



**Veronese, *Allegory of Painting*, c. 1560s. Detroit Institute of Arts.**

Oil on canvas. 27.9 x 18.4 cm. Gift (1936), Mr and Mrs Edgar Whitcomb, Detroit.  
 Provenance: Raggi-Holford-Whitcomb. See *Paolo Veronese*, ed. Virginia Brilliant,  
 with Frederick Ilchman (Scala, 2012; 288 pages; 177 color ills.), 262.

**Veronese, His Seventeenth-Century Legacy. Exhibition Review, with a Gallery of Images. *Paolo Veronese: A Master and His Workshop in Renaissance Venice*.** The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida. December 6, 2012-April 14, 2013. [Webpage](#). Curator: Virginia Brilliant, Ringling Museum, with Frederick Ilchman, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Guest Speaker: Peter Humfrey (St Andrews University, Edinburgh, Scotland), Asolo Theatre, Sarasota, December 8, 2012. Companion volume (in lieu of catalogue): *Paolo Veronese*, ed. Virginia Brilliant, with Frederick Ilchman (Scala, 2012; 17 essays). Installation: Matt Lynn, Donn Roll, Carl Lamparter (Signs Now, Bradenton, Florida), *et al.* Photographer: Giovanni [Lunardi](#), Sarasota, FL. Scott Gardiner, Media Director, Ringling Museum.

**Review by Maureen E. Mulvihill**

**Princeton Research Forum, Princeton NJ**

**POWER IN GREAT NATIONS** is never hidden; power is meant to be seen. A first priority in nation-building and urban design is the public display of power. And this is managed visually, in glorious physical objects: dynastic family estates, public museums and libraries, iconic monuments, grand architecture, and so on. These are the symbols of power and cultural capital. When Charles I engaged Peter Paul Rubens in 1635 to design the [ceiling paintings](#) of the Banqueting House in Whitehall Palace, Charles was exploiting the medium of the visual arts to assert his own sovereignty and the rising prestige of his nation. Notably, the King did not commission a native English artist for this plum, but rather a distinguished Baroque master beyond his own shores. The King sought reputation and legacy on the world stage through a famous citizen of Flanders ([Rubens, ceiling paintings](#); [Rubens in London](#)).

Across time and cultures, the visual arts have served the fame of great nations. In the seventeenth century, it was Italy, Holland, France, and England (rather in that order) which effectively flaunted their commercial and political power through a calculated program of cultural display. This began with commissioned works by the best available masters in architecture, painting, and sculpture, as well as book arts, fabric and tapestry, and (yes) high fashion with its stylish *accoutrement*.

In the annals of art history, the seventeenth century is remarkable for the rise of the professional art connoisseur and his agent (see [Edward Chaney](#)). There have always been art collectors, of course, but the informed and discriminating art connoisseur, such as Thomas (Howard), Earl of Arundel, and his buying agent (his “man”), were something of a race apart. Theirs was a serious buying agenda, with enviable resources and access, and (above all else) deep knowledge of the international art markets. One of the busiest art agents of the seventeenth century was [Sir Balthazar Gerbier](#), successful buyer and art advisor to Charles I and principally to George (Villiers), first Duke of [Buckingham](#), the century’s most flamboyant collector. During his many art-buying sprees on the Continent, Buckingham was known to say to hosts and potential sellers, “Why, yes, all in this gallery is quite fine. We’ll buy the whole room” (Humfrey, Veronese lecture, Asolo Theatre, Sarasota, FL., December 2013; Image 4, below). Gerbier and

others of his talents assisted Stuart royals and nobles in defining the English nation; the art agent anchored and advanced the administrative program as much as any court politician. The agent was the critical pointperson in these transactions, serving as negotiator and commercial interface between buyer and seller. Like the deep-pocketed collector and connoisseur, the art agent was the builder of great collections: his taste and alertness to market changes contributed considerably to collection formation and value, and to the reputation of nations. And like the knowledgeable art connoisseur, the art agent was a relatively new and rising professional in seventeenth-century cultural history.

