Paolo Veronese’s Art of Business: Painting, Investment, and the Studio as Social Nexus
Author(s): John Garton
Reviewed work(s):
Source: Renaissance Quarterly, Vol. 65, No. 3 (Fall 2012), pp. 753-808
Published by: The University of Chicago Press on behalf of the Renaissance Society of America
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/668301
Accessed: 02/10/2012 14:40

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.
Paolo Veronese’s Art of Business: Painting, Investment, and the Studio as Social Nexus*

by John Garton

Despite the prominent career of Paolo (Caliari) Veronese (1528–88), much remains to be discovered about his patrons and peers. Several letters written by the artist are presented here for the first time, and their recipient is identified as the humanist Marcantonio Gandino. The letters reference artworks, visitors to Veronese’s studio, and economic data pertaining to the painter. Analyzing the correspondence from a variety of methodological viewpoints reveals how Veronese fulfilled commissions, interacted with nobility, and invested his painterly profits in land on the Venetian terraferma. In addition to promoting Veronese’s career and advising on financial matters, Gandino translated Plutarch and Xenophon, whose texts share classical subjects and content with Veronese’s paintings. The comparison of texts and images leaves open the possibility of an exchange between the writer and painter concerning matters of classical motifs.

1. INTRODUCTION

Paolo Veronese has remained a somewhat ill-defined figure in the history of art, in part because so little biographical information has survived. Giorgio Vasari, a slightly older contemporary, mentions Veronese’s early works within the confines of his life of Michele Sanmicheli, but longer accounts of the artist’s career would only emerge in the seventeenth century with such writers as Marco Boschini and Carlo Ridolfi. Most of the historic documentation concerning the painter comes from census reports, brief contracts involving his civic and ecclesiastical commissions, and the famous transcript from his trial before the Inquisition in 1573.1 Private correspondence from the artist is quite rare. When Pignatti and Pedroccho attempted to publish all the known documents relating to Veronese in 1995, they counted five letters from his hand.2 Two of these, now in the

* A grant from the Gladys Krieble Delmas Foundation, New York, in 2008 made this research possible. In the transcription and translation of these letters, I have benefitted from the advice of Federica Ambrosini, Patrizia Bortolozzo, Giovanni Caniato, Marina Coslovi, Liliana Leopardi, Paola Modesti, and especially Silvia Bottinelli, who was Visiting Professor at Clark University in 2010. I also thank Julia DeLancey, Edward Olszewski, and Kristina Wilson for their expertise and editing. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

1 For all of the documents concerning the artist, see Pignatti and Pedroccho, 2:553–63.

2 Ibid., documents 49, 50 (doc. 51 mistakenly reprints part of doc. 50), 63, 66, and 68. To these five, a sixth autograph letter, dated 1584 from Paolo to Francesco Badile, has been added: see Brugnoli, 16. Another somewhat fragmentary letter survives on the verso of a drawing at the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, MA (Inv. 1924.101).
Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, are addressed to Marcantonio Gandino in Treviso and dated 1578. The recipient has mistakenly been assumed to be a Brescian painter, Antonio Gandino (1550–1630). Five more letters written that year by Veronese to Gandino are here presented for the first time. These letters are now in the British Library, the Getty Research Library, and the Biblioteca Civica–Verona: one photographed by Charles Geigy-Hagenbach in 1925 is now missing. All seven of Veronese’s letters to this addressee are transcribed and translated in an appendix. As Lionello Puppi has noted, the recipient is actually a humanist, jurist, and mathematician. He was not a painter at all, but rather an intellectual, engineer, and aficionado of Greek literature. The patronage study that follows analyzes the relationship between this polymath and one of Venice’s leading artists.

Veronese’s letters offer a few points of clarification in the difficult chronology of the artist’s works, while also affording a glimpse into his studio. The letters mention specific artworks: two portraits (including one of Gandino) as well as the Noli me tangere altarpiece at the church of Santa Maria Maddalena, Treviso (fig. 1), which can now be firmly dated to 1578. One of the references to portraiture in the correspondence suggests the collaborative role of Veronese’s brother, Benedetto Caliari (1538–98), who was also a painter.

Since the artist’s interaction with patrons is mostly undocumented, these letters provide new information on this aspect of Veronese’s career. References to members of the noble Barbaro and Vendramin families reflect Veronese’s attempts to maintain and expand his clientele. By introducing an accomplished humanist in the role of patron and close correspondent, this study may also direct further scholarly attention to Marcantonio Gandino, a man of letters who contributed to the intellectual history of Venice and the Veneto. Rediscovering the interests and erudition of this forty-one-year-old Trevigiano humanist more clearly defines the social and intellectual world of the fifty-year-old artist, even as Veronese’s own words reveal his eagerness to become a man of property.

3MA #2061 and MA #2836, Morgan Library. See letters 4 and 6 in the Appendix.
4The identification of Puppi, 67, is advanced at the end of an article devoted to other documents concerning the artist’s finances.
5Oddly, Pignatti’s transcription of the letter of 20 March 1578 was only partially completed, and omits the reference to the altarpiece for the church of S. Maria Maddalena in Treviso: Pignatti, 1:257, doc. 49; Pignatti and Pedrocco, 2:560, doc. 49.
6Gnocchi, for example, attempts to define Veronese’s cultural milieu, but ultimately falls back upon a formal analysis of the artist’s paintings due to the paucity of documentary evidence.
FIGURE 1. Veronese and workshop. *Noli me tangere*, 1578. Treviso, Church of Santa Maria Maddalena. Photo: Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali, Soprintendenza B.S.A.E. per le province di Venezia, Belluno, Padova, e Treviso.
2. **MISTAKEN IDENTITIES**

Tradition and stylistic analysis hold that the Brescian painter Antonio Gandino may have studied with Veronese, though this is difficult to verify.\(^7\) This tradition, combined with market pressures to sell a document connecting one painter to another, may help explain why Antonio has been advanced as the recipient of this correspondence. All seven letters, together with an eighth that sold to a private buyer in 2007, continue to be catalogued as though addressed to the Brescian painter.\(^8\)

There are several reasons to reject the conventional identification, apart from the fact that the painter seems to have used the name Antonio rather than Marcantonio. There is no record of Antonio maintaining a residence in Treviso, much less in the civic center near the Duomo, as Veronese’s letters are addressed. By contrast, the wealthy humanist at the center of this study did possess a *casa padronale* near the Duomo as early as 1567.\(^9\) Also, if the addressee were an eighteen-year-old painter-pupil, then the correspondence would likely reflect Veronese’s position as *maestro* and include more discussions of art production. Instead, the letters clearly address a nobleman, nine years younger than the artist, in whom Veronese places his confidence to intervene on his behalf with other elite patrons and landowners. Even the forms of salutation Veronese employs, i.e., “To the very magnificent and always observant lord, il Signor Marcantonio,” make it clear that he is addressing a social superior.\(^10\) Veronese uses the same style of address and closure in his letter to the distinguished Francesco Soranzo in

\(^7\) On the presumed rapport of Antonio Gandino and Paolo Veronese, see Guzzo; Passamani, 597–600.

\(^8\) The misconception dates back at least as early as the Bovet sale of the nineteenth century: Charavay, 688. This error is present in the cataloguing information in the library files at the British Library, the Getty Research Library, the Morgan Library, the Biblioteca Civica–Verona, and the Christie’s London, Albin Schram sale catalogue of 3 July 2007, lot 270. Attempts to contact the owner of lot 270 for its inclusion in this article were unsuccessful. On the two Morgan letters being addressed to the Brescian painter, see Adams, 38–39; Ryskamp, 108.

\(^9\) ASTv, b. 224. I thank Director Franco Rossi at the Archivio di Stato, Treviso, for bringing this document to my attention. The property and possessions mentioned make it clear that the Gandini were a wealthy family, and they seem to have still occupied the house in Calmaggiore near the Duomo in Treviso as late as 1717: BCT: ms. 1614, c. 54.

\(^10\) “Al molto magnifico suo signore sempre opss.mo [osservandissimo], il Sig. Marcantonio,” as in letter 3 of the Appendix. In this usage he appears to be following convention, for Palladio, 3, uses similar language in the 1570 printed dedication of his *I quattro libri dell’architettura*: “Al molto magnifico mio signor osservandissimo il Signor Conte Giacomo Angaranno.”
The name, address, form, and content of the letters all point to the same nobleman, Marcantonio Gandino (1537–87).

The fame of this Trevisan humanist does not shine as brightly for modern audiences as it once did for the intelligentsia of early modern Europe. Gandino’s books circulated widely: a copy of his translation of Frontinus’s *Strategemi militari* is noted, for example, in the library of the Cambridge don Gabriel Harvey during the 1590s. Galileo Galilei probably consulted Gandino’s translation of Plutarch’s *Moralia*, as Shea and others have suggested, and the English architect Inigo Jones annotated a copy. Gandino also invented an important type of graphometer, an adjustable set square designed for cartographers and architects to measure distance, height, and depth in the field or at sea, and wrote an accompanying treatise that was only published posthumously. Although overlooked today, Gandino was regarded as an author and intellectual of importance in the late sixteenth century.

The son of the nobleman Giovanni Francesco Gandino (d. 1563), Marcantonio mastered Latin and Greek at an early age and then devoted his life to the study of mathematics, hydraulic engineering, military architecture, and the moral writings of certain ancient Greek authors, as his tomb inscription from the church of the Gesù, Treviso, makes clear. His family held prominent positions in the church: a nephew Bernardo was made a canon of Treviso Cathedral in 1574, four years before the surviving Veronese correspondence, and Marcantonio’s son, Giovanni Francesco, would become canon in 1596. Gandino’s engineering expertise seems to have been solicited by the commune of Treviso, if not Venice, and in 1572 he published two dissertations on hydraulics: one for the construction of the aqueduct of Pederobba and another explaining how to use the Brentella River to irrigate fifty-nine of the surrounding villas and provide passage to Treviso. Even local monastic building projects sought his authority: he is

---

11 This letter, dated 1 June 1584, is transcribed in Pignatti, 259.
12 Stern, 22.
13 Shea, 86; Casini, 59–61. On Jones’s notations in Gandino’s translation of Plutarch, see Smuts, 181n77.
14 Ottavio Fabri published the manuscript in 1598 and 1615 without fully crediting Marcantonio, though it was dedicated to Marcantonio’s son, Giovanni Francesco: Gandino and Fabri; see also Tiraboschi, 7.5:96–97.
15 Besides the wide circulation of his books, Gandino’s *Opuscoli morali* of Plutarch sold well enough to be reprinted in its 1614 and 1625 editions.
16 For the Latin tomb inscription, see Renucci, 14, 55n61.
17 BCT ms 1341, c. 215.
18 Renucci, 14.
documented, for example, as an artistic advisor on a three-person committee overlooking the renovations of the Benedictine church of San Teonisto in Treviso. In general, he seems to have balanced an active life as advisor in Treviso and Venice with a contemplative life devoted to classical study and the publication of several notable books.

Beyond the evidence of his own publications, Gandino’s strong intellect is indicated by his annotations of a book written by one of Veronese’s early patrons, Daniele Barbaro. Marcantonio Gandino annotated Barbaro’s 1556 translation of and commentary on Vitruvius’s *De architectura*.

The date of his emendations is secured by a reference the twenty-three-year-old penned beside a star chart: “The North Pole Star I find in my times, that is in 1560, to be near the pole little more than four degrees.”

Here and elsewhere, Gandino had both instruments at hand and books open to check the reliability of the ancient Roman writer and his sixteenth-century commentator. Gandino appears to have kept fastidious records on the location of stars, as evidenced by the many calculations and adjustments he made in the margins of the stellar measurements offered in book 9 of Barbaro’s Vitruvius. Beyond his own astronomical measurements, Gandino also notes when the Vitruvian commentary is at variance with information from Alessandro Piccolomini’s *De le stelle fisse* (1540), an early type of star atlas. Gandino’s critical-minded checking of *De architectura* against both experiential knowledge and other book sources was not limited only to matters of astronomy. In book 3 next to Vitruvius’s discussion of three ways to relate the greater to the lesser in systems of proportion, Gandino offers various mathematical operations as analogues, and in a later chapter corrects a mislabeled geometrical diagram. As an intellectual whose annotations correct, improve, or seek out the classical sources of an author, Gandino is punctilious almost to a fault. Repeatedly he notes that Barbaro has copied his information without acknowledging the sources: the examples include various works by Aristotle, the Alexandrian Julius

---

19 Michieli, 96.
20 Barbaro. On Marcantonio’s authorship of the annotations, see Renucci, 14. The Vitruvius copy appears to have been consulted by other family members. Giulio Camilo Gandino, either Marcantonio’s younger brother or Marcantonio’s third son (b. 1572), signed near his emendation of a different page (39) discussing fortified cities. For the family tree, see BCT fam. tarv. gen. 1341, c. 215.
21 Barbaro, 229: “la stella tramontana io trovo i tempi mì ciò è nel 1560, essere vicina al Polo poco piu di gr. 4.”
22 Ibid., 221: “Tavola delle longhezze, larghezze parti, et grandezze delle stelle” (“Table of the length, width, and size of stars”). The table runs from pages 221 to 227.
23 Ibid., 57, 208.
Pollux’s *Onomasticon* (second century CE), and the sixteenth-century Frenchman Oronce Finé’s *De mundi sphaera* (1542). Gandino appears to have been a scholar who could recognize classical sources and apply them in matters of interpretation, perhaps just the sort of well-read person to be of aid to an artist interested in ancient subjects and their various literary sources.

