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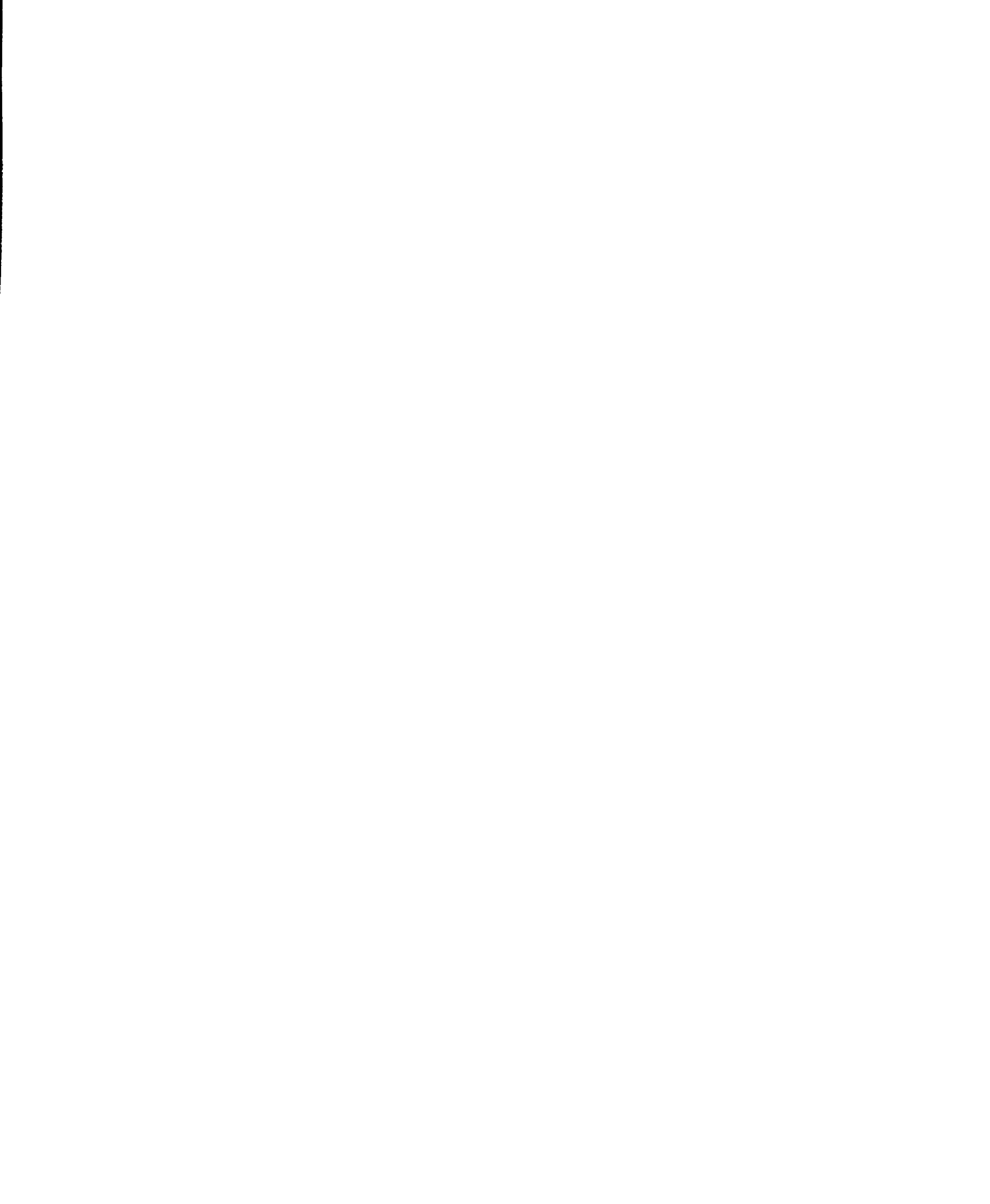
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***Pietro Edwards and the Restoration of the Public Pictures of Venice 1778-1819 :
Necessity Introduced These Arts***

By

Elizabeth Jane Darrow

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Washington

2000

Program Authorized To Offer Degree : Division of Art History

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Joanne Snow-Smith

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Susan Casteras

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Date: May 5, 2000

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Abstract

Pietro Edwards and the Restoration of the Public Pictures of Venice 1778-1819:
Necessity Introduced these Arts

Elizabeth Jane Darrow

Chairperson of the Supervisory Committee:
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Division of Art History

Pietro Edwards (1744-1821) served as the Director of the Restoration of the Public Pictures of Venice and dedicated his life to the preservation of Venetian art. His visionary spirit and meticulous bureaucratic administration resulted in revolutionary developments in art conservation. The situation in Venice during these years was unique in restoration history because the city's location demanded an early awareness about the destructive effects of a maritime climate on art. The government also expected written reports and management of its art which was also unique in conservation history. While acting as a restorer and inspector through years of technical and theoretical study, Edwards devised a unified method of theory and practice that included a respect for the artist's original intention. He promoted professional standards including public disclosure of treatments, environmental solutions to problems, reversibility principles in the use of materials, and he established the first conservation laboratory in Europe. He invented the team approach to conservation projects that today is still operative in Italy and he proposed the very first plan in Europe (and perhaps anywhere) to create a school to train professional restorers.

Edwards' impact was felt on the cultural life of Venice for over forty years. In 1797 the Republic of Venice fell to Napoleon, who ordered the appropriation of many famous works of art from the city and Edwards was appointed to manage their removal and shipment to France. He continued his work for the French Regno Italico (1807-1814) and later governments of Austria (1814-19). He was instrumental in the creation of the Brera museum in Milan, selected the first collections to establish the Galleria dell' Accademia in Venice and wrote its first catalogue. Throughout his long life he advocated for increased respect for the restorer and promoted scientific research as the necessary foundation for restoration practice. Pietro Edwards' written record is unprecedented in art conservation history and it frames the philosophical debate that continues today about the proper role of the restorer in maintaining the aesthetic aspect of a work of art.

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Dedication

*“Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
Mi trovai per una selva oscura
Chè la diritta via era smarrita
Ahi quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura
Esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte
Che nel pensier rinova la paura!”*
To Jim, who found me

Introduction

The figure of the restorer has been neglected as a subject for study in the history of art. Typically, these obscure individuals appear in anecdotal information or are buried in the footnotes of the provenance to a famous work. With this dissertation anonymity no longer extends to Pietro Edwards (1744-1821), who served as the Director of the Restoration of the Public Pictures of the Republic of Venice in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Among his many achievements and innovations were his theoretical and practical approaches to the restoration of the art, many of which are remarkably similar to the current practices and standards of professional conservators. A meticulous administrator, he wrote reports and commentaries as part of state-sponsored restoration activities.

This study utilizes many of these rich historical materials painstakingly gleaned by more than three years of my research from hundreds of Edwards' original papers. This investigation included documents found in the Seminario Patriarcale of Venice, the Archivio di Stato di Venezia, the Libreria Marciana, and the archives of the Museo Correr; and all contribute new and important scholarship in the history of conservation of art. My synthesis reveals that conservation history need no longer be presented in a fragmentary way, but can provide historical, technical, and critical contexts to reinvigorate our understanding of the past.

This dissertation is unique because for the first time it will make Pietro Edwards' life and work available to English-speaking students of art history and conservation through the translation of a key selection of many of his papers, reports, letters,

catalogues, contracts, and invoices (Appendix #4). I also firmly place Edwards in the context of Venetian history and link his complex life and activities together in a narrative that reveals his character and influence, a comprehensive approach that is unprecedented. This perspective now makes it possible to look behind the scenes at the restorer's hidden world, traditionally ruled by the private fraternal practices of the artist's workshop. However, as the concept emerged that the work of art existed both as an historical and an aesthetic document, the restorer began to serve the new historical awareness. This transition led inevitably to the evolution of the profession itself under Edwards' guidance and vision.

Pietro Edwards' impact was extraordinary in the craft and political history of Venice because he did not confine himself merely to the problems of the workshop, but was actively involved in the larger issues of conservation. He recognized the ramifications of the flawed restoration policy of the Republic and saw his career as an opportunity to change the entrenched attitudes held by those in power. Pietro Edwards considered restoration of the Venetian artistic heritage an absolute necessity.¹ He resolutely fought against the forces of nature, time, and man, but understood in a profound and even poetic way that imminent ruin always threatened, particularly in Venice with its maritime climate. He was dedicated to the art itself, and like a concerned parent, he worried about its future. He was convinced that the security he sought for the art could be achieved only if the status of the restorer were elevated and made separate from that of the artist. He wanted

¹ Mary Merrifield, *Medieval and Renaissance Treatises on the Arts of Painting: Volumes I & II*, New York: Dover Books, Inc., Reprint 1999 of 1847 edition, p. 853, Pietro Edwards' son, Giovanni O'Kelly wrote that his father believed, "Necessity introduced the arts, and the art of restoring the works of the

to create an elite association whose sole responsibility was to preserve the art and consequently to protect the present and future cultural and economic interests of the Republic. These goals developed after he denounced the corrupt restoration practices of the powerful Collegio dei Pittore in his public exposé of that organization.

Crucial to the realization of this vision was the development of a theory behind the practice. Edwards imitated centuries of artistic aspirants from Leonardo to Rubens who sought to institutionalize their higher artistic and philosophical concerns within the functions of an Academy. If higher status was difficult for artists to achieve, it was almost impossible for the restorer, who served as a shadow to the artist. On the one hand, the restorer was warned to resist subjective interpretation, while on the other, he was encouraged to enter into the spirit of the long dead artist. The restorer's intentions and mandate remained confused and variable, depending on the work, the client, or the restorer's skill and education.

Italian scholars have always respectfully acknowledged Edwards in the history of Venice; some of their contributions are briefly described here. All have provided a perspective that has augmented this research. The first in this century was Annibale Alberti, who in his article "Pietro Edwards e le Opere d'Arte Tolte da Napoleone a Venezia"(1926) portrayed Pietro Edwards as a sensitive functionary trapped by his responsibilities. Loredana Olivato in "Provvedimenti della Repubblica Veneta per la Salvaguardia del Patrimonio Pittorico nei Secoli XVII e XVIII"(1974) emphasized the strategies of the Venetian Senate to preserve their public art from 1727 followed by

pencil (brush) from decay to which they were liable from age could not arise unless the pictures grew old

Edwards' ascendancy as the Inspector and Director in 1778. Alessandro Conti's *Storia del Restauro della Conservazione delle Opere d' Arte* (1988) placed Edwards in a broader survey of European conservation history. Michelangelo Cagianò de Azevedo demonstrated a modern awareness of Edwards' contribution as a restorer in "Provvidenze del Senato Veneziano per le Opere d' Arte" (1950).

One serious problem that emerges for a researcher in the history of art conservation before the photographic era is that most works have been successively restored, thus erasing or altering traces of previous restorers and the visual evidence or proof of past restoration. Gloria Tranquilli provided a rare glimpse of the few paintings that still contain some of Edwards' interventions in "Aspetti Tecnici dell'Attività di Pietro Edwards: Metodologia di Intervento e Materiali Utilizzati per il Restauro dei Dipinti su Tela" (1996). The first transcription from Edwards' handwritten script into a printed format is found in *Pietro Edwards: The Piano Pratico per la Generale Custodia delle Pubbliche Pitture e Instituzione di una Formale Pubblica Scuola* (1994) by Tranquilli and Giuseppe Basile. The authors include a register of other documents and a chronology of major events in Edwards' life and career.

The effect of restoration on the interpretation of a work of art remains a subject for debate. If authenticity is a necessary condition of aesthetic and economic worth, does restoration compromise the traditional art historical canon? Is the "objective" repair of a work possible? The presumptions of past glory and genius or a Romantic vision of decline can exert a definitive force and "selectively deform the reality the (historians) claim to

and lost their beauty..."

articulate."² Edwards' passion coincided with the decline of the Republic as an economic and cultural leader begun in the sixteenth century when the city "...displayed the maturity of charm which presaged an approaching decline...her vital essence was spread beyond her borders in a species of autumnal glory...."³ Pietro Edwards tried to arrest this decadence by bringing back to life the works of art that contributed to Venice's historic fame.

While every viewer brings a new perspective to a work of art, a restorer, by adding new materials to older fragments, controls this vision in various ways. Restoration imposes conditions, reveals particular ideas of beauty, and is a reflection of taste and aesthetic judgment. The restorer can copy a lost image that exists only in personal memory and reinterpret that invisible model.⁴ Edwards proclaimed that restorers must respect an artist's original intent; yet this philosophy was difficult to implement when discovery of authorial intention remained dependent on the degree of damages and on the critical reputation of the work. No matter how good their intentions, restorers are forced to perceive the past only through the lens of the present, their own cultural milieu. For as Benedetto Croce declared in 1921, "every true history is a contemporary history."⁵ These are some of the issues that this examination of Pietro Edwards will consider.

Chapter One will reconstruct the political context for restoration practice in Venice when Pietro Edwards appeared. The Government struggled for years to improve the long history of confusion, corruption, and ineptitude in the official policies of restoration in

² James Grubb, "When Myths Lose Power: Four Decades of Venetian Historiography," *Journal of Modern History* Vol. 58 #1, Chicago:1986, p.45.

³ P.G. Molmenti, *Venice: Its Individual Growth from the Earliest Beginnings to the Fall of the Republic*, Translated by Horatio Brown, London: John Murray, 1908, p.59.

⁴ Seymour Howard, *Antiquity Restored: Essays in the Afterlife of the Antique*, Vienna: IRSA, 1990, pp.17.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 48.

Venice. These scandals finally resulted in an investigation and report written by Edwards called *Privata Informazione preliminare al Progetto del Ristauro generale di tutte le Pitture di pubblica Ragione* (June 6, 1777). His discriminating intelligence and his competence won him the appointment by the Senate on September 3, 1778 as “Ispettore al generale restauro delle pubbliche pitture” to officially take charge and reform the process of restoring the Public Pictures of the Republic. The efforts of past restorers, who were often described in the record as the least talented of the artists working in the city, had focused on the most famous works in Venetian art. However, their results were often disgraceful, if not ruinous, to these works. Edwards intended to change this failed policy and dedicated himself to the preservation those works of art from the Venetian Renaissance considered essential to the artistic history and reputation of the city.

His early essay *Relazioni sul restauro di antiche pitturre* (c.1771) summarized his deep commitment to the preservation of those works from what he called the “illustrious past.” He was preeminent on the cultural scene, elected as Secretary and President to the Collegio di Pittore in 1778-1783, and a member of the Academies of Venice, Bologna, Parma, and San Lucca in Rome. Because of this fame, he became a respected and articulate advocate for the preservation of the cultural heritage of Venice. He worked hard to convince the conservative governmental bodies who controlled policy and the budget, such as the Magistrati al Sal, that a restoration program grounded in ethical theory relying upon a trained group of restorers was desperately needed. Edwards’ team, comprised of restorers and an Inspector, came into being. This structure of practice and

oversight created by Pietro Edwards still functions today as a critical part of the official Italian bureaucracy of restoration.

The geography of the city of Venice was also among the parameters that affected the development of an institutionalized approach to the restoration of the art that was crucial to its civic myth-making. Weather, climate, and the maritime environment (Fig. 1) had always been recognized as culprits in the deterioration of Venetian art and architecture. Due to these persistent elements the Senate decrees from 1500 on to 1797 reaffirm a commitment to preserve the artistic heritage far earlier than any other European state. In one report alone, over 300 “suppliche” or petitions (Fig. 2) to restore the works by Paolo Veronese, Paolo Carletto Caliarì, Tiziano Vecelli, and Bonifacio Veronese date from 1726-1773. They are directed to the Magistrato al Sal and originate from the Collegio dei Pittore.⁶ This document shows that the works were repaired over and over, thus revealing their public importance, but also the corruption of the agencies involved. The high status of Venetian Renaissance and Baroque art then developing all over Europe gave the Republic still another incentive for the care and exhibition of these economic assets. However, although the Republic showed an intent to preserve the vast collections of public art, the systems and methods were still erratic and often resulted in more damage than repair.

Pietro Edwards’ highly organized approach to restoration, his unity of method that combined theory with practice, is explored in Chapters Two and Three in several primary manuscripts. These accounts reveal the difficult nature of restoration problems and the

rather amazing and prescient solutions found in eighteenth century Venice. His theory is articulated in explicit detail and with rhetorical flourishes in the *Dissertazione preliminare al piano di custodia da istituirsi per la possibile preservazione e per il miglior mantenimento della pubbliche pitture* (1785). The practice is outlined for almost any circumstance a restorer might face in the *Piano Pratico per la generale custodia delle pubbliche pitture* (1785) and Edwards' plan is convincing in its logical clarity. Much of what he introduced has been incorporated today in the tenets of responsible conservation.

Edwards also promoted scientific research: he was fully aware of developments in areas like chemistry and had an understanding of salts and gases and improved lining techniques. He incorporated environmental solutions and expressed an expectation of the inevitable evolution of technology, as seen in his demand that restorers use only reversible materials. He opened the first official laboratory for restoration in Europe in 1778 at the convent of SS Giovanni e Paolo, where his reputation was known by culture *cognoscenti* all over Europe from Goethe to the Tsars of Russia. His final dream was to establish a school for restorers, as outlined in his plan *Instituzione di una Formale Pubblica Scuola pel Ristauo delle Danneggiate Pitture* (c.1819). This was a revolutionary idea within the conservative context of Venetian craft tradition and, while never realized in his lifetime, was the first such plan ever proposed in Europe.

Pietro Edwards influenced the longevity of the critical reception of works of art acting as connoisseur and expert. As an advisor to some of the most important art collectors in Venetian society like Girolamo Manfrin, Edwards helped to create one of the

⁶ Pietro Edwards, S.P.V., MS 787.9-876.9, "*Spoglio delle Suppliche o riferite del Collegio de' Pittori*

greatest art collections in Venice, conferring value and ensuring that these works would be considered important beyond his lifetime. His activities during this time would certainly be criticized by those today who assert that claims of connoisseurship and the power it represents mainly serve the vested interests of the art market and the museum. These same forces operated in Venice, where securing the status and condition of works of art ultimately benefited those involved in the commercial exchange of art.

Edwards' reports to the Government during the years 1778-1797 in Chapter Four reveal the extent of the damages to the public pictures held in the Palazzo Ducale and other locations around the city. These condition and treatment reports are highly unusual in the history of conservation and indeed appear to be unique to Venice. Generally, the lack of documentation in conservation history has been traced to the long tradition of secrecy surrounding the artist's workshop recipes and treatments. The code of silence also prevented disclosure of past unsuccessful interventions on some highly public and famous works. However, Edwards used the *relazione* to inform the authorities about the condition of a work to be restored, as well as to chronicle his technical and critical approach. His careful handling of the government authorities who funded his laboratory and staff is also apparent in these accounts.

The subjects of many reports were some of the largest and most valuable paintings representing the Republic's "Golden Age" and found in the Palazzo Ducale. Among these were Tintoretto's *Paradiso* (1579), the largest painting in the world at that time, and Veronese's *Triumph of Venice* (c.1582), a symbol of the glorious Venetian past. Both

works were located in the *Maggior Consiglio*; another was *St. Mark and the Theological Virtues* (1562-64), also by Veronese, in the *Sala della Bussola*. There were hundreds more that Edwards and his team worked to save. Today some of these ensembles of paintings have been changed or moved to other buildings. However, through his own words we can reconstruct the rooms as they were at the time as well as the challenges he faced as a restorer and government employee.

Chapter Five considers Edwards' professional life after the collapse of the Republic in 1797; at this time his career coincided with some of the formative events in the history of debates about legal and ethical issues of cultural property. He diligently directed the last great effort of the Republic to preserve the artistic heritage of the Venetian Renaissance, only to see his efforts collapse in the wake of the French requisition of works of art for the Louvre Museum and other newly formed state collections. Edwards played an almost tragic role, acting as a respected restorer and administrator even as he directed the removal and transport of the artistic heritage of the Republic. These were among the same works he had pledged to protect.

