eScholarship
California Italian Studies

Title

Dress as Civic Celebration in Late Sixteenth-Century Venice: The Woodcuts of Cesare Vecellio's Habiti antichi et moderni and the Paintings of Paolo Veronese

Permalink

https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6kt4119d

Journal

California Italian Studies, 5(2)

Authors

Jones, Ann
Rosenthal, Margaret

Publication Date

2014

DOI

10.5070/C352023618

Copyright Information

Copyright 2014 by the author(s).This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial License, available at https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/

eScholarship.org Powered by the California Digital Library
University of California

Dress as Civic Celebration in Late Sixteenth-Century Venice: The Woodcuts of Cesare Vecellio's *Habiti antichi et moderni* and the Paintings of Paolo Veronese

Ann Rosalind Jones and Margaret F. Rosenthal

> Le Donne Nobili, & d'altra honesta conditione, usano per casa vesti di colori diversi, & massime la state, che portano […] brocati di diversi bellissimi colori, & vi sarà tadrappo, che sarà tessuto di Quattro, o di sei colori, tanto ben fatti, che'l pennello non gli saprebbe dipinger meglio.
>
> Cesare Vecellio, *Degli Habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del Mondo* (Venice 1590)
>
> Women of the nobility and other high ranks at home wear gowns of diverse colors; this is especially true in the summer, when they wear […] brocades in many different colors, and also fabric woven of four or even six colors, so well made that no brush could paint better.
>
> Cesare Vecellio, *The Clothing, Ancient and Modern, of Various Parts of the World* (Venice 1590)[1]

In this praise of the artistry in the richly dyed and woven fabrics manufactured in Venice, the Cinquecento costume-book maker Cesare Vecellio (c. 1521-1601) wrote as a connoisseur of textiles and a celebrator of his city. His costume book, *Degli Habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del Mondo* (1590), combined 421 woodcuts and commentaries on dress into the most massive of all such books printed throughout the century during which this genre of linked images and texts first flourished.[2] He had begun his career in the 1540s, when he began to paint

We would like to thank our two *CISJ* reviewers for their supportive and incisive comments, and also Virginia Brilliant, Blake de Maria, Frederick Ilchman, and Peter Bjorn Kerber for their useful suggestions as we worked on an early version of this essay.

[1] Cesare Vecellio, *Degli Habiti antichi et moderni* (Venice: Damiano Zenaro, 1590), 136, translated as *Cesare Vecellio's Habiti antichi et moderni*: *The Clothing of the Renaissance World*, ed. and trans. Margaret F. Rosenthal and Ann Rosalind Jones (London: Thames and Hudson, 2008), 191. The page number following our citations from Vecellio refers to the Italian text of the original edition, now available in facsimile in *Habiti antichi et moderni: la moda nel Rinascimento* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Libreria dello Stato, 2010). The number following the English translation refers to the lower number on the page of our translation.

[2] Vecellio's costume book contained 421 woodcuts in 1590 and 500 in 1598. It went through many editions. The 1590 edition was published by Damian Zenaro, the 1598 edition by Giovan Bernardo Sessa, and a third, abridged, by Combi e LaNoù in 1664. On costume books in general, see Ulrike Ilg,"The Cultural Significance of Costume Books in Sixteenth-Century Europe," in *Clothing Culture 1350-1650*, ed. Catherine Richardson (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2004), 29-47. For an explanation of the differences in meaning among "clothing," "dress," "costume" and "fashion," see Margaret F. Rosenthal, "Cultures of Clothing in Later Medieval and Early Modern Europe," *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 39:3 (2009): 459-81. *Clothing* was the product of textile spinners, weavers and embroiderers**.** The quality of a fabric produced its meaning, not the fabric alone. Sixteenth-century dress served as a marker for distinct social registers by adhering to specific colors and fabrics that announced the wealth, rank, vocation, marital status and gender of the wearer. *Dress* (*habito,* in Vecellio) referred to a communal or collective identity prescribed by codes of civility as well as by family lineage, regional specificity and gender. In Italian, *costume* signified manners and behaviors or customs and styles of life. *Fashion*, in contrast, extolled the new and depended less on conservatism and tradition; transforming textiles into dress in new cuts and shapes, it responded to changes in gender codes and other social practices. See also Margaret F. Rosenthal, "Clothing, Fashion,

altarpieces in churches of the Veneto and portraits of his patrons in Belluno and to travel with his kinsman Titian (Tiziano Vecellio), whose workshop in Venice he joined and continued to paint in until Titian's death in 1576. Collaboration likewise shaped the images in Vecellio's 1590 costume book, for which his German assistant, Christopher Krieger, cut his drawings into wood blocks. During the years they worked together, Vecellio wrote detailed passages explaining the textiles, colors, cut and trim of the wide range of clothing he illustrates in his prints, each one surrounded with an ornate frame and juxtaposed to commentary on the facing page. These composite prints are the work of a costume historian and civic patriot as well as a close observer of contemporary customs of dress in his city.

During the same decades, up to his death in 1588, Veronese (Paolo Caliari) also depicted the brilliant fabrics manufactured in his city. Like Vecellio, he distilled a deep knowledge of fabrics and dress into paintings in which he linked his city's textile wealth and social hierarchy to the luxuriously dyed and brocaded fabrics made there. The modern critic Rembrandt Duits remarks, as Veronese's contemporaries did, that he "obviously took delight in the representations of luxurious fabrics and their use as props in his compositions."[3] His seventeenth-century biographer, Carlo Ridolfi, recounts that some viewers thought Veronese's handling of the clothing in his paintings must be based on samples of actual clothing (*spoglie*) of various styles and hairpieces knotted in different shapes, "which are common for painters to collect."[4] In his religious and allegorical paintings as much as his portraits of patrons, Veronese carefully recorded the textiles and styles of clothing produced and worn in his adopted city.[5]

This essay, for the first time, sets Vecellio's woodcuts and commentaries on the dress of his fellow Venetians side by side with Veronese's paintings in order to explore how the costume-book woodcuts and their texts intermesh with the visual articulation of costume in the paintings. Both artists focused closely on the dress and accessories worn in their city because they shared a common purpose: to contribute to the discourse of civic pride in sixteenth-century Venice. We analyze how Vecellio and Veronese, in their different media, relate Cinquecento dress in Venice

---

Dress and Costume in Venice (c. 1450-1650)," in *Handbook of Venetian History, 1400-1600*, ed. Eric Dursteler (Leiden: Brill Press, 2013), 889-928. On the tension between traditional and fashionable dress in Vecellio, see Ann Rosalind Jones, "'Worn in Venice and throughout Italy': the Impossible Present in Cesare Vecellio's Costume Books," *The Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies,* 39:3 (2009): 511-44.

[3] Rembrandt Duits, "'Abiti gravi, abiti stravaganti': Veronese's Creative Approach to Drapery," in *Paolo Veronese: A Master and his Workshop in Renaissance Venice*, ed. Virginia Brilliant with Frederick Ilchman (London: Scala Publishers/The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 2012), 61.

[4] Carlo Ridolfi, *Vita di Paolo Caliari Veronese, celebre pittore* (Venice: Leni, 1656): "Fù però creduto da alcuni, ch'essendo egli copioso nelle opere sue di tanti capricci, e ornamenti; egli havesse in sua Casa un cumulo de' modelli acconci di varie spoglie, e capigliature annodate in varii modi, di che sogliono molti Pittori far raccolta," (51). Ridolfi dismisses this idea, insisting instead on the painter's good memory and imagination. For a translation of the entire passage, see Xavier F. Salomon, *Veronese* (London: National Gallery Company Limited, 2014), 25; for an extended discussion of a Baroque treatise on Renaissance Venetian art history, Marco Boschini's *La carta del navegar pitoresco,* in relation to Veronese's depictions of textiles, see Duits, 61-2 and passim.

[5] On the accuracy and splendor of Venetian textiles in Veronese's portraits, see John Garton, *Grace and Grandeur: The Portraiture of Paolo Veronese* (London: Brepols Publishers, 2008), 11-12, 26-27, 63, 66-67, 74-75; and Frederick Ilchman, *Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese: Rivals in Renaissance Venice* (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts Publications, 2009). Ilchman notes that Veronese's techniques for representing textiles show his understanding of their specific uses and textures: "more than any of his contemporaries, [he] seems to have most fully exploited the weave of the canvas for expressive ends, —such as […] the herringbone cloth in his *Saint Jerome in the Wilderness* […] whereby the paint from a dry brush catches only the higher threads and leaves the lower ones untouched. This technique produces a regularly interrupted line and conveys the impression of light catching the thick pile of the saint's velvet drapery" (32).

to religious and secular history, mercantile wealth, patrician luxury, and civic harmony in order to affirm the commercial and political ideologies of their city.[6]



Fig 1: Paolo (Caliari) Veronese, *Allegory of the Battle of Lepanto,* c. 1573, oil on canvas, 169 x137cm, Gallerie dell'Accademia,Venice, Wikimedia Commons

Like many promoters of Venice, Vecellio praises the city as triumphantly unconquerable:

L'Illustrissima Città di Venetia rispetto al sito, grandezza, & magnificenza sua è più tosto nell'Europa dopo Roma tiene il primo luogo, & è detta Regina del Mare, & Vergine

[6] See Patricia Fortini Brown on Veronese's state, religious and privately-supported projects, often commissioned by non-noble *cittadini*, in "Where the Money Flows: Art Patronage in Sixteenth-Century Venice," in Ilchman, *Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese*, 41-59.

> intatta & un miracolo del mondo […], una Città cosi famosa, & Illustre, la quale meritamente immaculata, per non haver mai sostenuto assalto, nè sacco alcuno (39).
>
> Quite unlike any other city, the illustrious city of Venice, because of its location, size and magnificence, is one of the miracles of the world […], a famous and illustrious city, which, after Rome, rightly takes the first place in Europe and is called the Queen of the Sea, untouched and immaculate Virgin, never attacked or put to the sack (91).

Veronese, too, celebrated the unconquerable power of the Venetian state. An example is his *Allegory of the Battle of Lepanto*, c. 1573, at the Gallerie dell'Accademia in Venice, a large canvas presenting the famous naval encounter of 1571 in which Venetian and other European forces defeated those of the Ottoman navy (Figure 1). A fragment of a much larger picture that originally decorated one of the side walls of the Chapel of the Rosary in the church of San Pietro Martire at Murano, this massive piece of propaganda combines Venetian politics with Christian belief to represent good triumphing over evil. Veronese represents four saints as the intercessors for the Christian fleet: Saints Peter and James, patrons of Rome and Spain, and Saints Justina and Mark, all dressed in intense, shimmering colors, who present to the Virgin a veiled female figure in a white robe personifying Venice. In this painting, as in many others intended for public viewing in secular and religious spaces, Veronese represented on canvas, as Vecellio did in his prose, the Republic's political strength and God-given security in the allegorical figure of a woman both unconquerable and holy.[7]

Vecellio further aligns himself with eulogists of his city by praising the orderliness and pomp of the Republic's governing bodies and officials. In his description of their leader's dress, he links him to ancient Rome:

> Usa per tanto la nobiltà di Venetia, la quale può arrivare al numero di mille, & cinquecento huomini, i quali vanno al Consiglio, oltre quelli, che sono in Reggimento fuori; di creare un Prencipe, il quale nomano Doge […]. Questo Doge alli tempi nostri porta un manto Regale di porpora, o pur tessuto d'oro, il quale si può chiamare verisimilmente Paludamento (38).
>
> All the nobility of Venice, as many as fifteen hundred men, attend the Great Council, in addition to those who own lands outside the city; together, they create a prince whom they call the doge […]. In our time, this doge wears a royal cloak, *porpora* [deep red] in color, or even of cloth of gold, which might reasonably be compared to the cloak of a Roman general (90).

