



AUTHENTICITY REPORT

Titian's Magnum Opus *La Trinità · Il Paradiso*

Titian · Oil on Canvas · Private Collection, London

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FINE ART DETECTIVE

THE PAINTING UNDER EXAMINATION



La Trinità / Il Paradiso, currently catalogued as *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife*.

Oil on canvas, c. 125 × 102 cm. Private collection, London.

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PREFATORY

Abstract

This report examines an oil-on-canvas painting (c. 125 × 102 cm; private collection, London) long catalogued as Joseph and Potiphar's Wife, and argues that it is a work by Titian, the lost, original studio oil sketch for the great Trinity (La Gloria / Il Paradiso) now in the Museo del Prado. Read through Erwin Panofsky's iconological method, disciplined against the accepted iconography of the Cybele–Attis mystery tradition and against securely documented Titians (Venus and Adonis, The Fall of Man, Bacchus and Ariadne) and Mantegna's Introduction of the Cult of Cybele at Rome, the picture is interpreted not as a biblical narrative but as an initiatory image set in the studiolo of Isabella d'Este at Mantua, in the sense of the fantasia she is documented to have commissioned, a reading grounded in the documented humanist culture of the milieu (the immortality-of-the-soul debate of 1513–16 and Ficino's prisca theologia), though no lost programme is claimed. The technical case draws on the 2005 diagnostic report of Editech (Ing. Maurizio Seracini), cross-section and SEM-EDS pigment analysis, a calcite-and-lead-white ground without gesso, an oil-bound Renaissance palette, and radiocarbon and lead-210 dating, and on Dr J. E. Metcalfe's independent review, whose X-radiographic pentimenti and "second painting phase" point to an original invention rather than a copy, and who attributes the anomalously early radiocarbon date to sample contamination. The provenance is traced from the finished sketch for La Gloria recorded in the Samuel Rogers collection (Christie's, 1856, lot 725) and set beside the competing identification with National Gallery NG4222, a picture contested since Sir Charles Holmes (1927) argued a genuine preparatory Titian and Nicholas Penny (2008) judged it a later copy. A two-sided-canvas hypothesis (a Bellini composition beneath Titian's, at the 1516 succession) is advanced as an investigation to be resolved by non-destructive imaging. Documented findings, proposed readings, and matters still to be tested are kept distinct throughout.

PREFATORY

Object Identification

ARTIST	Tiziano Vecellio, called Titian (attributed)
TITLE	<i>La Trinità / Il Paradiso (La Gloria di Tiziano)</i> ; currently catalogued as <i>Joseph and Potiphar's Wife</i>
PROPOSED DATING	Initiatory subject c. 1515–16; the identity as the finished sketch for <i>La Gloria</i> is examined at §2 and §8
MEDIUM	Oil on canvas
DIMENSIONS	c. 125 × 102 cm (approximately 4 ft 3 in × 3 ft 4 in)
SUPPORT	Canvas; two later relinings; non-original stretcher
GROUND	Beige layer of calcite, lead white and earth pigments; no gesso
INSCRIPTIONS	Faint “MAXIMILIAN MDXVI” reported on the reverse (unverified)
LABELS AND MARKS	Collection labels affixed to the reverse, among them the Woodroffe Collection, Adelaide
LOCATION	Private collection, London

STATEMENT OF EXAMINATION BASIS

The opinions advanced in this report rest on four bodies of evidence: the author’s first-hand examination of the painting (c. 2007); the full diagnostic dossier produced by Editech S.r.l., Florence, under Ing. Maurizio Seracini (2005), bound as Appendix A; the independent critical review of that dossier by Dr John Edwin Metcalfe (2006), bound as Appendix B; and sustained photographic and documentary study of the picture and of the comparative material cited throughout. Where a reading depends on photographs rather than direct examination, this is stated in place.

LIMITATIONS

Certain matters remain untested and are flagged as such throughout. The twenty-six paint samples taken by Dr Nicholas Eastaugh have not been submitted for analysis; the reverse of the canvas has not yet been imaged, so the two-sided-canvas hypothesis of §6 remains open; no cleaning test has yet been carried out beneath the discoloured varnish; and the comparison with National Gallery NG4222 rests on the published literature rather than side-by-side examination. Each of these is treated in the body of the report as work still to be done, not as settled ground.

I. Summary of the Case

The painting long catalogued as *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife* is presented here as a work by **TITIAN**, and as the lost, original **STUDIO OIL SKETCH** for the great *Trinity* now in the Museo del Prado, a composition recorded across the nineteenth century under the names *La Gloria di Tiziano*, *Il Paradiso*, *The Apotheosis of Charles V* and *The Last Judgement*. Read through its iconography, it is not a biblical seduction scene but an **INITIATORY IMAGE IN THE CYBELE MYSTERY TRADITION**, set in the world of **ISABELLA D'ESTE'S STUDIOLO** at the Castello di San Giorgio, Mantua. The object itself is proposed to be rarer still: a **TWO-SIDED CANVAS** carrying an earlier hand beneath Titian's, made at the moment Titian succeeded his master **GIOVANNI BELLINI** in 1516. These claims stand at different levels of proof, and this report keeps them distinct, separating what is documented from what is proposed and from what remains to be tested.

The method throughout is that of Erwin Panofsky's iconology: the picture is read against the *accepted, undisputed* iconography of its tradition, so that interpretation is disciplined by fact at each step.

2. The Object

The picture is currently catalogued as *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife*. It is here attributed to **TITIAN**, and identified with the recorded finished sketch known as *La Gloria di Tiziano / Il Paradiso / La Trinità*. The medium is oil on canvas; the dimensions, approximately **125 × 102 CM**, correspond to the size recorded for the *La Gloria* sketch in the nineteenth-century literature (**4 FT 3 IN × 3 FT 4 IN**, ≈ 124.5 × 101.6 cm). The work is in a private collection in London.

Two questions of date arise and are addressed below: the **INITIATORY SUBJECT** belongs to Isabella d'Este's lifetime (c. 1515–16), while the identity as the **FINISHED SKETCH FOR THE LARGE LA GLORIA** points to the 1550s. The relationship between these two datings is treated as an open matter of the investigation rather than assumed.

Physically, the object presents as a canvas of considerable age that has passed through more than one campaign of restoration. It has been relined twice, the present stretcher is not original, and the paint lies on a warm beige ground of calcite, lead white and earth pigments rather than a gesso preparation: a layer whose significance for the picture's dating and workshop is examined at §4. The reverse is reported to carry a faint inscription, **MAXIMILIAN MDXVI**, together with collection labels that include the Woodroffe Collection, Adelaide; the inscription remains unverified and is weighed accordingly in the provenance discussion at §8.

As it hangs, the picture shows the biblical moment of Joseph fleeing Potiphar's wife: a young man in a rose tunic turning away, the woman rising from a curtained bed and grasping the red mantle that passes between them, an Anatolian carpet spread beneath her feet, and a bronze vessel standing in shadow beneath the table. Under the discoloured varnish the principal forms remain fully legible, and it is on the conduct of these passages, the drawing of the hands and feet, the handling of the carpet and the whites, and the evidence recovered beneath the surface, that the argument of this report is built.

3. Condition and Surface

A thick layer, approximately 4 mm, of dark yellow, heavily soiled varnish obscures the entire surface. It is not merely cosmetic: it mutes the chromatic brilliance and luminous colour expected of Bellini or Titian and flattens the picture's depth, though the underlying animation remains legible to a careful eye.

Beneath that varnish the paint is well preserved. In the assessment of Ing. Maurizio Seracini, the picture is in remarkable condition for its age; and, most significantly for attribution, the **FACES AND THE FLESH**, the passages that carry most of the painter's hand, are **UNTOUCHED BY RESTORATION**, the later interventions recorded in the imaging (§4) being confined to other areas.

The condition corroborates the documentary trail. Period records describe the *La Gloria* sketch as rediscovered in 1808 “begrimed with dirt and lamp-oil”, the exact effect visible on this surface today (Jameson, 1844). A cleaning and condition report by a qualified paintings conservator is the natural first step, and would allow the picture to be read clearly for the first time in two centuries.

DOCUMENTED RESTORATION HISTORY

The surface also carries the marks of modern handling, recorded here as owner-reported history. During a restoration around 1995 a small tear in the left leg of the female figure was repaired with a sewn-in patch, visible in photographs of the reverse; a small blister on the same leg, where the paint has lifted onto one of the relinings, remains. The painting was given a protective layer of artist's gel at that time. On professional advice the paint-sampling sites (§4) have been left unfilled pending completion of the authenticity investigation. None of this touches the autograph passages, the faces and flesh remain unrestored.



PLATE I

The reverse of the painting, showing the later relinings and the (non-original) stretcher; the sewn-in patch repairs the c. 1995 tear to the female figure's left leg (owner-reported). Collection labels are affixed to the reverse, among them the Woodroffe Collection, Adelaide, and the faint "MAXIMILIAN MDXVI" lettering reported on the reverse is discussed at §4.

4. Materials, Technique and Scientific Findings

This is the strongest technical ground in the file, and the place where the case must be settled on evidence.