This examination of Pietro Edwards also suggests that the restorer's artistic inclination or ideology can affect the fate of works of art. Although Edwards' record is contradictory in these matters, he could not avoid the critical biases of his class and time. Feelings of Venetian pride – that its art was representative of the highest ideals in Renaissance art – were transformed into the popularity of the Neoclassical style in the eighteenth century. Edwards studied the archeologist and historian, Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717-1768) and was a devoted admirer of the Neoclassical sculptor,

Antonio Canova. Canova's influence inspired the curriculum for the new Venetian academy seen in Edwards' plan, *Statuti e Piano Disciplinare per la Veneta Accademia di Belle Arti* (1804). The Academy was determined to base its training of future artists upon Classical models and to regain the artistic celebrity of the Venetian school. Edwards subscribed to Vasari's evaluation of the development of Italian art seen in the three *etè* and placed the early masters such as Bellini and Carpaccio, with all their "defects," in the first or second epoch on the way to the supreme expression found in Michelangelo and Raphael.⁷ These criteria meant that certain artists were valued over others, and their works were thus more likely to be salvaged when Edwards placed works into Classes of Need and Merit. However, Edwards, unlike some of his predecessors, did not categorically reject many of the so-called "primitives" from the early Renaissance, indeed he judged them worthy to be saved.

Edwards continued his work for the French Regno Italico (1807-1814) and later governments of Austria (1814-19). He was instrumental in the creation of the public museums in Milan, Padua, Treviso, and elsewhere. He selected the first collections to establish the Galleria dell' Accademia in Venice and wrote its first catalogue. He was called upon again at the close of his career to defend the necessity of restoration and to educate the public and government and wrote the *Dissertazione Accademica sul quesito Se si debbano ristaurare le antiche danneggiate pitture* (c.1819). In this paper, he mediated several points of view among his own colleagues about the appropriate action to take

⁷ Giuseppe Basile e Gloria Tranquilli, *Pietro Edwards: Piano Pratico per la Generale Custodia delle Pubbliche Pitture & Istituzione di una Formale Pubblica Scuola pel Ristauro delle Danneggiate Pitture*, Istituto Centrale del Restauro, Rome: 1994, p.32.

when trying to save the greatest works of Venetian artistic heritage. Edwards was a consummate debater and openly acknowledged what he saw as misguided opinions from restorers like Galgano Cipriani. Cipriani took a purist position and concluded that it was only a last resort to touch a painting by an antique master even when the work was seriously threatened by ruin. This was folly to Edwards, who instead called for a stricter adherence to his unified method of theory and practice. He believed that this discipline and the establishment of his proposed school for restorers would ensure competency over the years to come.

What can we determine about the style or intention of a work of art if it has been restored once, much less many times? The concept of the artist as an author who must represent levels of aesthetic or market value, stylistic unity, or serve as a unique marker in historical chronologies is challenged by the act of restoration. In Edwards' opinion the restorer assumed the mantle of the original artist and became another participant in the "making" of a work of art. His philosophical position regarding restoration and issues of authenticity and authority in the evaluation of art is considered in the Conclusion of this study.

Pietro Edwards confronted the most difficult questions in the conservation of art that are today still unresolved. In speeches and position papers he declared his most profound belief that the restorer with training and education in various styles could somehow enter into the work and make the artist "live" again. He could not accept that these works might be lost forever or that original artistic intention would be impossible to identify. Today this question still haunts conservators who organize symposia agonizing

over the question while some preach non-intervention as the only respectful course.

Should the conservator also act as a restorer? This ongoing debate and fierce resistance to even the possibility of decoding original intent reveal our own late 20th century critical perspectives on the past.

Chapter One

Restoring the Myth of Venice

Proponents of the new art historical methodologies doubt that there can be an objective or accurate understanding of the past, but is it possible to explore the reasons behind restoration of many works and reveal historiographic attitudes towards art from the past which in turn affect future perspectives? Venice is a fascinating subject for such historiographic examination. The city has long been the object of what some scholars call a transfiguring myth. Since its beginnings as an outpost claiming descent from the ancient city of Troy, the inhabitants of *La Serrinissima* have elaborated on the legends of its unique origins and special place in history.⁸ The strong tradition of recording and recounting the events of history led to the development of the city's immense archives. The narratives of past greatness were designed to illustrate the lasting superiority of the Republic. The "myth" of Venice is not unitary, but complex and infused many aspects of the city's self-image.⁹ The myth presented a vision of a benevolent Republic blessed by God with longevity and financed by its maritime superiority and commercial ingenuity. A parallel view that the Venetians were the artistic and cultural inheritors of ancient Rome and of the Renaissance accompanied this perception.¹⁰ This idealization became easier to

⁸ Edward Muir, *Civic Ritual in Renaissance Venice*, "Chapter One," Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981.

⁹ James Grubb, p. 43.

¹⁰ Patricia Fortini Brown, *Venice and Antiquity*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997, p. 5; Eric Cochrane, *Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1981, p.84, Sabellico (1436-1506) or Marc Antonio Coccio wrote *Rerum Venetarum ab Urbe Condite Libri XXXIII* which was presented to the Venetian Senate, proclaimed Venice as the "New Rome," "more worthy than the old to the same degree that the sanctity of laws and equity of justice" were more noble than mere extant of territorial holdings.

sustain when Venetians began to see a Golden Age in their history, and after 1797 the myth continued to serve historical and ideological interpretations rather than propagandistic ones.¹¹

The roots of the myth were difficult to tear out or to legitimize because Venetian history from the Renaissance on was full of unsubstantiated events given life by subsequent retelling. For example, various authors like Bernardo Giustinian (1406-1489) attempted to construct some kind of truthful history of Venice. However, he still tried to discover written testimony which supported some Venetian historical claims like the early Trojan settlement of the lagoon. The verification of actual events in Venetian history eluded even its most famous historian's efforts. Marino Sanudo (1466-1533) was trained in the classics and had written his dissertation on Ovid and Petrarch with a guide to mythology. He was not immune either to the lure of story-telling in his version of Venetian history. Some of his evidence supported parts of the myth of an early Trojan presence in Venice and even of the earlier fantasy that Noah's son Sem founded the city of Verona. Sanudo rejected revision of the founding date suggested in Biondo's *De Origine et Gestis* (1454) because the traditional and accepted date coincided with the supposed centenary of the creation of Adam. Although Sanudo's *Vite dei Dogi* is considered indispensable to historians interested in Venetian life in the Renaissance, his work resembled fable. However, in the humanist literary tradition to which Sanudo belonged, this quality did not necessarily contradict his perspective on Venetian political and cultural history. The text degenerated into unacknowledged quotations, lists, and unreadable

¹¹ Grubb, p.47.

sentences that prevented its publication until the eighteenth century.¹² These are just several examples of the limitations that the power of the myth placed on a reconstruction of an objective history of Venice.

The romantic perception of Venice had intensified by the nineteenth century, its myth was fueled by writers such as Henry James, who envisioned dilapidated palazzi as homes to mysterious secrets.¹³ The city served as a giant marble mausoleum, a container filled with ancient history shrouded in watery mists while approached by gliding black boats reminiscent of funeral barges.¹⁴ (Fig. 3) The journey inflicted a kind of neurasthenic reverie, like an eerie trip across the River Styx into the arms of masked revelers, leaving Europe behind.¹⁵ Venice clung to its past so ferociously that the act of recording history was not left to fallible human memory. A remarkable resource, the archives of Venice permitted a historical transparency that was first brought to the world's attention in the 19th century by Leopold Ranke. His research in the famed Archivio di Stato of Venice resulted in a work he called a *History of England Chiefly in the Seventeenth Century* (London 1875), which introduced a new model for European scholarship.¹⁶ This model transformed the tradition of historiography that had previously been based upon the use of materials found in libraries--where Ranke believed books, chronicles, memoirs, and

¹² Cochrane, pp.77-83.

¹³ Henry James, *The Aspern Papers*, London: Penguin Books, 1888, reprint 1979, p. 14. It was certainly strange beyond all strangeness, and I shall not take up space with attempting to explain it, and whereas in all other lines of research we had to deal with phantoms and dust, the mere echoes of echoes...The only secret of her safety that we could perceive was that Venice contained so many curiosities that were greater than she.

¹⁴ John Pemble, *Venice Rediscovered*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, p.13.

¹⁵ Molmenti, p.18, *On the gondola, it represented...modesty, luxury, morbidity....* According to Goethe the gondola resembled a bier.

propaganda were flawed by subjective points of view or faulty memory. Ranke demanded that the historian look to official papers, letters, receipts, and reports stored in the archive as unimpeachable evidence, unfiltered by subjective mediation, of what really had happened in the past--an alleged font of Truth where none had been possible before.¹⁷

According to Ranke, it was in the huge state archives of Venice that the Republic could finally be understood in all its complexity, clearly revealed by the dutiful scribbling of diligent Venetian functionaries (scribes) operating at all levels of government office.¹⁸

Ranke's discovery revealed that the administration of Venice required extensive paperwork from almost every institution and profession. This management extended even to the artist, whose structured activities were overseen by the State. Because restorers were primarily artists, it naturally followed that documentation of restoration activities was officially expected.¹⁹ This situation was unique to Venice and perhaps the first of its kind in the history of restoration of art. Experiments, frequently disastrous in the restoration of art, were rarely recorded in other cities. At times a connoisseur or owner's

¹⁶ Pemble, p.74, Ranke hoped the archives could make possible a "universal history of objective value" where although "lifeless papers...but they are the remnants of the life of past ages which gradually assume form and substance to the eye occupied in the study of them."

¹⁷ Ibid., As Lord Acton would write about Ranke's discovery, "from that which is public to that which is secret, is also a transition from complacent and conventional narrative to disclosures of guilt and shame...we exchange doubt for certainty and become our own masters."

¹⁸ Ibid., Horatio Brown claimed that no archive in the world compared to that of Venice located at the Frari with its richness of historical value or minutiae, and the Republic had bequeathed to posterity a huge amount of documentation equaling some 12 million volumes.

¹⁹ Michelangelo Muraro, "Notes on Traditional Methods of Cleaning Pictures in Venice and Florence," *Burlington Magazine*, Vol. 104, 1962, p. 475; Pemble, p.75, Government ambassadors and bureaucrats were required to deliver reports (relazione) to the Senate on all manner of their activities and observations; Marijnissen, *Degradation...*, pp. 25-26, Restorers were not inclined to have interventions officially recorded also pp. 29-30; See David Rosand, *Painting in Cinquecento Venice*, New Haven and London:Yale University Press, 1982, p. 7, Structured character of Venetian society and life extended to govern every aspect of an artist's professional life. Traditionally in Venice "artists were faithful servants of the state...considered employees... and controlled by legal system, governmental institutions...to assure stability and order...the history of art in Venice...is rather an institutional history."

financial interests prevented disclosure of the actual condition of a work of art with all its attendant restoration history. The insular world of guilds and workshops protected the specialized recipes or “*diversi secreti*” of artistic practices within an oral tradition; restorers kept their methods secret as well.²⁰

In Venice, restorers and official agencies submitted extensive records to the state that in effect, recount the history of the conservation of the public pictures. These records were known as *referti* or *relazione*, and from 1776-1819 hundreds came from Pietro Edwards and his colleagues. These reports provide a rare and revealing perspective on the bureaucratic machinations and philosophical debates that drove the various campaigns to preserve the artistic heritage of the Republic, particularly in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Early Repair of the Public Pictures

Records of the state-sponsored restoration in the archives show that from an early date Venetian authorities took timely action, if only occasionally at first, for the protection

²⁰ Among the numerous sources that mention “workshop secrets” as a deterrent to a more organized attempt at creating a profession out of the craft tradition. See Joyce Hill Stoner, “Pioneers in American Museums: William Suhr,” *Museum News*, Nov/Dec 1981, p. 31, Suhr tells how training was kept secret and only sons could learn the trade in certain families; Calvin Tompkins, “Profiles: Colored Muds in a Sticky Substance,” *The New Yorker*, March 16, 1987, p.44, on John Brealey who discussed perception of restorer as an alchemist with secrets, Cristina Gianni, *Lessico del Restauro*, Florence: Nardini Editore, 1992, Laboratorio tecnico sempre circondato da un alone di mistero, che nasceva dagli incerti confini della sua attività, e dalle consuetudine di tramandare oralmente tecniche e ricette da maestro ad allievo come segreti professionali, al bottega del restauratore può essere considerata un vero e proprio laboratorio linguistico.; R.H. Marijnissen, *The Deterioration, Conservation, and Restoration of Works of Art*, Translated by Garrett White, Brussels:1963, p. 3, 29 -30, On obscurantism,...Restorers were assumed to possess full knowledge on long-lost studio secrets...; Max Doerner, *The Materials of the Artist*, New York: Harcourt Brace and Jovanovich, 1984, p.376 on workshop secrets; Paul Coremans, “Scientific Research and the Restoration of Paintings,” *The Getty Conservation Institute*, Los Angeles: 1996, p. 44 on “secret formulae.”; Mary Merrifield, Volume II, *Marciana Manuscript “Diversi Secreti,”* also *Bolognese Manuscript*, “Segreti per Colori,” pp.341-547, orig published in London: 1847 also New York: Dover 1999, pp.604-644.

of the famous works held in the public buildings. As early as 1400, the Maggior Consiglio ordered that damages to the paintings in the Chapel of San Nicolò in Palazzo Ducale be repaired.²¹ The authorities took a consistent interest in the condition of the highly public paintings in the Palazzo Ducale. Unknown painters were hired for this kind of work, but in 1474 we find further conservation repair of the same Chapel entrusted to Gentile Bellini. When he left for Constantinople in 1479, the work was then offered to his son “Johannes Bellinus pictor egregius...ad dictum opus instaurandum renovandunque.”²² Nevertheless, by 1515 some of the paintings were “spoiled and reduced to nothing.” Luca, the son of painter Andrea Comandador then petitioned the Senate to grant him a semiannual repair of the canvases, and the Consiglio dei Dieci accepted his proposal. By 1524, Francesco Cevola had taken on the assignment to repair a large fresco (probably the *Coronation of the Virgin* (1365) by Guariento) in the palace.²³ Another name appears, Master Guglielmo, chosen by the Ten to “reassemble” the friezes in the ceiling of the Sala dei Nove. In early Renaissance restoration there is a consistent approach that Anabel Thomas has called *acconciatura* or alteration. These were re-arrangements, adaptations, or a kind of repair work rather than what became known as *restauro*, *rifiorire*, or

²¹ Loredana Olivato, “Provvedimenti della Republica Veneta per la Salvaguardia del Patrimonio Pittorico nei Secoli XVII e XVIII,” in *Memorie Classe di Scienze, Morali, Lettere ed Arti*, Volume XXXVII Fascicolo I, Venice: 1974, Chapter I p.13.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 14, The Venetian spelling refers to Gentile as “Zintil Ballini.”

²³ *Ibid.*, ff.5, p.14, Luca was paid “grande libre disedoto et soldi 8 di pizoli.” Guariento probably painted other works now lost in the room, perhaps one a “Paradiso.”; See Eugenia Bianchi et al, *Piazza San Marco and Its Museums*, Milan: Electa, 1997, pp.85-87, It is known that Guariento’s fresco, *Coronation of the Virgin* was damaged in a fire and then covered up by the huge *Paradiso* by Jacopo Tintoretto and workshop in 1588. The *Coronation...* was not discovered until the early 20th century and it is now exhibited in the Sala del Guariento in the Palazzo Ducale.

rinfricare.²⁴ Many other works were left untouched, abandoned to their sometimes-disastrous fates.²⁵

The names of those who worked on the various and desultory repairs during the early seventeenth century included lesser-known relatives of some of the most celebrated artists in Venetian history. Pietro Vecelli effectively represented the precarious condition of the paintings in the Palazzo Ducale to the Senate in 1608 and was introduced in a petition as a nephew to “Tiziano Vecelli, his uncle.” Vecelli described the state of the large canvases in the *Maggior Consiglio* and the rooms of the *Pregadi* and *Scrutinio* as “not only decayed in countless places, but continuously covered with a thick dust, coating the colors and make an ugly sight.”²⁶ He presented himself as an “intelligent member of his painterly profession” and volunteered as a conservator. He pledged to clean the works of dust, restore them as needed, and provide for expenses such as canvases, glue, varnish and pigments. For this he asked for the sum of ten ducati, “not large...for the needs of his family.”²⁷ Vecelli’s proposed interventions were rather extensive and included the removal of pigment from some canvases damaged by mud and the replacement of stretchers and grounds. From his reports there emerges a disturbing view, as seen from the early 17th century; many of the great works of the Renaissance were already darkened and almost illegible with faded colors or parts completely gone.

²⁴ Anabel Thomas, “Restoration or Renovation: Remuneration and Expectation in Renaissance *Acconciatura*” *Studies in the History of Painting Restoration*, London: Archetype Publications Ltd., 1998, pp.2-3.

²⁵ Olivato 1974, p.16.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, Pietro “...essendo ancor egli di professione di pittura di qualche intelligentia.” It is not clear if Pietro Vecellio was really related to Titian as he is not listed in the family tree. There is a letter from Pietro Moro to Cesare Vecelli (cousin of Titian) which mentioned Pietro Vecelli.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

Even with this reality now publicly acknowledged by Vecelli, the more elaborate campaigns for restoration seemed incomplete in the early seventeenth century. Years later, on December 23, 1676, the massive “restoration” of the mosaics in the corridor of the Sala dei Banchetti began. However, the conservation records concentrate on the insertion of twelve new panels rather than on the treatment of the old ones.²⁸ Domenico Uberti was summoned in January of the following year and granted 20 ducati for “various work done on the Palazzo Ducale.” Activity resumed in 1677, when the painter Giovanni Battista Rossi restored the decoration in the upper part of the Sala dei Maggior Consiglio that had been harmed by rain. The damages must have been more extensive because the records show that the large canvases were taken down and transported to a room above the Nuova Quarantia Criminale for security reasons and stayed there until restoration was complete. In the meantime the roof was radically rebuilt.

Exactly which governmental body was ultimately responsible for the continuing restoration work on the public pictures is unclear. There did not exist in the Venetian Republic a Magistratura that was solely occupied with the protection of works of art. Reports and petitions passed from the Senate to the Maggior Consiglio and Council of Ten and to the Provveditori al Sal. From the middle of the 17th century this task was assumed by the Magistrata al Sal, who utilized a large fund tied to its activities of the restoration of public buildings.²⁹ A brief note from April 16, 1678 reiterated the Senate’s

²⁸ Ibid., p. 17 ff 13; A.S.V. Provveditore al Sal parti del Senato-Reg 21 Busta 13,”...Sia pero commesso all offitio sudetto del Sal di far continuar l’opera sino suo adempimento, con facultà di far dipingere nei vani accennati dodeci città suddite nella terrferma come mostrano detti Provveditori nelle loro scritte....”

²⁹ Muraro, ff2 p.475; Basile e Gloria Tranquilli, p. 53 ff6; A.G Nicoletti, *Documenti Tolti Dal Magistrato del Sal Relativi a Restauri di Quadri dei Palazzo Ducale e di Rialto*, Venice: 1886, p. 7-8, The Magistrato al Sal was formed originally in 1243 and was called “Salinieri del Mare.” It consisted of four

official commitment to safeguard the precious works of art; the Magistrati in the Proveditori al Sal were to assume every responsibility connected to the position and execute the decrees of the Senate without burdening the public coffers unduly.³⁰

The Magistrati hired Giovanni Battista Rossi, whose reports include clear and detailed descriptions of the problems and attempted solutions for the ongoing restoration of public art.³¹ The ubiquitous problems of weather and climate provided the continuing catalyst for some of these state-sponsored interventions. For example, a huge snowfall in the winter of 1683 caused massive infiltration of moisture and damaged the works on the upper walls of the Maggior Consiglio and Sala dello Scrutinio. Rossi recommended that three canvases in the Maggior Consiglio and five in the Scrutinio undergo radical restoration. He included a report on the ruinous condition of the *Paradiso* (1588-1594) by Jacopo Robusti known as il Tintoretto (1518-1597) and another painting by Jacopo Negreti (1480-1528, also known as Palma il Vecchio); the Senate then moved for immediate action. By March 4th the Magistrato al Sal sought conclusive results and set up a competition to compare the skills of Rossi, Antonio Zanchi (1631-1722), and Johann

nobles who were responsible for administering the Venetian ports on the Adriatic and exports. Their duties were distinct from other offices and the body was later called Proveditori al Sal. According to other sources they managed the collection, manufacture, and sale of salt within the Republic and all of Italy. Added to these numerous duties was the construction and maintenance of public buildings, conservation of monuments and some pictures.

