



Follower of Jacopo Tintoretto
Anonymous Artist

Jacopo Tintoretto
Venetian, 1518 or 1519 - 1594

Andrea Renier and His Son Daniele

c. 1560/1566

oil on canvas

overall: 113 x 94.3 cm (44 1/2 x 37 1/8 in.)

framed: 142.6 x 124.4 x 7.6 cm (56 1/8 x 49 x 3 in.)

Inscription: center left: ANDREAS. RENERIVS. / CONSILLARIVS. / DANIEL. / FILIVS

Gift of Samuel L. Fuller 1951.15.1

ENTRY

The first name of the primary sitter, Andreas Renerius or Andrea Renier, and the entire reference to his son Daniel or Daniele, is on the strip of canvas added to the left (probably during the 17th century) to replace a portion of the painting that had apparently been severely damaged. Nevertheless, the specificity of the information suggests that it repeats an inscription that was there originally, or at least has some factual basis. Indeed, the primary sitter can be securely identified.

The Reniers were a patrician Venetian family with many prominent members in the 16th and early 17th centuries. Andrea di Giacomo di Andrea Renier was born in 1514 and died in 1560. His son Daniele was born in 1535 and died in 1566. Andrea Renier held numerous positions in the Venetian government over the course of his career, most prominently as a member of the Minor Consiglio (or Consiglio dei Sei) from 1552 to 1553, 1555 to 1556, and 1558 to 1559. In this position, he would have been one of the six consiglieri to the doge who made up the group. The doge could open letters and hold audiences only in the presence of four of the six consiglieri. They were elected for eight-month terms and could be reelected only twice, after which they had to leave the office before they could be elected to it again. In 1559, the year before his death, Andrea was appointed to the important post of podesta (Venetian governor) of Brescia. He had previously held the same office in another of Venice's other subject cities on the *terraferma*, Treviso, and

served as Venetian *capitano* at Verona. [1]

That this Andrea Renier is the subject of the Gallery's painting is confirmed by the landscape, which represents Brescia, where he served in his last official position. The town is seen from the east or southeast, with the Ronchi hills in the background. Looming above it is the Castello, with its large towers at either end and the tall, round Mirabella tower at the center. Ascending diagonally up the hillside is the inner range of walls built by the Viscontis in the 14th century. Below the castle are the two towers of the *broletto*, the seat of government, and the old Duomo (cathedral), which collapsed in 1708. The other towers are generally consonant with Brescian topography at the time, although not every one can be identified with precision. The gate in the foreground is probably the Porta Torrelunga (now Porta Venezia). [2]

The identity of the boy in the painting is more problematic, since in the inscription he seems to be referred to as Andrea Renier's son Daniele. This boy appears to be roughly ten to twelve years old, whereas Andrea did not assume his office at Brescia until 1559, when Daniele was well into his twenties. Moreover, the picture seems more likely to date from around 1560 (the year of Andrea's death) rather than around 1545/1547, when Daniele would have been a boy. The careful, labored technique and the overall flatness of the result suggest that the painting was executed by a studio assistant or imitator. The format, with the view out the window to a landscape, is generally similar to one employed by Tintoretto (for example, *Portrait of a Man with a Landscape View*). However, Tintoretto first used this format in the *Portrait of a Gentleman Aged Twenty-Eight* (Staatsgalerie, Stuttgart), dated 1548; by 1560, the type was well established and much more likely to have been imitated as a matter of routine. [3]

The unusual profile view of the primary subject suggests that the portrait may have been posthumous, possibly commissioned by the adult Daniele Renier after his father's death and before his own death in 1566. Although rare in easel paintings, profile portraits of officials often appeared on the frontispieces of official documents such as ducal *commissioni*. [4] The Gallery's portrait may have been based on the image of Andrea Renier in such a document. According to Helena Szépe, who has studied portraiture on ducal *commissioni*, these documents occasionally portray the recipient of the post with a young boy. In some such cases, it is possible to identify the boy as the recipient's son; in other cases, surviving records show no son of a corresponding age at the time of the recipient's commission. [5] Thus, it is conceivable that the painting is based on a

commissione depicting Andrea Renier with a page or some other anonymous youth, and that the phrase *Daniel.filius* was added at the time of the repair and repainting of the left side. The painting has never been included in the Tintoretto literature. Fern Rusk Shapley assigned it to a Tintoretto follower, the most appropriate attribution. [6]

Robert Echols

March 21, 2019

NOTES

- [1] For a description of the Venetian system of government, with its various councils, see David Chambers, *The Imperial Age of Venice, 1380–1580* (London, 1970), 73–107; and Robert Finlay, *Politics in Renaissance Venice* (Brunswick, NJ, 1980), 37–43. Paola Benussi of the Archivio di Stato, Venice, has located documentation of Andrea Renier's appointment as consigliere and podesta of Brescia, along with many other positions, beginning in 1532, in the Segretario alle Voci election registers in the Archivio di Stato di Venezia (email correspondence with author, April 2011, copies in NGA curatorial files). His appointment as podesta of Brescia in 1559 is also documented in Amelio Tagliaferri, ed., *Podestaria e capitanato di Brescia, Vol. 11: Relazioni dei rettori veneti in terraferma* (Milan, 1978), LII (information provided by Stephen Bowd). His appointment as podesta of Treviso in 1543 is at Biblioteca del Museo Correr, MS Classe III, 154 (information provided by Helena Szépe). His life dates and his appointment as podesta of Brescia, as well as the life dates of his son Daniele, are reported in Marco Barbaro, with additions by A. M. Tasca (1743), *Arbori de' patritii veneti*, Archivio di Stato, Venice, Miscellanea codici, serie I, reg. 22: vol. 6, 417 (information provided by Linda Borean). The 18th-century genealogist Girolamo Alessandro Cappellari-Vivaro, in *Famiglie venete (Campidoglio Veneto)*, Archivio di Stato, Venice, Miscellanea codici, serie III, reg. 34, c. 40v, adds that Andrea was senator and consigliere (information provided by Paola Benussi of the Archivio di Stato, Venice).
- [2] On Brescia in the 16th century, see Stephen D. Bowd, *Venice's Most Loyal City: Civic Identity in Renaissance Brescia* (Cambridge, MA, 2010). Stephen Bowd confirmed that the landscape depicts Brescia and identified its topographical features.
- [3] For the Stuttgart portrait, see Paola Rossi, *Jacopo Tintoretto: I ritratti* (Venice, 1974), cat. no. 65; Miguel Falomir, ed., *Tintoretto* (Madrid, 2007), 226–228, cat. no. 10.