THE ANALYTICAL DOSSIER

In 2005 the picture underwent a full diagnostic examination at **EDITECH S.R.L.** (Centro Diagnostico per i Beni Culturali, Florence) under **ING. MAURIZIO SERACINI**, the standard multi-technique protocol of Italian cultural-heritage conservation science. The report (*Analytical Diagnostics on “Joseph and Potiphar’s Wife,” attributed to Tiziano*, Cod. Ed. P1320, 2005) combined visible-light and detail photography, ultraviolet fluorescence, infrared reflectography and X-ray radiography with optical microscopy of cross-sections (reflected light and UV) at eleven sampling sites, scanning-electron-microscope back-scattered-electron imaging, SEM-EDS elemental microanalysis, radiocarbon dating and a lead-210 measurement. The findings were read against the published literature on sixteenth-century Venetian painting technique (Lazzarini; Gettens & Mrose; Dunkerton & Spring), and are reproduced in full in the scientific annex. The results below are drawn from that report.

SUPPORT

Beneath the original canvas the examination found two later relinings, and because the painted surface is smaller than the stretcher on which it is now fixed, that stretcher is not the original one. This bears directly on the two-sided question of §6, since the reverse of the original canvas lies beneath those relinings.

GROUND

The preparation is a beige layer of **CALCITE (CaCO₃)**, **LEAD WHITE AND EARTH PIGMENTS**, with **NO GESSO**. This cuts two ways. Painting on a calcite-and-earth ground without gesso is documented in Andrea Mantegna’s oil-on-textile works and in Dosso Dossi (as tested by Dr Barbara Berrie), and it suits a support built to be rolled, a travelling altarpiece. But it is also, as Seracini expressly noted, atypical of Titian’s documented works, whose grounds, the *Madonna delle rose*, *Flora*, the della Rovere portrait, the *Assunta*, the *Pala Pesaro* and others, are gesso-and-glue. The calcite preparation therefore has to be explained rather than assumed; it points away from Titian’s standard panel practice and toward the Bellini–Mantegna canvas tradition in which this picture is here placed.

PALETTE

SEM-EDS microanalysis identified a fully period-appropriate palette bound in OIL: LEAD WHITE, AZURITE, CINNABAR (VERMILION), RED LAKE, EARTH PIGMENTS, CALCITE, CARBON BLACK AND GOLD LEAF, with calcite and lead white associated in the ground and silicon and iron contributed by the earth pigments. (In a later examination the pigment scientist DR NICHOLAS EASTAUGH identified SMALT in the eye of the male sitter and LEAD-TIN YELLOW in his double girdle; these remain to be confirmed and, in the case of the blue, reconciled with the azurite of the documented palette.)

IMAGING: PENTIMENTI AND A SECOND PAINTING PHASE

The X-ray radiography and infrared reflectography are the most telling part of the dossier, because they record the composition being worked out on the canvas. The examination was extensive, sixteen X-radiographs overlapped into a single composite of the whole picture, together with 146 infrared-reflectography frames. Seracini documented numerous PENTIMENTI: differences in the profile of the collar; the male figure's right hand, first painted further to the left and moved before the red robe was laid in; several successive positions of his left leg; adjustments to the upper profile of the red robe and to the legs of the table; and the vase in the lower-left corner, painted over the pillar behind it. The report concluded that the picture "was partly subjected to a SECOND PAINTING PHASE," and ultraviolet fluorescence mapped two later restoration campaigns. Changes of this order are the signature of an ORIGINAL, AUTOGRAPH INVENTION, an artist composing and revising at the easel, and are precisely what a copy cannot show. This is the decisive material contrast with the National Gallery's NG4222, whose design is traced from Cornelis Cort's 1565 engraving and so carries no such creative reworking (§8).

DATING

Radiocarbon dating of the canvas cellulose, carried out at the R. J. VAN DE GRAAFF LABORATORY, UTRECHT (sample UtC-13929), returned a calibrated age of CAL AD 1374–1472 (1σ; cal AD 1304–1449 at 2σ). Seracini's report notes that ORGANIC CONTAMINATION OF THE CANVAS SAMPLE affected the measurement, so the early range should be read as a terminus on the support: the flax of a canvas can in any case predate its use, not as a date of execution. A lead-210 (²¹⁰Pb) measurement detected no residual activity, consistent with an age of more than 250 years. A further radiocarbon programme was later commissioned by FREEMAN ART (DAVID FREEMAN), which engaged DR NICHOLAS EASTAUGH to take the samples: three were taken for three separate tests at the OXFORD RADIOCARBON ACCELERATOR UNIT. The resulting report is held by Freeman Art and has not yet been released to the owner; recovering it is a priority.

OUTSTANDING SAMPLES

As part of the same programme Dr Eastaugh also took **TWENTY-SIX PAINT SAMPLES**, which he retains in his archive. These were not submitted for analysis, none having been commissioned, so obtaining results from them would materially add to the technical file.

INDEPENDENT REVIEW (DR JOHN EDWIN METCALFE)

The Editech data were subsequently examined by **DR JOHN EDWIN METCALFE** (Florence) in a four-month critical study (2006), several of whose observations reinforce the case. The paint is built up in **DISCRETE LAYERS** rather than blended wet-in-wet, which he reads as the mark of an **EARLY PERIOD IN THE HISTORY OF OIL PAINTING**; there is **NO UNDERDRAWING** beneath the paint, unusual since most painters underdraw and consistent with Titian's direct manner; and the X-radiograph shows **FINISHED PASSAGES, CARRYING LEAD-WHITE HIGHLIGHTS, THAT WERE LATER PAINTED OUT**, alongside several pentimenti, the marks of an artist revising an original composition rather than copying one. The binder is a drying oil (linseed or walnut). On the two features that complicate a Titian attribution, Metcalfe is constructive: he judges the anomalously early **RADIOCARBON RESULT TO BE ERRONEOUS THROUGH SAMPLE CONTAMINATION**: restoration glues in the canvas fibre cannot be wholly removed and bias the measurement, a reading he pursued directly with Dr K. van der Borg of the Utrecht laboratory, and he treats the **CALCITE IMPRIMATURA** not as a disqualifier but as a question to be resolved by locating comparable grounds in documented Titian works.

THE VERSO INSCRIPTION

Faint lettering reading **"MAXIMILIAN MDXVI"** has been reported on the reverse through digital photography. If confirmed, it would tie the object to 1516 and to Habsburg patronage. It is a load-bearing clue and must be imaged, transcribed and verified before it is relied upon.

SURFACE OBSERVATIONS (THE AUTHOR'S EXAMINATION, C. 2007)

Distinct from the 2004–2006 scientific dossier, which did not record them, the author's own close examination around 2007 identified across the finished surface a clear alkaline glazing, a leaden seal stamped with "invisible-ink" steganography, and a "seal of the deity", the last compared to the sealing practice of Sebastiano del Piombo, a one-time holder of the Papal seal. The invisible-ink medium is of particular interest because comparable ink has been noted on the surfaces of other Italian Renaissance masterpieces. These are the author's observations and are among the least externally corroborated in the file; they are held here as findings to be independently re-examined and documented rather than as settled fact.

A CONCEALED SIGNATURE

Inverted, the picture is reported to reveal a concealed interpretive iconographic signature in a position consistent with several authenticated works by Titian, echoing the pattern of his hidden self-portraits legible in the vermilion layers of early works. This is a promising lead, to be demonstrated under raking light and imaging.



PLATE II

Titian's hidden self-portraits: the present painting set against the Sacrifice of Isaac, the master's own likeness concealed in the folds of the red drapery and matched to his engraved portrait.



PLATE III

The same device in Titian's securely documented Jacopo Pesaro being presented by Pope Alexander VI to Saint Peter (Royal Museum of Fine Arts, Antwerp, c. 1512), the concealed likeness traced in the drapery.

5. Iconography

THE SUBJECT RECONSIDERED

The surface “Joseph and Potiphar’s Wife” narrative is read here as deliberate cover, the ordinary Renaissance practice of carrying a forbidden subject under an acceptable one. The scene is an initiatory image: the male figure’s outstretched hand is not flight but a reaching across the threshold into the ancient mysteries under a patron’s hand; the red cloak is the painter’s mantle drawn into the sacred space; and the presiding female figure is the Magna Mater, Cybele, the sacred feminine, in the person of Isabella d’Este.

THE ACCEPTED GRAMMAR

The reading is disciplined against works no one disputes. The keystone is Andrea Mantegna’s *The Introduction of the Cult of Cybele at Rome* (National Gallery, London, NG902, 1505–06), the founding episode of the whole tradition, painted by the Gonzaga court painter for a Venetian *studiolo* in Mantegna’s last years, the same Mantua–Venice–*studiolo* triangulation as this picture, and the documentary basis for the claim that Mantegna carried the Cybele cult forward and Bellini inherited the series on Mantegna’s death in 1506. The fixed cult attributes, the mural crown, the tympanum, lions, the sacred stone, and Attis with pine, pomegranate, crescent and sun-rays, are set by accepted sculpture, by the Parabiago Plate (Milan) and by the Ostia Attis (Vatican), and each disputed motif in the present picture is read against that grammar.



PLATE IV

Andrea Mantegna, The Introduction of the Cult of Cybele at Rome (National Gallery, London, NG902; 1505–06, glue tempera on canvas), the keystone of the tradition, painted by the Gonzaga court painter for the Venetian camerino of Francesco Corner. Cybele’s image, the meteoric sacred stone borne with her turret-crowned bust, is brought to Rome in 204 BC on the counsel of the Sibylline Books; the figures are painted to imitate carved stone.

