of men and women. Gentlemen afflicted by heaviness of mood, he notes, “have many ways of
relief and diversion; they may go where they will, may hear and see many things, may fowl,
hunt, fish, ride, play or traffic.” By contrast, women are housebound and subject to melancholy:
“restrained by the will, the caprice, the commandment of fathers, mothers, brothers, and
husbands, confined most of their time within the narrow compass of their chambers, and resting
in vacant ease...they meditate diverse matters which cannot all be cheerful,” he writes. (13)
Carpaccio, likewise, portrays contrasting remedies for the melancholy of gentlemen and ladies:
husbands out in the open air, permitted to “fowl, hunt, fish, ride, play or traffic”; their wives
restricted to the balcony of the home. The bored stagnation and frustration of the ladies’
confined viewing platform – manifest in their empty stares, the restless child, and the pent-up
dog biting at its leash – contrast with the dynamic scene in which their male counterparts
participate – birds flying, clouds shifting, boats cutting the surface of the lagoon. The women’s
state of mind is further suggested by their likeness to the female figure of Melancholy, who is
frequently depicted in the company of a dog, and wearing an expression of ennui and world-
weariness. (14) Far from enthralled spectators, these women are indifferent to and removed from
the panorama behind them, further underscoring the dichotomy established in Boccaccio’s
preface.
Part anthropological, part fictional, part rhetorical, the imagery of *Ladies on a Balcony* and *Hunting and Fishing on the Lagoon* is as intricate as the physical remains of the panels themselves. Taken as a whole, the visual and technical evidence reveals an unprecedented work of imaginative art whose novel subject matter was made possible by its original decorative setting.

**DATING:** ca. 1490-1500

**NOTES:**
(1) I am grateful to Scott Allan of the Getty Museum and Marta Minelli of the Museo Civico Correr for conservation and research information on the two fragments. The relationship between the pictures was proposed in 1963 by Giles Robertson (Review of Lauts, *Carpaccio, Paintings and Drawings*, 158) and Carlo Ragghianti (“L’Architettura Musicale del Carpaccio,” 26); subsequently rejected (Robertson, “The Carpaccio Exhibition at Venice,” 389); and later reaffirmed in Dorigato, *Carpaccio, Bellini, Tura, Antonello*, 74-81, 177-185, after the discovery in 1989 that the wood grains of the two panels are identical. It was also determined that the wood of both panels is vertically edge-joined in the same position. See Szafran, “Carpaccio’s ‘Hunting on the Lagoon,’” 148 n. 1, 149 n. 4, 152, 158. For the first modern reunion of the two panels at Palazzo Grassi in Venice in 1999, see Aikema et al., *Renaissance Venice and the North*, 236-239. The paintings’ subject, original setting, and later provenance are also discussed in Chs. 1, 2, and 3 above, respectively.

(2) Szafran, “Carpaccio’s ‘Hunting on the Lagoon,’” 150-152; Dorigato, *Carpaccio, Bellini, Tura, Antonello*, 177-179. The lower right corner of *Hunting and Fishing*, as seen from the front, also contains the remains of a metal staple, which may once have functioned as a closing latch (Szafran, op. cit., 152).


(5) The copy, measuring 115.4 x 120.5 cm, is now lost (Szafran, “Carpaccio’s ‘Hunting on the Lagoon,’” 158). It is discussed (but not illustrated) by Fiocco, “Postille al mio Carpaccio,” 229.

(6) Szafran, “Carpaccio’s ‘Hunting on the Lagoon,’” 150, 158. The *trompe l’oeil* image is not visible on the reverse of *Ladies on a Balcony*, as that panel has been planed down and cradled (ibid., 152; Dorigato, *Carpaccio, Bellini, Tura, Antonello*, 177).

(7) Lauts suggests the possibility of a cupboard door decoration (*Carpaccio*, 248), and Cohen proposes that the painting belonged to a piece of domestic furniture intended as a wedding gift (“The Enigma of Carpaccio’s *Venetian Ladies*,” 181-182).

(8) Szafran, “Carpaccio’s ‘Hunting on the Lagoon,’” 157-158.
(9) Interpretation is further complicated by the fact that the artist made some *pentimenti*, including the substitution of the peahen for a partridge, suggesting that there was perhaps no rigid symbolic program behind the choice of animals. For interpretations of the women as courtesans, Molmenti and Ludwig, *Carpaccio*, 210-211, and Santore, “The Fruits of Venus.” For the history of debate on the subject, Polignano, “Maliarde e Cortigiane,” and Cohen, “The Enigma of Carpaccio’s *Venetian Ladies*.” The scene’s dual symbolism is discussed by Brown, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice*, 130-132.

(10) Knauer, “Fishing with Cormorants,” and Smith, “Carpaccio’s *Hunt in the Lagoon,*” 240. Knauer identifies the dead creatures draped over the edges of the boats as fish (op. cit., 33), but they clearly have beaks and are birds of some sort, indicating that the men are hunting as well as fishing.


(12) For the illumination of the month of April in the Grimani Breviary, Venice, Biblioteca Marciana, Cod. Lat. I, 99 (=2138), f. 4v. See Leporace, *Il Calendario del Breviario Grimani* (np), and Dorigato, *Carpaccio, Bellini, Tura, Antonello*, 75-77.


SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Cat. no. 7, Vittore Carpaccio, *Ladies on a Balcony, Hunting and Fishing on the Lagoon* (image source: Sgarbi, *Carpaccio*, 102)

1-2. Vittore Carpaccio, Preparatory drawing for *The Vision of St. Augustine*, and detail of door with horizontal supporting battens
London, British Museum
(image source: Tietze and Tietze-Conrat, *Drawings of the Venetian Painters*, 153, Pl. XXI)

Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia
(image source: Sgarbi, *Carpaccio*, 75)
4. Vittore Carpaccio, *Hunting and Fishing on the Lagoon*, reverse, showing trompe l’oeil design and blank space for batten at the top of the panel.
(image source: Sgarbi, *Carpaccio*, 100)

5-6. Grimani Breviary, illumination of the month of April, and detail
Venice, Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Cod. Lat. I, 99 (=2138), f. 4v.
(image source: Leporace, *Il Calendario del Breviario Grimani*)
Cat. no. 8  
Vittore Carpaccio  
*Tale of Ceyx and Alcyone*

**a) Departure of Ceyx**  
Oil on panel, 74.9 x 88.9 cm  
London, National Gallery, inv. no. 3085

**b) Metamorphosis of Alcyone**  
Oil on panel, 69.5 x 125.9 cm  
Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art, inv. no. 173

*Type: Spalliera*

The two panels, narrating a neglected tale from the *Metamorphoses*, most likely descend from a *spalliera* arrangement similar to the Florentine type of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In the first scene, King Ceyx sets out on a treacherous journey by sea to visit an oracle. His wife, Alcyone, “frightened, chilled to the bone, her face…pale as boxwood,” kneels before him, beseeching him not to undertake such a dangerous voyage (XI.416-418). Along the bottom edge of the painting runs a ledge decorated with two slips of paper and a small bird, providing a visual entranceway into this scene of leavetaking. The work is related to a preparatory drawing in the Hermitage, depicting the woman standing to Alcyone’s left with her hand extended. The same sketch includes a study for another ornamental painting from the circle of Carpaccio, the *Page in a Landscape* (see Fig. 1 in cat. no. 9 below). (1)

The second, much-abraded panel depicts the realization of Alcyone’s fears: Ceyx has died in a violent storm at sea, and his body floats toward the shore. His wife, having received the news through a dream sent by the goddess Juno, springs toward her husband. She will never fall, but instead take to the air as “a bird on new-found wings” (XI.731-33). She leans forward in an aerodynamic pose, her hands already white-tipped feathers. At the painting’s left edge, the couple reunites as kingfishers, or halcyons, named for Alcyone. The two surviving panels were probably joined by at least one other segment, now lost, depicting the storm during which Ceyx meets his fate. This sequence is suggested by the 1497 printed edition of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, which illustrates three scenes from the story: the king’s departure, the storm, and the return of Ceyx’s body. (2)

Several clues point to the original cycle’s probable use as a domestic *spalliera* decoration. Significantly taller and squarer in shape than standard Venetian frieze pictures, the panels are similar in proportions to Florentine *spalliera* paintings. Their common subject, format, and source material imply a single narrative series, whose intuitive location would have been the upper portions of a wall; the paintings may have been attached to a built-in bench or wainscot. (3) The inclusion of a fictive plinth in the *Departure of Ceyx* is another sign. Most likely, all three pictures included at their lower margins a similar painted ledge, forming a single horizontal unifying device. Although this detail is now missing from the *Metamorphosis*, the panel is also about five centimeters shorter in height than the *Departure*; it must once have contained an element of this type, which was cropped when the work was separated from other members of the series. (4) The illusionistic plinth strongly suggests that the pictures hung as *spalliere*, since many Venetians hung an actual running ledge at shoulder height in their homes, similar to the detail on the left wall of Carpaccio’s *Vision of St. Augustine*. The scenes would have artfully
replaced the traditional shelving of a Venetian domestic interior with a *trompe l’oeil* sill opening out on to a mythological landscape.

Another clue to the works’ setting is their relationship with Carpaccio’s paintings for Venetian confraternities, which are known to have hung as *spalliere*. Although the *Ceyx and Alcyone* panels are much smaller than these religious cycles, and painted on wood rather than canvas, they are derivative of the *scuole* pictures in other respects. Carpaccio borrowed many elements from his narratives in the confraternity of St. Ursula (ca. 1490-1500; Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia). Alcyone’s posture of supplication, kneeling before Ceyx, is drawn from the figure of Ursula, first kneeling before her father as she prepares to depart with her betrothed, later paying her respects to Pope Cyriacus outside the walls of Rome. Other affinities include the moored ships and elaborately draped smaller boats in the harbor of the *Departure of the Betrothed Pair* and *Departure of Ceyx*, as well as the depiction of well-wishers arrayed at the shore in both narratives. The similarities suggest that Carpaccio employed the same preparatory drawings for parts of the two cycles.

In fact, the two stories, however disparate in origin, lend themselves to similar visual treatments. Both tales hinge on arrivals, departures, and treacherous voyages, and both contain dreams foretelling doom. In the tale of St. Ursula, the princess and her betrothed, the Prince of England, journey with an entourage of virgins to Rome and Cologne, where, in a tragedy prophesied by Ursula’s dream, they are massacred. (5) In choosing a subject for a domestic mythological narrative, a reduced version of the confraternity cycle, the artist or his patron must have looked for a story comparable to this tale of arrivals, departures, vows, and tragic journeys. For the decoration of the family home of a seafaring Venetian, Ovid’s tale of travel and its spiritual and natural dangers would have been a natural choice.

**DATING:** ca. 1497-1500

**NOTES:**

(1) Sgarbi, by contrast, suggests that the *Ceyx and Alcyone* pictures originally adorned a nuptial chest (*Carpaccio* (trans. Hyams), 106); however, their size and arrangement, as discussed here, are more typical of *spalliere*. For the genre of *spalliera* painting in Tuscany, see the discussion of this genre in Ch. 2 above. For the *cartellini* in the *Departure of Ceyx* and their relationship to such details in other Venetian paintings of this period, Matthew, “The Painter’s Presence,” 634, 646 n. 72. For the Hermitage preparatory drawing, Lauts, *Carpaccio*, pl. 80, and Tietze and Tietze-Conrat, *Drawings of the Venetian Painters* (1970), vol. 1, 152. I am grateful to Jennifer Vanim of the Philadelphia Museum of Art for information on the *Metamorphosis of Alcyone*.

(2) Pokorny, “Carpaccio’s Alcyone Cycle,” 421. Pokorny believes that the printed illustration is a copy and simplification of Carpaccio’s cycle, which he then dates between 1495-1497. Here, I propose that Carpaccio borrowed the story of Ceyx and Alcyone from the 1497 edition of Ovid but transformed it creatively into a domestic allegory of love and fidelity.

(3) As noted in the discussion of *spalliera* paintings in Ch. 2 above, the 1576 inventory of Gasparo Segizzi’s home in the parish of San Barnaba lists simple red benches: “quattro panche di abete dipinte di rosso disposte lungo i muri” in the portego (Palumbo-Fossati, “L’Interno della
Casa dell’Artigiano,” 138-139). This is the type of furniture over which spalliera paintings could have hung.

(4) The three pictures would have shared a height of about 75 centimeters, appropriate for a domestic spalliera cycle (for typical dimensions of such paintings, Barriault, Spalliera Paintings, 57-58). The Departure of Ceyx, now only 88.9 cm long horizontally, may have been cut down along one edge.


SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Perkins, “Piture Italiane nella Raccolta Johnson,” 131; Molmenti and Ludwig, Carpaccio, 200; Grant, “Mr. John G. Johnson’s Collection of Pictures in Philadelphia,” 8, 11; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Painting in North Italy, vol. 1, 212, 214 n. 1; Berenson, Venetian Painting in America, 157; Schubring, “Cassone Pictures in America,” 241; Schubring, Cassoni, 392-393; Berenson, Venetian School, vol. 1, 57, 58; Perocco, Tutta la Pittura del Carpaccio, 55-56; Davies, Earlier Italian Schools, 134-135; Lauts, Carpaccio, 244-245, 247; Zampetti, Carpaccio (1963), 214-216; Muraro, Carpaccio, 93, cxxxiv-cxxxvii; Pokorny, “Carpaccio’s Alcyone Cycle”; Zampetti, Carpaccio (1966), 68; Perocco, L’Opera Completa del Carpaccio, 95-96; Humfrey, Carpaccio, 93-94; Scott et al., Paintings from Europe and the Americas, 186; Sgarbi (trans. Hyams), Carpaccio, 106-109, 207; Baker and Henry, National Gallery, 97.

Cat. no. 8, Vittore Carpaccio, Tale of Ceyx and Alcyone: Departure of Ceyx, Metamorphosis of Alcyone (images courtesy of the National Gallery, London, and Philadelphia Museum of Art)
Cat. no. 9
Circle of Vittore Carpaccio
Page and Nymphs in a Landscape

a) Page
Oil on panel, 13.2 x 27.6 cm
Bergamo, Accademia Carrara, inv. no. 1645

b) Nymph
Oil on panel, 13 x 28 cm
New York, Knoedler (as of 1994)

c) Nymph
Oil on panel, 13 x 28 cm
New York, Knoedler (as of 1994)

Type: Cassa

This early portrayal of a youth in colloquy with mysterious nymphs anticipates pastoral paintings of the Venetian tradition. Attribution to the circle of Carpaccio was certified by the discovery of a drawing in the Hermitage (Fig. 1), in which the figure of the page appears next to a study for another ornamental work by the artist, the Departure of Ceyx (cat. no. 8). (1) Framed end-to-end, the panels would have decorated the front of a chest approximately 100 cm long. The Page’s panel support is composed of a hard walnut or oak, only 0.5 to 0.6 cm in width, appropriate for furniture decoration. Its picture field is surrounded by a dark-green border, which may have been added to fit the panel into the aperture of a chest. (2) The Page must originally have appeared at the center, with the two Nymphs facing him. At some stage, the panels underwent repainting, including the addition of the feather in the page’s cap.

The characters’ attributes and identities are uncertain: the cornucopias held by the nymphs, for instance, might symbolize Ceres, Abundance, Autumn, Peace, or Fortune. Sgarbi has proposed the theme of Hercules at the Crossroads, choosing between Virtue – the nymph holding a staff in her right hand and a cornucopia in her left, as per Cesare Ripa’s description – and Vice, who holds only a cornucopia. However, the women appear too alike to merit such a distinction, and the landscapes they occupy are not allegorically differentiated, as is typical of this theme. (3) Rather than depicting specific characters, the paintings may allude to the lovesick wanderers of pastoral poetry. The speaker of Petrarch’s sonnet 35 traverses deserted fields, fleeing human footprints, only to be accompanied by Love to the most trackless landscapes; the poet’s canzone 129 evokes journeys by foot among “high mountains and harsh woods.” In a related canzone, Pietro Bembo records the lament of a heartbroken itinerant who scales the hills and his miseries, searching in vain for his love. (4) Perhaps the nymphs in these panels are visions of the youth’s beloved, whom he both pursues and flees. Similar figures appear in Bembo’s Gli Asolani and Sannazaro’s Arcadia, and may have provided inspiration for the enigmatic characters portrayed here.

DATING: ca. 1500-1505

NOTES:

(2) For the supports, Lucco, “Il Giudizio di Paride,” 3.

(3) Sgarbi proposes Hercules at the Crossroads (Carpaccio (trans. Hyams), 216-217). For the symbolism of the cornucopia, Hall, Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols, 75.


SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Zampetti, Giorgione e i Giorgioneschi, 8-9; Lauts, Carpaccio, 238, 270; Muraro, Carpaccio, cxxxvii-cxxxix; Perocco, L’Opera Completa del Carpaccio, 102; Zampetti and Gould, Complete Paintings of Giorgione, 98; Tschmelitsch, Zorzo, genannt Giorgione, 81-82; Sgarbi (trans. Hyams), Carpaccio, 216-217; Anderson, Giorgione, 322; Lucco, “Il Giudizio di Paride”; Gregori, In the Light of Apollo, vol. 1, 511.
**Cat. no. 10**  
Cima da Conegliano  
*Tale of Theseus*  

*a) Theseus at the Court of Minos*  
Tempera on panel, 36.8 x 88 cm  
Zurich, private collection  

*b) Theseus Slays the Minotaur*  
Tempera on panel, 38.5 x 31 cm  
Milan, Brera, inv. no. 1013 (on deposit at Milan, Museo Poldi Pezzoli)

Type: *Cassa*

The longer segment, likely intended to decorate the front of a chest, depicts the arrival of the hero Theseus at the court of King Minos. In the middle distance, Ariadne stands at a window of the palace, dropping the hero a ball of thread. Theseus appears again in the foreground, kneeling before the king beneath a portico. Soldiers stand in the tiled plaza, and the palace complex in the background displays a mixture of classical arcades, medieval fortifications, and fanciful marble facings. The right and upper edges of this panel appear to have been trimmed. (1) The smaller panel, flanking the main scene or adorning a lateral end of the chest, may have been accompanied by a similarly sized pendant on the opposite side. It depicts a cutaway scene of the center of the labyrinth, where Theseus prepares to slay the Minotaur. The beast bleeds at his neck and torso, but the overall atmosphere remains curiously calm, anticipating the mood of Giovanni Bellini’s late mythologies.

For the Theseus story, Cima likely drew on Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* (VIII.169-174), and possibly on Plutarch’s biography. In some respects, however, the artist departed from the symbolism set down in literary sources. For example, the Minotaur does not resemble the bull-headed monster of tradition. Instead, he is an innocuous centaur, perhaps inspired by the creature in the background of Bellini’s *Sacred Allegory* (ca. 1488; Florence, Uffizi). The same discrepancy appears in an ornamental painting from the circle of Lorenzo Costa, as well as in a painted illustration of Plutarch’s life of Theseus, attributed to Benedetto Bordon. (2) During the Renaissance, the minotaur and the centaur were often treated as cognates, appearing together, for instance, in the twelfth canto of Dante’s *Inferno*. Cima’s conflation of the two creatures, as well as his interpretation of the Theseus story as a whole, reveal concern for the spirit rather than the letter of the antique tale.

**DATING:** ca. 1495-1497

**NOTES:**  
(1) Humfrey, *Cima da Conegliano*, 167-168. I thank Andrea Di Lorenzo for access to and information about *Theseus Slays the Minotaur*, and Johanna Heinrichs for discussing the symbolism of this ensemble. For further discussion of this cycle’s subject matter and original setting, see the discussions of Early Subjects in Ch. 1, and Chests and Boxes in Ch. 2. Dated ca. 1495-1497 by Humfrey (*Cima da Conegliano*, 125), the cycle has most recently been placed ca. 1497 by Binotto on the basis of similarities with the *Ovidio Metamorphoseos Vulgare* of that year, though it is not clear that Cima directly drew on this text or its illustrations (Villa, *Cima da

(2) The fragment of furniture decoration (Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts), attributed to a follower of Lorenzo Costa, depicts a similar encounter between Theseus and a centaur-like minotaur (Tátrai, “Brefs Commentaires sur Six Tableaux Italiens,” 33-35; I thank Peter Humfrey for this reference). The hand-illustrated incunabulum of a Latin edition of Plutarch’s life of Theseus, attributed to Benedetto Bordon, also depicts the minotaur as a centaur (ca. 1500; Florence, Biblioteca Laurenziana, Inc. I, 7/I, f. 1r.; see Bauer-Eberhardt, “Cima, Benedetto Bordon e il Maestro delle Sette Virtù,” 121, and Gregori, *In the Light of Apollo*, vol. 1, 431).

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cat. no. 11
Cima da Conegliano
Tale of Bacchus and Ariadne

a) *Bacchus and Ariadne*
Tempera on panel, 28 x 69.5 cm
Milan, Museo Poldi Pezzoli, inv. no. 1596/686

b) *Silenus Riding an Ass and Satyrs*
Tempera on panel, 31 x 41.3 cm
Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art, inv. no. 177

c) *Bacchant*
Tempera on panel, 24 x 19.5 cm
Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art, inv. no. 178

d) *Bacchic Faun*
Tempera on panel, 20.8 x 11.2 cm
Paris, private collection

Type: *Cassa*

As discussed in the section on Early Subjects in Ch. 1 above, Cima’s panels present a refined example of a complete *cassa* ensemble illuminating a mythological narrative. Although the tale is continuous with the story of Theseus, as depicted by the artist in another ornamental cycle (cat. no. 10), the two groups differ in handling and have been dated about a decade apart. (1) All the fragments of the *Bacchus and Ariadne* group have undergone substantial alterations, consistent with paintings detached from a *cassa*. At some point, the central image of the wine god and his maiden was cut close to the forms of the end figures, and inserts of painted wood were later added to restore a rectangular shape. The Philadelphia *Bacchant* shows panel losses on the right edge, while the Paris *Faun* has been reduced to an oval pendant; its dimensions likely originally matched those of the *Bacchant*. *Silenus and Satyrs* shows less overall loss than the remaining panels, although some paint cleavage and cut and restored areas are evident. (2)

As noted in the section on Chests and Boxes in Ch. 2 above, the long segment portraying Bacchus and Ariadne probably appeared to the right of the image of Silenus, who headed up the procession on the front of the chest; the individual figures of the satyr and bacchant decorated its lateral ends. Humfrey, however, proposes a reconstruction involving a pair of chest fronts, one containing the single panel displaying Bacchus and Ariadne in their car, the other a composite of the three remaining fragments depicting Silenus and his entourage. (3) Whatever their original configuration, the panels were no doubt painted for a single impressive program, forebear of the monumental Venetian bacchanals of the sixteenth century.

DATING: ca. 1505-1510

NOTES:
(1) Humfrey, “Two Fragments from a Theseus Cassone by Cima,” 477. I thank Andrea Di Lorenzo of the Museo Poldi Pezzoli and Jennifer Vanim of the Philadelphia Museum of Art for access to and information about this cycle.

(2) Conservation dossiers, Museo Poldi Pezzoli and Philadelphia Museum of Art. The works appear to have been painted primarily in tempera, although a Philadelphia Museum catalogue and some conservation notes list the medium of panels (b) and (c) as oil (Scott et al., *Paintings from Europe and the Americas*, 187).


SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
**Cat. no. 12**  
Cima da Conegliano  
Parma, Galleria Nazionale

a) *Endymion Asleep*  
b) *The Judgment of Midas*

Oil on panel, 24.8 x 25.4 cm  
Oil on panel, 24.6 x 25.5 cm

Inv. no. 370  
Inv. no. 373

_Type: Cassa_

These *tondi* depict kindred spirits of antique mythology: Endymion, the slumbering youth who is loved by the moon-goddess Selene, and Midas, the king who witnesses the musical contest between Apollo and Pan. The naïve manner in which the figures are portrayed is consonant with their childlike foolishness – Endymion’s wish for eternal youth, Midas’s errant aesthetic judgment – which leads them finally into commerce with the animal world – Endymion consigned to hibernate with the beasts of the forest, Midas to wear the ears of the ass.

Both works treat the subject of divinity manifest in nature: Selene takes the form of a delicate crescent moon, whose light, rising like mist, bathes the slumbering youth; while in the pendant scene, the mountain god Timolus appears not in person, but rather implicitly in the distant slope behind the figures’ heads. (1) The same theme of a deity revealed in the natural world emerges in the pairing of Selene, the lunar goddess, with Apollo, god of the sun. They appear in matching elysian landscapes, and a single creek trickles through the backgrounds of both scenes.

*Endymion* displays a fine, miniaturist’s technique, particularly in the fur of the animals, the grasses, and the flower lapping over the young boy’s ankle. He appears much as described by Lucian in the *Dialogues of the Gods*, having “spread out his cloak...the right arm bent upwards, making a bright frame to the face, and breathing softly in helpless slumber.” He does not hold a javelin, as Lucian reports, but is dressed as a knight, in a blue garment covered with a red cloak, matching the colors of Midas’s costume in the pendant panel. The motif of a sleeping youth in the garb of a soldier evokes Raphael’s *Allegory*, or *Dream of Scipio*, of the same decade (London, National Gallery). (2)

As early as the fourteenth century, Selene and Endymion enjoyed a renaissance among vernacular poets. In a _canzone_, Petrarch wishes to be “with the lover of the moon / fallen asleep somewhere in a green woods,” where his own beloved might visit him. In Sannazzaro’s _Arcadia_ (first published in an unauthorized edition of 1502), Endymion is described in the ekphrasis of a painting above the entrance of a temple, sleeping with his goats while the moon trains her serene gaze on him. The youth is also the title character of _Endimione_, a collection published in 1506 by the Neapolitan court poet Chariteo. In this long series of sonnets and _canzoni_, Chariteo describes the hopeless love of a young man for a lady, Luna, who, like the moon, is white, cold, and chaste: “...my Luna, intent on my torment, who beneath the moving shadows of the wind displays her various and beautiful brilliance.” (3) In these works, the youth is understood as the quintessential type of the poet, eternally enamoured of beauty – predecessor to the poet-hero of Keats’s *Endymion*. 
The *Judgment of Midas*, treating the theme of music, supplies a fitting complement to Endymion’s tale of love and poetry. It, too, is carefully executed with a variety of pigments, including ultramarine. The partially nude Apollo appears in the classical pose of the *ponderatio*, inspired by Polyclitus, while the overall arrangement of the figures may have been inspired by a contemporary plaquette depicting Orpheus and Eurydice. Analysis of *Midas*’s underdrawing with infrared reflectography reveals that the artist changed the position of Apollo’s bowing arm, which at first was planned to point toward the bridge of the instrument. Perhaps the difference is that in the final version, Apollo actively plays his *lira da braccio*, while originally he would have been resting the bow. In an inverse *pentimento*, the painter of the *Fête Champêtre* altered the position of the lutenist’s hands from a playing to a rest position. Such changes reveal that artists in Cinquecento Venice thought seriously about how to depict music, deliberating, paradoxically, over whether a painted instrument would issue sound.

Both *Endymion* and *Midas* are executed on extremely thin poplar panels, and display a substantial apron of exposed wood around the painted areas; this indicates that the round shape was original, with space left for insertion into a framing device. Their present-day rectangular frames were constructed in the nineteenth century. The roundels most likely once decorated the front of a chest, such as the one now preserved at the Museo Poldi Pezzoli (cat. no. 28). Their size, shape, and subject matter are consistent with pictures for an early setting of this type, and they compare closely with other examples of decorative painting from Cima’s circle (cat. nos. 10, 11). It has been proposed that the panels originally belonged to a set of at least three *tondi*, including one depicting Orpheus, who appears in a pounced drawing attributed to Cima in the Uffizi. Surviving chests of this type contain only two roundels, and the subjects of Endymion and Midas form a natural set; if there was an additional *tondo*, it probably belonged to a separate pair decorating a pendant chest.

Of distinguished provenance, the paintings were apparently made for a specific patron. They entered the Galleria Nazionale from the collection of the Dalla Rosa - Prati family, descendants of several prominent Parmese art patrons, including Bartolomeo Prati (1471-1542), a jurist of elevated tastes who also commissioned Correggio’s *Ecce Homo* (ca. 1525-1530; London, National Gallery). In 1661, an inventory of art works belonging to the Prati clan recorded two *tondi* depicting “un Orfeo con un Satiro / et un’altra figura” and “una figura che dorme” in gilded frames with arabesques, implying that, by this date, the panels were being displayed independently alongside works by Dosso Dossi, Palma Vecchio, and Parmigianino. The inventory listing further supports their identification as an integral pair, with no additional scenes intended.

**DATING:** ca. 1505-1510

**NOTES:**
(1) I thank Lucia Fornari Schianchi and Clelia Alessandrini for access to the works and analysis with infrared reflectography, as well as Diego Cauzzi and Pierpaolo Monfardini for photographs and information about their conservation. For the presence of Timolus in the background landscape, Anderson in Brown et al., *Bellini, Giorgione, Titian*, 154. For further discussion of
these roundels, their subject and original setting, see the sections on Early Subjects and Patterns and Hierarchies of Content in Ch. 1, and Chests and Boxes in Ch. 2.

(2) Lucian, *Dialogues of the Gods*, XI. Selene’s love for Endymion was also described by Theocritus in his Idyll XX, the lament of a scorned lover who describes the passions of gods and goddesses for humble country youth. In these versions, Endymion’s lover is identified as the lunar deity Selene; elsewhere, she is named Luna, and by the Renaissance, she had come to be identified with the chaste Diana (Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols*, 103). Other early accounts of Endymion are Ovid, *Heroides*, 18.59ff; Virgil, *Georgics*, 3.390ff.; Propertius, *Elegies*, 2.15; Seneca, *Phaedra*, 309ff., 422ff., 786ff. Cima’s panel is also compared with Raphael’s *Allegory* by Binotto, “La Pittura Mitologica di Cima da Conegliano,” 56.


(4) In *Midas*, the mixing and layering of pigments including ultramarine, azurite, and malachite is discussed in a conservation report by Clelia Alessandrini, 2006. For the *ponderatio* pose, Gregori, *In the Light of Apollo*, vol. 1, 431. The possible inspiration of the plaquette from the workshop of Moderno (Venice, Museo Civico Correr) discussed in Humfrey, *Cima da Conegliano*, 140 (with further bibliography), and Binotto, “La Pittura Mitologica di Cima da Conegliano,” 56-57.

(5) The observation with infrared reflectography of the *pentimento* in the *Judgment of Midas* was made by Diego Cauzzi. The infrared examination of the *Fête Champêtre* was conducted by Bruno Mottin at the Louvre and is discussed by Anderson, “Vedere la Musica,” 37.

(6) The nineteenth-century frames belong to a matching set constructed for paintings in the Dalla Rosa - Prati collection (conservation report, Clelia Alessandrini, 2006). Schubring proposed that the paintings originally adorned a harpsichord or spinet (*Cassoni*, 168, 393-394), but their round shape is clearly more consistent with the decoration of surviving chests, as discussed in Ch. 2 above.

(7) Florence, Uffizi, Gabinetto dei Disegni, no. 1680; Humfrey suggests that this design corresponds to one of two lost works adorning a pendant chest (*Cima da Conegliano*, 58, 174, pl. 140).