Judging from these annotations to the Vitruvian commentary, the twenty-three-year-old already possessed in 1560 a solid classical education, with strengths in at least three areas of the classic quadrivium: geometry, arithmetic, and astronomy, lacking only the fourth, music. His humanistic studies included Greek literature, history, and moral philosophy. As to his skill at letter writing, this facet of his education remains unknown, and unfortunately, none of Gandino’s letters to Veronese have survived. The record preserves only a one-sided correspondence penned from the artist’s perspective.

### 3. ARTISTIC PRACTICE AND PATRONAGE

Although Veronese’s seven letters to Gandino primarily address land acquisition, interspersed throughout the correspondence are references to artistic practice and patronage. When these subjects arise, they are presented quickly and naturally, as if the business of art were just one of many continuous threads in their correspondence. Following the threads can be challenging, since several of the original letters are missing. Some of the surviving letters are written only a few days apart, suggesting regularity in their correspondence. These seven may once have formed part of the thirty letters from Veronese to Gandino that were once recorded in the Tomaso De Luca sale in 1816, but are now dispersed. Perhaps others will resurface with time.

The ongoing nature of their exchange is evidenced in a letter that also contains an important reference to one of Veronese’s ecclesiastical commissions. In letter 4 (see Appendix) Veronese writes: “I have made and arranged that the altarpiece of the Brothers of the Magdalene comes by your boat and they promised to send it here to dry dock it. Now they

---

24Ibid., 41, 162, 220, 231, 254.
25Puppi, 67. According to conversation with the antiquarian Massimo Rossi, these thirty letters may once have been owned by Count Bernardino Tomitano around 1785. Two now missing letters from Paolo Veronese to Marcantonio Gandino and belonging to Mons. A. Donnadieu sold at auction by Messrs. Puttick and Simpson, London, in 1851, and the date of 31 March 1578 was listed for one of them. The items are recorded in Gratz, 109.
have opted for less expense, and they decide to send two of their workers with horses.” One may surmise that many logistical discussions involving the monks, the artist, and Gandino took place before this letter, and that the commission is somewhat familiar to all parties. The nobleman seems to be offering the use of his boat even though the commission may not have involved him directly, and was not for the Gandino family’s own burial church, Il Gesù. In the case of this particular commission, the altarpiece survives and can be related to several other works by the artist, a useful exercise given the ambiguities surrounding the sequence of Veronese’s works.

The main altarpiece of Santa Maria Maddalena, Treviso depicts a scene of the Magdalene reaching out to a not-yet-risen Christ — the Noli me tangere — while above, Saints John the Baptist and Jerome witness the Assumption (fig. 1). Although Carlo Ridolfi, writing in 1648, listed it as an autograph work, most modern scholars have rightly noted the participation of Veronese’s workshop in the completion of this large altarpiece (400 x 180 cm).26 Nothing in Veronese’s correspondence contradicts this modern judgment. However, that the altarpiece can now be dated to 1578 — rather than 1584, as Cocke advanced, or 1582–83, as Rearick proposed — necessarily leads to certain revisions.27 For example, a pen-and-ink drawing in the Ashmolean Museum showing a group of figures (fig. 2) that was once thought to be preparatory for the Treviso altarpiece is instead likely to be a later conception of the theme.28 Veronese’s Prado Magdalene, which bears the date 1583, comes after the altarpiece and shows the continued interest in depictions of this religious subject, as does the Dijon Redemption of the Magdalene (fig. 3), generally dated to 1583 and thought to be the painted processional standard (gonfalonetto da processione) mentioned by Ridolfi for the same church of Santa Maria Maddalena, Treviso.29 Indeed, the Dijon Magdalene takes her posture and upward glance from the central figure of the Assumption of the Magdalene at the top of the Treviso altarpiece, although her hands have been joined in prayer. It seems reasonable that a standard for the brethren of the church would be decorated with a reiteration of their ascendant saint from the main altar. A lesser-known

26Ridolfi, 316. For the critical fortunes of the work and the issues of its autograph status, see the catalogue entry in Pignatti and Pedrocco, 2:521.
27Cocke, 1984, 270–71, no. 115; Rearick, 73–74, no. 34.
28Parker, 2:743, convincingly dates the Ashmolean sheet to 1584 based on comparison with Veronese’s Costume Studies for Oedipus Tyrannus. On the drawing as preparatory to the altarpiece, see Cocke, 1984, 270; Rearick, 74.
29The Prado Magdalene is illustrated in Pignatti and Pedrocco, 2:456. Record of the standard is in Ridolfi, 313; on the Dijon canvas, see Béguin, 214–16.
Christ and the Magdalene at the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Grenoble (fig. 4), attributed to Veronese’s workshop also seems to be a reformulation of the Treviso altarpiece’s *Noli me tangere* and probably dates from this period.  

The Treviso altarpiece includes a donor portrait of a bearded man shown at lower right. Writing in 1648, Ridolfi elaborated that the two figures bowing behind the Magdalen are her sister Martha and a portrait of a man. Hadeln, annotating Ridolfi in 1965, noted that Michele Spavento

---

30 The Grenoble canvas is discussed in Pignatti, 185.

31 Ridolfi, 316: “For the Brothers of the Magdalene of Treviso, his friends, he made a *Christ and the Magdalene in the Garden*, in which some would have it that he portrayed his wife [as the Magdalene], beside whom is the sister Martha and a portrait, and beyond are angels over the sepulchre.” In this passage Ridolfi notes provisionally that “some would have it” that the artist painted his wife’s features for the Magdalene’s. However, no secure portrait of the artist’s wife, Elena Badile, survives, and that Ridolfi, who knew Paolo’s heirs in Venice rather well, expresses it with reservation suggests the anecdote may have originated in Treviso. As to the donor’s portrait, it is not likely Marcantonio Gandino, since he was buried in Il Gesù and seems to have had little connection to the monks of the S.M. della Maddalena, apart from offering the services of his boat at a fee to help deliver the painting from Venice to Treviso.
served as rector of Santa Maria Maddalena in Treviso in 1576, but by 1578 had moved on to the Church of San Sebastiano in Venice, where Veronese was also active.\(^{32}\) Cocke was the first to suggest that the donor in the Treviso altarpiece might be the same Michele Spavento whose portrait Ridolfi described in the small *Madonna and Child with Saint Catherine and Michele Spavento* that still hangs in a side chapel in San Sebastiano, Venice (fig. 5). Now that the Treviso altarpiece can be firmly dated to 1578, either Cocke’s identification of the donor as Spavento must be rejected, or Pignatti and Pedrocco’s date of 1578 for the small San Sebastiano Spavento image must be revised, since the donor of the altarpiece appears much older, with a full beard and gray hair.\(^{33}\) The impasse is a difficult one, since the physiognomic similarities in the portraits are hard to judge. Ridolfi does not mention Spavento as the *ritratto* in Treviso but does in the San Sebastiano example, and other candidates, such as the Maddalena rector of 1578, might be equally probable in the role of donor. On the other hand, some scholars,

\(^{32}\)Indeed, the Treviso church was administratively tied to the larger Jeronymite monastery of San Sebastiano in Venice: Ridolfi, 313n3, 316n6.

\(^{33}\)Pignatti and Pedrocco, 2:356.
including Marini, have proposed a date in the 1560s for the small San Sebastiano canvas, noting similarities to the *Madonna and Child with Saints Catherine and Peter* in Vicenza of ca. 1560. This earlier dating would account for the difference in age. Though the conundrum cannot be easily resolved, perhaps the initials FMS that appear embroidered on Christ’s pillow in the San Sebastiano work, and which are generally understood to abbreviate Frater Michele Spavento, are literally meant to record this wealthy man’s junior status as *frater* rather than the more senior *padre*, or rector, that he would later become in Treviso, favoring an earlier date.

Beyond attempts to identify donor portraits, these letters offer some brief but noteworthy details about Veronese’s practice as portraitist. Following the passage quoted above concerning the delivery of the Magdalene altarpiece, Veronese describes his attempts to deliver two independent portraits: one of

---

Marini and Piovene, no. 119. The Vicenza canvas is illustrated in Pignatti and Pedrocco, 1:112.
Marcantonio Gandino and the other of a certain Federico. Judging from the context, the latter is likely another Trevigiano noblemen with whom Gandino was close. Veronese writes: “Now they have opted for less expense, and they decide to send two of their workers with horses so that in this way I could get to you your portraits without the stretchers, unless they make a new decision and that would be in order to give the portraits to your majesties together with their crate.” The letter is dated 20 March 1578. It appears that by 7 April (letter 6 in the Appendix) the portraits were on their way to Treviso, either as rolled-up canvases or on their stretchers in a crate delivered by boat: “I send you your portrait together with messere Federico’s. I know that my brother was to make on the paper [Federico] holds in his hand a compass showing the winds and he has not done it, Your Lordship will be pleased to tell [Federico] that I hardly had time to paint the tablecloths around him. He could do it [add the compass design] himself, or have someone else do it, as he likes, in ink, but before doing it one should rub it with an orange peel so that the ink can penetrate better, as one will also do in writing the brief [inscription] on it. I also send along your book, and remain forever your servant together with my brother and my goddaughter [in service to] your wife.” This second passage includes several details that warrant discussion.

Although the canvas does not survive, the letter suggests that Federico’s portrait has been a collaborative venture between Paolo and his younger brother Benedetto. This might not have been that uncommon, since several portraits attributed to Veronese show indications of workshop assistance. According to the letter, Paolo hardly had time to paint the tablecloths around Federico, and, though he communicated the patron’s wishes concerning the minutiae that were to be drawn on the slip of paper, Benedetto did not add them. It is tempting to assume that when it came to executing the details depicted on the paper, Benedetto’s talents were judged to be better spent on more important matters. This line of thought is supported by the way in which Paolo casually suggests Federico himself or someone else can easily add the image of the compass and the inscription to the surface of the canvas.

Line drawings and inscriptions rarely appear in Veronese’s portraiture, but his famous Daniele Barbaro in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam (fig. 6) does show a sitter holding an open book whose pages bear designs and inscriptions. In this case, the two large volumes are Barbaro’s own translation of and commentary on Vitruvius’s De architectura, though the position of the woodcuts has been slightly altered, as Rossi has noted. Small books with fewer discernible lines occasionally appear in other Veronese

35See, for example, the portraits catalogued in Garton, 210–24.
36Rossi.
portraits, but none of these show a sitter with surrounding tablecloth and a slip of paper in his hand. The latter formula was common enough, but the closest surviving example is Benedetto’s *Portrait of Toma Giunta*, now in the Hermitage (fig. 7), in which a piece of paper inscribed with the date 1563 and the sitter’s name and age is placed beside the hand of the noted Venetian publisher.\(^{37}\) Benedetto’s *Toma Giunta* remains the closest surviving parallel to the now-missing portrait of Federico.

\(^{37}\)There seems no reason to doubt the inscription or the identification: Artemieva and Guderzo, 104; Garton, 136–37, 235.
In adding the inscription, Veronese counsels the use of an orange peel to prepare the surface for receiving ink. This unusual recommendation indicates the artist’s knowledge of materials and technique. I have not been able to locate any Renaissance treatise or author who recommends this
practice, but in discussing it with a few modern conservators, there may have been logic to it. 38 An orange could offer an easier and more elegant solution for Federico than, say, a trip to an apothecary or negozio, where more potent and traditional forms of solvent were available, such as turpentine or spike oil of lavender. Like other citrus skins, the peel of an orange contains two natural elements that could clean the small part of the canvas where otherwise the ink might be repelled by the resinous and greasy paint film. 39 Though somewhat quixotic as artistic practice, the use of orange peel may have sufficed when the artist was not eager to follow up in person to paint the inscription. 40

Moving beyond the particularities of solvents and the painter’s treatment of inscriptions, the letters reveal much about a broader subject: Veronese’s web of patrons in Venice and the Veneto. Here the correspondence offers some insights into what might be called Veronese’s attempts at networking. At least a couple of references suggest how the artist worked to secure commissions. The most forthright of these appears in letter 7: “I gave the most excellent messere Francesco Barbaro the remembrance you know of so that he would be of service to me with the Vendramins, and he promised me business and all that goes with it. Furthermore, I gave the notary a mandate undersigned by two of the above-mentioned gentlemen regarding the income and done with great difficulty for he has been deprived of authority by the attorneys and he would not be allowed to do them any longer. I send you my greetings and put myself in your hands. From Venice the 4 August 1578. Your servant.” Veronese makes a gift to the nobleman Francesco Barbaro, whose youthful portrait he had painted two decades earlier in the fresco decorations of the family’s Palladian villa at Maser. 41 The gift is given so that Francesco might help Veronese secure commissions from the Vendramins, especially Federico Vendramin, who is mentioned in the letter’s postscript. The Vendramin family was so large as to make it difficult to know which Federico is referenced in Veronese’s letter. The most likely candidate, based on age, wealth, and prominent art patronage, is the seventh

38 I am especially grateful to Robert Wald for sharing his thoughts on the orange peel as preparatory agent.

39 First, there is a high percentage of terpenes in the outer layer of a fresh skin that might provide enough oil to saturate a lead paint film. Second, the inside of the skin provides an agent known as limonene, which could be used as a solvent to remove oily deposits.