THE MOURNING GODDESS AND THE DYING YOUTH

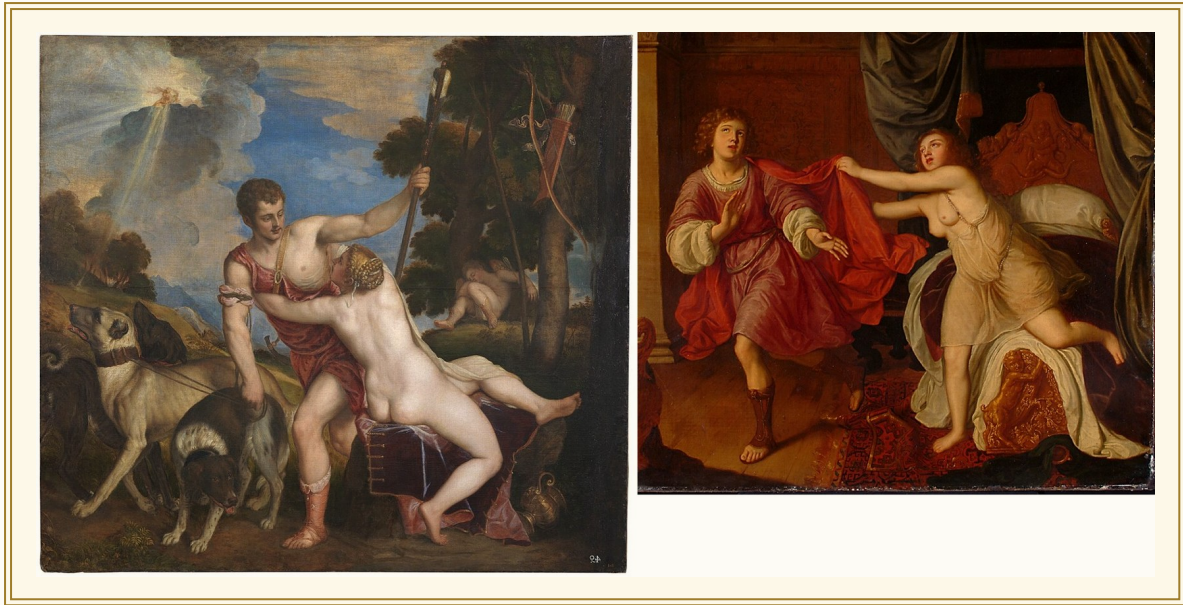
The picture's central relationship, the goddess and her beautiful young consort, held between desire and death, is the same mythic structure Titian gave to *Venus and Adonis* (Prado, 1554, and its many versions). Adonis and Attis are the ancient world's twin figures of the dying-and-reborn youth mourned by a goddess, Adonis to Venus, Attis to Cybele, a pairing so close that, as Frazer records, "the ancients themselves sometimes identified them" (*The Golden Bough*, "Adonis, Attis, Osiris"). The compositional echo is exact: in both, the goddess reaches after the youth who pulls away, toward the hunt and death in the one, toward flight in the other. Read here, the present picture is the Cybele–Attis counterpart of Titian's *Venus and Adonis*: the same initiatory mystery of love, death and rebirth, in its Phrygian rather than its Syrian key. The two are set side by side below, first in their natural orientation and then with Titian's *Venus and Adonis* reversed in mirror, so that in each the reaching goddess and the recoiling youth fall into direct alignment. The mirroring is the present author's, made only to bring the two designs into register for comparison.



PLATE V

Titian's Venus and Adonis (Prado, 1554; left) and the present painting (right), each in its original orientation: the same composition, the goddess reaching after the youth who pulls away, appears in both, the two designs falling as natural mirror-images of one another.

Cybele and Attis beside Venus and Adonis.



P L A T E V I

*The same comparison with Titian's *Venus and Adonis* reversed in mirror, so that both compositions read the same way and the reaching goddess and departing youth fall into direct register. The reversal is for comparison only.*

A RECURRING DEVICE: *THE FALL OF MAN*

A second securely documented Titian is laid out on the same armature. In *The Fall of Man* (*Adam and Eve*, Museo del Prado, inv. P429, c. 1550), a composition famous enough that Rubens copied it in Madrid in 1628–29 (Prado inv. P1692), Adam sits at the lower left and reaches up and across while Eve, standing, lifts her arm toward the fruit held by the child-serpent in the tree; the two gestures all but meet across the trunk, the picture's vertical axis. The present painting follows the same plan: the youth's raised hand and the woman's reach cross over the diagonal sweep of the red drapery, and the whole turns about the vertical of the carved bedhead.

Within that skeleton the two female figures repeat one another closely. Eve inclines her head onto the shoulder of her raised, reaching arm, so that head, neck and lifted shoulder read as a single continuous arc; the nude woman of the present picture does the same as she reaches across, the head set onto the shoulder of the outstretched arm in the same distinctive way. And the two share more than a silhouette: in both, the woman is the active agent. Eve reaches for the fruit and Adam responds; here the woman drives the action, reaching to draw the red drapery, while the clothed youth recoils, the narrative carried, in each, in the charged space between the figures' hands. This role is worth stressing because any viewer can verify it and because it is the reverse of the passive *studiolo* nude. In the picture's traditional title, *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife*, the woman is already the initiator who seizes the fleeing youth's garment, so the compositional role is rooted in the subject itself; read here as Cybele reaching after the departing

Attis, that same initiating gesture becomes the goddess's rather than the seductress's. These are compositional affinities, not in themselves a proof of one hand, composition can be imitated, and the contrapposto of the nude is a general Venetian habit, but the crossing-diagonal armature and the female-initiator role are the kind of structural choices a painter carries from one work to the next, and they recur here in a design this study places c. 1516, the earlier instance of a solution Titian would use again at mid-century.

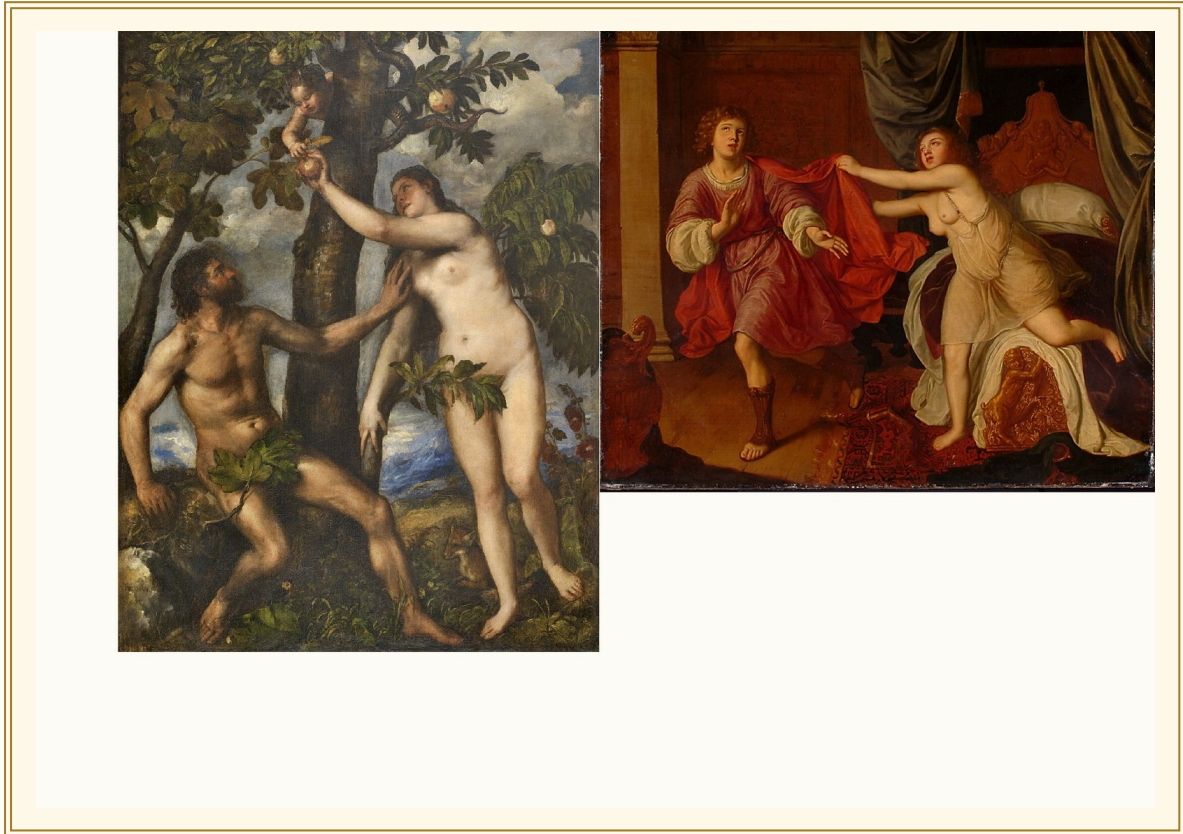


PLATE VII

Titian, The Fall of Man (Adam and Eve), Museo del Prado, c. 1550 (left), and the present painting (right): the same crossing-diagonal design about a central vertical, the tree, the carved bedhead, with, in each, the woman as the active agent, her head inclined onto the shoulder of the reaching arm.

AND A THIRD DOCUMENTED TITIAN: *BACCHUS AND ARIADNE*

The same habit governs a further securely documented Titian. In *Bacchus and Ariadne* (National Gallery, London, c. 1520–23), painted for Alfonso d'Este's Camerino d'Alabastro, Titian sets an antique serpent-quotation, the reveller modelled on the newly excavated *Laocoön* (1506), beside a bacchic child among the revellers: the same pairing of antique serpent-motif and divine child that the present picture carries on its bedhead (the infant-Hercules type) and its bed-foot (the Dionysian child).

