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‘ENGLAND’S GIORGIONE’: CHARLES H. SHANNON AND VENETIANISM IN LATE VICTORIAN ART

By

WILLIAM CARLISLE MCKEOWN

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation studies the paintings and lithographs of Charles Hazelwood Shannon within the context of British Venetianism. Shannon clearly dervied many stylistic elements and figurative motifs from Venetian Renaissance art. By doing so, he was at once following a British tradition of Venetianism, and reformulating it for a modern era.

The history of British Venetianism has not been a smooth or consistent one. Within Charles I's court and through the intermediary of Anthony Van Dyck's paintings, the Venetian style became closely associated with royalist concepts and aristocratic privileges in seventeeth-century Britain. By contrast, much of the Venetianist discourse of the eighteenth century can be characterized as *anti*-Venetianist. In eighteenth-century British texts, Venetian art is repeatedly conflated with Venetian society, and both are condemned for a perceived licentiousness. This literary reprobation of Venetianism stands in strong contrast to the continued collecting of Venetian paintings by aristocrats, and to the painting practices of British artists like Sir Joshua Reynolds.

Throughout the nineteenth century, Venetianism is reevaluated. Nevertheless, Victorian Venetianism encompasses many contradictory points of view inherited from earlier periods. These contradictions are well-represented by the critics John Ruskin and Walter Pater. While the former critic emphasized the moral role of honest labor in the creation of art, the latter stressed the distinction between the prosaic realm of morality and the purposeless beauty of the aesthetic world. However, both critics would use Venetian art to advance their arguments, and they both believed that art was of the highest importance for modern British culture.

In his artwork, Shannon would engaged with all of these previous forms of Venetianism. He patterned many of his portraits after the example of Van Dyck and Titian; he countered the vestiges of anti-Venetianism with his sensual depictions of nudes based on Venetian and Hellenistic prototypes; he infused his work with a Ruskinian sense of craftsmanship, as is particularly evident in his finely-made lithographs; and he evokes Paterian aesthetics in painting beautiful figures removed from any obvious narrative action.

Shannon's Venetianism was recognized as progressive from the 1890s through the first

decade of the twentieth century. Contemporary art historians and critics emphasized the continuity between Venetian Renaissance painting and modern European art, and Shannon's workwas understood as part of this continuum. Shannon's progressive credentials can be measured by the avant-garde groups with whom he exhibited, and by the collectors who sought after his work. Nevertheless, his work was ultimately incompatible with the rising scene of modernist art. Modernist art in Britain, and the formalist theories which supported it, was largely born out of Paterian Venetianism. However, the modernist disavowal of European traditions of painting would spell the end for Shannon's particular version of Venetianism.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1623, King Charles I of England traveled to Spain in an attempt to win the affections of the Spanish Infanta. He was ultimately unsuccessful in this mission, but his journey was not entirely in vain. At the court in Madrid, he had the opportunity to view Philip IV's collection of paintings by Rubens, Titian, and Velazquez, in addition to a vast array of other artists. Charles I was deeply impressed with the richness of the Spanish king's collection and, in particular, with Titian's paintings. As a gift, Philip presented his guest with an original painting by Titian. Thus, Charles I did not leave Spain empty-handed after all.

Nearly three hundred years later, the English painter Charles Hazelwood Shannon followed in the Stuart king's footsteps. In 1900, Shannon visited Madrid, where he studied many of the same works that Charles I would have seen. Shannon was similarly taken with the Titians, describing the *Bacchanal of the Andrians* (1523/24) as "infinitely the most beautiful picture I have ever seen. . . . There is not one square inch in the whole picture that is not a wonder."[1] Titian's portrait of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V was "of course the *portrait of portraits*." Of Titian's worth as an artist, Shannon concluded that the Venetian master was "the most perfect draughtsman, colourist, and painter that had ever lived."[2]

Titian is therefore the connecting factor between these two Spanish holidays by Englishmen named Charles. While their admiration for Titian would be shared by many other English men and women during the three hundred years that separate their visits to Madrid, in many ways Charles I and Shannon act as historical brackets to the phenomenon of Venetianism in British art and culture.

Although Venetian influences permeate many important British works of art, few scholars have considered the significance of these influences beyond isolated instances. Even fewer scholars have studied the works of Shannon, whose reputation over the past century has been obscured by his more famous contemporaries, including Charles Ricketts and Aubrey Beardsley. I propose to rectify this situation by studying Shannon's artworks within the context of Venetianism. By understanding this particular aspect of Shannon's work, we will gain a much deeper understanding of this artist, who devoted so much of his artistic career to a Venetianist aesthetic.

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[1] Charles Shannon to Charles Ricketts, 16 May 1900

[2] Charles Shannon to Charles Ricketts, 17-19 May 1900.

Biographical and Historical Background

Charles Hazelwood Shannon was born 26 April 1863, in the rural town of Quarrington in Lincolnshire. His father, the Reverend Frederick William Shannon, was the local rector of Quarrington and Old Sleaford, and his large family included eight children. Shannon's family life seems to have been happy and emotionally stable, qualities that probably influenced his pleasant disposition as an adult.[3] His father's occupation also ensured that Shannon enjoyed the benefits of preparatory school, as the school he attended, St. John's, Leatherhead, was reserved for children of clergymen.[4]

Located just outside London, Leatherhead was only the first of several residences in greater London for Shannon, who would live the rest of his life in the capital. It is very likely that while at St. John's, Shannon's artistic interest and talent became manifest. In 1881, Shannon moved to Kennington in southern London where, with his father's support, he enrolled at the City and Guilds Technical Art School.[5] Here, he studied and mastered wood-engraving, a practice he would put to use when co-producing illustrated editions of *Daphnis and Chloe* and *Hero and Leander* in the 1890s.

Kennington's most lasting impact on Shannon did not come from the classes at art school, however, but from one of his classmates. A year after commencing studies, Shannon met Charles de Sousy Ricketts (1866-1931). Such was Ricketts's charm and personality that the two art students became fast friends, and in 1886 they became flatmates. This would be the beginning of a lifetime of shared accommodations, lasting until Ricketts's death in 1931.

This remarkable relationship provided Shannon with a constant audience and critic. Ricketts had spent much of his childhood abroad, and was extremely well-read. In addition, he differed tremendously in temperament from his Lincolnshire friend, being much more assertive. His enthusiasm for such contemporary artists as Moreau and Puvis de Chavannes must have greatly inspired Shannon, who had yet to visit the Continent. Shannon gained much in cultural awareness from Ricketts, who, for instance, introduced him to works of music that the less musically inclined Shannon might otherwise have never known. For his part, Ricketts learned to paint from Shannon, and perhaps most importantly, gained a fairly stable friendship through his quiet and friendly manner. This was the kind of relationship that Ricketts, with his often antagonistic opinions, found impossible to maintain with most people.

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[3] For information on Shannon's upbringing, see J. G. P. Delaney, *Charles Ricketts: a Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 19-21.
[4] St. Johns is still an active boarding school today, although it no longer restricts its enrollment only to children of clergy. See their website, www.stjohnsleatherhead.co.uk
[5] See Delaney, *Charles Ricketts*, 27-31.

Much speculation has been raised over the exact nature of Ricketts and Shannon's personal lives.[6] It is no secret that Ricketts was homosexual, and it is likely that part of his commitment to the friendship resulted from a physical attraction to Shannon. However, it is less certain if this attraction was ever fully reciprocated by Shannon. Judging from his various relationships with female models, Shannon was predominately heterosexual in nature. This should not detract from Shannon's feelings for Ricketts, however, for there is no doubt that he cared very deeply for Ricketts.

Whatever Shannon's sexual preferences may have been, women appear as the predominant subject in his artwork. His earliest professional work in the 1890s fully demonstrates this. After graduating from Kennington, Shannon took up the study of oil painting, but decided he would not exhibit his paintings until he had fully mastered the technique through a close and exhaustive study of the Old Masters. Meanwhile, the majority of his exhibited materials was lithographs. In fact, it was in the lithographic medium that Shannon first established his reputation, which to this day still largely rests upon these early prints. These works were seminal in Shannon's career, for they set forth the basic themes that he would return to again and again in his paintings. They represent lyrical themes of women at their bath, dressing their hair, and playing with children on the seashore or under fruit trees.

Despite their lack of color, Shannon's lithographs convey profound atmospheric moods of light and warmth. This atmosphere, and the type of women represented, reveals Shannon's major artistic source at this time and throughout his life: the Venetian Renaissance. He favored all artists who practiced a Venetian sense of color and brushwork, including such post-Renaissance figures as Reynolds, van Dyck, and Velazquez. He reserved his highest admiration, however, for the Venetians, chiefly Titian. In diaries and letters, Shannon expressed in no uncertain terms that Titian was, in his opinion, the greatest painter who had ever lived. He voraciously studied the master's work wherever he encountered it, in London, Madrid, Paris, and, of course, Venice.

By the first decade of the twentieth century, Shannon's name was associated with his painting style, as he had finally begun to exhibit the results of his long apprenticeship to the Old Masters. He became widely known for his portraits, but he also produced many subject paintings of poetic idylls, often based on earlier lithographic designs. While he was patronized by many individuals for portraits, he also found an audience for his *poesia* paintings.[7] The most significant of these latter patrons was Sir Edmund Davis, who had made a fortune in South Africa's mines. Davis and his wife, Mary, were keenly interested in art, and began collecting

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[6] For a discussion of Shannon's relationship with Ricketts, see Delaney, *Charles Ricketts*, 21-26.

[7] The term *poesia* traditionally characterizes a genre of Venetian paintings which depict mythological and pastoral subjects as opposed to religious scenes. It is most often applied to Titian's mythological paintings.

valuable paintings and sculptures at auction houses. Shannon's paintings were also collected by such individuals as Sir Hugh Lane, the art dealer and founder of Ireland's first gallery of modern art, and the American attorney John Quinn, a pivotal figure in New York's modern art scene in the 1910s and 20s.

During his lifetime, Shannon earned a great deal of esteem, particularly during the last decade of the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth. He and Ricketts were active in many social circles, which were composed of a diverse range of artistic celebrities. A list of the more intimate of these friends would include: Oscar Wilde, Robert Ross, Lucien Pissarro, Alphonse Legros, Auguste Rodin, Charles Conder, Max Beerbohm, Philip Wilson Steer, Walter Sickert, Lillah McCarthy, Lord Kenneth Clark, George Bernard Shaw, W. B. Yeats, and, for a time, Roger Fry.

As Shannon grew older, he began to frequent these social circles less often, and became increasingly withdrawn. Even Ricketts found him growing distant. Events took a tragic turn in 1929, when Shannon experienced a fall from a ladder while hanging paintings. He was seriously brain-damaged from the fall, and never fully recovered his senses. Much of the collection of art objects that he and Ricketts had put together had to be sold to provide for Shannon's caretaking, although the majority of it would be bequeathed to the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, as the two had intended.

Ricketts died in 1931. Shannon continued to live with full-time nurses at a house in Kew, where he died in 1937.

Review of the Literature

For this dissertation, I have reviewed two sets of art historical literature: studies on Venetianism in British art and culture, and studies on Shannon and his artwork.

The significance of Venetian art for British culture has yet to be fully appreciated. There have been numerous studies on the city of Venice and its meaning for such varied historical figures as the seventeenth-century Earl of Arundel, the Victorian critic John Ruskin, and the expatriate American novelist Henry James, to name but a few. Nevertheless, these biographically-centered studies have contributed little to an understanding of Venice's wider meaning for British (or, in the case of James, Anglo-American) culture.

I have focused my attention on discussions and interpretations of Venetian art by British writers and artists. While primary research materials abound in this area, secondary research has been fairly reticent. Most discussions are to be found in general surveys of English reactions to the Italian Renaissance. For instance, J. R. Hale's *England and the Italian Renaissance: the*

Growth of Interest in its History and Art (1954) covers the periods from the seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century, and analyzes such aspects as the Grand Tour and the collecting and criticism of Italian art. Several scholars have focused on the eighteenth century and the Grand Tour, including Bruce Redford and his lavishly illustrated *Venice and the Grand Tour*. In his *Venice Transfigured: the Myth of Venice in British Culture, 1660-1797*(2001), John Eglin discusses the political meanings which British writers attributed to Venice, and how these meanings reflected British ideas about government and society. While these studies often describe British aristocrats' interest in connoisseurship and Venetian art, neither Redford nor Eglin considers how British artists reacted to either Venice or Venetian painting.

Literary scholars like John Pemble have been primarily concerned with Romantic and Victorian literary interpretations of Venice, ranging from Lord Byron to Henry James. Pemble distinguishes between two different approaches to Venice in British literature: Venetophilia and Venetophobia. He characterizes most eighteenth-century writings as Venetophobic, that is, as expressing profound reservations or criticisms of Venice; conversely, he considers much of nineteenth-century literature as Venetophilic, that is, expressing a strongly appreciative view of Venice. Pemble does not discuss how these categories might apply to British paintings, nor does he consider how Venetophilia or Venetophobia may have influenced British views on Venetian Renaissance art.

Like these cultural and literary studies of British Venetianism, historians of British art have been more interested in depictions of the city of Venice rather than in the assimilation or rejection of Venetian Renaissance characteristics in British painting. Several studies have focused on the Venetian landscape in British painting; of these, Julian Halsby's *Venice: the Artist's Vision* (1990) offers the most comprehensive survey of Venice's significance within British art. However, Halsby has little to say about British artists' reactions to Venetian Renaissance paintings. The only major art historical study of the relationship of Victorian artists and the Italian Renaissance is the 1978 Minneapolis exhibition "Victorian High Renaissance." The exhibition catalogue makes some mention of the importance of Titian to Watts and Leighton, although its primary interest is on the High Renaissance as a whole, and not only the Venetian Renaissance. Its scope is also limited to only a few Victorian painters.

The literature on Shannon is even more sparse than that on Venetianism in British art. Although Shannon was featured in a number of studies throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, little has been written on his work since his death in 1937, and he still awaits a definitive text. The following survey provides an overview of the kinds of secondary sources that are currently available.

During their lifetimes, Ricketts and Shannon exhibited widely, sometimes with particular art associations and at other times alone or jointly. The 1914 exhibition at the Buffalo Fine Arts

Academy (NY) featured paintings, sculptures, and prints by both artists, with an introduction to the catalogue by Martin Birnbaum. A posthumous exhibition of Shannon's lithographs was held at the dealer Colnaghi's gallery (London, 1938), and Shannon's close friend Thomas Sturge Moore composed a touching introduction to the catalogue.

Of greater critical substance are essays that focused specifically on Shannon. In his extension of Ricketts's catalogue of Shannon's lithographs, R. A. Walker contributed a sensitive essay discussing the poetic qualities of Shannon's work *(The Print Collectors Quarterly*, 1914). Shannon was also the subject of essays by friends like Ricketts *(L'Art et les Artistes*, 1902), Cippico (*Vita d'Arte*, 1910), Charles Dodgson *(Die Graphischen Kunste*, 1903), and Charles Holmes (*The Burlington Magazine*, 1906). Even Roger Fry, eventually an "enemy" to Ricketts and Shannon, wrote an appreciative if critical essay on Shannon's paintings (*Athenaeum*, 1901).

A few books on Shannon appeared in his lifetime. These include a book in the "Masters of Modern Art" series, *Charles Shannon, A.R.A.* (undated, but apparently between the years 1911, when Shannon was elected an Associate of the Royal Academy, and 1920, when he was elected to full membership). This volume featured a short essay by Herbert Furst, under the pseudonym "Tis," and ten color reproductions of Shannon's paintings. The most significant publication on Shannon, then and now, was E. B. George's book in the series "Contemporary British Artists," edited by Albert Rutherston (1924). This monograph provides virtually no biographical material on Shannon, and little sense of the chronology of Shannon's work. However, it does discuss at length the stylistic features of Shannon's paintings. George noted, although without resolving, the apparent conflict between Shannon's traditional sources and his progressive treatment of composition and subject. George's book is also extremely valuable for its numerous reproductions (thirty in all) of Shannon's paintings, many of which are in private collections today.

Since George's monograph, few publications have appeared that deal specifically with Shannon. F. R. Meatyard produced another study of Shannon's lithographs in 1940. Most recently, Paul Delaney composed what is the definitive catalogue of Shannon's lithographs, including an introductory essay by Fenella Crichton (1978). However, there has been no study of Shannon's paintings since George's monograph.

In late twentieth-century literature, most references to Shannon are to be found in biographies on Ricketts. Joseph Darracott included some biographical information about Shannon in *The World of Charles Ricketts* (1980), which featured a number of photographs of Shannon and reproductions, two in color, of his work.[8] Darracott was also responsible for compiling a catalogue of the Ricketts and Shannon collection in the Fitzwilliam Museum. By far

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[8] Joseph Darracott, *The World of Charles Ricketts* (New York: Methuen, 1980).

the most valuable modern book for Ricketts and Shannon scholars is Delaney's *Charles Ricketts: a Biography* (1990). Resulting from Delaney's exhaustive research into the Ricketts and Shannon archives, this study is an extremely thorough biography, covering virtually every aspect and period from Ricketts's life. In a book as comprehensive as this, Shannon's name frequently appears. Delaney's study is an extremely useful resource for the places and persons with which Ricketts and Shannon were familiar.

Shannon's work has featured in several recent exhibitions. In 1979, the Orleans House (London) exhibit "Charles Ricketts and Charles Shannon: an Aesthetic Partnership" virtually initiated contemporary scholarship on Ricketts and Shannon. Several of Shannon's paintings were featured in the Usher Gallery's (Lincoln) 1987 exhibit "At the Sign of the Dial: Charles Haslewood Shannon and his Circle," which also focused on publications from Ricketts's Vale Press.

Shannon has also been represented in two exhibitions of a wider scope. Most recently, the Tate Gallery (London) exhibition "The Age of Rossetti, Burne-Jones, and Watts" included Shannon's *Age of Gold*.[9] The Barbican Art Gallery's (London) "Last Romantics" has probably done the most in introducing Ricketts, Shannon, and other Edwardian artists to a general audience. Several paintings and drawings by Shannon were shown, and for the catalogue Delaney contributed an essay on the Ricketts and Shannon circle. To date, "The Last Romantics" is, in fact, the only real consideration of the Edwardian period of art. However, Shannon's role in this period has still not been closely considered.

Statement of the Problem

This dissertation seeks to understand how Shannon interacted with cultural discourses on Venetian art, discourses which had formed and evolved over a period of approximately three-hundred years. Not only did Shannon possess a deep and abiding knowledge of Venetian Renaissance paintings, he was also aware of the aesthetic issues raised by British critics on Venetian art, especially John Ruskin and Walter Pater. I will be demonstrating that Shannon engaged with these critical issues on Venetian art through his own paintings and lithographs, which he filled with references to Venetian artworks and figurative motifs which held a particular significance for the critical tradition in British aesthetics.

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[9] *The Age of Rossetti, Burne-Jones, and Watts*, ed. Andrew Wilton and Robert Upstone (London: Tate Gallery Publishing, 1997). Unfortunately, Robert Upstone's catalogue entry for Shannon's painting (catalogue no. 133, pp 279-280) offers very little commentary about *The Golden Age*, and mainly consists of a summary of Shannon's style of painting.

Shannon's role within the Venetianist discourse has never been fully examined. Neither, for that matter, has the discourse itself been carefully considered. In this dissertation, I intend to demonstrate the complexities within this discourse, and how its meaning would shift in accordance with new paradigms in British culture. Shannon's own understanding of Venetian art was greatly colored by previous generations' interpretations. These different forms of Venetianism therefore need to be examined before we can properly assess Shannon's role within this discourse.

Methodology

The term "Venetianism" was coined by Heather Pattison Jespersen in her dissertation, "Delacroix and the Venetian Tradition" (1987).[10] In its widest sense, it means the self-conscious revival of Venetian Renaissance themes and stylistic techniques in modern art. It can also encompass, as it does for Jespersen, the critical reception and interpretation of Venetian Renaissance art in modern theory.

I would like to adopt this model of Venetianism, and apply it to British art and theory. In the process, I intend to amplify its meaning by considering a connotation of the term "Venetianism" which was not addressed by Jespersen. "Venetianism" calls to mind the similar term of "Orientalism." Orientalism, the academic study of Near Eastern culture and art, was brilliantly analyzed by Edward Said in his seminal study, *Orientalism* (1979). Said demonstrated in this text that the academic discourse on the Near East is far from an objective study of a particular historical or geographical culture; it is, rather, a myth constructed by European writers composing their ideals and fears about European self-identity.

What I would like to consider is whether or not a similar process occurs in British writings on the city of Venice and its art. A study of British texts on Venice suggests that there is indeed a similar process, which one might call "Venetianism," whereby hopes and fears about the British Empire are displaced onto the Italian city-state. What is more, the British discourse on Venice is often cross-fertilized by the critical discourse in Britain on Venetian art. It will be seen that these two discourses actually merge with one another to such an extent that it is difficult to distinguish them. Because of the intertextual meanings of Venice and Venetian art in British discourses, I will propose a combination of Jespersen's art historical concept of Venetianism with a Saidian Venetianism which would encompass socio-historical interpretations of Venice. I will also incorporate Pemble's concepts of Venetophilia and Venetophobia in

[10] Heather Pattison Jespersen, "Delacroix and the Venetian Tradition" (unpublished dissertation: Brown University, 1987). By nature of her topic, Jespersen's study is largely limited to French Venetianism.

describing the various forms of Venetianism throughout the ages. As with Orientalism, however, these various forms of Venetianism will reveal more about the speakers' cultural self-identity than they do about Venice or Venetian art in and of themselves.

Précis of Chapters

Chapter One

This chapter introduces the subject of the dissertation and indicates what issues will be discussed. I also provide a brief biography of Shannon's life and activities, as well as a review of scholarly literature on both Shannon and on the discourse of Venetianism in British art and culture.

Chapter Two

In this chapter, I survey the history of Venetianism through three periods, ranging from 1600-1830. Each period represents a distinctive phase of British Venetianism: Van Dyck and the age of absolutism (seventeenth century); Reynolds and the age of skepticism (eighteenth century); and Byron and the age of romanticism (early nineteenth century). I examine the reception of Venetian art in British travel guides, poems, and paintings. These sources demonstrate that British writers and artists conferred distinctive meanings on Venetian art that correspond to British discourses on the city of Venice and its morality. These discourses, including Venetianism as an artistic language, reveal that British writers and artists treated Venice and Venetian art as surrogates for British culture. They would invest Venetian art with those characteristics considered most attractive or most repellant in British culture. Venetianism thus shifts in meaning from one period to the next.

I chart the shifting meanings in British Venetianism through the writings of Richard Lassels, Joseph Addison, Jonathan Richardson, Joshua Reynolds, and Lord Byron. At the same time, I analyze the assimilation of Venetian Renaissance characteristics in the paintings of Rubens, Van Dyck, Reynolds, and William Etty. I pay particular attention to the collection and criticism of Venetianist paintings in Britain, and interpret these activities and writings as further evidence of the Venetianist discourse.

Chapter Three

This chapter concentrates on Venetianist art and criticism during the Victorian age, from

the 1830s through the 1870s. I survey the major art historical studies of this time, including Burckhardt's *Cicerone*, and compare their interpretations of Venetian Renaissance painting. After ascertaining the dominant trends in Venetianist art history, I discuss the critical writings of John Ruskin and Walter Pater. Each critic offers a distinctive interpretation of Venetian art, interpretations which would have a significant impact on contemporary Venetianist art. While Ruskin and Pater share an appreciation for Venetian art, they differ in their understanding of it and of art in general. Ruskin judges aesthetic value by the artist's expression of honest labor and faith; he particularly valorizes medieval art in Venice, while he finds serious faults in Venice's Renaissance art, especially the architectural structures. After undergoing a loss of religious faith, Ruskin would modify his views of Venetian Renaissance painting, but he would always insist on the social value of art. Pater, by contrast, pointedly ignores any social or moral relevance in art. In his aesthetic system, the highest form of art is the fusion of content with formal means of expression. Pater considers this fusion to exist in an almost entirely aesthetic realm, with very little connection to social or moral demands; hence, Pater's philosophy has often been summarized as "art for art's sake." Furthermore, Pater regards Renaissance art in general, and Venetian painting in particular, as epitomizing this ideal fusion of form and content.

I find echoes of these critical interpretations of Venetian art in contemporary Victorian painting. I observe a distinctive shift in Victorian artists' treatment of Venetian traits during this period. In the 1840s and 50s, few Victorian artists incorporated Venetian techniques or stylistic characteristics in their art. I argue that these early Victorian painters intentionally overlooked Venetian art as they were more interested in medieval forms of expression. In fact, they belonged to a wider trend of medieval revivalism in Victorian culture, a trend which Ruskin also followed in his early writings. However, by the 1860s, Venetian references reappear in British paintings. Artists like Dante Gabriel Rossetti and George Frederic Watts start to emulate Venetian techniques and subject matter. I study the works of these artists, and relate their stylistic experiments to Pater's aesthetics. I also explore these artists' association with the Aesthetic Movement in Late Victorian England, and how much of their "Aestheticism" stemmed from Venetianism.

Chapter Four

Shannon's paintings and lithographs form the primary subject of this chapter. I closely examine the Venetian qualities of his works, and discover instances where Shannon makes direct references to particular Venetian Renaissance paintings. I also note how Shannon's Venetianism is indebted to earlier versions of Venetianism. Indeed, Shannon interacts with all of the forms of Venetianism that this dissertation has exposed. He emulates Van Dyck by depicting his sitters in

the poses and manners seen in Titian's portraits, thereby conferring on the sitter an aura of nobility. Shannon's paintings of nudes demonstrate how much the artist reacted against the prudery of eighteenth-century (and Victorian) anti-Venetianism. Shannon also shares Ruskin's concern for honest labor, a concern that is evident in Shannon's careful attention to technique, particularly in his lithographs.

While Shannon clearly draws elements from all of these previous Venetianisms, he is most strongly inspired by Pater's version. I discuss how Shannon would have come into contact with Paterian aesthetics through his friendship with Oscar Wilde, one of Pater's closest followers. I also detect Paterian sympathies in Shannon's treatment of Giorgionesque subjects. Shannon's lack of interest in narrative subjects, and his love for beautiful and harmonious arrangements of figures, fulfill many of Pater's criteria for art. Furthermore, many of Shannon's critics responded to his paintings with Paterian language, suggesting that they too recognized Shannon's connections with Pater's Venetianism.

Chapter Five

The last chapter of the dissertation explores the modernist context of Shannon's paintings and their Venetianism. I note how many critics at the turn of the twentieth century, including John Addington Symonds, Roger Fry, and Bernard Berenson, continue to evoke Paterian language in their discussions of Venetian Renaissance painting. I also point out that these critics increasingly compare Venetian paintings to modern European paintings, thereby creating an artistic climate in which modern art is associated with Venetianist characteristics. Within this climate, Paterian Venetianism begins to overlap with modern formalism, a process that is most evident in Roger Fry's aesthetics.

The "modern" connotations of Venetian art have an effect on Shannon, and on how his paintings were interpreted. I discuss how Shannon exhibited at mainly progressive venues in London, and how he, like his heroes Dante Gabriel Rossetti and George Frederic Watts, held a deep antipathy towards the Royal Academy and its stylistic conservatism. Many collectors with modern tastes in art begin purchasing his works; the most significant of these collectors include John Quinn, Hugh Lane, and Sir Edmund Davis. Each of these patrons included in their collection many avant-garde paintings, in addition to other Venetianist-inspired works. In the case of Quinn, Shannon's work would be included within the same collection as paintings by Matisse and Picasso.

I close my discussion by discussing the rise of modernism in British art, and evaluating its impact on Venetianism. Although the aesthetics of modernism owe much to Pater, as is particularly seen in Roger Fry's formalist theories, modernist art would come to be identified

with non-figurative art and with saturated tones of color. Venetianism's figurative tradition and chiaroscuro techniques would come into conflict with these new artistic values. As a result, Venetianism, and Shannon's art, would ultimately fall from their formerly avant-garde status. Only fragments of Venetianism would linger in British modernist art, and Shannon's work would barely be remembered.

CHAPTER 2
PRE-VICTORIAN VENETIANISM

In terms of painting, the golden age of British Venetianism was undoubtedly the nineteenth century. However, as a cultural phenomenon, Venetianism has a much older history. As early as the seventeenth century, a distinct discourse on Venice and the city's Renaissance art was already emerging. As time progressed, this discourse was adapted by various writers and artists to suit their own perspectives. Nevertheless, a common thread can be followed from these earliest manifestations of a Venetianist tradition. From the time of Charles I until the days of Charles Shannon, Venetian Renaissance art will be invested with particular meanings that reflect and reiterate British cultural ideas. Indeed, in British literature and art, the paintings of Titian and Giorgione become not so much great works of art as they become vehicles of British aesthetic values, both positive and negative. What these values signify, however, vary from one age to the next, in accordance with that age's particular aesthetic point of view.

As we shall see in this survey of Venetianism prior to the nineteenth century, Venice and Venetian paintings will frequently challenge the attempts made by British travellers, writers, and artists to pin down one particular definition on them. The history of Venetianism is often convoluted or outright contradictory, as writers will frequently cite the same features and artworks of Venice to defend completely opposing arguments. Tories and Whigs, Classicists and Gothicists: all will use the common ground of Venice on which to make their case for Britain and British art.

Van Dyck and the Age of Absolutism: Venetianism in Seventeenth-Century Britain

It was perhaps inevitable that during the seventeenth century Venetian art would be associated primarily with the aristocracy and royalty. The only individuals in Britain who would have had the opportunity to see and enjoy Venetian paintings were by necessity those who lived or worked in the great mansions of the upper classes. Among these classes, collecting paintings by Titian or Veronese was extremely popular, as is attested in contemporary inventories. Even fewer individuals would have seen Venetian paintings *in situ*, as the idea of travelling on holiday to Venice was almost unheard of at this time.

Even the English king Charles I never visited the city of Venice. Nevertheless, he was an avid collector of Venetian paintings, and sponsored several important artists who adopted Venetian techniques and themes for their own works. His great love for the Venetian style would have a major impact on the cultural understanding of Venetian and Venetian-influenced

art in Britain. The impact will be so deep that, as we shall see, subsequent generations will struggle with their own interpretation of Venetian art, an interpretation that will become particularly complex as the British begin to travel regularly to Venice itself.

The tone of absolutism in Venetian-inspired paintings, as seen during Charles I's reign, will pose a thorny problem for these later artists and critics who will either modify the royalist meanings of this genre of painting or come to reject it entirely. In any case, Charles I's patronage of Venetian-influenced artists has a bearing on Venetianism's future in at least one particular way: those artists' works will come to be associated with specifically British ideas about Venetian art. Those ideas reveal much about how particular segments of the British population viewed themselves as a people, as well as what they thought about Venetian paintings. This process of identifying or criticizing one's own culture through the medium of another culture's artistic style will become the basic structure of British Venetianism.

Charles I's enthusiasm for Venetian art was largely sated by his extensive collection of Venetian paintings, including several Titians. However, Charles I did not limit his interest to the art of the past. He was also keenly aware of the modern descendants of Titian, those artists in the seventeenth century who practiced a style of painting based upon Venetian Renaissance art. In addition to being essentially introduced to Venetian art during his visit to Madrid, Charles I had also become aware of the work of Peter Paul Rubens. Recognizing the stylistic links between Rubens and the Venetians, Charles I awarded the Flemish painter with the commission to paint the ceiling of London's Banqueting House [Figure 1].

The Banqueting House ceiling is quite unlike anything else in contemporary England; Roy Strong even describes it as "the greatest baroque ceiling painting north of the Alps."[11] The Banqueting House cycle stands out in Rubens' *oeuvre*, which otherwise includes very few examples of ceiling paintings. Furthermore, the form of these paintings distinguishes them from most other Baroque ceiling paintings. Ceiling paintings in Baroque art was predominately characterized by *trompe l'oeil* and other illusionistic devices; artists like Annibale Carraci, Guido Reni, and Guercino typically painted the surface to appear either as a series of framed canvases or as an opening to the heavens, when it was, in fact, a flat fresco on the flat surface of the ceiling. By comparison, Rubens's use of actual oil paintings on canvas, framed by actual frames, is very much a return to the tradition of framed ceiling paintings as found in sixteenth-century Venice, most notably in the Doge's Palace.

The resemblances between Rubens's work and its Venetian predecessors go even further. In subject matter, Rubens's scenes recall the kind of themes represented in the Doge's Palace

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[11] Strong, *Britannia Triumphans: Inigo Jones, Rubens, and Whitehall Palace* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1980), 16.

ceiling paintings by Tintoretto and Veronese. Like the Venetian paintings, Rubens' work represents allegorical figures of virtues triumphant over vices, putti and angels carrying coats of arms and laurel crowns, and Olympian gods bestowing authority onto temporal rulers. The paintings also bear evidence of Venetian influences in technique as well as in form and subject matter: the rich colors and fluid tones, including splendid effects of light and shadow, all demonstrate how Rubens derived much of his stylistic technique from Venetian prototypes.

To describe the Banqueting House ceiling as Venetianist is therefore entirely appropriate in terms of style. However, this work indicates that the British idea of Venetianism in the seventeenth century should be understood in more than the simple terms of stylistic influences; it also encompassed cultural meanings peculiar to Britain. While the identity of the program's designer is still debatable, there is no question that its primary purpose is to glorify the Stuart dynasty of kings. Specifically, the canvases represent the different virtues of Charles I's father, James I, and the prosperity and wisdom that his reign has brought to all of Britain. In one scene, James I is shown enthroned with Minerva and Mercury driving the forces of evil out of his kingdom [Figure 2]; in another, he presides over the union of England and Scotland as Great Britain, symbolized by two women with an infant [Figure 3]; and in the centermost canvas, James I is assumed into heaven, guided by Virtues such as Justice and Faith and the goddess Minerva [Figure 4].

These canvases make several references to the ceiling paintings of Venice. Certainly, the putti and the Olympian gods flying overhead share much with the paintings one finds in the Doge's Palace; as in that structure, these classical figures enact allegories that glorify the power of the temporal state. In the *Benefits of the Government of James I* [Figure 2], James I is enthroned before a structure consisting of twisting, Solomonic columns. One of the possible art historical sources for this structure is certainly the Raphael cartoon of St. Peter Healing in the Temple, as Roy Strong points out. However, the presence of Solomonic columns behind an enthroned figure also recalls Veronese's painting of *The Triumph of Venice* (c. 1585) in the Sala del Gran Consiglo [Figure 5]. In both works, a figure representing temporal power is enthroned before such a structure, and is crowned by angels. An important difference, however, is that in this and other Venetian painting, the temporal power is typically depicted in allegorical form, in the shape of female figure representing "Venice." In the Banqueting House paintings, the power is portrayed in the distinctive features of the late James I.

The meaning conveyed in the Banqueting House paintings is clear: James I was the divinely appointed ruler of Britain, and evidence of this is to be found in the wisdom and justice with which he discharged his royal duties. The implication is that his son, the man who commissioned these paintings, would follow in James I's footsteps. In this powerful instance of

Venetianist painting in seventeenth-century Britain, a meaningful link between Venetian styles of painting and royal absolutism is forcefully made.

The Banqueting House project is not an isolated example of such a link; indeed, the association of Venetian painting with Stuart absolutism became the predominate meaning for British Venetianism in the first half of the seventeenth century. This association is evident in other paintings from this time period, even though few of these are by Rubens. In fact, Rubens executed the canvases for the Banqueting House entirely in Antwerp, and probably never saw them installed; the only time that he ever spent in England, a seven month period from 1629-30, was devoted more to his diplomatic mission than to his artistic career. An artist who spent more time in England than Rubens, and whose own contribution to the developing idea of Venetianism in British art was even more significant, was Anthony Van Dyck. For over two hundred years, Anthony Van Dyck exercised an immense influence on British painters, from Gainsborough to Shannon.

As in the case of Rubens, Van Dyck's style reinforced Charles's identification of Venetian painting techniques with the social power of the royalty. As court painter to Charles I, Van Dyck painted the king's portrait on numerous occasions. In *Charles I on Horseback* (1636, National Gallery, London) [Figure 6], Van Dyck represents Charles I in armor astride a horse, accompanied by a squire who carries the king's helmet. With the exception of the squire, Van Dyck's portrait is in many ways a mirror image of Titian's equestrian portrait of the Holy Roman Emperor *Charles V at the Battle of Muhlberg* (1548, Prado) [Figure 7]. Both rulers are depicted riding forth as though out of a forest, with a wide, open plain before them stretching into the background. The resemblance is almost certainly not coincidental. Since his trip to Venice in the 1620s, Van Dyck had been studying Titian's style closely. After becoming court painter to Charles I, Van Dyck modeled himself after Titian in more than stylistic ways; Van Dyck considered his role of court painter to mirror that of Titian in the service of Charles V and others. By representing Charles I in a way that intentionally recalled Titian's portrait of Charles V, Van Dyck was not only trying to flatter his royal patron. He was also trying to express that his social status, far from being that of a manual laborer, was in fact equal with that of Titian: like Titian, who had been ennobled by Charles V in 1533, Van Dyck was himself ennobled by Charles I, who knighted the artist in 1632.

These resemblances should not prevent one from recognizing subtle but important differences between these two equestrian portraits. The most evident difference is the amount of armor worn by each ruler. Charles V not only wears his helmet, but also brandishes a spear to indicate that he is riding into battle. His horse also wears a helmet piece, and seems to be charging forth. Charles I, on the other hand, is much more lightly armored. He is not wearing his helmet, nor is he wielding a weapon; his sword is sheathed, and the only object he holds other

than the horse's reins is a baton. His horse is similarly peaceful. Wearing no armor or battle dress, the English steed is far more refined than the Holy Roman Emperor's stallion. The horse's stance is not a gallop, but a very elegant trot. The sense of elegance is reinforced by the thinness of the horse's face, and his flowing mane of curly hair. The implication is that, while the English king conveys the same air of authority as the sixteenth-century emperor, his reign has brought so much peace and prosperity to his kingdom that warfare is obsolete. Charles I's armor and horse seem ceremonial, and hardly bellicose.

Many of Van Dyck's portraits of aristocrats follow the same model. For example, his portraits of the Earl of Strafford borrow their compositions almost wholesale from Titian's prototypes. The standing portrait of Charles's close ally, *Thomas Wentworth, 1st Earl of Strafford* (1632) [Figure 8], clearly takes its pose and the accompanying dog from Titian's full-length portrait of Charles V (1533, Prado) [Figure 9]. Once again, Van Dyck lends an authoritarian air to the sitter of his painting by explicitly comparing him with the Holy Roman Emperor. The significance of this comparison becomes even more complex when one learns that the Titian portrait upon which it is based was in Charles I's collection at this time. The Venetianism in Van Dyck's portrait is thus associated with absolutist power on two levels: one, in that it was based on the portrait of an emperor, and two, in that the emperor's portrait was in the king's collection.

Van Dyck became famous for his skill in painting portraits, and aristocrats who knew anything about art would understand the significance of being painted like an emperor in the style of Titian. However, some of his most accomplished Venetianist paintings are not portraits, but mythological scenes. Just as Van Dyck's portraits followed the model of Titian's portraits, his subject paintings follow the model of Titian's mythological scenes, or "*poesia*" as they had come to be called. *Rinaldo and Armida* (1629, Baltimore Museum of Art) [Figure 10] was one of the first paintings by Van Dyck that Charles I purchased for his collection; this work probably played a major factor in Charles I's decision to appoint Van Dyck court painter upon his return to England in 1632.[12] The painting deals with a romantic medieval story: the Crusading knight Rinaldo has been enchanted by the sorceress Armida, with whom he falls deeply in love. In theme, this work has much in common with Titian's *poesia* paintings, which often deal with stories of love: *Venus and Adonis* and *Danae* are two such *poesia*. The painting with which *Rinaldo and Armida* has the most in common is another *poesia* work by Titian: the *Worship of Venus* (1516/18, Prado) [Figure 11]. Van Dyck copied several of Titian's putti for his own painting; the boy lifting his arms in the air on the far left is remarkably similar to a cupid

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[12] This is the version that is today in the Baltimore Museum of Art.

performing the same gesture in Titian's painting, while the boy on the right, just behind Armida, is almost an exact copy of a boy eating an apple in the central foreground of Titian's painting.

The Titianesque elements in *Rinaldo and Armida* no doubt appealed to Charles I's aesthetic instincts, as he was already avidly collecting the Venetian painter's works. The relationship between the Venetianism of this painting and social status is perhaps less obvious than in the portraits. However, the associative meanings of Titian's *Worship of Venus* may have been transferred to the Van Dyck. Titian's painting was one of a series of works based on mythological themes that he painted for Alfonso I d'Este, Duke of Ferrara. Alfonso's patronage of the young Titian would have been well known to any art connoisseur, this episode having been mentioned by Vasari. Charles I may have seen himself in a similar role with the young Van Dyck, by promoting the work of a promising newcomer to the art world. At the same time, the king also benefitted from this relationship, as such a Titian-influenced work, with its references to another famous painting from an aristocratic collection, exhibited his learned knowledge of art and literature—a priceless demonstration of his cultural status among the social elite of Europe.

In any case, Charles I and Van Dyck continued to expand the meanings of Venetianism for the Carolingian court. *Cupid and Psyche* (1638-40, Buckingham Palace) [Figure 12], a royal commission perhaps intended for Greenwich Palace, is one of the most Titianesque paintings in subject, composition, and style. This work particularly recalls Titian's Bacchus in *Bacchus and Ariadne* (1523/24, National Gallery, London) [Figure 13], which like the aforementioned *Worship of Venus* was originally commissioned by Alfonso d'Este.

Cupid's flying gesture in the Van Dyck painting, as he alights on the earth, is very similar to Titian's Bacchus as he dismounts his chariot. Furthermore, the vermilion shades of Cupid's garment are similar to those of Bacchus's, both in color and in the way that they flutter in the wind. The richness of the colors, achieved through layers of glazes, reveals Van Dyck's appropriation of Titian's technique for his own. The subject here is also in the same genre as Titian's *poesia* paintings. As a mythological theme of a god rescuing his mortal love, it can again be compared to Titian's painting of Bacchus discovering Ariadne. This is true not only in subject, but also in the way Van Dyck's work lovingly and tenderly lingers over beautiful passages of color, and the pathos of the unconscious and vulnerable Psyche. This emphasis on lyrical beauty instead of on the allegorical meaning of the story makes it especially Titianesque; as Lawson says, "the story is not couched in terms of philosophical exegesis, but of sentiment."[13] Both Charles I and Alfonso had no need of didactic allegories in their collection; as cultured and educated aristocrats, their familiarity with the narrative was already presumed.

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[13] James Lawson, *Van Dyck* (Munich: Prestel, 1999), 92-94.

Outside of Charles I's court, however, a new cultural group was rising in power, one with little interest in the visual arts and no belief in the divine right of kings. After years of a bloody Civil War (1642-1649), the Puritan faction within Parliament would eventually overthrow Charles I, and convict him on charges of treason. On the morning of 30 January, 1649, Charles I stepped onto a scaffold set up next to the Banqueting House. Within a few yards of Rubens's Venetianist paintings and their apotheosis of the Stuart dynasty, the king knelt at a chopping block, and awaited the swing of the executioner's axe.

Venetianism and the Grand Tour

With Charles I's execution in 1649, the absolutist ideals of the Stuart dynasty were shattered forever. With those ideals went the political associations of Venetian art. Never again would Venetian artists and their successors be identified exclusively with a particular political ideal in Britain; from that point on, the meaning of Venetian and Venetian-influenced art was subject to a great deal of fluctuation.

The most significant factor in the changing face of British Venetianism was the advent of the Grand Tour. This cultural phenomenon became a recognizable force in late seventeenth-century Britain, and had a powerful impact on the British view of Venetian art. In fact, the Grand Tour represents the first time when interpretations of the city of Venice and of its art begin to blur into one another, forming a Venetianism in the truest sense of the word. While the cultural meaning of Venice and that of Venetian painting were not necessarily identical, and would often overlap one another, the discourse of Venetianism would always rely heavily upon a dialogue between the city and its art, or, more accurately between interpretations of the city and its art.

The substance of that dialogue, however, would change from era to era. Through the end of the seventeenth century, Venetianism was still dominated by aristocratic definitions. Many aristocrats, most of whom were royalist, chose to live in exile in Venice during the time of Cromwell's Protectorate. Their associations of Venice and aristocratic identity were therefore only reinforced during this time.

Venice had already been a favorite site for British travelers for centuries before Richard Lassels visited the city in 1670. During the Middle Ages, Venice had been an important stop for pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem.[14] After the fall of Jerusalem, it became a tourist destination in its own right. Visitors were drawn in part by a curiosity with the Venetian state's unusual

[14] J. R. Hale, *England and the Italian Renaissance; the Growth of Interest in its History and Art* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), 29.

government, composed of a duke and a senate drawn from the noble families of the city. Nearly all English visitors to Venice during the seventeenth century were from aristocratic families themselves. They were typically young gentlemen or their mentors, who realized that a political education was of paramount importance. The young men were, after all, future members of the House of Lords.[15] Venice's political situation would therefore have certainly interested them. Their political interests would have been served in such books as James Howell's *Of the Republic or Signorie of Venice* (*A survay of the signorie of Venice, of her admired policy, and method of government, &c*) (1651). Howell argues that the longevity of Venice's government is proof of the city's political strength, making it a suitable model for other nations. "Length of Age argues strength of Constitution," Howell writes. "She hath continued a pure Virgin, and an Independent . . . neer upon 13 Ages."[16] This strength indicates that Venice is "the fittest pattern on Earth both for direction and imitation."[17] Furthermore, Venice is of particular interest to the English because of the similarities between the two states. "[I]n point of security ther is much resemblance between them, both being seated in the Sea, who is their best Protector; The one preserves Her-self by her Gallies, the other by her Galeons; The fairest flower of England is the Dominion of the Narrow Seas, the gretest glory of Venice is the Dominion of the Adriatic Gulph."[18]

Howell provides a lesson in the history of Venice's rulers, including a long list of every doge, with his respective accomplishments. However, he has much less interest in the arts of the city. Indeed, he only discusses Venice's three most significant sights, in his opinion: St. Mark's basilica, St. Mark's treasury, and the Arsenal. In each of these monuments, Howell describes the material richness with little eye for aesthetic appreciation. Of St. Mark's basilica, for example, he is astounded by the amount of gold and marble; in comparison to these riches, he considered the "Mosaicall works," to be among the "least curiosities" in the entire church. He recounts the amazing statistics of the Arsenal: "This Arsenal hath armes to furnish 200000 men and upwards . . . when Henry the third passd from Poland to France by Venice, he went to see this Arsenal, and in lesse than two howers [hours] ther was a new Gallie made in his presence and launchd."[19] In St. Mark's treasury, he describes at great length "Jewells of all sorts of incredible greatnes and value, Diamonds, Rubies, Saphyres, Emerauds, Cupps of Agat . . ."

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[15] Until 1999, all hereditary peers in England had the automatic right to sit in the House of Lords, whether they exercised that right or not; the only time they could not exercise this right was during the Protectorate (1649-1660).
[16] Howell, *Of the Republic and Signorie of Venice* (1651), introduction.
[17] Ibid, 1.
[18] Ibid, introduction.
[19] Ibid, 35. The story about Henry III's visit would be repeated in many subsequent travel guides.

By contrast, in regard to Venetian paintings, Howell does not refer to a single Renaissance work. His only comment in regard to Renaissance paintings is "That ther are few places [other than Venice] where ther are more curious and costly Books for the illiterate vulgar, for so the Romanists term Church-Images and Sculptures . . ."[20] A reference to "Titiano a Venetian born" is the only mention of a particular artist, and none of his works are discussed.[21] "To speak of the sundry sorts of Antiquities, Monuments, and ingenious Epitaphs, which are in the Churches up and down Venice, wold afford matter enough to fill Volumes," Howell declares, apparently justifying the paucity of artistic sights in his book.[22]

While many aristocrats visited Venice primarily for those sights and histories that Howell discusses, some of these tourists were less interested in the politics of Venice and more interested in the city's art; possessing a collection of fine paintings was increasingly regarded as a sign of high cultural taste. A more thorough guidebook was needed for these visitors' full enjoyment of the city, and this was found in Richard Lassels' *An Italian Voyage, or, a Compleat Journey through Italy* (1670), a book that would become virtually the bible for the Grand tour.[23] In this book, Lassels discusses, as Howell did, many of the Venice's political features and practices. However, Lassels makes an original contribution to the genre of travel literature by insisting that a well-rounded aristocratic education would also include cultural and artistic values. He thus sees fit to include descriptions of what he considers to be the most important artworks in Venice.

Like Howell, Lassels stresses the idea that "[Venice] is a Virgin . . . having never yet fell from her Principles either in Government or Religion."[24] Lassels' description of the approach to Venice, however adds a new perspective to the literature. As he nears the lagoon along the Brenta river, Lassels describes how the presence of "stately Pallaces and Gardens" upon the riverbanks indicated that "we were approaching a great Town indeed."[25] Upon reaching the Lagoon and sighting Venice, Lassels describes it as "lying as it were at Anchor, in the midst of the Sea; and standing fixed where every thing else Floats."[26] This description of the approach to Venice, and the admiration for its almost magical appearance among the waves, would be a standard trope in the literary guides to Venice.

Lassels' visit to the Doge's Palace provides more examples of observations that would become clichés in later accounts. His description of the "*bocca di leone*" is typical: these letter

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[20] Ibid, 54.
[21] Even this reference is technically incorrect, if one takes it to mean that Titian was born in the city of Venice. He was born in Pieve di Cadore, on the mainland.
[22] Howell, 54.
[23] Quotations are taken from the second edition, 1698.
[24] Ibid, 233.
[25] Ibid, 224.
[26] Ibid.

boxes, Lassels explains, are shaped as "certain wide Mouths of Marble Stone . . . Into which they cast secretly Papers of accusations, by which they accuse secretly any Officer or Nobleman, whom they durst not accuse publickly." The effect of this method of informing is that it "makes Men stand hugely upon their guard, and be wary with whom they converse, and what they say."[27]

Lassels does not dwell too much on the darker implications of these informant boxes, which in the eyes of later writers will become evidence of an oppressive police state; on the contrary, his other remarks regarding the government of Venice are largely favorable. Nevertheless, because of its long history in subsequent literature, Lassels' reference to the *bocca di leone* is a significant one.

Many of Howell's observations have become so embedded in the literature that Lassels and subsequent writers cannot avoid repeating them. For instance, Lassels repeats much of Howell's itinerary by visiting St. Mark's basilica, the treasury, and the Arsenal, with a similar eye to luxurious items of jewels and gold at the Treasury and the ships and activities at the Arsenal.[28] Many of Lassels' readers no doubt expected to learn about these kinds of items.

By making a conscious effort to include other sights of artistic interest, however, Lassels also recognizes that art is an element in a gentleman's well-rounded education. Consequently, he takes care to call attention to what he considers to be the more significant Renaissance paintings in the churches of Venice: Tintoretto's *Last Supper* in the Salute, Bassano's *Raising of Lazarus* in the convent of La Carita, Titian's *Transfiguration* and *Annunciation* at San Salvatore, and so forth. In his descriptions of the churches of Venice, Lassels rarely neglects to point out which altarpieces were painted by the major artists of the Renaissance, and in this regard differs greatly from any writer before him. Reflecting on the artworks in Venice, Lassels declares "I saw so many, and so rare pieces of painting, of Titian, Tintoret, Bellino, Gentile, Castel, Franco, Bassano, Paolo Veronese, Perdonone, and others, that with Madam Rome's leave, I dare boldly say, that no place of Italy hath so many rare Pictures in it, as Venice hath."[29]

When he introduces his readers to the most famous works of Venetian art, Lassels is not including this information purely for curiosity's sake. One must remember that his intended audience was composed of aristocratic men embarking on one last journey before taking on the responsibilities of adulthood. The Grand Tour was intended as a rite of passage, and in his guidebook, Lassels is determined to provide the initiate with the tools necessary to enter successfully into manhood. Art is one of these tools. Lassels' commentary is crucial to an understanding of Venetianism's beginnings because he was among the first British writers to

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[27] Ibid, 234.
[28] Ibid, 241-246; 249-253.
[29] Ibid, 241; 255-259.

recognize the value of art connoisseurship for aristocratic men, and because his guidebook was so widely read. *An Italian Voyage* was so popular that it went through several prints, ensuring that, for many Englishmen in the seventeenth century, Venetian painting was taken seriously as a part of an aristocratic identity.

For Lassels, art is part of an aristocrat's well-rounded education. A gentleman must be cultured in more than just politics and war; he must be equally strong in his understanding of social practices, moral philosophy, and the arts. It is in Italy, above all other regions of Europe, where the young aristocrat's education can be improved in every dimension. Intellectually, he is improved by an exposure to a variety of languages; socially, by encountering a variety of customs; ethically, by learning the virtues of self-reliance; and politically, by learning forms of statecraft.[30] Altogether, these areas, when improved and polished by this journey through Italy, will assure that the young man rises above a provincial, insular perspective and that he returns to his country "like a blessing Sunn."[31]

At this stage in British history, then, the value of Venetian painting is linked closely with aristocratic identity. Through the study of Venice, the noble tourist is given the opportunity to improve every area of his education. Having learned of these various aspects of culture, the young man can return to England to assume his role as a full-fledged and competent member of society. His knowledge of the world's social customs, great works of art, and systems of government will ensure that England's future is a bright one.

While Venice offered much to educate young aristocrats, its society contained some vices as well as virtues. Lassels did not ignore the darker side of Venice, but he did not regard it as a serious issue. However, subsequent writers would become obsessed with what they considered to be Venice's licentiousness. Eighteenth-century writers, indeed, would adopt an *anti*-Venetianist perspective, one which would affect their understanding of Venetian art as well as Venice itself.

"An Exquisite Courtesan": Venice and Venetian art in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century British art and literature

When Lassels wrote his *Voyage*, he warned against Venice's more lurid attractions. Many young men, Lassels suspected, visited Venice "onely because they heare there are fine Curtisanes in Venice . . . so these men travel a whole month together to Venice, for a nights

[30] Bruce Redford, *Venice and the Grand Tour* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 10-11.
[31] Lassels, "Preface," unpaginated.

lodging with an impudent Woman. And thus by a false ayming at breeding abroad, they returne with those diseases which hinder them from breeding at home."[32]

Lassels meant these words as practical advice, but they anticipate the overwhelmingly moralistic tone of eighteenth-century Venetianism in Britain. Whereas seventeenth-century Venetianism had been associated with royalist doctrine, the eighteenth-century discourse would adopt much more negative views of Venetian art, which paralleled moralistic judgments on the city of Venice. Writers on Venetian art, like Joseph Addison and Jonathan Richardson, ranked its significance far below that of Central Italian art. The artist Joshua Reynolds would similarly condemn Venetian art, even as he adopted many of its principles in his own paintings. It is not until the turn of the nineteenth century that one sees a slow and lengthy rehabilitation of Venetianism in British art and culture.

For most of these eighteenth-century writers and artists, Venetian art is associated with luxury, sensuality, and a general absence of morals. These traits are linked with both the painterly style and the pagan subject matter of Venetian paintings. Furthermore, these characteristics are attributed to, and often conflated with, interpretations of Venice itself. My study of eighteenth-century Venetianism will reveal that British writers and artists would confer unto Venice and Venetian art predominately negative traits, in a process that anticipates nineteenth-century Orientalism.[33]

This projection of negative traits onto Venetian subjects is exemplified in the "Venetian courtesan." While Lassels may have been referring to real-life prostitutes, who certainly lived and worked in Venice throughout these years, the figure assumed a cultural significance for British writers which had little to do with empirical facts. Throughout the eighteenth century, British writers invested the Venetian courtesan with all their anxieties about sex, morality, religion, and politics. Fears of Britain becoming infected with Continental "diseases," from syphilis to Roman Catholicism, played into the construction of this myth. Treated as a metonym for Venice itself, this character was also frequently invoked, we shall see, in discussions of Venetian and Venetianist paintings.

Venice was often described in eighteenth-century British literature as a constant, hedonistic festival. Writers particularly enjoyed making puns with the word "Venice" and its similarity to "Venus." The city and the goddess of carnal desire were often intentionally

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[32] Lassels, "Preface," unpaginated.

