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Titian's Sacred and Profane Love Re-examined

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This discussion of Titian's *Sacred and Profane Love* is one of many. Walter Friedlaender and Erwin Panofsky wrote extensively on the subject in 1938 and 1939 and much was brought up to date by Malcolm Bull and others in the present century. Eugene Cantelupe provides a cogent analysis of Titian's painting, but it is worth noting that at the time of his writing it was not known that the painting was commissioned for the marriage of Nicolò Aurelio, the Venetian Grand Chancellor, to a young widow, Laura Bagarotto. Irrespective of this, the elaborate details in his article are well worth attending to. (AF)

istic of military fortifications built by Luciano Laurana and Francesco di Giorgio.

A major edifice built in Pesaro during the decade of the seventies, Costanzo's Nuova Rocca or, as it is now known, Fortezza Costanzo, answers the description of S. Terenzio's model. Although only the foundation of the original building remains, the model can be seen to conform to the outline of the massively proportioned corner towers.<sup>9</sup> In addition, the sloping foundations of the model correspond to the present-day ruins, where the sides are much thicker below the stringcourse which encircles the building.

The most conclusive evidence for the identification of S. Terenzio's model is the elevation of the fortress on the reverse of one of Costanzo's medals (Fig. 4), an example of which is preserved in the National Gallery of Art in Washington.<sup>10</sup> The coin portrays the fortress from a level high enough to show the relationship between the four corner towers and the central tower. According to Adolfo Venturi, the fortress originally consisted of "four massive battlemented towers at the corners of the main escarpment; from the escarpment a drawbridge led to the central section, from which arose the keep which dominated the Adriatic."<sup>11</sup>

On the basis of the identification of the Fortezza Costanzo in the Pesaro altarpiece, we may assume that Giovanni executed the painting either for Costanzo Sforza or for a patron who wanted the Fortezza represented as a tribute to Costanzo. Situated on a bluff overlooking the Foglia River, the new building was probably a conspicuous feature of the city when Giovanni arrived there during the seventies. Little is known about Costanzo's art patronage; however, since Costanzo was the brother-in-law of Federigo da Montefeltro, his role as a significant patron seems plausible.

Through the identification of the Fortezza Costanzo, we are able to arrive at a *terminus post* for the altarpiece. Construction of the fortress began on June 3, 1474.<sup>12</sup> A year later, Costanzo had the commemorative medal made.<sup>13</sup> Consequently, the likeness of the fortress was known in 1475 (evidently through architectural plans), although the activity of Luciano

Laurana, the most important architect involved in the project, is documented only from 1476 until his death in 1479.<sup>14</sup> Giovanni may well have had access to the same source used by the designer of the medal. We can say with certainty, then, that Giovanni's altarpiece was painted in 1475 or after.

Most recent scholars have tended to assign the *Coronation of the Virgin* to an earlier date, roughly 1470-1473,<sup>15</sup> which is to say, several years before Antonello da Messina's altar for the church of San Cassiano (documented 1475-1476). A post-1475 dating of the altarpiece at Pesaro considerably changes our view of Venetian painting during the seventies, especially with regard to Giovanni's debt to Antonello. As Giles Robertson has observed, "the Vasarian tradition that he learnt from Antonello to paint in oils, inaccurate as it may be in all its details, gives us the essential answer. In such works as the Rimini *Pietà* and the *Santa Giustina* we see him modifying the sharp hatched modelling of his earlier period . . . to achieve a more continuous modelling of form; and in the *Coronation of the Virgin* at Pesaro we see this fully achieved by some different means, including the use of glazes. The Antonellesque character of the modelling of the Pesaro picture seems to me self-evident . . . and there is no external evidence to suggest it was in fact executed before Antonello's visit."<sup>16</sup>

While we hope that the discoveries communicated in this note will substantiate Robertson's findings, we must emphasize in conclusion that a positive *terminus post* for the Pesaro altarpiece is only a first step toward an accurate assessment of Giovanni Bellini's early development.

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## TITIAN'S SACRED AND PROFANE LOVE RE-EXAMINED

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If Titian's Borghese painting is not the most enigmatic of Italian High Renaissance pictures, certainly it is one of the most disputed. For more than forty

the fortress.

9. For a reproduction of the Rocchetta as it stands today, see Vacca, *op.cit.*, p. 68.

10. The medal, catalogued as No. A 834 of the Kress collection of Renaissance bronzes, was formerly in the Dreyfus collection (cf. George Francis Hill, *Renaissance Medals: The Gustave Dreyfus Collection*, Oxford, 1931, No. 97).

11. Venturi, *op.cit.*, VII, 1, p. 675. At the same time we should note that the model held by S. Terenzio differs in certain ways from the fortress portrayed on the coin. For instance, in the painting the central keep has a broad, sloping roof, whereas on the coin it is much steeper. Also the proportions of the central keep are dissimilar in the coin and the model. Although it is difficult to account for these discrepancies, the identification of the model as the Fortezza Costanzo would appear correct nonetheless. I have not discovered any other building undertaken in Pesaro, Urbino, or Rimini that resembles the model so closely. Since construction of the Fortezza was still in progress during the 1480's, it is conceivable that the painting shows an alternate project for

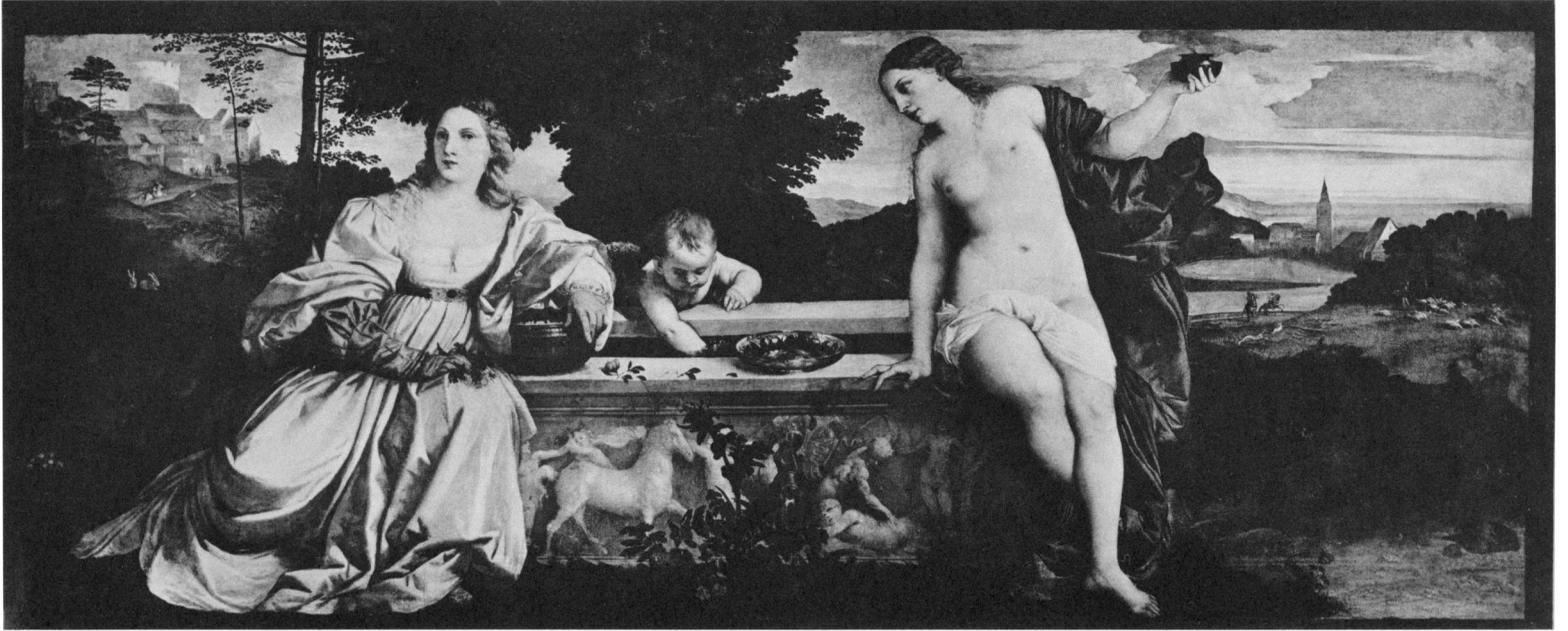
12. Annibale Olivieri-Giordani, *Lettera sopra un medaglione non ancor osservato di Costanzo Sforza di Pesaro*, Pesaro, 1781, p. vii. See also Pompeo Litta, *Famiglie celebri italiane*, 1819, I (unpaginated; plate entitled "Cenni sulle Medaglie . . . al ramo di Pesaro").

