NATIONAL GALLERY OF ART ONLINE EDITIONS
Italian Paintings of the Sixteenth Century

Jacopo Tintoretto
Venetian, 1518 or 1519 - 1594

A Procurator of Saint Mark's

c. 1575/1585

oil on canvas
overall: 138.7 x 101.3 cm (54 5/8 x 39 7/8 in.)
framed: 167 x 128.9 x 9.8 cm (65 3/4 x 50 3/4 x 3 7/8 in.)
Samuel H. Kress Collection 1952.5.79

ENTRY

A Procurator of Saint Mark's is one of Jacopo Tintoretto's largest portraits and has increasingly come to be recognized as one of the most distinctive and imposing of his later career. [1] Especially in his official portraits, Tintoretto tended to paint his subjects in three-quarter view and roughly half-length. Here, in contrast, the subject is presented frontally and almost full-length. Although seated, he is seen from a lowered point of view, the folds of his garment sweeping upward in an unbroken line, suggesting that the picture was intended to hang fairly high on a wall. Typically for Tintoretto, the face and hands are rendered with care, while the drapery is conveyed more broadly. X-radiography reveals how the artist began the portrait by sketching in the basic structural forms of the head, including the eye sockets. The costume is disproportionately bulky in relation to the head, emphasizing the sense of authority and grandeur. The summary execution and flowing rhythms of the garment, however, keep the forms from appearing ponderous and, as Miguel Falomir has noted, the vibrancy of the illumination on the subject's head and the foreshortening of the right arm and hand projecting toward the viewer give the painting a dynamism that is usually absent in Tintoretto's institutional portraits. [2] Given the Venetian penchant for conformity in official portraiture, which reflected a system of government in which the cult of personality was rigidly suppressed, this portrait was almost certainly created for a private setting. Some critics, among them Peter Humfrey and Falomir, have found that the sense of majesty conveyed by the painting comes at the cost of psychological penetration. [3] It is true that the subject here lacks the poignant combination of dignity and frailty that characterizes Tintoretto's greatest portraits of

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old men, the category in which his genius as a portraitist was most fully realized. But the Gallery's portrait presents a somewhat different personality: careworn and pensive, but stoical and still vigorous.

As is typical for Tintoretto's finest portraits, the format is minimalist. The shadowy background shows only a simple architectural form—perhaps the high plinth of a column or pier—barely sketched in. Aside from the sitter's robe of office and the chair on which he sits, there are no further accoutrements. Nothing distracts from the emphasis on the sitter's face, and in particular on his gaze, directed out at the viewer.

Since the portrait entered the Gallery's collection, the subject has been identified as a procurator of Saint Mark, one of the most prestigious offices in Venice. [4] This was based on the understanding that the costume he wears—specifically the robe with voluminous *manege dogali* (ducal sleeves), open at the wrist, rather than tapered, to reveal the rich ermine lining, and the *becho* or stole—was limited to procurators and a few other high-ranking officials. [5] However, David S. Chambers argued that procurators wore no special garments, but dressed like all other Venetian nobles holding high office; he noted that Cesare Vecellio, in his *Degli habiti antichi et moderni di diverse parti del mondo* (Venice, 1590) did not illustrate a procurator, as he would have been likely to do if they had worn a distinctive costume; rather, Vecellio simply stated that procurators and a few other high officials could wear the grand robes of high office for life, not just during their period of job tenure. [6] Visual evidence from the paintings of the period suggests that the use of costumes like that of the sitter here by Venetian officials may have been somewhat broader than has previously been supposed. Numerous official group portraits by Tintoretto and his studio show officials who are not procurators wearing similar garments. For example, in Tintoretto's *Saint Giustina and Treasurers and Three Secretaries* of 1580 (Museo Correr, Venice), all three treasurers have robes with open, ermine-lined sleeves and wear embroidered stoles the same color as their robe, like the subject in the Gallery's painting. [7] Thus the sitter here may not in fact be a procurator, but rather some other official or simply a senator.