[33] As Edward Said has demonstrated in his seminal study, the European discourse of Orientalism displaced anxieties about the European Self onto a constructed, Eastern Other. In this way, the Orientalist subject in art and literature conveys more information about the European artist's self-conception that it does about the Near East itself. I would am arguing that eighteenth-century Venetianism operates in a similar fashion by attributing British moral anxieties to Venetian subjects. See Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

conflated, as in Alexander Pope's *Dunciad*. To the foolish young tourist in this poem, Venice appears as

> . . . her shrine where naked Venus keeps,
> And Cupids ride the Lyon of the Deeps;
> Where, eas'd of Fleets, the Adriatic main
> Wafts the smooth Eunuch and enamour'd swain.[34]

Venice is thus a site for languor and for immoral, even effeminate indolence–hardly a model for a progressive, energetic, and manly Britain. This equating of Venice with Venus may have been encouraged by the supposedly high profile of Venetian prostitutes, a trade traditionally considered under the protection of Venus, and the frequent representation of the nude Venus in Venetian paintings.

British travel writings from the eighteenth century contain frequent references to Venice's courtesans. These are often couched within general critiques of Venetian society. During his 1712 visit to Venice, Charles Baldwyn was so taken aback by what he perceived as the city's lax morals that he declared that the "whole City may well be term'd the Brothell house of Europe."[35] He described "whole streets" filled with prostitutes, an impression that was shared by Charles Thompson. Thompson considered the prostitutes' high profile as a sign of the Venetian government's corruption: "There is perhaps no place in the World that abounds so much with Courtisans (in plain English *Whores*) . . . whom the Policy of the State has thought fit to tolerate and encourage."[36]

John Warner's description of Venice is even more scathing. He metaphorically transforms the city into the body of a prostitute. Venice is "an exquisite courtesan," he states, and as with a beautiful woman

> you gaze upon those beauties which first present themselves . . . the neck and the bosom [which are] all delight and admiration. But if the eye, with its neighbour nose, suffers itself to be carried down the Grand Canal, which–between those breasts turned by the hands of Grace, and pointed by Desire–leads to the chinks and crannies of the city . . . Venice is a stink-pot, charged with the very virus of hell![37]

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[34] Alexander Pope, "The Dunciad," in *The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope*, ed. John Butt et al (London: 1950-1969), v. 2, 307-310.
[35] Cited in Redford, 56.
[36] Charles Thompson, *The Travels of the Late Charles Thompson* (Reading: J. Newbery and C. Micklewright, 1744), 256.
[37] In a letter to George Selwyn. See John Heneage Jesse, ed., *George Selwyn and his Contemporaries* (London: Richard Bentley, 1844), 317.

In Warner's words, every aspect of Venice becomes charged with negative sexual connotations. Even the domes of the city's many churches appear to be sites of illicit desire, as the "breasts" between which the Grand Canal flows bear a striking resemblance to St. Mark's pointed onion domes.

British writers found negative traits in less tangible aspects of the city. They often remarked on the Venetian government's corruption and secrecy, and contrasted it with the British parliament's reputed fairness and openness. To such writers, Venice's power was wielded through shadowy bodies like the Council of Ten and the Inquisition. Many visitors were fascinated with the infamous *bocca di leone* in the Doge's Palace, as noted earlier by Lassels. As late as the 1790s, Thomas Watkins declared that these accusation boxes were "instruments of fear, the despotism, and the injustice of hereditary aristocracy."[38] Many of these accounts are notably sensationalist, as in Watkins's description of the state prisons, the *piombi*: in these prisons, "the unhappy prisoners, who are confined, suffer so severely from the intense heat of the sun in summer . . . that they are almost baked to death."[39]

Many writers explicitly compared the structure of Venice's government to Britain's. Not all of these comparisons were unfavorable to Venice; Henry Neville, for example, proposed adopting certain elements from the Venetian constitution, particularly limiting the king's right to summon and dissolve Parliament. Such an act would make the British monarch more like a doge than an absolute ruler.[40] However, most critics saw the Venetian state as a hopelessly corrupt oligarchy. The historian Edward Gibbon, for instance, dreaded the possibility that the British Parliament might one day be ruled by an oligarchic Senate like Venice's. He unfavorably compared England's Septennial Act of 1716 to the Venetian Serrata, believing that both acts were liable to perpetuate corrupt administrations; the Venetian Serrata had limited membership in the Grand Council to nobles from two hundred families, while the Septennial Act lengthened the maximum life of a Parliament from three to seven years.[41]

Gibbon, indeed, had little positive to say about Venice. "The spectacle of Venice afforded some hours of astonishment and some days of disgust," he complained after a 1765 visit to the city. He dismissed the city's collection of "ill-built houses, ruined pictures and stinking ditches dignified with the pompous denominations of canals" and described St. Mark's Piazza as "a large square decorated with the worst architecture I ever saw." "Of all towns in Italy I am the

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[38] Thomas Watkins, *Travels through Swisserland, Italy, Sicily, the Greek Islands, to Constantinople* (London: T. Cadell, 1792), 131-33.
[39] Ibid.
[40] In *Plato Redivivus*. See John Eglin, *Venice Transfigured: the Myth of Venice in British Culture, 1660-1797*(New York: Palgrave, 2001), 23.
[41] Eglin, 36-37. As Eglin points out, Gibbon's comparison of the Serrata would have been more appropriate to the Peerage Bill, which would have fixed the actual number of seats in the House of Lords.

least satisfied with Venice," he concluded. Gibbon's negative impression is in keeping with his true interests, which lay in classical Rome, not Renaissance Venice, as evidenced in his major scholarly contribution, *The Rise and Fall of Roman Civilization*. Gibbon's classical scholarship is a sign of the times; the eighteenth century experienced a Neoclassical revival that touched nearly every aspect of intellectual and artistic life. Accordingly, contemporary British writers either downplayed or completely overlooked Venetian Renaissance art in favor of classical art.

The Neoclassical prejudice against Venetian art is clear in the writings of Joseph Addison and the Richardsons. In Addison's *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy* (1705), he is far more interested in the antique remnants of Rome than in Renaissance paintings. In Venice, he does take some time to observe the highlights in Venetian painting. "The pictures," he remarks, "are here in greater plenty than any other place in Europe, from the hands of the best masters of the Lombard school, as Titian, Paul Veronese, and Tintoret."[42] Nevertheless, Addison refrains from a church-by-church description, as Lassels had done, and he slights Tintoretto by commenting that his work is held "in greater esteem at Venice than in other parts of Italy."[43]

Other writers are less equivocal in their criticism of Venetian art. During the eighteenth century, Jonathan Richardson, Sr. and Jonathan Richardson, Jr.'s *An Account of Some of the Statues, Bas-Reliefs, Drawings, and Pictures in Italy* (1722) became the standard British art guide to Italy.[44] It was intended as a catalogue of Europe's most significant collections of art, focusing on Italy as the country most distinguished for its art. Their cataloging of Italian collections is very thorough, often room-by-room and painting-by-painting. However, notable omissions occur, the most significant being the entire city of Venice.

In the preface, the elder Richardson explains that his son was unable to visit Venice during his travels. Nevertheless, he does not consider the city's absence from the book to be a major drawback, particularly when compared to the richness of Rome's art collections. "The following Account would have been little other than it Is," Richardson asserts. "Some few Additions indeed there would have been, and but Few, and Those not of the most Excellent Things in the World . . . for notwithstanding their great *Eclat*, I don't take the Works of *Titian*, *Tintoret*, and *Paolo Veronese*to be of [Raphael's] Class."[45] The traits of these Venetian painters suffer in comparison with the Renaissance painters of central Italy:

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[42] Joseph Addison, *Remarks on Several Parts of Italy, etc.* (1705), 65-66. By "Lombard," Addison intends the broader meaning of "Northern Italian."
[43] Ibid.
[44] The descriptions are based on the travel experiences of the younger Richardson Junior, who had visited Italy in 1721; his father edited and commented on his detailed notes. See Richardson, *An Account of Some of the Statues, Bas-Reliefs, Drawings, and Pictures of Italy* (London: 1722).
[45] Ibid, unpaginated.

> [The Venetians'] Principal Characters are what are Least to be Describ'd, and the Least Considerable in Painting, the Pencil, and Colouring; [and] they give no Such Ideas as what we have seen from the Best Masters of all the Other Schools; Their People (Generally speaking) neither Look, nor Act with that Grace and Dignity, as those of *Raffaele*, *Mich. Angelo*, *Giulio*, *Correggio*, *Guido*, &c.[46]

The Richardsons' bias against Venetian art is not unique among British travelers; on the contrary, this became the standard view for most eighteenth-century writers and artists in Britain. Indeed, the most prominent painters of this period adopted Neoclassical traits rather than Venetianism. Such artists, including James Barry, strongly disapproved of the Venetian style. Speaking as Chair of the Royal Academy, Barry denounced the late work of Titian as "dashing and slobbering," and he dismissed the entirety of Tintoretto's *oeuvre* as "subversive of all intelligence and variety."[47] Barry preferred the cooler hues and linear qualities of Roman Renaissance art, and rejected the sensual subjects of Venetian art as inappropriate for the intellectual aims of Neoclassical art. In terms of subject matter, Barry and his fellow Neoclassicists promoted a revival of history paintings based on serious, morally-inspiring stories from antique history and the Bible.

The official Academic stance was promulgated by Barry's predecessor, and founder of the Royal Academy, Sir Joshua Reynolds. Reynolds set forth his views on the Grand Style of painting in a series of lectures at the Royal Academy, which were collected and published as the *Discourses*. In these lectures, Reynolds based the Grand Style on Florentine and Roman Renaissance painting, and he acknowledged Giorgio Vasari's *Lives* (1550) as the source for much of his own art criticism. Vasari had asserted a canonical distinction between the formal design, or *disegno*, of Florentine art and the painterly color, or *colorito*, of Venetian painting. In his biographies on Michelangelo and Titian, Vasari had argued that Florentine *disegno* addressed the viewer's intellect, while Venetian *colorito* appealed primarily to the viewer's senses. Therefore, for Vasari and his Neo-Classical heirs, Florentine art is a preferable model for young painters. Furthermore, this Vasarian dichotomy between the classical principles of central Italy and the emotive qualities of Venice permeated the British discourse on Venetian art.

The influence of Vasarian thought on Reynolds is clear. In Discourse IV, Reynolds places Venetian artists in an inferior category, dismissing their art and that of their Baroque descendants as a "style merely ornamental."[48] This ornamental category, which includes Dutch and Flemish as well as Venetian art, is ranked beneath the great schools of the "epic style," which Reynolds often describes as the "Grand Style": Rome, Florence, Bologna, and the French

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46 Ibid.
47 In *Lectures on Painting by the Royal Academicians: Barry, Opie, and Fuseli*, ed. Ralph N. Wornum (1848), 226.
48 Sir Joshua Reynolds, *Discourses*, ed. Pat Rogers (London: Penguin Books, 1992), 128.

Academy. Reynolds admits that the Venetians "accomplished perfectly the thing they attempted," but that thing is something of little importance: "mere elegance," not the noble ideas of the epic style. "There is a simplicity," Reynolds states, "and, I may add, severity in the great manner, which is, I am afraid, almost incompatible with [the Venetians'] comparatively sensual style."[49]

Part of the problem, Reynolds believes, lies in the Venetian choice of subject matter. Recalling Richardson's claim that Venetian figures lacked Raphael's grace and dignity, Reynolds argues that the Venetians generally choose "uninteresting subjects of their own invention," and "mostly such as give them an opportunity of introducing a great number of figures; such as feasts, marriages, and processions, public martyrdoms, or miracles."[50] These kinds of subjects allow the artist to brazenly display his "skill and expertness in the mechanism of painting," making "a parade of that art, which . . . the higher style requires its followers to conceal."[51]

Even if a Venetian painter tried to paint a higher, more heroic subject, in Reynolds's eyes he would still be doomed to failure. The fault lies in the Venetian sense of color: "Their colouring is not only too brilliant [for Grand Style subjects], but, I will venture to say, too harmonious, to produce the solidity, steadiness, and simplicity of effect, which heroic subjects require, and which simple or grave colors only can give to a work."[52] In this context, Reynolds cites Michelangelo's criticism, as related by Vasari, of Titian's supposed inability to draw correctly. Summing up the Vasarian argument against *colorito*, Reynolds explains that "the principal attention of the Venetian painters . . . seemed to be engrossed by the study of colours, to the neglect of the *ideal form of beauty*, or propriety of expression."[53]

Reynolds takes on a paternal tone when discussing the attractiveness of Venetian color. "Young minds are indeed too apt to be captivated by the splendour of style," he notes with disapproval.[54] He warns students against the "seducing qualities" of Veronese and Tintoretto: "I could wish to caution you against being too much captivated. These are persons who may be said to have exhausted all the powers of florid eloquence, to debauch the young and inexperienced." The student "must take care not to be so much dazzled with this splendour, as to be tempted to imitate what must ultimately lead from perfection."[55] Reynolds's choice of words

[49] Ibid, 123.
[50] Ibid, 125.
[51] Ibid, 123.
[52] Ibid, 126.
[53] Ibid, 126-126. Reynolds's stress.
[54] Ibid, 124.
[55] Ibid, 128.

is extremely interesting: Venetian art is “seducing,” “captivating,” “debauching,” “tempting.” This vocabulary is remarkably similar to that used by Lassels and other Grand Tour tutors when warning their young protegees against the seductive tricks of Venetian courtesans.

Is this similarity purely coincidental? When one examines the critical literature on Venetian art, one finds that Venetian color and Venetian morality are discussed with nearly identical vocabularies. J. B. Bullen has pointed out that, in eighteenth-century criticism, color is repeatedly anthropomorphized as a procuress or a courtesan.[56] This tendency is already apparent by the late seventeenth century. In the introduction to his 1695 translation of Dufresnoy’s *De Arte Graphica* (an edition which Reynolds probably owned), John Dryden describes how Dufresnoy represents color and form as sisters. Color is “the bawd of her sister the Design or Drawing . . . she cloathes, she dresses [Design] up, she paints her, she makes her appear more lovely than she naturally is, she procures for the Design and makes lovers for her.”[57] For late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century audiences, “paint” was understood as a reference to both the artist’s materials and the application of make-up; the latter was typically associated with deception and prostitution, as in the term “painted ladies.” In the critical literature, Venetian painters’ color becomes conflated with the cosmetic makeup of the Venetian courtesan. Thus, the artist William Blake, who despised Venetian Renaissance painting, declared “Venetian, all thy colouring is no more / than Boulster’d Plasters on a Crooked Whore.”[58]

The complexities of British eighteenth-century Venetianism become particularly evident when one considers that Blake despised Reynolds’ artwork as much as he did Venetian painting, and on the same grounds: namely, that the artists employed sensual oil paints to represent things of the material world, instead of expressing transcendental truths through supposedly purer mediums like fresco or tempera paint. Blake’s discerning of Venetian traits in Reynolds’s work is instructive. Reynolds was, ironically, the most significant Venetianist painter in eighteenth-century British art. In practice, he assimilated much more from Venetian art than he did from the Florentine masters whom he so extolled in the *Discourses*. As Ellis Waterhouse points out, “Reynolds’s mastery lies essentially in the Venetian tradition, in chiaroscuro, in the arrangement of masses in which the outlines are never hard.”[59] Indeed, in his own day Reynolds’s reputation was based on his skill with colors and tones, while his contemporaries frequently found faults with his draftsmanship.

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[56] J. B. Bullen, “A Clash of Discourses: Venetian Painting in England, 1750-1850.” *Word and Image* (8: 2, April-June 1992), 113-114.
[57] Charles Alphonse Dufresnoy, *De Arte Graphica*, trans. John Dryden (1695), xlviii.
[58] William Blake, *The Complete Writings of William Blake*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), 465.
[59] Ellis Waterhouse, *Reynolds* (1973), 11.

Reynolds's personal affinity with the Venetians manifested during his Italian journey (1750-52), during which time he virtually initiated the British practice of studying Italian art in its original context.[60] Although he only spent three weeks in Venice, Reynolds spent this time wisely. As Waterhouse observes, Reynolds "made fuller notes [in Venice] than he had made elsewhere about the technical mastery of the Venetians in the control of light and shadow. He seems to have at once realized that the Venetians had clearer messages for him personally than any other school."[61]

These messages can be read in Reynolds's mature paintings. These works often make references to Venetian paintings. The portrait of Peter Ludlow (1755, Woburn Abbey) [Figure 14], his hand resting on the head of a hunting dog, calls to mind Titian's portrait of Charles V which, as we have noted, had already been used as a source by Van Dyck. Reynolds's ceiling painting of Theory [Figure 15], painted for the Royal Academy in London, may have been inspired by Titian's ceiling paintings in the San Marco library in Venice.[62] Reynolds even borrowed from the despised Tintoretto. His famous portrait of Commodore August Keppel (1753-54, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich) [Figure 16] derives much of its dramatic lighting from Tintoretto's San Rocco compositions, and Elizabeth Gunning's pose (1760, Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool) [Figure 17] was likely borrowed from one of Tintoretto's Virtues in the Madonna dell'Orto.

One might argue that, as a genre, portraiture was not as strictly bound by the rules of the Grand Style. In any case, Reynolds did not restrict his Venetianism to portraits. He also employed Venetianism in his fancy pictures, like *Venus* (1785) [Figure 18].[63] In a letter to the Duke of Rutland, Reynolds describes making the landscape in this painting "as well as I could in the manner of Titian."[64] Indeed, the landscape view, as well as the red curtain that frames it, strongly calls to mind Titian's *Venus and Cupid with a Lute Player* (1565-70, Metropolitan Museum of Art) [Figure 19], a work which Reynolds is known to have copied. Contemporaries of Reynolds were quite aware of the Venetian influences in this work. William Mason noted that the artist "bestowed much time [on this painting], intending . . . to emulate the Venus of Titian."

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[60] Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, 122. As Waterhouse explains, before Reynolds, the main objective for British artists in Italy had been to meet British aristocrats on the Grand Tour, thereby attracting a potential clientele when back in England. While a few artists would make copies of classical paintings and sculptures, particularly of the Bolognese school, these copies would have merely demonstrated their technical prowess to aristocratic patrons.
[61] *Reynolds*, 16.
[62] *Reynolds*, ed. Nicholas Penny (London: Widenfeld and Nicolson, 1986), 284.
[63] "Fancy picture" is the term given to any painting depicting imaginative subjects, as distinct from the portraits which otherwise constitute the bulk of Reynolds's work.
[64] Letter to the Duke of Rutland, 30 May, 1785. Cited in Martin Postle, *Sir Joshua Reynolds: the Subject Pictures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 200.

Public reaction to this painting was mixed. Many reviewers at the Royal Academy exhibition where it was first shown remarked on the figure's seductive qualities. "Her eye is full of *wanton magic*," the *Morning Herald* noted, while the *Public Advertiser* described it as "a picture of temptation from her auburn lock to her painted toe."[65] The *General Advertiser* remarked with disapproval: "It may not be amiss to remind the artist who has so wantonly displayed the bosom of a woman in the great room, that a little more decency would have had a much better effect."[66]

Despite such moral reprobations, Reynolds felt confident enough with the result of this *Venus* to execute a second version [Figure 20]. In this later version, the Cupid from the original is replaced with a piping boy, whose presence strikes a very Giorgionesque note. Many of the Venetian qualities of the first version, including the red curtain and lush landscape, are repeated in this version. Of greater interest, however, is the language critics used to describe the painting. It was sold to the Duke of Dorset, who was acting as an agent for a French nobleman. *The World* announced the sale of the work, commenting: "Sir Joshua's delicious Venus–is gone the way of all flesh–she is sold–and gone to Paris. . . . None of *Sir Joshua's* women ever made themselves *cheap*–though this was such as to be *cheap at any price*. The *Duke* had her for four hundred–Others he has had, lost him infinitely *more*."[67] The painting is thus discussed as though it were a real woman instead of a representation of one, and, moreover, as though it were a prostitute, with the Duke of Dorset in the role of a pimp delivering her to the sinful city of Paris.

Reynolds's Venetianist paintings were therefore discussed by contemporary critics in the same moralistic terms used to characterize Venice and Venetian art. However, this does little to resolve the discrepancy between the artist's practice and his theory. Is Reynolds betraying his own theoretical principles with his painting practices? A closer examination of the *Discourses* reveals that Reynolds attempted, without complete success, to resolve his ambivalence about Venetian art by paying some respects to Titian's work. He is keen to distinguish Titian from the other Venetian painters whom he regularly castigates. When he brings up Michelangelo's alleged slight against Titian's drawing capabilities, Reynolds offers a defense of the Venetian:

> For my part, when I speak of the Venetian painters, I wish to be understood to mean Paolo Veronese and Tintoret, to the exclusion of Titian; for though his style is not so pure as that of many others of the Italian schools, yet there is a sort of senatorial dignity about him, which, however awkward in his imitators, seems to

[65] *Morning Herald*, 8 April, 1785; the *Public Advertiser*, 5 April. Cited in Postle, 201.
[66] *General Advertiser*, 2 May. Cited in Postle, 201.
[67] *The World*, 3 February 1787. Cited in Postle, 203.

> become him exceedingly. His portraits alone . . . will entitle him to the greatest respect, as he undoubtedly stands in the first rank of this branch of art.[68]

In this passage, Reynolds refrains from grouping Titian with artists of the Grand Style, like Michelangelo or Raphael, but he is clearly uneasy with the idea of leaving him in the same category as Tintoretto and Veronese. There is dignity in Titian–an almost "senatorial dignity." Reynolds's choice of words is interesting; he usually reserves "dignity" for artists of the Grand Style, while the term "senatorial" inevitably calls to mind, on the one hand, the Roman Senate, and, on the other, the Venetian Senate that was purported to be Rome's heir.

Reynolds, no doubt, identified to some extent with Titian. Like the Venetian artist, Reynolds was a portrait-painter, and, furthermore, he had adopted many of his predecessor's own techniques in his painting. Reynolds was familiar with the problems involved in reconciling portrait painting, which involves painting contemporary individuals, with the Grand Style, which demands that one paint timeless, universal ideals. Titian's elegant portraits must have suggested a model for Reynolds to follow in his own portraiture. Nevertheless, Reynolds feels he must caution his own students from adopting this model, lest they, like Titian's followers, become "awkward imitators."

Perhaps as a consequence, Reynolds often downplays Titian's significance in favor of an artist whose model, Reynolds believes, offers fewer distractions from the Grand Style. In Discourse XI, he initially speaks of Titian with enthusiasm, comparing him to Raphael in terms of Painting and Drawing, respectively. He praises Titian's handling of color: "By a few strokes he knew how to mark the general image and character of whatever object he attempted. . . . His great care was to express the general colour, to preserve the masses of light and shadow, and to give by opposition the idea of that solidity which is inseparable from natural objects."[69] The problem, he reiterates, is not with Titian so much as it is with his incompetent followers who "have ignorantly imagined that they are imitating the manner of Titian, when they leave their colours rough, and neglect the detail; but, not possessing the principles on which he wrought, they have produced what he calls *goffe pitture*, absurd foolish pictures."[70]

In the overall comparison with Raphael, however, Titian suffers. Once again, it comes down to the differing merits of *disegno* versus *colorito*, and in this debate, there can be only one winner for Reynolds, no matter how much it goes against his own artistic impulses. "We cannot entirely refuse to Titian the merit of attending the general *form* of his object, as well as his colour; but his deficiency lay . . . in not possessing the power like [Raphael], of correcting the

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[68] Reynolds, "Discourse IV," *Discourses*, 127.
[69] "Discourse XI," 252.
[70] Ibid, 252-53

form of his model by any general idea of beauty in his own mind."[71] Reynolds especially criticizes Titian's *St. Sebastian* for preserving the imperfect flaws of the model's legs instead of improving upon them.

For Reynolds's England, the city and the art of Venice were conflated into the negative construct of the Venetian courtesan. It is difficult to say which came first–the prejudice against the city or the bias against Venetian painting. What can be said for certain is that the critical assessment of Venetian color as sensual and shallow was often informed by British travelers' impressions of the *citta-galante*, and furthermore, that the impression *citta-galante* was itself pre-conditioned by the critical discourse on Venetian color. As one can see, this cycle of Venetian color = Venetian whore was a self-perpetuating tautology in the British discourse of Venetianism. It would not be until the early nineteenth century that this perspective is revised, and even then, the legacy of the eighteenth-century anti-Venetianist bias would prove strong.

"Cara Venezia": Byron, Etty, and responses to Venice and Venetian art, 1800-1830

The anti-Venetianist perspective of the eighteenth century would hold strong, well into the nineteenth century. However, Venice would experience major social and political changes between these two centuries, and these changes would have a significant impact on how British thinkers interpreted the city and its art.

In 1797, Napoleon conquered Venice, and overthrew its thousand-year old Republic. As in other parts of Italy, Napoleon also dissolved the city's monasteries, and stripped many of the churches of their altarpieces. Thus, many major Venetian paintings ended up in the Louvre's collection, including Veronese's huge *The Wedding at Cana*, originally located in San Giorgio Maggiore's monastery refectory in Venice. Napoleon also oversaw the removal of the famous bronze horses from San Marco's facade, which for the remainder of his regime were displayed in Paris atop the Arc du Carrousel. After Napoleon was exiled to Elba, Venice was claimed by the Austrian Empire. It would remain under Austrian rule until 1866, when Venice would become unified with the rest of Italy.

Napoleon's overthrow of the Venetian Republic would have a tremendous effect on the British interpretation of the city and its art. With the city under occupation, British visitors no longer regarded Venetian government as a real-life model for how to manage a republican or aristocratic state. Instead, Venice would become a site for nostalgia, for recalling its glorious past and for lamenting its contemporary humiliation under foreign rule. While many

[71] Ibid, 253.

commentators would continue to link Venetian art with Venetian politics and morality, Napoleon's looting of Venice would also usher in a new period of Venetianist aesthetics. Venetian painting would still be characterized in terms of sensuality and colorism, but these traits would no longer carry the negative political or cultural connotations as conferred by eighteenth-century writers.

The nostalgic remembrance of Venice's past is evoked most strongly in Lord Byron's poetry. Furthermore, Byron is one of the first British writers to express a genuine delight in the city and art of Venice. Byron expresses his feelings with the vocabulary borrowed from earlier discourses on the city and its culture, as he distinguishes between the reserved moral character of Britain and the more relaxed environment of Venice. However, he reformulates these discourses so that Venice is extolled rather than condemned for its differences with British culture. Indeed, we will see that, like previous writers, Byron uses Venice and Venetian art as a means for commenting on British culture. However, unlike previous writers, Byron's Venetianism acts as a severe critique rather than a defense of British culture.

Byron is aware of how rich and glorious Venetian history has been. He is therefore poignantly aware of how much the contemporary city has lost, particularly under Austrian rule. In the poem "Venice: an Ode" (1818), Byron describes the Venetian Republic in glowing terms, as a maritime empire "born of Love, / [who] drank no blood, nor fatten'd on the dead / But gladden'd where her harmless conquest spread."[72] "Even her crimes," the poet declares, "were of the softer order."[73] In *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Byron describes the city's international culture and its prestige: Venice is "a sea Cybele" in whose streets Tasso's poetry could be heard, and in her piazza, the Holy Roman Emperor Frederic Barbarossa could be seen humbling himself before the Venetian Senate. Byron's vision of Venice's past is quite a different picture from the sinister Venice as perceived by many eighteenth-century writers.

Byron notes with dismay how Venice had changed in recent years. Now under Austrian rule, she is "clothed in chains."[74] In *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Byron makes a specific reference to the Austrians' role as occupiers:

> [N]ow the Austrian reigns–
> An Emperor tramples where an Emperor knelt;
> Kingdoms are shrunk to provinces, and chains
> Clank over sceptred cities.[75]

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[72] Lord Byron, "Venice: an Ode," lines 111-113. In Lord Byron, *The Complete Poetical Works*, ed. Jerome J. McGann (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), volume IV: poem 328, p. 204.
[73] Ibid, lines 110-111. *Complete Poetical Works*, IV: 328, p. 204.
[74] Ibid, line 118. *Complete Poetical Works*, IV: 328, p. 204
[75] *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Canto IV, lines 100-103. In *Complete Poetical Works*, volume II: poem 174, p. 128.

Particularly heartrending is the fact that Venice had been free for many centuries, but is now reduced to the status of an Austrian province. In "an Ode," Bryon cries out:

> Oh! agony–that centuries should reap
> No mellower harvest! Thirteen hundred years
> Of wealth and glory turn'd to dust and tears
> . . .
> And the harsh sound of the barbarian drum
> With dull and daily dissonance, repeats
> The echo of thy tyrant's voice along
> The soft waves, once all musical to song.[76]

Such words are echoed by *Childe Harold*:

> Venice, lost and won,
> Her thirteen hundred years of freedom done
> Sinks, like a sea-weed, into whence she rose!
> Better to be whelm'd beneath the waves, and shun,
> Even in destruction's depth, her foreign foes,
> From whom submission wrings an infamous repose.[77]

Byron thus invests the fall of Venice with a special significance. As a lover of democratic liberty, he is grieved to see a republic lose its independence to an imperial power. Moreover, Byron, like his eighteenth-century forebears, recognized the similarities between Britain and Venice, particularly their shared geographical situation as island states, and their similar form of a divided or "mixed" government. Indeed, when Byron describes Venetian politics in his poems, he is actually commenting less on Venice's historical past than on British contemporary politics, a subject with which he had direct experience as a member of the House of Lords.[78] In "An Ode," he laments the spread of authoritarianism in Europe:

> Tyranny of late is cunning grown,
> And in its own good season tramples down
> The sparkles of our ashes.[79]

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[76] Ibid, lines 14-16; 20-23. *Complete Poetical Works*, IV: 328, p. 201.
[77] *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, lines 112-117. In *Complete Poetical Works*, II:174, p. 128.
[78] Byron had served in the House of Lords as a young aristocrat, but discovered that he disliked politics immensely–so much that it was one of the reasons he chose poetry and the life of an exile in Europe.
[79] "Venice: an Ode," lines 131-33. *Complete Poetical Works*, IV: 328, p. 205.

Britain does not escape his censure; it is one of the lands “whose sons must bow them at a monarch’s motion, / As if his senseless sceptre were a wand / Full of magic of unexploded science.”[80] Byron even regards England’s naval defeats in the recent War of 1812 as a positive sign that freedom will prevail somewhere in the world, in North America if not in Europe. The United States, Byron notes,

> . . . has taught
> Her Esau-brethren that the haughty flag,
> The floating fence of Albion’s feebler crag,
> May strike to those whose red hands have bought
> Rights cheaply earn’d with blood.[81]

This ironic reference to Albion’s “floating fence” reminds the reader of Britain’s geographical situation as an island-nation, which, like Venice, depends upon its maritime prowess and its isolation for security. *Childe Harold* makes the comparison to Venice even clearer. In her glory days, Venice had been like the fabled Phoenician city of Tyre, the ruler of the waves. However, like Tyre, Venice has fallen to another power. Byron offers Tyre and Venice’s fate as a warning to England. Venice’s situation, Byron declares,

> is shameful to the nations,–most of all,
> Albion! To thee: the Ocean queen should not
> Abandon Ocean’s children; in the fall
> Of Venice think of thine, despite thy watery wall.[82]

Although the fate of Venice provides a somber warning for modern England, Byron also finds positive models in Venetian art and history. Even in her fallen state, he observes, Venice is peopled with the shadows from her past:

> . . . Beauty is still here.
> States fall, arts fade–but Nature doth not die,
> Nor yet forget how Venice once was dear,
> The pleasant place of all festivity,
> The revel of the earth, the masque of Italy![83]

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[80] Ibid, lines 139-141. *Complete Poetical Works*, IV: 328, p. 205.
[81] Ibid, lines 144-147. *Complete Poetical Works*, IV: 328, p. 205.
[82] *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, lines 150-153. *Complete Poetical Works*, II: 174, p. 130.
[83] Ibid, Canto IV, lines 23-27. *Complete Poetical Works*, II: 174, p. 125.

Even if the names of all the doges are forgotten, the Doge's Palace still stands as a reminder of the glorious history of Venice: the long line "of her dead Doges are declined to dust; / But where they dwelt, the vast and sumptuous pile / Bespeaks the pageant of their splendid trust."[84]

While Byron focuses on Venice and Britain's shared characteristics in *Child Harold* and "An Ode," in other poems he draws out their contrasts, but to the advantage of Venice rather than Britain. The poem *Beppo, a Venetian Story* effectively conveys Byron's warm sentiments about the city of Venice by contrasting Venice's positive traits with England's negative aspects. The poet also employs Venetian Renaissance painting to express the virtues of Venetian beauty.

Beppo purportedly relates the tale of a Venetian merchant who, presumed dead after many years at sea, returns to Venice during Carnival to reclaim his wife, who in the meantime had become involved in a new relationship. Despite the subject, it is told as a comic story with none of the moralizing overtones of *Childe Harold* or "An Ode." Byron borrowed much of the style and verse structure from Italian sources, particularly the tradition of Ariosto; he based the story itself on an anecdote told to him by Pietro Segati, a Venetian. Ironically, Byron was openly conducting an affair with Segati's wife at the time he wrote this poem.

Frequently in the poem, Byron mockingly contrasts British culture with a much more attractive Venice. While discussing the Continental custom of married women taking a lover, the poet remarks ironically: "But Heaven preserve Old England from such courses! / Or what becomes of damages and divorces?"[85] In addition to the relaxed moral behavior in Venice, the poet prefers the weather to England's gloomy climate, in which one is "forc'd to borrow / That sort of farthing candlelight which glimmers / Where reeking London's smoky cauldron simmers."[86] Overall, he finds the weather, language, and women of Venice, and of Italy in general, to be more beautiful than their English equivalents.

After singing Venice's praises, the poet, seemingly embarrassed by his lack of patriotism, attempts to correct the balance by mentioning England's positive traits. He can find only a few:

> I like the Habeas Corpus (when we've got it);
> I like a parliamentary debate,
> Particularly when 'tis not too late. . . .
>
> I like the weather, when it is not rainy,
> That is, I like two months of every year. . . .
>
> Our little riots just to show we are free men,
> Our trifling bankruptcies in the Gazette,

[84] Ibid, Canto IV, lines 128-130. *Complete Poetical Works*, II: 174, p. 129.
[85] *Beppo, a Venetian Story*, lines 295-296. In *Complete Poetical Works*, IV: 320, p. 140.
[86] Ibid, lines 342-344. *Complete Poetical Works*, IV: 320, p. 142

> Our cloudly climate, and our chilly women,
> All these I can forgive, and those forget,
> And greatly venerate our recent glories,
> And wish they were not owing to the Tories.[87]

Byron thereby presents Venice not as a warning to England, as in *Childe Harold*, but as a positive alternative. It is in this context that we should understand *Beppo*'s references to Venetian Renaissance paintings. Like eighteenth-century writers before him, Byron intentionally conflates Venetian art with the city of Venice and its women. We previously noted how John Warner saw the city of Venice, with its domed churches and canals, as a disease-ridden prostitute masquerading as a beautiful woman. In *Beppo*, Byron performs a similar operation, but arrives at a strikingly different conclusion.

The poet rhapsodizes on the beauty of Venetian women, whose only equivalent can be found in Venetian paintings. The poet praises the Venetians' "black eyes, arch'd brows, and sweet expressions," and he compares them to artistic representations of female beauty:

> Such as old were copies from the Grecians . . .
> And like so many Venuses of Titian's . . .
> They look when leaning over the balcony,
> Or stepp'd from out a picture by Giorgione.[88]

He praises Giorgione in particular, whose "tints are truth and beauty at their best." This artist's paintings depict beautiful women who resemble contemporary Venetian women in almost every detail. Byron had made this observation in real life; after visiting the Manfrini collection in Venice, he wrote to a friend remarking on

> The extreme resemblance of the style of the female faces in the mass of the pictures–so many centuries or generations ago–to those you see & meet every day among the existing Italians.–The queen of Cyprus [by Titian] and Giorgione's wife–particularly the latter–are Venetians as it were of yesterday–the same eyes and expressions–& to my mind there is none finer.[89]

Byron reiterates this impression in *Beppo*. To help the reader gain an idea of Venetian beauty, the poet recommends that one go to Manfrini's palace to view the same Giorgione

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[87] Ibid, lines 374-392. *Complete Poetical Works*, IV: 320, p. 144.
[88] Ibid, lines 83-88. *Complete Poetical Works*, IV: 320, p. 132.
[89] Lord Byron to John Murray, 14 April, 1817. In *Byron's Letters and Journals*, ed. Leslie A. Marchand (1973-82). V. 212-14.

painting which Byron had cited in his letter. The Giorgione painting, the poet explains, is only a portrait, the poet explains, "of his son, and wife, / And self; but *such* a woman! love in life!"[90]

The Manfrini Giorgione is thus treated as a metonym for Venice, or, more specifically, for Venice's beautiful women. For Byron, the Giorgione portrait depicts a pure beauty–"love in life"–with none of the sinister secrets which Warner had detected in Venice and the Venetian courtesan. In his use of Venetian art, Byron follows the same pattern as his eighteenth-century precursors, seeing the artistic representations as symptomatic of Venetian women and culture in general. However, whereas Warner read these signs in decidedly negative terms, in contrast with Britain's moral righteousness, Byron regards Venetianist traits as positive, honest approaches to sensuality, in contrast with British hypocrisy and aloofness. Byron therefore accepts many of the eighteenth-century assessments about Venetian sensuality. However, he reaches utterly opposite conclusions.

Byron's perspective heralds a new way of looking at Venetian art and culture. His love for Venice and his relaxed approach to sexuality would have an impact on Victorian writers as diverse as John Ruskin and John Addington Symonds. Nevertheless, the negative Venetianism of the eighteenth century would not disappear entirely, and would continue to affect British artists writers well into the nineteenth century.

Nowhere is anti-Venetianism's legacy more clearly seen than in critical reactions to William Etty's paintings. Etty is significant as the first major Venetianist painter in England since Reynolds. In the footsteps of Reynolds, Etty traveled to Venice expressly for the purpose of studying Renaissance paintings. He had intended only to "look around" the city for a week or so, but he found, in his own words, "so many things capable of giving me lessons that I determined to stay the winter and endeavour to profit by what I saw."[91] It was the perfect haven for Etty, who described it as his "cara Venezia" and "the birthplace and cradle of colour, the hope and idol of my professional life."[92]

Etty assimilated many stylistic traits through his study of Venetian Renaissance art. After returning to England in 1824, he exhibited the painting *Pandora Crowned by the Seasons* (1824, Leeds City Art Gallery) [Figure 21]. This work reveals the influence of Veronese in the impasto brushwork that shimmers across fabric surfaces; Titian's influence can be detected in the

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[90] Ibid, lines 89-96. *Complete Poetical Works*, IV: 320, p. 133. This painting has often been identified with Giorgione's *Tempest*, which was at one point in the Manfrini collection. However, Hilary Gatti has shown that it was more likely a triple portrait, today in the Alnwick Castle at Brentford. Formerly ascribed to Giorgione, this portrait is now attributed to Titian. See Hilary Gatti, "Byron and Giorgione's Wife," *Studies in Romanticism*, (v. 23: 1984), 237-43.
[91] Quoted in Julian Halsby, *Venice: the Artist's Vision* (London: Unicorn Press, 1990), 31.
[92] Ibid.

richness of the deep blues and reds. The lushness of Etty's colors proves how much the artist profited by studying Venetian art in Venice. The mythological subject matter also recalls the ceiling paintings from the Doge's Palace, many of which also depicted coronations set within the heavens.

While Etty's critics professed to admire the artist's colors, they often denounced his treatment of a particular subject: the female nude. Nude figures had been seen in British art before Etty, but they had tended to appear as chaste goddesses or allegorical figures in Neoclassical paintings, such as Thornhill's ceiling painted for the Painted Chapel in Greenwich. Etty's nude figures, on the other hand, are drawn from the Venetian tradition. The Venetian female nude is distinguished from her neoclassical counterparts in her erotic overtones. Giorgione is traditionally credited with introducing the "reclining Venus" composition, which depicts a nude woman, often lacking any mythological attributes or narrative references, lying languidly on a couch or on the ground parallel to the picture plane [Figure 22]. This type of nude is thus displayed to the viewer with little moralizing context, if any.

Many Venetians followed Giorgione's lead by depicting reclining nudes, often labeled as Venus although lacking any of the goddess's conspicuous attributes; the most famous of these is certainly Titian's *Venus of Urbino* (1538, Uffizi, Florence) [Figure 23]. In addition to reclining nudes, Venetians also painted female nudes in provocative situations, such as bathing or in the act of dressing. As with the reclining nude, these female nudes typically lack identifiable attributes, although they were conventionally referred to as Venuses. Their sensuality, reinforced by rich colors and the painterly texture of the brushstrokes, further distinguish them from the chaste goddesses of Neoclassical allegories.

Etty's nudes followed the Venetian tradition much more closely than the Neoclassical style. Most British art critics responded negatively to this aspect of Etty's Venetianism, and they often condemned his paintings as immoral or even obscene. W. H. Leeds, in his1835 review of the Somerset House Annual exhibit, represents the typical critic's perspective by reproving Etty's depiction of nudes. Leeds bases his critique of Etty's nudes on Neoclassical standards, and he concludes that Etty neglected spiritual or intellectual qualities in favor of the sensual. Etty's female figures, Leeds suggests, are "apt to offend–at least to startle the prudish." Etty "too frequently indulges in a prurient obstrusion of nudity upon the eye" and he chooses "unseemly" postures for female figures, like the nymphs in his painting *Sleeping Nymph and Satyrs* (1828, Royal Academy of Art, London) [Figure 24]. "We might almost fancy that satyrs as well as graces occasionally inspire him," Leeds remarks, strongly hinting that Etty's artistic motives were more carnal than spiritual.[93]

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[93] Leeds, *Fraser's Magazine* 12 July, 1835, 49-62.

Leeds' criticisms were echoed by Anna Jameson, who argued that Etty's pictures contained "a certain coarseness of feeling." Jameson also applied a Neoclassical standard, by which Etty's work could only fail. She therefore concluded that in Etty's paintings, "form and colour too often [prevailed] over the sentiment, the material and the sensual over the spiritual and the ideal."[94]

These criticisms of Etty's work had become so commonplace that Thackeray was able to satirize them in his contemporaneous article, "Strictures on Pictures."[95] In spite of his humorous intent, Thackeray accurately summarized most critics' responses to Etty's Venetianist nudes. Of a sleeping nymph, Thackeray describes how she is

> most richly painted; but tipsy looking, coarse, and so naked, as to be unfit for appearance among respectable people at an exhibition. . . . There are some figures, without a rag to cover them, which look modest and decent for all that; and others which may be clothed to the chin, and yet are not fit for modest eyes to gaze on.

Thackeray's comments indicate that it was not only nudity that offended critics, but the richness of Etty's painting style. Thackeray would continue his comments in a subsequent article, "A Second Lectures on the Fine Arts," in which he facetiously suggests that "a great, large curtain of fig-leaves should be hung over every one of [Etty's] pictures, and the world should pass on, content to know that there are some glorious colours painted beneath."[96]

For early Victorian audiences, Etty's work was offensive not only for the depiction of voluptuous and richly painted nudes, but also because of the absence of a moralizing story. Most critics of the Royal Academy's annual exhibitions enjoyed describing the narrative scenes represented by artists like C. R. Leslie and William Mulready, scenes which allowed the critic to describe the characters' personality types and to speculate about the likely outcome of the scene. Etty's works rarely offered such subjects or stories. This led the critic of the *Art-Union* to protest that Etty's paintings failed to excite the viewer's sympathies. While reviewing Etty's *Diana and Endymion*, the *Art-Union* critic complained that Etty

> aims to satisfy the judgment rather than touch the heart . . . It is the noblest privilege of art to inform and gratify universally; to make the more elevated class of subjects familiar and easily understood . . . [W]e join with those who protest against his so continually selecting themes that excite no sympathy and rouse no

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[94] Jameson, "The Exhibition of the Royal Academy, English Art and Artists," *Monthly Chronicle* (June: 1838), 348-55.

[95] *Fraser's Magazine* 17 June, 1838, 758-64.

[96] *Fraser's Magazine* 19, June 1839, 743-50.

> generous emotion . . . [and we] most deeply grieve at finding him frequently doing as little good for manhood as the priest who preaches his sermon in Latin.[97]

Etty's subjects, in other words, are valued by these critics only in so far as they serve a higher, moral purpose. As Etty appeared to be more interested in formal properties of color and composition than in the spiritual or moralistic meaning of particular subjects, his work tended to disappoint contemporary critics. This is the case even when Etty chooses an identifiable subject, like Diana and Endymion; the same critic described Etty's *The Infant Moses and his Mother* as only "a study of a woman stooping" with "little of sentiment or remote allusion."[98] Etty's female nudes, however, incurred the greatest outrage; the sensuality of these figures, coupled with their absence of (by early Victorian definitions) significant narratives, prompted contemporary critics to borrow from eighteenth-century (anti-)Venetianism for their moralizing language.

Etty's critics were not yet able to appreciate one of the shifts Venetianism had undergone after the fall of the Venetian Republic. While Lord Byron had turned to romantic nostalgia in his poetic reflections on Venice, Etty's work represents another shift: Venetian art was becoming seen as an end in itself, divorced from the political and cultural context of Venetian society. Etty and like-minded artists regarded the absence of strong narratives in Venetian paintings as a strength, and thus were not disturbed by the sensuality or amorality of nude figures.

These two parallel shifts within British Venetianism would continue to expand in later Victorian art criticism. As we will see in the next chapter, Byron's use of Venice as a vehicle for critical commentary on British society anticipates John Ruskin's theories on Venice and Venetian art. On the other hand, the Aesthetic Movement, and particularly the theories of Walter Pater, would be heavily indebted to the art for art's sake principles seen, and criticized, in William Etty's work. For Pater and his readers, however, a self-reflexive art will be a thing to be praised, rather than scorned.

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[97] "The Royal Academy. The Seventy-first Exhibition. 1839." *Art-Union* (1 May, 1839), 65-71.
[98] *Art-Union* (5 June, 1843), 159-78.

CHAPTER 3

RUSKIN, PATER, AND VICTORIAN VENETIANISM

The rehabilitation of Venetianism, as initiated by Lord Byron at the beginning of the nineteenth century, continues throughout the Victorian years. Venetian Renaissance art, which had been relegated to near obscurity by most eighteenth-century writers, once again becomes a topic of heated interest and debate among a new generation of artists, art critics, and art historians. These artists and writers invest Venetian art with new meanings relative to the new century in Britain, while still playing on past conceptions of Venetianism.

In Britain, two particular strands of Victorian Venetianism arise, represented respectively by John Ruskin and Walter Pater. Whereas Ruskin regards art as expressing the deepest moral beliefs of a society, Pater posits a complete separation between the spheres of art and morality. These two different perspectives have been the subject of a great deal of scholarly discussion, as the voluminous bibliography on these writers indicates.

However, little consideration has been given to Venetianism's role in the formation of Ruskin and Pater's aesthetic ideologies. While most scholars have recognized Ruskin's influence on the medievalist revival in architecture and interior design, fewer scholars have dealt with his analyses of Venetian Renaissance paintings. Similarly, many Pater scholars have discussed the theoretical implications of Pater's essay "The School of Giorgione" without closely examining the role that Venetian art played in the author's argument.

In this chapter, I wish to reevaluate Ruskin and Pater's theories within the discourse of Venetianism. Accordingly, I will be focusing on how contemporary writers and artists interpreted Venetian Renaissance art, and how Ruskin and Pater engaged in dialogues with both these contemporary interpretations as well as with one another's particular aesthetic theories. We will see that Venetian Renaissance art assumes a significant position in Victorian art and culture. However, this position will be different from the one Venetianism played in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Britain. In Victorian Britain, Venetian art will no longer be interpreted as reflecting Venice's political or moral situation. Indeed, Victorian Venetianists will reverse the equation entirely: now, Venetian art will be interpreted as effecting the city's politics or morals. As with the earlier forms of Venetianism, however, Venetian art, and the discussion thereof, serves as a surrogate for British art. While reading about Victorian interpretations of Venetian art and culture, one must keep in mind that the writers and artists are simultaneously referring to British art and culture.

"A rich and beautifully coloured existence": Venetianism and Victorian Art History

The nineteenth century witnessed the rise of art history as an academic discipline, and with it one finds a revised definition of Venetian art. While connoisseurship would continue to be a major issue for nineteenth-century art historians, it would be grounded in a more rigorously scientific approach which understood artworks as representing particular schools of painting rather than primarily as expressions of individual genius. Art historians like Franz Kugler, Jacob Burckhardt, and Crowe and Cavalcassele would define the specific artistic and cultural factors that identified paintings as belonging to particular schools, such as Venice, Florence, Rome, Bologna, and other city-states and regions. It is against this art historical background that Ruskin and Pater would react in forming their perspectives on Venetian art. Therefore, a survey of British Venetianism would not be complete without a brief overview of the major trends in Victorian histories of Venetian art.

Not all of these art historians were British. Indeed, several of the most influential historians in British art criticism were German or French. Their texts, nevertheless, were widely available in English translations. A good example is Franz Kugler, whose *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*(1841) was translated into *The Handbook of Painting* (1847) by Lady Eastlake, and edited by her husband, the painter Sir Charles Lock Eastlake.

In Kugler's work, the traditional Vasarian approach to art history as a series of brilliantly talented individuals gives way to a more complex understanding of different schools of painting. Venetian painting, for example, is no longer the collected works of Titian, Veronese, and Tintoretto; it is now treated as an entity distinct from Florentine and Roman schools of art, with a whole set of identifiable characteristics motivated by particular stylistic factors.

Admittedly, Vasari had already distinguished between Venetian and Florentine painting based on the categories of *colorito* versus *disegno*. However, Kugler and his contemporaries differ from Vasari in exploring the stylistic and technical evolutions of these categories instead of taking them for granted. Kugler traces the Venetian predilection for color over drawing back to the Vivarini family of artists in fifteenth-century Venice, and he deduces that this tradition was based on two factors in Venetian culture: the adoption of oil painting, and the "cheerful and festive spirit of the Venetians themselves."[99] Kugler goes to lengths to explicate Venetian contacts with Flemish oil painting through the intermediary of Antonello da Messina, although the Venetians would depart from the "careful treatment of minor objects of life" found in Flemish Renaissance art as they became more interested in warm flesh tones.[100]

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[99] Franz Kugler, *Handbook of Painting: the Italian Schools*, 2nd edition (London: J. Murray, 1867), 1: 235.
[100] Ibid, 1: 236-37.

Kugler also explores the relation of Venetian painting with Venetian cultural ideals. Venetian painting, he explains, includes a love for "glittering magnificence and varied splendour."[101] Venetian artists rarely painted historical narratives, preferring to concentrate on accessories and landscapes. In general, Kugler observes a love for color and a *joie de vivre* permeating Venetian paintings, particularly those by Giorgione and Titian. These artists were less interested in symbolic images expressing clear meanings than they were in painting "a free, open, and serene beauty" in a "peculiar poetic manner."[102] The Venetians often personified this beauty in human figures, who seem like "an elevated race of beings, capable of the noblest and grandest efforts," and who possess "the bliss of satisfaction [and] the air of an harmonious, unruffled existence."[103] Despite their perfect qualities, these figures belong to earthly life, as they represent the kinds of happiness and beauty that are sought in this world rather than on another plane of existence. Thus, Kugler states that Venetian art represents "life in its fullest power–the glorification of earthly existence, the liberation of art from the bonds of ecclesiastical dogmas."[104] Kugler's analysis of Venetian Renaissance painting presents many of the basic principles of what would become Victorian Venetianism: Venetian art is interpreted simultaneously as expressing the beauties and pleasures of an earthly existence, and as expressing the poetic ideals of a glorified, perfected form of life. In either case, the Venetian world is understood as an emphatically human world; its meaning has little or nothing to do with religious messages. Kugler is therefore able to claim that even altarpieces in Venice are more noteworthy for depicting musical angels, "pleasing accessories" who bear "festoons of flowers and fruits," than they are for conveying spiritual lessons.[105]

Kugler criticizes those Venetian artists who fail to express these artistic principles fully. Tintoretto comes under particular censure for adopting what Kugler calls a "foreign and non-Venetian element" in his work. This "non-Venetian element," Kugler explains, is a faulty interpretation of Michelangelo's style of muscular, violent action. By the mid-sixteenth century, "Venetian art had fallen into the mistaken path of colossal and rapid productiveness. . . . Tintoretto was the painter who paid the greatest penalty for this taste."[106] Kugler sums up the differences between Titian and Tintoretto thusly: "with Titian the highest idea of earthly happiness in existence is expressed by beauty; with Tintoretto in mere animal strength,

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[101] Ibid, 1: 235.
[102] Ibid, 2: 434-441.
[103] Ibid, 2: 431-32; 441.
[104] Ibid, 2: 441.
[105] Ibid, 1: 235-36.
[106] Ibid, 2: 460.

sometimes of a very rude nature."[107] In Kugler's interpretation, Tintoretto's work lacks the poetic inspiration that he detects in Titian's and Giorgione's paintings.

Kugler's assessment of Venetian art is echoed in the writings of his student, the famous Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt. Burckhardt played an even more influential role than Kugler in defining Renaissance art and culture for Victorian England through his texts, *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy* and *The Cicerone* (1855; translated into English 1873). Burckhardt echoes Kugler in identifying Venetian art with a poetic evocation of a happy existence, and in denouncing Tintoretto's style as non-Venetian. Burckhardt would also employ musical analogies in describing Venetian paintings, analogies which would become a standard feature of Victorian Venetianism.

Burckhardt's views on Renaissance art are set forth in *The Cicerone*, which with its detailed descriptions of European art collections would function as a guidebook for many travelers. Burckhardt follows Kugler quite closely in attributing a poetic spirit to the Venetians' sense of painting. The Venetians, he notes, are not particularly strong in depicting narrative scenes, but they are very much capable of infusing their images with "picturesque ideas." Burckhardt argues that these picturesque ideas are related to poetry, and suggests that they are, in fact, visual corollaries to poetic thoughts. Is it possible, Burckhardt asks rhetorically, that these pictorial ideas are "simply the consequence of the pleasure of the eye? or does the empire of poetry extend far down into those regions which we laymen allow to picturesque execution only?"[108]

Burckhardt clearly believes the latter situation is the case with Venetian art, and cites Giorgione's and Titian's paintings as examples of poetic images. Giorgione specialized in painting half-length figures, Burckhardt says, because in these compositions "he was able to give them a permanent life–a complete poetical subject."[109] Similarly, Titian infused his mythological paintings with "an inexpressible poetry," one which is "perhaps only desecrated by words."[110]

Like Kugler, Burckhardt sees the Venetian paintings as beautiful evocations of a happy, earthly existence. The figures in these paintings express the "calm happiness" of a "calm existence," and they represent a type of human beings "so near reality, that one feels it possible to meet such characters and live with them."[111] Burckhardt claims that the Venetians treat even

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[107] Ibid.

[108] Jacob Burckhardt, *The Cicerone: an Art Guide to Painting in Italy*, trans. Mrs. A. H. Clough (New York: Garland Pub., 1979; reprint of second English ed., London: T. Werner Laurie, 1908), 86.

[109] Ibid, 185.

[110] Ibid, 196-197.

[111] Ibid, 86.

their religious subjects on a personal or poetic level rather than spiritually. Thus, Burckhardt argues that Giorgione's religious paintings appeal to the viewer not as representations of Biblical subjects but as representations of a "rich and beautifully coloured existence." Such works show "in a remarkable way, how with the Venetian the incident is but the pretext for the representation of a pure existence, on a harmonious landscape background."[112] Titian is interpreted along similar lines; his depiction of Mary Magdalene (c. 1533, Galleria Palatina, Florence) [Figure 25] is more interesting as a beautiful form, surrounded by streaming golden hair, than as a particular saint. As Titian paints her, the Magdalene's identity as a repentant sinner is only incidental to her form as a beautiful woman.[113] From such observations, Burckhardt concludes that in compositions "where one tone, one feeling, must fill the whole, where the special historical intention is in the background, Titian is incomparably grand."[114]

In his analysis of Venetian art, Burckhardt frequently draws an analogy with music as well as poetry, an aesthetic correspondence that he probably borrowed from German philosophy.[115] For example, he considers the Venetian treatment of color, with soft tonal gradations, as comparable to musical tones. Even human figures remind Burckhardt of notes in classical music; the saints and angels in *sacra conversazione* altarpieces convey "tones of one and the same chord; neither supersensual longing nor sudden grief, but the expression of calm happiness pervades them."[116] These compositions are marked by "the harmonious union of so many free and beautiful characters in a blessed state of existence," a union which Burckhardt regards as analogous with music. The angels that one sees in such altarpieces, singing and playing musical instruments, are "but the outward symbol of this musical meaning."