Rosa family collections merged upon the marriage of Maria Anna Prati to Pier Maria Dalla Rosa in 1694 (ibid.). For further discussion of Bartolomeo de’ Prati and his likely patronage of *Endymion* and *Midas*, see the discussion of Patterns and Hierarchies of Content in Ch. 1 above. For art patronage in sixteenth-century Parma, Humfrey, “Cima da Conegliano a Parma,” 38-45.

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

Cat. no. 12, Cima da Conegliano, *Endymion Asleep, The Judgment of Midas*
(images courtesy of the Galleria Nazionale, Parma)
**Cat. no. 13**  
Workshop of Cima da Conegliano  
*The Judgment of Midas*  
Tempera on panel, 43 x 73 cm  
Copenhagen, Statens Museum for Kunst, inv. no. KMS-4514

Type: Unknown

A larger version of the *Judgment of Midas* theme also depicted by Cima in roundel form (cat. no. 12), the panel depicts the king in rustic attire, gesturing as he listens to Apollo and Pan at their instruments. Both figures play versions of the *lira da braccio*, the traditional contrast between Apollo’s strings and Pan’s pipes thus being avoided. In size, too, the figures match, while in Cima’s *tondo* of the same subject, Pan is diminutive. (1) The man in stockings at left could be the personification of Timolus, the mountain god who judges the contest, or a spectator. In contrast to Cima’s *tondo* and to many later depictions of the tale (for instance, cat. no. 53), Midas does not yet wear the ass’s ears that he will acquire for having preferred Pan’s “barbaric song.” The story’s themes are thus evoked but not declared, lending the scene the air of a generic pastoral gathering.

The painting has frequently been associated with settings such as clavichords and cassoni. However, its conservation history makes definite conclusions difficult. The panel was originally constructed of two or three long horizontal planks glued edge to edge; later, it was trimmed and sawn vertically across the grain into four unequal pieces. (2) In pictorial terms, the work would appear to be an easel painting. This version presents a more expansive treatment of the subject than does Cima’s *tondo*; and the landscape, particularly the mountain at background left, is thoughtfully constructed and contributes to the broadly allusive air of the tale. Perhaps Cima or a member of his workshop chose a larger format in order to expand on themes first essayed in the Parma *tondo*. If so, this would be the first independent mythological painting from his circle.

**DATING:** ca. 1510-1515

**NOTES:**
(1) I thank Henrik Bjerre and Hannah Heilmann for information about this work. Pan’s size difference across the two versions is noted by Anderson in Brown et al., *Bellini, Giorgione, Titian*, 154. The painting has been attributed to Cima and, most recently, to the artist and collaborators (Binotto, “La Pittura Mitologica di Cima da Conegliano,” 58 n. 9, with further bibliography).

(2) Schubring, *Cassoni*, 168, proposes the clavichord setting. Henrik Bjerre, Conservator at the Statens Museum for Kunst, provided this account of the changes. Humfrey suggests that the panel was dismembered and then later reconstituted, with the addition of strips on the upper and lower edges (*Cima da Conegliano*, 96).

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**  
Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *Painting in North Italy*, vol. 1, 252 n.; Schubring, *Cassoni*, 168, 394; Berenson, *Venetian School*, vol. 1, 65; Olsen, *Italian Paintings and Sculpture in Denmark*, 52-

Cat. no. 14
Circle of Cima da Conegliano
*Scene of Sacrifice*
Oil on panel, 23.5 cm diameter
Northampton, City Museum and Art Gallery, inv. no. 1993.163

Type: *Cassa*

This *tondo* depicts a white-bearded man and a youth before a burning marble altar, set in a rolling landscape dotted with trees. The altar front bears the inscription “R S,” surrounded by a laurel wreath, and surmounted by a mask and swags. The young man, dressed in pink and blue armor, wears a crown, but otherwise there are few indications of the figures’ identities. Some scholars propose the sacrifice of Iphigenia, while several Biblical subjects, such as David and Solomon, the anointing of David by Samuel, and Saul’s offer of sacrifice, have also been suggested. (1) Yet another possibility is Noah’s sacrifice after the flood, which would be consistent with the old age of the left figure. However, many furniture paintings depict generic sacrifice scenes of this sort. The so-called *Priesthood and Force of Arms* from the circle of Schiavone (cat. no. 46) provide a later example, and two *tondi* recorded in the collection of Andrea Vendramin portray anonymous armoured figures making offerings before a flaming altar (Fig. 1).

**DATING:** ca. 1510

**NOTE:**
(1) Humfrey, “Cima da Coneglio a Parma,” 44, proposes Agamemnon and Achilles preparing the sacrifice of Iphigenia. Other possible subjects discussed in the files of the Northampton City Museum and Art Gallery. I am grateful to Alison Marks for information about this painting.

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

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1. Andrea Vendramin, *De Picturis*, fol. 73
London, British Library
(image source: Borenius, *Picture Gallery*, pl. 61)
Cat. no. 15
Circle of Cima da Conegliano
*Duel on a Seashore*
Oil on panel, 32 x 53 cm
Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, inv. no. 17A

Type: Cassa (?)

The painting shows two men jousting on an outcropping of land, surrounded by sea. A third figure stands against a spindly tree, playing a pipe, while two more appear by the shore; in the water, a ship awaits. The panel has been identified as a one-time cassa decoration, and its physical configuration – trimmed on all four sides, perhaps with substantial cropping of an originally oblong rectangular panel – is consistent with this setting, as is the ambiguous, apparently secular subject. (1) Perhaps the painting depicts an adventure in the life of Theseus, illuminated by Cima in a similar work (cat. no. 10). According to Plutarch, the hero slew numerous foes during his travels through the Peloponnesus and Crete, including Taurus, the chief captain of Minos, at a seaside port. Others, however, propose a courtly subject, perhaps the education of the young Roland, who learns the art of swordfighting in the company of a musician. (2) Or the painter may have chosen to illustrate countryside pastimes, such as fencing and music, without intending any particular story.

DATING: ca. 1510-1515

NOTES:
(1) For the suggestion of a cassa setting, Schubring, *Cassoni*, 395. For the panels’ physical condition and trimming, Humfrey, *Cima da Conegliano*, 84.

(2) Plutarch’s account of Theseus’s travels in his *Lives*, vol. 1, 1-24. For the tale of Roland as a possible subject, Redslob, *Berlin-Dahlem Gallery*, 211.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cat. no. 15, Circle of Cima da Conegliano, *Duel on a Seashore*  
(image source: Humfrey, *Cima da Conegliano*, pl. 179a)
**Cat. no. 16**  
Follower of Cima da Conegliano  
*Scenes from the Life of Coriolanus*  
Florence, Villa I Tatti, Berenson Collection

a) *Coriolanus Besieging Rome*  
b) *Coriolanus and His Mother*  
Oil on panel, 35.5 x 89.9 cm  
Oil on panel, 35.8 x 88.8 cm

**Type: Cassa**

Most likely the decorations for a pair of cassa fronts, the paintings depict a man riding a horse outside a fortified town, and a woman on her knees beseeching him. The scenes are apparently drawn from the life of Coriolanus, the general who turned against his own people, only to be prevented from attacking them by his wife and mother. They anticipate similar depictions of such episodes from the circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati (cat. no. 29). Attributed at one time to Cima da Conegliano, the works are now associated with a follower of the artist. The landscapes and town, particularly the detail of a bridge reflected in water, recall ornamental pictures from the circle of Giorgione (cat. no. 23).

**DATING:** ca. 1510

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**  
Schubring, “Neugefundene Cassonebilder,” 167-168; Berenson, *Venetian School*, vol. 1, 65;  
Cat. no. 17
Follower of Cima da Conegliano
Tours, Musée des Beaux-Arts

a) Woman Drinking
b) Funeral Fire

Oil on panel, 26.5 x 61.4 cm
Oil on panel, 26 x 61.4 cm

Inv. no. D.53.2.4
Inv. no. D.53.2.3

Type: Cassa

Matching in size and style, the two panels also display similar patterns of wood damage, probably due to daily use as chest fronts; their edges were left unpainted to accommodate framing in this setting. The pictures illuminate mythological and historical themes in the style of Cima; the panels also display the influence of Carpaccio in their composite building types, exotic costumes, and attention to interior details such as restelli and furniture. (1) The first scene depicts a woman drinking from a bowl, while her nurse and attendants look on; a funeral pyre appears in the background. The second displays another funeral fire, already consuming a woman, to which a man who has died by the sword is being brought. The episodes have been variously identified, most recently as two tales from Valerius Maximus’s Factorum et Dictorum Memorabilium: Artemisia’s imbibing of the ashes of her husband Mausolus, and the funeral of Marcus Plautius, who committed suicide after the death of his wife. (2) If so, they would illuminate complementary demonstrations of conjugal loyalty, one on the part of a woman, the other on the part of a man.

DATING: ca. 1510

NOTES:
(1) For the panels’ physical condition, Gilet, Italies, 108. For the restello in the scene of a woman drinking, Cecchini, “Collezionismo e Mondo Materiale,” 168-169.

(2) The characters have also been identified as Pyramus and Thisbe (Gentili, “Boccaccio a Venezia,” 19-23). See also Gilet, Italies, 108.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cat. no. 17, Follower of Cima da Conegliano, Woman Drinking, Funeral Fire
(image source: Humfrey, Cima da Conegliano, pl. 200)
Cat. no. 18
Circle of Giorgione
Florence, Uffizi

a) Trial of Moses  
b) Judgment of Solomon

Oil on panel, 89 x 72 cm  Oil on panel, 89 x 72 cm
Inv. no. 945  Inv. no. 947

Type: Sportello (?)

These panels, which came to the Uffizi in the 1790s from the collections of the Medici villa at Poggio Imperiale and are considered examples of the youthful Giorgionesque style, were recently discovered to exhibit painted designs and wood damage on their reverses, suggestive of an original decorative setting (museum photographs of reverses in Figs. 1-2; recent color photographs in Figs. 3-4; for author sketches of the reverses, see Figs. 2.113-2.114 in Ch. 2 above). (1) The new evidence calls for a reconsideration of the two pictures as early works of Venetian ornamental painting.

The backs of both panels display a finto marmo background, composed of a brown base covered with a web of gray-green streaks, on which appear black outlines of plants: crossed branches of olive and grape or ivy on Moses, and a palm frond and laurel on Solomon, joined by stylized loops of ribbon. These designs are probably contemporary with the paintings on the fronts, although much more simplified in execution and not by the same hand. The lower portions of both designs are interrupted, indicating that the panels have been cut at their bottom edges. In the upper area of both reverses, the finto marmo design breaks to expose a horizontal strip of unpainted wood. These areas must be original, because they display barbes along the edges of the paint surface. They were likely once covered by additional segments of wood, functioning as battens or crosspieces. Nail holes at the upper and lower regions of the exposed spaces, particularly evident in Moses, further suggest the one-time presence of structural attachments. The nails were applied from the front of each panel before the recto scenes of Moses and Solomon were painted. (2)

The panels’ reverses also display regular patterns of wood loss along their edges, consistent with brackets or hinges. Moses exhibits two triangular gaps along the upper edge, toward the left and right corners; several tab-shaped indentations on the left and right edges; and two more along the lower edge. On Solomon’s reverse, the most substantial loss appears on the left edge, toward the bottom, where a roughly rectangular area of wood has been gouged out, interrupting the painted design (Fig. 5). Solomon also sustains two substantial clefts along the bottom edge, triangular gaps along the right and left edges, roughly at center, and three more hollows along the top edge. While it is difficult to determine when these areas were cut, their presence along the right and left sides implies framing or joining devices of some kind. (3)

These features suggest two general possibilities. First, the verso images could be unrelated to the paintings of Moses and Solomon. The plant designs could have belonged to a pre-existing composition, which was then taken up in the workshop, flipped over, cut down, and reused for the new paintings; or they could have been added after the scenes on the fronts were painted. In
these scenarios, the works would have hung as pendant easel pictures, with the backs hidden. Or second, the devices on the reverses could have been added specifically to complement the scenes of Moses and Solomon, and would have been visible in the initial hanging.

Overall, physical evidence favors the latter arrangement. The correspondences within and between the works – the matching allegorical motives on pendant panels; their vertical orientation relative to the scenes on the fronts; the battens attached before painting of Moses and Solomon began; the clefts possibly carved for framing or hinging – imply that the fronts and backs belonged to a single integral ensemble. In the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, allegorical and faux-marbre designs of this type often appeared on the reverses and covers of paintings. A well known example is Leonardo’s portrait of Ginevra de’ Benci (Figs. 6-7; ca. 1474-1478; Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art), decorated on its reverse with an inscribed scroll, a wreath of laurel and palm (the same plants appearing on Solomon’s reverse) surrounding a sprig of juniper, and a fictive porphyry background. A work by Jacometto Veneziano recalls the reverses of the Uffizi panels even more closely. The back of his Portrait of a Man (ca. 1480-1485; London, National Gallery) contains a painted inscription and device of crossed laurel branches tied with a bow against a dark backdrop. (4) These late Quattrocento precedents support the inference that the reverses of Moses and Solomon were visible in their original configuration, and that the allegorical and marble designs served as ad hoc decorations for these exposed areas. In this case, a few potential schemes for the paintings’ initial setting can be identified, based on the evidence of similar surviving panels. The works could have served as wings of a diptych or altarpiece, or as a pair of doors or shutters.

As a diptych, the paintings would have constituted a novel example of the genre, displaying, instead of donor portraits, devotional images, or New Testament episodes, stories from Jewish sources. The panels would have been hinged together, revealing the reverses when closed. However, studies of contemporary hinged diptychs suggest that the paintings do not accord with this type. Diptych pairs often display traces of matching hinges on their frames, in the form of wood damage or spaces for nails. (5) Because the Uffizi paintings’ frames (if they existed) are missing, and because the pictures may have been trimmed laterally or otherwise damaged over time, the evidence in this area is necessarily incomplete. While the panels do display a pattern of clefts where hinges might once have been attached, these existing lacunae fail to correspond along their vertical edges, which would be necessary for works hinged to each other. It is still possible that alteration of the paintings at a later date removed traces of matching hinges. (6) A stronger factor weighing against the identification of a diptych is the apparent cutting of the panels and the spaces for battens, which imply that the paintings were once larger. A taller format would not befit a standard portable diptych. Finally, the allegorical plant designs on the reverses are not typical of diptych covers, which tend to depict saints, donors, or sacred symbols.

Alternatively, the paintings may have functioned as the wings of an altarpiece whose central panel is now lost. When closed, the ensemble would have revealed the finto marmo and allegorical designs. While this possibility cannot be excluded, it is unlikely; Moses and Solomon would be unusual choices for the wings of a Christian altarpiece, and their reverses are secular and allegorical in nature, as inconsistent with a larger altarpiece as with a diptych.
Finally, the paintings may have served as doors or shutters protecting a piece of furniture, such as a cabinet or closet; a small room, such as a studiolo; or perhaps a window. This is the function most compatible with their appearance and physical condition. The panels’ versos are highly comparable to that of Carpaccio’s Hunting and Fishing on the Lagoon (Fig. 8; cat. no. 7). Once part of a larger leaf serving as a shutter, this fragment depicts a motive of cartellini against a stone-patterned background, similar to the feigned marble design of the Uffizi reverses. The image on the Getty verso breaks to reveal a horizontal area of unpainted wood near the top of the panel; this once accommodated a batten or cleat. It is quite similar to the exposed areas of Moses and Solomon, which likely served the same purpose. (The removal of these presumed battens from the Uffizi works at a later date may have erased traces of hinges or other joining devices.) The wood losses on Moses and Solomon, while difficult to date, also recall those of surviving sportelli. Carpaccio’s ensemble contains analogous gaps, notches, and empty insets. Before its transfer to canvas, Giorgione’s Judith (cat. no. 19), originally a door, also bore damage associated with hinges. (7)

The alterations imposed on the Uffizi panels further imply an original sportello arrangement. As noted above, the interruption of the painted allegorical design at the bottom edge of each reverse indicates that the panels have likely been cut, and were once longer in the vertical direction. In fact, the paintings may have been about twice as tall as they are now, with a second batten appearing on the lower half of each panel. Battens were typically spaced evenly in pairs or threes on a single door, as demonstrated by the inner door depicted in Carpaccio’s preparatory drawing for the Vision of St. Augustine (see Figs. 1-2 in cat. no. 7 above) and by the technical evidence of Ladies on a Balcony and Hunting and Fishing (discussed in cat. no. 7 above). The Uffizi panels’ present dimensions are about 89 x 72 cm each; originally, they could have measured as much as 178 x 72 cm each. These hypothetical dimensions are commensurate with those of Carpaccio’s painted shutter, composed of Hunting and Fishing and Ladies – about 170 x 64 cm. They are also comparable to those of Giorgione’s Judith, about 144 x 68 cm. (8) The horizontal cutting of Carpaccio’s leaf in order to transform the panels into smaller, more orthodoxy sized quadretti, which are now displayed separately in Venice and Los Angeles, is identical with the changes possibly imposed on Moses and Solomon.

Fig. 9a describes the paintings’ proposed format as tall sportelli. The reverse of each panel contains a complete allegorical plant design, with the finto marmo background continuing through their lower halves. An additional batten is located at the corresponding lower area of each reverse. The fronts, meanwhile, contain the scenes of Moses and Solomon on their upper halves (their borders are incised, indicating that they are integral images). In the reconstruction, the lower portion of each panel is decorated with a second painted design of the same dimensions, now lost or unidentified. Perhaps the two missing images depicted related scenes from Jewish history, or New Testament episodes typologically paired with Moses and Solomon. A similar arrangement of paired panels, each comprising two vertically stacked images with incised borders, appears in the Bellinesque paintings of an eclogue of Tebaldeo (cat. no. 5), which also likely functioned as sportelli.

Thus disposed, the paintings could have functioned as separate flaps, each hinged to the outer frame of a door, window frame, or cabinet and opening from the center (Fig. 9b). Another possibility is that the two panels were hinged to each other to form a bifold shutter, as in
Carpaccio’s sportello group. In this case, they would have been attached to the outer frame on one extreme end, with the other end swinging free (Fig. 9c). This setting, however, would require that the two panels display matching hinges along their shared lateral edge. As noted above, such evidence is not currently visible, although it may have been removed at an earlier date.

In either configuration, the Uffizi panels may have served as doors to a room such as a studiolo; leaves protecting a piece of furniture; or interior shutters covering a window. Whatever their initial setting, the panels convincingly dovetail with the genre of painted sportelli in Venice during the early sixteenth century. However, further technical examination and comparison are necessary to understand fully their initial arrangement.

DATING: ca. 1496-1505

NOTES:
(1) This discovery was made by David Alan Brown and Jaynie Anderson in 2002-2003. I am grateful to them for permission to share these findings and to Dr. Brown for arranging access to the works and advising this research. I am also indebted to Antonio Natali and Angelo Tartuferi of the Uffizi for access to and technical information about the paintings. See now also Dal Pozzolo, “Ipotesi per un Esordio,” 41-43. The fronts of both panels are generally associated with Giorgione’s early works, and are given to the artist in the monographs of Pignatti and Pedrocco and Anderson, who discusses the attribution debate (Pignatti and Pedrocco, Giorgione, 112-115; Anderson, Giorgione, 291). Brown (verbal communication, January 2007) believes that the panels were painted by two artists close to Giorgione, although they are probably not autograph; he attributes the Trial of Moses to the painter of the Tallard Madonna (ca. 1506; Oxford, Ashmolean Museum), who is sometimes identified as Sebastiano del Piombo (Anderson, op. cit., 332, 334-335). Hope attributes both works to the Paduan painter Gian Antonio Corona and dates them after Giorgione’s death (“The Attribution of Some Paduan Paintings,” 92-96); this attribution still places the works in the ambit of early sixteenth-century Giorgionesque painting. For recent summary of the attribution debate, Dal Pozzolo and Puppi, Giorgione, 415-416. The authorship of the designs recently discovered on the reverses is unknown. For further discussion of this group, see the section on Doors and Shutters in Ch. 2 above.

(2) The application of nails from the front of the panel noted by Rita Alzeni during technical examination in January 2009, and reported by Dal Pozzolo, “Ipotesi per un Esordio,” 42. For an example of a panel of ca. 1490 by Francesco Botticini with intact horizontal battens on its reverse, Dunkerton et al., Giotto to Dürer, 152-153. The reverses of the Uffizi panels also contain painted numbers: on Moses, “600” (or possibly “603” or “605”) appears in red over the knot of the ribbon, and the number “1763” appears in black just to the right. On Solomon, the number “605,” painted in red, covers part of the palm frond, and the number “1763” appears in black at the bottom left edge. These were probably added at a later date for inventory purposes; according to Dal Pozzolo, the “1763” designation pertains to the numbering of paintings in the collection of Grand Duchess Vittoria at Poggio Imperiale in a 1692 document (Dal Pozzolo and Puppi, Giorgione, 415).
(3) Some of the crevices along the panel edges are definitely the result of later alterations: for instance, since the panels have been cut along their bottom edges, the wood losses in these areas are clearly more recent. However, the other irregular, triangular losses appear to be older and may pertain to the panels’ original setting.

(4) Brown et al., *Virtue and Beauty*, 142-147, 158-159. Comparable works are a pair of miniature portraits by Jacometto with emblematic designs on their reverses (ca. 1485-1495; New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art); see ibid., 154-157, and Bayer, *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy*, 265-268. Precedents for such imagery can be found in Netherlandish panel paintings, as well as decorated birth trays and other household objects (Brown et al., op. cit., 146 n. 8). Marble imitation designs on picture covers and reverses are discussed by Dülberg, *Privatporträts*, 116-127.

(5) Recent studies of Renaissance diptychs employ a variety of techniques to piece together original ensembles. Hand et al. discuss numerous examples of dismantled diptychs whose original frames show matching traces of nails and hinges, e.g., works by Hans Memling and Jan Provoost (*Prayers and Portraits*, 17, 292, 295). One scholar notes, however, that diptychs were not necessarily hinged (Schmidt, “Diptychs and Supplicants,” 15).

(6) For instance, the left edge of *Solomon* verso and the right edge of *Moses* verso both display small areas of wood loss toward the lower end, where a hinge might have joined them; however, the locations of these gaps do not correspond vertically between the panels. The tab in *Moses* is very close to the panel’s bottom edge, while that of *Solomon* is higher. In a standard hinged diptych, the vertical positions of the spaces for hinges would match exactly. If, however, the panels were trimmed or otherwise altered at some point along their left or right edges, then evidence of matching hinges of this sort would have been removed. Further study of the possibility of a hinged diptych could be made through X-radiography and discovery of traces (or the lack thereof) of nails and hinges.

(7) For the *trompe l’œil* design and batten space on the reverse of *Hunting and Fishing*, see cat. no. 7 above. Extensive technical examination has revealed that the Getty panel displays the actual physical remnants of hinges and nails (Szafran, “Carpaccio’s ‘Hunting on the Lagoon,’” 150-152), while on visual inspection the Uffizi panels contain only gaps where such additions might have been located. Further analysis, particularly with X-radiography, might reveal evidence of nails or hinges. For the hinges on Giorgione’s *Judith* before its transfer from panel to canvas, Fomicieva, “History of Giorgione’s ‘Judith,’” 419-420.

(8) The original suggestion that the panels had been cut was made by Angelo Tartuferi (April 2007); possible reconstructions proposed here by the author. For *Judith’s* dimensions, Fomicieva, “History of Giorgione’s ‘Judith,’” 418. *Hunting and Fishing* measures 75.2 x 63.6 cm, while *Ladies on a Balcony* measures 94.5 x 63.5 cm (Szafran, “Carpaccio’s ‘Hunting on the Lagoon,’” 150-152).

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

Cat. no. 18, Circle of Giorgione, Trial of Moses, Judgment of Solomon
(image source: Anderson, Giorgione, 25, 28)

(illustrations continue next page)
1-2. Reverses of *Trial of Moses* and *Judgment of Solomon*
(images courtesy of the Polo Museale Fiorentino)

3-4. Recent color photographs of panel reverses
.photos by the author)
5. Detail of *Judgment of Solomon*, reverse
(image source: Dal Pozzolo, “Ipotesi per un Esordio,” 43)

Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art
(image source: Brown et al., *Virtue and Beauty*, 144)

8. Vittore Carpaccio, *Hunting and Fishing on the Lagoon* (cat. no. 7), reverse, showing trompe l’oeil design and blank space for batten at the top of the panel
(image source: Sgarbi, *Carpaccio*, 100)
9a. Hypothetical format as tall *sportelli*

9b. Hypothetical reconstruction as doors

9c. Hypothetical reconstruction as bifold shutter
Cat. no. 19
Giorgione
*Judith with the Head of Holofernes*
Oil on panel (transferred to canvas), 144 x 68 cm
St. Petersburg, Hermitage, inv. no. ГЭ 95

Type: *Sportello*

One of Giorgione’s most beautiful works – a fusion of allegory, poetry, and sacred history in the person of a maiden in victory – this is also the only furniture painting firmly attributed to the artist. Its original function as a *sportello* was recognized during the eighteenth century, when the picture belonged to Pierre Crozat. In the printed catalogue of the collector’s holdings, Pierre-Jean Mariette noted the presence of a keyhole and suggested that the panel had served as a door or shutter. (1) More recent X-ray examination uncovered a dark square of wood, about 3 x 3 cm, near the right edge of the painting, slightly below center, which must have been added at a later date to fill in the keyhole. Before its transfer from panel to canvas, the painting also bore traces of hinges. (2) Although similar in size and shape to other hinged leaves, such as Carpaccio’s *Hunting and Fishing on the Lagoon and Ladies on a Balcony* (cat. no. 7), the panel was probably not tall enough to decorate the doorway of a room; perhaps it adorned a cabinet for books or collectibles. The original work may also have exhibited a painted design on its reverse, although none is mentioned in catalogue records.

In the narrow format dictated by the painting’s function, Giorgione portrays his heroine in eternal triumph over her foe. Judith’s bare leg, delicately counterpoised against the great oak behind her, rests on the head of Holofernes, whom she has seduced and murdered to save the people of Bethulia. The sensual violence of the story contrasts with its protagonist’s expression of demure contemplation and with the gentle countryside that emanates from her, unfolding outward from the tendrils of her hair. The image of a young lady in a budding spring, juxtaposed with Holofernes’s lifeless, impotent crown, suggests the power of a woman’s beauty – embodied in both figure and setting – to topple even kings and generals. The scene as a whole diverges markedly from its famous antecedent, Donatello’s bronze *Judith* (1455-1465; Florence, Palazzo Vecchio), who is fully clothed and veiled to declare her chastity, and whose strength and brutality are accentuated by the weapon she brandishes. (3)

Giorgione emphasizes not only Judith’s serene beauty, but also much of her varied symbolism at the turn of the sixteenth century. Standing in triumph, she resembles allegories of humility, sanctity, fortitude, and chastity, all associated with Judith in Renaissance art. (4) In other aspects, she echoes the Virgin Mary: her downcast glance and ovoid physiognomy recall Giorgione’s *Castelfranco Madonna*, and the maiden’s surroundings – a low stepped wall with plant creepers, bordered by flowers and grass – evoke the *hortus conclusus* of the Virgin. (5) In texts of the period, Judith appears as a prefiguration of Mary, and Giorgione’s image parallels the iconography of the Virgin triumphing over the devil. Yet the artist also presents Judith as a beguiling temptress, the counterpart of Salome, a theme especially prevalent in German art. Both siren and paragon of sacred chastity, Giorgione’s figure reminds present-day viewers of the contradictory lights in which powerful women were seen during his time. (6)
Renaissance artists also depicted Judith in a civic and political guise; in Venice, Giorgione’s image would no doubt have brought to mind the personification of the Republic as Justice, often identified with the Biblical heroine. The figures of Giuditta and Giustizia were conflated in a sculpted tondo on the façade of the Palazzo Ducale (ca. 1360), on the tomb of Doge Antonio Venier at SS. Giovanni e Paolo (after 1400), and in Titian’s fresco on the Fondaco dei Tedeschi façade (ca. 1508); several hundred years later, Antonio Vivaldi’s Juditha Triumphans commemorated Venice’s 1716 victory over Turkish forces at Corfu, and cast the Republic as a “new Judith.” Similarly, in Florence, Donatello’s bronze Judith celebrated the city’s spirit of self-determination and cast the ruling Medici as tyrant slayers and saviors of their people. (7)

In fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italy, Judith shared her republican connotations with David, another Old Testament archetype of valiant and cunning resistance against oppression; for this reason, it is conceivable that Giorgione’s painting once belonged to a pair of sportelli, its pendant portraying David. Analogous arrangements include Ghiberti’s Porta del Paradiso (1425-1452; Florence, Museo dell’Opera del Duomo), which depicts David’s slaughter of Goliath next to the figure of Judith, and Michelangelo’s Sistine ceiling frescoes (1508-1512; Rome, Vatican), in which the two protagonists occupy adjacent corner spandrels. Donatello’s bronze Judith and David (1430-1460; Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello) represent the most ambitious union of these two characters in Renaissance art: they were displayed as pendants in the garden and courtyard of the Medici palace during the later fifteenth century, together perpetuating the family’s claims to power and its dubious rhetoric of civic liberation. Giorgione’s own interest in the theme of David is evinced by his lost self-portrait in the guise of the hero meditating over the head of Goliath. (8) The possibility that the artist painted a version of this subject to accompany the St. Petersburg Judith is further substantiated by Rosella Lauber’s recent discovery of a sketched record of a narrow, full-length portrait of the young David, attributed to Giorgione, in the late eighteenth-century correspondence of the connoisseurs Giovanni Maria Sasso and John Strange (Fig. 1; 1786; London, British Library). (9)

Inclusive of Judith’s many meanings, Giorgione’s picture is also catholic in its techniques and artistic sources. The artist adopted a free painting style, drawing with the brush and at times with his fingertips, scoring parallel lines lightly in the wet paint to show details of Judith’s collar, and making numerous alterations, including changes to the figure’s head, hands, and hair. Restoration revealed the use of color as a modeling device: the surfaces of the maiden’s gown vary from pink and white on the ridges of folds to dark red in their crevices. (10) Touched with globules of golden-yellow paint, the hilt of Judith’s sword gleams against the bluish depths of the landscape.

Giorgione’s subject is new to Venetian painting of the early sixteenth century, and owes a debt to ancient and contemporary sculpture. For the motif of a woman in contrapposto with one foot placed gently on another object, Giorgione may have borrowed from the Aphrodite Ourania of Phidias, known during the Renaissance through Hellenistic variants, which displays the goddess resting one foot on a tortoise. The artist may also have looked to Tullio Lombardo, who included the figure of Judith on the tomb of Doge Andrea Vendramin (ca. 1493; originally S. Maria dei Servi, now SS. Giovanni e Paolo), and other contemporary sculptors essaying the theme. (11)
As noted in Ch. 3 above, the fortunes of the St. Petersburg Judith during the centuries after its making are chronicled in the records of Pierre Crozat, who acquired the picture in the early 1700s and published it in the catalogue of his collection. (12) The accompanying engraving by Toinette Larcher (1729; see Fig. 3.95 in Ch. 3 above) displays the picture in an enlarged format, with vertical strips added to the left and right sides. These changes were most likely imposed by Crozat after his purchase of the work. In addition to this image, several other early reproductions of the picture survive: a brown wash drawing signed by the seventeenth-century painter Jan de Bisschop (Amsterdam, Van Regteren Altena collection); a seventeenth-century engraving by one “L. Sa.,” published by the Amsterdam printer Abraham Blooteling; and a pencil sketch by Gabriel de Saint-Aubin, dating to around 1771. (13) All three of these copies show the painting in its narrower dimensions, without the side strips. (Saint-Aubin’s drawing, however, appeared after the additions had been made; perhaps he knew of the alterations and sought to record the picture in its original format.) Judith is thus among the most completely documented of Venetian Renaissance ornamental paintings.