The point Vecellio is making in this shift from government to dress is that the authority of the ruling elite, implicitly compared to the leaders of the Roman Empire, is materialized in the rich fabrics worn by their *principe*, that is, their *doge*.

---

[7] For a reproduction of the painting, see Terisio Pignatti and Filippo Pedrocco, *Veronese* (Milan: Electa, 1995), 2: 278. They point out that this painting must have been based on prints available at the time. Given Veronese's and Vecellio's loyalties, and perhaps their commissions, it comes as no surprise that Vecellio used just such a print as a basis for his and Krieger's large woodcut entitled *La Battaglia di Lepanto e delle Curzolari*, published in 1591. For a recent summary of the historical and architectural contexts of the painting, see Iain Fenlon, *The Ceremonial City: History, Memory and Myth in Renaissance Venice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 276.

He returns to the meanings of the doges' clothing in his passage on "The First Leader, or Doge, of Early Venice," in which he refers for the first time to the *corno,* the doge's hat with an upturned "horn" at the back: "questa foggia [è] di una grande Maiestà, il che si vede al Corno, che anchora oggidì sogliono portare in testa i Prencipi di Venetia" (42) (This style is very majestic, as can be seen from the *corno*, still worn today by the doges of Venice, 94). He goes on to emphasize the religious and political power of an eleventh-century doge as symbolized in his hat:

> L'habito del sopraposto Prencipe […] era di un'Ordelaso Faliero, huomo accurato, e diligente nelle cose del governo della sua Repubblica, il quale governava del mille e ottantacinque, e andava vestito secondo, che di sopra si rappresenta; portava per tanto in testa una mitra simile a quella del Sommo Pontefice di forma tonda con la sua cima che si alza a guisa di piramide, il qual Corno era rosso, e haveva attorno una fascia a guisa di Corona Ducale; la qual fascia, o cerchio d'oro era piena di gemme, se bene alcuni altri antichi Dogi in cima di detto Corno hanno portato una Crocetta d'oro (42).
>
> The dress of the early doge shown here […] was worn by a certain Ordelaso Faliero, a man scrupulous and diligent in matters of the government of his republic, whose rule began in 1085 and who dressed as we see here. On his head he wore a miter similar to that of the holy pope, round in shape with a pointed top; the top portion was red and around it was a border similar to a duke's crown, and this border, or circle of gold, was full of gems, although other early doges wore a small gold cross at the top of their hat (94).

As he describes the dress of succeeding doges and arrives at the apparel of Sebastiano Ziani (doge from 1172 to 1178), Vecellio uses the word *corno* again to describe the dogal dress decreed by Pope Alexander III and the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick in 1176: "[i] Dogi di Venetia portassero il manto lungo fino a terra, e insieme la sottana della medesima lunghezza, e con lo strascico, il quale fu poi usato assai tempo. E tanto il manto, quanto la sottana, e 'l corno erano di velluto rosso, ma con un fregio d'oro" (79) (At this time the doges wore a floor-length mantle and with it an undergarment of the same length with a train, a style that continued for a very long time. The mantle, the undergarment, and the corno were of red velvet with gold trim, 131). He shows the sixteenth-century shape of the *corno* in his later print entitled "Principe, ò Doge di Venetia," which he accompanies with a description of the white robes worn by Doge Sebastiano Venier and his successors to symbolize their devotion to the Virgin Mary in ceremonies honoring her (Figure 2).[8]

Veronese, too, depicted such figures—allegories of Venice, members of the Great Council, doges, military leaders, and the patricians of the city and its surrounding territories—on the walls and ceilings of the rooms in which they met and the churches in which they worshipped. In private and public spaces alike, he synthesized religious and political themes to glorify his city and its ruling elites. In a striking visual conflation of classical allegory, Venetian

[8] For the print and commentary, see Vecellio, 79 (131).



Fig 2: Vecellio, Principe ò Doge, *Habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del Mondo,* 1590, woodcut, 15.5 cm x 6 cm, Private collection, Massachusetts

power and Venetian dress, he painted his allegorical *Juno Showering Gifts on Venice*, Palazzo Ducale, 1554-6, for the ceiling of the Sala dei Dieci (Figure 3).[9] At the center of his composition, halfway between the goddess and Venice allegorized as a woman holding a scepter, he depicts a ducal *corno* of red velvet with a golden border. This painting, set above the ten councilors who met in the room, would have been seen as celebrating the city's wealth in the form of golden vases, coins and crowns. The velvet cap, however, emblematizes the doge's supremacy in the elaborate Venetian political hierarchy.[10] Set at the center of the painting, the *corno* presents vividly to the eye the crown that Vecellio describes in its changing forms over time. Below the laurel crown of peace, turned upside down in its passage from the goddess down to Venetia, the *corno* floats on a ray of light, distinguished from the jeweled brooch, coins and crowns above and below it by its bright red color and velvet texture. The color and fabric of this one item of apparel carry a multitude of meanings.

[9] For a black and white reproduction of the painting, entitled *Giunone che versa doni su Venetia*, see Pignatti and Pedrocchi 1995, 2: 65.

[10] Joanne Ferraro summarizes the meaning of the *corno* in this painting in relation to other Venetian representations of Juno in public spaces: "The message was that Venice […] was blessed not only with commercial wealth but also with wise rulers," in *Venice: History of the Floating City* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 132.



Fig. 3: Veronese, *Juno Showering Venice with Gifts*, 1554-6,
oil on canvas, 365 x 147 cm, Sala dei Dieci, Palazzo Ducale, Venice. Wikimedia Commons

Color and cloth are central in anecdotes about Veronese's personal investment in fine fabrics and his familiarity with how it was used in clothing. His older brother Antonio worked in Verona as a *rechamador,* that is, an embroiderer of textiles;[11] after Paolo's death, his youngest son Gabriele worked as both a painter and a fabric merchant;[12] his nephew Alvise del Friso lived in the household of the Cuccina family, a clan of Venetian *cittadini* whose wealth, derived from the wool and silk industries of the Veneto, permitted their participation in the city's bureaucracy and their patronage of artists such as Veronese.[13]

[11] Garton**,** *The Portraiture of Paolo Veronese*, 63.
[12] Stephen Gritt, "'Like a Mirror that Shows His Idea': Interaction in the Veronese Workshop," in Brilliant and Ilchman, 233.
[13] Blake de Maria, *Becoming Venetian: Immigrants and the Arts in Early Modern Venice* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 89-90. For a recent definition of the Venetian rank of *cittadino*, see Ferraro, *Venice: History of the Floating City*: "During the last third of the sixteenth century, the character of this social class shifted from its

Veronese was said to have dressed well himself. Ridolfi wrote that though he generally spent little, "he habitually wore expensive clothes and velvet shoes"[14]—a remark affirmed by the beautiful clothing the painter depicts in his 1562-3 *Marriage Feast at Cana*, painted for the Benedictines at San Giorgio Maggiore and now in the Louvre (Figure 4).[15]



Fig. 4: Veronese, *Wedding Feast at Cana*, 1562-3, oil on canvas, 6.77 x 9.94 m, Louvre, Paris, France, Peter Willi / Bridgeman Images

earlier foundations based on birth, residency, and the payment of taxes to one that emphasized social status, family lineage, and honor. In 1569, the condition […] was added that neither the citizen nor his father nor grandfather could engage in the mechanical arts. Anna Bellavitis finds that the behavior of families in this class during the sixteenth century was critical to the formation of their bourgeois identity, owing to the laws that excluded the *ars mecanica*" (80-2).

[14] Ridolfi: "Usò vestiti di pregio, e calzari di velluto, che ancor si conservano dall'herede" (53).

[15] *Marriage Feast at Cana* (not to be confused with *Wedding Feast at Cana*, painted for the Cuccina palazzo) is reproduced in an excellent large plate in Pignatti and Pedrocco, *Veronese*, 1: 164-5. See also two details of the painting, including the figure of Veronese, in Brilliant and Ilchman, 58 and 60-1.



Fig. 5: Veronese, *Wedding Feast at Cana*, detail, Peter Willi / Bridgeman Images

In the midst of the striped and gold-woven Eastern silks and the patterned Venetian brocades, painted, as Richard Cocke puts it, with Veronese's "customary mastery" of such textiles,[16] Veronese shows himself in a presumed self-portrait as the *viola da gamba* player in a group of

[16] For Cocke's comment on Veronese's expert depictions of brocade, see *Paolo Veronese: Piety and Display in an Age of Religious Reform* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001), 51. He points out that in Veronese's representations of fine fabrics and clothing, the artist looked back to earlier Venetian painters such as Gentile da Fabriano and Pisanello for their "concern with rich fabrics," 19.

five musicians (Figure 5).[17] This *viola da gamba* player wears spectacularly fine specimens of Venetian textiles: a white satin doublet, white damask sleeves, a white damask mantle falling from his shoulder to his lap, and bright yellow knee breeches with yellow stockings. Veronese may not have owned such clothes himself; painters often borrowed the clothing and fabrics they used in their studios, including those belonging to rich patrons sitting for portraits.[18] What is striking, nonetheless, is Veronese's close and precise treatment of the radiant colors and shimmering textures of the musician/artist's *habito*. Silk, Duits points out, was the painter's preferred fabric—and worth as much per ell as a painted canvas.[19]

Like Venetian painters, the city's writers took the meanings of color seriously as forms of mercantile and aesthetic entrepreneurship. Art-historical consensus now holds that Renaissance painters worked under too many constraints, including contracts requiring that they use precise amounts of certain pigments, to follow any fixed system of religious or humoral color symbolism.[20] Heraldry, however, seems to have had considerable currency among Venetian intellectuals in the Cinquecento. Tomaso Garzoni in his *Piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo* (1585) cites—though with some skepticism—astrologers and philosophers who define the meanings of eight colors, constructing a language of color to which Veronese's paintings often correspond.[21] *Giallo* (yellow), belonging to the sun, symbolizes desire and happiness, and *bianco* (white) represents purity, as in Veronese's *Allegory of Venice Adoring the Virgin and Child* (1570s, private collection, Texas)*; rosso* (red), related to Mars, represents anger and warfare, as in Veronese's centurion in *Christ and the Centurion* (c. 1575, Nelson Atkins Museum, Kansas City); *turchino* (blue-green) and *azzurro* (deep blue) signify faithfulness, often used in his depictions of the robes of the Virgin Mary; *nero* (black), attributed to Saturn, represents steadfastness, as in Veronese's portraits of noblemen*; verde* (green) and *incarnato* (flesh tones) signify hope and love. When the colors are mixed together, they are related to Mercury and signify a changeable disposition, as in the multi-hued costume of the *Allegory of Painting* (1560s, Denver Institute of Art)**.**[22]

---

[17] Anthony Rowland-Jones summarizes the debate over the identity of the figure in white in "The Minuet: Painter-Musicians in Triple Time," *Early Music* 26:3 (1998): 416-431. This identification is accepted by David Rosand in "Paolo Caliari: A Veronese Painter Triumphant in Venice," in Brilliant and Ilchman, 25.