13. The inscription on the medal reads INEXPVGNABILE CASTELLVM CONSTANTIVM PISAVRENTI SALVTI PVBLICAE MCCCCLXXV.

14. Arduino Colasanti, *Luciano Laurana*, Rome, 1922, p. 8.

15. Roberto Longhi, "The Giovanni Bellini Exhibition," *Burlington Magazine*, XCI, 1949, p. 281, dates the altar about 1473. Luigi Coletti, *Pittura veneta del quattrocento*, Novara, 1953, p. lxii, accepts Longhi's dating, as does Edoardo Arslan, "Studi Belliniani," *Bollettino d'Arte*, XLVII, 1962, p. 44. Rodolfo Pallucchini, *Giovanni Bellini*, Milan, 1959, pp. 57 and 137, places the execution of the altar about 1470-1471.

16. Robertson, *op.cit.*, p. 58.



1. Titan, *Sacred and Profane Love*. Rome, Borghese Gallery (photo: Alinari)



2. Clothed woman on left (detail of Fig. 1). Rome, Borghese Gallery (photo: Alinari)



3. Unclothed woman on right (detail of Fig. 1). Rome, Borghese Gallery (photo: Alinari)

years this work has commanded critical attention, but the considerable body of scholarly writing it has inspired is inconclusive, most critics admitting that they cannot account for all of the details in the painting.

When one first sees *Sacred and Profane Love*, he senses neither obliquity nor mystery, rather directness and clarity (Fig. 1). Two women, seated at a sculptured fountain, clearly define a series of opposites. The figure on the left, elaborately gowned, sits at a lower elevation than the semidraped one on the right. The clothed woman leans on a closed urn, while the unclothed one extends an open urn. Moreover, these protagonists, separated by Cupid behind and a rosebush in front of the fountain, lead the eye of the beholder into two contrasting backgrounds. The left one is a cityscape, dark and crowded (Fig. 4); the right is a pastoral landscape, bright and spacious (Fig. 5).

Further scrutiny reveals similarities that link the contrasting halves of the canvas and the landscapes with the foreground. The women so closely resemble each other that they seem sisters, perhaps twins; and their vases are alike in shape and texture. In addition, horses and riders appear in both landscapes and in the relief sculpture on the fountain. The viewer soon realizes that Titian has harmonized the contrasts between the protagonists—and between their peculiar milieux—within the fundamental dichotomy of the composition.

In the absence of a text or program for the painting, the addition of another interpretation to those already in existence seems unnecessary, perhaps futile. Yet a review and an examination of these explanations, with reference to other pictures by Titian, at least prepare for, if they do not constitute, a new reading.

## I

The various interpretations of *Sacred and Profane*

1. "La 'Fontaine d'Amour' du Titien," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, XIII, 1917, pp. 288-298. Perhaps Hourticq favored a literary source because of Franz Wickhoff's suggestion, in 1895, that Titian, following the *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus, represents Venus imploring Medea to love Jason.

2. "La tintura delle rose," *ART BULLETIN*, XX, 1938, pp. 320-324. Like Hourticq, Friedlaender refrained from commenting on the dual landscapes and identified Polia on the left less positively than he did Venus on the right, because the relief scene directly below Polia does not indicate her as clearly as the scene on the right—the flogging of Adonis by Mars—indicates Venus. August L. Mayer, "Niccolò Aurelio, the Commissioner of Titian's 'Sacred and Profane Love,'" *ART BULLETIN*, XXI, 1939, p. 89, agreed that Friedlaender's interpretation solved the riddle of the painting and suggested that perhaps the poet-humanist, Pietro Bembo, friend of Aurelio and patron of Titian, might have suggested the literary theme of the painting.

3. "A New Interpretation of Titian's 'Sacred and Profane Love,'" *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, XXIII, 1943, pp. 89-98. Mrs. Bernstein claimed that Titian modeled the horse carved on the fountain after one of the woodcuts of the novel, its small ears, long mane, and timidly unyielding manner identifying it as a symbol of virginity. She also suggested that the sculptured figure at the extreme left of the relief may be a herm—perhaps Terminus, who refuses to yield to Jove as Polia in the novel does to Poliphilus. Thus, she concluded, Venus,

*Love* may be categorized as literary, philosophical, and allegorical, and begin in 1917, when Louis Hourticq indicated a literary source for the painting's iconography—Fra Francesco Colonna's popular romance, *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*, first published in Venice by Aldus Manutius in 1499 in an edition famous for its woodcuts.<sup>1</sup>

Hourticq's hypothesis, which accounted for few of the painting's many details, was disregarded until 1938, when Walter Friedlaender suggested that Titian, utilizing Colonna's text and its woodcut illustrations, pictured the crucial rite of the "tintura delle rose" as performed by Cupid at a fountain supporting, on the right and the left, Venus and Polia, the two heroines of the novel.<sup>2</sup>

In 1943, Rachel Wischnitzer-Bernstein, affirming Friedlaender's *ut pictura poesis* interpretation, attempted to corroborate his tentative identification of Polia by explaining the sculptured scene beside her as an "allegory of assailed virginity."<sup>3</sup> But Friedlaender immediately objected to the addition by Mrs. Bernstein of an allegorical interpretation to his purely literary one, and expressed doubt that the sculptured horse, which the scene features, symbolizes virginity.<sup>4</sup>

Chief spokesman for a philosophical interpretation is Erwin Panofsky; in 1930, he identified the two lovely women as Ficino's Twin Venuses, who personify transient and eternal love and beauty.<sup>5</sup> Later, in 1939, Panofsky elaborated on his earlier explanation by comparing *Sacred and Profane Love* with an engraving after Baccio Bandinelli, the *Combat of Ratio and Libido*, commenting that the painting is a Venetian translation of the Neoplatonic theory of love into images—"clear and poetic"—in contrast to the translation of the Florentine engraving—"obscure and dialectic."<sup>6</sup>

An allegorical explanation was offered in 1948 by

seated on the right side of the fountain, attempts to press Polia, seated on the left, into the service of love.

4. "Letter to the Editor," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, XXIII, p. 382. Denying that a herm appears on the fountain, Friedlaender expressed doubt that the horse, an established Platonic symbol of the passions, connotes virginity; then he pointed out that the woodcut which Mrs. Bernstein considered as a model for Titian's horse shows not a mare but a stallion.

5. *Hercules am Scheidewege*, Leipzig, 1930, pp. 173-180. Panofsky favored such sources as Ficino's commentary on Plato's "Symposium" and the innumerable *tratti d'amore* that it originated and proliferated to astonishing proportions in the 16th century, particularly among wealthy patrons and humanists of the Italian courts. For a recent analysis of the more important of these popular love treatises, see John Charles Nelson, *Renaissance Theory of Love*, New York, 1958, ch. 2.

6. *Studies in Iconology*, New York, 1939, pp. 148-160. Panofsky's analysis is based upon an excellent summary, pp. 129-150, of Neoplatonism and its attitude toward love, the latter schematized by a synoptic table of the Venuses to which both Ficino and Pico della Mirandola subscribed. F. M. Godfrey ("L'amor sacro e l'amor profano," *Apollo*, L, 1949, pp. 61-64) agreed with Panofsky's interpretation because the popularity of Neoplatonic doctrine resulted in the widespread concern of the age with the subject of sacred and profane love. Hans Tietze (*Titian*, London, 1950, p. 14) preferred

R. Freyhan, who noted that the attributes of the seated women correspond closely to those used to represent the dual nature of *Caritas*; the elegantly draped woman, holding flowers and vase, personifying *Amor Seculi*, contemplates God's riches of this world; her unclothed counterpart, raising a flaming vase that symbolizes divine love, personifying *Amor Dei*, offers God's gift to the world.<sup>7</sup>

In 1958, Edgar Wind concluded that the painting is a "figured dialogue *de voluptate*," which traces the initiation of Beauty into Love, a rite that is dramatized on the fountain frieze, where animal passions are so exorcised through chastisement that the seated women represent two forms of chastened love, *Amore celeste e umano*.<sup>8</sup>

## II

Criticism of these interpretations of Titian's early painting must begin with the two seated figures who, prior to 1700, were called *Beauty Adorned and Unadorned*, a title that might have complicated the task of identification less than the invented one, *Sacred and Profane Love*, undoubtedly has.<sup>9</sup> In accomplishing this task, scholars have not stressed enough the significance of objects that appear in the background and foreground—especially roses and

an interpretation that finds in the painting a parallel to the popular Platonic treatises on love which, he claimed, are also celebrated in Colonna's novel.

7. "Evolution of the *Caritas* Figure in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XI, 1948, pp. 68-86. Freyhan reasoned that even though the vase of flame in Christian iconography was an attribute of *Caritas* representing *Amor Dei*, it derived from the torch of flame held by Venus in mediaeval literature and pictorial representations; therefore the pagan goddess of love and beauty and the salient Christian virtue of *Caritas* merge in Titian's unclothed figure. Thus Titian's painting, while alluding to philosophical and literary topics popular among fashionable and leisured Venetians in the early Cinquecento, "is linked with the classical period of the *Caritas* representation, the early *Trecento*." Carl Nordenfalk ("Titian's Allegories on the Fondaco De' Tedeschi," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, XL, 1952, pp. 101-108) confirmed Freyhan's interpretation of the seated women and suggested that Titian found in Colonna's romance motifs which are only secondary to the meaning of the painting.

