

TITIAN

Venetian school, ca. 1488 (?) -1576.

Tiziano Vecellio came from Pieve di Cadore in the Dolomites. The date of his birth is uncertain. The traditional and canonic date given in some of the early biographical sources is 1477 ; but at the same time competing sources (letters of the time, and other sixteenth and seventeenth century lives) give a range of dates running all the way from 1473 to 1482 or later. A birth date within the latter time range cannot be ruled out absolutely, but Titian himself appears either not to have known his age late in life or to have exaggerated it deliberately ; and present-day opinion had tended towards the view that he was born later, around 1488-90, and correspondingly did his first independent paintings around 1505⁽¹⁾. Dolce records that he was sent to Venice at the age of nine to study painting with the Zuccati, that he spent time successively in the studios of Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, and then worked alongside Giorgione, painting with him the frescoes on the Fondaco de' Tedeschi (for which Giorgione was paid in 1508).

The completion of the altarpiece of the Assumption of the Virgin for the Frari church in Venice (1516-18) established Titian's reputation ; and from then on he worked not only for the Venetian republic, but also for the great princely families elsewhere in Italy --the Estes of Ferrara, the Della Roveres of Urbino, the Gonzagas of Mantua. He did work equally for Francis I of France; and in 1545 the patronage of the Farneses led him to pay a visit to Rome. His relations with the Hapsburgs were of even greater consequence ; he worked for Charles V, who made him Count Palatine and Knight of the Golden Spur in 1533, for other members of the Hapsburg courts, and subsequently for Charles's successor as King of Spain, Philip II, who kept Titian almost continually busy on his behalf during the artist's late years. Titian did numerous portraits and religious and mythological paintings. He signed himself on his letters variously Titiano, Tiziano or Ticiano and Tizian or Tician Vecellio, and on his paintings used the Latinized ^{form} Titianus or Tizianus; the anglicization "Titian" was already in use in the seventeenth century.

Portrait of Andrea dei Franceschi

oil on canvas, 34x 27 ins.

Condition

Somewhat rubbed, particularly in the face.

Provenance

Major and Mrs Bono, Florence. Acquired by Dr Clowes in
19 .

Literature

Catalogue of the Paintings and Sculpture given by Edgar
B. Whitcomb and Anna Scripps Whitcomb to the Detroit Institute of
Arts, 1954, p.107 ; B. Berenson, Italian Pictures of the
Renaissance, Venetian School, 2 vols., Phaidon Press, 1957,
I, p.186.

Exhibited

Ind., 1959, no.55.

Versions

1. Detroit Institute of Arts, Whitcomb. colln., 53.362
(see catalogue cited above). 32 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 25 ins. From ^{the} colln. of King
Frederick of Prussia.
2. National Gallery, Washington, Mellon colln., no.36
(Burl. Mag., 55, 1929, p.159). 64.8 x 51 cm. From the colln.
of the Earl of Wemyss.

The identity of the sitter here was established by
Poglayen-Neuwall, on the basis of an eighteenth century engraving
by Crescenzo Ricci. ⁽³⁾ Andrea dei Franceschi, born in Venice in
1472, was made Grand Chancellor in 1529 and died in 1551.

Ridolfi, in his biography of Titian, mentions him as extremely devoted to the artist.⁽⁴⁾

The Clowes painting was attributed to Titian by G.Gronau and G.Fiocco (1928) and by E.Sandberg-Vavala (1935)⁽⁵⁾. Berenson, however, expressed some doubt, attributing it to Titian in his 1957 listing with a question-mark.

The fragmentary inscription on the Washington version (without hands) was read by Holmes as implying 1532 as its date.⁽⁶⁾ The Detroit version, which suggests some increase in age, has correspondingly been dated in the 1540s.⁽⁷⁾ The present version, as noted in the Detroit catalogue, shows Franceschi as older still, with white hair ; but the face-mask and turn of the head correspond closely here, particularly with the Detroit version, and this suggests an attribution to the studio of Titian.⁽⁸⁾

Notes.

1. See, for a recent, full review of the evidence on the subject, M.Roskill, Dolce's "Aretino" and Venetian Art Theory of Cinquecento, College Art Association, 1968, pp.320ff.

2. For the triple portrait (as it is now revealed to be) at Hampton Court, which includes Franceschi along with Titian himself, see S.Gore, "Five Portraits", Burl.Mag., 100, 1958, pp.351ff. The figure of Franceschi there is based on the Detroit version, and the work as a whole has generally been identified as a studio production.

3. S.Poglayen-Neuwall, "Tizian-Studien", Münchener Jahrbuch für Bildende Kunst, ^{N.F.} 4, 1927, pp.66ff.; cf. also, from the same year, B.Berenson, "While on Tinetoretto", in Festschrift für M.J.Friedlander, , 1927, p.235. The engraving is inscr. "ANDREAS DE FRANCISCUS Eques magnus Cancellarius Venetus", and on the frame "Titianus Vecellius Pinx. Crescentius Ricci del. et sculp.".

4. C.Ridolfi, Le Meraviglie dell' Arte (1648), ed. D.von

Notes, cont.

Hadeln, 2 vols., Berlin, 1914-24, I, p.154 : "amorevolissimo del Pittore". The inclusion of a portrait of him in Titian's Presentation in the Temple from the 1530s (now in the Accademia, Venice) is noted there. For a portrait of him by Palma Giovane (lost), see ibid. , II, p.201.

6. Docs. of Aug. 2 and 20, 1928, and Jan.1935, Clowes archives. Gronau and Fiocco proposed a date of around 1550, and Sanöberg-Vavala suggested 1545-50.

6. Sir C.Holmes, "The Inscription upon Titian's Portrait of Franceschi", Burl.Mag., 55, 1929, pp.159f.

70. See H.Tietze, Titian, Paintings and Drawings, Vienna, 1937, p.320.

8. Cf. n.2 above.