



Follower of Veronese
Anonymous Artist

Veronese
Venetian, 1528 - 1588

Agostino Barbarigo

possibly 17th century

oil on canvas

overall: 102.8 x 102.4 cm (40 1/2 x 40 5/16 in.)

framed: 125.1 x 125.4 x 8.9 cm (49 1/4 x 49 3/8 x 3 1/2 in.)

Gift of Lewis Einstein 1957.8.1

ENTRY

The critical consensus that this is a copy, of inferior quality, of Veronese's *Portrait of Agostino Barbarigo* in the Cleveland Museum of Art [fig. 1] is certainly correct. [1] It is further confirmed by the underdrawing, of a type uncharacteristic of the master, revealed by the infrared reflectogram. The fact that the Gallery's version is slightly longer in format than the Cleveland picture prompted W. R. Rearick to suggest that the latter originally showed the sitter in full length. [2] The Cleveland portrait has indeed been cut at its lower edge, as well as down both sides, [3] and the visual evidence suggests that, as in the Gallery's copy, the picture originally included the sitter's right hand, clasping his baton of command. Arguably lending support to Rearick's suggestion is another copy of the portrait that appeared on the New York art market in 1997, since although of mediocre quality, it shows the sitter in ankle length. [4] Yet apart from the fact that full-length independent portraits of Venetians remained rare throughout the 16th century, it is significant that in this case the copyist has shifted the position of the arrow from the horizontal to the diagonal, as if to accommodate it to an elongated format. On balance, it seems likely that the sitter was always meant to be shown in half-length; indeed, the Washington picture, although itself trimmed on all four sides, may provide a fairly accurate idea of the original format of the Cleveland original, as well as confirm that the now very abraded area of the sky to the right was once streaked with clouds. Insofar as it is possible to judge from its own damaged condition, the rather hard, unpictorial handling of the surfaces in the Gallery's picture suggests that it was not executed under Veronese's supervision in his shop, but by a later follower, perhaps in the 17th century.

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The sitter of the Cleveland portrait was convincingly identified as the Venetian admiral Agostino Barbarigo (1516–1571) by Gyorgy Gombosi in 1928 and independently by Francis M. Kelly in 1931. [5] Barbarigo was killed at the naval battle of Lepanto in October 1571, when he was shot in the left eye by a Turkish arrow, and he was immediately proclaimed to be a heroic martyr, who had played a central role in achieving victory for the allied Christian fleet. In his posthumous portrait, Veronese accordingly showed him in armor, displaying the instrument of his death like a saint with his attribute. It is easy to imagine that in the years and decades following the battle there was considerable demand among Barbarigo's family and admirers for replicas of the portrait. Another version, reduced to a bust (Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest), was attributed by Rearick to Veronese's younger brother Benedetto Caliarì, but was accepted as an autograph Veronese by John Garton. [6]

Peter Humfrey

March 21, 2019

COMPARATIVE FIGURES



fig. 1 Veronese, *Portrait of Agostino Barbarigo*, after c. 1571, oil on canvas, Cleveland Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. L. E. Holden, Mr. and Mrs. Guerdon S. Holden, and the L. E. Holden Fund 1928.16

NOTES

- [1] Burton Fredericksen and Federico Zeri, *Census of Pre-Nineteenth-Century Italian Paintings in North American Public Collections* (Cambridge, MA, 1972), 40, 510, 647; Terisio Pignatti, *Veronese* (Venice, 1976), 1:135; Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings* (Washington, DC, 1979), 1:531; W. R. Rearick, *The Art of Paolo Veronese* (Cambridge, 1988), 108; Terisio Pignatti and Filippo Pedrocco, *Veronese: Catalogo completo dei dipinti* (Florence, 1991), 92; Terisio Pignatti and Filippo Pedrocco, *Veronese* (Milan, 1995), 1:284; John Garton, *Grace and Grandeur: The Portraiture of Paolo Veronese* (London and Turnhout, 2008), 204; John Garton and Frederick Ilchman, in *Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese: Rivals in Renaissance Venice* (Boston, 2009), 284 n. 72.
- [2] W. R. Rearick, *The Art of Paolo Veronese* (Cambridge, 1988), 108. Garton expressed sympathy with this view but did not fully subscribe to it. See John Garton, *Grace and Grandeur: The Portraiture of Paolo Veronese* (London and Turnhout, 2008), 99–100, 203–204.

