NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART ONLINE EDITIONS
Italian Paintings of the Sixteenth Century

after Titian
Anonymous Artist

Titian
Venetian, 1488/1490 - 1576

Andrea de' Franceschi

late 16th or early 17th century

oil on canvas
overall: 64.8 x 50.6 cm (25 1/2 x 19 15/16 in.)
framed: 87.15 x 73.98 x 7.78 cm (34 5/16 x 29 1/8 x 3 1/16 in.)
Inscription: upper left on tablet: ...TIS/...OIX
Andrew W. Mellon Collection 1937.1.35

ENTRY

The portrait is known in two other main versions, respectively in the Detroit Institute of Arts [fig. 1] and the Royal Collection [fig. 2]; in the latter, known as *Titian and His Friends*, the sitter is accompanied by portraits of Titian himself (a variant of the *Self-Portrait* in the Gemäldegalerie, Berlin) and of another man (a variant of the male portrait in the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco). (A third version, in the Indianapolis Museum of Art, clearly represents the same sitter, but at a significantly more advanced age.) Both of the other main versions show the sitter in waist length and include his left hand holding a letter. The truncation of the tablet with an inscription in the present version indicates that the picture has been cut at the left edge, and the technical evidence suggesting that it has also been cut below confirms the natural supposition that this version likewise originally included the hand holding the letter.

Critics have not always agreed about the relative merits of the various versions. The Royal Collection group portrait was generally accepted as an autograph painting by Titian until it was demoted by Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle in 1877, [1] and although its exact status remains problematic, it is now universally regarded as inferior to and considerably later than the Detroit version. [2] Crowe and Cavalcaselle, Bernard Berenson, Charles Holmes, Hans Tietze, Wilhelm Suida, and Gunter Troche all accepted the Gallery's version as autograph, and the last two even considered it to be superior to that in Detroit. [3] But Rodolfo Pallucchini, followed by Harold Wethey, Fern Rusk Shapley, John

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Shearman, and Filippo Pedrocco, thought the opposite to be the case; [4] and, indeed, compared with the pictorially and psychologically much more refined Detroit version, the present picture appears coarse and veristic. The absence of any underdrawing or pentimenti (see Technical Summary) further suggests that it postdates the Detroit version and was based on it.

The sitter was first identified, with respect to the Royal Collection picture, as Andrea de' Franceschi, grand chancellor of Venice, by Anna Jameson, on the basis of an engraved portrait after Titian. [5] Crowe and Cavalcaselle rejected the identification, proposing instead that the sitter is the mosaicist Francesco Zuccato, on the grounds that Carlo Ridolfi described a picture in which Titian portrayed himself with Zuccato. [6] But in 1927 Jameson's identification was independently reaffirmed from two different quarters. Berenson pointed out that the sitter reappears prominently in a group of bystanders next to the papal throne in Palma Giovane's *Pope Alexander III and Doge Ziani Receiving the Emperor's Son*, painted circa 1583 for the Sala del Maggior Consiglio in the Doge's Palace (in situ), [7] and that Ridolfi had mentioned the presence of Andrea de' Franceschi in this group. [8] Berenson further pointed out that Palma Giovane's posthumous portrait must have been based on an original by Titian, since such a portrait, mentioned in the grand chancellor's will, was also recorded by Ridolfi in the Widmann collection in Venice. [9] Writing in the same year as Berenson, Stephan Poglayen-Neuwall reasonably surmised that the engraving to which Jameson was referring was the one by the 18th-century master Crescenzio Ricci, which carries the inscription "ANDREAS DE FRANCISCIS / Eques Magnus Cancellarius Venetus" (Andrea de' Franceschi, Knight and Grand Chancellor of Venice) [fig. 3]. [10]

Poglayen-Neuwall also provided basic biographical information about Andrea de' Franceschi (1473–1552), [11] which has now been supplemented by Sergio Zamperetti, Thomas Weigel, and especially Deborah Howard. [12] A member of the *cittadinanza* (citizen class), De' Franceschi pursued a highly successful career in the civil service, rising to become secretary to the powerful government magistracy of the Council of Ten in 1519, and, finally, to become grand chancellor in 1529. This office, which was the highest attainable to any Venetian from a nonnoble family, was held for life. In rank it was senior to that of senator, and it was junior only to that of doge and procurator of San Marco. It entitled the holder to wear the distinctive red robe, with a black stole—and presumably large open sleeves—worn by the sitter in the present portrait and in that in Detroit. [13] A person of high intellectual and social distinction, De' Franceschi was also, according to Titian's

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17th-century biographer Carlo Ridolfi, a close friend of the painter.

