

Triumph and Tradition in Veronese's Venice:  
Political Propaganda in the Doge's Palace

by  
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## Acknowledgements

From the very start I knew that art was important. My parents, who were very lucky little girl I was to be strolling through the Orsay and Louvre on my first trip to Paris. I continue to be grateful for the experience. I was fortunate, I realize now, for many reasons than traveling abroad so young. As I stood eyelevel with the placards describing the works, I began playing games with my mother to remember who created what work during what period, fascinated with the different styles and images created by the masters. A privileged little girl to be in such fine museums at such a young age, I was luckier still to have parents who enjoyed art with such an interest that it spilled over to their daughter. Their love, interest, and support for me not only helped cultivate my academic passion, but enabled me to study at a university that I love. There are not words to express my gratitude.

At Washington and Lee, art became more than the stuff of family vacations. When my final project in Art 102 freshman year was handed back, the note under the grade said "Maybe you should think about becoming a major." I had an epiphany: why not study what I enjoy? I continued learning and growing under the guidance and support of an outstanding art faculty. I would like especially to thank my advisor, Dean George Bent, for his countless hours spent discussing my research problems, reviewing drafts, and cultivating my interest in Italian Renaissance art. Without the help of his amazing gift for teaching and mentoring, I would not have been able to accomplish this project.

Significantly, Dean Bent's advice also enabled me to receive a research fellowship under a grant generously provided by Global Stewardship under the direction of Professor Jeff

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Barnett. This financial support sent me to Venice for a week in December 2003, where I spent days traversing the Doge's Palace, noting and sketching its art. My mother traveled with me and was an invaluable help in this work. I will never forget the time we spent studying, touring, and getting lost along the streets of Venice. The research we compiled over this week was priceless to the development of my thesis. Because color plates of all the palace art are not available, photographs are not permitted, and there is no published documentation of every work in every room, this trip was crucial to my research. Seeing the works and how they fit together in the scheme of the palace allowed me to complete primary research that would otherwise have been impossible.

Washington and Lee is one of a kind in its interest and support of the particular academic pursuits of its students. The university and its faculty not only enabled my research abroad, but also cultivated in me academic abilities and goals I never dreamed I could possess and achieve.

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*For My Parents*



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### Reference: Painting Locations, Maps, and Notes

<sup>1</sup> Fulvio Roiter, *Il Palazzo Ducale*, Testi di Umberto Franzoi (Pozzallo, Venezia, 1983), 198.

<sup>2</sup> John Julius Norwich, *A History of Venice* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982), *Palazzo Ducale*, 495.

<sup>3</sup> Roiter, 52.

<sup>4</sup> *Le Palais des Doges De Venise* (European Union: Studi editores Venetia, 1983), 19. The palace was first built as a fortress in the ninth century.

<sup>5</sup> Roiter, 52. The palace was last structurally renovated in the fifteenth century, beginning in 1578.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

Flames licked the midnight sky as the Doge's Palace burned. Radiating embers crackled in the air above the salty lagoon as gondolas bucked up and down in the choppy waves, black with shadow, then orange with glinting reflections of flames high above. The heat mounted, exploding marble chunks of ancient window mullions onto the stone walks below (Fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> December 20, 1577, marked the end of centuries-old memories brushed onto the walls of the great Council Hall and Sala dello Scrutinio in the heart of Venice's cherished seat of republican government.<sup>2</sup> The celebrated fresco of the Virgin Mary (Fig. 2), painted by Guariento in 1365, was the last work destroyed as the flames burned themselves out.<sup>3</sup> When inspectors arrived to survey the damage they found a sooty corpse of what had stood before: a roof caved in completely, charred walls open to the sky, and a community now talking of demolishing the fourteenth-century<sup>4</sup> space for a new design.<sup>5</sup> But a faction of noblemen in favor of political revitalization of the state, as well as renewal of the historic palace, won the vote for restoration.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Fulvio Roiter, *Il Palazzo Ducale*, Testi di Umberto Franzoi (Panzano, Treviso: Vianello, 1997), 52.

<sup>2</sup> John Julius Norwich, *A History of Venice* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1982; Vintage Books/Random House, 1989), 495.

<sup>3</sup> Roiter, 52.

<sup>4</sup> *Le Palais des Doges De Venise* (European Union: Storti edizioni-Venezia, 1995-96), 11. The palace was first built as a fortress in the ninth century.

<sup>5</sup> Roiter, 52. The palace was last structurally renovated in the fourteenth century before the restoration beginning in 1578.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

Girolamo Bardi took on the job of planning the decorative scheme for the “Maggior Consiglio,” or great Council Hall.<sup>7</sup> As he inspected the remains of the council room, Bardi noticed that oil paintings from the fifteenth century had burned away, revealing centuries-old frescoes underneath. The general compositions of the frescoes and canvases were strikingly similar.<sup>8</sup> In keeping with the Venetian artistic tradition, ‘restoration’ had often meant the recreation of a painting; artists and thematic advisors paid close attention to the subject of the painting to be replaced when creating restorative plans.<sup>9</sup> In this way subjects from Venetian history and myth would continue on in new designs. But because the ceiling of the Maggior Consiglio was previously undecorated, advisors and artists had new freedom in painting the vast fifty-three by twenty-four meter space.<sup>10</sup>

Girolamo Bardi, along with a committee of advisors, commissioned Paolo Veronese to complete an expansive *Triumph of Venice* (Fig. 3) on this virgin space.<sup>11</sup> The oval canvas, some 9 meters high by 5.8 meters wide, lies within a heavy gilded wood frame on the ceiling of the great Council Hall of the Doge's Palace.<sup>12</sup> A viewer standing directly before the doge and the highest-ranking members of the council, who sat in gilded wooden chairs at one end of the great room, could have looked up to find the painting looming directly overhead. Oriented toward the audience facing the seat of the

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<sup>7</sup> Patricia Fortini Brown, *Venetian Narrative Painting in the Age of Carpaccio* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1988), 84. The canvas works were ordered in 1474 as part of a palace refurbishment plan.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 84.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 85. Words such as *reconzare*, *insaurare*, *reparare*, and *renovare* all imply complete replacement of an older work in favor of a completely new piece of art.

<sup>10</sup> Roiter, 53.

<sup>11</sup> Robert Engass, “Visual Counterpoint in Venetian Settecento Painting,” *Art Bulletin* 64 (March 1982), 97.

<sup>12</sup> Patricia Fortini Brown, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice, Perspectives* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997) 64.



doge, viewers saw from below all of the painting's figures, many of which were hidden from view or foreshortened to enhance the *dal soto in su* perspective.

The image consists of four interconnected levels of action, of which the third from the bottom immediately draws the eye. The image of Venetia floating atop a cloudbank consumes this area of the painting. The imposing woman wears an ermine wrap over a white and gold brocaded silk gown. A gold and brown brocaded robe flows across her lap. Over her shoulders bunches a golden cape through which descend her arms.

Sunlight glints on the many silks she wears and catches on her pearl necklace. Pearl drop earrings peek out between golden tendrils framing her face. Her left hand holds a thin scepter topped by a small golden ball. Serene but commanding, her face flushes pink and her red lips close firmly. The porcelain skin puffing from under her chin and her cheeks gives her a well-fed, healthy appearance.

Venetia's downward gaze ignores the action above her head, where two tumbling winged figures descend to coronate her with a gold and jeweled crown. The image captures the moment of anticipation just before the crown reaches Venetia's head. The dark pink silk robe of the winged figure holding the crown catches the sunlight, glinting bright white as the garment swirls near his feet. These highlights are offset by the dark blue wings of the figure, which lie in the shadow of his lower body. Another winged man twists in the opposite direction of the first winged figure, his head near the center of the composition and his body extending on a diagonal towards the left. In his outstretched left hand he holds a trumpet that reaches just past his dark gold and black-spotted wing. The flowing, wrapping clothes of the winged figures contribute a sense of motion to the uppermost reaches of the composition.

Below the winged figures, and at the feet of Venetia, rest six figures seated on the clouds. Atop these clouds, on the left side of the composition, sits a male figure wearing golden armor and golden sandals with ornate plates covering his lower leg. A sumptuous red cape drapes across his body, as he turns to look at the coronation. In his right hand, which stretches to the far left side of the composition, he holds a large laurel branch, echoed in the crown of laurel leaves around his head. The two female figures who sit just below this man rest in the shadow of Venetia. One woman is almost completely obscured by the figure in front of her. The draping neck of her maroon silk gown peeks out from behind the heavily jeweled woman in blue sitting on Venice's right side. This woman holds a staff topped with a caduceus in her right hand, and with her left she proffers a gold crown to Venice. A nude woman lounges on the clouds in front of Venetia's feet. She turns to look at Venetia, exposing her bare back and arm. Her fingertips on her obscured right hand rest on her exposed left breast. A deep red cloth wraps around her legs and up her lower back to drape across her right shoulder. Just behind her back, a sheaf of wheat sits on the clouds, held between another woman's naked left hip and arm. She turns her back to the viewer to look at Venice. More wheat sticks out of her blonde braided hair. The final figure, on the right hand of the composition, is a woman dressed in brown with red bands of cloth draping across her torso. Her right hand rests atop a vermillion pole with a doge's *cornio* crown on top.

The figures on the clouds, Venetia, and the winged figures above her float in front of a large stone archway and balustrade. Two twisting columns hold up this heavily carved archway. Figural sculptures rest on the capitals of the columns. The one on the left is cut off by the edge of the canvas and the one on the right resembles stone or bronze

and depicts a heavy male nude holding a sword by his side. Below these capitals, the columns divide into alternating segments of twisting vertical stripes and stylized grapevines. Swags of fruit carved onto the extending structure emerge from behind the columns on the far sides of the canvas. Below these garlands, sculptures of women hide in the darkness of deep alcoves. The columns' bases are behind a balustrade lined with people. Figures dressed in colorful finery line the rail, as young men climb about the bases of the columns and children sit on the railing.

A large gold crest, depicting a golden bridge on a light blue background marks the middle of the banister. Below this, more molding extends to a sculpture. Mounted low on the structure, at the level of the people at the bottom of the painting is a golden winged lion with the face of an elderly man. On either side of the lion, rearing horses conceal the remainder of the architecture. Throngs of people, clothed in simpler garb than those under the archway, watch three military men on horseback. The soldiers are clad in velvet suits, the man on the left in black, with a gold cross sewn on his front, and a man on the right in deep red with gold stitching, and a sword hanging from his left side. The third horseman emerges only partially from behind the horseman on the right. The horses match their riders' apparel in the colors of their ornate saddlery.

At the bottom of the scene, soldiers on foot walk beside the horses, holding large spears extending from axes. People line both sides of the military group. Those closest to the viewer sit on the ground with piles of armor. One shirtless man sits clutching an alert white dog with his right hand at the bottom center of the work. The dog's feet and the lower part of the man's body pass the edge of the frame out of the viewer's sight.

Taken as a whole, this image imposes upon the viewer an opulent and charming scene of delight in the state.

This idea of Venetia overseeing a content and joyous public reflected the city's historic pride as an example of a just republic.<sup>13</sup> Petrarch praised Venice in his *Epistolae Seniles*:<sup>14</sup>

Most august city of Venice, today the only abode of liberty, peace, and justice, the one refuge of the good and haven for those who, battered on all sides by the storms of tyranny and war seek to live in tranquility: city rich in gold but richer in fame, mighty in resources but mightier in virtue, built on solid marble but based on the more solid foundations of civic concord, surrounded by salty waters but more secure through her saltier councils.<sup>15</sup>

Petrarch's comments reflect Venice's founding principles of justice and fairness which enabled the stability of the city-state. Venice's legislative councils took their role as protectors of the *Serenissima* seriously, leading to fierce debate and ultimately a strong, secure republic. Indeed Venice earned the title "most serene republic" from her reputation for justice, fairness, safety, and prosperity.

The art surrounding the Doge's Palace mirrors the ideas of justice upheld inside its walls. Filippo Calendario's stone relief (Fig. 4) dating before 1355 portrays Venetia holding scales and a sword atop a kingly throne.<sup>16</sup> Similar images, including Bartolomeo Bon's Justice carving (Fig. 5), serve to reinforce the identity of the city and doge with King Solomon and his ancient palace of justice.<sup>17</sup> But importantly, as opposed to the

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<sup>13</sup> David Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice: Titian, Tintoretto, and Veronese*, revised edition (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 1.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 1. Rosand takes this selection from chapter IV.3 of the *Epistolae Seniles*.

<sup>15</sup> Francesco Petrarca, *Letters of Old Age; Rerum Senilium Libri*, Translated by Aldo S. Bernardo, Saul Levin, Reta A. Bernardo (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 132-136. Petrarch wrote this letter from Venice to Professor Pietro Bolognese da Muglio on August 10, 1364.

<sup>16</sup> Rona Goffen, *Piety and Patronage in Renaissance Venice: Bellini, Titian, and the Franciscans* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1986), 144.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Finlay, *Politics in Renaissance Venice* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 1980), 28. For detailed discussion of this matter see page 56 below.

Sieneese image of justice serving government, in Venice justice and the government were one.<sup>18</sup> Through the centuries, the association between Venice and Solomonic justice evolved into the mythic story of the Serenissima as a holy and flawless miracle of government.<sup>19</sup>

Not only the embodiment of justice, Venice was also closely associated with the Virgin Mary. This idea springs from the historic founding of the city on March twenty-fifth, the feast of the Annunciation. The creation of Adam and Eve and the crucifixion of Christ were also believed by Venetians to have taken place on this day of the year.<sup>20</sup> In the same way that Christ's conception cleared the world of original sin, God chose to save men through Christian government by founding a savior of politics on that holy date.<sup>21</sup> Thus for Venetians, images of the Annunciation were synonymous with the founding of the republic.<sup>22</sup> In 1585, in a speech before Doge Pasquale Cicogna, Luigu Petrico da Zara said, "Venice is like the Immaculate Virgin, like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army with banners."<sup>23</sup> A sixteenth-century poem reflects this idea once again, "'gia mill' anni intatta pura."<sup>24</sup> Throughout the history of the Republic this metaphor remained close to the hearts of Venetians.

The ideas of Venice as the embodiment of justice with the purity of the Virgin joined in a synergy of Christian liberty. Seen as a new Rome, Venice claimed a purer link to Christianity because of her founding on Annunciation day; Venetians saw their

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<sup>18</sup> David Rosand, *Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State*, Bettie Allison Rand Lectures in Art History (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 26.

<sup>19</sup> Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, 1.

<sup>20</sup> Goffen, 150-151.

<sup>21</sup> Rosand, *Myths of Venice*, 13.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>23</sup> Goffen 154.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 149. Translated, "Venice is the Virgin."

city as a better Constantinople by way of its power and wealth.<sup>25</sup> These perceptions of Venice came together into the idea of Venice as a new city of God: a new Jerusalem.<sup>26</sup> The *Triumph of Venice* reflects this idea, as once again the twisting columns of the Palace of Solomon support Venetia's triumphal arch.<sup>27</sup> More than echoing Venetian pride, this well-known reference to Solomon, echoed the momentum of a traditionalist political movement, as will be discussed in following chapters. By aligning itself with such a prestigious and vital force in Christianity, Venice aspired to lofty goals.

An example of this devotion to the state appears in the rules of Venetian confraternities, or *scuole*. These organizations, made up of people from similar neighborhoods or trades, produced rule books that included provisions that any harm to Venice by one of its members would lead to his permanent expulsion from the group.<sup>28</sup> Even charitable efforts of the *scuole* were enacted in the name of the group to avoid incurring criticism of the individual as self-important and conceited.<sup>29</sup> Such a group mentality contributed to the ancient myth of Venice, at its height in the sixteenth century due to the stability and power of the government.<sup>30</sup> In all facets of life, Venetians revered the state and respected the idea of the good of the whole superceding individual glory.

This decidedly Venetian mindset emerged in the art of the Serenissima. The replacement and creation of images adorning the walls of the Doge's Palace, the heart of this beloved government, was not taken lightly. Neither was the style of the works, created by Venice's premier artists. In 1557 Lodovico Dolce wrote about the virtue of

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<sup>25</sup> Rosand, *Myths of Venice*, 13.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>27</sup> The ideas expressed by Veronese's columns relate to the twisted columns of old St. Peter's in Rome as well as Bernini's newer Baldachino.

<sup>28</sup> Brown, *Venetian Narrative*, 18-19.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>30</sup> Finlay, 34. For hundreds of years Venice had experienced no successful coups, revolts, or violent internal conflict.

Venetian art in Dialogo della Pittura, "The true test of an artist's skill is not in the drawing of the figure but in rendering human flesh and the other substances of nature."<sup>31</sup>

Dolce, along with other writers and critics, believed art should be concerned with the application of the paint rather than its color or the strict adherence to preparatory drawings.<sup>32</sup> This attention to the quality of paint application for which Venice was famous has led to misconceptions about the motives of Venetian artists.

Writers and scholars of art history have sidelined the luminous works of such masters as Veronese, as devoid of serious meanings and cerebral intentions; modern critics have even referred to him as "seem[ing] not to permit expression of the profound, the human, or the sublime."<sup>33</sup> Even Charles Hope, the renowned scholar of Venetian art, believes the messages of most Renaissance Venetian paintings to be direct and devoid of depth and cleverness.<sup>34</sup> While the message of the *Triumph of Venice* would have spoken directly to politicians at the time of its creation, modern scholars must dig deeper to understand the complexity of Veronese's intentions and those of his patrons and advisors. Perhaps Veronese's magnificent handling of paint has blinded critics for centuries, masking the brilliant intellect of the artist that emerges upon inspection of his well-planned images and the compelling history surrounding their creation.

In the *Triumph of Venice*, and other paintings in the Doge's Palace, Veronese made clear his support of a rising faction of traditionalist politicians by lending his brush to produce one of the most important paintings of the late Cinquecento.

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<sup>31</sup> Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, 19.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 20. Boschini and Pino also wrote on this subject.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 107.

<sup>34</sup> Charles Hope, *Veronese and the Venetian Tradition of Allegory*, Proceedings of the British Academy 71 (1985), 428.

## Chapter Two:

### Leadership of the State

An oligarchy of patricians ruled Renaissance Venice. These leading members of society participated in various governing councils, the largest of which, the *Maggior Consiglio*, included all voting members of government. In the sixteenth century, the noble voting class comprised between four and eleven percent of the population.<sup>35</sup>

Despite the exclusion of the majority of Venetians from government, the voting members took upon themselves the responsibility of keeping Venetians happy and safe from internal and external strife.<sup>36</sup> In order to accomplish this goal, patricians understood the necessity of looking out for the interests of commoners while giving them a stake in community life.<sup>37</sup>

Despite their disenfranchisement, common Venetians had the advantage of living in a very utilitarian environment. The success of the individual was tied closely to the good of the whole, encouraging principles of service and patriotism in government and society.<sup>38</sup> Guilds and *scuole* served to unite professions and lay groups for mutual support, while giving commoners an outlet for community involvement. This philosophy promoted harmony between the various classes in and out of government.

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<sup>35</sup>Brown, *Venetian Narrative*, 14.

<sup>36</sup>Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth Century Venice*, 95.

<sup>37</sup>*Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>38</sup>Brown, *Venetian Narrative*, 12.



well. Venetians' selfless love for their country had a unique effect on government. The system of ruling chambers and councils served to mask the achievements and goals of individuals, leaving instead the mark of the whole system of government.<sup>39</sup> Images of particular men, such as *Doge Francesco Venier Presents to Venice the Subject Provinces* (Fig. 6) in the Senate Chambers, portray their acts of obligation to the state and their role as figureheads of Venice, instead of only recognizing personal goals and accomplishments. In such paintings the portrait of the doge represents the leadership of the state and the blessings bestowed on the doge by the abilities and success of Venice as a whole.

Political careers began for patricians at least twenty years old on every December 4, during the feast of Saint Barbara; at this time forty-five young men were selected by lot to join the membership of the *Maggior Consiglio*.<sup>40</sup> With entrance to the council came the costume of office. While young men were known to sport garish, costly garments, members of the great council wore black togas.<sup>41</sup> Clothes marked behavior in Renaissance Venice, and these youths were expected to set aside their immature fashions to join the dignified ranks of government in more formal patrician work attire.

As a member of the government progressed through offices, so did the distinction of the attire. Members of the ducal council, called the *Signoria*, as well as the powerful elite on the Council of Ten, wore red robes. Purple robes marked members of the Senate whereas those serving on the steering committee of this body, the *Collegio*, were distinguished by robes of violet or blue.<sup>42</sup> Along with new clothes came privileges as

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<sup>39</sup> Finlay, 34.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-27.

well, including free housing on Piazza San Marco for red-robed Procurators, and fine gold frocks for the official resident of the ducal palace, the doge. More than merely organizing the hierarchy, distinction by dress expressed the idea that only through election to office was one man higher than another.<sup>43</sup> Clothes marked, rather than made, the Venetian politician, providing the opportunity for lesser nobles to receive distinction above elite and ancient patrician families.

The opportunity to do so did not always mean success, however, as 'new' families rarely ascended to positions of power in the Serenissima. Future chapters will address this issue as it relates to the election of Doge Nicolo da Ponte, and its subsequent effect of the art of the Doge's Palace.

Although in theory the nobility oversaw the government for the common good, the lower classes held one key check on those of the ruling oligarchy. They elected the Grand Chancellor of Venice.<sup>44</sup> This powerful individual rose from the common class to serve as second in power after the doge. And, like the doge, the Grand Chancellor served a life term. Gasparo Contarini, a political theorist from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, described the grand chancellor as "the prince of the common people," bringing to mind the structure of the government and this benevolent protection of the entire community.<sup>45</sup>

Another aspect of the balance of power revolved outside the realm of titles and robes; the power of the vote gave considerable force to every noble political player. Lobbying, although counter to both the morals and laws of the Venetian government, became an integral aspect of Venetian politics. This process of trading votes was known

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>44</sup> Brown, *Venetian Narrative*, 14-15.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 14-15.

as *broglia*, meaning “grove,” a term which sprang from the area outside the palace where the practice of political bargaining took place.<sup>46</sup>

Fine art was used to counter the burgeoning political corruption of the sixteenth century. Palace decoration helped reinforce the tradition of a just government. Scenes of doges interacting with angels and allegorical figures before images of the thriving city reminded viewers that happiness results from holy and righteous behavior. Images of Venetia overseeing neighboring countries and receiving honors from personifications of Peace and Justice, such as those in the Sala della Quattro Porte, expressed the ability of good government to succeed militarily, while also ensuring peace in the end through justice. The décor reflected this moral imperative of government to act fairly and honestly to ensure a prosperous republic.

Venice's economic problems began with her crushing defeat in 1508 by the League of Cambrai, which devastated the trade-based economy.<sup>47</sup> Economic troubles continued, when after seizing Venice's final holding on the Peloponnese, the Turks threatened to close off the Adriatic to Venetian vessels altogether by the 1530s; combined with the rise of piracy throughout the area and new competition from Spice Island traders, commerce took a serious blow.<sup>48</sup>

Thus in 1571, when the Venetians won an overwhelming victory at the Battle of Lepanto, there was much cause for celebration. So grateful were the Venetians for the success of their military commander Sebastiano Venier, that he was easily elected doge.

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<sup>47</sup> Finlay, 15.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>49</sup> Brown, *Venetian Narrative*, 25.

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<sup>46</sup> Finlay, 28.

## Military Troubles and Economic Downturn

With the advent of the sixteenth century, however, serious new temptations began to place new stresses on the Venetian government. At the turn of the century, nearly one third of the population of the city fell below the poverty level.<sup>47</sup> By 1509 poverty reached into higher rungs of society, with civil service providing the only reliable income for three-fourths of the noble class, many of whom were considered poor.<sup>48</sup> These financial struggles meant increasing vote-trading and bribe-taking for personal gain. Venice's economic problems began with her crushing defeat in 1508 by the League of Cambrai, which devastated the trade-based economy.<sup>49</sup> Economic troubles continued, when after seizing Venice's final holding on the Peloponnesus, the Turks threatened to close off the Adriatic to Venetian vessels altogether by the 1530s; combined with the rise of piracy throughout the area and new competition from Spice Island traders, commerce took a serious blow.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 62-63.

<sup>47</sup> Finlay, 15.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>49</sup> Brown, *Venetian Narrative*, 25.

<sup>50</sup> William Archer Brown, "Nicolo da Ponte: The Political Career of a Sixteenth-Century Venetian Patrician," Ph.D. Diss. (New York University, 1974), 4.

the next election.<sup>51</sup> His reputation as a military champion resulted in full from Lepanto; Venice was desperate to claim a hero from their first successful battle in over fifty years.<sup>52</sup>

Even the victory at Lepanto, however, did not bolster the war effort, as the Turks won the war against Venice by overtaking the island of Cyprus.<sup>53</sup> As maritime trade became increasingly difficult, overland trade worsened, with the Spanish encroachment on Italian lands blocking the flow of food from Southern Italy to the Venetto.<sup>54</sup>

Because of these troubles, Venetians turned toward the terra firma for economic security. An examination of sixteenth-century tax records reveals the booming popularity of land investments. 33,000 ducats in property taxes were collected in 1510, as compared to 134,000 ducats in 1582, revealing the sharp increase in Venetian terra firma holdings.<sup>55</sup> And yet it took one final blow to Venetian trade to seek further protections on the mainland. The plague had returned to Venice.

In 1575 the population of Venice had reached 175,000 people; by 1581, only 124,000 remained alive.<sup>56</sup> Every sector of society suffered catastrophic losses; even the heroic Titian succumbed to the illness. Plague racked Venice, leaving her weak, demoralized, and vulnerable.

In July of 1577 the plague subsided completely, just months before the palace fire. By 1578, the year of Nicolo da Ponte's ducal election, the security and financial stability offered by land investments continued to be popular in the face of endless

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 88-89.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 92.

<sup>53</sup> J.R. Hale, "Venice and Its Empire," In *The Genius of Venice 1500-1600*, ed. Jane Martineau and Charles Hope (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1984), 15.

<sup>54</sup> Brown, *Nicolo da Ponte*, 4.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>56</sup> Norwich, 494.

Venetian crises.<sup>57</sup> Da Ponte believed military neutrality could help the republic recover from the past decade of disasters while protecting Venice's new land-based economy; after years of military and diplomatic aggression, Venice began to shift her focus to self-preservation and revitalization of the government.<sup>58</sup> Paintings would be da Ponte's primary weapon in molding a new façade for the troubled nation and its crumbling sense of tradition.

Da Ponte would not have to fight alone. The *giovani*, an emerging group of young politicians, set out to reform the injustices they saw in Venetian government. Their efforts began out of frustration with the growing unrestricted powers of the *vecchi*, high-ranking elders notorious for monopolizing high-power state positions.<sup>59</sup> The *giovani* set out to break their lock on government by rejecting nominations from the *vecchi* to the Council of Ten's Zonta, a group of around forty-five men whose powers nearly equaled those of the entire Senate.<sup>60</sup>

The agenda of the *giovani* soon expanded. They incited reforms, such as alterations to the powers of Procurators. These long serving and powerful bureaucrats retained their high status in government and kept lifetime Senate seats, although after the rise of the *giovani* in 1582, they no longer received automatic membership in the Council of Ten.<sup>61</sup>

Efforts towards reform, however, began years before the *giovani* had such influence to effect change. The freedoms of Procurators were first curtailed at the start of

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 494.

<sup>58</sup> Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981), 37.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>61</sup> Brian Pullan, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice: The Social Institutions of a Catholic State, to 1620* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1971), 209.

da Ponte's dogate. A need for audits resulted from the temptation of financial indulgences given to Procurators to facilitate their duties, such as overseeing the almshouses and hospitals for the needy; in 1578 a board called the *Revision sopra le Procuratie* was created to assure the financial honesty of high ranking officials.<sup>62</sup> A series of sweeping changes, designed to stop the abuse of government offices were enacted, culminating in the *giovani*'s rise to power in 1582 and 1583.<sup>63</sup> It should be noted, however, that old Venetian families still remained active in government, holding office as in years before the *giovani* came to hold sway.<sup>64</sup> The real change, however, took place in renewal of traditional Venetian spirit.

All of these events, seemingly separate from the art world of this time, had a drastic effect on the painting program for works produced during the dogate of Nicolo da Ponte. Da Ponte understood that political reforms supported by new artistic propaganda were needed to set the government and the tradition of Venetian utilitarianism back on track.