8. *Pagan Mysteries in the Renaissance*, London, 1958, pp. 121-128. Wind also found in the contrasting landscapes, particularly in the one on the right, an echo of the theme narrated by both the figures seated on the fountain and those on the relief.

9. See Hans Tietze, *op.cit.*, p. 14, and Edgar Wind, *op.cit.*, p. 122 n. 1.

10. A thorough summary of myths about and attitudes toward Venus may be found in Wilhelm H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, Leipzig, 1890, I, cols. 390-405. Relevant also is the work of the enormously popular 16th century mythographer Natale Conti's *Mythologiae, sive explicationum fabularum, libri decem*, Paris, 1583, Bk. IV, pp. 377-398. Conti (p. 392) lists three Venuses who personify all aspects of the allegorical interpretation of the goddess—the *Venus Caelestis* or *Urania* (who ". . . signifies pure love without sexual passion"); the *Venus Popularis* ("the goddess of the common people . . . the mother of all"); and the *Venus Apostraphia* (who ". . . made laws against unlawful passions and turned her back upon dis-

rabbis, which are traditional attributes of Venus.<sup>10</sup>

Titian's adorned female (Fig. 2), wreathed in myrtle—a plant sacred to the goddess of love and beauty—holds roses in her lap;<sup>11</sup> rose petals and leaves on the ledge of the fountain lead to a metal basin embossed with shell motifs, an allusion to the water, stirred by Cupid, out of which *Venus Caelestis* was born.<sup>12</sup> The two rabbits that nestle on a knoll in the left background appear unafraid or unaware of the horseman, who gallops to the gates of the city; but in the right background, a rabbit is pursued by two riders and their dogs (Fig. 3). This amorous, prolific animal is not only an attribute of Venus but also an important symbol of her consuming love for Adonis, the handsome mortal who was more interested in hunting than love-making. According to Ovid, Venus' reiterated advice that Adonis hunt the timorous hare instead of the ferocious boar voices both her anxiety for his safety and her desire that he pursue love instead of sport. Later, when the reckless, gored hunter cries for help, Venus, dashing through the forest in rescue, pricks her flesh on a rose thorn; and the immortal blood turns white roses red.<sup>13</sup> Hence, Titian's roses, rosebush, rabbits, and landscape *caccia* scenes allude generally to the theme of love,<sup>14</sup> but specifically to the love of Venus for Adonis—a legend of pain, sacrifice,

honest and adulterous people"). Conti's third Venus may be compared with Pico della Mirandola's *Venus Animalis*, who symbolized animal lust and passion which, in the human being, is a form of madness or insanity. Both philosophers added a third goddess to the traditional two described by Plato in the "Symposium." (See note 6 for reference to Ficino's Neoplatonic Academy.)

11. Venus clutches roses in Titian's *Venus of Urbino* and *Venus and Cupid* (Florence, Uffizi). In his *Allegory of Alfonso d'Avalos* (Paris, Louvre), the bridal couple, playing the roles of Venus and Mars, are attended by two girls, one wreathed in myrtle and one carrying roses; Paris Bordone employs the same mythological pose and similar attributes in his *Matrimonial Allegory and Mars, Venus and Cupid* (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum). These portraits, in which contemporary couples suggest Venus and Mars, are, according to Erwin Panofsky (*op.cit.*, pp. 160-164) allegories of matrimonial happiness—an interesting point with reference to *Sacred and Profane Love* which, because of its *casone* shape and the coat of arms painted on the fountain, may have been a bridal gift (cf. Edgar Wind, *op.cit.*, p. 127 n. 3).

12. Only Walter Friedlaender (*op.cit.*, p. 324) noticed the basin—Titian's replacement of the oyster-shells used by the high priestesses in Colonna's novel for sprinkling holy water on the altar of Venus or for catching the blood of Venus in the performance of the rose ritual. Of course the basin balances the vase on the ledge of the fountain; and I believe it is associated with the woman on the left, its metallic texture gleaming like her jeweled clasp and silken gown.

13. See *Metamorphoses* 10. ll. 512-739. Venus' advice that Adonis hunt not the boar but the rabbit and deer is a recurring motif in Ovid's narrative, one often utilized by Renaissance poets and painters—for example, Shakespeare in *Venus and Adonis* (ll. 259-307), and Titian in his *Pardo Venus* (Paris, Louvre), where the goddess slumbers peacefully while Adonis hunts a stag. See T. W. Baldwin, *On the Literary Genetics of Shakespeare's Poems & Sonnets*, Urbana, Illinois, 1950, pp. 1-93, for a discussion of the use of Ovid's myth by Shakespeare and other English and Continental poets.

14. Julius Held, in "Flora, Goddess and Courtesan," *Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky*, Millard Meiss, ed., New York,

and resurrection—which the Renaissance allegorized into a myth of rebirth and eternal life.<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, the roses, as richly symbolic in Christian as in pagan lore, are associated, as R. Freyhan has indicated, with the symbolism of *Caritas*, keystone of the Christian virtues, which Christ embodies in the New Testament.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the flowers, animals, embossed basin—and even the sculptured fountain which suggests the tomb of the resurrected Adonis and Christ—may allude to the dual nature of love in Platonic philosophy and Christian doctrine. Such a mixture of pagan and Biblical conceptions, which the “solvent of Neoplatonism” made possible in Renaissance thought,<sup>17</sup> would certainly have been understandable as well as acceptable to Titian, his patron, and his audience. Indeed the recognition of this fusion may lead to a fresh interpretation of this much discussed painting, particularly in view of its elaborate configuration, in which appears the theme of *discordia concors*.

Scholars have also given scant attention to the bipartite background of the painting, the elements of which illuminate the nature and behavior of the seated woman and echo the episodes in the fountain frieze. Those who explained the painting as a literary illustration almost ignored the landscapes; and Wind, the one critic who considered the details in all three pictorial planes, found in the pastoral setting only a musical restatement of the major theme of the *misteri amorosi*.<sup>18</sup> Yet a moment's reflection on Titian's four later paintings of Venus and a musician reveals how closely he relates background and foreground elements

in order to delineate his theme. These four pictures, executed over a period of at least fifteen years, are almost identical in composition and motifs, except that a courtly musician and the immortal goddess appear on a balcony that opens upon a formal garden in the first two versions—*Venus with the Organ-player* and *Venus with the Organ-player and a Putto* (Madrid, Prado); a rural scene in the third—*Venus with the Organ-player* (Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum); and a pastoral landscape in the fourth—*Venus with the Lute-player* (New York, Metropolitan Museum). By altering the backgrounds, Titian effects important changes both in content and theme of each painting in the series.<sup>19</sup> These four different landscapes contain emblematic images, which Titian employs in like manner in the Borghese picture.

Panofsky called the background of *Sacred and Profane Love* a “paysage moralisé” deriving from the mediaeval debate picture, but Titian avoids the traditional implications of good and evil, superior and inferior, by making the left half of the composition sequential, rather than antagonistic, to the right half.<sup>20</sup> The landscape on the left is dark and hilly, its contours rolling back to a winding road that ends at the portals of a walled city with a crenelated tower rising out of its center (Fig. 4). This jammed, labyrinthine vista has a parallel in the heavy folds of drapery that swathe the seated woman, whose waist, like the compact city, is locked within a girdle fastened with a jeweled clasp. The vessel she rests on is also significantly closed, her possession of it emphasized by the circle that begins with

1961, pp. 201-218, has discussed the long established association of flowers with love and Adonis, and of Flora, goddess of flowers, with Venus, goddess of love. Also pertinent is Held's analysis (p. 213) of Titian's *Flora* (Florence, Uffizi), whose beauty and nobility resemble those of the protagonists in Titian's Borghese painting, and whose slightly turned head virtually repeats the pose of the clothed figure at the fountain.

15. Renaissance artists, writers, and humanists almost always allegorized pagan myth, particularly Ovidian. Jean Seznec (*The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, Barbara F. Sessions, trans., New York, 1953, pp. 95-121) has discussed the allegorizing of myth in Italy, and, pp. 219-323, its use in literary and pictorial art according to references in mythological manuals (see note 10). The best explanation of Ovid moralized is Lester K. Born's “Ovid and Allegory,” *Speculum*, IX, 1934, pp. 362-379. Erwin R. Goodenough (*Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period*, New York, 1958, VIII, pp. 100-105) has summarized remarks by Carl Robert, A. C. Soper, and F. Cumont with reference to the appearance on sarcophagi of pagan myths as allusions to Biblical themes of rebirth and eternal life—for example, the resurrection of Adonis adumbrates that of Jonah in the Old Testament and Jesus in the New. Cf. also Fritz Saxl, “Pagan and Jewish Elements in Early Christian Sculpture,” in *Lectures*, I, London, 1957, pp. 45-57.