After passing to Crozat’s heirs, the picture was sold to Catherine II of Russia in 1772. It entered the Hermitage as a work of Raphael, although Mariette had earlier suggested the possibility of Giorgione’s authorship. Waagen attributed the painting to Moretto da Brescia in the first catalogue of the museum, dated 1864, while connoisseurs such as Liphart, Richter, and Morelli advanced the attribution to Giorgione, which is now generally accepted. (14) Sometime between 1838 and 1863, a conservator at the museum removed Crozat’s extensions, and in 1893, the picture was transferred from panel to canvas. A restoration of 1968-1971 uncovered up to five later paint layers, revealing the attention – not all welcome – lavished on this monumental work over the centuries. (15)

**DATING:** ca. 1500-1510

**NOTES:**

(1) “Il y a apparence que ce Tableau peint sur bois, a servi de porte ou de volet, du moins une marque de Serrure le fait conjecturer: Il est très fini & très bien conservé; mais les couleurs fortes & vives, les carnations fonduës & de beaucoup de relief, enfin le paysage qui sert de fond estant précisément dans le goût & dans les principes du Giorgion, tout cela a porté quelques Connoisseurs à soutenir qu’il estoit du Giorgion & non de Raphael. Ce tableau a esté apporté en France par M. Forest, qui le vendit à M. Bertin; & c’est de ce dernier que M. Crozat, chez qui il est presentement, l’a acheté. Il avoit déjà esté gravé par Blotelinck, comme Tableau de Raphael” (Crozat and Mariette, *Recueil Crozat*, vol. 1, 13).

(2) For physical evidence of the panel’s use as a *sportello*, Fomicieva, “History of Giorgione’s ‘Judith,’” 420, and see also discussion of Doors and Shutters in Ch. 2 above.

(4) For Judith’s varied associations during the Renaissance, see a variety of recent studies, including Knotts, *Judith in Florentine Renaissance Art*; Stocker, *Judith, Sexual Warrior*; Uppenkamp, *Judith und Holofernes*. In a possible example for Giorgione, the theme of Judith with the Head of Holofernes was represented by Jacopo Bellini in one of his sketchbooks (London, British Museum, *Book of Drawings*, f. 35r.); see Eisler, *Genius of Jacopo Bellini*, 279.


(8) The possible pairing of Giorgione’s Judith with David is also discussed in the section on Doors and Shutters in Ch. 2 above. For the analogy between Judith and David during the Renaissance, Bialostocki, “La Gamba Sinistra della Giuditta,” 206, and Anderson, *Giorgione*, 201. For these characters as “partners in meaning” and the deployment of Donatello’s sculptures by the Medici for rhetorical purposes, McHam, “Donatello’s Bronze David and Judith.” For Giorgione’s lost self-portrait, recorded in a seventeenth-century engraving by Wenceslaus Hollar and in a painted copy, Sheard, “Giorgione’s Portrait Inventions,” 149-161; Anderson, “The Giorgionesque Portrait,” 153-154; idem, *Giorgione*, 200-204, 206-207; Dal Pozzolo and Puppi, *Giorgione*, 264-265, 403-404. See also Holberton, “To Loosen the Tongue of Mute Poetry,” arguing that Giorgione intended his self-portrait to compete with the art of poetry by its visual intimation of the theme of Virtuous Victory. It has been suggested that the head of Holofernes in Giorgione’s Judith is also a self-portrait (Pignatti, “La ‘Giuditta’ Diversa di Giorgione,” 270).

(9) For the sketch after a David attributed to Giorgione in the correspondence of Sasso and Strange, Lauber, “Una Lucente Linea d’Ombra,” 200-202. Lauber suggests that this lost work originally served as a pendant to Judith.

(10) For Giorgione’s techniques as revealed by recent restorations, Fomiciev, “History of Giorgione’s Judith,” 419; Fomiciova, “La Storia della Giuditta di Giorgione,” 264-265. For incision of lines in the wet paint with an implement (possibly the reverse end of the brush), a technique also seen in other works attributed to Giorgione, Poldi, “Dalle Opere in Mostra alla Tecnica di Giorgione,” 227.

(11) For sculptural examples possibly employed by Giorgione, Sheard, “Giorgione and Tullio Lombardo,” 206-207, and Anderson, *Giorgione*, 195-196, 292, who also discusses the novelty of

(12) The painting also appears in a 1740 inventory of Crozat’s collection, in which it is described as “un tableau peint sur bois de 4 pieds un pouce de haut sur deux pieds huit pouces et demy de large, dans sa bordure de bois sculpté doré, représentant Judith, fait par Raphaël, prisé 4 000 l” (Stuffmann, “Tableaux de la Collection de Pierre Crozat,” 62). A 1755 inventory describes the same work as “Judith foulant aux pieds la tête d’Holopherne; par Raphaël. C’est une des Estampes du Recueil de M. Crozat: sur bois, de 4 pieds 5 pouces de haut, sur 2 pieds 7 pouces de large” (de la Curne de Sainte-Palaye, *Catalogue des Tableaux du Cabinet de M. Crozat*, 41).

(13) Fomicieva, “History of Giorgione’s ‘Judith,’” 417. Saint-Aubin’s sketch is reproduced in his *Catalogues de Ventes et Livrets de Salons*, where it appears on a full page of drawings with the heading, “tous ces tableaux sont expliqués dans le Catalogue, il ne faut que la patience de les chercher.”

(14) For Mariette’s remarks on Giorgione’s possible authorship, see n. 1 above. For the later attribution debate, Anderson, *Giorgione*, 292.


SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Cat. no. 19, Giorgione, *Judith with the Head of Holofernes*
(image courtesy of the Hermitage, St. Petersburg)

1. Giovanni Maria Sasso, *Supplementary Strange Papers*, fasc. 5, f. 32r.
London, British Library, ms. Add. 60537
(image source: Lauber, “Una Lucente Linea d’Ombra,” 201)
**Cat. no. 20**  
Circle of Giorgione  
*Pastoral Scenes*  

a) *Rustic Idyll*  
Oil on panel, 12 x 19 cm  
Padua, Museo Civico, inv. no. 170  

b) *Leda and the Swan*  
Oil on panel, 12 x 19 cm  
Padua, Museo Civico, inv. no. 162  

c) *Venus and Cupid in a Landscape*  
Oil on panel, 11.6 x 20.3 cm  
Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, inv. no. 1939.1.142  

d) *Astrologer (Orpheus and Time)*  
Oil on panel, 12 x 19 cm  
Washington, D.C., Phillips Collection  

Type: *Cassetta* with Drawer  

These small panels depict landscapes composed in gradients of green, with mossy or flowered foregrounds shading into blue distances. All contain two major protagonists, and in each picture, an offering is made: the *Rustic Idyll*’s red-coated man leans forward with a sprig of flowers; the female figure at the left of *Leda* looks out of the picture as she carries a burning staff or thyrsus; Cupid steps forward to clasp Venus’s hand; and the *Astrologer*’s musician looks outwards, towards an imagined audience, while the old man proffers his hourglass. Despite their similarities, however, the panels have an improvised quality, suggesting a free mixture of themes from mythology, poetry, and music.  

As noted in the discussion of Chests and Boxes in Ch. 2 above, the paintings apparently belonged to a single group, decorating a piece of furniture that included at least one drawer. *Venus and Cupid* shows traces of dovetailing and a filled-in keyhole, suggesting that it functioned as a fixed drawer front. Its later provenance matches that of the other panels, and the dimensions, styles, and subject matter of all four paintings match closely. (1) Some differences in execution are apparent, however. The *Astrologer, Leda,* and *Rustic Idyll* all display loose, sketchy brushwork, with *pentimenti* incorporated during the painting stage of the *Astrologer*; in the two Paduan panels, the figures and other compositional elements were painted directly over the background rather than left in reserve on the picture preparation, and minimal underdrawing has been detected. *Venus and Cupid,* by contrast, contains a detailed underdrawing. These differences do not preclude the panels’ belonging to the same ensemble, as multiple artists or a single painter employing varied techniques may have been involved in their production. The final appearance and dimensions of the four panels remain remarkably similar, suggesting an effort to unify their style and format. In *Venus and Cupid,* for instance, the posture of the seated female closely matches that of the elderly man in the *Astrologer,* and the treatment of foliage in both pictures is comparable. *Venus and Cupid* also shares with the remaining panels an attention to landscape and a common tonality of greens and blues. If painted later, or by another hand, the panel was nonetheless composed with an eye to the harmony of the resulting set. (2)  

**DATING:** ca. 1500-1510  

**NOTES:**
(1) For further information about the panels’ original configuration, see the discussion of Chests and Boxes in Ch. 2 above. For the works’ common provenance in the Falier collection at Caselle d’Asolo, Banzato, La Quadreria Emo Capodilista, 62. I am grateful to Antonella Daolio, Joanna Dunn, Patricia Favero, and Franca Pellegrini for access to and information about these panels.


SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cat. no. 20, Circle of Giorgione, Pastoral Scenes: Rustic Idyll, Leda and the Swan, Venus and Cupid in a Landscape, Astrologer (Orpheus and Time)
(image sources: Padua, Museo Civico; Pignatti and Pedrocco, Giorgione)
Cat. no. 21
Circle of Giorgione
*Maiden with a Unicorn*
Oil on canvas, 28 x 38.9 cm
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-3970

Type: *Cassa*

Attributed to Giorgione or a follower, this small work depicts a young woman seated in a grassy hollow, with a unicorn resting its head on her lap. (1) This theme suggests the inspiration of tapestries depicting the virgin and the unicorn, long associated with Mary and the mystery of the Incarnation. A medieval bestiary describes Christ as “a unicorn spiritually,” who descended into Mary’s womb without violating her virginity. Tapestry cycles depicting the Hunt for the Unicorn, who could be trapped only by a virgin, emphasized the subject’s association with the miraculous birth of Christ. During the Renaissance, artists employed similar imagery to demonstrate the chastity of exemplary women, such as Battista Sforza, who sits on a chariot drawn by a pair of unicorns on the reverse of Piero della Francesca’s portrait (ca. 1472-1474; Florence, Uffizi), and the lady with a unicorn painted by Raphael (1506; Rome, Galleria Borghese). Related symbols appeared on wedding chests; perhaps this canvas belonged to an object of this type. (2)

Other sources, however, associated the figure of the unicorn with vice. In the *Fior di Virtù*, a vernacular handbook frequently used in the schools attended by young Venetians during the sixteenth century, the creature is employed to demonstrate the dangers of intemperance. According to the text’s late medieval author, unicorns have such lust for young maidens that they frequently fall asleep in their arms – much as does the animal in this picture – thus exposing themselves to capture by the hunter. (3)

Rooted in both sacred and vernacular medieval traditions, the painting also manifests the Renaissance fascination with wonder and marvel. At the turn of the sixteenth century, narwhal tusks cast as *corna di unicorno* were secular relics coveted by collectors of fine art and naturalia, and the lore of unicorn hunts joined a larger fascination with unknown realms of the earth and the pursuit of mythical beasts. In Venetian collections, objects exemplifying this interest appeared next to paintings and antiquities. Gabriel Vendramin kept “animals’ horns and diverse other things” in his collection, which also included the *Tempesta*, and Andrea Odoni owned dried snakes and chameleons, sea shells, and “bizarre fish.” (4) These connoisseurs may have taken their cue from the *tesoro* of San Marco, which housed at least three purported unicorn horns encased in silver fittings, with inscriptions in Arabic and Greek. One was decorated with the first words of the *Ave Maria*, its fascination as an exotic artifact thus mingling with its sanctity as a symbol of Mary’s chastity. The Amsterdam canvas would have suggested similarly diverse but harmonious meanings. (5)

**DATING:** ca. 1500-1510

**NOTES:**
(1) The attribution to Giorgione was first proposed by Bode in 1900 and supported by Morassi (Giorgione, 57); see Zampetti and Gould, Complete Paintings of Giorgione, 99.


(4) In his 1548 will, Gabriel Vendramin listed “corni de animali et altre cosse diverse” in his collection (Battilotti and Franco, “Regesti di Committenti e dei Primi Collezionisti di Giorgione,” 67). In 1532, Andrea Odoni owned “cose naturali, zoe granchi, pesci, bisse, petrificadi, un camaleonte secho, i caragoli picoli et rari, crocodili, pesci bizarri” (Michiel, Notizia d’Opere del Disegno (ed. Frimmel), 52); these were probably inherited from his uncle, Francesco Zio (Schmitter, Display of Distinction, 116).

(5) Hahnloser, Il Tesoro di San Marco, 89-90; the horns were described by Marin Sanudo in his 1493 account of the city’s treasures (Sanudo, De Origine, Situ et Magistratibus Urbis Venetae, 52, 179). One of the horns was given to the Ottoman sultan, and Sanudo also reports in his diaries that a rumor was purposefully circulated that the object had been stolen, in order to conceal this gift to an enemy of the Christians (see Carboni et al., Venice and the Islamic World, 28, 372). The Amsterdam canvas has also been linked with Venetian politics; Puppi (“Il Purissimo Liocorno”) argues that it represents an “Allegory of Venice.” This interpretation seems somewhat strained, considering the private setting in which the painting would have been viewed.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Fiocco, Giorgione, 46, 132-133; Morassi, Giorgione, 57, 160; Zampetti, Giorgione e i Giorgioneschi, 66-67; Berenson, Venetian School, vol. 1, 86; Zampetti and Gould, Complete Paintings of Giorgione, 98-99; Tschmelitsch, Zorzo, genannt Giorgione, 77-79; Van Thiel et al., All the Paintings of the Rijksmuseum, 242; Puppi, “Il Purissimo Liocorno”; Lucco, Giorgione, 152; Guidoni, Giorgione: Opere e Significati, 269-271.

Cat. no. 21, Circle of Giorgione, Maiden with a Unicorn (image courtesy of the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam)
Cat. no. 22
Follower of Giorgione
*Landscape with Figures*
Oil on panel, 12.9 x 45.8 cm
Bergamo, Accademia Carrara, inv. no. 179

Type: *Cassa*

An early example of an independent secular landscape, the painting depicts a gentle slope, divided by a path leading to a small town, shading to mountains. The work may have belonged to a pair of small landscapes, mentioned in the eighteenth-century inventory of the collector Giacomo Carrara; if so, its pendant has been lost. Clearly produced under the influence of Giorgione, it has been attributed to various artists working in and near Venice during and after his career. (1) An area of exposed panel around the painting’s edges indicates that its dimensions and format, suggestive of a chest decoration, are original. The reverse bears a stamp of a cardinal’s hat and a coat of arms, probably added after the work was independently framed. Perhaps it hung at one time in the collection of another noble or ecclesiastic, before passing to Carrara. (2)

DATING: ca. 1510-1520

NOTES:
(1) In the 1796 Carrara inventory, the works are listed as a “paesetto in tavola antico, opera del Bernasconi [Cesare Bernazzano]” and its pendant, by “Bernasconi [Bernazzano] milanese con figure di Cesare da Sesto.” Pagnotta, however, notes that many “paesetti” by anonymous authors appear in the Carrara inventory, and that the Bergamo painting is not necessarily to be identified with either of these two specific entries (*Bartolomeo Veneto*, 190). Attributions of the picture to Bartolomeo Veneto, Bernardino Licinio, Giovanni Cariani, and others are summarized in Rossi, *Donazioni 1998*, 54-55. I am grateful to Giovanni Valagussa and Angelo Zamataro for information on this painting.


SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Cat. no. 23
Follower of Giorgione

_Landscape with Figures_

Oil on panel (transferred to canvas), 29.5 x 47 cm
Paris, Robert Lebel collection (as of 1997)

Type: _Cassa_

Like cat. no. 22, the painting depicts _contadini_ by a country pond, whose surface reflects the houses and trees at its edges. Forests and distant mountains complete this scene of rustic life, typical of works completed under the influence of Giorgione in early sixteenth-century Venice. The bridge over the water in the background recalls a similar detail of his _Tempesta_. Pagnotta suggests that the picture adorned a small piece of furniture. Transferred from its original panel to canvas, the painting reveals little of its previous setting, but its dimensions, stylistic affinities with the Bergamo painting, and Giorgionesque manner suggest this possibility. It may once have been wider, matching the dimensions of typical _cassa_ ornaments.

DATING: ca. 1510-1520

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Morassi, _Giorgione_, 42-44, 155; Coletti, _Tutta la Pittura di Giorgione_, 64; Zampetti, _Giorgione e i Giorgioneschi_, 6-7; Zampetti and Gould, _Complete Paintings of Giorgione_, 97-98; Lucco, _Giorgione_, 149; Pagnotta, _Bartolomeo Veneto_, 192-193.

Cat. no. 23, Follower of Giorgione, _Landscape with Figures_ (image source: Pagnotta, _Bartolomeo Veneto_, 193)
An intriguing variation on the Venetian landscape tradition of the early sixteenth century, this panel has long been identified as the cover of Lotto’s portrait of Bishop Bernardo de’ Rossi of Treviso (Fig. 1; 1505; Naples, Museo di Capodimonte). (1) An inscription on the Allegory’s reverse once listed Rossi’s name and title, his age at the time the Naples portrait was painted – thirty-six years, ten months, and five days – followed by Lotto’s name and the date, the first of July 1505. The notation survived into the nineteenth century and was described by Morelli in the 1880s, but has since been abraded or removed. (2) The Naples and Washington panels are further associated in Rossi’s inventories, which describe “a picture on which is portrayed the figure of the most Reverend Monsignore de’ Rossi” and a “cover for the picture of the portrait” in 1511 and 1510 respectively. (3) These separate entries indicate that the works were probably displayed apart from an early date; they were reunited only in the Lotto exhibition of 1997. On that occasion, the Allegory was found to measure slightly larger than the Rossi portrait – about 1.8 cm vertically and 0.9 cm horizontally – consistent with a cover that would have fit over the Naples picture. A 5 mm-wide apron of unpainted wood at both the top and bottom edges of the Allegory also suggests this function; the panel would have slid along these surfaces in and out of the portrait’s fixed frame. Such physical details support the textual documentation relating the two paintings. (4)

This evidence reveals the power of a charismatic patron to imprint his commissions on history. Rossi (1468-1527), who became bishop of Treviso in 1499, was not only an important political and religious figure of his time but also a humanist in his own right. Just as Lotto’s portrait of Rossi is not a static icon but a living and psychologically perceptive likeness, so the accompanying cover is a poetic illumination of Rossi’s character which creatively animates the standard allegorical opposition of virtue and vice. At right, on a bed of grass and flowers, a drunken satyr embraces a jug, while a second vessel to his right gushes wine – a playful inversion of the traditional image of Temperance carefully pouring liquid from a pitcher. In the background, a galley founders in rough waters, and the air above is turbid and dark with moisture, echoing (or anticipating) the skyscape of Giorgione’s Tempesta. (5) The storm contrasts with the scene at background left, lit in scintillating yellow and green, in which a winged genius climbs a steep hill to the clouds. The hard way of virtue was often allegorized in devotional manuals as a cautious journey through a vertiginous landscape. The child’s ascent is indeed the reward of industry and integrity, symbolized by the foreground putto, who devotes himself to mathematical, musical, and literary pursuits.

The Allegory has received many learned interpretations, with some identifying it as an allegory of the rational spirit, others seeing it as a coded remark on Rossi’s political fortunes, and still others suggesting a Platonic meaning. Analyses of the work frequently cite texts appearing in Rossi’s library, such as the mystical writings of Jean Gerson and the poetry of Petrarch. (6)
Perhaps the most incisive reading, however, is found in the first published account of Lotto’s painting. In 1791, Padre Ireneo Affò, a humanist and clergyman like Rossi himself, included a description of the Allegory in his biography of the prelate. (7) Affò embedded his discussion of Lotto’s painting among excerpts of poems, epigrams, and epistles by contemporary letterati, which testified at length to Rossi’s erudition and temperament. Affò thus characterized the Allegory as a pictorial laudatio: a humanist tribute comparable to the verse of Valeriano or the adages of Girolamo Bononio. In its praise of a distinguished subject through the oblique, witty, and stylish arrangement of disparate symbols, Lotto’s painting mirrors learned emblems and epigrams of its period.

DATING: ca. 1505

NOTES:
(1) For the panel’s history and identification as the cover of Rossi’s portrait, Brown et al., Lorenzo Lotto, 76.

(2) “BERNARD. RVBEVS / BERCETI COM. PONT / TARVIS. NAT. / ANN. XXXVI. MENS. X. D. V. / LAVRENT. LOTVS P. CAL. / IVL. M. D. V.” or “Bernardo Rossi of Berceto, Papal Count of Treviso, age 36 years, 10 months, 5 days. Painted by Lorenzo Lotto. July 1, 1505.” The inscription was recorded by Ireneo Affò in his 1791 biography of Rossi (Memorie degli Scrittori e Letterati Parmigiani, vol. 3, 201) and by later scholars, but the words now survive only in published transcriptions. See Shapley, Catalogue of the Italian Paintings, vol. 1, 278, and Brown et al., Lorenzo Lotto, 76.

(3) “Uno quadro dove è retratato suso la figura de Monsignore rev.mo di Rossi” recorded in a 1511 inventory; a “coverta del quadro del retratto” in a 1510 inventory (Liberali, “Inventari delle Suppellettili del Vescovo Bernardo de Rossi,” 83, 78).

(4) For the possibility that the Allegory was detached from Rossi’s portrait shortly after it was painted, see the section on Lotto and Titian in Ch. 3 above, and Brown et al., Lorenzo Lotto, 76. For the reunion of the portrait and cover in the Lotto exhibition, ibid., 73-80. The two works also appeared together in the Venetian painting exhibition of 2006 (Brown et al., Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, 246-249). The portrait of Rossi measures 54.7 x 41.3 cm, while the Allegory measures 56.5 x 42.2 cm (Brown et al., Lorenzo Lotto, 76). For the unpainted surfaces at the top and bottom of the panel, Shapley, Catalogue of the Italian Paintings, vol. 1, 277.

(5) For the pitchers as an inversion of the traditional iconography of Temperance, Galis, Lorenzo Lotto, 197. Tervarent argues that the ship represents the consequences of prodigality and abandonment to easy pleasures (Attributs et Symboles dans l’Art Profane, vol. 2, 389), while Pochat sees the vessel in part as a symbol of the vicissitudes of fate and the instability of Fortuna (“Two Allegories by Lorenzo Lotto,” 5). Brown explores the relationship between the Allegory and the Tempesta and raises the possibility that Lotto’s painting precedes Giorgione’s (Brown et al., Lorenzo Lotto, 76, 79).

(6) Bosco proposes a reading based on the theology of Jean Gerson (“Divina Vigilia”). Galis argues that the image describes the path of philosophy and enumerates its Platonic symbols
(Lorenzo Lotto, 193-203); see also Gentili, *I Giardini di Contemplazione*, 86. Humfrey proposes a biographical and political reading (Lorenzo Lotto, 11). For a summary of various interpretations, Brown et al., *Lorenzo Lotto*, 80.


SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cat. no. 24, Lorenzo Lotto, *Allegory of Virtue and Vice*
(image source: Brown et al., *Lorenzo Lotto*, 77, 75)

1. Lorenzo Lotto, *Portrait of Bishop Bernardo de’ Rossi*, Naples, Museo di Capodimonte
Cat. no. 25  
Lorenzo Lotto  
*A Maiden’s Dream (Allegory of Chastity)*  
Oil on panel, 42.9 x 33.7 cm  
Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, inv. no. 1939.1.147

Type: *Coperchio*

The panel depicts a forest clearing in which a chaste maiden, mischievous satyrs, and a winged child enact a twilight *fantasia*. Although no documents or inscriptions survive to link this picture to a particular patron or image, the work has consistently been identified as a portrait cover on the basis of formal and physical similarities to Lotto’s *Allegory of Virtue and Vice* and *St. Jerome in the Desert* (cat. nos. 24, 26). Even without its likely pendant, the *Maiden’s Dream* proves infinitely evocative and suggestive, its themes invoking and amplifying the now absent likeness of its noble subject. (1) Lotto’s protagonist is a lady, demurely swathed in white and gold, who leans against a tree stump from which sprout new laurel branches. An angelic putto lifts his garment to make a satchel for a collection of white-light flower petals, which he scatters into her lap. The maiden is accompanied by a satyr couple, the female peering around a trunk, the male seated among rocks and tipping back a jug of wine.

The puzzling scene was at first entitled *Danaë*, an intuitive choice given that the flying *amorino*, like Jupiter, conjoins heaven and earth by raining a mystical shower upon a beautiful maiden. (2) However, the satyrs, infant, and forest setting do not correspond to the myth of Danaë, and subsequent scholars have proposed a range of alternative subjects. In 1906, Herbert Cook argued against particular interpretations and titled the picture “A Maiden’s Dream.” (3) Although scholars have objected to this label on the grounds that the young woman’s eyes are open and she appears to be awake, it nonetheless captures the oneiric element of Lotto’s painting. The picture’s incongruous juxtaposition of familiar images, its glowing colors against a tenebrous backdrop, and its enclosed and magical setting all serve to heighten the impression that the event described is actually being encountered within a dream. In the Renaissance, dreams were thought to reveal the active, creative nature of perception: Leonardo, for example, noted with wonder that the eye sees things more clearly in dreams than with the waking imagination. (4) Lotto’s picture, too, has the quality of a dream world in that it is fantastical yet visually concrete. Gazing at it, the spectator feels enveloped in a spectacle that, like a dream, unfolds as a strange optical reality, but in fact has been devised and transmitted by a mind, in this case the mind of the artist. To conjure this trancelike scene, Lotto worked from a variety of sources, most importantly Petrarch’s *canzone* 126, “Chiare fresche et dolci acqua.”

**DATING:** ca. 1506

**NOTES:**  
(1) The *Maiden’s Dream* is most often associated with Lotto’s *Portrait of a Lady* (ca. 1505-1506; Dijon, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon; see Brown et al., *Lorenzo Lotto*, 81-83, 84-86). The sitter of the Dijon portrait is sometimes identified as Bernardo de’ Rossi’s sister, Giovanna; Gentili proposes that the portrait and cover were made after her death as a memorial (*I Giardini di Contemplazione*, 89-91).
(2) The painting was entitled Danaë by Morelli (Kunstkritische Studien über Italienische Malerei, 63); Morassi (Giorgione, 147); and Longhi (Viatico per Cinque Secoli di Pittura Veneziana Viatico, 62). Berenson first called it Danaë (Lorenzo Lotto (1895), 1), then La Ninfa Rodos e Plutone (Pitture Italiane del Rinascimento, 266), then Dream of a Maiden (Lorenzo Lotto, 4), then A Maiden’s Dream (Venetian School, vol. 1, 107).


SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Morelli, Kunstkritische Studien über Italienische Malerei, 63, 69, 73 n. 1; Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Painting in North Italy, vol. 3, 394 n. 4; Coletti, “Lotto e Melozzo,” 350-351; Bosco, “Divina Vigilia”; Dal Pozzolo, “Laura tra Polia e Berenice di Lorenzo Lotto”; Bonnet, Lorenzo Lotto, 24-25, 193; Brown et al., Lorenzo Lotto, 84-87; Humfrey, Lorenzo Lotto, 12, 14-15; Woods-Marsden, “Portrait of the Lady,” 83; Brown et al., Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, 200, 202, 204-207.

Cat. no. 25, Lorenzo Lotto, A Maiden’s Dream (Allegory of Chastity)
(image source: Brown et al., Lorenzo Lotto, 84)
Cat. no. 26
Lorenzo Lotto

*St. Jerome in the Desert*
Oil on panel, 48 x 39.9 cm
Paris, Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures, inv. no. M.I. 164 (S/AR)

Type: *Coperchio*

In his monograph on Lorenzo Lotto, Berenson first proposed that this panel served to cover a portrait, and subsequent examination has substantiated his suggestion. The image is painted on a piece of vertically-grained poplar only 4-5 mm thick, dimensions that would have allowed it to slide in and out of a fixed frame surrounding a portrait. The original support was later applied to a panel 26 mm thick, and battens were attached to the ensemble, probably to refit it for independent display. The top and bottom edges of the picture surface are abraded and show evidence of repainting, suggestive of damage caused by sliding action. Overall, the panel is among the smallest of Lotto’s several versions of this subject – further implying an ornamental appurtenance rather than an autonomous picture – and, in size and composition, it bears comparison with scenes of St. Jerome in the wilderness that are also thought to have functioned as portrait covers, particularly examples by Dürer and Cranach the Elder. (1) The theme was a natural choice to accompany portraits of humanists, and Lotto’s picture probably decorated such an image as well. (2)

The physical evidence complements the work’s appearance, very similar to that of other portrait covers by Lotto. Like his *Maiden’s Dream* (cat. no. 25), the painting depicts a mysteriously wooded scene, in which a tree springs from and amplifies the recessed figure of the protagonist; and like his *Allegory of Virtue and Vice* for Bernardo de’ Rossi (cat. no. 24), it dramatizes a scholar’s struggle for honorable attainment amidst temptation. (3) Surrounded by the books with which he fills his time of solitude, Jerome prepares to smite himself in penitence. The theme of self-abnegation in pursuit of morality and wisdom further recalls Rossi’s portrait cover, and indeed, *St. Jerome* has long been associated with Rossi. Dated to the first years of the sixteenth century, when Lotto had completed his training in Venice and joined the prelate’s service in Treviso, the work is most likely identical with one of several paintings of the saint documented in Rossi’s inventories; if so, it was detached early from its portrait cover setting for display among his impressive assembly of jewels, books, and paintings. (4) The bishop also owned two volumes of Jerome’s letters and a popular compilation of lives of the saints, which no doubt included a version of the holy man’s biography. (5)

Emerging from the court of a humanistically minded cleric, Lotto’s picture combines strands of several visual, religious, and intellectual traditions. The saint is embedded in a craggy forest that evinces the long-ago violence of geologic shifts, symbolic of his self-mortification and of the upheavals within his spirit. Yet his posture and downcast eyes bespeak quietude and peace; as Guarino da Verona wrote of an image of Jerome painted by Pisanello, “he is present with us and yet seems also absent, he is both here and somewhere else: the grotto may hold his body, but his soul has the freedom of Heaven.” (6) In Lotto’s rendering, too, the saint’s penitential and contemplative selves are reconciled, their unity manifest in the now subdued harmonies of the Germanic forest landscape. The cross that Jerome holds in his left hand is echoed by the spiky
branches of the dead tree rising behind him – a prominent symbol of the Crucifixion – and counterposed by the foliage of the surrounding woods, evidence of the divine generative power latent in nature. The surfaces of the rocks and the tips of the leaves register minuscule changes in the light at a transitional moment; as the sun sets in the distance and a lone horseman traverses the darkening wilderness, the viewer, perhaps the very subject of the portrait within, is reminded of the transitory character of all mortal endeavor in contrast to God’s eternity.