Nicolo da Ponte ran for doge in the hotly contested race of 1578. His expertise in government affairs was well known, so embattled opponents attacked not his political service and beliefs but the reputation of his family. Alessandro Grillo, a rival candidate for the dogate and a cousin of Doge Andrea Grillo, scorned da Ponte's family as a "house of shit."<sup>65</sup> Despite extensive government service, including seven years as a high-

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<sup>62</sup> Brown, *Nicolo da Ponte*, 24.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 351.

<sup>64</sup> Muir, 32.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

## Nicolo da Ponte: Orator, Diplomat, Doge

Theoretically, election to the dogate meant power and prestige, but the *cornio* was not easily won. Political careers were accessible to all noble Venetians, although those from the largest and oldest families rose to high offices more quickly than did those with less prestigious names.<sup>65</sup> Even qualified candidates faced problems because of class; in 1476 Andrea Vendramin's candidacy for doge was jeopardized because his family had been noble for just fewer than one hundred years.<sup>66</sup> The challenge of election for lesser nobles was magnified by the Venetian tradition of favoring experience and age.<sup>67</sup> To ascend to the office of doge, a lesser noble spent decades working his way through the vast bureaucracy of Venice. Yet old age and political respect did not guarantee acceptance for the highest office.

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<sup>65</sup> Paul F. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540-1603* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), 45. Advanced age was typical of newly elected Doges as well as of those chosen from aged leaders.

<sup>65</sup> Brown, *Nicolo da Ponte*, 28.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 16. Andrea Gritti served as Doge from 1523 to 1538. Alessandro was his first cousin once removed. Alessandro Gritti used the phrase "cha merda" to describe the da Ponte family.



ranking Procurator, da Ponte's family history kept him out of the dogate until he was nearly 90 years old.<sup>69</sup>

Family ties could expedite a rise to power and influence, but neither of these came easily to the small da Ponte clan. The number of da Pontes in Maggior Consiglio reached its maximum of 9 in 1556; even at its height, the da Ponte family made up less than 1 percent of eligible voters.<sup>70</sup> In fact many nobles supported da Ponte's candidacy out of jealousy toward other highly noble candidates; this avarice, coupled with a lack of communication among voters, led to da Ponte's election after five rounds of voting, much to the consternation of the Maggior Consiglio.<sup>71</sup>

Regardless of his problems getting into office, da Ponte used his election as a mandate for change. He supported the position of "defensive neutrality" rather than aggression, distrusting the motives of both the French and Spanish and believing in the necessity of keeping good relations with all Christian powers in the face of continuing Turkish threats.<sup>72</sup> Protecting what was left of the trade economy was his utmost concern, despite the conflict this goal created with another Italian and continental superpower: the Papacy.<sup>73</sup>

Venetians rarely chose anti-papists to serve in the Collegio, much less the office of doge. Da Ponte's election was particularly unusual considering his constant opposition to papal initiatives throughout his political career.<sup>74</sup> Da Ponte's troubles with the Pope began long before his dogate. Serving as a lay ambassador to the Council of

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<sup>69</sup> Paul F. Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press, 1540-1605* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1977), 45. Advanced age was typical of newly elected Doges as Venetians favored extensive experience and wisdom from aged leaders.

<sup>70</sup> Brown, *Nicola da Ponte*, 23.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-9.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>74</sup> Grendler, 45.

Trent from 1562 to 1564, da Ponte butted heads directly with Pope Pius IV.<sup>75</sup> Two years later in 1566, the newly elected Pope Pius V refused to receive da Ponte, then a Venetian ambassador, because he did not favor a papal initiative involving state tax exemptions for monasteries and convents.<sup>76</sup>

His troubles with the papacy continued even after the death of Pius V in 1572. Because healthy trade remained at the top of da Ponte's priorities, he came into conflict with newly elected Gregory XIII by speaking out against papal involvement with Venetian printing companies.<sup>77</sup> The problem arose when the papacy awarded printing privileges for a religious book to only one Venetian printing company; other printers felt the copyright unjustly hindered business, so the guild permitted them to print the "Little Office of Our Lady" despite the papal order. Outraged by this action, the papal nuncio approached Venetian leaders to enforce the papal rule. Da Ponte was one of two vociferous leaders opposed to papal meddling at the expense of Venetian trade and business, noting that the Venetian privileges given out by the Pope had "gravely injured the local press."<sup>78</sup>

Da Ponte's relationship with the Vatican suffered further as his frustrations increased with the pope's growing involvement in Venetian military affairs. Conflict with Gregory continued in 1573 when for six days he refused to see da Ponte, then a Procurator serving as ambassador to the Vatican; the Pope was angry with Venice for signing a treaty with the Turks before consulting their Vatican allies.<sup>79</sup> Much of this

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 45.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 174-177. Printing affair all taken from this section of Grendler's discussion of the Inquisition's involvement with Venetian printing practices.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 239, 202. da Ponte noted these concerns in a document from December 1581. One other noted anti-papist was Giovanni de Bernardo Dona.

<sup>79</sup> Brown, *Nicolo da Ponte*, 85.

disrespectful action was directed personally at Da Ponte; he was known for pushing an anti-papal agenda, although he won the support of other Venetian politicians only when prevailing matters of state were involved.<sup>80</sup>

For da Ponte, an ardent Catholic, anti-papal feelings arose from belief in and defense of Venetian tradition. Yet Nicolo's younger brother, Andrea, became a Calvinist before fleeing to Geneva, tainting the appearance of Nicolo's outspokenness; after voicing opposition to papal involvement in Venetian affairs, Nicolo da Ponte was accused of heresy by Pope Pius V.<sup>81</sup> But da Ponte could not be deterred from his belief that religious toleration and governmental involvement in the affairs of the Catholic Church in Venice enabled the existence and prosperity of trade. These sentiments, coupled with the changing political climate, led da Ponte to involve himself directly in the theme of the decoration of his palace.

Particularly busy, as he created *The Wedding Feast at Cana* (Fig. 7), *The Last Supper (Feast in the House of Levi)* (Fig. 8), and decorated the entire interior of the Church of St. Sebastian, as well as painted secular works such as the *Rape of Europa* (Fig. 9) and portraits for private clients.

The Church during this time faced both internal and external strife and change. In *The Last Supper* for the church of S.S. Giovanni e Paolo, Veronese depicted a turbaned figure, perhaps alluding to salvation through conversion to Catholicism; the inclusion of a Turk, along with increasingly popular depictions of the sacrament of bread and wine, indicates the level at which Venetian Catholics felt threatened by Turkish invasion and the increasing Protestant population across Europe.<sup>82</sup> This developing focus on religious propaganda was fueled by Venice's location; the idea of the Serenissima as the center of

<sup>80</sup> Grendler, 202.

<sup>81</sup> Brown, *Nicolo da Ponte*, 114.

## Chapter 5:

### Religion in the Serenissima

Not only was Venice experiencing political change, but so was the Church, whose doctrinal changes necessitated alterations to church decoration. The Tridentine reforms had far-reaching effects on the interrelationship of the papacy and European states, and as views changed, so did religious art. The 1560s and 1570s brought a wealth of commissions to Venetian artists, most notably to decorate churches undergoing renovation.<sup>82</sup>

For Veronese this period was particularly busy, as he created *The Wedding Feast at Cana* (Fig. 7), *The Last Supper (Feast in the House of Levi)* (Fig. 8), and decorated the entire interior of the Church of St. Sebastian, as well as painted secular works such as the *Rape of Europa* (Fig. 9) and portraits for private clients.

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<sup>82</sup> Peter Humfrey, *Painting in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1995), 253.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 254.

front against the pagan East, used for ages as a public relations bluff, began to have serious military implications.<sup>84</sup>

The Turks, however combative, were not the only menace to Venice's power and independence. For more than a century, changing alliances among Christian nations had threatened the security of the state. In the 1480s, Venice joined in the War of Ferrara fighting against the papacy; just fifteen years later, Venice backed the Holy League, joining with Spain, the Holy Roman Empire, Maximilian I and Milan against the French King Charles VIII. Four years later, in the Treaty of Blois, Venice traded alliances, joining the French against Milan.<sup>85</sup> But soon Venice became the object of these unstable alliances, as the League of Cambrai took all of her *terrafirma* holdings, including Padua just across the lagoon; all the land lost in this military disaster took eight years to reclaim.<sup>86</sup>

This dance of power and politics mirrored the turmoil in the Church as well. After ten years of failed attempts to gather together, the Council of Trent convened on December 13, 1545, to address problems in the Catholic Church related to the advent of Protestantism in Europe; over the next eighteen years, discussions of Catholic doctrine would continue at Trent.<sup>87</sup> As we have seen, da Ponte attended sessions of the Council of Trent and was frustrated with the power the Pope claimed over the council and Catholic states.

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<sup>84</sup> Brown, *Venetian Narrative*, 11.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>87</sup> Robert Bireley, *The Refashioning of Catholicism, 1450-1700: A Reassessment of the Counter Reformation* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 48.

The governmental ambassadors from Venice led the state's ecclesiastical delegation.<sup>88</sup> This situation annoyed the Pope, who wrote a vehement request to Venice demanding her ambassadors to stop swaying the votes of her clergy. He specifically noted his hostility toward da Ponte, who was lobbying the Bishop of Verona to vote for legislation that would decrease the power and influence of the Pope. Da Ponte felt the papacy was pulling strings, denying the council its intended freedom to make decisions free of papal meddling.<sup>89</sup> Such unresolved power struggles contributed to years of frustration between the Pope and Venetian politicians.

Political conflicts with papal agendas should not be confused as conflict with Catholicism. France, Spain and the city-states of Italy remained defenders of the Faith and the Church, despite tumultuous relationships with individual Popes. Henry III, an opponent of papal political intrigue, defended Catholicism from the Huguenots in France; the French king's popularity in Venice suggests the common belief that a state could support the Church within their state and abroad militarily, while maintaining freedom from the whims of a manipulative Pope.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Brown, *Nicolo da Ponte*, 106-107. Information in following paragraph taken from these pages. The Pope was angry about da Ponte's stance that ecclesiastic residence in cities was part of divine law rather than a decree by the Pope. This claim weakened the Pope's power because it was God demanding their compliance with Church rules regarding Catholic officials residing in states, rather than the pope himself having this authority over the state governments.

<sup>89</sup> Bireley, 46. The doctrine adopted at the Council of Trent provided some powers, however, as evinced by its use by the King of France to put pressure on the Pope.

<sup>90</sup> Robert Jean Knecht, *The French Civil Wars 1562-1598* (Harlow, England; New York: Longman, 2000), 200. Works in the Doge's palace depicting Henry III can be seen in the Doge's private apartments, where a portrait of the French King hangs in the Stucco Room. The Sala delle Quattro Porte contains a painting of the arrival of Henry III to France, *The Doge Alvise Mocenigo and the Patriarch Welcoming Henry III, King of France, to Venice* (Fig. 10), painted in 1595 to 1600 by Andrea Vicentino in remembrance of the historic visit.

Venetians were religious people who believed strongly that their success was bound up with Christianity.<sup>91</sup> Yet paired with their independent government, a dichotomy developed between the obligations nobles saw to the Catholic faith and the whims of the papacy. The founding of Venice, and the myth relating to Solomonic justice and the significance of the Feast of the Annunciation that developed around it, gave Venetians a sense of freedom and superiority over other states; at the same time, Venetians remained ardent followers of the Catholic faith, relating the extent of their piety to the continued success of the republic.<sup>92</sup> Together these ideas formed a deeply Catholic state wary of papal pressures and authority.

Da Ponte believed that Venetians should be independent to control their church and felt threatened by Pope Pius IV, who claimed authority to direct all secular and non-secular world affairs.<sup>93</sup> Da Ponte saw the Pope as the leader of the spiritual realm rather than as a superior political entity. Because of this conflict of wills, Pius V charged da Ponte with heresy in 1565, although he was not convicted. However, the conflict extended beyond these two opposed individuals; Pius did not believe in secular meddling in any church matter, whereas Venetians believed that the state should govern the non-spiritual aspects of the Church.<sup>94</sup>

This conflict had existed between the Church and Venetian state for many years. As early as the 1460s Pope Pius II decried Venice, saying “they wish to appear Christians before the world but in reality they never think of God and, except for the state, which

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<sup>91</sup> John J. Martin, *Venice's Hidden Enemies: Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City* (Ann Arbor: Electronic Book. Scholarly Publishing Office, University of Michigan Library, 2002), 56.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 56.

<sup>93</sup> Brown, *Nicolo da Ponte*, 114.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

they regard as a deity, they hold nothing sacred, nothing holy."<sup>95</sup> While hyperbolic, the Pope's words reflect the grit of Venetians to hold onto political power against the might of an angry Pope.

Thus when the Inquisition came to Venice on April 22, 1547,<sup>96</sup> the Venetian government took steps to oversee the trials held by the papal nuncio, the local inquisitor, and the Venetian patriarch.<sup>97</sup> Venice had come to view the activities of the Church as part of the political process and as such subject to a degree of lay control.<sup>98</sup> These sentiments could not be contained in words alone; they flowed directly into the public art of this period. Nowhere is this art more evident than in the Doge's Palace.

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<sup>95</sup> Finlay, 35.

<sup>96</sup> Martin, 51.

<sup>97</sup> Stephen Haliczer, *The First Holocaust, Inquisition and Society in Early Modern Europe*, ed. and trans. by Stephen Haliczer (Totowa, New Jersey: Barnes and Noble, 1987), 116.

<sup>98</sup> Brown, *Nicolo da Ponte*, 98.



## Chapter Six:

### The Ducal Palace

The soul of the Venetian government lived within the walls of the Doge's Palace. Just as Venetians connected the state and its judicial system through images of Venetia holding scales, the design of the palace evoked a similar association by bringing to mind the temple of Solomon.<sup>99</sup> The Byzantine patterning of stones, as well as the colonnaded first two floors associated the palace with notions of Solomonic justice. Every Sunday patricians heard the ringing bells of San Marco, calling them to conduct the business of the Serenissima; nearly eighteen hundred men gathered to legislate on behalf of the Republic.<sup>100</sup> The Maggior Consiglio housed this expansive body, seating members at tables arranged in rows the length of the room (Fig. 11). The doge and six other high-ranking members of the government took seats upon a dais at the short end of the room below Tintoretto's vast image of *Paradise* (Fig. 12), which replaced Guariento's *Coronation of the Virgin*.

The building soon drew more than Venetian leaders; the palace became a tourist attraction from the start. In 1415, more than fifty years after its initiation, the first government meeting took place in the renovated structure; in that same year, members of the council noted that "all lords and noble persons coming to our land," wanted to tour the Maggior Consiglio because it had already gained notoriety "for the beauty of the

<sup>99</sup> Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, 94.

<sup>100</sup> Brown, *Nicolo da Ponte*, 31.

excellent works that adorned it."<sup>101</sup> By 1493, Marin Sanudo included the Doge's Palace in his guidebook to visitors, the Cronachetta, including the site among the top twelve things foreign lords should see in Venice.<sup>102</sup>

Only the best would do for the seat of this revered government. Even after fires burned a large portion of the legislative rooms of the palace, the décor still included multiple works by Venetian masters such as Carpaccio, Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, Jacopo and Domenico Tintoretto, Titian, and Veronese, and was considered comparable to the Sistine Chapel in terms of artistic magnificence.<sup>103</sup>

After the fire of 1577, advisors designed a plan of paintings to recreate the subjects formerly represented on the walls. Doge Sebastian Ziani's diplomacy between the Pope and Holy Roman Emperor was depicted along the inner courtyard-side wall of the Maggior Consiglio; this historical happening had become a popular and beloved memory of the Republic.<sup>104</sup> Images of the successful Fourth Crusade covered the opposing canal-side wall. The selection of these stories to decorate the palace added to the progression and evolution of the Venetian myth.<sup>105</sup>

But even in these years of prominence and accolade, the decoration of the Maggior Consiglio suffered wear and tear. The saline lagoon took a toll on the frescoes from the moment artists brushed in pigments; the humidity created a difficult environment in which fresco could harden, necessitating frequent repairs.<sup>106</sup> As early as 1409 the palace art underwent restorations, but the efforts of painters and conservationists

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<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>103</sup> Brown, *Venetian Narrative*, 32.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>105</sup> Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, 3.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 3.

failed.<sup>107</sup> Frescoes by Guariento, Gentile da Fabriano, and Pisanello warranted total replacement by canvas paintings in 1474.<sup>108</sup> Unlike their frescoed antecedents, these oil paintings survived the Venetian climate, resisting damage from moisture and salt. Thus, oil painting became the popular medium for painters in Venice.

Climatic conditions were only one threat to palace art. Fires ravaged the main meeting rooms in the mid 1570s. Prominent artists from around Italy ventured to Venice, vying for lucrative and prestigious positions in the redecoration efforts. Francesco Bassano moved to Venice in 1578 in an effort to win work in the palace reconstruction; work in the Maggior Consiglio was especially coveted, as the burned paintings had contributed to the fame of the council room for more than a century.<sup>109</sup> Federigo Zuccari, another artist attracted to Venice during this time, left his position as the leading artist in Rome to look for work in the Doge's Palace.<sup>110</sup> The movement of worthy artists from comfortable, respected posts in their homelands to Venice, based on the hopes of garnering these commissions, speaks to the importance of the Ducal Palace opportunities.

Because many historically acclaimed artists of Venice were dead by this year, a new generation of masters rose to the challenge: Veronese and Tintoretto headed the reconstruction efforts, with the help of Palma Giovane, Francesco Bassano, and Federigo Zuccari.<sup>111</sup> The idea of sharing commissions among many *bottegas* reflects the sensibilities of the Republic itself; the allotment of state-supported commissions struck a chord with Venetians and their history of government serving the common good.<sup>112</sup> In

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 4, 11. This term "restoration" applies loosely in Venice, however, as new pieces sometimes took place of originals while retaining the subjects and general compositions of the damaged works.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>109</sup> Humfrey, *Painting in Renaissance Venice*, 262.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 262.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 255.

<sup>112</sup> Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, 4.

this vein of tradition, the state expected the art of the palace to evoke the time-honored values of the Venetto.<sup>113</sup> As the seat of justice, the Ducal Palace needed to reflect patriotism of the whole rather than commemorate particular artists who worked on the projects; the collaborative efforts of many artists mirrored the message of fairness and communality the building itself was meant to convey.<sup>114</sup>

Thus, the theme of the Maggior Consiglio developed as a monument to the glory of Venice as a third super power on the European stage, along with the Vatican and the Holy Roman Empire.<sup>115</sup> The cycle of paintings around the walls of the great council room recreated images from before the fire, depicting moments of glory and success from Venetian history, again stressing the power of Venice. Plans for ceiling decoration began from scratch, as the previous ceiling had been undecorated.<sup>116</sup>

The ceiling was divided into 35 paintings, with three central panels running down the length of the room. These works depict *Venice as Queen Offering an Olive Branch to Doge Nicolo da Ponte* (Fig. 13) by Tintoretto in the center, flanked by *Venice Crowned by Victory Triumphs Over the Subject Provinces* (Fig. 14) by Palma Giovane on the far end of the ceiling, and *The Triumph of Venice* by Veronese above the dais where sat Venice's leaders.

*Venice as Queen Offering an Olive Branch to Doge Nicolo da Ponte* consumes the center of the room. The upper third of the work swirls around the light blue-clad figure of Venice, who bends toward the figure of the doge from atop a cloudbank only a little larger than the expanse of her draping gown. Just above her head, seeming to rest

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>116</sup> Eugenia Bianchi, Nadia Righi, and Maria Cristina Terzaghi, *The Doge's Palace in Venice*, trans. by Richard Sadleir (Milan, Italy: Electa, 1997), 46.

on her shoulders, a mandorla of glowing, cyclonic light breaks through the surrounding clouds. Within these spherical, puffy clouds, wingless figures take flight in the mystical space above Venetia. She leans toward the doge, who stands underneath an elaborate gold and red embroidered canopy, offering him an olive branch. Around the Doge various members of the government bear witness to the mystical happening. Oriental runners drape across a series of stairways and landings across the bottom half of the composition. Various figures sit and lie across the stairs, adding to the complicated and colorful scene.

*Venice Crowned by Victory Triumphs Over the Subject Provinces* presents a direct image of state propaganda. A towering canopy of red and gold brocaded velvet hangs in a semi-circle over Venetia. An allegorical figure, likely a personification of victory with white feather wings and archaic Grecian robes, reaches from behind Venice to place a laurel crown on her head. A crown of gold already rests on Venetia's head and satiny fabrics in gold and light blue swathe Venice's full figure. She looks straight ahead from her perch atop a stage-like pedestal draped in pink satin; her glance passes over the throngs of soldiers and citizens standing eye level with the hem of her robes. Catching her stare, however, a flag held by helmeted soldiers waves just in her line of vision. Behind the flag and canopy, patches of white clouds drift across a brilliant blue sky. Yet the celebratory feel of the upper half of the composition contrasts the lower portion, where, as the title suggests, the conquered people writhe. Half-naked bodies lie about on a set of stairs leading from the bottom of the composition up to a plateau where the Venetians gather. Five steps separate the conquered from the subjugators, drawing a straight line through the oval composition. These defeated peoples cry out and struggle,

the women turn their heads and cast worried stares while the men thrash about fruitlessly against their chains. The bottom of the composition, below the prisoner's feet in the curve of the oval canvas, contains armor and drums presumably denoting the battles that have led to Venice's triumph and glory. *Defeat of Padua* (Fig. 16) created by Jacopo

Tintoretto. These two paintings differ greatly from Veronese's ceiling painting. Tintoretto uses the embodiment of Venice to show her gifts to the doge and to the well-dressed figures scattered throughout the composition in an opulent and mystical display of personified state power. Palma Giovane shows Venice personified receiving honors and glory, in the form of homage from both her subjects and from allegorical figures. In this work, Venice gazes past her citizens as well as the prisoners below, remaining in the separate sphere with the allegorical, mythic figures of victory. In both of these works Venice appears holy and separate, disconnected from the reality of her subjects. In Veronese's piece, however, Venice reigns on high with allegorical representations, while at the same time acknowledging and sharing the joy of her populace. Including all levels of society within Venetia's protective gaze, Veronese made a point to include the wealthy and the poor. Another difference here is the interaction of various Venetians in the scene. The idea that Venice rests atop a triumphal arch made up of her people strengthens the connection between the inhabitants of Venice and the glory and success of the republic, which the imagery of the other two works ignores.

Surrounding these three main paintings, twelve smaller works show images of military glory from various battles involving the republic. *Victory of the Venetians Over the Ferrarese at Argenta* (Fig. 15) by Jacopo Tintoretto, from 1584, complements other works in the room by displaying Venetians of all classes working together for Venice.

The scene appears to rise above the viewer, as a ship's mast ascends high into a cloud-filled sky. Standing upon the white-striped lower boom, archers in simple army dress shoot into the fray, while above, a barefoot sailor clings to the mast.

The *Defense of Brescia* and the *Defeat of Padua* (Fig. 16) created by Jacopo Tintoretto in 1582-84 also depict battles with figures exerting themselves in combat. The *Defense of Brescia* shows horsemen moving into the picture plane from the left with pink banners raised above. A knight clad in burnished silvery armor rides a dark horse in front of the banners. On the right side of the composition men holding more flags walk before the cavalymen. The *Defeat of Padua* shows an intense battle scene in which knights and plainly dressed soldiers come to blows in a tumultuous scene of clashing weapons and smoke-filled skies.

The walls echo the theme of power of the works hanging above, burnishing the historic victories of the republic while acknowledging the role of the commoner in the success of Venice. In order to depict the players in battle scenes accurately, the artists included an array of Venetians from nobility to commoners to prisoners. In this way, the decorative plan for the room naturally accentuated the theme of the *Triumph of Venice*. Domenico Tintoretto's allegorical *Battle of Salvo* (Fig. 17) exemplifies this idea, as the new painting shows Venetians of all classes, including the doge, warriors, and galley-workers working to win a historical battle. Although these numerous battle scenes merely represented how battles were won, when seen in context with the *Triumph of Venice*, images of Venetian victory highlight once again the importance of all parts to the whole glory of the state.

The entire canal-side wall of the Maggior Consiglio portrays this same theme, as discussed earlier, with paintings recording the successes of the Fourth Crusade, including *The Crusaders Army Attacks Constantinople* (Fig. 18) by Jacopo Palma il Giovane, glorifying the state through images of combat, leaders, and military triumph.

The connection between cycles around the ceiling and walls to the *Triumph of Venice* reflects effort and planning. That the advisors had artists tackle the ceiling first signifies their concern with the cohesion of the room emanating from the new works. The compositions of the refurbished wall paintings take their cues not only from the subjects and designs from the works they replaced, but also from the new works on the ceiling created just as da Ponte rose to the dogate, as will be discussed in coming chapters. Moreover, the twelve mid-sized ceiling canvases and battle works on the walls depict all classes, reflecting the social sentiments of the city and the reality of Renaissance warfare. These works magnify the return to tradition strongly supported by both the *Triumph of Venice* and Veronese's works in other palace council chambers.

writing, which was then given to an artist who determined the "pictorial potential" of the selection; thus artists often executed works based on their own compositional style without strict guidelines from the advisor or patron.<sup>120</sup> With these rules and standards in practice, a patron could still request the inclusion of specific compositional motives to convey particular ideas.<sup>121</sup>

Separate from this give and take between painting advisors and Venetian artists, the advent of the Catholic Inquisition put new pressures on the artistic community.

<sup>120</sup> Roland, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, 4-5.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>124</sup> Such direct involvement occurred in Veronese's career, which will be discussed later in this chapter.



## Chapter Seven:

Paolo Veronese

Artists in Renaissance Venice were seen as state workers or blue-collar craftsmen rather than as creative virtuosi, as evinced through their typically salaried work.<sup>117</sup> In the beginning of the 1570s, artists fell into the category of “depentori,” which included painters of any sort; as a mark of distinction painters of fine art received the title “figurer.”<sup>118</sup> Although categorized with handyman-painters, master painters took up the notion of artistic license as early as 1453 with the advent of Alberti’s definition of painting as a liberal art.<sup>119</sup>

Despite the mediocre standing of painters, patrons afforded workshops some freedom. The patron often selected painting planners to choose a religious passage or writing, which was then given to an artist who determined the “pictorial potential” of the selection; thus artists often executed works based on their own compositional style without strict guidelines from the advisor or patron.<sup>120</sup> With these rules and standards in practice, a patron could still request the inclusion of specific compositional motives to convey particular ideas.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, 4-5.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>121</sup> Such direct involvement occurred in Veronese’s career, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Veronese in particular felt the sting of restricted artistic freedom. When Titian's *Last Supper* in the Church of S.S. Giovanni e Paolo burned in 1571, Veronese painted its replacement.<sup>122</sup> When he completed the *Last Supper* two years later, Veronese was quickly summoned to appear before the Holy Tribunal of the Inquisition. Heresy in the form of "buffoons, drunkards, Germans, dwarfs and other such scurrilities" not belonging in a textually based image was the charge.<sup>123</sup> Inquisitors demanded of Veronese, "When you, the painter, add these decorations to your pictures, is it your habit to make them appropriate to the subject and to proportion them to the principal figures, or do you really do as the fancy takes you, without using any discretion or judgment?" to which Veronese answered "I make the pictures after proper reflection, within the limits of my understanding."<sup>124</sup> But upon further prodding he revealed his philosophy behind artistic creativity, "We painters assume the same license as do poets and fools...."<sup>125</sup> Veronese believed the artist had an active role in interpreting the function and content of paintings.

Exercising his will and creativity, Veronese avoided persecution by the inquisitors in a brilliant manner. The inquisitors ordered the artist to rework the image to depict the biblical text. Instead of acquiescing directly to the desires of the inquisitors, Veronese made only minor alterations to the composition, changing the title of the work to represent Luke 5:30, which calls for "publicans and sinners."<sup>126</sup> Veronese did not deny the authority of the Inquisition, but proved his artistic power and cunning in finding a

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<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 119.

<sup>123</sup> David Chambers, Brian Pullan, and Jennifer Fletcher, eds., *Venice A Documentary History, 1450-1630* (Oxford, England; Cambridge Massachusetts: B. Blackwell, 1992), 235.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>125</sup> Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, 119.