16. *Op.cit.*, p. 85, and Julius Held, *op.cit.*, p. 201. Pertinent are the references to the rose as the purity of Mary and the salvation of her Son. See Gustav Ludwig, “Giovanni Bellini's sogenannte Madonna am See,” *Jahrbuch der preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, XXIII, 1902, pp. 163ff. for an analysis of the rose as one of the many examples of Renaissance symbolic thinking, the origins of which are in mediaeval anagogy; and Sydney J. Freedberg, *Parmigianino*, Cambridge, Mass., 1950, pp. 140-141, for a description and bibliography of the iconography of the rose.

17. The phrase is that of E. H. Gombrich, “Botticelli's Mythologies,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, VIII, 1945, p. 43. Erwin Panofsky (*Iconology*, pp. 140-141) mentioned the correspondences between Platonic and Christian love in the writings of Ficino and his followers, and D. P. Walker (“Orpheus the Theologian and Renaissance Platonists,” *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XVI, 1953, pp. 100-120) discussed the Neoplatonists' belief in Plato as deriving from Moses and pagan philosophy as revealing Christian truth.

18. *Op.cit.*, pp. 127-128.

19. These four paintings have yet to be satisfactorily explained. Otto Brendel (“The Interpretation of the Holkham Venus,” *ART BULLETIN*, XXVIII, 1946, pp. 65-75) proposed a Neoplatonic argument, the primacy of the “spiritual” senses of sight and hearing over the “material” organs of sensuous perception; Edgar Wind (*op.cit.*, p. 123 n. 1) has suggested a theme similar to that in Giorgione's *Fête Champêtre* in the Louvre, where the nymphs, differentiated from the musicians by their nudity, are “divine presences,” who inspire and communicate with mortal musicians through the power of music. Cf. Patricia Egan, “‘Poesia’ and the ‘Fête Champêtre,’” *ART BULLETIN*, XLI, 1959, pp. 303-313, who has explained Giorgione's painting as an allegory of poetry.

20. Almost the only point on which all critics agree, it is summarized by Erwin Panofsky, *op.cit.*, pp. 151-152; “[Titian's] figures do not express a contrast between good and evil, but symbolize one principle in two modes of existence and two grades of perfection.” Cf. Patricia Egan, *op.cit.*, pp. 306, 312, who credits Giorgione with originating a compositional device which very probably provided a model for many later Venetian paintings—the allegorical innovation for indicating “higher” and “lower” status by means of contrasts in landscape and foreground.

her left hand, moves up and around her head and down to her lap, the right hand almost touching the vessel.<sup>21</sup> Her head, turned slightly away from her companion, suggests an attitude firmly held. Finally, the horseman who dashes up the meandering road, parallels the direction as well as the energy of the horse prominently displayed in the left panel of the fountain.

The Arcadian scene on the right is open and flat, a spacious basin rimmed by distant hills, a church, and a cluster of barns (Fig. 5). This radiant, undulating landscape possesses the same rhythm as the red mantle that billows behind the undraped figure and provides an appropriate setting for her offer of a smoking urn, in a sweeping gesture which exposes, rather than conceals, her waist.<sup>22</sup> Finally, the active pursuit of the rabbit by courtly riders and dogs corresponds to the beating of the young man on the right side of the fountain.

But is the stone object which supports the women a fountain? The literary exegetes called it the tomb of Adonis, whose corpse has been replaced by water that now marks the funerary monument as a fountain of love. A philosophical exponent described it as an ancient sarcophagus converted by water into a spring of life, and an allegorist considered it solely a love fount in which Amor gently agitates water as pure as the love that the seated women personify.<sup>23</sup> A scholar interested in Titian's use of ancient monuments analyzed it as an invented antique, "the most imaginative in all the art of Titian."<sup>24</sup>

Another invented antique, which Titian created for the *Votive Picture of Jacopo Pesaro* (Antwerp Museum), helps us define the one that appears in *Sacred and Profane Love*, a later painting. In the Pesaro

votive picture, St. Peter's throne rests upon an Aphrodisian marble, its antiquity indicated by a worn surface and classical reliefs either shadowed or blurred. By placing this sculptured pedestal on a Renaissance terrace where Alexander VI presents a victorious warrior to St. Peter—in whose honor the sea battle of Santo Mauro was waged—Titian so contrasts a relic of the past with an event in the present that the decorated monument comments on the contemporary pictorial theme. Jacopo Pesaro was once a bishop of the island of Paphos, legendary sanctuary of Aphrodite, and the presence of St. Peter on the sculptured socle symbolizes the victory of the Church over paganism.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, this victory is emphasized by another victory celebrated in the bas-relief of the pedestal. The frieze is divided in two by a sacrificial altar out of whose flames Cupid springs. On the right is Venus in the role of *Victrix*, the austere, virtuous goddess whom the Romans worshipped. Attended by Mars, the goddess succeeds in bringing order, reason, and peace to a life of chaos and sensual indulgence that is represented on the left side of the socle by languorous figures and an amorous couple reaching for a cluster of grapes. Hence, this pagan victory recorded on the pedestal—which is indeed an invented antique—is an allegory of the Christian victory that constitutes the pictorial theme.<sup>26</sup>

In the Borghese painting, Titian again suggests the survival into his own world of a classical monument, first by isolating the marble fount on a mound of luxuriant growth in the center of the composition so that the cityscape rises abruptly on the left and the pastoral meadow, at the right, rolls away from the bottom of a hill.<sup>27</sup> Then Titian places certain figures on the fountain frieze in shadow and breaks them—as

21. Walter Friedlaender ("La tintura delle rose," p. 325) saw in this vessel white roses which the blood of Venus will turn red; Erwin Panofsky (*Iconology*, p. 151) found gold and jewels, "symbols of short-lived happiness"; and R. Freyhan ("Evolution of *Caritas* Figure . . .," p. 85) glimpsed precious objects, attributes of *Caritas Misericordia*. Actually, the vessel is closed, and only the fringe on the edge of the woman's glove shows above it (see Edgar Wind, *Pagan Mysteries*, p. 123 n. 4). What probably encouraged scholars to find objects that supported their theses were photographs taken before the painting was cleaned after World War II. For photographs in black and white and color, plus enlargements of all parts of the painting, taken after it was cleaned, see Giulio Carlo Argan, ed., *L'amor sacro e l'amor profano*, Milan, 1949.

22. With the exception of Walter Friedlaender ("La tintura delle rose," p. 323) and Rachel Wischnitzer-Bernstein ("A New Interpretation . . .," p. 96) who referred to the smoking urn as an incense-burner used by Venus to supervise Colonna's ritual of the coloring of the rose, scholars have agreed that the vase of flame, symbolic of divine love, associates Titian's semidraped figure with either Heavenly Love or *Caritas*. See Erwin Panofsky, *op.cit.*, p. 151, R. Freyhan, *op.cit.*, pp. 85-86, and Edgar Wind, *op.cit.*, p. 126.

23. Walter Friedlaender, *op.cit.*, p. 320; Rachel Wischnitzer-Bernstein, *op.cit.*, p. 96; Erwin Panofsky, *op.cit.*, p. 152; Edgar Wind, *op.cit.*, p. 126, respectively.

24. Otto Brendel, "Borrowings from Ancient Art in Titian," *ART BULLETIN*, XXXVIII, 1955, p. 117.

25. *Ibid.*, p. 116, and Fritz Saxl, "Titian and Aretino," in *Lectures*, I, pp. 163-164.

26. Rudolph Wittkower ("Transformations of Minerva in Renaissance Imagery," *Journal of the Warburg Institute*, II, 1938-1939, p. 203) analyzed the socle and mentioned its allegorical treatment of the subject of the painting. But he ignored Titian's use and placement of Pesaro's helmet, which intrudes upon one of the socle's sculptured figures—an heroic, bearded male. This helmet, an emblem of war, identifies the muscular male next to Venus as Mars, who always accompanies the goddess in her martial role as *Victrix*, either giving her weapons or receiving them from her. (See Wilhelm H. Roscher, *Ausführliches Lexikon . . .*, cols. 194, 198, for a summary of the Roman worship of Venus as *Victrix* and its representation on coins, medals, and monuments.) Titian's juxtaposition of a "pictured" attribute and a "chiseled" figure to identify the character, and thus develop the pictorial theme, is crucial, I believe, to an analysis of the frieze in *Sacred and Profane Love*; the intruding rosebush not only divides the bas-relief into two separate panels but also plays an important role in the Ovidian episodes dramatized in stone.