Of all Kugler's points about Venetian art, Burckhardt seems to have most strongly inherited his teacher's dislike of Tintoretto. Like Kugler, he notes Michelangelo's influence on Tintoretto, and regards this as Tintoretto's faulty assimilation of non-Venetian sources. Tintoretto's preference for dramatic historical paintings, full of violent movement, runs counter to the calm and harmonious, non-narrative compositions found in other Venetians' work. Burckhardt is even less forgiving of Tintoretto's interest in strong lighting conditions, which tend to obliterate the one feature that Burckhardt sees as quintessentially Venetian: the sense of soft, harmonious colors. Tintoretto "sacrificed the Venetian colouring in many of his works as

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[112] Ibid, 185.
[113] Ibid, 192.
[114] Ibid.
[115] See for example Hegel's *Vorlesungen über die Aesthetik* (first published in 1835; English translation by Bernard Bosanquet, 1886): "Painting, in the pure *sfumato* and magic of its tones of colour and their contrast, and the fusion and play of their harmony, begins to swing over to music." (III, 81).
[116] Burckhardt, 86.

something in itself irreconcilable with the dark shadows of the modelling," and many of his own paintings are "quite discoloured, dull, leaden."[117]

Burckhardt considers Tintoretto's innovations in light and movement as essentially dead ends in the history of Venetian art. While he concedes that Tintoretto was capable of grand ideas, there was also in him "a certain coarseness and barbarism of feeling; even his artistic morality often wavered, so that he was capable of descending to the most unconscientious daubling."[118] For Burckhardt, artistic morality is to be measured by how beautiful an artwork is, and in his opinion, Tintoretto's work fails to meet this standard. He points to specific paintings to confirm his negative assessment of Tintoretto's artistic merits. The artist's huge paintings in the Venetian church, the Madonna dell'Orto, are "coarse and tasteless," while his altarpieces at San Giorgio Maggiore are mere "daubs which are an everlasting shame to Tintoretto."[119]

Purportedly less subjective than Kugler or Burckhardt, the art historian partnership of Crowe and Cavalcaselle would be of monumental significance for Victorian audiences. This scholarly partnership was formed in the 1850s between Joseph Archer Crowe, an English political journalist, and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle, an Italian artist and connoisseur who had studied painting at the Venetian Academy. Since the 1848 Revolution in Italy, Cavalcaselle had been living as an exile in London, where he met Crowe. The two men formed a remarkable partnership, with Crowe responsible for writing the text, and Cavalcaselle, who possessed the deeper knowledge of art, responsible for conducting the research. Their writings are considered the first English-language art history studies to be based upon documentary research.

Crowe and Cavalcaselle's books focus on Italian art, surveying its history from the fall of Rome until the beginning stages of the High Renaissance. These texts are characterized by a strong attention to issues of attribution and conservation; at the same time, they follow Continental scholarship in dividing artists into different regional schools. The Venetian school is treated in the two-volume set *History of Painting in North Italy* (1871), and in their monograph *Titian: His Life and his Times*(1877).

Crowe and Cavalcaselle chart the history of Venetian painting from the Bellini school through the sixteenth century. They have relatively little to say about the Veneto-Byzantine tradition as represented in the San Marco mosaics, other than commenting that it "was elbowed out of the world in silence and without regret" once oil painting came to dominate the art scene. They praise Giovanni Bellini in particular for his assimilating the oil medium, by which "he had won the secrets of half impasto, of local and diverse glazing, and . . . the method of balancing

117 Ibid, 206.
118 Ibid.
119 Ibid, 207

and fusing harmonies into graceful chord."[120] Eventually, Giovanni's work lost nearly all sense of linear contours, thus acquiring "what may be called the Giorgionesque touch."[121] By the "Giorgionesque touch," Crowe and Cavalcaselle mean the same kind of poetic mood that Kugler and Burckhardt had detected in Venetian art.

When discussing Giorgione himself, the authors reinforce many of the same observations made by Kugler and Burckhardt. They credit Giorgione with inventing "conversational pieces" and "cabinet pictures in which landscapes of the sunniest tints gave freshness to figures of a miniature size." Giorgione also specialized in depictions of "the innocent recreation of music and song," which gave the artist "occasion to charm by varied expression of face [and the] rich diversity of dress."[122] These cabinet pictures demonstrate Giorgione's interest in "that form of art in which [Giovanni] Bellini divested himself of religious element," that is, in genre and mythological paintings. Crowe and Cavalcaselle describe these works as "gems of peculiar brilliancy in allegorical compositions, tragic legendary episodes, and bacchanals."[123] They are rendered with an "astonishing realism, and yet without vulgarity." Giorgione's realism and his exquisite harmony combine to produce such a refreshingly novel impression, that Crowe and Cavalcaselle feel his work still deserves to be considered modern even in the present time.[124]

Crowe and Cavalcaselle are perhaps best remembered for their rigorous connoisseurship. Basing their investigations as much as possible on documentary evidence, the writers altered or removed many traditional attributions; in the case of Giorgione, they eliminated so many attributed works from his corpus that only a handful of works remained ascribed to the artist. Even though not all of their attributions are accepted today, Crowe and Cavalcassele's document-centered connoisseurship greatly anticipated modern scholarship, and had a tremendous impact on how art historians would understand Giorgione's work.[125]

While Crowe and Cavalcaselle's connoisseurship was a significant part of their contribution to art historical scholarship, I wish to emphasize what traits these writers have in common with Kugler and Burckhardt. All of these art historians were concerned with identifying regional styles, and placing artists within these schools of art. In such a way,

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[120] Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle, *A History of Painting in North Italy* (London: J. Murray, 1871), 164.
[121] Ibid, 167.
[122] Ibid, 120.
[123] Ibid, 124.
[124] Ibid, 138-39.
[125] At a time when it was almost universally considered a Giorgione, Crowe and Cavalcaselle were the first scholars to seriously doubt the traditional attribution of the *Fête Champêtre*, preferring to ascribe it to an unknown follower of Sebastiano del Piombo. Most scholars today regard it as an early Titian. On the other hand, Crowe and Cavalcaselle's attribution of the Pitti Palace *Concert* to Giorgione has since been rejected, and it is today attributed to Titian. See Crowe and Cavalcaselle, 147.

Giovanni Bellini, Giorgione, and Titian are not only seen as powerful individual artists, but also as expressing a consummately Venetian style of painting. All of these writers defined Venetian painting as a poetic evocation of an earthly existence filled with happiness, and an almost musical sense of harmony. Furthermore, they all shared a preference for fifteenth and sixteenth-century Renaissance art, and they held both medieval art and Late Renaissance art (as exemplified by Tintoretto) in low esteem.

These art historical writings played a major role in defining Venetianism for Victorian artists and writers. However, they would also be challenged or assimilated by two of the most famous critics from the Victorian age: John Ruskin and Walter Pater. Ruskin and Pater would respond in very different ways to Venetian art and to Venetianism. Their responses, in turn, would further define and enrich the Venetianist discourse in the years leading up to Shannon's career. Ruskin and Pater's particular responses therefore require a close study before considering how Shannon's work relates to previous forms of Venetianism.

"The Pestilence of the Renaissance": Ruskin's Early Venetianism

For John Ruskin, Venice and Venetian art represented many different things at different times in his life. He identified many of the city's monuments and artworks with episodes and individuals from his personal life; thus, for the twenty-two year old Ruskin, the streets and corners of Venice continuously reminded him of his hopeless love for Adèle Domecq, while the fifty-seven year old Ruskin believed that another tragic love, the late Rose La Touche, was communicating to him through Carpaccio's paintings.[126]

I am more interested in how Ruskin relates to contemporary Venetianism, and what he contributes to the discourse. Ruskin's interactions with Venetianism, like his visions of Venice, shifted frequently during his life, and are never simple to define. His prolific critical and literary output featured many remarks about Venice and Venetian art, including two entire books as well as many passages and chapters from the *Modern Painters* series. Consistency was never Ruskin's strength, and therefore these texts contain a multiplicity of perspectives on Venetian art.

Nevertheless, one can define two major periods within Ruskin's Venetianism: an earlier period, represented by *The Stones of Venice* (1851-53), during which he condemns the Renaissance for introducing a pagan, impersonal spirit into Venetian art and culture; and a later period, during which Ruskin espouses a more appreciative view of Venetian Renaissance artists,

[126] For Ruskin's personal life, see Tim Hilton's biography, *John Ruskin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985). For his episodes in Venice, the most useful resources are Robert Hewison's *Ruskin's Venice* (London: Pilkington Press, 2000) and, especially, Jeanne Clegg's *Ruskin and Venice* (London: Junction Books, 1981).

even while maintaining his criticism for the machine-like mentality which he discerned in the modern age, and which he initially traced to the Renaissance period.

When reading Ruskin's early writings, it is important to remember that much of his criticism for the Renaissance is actually a powerful reaction against modern Europe's industrial society. Ruskin's opposition to industrialism merged with his views on Renaissance Venice during his 1845 trip to the city. Although it was the third time he had visited Venice, Ruskin had not noticed the effects of modern technology on previous visits. On this trip, he was horrified to see the new railway bridge spanning the lagoon, connecting Venice to the mainland while obscuring the traditional vista of the city as experienced by travelers approaching from the south. In Ruskin's impression, the iron bridge, coupled with the presence of modern factories nearby the rail station, caused Venice to appear on initial approach as "nearly as possible like Liverpool at the end of the dockyard wall."[127] He was similarly distressed with the gas lamps that had been installed near the Rialto, which reminded him of the "grand new iron posts of the last Birmingham fashion."[128] Significantly, the comparison in both cases is with an English industrial town.

Meanwhile, Venice's medieval monuments were either falling into disrepair or being subjected to, in Ruskin's eyes, misguided restoration attempts. Ruskin criticized the restorers of St. Mark's, who he claimed had stripped the basilica of "all the glorious old weather stains."[129] He complained that the workmen at the Ca d'Oro were "hauling up beams and dashing in the old walls and shattering the mouldings."[130]

Ruskin conceived the idea for *The Stones of Venice* (1851-1853) after viewing such incidents during this trip. He intended the text not only as a means for recording Venice's monuments before they disappeared, but also as an investigation into the causes for Venice's decline. In other words, Ruskin wished to determine if Venice's current state of neglect and apathy might be traced to particular events from the city's past.

To unravel the origins of Venice's decadence, Ruskin looks to aesthetic factors. He combines this aesthetic investigation with a Byronic view of Venetian history; that is to say, Ruskin, like Byron, regards Venetian history as a possible template or warning for England's parallel history. Byron's influence is clear in the opening lines of *The Stones of Venice*:

> Since first the dominion of men was asserted over the ocean, three thrones, of mark beyond all others, have been set upon its sands: the thrones of Tyre, Venice,

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[127] John Ruskin to John James Ruskin, 10 September,1845. Reproduced in *Ruskin in Italy: Letters to his Parents, 1845*, ed. Harold I. Shapiro (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 198.
[128] Ibid, 198-199.
[129] John Ruskin to John James Ruskin, 14 September, 1845. Reproduced in *Ruskin in Italy*, 201.
[130] John Ruskin to John James Ruskin, 23 September, 1845. Reproduced in *Ruskin in Italy*, 209.

> and England. Of the First of these powers only the memory remains; of the Second, the ruin; the Third, which inherits their greatness, if it forget their example, may be led through prouder eminence to less pitied destruction.[131]

Ruskin's comparison of Venice to Tyre and England clearly echoes Byron's *Childe Harolde*, which, we will recall, warned that nations which ruled the oceans may be punished for their hubris. Ruskin openly acknowledged his youthful debt to Byron in his autobiography, in which he asserted "My Venice, like Turner's, had been chiefly created for us by Byron."[132]

However, by 1853, Ruskin's Venice has already evolved away from Byron's nostalgic depictions of the city. While Byron could still find romance and beauty in Venice's decaying architecture and painting, Ruskin can only see irreparable damages inflicted by the modern industrial age. Ruskin cannot find anything positive about modern Venice. For him, it is completely in the grip of the modern age, the effects of which he had described in a letter to his father:

> One sees nothing but subjects for lamentation, wrecks of lovely things destroyed, remains of them unrespected, *all* going to decay, nothing rising but ugliness and meanness, nothing done or conceived by man but evil, irremediable, self multiplying, all swallowing evil, vice and folly everywhere, idleness and infidelity, & filth, and misery, and desecration, dissipated youth & wicked manhood & withered, sickly, hopeless age.[133]

This "all swallowing evil" is the spirit of the modern age, which Ruskin believes has its roots somewhere in Venice. He is therefore determined to root out the main cause for the city's decline, believing that by doing so, he could help alter the course of England toward a better fate than the one which had befallen Venice.

The Stones of Venice documents Ruskin's search for the cause of Venice's decline. It follows the moral and artistic history of Venice from its mythical beginnings as a Roman refuge from barbaric hordes, through the glories of the Middle Ages, and ultimately, to its modern state, in which the new barbarians, with their iron railways bridges and gas lamp posts, appear to have prevailed.

In his overview of Venetian history, Ruskin, unlike Burckhardt or Crowe and Cavalcaselle, regards the Byzantine and medieval periods as Venice's highest historical points. He portrays the founders of Venice as a modest and pious people, who unite together in the face of natural and military adversity. Ruskin sees the artwork of these early inhabitants as

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[131] John Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*, vol. I; *Works* 9:17.
[132] John Ruskin, *Praeterita*; *Works* 35: 295.
[133] John Ruskin to John James Ruskin, 3 May, 1845. Reproduced in *Ruskin in Italy*, 51.

expressing their moral principles, in accordance with a thesis that underlies this text and most of Ruskin's writings: a nation's cultural health is conveyed by its citizens through their art and architecture.

Ruskin praises Venice's medieval monuments, from the Byzantine and Gothic eras, as exemplars of good architecture and, by extension, of good cultural morality. However, when he discusses the Doge's Palace, he notices a certain inconsistency in the building's ornamentation. On the structure's western side, overlooking the narrow Piazzetta, Ruskin notes a decline in the quality of the arcade capitals and sculptures.[134] Ruskin also discerns an "inferior spirit in the workmanship" of the northwestern corner sculpture, a Renaissance piece representing *The Judgment of Solomon* (early fifteenth century) [Figure 26]. This sculpture features a tree with leaves that in Ruskin's mind resemble wrinkled drapery more than actual vegetation.[135] Furthermore, many of the arcade capitals on the Piazzetta facade appear to be inferior copies of earlier, Gothic capitals from other sides of the building.

From his extensive research on the Doge's Palace, Ruskin concludes that the Piazzetta facade was the last section of the palace to be constructed in the mid-fifteenth century. It is here, in the western facade's superficially Gothic appearance, that Ruskin detects the first signs of the Venetian Renaissance. While most historians associated the Renaissance with the revival of classical architecture, Ruskin identifies it with thoughtless copying of any kind. For Ruskin, the Renaissance represents a type of aesthetic attitude or spirit rather than a particular historical or stylistic period. In the case of the Doge's Palace, Ruskin sees the malignant Renaissance spirit at work in the decision to remodel the Piazzetta facade.

To follow Ruskin's argument, one needs to adopt his terminology. The Doge's Palace consists of three major facades; the fourth one, adjacent to St. Mark's basilica, is not visible from the exterior. The three visible facades are the eastern facade (the "Rio Facade"), the southern facade (the "Sea Facade"), and the western facade (the "Piazzetta Facade") [Figure 27]. One also needs to understand that not all parts of the present-day structure date to the same time. The original structure was a Byzantine palace. This structure was gradually replaced, piece-meal, as its size and maintenance proved to be inadequate for fifteenth-century Venice. The southern Sea Facade therefore dates to an earlier period than the western, Piazzetta Facade.

When the Byzantine wing of the Sea Facade was demolished, the new Gothic wing was constructed to house the Grand Council room as a meeting chamber. Ruskin regarded this renovation as a worthy endeavor, and he particularly admired how the architects deliberately misaligned this chamber's windows with the other windows on the facade. This daring

[134] Ruskin, *Stones of Venice*, vol. II; *Works* 10: 424-425.
[135] Ibid, *Works* 10: 363.

asymmetry ensured that the chamber and its glorious ceiling paintings would be adequately illuminated, and is an example of the structural honesty that Ruskin admired in Gothic architecture.[136]

After the Sea Facade was renovated, the Piazzetta facade was the only remaining wing from the Byzantine palace. There was no need to renovate this wing, Ruskin insists. Instead, fifteenth-century Venetians were motivated by a superficial desire to match the Piazzetta Facade with the Gothic style of the Sea Facade. Such a desire, Ruskin believes, is not sufficient cause to demolish a venerable and historical structure like the Byzantine wing.

Ruskin pinpoints the beginning of the Renaissance with the first hammer blow struck against the Byzantine Piazzetta wing on March 27, 1424. This hammer blow was, Ruskin states, "the first act of the period properly called the 'Renaissance.' It was the knell of the architecture of Venice,–and of Venice herself."[137] The Renaissance spirit, as Ruskin understands it, is born not in the revival of classical elements of architecture, but in the violent act of destroying, without justified cause, the ancient home of the Venetian state. Ruskin claims that after this last remaining Byzantine wing was demolished, Venice never flourished again.

To demonstrate the evil effects of the Renaissance spirit, Ruskin turns to the subsequent history of Venetian architecture and tomb sculptures. He considers the sixteenth-century church of Santa Maria Formosa as epitomizing the Renaissance spirit. He points out that the facade of the church (erected in 1542) lacks any reference to the Christian faith [Figure 28]. Commissioned by the Cappello family, the church features an entirely classical facade, consisting of a pediment supported by Corinthian pilasters. Furthermore, it is adorned with tablets recording and glorifying the deeds of Admiral Vincenzo Cappello, along with circular trophies of Roman arms and armor. A sculpture representing the admiral stands over the church door, the same location that is occupied by Christ's statue at St. Mark's basilica. Ruskin asserts that Santa Maria Formosa is the first church in Venice that is "*entirely destitute of every religious symbol, sculpture, or inscription*" [Ruskin's emphasis] and which was built "to the glory of man, instead of the glory of God."[138] For Ruskin, the paganism of the church's style, coupled with its glorification of a particular individual, sums up the Renaissance traits of pride and arrogance.

Ruskin contrasts the Renaissance structure with the history of its site, which he recounts. According to tradition, the original church on this site was the first Venetian church ever dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Legend held that the church had been constructed by the bishop of Uderzo, an early refugee to Venice, who had a vision in which the Virgin commanded him to

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[136] Ibid, *Works* 10:334.
[137] Ibid, *Works* 10: 352.
[138] *Stones of Venice*, vol. III, *Works* 11: 146.

build a church in her honor. The bishop had then followed a mysterious white cloud which came to rest at the spot where the church would be constructed.[139]

The medieval church of Santa Maria Formosa had been the traditional site of all Venetian weddings, and throughout the Middle Ages it had hosted the annual "Brides of Venice" festival. This festival, Ruskin explains, was a popular festival for the Venetians, and the church's site had therefore acquired a kind of populist significance for all Venetians. By appropriating the reconstructed Renaissance church for their own glory, the Cappello family had dishonored the traditional populism associated with Santa Maria Formosa.

Ruskin sees the worst signs of the site's degradation on its bell tower. This tower, Ruskin explains, occupies the very spot where "the daughters of Venice knelt yearly" in commemoration of the Brides festival. However, instead of a reference to this sacred and beautiful ceremony, one finds a cross-eyed, grimacing stone head, "leering in bestial degradation, too foul to be either pictured or described, or to be beheld for more than an instant."[140] In this sculpted head [Figure 29], which actually dates to the seventeenth century, Ruskin finds the worst features of the Renaissance, and he urges the reader to behold it for much longer than an instant:

> in that head is embodied the type of evil spirit to which Venice was abandoned . . . and it is well that we should see and feel the full horror of it on this spot, and know what pestilence it was that came and breathed upon her beauty, until it melted away like the white cloud from the ancient fields of Santa Maria Formosa.[141]

The monstrous head and the absence of religious imagery at Santa Maria Formosa represent the logical consequences of the Renaissance spirit. In a civilization that abandons its traditional notions of faith, industriousness, and humility, the only possible results are infidelity, lust, and pride.

Ultimately, Ruskin holds the Renaissance period and its "evil spirit" as responsible for bringing Venice to its present state of decay and apathy. By describing the baleful effects of the Renaissance in Venice, Ruskin is trying to fulfill one of the stated purposes of *The Stones of Venice*: to undermine the influence of the Renaissance style in English art and architecture. The Renaissance style, Ruskin points out, has reached from the Grand Canal to as far as London's Gower Street. Because Ruskin regards Venice as the birthplace of "this pestilent art of the

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[139] Ibid, *Works* 11: 136-142.
[140] Ibid, *Works* 11: 144-45.

[141] Ibid, *Works* 11: 145.

Renaissance," he believed that one first had to undermine its reputation in Venice. "Destroy its claims to admiration [in Venice]," he advises, "and it can assert them nowhere else."[142]

In addition to discrediting the Renaissance, Ruskin also intends *The Stones of Venice* as an instructive manual for a new generation of English artists. In particular, Ruskin advocates the Venetian Gothic style as a model for modern artists, thus breaking with the traditional British bias against Venice's Gothic structures. On the other hand, Ruskin rarely refers his reader to Venetian paintings as a guide, which raises an important question: does Ruskin's sweeping condemnation of the Venetian Renaissance also apply to Venice's painters?

The Stones of Venice leaves no doubt about Ruskin's opinions on Venetian architecture and sculpture, but it says very little about Renaissance paintings. For Ruskin's views on Venetian paintings, one must refer to his *Modern Painters* series. This multi-volume set provides multiple perspectives, as Ruskin's aesthetics shifted significantly from the date of the first volume's publication (1843) until the date of the last volume (1860). The first four volumes belong to Ruskin's earlier period of Venetianism, and share some of the principles that Ruskin expressed in *The Stones of Venice*. The last volume suggests a profoundly different perspective on Venetian art, and belongs to Ruskin's later period of Venetianism.

Ruskin's earlier Venetianism, as seen in *The Stones of Venice*, was primarily a medievalist Venetianism. While Ruskin clearly despised Venetian Renaissance architecture, his views on Venetian paintings were far more ambivalent. He was disturbed by the pagan and erotic content in many of Giorgione and Titian's paintings; furthermore, he notes several instances where Titian departs from naturalistic detail. However, he could not deny the expressive power of Venetian painting, and was particularly impressed by Tintoretto's work–an appreciation which sets him apart from many other contemporary and past art historians.

Ruskin conceived *Modern Painters* as a defense of Joseph Mallord William Turner's landscape paintings. In the first edition of *Modern Painters* 1, Ruskin limited his attention to Turner's paintings and argued for their superiority over the conventions of Baroque landscape painting. In subsequent volumes, Ruskin expanded his argument to cover many other kinds of paintings and even natural sciences. In 1845, he revised *Modern Painters* 1 for a third edition, and inserted many discussions of Venetian Renaissance paintings. These new discussions reveal that Ruskin's attack on the Renaissance was not historically consistent. Ruskin has many positive remarks about Giovanni Bellini and Tintoretto, both of whom postdate the Renaissance's 1424 "hammer blow." On the other hand, Ruskin has difficulty in assimilating

[142] *Stones of Venice*, vol. I, *Works*: 9: 47.

Titian's work within his overall aesthetic theories, and often resorts to an anti-Venetianist perspective that recalls eighteenth-century writers.

Ruskin particularly finds faults in Titian's landscapes. He is astonished that Titian never depicted mountainous landscapes, even though the Tyrolese Alps are clearly visible from Venice's Fondamente Nuovo, where Titian's house once stood. "Every dawn that reddens the towers of Murano lights also a line of pyramidal fires along that colossal ridge," Ruskin says of Titian's vista. However, Ruskin can find "no evidence in any of the master's work of his ever having beheld . . . the majesty of their burning."[143] In Ruskin's opinion, Titian's landscapes fail as truthful representations of nature. Citing the *Martyrdom of St. Peter Martyr* (then located in San Giovanni e Paolo; destroyed in 1867 fire) [Figure 30], Ruskin points out several inconsistencies in the painting's famous background: "the mountains are laid in with violent and impossible blues, except one of them on the left [which] is thrown in to light relief, unexplained by its material, unlikely in its position, and . . . impossible under any circumstances."[144]

Ruskin recognizes that Titian's liberties with natural scenery and light were conscious decisions on the part of the artist. He even grants that "the barred horizontal gloom of the Titian sky, and the massy leaves of the Titian forest, are among the most sublime of the conceivable forms of material things."[145] Nevertheless, he cautions the reader to be familiar with landscapes in nature before studying Titian's work. Titian's artistic liberties with landscapes are "not intended for continual food, but the occasional soothing of the human heart." Before one can fully appreciate Titian's landscapes, one needs to compare them to "the cheerfulness, fulness, and comparative unquietness of other hours and scenes."[146]

Similar to Reynolds, Ruskin believes that Titian's paintings could mislead a young and naive art student. He therefore exhorts the student to turn to other artistic models for instruction. Whereas Reynolds had offered Michelangelo and sixteenth-century paintings as models, Ruskin turns the reader's attention to fifteenth-century art. He argues that fifteenth-century Venetians far surpassed Titian in their rendering of natural scenery. For instance, he considers the landscape in Giovanni Bellini's *St. Jerome* (1513, San Crisostomo, Venice) [Figure 31] to be "finer than anything of Titian's" because of the "care and completeness in the background."[147] Furthermore, Giovanni's figures possess a "dignity and heavenliness" combined with a "force

[143] *Modern Painters*, vol. 1, *Works* 3: 170-171. Ruskin probably based his description of Titian's view on his own observations from the Fondamente Nuovo, or from the particular structure then reputed to be Titian's house.
[144] Ibid, *Works* 3: 171.
[145] Ibid, *Works* 3: 172.
[146] Ibid.
[147] Ibid, *Works* 3: 180.

and purity of colour" greater than Titian's. Ruskin concludes that this painting, unlike Titian's work, "may be set before the young artist as in every respect a nearly faultless guide."[148]

As his discussion of Giovanni Bellini's work demonstrates, Ruskin could find positive aspects in Venetian Renaissance paintings, despite his hatred of the Renaissance spirit. His most passionate praise, however, is reserved for Tintoretto. He had first encountered Tintoretto's work during his 1845 trip to Venice; at the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, he was awed by Tintoretto's dramatic renderings of Biblical scenes.[149] In a letter to his father, Ruskin described being so overwhelmed that for several minutes, he could only lie on a bench and laugh as he gazed up toward the ceiling paintings. "I never was so utterly crushed to the earth before any human intellect as I was today, before Tintoret," he wrote, using the anglicized variant of "Tintoretto." "I think I didn't know what [painting] meant until today."[150]

Ruskin's appreciation for Tintoretto is expressed in *Modern Painters* 2 (1846). This volume deals extensively with figure paintings, in contrast to the focus on landscape paintings in the first volume. Ruskin promotes Tintoretto's work as an example of the "Imagination Penetrative," a principle which Ruskin defines as depicting an ideal, imaginative truth unhindered by surface details. In this context, he interprets Tintoretto's *Crucifixion* (1565, Scuola Grande di San Rocco) [Figure 32] as capturing the moment of Christ's death without resorting to bloody representations of bodily agony. Tintoretto demonstrated the ultimate misery of Christ's death, Ruskin argues, by depicting a donkey feeding upon the withered palm leaves at the foot of a cross; this scene contrasts dramatically with traditional scenes of Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem riding upon a donkey, and greeted by a crowd waving palm leaves.[151]

Similarly, in the *Massacre of the Innocents* (1582-87, Scuola Grande di San Rocco) [Figure 33], Tintoretto conveys a sense of violence and grief without dwelling on "details of murder and ghastliness of death." Ruskin asserts that in this painting, "there is no blood, no stabbing or cutting, but there is an awful substitute for these in the chiaroscuro."[152]

Ruskin's discussion of Tintoretto clearly differs from Kugler or Burckhardt in emphasizing the expression of religious ideas, in contrast to the *joie de vivre* which the Continental scholars had admired in Venetian paintings. Indeed, Kugler had characterized Venetian art as free of ecclesiastical dogma. Ruskin has seemingly selected the artist whom

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[148] Ibid, *Works* 3: 181.

[149] The Scuola Grande di San Rocco, a Venetian lay confraternity, commissioned thirty-eight paintings from Tintoretto to decorate their new headquarters (1549). These paintings cover the walls and ceilings of the building's chambers, and range in dates from 1565-1587.

[150] John Ruskin to John James Ruskin, 24 September, 1845. Reproduced in *Ruskin in Italy*, 211-212.

[151] *Modern Painters* vol. 2, *Works* 4: 263-64.

[152] Ibid, *Works*4: 271.

other writers regarded as the least "Venetian" and highlighted the very features which distinguished Tintoretto's work from that of most other Venetians.

Nonetheless, Ruskin's "Imagination Penetrative" resembles the poetic qualities that Kugler and others associated with Venetian painting. Kugler had commented on the poetic nature of Giorgione's paintings, and described them as depicting an ideal world populated by an "elevated race" of beings. Ruskin notes a similar idealism in Venetian paintings. He differs from Kugler and other art historians, however, in finding this ideal world in Tintoretto's paintings, and in a spiritual rather than earthly world. Tintoretto's work, Ruskin argues, inserted the imagination into "the TRUE nature of the thing represented" and scorned "all shackles and fetters of mere external fact that stand in the way of its suggestiveness."[153]

Ruskin's Venetianism is strikingly different from both his contemporaries and from his predecessors. His purported hatred of the Renaissance stands in stark contrast to other historians' traditionally favorable views of this period. *The Stones of Venice* would awaken intense interest in Venice's medieval architecture, which for most previous historians and artists had been overshadowed by Palladio and Longhena's classical structures in Venice.

Judging from *The Stones of Venice*, Ruskin's early Venetianism appears to be a medievalist Venetianism. On the other hand, his opposition to Renaissance Venetianism is not as absolute as he would have the reader believe. Although he insists that Venice's aesthetic production collapsed after 1423, he also expresses great admiration for Giovanni Bellini, who worked in the latter years of the fifteenth century, and, especially, Tintoretto, who lived more than a century after the Renaissance's "hammer blow." Moreover, Ruskin's principle of the Imagination Penetrative also bears a strong resemblance to the poetic qualities assigned by Kugler and Burckhardt to the Venetian Renaissance.

Ruskin's problems with the Venetian Renaissance have more to do with the "Renaissance spirit" than they do with the precise historical period. Thus, artists like Tintoretto and Giovanni Bellini escape censure, as in Ruskin's view their works transcend the Renaissance period and show none of its evil effects. On the other hand, his dislike of the Renaissance's pagan spirit seems to carry over to Titian and Giorgione's work. Ruskin's early writings make no reference to Giorgione's work, and his references to Titian are equivocal, to say the least. While Ruskin appears to have exempted Giovanni Bellini and Tintoretto's work from the Renaissance "spirit" that he saw pervading contemporary sculpture and architecture, he still suspects that Titian and Giorgione were negatively affected by that spirit. The overtly pagan and sensual subjects of their

[153] Ibid, *Works* 4: 278.

works posed many problems for Ruskin, unlike the religious subject matter of the Bellinis and Tintoretto.

Ruskin's first Venetianist period is therefore a highly idiosyncratic Venetianism, one which incorporates some elements from different Venetianisms while differing from all of them. Unlike earlier Venetianisms, Ruskin's early period promotes medieval Venetian art over Renaissance art. Ruskin's early writings share with eighteenth-century Venetianism a dislike toward the sensuality and paganism of certain Venetian Renaissance paintings, while at the same time favoring fifteenth-century Venetian paintings and Tintoretto's work. At the same time, Ruskin seems to echo Kugler and Burckhardt by discerning in Venetian painting a poetic spirit. Unlike those contemporaries, however, Ruskin attributes that poetic spirit to religious paintings, particularly ones by Tintoretto and Giovanni Bellini, whereas Kugler and Burckhardt had found it primarily in Titian and Giorgione's mythological paintings.

Ruskin's medievalist preferences would find a welcome audience among young British artists like Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Morris. However, his Renaissance selections appear to have had little effect. During the 1840s and 1850s, when Ruskin's early writings first appeared, no British artist emulated Giovanni Bellini or Tintoretto's painting style. Thus, Ruskin's early Venetianism does not appear to have had a substantial effect on how British artists assimilated Renaissance Venetian art, except in a negative manner. Ruskin's heated denunciation of the Renaissance period, and his inconsistencies in discussing Renaissance paintings, may have dissuaded young British artists from studying the Venetian Renaissance. Indeed, there is a sustained period of medieval revivalism throughout the 1840s and 1850s in British painting that was at least in part fueled by Ruskin's early writings.

The 1860s would witness a resurgence of a Renaissance-based Venetianism in British painting. This is a remarkable and highly formative period for British Venetianism, and one which shapes the future for Shannon's subsequent work. It is also a period in which Ruskin would play a significant role. However, in this period, Ruskin's views on Venetian Renaissance painting have shifted considerably.

"A Golden City": Ruskin's Later Venetianism

Ruskin's early Venetianism had been strongly based on the critic's moralistic worldview and religious beliefs. The voice that permeates *The Stones of Venice* is like that of a Biblical prophet, condemning Venice's moral inequities and predicting similar ruin for Britain's future. Ruskin was particularly wary of Roman Catholic as well as pagan elements in Venetian art, and he admired precisely those elements which struck him as the least Catholic in spirit; for instance, he approved of Torcello cathedral's light-filled interior for disavowing the shadows of mystery,

and he praised Tintoretto for avoiding graphic and bloody details in his paintings, details which are commonly found in traditional Catholic imagery.

Ruskin would radically reevaluate his aesthetic philosophy in the 1860s, and by doing so would accommodate a more consistently positive appraisal of Venetian Renaissance paintings. The writer acknowledged a shift in his perspective during an 1858 trip to Turin, where he underwent a profoundly personal transformation. Significantly, this transformation was initiated by a Venetian Renaissance painting.

While viewing the Venetian collection at Turin's Galleria Sabauda, Ruskin found himself drawn to Veronese's painting, *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba* (c. 1560) [Figure 34]. He was astounded by Veronese's expressive technique, which he described as the artist's "God-given power." After leaving the gallery, Ruskin attended a service at a local Protestant Waldensian chapel. He found the sermon deeply disappointing. The preacher was, in Ruskin's words, a "little squeaking idiot" who spoke to the tiny congregation as though they were "the only children of God in Turin," and that everyone else would be damned. The contrast between this prosaic sermon and the splendor of Veronese's painting was so great that Ruskin left the chapel as "a conclusively *un*-converted man."

Veronese's painting had appealed to Ruskin on more than a moralistic level, and it had opened his eyes to a new way of looking at Venetian art. Throughout the duration of his stay in Turin, Ruskin repeatedly returned to the gallery and made detailed studies of *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*. One morning he overheard a band performing in the street outside. The sound of the music, combined with the visual stimulus of the Veronese painting, deeply moved Ruskin. The music blended "so thoroughly with Veronese's splendour" that the musical notes seemed "to form one whole with [Veronese's] lovely forms and colours." This synaesthetic experience prompted Ruskin to reflect deeply on his crisis of faith, which he described in a letter to his father:

> Can it be possible that all this power and beauty is adverse to the honour of the Maker of it? Has God made faces beautiful and limbs strong . . . and filled human fancy with all splendid thoughts; and given to the human touch its power of placing and brightening and perfecting, only that all these things may lead His creatures away from Him?

Ruskin was wrestling with a traditional Christian dilemma: how could God create the physical world as a beautiful place, but intend its beauty only as a means to sinful distractions? Ruskin's evangelical beliefs had contended that the physical world was full of sin. While beholding the powerfully sensual effects of music and painting in Turin's gallery, Ruskin was finding it difficult to maintain his beliefs.

Ruskin's beliefs were further challenged by the differences between the respective representatives of aesthetic beauty and of moral theology: Veronese and the Waldensian preacher. Continuing his rhetorical questioning, Ruskin contrasted the two individuals:

> Is this mighty Paul Veronese, in whose soul there is a strength as of the snowy mountains, and within whose brain all the pomp and majesty of humanity floats in a marshalled glory . . . is he a servant of the devil; and is the poor little wretch in a tidy black tie, to whom I have been listening this Sunday morning expounding Nothing with a twang–is he a servant of God?

The answer to all these questions, Ruskin felt, was clearly "No." Although he would never abandon his belief in a higher power or in a moral purpose to life, from this moment on he would disavow institutional Protestantism and its teachings. In Ruskin's unconverted perspective, God has given artists the power to "place and brighten and perfect" elements drawn from the beauty of His creation, and people are wrong to reject these powers under the notion that they distract from God. On the contrary, Ruskin now believed, humans can improve themselves and draw closer to God through these artistic reflections on God's universe.

Ruskin's "unconversion" had been instigated by an aesthetic experience before a Venetian painting. This experience would modify Ruskin's Venetianism as well as his religious beliefs. As we have seen, the early Ruskin, like eighteenth-century Venetianists, had regarded the sensual properties of Venetian Renaissance paintings as faults. With Veronese's painting, Ruskin realized a new appreciation for sensual beauty in its own right, and this new perspective will change how the critic discusses Venetian art in subsequent writings.

Ruskin's new Venetianism is most evident in the fifth and last volume of *Modern Painters* (1860). In the preface, Ruskin reviews his previous volumes in the series, and remarks on how limited his discussions on Venetian paintings had been. He surmises that his earlier passion for Fra Angelico and Raphael's works had blinded him to "the deepest qualities of Venetian art." While he insists that he had always regarded Venetian paintings as powerful works of art, he admits that he had also been disturbed by what had seemed a "luxurious and sensual" quality in those works.[154]

With volume 5, Ruskin attempts to compensate for his earlier neglect of Venetian paintings. He devotes two entire chapters to Venice and Venetian art. In the first of these, "The Two Boyhoods," he contrasts the childhoods of Turner and Giorgione. Ruskin detects a mystical connection between the two artists. Turner, Ruskin points out, was born on St. George's Day, while Giorgione's name (actually a nickname whichthat means "Big George) can be translated as

[154] *Modern Painters*, vol. 5, *Works* 7: 9.

the “George of Georges.” Since Italian children in the Renaissance were traditionally named after the saint on whose day they were born, it is quite likely that Turner and Giorgione share a birthday. While Ruskin does not state so explicitly, these artists’s birthday must have reminded him of St. George’s role as the patron saint England. Ruskin would often use St. George as a symbol for England, and in Ruskin’s mind, English culture and Turner and Giorgione’s paintings are therefore connected through their associations with St. George.

Despite their connections to St. George, Giorgione and Turner were raised in completely different circumstances, according to Ruskin. Turner’s London is prosaic at best; Ruskin describes it is as downright ugly, full of “dead brick walls, blank square windows, old clothes,” all inhabited by a “market-womanly type of humanity.”[155] The young Giorgione’s Venice is an entirely different world. Ruskin begins to describe it as a city of marble, but quickly corrects himself: “nay, rather a golden city, paved with emerald. For truly, every pinnacle and turret glanced or glowed, overlaid with gold or bossed with jasper.”[156] Giorgione’s Venice is a world “from which all ignoble care and petty thoughts are banished,” words which echo Kugler and Burckhardt’s descriptions of Giorgione’s paintings. Ruskin claims that Giorgione’s Venice was free from any troubles, and that the only sounds that filled its streets were the “rippled music of majestic change, or thrilling silence.”[157]

Ruskin argues that in almost every aspect, Giorgione’s Venice offered a superior artistic environment than did Turner’s London. He regards the Catholic Church’s influence on Venetian society as a positive thing. Even when its beliefs appear hypocritical, Ruskin insists that the Church puts forth those beliefs “in bold hypocrisy.” The Venetian Church, Ruskin deduces, was “a thing which had either to be obeyed or combated, but could not be scorned.” Its effect on Venetian culture could be measured by its success in “animating national courage, and raising souls, otherwise sordid, into heroism.”[158] These comments on Venetian Catholicism show a remarkable shift in perspective from the same man who had once complained about how awful “Romanism” was in Venice, and they demonstrate how much Ruskin’s religious beliefs had altered since his 1858 unconversion.

Ruskin finds Turner’s London to offer a very different kind of religious system. He finds much to be desired, and little to be respected, in the English church. It espouses a religion that is “maintained occasionally” out of habit rather than by faith; it is “discreditable–discredited–not believing in itself: putting forth its authority in a cowardly way.”[159] The English church

[155] Ibid, *Works* 7: 377.
[156] Ibid, *Works* 7: 374.
[157] Ibid, *Works* 7: 375.
[158] Ibid, *Works* 7: 381.
[159] Ibid, *Works* 7: 382.

therefore differs greatly from the bold self-assurance of Venetian Catholicism. Unlike Venice's religion, Ruskin argues that London's church cannot be "either obeyed or combated" but can only be scorned.

As in *The Stones of Venice*, Ruskin relates Venetian and English culture to actual architectural sites. For this discussion, he turns to the major churches of either city; Venice is represented by St. Mark's basilica, while London is represented by St. Paul's Cathedral. As impressive as St. Paul's is, it cannot redeem England in Ruskin's eyes. Its geographical location superficially resembles St. Mark's, with its dome looming "high over the distant winding of the Thames; as St. Mark's campanile rose . . . over mirage of lagoon."[160] However, Ruskin asserts that St. Paul's rules over death, while St. Mark's rules over life.[161] He points to their respective environs: St. Mark's stands over the lively Piazza of St. Mark's, while St. Paul's stands over a cemetery.

These physical locations symbolize deeper cultural beliefs for Ruskin. As St. Paul's Churchyard suggests, English culture has come to worship death, particularly in the nineteenth century. This is evident not only in the bloody military conflicts of the century, but also in the industrial age's disrespect for individual life.[162] Ruskin asserts that industrial capitalism has crushed lives to death "amidst the roaring of the wheel" and tossed them "countlessly away into howling winter wind." Left to rot in "forgotten graves," modern lives are like "motherless infants starving at the dawn," with no hope for assistance from man or church.[163]

In criticizing the modern ills of industrial England, Ruskin is not striking any new ground. However, he no longer blames Renaissance Venice as originating these problems. In fact, he seems to admit that his previous portrayals of Venice's fall were exaggerated. "The wreck of one guilty country does not infer the ruin of all countries," he states, suggesting that one should be careful when drawing parallels between different nations' fates.[164] In his new comparison with modern England, Renaissance Venice's differences with England stand out more than any similarities. Indeed, in Ruskin's descriptions, sixteenth-century Venice appears to be a paradise, one that offered a far healthier and more inspiring environment for Giorgione than modern London did for Turner.

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[160] Ibid, *Works*7: 383.

[161] Stein has noted Ruskin's recurring stress on death and tombs in *The Stones of Venice*, and compared Ruskin's Venice to T. S. Eliot's London as both cities "of the dead." He attributes much of Ruskin's "necrophilia" to his learning of Turner's death in 1851 while Ruskin was in Venice researching for *The Stones of Venice*. At this later point in his life, however, Ruskin has maintained the death imagery, but has significantly shifted the descriptions of death and decay from post-Renaissance Venice to modern London. "Unstable Foundation," 6-7

[162] *Modern Painters*, vol 5, *Works* 7: 387.

[163] Ibid.

[164] Ibid, *Works* 7: 386.

In this chapter, then, Ruskin refutes the underlying thesis of *Stones of Venice*: the idea that modern society's terrible conditions could be traced directly back to Renaissance Venice. Nevertheless, Ruskin still maintains that a just society has a moral obligation to encourage all of its artists and craftsmen to find means by which to express themselves. Modern European culture now poses much greater threats to artistic freedom and morality than did sixteenth-century Venice. Turner's ability to overcome England's adverse conditions in order to produce art was an exception to the rule, Ruskin believes. Most modern English artists and craftsmen appeared to be enslaved to the false and dehumanizing principles of industrialism.

By turning to Giorgione as an example of an artist living in harmony with his society, Ruskin is offering a new way of looking at Venetian painting, and of looking at Giorgione in particular. Writers like Kugler had already described many of the key features of "the Giorgionesque" vein of Venetianism: it is, above all, a poetic manner of painting that represents "the glorification of earthly existence" and which transcends religious dogma. After his unconversion, Ruskin seems to have adopted Kugler's perspective on Giorgione, and he now appreciates the sensual beauty of the artist's paintings. However, Ruskin modifies the Giorgionesque by infusing it with a social consciousness that is not found in Kulger, Burckhardt, or Crowe and Cavalcassele's accounts.

Ironically, Ruskin's social consciousness is fueled as least in part by the Venetianism of these other writers. The Venetianist expression of earthly harmony appeals to the unconverted Ruskin, who argues that modern society needs to forge a similar kind of harmony for itself. For Ruskin, the Giorgionesque represents not only beauty in itself, but also demonstrates how an artist can make full use of his God-given talents when his society allows him to do so. Perhaps most important, the Giorgionesque also offers a glimpse into a utopia that can be found in this world rather than in the next. Ruskin thereby agrees with his Venetianist contemporaries in recognizing the ideal beauty in Venetian art as references to earthly beauty; however, Ruskin is unique in developing a social program dedicated to achieving such beauty and harmony in individual's daily lives.

In his later life, Ruskin would devote much of his energy to making such utopian harmonies a reality for modern England. As a result, many of his later writings are more socially- than artistically-oriented. Nevertheless, references to Venice and Venetian art still appear in these social writings, such as the *Fors Clavigera*, the monthly pamphlets he intended as "Letters to the Workmen and Labourers of Great Britain." Many of these pamphlets were directed towards members of the Guild of St. George, an organization which Ruskin had founded and modeled after medieval guilds. Ruskin envisioned the guild as a national organization rather than an isolated and independent commune, and he selected the name of England's patron saint

to reflect this.[165] Furthermore, as Judith Stoddart has pointed out, St. George was traditionally regarded as a populist "saint of the people," whose fight against the dragon could be interpreted allegorically as "the eternal battle between love or charity and the bestial elements in human nature."[166] In Ruskin's account, the dragon comes to signify the modern age itself.

Although St. George would appear to be a consummately English symbol, Ruskin borrows much of his concept of St. George from Venetian art. We have already noted the connection Ruskin saw between Giorgione, Turner, and St. George. He also frequently refers to Carpaccio's depictions of St. George in Venice's Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni (1502) [Figure 35], the paintings of represented perfectly the fight against "modernism, capitalism, [and] utilitarianism."[167] Even in his ideas for a utopian society, Ruskin frequently has Venetian paintings in mind.

Ruskin's significance in Victorian Venetianism cannot be overrated. Judging by their number of reprints, Ruskin's writings were avidly read by Victorian readers. Many artists, like William Morris, would openly proclaim Ruskin as their critical idol. Through Ruskin, many readers were introduced to Venetianism in all of its various forms, from the medievalist Venetianism of *The Stones of Venice* to the more varied forms of *Modern Painters*' Venetianism. While Ruskin's unconversion would bring his theories more into line with the Venetianism of Kugler and Burckhardt, Ruskin would always insist on art's relationship to moral society, and he would consistently use Venetian art as a means for attacking modern industrialism, even if his historical analysis was not always consistent.

Ruskin would not be the only British critic to contribute to the Venetianist discourse. As we will see, Walter Pater emerges during the 1870s as a major rival in thought. While his Venetianism will bear some similarities to Kugler, Burckhardt, and the unconverted Ruskin's ideas, Pater will reach different conclusions about Venetianism's relationship to society. Pater's Venetianism would become a hallmark of a new artistic movement in Britain: the Aesthetic Movement. It is with this movement that we will begin our analysis of Pater's Venetianism.

The School of Giorgione: Venetianism and Paterian Aestheticism

The critic Walter Pater is most closely associated with the Aesthetic Movement, or

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[165] See Judith Stoddart, *Ruskin's Culture Wars:* Fors Clavigera *and the Crisis of Victorian Liberalism* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998), particularly pp 77-86.

[166] Ibid, 124 and 112.

[167] Like the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, the Scuola di San Giorgio degli Schiavoni was another one of Venice's powerful confraternities. Carpaccio painted several cycles of paintings for this confraternity's meeting hall, including a scene of St. George slaying the dragon. Ruskin visited the site in 1872. See Tim Hilton, *John Ruskin: the Later Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 240.

Aestheticism, which flourished in British culture during the 1860s and 70s. The Aesthetic Movement included a wide variety of artistic styles and principles, but nearly all of its artists and thinkers agreed on the basic principle of "art for art's sake." By stressing an artwork's beauty to the exclusion of any social or moral meanings, Aestheticism was clearly at odds with Ruskin's moralistic aesthetics. It will not be surprising to see that Venetianism takes a different tone under Aestheticism than it had with either early or late Ruskin.

The "art for art's sake" principle was largely derived from Immanuel Kant's aesthetic theories, especially his placement of art in a special category apart from utilitarian objects.[168] The French writer Théophile Gautier expanded on Kant's aesthetics in his novel, *Mademoiselle de Maupin* (1834). Gautier argued that beauty in itself was the proper subject for art and literature, and that an object's utilitarian and moralistic value has no bearing on its aesthetic value. Gautier stated that he would "rather do without potatoes than without roses," even though potatoes would seem the more useful form of vegetation.

These Continental ideas formed the basic framework for the Aesthetic Movement's philosophy. They were disseminated in England through translations and by those critics, like Walter Pater, who read German and French. He borrowed heavily from Kant and Gautier in forming his own aesthetic theories, which he expounded most clearly in his collection of essays, *The Renaissance* (first published in 1871 as *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*). Pater's book would have a tremendous influence on contemporary artists and their understanding of art's purpose in bringing beauty to the world. Moreover, it would infuse Venetianism with an Aestheticist sensibility, which would powerfully affect the manner in which British artists approached Venetian art.

For the focus of his studies, Pater chooses a different historical period than did Ruskin. For Ruskin, the Middle Ages had represented the ideal human community and artistic culture; medieval art was expressed with a pious intent, and moral strength, which was lost in Renaissance art's pagan forms and decadent themes. As we have already noted, Ruskin was unable to appreciate Venetian Renaissance art fully until his "unconversion."

Unlike Ruskin, Pater did not consider any one historical period to be inherently superior to another. Nevertheless, Pater prized Renaissance art for its strong, self-conscious tendency toward unifying formal properties with issues of content; this unity of form and content is a central feature in Pater's aesthetics. Pater also heralded the pagan themes and styles of the Renaissance as signs of an art which is no longer restricted by extraneous, non-artistic purposes, an art which appealed as much to imaginative reason as to the intellect.

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[168] Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987).

Pater outlines his aesthetic principles most clearly in his essay, "The School of Giorgione," which first appeared as an article in *The Fortnightly Review* (October, 1877) before being included in the third edition (1888) of *The Renaissance*. Richard Stein has noted this essay's significance within Pater's overall aesthetics. It contains, as Stein says, Pater's "most complete theoretical discussion of the nature of art," and can be considered "the theoretical center of the argument implicit throughout *The Renaissance*," namely, the contention that the fine arts supersede any ideological or religious interpretations.[169] Not coincidentally, it is in Venetian art that Pater discerns what he considers to be the most refined example of an art that must be understood on its artistic terms before it can be subjected to an ideological analysis. Pater's Venetianism, then, is closely tied to his Aestheticism.

The central premise of "The School of Giorgione" is that art is motivated by a desire to blur, and ultimately to obliterate, the distinction between content and form. Pater sees the expressed thought of an artwork as part and parcel with the medium in which the work was created. In other words, *what* is depicted is bound to *how* it is depicted, and it is therefore impossible to extract the meaning of the work based on its subject without also taking its form into consideration.

The most powerful artworks, consequently, are those in which the "what" and "how" are virtually indistinguishable. "The mere matter of a poem, for instance, its subject," Pater writes, "should be nothing without the form, the spirit, of the handling . . . this form, this mode of handling, should become an end in itself, should penetrate every part of the matter."[170]

In no medium is the marriage between form and content more apparent than in music. For this reason, Pater claims that music is the typical or "ideally consummate art" and thus offers the best models for the other arts. While he maintains that each medium is governed by particular rules, Pater also argues that different mediums can borrow from one another without violating their respective laws. He calls this process "*Anders-streben*," a term which Pater defines as "a partial alienation from [a medium's] own limitations, through which the arts are able, not indeed to supply the place of each other, but reciprocally to lend each other new forces."[171] Music, he contends, is the "great *Anders-streben* of all art." Pater proceeds to make his famous statement: "All art constantly aspires to the condition of music."[172] This condition is

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[169] Stein, *Ritual of Interpretation*, 218-222.

[170] This and other citations from "The School of Giorgione" are taken from Donald Hill's annotated edition of *The Renaissance*. See Walter Pater, "The School of Giorgione," in *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry; the 1893 Text*, ed. Donald L. Hill (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 106.

[171] Ibid, 105. Although Pater derives this term, which roughly means "other-striving," from German, no German philosopher before Pater appears to have used this exact term. Donald Hill points out that Goethe and Hegel had discussed similar ideas about the arts, although without using the phrase "*Anders-streben*." See Hill, 388.

[172] "The School of Giorgione," 106.

one in which "the constituent elements of the composition are so welded together that the material or subject no longer strikes the intellect only." Instead, the union of form and matter presents "one single effect to the 'imaginative reason,' that complex faculty for which every thought and feeling is twin-born with its sensible analogue or symbol."[173] In the highest form of art, like music, the form of the artwork and its content or one with the expression; the subject and the medium "inhere in and completely saturate each other."[174]

Pater argues that the art critic has as his duty to judge by what degree artworks approach music's condition. This is the critical approach that he takes when evaluating Venetian art in the second section of the essay. Venetian Renaissance art represents for Pater the most ideal form of painting. No other school of painters has "so unerringly though instinctively apprehended" the formal limitations that are essential to painting's medium. From their beginnings, Pater says, the Venetains have understood that before a painting can represent anything, it is something "decorative, a thing for the eye, a space of colour on the wall."[175] As early as in their Byzantine mosaics, one finds that Venetian artists took care to design the mosaics to conform with the wall surface of the church. The images in these mosaics function as "but the introduction into the crust of marble and gold on the walls . . . of a little more of human expression."[176]

Giorgione is the Renaissance heir to this Venetian tradition. Pater describes Giorgione as summing up "the spirit of the Venetian school," and he credits the painter with inventing "genre" or "cabinet" paintings. These paintings are remarkable for serving neither devotional nor allegorical purposes. Instead, they represent "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."[177]

These small paintings continue the spirit of early Venetian mosaics. What Giorgione has done, Pater tells us, is to take from those early mosaics "those spaces of more cunningly blent colour" which had formerly been limited to their architectural contexts. In essence, Giorgione detaches these passages from the mosaic's wall and sets them into small, portable frames. In this way, people can move a Giorgione painting "with them where they go, as one might a poem in a 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 aroma, and, like persons, live with us, for a day or a lifetime."[178]

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[173] Ibid, 108-09.
[174] Ibid, 109.
[175] Ibid, 110.
[176] Ibid.
[177] Ibid, 111.
[178] Ibid.

It is clear from such a passage that the "art for art's sake" principle should not be taken too literally. By becoming "like an animated presence" that gives one "self-education, stimulus, or solace," Giorgione's paintings have a profound impact on the viewer's psychological state. In Pater's aesthetics as much as in Ruskin's, art is an active agent in individuals' lives, and plays a major role in the formulation of one's culture.