Attempts to identify the sitter by name have not been successful. In 1930, Wilhelm R. Valentiner suggested that the sitter was Francesco Duodo (1518–1592), an important commander of the Venetian fleet in the battle of Lepanto (1571). His hypothesis was based on a supposed resemblance to a bust by Alessandro Vittoria that originally decorated the Duodo tomb (now Ca' d'Oro, Venice). However, as

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Falomir and Frederick Ilchman have noted, the sitter's nose, eyebrows, and cranium are different from those of Duodo as represented in that bust and other secure likenesses. [8]

Another identification has been proposed on the basis of a weaker replica of the Gallery's portrait, first noted by Lionello Venturi in 1931 (once in the Kende collection, Vienna; now private collection, Austria), bearing the inscription "Gio. Donato padre del Ser.mo Nic.o 1560" (Giovanni Donato, father of the Serenissimo Nicolò). [9] Nicolò Donato was doge for only 35 days in 1618. His father, Giovanni Donato, or Donà, was born around 1487 and died in 1571. He was never a procurator. In the 1520s and 1530s, he held several positions that would have entitled him to wear the robes of a high official, but no mention of his having held office after 1531 has been located in the archives. [10] It seems unlikely that he would be depicted wearing official robes in a portrait of some four decades later. Moreover, the painting seems to depict a man in his fifties or sixties, not his eighties, as Giovanni Donato would have been around 1570 (a date of 1560 is certainly too early for the Gallery's picture). [11]

The attribution of the painting to Tintoretto is uniformly accepted, with a dating to the later decades of his career. While there are no directly comparable portraits in Tintoretto's oeuvre, it is generally analogous to the portrait of *Marco Grimani* of 1576–1583 (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) in the treatment of the face, hands, and garment. Given the absence of any clear year-by-year progression in the chronology of Tintoretto's portraits, as well as the unique characteristics of the Gallery's painting and the absence of information about the sitter, a date somewhere in the later 1570s or early 1580s seems best. [12]

Robert Echols

March 21, 2019

NOTES

[1] Peter Humfrey, in *The Age of Titian: Venetian Renaissance Art from Scottish Collections*, ed. Aidan Weston-Lewis (Edinburgh, 2004), 186; Miguel Falomir, in *Tintoretto*, ed. Miguel Falomir (Madrid, 2007), 316; Frederick Ilchman, in *Botticelli to Titian: Two Centuries of Italian Masterpieces*, ed. Dóra Sallay, Vilmós Tátrai, and Axel Vécsey, trans. Nicholas Bodoczky (Budapest, 2009), 362.

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[2] Miguel Falomir, in *Tintoretto*, ed. Miguel Falomir (Madrid, 2007), 316.

[3] Peter Humfrey, in *The Age of Titian: Venetian Renaissance Art from Scottish Collections*, ed. Aidan Weston-Lewis (Edinburgh, 2004), 186; Miguel Falomir, in *Tintoretto*, ed. Miguel Falomir (Madrid, 2007), 316.

[4] Scholars since 1952 have generally referred to the painting by the Gallery's title. An exception is Paola Rossi, *Jacopo Tintoretto: I ritratti* (Venice, 1974), 132–133, no. 154, who calls it *Ritratto di senator veneziano*. Procurators were the only officials in Venice other than the doge to hold office for life, and doges were almost invariably elected from among their ranks. Originally responsible for administering the basilica of San Marco, they gradually assumed other charitable and administrative duties, and served as advisors on the most sensitive affairs of state. See generally David S. Chambers, "Merit and Money: The Procurators of Saint Mark and Their *Commissioni*," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 60 (1997): 23–30.

[5] Miguel Falomir, in *Tintoretto*, ed. Miguel Falomir (Madrid, 2007), 314. Fern Rusk Shapley, in *Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection: Italian Schools, XVI–XVIII Century* (London, 1973), 52–53; and *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings* (Washington, DC, 1979), 1:467, identified the stole as the golden *stola d'oro*, worn by Vincenzo Morosini in his portrait by Tintoretto in the National Gallery, London, and indicating that the subject here was a member of the knighthood of that name; however, technical examination reveals no evidence that the stole was ever gold in color.

[6] David S. Chambers, "Merit and Money: The Procurators of Saint Mark and Their *Commissioni*," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 60 (1997): 26–27.

[7] Rodolfo Pallucchini and Paola Rossi, *Tintoretto: Le opere sacre e profane* (Venice, 1982), 1: cat. no. 406; 2: fig. 520. Other examples of high officials, not procurators, wearing robes with open, ermine-lined sleeves and stoles include the *Madonna of the Treasurers* (Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice), the *Resurrection of Christ with Three Avogadori* (Avogaria, Palazzo Ducale, Venice), and *Saint Mark with Three Camerlenghi* (Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin). See Pallucchini and Rossi, *Tintoretto*, 1: cat. nos. 302, 315, and 317; 2: figs. 393, 410, and 412.