³⁰ Olivato, 1974, p. 19 ff18, 1678 16 Aprile in Pregadi. "Resta gradita la puntalità del Magistrato al Sal del Magistrato al Sal nel dar l'esecuzione dovuta a decreti di questo Consigli e l'applicazione che prestano perchè restino ben aggiustati li quadri soffitto nella Sala del Maggior Consiglio, a dovendosi proseguire nella restauratione delli restanti non può il Senato, se non riportarsi alla prudenza del Magistrato medesimo, che ben saprà con il minor dispendio far supplire al bisogno...."

³¹ Giovanna Nepi-Scire, "Aspects of Cultural Politics in Venice," *The Glory of Venice*, New Haven & London: Yale University Press, p.66, In 1689 the Magistrato hired Rossi as Superintendent with a stipend of 130 ducats.

Carlo Loth (1632-1698).³²

The weather and the constant construction and repair of the buildings caused significant problems. Layers of plaster dust and vibration allied with moisture caused dilation and contraction of the canvas weave and consequent pigment loss. The collapse of walls and roofs from snow and ice could destroy whole works or lead to damage; the large canvas *The Venetian Ambassadors Before Barbarossa in Pavia* by Jacopo Tintoretto was dissolving from “rain that has bathed the walls...the canvas, wetting the glue and the gesso.” To save this painting, Rossi wanted to begin a massive intervention that included a new ground costing 100 ducati. He recommended a simple “imbrochadura” (restretching) for Paolo Veronese’s *Victorious Return of the Doge Contarini from the War at Chioggia* (1562-64) and warned that nails should not be pounded directly into the canvas. He also stipulated that there should be room to breathe between panel support and wall; pigments should be fixed from the back of the canvas; and works should be kept away from damp surfaces. The most progressive idea that Rossi promoted--one which will we return to again and again in Venetian restoration history--is that the restorer must “only intervene directly on a canvas in cases of extreme necessity.” He stressed using the “ponta di pennello” with delicacy so as not to jeopardize the original brushwork.³³

³² Olivato, 1974, p. 21, ff 24, They proposed a new “imbrochadura” that would maintain the canvas in tension and suggested 60 ducati for this work; Paola Rossi, “Carta d’ Archivio,” *Arte Veneta*, Volume 49, 1990, p. 107; On major restorations in Palazzo Ducale that were pictorial, structural, and decorative; & Paola Rossi, “Carte d’ Archivio” *Arte Veneta*, Volume 50, 1993, p. 114, Frequent interventions, water damage to stucco and other delicate materials.

³³ Ibid. Olivato, p. 22, “...e di intervenire direttamente sulla tela solamente in casi di estrema necessità e a punta di pennello con estrema delicatezza cioè, per non pregiudicare l’originalità dell’opera.”; also p.22 ff

Rossi secured the confidence of the authorities, who accepted his judgment and expertise over that of Zanchi and Loth, although his fee for general expenses was reduced from 1140 ducati to 1000. However, rumors soon began to circulate that Rossi's cleanings diminished the color values, and the Magistratura was compelled to hire a group of artists to investigate the charges.³⁴ Composed of Andrea Celesti and Nicola Cassana--the names Antonio Zanchi and Carlo Loth show up also--the group was hardly impartial, its members having lost the commission to Rossi. Nevertheless, the reports were positive and absolved Rossi from the accusations.³⁵

These inspections encouraged the necessity of maintaining regular cleaning of paintings in the Palazzo, and the Magistrata al Sal proposed to the Senate that a permanent conservator be hired to take charge of this continuous care.³⁶ The Senate did not rush to hire Rossi for the position, but eventually by June of 1689 he was designated as the conservator, with a modest salary of 130 ducati a year. Rossi diligently reported his opinions on the state of the public pictures, and the news was not good.

Rossi identified the need for a corps of skilled and trusted restorers to maintain the art at all times. He denounced careless repairs on structures that housed the art, which made useless the endless series of interventions on the unhappy works inside.³⁷ The

25, It was one of several pictures in bad condition from a preceding restoration. The canvas in result was "rotta" in many places and could not sustain the tension of the stretchers.

³⁴ Ibid., Appendix Document 5, 12 Dec 1685, p.103, "...perventoci alle orecchie qualche rumore, che potesse egli con lavature i colori avere a i quadri scemato più sotto il loro pregio...."

³⁵ Ibid., Appendix Document 5-abcd, pp.103-04.

³⁶ Ibid., Appendix Document 6, p.105, "Si osserva la considerazione del suddetto Magistrato per atrovarsi persona che abbia cura continua a tenir nette, e preservate quelle pubbliche pitture di Palazzo...."; Vianello, "Documenti per la Storia delle Tutela Artistica a Venezia nel 700" in *Atti dell Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere, Arti*, 1970-71 Tomo cxxix, p.135.

³⁷ Ibid. Olivato, p.26 ff 36, "dalla osservazione trascuria ne tetti e dell' imperfetto e debole loro acconciamento."

Paradiso and the *Queen Offering an Olive Branch to Doge Nicolo da Ponte* (1584) in the Maggior Consiglio both by Jacopo Tintoretto and assistants had to be relined--a huge job because of their massive sizes. The Senate instructed Rossi to do these repairs, but not to paint or color.³⁸ In July of that same year Rossi, acting as official custodian of the pictures, observed that the *Queen...* had pigment losses in three places and that intervention would require the assistance of accredited painters. The painters repaired the large flagstaff and carpets in the center of the canvas, and any heads of figures that were rotted. The restorers were permitted to repaint the light blue water and color at the edges of the canvases.³⁹

After Rossi's death in 1703, the Senate nominated Giovanni Vincenzo Cecchi, but from the documents it appears that Cecchi did not have his successor's ability or prestige. He was limited by constant supervision of his interventions, and was allowed to work only on canvases considered in extreme danger. Cecchi was denied the privilege to attempt problems destined for more expert restorers and was assessed every three years by the Magistrata al Sal. Perhaps because of his lack of skill, he was not allowed to do any basic repair on the *St. Lawrence Giustiniani* attributed to Marco Vecellio in the Sala del Pregadi. He used assistants who were not identified. However, at least in one case he

³⁸ Ibid., Appendix Document 11, p.110, "...perchè sia diligente supplito a ciò che occorre al suo necessario aggiustamento sino alla perfezione dell' opera avvertendo sopra tutto che il quadro stesso non sia tochato dal pennello..."; also see Document 5a p.103-04 on use of the brush., Visti, e rivisti così nella pittura non esser toccati con pennelli a pregiudizio della pittura vecchia, così nelle nove fodre ottime per la conservazione de medesimi...."

³⁹ Ibid., Appendix Document 12, p.110, "...Sal nel riparar d'ogni difetto, resta a medesimi permesso di far colorir con l'acqua celeste imprimitura e la tela connessa nell'estremità della lunghezza e larghezza del quadro come pure alla prudenza loro rimesso di far ritornare se lo credessero proprio dall'esperienza del suddetto Rossi nella più diligente e delicata maniera e con l' assistenza d'accreditati pittori non meno il bastoni e tapetti ch'esistono nel mezo del quadro pregiudicati...."

inspired a somnolent Magistratura to attend to the deterioration of the ceiling in the Sala della Quattro Porte, and this facilitated its timely repair by Nicolo Bambini in 1713.⁴⁰

From this changing cast of characters and the movement of administrative functions with little precedence or continuity it is clear that the Republic's interest in its cultural heritage was fixated on the works in the Palazzo Ducale, the primary seat of government and symbolic focus of the Republic's power and longevity. The frequency of restoration of the same works tells how flawed the system was in terms of effective and long-term protection. The environmental causes in the buildings are mentioned repeatedly, yet the problem remains unsolved and the restorer's contribution and authority elusive. The Magistrato al Sal showed concern for the maintenance of the buildings themselves, but the official objectives for inspectors were to remain aware of the priceless treasures protected inside.⁴¹

Venice in the Eighteenth Century

The public policy on restoration in the Republic--at least that traced in the reports--is not easily connected to the larger political context of Venice in the eighteenth century. Events that were shaping Europe of the Enlightenment must have influenced the course of the restoration of public art initiated by various government agencies. Yet Venice itself appeared to reflect little of the turmoil found in the international situation, rather relishing its role as a cultural destination and exotic repository of Renaissance art on the continent.⁴² There runs a curious contradictory strain in Venetian history at this

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 29.

⁴¹ Alessandro Conti, *La storia delle restauro e il conservazione di arte*, Milan: Electa, 1988, p.155.

⁴² See Nepi-Scire, "Cultural Politics..." p.62; Also Oliver Logan, *Culture and Society in Venice 1470-1790*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1972, p. 271 on Republic's reaction to forces in wider Europe;

particular time. The city wanted to promote its standing as a cultural Mecca, yet the government still retained strict control over its population. Contact between foreigners and nobles was prevented by maintaining a large internal spy force for domestic security.⁴³ These efforts were not completely successful even when enforced. As late as 1783 censorship was strict and travel abroad was forbidden without permission of the Council of Ten.⁴⁴ The intellectual community claimed that Venice discouraged scientific research while politically the world was passing it by.⁴⁵ Reforms in the rest of Europe were enacted to attempt to preserve the status quo of the *ancien regime*, but Venice ignored these palliatives. At the Treaty of Passarwitz in 1718 after the war against the Turks, Venice gave up the conquests of thirty years before such as the Morea, and the decline continued.⁴⁶ These weaknesses forced a nostalgic awareness of the Republic's past glories, symbolized by its beloved Masters of Renaissance and Baroque art. This cultural resource also served as an economic incentive for the government to protect and restore the artistic heritage that drew so many visitors to the lagoon.

Families of Fame in Venice

The conflicts between the reality and the myth of Venetian supremacy were seen in

Also See Horatio Brown, *Venice: An Historical Sketch of the Republic*, London: Percival & Co., 1893, p.420-21.

⁴³ Francis Haskell, *Patron and Painters: A Study in the Relations Between Italian Art and Society in the Age of the Baroque*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963, p. 245.

⁴⁴ Vincenzo Ferrone, *The Intellectual Roots of the Italian Enlightenment*, Translated by Sue Brotherton, Atlantic Highlands: New Jersey Humanities Press, 1995, p.89. The Veneto was hostile to Roman Catholic Counter Reformation hegemony and in their efforts at State autonomy had encouraged a flourishing publishing trade, established tools of repression and censure controlled by a State apparatus with supervision of internal political affairs.

⁴⁵ For more on science in Venice also see Brendan Dooley, *Science, Politics and Society in Eighteenth Century Italy: The Giornale de Letterati d' Italia and its World*, New York & London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1991.

⁴⁶ Ibid. Haskell, *Patrons & Painters*, p.246.

the art created at this time. The former glory of the aristocracy was immortalized by the hand of Tiepolo, who covered state rooms and villas with images of the living and the dead exalted in the presence of various Divinities.⁴⁷ Leonardo Pesaro, the nephew of the Doge (1658-59) Giovanni Pesaro, created an opulent environment for himself at his palace on the Grand Canal. In 1682 he commissioned Niccolo Bambini to represent the *Triumph of Venice*, marking the first time this theme was set in a private palace. His monument to his uncle in the Frari (1669) surpassed all other memorials previously constructed. With the decline of State support, only 250 families were responsible for most of the art patronage in the city, including the Manin family of the last Doge, who had a colonnade constructed in front of its country home in Passeriano, designed after Bernini's portico at St. Peters in Rome. The Manin house on the Grand Canal was filled with treasures inspired by Renaissance artists. There were paintings by Raphael, bronzes by Giambologna and other works by Sansovino and Andrea del Sarto. In the absence of public exploits that once were the currency of Venetian rule, old families took refuge in their wealth.⁴⁸

Families like the Grassi, the Widmann, Giustiniani, and Soderini all had scenes of their relatives painted in "Apotheosis" for their country and city palazzi.⁴⁹ The Republic's wealth in the past had come from its maritime merchant existence, but trade was now diminished and a source for concern rather than pride.⁵⁰ Nevertheless, Tiepolo painted *Neptune Paying Homage to Venice* (1745) in the Palazzo Ducale, a rare State commission

⁴⁷ Ibid., p.254.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p.246.

at this time. The picture was self-glorifying and represented a confidence long past. This expression of a nobility based on commercial economic success also caused those in power to hide these mercantile roots with an ostentation equal to that of Kings and Popes, who claimed their privileges as part of a Divinely given right to rule.⁵¹ The love of wealth and display provided incontrovertible evidence of aristocratic status, for as some believed, this “Richness is the body of nobility, which has as its soul ancient lineage and virtue.”⁵²

These passions for the distant and romanticized past were also exemplified by the increasing popularity of antiquarian and related cultural studies. With an emphasis on the continuity found in the heritage of Venice, these pursuits became the prominent pursuit of the Venetian intelligentsia. Although changes of taste occurred within this period, there was still an overwhelming curiosity about and respect for the literary, dramatic, and artistic achievements of the past. Any field in the arts and letters that could be discovered or rediscovered appealed to the aesthetes.⁵³ Lelio Riccoboni encouraged the recovery of sixteenth-century Venetian tragedy when he resuscitated the drama *Sophonisba* (1515) by Giangiorgio Trissino (1478-1550), the first classical tragedy of the Renaissance.

Meanwhile Carlo Goldoni (1707-1793) revived popular comedy by writing and guiding theater away from the rote memorization of the oral tradition in drama. In history and the visual arts, the Marchese Scipione Maffei traveled widely and transformed various historical studies in Venice from Greek paleography to political theory. Believing that historians should rely on primary sources rather than on literary traditions, he established

⁵¹ Ibid., p.247.

⁵² Ibid., p.251.

⁵³ Logan, pp.276-278, On antiquarianism, drama and literature.

several museums with his own collections of antiquities in Verona and Turin. Maffei insisted on absolute authenticity, and none of his sculptures was restored in any way. This policy distinguished his museums from all others in the eighteenth century.⁵⁴

Another figure who will appear in relation to Pietro Edwards was Francesco Algarotti (1712-1785), an active collector and esteemed author. He demonstrated his devotion to the antique and the Renaissance by promoting the Palladian revival in architecture. This movement in Venice expressed itself in simple and rational forms in a Neoclassical rejection of the Baroque.⁵⁵ Algarotti retained a taste for the great Masters of sixteenth century painting. Their style had elevated Classical idealism, *disegno*, and Venetian *colorito* practiced by Titian, Tintoretto, and Bassani, to name only three.⁵⁶ This cultural archeology elevated works of the Venetian Renaissance, and would stimulate the administrative and conservation efforts during the eighteenth century to recreate the splendors of the past.⁵⁷

The city enjoyed a period of prosperity and growth aided by the absence of Imperial responsibilities and what would become eighty years (until 1797) of peace. Venice had become a city of pleasure for the rest of Europe. The city of 170,000 inhabitants could boast of seven opera houses, a resurgence in its famed school of painting, and theaters playing the comedies of Goldoni. It was the age of the Grand Tour,

⁵⁴ Francis Haskell, *History and its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994; for Scipione Maffei, pp.174-78.

⁵⁵ Logan, pp. 286-89 on Francesco Algarotti and his rejection of Baroque style and theories about colorism. and p. 280 on Palladio, "...nothing must be seen in a building which does not have its proper task and is not an integral part of the building...."

⁵⁶ Rosand, *Painting...*, See on colorito in Venetian aesthetic theory, pp.15-26; Logan, p.288, Algarotti on Titian & Tintoretto.

⁵⁷ Vianello, pp. 135 & 137.

when tourism was born, and many highly cultivated European—indeed even Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)—visited the fabled islands. The magic of Carnival in Venice, the longest and most libertine celebration in Europe, drew the enthralled visitors of other countries. Gambling thrived in the state-run and private *Ridotti* (Fig. 5) and prostitution reached its most elegant and public level of display on the continent.⁵⁸

An example of the ruling élite who worked to maintain the status quo was Alvise Pisani, elected Doge in 1735 and a member of one of the most fabulously wealthy families of old nobility in the Republic. Pisani was owner of the Palazzo Pisani at S. Stefano (now the Conservatory of Music) and the Villa Pisani at Stra (now Villa Nazionale), once considered the grandest country house built near Venice in the eighteenth century. This is where Tiepolo painted his impressive fresco decorating the ceiling of the ballroom. It is called the *Apotheosis of the Pisani Family* (1762-62) and depicts Venice proudly presenting the Pisani family to the Virgin, as Fame spreads their renown to the rest of the world.⁵⁹ This work was considered the greatest of all the megalomaniacal displays by wealthy families at the time, and after he completed it, the artist left Venice forever.⁶⁰ Pisani had been the Venetian ambassador to the court of Queen Anne in England, impressing all of London with his extravagance. He strove to maintain this quiet period of luxury and political vapidty for the Republic, while the rest of Europe was deconstructing its centuries old systems of hereditary rule. From Italy to Poland, Europe was at war as

⁵⁸ John Norwich, *The History of Venice*, New York: Vintage Books, 1989, p.585; On the “Ridotto” see Richard Goy, *Venice: the City and its Architecture*, London: Phaidon, 1997, p. 246.

⁵⁹ Haskell, *Patrons & Painters*, p.247& 261, The nobility became the primary patrons of art by 1745 when official State patronage virtually ceased. Tiepolo had been a firm believer in the *ancien regime* and he benefited from the leading families who presented the greatest artists with the best opportunities.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 254.

Venice maintained a difficult neutrality that preserved the conservative hegemony of the regime.⁶¹ The efforts to maintain a particular way of life within a political structure that remained basically unchanged would, in the end, weaken the Republic and lead to its domination by more progressive forces. Neglect of the war fleet, loss of dominance in the Adriatic, and the finding the population of ruling nobles eroded the foundations for Venice's future.

The rigid social traditions of the Republic were themselves factors in the decline of the Republic. For centuries the patricians had closely held their power through a complex system of membership, drawing from a relatively large group of wealthy families. This changed over time however, and from 1675 to 1775, only four of the fourteen Doges were married, and a third of the Venetian nobility.⁶² The social catastrophe that this represented for the ruling class would become clear. Because the family had to preserve its wealth to maintain its political power, only one son of each family was allowed to marry. This prevented the dispersal of wealth among the members of the family, but failure of the single heir to procreate might also wipe out a whole family line. Equally problematic was the creation of a whole class of males doomed to enforced bachelorhood. The upper-class women who would have been their wives were sent to convents or in some cases, into prostitution. The overall result was that the Venetian nobility suffered an increasingly large gap between rich and poor, and a class emerged of impoverished nobles called *Barnabotti* because they lived in the parish of St. Barnaba.⁶³ It was in this disaffected and

⁶¹ Norwich, p.588.

⁶² Norwich, p.594.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p.596.

demoralized group that the forces sweeping the rest of Europe would find fertile ground in an attempt to reform the constitution of Venice in the late 1700s. The realization of the precious immortality of Venetian artistic greatness, revealed in efforts to preserve the art, emerged when the actual generational renewal--another kind of immortality--of the ruling class was so threatened.

Some of the disaffected members of noble families submitted programs of “reform” —like those of Angelo Querini and Giorgio Pisani in 1778—to return to stricter forms of constitutional legality. Their drive for change was not of a progressive kind designed to lead to improvements in society. These radicals were not promoters of Enlightenment ideas of liberty and equality, but rather those whose chief desire was to return to the Glory Days of Venetian power and the existence of a healthy noble class. Querini and Pisani believed that the famous system of checks and balances in Venice’s centuries-old Republic had been compromised by the special interests of the wealthy few who now ruled through the Council of Ten and the “Three” or the *Inquisitori di Stato*. This last committee had developed out of the *Esecutori contra la Bestemmia*, originally concerned with the suppression of vice and answered to the Council of Ten. It had grown more powerful and had the right to try and condemn without oversight and was responsible for issues of state security. These erosions of political and judicial balance worried many in Venice. Querini and Pisani hoped to prevent this by strengthening the caste system and halting the disintegration of the lesser nobility. Among their goals was increasing the stipend of the Quarantie, the judicial Magistrate whose seats were usually held by nobles possessing small or eroding fortunes. Other modifications to the system would encourage more

marriages, assure promotion based on seniority, and institute the wearing of uniforms by patricians as example of a kind of sumptuary law.⁶⁴

Corruption in the Collegio dei Pittori

During this period of retrenchment and reactionary political caution, the Republic's campaign to conserve its artistic treasures would become, for art conservation at least, one of its few progressive policies. There is no clear *quid pro quo* causality among the social, political, and artistic forces of the day that gave rise to a competent visionary such as Pietro Edwards and his predecessors. The roots of any new movement come from complex and evolving structures, but perhaps the powerful artistic tradition in Venice, supported by a government that rested on its detail-oriented bureaucracy, was transformed by the affects of Enlightenment empiricism.