However, to play such a role in culture, and to assume such a presence for the viewer, a painting's content should not distract one's attention too much from the form. In Pater's view, Giorgione's work succeeds in bringing form and content together in a unified whole. Although Giorgione does not eliminate subject matter altogether, "in his selection of subject, or phase of subject, in the subordination of mere subject to pictorial design, to the main purpose of a picture, he is typical of that aspiration of all the arts towards music [and] towards the perfect unification of matter and form."[179]

To demonstrate how Giorgione effects such a unification, Pater turns to discuss a particular painting then attributed to Giorgione: *The Concert* (1511-12, Galleria Palatina) [Figure 36]. This work, today regarded as an early Titian, is one of the few works which Crowe and Cavalcaselle had attributed to Giorgione. Even though the work is no longer considered by Giorgione, it would not affect Pater's argument; as Pater himself points out, "over and above the real Giorgione and his authentic extant works there remains the *Giorgionesque* also–an influence, a spirit or type in art."[180]

Whether or not it is by Giorgione, the Pitti *Concert* represents for Pater the Giorgionesque spirit. The critic believes that this work remarkably corresponds to the conditions of *Ander-streben*. Its subject is not too definite, suggesting more of a "painted idyll" than a particular narrative. It is a kind of pictorial poetry, Pater says, one in which the elements of color and design are selected so that they lend themselves most readily to pictorial form: "although its productions are painted poems, [Venetian art] belongs to a sort of poetry which tells itself without an articulated story."[181]

As in the Pitti *Concert*, Venetian subjects are often musical settings, or the pauses within a musical performance, which draw "on that background of the silence of Venice, so impressive to the modern visitor."[182] In the many variations of this subject, one sees figures "with intent faces, as if listening . . . to detect the smallest interval of musical sound, the smallest undulation

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[179] Ibid.
[180] Ibid, 116.
[181] Ibid, 117.
[182] Ibid, 118-19. This is reminiscent of the "thrilling silence" that Ruskin observed in Giorgione's streets and canals.

in the air . . . a momentary touch of an instrument in the twilight, as one passes through an unfamiliar room, in a chance company."[183]

What makes these paintings so much like music is their ability to capture "profoundly significant animated instants," embodied in "a mere gesture, a look, a smile, perhaps–some brief and wholly concrete moments . . . which seem to absorb past and future in an intense consciousness of present."[184] These arrested moments, or "ideal instants," are drawn from "that feverish, tumultuously coloured world of the old citizens of Venice." Pater describes them as "exquisite pauses in time" which are the "consummate extract or quintessence of life," to which "we seem to be spectators of all the fulness of existence."[185] Like many previous commentators, Pater recognizes the joyfulness in Venetian paintings, which he sees as corresponding with "our moments of play [when] we are surprised at the unexpected blessedness of what may seem our least important part of time." At such times, with "the stress of our servile, everyday attentiveness being relaxed, the happier powers in things without are permitted free passage, and have their way with us."[186] Pater considers this the same effect that music has on listeners, and it is an effect that most enables the spectator to receive and appreciate aesthetic impressions.

The pursuit of aesthetic moments–these "ideal instants" or "exquisite pauses in time"–is a recurring feature in Pater's aesthetic philosophy. In his famous "Conclusion" to *The Renaissance*, Pater offers an aesthetic philosophy by which his contemporary readers might live. Physical life, Pater says, is in perpetual motion, composed of forces beyond one's control. One should focus on "exquisite intervals" in life, moments like the "delicious recoil from the flood of water in summer heat."[187] Pater encourages the reader not to translate such moments into words, but instead to consider them as they really are, as "unstable, flickering, inconsistent" moments that "burn and are extinguished with our consciousness of them."[188] These flickering and momentary impressions, Pater insists, are the basis of a meaningful life, one of "constant and eager observation." "A counted number of pulses only is given to us of a variegated, dramatic life. How may we see in them all that is to be seen in them by the finest senses?" Pater's answer to this question is perhaps his most famous pronouncement: "to burn always with this hard, gem-like flame, to maintain this ecstasy, is success in life."[189]

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[183] Ibid.
[184] Ibid, 118.
[185] Ibid.
[186] Ibid, 119.
[187] "Conclusion," in *The Renaissance*, 187.
[188] Ibid.
[189] Ibid, 189.

Pater advises that the best and most effective way to live in this manner is to live "among 'the children of this world,' in art and song." One should not refrain from pursuing "strange dyes, strange colours, and curious odours," or anything else which provides one with intense sensations, all of which are most readily available in artistic forms. "Art comes to you proposing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake."[190] Venetian paintings, which themselves portray arrested moments of time, are particularly effective in elevating and intensifying the viewer's passing moments.

Pater's significance for British Venetianism is in his shifting the discourse to aestheticist principles. He was not operating in a vacuum; his interest in Venetian Renaissance art should be considered as part of a broad cultural interest in the subject, as had been engendered by the writings of Kugler, Burckhardt, Crowe and Cavalcaselle, and above all, by Ruskin. Ruskin's treatises on Venetian art had powerfully defined the Venetianist discourse throughout the 1840s and 50s. Pater and his contemporaries responded to Ruskin by either assimilating his ideas, or by challenging them. Pater draws his aestheticist principles of *The Renaissance* in opposition to the moralizing argument of *The Stones of Venice*. Just as Ruskin had used medieval Venice and Tintoretto as his vehicles for asserting a moralistic purpose for art, Pater turned to Renaissance Venice and Giorgione in formulating an aesthetic philosophy which regards art as transcending utilitarian, moral, or political philosophies.

Pater's Aestheticism would have a major impact on late Victorian culture. Just as Ruskin's *Stones of Venice* was received as part of an ongoing medieval revival, Pater's essays would become required reading for a new generation of artists interested in cultivating beauty for its own sake. Many of these artists, we will see, turned to Venetian Renaissance art for their inspiration. These artists will adopt the Giorgionesque idea as Pater had defined it, and would attempt to implement it in their own work. Ruskin's version of Venetianism and the Giorgionesque would not be entirely forgotten, however. We will see in subsequent chapters that Ruskin's social theories would eventually be integrated with Pater's aestheticism to form a new Venetianism for the turn of the twentieth century, a discourse in which Shannon would play a significant role.

"A Rather Venetian Aspect": Venetianism in Victorian Painting, 1840-1880

We noted in a previous chapter that the painter William Etty fostered a brief Venetianist revival at the beginning of the nineteenth century. We also noted that Etty's work was poorly

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[190] Ibid, 190.

received by most critics, who employed anti-Venetianist language in their reviews of his paintings. This hostile environment towards Venetianist painting continued to impact Victorian painters until the early 1860s. Indeed, few Victorian painters from the mid-nineteenth century produced any Venetianist paintings, and those who did so only adopted a Venetianist technique in a few select paintings. The contemporaneous medieval revival also appears to have discouraged most artists from exploring Renaissance art forms.

The situation would change dramatically in the 1860s and 70s. In these decades, several artists consciously infused Venetianist techniques and motifs into their work. This new generation of Venetianist artists were strongly influenced by the Aesthetic Movement, and participated in a general cultural reaction against the preceding generation's medievalism. This Venetianist revival will also play a strong role in Shannon's development as a young painter.

A few artists in the 1840s and 50s experimented with Venetian techniques. However, even for these artists, a Venetianist style was the exception rather than the norm. Two examples will make this situation clear. The painters William Dyce and Charles Eastlake produced a few paintings that can be regarded as Venetianist. However, both artists are best known for adopting the hard-edged contours and sharp colors of fifteenth-century Flemish or Florentine painting. Their choice of style was largely inspired by the Nazarenes, a group of early nineteenth-century German painters who admired, and tried to emulate, the simplicity and piety of early fifteenth-century Italian paintings.[191] In many ways, the Nazarenes anticipated the British Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Dyce and Eastlake, both of whom visited with Nazarene painters while in Rome, were instrumental in introducing the British public to this medieval revival in painting. This is most evident in the Westminster Palace mural project, for which Dyce, Eastlake, and other artists painted scenes from English medieval history in an appropriately medievalized style.

Nevertheless, Dyce and Eastlake sometimes experimented with Venetian techniques. For instance, Dyce painted his Diploma picture for the Royal Academy, *Omnia Vanitas* (1848, Royal Academy of Art) [Figure 37], with layers of varnish over freely-sketched drapery folds. This technique strongly recalls Titian's *Vendramin Family* (1546, National Gallery, London) [Figure 38], particularly in the treatment of red drapery.[192] Furthermore, Dyce depicts the figure of Vanity in the traditional guise of the penitent Mary Magdalene, with her long tresses of hair and

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[191] In 1809, the Nazarenes, under the leadership of Peter von Cornelius and Johann Friedrich Overbeck, established an artistic commune in Rome. Inspired by the medieval traditions of art guilds and by the pious life of Fra Angelico, the Nazarenes styled themselves as the Guild of St. Luke, and lived a nearly monastic lifestyle in a former monastery, San Isidoro, in Rome.

[192] Eastlake discussed this particular technique in his *Materials for a History of Oil Painting* (1847), with which Dyce was familiar. See Helen Glanville, "Victorian Painting Technique: a Craft Reinvented?" in *Art in the Age of Queen Victoria*, ed. Helen Valentine (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1999), 50. Incidentally, the *Vendramin Family* is one of the Titians that once belonged to Van Dyck's collection.

the skull resting under her hand. This subject was quite common in Venetian art, as can be seen in the several versions of *The Magdalene* by Titian.

Dyce's contemporaries recognized the Venetian qualities of *Omnia Vanitas*. For example, the *Athenaeum*'s art critic commented that the painting belonged "rather to this side of the Apennines [namely, Venice] than to the Florentine or Umbrian masters."[193] However, the painting cannot be interpreted as a sustained revival of Venetian painting. As Marcia Pointon reminds us, Dyce painted this work with the Academy in mind; for this, his Diploma picture, he undoubtedly felt strong incentive to demonstrate his full range of technical skills beyond the Nazarene style for which he was best known. The work's Venetianism, then, is almost incidental, serving only to prove Dyce's proficiency as a painter. The fact that Dyce never seems to have repeated this Venetianist experiment supports this conclusion.

Eastlake was more involved with Venetianism than Dyce ever was. As the first full-time Director of the National Gallery, as well as the President of the Royal Academy, Eastlake was intimately familiar with Venetian Renaissance artists and paintings. As stated earlier, Eastlake had edited the first English edition of Kugler's *Handbook*. His knowledge of Venetian art is evident in his paintings of beautiful women, such as *Haidee, a Greek Girl* (1827, Tate Gallery, London) [Figure 41]. These paintings strongly recall Titian's *Flora* (c. 1515, Uffizi) [Figure 39] and *Bella* (1536, Galleria Palatina) [Figure 40]. Indeed, the critic Thomas Utwins praised Eastlake's *Ippolita Torelli* (1851, destroyed; formerly in Tate Gallery, London) [Figure 42] as having "a head of which Titian would be proud."[194]

His painting *Beatrice* was also compared to Titian's paintings. However, this work was also subjected to some strong criticism, particularly by Ruskin. The critic complained that Eastlake had failed to assimilate the spirit of Titian's work, and that the result was only a sterile copy. It was, Ruskin said, only "an imitation of the Venetians, on the supposition that the essence of Venetian painting consisted in method." Ruskin predicted that Eastlake would end as "all imitators must end, in a rich inheritance of the errors of his original, without its virtues." By this, Ruskin means that Eastlake had only succeeded in copying the form of Titian's paintings, while failing to reproduce their spirit, essentially the same criticism which Ruskin had made of Renaissance architecture.

During the 1850s, Ruskin believed that the Pre-Raphaelites' paintings surpassed Eastlake in evoking an authentic spirit of past art. Indeed, the Pre-Raphaelites had shared with Ruskin a dislike of academic art's over-reliance on sixteenth-century models. Young artists like Rossetti, John Everett Millais, and William Holman Hunt looked to medieval and Early Renaissance

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[193] *Athenaeum*, 2 June, 1849, 575-76.
[194] Thomas Utwins to John Townshend, 7 May 1851.

paintings for inspiration, believing that these artworks possessed an honesty and sincerity not to be found in the formulaic models of the Royal Academy.

Ironically, it is with one of these Pre-Raphaelite painters that we first see a sincere Victorian revival of Venetian Renaissance painting, in contradiction to the Pre-Raphaelite rejection of sixteenth-century art. During the 1860s, Rossetti radically changed his style of painting. Beginning with the *Bocca Baciata* of 1859 (Boston Museum of Fine Arts) [Figure 43], Rossetti began painting images of beautiful women divorced from any particular narrative, instead of the religious narratives of the 1840s, such as *The Girlhood of the Virgin Mary* (1848-49, Tate Gallery) [Figure 44]. Rossetti derived the title *Bocca Baciata,* "the kissed mouth," from a sonnet by Boccaccio, whose poems and stories had provided sources for other Pre-Raphaelite artists like Millais and Burne-Jones.[195] However, unlike Millais or Burne-Jones, Rossetti does not provide a narrative context for his painting. Although he depicted the woman with his model Fanny Cornforth's features, Rossetti preferred that it not be regarded as a portrait of any particular person, apparently hoping that it could better be understood as a depiction of a beautiful object, without any personal associations.[196] When regarded as a beautiful woman, rather than as a specific portrait, the *Bocca Baciata* takes on poetic connotations similar to that of Venetian paintings like Palma Vecchio's *Lady with a Lute* (c. 1525, Duke of Northumberland) [Figure 45].

Rossetti certainly had Venetian prototypes in mind while working on this painting. He intentionally adopted a looser, "rapid flesh painting" for the figure's tones, and dressed her in sixteenth-century costume.[197] He also remarked that after starting the painting, it had "taken after all a rather Venetian aspect."[198] Rossetti's contemporaries also noticed this change in tone and temperament from the artist's earlier, Pre-Raphaelite style. Holman Hunt reacted quite angrily to Rossetti's stylistic change, and he was particularly upset that the viewing public was associating this new style with Pre-Raphaelitism. In 1860, Holman Hunt complained that people were describing the *Bocca Baciata* as "a triumph of *our school*" [Holman Hunt's stress]. For him, the painting was simply "advocating as a principal [sic] the mere gratification for the eye," and was only "remarkable for gross sensuality of a revolting kind."[199] Clearly, Holman Hunt

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[195] Lines from Boccaccio's sonnet were carved into the painting's panel: "The mouth that has been kissed loses not its freshness; still it renews itself even as does the moon." Rossetti probably also recognized that the title serves as a pun on Boccaccio's name. See Barbara Bryant's catalogue entry for this painting in *Age of Rossetti, Burne-Jones, and Watts* (cat. no. 2), 96.

[196] Ibid. Rossetti's comments, expressed in a letter to George Price Boyce, are the basis for Bryant's claim that this painting represents "the first moment of Aestheticism."

[197] Virginia Surtees, *The Diaries of George Price Boyce* (Norwich: 1980), 27.

[198] Dante Gabriel Rossetti to George Price Boyce, July 1859. Quoted in Bryant, 96.

[199] William Holman Hunt to Thomas Combe, 12 February 1860 and May 1860. Cited in *Age of Rossetti*, 38, 97.

thought that Rossetti's new Venetianist technique constituted a betrayal of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood's principles.

Despite Holman Hunt's misgivings, Rossetti includes many more references to Venetian paintings in his subsequent work. Grieve and MacLeod have both pointed out that Rossetti's *Fazio's Mistress (Aurelia)* (1863, Tate Britain) [Figure 46] resembles Titian's so-called *Alphonse Ferrare and Laura de Diante* (1513-14, Louvre) [Figure 47], which Rossetti probably saw at the Louvre during an earlier trip to Paris.[200] Rossetti appears to have borrowed from Titian the model's gesture of pulling her hair over her right shoulder. Furthermore, his model, once again Fanny Cornforth, is engaged at her toilet, similar to Titian's many paintings of Venus at her toilet.[201]

Besides similarities in subject and pose, Rossetti's work and Titian's share a common stylistic and aesthetic treatment. Rossetti even uses the same kinds of Indian reds in *Fazio's Mistress* as Titian had used in his own work, and enriches these hues with glazes applied in a manner like Titian's. Rossetti insisted that this painting was "chiefly a piece of colour," and apparently attempted to focus attention on this idea by retitling it *Aurelia*.[202] This retitling removes any narrative associations that the original title may have suggested in its reference to the fourteenth-century poet Fazio. As MacLeod remarks, the new title "diminishes the anecdotal content of [Rossetti's] picture [and] at the same time reveals his obligation to the Venetian emphasis on colour as the primary agent in painting."[203]

Many of Rossetti's other late works display a kinship with Venetian Renaissance paintings. *Monna Vanna* (1866, Tate Britain) [Figure 48] and *Veronica Veronese* (1872, Delaware Museum of Art) [Figure 49] contain similar Venetianist overtones in Rossetti's handling of the paint and glazes as well as in the lack of a narrative context. Moreover, Rossetti originally called the *Monna Vanna* "Venus Veneta," while the *Veronica Veronese* calls to mind the painter Veronese, as well as the city Verona.[204] Rossetti's contemporaries widely remarked on the Venetian aspects of such works; while some, like Holman Hunt, considered Rossetti's Venetianism a detraction, others regarded it as a positive development. Ruskin, who had initially

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[200] Alistair Grieve, *Pre-Raphaelites* (London: Tate Gallery, 1984), no. 123; Dianne Sachko MacLeod, "Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Titian," *Apollo* (January 1985), 36-39.

[201] MacLeod, 36.

[202] Dante Gabriel Rossetti to Ellen Heaton, October 1863. Reproduced in *Letters of Dante Gabriel Rossetti*, ed. Oswald Doughty and J. R Wahl (1965-8), vol. I, 196-7. The term "aurelia" presumably refers to the model's golden hair, which is also a major feature in Fazio's poem.

[203] MacLeod, 37.

[204] Luke Herrman, *Nineteenth-Century British Painting* (London: Giles de la Mare Publishers, 2000), 259-60; *The Age of Rossetti*, 197.

supported Rossetti's medieval-inspired early paintings, was won over to his new style, even declaring that Rossetti was "the nearest Titian–of any man living."[205]

It is worth noting that Ruskin's support for Rossetti's stylistic change mirrors the critic's own change of aesthetics after his 1858 unconversion. As we have seen, one result of his experience was a greater appreciation for Venetian Renaissance paintings. His opinions on the Pre-Raphaelites underwent a similar change, as he now found Rossetti's earlier, medieval-inspired works to be distasteful for their "stiffness and quaintness."[206]

Ruskin also expressed support for George Frederic Watts, whose painting style, like Rossetti's, contains strong references to Venetian art. Throughout his career, Watts was primarily interested in sixteenth-century Italian painting, and never shared the Pre-Raphaelites' enthusiasm for medieval and fifteenth-century art. Watts's work also demonstrates connections with Pater's aesthetics, providing further evidence of the link between Venetianism and Aestheticism in Late Victorian art.

Watts's interest in High Renaissance art dates back to his earliest artistic productions. In 1843, Watts submitted an entry to the semi-annual Westminster Palace mural competition.[207] While most of Watts's competitors submitted designs in a style similar to the Nazarenes, Watts's entry, *Caractacus* (Collection of Ronald Chapman) [Figure 50], bears more similarities with Etty's Rubenesque compositions. Despite the possible stylistic disharmony between his work and the other, more medievalizing scenes, Watts won a £300 first prize.[208] With this money, Watts was able to make a life-changing journey to Italy.

Watts spent the next four years in Italy, mostly in Florence. There, Watts was deeply impressed with Michelangelo's monumental sculptures. At the same time, he studied Titian's paintings in Florentine galleries, including the Uffizi and the Pitti Palace. An examination of Watts's paintings reveals that he derived much of his painting style from Titian, despite his professed allegiance to Michelangelo and classical Greek art. Watts executed his paintings with scumbling and strong impasto, as is clearly seen in works like *Paolo and Francesca* (c. 1872-84; Watts Gallery, Compton) [Figure 51]. In the search for lively and interesting textures, he would

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[205] MacLeod, 36.
[206] Ibid.
[207] This contest invited artists to submit cartoons for proposed frescoes to decorate the recently rebuilt House of Parliament. After the public success of the first contest in 1842, the government committee responsible for the palace's decoration decided to hold further competitions, which nearly became an annual event during the 1840s. These competitions did not always offer commissions to the winners, although they did award prize money. For a good overview of the Westminster Palace competition in all its complexities, see Julian Treuherz, *Victorian Painting* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1993), 41-51.
[208] Watts did not receive a commission to paint *Caractacus*, although he was later commissioned to paint a large canvas scene oil on canvas ofof King Alfred, a work which to this day is displayed at the House of Lords. *Alfred Inciting the Saxons to Resist the Landing of the Danes* (1847); this work was intended for the House of Commons, where it remains to this day.

apply the paint with paper, rags, and sometimes his own fingers, in addition to more conventional paintbrushes. His colors and glazes call to mind Venetian prototypes, even though Watts rarely copied any particular Renaissance painting.

Certain of Watts's themes can be correlated with Venetian art. Paintings like *A Study with the Peacock Feathers* (c. 1862-5, Pre-Raphaelite Inc.) [Figure 52] and *The Three Goddesses* (c. 1865-72; Faringdon Collection Trust) [Figure 53] are remarkable for presenting the female nude without any associative or narrative connotations. Watts intended the former painting as an artistic exercise, as its title suggests. In it, he depicted a nude blonde woman, with sumptuous fabrics and accessories such as pearls and the eponymous peacock feathers. The figure calls to mind Titian and Giorgione's paintings of Venus; the richness of the fabric colors are similar to *The Venus of Urbino*, while the figure's pose, with one arm over her head, resembles that of Giorgione's *Venus* (Dresden) or Titian's *Venus of Pardo* (1540, Louvre) [Figure 54].

Watts's *Three Goddesses* similarly represents the female nude without any narrative references. Although it would later be called the *Judgement of Paris*, Watts never assigned it a particular title. The three figures lack any attributes that would identify them as Juno, Minerva, and Venus; they could just as easily be the Three Graces.[209] While the figures can be related to classical sculptures, they also resemble nudes from Titian's paintings. The right-hand figure in Watts's composition is remarkably similar to a figure in Titian's *Diana and Callisto* (1559, then exhibited at London's Bridgewater House; today in Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland) [Figure 55].

Watts's later paintings form a curious parallel with Titian's late work. As with the Renaissance painter, Watts's brushwork becomes increasingly loose; his paintings from the 1890s, like *"She Shall be Called Woman"* (c. 1888-92, Tate Britain) [Figure 56] are characterized by vigorous and dynamic swirls of paint. These works sometimes verge on abstraction, as in *The Sower of the Systems* (c. 1902, Watts Gallery, Compton) [Figure 57], in which the advancing figure is almost entirely lost amid swirls of color and thickly applied paint. This looser and rougher technique is similar to that seen in Titian's late paintings, like the Munich *Crowning with Thorns* (1570/75; Alte Pinakothek) [Figure 58] and *The Annunciation* (1559-62, San Salvador, Venice) [Figure 59]. Incidentally, Watts took to wearing a skullcap in his advanced age [Figure 60]; with this cap and his short white beard, Watts increasingly resembled Titian's own features, as depicted in a late self-portrait (1567-68; Madrid, Prado) [Figure 61]. Both artistically and personally, Watts seems to have modeled himself after Titian.

[209] In fact, the painting was first exhibited at the Deschamps Gallery under the title *The Three Graces*. By the 1880s, however, it had become identified as the *Judgement of Paris*. See *Age of Rossetti*, 114-115.

Watts and Rossetti are the two most significant Venetianist painters of the 1870s and 80s. However, a number of other artists from this time experimented with Venetianist techniques, even though none were as consistently Venetianist as Rossetti or Watts. Lord Leighton is a good example of an occasional Venetianist. Leighton's preferred style was of a Neo-Classical lineage; his highly-finished, glossy painting surfaces are more in keeping with the academic techniques taught at the Royal Academy.

Nevertheless, Leighton greatly admired Venetian art, and even owned a number of Venetian works in his personal collection of art.[210] Occasionally, his respect for the Venetians emerges in his own paintings, most particularly in *Golden Hours* (c. 1864, collection of George Christie) [Figure 62]. Representing a man playing the piano while his female lover watches, this painting has drawn comparisons to Giorgione's work, particularly in regard to the twin themes of love and music.[211] The woman's brocaded dress and puffed sleeves call to mind Venetian costume as seen in Veronese's paintings, while the poetic atmosphere and lack of any obvious narrative infuse the work with a powerfully Giorgionesque feel.

Other painters who occasionally incorporated Venetianist traits include Alfred Stevens and Albert Moore. Stevens, whose work typically drew from Michelangelo and Central Italian art for inspiration, sometimes borrowed Venetian brushwork in such paintings as his portrait of John Morris Moore.[212] Albert Moore occasionally depicted poetic themes that reveal the influence of Venetian *poesia* paintings, even though he derived his predominant style from Classical Greek art. The lack of overt narratives in Moore's work often suggests a Giorgionesque quality, as in *A Musician* (c. 1867, collection of Robert Isaacson) [Figure 63], which features the typically Venetian theme of music, even though the figures' drapery is copied almost directly from the Elgin Marbles. Moore frequently followed Rossetti's example in representing solitary, beautiful women lost in reverie or completely asleep, a theme which Rossetti had borrowed from Giorgione and Titian's Venuses.

From the 1860s onward, Venetianism increased in popularity among British artists. However, it was not until the 1880s that the Victorian viewing public became familiar with this stylistic idiom. This is due to the fact that Rossetti and Watts's Venetianist paintings were not well known outside their circle of friends, as neither Rossetti nor Watts regularly exhibited at

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[210] *Victorian High Renaissance* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Institute of Arts, 1978), 106.
[211] Ibid, 106-107.
[212] See Towndrow, *The Works of Alfred Stevens*, xxi. Incidentally, Ricketts and Shannon owned Steves's portrait of Leonard W. Collmann, which was compared to Shannon's own work. Ricketts remarked of it that "at its birth, Titian and Ingres stood sponsors; at the birth of Shannon, Titian and Velazquez." See Ricketts's diaries, 5 February, 1901.

such popular venues as the Royal Academy.[213] Although Watts had been producing allegorical works with strong Venetianist traits since 1848, these paintings were virtually unknown to most viewers until a massive exhibit (1881-82) of his work appeared at the Grosvesnor Gallery.[214] Similarly, most viewers identified Rossetti with his earlier Pre-Raphaelite style, as only the artists' close friends were familiar with his later, more Venetianist images. In 1883, a year after Rossetti's death, a large retrospective of Rossetti's work was shown at the Burlington Fine Arts Club and then at the Royal Academy. This exhibit, like Watts's, introduced a wider range of the viewing public to Venetianist paintings.

In the early years of the 1880s, then, the Victorian art public was presented with two monumental exhibitions of Venetianist art in quick succession. These exhibits would have cemented a cultural association between Venetianism and Aestheticism, as initiated by Walter Pater. In their work, Rossetti and Watts attempted to represent beautiful images largely divorced from narrative contexts, and infused with a poetic or musical sensibility. This endeavor mirrors Pater's description of the Giorgionesque as a perfect fusion of form and content, an kind of art that strives for the kind of abstract harmony that music expresses.

The viewing public of the 1880s would have included the young Ricketts and Shannon, who at the time were attending art school in south London. The Watts and Rossetti exhibits may very well have been the artists' introduction to Venetianist art, and they were deeply impressed by the quality of the exhibited paintings. The impact of the Rossetti exhibit was so powerful that it actually moved Ricketts to tears.[215] Of the emotionally reserved Shannon, no response is recorded. However, as we will see when we examine his work, Shannon must have been equally impressed with both Rossetti and with the idea of Venetianist painting.

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[213] On Rossetti, see Elizabeth Prettejohn, *After the Pre-Raphaelites: Art and Aestheticism in Victorian England* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1999), 40.

[214] See Barbara Bryant, "G. F. Watts at the Grosvenor Gallery" in *The Grosvenor Gallery: a Palace of Art in Victorian England*, ed. Susan P. Casteras and Colleen Denney (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 109-128. The 1881-82 exhibit, "Collection of the Works of G. F. Watts, R.A.," featured nearly two hundred of Watts's paintings.

[215] Delaney, *Charles Ricketts*, 35.

CHAPTER 4

VENETIANISM IN SHANNON'S WORK

"Shannon looks as if he had the will of a Titan to be Titian," Michael Fields wrote in their diary in 1900. "But can he manage the extra vowel, O Fate?"[216] As this reference suggests, Shannon's contemporaries fully recognized the artist's desire to emulate the painters of the Venetian Renaissance. Since Shannon's day, Victorianist art historians have continued to characterize his work primarily as a revival of Venetian art. Nevertheless, the nature of this revival is still not well understood. To understand Shannon's role in late Victorian and Edwardian art, the significance of Venetian art for Shannon and his audience needs to be more closely studied.

To this end, we have surveyed the history of Venetianism as a discourse in British art and culture. This survey has revealed that British revivals of Venetian art were never purely for the sake of revivalism. Each period of British art attached particular meanings to particular Venetian paintings, and the case is no different with Shannon's generation.

Furthermore, the exact focus of Venetianism had frequently shifted over the ages. While seventeenth-century audiences identified Venetian art primarily with the elegance of Titian's portraits, eighteenth-century artists and patrons tended to focus, albeit negatively, on the sensuality of Venetian nudes and mythological scenes. Ruskin concentrated on the honest labor of Giorgione and anonymous medieval artisans, whereas Pater preferred the lyrical, purposeless beauty of the "Giorgionesque."

The various stages of Venetianism are relevant to Shannon's work, as Shannon could only approach Venetian art through these past interpretations. Although Shannon frequently visited galleries in London and Europe to study the Venetian masters firsthand, he was also acutely aware of the works of past Venetianist painters, like Van Dyck, Reynolds, and Rossetti. Of perhaps even greater influence were the writings of Victorian critics on Venetian art, particularly Ruskin and Pater. These two critics are especially relevant to any understanding of Shannon, for not only was Shannon affected by their ideas, but so were his critics. In fact, many of Shannon's critics reacted to his Venetianism in the same way that Ruskin and Pater had to Venetian art. Their responses indicate how deeply Ruskinian and Paterian Venetianism had affected English culture.

[216] Michael Field [Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper], 22 October, 1900. "Michael Field" was the nom de plume adopted by the poet-partnership of Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper, who published their jointly-authored poems under this name. The name became so closely associated with the two women that everyone, even their friends, referred to them collectively as "Michael Field," "the Fields," or "the Michaels."

On one level, Shannon's artwork functions as a cross-section of earlier Venetianisms, and incorporates references as varying and even contradictory as Van Dyck's aristocratic refinement and Ruskin's work ethic. This is not to say that Shannon did not contribute any personal response to the Venetianist discourse. In fact, I will be arguing in the subsequent chapter that Shannon played a vital role in developing the idea of a modernist Venetianism. However, Shannon's responses to and awareness of previous interpretations of Venetian art need to be studied first.

Shannon Van Dyck, and Titian: Venetianist Portraiture

In his monograph on Shannon's work, E. B. George divided Shannon's paintings into two principal categories: portraiture and figurative designs. For both of these categories, Shannon's work draws upon Venetian and Venetianist sources. However, the kinds of sources differed according to the respective format. For his portraits, Shannon looked to the precedents set by Van Dyck and Titian in their own portraits. In these kinds of works, Shannon encountered the royalist Venetianism that characterized much of seventeenth-century art. However, as we will see, Shannon did not simply imitate the style or spirit of Van Dyck's portraits; he would adapt Van Dyck's Venetianism for his particular audience.

Shannon always held Van Dyck's works in great esteem. He and Ricketts were proud owners of the *Portrait of Archbishop Laud*, a painting from Van Dyck's studio which they believed to be an original Van Dyck.[217] Shannon also regularly visited public collections to study their Flemish Baroque paintings. In 1900, the National Gallery held an exhibition honoring the 300th anniversary of Van Dyck's birth. Shannon repeatedly returned to the exhibit throughout the course of its run, and recorded many of his impressions in his diary.[218]

Shannon was already familiar with Van Dyck's work before this exhibit. In 1883, he and Ricketts visited Antwerp, and certainly would have studied local collections of Van Dyck and Rubens's work.[219] In 1897, Shannon exhibited one of his first paintings, a portrait of Kate Hargood entitled *A Souvenir of Van Dyck* (1897, National Gallery, Melbourne) [Figure 64]. This portrait depicts the young woman dressed in satin, with culottes and a hat. Like his Flemish predecessor, Shannon delighted in painting the textures of satin, with flashes of light captured in quick brushstrokes. Furthermore, various figurative motifs in the painting recall Van Dyck

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[217] The original version of this portrait is in the Hermitage collection at St. Petersburg. See Darracott, *The World of Charles Ricketts* (New York: Methuen, 1980), 124-125.

[218] Shannon visited the exhibition on at least nine separate occasions. See 1900 diary: 1, 8, 11, 22, and 29 January; 5, 12, and 19 February; and 5 March.

[219] J. G. P. Delaney, *Charles Ricketts: a Biography* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 33. As no diaries or letters survive from this time, this trip is not very well documented.

portraits; for instance, the young woman's handling of the glove is similar to Thomas Hamner's gesture in Van Dyck's portrait (1638, The Weston Park Foundation) [Figure 65], a motif which is also found in the double portrait of *Lord John Stuart and his Brother, Lord Bernard Stuart* (c. 1638, National Gallery of Art, London) [Figure 66]. This latter portrait depicts Lord Bernard Stuart in a pose not very different from Hargood's stance: nearly in profile, with head turned to look over the shoulder at the viewer. Of all of Van Dyck's portraits, however, Hargood's figure most closely resembles that of Prince William of Orange in the double portrait, *Princess Mary Stuart and Prince William of Orange* (1641, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam) [Figure 67]; indeed, the prince's lower body is nearly a mirror image of Hargood's stance, even down to the positioning of the feet.

While these figurative motifs may justify the "Van Dyck" reference of the title, Shannon's portrait otherwise lacks a feature that would most readily identify it as Van Dyckian. Most conspicuously, she lacks the extravagant, lacy collar that is most commonly associated with Van Dyck's portraits. Furthermore, a woman or a young girl in the seventeenth century would not wear breeches, a conspicuously masculine garb.

The style of dress that Miss Hargood wears is not, in fact, Van Dyckian, but more accurately eighteenth-century French. Shannon referred to this style as "marmiton," presumably because the floppy hat resembles a chef's hat.[220] The "marmiton"-like hat, along with the culottes and flowing satin coat, is frequently found in Watteau's paintings, such as *The Concert* (Wallace Collection). Shannon used the dress style on at least one other occasion, when he painted a double portrait, *Rose and Blanche* (1899, private collection).[221]

The inclusion of Watteauesque elements indicates that Shannon often combined motifs from various Venetianist painters. Watteau, after all, was the representative of the "Rubeniste" tradition in Europe, which itself was descended from Venetian paintings, and as a Belgian painter he was in many ways the heir to Van Dyck. This does not mean that Shannon considered Venetianist artists interchangeable; instead, he seems to have recognized the shared aristocratic refinement of both Van Dyck's portraits and Watteau's *fêtes galantes*, and it is this spirit that he tries to impart onto his portraits.

At the same time that he looked to Venetianist artists as sources, Shannon also looked back to the original Venetians. In fact, in Shannon's portraits, one often detects strong references to Titian's portraits, often coinciding with Van Dyckian references. This can be seen particularly well in a set of portraits that Shannon painted over a two-year period, from 1897-98. Along with *A Souvenir of Van Dyck*, these portraits are among Shannon's earliest exhibited

[220] The French culinary term "marmiton" translates roughly as an assistant to a head chef.
[221] Shannon also painted a study for this portrait, which is entitled *Les Marmitons* (1897, London: Tate Gallery).

paintings. They include a self-portrait, called *The Man in a Black Shirt* (1897, National Portrait Gallery, London) [Figure 68] and a portrait of Ricketts, called *The Man in an Inverness Cape* (1898, National Portrait Gallery, London) [Figure 69]. These two portraits are usually considered as pendants, and, indeed, have been exhibited as such for most of their history. After exhibiting them at the New English Art Club, Shannon sold them to Sir Edmund Davis, who kept them together for the rest of his life. Today, the portraits remain together, in the Victorian gallery at the National Portrait Gallery in London.

Although they were executed as separate paintings, these two portraits have been considered as a unit for so long that one almost thinks of them as a double portrait. The paintings are of the same size, and the same square format. They share almost the same monochromatic palette of blacks, browns, and greys, and the neutral background is nearly continuous through both portraits, except for the molding that appears on the wall behind Ricketts. In later years, Shannon would work on an actual double portrait of himself and Ricketts (1907; destroyed).[222] Shannon was apparently never satisfied with this later portrait, however, and eventually destroyed the painting. However, he continued to experiment with the idea of a double portrait of himself and Ricketts, as a 1928 sketch reveals (Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge).

This idea of painting oneself and a fellow artist may have been inspired by Van Dyck, who had painted a double portrait of himself and the painter Endymion Porter (c. 1635, Prado, Madrid) [Figure 70]. In this case then, Shannon's two portraits might be considered collectively as a reference to Van Dyck. However, certain features complicate this conclusion. For one, this set of portraits should actually be considered a triptych rather than a diptych, for Shannon also painted a portrait of his close friend Thomas Sturge Moore, in a work called *The Man with a Yellow Glove* (1897, Agnews Gallery, London) [Figure 71]. The Moore portrait shares the same format, palette, and size as the other two portraits. It was with the Moore portrait that Shannon first received international recognition as a painter, as it was awarded a gold medal in Munich in 1898.

The color scheme and composition in all three of these portraits cannot be considered Van Dyckian. Van Dyck always used a more colorful palette, and usually set the sitter against a background with voluminous drapery and other textural surfaces. The neutral background in Shannon's portraits is associated more closely with Titian, and artists who followed Titian's precedent, like Velazquez and Rembrandt. One such Titian portrait is the *Portrait of a Man (the Cobham "Ariosto")* (1508-10, National Gallery of Art, London) [Figure 72], a painting which was acquired by the National Gallery in 1904. Another example is the portrait reputedly of

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[222] See Delaney, *Charles Ricketts*, 188.

Jacopo Sannazaro (c. 1511-12) [Figure 73], in the Hampton Court collection, of which Shannon made a copy in 1900.[223] This portrait features the sitter wearing a black cloak against a neutral grey-green background, and holding a book, a page of which he marks with his finger. In many ways, Shannon's portrait of Ricketts recalls this Titian portrait, although the book in Ricketts' portraits lies upon a table instead of in the sitter's hands.

These early portraits recall other Titian portraits. In particular, the muted colors and the square formats recall *The Man with a Glove* (1520/25, Paris: Louvre) [Figure 74] and the so-called *Young Englishman* (1544-45, Florence: Galleria Palatina) [Figure 75]. Shannon's confident gaze in *The Man in the Black Shirt*, with his face turned in three-quarters, is quite similar to *Ippolito dei Medici* (1532-34, Florence: Galleria Palatina) [Figure 76]. In the *Man with a Yellow Glove*, Moore handles his glove in a manner that recalls not only Van Dyck portraits, but also Titian's *Man with a Glove* and, especially, the *Portrait of a Man* from the Halifax collection (c. 1515-20, London: on loan to the National Gallery) [Figure 77]. As in the Moore portrait, the latter portrait by Titian depicts the sitter at a balustrade, upon which he rests the glove. *The Man in an Inverness Cape* recalls the Titian portrait of Jacopo Sannazaro, as we have already seen; Ricketts' lost profile in this portrait also calls to mind Titian's portrait of Francis I of France (1538, Paris: Louvre) [Figure 78].

Shannon's references to Van Dyck and Titian in these early portraits served several purposes. On the most basic level, they announced to the world Shannon's connoisseurship and erudition. These were his first exhibited works in oil, and they demonstrated to the viewer how well versed Shannon was in the history of portrait painting. The references to Titian and Van Dyck's portraits also confer upon the sitters an appearance of aristocratic elegance. Hargood's stance reminds one of Prince William of Orange, while Shannon's gaze is reminiscent of Ippolito dei Medici. All of the portraits recall various Titian portraits of aristocrats in their format and palette. In this sense, the portraits introduce the sitters as though they were aristocrats.

Shannon's early portraits do not depict actual aristocrats, however, and throughout his career he would only paint a few portraits of actual members of British nobility.[224] Most of

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[223] The identification of the sitter has never been firmly settled. It was sometimes mistakenly identified as Alessandro de' Medici, as Ricketts points out in his book on Titian. The identification with Sannazaro is similarly rejected by most Titian scholars. Shannon's copy is today in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. See Shannon's 1900 diary, 6, 19-21 June, 6, 13, 27 July, and 10, 17, 24 August, entries which record Shannon's progress on this copy.

[224] Exceptions include portraits of the Late Marquis of Northampton (c. 1910; The British and Foreign Bible Society), the Earl of Sandwich (1916-17; private collection), and, most notably, Princess Patricia of Connaught (1917-1918; Ottawa), a granddaughter of Queen Victoria. Interestingly, Shannon's commission for Princess Patricia's portrait was actually the result of a gratuitous error, as the princess had only arrived at his studio after confusing him with different painter of the same surname, James Jebusa Shannon, an American painter who specialized in aristocratic portraits. Fortunately for Charles Shannon, she was sufficiently impressed with the

Shannon's sitters are from his circle of friends and fellow artists. However, the visual references to Titian and Van Dyck paintings and Shannon's choice of ambiguous titles deliberately invite comparisons to many of Titian's portraits of nobility. Several of Titian's portraits are of unidentified individuals—*The Man with a Glove*, *The "Young Englishman"*, *The Man with a Falcon*—who are only referred to by their outward appearance or by attributes that they hold. Shannon's sitters are given similar monikers, identified with something they wear, like a black shirt or an Inverness cape, something they hold, like a glove, or with a fanciful association, like a Van Dyck portrait. Throughout his career, Shannon would continue to give his portraits such vague yet suggestive titles, such as *The Lady with a Cyclamen* (portrait of the Hon. Mrs. Chaloner Dowdall; 1899, Liverpool: Walker Art Gallery) [Figure 79], *The Lady with a Feather* (portrait of Esther Deacon; 1903, Venice: Ca' Pesaro) [Figure 80], *The Sculptress* (portrait of Kathleen Young, née Bruce; 1907, Paris: Musée d'Orsay) [Figure 81], *The Lady with the Amethyst* (portrait of Hilda Moore; 1915, London: Tate Gallery), and *The Man with the Greek Vase* (portrait of Charles Ricketts; 1916, Royal Leamington Spa Art Gallery) [Figure 82].

By including these visual and textual motifs that recall Van Dyck's and, in particular, Titian's portraits, Shannon essentially elevates his sitters to a status befitting aristocrats. He does so by calling upon past Venetianist discourses. Van Dyck's royalism certainly plays a role here. Just as Van Dyck had flattered Charles I of England by depicting him like the Emperor Charles V, Shannon depicts himself and his friends in manners that resemble Titian's portraits of both famous and anonymous noblemen and women.

However, Shannon did not intend for his sitters to be entirely unidentifiable. He usually includes attributes that identify the person's occupation or interests. In most of his self-portraits, Shannon depicts himself as an artist. In a 1917 self-portrait (Cambridge: Fitzwilliam Museum) [Figure 83], he is in the midst of painting: wearing a painter's smock, he grips one paintbrush between his lips as he begins to paint on a canvas with another brush. The canvas represented in the painting bears a faint outline, apparently of the very same self-portrait. Shannon had already depicted himself as an artist in the *Man in a Black Shirt*, although here he referred to another field of his artistry, namely, his lithography. He holds an opened portfolio, from which he has apparently withdrawn a couple of lithographs, which lie on a table in the immediate foreground. Two more portfolios rest against the wall in the background. These presumably refer to the three portfolios of lithographs that Shannon published from 1893-1895.[225] By depicting himself as a

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portraits in his studio to request a portrait from his as well. See Darracott, 70-71. Significantly, these few aristocratic portraits date to the later part of Shannon's career.

[225] The three portfolios are known as: *Early Lithographs* (1893), with lithographs R2-R7; *Six Lithographs (Portfolio No. 2)* (1894), with R8, R20, R23, R25, R26, and R28; and *A Portfolio of Lithographs (Portfolio No. 3)* (1895), with R15, R22, R29, R31, R33, and R34. See Delaney, *The Lithographs of Charles Shannon*, 19.

lithographer, Shannon is reminding his 1897 audience of his established reputation in printmaking. The fact that the portrait's medium is oil painting suggests that Shannon wants to demonstrate the continuity between his artistic skills as a lithographer, and his skills as a yet unproven painter.

Yet another self-portrait depicts Shannon as an artist, but with a clue to a different activity. This self-portrait, also known as *The Marble Torso*, (1907; whereabouts unknown) [Figure 84] depicts Shannon seated in the foreground. He holds in his lap a portfolio of his lithographs, similar to the ones seen in the 1897 self-portrait. At least one of these lithographs, which Shannon holds in his left hand, can be identified with an actual print by Shannon, *Salt Water* (1895, R 36) [Figure 85]. Shannon also presents himself in a second guise: as an art collector. Since he and Ricketts amassed a large collection of paintings, drawings, and sculptures from various ages and cultures, it is appropriate that Shannon should refer to this other field of his activity. Such references include a fragmented Greek statue standing in the background, which is actually based on a Praxitelean sculpture of Apollo that Shannon and Ricketts owned [Figure 86]. That sculpture, a depiction of Apollo Sauroktonos, was housed in Shannon's studio at Lansdowne House; it is today in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge (GR 94). On a table in front of the sculpture rests another Greek item, a red-figure kylix. This kylix can be identified with a particular vase from Ricketts and Shannon's collection, one which depicts a satyr within the bowl (Cambridge: Fitzwilliam Museum, GR.17.1937).

The kylix makes a second, and more prominent, appearance in a portrait of Ricketts, *The Man with the Greek Vase* (1916, Royal Leamington Spa Art Gallery). Like Shannon's self-portrait, this portrait calls attention to Ricketts's interests in collecting. The earlier portrait of Ricketts, *The Man in an Inverness Cape*, depicts Ricketts neither painting nor holding a piece from their art collection; it instead refers to Ricketts's literary skills. Besides being an artist, Ricketts also wrote art criticism, and would publish three major books (*Pages on Art*, 1913; *The Prado and its Masterpieces*, 1903; and *Titian*, 1910) as well as numerous articles. In Shannon's 1898 portrait of Ricketts, a book rests upon a table in the foreground, with a page marked with a calling card bearing Shannon's signature. Also on the table are papers and a quill-pen. In a letter, Ricketts described his appearance in the painting as "turning away from the 20th century to think only of the 15th," and he imagined that "the book at my side has been sent to me by Aretino with a hint that a silk doublet would be acceptable."[226] By making imaginative allusions to the Renaissance and the famous Venetian writer Aretino, Ricketts's reaction to the portrait demonstrates that Shannon was right to emphasize Ricketts's literary side.

[226] Ricketts's letters to Michael Field, 16 and 30 November 1898.

Other portraits of Shannon's friends and associates also emphasize the sitter's activities and interests. *The Sculptress* depicts the young Kathleen Bruce, with whom Shannon had a brief romance before she married the explorer Captain Robert Falcon Scott. She was also an artist, and had studied sculpture in Paris before living in London. Shannon portrays her wearing an artist's smock as she carves a small figurative sculpture. On a ledge behind her rests an unshaped lump of stone and a pair of calipers, further allusions to her artistic trade. Shannon exhibited this portrait at the Paris Salon in 1909, and it was purchased by the French government for the Luxembourg collection.

Shannon had also earned international acclaim with another portrait of a woman: *The Lady with a Feather*, which was purchased by the Commune of Venice after it was exhibited at the Venetian Venice Biennale in 1909. The sitter is this portrait can be identified as Esther Deacon, who was Shannon's lover and principal model over a three-year period, from 1903-1906. She is depicted seated on a divan, wearing a ruffled dress and a hat. She holds a feather in her left hand, and pulls at one of its plumes with her right hand. Although she modelled for Shannon, Deacon worked primarily as a dress-maker, and Shannon, who often sought dress-makers as well as models for his paintings, probably met her in this role.[227] The dress she wears in the portrait was very likely one of her creations. The feather that she holds is probably intended for a hat, a reference to her skill at making hats as well as dresses.[228]

The idea of including motifs that identify the sitter's occupation or interests is also found in Venetian portraits, especially Titian's. For instance, Titian depicted Jacopo Strada (1568, Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum) [Figure 87] in his role as an art dealer; Strada holds a classical statue of Venus in his hands, while antique coins and medals lie scattered on the table before him. In his late self-portrait (c. 1560, Madrid: Prado), Titian depicted himself holding a paintbrush, a reference to his livelihood. Titian frequently included books in portraits as a reference to the sitter's writing skills or to his education, as in the portrait of the Florentine historian Benedetto Varchi (c. 1540-43, Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum) [Figure 88]; the portrait of Cristoforo Madruzzo, a cardinal who was an active force at the Council of Trent (1552, Sao Paulo: Museu de Arte) [Figure 89]; the portrait of the scholar and ambassador Daniele Barbaro (c. 1545, Madrid: Prado) [Figure 90]; and the aforementioned "Sannazaro" portrait of Jacopo Sannazaro.

Although Titian's portraits of women usually emphasized their beauty rather than their interests or activities, the portrait of Isabella d'Este (1534-36, Vienna: Kunsthistorisches

[227] Her occupation is listed in the 1901 UK Census is as a dressmaker. This occupation seems to have been passed down to her from her mother, who was listed in the 1881 Census as a dressmaker, too. For Shannon's contacts with dress-makers and models, see the appendix pages in his 1902 diary.
[228] See Shannon's diaries, 29 May 1903, 20 April 1904.

Museum) [Figure 91] might be compared in some ways to Shannon's *Lady with a Feather*. While Titian does not include any references to Isabella's avid interest in, and sponsorship of, the arts and sciences, he does depict her dressed in an extravagant costume, with intricate gold and silver patterns embroidered on her sleeves, and wearing a turban-like headdress. Isabella was in fact renowned for her innovative fashion tastes, in particular for her turbans and decorative patterns that she designed in gold and silver.[229]

For his portraits, then, Shannon drew many conceptual as well as figurative motifs from Titian and his Venetianist followers. By doing so, he was simultaneously able to promote his portraiture and the work of his friends and associates. These portraits do not serve exactly the same function as Van Dyck's; whereas Van Dyck drew upon Titian's models in order to provide his aristocratic patrons with images that confirmed their preconceived notions of divine right, Shannon borrows the same kind of Venetianism to ennoble, in essence, himself and his friends. From the reputation that he gained with his portraits, Shannon would go on to receive commissions from wealthier individuals, although he would never be considered a regular painter of aristocrats. Furthermore, Shannon's portraits demonstrate that, while Shannon paid his respects to Van Dyck and other Venetianists, he would also draw heavily from original Venetian sources in developing his own language.

However, it is not in the field of portraiture that Shannon made him most meaningful engagements with Venetianism. His figurative paintings, George's second category, reveal to us Shannon's most involved reactions to previous Venetianisms, including Ruskinian and Paterian Venetianism, as well as eighteenth-century Venetianism.

Shannon and the Nude in Late Victorian Art

The nude is a recurring theme throughout Shannon's work. Shannon's involvement with this subject was recently recognized in an exhibition of *The Victorian Nude*, which featured one of Shannon's major paintings, *The Bath of Venus* (1898-1904, London: Tate Britain) [Figure 92]. As a Victorian painter, Shannon was hardly unique in painting female nudes. Many Victorian artists, including Lord Leighton, Albert Moore, and Alma-Tadema, specialized in nude figures. What differentiates Shannon's nudes from his contemporaries is their degree of Venetianism. Whereas most of his contemporaries painted nudes with the cool hues and porcelain-like skin of the Neo-Classical tradition, Shannon evoked the sensual and coloristic traditions of Etty, Rubens, Giorgione, and Titian.

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[229] Sylvia Ferino, "Portrait of Isabella d'Este," in *Titian: Prince of Painters* (Munich: Prestel, 1990), 218.

As we have seen with Reynolds and Etty, British artists who painted nude figures in a Venetianist style were often censured by moralistic critics. Neo-Classical artists usually could avoid scandal by citing classical Greece and Platonic idealism as their model, even though this course was not always free of criticism, as Alma-Tadema discovered when he exhibited *A Sculptor's Model* (1877, private collection) [Figure 93], a painting that depicts a female model in ancient Greece wearing nothing but a fillet in her hair.[230]

Nevertheless, artists who based their nude figurative designs on classical art were usually able to avert moral outrage. Whenever Late Victorian artists were indeed attacked as purveying smut with their nude imagery, they were typically upbraided for indulging in overly realistic portrayals of the nude, at the expense of classical traditions. This dichotomy between classical idealism and vulgar realism roughly parallels the traditional opposition of linear art versus colorism, as upheld by artists like Reynolds. Many Victorian painters, like Lord Leighton, would be careful to promote linear draftsmanship over colorism, perhaps to assure that their nudes would not be considered overly sensuous.[231]

By the 1880s, however, most critics and museum visitors had accepted Venetian nudes as works of high art rather than pornography. Even the more prudish critics, like J. C. Horsley, tended to exempt Titian from any charges of obscenity.[232] To safeguard further against any moral doubts, many Venetianist painters incorporated classical allusions into their paintings. For instance, Watts would design his figures after the Elgin marbles, while painting them with the colors and atmosphere of Venetian Renaissance paintings. His *Ariadne on Naxos* (1875, Guildhall Art Gallery, London) [Figure 94] is an excellent example of this marriage between classical design and Venetianist style: the figure of Ariadne is closely based upon fifth-century Greek sculptures, like the *Three Goddesses* from the Parthenon's western facade, but she is painted with colors and brushwork that evoke Titian's *poesia* paintings. Similarly, Watts's *Wife of Pygmalion* (1868; Buscot Park, Oxfordshire: the Faringdon Collection Trust) [Figure 95] was designed after a classical bust called "Sappho," but which Watts believed was a portrait of Aspasia, the mistress of Pericles (in the Arundel collection, Oxford: Ashmolean Museum).[233] However, its rich colors and composition make references to Venetian paintings of beautiful women, like Titian's *Flora*.

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[230] This painting provoked the wrath of the Bishop of Carlisle, who wrote that "for a living artist to exhibit a life-size life-like almost photographic representation of a beautiful naked woman strikes my inartistic mind as somewhat if not very mischievous."

[231] Alison Smith, *The Victorian Nude* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 88; 115-116.

[232] Ibid, 227-228.

[233] Alison Smith in *Exposed: the Victorian Nude*, ed. Alison Smith (New York: Watson-Guptill Publishers, 2001), 201.

Like Watts, Shannon often used ancient Greek sculptures as sources. However, he rarely referred to Classical fifth-century sculptures. More often, his sources lay in the more sensual style of Hellenistic art, a period which many Victorians regarded as decadent and overwrought.[234] For his painting, *The Bath of Venus*, Shannon studied Hellenistic sculptures of Aphrodite, readily available to him in London collections like the British Museum [Figure 96]. In his diary, Shannon also recorded a visit to the Crystal Palace (then located at Sydenham in south London) where, in preparation for *The Bath of Venus*, he sketched the torso from a cast of an antique sculpture.[235] Shannon borrowed the theme of Venus at her bath from Hellenistic art, which was a popular subject with Greek artists from the fourth-century B.C. on. The manner in which Shannon's Venus wrings water from her hair is based on images of the Venus Anadyomene, a theme that depicts Venus rising from the sea after her birth. Made famous by the Greek painter Apelles, the Venus Anadyomene was also a favorite subject for Hellenistic sculptors.

Hellenistic art shares certain traits with Venetian art, most particularly the prevalence of female nudes and erotic themes. In fact, many Venetian paintings were inspired by Hellenistic sculptures. Titian frequently modelled figures after Hellenistic sculptures, and several of his paintings depict Hellenistic themes. Titian had utilized the Venus Anadyomene in a painting sometimes known as *Venus with a Shell* (1519/25; Edinburgh: National Gallery of Scotland, on loan from the Duke of Sutherland collection) [Figure 97]. Shannon is known to have viewed this painting at Bridgewater House in London, where the Duke of Sutherland's collection was then housed. While Shannon's Venus does not match up with Titian's in every respect, her down-turned face with eyes cast to the side is remarkably similar to Titian's.