A particularly valuable document for Andrea de' Franceschi's biography is provided by his will, drawn up in 1535. [14] This mentions that at this date he owned two portraits of himself by Titian. The natural assumption that one of these was the portrait now in Detroit is confirmed by its style, which as pointed out by Pallucchini and Wethey, fits comfortably with Titian's other portraits of the early 1530s, such as the *Ippolito de' Medici* (Pitti, Florence) and the *Charles V with a Hound* (Prado, Madrid). [15] The identification of the other portrait of De' Franceschi is more problematic. In theory this could have been of a quite different composition, possibly painted before his election as grand chancellor in 1529, and now lost or unrecognized. It is more likely, however, that the second portrait was simply a close variant or copy of the Detroit picture—especially since the various other versions provide clear evidence that such copies were made by Titian's workshop.

Holmes proposed a reading of the truncated inscription (. . . TIS/ . . . OIX) on the present portrait as AETATIS ANNO LX, suggesting that the penultimate letter has been reduced from an L to an I by abrasion. [16] Although Howard has plausibly suggested that this should be modified to AETATIS SVO LX, both readings would interpret the inscription as indicating that the sitter was aged 60, giving a date for the portrait of circa 1533. On this basis Howard drew the seemingly obvious inference that the Gallery's portrait—in which the sitter arguably appears slightly older than in the Detroit portrait—is identical with the "second" portrait mentioned in De' Franceschi's will and that it was painted just three or four years later than the original, which was presumably painted circa 1529, directly after the sitter's election as grand chancellor. [17]

This attractive interpretation of the documentary and orthographic evidence is not, however, borne out by the style of the present portrait, which is difficult to reconcile with that of Titian in the early 1530s. As indicated above, the handling is harsher and cruder than that of Titian at any date, as is evident not only in the treatment of the head, but also in the change of the color of the gown from a subtly modulated crimson to a crude scarlet. Indeed, although a majority of recent scholars have accepted it as a product of Titian's workshop, the more severe verdict by Shapley—that it was painted independently of the master's supervision, perhaps even after his death—remains more convincing. [18] The work may be seen, then, as a copy either of the Detroit original, or of a close version of it, dating from the later 16th or the early 17th century. In that case the information on the sitter's age provided by the now-truncated inscription would have been taken from

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the now-illegible inscription in minuscules on the letter held by the sitter in the Detroit picture—which may well have been painted in 1533. [19]

Peter Humfrey

March 21, 2019

COMPARATIVE FIGURES

fig. 1 Titian, *Andrea dei Franceschi*, c. 1533, oil on canvas, Detroit Institute of Arts

fig. 2 After Titian, *Titian and His Friends*, c. 1550/1560, oil on canvas, Royal Collection Trust / © Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II 2017

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fig. 3 Crescenzio Ricci, after Titian, *Portrait of Andrea de' Franceschi*, 18th century, engraving, Museo Correr. © Photo Archive - Fondazione Musei Civici di Venezia

NOTES

[1] Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle, *Titian, His Life and Times* (London, 1877), 2:64–65.

[2] For the Royal Collection picture, see John Shearman, *The Early Italian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen* (Cambridge, 1983), 268–271; Deborah Howard, "Titian's Portraits of Grand Chancellor Andrea de' Franceschi," *Artibus et Historiae* 37, no. 74 (2016): 139–151.