27. Fritz Saxl (*op.cit.*, pp. 164-165) commented on Titian's method of absorbing the Pesaro socle into the organism of the picture, thus "bringing antiquity into a new relationship with his own world." The more one studies the juxtaposition in the later painting of the classical marble against the contemporary background, the more one experiences surprise and wonder akin to the feeling expressed by Fritz Saxl, who stated (p. 163) that Giorgione's slumbering goddess in the *Sleeping Venus* (Venice, Academy) seems less a person than a classical statue in a landscape with which it has no specific connection.

he does in the earlier Pesaro pictures—by permitting drapery and a rosebush to intrude upon them. What supports the draped and semidraped pair is an invented antique shaped like a sculptured coffin that contains water instead of a corpse.<sup>28</sup>

Precise definition of this imaginative funerary fount depends upon the interpretation of its decorative reliefs (Fig. 6). Over these, too, critics have puzzled. Do they dramatize the death of Adonis, particularly as it is portrayed in a woodcut illustrating Colonna's Venetian romance? Or do the figures show how animal passion is chastened in a pagan initiatory rite of love?<sup>29</sup> Essential to any answer or comment is an accurate description of what the sculptured band includes.

At the extreme left edge of the frieze is a male figure partially concealed by the folds of the seated woman's gown; next appears a horse, trotting towards the right; behind this animal loom the head, left arm and shoulder of a girl, her streaming hair or veil accentuating an agonized gesture. In the center of the sculptured band another figure apparently walks in front of the horse, but his action is obscured by a flowering rosebush intruding upon the frieze. Near the bush are a coat of arms and a flowing conduit that irrigates the flowers and grass.<sup>30</sup> At the far right side of the bas-relief, the mantle and legs of the unclothed woman seated on the fount shadow a figure walking toward a muscular male who beats a recumbent youth. Behind them stands a girl, who witnesses the flogging with horror or fright. Thus the frieze comprises two parts which are similarly composed. Shadowed figures at opposite ends of the monument constitute a frame for

the chiseled group; the agitated girl behind the horse on the left corresponds to the agonized nymph behind the contending males on the right. Most clearly delineated are the horse and these two men.<sup>31</sup>

Since both landscapes in *Sacred and Profane Love* feature horsemen and hunting scenes, perhaps the horse on the fount belongs to the hunter Adonis, who is usually portrayed in Renaissance literary and visual art with either horse or dog.<sup>32</sup> If so, the agitated girl behind the horse is Venus, who, heeding her lover's cry for help at the opposite end of the frieze, according to the legend stumbles against a rosebush, and her blood colors white roses red.<sup>33</sup> Titian so displays the bush that it divides the frieze into two scenes which dramatize crucial moments in the mythological romance of goddess and sportsman—the pricking and bleeding of her immortal flesh, at the moment his mortal flesh is being beaten to death.

But Ovid's sorrowful legend of love has a happy ending to which the monument as a whole, rather than its reliefs, alludes. By Olympian decree, Adonis is resurrected as a flower, a rose or an anemone; consequently, the tomb that once contained his remains is now filled with water, signifying life and rebirth. The classical tomb and its decorations, therefore, refer to a pagan mystery of love that prefigures the Christian one of transubstantiation and that hints at the cult of the "Precious Blood."<sup>34</sup> It is a fitting throne—even a predella—for the two lovely personifications of both pagan and Christian love.<sup>35</sup> In brief, the mortuary fount supports and defines the female protagonists, echoes the contrasting landscapes, and illustrates the

28. Edgar Wind (*op.cit.*, p. 124 n. 2) doubted that the Borghese fountain, even though its shape resembles a sarcophagus, is a classical antique because its moldings and figures bear no traces of the fragmentation that Titian gives to the Pesaro pedestal. Close study shows that neither monument is fragmented. In both, Titian shadows or "breaks" certain of the reliefs by placing drapery or other objects in front of them.

29. See Walter Friedlaender, *op.cit.*, p. 320; Edgar Wind, *op.cit.*, pp. 124-125.

30. August L. Mayer (*op.cit.*, p. 89) identified the coat of arms as belonging to Niccolò Aurelio, Venetian Grand Chancellor, or a member of his family. The water spout appears in the woodcut in the Colonna novel that Friedlaender considered as the model for Titian's tomb (see J. W. Appel's facsimile edition of the novel's woodcuts, London, 1889, fig. 149). It is worthy of mention that the same detail appears in a late 16th century tapestry, *Venus and Adonis* (London, Victoria and Albert Museum), which presents three episodes from the Ovidian myth—Adonis fighting the boar; Venus and her attendants lamenting over the dead youth; Venus returning to heaven in her chariot drawn by swans. The characters, wearing Elizabethan costumes, inhabit a luxuriant wood, beyond which are a cityscape, a *caccia* scene, and a temple. Prominently displayed on the left is a rectangular fountain with two spouting conduits.

31. Edgar Wind (*op.cit.*, p. 124) found in the left panel ". . . a woman dragged by the hair, an unbridled horse led away by the mane"—evidence that "animal passion must be chastened and bridled." The imprecise rendering of the shadowy, half-hidden figures raises questions about Wind's interpretation. Is the figure at the extreme left grasping the girl's hair or hand? If Titian wished to show the horse being

led by the mane, why did he place the arm of the figure behind, rather than in front of, the animal's head? Beyond question is the grief or agitation of the females near the clearly rendered horse and fighting males.

32. In Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, the most influential poetical version of the Ovidian myth in Renaissance literature, the horse plays as important a part in the drama as the protagonists (see ll. 36off.). In Titan's *Pardo Venus* (Paris, Louvre), the goddess sleeps peacefully in the middle foreground as Adonis, on the left, prepares for the hunt, and, on the right, pursues a gentle stag with his dogs; but in Titian's *Venus and Adonis* (Madrid, Prado), the goddess clutches desperately at a determined hunter, whose dogs pull him in the opposite direction—presumably toward a wild boar.

33. Titian may well intend both of the females on the fount to be Venus, thus emphasizing her emotional stress twice, first while she is hurrying to his screams, and then while witnessing his maimed body. These figures also balance the two seated women.

34. Walter Friedlaender (*op.cit.*, p. 320) merely mentioned such an allusion; Rachel Wischnitzer-Bernstein (*op.cit.*, p. 98) found Christian connotations associated with the fountain of love; Erwin Panofsky (*op.cit.*, pp. 15off.) implied Christian references mainly through the association of the nude figure with *Caritas*; Edgar Wind ignored Christian implications.

35. R. Freyhan (*op.cit.*, p. 85) while agreeing with Friedlaender that the sarcophagus and its reliefs illustrate Colonna's version of the Venus-Adonis myth, recommended that the funerary monument be considered "a predella to the two main figures," who, he believed, are not Venus and Polia from the novel.

fusion of mythological-Biblical elements with which the painting abounds—a typical Renaissance blend to which the action of Cupid, who forms part of the vertical axis of the composition, neatly points.<sup>36</sup>

### III

The foregoing summary and criticism demand an allegorical interpretation which will not only mediate between but also combine the philosophical and the literary ones. Only an allegorical approach can explain the intricate pattern of contrasting yet corresponding details by which Titian sets forth a complex theme. That he might deliberately compose a canvas in this fashion is disclosed by his conversion, in mid-century, of a mythological into a religious picture. After portraying a humble Venus bowing before a victorious Minerva for Alfonso d'Este of Ferrara, Titian was unable to deliver the painting because of the Duke's death. Almost twenty years later, for King Philip II of Spain, Titian changed the mythological subject into a religious allegory—*Religion Succored by Spain* (Madrid, Prado)—by altering slightly the secondary elements of flag on lance, cross, and chalice. Thus Minerva became an allegory of the Church and Venus of Sin redeemed by Faith.<sup>37</sup> Such a transformation was both natural and possible because of the immense iconographical system of pagan, Christian, and Neoplatonic imagery which Renaissance thinkers, poets, and artists utilized.<sup>38</sup> This symbolic system enabled Titian to satisfy the humanistic interests of a Renaissance duke and the mystical concerns of a Counter-Reformation king.

The patron who commissioned *Sacred and Profane Love* undoubtedly possessed interests similar to those of the Duke of Ferrara. Completed not later than 1516, the painting mirrors the time when the symbolic conception of mythology, first glimpsed in primitive Christian art and seriously and religiously rationalized

in Ficino's Florentine Academy, triumphed throughout northern Italy.<sup>39</sup> Within this context, a new reading of Titian's painting is warranted, indeed necessary.

*Sacred and Profane Love* is an allegory of pagan-Biblical love. The splendid, amply gowned figure, who possesses a closed treasure chest, personifies one aspect of *Caritas, Amor Seculi*; her seminude twin, who holds high a flaming vase, personifies the other aspect, *Amor Dei*.