DATING: 1506

NOTES:
(1) Berenson, Lorenzo Lotto, 10. Berenson’s suggestion has been supported by Dülberg (Privatporträts, 164-165, 293), Béguin (in Laclotte et al., Le Siècle de Titien, 275), and Brown et al. in the exhibition catalogue of 1997 (Lorenzo Lotto, 90). Details of the work’s physical configuration from conservation reports, Louvre, November 1995 and April 1997; see also Brown et al., op. cit., 90. To my knowledge, the only version of the subject by Lotto smaller than the Louvre picture measures 39.4 x 32.1 cm (Allentown, Allentown Art Museum, Samuel H. Kress Collection); see Pallucchini and Canova, L’Opera Completa del Lotto, 93. Dülberg notes several German paintings of St. Jerome in the Desert that may have served as portrait covers: one by Lucas Cranach the Elder measuring 55.5 x 41.5 cm (1502; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie); and another by Albrecht Dürer measuring 23.1 x 17.4 cm (1497-1498; Norwich, Collection of Sir Edmund Bacon, Raveningham Hall). See Dülberg, op. cit., 164-165, 297-298.

(2) Scholars have surmised that the painting originally covered a portrait of a humanist, such as Giovanni Aurelio Augurelli (1456-1524) or, more likely, Girolamo Bologni (1454-1517), the author of La Vita Beati Hieronymi, inspired by his name saint. For Bologni and his writings on Jerome, Ceserani, “Girolamo Bologni”; Béguin, “A Propos des Peintures de Lorenzo Lotto au Louvre,” 100; and Gentili, I Giardini di Contemplazione, 129-131. If the painting indeed covered Bologni’s portrait, the humanist would probably have given the work to his patron, Bernardo de’ Rossi, at an early date, hence its appearance in the bishop’s inventories beginning in 1510.

(3) For similarities among Lotto’s St. Jerome, Maiden’s Dream, and Allegory, Brown et al., Lorenzo Lotto, 90. The Lotto exhibition of 1997 afforded the opportunity to view all three works together and led scholars to support the identification of St. Jerome as a coperchio: “to see the Washington covers in the same room with the Louvre Saint Jerome...strongly confirmed the suspicion, first voiced by Berenson, that the latter is also a cover for a portrait” (Nagel, Review of Lorenzo Lotto, 744).

(4) For references to the Louvre panel in Rossi’s inventories, see n. 5 below, and the section on Lotto and Titian in Ch. 3 above. The work is signed and dated on the rocks in the lower right foreground; the question of whether the date reads “1500” or “1506” has been controversial, though most scholars have accepted 1506 on the basis of the painting’s sophistication and presumed relation to Rossi. See Béguin, “A Propos des Peintures de Lorenzo Lotto au Louvre,” 99, Humfrey, Lorenzo Lotto, 12, and Brown et al., Lorenzo Lotto, 88.
(5) A 1510 inventory of Rossi’s belongings refers to “uno sancto Hieronimo,” while one of the following year mentions “uno quadro del Santo Gieronimo” (Liberali, “Inventari delle Suppellettili del Vescovo Bernardo de Rossi,” 78, 83). Liberali definitively identifies these two entries with the Louvre panel (ibid., 75). See also idem, “Lotto, Pordenone e Tiziano a Treviso,” 23-25, 33. Humfrey argues that the painting was “almost certainly commissioned by Rossi” (Lorenzo Lotto, 12). These issues further discussed by Béguin, “A Propos des Peintures de Lorenzo Lotto au Louvre,” 100, 103 n. 11, and Brown et al., Lorenzo Lotto, 88, 90. An inventory of Rossi’s library records the “primo libro da Sancto Hieronimo zoè le Pistole,” and “par[s] epistole seconda Sancti Hieronimi”; it also notes the first and second parts of “la vita de li sancti,” which probably contained Jacobus de Voragine’s biography (Liberali, “Inventari delle Suppellettili del Vescovo Bernardo de Rossi,” 87).

(6) Guarino’s description of Pisanello’s painting quoted in Baxandall, “Guarino, Pisanello and Manuel Chrysoloras,” 196.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cat. no. 26, Lorenzo Lotto, St. Jerome in the Desert
(image courtesy of the Réunion des Musées Nationaux)
**Cat. no. 27**

a) Andrea Mantegna

*Introduction of the Cult of Cybele at Rome*

Distemper on canvas, 73.7 x 268 cm

London, National Gallery, inv. no. 902

b) Giovanni Bellini and assistants

*Continence of Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus*

Oil and tempera on canvas, 74.8 x 356.2 cm

Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art, inv. no. 1952.2.7

**Type: Fregio**

A distinguished prototype of domestic *fregio* paintings, this ensemble illuminates scenes from antique history on elongated canvases decorated with *grisaille* imitations of marble friezes. As discussed in the section on Friezes in Ch. 2 above, these are the earliest surviving works to serve as painted substitutes for sculptural or fresco decorations along the upper wall of a Venetian patrician home, transforming it into a vivid prospect meant to edify and delight viewers, in this case members and guests of the eminent Cornaro family.

The commission had probably been planned to include more than two paintings, for Mantegna originally prepared four canvases. But his death in 1506 complicated the project, and Giovanni Bellini, when he took up the unused canvases, completed only one additional piece. (1) It has been proposed that the cycle included other monochrome paintings by Mantegna, including his vertical panels of the Roman heroines Tuccia and Artemisia (ca. 1505; London, National Gallery); however, these works’ differing support and medium suggest a separate group. (2)

The original location of the cycle is unknown, although at least one of the canvases remained in the Cornaro family for many generations. In the early nineteenth century, Mantegna’s painting was recorded in the Palazzo Corner-Mocenigo at San Polo and described as *un fregio*, but it may not always have hung there, for the Cornaro owned much real estate in the city, including houses at San Maurizio and San Cassian. (3) Apparently, the family decorated many of its palace interiors with Cornelian themes: in 1551, Francesco’s relative, Giovanni, mentioned in his will a valuable set of tapestries, illustrating similar subjects, which he wished his sons to preserve. (4)

**DATING:** 1505-1506

**NOTES:**

(1) For further information about this cycle, see the discussion of Friezes in Ch. 2 above. For the original four canvases, Christiansen in Martineau et al., *Andrea Mantegna*, 414, and Lightbown, *Mantegna*, 215. For documents surrounding the commission, Brown, “Andrea Mantegna and the Cornaro of Venice.” Dunkerton identifies the medium of the Washington canvas as egg tempera rather than oil (“Bellini’s Technique,” 220). I am indebted to Barbara Berrie, Carol Plazzotta, and Elizabeth Walmsley for information about these canvases.
(2) For the inclusion of Tuccia and Artemisia (also known as Sophonisba), Knox, “The Camerino of Francesco Corner,” 82-83. For the contrary view, Christiansen in Martineau et al., Andrea Mantegna, 414. The two paintings are in tempera with gold highlight on panel.

(3) In his Guida di Venezia of 1815, Moschini wrote of the canvas seen in the Palazzo Corner-Mocenigo: “Particolarmente vi si ammira un fregio che i giudici più intelligenti riconoscono per fattura di Andrea Mantegna” (quoted in Knox, “The Camerino of Francesco Corner,” 80). For the canvases’ provenance, Davies, Earlier Italian Schools, 333; Braham, “A Reappraisal of The Introduction of the Cult of Cybele at Rome,” 458; and Knox, op. cit., 80-84. Following fires in the sixteenth century, two of the family’s palaces were redesigned by Jacopo Sansovino and Michele Sanmicheli. For Cornaro architectural patronage, Howard, Jacopo Sansovino, 132-146, and Romanelli, Ca’ Corner della Ca’ Granda.

(4) Cornaro urged his sons to take care of the tapestries, which were “beautiful and delicate” and “noble objects...worthy of princes,” and to keep them together, rather than selling them in Rome, “where they are known” (ASV, Sezione Notarile, Testamenti, A. Marsilio, B. 1209, no. 492; see Fletcher, “Patronage in Venice,” 20).

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cat. no. 27, Andrea Mantegna, Introduction of the Cult of Cybele at Rome; Giovanni Bellini and assistants, Continence of Publius Cornelius Scipio Africanus (detail) (image sources: National Gallery, London; Brown et al., Bellini, Giorgione, Titian, 156, 158-159)
**Cat. no. 28**
Circle of Bartolomeo Montagna

a) Chest, gilded, with beaten iron fittings and inlaid panel paintings, 70 x 208 x 79 cm  
*Duilius and Bilia, Tuccia with a Sieve*  
Tempera on panel, 29 cm diameter  
Milan, Museo Poldi Pezzoli, inv. no. 1652/676

b) *Claudia*  
Tempera and oil (?) on panel, 29 cm diameter  
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, inv. no. WA 1946.201, A723

c) *Antiochus and Stratonice (?)*  
Tempera and oil (?) on panel, 29 cm diameter  
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum, inv. no. WA 1946.200, A722

Type: *Cassa*

The ornate chest (a) displays a pair of roundels in gilded *pastiglia* surrounds, set within golden squares decorated with foliate tracery. The paintings flank an escutcheon representing a rampant bear, which has led some to associate the *cassa* with a marriage in the Buri family of Verona; however, the same crest could also be identified with the Orsato of Padua, the Orselli of Saluzzo, and the Orso of Venezia. (1) Despite the uncertainty surrounding its owner, the chest was probably made for a marriage, as both paintings depict exemplars of female virtue. The roundel at left portrays Bilia, conversing in animated gestures with her husband, the naval hero Gaius Duilius, in a tiled portico with a coffered ceiling. According to the tale narrated by St. Jerome in the *Adversus Jovinianum*, Duilius, having discovered from a rival that he suffered from bad breath, asked Bilia why she had never revealed this fact, to which she replied with the words inscribed on the structure in the background: “DIXISSEM / TIBI NISI / PUTASSEM / OMNIBUS / VIRIS / [SIC] OLERE” – “I would have told you, if I hadn’t thought that all men have terrible breath.” (2) The roundel at right depicts Tuccia, a frequent subject of marriage and ornamental pictures, who demonstrates her chastity by carrying water from the Tiber in a sieve. Dressed in red, she rushes toward a marble portico, with her tresses flying behind her.

The Milan chest has been persuasively linked with two roundels in the Ashmolean Museum, (b) and (c), also portraying virtuous women. That pair probably belonged to a now-dismantled pendant to the Milan chest. (3) All four paintings are ascribed to the circle of Bartolomeo Montagna, and can thus be associated with the production of painted furniture in and near Venice during the early sixteenth century. In addition to sharing styles and settings – elaborate porticoed or tiled spaces – the four *tondi* elaborate on the theme of female virtue. The Ashmolean *tondi* depict the vestal virgin Claudia, who looks outwards as she pulls the boat carrying the image of the goddess Cybele, and a wedding scene, perhaps between Antiochus and his stepmother, Stratonice, as recounted by Plutarch and Valerius Maximus. These subjects appear in other decorative paintings from the Veneto region, such as those by Mantegna (cat. no. 27) and Bonifacio de’ Pitati (cat. no. 30).
DATING: ca. 1500-1510

NOTES:
(1) Pirovano et al., *Museo Poldi Pezzoli*, 122. For further information about this chest, see the section on Chests and Boxes in Ch. 2 above.

(2) The identification of this scene with the episode from St. Jerome’s text was made by Schubring (*Cassoni*, 364-365).

(3) Waterhouse, “Two Panels from a Cassone by Montagna.”

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cat. no. 28a, Circle of Bartolomeo Montagna, Chest with scenes of *Duilius and Bilia* and *Tuccia with a Sieve*  
(image sources: author photo; Alberici, *Il Mobile Veneto*, 22-23)

Cat. no. 28b-c, Circle of Bartolomeo Montagna, *Claudia, Antiochus and Stratonice (?)*  
(image source: Puppi, *Bartolomeo Montagna*, figs. 72, 73)
**Cat. no. 29**  
Circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati  
*History of Rome*  
Venice, private collection (as of 1986)

a) *Triumphal Entrance* (?)  
b) *Departure of Aeneas*  
Oil on canvas, 27.5 x 82 cm  
Oil on canvas, 27.5 x 82 cm

c) *Flight of Clelia*  
d) *Coriolanus and his Mother at the Gates of Rome*  
Oil on canvas, 27.5 x 82 cm  
Oil on canvas, 27.5 x 82 cm

Type: *Fregio*

These works illuminate incidents in the history of Rome, with an emphasis on family and lineage that is apposite for ornamental paintings in a domestic setting. The first two canvases probably depict episodes from Virgil: Aeneas’s entrance into Carthage, and his departure from Dido. In the third, the valorous Clelia escapes from her captors, bearing a fellow prisoner across the Tiber by horse. The last painting depicts the episode, described by Livy (*Ab Urbe Condita*, II.40) and Plutarch (*Lives*, XII.34-36), in which Coriolanus’s wife and mother convince him not to wage war against his fellow Romans, whom he has deserted for an enemy camp. At left, the women gather to press their case, while at right, soldiers congregate, strategizing as they point to the city walls.

According to Simonetti, the four canvases belonged to two separate groups, one recounting the adventures of Aeneas, the other portraying ancient exemplars of virtue. (1) However, their common dimensions, canvas support, and provenance suggest an integral series arranged to end-to-end along a wall. Paintings of this type, illustrating episodes from the history of Rome or Troy, often mingle myth, poetry, and history. A related example is the series from the circle of Schiavone (cat. no. 54).

**DATING:** ca. 1540-1542

**NOTE:**  
(1) Simonetti, “Profilo di Bonifacio,” 112. Simonetti includes two further paintings in the cycle of Aeneas pictures; however, these are significantly shorter in length and height than the other four, and should perhaps be considered separately (ibid., 112, cat. nos. 44/d, 44/e).

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**  

(illustrations next page)
Cat. no. 29, Circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati, *History of Rome: Triumphal Entrance (?), Departure of Aeneas, Flight of Clelia, Coriolanus and his Mother at the Gates of Rome* (image source: Simonetti, “Profilo di Bonifacio,” 263-264)
Cat. no. 30
Bonifacio de’ Pitati and Workshop

Antiochus and Stratonice
Oil on canvas (transferred to panel), 21 x 54 cm
Milan, Museo Poldi Pezzoli, inv. no. 1604/615

Type: Cassa

The rounded panel, originally displayed in the front center of a chest, depicts a scene from the story of Antiochus and Stratonice, as related by Valerius Maximus, Plutarch, and later authors including Petrarch and Bandello. Antiochus, son of the emperor Seleucus, has fallen in love with his stepmother, Stratonice, and, horrified by his passion, become gravely ill. Here, the bedridden Antiochus appears with his doctor, Erasistratus, while Stratonice reaches for a glass with which to nurse the young patient. He, in turn, has fallen into a swoon, giving away the secret of his love. At far right, in the outdoors, the doctor informs Seleucus of his discovery. According to Plutarch, the emperor responded by abdicating both throne and wife, allowing Antiochus to marry Stratonice and to accede to power. (1) The panel relates to several other ornamental paintings from the circle of Bonifacio. It closely matches the Birth of Hercules (cat. no. 31) in dimensions, costumes, coloring, and setting, though the latter painting is more awkwardly executed; it is likely a workshop piece executed after Antiochus and Stratonice. The dimensions of these works also match those of Cimon and Iphigenia (cat. no. 33).

DATING: ca. 1540-1545

NOTE:
(1) The tale appears in Valerius Maximus’s Factorum et Dictorum Memorabilium, Plutarch’s Life of Demetrius, Petrarch’s Trionfi, and Bandello’s Novelle (Vertova, “La Visita del Medico,” and Pirovano et al., Museo Poldi Pezzoli, 134). I am grateful to Andrea Di Lorenzo for access to and information about this work.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
**Cat. no. 31**  
Circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati  
_Birth of Hercules_  
Oil on canvas (transferred to panel), 20.3 x 53.5 cm  
Veneto, private collection (as of 1986)

Type: _Cassa_

Previously known as a “Birthing Scene,” the work is identified here as the _Birth of Hercules_ on the basis of compositional similarities with the illustration of this story in the 1497 vernacular printed edition of Ovid’s _Metamorphoses_ (Fig. 1). According to the tale (_Metamorphoses_, IX.281-323), Hercules was the illegitimate son of Jupiter, who deceived his wife, Juno, by impregnating Alcmena. Enraged and jealous, Juno turned the nurse-midwife Lucina against Alcmena. Called upon to assist at the excruciating labor, Lucina sat by an altar near the doorway, laced her hands together, and spoke “constricting charms.” The painting shows Alcmena in the throes of childbirth, surrounded by midwives and attendants. Lucina sits outside the door at right; she has just been tricked by Alcmena’s loyal servant Galanthis into loosening her hands and allowing the labor to proceed. The painting is similar in composition to _Antiochus and Stratonice_ (cat. no. 30) and, as discussed in the section on Workshops and Authorship in Ch. 1 above, is probably a workshop piece created on the basis of this exemplar. The picture has also been related, somewhat tenuously, to Bonifacio’s _Finding of Moses_ (cat. no. 32); it may recall the birth of Moses or another Biblical hero. The subject of childbirth is appropriate for a domestic _cassa_ decoration intended to promote ideals of family and fertility.

**DATING:** ca. 1545-1550

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

Pallucchini, _La Giovinezza del Tintoretto_, 28; Simonetti, “Profilo di Bonifacio,” 111; Cottrell, _Bonifacio’s Enterprise_, 269, 270.

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1. Giovanni Bonsignori, _Ovidio Metamorphoseos Vulgare_, f. LXXVIIv., _Birth of Hercules_  
(image source: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich)
Cat. no. 32
Bonifacio de’ Pitati
Finding of Moses
Oil on panel, 31 x 113.6 cm
Florence, Palazzo Pitti, Galleria Palatina, inv. no. 1912.161

Type: Cassa/Fregio

Like other works from Bonifacio’s circle (cat. nos. 30, 31), this painting is of an extended round shape, typical of a panel inserted into the front of a chest; however, its greater length suggests a possible fregio configuration, and the artist may have painted it with either setting in mind. The subject of a prodigious child with a great future in store echoes that of Bonifacio’s Legend of the Infant Servius Tullius (cat. no. 34), and the episodes in these two works are treated similarly: here, Pharaoh’s daughter and her maids appear among a party of well-dressed ladies and courtiers, akin to those who tend the Roman infant. At right, men and women strum and bow instruments, while other figures appear by the peaceful river at left. The work shares some formal similarities with Bonifacio’s monumental version of the Finding of Moses, dated ca. 1540 (Milan, Brera), particularly in the energetic and colorful grouping of figures, which looks forward to Veronese. Perhaps, like other versions of this subject from Bonifacio’s workshop, this version was derived from the Brera composition. (1) The Pitti Finding of Moses appeared in the 1675 inventory of the collection of Cardinal Leopoldo de’ Medici, where it was attributed to Veronese. (2)

DATING: ca. 1545

NOTES:
(1) For the Brera Finding of Moses and related studio productions, Cottrell, Bonifacio’s Enterprise, 228-232; see also discussion of Workshops and Authorship in Ch. 1 above.

(2) Simonetti, “Profilo di Bonifacio,” 110; Chiarini and Padovani, La Galleria Palatina, vol. 2, 86.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Westphal, Bonifazio Veronese, 69; Pallucchini, La Giovinezza del Tintoretto, 28; Simonetti, “Profilo di Bonifacio,” 110; Cottrell, Bonifacio’s Enterprise, 229, 230, 452; Chiarini and Padovani, La Galleria Palatina, vol. 2, 86.
Cat. no. 33
Circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati
Cimon and Iphigenia
Oil on canvas (transferred to panel), 20.3 x 53.5 cm
Italy, private collection (as of 1986)

Type: Cassa

The painting depicts a young woman sleeping beneath a stand of trees, approached on the right by a rustic shepherd boy while, to the left, ladies flee. It most likely represents the tale from the Decameron in which Cimon, an uncouth Cypriot, happens on to the sleeping beauty Iphigenia, accompanied by her maidervants, and is immediately transformed from a country laborer into a connoisseur of beauty (“di lavoratore, di bellezza subitamente giudice divenuto”). (1) Perhaps Bonifacio learned of this relatively uncommon subject from his teacher, Palma Vecchio, whose studio has been associated with a version of the theme now in the National Gallery, London (ca. 1510-1515). (2) Bonifacio’s workshop also produced close variants on the scene: several versions went up for auction in London in 1978 and 1982. (3)

DATING: ca. 1540-1550

NOTES:
(1) Boccaccio, Decameron, 321-330.

(2) Herman, Out of the Shadow of Titian, 61 n. 86. Gentili, however, attributes the London picture to an anonymous Venetian painter working ca. 1510-1515 (“Boccaccio a Venezia,” 27).

(3) Gentili, “Boccaccio a Venezia,” 27-29. One of these was formerly in the Robert von Hirsch collection (Cottrell, Bonifacio’s Enterprise, 233, 267-269, 442).

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cat. no. 33, Circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati, Cimon and Iphigenia
(image source: Simonetti, “Profilo di Bonifacio,” 262)
**Cat. no. 34**
Circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati
*Legend of the Infant Servius Tullius*
Oil on canvas, 26.7 x 102.2 cm
New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, inv. no. 32.100.78

**Type:** *Cassa/Fregio*

This oblong panel, fitting into either the front of a chest or a *fregio* configuration, depicts a porticoed palace in which attendants gather around an infant in his cradle. The picture’s subject was originally identified as the young St. Ambrose, who miraculously attracted a swarm of bees around his mouth, presaging his illustrious career. However, as Lino Moretti noted in 1991, the emanation around the child’s head in this picture is not bees but flames. The painting must illuminate a different portent of future greatness: the episode recounted in Livy’s history of Rome, in which the head of Servius Tullius, a humbly born infant in the house of King Tarquinius and his wife Tanaquil, “burst into flames in the sight of many.” Bonifacio renders the child’s cradle lying on the palace floor, as servant women swoon in marvel to the left, and the king, queen, and their retainers rush in from the right. The flames glow like a halo around his head. This subject, the fortunes of a royal house, befits a domestic setting. According to Livy, Queen Tanaquil took the miracle to mean that Servius Tullius would one day be a lamp to the family’s fortunes, and he eventually married Tarquinius’s daughter and assumed the throne. (1)

**DATING:** ca. 1540-1550

**NOTE:**

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**
Berenson, *Venetian School*, vol. 1, 44; Simonetti, “Profilo di Bonifacio,” 119.
**Cat. no. 35**  
Circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati

a) *Perseus and Andromeda*  
Oil on canvas (transferred to panel), 20.3 x 53.5 cm  
Veneto, private collection (as of 1986)

b) *Perseus and Andromeda*  
Oil on canvas, 25.4 x 76 cm  
Italy, private collection (as of 1986)

Type: *Cassa*

Rounded canvases that probably originated as chest front decorations, these works depict Perseus’s descent to rescue Andromeda, chained to a rock, from the sea-monster to whom she has been abandoned. The beast appears in slightly different attitudes in the two works, once with his jaws open and directed at Andromeda, once looking up at Perseus. Cottrell has characterized the first of these paintings (a) as an autograph work by Bonifacio of the late 1530s or early 1540s, and the second, larger canvas (b) as a later studio version that is more simplified and cruder in execution. Yet another workshop example of this theme is in the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo. The affinities among these types suggest that the design was produced in multiple at low cost by Bonifacio’s studio on the basis of the woodcut illustration of Perseus and Andromeda in the *Ovidio Metamorphoseos Vulgare* of 1497. (1)

DATING: ca. 1535-1545

NOTE:
(1) Cottrell, *Bonifacio’s Enterprise*, 233-234. See also the sections on Patterns and Hierarchies of Content, and Workshops and Authorship in Ch. 1 above.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Cat. no. 36
Circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati

Biblical Scenes
St. Petersburg, Hermitage

a) Israelites at the Red Sea  b) Prayer
Oil on panel, 30 x 70 cm  Oil on panel, 30 x 70 cm
Inv. no. ΓΕ 5496  Inv. no. ΓΕ 5497

Type: Cassa

These rounded panels probably decorated the fronts of a pair of cassa. The first depicts the drowning of Pharaoh’s army in the Red Sea, after the safe crossing of the Israelites (Exodus 14:21-30). In the second, a figure kneels on a hilltop, his hands clasped in prayer, while soldiers congregate behind him. This scene has been identified in the Hermitage catalogues as the prayer of Joshua, who beseeches the sun and moon to stand still (Joshua 10:12); and the figure does seem to be addressing a bright sun. However, another possibility, closer to the subject of the first panel, is Moses’s final prayer to be allowed to cross the Jordan into the land of Israel. God responds by ordering him to climb the mountain of Pisgah “and lift up your eyes westward and northward and southward and eastward, and behold it with your eyes; for you shall not go over this Jordan” (Deuteronomy 3:27). Similar in composition, with crowds of actors set against steep mountain vistas, the panels have been attributed to the young Schiavone, when he was presumably under the tutelage of Bonifacio de’ Pitati; but the bright-keyed coloring and plethora of figures suggest an artist closer to Bonifacio himself.

DATING: ca. 1540-1550

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Cat. no. 37
Circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati
Astrological Scenes
Padua, Museo Civico

a) *Children of Saturn*  b) *Children of the Moon*  c) *Children of Jupiter*
Oil on panel, 33 x 131 cm  Oil on panel, 33 x 131 cm  Oil on panel, 33 x 133 cm
Inv. no. 164  Inv. no. 242  Inv. no. 167

Type: *Fregio*

Perhaps these panels once belonged to a group of seven, progressing through the standard astrological signs of this time – the sun, moon, and five planets. The surviving scenes illustrate the influence of individual deities on the activities of mankind. Saturn, god of agriculture, rides a chariot pulled by winged creatures and presides over the sowing of seed and the slaughter of pigs, while one of his children is punished for his misdeeds by the stocks. The goddess of the moon, who controls the tides, supervises fishing and the mill. Jupiter, in a chariot pulled by peacocks, displays his power in the world of politics – at left, a king and his audience, perhaps poets about to be crowned with laurels – and religion – at right, an ecclesiastical assembly. The imagery may have been drawn from a well-known German print series, appearing by 1531, in which the gods appear in chariots above landscapes busy with activity.

DATING: ca. 1545-1550

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cat. no. 37, Circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati, *Astrological Scenes: Children of Saturn, Children of the Moon, Children of Jupiter* (images courtesy of the Museo Civico, Padua)
**Cat. no. 38**  
Circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati  
*Birth of Venus*  
Oil on panel, 28 x 110.5 cm  
Milan, Castello Sforzesco, Pinacoteca, inv. no. 55

Type: *Recinto da letto* (?)

The panel, depicting the newly born Venus as she floats toward shore, was first associated with the so-called *Sleeping Shepherd* in the Barnes Collection (cat. no. 67) in the 1960s. (1) Allowing for trimming on one or both lateral ends, its dimensions match those of the Barnes painting, and the panels are of the same height; however, as noted in the section on Beds in Ch. 2 above, this picture appears to have been painted later, is closer in style to Bonifacio de’ Pitati, and betrays some awkwardness of execution in the figure of Venus. It seems most likely that the works belonged to a common genre of sixteenth-century *recinto da letto* decorations, with similar subject matter and dimensions.

**DATING:** ca. 1550

**NOTE:**  
(1) The relationship between the panels was suggested by Richard Wattenmaker (letters of 1966 and 2002, Barnes Collection conservation files), to whom I am grateful for correspondence regarding their pairing. For further information about both paintings, see discussion of Beds in Ch. 2 above.

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**  
**Cat. no. 39**  
Giovanni Antonio da Pordenone  
*Satyr Family*  
Oil on panel, 36 x 93 cm  
Rome, Adele De Maria Macchi Collection  

Type: Musical Instrument  

The painting, depicting a satyr and figures at the edge of a forest, was identified during the nineteenth century as a one-time musical instrument decoration. This function is suggested by the panel’s size and trapezoidal shape, consistent with a domestic virginal or spinet; a traditional harpsichord is less likely, since these instruments were usually curved rather than polygonal in profile. The image may have served as a lid, or belonged to an exterior protective case, of the type that often accompanied keyboard instruments. (1) The design is attributed to the Friulian Giovanni Antonio da Pordenone and dated to around 1515, when he was learning from the Giorgionesque styles, formats, and subjects emanating northward from Venice. (2) Most strongly reflecting the influence of Giorgione and his circle is the picture’s ambiguous theme. A satyr crouches by a tree, with a child prostrate in his lap, while a nude man carrying a *satiretto* departs at left. A reclining female points to the exiting pair, while a third youth peers furtively at the scene from behind a tree. The satyr has often been described as “sleeping” or “wounded,” but appears actually to be grieving over the ill or dead child he holds. (3) Perhaps, as Cohen suggests, the ensemble is a satyr family, frequently depicted in northern European art during the first three decades of the sixteenth century. This type cast the satyr not as a lascivious attendant of Bacchus, but as a *paterfamilias* from early history, when beasts and humans mingled in the natural world. The picture also recalls Giorgione’s *Tempesta*, which likewise seems to show a child being brought up in nature, and was described during the sixteenth century as a portrait of a gypsy [zingana]. Gypsy bands were the latter-day satyr families of the Renaissance, considered animal-like primitives who roamed outside the borders of society. Perhaps Pordenone knew Giorgione’s painting or others like it, which depicted the kinship between man and creature in the wild. (4) In his grief, the main character epitomizes the satyr as an expressive being prone to extremes of emotion; he recalls the scene in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* when the satyrs and fauns weep hysterically after the death of Marsyas (VI.392-395). His location at the edge of a forest further suggests the customary Greek and Roman identification of the satyr as a spirit of the woods and mountains. The range of familiar allusions captured within this ultimately strange scene suggests that the artist intended a free variation on existing prototypes, and devised the painting like an improvised musical *fantasia* on the instrument it once adorned.  

**DATING:** ca. 1515-1516  

**NOTES:**  
(1) The harpsichord setting was first proposed by Di Maniago, *Storia delle Belle Arti Friulane*, 191. For the painted frame, Furlan, *Pordenone*, 78. The painting is recorded in an apparently nineteenth-century drawing now in Pordenone, Museo Civico d’Arte, which was at one time attributed to the artist Michelangelo Grigoletti (1801-1870); Ganzer and Gransinigh, however,
cast doubt on his authorship (Michelangelo Grigoletti, 255). See also Fiocco, Pordenone (1939), 42; Pilo, Michelangelo Grigoletti e il suo Tempo, 183; and Cohen, Pordenone, vol. 2, 543.

(2) For summary of the picture’s attribution history, Cohen, Pordenone, vol. 2, 543.

(3) Di Maniago writes that the satyr is sleeping (Storia delle Belle Arti Friulane, 191), while Morassi and Zampetti title the painting “il satiro ferito” (Morassi, Giorgione, 187; Zampetti, Giorgione e i Giorgioneschi, 258). Cohen, however, believes the satyr to be grieving (Pordenone, vol. 2, 544).