After the death of Cecchi in August 1724 it became clearer that the government wanted to reform the position of conservator for the public paintings by organizing a group of experts to handle this ongoing dilemma. A report dated September 14, 1724 commented on Cecchi's death and the need for a "prompt substitution," but also mentioned the petition of the Collegio dei Pittori, the painter's union broken off in 1682 from the larger craft guild to take on this task.⁶⁵ The Magistratura appeared cool to the proposal and designated limited duties for an inspector if appointed from the Collegio. These responsibilities consisted of simple operations like dust and spider web removal,

⁶⁴ Logan, on decline of Venetian nobility pp. 272- 275; George McClellan, *Venice and Napoleon*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1931, pp.10-42.; On sumptuary law see P.G. Molmenti, pp15-17; See Norwich on nobility and Giorgio Pisani, pp. 594-602.

⁶⁵ Nicoletti, pp.8-10, At the end of 1724, the Collegio were asked to maintain and supervise the public pictures and make an inventory of the Palazzo Ducale and Rialto. The Collegio responded with a report

touch-up frames, and basic condition assessments, but it was not the “duty of the inspector to use a hand or brush or any other operation on the painting for this remains forbidden.”

The inspector was expected to proceed within bureaucratic avenues to notify the offices in charge and not act independently.⁶⁶ Such restrictions point to an official distrust by the Magistratura of independent actions taken by restorers, perhaps because of expense, precedence, or control issues. For as the Magistrata cautioned, “...illustrious professors...do not lower themselves to do mechanical work or concern themselves with facts. They are not always well-informed of quality or functions and inordinately try to please higher-ups to receive thanks.”⁶⁷

Despite these rather stringent conditions, the Collegio continued its campaign to secure the position by emphasizing the need for using skilled artists to repair the precious art.⁶⁸ The arguments succeeded in convincing the Senate to accept the Collegio as deputy for the custody of the public paintings, for who else could be relied upon to do it? The duties were to inspect all the paintings in the Palazzo Ducale and Magistrato di Rialto, to give monthly reports with complete lists describing the painting, its subject and proposed repairs, and to oversee cleaning of canvas, frames, and stretchers. This was to be achieved without moving the works if possible, and without “placing hands directly on the

dated December 13, 1725 signed by the Prior Santo Piatti, Sebastiano Ricci as Sindaco, and Angelo Trevisani as Consiglieri.

⁶⁶ Olivato, 1974, Appendix Document 16, pp.113-115.

⁶⁷ Conti, 1988, p.155.

⁶⁸ Olivato, 1974, p. 32, “non v’ha cosa, nè operazione, che intorno a guasto si faccia, per quanto sembri ella vile, materiale e meccanica, le quale di mano perita e giudizio grave tanto non abbisogni, quanto può di leggieri l’arte stessa, men cautamente usata, di ripulire sturbar la grazia a guastare la perfezione della più bella fra queste gioie; sfreggiando l’onore degli andati, e lo stupor e l’ insegnamento dei secoli avvenire sopprimendo in un punto.”

canvas.”⁶⁹

The Collegio responded that the vigilant care of the art was reserved for their head (Prior) and assistants, with Pietro Zemello to take charge of the duties outlined. The expenses must include a revision that would take into account the negligence of past care and must allow some autonomy of the conservator when dealing with functionaries of the Palazzo to facilitate restorations. The stipend was the same that was given to the stolid Cecchi, who had earned 130 ducati. This amount was now expected to cover personal expenses and tools for maintenance and was paid directly to the Prior of the Collegio.⁷⁰ The Liberali Professori di Pittura at the Collegio claimed the right to prevent any sale of a work of art without their knowledge and agreement, and no antique painting could be sold without their authentication. However, it was later shown that the Collegio did not often exercise these prerogatives of expertise or national interest.⁷¹

On June 19, 1727 the Senate suggested to the Provveditori al Sal that the Collegio undertake a more detailed review of the condition of the public pictures. When the Collegio failed to do this by January, the original uncertainty of the Magistratura appeared justified. The report to the Pregadi (Senators--those “summoned”) lamented the condition of the ceiling of the Maggior Consiglio and claimed that “universally the public pictures do not get the attention and care from painters that is their due.”⁷² The problem was reaffirmed in January of 1728, and questions of theory revealed themselves in restoration

⁶⁹ Ibid., “Il tutto senza poter spostare minimamente i quadri, ne’ metter mano direttamente sulla tela.”

⁷⁰ Ibid.

⁷¹ Vianello, p. 136.

⁷² Olivato, 1974, Appendix, Document 20, p.119, “Scorgendosi nel resto che all’ universale de’ quadri di ragion pubblica non viene da pittori prestata quella attenzione e cura che gli è dovuta, doverà, il

practice. The notary wrote that these "singular jewels and precious ornaments of Palazzo Ducale" were in danger, but the methods used to repair them must be more fully examined because "it was not fitting to use modern retouches on these antique works...."⁷³ In private practice Giuseppe Zanchi restored a work by Paris Bordone "with the prohibition of using the brush with imagination."⁷⁴ The Collegio was encouraged to do simple cleanings, but these could endanger what was called a pristine state of the canvas. Perhaps, they asked, a more qualified person could be found for such important work as yet unrealized by the Collegio?

The flawed collaboration continued, however, with monthly reports from the Collegio sent to the Magistrato. The inspections were generally limited to the Palazzo Ducale, except on a few occasions like the repeated visits to the Salute; where three works by Titian were examined month after month—examples of the slow workings of bureaucracy and the delay in completion of projects. In 1730 the Magistrati assigned the Collegio to the paintings in the Sala dei Banchetti and the Camerlenghi di Comune di Rialto for the total sum of 240 ducati. It was decided that after this restoration would be the province of a single expert selected and approved by the Collegio.

Two famous names in Venetian painting appear in the record in 1730 acting as restorers. Sebastiano Ricci and Pietro Cardinali were hired and the latter called a restorer

Magistrato far chiamare li loro capi, seniatamente arricordandoli a custodirli, e pulirli con quella esattezza e frequenza.e che sono tenuti, et esigge la qualità di capitali cosi preciosi."

⁷³ Ibid., Appendix Document 21, p. 120, Come però si vede che non convenga far ritocar da penello moderno opere di tanta antichità...."

⁷⁴ V. Moschini, "Altri restauri alle Gallerie di Venezia" in *Bolletino d'Arte*, 1960, pp.363, for lining of *Tempesta* and lining and cleaning of Bordone's *Consegna dell' Anello*; *Catalogo Arte Veneta* 1971, ff27; A. Conti p.156, "...Nella Scuola di San Marco, Giuseppe Zanchi (con la proibizione di usare il pennello

of “trust” for the Republic. Yet the actual quality of his work was quickly repudiated and the honorific soon expired. He began with the restoration of two important canvases damaged by rain, *St. Mark Crowning the Theological Virtues* (1566) by Paolo Veronese in the ceiling of the Sala dei Bussola and a Leandro Bassano in the Sala of the Consiglio dei Dieci. Another project Cardinali took on was the repair of the *Surrender of Zara* by Domenico Tintoretto (1560-1635) in the Sala of the Maggior Consiglio. The works were removed and transported to the security of the Refectory of San Giovanni e Paolo, which, under Pietro Edwards, would become the most important laboratory for restoration in the Republic until its end in 1797. Cardinali was paid eighty of the 100 ducati he requested, while the Magistrati expressed concern at the ongoing difficulties in convincing the Collegio to abide by its contracted duties. The Magistrati reiterated its call for moderation in the methods used on damaged pictures.⁷⁵ Cardinali expressed satisfaction with his treatments of paintings in Santa Maria Maggiore, the Salute, and the Sala dei Dieci. He later completed work in the Sala delle Quattro Porte and the Sala dei Consiglio Dieci, the results later criticized by Pietro Edwards.⁷⁶

Cardinali showed up again in a contract for work on twenty-seven unnamed canvases in the Maggior Consiglio. He completed this monumental task a scant one year

“*imaginabilmente*”) restaura il Paris Bordone e la *Tempesta* attribuita a Giorgione nel 1733; il Cardinali nel 1738 interviene sul Tintoretto e sulle tele del Bellini e del Mansueti.”

⁷⁵ Olivato, 1974, Appendix Document 23, p. 122, “Per quanto in fine riguarda ai quadri della Sala del Maggior Consiglio, che pur sentono gravemente pregiudicati, et in grande esigenza di qualche provvedimento, starà attendendo questo Consiglio dell’ aggradita attenzione e diligenza del Magistrato la relazione precisa de quadri pregiudicati con distinzione di quelli che più fossero bisognosi di predeta riparazione onde sollecitamente adempirla, per andare poi successivamente occorendo su gli altri ancora la loro necessario accomodamento.”

⁷⁶Ibid., p.52; Conti, 1988, p.155-56, The results of this restoration were later used as an example by Edwards to delineate the difference between a valued artist and an expert restorer. He called the restoration of Tintoretto’s *Paradiso* by the artist, Fontebasso a poor use of public funds.

later on July 30, 1744, with the addition of “many operations that were already well begun.” This speed indicated a careless application of restoration techniques. By 1747 his name disappeared from the official records and he was not consulted on the repair of a painting by Bassano to which “only experts” were invited.

Sebastiano Ricci, the artist was also known as an experienced and committed restorer who repaired the *St. Peter Martyr Altarpiece* by Titian in 1731.⁷⁷ Carbon and wax from candles had damaged the picture. It was removed from SS Giovanni e Paolo to the Scuola di San Marco next door, where the panel was reinforced. Surface paint had detached and the heads of all the figures had darkened. Under Ricci’s direction Cardinali performed the restoration, which included cleaning, filling losses, inpainting, and intensifying the color values.⁷⁸

The reports from the Collegio dei Pittori to the Provveditori al Sal from 1748-1759 record almost always mentions the same paintings—such as the *Paradiso* by Tintoretto, Bonifacio in the Rialto, and the Veronese ceiling in the Bussola. In 1755 Francesco Fontebasso contracted to restore the same benighted *Paradiso* (Fig. 4) that Edwards would later call an example of a poor use of public funds. In 1762 the Senate demanded from the Magistrati al Sal and the Collegio a list of paintings most in need of intervention and a capable person to take on the responsibility. The Collegio dei Pittori submitted a “Nota di Professori” of the most respected specialists in the field. This list is of immense interest because of the historical lack of data on the identities of restorers and

⁷⁷ Loredana Olivato, “Sebastiano Ricci, restauratore,” in *Atti del congresso internazionale di studi su Sebastiano Ricci e il suo tempo*, Venice: 1976, pp.20-23.

⁷⁸ Patricia Meilman, Unpublished manuscript on *St. Peter Martyr altarpiece by Titian*, 1995, p.104.

the inclusion of many of the principal painters of Venice. These were Fabio Canal, Giuseppe Angeli, Jacopo Mareschi (who had worked on many Bonifacios in the *Provveditori agli Ori e Argenti in Zecca*), Giacomo Gurana, Giuseppe Nogari, and Giuseppe Bertani. Bertani would become known as the “master of all restorers” according to Pietro Edwards.⁷⁹ The list continues with Domenico Maggiotto, who repaired the art in the Palazzo Patriarcale and Gaetano Zompino, and was active in the *albergo* of the Scuola di San Rocco.

In a succeeding report the Collegio reduced the number of paintings to ten in dire need and singled out Giuseppe Angeli to make the repairs. Angeli soon retired as a primary participant and Domenico Maggiotto was suggested, with Giuseppe Diziani, G.B. Pittoni, Giuseppe Nogari, and Angeli guaranteeing the work.⁸⁰ Maggiotto had intervened on a panel in San Pietro Castello and worked for many private collectors.⁸¹ The list of damaged works included a Paolo Veronese in the Sala della Bussola and the *Caduta della Manna* (c.1540) by Bonifacio Veronese (1487-1553) “with the pledge to line and restore it without use of the brush.”⁸² Maggiotto was awarded a contract with Angeli for 1250 Ducati (in total) and they worked as a team until the end of 1768.⁸³ Angeli complained about past destructive treatments of these paintings:

⁷⁹ Nicoletti, p. 18-19; also see Conti, 1988, p.163, “Giuseppe Bertani, ricordato per la discezione nel restauro del Tintoretto di San Simeon Grande anche da un conoscitore cauto nel consigliare I restauri quale lo Zanetti, era il più apprezzato restauratore di Venezia, *maestro di tutti restauratori*, lo definisce Edwards.”

⁸⁰ Nicoletti, pp.25-27.

⁸¹ Moschini 1815, Maggiotto was known for a bad restoration of a *Baptism* by Cima di Conegliano in San Giovanni in Bragora; Conti, 1988, pp.156-7, Maggiotto had worked for many private collectors including Francesco Vendramin, The English Resident, the English Consul, and Count Bonomo Algarotti, brother to Francesco. He had restored works in the cancelleria of the Scuola della Carità, and many other works that “went to Moscow.”

⁸² Nicoletti, pp. 9-10; See Conti, p. 156, ...con l’impegno di foderli e restaurli senza uso del pennello.

the works were cleaned imperfectly so that the most delicate tints and shades did not remain, also after the fact, behind the dark strange patina confused and hidden...this patina, the masters traits of art not in them to be altogether diminished or lost....they remain in this way lost miserably or for one or the other way, in company, and a universal aspect of these admirable canvases, that harmony and concordance that forms their major value.⁸⁴

Angeli recognized that patina could be a hindrance to the appreciation of the art, but in theory it was better to do too little to a work than too much.⁸⁵ In 1768 Giuseppe Bertani, who was now Prior of the Collegio, intervened on the much restored *Paradiso* by Tintoretto in the Maggior Consiglio. The painting was again found in terrible condition, this time with a crumbling ground and a faulty stretcher which allowed a dangerous relaxation of canvas tension. The restorers replaced the panel attached to the canvas to create a more intact barrier and isolated the painting from the wall to try to prevent the decay of the painting surface.⁸⁶ Often canvases, or the *teleri* of Venice, had been attached with nails to boards or wainscoting without stretchers, which would lead later to serious surface problems. The *Storia di Sant Orsola* (1495) by Vittore Carpaccio (1465-1526) was such an example, it was finally stretched onto a *telaio* in 1753. The same artist's *St. George Cycle* (c.1490) for the Scuola degli Schiavoni was treated in the same manner by 1754.⁸⁷

⁸³ Nicoletti, p. 24.

⁸⁴ G. Moschini, *Guida per la Città di Venezia all' Amico delle Belle Arti Venice*: 1815, I, p.83 & II p.350, On Maggiotto and Angeli; Olivato, 1974, p. 41, ff 89; Conti, p.156, Angeli said, "o imperfettamente le pitture non fossero ripulite, sicche i più delicati linementi, tinte, ed ombreggi, non se rimanessero, anche dopo il fatto, dentro la oscura estrania pattina confusi, e nascosti...questa pattina, quei tratti maestri dell' arte non ne fossero insieme logorati e perduti..."

⁸⁵ On Angeli and Maggiotto as restorers see Nicoletti, p. 27-31.

⁸⁶ Olivato 1974, p.42, ff 95.

⁸⁷ Conti, 1988, p. 157.

Bertani was a cautious craftsman and was admired in Venice for his work on the Tintoretto in San Simeon.⁸⁸ A more controversial Bertani restoration in 1752 was that of the *The Madonna of the Pesaro Family* by Titian. The extent of Bertani's restoration is unknown, but his treatment gave St. Peter "new" feet because nothing remained of the originals. Bertani was criticized for this license because he had added something with no precedent in fact, but was not punished by the authorities.⁸⁹ Edwards remembered the Pesaro intervention in 1812 and wrote that the panel "was exhumed from darkness and compensated in the decay that was similar to the same problems that involved its unfortunate companion, the *Assunta*."⁹⁰ Edwards' comparison referred to the partial loss of the figure of St. Peter in Titian's other masterpiece in the Frari.

With Bertani's arrival on the scene, the battle to save the public pictures of Venice entered a new phase. The petitions and proposals in the past had never resolved into reliable results.⁹¹ In the report dated June 6, 1771 the Provveditore al Sal recapitulated the duty of the state to protect artistic patrimony, so celebrated and unique, as in the example of Paolo Veronese's canvas in the Bussola. The work was a ruin and the Magistrati relied upon Giuseppe Bertani's "well-known abilities" and adherence to economical solutions to save it and to keep the administration informed.⁹² Under Edwards' supervision in 1788, Bertani would achieve a spectacular restoration, recovering the crystalline azure sky of Veronese's *Family of Darius* (then in the Pisani palazzo in San

⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 163.

⁸⁹ Valcanover, p. 63, ff22.

⁹⁰ Ibid., ff23.

⁹¹ Pietro Edwards, *Privata Informazione preliminare al Progetto del Ristauro generale di tutte le Pitture di Pubblica Ragione June 1771 (77)*, S.P.V. MS 787.7.-876.7.

⁹² Conti, 1988, p. 163; Olivato, 1974, p.42.

Polo) from beneath a yellow varnish skin.⁹³

A3 Brief Biography of Pietro Edwards

Venetian authorities recognized that persistent problems with art that repeatedly needed restoration could be traced to the government's arrangements with the Collegio dei Pittori, in existence only since 1682.⁹⁴ The frustrated Senate turned for an assessment to the Reformatori allo Studio di Padova, the educators and magistrates at the University of Padua charged with supervising schools and universities.⁹⁵ The person who prepared this report was Pietro Edwards (1740-1821), a Deputy of the Collegio, a painter and restorer. His position paper, *Privata Informazione preliminare al Progetto del restauro Generale di tutte di Pitture Pubblica Ragione, (1771)(7)* stripped away the façade of bureaucratic incompetence and malfeasance.⁹⁶ Edwards had been called in ever since 1770 by the Magistratura for projects in the public palace and he had gained the confidence of the Magistrati. Thus entered onto the stage of Venetian cultural life a

⁹³ Ibid. Conti, p.163. The work is now in the National Gallery in London. At the time Bertani was paid 148 zecchini.

⁹⁴ Nepi-Scire, "Cultural Politics..." p. 60, The painters in Venice, called *depentori*, belonged to the Arte dei Depentori established in 1271, as a guild of artisans including gilders, miniaturists, draughtsmen, those who worked with paper, leather, house-painters, whitewashers, etc. The painters asked the Venetian Senate in 1679 for the right to separate from the manual arts and were consequently known by the title of Collegio dei Pittori, a professional union that survived into the Napoleonic era developing separately from the Academy in Venice. See Rosand, *Painting...*, pp.13-14, in the Collegio petition they complained that they were united with, "other mechanical arts in the city with whom most of the figure painters refuse to cooperate." Their petition was granted by decree in 1682, but they were considered a Collegio not an Accademia, and essentially remained a guild under the same jurisdiction of the Giustizia Vecchia which controlled all trade in the city including barbers, tailors, etc. Its rules and regulations were virtually the same as the Arte dei Depentori and this example can serve as another example of the stability, control, and continuity of Venetian institutions; See Molmenti, pp. 81-82, on formation of artists' guilds.

⁹⁵ Nepi-Scire, "Cultural Politics..." pp. 60; Rosand, *Painting...*, pp. 246-247 ff57, The Reformatori dello studio di Padova was a magisterial body established in 1513 to reform the University of Padua and it continued to supervise all aspects of academic activity there, but also in Venice controlling publishing and intellectual life in the city.

singular and little known figure to world art history.