The roses, rosebush, rabbits, and Cupid further identify these exquisite personages, who contemplate and offer God's gifts to man. The sophisticated woman on the left is also the *Venus Vulgaris*, who signifies physical beauty and the generative force in the world that brings into existence human beings, flowers, animals, even such works of art as the embossed basin and engraved tomb. Her simple, unadorned sister is the *Venus Caelestis*, who symbolizes intelligible, spiritual beauty and whose vase of flame exhibits the splendor of God. Cupid stands nearer the Earthly Venus, whom he aids in impelling nature to procreate likenesses of itself in the world; but he also stirs water out of which the Heavenly Venus was born, and out of which all life springs.<sup>40</sup> Thus the attributes identify the two lovely creatures as personifications of love in its dual nature—in Platonic philosophy and in the New Testament.<sup>41</sup>

Their throne is a sarcophagus-fountain, which is also a fusion of pagan with Christian motifs.<sup>42</sup> In form, texture, and decoration it is classical, but Titian so improvises its bas-relief and so transforms its contents that it becomes an integral part of the painting's religious theme. In his usual manner of integrating a classical monument into the aesthetic and ideational scheme of the picture, Titian indicates its survival into his own world as a ruin by isolating it on a mound of luxuriant grass, with a flowering rosebush, and by shadowing its reliefs with the draperies of the seated

36. Rachel Wischnitzer-Bernstein (*op.cit.*, p. 98) mentioned that the figure of Cupid fused two mysteries, Christian and Pagan, "in true fashion of the Renaissance."

37. See Rudolph Wittkower, "Titian's Allegory of 'Religion Succored by Spain': The Change of Symbolism," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, II, 1938-1939, pp. 138-140. E. Tietze-Conrat ("Titian's Allegory of Religion," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, XV, 1951-1952, pp. 127-132) believed that the painting, with its symbolism changed as Wittkower indicated, is not an allegory of conversion but of religion.

38. See Jean Seznec, *op.cit.*, Bk. 1; cf. also Liselotte Dieckmann, "Renaissance Hieroglyphics," *Comparative Literature*, IX, 1957, pp. 308-321.

39. See Paolo D'Ancona, *The Farnesina Frescoes at Rome*, Milan, 1955, pp. 16-21. At this time Agostino Chigi commissioned Raphael and Peruzzi to decorate his suburban villa with a moralized version of Cupid and Psyche, and a fortunate horoscope in the form of mythological-astrological fiction. Cf., also, Fritz Saxl, "The Villa Farnesina," in *Lectures*, I, pp. 189-199.

40. Cf. Erwin Panofsky's remark (*Iconology*, p. 152) that the placement and action of Cupid "may express the Neoplatonic belief that love, a principle of cosmic 'mixture' acts as an intermediary between heaven and earth," with Rudolph Wittkower's statement (*op.cit.*, p. 138), "It is a

constant thesis of Renaissance philosophy that the element of water unites opposites, because water joins heaven and earth."

41. In the Renaissance, Venus, more than any other Olympian, underwent a moral transformation. This transformation begins as early as the 12th century, when Venus was designated a subordinate power of Dame Nature, God's Vice Regent, in the Christianized Platonism of the School of Chartres. See my article, "The Anonymous 'Triumph of Venus' in the Louvre: An Early Italian Renaissance Example of Mythological Disguise," *ART BULLETIN*, XLIV, 1962, pp. 238-242.

42. Walter Friedlaender's claim that Titian found the model for the sarcophagus in Colonna's novel and its accompanying woodcuts, and Otto Brendel's conclusion that Titian has improvised an ancient monument (see notes 23, 24) are not so much contradictory as revelatory of Titian's traditionalism and originality. Since Titian's painting is linked with the classic period of the *Caritas* representation, the early Trecento, it is reasonable to assume that he also drew upon a traditional motif that has its origin in mediaeval art (see notes 7, 34), and that Francesco Colonna, whose novel is a Gothic romance, strongly influenced by the *Roman de la rose* as well as by Boccaccio's *Amorosa visione*, drew upon the same source. (See Anthony Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy*, Oxford, 1956, pp. 40-41, for an analysis of the mediaeval elements in the *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*.)

protagonists. He then permits the fountain frieze to narrate the myth of Venus and Adonis in such a way that it allegorizes—mainly through the element of suffering revealed in both sculptured panels—the passion and triumph of Christ. The scene subordinate to *Amor Dei-Venus Caelestis* presents a jealous Mars who flogs a recumbent Adonis in a manner reminiscent of a soldier chastising Christ on the sepulcher in Titian's *Entombment* (Madrid, Prado), just as the girl, with staring eyes and outstretched arms, describes the grief and agony of the two Marys.<sup>43</sup> In the scene subordinate to *Amor Seculi-Venus Vulgaris*, both the horse of Adonis and the agitated goddess respond to the hunter's cry for help. In her haste, Venus brushes against a thorn on the rosebush, and her blood colors white roses red. After the beating, Adonis dies, and Jupiter, out of compassion for the grief-stricken Venus, resurrects the handsome mortal in the form of a flower.

This youthful hunter, who suffered and died for the love of a goddess, is a pagan prefiguration of Christ, who suffered and died for the love of mankind; and the conversion of white roses into red by the ichor of Venus is a pagan mystery of love that anticipates the Christian one of transubstantiation.<sup>44</sup> This myth also explains the presence of water in the funerary monument. The contents are those of Fountains of Youth and of Life in mediaeval allegory and religious art, whose miraculous waters restore not only youth to the aged and health to the sick, but also eternal life to the faithful.<sup>45</sup> Cupid, who agitates the waters, echoes the

angel that troubled the water of the pool of Bethesda which made men clean, and also Christ, often represented in mediaeval art as issuing from the center of the fountain in which the faithful bathe.<sup>46</sup> Thus the sarcophagus is the tomb of Adonis and Christ, its rejuvenating waters a symbol of their resurrection and the ever-recurring cycle of birth, death, and eternal life. Moreover, Amor, who signifies sacrifice and reward for love, initiates the ritual of a regenerative Baptism of Love, which is preceded by a kind of death. Hence, earthly love, its pagan and Christian aspects designated by the clothed woman, is followed by spiritual love, indicated by the unclothed one.

The dual landscapes fall away from the emblematic fountain, which rests upon a hill of high, thick grass, perhaps a *mons veneris*.<sup>47</sup> Its left side, crowded and active, repeats the swirling rhythm of the gown on the clothed figure in the foreground. The mounted rider gallops to the group before the city gates, as does the horse on the sarcophagus toward the group around Adonis. The right side of the landscape, silent and peaceful, repeats the flowing rhythm of the cloak that floats behind the unclothed figure in the foreground. In the sunny meadow, sheep graze peacefully, as one shepherd studies the foliage of trees, and another embraces a shepherdess. The two mounted hunters who chase the hare, the animal which Venus begged Adonis to pursue rather than the boar, correspond to the battling men on the frieze. Thus the dimly lighted, busy landscape on the left is the proper environment

43. Titian's muscular, brutal Mars and agonized nymph—Venus, perhaps—further illustrate his adaptation of pagan legend and monuments for his own purpose. Natali Conti (*Mythologiae*, . . . , p. 386) recorded a version of the Adonis myth that differs from Ovid's—that of a jealous Mars, who either sends or turns himself into a ferocious boar that kills the hunter (see note 10, and cf. Walter Friedlaender, *op.cit.*, p. 320). Titian varies it even more, permitting Mars, in human form, to beat Adonis to death; this provides a more convincing image for its Christianized equivalent. The expressive gesture of the nymph and the two Marys is repeated in the *Pietà* (Venice, Academy) by Mary Magdalene, and is derived from an ancient sarcophagus which portrays Venus, with the same gesture, looking with horror upon the maimed Adonis. See Fritz Saxl, "Titian and Aretino," in *Lectures*, I, p. 173, and pls. 113, 114. It is worth noting that a similar gesture is used by Michelangelo in his *Sacrifice of Noah* (Sistine Chapel), which repeats that of Althea, who also appears on a Roman sarcophagus which contains the myth of Meleager. This hunter, like Adonis, was associated with Christ by Titian and Raphael in a manner similar to that on the tomb in the Borghese allegory. See Frederick Hartt, "Lignum Vitae in Medio Paradisi," *ART BULLETIN*, XXXII, 1950, p. 185 nn. 36, 37.

44. Fritz Saxl ("Pagan Sacrifice in the Italian Renaissance," *Journal of the Warburg Institute*, II, 1939, p. 348) pointed out that the rebirth of classical antiquity provided "the emotional background for the representation of pagan sacrifices by Italian Renaissance artists who introduced them as counterparts to Christian ritual."