Art collectors and connoisseurs, especially in the first half of the seventeenth century, were mad for the Old Masters, especially the Baroque painters of Renaissance Venice: Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese, Bassano, and their lesser contemporaries. Collectors amassed lavish collections of the best paintings by the Italians, favoring the large canvases, such as Titian's *Ecce Homo* (1543), enviably owned by Buckingham, one of twenty Titians in his collection (Lockyer, *Buckingham* [1981], 409). Art galleries, family estates, and salons, especially in London and Paris, proudly displayed works by the Venetian masters. Occupying a special niche was Paolo Caliari, known as Veronese (b. Verona, 1528; d. Venice, 1588; [profile](#); also D. Gisolfi, "Veronese," *Grove Dictionary of Art*, 32: 346-358; [ills](#)). Veronese's scenic canvases of biblical, historical, and mythological subjects, and to a lesser extent, his refined portraits of highly-placed Venetian figures (Images 10 and 12, below), were unusual for their thrilling action and energy, spatial composition and imposing scale, color quality and combinations (*colorito*), depiction of fabrics and jewelry, and narrative interpretation—yes, all of that. As one of his contemporaries explained, Veronese was a great observer; he spent many hours in the large public spaces of his great international city where he saw all manner of tourists and visiting traders. The exotic details in most of his compositions derive from those hours. "This is not painting," wrote that contemporary, art historian Marco Boschini, "it is magic, which casts a spell on all who see it" (*La carta del navegar pitoresco*, 1660; *Veronese*, ed. V. Brilliant with F. Ilchman [2012], 66-68, *passim*).

And while Titian was the supreme master among Baroque painters of the Venetian High Renaissance, Veronese distinguished himself

among his rivals by introducing something quite new, even surprising, in his depictions of familiar genre scenes. Surveying his canvases with care (really “looking”), we see occasional touches of wit, irony, and humor. It was his *invenzione* (invention) that caught the eye of seventeenth-century viewers, whose literature, opera, and plays had sharpened their appetite for such things.

Reader, look! In his reflective presentation of the Holy Family (Image 9), Veronese adds a comic element at the top of the scene: a playful, acrobatic angel, swinging from a date palm tree. In his full-length portrait of a wealthy Venetian merchant, Veronese adds a small dog, gazing quizzically at his imperious master (Image 10). In Veronese’s festive *Marriage at Cana* (Image 16), a spectacular example of religious genre painting, the master adds to the large crowd of guests a (fictional) quartet of musicians. In the foreground, Veronese presents four master painters of his own circle, each with a musical instrument. The quartet includes Titian, Bassano, Tintoretto, and Veronese himself, clothed in white silk, on viola da gamba. As John Ruskin observed, Veronese jested gently (*The Stones of Venice*, 3 vols., 1851-1853). None of the master’s humor and ingenuity would have been lost on the seventeenth century whose aesthetic placed high value on invention in all of the arts. Though not incapable of *gravitas*, even willing to depict horrific action (the stabbing of St Lucy, Image 13), Paolo Veronese was a celebrant at life’s feast, the “happiest of painters” (Henry James, *Italian Hours* [1909]; see *Veronese*, ed V. Brilliant, with F. Ilchman [2012], 8).

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**BUT WHY** should seventeenth-century specialists in the present century care about a master painter of sixteenth-century Venice? The answer is simple: the seventeenth century cared (cared rather dearly) about this painter. Specialists examine the culture, morals, and politics of the period to better understand its place in history. Determining what the century prized, offers a reliable gauge on the character, values, and tastes of its leadership and citizens.

Beginning with the Royal Collection of Charles I, Veronese was prized by several of the century’s principal collectors and connoisseurs

(Images 17-20). The King's residences, galleries, and private rooms included some of the best art in the world at that time (Rubens, Van Dyck, etc.) and several Veroneses, such as his *Mars and Venus* (c1570s), brought to England from Spain in 1623, and now at the National Gallery of Scotland; and *The Finding Of Moses*, now at the Prado (note Veronese's humor, in the demeanor and gestures of the two principal women; likewise, the picture's implicit *sound*: one can almost hear a rapid exchange of words). Charles I's interface on most of these acquisitions was the art agent Gerbier, mentioned above. (F. Haskell, *The King's Pictures* [2013]; [book ad.](#))

George (Villiers), 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Buckingham, chief operative at the Court of Charles I and another grand collector of the age, outfitted his many residences, especially York House, with work by most of the Old Masters. The strengths of his collection included Titian (his *Ecce Homo*, as mentioned above), Rubens, and Veronese (some 16 pictures), including the master's *Esther and Ahasver* and *Leda and the Swan*. During the Stuart exile, Buckingham's collection was sold to raise money for munitions. In 1648, his Titian masterpiece was sold to Archduke Leopold of Prague for £5000, a great sum at the time; the same year, 16 large cases of Buckingham's art holdings were shipped to Antwerp. (Burghclere, *Villiers* [1903], 27; Lockyer, *Buckingham* [1981], 409ff; Betcherman, *Apollo* [Oct. 1970], 250-259, ills.)