[18] Duits doubts that Veronese owned many of the textiles he painted; some, he remarks, would have been lent to him only temporarily by rich sitters for portraits, 65. Xavier F. Salomon, *Veronese,* however, conjectures that Antonio Caliari, the *rechamador*, supplied samples of "sophisticated fabrics" to his brother throughout his painting career, 25-6.

[19] Duits, 63. An ell now is a piece of fabric 45 inches long and 45 inches wide. On the relative prices of silk and paintings, see 64-5.

[20] Michael Baxandall in *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972) dismisses color symbolism, arguing that fifteenth-century painters ignored strict systems of colors assigned to religious themes and to humors, 81. Marcia B. Hall in *Color and Meaning: Practice and Theory in Renaissance Painting* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 16, adds to Baxandall that artists worked from their own sense of color as an element of composition rather than an element in a system external to their work.

[21] Tomaso Garzoni, *La piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo*, ed. Paolo Cherchi and Beatrice Collina (Turin: Einaudi, 1996), 2: 983, our paraphrase. Amedeo Quondam in *Tutti i colori del nero: moda e cultura* (Vicenza*:* Angelo Colla Editore, 2007), 88-102, takes color theory seriously, especially Ludovico Dolce's praise for the elegant and discreet formality of black. He also points out Dolce's membership in circles close to Venetian painters such as Titian.

[22] Duits points out that "shot silk is […] the fabric prescribed for the personification of painting in the contemporary handbook of allegory in Cesare Ripa's *Iconologia*" (69).

Venetian red and scarlet in Veronese's pigments and Vecellio's texts

As his *Marriage Feast at Cana* shows, Veronese often depicted contemporary dress in his large Biblical canvases. A second example is *Christ and the Centurion* (Figure 6).[23]



Fig. 6: Veronese and workshop, *Christ and the Centurion*, c. 1571, oil on canvas, 55 3/8 x 81 1/8 inches (140.6 x 206.1 cm), The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri, Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust 31-73, Photo: Melville McLean

The richness Veronese gives the centurion's dress translates the two New Testament passages about this scene, one of Jesus' first miracles (Matthew 8: 5-13, Luke 7:1-10), into a vivid image. Matthew and Luke relate that as Jesus passed through the city of Capernaum, a Roman centurion asked him to cure his sick servant back at home. The story focuses on the soldier's faith in Jesus as a miracle-worker and on this rich man's humility. Stopping Jesus from going to his house, as he has offered to do, the centurion says, "Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldst enter under my roof; but only say the word, and my servant shall be healed."[24]

[23] *Christ and the Centurion,* c. 1571, Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas City, Pignatti and Pedrocco, *Veronese*, 2: 168. For a superb reproduction of the Centurion at the center of this painting, see Brilliant and Ilchman, detail facing 135. See also Cat. 142 and Fig. 53, 142.

[24] King James Bible, Matthew 8: 5-8. For a discussion of the theological implications of the story, see Virginia Brilliant, "The Bible and the Lives of the Saints" in Brilliant and Ilchman, 141. On the significance of the story for

Veronese's wealth of pigment, a visual analogy to Vecellio's language of color, signals the willingness of this powerful soldier to kneel to the young man he has accepted as the son of God. Veronese makes this point visually through the contrast between the humility of the centurion's kneeling pose and the splendor of his dress, grounding the miracle in a precise rendition of the rich dyes and fabrics named in Vecellio's text, which their fellow citizens would recognize as those worn by a wealthy man of the present (Figure 7). Expensive reds, as we will see, were reserved for the gowns of patricians.[25]



Fig. 7: Veronese and workshop, *Christ and the Centurion*, detail, The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri, Purchase: William Rockhill Nelson Trust 31-73, Photo: Melville McLean

worship in Counter-Reformation Venice, see Paul Kaplan, "Veronese's Images of Foreigners," in Massimo Gemin, ed., *Nuovi studi su Paolo Veronese: convegno internazionale di studi, Venezia 1-4 giugno 1988* (Venice: Arsenale Editrice, 1990), 308-16.

[25] On sumptuary law, see note 58 below.

Veronese dresses his central figure in a splendid reconstruction of the military apparel that a centurion would imaginably have worn in the time of Jesus. The viewer's eye is immediately caught by the rich red of the tunic covering his cuirass. This tunic is dotted with tiny specks of gold, like the velvet that Venetians called *allucciolato,* woven with tiny loops of gold thread that stood up and glittered above the surface of the fabric; the red satin mantle draped over his thigh; and the brilliant lighter orange-red of his hose**.**

The medium in which Veronese represents this self-humbling Christian's clothing—a canvas 6 ¾ feet wide, 4 ¾ feet high, and loaded with color—is very different from Vecellio's much smaller black and white woodcut, which is only 4 inches wide, including the frame, and 6 inches high (Figure 8).



Fig. 8: Cesare Vecellio, *Consul, or Roman Tribune*, in *Habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del Mondo,* 1590, woodcut, 15.5 cm x 6 cm, Private collection, Massachusetts

But in Vecellio's commentary on ancient Roman clothing in the first section of his book, he uses a formula by which, as many Venetian writers did, he links the ancient Roman Empire to Venice as a modern empire. In his *Discorso* on the history of dress, he explains that he has modeled his prints of Roman soldiers on descriptions by Roman historians (among others, Plutarch, Martial and Suetonius) and on the clothing sculpted in ancient statues and the column of Trajan.[26] There is no evidence that Vecellio ever went to Rome; he probably based his print on earlier ones of Roman sculpture. His woodcut of *Roman Consuls and Tribunes* contains many of the same details as Veronese's painting: the calf-length mantle, the cuirass, the velvet tunic fitted smoothly over it, and the horizontally striped underskirt.[27] Assuming that similar visual sources were available *in situ* to Veronese, who may have made a trip to Rome in 1560, the painter and the writer were both mobilizing the humanist reconstruction of the classical past to glorify the Venetian present.[28]

Vecellio's black and white woodcut cannot represent the rich red hues of these garments visually; he captures them differently in the specialized textile vocabulary of his commentary. W.J.T. Mitchell succinctly describes the contrasting capacities of image and text in forms, such as the costume book, that combine them: "Words can 'cite,' but never 'sight' their objects." But he goes on to analyze what he calls "ekphrastic hope […] when we discover a 'sense' in which language can do what so many writers have wanted it to do: to make us see."[29] In a passage in the first section of *Gli Habiti*, Vecellio asks his readers to "see" a long pagan and Christian history: invoking ancient Roman consuls and centurions, he will begin with "the glorious city of Rome," whose heritage has ennobled Venetian politics and culture. He lists in detail the items of armor and the colored fabrics reserved for these Roman leaders:

> Simile all'habito de 'Consoli erano quello de' Tribuni, e de' Centurioni […], la corazza di lama di acciaio, ò di ferro […], copert[a] di velluto cremesino […]. Sotto la corazza portavano un panno di seta, che faceva l'armadura più commoda alla persona, e sopra poi un saio, che dal busto in giù era fatto di certi tagli di broccato […]. Hebbero anchora in uso gli stivaletti fino à meza gamba, sotto i quali portavano le calze di scarlatto intiere dai piedi fino alla cintura […]. Sopratutti questi Habiti portavano un manto di porpora, il quale si chiamava Paludamento (16).
>
> The dress of tribunes and centurions resembled that of the consul […] a cuirass of steel or iron, […] covered with velvet of *cremesino* […]. Under the cuirass, they wore a silk cloth that made the armor more comfortable for the body, and a *saio* [a long jacket] made of certain lengths of brocade […]. They also wore half-length boots, under which they wore full-length tights of *scarlatto* from their feet to their waists. On top of all these garments, they wore a mantle, *porpora* in color, called a *paludamento* (69).

---

[26] Vecellio on the foot soldiers depicted on Trajan's column, 73: "[i] quali si vedono assai nella Colonna di Traiano, e di Antonio" (21).

[27] Vecellio, "De i consoli, et Tribuni Romani armati in guerra," woodcut, 68/16-7.

[28] Salomon cites Ridolfi's statement that Veronese went to Rome with the Venetian procurator Girolamo Grimani. On the issue of Veronese's humanism, see Inge Reist, "The Classical Tradition: Mythology and Allegory," in Brilliant and Ilchman, 104-29.

[29] W.J.T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 152.

In this account, Vecellio lists four reds through which he layers ancient Rome onto contemporary Venice, condensing a whole history and geography of dye into each word. Each of these colors, derived from a different source, was highly prized by his contemporaries in Venice. *Cremesino* (from which our "crimson" is derived) was a bright red dye tending toward blue, made from *kermes*, an Arabic word for the dried, crushed bodies of tiny insects that live on bushes in the Caucasus, Anatolia, and Persia; another kind of *kermes* was made from insects living on the roots of a plant native to central and eastern Europe. *Grana,* a dye tending toward orange, took its name from its resemblance to small grains of wheat. It was made from the bodies of lice that live on diverse species of Mediterranean scarlet oak.[30] The high price and status of *cremesino* resulted from the need to import a huge quantity of insects from far away and the many steps required to make it; for silk dyers and their customers, *grana* was more affordable. In the statutes of the dyers' guild and in the *Plictho*, Gioanventura Rosetti's dyeing manual of 1548, the greatest number of recipes is for red made from *grana*, of which he says the best comes from Armenia, lesser kinds from Spain and the Crimea.[31] In a long recipe using only *kermes*, "to dye silk in a perfect crimson color," he insists on the absolute cleanliness of the silk and the fine grinding and steeping of the *kermes*, first to make an intensely colored liquid and then a second, less saturated one, so the silk can be bathed in two batches of dye.[32] The centurion, then, in Vecellio's prose and Veronese's painting, wears the most luxurious red color available in late sixteenth-century Venice.