However, one can argue that Shannon's Venus is not technically an Anadyomene, since she is located within a definite bath rather than in the sea. In this regard, Shannon's work can be considered a "Toilet of Venus," a favorite subject for Venetian painters, and loosely based on Hellenistic depictions of Venus preparing for her bath. Indeed, Shannon repeated similar motifs for many other artworks, even though few of them retain references to Venus in their titles. He would paint at least five different paintings of toilet scenes, in 1903 (*The Toilet*; Compton: Watts Gallery), [Figure 98] in 1905 (*The Toilet*, London: Agnews), in 1907 (*The Amethyst Necklace*; formerly in Waller collection) [Figure 99], in 1912 (*The Morning Toilet*; Cape Town: National Gallery of South Africa) [Figure 100], and a late work (*The Toilet*; Lincoln: Usher Gallery of Art) [Figure 101]. Shannon also printed lithographs of toilet subjects in 1895 (R 34), 1905 (D60), 1906 (D64, D65), 1908 (D76, D78), and 1909 (D82).

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[234] Smith, 177-178

[235] Shannon's diary, 24 February 1898.

Almost all of these works contain the same basic elements: a beautiful nude or partially-nude woman sits or stands near a table, on which appears a variety of jewels. She often holds or looks into a mirror. Next to her or behind her stands an attendant, who typically carries the nude woman's dress draped over one arm. In most of these cases, the nude's figure, often with a pronounced S-curve, strongly recalls Greek precedents, particularly the Knidian type of Venus, based on the lost original by Praxiteles of the *Aphrodite of Knidos* (4th century) [Figure 102]. *The Toilet* of 1903 (Watts Gallery) not only calls to mind the general type of Knidian Venuses, but also the specific sculpture of the *Venus Esquilina* (1st century B.C., Rome: Musei Capitolini) [Figure 103], which as Alison Smith has pointed out was a common source for Victorian painters like Alma-Tadema and Poynter.[236] The manner in which Shannon's figure tilts her head downward and to the right particularly recalls the *Esquilina*; in his later version of the same composition, Shannon paints the same figure in reverse, but with one hand raised to her head as she arranges her hair. This motif makes an even stronger reference to the Hellenistic sculpture, which was probably depicted arranging her hair with her now-lost arms.

Shannon's paintings and prints of women at their toilet are also descended stylistically from Venetian Renaissance paintings. Titian depicted a *Venus at her Toilet* (1554/55; Washington: National Gallery of Art) [Figure 104], which presents Venus attended by two cupids, one of whom holds up a mirror into which Venus gazes. Veronese closely followed Titian's format with his own painting of a Venus at a mirror, attended by a Cupid. In his *Susanna and the Elders* (1560-62, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) [Figure 105], Tintoretto painted the Biblical heroine at her bath in much the same manner as a Venus, with mirror and discarded jewelry at the side of the bath. Even earlier, Giovanni Bellini had painted a Venus-like figure in his *Nude Woman with a Mirror* (1515, Vienna: Kunsthistorisches Museum) [Figure 106], which depicts a young woman at her toilet, looking at her reflection in a hand-held mirror. A convex mirror hangs on the wall behind her, reflecting the back of her head. Titian also included such a mirror in his painting of Laura dei Dianti and Alfonso d'Este, and so would Shannon for *The Bath of Venus* and *The Toilet*. The idea of depicting mirrors within a painting may be derived from Giorgione. In response to art theorists' claims that sculpture was superior to painting because sculpted figures allowed multiple perspectives, whereas painting could only depict figures from one perspective, Giorgione is said to have painted the image of a nude reflected in water and armor, thus providing the viewer with multiple views of the same figure. Shannon was certainly aware of this Giorgionesque legend, and it is interesting to note that Shannon includes many reflective surfaces in his paintings, including water and multi-faceted gems as well as mirrors.

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[236] Ibid, 186; and *Exposed: the Victorian Nude*, ed. Alison Smith (New York: Watson-Guptill Publishers, 2001), 98,

Shannon's *Bath of Venus*, then, draws from both Hellenistic and Venetian precedents. It should also be considered as partaking in a dialogue with contemporary paintings. In particular, Shannon's composition resembles Burne-Jones's painting of *The Bath of Venus* (1873-99; Lisbon: Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation) [Figure 107], which also represents Venus in the Anadyomene pose, and includes attendants strewing roses and playing music. Shannon would have been acquainted with Burne-Jones in the last years in which he was working on this painting, and may have been directly inspired by Burne-Jones to work on his own version of the subject. Shannon's version does include roses, one of which floats in the water before Venus, but it must be pointed out that his painting departs in many ways from Burne-Jones. Most obviously, Shannon's painting pares Venus's attendants down to two, neither of whom plays music, whereas Burne-Jones's version features six; Shannon's Venus is already submerged into her bath, while Burne-Jones's is standing on the final step above her bath. In the latter detail, Shannon's Venus is closer to Titian's than Burne-Jones's, as Titian also depicted Venus with the water rising to her upper thighs. Perhaps most importantly, Shannon depicts Venus with truly Venetianist proportions. She is not the almost androgynous figure that one finds in Burne-Jones's painting; she has full hips and breasts, as one sees with Titian's Venus. She is also rendered with warm colors and sensuous brushstrokes, which also have more in common with Titian's colorism than with Burne-Jones's comparatively cooler hues, based primarily on Quattrocento painters like Mantegna and Botticelli.

By combining elements from Hellenistic and Venetian art, Shannon is performing a similar act as Watts had done: as Alison Smith has said, both Watts and Shannon are "pursuing a transhistoric affinity between different yet complementary indices of beauty."[237] Shannon was certainly aware of, and wished to promote, this idea of "transhistoric affinity"; in Ricketts and Shannon's travel diary from their first trip to Venice in 1899, Ricketts described Venetian Renaissance painting as "one of the most perfect conventions the world has seen since the arts of Greece."[238] However, Shannon goes further than Watts. Whereas Watts's figures retain their classical reserve, Shannon's figures partake in the sensuality that is a predominant aspect of both Hellenistic sculptures and Venetian paintings of Venus. Shannon's *Bath of Venus* and the Toilet paintings therefore overcome the contradiction between sensual colors and linear form which was apparent in Burne-Jones and Watts's paintings. Shannon's sources of Hellenistic sculptures and Venetian paintings, while differing in medium, share the same sense of overt sensuality.

By emphasizing the sensual aspect of Venetian and Hellenistic art, Shannon seems to deny the very reason why most Victorian painters of nude figures turned to Greek sculptures in

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[237] Smith, *Exposed*, 101.
[238] Travel diary, 13 April, 1899.

the first place, which was to de-emphasize the figures' sensuality. In this sense, Shannon is restoring to Venetianist nudes their sensuality, something which had not been seen since Etty's day. At the same time, Shannon avoids the accusations of obscenity that were hurled at Etty's work, since he can verify a historical lineage for his nudes. Etty's figures, on the other hand, were often criticized for retaining the appearance of studio models rather than classical or Renaissance figures.[239]

The general acceptance of Shannon's nudes also indicates the change in cultural climate from the early to the late nineteenth century. While Etty lived at a time when Venetianism was largely associated with decadent morals, Shannon's nudes were exhibited at a time following the appearance of Ruskin and Pater's writings on Venetian art. Although Late Victorian critics occasionally expressed scorn toward contemporary paintings of nudes, they no longer attributed their distaste to Venetianist colorism; instead, they focused on the "vulgar" realism of paintings by William Stott and Walter Sickert.

To understand how Ruskin and Pater affected Shannon's interpretation of Venetianism, we will need to turn our attention away from specific subjects like the portrait and the nude, and toward other concepts–particularly, Shannon's technique and his artistic philosophy. These concepts grow directly out of Shannon's contacts with both Ruskin's and Pater's Venetianism.

Shannon's Printmaking and the Arts and Crafts Movement

When Ricketts and Shannon first visited Venice in 1899, Ruskin's writings could not have been too far from their minds. Upon visiting the Doge's Palace, they were struck by the beauty of its exterior, and Ricketts remarked on how "each capital seems a masterpiece, delicate in execution and ever fresh invention."[240] These comments certainly remind one of Ruskin's exhaustive studies of the palace's capitals; it was, after all, Ruskin who first called tourists' attention to the capitals. However, their impression of the palace's interior was profoundly negative. "Tintoretto is perfectly appalling in his vicious contempt for drawing and painting," Ricketts complained. "Tintoretto was very properly forgotten . . . till Mr. Ruskin arrived. Mr. Ruskin, who is a lady, was overawed by Tintoretto, just as he might have been silenced by somebody who bawled him down or used slang."[241]

Shannon seems to have agreed with Ricketts's assessment of Tintoretto; while visiting the church of the Madonna dell'Orto, Shannon "very properly refused to look at Tinto,"

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[239] Smith, *The Victorian Nude*, 86-87.
[240] Travel diary, 4 April 1899.
[241] Ibid.

preferring to study the altarpiece by Cima da Conegliano.[242] One year later during a visit to the Prado in Madrid, Shannon slightly revised his opinion on Tintoretto. He admitted that the Venetian artist had painted one or two admirable paintings; however, he also maintained that Tintoretto was also responsible for "an amount of beastliness . . . that should make Venice tremble."[243]

As these comments make clear, Shannon did not entirely agree with Ruskin's account of Venetian art. In fact, Shannon was opposed to much of Ruskin's aesthetic philosophy, as we will see when we discuss his reaction to Pater. However, this should not obscure from us the fact that Shannon did derive certain notions from Ruskin's writings. In particular, it can be demonstrated that Ruskin's views on artistic technique and craftsmanship had some impact on Shannon, if only indirectly.

Ruskin's primary grievance against the Renaissance was in regard to the alienation of the craftsman from his craft. In Ruskin's account of art history, Renaissance architects, trained in classical traditions, forced upon their workers unimaginative, soulless copies of Greek and Roman architecture. To meet the classical demands for regularity and perfection, the artisans had to abandon the fanciful designs that glorified God and nature in medieval art. This process had taken European civilization on a path that led to modern society's complete devaluation of the worker's technique, with reliance on machines to perform man's duties.

Shannon's main contact with these ideas about craftsmanship would have come through the Arts and Crafts movement as promoted by Pre-Raphaelite artists, particularly William Morris. Shannon and Ricketts occasionally visited Morris at Merton Abbey in south London, and they were friends with his daughter, May Morris, a skilled artist in embroidery. Shannon may have borrowed his long-time dislike of the Royal Academy from Morris and the Pre-Raphaelite tradition. He would only join this institution rather reluctantly in 1911, by which time the art world had changed sufficiently for Shannon to find more sympathy with the traditional artists of the Academy than with the more modernist painters of the avant-garde.[244] When Shannon began to experiment in oils in the late 1880s, he bypassed the Royal Academy, and any other painting school, preferring to be self-taught.

However, it is not in Shannon's paintings that one sees his strongest connection with the Arts and Crafts Movement. After all, Shannon did not look to nature for direct inspiration, as did Pre-Raphaelites like William Holman Hunt and Ford Madox Brown. Instead, he turned to Old

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[242] Travel diary, 13 April, 1899.

[243] Letter by Charles Shannon to Charles Ricketts, 17-19 May, 1900.

[244] Significantly, Shannon only accepted his election to the Royal Academy after Roger Fry's Post-Impressionist exhibits at the Grafton Galleries had divided the London art scene into two bitterly-opposed camps. For more on Shannon's reaction to these exhibitions and to modern art, see the following chapter.

Master paintings and instructional manuals by artists like Reynolds and Eastlake, the very sources against which the Pre-Raphaelites had rebelled.[245] Rather, it is in Shannon's illustrations and printmaking that one can see his kinship with the Arts and Crafts movement in both design and in spirit.

Shannon first became involved with printmaking during his studies at the City and Guilds Technical Art School in south London, which he attended during the early 1880s. At this school, he took classes in wood-engraving, and it was in these classes that he first met Charles Ricketts. As Delaney suggests, Ricketts and Shannon probably enrolled in wood-engraving courses out of their deep admiration for Pre-Raphaelite book illustrations, which were executed as woodcuts.[246]

Shannon's first major artistic project was a joint effort between himself and Ricketts: a new illustrated edition of *Daphnis and Chloe*, a pastoral by the ancient Roman writer Longus. Shannon had discovered an Elizabethan translation of the novel at the British Museum, and he and Ricketts decided to republish the Elizabethan version with typeface and illustrations designed by themselves.

The amount of work that Shannon and Ricketts devoted to this project was immense, as they took it upon themselves to execute all the book's designing and production. The project ultimately took an eleven month period from 1892 to 1893 to complete, with thirty-nine woodcuts and numerous decorative initial letters. Each artist designed one half of the illustrations, but to disguise any disparities in style, Ricketts redrew all the designs onto the woodblocks, which were then cut by both artists. Their commitment to this project drew much attention from their friends and fellow artists, including William Rothenstein, who remarked on how the two artists, hunched over their woodplates, appeared like "figures from a missal." "I had never come into touch with the Morris movement," Rothenstein explained, "and this craftsmanship side was new to me."

Daphnis and Chloe [Figure 108] was intended as the first in a series of books designed by Ricketts and Shannon. Soon after its publication in 1893, the artists founded the Vale Press, which followed many of the same ideals that William Morris had put forth in his nearly contemporaneous Kelmscott Press (founded in 1890): namely, to take an everyday item and make it into something exquisite. In the specific case of book-printing, this involved making books that are as beautiful visually as they should be textually, something that Ricketts and Shannon, like Morris, believed could only be done through an artistic production of the books.

Morris's ideas on typography, as well as on wallpaper, stained glass, textiles, and other crafts, were heavily influenced by Ruskin. In particular, Ruskin's essay on "The Nature of

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[245] Delaney, *Charles Ricketts*, 36.
[246] Ibid, 28-29.

Gothic" in *The Stones of Venice* made a deep impression on Morris's understanding of craft and its role in a harmonious society; Morris would even reprint this essay as an individual publication of the Kelmscott Press. As one might expect with Ruskin as a source, Morris looked back to medieval and Early Renaissance books for inspiration, especially Gothic manuscripts. The Vale Press books, as well as *Daphnis and Chloe*, differ in terms of their sources. For the style of their imagery, Ricketts and Shannon studied Italian Renaissance books. One in particular inspired their designs for *Daphnis and Chloe*: the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, published in Venice in 1499 [Figure 109]. British interest in the book had revived during the 1870s, resulting in the 1888 publication of a facsimile edition.[247] This Venetian book, which tells an allegorical story of Poliphilus's dreams about love, is replete with woodcut illustrations. Unlike Morris's more crowded "Gothic" designs, the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*'s illustrations are fairly spacious, with open passages interrupted by classical structures and gardens consisting of simple lines. *Daphnis and Chloe* closely follows its Venetian predecessor. Not only were both books designed with a similar handling of line and space, they both depict, as Darracott points out, "grotesque decorations, figures after the antique, enigmatic landscapes or architectural backgrounds, and harmony of text with illustration."[248]

With *Daphnis and Chloe*, Shannon and Ricketts infused an Arts and Crafts process with a Venetianist spirit by drawing from a famous Venetian book as their model. This marrying of Venetianism with the Arts and Crafts movement can be seen to even fuller effect in Shannon's lithographs, which he began printing before the *Daphnis and Chloe* project. He pulled his first lithograph in 1888 (Derry A), and published several of his 1890s lithographs in periodicals like *The Hobby Horse* and *The Dial*. This latter periodical, a journal of art and literature, was begun as a collaboration between Ricketts, Shannon, and their fellow artists and writers, Reginald Savage and John Gray. It also reflected Ricketts and Shannon's interest in the Arts and Crafts movement, with, as Delaney explains, an "emphasis on good design and fine craftsmanship, on the handmade as opposed to the commercial and machine made, and on 'fine' artists applying themselves to the humbler objects of everyday life."[249]

By the 1880s, lithography in Britain was a seldom-used medium, except for commercial reproductions. Unlike France, where artists from Daumier to Toulouse-Lautrec had excelled in lithography, few British artists were conversant in lithographic technique; indeed, Lord Leighton, president of the Royal Academy, had great difficulty finding any British artists to exhibit lithographs for the International Exhibition of the Centenary of Lithography in Paris (1895).

[247] Darracott, *The World of Charles Ricketts*, 38-40.
[248] Ibid, 40.
[249] Delaney, *Charles Ricketts*, 43.

Shannon was one of the few artists working in Britain, along with Whistler and William Rothenstein, who were able to submit prints to the exhibit.[250]

Shannon was therefore at the forefront of a lithography revival in Britain. He took steps beyond many of his contemporaries by acquiring his own press with which to print his stones; the common practice at the time was to hire a commercial printer to pull one's lithographs.[251] In addition, Shannon usually drew directly onto the stone, and only occasionally used transfer lithographs.[252] The distinction between transfer lithographs and those lithographs which are drawn directly on the stone was actually a topic of some heated debate in the 1890s. A transfer lithograph typically involves drawing the design in lithographic crayon on paper; the paper will then be laid face-down onto the stone and sent through the press, thus transferring the design onto the surface of the stone.[253] This process is preferred by many artists, who find it easier to draw on paper than directly on the stone, and who dislike how the image as seen on the stone is necessarily the reverse of the final print. However, some artists and critics felt that the aesthetic value of transfer lithographs was lower than that of lithographs drawn on the stone. No less a critic than John Ruskin had voiced his opinion on the subject when he referred to Samuel Prout's lithographs as having a particularly high value "by the circumstance of their being drawn by the artist's own hand upon the stone."[254]

The debate on transfer lithographs was made public when Walter Sickert criticized Joseph Pennell for calling transfer lithographs simply "lithographs." In a letter he wrote to the *Saturday Review* (26 December 1896), Sickert argues that Pennell was being deceptive by describing his prints in a recent exhibition as lithographs. In Sickert's opinion, these prints, depicting scenes from Washington Irving's *Alhambra*, should actually have been termed "transfer lithographs." To be truly a lithograph, Sickert states, the print must be made from the stone–not "a drawing done . . . on transfer paper and then transferred by the lithographer on to the stone, and then printed," as Sickert describes.[255] Besides the process, the final product is also a fraud in Sickert's opinion. A true lithograph retains the grain of the stone from which it was printed; this grain, Sickert says, provides the artist with the greatest range of tones, "a beauty, half natural, and half due to human skill, which is the attribute of lithography alone." Transfer lithographs, on the other hand, are made from a paper with an artificial grain designed to mimic

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[250] Delaney, "Charles Shannon: Master of Lithography," *Connoisseur* (200: 1979), 200-205. Watts, Sargent, and Leighton also contributed lithographs, but had very little experience with the medium.
[251] Ibid, 200.
[252] Fenella Crichton, "Preface," in *The Lithographs of Charles Shannon* (London: Taranman, 1978), 11.
[253] For a more thorough account of the process, see "Transfer Lithography" in Garo Z. Antreasian and Clinton Adams, *The Tamarind Book of Lithography: Art & Techniques* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1971), 227-253.
[254] Cited by Frank Harris, "Pennell v. Harris and Sickert," 372.
[255] Walter Sickert, ""Transfer Lithography," in *The Saturday Review*(26 December 1896), 667-668.

stone. This paper grain, Sickert states, is "as much a sham as the marbled and varnished wall-paper on the staircases in a dear Victorian house." This criticism of transfer lithography for posing as a different medium than itself strikes a particularly Ruskinian note.

Sickert further implies that Pennell is acting as a hypocrite, as he had himself attacked the Royal Academician Herkomer for labelling photographic reproductions as "etchings." Just as photographic reproductions are valued less than etchings, Pennell's transfer lithographs should be considered of a lesser commercial, as well as aesthetic, value than true "lithographs." In Sickert's eyes, they might be worthy as illustrations in a magazine, but not as exhibited prints hanged on a gallery wall.

In response to Sickert's letter, Pennell sued the artist and Frank Harris, the editor of the *Saturday Review*, for libel.[256] Whistler, Pennell's close friend and, in fact, the person who had taught him transfer lithography, appeared as a witness for Pennell. Sickert's witnesses included artists like William Rothenstein and Shannon. Shannon's expertise in lithography was recognized in the court proceedings and in newspapers covering the case; he was recognized in *The Times* as "an artist with considerable experience of lithography," and *The Saturday Review* pointed out that Shannon was "the only artist of the first rank who has his own lithographic apparatus and who prints as well as draws his own lithographs." As Sickert's witness, Shannon testified that certain lithographic effects could not be obtained through transfer paper, but only through drawing on the stone. In particular, he cited the richness of the black line; he also pointed out that one could print an unlimited number of impressions from transfer lithographs, a feature which would decrease the financial value of the print. Contradicting plaintiff witnesses' claims that no one could tell the difference between lithographs printed through either process, Shannon also stated that he could easily tell the difference between a transfer lithograph and one drawn on the stone.[257] Pennell later claimed that Shannon's testimony was "more favourable to us than to [Sickert]."[258] This was probably because Shannon admitted under cross-examination that he had published a few transfer lithographs as "lithographs." In the end, Pennell won the case, and was awarded 50 pounds, rather less than the 1000 pounds for which he had sued.

Nevertheless, Shannon maintained a preference for drawing his lithographs on the stone. This preference often manifested in the use of "white line," a technique that Shannon frequently used throughout his career. "White line," more commonly known as "*manière noire*" or the "black method," involves scraping lines through a layer of lithographic ink that covers the stone, thus revealing traces of the stone beneath.[259] This technique, popularized in the nineteenth

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[256] For a summary of the court proceedings, see *The Times* (6 and 7 April, 1897).

[257] Frank Harris, "Pennell v. Harris and Sickert," *The Saturday Review* (10 April 1897), 372.

[258] Joseph Pennell, *The Life of James McNeill Whistler* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1909), v. II, 191.

[259] See Antreasian and Adams, "*Maniere Noire*," *The Tamarind Book of Lithography*, 378.

century by the German artist Adolph von Menzel, can only be performed directly on the stone, so any lithograph that involves "white line" by default cannot be a transfer lithograph.

By using the *manière noire* in lithographs like *A Lithograph in White Line* (1891, R5) [Figure 110], *In the House of Delia* (1895, R35) [Figure 111], and *At the Water's Edge* (1907, D71), Shannon is offering visual proof that these images were drawn directly on the stone. The grain impression that is visible in these prints is assuredly true stone grain, not the "sham" grain from transfer paper. By employing this technique, as well as using his own lithographic press, Shannon is closely adhering to the craftsmanship principles advocated by the Arts and Crafts Movement, and by Ruskin.

The question remains: what relationship do Shannon's lithographs have with Venetianism? While there was a clear connection between the *Daphnis and Chloe* illustrations and the Venetian *Hypnerotomachia*, the lithographs appear to owe less of a direct debt to Venetian art. After all, lithography as a medium was not invented until Aloys Senefelder developed it in the eighteenth century, so no Venetian could have practiced it during the Renaissance.

Although lithography cannot be regarded as Venetianist in itself, Shannon's lithographs nevertheless lend themselves to a Venetianist atmosphere. The range of tonality that Sickert noted in lithography brings the medium closer to a Venetian sensibility than other forms of printmaking. Lithographs are able to capture a tonal softness comparable to Venetian paintings, particularly the atmospheric paintings of Giorgione. For his lithographs, Shannon does not try to capture every line and detail as one would in traditional engravings and etchings; instead, he uses slight strokes to evoke the features and character of the sitter or of the scene.[260] In other words, Shannon uses the lithographic crayon in a manner comparable to a Venetian painter with his paintbrush; in his later lithographs, he would even go further and use a brush with lithographic ink, conferring an even greater painterly sensibility onto his prints.

There is at least one form of Venetian printmaking, however, that can be compared to Shannon's lithographs. The artist Giulio Campagnola, famous for his reproductive engravings after Titian's paintings and drawings, was an expert in the stippling technique. This technique, which involves cutting small dots instead of lines into the metal plate, results in soft, atmospheric tones, which appear darker or lighter in correlation with how close together the dots are placed. This was essentially a forerunner to mezzotints, and bears a similarity to Shannon's "white line," which similarly achieves soft tonal variations. Shannon was very familiar with Campagnola's work. He often studied his engravings at the South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum). For the *Pageant*, an annual periodical that Shannon edited, D. S. MacColl

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[260] Delaney, "Charles Shannon: Master of Lithography," 204.

wrote an article on the Venetian engraver. In this article, MacColl describes how Campagnola's stippling technique arose as a response to Venetian Renaissance paintings: although traditional engraving was well suited for the linear style of Florentine art, "the painting of Giorgione, with its tenderly fused and rounded forms, its lustre and shadow, called on the graver for a new language if its essential beauty was to be preserved."[261]

By adopting lithography, particularly with the "white line" technique, Shannon was able to bring together a Venetianist sense of atmosphere and a Ruskinian (via Morris) form of craftsmanship. However, as we will see in the following section, it would be a mistake to regard Shannon as a Ruskinian thinker; on many instances, his disagreements with the critic were quite strong. Nevertheless, Shannon's sense of craftsmanship certainly owes something, if indirectly, to Ruskin.

Shannon's Paintings, *Poesia*, and Paterian Venetianism

Shannon has often been considered one of the last representatives of the Aesthetic Movement; indeed, Delaney describes him and Ricketts as "in some ways [British Aestheticism's] purest and most consistent adherents."[262] His relationship with Aestheticism, however, has never been very closely studied.

A brief overview of Shannon's paintings and his environment reveals that Shannon was in close contact with Paterian ideas on art. When discussing Shannon's work, his critics invariably compared him to Giorgione and Titian, and often drew their vocabulary directly from Pater's essays on the Giorgionesque. It was in Shannon's work, in fact, that critics detected the Giorgionesque spirit as defined by Pater.

The Paterian aspects of Shannon's Venetianism should not obscure for us his debts to previous forms of Venetianism, which, as we have already seen, also had an impact on the artist. Nevertheless, Paterian Venetianism undeniably exerted the strongest influence upon Shannon and his work, and it would be impossible to understand Shannon's Venetianism without recognizing its debts to Pater.

It is difficult to determine exactly where Shannon would first have encountered Pater's writings, as there is no documentary evidence that he ever read Pater. However, several of Shannon's closest friends certainly did read Pater, and applied his aesthetic ideas to Venetian art. Two individuals in particular will be considered here: Oscar Wilde and Charles Ricketts.

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[261]. D. S. MacColl, "Guilio Campagnola," *The Pageant* (v. 2: 1897), 137.
[262] Delaney, *Charles Ricketts*, 26.

Shannon was on fairly close terms with Wilde during the late 1880s and 1890s. At that time, Shannon and Ricketts were living in Chelsea, and Wilde was a frequent visitor at their house in the cul-de-sac known as the Vale.[263] Indeed, Wilde's friendship with Ricketts and Shannon produced several artistic collaborations; with the exception of *Salome*, most of Wilde's subsequent books would be produced and illustrated by the two artists.

Wilde probably played a major role in introducing Ricketts and Shannon to Pater's Aestheticism, the influence of which is evident throughout Wilde's writings. This can be seen in Wilde's essays on art criticism, such as "The Decay of Lying." In this essay, Wilde frames a debate between two speakers, Cyril and Vivian, regarding nature, life, and the role of art. Vivian speaks for the Aestheticist position, and privileges art above nature or life. Indeed, he contradicts the usual interpretation of art as holding up a mirror to life and nature. "The more we study Art, the less we care for Nature," Vivian states. "What Art really reveals to us is Nature's lack of design, her curious crudities, her extraordinary monotony, her absolutely unfinished condition."[264] He criticizes the realist style dominating much of contemporary literature, as exemplified in Zola's writings. Wilde clarifies that his criticism of Zola is not because of any moral indignation to the subject matter, but because the characters, drawn from real life, are boring and inartistic. He decries modern subjects as inappropriate for art, because art, he explains, should deal only with beautiful things, and for a thing to be truly beautiful, it cannot serve any particular function. True art should not be concerned with contemporary issues, problems which belong to the domain of the journalist rather than the artist. "To art's subject-matter we should be more or less indifferent," Vivian declares, and goes on to criticize the modern age: "We have mistaken the common livery of the age for the vesture of the Muses, and spend our days in the sordid streets and hideous suburbs of our vile cities when we should be out on the hillside with Apollo. Certainly we are a degraded race, and have sold our birthright for a mess of facts."[265]

In this essay, Wilde intentionally reverses the mimetic role traditionally ascribed to art. Instead of believing that art holds up a mirror to life, Wilde declares that life actually mirrors art. He notes the influence of Rossetti and Burne-Jones's paintings on contemporary ideals of fashion and female beauty:

> We have all seen . . . how a certain curious and fascinating type of beauty, invented and emphasised by two imaginative painters, has so influenced Life that

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[263] Their house, formerly owned by Whistler, became synonymous with "the Vale." The house no longer stands, but the Vale as a street still does, although it has been connected to streets to the west so that it is no longer a cul-de-sac. For more on the Vale, see Delaney, *Charles Ricketts*, 38-41.

[264] *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde* (New York: Barnes & Noble, Inc., 1994), 970.

[265] Ibid, 976-977.

> whenever one goes to a private view or to an artistic salon one sees, here the mystic eyes of Rossetti's dream, the long ivory throat, the strange square-cut jaw . . . there the sweet maidenhood of [Burne-Jones's] 'The Golden Stair,' the blossom-like mouth and weary loveliness of the 'Laus Amoris' . . . . And it has always been so. A great artist invents a type, and Life tries to copy it, to reproduce it in popular form, like an enterprising publisher.[266]

Wilde points out that the Greeks were aware of the influence of art on life, and explains that this is why they placed beautiful sculptures of Hermes or Apollo in a bride's chamber to ensure that she gave birth to children as lovely as the sculptures. They rejected realism, Wilde claims, because they believed it would inevitably make people in life as ugly as the figures in realist art.

Wilde explicitly cites Pater in "The Decay of Lying" when discussing the concept that art can only express itself. Here, Wilde is referring to Pater's belief that the content of an artwork was inextricably bound to its form. Pater, we will recall, made this argument most forcefully in his essay on "The School of Giorgione." Wilde, however, only rarely discusses Venetian art, or visual art in general, for that matter. Nevertheless, whenever he commented on visual art, Wilde often referred to Venetian art to express the very same Aestheticism that Pater had formulated in *The Renaissance*.

Wilde's most expansive comments on Venetian art appear in "The Critic as Artist," first published in *The Nineteenth Century* in 1890. Wilde employs Paterian language in describing Venetian paintings as depicting "a single exquisite instant, eternal indeed in its beauty." For Veronese's St. Helena, Wilde explains, the setting is always dawn, as "the cool breezes of the morning lift the gilt threads from her brow." Similarly, Giorgione's lovers from the *Fête Champêtre* enjoy "always the solstice of noon, of noon made so languorous by summer suns that hardly can the slim naked girl dip into the marble tank the round bubble of clear glass, and the long fingers of the lute-player rest idly upon the chords."[267]

Despite the beauty of these moments, Wilde actually considers them to represent a shortcoming for the visual arts. As a writer, he felt that literature surpasses painting by describing movement and the passing of time. However, Wilde also insists that for a pictorial medium, the most effective artworks are those that depict exquisite moments, as the Venetian paintings do. Paintings that attempt to narrate literary stories, he notes, fail to respect the basic demands of the pictorial medium. Indeed, Wilde expresses contempt for painters who ask us

> to accept the torn turban of the Moor for the noble rage of Othello, or a dotard in a storm for the wild madness of Lear! . . . Most of our elderly English painters spend their wicked and wasted lives in preaching upon the domain of the poets. . .

[266] Ibid, 982.
[267] *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde*, 1025-1026.

> Their pictures are, as a natural consequence, insufferably tedious. They have degraded the invisible arts into the obvious arts, and the one thing not worth looking at is the obvious.[268]

Such literary paintings, Wilde argues, offer nothing for the critic to discuss. More interesting paintings will possess "the subtle quality of suggestion" and the ability to make the critic "brood and dream and fancy." The problem with narrative paintings is that their meaning is too definitive and too obvious. The critic will prefer those works which "suggest reverie and mood, and by their imaginative beauty make all interpretations true, and no interpretation final."[269]

Ricketts spoke of Venetian art in similar terms. One can see Paterian influences most clearly in his writings on Titian. Describing the development of Venetian art, Ricketts explains that pre-sixteenth-century artists rarely broke from the specific demands enforced upon them by their patron or guild. Giorgione and Titian were the first Venetians to strike a new path for their city's painters, and they did so by painting "poesies" or "poesia," as Titian called them: poetic interpretations in paint of classical mythology and themes. Ricketts further defines the "poesia" as:

> pictures of an allusive and poetic bent, in which we detect a love of beauty for its own sake . . . In these the human figure is related to its environment in a way that stimulates and haunts, and does not rely solely on the effect of traditional gesture and associated symbol. The masses of the composition take upon themselves a charm of their own . . . The figures in these pictures are conceived as if on business of their own, within the pale of their charmed environment.[270]

These works do not rely upon associative meanings or illustration; they can be appreciated first and foremost as visual objects of beauty. They also express the fundamental difference between Florentine and Venetian art, which Ricketts defines as the Venetian preference for "chance appearances" and the "love for the momentary for its own sake."

These are the same features that Pater and Wilde had associated with Venetian art. Ricketts was certainly familiar with Pater, to whose writings Wilde probably introduced him.[271] Ricketts refers to Pater when discussing the Pitti *Concert* (which Ricketts attributed to Titian), thus acknowledging the critic who had done the most to associate Venetian art with Aestheticism. Furthermore, the characteristics that Ricketts ascribes to Titian's *poesia* paintings

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[268] Ibid, 1030-31.
[269] Ibid, 1031.
[270] Charles Ricketts, *Titian* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1910), 6.
[271] Ricketts once wrote that "I think [Wilde] made me read Pater and I made him read Villiers & Verlaine; we had a common meeting ground in Baudelaire and Flaubert." Letter to Gordon Bottomley, 20 July 1918.

were also attributed to Shannon's work. Indeed, as we will soon see, one could easily take Ricketts's above comments and substitute Shannon's name for Titian's without substantially altering the meaning of the passage.

The Giorgionesque spirit that characterizes Venetian Renaissance painting is that of a pagan art, in which beauty is valued as a virtue. Indeed, "Giorgione replaces the statement of facts by the rendering of their chance appearance, or . . . their appearance to a nature in which the bias was all for beauty–all for beautiful emotion."[272] Titian inherited this spirit from Giorgione, and developed it even further, adding a "profounder sensuousness" to his imagery.[273] His special talent was not only his command of color, but also his poetic sensibility, by which "a few chosen elements are sufficient to express the whole." Furthermore, "his power lies in the grasp of larger facts, such as the solidity of the ground, the breadth and movement of the sky, the individuality in the structure of trees, the balance and breadth in the construction of the human figure, and the moving mystery of light and shade."[274]

Shannon's paintings fit Wilde's and Ricketts's descriptions of Venetian art remarkably well. Shannon rarely depicts scenes from particular literary texts. Despite the popularity of Shakespeare as a source for Victorian artists, Shannon is not known to have ever depicted a scene from a Shakespearean play. In a few instances, he illustrates a classical text, as in *Tibullus in the House of Delia* (1900-05; Nottingham Castle) [Figure 112], which depicts a scene from a Tibullus poem, and in several depictions of the infant Bacchus, which are derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. However, these literary paintings are the exception rather than the norm in Shannon's *oeuvre*.

Shannon's paintings more often depicted moods rather than particular narratives. Most of Shannon's figurative works do not depict any identifiable characters, nor do his figures take part in a dramatic narrative. Shannon's most common themes are of women at their toilet, bathing or dressing, or of women playing with children on the seashore. For instance, *The Shell Gatherers* (1894-98; London, Fine Art Society) [Figure 113] depicts three figures in the foreground engaged in the eponymous activity. The female figure stands on a shore to the left of the composition, framing the scene; at her feet, two male figures kneel on the sand searching among the shells for pearls. One of the male figures holds up a piece of coral for the woman to see. In the background, another group of figures dive into the water, presumably hunting for more shells. Although one can identify the figures' actions, the subject still defies labeling. The figures cannot be related to particular characters from a particular text. Any attempt to ascribe a

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[272] Ibid, 25.
[273] Ibid, 55.
[274] Ibid, 169.

narrative onto the scene is bound to be frustrated, as Shannon gives few hints about what relationships these figures have with one another.

Neither can one relate this painting to English beach scenes, which had become popularized by contemporary painters like Philip Wilson Steer and Henry Tonks. Shannon's figures are either nude or dressed in vaguely antique garb; nothing in the paintings suggest a particular time or place. Another painting bears a title that sums up the mood of most of Shannon's seashore paintings: *The Idyll* (1894, Compton: Watts Gallery) [Figure 114]. In this painting, a family group is seated upon the shore, with beach shells littering the foreground. The woman lifts an infant over her head, and the man, sitting upright behind the woman, reaches out to support the child, whom he kisses. It is a very tender rendering of a family group, but once again, it escapes precise definition. The composition calls to mind Renaissance depictions of the Holy Family, such as Michelangelo's Doni tondo. The male figure bears a resemblance to Shannon himself. One may therefore be tempted to read the painting as an idealized self-portrait, with Shannon perhaps picturing himself as part of a family group.[275] However, once again the viewer is denied clues that would confirm any identification. Shannon frequently used himself as a model for his male figures, and the gestures among the family group, although charming, do not truly inform the viewer of any narrative. As with Shannon's other beach-side scenes, the figures are nude and therefore seem abstracted from any particular historical period of geographical location.

These paintings occasionally make direct references to Venetian art, although in other cases the connection is in spirit rather than figurative design. *Salt Water* (1902, Lincoln: Usher Art Gallery) features the profile of a woman walking by the sea, leading two children by the hand. To some degree, the woman's profile recalls Titian's *Sisyphus* (1549, Prado) [Figure 115], particularly in how she is hunched over. Of course, there are several differences: besides the gender of either figure, Sisyphus is silhouetted against the dark fires of hell; the woman in *Salt Water*, on the other hand, is projected against a fierce sea. While Shannon may have looked at the *Sisyphus* for inspiration and perhaps even for the figurative design, he has stripped the scene of any mythological references.

These scenes are sufficient in themselves, without any references to any preceding or subsequent scenes. Although the figures are occasionally given mythological guises, they are rarely identified with particular characters from literary texts. In fact, Shannon would freely change the title of a work, even though it might seem to change the identity of the figures; Shannon originally called *The Wood Nymph* (1906, Lincoln: Usher Gallery of Art) [Figure 116]

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[275] Shannon reputedly confided to a friend that he had once desired to marry, but that Ricketts had prevented him from doing so (see Delaney, *Charles Ricketts*, 22-24; 160).

the "Woodland Venus," and changed the title upon Ricketts's suggestion. In a variation of this work, Shannon repeated many of the same elements, but conferred on it yet another title, *The Sleeping Nymph* (1910, Musee d'Orsay) [Figure 117]. Similarly, Shannon's painting *The Wounded Amazon* (1896, whereabouts unknown) [Figure 118] is modeled directly after his earlier lithograph entitled *Atalanta* (R15) [Figure 119]; although both works depict the same female figure removing greaves from her legs, the figure's identity is not so firmly fixed that she must belong to only one particular story.

Many of Shannon's critics detected an Aestheticist overtone in Shannon's idyllic paintings, and related it to the Giorgionesque. Laurence Binyon saw a kinship between Shannon's paintings and "the kind of picture which Venice in her early prime invented, and which we vaguely associate with the name of Giorgione."[276] Binyon specifically compares Shannon's work to Giorgione's *Fête Champêtre* and to Titian's "poesie," paintings like *The Worship of Venus* in which the artist "took up a theme from a classic author and found for it a congenial home in his own imagination." Even when Shannon or his Venetian predecessors depict classical themes, their work cannot be classified as narrative paintings, because they capture a poetic image, or a pause in the drama, rather than any "tangible incident." The subject is "an enchanted moment of life—life in an exquisite pause."[277] These comments closely echo Pater, Wilde, and Ricketts's descriptions of Venetian art, and even more Paterian is Binyon's assertion that the class of paintings to which Shannon and the Venetians' work belongs have "no ulterior purpose; they were made for their own sake and out of the artist's own joy."[278]

E. B. George also noticed a resemblance between Shannon's style and the Venetians, and discussed their similarities in Paterian terms. In his monograph on Shannon, George writes of how Titian's paintings, especially works like *The Bacchanal of the Andrians* (1523-24, Prado) [Figure 120] and the *Sacred and Profane Love* (1514, Rome: Borghese Gallery) [Figure 121], introduced Shannon to "that world of idyllic romance which [Shannon's] imagination inhabits."[279] Shannon's work seems to be designed to accompany music, especially the kind of music "presented to the memory rather than the ear," a description which reminds one of Pater's analysis of Giorgione's musical tones.

Like Giorgione, Shannon intends to capture moods rather than specific narratives in most of his work. Even in those works that are inspired by literature, "the mood and the pattern

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276 Laurence Binyon, "Charles H. Shannon" in *Charles H. Shannon: Seven Reproductions from the Exhibition of Fifteen Pictures shown at the Leicester Galleries, in January 1907* (London: Walbrook & Co. Ltd, 1907).
277 Ibid.
278 Ibid.
279 E.B. George, *Charles Shannon* (London: Ernest Benn, Ltd, 1924), 14.

remain the dominant features," which mark Shannon's works as the "right" kind of pictorial illustration, as opposed to the overtly narrative form.[280]

Shannon's work, then, was not only recognized by his contemporaries as Venetianist, but was also described in the same terms by which Pater and his followers defined the Aestheticist properties of Venetian art. However, Shannon's connections to Venetian art go further than this. Besides capturing the same kind of "exquisite moment" than Pater had seen in Giorgione's paintings, Shannon's work also follows Venetian precedents in drawing from antique prototypes. Binyon, like many other critics, recognized Greek overtones as well as Venetian elements in Shannon's paintings. Shannon shares with Greek art, Binyon says, an instinct for "disengaging the inherent graces in 'familiar matter of to-day' and for relying on the effectiveness of those graces, without aid of adventitious dignities or romantic atmosphere."[281] This reference to Greek art is not inconsistent with Pater's Venetianism, nor with Venetian paintings themselves. Titian, after all, frequently made references to classical Greek sculptures, as we have already noted with his *Venus Anadyomene*. Pater deeply admired Greek art, and Wilde preferred Greek sculptures to Venetian art, possibly because of the homoerotic qualities frequently found in the former.

Judging by his paintings, Shannon seems to have preferred the female nudes of Venetian art. However, he does occasionally borrow more than the spirit of Greek art, and in doing this he is still following the Paterian intepretation of Titian and Giorgione.[282] The critic D. S. MacColl noted the resemblance between Shannon's painting *The Infant Bacchus* (1900-1906, Tate Britain) [Figure 122] and Greek painted vases.[283] Like the interior of a kylix, Shannon's composition binds its figures within a tight yet comfortable circle. It is a design, MacColl notes, in which "Euphorion and Titian alike would surely have found something to praise." With the young Bacchus's "soft glee" and the rich setting amid ocean waves, the painting also serves as "an early chapter in the story thatn runs on to [Titian's] 'Bacchus and Ariadne.'" The kinship between Titian and Greek art, to which Shannon appears to be responding, was also noted by John Addington Symonds, who once described Titian as "the Sophocles of painting [who] has infused into his pictures the spirit of music, the Dorian mood of flutes and soft recorders, making power incarnate in a form of grace."[284]

Shannon and Ricketts collected many Greek vases, and it is quite possible that MacColl had discovered a source for *The Infant Bacchus* in its similarity to Greek kylices. However,

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[280] Ibid, 27-28.
[281] Ibid.
[282] For a discussion of Shannon's sexuality and his art, see Delaney, *Charles Ricketts: a Biography*, 22-26.
[283] D. S. MacColl, "The New English Art Club" in *Saturday Review* (v. 84: 27 November, 1897), 587.
[284] John Addington Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy: the Fine Arts* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1908) 370-71.

outside of his portraiture, Shannon rarely made direct references to any particular Greek vases, including those which he and Ricketts owned.[285] On the other hand, one can occasionally detect references to another type of Greek art that Shannon and Ricketts collected: Hellenistic terracotta figurines from Asia Minor, commonly referred to as "Tanagras" due to the fact that many, though not all, were from the site of Tanagra. These figurines were the rage among late Victorian collectors, so much so that the market was flooded with many forgeries. Ricketts and Shannon owned several figurines, both authentic ones and forgeries. Most of these statuettes represent pensive young women, often engaged in daily activities, such as dancing, playing games, or conversing with one another. Gods and other mythological figures are occasionally represented, but they are in the minority; more often than not, the only god who is represented is a young Eros, who often appears as a child playing with a woman.

Contemporary collectors knew that these figurines were originally buried in graves, which suggests that they held some kind of religious or supernatural function. However, the lack of any overtly religious symbolism in these figures was striking. "It certainly requires a stretch of the imagination to recognize Demeter in these pensive maidens, or Persephone gathering flowers in the fields of Nysa, in the oft-recurring figure of a girl playing at knucklebones," Marcus Huish wrote in *The Studio*.[286] The Tanagras appeared to represent scenes from daily life, and therefore differed greatly in subject and temperament from the severe austerity of Classical Athenian art. Huish reminded his readers that the people of Asia Minor were quite different from the ancient Athenians, preferring to depict people going about their daily lives rather than engaged in heroic epics.

Shannon's artworks share certain traits with many Tanagra figurines, particularly in the depiction of women (and occasionally children) engaged in daily activities, with few references to literary scenes or characters. Adult male figures are a minority in both Tanagra sculptures and in Shannon's works. The pensive mood of Tanagra figures is also found in Shannon's women, who with their often-wistful faces express a similar mixture of joy and melancholy. Moreover, Shannon must have sensed a kinship between Tanagra figures and Venetian Renaissance paintings; according to contemporary aesthetics, both types of art celebrated feminine beauty for its own sake, and, as though fearful of disturbing that beauty, attempted to preserve the figures in a state of contemplation rather than engaged in any strenuous action. Indeed, the only kinds of action Tanagras or Giorgione's figures might take part in usually consist of such tasks as bathing or admiring their beauty in mirrors.

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[285] Most of these vases were bequeathed to the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge. See Joseph Darracott, *All for Art: The Ricketts and Shannon Collection* (Cambridge, 1979).

[286] Marcus B. Huish, "Tanagra Terracottas," in *The Studio* (v. XIV, no 64), 97-104.

Shannon occasionally used Tanagras as sources for his compositions. He once planned a companion picture to his painting *Salt Water*, describing it as a man leaning forward and carrying a woman on his back "somewhat like the action of the well-known Tanagra groups of one woman carrying another."[287] Shannon is referring here to depictions of *ephedrismos*, a game for two players that required the loser to carry the winner [Figure 123].[288] Shannon did not own an *ephedrismos* Tanagra, although he may have seen one in the Ionides collection, which Shannon is known to have viewed in 1902.[289] The *Salt Water* companion piece does not seem to have been completed, although a few other paintings by Shannon contain passages that recall a similar composition. For instance, in Shannon's later version of *The Romantic Landscape* (1904; private collection), he added a figure which did not appear in earlier versions of the same composition: on the right side of the composition, a woman climbs down a ladder and is supported by a second woman. The position of these two figures, of one woman holding up the other one, calls to mind Tanagra e*phedrismos* figures.[290] A more direct reference to a Tanagra sculpture can be seen in *The Intruder* [Figure 124]. This image, which Shannon originally designed as a lithograph in 1892 (R13) and later painted as an oil (private collection), represents a young boy whose basket of grapes has drawn the unwanted interest of a rooster. This composition is directly modeled after a Tanagra of a predatory cockerel threatening a boy, who holds a bunch of grapes and turns away from the rooster [Figure 125]. The British Museum had acquired such a statuette in 1891 (GR1891.6-29.2), and Shannon, who frequently visited the British Museum, almost certainly saw it there.

Even when Shannon's work refers to non-Venetian sources, it is almost always to artistic cultures that he and fellow Late Victorians interpreted in the same Aestheticist terms as Venetian art. According to contemporary interpretations, Venetian paintings, Hellenistic Tanagra figures, and Shannon's work all share an interest in contemplative moments, removed from narrative action, and in the concept of beauty for its own sake. Shannon and his audience, including his closest friends and associates, would have regarded all of these traits as embodying Paterian Aestheticism.

Shannon's art was therefore strongly informed by Pater's Venetianism. Nevertheless, Shannon's Venetianism is more complex than simply a set of reflections on past discourses. It also uses Venetian art, and Ruskinian and Paterian ideas, to engage with issues of modernism

[287] Diary, 20 January 1904. I am unaware of any surviving drawings or paintings for this piece.
[288] Huish, 103; figure 7 from Huish's article reproduces an *ephedrismos* set, p. 101.
[289] Diary, 12 March, 1902.
[290] For more on the different versions of *The Romantic Landscape*, see the following chapter.

and art's role in society. In the following chapter, we will examine how Shannon utilized the Venetianism to address these issues.

CHAPTER 5

VENETIANISM AND THE RECEPTION OF SHANNON'S WORK
IN EARLY MODERNIST BRITAIN

"The obvious thing about the work of Shannon is that, though scrupulously pictorial in form, it was inspired by literature rather than life." Thus wrote the author of the *Times* obituary of Shannon in 1937.[291] While noting Shannon's affinities to Giorgione's interpretation of mood, the obituary author criticized Shannon's technique. "[Shannon's paintings] derive from the Old Masters in the wrong way; that is to say by imitating style instead of by extracting and applying in new conceptions the enduring principles of pictorial composition." This assessment of Shannon's work expressed the dominant idea of modern art in the 1930s: artists were expected to disavow academic traditions of painting in favor of a more direct apprehension of formal principles of expression.

By 1929, the year in which Shannon stopped working regularly, various modernist art movements had swept through London, including Cubism, Fauvism, Futurism, and Surrealism.[292] For the most part, these movements' styles departed radically from Venetianism. Whereas Venetianist art contained strong references to Venetian Renaissance paintings and motifs, modernist art tended to reject European traditions and drew upon naïve or non-European art for inspiration.[293] Furthermore, modernist artists painted predominately abstracted forms or non-figurative subject matter, in contrast to the figurative and mythological traditions favored by Venetianism.

These stylistic differences between modernism and Venetianism are quite obvious. However, these differences obscure several real continuities between the two discourses. In particular, the aestheticist principle of "art for art's sake"—the idea that art should be concerned primarily with aesthetic issues—was a major principle for both Late Victorian Venetianism and

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[291] "Obituary: Mr. Shannon, R. A., Lithographer and Painter," *Times* (19 March, 1937), p18.

[292] In 1929, Shannon suffered severe head trauma after falling from a ladder while hanging pictures. He would never fully recover his mental faculties, and other than some sketching, he would never paint again.

[293] For the purpose of this study, I am accepting the standard idea of modernist art as defined by early 20th-century exhibitions like the Great World Exhibition at Paris (1900), the Post-Impressionist exhibits at the Grafton Galleries (1910 and 1912), and the Armory Show in New York (1913), all of which presented Post-Impressionist art and/or the emerging movements of Fauvism and Cubism as symptomatic of a new, modern style of painting. The stylistic traits represented by the works in these exhibits emphasized abstraction of form and saturation of colors, and these characteristics were given critical validation in writings like Worringer's *Abstraktion und Einfuhlung* (1908), Kandinksy's *Concerning the Spiritual in Art* (1912), and Kahnweiler's *The Rise of Cubism* (1915). For British art and criticism, Roger Fry's essays, including "An Essay in Aesthetics" (1909), were tremendously influential in shaping a similar idea of modernist art; because of Fry's connections with both British Venetianism and British modernism, he will figure quite prominently in this chapter's discussion. By "naive" art, I am generally referring to artists who have trained themselves in artistic techniques, without acquiring an academic approach to their subject matter.

twentieth-century formalism. Moreover, the painterly and colorist traditions of Venetian art are partly continued by movements like Fauvism, while certain quintessentially Venetian subjects, like the "reclining Venus" or female nude, would be self-consciously adopted by modernist artists ranging from Picasso to de Kooning.

In this, the final chapter of the dissertation, I wish to study Venetianism's role in the transitional period between Late Victorian art and modernism. Extending from the 1890s until the 1910s, this period saw the Venetianist discourse shift from an association with progressive movements in art to an identification with reactionary, academic styles of painting. Nowhere is this shift better represented than in Shannon's work. Until 1910, his work was typically associated with avant-garde venues and collections; after that time, his work is either valued as "traditionalist" painting or dismissed as a rehashing of "Post-Pre-Raphaelite" stylistic principles.

To understand how this shift in attitudes toward Venetianism occurs, I will be examining the artistic climate of the 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century. A review of contemporary literature on Venetian art will demonstrate that Late Victorian art critics continued to employ Paterian language in discussing Venetian art. Furthermore, they would often correlate elements of Venetian painting with progressive art in modern Europe, and in some cases would urge modern artists to use Venetian art as a means to correcting their own shortcomings and faults.

The reception of Shannon's work during this period will reaffirm these observations. His work consistently appeared in avant-garde venues, ranging from the New English Art Club in London to Durand-Ruel's gallery in Paris. Indeed, Shannon preferred to exhibit his paintings with progressive groups like the NEAC and the International Society rather than at the Royal Academy, which he and many of his contemporaries regarded as an obsolete institution. His work was also purchased by collectors with decidedly non-academic tastes in art. A survey of the exhibitions and private collections in which Shannon's work appeared will indicate that Shannon's Venetianism was not considered entirely at odds with some forms of modernist art.

The cultural reception of Venetianism would radically change after 1910. As British artists and audiences became increasingly exposed to modernist painting, the visual language of Venetianism would decline in popularity, even though Shannon would continue to use it until the end of the 1920s. We will see that certain elements of Venetianism would be extracted and applied to the most abstract modernist paintings, and that a few modernist artists would paint works which can only be described as Venetianist. Nevertheless, the Venetianist discourse as a whole had peaked at the turn of the twentieth century. It would never again enjoy the popularity that it had in previous centuries, and it would never again inspire a major artist to adopt a Venetianist idiom for nearly his entire *oeuvre*, as Shannon had done.

Venetianism in British Art Criticism after Pater

In many ways, Late Victorian Venetianism is a continuation of mid-Victorian Venetianism. Paterian and Ruskinian Venetianism would continue to dominate the discourse, and most writings on Venetian painting will exhibit at least some degree of either Ruskin or, more often, Pater's influence.[294] We have already seen Pater's influence on Wilde's general aesthetic philosophy and on critical responses to Shannon's work. It is also interesting to note that even those critics, like John Addington Symonds, who disagreed with Pater's aestheticism would still employ Paterian language when discussing Venetian art.

Although he was not an art historian, and was more interested in poetry than the visual arts, John Addington Symonds was intimately familiar with Venetian painting, which he discusses in one of his chapters in *Renaissance in Italy* (1875-77). During the last two decades of his life, Symonds spent much of his time in Venice, staying at Horatio Brown's house, the "Ca' Torresella," on the Zattere. He was also familiar with Pater's writings, although he did not usually agree with his theories. To Henry Graham Dakyns, Symonds wrote that Pater's "theory to the world has in it a wormy hollow-voiced seductiveness of a fiend," who "makes his music (but heavens! how sweet that is!) a little faint and sickly."[295] Symonds admitted that he was impressed with "The School of Giorgione," but insisted that Pater was incorrect to assume that music was the appropriate standard for the fine arts. Symonds admits that Pater may have found some evidence in Venetian painting to support his theories on music, but he argues that it is dangerous to extrapolate this theory as a standard for all of the fine arts, just as Matthew Arnold was wrong, in Symonds' view, to assume that poetry was the standard for all art. While Symonds found Arnold's theories overly intellectual, he argued that Pater's aesthetics were overly sensuous.[296]

It is significant, however, that Symonds seems to have accepted Pater's aesthetics when it came to Venetian art. Despite his criticism of Pater's musical theory and its sensuousness, Symonds ascribes these very same features of musicality and sensuousness to Venetian painting. Indeed, his only major difference with Pater is in dwelling at greater length over the cultural and social circumstances of Venice, which received little attention in "The School of Giorgione." Ultimately, Symonds' Venetianism strikes us as a combination of Burckhardt's historical

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[294] The situation is reversed in writings on Venetian architecture, in which Ruskin's influence far overshadows any other critics.

[295] Letter John Addington Symonds to Henry Graham Dakyns, 20 February 1873 (*Letters* vol. 2, p. 273).

[296] See his letter to Horatio F. Brown, 11 November 1877 (*Letters* vol 2, p. 500-01), and to Herbert Horne, 28 January 1888 (*Letters* vol. 3, p 289). In the Horne letter, Symonds declares his intention to write on essay debating music's role as the standard for art.

methods, Ruskin's descriptive prose, and, most strongly, Pater's theories on Venetian art's sensuousness and its formal correlations with music.