45. Raimond van Marle (*Iconographie de l'art profane au moyen-âge et à la Renaissance*, II, The Hague, 1932, pp. 430-433) described a popular motif in mediaeval literature and religious art, particularly in Italy—"La Fontaine de la Vie," which appears in a garden and miraculously conserves or restores youth. It was fused with "La Fontaine de Jouvence,"

which does not restore or conserve youth to prolong pleasure of the senses, but, rather, to bestow eternal life upon the faithful. In Italy, the fusion of these two fountains was regarded as a "Fountain of Love," a "rendezvous for lovers" (see Van Marle figs. 460-467). See also, Rachel Wischnitzer-Bernstein, *op.cit.*, p. 98, who remarked that in Titian's time the sarcophagus was intimately associated with the Fountain of Youth and its Christian connotations; and Erwin Panofsky, *op.cit.*, p. 154, who mentioned the Fountain of Life as one of the motifs used in Christian art to portray allegorical figures who symbolize and advocate two divergent moral or theological principles.

46. Rachel Wischnitzer-Bernstein (*op.cit.*, p. 89) suggested an allusion to St. John, 5: 4, and also to Christ, who, in the process of secularization, is replaced by Cupid. Also, in the Pesaro votive picture Titian identifies Cupid with Christ's Vicar by placing Peter's keys above the head of Cupid engraved on the socle; Cupid thus becomes a symbol of divine love (see Rudolph Wittkower, "Transformations of Minerva in Renaissance Imagery," p. 203). For illustrations of "La Fontaine de la Vie," see Émile Mâle, *L'art religieux de la fin du moyen-âge en France*, Paris, 1925, pp. 110ff.

47. The landscapes also echo an allegorical Garden of Love. Raimond van Marle (*op.cit.*, pp. 426-428) discussed the development in the 15th century of the "Garden of Love" theme, particularly popular in Italy and England. Very probably based upon descriptions of a similar garden in the second part of the *Roman de la rose*, it is analogous to the "Chateau d'Amour" and describes a landscape of the dream of love. This garden landscape includes a fountain, often with musical instruments around it or a Cupid perched upon its ledge, and such animals as the rabbit, stag, and horse, and men on horseback. It is significant that Titian's landscape is as traditional in its elements and their emblematic function as his use of the classical monument is inventive and original.

for the realization of physical love in the world, and the bright, quiet landscape on the right is the appropriate one for the contemplation of divine love in the spiritual realm.<sup>48</sup>

Although this analysis emphasizes the fundamental dichotomy of the painting, it also reveals the carefully planned links between background and foreground, figures and attributes, and pagan and Christian motifs with which Titian has unified all parts of the canvas in order to narrate a dual allegorical theme.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, only by such means is the complex theme finally projected. *Amor Seculi* is contrasted with, but not antagonistic toward, *Amor Dei*, just as *Venus Vulgaris* is with *Venus Caelestis*; earthly love is the first step towards the attainment of divine love, just as love for one's neighbor leads to love for God. Pagan love foreshadows Christian love, and its representative, Venus, in turn represents *Caritas*.

Yet in the contrast, rather than in the antagonism between the figures and their respective backgrounds, lies the meaning of the painting. The swathed figure, sitting at a lower elevation, is silent and does not look at her sister. The landscape, as if bathed in twilight, contains rabbits that do not mate and a hunter who returns to a towered city, the walls of which enclose it as tightly as the sash does the waist of the adorned woman. These images of sanctuary and enclosure, like the voluminous drapery encircling the woman, symbolize virginity and chastity—resistance to the activity that the myrtle, roses, and Cupid designate.<sup>50</sup> This is further illustrated by the manner in which the lady leans on the urn, also tightly locked. Although sensitive, gentle, and dignified, she rejects the pleading or persuading of her sister, and clings to the trappings of earthly love, blind and indifferent to its reality and implications. Therefore, the left side of the painting, although jammed with details, is peculiarly frozen and still, in direct contrast to the excited Venus and the trotting horse on the sarcophagus—ancient symbols of the reality and impermanence of physical love, suffering the necessary rituals for its eternal reward.<sup>51</sup>

The naked Venus, on the right, leans toward her sister and persuades, perhaps admonishes. Suddenly she

lifts her fiery urn to the golden sky, her vigorous gesture exposing the pelvic region and finding its accent in the church steeple that appears below her arm. The landscape, as expansive and limitless as her action, is filled with open, radiant space. A lake and meadow form graceful arcs that roll to a country church, its steeple pointing to an infinity of blue. The pursuit of love, dramatized by the chase, and its ultimate reward, rebirth—embodied in the dying Adonis on the tomb—find reality in the rustic lovers who embrace in the sunlit pasture. Thus the right half of the composition, though serene and meditative, is permeated with the undulating and continuous rhythm of everlasting life which is realized, as it was by Adonis and Christ, through a Baptism of Love.

It can now be seen that the two sides of the canvas, though different, are compounded of the same figures, details, and images—all of which explore, as in the *dialoghi d'amore*, the issue of love. The dark left side represents the realm of earth where man is concerned with material wealth and love—that centered around the castle and the well-acoutered Venus. An existence in time, it must be accepted and utilized for its own sake, in full realization that its attractions and beauty are merely adornments for transience and pain. But these experiences are the necessary preparation for the bliss and reward of a permanent realm, one to which earthly love is the bridge, its suffering and vicarious joys the requirements for rebirth.

The right side exhibits the world of permanence. Its unadorned Venus, who has by far the superior role, is more ardent, sensuous, and persuasive than her mundane twin, and its dominant images of vessel and spire—the former burning and the latter penile—have a sexual connotation. Yet it must be noted that she is modestly covered, her flame is God's spark of life, and the spire belongs to the Church.<sup>52</sup> Titian's pictorial allegory, which fuses pagan eroticism with Christian symbols, is in perfect accord with the beliefs of the Neoplatonists and the writers of the love treatises that Divine Love has its own cult of the senses, and must, by its intensity and magnetism, convince man of the

48. The bipartite landscape no doubt echoes those used in religious pictures to contrast Virtue and Pleasure, and the crossroads or choice Hercules ponders (see Erwin Panofsky, *op.cit.*, p. 64).

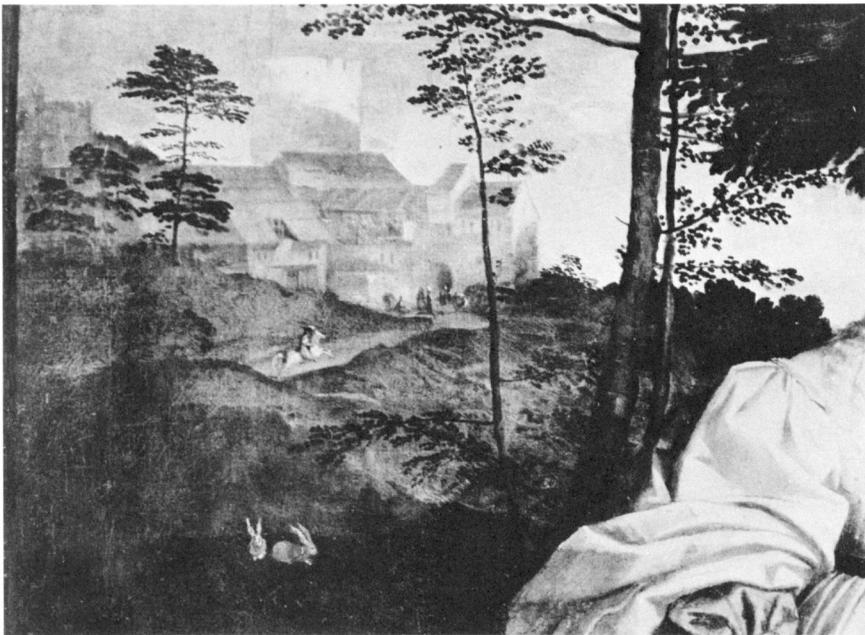
49. Arthur Pope, in *Titian's Rape of Europa*, Cambridge, Mass., 1960, has discussed the artist's amplification of theme by means of "minor echoes" (p. 18), and his "sheer quantity of orderly relationships which produces the richness of effect" (p. 41). With respect to Titian's blending of images which embody separate and distinct ideas, see the analysis of his *Prudentia* by Jean Seznec, *The Survival of the Pagan Gods*, pp. 119-121.

50. See Ernest Kitzinger, "The Mosaics of the Capella Palatina in Palermo," *ART BULLETIN*, XXXI, 1949, p. 277, for a discussion of the closed gates of Ezekiel in Byzantine iconography as a prophecy of the Annunciation; and Frederick Hartt, *op.cit.*, p. 189, for mention of mediaeval imagery of Mary's virginity, such as the closed door and the tower.