When Vecellio uses the term *scarlatto* to describe the centurion's leggings, he is referring to both the color and the fabric represented in Veronese's painting. The dye, originally made from European *grana*, began to be replaced in the sixteenth century by the cheaper Mexican cochineal, derived from female insects grown on the New World nopal cactus; by the late sixteenth century, the wool guild had persuaded city officials to allow them to use it instead of *grana*.[33] But dyers continued to use the more expensive *kermes* to color the finest wool. (The Oxford English Dictionary suggests that the source of the word *scarlatto* may be the Persian *suqalat*, a kind of rich cloth.) In Veronese's time, the word described a luxurious fabric as well as a hue, and Veronese, like Vecellio, makes a distinction: he gives a lighter, more matte surface to the fabric of the centurion's leggings.

Finally, Vecellio returns to ancient times to explain the term *porpora*. This was a deep red dye exported from the Phoenician city of Tyre, highly valued by the Romans and enormously expensive because it was made from *murex*, tiny mollusks that had to be harvested alive from the Mediterranean. According to Pliny, the shellfish glands were treated with salt, heated for several days in leaden vessels, and finally strained to produce a high-intensity dye.[34] As Vecellio says, the color was reserved for the *paludamentum*, a mantle restricted to the generals and emperors of ancient Rome and—here again celebrating Venice—to the generals of his city and the highest

---

[30] Luca Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), 109-10.

[31] Gioanventura Rosetti, *Plictho de l'arte de tentori che insegna tenger pan[n]i telle banbasi et sede si per larthe magiore come per la commune*, trans. Sidney M. Edelstein and Hector C. Borghetti as *Instructions in the Art of the Dyers which Teaches the Dyeing of Woolen Cloths, Linens, Cottons, and Silk by the Great Art as well as by the Common* (Cambridge, MA.: MIT Press, 1969), A4 recto-verso, translation, 94.

[32] Rosetti, *Plictho*, "A Tenger Seda in color Cremesino perfetto," G4 recto-verso; translation 53-4.

[33] Molà, *The Silk Industry*, 129.

[34] Judith H. Hoffenk Van der Graaf, *The Colourful Past: Origins, Chemistry and Identification of Natural Dyestuffs* (Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung / London: Archetype, 2004), 286-321. Wool dyed with *porpora*, not the perishable dye itself, was exported to Rome.

officials under the doge.[35] Veronese's ancient centurion, then, displays the high end of Venetian cloth culture as Vecellio describes it in his passage on the Roman army.

Even in his paintings of imagined figures, Veronese depicted actual Venetian fabrics, which he combines in his *Allegory of Painting* (Figure 9):



Fig. 9: Paolo Veronese, *The Muse of Painting* [*Allegory of Painting*], 1560's, oil on canvas, 38.7 x 28.9 cm, Detroit Institute of Arts, USA / Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar B. Whitcomb /Bridgeman Images

Vecellio names two of these fabrics in the passage with which we opened, praising the lightweight silks made by Venetian fabric artists and worn by wealthy Venetian women at home: "Le Donne Nobili […] usano per casa vesti di colori diversi, & massime la state, che portano ormesini, zendadi, overo broccati di diversi bellissimi colori" (139) ("Women of the nobility […]

[35] On the *paludamentum* worn by Roman generals, see Vecellio, 63/11; on its use by Venetian generals, 155/10.

wear gowns of various colors; this is especially true in the summer, when they wear *ormesino*, *cendal* or brocades in many beautiful colors" (131).[36] He names a textile designer famous in the city, Bartolomeo Bontempele, as the inventor of such colors—pinks, lavenders, and light greens "that look very lovely."[37] Such colors and fabrics are combined in Veronese's *Allegory of Painting,* which Duits interprets as "an abundant scheme" of colors and textiles that "celebrates the arrangement of colors as the primary facet of the painter's art."[38] Veronese shows the allegorical figure in an airy, fanciful ensemble, but one made of silk fabrics his viewers would have recognized: her pink overskirt is of yellow-green striped *cendal* or *ormesino*—lightweight, shiny fabrics made by the Venetian silk workers called *ormesini*, imitating textiles previously imported from Hormuz in the Persian Gulf.[39]

Veronese also gives his allegorical figure a long, fluttering sash of iridescent green and rose *cangiante*, a textile made by combining two different colors of silk, one in the warp (the vertical threads) of the fabric, one in the weft. This process produced two-toned or shot silk similar to what we now call changeable taffeta, a fabric that had given its name to the painterly technique of *colore cangiante* in Cennino Cennini's 1390 *Il Libro d'arte* (*The Craftsman's Handbook*). Cennini proposed a specific method of representing shot silk: he advises the painter to avoid using black for shading, instead juxtaposing a low-value color such as dark blue to render the shadows of a red drapery.[40] Duits clarifies another aspect of the technique in his analysis of Veronese's depiction of the sash worn by Saint Michael in a fragment from the Petrobelli altarpiece.[41] The painter represents the silk fabric by painting the garment in "dark, dull tones of ochre and green" but he then adds bright yellow and green highlights, "leaving out the modifying middle tones used in normal draperies. Such a strong contrast matches the optical appearance of a reflective surface, which casts back the incoming light […] toward the viewer."[42] The female figure in Veronese's allegory of painting is, in fact, a very material girl. The dyer's hand, the weaver's loom, and the painter's brush and pigments work together to ground the abstract concept of "la pittura" in the physical world these Venetian craftsmen inhabited together.

---

[36] Vecellio, 191.

[37] Bontempele (Bontempelli), whom Vecellio praises in the passage we cite throughout this essay, earned immense wealth in the cloth trade from 1562 to his death in 1616. He donated great sums to charitable undertakings, such as the restoration of the church of the Convertite. In the church of San Salvatore, a painting by Sante Peranda depicts him and his brother Grazioso, kneeling at each side below the Virgin. For further details, see Ugo Tucci's biography, http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bontempelli-dal-calice-bartolomeo_(Dizionario-Biografico)/, accessed January 26, 2015.

[38] Pignatti and Pedrocco, *Veronese*, 1: 262; and Brilliant and Ilchman, plate facing the title page and Cat. 2,107. 39.

[39] In his conclusion, Duits concurs with our claim that Venetian viewers would have recognized the fabrics Veronese depicted in this painting, 69.

[40] On Cennini's *colore cangiante*, see James S. Ackerman, "On Early Renaissance Color Theory and Practice," in *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 35 (1980), 18-9. This term for shot silk was used again in the *cangiantismo* associated with Michelangelo, the modeling of figures by juxtaposing bright, saturated hues; see Marcia Hall, *Color and Meaning: Practice and Theory in Renaissance Painting* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 95.

[41] For this fragment of the painting, see Brilliant and Ilchman, Cat. 44, 90.

[42] Duits, 63.

Fabrics for patrons: the richness of red and black

As Vecellio and Veronese used color to formulate analogies between the Roman and Venetian empires, they also responded to the patronage system of Venice in similar ways, Vecellio in his texts and Veronese in his portraits of nobles and *cittadini.* Vecellio places a print typifying a well-to-do merchant near the beginning of his section on the male elite of Venice. As art collectors and connoisseurs, such merchants would have been customers in the book market in which expensive volumes like Vecellio's could be bought. Here he pays homage to two of them, Paolo dallo Struzzo and Bernardino Pillotto. Strategically, he compliments Struzzo's intelligence and skill as an apothecary, as well as Pillotto's generosity and courtesy. Similarly, he praises Bontempele for his character as well as his fabrics, which link his city's textile production to a wider commercial orbit:

> Di queste opera sì belle è stato in Venetia auttore M. Bartholomeo Bontempele del Calice, il quale alle volte con le mostre, ch'egli fa di questi drappi, mostra la grandezza dell'ingegno suo, la quale è accompagnata di una incomparabile liberalità, et bontà, per ilche è molto amato dalla nobiltà Venetiana, et da molti Principi dell'Italia […] et fino al seraglio del Gran Turco (139).
>
> Such lovely fabrics were invented here in Venice by Messer Bartholomeo Bontempele at the sign of the Chalice […], who, when he lays out his displays, exhibits his brilliant skill, for which, added to his incomparable generosity and kindness, he is much loved by the Italian nobility and by many princes of Italy and […] even from as far as the seraglio of the Great Turk (191).

Cittadini cloth makers and merchants in the Veneto made fortunes by fulfilling the demand for the luxury fabrics described by Vecellio and painted by Veronese. One such *cittadino* family, previously mentioned, was the Cuccina clan, dealers in wool and silk, who moved from Bergamo to Venice in the 1520s to consolidate their vast commercial enterprises.[43] Such cloth makers widened their customer base by using inexpensive reds: cochineal, on which the silk-producing family of the wife, Zuanna di Muti, had a monopoly,[44] and madder, a dye made from the roots of a common low-growing European plant. In 1572, the Cuccina family commissioned Veronese to paint four huge horizontal canvases for their new palace, Ca' Cuccina, which they had begun to build in the 1550s on the Grand Canal. The first of these paintings was the *Cuccina Family Presented to the Virgin and Child*, now in Dresden (Figure 10).[45] Blake de Maria points out that Veronese identifies the family by representing the obelisks on their palazzo's roof in the right background of the painting.[46] She interprets Veronese's glowing depiction of their rich clothing of red and black wool and velvet as a way of promoting their mercantile interests by "showcasing the quality and variety of fabrics available for purchase in

[43] On the Cuccina family as Veronese's patrons, see Blake de Maria, *Becoming Venetian*, throughout*;* on their move to Venice and construction of the palace, see 204. See also her "Veronese and His Patrons," in Brilliant and Ilchman, 55.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Pignatti and Pedrocco, *Veronese*, plate 182, 1:279. For another good reproduction of the painting, see Cocke, *Paolo Veronese: Piety and Display,* plate 20; and for useful remarks on Veronese's *cittadino* patrons, idem, 63-5.
[46] Blake de Maria, "Veronese and His Patrons," 55 and Fig. 19, 53.



Fig. 10: Paolo Veronese, *Cuccina Family Presented to the Virgin and Child*, c. 1572, oil on canvas, 167 x 416 cm, Gemäldegalerie, Dresden, Wikipedia Commons/Google Art Project

Ca' Cuccina" and points out that this painting, like the other three, "provided sumptuous affirmation of the family's piety while simultaneously making reference to their commercial interests."[47]

The Cuccina dressed splendidly, in imitation of the noble families of the city; especially opulent is the red gown of Zuanna di Muti Cuccina. The grand style in which they commissioned Veronese to represent them pushed the limits of Venetian sumptuary laws, which permitted the wearing of top-end velvets and brocades only to longstanding patrician families. In a recent essay, Maria Giuseppina Muzzarelli clarifies the purpose of these laws: they were designed to maintain social and political distinctions and to control the expenditure of elite as well as citizen families, though they were often honored more in the breach than the observance.[48]

Obedience to such laws was a central concern for Vecellio. By following the hierarchical sequencing on which costume books were based, he reinforced what he represented: Venetian social types identified by their rank-specific dress, from city officials and nobles down through merchants and artisans. In certain passages, he recounts that civic control of dress has successfully discouraged extravagance—for example, in the case of the *dogalino*, an extravagantly long, full sleeve, which the Senate prohibited to women in the mid-fifteenth century in an edict that led to more restrained styles.[49] This sense of public order is the basis on which he praises the dress of the magistrates of Venice—members of the Council of Ten, for example—who wear long red gowns under narrow black stoles. Red alone is worn by the Knight of the doge, black alone by his sixteen attendants, the *Scudieri* (standard bearers).[50]

---

[47] Blake de Maria, *Becoming Venetian*, 145. On Veronese's portrait of another patron, Marcantonio Cogallo, a "rich and devout cloth merchant," in *The Adoration of the Magi* for the church of Santa Corona in Vicenza, see Cocke, 115 and plate 15.