[8] Wilhelm R. Valentiner, ed., *Unknown Masterpieces in Public and Private Collections* (London, 1930), 28; Miguel Falomir, in *Tintoretto*, ed. Miguel Falomir (Madrid, 2007), 314; Frederick Ilchman, in *Botticelli to Titian: Two Centuries of Italian Masterpieces*, ed. Dóra Sallay, Vilmós Tátrai, and Axel Vécsey, trans. Nicholas Bodoczky (Budapest, 2009), 362. For likenesses of Francesco Duodo, see Frederick Ilchman, "A Rediscovered Late Portrait by Titian," in *Rembrandt and the Venetian Influence* (New York, 2000), 22–27, 70 (see especially fig. 18 for a portrait of Francesco Duodo from the School of Tintoretto in the Museo Storico Navale, Venice). Duodo became a

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procurator in 1587.

[9] Lionello Venturi, *Pitture italiane in America* (Milan, 1931), no. 414. For the Vienna copy, see Miguel Falomir, ed., *Tintoretto* (Madrid, 2007), fig. 163.

[10] His life dates are reported in Marco Barbaro, with additions by A. M. Tasca (1743), *Arbori de' patritii veneti*, Archivio di Stato, Venice, Miscellanea codici, serie I, reg. 19: vol. III, 313; information provided by Paola Benussi of the Archivio di Stato, Venice, who has also located documentation of his election to the offices of *camerlengho del commun* (1523), *ufficale alle cazude* (1528), and *provveditore sopra camere* (1531) in the election registers of the Segretario alle Voci and other archives in the Archivio di Stato, Venice (email correspondence with author, April and May 2011, copy in NGA curatorial files).

[11] Recent scholars have rejected the identification of the subject as Giovanni Donato on the grounds that he was not a procurator, an argument which carries equal force because of his lack of other high office in his later years; see Peter Humfrey, in *The Age of Titian: Venetian Renaissance Art from Scottish Collections*, ed. Aidan Weston-Lewis (Edinburgh, 2004), 186; Miguel Falomir, in *Tintoretto*, ed. Miguel Falomir (Madrid, 2007), 316; Frederick Ilchman, in *Botticelli to Titian: Two Centuries of Italian Masterpieces*, ed. Dóra Sallay, Vilmós Tátrai, and Axel Vécsey, trans. Nicholas Bodoczky (Budapest, 2009), 362.

[12] All of the authorities listed under Bibliography and Exhibition History accept the attribution. Those offering dates are Erich von der Bercken, *Die Gemälde des Jacopo Tintoretto* (Munich, 1942), 118 n. 262 (1575–1585); Pierluigi De Vecchi, *L'opera completa del Tintoretto* (Milan, 1970), 120, no. 225 (c. 1577); Fern Rusk Shapley, *Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection: Italian Schools, XVI–XVIII Century* (London, 1973), 52 (1575/1585); Fern Rusk Shapley, *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings* (Washington, DC, 1979), 1:467 (1575/1585); Paola Rossi, *Jacopo Tintoretto: I ritratti* (Venice, 1974), 103, no. 154 (c. 1572); W. R. Rearick, in *Italian Paintings, XIV–XVIIIth Centuries, from the Collection of the Baltimore Museum of Art*, ed. Gertrude Rosenthal (Baltimore, 1981), 145 n. 39 (1580–1583); Peter Humfrey, in *The Age of Titian: Venetian Renaissance Art from Scottish Collections*, ed. Aidan Weston-Lewis (Edinburgh, 2004), 186 (c. 1570–1590); Miguel Falomir, in *Tintoretto*, ed. Miguel Falomir (Madrid, 2007), 316 (c. 1570); and Frederick Ilchman, in *Botticelli to Titian: Two Centuries of Italian Masterpieces*, ed. Dóra Sallay, Vilmós Tátrai, and Axel Vécsey, trans. Nicholas Bodoczky (Budapest, 2009), 362 (1570s).