Thomas (Howard), Earl of Arundel (Image 18), celebrated for refined tastes in art, sculpture, and book-collecting, was also a great admirer of Veronese, owning some 17 paintings. Arundel's wife, Alethea (Howard *née* Talbot), Countess of Arundel, shared his enthusiasm in the Italian masters, and the financing and maintenance of Arundel's collection was largely her doing. (Hervey, *The Life...Collections of Thomas Howard*, 256, 490, 560.)

A major art competitor of the Stuart grandees was Louis XIV and his nobles. Louis's collection included one of Veronese's great feast scenes, the *Feast In The House of Simon*, presented in 1664 to France's monarch by the Most Serene Republic of Venice in the spirit of international harmony (*cf.* Images 15, 16). Preserved in the great art collection at Versailles, the picture has received several restorations, dating from 1948 (see [Sylvie Beguin's recent book](#)). Louis's younger brother, Philippe I, Duc d'Orléans (Image 20), formed the famous

Orléans Collection (over 500 paintings). The core of the collection was acquired from Queen Christina of Sweden. Veronese and other Baroque masters were well represented; especially prized was Veronese's *Allegory of Wisdom and Strength* (c1580), commissioned by Rudolph II, Holy Roman Emperor (presently, Frick Collection, NY).

Later in the seventeenth century, art collecting in England centered principally around the Royal collection formed by Charles II, being mostly portraiture by Lely, Mignard, Huysmans, Wright, *et al.* (McLeod & Alexander, *Painted Ladies* [2001]). The jewel of Charles II's collection was a set of drawings by **Leonardo da Vinci**, preserved at Windsor Castle, acquired by purchase or as gifts (Millar, *The Queen's Pictures* [1977], p 69). Charles II's art collection did not continue the high standard and broad European range of his father's trove of rarities, most sold during the English Troubles of the 1640s.

Grand collections were essential in early modernity as a visible assertion of personal and national prestige. While luxury was damned from the pulpit and in the period's religious manuals, conspicuous consumption had become something of a new social standard, even a value for those who could afford it. Ownership of fine things was ennobling and empowering; it defined the owner as an informed citizen of the world, a refined individual of cultivated tastes. It also connected certain strata of collectors with the best of Renaissance Humanism and the Classical past.

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**PAOLO VERONESE** has enjoyed his own renaissance. In 1988, the National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, put up a comprehensive [exhibition on the master](#). In 2009, the Boston Museum of Fine Art installed a uniquely conceived exhibition on [Veronese's rivals](#) in sixteenth-century Venice ([brief video](#) by Frederick Ilchman, essential viewing). Building on the recent momentum, The Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida, launched in December, 2012 an exquisitely installed exhibition of the master's work, the first comprehensive American show on Veronese since 1988 (Ringling's [webpage](#)).

Ringling's *Veronese* was organized by the show's lead curator Virginia Brilliant (Curator, European Art; Image 2), with curatorial part-

ner Frederick Ilchman (Baker Curator of Paintings, Boston Museum of Fine Arts; Image 3). Dr. Brilliant distinguished herself in 2012 as curator of the impressive [Rubens show at The Ringling](#), also reviewed [by the present writer](#). Over three years in preparation, The Ringling Museum's *Veronese* includes several Veronese items from the Museum's own collection of Baroque painting and early-modern printed books (Images 1, 7-11), formed by the Museum's founder, businessman and collector [John Ringling](#) of Baraboo, Wisconsin. Loan items contributed to the show came from thirty-two North American institutions, in Austin, Boston, Cambridge (Massachusetts), Cleveland, Denver, Detroit, Hartford (Connecticut), Houston, Kansas City (Missouri), Malibu, NYC, North Carolina, Princeton, San Diego, Seattle, Ottawa (Ontario, Canada), etc. ("Lenders to the Exhibition," *Veronese*, ed. V. Brilliant with F. Ilchman [Scala, 2012], 13; see, below, Images 12-14, loan items.)