[3] Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle, *Titian, His Life and Times* (London, 1877), 2:64–65; Bernard Berenson, "While on Tintoretto," in *Festschrift für Max J. Friedländer zum 60. Geburtstage*

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(Leipzig, 1927), 231–235; Charles Holmes, "The Inscription upon Titian's Portrait of Franceschi," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 55 (1929): 159–160; Hans Tietze, *Titian: Paintings and Drawings* (Vienna, 1937), 320; Wilhelm Suida, "Miscellanea Tizianesca, II," *Arte Veneta* 10 (1956): 76; and Gunter Troche, "Venetian Paintings of the Renaissance at the M. H. De Young Memorial Museum," *Art Quarterly* 28 (1965): 98.

[4] Rodolfo Pallucchini, *Tiziano* (Florence, 1969), 1:78–79, 266; Harold Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian* (London, 1971), 2:101; Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings* (Washington, DC, 1979), 1:506–508; John Shearman, *The Early Italian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen* (Cambridge, 1983), 268, 271; and Filippo Pedrocco, *Titian: The Complete Paintings* (New York, 2001), 152.

[5] Anna Jameson, *A Handbook to the Public Galleries of Art in and near London*, new ed. (London, 1845), 241–242.

[6] Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle, *Titian, His Life and Times* (London, 1877), 2:64–65.

[7] Bernard Berenson, "While on Tintoretto," in *Festschrift für Max J. Friedländer zum 60. Geburtstage* (Leipzig, 1927), 231–235.

[8] Carlo Ridolfi, *Le maraviglie dell'arte, overo Le vite de gl'illustri pittori veneti, e dello stato*, ed. Detlev von Hadeln (Berlin, 1924), 2:178. For this picture, see Stefania Mason Rinaldi, *Palma il Giovane: L'opera completa* (Milan, 1984), 141. Ridolfi (ed. Detlev von Hadeln, 1914), 1:154, also claimed that De' Franceschi's portrait was included in the left foreground of Titian's *Presentation of the Virgin* of 1534–1538 (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice), but this identification has been convincingly refuted by David Rosand, *Painting in Cinquecento Venice: Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto* (New Haven and London, 1982), 123.

[9] See Carlo Ridolfi, *Le maraviglie dell'arte, overo Le vite de gl'illustri pittori veneti, e dello stato*, ed. Detlev von Hadeln (Berlin, 1914), 1:201, and editorial note 5 therein. It is then listed as "Ritratto d'un cancellier grande di Tiziano" in a Widmann family inventory of 1659; see Fabrizio Magani, *Il collezionismo e la committenza artistica della famiglia Widmann, patrizi veneziani, dal Seicento all'Ottocento* (Venice, 1989), 34, 42.

[10] Stephan Poglayen-Neuwall, "Tizianstudien," *Münchner Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst*, n.s. 4 (1927): 66–70.

[11] Stephan Poglayen-Neuwall, "Tizianstudien," *Münchner Jahrbuch der Bildenden Kunst*, n.s. 4 (1927): 66–70. The author quotes as his sources Giovanni Battista Nicolesi, *Distinta, e chiara narratione di nome, e cognome delle famiglie, che furono eletti in Cancellieri Grandi di questa Serenissima Republica di Venetia*, 1713; Cicogna MSS in the Biblioteca Correr, Venice; and Tassini MSS in the Archivio di Stato, Venice.

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[12] Sergio Zamperetti, "Andrea de Franceschi," in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani* (Rome, 1988), 36:24–26; Thomas Weigel, "Begräbniszeremoniell und Grabmäler venezianischer Grosskanzler des 16. Jahrhunderts," in *Praemium Virtutis: Grabmonumente und Begräbniszeremoniell im Zeichen des Humanismus*, ed. Joachim Poeschke, Britta Kusch, and Thomas Weigel (Münster, 2002), 148, 165–167; Deborah Howard, "Titian's Portraits of Grand Chancellor Andrea de' Franceschi," *Artibus et Historiae* 37, no. 74 (2016): 143–145.

[13] See Felix Gilbert, "The Last Will of a Venetian Grand Chancellor," in *Philosophy and Humanism: Renaissance Essays in Honor of Paul Oskar Kristeller*, ed. Edward Mahoney (Leiden, 1976), 502–517; Deborah Howard, "Titian's Portraits of Grand Chancellor Andrea de' Franceschi," *Artibus et Historiae* 37, no. 74 (2016): 139–151.