40 In the Amsterdam canvas, by contrast, the Barbaro folios and their text are painted in oil with a fine brush, presumably an integral part of the original conception.

41 For Francesco Barbaro’s portrait as a youth in the balcony opposite his mother, Giustiniana Giustiniani, in the fresco decorations of the Villa Barbaro, Maser, see Garton, 16, 36–39.
son of Andrea Vendramin (1514–47) and Lucrezia Pasqualigo, who variously went by the name Federico or Federigo, and who was born on 26 December 1535. As a youth, this nobleman had posed with his six brothers, father, and uncle in Titian’s famous *Vendramin Family*, now in the National Gallery, London. By the time of Paolo’s letter, many of those portrayed in Titian’s canvas were dead, and the forty-three-year-old Federico had risen to a position of authority. Whether Veronese was seeking work at the Scuola di S. Giovanni Evangelista, Venice, whose history was intimately linked with the Vendramin family, or a private commission, is difficult to ascertain. The artist might also have been considering a painting commission for one of the Vendramin tombs in the Church of S. Maria dei Servi. Regardless, Veronese launches a two-part networking campaign in this letter, offering a remembrance (*ricordo*) to Francesco Barbaro in exchange for his intervention with the family and urging Gandino also to put in a good word with Federico Vendramin.

In its widest sense, the term *ricordo* can mean “souvenir” or “gift,” but in the sixteenth century in the context of art, the word could also signify a scaled-down replica, version, or copy of an artwork. Such a *ricordo* provided the artist or his workshop with a record of a composition, subject, or portrait that could be kept as a memento or adapted for later commissions. Given the versions and variants of Daniele Barbaro’s portrait that are recorded, it is tempting to speculate that perhaps one of these, either a drawing or a painting, was the gift (*ricordo*) given to Daniele’s nephew. After all, Daniele had been Francesco’s

---

42 ASV, Libro d’Oro, Nascite II, b. 283, recorded on 21 January 1535.
44 He married Bianca, the daughter of Giacomo Donà, on 19 January 1558, with a dowry of 5,000 gold ducats, and the couple proceeded to have numerous children: ASV, Avogaria di Comun, *Matrimoni*, recorded 18 February 1558, contratti lib. 12, no. 244.
45 On 23 December 1369, the scuola’s *guardiano* Andrea Vendramin accepted the relic of the True Cross on behalf of this confraternity from Philippe de Maizières, cancelliere of Cyprus. As is well known, this same Vendramin miraculously rescued the relic when it fell into the waters of the canal, a scene immortalized in Gentile Bellini’s *Miracle of the Cross* (Venice, Accademia).
46 Federico’s wife asks in her will of 1587 to be entombed with the many Vendramins in S. Maria dei Servi: ASV Notarile testamento, atti Crivelli, 31 January 1587, busta 219, no. 238.
47 Daniele Barbaro’s likeness appears to have been recorded in a black chalk drawing that does not match any surviving paintings: Staatliche Graphische Sammlung, Munich, Inv. no. 12893. Veronese’s best-known painting of Daniele Barbaro survives in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, Inv. no. SK–A–4011, but two others of lesser dimensions are recorded: one in the 1682 inventory of Veronese’s heirs, and another in Console Joseph Smith’s collection in 1762. See Garton, 197, 199–200.
mentor in a career of diplomacy and ecclesiastical service, and by this time Francesco had been appointed to the very position his deceased uncle had once held, Patriarch-Elect of Aquileia. Whatever the nature of the gift, it is clear that Veronese, Barbaro, and Gandino were friendly acquaintances: letter 3 mentions that Francesco Barbaro visited Veronese in his studio and at that time asked after Marcantonio Gandino.

Francesco Barbaro appears to be just one of many visitors to Veronese’s house and studio in the contrada of San Samuele during these months. The letter of 6 February 1578 (letter 3) records recent visits from the inquisitor general of Venice as well as a group of Crociferi (crosachieri) Friars, sometimes referred to in English as the Crutched Friars. In this period the inquisitor in Venice was a Dominican friar, a “foreigner,” that is to say, a subject of another Italian state, and was appointed by the Congregation of the Holy Office, Rome. He bore most of the responsibility for interrogating suspects and witnesses brought before tribunals, although all trials of heresy included lay representatives from the Tre Savi all’Eresia, elected by the Venetian Senate. Veronese had appeared before just such an inquisitor general in 1573 for the famous trial concerning his Feast in the House of Levi (Accademia, Venice). At that time, the inquisitor was fra Aurelio Schellino da Brescia, but by 1574, he was replaced by fra Marco de’ Medici da Verona, who remained the inquisitor at the time of Paolo’s letter. What Fra Marco de’ Medici and Veronese discussed is not recorded in the letter, but the routine way the visit is mentioned alongside a festive account of the Crociferi Friars bringing Carnival gifts suggests his visit was cordial and uneventful. In his 1568 edition, Vasari refers to fra Marco de’ Medici as a man “well experienced in all the noble arts and sciences,” and credits him as a key source for information on artists from

---

48 Eventually he would become Patriarch of Aquileia. On Francesco’s life and career, see Trebbi.
49 In sixteenth-century Venice, the house of the Order of the Frati Crociferi (Crutched Friars) was located in Cannaregio at S. Maria Assunta, which after 1715 became the Church of the Gesuiti, still standing today. However, the context of the letter does not make it clear if the artist’s guests were from the Venetian order, or from farther afield.
50 Although he was logistically supported by his office in San Teodoro (beside San Marco) and the inquisitor’s suite in the Observant Dominican monastery of San Domenico di Castello, the inquisitor general reported directly to the Holy See: see Schutte, 30.
51 Ibid.
52 The document was first published in Bascher; but see the discussion in Fehl.
53 ASV, Sant’Uffizio, b. 153, “Elenco degli inquisitori domenicani, 1560–1755.”
Verona. Indeed, a few lines later Vasari records how the erudite Marco de’ Medici, after finishing his studies, would visit the studio of the aging artist, Francesco Torbido, called “Il Moro,” “to sit with him, watching him at work, and discoursing lovingly with him, in order to refresh [Il Moro’s] mind when he was weary with labor.” Perhaps Veronese and Fra Marco spoke of news or contacts from Verona, or perhaps about art. Their relationship would have been of great consequence to Veronese, since, as Schutte has shown, the inquisitor general was someone whose rank commanded respect among Venetian elite and whose offices put him in regular contact with leading ecclesiastics.

While Veronese was busy maintaining his contacts in Venice, Marcantonio Gandino appears to have helped promote the artist in and around Treviso. Beyond commissioning a portrait, assisting with the delivery of an altarpiece, and putting in a good word with Federico Vendramin and Francesco Barbaro, Marcantonio may also have been responsible for helping Veronese to secure the commission of the Wedding at Cana for the refectory of the Benedictine nunnery of San Teonisto, Treviso. This large feast scene now hangs in the Palazzo di Montecitorio, Rome (fig. 8). As mentioned earlier, Gandino served in 1571 on a three-person committee at the church of San Teonisto, Treviso, responsible for advising on matters of building and decoration. By August of that year he appears to have been entrusted as the expert advisor to the abbess of San Teonisto, the Reverend Sister Onigo, on matters of construction, pricing, and financing. She would ambitiously renovate and expand the cloister, refectory, and other spaces over the coming decade. The nobleman is still recorded as assisting in 1576 when the abbess decided to add another wing, and was probably continuing to work

54Vasari, 1973, 5:334: “Io sapeva bene alcune cose dei sopradetti eccellenti e nobili artefici veronesi; ma tutto quello che n’ho raccontato, non avei già saputo interamente, se la molta bontà e diligenza del reverendo e dottissimo Fra Marco de’ Medici, veronese ed uomo praticissimo in tutte le più nobili arti e scienzie”; Vasari, 1912–14, 6:54: “I knew for myself some of the facts about the excellent and noble craftmen mentioned above, but I would never have been able to learn the whole of what I have related of them if the great goodness and diligence of the reverend and most learned Fra Marco de’ Medici of Verona, a man profoundly conversant with all the most noble arts and sciences . . . had not given me that complete and perfect information which I have just written down.”
55Vasari, 1912–14, 6:27.
56Schutte, 31.
57Illustrated in Pignatti, 205, fig. 952.
58Gandino seems to have lent his expertise throughout the project. He is documented, for example, advising on the types of stone and the style of lapidary work required for the additions being made in 1571–72. For the documents of his collaboration with the Reverend Sister C. Onigo, see Michieli, 96.
intermittently on the project at the time of his correspondence with Veronese. When it came to decorations for the refectory, Gandino’s decade of involvement may help explain the nunnery’s commissioning a large feast scene from Veronese around 1580.

The commission of the *Wedding at Cana* in San Teonisto should also be seen in the broader context of the Veronese brothers’ work in Treviso. Benedetto and his young assistant Francesco Montemezzano were actively frescoing the great hall of the Bishop’s Palace (*salone del Vescovado*) as early as 1574. Benedetto’s patron, the Bishop of Treviso, Giorgio Corner, also seems to have enlisted Benedetto’s services to fresco the walls of a loggia at the parish church of St. Andrea oltre il Musone, as well as a cycle of frescoes of *historie et imagini di Santi* for his own villa, now Villa Piacentini-Corner, also known as the Villa Chiminelli. As Humfrey has shown, the Corner family was closely tied to the Soranzo family, patrons who played an instrumental role in Veronese’s early Venetian career. To round out this

---

59Ibid., 97–98.
60The surviving canvas appears to have been executed mostly by Veronese’s workshop. Larcher, 1969, 121, has suggested Benedetto’s involvement.
61Larcher, 2000. In this context it is interesting to consider whether the *Noli me tangere* in Santa Maria Maddalena might also show the brushwork of Benetto Caliari and Francesco Montemezzano.
62See Melchiori, 162n4.
63Humfrey, esp. 388n55. It should also be noted that Gandino’s *Strategemmi militari* (1574) was dedicated to Giacomo Soranzo, Generale da Mar della Repubblica di Venezia.
network of Trevisan patronage, it should be added that the brothers at the church of Santa Maria Maddalena continued to commission works from Veronese even after the main altarpiece and processional banner were completed, as evidenced by the *Crucifixion* on the small altar to the left of the apse, generally attributed to Veronese’s son, Carlo, also called Carletto.64

4. Veronese as Investor

Shifting focus to the financial matters referenced in the letters warrants a corresponding change in methodological approach. Up to now, the contents of the letters have been presented alongside other archival and literary records to augment the biographies of artist and patron, the latter having been completely overlooked in the modern literature. The contents of the letters have also, in a positivist way, provided the date of a major altarpiece, clarified the relative dates of other important paintings and drawings, and established patrons and acquaintances of the artist. Now the letters will be examined from a different vantage point, that of comparative economic analysis, albeit within a limited framework. The data contained in the letters helps quantify Veronese’s financial status and explain his investment objectives as a painter moving to a much higher social position. Richard Spear and Philip Sohm’s recent study of the economic lives of seventeenth-century painters suggests such inquiries can produce important insights about an artist, his manner of living, relative social position, and aspirations.65

If one were to amass all the surviving letters from Renaissance artists and then attempt to sort them according to their contents, the bulk could be reduced to one category: business. Even Michelangelo, who was provided a grammar-school education, a modicum of Latin, and a fine introduction to humanist studies in the Medici household — a writer whose elegant penmanship, orthography, and grammar far surpass Veronese’s modest vernacular — even this artist, as William Wallace has observed, “primarily wrote letters to conduct business, air grievances, and resolve problems.”66 Paolo Veronese is no exception. The letters transcribed here primarily document his ambitions, concerns, and grievances about investing his money in land. Up to this point, only a few scholars have devoted much attention to Veronese’s wealth.67 However, the Gandino correspondence

64Illustrated in Pignatti, 211, fig. 990.
65Spear and Sohm.
66Wallace, 6.
opens up new vistas in the financial picture of the artist and documents his business acumen. The letters provide some basis for a financial comparison, although limited, with other prominent Venetian painters who also invested in land in the Veneto.