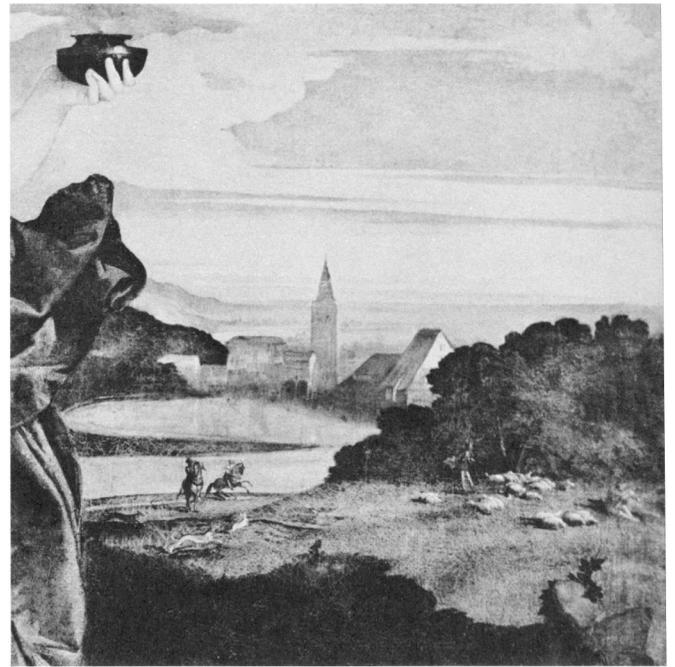
51. Certainly this explanation does not exclude the Platonic

and novelistic associations claimed for these figures by Edgar Wind and Walter Friedlaender. See notes 3, 4, 32.

52. The fusion of pagan-Christian elements is typical of Renaissance philosophy and art, but the use of pagan sensuous beauty to pictorialize Christian concepts is peculiarly Italian. The representation of *Caritas* by means of Venus with a torch originated and developed in Italy; in France and Germany the type was known but not so utilized. The reason for the appearance and development of this type is, very probably, the literary movement, "dolce stil nuovo," which fused, within the code of courtly love, erotic and religious thought. (See R. Freyhan, *op.cit.*, pp. 76-78.) In France, courtly love and religion were kept separate, but the introduction of Provençal poetry into Italy, where feudalism had never taken firm root, resulted in the poets' stress of the ennobling and purifying aspects of love rather than the chivalric. (See Nesca Robb, *Neoplatonism of the Italian Renaissance*, London, 1953, pp. 177-178.)



4. Left landscape (detail of Fig. 1). Rome, Borghese Gallery  
(photo: Alinari)



5. Right landscape (detail of Fig. 1). Rome, Borghese Gallery  
(photo: Alinari)



6. Reliefs on sarcophagus (detail of Fig. 1). Rome, Borghese Gallery (photo: Alinari)

ultimate reality—reality to which both Plato and the Gospels well attest.<sup>53</sup>

Therefore, Titian does not permit his *Venus-Caritas* figures and their symbolic landscapes merely to argue the dual aspects of pagan and Christian love. The funerary but vitalistic monument, with its beautiful women, not only lies astride the canvas, filling its frontal plane, but also continues the diagonal that begins on the ground, with the tip of the gown of the unclothed figure, moves up across the fountain, and ends in the sky with the flaming vase held by *Venus Caelestis*. This diagonal stitches the two halves of the painting together and magnetizes all its parts to the symbol of eternal life. Thus Titian divides his painting into two distinct parts to define their inherent sequence and unity.

Like Raphael's frescoes in the Stanza della Segnatura, which unite all gods and all truth within a single cult,<sup>54</sup> Titian's allegory of love so reconciles the dual aspects of Platonic and Christian love that each is admired and followed with equal fervor. *Sacred and Profane Love* records the reconciliation that humanists, scholars, poets, painters, and philosophers had dreamed of and striven for since the time of Petrarch, the reconciliation that the optimistic and triumphant classicism of the High Renaissance demanded.

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### SOME UNPUBLISHED PAINTINGS BY GIUSEPPE BAZZANI

CHIARA PERINA

The development of Giuseppe Bazzani's style, known until a short while ago through a few dated works, has recently been more clearly defined by modern critics, notably by Ivanoff who made a careful study of the paintings along lines which may, for the most part, still be accepted today.

Since 1950, when an exhibition made it possible to study and compare a great many works by Bazzani,

53. See John Charles Nelson, *Renaissance Theory of Love*, pp. 69ff. Cf., also, Edgar Wind, *op.cit.*, p. 121.

54. See Jean Seznec, *op.cit.*, pp. 143-147.

1. L. Ozzola, "Giuseppe Bazzani," *Commentari*, 1951, pp. 43ff.; M. Muraro, "Il posto di Giuseppe Bazzani," *Arti*, 1, 1951, pp. 52ff.; N. Ivanoff, "Ultimi echi della mostra di Giuseppe Bazzani a Mantova," *Arti*, 11, 1951, pp. 84f.; T. Pignatti, "Venetian Seicento and Settecento Drawings: An Uffizi Exhibition," *Burlington Magazine*, October, 1954, p. 314; G. Copertini, "Note su Giuseppe Bazzani e Giuseppe Maria Crespi," *Parma per l'arte*, v, 1955, pp. 36ff.; H. S. Francis, "A Pietà by Giuseppe Bazzani," *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum*, XLIII, 1956, pp. 44ff.; J. Bialostocki, exhibition catalogue, *Italian Painting of the 17th and 18th Centuries in Polish Collections* (in Polish), Warsaw, 1956, pp. 23f.; A. Riccoboni, "Un capolavoro di Giuseppe Bazzani," *Emporium*, CXXV, 1957, pp. 14ff. (I disagree with Riccoboni, who attributes this *Pietà* to Bazzani, because it seems to me to be different from the artist's known works); F. Valcanover,

and to publish the first critical catalogue of his large oeuvre, many important contributions have helped to enlarge and deepen our knowledge of the artist's personality, his cultural and artistic background, and his ties with contemporary styles of painting.<sup>1</sup> In fact, although Bazzani lived in Mantua, once a famous capital but now in a period of decline, his artistic purpose was never limited by a provincial cultural outlook. He managed to participate in various, complex currents of painting, perhaps through short, undocumented journeys, but certainly through the extensive knowledge provided in the form of engravings. Through the paintings of Castiglione, it is possible to see in Bazzani's work significant similarities with trends formulated in Liguria; with Piedmontese concepts, as shown by interesting parallels with the works of his contemporary, Guala da Casale;<sup>2</sup> with the Venetian style, for the close analogies with the works of Giovanni Battista Pittoni, Federico Bencovich, and Gian Antonio Guardi;<sup>3</sup> and, finally, with the Austrian school, as revealed in Bazzani's influence on Maulpertsch.<sup>4</sup>

Through the kindness of E. Arslan, I was able to see two paintings whose present whereabouts are not known, and which I propose to include in Bazzani's oeuvre: *Christ and the Magdalen* (Fig. 1) and *Christ on the Road to Emmaus* (Fig. 2). Perhaps they were once companion pieces since the shape of both is rectangular, but, in any case, they share stylistic similarities and have close affinities in pictorial aims. Although these works are certainly Bazzani's, it is rather difficult to place them chronologically, because there are few well-dated paintings to show us the development of his style.

Let us try to summarize the fundamental phases of his development. On the evidence of the Mantuan biographer, Pasquale Coddé,<sup>5</sup> the paintings of the *Via crucis* (Way of the Cross) in San Barnaba, Mantua<sup>6</sup> have been ascribed to Bazzani's youth when he was apprenticed to Giovanni Canti of Parma. These early pictures are rather uneven in quality, but one does find some inspired passages and expressionist tendencies which shed light on the young painter's artistic ed-

"Note venete alla mostra della pittura italiana nelle collezioni polacche," *Emporium*, CXXV, 1957, p. 256; J. Fenyö, "Des-sins italiens inconnus," *Bulletin du Musée National Hongrois des Beaux-Arts*, XLIII, 1958, pp. 59-86; N. Ivanoff, "Ignoti disegni lombardi del Sei e Settecento," *Emporium*, CXXIX, 1959, pp. 8ff.; L. Puppi, "Un disegno noto e un dipinto poco noto del Bazzani," *Paragone*, 153, 1962, pp. 39ff.; E. Arslan, "Contributo al Bencovich e al Bazzani," *Commentari*, 11, 1962, pp. 121ff.

2. G. Testori, "Introduzione al Guala," *Paragone*, 55, 1954, pp. 23-36.

3. E. Arslan, *op.cit.*, pp. 121ff.

4. M. Muraro, "Importanza dell'ambiente viennese e della provincia prealpina nella pittura veneziana del '700," *Atti del I convegno internazionale per le arti figurative*, Florence, 1948, p. 141.

5. P. Coddé, *Memorie biografiche . . . dei pittori, scultori, architetti ed incisori mantovani*, Mantua, 1837, p. 12.

6. N. Ivanoff, *Bazzani* (Catalogue of the Exhibition), Mantua, 1950, p. 43, Nos. 1-14. (Hereinafter, Ivanoff).