<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 119. The other alterations made to the work are disputed among scholars. Rosand believes the only alteration made to the work lies in the title, although other scholars have proven through texts of examinations of the painting before the trial that Saint Peter was holding a tray of food which is no longer apparent, blocked by what is thought to be an added Pharisee to better complete the transformation to a *Feast in the House of Levi* image.

subject within the boundaries of the Inquisition's complaints while retaining the aspects of the painting to which they objected.

Veronese's approach to the threats and penalties of the inquisitors would have suited the mindset of da Ponte. Veronese undermined Catholic control in a church refectory, asserting the power of Venetian artistic tradition over the will of church reformers.

Although Veronese grew into an ardent Venetian, as his nickname suggests, he began his life in Verona. As a young man in Verona, he surely saw works by Mantegna, who created altarpieces for the churches of S. Zeno and S. Maria in Organo.<sup>127</sup> By the time Veronese reached Venice in the early fifties, he had already established himself as a professional artist, having finished his apprenticeship in Verona.<sup>128</sup>

The theater seems to have played an important part in his artistic development.<sup>129</sup> Illustrations of theater sets and theaters themselves influenced Veronese in the composition of his monumental paintings.<sup>130</sup> Loggias, created to divide compositional space in works such as *The Family of Darius before Alexander* (Fig. 21) parallel the theatrical designs of Palladio, Serlio (Fig. 22), and Sansovino, who divided stage settings with architectural elements to create spatial divisions and recession in a shallow plane.<sup>131</sup> In this work, the triple arcade in the background reflects the style of the Arco Foscari (Fig. 23) in the Ducal Palace as well.<sup>132</sup> The architectural elements of Veronese's works, such as the arcade in *Feast in the House of Levi* which enabled separation between the

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<sup>127</sup> Lionello Puppi, *Andrea Palladio*, translated by Pearl Sanders (Boston: New York University Graphic Society, 1975), 22.

<sup>128</sup> Humfrey, *Painting in Renaissance Venice*, 238. Scholars know little of Veronese's formal training.

<sup>129</sup> Rosand, 1997, 125. Veronese created costume designs (Fig. 19) for productions in the Teatro Olimpico (Fig. 20) in Vicenza. Drawings of these designs are located in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in Paris.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, 113-116.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 114-118.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

buffoons and the disciples, relates compositionally to Palladio's triple arcade at the Teatro Olimpico.<sup>133</sup> *The Wedding Feast at Cana* once again illustrates this loggia technique. Throughout his career, working on a variety of subjects, Veronese continued to use the architectural conventions of theater to divide space and organize themes.

Other influences on Veronese's work include Cartari's *Imagini*, which served as popular templates for a variety of paintings designed for the Doge's Palace.<sup>134</sup> These descriptions and drawings of mythological figures were published in 1556; Veronese referenced this book for the program designed by Betussi for the Obizzi villa.<sup>135</sup> Seven of twelve figures directly relate to Cartari's publication, including Veronese's images of Good Fortune, Bellona, Felicità, Occasion, and Peace; the other figures were not described in Cartari, forcing the artist to make up his own allegorical attributes.<sup>136</sup> At the Palazzo Trevisan, Veronese again made direct use of Cartari's descriptions of Eros and Anteros struggling over a palm branch in one painting and extinguishing torches in another.<sup>137</sup> A precedent for Cartari's publication, Marcolini's *Sorti* of 1540 was referenced by Veronese for *Triumph*.<sup>138</sup> Marcolini describes Fame (Fig. 24) as holding a trumpet, with wings covered in eyes upon her back; this portrayal fits Veronese's personification of Fame, the uppermost figure in the *Triumph of Venice*. These written sketches of allegorical attributes from Marcolini and Cartari served as a background upon which Veronese built his own images and creations.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Engass, 96.

<sup>134</sup> Hope, *Veronese and Allegory*, 396.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 397.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 391. The seventh figure described by Cartari, Clemency, was too plain to be presented artistically by the attributes included in the *Imagini*.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*, 415.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 399.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 397. *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, 10.

Veronese's artistic interpretations garnered praise and a growing number of commissions for the painter. Veronese won the prestigious golden chain for *Music* (Fig. 25) in the reading room in the Marciana Library in 1557.<sup>140</sup> Three ceiling roundels each were given to seven rising Venetian artists, among them Schiavone, Salviati, Battista Franco, and Veronese; Titian and Sansovino were charged with awarding a gold chain to the most "distinguished contribution."<sup>141</sup>

After Veronese received this honor, he distinguished himself as a painter of great feasts, working in 1562-1563 on the *Wedding Feast at Cana* (Fig. 7) for the Palladian refectory in S. Giorgio Maggiore.<sup>142</sup> He then received an important commission in 1565 to decorate the Church of San Sebastiano, covering the walls, ceiling, and even the organ with paintings; in this year he also created the *Family of Darius before Alexander* (Fig. 21), another of his most celebrated paintings.

Perhaps due to his clever avoidance of punishment by the Inquisition, Veronese's popularity continued to grow. As early as 1573, Jacopo Contarini commissioned the *Rape of Europa* (Fig. 9) which now hangs in the Sala del Anticollegio of the Doge's Palace, and Emperor Rudolph II among other patrons requested mythological paintings shortly thereafter.<sup>143</sup>

Many of these works created during the 1560s and 70s rely on the writings of Alberti. Geometry, according to Alberti, served as the foundation for painting, working as "the basis of the modern system of pictorial perspective."<sup>144</sup> Although Veronese relied on architecture and geometry, he valued accurate visual interpretation by the viewer more

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<sup>140</sup> Humfrey, *Painting in Renaissance Venice*, 194.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 197-198.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 245.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 252.

<sup>144</sup> Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, 10.

than mathematical perfection. In the *Wedding Feast at Cana* Veronese used multiple vanishing points.<sup>145</sup> This technique created the illusion of spatial recession for an audience viewing the work from different parts of the room.<sup>146</sup> The influence of theater, architecture, and his friendships with leading scholars of the day attuned Veronese to mathematical and perspectival aspects of art. More importantly, however, the freedom and confidence with which Veronese approached his commissions enabled him to create spatially effective works full of his own narrative and decorative ideas.

Part of the most extensive and prestigious of Veronese's commissions, the *Triumph of Venice* is central to the redecoration of the Doge's Palace. Veronese, along with Tintoretto, headed the artistic renovation of the palace after fire damaged several third-floor council rooms in December of 1577.<sup>147</sup> Not only did these commissions give artists added prestige, but they also provided state-funded studio space, assistants, and a generous sinecure.<sup>148</sup> The increased money and helpers meant added freedom for the artist. His capture of this commission less than ten years after his trial speaks to the spine of Venetian government in resisting the influence of the Church. After his own experiences with the Pope and Inquisition, da Ponte likely supported Veronese as the artist to create new images for the seat of government. This single action stung the Pope in two ways, both showing the Inquisition that its threats mattered little to Venetians and including direct anti-papal sentiment in the art itself.

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 117. This technique could have been taken from Palladio's alleyways, which also employed multiple point perspective.

<sup>147</sup> J.M. Fletcher, "Patronage in Venice," *The Genius of Venice 1500-1600*, ed. by Jane Martineau and Charles Hope (New York, Harry N. Abrams, 1984), 17.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 17.

The centerpiece of this cycle of interconnected artistic propaganda lies in the relationship between the *Paradise* and *Triumph of Venice*. Little is known of what liberties Veronese took in laying out designs for the *Paradise* because the documented counsel of advisors is limited. A great deal of evidence survives, however, as to the latitude he assumed in creating the *Triumph of Venice*.

The plan for this painting included a loose description of what was desired in the finished work, including the “four seasons, seven virtues, a crowd in a festive mood, Venice over city and countryside.”<sup>149</sup> This general direction allowed the artist freedom of interpretation to add figures and designs to the scene not specifically prescribed by patron or advisor.<sup>150</sup>

In Venice, especially, artists received encouragement to experiment with style, drawing on new influences while building on the tradition of Titian; this artistic approach developed in opposition to the strict stylistic boundaries of art in central Italy.<sup>151</sup> The history of painting in these areas encouraged differences, as *disegno* dictated an increasingly uniform style of Mannerism in western Italy and *colorito* encouraged looser brushwork, with a focus in Venice on painterly skill, rather than the recreation of nature.<sup>152</sup> Differences in the style of Tintoretto and Veronese exemplify this point, as the latter focused on volumetric forms, rich in color, while the former chose more muted colors applied in sweeping brushstrokes; despite different mature styles, both artists are considered masters of Venetian style.

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<sup>149</sup> Andreas Prieuer, *Paolo Caliari Called Veronese, 1528-1588*, translated by Paul Aston and Fiona Hulse (Neue Stalling; Oldenburg, Germany: Konemann, 2000), 122.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, 122.

<sup>151</sup> Charles Hope, “The Historians of Venetian Painting,” *The Genius of Venice 1500-1600*, ed. by Jane Martineau and Charles Hope (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1984), 40.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, 40.

This stylistic freedom worked hand in hand with the compositional freedom often afforded to Venetian masters by patrons and advisors. Especially in the Maggior Consiglio, artists altered works compositionally to suit their own designs, using the advisors' plans as a general subject outline rather than as a template of words to reproduce in paint.<sup>153</sup> In fact, these programs included mostly detailed descriptions of the attributes of allegorical figures rather than instructions for the entire composition, leaving the majority of the meaning of the work to the discretion of the artist.<sup>154</sup> Thus, the paintings had the potential to become imbued with different meanings depending upon the creativity and depth of freedom with which the artist approached his canvas.

In terms of painterly intention and direction, however, Veronese and his patrons usually compromised on the plans. In fact at Maser, a villa Veronese decorated in fresco, the artist worked directly with the patron and architect to create images pleasing to everyone involved.<sup>155</sup> Although the works commissioned at Maser had a different intent from those in the Doge's Palace, the idea that Veronese valued and trusted the input of patrons is significant.

Perhaps this reliance upon patrons for the intellectual or emotional content of his works explains the dichotomy in appearance and effect of the *Triumph of Venice* images by Veronese and Tintoretto.

The massive rectangular canvas of Tintoretto's *Triumph of Venice* (Fig. 26) stretches across the center of the Sala del Senato. The figure of Venetia stands with outstretched arms on a foreshortened circular cloudbank. Clothed in a shining brocaded dress, Venice stares out of the work, as a swirling halo of flaming orange sky surrounds

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<sup>153</sup> Hope, *Veronese and Allegory*, 402.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 402.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 426.



her crowned head. Dark grey, ominous clouds open to reveal this glowing orange orb. At Venetia's feet recline partial nudes, floating on clouds descending from both Venetia's platform and the dark clouds on her sides. The sky in the background gradually lightens by gradations from navy blue into a dawn-like pinkish tone near the bottom of the composition. The sky creates deep spatial recession, as clouds withdraw steeply backwards into space. A ring of figures encircles Venetia from below, with a semi-circle of partial nude's receding away from the viewer. The front of this ring has broken apart, with figures floating up and down from a globe-like form in the bottom right-hand corner of the canvas. These figures differ from the others depicted, with dark green scales and webbed appendages on the lower half of their bodies. Some of these figures seem to wrestle with sea creatures of these same dark scales, adding to the mythological, dreamlike setting of the entire image.

The spatial composition in Tintoretto's *Triumph of Venice* appears flat, as though the painting which hangs on the ceiling could be read just as easily as a wall painting. Although figures rise and descend to and from Venetia, the movement within the canvas remains captive; there is a marked absence of *dal sotto in su* motion, as figures seem to travel from the globe towards the seated figure of Venetia rather than moving in and out of the compositional plane.

This work differs from that of Veronese in every possible element of design, composition, and meaning.<sup>156</sup> Some of the structural differences return to the influence of theater on Veronese's shallow compositional spaces.<sup>157</sup> Other important influences on this artist that set Veronese apart from Tintoretto include the influence of masters such as

<sup>156</sup> Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, 111.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 110.

Raphael and Classical artists, as well as the more recent art of Giulio Romano and Parmigianino.<sup>158</sup> On the other hand, Tintoretto studied Michelangelo and Giorgione, striking a middle ground between the techniques of drawing and painting.<sup>159</sup> However, dedicated to *colorito*, Veronese has remained famous through the centuries for his sensuous mastery of color combinations to induce illusions of texture and space.<sup>160</sup>

Despite the stylistic divergence between the two leading Venetian artists of this period, there lies a more fundamental distinction in their approach to the subject of Venice triumphant. Veronese's active involvement with patrons, trouble with the Inquisition, and fierce patriotism evinced therein separate his motives from the other artist. The location of the works in the palace further divides the intentions of these two divergent works as well. Despite the lack of documented evidence involving the aims of the artists, the history of the paintings created at the Doge's Palace at this time, as well as the history of their creators, sheds light on the objective of these works. Charles Hope, in writing on the intentions of the ceiling in the Sala del Collegio, notes that the basic goal of paintings and painting cycles can be understood by examining the works, plans, and patrons.<sup>161</sup> Yet Hope explicates the ceiling of that space only, whereas this idea for understanding art and society can be expanded to the entire restoration project in the Doge's Palace. In this manner the relationship between the doge and Veronese, as well as the politically-charged images resulting from this interaction, emerge clearly.

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<sup>158</sup> Hope, *The Historians*, 40.

<sup>159</sup> Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice*, 161.

<sup>160</sup> Humfrey, *Painting in Renaissance Venice*, 238.

<sup>161</sup> Hope, *Veronese and Allegory*, 390.

## Chapter Eight:

### Triumph of Venice

Although both Tintoretto and Veronese painted Venice Triumphant, each artist approached the subject in strikingly dissimilar ways. Many differences are due to the location of paintings; the art of the Doge's Palace often reflects the purpose of the room for which it was intended. The sheer magnitude of the palace structure dictated that each advisor oversaw only a portion of the palace's redecoration. Daniel Barbaro designed the decorative scheme for the chamber of the Council of Ten, whereas the Salla delle Quattro Porte was undertaken by Andrea Palladio and Giovanni Rusconi, with the help of Sansovino.<sup>162</sup> Giacomo Marcello, Giacomo Contarini, Jacopo Soranzo, Francesco Bernardo, and Girolamo Bardi organized plans for the Maggior Consiglio, including the new ceiling works.<sup>163</sup> These scholars, monks, and government officials undertook the task of piecing together the kind of majesty that had been destroyed.

Advisors drew heavily on the burned art in order to keep the subject and composition of the rooms in-tact, as they had been for centuries. Guariento's *Coronation of the Virgin* fresco, to be replaced by an oil *Paradise* commissioned to Veronese, informed the composition of Veronese's *Triumph* as he worked to create a cohesive set of works. In the Senate chambers, however, another artist addressed the same subject

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid., 407, 410

<sup>163</sup> Richard Cocke, *Veronese's Drawings: with A Catalogue Raisonne* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 211.

<sup>163</sup> Bianchi, 46.

differently, taking a cue from the allegorical and devotional works surrounding his compositional space. Here Tintoretto took a lighter, more mystical approach to the same theme. However, the advisors and patron of the works in the Maggior Consiglio had a specific message in mind for Veronese's painting. This painting united works throughout the palace in a common theme, propagating a return to the Venetian tradition of government for the betterment of all, while reflecting the anti-papal feelings of the doge.

Because the ceiling of the Maggior Consiglio had never held paintings before, Veronese had unprecedented freedom in the creation of the Triumph. The newly built roof allowed for an expansive room without columns breaking up the ceiling space. Vast painting surfaces without thematic precedence, as well as the assigned topic of Venice triumphant, allowed Veronese freedom to experiment creatively with content and forms. While other artists worked to replace paintings damaged in the fire, the great council ceiling presented a space open to completely new ideas.

Under the dogate of the newly elected Nicolo da Ponte, the basic themes for the new space were created. Soranzo, one of the painting advisors, preferred the works of Tintoretto to those of Veronese, but the planners selected Veronese for reasons surpassing aesthetic preferences.<sup>164</sup>

Veronese was surely one of the preeminent painters of the Serenissima. His trial by the Inquisition, however, made him a perfect choice to reflect the beliefs of da Ponte through palace decoration, and his design for the *Paradise* was selected over those

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<sup>164</sup> Peter Humfrey, "Veronese's High Altarpiece for San Sebastiano: A Patrician Commission for a Counter Reformation Church," *Venice Reconsidered: the History and Civilization of an Italian City-State, 1297-1797*, edited by John Martin and Dennis Romano (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 381. Soranzo's personal collection from his home in San Polo, Ca' dell' Angelo, included works by Tintoretto but notably none by Veronese.

submitted by five other artists.<sup>165</sup> Before he could even purchase the canvas, however, Veronese contracted fatal pneumonia, leaving the project open to other artists.<sup>166</sup>

Tintoretto stepped in to complete the task (Fig. 27). By examining the competition pieces of Veronese and Tintoretto for the replacement of Guariento's work, it becomes clear that the work of the former directly impacted that of the latter. Tintoretto's completed *Paradise* resembles much more closely Veronese's winning work than his own competition entry (Fig. 28).<sup>167</sup> This situation can be attributed to pressure from the patrons, who had wanted Veronese's painting all along.

The selection committee's choice of Veronese to execute the *Paradise* and *Triumph* images for the Maggior Consiglio, despite stronger preferences for Tintoretto's style, implicates the importance of Veronese himself to the message of the works. This idea becomes evident as Tintoretto assimilated his plan for the *Paradise* to that of Veronese. Tintoretto reworked his earlier design, focusing more closely, as Veronese had done, on Guariento's *Coronation of the Virgin*.<sup>168</sup> Although Tintoretto included more figures than Veronese had intended, the reworked design relates directly the terraced look of Veronese's *Triumph of Venice* above. By drawing this comparison so directly, Veronese had intended the viewer to recognize the thematic connection between the two works. Some scholars suggest that Tintoretto's aligning his work with Veronese's design can be attributed to the demands of painting advisors.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Peter Humfrey, *Painting in Renaissance Venice*, 262.

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, 253; and William R. Rearick, *The Art of Paolo Veronese, 1528-1588*, exhibit catalogue (Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art; Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 154.

<sup>167</sup> Hans Tietze, *Tintoretto: The Paintings and Drawings with Three Hundred Illustrations* (London: Phaidon, 1948), 365.

<sup>168</sup> Goffen, 144.

<sup>169</sup> Tietze, 54.

The visual parallels between the paintings serve to strengthen the thematic relationship between the traditional images of Venetia as justice and the Virgin. As Rona Goffen notes, “the inference was clear: the paradise in which the *Coronation of the Virgin* was juxtaposed with the Annunciation was a visual metaphor for the foundation, triumph and glorification of Venice.”<sup>170</sup>

Although critical to the meaning of the work, Goffen’s comments only scratch the surface of the deeper intentions of the paintings. Veronese’s designs for these images presented a new mentality of patriotism rising up in the membership of the *Maggior Consiglio*. When viewed together, these works presented a metaphor for political change as well as a denial of the power of the Pope over the Venetian state.

More than remind viewers of Venice’s historical claim on religious and moral superiority, however, the *Triumph of Venice* suggests the ability of the current government to embody these ideas. In the painting, a commoner and a dog both turn away from the room below, their lower portions obscured by the frame rather than seeming to hang over those seated below. Thus the frame creates a boundary between reality and the fantasy world of Venice triumphant.<sup>171</sup> This framing technique gives viewers the sense of the image rising up, rather than sinking into the room. This towering scene reaches upwards through the heavens, encouraging legislators below to ascend figuratively to the level of perfect government and to the civic joy, as seen above. Thus, through illusory perspective the painting encouraged voters to rise above the superficial issues of title and personal gain to focus instead on problems keeping all Venetians from happiness and success. This idea reflects the beliefs of a growing faction in Venetian

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<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>171</sup> Paula Carabell, “Framing and Fiction in the Work of Paolo Veronese: A Study in the Structure and Meaning of the Image Di Sotto in Su,” *Res* 36 (Autumn 1999), 182.

politics at this time, in reaction to the internal and external struggles of the Republic over the past century.

A return to pride in justice and utilitarianism to overcome the numerous struggles of the late sixteenth century became the mission of a group of emerging politicians who called themselves the *giovani*.<sup>172</sup> Although scholars debate the extent of da Ponte's involvement with the *giovani* movement, Grendler, Lowry, W.A. Brown, Bouwsma and Muir all agree that da Ponte wished to focus again on traditional state values.<sup>173</sup> Although the extent to which da Ponte supported *giovani* efforts to decrease the power of the nobility remains a bone of contention among scholars, without question da Ponte desired a return to the theme of government working for the common good.<sup>174</sup> However, palace art from the period suggests that da Ponte favored a more traditional, communal Venice free of imposition by papal regulation and self-absorbed nobility.

The *Triumph of Venice* presents a new interpretation of Venetian tradition by taking a prescriptive role to fix problems plaguing the state. The need for reform developed from problems discussed earlier, such as the declining of the wealth of the old nobility, the increasing corruption of Venetian officials, and the concentrated power in the elite Senate. The years of Venetian involvement with the League of Cambrai marks the beginning of this period of general decline, according to one noble who recorded events from this period; Pietro Bembo believed that the shameful conduct of Venetian nobility in failing to protect the state during these battles constituted treason.<sup>175</sup> More

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<sup>172</sup> Muir, 35.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>174</sup> Brown, *Nicolo da Ponte*, 139. Brown doubts the truth of Bouwsma's claim that da Ponte's election relates to the *giovani-vecchi* movement because no primary sources have been located to indicate this connection.

<sup>175</sup> Muir, 35.

accurately perhaps, it marked a change in thought from traditional duty to the state to focus on self-interests.

The *Triumph of Venice* propagates the ideas of the *giovani* movement, especially in terms of Venice returning to her former glory through utilitarian government. The image of people spread across a triumphal arch, with Venetia smiling down equally upon them, reminded onlookers that attributes of good government and prosperity reigned when government serves all, even while respecting traditional social divisions. In the *Triumph*, Veronese painted nobles behind the balustrade, close to Venice, perhaps echoing their close ties to and involvement in the leadership of the state. At the bottom of the work, Veronese painted commoners and soldiers who smile at each other and at Venetia, who smiles at her subjects in return. This exchange among the people of Venice provides a moral imperative for good government in the traditional Venetian sense. Carrying out their voting power, nobles were encouraged to look to the well-being of all so that Venice could succeed; without happiness and prosperity for all, the power and freedom of the state would vanish.

The *Triumph of Venice* unites this theme as seen in other paintings on the ceiling and walls of the Maggior Consiglio. Images of commoners, nobles, and doges fighting for the Republic surrounded low-ranking voters, as well as Senate and Council of Ten members who attended meeting of the Maggior Consiglio. Works such as the *Victory of the Venetians over the Ferrarese at Argenta* by Jacopo Tintoretto depict low-ranking soldiers running about on a boat, in tattered clothing, working to secure Venetian victory at sea. Other images depict military leaders rallying their troops to defeat opposing armies, as in Jacopo Tintoretto's *Defense of Brescia* and *Defeat of Padua*. Once again, in

<sup>128</sup> *Identity, Painting in Renaissance Venice*, 261.



the *Battle of Salvo* by Domenico Tintoretto, Venetians of all classes fight together in order for Venice to succeed. These military paintings easily translate into the ideas of the *Triumph of Venice* and serve as veiled allusions to the power of Venice through unity of purpose; this theme parallels the ideas the *giovani* attempted to drive home during this period of reform. By surrounding allegorical images with historical examples of Venetian success, da Ponte wished to reinforce visually the political efforts of the *giovani*.

Images depicting battles supported *giovani* goals, but other works more directly addressed the concerns of the doge. Newly renovated images of Venetian history in the Maggior Consiglio, such as the cycle of Venice reconciling the Pope and the Holy Roman Empire, reflected the power of the republic in diplomatic endeavors. Since the beginning of his political career, the doge had despised the unyielding power of the papacy and its intrusion on Venetian freedoms. The cycle along the western wall of the Maggior Consiglio traced the successful Venetian attempts to resolve the historical conflict between Emperor Barbarossa and Pope Alexander III. In Federigo Zucari's work *Barbarossa kneeling Before Pope Alexander III* (Fig. 29), the Emperor seems to kneel both to the doge and the Pope, symbolizing the equal footing and power of Venice and the papacy.<sup>176</sup> The cycle continues with works showing how the Venetians helped avert the continuing crisis between the Holy Roman Empire and the Pope, showing a grateful Pope thanking the Serenissima in works such as Leandro da Ponte detto Bassano's *Pope Alexander III offers Doge Ziani the Holy Candle* from 1605 and Palma Giovane's *Pope and Doge allowing the Emperor's Son to Sue for Peace in 1177* (Fig. 30). The Pope showers the doge with gifts and power, not only through holy candles, but with

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<sup>176</sup> Humfrey, *Painting in Renaissance Venice*, 261.

a precious ring in *The Doge receiving the Ring from Pope Alexander III* (Fig. 31) by Andrea Vincentino. Pope Alexander III, grateful for Ziani's help in matters with the Holy Roman Empire, presented this gift to the doge, saying, "We wish Doge, that you would receive this ring and that every year in perpetuity you should marry the sea, just as a man marries his wife in sign of perpetual domination."<sup>177</sup> This ceremony took place along with a parade and feast on the founding day of Venice, 'Madonna di Marzo,' to remember the success of the republic and its domination of the sea and protection of the pope.<sup>178</sup> Another potent symbol of Venice's world standing and power was the *The Doge Receiving the Sword from Pope Alexander III in 1177 (The Venetian Fleet About to Set Sail from the Quay of Saint Mark's Against Barbarossa)* (Fig. 32) by Francesco Bassano. Especially in light of Zuccari's work, these paintings take a stab at the Vatican, showing how without Venice, the papacy might not have survived the problems of the Middle Ages. These ideas of freedom of government from clerical imposition correspond

directly. This anti-papal sentiment continues in the back of the room with Veronese's *The Return of Doge Andrea Contarini to Venice after the Venetian Victory of the Genoese at Chioggia* (Fig. 33). Here, although the theme seems to focus on military victory, there lies an anti-papal undercurrent. The painting shows a group of people, including many priests and a large cross on a staff, greeting the returning ships. The bottom of the work is littered with prisoners bound at the wrists in chains. Compositionally, tiers of people flow in bands across the canvas, much as they do in the *Paradise* and *Triumph of Venice*, which hang just across the room. In these opposing images, Mary and Venice preside over joyous individuals, aligning the religious freedom of the inception of the city with

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<sup>177</sup> Brown, *Venetian Narrative*, 38.

<sup>178</sup> Rosand, *Myths of Venice*, 13.

the joy of paradise. Diametrically opposed, physically and thematically, to the righteous figures of *Triumph* and *Paradise* are clerical symbols and Church officials. Similarly, members of the Church hierarchy replace the nobility in the second tier of leadership. Prisoners fill the bottom tier of onlookers, as opposed to jubilant commoners and angels. Significantly, Veronese received commissions to create all of these works; who better to proclaim anti-papal sentiments than the artist who had suffered through the Inquisition firsthand? These images, through the veil of historical relevance to the painting plan, represent da Ponte's feelings of how a meddling pope can negatively impact a just and joyous society. Paintings down the side of the chamber reinforce the vital role of Venice in protecting a needy Vatican, in the painting cycles of Alexander III and Emperor Barbarossa as well as the cycle of paintings hanging across the room depicting the Venetian-led Fourth Crusade.

These ideas of freedom of government from clerical imposition correspond directly with da Ponte's beliefs and history. Da Ponte held strong patriotic beliefs and spoke his mind more often than others in Venetian government; the *savii* of the Collegio, which entertained ambassadors as well as matters of state, had trouble keeping da Ponte quiet in discussions when he served as doge, and Collegio records mark him as more outspoken than past doges.<sup>179</sup> Combined with his staunch anti-papal feelings, da Ponte's outspokenness caused him trouble in his political and diplomatic career. Da Ponte supported Venice's history of religious tolerance, including trading with nations of many backgrounds and respecting the rights of Protestants to study at the University of

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<sup>179</sup>Brown, *Nicolo da Ponte*, 111-113.