[48] Giuseppina Muzzarelli, "Reconciling the Privilege of a Few with the Common Good: Sumptuary Laws in Medieval and Early Modern Europe," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 39:3 (2009): 598-600. For an book on sumptuary law as it shaped—or failed to shape—Venetian dress, see Stella Mary Newton, *The Dress of the Venetians, 1405-1525* (Aldershot, U.K.; Brookfield, VT: Scolar Press, 1988). See also, on such laws in relation to Veronese's paintings of women, Garton, *Portraiture*, Chapter 2, "Paragons of Beauty," especially the section entitled "Lusso e abuso: the Economics of Feminine Display," 62-68.

[49] Vecellio, 59-60/ 111-112.

[50] Ibid., 167/115.

In Veronese's portraits of Venetians, his treatment of what they are wearing



Fig. 11: Paolo Veronese, *Francesco Franceschini*, 1551, oil on canvas, 189.5 x 134.9 cm, John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota, Florida

likewise positioned them in the system of Venetian dress: his close attention to the textiles they wore identified their status. In his earliest full-length portrait, of the twenty-eight-year-old nobleman *Francesco Franceschini* (1551, Ringling Museum), the gold-trimmed reds and blacks in which his sitter chose to be portrayed immediately demonstrate his wealth (Figure 11).[51] Franceschini's family was involved in the silk trade in Vicenza, where the production of silk

[51] Pignatti and Pedrocco, *Veronese*, 1: plate 27, 57. For an excellent reproduction of this portrait, including useful details of Franceschini's dress, see *Veronese: Gods, Heroes and Allegories*, ed. Patrizia Nitti et al. (Milan: Skira, 2004/Versailles: Sylvestre Verger Art, 2004), 61-63. See also the large half-length detail in Garton, "The Portraiture of Veronese" in Brilliant and Ilchman, 120.

thread had begun in the early fifteenth century and silk merchants oversaw over one hundred silk mills by the end of the sixteenth century.[52] He not only dealt in silk: he wore it. Veronese presents him from below, positioning the viewer to look upward in a *di sotto in su* perspective, as John Garton points out, that "gives the impression of grandeur through elevation."[53] This point of view also leads the eye through the grandeur of Franceschini's dress, from his crimson *calze intere* (full-length hose), over which he wears a pair of the short, snug trousers called *calzoni*, trimmed with three narrow bands of gold thread, and onward up to his black doublet, richly trimmed with paired vertical strips of narrow gold cord, as is his red velvet sleeve. Veronese portrays Franceschini in detail as a rich man wearing an outfit very different from the long black robes worn in public by men belonging to the city's old elite, whose sober dress Vecellio praises and Veronese shows in other portraits.

Men in black

Franceschini's reds, contrasting to the black of his doublet with its intricate gold trim, combine colors and textures into an ensemble considerably more lavish than those that Veronese presents in portraits of men dressed in black. A figure clad more discreetly, also painted in 1551, is the subject of the *Portrait of Giuseppe Da Porto with his Son Adriano* (c. 1551, Uffizi) (Figure 12).[54] In contrast to Franceschini, Da Porto came from an ancient and famous family: he was a wealthy Vicentine count and Knight of the Holy Empire. He poses in an understated plain black doublet over which he wears a short black cape, full-cut and lined with fur, with black hose and black shoes. The fur, like the shiny satin fabric of the cape, is luxurious, but all the fabrics are black. Garton describes the painting's "subdued palette" as "a symphony of blacks, whites and grays."[55] Still greater simplicity characterizes the dress of the architect in Veronese's mid-1580s *Portrait of Vincenzo Scamozzi,* now in the Denver Art Museum (Figure 13).[56]

[52] Molà, *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice,* 237-38.
[53] Garton, "The Portraiture of Veronese," in Brilliant and Ilchman, 125.
[54] Pignatti and Pedrocco, *Veronese*, 1: plate 4, 51. For a good reproduction, see Garton, *The Portraiture of Paolo Veronese*, Plate 4, 51, and his commentary, 188-9.
[55] Garton, *Portraiture*, 2008, 189.
[56] Pignatti and Pedrocco, 2:435; see also Garton, *Portraiture*, Plate 29, 121.



Fig. 12: Veronese, *Portrait of Giuseppe Da Porto with his Son Adriano*, c. 1551,
oil on canvas, 207 x 136 cm, Uffizi Gallery. Wikimedia Commons



Fig. 13: Paolo Veronese and Workshop, *Portrait of Vincenzo Scamozzi*, oil on canvas, 93.5 x 82 cm, mid-1580s, Denver Art Museum, Wikimedia Commons

Veronese's treatment of Scamozzi's plain black gown focuses the viewer's eye first on the architect's face, then briefly on his modest white chemise collar and almost invisible chain necklace, and then on the Corinthian capital and compass in his hands. We look at the tools of his profession rather than the splendor of a nobleman's gold-trimmed jacket.

Black worn by men, in addition to signaling their prosperity, had moral and political significance in Venice. Long gowns of black cloth are praised in an exchange in Ludovico Dolce's *Dialogo nel quale si ragiona delle qualità, diversità e proprietà dei colori* (1565). In this dialogue the speaker, Mario, refutes Cornelio's classically-based argument that black signifies madness by emphasizing how many men of honorable professions now wear the color and how noble a temperament it signifies:

> Watch what you say; for you will find yourself borne in upon by a multitude of robed men, that is, lawyers, procurators, notaries, doctors, philosophers, priests, and other such men, indeed, men of every rank who dress in black, for this color has an air of nobility and maturity; it also shows strength of character, because this color cannot be changed into any other.[57]

Vecellio shares this view of black, which he shows in a print entitled *Everyday Clothing Worn by the Entire Venetian Nobility* and succinctly describes in his text (Figure 14).[58]



Fig. 14: Cesare Vecellio, *Habito Ordinario, et Commune à tutta la nobiltà Venetiana*, woodcut, *Habiti antichi e moderni*, 1590, 106, Private collection, Massachusetts

He, too, explains that black is no longer exclusively a sign of patrician rank, but a color worn more widely in contemporary Venice:

[57] Ludovico Dolce, *Dialogo nel quale si ragiona delle qualità, diversità e proprietà dei colori* (Venice, 1565), cited in Amedeo Quondam, *Tutti i colori del nero,* 95. Our translation.

[58] Vecellio, 158: "[e]t questo è l'Habito usato non solamente dalla nobiltà, ma da' Cittadini, & da chiunque si compiace di portarlo, come fanno quasi tutti i Medici, gli Avvocati, & Mercanti, i quali tutti se ne vestono volontieri, poiche essendo Habito proprio della nobiltà, porta seco ne gli altri anchora gran riputatione" (106).

> Et questo è l'Habito usato non solamente dalla nobiltà, ma da' Cittadini, & da chiunque si compiace di portarlo, come fanno quasi tutti i Medici, gli Avvocati, & Mercanti, i quali tutti se ne vestono volontieri, poiche essendo Habito proprio della nobiltà, porta seco ne gli altri anchora gran riputatione (106).
>
> This is the clothing worn not only by the nobility but by citizens and by anyone else who wants to wear it, as almost all doctors, lawyers, and merchants do, all of whom wear it gladly, for as a garment of the nobility, it confers great dignity on these others as well (158).

Black, in effect, was the uniform of Venetian men, patrician, professional and *cittadino* alike. These two portraits by Veronese and Vecellio's woodcut with its commentary call attention to a Venetian sartorial specialty: good black fabric. Even a plain black wool was produced through a complex series of dyeing techniques. Lasting, rich black dyes, which had to penetrate deeply to produce the fade-proof intensity required for wools and velvets, were produced through successive baths of color, including the dark blue of woad, derived from plants growing in the Caucasus and central and western Asia; the dark browns of oak and alder galls; sumac; alder bark; madder; and, more expensively, kermes.

To reproduce a rich black in oil painting, Venetian painters, too, layered pigments—for example, Titian, who depicted the deep-pile black velvet of the gown of Bishop Averoldi in his 1520-1522 polyptych in the basilica church of Saints Nazaro and Celso in Brescia by means of successive layers including four dyestuffs. He used vermilion, yellow ochre, blue-violet and blue-violet lake.[59] These lakes were based on a fixative also used for dyeing cloth, derived from beetles parasitic on fig, teak, and other trees in the Far East, whose dried bodies were pounded into powder to make a lacquer-like substance. Veronese similarly layered up color. Diana Gisolfi, synthesizing studies by five art historians, points out that cross sections from the *Feast in the House of Levi* and the *Wedding Feast at Cana* reveal that "drapery areas […] were typically made of three or four layers of pigment to simulate specific fabrics."[60] In a close technical study of Veronese's *Venus and Adonis* (c. 1565-75, Seattle Art Museum), Nicholas Dorman and Katie Patton analyze three sets of triple-layered paint, including red lake used for the tapestry hanging behind the couple, and for Adonis' orange tunic, a middle layer of yellow realgar, a mineral that was also used to dye calico.[61]

To return to "the luxury of black," as Paul Hill describes it, by the mid-sixteenth century Venice was competing with the Low Countries and Genoa in the production of deep black cloth that neither faded nor tended toward brown: "the honor of Venice was bound up with its production of black silk and [woolen] cloth."[62] From satin and velvets to wools, different fabrics absorbed and reflected black dyes in different ways.

---

[59] Paul Hills, *Venetian Colour: Marble, Mosaic, Painting and Glass, 1250-1550* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 186. On Veronese's layering of four or more colors to depict textiles in *The Feast in the House of Levi* and *The Wedding Feast at Cana,* see Diana Gisolfi's synthesis of five art historians' analyses in "Veronese's Training, Methods and Shop Practice," in Brilliant and Ilchman, 39.

[60] Gisolfi, "Veronese's Training," 39.

[61] Nicolas Dorman and Katie Patton, "Materials, Technique, and the Master's Hand: The Seattle *Venus and Adonis*," in Brilliant and Ilchman, 240-2. They also point to the use of red lake as the top layer of the background tapestry.

[62] Hall, *Color and Meaning*, 7.