The Ringling Museum in beautiful Sarasota, Florida, with its old-world Italian ambience and neighboring communities in Lido, Naples, and Venice, Florida, was the ideal venue for an American show on a Venetian painter. The rather vast Ringling Museum campus includes [Ca' d'Zan](#), John Ringling's residence (a Venetian-style palazzo overlooking Sarasota Bay), now open to the public; and Ringling's eighteenth-century [Asolo Theatre](#), shipped to Sarasota in 1951 from Asolo, Venice, a project coordinated by Ringling's first director, A. Everett ('Chick') [Austin, Jr.](#), former Director, Wadsworth Athenaeum, Hartford, CT. Even more apropos, the Museum's founder had special interests in Renaissance art, and Mr Ringling's first Old Master acquisition (c1925) was Veronese's *Rest On the Flight to Egypt* (Image 9). In addition to other rarities in Mr. Ringling's collection of paintings, rare books, and prints, his early acquisitions included Veronese's full-length oil of Francesco Franceschini (Image 10).

Thematically organized, the show presents the achievement of Veronese over five beautifully assembled galleries (installation views: Images 5-7). The range of the master's achievement is presented in several mediums: oil paintings, drawings and sketches, prints, books, as well as actual luxury products from Veronese's own city, such as specimens of Venetian fabric and textiles often depicted in the master's paintings. The exhibition comprises 32 oils, 20 drawings, and 15

prints, as well as autograph letters. In the show's [collection of essays](#) (in lieu of an exhibition catalogue), the large Veronese workshop of family members, hired painters, local apprentices, studio assistants, and tradesmen, is given worthy attention as a sort of bustling family firm and structured corporation of artisans (see essays by Gisolfi and Gritt). Veronese's workshop also reflected the painter's business acumen, as Frederick Ilchman has emphasized, reminding us that the early artists were their own managers and bookkeepers. If the sons of Paolo Veronese (Carlo and Gabriele) completed an unfinished painting begun by their father, the picture would carry the shop signature: "*haeredes Paoli*" ("inheritors of Paolo"). (Note the inferior drawing and masculine arms in the [Penitent Magdalene](#).)

"This exhibition," explained the show's curator Virginia Brilliant, "sheds light on Veronese as a masterful, deeply empathetic storyteller and narrative painter whose works were often iconographically complex and invested with rich layers of meaning. . . . Yet Veronese is often dismissed [by, e.g., Sir Joshua Reynolds, though himself a collector of Veronese] as a merely decorative painter, more elegant and 'happier' than Titian or Tintoretto. This exhibition hopes to shift that perception" (opening remarks, preview, December 2012).

So let us take a look:

**A Gallery of Selected Images** now follows, with original captions and caption notes written by the present writer. This assemblage presents images of Veronese; the exhibition's curatorial team and guest speaker; photographs of the show's installation; Veronese's work in various mediums and formats; and images relating to the currency of Veronese in the seventeenth-century book market, print market, and art markets in London and Paris.

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## A GALLERY OF IMAGES

VERONESE SHOW (2012-2013)  
THE JOHN AND MABLE RINGLING MUSEUM  
SARASOTA, FLORIDA



Image 1. Paolo Caliari Veronese (1528-1588) by Carlo Ridolfi

Seventeenth-century art historians and book publishers, as well as art collectors and printmakers, were dazzled by Veronese. Above, a copper engraving of the master from *Delle maraviglie dell' arte* [*The Marvels of Art*], 2 vols (Venezia, 1648) by art historiographer and painter Carlo Ridolfi (1584-1658). The Ringling Museum's copy of Ridolfi's book (Image 8, below) was included in the Museum's 2012-2013 [Veronese show](#). A [self-portrait](#) of a young and handsome Veronese is preserved at The Hermitage, St Petersburg, its Veronese Room (eight works; [image here](#)).

Image, Ringling's copy of the *Ridolfi*, The John Ringling Room,  
Ringling Art Library, Sarasota, Florida

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**Image 2. Virginia Brilliant, Curator of the *Veronese* Exhibition**

Ringling Museum, Sarasota, Florida, 2012-2013.