Padua.<sup>180</sup> Da Ponte's lax attitude towards those who did not profess the Catholic faith, and what the pope saw as his unruly conduct at the Council of Trent, led Pope Pius V to reject him as an ambassador to the Vatican and charge him with heresy.<sup>181</sup> The republic, however, interpreted the pope's insult to the ambassador as a blow to Venice's sovereignty.<sup>182</sup> This circumstance served as a patriotic rallying point for Venetians, who felt slighted by the disrespectful pope.

Despite his hometown win over Pius, da Ponte skated a narrow line between a pro-Venice and pro-Protestant image because of his brother's Protestant conversion and his own laxity towards Greek Orthodoxy and Lutheranism.<sup>183</sup> Ironically, Pope Pius V's charges against da Ponte helped tip his image toward that of a supporter of Venetian independence rather than as an extremist anti-Catholic. The art of the Doge's Palace established da Ponte's sympathies with an unencumbered political system in Venice, separate from papal meddling, not as distaste and disrespect for Catholicism. Paintings of da Ponte throughout the Palace depict a man both respectful of the church and the state. One such work is found in the Sala del Collegio.

Just two years before the fire and renovation of the Maggior Consiglio, fire struck the Collegio. Records indicate payments began to those involved in the reconstruction in December of 1575; Andrea da Ponte, perhaps with the help of Veronese's close friends Palladio and Marcantonio Barbaro, created the plan for decorating the restored council room.<sup>184</sup> In this room, a traditional votive portrait, *Doge Nicolo da Ponte Invokes the*

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<sup>180</sup> William James Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty; Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), 110. Venice heartily resisted Rome's urging to force Paduan students to convert to Catholicism in order to continue their studies.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, 108.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>184</sup> Prieuer, 112.

*Protection of the Virgin*, hangs on the wall. But another work depicting someone else in the restored program of paintings, repainted during da Ponte's dogate, supports the ideas addressed in the *Triumph of Venice*.

The painting altered to support da Ponte's opinions hangs above the thrones of the *savii* of the Collegio. This work began in 1578 to commemorate the dogate of Francesco Venier, who had died just prior to da Ponte's election. The *Votive Portrait of Doge Sebastiano Venier* (Fig. 34) depicts the doge turned at a three-quarters view away from the audience, outstretching his arms toward the figure of Jesus, who descends towards the doge. The clouds on which Christ stands seem to move downwards as well, extending into a point near Venier. Bathed in golden light behind Christ, flocks of angels and allegorical figures follow. Beside Venier, Saint Justina stands next to the figure representing Faith with a chalice.<sup>185</sup> A young boy, oblivious to the interaction between Venier and Jesus, attends to the train of the doge's cloak. Behind this scene of duke and deity rages the battle of Lepanto, reminding the viewer of Venier's greatest success as leader of the victorious army.

The present work and the models made for the original painting, however, suggest slightly variant themes. In the original work (Fig. 35), Venetia stood in the place of Saint Justina;<sup>186</sup> in this version Venier received the crown from Venetia, whereas in the final version Venier views and interacts directly with Jesus, flanked by Venice and allegorical figures. Most significantly, Saint Mark is removed from the focal point of the piece as Jesus replaces him on the central cloudbank.<sup>187</sup> The final version seals the doge's

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<sup>185</sup> Cocke, 207.

<sup>186</sup> *Ibid.*, 207.

<sup>187</sup> Brown, *Art and Life*, 80.

position as protector of Christianity through public service to Venice.<sup>188</sup> These changes date just after 1581, the moment the *giovani* made their move to power. Da Ponte, sympathizing with *giovani* efforts to return to tradition, reinforced his own desires to end papal powers in secular matters here, as had already begun in the art of the Maggior Consiglio.

The ideas presented in the votive portrait of Venier are especially striking when viewed in the context of other works in the Collegio and adjacent Senate chambers. Paintings surround the viewer in these rooms, both on the walls and ceilings. Images of doges receiving gifts and honors, in works such as the *Marriage of Saint Catherine and the Doge Francesco Dona* (Fig. 36) by Jacopo Tintoretto, *Doge Francesco Venier Presents to Venice the Subject Provinces* (Fig. 6) by Palma Giovanni, *Doge Pietro Loredan Beseeching the Virgin for the End of the Famine* (Fig. 37) by Jacopo Tintoretto, and *Doge Nicolo da Ponte Invokes the Protection of the Virgin* (Fig. 38) also by Tintoretto, combine Venetian personifications with allegorical and godly figures. Yet the votive painting of Doge Venier hangs alone in terms of religious implications.

The painting of Doge Venier is the only painting in the palace in which a doge interacts directly with God. Thus this work serves to enforce the sentiment already showcased in the paintings by Veronese in the Sala del Maggior del Consiglio; involvement of the pope is unnecessary for government to succeed in grace, as exhibited by Venier's victory on behalf of the Church to defeat the Turks.

Most shocking in this image, however, is the implication of Protestantism showcased by Venier's direct interaction with God; the power and importance of a

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<sup>188</sup> Prieuer, 116.

mediating Church becomes irrelevant and unnecessary when the idea of clergy as intercessors becomes obsolete. Cleverly, da Ponte places his own devotional image on the wall adjacent to this bold and unusual painting. By commissioning his own devotional image in the traditional style of the patron experiencing a vision, da Ponte separated himself from the implications contained in the Venier commission.

The work affirms the power of the dogate and an independent Venice to steer the state and the Church to safety and victory; this work implies once again that the Pope needed Venice more than she needed him. The selection of Veronese as the chief painter of the ceiling of the room as well as of the image and alterations of Venier, ties these images even closer to the message of those he created for the Maggior Consiglio.

The *Triumph of Venice* takes these ideas full-circle. As discussed earlier, Venice had long aligned herself with Solomonic justice. In this painting, the columns of Solomon's palace twist up either side of the triumphal arch behind Venetia. Although painting advisors did not specifically request this reference, Veronese included the justice motif to enhance da Ponte's anti-papal propaganda while glorifying the traditional state. Solomon's columns are embraced by Venetian nobles; thus, Venetians held close to Justice as the foundations of their triumphal structure of government. Just as Venetia and Justice are shown as one through this well-known imagery, the doge becomes the new Solomon. Thus, Venice emerges as a new Jerusalem, free from duty to the Pope.

Although da Ponte wished to spread his views on the papacy and politics, he also stressed the importance of civic responsibility and progressive aims of the *giovani* through the images created during this time. The Collegio consisted of men from some

Press, 1962), 105-115.

<sup>18</sup> Bianchi, 38. The three zones included were the *Sevi dal Consiglio*, *Sevi dal Collegio*, and *Sevi degli Ordinari*.

of the wealthiest and noblest families of Venice.<sup>189</sup> Members of this elite group of legislators included the Signoria, three Capi della Quarantia and three members of the *zonta*.<sup>190</sup> The image of Venier, a lesser-noble doge, elected purely because of the military prestige he brought the republic, displayed next to a painting of the lesser-noble da Ponte smacked of revenge against the members of high houses who defamed da Ponte during his election.

Such paintings made clear to the upper crust that the lower nobility had seeped into the highest ranks of Venetian government, evincing the momentum of the rediscovered principles of equality. These images helped drive home the importance of government on behalf of the entire republic, supporting the idea that even those of lower social standing had great worth to society. Any visitor to the council, or seated councilmen facing the throne, would have seen the religious allusion through the painting of Venier, and Venetians would have understood the reference to the rising power of the *giovani* class and their ideas of political reformation therein.

These legislators would have experienced the full impact of this propaganda in their daily work around the palace. The Collegio faces the interior courtyard of the palace, on the far side from the piazza and the Grand Canal. In coming and going from the important meeting rooms of the palace, men would have seen the portrait of Venier in the Collegio, then passed into the Sala del Quattro Porte, where the wall-size image of Henry III of France (Fig. 10) would have greeted them. As discussed earlier, Henry III represented an ally who opposed Protestantism while also denying papal control of his

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<sup>189</sup> James C. Davis, *The Decline of the Venetian Nobility as a Ruling Class* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962), 109/315.

<sup>190</sup> Bianchi, 28. The three *zonte* included were the Savi del Consiglio, Savi di Terrafirma, and the Savi degli Ordinari.



state. Legislators would have moved from this room down the Scala d'Oro and down an unadorned hall to reach the Maggior Consiglio on the second floor of the palace.<sup>191</sup> Here the implications of works in the Collegio and Quattro Porte would combine with other works of art.

The ideas presented in the wall paintings in the Collegio also apply to the works on the ceiling of the Maggior Consiglio. *The Triumph of Venice* relates to the other two main canvases on the ceiling, *Venice Crowned by Victory Triumphs Over the Subject Provinces* by Palma Giovane and *Triumph of Doge Nicolo da Ponte* by Tintoretto, in terms of spatial arrangement. As in the Collegio, da Ponte strategically removed himself from paintings with the strongest religious and political messages and instead placed himself in a benign coronation scene.

Tintoretto received the commission for the *Venice as Queen Offering an Olive Branch to Doge Nicolo da Ponte* (Fig. 13), which, when completed sometime between 1581 and 1585, withstood harsh criticism as "fatte per prattica," or as Tieze translates, "mass production."<sup>192</sup> By choosing Tintoretto to paint his two palace portraits, da Ponte further removed suspicion of his alliance with Veronese and his involvement with the propagandistic pro-*giovani* program for the renovated palace. By paying careful attention to detail and appearances, da Ponte took the focus from himself to facilitate the broad messages of the paintings, while at the same time honoring himself with large pictures to remove further suspicion of his personal stake in propagandistic images. With his

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<sup>191</sup> In years following the *giovani* movement, Domenico Tintoretto undertook a decoration project for part of the hallway leading to the Maggior Consiglio from the Scala D'Oro, although in the late sixteenth century this project had not yet begun. A portion of the hallway closest to the stairs holds no paintings, but is decorated in patterned wallpaper and stained wooden ceilings.

<sup>192</sup> Tieze, 365.

portraits throughout the palace, it would appear that his interests lay only in documenting his political achievements rather than in spreading his goals and views on government.

Despite the balance of power and lack of constitutional powers, any man who assumed this position could use the office to strengthen policy and effect as much change as he saw fit; the power of the doge rested in the desires and efforts of the individual holder of the title.<sup>193</sup> The surprise winner of the ducal title, da Ponte used his position to advance ideas about which he developed a passion throughout his long career in public service, using his powers of office to order visual representations of his sentiments about Venetian power and freedom from papal authority. His patronage of the arts also lent support to the *giovani* movement.

This young set of motivated, patriotic legislators replaced the mentality of the old, wealthy men who held complete sway in earlier decades, leading to a fresh concern for republicanism; this renewal of striving for the common good kindled within the government the anti-papal sentiments that da Ponte supported from the beginning of his public service.<sup>194</sup> Da Ponte directly influenced the painting program of the palace, notably in the works of Veronese, combining with his goals for social and governmental reform his desires for Venetian freedom from the tyranny of the pope and old nobility.

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<sup>192</sup> Norwich, 630.

<sup>193</sup> Brown, *Niccolo da Ponte*, . . . (New York: Walker, 1961), 71-72.

<sup>194</sup> Muir, 32.

The Venetian Republic died in 1797. After fourteen centuries, a series of complicated diplomatic fiascoes, weak leaders, and impotent neutrality led to a vote of surrender by Venice's nobility to Napoleon Bonaparte. On Friday, May 12, the Republic officially ended.<sup>195</sup> And with it died the original appearance of the Doge's Palace. The circumstances of Venice's fall came about through a difficult mélange of alliances and the decision to remain militarily neutral in the face of serious threats and aggression. Both Austria and France bullied Venice, each wanting to use the terra firma as a means of passage across Italy. Austria was an aggressive neighbor, making France both a natural and historical ally to Venice; however, Venice still recognized the government of Louis XVI, making an alliance with Napoleon's rebellious army impossible.<sup>196</sup> The situation worsened when the dead King's heir sought refuge in Verona, angering the French who wanted him dead and provoking the Austrians who wanted the heir to remain a threat to Bonaparte; Venice could not decide what to do, annoying both sides until the Republic finally forced him from the territory.<sup>197</sup> France then took offence at Venice's permission to allow Austrian troops to cross their mainland holdings; France interpreted this action as a breach of Venetian neutrality, giving them an

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<sup>195</sup> Norwich, 630.

<sup>196</sup> Guglielmo Ferrero, *The Gamble: Bonaparte in Italy 1796-1797*, Translated by Bertha Pritchard and Lily C. Freeman. 1<sup>st</sup> American Edition (New York: Walker, 1961), 71-72.

<sup>197</sup> Norwich, 610.

excuse to attack.<sup>198</sup> She had neither the strength nor the will to fight back. A few more diplomatic missteps by Venice sealed the fate of the Serenissima, as Napoleon vowed to overcome those who would not ally with him.<sup>199</sup>

In the name of liberation, Napoleon's men arrived in Venice. They destroyed what traces of the Republic they recognized in the city, including the *bocche lione*; these stone lion's mouths had for centuries stood as reminders of Republican justice, serving as collection boxes for letters requesting the investigation of crimes. Only one such carving remains today (Fig. 39), that of a man rather than a lion in the second floor loggia of the interior courtyard of the Doge's Palace. Other symbols of the Republic survived the Napoleonic years, including statues of Venice as Justice on the palace walls and sculptures of the lion of St. Mark.

Many other treasures of the Doge's Palace remain intact today. Scholars speculate that because Napoleon himself never visited Venice, using it instead as a temporary bargaining tool with the Austrians, he did not fully realize its value and thus did not take complete advantage of its opulence.<sup>200</sup>

His men did not leave the palace completely untouched during their occupation, however. The central painting panel on the ceiling of the Salla della Bussola and that of the Salla del Consiglio dei Dieci (Fig. 40) were ripped from their frames. Today these works hang in the Louvre in Paris, along with Veronese's *Wedding Feast at Cana*, which the French stole from its home in a Venetian monastery.

Weak copies eventually filled the heavy frames in the palace, although they are laughable imitations of the splendid Veronese originals. In the meeting room of the

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid., 610.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., 622.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., 635.

Council of Ten, paintings were robbed only to be returned and rehung incorrectly, confusing scholars as to the artists' intentions and themes.

Despite this thievery, Venice luckily avoided heavy looting. Perhaps the expansive rooms and tall ceilings discouraged men from stealing her paintings. The interim government may have enjoyed the opulent surroundings of the palace, choosing to leave the décor intact regardless of its content. Whatever the reason for its preservation, the palace found uses ranging from hosting appeals court trials, to serving as the city library to housing the state archeological museum, before its reopening to the public as a state-sponsored museum.<sup>201</sup>

Little has been written about the interconnectedness of the art of the Doge's Palace in terms of its thematic association with politics and history. Scholars have chosen to focus instead on individual works in single rooms or on allegorical themes, as opposed to addressing the meanings of complete cycles and the relationship of paintings throughout the palace. Napoleon's intervention may be to blame for this dearth of research; the removal of original works and lack of documentation of what changed in the palace over the years hinders the surety of research in the pilfered rooms. Also, the Palace Museum itself causes problems for researchers abroad by not publishing color-plates of the paintings it houses, nor allowing photography. Without these resources, the process of linking paintings, painting cycles, and their meanings becomes difficult without extensive on-site research. Hopefully this body of work will help fill the gap by addressing the motives and relationships among the paintings of the Doge's Palace still intact four hundred years after their installation.

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<sup>201</sup> Bianchi, 8.

## Conclusion

Born out of the ideals of justice and righteousness, Venetian government aligned itself with Solomon and the Virgin to reinforce traditional utilitarian community goals. Headed by the doge, councils and committees oversaw all aspects of the Serenissima from regulating the economy to overseeing the famous navy. Yet the Renaissance brought troubled times to Venice, as the maritime-trade economy collapsed due to piracy and Turkish violence on the seas. Trade routes on land became difficult as foreign armies blocked roads on the Italian mainland, limiting food supplies from the South.

The military also struggled, bowing to the might of the Turks who overtook nearly every Venetian outpost in the Adriatic. The League of Cambrai threatened from the West, claiming the entire terra firma for nearly a decade in the early sixteenth century. Despite Venice's partial recovery of these lands, the remainder of the sixteenth century continued to be a time of trouble for the Most Serene Republic. Although the Battle of Lepanto brought the joy of success to Venice, the republic was about to face another crippling defeat. Plague struck down more than fifty thousand Venetians. Only months after the government declared that the epidemic had subsided, the Maggior Consiglio of the Doge's Palace burned. Soon after this series of disasters, Nicolo da Ponte assumed the dogate.

Da Ponte understood the demoralizing effects of the recent past on Venetians and believed that a period of military neutrality while rebuilding the strength of the Venetian

interior would enable Venice to regain her status as a world leader. He began his fight by establishing checks on the freedoms of increasingly selfish city officials. Da Ponte understood the shift in thinking that had occurred as Venice had declined; the traditional mindset of government working for the good of the community had buckled as financially strained legislators sold votes and offices for money. The lower classes suffered poverty and unemployment as the self-interested councils and politicians ignored the needs of the state in favor of personal gain.

In order to combat the growing problems of state, da Ponte realized that fundamental changes needed to begin in the government. He commissioned propaganda in the form of expansive oil paintings in the renewed meeting rooms of the Doge's Palace. These paintings were designed to incite reform and return to tradition. A group of young legislators, who believed in the tradition of government working for the good of the whole, worked for these aims and in turn received support through da Ponte's political propaganda. Known as the *giovani*, these young men voted to dilute the power of the highest councilors and noblest families in the Venetian oligarchy. Da Ponte supported the politics and the agenda of the *giovani*, as circumstances surrounding his election suggest that his low-noble status nearly prevented his assumption of the corno.

The *Triumph of Venice*, commissioned during these years, reflects the *giovani* ideal for the state to rise above issues of title and nobility to work for the good of the state. As the image rises up on the ceiling, it suggests to legislators below their power to work on a plane above earthly desires for a better, more joyous Venice. These ideas presented in the *Triumph* contrast the ceiling works by Tintoretto and Palma Giovane,

whose depictions of Venetia cast her in a mythical, holy setting above and disconnected from the people of Venice.

Combined with paintings in other rooms, however, the message of the *Triumph of Venice* becomes more personal in its encouragement of open minds for the betterment of Venice. The votive portrait of Doge Sebastiano Venier would have reminded legislators of the recent history of lesser nobles ascending to the height of Venetian power, an idea especially close to da Ponte because of the mudslinging tactics used against his ducal campaign. Nobility from ancient houses had claimed his inferior family standing should keep da Ponte out of office; these same men, just a few years later, would have seen him presiding before a portrait of the previous doge Venier, who also came from a humbler noble clan. But revenge is only one motive of this work.

The painting also strikes at the papacy by revealing the power of Venice to protect the Church in times of military conflict. This image depicts direct interaction between Jesus and the doge, hinting at the debate over transubstantiation while implying the power of Venice to oversee the well-being of the Church. This painting was altered in 1581 to increase the interaction between doge and deity, reinforcing da Ponte's connection to the implications therein. The motives for displaying Venice's power relationship to the Vatican and anti-papal sentiments stems directly from da Ponte's personal animosity towards numerous popes during his years in public service. Accused of heresy, denied ambassadorial receptions, and asked to desist lobbying in international and Venetian affairs concerning papal politics, da Ponte had enough of papal manipulation.



The doge's earlier political career, fraught with encounters involving unfriendly, meddlesome popes, led da Ponte to include deeper messages in his propaganda for internal political reform. Veronese was selected to paint the key pieces in da Ponte's painting plan because of the artist's dealings with the Inquisition; both artist and doge had been accused of heresy for expressing opinions counter to those of the Pope and the hierarchy of the Catholic Church, lending these men a common bond and agenda.

Works such as the *Triumph of Venice* seem only ornate, skillfully painted images of allegory and overblown state glory. Yet upon further inspection, the relationship of this work to the *Paradise* connects the power of the state to both the justice of Solomon and the pure Christianity of the Virgin. Not only evoking state pride, these images in tandem target the power of the Pope by reminding Venetians of the holy birth of the state independent of Roman Christianity. The painting on the far wall of the Maggior Consiglio again strikes at the papacy; compositionally aligned with the *Triumph of Venice* and *Paradise* with figures arranged in horizontal bands, *The Return of Doge Andrea Contarini to Venice after the Battle of Chioggia* shows Church hierarchy in place of Jesus and Venetia in the top figural tier. Rather than angels and joyous citizens across the bottom of the canvas, prisoners are shown wrestling against their chains.

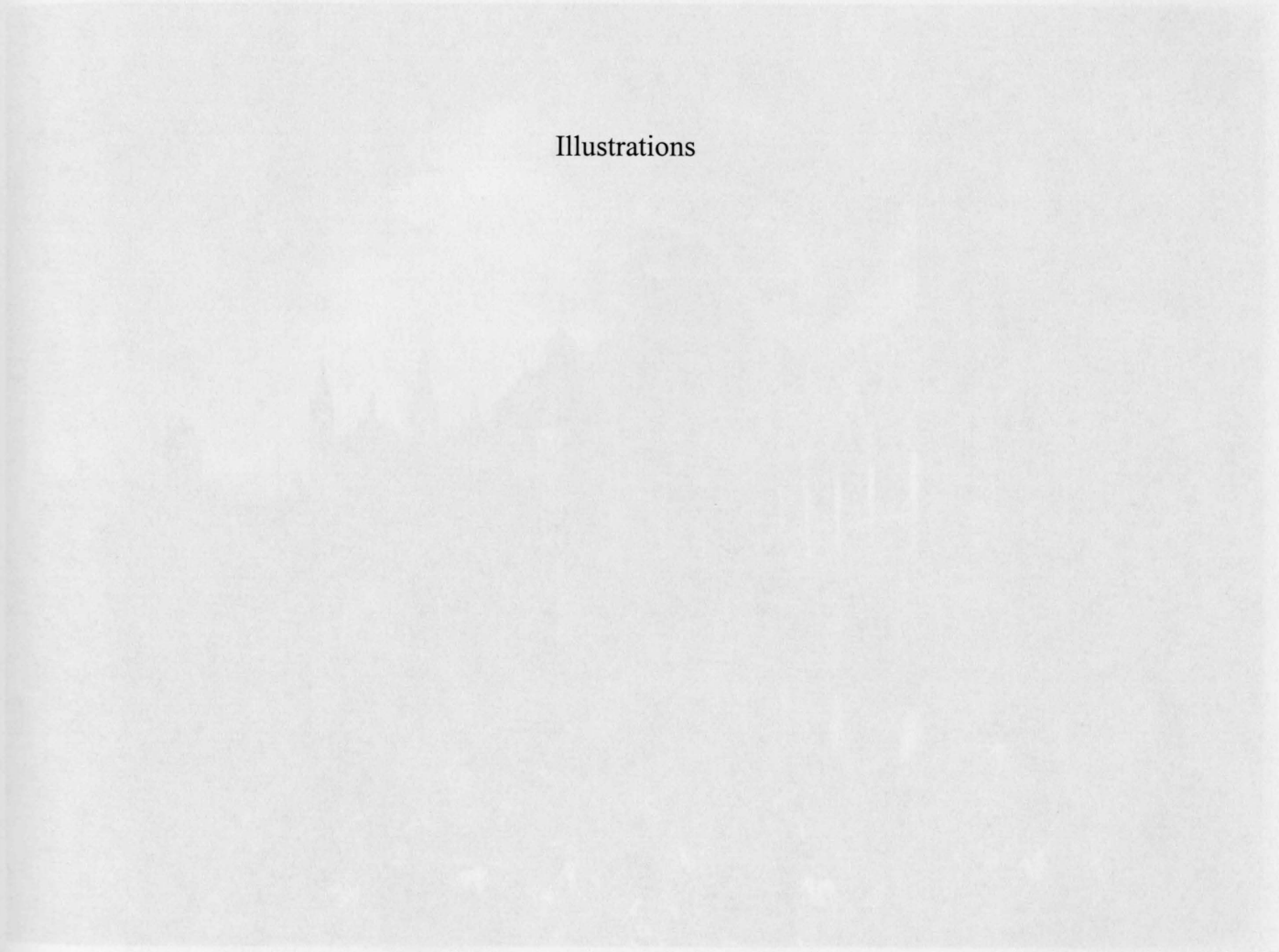
This anti-papal theme continues on the walls of this room, with images of the Venetian led Fourth Crusade and the diplomatic efforts of Doge Ziani to settle conflict between Emperor Barbarossa and Pope Alexander III. The gratitude of the Pope emerges as the theme of at least three major paintings in this series, reminding Venetians of their past glories while noting the debt of the Vatican to their republic.

The propaganda created during these years does not stop in the Collegio and Maggior Consiglio, but continues throughout the palace. Councilmen entering the Collegio would have passed an expansive portrait of King Henry III of France in the Salla della Quattro Porte. The prominence of this painting denotes Venice's respect for the policies of Henry, who fended off papal intrusion in state affairs while at the same time combating the growing Protestant population of France. This work recognized the celebrity of the King among Venetians at large, pushing a similar agenda to that of France in the Serenissima. The ceiling of this room shows Venice ruling over the terra firma, noting the importance of protecting the success of the land-based economy while also celebrating the maritime past in allegories of Venice receiving treasures from the sea. These rooms would have been seen in sequence as legislators passed through the palace from smaller legislative chambers to the Maggior Consiglio.

Taken together, the historical context of Venice in the late sixteenth century and the history of the doge reveal the motives and the propagandistic nature of the art of the Doge's Palace created after the fires of 1574 and 1577. These paintings supported the anti-papal leanings of Nicolo da Ponte while furthering the goals of the *giovani* for Venetian government to return to traditional utilitarian objectives.

Figure 1

Illustrations



"L'incendio del Palazzo dei Dogi nel 1577," n.d. As reproduced in *Le Palazzi di Venezia*, Venice, Page 58. Europa's World; North Editions, 1995-98.

Figure 1



Guariento. "Coronation of the Virgin." Fresco. Sala del Guariento, Doge's Palace, Venice, 1365. As reproduced in Eugenia Bianchi, Nadia Righi, Maria Cristina...

"L'incendie du Palais des Doges en 1577." n.d. As reproduced in *Le Palais des Doges de Venise*. Page 58. European Union: Storti Edizioni, 1995-96.

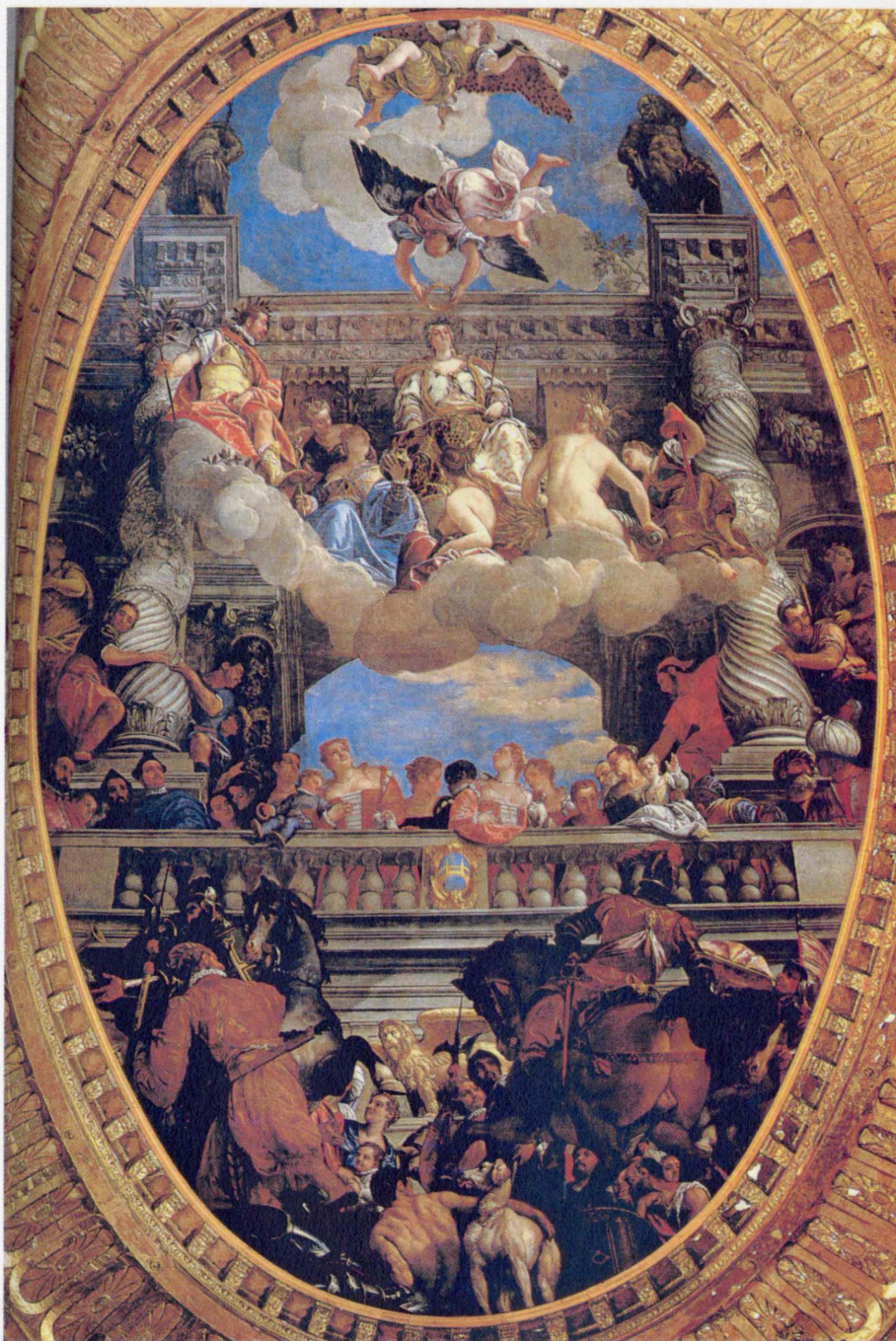
Figure 3  
Figure 2



Guariento. "Coronation of the Virgin." Fresco. Sala del Guariento, Doge's Palace, Venice. 1365. As reproduced in Eugenia Bianchi, Nadia Righi, Maria Cristina Terzaghi, *The Doge's Palace in Venice*. Page 41. Translated by Richard Sadleir. Milan, Italy: Electa, 1997.