Information about Pietro Edwards' private life is scarce. The few facts include his marriage to a Teresa Fossati and the birth of one son, Giovanni O'Kelly Edwards, who worked with his father and was also a restorer.⁹⁷ As one examines the extent of Edwards' activity and influence, one imagines he had little private life, but was a supremely public person. This was not so unusual in Venice, which had created a coherent and enduring society in part by defining the limits of individual autonomy and rewarding loyalty to the state.⁹⁸ As in the Middle Ages when men had bestowed their worldly goods on the church, in Venice they left them to the state. In the eighteenth-century, a distinguished Venetian commented that there was a lack of biography in Venetian literature, a condition he attributed to "a cautious and temperate genius of free cities, to which too explicit testimonials of honor paid to an individual have never been congenial."⁹⁹ Other intellectual interests were cultivated not by isolated persons, but by groups bound together by ties, friendship, and the expansive definition of rank in the Republic.¹⁰⁰

This tradition applied in Edwards' case, for within the large inventory of his own papers there is a curious lack of detail about his personal life. Even in his *Notizie di Biografia* (perhaps compiled in 1799 by his son, Giovanni O'Kelly Edwards) there is little

⁹⁶ Conti, 1988, p. 163. Edwards had intervened on a tondo by Paolo Veronese in the ceiling of the Sala dell'Anticollegio in 1776, damaged by many previous restorations and a work nobody wanted to repair. The painting was held to the ceiling by metal clamps and darkened by many retouches.

⁹⁷ Basile & Gloria Tranquilli, p. 49. B.C.V Fondo Cicogna cod.cic 3006/viii.

⁹⁸ William J. Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty in the Age of the Counter-Reformation*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968, p.65, for loyalty to Venice at expense of individual interests.

⁹⁹ Ibid. p. 66, on paucity of biography in Venetian literature, also found in Foscarini's *Della letteratura veneziana*, Venice: 1854.

¹⁰⁰ Logan, p. 273.

commentary or discussion of personal experiences or private thoughts beyond his professional activities. Pietro was born in 1744 in Loreto, the province of Ancona, near Venice to a “good family”—originally English Catholics. His family probably fled that country during the Glorious Revolution in 1688, when Charles II was soundly defeated and Catholic rule in England was rejected.¹⁰¹ The family settled in Venice when Edwards was eight, possibly after an initial sojourn in Lombardy.¹⁰² His father’s profession, their financial situation, number of siblings, and continued connection to England or to an expatriate community are all unknown. Some have speculated that Edwards was born in Lombardy, and that his family came from that province. By the end of the seventeenth-century there already existed a Giovanni Edwards (from Lombardy) in Venice, an eminent prelate, whose portrait dated 1699 hung in the same Seminario Patriarcale (Fig. 6) where Edwards’ papers now reside.¹⁰³ (Fig. 6)

Edwards’ education as a pious young boy was at the hands of the priests and Father Filippini in the school of the Oratorio, where he studied various sciences, literature, and mathematics. He was also schooled in anatomy, astronomy, chemistry, and was knowledgeable in history. Edwards’ obituary (again perhaps composed by his son) in *Il Nuovo Osservatore Veneziana* from March 3, 1821 states that the “Beautiful Arts transported him strongly.” Consequently he was apprenticed in the workshop of the

¹⁰¹ *Notizie di Biografia*, Pietro Edwards MS 787.4-876.4 1799?, S.P.V.; Conti, 1988, p.155; Olivato 1974, p. 68 ff 4; Michelangelo Cagiano de Azevedo, “Provvidenze del Senato Veneziano per le opere d’arte” *Bolletino d’Arte* Annato °1, Rome: 1950, p.113.

¹⁰² “Pietro Edwards,” *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*, Rome: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 1993, pp.296-298.

¹⁰³ Cagiano de Azevedo, p. 114; See G. Lorenzetti, *Fanfulla della Domenico* 23/Nov-1913 & 7/Mar-1915; Mary Merrifield, Volume II, “Extracts from an Original Manuscript...”, pp.845-889, on Edwards life and career told by his son, Giovanni O’Kelly Edwards.

painter Gaspare Diziani (1689-1767), who was a founding member and later President of the new Academy of Venice from 1760 until his death in 1762. As a painter Diziani has been described as “a lesser student of Lazzarini” and an admirer of Sebastiano Ricci. One critic called his painting style “extravagant”—one which “did not fall short in spirit.”¹⁰⁴ The older artist taught the young Pietro Edwards the craft of painting and probably the rudiments of restoration since Diziani was also one of the “official restorers of the Republic.”¹⁰⁵

Edwards’ development as a painter appeared to have been swift. According to his newspaper obituary, an early painting entitled the *Ascensione*, representing Abigail offering gifts to David, amazed his audience. This “youth of fifteen(or seventeen)” could depict the subject with such fire that it was “a grand painting worthy of decorating the walls in the Villa of the Venturalli family,” where it later was destroyed. A sonnet written by Father Grandis in 1771 from the Oratorio celebrated Edwards’ skill and youth. Later this same priest commissioned Edwards to paint the *Heart of Jesus* (n.d) for the walls of the Convento of St. Andrew.¹⁰⁶ This work and another of Edwards’ devotional paintings, an image of St. Luigi Gonzaga, were engraved and enjoyed some popularity.¹⁰⁷ By age twenty Edwards had painted history, fables, portraits and two large panels of the *Holy Virgin of the Rosary with Saints*,(n.d.) and another *Virgin Mother with Saints Joseph*

¹⁰⁴ Obituary, *Il Nuovo Osservatore Veneziana*, Supplemento March 3, 1821; Anna Paola, Zugni-Tauro, *Gaspare Diziani*, Venice: Alfieri, 1971, Appendix p.110 on Antonio Lazzarini (1672-1732) tied to Bellini workshop.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, *Dizionario Biografica...*, pp.296-98.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* Obituary; Pietro Edwards S.P.V.MS 788.12-877.12, Sonnet, “*espondendosi per la seconda volta in pubblico a richiesta universale l’anno 1771, la storia di Abigaile di mano del Sig Pietro Edwards in era d’anni 17-*”*Sonnetto Dedicato al.. Di P. Domenico Grandis.*”

Francis Paul and Anthony (n.d.).

The subject matter of this work reflect the highly religious nature of this and other commissions. Edwards' training with Gaspare Diziani could also account for the turgid sounding titles or possible execution of the work. Although there was a certain energy found in his art, Diziani is also remembered as being merely a competent painter, with a dark "tenebroso" style devoid of any striking originality.¹⁰⁸ Even without seeing Edwards' own art, it is very possible that he would never have achieved great success as a respected artist in the grand Venetian tradition. However, later in his life he won the prize at the Academy often during forty years for drawing from the nude, consequently he must have been a highly competent draftsman.¹⁰⁹ It is suggested that his scientific interests led him naturally into issues of conservation, tying his artistic training together with empiricism.¹¹⁰ This unusual combination permitted Edwards to expand upon the tradition of artisanal solutions and also placed him firmly within the scientific revolution known as the Enlightenment then sweeping Europe.

The biographical notes cited above focused on the offices and honors that Edwards had earned up to the date of the document. The achievements are noteworthy and affirm the impression that Edwards for years was central to the cultural life of Venice for years. As an apprentice to a well known painter, he was initiated as a Deputy into the Liberale Collegio di Pittura in 1767, and in 1774 was chosen to address the ideas of public art

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. Obituary, Pizzeri and Alessandro Innocente were the engravers, but the originals or extant copies are known to me.

¹⁰⁸ Zugni-Tauro, p. 52.

¹⁰⁹ Sandra Marconi-Moschini, *Gallerie dell'Accademia di Venezia: Opere d'Arte dei Secoli XIV e XV*, Rome: 1955, p. vii

¹¹⁰ Basile & Gloria Tranquilli, p.177 &p. 49.

instruction in the Accademia di Pittura, Scultura, Architettura di Venezia. Although considered a member of the Venetian Academy, in 1778 Edwards is listed with other painters who had not submitted the entry work required for admittance.¹¹¹ Perhaps his importance in the political arena on behalf of the Accademia took precedence. However, other Academies throughout Italy also offered him membership, a custom widespread among these institutions.¹¹² (Fig. 7) These included the Reale Accademia di Parma, Accademia Clementina di Bologna, and the Accademia di San Luca di Roma. He served for four years as Presidente di Collegio di Pittura and then as a Master and President of the Accademia del Disegno. In 1778-1783 he was honored as President and then Secretario per perpetuo of the Collegio. Throughout these years from 1778 he was appointed Director of Conservazione of the Public Pictures of Venice and the Rialto, which required both technical expertise and political acumen.¹¹³

At the Fall of the Republic to France in 1797, Pietro Edwards managed for the Provisional Government the appropriation of art taken by the French to Paris.¹¹⁴ His later career can be traced in the years during Austrian control and after the former Republic's annexation during the Regno Italico, as "Delegato della Corona per la scelta degli oggetti di Belle Arti" (1803-07). He served both French and Austrian interests while trying to protect the Venetian artistic heritage. When later elected as President of the Accademia Gallery of Venice, his decisions and selections guaranteed that this institution would

¹¹¹ *Dizionario Biografico...*, p. 296-98; also see Lorenzetti, *Fanfulla della Domenico*, 1915.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, Basile; Pietro Edwards S.P.V., MS 787.4-876.4 *Notizie di Biografia*.

¹¹³ *Ibid. Notizie...*

¹¹⁴ Alberti, "Pietro Edwards e le Opere d' Arte Tolte da Napoleon a Venezia," *Nuova Antologia Rivista di Lettere Scienze ed Art*, Settima Serie Novembre-Dicembre 1926, p. 328, "...dei primi giorni del giugno

contain many of the greatest and most representative works of Venetian Renaissance art.¹¹⁵ This was a notoriously difficult task given the years of French and Austrian occupation and expropriation of art diverted to collectors and galleries all over Europe.

Privata Informazione preliminare al Progetto del Ristauro...1777(1)

Pietro Edwards, artist, restorer and administrator was also a master of rhetoric seen in excerpts from his writings. If the style of Italian official discourse in the eighteenth century was circuitous, its content could not be disguised in Edwards' passionate and poetic presentation of the ills besetting the public pictures in Venice. One of the first official documents we have from Edwards is the *Privata Informazione...* dated June 6, 1771(7) (Appendix #1), elicited by the Riformitori to settle the matter of the Collegio dei Pittori's administration of restoration of public art. Edwards began the paper, dated June 6, 1771, with praise for the Excellent Senate and its efforts to protect these "objects of public Decorum and National interest." Although he was himself a member, Edwards proceeded inexorably to build his case against the Collegio who held "in jealous custody the Celebrated Works that increase the Splendor of the Public Majesty"—especially in the Palazzo Ducale, di Rialto, Procuratori and the Zecca.¹¹⁶

According to Edwards' devastating critique, the Collegio did not present a clear

1797 delibero' di affidare ai cittadino Pietro Edwards l' incarico di prestarsi alle ricerche dei commissari francesi destinati a compiere la razzia artistica..."; See Nepi-Scire, "Cultural...",p.61.

¹¹⁵ Marconi-Moschino 1955, p.viii.

¹¹⁶ Pietro Edwards S.P.V., MS 787.7-876.71, *Privata Informazione preliminare al Progetto del Ristauro generale di tutte le Pitture di Pubblica Ragione, June 1771.*, "Quei medesimi oggetti di pubblico Decoro, e d'interesse Nazionale, da quali l'Eccel. Senato fu in ogni tempo mosso a prestare valida Protezione alla Società dei Veneti Pittori, ed a quelli tra loro che con Singolar onore sostennero il credito di questa Scuola, eccitareno ancora la Sovrana Vigilanza a tenere sotto gelosa custodi le Celebre Opere di quell' arte, che in tanta copia e con tanta Eminenza di merito largamente concorrono ad accrescere lo Splendore della Maesta Pubblica, specialmente nei Ducali Palazzi di San Marco, di Rialto dell' Eccellente Procuratorie e della Zecca."

picture of the progress of restoration work in the monthly reports to the supervising authorities. Edwards accused the artists from the Collegio of vacillating in their recommended treatments because of the “discord of their opinions” and the “private advantage” they gained by treating the same works over and over. The Collegio happily received its stipends, chose the easy rewards from the large number of works destined for restoration, and left the necessary duties of vigilance to unemployed and unskilled artists. In fact, expedience placed the works of art in the protection of those “less intelligent in their craft...who falsified artist’s names, lowered prices... and 100 other bad deeds.”¹¹⁷ Changing the signature on a painting was not an uncommon act for a restorer who wanted to facilitate a sale.¹¹⁸ To Edwards, the result was a confusion of objectives, hidden agenda, and the dismissal of skilled artisans.

Finally, he proclaimed that a distinction must be made between a valued painter (valente pittore) and an expert restorer (perito restauratore). This last point is significant

¹¹⁷ Ibid., “Non è già che per difetto di ottime mire, e della possibile avvedutezza in chi dispose la distribuzione di tali intraprese siasi vilipeso tanta obbrobriosamente alcuno di que Divini Esemplari; ma solo per un prodigio di Sagacità accuita dalla miseria si videro intrusi in quest’ opere degli uomini che non vi si avinsero con altro oggetto che si provvedere alla propria indigenza, sebben ciò si fosse a spese del pubblico Decoro, e della riputazione dei nonstante antichi Maestri. Siccome per la visibile sorgenza di prontamente soccorrere tante belli opere cadenti, e per la brama dimostrate dal Senato di volerle tutte serbare non potevasi credere che assai rimote fosse una qualche decisiva risoluzione onde rimediare all’ importanza di tale bisogno, così le vigile turba degli artisti disoccupati, che d’ordinario sono peggiori, ansiosamente spio’ sempre dietro questo momento, e con quant’ arti mai possono rinvenirsi negli’ ozi dei sfacendati, ognun d’essi cerco’ di prepararsi l’avvenimento in proprio favore. Appena perciò si facero note le pubbliche deliberazioni sullo stabilito riparo d’una o d’ un altra preziosa pittura, che in un punto solo si scossero tutte le fila tese da queste schiera di Pretendenti; ed è incredibile a qual grado giungesse il fermento eccitatosi in questo piccolo circolo per lo sviluppo delle ordite scaltrezze, e per la contrarietà delle susseguento emozioni. Le finesse più delicate di tai procedure non sono quelle che si traspirano; ciò non di meno, assai se ne conosce in fine per congetturar tutto il resto. La protezione di Persone di conto, scielte a bella posta tra le manco intelligenti di tal mestiere; i sotto mani; le falsificazione di nome; l’avvilimento dei prezzi; il rilascio di utilità; e cent altri maliziosi raggiri o condotti, o portati in luce dagli’ Emoli....”

because it is here that Edwards' claims for the future profession of restorer an elevated position in the rigidly defined hierarchy of crafts. Edwards stated:

However, all the paintings restored up to fifty years ago provide evidence that the good practice of such a craft did not keep pace with (that of) painting, but that it (the art of restoration) is still a new profession in the world. In fact it must be so, since (these) arts were introduced only because of necessity of restoring paintings, it could not happen except after their ruin, and closer to the decline of Painting (as an art?). Because the beautiful productions decayed over the years, it became a matter of profession to try out those methods whereby they (the paintings) could be, so to speak, rejuvenated or removed from the further damage of decrepitude.¹¹⁹

Edwards continued:

To confirm this truth is of no small value to observe even now in the art of Restorers, just as happens with every new discovery, that it bears the mark of its novelty in its air of mystery and secrecy exercised by its better masters. Therefore, the loss of this distinction of art from art, made even many enlightened Persons believe in the deception that a Painter, capable of originality in his Profession ought to succeed in the repair of the ancient pictures. Their belief rested on this false concept, and they concluded that what better hands could restore these old examples than the most famous painter of the day? This unhappy result made clear how real and important was this distinction which has been misunderstood from the beginning. This lesson has been purchased at too high a price, having cost not less than the value of the Excellent canvas by Paolo in the ceiling of the Most Excellent College, those of Titian in the Sala delle Quattro Porte, and the incomparable value of the famous *Paradiso* by Tintoretto, and others that suffered the same fate, on which were placed the hands of men of no small reputation as painters like Cavaliere Bambini and Fontebasso, authors of ruinous restorations.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Alessandro Conti, "Giovanni Morelli ed il Restauro Amatoriale," *Giovanni Morelli e la Cultura dei Conoscitori*, Volume I, p. 159, Bergamo: Pier Luigi Lubrini, Editor, 1993, Atti del Convegno Internazionale Bergamo, 1987.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., "Non è conosciuta neppur da tutti Professori di quest' arte la gran differenza che passa tra l' essere valente Pittore e l'essere perito ristaurator di Pitture, e comunque dacche rinacquero tra noi li colori siasi di tempo in tempo accidentalmente accomodato un qualche quadro, tutti li quadri pero ristaurati sono a cinquant' anni addietro mostrano ad evidenza che la buona pratica di tal mestiere non si avanzo dello stesso passo con la Pittura, ma che tutta via ella e' nel mondo una profession ancor nuova. Di fatti cosi' dev' essere imperciocche l' arti s'introducono solo per la necessita' di ristaurare li Quadri non pote' occorrere se non che dopo il ravvimento, e presso all' invecchiar della Pittura, allorche, decadute per gli anni le sue belle produzioni, fu di mestieri tentare i modi onde ringiovenirle per dir cosi o torle agli ulteriori danni della decrepitezza."

¹²⁰ Ibid., " A confermare questa verità non poco vale ciò che tuttora s' osserva nell' arte dei Ristauratori, che, appunto come succede d' ogni novella scoperta, ancora conserva il carattere della sua novita' nel aria mistero, e di segretezza con la quale viene esercitato da suoi migliori maestri. La mancanza adunque di

The closed and protective world of the guild and Collegio had perpetuated both the jealous control of the fate of the art of the Republic and the public debate about its care. The high cost of the restoration, the reliance on ambiguous skills of an artist not trained as a restorer, and the traditions of secrecy around restoration materials and techniques did not serve the public good.¹²¹

At this point, Edwards' commentary encouraged the commitment taken by the Riformatori to reform the institutions of custody of the public pictures. He dismissed the Collegio's claim that their choice of certain artisans benefited the whole community of painters as a pretense and declared that the Collegio had attempted to shirk every responsibility for damages inflicted on paintings by inexpert hands.¹²² The picture emerges of a fiercely competitive and corrupt world. Professors wary of being scrutinized knew that, sometimes wrongly, competitors would find fault with their work. Consequently, the same artists who did the work acted as inspectors, providing less-than-objective reports to the Magistrato al Sal. This state of affairs became part of a public forum, and it divided painters into opposing factions. As Prior of the Collegio, Giuseppe Bertani was placed in

queste distinzioni di arte da arte fece cader anche molte illuminate Persona nell'inganno di credere che il Pittore capace di originalmente, e con merito trattar la sua Professione riuscire non meno dovesse nel riparare le antiche Pitture; e su questo falso concetto appoggiandosi conclusero che a mani migliori affidar non potevasi il restauro dei vecchia esemplari, che a quelle del Pittore più rinomate del tempo. La infelicità però della riuscita fece chiaramente quanto reale ed importante si fosse la differenza non intesa da prima; ma troppo cara si pagò quest'istruzione, che non costa meno di quanto valevano L' Egregie Tele di Paolo poste nel soffitto dell' Eccellentissimo Collegio, quale di Tiziano nella Sala dello Quattro Porte, e la incomparabile del famoso *Paradiso* di Tintoretto, con altre ancora corsero la stessa sorte, e sulle quali poser le mani degli uomini di credito non inferiore tra i Pittori al Kaviliere Bambini ed al Fontebasso autori degli indicati rovinosi restauri."

¹²¹ Pietro Edwards, S.P.V MS 787.7-876.7 October 21, 1777, "E certo che il prezzo conseguito dai migliori restauratori è molto grande. In esso si considera non solo il Capitale che si salva da deperimento; ma di più si prendono in riflesso le circostanze d' un arte che tutta via vien trattata con qualche sorta di mistero; ed in fine si proporziona ancora la mercede con la fatica, la quale a dir vero, è spesso volte incredibile."

an untenable position as an object of criticism and gossip. Edwards rushed to Bertani's defense in his report, but admitted that the whole affair had tarnished the reputation of this valuable artist.

The situation called for a committed objective Supervisor, an arbitrator and expert in restoration, not just in painting. The Collegio wanted to retain control over the restoration of the public pictures of the Republic, but they did not know how to create a new institutional structure to abolish the old corrupt practices. As Edwards so eloquently wrote about the threatened artistic heritage,

For more than three centuries these craftsmen contributed so worthily to the Glory and Renown of Venetian genius. Their sublime memories perish, meanwhile, in ways more irreparably (than the paintings). Whereas these excellent products of our celebrated brushes are revered almost superstitiously, and sought after with a transcendent profusion of gold from other nations, to which Nature did not offer the gift of a Titian, or a Paolo; we who have in common with them a country, and we, their depository of honored works and of their fame, contemplate coldly the downfall of these same priceless works...¹²³

The "Pretenders" whom Edwards chastised so thoroughly in this document included private collectors, "Of so many sublime examples left in the hands of a Group, generally ignorant, if not hostile to the belle arti, only a few remain that are not lacerated, blackened, badly retouched, and hung in dangerous places and in various ways

¹²² Olivato 1974, p. 44. also Appendix Document 52, p. 160.