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

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The support is two pieces of fine, twill-weave fabric sewn together with a horizontal seam located 30.5 centimeters from the bottom. It has been lined and the tacking margins have been removed. Light cusping is evident along the top edge but not along the others, indicating that the painting has been cut down at least to some degree at the sides and bottom.

There is a very thin white ground layer. Infrared reflectography at 1.1 to 1.4 microns [1] reveals very casual, straight, black brushstrokes indicating the contours of the hands, neck, and chin, as well as several lines below the sitter's shoulders that do not appear to relate to the visible design. X-radiographs reveal several shapes that do not relate to the present composition in the background to the left of the sitter's head. They also show that the basic structural forms of the head, including the eye sockets, were defined with broad strokes of lead white. Both x-radiography and infrared reflectography show that the sitter's hands were adjusted slightly.

The paint has been applied in a variety of techniques, ranging from stiff pastes to transparent glazes. In the drapery, the highlights of the folds are marked with stiffly brushed, free angular strokes of white paint, covered with a glaze of crimson red. The glaze is built up more thickly in the shadows, so that it appears almost black. Several pentimenti in the folds of both sleeves are visible to the naked eye as faint white strokes, covered with red glaze.

The paint layer is heavily abraded, revealing the white ground and underlayers in the pattern of the fabric weave. The worst areas of abrasion are in the beard and the right side of the head and hair. There are many small areas of loss in the face, as well as a larger loss over the bridge of the nose. There is a small vertical line of loss in the upper folds of the sleeve at left. The painting was treated in 1950 by Mario Modestini, at which time a discolored varnish was removed and the painting was inpainted. The varnish applied by him in 1950 had discolored by 2018; thus, the painting was treated again at that time.

Robert Echols and Joanna Dunn based on the examination report by Sarah Fisher

March 21, 2019

TECHNICAL NOTES

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[1] Infrared reflectography was performed with a Santa Barbara Focalplane InSb camera fitted with a J astronomy filter.

PROVENANCE

Francis Richard Charteris, 10th earl of Wemyss [1818-1914], Gosford House, Longniddry, East Lothian, Scotland, by 1886;[1] by inheritance to his son, Hugo Richard Charteris, 11th earl of Wemyss [1857-1937], Gosford House; (Wildenstein & Co., New York), by 1929;[2] sold June 1949 to the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York;[3] gift 1952 to NGA.

[1] The Gosford House collection was largely gathered by the 7th and 10th earls of Wemyss, so it is possible the painting was brought to Scotland by Francis Charteris, 7th earl (1723-1808) and great-great-grandfather to the 10th earl (see David Carritt, "Pictures from Gosford House," *The Burlington Magazine* 99, no. 655 [October 1957]: 343). However, the painting does not appear in a 1771 inventory of Amisfield House (transcribed and published in *Transactions of the Society of the Antiquaries of Scotland* [*Archaeologia Scotica*], vol. 1 (1792): 77-84). Waagen records visits to the collection of Lord Elcho, the future 10th earl, at Amisfield House, and to Gosford House (Gustav Friedrich Waagen, *Treasures of Art in Great Britain*, London, 1854: 2:82, and *Galleries and Cabinets of Art in Great Britain*, London, 1857: 437-441), and although this painting is not mentioned by him, he was not given access to the entire collection and so does not describe it completely. The first certain reference to the painting came when it was included in the winter exhibition of the Royal Academy in London in 1886, and was described as belonging to the collection of the earl of Wemyss. References through at least 1923 continue to place the painting at Gosford Hall, and the previous collection given in the Wildenstein invoice (see note 3) is "Lord Wemyss, Gosford House, Scotland." On the collecting by the earls see: *Pictures from Gosford House Lent by The Earl of Wemyss and March*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1957; "The Earls of Wemyss and March," in *Dutch Art and Scotland: A Reflection of Taste*, exh. cat., National Gallery of Scotland, Edinburgh, 1992: 171; Shelagh Wemyss, "Francis, Lord Elcho (10th Earl of Wemyss) as a Collector of Italian Old Masters," *Journal of the Scottish Society for Art History* 8 (2003): 73-76.

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[2] The painting appears in a Wildenstein advertisement in the 27 April 1929 issue of *The Art News*.

[3] The Wildenstein invoice to the Kress Foundation for 16 items, including this painting, is dated 23 June 1949 (copy in NGA curatorial files). The painting is described as "Portrait of Francesco Duodo." Some of the Kress Foundation's paperwork during the acquisition process includes the title *Portrait of a Procurator of St. Mark's, possibly Francesco Duodo*.