The show's companion volume, *Veronese*, is edited by V. Brilliant, with Frederick Ilchman (Scala, 2012); 17 essays, detailed Checklist of Exhibition, 288 pp, color plates

**Image 3 (above, left). Frederick Ilchman, Baker Curator of Paintings**

Museum of Fine Arts, Boston

Consulting curatorial partner of V. Brilliant, *Veronese* show, Ringling, 2012-2013  
*Veronese*, ed Brilliant, with F. Ilchman (Scala, 2012)

**Image 4 (above, right). Peter B. Humfrey, Art History, St Andrews University**

Guest Speaker, 'Grand Collectors...', Asolo Theatre, 8 Dec. 2012, Sarasota, Florida  
 See Humfrey, *Painting in Renaissance Venice* (1995); his review of Ringling's *Veronese*,  
*Burlington Magazine* (March 2013), pp 204-06, 3 images



**Image 5. Installation Photograph, Entering Gallery 1**  
The Venetian Staging of The Ringling Museum's *Veronese* Show

The curators and their installation team masterfully installed the show with the 'look' and ambience of sixteenth-century Venetian opulence. Complementing the exhibits was the show's period architecture (columns, archways, statuary, exhibit pedestals), as well as samples of period fabrics, prepared scrim, and beautifully scripted wall graphics. Like seventeenth-century collectors and connoisseurs of Veronese, visitors to Sarasota's recent show were captured by the magic of Renaissance Venice.

Image, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida  
Photographer, Giovanni [Lunardi](#), Sarasota, Florida

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**Image 6. Installation Photograph, Gallery 5**  
The Ringling Museum's *Veronese* Show

This gallery offers a selection of Veronese's tastes in religious and biblical subjects. Of special interest is the master's large canvas *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* (back wall, far right); see Image 9, below. This photograph shows the installation's use of space, lighting, variety of exhibit formats, and a courteous concern for visitors' comfort and viewing.

Image, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida  
Photographer, Giovanni [Lunardi](#), Sarasota, Florida

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**Image 7. Installation Photograph, Case Display**

The Currency of Veronese in the Seventeenth-Century Book Market

This case display (5 items), set on a decorative Venetian table, illustrates interest in Veronese among seventeenth-century book publishers. The centerpiece is volume two of Carlo Ridolfi's foundational source on Venetian painters, *Delle maraviglie dell'arte* (Venice, 1648; see also Images 1 and 8). Of equal importance is Valentin Lefevre's *Opera Selectoria* (Venice: Jan Van Campen, 1682), a published volume of 53 prints by Lefevre; 30 inspired by Titian, 23 by Veronese; see Image 14, below. For English-language publications on Veronese, Venetian culture, and literary writings inspired by a general vogue in Venetian culture, see *Early English Books Online* and the online *English Short-Title Catalogue*.

Exhibits, Image 7, The Ringling Art Library, Sarasota, Florida  
Photographer, Giovanni [Lunardi](#), Sarasota, Florida

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**Image 8. Title-page, Carlo Ridolfi, *Delle maraviglie dell'arte*.  
2 vols. Venice, 1648**

The Currency of Veronese in the Seventeenth-Century Book Market

A valued early source on Venetian painters, Ridolfi's *Marvels of Art* presents biographies of the principal artists at work in Venice down to the 1640s. Most of the engraved portraits of the artists are by Girolamo Piccini, after Ridolfi. Ridolfi's biography of Veronese (1646) appears in this important 1648 collection, with a rare early listing of the master's work. (See Google Books for the Ridolfi.) This two-volume collection of biographies replies to Vasari's *Vite* (1550, 1568), strongly biased against Venetian artists. Of equal importance is Valentin Lefevre's *Opera Selectoria* (Venice: Jan Van Campen, 1682), a published collection of 53 prints by Lefevre; 30 inspired by Titian, 23 by Veronese. See Image 14, below.