The present painting is read here as standing where the two initiatory strands that run through Titian's Este mythologies meet, the Sibylline-prophetic and the Dionysian-Cybelean, a reading developed separately from this report.

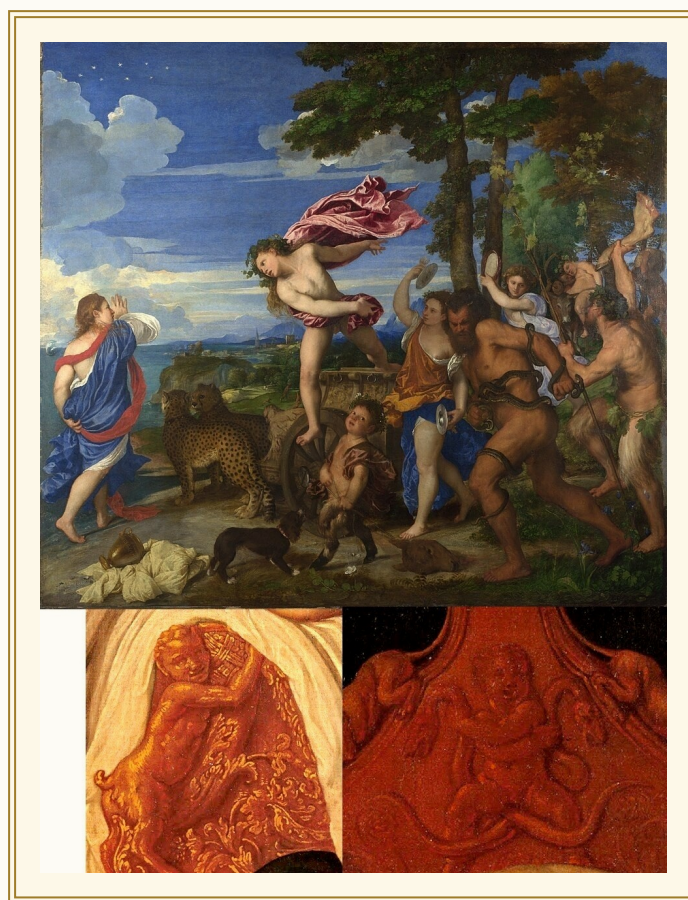


PLATE VIII

Titian, Bacchus and Ariadne (National Gallery, London, c. 1520–23), above; below, two carved details from the present painting, the bed-foot (left) and the bedhead (right). In Bacchus and Ariadne an antique serpent-quotation, the bacchant modelled on the newly excavated Laocoön (1506), stands beside a bacchic child; the present painting carries the same antique-serpent-and-divine-child pairing in its carved bed-foot and its bedhead (the infant-Hercules type). The parallel is one of shared motif and workshop habit, not identical figures.

ISABELLA D'ESTE AND THE *STUDIOLO*

Isabella, the most powerful patron in Italy and a documented collector of ancient hardstone vessels, kept her treasures in the *grotta* beside her *studiolo* at the Castello di San Giorgio, a project completed about 1508. That sacred space is read here as the true setting of the picture, with Isabella as its Magna Mater. The wider group of Titian's interiors is read as the erotic-and-sacred programme of Isabella d'Este and Giovanni Bellini in the cult of Mary Magdalene, an "alliance" running through the whole apartment cycle discussed below.

Isabella's method bears directly on the reading. She was an exacting patron who supplied her painters with detailed programmes, *fantasie* and *istorie* invented with her adviser Paride da Ceresara, and for years (c. 1496–1506) she pursued one such *fantasia* from **GIOVANNI BELLINI** for the studiolo, a commission he resisted, disliking (as Pietro Bembo reported) written instructions that constrained his freedom to invent. Her intermediary in that negotiation was **MICHELE VIANELLO**, the same collector from whose 1506 estate sale she acquired the hardstone vase (§5.4). The picture is read here as precisely such a *fantasia*, an imaginative invention in the sense the word then carried, a subject composed to the patron's programme, executed by Titian within Isabella's studiolo, with the antique treasures she prized given fixed places in the design (Campbell, *The Cabinet of Eros*, 2006; Brown, *Isabella d'Este and Lorenzo da Pavia*, 1982).

THE ENCODED OBJECTS

The stone at the foot of the bed is read as the *omphalos* or *lapis exillis*, the meteoric baetyl of Cybele, the sacred black stone that, on the counsel of the Sibylline Books, was carried from Pessinus in Anatolia to Rome in 204 BC and housed first in the Temple of Victory, then from 191 BC in the Temple of the Magna Mater on the Palatine (Livy), attended by an infant read here as the child Dionysus pouring honey-mead, in the death-and-rebirth mystery of Attis. The agate vessel at the lower left is read as the hardstone vase Isabella bought from the estate of Michele Vianello in Venice in 1506, a purchase that is itself documented, though its identification as the painted vessel is proposed; archival confirmation of the material description has been requested from the Archivio di Stato di Venezia. The prestige of such hardstone vessels in this world is documented in Andrea Mantegna's *Adoration of the Magi* (J. Paul Getty Museum, c. 1500), where Balthasar presents a covered agate cup among the Magi's gifts, a comparison that carries particular weight here, since Mantegna is the painter through whom the Cybele programme is traced (NG902). The feathered-serpent motif upon the cup is here read as Quetzalcoatl, setting an Old-World sacred vessel beside a New-World deity at the moment of the Spanish conquest. A third object, resting on the floor beyond the Anatolian carpet, is read as a **BRONZE TRIPOD RITUAL VESSEL**, a *lebes* of the ancient type, comparable to the Greek, Etruscan and Roman ceremonial cauldrons of sacrifice and regeneration, so that stone, cup and cauldron form a triad of fixed treasures within the design. The carved relief of the bedhead is read as the infant Hercules strangling the serpents, the classical type documented in the Pompeian fresco from the House of the Vettii, set above the bed as a sign of heroic destiny; and the serpents rising from below, mastered by the infant hero, are read here as the ascent from the material to the spiritual, the conquest of the base passions, in the Neoplatonic and Hermetic register. Taken together, the two divine children, the infant Hercules who masters the serpents and the infant Dionysus with his honeyed cup, carry, in classical form, the theme the finished

Gloria states in Christian terms: victory over death and the soul's passage to immortality, earth lifted toward heaven. These object-identifications are advanced as readings, to be tested against the accepted iconography.



PLATE IX

The bedhead relief in the present painting (left) beside the infant Hercules strangling the serpents in the Pompeian fresco from the House of the Vettii (right), the documented classical type against which the bedhead motif is read here.



P L A T E X

Detail of the stone at the foot of the bed, read here as the omphalos or lapis exillis, the meteoric baetyl of Cybele, with the attendant infant read as the child Dionysus pouring honey-mead.

The Anatolian carpet beneath the figures is of the geometric type frequently depicted in Venetian Renaissance painting; its border and field carry the hooked medallions and interlaced knot-motifs, the endless or Solomon's knot among them, of the standard Islamic ornamental vocabulary. The author reads certain of these motifs in a further, esoteric register, as an alchemical device and as the Gordian knot; this is advanced as a reading, to be tested against the accepted grammar of Ottoman carpet design.



PLATE XI

The Anatolian carpet in the present painting (detail), of the geometric type depicted across Venetian Renaissance painting.



PLATE XII

The tripod vessel in the present painting (detail, in shadow beneath the table), read here as a bronze ritual cauldron (lebes) of the ancient type, a form belonging to the classical symbolism of sacrifice and regeneration.

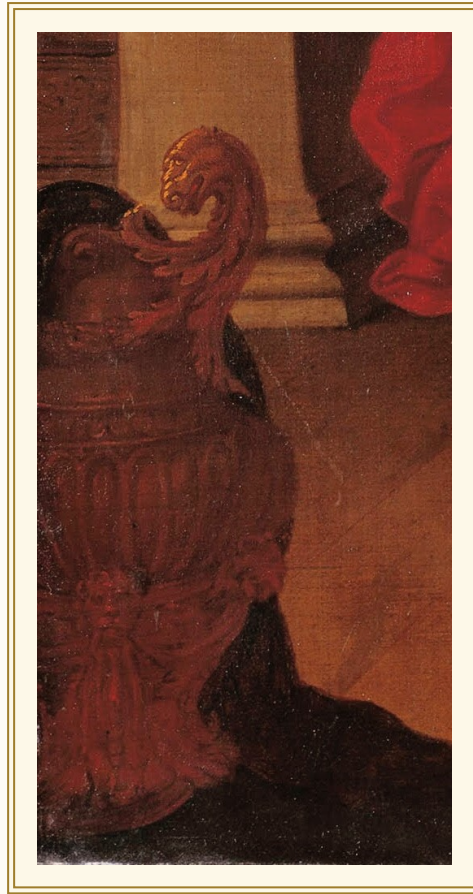


PLATE XIII

A detail of the vessel at the lower left of the present painting, read here as the hardstone (agate) vase Isabella d'Este acquired from the estate of Michele Vianello in Venice in 1506, the purchase documented, the identification of the painted vessel proposed. Its scrolling handle terminates in an animal head read here as a plumed serpent (the feathered-serpent reading noted above); a material description has been requested from the Archivio di Stato di Venezia.