- [3] As confirmed by Jon L. Seydl, curator at the Cleveland Museum of Art; see also John Garton, *Grace and Grandeur: The Portraiture of Paolo Veronese* (London and Turnhout, 2008), 99. Photographs taken prior to conservation in 1975 (for example, the one reproduced in Remigio Marini, *Tutta la pittura di Paolo Veronese* [Milan, 1968], 111) show the picture with added strips at both sides and below—with the sitter’s hand included—as well as with repainted clouds in the sky. These additions may, however, have accurately recorded lost areas that were original.
- [4] Sotheby’s, New York, Oct. 17, 1997, lot 156, with an attribution to the Circle of Tintoretto. An equally mediocre, full-length derivation at Schloss Ambras, Innsbruck (for which see Francis M. Kelly, “A Problem of Identity,” *Connoisseur* 87 [April 1931]: 213), employs Veronese’s portrait of the head, but the body is obviously an invention.
- [5] Gyorgy Gombosi, “Paolo Veronese,” *Magyar Művészeti* 10 (1928): 724–728; Francis M. Kelly, “A Problem of Identity,” *Connoisseur* 87 (April 1931): 207–213. For further details of Barbarigo’s biography, see Aldo Stella, “Barbarigo, Agostino,” in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, ed. Alberto Maria Ghisalberti (Rome, 1964), 6:50–52.
- [6] W. R. Rearick, *The Art of Paolo Veronese* (Cambridge, 1988), 108; John Garton, *Grace and Grandeur: The Portraiture of Paolo Veronese* (London and Turnhout, 2008), 203.
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TECHNICAL SUMMARY

The relatively coarse fabric support has been lined, and the tacking margins have been removed. The x-radiographs reveal slight cusping only on the left edge, indicating that the painting has been cropped on all four sides, but the left side is probably closest to the original edge of the composition. A vertical seam 7 centimeters from the right edge forms part of the original support. The smaller section of fabric on the right is made up of two pieces of fabric joined with a horizontal seam.

The canvas was prepared with an off-white ground, covered with a transparent brown imprimatura. Infrared reflectography at 1.1 to 2.4 microns [1] revealed an underdrawing outlining all the main contours of the figure. It also showed a drawing of a different male head to the left of the sitter, rotated 90 degrees. Dark paint strokes visible with infrared reflectography indicate that this earlier figure was depicted standing and wearing a long robe. The x-radiographs show that originally Barbarigo’s armor was crossed with a broad ribbon.

The paint surface has been badly abraded by overcleaning in the past, and the appearance of the picture is also severely compromised by extensive and insensitive retouching of tears in the original canvas.

Peter Humfrey and Joanna Dunn based on the examination reports by Michael Swicklik and Ina Slama

March 21, 2019

TECHNICAL NOTES

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

PROVENANCE

Henry Doetsch [1839-1894], London; (his estate sale, Christie, Manson & Woods, London, 22 and 24-25 June 1895, no. 43, as by Tintoretto); David L. Einstein [1839-1909], London; [1] his son, Lewis D. Einstein [1877-1967]; gift 1957 to NGA.

[1] Ellis Waterhouse supplied the information about the elder Einstein's purchase of the painting at the Doetsch sale in a note dated 22 July 1980, in NGA curatorial files. A red wax seal on the reverse of the painting has not yet been identified; the seal has an unmarked shield surmounted with the profile head of an antlered deer and to the left of the shield, the impressed numbers "129."

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- 1968 National Gallery of Art. *European Paintings and Sculpture, Illustrations*. Washington, 1968: 123, repro., as School of Veronese.
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