¹²³ Edwards, *Privata Informazione...* MS 787.7-876.7-1, "Periscono intanto vie più irrimediabilmente le preziose memorie di quei sublimi artefici, che per più di tre Secoli così degnamente contribuirono alla Gloria ed alla rinomanza nel Veneto Genio; e la dove gl' eccellenti prodotti dei celebri nostri pennelli sono venerati quasi superstiziosamente, e con trascendente profusione d' oro ricercati dall' altre Nazioni, alle quali la Natura non fu mai cortese d'un Tiziano o d'un Paolo, noi che pur ci pregiamo d'aver con essi comune la Patria, e siamo i fortunati depository delle loro più Egregie fatiche; e delle Fama loro miriamo poi freddamente la rovina di queste stesse pregiolissime Opere, senza risolversi mai a secondare le ottime intenzioni del Principe Liberale che pur vorrebbe salvarli."

harmed...¹²⁴ Edwards wrote that eminent foreigners had depleted the once abundant galleries of the State and only “small private shelters remain for the dusty leftovers of the art now banished from haughty residences...”¹²⁵

How could official concern influence owners of privately held works of art? For years the Republic had considered many of the works in churches, scuole, and private hands to be under its jurisdiction, and periodically acted to prevent foreign dispersals and to see that the art was protected in situ.¹²⁶ The Senate took the opportunity during this period to extend jurisdiction officially to churches like the Redentore and Salute and to the Terraferma (mainland) to protect works of art in public buildings.¹²⁷ The condition of the many paintings and sculptures located in the immense collections held by religious bodies was often terrible. The large stone structures suffered from perennially damp interiors; seasonal extremes of temperature; lofty, leaky ceilings and roofs; candle smoke; wax drippings; fire; and theft.

Anton Maria Zanetti and the Public Pictures

Another important defender of Venetian art who was active concurrently with Edwards at this time was Antonio Maria Zanetti (1716-1778), the Librarian of the

¹²⁴ Ibid., “Di tanti sublimi esemplari lasciati in mano d’ un Ceto generalmente ignorante, se non nemico delle bell’ arti, assai pochi sono i non laceri, anneriti, abbruciati, mal redipinte, situati a svantaggio, e in varie guise sostanzialmente lesi....”

¹²⁵ Ibid., “...al plauso degli’ Emuli Forestiere, votate quasi tutte le doviziose Gallerie dello Stato, e solo pochissimi privati asili rimanghino ai polverasi avanzi di quest’ arte, sbanditi adesso dalle superbe abitazioni, dove crederebbesi ch’ ella avesse un diritto...”; Also see printed in Olivato, Appendix Document 52, p.162.

¹²⁶ Vianello, p.138, “...opere che trovandosi in luoghi pubblici, erano considerate pubbliche, anche se appartenenti a scuole o privati.”

¹²⁷ Olivato 1974, p. 57, ff26 on R. Fulin 1868 pp.103-05 for a transcription of deliberations of the Senate July 27, 1773 called, “*Osservazioni intorno alla custodia delle pitture pubbliche delle citta’ di Terraferma.*” also found in the A.S.V. Consiglio dei Dieci, Secreta=Fa 74 Inquisitori di Stato Busta 909 fasc #1.

Marciana. Appointed to enforce the restrictions in the new legislation, he sought to improve the quality and minimize the quantity of restoration work being done. One of his most important contributions was the suggestion to the Tribunal of the Inquisitori di Stato that an inventory be compiled of all the important paintings in churches, schools, monasteries and other buildings in the Republic and its territories. Zanetti had been directly involved with the new edition of Marco Boschini's *Ricche Minere* (1733), the *Vecchie pitture a fresco* (1760), and a history of Venetian painting called *Delle Pitture Veneziana* (1771). This latter history was effectively a guide to the city's art and Zanetti was considered highly knowledgeable on all related subjects.

The Council of Ten issued a decree on July 12, 1773 as Zanetti as Director-Inspector of the Public Pictures and to create a catalogue describing every existing work including the artist's name. Zanetti intended to appoint a public inspector of the artistic patrimony in every city within Venetian territory. In the second volume of his Catalogue he announced to the Inquisitori di Stato the requirement that all public works in all palazzi, churches, islands and territories be inspected and that those damaged by time or sold to foreigners be identified. This revolutionary method of keeping track of many and varied precious items gave birth to the modern practice of cataloguing, its criteria inspired by the Venetian effort.¹²⁸ How could the Republic protect what it did not know it had?

¹²⁸ See Nepi-Scire, "Cultural...", p.66, on Zanetti; also Olivato (1974), p.56, "Da questo momento lo Zanetti con la paziente cura tipica del bibliotecario qual' era, si assunse li compito di sorvegliare i beni dei luoghi sacri ed anzitutto passo' velocemente alla stesura di una catalogo che comprendesse l' elenco dei quadri di maggior importanza, contrassegnandoli col soggetto, col nome dell' autore, spesso indicando lo stato di conservazione e la necessita di eventuali restauri."; also see Olivato, Appendix Document 35, pp. 134-35; Also see Zanetti's report in A.S.V. Busto 909 I & II dated March 1774 in a file called *Note de' quadri più degni che esistono nelle Chiese, Scuole, ed altri luoghi pubblici della Citta' e dell Isole*

Zanetti also stipulated that paintings could no longer be entrusted to restorers without “public permission”; every school or church compiled a list with works to be restored and was to be held accountable for all changes or damage done to the art. These lists and receipts were to contain the official stamp of the Lion of St. Mark, and every six months the inspector was to notify the Inquisitori di Stato of the disposition or removal of works of art and their condition. Zanetti distributed a form to all religious entities that contained the rules from that time forward for the custody of all “public art” and that threatened severe sanctions for noncompliance.¹²⁹ The form itself—addressed to “Alli Rettori di Brescia, Padova, Crema, Bergamo, Salo, Vicenza, Rovigo, Udine, Treviso, Feltre, Belluno, Cividale di Friuli, Conegliano, Chiozza, etc.”—and Zanetti’s ensuing reports to the Senate reveal his opinions about various works of art and their condition.

Zanetti understood the artistic and economic importance of the Venetian Renaissance legacy and the perceived decline of painting after Paolo Veronese.¹³⁰ With this in mind and the apparent deterioration of antique art, his reports focus on Renaissance Masters. Zanetti the Younger was not considered a highly creative person in the arts. Indeed he appears to have come by his interests through a family connection. His famous older cousin, Antonio Maria Zanetti the Elder (1679-1767), was an influential collector and connoisseur and also a painter who favored the Mannerist and Rococo styles and was a pioneer in print collecting. His taste was considered impeccable and in his book *Delle Antiche Statue Greche e Romane* (1740) he gave full reign to his passion for classical

circonvicine consegnati ai rispettivi Superiori di essi luoghi in ordine al decreto dell "Eccelso Consiglio dei Dieci 20 Aprile, 1773.

¹²⁹ Olivato 1974, p. 56 and p.57 ff.25.

¹³⁰ Michael Levey, *Painting in Eighteenth Century Venice*, London: Phaidon, 1988, pp.8-9.

antiquity. This work established itself as a landmark in evolving Venetian Neoclassical preferences. He was a ubiquitous figure on the Venetian cultural scene, a friend to collector Pierre Crozat and English Resident Joseph Smith, and an agent for many artists like Sebastiano Ricci. Inspector and bibliophile, Anton Maria Zanetti the Younger was better known for his abilities as a critic. He favored Classicism in his own painting and drawing.¹³¹

An example of Zanetti the Younger's reports from one of his tours of inspection included six unidentified altarpieces in the Church of the Redentore in Guidecca. Zanetti noted that these were not of a "...primary beauty," yet still not too "deformed in his eyes" by time or neglect and really only needed simple cleaning. He rejected the idea of lining, where a new piece of canvas is glued to the back of the original. This was a risky procedure for a painting and Zanetti called it a technique of "modern restoration which should be abandoned."¹³² In the Scuola Grande di San Marco the four famous paintings by Jacopo Tintoretto which depicted the miracles of the Evangelist needed repair; the one near the window, a "sublime work," had an encrusted surface. The Paris Bordone in the *albergo* was a "most beautiful picture," but difficult to decipher, while another rare work "with a storm at sea" by Giorgione da Castelfranco needed clarity by lifting the "darkening of time."¹³³

¹³¹ Vianello, p.135; See Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters...*, pp.343-345 on both Zanetti; See Rosand on Zanetti as critic of Tintoretto p. 207, p.303ff 64, Titian p. 256 ff17, p.271 ff85; Molmenti, *Venice: Its Individual Growth...*, ff 1, p. 81, Smith hired Giovanni Sasso and Luca Breda to restore canvases in his palace.

¹³² Olivato 1974, p. 59 ff 31, also Appendix Doc 37-38, pp. 136-137; A.S.V. Busta 909 January 17, 1774 A.S.V. Busta 909.

¹³³ Ibid., Olivato, Appendix Document 38, p.138, "...che rappresenatano miracoli di esso santo Evangelista, hanno bisogno di riparo; e specialmente quello ch' è fra le finestre, opera sublime, che gia'

At the church of SS Giovanni e Paolo Zanetti found grave damages to Titian's stupendous *The Death of St. Peter Martyr* (1520) (destroyed by fire in 1867). In spite of its condition Zanetti called it the most beautiful work in Venice and perhaps in all of Italy. He noted the painting's surface problems with dry and scaly pigment and dirty varnish and said that the "panel of this picture causes difficulty to whoever places hands on it...."¹³⁴ The darkened condition of the painting can be traced further back to the *Volpato Manuscript* (c.1670), which contains the dialogue between two apprentices who are engaged in a conversation about the destructive practice of applying oil to the surface of a painting to facilitate copying. The copyists did this to intensify the color and tonal values temporarily. It also resulted in a buildup of many layers of oil laid down on the surface that ultimately obscured the original image. Because so many artists had deeply admired the Titian painting for many years, it had suffered accordingly.¹³⁵ Zanetti warned that its restoration should rightly fill the restorer with fear and "loving caution."¹³⁶ Over time Zanetti conceived a great distrust for restorers and their work. He was more and more reluctant to permit the precious treasures to be treated, finding the results unsatisfying and

comincia a scrostare. Nell' albergo di essa scola (sic) è in pessimo stato un quadro di Paris Bordone, che mostra il vecchio barcarolo in atto di presentare alla Serenissima Signoria l'anello miraculoso di S. Marco...L' altro rarissimo quadro vicino a quello con una tempesta di mare dipinto da Giorgione da Castelfranco ha bisogno similmente di ripare; e d'essere renduto visibile col levarne il soverchio offuscamento del tempo."

¹³⁴ Ibid., pp. 60-61, "...il più quadro che sia in Venezia e forse in Italia...E questa tavola veramente una di quelle pitture che portano somma difficoltà a chi dee porvi mano..."; Meilman, p. 98 ff53. Titian painted the *Assunta* in oil on panel, perhaps because the lighting problems in its intended site. Also using white gesso as a ground could help achieve a more luminous and readable surface.

¹³⁵ Merrifield, Volume II, p. 750-751, The apprentices referred to the copyists as "sacrilegious blockheads" for the disfigurement of this prized painting. This practice continued into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

¹³⁶ Olivato, 1974, p. 61, "...ed e' tanto geloso l' impegno di ristorarla, che fa nascer dubbio se si dovesse farlo o no a chi vi riflette. Ma il gusto timore di perderla affatto, ch' è l' ultimo de' mali; e le amorose

the process fraught with danger.

His ethical and aesthetic conflict was not entirely new in Venice affirmed by the Government's attempts to control the "use of the imaginative brush."¹³⁷ Zanetti continued to ponder these serious issues after his report on the *St Peter Martyr* by Titian and two years later he wrote:

(Its total loss)... would be the primary reason for putting a hand to a sublime work: and no one should ever touch them... The decision to restore old paintings must be carefully weighed, perhaps even more than is usually said. And only the fear of losing them, in fact... some solemn loss can in some way compel their mending.¹³⁸

Another famous example to Zanetti concerned the historic fire that broke out in the (Dominican PP) in SS Giovanni e Paolo. The famous *Feast in the House of Levi* (1573) by Paolo Veronese had only barely escaped destruction by being divided on the spot into three separate pieces.¹³⁹ The three parts were then rolled up and transported to a secure location. This resulted in long crude incisions and paint loss between the right and left central columns in the center of the composition. In 1607 there was also added some 4.5-6 cm. of extra canvas folded at bottom to recreate the proportions of the original. Edwards wrote later that "the painting divided into three pieces does not contain its original frieze of architecture."¹⁴⁰ In 1698 the *Feast* was described as "ruined from the

cautele, che usar si portrebbero...". *The Death of St Peter Martyr* was destroyed during a fire that swept the chapel of the Rosary in SS Giovanni e Paolo in 1867; See Wethey, p. 153.

¹³⁷ Conti, 1988, p. 156.

¹³⁸ Ibid.; Olivato 1974, Appendix Document 41, p. 142, "...ragione primaria per cui si mostrò necessario il por mano in un' opera della prima sublimità: e che senza questo non dovea esser mai tocca da chi si sia. In fatti facile sempre più si rende il persuadersi che molto ben ponderata, e forse più quel che si dice, dee essere la risoluzione di ristaurare gli antichi quadri; e solo timore di perderli affatto... qualche solenne mancanza, puo obbligare in certo modo gli accomodamenti...."

¹³⁹ Giovanna Nepi-Scire, "Il Restauro del Convito in Casa di Levi di Paolo Veronese," *Quaderni* #11, Venezia: 1984, pp.13-55.

¹⁴⁰ Nepi-Scire, p.22

fire” and Giovanni Battista Rossi, the conservator of the public pictures from 1689 to 1793 was hired to repair it for 5 ducati. Rossi was a mediocre painter and a follower of Padovanino. In 1776 Zanetti described *The Feast...* as flaking with desiccated color, saying “the danger must be reduced or the damages will grow greater.”¹⁴¹ Zanetti believed in this case, that careful restoration would promote the longevity of such a precious and illustrious work.¹⁴²

Later Edwards’ colleague, Mengardi, related in 1779 that the celebrated picture was “lacerated in some places and generally peeling from time and paint on gesso...it ran the risk of completely perishing.” It was placed in the primary category of repair in 1782 and again in 1787, “to save it from being completely lost.”¹⁴³ The painting was considered one the Venice’s most important works and the French accepted it in exchange for Tintoretto’s *Paradiso* by 1797 a fragile wreck.¹⁴⁴

Zanetti recommended that only a few works from 1773 to 1778 be repaired because he adamantly opposed the over-restoration of Venetian art. He believed that paintings were lined too often, and that even if time was destructive to art, restoration was too dangerous a remedy. It was to be considered as a last resort and “put in practice so

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p.30.

¹⁴² Olivato, 1974, Appendix Document 42, p. 142, “Verso il principio del presente secolo un improvviso e furioso incendio seguito nel vicin Reffetorio, costrinse alcuni di que’ Religiosi, e specialmente un coraggioso polacco, a salvare dalla imminente perdita quest’ opera col dividerla prestamente in tre parti; e con quella diligenza che potean permettere pochi momenti, farne tre ruotoli e asportarla in luogo sicuro; come segue. Da questo violento asporto si trovo’ per necessità in molti luoghi la pittura pregiudicata da piccole ma frequenti crepature, per essere l’ imprimitura di semplice gesso; ma fortunatamente non si perdettero veruna parte essenziale o importante; come sono le teste le mani e simili: benché alcune abbian sofferto qualche pregiudizio Perciò desiderabile si può rendere un pronto riparo con la ricercata diligenza e discrezione; assicurando in queste parte la durezza di un’ opera ch’ è un delle più pregiabili fra le pubbliche di questà inclita dominante....”

¹⁴³ Ibid., Nepi-Scire, p. 30.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p.31.

that some famous works might not perish.”¹⁴⁵ Anton Maria Zanetti and Pietro Edwards acted as the vanguards for responsible preservation at this crucial time. They consistently articulated doubts about common restoration practices. Zanetti further expanded his role when he introduced new evidence of illegal sales that he believed were not in the Republic’s long-term interests.¹⁴⁶

The Taste for Venetian Art

From as early as the sixteenth century the government had tried to control traffic in precious art, particularly those works displayed in the public buildings or important to the self-image of the Republic as the heir to Roman glory. When the Dominicans arranged to sell the prized *Death of St. Peter Martyr* by Titian the Senate intervened. The Grimani family provided another example when they intended to auction off an antique statue of *Marcus Agrippa* that adorned the courtyard of their palace in Santa Maria Formosa. The workmen were just raising a platform to remove it when Cristoforo Cristofole, Sargent of the dreaded Inquisition, appeared at the scene. He raised his hat to the statue saying, “The Supreme Council of the Inquisition, understanding that you, Signor Marco are about to leave this city, have sent me to wish you and his Excellency Grimani, a pleasant journey.” The contract was cancelled immediately and both sculpture and owner stayed in Venice.¹⁴⁷ In another notorious case, three altarpieces and organ doors by Paolo Veronese in San Giacomo di Murano were sold for only a few *zecchini* (pennies) to John Murray, the

¹⁴⁵ Conti, 1988, p. 157, “...da mettersi in pratica nel caso d’ imminente rovina, per non lasciare affatto perire qualche opere insigne.”

¹⁴⁶ Haskell, *Patrons and Painters*, p. 345.

¹⁴⁷ Molmenti, *Venice: Its Individual Growth...Part III Volume I*, pp.81-82.

English Resident in Venice.¹⁴⁸

On various occasions stolen art caused more problems than bad restoration or illicit sales. This scenario played out in the cases of the *Arca di Noe* by Jacopo Bassano in the church of S. Maria Maggiore and the painting by Carletto Calari (c.1555) in Treviso, whose removal was arranged by the English consul. Perhaps the return of this particular canvas would not have been so important to the State if it had been merely a workshop piece. It was, however, attributed to the artist unequivocally. Such complications made the theft and sale of works even more difficult to document and regulate. The situation had gone on for many years, and although there was little hope of stopping it completely, the authorities were spurred on by the alarming depletion of the Venetian art. When informed of an impending sale, the Magistrati tried to intervene quickly, but were not always successful in preventing it.¹⁴⁹

Cultural and historical incentives seem paramount in the Republic's efforts to preserve its art, but economic considerations always drove the various campaigns as well. The Magistrato al Sal was appointed as the official body to oversee the preservation of the public pictures of Venice c. 1678, because they were responsible for the collection and distribution of public monies. They were, in turn, supervised by the Pregadi or Senate, who governed internal financial matters of state like taxation.¹⁵⁰ The final decisions regarding the fate of the art was, as is still the case today, a question of who would or could pay for it. When the government extended its decrees of protection to churches,

¹⁴⁸ Vianello, p. 138.

¹⁴⁹ Olivato 1974, p. 50, The abbess of the Monastery of Santa Maria Maggiore in Venice sold fourteen canvases and substituted them with copies. Only three originals were recovered still within the borders of the Republic.

schools, and other places where works of art were collected, this did not indicate that the state was financially responsible for the care and maintenance of the works. From the beginning the government attempted to locate this liability with the possessors of the art, whether rich nobles with known masterpieces or the wealthy clergy and religious organizations who were better prepared actually to pay for the kind of care the work needed.

The Holy Republic and Public Good

Why would these separate and seemingly autonomous social bodies, particularly the church, bow to the directives of the civic government? Once again the careful Venetian balance between secular and religious, between authoritarianism and republicanism, had implications for the policy of preservation of art in the Republic. The ancient habit of associating religion with the state probably developed from Byzantine influence and Venice had developed characteristic ways of exhibiting the relationship between spiritual and temporal power. The constitution required participation of the Doge and other officials in great religious processions while the liturgy contained important civic components.¹⁵¹

In Venice the social function of religion served as an instrument by which the government maintained the rule of law. Religion reinforced the political autonomy of the Republic helping to ensure freedom from papal influence in the affairs of state. This opened the Venetian church to control by lay government, which did not preserve a

¹⁵⁰ Bouwsma, p.61.