(4) For the satyr family subject, Cohen, Pordenone, vol. 2, 544. For a survey of this theme in northern European and Italian art, Kaufmann, The Noble Savage. In 1530, Michiel recorded in the house of Gabriel Vendramin “el paesetto in tela cun la tempesta, cun la cingana et soldato” by the hand of “Zorzi da Castelfranco” (Michiel, Notizia d’Opere del Disegno (ed. Frimmel), 57). For the relationship of Giorgione’s picture to the satyr family tradition, Holberton, “Giorgione’s Tempest,” 391-395.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cat. no. 39, Giovanni Antonio da Pordenone, Satyr Family
(image source: Cohen, Pordenone, vol. 2, pl. 109)
Cat. no. 40
Andrea Schiavone
Tale of Diana and Callisto

a) Jupiter and Callisto
Oil on canvas, 18.7 x 18.7 cm
London, National Gallery, inv. no. 1884

b) Diana and Callisto
Oil on canvas, 18.6 x 49 cm
Amiens, Musée de Picardie, inv. no. 1894-241

c) Arcas the Hunter
Oil on canvas, 18.7 x 18.7 cm
London, National Gallery, inv. no. 1883

Type: Cassa

As noted in the section on Chests and Boxes in Ch. 2 above, these three canvases once formed a single ensemble decorating a chest, with Jupiter and Callisto at left, Diana and Callisto at center, and Arcas the Hunter at right. (1) The central scene takes an oval shape, painted within a rectangular field, whose exposed corners would have been hidden by the chest’s framing aperture. Originally, the two smaller episodes either flanked this one on the front of the chest, or decorated its lateral ends. In both configurations, the paintings would have proceeded through events beginning with Callisto’s seduction, and ending with her reunion with her adolescent son many years later. The canvases have a common provenance in the Vivant Denon collection, where a Diana and Callisto was listed along with two unidentified “sujets de la Fable” in 1826; all three paintings were displayed in the bedchamber. They had probably come from Francesco Algarotti, who owned a painting of Diana and Callisto, along with “Apollon dans un bois qui tire de l’arc” and its pendant, “un vieillard qui tient une jeune fille embrassée.” (2) The paintings likely joined the Algarotti collection as a group after being detached from a furniture setting. In the Algarotti catalogue, the works are described as being painted on wood. Technical analysis, however, reveals their supports to be fine canvas, paste-lined onto thicker stretched linen canvas. (3) Originally, the canvases may have been mounted on wood panels, as was fairly common for furniture decoration.

In addition to a single provenance, the works share a common coloring scheme that connects the events depicted over time. The figures wear brilliant, loose garments of red, yellow, and pink, with traces of shell-gold. To render nude flesh, Schiavone avoids the usual iron oxide red pigments, using instead vermilion, which gives the bodies a particular luminosity. (4) Windblown draperies, outstretched limbs, and sprawling figural attitudes suggest the drama of the events unfolded, while the dark foliage and blue skies unify their setting.

DATING: ca. 1545-1550

NOTES:
(1) The identification of the subject of Arcas the Hunter was made by Carol Plazzotta (unpublished correspondence, curatorial files, National Gallery). I am grateful to Carol Plazzotta.
for access to and discussion of Jupiter and Callisto and Arcas the Hunter, and to Catherine Renaux of the Musée de Picardie for access to Diana and Callisto.

(2) For the paintings’ display in the bedchamber of Dominique Vivant Denon, Béguin et al., Splendeur de Venise, 178. For their provenance in the Algarotti and Vivant Denon collections, Gould, Sixteenth-Century Italian Schools, 241 n. 3, 4. This cycle has recently been related to several other decorative works in the Algarotti collection: see Campbell, “When is a Cassone Painting not for a Cassone?,” 16-18, and cat. no. 64 below.


SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Berenson, Venetian School, vol. 1, 159, 160; Gould, Sixteenth-Century Italian Schools, 240-241; Richardson, Andrea Schiavone, 152, 165-166; Martineau and Hope, The Genius of Venice, 206-207; Dunkerton et al., Dürer to Veronese, 130-131; Rosenberg, Dominique-Vivant Denon, 440-441; Pinette, Couleurs d’Italie, Couleurs du Nord, 28-29; Béguin et al., Splendeur de Venise, 178-179; Penny, National Gallery Catalogues, vol. 2, 116-123; Delieuvin and Habert, Titien, Tintoret, Véronèse, 332-336; Campbell, “When is a Cassone Painting not for a Cassone?,” 16-18.

Cat. no. 40, Andrea Schiavone, Tale of Diana and Callisto: Jupiter and Callisto, Arcas the Hunter, Diana and Callisto
(images courtesy of the National Gallery, London, and Musée de Picardie, Amiens)
Cat. no. 41
Circle of Andrea Schiavone (?)
*Story of Joseph*
Padua, Museo Civico

a) *Joseph Explains Pharaoh’s Dream*  
Oil on panel, 32 x 115 cm  
Inv. no. 308

b) *Voyage of Joseph’s Brothers to Egypt*  
Oil on panel, 32 x 115 cm  
Inv. no. 122

Type: *Fregio*

Like the decorations for the bedroom of the Florentine Pierfrancesco Borgherini, completed 1515-1518, these panels depict scenes from the life of Joseph. In the first, Pharaoh, crowned and sitting in a portico, hears the hero’s interpretation of his dream of the seven fat and seven emaciated cows; in the second, Joseph’s brothers are sent by their father from the famished land of Canaan to Egypt. As they approach, their donkeys’ sacks are empty, while before them, men carry bags of grain. Perhaps these panels were accompanied by other episodes in the long story recounted in Genesis. The works have been attributed by Banzato to the circle of Schiavone, although some details, such as the panoramic landscapes and careful treatment of the figures, are more typical of Bonifacio.

DATING: ca. 1540-1550

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
**Cat. no. 42**
Circle of Andrea Schiavone
*Apollo Flaying Marsyas* (r.)
Oil on panel, 21 x 26.5 cm
*Foliate Design* (v.)
Tempera on panel, 21 x 26.5 cm
Milan, Castello Sforzesco, Pinacoteca, inv. no. 1080a-b

Type: Musical Instrument (?)

One side of the panel, painted in oil, depicts the flaying of Marsyas, as Apollo attacks the howling satyr’s hoof. The sun god’s instrument, a *lira da braccio*, lies discarded at the left. The reverse displays an abstract foliate design, painted in tempera. Technical analysis reveals that this scrolling pattern predates the Apollo scene, and they were most likely not painted by the same hand. (1) However, both designs could conceivably have issued from the circle of Schiavone, who according to Ridolfi painted “little histories, foliage, grotesques and other bizarre things.” (2) The panel may have originally been painted with the vegetal design, then flipped and re-used to depict the scene of Apollo. Another possibility, however, is that it formed the lid of a small keyboard instrument, with the abstract pattern on the exterior and the musical scene of Apollo and Marsyas inside, or vice versa. The reverse displays damage at the bottom edge, where hinges may have been located.

**DATING:** ca. 1540-1550

**NOTES:**
(1) Pirovano et al., *Museo d’Arte Antica del Castello Sforzesco*, 142.


**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**
Cat. no. 43  
Circle of Andrea Schiavone  
*Apollo and Daphne*  
Tempera on panel, 18 x 39.8 cm  
Princeton, Princeton University Art Museum, inv. no. 1997-491

Type: *Cassa*

Apollo, wearing a yellow sash, pursues Daphne, who, having already taken root and begun to grow branches and leaves, turns back to him. At left, the reclining river god Peneus looks on. The small panel, which displays an apron of unpainted wood on all four sides, is of the appropriate size and shape for a Schiavonesque *cassa* decoration. The windblown garments recall those of the figures in the *Tale of Diana and Callisto* (cat. no. 40), but the execution of figures and landscape is schematic and simplified. As discussed in the section on Workshops and Authorship in Ch. 1 above, the artist was likely a *cofaner* working in the style of Schiavone.

DATING: ca. 1540-1550

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:  
Berenson, *Venetian School*, vol. 1, 161; Richardson, *Andrea Schiavone*, 200-201.
Cat. no. 44
Circle of Andrea Schiavone
Tales of Apollo
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie

a) Birth of Apollo
Oil on panel, 30 x 32.4 cm
Inv. no. 1986
b) Infancy of Apollo
Oil on panel, 30 x 32.4 cm
Inv. no. 1991
c) Apollo and Cupid
d) Apollo and Daphne
Oil on panel, 30 x 32.4 cm
Inv. no. 115
Oil on panel, 30 x 32.4 cm
Inv. no. 356

Type: Cassa/Fregio

The paintings were executed on very rough, thick planks of unprepared spruce wood, suggestive of an original furniture setting. They may have appeared within a chest front, or formed a linked frieze decorating a wainscot or other detail. By the mid-seventeenth century, the panels were in the collection of the Habsburg Archduke Leopold Wilhelm. (1)

The first scene depicts a child’s birth; in the second, he nurses, as men at right sound annunciatory horns. These events have traditionally been identified as the birth of Jupiter and his suckling by the nymph Amalthea. However, the woman who holds the child is his mother – the same figure who gives birth to him in the first panel – rather than the surrogate Amalthea. The infant should be identified instead as Apollo. In the royal inventory of 1659, the panels are described as “the birth of Apollo” and “the mother with her son Apollo at her breast,” and the depiction of this god’s birth and infancy form a natural prelude to the remaining images, relating his later exploits. (2) In the third scene, Apollo, dressed as a rustic hunter, confronts Cupid against a vividly uniform blue sky. For this composition, the artist quoted Titian’s painting of Saint John the Baptist (1545-1550; Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia), which also depicts a muscular, partially nude figure pointing with his forefinger, and a small animal at his feet. (3) The following scene depicts the lovestruck Apollo’s pursuit of Daphne.

In addition to appearing in documents of the Habsburg collections, the panels were included in David Teniers the Younger’s Theatrum Pictorium. In the etchings, the pictures appear to be taller. The edges of the original paint surfaces are visible today, suggesting that their current size is original and was inaccurately transcribed in the Theatrum. (4)

DATING: ca. 1540-1545

NOTES:
(1) The paintings’ spruce supports noted in conservation reports, Kunsthistorisches Museum. The backs of several members of the series are cradled, making further conclusions about their initial settings difficult. I thank Robert Wald for technical analysis of the paintings.

(3) Titian’s painting was in the church of Santa Maria Maggiore in Venice by the 1540s, and numerous artists visited to copy it (Walberg, “Una Compiuta Galleria di Pitture Veneziane,” 274). See also Wethey, Paintings of Titian, vol. 1, 136-137.

(4) Teniers, Theatrum Pictorium, pl. 132, 128, 126, 129.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Cat. no. 45
Circle of Andrea Schiavone (Battista Agnolo del Moro?)
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie

a) *Venus and Cupid*  
b) *Allegory of Music*
Oil on panel, 25 x 25 cm  
Inv. no. 359

Original part of a set of three, these panels passed from Venice to the Hamilton collection in England, then into the possession of Leopold Wilhelm of Austria, where they were recorded in the 1659 inventory of his collection. (1) *Venus and Cupid*, described in that document as “a Nymph with Cupid,” portrays a partially nude woman, grasping a figured urn, approached by the winged Cupid. In the *Allegory of Music* (“a Nymph with a Violin”), a kneeling woman bows an instrument. The third, now missing panel depicted “ein Häcz von Nimpfen mit Windspihl,” perhaps a circle of nymphs playing wind instruments, which would have joined the other paintings’ themes of love and music. In the royal collection, the scenes were mounted in a single gilded frame with three segments: the lost panel at center, *Venus and Cupid* at right, and the *Allegory of Music* at left. This frame may have been original, in which case the pictures would have been conceived by the painter as a single frieze-like arrangement. Or, they may have decorated a chest front; their cumulative length of about 75 cm suggests this format.

DATING: ca. 1540-1545

NOTE:
(1) “101. Drey Stückhel von Öhlfarb auf Holcz in einer glatt vergulden Ramen, warin in der Mitten ein Häcz von Nimpfen mit Windspihl, auf der rechten Handt ein Nimpfa mit dem Cupido, auf der linckhen auch eine Nimpfa mit einer Geigen... ” (Berger, “Inventar der Kunstsammlung des Erzherzogs Leopold Wilhelm,” xcii). For further discussion of the panels’ provenance, see the section on Venice to Vienna in Ch. 3 above.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Cat. no. 46
Circle of Andrea Schiavone
Lewisburg, Kress Collection, Bucknell University

a) *Priesthood* (?)  
b) *Force of Arms* (?)  
Oil on panel, 38 x 39 cm  
Oil on panel, 39 x 40 cm

Type: *Cassa*

This pair of *tondi* probably once decorated a chest. The first depicts an aged magus pouring liquid over a burning altar, while a man and woman kneel before him. In the second, a warrior holds a severed head before a portico containing a collection of arms and another flaming altar. In the background, a military encampment is visible. Ever since Berenson titled the panels *Priesthood* and *Force of Arms*, they have generally been considered allegorical in nature, but their specificity implies concrete events, perhaps episodes from the Trojan War.

In the seventeenth century, Ridolfi recorded “due sacrifici degli antichi” by Schiavone in the home of the Gradenigo family; the theme appears also in a *tondo* from the circle of Cima da Conegliano (cat. no. 14) and in paintings of the same shape from Andrea Vendramin’s collection, and recalls ancient coins and roundel reliefs. (1)

DATING: ca. 1550

NOTE:

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Berenson, *Venetian School*, vol. 1, 161; Gummo, *Study Collection of Renaissance Art*, 36-37; Richardson, *Andrea Schiavone*, 199.
Cat. no. 47
Circle of Andrea Schiavone
*Midas and Pan* (?)
Oil on panel, 17.8 x 40.5 cm
Riga, Museum of Foreign Art, inv. no. Ž-826

Type: *Cassa*

Beneath a spreading tree before a valley, a figure plays the pipe while another, wearing royal robes and a crown, observes. The painting most likely depicts Pan and King Midas, although Pan’s traditional musical adversary, Apollo, does not appear. Perhaps the panel was cut down, excising him. Or, an accompanying picture may have displayed the figure of Apollo; if so, the panels may have adjoined each other on a single chest front.

DATING: ca. 1550

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Cat. no. 48
Circle of Andrea Schiavone (Lambert Sustris?)

*Nessus and Deianeira*
Oil on panel, 24 x 95 cm
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-3374

Type: *Cassa*

This painting shares with the *Rape of Europa* (cat. no. 49) a recent provenance, the Lanz collection in Amsterdam, and the two works have been displayed together in the past, but their dimensions and styles differ. (1) *Nessus and Deianeira* depicts a theme that had appeared elsewhere in Venice, most notably in a roundel sculpted by the Lombardo workshop on the tomb of Doge Andrea Vendramin now at SS. Giovanni e Paolo (ca. 1493). On the basis of its attenuated figures and clear outlines, suggestive of central Italian influence, as well as its atmospheric landscape, the work has been attributed to the northerner Lambert Sustris working in the ambient of Schiavone. (2)

DATING: ca. 1550

NOTES:
(1) For the works’ shared provenance, van Thiel et al., *All the Paintings of the Rijksmuseum*, 504-505.

(2) For the attribution to Sustris, Berenson, *Venetian School*, vol. 1, 167; Ballarin, “Profilo di Lamberto d’Amsterdam,” 80 n. 35; idem, “Lamberto d’Amsterdam (Lamberto Sustris): Le Fonti e la Critica,” 364, 366; Couilleaux in Delieuvin and Habert, *Titien, Tintoret, Véronèse*, 331-332. See also the discussion of Sustris in the section on Workshops and Authorship in Ch. 1 above.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Cat. no. 49
Circle of Andrea Schiavone (Lambert Sustris?)
Rape of Europa
Oil on panel (transferred to canvas), 31 x 84 cm
Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, inv. no. SK-A-4009

Type: Cassa

The work, which has been displayed together with Nessus and Deianeira (cat. no. 48) in its recent history, shows a slightly different technique, with brushier paint application and quick wavy lines of paint used to render the surface of water and the surrounding air. The picture has been transferred to canvas, which may have augmented this effect. Like Nessus, the painting has been attributed to Lambert Sustris. Sustris was capable of working in a variety of stylistic idioms, from a clearly outlined, figurally exaggerated Mannerism to a more Venetian, broken and atmospheric impressionism. The present work demonstrates the latter end of his spectrum of painterly styles, suggesting the influence of Schiavone. (1)

DATING: ca. 1550

NOTE:
(1) The work is attributed to Sustris by Berenson (Venetian School, vol. 1, 167) and Ballarin (‘Profilo di Lamberto d’Amsterdam,’ 80 n. 35, and idem, ‘Lamberto d’Amsterdam (Lamberto Sustris): Le Fonti e la Critica,’ 364, 366). For Sustris’s range of stylistic capabilities, Echols, ‘Tintoretto, Christ at the Sea of Galilee, and the Unknown Later Career of Lambert Sustris,’ 100; see also the discussion of Workshops and Authorship in Ch. 1 above.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Berenson, Venetian School, vol. 1, 167; Ballarin, ‘Profilo di Lamberto d’Amsterdam,’ 80 n. 35; Ballarin, ‘Lamberto d’Amsterdam (Lamberto Sustris): Le Fonti e la Critica,’ 364, 366; van Thiel et al., All the Paintings of the Rijksmuseum, 504-505; Richardson, Andrea Schiavone, 197.
**Cat. no. 50**
Circle of Andrea Schiavone  
*Narcissus*  
Oil on canvas, 28 x 73 cm  
Budapest, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 59.12

Type: *Cassa/Fregio*

This painting, depicting Narcissus enraptured by his image before a stream and a hilly landscape, may originally have decorated a chest front; or perhaps it was grouped with the Schiavonesque *Rape of Europa* (cat. no. 49) or other similarly sized works in a *fregio* configuration.

**DATING:** ca. 1550

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**  

![Cat. no. 50, Circle of Andrea Schiavone, Narcissus](image source: Haraszti-Takács, *Masters of Mannerism*, ill. 11)
Cat. no. 51  
Andrea Schiavone  
*Tales of Aeneas*  
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie  

a) *Aeneas Recalled from Dido*  
   Oil on canvas, 63 x 114 cm  
   Inv. no. 5816  

b) *Aeneas Takes Leave of Dido*  
   Oil on canvas, 62.5 x 115 cm  
   Inv. no. 5818  

Type: *Recinto da letto*

In his life of Schiavone, Ridolfi records a series of “little histories of the deeds of Aeneas: his departure from Troy, carrying his father Anchises on his shoulders, and young Julius holding his hand, while the city was left to be consumed by flames; the debarkation of the same at Carthage; the loves of Dido; and other actions taken up by Virgil, made by the artist for the enclosure of a bed [per un recinto da letto], according to the custom of those times, for slight recognition.” The paintings of *Aeneas Recalled from Dido* and *Aeneas Takes Leave of Dido* once belonged to this cycle, which was first owned by the sculptor Alessandro Vittoria, an early admirer of Schiavone. Ridolfi reports that the paintings moved from Vittoria’s estate to the collection of Bartolomeo della Nave, and then to England. (1) An inventory of the della Nave collection compiled by an English agent during the 1630s lists “a part of a Room with the History of Eneas in 25 figures long p[almi] 18 to 20 high 3 of Andrea Schiavone,” an account consistent with Ridolfi’s description of the works as *recinto da letto* paintings. From the Hamilton collection in London, they passed to Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria. (2)

The subject of Aeneas and his adventures was popular in Venetian ornamental painting, appearing in a series of *fregio* pictures from the circle of Schiavone (cat. no. 54); Mantegna and Bellini illuminated similar themes from ancient history and mythology in their early *fregio* group (cat. no. 27). Incorporated into the decorative schemes of Venetian homes, such images celebrated the city’s fabled origins, linking the triumphs of the Republic and its citizens with the heroism of Aeneas and his descendants. Schiavone’s cycle, however, is dreamy and allusive in tone; rather than glorifying Aeneas’s military exploits, it conjures a poetic vision of his romance with Dido, befitting the nuptial chamber for which it was probably designed. (3)

The first surviving canvas depicts Aeneas and Dido sitting in a landscape with a soldier, as a winged genius directs the hero to depart. The inspiration for this composition may have come from Pordenone, whose now lost frescoes on the façade of the Palazzo Talenti-d’Anna on the Grand Canal included the same scene. Usually dated ca. 1535 on the basis of contemporary descriptions and an extant preparatory study (Figs. 1-2; ca. 1531-1535; London, Victoria & Albert Museum), the frescoes were praised by Vasari and would have provided a compelling model for Schiavone, though his scene differs formally from Pordenone’s. The latter artist’s drawing shows a powerful, diagonal rear view of Mercury descending into a vertical compartment on the left side of the *piano nobile* façade, as if soaring in from above the rooftops of Venice. (4) By contrast, the Vienna painting is horizontally organized and presents a graceful lateral perspective of the flying envoy. Schiavone chooses to convey drama instead by atmospheric effects, as the turbulent sky and the messenger’s flowing garments recall Virgil’s
description: “wand in hand, he can drive winds before him, swimming down along the stormcloud” (*Aeneid*, IV.242-246). (5)

The second known canvas depicts the “arc of waterfront, all in commotion” (IV.416-418) where Aeneas and his crew prepare to depart. This image roughly corresponds to Ridolfi’s description of the “debarkation at Carthage,” although an embarkation is actually shown. Standing before a rich colonnade and accompanied by female attendants bearing gifts – reminders of the pleasures of the court that Aeneas is renouncing – Dido pleads with the hero to remain by her side.

In his account of the *Aeneid* series, Ridolfi describes a more extensive narrative, beginning with Aeneas’s escape from burning Troy; the English inventory of della Nave’s collection, too, refers to a larger cycle depicting 25 figures, and notes that it is at least six times as long as it is high. (6) This evidence indicates that the group once contained additional canvases. One of these, depicting the opening scene described by Ridolfi – Aeneas and his family fleeing Troy – is recorded in the 1649 inventory of the Hamilton collection. This work has since gone missing, and its relation to another scene of Aeneas and his father, recorded in the *Theatrum Pictorium*, is uncertain. Other potential members of the cycle, also lost, are documented in Teniers’s volume: one image of a pair of elderly men presenting an object to an armored youth in a landscape, and another of a palm-bearing woman crowning a man holding a balance and sword, flanked by figures with attributes of pots and urns (Figs. 3-4). These plates appear near the surviving *Aeneas* scenes (Figs. 5-6) in the *Theatrum Pictorium*, and are of similar dimensions and subject matter. The original assembly remains difficult to reconstruct; it was evidently broken up and some of its components mislaid upon the distribution of Leopold Wilhelm’s holdings among various Habsburg properties. (7)

In style, the integral ensemble would have presented a single vivid tableau, with boldly patterned golds, blues, and browns lending decorative coherence to the narrative’s horizontal expanse. The scene of Aeneas’s recall from Dido displays a mixture of azurite and ultramarine blues, the richer ultramarine (now abraded) reserved for Dido’s costume. Using both oil and tempera, the artist sought to create striking texture and depth; working with fast, open strokes of the brush, he left areas of ground exposed, producing exaggerated effects of environment and lighting. (8) This treatment corresponds to Schiavone’s loose and improvisatory interpretation of Virgil’s poem, which has led later viewers to understand the paintings as romantic landscapes rather than as specific mythological episodes. The 1659 inventory of Leopold Wilhelm’s collection, for example, lists the paintings separately – indicating that they were probably not displayed consecutively as a narrative – and makes no mention of their Virgilian subject matter. *Aeneas Recalled from Dido* is described as “a landscape in oil on canvas, in which a Nymph sits in a seat with an open book in her left hand, near a soldier and a herdsman (?) and an angel in the sky;” while *Aeneas Takes Leave of Dido* is “a piece in oil on canvas, depicting two Romans, one with a shield in his left hand, before whom a woman is kneeling, and two others standing nearby, with a river containing a great boat on one side.” (9) These accounts suggest that the pictures were appreciated during the seventeenth century not for their concrete references to classical narratives, but for their vibrant, expressionistic evocation of the faces and settings of the antique world.

DATING: ca. 1555-1560
NOTES:

(1) “Soleva negli avvanzi del tempo lo sfortunato Schiavone far quadri tuttavia per le botteghe ‘dipintori, trahendone in simil guisa scarsamente il vitto. Or mentre un giorno due ne portava à soliti Bottegai, fu incontrato da Alessandro Vittoria Scultore, il quale con chiari effetti faceva conoscere non essere stato favoloso il tramutare i sassi in huomini, cangiando anch’egli marmi in spiranti figure, e sforzatoli à lasciarglieli vedere, e giudicandogli delle migliori sue fatiche, li volle per se, dandogli prezzo vantaggioso de’ Bottegai, ricusando Andrea tuttavia il concederglieli, non gli stimando degni d’un suo pari, quali caderono dopo la morte del Vittoria in Bartolomeo dalla Nave, con molti disegni del Parmigiano, che pervennero finalmente in Inghilterra con altre piccole historie de’ fatti d’Enea, del partirsi ch’ei fece da Troia, portando il Padre Anchise sopra le spalle, e Giulio picciolletto à mano, mentre quella Città rimase esca delle fiamme; lo sbarco del medemo in Cartagine; gli Amori di Didone, & altre attioni tratte da Virgilio, fatte dall’Autore per un recinto da letto (conforme accostumavasi in que’ tempi) per lieve riconoscime” (Ridolfi, Maraviglie, vol. 1, 252-253). The surviving two canvases have mirror-image seams (on the right side of Aeneas Recalled from Dido, on the left side of Aeneas Takes Leave of Dido), indicating that they are pendants originally cut from the same bolt of cloth (Robert Wald, technical analysis, June 2008). For further information about this cycle, see the discussion of Beds in Ch. 2 above.

(2) For the della Nave inventory entry, Waterhouse, “Paintings from Venice for Seventeenth-Century England,” 17. The compiler of the inventory was Basil, Viscount Feilding, Ambassador to Venice during the 1630s, who coordinated the purchase of the della Nave collection by the Marquis of Hamilton. For further discussion of the works’ provenance, see the section on Venice to Vienna in Ch. 3 above.

(3) For Venetians’ refashioning of antiquity for civic and humanistic purposes, Brown, Venice and Antiquity, esp. 95-115.


(5) All translations are from Virgil, Aeneid (trans. Fitzgerald).

(6) For Ridolfi’s account, see n. 1 above. As noted in the catalogue text above, in the 1630s inventory of Bartolomeo della Nave’s collection, the cycle was described as “a part of a Room with the History of Eneas in 25 figures long p[almi] 18 to 20 high 3 of Andrea Schiavone” (Waterhouse, “Paintings from Venice for Seventeenth-Century England,” 17).

(7) Item 124 of the 1649 inventory of the Hamilton collection lists “Aeneas portant son pere, un navire, et 3 autre figures 2 1/2 quaree” (Garas, “Die Entstehung der Galerie des Erzherzogs Leopold Wilhelm,” 78). This painting is probably not identical with the work appearing in Teniers, Theatrum Pictorium, pl. 131, and copied by Teniers for a small pasticcio now in
London, Courtauld Gallery. In any case, both original paintings are lost. See Richardson, *Andrea Schiavone*, 160-161, and Vegelin van Claerbergen, *David Teniers and the Theatre of Painting*, 110-111. The other paintings documented in the *Theatrum Pictorium* that may have belonged to the *Aeneas* series are pl. 136, 138.

(8) Visual analysis of pigment and technique courtesy of Robert Wald. For the overall coloring scheme, Richardson, *Andrea Schiavone*, 60, 187-188.


SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cat. no. 51, Andrea Schiavone, *Tales of Aeneas: Aeneas Recalled from Dido, Aeneas Takes Leave of Dido* (images courtesy of Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)

(illustrations continue next page)
1-2. Giovanni Antonio da Pordenone, Drawing for the façade of Palazzo Talenti-d’Anna, and detail of *Aeneas Recalled from Dido* at upper left
London, Victoria & Albert Museum

3-4. Teniers, *Theatrum Pictorium* (1684), pl. 136, 138
(images courtesy of Marquand Library, Princeton University)

5-6. Etchings after *Tales of Aeneas*
Teniers, *Theatrum Pictorium* (1684), pl. 137, 135
(images courtesy of Marquand Library, Princeton University)
Cat. no. 52
Circle of Andrea Schiavone
Tale of Psyche

a) Psyche at the Palace of Cupid
Oil on canvas, 35 x 52.8 cm
Venice, Gallerie dell‘Accademia, inv. no. 341

b) Arrival of Psyche‘s Sisters (?)
Oil on canvas, 33 x 36 cm
Kassel, Staatliche Gemäldegalerie, inv. no. 493

c) Departure of Psyche‘s Sisters (?)
Oil on canvas, 36 x 53 cm
Venice, Gallerie dell‘Accademia, inv. no. 337

d) Psyche and Sleeping Cupid
Oil on canvas, 35 x 38 cm
Kassel, Staatliche Gemäldegalerie, inv. no. 494

e) Psyche and Pan
Oil on canvas, 35.5 x 52.2 cm
Venice, Gallerie dell‘Accademia, inv. no. 336

f) Psyche and Jupiter (?)
Oil on canvas, 34.9 x 50.5 cm
Venice, Gallerie dell‘Accademia, inv. no. 335

Type: Fregio

These panels illustrate scenes from the tale of Psyche and Cupid, recounted by Apuleius in The Golden Ass. (1) Psyche, an earthly maiden of matchless beauty, awakens the wrathful jealousy of Venus, who sends Cupid to arouse the girl’s love for a vile man. Instead, Cupid himself falls in love with her, brings her to his palace, and makes love to her under cover of night. Psyche’s sisters urge her to discover her lover’s identity, and a series of disasters ensues. The story concludes, however, with the joyful marriage of Psyche and Cupid in heaven. Because this painted cycle does not include the marriage scene – the most common in depictions of this tale – there are most likely some panels missing. Originally, the works must have formed a series long enough to circle the panelling of an entire wall or room.

Several of the surviving scenes depict Cupid’s palace: Psyche’s arrival there (a), where invisible servants wash her feet; subsequently (b, c), when her visiting sisters goad her to discover her lover’s identity, before departing with the West Wind. In a following panel (d), the compliant Psyche carries a lamp and a dagger to Cupid’s bed. Soon after, however, the awakened Cupid flees, and Psyche is bereft of her love. Another panel (e) must depict the brokenhearted maiden, who has unsuccessfully tried to drown herself in a river, being comforted by the goat-eared Pan. The last surviving picture (f) might illuminate the moment later in the tale when Psyche, while wandering the earth in search of Cupid, is whisked up to visit Jupiter, who confers on her the status of a goddess.