Image, The Ringling Art Library, The John Ringling Room  
The John and Mable Ringling Museum, Sarasota, Florida. With kind permission  
Special thanks to Megan Oliver, Ringling Art Library  
And for technical assistance, Bruce Johnson, [Veery Books](#), New York



**Image 9. Veronese, *The Rest on the Flight into Egypt* (c1572)**

Oil on Canvas, 236.2 x 161.3 cm

Collection of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida

A jewel in the crown of The Ringling Collection, Veronese's painting of the Holy Family is one of only two complete Veronese altarpieces in North America, and it was the first Old Master painting acquired in 1925 by collector John Ringling, founder of The Ringling Museum. A familiar genre scene (Matthew 2:14; cf *Bartolommeo, Rest*, c1509, Getty Center), Veronese invigorates the narrative with movement, symbolism, and emotional content, from familial harmony and repose to foreboding (the landscape and sky). The loving care of Joseph, active supplier of nourishment, while Mary herself breast-feeds the infant Jesus, engages the eye; and the amusing detail (top of painting) of an acrobatic angel, gathering fruit from a date palm, depicts the painter's skill in theatrical effects, as well as his humor and invention. This is a dense composition of several figures (the Holy Family, two angels and putti, a donkey, a cow), and the lush tropical setting and activity underscore the picture's theme of continuing life. See V. Brilliant, "The Rest on the Flight into Egypt," *Veronese*, ed V. Brilliant, with F. Ilchman (Scala, 2012), 166-173, 6 images.

Image, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida

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**Image 10. Veronese, *Portrait of Francesco Franceschini* (1551)**

Canvas, 189.5 by 134.9 cm

Collection of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida

Painted by Veronese at age 23, the signed and dated *Franceschini* is the master's earliest surviving full-length portrait. The subject is a 28-year-old nobleman from a family of silk traders. The composition is an amusing, if ironic, contrast in scale: the grand columns and imposing physical presence of the subject are juxtaposed with the banality of a small dog which gazes at the subject with some perplexity (and an upturned nose). Veronese's humor was not lost on his contemporaries, not least his delight in small dogs on stately canvases. As art critic John Ruskin observed, the master "jested gracefully and tenderly" (*The Stones of Venice*, 1851-1853). See J. Garton, "The Portraiture of Veronese," *Veronese*, ed V. Brilliant, with F. Ilchman (Scala, 2012), 120-133, 14 images. Provenance: Holford-Ringling.

Image, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida

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**Image 11. Veronese, *Sheet of Studies for The Consecration of David, and for Figures and Architecture at Villa Barbaro, Maser* (c1558-62)**

Pen and brown ink and wash on paper, 21.4 x 31.1 cm

Collection of The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida

As all preparatory sketches, this sheet of studies for work in a patron's opulent villa-palazzo, valuably demonstrates Veronese's talent as a skilled draughtsman, his compositional technique and his working methods. As art historians have observed, the preliminaries of Veronese were drawn with impressive rapidity and economy of means. See J. Marciari, "The Drawings of Veronese" and Inge Reist, "The Classical Tradition: Mythology and Allegory," in *Veronese*, ed V. Brilliant, with F. Ilchman (Scala, 2012). See also G. Gallucci, "An Important New Sheet of Studies," *Master Drawings* 48, 3 (2010), 327-40, ill.

Other sketches by Veronese: *Allegories of Love*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. *Studies for the Martyrdom of St George*, Getty Museum, Malibu, California.

Image, The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida

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**Image 12. Veronese, *Portrait of a Man* (c1576-1578)**  
Oil on Canvas. 75 5/8 in. x 52 3/4 in. Gift of J. Paul Getty  
Lender, Getty Museum, Malibu, California

The identity of this stylish nobleman has baffled historians for centuries. Might this be Veronese himself (a self-portrait)? As Veronese favored biblical and mythological subjects, and painted few portraits, this large canvas, if not a self-portrait, must have been an important (and lucrative) business transaction. The portrait's setting suggests that the subject was a prominent figure, possibly associated with architecture or sculpture. See J. Garton, "The Portraiture of Veronese," *Veronese*, ed V. Brilliant, with F. Ilchman (Scala, 2012), 120-133, 14 images.