PLATE XIV

Andrea Mantegna, Adoration of the Magi (J. Paul Getty Museum, c. 1500): a covered agate cup among the Magi's gifts, the documented prestige of the hardstone vessel read in the present picture, and by the very painter (Mantegna) through whom the Cybele programme is traced.

THE DUAL SUBJECT

The picture answers to several names at once, *La Gloria di Tiziano*, *La Trinità*, *Il Paradiso*, and, in Charles V's own will, *The Last Judgement*. The "Great Trinity" holds both the Resurrection and the Immaculate Conception in a single composition, the traditional requirement of a *Trinity*. The poet-critic Thomas MacGreevy caught the doubleness exactly: the eternal beatitude of the City of God, where time has ceased, and the Last Judgement, where time is ending but not yet abolished in favour of eternity.

THE FOREGROUND FIGURE AND THE SIBYLLINE THREAD

In the finished *Gloria*, the foreground female figure, the same compositional position occupied by the presiding woman here, carries an established identification as the **ERYTHRAEAN SIBYL**, set beside Mary Magdalen and a personification of the Church (Museo del Prado; Falomir, 2003). That a pagan prophetess should stand at the heart of a Christian *Trinity* is not incidental. The picture's textual source is Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, and it is within that same work (Book XVIII) that Augustine transcribes the Erythraean Sibyl's acrostic foretelling Christ and the Last Judgement, the verses whose initials spell *Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour*. In the tradition the picture inherits, the Sibyl is the pagan witness to

the coming Redeemer and to the immortality of the soul, the very theme of the *Gloria*, an image of the soul rising toward the Trinity in hope of eternal salvation. The frame that makes such a figure legible within a Christian composition is the Renaissance *prisca theologia*, Marsilio Ficino's argument (*Theologia Platonica de immortalitate animorum*, 1482) that the ancient sages had already glimpsed the soul's immortality. The presiding woman is read here within that prophetic-female lineage, Sibyl and Magna Mater at once, of which the specific identification with Isabella d'Este remains the proposal advanced above.

TITIAN AS A PAINTER OF VISUAL LANGUAGE

Like Giotto, Titian speaks in paint as well as colours it. The picture's play of near-and-far illusion is the technique the pseudo-Aristotelian *De audibilibus* describes, in which two objects, differently placed in perspective and colour, hold one plane near and another far.

THE SELF-PORTRAIT IN YOUTH

The male figure is read as Titian himself in youth, about seventeen, reaching immortality in 1516 under Isabella's patronage. This has a documented footing: the large Prado *Gloria* is agreed to contain Titian's own self-portrait, the bearded elderly master near the right edge, and Titian was a sustained self-portraitist (Wivel, "Building the Brand: Titian Self-Portraits," 2016). The reading proposed here is that the sketch encodes a youthful self-portrait where the finished canvas carries the aged one, the painter entering the sacred space at the outset of his career.

THE PALACE ROOMS CYCLE

The picture is read as the keystone of a series in which Titian's interiors record the actual rooms of Isabella d'Este's apartments in the Castello di San Giorgio. The architectural argument is testable: in Titian's *Last Supper* (the Corpus Domini banner; Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Urbino, inv. DE 239, 1542–44) a rotunda is visible through the window, and its pilaster is noted here as similar in design to the pilaster in this picture, the room read here as Isabella's grotto in the upper St Nicholas Tower of the Castello. Earlier scholarship reads these background structures as generic architectural quotation rather than a specific site: Suida (1936) saw the centrally planned building as reminiscent of Bramante's ideal round architecture, and Wethey (1969) identified the pyramid beside it as recalling the Pyramid of Cestius in Rome, a Renaissance and a Roman reference, not a named place, and no published study has linked the rotunda to a real building (both attributions as recorded in the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche catalogue). The reading advanced here is a deliberate alternative to that consensus: the rotunda is proposed as the Rotonda di San Lorenzo, Mantua's oldest church (c. 1082): a round, Holy-Sepulchre-plan church holding the relic of the Holy Blood and probably raised over a Roman temple of

Venus. A *Last Supper* (the Grail cup) thus frames a Venus-temple and Holy-Sepulchre rotunda holding the Blood, seen from the same window as this picture, which holds the Grail stone, the cup and the stone in one line of sight. The reclining *Venus and the Organ Player* (Prado; Berlin) and *Venus and the Lute Player* (New York; Cambridge) are read as the bedchambers of the same apartments, and the *Venus of Urbino* (Uffizi, 1538) as the library room, glimpsed in the background loggia, where two figures at the marriage-chests are documented as maidservants preparing the bridal trousseau. This cycle must be presented as a lifelong and posthumous series spanning roughly 1515 to 1564: Isabella died in 1539, so the *Venus* pictures and the *Last Supper* post-date her; the banner was itself commissioned for the Confraternity of Corpus Domini at Urbino, a context any Mantuan reading of its architecture must accommodate; and the *Venus of Urbino* carries a documented della Rovere bridal provenance that any “library” reading must accommodate. In the view advanced here, this single canvas is the key to the whole: once it is accepted as Isabella’s studiolo-grotto, the architectural match through the *Last Supper* window, the same room, seen from the St Nicholas Tower, with the Rotonda di San Lorenzo beyond, opens the rest of the apartment room by room, and Titian’s wider body of interiors with it.

THE LAP DOG ON THE BED

A single recurring detail binds this group to the present picture. The small dog on the bed is a fixture of Titian’s bedchamber Venuses, the *Venus of Urbino*, the Prado *Venus with an Organist and a Dog*, the Berlin *Venus with the Organ Player*, and others, and the X-radiography of the present painting reveals the same motif beneath the surface: a fully modelled dog on the bed, recorded by Seracini (2005) as complete in all its detail, including its highlights, before being painted out. It recurs here as a pentimento. The recurrence of the motif does not, by itself, identify the hidden subject; but it places the buried dog within a well-established pictorial vocabulary of Titian’s domestic and mythological interiors, and marks it as a worthwhile subject for comparative technical and art-historical investigation.

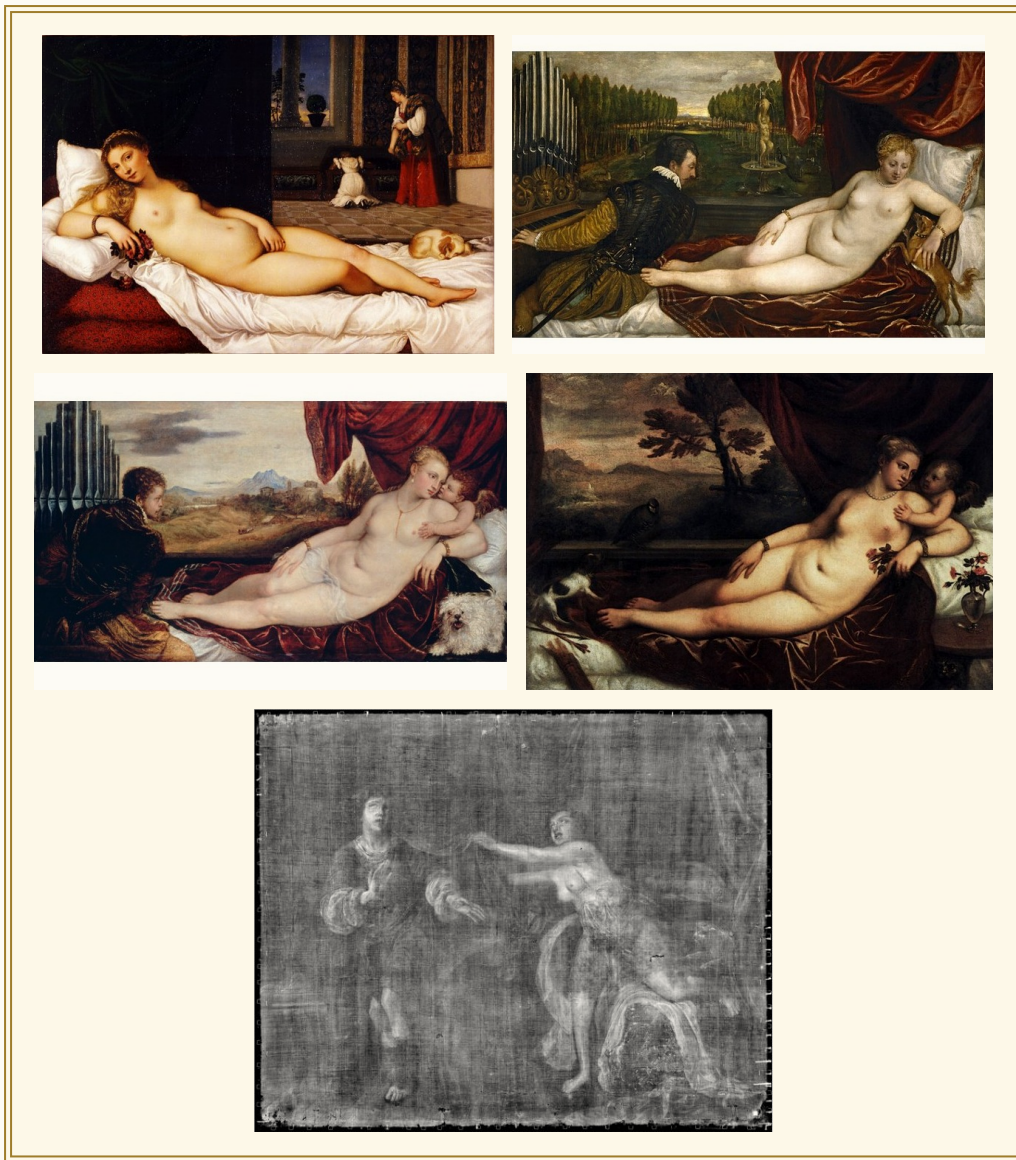


PLATE XV

The lap dog on the bed, a recurring motif in Titian's bedchamber scenes. Top row: Venus of Urbino (Uffizi, 1538) and Venus with an Organist and a Dog (Prado, P000420); bottom row: Venus with the Organ Player (Berlin) and Venus and Cupid with a Partridge (Uffizi, c. 1550). Below: the X-radiograph of the present painting, in which Seracini (2005) recorded a fully modelled dog beneath the blanket and curtain, later painted out.