Fig. 15: Paolo Veronese, *Portrait of a Man*, 1576-78, oil on canvas, 192.1 x 134 cm, Open Content, J. Paul Getty Research Institute

Living in a city in which magistrates were required to wear black robes and men of all ages wore it as a sign of dignity, Venetians, including artists, developed a discerning eye for the hues and qualities of *panni neri*. An early painting demonstrating the importance of black is Sebastiano

del Piombo's 1524-5 *Portrait of Pietro Aretino*, in which, Vasari points out, the viewer can distinguish five or six types of black fabrics, including velvet, damask, ormesino and wool.[63]

Another case in point is Veronese's *Portrait of a Man,* 1576-8, at the J. Paul Getty Museum, showing a nobleman in a range of black fabrics to which the painter is closely attentive (Figure 15).[64] He is dressed in the black typical of male portraits of the Veneto, but in this case the variety of fabrics he wears is subtly complex. He wears a black velvet doublet and black velvet *bracconi* (full, padded breeches ending at mid-thigh), paned—that is, cut vertically—to show their black silk lining, over black stockings probably of silk knit, and black shoes. Over his doublet, he wears a wide sash or possibly a mantle of a shiny fabric, probably silk taffeta, and on top of this, a lustrous three-paneled border of black velvet descending diagonally from his left shoulder. In his left hand, he holds a soft black velvet beret trimmed with a golden brooch and a black feather. To a perceptive Venetian viewer, as to Vecellio in his commentary on the noblemen of Venice, the subtle variations in the texture and drape of these fabrics, in addition to the black color, would have signified understated elegance, ennobled by the man's toga-like mantle.

In addition to Veronese's accurate depiction of the textiles worn by his sitter, he added a small scene of San Marco in the left background of the painting to associate this nobleman with Venice and its ruling officials. Garton conjectures that "the sitter was a member of the patriciate class, perhaps from Verona, who, like the painter, aspired to a position of rank in Venice."[65] Indeed, Veronese's visual language may link his subject specifically to the *scudieri*, the standard bearers of the doge, as depicted by Vecellio (Figure 16),[66] whose black velvet caps, short black velvet capes, slashed padded breeches and velvet shoes closely resemble those worn by this anonymous gentleman. Given the abraded condition of the painting, identifying the clothing of Vecellio's *Scudieri* with the *habito* of Veronese's *Portrait of a Man* can only be tentative. Even so, the clothing and carriage of Veronese's anonymous gentleman correspond to the cut of the uniforms and the dignity of these guardians of the doge.

The perfection of Venice: women in white and gold brocade

In contrast to the restrained black clothing of Venetian men, Vecellio and Veronese celebrated the white satin, gold, silver and pearls through which Venetian noblewomen displayed their splendor on civic occasions. Vecellio, describing the 1556 coronation of the doge Lorenzo Priuli, recounts the procession of the dogaressa, his wife, Zilia Dandolo Priuli, through the ducal palace: "A corteggiarla furono elette dugento trenta donne nobili, tutte vestite di seta Bianca, & ornate di perle" (80) ("To serve her, 230 noblewomen were chosen, all wearing white silk and adorned with pearls" (132).

[63] Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani* (1559), ed. Luciano Bellosi and Aldo Rossi, 843 (Turin: Einaudi 1986).
[64] For an excellent reproduction of this portrait see Brilliant and Ilchman, Plate 16, 127. Garton comments that this portrait "marks the summit of Veronese's monumentalizing mode of full-length portraiture," in Brilliant and Ilchman, 129.
[65] Garton, *Portraiture*, 129. In *The Art of Paolo Veronese,* W. R. Rearick likewise conjectures that the small image of San Marco implies that the sitter "had a specific connection . . .with the Venetian state" (118).
[66] Vecellio, 167/115.



Fig. 16: Cesare Vecellio, *Scudieri del Doge*, woodcut,
Habiti antichi et moderni, 1590, folio 115, Private collection, Massachusetts

He also describes the dress of the *dogaressa* herself and provides a detailed woodcut portrait of her, though the written description is more informative than in the black and white print (Figure 17):



Fig. 17: Cesare Vecellio, *Principessa, ò Dogaressa,* woodcut, *Habiti Antichi et moderni*, 1590, 80, Private collection, Massachusetts

[l]a Principessa era vestita alla Ducale, con una vesta di broccato d'oro fino, sopra la quale portava il manto lungo fino in terra […]. Il Corno, ch'ella haveva in capo, era tempestato d'assai gemme, & era accompagnato da un sottilissimo velo di seta […] tutto trasparente […]. Al collo havea una filza di perle di grandissima valuta, ma più d'ogni altra cosa fu mirabile una gioia di prezzo inestimabile, che pendeva fino al petto da una collana d'oro tramezata di molte altre gioie (80-1).

[t]he princess was dressed in ducal fashion, with a gown of fine gold brocade, on top of which she wore a floor-length mantle […]. The *corno* she wore on her head was studded with a great number of jewels and trimmed with a very fine silk veil, transparent throughout […]. At her neck she wore a string of valuable pearls, but more wondrous than all the rest was a jewel of inestimable price hanging from a gold necklace interlaid with many other jewels (131).

Wonder at this luxurious combination of white and gold was echoed by Veronese's mid-seventeenth-century biographer, Marco Boschini, who described Veronese's color as follows: "one can say that the Painter […] had melted together gold, pearls […] finer than fine, and the purest and most perfect diamonds."[67] The biographer's use of metaphor is only slightly exaggerated. Gold was indeed used in the intricate weft of Venetian brocades. Boschini's allusion to the gold that Veronese made visible is described as a technical reality in Garzoni's *Piazza*; he explains at length the process by which *tiratori* hammered and stretched gold into fine wire to be wrapped around silk threads, which weavers then worked into the patterns of brocades.[68] He also links the beauty of Venetian women to such brocades: "[t]he noblewomen […] are they not a thousand times more alluring and gaily lovely in their clothes of silk adorned with so much gold? Are their beautiful faces not twice as radiant under white silk?"[69]

Veronese depicts this kind of brocade in both sacred and civic images. With close-focused precision in an imagined religious scene, *Sacred Conversation with Saint Agnes* (1560s, New Orleans Museum of Art), he shows the saint facing the Holy Family (Figure 18).[70] She kneels with her back to the viewer in a pose showing her wrapped in a swathe of white satin brocaded with a gold floral design; this overskirt is doubled over at the top and tied, not sewn on, with a thick green silk cord in a way suggesting that the painter was using a length of such fabric that he kept in his studio. Veronese also used the fabrics celebrated by Vecellio and Garzoni in the white satin and cloth of gold in his allegorical painting of Venice, the 1579-1582 *Apotheosis of Venice*, an oval painted for the ceiling mural of the Sala del Maggior Consiglio in the Ducal Palace.[71] His *Venetia*, enthroned on clouds rising above a pillared balcony, wears a gown of white and gold brocade under a golden mantle, and a pearl necklace and pearl earrings against her white neck.

This interplay of white brocade, pearls and pale skin also illuminates Veronese's late 1570s *Allegory of Venice Adoring the Virgin and Child* (Figure 19).[72] The figure personifying Venice combines three details of dress that would have been immediately recognizable to a Venetian viewer. On the back of her head she wears the doge's upward-curving *corno* in the smaller version worn by his wife and described by Vecellio in his passage on Zilia Dandolo.[73]

[67] Marco Boschini, *La carta del navegar pitoresco* (1660), ed. Anna Pallucchini (Venice: Istituto per la collaborazione culturale, 1966), 364. Cf. Garton, *The Portraiture of Paolo Veronese*, 67. Duits gives an English translation of a poem from Boschini's book in which the artist-poet lists many specific kinds of silk, including satin, damask, *ormesino* and *cendal*, 61-2.

[68] Garzoni, *Piazza universale*, 904-5. Our translation.

[69] Ibid., 910. Our translation.

[70] Pignatti and Pedrocco, *Veronese*, 2:517; they suggest that Paolo's son Benedetto also had a hand in the painting. The full title is *Madonna and Child with Saints Lawrence, Agnes and Anthony Abbot.*

[71] Pignatti and Pedrocco, 2:312. Veronese painted this oval after the Sala Maggiore in the Ducal Palace had burned a second time in 1577.

[72] Pignatti and Pedrocco, 2:352; see also Brilliant and Ilchman, Plate 32, 164.

[73] On the significance of this dogal cap, and of Dandola Priuli's coronation in general, see Bronwen Wilson, *The World in Venice: Print, the City, and Early Modern Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 165. See also, on the ceremonies of earlier dogaressas, Holly Hurlburt, *The Dogaressa of Venice: Wife and Icon* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).



Fig. 18: Paolo Veronese, *Sacra Conversazione*, 1560s, oil on canvas, 103.2x 127.7 cm, The New Orleans Museum of Art: The Samuel H. Kress Collection, 61.80

Second, her intricately braided blond hair is trimmed with pearls falling in a loop around and below her ear. Coiffures in which braids were woven with strands of pearls, gems that Venice famously imported from the East and sold to the rest of Europe, were themselves a fine art. Giovanni Guerra illustrated such styles in the forty-five engravings in his book, *Various Coiffures Worn by the Noblest Ladies of Various Cities of Italy*, published in the 1590s.[74] One of Guerra's prints, "La Ornata" of Milan, resembles Veronese's *Venetia*: she wears a long strand of

[74] For the connections between Guerra and Vecellio, see Grazietta Butazzi, "L'acconciatura femminile della seconda metà del secolo XVI nei 'figurini' del Vecellio," in *Il vestito e la sua immagine: atti del convegno in omaggio a Cesare Vecellio nel quarto centenario della morte,* ed. Jeannine Guérin Dalle Mese (Belluno: Amministrazione Provinciale di Belluno, 2002), 48-54. See also C. Mazzi, "Le acconciature di Giovanni Guerra," *La Bibliofilia,* Jan. 1900, 1: 229-233, and Enrichetta Cechi Gattolin and Elena Parma Armani, *Libri di immagini, disegni e incisioni di Giovanni Guerra (Modena 1544-Roma 1618): Modena, Palazzo dei Musei, Sala Poletti, 18 marzo-30 aprile 1978* (Modena: Biblioteca di storia dell'arte Luigi Poletti/Dalla Tipo-Lito, 1978).



Fig. 19: Paolo Veronese, *Allegory of Venice Adoring the Virgin and Child,* late 1570s, oil on canvas, 103 x 139 cm, Private collection, Wikimedia Commons

small pearls twisted through her braids, encircling her neck, looping down to her collarbone, and framing her ear from below.[75] Veronese's *Venetia* also wears a long strand of smaller pearls, pinned up at the middle of her bodice below the heavy jeweled necklace attaching her mantle. Third, under the gold-on-gold brocade of her cloak, she wears a gown of white satin brocaded in gold.