According to Ridolfi, Giorgione depicted the story of Psyche in a similarly extensive series; though it is not clear if the artist ever authored such a cycle, perhaps works of this kind inspired Schiavone’s group. Ridolfi further noted that the latter artist painted the same subject in several parts for a ceiling. (2)
DATING: ca. 1560

NOTES:


SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cat. no. 52, Circle of Andrea Schiavone, *Tale of Psyche*: *Psyche at the Palace of Cupid*, *Arrival of Psyche’s Sisters (?)*, *Departure of Psyche’s Sisters (?)*, *Psyche and Sleeping Cupid*, *Psyche and Pan*, *Psyche and Jupiter (?)* (images courtesy of the Polo Museale Veneziano and Staatliche Museen, Kassel)
**Cat. no. 53**  
Circle of Andrea Schiavone  
Venice, Gallerie dell’Accademia (on deposit at Palazzo Grimani as of April 2010)

a) *Deucalion and Pyrrha*  
b) *The Judgment of Midas*  
Oil on panel, 41 x 118 cm  
Oil on panel, 41 x 118 cm  
Inv. no. 713  
Inv. no. 714

**Type:** *Recinto da letto (?)*

The panels are of identical size and have not been cut down. As noted in the section on Beds in Ch. 2 above, the works’ dimensions and format are consistent with the decoration of *a recinto da letto*, and the theme of Deucalion and Pyrrha would have proved especially apt for such a setting. This was probably not the only version of the subject from the circle of Schiavone; another appeared in the seventeenth-century picture collection of Andrea Vendramin. (1)

**DATING:** ca. 1560

**NOTE:**  
(1) Borenius, *Picture Gallery of Andrea Vendramin*, pl. 59. According to Ridolfi, the subject of Deucalion and Pyrrha was among those painted by the young Giorgione for furniture settings (*Maraviglie*, vol. 1, 98). I am grateful to Alfeo Michieletto for access to these paintings.

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**  
Cat. no. 54

Follower of Andrea Schiavone (Lambert Sustris?)

History of Troy

Turin, Galleria Sabauda

a) Judgment of Paris
   Oil on panel, 35 x 156 cm
   Inv. no. 562

b) Abduction of Helen
   Oil on panel, 35 x 155 cm
   Inv. no. 570

c) Iphigenia in Aulis (?)
   Oil on panel, 35 x 155.5 cm
   Inv. no. 561

d) Taking of Troy
   Oil on panel, 35 x 155 cm
   Inv. no. 569

Type: Fregio

When these panels entered the collection of the Duke of Savoy in 1607, they were described by the artist Gaspare Mola as “quattro quadri a uso di fregi,” indicating their probable setting during the half-century after their composition. (1) The Trojan War and its aftermath were often depicted in such settings; Ridolfi noted similar scenes painted by Schiavone for a recinto da letto (cat. no. 51), and many similar examples likely have not survived. This series depicts a wide range of events, drawing on the accounts of Homer, Virgil, and Ovid. In the first panel, Paris judges the fateful beauty contest among Juno, Minerva, and Venus. Next, Paris and his armies abduct Helen. The third panel depicts a scene of sacrifice, attended by, among others, an aging priest and a young, partially nude figure kneeling before the altar. Perhaps this is the episode recounted by Ovid in which the Greeks are halted in their progress toward Troy and ordered to sacrifice Agamemnon’s daughter, Iphigenia, in order to proceed. The last scene depicts the ravaged and burning city of Troy, which the young prince, Aeneas, flees under cover of night, carrying his father. The series thus spans events from the mythical contest that precipitated the war, up to the escape leading ultimately to the founding of Rome.

Attributed to Titian in the seventeenth century, the paintings were later given to an artist in the circle of Andrea Schiavone and, most recently, to Lambert Sustris. (2)

DATING: ca. 1560

NOTES:
(1) “Prima deve dare Sua Altezza a dì 20 febbraio 1607 per quattro quadri a uso di fregi di mano di Ticiano comprati di commissione di S.A. per scudi 400 d’oro” (quoted in Gabrielli, Galleria Sabauda, 241). I am grateful to Paola Astrua of the Galleria Sabauda for information about these works.

(2) Ballarin, “Profilo di Lamberto d’Amsterdam,” 80 n. 33; Richardson, Andrea Schiavone, 201. For Lambert Sustris and other paintings possibly attributable to him, Echols, Titoreto and Venetian Painting, 330-344.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cat. no. 54, Follower of Andrea Schiavone (Lambert Sustris?), *History of Troy: Judgment of Paris, Abduction of Helen, Iphigenia in Aulis (?)*, *Taking of Troy* (images courtesy of the Galleria Sabauda, Turin)
**Cat. no. 55**
Circle of Jacopo Tintoretto

*Old Testament Scenes*
Verona, Museo di Castelvecchio

a) *Transport of the Sacred Ark*
Oil on panel, 22 x 27 cm
Inv. no. 263-1B227

b) *Samson and the Philistines*
Oil on panel, 22 x 27 cm
Inv. no. 265-1B228

c) *Feast of Belshazzar*
Oil on panel, 22 x 27 cm
Inv. no. 264-1B229

d) *Judgment of Solomon*
Oil on panel, 22 x 27 cm
Inv. no. 266-1B230

Type: *Fregio*

These small panels anticipate Tintoretto’s monumental cycle of Biblical scenes in Vienna (cat. no. 58), illuminating episodes from the Old Testament in an oblong format. With its diagonally placed table spread, the *Feast of Belshazzar* recalls other banquet scenes by Tintoretto, but is distinguished by the proverbial “writing on the wall” that appears during the sinful celebrations of the Babylonian king. *Samson among the Philistines* shows the “heaps upon heaps” of Philistines whom Samson killed in retribution for their taunts; he kneels over their corpses with his arms spread. In the *Transport of the Sacred Ark*, one figure has collapsed in the foreground as the Israelites bear the ark over rocky terrain. The *Judgment of Solomon* depicts the disputed child twice, first as one woman makes her claim to it, next as a man prepares to sacrifice it, before the true mother’s intervention.

The compositions are heavily peopled and characterized by overall blue and brown coloring touched with streaks of golden yellow. Their technique relates to that of Tintoretto’s *Disputation of Christ in the Temple* (Milan, Museo del Duomo), dated to the 1540s; however, the Verona scenes were probably executed by a workshop assistant rather than the artist himself. As noted in the section on Friezes in Ch. 2 above, the panels remain in their original lobed frames, which suggest the configurations of *fregio* paintings. (1)

**DATING**: ca. 1541-1542

**NOTE:**
(1) Originally catalogued as works of Schiavone, the paintings are now attributed to Tintoretto’s circle (Fröhlich-Bum, “Andrea Meldolla, genannt Schiavone,” 211; Echols, *Tintoretto and Venetian Painting*, 127 n. 126). Echols and Ilchman point to the flat execution of the figures and suggest an associate or assistant of Tintoretto working in his style (“Toward a New Tintoretto Catalogue,” 137). The original framing was verified by Gianni Peretti, Curator, Museo di Castelvecchio. In his nineteenth-century catalogue, Ferrari proposed that the pictures decorated the “parapetto di un mobile,” but their framing shows no evidence of previous attachment to another piece of furniture (Ferrari, *Catalogo Bernasconi*, cat. no. 196).

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

Cat. no. 55, Circle of Jacopo Tintoretto, *Old Testament Scenes: Transport of the Sacred Ark, Samson and the Philistines, Feast of Belshazzar, Judgment of Solomon*  
(images courtesy of the Museo di Castelvecchio, Verona)
**Cat. no. 56**

Circle of Jacopo Tintoretto

*Ovidian Tales*

a) *Jupiter and Semele*
   - Oil on panel, 22.5 x 65.8 cm
   - London, National Gallery, inv. no. 1476

b) *Argus and Mercury*
   - Oil on panel (transferred to masonite), 22.9 x 65.4 cm
   - Private collection (1)

c) *Apollo and Diana Killing the Children of Niobe*
   - Oil on panel, 22.6 x 65.8 cm
   - London, Courtauld Gallery, inv. no. 337

d) *Latona and the Peasants of Lycia*
   - Oil on panel, 22.9 x 67.7 cm
   - London, Courtauld Gallery, inv. no. 77

Type: *Cassa/Fregio*

Technical analysis of these paintings suggests that they originally belonged to a single cycle. The panel supports of *Jupiter and Semele* and *Latona and the Peasants* were cut from the same tree; *Apollo and Diana* probably was, as well, but its wood is now too thin for dendrochronological study, while *Argus and Mercury* has been transferred to a masonite support. (2) The three works still on wood bear signs of a common provenance: on the reverse of each panel appear two impressed monograms of an ‘A’ and ‘S’ in reverse, linked by a cross and enclosed in a double circle. Although it has been proposed that the panels decorated one or more *casse*, their long format and serial nature are also consistent with scenes placed end to end along an upper wall. (3)

The cycle as a whole is organized into two pairs of linked tales, focusing on the deities Jupiter and Latona. In *Jupiter and Semele*, the god descends to his mistress in a blaze of lightning, which illuminates her bed with tongues of fire; Semele turns her head towards him, comically unaware of her coming demise. In *Argus and Mercury*, the many-eyed giant, guardian of Jupiter’s lover Io, is slain by the wing-footed god at Jupiter’s behest. *Apollo and Diana* depicts these gods murdering with bows and arrows the children of haughty Niobe, who had dared to insult the goddess Latona. The last painting depicts a tale that circulated after the death of Niobe’s children: Latona’s reputation for wrath extended back to the time when, denied drinking water by the peasants of Lycia, she turned them into frogs. In this image, the peasants crouch in the water, still human but taking on frog-like postures. Their hands are underwater, and the blurring of forms at their edges suggests incipient changes.

Probably executed by assistants or associates of Tintoretto, these pictures have sometimes been associated with a fifth, the so-called *Contest between Apollo and Marsyas* in Coral Gables (cat. no. 57); but that painting’s different dimensions and support suggest that it does not belong to the same group. (4)

**DATING:** ca. 1543-1545

**NOTES:**
(1) I thank Caroline Campbell, Graeme Barraclough, and Genevieve Silvester for access to Apollo and Diana and Latona and the Peasants and for information about this ensemble. The painting of Argus and Mercury, earlier in the Suida Manning Collection in New York, was no longer there when it was appraised in 1994 (Penny, National Gallery Catalogues, vol. 2, 141 n. 8). It was sold to a private collector on June 5, 2008, at Sotheby’s, New York, lot 5, as Bonifacio de’ Pitati (Echols and Ilchman, “Toward a New Tintoretto Catalogue,” 145).

(2) Plesters, “Tintoretto’s Paintings in the National Gallery,” 25. For Argus and Mercury’s masonite support, Pallucchini and Rossi, Tintoretto, vol. 1, 140.

(3) Plesters raises the possibility of both a cassa decoration and “a decorative scheme for a room” (“Tintoretto’s Paintings in the National Gallery,” 28).

(4) For the works’ relationship to the Contest between Apollo and Marsyas (?) in Coral Gables, Pallucchini and Rossi, Tintoretto, vol. 1, 139-140; Echols and Ilchman suggest that Argus and Mercury is by the same hand as the Coral Gables painting (“Toward a New Tintoretto Catalogue,” 145). The present series as a whole has been associated with a group of pictures dated to the 1540s – including the Apollo and Marsyas for Pietro Aretino (Hartford, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art), and the Allegory of Fortune (Milan, Brera) – and attributed to a follower of Tintoretto, perhaps Domenico Molino (Echols, Tintoretto and Venetian Painting, 240-255). Latona and Apollo and Diana have also been linked to the composition of Samson and the Philistines from Tintoretto’s Vienna Old Testament cycle (cat. no. 58; see Echols and Ilchman, op. cit., 137-138).

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Berenson, Venetian School, vol. 1, 174; Bernari, L’Opera Completa del Tintoretto, 88-89; Gould, Sixteenth-Century Italian Schools, 263; Braham, Princes Gate Collection, 82-83; Pallucchini and Rossi, Tintoretto, vol. 1, 139-140; Plesters, “Tintoretto’s Paintings in the National Gallery,” 24-29; Echols, Tintoretto and Venetian Painting, 243-255; Dunkerton et al., Dürer to Veronese, 129-130; Nichols, Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity, 97-98; Cottrell, Bonifacio’s Enterprise, 268, 269; Penny, National Gallery Catalogues, vol. 2, 138-141; Delieuvin and Habert, Titien, Tintoret, Véronèse, 330-332; Echols and Ilchman, “Toward a New Tintoretto Catalogue,” 137-138, 145; Campbell, “When is a Cassone Painting not for a Cassone?,” 18-20.

(illustrations next page)
Cat. no. 56, Circle of Jacopo Tintoretto, *Ovidian Tales*: Jupiter and Semele, Argus and Mercury, Apollo and Diana Killing the Children of Niobe, Latona and the Peasants of Lycia
**Cat. no. 57**

Circle of Jacopo Tintoretto

*Contest between Apollo and Marsyas (?)*

Oil on canvas, 22.6 x 54.6 cm

Coral Gables, Lowe Art Museum, University of Miami, inv. no. 61.014.000

Type: *Cassa/Fregio*

This painting has been associated with the series of Ovidian tales also from the circle of Tintoretto (cat. no. 56), but its slightly smaller dimensions and canvas support indicate a work apart from that group. Perhaps it belonged to another series of *fregio* or *cassa* pictures on canvas illustrating mythological scenes. (1) The work’s subject at first appears to be the musical rivalry between Apollo and Marsyas, the former at right playing his *viola da braccio*, the latter with pipes. But that contest was judged by the Muses, while the spectators in this picture appear to be a group of men, including two aged and bearded figures; they evoke Midas and Timolus, who attended the instrumental competition between Apollo and Pan. Tintoretto represented these myths separately in other works, most notably Aretino’s ceiling painting of *Apollo and Marsyas* (1544-1545; Hartford, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art), to which the present composition is clearly indebted.

**DATING:** ca. 1545

**NOTE:**

(1) I am grateful to Kara Schneiderman for information about this painting. Berenson, Fiocco, Longhi, van Marle, Suida, and Venturi, among others, have attributed the painting to Tintoretto (Lowe Art Museum, curatorial files). Another possible author is Domenico Molino; for his relationship to Tintoretto and potential attributions, Echols, *Tintoretto and Venetian Painting*, 240-255. Echols and Ilchman suggest that this painting is by the same hand as *Argus and Mercury* (cat. no. 56) and propose a derivation from Tintoretto’s ceiling for Aretino (“Toward a New Tintoretto Catalogue,” 145).

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

Cat. no. 58
Jacopo Tintoretto and assistants
Biblical Tales
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie

a) Solomon and the Queen of Sheba
Oil on panel, 29 x 157 cm
Inv. no. 3830

b) Feast of Belshazzar
Oil on panel, 29 x 156 cm
Inv. no. 3829

c) Carrying of the Sacred Ark
Oil on panel, 29.5 x 157 cm
Inv. no. 3831

d) Promise to David (?)
Oil on panel, 29 x 153.5 cm
Inv. no. 3832

e) David and Bathsheba (?)
Oil on panel, 29.5 x 154 cm
Inv. no. 3833

f) Samson and the Philistines
Oil on panel, 30 x 156 cm
Inv. no. 3828

g) Adoration of the Golden Calf
Oil on panel, 29 x 76 cm
Inv. no. 7039

Type: Cassa

These paintings, which once decorated a collection of wooden chests, have a distinguished provenance going back to the early seventeenth-century collections of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham. The panels remained intact in their casse during this period: in an inventory dated to 1635, they are described as “Seven Italian Painted Chests,” while another document of 1758, copied from an inventory of circa 1648, notes “seven Italian Trunks, histories of Old and New Testament.” (1) The ensemble subsequently passed to Archduke Leopold Wilhelm of Austria, who sent it to the Castle of Prague; there, all but one of the paintings remained together, appearing in a 1685 inventory as “six kinds of illustrations from the holy writings” attributed to Schiavone. No furniture setting was mentioned, suggesting that by this point, the panels had been separated from their associated chests. The Adoration of the Golden Calf, meanwhile, was isolated from the cycle; the 1685 inventory listed it apart from the others, and described it generically as “a history with many figures.” (2) The only member of the series now less than a meter long, the panel was probably cropped at or after this time for independent display. The Adoration did not rejoin the other pictures until about two hundred years later, when the Habsburgs recalled a variety of works of art from the corners of their empire for hanging in the nascent Kunsthistorisches Museum. In 1880, the seven panels travelled in a large shipment from Prague to Vienna, and entered the gallery as easel paintings. (3)

Like the documentary record, the works’ physical configuration supports their identification as one-time furniture ornaments. The scenes are painted on soft spruce, commonly used for cabinetmaking in Italy (though also sometimes employed as a support for framed paintings), and the panel backs are rough and unprepared, contrasting with the pegs and chamfering typical of finished easel pictures. Of the group, only the Adoration has been substantially altered; its thin
Painted surface was applied to a supporting plank, and wooden strips were added to its top and bottom edges. (4) Perhaps these modifications, along with the lateral trimming of the panel, were executed when the work was separated from the other members of the series; or the intervention may have occurred later, when the group was reunited. In any case, the technical evidence linking the seven paintings to an original decorative setting remains consistent.

Usually dated to the later 1540s, the paintings already bear the hallmarks of Tintoretto’s mature style, with its sketchy, vivid coloring and large figure groups. However, recent scholarship has demonstrated that the ensemble is probably not all from Jacopo’s hand. The image of *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*, the highest in quality of the group and the one most attributable to him, displays extraordinary detail and a wide palette, including turquoise and coral, with Byzantine-inspired gold hatching used to highlight the figures’ garments. Perhaps he executed this work carefully, designed the other panels, and then left their completion to assistants. (5) Many of the remaining scenes are unified by landscape views: in the *Carrying of the Ark*, the sacred vessel is only partially visible at far right, in a scene otherwise filled with blue-tinged mountains, rivers, bridges, and towns. The truncated *Adoration*, too, most likely once included an extensive landscape; as it appears now, the work depicts the Israelites presenting Aaron with their jewelry, recalling how “he received the gold at their hand, and fashioned it with a graving tool, and made a molten calf,” which sits on the altar at right (Exodus 32:4). The *Feast of Belshazzar*, meanwhile, displays the guests of the Babylonian king, feasting and making music, beneath a vast portico looking out on to trees and sky; the colonnade turns a corner in the picture space, opening it up into a stage. In this scene, as well as in *David and Bathsheba*, the artist creates a convincing perspective construction within a small vertical space by placing architectural details along carefully plotted orthogonal lines.

In *Samson and the Philistines*, the hero topples the hall of the Philistines with his bare hands; the edifice crashes to the ground as spectators flee. This composition, particularly the figure of Samson hugging a falling column with a muscular left arm, was inspired by a bronze relief of the same subject by Bartolomeo Bellano (1484-1490; Padua, Basilica di Sant’Antonio). Another scene by Bellano in the same series, the *Judgment of Solomon*, depicts a long, laterally organized vista punctuated by columns, a format borrowed in both *Samson* and the *Feast of Belshazzar*. The influence of these reliefs manifests Tintoretto’s receptiveness to sculptural models, his interest in artistic centers outside Venice, and his respect for the achievements of the fifteenth century. The *Adoration*, too, contains references to earlier masterpieces: the pedestal on which the calf rests is reminiscent of Alessandro Leopardi’s base for the statue of Bartolomeo Colleoni on his horse (ca. 1481-1496; Venice, Campo SS. Giovanni e Paolo). The calf’s equine head and face, in fact, recall Verrocchio’s design for the statue itself. As Krischel suggests, these quotations may be a facetious reference to the “golden calf,” the contemporary nickname of the Colleoni monument, which was gilded. By including painted figures who kneel before the ungulate, Tintoretto perhaps alludes to the many sixteenth-century artists, *inginocchiati* in reverence before the matchless sculptural creation of Verrocchio and Leopardi. (6)

Several of the episodes have been variously identified: *David and Bathsheba* was also designated by Berenson as *Esther and Ahasuerus*, while *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* might likewise be related to either of these two tales. The scene depicting a crowd of people among whom crowns and palm fronds are distributed may be the *Promise to David*, when the prophet Nathan notifies
the king of God’s promise of eternal life for his royal house (2 Samuel 7); however, it has also been named a “Scene from Apocalypse.” (7) Perhaps the artist chose purposefully to illuminate generic tales of kingship and courtly magnificence, which presented the opportunity to depict sprawling scenes in rich, bold paintwork. Indeed, the series as a whole reveals Tintoretto’s use of ornamental painting as a platform for development of his audacious signature style.

DATING: ca. 1545-1550

NOTES:
(1) I thank Robert Wald for information about this cycle and technical analysis. For the inventories of the Duke of Buckingham, Davies, “An Inventory of the Duke of Buckingham’s Pictures,” 381, and Garas, “Le Tableau du Tintoret du Musée de Budapest,” 46 n. 47. The compiler of the later inventory erred in describing the works as “histories of Old and New Testament,” as only Old Testament scenes are shown. This documentary information, which has been overlooked since its discovery by Garas, resolves debates about the paintings’ original setting, for they have often been identified as friezes or musical instrument decoration. For the works’ later provenance, Pallucchini and Rossi, Tintoretto, vol. 1, 138. For further discussion of this cycle and its original setting, see the section on Chests and Boxes in Ch. 2 above.

(2) The two entries in the 1685 inventory of Prague Castle are: “Schiavon. Orig.: Sechserlei abbildungen aus der heiligen schrieft,” and “Schiavon: Eine histori von vielen figuren” (Inventarium der Röm. Kayserl. Maytt. Mahlerey auff dem Könogl. Praager Schloss, nos. 329, 393). These entries were later transcribed in a 1718 inventory of Prague Castle (Köpl, “Urkunden, Acten, Regesten und Inventare,” cxxxvii). See also Haja, Gemäldegalerie des Kunsthistorischen Museums, 121. For the history of Tintoretto’s panels in the context of Habsburg collecting, see the section on Venice to Vienna in Ch. 3 above.

(3) The Biblical Tales were included in a shipment of twenty-two pictures from Prague to Vienna in 1880 (Neumann, Gemäldegalerie der Prager Burg, 66).

(4) Information on the panel reverses and alterations to the Adoration of the Golden Calf courtesy of Robert Wald. For the paintings’ spruce support, Oberhammer et al., Katalog der Gemäldegalerie, 129-131, and Plesters, “Tintoretto’s Paintings in the National Gallery,” 27-28. Though spruce is often found in cabinets and as a support for decorative paintings (for example, Carpaccio’s Hunting and Fishing on the Lagoon, cat. no. 7), it has also been documented in Venetian panel paintings, e.g., Veronese’s Christ on the Road to Calvary (Paris, Louvre; see Marette, Connaissance des Primitifs par l’Étude du Bois, 210).

(5) In 1948, Tietze suggested “the collaboration of different assistants” in the ensemble (Tintoretto, 379). While the panels have the characteristics of Tintoretto’s mature style, they also resemble works of his early career. Echols explains that the scene of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba repeats the artist’s slightly earlier version of this subject, now at Chenonceaux (ca. 1540-1545). He further notes that other paintings in the series, such as the Feast of Belshazzar, display less masterful execution. Belshazzar, in particular, may be the work of Giovanni Galizzi, an associate of Tintoretto who probably participated in many works previously thought to be autograph; another secondary artist who may have contributed to the series is
Domenico Molino (Tintoretto and Venetian Painting, 219-226, 286-287; “Giovanni Galizzi and the Problem of the Young Tintoretto,” 100-101). See also Echols and Ilchman, “Toward a New Tintoretto Catalogue,” 116, 137. In the present study, it is assumed that Tintoretto directed the overall design of this carefully planned ensemble, though he may not have executed all of the individual paintings. For further discussion of the panels’ attribution, including the possible role of Lambert Sustris, see discussion of Workshops and Authorship in Ch. 1 above.

(6) For the influence of Bellano’s reliefs on Samson, Krischel, “Reiseerfahrungen des Jacopo Tintoretto,” 134-136. Echols suggests that, considering the close relationship between the two images, the Biblical Tales were executed fairly soon after Tintoretto’s 1541 visit to Padua (“Tintoretto the Painter,” 62 n. 13). For the Adoration and the Colleoni monument, Krischel, “Tintoretto e la Scultura Veneziana,” 7-13. Fifteenth-century and Gothic models not only informed specific passages of Tintoretto’s compositions, but also permeated his formal and stylistic vision, as demonstrated by Hills (“Tintoretto and Venetian Gothic”).

(7) For Berenson’s identifications, Venetian School, vol. 1, 182.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

(illustrations next page)
Cat. no. 58, Jacopo Tintoretto and assistants, *Biblical Tales: Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, Feast of Belshazzar, Carrying of the Sacred Ark, Promise to David (?), David and Bathsheba (?), Samson and the Philistines, Adoration of the Golden Calf* (images courtesy of Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna)
**Cat. no. 59**
Circle of Jacopo Tintoretto

*Gaius Mucius Scaevola before Porsenna*

Oil on canvas, 39 x 120 cm
Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Gemäldegalerie, inv. no. 2693

Type: *Cassa/Fregio*

Like the *Ordeal of Tuccia* from the circle of Tintoretto (cat. no. 65), the painting honors the virtuous deed of an ancient, in this case Gaius Mucius Scaevola, who, after botching an attempt on the life of the Etruscan king Porsenna, displayed his scorn for the resulting punishment by thrusting his right hand into the fire that had been prepared for him. During the Renaissance, Mucius Scaevola was taken as a figure of patience and constancy, and his sacrifice understood as a prefiguration of Christ’s. He was depicted in *grisaille* by a follower of Mantegna (ca. 1500; Munich, Alte Pinakothek) and in a sculpted relief attributed to Giovanni Minello in the Chapel of St. Anthony at the Santo in Padua (ca. 1500-1521). (1) The Vienna scene is schematically though not exactly related to the earlier relief; Minello’s work is organized into two vertical groups, while Tintoretto’s is dominated by the diagonal action of the nobleman lunging dramatically toward the fire, and by the prostrate figure of the secretary he has mistakenly killed. The scene is united by the use of quickly-sketched reds and pinks over white, particularly in the robes of the attending figures. (2) With its elongated format, the painting would have fit within either a chest or a *fregio* decoration.

**DATING:** ca. 1545

**NOTES:**
(1) For the relief in the Chapel of St. Anthony and related imagery, McHam, *The Chapel of St. Anthony at the Santo*, 69-70.

(2) The artist’s use of pigments noted by Robert Wald. Dated here to the mid-1540s, the painting has been placed substantially later, in the 1570s, by Echols and Ilchman (“Toward a New Tintoretto Catalogue,” 147).

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**
**Cat. no. 60**
Circle of Jacopo Tintoretto
Italy, private collection (as of 1982)

a) *Jupiter and Semele*
Oil on canvas, 22 x 51 cm

b) *Perseus and Andromeda*
Oil on canvas, 22 x 51 cm

**Type: Cassa**

These rounded canvases, probably decorating a single chest front or a pair of *casse*, depict tales commonly found in Venetian ornamental painting. The scene of *Jupiter and Semele* recalls one segment of the Ovidian cycle also from the circle of Tintoretto (cat. no. 56), while *Perseus and Andromeda* evokes similar works from the circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati (cat. no. 35).

**DATING:** ca. 1540-1550

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**
Pallucchini and Rossi, *Tintoretto*, vol. 1, 238.
Cat. no. 61
Circle of Jacopo Tintoretto
*Allegory of Fall and Winter*
Oil on panel, 25 x 56 cm
Scotland, private collection (as of 1982)

Type: *Cassa*

At left, a woman on a ladder plucks grapes from a vine, and hands them to a young man standing in a vat; at right, a white-bearded man leans on a cane next to a bare tree in a frigid landscape. The oval-shaped panel was probably complemented by a similar work depicting the other two seasons.

In his biography of Tintoretto, Ridolfi mentions paintings of the four seasons “in a setting of gilded leather,” but this panel and its probable pendant appear more likely to have decorated a pair of chests. The panel has been excluded from Jacopo’s autograph oeuvre by Echols and Ilchman. (1)

DATING: ca. 1540-1550

NOTE:

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
**Cat. no. 62**  
Circle of Jacopo Tintoretto  
*Raising of the Golden Calf*  
Oil on panel, 27 x 72 cm  
Turin, private collection (as of 1982)

Type: *Cassa*

The scene differs slightly from the representation of the same episode in the Vienna series (cat. no. 58), in which the Israelites gather to adore the golden calf. Here, the pedestal on which the idol will be erected is still under construction, while in the right background, the Israelites donate the jewelry that will be melted down to make it. In the prominent foreground appear women tending infants, lending the image the air of a genre scene. With its rounded shape, the panel probably descends from a *cassa* configuration.

**DATING:** ca. 1540-1550

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**
Cat. no. 63
Circle of Jacopo Tintoretto
*St. Helena and the True Cross*
Oil on canvas, 21.4 x 48.6 cm
Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago, inv. no. 1932.44

Type: *Cassa*

The canvas, extremely abbreviated in execution, depicts St. Helena’s legendary discovery in the Holy Land of the cross on which Christ was crucified. It has sometimes been identified as a *bozzetto* or sketched plan for Tintoretto’s painting of the same subject in the church of Santa Maria Mater Domini, but compositional differences between the works undermine this connection. (1) The present work’s scale and stylistic consonance with other ornamental paintings from Tintoretto’s circle, such as *Gaius Mucius Scaevola* (cat. no. 59), suggest that it adorned a small *cassa*.

DATING: ca. 1545

NOTE:
(1) Pallucchini and Rossi, *Tintoretto*, vol. 1, 147. For a different view, Tietze, “Bozzetti di Jacopo Tintoretto,” 57-58. Echols and Ilchman attribute the painting to Jacopo, suggest a later dating (possibly ca. 1561), and tentatively associate it with the Santa Maria Mater Domini commission (“Toward a New Tintoretto Catalogue,” 124).

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cat. no. 63, Circle of Jacopo Tintoretto, *St. Helena and the True Cross* (image source: Pallucchini and Rossi, *Tintoretto*)
Cat. no. 64  
Jacopo Tintoretto  
Esther and Ahasuerus (Solomon and the Queen of Sheba?)  
Oil on canvas, 17 x 48.5 cm  

Type: Cassa  

This rounded scene, which probably originally decorated the front of a chest, is among a handful of ornamental works from the circle of Tintoretto usually attributed to the master himself. (1) The painting’s theme has been identified as Esther interceding with Ahasuerus on behalf of her people, and the composition as a whole echoes Marcantonio Raimondi’s print of the same subject; a different possibility, however, is the encounter between Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, also depicted in another decorative cycle from Tintoretto’s workshop (cat. no. 58). It has recently been proposed that the Courtauld painting is identical with a work attributed to Schiavone in the 1776 inventory of Francesco Algarotti’s collection, “La Regina Saba dinanzi a Salomone sedente in Trono e circondato da suoi ministri.” The same inventory records a number of decorative pictures with attributions to Schiavone, including three paintings of the Tale of Diana and Callisto (cat. no. 40) and a tondo depicting Lot and His Daughters (cat. no. 73). Although these small pictures are now given variously to Tintoretto, Schiavone, and the circle of Titian, several of the works show pronounced affinities of format and technique, and may descend from a single ensemble of chests. (2)

The Courtauld painting portrays a king (perhaps Ahasuerus or Solomon) seated on a dais covered with a richly patterned rug, surrounded by his advisors, while the queen (perhaps Esther or Sheba) draws one arm to her chest in supplication. Individual elements of the composition evoke Venetian painting of the late 1530s and 1540s: the queen, for instance, reflects the figure of Psyche in a ceiling picture by Francesco Salviati at the Grimani palace (ca. 1539). The figures’ grouping and the execution of their garments also follow those of Tintoretto’s soffitto painting of Apollo and Marsyas (Hartford, Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art). (3) The juxtaposition of bright yellows and pinks against a backdrop of stone architecture and an activated landscape recalls the technique of Schiavone, providing impetus for this attribution in the Algarotti catalogue. The picture is also notable, however, for its fineness of decorative detail and extensive and subtle use of shell gold, both in striated patterns for highlights and as a layer beneath glazes. The interplay of yellow paint (probably lead-tin yellow) and gold is dynamic, including details such as a highlight composed of a line of yellow paint with a dash of shell gold as a flourish at the end. (4) Overall, the work shows a sensitivity to detail and pattern that are not typical of Tintoretto’s larger-scale works, demonstrating his ability to adjust his technique to various formats and settings.