EXHIBITION HISTORY

1886 Exhibition of Works by the Old Masters. Winter Exhibition, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 1886, no. 144, as *A Venetian Senator*.

1931 Scottish Paintings, Water Colours and Sculpture, British Paintings, Water Colours, Miniatures and Sculpture, British Graphic and Applied Art, Old Masters, Stained Glass Exhibit, Canadian Paintings, Water Colours, Sculpture, Graphic and Applied Art, and Salon of Photography, Canadian National Exhibition, Toronto, 1931, no. 116, as *Francesco Duodo*.

1938 Exhibition of Venetian Painting From the Fifteenth Century through the Eighteenth Century, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, 1938, no. 66, repro., as *Portrait of Francesco Duodo*.

1947 Italian Paintings, Wildenstein & Co., New York, 1947, unnumbered catalogue, repro., as *Portrait of Francesco Duodo*.

1988 Loan to display with permanent collection, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, 1988-1989.

2004 The Age of Titian: Venetian Renaissance Art from Scottish Collections, Royal Scottish Academy Building, Edinburgh, 2004, no. 68, repro.

2007 Tintoretto, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, 2007, no. 34, repro.

2009 Botticelli to Titian: Two Centuries of Italian Masterpieces, Museum of Fine Arts, Budapest, 2009-2010, no. 109, repro.

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1923 Bercken, Erich von der, and August L. Mayer. *Jacopo Tintoretto*. 2 vols. Munich, 1923: 1:67.

1930 Valentiner, Wilhelm R., ed. *Unknown Masterpieces in Public and Private Collections*. London, 1930: n.p., pl. 28.

1931 Venturi, Lionello. *Pitture italiane in America*. Milan, 1931: pl. 414.

1942 Bercken, Erich von der. *Die Gemälde des Jacopo Tintoretto*. Munich, 1942: 118, n. 262.

1951 *Paintings and Sculpture from the Kress Collection Acquired by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation 1945-1951*. Introduction by John Walker, text by William E. Suida. National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1951: 122, no. 51, repro.

1957 Berenson, Bernard. *Italian Pictures of the Renaissance. Venetian School*. 2 vols. London, 1957: 1:183.

1959 *Paintings and Sculpture from the Samuel H. Kress Collection*. National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1959: 204, repro.

1965 *Summary Catalogue of European Paintings and Sculpture*. National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1965: 128.

1968 *European Paintings and Sculpture, Illustrations*. National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1968: 115, repro.

1970 De Vecchi, Pierluigi. *L'opera completa del Tintoretto*. Milan, 1970: 120, n. 225.

1972 Fredericksen, Burton B., and Federico Zeri. *Census of Pre-Nineteenth Century Italian Paintings in North American Public Collections.* Cambridge, Mass., 1972: 201.

1973 Shapley, Fern Rusk. *Paintings from the Samuel H. Kress Collection: Italian Schools, XVI-XVIII Century*. London, 1973: 52-53, fig. 92.

1974 Rossi, Paola. *Jacopo Tintoretto: I ritratti*. Venice, 1974: 132-133, n. 154; fig. 152.

1975 *European Paintings: An Illustrated Summary Catalogue*. National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1975: 342, repro.

1979 Shapley, Fern Rusk. *Catalogue of the Italian Paintings*. 2 vols. National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1979: I:467-468, II:pl. 333.

1981 Rearick, W. R. In *Italian Paintings, XIV–XVIIIth centuries, from the Collection of the Baltimore Museum of Art*. Edited by Gertrude Rosenthal. Baltimore, 1981: 135, 145 n. 39, fig. 3.

1984 Walker, John. *National Gallery of Art, Washington*. Rev. ed. New York,

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1984: 230, no. 289, color repro.

1985 *European Paintings: An Illustrated Catalogue*. National Gallery of Art, Washington, 1985: 393, repro.

1990 Chapman, H. Perry. *Rembrandt's Self-Portraits: A Study in Seventeenth-Century Identity*. Princeton, 1990: xiv, fig. 134.

2007 Butterfield, Andrew. "Brush with Genius [review of the exhibition Tintoretto, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, 2007] ." *The New York Review of Books* (26 April 2007): 12.

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