These letters to Gandino reference ten different properties that are geographically spread over a wide territory of the terraferma, ranging from just north of Mirano to as far west as Bessica (northwest of Castelfranco) and Monzelese (Monselice, south of Padua). In several instances, Veronese mentions a casa per patron in addition to other buildings on the property. This expression literally means a “master’s house” and signals a residence suitable to a landowner or member of elite standing, as opposed to the more traditional housing stock common to peasants or farm managers. It is tempting to think that the artist planned for himself or his heirs a country villa for the purposes of living to some degree as a landed gentleman. Indeed, he and Benedetto did eventually acquire a property of forty-five campi in Sant’Angelo southwest of Treviso in 1582 that included a house and courtyard declared at that time to be retained for the maestro’s own use.68 How much he or his family were able to enjoy the house is not clear; by 1591 it is recorded as rented to a notary, Lorenzo Parente.69 Meanwhile the artist and his family continued to live and work in their rented home in Venice. A casa per patron and surrounding buildings could generate considerable rental revenue, as letter 1 suggests. Also in letter 1, but in discussing a different property, Veronese urges Gandino to find out “what the opportunities are to rent it, so that the owner would not have to bear the burden and if a storm were to happen and time be lost that could equal much bread and wine, still the field would provide me the rent of a year, and also over two decime a year [two tenths of a harvest].” In this and other examples, one senses from the eagerness of his tone, as well as the generally haphazard geographic distribution of all ten parcels referenced in the correspondence, that Veronese is mostly concerned with finding a sound investment capable of generating a high rate of return. In this respect, the letters confirm the hypothesis that Puppi had proposed based on a few examples from the 1580s and 1590s, namely, that land acquisition for Veronese seems to have been primarily a means of financial speculation.70 He invested his profits from painting in the tangible asset of land with the hope of generating short-term liquid assets through rent and harvest yields.

---

69Bampo, ms. 1410, I, s.v. Paolo Caliari [Veronese], 1591.
70Puppi, 64.
Only a few prices for the properties are mentioned, and they range from 681 to 7,200 ducats, which both amount to considerable sums even in ducati di conto (rather than silver or gold ducats). By comparison, the starting annual salaries for Venetian chancellory notaries and secretaries were around 100 ducats: experienced grammar-school teachers averaged around eighty ducats, and workers’ and farm laborers’ annual incomes were, of course, far lower. In his comparative study of baroque painters, Philip Sohm classified Sebastiano Ricci as rich for purchasing plots of land near Mirano for 7,050 ducats. Though the prices of Veronese’s paintings are rarely recorded, a few documented examples give some indication of painterly income relative to land investment: 324 ducats in 1562 for the large Wedding at Cana (S. Giorgio Maggiore, Venice, now Louvre, Paris), ninety-seven ducats in 1572 for the Supper of St. Gregory the Great (Sanctuario del Monte Berico, Vicenza), 150 ducats in 1575 for the Martyrdom of S. Giustina altarpiece (St. Giustina, Padua), and forty ducats in 1575 for the Beheading of John the Baptist altarpiece (Chiesa Parrocchiale, Dossena [Bergamo]). Prices clearly fluctuated depending on both the size of the painting and whether the commission was for a wealthy Venetian church or a poor parochial one in the Veneto. Considering the hundreds of works that still survive from Veronese and his workshop, one can surmise the artist’s considerable income even in the absence of any account books.

During the time of his letters to Gandino, Veronese hoped to augment his primary income as a painter with yields from land. In quantifying the rent he expects to earn from one of the smallest properties considered in letter 1, a parcel valued at less than 681 ducats, he notes that the annual rent amounts to forty ducats. By comparison, the rent Veronese himself paid to lease the large house of Vincenzo Morosini in Venice was sixty ducats, corresponding roughly to what some doctors could afford. Titian similarly paid sixty ducats for his Venetian rent in 1549. All of these figures confirm

\[71\] For example, even if ducato di conto, 7,200 ducats would be more than sixty times the annual salary of a midlevel military manager in the Venetian Arsenale. The ducato d’oro (or zecchino) in 1577 had a ratio to the ducato di conto of 8:12. Generally, one ducato di conto = six lire and four soldi. On currency conversion, see Pezzolo, 322. For a broader reference on Venetian coins and currency, see Papadopoli Aldobrandini.

\[72\] Spear and Sohm, 220.

\[73\] Ibid.

\[74\] The contracts for these commissions appear in Pignatti and Pedrocco, 553–63, docs. 22, 39, 43, and 45, respectively.

\[75\] By 1578 Veronese had moved into an even better house in San Samuele owned by heirs of Jacopo Federici: Hochmann, 43.

\[76\] Cadorin, 11–12.
that in Beltrami’s taxonomy of poor, comfortable, rich, and wealthy, the artist could be categorized as rich. Setting aside, for the moment, the comparisons with other artists, the letters reveal much about Veronese’s knowledge of business, financing, and land transactions.

Land sales and acquisitions in the sixteenth century were delicate negotiations usually carried out among the highest socioeconomic strata. As a son and grandson of stonecutters and as a painter, Veronese was clearly dependent on Marcantonio Gandino to approach the relevant parties and negotiate prices. In letter 1 he thanks Gandino by declaring “I must make sure that no one takes [the property of the Zagi family] from me at your good offering price, for which I praise you forever,” and in other letters he expresses similar gratitude for Gandino’s advice and intercessions on his behalf. Veronese’s determination to press forward with a bargain leads him to ask in letter 5 if Gandino might also tell Messer Federico to intercede with a widow whose irresolution is hampering his progress. Veronese carefully attempts to balance his urgency with a tone of gratitude. After all, Gandino is not only his social superior, but is also his agent in these dealings. At times Veronese voices bitter disappointment at deals that do not succeed, and perhaps these bear the added guilt of having wasted Gandino’s time. In letter 4 he writes “For what I have known of this magnificent Bollani and his relative I am more convinced that I shall not conclude any deal ever with him and his relative, and had I seen him earlier I would have realized this earlier, because by now I have known him to be someone who, having started, never finishes anything, and I want to think about other things and speak no more to him. They were jumping up the price to 7,200 and making me pay every sort of fee that could be encountered and it seemed like he was agreeing and afterwards he forced me to agree to different terms which made me know [the true] him.”

Undiminished by this setback, however, Veronese goes on in the same letter to describe three more real estate prospects that have captured his attention.

Veronese’s zealous scouting of prospects appears unflagging throughout the letters and involves a network of people that extends well beyond Gandino and Messer Federico. In letter 1 he speaks of the “friars of San Sebastiano who for their goodness wanted to give me help.” In particular he mentions a brother of one of the friars who has heard that part of a possession Paolo would like to acquire may soon be donated to the church. The implication is that Veronese might acquire more favorable terms if he waited to see if the donation proceeded. In these years, it seems, Veronese’s ecclesiastical patrons could also prove useful associates in the task

77These four categories proved effective in distinguishing residences in Venice and the Veneto: Beltrami, 1954 and 1966.
of land acquisition. Even outside the clergy, Veronese appears to have had many useful contacts. In letter 2 he describes a property near Treviso as “beautiful and good, known as such by a beloved friend of mine who has a business contiguous with it and searches for any advantageous opportunity for me,” and in letter 5 he references informants in Piombino Dese and Castelfranco who seem to provide “very reliable information” on certain properties. These channels of information, and perhaps many others, converged on the artist in his busy Venetian studio.

For his part, Veronese appears to have been a competent judge of land prices, agricultural yields, taxes, and financing options. Of the latter, letter 5 shows him comparing the loan terms of the monte di pietà, a type of communal banking institution devoted to charitable loans, against the terms of certain private lenders. Veronese’s network of informants and business savvy may suggest the prosaic means behind Carlo Ridolfi’s opaque reference in 1648 about the artist’s good fortune in investing his painterly profits well.78

The Gandino correspondence of 1578 documents a business initiative that would bear fruit in the decade to come. Veronese did succeed to some extent in becoming a man of property. By 1582 he was master of the previously mentioned Sant’Angelo house and grounds, as well as of nearly forty-five fields (campi) rented out, the value of which Veronese was keen to downplay for tax reasons, claiming a low rental income (affittuali miserabili) and a poor harvest of a few botti di vino, a pig, a couple of hens, and fifty eggs.79 However, the rent on such a sizeable tract could hardly have been miserable. He also reported to the authorities that his property at Castelfranco, for which he paid 750 ducats, produced a gross annual revenue of forty-five ducats.80 On 17 November 1586, Veronese established with the abbot of S. Maria della Carità in Venice a censo, a form of mortgage loan contract, on land close to Ravenna, where he committed a capital of 500 ducats for an annual rent of thirty ducats.81 Puppi has suggested that Veronese’s 1586 investment with the Carità corresponds to the capital gains earned during that time by painting the Duke of Buckingham’s series of ten paintings depicting stories of the New and Old Testaments, which seems persuasive even if difficult to verify.82 After his death, Veronese’s investment strategy lived on.

78Ridolfi, 333–34: “in that way, not only Paolo’s fame, thanks to his works, increased, but also his fortune, as he invested six thousand scudi, which he had earned with his art (his brushes) in a few years, and they grew successfully.”
79Puppi, 64.
80Ibid.
81Hochmann, 45.
82Puppi, 65.
His sons Carlo and Gabriele Caliari established with the same monastery another censo dated 30 July 1590, for a capital of 900 ducats, which produced annually forty-nine ducats. There may have been other properties and investments not yet accounted for, but those already documented are sufficient to establish that the artist amassed a respectable estate, making good on the goals he set for himself in the Gandino correspondence.

In his pursuit of land in the terraferma, Veronese was not unusual among the upper ranks of Venetian painters. He may have been following Titian’s lead, since the latter owned properties around his native Pieve di Cadore that far exceeded Veronese’s assets: several houses and farms, two sawmills leased at forty-eight ducats a year, timber interests, lands near Seravalle and Conegliano, and much more. The painter Francesco Bassano, whose son likely apprenticed with Veronese, was also a large investor in the Veneto, buying the property of Ezzelino Romano in 1578 for 3,000 ducats and another fifty-three campi at the “villa della Fossa delle Fellette” for 3,585 ducats. Tintoretto also owned a house and eight campi at Carpenedo, near Mestre, but this was a modest investment compared to Veronese’s and to the others previously referenced. Perhaps the Venetian-born Tintoretto was less committed to owning properties in the terraferma— all the earlier-mentioned painters had been born in the terraferma. Another famous painter, Paris Bordon, purchased twenty campi near his hometown of Treviso and owned a few rental properties in Venice, but may have been considerably less well-off, since his will of 1563 left his daughter a dowry of only 200 ducats. By comparison, Veronese left that same amount to a distant niece, and his brother Benedetto’s dowry for Vittoria Caliari was 2,000 ducats.

More than any other set of documents, the Veronese-Gandino correspondence establishes the considerable wealth of the artist, albeit through the narrow lens of a single year; all the letters are dated 1578. The letters also define the objectives, terms, and prices of his wide-ranging strategy to invest in Venice’s inland empire. When added to the other

83 Hochmann, 45.
84 Cadorin, 91–92 (Decima of 28 June 1566).
85 Signori and Sesso, 163.
86 ASV Savi alle decime, b. 162, n. 293, transcribed in Schiavon, 128. In his later years, however, Tintoretto was the only Venetian artist to draw two salaried positions: 1,000 ducats per annum as state painter receiving the Sansaria al fondego di Todeschi, and 100 ducats from the Scuola di San Rocco: Spear and Sohm, 220.
87 On the rental properties of the artist, see Paris Bordon, 139, doc. no. 57 (estimo of 15 January 1566).
88 Caliari, 183 (testament of 1 March 1598); for the niece’s dowry, see Puppi, 66n17.
surviving documents concerning commissions, housing, and dowries, the letters establish Veronese’s comparatively rich status.

5. GANDINO’S CLASSICISM AND VERONESE’S THEMES

Returning to the two men and their correspondence, there remains the task of defining the intellectual relationship between this accomplished humanist and his celebrated artist friend — not an easy endeavor, since only Veronese’s side of the correspondence survives. The letters offer little about their intellectual exchange, apart from Veronese returning a book, the title of which is sadly omitted, to Gandino. Perhaps others of the thirty letters once recorded in the De Luca sale in 1816 will resurface to better round out the contours of their exchange.\(^89\) Further complicating matters is the general difficulty of connecting Veronese’s pictorial themes at any point in his career to a particular source, be it the advice of a humanist or a printed text. His artwork is complex and personalized, rather than merely illustrative. Even in the case of his well-known fresco decorations at Villa Barbaro in Maser, where the erudite Daniele Barbaro was likely advising both Andrea Palladio and Veronese on the villa’s completion, the relationship of patron and artist remains unclear and scholars continue to debate the various literary sources that might inform the central image of the cycle’s program.\(^90\)

Against this surfeit of obstacles, it is tempting to end the discussion of the Veronese-Gandino correspondence having already secured a better understanding of the artist’s works, patrons, and finances. However, Gandino stood to offer Veronese a great deal should their discussions have turned to classical subjects. The frequency of their visits to each other’s homes suggests ample room for such conversations. The classical past was a lively topic to each: Veronese was earning fame for his canvases depicting ancient subjects, and Gandino was winning admiration well beyond Venice for his translations of classical authors. In moving to this more speculative ground of connecting literature to paintings, two of Veronese’s commissions serve as useful case studies. One involves arcane historical subjects from Plutarch that also held Gandino’s interest, and the second concerns a depiction of allegory.