DATING: ca. 1545-1550

NOTES:  
(1) I thank Caroline Campbell, Graeme Barraclough, and Genevieve Silvester for information about and access to this work. Echols and Ilchman attribute the painting to Tintoretto (“Toward a New Tintoretto Catalogue,” 116, 137).
(2) The connection between the Courtauld canvas and the painting of *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* in the Algarotti inventory was suggested by Couilleaux in Delieuvin and Habert, *Titien, Tintoret, Véronèse*, 338. Campbell notes the affinities between this picture and the *Tale of Diana and Callisto* (cat. no. 40), and suggests that these scenes originally decorated pendant chests (“When is a Cassone Painting not for a Cassone?,” 16-18).


(4) Technical analysis and photomicrographs courtesy of Graeme Barraclough.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cat. no. 64, Jacopo Tintoretto, *Esther and Ahasuerus* (*Solomon and the Queen of Sheba?*)
(image courtesy of the Courtauld Gallery, London)
**Cat. no. 65**

Circle of Jacopo Tintoretto (Lambert Sustris?)

*Ordeal of Tuccia*

Oil on canvas, 47.6 x 103.2 cm

Glasgow, Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum, inv. no. 189

Type: *Fregio*

Like a *cassa* painting from the circle of Bartolomeo Montagna (cat. no. 28), this work depicts the vestal virgin who proves her chastity by carrying a sieve of water intact from the Tiber to her temple. Tuccia rushes forward, her garments flying behind her, as the assembled citizens watch in amazement. The setting includes an overgrown ruin and, in the background, the Castel Sant’Angelo. This tale would have been familiar to readers of Pliny’s *Natural History* and Petrarch’s *Trionfi*. In his *City of God*, St. Augustine described Tuccia as a prefiguration of the Virgin Mary. (1)

The painting was perhaps originally accompanied in a *fregio* configuration by other expansions on the lives of virtuous ancients, such as Claudia Quinta. It may also be of the same type as *Gaius Mucius Scaevola* (cat. no. 59), with which it would have shared close vertical dimensions, for the *Ordeal of Tuccia* was once substantially shorter. Initially, the painting’s upper edge rose just above Tuccia’s head. Dunkerton, Foister, and Penny suggest that the picture was enlarged during the seventeenth century to render it more suitable for gallery display. (2) Perhaps it was owned by the Countess of Arundel in Amsterdam, whose collection included a “Roman woman carrying water to the Tiber” in 1654. (3)

The painting is generally given to an artist in Tintoretto’s circle; observing the figure types, technique of the landscape, and presence of a Roman monument, Echols suggests the authorship of Lambert Sustris and dates the work to the early 1560s. Others agree on the authorship of a northern painter associated with Tintoretto, but stop short of an attribution to Sustris. (4)

**DATING:** ca. 1560-1565

**NOTES:**

(1) Humfrey et al., *The Age of Titian*, 154; Hall, *Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols*, 314. I thank Pat Collins for information about this painting.

(2) Dunkerton et al., *Dürer to Veronese*, 129.

(3) Humfrey et al., *The Age of Titian*, 154.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Berenson, *Venetian School*, vol. 1, 173; Bernari, *L’Opera Completa del Tintoretto*, 89;

Cat. no. 65, Circle of Jacopo Tintoretto (Lambert Sustris?), *Ordeal of Tuccia* (image source: Humfrey et al., *The Age of Titian*, 154)
Cat. no. 66
Circle of Jacopo Tintoretto

*Story of Judith*
Milan, Castello Sforzesco, Pinacoteca

a) *Judith Dresses to Meet Holofernes*

Oil on panel, 27 x 30 cm
Inv. no. 37

b) *Judith Brought before Holofernes*

Oil on panel, 30 x 60 cm
Inv. no. 38

c) *Banquet of Holofernes*

Oil on panel, 30 x 60 cm
Inv. no. 42

d) *Judith Decapitates Holofernes*

Oil on panel, 29 x 32 cm
Inv. no. 41

Type: Cassa/Fregio

Like the *fregio* cycle of this subject from the circle of Veronese (cat. no. 75), these paintings depict Judith as a cunning and beautiful heroine who deceives the lascivious Holofernes; the series departs from Veronese, however, in its graphic treatment of the story’s violence. The heroine first appears arraying herself, her servant making the final adjustments to a costume of leather sandals, fringed skirts, a pearl necklace and earrings, and jewel-studded hair. In the second panel, Judith first appears at left, arguing with the soldiers guarding Holofernes’s tent, and then at right, before the general himself. The third panel depicts an impressive feast, with rows of plate service lining one wall. In the last scene, the flaps of Holofernes’s tent part to reveal Judith’s raised sword, blood spilling from the villain’s gullet, and a servant looking on.

DATING: ca. 1560

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
Berenson, *Venetian School*, vol. 1, 175; Pallucchini and Rossi, *Tintoretto*, vol. 1, 248.
**Cat. no. 67**  
Circle of Titian  
Sleeping Shepherd  
Oil on panel, 27.6 x 127.6 cm  
Merion, Barnes Foundation, inv. no. 977  

Type: *Recinto da letto* (?)  

As noted in the discussion of Beds in Ch. 2 above, this painting, depicting a goatherd reclining in a gentle landscape, may have functioned as a *recinto da letto* decoration. Although identified by Berenson as *Endymion Asleep*, it lacks the moon that typically appears in this scene. The painting is related in dimensions, format, and subject to the *Birth of Venus* from the circle of Bonifacio de’ Pitati (cat. no. 38). (1)  

**DATING:** ca. 1510  

**NOTE:**  
(1) I thank Sarah Noreika and Richard Wattenmaker for information about this painting.  

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**  

Cat. no. 67, Circle of Titian, *Sleeping Shepherd*  
(image courtesy of the Barnes Foundation, Philadelphia)
Cat. no. 68
Circle of Titian
*Orpheus and Eurydice*
Oil on panel, 39.6 x 53 cm
Bergamo, Accademia Carrara, inv. no. 547

Type: Unknown

The painting depicts events precipitating Eurydice’s final descent into the underworld: first, when she is bitten by a serpent; then, in the landscape at right, when Orpheus, having rescued her, looks backwards. In Giorgione’s lost self-portrait as Orpheus, a similar scene also appeared as a small vignette in the distant background. Here, the attention given to landscape recalls Giorgione and the young Titian, while several details, especially the serpent and the blazing gate of the underworld at right, suggest the influence of Bosch or another northern artist. The picture’s original configuration remains uncertain. Its relatively square dimensions are typical of an independent *quadretto*, but other aspects of the work imply an ornamental setting. It is made of oak, a hardwood used more often for furniture than for independent panels in Italy. (1) And the subject of Orpheus and Eurydice was depicted quite frequently in furniture painting during the early sixteenth century, particularly in Florence and Siena. Whatever its initial purpose, the picture can be located in the milieu of Italian ornamental painting and was surely produced with its styles and subjects in mind.

DATING: ca. 1510

NOTE:
(1) I thank Giovanni Valagussa and Angelo Zamataro for information about this painting. For the oak support, conservation report, Accademia Carrara, 1994.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cat. no. 68, Circle of Titian, *Orpheus and Eurydice* (image courtesy of the Accademia Carrara, Bergamo)
**Cat. no. 69**  
Circle of Titian  
*Tales of Apollo*  
Oil on panel, 64 x 130 cm  
Venice, Seminario Patriarcale, Pinacoteca Manfrediniana

Type: Unknown

This painting from the circle of Titian (also sometimes given to Giorgione) has long been described by scholars as a chest decoration. It depicts tales from the life of Apollo: his killing of the Python with a thousand arrows; the god himself being hit by the arrow of Cupid; his consequent pursuit of Daphne, and her metamorphosis (Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, I.438-567). According to Ridolfi, these were among the subjects of Giorgione’s early furniture paintings. (1) Although visually apposite for a piece of furniture, the painting is, at 64 cm in height, taller than most *cassa* paintings; and it may have been trimmed at its upper edge, as the abbreviation of the foreground trees suggests. The painting has also been substantially cut at the left, excising Python from the scene. Most likely, this was an easel picture, but one inspired by the lateral formats of *fregio* paintings, with the scattering of three related narratives across a single vista. The artist has woven the stories into the enveloping landscape, which includes a strolling pastoral couple and a river, alluding perhaps to Daphne’s father, Peneus. Much damaged, the painting still bears traces of a peach-colored sunset.

**DATING:** ca. 1510-1515

**NOTE:**
(1) I am grateful to Silvia Marchiori for access to and information about this painting. Ridolfi notes: “...Haveva poi figurato Pitone serpente ucciso da Apolline & il medesimo Deo seguendo la bella figlia di Peneo, che radicate le piante nel terreno, cangiava le braccia in rami & in frondi d’alloro” (*Maraviglie*, vol. 1, 98).

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

Cat. no. 69, Circle of Titian,  
*Tales of Apollo*  
(image courtesy of the Seminario Patriarcale, Venice)
Cat. no. 70
Titian
*Christ and the Pharisee*
Oil on panel, 75 x 56 cm
Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, inv. no. 169

Type: Sportello

Called *Cristo della Moneta* by its early admirers, this masterpiece by the young Titian is among the most extensively documented of Venetian ornamental works. In the 1568 edition of his *Lives*, Vasari noted that the artist had painted for Duke Alfonso d’Este of Ferrara (1476-1534) “a half-length picture of Christ, marvelous and stupendous, to whom a base Jew is showing the coin of Caesar,” among “the finest and best executed that Titian has ever done.” The picture was located, he wrote, “in the door of a cupboard” [*nella porta d’un armario*] in the palace of the Duke. (1) Other documents, too, related the panel to a piece of furniture belonging to Alfonso, most likely a cabinet containing medals and coins. In an inventory of 1543, “an effigy of Jesus by the hand of Titian” [*una effigie de Hiesu di mano di Tiziano*] was noted in a chamber of the Castello called the *primo camerino adorato*. This space, which contained books, marble heads, and naturalia, also housed a *studio di noce* holding numerous coins and medals. Although this item of furniture and Titian’s painting are noted separately in the inventory, it is likely that the picture was still incorporated into the cupboard at this point. (2) A later document describes the same room as the *studio delle medaglie* and records the painting’s position: in 1559, Alessandro Fiaschi, a servant of the Ferrarese court, wrote to Alfonso’s successor, Ercole II, with instructions to visit the *studio delle medaglie*, and “once you have entered it…look above the said fireplace, where you will find a key to the door on which Signor Jesus is portrayed by the hand of Titian; when this portrait is removed there are some small chests [*cassettini*] inside.” (3) These *cassettini* no doubt contained the coins and medals that gave the room its name. Titian’s painting thus adorned a cabinet and chamber devoted to the numismatic arts, which brought the glories of the Roman emperors into the precincts of the modern Este castle. (4)

The subject of *Cristo della Moneta* naturally complements its original setting, and both Titian and his patron were aware of the theme’s rhetorical potency. According to the story recounted in three of the Gospels, the Pharisees sought to entrap Christ by asking him if it were lawful to pay tribute to the Roman emperor: a dangerous query at a time when the land of Israel was still under the control of the imperial power. A negative answer would have branded Jesus as a political revolutionary who sought to challenge Caesar, while a positive one would have undermined God’s authority over the land of Israel. Skillfully parrying the question, Christ demanded, “Shew me the tribute money” (Matthew 22:19). Titian’s painting depicts the electric moment when one of the Pharisees slips the golden coin between his fingers. Jesus then asked whose image and superscription were found there, and the Pharisees identified them as the emperor’s; “then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matthew 22:21). This ingenious response tacitly endorsed the payment of taxes to the imperial power, while at the same time asserting the existence of a spiritual authority to whom such payments were meaningless. The Pharisees were stunned and, according to Luke, “could not take hold of his words before the people” (20:26). (5)
This tantalizingly ambiguous episode bore special relevance for Alfonso. As Duke of Ferrara, he occupied a fraught position, his allegiances suspended between the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor – a political situation analogous to that of Jesus before the Pharisees. (6) The Duke adopted the Tribute Money story as his emblem at an early date, and he minted several coins depicting the theme. Among these was a silver testone showing his portrait on the obverse, with the figures of Christ and the Pharisee, accompanied by a quotation of Christ’s words, “DEI DEO + QVAE SVNT” (“And to God the things that are God’s”), on the reverse (Figs. 1-2; 1505-1534; New York, American Numismatic Society). Alfonso’s use of this passage was witty and disingenuous, for unlike Jesus, who faced a treacherous political and spiritual predicament, the Estensi had long used their divided allegiances to engineer virtually any situation to their benefit. Throughout the fifteenth century, the family had leveraged its peaceful authority over vast swathes of Italian territory both to gain titles from the Holy Roman Empire, and to avoid paying many of its taxes to the Church. In these lights, the imposing motto, “unto God what is God’s,” appears as a two-faced reminder: to political adversaries of the divine sanction enjoyed by the Dukes of Ferrara, and to the papacy of the strict limits of its influence. (7)

With his conversion of Alfonso’s succinct emblem into pictorial form, Titian introduced the story of Christ and the Pharisees to Italian painting: the subject was to become popular during the later sixteenth century through replicas and adaptations. (8) The artist transformed the Duke’s device of two standing figures into an infinitely suggestive drama whose every detail serves to recall the characters of the actors. Pale-faced and luminous, with the slightest points of a halo glimmering behind his head, Christ turns gracefully towards the swarthy Pharisee. The earringed villain, his craggy physiognomy reminiscent of the portrait drawings of Leonardo (Fig. 3; ca. 1493-1495; Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina), reaches with his sinister left arm to reveal the emperor’s coin. Its color matches the emanation of Christ’s halo, yet suggests the antithesis of his celestial aura and the base gold of earthly currency (Figs. 4-5). (9) The meeting of the two hands presents a singular contrast: Jesus’s radiant fingers open to receive the coin, which protrudes from the gnarled fist of his greedy and cunning interlocutor. (This “villano ebreo,” as Vasari calls him, serves as a proxy for all of sinful humanity, a role frequently assigned to Jews in Renaissance art and literature.) The Pharisee having just passed into the frame of the picture, the figures’ bodies and gazes lock in an intense congress. (10)

Titian’s painting draws on the imagery of coins and money in religious art and Scripture. Its presentation of a dispute over taxation recalls Masaccio’s fresco in the Brancacci chapel (1420s; Florence, S. Maria del Carmine), depicting the scene in which a local official approaches Christ and the apostles to demand the temple tax. Christ directs Peter to cast a line into the sea and to draw a fish, in whose mouth he discovers a coin (Matthew 17:24-27). By miraculously supplying the trivial half-shekel sum, Jesus draws attention to the far more awesome debt repaid by his sacrifice: only by taking the lowly form of a man who would suffer and die on the cross could God erase the debt of human sinfulness incurred at the Fall. (11) The same message is apparent in the episode of Christ and the Pharisees, for by ordering the payment of debts to emperor and to God, Jesus calls to mind the seminal balancing of accounts achieved by his incarnation and death for humanity’s salvation. This lesson is underscored by his beatific appearance in Titian’s painting. A miracle in the flesh, strongly contrasting with the coarse air of the Pharisee, this holy figure reminds each viewer of his own crude sinfulness and thus, of the true magnitude of God’s sacrifice on his behalf.
Titian’s painting also harbors a more worldly symbolism, closely linked to its original setting in Alfonso’s studio delle medaglie. The Pharisee’s golden coin, painted with the sheen of brilliant metal, recalls the many species of currency kept in the very armario protected by Titian’s painting. Though their denominations are not specified in Este inventories, these artifacts probably resembled surviving examples of Roman imperial coinage (Figs 6-7; 64-66 A.D., 64-68 A.D.; New York, American Numismatic Society). The Estensi had long been serious numismatists: between 1430 and 1500, at least twenty medallists were active at the court of Ferrara, designing not only the official currency but also portraits of rulers, artists, and humanists, including Leon Battista Alberti and Guarino da Verona. Angelo Decembrio’s De Politia Litteraria, completed by 1462, presents a conversation among Alfonso’s predecessor, Leonello d’Este, and humanists of his court, in which ancient coins and engraved gems are discussed at length as artistic and historical treasures: “I often take great pleasure in looking at the heads of the Caesars on bronze coins,” says Leonello, “...and they impress me no less than the descriptions of their appearance in Suetonius and others.” (12) Decembrio declares the parity of visual and written evidence, comparing the portraits on the Duke’s monete favorably with the words of the ancient biographers and historians. Leonello evidently harbored the view ascribed to him in this text, for he collected coins, and commissioned over 10,000 medals in the antique style during his mid-fifteenth century reign, including many from the famed Pisanello. Leonello’s successors also cultivated a taste for ancient coinage: a 1540 catalogue inventory of the antique currency belonging to Ercole II runs to over five hundred items, including imperial coins similar to the denarius presented to Christ in the Tribute Money story. Alfonso, meanwhile, modelled his very persona on numismatic examples, as demonstrated by the affinities between his tribute money testone and the compositions of ancient imperial coins (Figs. 8-9; 64-68 A.D., 1505-1534; New York, American Numismatic Society). (13) In this climate of enthusiastic appreciation for both antique and modern coins, Titian’s painting takes on an aesthetic as well as a political meaning. The moment he chooses to depict – just between Christ’s words, “Show me the tribute money,” and “Whose is this image and superscription?” – recalls the rituals of display, identification, and study associated with the connoisseurship of coins and medals. One can imagine Alfonso and his companions removing objects from the cabinet and posing the very same questions posed by Jesus, only now in a spirit of antiquarian appreciation, historical interest, and satisfaction in the riches of their holdings. This usage is surely consistent with the Biblical narrative, in which Christ employs the coin as a visual aid to convey the meaning of his pronouncement and to enhance its impact on his audience. (14) In the rarefied atmosphere of Alfonso’s cabinet, too, the visual and the verbal were conjoined for pedagogical purposes – to communicate to the Duke and his visitors the “images and superscriptions” of the ancient emperors, thus summoning the rarefied faces and devices of a glorious past. For the Estensi, who employed the art of the medal in conscious emulation of the power and achievements of the Roman emperors, the contemplation of such artifacts would have lent an aesthetic dimension to their political rhetoric, reminding them of the elegance and fame associated with the visages of their fabled predecessors. (15) It would also have served as a powerful reminder that the coins on view were not mere money, but works of art and objects of study and wonder: cornerstones of the new Renaissance attitude to the past, which prized antique currency not for its material worth, but for its craftsmanship and historical value. The process of learning, imaginative appreciation, and pleasure unfolded by Cristo della
Moneta ultimately expands to include the painting itself. In his Maraviglie, Ridolfi commented that Titian made the picture “for the contemplation of the Duke,” thus identifying the work as an object of meditative study like the distinguished artifacts it served to protect. (16)

DATING: ca. 1516

NOTES:
(1) “Similmente nella porta d’un armario dipinse Tiziano dal mezzo in su una testa di Cristo, maravigliosa e stupenda, a cui un villano ebreo mostra la moneta di Cesare: la quale testa, ed altre piture di detto camerino affermano i nostri migliori artefici che sono le migliori e meglio condotte che abbia mai fatto Tiziano: e nel vero sono rarissime” (Vasari, Vite, vol. 7, 434-435). Vasari seems to imply that Christ and the Pharisee is located in Duke Alfonso’s famed camerino d’alabastro; he discusses the armario immediately after describing the paintings by Dosso Dossi, Bellini, and Titian for the camerino, and then says that Christ and the Pharisee, along with “other pictures in that little chamber,” are considered by craftsmen to be the best that Titian has ever done. However, the phrasing is ambiguous, and other documents from the same period indicate that the picture was found in a different part of the palace complex: the Castello, not the corridor between the Castello and the Palazzo where the camerino was probably located (see n. 2 below). Moreover, the camerino does not seem to have served as a repository for coins, the function most obviously associated with Christ and the Pharisee. Finally, in visual terms, the picture would have better served as the focus of a small room, without other painting programs. For discussion of this issue, Walker, Bellini and Titian at Ferrara, 34 n. 47; Hope, “The ‘Camerini d’Alabastro’ of Alfonso d’Este,” 649; Fehl, “Worship of Bacchus and Venus,” 39-42; Gilbert, “Some Findings on Early Works of Titian,” 62-63. For the camerino d’alabastro, Ceriana, Gli Este a Ferrara.

(2) Cittadella, Il Castello di Ferrara, 11, 96-98. Cittadella notes that this room was located in the Castello portion of Alfonso’s palace complex, rather than the corridor where the camerino d’alabastro was likely situated. This evidence further supports the inference that Christ and the Pharisee did not occupy the camerino d’alabastro (see n. 1 above).

(3) Letter of Alessandro Fiaschi to Ercole II d’Este on 29 April 1559, instructing him to go to the “studio delle medaglie...nel quale entrato havendo seco putino, facci guardare sopra il detto comino che troverà una chiave di gl’uscio dov’è ritratto del Signor Hiesù di mano di Titiano, tolto detto ritratto sono alcuni cassettini dentro...” (Modena, Archivio di Stato, Ambasciatori, Florence, b. 23; see Hood and Hope, “Titian’s Vatican Altarpiece,” 547 n. 62). See also Grana, “Alessandro Fiaschi.”

(4) Physical evidence of the painting’s original setting is less revealing than the documentary record. The picture was painted on poplar, with total dimensions of 75 x 56 cm; its current frame is not original (Dülberg, Privatporträts, 295). For the painting’s proposed original configuration, see the discussion of Doors and Shutters in Ch. 2 above.

(5) The episode of the Tribute Money appears in Matthew 22:15-22, Mark 12:13-17, Luke 11:54, 20:20-26. Jesus’s remark has also been construed to mean that tax should not be paid to Caesar, for among the “things that are God’s” is the land of Israel, no part of whose bounty should
therefore be given to an earthly ruler (Bruce, “Render to Caesar,” 259). In any case, by avoiding a clear “yes” or “no” answer, Jesus escapes the pitfalls of undermining the Emperor’s authority on one hand, and God’s on the other. The Pharisees apparently expected Christ to deny the propriety of paying tribute to Caesar, which would have led them to denounce him to the provincial government: hence Luke’s remark that they “sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of his words, that so they might deliver him unto the power and authority of the governor” (20:20). See Bruce, op. cit., 251. For further interpretation of the Biblical episode, Bryan, *Render to Caesar*, 42-46. I thank Judith Kovacs for assistance in interpreting the Biblical passages.

(6) Descended from the German Obertenghi, the Estensi had first gained a foothold in northern Italy through a land grant from the Holy Roman Emperor; many of Italy’s princely courts were imperial fiefs of this kind, which owed fealty to the Empire. During the Middle Ages, however, the family had expanded their holdings from the area near Padua to encompass a swathe of land including Modena, Reggio, Rovigo, and Ferrara, the last of which was a papal jurisdiction over which the Church had long claimed hegemony. During the early fourteenth century, the Este rulers engaged in a series of power struggles with the Church over control of the city. These concluded in the 1320s with an agreement that recognized papal claims to Ferrara, but permitted the Estensi to reign there as vicars. See Cole, *Virtue and Magnificence*, 120, and Gundersheimer, *Ferrara*, esp. 18, 30, 45-48, 81, 151-158, 198-199. The question of whether the Estensi were papal or imperial vicars remains controversial: ibid., 30 n. 23.

(7) The relationship of Titian’s image to Alfonso’s coins was first suggested by Crowe and Cavalcaselle, *Titian*, vol. 1, 117. Gilbert identifies the moment depicted by the painter as different from that shown on the Duke’s coins, which display “Christ raising his right hand in blessing”; in contrast, the Dresden painting seems “to emphasize his intent to look into the other man’s face, and his finger indicating the coin. It is about the coin that Christ is speaking” (“Some Findings on Early Works of Titian,” 63). For Alfonso’s use of the Tribute Money theme, Fehl, “Worship of Bacchus and Venus,” 40-42, and Hope, *Titian*, 51. For Este tax payments to the Pope during the fifteenth century, Gundersheimer, *Ferrara*, 81. The likeness between Alfonso’s coin and Titian’s painting led Dülberg to suggest that the picture served as a cover of a lost portrait of the Duke (*Privatporträts*, 295). However, as noted above, documentary evidence points to its use as a sportello protecting Alfonso’s coin cabinet.


(9) The head of the Pharisee recalls several surviving drawings by Leonardo, including a sheet of figure studies (Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art), and the *Bearded Old Man in Half-Length* (Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina); see Bambach et al., *Leonardo da Vinci: Master Draftsman*, 309-312, 440-443. Perhaps Titian was aware of the work of Lombard artists, influenced by Leonardo, who were working in Venice in the early sixteenth century (Pedroccho, *Titian*, 113).
(10) The juxtaposition of these two figures recalls the Venetian tradition of half-length portraits of two individuals in close confrontation. For the rise of the secular half-length “confrontation picture” in Venice and its possible relationship to ornamental painting, see the discussion of Doors and Shutters in Ch. 2 above.

(11) Ladis, Brancacci Chapel, 36.

(12) “‘Certainly,’ interposed Leonello, ‘I often take great pleasure in looking at the heads of the Caesars on bronze coins – bronze having survived more commonly than gold or silver – and they impress me no less than the descriptions of their appearance in Suetonius and others. For the latter are apprehended by the mind alone’” (quoted in Baxandall, “A Dialogue on Art from the Court of Leonello d’Este,” 324). For medallists active at the court of Ferrara, Gundersheimer, Ferrara, 246. Documents of the Este coin holdings rarely if ever specify denominations or other identifying features of these artifacts (Cunnally, The Role of Greek and Roman Coins in the Art of the Italian Renaissance, 4).

(13) For Leonello’s taste in ancient coins and contemporary commissions, described in a letter of Flavio Biondo, Weiss, Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity, 167 n. 3; see also Cole, Virtue and Magnificence, 120-123. The 1540 catalogue, compiled by Celio Calcagnini, is transcribed in Documenti Inediti per Servire alla Storia dei Musei d’Italia, vol. 2, 100-155. The collection documented here probably represented the acquisitions of several generations of Este rulers, and may have included the 437 gold coins listed in the family collection in 1494 (Weiss, op. cit., 167 n. 3). Since the coins in the 1540 cabinet were gold, none can have been identical to the silver denarius presented to Christ; the same is true of the golden coin depicted by Titian in Christ and the Pharisee. However, the 1494 inventory lists 3385 silver coins, which probably did include an object very similar to the Pharisee’s denarius. See Hart, “The Coin of ‘Render unto Caesar,’” and Weiss, op. cit., 167 n. 3. For further information on the Este treasure of coins and medals and the artist Enea Vico’s associated scholarship, Campori, “Enea Vico e l’Antico Museo Estense delle Medaglie.” I am grateful to Sylvia Karges and Rick Witschonke of the American Numismatic Society for research advice regarding antique coin collecting in the Renaissance.


(15) As Gundersheimer has shown, coinage was a key element of the “style” of the “Renaissance despotism” of Ferrara. The currencys minted for use in the Este realms were modelled on Roman imperial types, and used as instruments of ducal propaganda. In particular, Borso d’Este established a new line of currency based on Roman coinage, with the ruler’s image appearing in idealized profile; the medals of his successor, Ercole I, also emphasized the image of Augustan majesty (Ferrara, 57-58, 161-162, 212). No matter that the story of the Tribute Money ultimately undermines the glory of the emperors and characterizes their currency as a base, earthly system of value.
(16) “A contemplatione del Duca medesimo figurò Nostro Signore, à cui un vecchio Hebreo
dimostra la moneta interrogandolo, se dar dovevasi il tributo à Cesare?...” (Ridolfi, Maraviglie, vol. 1, 161).

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della Pittura, 228-234; Boschini, Carta del Navegar Pitoresco, 336-337; Gherardi, Descrizione
delle Pitture Esistenti in Modena, 4, 85, 208-213; Cittadella, Il Castello di Ferrara, 96; Crowe
and Cavalcaselle, Titian, vol. 1, 116-121; Morelli, Kunstkritische Studien über Italienische
Malerei, 297; Gronau, Titian, 46-49; Suida, Tizian, 35, 155; Tietze, Tizian, vol. 1, 120; Walker,
Bellini and Titian at Ferrara, 32-34; Berenson, Venetian School, vol. 1, 184; Valcanover,
Tiziano, vol. 1, 57-58; Cagli and Valcanover, L’Opera Completa di Tiziano, 98-99; Panofsky,
Problems in Titian, 7; Wethey, Paintings of Titian, vol. 1, 163-164; Hope, “The ‘Camerini
d’Alabastro’ of Alfonso d’Este,” 649; Fehl, “Worship of Bacchus and Venus,” 40-43; Hood and
Hope, “Titian’s Vatican Altarpiece,” 547; Rosand, Titian, 21-22; Walther, Tizian, 19, 34, 52, 56;
Gilbert, “Some Findings on Early Works of Titian,” 62-71; Hope, Titian, 51-54; Dülberg,
Privatporträts, 171, 295; Goffen, “Titian, His Donors and Sacred Subjects,” 89; Hetzer, Tizian,
112-114, 144-145, 354-355, 406-407; Walther et al., Gemäldegalerie Dresden, 385; Joannides,
Titian to 1518, 238-239; Pedrocco, Titian, 113; Marx et al., Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, vol. 1,
221-222, vol. 2, 541.