Titian. "Triumph of Venice." Oil on Canvas. Doge's Palace, Venice. 1579-82. As reproduced in Peter Humfrey, *Pantheon of Venice*. Page 258. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985.

Figure 3



Filippo C  
reproduced  
Allison Rand Lertzman is *An History*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press  
2001.

Paolo Veronese. "Triumph of Venice." Oil on Canvas. Maggior Consiglio, Doge's Palace, Venice. 1579-82. As reproduced in Peter Humfrey, *Painting in Renaissance Venice*. Page 258. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.

Figure 4



Filippo Calendario. "Venetia." Stone relief. West Façade, Doge's Palace, Venice. As reproduced in David Rosand, *Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State*. Page 31. Allison Rand Lectures in Art History. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

As reproduced in David Rosand, *Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State*. Page 31. Allison Rand Lectures in Art History. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

Figure 5

Figure 6



Jacopo Palma il Giovane. "Venice Receiving Gifts from the Subject Provinces."  
Bartolomeo Bon. "Justice." Stone relief. Porta della Carta, Doge's Palace, Venice. As reproduced in David Rosand, *Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State*. Page 33. Bettie Allison Rand Lectures in Art History. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

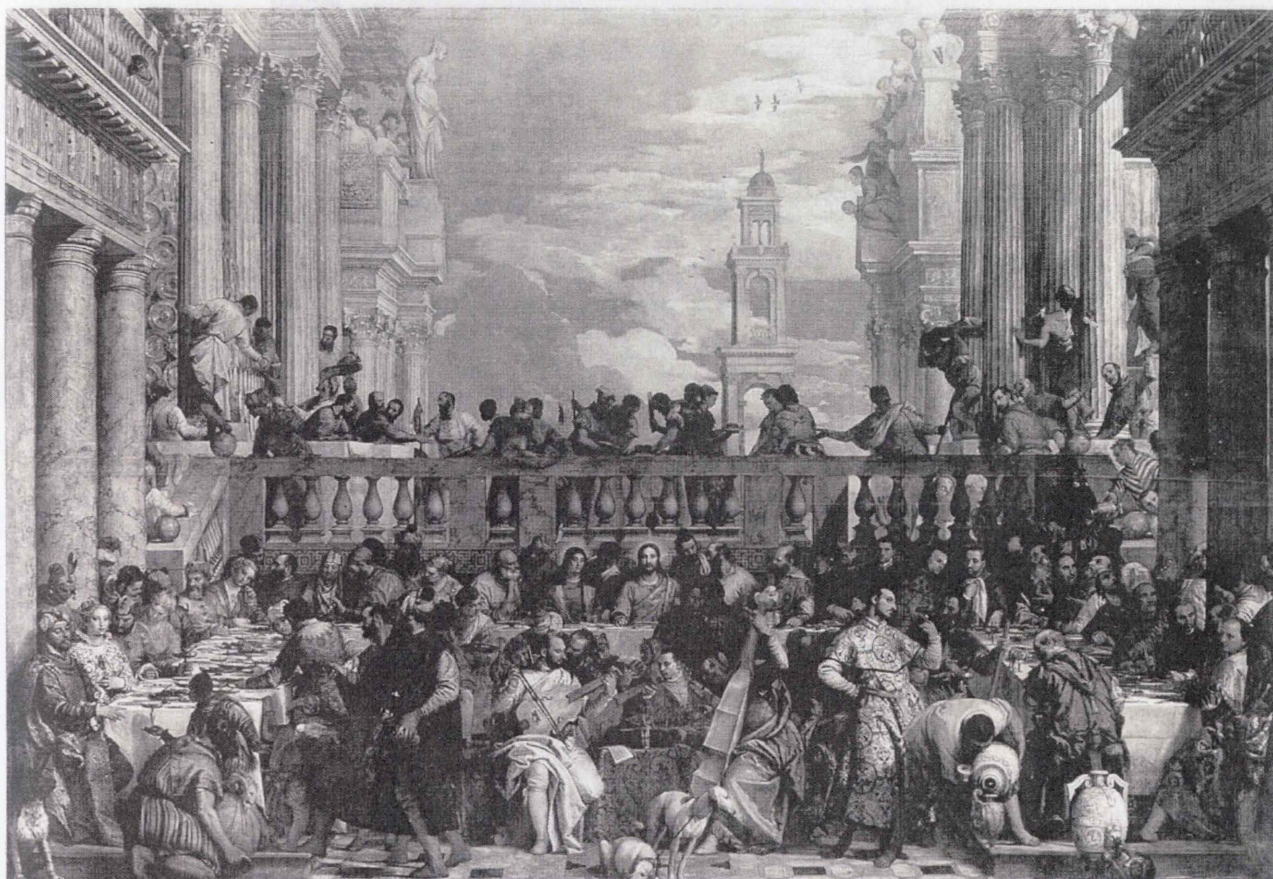


Figure 7  
Figure 6



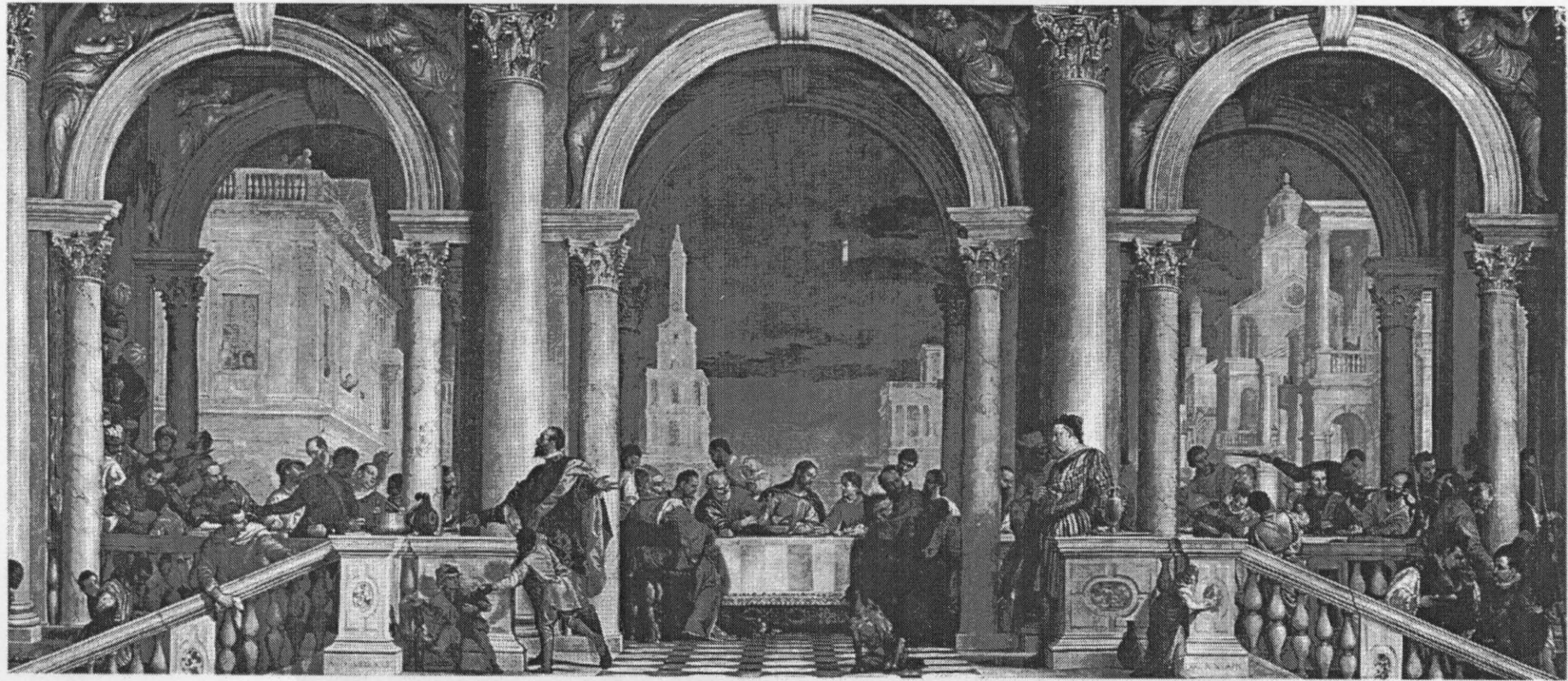
Jacopo Palma il Giovane. "Venice Receiving Gifts from the Subject Provinces Presented by Doge Francesco Venier." Sala del Senato, Doge's Palace, Venice. As reproduced in Eugenia Bianchi, Nadia Righi, Maria Cristina Terzaghi, *The Doge's Palace in Venice*. Page 32. Translated by Richard Sadleir. Milan, Italy: Electa, 1997.

Figure 7



Paolo Veronese. "Wedding Feast at Cana." Oil on Canvas. Musee du Louvre, Paris. As reproduced in William R. Rearick, *The Art of Paolo Veronese, 1528-1588*. Exhibit Catalogue. Page 12. Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art; Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Figure 8



Paolo Veronese. "Feast in the House of Levi (Last Supper)." Oil on Canvas. Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice. As reproduced in William R. Rearick, *The Art of Paolo Veronese, 1528-1588*. Exhibit Catalogue. Page 14. Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art; Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

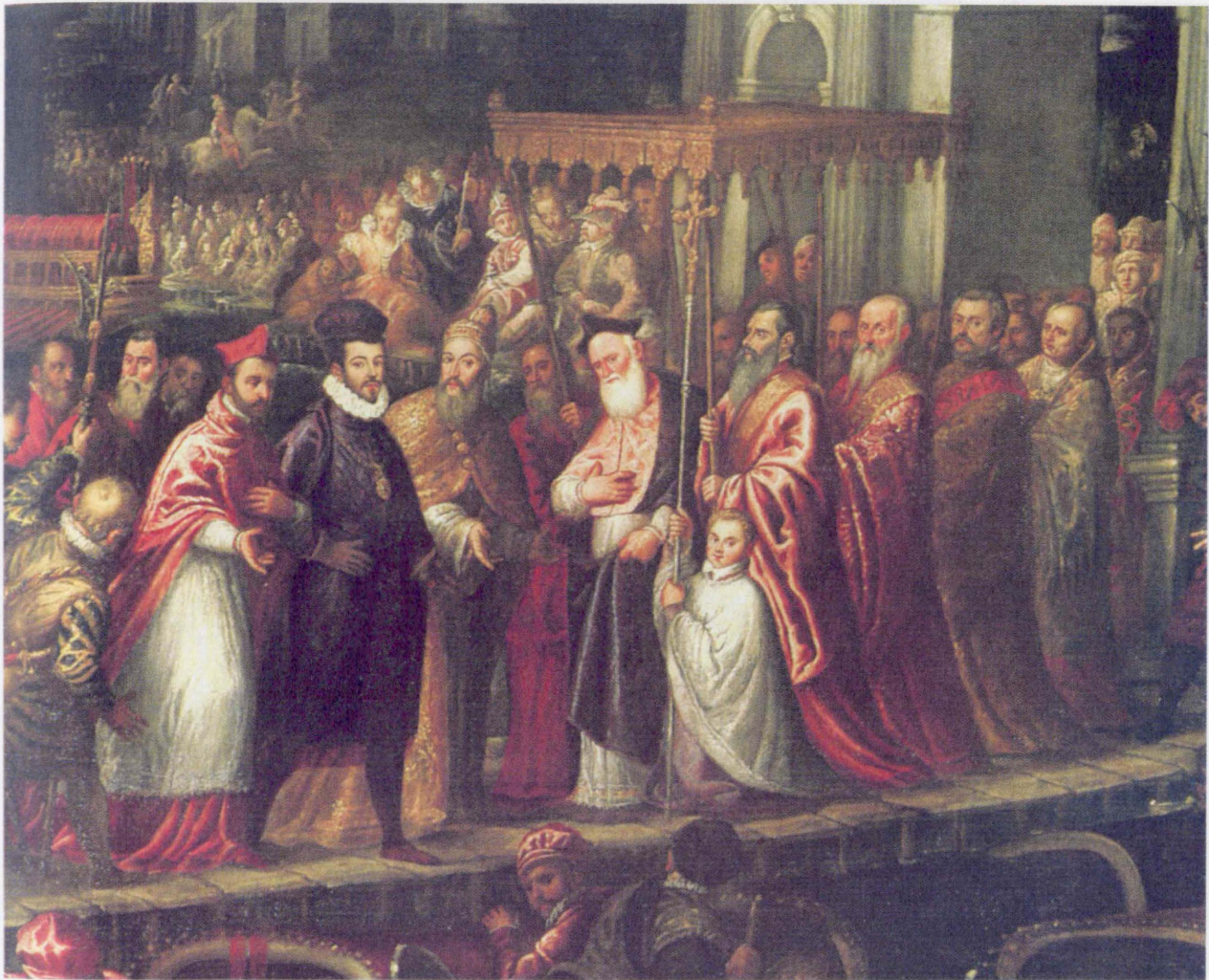
Figure 9



Paolo Veronese. "The Rape of Europa." Sala del AntiCollegio, Doge's Palace, Venice.  
As reproduced in Filippo Pedroca, *Veronese*. Page 61. Florence: Scala, 1998.

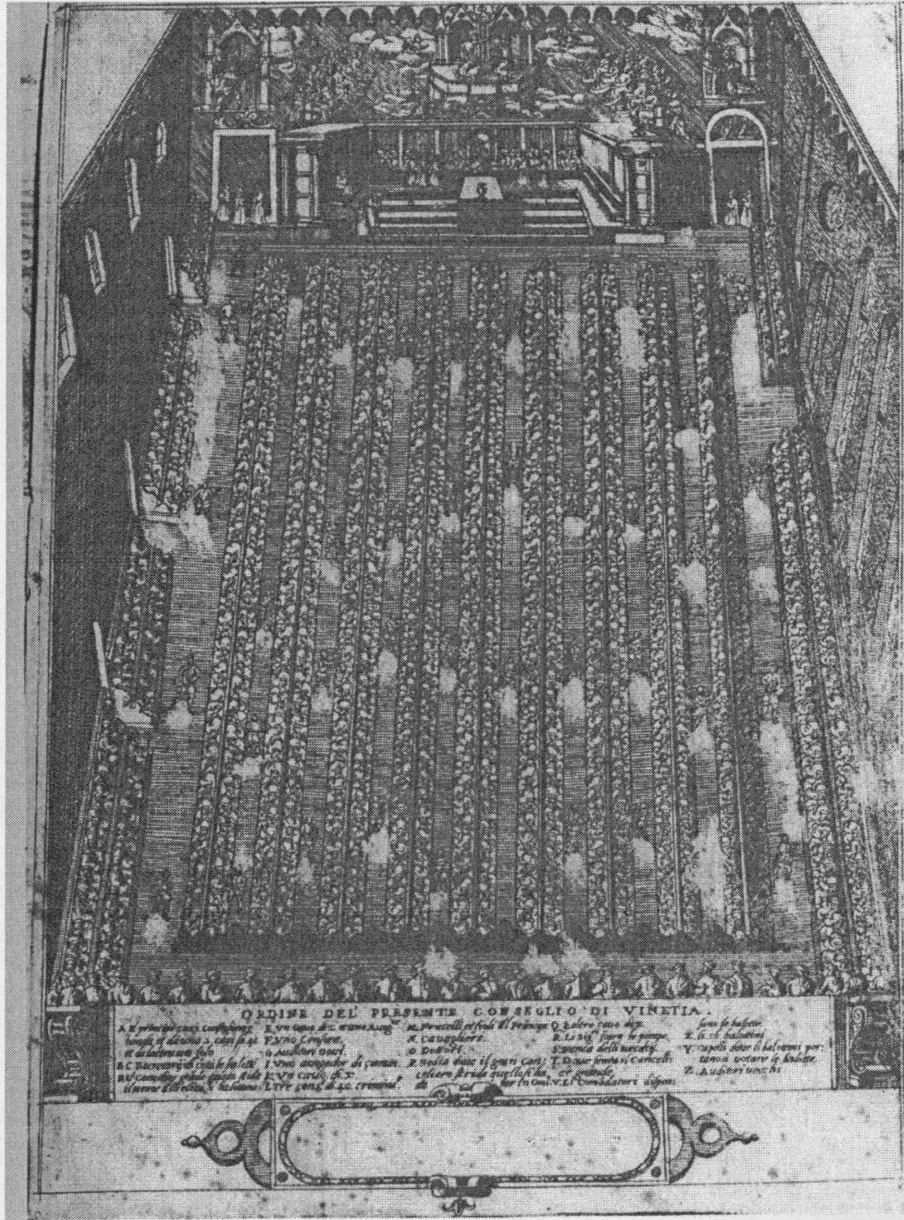
*Palace in Venice*. Translated by Richard Sadleir. Page 25. Milan: Scala, 1998.

Figure 10



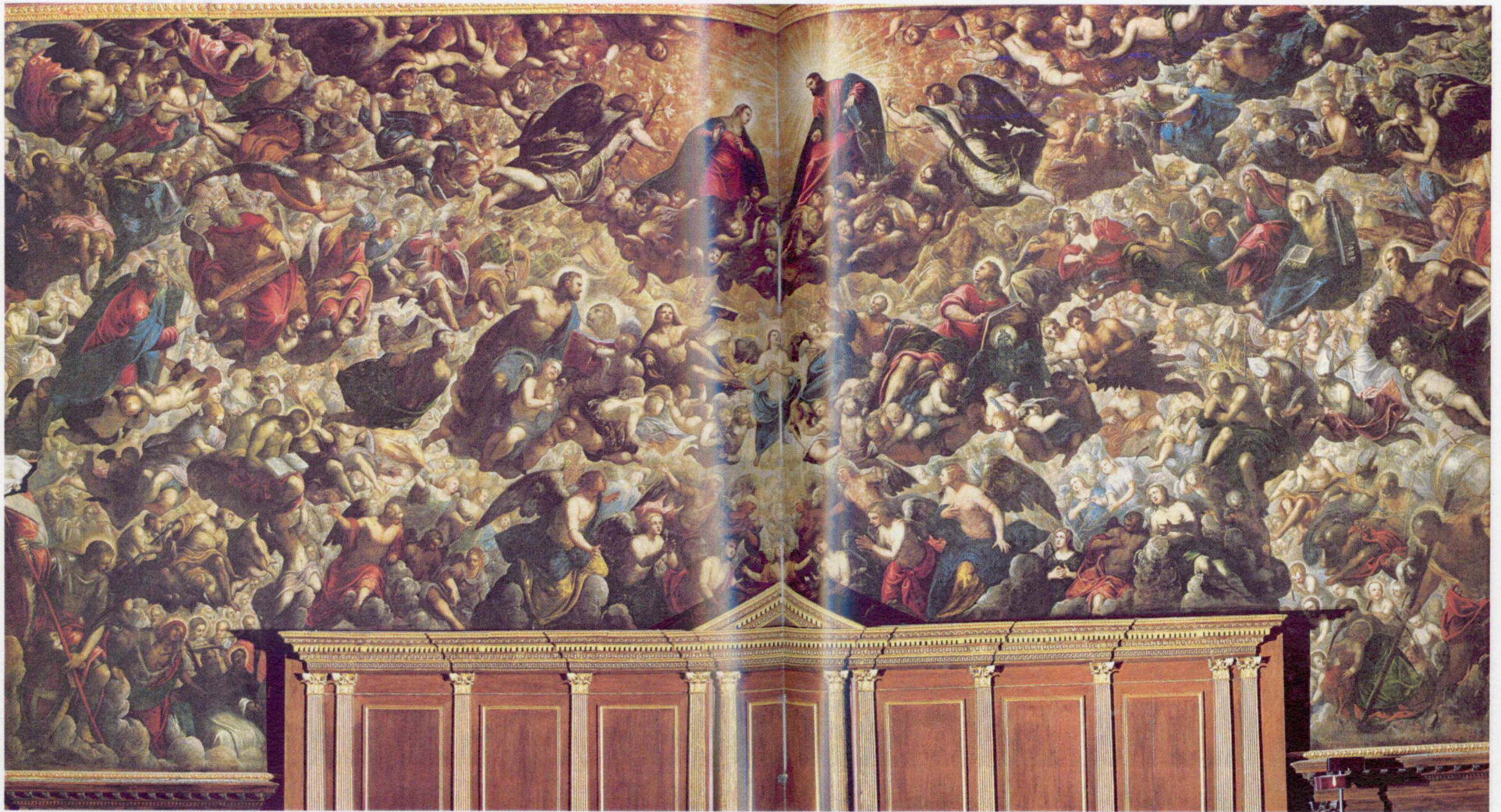
Andrea Vicentino. "The Doge and the Patriarch Welcoming Henry III, King of France to Venice." Detail, Oil on Canvas. Sala del Quattro Porte, Doge's Palace, Venice. As reproduced in Eugenia Bianchi, Nadia Righi, Maria Cristina Terzaghi, *The Doge's Palace in Venice*. Translated by Richard Sadleir. Page 25. Milan, Italy: Electa, 1997.

Figure 11



"Anonymous Sixteenth-Century Engraving of the Maggior Consiglio Before the Fire of 1577." Museo Civico Correr, Venice. As reproduced in David Rosand, *Myths of Venice: The Figuration of a State*. Page 27. Bettie Allison Rand Lectures in Art History. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.

Figure 12



Jacopo Tintoretto. "Paradise." Oil on Canvas. Sala del Maggior Consiglio, Doge's Palace, Venice. 1594. As reproduced in *Le Palais des Doges de Venise*. Page 56-57. European Union: Storti Edizioni, 1995-96.

Figure 13



Jacopo Tintoretto. "Venice as Queen Offering an Olive Branch to Doge Nicolo da Ponte." Oil on Canvas. Sala del Maggior Consiglio, Doge's Palace, Venice. As reproduced in *Le Palais des Doges de Venise*. Page 60. European Union: Storti Edizioni, 1995-96.



Figure 14



Jacopo Palma il Giovane. "Venice Crowned by Victory Triumphs Over the Subject Provinces." Oil on Canvas. Sala del Maggior Consiglio, Doge's Palace, Venice. As reproduced in *Le Palais des Doges de Venise*. Page 61. European Union: Storti Edizioni, 1995-96.

Figure 15

Jacopo Palma il Giovane. "Defeat of Padua." Oil on Canvas. Sala del Maggior Consiglio, Doge's Palace, Venice. As reproduced in *Le Palais des Doges de Venise*. Page 63. European Union: Storti Edizioni, 1995-96.



Jacopo Tintoretto. "Victory of the Venetians Over the Ferrarese at Argenta." Oil on Canvas. Maggior Consiglio, Doge's Palace, Venice. As reproduced in Eugenia Bianchi, Nadia Righi, Maria Cristina Terzaghi, *The Doge's Palace in Venice*. Page 47. Translated by Richard Sadleir. Milan, Italy: Electa, 1997.

Figure 16

Jacopo Palma il Giovane. "Defeat of Padua." Oil on Canvas. Sala del Maggior Consiglio, Doge's Palace, Venice. As reproduced in *Le Palais des Doges de Venise*. Page 63. European Union: Storti Edizioni, 1995-96.



Jacopo Tintoretto. "Defense of Brescia." Oil on Canvas. Sala del Maggior Consiglio, Doge's Palace, Venice. As reproduced in *Le Palais des Doges de Venise*. Page 63. European Union: Storti Edizioni, 1995-96.

Figure 17



Jacopo Palma il Giovane. "Siege of Constantinople." Oil on Canvas, 1567.

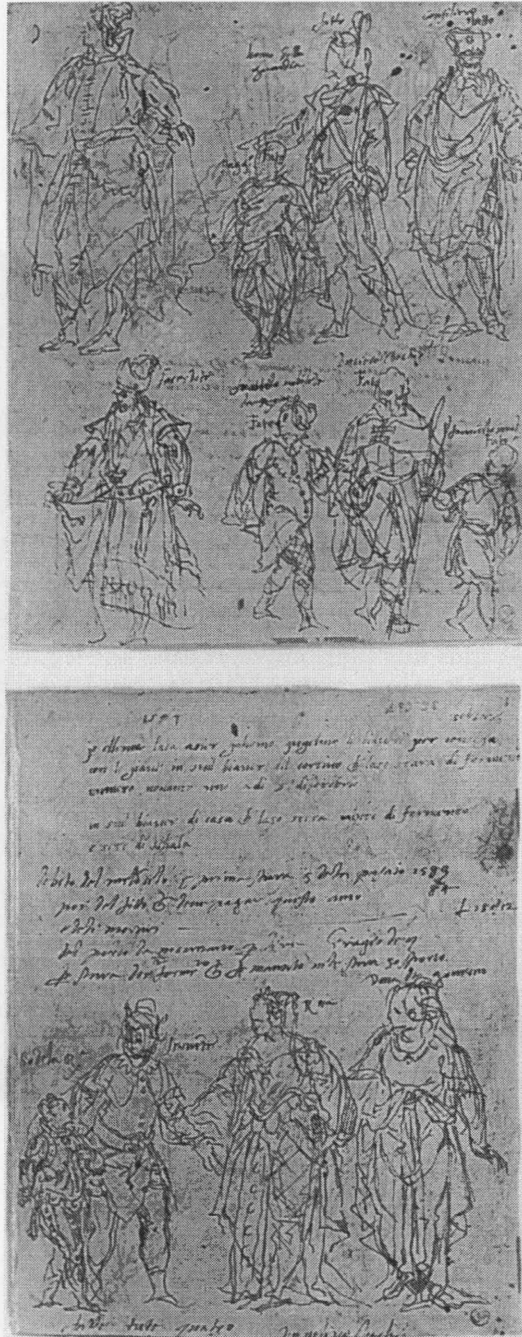
Domenico Tintoretto. "Battle of Salvo." Oil on Canvas. Sala del Maggior Consiglio, Doge's Palace, Venice. As reproduced in *Le Palais des Doges de Venise*. Page 66. European Union: Storti Edizioni, 1995-96.

Figure 18



Jacopo Palma il Giovane. "Siege of Constantinople." Oil on Canvas. c. 1587. Maggior Consiglio, Doge's Palace, Venice. As reproduced in Patricia Fortini Brown, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice*. Page 72. Perspectives. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997.