As Veronese's *Venetia* summed up the physical and spiritual beauty of the city, so Zilia Dandolo Priuli had been a living allegory of its power. Her coronation ceremony affirmed her political role and the power of her clan in the social hierarchy of the city and its sumptuous processions.[76] Bronwen Wilson analyzes the similar later ceremonies of Dogaressa Morosina Morosini of about 1597.[77] During the coronation of her husband Marin Grimani, the dogaressa, wearing a gown of cloth of gold, approached the city from the sea in the doge's ceremonial galley, the *bucintoro;* disembarking, she was accompanied by two hundred patrician women dressed in white satin and pearls. Wilson points out the civically unifying effect of these attendants and also the gender divide in Venetian self-presentations in which such feminine splendor in white silk was set off against the masculine austerity of Venetian noblemen in black.[78]

---

[75] Butazzi, 53.

[76] Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 289-90.

[77] Wilson reproduces Andrea Vicentino's painting commemorating this event, *The Disembarkation of the Dogaressa Morosina Grimani from the Bucintoro and her Progress Toward the Triumphal Arch*, c. 1597 (oil on canvas, Museo Correr, Venice), in *The World in Venice,* Figure 61, 166.

[78] Bronwen Wilson, "'Il bel sesso, e l'austero Senato': The Coronation of Dogaressa Morosina Morosini Grimani," *Renaissance Quarterly* 52: 1 (1999): 180.

Vecellio records a similar entourage of spectacularly dressed noblewomen on a state occasion in his account of the visit of Prince Henri of Valois to Venice in 1574, during which the women of the city appeared in glittering splendor:

> […] fu trattenuto […] con un grandissimo apparato ridotto nella Sala del gran Consiglio, di dugento Gentildonne delle più belle e principali dela Città […] tutte vestite di bianco…Tutte queste passarono a due a due dinanzi alla sua Maestà […]. Queste tutte havevano il capo coperto di perle, & d'altre gioie, delle quali anchora havevano con vaga ricchezza ornato il collo, il petto, le spalle, i busti & le maniche (132).
>
> [h]e was entertained […] with an immense gathering in the meeting room of the Great Council of two hundred of the most beautiful leading women of the city, all dressed in white […]. All of them promenaded two by two in front of his majesty […]. They had all covered their heads with pearls and other jewels, with which they had also adorned their necks, breasts, shoulders, bodices and sleeves, with lovely richness (187).

On occasions of such ostentatious display, Patricia Fortini Brown remarks, as Vecellio does, that sumptuary laws were temporarily suspended so that the city could deploy its noblewomen as luxury commodities themselves—a living frieze, one might say—in order to impress foreign visitors with Venetian wealth and luxury.[79]

In comparison to the massing of noblewomen in white satin on such occasions, the pose of Veronese's *Venetia* is remarkably humble: she bows down to the Virgin, who was central to one of the city's most important festivals, the Feast of the Ascension, which celebrated the founding of the city and the Virgin's ascent into heaven.[80] Kneeling and facing Mary, *Venetia* rests her left hand on her breast in a gesture of pious fealty. But Veronese elevates her into a paragon of beauty through the "translucent hues and rich impastos" that John Garton sees in the painter's female portraiture in general: "the beauty of Paolo's subject becomes so thoroughly imbricated with her splendid attire and jewels that our eye moves naturally from the blush of her cheek [...] or from the gleam of her pearls to the whiteness of her skin."[81]

Veronese celebrates the dress and beauty of the women of his city in another religious painting, the cabinet–size *Finding of Moses,* c. 1570s, now in the Prado. This is the kind of small painting that, as Virginia Brilliant points out, "filled a niche" in the Venetian art market for privately owned religious paintings to be kept in spaces such as the *studiolo* of a palazzo.[82] Here,

[79] Patricia Fortini Brown, *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice (*New York: Prentice Hall*,* 1997), 154-55. On contradictory attitudes toward women's dress, see J. Haraguchi, "Debating Women's Fashion in Renaissance Venice," in *A Well-Fashioned Image: Clothing and Costume in European Art, 1500-1850*, ed. Elizabeth Rodini and Elissa B. Weaver (Chicago: David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, 2002), 23-34.
[80] Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, 289-90.
[81] Garton, *Portraiture*, 66.
[82] Brilliant, "The Bible and the Lives of the Saints," in Brilliant and Ilchman, 136.



Fig. 20: Paolo Veronese, *Finding of Moses* [*Moses Saved from the Water*], ca. 1580, oil on canvas, Prado Museum, Wikimedia Commons

too, Veronese translates the language of civic celebration onto canvas, on which, as with the centurion, he transforms a Biblical story into a portrait of contemporary dress (Figure 20).[83] He shaped his Venetian viewers' response to the heroine of this story, the compassionate and generous daughter of the Pharaoh who found Moses and accepted him into the ruling family, by depicting her in a style of dress they would recognize. He gives her a lavish ensemble that befits both an Old Testament princess and a Venetian noblewoman of the Cinquecento: an elegantly cut gown made of brocade, a fashionable coiffure, a transparent veil worn at her neckline, and a necklace of pearls.[84]

All four of these resemble those that Vecellio shows in two woodcuts of present-day Venetian noblewomen. Such women, he writes, display the artistry of Bontempele's brocades:

> [d]i queste opere sì belle è stato in Venetia auttore M. Bartholomeo Bontempele dal Calice, il quale alle volte con le mostre, ch'egli fa di questi drappi de' quali li è stato inventore, mostra la grandezza dell'ingegno suo […]. Nella sua bottega […] si veggano broccati a opera di tutte le sorte d'oro & d'argento (139).
>
> [l]ovely fabrics such as these have been invented here in Venice by Messer Bartholomeo Bontempele, at the sign of the Chalice; when he exhibits these materials of his own design, he demonstrates his brilliant skill […]. In his shop […] all sorts of brocades woven with gold and silver can be seen (191).

In his commentary on his woodcut (Figure 21) of *Donne per casa* (*Women at Home)*, Vecellio describes the braided bun and the accessories worn by Bontempele's customers:

> [s]'acconciano la testa facendosi due trecce ristrette in un groppo tirato nell'ultimo della testa, e legato con cordelle di seta, che poi si ferma con alcuni achi d'oro ò d'argento […]. Portano sopra le spalle un velo a moda di bavero, e sempre le sue perle al collo (139).
>
> [t]hey wear their hair in two narrow braids, pulled into a bun at the back of the head and bound with silk cords held up with pins of gold or silver […]. Over their shoulders they wear a *velo* [a piece of thin voile or gauze] […], light and transparent, and at their necks they always wear their pearls.

---

[83] For reproductions, see Pignatti and Pedrocco, 2:394, and Salomon, Plate 115, 160. On the popularity of this subject in later painting, including several versions from Veronese's studio, see Brilliant, 161. Salomon remarks that the devotional aspect of these images was less important to their owners than their secular beauty: "[t]his small, cabinet-size canvas is more an exercise in aristocratic taste than in deeply felt piety. Such works were perhaps owned by noble families and displayed in their palaces more for their jewel-like quality than for the emotions they inspired," 161. On the Biblical connotations of dress in this painting, see Naomi Yavneh, "'Lost and Found: Veronese's *Finding of Moses*," in *Gender and the Early Modern Construction of Childhood*, ed. Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh (Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2010), 61-63.

[84] Salomon accounts for the popularity of this subject in the paintings of Veronese and his studio by emphasizing the painter's "almost secular interpretation . . . The scene must have been in Veronese's mind one in which the theatre and pageantry of his secular paintings could be applied to an Old Testament story" (161). Alessandra Zamperini in her richly illustrated *Paolo Veronese* (Verona: Arsenale, 2013) argues that Veronese's spectacular treatment of the princess, "abbigliata come un' aristocratica veneziana," is not mere stage-setting but central to the dramatic role that she and other heroines are assigned in Old Testament narratives and in Veronese's paintings of Esther, Judith and Susannah (150).



Fig. 21: Cesare Vecellio, *Donne per Casa*, woodcut, *Habiti antichi et moderni,* 1590, folio 139, Private collection, Massachusetts

We see the noblewoman from behind, in a snugly fitted bodice with a slightly dropped waist and a full, gathered skirt of brocade long enough to flow into a train.

In a later print, *Venetian Noblewomen and Others at Home and Outdoors in the Winter*, he presents another ensemble like the one Veronese gives his Old Testament princess, showing a noblewoman at home in a square-necked, long-waisted bodice, an almost invisible silk veil covering her shoulders at the sides of the bodice, a full brocade skirt, and the *pianelle* (platform-soled mules) that increased a woman's height and necessitated a luxuriously long skirt for her gown (Figure 22).



Fig. 22: Cesare Vecellio, *Venetiane a Casa,* woodcut, *Habiti antichi et moderni*, 1590, 144, Private collection, Massachusetts

In both cases, Vecellio associates the beauty and richness of the woman's clothing with her moral beauty and the domestic harmony of his city. Of the women buying Bontempele's fabrics he says, "Studiano molto di compiacere a i mariti, desiderando di conservargli nell'amor congiugale, & di mantener la pace, & la Concordia nelle case loro" (140): "[t]hey make every attempt to please their husbands, wishing to preserve conjugal love and to maintain peace and harmony in their home" (139-40). In his comment on his second print of women at home in the winter, he contrasts the Venetian courtesans' usurpation of fine fabrics to those legitimately worn by women of high rank—"di colori diversi di seta, & di broccati" (in various colors of silk and brocade,"144)—as well as pearls, allowed only to noblewomen and forbidden to prostitutes, "non potendo esse in vigor delle bene ordinate leggi della Città di Venetia portar ornamenti di perle" (144): "since courtesans cannot wear pearls, as honorable women do, according to the carefully designed laws in place in the city of Venice" (196).

Veronese also depicts the princess' gown, a damask combining silver thread with lustrous silk, in a newly stylish color of the kind that Bontempele was inventing for his brocades: orange (*arancia*). Paul Hills and Marcia B. Hall discuss the evolving use of pigments mixed to produce hues of orange in paintings by Carpaccio, Giovanni Bellini, and Cima da Conegliano. Hills points out that the gamut of ochre and orange is "especially striking in Veronese."[85] By 1548, Rosetti's *Plictho* included several recipes for orange dyes, which he calls *naranzato* and *rancio*. To dye silk a rich orange, he recommends a mixture of *grana*, madder, and fustet, the yellow called "Venetian sumac," derived from a species of rue.[86]

The orange and silver brocade worn by the daughter of Egypt's ruler, then, unites the arts of the dyer, the silver-thread maker, the weaver, the printmaker, and the painter as mutual creators of a modishly cut and fashionably colored gown. Vecellio's equation of elegant dress and nobility of spirit, his rich language of textile description, and Veronese's shimmering display of fabric and color: all these illuminate the figure of the pharaoh's daughter. As Naomi Yavneh points out, this "contemporary court scene of lavish luxury and exoticism is a specifically Venetian one, as emphasized by the subtly toned but clearly recognizable view of the city of Venice in the painting's middle-left background."[87] Veronese's princess combines Old Testament history with the mercantile culture of Venice and the language of its eulogists, condensing the word, the worn world and the wealth of dyers' and painters' pigments into Veronese's richly textured celebration of *venezianità*.