---

89\(^{See n25 above.}\)

90\(^{Many scholars acknowledge the importance of Vincenzo Cartari’s Le imagini con la sposição de i dei degli antichi (Venice, 1556) in establishing a program of Olympian gods arranged around the theme of harmony, but the enigmatic female figure seated on a dragon at the center of the vault of the Sala dell’Olimpo has been variously identified as Eternity, Earth, Divine Wisdom, Thalia, Aristodama, or Divine Love. For the bibliography and corresponding interpretations, see Reist, 1985a and 1985b; Hope; Lewis, 1987 and 1990; Rogers.}\)
that would seem to relate to Gandino’s translation of Xenophon. Gandino’s printed words and those of his son, when considered alongside the lengthy tomes of the translations themselves, suggest that the humanist was already deeply immersed in translating Plutarch’s *Moria* and Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* at the time of his correspondence with Veronese in 1578. 91

Gandino’s translation of Plutarch is a text that presents moral exempla based on historical accounts. It shares conceptual affinities with the moralizing histories and allegories that were becoming popular pictorial themes among sixteenth-century Venetian painters. Several scholars have noted Veronese’s preeminence in the genre of history painting and moral allegory. 92 As Claudia Terribile has shown in a recent study of Veronese’s *The Family of Darius Before Alexander* (National Gallery, London), the artist was especially interested in using stories from history to portray classical virtù for the education and edification of a Venetian audience. 93 A similar spirit, albeit literary in nature, informs Gandino’s translation of Plutarch’s *Moria*, where the title page declares that the volume contains “an abundance of vital precepts to be followed by Princes, the populace, priests, laity, fathers, sons, husbands, wives, masters and servants.” 94 Veronese’s istorie shared Plutarch’s conviction that such representations are valuable as exempla of conduct and decorum.

In the *Moria*, Plutarch generally proceeds by establishing a tenet of virtuous behavior and then by presenting historical figures whose actions are illustrative: Sulla, for example, demonstrated discipline and strategy in the siege of Athens, Publius Decius Mus showed loyalty and determination by fighting to the bitter end for Rome, and the legislator Charondas of Catania was of such integrity that he would rather commit suicide than betray his own principles. 95 Though quite rare in paintings of the time, all three of the

91 Gandino declares in the forward to his translation of Xenophon (published posthumously) that from his earliest years, when he would grow tired of his long studies of mathematics, he would relieve his mind by studying the history and moral philosophy of Xenophon and Plutarch: Gandino, 1588, unpaginated preface. His son, Giovanni Francesco Gandino, seems to corroborate this story of lifelong devotion to these particular authors, because he writes in the dedication of the posthumously published *Moria* of Plutarch that Marcantonio worked on the translation for many, many years: Gandino, 1598, unpaginated dedicatory page. Both works, then, were likely underway nine years before his death, the time of the Veronese correspondence.
92 See, for example, Campenhausen; Hope; Cocke, 1990.
93 Terribile, 98–116.
94 Gandino, 1598, title page.
95 Gandino, 1598, book 6, section 8, for Lucius Cornelius Sulla and Publius Decius Mus; for Charondas of Catania, see ibid., book 5, section 3.
above Plutarchan subjects were well known to Marcantonio Gandino through his studies of Plutarch’s *Lives* and his translation of the *Moralia*. All three subjects appear in the grisailles that Veronese completed sometime around 1577 for the ceiling of the Sala del Collegio in Palazzo Ducale. These smaller chiaroscuro paintings flank colorful allegories, and the complete ensemble of the ceiling, as Ettore Merkel and others have noted, presents an aspirational self-portrait of the Venetian Republic, one in which the Council (Collegio) appears bolstered by Strength, Faith, and Justice.

The Sala del Collegio was the conference hall for what was essentially the cabinet or executive arm of the Republic, and the great room had been damaged by a fire in the Doge’s Palace in 1575, necessitating a new ceiling. Veronese and his workshop were commissioned to provide the many paintings enframed by the gilded *saffitto*. Since the nineteenth century, art historians have recognized that several of the historical scenes rendered in chiaroscuro have their origins in Plutarch, either his *Lives* or his *Moralia*: it is difficult to be more precise since both volumes refer to many of the same historic personages. Now, with the discovery of Marcantonio Gandino’s presence in Veronese’s life during this period, the skilled painter may be connected with a recognized scholar conversant in Plutarch’s *Lives* and a translator of the *Moralia*. Marcantonio Gandino could easily have provided relevant passages from the historical texts, offered discussion of their content, or helped to explore how these particular stories might complement the surrounding allegories, all in the service of glorifying the Venetian government. It would not have been common to leave the iconographic program of such an important state commission to the artist’s discretion, nor would it likely have been entrusted solely to Gandino, regardless of the ties he might have cultivated with high-placed members of Venice’s government. Marcantonio Barbaro, brother of Daniele (mentioned above), appears to have been actively consulted in the rebuilding and redecorating of the Doge’s Palace at this time, and the ceiling’s program is generally attributed to him.

This state of affairs does not undercut Gandino’s possible advisory

---

96 These chiaroscuro paintings are illustrated in Merkel.
97 Ibid., 380–90; Priever, 112.
99 Gandino’s 1574 translation of Frontinus is dedicated to the Generale da Mar della Repubblica di Venezia, Giacomo Soranzo, and the 1587 dedicatory letter preceding his translation of Xenophon is addressed to the Doge of Venice, Pasquale Cicogna.
100 See, for example, Merkel, 388.
role. Barbaro and Gandino were likely acquainted, as is suggested by the friendship Gandino shared with Barbaro’s son, Francesco, who is mentioned in the letters. At a minimum, the unusual Plutarchan subjects of the Sala del Collegio ceiling, one of the great masterpieces of the Doge’s Palace, can now be connected to the intellectual interests of one of Veronese’s closest advisors during those years: Marcantonio Gandino. In the examples above, Plutarch’s writings do not offer details concerning settings, costumes, or figures. However, moving ahead to an allegorical commission of the 1580s, a close analysis of Veronese’s work does reveal similarities to another of Gandino’s texts.

The second case study requires lengthier analysis because Veronese painted more than one version of *The Choice between Virtue and Vice*, and the subject appears in several literary sources. Gandino’s knowledge of Xenophon may have precipitated a change in the painter’s approach to the subject. Veronese leaves us two well-known images of the theme, one of ca. 1565 now in the Frick Collection, New York (fig. 9) and another generally dated ca. 1580–82 in the Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid (fig. 10). The paintings are noticeably different in details and composition. A close formal comparison of the Frick and Prado canvases yields insights if one simultaneously engages in a close textual analysis of the classical sources that describe Hercules’s choice between Virtue and Vice.

The fifth-century BCE sophist Prodicus offered the earliest formulation of Hercules confronting two females, Virtue (*Arête*) and Vice (*Kakia*), who each counsel him to follow a different path. Though Prodicus’s speech is the origin of Hercules at the crossroads, his writings do not survive. Erwin Panofsky’s study of the theme confirmed that in Veronese’s day the depiction of Hercules at the crossroads was still relatively rare, although it would soon gain popularity in baroque paintings and prints. A well-read person in sixteenth-century Italy could find reference to this historic choice between Virtue and Vice in at least seven sources, five of which are either too brief in mentioning the subject or too unrelated to Veronese’s canvases to merit attention in the context of the current study. However, two classical texts do tell the story in vivid detail in ways consonant with the

---

101 For the Frick allegory, see Salomon, esp. 33; for the Prado canvas, see *Veronese*, 160–61.
102 Panofsky, 37–124.
103 Hesiod, *Theogony* 911–18; Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses (Orations)* 1.66–84; Justin Martyr, *Second Apology* 11.6–15; Basil the Great, *On the Value of Greek Literature* 5.55–77; Silius Italicus, *Punica* 15.18–128, which has Scipio Africanus pondering the choice between virtue and vice. The two sources most relevant to this study, Philostratus and Xenophon, are cited below.
artist’s scenes, and one of these was being translated into Italian by Marcantonio Gandino at the time of his correspondence with Veronese.

The earliest written account of Hercules’s choice between Virtue and Vice is by Xenophon (Memorabilia 2.1.21–34), who claims Prodicus as his authority. However, a shorter version of the choice between Virtue
and Vice is also mentioned by Philostratus (Life of Apollonius of Tyana 6.10). Veronese’s earlier Frick canvas appears to share conceptual affinities with Philostratus’s account, although Veronese makes his own choices regarding costumes and fabric colors; while the later Prado painting appears to reflect Xenophon’s (and hence, Gandino’s) lengthier formulation of the theme.

Let us begin with Philostratus’s brief account. It should be remembered that Philostratus had already become a respected authority consulted by sixteenth-century Venetian artists and patrons, as evidenced by Titian’s paintings relating to the Eikones (Images). In Philostratus’s Life of Apollonius of Tyana, the ascetic philosopher Thespesion lectures Apollonius about the simplicity of the Delphic oracle in contrast to the pomp and extravagance of the sages of India. He then elaborates by example: “You have seen in picture-books the representation of Hercules by Prodicus; in it Hercules is represented as a youth who has not yet chosen the life he will lead; and Vice and Virtue stand on each side of him plucking his garments and trying to draw him to themselves. Vice is adorned with gold and

104 On Alfonso d’Este’s pictorial cycle and the argument that Titian knew Philostratus’s Eikones by studying the translation by Demetrios Moschos, see Luskin.
necklaces and with purple raiment, and her cheeks are painted and her hair delicately plaited and her eyes underlined with henna; and she also wears golden slippers, for she is pictured strutting about in these; but Virtue in the picture resembles a woman worn out with toil, with a pinched look; and she has chosen for her adornment rough squalor, and she goes without shoes and in the plainest of raiment, and she would have appeared naked if she had not too much regard for feminine decency. Now figure yourself, Apollonius, as standing between Indian wisdom on one side, and our own humble wisdom on the other.” In the lines that follow, Thespesion admonishes the younger philosopher to remain faithful to the Hellenic path of truth and arduous toil, and abandon attractions to the Indian sages with their fanciful tales.

The central motif of Philostratus’s version — what sixteenth-century Venetians might have referred to as its concetto — is the image of Vice and Virtue standing on each side of Hercules “plucking his garments and trying to draw him to themselves.” Such a highly memorable picture of a man being plucked by women finds painterly depiction in Veronese’s Choice between Virtue and Vice, now in the Frick Collection (fig. 9). In Veronese’s scene, a man dressed in white silk, who might as easily be a sixteenth-century nobleman as the young Hercules, appears between two females who grab at his garments and appear to pull him in opposite directions. Virtue is winning this tug-of-war, for the man embraces her with one arm and she gathers the billowing folds of his mantle to keep them from the clutches of Vice. Despite Vice’s attractive gold adornments and delicately plaited hair (both referenced in Philostratus), the audience soon realizes that her allure is deceptive. Behind Vice and framed in the picture by the dark fabric of the under-layer of her dress is a sphinx against which a knife rests, both elements concealed from the other figures in the painting. Although difficult to see in

---

105Philostratus, 2:33–34.

106The subject of the Frick version has been debated, with an alternative view advanced by Cocke, 1977, that the inscription at upper left “[HO]NOR ET VIRTUS [P]OST MORTEM FLORET” (“Honor and Virtue flourish after Death”) literally names the three figures of the painting: Honor in white at the center between Virtue and Death. While it is true that a harpy with claws is an ancient symbol of Voluptas and death, Cocke’s interpretation has not gained widespread support, in part because so many elements of the painting better match the Hercules story. The occasional title of the subject as Poet between Virtue and Vice appears to have no textual foundation apart from the association of Virtue’s laurel crown.

107There is no reference in Philostratus to the crown of cyclamens in Vice’s hair, but Sitwell, 264, notes that such flowers, according to the classical author Dioscorides, were used for love potions and anointments for fair skin.
a small reproduction, in the original canvas one can clearly see that Vice’s delicate hands terminate in animal-like claws. Indeed, it appears her right hand has just torn the man’s legging; lines of blood are visible on his left calf. The artist has amplified Philostratus’s plucking of garments to dramatic effect, despite the initial impression of an untroubled tableau of figures in elegant attire.

Veronese’s choice of costuming may be consistent with his own conceptions of decorum, but it departs significantly from the classical text. According to Philostratus, in the ancient picture-books, Vice is shown wearing purple raiment, whereas Veronese has depicted her in garments of blue and orange. Virtue is described as adorned in “rough squalor” and the “plainest of raiment.” Yet Veronese has outfitted her in fine silks, perhaps out of deference to the common Renaissance notion that outward beauty was a sign of inward goodness, or simply to make a more beautiful picture that might better please a patron. 108 Whatever his motives, Veronese adheres to Philostratus’s conception of Virtue’s face as being free of makeup, a little weary, and perhaps bearing a “pinched look.” Despite taking artistic license, it seems the painter remained faithful to the central concepts of the classical apologue and its actions, paying attention to the gold adornments and delicately plaited hair.

When Veronese returned to this same subject around 1580–82 in the Prado Youth of the Sanuto Family between Virtue and Vice (fig. 10), he changed the action and staging considerably. 109 This youthful Hercules, in reality a member of a Venetian patriciate family, is beckoned by each of the allegories, but they no longer pluck at his garments. In fact, Virtue leans forward with a closed posture, and the youth reaches for, but has not yet succeeded in grasping, her hand. A lascivious, but also lethargic, Vice sits too far away to menace the youth’s clothes or detain him from his journey. Indeed, she appears to tilt too far back to aggressively confront anyone. The new conception of the theme becomes more cogent if one considers Gandino’s account of Hercules’s choice between Virtue and Vice as told by Xenophon.