Like Burckhardt, Symonds is mainly interested in the social and cultural history of Renaissance Italy, and the third volume of *Renaissance in Italy* displays a similar tendency to relate art to cultural phenomena. Like both Burckhardt and Pater, Symonds championed the Renaissance as the rebirth of the classics and the individual, and part of his motivation was a reaction against Ruskin's morality and medievalism.

Symonds defines the characteristics of Venetian painting in terms little different from earlier writers: "To idealize the sensualities of the external universe, to achieve for color what the Florentines had done for form, [and] to invest the worldly grandeur of human life at one of its most gorgeous epochs with the dignity of the highest arts."[297] He waxes poetically over Venice's cultural and physical setting, which had inspired many of his own verses. Venice possesses "pavement of liquid chrysoprase" and "palaces of porphyry and marble," among other treasures, and lives within "the light and color of a vaporous atmosphere, where sea-mists rose into the mounded summer clouds," with the sky "reflected in all its many hues of sunrise and sunset upon the glassy surface of smooth waters." Venice is "like a miracle of opal or of pearl upon the bosom of an undulating lake," Symonds proclaims. "Here and here only on the face of the whole globe was the unique city wherein the pride of life might combine with the luster of the physical universe to create and stimulate in the artist a sense of all that was most sumptuous in the pageant of the world of sense."[298] Symonds' impassioned prose is reminiscent of Ruskin's praises of Venice; however, his attribution of Venice's artistic power to the city's sensual rather than spiritual properties brings him closer to Pater's aesthetics.

Like Burckhardt, Symonds connects Venice's style of art with its state. The city's security from invasions, and its immense mercantile wealth, established an environment which lacked the "grim and anxious struggles" endured by cities like Florence. Symonds goes so far as to contrast the overall hues of different cities, and to suggest a correlation with the respective city's art: "It is not an insignificant, though a slight, detail that the predominant color of Florence is brown, while the predominant color of Venice is that of mother-of-pearl, concealing within its general whiteness every tint that can be placed upon the palette of a painter."[299]

Symonds considers Venetian art's sensual and worldly properties its most remarkable aspects. Religious faith did not preoccupy Venetian artists as it did many Florentines. For Venetians, faith was a part of everyday life, not a mystical or otherworldly experience. By the

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[297] John Addington Symonds, *Renaissance in Italy*. Volume 3: "The Fine Arts." New York: Henry Holt and Company, 347-48.
[298] Ibid, 348-49.
[299] Ibid, 354.

sixteenth century, artists like Giorgione could specialize in non-religious subjects; Symonds credits Giorgione with cutting "painting altogether adrift form mediaeval moorings" and for launching it "on the waves of the Renaissance liberty."[300] Following Giorgione, Titian perfectly fulfilled Venetian art's demands for sensual color. He conferred upon "landscape and the human form a sublime yet sensuous poetry no other painter in the world has reached. . . . Titian's exquisite humanity . . . gives proper value to the imaginative and the scenic elements of the Venetian style."[301]

Recalling Pater, Symonds describes Titian in musical terms, as an artist who "has infused into his pictures the spirit of music, the Dorian mood of flutes and soft recorders, making power incarnate in a form of grace."[302] "When we think of Titian, we are irresistibly led to think of music," Symonds insists. The *Assunta* can "best be described as a symphony—a symphony of color, where every hue is brought into harmonious combination—a symphony of movement, where every line contributes to melodious rhythm—a symphony of light without a cloud—a symphony of joy in which the heavens and earth sing Hallelujah."[303] Symonds sees this altarpiece as the epitome of Venetian art, in which the religious properties are subordinated to "a golden mean of joy." One of Titian's primary achievements in painting, this golden mean consists of "a well-tempered harmony in which no thrilling note suggests the possibility of discord," as, like an alchemist, Titian separates "what is beautiful in sensuous life from its alloy of painful meditation . . . the disease of thought is unknown in his kingdom; no divisions exist between the spirit and the flesh." In the *Assunta*, the result is a figure "who was Mary and is now a goddess, ecstatic yet tranquil . . . her womanhood is so complete that those for whom the meaning of her Catholic legend is lost may hail her in her humanity personified."[304] In this passage, Symonds hints at Venice's inheritance of classical Greece, a connection he makes even more explicit when describing the ceiling paintings at the Doge's Palace:

> Without Venice the modern world could not have produced that flower of sensuous and unreflective loveliness in painting which is worthy to stand beside the highest product of the Greek genius in sculpture. For Athena from her Parthenon stretches the hand to Venezia enthroned in the ducal palace. The broad brows and earnest eyes of the Hellenic goddess are of one divine birth and lineage with the golden hair and superb carriage of the sea-queen.[305]

[300] Ibid, 366.
[301] Ibid, 370.
[302] Ibid, 371.
[303] Ibid, 380.
[304] Ibid, 380-81.
[305] Ibid, 354-55.

Although Symonds had started writing well before Shannon began studying art, the two men share connections during the late 1880s and early 1890s. Shannon's early lithographs appeared in *The Century Guild and Hobby Horse*, to which Symonds also contributed literary works. Furthermore, Symonds' collection of essays, *In the Key of Blue*, was designed by Ricketts and published in 1893 by the Vale Press. Shannon was therefore probably familiar with Symonds' eponymous essay, which describes the effects of colors in Venice. The title provides yet another Paterian instance of a musical analogy in connection with Venice and Venetian art.

Pater's influence is also clear in the early writings of Bernard Berenson and Roger Fry, two major figures in Anglo-American art history and criticism at the turn of the twentieth century. Shannon was closer friends with these two individuals than he was with the elder Symonds, and he visited them on many occasions. Neither of these critics is particularly well-remembered for their writings on Venetian art; Berenson would become more renowned as an expert on fifteenth-century Central Italian art, while Fry would become infamous for promoting Post-Impressionist styles of painting in Britain. However, both critics began their careers with books on Venetian painting, texts which on the one hand reinforce Paterian Venetianism, and on the other hand, introduce the idea that Venetian art expresses principles which can, or should, be found in contemporary European painting.

Surprisingly, Berenson's initial artistic interest had been in modern Impressionist paintings in France. When he began studying Venetian paintings, he justified his new focus by arguing for a common link between the art and cultures of Venice and the modern age. Berenson stated his case most forcefully in the book *The Venetian Painters of the Renaissance* (1894), his first published book. Berenson detected certain sympathies between the Renaissance age and the modern era: "We ourselves," Berenson writes in the preface, "are instinctively in sympathy with the Renaissance . . . the spirit which animates us was anticipated by the spirit of the Renaissance."[306] That shared spirit, Berenson explains, is a sense of youthful energy and intellectual curiosity, which he finds expressed in Renaissance painting in general, and most perfectly in Venetian Renaissance painting.

In accordance with Pater's interpretations, Berenson sees Venetian art as related to everyday life and worldly beauty rather than to spiritual concepts alone. In the Renaissance, Berenson writes, "a new feeling arose that mere living was a big part of life, and with it came a new passion, the passion for beauty, for grace, and for comeliness."[307] This "delight in life" was most powerfully expressed in Venetian painting. The Venetian artists, Berenson argues, were only nominally painting Madonnas and saints; in reality, they were depicting "handsome,

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[306] Bernard Berenson, *Venetian Painters of the Renaissance* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1897), x.
[307] Ibid, 9.

healthy, sane people like themselves, people who wore their splendid robes with dignity, who found life worth the mere living and sought no metaphysical basis for it."[308]

Many of Berenson's points about Venetian painting remind us of Pater's writings. In describing the role of painting in Renaissance Venetians' lives, Berenson compares it to the role of music in modern life. Like music, painting provided Venetians with a sense of everyday pleasure, detached from didactic or religious stories. It is therefore no surprise to learn that major Venetian paintings were often intended for private collections and not just for public institutions. Berenson explicitly compares Venetian paintings to music, suggesting that if the Venetian enjoyment of art had been limited to spaces like the Doge's Palace or confraternity halls, it would be similar to restricting music to the concert-hall.

Besides drawing analogies with painting and music, other of Berenson's comments recall Pater's ideas. For the Renaissance Venetian, painting's function was not to move him to religious devotion. Instead, a painting functioned as a "pleasantly coloured thing that would put him in a mood connected with the side of life he most enjoyed–with refined merrymaking, with country parties, or with the sweet dreams of youth."[309] This statement strongly resembles Pater's description of painting as "a space of colour on the wall" with "no more definite message for us than an accidental play of sunlight and shadow."[310] Berenson relates the Venetian demand for everyday art to the format and content of Venetian painting: as such works were intended for private houses, they tended to be small easel paintings, and in order to maintain a tolerable presence in a home, they had to be "without too definite a subject." Preferably, they contained poetic subjects that are no more translatable into words than a sonata would be.

In satisfying demands for everyday enjoyment, Venetian painting "thus became the first genuinely modern art" insofar as modern arts "tend to address themselves more and more to the actual needs of men, while in olden times they were supposed to serve some more than human purpose." In sensing a kinship between Venetian painting and the modern age, Berenson goes further than pointing out similarities in spirit. He also discusses technique, and specifically compares Titian's painterly style with the brushwork of modern French painting, by which Berenson means Impressionist art.[311] Elsewhere, Berenson traces a lineage from the Venetian Renaissance to French modernism: artworks by Bassano and Tiepolo, Berenson suggests, had a significant impact on Velazquez and Goya, whose work in turn had a powerful influence on modern French art. "Not the least attraction of the Venetian masters," Berenson remarks, "is

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[308] Ibid, 13.
[309] Ibid, 25.
[310] Pater, "School of Giorgione," 110, 104.
[311] Berenson, 43.

their note of modernity." In his conclusion, Berenson drives home the comparison between the Venetian Renaissance and the modern age:

> the spirit that animates us is singularly like the better spirit of [the Renaissance] epoch. We, too, are possessed of boundless curiosity. We, too, have an almost intoxicating sense of human capacity. We, too, believe in a great future for humanity, and nothing has yet happened to check our delight in discovery or our faith in life.[312]

From a historical perspective, Berenson's comments on the human condition–twenty years before the First World War–sound hopelessly optimistic or naive. However, they strongly make the case for the ultimate relevance of Venetian art, and the revival of Venetian art, to modern art and culture at the turn of the twentieth century.

Roger Fry's reputation as a connoisseur of Italian Renaissance art is based primarily on his studies of fifteenth-century Florentine art, a specialty that he shared with Bernard Berenson. However, Fry was also inspired by Venetian art, particularly on the occasions when he visited Venice. Admittedly, he would come to prefer Florentine quattrocento artists, like Piero della Francesca and Uccello, whose starkly simple compositions he would regard, in retrospect, as anticipating Post-Impressionist and Cubist art. Nevertheless, it is important to remember that Fry's earlier interests included the Venetians, and that his understanding of Venetian art–and, later, modern art–was primarily based on Paterian Venetianism.

During his first visit to Italy in 1891, Fry considered the Venetians to be the most skilled oil painters of Italy, writing that he found "the Venetian School of painting far more instructive than the Florentine."[313] Following Ruskin's lead, Fry was deeply impressed with Venice's Gothic architecture and Tintoretto's paintings. In Venice, he also met John Addington Symonds and Horatio Brown, with whom he discussed Venetian paintings and Pater's writings, among other topics.

The link that Berenson asserted between Venetian art and the modern age also had an effect on Roger Fry's first published book, *Giovanni Bellini*. Like Berenson, Fry sees certain aspects of Giovanni's paintings as precedents for nineteenth-century art. In describing the atmospheric mood of Giovanni's *Agony in the Garden*, Fry writes that "Bellini shows that perception of the emotional value of passing effects of atmosphere, which is often supposed to be a peculiarity of the art of this century."[314] Like both Berenson and Pater, Fry emphasizes the

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[312] Ibid, 70.
[313] Roger FryLetter to Isabel Fry, May 17, 1891. Reproduced inIn *Letters of Roger Fry*, ed. Denys Sutton (New York: Random House, 1972), 145.
[314] Roger Fry, *Giovanni Bellini*, 21-22.

aesthetic qualities of Giovanni's work over the religious intentions. Of the San Giobbe altarpiece, Fry writes "his delight is not in the expression of profound emotion, but in the creation of types, with a view to their pictorial possibilities more than their significance as expressions of religious ideals of character."[315]

Paterian qualities appear in Fry's description of Giovanni's evolving painting technique. By enveloping form within atmospheric effects, Giovanni was utilizing not a scientific analysis so much as "a perception that thus and thus only could the intensest unification of the picture be effected, and that thus only could the beauties of transparent paint find their fullest display."[316] The shimmering light effects, achieved by layers of oil glazes, provide "opalescent depths" in which "the evening light still lingers," creating a mood of "pure and unquestioning delight in the sensuous charm of rare and beautiful things." Such a "purely sensuous enjoyment of colour" finds its culmination in the San Zaccaria altarpiece. Fry also remarks on Giovanni's avoidance of narrative dramas, as "his pictures each render a single emotional state" instead of a scene presenting a whole range of emotions. This emotional state is never overwrought, even when the dominant tone is pathos. "The pathos which his figures express is never sickly or sentimental," Fry explains. "Rather it is, as Bellini feels it, the inevitable result of their condition as human beings."[317] Fry's emphasis on Giovanni's use of beautiful color and human (rather than metaphysical) emotion distinguishes him from many Victorian writers, including Ruskin, who considered Giovanni's piety to be a critical element in his painting[318]; it also brings Fry close to Pater's aesthetics, as Pater similarly disregarded religious expressionism in favor of a more formalist appreciation of Renaissance art.

Fry's enthusiasm for Renaissance art would continue throughout the 1890s and the first decade of the twentieth century, throughout which time he had little to say about contemporary European art. Despite penning some favorable comments about Impressionism, including an article he submitted to the *Fortnightly Review* in 1893, Fry grew increasingly disenchanted with it and with modern art in general by the end of the nineteenth century. In 1894, he complained that "the more I study the Old Masters the more terrible does the chaos of modern art seem to me."[319] During his second trip to Italy in that same year, Fry was struck by how even minor

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[315] Ibid, 36.
[316] Ibid, 39.
[317] Ibid, 47-48.
[318] See Caroline Elam, "Roger Fry and Early Italian Painting," in *Art Made Modern: Roger Fry's Vision of Art*, ed. Christopher Green (London: Merrell Holberton, 1999), p 105. Elam points out that Fry's formalism was not always consistent, and that his 1905 essay on Mantegna contains a deep appreciation for religious expression. This suggests that Fry deliberately applied formalism to the Venetian artist, in keeping with Pater's interpretation of Venetian art and Venetianism.
[319] Letter to Sir Edward Fry, September 27, 1894. In *Letters of Roger Fry*, 159.

Renaissance painters could stand their own against the great artists like Leonardo. "Owing to the strength of tradition even a feeble man [in the Renaissance] didn't make a bad mess," he observed.[320] For Fry, this presence of a tradition distinguished Renaissance art from modern art, and he would later explain that "it was an innate desire for this [structural] aspect of art which drove me to the study of the Old Masters . . . in the hope of discovering from them the secret of that architectonic idea which I missed so badly in the work of my contemporaries."[321]

Fry was not alone in finding faults in contemporary art. Laurence Binyon similarly criticized Impressionism. Arguing that Impressionism depended on the theory that "one should paint only the impression on the retina of the eye," Binyon saw the movement as a dead-end. Like Fry, Binyon felt that the Impressionist technique cast aside architectonic issues of design and structure to its detriment.[322]

Critics like Binyon and Fry believed that modern art had foundered upon Impressionism, which they considered to be the most extreme form of naturalism. To correct this situation, they called upon modern artists to return to their artistic roots. In particular, they advocated a study of the Old Masters, including the Venetians. Modern artists, they believed, could draw significant lessons from the Old Masters on how to conceptualize their artworks.

Fry and Binyon both held a high regard for the British tradition of the eighteenth century, which they felt had been abandoned during the nineteenth century. It is no surprise, then, to find that Fry edited a 1905 edition of Reynolds's *Discourses*. Fry composed an introduction to this edition, and included comments for the text and illustrations (selected by Fry) of each discourse. As Jacqueline Falkenheim has pointed out, Fry shared with Reynolds the belief that artistic creation is largely an intellectual exercise demanding a familiarity with particular conventions that may be gained through a study of the Old Masters.[323] In other words, Reynolds offered an alternative point of view to the extreme naturalism which Fry saw in Impressionism.

It is evident in Fry's comments to the *Discourses* that he regards Reynolds's lessons as highly relevant to the modern age. Fry even claims that his current generation was more receptive to the lessons of Reynolds's Discourses than any generation since the Discourses were first published. The nineteenth century, Fry notes, had lost its connection with tradition, despite Reynolds's efforts at founding the Royal Academy as "an organised cooperative advance in the knowledge of these principles of artistic expression."[324] After Reynolds, tradition had

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[320] Letter to Lowes Dickinson, November 7, 1894. In *Letters of Roger Fry*, 161.
[321] Fry, *Vision and Design*, 1920, pp287-288.
[322] See Binyon, *English Watercolours*, p. 189.
[323] Jacqueline V. Falkenheim, *Roger Fry and the Beginnings of Formalist Art Criticism* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1980), 74.
[324] Reynolds, *Discourses*, with introduction and notes by Roger Fry (London: Seeley & Co. Limited, 1905), xix.

degenerated into complete sterility, culminating in "a complete bankruptcy of tradition . . . in the first half of the nineteenth century." "The subsequent history of art," Fry argues, "has been the story, not of a gradual process of construction, but of successive revolutions, each illuminated by one or more heroic figures, and each ending without establishing more than a provisional government."[325] This development encouraged the rise of the cult of the individual, epitomized by Whistler's celebrity and egotistic personality. Such a situation was characterized by "its feverish and quickly exhausted energy, its waste of power in fruitless experiment, and its small actual accomplishment."

Fry then calls for a return to the principles advocated by Reynolds, "principles which were more or less discoverable in the great traditions of past masters."[326] The current historical moment seems ripe for this revival:

> Ten years ago the revolutionary forces were still strong; it still seemed worth while to destroy and to liberate; but the rising generation of artists, especially in England, is turning with a new reverence to the art of the past . . . we are tired of a too self-assertive individualism; the cult of genius has passed its climax with the death of Whistler; and we are ready to listen with profit to the sage counsels and constructive policy of Reynolds.[327]

As we will see, Fry probably had Shannon in mind as one of the artists of this new generation. However, five years later, Fry would shift his loyalties away from the Old Masters to modernist artists. Later in this chapter, we will return to a discussion of Fry's role in promoting Post-Impressionism, and we will see how Fry extracted particular aspects of Venetianism and applied them to a new visual language.

Shannon's Reception in Late Victorian and Edwardian England

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Shannon certainly belonged to "the rising generation of artists" who Fry noted were turning to the Old Masters. Because of this context, and because of modern art's asserted link with the Venetian Renaissance, it is not surprising to learn that Shannon's Venetianism was regarded as a progressive trait by many Late Victorian and Edwardian viewers. An examination of Shannon's audience from 1890-1910 will demonstrate that not only was Shannon's work considered progressive, but that it was also

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[325] Ibid, xx.
[326] Ibid, xix.
[327] Ibid, xxi.

recognized as sharing certain aesthetic principles with several modernist artworks, even while retaining its powerful connections with Renaissance art.

Shannon's place among his contemporaries can best be ascertained by considering how his work was received by contemporary audiences. I will accomplish this by discussing the environments in which Shannon's work was seen: in public exhibitions and in private collections. Both settings will indicate that until the 1910s, Shannon's paintings were typically associated with the most progressive works of modern British art. At the end of this chapter, we will see how circumstances changed after 1910.

Throughout the 1880s and 1890s, Shannon was an avid participant in London's literary and artistic avant-garde circles. In particular, Shannon became associated with the Aesthetic Movement, which continued to provoke many conservative viewers by privileging art above moral concerns. Walter Pater's "School of Giorgione" essay had linked Aestheticist principles with Venetian art as early as the 1872. However, Aestheticism did not become strongly linked with British Venetianist painting in Britain until the 1880s, thanks to the major exhibitions of Watts and Rossetti's paintings at the Grovesnor's (1881) and the Royal Academy (1883), respectively. Although Watts and Rossetti had been employing Venetianist techniques since the 1860s, their Venetianist paintings were unknown to the general public until the 1880s exhibits. Venetianism was therefore a current style when Shannon began studying as an art student in the 1880s, and it offered an appealing reaction against the medievalism that had dominated much of early Victorian art.

Shannon's work appeared in many progressive journals of the 1880s and 1890s, including *The Century Guild and Hobby Horse*, the *Universal Review*, and, most significantly, *The Dial*. These journals promoted the literary and artistic efforts of young artists, whose work demonstrated close links with contemporary art movements on the Continent, particularly Symbolism. Although Shannon's work rarely reveals the influence of the more esoteric Symbolists, his work often comes close in mood to the idyllic pastorals of Puvis de Chavannes, with whom Shannon and Ricketts met during an early trip to Paris.

At this point of his career, Shannon clearly set himself in opposition to the Royal Academy. When learning to paint oils, he intentionally bypassed the academic schools, preferring to teach himself based upon firsthand examination of Old Master paintings and with Reynolds and Eastlake's manuals. As his reputation grew in the first decade of the twentieth century, Shannon continued to ignore the Academy, and rarely attended the annual shows, to which he did not submit his work for exhibition. Instead, Shannon preferred to exhibit with more progressive-minded groups, including the New English Art Club and the International Society. The NEAC began as a progressive alternative to the Royal Academy; its shows from the 1890s are primarily remembered for showcasing British Impressionists like Sickert and Steer,

but its range included many non-Impressionist artists, such as Charles Conder, Alphonse Legros, and Shannon. These various artists were united by their belief that the Royal Academy had become insular and moribund. The NEAC artists, by contrast, were in close contact with many Continental avant-garde movements, including Impressionism and Symbolism.

Shannon was even more closely associated with the International Society of Sculptors, Painters, and Gravers. As its name suggests, this group disavowed national distinctions, and actively promoted works by European artists. Shannon was involved with the founding of the organization in 1898; he would soon leave the group after disagreements with Whistler, who was the first president of the Society and with whom Shannon did not get along. However, Shannon would return to the group after Whistler's death in 1903, when Rodin was elected as the new president. He would then become deeply committed to the International Society, for which he would serve as vice-president. The society would become Shannon's main vehicle for exhibiting his pictures until the 1920s.[328]

At the International Society, Shannon exhibited his work alongside such proto- modernist painters as Cézanne. While Shannon's Venetianism certainly struck a different stylistic note from the Impressionism and Post-Impressionism that one would also see at the NEAC and the International Society, the very fact that these different styles were seen together suggests that contemporary viewers would not have regarded them as entirely incongruous. During the first decade of the twentieth century, Shannon's Venetianism would have been seen as one of several different artistic methods available to modern artists.

Shannon also exhibited his works in other venues, many of them outside England. Many of his lithographs were exhibited at Durand-Ruel's gallery in Paris; two of his earliest paintings, *A Wounded Amazon* and *The Man with the Yellow Glove*, were shown at the 1897 Annual Exhibition of the Fine Arts in Munich, the latter painting winning a first-class gold medal. In fact, in the first decade of the twentieth century, Shannon's work actually received better recognition on the Continent than it did in England. His portrait of James Staats Forbes was purchased for the Bremen Kunsthalle in 1900, and in subsequent years paintings of his would be acquired by the National Gallery of Australia (*A Souvenir of Van Dyck*); the Luxembourg Gallery in Paris (*The Sculptress*); Dresden; and the Museum of Modern Art (today housed in the Ca' Pesaro) in Venice (*The Lady with a Feather*). As we noted in a previous chapter, Tthis last painting was purchased by the Venetian city government after it was exhibited in the British

[328] Delaney, *Charles Ricketts*, 230.

pavilion at the Venice Biennale.[329] In a stroke of poetic justice, Shannon is therefore represented in Venice.

An exhibit which provides a strong idea of Shannon's growing reputation in contemporary art is the Guildhall exhibit of Irish painters (1904). The origins of this exhibit actually lay in an international exhibit that was held in St. Louis, Missouri. When the Irish Department of Agriculture decided to partake in this exhibit, the art dealer Hugh Lane was hired to select the exhibitors. Lane chose Shannon to be one of the main contributors to the exhibit, and even offered him a whole room for his pictures.[330] Although Shannon was English, the only condition was for exhibitors to be of Irish blood, and Shannon could claim Irish descent through one of his grandparents.[331]

The Irish section of the St. Louis exhibit had to be canceled after the Department of Agriculture withdrew from the show, citing the unexpectedly high rate of insurance. Lane was able to salvage the project by convincing the gallery director of London's Guildhall to host an exhibit of Irish art. Shannon exhibited ten of his paintings, which were hung, in Shannon's own words, "in the place of honour" at the center of the gallery's main wall; he exhibited eleven sketches and watercolors as well.[332] The exhibited works included such paintings as *The Lady with a Feather* (cat. 17), *The Wood Nymph* (cat. 18), *The Shell Gatherers* (cat. 20; London: Fine Art Society), and *The Bath of Venus* (cat.13). The catalogue for the Guildhall exhibit even featured a reproduction of *The Bath of Venus* as its frontispiece.[333] The prominence of this reproduction, in addition to the number of works in the show and their advantageous placement, gives further evidence of Shannon's growing reputation in the early years of the new century.

As his prestige as an artist grew, Shannon enjoyed the patronage of several important collectors. These included Lane, who in addition to organizing the Guildhall show also amassed a significant collection of art. Lane collected several Old Master paintings, including several Venetian paintings including a portrait by Jacopo Bassano and a Veronese (both in Dublin: National Gallery of Art). He also acquired three portraits by Titian: *Portrait of a Man in a Red*

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[329] For British artworks at the Venice Biennale, see *Britain at the Venice Biennale*, ed. Sophie Bowness and Clive Philipot. *The Lady with a Feather* appeared at the 1909 Biennale, in which Shannon also exhibited lithographs. Shannon also exhibited at the 1910, 1912, and 1922 shows. At this moment in the Biennale's history, participating nations were represented by a group of artists instead of a single artist. Also at this time, the Biennale was not always strictly biannual, as the 1909 and 1910 shows demonstrate.

[330] Delaney, Charles Ricketts: a Biography, 188.

[331] Shannon's diary, 22 August, 1904.

[332] Shannon's diary, 5 May, 1904. See also Lady Gregory, pp 48-49.

[333] See Catalogue of the Exhibition of Works by Irish Painters, with notes by A. G. Temple (London: Art Gallery of the Corporation of London, 1904). Shannon is also listed as exhibiting a Souvenir of Giorgione (cat. 14), which I have not been able to trace.

Cap (New York: Frick Collection), *Baldassare Castiglione* (Dublin: National Gallery of Ireland), and *Philip II* (Cincinnati Museum of Art).

Lane also compiled a significant collection of contemporary art, which included paintings by Augustus John, Philip Wilson Steer, Renoir, Manet, and Monet. His collection of modern paintings would ultimately be housed in the Dublin Municipal Art Gallery (now the Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery), although the French Impressionist paintings would be shared with the National Gallery in London. Lane intended this collection as a gift to the Irish nation, and as a means for young Irish artists to become educated about modern art, a resource which was not available at any public galleries in Ireland. As Lady Gregory, Lane's famous aunt, explained, Lane was motivated by a desire to correct the kind of distorted stereotypes of Ireland that had been fostered during the Victorian age. A gallery of modern art would hopefully "put out of fashion those outlandish labels" and "bring back distinction and dignity to Ireland."[334] For this gallery, Lane acquired two of Shannon's portraits, *A Bunch of Grapes* [Figure 126] and *The Lady with the Green Fan* (Mrs. Hacon). His esteem for Shannon's work is suggested by the fact that, as in the Guildhall exhibition catalogue, a reproduction of one of Shannon's paintings--*A Bunch of Grapes*--served as the frontispiece for the gallery's original catalogue.[335]

Lane's decision to open a modern art gallery in Dublin was motivated by the success of the Guildhall show. Lane had described his vision in the catalogue for the Guildhall show: "There is not in Ireland one single accessible collection or masterpiece of modern or contemporary art," he decried. "A Gallery of Modern Art in Dublin would create a standard of taste. . . . Such a gallery would be necessary to the student if we are to have a distinct school of painting in Ireland, for it is one's contemporaries that teach one the most. They are busy with the same problems of expression as oneself, for almost every artist expresses the soul of his own age."[336] It is apparent from Lane's support for Shannon's work that he considered Shannon to express something of the soul of the modern age, even though his method of expression was certainly different from the Monets and Renoirs in Lane's collection.

Shannon's most significant and supportive patrons were undoubtedly Mary and Edmund Davis. In their relationship with Shannon, the Davises were far more than collectors; they also became close friends. They first met after Mrs. Davis began taking art lessons from Shannon in

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[334] Lady Gregory, *Hugh Lane's Life and Achievement* (London: John Murray, 1921), 45.

[335] This catalogue was reprinted as *The City's Art–the Original Municipal Collection Catalogue* (Dublin: Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, 1984). Somewhat oddly, *A Bunch of Grapes* (cat. no. 7) was originally exhibited in Room 1, "Irish Painters (by Birth or Descent) while *The Lady with the Green Fan* (cat. no. 84) was exhibited in Room 2, "British Schools."

[336] Hugh Lane, "Prefatory Notice," in *Catalogue of the Exhibition of Works by Irish Painters*, x.

the late 1890s. She and her husband Sir Edmund Davis, who as a young man had studied painting in Paris, began to support Shannon by purchasing his work.[337]

Their support of Shannon and Ricketts would continue through the rest of their lives. They leased a large flat to the two artists in Lansdowne House, a residential building the Davises had constructed in Holland Park; Ricketts and Shannon lived there from 1902 until 1923. They also hosted Shannon and Ricketts as their guests at the Palazzo Desdemona, the Davis's villa on the Grand Canal in Venice. The artists' extended stay at this palazzo in 1908 would be Shannon's last trip to Venice.[338] The Davises also owned Chilham Castle in Kent, which featured an old Norman keep which they gave to Shannon and Ricketts as a holiday residence. These and other favors were given partly in exchange for Ricketts and Shannon's extensive advice on the Davis art collection, which included a bust by Houdon and paintings by Van Dyck and Rembrandt.

While the Davises would purchase several significant Old Master works, the heart of their collection was contemporary British art. They bought several paintings by Shannon, including *The Man in the Black Shirt* and *The Man in an Inverness Cape*, which were the first works by Shannon that the Davises acquired. The Davises commissioned various artists to design rooms of their house on Lansdowne Street, each in their own distinctive style; thus, Frank Brangwyn designed their bedroom and hallway, and Charles Conder decorated their drawing room with silk panels.[339] They also purchased significant paintings by Robert Anning Bell, Philip Wilson Steer, Emma Ciardi, Frederick Cayley-Robinson, Ambrose McEvoy, Constance Rea, and Edmund Dulac, among others.

The styles represented by these and other artists from the Davis collection are immensely diverse. Some artists, like John Pettie, represent fairly traditional Victorian painting, with a heavy emphasis on narrative. Other artists indicate other, more progressive directions in art; Brangwyn's paintings, for example, show both Whistlerian and Art Nouveau traits, while Cayley-Robinson's work recalls Puvis de Chavannes, whose work he had seen while studying at the progressive Académie Julian in Paris. Impressionist traits can be seen in Wilson Steer's portraits, in Emma Ciardi's landscapes of Venice, which also recall Guardi's *vedute*, and in Philip Connard's pastorals.

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[337] For the history of the Davises, see Anna Tietze's catalogue essay for *The Sir Edmund and Lady Davis Presentation: a Gift of British Art to South Africa* (Cape Town: South African National Gallery, 1999), pp 15-29. Tietze's statement that the Davises lived in Lansdowne House with Ricketts and Shannon is erroneous; while they built Lansdowne House for the artists and other tenants, the Davises actually lived in a different house in the same street.

[338] For details of this trip, see Delaney, *Charles Ricketts*, 232.

[339] Ibid, 20.

Some of the most significant works in the Davis collection show artists working in a similar revivalist method as Shannon, albeit in different styles. While Shannon painted his subjects through the visual idiom of the Venetian Renaissance, Charles Conder looked to Watteau and eighteenth-century France for inspiration. An active member of the New English Art Club, Conder established his reputation in painting silk fans of *fêtes galantes*, which inspired Shannon to adopt fan-shaped compositions for some of his lithographs. For his part, Robert Anning Bell was fascinated with late medieval art, and executed Italianate works in tempera, neo-Byzantine works in mosaic, and neo-Gothic works in stained glass. Edmund Dulac, who drew brilliant caricatures of Ricketts and Shannon, took his inspiration from Asian art and Near Eastern manuscripts; the flattened perspective and the saturated tones of his drawings reveal the influence of Persian manuscript miniatures.[340]

Shannon's Venetianism was perfectly at home in such a collection. However, it could also find a surprising home in the collection of John Quinn. Quinn, the son of Irish immigrants, had made his career as an attorney in New York. He became a major collector of both modern paintings and books, and kept abreast of the London art scene through his correspondences with Shannon and with May Morris. His literary collection included manuscripts by Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, and T. S. Eliot, while his art collection featured paintings by Cezanne, Seurat, Picasso, and Matisse. Other works were even more radically abstractionist, including paintings by Duchamp, Rouault, and Wyndham Lewis.[341] Quinn's commitment to modernist art can be gauged by the fact that in 1913, he played a major role in organizing the Armory Show, to which he lent nearly 80 paintings (in fact, his was the biggest loan at the show), and for which Quinn gave the opening speech.[342] He would describe the exhibition, which virtually introduced New York audiences to modern European painting, as "away ahead of the two Post-Impressionist exhibitions in London," which, as we shall see, had caused a storm in the London art world.[343]

Quinn first became aware of Shannon's work during a 1904 trip to London, during which he saw Shannon's paintings at a Leicester Galleries exhibition. In November of the same year, W. B. Yeats introduced him to Shannon in person.[344] In 1907, Quinn would commission Shannon to paint a portrait of Yeats (now in the Courtauld Institute of Art), and would go on to purchase several other paintings by Shannon for his collection–portraits like *Lilah McCarthy in*

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[340] See The Last Romantics: the Romantic Tradition in British Art, ed. John Christian, 171.

[341] My information about Quinn's collection comes mainly from the memorial exhibit catalog of his collection, published as John Quinn, 1870-1925: Collection of Paintings, Water Colors, Drawings, and Sculpture (Huntington, NY: Pidgeon Hill Press, 1926).

[342] See B. L.Reid, The Man from New York (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 142-147.

[343] John QuinnLetter to May Morris, 4 March 1913; reproduced in Londraville, 124.

[344] Shannon recorded this meeting in his diary: "Yates [sic] and American friend . . . came in evening." 4 November, 1904.

"Man and Superman" (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art) [Figure 127] and subject paintings like *Summer* and *The Sapphire Bay* [Figure 128].[345] He also owned several of Shannon's lithographs. Quinn's letters to May Morris and Shannon reveal that he held a genuinely aesthetic appreciation of Shannon's work.[346]

However, when looking at Quinn's entire collection of art, Shannon's works may seem out of place next to the radically modern works by Rouault and others. One also has some difficulty in reconciling Shannon's Venetianism with Quinn's criticism of Pre-Raphaelite art for not evoking the spirit of their times. Quinn was particularly dismissive of Burne-Jones's sentimentality. "Real art is the expression of its time," Quinn once stated. "It ought to appeal to its own time and to respond to the emotions of its own time. . . . I feel that my generation is that of Van Gogh and Gauguin and Augustus John, though I don't deny great beauty to the Pre-Raphaelites, but I can't stand the sentiment."[347]

Quinn's views on Shannon's work were similarly mixed. After becoming acquainted with Matisse's Fauvism in 1911, he expressed reservations about Shannon's dark tones. The palette of the Yeats portrait seemed too dim and restrained, he now felt. Modern pictures "should not look as though they were painted in a coal cellar or in a prison cell with very little light coming through a small hole in the wall," he complained in a letter to August John.[348] However, for the rest of his life he kept the Shannon paintings in his collection, and would commission other works from the artist.

On closer analysis, the Venetianist aspect of Shannon's works may have forged a common trait with the more modernist tones of other works in Quinn's collection. Shannon's paintings generally lack the kind of overtly sentimental expressions that Quinn deplored in Pre-Raphaelite art. Furthermore, although Shannon never could be considered a "painter of modern life" in the Baudelairian sense, his Venetianism could be considered an expression of his time. Shannon's emphasis on formal beauty rather than on literary narrative was shared by both the Aesthetic Movement and by many abstract painters. When viewing Quinn's collection, one can

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[345] Shannon received £100 for the Yeats portrait, and £360 for *Summer* and *The Sapphire Bay*. Quinn acquired all three of these works in 1909. He purchased Shannon's *Portrait of Lilah McCarthy* in 1910 for £360. These were respectable prices for an artist at this time, and they indicate Shannon's established reputation as a painter. See B. L.Reid, *The Man from New York* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 70, 90.

[346] See for example Quinn's letter to Morris, 15 July 1910 (reproduced in Janis Londraville, *On Poetry, Painting, and Politics: the Letters of May Morris and John Quinn* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1997), 49, in which he proudly refers to his "two splendid Shannons" (the reference is probably to *Summer* and *Sapphire Bay*, which Quinn had received at the end of 1909). In regard to his collection, Quinn considered himself an art lover first and foremost, and was very critical of other collectors whose interests were more financial in nature. See his letter to Morris, 8 March 1912 in which he expresses his disappointment that a rival collector, "nothing but a dealer," had purchased an Augustus John painting "for a profit" rather than for its aesthetic value. Londraville, 99.

[347] John QuinnLetter to May Morris, 4 June 1914. Reproduced in Londraville, 151.

[348] Cited in Reid, 96.

detect certain sympathies between Shannon's work and paintings by André Derain, Maurice Prendergast, and even Picasso. All of these modernist works are figurative paintings of nudes. Picasso's Rose Period paintings (*La Toilette* [Figure 129] and *Les Baigneuses* [Figure 130]) and several of his Neo-Classical works (*Maternity* [Figure 131] and *Mére et Enfant* [Figure 132]) are strikingly similar to many of Shannon's subjects: women at their toilet, playing with children, and swimming in the sea, with no allusions to particular narratives.

Quinn's primary objection to Shannon's work, therefore, was due to the dark tonality of the paintings. He had no real issue with the aesthetics of Venetianism, the spirit of which was shared by Matisse (in his pastorals, for instance) and by Picasso (in his aforementioned toilet and bathing scenes). Further evidence of the link between modernism and Venetianism can be seen in Puvis de Chavanne's work, of which Quinn was a fervent admirer. Puvis' pastoral scenes and nudes are similar in feel to both Giorgione and Shannon. However, Quinn preferred the luminosity of Puvis' tones, an issue he discussed with Augustus John during a trip to France in 1911.[349]

With Quinn's collecting habits, we can see the beginning of a cultural shift in the reception of Venetianist art: while the most characteristic stylistic elements are rejected, or at least criticized, the underlying aestheticism is reaffirmed. A similar shift in attitude can be traced in Roger Fry's criticism of Shannon's work. In a review of Shannon's exhibit of pastels, drawings, and woodcuts at the Dutch Gallery (1901), Fry approves of Shannon's interest in formal beauty divorced from daily life or literary narrative, while finding serious faults with Shannon's style of painting.

Fry finds Shannon's work anything but literary in nature. "Mr. Shannon refuses the aid of definite literary or poetical ideas," Fry remarked. "Titian and Giorgione had as a rule in painting their 'poesie' some definite poetical suggestion to work from, but Mr. Shannon has apparently determined to rely solely on visual beauty," which he aims at in its purest and most abstract manifestations.

Fry's interpretation of Shannon anticipates an essay he would later write about Watts, Shannon's Venetianist predecessor. Of Watts, Fry would write that his allegorical works could not be considered literary because they did not rely upon "literary annotation" for their meaning; on the contrary, Watts's allegories express their meaning purely through pictorial means.[350] Fry sees Shannon, like Watts, as offering an alternative to the bustle and chaos of daily modern life. "Sheltered from the clamour of contemporary fashions," as Fry describes them, Shannon's works act as "a protest against the vulgarity, the haste, and the ugliness of modern life." Fry described

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[349] Reid, 107.
[350] Fry, "Watts and Whistler," in *The Quarterly Review* (April 1905), 607-23; reprinted in *A Roger Fry Reader*, pp 25-38.

Watts's situation in similar terms: "greeted on all sides by the jerky briskness of modern man, in an age of daily increasing ugliness and squalor."[351] However, Fry would find faults in Watts, just as he does in Shannon. Of Watts, Fry described him as belonging to the "improviser" class of artists rather than the "supreme creator" class. "The great creators revealed some new aspect of form, and discovered some new rhythm," Fry explained. "They expressed great conceptions in forms moulded anew specially to fit them, while the improvisers modified and adapted to the expression of their own conceptions material that had already been quarried."[352]

It would probably not be unfair to categorize Shannon in a similar way: an improviser rather than a creator. This is not necessarily a bad thing; Fry also included Tintoretto, William Blake, and El Greco in this category. However, Fry was more critical of what he saw as a lack of structural unity in Shannon's work. While he praises the harmony of Shannon's compositions, Fry argues that his oil paintings "lack that solidity, that vigorous imaginative grasp of possible structural form, that oil painting, if it is to give us the fullest pleasure, presupposes." Shannon's technique, Fry concludes, fails to grasp form beyond its superficial appearances. He compares this to the Impressionists:

> It would seem almost as though he [Shannon] had approached his view of design through the dainty selection of superficial appearances, the indifference to the deeper significance of objects which some Impressionists proclaim as a principle, and that, in arriving at his own far more searching ideal of style, he still retained something of their habits of elusiveness, of escaping from the conflict with form into mere tastefulness and pleasing uncommitting vagueness.

Fry's comparison of Shannon's style with the Impressionists comes as a surprise, as Shannon's art appears to have little in common with the Impressionist working method. Unlike the Impressionists, Shannon executed most of his works in the studio, not in *plein air*. Unlike the spontaneous appearance of Impressionist canvases, Shannon's paintings were methodically constructed following the manner of the Old Masters, with several layers of underpaint and glazes, over a lengthy period of time (several years, in some cases). Nevertheless, Venetianism at the turn of the twentieth century was flexible enough as a category to include both Shannon and Monet. As Berenson had observed of French Impressionism and Venetian art, such artists achieve their effects not "through beauty of line or even color, but through their treatment of light, values, and atmosphere, or at least through their fascinating brushwork."[353] Such an

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[351] Ibid, 33.
[352] Ibid, 37.
[353] From Berenson's 1892 notebook, quoted in *The Bernard Berenson Treasury, 1887-1958*, ed. Hanna Kiel (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1962), 61-62.

assessment is equally applicable to Shannon's work. By comparing Shannon's work with the Impressionists, Fry is following Berenson in correlating Venetianism with modern Impressionism.

Fry's comparison of Shannon's work with Impressionism provides further evidence that contemporary audiences did not see his Venetianism as at odds with modern French painting (which, for British viewers, was still identified with Impressionism).

However, Fry's comparison also reveals why Shannon's Venetianism would fail his test for modernist art: like Impressionist art, Venetianist paintings did not provide the solidity in form that Fry desired, and which he found in the paintings of Cézanne and Piero della Francesca. Fry would grow increasingly suspicious of the painterly tradition for obscuring formal structure, and would even criticize Titian for creating works "full of vacancies, recessions which have no relation to volumes, and volumes which are inadequate to the recessions"; Fry would argue that successful painting required "the greatest possible amount of interplay between the volumes and the spaces both at their three dimensionalist."[354] Just as he would eventually reject the painterly tradition as a whole–the Rubenist tradition as descended from the Venetians and adopted by the Impressionists–Fry would also reject Shannon's relevance to modern art.

Thus, the chiaroscuro and colorism of Venetian art were coming into increasing conflict with modernist art's stress on delineated forms and saturated hues. At the same time, certain aspects found in Venetianist art, including the diminished significance of subject matter, are carried over into modernist painting. Despite feeling some reservations about the darkness of Shannon's style, John Quinn was able to maintain a collection featuring paintings by both Shannon and Picasso. However, Quinn would be in the minority, as most critics would accept Fry's criticism. By the 1920s, most critics would regard Shannon as a firmly conservative, academic artist—if they discussed him at all.

Before discussing the state of Venetianism in the 1920s, we need to consider what events transpired in the London art world between 1910 and 1920, and how these events affected Shannon. In the following section, we will examine the repercussions from the Post-Impressionist exhibits at the Grafton Galleries, which virtually introduced the London public to Post-Impressionist and modernist art. We will also evaluate how successfully modernist British artists interacted with Venetianism, before contrasting their efforts with Shannon's more consistently Venetianist style.

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[354] Letter to ? (518), cited in Reed, 122

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Death in Venice: The Post-Impressionist Exhibits, Modernism, and the End of British Venetianism

The year 1911 was a time of major transitions for Shannon. In this year, Shannon joined the Royal Academy, the very institution which he had spent years opposing. He only accepted his election as an Associate member of the Academy with great reluctance, and even afterwards found himself at odds with other members over a variety of issues.[355] Nevertheless, it is a significant career shift for an artist who had once resisted being nominated for the Academy because he felt it had become obsolete, and that any association with the organization would be grounds for ridicule.

Although it may be impossible to assign a particular cause to Shannon's change of heart, the Post-Impressionist exhibitions (1910 and 1912) at the Grafton Galleries almost certainly played a role. These were organized by Roger Fry, and introduced British audiences to modernist art, which was identified primarily with Post-Impressionist, Fauvist, and Cubist styles of painting. The exhibitions would propel Fry's theories into the spotlight while bitterly dividing the London art world.

Many visitors to the first Post-Impressionist exhibition were shocked at what they perceived as the lack of technical skill in the exhibited paintings. To critics like Robert Ross, Matisse and Van Gogh's paintings appeared to be the ravings of madmen, with no proper grounding in technique or style. The London art world was split into two camps: those, like Ross and Ricketts, who rejected the exhibition as a farce, and those, like Virginia Woolf and Clive Bell, who supported Fry's efforts to introduce modern art to Britain. Although Fry and some of his supporters would describe the conflict as one between a progressive, avant-garde vision versus a reactionary, Philistine mentality, the reality was much more complex. Several of the show's detractors were artists or writers who would normally be considered progressive. They included, for instance, Walter Sickert, whose paintings were heavily indebted to Degas and Impressionist paintings, and the aforementioned Ross, who had fought the "Philistine" public himself during and after Wilde's conviction for acts of gross indecency, and who had supported Fry when Fry began to work as a painter.[356]

In fact, one of the reasons why the reaction against the Post-Impressionist exhibit was so vociferous was because many of Fry's former friends and supporters considered the show a

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[355] For instance, Shannon often protested the Academy's selection of nominees, particularly when they overlooked artists like James Pryde, and he was incensed when the Academy refused to purchase Glyn Philpot's painting, *The Two Sisters*, with the Chantrey Bequest. See Delaney, *Charles Ricketts*, 326.

[356] Ross had organized Fry's first show of his own paintings in 1903. See Frances Spalding, *Roger Fry: Art and Life* (London: Granada, 1980), 75-78.

betrayal. As we have seen, Fry's early work had been in the field of Renaissance connoisseurship, and during that time, Ricketts and Shannon held cordial, if not exactly warm, relations with the young critic. Indeed, when he lived in Chelsea during the 1890s, Fry used to visit Ricketts and Shannon frequently at the Vale. William Rothenstein even credited Ricketts and Shannon with inspiring Fry's initial enthusiasm for Old Master paintings.[357]

However, the traditional skill and quality of those Old Master paintings stood in stark contrast to the Post-Impressionist and Fauvist works that Fry was advocating in 1910. Although Fry would sometimes insist on a continuity between Post-Impressionist art and Old Master paintings (Quattrocento Italian art in particular), many of Fry's colleagues could see no connection between these different styles of art.

For his part, Fry defended the Post-Impressionist painters partly on the grounds that they were aware of, and drew upon, the European traditions of painting. However, he also argued that these modern artists needed to detach themselves, albeit temporarily, from those traditions in order to find new means of expressing their emotions. The Renaissance had introduced "the too elaborate pictorial apparatus" of illusionistic realism into art; over the centuries, the techniques of the Old Masters had refined and perfected this apparatus so much that modern viewers focused on the artists' skill in technique rather than on the artists' expression of "emotional ideas."[358] Modern artists, Fry explained, needed to explore new avenues of expression, particularly in the form of naive or primitivist art, which would help them arrive at the "elementary facts of mass, gesture, and movement."[359]

As we have already noted, the style of Venetianist art was excluded from Fry's conceptualization of modern art. In terms of a formal language, Venetian Renaissance art qualifies as overly-elaborate system, and its use of chiaroscuro and impasto, in Fry's opinion, obscured the fundamental design. In drawing its stylistic and formal language from Venetian Renaissance painting, Venetianism would therefore diverge from modernist art, which seemed to renounce any obvious debts to European art and replaced them with homages to naive and non-European art, as represented, respectively, by Henri Rousseau and West African masks.

Fry did not renounce his former specialization in Old Master paintings, but he clearly preferred Florentine Quattrocento painting, with its clear, linear properties, to the painterly tradition of Venetianism. With Fry, then, we are back in the old Vasarian *disegno* versus

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[357] *Men and Memories*, v. i p 176; Mary Lago's edition, 80.

[358] "The Grafton Gallery–I," in *The Nation* (19 November 1910), 331-35. Reprinted in *A Roger Fry Reader*, ed. Christopher Reed (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), 86-89.

[359] By "naive" art, I am generally referring to artists who have trained themselves in the western traditions of art without acquiring the kind of professional sophistication represented by the academic style. "Primitivist" art refers to artists who self-consciously adopt non-Western techniques and motifs.

colorito debate, with Fry, like Reynolds, taking the Florentine side of the argument. However, it is interesting to see that just as Reynolds employed Venetianist traits in his painting, Fry incorporated certain Venetianist ideas into his artistic theories. Fry's formalism, in fact, closely follows many of the principles Pater had outlined in his essay on Giorgione. Fry asserted, like Pater, that the realm of art is outside daily moral or utilitarian functioning. In their purest form, artworks appeal to a different, aesthetic level of consciousness, and this consciousness is addressed through formal categories peculiar to visual art. Mimetic naturalism is therefore discouraged, as it refers to objects outside of the artwork itself; first and foremost, an artwork should be understood as a work of visual art.[360]

These principles are nearly identical with Pater's Venetianism, which, as we have seen, informed so many of Shannon's artworks. Fry's own review of Shannon's work demonstrates that he recognized, and approved of, Shannon's emphasis on formal beauty to the exclusion of literary narrative. Fry's monograph on Giovanni Bellini also reveals that he was familiar with Paterian Venetianism, and his formalism is clearly indebted to Pater's aestheticist principles. However, after his first encounter with Post-Impressionist art—at an International Society show, of all places—Fry had become convinced that Pater's principles needed to be applied to new styles of painting. He would no longer advocate a revivalist approach as he had in his introduction to Reynolds's *Discourses*. Studies of the Old Masters would need to be incorporated within a new, modernist idiom.

Few modernist artists incorporated Venetian Renaissance art in their own work. This does not mean that Venetianism disappears entirely from modernist art. However, those modernist works which do contain Venetianist elements look strikingly different from previous generations of Venetianist art. In Shannon's work, one can easily spot the formal traits and figurative elements that reference paintings by artists like Watts, Rossetti, Etty, and Reynolds, as well as Giorgione and Titian. Modernist artworks, on the other hand, rarely contain such overt references. Venetianism will occasionally surface in modernist paintings as figurative elements, or subject matter, or painterly technique, but rarely will these various aspects all appear within the same painting.

These changes in Venetianism lead one to an important question: can Venetianism still be considered a viable discourse in the years following the Post-Impressionist exhibits? Venetianism in previous eras had functioned as a vehicle for contemporary cultural concepts, from the royalism of Van Dyck's Venetianism to the aestheticism of Rossetti's Venetianism. If modernist Venetianism was fractured to such an extent that its various components could only

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[360] See Fry's essay "An Essay in Aesthetics," originally published in 1909. Reprinted in *Vision and Design* (New York: Brentano's, 1921).

function independently, the discourse could no longer carry the same kind of cultural significance as it had in the past.

We will now examine three modernist British artists whose work reveals certain aspects of Venetianism: Duncant Grant, Mark Gertler, and Matthew Smith. While none of these artists were consistently Venetianist, and each went through several different styles, their work is representative of the range of Venetianism among modernist painters. While Grant will recall Venetian art through his subject matter, Gertler does so primarily through his compositional formats. Smith also recalls Venetian paintings through his compositions, as well as through his painterly brushwork. Of these three, Smith is probably the most "Venetianist." However, none of these artists are as thoroughly Venetianist as Shannon, a point which will be made clear when we contrast their work with Shannon's contemporaneous paintings.

In its subject matter, Duncan Grant's *Venus and Adonis* (c.1919, Tate Gallery) [Figure 133] calls to mind Titian's famous painting (1553-54) [Figure 134], a studio version of which is at the National Gallery in London. Grant depicts a later moment in the narrative than is that seen in Titian's painting; in Grant's painting, Adonis has already departed from Venus and can be seen in the background running off to the hunt. Venus's figure fills the foreground, reclining in a manner somewhat reminiscent of Giorgione's and Titian's Venuses. However, the anatomy of Grant's Venus is highly distorted, her hips exaggeratedly large and her head impossibly small. Her skin is colored in Fauvist patches of intense greens and purples.

In his descriptions of *Venus and Adonis*, Grant insisted that these colors and the formal rhythm of Venus's curves were the real subject of the painting. The actual narrative had no significance, and he wrote of this particular painting that this paintingit was "not in any way an illustration of the subject, but a rhythm which *came out of* the subject."[361] Ironically, both the subject and its lack of significance are Venetianist aspects: while the myth of Venus and Adonis had been popular with Venetian Renaissance painters, Grant's disavowal of the painting's narrative content, and his insistence on the formal values instead, is also a Venetianist trait in the Paterian tradition.

Mark Gertler's work occasionally also reveals Venetianist influences. Gertler, in fact, admired the Old Masters and modernist painters equally, and strove for a resolution between these ideals throughout his career. As a result, his style shifted frequently. An early work like *Bathers* (1917-18) demonstrates the powerful influence of Cezanne's bather series. At the same time, the nudes in their various poses call to mind Titian's *Diana and Callisto* (1559; Edinburgh: National Gallery of Scotland, on loan from the Duke of Sutherland collection) and *The Death*

[361] Cited in *The Tate Gallery, 1970-72* (1972), 111. Grant's italics.

ofDiana and Actaeon (1559; Edinburgh: National Gallery of Scotland, on loan from the Duke of Sutherland collection). Gertler's paintings of reclining nudes [Figure 135] also remind us of Titian's and Giorgione's Venuses, although Renoir's impact is very evident. Gertler's glowing tones, as seen in his 1920s still-lifes, are clearly indebted to the colorist tradition that extends back to Venetian art. Nevertheless, Gertler's studies of the Old Masters are in most cases mediated through the Impressionists, and Renoir in particular.

Sir Matthew Smith's figures are similarly indebted to Venetianism. His early work is strongly Fauvist, and Matisse's influence is never very far away even in his works from the 1950s. However, by the 1920s he would adopt a more subtle painterly technique, as seen in works like *The Falling Model* (1926) [Figure 136] and *Turning Model* (c. 1924, Tate Britain) [Figure 137]. Such paintings, frequently of nudes, have their roots in Venetian paintings by Veronese; this reference is made explicit in the painting *Leda and the Swan, after Veronese* (c.1922-25, Corporation of London) [Figure 138], which he modelled after Veronese's Veronese's now-destroyed painting, then in the Gemaldegalerie, Dresden (destroyed). He also used this Veronese as the source for the design of a double-leaf screen (c. 1922-25, Corporation of London) [Figure 139].

As with Gertler, the Venetianist influence is usually derived through other artists; in Smith's case, Delacroix is a clear antecedent. As Delacroix's Venetianist credentials are perhaps stronger than Renoir's, this confers upon Smith a stronger degree of Venetianism than Gertler. Furthermore, the reception and interpretation of Smith's work relates it to Paterian Venetianism. Sir Philip Hendy described Smith's work as "pure painting": "The essence of every picture by Matthew Smith is the identification of an enjoyable thing with the act of painting. There is no need to write about the context or the subject."[362] The irrelevance of the narrative content, and the focus on the sensual act of painting, draws us very close to Pater's idea of Venetian art, and indicates that Paterian Venetianism still exerted some influence on painters in twentieth-century Britain.