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**Image 13. Veronese, *Martyrdom and Last Communion of Saint Lucy* (c1585)**

Oil on canvas, 140 x 173 cm

Lender, The National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC

The Veronese *St Lucy* is one of the master's most compelling, theatrical works. His depiction of the martyrdom of this virgin martyr of Sicily balances sacred and profane: eternal life (the sacrament of the Eucharist) and violent murder. These themes are joined visually by the assassin's dagger and the Communion wafer entering Lucy's body at (nearly) the same time. Veronese also invests this horrific scene with the composure of the victim whose (blinded) eyes are directed at her 'last Communion'. The startling action of the scene is matched only by its colors and the master's dexterity with fabric and drapery (Lucy's extraordinary skirt: its color, volume, folds). St Lucy, whose grisly tortures included blinding, is the patron saint of eyes; feast day, December 13<sup>th</sup>. See M. H. Loh, "Veronese's Story of The Eye"; V. Brilliant, "The Bible and the Lives of the Saints"; and R. Duits, "'*Abiti gravi, abiti stravaganti*': Veronese's Creative Approach to Drapery," in *Veronese*, ed V. Brilliant, with F. Ilchman (Scala, 2012).



**Image 14. Currency of Veronese among Seventeenth-Century Printmakers**

Print (etching), *The Triumph of Venus*, Plate 1 of 2, by Valentin Lefevre  
(Flemish, 1637-1677)

Lefevre, *Opera selectoria* (Venice: Jan Van Campen, 1682)

Lender: Watkinson Library, Trinity College, Hartford, CT

Lefevre's etching, above, was inspired by Veronese's painting of the subject in the Sala del Maggior Consiglio, Palazzo Ducale, Venice. Note the amusing detail of the two tumbling angels, top of composition. The print was published in Lefevre's important collection, the *Opera selectoria* (Venice: Jan Van Campen, 1682; 53 plates), included in the Ringling show. This Lefevre print was struck from two plates. Plate 1, above, upper half of etching, 39 x 50.4 cm. Total image: 77 x 50.4 cm. See J. Bober, "Veronese and the Reproductive Print," *Veronese*, ed V. Brilliant, with F. Ilchman (Scala, 2012), 208-221, 17 images.

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**Image 15. Veronese. *The Last Supper. Renamed, Feast in the House of Levi* (1573)**

Oil on Canvas. 555 x 1280 cm (18 x 42 feet). Galleria dell'Accademia, Venice.

[Not included in the Ringling *Veronese* show, 2012-2013]

But not everyone loved Veronese. The Inquisition judged the master's rendering of the Last Supper heretical in its theatrical mix of sacred and profane. Veronese defended his inclusion of "drunken buffoons, armed Germans, dwarfs, and similar scurrilities" as appropriate, naturalistic details; he also claimed creative freedom for "the poet and the madman." While not altering his *Last Supper*, Veronese renamed it *The Feast in the House of Levi*. One of the largest canvases of the sixteenth century, the painting is a masterpiece of composition; and its robust activity in the engagement of its many figures (observe the busy talking and gesturing) lends a distinct aural quality to the scene: one almost *hears* the sounds of this feast. The picture is also remarkable as an early (recorded) instance of institutional censorship in the visual arts. For the trial transcript, see [P. Fehl](#), *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 6<sup>th</sup> series, 58 (1961), 325-354.

Owing to its extraordinary size, this picture could not be shipped as a loan item from Venice, Italy, to Sarasota, Florida, but the curators thoughtfully included in the show a surrogate, being a large photograph of the painting by Thomas Struth in its Venetian setting at the Galleria dell'Accademia, visited by the present writer in the early 1990s for the *Tintoretto* show.

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**Image 16. Veronese, *The Wedding Feast at Cana in Galilee* (1562-1563).  
Detail**

Oil on canvas. Height, 6.77m.; Width, 9.94m

At The Louvre, Paris, dating from 1798. Inventory #42.

[Not included in the Ringling “Veronese” show, 2012-2013]