Whereas the crossroads story serves as a minor illustration in Philostratus, Xenophon offers an epic, multi-page tale of two allegories

108 Castiglione composed his Libro del Cortegiano on the premise that “outward beauty is a true sign of inner goodness,” and the outward-inward conception of virtue was used in defense of Ariosto’s poetic style by Giovanni Battista Pigna in I romanzi (Venice, 1554): Castiglione, 342; on Pigna, see Weinberg, 2:965. On the important concept of magnificenza in the Renaissance, see Gombrich; Green.

109 The Prado Youth of the Sanuto Family between Virtue and Vice was first attributed to Veronese in 1648 by Ridolfi, who saw it in the collection of Giambattista Sanuto of Venice: Ridolfi, 338.
debating over a young man’s future. In establishing the setting, Xenophon (in Gandino’s translation) describes the locus of the story as a quiet place beyond the city, and the author specifies that the boy Hercules is just entering youth’s estate. In the Prado painting, a classical-styled colonnade atop five steps is visible in the background, but the architecture gives way to a bucolic glade and eventually to rocks at the far right near the personification of Virtue. Collectively, these elements suggest the transition from an urban space to a natural one, hence, a quiet place beyond the city. The Venetian youth is also much closer to a fanciullo than was the fully-grown man who had assumed the place of Hercules in the earlier Frick portrayal. Returning to Xenophon’s account: “there appeared two women of great stature making toward him. The one was fair to see and of high bearing; and her limbs were adorned with purity, her eyes with modesty; sober was her figure, and her robe was white. The other was plump and soft, with high feeding. Her face was made up to heighten its natural white and pink, her figure to exaggerate her height. She was more open-eyed than is natural; with eyes dilated and lustrous; and dressed so as to disclose all her charms.” This passage provides several elements that appear in Veronese’s painting: Virtue is a woman with modest gaze, whose limbs are adorned with purity (without jewelry), and she is portrayed as sober in her demeanor and wearing white (albeit with a mantle of pink over her white robe). Vice’s plumpness and high feeding are suggested in Veronese’s image by the hint of her full stomach and soft features, though it is difficult to discern her height since the artist chose to depict her seated. She is “dressed so as to disclose all her charms,” as evidenced by her ample bosom framed by a careless arrangement of fabrics and a low neckline. Vice’s face is lightened, and the pinks of her cheeks are made more prominent than Virtue’s. Even Vice’s wide eyes correspond to the text, and appear something of an anomaly in Veronese’s oeuvre and in the works of his peers.

110 Gandino, 1588, 278: “Hercole di fanciullo essendo divenuto giovane (conciosiache i giovani facciano hoggimai qualche cosa per se stessi, e diano inditio se sono per vivere virtuosamente, ò vitiosamente) uscito della città in luogo solitario” (“When Heracles was passing from boyhood to youth’s estate, wherein the young, now becoming their own masters, show whether they will live virtuously or by vice, he exited the city to a quiet place”).

111 Xenophon, 95; Gandino, 1588, 278–79: “Allhora gli parve, che gli si accostassero due donne grandi, una di faccia leggiadra, e gentile; le cui membra d’un certa natural politezza adornate, gli occhi di modestia, i movimenti di pudicitia; e vestita di bianco. L’altra grassa, e delicata; ma guernita in quanto al colore, che ella pareva più bianca, et più rossa di quel, che era; con la persona a gli occhi altrui più alta del naturale; con gli occhi vaghi, e lampeggianti; con la veste di tal maniera, che facesse risplendere assai meglio la sua bellezza.”
Beyond these details, Veronese establishes the pictorial space of his canvas and the postures of his figures very much in accord with Xenophon’s conception of the two allegories. Vice is languid and surrounded by comfortable trappings that nonetheless fail to satisfy her, and for this reason she sets her sights on acquiring the boy. In the narrative account she tries to lure him: “Hercules, mark you how hard and long is that road to joy, of which this woman tells? but I will lead you by a short and easy road to happiness.” Several times she warns of the rough path and toil that lies ahead if he follows Virtue, a point that conforms to the rocky path the boy is shown treading in the painting, leaving behind the refined palace architecture. Virtue looks back at Vice in Veronese’s scene, but moves away with a sweeping gesture that suggests reproof of her languid rival. Here the artist is confined to the field of mute gesture, but Xenophon provides the words of Virtue’s rebuke of Vice: “thou dost not even tarry for the desire of pleasant things, but fillest thyself with all things before thou desirest them, eating before thou art hungry, drinking before thou art thirsty . . . to soothe thy slumbers it is not enough for thee to buy soft coverlets, but thou must also have frames for thy beds. For not toil, but tedium of having nothing to do, makes thee long for sleep. Thou dost rouse lust by many a trick, when there is no need.” The diatribe continues with accusations that the idleness of Vice causes young men to run through their pleasure in youth, while they save up hardship for their old age. Veronese’s image depicts Vice reclining on her “soft coverlets” amid a gold-embroidered curtain and statuary. By contrast, Virtue is portrayed as barefoot and walking with a determined gate symptomatic of her ethos of hard labor.

Xenophon’s apologue and Veronese’s painting each present an instructive story well-suited to a young patrician, whether from the Sanuto family or any other. Veronese’s image has the edifying effect of placing the Sanuto youth in the place of a classical hero who once stood at the crossroads and wisely chose the path of virtue and greatness. Within a social and political oligarchy whose noble families competed with one
another for prestige, the painting suggests the Sanuto clan possesses a classically inspired integrity (and perhaps also an ancient lineage), and one of their sons appears bound for greatness.\textsuperscript{114}

If the examples from Panofsky’s study of Hercules at the crossroads are any indication, Veronese’s canvases may have helped to promulgate this artistic theme, even if his unique choice to substitute Venetian contemporaries for the nude pagan hero was not widely followed.\textsuperscript{115} It also seems likely that Gandino’s translation of Xenophon into Italian aided in the dissemination of this classical motif among artists and patrons. Again referencing the images assembled by Panofsky, Gandino’s posthumous 1588 publication coincides with the beginning of an uptick in visual representations of the story along Xenophonic lines.\textsuperscript{116} Painters of the next generation, especially Annibale Carracci, who revered Veronese’s work, returned to representations of a nude Hercules between Virtue and Vice and made the subject famous in Rome and beyond.

Veronese’s complexity as a painter stems from more than just his formal choices of color, composition, and pose: it pertains also to his refined sense of history and decorum. His close advisor Marcantonio Gandino had a lifelong familiarity with certain histories and allegories rooted in a classical literary tradition. It seems likely that Paolo, a stonemason’s son from Verona, would have been eager to familiarize himself with the content of such stories, even if only to reinvigorate the conventional imagery with which he was familiar. Gandino, for his part, appears to have been impressed by Veronese’s talent and to have been eager to assist him in various ways. Unfortunately, any discussion of the classical content they may once have shared now remains beyond the epistolary record.

6. Conclusion

Until now, Daniele Barbaro has been one of the only patrons about whom lengthy \textit{vitae} can be assembled to suggest the character and intellectual achievements that might have been formative for Paolo Veronese. Now, however, the documentary evidence presented here connects the painter with another humanist whose presence was significant in his later artistic career. Rediscovering Marcantonio Gandino’s identity uncovers an important

\textsuperscript{114}Veronese’s painting was apparently prized, since it was still hanging in a prominent spot in Giambattista Sanuto’s house in Venice at the middle of the following century: Ridolfi, 338.

\textsuperscript{115}Panofsky, 117–19.

\textsuperscript{116}Ibid., 173–212.
intellectual of the Veneto, a man whose studies of mathematics, hydrology, perspective, military engineering, and Greek history had consequences for thinkers as far afield as England. This author was socially connected with many Venetian elite, and revered as a civic authority on artistic and engineering matters in and around Treviso. Gandino played an active role in Veronese’s career, serving as his advisor in real estate matters, commissioning a portrait, assisting in the commission and delivery of paintings to the churches of Santa Maria Maddalena and San Teonisto in Treviso, and promoting the artist’s talents among various noblemen in Venice and the Veneto.

Until now, documents have shed little light on Veronese’s studio, apart from its location in the contrada of San Samuele. These letters render meaningful details about his artistic practice in the genres of portraiture and altarpiece commissions, providing details of delivery and discussing an example where work has been delegated to his brother Benedetto. This correspondence creates an image of Veronese’s home and studio as a social hub and a bustling workshop. Noblemen such as Francesco Barbaro and Marcantonio Gandino came to see him, the Inquisitor General Marco de’ Medici paid a visit alongside more humble monks from the Church of San Sebastiano, and no doubt others brought news and letters from the Veneto. In addition to the receiving of guests, something of Veronese’s social aplomb is demonstrated in the tone of the letters and their forms of salutation, as well as in the gift-giving and attempts to curry favor with members of the elite. Much of the correspondence is taken up with somewhat frenzied comparisons of houses, farmlands, taxes and harvests: in short, all the exhilarations and anxieties of trying to play the real estate market of the terraferma. These quotidian worries stem from the artist’s deep concern to invest his painterly profits well, and to build up a respectable estate for his children.

The case studies examined here suggest that Gandino’s translations of Plutarch’s Moralia and Xenophon’s Memorabilia shared a common purpose with Veronese’s paintings: both offered moral exempla useful to a patrician audience that was sensitive to both classical pedagogy and the status conferred by antique example. At times the texts and images shared the same subjects and even visual details. Though Gandino’s half of the letters does not survive, having now identified him as the proper recipient of Veronese’s correspondence, one is in a better position to understand the rapport between this leading intellectual and one of sixteenth-century Venice’s most celebrated painters. When compared to the earlier catalogue raisonné, the letters published here double the number of known letters surviving from Paolo Veronese’s hand.

Clark University
Appendix: The Letters of Paolo Veronese to Marcantonio Gandino


In this letter, Veronese describes a variety of possible land investments, including one above Mirano, between Venice and Padua. Gandino has been negotiating on Veronese’s behalf on a different property with a landowner, Sig. Zane Zago, and has recommended a favorable price, but the negotiation proves complex since thirty campi of the property appear to be promised to a group of nuns, and the taxes on the parcel are higher than expected. In the end, the artist asks his friend to inquire with Zago about the rental prospects concerning the land, and whether arrangements could be made that leave the tenant(s) bearing the risk of bad harvests or inclement weather.

[On the outside of the letter]
Al Molto Mag.[nifi]co e sempre sano S.[ignor]e
TREVISO

[Inside the letter]
Molto magnifico signor mio
Non navendo scorso a parlamento fin hora co messer Zane Zago, la volio pregar che vadi osservado con oservanza di tempo: dal presamento che facio per quella cusi’ fatta gabbella che sopra tal posesione sono, qual è che per altri partiti che ala gornata viene più mi la fa conoser per gravissima carga et al preio che leii a proferito parmi che tal contraente si averà a stracontentare cioè del ducati 681 dil campo et potendo mi pareria a restar con magor satisfacione a pagarli 78 dil campo, senza queli 30 dele monege qual con cossa eterna che quanto li ‘a offerto vostra signoria et la farà bene come ho detto a intraporli dilacione di tempo, che potria eser che fra tanto la posesione che li ‘a cegnato messer Fedrico suo carissimo compare li fusero qualche magor grasa et questo messer Zuane faria altro proposito. Et ve so dire che non li verà partiti cusi’ fatti vogosi come è el mio, ma cusi contentandosi sarà pur menor il male.

‘O da novo un altro partito ma di menor spesa sopra Mirano milia 4, un loco de 40 campi in circa con buone case da abitador de muro et altra fabrica stimata per 1500 ducati per patron nela qual cioè colherra dui prolli centi de spinade videgadi, lontan da l’aqua moli 3 de fito stra 3 e mezo paduani e un mastel de vin colado con le onoranze medeme aceto il canevo et le lire 9 che dite che si paga a questo Zago e in poliza senza le fabriche dimanda ducati 70 et con le fabriche ducati 90 dal campo, le qual fabriche son afitade con li brolli de ducati 40. Et è per qual che fin ora mi referise è compredamente a questa quanto io so le scrivo perché da lei oltra lo agiuto ne aspetto consilio, hora per aver da li padri de San Bastiano za 4 gorni ragonato volendomi per bontà lori darmi qualche agiuto uno di essi ‘a schrito ad un suo fratel apreso il zero che li volia dar regualio de detta posesion de questi Zagi e la resposta li l’avrò et forse a quel che cusi se ragiona potria esere che li campi za deti 30 fuse deseparati da le ragon de questi Zagi, il che lei facendone a questi moto forse potrà venir in cognizione che cosa
sono se de elli si potesse afitar che il patron non navese a sentir quel gravame et verà una tempesta portàr via a tempo che potria valer il pan e vin asaii mi portàr il fitto de un ano, inoltra che ve farà senpre sopra due decime a l’ano et l’a contto over susidio che di là si paga et questo tuto sia dito perché parmi che mi abbi a render sicuro che niuno me la tollia a la sua bona offerta per qual io la laudo e con fine et zenza con il fratel insieme de tuto corre la salutiamo.