[14] An extract, quoting the reference to the two portraits by Titian, is published by Michel Hochmann, *Peintres et commanditaires à Venise (1540–1628)* (Rome, 1992), 356–358. See also Deborah Howard, "Titian's Portraits of Grand Chancellor Andrea de' Franceschi," *Artibus et Historiae* 37, no. 74 (2016): 139–151.

[15] Rodolfo Pallucchini, *Tiziano* (Florence, 1969), 1:78–79, 266; Harold Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian* (London, 1971), 2:101.

[16] Charles Holmes, "The Inscription upon Titian's Portrait of Franceschi," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 55 (1929): 159–160. However, John Shearman, *The Early Italian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen* (Cambridge, 1983), 270, observed that "the spacing of the surviving letters discourages such a reconstruction."

[17] Deborah Howard, "Titian's Portraits of Grand Chancellor Andrea de' Franceschi," *Artibus et Historiae* 37, no. 74 (2016): 139–151.

[18] Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings* (Washington, DC, 1979), 1:506–508.

[19] John Shearman, *The Early Italian Pictures in the Collection of Her Majesty the Queen* (Cambridge, 1983), 270, tentatively read the much-damaged inscription on the letter in the Detroit version as " . . . eas Franceschinus . . . / Ma . . . /A . . . M.D.L." But 1550 is an impossible date, from the point of view both of style and of the sitter's age.

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The painting was executed on a coarse, plain-weave fabric. It has been lined, and the tacking edges are no longer extant. Comparison with the version of the

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composition in Detroit, together with the fragmentary character of the inscription, suggests that the painted surface has been reduced along the right, left, and bottom edges. This supposition is confirmed by the fact that cusping of the original fabric is absent along those three tacked edges but is present along the top edge. The support was prepared with a thin, white ground. Infrared reflectography (Vidicon) [1] has not exposed any underdrawing, and no compositional changes have been revealed by x-radiography. The paint was applied thinly, and the individual strokes are well blended. The x-radiographs of the painting suggest that the image was originally stronger in painterly expression, as the surface has suffered extensively from abrasion. The inpainting is extensive and has darkened, and the surface coating is thick and somewhat discolored.

Peter Humfrey and Joanna Dunn based on the examination report by Susanna Griswold

March 21, 2019

TECHNICAL NOTES

[1] Infrared reflectography was performed with a Hamamatsu c/1000-03 Vidicon camera and a Kodak Wratten 87A filter.

PROVENANCE

("Anthony," London); purchased before 1859 by Francis Richard Charteris, Lord Elcho [1818-1914, from 1883 the 10th earl of Wemyss], London, and Gosford House, Lothian, Scotland;[1] by inheritance to his son, Hugo Richard Charteris, 11th earl of Wemyss [1857-1937], Gosford House, until 1927; (Wildenstein & Co., New York); sold 1928 to (M. Knoedler & Co., New York); purchased January 1928 by Andrew W. Mellon, Pittsburgh and Washington, D.C.; deeded 28 December 1934 to The A.W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh;[2] gift 1937 to NGA.

[1] The painting was lent by Lord Elcho to the British Institution in 1859. Confirmation that the painting was not inherited by Lord Elcho, but was purchased by him from a London dealer named “Anthony,” was kindly provided to Peter

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Humfrey by Shelagh, Countess of Wemyss and March, on the basis of family papers at Gosford House. See also Shelagh Wemyss, "Francis, Lord Elcho (10th Earl of Wemyss) as a Collector of Italian Old Masters," *Journal of the Scottish Society for Art History* 8 (2003): 73-76, and on the collecting by the earls of Wemyss and March, *Pictures from Gosford House Lent by The Earl of Wemyss and March*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1957; "The Earls of Wemyss and March," in *Dutch Art and Scotland: A Reflection of Taste*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1992: 171.

[2] Mellon date deeded to Mellon Trust is according to Mellon collection records in NGA curatorial files and David Finley's notebook (donated to the National Gallery of Art in 1977, now in the Gallery Archives).

EXHIBITION HISTORY

1859 Pictures by Italian, Spanish, Flemish, Dutch, French, and English Masters, British Institution, London, 1859, no. 40, as Head of a Man by Titian.

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