Figure 19



Paolo Veronese. "Costume Studies for Sophocles' Oedipus the Tyrant." Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris. As reproduced in William R. Rearick, *The Art of Paolo Veronese, 1528-1588*. Exhibit Catalogue. Page 167. Washington: National Gallery of Art; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Figure 20



Ferrini. "Teatro Olimpico." Photograph. Vicenza. As reproduced in David Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice: Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto*. Page 118. Revised edition. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Figure 22  
Figure 21

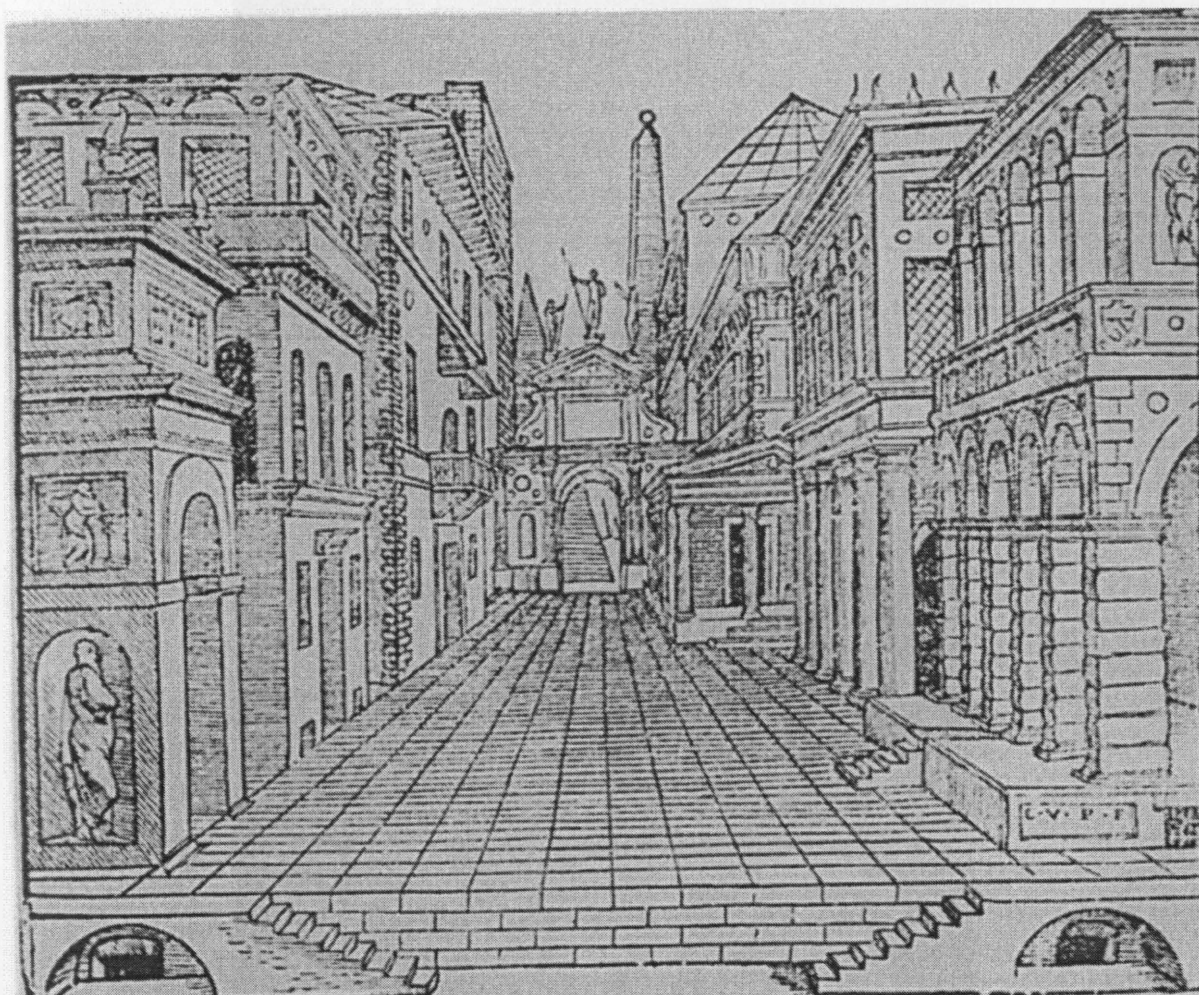


Sebastiano Serlio, "Scena Tragica (from Secondo libro odi Prospettiva)," 1568

Paolo Veronese. "The Family of Darius Before Alexander." Oil on Canvas. National Gallery, London. As reproduced in Filippo Pedroca, *Veronese*. Page 41. Florence, Scala: 1998.

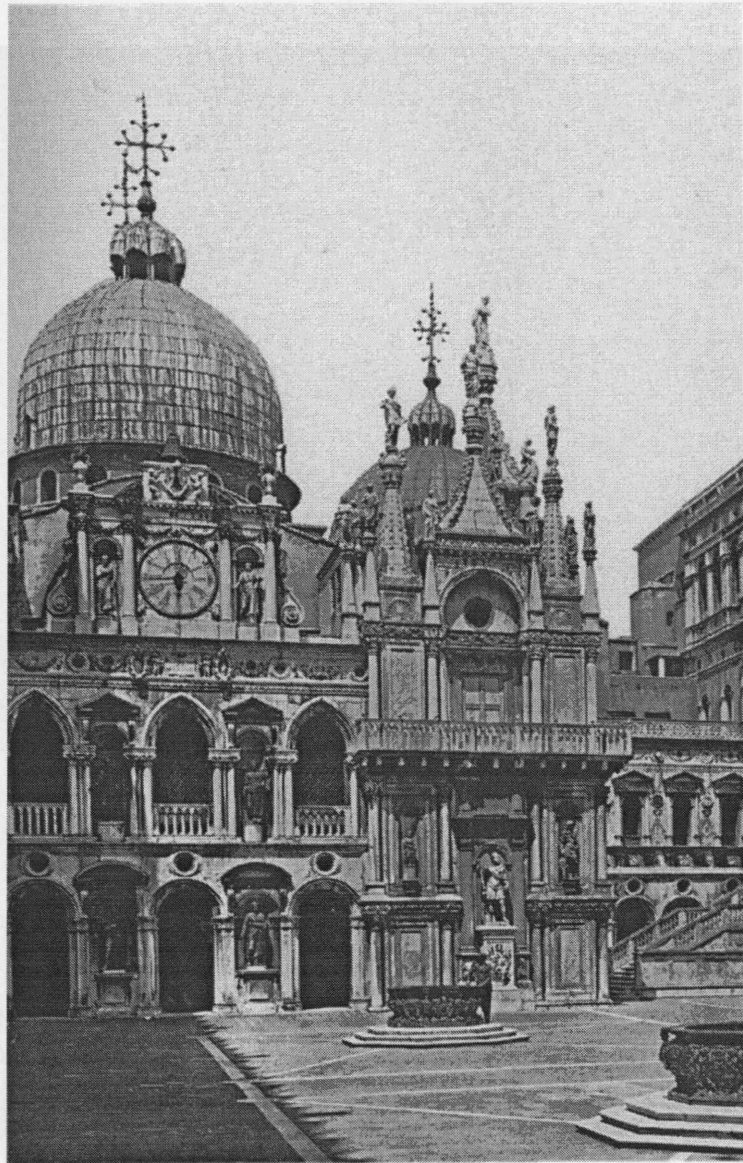


Figure 22



Sebastiano Serlio. "Scena Tragica (from *Secondo libro di Perspettiva*)."  
1545. As reproduced in David Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice: Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto*. Page 114. Revised edition. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Figure 23



"Arco Foscari." Photograph. Doge's Palace, Venice. As reproduced in David Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice: Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto*. Page 127. Revised edition. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Figure 24



Francesco Marcolini. "Le Sorti: Fama." 1540. As reproduced in Charles Hope, "Veronese and the Venetian Tradition of Allegory." *Proceedings of the British Academy* 71. Page 399. (1985): 389-428.

Figure 25



Paolo Veronese. "Music." Oil on Canvas. Marciana Library, Venice. 1556-57. As reproduced in Filippo Pedroca, *Veronese*. Page 17. Florence, Scala: 1998.

European Union: Storm Report, 1995-96.

Figure 26



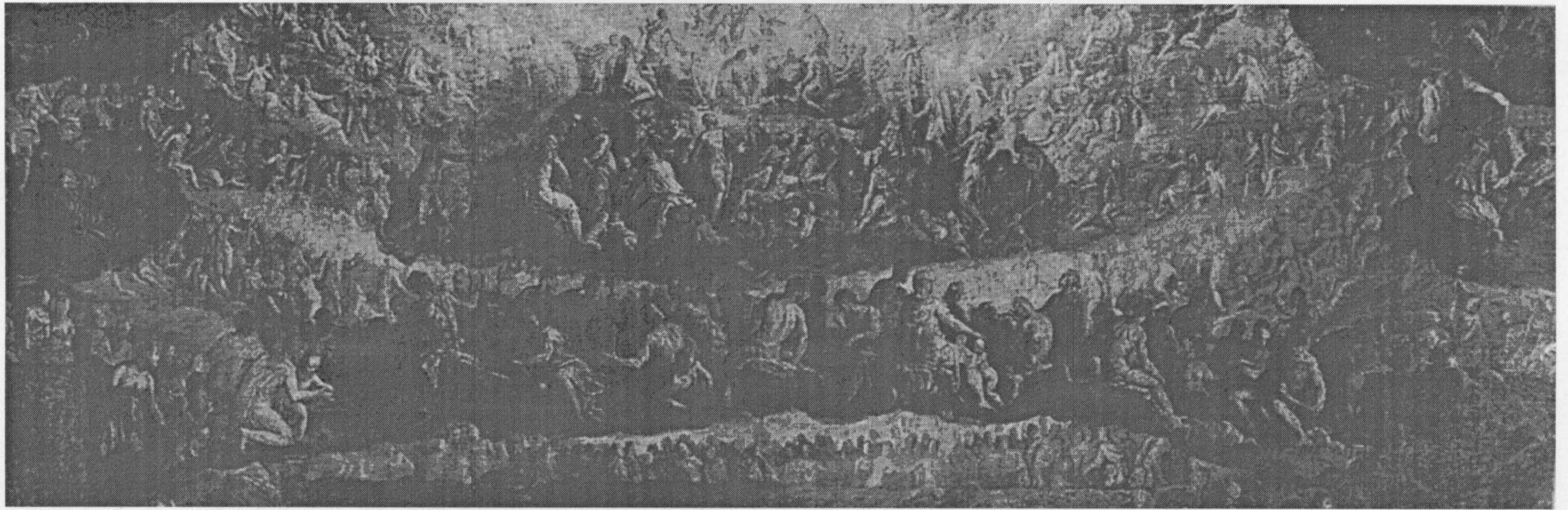
Jacopo Tintoretto. "Triumph of Venice." Oil on Canvas. Sala del Senato, Doge's Palace, Venice. 1584. As reproduced in *Le Palais des Doges de Venise*. Page 46. European Union: Storti Edizioni, 1995-96.

Figure 27



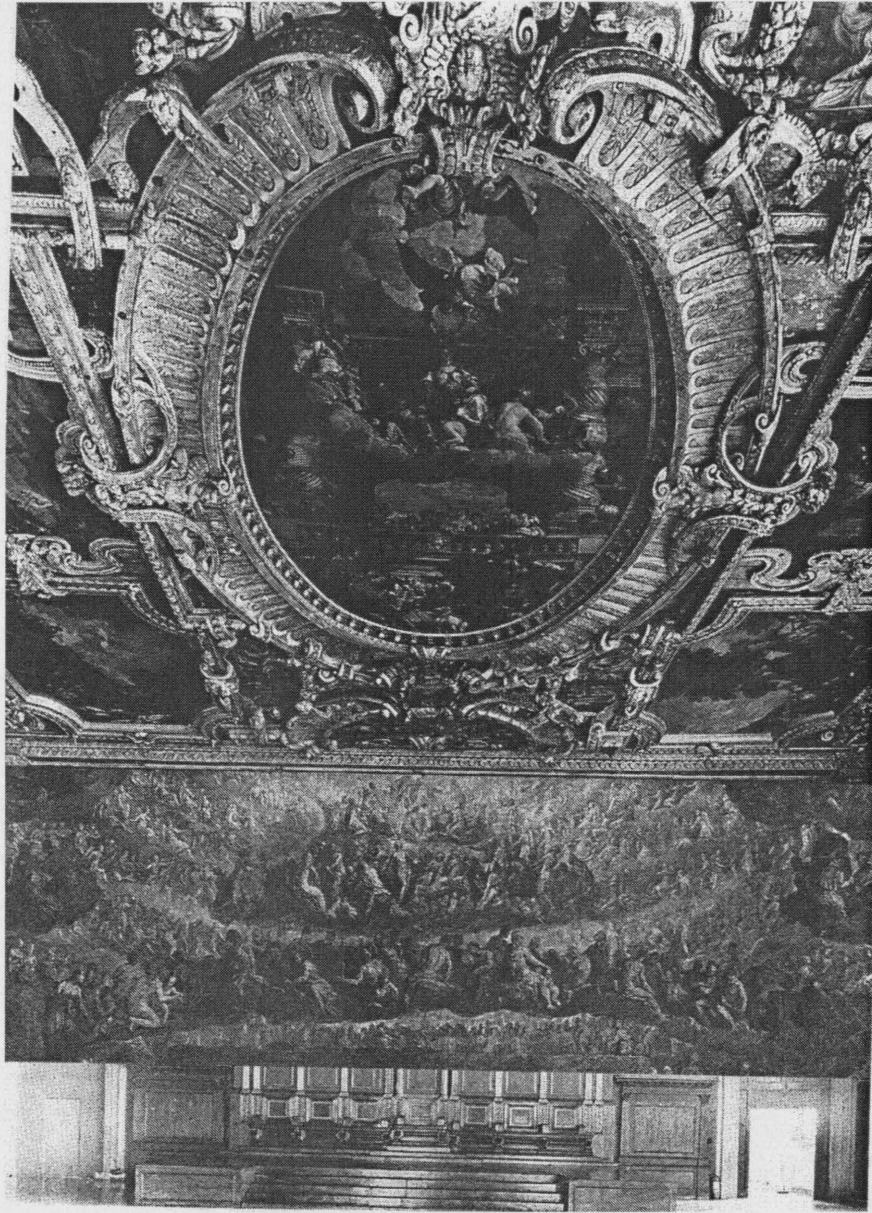
Jacopo Tintoretto. "Competition Sketch for Paradise." Musee du Louvre, Paris. C. 1579. As reproduced in Hans Tietze, *Tintoretto: The Paintings and Drawings: with Three Hundred Illustrations*. Plate 244. London: Phaidon, 1948. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge

Figure 28



Paolo Veronese. "Model for Paradise." Musee des Beaux-Arts, Lille, France. As reproduced in William R. Rearick, *The Art of Paolo Veronese, 1528-1588*. Exhibit Catalogue. Page 163. Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art; Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Figure 28



Paolo Veronese. "Photo of Veronese's Triumph of Venice with a photographic reconstruction showing Veronese's Model for Paradise Superimposed on the End Wall." Salla del Maggior Consiglio, Doge's Palace, Venice. As reproduced in William R. Rearick, *The Art of Paolo Veronese, 1528-1588*. Exhibit Catalogue. Page 156. Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art; Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1988.



Figure 29



Federigo Zuccari. "Barbarossa Kneeling Before Pope Alexander III." Oil on Canvas. Maggior Consiglio, Doge's Palace, Venice. 1582. As reproduced in Peter Humfrey, *Painting in Renaissance Venice*. Page 260. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.

Figure 30



Palma Giovane. "Pope and the Doge allowing the Emperor's Son to Sue for Peace in 1177." Oil on Canvas. Maggior Consiglio, Doge's Palace, Venice. As reproduced in William James Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty; Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation*. Page 270. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.

Figure 31



Andrea Michieli detto Vincentino. "Doge Sebastiano Ziani Receiving the Ring from Pope Alexander III in 1177." Oil on Canvas. Maggior Consiglio, Doge's Palace, Venice. 1600. As reproduced in William James Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty; Renaissance Values in the Age of the Counter Reformation*. Page 239. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968.

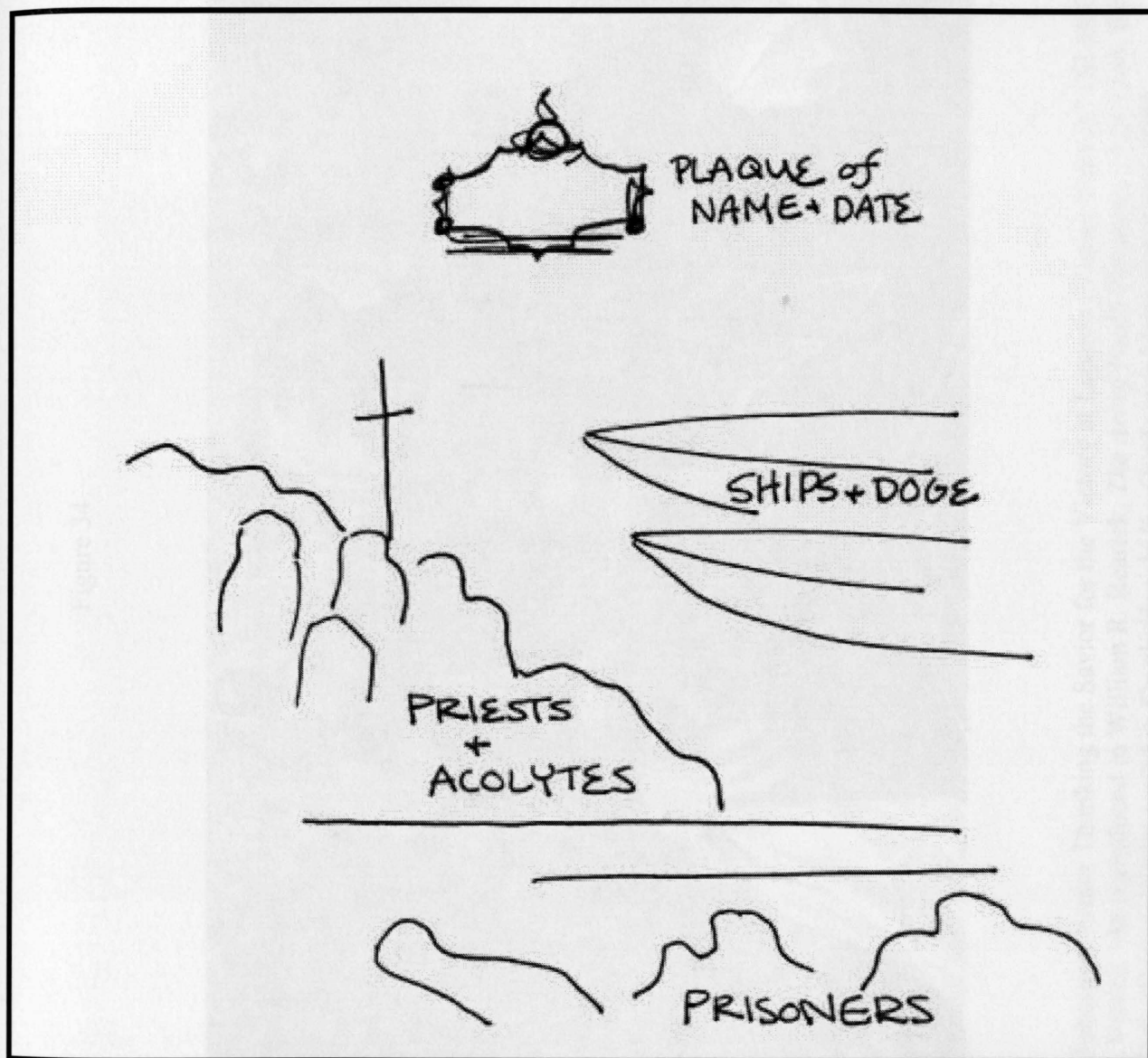
Figure 32



Francesco Bassano. "Donation of the Sword." Oil on Canvas. Maggior Consiglio, Doge's Palace, Venice. 1582-87. As reproduced in Peter Humfrey, *Painting in Renaissance Venice*. Page 261. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.

Doge's Palace, Venice

Figure 33



Sketch by author of:  
Paolo Veronese. "The Return of Doge Andrea Contarini to Venice After the Venetian Victory over the Genoese at Chioggia." Oil on Canvas. Sala del Maggior Consiglio, Doge's Palace, Venice.

Figure 34



Paolo Veronese. "Doge Sebastian Venier Thanking the Savior for the Victory at Lepanto (Venier Votive)." Oil on Canvas. Sala del Collegio, Doge's Palace, Venice. As reproduced in William R. Rearick, *The Art of Paolo Veronese, 1528-1588*. Exhibit Catalogue. Page 105. Washington, D.C.: National Gallery of Art; Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Figure 35



Paolo Veronese. "Preparatory Sketch for Votive Portrait of Doge Sebastiano Venier." Oil sketch in Chiaroscuro on Prepared red paper. C. 1578. British Museum, London. As reproduced in Patricia Fortini Brown, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice. Perspectives.* Page 79. New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1997.

Art, 1999; Milan: Mondadori Electa.

Figure 36

Figure 37



Jacopo Tintoretto. "The Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine, with the Doge Francesco Dona Surrounded by Prudence, Temperance, Eloquence, and Charity." Oil on Canvas. Salla del Collegio, Doge's Palace, Venice. As reproduced in Stefano Zuffi, editor. *Venice. Capitals of Art*. Translated by Richard Sadleir. Page 236. Milan: Leonardo Arte, 1999; Milan: Mondadori Electa, 2003.

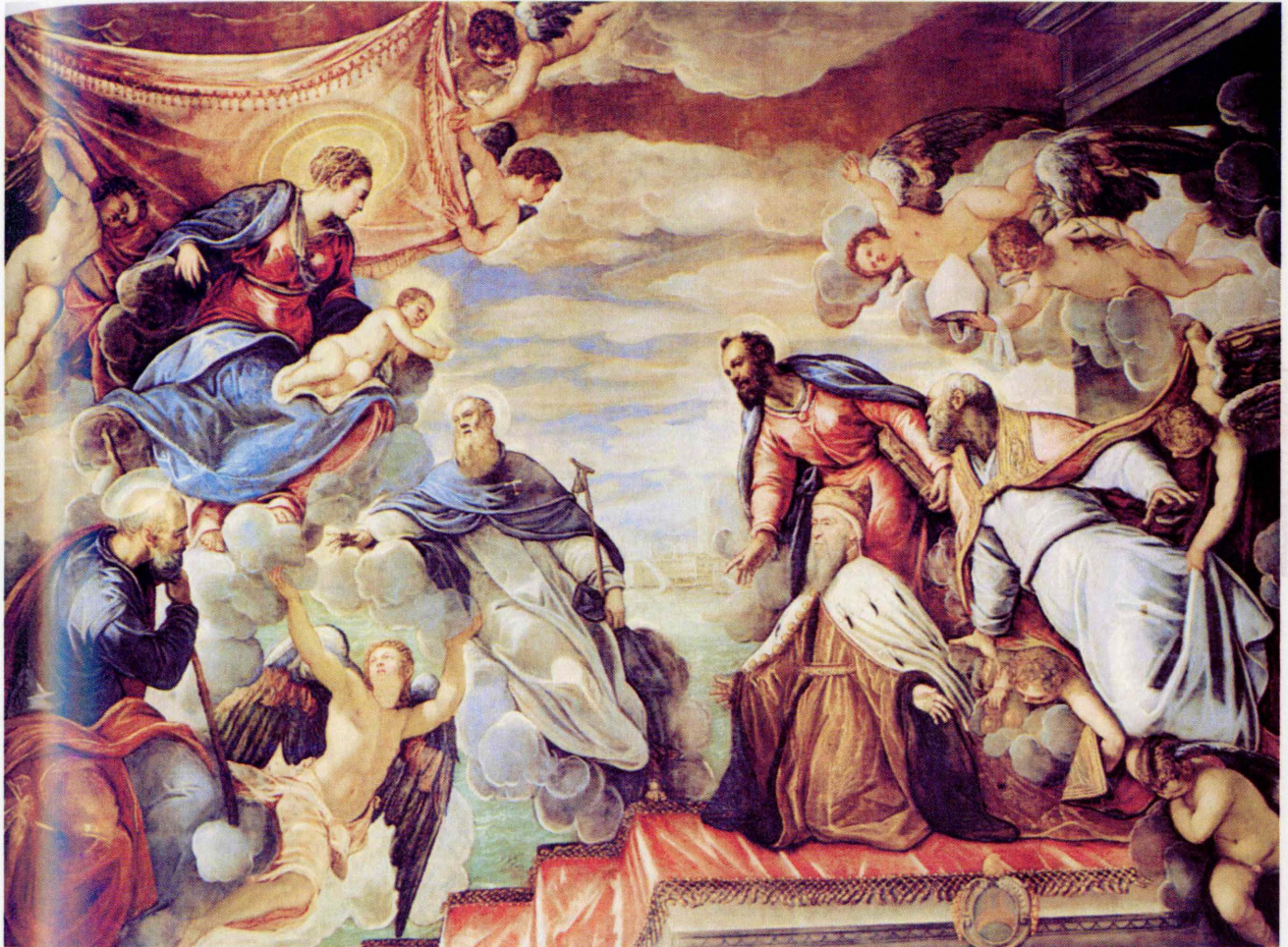


Figure 36  
Figure 37



Jacopo Palma il Giovane. "Doge Pietro Loredan Beseeking the Virgin for the End of the Famine and Victory over the Turks." Sala del Senato, Doge's Palace, Venice. As reproduced in Eugenia Bianchi, Nadia Righi, Maria Cristina Terzaghi, *The Doge's Palace in Venice*. Page 33. Translated by Richard Sadleir. Milan, Italy: Electa, 1997.

Figure 38



Jacopo Tintoretto. "Votive Portrait of Doge Nicolo da Ponte." Oil on Canvas. Sala del Collegio, Doge's Palace, Venice. 1581-84. As reproduced in Hans Tietze, *Tintoretto: The Paintings and Drawings: with Three Hundred Illustrations*. Plate 235. London: Phaidon, 1948.

Figure 39



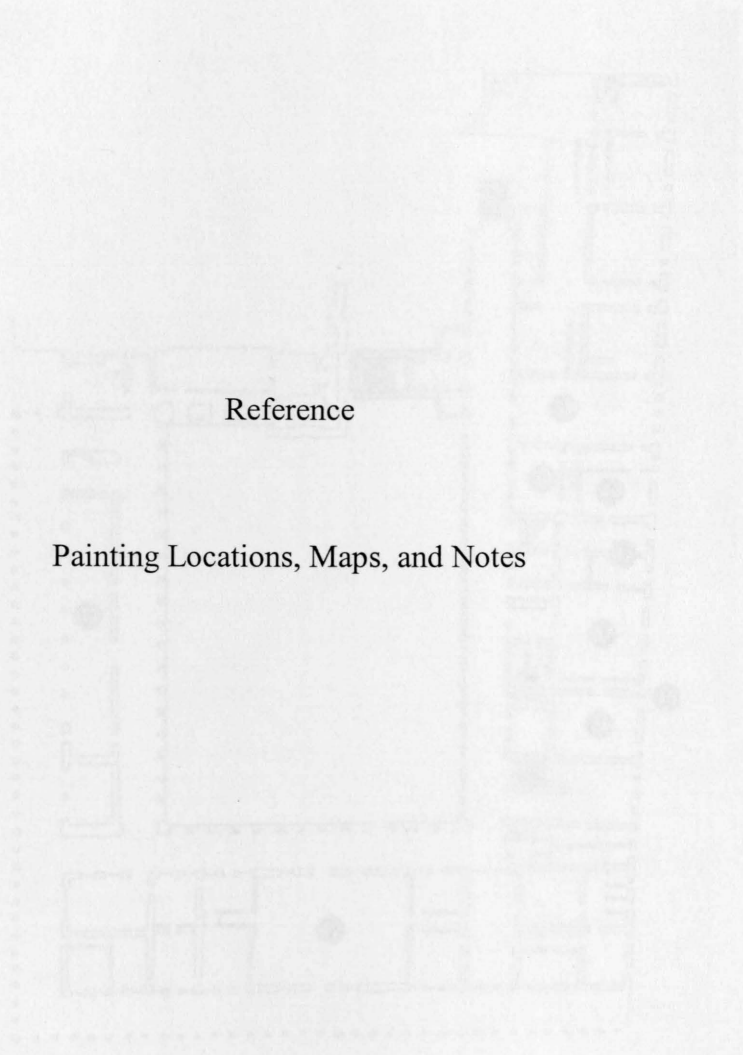
"Bocche di Leone." Stone carving. n.d. As reproduced in Eugenia Bianchi, Nadia Righi, Maria Cristina Terzaghi, *The Doge's Palace in Venice*. Page 15. Translated by Richard Sadleir. Milan, Italy: Electa, 1997.