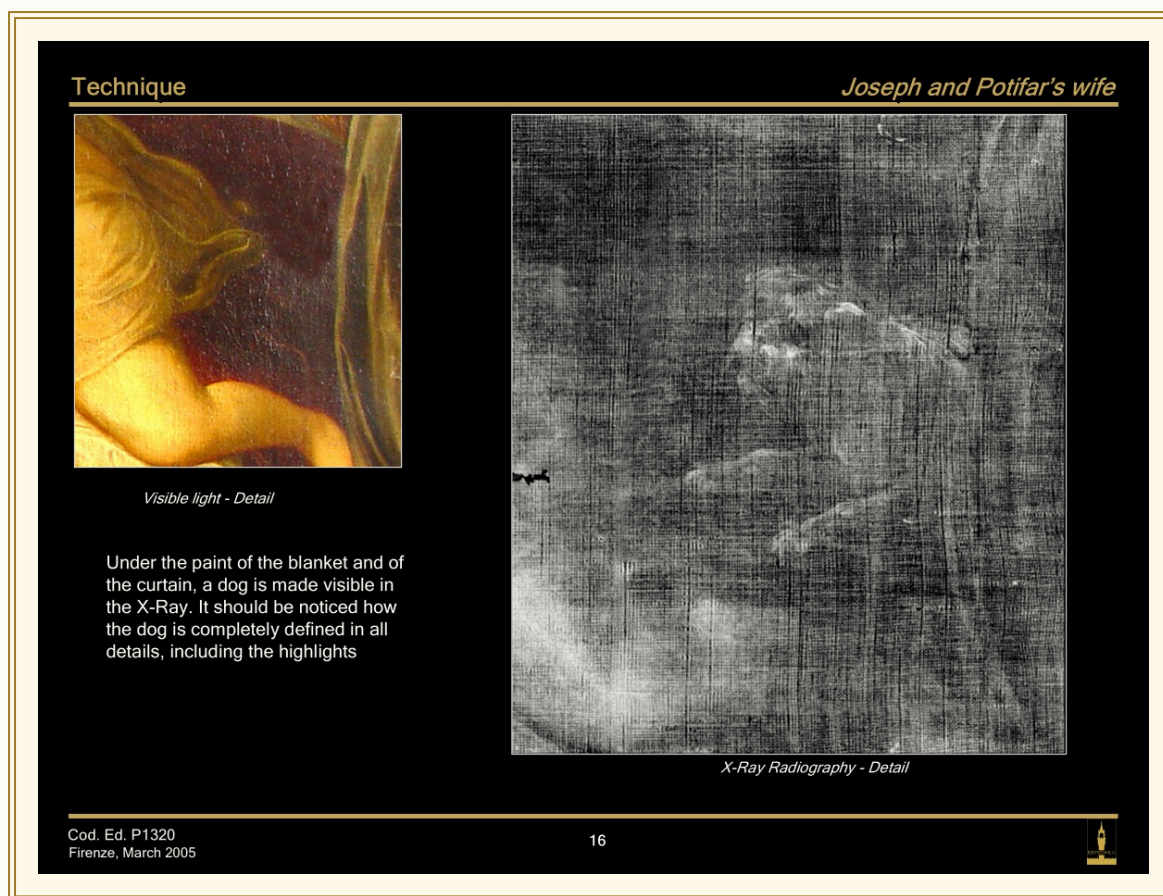


PLATE XVI

The hidden dog at close range, from the diagnostic report of Editech (Ing. M. Seracini), Cod. Ed. P1320, Florence, 2005: at left the visible surface, at right the X-radiograph of the same passage, in which, beneath the paint of the blanket and curtain, a dog appears, in the report's words "completely defined in all details, including the highlights."

THE PATRONAGE NETWORK

These commissions sit within a single, documented web of courts. Titian's *Supper at Emmaus* (Louvre) was painted for Niccolò Maffei of Mantua, a counsellor of Federico II Gonzaga, and later entered the Gonzaga collection; the *Last Supper* discussed above is the Corpus Domini banner made for a confraternity at Urbino; and the *Venus of Urbino* was painted for the della Rovere court of Urbino. Mantua, Urbino and Venice were not separate worlds, the Gonzaga, Este, della Rovere and the great Venetian patrician houses, the Cornaro among them (for whose *camerino* Isabella d'Este's own court painter, Mantegna, made the *Cult of Cybele*), intermarried, exchanged ambassadors and collected from one another. This is the world in which Titian worked, and the natural setting for a picture read here as passing between Mantua and Venice. The network is offered as context, not as proof: it establishes that these courts were connected, not that any single picture was intended to encode those connections: that must rest on the iconographic evidence set out above.



PLATE XVII

The window of Titian's Last Supper (Corpus Domini banner, Urbino) set beside the Rotonda di San Lorenzo, Mantua. The association is the reading advanced here, not an established identification.



PLATE XVIII

The pilasters appear to be of the same design, suggesting that Titian intentionally repeated the architectural setting between the two compositions.

The documented decorative environment of that room survives independently: the intarsia of Isabella's grotta by **ANTONIO AND PAOLO MOLA** (c. 1506–08; the ensemble reassembled in the Corte Vecchia, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua, by 1522), whose perspectival cityscapes and musical-instrument still-lives set the visual key of the setting proposed here.



PLATE XIX

Antonio and Paolo Mola, perspectival cityscape intarsia from the Grotta of Isabella d'Este, Palazzo Ducale, Mantua (c. 1506–08; grotta reassembled by 1522).

Both the Mola intarsia (c. 1522) and Titian's *Last Supper* (c. 1542) include a similarly proportioned low-legged hunting dog, suggesting a shared familiarity with a recognizable type of Renaissance domestic or sporting dog; this motif alone cannot establish a direct connection, but it contributes to the broader visual parallels between the two works.

THE MEGALESIA

A second, independent argument for the same room reads the *Last Supper* against the Megalesia, the Roman festival of the Great Mother (the *Ludi Megalenses*, 4–10 April), as dedicating the grotto to Cybele. The documented basis is firm: the Megalesia was Cybele's festival; her sacred stone was carried from Pessinus to Rome in 204 BC on the counsel of the Sibylline Books, the act the festival commemorated; Catullus (Carmen 63) sings her Phrygian rites; the tympanum is her standard attribute; and the Getty Villa holds a Roman *Seated Cybele with the Portrait Head of her Priestess*, the goddess wearing a real priestess's face. That this particular *Last Supper* belongs to the Megalesia is the interpretation advanced; the calendrical or visual hook binding the composition to April, and confirmation of the tympanum at the goddess's feet, remain to be established.

6. The Two-Sided Canvas: Bellini and Titian, 1513–1516

The most far-reaching claim in the file is held to the strictest discipline.

The documented base is genuine. Two-sided painting on canvas is an established Venetian practice, Venice, short of timber and rich in sailcloth, pioneered canvas, and its painters worked both faces, so a hidden composition on the reverse is historically credible. Giovanni Bellini died in 1516, and Titian came into full enjoyment of the *senzeria*, the broker's patent granted him in 1513 at the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, upon Bellini's death; the succession is documented, and it made Titian superintendent of government works, charged with completing Bellini's unfinished paintings in the Great Council Hall. Titian stood in Bellini's line as pupil and heir. The verso of this canvas is real and has been examined: relining, patch and markings are recorded in the reference plates, and a scientific dossier already exists.

That Titian himself worked a single canvas on both faces is documented in the **CORPUS DOMINI PROCESSIONAL BANNER** (Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Urbino, inv. DE 239, 1542–44), which bore his *Last Supper* on one face and his *Resurrection of Christ* on the other before the two were separated. That banner's two-sidedness served a processional purpose rather than the succession proposed here, but it establishes the practice in Titian's own hand. Whether any larger significance attaches to the pairing of two two-sided compositions is treated as an open question for the investigation, not a claim advanced here.

The hypothesis is that the reverse carries an earlier, hidden composition beneath later re-linings, and that this composition is Bellini's, making the object a two-master succession piece in which the pupil enshrines the master, turning Bellini's own canvas to bear Titian's supreme work.

What must not be stated ahead of the evidence: that the reverse *is* a Bellini, or a *Last Judgement*, before imaging and attribution. There is no *Last Judgement* in Bellini's catalogued works and no documented custom of a "retirement" Last Judgement, so the subject of the reverse is genuinely open, to be revealed, not assumed. Nor should any claim of relics or bodily material be advanced ahead of laboratory analysis.