¹⁵¹ Norwich, p.283; Bouwsma, p.63-65. on Venetian secularism, "This holy republic is governed with such order that it is a marvelous thing."; Muir, pp.187-89.

distinction between clerical and secular responsibility. In Venice, the nobility supervised ecclesiastical and secular administration. The government dealt with such issues as the acquisition and custody of relics, content of sermons, administration of Mass, the cult of saints, religious festivals, and parish administration. Lesser clergy were elected by the property owners in a parish and Bishops were chosen by the Venetian Senate. This guaranteed that the upper clergy of Venice and her territories were drawn from Venetian nobility. Rather than a class, whose position rested on any distinguishable economic base, the Venetian nobility was in reality a legally defined order.¹⁵² Their attitudes towards the state, their education and social milieu, reflected their privileged social position. After their selection, Venetian clergy were considered subjects of the Venetian government and were expected to show loyalty to the state rather than to the Church.¹⁵³

The Inquisitori di Stato intended that the congregations, *scuole*, and confraternities would handle the expenses of maintaining the works they had originally commissioned. The state would contribute supplemental expenses as needed, but warned that these should be minimal. The state accepted that there could be delays in work done because of its cost or complexity.¹⁵⁴ They relied on Zanetti's surveillance to keep them current and informed. Zanetti, in turn, sent punctual reports on the development of this or that restoration. In his letter to the Tribunal from 8 April, 1775 he commented on the beautiful but damaged work by Paris Bordone in the Scuole di San Marco, and he encouraged a renewed effort for its repair. In Santa Maria Formosa the priests claimed that both the

¹⁵² Logan, pp.273-274. During the sixteenth century the gap widened between rich and poor nobles. The problem of indigent nobles gained more attention by the eighteenth century with the rise of a group called the Barnabotti, inhabiting the parish of St. Barnaba.

¹⁵³ Bouwsma, p.78

lack of funds and a competent restorer delayed the work on the five panels of the *Santa Barbara* by Palma il Vecchio. Zanetti professed disbelief at all of these excuses and asked the Magistrate to intervene. The Scuole of S. Vincenzo Ferrer requested to rebuild the whole altar which held the precious *Death of St. Peter Martyr* by Titian in SS Giovanni e Paolo. To Zanetti's chagrin, elevated cost and problems in the reconstruction further postponed work on the painting.¹⁵⁵

His methodical progress and level of success can be measured when he returned to the locations again to check on progress. By September 26, 1775 the Paris Bordone (no title) and the "tempest on the sea" by Giorgione in the Scuola di San Marco were repaired successfully. The *Santa Barbara* by Palma il Vecchio was restored with "much love," and on that Saint's day returned to its place in the church. The Brothers of the Scuole di St. Vincenzo Ferrer tried to respond promptly to the public outcry for the repair of the beloved Titian mentioned above, and finally the work was finished by March, 1776. The restorers stabilized the dry and crumbling pigment that threatened parts of the surface.¹⁵⁶

Zanetti's careful documentation presents a glimpse of the state of conservation of many respected works. He reported that in the church of St. Bartolommeo the monks had not protected two figures painted by Fra Bartolomeo del Piombo, a follower of Giorgione, even after the Order had been warned many times.¹⁵⁷ Zanetti's restrained policy of

¹⁵⁴ Olivato 1974, p. 62; Appendix Document 39, p. 139.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.; also see Olivato 1975-76 "Sebastiano Ricci..."; For more on this painting see Meilman, p. 108, Ruskin saw the painting out of its frame on floor in 1852; Alberti after Napoleon took the painting p.333; Leroix on Hacquin restoration, reception *Manuel du Museum Francais, Ecole Venitienne*, Paris, 1805, 200-228.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid. Olivato 1974, Appendix Document 41. p.142.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., pp. 143-144.

restoration did not please everyone.¹⁵⁸ Edwards showed his displeasure in 1777 as the President of the Collegio dei Pittori when he criticized the restoration of two paintings by Liberi in the Scuola di San Marco. One had been damaged from a fall during Zanetti's tenure as Inspector.¹⁵⁹ Edwards feared that if the restoration of works was not begun promptly, the art would not survive as a coherent and aesthetic unity. Zanetti maintained his position and fulfilled his responsibilities. His last report dated March 1778, seems devoid of more intense advocacy. He noted that the law of the land was being obeyed in the places he visited and then reminded the Inquisitori that their duty was the protection and also the repair of these "most beautiful works in Venice."¹⁶⁰ Anton Maria Zanetti died on November 4, 1778.

Pietro Edwards Takes Charge

The Government had appeared to have an effective plan to protect its artistic heritage, and in Zanetti found a capable inspector. However, the recurrent theme in Venetian restoration history is the absolute uncertainty of any permanent solution. Even during Zanetti's tenure the same problems frustrated his idealism and the government's intent.¹⁶¹ The two issues most pressing to the authorities were these: the continuing deterioration of the public pictures and the recurrent doubts about the competence and

¹⁵⁸ Ibid. Appendix Document 47, pp. 146-7, *Ma facendo vedere l'esperienza essere ogni rimedio dell' arte assai pericoloso; e molte volte dal pubblico non approvato...*

¹⁵⁹ Basile, 1994, in "Regesto," by Gloria Tranquilli, Document 14 from March 20, 1776, Edwards criticized the work of Inspector Zanetti on the two paintings in the Scuola di San Marco and a panel by Liberi in A.A.V.B.a Atti del Collegio dei Pittori 1689-1798.

¹⁶⁰ Olivato 1974, Appendix Document 46, p. 146, "Sono osservate le pubbliche leggi nella custodia delle scelte pitture con attenzione e fedeltà...."

¹⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 67-68, In 1776 when the ceiling in the Sala di Maggior Consiglio again showed serious damage, a universal examination of all paintings and stretchers was begun at the order of the Magistrati al Sal. The anticipated expense for the removal of all the canvases was 300 ducati, and this was separate

professionalism of the class of restorers being hired. Pietro Edwards, now President of the Collegio elected in 1776 and active as a restorer, moved phantom-like behind the drive for restoration reform. His stunning exposé of the Collegio in “Privata Informazione...” (1771 or 1777) was still relevant, and now he was in charge of the very organization that he had accused. In 1775 he handled two jobs concurrently, one for the Magistratura delle Rason Vecchie and the other to the Magistrati al Sal. His intervention in 1776 on a *tondo* by Paolo Veronese painted in tempera on the ceiling of the Sala dell’ Anticollegio and his treatments of paintings in the Sala di Maggior Consiglio were highly respected by the authorities in the government.¹⁶²

Edwards’ expertise had not gone unnoticed in the private sector either. He had received an invitation to work for James Wright, a collector and former English Resident of Venice then living in Ireland.¹⁶³ These contacts reveal his elevated stature as a connoisseur within the noble and cultural community in the Republic and his notoriety at the forefront of the public debate about restoration reform. The range of his contacts and influence in Venice and Europe expanded during his long and eventful career. This interest and respect encouraged Edwards to produce diverse and thoughtful writings, but he still was investigated by the secret police some eight months before his official appointment. He was finally appointed by the Senate in September 3, 1778 over some of his well known colleagues including Bertani, Baldassinni, and Diziani to the position of “Ispettore al generale restauro delle pubbliche pitture. The Senate proposal considered

from any actual restoration work. The authorities knew that if the previous structural work commissioned in 1773 was never completed, there was no point in beginning work on the paintings.

¹⁶² Merrifield, p.847; Olivato Appendix Document 53, p.166.

Edwards' appointment:

Of equal importance as a result is the already suggested appointment of an inspector of intelligence and proven integrity, who with attention and care should assist this work and decide on the quality and merit of the works. If the Council is convinced, therefore determined to entrust this important task to another Professor Sig. Pietro Edwards, who alone is considered worthy to fulfill so delicate a task, having already shown his ability in various operations, especially in the public work of restoring the ceiling by Paolo Veronese in the Sala dell Anticollegio, then in danger of perishing; and who was by the Senate, in preceding decrees, acknowledged honest and skillful, and who has obligingly consented to accept the employment for certain considerations.¹⁶⁴

Edwards' reports to the Provveditori and Savio Cassier in the Senate heralded a new approach to restoration in Venice. He appeared to combine a gift for organization with a an abundance of explanation. Perhaps one of the faults of policy in the past was that the experts who analyzed the complex problems suggested solutions that were both too shallow and too broad. This left many loopholes in policy for the self-interested, the greedy, or the incompetent. Pietro Edwards' grasp of details, his eloquence to cajole, flatter, and convince, would establish his power and influence in Venice for fifty years to come. Perhaps more remarkable for the time was his vision of establishing a professional class from the miscellaneous artisans and experts who had patched together the unsuccessful policy that Edwards would attempt to change.

¹⁶³ Basile, 1994, n. 9, p. 53.; also see Pietro Edwards S.P.V. MS 788.12-877.12, The invitation came both from the Bishop Devi and the English Resident, John Strange.

¹⁶⁴ Merrifield, p. 862 ff 1; Olivato, 1974, Appendix Document 53, p. 166, Appendix Document 53 September 3, 1778, "Di eguale essenzialità risultando poscia anche la suggerita destinazione d' un Ispettore d' intelligenza e provata integrità che non attenzione ed impegno accudisca a quest' opera, e decide del merito, de' qualità de' lavori, si persuade questo Consiglio di appoggiare geloso incarico all' altro riputato Professor Edwards; che solo viene riconosciuto idoneo a così delicata incombenza, come quello che diede saggio della sua abilità in varie operazioni, e specialmente in quella pubblica di ricuperare il perilitante soffitto di Paolo Veronese essiente nella Sala dell' AntiCollegio, che fu già dal Senato in precedenti decreti riconosciuto onesto, e capace; e che si rileva con compiacimento disposto anche a rassegnarsi mediante li praticati eccitamenti."; Basile, p. 50, also ff.8, p. 53, Nonostante la fiducia di cui

Chapter Two

A Unity of Method: Theory

Why is Pietro Edwards so significant in the history of conservation? It is clear that before he arrived on the scene, the Republic of Venice was already engaged in saving their irreplaceable collections of public and private art. They had attempted various remedies, both bureaucratic and technical. However, it is also apparent that these campaigns were erratic, producing some temporary successes and many failures. The insular world of the artists' associations like the Collegio dei Pittori was prone to corruption. The complex machinations of state-sponsored endeavors lacked continuity and an overarching vision for the future. At this point, Pietro Edwards grasped the importance of the development of a theoretical basis for restoration that would support and guide its practice. The evolution of this unity of method can be documented by his numerous writings, which were produced with regularity throughout his long career and based on his day-to-day experience as Inspector and restorer of art. From the outset, his understanding was reactive and his methodology was a response to the wide variety of situations, decisions, and problems that restorers faced daily. He would move beyond this mode within seven years of taking charge, and would synthesize the issues of cause and remedy that provided the foundation for a professional ethic.¹⁶⁵

His activities in the years following his appointment by Senate decree on September 3, 1778 focused on the organization of restoration of all the public painting in

Edwards presso il governo furono eseguite, da parte delle Consulti dei Savi, indagini segrete sulla sua persona; trascorsero otto mesi prima che i Savi proponessero il suo nome al Senato.”

¹⁶⁵ Gloria Tranquilli, p.173.

the Palazzo Ducale complex and the government offices in the Rialto, the financial center of the city. Out of this huge, ongoing project, Edwards' theory of conservation practice grew from practical example and pragmatic application. One dominant principle in his unified method would evolve from the idea that one must "remedy the effects, but never in this action, exceed the causes."¹⁶⁶ In other words, you must not destroy a painting in order to save it. However, there were always certain limitations, in Edwards' opinion, that a restorer must accept when dealing with objects made of unstable materials and subject to time. He eloquently warned that "Frailty is not a unique disgrace to the production of the brush, but the general condition of created things...Men will never truly renounce from truth, the aids of curative medicine for the sole reason that they do not include an elixir for immortality."¹⁶⁷ Any restoration would by its very nature be as impermanent as life itself. Yet Edwards believed the effort must be made to preserve that art for future generations.

Edwards' methodology developed through the early years of his administration.

He began by selecting a team of restorers, those men whose experience and skill he

¹⁶⁶ Pietro Edwards MS 787.6-876.7/10 S.P.V, *Dissertazione preliminare al piano di custodia da istituirsi per la possibile preservazione, e per il miglior mantenimento delle pubbliche pitture*, 1785, "Sembra che l' idea general ed astratta d'una perfetta preservazione supponga il rimovimento delle cagioni, da cui opererebbe la rovina di ciò che si vuol preservare. Ridotti per altro all'esecutivo ed al pratico ci avvediamo, che siccome non sempre possono distruggersi originariamente le cause del danno, così la preservazione deve restringersi il più delle volte a sospendere soltanto l' effetto delle cagioni, che di lor natura non sono ammovibili...Ho già' indicato più addietro che questi vantaggi sono limitati; e sebben siano reali, non basterebbero giammai a preservar totalmente le nostre pitture: quindi volentieri io vi passo al di sopra in silenzio, non essendo mio assunto di raccomandare l' opera della restaurazione, se non per il suo carattere proprio, ch' è quello di rimediare agli effetti, non quale de superar le cagioni."

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., "La caducità non è disgrazia peculiare alle produzion del pennello, ma condizion generale delle cose create; ed è gran ventura se alcuna delle più preziose che non si possono sottrarre a queste legge comune, atte non per lo meno ad essere in qualche grado risarcite dalla decadenza lor naturale...Gli Uomini non rinunzieranno giammai da vero ai soccorsi della medicina curativa per la sola ragione che ancora non si è trovata un elesir che li renda immortali...."

admired and who would work under him. Thus was born the first team approach to restoration, still practiced in Italy today with restorers and Inspectors (usually art historians) working together.¹⁶⁸ Edwards chose several of the most respected restorers of his day, although one of them had not avoided controversy. This was his friend and colleague, Professor Giuseppe Bertani, whose reputation as Priore in 1771 had been marred by the scandal surrounding past restoration under the auspices of the Collegio dei Pittori. Niccolo Baldassini and Giuseppe Diziani, the son of Edwards' former painting master Gaspare Diziani, also joined the organization.¹⁶⁹ Eight years later, when Niccolo Baldassini died, Edwards hired Baldassini's son, Giuseppe, for his "expert and capable" skill. He submitted his general plans for the organization of his team and their duties in the *Ristretto del Pubblico Contratto per la generale Ristaurazione delle Pitture Pubbliche, con alcuni altri poche notizie relative al soggetto medesimo* (1785) (Appendix #3). His small work force included a personal assistant schooled in all aspects of workshop practice for each restorer, but whose employment continued at Edwards' discretion depending on the quality of his work.¹⁷⁰

Edwards outlined his own duties as Inspector, including the following: he would make a selection of the works most in need and their location; perform a detailed examination of each work, its damages and proposed repairs; assign each project to the

¹⁶⁸ To the best of my knowledge this is true and confirmed by correspondence with Giuseppe Basile at the Istituto Centrale di Restauro, Autumn 1998 for which I am grateful.

¹⁶⁹ Zugni-Tauro, p. 111, Giuseppe was the son (1732-1803) of Gaspare Diziani.

¹⁷⁰ Pietro Edwards S.P.V. MS 787.6-876.7/10 *Ristretto del Pubblico Contratto per la generale Ristaurazione delle Pitture Pubbliche, con alcuni altri poche notizie relative al soggetto medesimo*, "Che alli tre sudetti Professori soltanto sia permessa ed affidata la ristaurazione generale delle Pitture di pubblica ragione; potendo pero ciascun di essi prendere un Assistente sotto la propria direzione...ch' egli potesse licenziare questi assistenti quando non fosse contiento di loro... ."

responsibility of a particular restorer; oversee the exact execution of these orders and demand a repeated treatment if necessary; discharge assistants and assess the quality of all materials used by the restorers; and review the designation of the class of need and the quality of finished work which must correspond with the restorer's payment. Edwards' salary was figured separately at £4 per square foot.¹⁷¹

Edwards took the policing functions of his job seriously and worked to prevent various activities that hindered the perception and the reality of professional behavior by the restorers. They had often taken paintings home to their own studios for repair and this was one practice that Edwards ended. He had reassured the authorities that the team would work with public access and constant supervision. The restorers also worked in substandard conditions due to the limited space in the crowded studio and poor lighting. He limited what had been accepted access to the art by copyists and students who might also be potential forgers and increased security of the laboratory when he forbade unauthorized persons to have keys.

Edwards knew that in his managerial role he must at least appear to be above certain utilitarian tasks in the laboratory. However, his tendency towards detail and perfectionism probably made this impossible. He was omnipresent and aware of every aspect of the team's operations. He verified the training and ability of the assistants and made them aware of the limits of their functions. He documented all the work

¹⁷¹ Olivato, 1974, p.167, Appendix Document 53, A.S.V., Proveditori al Sal, Parti a del Senato-Reg 37, B.21., "Mentre però resta fissata per la prima la somma di lire quattro al piede quadrato, in ogni qualità di lavoro, si addotta per li secondi l' equa ripartizione avvedutamente immaginata in riflesso alla varia costituzione e grandezza de' quadri da ristaurarsi contradistinti in tre capi di estremo, di grande e di mediocre bisogno, stabilendosi in conseguenza che abbiano a percepire lire cento al piede quadrato per li

accomplished and maintained the administrative organization of the whole operation, including timetables and schedules. Most importantly he did not disturb the Provveditori al Sal with frivolous complaints or problems which might bring unwanted bureaucratic interference.¹⁷²

The Organization and Functions of the Team

There were rules that the Professors were expected to obey in order to eliminate the previous conflicts of interest and corruption that Edwards had identified in the Collegio dei Pittori. The team was expected to abandon all restoration commissions from private collectors and devote themselves fully to the works in the public interest. If they abided by that condition, they were guaranteed a monopoly on restoration of all public painting in Venice.¹⁷³ This was no small source of income. They were instructed to conduct their work in a public space that was designated specifically for restoration of the public pictures. Their duties in the laboratory were to be collegial and their interventions considered a group effort, with personal autonomy sacrificed to the principle of shared responsibilities.¹⁷⁴ Edwards directed the collective activity, which expedited the conservation of a work and maximized the benefits of the particular skills of each restorer.

Every restoration project ideally would contain the work of all three restorers and of the Inspector in some aspect. To reduce conflicting opinions and approaches in an intervention, each restorer focused on one part of the procedure and Edwards supervised

quadri della prima classe; lire quattordici per quelli della seconda, e per gli altri della terza lire otto tutte nette d'aggravio...."; Conti, 1988, p.164; Pietro Edwards, S.P.V. MS 787.6-876.7/10 n.d.*Ristretto...*

¹⁷² Conti, 1988, p.166, ff21, p.346.; Olivato 1974, p. 74; Pietro Edwards S.P.V., MS 787.7-876.7 October 22, 1777 & September 3, 1778.

¹⁷³ Olivato 1974, p.73 & Appendix Document 53, p.167, "...e di lasciar interamente ogni altra loro privata commissione in tutto conforme all'articolo XII del loro capitolare."

all of these.¹⁷⁵ For example, one restorer would handle the lining of the work or transfer it to a new panel, while another would clean away old varnish, dirt, and smoke. A third craftsman repaired losses with inpainting or retouches. The reports, marking their progress on the huge public collection, spanned many years. Later in 1785, after seven years of work, the efficiency of Edwards' group was undisputed. They had restored 405 works of art and in the succeeding years they were to preserve another 343.¹⁷⁶ It is difficult to assess the quality of the repairs now because most of these works have been treated since Edwards' day. However, contemporary authorities were effusive in the effects that they perceived, and Edwards' reputation was assured as a supreme administrator, restorer, and connoisseur. All these efforts worked toward Edwards' goal that the "trade" of restoration be recognized as an "art" and consequently be raised in status as a profession fit for learned gentlemen.

Catalogo di tutte le pitture ristaurate...

In the *Catalogo di tutte le Pitture ristaurate sotto la direzione dell' Ispettor Pietro Edwards giusto a Decreto del Senato 3 Sett, 1778*, (Appendix #2) Edwards explained the

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ Pietro Edwards MS 787.7-876.7 October 21, 1777, "...val a dire che siccome non e' possibile di affidar questa impresa ad un solo professore col suo assistente, ma rendendosi necessario che ad essa si destino in principalità almeno tre artista, i quali bene spesso dovranno unitamente lavorare sopra una medesima tela, cosi molto importa alla buona riuscita, che essi convengono ben insieme nelle cose del loro mestiere, anche in riflesso alle sole materialità dell' arte, onde non accada che uno di essi voglia, a cagion d' esempio ammorbire i colori con una sorta d' ingrediente, ed uno con un'altra voglia fermare il colore per di sotto, ed uno per di sopra; uno voglia verniciare in un modo, ed uno in un altro; e cosi, oltre che frequenti querele rischia in fine un' opera non uniforme."