Veronese’s *Cana*, the most accomplished and theatrical “feast picture” of the Italian High Renaissance, is the master’s signature work, displaying his many gifts. Like his *Levi* (Image 15), the *Cana* is a vast irreplaceable canvas, not an item to be loaned and shipped from Europe to the States. The *Cana* was commissioned for the Palladian refectory of the Benedictine monastery at San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice. Another of the master’s great canvases, the *Cana* combines a biblical genre scene (Christ’s first public miracle) with a sumptuous Venetian-style wedding feast. Gesturing to the Divine plenitude of the creation, the picture is remarkable for its density of composition (Vasari saw over 100 figures). It also impresses with its great sweep of movement and activity. Its variety of costume and color is typical of the painter’s most ambitious scenes. Especially delightful is Veronese’s humor and invention in the addition of an original quartet of musicians (strings & winds), in the foreground, just below the central figures of a haloed Christ and his mother. The master’s four players are thought to be Veronese himself (in white, left of center) on viola da gamba, and three of his Venetian contemporaries in art: Titian on bass viol; Tintoretto on violin; and Bassano on flute. (This is why we love Veronese!) As in the master’s *Levi* (Image 15), the *Cana* can almost be *heard*. The bride and groom, all but lost in the scene, are seated at the left end of the table. In 1797, Napoleon’s troops confiscated the painting, rolled it up, and shipped it to Paris. Its recent restoration dates from 1989 to 1992.



## **Some of the Grand Collectors of Veronese, Seventeenth-Century London and Paris**

The Royal Collection of Charles I of England

The Arundel House Collection, formed by Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel

The York House Collection, formed by George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham

The Orléans Collection, formed by Philippe, Duke of Orléans

(most of the early grand collections were dispersed: changing times, changing tastes)



**Image 17. Charles I by Van Dyck**



**Image 18. Lord Arundel by Mytens**



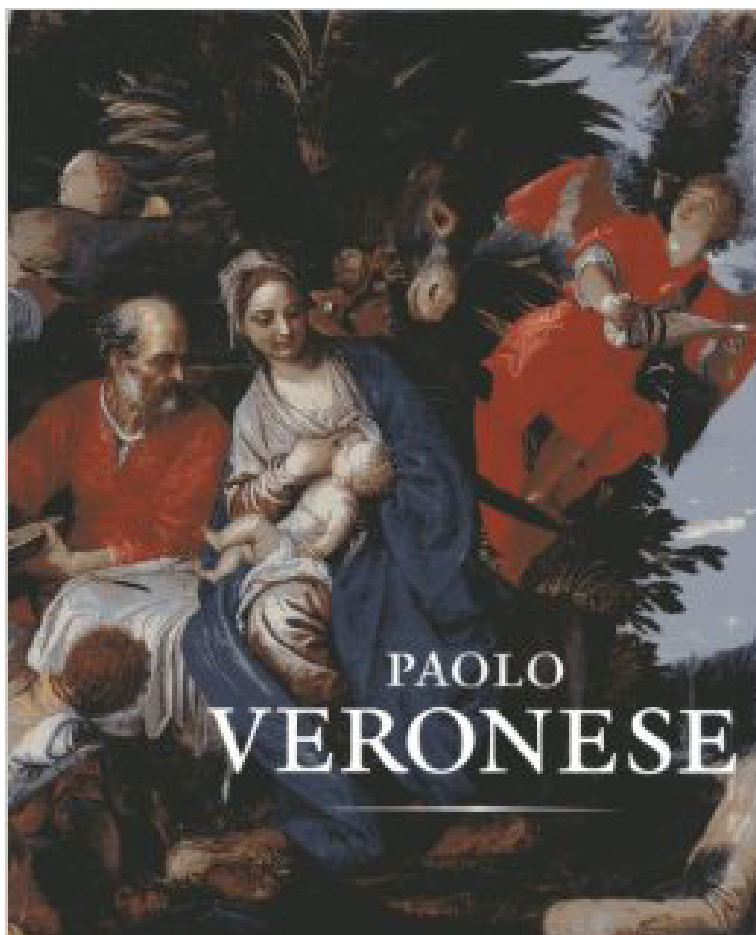
**Image 19. Duke of Buckingham  
by Rubens**



**Image 20. Duke of Orléans  
by Mignard**

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**Image 21. Companion volume, in lieu of exhibition catalogue: *Paolo Veronese*,** ed. Virginia Brilliant, with Frederick Ilchman. Scala, 2012. Cloth. 288 pp. Ills. Index. Jacket. 17 essays. Checklist of the Exhibition, 262-270. Chronology of the life and career of Veronese, compiled by John Garton, 271-272. Dimensions: 11.4 x 10.4 x 1.2” [Book ad.](#)

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This essay is dedicated to the memory of

Peter Tasch (1934-2010),  
co-founder and co-editor, *The Scriblerian and the Kit-Cats*

and

John T. Shawcross (1924-2011),  
distinguished scholar of seventeenth-century English literature

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