The way to prove it is non-destructive first: image through the canvas by X-radiography, infrared reflectography and multispectral imaging, which reveal any hidden composition without touching the surface; then compare the ground, imprimatura, pigments and handling of each face against documented Bellini and Titian practice; then, only if warranted, pursue material analysis; and only then, under a qualified paintings conservator and fully documented, any intervention on the re-linings, which is irreversible. The imaging reveal, the hidden picture rising out of the canvas, is the safe and decisive centrepiece.

7. The Painting in the Wider Inquiry

This canvas is the interpretive endpoint of a longer study into how the doctrine of the eternal soul was carried under Christian cover from antiquity through the Renaissance and across the Atlantic; that wider argument is developed separately and is held apart from the authentication case set out here.

The report's own material sketches the shape of that wider study. The immortality of the soul was the contested question of the very decade proposed for the initiatory subject: Ficino had argued it rationally demonstrable, the Fifth Lateran Council dogmatised it in 1513, and Pomponazzi denied in 1516 that natural reason could prove it. The iconographic programme recovered at \$5, an initiatory image of love, death and rebirth carried under a biblical costume, belongs to precisely this current of thought, in which classical mystery material survived inside acceptable subjects.

The picture's proposed later identity extends the same trajectory. If the canvas is the finished sketch for *La Gloria*, then a composition conceived in the orbit of Isabella d'Este's *studiolo* ended as the germ of the great canvas commissioned by Charles V at Brussels in 1554, carried with him to Yuste, and recorded there by Sigüenza at the emperor's death. The same meditation on the soul's ascent passed from a private, initiatory register into the most public statement of imperial piety of the age, and that span is what gives the painting its significance beyond the question of authorship.

For the purposes of this report, these connections are context rather than evidence. The attribution advanced here stands or falls on the documentation, connoisseurship and technical analysis assembled in the preceding sections; the wider argument is being prepared for separate publication, and no part of the present case depends upon it.

8. Provenance

The sale catalogues write a single provenance, but two physical objects are involved: the large Prado autograph and the small finished sketch. Separating them is the central task of this section.

THE LARGE AUTOGRAPH NEVER LEFT SPAIN

The large *La Gloria / The Trinity* (Prado P432, 346 × 240 cm) is documented continuously in Spain: commissioned at Augsburg (1550–51), delivered to Charles V at Brussels in 1554, taken to Yuste (1556–58, where Sigüenza describes it at the emperor’s death), at El Escorial from at least 1566, and in the Prado from 1837. It was never in a Madrid gambling house and never came to London. Whatever surfaced in Madrid in 1808 and travelled to England was therefore a different picture, and that fact is the foundation of what follows. The Prado catalogue itself (following Falomir, 2003) records that this large canvas, although autograph, was executed with considerable **WORKSHOP ASSISTANCE**: the portraits of the imperial family, the emperor’s included, are noted as weak, and the hands of assistants are evident in its middle and upper zones.

THE LONDON FINISHED SKETCH, AND WHAT THE SOURCES SAY

Anna Jameson (1844) calls it “the original finished sketch for the great picture of this subject,” which “was for some time lost,” and “discovered, about 1808, in a gambling-house at Madrid, begrimed with dirt and lamp-oil,” and brought to England by Mr Wallis; she gives 4 ft 3 in × 3 ft 4 in. Jameson describes the same composition as the large picture, the Trinity, Charles V and his Empress with their crowns at their feet, Philip II, Titian’s own portrait, Noah, Moses, David and the figure of the Church, as a finished *modello* naturally would. No nineteenth-century source describes a “different composition”; that distinction belongs not to the catalogues but to the reverse of the owned canvas, a matter for imaging (§6). Waagen (1838) corroborates the “finished sketch” identity; De Boni (1840), in his life of Titian, names the composition *the Trinity* (“il quadro della Trinità”) and records the finished picture as being at the Escorial; Scharf (1858) names it “the Apotheosis of Charles V., known as ‘La Gloria di Tiziano,’... the property of Lord Harry Vane,” giving no composition. The picture was lot 725 in the Samuel Rogers sale (Christie & Manson, 2–3 May 1856), bought by Lord Harry Vane; the lot entry itself gives no measurements.

THE PERSONS, CORRECTLY IDENTIFIED

Comte Edmond de Bourke, the Danish Minister in Madrid, was the buyer; George Augustus Wallis was the dealer who brought the picture to England about 1808; Samuel Rogers then acquired it, and at his 1856 sale it passed to Lord Harry Vane, later 4th Duke of Cleveland. Vane's ownership is independently confirmed by Scharf in 1858.

THE NATIONAL GALLERY QUESTION

The National Gallery's NG4222 (131.6 × 100 cm) claims this same 1808 → Rogers → lot 725 descent. Nicholas Penny (2008) identifies lot 725 as NG4222, dates it "late 17th century," and finds it a copy made after Cornelis Cort's engraving of 1565, the print's design lying beneath its surface, adding that the Madrid story may have been invented to secure a sale. The attribution has, however, been contested at the highest level: when the National Gallery acquired the picture in 1926, its then Director, **SIR CHARLES HOLMES**, published in *The Burlington Magazine* (1927) an argument that it is a genuine **PREPARATORY VERSION BY TITIAN** of the *Trinity*, precisely the reading Penny reversed eighty years later. The distinction that matters is that a genuine oil sketch is preparatory, made *before* the painting, whereas a picture whose design derives from the 1565 engraving was made *after* the finished painting and cannot be a preparatory sketch; by the Gallery's own analysis, NG4222 is a late copy, not the sketch it was sold as. NG4222 and the owned canvas cannot both be lot 725, and resolving which is the single matter to settle before any curatorial approach. (A Spanish or Murillo attribution for NG4222 was considered, the "late 17th century" date fits Murillo's era, but no such attribution exists in the literature, and the composition is Titian's, traced from a print, not a Murillo invention; it is not advanced.)

THE OWNED CANVAS

The owned canvas is presented as the genuine studio oil sketch the early sources record. Because its front composition matches the *La Gloria*, as a *modello* should, it cannot be separated from NG4222 on the front composition; the separation must be physical and technical. The decisive test is imaging: the owned canvas's X-radiography is held to reveal a hidden, reverse composition (§6) together with preparatory characteristics, pentimenti, and no design traced from the Cort print, which, if confirmed, would establish exactly what NG4222 lacks. Stated carefully, the position is this: if NG4222 is the copy-after-the-print the National Gallery holds it to be, then the genuine preparatory sketch the early sources describe is not securely identified in the public collections, and the owned canvas is advanced as that object.

MATTERS STILL TO BE RESOLVED

The 1651 postmortem inventory of Don Francisco de Prado Bravo de Mendoza, appraised in Madrid by the royal painters Angelo Nardi and Juan Bautista del Mazo, lists among its more highly valued pictures “*la gloria del ticiano*” (item 4, at 1,400 reales), which Burke & Cherry identify as “evidently a copy of Titian’s *Gloria*... one of the most famous paintings at the Escorial” (*Collections of Paintings in Madrid, 1601–1755*, Getty, 1997, pp. 459–461). This documents that highly valued copies of the *Gloria* circulated in seventeenth-century Madrid collections, appraised by royal painters; the source describes this example as a copy, and its identity with the present picture is not established. The annotated 1856 Rogers catalogue should be consulted for the lot 725 buyer and hammer price at first hand, and the post-Vane descent, the 8 March 1902 Cleveland sale, and the Manchester 1857 and Royal Academy 1872 exhibitions, should be traced to test whether Vane’s picture ran to the National Gallery or left England. The early-twentieth-century Australian records remain the weakest link and require primary confirmation; a label on the reverse recording the **WOODROFFE COLLECTION, ADELAIDE** (a number reading as 74 or 94, to be confirmed under magnification) is a physical anchor for that Australian phase and should be traced through South Australian collection and sale records.

9. Method and Scholarly Anchors

The primary framework is Erwin Panofsky's iconology, working from the pre-iconographic through the iconographic to the iconological level of meaning. It is supported by Bernard Berenson's morphological connoisseurship, attentive to the signature zones of eyes, hands and atmospheric ground, and by Walter Pater's empathetic looking, which distinguishes the psychological temperature of autograph work from that of the workshop. The intellectual frame is period-correct Hermeticism: Ficino's translation of the *Corpus Hermeticum* (1471) drove the Hermetic–Neoplatonic revival that saturated the courts in which Isabella, Bellini and Titian moved. Modern Theosophy, by contrast, postdates the paintings by some three and a half centuries and is used, if at all, only as an acknowledged modern lens, never as a Renaissance one.

THE DOCUMENTED INTELLECTUAL CLIMATE

The reading advanced here is consistent with the humanist culture of the milieu to which the picture is assigned. The immortality of the soul, the theme the finished *Gloria* stages, was the contested question of exactly this decade in the Padua–Ferrara–Mantua orbit: Ficino's *Theologia Platonica de immortalitate animorum* (1482) had argued it rationally demonstrable, the Fifth Lateran Council's *Apostolici regiminis* (1513) dogmatised it and ordered philosophers to defend it, and Pietro Pomponazzi's *De immortalitate animae* (1516) denied that natural reason could prove it. The Cybele–Attis texts on which the iconography here draws were themselves read and glossed in this world, Alessandro Guarini published a commentary on Catullus including the Attis poem (63) at Ferrara in 1521, and their death-and-rebirth allegory was standard from Boccaccio, while Ficino's *prisca theologia* supplied the frame in which pagan myth veils the soul's initiation, death and rebirth. None of this proves that the present picture depicts these debates; Mario Equicola's programme for the Este Camerino is lost. It establishes only that an initiatory reading of the kind advanced here belongs to the documented intellectual climate of the court, not outside it.