Nevertheless, none of these modernist artists can be considered thoroughly Venetianist. While each artist selects elements from the Venetianist tradition, none integrate them all into a single work of art. Smith almost succeeds in doing so, but his Fauvist tones, no matter how moderated, still distinguish his nudes from the softer palette of Venetian paintings. All of these artists are clearly modernists before they are Venetianists. Venetianism gave rise in part to modernist art, particularly the formalist tradition as inherited by Fry from Pater. However, as a cultural and aesthetic discourse, Venetianism could not be fully adapted to modernist art.

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[362] Sir Philip Hendy, "Foreword" to *Matthew Smith* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd, 1962).

Venetianism's clear ties to Renaissance forms of art ultimately conflicted with modernism's need to seek out new forms of expression.

The relative shortcomings of Grant, Gertler, and Smith's Venetianism can be clearly seen when comparing their work to Shannon's late work. At the same time that these modernist artists were producing works inspired by Post-Impressionist and Fauvist art, Shannon persisted in painting like a sixteenth-century Venetian in twentieth-century London. His painting *The Childhood of Bacchus* (1919-20; private collection) [Figure 140] is one of his most beautiful works. The composition is filled with references to other of Shannon's paintings: the standing figure on the right, grasping a bunch of grapes from a vine, recalls figures from works like *The Vintage*; the central group of women sit upon the ground in a manner reminiscent of *The Romantic Landscape*; the distant herd of deer in the background are the same type of deer seen in *The Wood Nymph*; and the figures of Hermes and the infant Bacchus are derived almost directly from Shannon's tondo of *The Infancy of Bacchus*. Hermes is still bent over, and the wind still ruffles his garments as he brings the young Bacchus down, presumably off his shoulder. In some ways, the *Childhood of Bacchus* feels like the last scene in a series of Shannon's images, through which one imagines Hermes and Bacchus flying on their way to Mount Nysa.

In addition to these figurative references to his own work, the *Childhood of Bacchus* also stands on its own as a Venetianist painting. The painting strongly recalls Titian's series of paintings for Alfonso d'Este's studiolo; Shannon was deeply familiar with these, having seen them at the Prado in Madrid and at the National Gallery in London. The grove-like setting is similar to Titian's *Bacchanal of the Andrians*, while the background, bathed in the pale tones of the atmosphere, is reminiscent of the background in *Bacchus and Ariadne*. The nymphs' dress provides a further echo of *Bacchus and Ariadne*; the nymph seated at the far left wears a blue dress that falls off her shoulder, and a red sash, which corresponds with Ariadne's dress in Titian's painting. Lastly, the deer in the background recall the stags found in Titian's landscapes, including the Pardo Venus, *Venus with Organist and Cupid* (1548; Madrid: Prado) [Figure 141], and *The Three Ages of Man* [Figure 142], while the winged putti in the upper right-hand corner remind the viewer of *The Worship of Venus* and *The Virgin and Child with the Young Saint John the Baptist and St. Catherine* (London: National Gallery) [Figure 143].

These references to Titian were not lost on contemporary critics when *The Childhood of Bacchus* was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1920. Claude Phillips described it as "a painted poem (*poesia*)" which was "in intention if not in realisation, quite Titianesque."[363] The modernist critic R. H. Wilenski also noted how the color "glows with Venetian splendour" and remarked on how "a visitor passing rapidly through [the exhibit] might be pardoned for

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[363] *Daily Telegraph* 1 May 1920.

imagining that 'The Childhood of Bacchus' had strayed from Trafalgar Square."[364] However, critics were divided on how effective Shannon's Venetianism was. While the anonymous art critic for *The Times* asserted that the painting was "a very skilful modern old master, with a learning that is not mere pedantry," Wilenksi pointed out "the general weakness of the drawing, the unrealised drapery, the absence of virility in the approach."[365] Wilenski was generally very critical of Pre-Raphaelite art, particularly the paintings of Burne-Jones and his followers. However, he could also express appreciation for Rossetti's Venetianist paintings of the 1860s. His mixed opinion on the Pre-Raphaelites seems to be reflected in his review of Shannon's painting.

While *The Childhood of Bacchus* recalls Titian's studiolo cycle, Shannon's *Vanity and Sanctity* (1921, Royal Academy) [Figure 144] resembles other early paintings by Titian. Shannon painted this as his Shannon's Diploma picture upon his election as a full member of the Royal Academy associate in 1920. The painting depicts two female figures seated before a pool, accompanied by various birds. The background, with its mill, is based on the landscape surrounding Chilham Castle, the Jacobean mansion in Kent which the Davises owned. As previously noted, the Norman Keep (the only remaining portion of the original Norman castle) on the mansion's grounds was given to Shannon and Ricketts to use as a country retreat; a corner of the Keep protrudes into the right background, while the curious structure in the immediate background is the well house, in which the tread-wheel can be seen.[366].

The title provides the figures' identities: "Vanity" is the nude figure on the left, accompanied by two peacocks, which are probably modeled on the real peacocks that lived in the Keep's gardens. The figure on the right, who is dressed in a habit and holding an infant, is "Sanctity." Like Vanity, Sanctity is accompanied by birds, although in her case they are white doves. These figures are familiar from earlier paintings by Shannon. Figures like Vanity appear in many of Shannon's toilet scenes, often with a peacock feather, as in the 1905 *Toilet* (Watts Gallery) and the later version at the Usher Gallery. Although she rarely appears in such a heavy habit, Sanctity is reminiscent of the maternal figures often seen playing with children in Shannon's paintings.

While it is tempting to read these female types as Shannon's attitudes towards women, I am not interested in psychoanalyzing Shannon so much as relating these figures and the composition to Venetian art. Vanity, with her pearls and other gems, seems to derive from Titian's reclining nudes, including particularly bejeweled figures like Danae as well as Venus [Figure 145]. Sanctity inevitably calls to mind Madonna and Child imagery. Moreover, the

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[364] Wilenski, *Athenaeum* 7 May 1920, p. 611.
[365] *The Times*, 1 May 1920, p. 16; Wilenksi, 7 May 1920.
[366] See Delaney, *Charles Ricketts*, pp309-312

overall composition, with two women prominently placed within the foreground and a water vessel between them, is obviously based on Titian's *Sacred and Profane Love*, from which Shannon also seems to have taken the idea of opposing female types.

Shannon's Diploma picture for the Royal Academy therefore strongly asserts his Venetianist principles, and as with his other works, his critics recognized these principles. The art critic for *The Times* described it as a picture "full of ghosts," including "the ghost of Sacred and Profane Love, the ghosts of several late Titians and of Giorgione."[367] Despite these obvious debts, Shannon's painting does did not strike the *Times* critic as plagiarism. Indeed, he argues that "all these memories are fused in a very agreeable picture," and goes on to provide a very insightful critique of Shannon's position as a modern, albeit non-modernist, painter: "It is the art of a painter who lives in a paradise of past masterpieces, a shadowy isle of bliss midmost the beating of the steely sea of prose and commonplace. He is not able to create a new heaven or a new earth, but he can almost persuade us that the past is the present." This passage sums up at once Shannon's qualifications as a Venetianist, and his failings as a modernist. The *Times* critic clearly agrees with Fry's earlier assessment of Shannon's work as "a protest against the vulgarity, the haste, and the ugliness of modern life." Shannon's depictions of idyllic beauty are not simply exercises in academic painting; they are intentionally opposed, like Wilde's writings, to modern life's vulgarity and commonness. The review also indicates Shannon's failure as a modernist. As his paintings were so deeply immersed in Venetianism, Shannon did not create or reveal new worlds with his art. He was much more comfortable in drawing from Titian, Giorgione, and all their Venetianist descendants than he was in blazing a new artistic path.

By maintaining such close connections to a European tradition of painting, Shannon set himself apart from the more revolutionary approaches espoused by modernist painters. In the 1920s, Shannon's decision would make him appear quite conservative, particularly when compared to the modernist styles adopted by the new generation of British artists. However, this picture tends to obscure Shannon's role in the pre-1910 British art world. In the years preceding the pivotal Post-Impressionist exhibits, Shannon's Venetianism was appreciated for its progressive values, as particularly shown in its lyrical, visual beauty. In comparison to the strong tradition for literary anecdote in Victorian art, Shannon's idyllic images were remarkable for their absence of overt narratives or moralizing didacticism. By painting in a Venetianist style, Shannon was reviving a tradition in British art that went back to Van Dyck, while restoring it to its Venetian roots through a diligent study and emulation of original Venetian paintings.

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[367] *The Times*, 2 May 1921, p. 9

As Britain's last consistent representative of Venetianist painting, Shannon's work was closely bound to the rise and fall of Venetianism. Unfortunately for Shannon, Venetianism as an artistic discourse was unable to survive the onslaught of modernism. In previous generations, British writers and artists had invested particular cultural meanings in Venetian forms of painting, and these meanings had been reinforced in the critical reception of those Venetianist works. Although these meanings had changed with different generations, the modernist age was unable to accommodate Venetianism as a discourse, as modernist cultural values could no longer be embodied within European traditions of painting. With the demise of Venetianism as a viable discourse, Shannon's work inevitably suffered a similar fate.

CONCLUSION

"Venice is a place of moods," Ricketts wrote during his and Shannon's second trip to Venice. "Sometimes it seems a paradise; sometimes a prison."[368] As this statement suggests, Venice's meaning was no more stable in Ricketts and Shannon's day than it had been in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. British writers and artists continued to interpret the city in a variety of fashions, depending on which Venetianist paradigm was followed: the royalist and aristocratic Venetianism of Van Dyck and Charles I; the anti-Venetianist stance of the eighteenth century; Ruskin's medievalist and socially-based Venetianism; or Pater's Aestheticist Venetianism.

I have outlined the shifting aesthetic principles of Venetianism throughout modern England, and in the process have demonstrated that Venice and Venetian art resonated with a particular significance for British writers and artists. In their reception of Venetian art, British thinkers have framed Venetianism according to contemporary British discourses on art and morality. Furthermore, they have repeatedly identified Venice as either a positive prototype for England or as an apocalyptic warning. In either case, Venice and Venetian art's significance rest in their identification with Britain and British art.

Scholarly research into the Venetianist discourse has largely been limited to literary and cultural studies of the city of Venice. By shifting attention to Venetian art, and both artistic and literary reactions to it, I have tried to cast the discourse into a new light. In the process, I have discovered how deeply the cultural discourse of Venetianism imbued British artists' work, and at the same time, I have demonstrated that Venetian art played a major role in the formulation of Venetianism in all its forms.

The history of Venetian art in British Venetianism is a topic that deserves further investigation. I have only hinted at its richness, and much remains to be explored. For the purpose of this dissertation, I have focused to a great extent on the Victorian period. While Ruskin's writings on Venice are well-known, few art historians have examined how those writings relate to his other writings on Venetian art, and no one has studied Ruskin's Venetianism within the wider context of Victorian art history. I hope that this dissertation serves to rectify this area of Ruskin studies. Similarly, few scholars have considered how Pater's aesthetics were indebted to Victorian-era studies of Venetian art, nor how much Pater's writings influenced Victorian Venetianist artists. This aspect of Paterian aesthetics deserves further attention, and I intend this dissertation as the first step in a fuller understanding of Pater's relationship to Venetian art.

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[368] Travel diary, April 1903.

Among the Victorian Venetianists, Shannon has probably been the most underrated. I have proven that this artist played an especially important role in Venetianism's Late Victorian phase. More than any artist before him, he engaged with Venetianist discourse in nearly all its permutations. For instance, his portraiture enacts a vivid dialogue with both Van Dyck and Titian, while his concern for craftsmanship in his woodcuts and lithographs indicates his familiarity with Ruskinian aesthetics as expressed in *The Stones of Venice*. Moreover, by depicting beautiful figures far removed from obvious narratives, Shannon infused his *poesia* paintings with a strongly Giorgionesque sensibility as defined by Pater. Shannon's critics recognized this quality in Shannon's work, and often responded by describing his paintings in Paterian terms.

As much as he interacted with past Venetianisms, Shannon also maintained a keen interest in original Venetian paintings. Shannon commited most of his life to an exhaustive and enthusiastic study of Venetian paintings, and repeatedly visited London's collections; during their three journeys to Venice, Shannon and Ricketts visited countless churches in order to study particular altarpieces and frescoes. In my discussion of Shannon's paintings and lithographs, I have tried to uncover links and references to his Venetian sources. These references merit future investigation, and I hope to continue exploring this and other dimensions of Shannon's artwork in subsequent studies. This dissertation should, in any case, bring more awareness to Shannon's work and its significance within Victorian and Edwardian art.

The triumph of modernism in the early twentieth century has caused many art historians to overlook the significance of both Shannon's work and Venetianism at the turn of the century. However, Venetianism clearly had a tremendous impact on British art and culture throughout the centuries, and in its Victorian incarnation it laid much of the groundwork for formalist theories of modern art. Shannon performed a significant role in shaping Late Victorian Venetianism as an artistic discourse, even though he would reject modernist art. His recognition for this role, as well as for his own artwork, is long overdue.

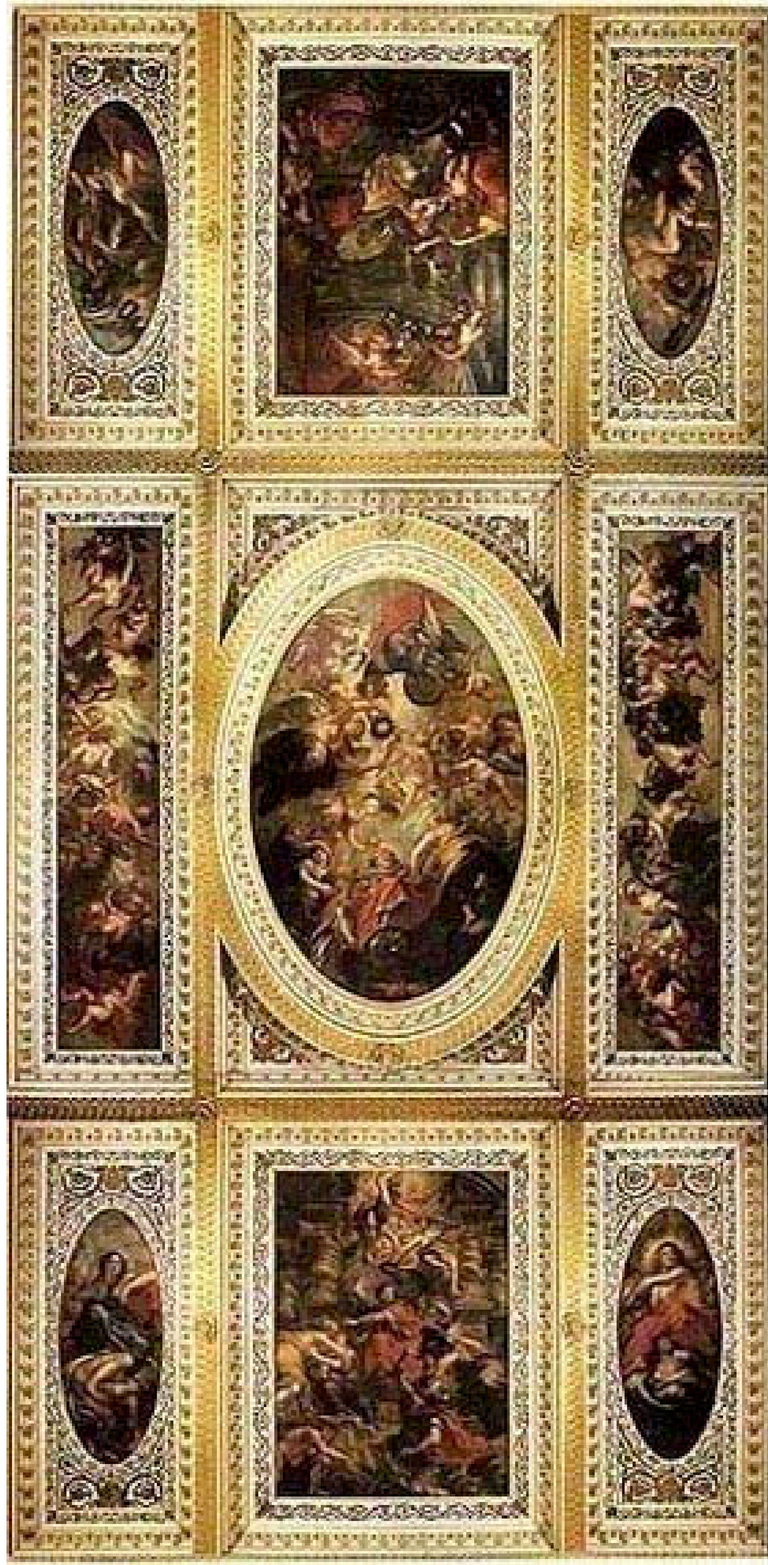

Figure 1: Peter Paul Rubens. The Whitehall Banqueting House ceiling, 1630s. Oil on canvas. Banqueting House, London. [Historic Royal Palaces, http://www.hrp.org.uk/webcode/banquet_home.asp]

Figure 2: Peter Paul Rubens. *The Benefits of the Government of James I.* Oil on canvas. Banqueting House, London. [Roy Strong, *Britannia Triumphans: Inigo Jones, Rubens and Whitehall Palace* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980), fig. 31.]

Figure 3: Peter Paul Rubens. *The Union of the Crowns of England and Scotland.* Oil on canvas. Banqueting House, London [Strong, fig. 10]

Figure 4: Peter Paul Rubens. *The Apotheosis of James I.* Banqueting House, London. [Strong, fig. 49]

Figure 5: Veronese. *The Triumph of Venice*. c. 1585. Oil on canvas. Doge's Palace, Sala del Maggior Consiglio, Venice. [Eugenia Biachi et al, *The Doge's Palace in Venice* (Milan: Electa, 1997), p44]

Figure 6: Anthony Van Dyck. *Charles I on Horseback*, 1636. Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Art, London. [Web Gallery of Art, http://www.wga.hu/]

Figure 7: Titian. *Charles V at the Battle of Muhlberg*, 1548. Oil on canvas. Prado, Madrid. [Web Gallery of Art]

Figure 8: Van Dyck. *Thomas Wentworth, 1st Earl of Strafford*, 1632. Oil on canvas. Private collection. [Christopher Brown and Hans Vlieghe, *Van Dyck: 1599-1641* (New York: Rizzoli, 1999), cat. no. 68]

Figure 9: Titian. *Portrait of Charles V*, 1533. Oil on canvas. Prado, Madrid. [Filippo Pedrocco, *Titian* (Milan: Scala, 1993), fig. 44]

Figure 10: Van Dyck. *Rinaldo and Armida*, 1629. Oil on canvas. Baltimore Museum of Art. [CGFA website, http://cgfa.sunsite.dk/]

Figure 11: Titian. *Worship of Venus*, 1516-18. Oil on canvas. Prado, Madrid. [Web Gallery of Art]

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Figure 15: Reynolds, *Theory*, from Royal Academy ceiling. [Postle, Martin. *Sir Joshua Reynolds: the Subject Pictures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.]

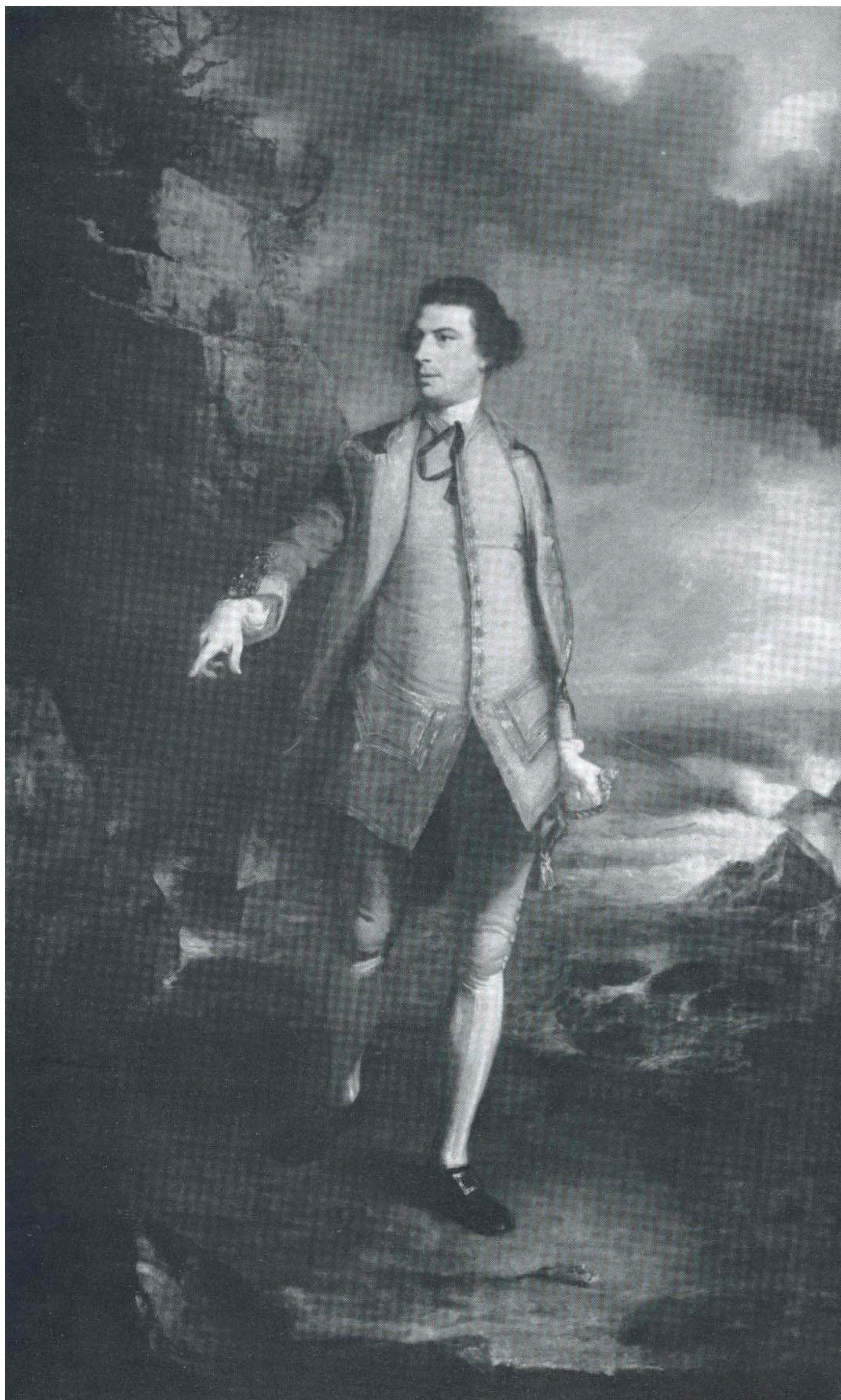

Figure 16: Reynolds. *Commodore Augustus (later Viscount) Keppel*, 1753-54. National Maritime Museum, Greenwich. [Waterhouse, pl. 10]

Figure 17: Reynolds. *Elizabeth Gunning, Duchess of Hamilton and Duchess of Argyll*, 1760. Lady Lever Art Gallery, Liverpool. [Lady Lever Art Gallery website, http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/ladylever/collections/elizabethgunning.asp]

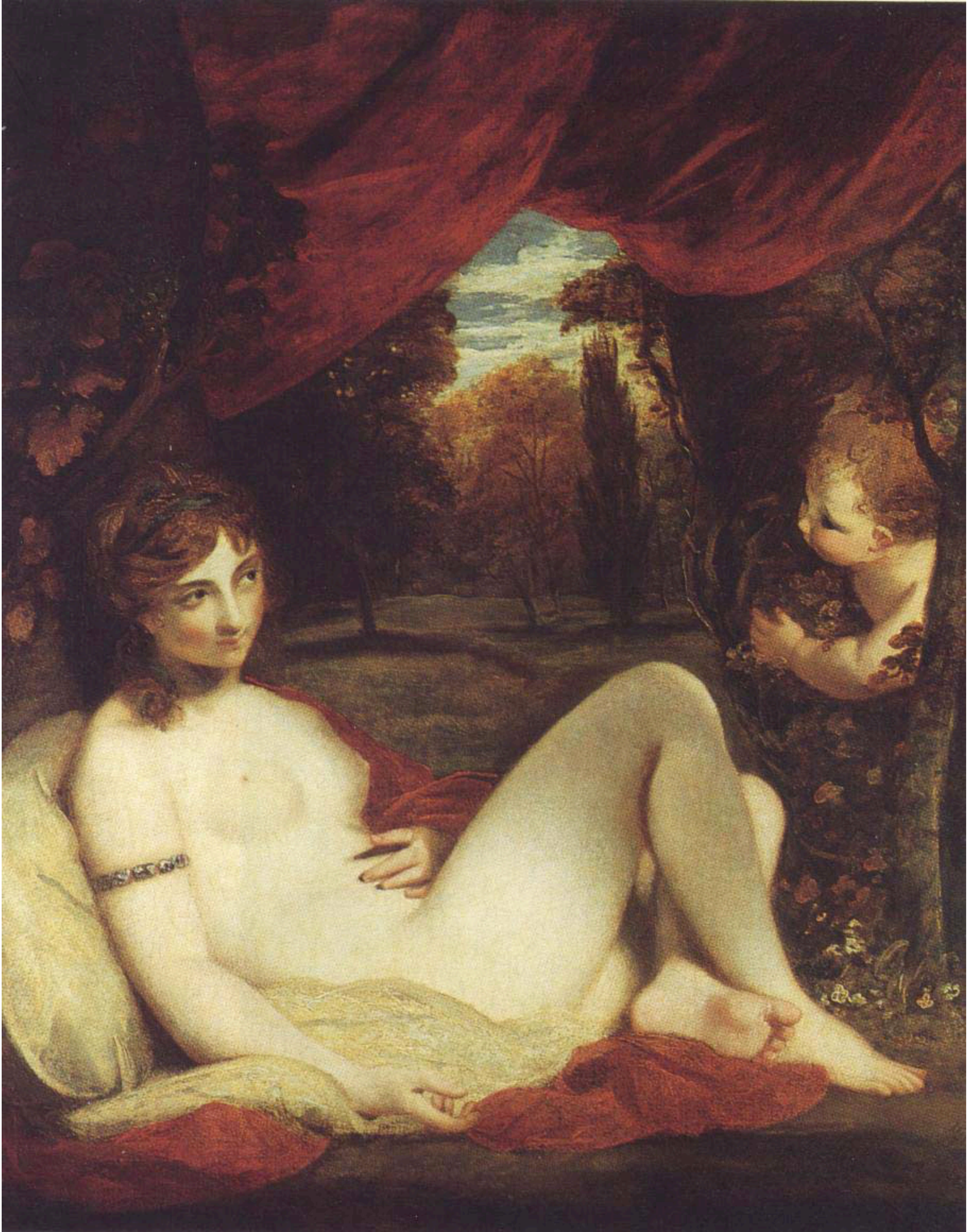

Figure 18: Reynolds. *Venus*, 1785. Oil on canvas. Agnews & Sons, London. [Postle, Martin. *Sir Joshua Reynolds: the Subject Pictures*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.]

Figure 19: Titian and workshop, *Venus and Cupid with a Lute Player*, 1565-70. Oil on canvas. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. [Metropolitan Museum of Art website, http://www.metmuseum.org/Works_Of_Art/viewOne.asp?dep=11&viewMode=1&item=36.29]

Figure 20: Reynolds, *Venus* (second version). Oil on canvas. [Postle]

Figure 21: William Etty. *Pandora Crowned by the Season*, 1824. Oil on canvas. Leeds City Art Gallery. [Luke Hermann, *Nineteenth-Century British Painting* (London: Giles de la Mare, 2000), pl. 43]

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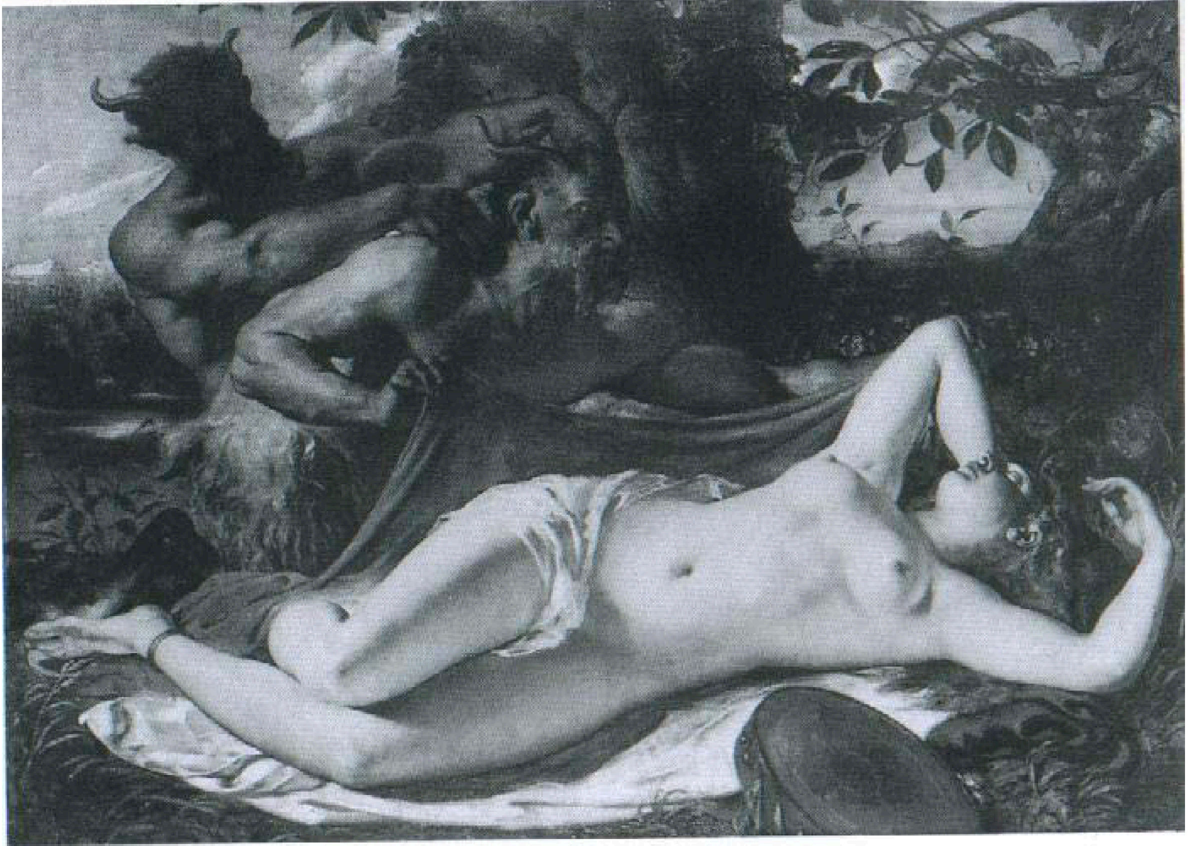

Figure 24: Etty. *Sleeping Nymph and Satyrs*. 1828. Oil on canvas. Royal Academy of Art, London. [Hermann, fig. 118]

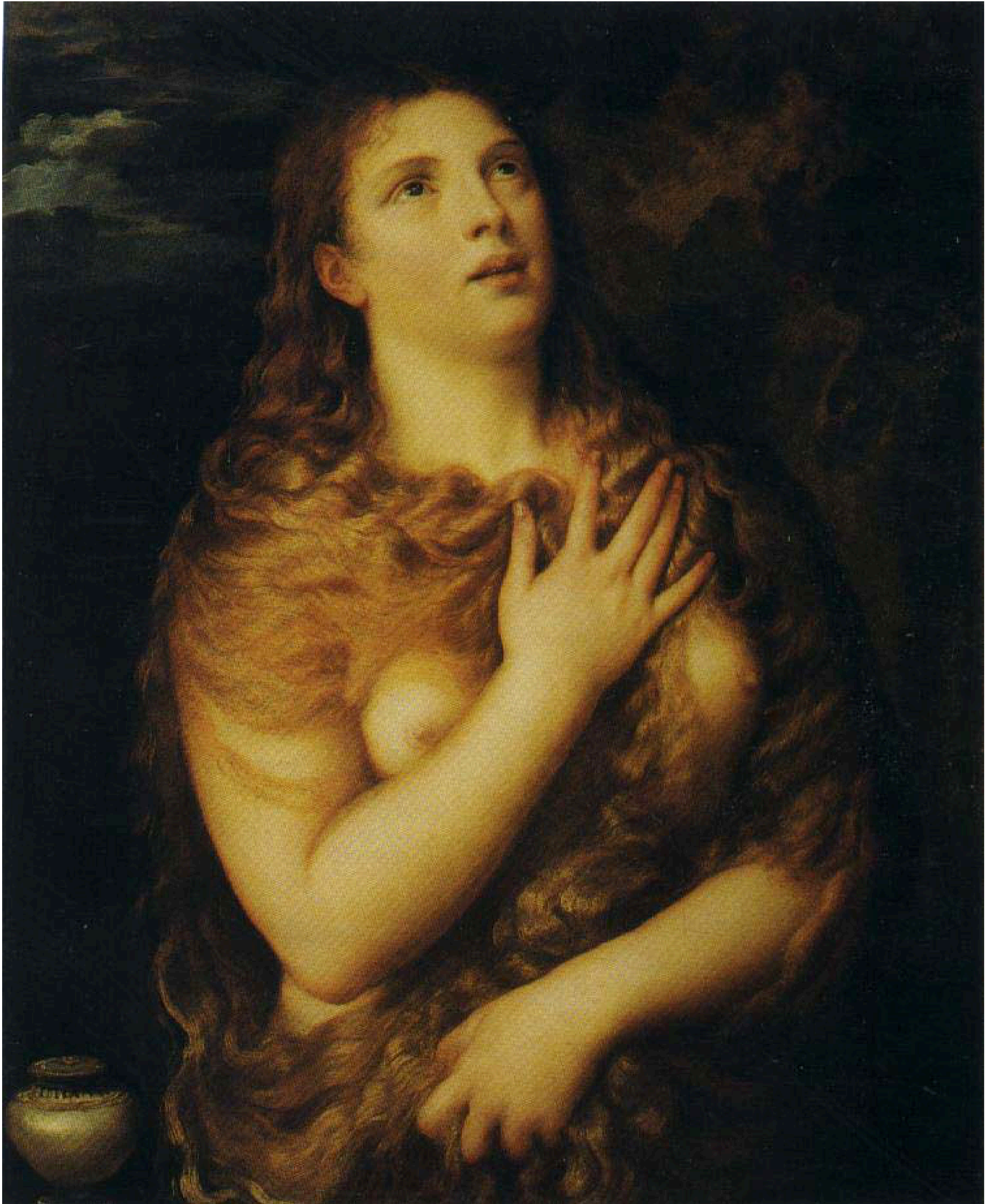

Figure 25: Titian. *Mary Magdalene*, c. 1533. Oil on canvas. Galleria Palatina, Pitti Palace, Florence. [Pedrocco, fig. 47]

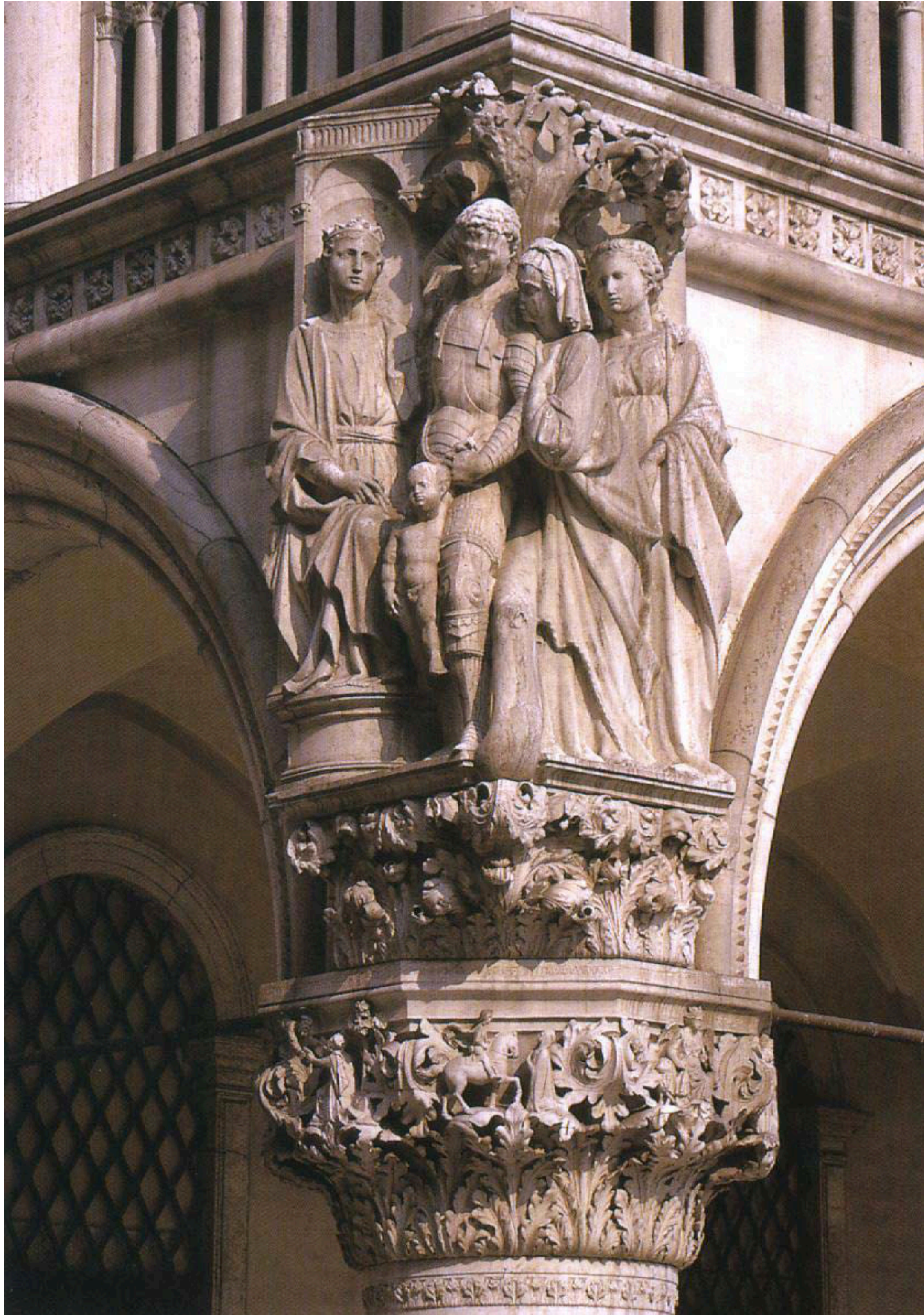

Figure 26: Attributed to Bartolomeo Bon. *Judgment of Solomon*, early fifteenth century. Marble. Doge's Palace, Venice.
[Sarah Quill, *Ruskin's Venice: the Stones Revisited* (Aldershot: Lund Humphries, 2000), p. 130]

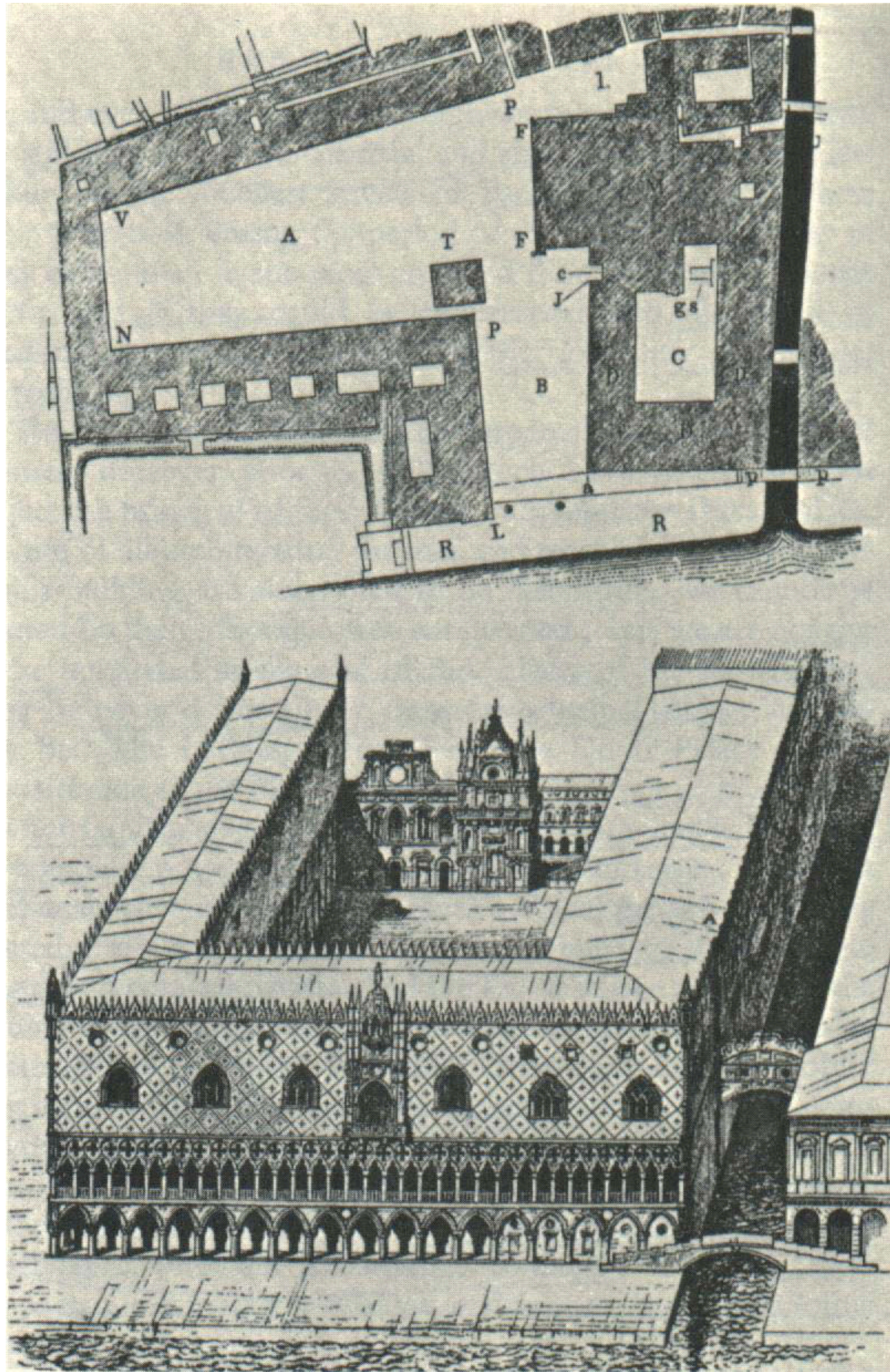

Figure 27: John Ruskin. *Plan and Bird's Eye View of the Ducal Palace*. Drawing for *The Stones of Venice* (1853). [Ruskin, *The Stones of Venice*, ed. J. G. Links (New York: Da Capo, 1960), pl. IV]

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Figure 31: Giovanni Bellini. *St. Jerome*, 1513. Oil on canvas. San Giovanni Crisostomo, Venice.
[Terisio Pignatti, *Venice: a Guide to Paintings in Original Settings*
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Figure 34: Veronese. *Solomon and the Queen of Sheba*, c. 1560. Oil on canvas. Galleria Saubada, Turin. [*John Ruskin and the Victorian Eye*, ed. Harriet Whelchel (Phoenix Art Museum, 1993), p. 43]

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Figure 38: Titian. *Vendramin Family*, 1546. Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Art, London. [National Gallery website, www.nationalgallery.org.uk]

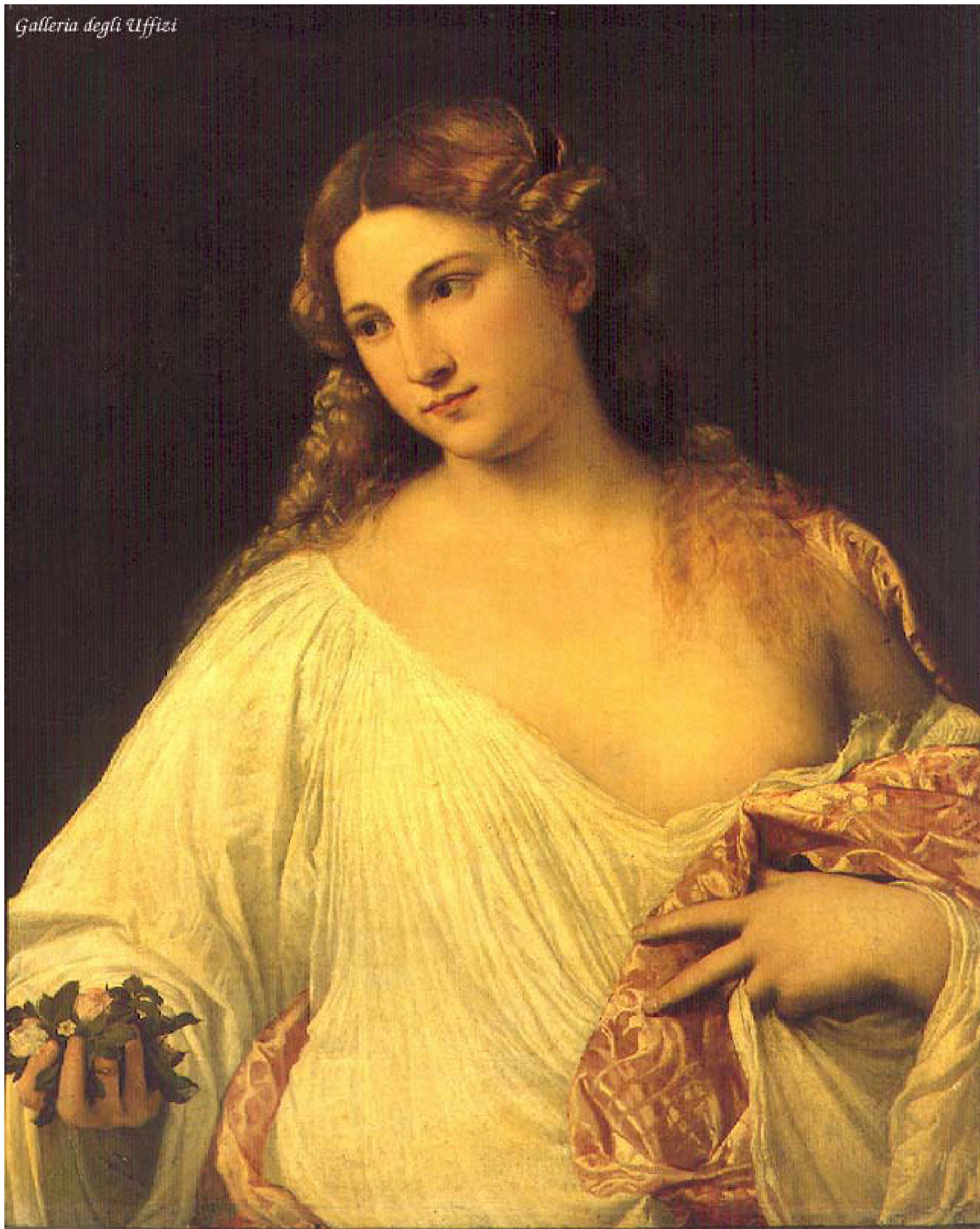

Figure 39: Titian. *Flora*, c. 1515. Oil on canvas. Uffizi, Florence. [Web Gallery of Art]

Figure 40: Titian. *Bella*, 1536. Oil on canvas. Palatine Gallery, Pitti Palace, Florence. [www.mezzo-mondo.com]

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Figure 43: Dante Gabriel Rossetti. *Bocca Baciata*, 1859. Oil on canvas. Boston Museum of Fine Arts. [Art Renewal Center, www.artrenewal.org]

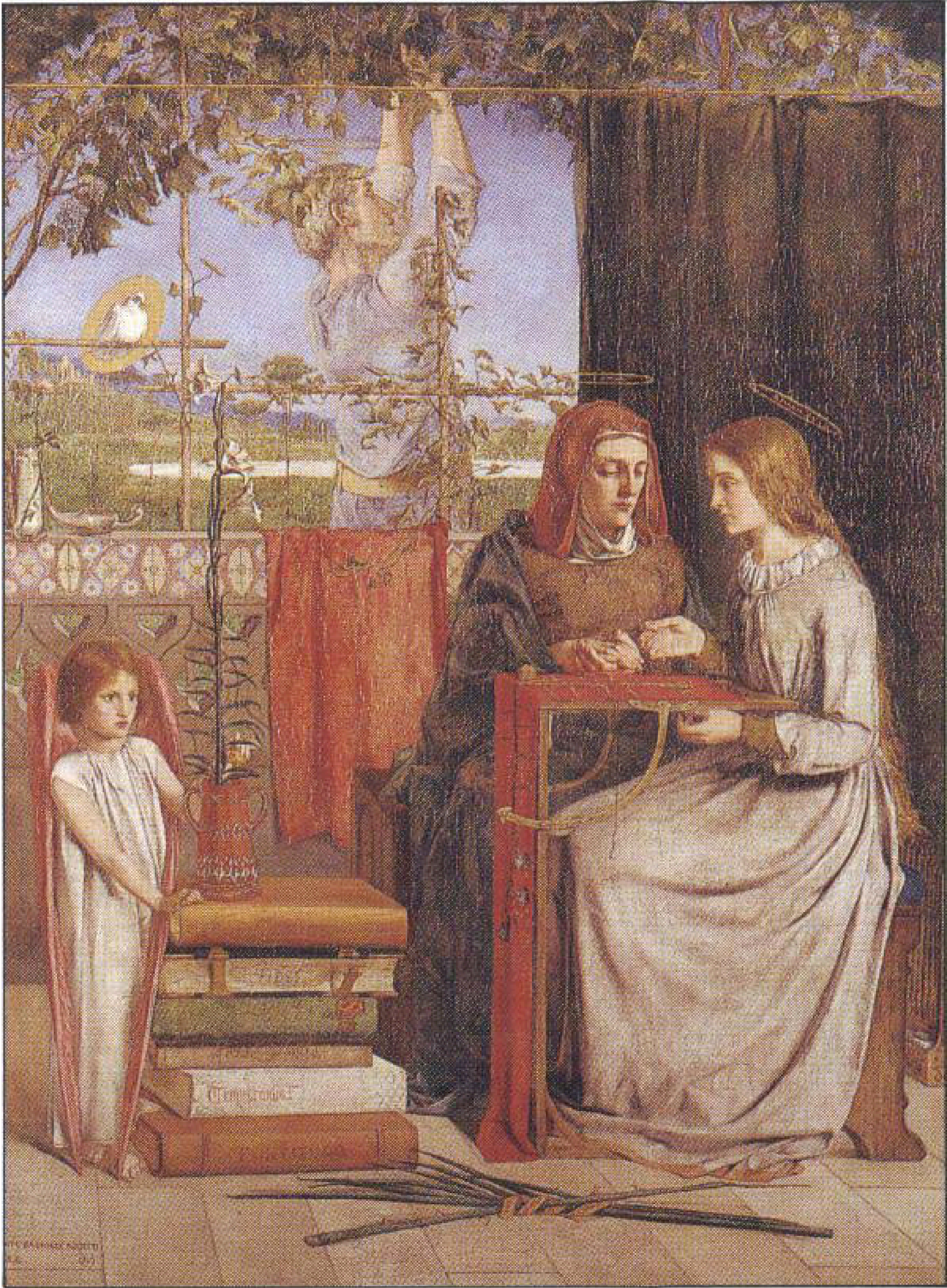

Figure 44: Rossetti. *The Girlhood of Mary Virgin*, 1848-49. Oil on canvas. Tate Gallery, London. [Steven Adams, *The Art of the Pre-Raphaelites* (Secaucus, New Jersey: Chartwell Books, 1988), p. 7]

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Figure 47: Titian. *Woman with a Mirror ("Alphonse Ferrare and Laura de Diante")*, 1513-14. Oil on canvas. Louvre, Paris. [Artchive website]

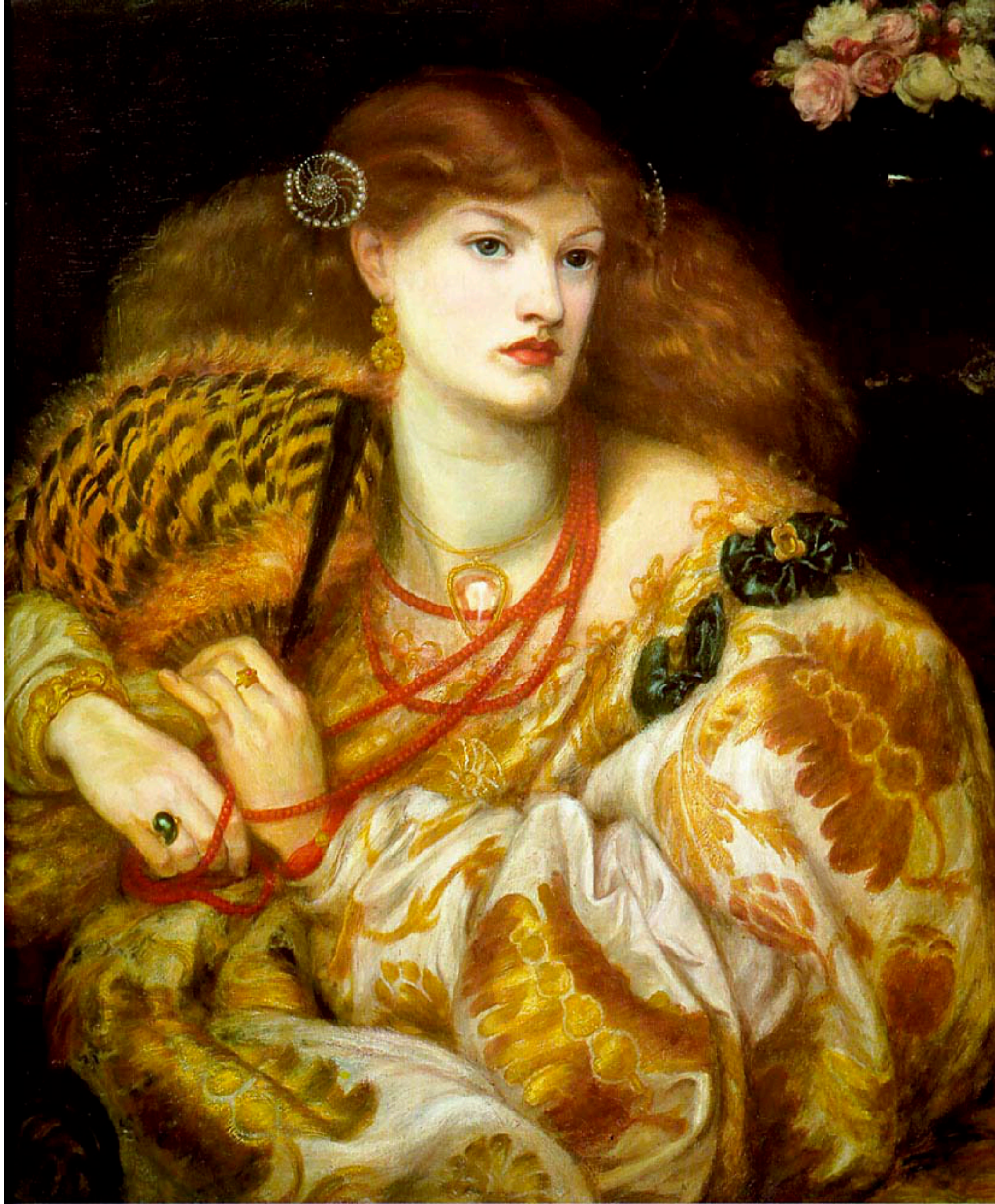

Figure 48: Rossetti. *Monna Vanna*, 1866. Oil on canvas. Tate Gallery, London. [Art Renewal Center]

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Figure 51: Watts. *Paolo and Francesca*, c. 1872-84. Oil on canvas. Watts Gallery, Compton. [Art Renewal Center]