De Venecia, li 6 zener il 1578
Signor patron servitor suo, Paulo Caliar, pitore

To the Most Magnificent and always healthy Lord, the magnificent Signor Marcatonio Gandino in the strada dal Duomo in Treviso

My Most Magnificent Lord

Considering that I still have not had the chance to talk with Sig. Zane Zago yet, I would like to ask you to time this carefully: from the evaluation that I make of that specific tax that is on the property, I know it to be a very onerous charge when compared with that of other offers that daily yield more, and at the price that you told me it seems to me the other party will have to be more than happy, then, of the total price of 681 ducats dil campo and if I could it would seem that I would feel more satisfied to pay him 78 dil campo without those thirty of the sisters’ [nuns] that your majesty offered them in perpetuity and you should as I said before allow some time so that in the meantime it might happen that the property that your dearest friend messere Fedrico has assigned to him there could turn out to be more productive and this messere Zuane might make a different decision. And I can tell you that he will not see offers as desirable as mine, but contenting himself this way it will still be the less bad option.

I also have another property but less expensive 4 milia above Mirano, a place of about 40 campi with good houses for people used to living in stone and other construction estimated at 1,500 ducats per patron in which, that is, there were two extensions delineated by vines, three moli away from the water, it gives a rent of more than three and a half padovani and a mastello of refined wine with the same honors of vinegar il canevo. And the nine lire that are paid to this Zago and in guaranty without the buildings, he asks for the field seventy ducats and with the buildings ninety ducats, these buildings are rented with the extensions for forty

1Also on the outside of the letter near the top, upside down and written in pen in a nineteenth-century hand: “Purch.[ase]d at Puttick’s [Puttick and Simpson in Picadilly] 13 May 1857”: Lot 575 (Coll.[ection] Donnadieu).

2Per patron in this context designates a casa padronale, that is, a habitation suitable for a master or one of his fiduciaries, as opposed to the type of house reserved for workers or caretakers.

3Unit of measure based on the wooden box of the grape harvest.

4Though this may refer to a regional variety of vinegar, canevo in Venetian usually means canapa, or hemp: Patriarchi, 57.
ducats. Considering what I’ve been told, and I know only what I’ve been told, I write to you because I need advice as well as help. Four days have passed now since I spoke with the friars of San Sebastiano who for their goodness wanted to give me help. One of them has written to one of his brothers, because he knows that someone wants to donate the said possession of these Zagi, and I will have the answer. And maybe for what we can anticipate it could be that the aforementioned thirty campi [of the sisters] were separated from the property of these Zagi. If you approach him about this whole possibility maybe you could find out what the opportunities are to rent it, so that the owner would not have to bear the burden, and if a storm were to happen and time be lost that could equal much bread and wine, still the field would provide me the rent of a year, and also over two decime a year and a deposit or subsidy that must be paid on the property; and all this must be said because I think I must make sure that no one takes it from me at your good offering price, for which I praise you forever, together with the brother with all our heart we say goodbye.

From Venice the 6 of January 1578

My good Sir, your servant, Paulo Caliar, painter

---


Three days have passed since the preceding letter, and Paolo remains eager to receive Gandino’s advice and assistance concerning possible land investments. After describing an attractive parcel near Treviso that is encumbered by debt, Veronese urges Gandino to try to close the deal with Sig. Zago. The letter ends with Veronese looking forward to Gandino’s visit to Venice.

[On the outside of the letter]

Al Molto Magnifico et suo S.re il Magnifico S.e Marcantonio Gandin in strada dal Domo a Treviso

[Inside the letter]

Molto magnifico signor mio

Esendomi hora comparso un partito che al dì passati qui fu praticato de una possesione che è del magnifico messer Piero Morosini la qual a Amonestir et è bela e buona conosuta talle per un mio amorrevel gentilomo a lei confinatte a qual a in sé tal negocio et cerca hogni mio avantazzo, queste tal terre son asente r[c]all e personal, non asente a colta, ma imbotadura con altre asencionche dicono asaii

5A decima equals one-tenth of the harvest.

6For the use of the sussidio triennale as a mechanism for church revenue, see Pezzolo, 52–54.

7While many official Venetian documents continued to adopt 1 March as the moment when the new year began, Veronese’s discussion of the Bollani family in his 6 February 1578 and 20 March 1578 letters suggest that he, like others from the Veneto, adopted the modern Julian-Gregorian calendar for private correspondence.
et son lavorate per colloni valent’omeni et comodo per la fura che dano; za fa
gorni io ne erra de ciò molto gravido et inchlinato e l’avera tollta.

Questo magnifico tirò indriò con dire che tal tratto erra per pagar debbita de
dotte con una sua sorella, la qual insieme lorri si era d’accordo, nè la voleva più vendere et questa sono un poco più lontano qual io stimo assai; et perciò torei con tuto il disavanzato che li vego piutosto quella dil Zagho, ma però non intenderia de pasar il segno dil che per sua bontà lei mi a consiliato et questo
dicho in risposta dela sua pollizza e a lei partendossi per esere di qua per le molte faticce fatte per me averia desiderio le corese al sano bon fine et neli termeni deli ducati 68 dil campo se no l’a datto altra parola de pasar come per le mie [h]ò risposto alle sue et per la partita di là le spetto come sempre mio signor gratamente si per goderla come anco che mi darà certezza come mi [h]ò da governar con una ho [sic] l’altra, perché alli molti partiti che mi è venuti a l’animo mio non no auto il meli di questo qual sarò tenuto a venirne a fine se questo messer Zuane Zago starà nela sua opinione et forse non li venirà più tal partito con che a la sua infinita amorevoleza insieme se li recomanderà besandoli con reverencia le mani.

De Venecia, lì 9 zener il .78 Suo servitor
Paulo Caliar, pitor

To the most magnificent, Your Lordship, the magnificent Signor Marcantonio Gandin in Strada dal Duomo in Treviso

My Most Magnificent Lord

Having now presented itself to me a parcel here that in the past was part of a possession that is of the magnificent messere Piero Morosini that is in Amonestir [near Treviso] and it is beautiful and good, known as such by a beloved friend of mine who has a business contiguous with it, and searches for any advantageous opportunity for me. These lands are unencumbered by any real or personal claims, except for harvest, but [the harvest] is subject to levies that are said to be many. And they [the lands] are attended by peasants — good men and the fields are useful for the forage/pasture they give; it’s been some time that I have been very interested in that land and inclined and I would have bought it. This magnificent [messere Piero Morosini] stepped back saying that that tract was meant to pay debts related to the dowry of one of his sisters, who had an agreement with him and he did not want to sell it anymore and these [fields] that I really value are a little farther away; and for this reason I would rather buy those of Zagho with all the disadvantages that I see, but my intention is not to exceed the price limit of that [of Zago] which in your goodness you recommended, and I say this in response to your secured price; and as you are departing [for here] I would wish, considering

---

8Also on the outside of the letter near the top, upside down and written in pen: “Lot. 246.” Out of respect for the colloquial register the author uses, I have included English punctuation only sparingly, though this admittedly generates longer, more convoluted passages.
the many efforts made for me, that you race to a healthy conclusion. And in the terms of 68 ducats del campo, if you have not promised something more than my response to your [earlier words] and concerning your departure from there, I happily wait for you as usual, my lord, both to enjoy your company and also because you will give me certainties about how to handle the one or the other deal, because among various offers that have come to me I have not had any better than this of which I will have to conclude if this messere Zuane Zago will agree about this. And perhaps he will understand that this is an opportunity that will not come again, and will accept it given your infinite kindness and also if you recommend it. Kissing with reverence your hands.

From Venice the 9 of January 1578 Your servant
Paulo Caliar, painter

Letter 3. I.D. #92–A1, Accession # 910142, Getty Research Library, Los Angeles.
This letter mentions a recent visit from Gandino and that the nobleman will again visit Veronese by Ash Wednesday. A messere Domenida, and perhaps also Gandino, have sent Veronese goods, perhaps perishables for feasting, and the artist frets that he may not be able to dispose of all of them before the asceticism of Lent begins. Veronese has hosted Crocachieri Friars, the Dominican inquisitor general, and a member of the Barbaro family, most likely Francesco Barbaro, who is referenced in letter 7.

[On the outside of the letter]
Al molto magnifico suo signore
sempre opss.mo, il Sig. Marcantonio
Gandini, apreso il Domo, a Treviso

[Inside the letter]
Mag.[nifi]co S.[igno]r mio sempre opss.mo [osservantissimo]
Dopo la sua partitta mi soprag[i]onsi a far disnar a due man de fratti, prima lo inquisitore et frati chrosachieri per qualli Ms. domenida per diverse vie mi manda robba che se non trovo modo mior di smaltirla io vo a pericolo de tenervi conpagnia con alongarmi il carneval per otto giorni. Nè per questo vollio dir che avitte fatto malle perché essendo in tutto in summa perfecione a me tuto è bene et tuto è buono. Ma dico ben questo per non neser finnora conparso cosa niuna dala band[a] del bollani che io non nesento sodisfattione che pilla alcun discorzo per veder tal posezione, et a questa ancora par che l’animo me dia che no si ava da far niente che mi resti et che non fuse prontiss.mo con tuto il poter mio il i faria volentieri, ma questa tardeza mi fa pensar malle et che Dio non il volla.
Il clarissimo Barbaro fu l’altr’ ieri qui et vi dimanda. Il rimanente di carneval chredo che si farà a converto con speranza a vedervi di qua con buon tempo per il primo di quaresima dopoi le ceneri benedette, e netto de tutti li v.[ost]ri superflu, con sanità et come qui tutti nui per Dio siamo alli v.[ost]ri piaceri rinovano la salutatione et a Ms. Fedrico dopoij fatola a mon. s.re [Monsignore].
Di Vene.[z]ia li 6 1578 de fevrer
S.[ervit]or suo sempre
Pauolo Caliar pitore
Aringraziando del suo presente

To the very magnificent and always observant lord, il Signor Marcantonio Gandini, near the Duomo in Treviso
My magnificent and always observant Signor

After your departure I happened to invite to dine together some friars, firstly the inquisitor and the Crociferi Friars, by whom messere Domenida in various ways sends me stuff that if I do not find a better way to give this material away, I am putting at risk keeping you company by extending Carnival for eight days. I am not saying that you have done wrongly, because everything being perfectly in order, for me it is all good and fine. But I say this because up till now nothing has come from the Bollani, who give me no satisfaction and kill all talk of seeing the property, and it seems to me that nothing will be done of it that is up to me and with all my effort and willingness, I would do it if I could, but this delay makes me think ill and that God does not want it [to happen].

Most illustrious Barbaro was here the day before yesterday and asked about you. What is left of Carnival I believe will be spent renewed with the hope of seeing you here in good time by the first day of Lent after the blessed ashes [Ash Wednesday], when one is cleansed of all superfluous things, with good health and, as all of us are, by God’s grace. At your pleasure, after greeting Monsignore renew my greetings also to messere Federico.

From Venice, the 6th 1578 of February.
At your service always,
Pauolo Caliar painter
giving thanks for your presence

In this letter Veronese describes several possible land acquisitions, some of which are priced at considerable sums: 7,200 and 7,000 ducats. Veronese also says that he is sending the altarpiece to the Friars of the Magdalene (to the Chiesa di Santa Maria Maddalena, Treviso) by means of using Gandino’s boat, but that now the Friars are considering sending horses and workmen to transport it by land. Veronese proposes to return the portraits, one of which is of Gandino, either by removing each from its

9These negotiations with the Bollani family appear to have been abandoned in Paolo’s letter of 20 March.
10Il clarissimo Barbaro appears to be Francesco Barbaro (1546–1616), son of Marcantonio Barbaro, whose full name appears in Veronese’s letter of 4 August.
stretcher (and presumably rolling each one up) for transport by horse-drawn cart, or, if the friars decide to use the boat, sending them in their crate.

[On the outside of the letter]
Al Molto Mag.[nifi]co et Sempre S.[ignor]e mio
il Sig. Marcantonio Gandin
A treviso

[Inside the letter]
Magnifico signor patron mio
Hazzò che ‘o conosuto il magnifico Bollani e con il suo parente mi faci più che sicuro da non venir mai a partito de conclulsion alcuna et se più presto io lo avese veduto più presto me ne averia avertito perché prima che orra l’o conosuto per omo talle che [move] ne risolve mai nula et io volio pensar ad altro né più parlarle eran saltato ali 7200 et pagava ogni sorte de spesa che ve intrasero et il che pareva che l’assentise po mi ‘a fato far un altro parlare il [che] me l’’a fato conoser. di là vi è una vedoa che ‘a una possesion de campi 40 a Piombin, la qual potria eser per me questa è una mad.[am]a Avogara la qual volio chreder cusi ‘a dato le schriture de tal acquisti a procurator messer Francesco Priolli za uno ano e più, né ancora ‘a fato cosa alcuna, questa mad.[am]a la voria venderla mellow che non è venduta et è ala condecio che è il signor Nicollò Spineda.