Cat. no. 70, Titian, Christ and the Pharisee
(image courtesy of the Staatliche
Kunstsammlungen Dresden)

1-2. Testone coin of Alfonso d’Este (obverse and reverse)
New York, American Numismatic Society
(images courtesy of the American Numismatic Society)

(illustrations continue next page)
Vienna, Graphische Sammlung Albertina (image source: Bambach et al., *Leonardo da Vinci: Master Draftsman*, 441)

4-5. *Christ and the Pharisee*, details of coin and halo

6-7. *Sestertius* and *aureus* of Emperor Nero
New York, American Numismatic Society (images courtesy of the American Numismatic Society)

8-9. Comparison of *aureus* of Emperor Nero (reverse) and *testone* of Alfonso d’Este (reverse)
New York, American Numismatic Society (images courtesy of the American Numismatic Society)
Cat. no. 71
Circle of Titian
Padua, Museo Civico

a) Birth of Adonis
Oil on panel, 35 x 162 cm
Inv. no. 50

b) Death of Polydorus/Tale of Erysichthon (?)
Oil on panel, 35 x 162 cm
Inv. no. 56

Type: Fregio

These panels have been associated with three furniture pictures, including “la nascita d’Adone,” attributed to Giorgione and documented in the Widmann collection by Ridolfi. But their abbreviated style and horizontal format suggest a slightly later artist, perhaps one working under Titian’s influence. (1)

At far left, the Birth of Adonis depicts the embrace of Cinyras and his daughter Myrrha, the incestuous pair, parents of Adonis. The rabbit and other animals in the center of the panel could be symbols of their union, and also of Myrrha’s lament that “the other animals pursue delight and mate without such niceties. / There’s nothing execrable when a heifer is mounted by her father” (Ovid, Metamorphoses, X.324-329). At center right, Adonis emerges newborn from his mother, now become a tree. He is delivered by his nurse, Lucina, her nympha, and a man wearing colorful stockings. The woman seated at right may be Venus, whose doomed passion for Adonis is also chronicled by Ovid. The tale of the youth’s emergence from a tree, as retold in Greek and Roman mythology, descends from ancient fertility rites, and the image of it could have served as a talisman for a marital chamber. The choice to depict Adonis’s birth, rather than the love story that follows, was comparatively rare during the early sixteenth century, but the subject had graduated to independent pictures by the Seicento: one 1646 inventory referred to “un quadreto del parto d’Adone.” (2)

The subject of the related panel is disputed. It may depict a neglected episode in Ovid, when Polydorus, the son of King Priam of Troy, is murdered at Thrace (Metamorphoses, XIII.429-438, 533-575). In the background, flaming buildings allude to the fact that “Troy was burning, burning with fire still visible” (XIII.408), when the prince was killed for the treasure he safeguarded. At right, the murder has just been carried out, while at left, a naked older woman approaches; this may be Hecuba, Polydorus’ mother, about to exact revenge for his death, while the figure sitting beneath the tree could be one of the captive women on whom she calls to assist her. Another possible Ovidian subject is Erysichthon (Metamorphoses, VIII.738-878), who decapitates one of his servants for trying to prevent the felling of a tree imbued with a sacred soul; he is punished by Ceres with an insatiable hunger, personified by the nude figure at left. The tale would complement that of Adonis, both stories centering around spirits enclosed in trees. Perhaps the two panels, which are quite elongated in format and probably functioned as fregi, belonged to a larger series of such paintings depicting arboreal subjects. (3)

DATING: ca. 1515-1520

NOTES:
(1) “...tre di queste favole si trovano appresso de’ Signori Vidmani; in una è la nascita d’Adone, nella seconda vedesi in soavi abbracciamenti con Venere, e nella terza vien ucciso dal Cinghiale…” (Ridolfi, Maraviglie, vol. 1, 99). The Giorgionesque ornamental works described by Ridolfi are probably lost and not identical with the present panels; see the discussion of Furniture to Frame in Ch. 3 above. The attribution difficulties surrounding the Padua panels are revealed by Berenson, who classifies them as “Giorgionesque furniture paintings” but calls them “Titianesque” (Venetian School, vol. 1, 86). For further commentary, Schubring, Cassoni, 415; Wethey, Paintings of Titian, vol. 3, 206-207; and Joannides, Titian to 1518, 78.

(2) For the birth of Adonis and its relationship to ancient fertility rituals, Hall, Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols, 307. The listing of the “quadroto del parto d’Adone” appears in the 1646 inventory of Vincenzo Grimani Calergi (Branca, Il Collezionismo Veneziano nel ’600, 119). A pair of paintings depicting the birth and death of Adonis, attributed to Sebastiano del Piombo, is in La Spezia, Museo Civico “Amedeo Lia” (Strinati et al., Sebastiano del Piombo, 92-93).

(3) Joannides identifies the tales’ common arboreal subject matter, points to the illustrations of the 1497 printed edition of Ovid’s Metamorphoses as a source, and suggests the panels’ original function as fregi (Titian to 1518, 77-78).

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Cat. no. 71, Circle of Titian, Birth of Adonis, Death of Polydorus/Tale of Erysichthon (?) (images courtesy of the Museo Civico, Padua)
**Cat. no. 72**  
Circle of Titian  
*Mother with Suckling Infants*  
Oil on panel, 30 cm diameter  
Milan, private collection (as of 1955)

Type: *Cassa*

In a clearing surrounded by dense forest, opening out to a mountainous landscape, a woman suckles two infants. Like Giorgione’s *Tempesta* and Pordenone’s *Satyr Family* (cat. no. 39), this *tondo* relates to contemporary imagery of gypsies and satyr families, who often appear nursing or playing in isolated woodland settings. (1) The painting may also be associated with *Lot and His Daughters* from the circle of Titian (cat. no. 73): both works depict figures in forests, and are of the typical dimensions of circular *cassa* decorations.

DATING: ca. 1540-1550

NOTE:  
(1) For gypsy family imagery in the Giorgionesque tradition, Holberton, “Giorgione’s *Tempest.*”

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:  

Cat. no. 72, Circle of Titian, *Mother with Suckling Infants*  
(image source: Zampetti, *Giorgione e i Giorgioneschi*, 125)
Cat. no. 73
Circle of Titian
Lot and His Daughters
Oil on panel, 27.5 cm diameter
St. Petersburg, Hermitage, inv. no. ГЭ 7350

Type: Cassa

Against a cracked, Bosch-like landscape of fire and lightning, an ageing man embraces a young woman, while another female figure appears at right. These are most likely Lot and his daughters, who have fled to a cave after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah; the burning landscape may allude to the fire and brimstone that God rained on these cities. The painting’s fearsome obscurity is heightened by its abraded condition. With its small size and round shape, it relates to other tondi probably inserted into chest fronts, such as the Mother with Suckling Infants (cat. no. 72). The painting has recently been associated with a group of Venetian decorative works documented in the Algarotti collection during the eighteenth century. (1)

DATING: ca. 1540-1550

NOTE:
(1) See Couilleaux in Delieuvin and Habert, Titien, Tintoret, Véronèse, 336.

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Fomichova, The Hermitage, 289; Martini, Pinacoteca Egidio Martini, 288; Delieuvin and Habert, Titien, Tintoret, Véronèse, 336, 338; Campbell, “When is a Cassone Painting not for a Cassone?,” 16, 18.
**Cat. no. 74**  
Follower of Titian  
*Venus and Adonis*  
Oil on panel, 25 x 50 cm  
Padua, Museo Civico, inv. no. 150

**Type:** Cassa

This rounded panel, most likely the front decoration of a chest, depicts a variation on Titian’s famous image of *Venus and Adonis* for Philip II (Fig. 1; 1554; Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado), which had begun to circulate in painted variations and copies at an early date. Venus faces forward, not back, and reaches across to Adonis in an attempt to arrest his flight. The overall brushy application of color suggests an artist attentive to Titian’s technique. Although inspired by his monumental canvas, the subject of Venus and Adonis would have befit an ornamental setting; it was among the themes of early Giorgionesque furniture paintings enumerated by Ridolfi. (1)

**DATING:** ca. 1560-1565

**NOTE:**
(1) Numerous versions and copies of Titian’s painting of *Venus and Adonis* for Philip II of Spain survive (examples in Washington, D.C., National Gallery of Art; Los Angeles, J. Paul Getty Museum); see Wethey, *Paintings of Titian*, vol. 3, 72, 188-194. For the early version of this subject associated with Giorgione, Ridolfi, *Maraviglie*, vol. 1, 99, and see also the discussion of Furniture to Frame in Ch. 3 above.

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**
**Cat. no. 75**
Circle of Paolo Veronese
*Story of Judith*
Oxford, Ashmolean Museum

a) *Judith Admonishing the Elders of Bethulia*
   Oil on canvas, 27 x 57 cm  
   Inv. no. WA 1926.3, A378

b) *Judith Leaving Bethulia*
   Oil on canvas, 27 x 57 cm  
   Inv. no. WA 1926.4, A379

c) *Judith Received by Holofernes*
   Oil on canvas, 27 x 57 cm  
   Inv. no. WA 1926.5, A380

d) *Judith Feasted by Holofernes*
   Oil on canvas, 27 x 57 cm  
   Inv. no. WA 1926.6, A381

e) *Judith Prepares to Kill Holofernes*
   Oil on canvas, 27 x 57 cm  
   Inv. no. WA 1926.7, A382

f) *Flight of the Assyrians*
   Oil on canvas, 27 x 57 cm  
   Inv. no. WA 1926.2, A377

Type: *Fregio*

This series of oblong canvases, likely organized in a *fregio* configuration similar to that of the *Mythological Cycle* from Veronese’s circle (cat. no. 76), expands on the standard theme of Judith with the head of Holofernes. The Assyrians have laid siege to Judith’s hometown of Bethulia, and its inhabitants are dying of thirst. After conferring with the people of the city, the elders have decided to surrender after five more days. In the first panel, Judith appears in her household before the elders, reprimanding them for “putting God to the test” in this way. With her right arm, she jabs the air, perhaps to emphasize the famous point, “If you cannot sound the depths of the human heart or unravel the arguments of the human mind, how can you fathom the God who made all things, or sound his mind or unravel his purposes?” (8:14). In the following panel, the heroine is shown arrayed in gold, departing the gates of Bethulia; she next appears before Holofernes’s tent, kneeling and offering her services on behalf of his armies. The general, beguiled by Judith’s beauty and planning to seduce her, holds a feast to which she is invited; but in the following panel, Judith prepares to kill him. In this segment, the artist exchanges the classic image – Judith triumphantly holding or stepping on the head of Holofernes – for the moment just before. The last canvas depicts the ensuing Israelite offensive, as the Assyrians bivouacked in the mountains flee in panic. (1)

Like Veronese’s lost *spalliera* paintings of the story of Esther (cat. no. 77), these pictures are sumptuous in coloring and detail. Judith’s apartments are furnished with a four-poster bed wrapped in yellow draperies; the room is arranged like a stage set opening on to a veranda and sky. The departure from Bethulia takes place in a classical architectural setting, while the feast of Holofernes recalls Veronese’s many larger depictions of festive suppers: gilded low-hanging chandeliers, fringed silk tablecloths covered with golden goblets and bowls, and a plate service lining the wall.

**DATING:** ca. 1560
NOTE:
(1) This scene has also been identified as the flight of Achior (Judith 6:10-21; Harrison et al., Ashmolean Museum, 233). I am grateful to Catherine Whistler for information about this cycle.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:

Cat. no. 75, Circle of Paolo Veronese, Story of Judith: Judith Admonishing the Elders of Bethulia, Judith Leaving Bethulia, Judith Received by Holofernes, Judith Feasted by Holofernes, Judith Prepares to Kill Holofernes, Flight of the Assyrians (image source: Harrison et al., Ashmolean Museum, 233-234)
**Cat. no. 76**
Circle of Paolo Veronese

*Mythological Cycle*

a) *Actaeon Watches Diana and Nymphs Bathing*
Oil on canvas, 26 x 101 cm  
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 59.260

b) *Jupiter and a Nude*
Oil on canvas, 27.1 x 101 cm  
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 60.125

c) *Jupiter with Gods and Goddesses on Olympus*
Oil on canvas, 27.2 x 101 cm  
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 64.2078

d) *Atalanta and Meleager at Alcalá*
Oil on canvas, 25.6 x 101 cm  
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 64.2079

e) *Rape of Europa*
Oil on canvas, 25 x 88 cm  
Milan, Rasini Collection (as of 2008)

f) *Allegory of Painting*
Oil on canvas, 28 x 16 cm  
Detroit, Detroit Institute of Arts, inv. no. 36.30

g) *Minerva*
Oil on canvas, 28 x 16 cm  
Moscow, Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, inv. no. 2666

h) *Diana*
Oil on canvas, 28 x 16 cm  
St. Petersburg, Hermitage, inv. no. ГЭ 167

**Type: Fregio**

These canvases likely once belonged to a group of at least seventeen paintings, arranged around a room as a decorative frieze. In November of 1658, two posthumous inventories of the holdings of the Genoese collector Giovanni Battista Raggi (1613-1657) recorded a series of small pictures by Veronese: five oblong paintings of mythological subjects, including Jupiter and Io, the tale of Europa, and Diana and Actaeon; and ten narrower quadretti portraying Muses and Virtues. All of the paintings were one span in height, and shared classical poetic and allegorical subject matter. (1) These congruences suggest that the pictures descended from the same series, and had been purchased as a single unit by Raggi sometime in the seventeenth century. Provenance studies have found that four of the oblong works (a-d) are now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Of the ten smaller quadretti, however, only one apparently survives: the *Allegory of Painting* (f), a single-figure canvas now in the Detroit Institute of Arts. From the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth century, this picture’s provenance was identical to that of the Boston mythological scenes. (2)

Overall, the Raggi inventories record fifteen linked works by Veronese, of which five (a-d, f) have been identified with reasonable certainty through the documentary record. These paintings show similarities of theme and composition that reinforce their association with an integral cycle. Hung in horizontal sequence, the canvases would have presented a panorama unified by
Veronese’s signature juxtapositions of brilliant color. Sumptuously costumed and nude figures consort among ruins, classical porticoes, and landscapes of gold-leaved trees stretching to Alpine slopes. Several of the longer scenes, including Actaeon and Atalanta and Meleager, share a formal arrangement: a cluster of actors appears at center-right or center-left, its outlines defined by an architectural or natural backdrop. This gathering is then flanked by a smaller object or figure parenthesizing the composition at far left. In Jupiter and a Nude, the larger group is replaced by a colonnade with distant figures, and the flanking element is Jupiter’s eagle. Repeated across the series, this compositional pattern creates a rhythmic alternation of dense action and open space. Also suggestive of a single ensemble is the recurrence of a few bright colors, which weave the compositions together. The searing orange, red, and yellow garments of the sons of Thestius in Atalanta and Meleager also appear in Jupiter and a Nude, in the god’s costume and the yellow cloth draped on the fountain at left; the same hues are seen in the landscape of Diana and Actaeon, whose nude figures are rendered in rich flesh tones that recur elsewhere in the series. A blue sky, meanwhile, joins together the various backgrounds. A summation of these colors is found in the smaller Allegory of Painting, who wears a yellow robe topped by a pink skirt with black and gold stripes, below blue, gold, and black vestments. This eloquent figure stands in a niche and gestures outwards with her brushes and palette. Symbolic rather than narrative in conception, this work would have relieved the expanse of the longer scenes. The Raggi inventories list nine other such quadretti, which probably were interspersed with the mythological canvases.

In addition to the five paintings discussed above, three other strong candidates for Veronese’s original cycle can be identified. One is the Rape of Europa (e), now in a private collection in Milan. This work is identical in height to the Boston paintings and, like them, depicts an episode from ancient poetry in a stretching landscape. The canvas is only 88 cm long, however, and may have been cropped at a later date. It is most likely the “Favola di Europa” documented in the Raggi collection in 1658, and one of the “due fregi bellissimi, uno dei quali ha il Ratto di Europa, di Paolo da Verona,” recorded in the Raggi palace in Genoa in 1818. Two other candidates are the pictures of Minerva and Diana (g-h), now in Russian museums. These did not belong to Raggi, but rather were in a private collection in Verona by 1656. They eventually passed to Pierre Crozat, and were sold in 1772 to Catherine II of Russia. They are considered part of the present ensemble based on similarities of dimensions, coloring, and composition to the Allegory of Painting. All three canvases measure 28 x 16 cm, and depict goddesses or female personifications in arched and shadowed niches.

The two pictures now in Russia, combined with the fifteen paintings recorded in the Raggi inventories, make for a cycle comprising at least seventeen documented canvases, of which eight survive and nine are lost. The original series may have comprised even more pieces, which have not come to light.

While elements of the group can be reconstructed on grounds of provenance, dimensions, content, and style, the impetus for this pictorial ensemble and its physical disposition are more difficult to determine. It has been proposed that the paintings served as bozzetti for frescoes; however, they are carefully executed and fail to correspond exactly to any surviving fresco by Veronese. More likely is that the pictures were arranged sequentially around a room as an ornamental frieze. Their oblong format is consistent with surviving and recorded examples of
this genre in sixteenth-century Venice, and at numerous points in their travels, pieces of the cycle were displayed together and described as fregi. (6) In their initial configuration, the works may have been hung end-to-end along the upper walls of a chamber, presenting a vista of mythological and poetic scenes punctuated by the images of Muses and Virtues.

Further clues about Veronese’s cycle and its function can be found by comparison with the artist’s frescoes for the Barbaro family at Villa Maser, usually dated to the same decade. The two groups are not identical, but both display rich open views of landscape, allegorical figures in architectural niches, and attention to dress and the female form. (7) Perhaps the present ensemble was conceived as a small-scale, urban analogue to the Maser frescoes. The considerably reduced height yet comparable breadth of the canvas group represents an alternative to in situ fresco; the individual paintings could be hung and rehung according to the dimensions of a particular room in a city dwelling. Moreover, in the saline climate of Venice, a series of images in oil on canvas would have offered a practical substitute for a domestic fresco program.

The scene of Jupiter and a Nude (likely identical with the painting described as “Favola di Giove et Io” in the Raggi documents) recently has undergone technical study that suggests avenues for further investigation of the cycle as a whole. (8) The work was executed on a fine twill canvas, and the preparatory layers included a light pink priming composed of lead white and red lake pigments. To create the precise architectural setting, an extensive underdrawing with straightedge was employed. Freehand underdrawing, similar in style to Veronese’s fluent drawings on paper, was used for scenographic features such as statue adorning the fountain at right. These elements were placed over a pre-existing composition that had included a truncated figure running or walking, suggesting that the work went through multiple phases of planning and revision. Overall, the picture shows a careful process of preparation and development, with fine pigments used for the upper layers; this contrasts with the quick execution and brushy style of some ornamental paintings by the artist’s contemporaries, Schiavone and Tintoretto. Though equivalent studies have yet to be conducted on other surviving members of Veronese’s ensemble, it seems likely that they would reveal comparable attention to detail and quality. In addition, such studies might establish more definitively the canvases’ relation to each other.

DATING: ca. 1560-1570

NOTES:

(1) I thank Frederick Ilchman and Brooks Rich for information about this ensemble. For further discussion, see the section on Friezes in Ch. 2 above. The paintings are listed in the Raggi inventory of 4 November 1658 as “Un quadro simile [1 e 5 palmi] di Paolo da Verona Favola di Giove et Io...Un quadro simile di Paolo da Verona Consiglio delli dei...Un quadro simile del detto testa del lagro (?) di Erimanto...Un quadro simile del detto Favola di Europa...Un quadro simile del detto Favola di Diana et Atteone.” The ten small allegorical pictures are described as “Quadri di 1 e 3/4 di ognuno con una figura delle Muse e Virtù di Paolo da Verona” (Boccardo et al., L’Età di Rubens, 325-326). Two days later, a second inventory was drawn up of works to be sent to Raggi’s brother in Rome. This document also lists the Veronese group: “cinque bislonghi di Paolo” and “dieci quadretti di Paolo” (ibid., 326). The 4 November inventory notes that all the paintings are 1 span [palmo] in height, or approximately 20-25 cm (for translation of the dimensions, ibid., 370). The oblong works are recorded as being 5 palmi in length and the
smaller canvases 3/4 palmo. These dimensions correspond to those of the surviving paintings (about 25-28 x 100 cm for the long canvases and 28 x 16 cm for the narrow ones).

(2) The canvases now in Boston have the following provenance: from the estate of Giovanni Battista Raggi, they travelled to his brother, Cardinal Lorenzo Raggi (1615-1687), in Rome in 1658. Sometime after Lorenzo’s death, the paintings returned to Genoa, where they were recorded in the palace of another family member, Giulio Raggi. They probably remained there into the nineteenth century; by 1927, they were in the collection of Lindsay Holford at Dorchester House. They were sold at Christie’s in London in 1927 to Edward J. Holmes, whose widow eventually donated them to the MFA. The Allegory of Painting shared the same provenance from 1658 to 1927 (Boccardo et al., L’Était di Rubens, 370, 372; Nitti et al., Veronese: Gods, Heroes and Allegories, 96; Ilchman et al., Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, 293).

(3) The smaller allegorical canvases are approximately 0.8-3 cm taller than the surviving oblong paintings. These differences probably can be attributed to framing devices for the longer works, or to trimming over time. A 1658 inventory describes all the pictures as being 1 span in height (see n. 1 above).

(4) For the provenance of the Rape of Europa, Minerva, and Diana, Pignatti and Pedrocco, Veronese, vol. 1, 260; Boccardo et al., L’Était di Rubens, 325, 368, 372.

(5) For the possibility that one or more of the canvases served as bozzetti for a fresco, Pignatti and Pedrocco, Veronese, vol. 1, 260, with further bibliography; Boccardo et al., L’Était di Rubens, 368. It has also been suggested that these paintings are spalliere, similar in type to the cycle originally in Ca’ Nani on the Giudecca and described by Ridolfi in his life of Veronese (Pignatti, “Spalliere’ Paintings by Paolo Veronese”). However, the present paintings are not tall enough to serve as spalliere (see discussion of this genre in Ch. 2 above). They certainly are not identical with the spalliera pictures recorded by Ridolfi, for that cycle illuminated scenes from the Book of Esther (see cat. no. 77 below).

(6) In the eighteenth century, for example, part of the original ensemble was recorded as “diversi fregi con piccole figure di Paolo da Verona”; in 1818, an anonymous source described two of the works as “fregi belliissimi” (quoted in Boccardo et al., L’Était di Rubens, 372).


(8) For the technical study of Jupiter and a Nude, Ilchman et al., Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, 156-159.

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Morassi, “Opere Ignote od Inedite di Paolo Veronese,” 252-256; Pallucchini, Mostra di Paolo Veronese, 84-87, 152-153; Berenson, Venetian School, vol. 1, 130, 132, 133; Piovene, L’Opera
In his life of Veronese, Ridolfi writes that the artist completed a cycle of spalliera paintings for Marcantonio Barbaro (1518-1595), one-time Procurator of San Marco, for his house on the Giudecca. The palace, home to an early academy known as the Accademia Filosofica, had passed by Ridolfi’s time to the Nani family, who also used it as the seat of an academy, the Filareti. During that period, the now-lost cycle remained in situ: seven scenes painted on cloth, topped with arches, and separated by Corinthian columns. (1) The paintings depicted episodes from the Book of Esther, similar to Veronese’s illumination of the Story of Judith in a smaller fregio cycle (cat. no. 75). Ridolfi described the scenes in detail, noting particularly the rich costumes and decorations. Esther appeared before the king “arrayed in veils and gems, leaning against two charming servants dressed in livery, and with a mere glance breaking hearts.” The feasts in the gardens of Ahasuerus took place beneath rich awnings of variously colored fabric, tied with cords of fine linen and cloth of purple, inserted in rings of silver hanging from marble columns, over emerald-tiled floors. (2) In one installment, Ridolfi notes, the Dukes and Captains present themselves at the feast dressed in Persian costumes, and among these figures is a portrait of Marcantonio Barbaro. The Procurator seems to have exercised control over the commission, perhaps even designing the cartoons, “which were then filled in with colors in oil by Paolo.” (3)

As Ridolfi’s description suggests, Veronese’s paintings were monumental works, larger than typical domestic fregio or spalliera decorations. The pictures were probably comparable to the artist’s series of ten canvases depicting episodes from the Old and New Testaments, each almost three meters in length. The spalliera paintings for Barbaro may have been even larger, since Ridolfi describes figures continuing into the lunettes created by the arch surrounds. (4) The grandeur of the ensemble is further suggested by Boschini’s note that Giovanni Battista and Pierfrancesco Mola were commissioned to make copies of it for a Cardinal of the church. But the word Boschini uses to describe the cycle – “fornimento” – reveals its origin as a work of ornamental painting, albeit on a scale unsurpassed in the genre. (5)

DATING: ca. 1565-1570

NOTES:
Tassini, Curiosità Veneziane, 294. Pignatti discusses the lost spalliera paintings in his article of 1981 (“‘Spalliere’ Paintings by Paolo Veronese”).

(2) “Ester s’avvia al Rè adorna d’ogni bellezza arrichita di veli, di gemme, e co’ sguardi và saettando i cuori, e se ne stà appoggiata à due vezzose serve vestite à livrea” (Ridolfi, Maraviglie, vol. 1., 342). Ridolfi describes the feast: “Hor nel’anno terzo del suo Impero Assuero fece à suoi maggiori Capitani & à loro servi sontuosi conviti à fine, di far pompa delle sue grandezze, apprestando le mense dinanzi al Regio Giardino sotto ricche tende di vari colori, sostenuti da funi di bisso e di porpora, inserte in anelli d’argento assissi à colonne di Marmo. Erano gli strati fregiati d’oro collocati sopra à pavimento di smeraldi e di marmi parij distinto, ed era il convito divisato di lauti cibi, bevendosi in tazze dorate i nettari pretiosi” (ibid., 341).

(3) “Nel primo partimento appaiono Ducì e Capitani alla mensa vestiti in belle guise all’uso Persiano, e trà quelli è ritratto il medesimo Procuratore” (Ridolfi, Maraviglie, vol. 1, 341). For Ridolfi’s account of Barbaro’s involvement, see n. 1 above.


(5) “In quel palazzo [Ca’ Nani] ghe xe un fornimento / Pur del gran Paulo, che veste una stanza / De pani de gran stima e d’importanza, / Che val quanto l’istesso godimento. / El Bichi, eminentissimo Signor, / Gardenal de suprema qualità, / Che portè pase in sta nostra Cità, / Ghe giera morto e spanto per amor. / A segno tal, che el fè oferir gran oro / A quela ecelsa Casa con destrezza. / Ghe fu resposo con gran zentilezza, / Che soldi no pagava quel tesoro. / Se trovete però temperamento, / Per contentar quel gran Signor in parte, / Che fu che i so Pitori, con bon’arte, / Fece le copie de tal fornimento. / Questì fu i Mola Francesco e Batista...” (Boschini, Carta del Navegar Pitoresco, 218-219). Boschini notes that Veronese also painted the façade of the house. For Cardinal Bichi, who visited the city in 1643 on behalf of King Louis XIV of France, ibid., 219 n. 1. See also Borean, La Quadreria di Agostino e Giovan Donato Correggio, 115.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:
**Cat. no. 78**
Anonymous, 16th-century Venetian
Chest, gilded, with inlaid panel paintings, 124 x 190 x 67 cm
*Three Scenes from Roman History: Killing of Julius Caesar, Aeneas and Anchises, The Head of Pompey*
Milan, Museo Bagatti Valsecchi, inv. no. 24

Type: *Cassa*

Three paintings, arranged within the front of the chest in a predella-like series, depict incidents from Roman history: the killing of Julius Caesar, Aeneas and Anchises as they escape from Troy, and the head of Pompey given to Caesar on a platter. Because the scenes are not arranged chronologically – the earliest episode of Aeneas and Anchises appears in the center, while Julius Caesar’s death is depicted before his receipt of Pompey’s head – their disposition is probably not original. (1) The chest underwent renovations during the nineteenth century; perhaps the paintings, associated by Schubring with the circle of Bartolomeo Montagna, were added or rearranged at that point. Despite the later alterations, however, substantial portions of the original structure remain intact: the underlying poplar case and *pastiglia* details, including the four candelabre dividing the painted scenes, the braided frieze below, and the row of palmettes along the top edge. As a whole, the work suggests how paintings would originally have been disposed within a lavish gilded *cassa*. A pendant to this chest is now in the Courtauld Gallery, London. (2)

**DATING:** ca. 1500-1510; 19th century renovations

**NOTES:**
(1) Schubring identifies all three episodes as scenes from the *Aeneid* (*Cassoni*, 366-367). For further discussion, see the section on Chests and Boxes in Ch. 2 above.

(2) This chest also depicts scenes from Roman history, including the suicide of Lucretia (Campbell, “When is a *Cassone* Painting not for a *Cassone*?,” 16, fig. 1.2).

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

(illustrations next page)
Cat. no. 78, Anonymous, 16th-century Venetian, chest with *Three Scenes from Roman History: Killing of Julius Caesar, Aeneas and Anchises, The Head of Pompey* (image source: Pirovano et al., *Museo Bagatti Valsecchi*, vol. 1, 97)
**Cat. no. 79**
Anonymous, 16th-century Venetian
Chest, gilded, with inlaid panel paintings, 74 x 202 x 61 cm
*Baptism of Christ with St. John the Baptist, Stigmatization of St. Francis*
Milan, Museo Bagatti Valsecchi, inv. no. 23

Type: *Cassa*

Although this ensemble has been substantially altered, it retains the framework of a sixteenth-century *cassa*, and suggests how paintings would have been arranged within. Portions of the original poplar structure remain intact, as do most of the front areas and the central coat of arms. During the nineteenth century, however, these elements were recomposed on a modern base of fir, and the paintings of the *Baptism of Christ* and *Stigmatization of St. Francis* were added. The pictures themselves can be dated to the late fifteenth century, but their subjects are incongruous with a chest of this type, and their fir frames awkwardly integrated with the poplar surrounds of the older structure. (1) The panels appear to have been added to the existing apertures in a configuration similar to that of the chest’s original decorative pictures (which may, however, have been roundels rather than quadrangular paintings). Examination of the coat of arms, containing a tower and helmet mounted by a lion’s head, has led to a dating around the turn of the sixteenth century. The ensign has not been definitively identified with a particular family.

**DATING:** ca. 1490-1510; 19th century renovations

**NOTE:**
(1) For details of the chest’s renovation, Pirovano et al., *Museo Bagatti Valsecchi*, vol. 1, 98-100.

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**
Pirovano et al., *Museo Bagatti Valsecchi*, vol. 1, 98-100.
**Cat. no. 80**

Anonymous, 16th-century Venetian

Chest, gilded, with inlaid panel paintings, 70 x 204 x 71 cm

*Scenes of Battle and Sacrifice*

Tempera on panel, 23 cm diameter

Milan, Museo Poldi Pezzoli, inv. no. 1653/671

Type: *Cassa*

The chest displays two painted roundels, framed and set within rectangular fields, and flanking a coat of arms, identified with the Porto family of Vicenza. (1) The left scene depicts soldiers on horseback, one holding a red standard, which flutters against a mountainous background. In the *tondo* at right, men gather around a flaming altar topped by a statue, while below, a ram is prepared for sacrifice. (2) The body of the chest, which has probably undergone restorations, displays overall gilding, floriante tracery, colonnettes, and dentillated mouldings, very similar to structural details of cat. no. 79. The *cassa* has sometimes been identified with the circle of Bartolomeo Montagna, but is now attributed more generally to a workshop in or near Venice at the turn of the sixteenth century.

**DATING:** ca. 1500-1510; 19th century renovations

**NOTES:**

(1) Pirovano et al., *Museo Poldi Pezzoli*, 123. For further information, see the section on Chests and Boxes in Ch. 2 above.

(2) The scenes are sometimes identified as episodes from the life of Romulus (Pirovano et al., *Museo Poldi Pezzoli: Ceramiche, Vetri, Mobili e Arredi*, 312).

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**


Cat. no. 80, Anonymous, 16th-century Venetian, chest with *Scenes of Battle and Sacrifice*, and details (photos by the author)
**Cat. no. 81**
Anonymous, 16th-century Venetian
Chest, with inlaid panel painting
*Romulus and Remus*
Berlin, Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Kunstgewerbemuseum, Schloss Kőpenick

Type: *Cassa*

The claw-footed chest marries figurative and decorative motifs: the oval-shaped painting of Romulus and Remus at center is framed by carved and foliate designs, and by two rectangles containing the image of a nursing mother with putti giving way to scrolls and vegetal patterns. The arrangement suggests how similarly shaped panels, such as *Venus and Adonis* by a follower of Titian (cat. no. 74) and several scenes by Bonifacio de’ Pitati (cat. nos. 30, 31) originally would have been oriented within carved chest fronts.

**DATING:** ca. 1530-1550

**SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

Cat. no. 81, Anonymous, 16th-century Venetian, chest with *Romulus and Remus*, and detail (image source: Schottmuller, *Furniture and Interior Decoration*, 42)
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