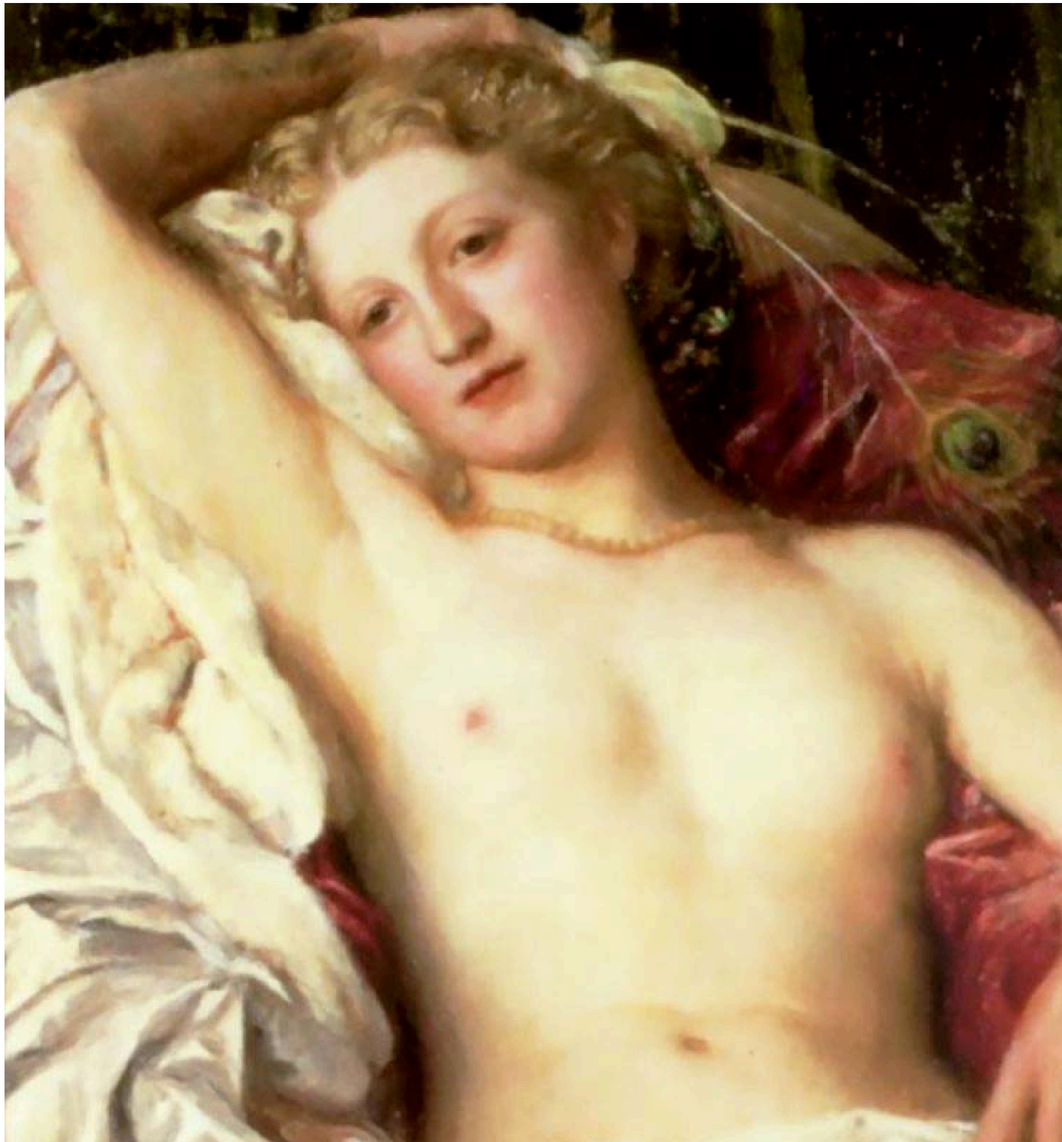

Figure 52: Watts. *A Study with the Peacock Feathers*, c. 1862-65. Oil on panel. Pre-Raphaelite Inc., London. [http://www.artformgallery.com]

Figure 53: Watts. *Three Goddesses*, c. 1865-72. Oil on canvas. The Faringdon Collection, Buscot Park. [Art Renewal Center]

Figure 54: Titian. *Pardo Venus*, 1540. Oil on canvas. Louvre, Paris. [Web Gallery of Art]

Figure 55: Titian. *Diana and Callisto*, 1559. Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh (on loan from Duke of Sutherland collection). [Web Gallery of Art]

Figure 56: Watts. *"She Shall be Called Woman"* c. 1888-1892. Oil on canvas. Tate Gallery, London.
[Art Renewal Center]

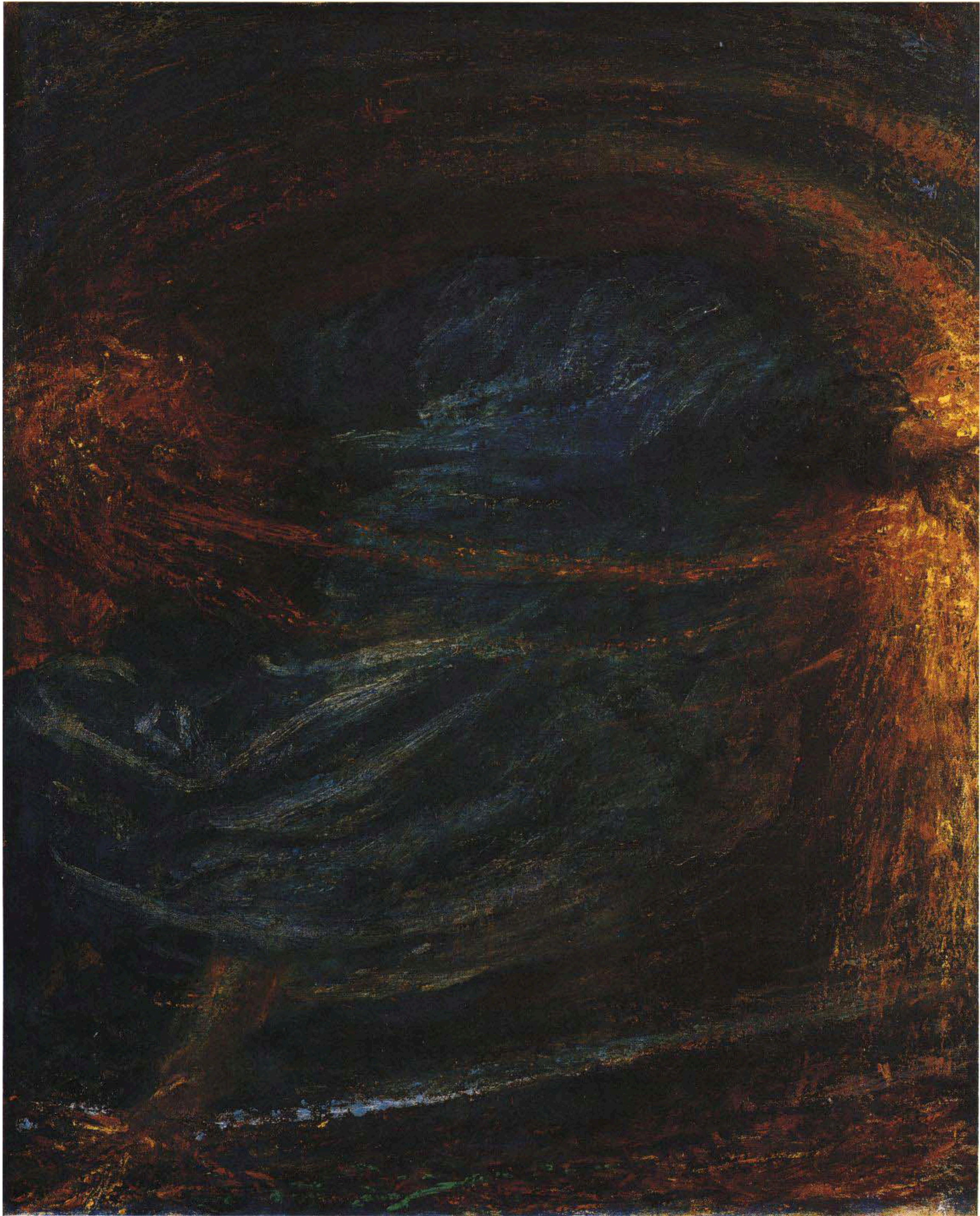

Figure 57: Watts. *The Sower of the Systems*, c. 1902. Oil on canvas. Watts Gallery, Compton. [*The Victorians: British Painting, 1837-1901*, ed. Malcolm Warner (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1997), cat. no. 34]

Figure 58: Titian. *Crowning with Thorns*, 1570-75. Oil on canvas. Alte Pinakothek, Munich. [Web Gallery of Art]

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Figure 60: Photograph of Watts at his studio in Compton.

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Figure 62: Frederic Leighton. *Golden Hours*, c. 1864. Oil on canvas. Collection of George Christie. [Art Renewal Center]

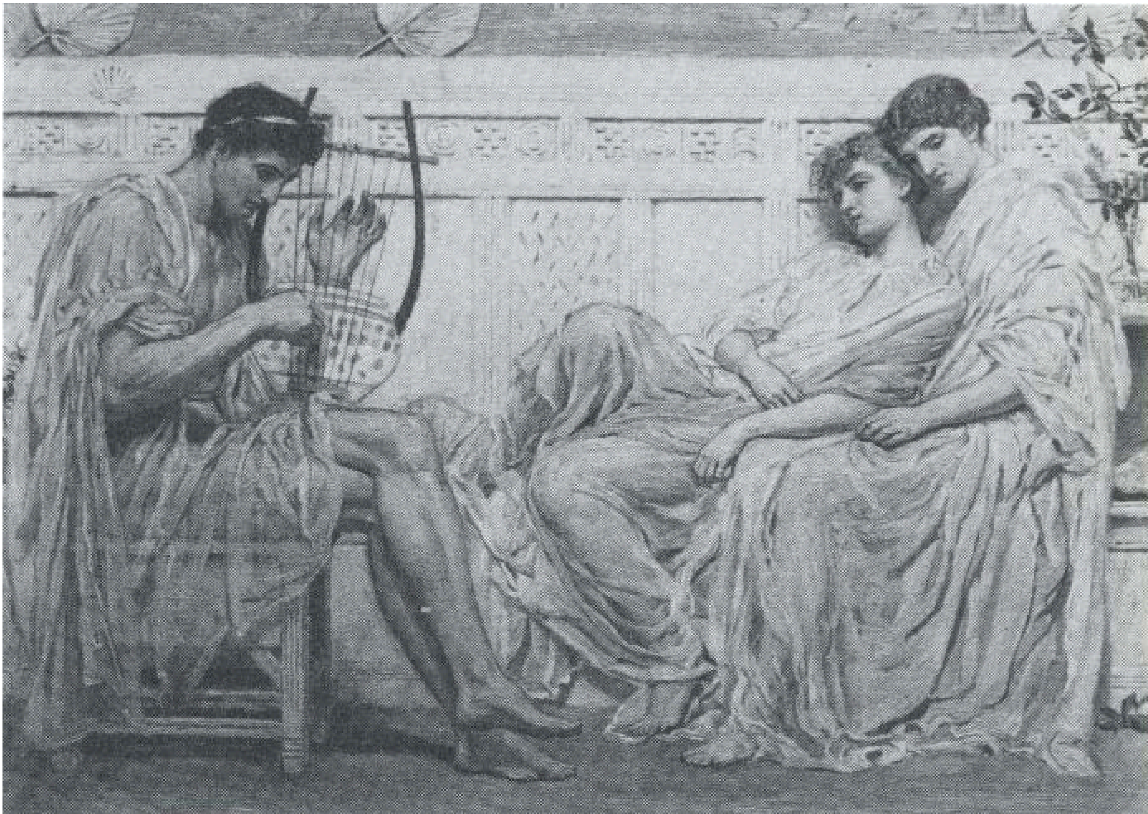
Figure 63: Albert Moore. *A Musician*, c. 1867. Oil on canvas. Collection of Robert Isaacson. [*Victorian High Renaissance*, cat. no. 71]

Figure 64: Charles Hazelwood Shannon. *A Souvenir of Van Dyck*, 1897. National Gallery of Art, Melbourne. Oil on canvas. [E. B. George, *Charles Shannon* (London: Ernest Benn, Ltd, 1924), pl. 1]

Figure 65: Van Dyck. *Sir Thomas Hamner*, c. 1638. Oil on canvas. The Weston Park Foundation. [*Van Dyck: 1599-1641*, cat. no. 96]

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Figure 72: Titian. *Portrait of a Man (the Cobham "Ariosto)*, 1508-10. Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Art, London. [Web Gallery of Art]

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Figure 79: Shannon. *The Lady with a Cyclamen* (portrait of the Hon. Mrs. Chaloner Dowdall), 1899. Oil on canvas. Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. [George, pl. 4]

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Figure 81: Shannon. *The Sculptress* (portrait of Kathleen Young, née Bruce), 1907. Oil on canvas. Musee d'Orsay, Paris. [Agence photographique de la Reunion des Musees Nationaux, http://www.photo.rmn.fr/fr/index.html]

Figure 82: Shannon. *The Man with the Greek Vase* (portrait of Charles Ricketts), 1916. Oil on canvas. Royal Leamington Spa Art Gallery. [George, pl. 20]

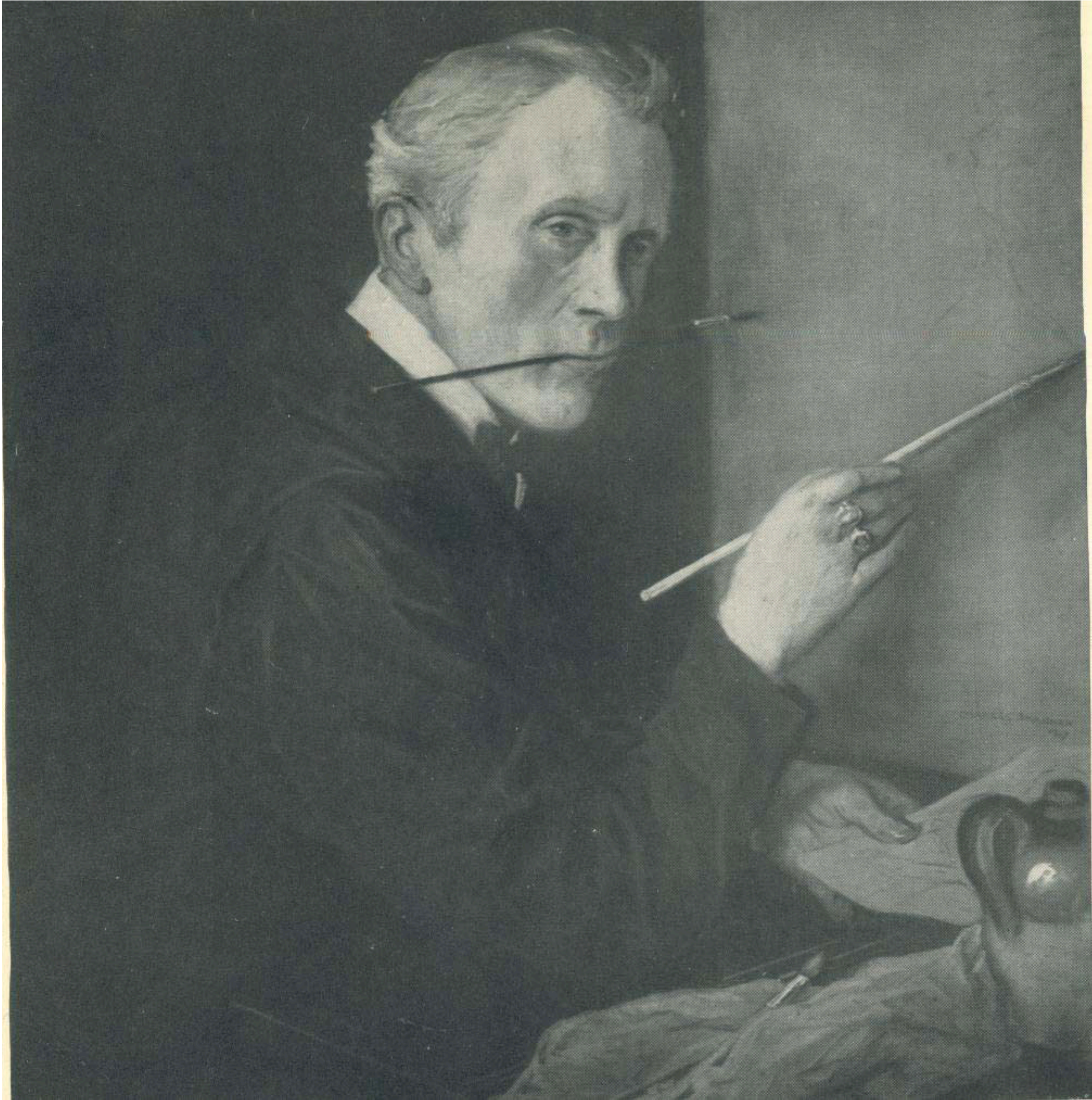

Figure 83: Shannon. *Self-Portrait*, 1917. Oil on canvas. Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. [George, frontispiece]

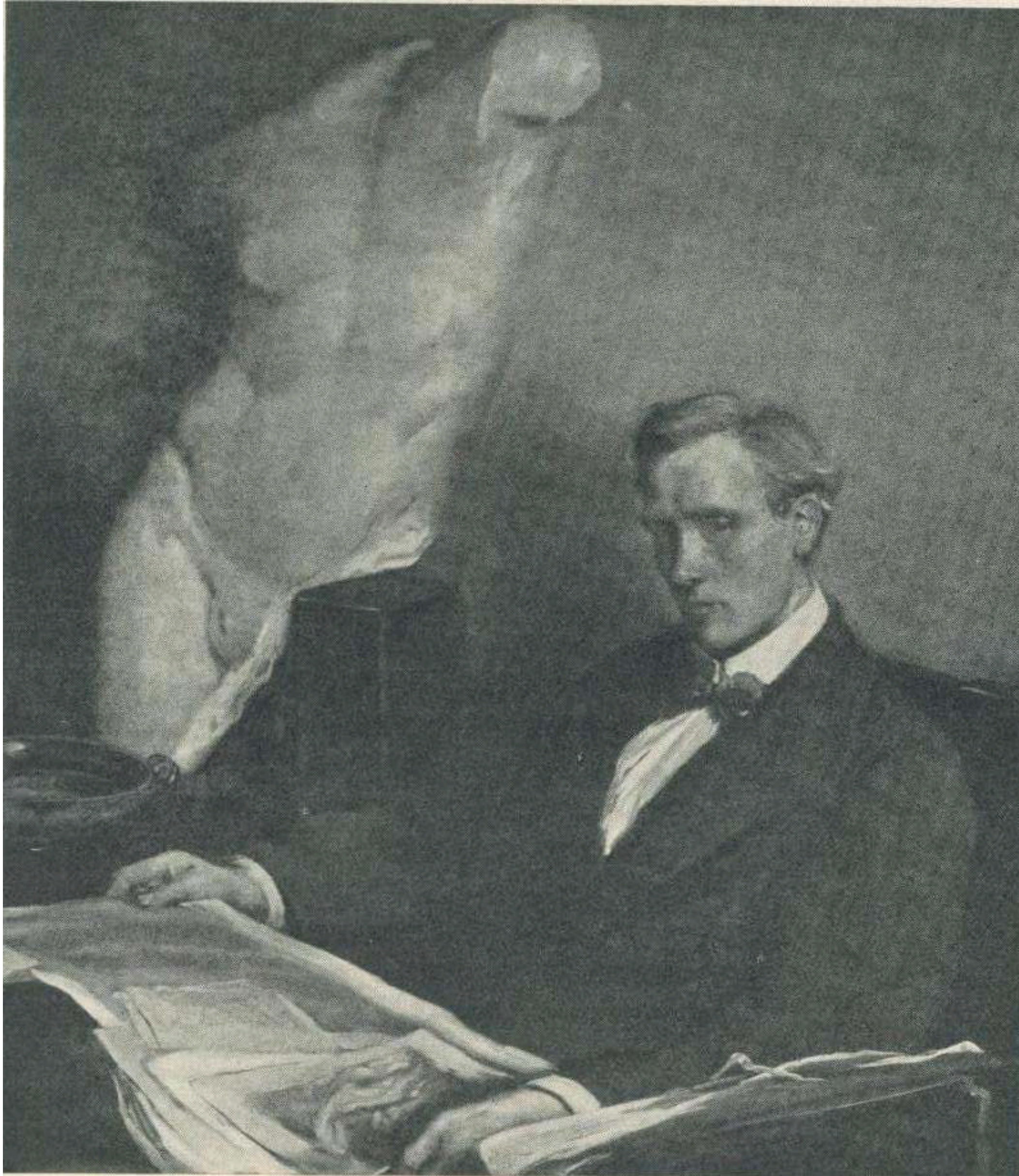

Figure 84: Shannon, *The Marble Torso* (self-portrait), 1907. Oil on canvas. Whereabouts unknown. [C. Lewis Hind, "Charles H. Shannon: Artist and Connoisseur," *The Studio* (v. XXXVII, no. 145: March 1909), p3]

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Figure 87: Titian. *Portrait of Jacopo Strada*, 1567-68. Oil on canvas. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna. [Pedrocco, fig. 92]

Figure 88: Titian, *Benedetto Varchi*.

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Figure 90: Titian. *Portrait of Daniele Barbaro*, 1545. Oil on canvas. Prado, Madrid. [http://www.artehistoria.com/]

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Figure 92: Shannon. *The Bath of Venus*, 1898-1904. Oil on canvas. Tate Gallery, London. [*Exposed: the Victorian Nude*, ed. Alison Smith (New York: Watson-Guptill Publications, 2001), cat. no. 35]

Figure 93: Lawrence Alma-Tadema. *The Artist's Model*, 1877. Oil on canvas. Private collection. [Art Renewal Center]

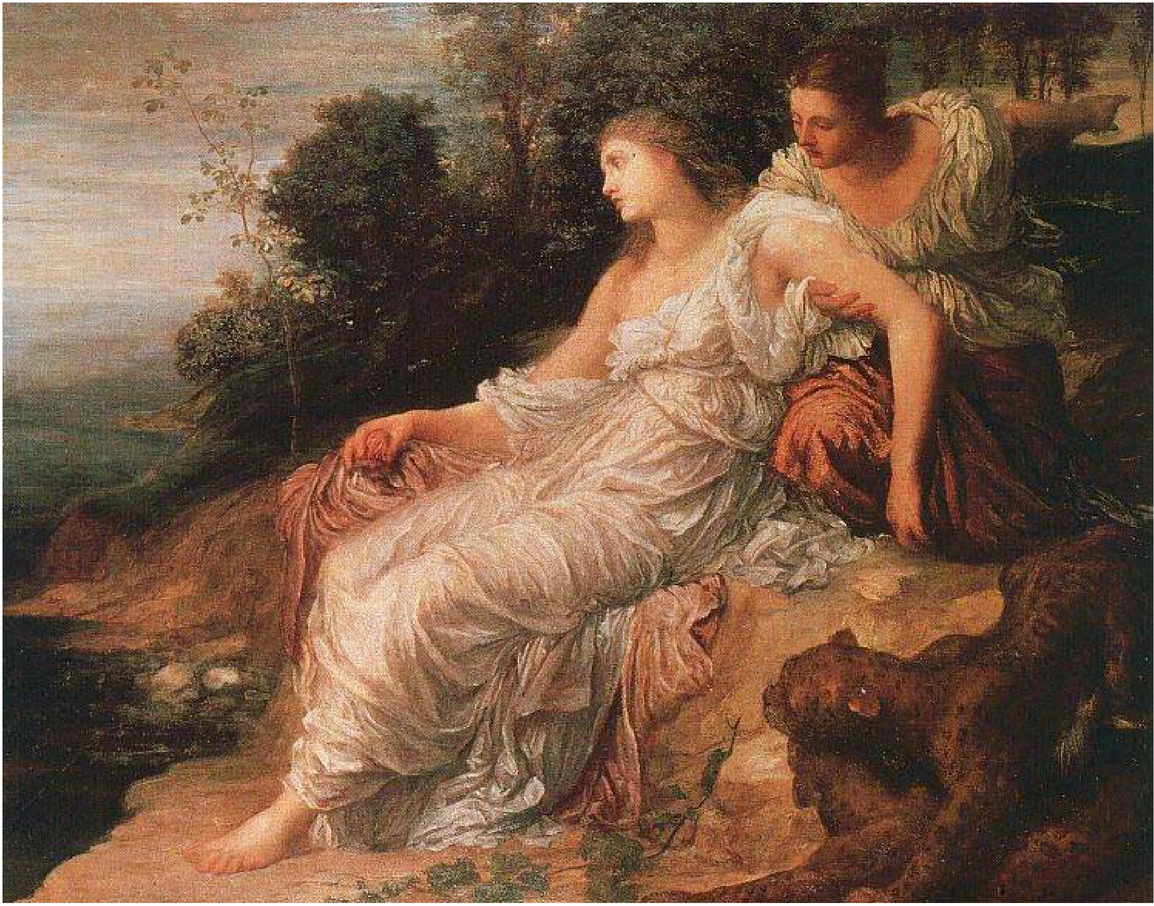

Figure 94: Watts. *Ariadne in Naxos*, 1875. Oil on canvas. Guildhall Art Gallery, London. [Art Renewal Center]

Figure 95: Watts. *Wife of Pygmalion*, 1868. Oil on canvas. The Faringdon Collection Trust, Buscot Park, Oxfordshire. [http://www.artformgallery.com]

Figure 96: *A Naked Aphrodite Crouching at her Bath*. Marble. 2nd century AD
Roman sculpture, copy of a lost Greek original. British Museum, London, on loan from Her Majesty the Queen. [British Museum website, http://www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk/compass]

Figure 97: Titian. *Venus with a Shell*, 1519-25. Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh; on loan from the Duke of Sutherland collection. [Artchive]

Figure 98: Shannon. *The Toilet*, 1903. Oil on canvas. Watts Gallery, Compton.
[Watts Gallery greeting card]

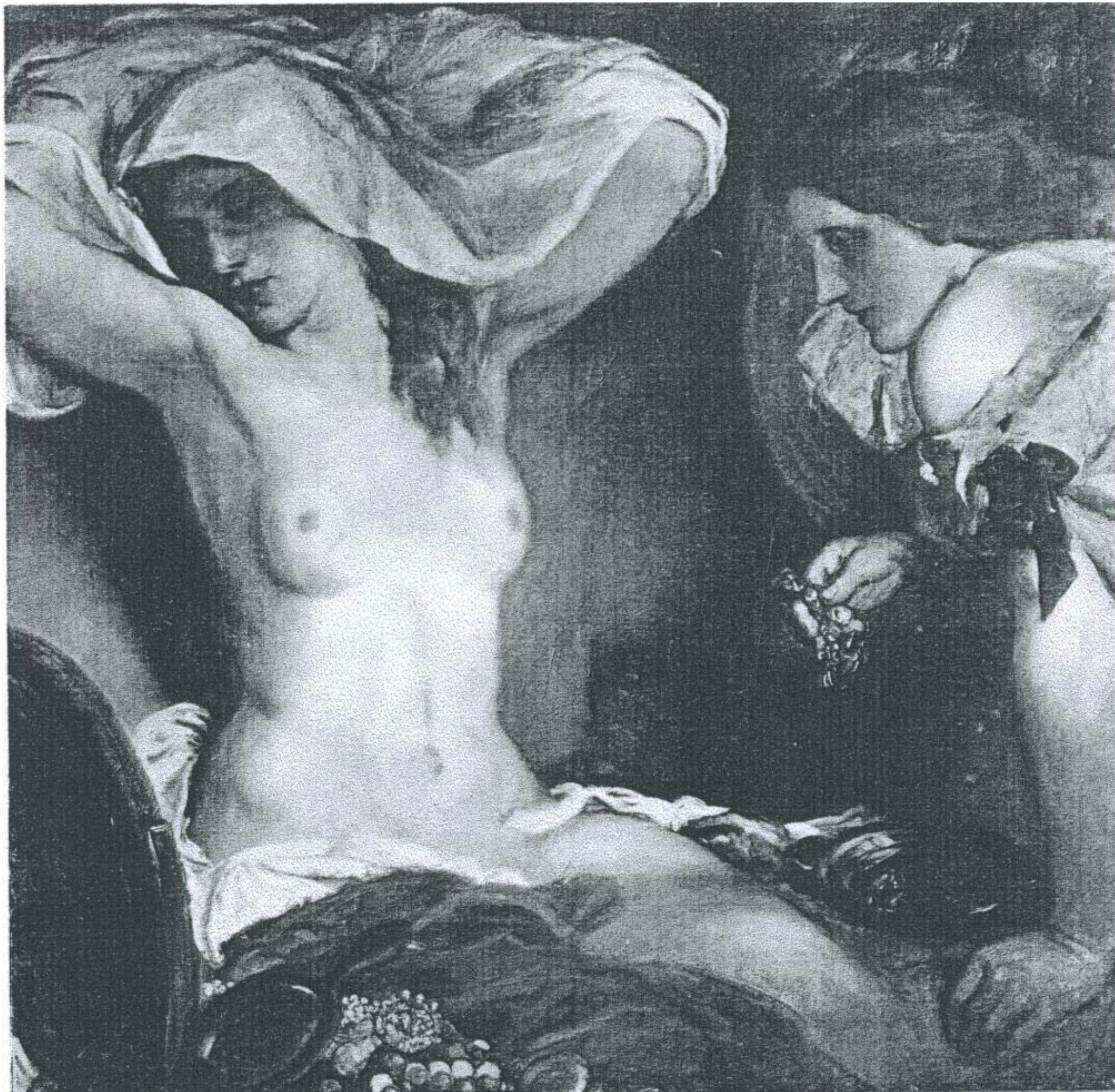

Figure 99: Shannon. *The Amethyst Necklace*, 1907. Oil on canvas. Formerly in Waller collection (present whereabouts unknown). [*Charles H. Shannon: Seven Reproductions from the Exhibition of Fifteen Pictures Shown at the Leicester Galleries, in January, 1907*, preface by Laurence Binyon (London: 1907), pl. 11]

Figure 100: Shannon. *The Morning Toilet*, 1912. Oil on canvas.
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Figure 101: Shannon, *The Toilet*, undated. Oil on canvas. Usher Gallery of Art, Lincoln. [Martin Freeman, *Figure Studies* (London: The Studio Ltd, 1931), frontispiece].

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Figure 104: Titian, *Venus at her Toilet*, 1554-55. Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC [Pedrocco, fig. 78]

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Figure 108: Ricketts and Shannon, "Wedding Feast," woodcut illustration for *Daphnis and Chloe* (London: Ballantyne Press, 1893).

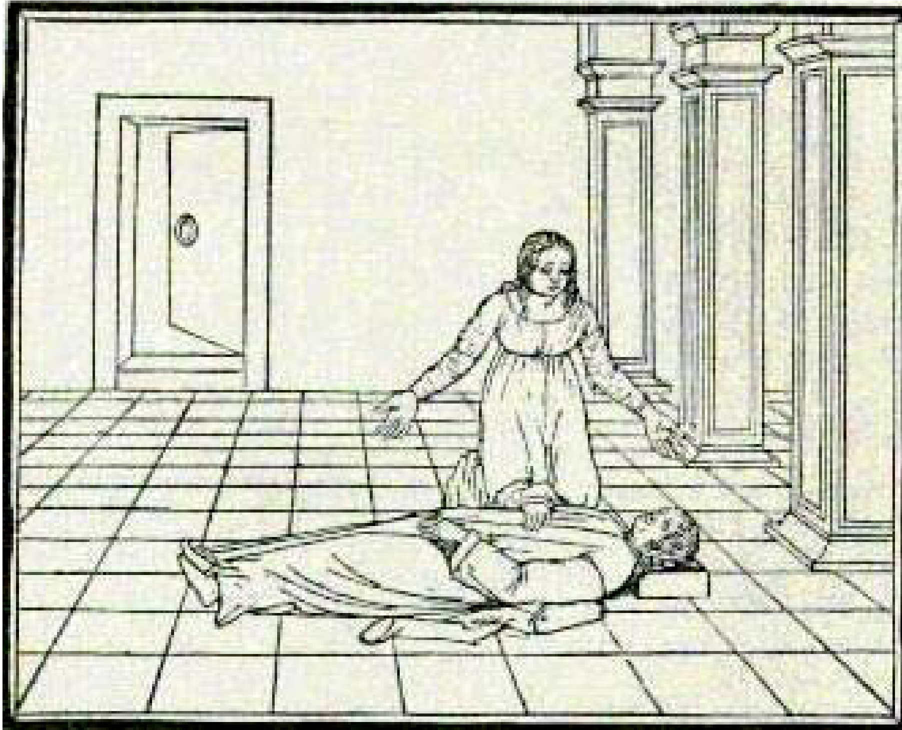

Figure 109: "Polia revives Poliphilo with a kiss," woodcut illustration from the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (Venice: Aldine Press, 1499). [The Electronic Hypnerotomachia, http://mitpress.mit.edu/e-books/HP/]

Figure 110: Shannon. *A Lithograph in White Line*, 1891. Lithograph. R5 [AMICO Library]

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Figure 114: Shannon, *The Idyll*, 1894. Oil on canvas. Watts gallery, Compton. [Hind, p. 4]

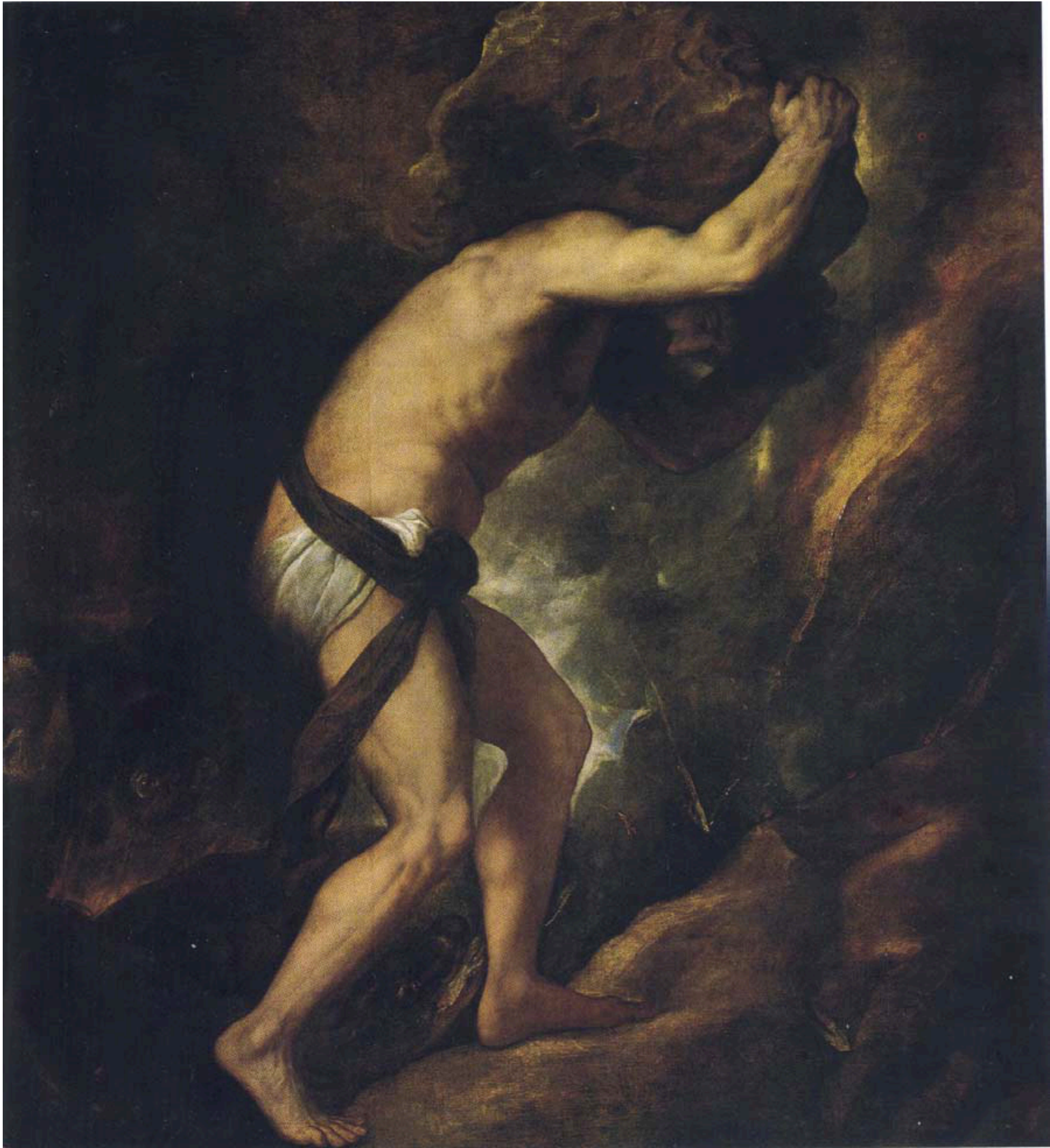

Figure 115: Titian. *Sisyphus*, 1549. Oil on canvas, Prado, Madrid. [Pedrocco, fig. 71]

Figure 116: Shannon. *The Wood Nymph*, 1906. Oil on canvas. Usher Gallery of Art, Lincoln. [George, pl. 11]

Figure 117: Shannon. *The Sleeping Nymph*, 1910. Oil on canvas. Musee d'Orsay, Paris. [Agence photographique de la Reunion des Musees Nationaux]

Figure 118: Shannon. *The Wounded Amazon*, 1896. Oil on canvas. Whereabouts unknown.
[*The Pageant* (v. 2: 1897), p. 85]

Figure 119: Shannon. *Atalanta*, 1893. Lithograph. R15. [Paul Delaney, *The Lithographs of Charles Shannon* (London: Taranman, 1978), p. 31]

Figure 120: Titian. *The Bacchanal of the Andrians*, 1523-24. Oil on canvas. Prado, Madrid. [Web Gallery of Art]

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Figure 123: *Ephedrismos* statuette from Boetia, c. 340-300 BCE. Terracotta. California Institute of World Archaeology, Santa Barbara. [CIWA website, http://www.virtual-egyptian-museum.org]

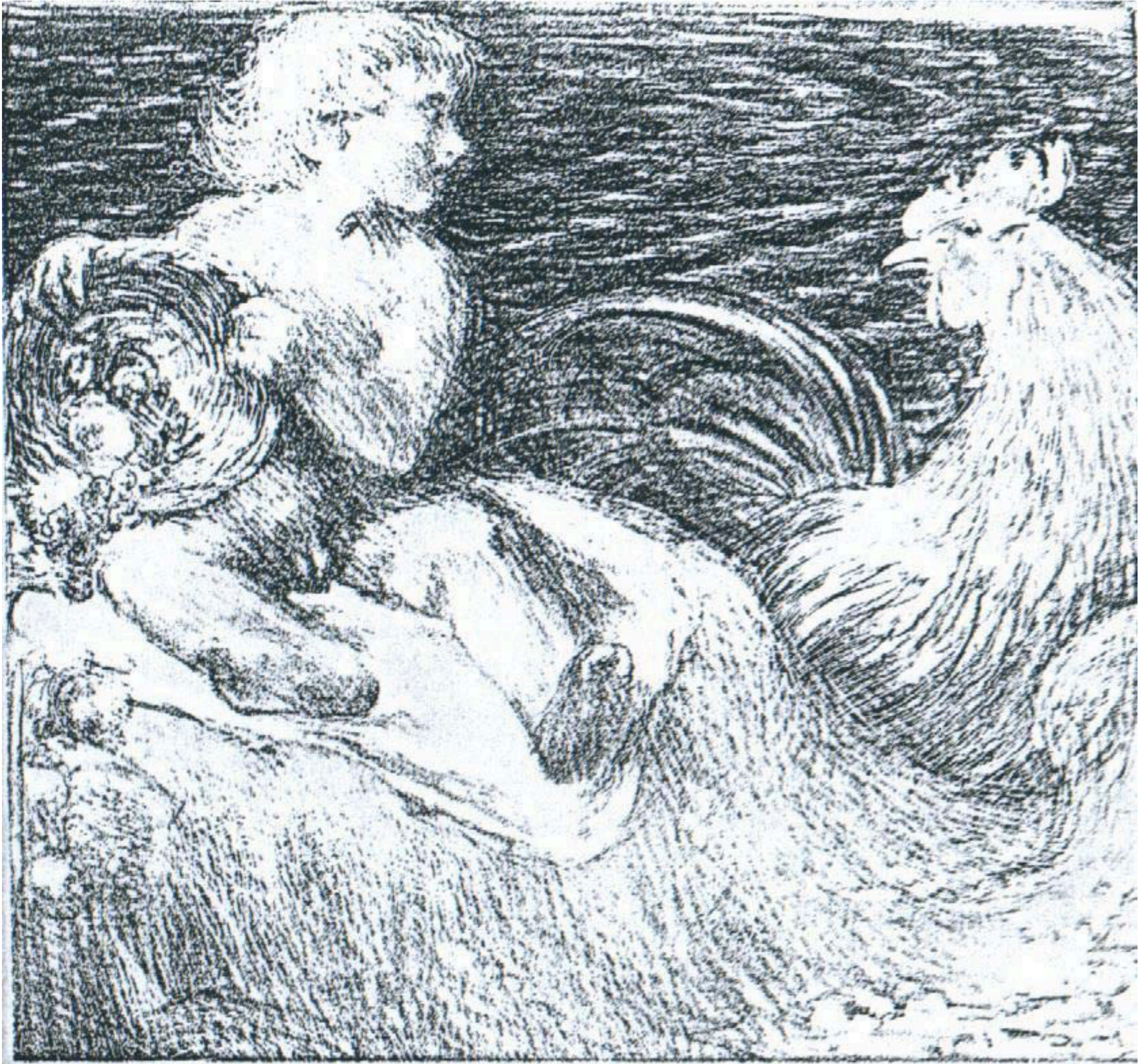

Figure 124: Shannon, *The Intruder*, 1892. Lithograph. R13. [Delaney, *Lithographs*, p. 27]

Figure 125: Predatory cockerel threatening a boy, 1st century AD. Terracotta from Myrina. Staatlichen Museen, Berlin.
[Elisabeth Rohde, *Griechische Terrakotten* (Berlin: Verlag Ernst Wasmuth Tübingen, 1968), pl. 43]

Figure 126: Shannon. *A Bunch of Grapes*. Oil on canvas. Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery, Dublin. [Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art. The City's Art–the Original Municipal Collection Catalogue. Dublin: Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, 1984.]

Figure 127: Shannon. *Lilah McCarthy in "Man and Superman,"* 1907. Oil on canvas. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. [George, pl. 12]

Figure 128: Shannon. *The Sapphire Bay*, 1903. Oil on canvas. Whereabouts unknown. [George, pl. 6]

Figure 129: Picasso, *La Toilette*.

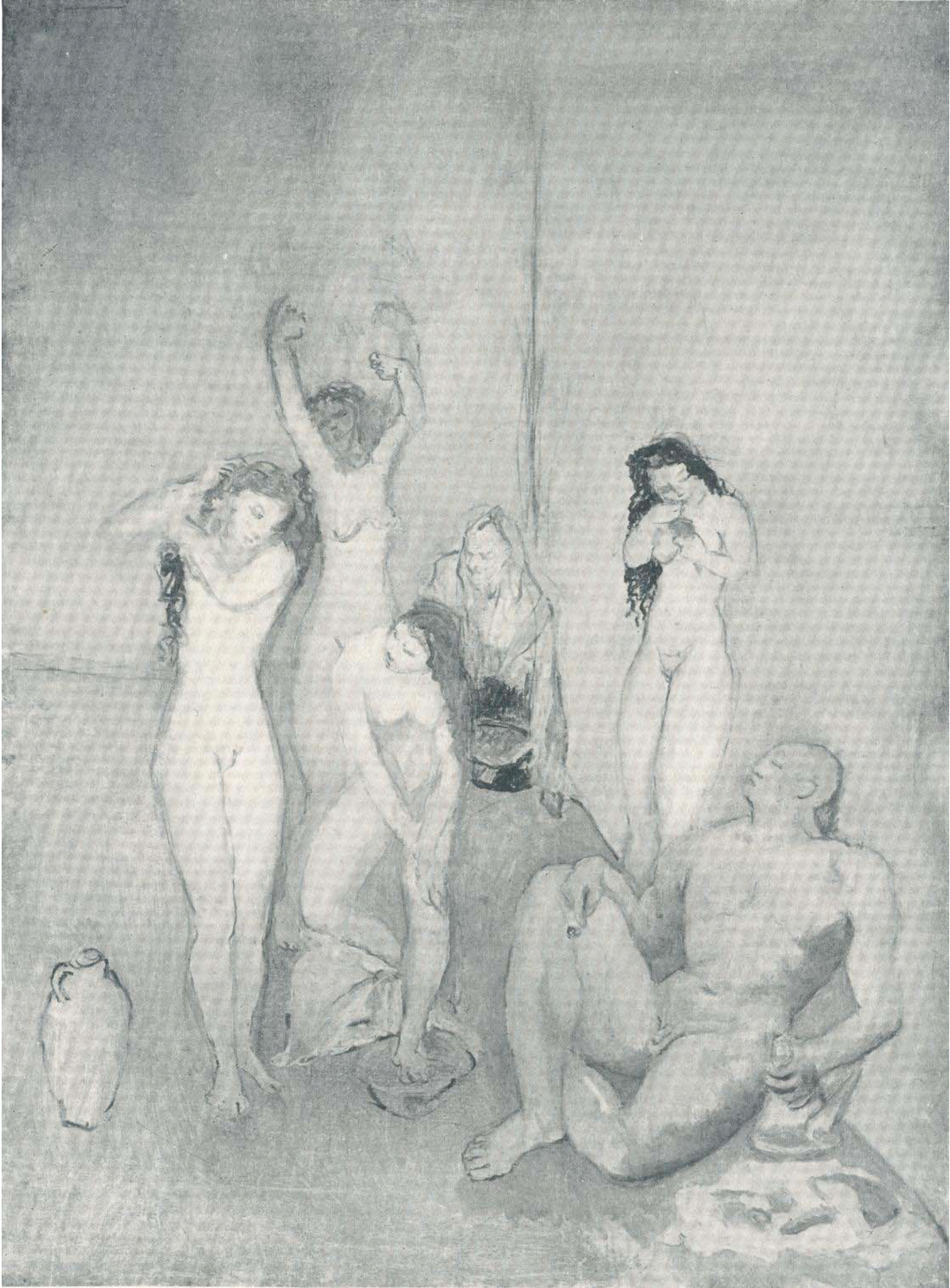

Figure 130: Picasso, *Les Baigneuses*.

Figure 131: Picasso, *Maternity*. Art Institute of Chicago.

Figure 132: Picasso, *Mere et Enfant*

Figure 133: Duncan Grant. *Venus and Adonis*, c.1919. Oil on canvas. Tate Gallery, London. [*The Art of Bloomsbury*, ed. Richard Shone (Princeton University Press, 1999), cat. no. 118]

Figure 134: Titian. *Venus and Adonis*, 1553-54. Oil on canvas. Prado, Madrid. [Web Gallery of Art]

Figure 135: Gertler. *Sleeping Nude*, 1928. Oil on canvas. Ulster Museum, Belfast. [Art Fund website]

Figure 136: Sir Matthew Smith, *The Falling Model*, 1926.

Figure 137: Smith, *Model Turning*, circa 1924. Oil on canvas. Tate Britain. [Tate website]

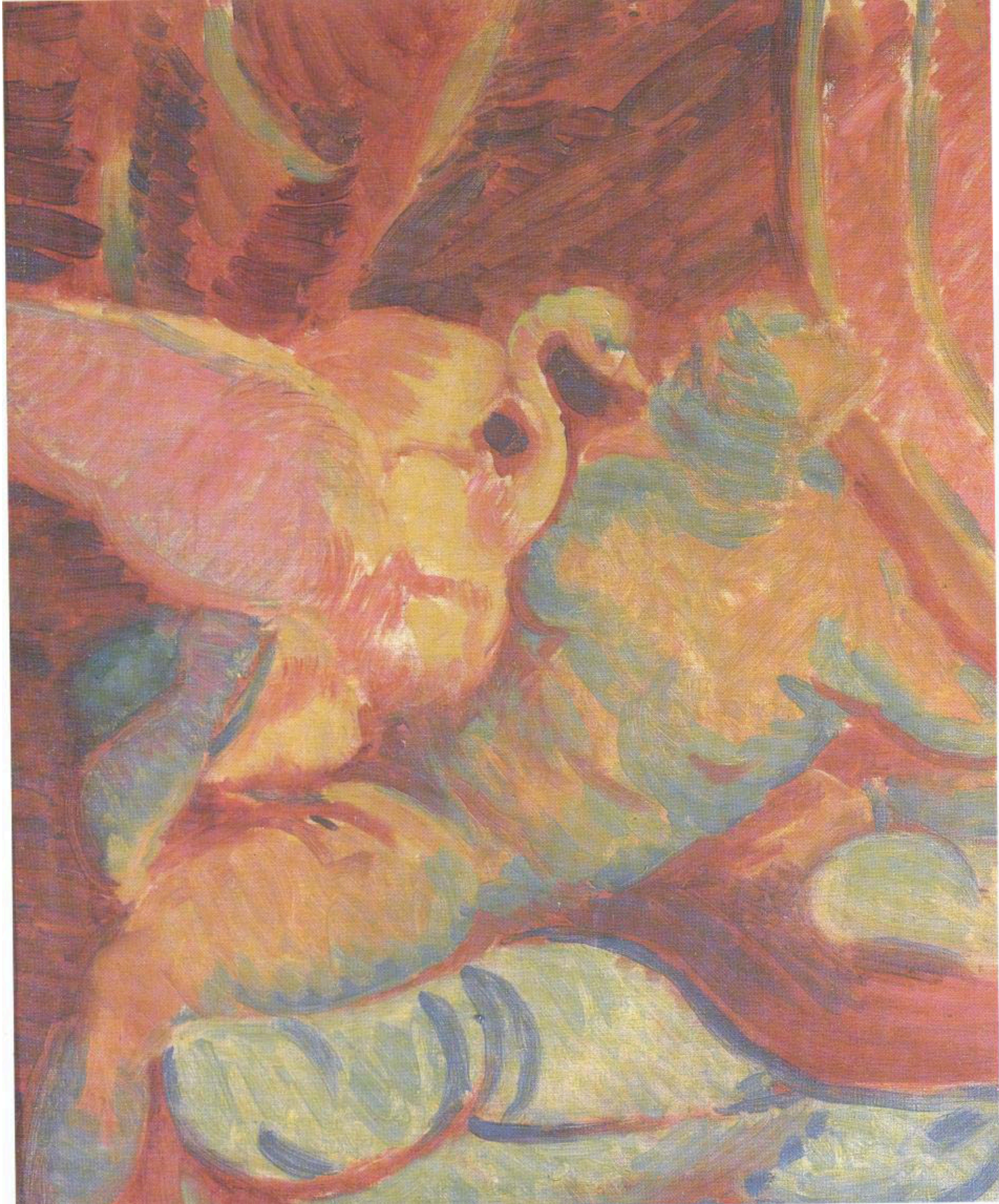

Figure 138: Smith, *Leda and the Swan, after Veronese*, c.1922-25. Oil on canvas. Corporation of London. [Alice Keene, *The Two Mr Smiths* (London: Lund Humphries, 1995), pl. 24]

Figure 139: Smith. *Double-leafed Screen with Designs of Leda and the Swan*, c. 1922-25. Oil on canvas. Corporation of London. [Keene, pl. 25]

Figure 140: Shannon. *The Childhood of Bacchus*, 1919-20. Oil on canvas. Private collection. [*The Last Romantics*, ed. John Christian (London: Barbican Art Gallery, 1989), cat. no. 256]

Figure 141: Titian. *Venus with Organist and Cupid*, 1548. Oil on canvas. Prado, Madrid. [Pedrocco, fig. 70]

Figure 142: Titian. *The Three Ages of Man*, 1511-12. Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, on loan from the Duke of Sutherland collection. [Web Gallery of Art]

Figure 143: Titian. *The Virgin and Child with the Young Saint John the Baptist and St. Catherine*, 1530. Oil on canvas. National Gallery of Art, London. [Pedrocco, fig. 41]

Figure 144: Shannon. *Vanity and Sanctity*, 1921. Oil on canvas. Royal Academy of Art, London. [Royal Academy website]

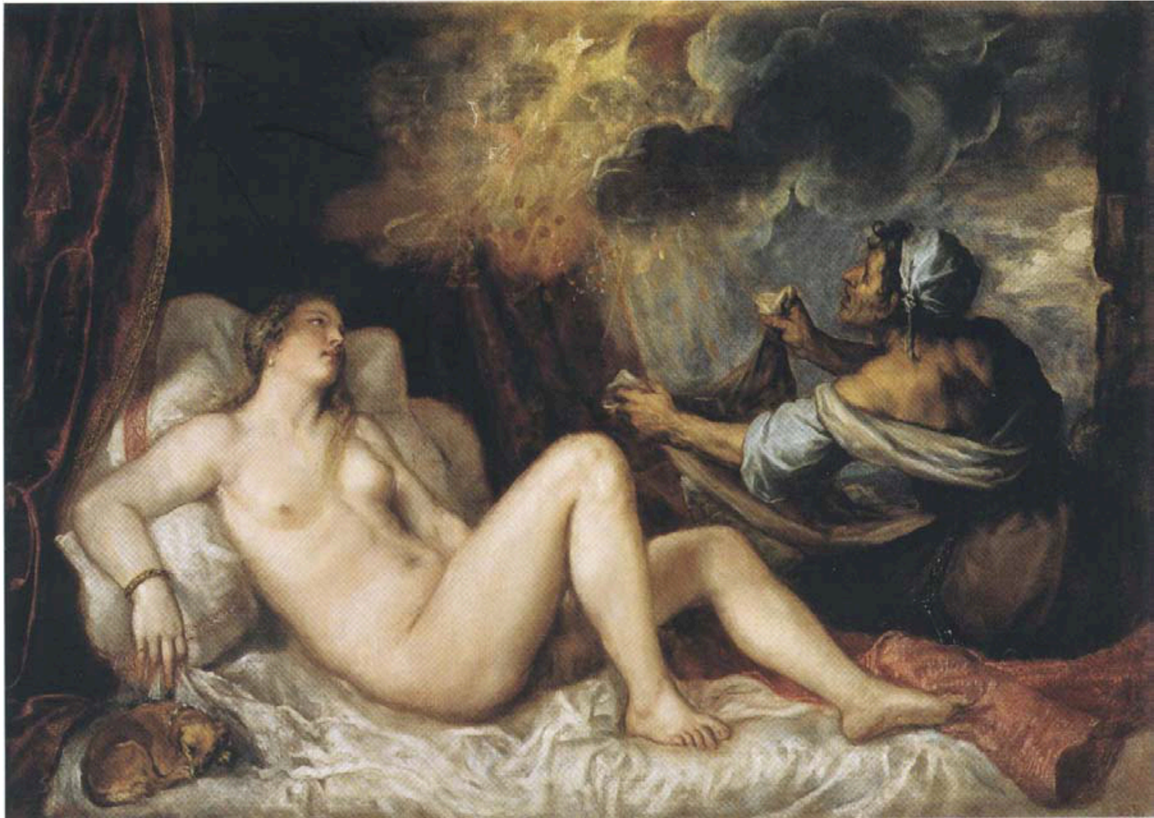

Figure 145: Titian. *Danaë*, 1553-54. Oil on canvas. Prado, Madrid. [Pedrocco, fig. 77]

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

William Carlisle McKeown was born on May 3, 1972 in Panama City, Florida. He earned an Associate of Arts at Gulf Coast Community College, and then transferred to the University of West Florida in Pensacola, where he received his Bachelor of Arts in art history. He earned his Master of Arts in Art History and Criticism from the State University of New York at Stony Brook. With his graduate studies, he began to focus scholarly attention on the Victorian period in British painting. He continues to research this area, with particular interest in the artistic dialogues which Victorian artists conducted with Italian art and culture.