Ne ‘o un’altra tra Mestre et Margera et una a Monzelese che l’una et l’altra son sulì 7000 ducati et chredo che averà la sorte che ‘o auto in queste. Questa Avogara vedoa et [sopra]detti [campi]. se le fase modo a far che si potese incaminar tal negocio mi sarà favore et se non no che talla abbia fato altra deliberacion faremo con le nostre

io ‘o fatto et detto perché l’ancona de[i] frati da la Madalena venga in barca e lori mi aveva promeso qui a mandar la sua barca per far mesenar et levarla. Hora si tramutta et va a l’amano spesa et si resolve a mandar dui suii lavorator con cavalli di modo che a questo fatto vi ricavo li retrati v.[ost]ri senza il suo telar se non pilia nova resolucione e questa sarà perché dili V.[ostri] Si.[gnori] insieme colla cassa sua sia sallutato et messer Fedrico insieme tutti pe Dio gracia chiamo bene et ali vostri servicii.

De Venecia, lì` 20 marzo 1578
De vostra signor servitor Paulo Caliar pitor
To the Most Magnificent and Always my lord

il Signor Marcantonio Gandin
at Treviso

Magnificent Signor patron mio
For what I have known of this magnificent Bollani and his relative, I am more convinced that I shall not conclude any deal ever with him and his relative, and had I seen him earlier I would have realized this earlier, because by now I have known him to be someone who, having started, never finishes anything, and I want to think about other things and speak no more to him. They were jumping
up the price to 7,200 and making me pay every sort of fee that could be encountered and it seemed like he was agreeing and afterwards he forced me to agree to different terms which made me know [the true] him. On the other side, there is a widow who has a possession [of land] of 40 campi in Piombino [Dese] that could work for me and she is a Madam Avogara in whom I want to believe. To that end she has given the papers of that purchase to Procurator Signor Francesco Priolli already one year ago or more, but nothing has been done. This lady [widow Avogara] would like to sell it [the possession] better than it sold, that is, at the condition that Signor Nicollò Spineda proposed. I have another [possession] between Mestre and Marghera, and one at Monzelese that both are 7,000 ducats and I believe that it will happen the same way with Avogara’s as in these two properties. If there were a way this deal could be made it would be good for me and otherwise in the case in which this Madam made a different decision we would make do with what we have. I have made and arranged that the altarpiece of the Brothers of the Magdalene comes by your boat and they promised to send it here to dry dock it. Now they have opted for less expense, and they decide to send two of their workers with horses so that in this way I could get to you your portraits without the stretchers, unless they make a new decision and that would be in order to give the portraits to your majesties together with their crate. Extend my greetings also to messere Federico and everyone, I ask by the grace of God and remain at your service. From Venice the 20 March 1578. From your devoted servant Paulo Caliar painter

Letter 5. Whereabouts unknown, the letter was photographed and appeared in Charles Geigy-Hagenbach, *Receuil de Facsimilés d’autographes de personages célèbres*, Basel, 1925. This letter begins by confirming that Gandino’s seventeen denari have been delivered to a Messere Ghirardo, presumably for services related to the land deals discussed later in the

11Piombino Dese is a small town southwest of Treviso and southeast of Castelfranco.  
12It appears that Ms. Avogara sold the property more than a year earlier to a Sig. Nicollò Spineda, but on conditions that still had not been met, and so Veronese senses that now she might back out of that deal if another offer proved more profitable. Veronese seems keen to know what the previous price and terms were, even mentioning the issue again in letter 5.  
13Monselice, a town southwest of Padua.  
14The original senza il suo telar may be a variant of senza il suo telaio, where the latter term can mean frame or stretcher. Telaio itself derives from the medieval Latin telarium, and Grassi and Pepe, 2:594, have noted fifteenth- and sixteenth-century variants such as telaro and tellaretto. In this sentence, Paolo’s switch from the plural retrati to the singular phrases senza il suo telar and colla cassa sua, though not grammatically strong, is consistent with passages in other letters in which plural subjects are attended by singular possessives.
letter. Besides demonstrating Veronese’s shrewdness in weighing various paths of land speculation, the letter also suggests he is comparing the financing terms from a previously mentioned source with those offered by the monte di pietà.  

Veronese plans a visit to Gandino in Treviso at Easter.

My Most Magnificent Lord

Already it was given as per promissory note from your denari seventeen to messere Ghirardo and rightly for you he wishes to write up for me a receipt and he says that, it being possible to have one of the two that declare it of Pionbin, I would choose the one of your magnificent comadre Avogara, and I receive very reliable information on that one, and when such lady lets us understand what was already offered, we can quickly resolve it; I understand that there is a bit of a casa per

---

15 The monte di pietà existed on a communal basis and was an institution of Christian charitable loans and pawn brokerage originally intended to combat usury. An extensive study of the importance of the monte di pietà (albeit in Tuscany) is offered by Menning.

16 See the Sig. Nicollò Spineda reference in letter 4.
patron in her possession as I have had it from someone from Castelfranco about
two years ago, who if I remember correctly gave it at forty-five “stara et vin
quarto botte,” and they asked fifty-five ducats dil campo yet not by the owner
who was a messere Giacomo Marda, whether this was then sold for sixty-one ducats,
I do not know, but I tell you that not for one nor two ducats more dil campo will
I budge when this lady will want to free it up, and when as soon as possible I have
resolved these deals, I will go see two possessions that were of messere Andrea
Loredan at Bessica\footnote{Bessica is a small town northwest of Castelfranco and southeast of Bassano del Grappa.} who wants to sell them, which they say gives an income of
around five percent and it is a good sale, but it is so far that it does not inspire me
a bit.

Considering what I understand the monte di pietà will give me, thus far I do not
give [the monte di pietà] an answer because I would wait for that loan that at other
times I mentioned instead when making the deal on one of the two aforementioned
properties. I will be with you on Easter day to solve this with your lordship, and it
seems to me for lack of time that it is good to tell you that this was in my own soul,
and with this saluting you in the name of one your servants, may messere Fedrico be
told that he needs to intervene in the dealings with this woman, nor with other
[interventions] will I bother you only I pray to blessed God for the health of your
house and happy travels signors.
From Venice 28 March 1578 your servant,
Paulo Caliar painter
[Inside the letter]

Molto Mag,[nifi]co Signor gentillo
Io agonisi tardatto ove non poteva star piú et le femine de casa era tutta conquesatte dubitando che non fuse intervenu' malla novella ma se non compariva a persuasion de loro mio fratel veniva hozi a Treviso. Aspeto per V.[ostra] S.[ignoria] la nua resolucionne dal S.[ignore] Ansuilla Prola(?) et forse avendo oppinion de esegir quel tanto che si orra è in camino forse a lui li meteria conto a levar tal danari de qui con il mezo qui de suo fratel perché manda hogni g[i]orno cavalli in su et in giù. Forse lor ne trará mazor satisfacione cui che a levarlli per camere fiscale et quanto ala chrída sopra queli da 40 li nostri signori ‘a sentitto nei Popolli grand mormorio la parte sopra sederà et forse no peserà et io non cascarò a dano quan vadi piú che de ducati 50 in sesanta; ma le ttalia con perdita de dui soldi- per una.

La mia moneta è ormai mesi 9 che non la ho veduta né toca et tal malle è de manco tempo venuto. Li avio il suo ritratto et di messer Fedrico insieme lo saii che mio fratel li facese sula carta che tien in mane una busolla con li venti segnatta et non la fatta V.[ost]ra signoria le piacera a deli che non no autto apena tempo a poterli meter a la toallie che con l’inchiostro la potra far lui o altro comme li pare ma che prima le regi sopra una corza di naranza ació che melio posa far tener lo inchiostro come ancor farà lei nel schriver sopra il breve ancor li avio il suo libro, con offrirmeli per sempre suo servitore insieme il fratel e la Sovrö a la signora sua consorte.

Di Venecia in San Bastiano, li 7 aprille 1578
Paullo Caliar S.[ervito]re

To the Most Magnificent and always
signor suo Signor Marcantonio
Gandin in Treviso with a
book enclosed to
Treviso immediately

Most Magnificent and Kind Signor
I lingered as long as I could [at Treviso] and the women at home were all agitated fearing some bad news, but if I had not shown up to calm them, my brother would have come to Treviso today [to find me]. I await to know through you the new decision of Signor Ansuilla Prola [?],18 and perhaps having the intention of doing that which is now under way, maybe for him it will be more convenient to take that money from here [to invest elsewhere] through the use of his brother, because he sends horses back and forth every day. Maybe they would get more satisfaction this way than withdrawing the money through the camere fiscale19 and

18 The penmanship is unclear as to the surname.
19 Camere fiscale were institutions placed in the Venetian territories to pay stipends and collect taxes locally. The implication seems to be that collecting their funds from Venice is better than withdrawing a transfer through the local camera fiscale.
as regards the tax above those of forty our Lords having heard there are some
rumors brewing among the people, the party above is backing out and maybe it
will not be approved and I would not incur damage if I have more than fifty
ducats in sixty: but I would have them with a loss of two soldi for [each] one.20 My
money I have not seen or touched for nine months already and the time has come.
I send you your portrait together with messere Federico’s. I know that my brother
was to make on the paper he [Federico] holds in his hand a compass showing the
winds and he has not done it, Your Lordship will be pleased to tell him [Federico]
that I hardly had time to paint the tablecloths around him. He could do it [add
the compass design] himself, or have someone else do it, as he likes, in ink, but
before doing it one should rub it with an orange peel so that the ink can penetrate
better, as one will also do in writing the brief [inscription] on it. I also send along
your book, and remain forever your servant together with my brother and my
goddaughter [in service to] your wife.
From Venice, in San Sebastiano, 7 April 1578
Paullo Caliar servant

Little is known about most of Gandino’s and Paolo’s mutual acquaintances referred to in
this letter, but Francesco Barbaro, son of Marcantonio of Maser, is also likely the
nobleman mentioned in letter 3 and Federico Vendramin may be the forty-three-year-
old son of Andrea (1514–47), whose family in the 1570s and 1580s was still
commissioning artworks in Chiesa Santa Maria dei Servi and elsewhere, an
identification discussed above. Veronese mentions giving a gift (ricordo) to Francesco
Barbaro so that the latter might help him secure patronage from the Vendramins, and at
the end of the letter he reminds Gandino to “Please give Sig. Federico Vendramin our
best regards.” Here is a rare glimpse of the artist attempting to use his network of patrons
to reach out to a new client.

20Veronese’s meaning is unclear in this passage, but perhaps he is speaking of a two soldi
loss on each ducat. In terms of conversion at this time, one ducato di conto was generally
equal to 124 soldi: Pezzolo, 322.
fa non ne verra. Io diede al Magnifico Ms. Fran.[ces]co Barbaro lo ricordo che V.
[ost]ra S[ignor]a mi la sa per far il servizio con quegli Vendramini et mi promise
affari co[n] tute le sue clausolle. Et ancora o datto al librar un mandato soto
schrito da due deli s.[ignoi]ri sopra le intrade et fatto co[n] gran fatica per che li
avogadori li a tolto autorità che non ne puo piu fare ne co[n] altro. A V[ost]ra
La salutarà Ms. Fedrico Vendramino a no[st]ro nome.
Paulo Caliari pintor.

To the Most Magnificent Marcantonio Gandino
at Treviso near the Duomo
Most excellent godfather
Shortly after your departure I received replies from the Scroven[?]21 of
Castelfranco, of which I forward one, keeping the other with me so as not to
inconvenience you with sending it back because it deals with some accounts between
Barbarella and me; and he writes that both he and the priest’s brother staying with
him are always glad to oblige me. Messere Mutio who writes the letter does not
mention anything having happened to him so that the story you were told about
cannot be true. I gave the most excellent messere Francesco Barbaro the remembrance
you know of so that he would be of service to me with the Vendramins, and he
promised me business and all that goes with it. Furthermore, I gave the notary
a mandate undersigned by two of the abovementioned gentlemen regarding the
income and done with great difficulty for he has been deprived of authority by the
attorneys and he would not be allowed to do them any longer. I send you my
greetings and put myself in your hands.
From Venice the 4th of August 1578. Your servant.
Please give Sig. Federico Vendramin our best regards.
Paulo Caliari painter

21The penmanship does not make the surname clear.
Bibliography

Archival Sources

Archivio di Stato — Treviso (ASTv): Estimi, b. 224, lettera “M”.
Archivio di Stato — Venezia (ASV): Avogaria di Comun, Matrimoni, contratti lib. 12, no. 244.
ASV: Libro d’oro, Nascite II, b. 283.
ASV: Notarile testimento, Atti Crivelli, b. 219, no. 238.
ASV: Sant’Uffizio, b. 153, “Elenco degli inquisitori domenicani, 1560–1755.”
Biblioteca Comunale di Treviso (BCT): ms. fam. tarv. gen. 1341, Nicoló Mauro, Genealogie trevigiane — Cronica.
BCT: ms. 1614, Dichiarazioni, c. 54.

Printed Sources

———. Opuscoli morali di Plutarco Cheronese, filosofo, & historico notabilissimo. Venice, 1598.
Gandino, Marcantonio, and Ottavio Fabri. L’uso del squadra mobile. Venice, 1615.


Spear, Richard, and Philip Sohm. *Painting for Profit: The Economic Lives of