Like the *Allegory of Venice Adoring the Virgin*, this painting interprets a religious scene by representing a woman's spiritual beauty through the splendor of her dress. Thematically and sartorially, the painting also presents an analogy to *Juno Showering Gifts on Venice*, in which Veronese focuses on a splendid dogal hat to give the composition a specific political meaning. Biblical narratives, female allegories, depictions of political power, portraits of wealth: in all of these, Veronese and Vecellio fuse Christian and Venetian ideals into words and pictures celebrating the textile wealth of their city and nation.

Bibliography

Ackerman, James S. "On Early Renaissance Color Theory and Practice." *Studies in Italian Art and Architecture, Fifteenth through Eighteenth Centuries*, edited by Henry Millon, 11-44. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1980.

Baxandall, Michael. *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth-Century Italy: A Primer in the Social History of Pictorial Style*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1972.

Boschini, Marco. *La carta del navegar pitoresco* (1660), edited by Anna Pallucchini. Venice: Istituto per la collaborazione culturale, 1966.

Brilliant, Virginia. "The Bible and the Lives of the Saints." In *Paolo Veronese: A Master and his Workshop in Renaissance Venice*, edited by Virginia Brilliant with Frederick Ilchman, 134-149. London: Scala Publishers/The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 2012.

Brown, Patricia Fortini. *Art and Life in Renaissance Venice*. New York: Prentice Hall, 1997.

[85] Hall, *Color and Meaning,* 208; Hills, *Language of Colour*, 147.

[86] Rosetti*, Plictho*, Part 2, B2 recto, translation 115.

[87] Naomi Yavneh, "'Lost and Found: Veronese's *Finding of Moses*,'" 53. She comments further: "With her blond hair, rich gown and extensive retinue […]. Pharaoh's daughter appears as the quintessential princess of any Venetian mythology" (61).

— . “Where the Money Flows: Art Patronage in Sixteenth-Century Venice.” In *Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese: Rivals in Renaissance Venice,* edited by Frederick Ilchman, 41-59. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts Publications, 2009.

Butazzi, Grazietta. “L’acconciatura femminile della seconda metà del secolo XVI nei 'figurini' del Vecellio.” In *Il vestito e la sua immagine: atti del convegno in omaggio a Cesare Vecellio nel quarto centenario della morte,* edited by Jeannine Guérin Dalle Mese, 48-54. Belluno: Amministrazione Provinciale di Belluno, 2002.

Cechi Gattolin, Enrichetta, and Elena Parma. *Libri di immagini, disegni e incisioni di Giovanni Guerra (Modena 1544-Roma 1618): Modena, Palazzo dei Musei, Sala Poletti, 18 marzo-30 aprile 1978*. Modena: Biblioteca di storia dell'arte Luigi Poletti/Dalla Tipo-Lito, 1978.

Cocke, Richard. *Paolo Veronese: Piety and Display in an Age of Religious Reform*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001.

de Maria, Blake. *Becoming Venetian: Immigrants and the Arts in Early Modern Venice*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010.

—. “Veronese and His Patrons.” In *Paolo Veronese: A Master and his Workshop in Renaissance Venice*, edited by Virginia Brilliant with Frederick Ilchman. 44-57. London: Scala Publishers/The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 2012.

Dolce, Ludovico. *Dialogo nel quale si ragiona delle qualità, diversità e proprietà dei colori*. Venice: Sessa, 1565.

Dorman, Nicholas, and Katie Patton, “Materials, Technique, and the Master's Hand: The Seattle *Venus and Adonis*.” In *Paolo Veronese: A Master and his Workshop in Renaissance Venice*, edited by Virginia Brilliant with Frederick Ilchman. 234-243. London: Scala Publishers/ The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 2012.

Duits, Rembrandt. “'Abiti gravi, abiti stravaganti': Veronese's Creative Approach to Drapery.” In *Paolo Veronese: A Master and his Workshop in Renaissance Venice*, edited by Virginia Brilliant with Frederick Ilchman, 58-69. London: Scala Publishers/The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 2012.

Fenlon, Iain. *The Ceremonial City: History, Memory and Myth in Renaissance Venice*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007.

Ferraro, Joanne. *Venice: History of the Floating City*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

Garton, John. *Grace and Grandeur: The Portraiture of Paolo Veronese*. London: Brepols Publishers, 2008.

Garzoni, Tomaso. *La piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo*, edited by Paolo Cherchi and Beatrice Collina. Turin: Einaudi, 1996.

—. *La Piazza universale di tutte le professioni del mondo*. Venice: Gio. Battista Somasco, 1587.

Gisolfi, Diana. “Veronese's Training, Methods, and Shop Practice.” In *Paolo Veronese: A Master and his Workshop in Renaissance Venice*, edited by Virginia Brilliant with Frederick Ilchman, 30-43. London: Scala Publishers/The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 2012.

Gritt, Stephen. “'Like a Mirror that Shows his Idea': Interaction in the Veronese Workshop.” In *Paolo Veronese: A Master and his Workshop in Renaissance Venice*, edited by Virginia Brilliant with Frederick Ilchman, 222-233. London: Scala Publishers/The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 2012.

Hall, Marcia B. *Color and Meaning: Practice and Theory in Renaissance Painting.* Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Haraguchi, J. “Debating Women's Fashion in Renaissance Venice.” In *A Well-Fashioned Image: Clothing and Costume in European Art, 1500-1850*, edited by Elizabeth Rodini and Elissa B. Weaver, 23-34. Chicago: David and Alfred Smart Museum of Art, University of Chicago, 2002.

Hills, Paul. *Venetian Colour: Marble, Mosaic, Painting and Glass, 1250-1550*. New Haven, CT.: Yale University Press, 1999.

Hoffenk Van der Graaf, Judith H. *The Colourful Past: Origins, Chemistry and Identification of Natural Dyestuffs*. Riggisberg: Abegg-Stiftung / London: Archetype, 2004.

Hurlburt, Holly. *The Dogaressa of Venice: Wife and Icon*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Ilchman, Frederick. *Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese: Rivals in Renaissance Venice*. Boston: Museum of Fine Arts Publications, 2009.

Ilg, Ulrike. “The Cultural Significance of Costume Books in Sixteenth-Century Europe.” In *Clothing Culture, 1350-1650*, edited by Catherine Richardson, 29-47. Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2004.

Jones, Ann Rosalind. “'Worn in Venice and throughout Italy': The Impossible Present in Cesare Vecellio's Costume Books.” *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 39 (2009): 511-544.

Kaplan, Paul. “Veronese's Images of Foreigners.” In *Nuovi studi su Paolo Veronese: convegno internazionale di studi, Venezia 1-4 giugno 1988*, edited by M. Gemin, 308-316. Venice: Arsenale Editrice, 1990.

Mazzi, C. “Le acconciature di Giovanni Guerra.” *La Bibliofilia* (Jan. 1900): 229-233.

Mitchell, W.J.T. *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994.

Molà, Luca. *The Silk Industry of Renaissance Venice*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000.

Muir, Edward. *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.

Muzzarelli, Giuseppina. “Reconciling the Privilege of a Few with the Common Good: Sumptuary Laws in Medieval and Early Modern Europe.” *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 39 (2009): 597-617.

Newton, Stella Mary. *The Dress of the Venetians, 1405-1525*. Aldershot, England/Brookfield,VT: Scolar Press, 1988.

Nitti, Patrizia, et al. *Veronese: Gods, Heroes and Allegories*. Milan: Skira, 2004/Versailles: Sylvestre Verger Art, 2004.

Pignatti, Teresio and Filippo Pedrocco. *Veronese*. 2 vols. Milan: Electa, 1995.

Quondam, Amedeo. *Tutti i colori del nero: moda e cultura*. Vicenza*:* Angelo Colla Editore, 2007.

Reist, Inge. “The Classical Tradition: Mythology and Allegory.” In *Paolo Veronese: A Master and his Workshop in Renaissance Venice*, edited by Virginia Brilliant with Frederick Ilchman, 104-129. London: Scala Publishers/The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 2012.

Ridolfi, Carlo. *Vita di Paolo Caliari Veronese, celebre pittore*. Venice: Leni, 1656.

Rosand, David. “Paolo Caliari: A Veronese Painter Triumphant in Venice.” In *Paolo Veronese: A Master and his Workshop in Renaissance Venice*, edited by Virginia Brilliant with Frederick Ilchman, 14-29. London: Scala Publishers/The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, 2012**.**

Rosenthal, Margaret F. "Clothing, Fashion Dress and Costume in Venice (c. 1450-1650)." In *Handbook of Venetian History, 1400-1600*, edited by Eric Dursteler, 889-928. Leiden: Brill Press, 2013.

— . "Cultures of Clothing in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe." *The Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 39 (2009): 459-481.

Rosetti, Gioanventura. *Plictho de l'arte de tentori che insegna tenger pan[n]i telle banbasi et sede si per larthe magiore come per la commune*, translated by Sidney M. Edelstein and Hector C. Borghetti as *Instructions in the Art of the Dyers which Teaches the Dyeing of Woolen Cloths, Linens, Cottons, and Silk by the Great Art as well as by the Common*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1969.

Rowland-Jones, Anthony. "The Minuet: Painter-Musicians in Triple Time." *Early Music* 26 (1998): 416-431.

Tucci, Ugo. http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/bontempelli-dal-calice-bartolomeo_(Dizionario-Biografico)/ Accessed January 26, 2015.

Salomon, Xavier F. *Veronese*. London: National Gallery Company Limited, 2014.

Vasari, Giorgio. *Le vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani*, edited by Luciano Bellosi and Aldo Rossi. Turin: Einaudi 1986.

Vecellio, Cesare. *Degli Habiti antichi et moderni*. Venice: Damiano Zenaro, 1590.

—. *Habiti antichi et moderni*: *The Clothing of the Renaissance World*, edited and translated by Margaret F. Rosenthal and Ann Rosalind Jones. London: Thames and Hudson, 2008.

—. *Habiti antichi et moderni*: *la moda nel Rinascimento.* Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, Libreria dello Stato, 2010.

Wilson, Bronwen. *The World in Venice: Print, the City, and Early Modern Identity*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005.

—. "'Il bel sesso, e l'austero Senato': The Coronation of Dogaressa Morosina Morosini Grimani," *Renaissance Quarterly* 52 (1999): 73-139.

Yavneh, Naomi. "'Lost and Found:' Veronese's *Finding of Moses.*" In *Gender and the Early Modern Construction of Childhood*, ed. Naomi J. Miller and Naomi Yavneh, 51-65. Aldershot, U.K.: Ashgate, 2010.

Zamperini, Alessandra. *Paolo Veronese*. Verona: Arsenale, 2013.