- [4] For examples of profile portraits in *commissioni*, see Wolfgang Wolters, *Der Bilderschmuck des Dogenpalastes: Untersuchungen zur Selbstdarstellung der Republik Venedig im 16. Jahrhundert* (Wiesbaden, 1983), 148–149; Italian ed., *Storia e politica nei dipinti di Palazzo Ducale: Aspetti dell'autocelebrazione della Repubblica di Venezia nel Cinquecento*, trans. Benedetta Heinemann Campana (Venice, 1987), 146–147, figs. 138, 139, and 141. The three-quarter-view portrait visible in the x-radiograph of the present painting may have been deemed unsatisfactory and been abandoned, or may possibly be unrelated to the final painting, despite its apparent similarity.
- [5] Email communication to author, September 2010. See also Helena Katalin Szépe, *Venice Illuminated: Power and Painting in Renaissance Manuscripts* (New Haven and London, 2018), 208–210.
- [6] The only attributions to Tintoretto are on the backs of photographs in NGA curatorial files. August Mayer in 1922 stated that the picture was by Tintoretto. Gabriel von Térey's undated opinion also attributes the painting to Tintoretto and identifies the sitter as "Andreas Renieri, Governor of Bergamo," presumably on the assumption that the landscape represents Bergamo. Both photographs show the painting before removal of the overpaint covering the boy. Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings* (Washington, DC, 1979), 1:475.
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TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The picture support is a composite of several pieces of canvas with varying shapes and weaves: one large piece, 79.5 centimeters wide, extending the full height of the picture, to the right; at the left, two pieces joined together to form a strip 14.8 centimeters wide, extending along the left side of the painting; and two triangular inserts at the top corners. The entire composite of fabrics has been lined. All the fabrics are coarse and plain-woven, although there are variations in the thread diameter and density of the weave. Cusping is evident at the top and bottom edges, indicating that the vertical dimensions of the painting must be close to the original, but not at the right or left edge or at the seam where the large piece of canvas was extended. The ground on the larger piece of fabric is white; the strip to the left either has no ground or has a dark ground that does not appear in the x-radiographs, strongly suggesting that this part of the painting is an addition, probably to replace parts of the original painting that had suffered damage. The addition was sewn to the main canvas, indicating that the addition is an old one.

The pictorial technique on the addition also differs from that on the main canvas. Overall, the paint is applied in flat, rather straight strokes, with no buildup of paint. The colors are opaque, with the exception of the red glazes in the man's coat. The rendering is clumsy and stiff in the main body of the painting; the modeling in the added strip is even more flat and maladroit, showing little understanding of the modeling of forms. The difference in pictorial technique and type of paint between the main canvas and the strip on the left is particularly noticeable in the face of the boy, which extends over both areas; the paint in the former has greater body, whereas in the latter it is soft and very liquid. Differences in the technique of the landscape across the seam are less apparent. However, the greater craquelure to the right of the seam indicates that this part of the landscape dates from the original painting campaign and was successfully matched by the painter of the added strip. The portion of the inscription to the right of the seam was originally worked in yellow paint, later gone over with a dull orange that has occasionally filled in cracks and losses in the yellow layer. The inscription to the left of the seam is similarly executed in yellow paint with an orange-brown overlayer.

Infrared reflectography at 1.1 to 2.4 microns [1] and x-radiographs show that the man was first positioned in the center of the composition. In the lower right corner, x-radiographs reveal a three-quarter-view frontal portrait, facing to the left, underneath and upside-down to the present portrait. The facial features of the sitter resemble those of the sitter in the present portrait. The face in the underlying portrait seems to have been brought to a high degree of finish, but there are only slight indications of his garments.

Numerous areas of loss in the ground and paint layer are evident, notably in the eyebrow of the man, his beard along the jawbone, his collar, and the forehead of the boy. The upper left corner has suffered major losses. The paint is badly abraded in the main body of the painting and somewhat abraded in the added strip. It is covered with a very thick and heavy layer of what appears to be a natural resin varnish, toned with black and significantly discolored; retouching is present both over and under this varnish. A 1922 photograph in NGA curatorial files shows the painting with the figure of the boy painted over with a table bearing a large vase. The sitter was holding a handkerchief in his hand, and the inscription—except for the name ANDREAS.RENERIVS—was painted over. The painting was in its present condition when it entered the Gallery's collection in 1951.

Robert Echols and Joanna Dunn based on the examination report by Catherine Metzger

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TECHNICAL NOTES

[1] Infrared reflectography was performed with a Santa Barbara Focalplane InSb camera fitted with H, J, and K astronomy filters.

PROVENANCE

Samuel L. Fuller [1875-1963], New York; gift 1951 to NGA.

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- 1979 Shapley, Fern Rusk. *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*. 2 vols. National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1979: 1:475; 2:pl. 339.
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