10. Scholarly Support and Recommended Examinations

More than nine specialists have examined the picture and are reported to have affirmed a Titian attribution, and dialogue with a leading Titian scholar is ongoing; these affirmations should now be converted from verbal to written form and placed on the record.

The recommended sequence of work is: a conservator's condition report and a surface cleaning test; non-destructive imaging of both faces and through the canvas (X-radiography, infrared reflectography and multispectral imaging); documented confirmation of the smalt identification, recovery of the outstanding Oxford radiocarbon report (three tests, held by Freeman Art) and analysis of the twenty-six paint samples held in Dr Eastaugh's archives, with all laboratories and ranges cited; transcription and verification of the "MAXIMILIAN MDXVI" verso lettering; assembly of the existing dossier and verso plates into a single evidence pack for a conservator; the Archivio di Stato di Venezia enquiry into the Vianello vessel; and confirmation of the post-Vane and Australian provenance from primary documents.

II. Conclusion

On the documented side, the file already holds a great deal: a picture whose dimensions, condition and description match the recorded finished sketch for *La Gloria di Tiziano*; a period-consistent materials profile with accepted comparanda; a real, examined verso; and a documented moment of succession, Bellini's death and Titian's *senseria*, precisely where the argument places the object. Read against the accepted Cybele grammar, the picture makes far better sense as an initiatory image in Isabella d'Este's world than as *Joseph and Potiphar's Wife*. What remains is not further assertion but the evidence that would settle it, imaging, confirmed pigment and radiocarbon results, the verso inscription, and the archival record. It is the conviction brought forward here that this canvas is the flower of Titian's art and the key that unlocks his entire art collection, the one picture against which his whole body of interiors can be read. The purpose of this report is to make that judgement testable, and to let the canvas answer for itself.

Yours sincerely,

Ian Henderson

FINE ART DETECTIVE

ADDENDUM

Documentary Appendix: Period Sources

FRAY JOSÉ DE SIGÜENZA, *HISTORIA DE LA ORDEN DE SAN JERÓNIMO* (c. 1600–1605), **TERCERA PARTE**. The earliest primary account. Describing the paintings at El Escorial, Sigüenza calls the work “*la gloria del Ticiano*” and gives its subject:

“...donde se muestra la santísima Trinidad, y la Virgen junto a ella algo mas bajo. Y en medio del quadro la Iglesia, en figura de una donzella hermosa, que está como presentando a Dios los príncipes del nuevo y viejo Testamento... El Emperador Carlos V con la Emperatriz y su hijo el Rey don Felipe, y la Princesa doña Juana... que aunque están muy altas... se conocen los retratos... lindas posturas y habitudines.”

“...showing the most holy Trinity, the Virgin beside it somewhat lower; and in the middle the Church, as a beautiful maiden presenting to God the princes of the New and Old Testament... the Emperor Charles V with the Empress and his son King Philip, and Princess Doña Juana... who, though placed very high up... the portraits are recognizable... in lovely postures and attitudes.”

In the narrative of the emperor’s death (the last day of August 1558) Sigüenza records that Charles had “*el lienço del juyzio final*”, the canvas of the Last Judgement, brought before him and meditated upon it at length, immediately before saying “*Malo me siento*” (“I feel ill”). He specifies no posture for the emperor, neither seated nor kneeling, describing the family only as “very high up” in “lovely postures.” (*Historia de la Orden de San Jerónimo*, 2nd ed., NBAE, vol. 2; digitised, Internet Archive item *historiadelaorde02jos*.)

ANNA JAMESON, *COMPANION TO THE MOST CELEBRATED PRIVATE GALLERIES OF ART IN LONDON* (1844), **ROGERS COLLECTION**, PP. 401–402. Describes the picture as “the original finished sketch for the great picture of this subject... now in the Royal Gallery at Madrid,” lists the composition in full (Trinity, Virgin and Baptist, Charles V and his Empress with crowns at their feet, Philip II, Titian’s self-portrait, Noah, Moses, St John the Evangelist, David, the figure of the Church), records that it “was for some time lost” and rediscovered about 1808 in a Madrid gambling-house “begrimed with dirt and lamp-oil,” brought to England by Mr Wallis, and gives the size as 4 ft 3 in × 3 ft 4 in.

CHRISTIE & MANSON, SALE OF THE COLLECTION OF SAMUEL ROGERS, 2–3 MAY 1856, LOT 725 (printed p. 75):

“La Gloria di Titiano: a finished sketch for the celebrated work, called also the Apotheosis of Charles V., and ‘Il Paradiso’... designed... for the Convent de St. Juste... This picture was held up before the king on his deathbed... After the death of Charles V. it was removed, by command of Philip II., to the Escorial. Dr. Waagen... says, ‘The painting is throughout excellent, and of a rich deep tone in the flesh.’ This important work was discovered in a gambling house in Madrid, purchased there by Mr De Bourke... brought by Mr Wallis to London; and afterwards purchased by Mr Rogers.”

The picture was bought by Lord Harry Vane. The same sale included Titian’s *Samson and Delilah* (lot 578), the equestrian *Charles V* study (lot 619) and Cornelis Cort’s engraving of *La Gloria* (lot 1495).

GEORGE SCHARF, *ARTISTIC AND DESCRIPTIVE NOTES... BRITISH INSTITUTION EXHIBITION OF THE ANCIENT MASTERS* (1858), p. 71. Names “the Apotheosis of Charles V., known as ‘La Gloria di Tiziano,’” then “the property of Lord Harry Vane,” and notes the equestrian *Charles V* (lot 619) as “a study for the great picture at Madrid.”

G. F. WAAGEN, *WORKS OF ART AND ARTISTS IN ENGLAND* (1838). Refers to “the finished sketch for the celebrated picture known by the name of *La Gloria di Tiziano*.”

FILIPPO DE BONI, *EMPOREO BIOGRAFICO METODICO, VOL. 10* (1840), LIFE OF TITIAN (THE TRINITÀ PASSAGE AT P. 1060). To celebrate “il trionfo della cattolica Chiesa,” De Boni writes, Titian “dipinse il quadro della Trinità; nel quale la luce che spande l’Eterno, la Vergine, gli angeli e i santi che adorano il mistero divino... tutto dispone l’anima all’estasi dell’adorazione. Ora questo quadro esiste all’Escoriale”, “*painted the picture of the Trinity... Now this picture is at the Escorial*.” De Boni thus names the composition *the Trinity* and locates the finished picture at the Escorial; he does not record a separate sketch at Madrid, which indicates that the “finished sketch... in the Royal Gallery at Madrid” phrasing derives from the English cataloguers (Jameson) rather than from De Boni.

J. A. CROWE AND G. B. CAVALCASELLE, *THE LIFE AND TIMES OF TITIAN, AND THE NNDB BIOGRAPHY*. Record Titian’s 1513 broker’s patent at the Fondaco dei Tedeschi, taken up in 1516 on Bellini’s death; and the 1554 dispatch to Charles V of the *Trinity* which Titian himself called the *Last Judgement*, the last image Charles is said to have gazed upon before his death.

CLAUDE PHILLIPS, *THE LATER WORK OF TITIAN* (1898). Records the letter of 10 September 1554 by which Titian sent Charles V the great *Trinity* (together with a *Mater Dolorosa*), and names the picture “the *Trinity*, called in Spain *La Gloria*,” then No. 462 in the Prado, the canvas toward which the dying emperor’s last looks were said to be directed. Sheila Hale, *Titian: His Life* (2012), gives a modern account of the same picture and its patronage, calling it the *Adoration of the Trinity*.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI, “THE LOST TITIAN,” *THE CRAYON* (3 JULY 1856), AND ROBERT HERRICK, “A REJECTED TITIAN.” Two works of imaginative fiction on the theme of a lost or rejected Titian; noted here as literary reflections only, not as provenance.

PRESS COVERAGE, 1914. *The New York Times* (6 June 1914), *The Mercury*, Hobart (8 June 1914), the *Wanganui Chronicle* (8 June 1914), *The Straits Times* (26 June 1914) and *The Advertiser*, Adelaide (8 June 1914) report the discovery in Australia of a picture then believed to be a Titian self-portrait.

ADDENDUM

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ADDENDUM

Appendices: Accompanying Technical Reports

Two primary technical documents are supplied with this report and should be read alongside it.

APPENDIX A, EDITECH SCIENTIFIC ANALYTICAL REPORT. Ing. Maurizio Seracini / Editech S.r.l., *Analytical Diagnostics on “Joseph and Potiphar’s Wife,” Attributed to Tiziano* (Cod. Ed. P1320), Florence, 2005, the full diagnostic dossier (85 pp.): cross-section and SEM-EDS pigment analysis, the calcite-and-lead-white ground, X-radiography and infrared reflectography (including the pentimenti and the hidden dog), and radiocarbon and lead-210 dating.

APPENDIX B, INDEPENDENT CRITICAL REVIEW. Dr John Edwin Metcalfe, *“Joseph and Potiphar’s Wife”, Commentaries: A Critical Review of the Scientific Report of Ing. M. Seracini*, Florence, 2006, an independent assessment of the Editech data: the anomalous radiocarbon result (attributed to sample contamination), the calcite ground, and the X-radiographic pentimenti and painted-out passages read as the marks of an original invention.

Both are bound into this volume as Appendices A and B, following this report.



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