Figure 40



Paolo Veronese. "Jupiter Expelling the Vices." Oil on Canvas. Musee du Louvre, Paris. As reproduced in Filippo Pedroca, *Veronese*. Page 11. Florence, Scala: 1998.

All maps reproduced from Eugenia Bianchi, Natalia Righi, Maria Cristina Terzaghi, *The Doge's Palace in Venice*. Page 41. Translated by Richard Sadleir. Milan, Italy: Electa, 1997.



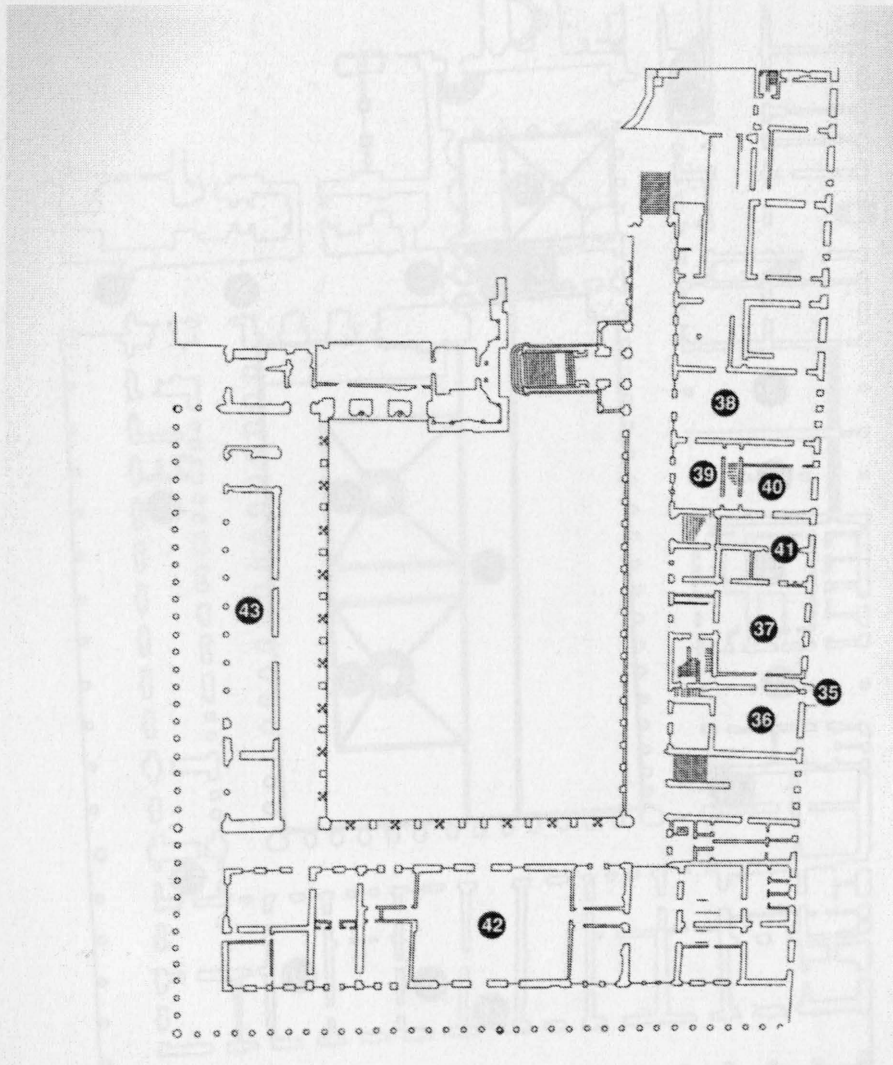
Reference

Painting Locations, Maps, and Notes

Notes and Drawings by Gene and Gayle Adams

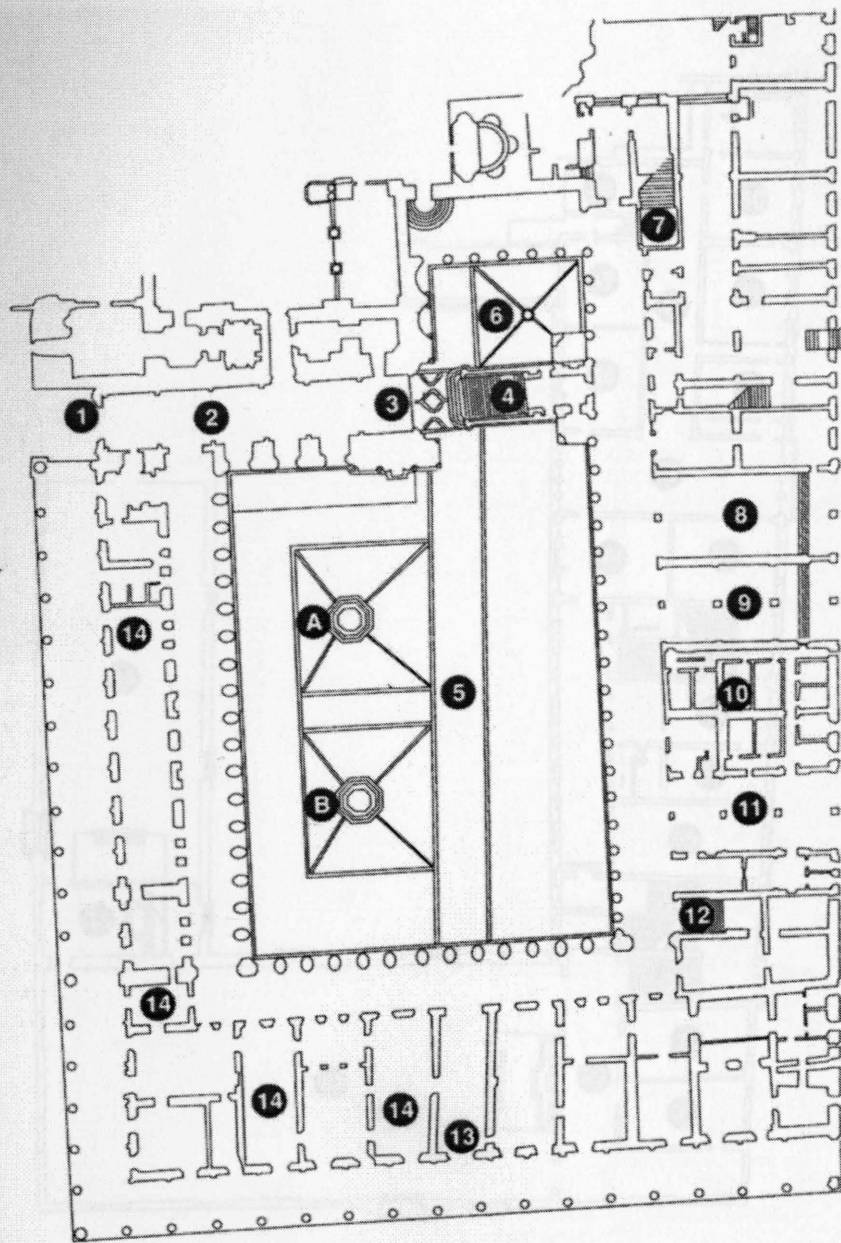
Maps reproduced from Eugenia Bianchi, Maria Christina Terzaghi, *The Doge's Palace in Venice*. Translated by Richard Sadleir. Milan, Italy: Electa, 1997.

All maps reproduced from Eugenia Bianchi, Nadia Righi, Maria Cristina Terzagli, *The Doge's Palace in Venice*. Page 41. Translated by Richard Sadleir. Milan, Italy: Electa, 1997.



*Plan of the loggias.*

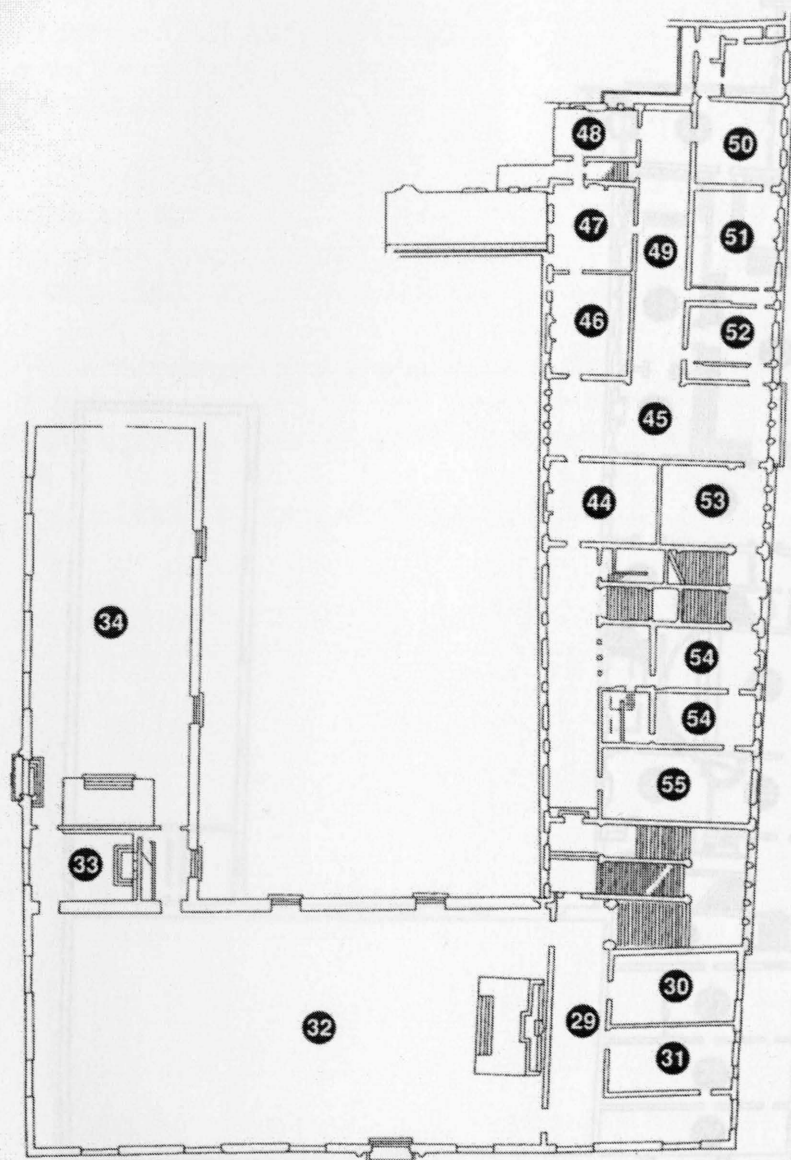
- 35. Bridge of Sighs
- 36. Sala dei Censori
- 37. Sala dell'Avogadria
- 38. Cancelleria Inferiore
- 39. Sala della Bolla
- 40. Sala della Milizia da Mar
- 41. Sala dello Scrigno
- 42. Sala del Piovega
- 43. Loggia Foscare



Preceding page  
*Courtyard of the Doge's  
 Palace facing the  
 Basilica of San Marco.*

*Ground-floor plan*  
 1. Porta della Carta  
 2. Porticato Foscari  
 3. Arco Foscari  
 4. Scala dei Giganti  
 5. Courtyard  
 6. Cortile dei Senatori  
 7. Scala dei Senatori  
 8-9. Riva Barbarigo  
 10. Well-heads

11. Riva Donà  
 12. Scala dei Censori  
 13. Porta del Frumento  
 14. Museo dell'Opera  
 A. Alberghetti's well  
 B. Nicolò dei Conti's well



*Plan of the first floor  
with the Doge's  
Apartment*

- 29. Liagò
- 30. Sala della Quarantia  
Civil Vecchia
- 31. Sala dell'Armamento  
or del Guariento
- 32. Sale del Maggiore  
Consiglio
- 33. Sala della Quarantia  
Civil Nuova
- 34. Sala dello Scrutinia

- Doge's Apartment*
- 44. Sala degli Scarlatti
  - 45. Sala dello Scudo
  - 46. Sala Grimani
  - 47. Sala Erizzo
  - 48. Sala degli Stucchi  
or Priuli
  - 49. Sala Dei Filosofi
  - 50. Sala dei Leoni
  - 51. Sala Corner

- 52. Sala dei Ritratti
- 53. Sala degli Scudieri
- 54. Sale del Magistrato  
alle Leggi
- 55. Sala della Quarantia  
Criminal



Sala Del Collegio

Coiling all Veronese:

Venice Endowed with Justice and Peace  
Faith is the Strength of the Republic  
Mars and Neptune

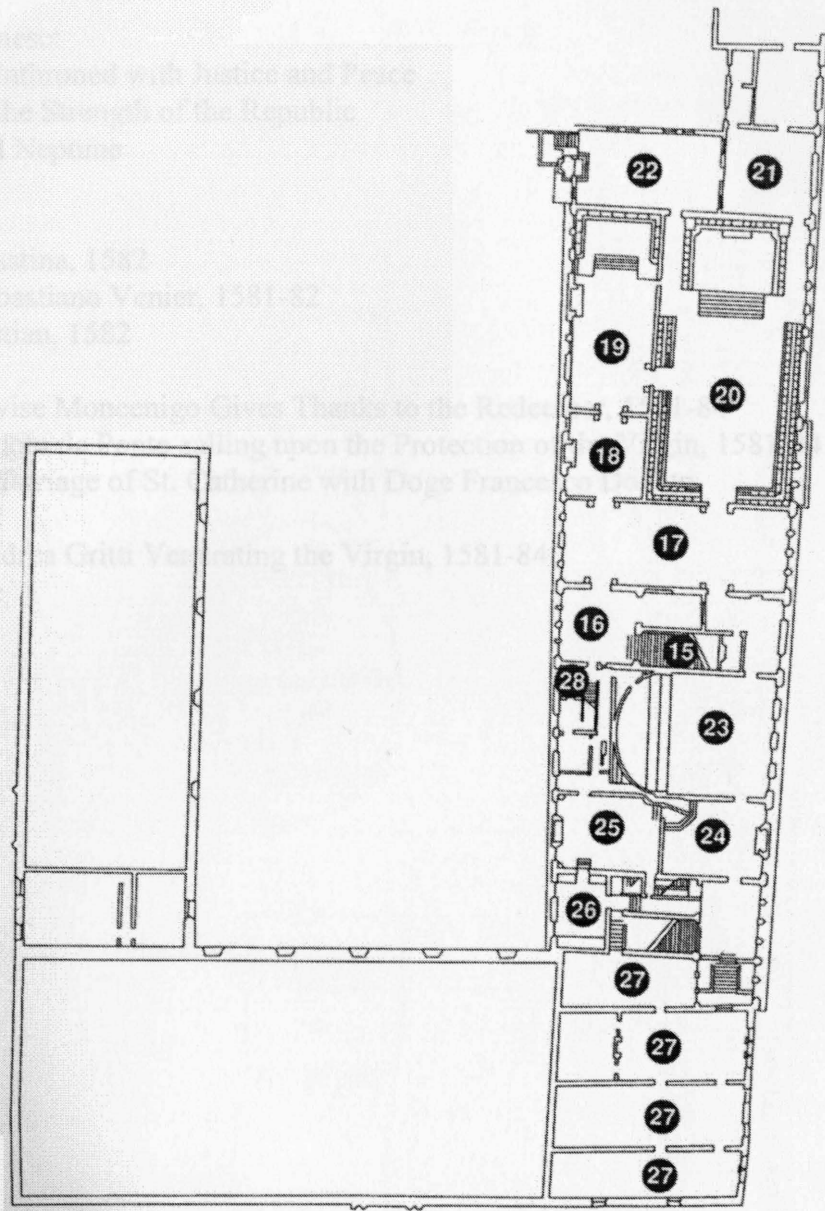
Walk:

Veronese:

Saint Giustina, 1582  
Doge Sebastiano Venier, 1581-82  
St. Sebastian, 1582

Timoretto:

Doge Alvise Mocenigo Gives Thanks to the Redeemer  
Doge Francesco Venier Giving up the Protection of  
Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine with Doge Francesco  
Concordia  
Doge Andrea Gritti Venerating the Virgin, 1581-84  
Prudence



Plan of the second floor

- |                              |                            |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 15. Scala d'Oro              | dei Dieci                  |
| 16. Atrio Quadrato           | 24. Sala della Bussola     |
| 17. Sala delle Quattro Porte | 25. Sala dei Tre Capi      |
| 18. Sala dell'Anticollegio   | 26. Sala degli Inquisitori |
| 19. Sala del Collegio        | 27. Armoury                |
| 20. Sala del Senato          | 28. Passage to the Piombi  |
| 21. Antichiesetta            |                            |
| 22. Chiesetta.               |                            |
| 23. Sala del Consiglio       |                            |

Sala Del Collegio

Ceiling all Veronese:

- Venice Enthroned with Justice and Peace
- Faith as the Strength of the Republic
- Mars and Neptune

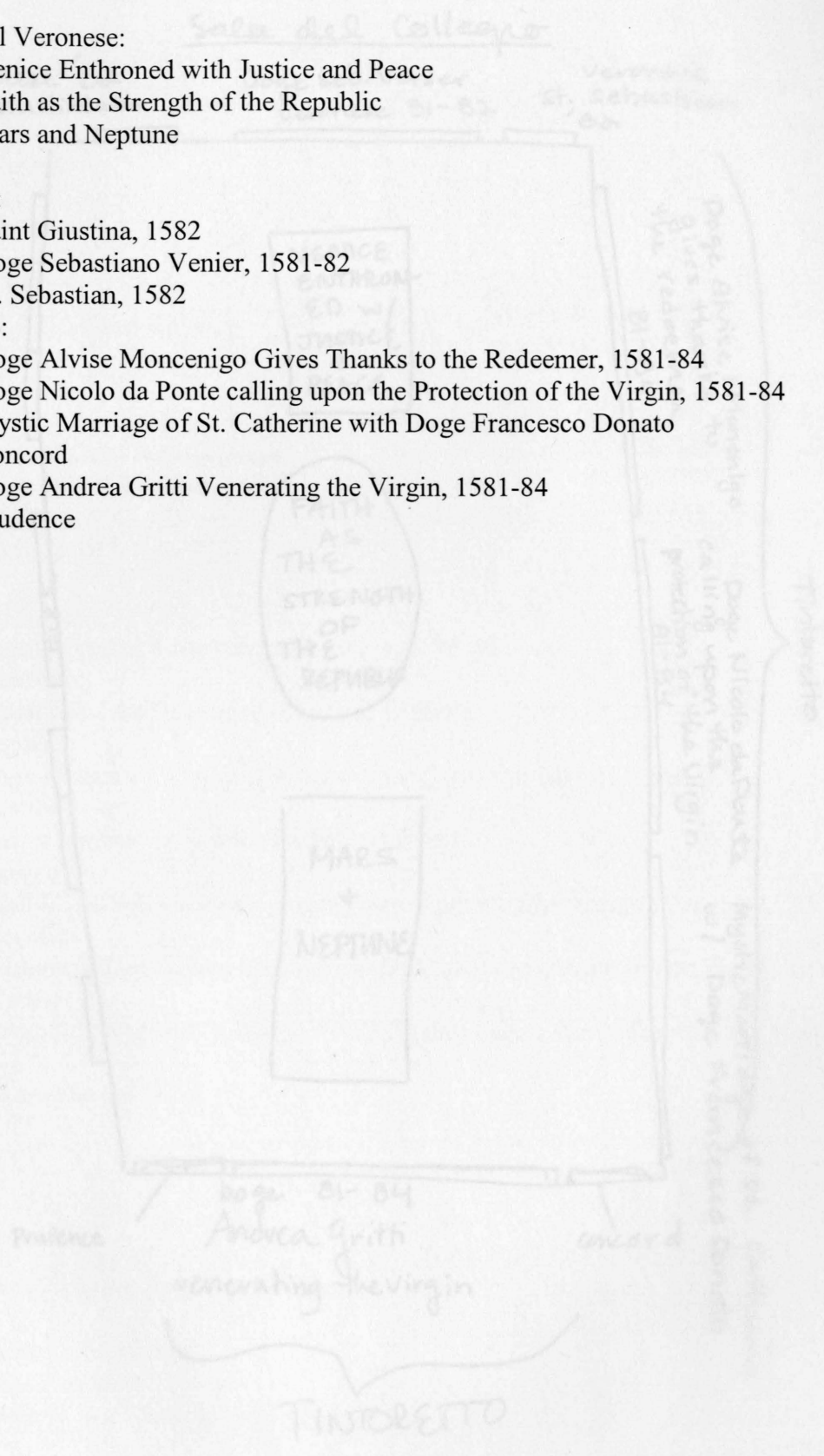
Walls:

Veronese:

- Saint Giustina, 1582
- Doge Sebastiano Venier, 1581-82
- St. Sebastian, 1582

Tintoretto:

- Doge Alvise Moncenigo Gives Thanks to the Redeemer, 1581-84
- Doge Nicolo da Ponte calling upon the Protection of the Virgin, 1581-84
- Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine with Doge Francesco Donato
- Concord
- Doge Andrea Gritti Venerating the Virgin, 1581-84
- Prudence

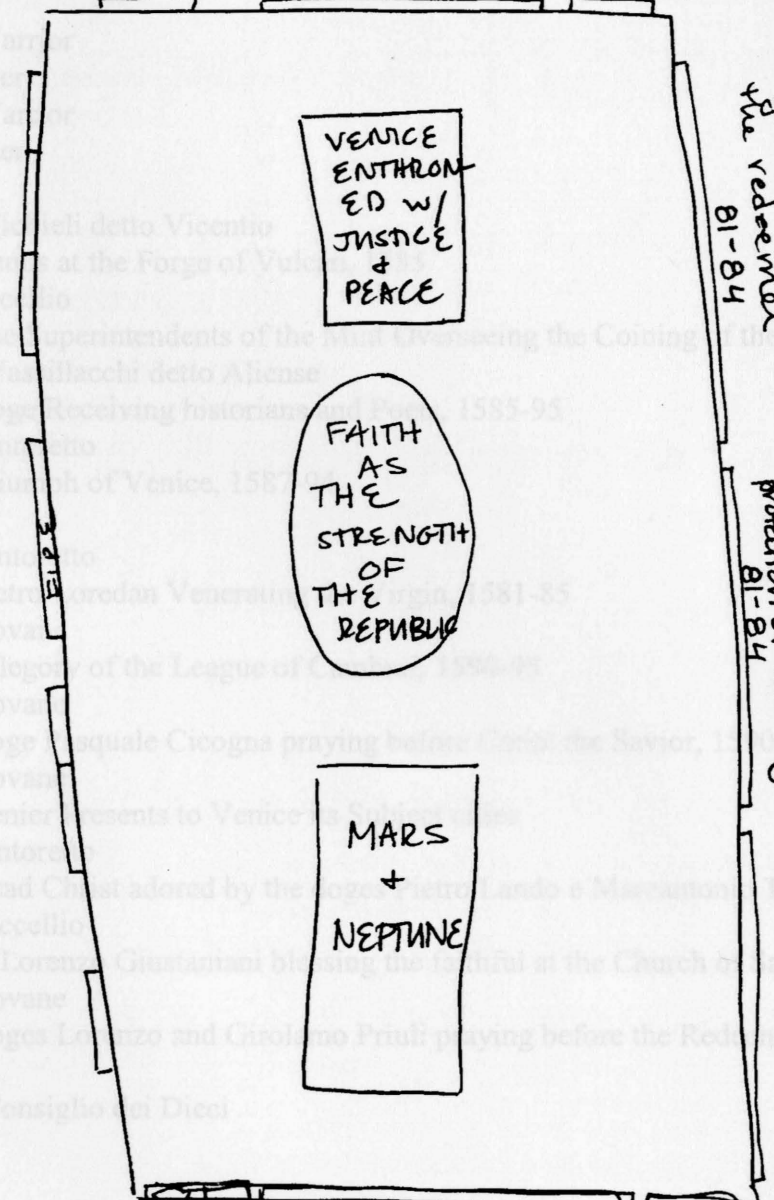


Sala del Collegio

Veronese '82  
St. Giustina

Doge seb. Venier  
Veronese 81-82

Veronese  
St. Sebastian  
82



Doge Alvise I Mocenigo  
gives thanks to  
the vedemur  
81-84

Doge Nicolo da Ponte  
calling upon the  
protection of the Virgin  
81-84

Tintoretto

Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine  
w/ Doge Francesco Donato

Doge 81-84  
Andrea Gritti  
venerating the Virgin

Prudence

concord

TINTORETTO

Sala del Senato:

Ceiling:

Tommaso Dolabella

Doge Pasquale Cigna Worshipping the Eucharist, 1585-90

Roman Warrior

Philosopher

Roman Warrior

Philosopher

Andrea Michieli detto Vicentio

Venus at the Forge of Vulcan, 1585

Marco Vecellio

The Superintendents of the Mint Overseeing the Coining of the Zecchini, 1585-95

Antonio Vassillacchi detto Aliense

Doge Receiving historians and Poets, 1585-95

Jacopo Tintoretto

Triumph of Venice, 1587-94

walls:

Jacopo Tintoretto

Pietro Loredan Venerating the Virgin, 1581-85

Palma Giovane

Allegory of the League of Cambrai, 1590-95

Palma Giovane

Doge Pasquale Cicogna praying before Christ the Savior, 1590-95

Palma Giovane

Venier Presents to Venice its Subject cities

Jacopo Tintoretto

Dead Christ adored by the doges Pietro Lando e Marcantonio Trevisan, 1590

Marco Veccellio

S. Lorenzo Giustaniani blessing the faithful at the Church of San Pietro, no date

Palma Giovane

Doges Lorenzo and Girolamo Priuli praying before the Redeemer (see Sketch)

Sala del Consiglio dei Dieci

ceiling:

Veronese

Veronese

Female Figure Breaking her Chains

Veronese

Youth and Old Age

Giambattista Ponchino

Neptune in a Chariot, 1553-1555

Di Jacopo

Zelloti

Venice Seated on the Globe and the Lion of St. Mark

Zelloti

Janus and Juno

Zelloti

Venus between Mars and Neptune

Giambattista Ponchino

walls:

Vecellio

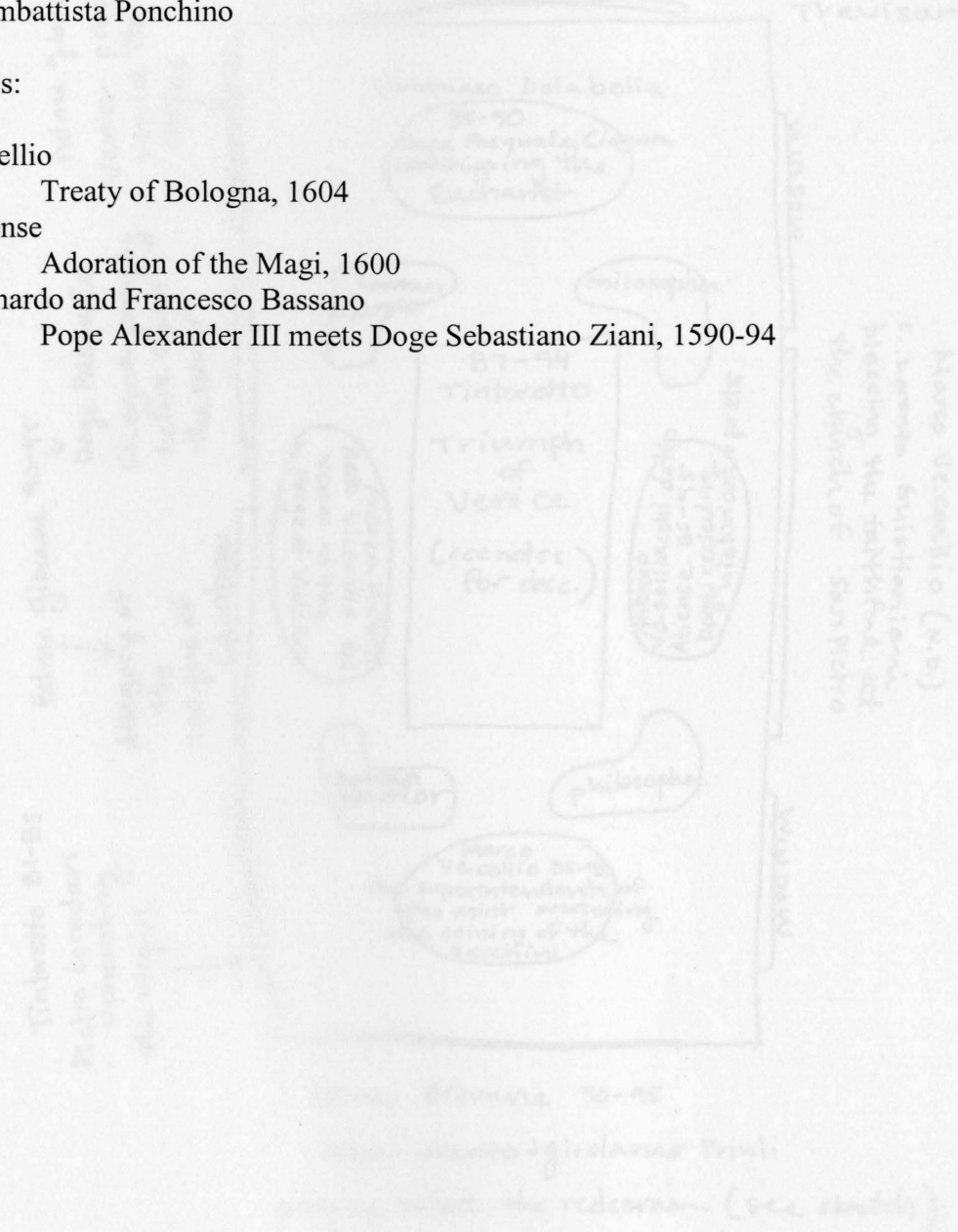
Treaty of Bologna, 1604

Aliense

Adoration of the Magi, 1600

Leonardo and Francesco Bassano

Pope Alexander III meets Doge Sebastiano Ziani, 1590-94



Sala del Senato

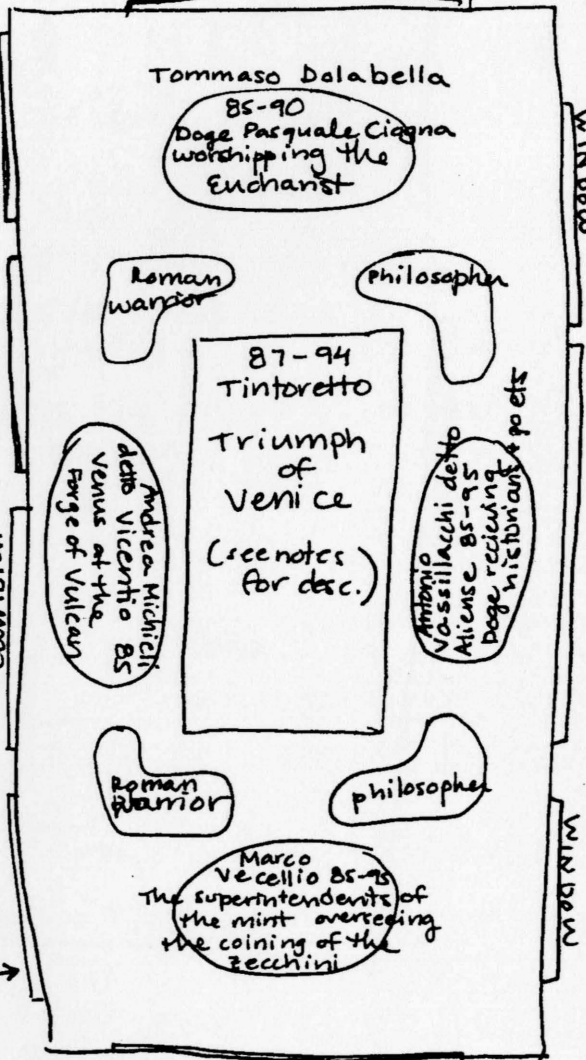
Tintoretto 1590 Dead Christ adored by Doges  
Pietro Lando e Marcantonio  
Trevisan

Palma giovane  
Venier presents to  
Venice its subject  
cities

Doge Pasquale  
Cicogna praying  
before Christ  
the savior

Palma giovane 90-95  
Allegory of  
the  
League of  
Cambrai

Tintoretto 81-85  
Pietro Loredan  
Venerating  
the virgin



Marco Vecellio (N.P.)  
S. Lorenzo Giustiniani  
blessing the faithful at  
the church of San Pietro

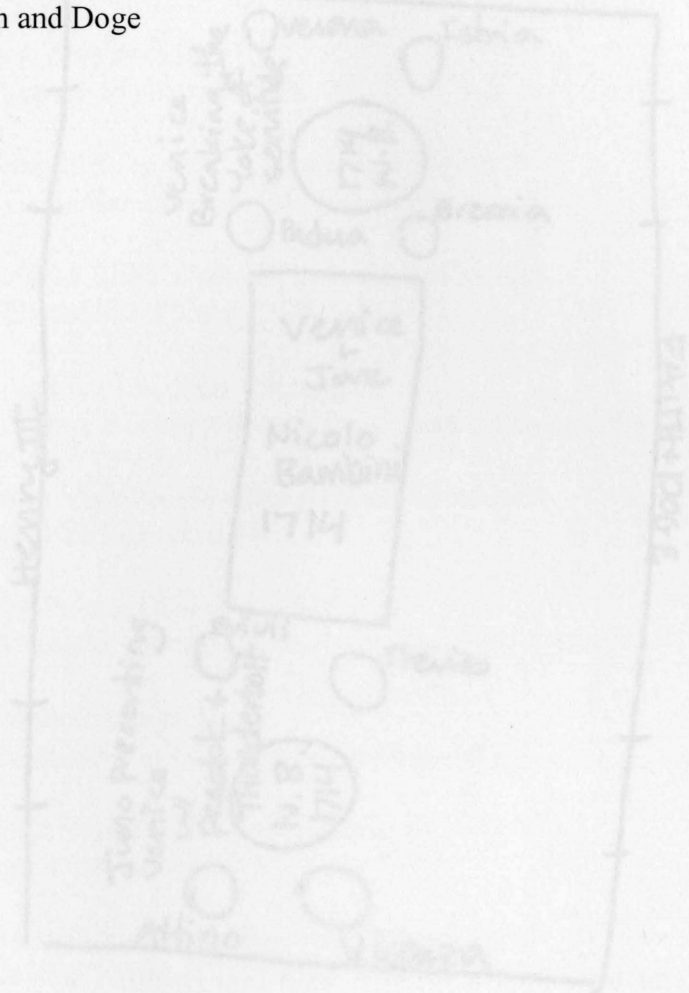
Palma Giovane 90-95  
Doge Lorenzo + Girolamo Priuli  
praying before the redeemer (see sketch)

Sala delle Quattro Porte

Tintoretto-- Altino, Vicenza, Priuli, Treviso, Verona, Padua, Brescia, Istria  
Nicolo Bambini-- 1714

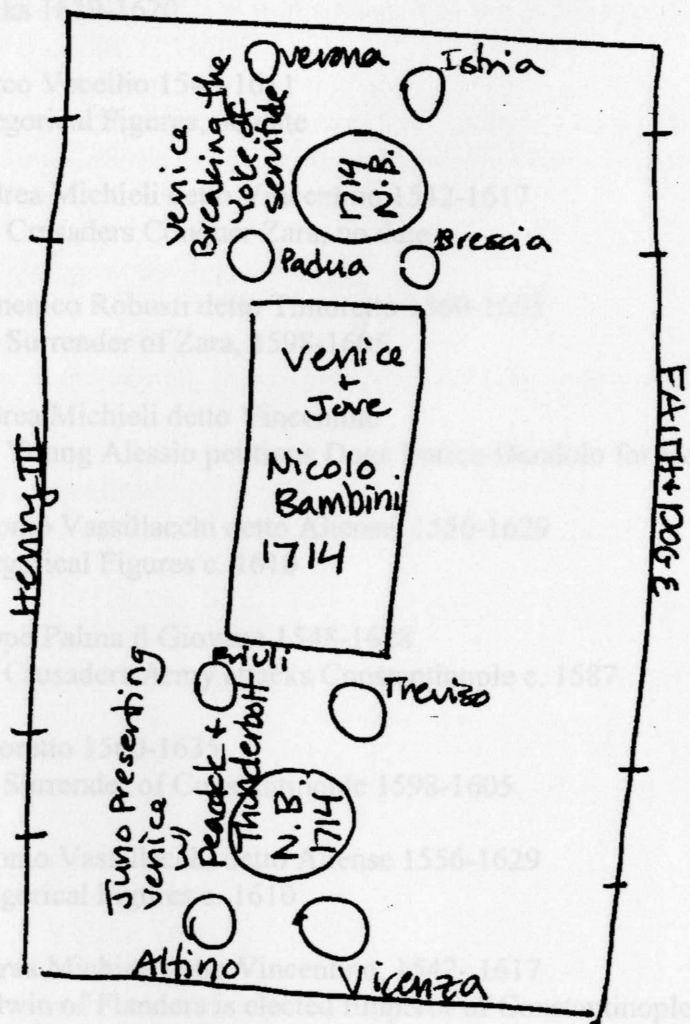
Juno Presenting Venice with Peacock and Thunderbolt  
Venice and Jove  
Venice Breaking the Yoke of Servitude

Henry III  
Faith and Doge



all small round paintings  
are by Tintoretto, allegorical representations  
of cities - personifications  
of territories

Sala delle Quattro Porte



all small round paintings  
 are by Tintoretto, allegorical representations  
 of cities - personifications  
 of terafunna



Maggior Consiglio

wall to the right of stage with 7 seats windows face the water, South wall along top of Portraits of Doges by Tintoretto

Carlo Saracina 1580-1620 and Giovanni Leclere 1587-1633

Doge Enrico Dandolo and the Crusader Captains take their bath at the Basilica of St. Marks 1619-1620

Marco Vecellio 1545-1611

Allegorical Figures, no date

Andrea Michieli detto Vincentino 1542-1617

The Crusaders Conquer Zara, no date

Domenico Robusti detto Tintoretto 1560-1635

The Surrender of Zara, 1598-1605

Andrea Michieli detto Vincentino

The Young Alessio petitions Doge Enrico Dandolo for Help, no date

Antonio Vassillacchi detto Aliense, 1556-1629

Allegorical Figures c. 1610

Jacopo Palma il Giovane 1548-1628

The Crusaders Army attacks Constantinople c. 1587

Tintoretto 1560-1635

The Surrender of Constantinople 1598-1605

Antonio Vassillacchi detto Aliense 1556-1629

Allegorical Figures c. 1610

Andrea Michieli detto Vincentino, 1542- 1617

Baldwin of Flanders is elected Emperor of Constantinople by Doge Dandolo and the Crusader Princes, no date

West wall: back wall facing the stage, on top continue portraits of doges by Tintoretto

Antonio Vassillacchi detto Aliense 1556-1629

Coronation of Baldwin of Flanders as Latin Emperor of Constantinople, no date

Antonio Vassillacchi detto Aliense

Allegorical Figures c. 1610

Paolo Caliari detto Veronese 1528-1588

The Return of Doge Andrea Contarini to Venice After the Venetian Victory over the Genoese at Chioggia, 1585-1586

Antonio Vassillacchi detto Aliense  
Allegorical Figures c. 1610

Giulio D'Angelo del Moro c. 1555  
Doge Sebastiano Ziani in the Rome Church of St. John Lateran receives gifts from Pope Alexander III, c. 1610

in the middle of Veronese's work here there is a stone plaque that is set into the sky of the painting with the name and date the painting has a hole the plaque fits into. it is probably 3 feet tall and 5 feet long

continuing on the next wall,

17. Girolamo Gambaratto n.d.  
Pope Alexander III, Emperor Frederick Barbarossa and Doge Sebastian Ziani reach Ancona

18. Palma Giovane 87  
Pope Alexander III and Doge Ziani Send the Young Otto to Propose Peace Terms to Barbarossa

19. Frederico Zuccari 82-1603  
Arriving in Venice, Emperor Frederick pays Public Homage to Pope Alexander III

20. Vicentino 1600  
Doge Ziani receives a ring that has been blessed by Pope Alexander III

21. Tintoretto n.d.  
Battle of Salvatore

22. Paolo dei Franceschi detto il Fimmingo 90-94  
Alexander III blessed Sebastiano Ziani as his Fleet is about to Set Out against the Ships of Barbarossa

23. Bassano 90  
The Venetian Fleet about to set sail from the Quay at St. Marks against the Ships of Barbarossa

24. Tintoretto 90-92  
The Ambassadors of Doge Ziani Petition in Vain for Barbarossa to make peace with Alexander III

25. Leandro da Ponte detto Bassano 1605

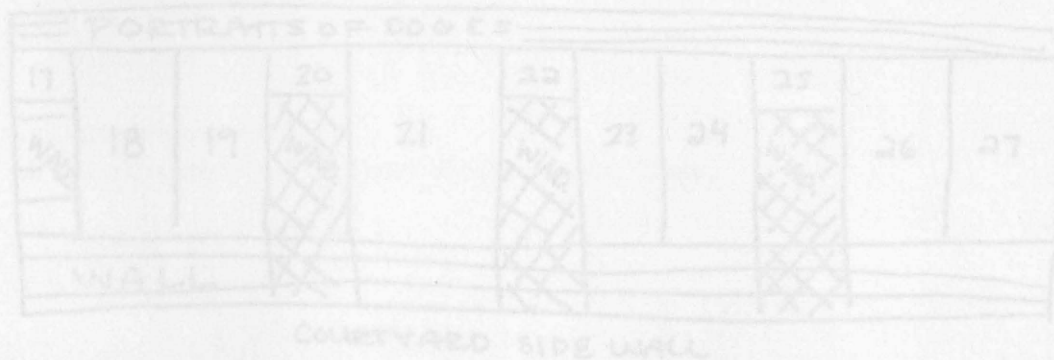
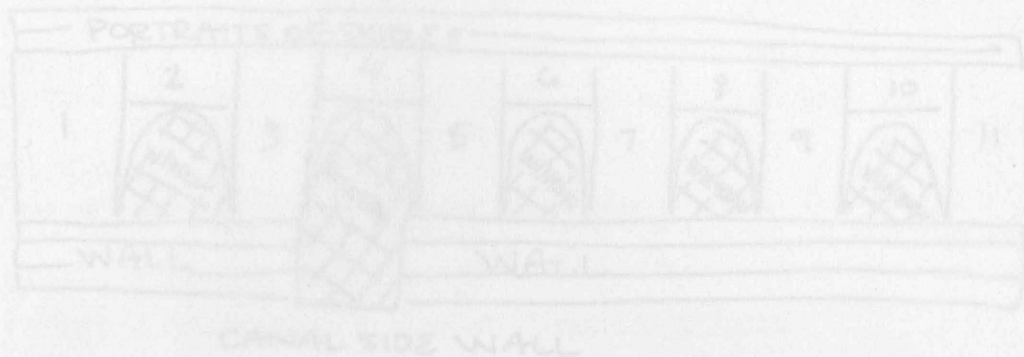
Pope Alexander III offers Doge Ziani the Holy Candle

26. Benedetto Caliari and Carlo Caliari 88-90

Pope Alexander III and Doge Sebastiano Ziani send peace ambassadors to Barbarossa

27. Benedetto Caliari and Carlo Caliari 1588-90

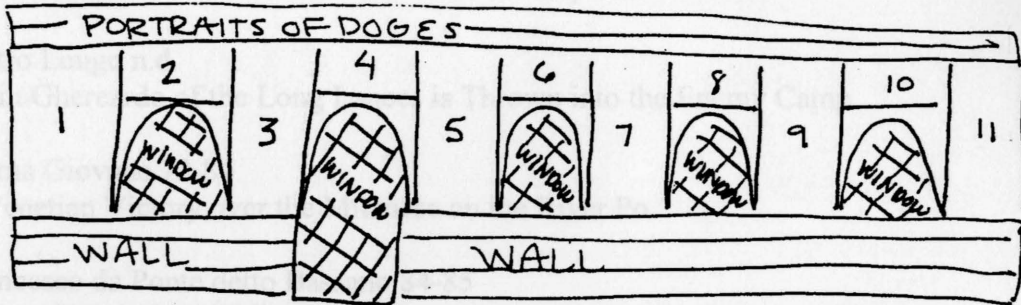
The Meeting in Venice between Pope Alexander III and Doge Sebastiano Ziani



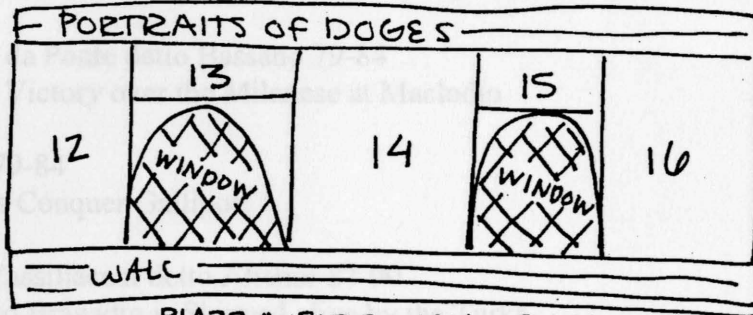
\*NOT TO SCALE

\*These notes taken by author + author's mother, Gayle Adams

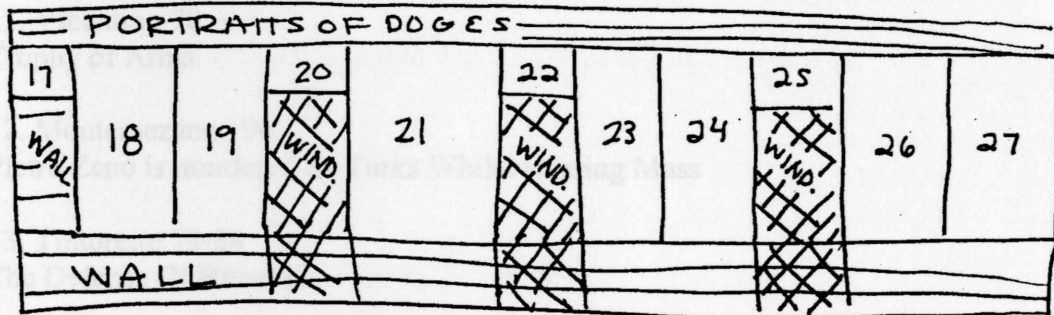
# MAGGIOR CONSIGLIO WALLS:



CANAL SIDE WALL



PIAZZA SIDE WALL; BACK WALL



COURTYARD SIDE WALL

\*NOT TO SCALE

\*These notes taken by author + author's mother, Gayle Adams

Maggior Consiglio

ceiling:

1. Palma Giovane 79-84

The Conquest of Padua

2. Francesco Montemezzano 90

Sebastiano Venier wounded at the battle of Lepanto

3. Palma Giovane 87-90

The Women of Venice offer their Jewels to the Republic

4. Pietro Longo n.d.

Captain Ghereardo of the Long Lances is Thrown into the Enemy Camp

5. Palma Giovane 79-84

The Venetian Victory over the Milanese on the River Po

6. Francesco da Ponte detto Bassano 84-85

The Venetians defeat the Troops of Emperor Maximilian in Cadore

7. Palma Giovane 82-84

Crowned by Victory Venice receives her subject provinces

8. Francesco da Ponte detto Bassano 79-84

The Venetian Victory over the Milanese at Maclodio

9. Tintoretto 79-84

The Venetians Conquer Gallipoli

10. Antonio Vassillacchi detto Aliense 87-90

Marco Antonio Bragadin is Skinned alive by the Turks

11. Vicentino 90

Trophy of Arms

12. Montemezzano 90

Pietro Zeno is murdered by Turks Whilst Hearing Mass

13. Tintoretto 79-84

The Defense Of Brescia

14. Vicentino 85-90

The Ambassadors of Sultan Bazajet Offer their Help to Doge Leonardo Loredan

15. Tintoretto 84

Doge Nicolo da Ponte Receives the Laurel Crown from Venice

16. Vicentino 1590  
Nicolo Pisani Avoids Encirclement by the Genoese Fleet in the Waters off Sardinia
17. Palma Giovane 90  
The Ambassadors from Nurembourg receive the Texts of Venetian Law from Doge Leonardo Loredan
18. Montemezzano 90  
Trophy of Arms
19. Vicentino 90  
Trophy of Arms
20. Leonardo Corona 85  
Agostino Barbarigo is wounded during the battle of Lepanto
21. Vicentino 90  
Bernardo Contarini Volunteers to Kill Lodovico Sforza
22. Leonardo Corona 85  
Carlo Zeno gaining a Naval Victory Against the Genoese
23. Tintoretto 70-84  
The Venetian Victory over Ferrara and Argenta
24. Aliense n.d.  
Albano Armerio Killed by the Turks
25. Vicentino n.d.  
Trophy of Arms
26. Montemezzano 90  
The Venetian Fleet is Transported over the Hills to Lake Garda
27. Tintoretto 79-84  
The Venetians Take Control of Lake Garda from the Milanese
28. Bassano 84  
The Venetian Victory over Ferrara at Polesella
29. Veronese, 82, Triumph of Venice
30. Bassano, 80-84  
The Venetian Victory over the Milanese at Casal Maggiore

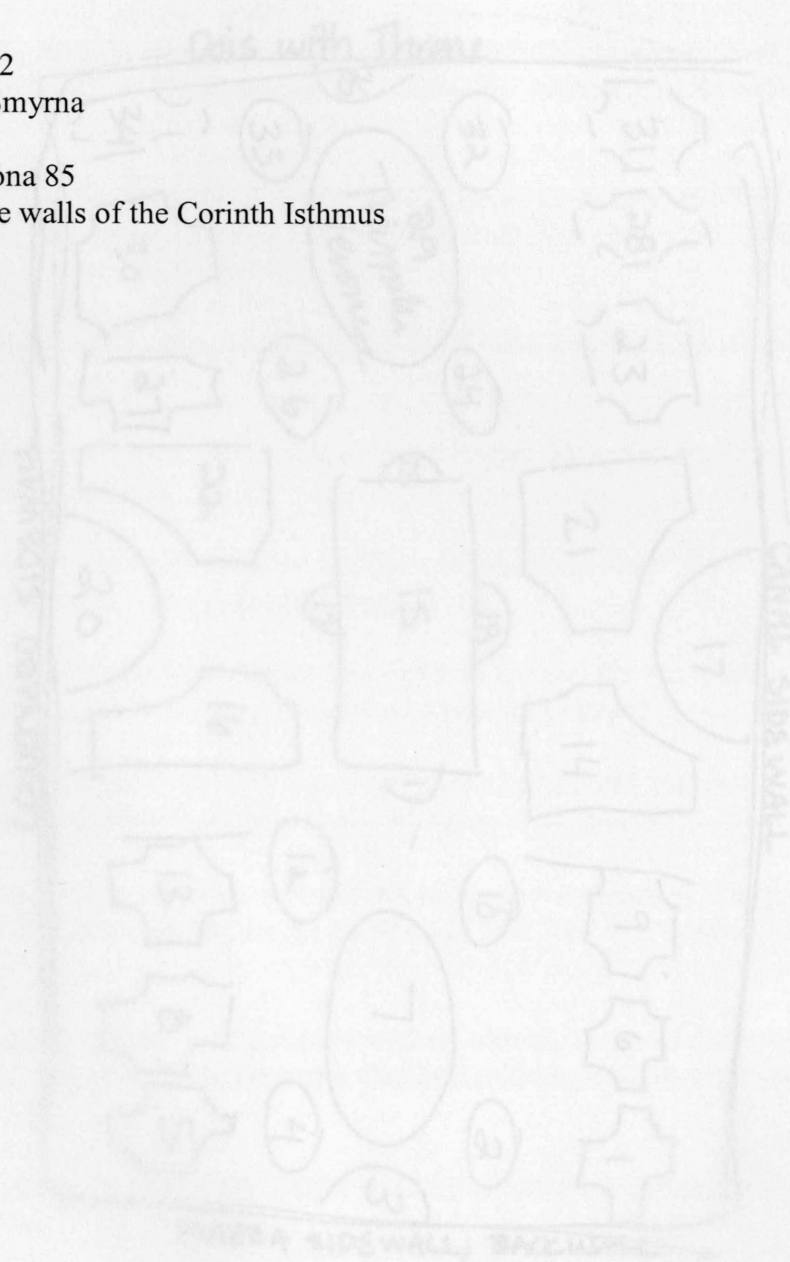
31. Veronese 82-85  
The Siege of Scutari

32. Aliense 1590  
Queen Caterina Cornaro Surrenders the crown of Cypress to the Venetian Republic

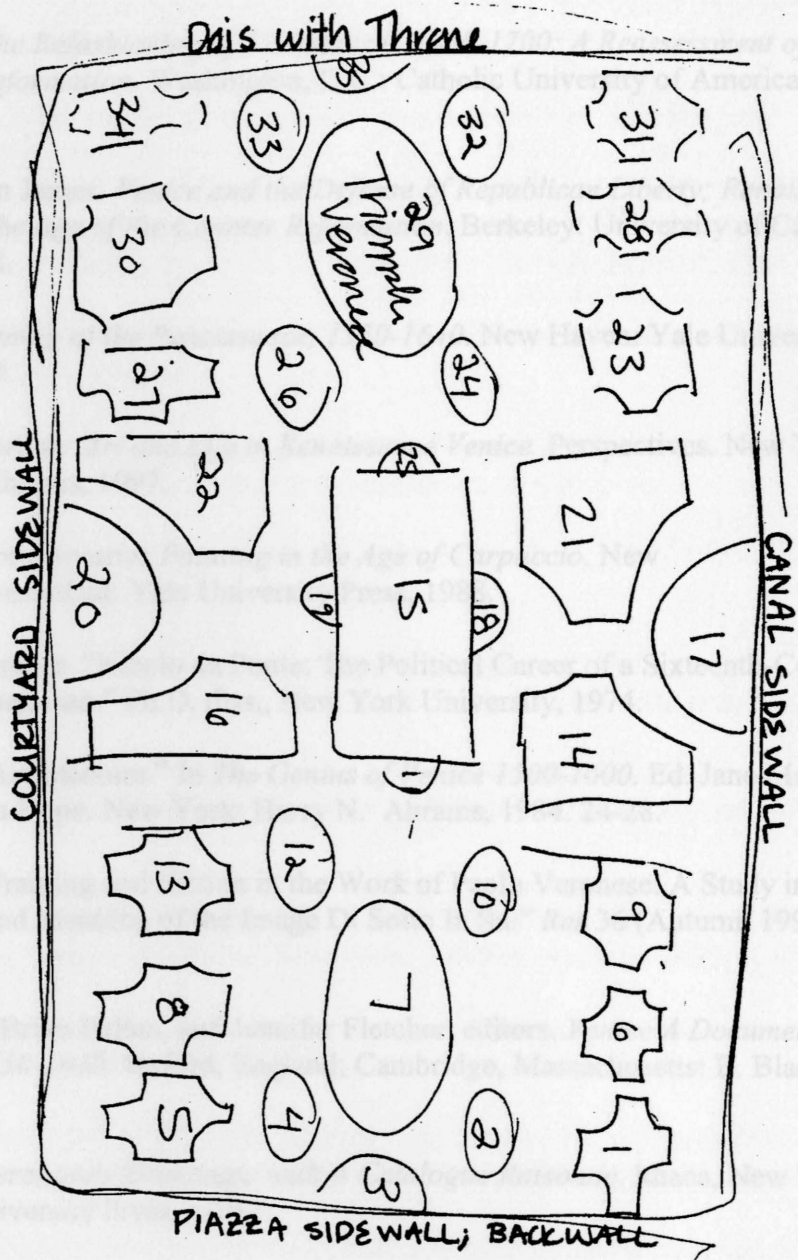
33. Pietro Longo 1590  
Stefano Contarini is wounded During the Victorious Battle of Lake Garda Against the Visconti Army

34. Veronese 79-82  
The Conquest of Smyrna

35. Leonardo Corona 85  
Work to restore the walls of the Corinth Isthmus



# Ceiling Plan, Maggior Consiglio





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