¹⁷⁶ Olivato 1974, p.73, "...alle opere del pubblico interesse accettando d' intervenire collegialmente anche su di una sola tela, senza ritenersi sminuiti da un lavoro comune...."; Tranquilli, p.173, "I restauri eseguiti in quegli anni sotto la sua direzione furono quindi il risultato di un lavoro collettivo...."; Pietro Edwards S.P.V. MS 787.6-876.7/10 1786 "*Catalogo di tutte le Pitture ristaurate sotto la direzione dell' Ispettor Pietro Edwards giusto a Decreto del Senato 3 Sett, 1778*", ... descritte secondo l'ordine col quale

organization of documentation of works to be inspected. The first part contained reports generated soon after receiving the works to be restored, followed by a detailed treatment proposal for the intervention. The same work is discussed a third time as found in its *Fedi di Laudo*, or the official dated contract recording the completion of the work to the satisfaction of both parties. Items in the *Fedi* included the measurements of any extensions added to the original canvas, the name of the artist, title of work, the subject represented, the usual location of the work, the “Class of Need,” and the corresponding expenses.¹⁷⁷

The various files in the “Catalogo...” were divided alphabetically from A to F, with the paintings organized by the various criteria noted above. In Foglio A, the first column listed the rooms in the public buildings or churches where the paintings hung. The next column identified the artist, the total number of works, and those giant canvases or series that had been divided into many pieces, which Edwards still counted as one work. For example, the first entry in the Salotto della Bussola was a group of nineteen paintings by Paolo Veronese, eighteen of which seem to have been chiaroscuro or painted in a monochrome technique called *grisaille*. The dated completion of the *Fedi di Laudo* was October 22, 1778 found in the last column.¹⁷⁸ Foglio B was organized alphabetically by artist, number of works inspected, information relative to the artist or picture indicated, and importance or quality of paintings restored up to the present. File B began with “Alberto Durer--Opere celebre di quest’ Autore, ed unica presso il Pub. Furono sopra di

furono presse in consegna col confronto delle Fedi di Laudo, nelle quali sono riportati i restauri dell’ Opere stesse” # A, B,C, D,E,F.

¹⁷⁷ Edwards, MS 787.6-876.7/10 March 3, 1785, A-F.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, A--*Catologo di tutte le Pitture...*

essa impiegata 128 giornate di lavoro; veggasi le relazioni dell' Ispettore 14. Mag 1779; ed 8. Aprile 1783. Pezzi N 5.”¹⁷⁹ File C arranged the corpus by the date of the Fedi, followed by one of the three classes of need, then the payment of each Fedi mentioned.¹⁸⁰ Sections D and E showed those works excluded on Edwards' recommendation during the general restorations from October 3, 1778 to June 1785. A few examples found in this category were the “Two pictures by Bassacco in the ceiling, excluded because they are repainted from top to bottom and are intrinsically mediocre.” In the Pro fuori di Zecca, “Two drawings perhaps by Vitruvio, but painted sketchily and completely ruined...,” and a large painting given to Bonifacio which Edwards believed was a copy.¹⁸¹ He further developed the information about reasons for exclusions in file E. For example, in the Sala delle Quattro Porte, he decided that the whole ceiling by Giacomo Tintoretto was no longer possible to restore and the two paintings by Tiepolo (no titles) in the Sala del Pregadi did not need restoration. In the Maggior Consiglio the great *Paradiso* by Jacopo Tintoretto was excluded only because of the uncertainty of the outcome of the intervention, but Edwards noted a dissent from this opinion from one of his team.¹⁸² A painting by Leandro Bassano was “lost” due to a complete repainting by Cardinali, a restorer whose work Edwards despised. Finally, section F cited several other paintings examined on later occasions in the Palazzo Ducale. In the Antisecreta some “nine other paintings of merit were exhibited in a state of disgrace from treatment by an incompetent restorer and now difficult to recover.” In the Quarantia Civil Vecchia, works by

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., B--*Catologo degli Autori...*

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., C--*Sommario di tutte le Fedi di laudo...*

¹⁸¹ Ibid., D--*Catologo delle Pitture pub.escluse per solo sentimento dell' Ispettor Pietro Edwards.*

¹⁸² Ibid., E--*Catologo provisionale di avviso contenente...*

Tintoretto, Palma, Lorenzetti, and Celesti had been earlier omitted, but the importance of the location made a reappraisal necessary.¹⁸³ For all of Edwards' attempts at impartiality, he still had to make judgments about what art deserved the skill and earthly treasure of the Republic. However, the rejected works were small in number compared to that which he and his team salvaged.

Itemization of Expenses

Edwards managed an efficient and cost-effective operation because he knew that this would please the Magistrati. To this end, the financial duties, rights, and obligations of his plan were also carefully enumerated in all contracts he submitted to the Senate.¹⁸⁴ Edwards' based his criteria for restoration charges on measurements of the canvas by the square foot and on a division of paintings into three classes called "estremo, grande, e mediocre." The paintings in the first class of "maximum damage" or "extreme need" were to cost around £ 20 per square foot. These were described as works whose color (pigment) was largely gone, particularly in the most important part of the composition, those that contained extensive repainting, and those works that were soaked with water. The second class of pictures were described as in "serious need" and sustained the same kinds of injuries as those cited above, but to a lesser degree. These repairs cost £ 14 based on the same measurement. The third class, or "pictures of lesser need," required only cleaning and were relatively free from damages seen in the first two categories.

¹⁸³ Ibid., *F--Catalogo de Quadri pub.che independentemente da quanto potra' risultare con ulterior esami.*

¹⁸⁴ MS 787.6-876.7/10 1797 S.P.V. *Ristretto del Pubblico Contratto per la generale Restaurazione delle Pitture Pubbliche con alcuni poche notizie relative al soggetto medesimo.* This document (contract) was a recapitulation of what Edwards had proposed in 1778, the team's accomplishments in the ensuing years, and a plea for several changes in the contract.

These specimens would cost £ 8 per square foot¹⁸⁵ Measurements were taken from the middle of the canvas to the sides, skipping the irregularities of form from any texture on the surface.

The tradition of conferring value on a work depending on its size can be traced to workshop practice, where artists had historically been paid by the amount of materials used or number of figures present in the commissioned work.¹⁸⁶ Edwards' system echoed this tradition even though it appears to undermine one part of his plan. He strove to lift the work of the restorer out of the sphere of mere craft up to a professional level with special skills and talents that were equal to but different from the great artistic geniuses of the past. However, his generic criteria of care based only on need and size attempted to ignore hierarchies of accepted artistic or market value and provided the basis for one of the proudest ideals of conservation practice--that all threatened art deserves to be preserved, even if it is not executed by a famous artist.

The Professors were expected to include in their fees many of the expenses incurred in the transfer of supports of paintings; the cost of linings, canvas, glue, etc., and other ingredients used in other procedures were also included in these charges.¹⁸⁷ In case of work that were judged poorly done, the restorer would lose his pay and could even be

¹⁸⁵ Olivato 1974, Appendix Document 53, p. 167; Conti, p.165; Edwards S.P.V. MS 787.7-876.7 September 3, 1778, "...Per li quadri di summa a rovina e della prima Classe il convenuto è di 20'al Pde £ quadrato nelle da aggravio. Per gli altri gravemente ma non estremamente pregiudicati della 2nd Classe 14 £'.E per quelli a minor bisogno che formano la 3rd Classe 8£..."; Also see copies of account invoices in this Appendix, Pietro Edwards MS S.P.V. 788.1-877.1.

¹⁸⁶ Michael Baxandall, *Painting and Experience in Fifteenth Century Italy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972, pp.18-19.

¹⁸⁷ Thomas p.182-183, In the artists' workshop tradition there were hidden costs in completing a commission and these were not incurred by the patron. The artist was responsible for payment to assistants, rent, living expenses, and any delay in completion, or increased use of valuable materials would all have been arbitrated by valuers.

punished if the harm was judged to come from malice and not just poor craftsmanship.

The Senate had concluded before Edwards' appointment in 1778 that expenses would be around £ 6000 annually, but Edwards testified that he could accomplish the work for 4714.67.¹⁸⁸

Pietro Edwards and The Team

The responsibilities of the restorers were spelled out very clearly in Edwards' various reports to the Senate over time, and a more extensive construction of the mission and the methods can be found in his position papers directed at the Senate. However, an early "referto," perhaps the basis for *Privata Informazione...* from October 21, 1771(7) is particularly concerned with the importance of the selection of restorers and Inspectors and an early appreciation for the distinctive skills that a restorer might have as distinguished from a painter. Edwards warned, "...it is one thing to be a good painter and another an expert restorer. The restorer should have all the theory of painting, but the painter does not need the particular and practical knowledge of restoration."¹⁸⁹ Edwards was sensitive to the insult this opinion might cause the Collegio and he called some of those artists who had dabbled in restoration work "valiant men of pictures." However, he could not abide some disasters caused by such artists as "Kavaliere Bambini who ruined Tintoretto's work over the Tribunal of the Maggior Consiglio."¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸ Pietro Edwards S.P.V. MS 787.6-876.7/10 March 3, 1785, ...Ecc Conferenza, da cui erano stati proposti li 6000£ all' anno, li quali restarono in fatto 4714£...

¹⁸⁹ Pietro Edwards S.P.V. MS 787.7-876.7 October 21, 1777, "... a tener per certo che altra cosa è l' esser valente pittore, ed altra l'esser perito restauratore di pitture. Il restauratore deve avvertutte le teorie del pittore, ma il pittore non ha bisogno per l' arte sua di erudirsi nelle cognizioni peculieri, e pratiche del professori di restauri."

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., This refers to the much abused *Paradiso*. "La mancanza di questa distinzione cagiano la rovina di molte opere restaurate dal Kav Bambini, e della famosa tela del Tintoretto sul Tribunale del Mag

Code of Conduct for Handling the Public Pictures

We can deduce the problems that may have been the basis for Edwards' detailed orders concerning every aspect of the treatment of art in its handling, shipping, and repair. The methodology for correct practice grew organically from years of his observations and the endless round of problem-solving while preserving and maintaining the huge collections of public pictures in the Republic. He submitted the following rules as a code of behavior and professional ethics necessary for all restorers under his supervision:

I) Protect the original condition at all times in handling and transport; II) Remedy all damage inflicted on the painting by previous cleaning within feasibility and without false procedures. III) Stabilize all shifting or falling pigment; IV) Straighten and repair warped or separated panels; V) Prevent worm infestation and mend old holes; VI) Transfer a canvas or panel intact to a new foundation, but only if the procedure does not threaten the work; VII) Line when necessary, but only those works with damage to original ground and also to repair grounds; VIII) Remove old dirt and smoke, cracking varnish, bubbles, yellowing, stains, and resistant dirt caused by insects using a needle; IX) Lift all old retouches that cover original paint without causing harm to original; X) Recover intensity of old color if not changed intrinsically particularly in the shaded areas; XI) Repair losses of color with invisible inpainting; XII) Replace scraped areas, and missing heads, hands, draperies always imitating the character of the author; XIII) Strive to revive the "natural freshness and health" of a painting from excessive dryness; XIV) prohibit the use of materials that could not be removed. All the completed work must be submitted to the Inspector [Edwards] and redone if necessary to avoid the "concealment of damages incurred by the restoration itself, as in the adoption of expedient palliatives that only provide superficial repair."¹⁹¹

The Laboratory at San Giovanni e Paolo

Pietro Edwards was also responsible for another completely unprecedented innovation in the history of restoration practice. He stipulated early in his reports that a

Consiglio."; Conti, 1988, p.155 & 344 ff.3. In 1714 Bambini restored the ceiling in the Sala della Quattro Porte by Tintoretto. For more on Bambini see A.S.V. Compilazione Leggi Busta 303,cc. 791-793.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., Conti, p. 164-65; Olivato, 1974, p. 74; E.I. Basile & Corrado Maltese, *I Supporti nelle Arti Pittoriche: Storia-Tecnica-Restauro*, Milan: 1990, pp.347-349, On Edwards' laboratory and restoration of panel painting see Basile who believes Edwards was familiar with the book, *Dictionnaire portraif de peinture* (1781) by Pernety.

laboratory be created, a space formally designated that could accommodate the complexities of restoration work. He firmly believed that his vision of the restorer as inextricably linked with recognized scientific activities was crucial for his plan to be credible and successful.¹⁹² Edwards' laboratory would remove the great works of Venetian genius from the commerce of inexpert hands that had ended so often in the destruction of that art.¹⁹³ When the Senate made his official appointment in 1778, they granted this request, and the refectory at the church of San Giovanni e Paolo (Fig. 8) became one of the first restoration laboratories in Europe. The space had occasionally been used in the past because of its size for the handling of the gigantic canvases from the Palazzo Ducale. Now it would become the official home for Edwards and his team until the Fall of the Republic in 1797. Frequent visitors to the laboratory remembered Edwards' detailed and erudite observations on every type of art.¹⁹⁴

Among the famous figures in eighteenth century Europe who made the pilgrimage to the laboratory to see the miraculous feats restorers in Venice were achieving was the great German poet, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832). His observations on restoration practice even today remain enormously intelligent and sensitive to aesthetic

¹⁹² Tranquilli p.173 On Edwards' laboratory; V. Moschini, *Bolletino d' Arte* 1949, p. 163; Luigi Lanzi, *The History of Painting in Italy* Volume II, London:George Dell & Sons, 1893, pp. 320-1; Frederick Lawrence Holmes, *Eighteenth Century Chemistry as an Investigative Enterprise*, Berkeley:1989, p.19, The chemical laboratory provided the chemist a place of opportunity and also shaped the social position of the chemist. The mechanical functions operating there supported the perception of the vocation as something between a craft and a science, although chemists hoped to raise their status through development of theoretical doctrines, pedagogy, and literary activities much like I suggest Pietro Edwards' hoped for a new vision of the "learned restorer."

¹⁹³ Cagianò de Azevedo, p.115, "Ed espone al Senato Veneziano un suo progetto di Laboratorio di restauro per i dipinti di proprietà pubblica che li togliesse dalle mani di inesperti ed evitasse illeciti commerci che si risolvevano sempre a tutto danno delle opere d' arte."

judgments and technical observations about painting. His ability to see beyond the artistic clichés of his day made him particularly interested in issues of conservation of Venetian Old Master painting. For example, he noticed the darkening of Tintoretto's works, which he attributed to the use of a dark red ground and the quality of the artist's materials. He learned that many famous pictures were damaged by the disastrous application of oil on the back of the canvas that permeated and then darkened or discolored the surfaces.

In another example, Goethe explained Tintoretto's working methods that left faces unpainted on certain portraits. The writer thought that the artist finished the faces at home and sewed the canvas piece in place at a later date.¹⁹⁵ This sounds unlikely and probably between Tintoretto's time and the eighteenth century, the faces had been excised and stolen and then restored. Giovanni O'Kelly Edwards, who was Pietro's son, later told a similar tale to the Englishwoman Mary Merrifield in 1846 saying that his father had repaired a similar act of vandalism on the *Adoration of the Magi* by Bonifacio Veronese in the Palazzo Ducale. It was a kind of legend also that the elder Edwards restored a missing head from the figure of Faith in Titian's painting in the Sala dello Quattro Porte. Giovanni O. Edwards claimed that this repair had been executed so perfectly that the French did not notice it when they appropriated the work for Paris in 1797.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹⁴ Tranquilli, p.173," ...tutta l' attrezzatura era sistemata in quello stesso ambiente che veniva utilizzato anche come deposito per i quadri i terminati che, tenuti in osservazione per due anni, erano in visione per i numerosi visitatori del laboratorio."

¹⁹⁵ Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von, *Goethe's Travels in Italy and Fragments on Italy*, Trans. A.J.W. Morrison & Charles Nisbet, London: G. Bell & Sons Ltd.,1911, p.576, ...he (Tintoretto) left out the heads, executed them one by one at home, cut them out and then stuck them to the picture as is still to be seen when retouching and restoring them.

¹⁹⁶ Merrifield, p. 847; Giovanni Nepi-Scire, "Recent Conservation of Titian's Painting in Venice" in *Titian: Prince of Painters*, Munich: Prestel, 1990, p.122, Recent conservation of this painting makes no mention of any major loss and replacement to the figure.

Goethe noted that the huge number of ruined works of art in Venice had been subjected to various attempts to repair them, and in the Ducal Palace “a kind of academy has been set up for the restoration of paintings with a Director appointed over the restorers... In the Monastery at SS Giovanni e Paolo, a larger Salon has been established for this same work.” The writer obviously interviewed someone (perhaps Pietro Edwards) in depth, because Goethe knowledgeably commented about methods and techniques of restoration which relate to the techniques used by the original artist and the state of the conservation of the various paintings. The restorers, he noted, were experienced and well trained in diverse styles and all aspects of technique. He correctly recognized that “This institute is so far serviceable that all experience acquired in this art is collected and preserved by a society.”¹⁹⁷

Goethe’s scrutiny of these early days of art conservation is remarkable and merits more examination. He accidentally happened on Edwards’ laboratory on one of his frequent trips to admire the great masterpiece, the *Death of Saint Peter Martyr* by Titian in SS Giovanni e Paolo. When a monk asked whether the writer would like to meet the fellow responsible for the preservation of this and other works of art, the writer eagerly accepted. The restorers greeted him in a very friendly way and Goethe learned much of interest as the following excerpt will reveal:

Titian and his followers painted , among other materials, on figured damask of linen fabric and unbleached, as it came from the weaver without any priming. The whole thereby received a certain double light which is peculiar to damask. The particular parts thus acquired an indescribable life, the color never remaining the same to the spectator, but passing by a peculiar movement from bright to dark and *vice versa*, losing everything of a material appearance...Suppose now a hole is eaten into such a

¹⁹⁷ Goethe, p.577,

picture by the damp, a new metal stamp is cut after the pattern of the cloth ground. A fine piece of canvas is next overlaid with chalk and the pattern is stamped on it. Such a patch is fastened on the new canvas on which the picture is to be spread so when the old picture is stuck on, the patch fits into the hole. It is then painted over and from the ground on which it rests acquires a harmony with the whole. Thus I found the men busy with the immense picture by Paul Veronese, in which were more than twenty holes. I now saw all the stamped patches prepared. Held together and apart from each other by threads, as on a cobweb...It required, indeed the situation of a cloister, a monk-like state of life, assured means of existence, and the patience of an aristocracy, to undertake and execute such labors.¹⁹⁸

With such accolades Edwards' reputation appears to have been assured.

However, the government had made provision for supervising any problems in Edwards' operation by giving the Savio Cassier the final power to quash any disciplinary problems in the laboratory.¹⁹⁹ However, the results generated from the laboratory were so astounding that the authorities quickly made their satisfaction known and even offered more money for extra expenses. The most obvious reason for this early approval was the restoration and return of nine canvases from the Magistrati al Sal's own offices by early 1779.

However, this politically astute move, assuredly directed by Edwards, also created some problems, for there was such a thing as being too successful. The authorities were so excited by Edwards' speed and the quality of the repairs that they suggested that all the paintings in the Palazzo Ducale that were lost to public view for years be removed and placed in a new public gallery.

Edwards and his team were horrified, realizing that so many works to repair would be an immense undertaking. In 1781 Edwards responded with a long report co-signed by Diziani and Baldassini, who urgently requested some improvements in their current

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 578.

¹⁹⁹ Olivato 1974, p.74.

situation before new responsibilities were added. They explained that the space they presently occupied was too restricted and poorly lit. With at least seven people working at a time in the laboratory, the delicacy of the operations and value of the art demanded more room for their activities and inventory. The refectory had been adapted by necessity to function as a restoration office, laboratory, storage depository for all sizes of paintings and all the materials for their restoration, and a gallery “because of the great number of paintings and the frequent visits by foreigners.”²⁰⁰ The canvases accumulated, often rolled up and heaped on one another while awaiting intervention. With over 747 works already waiting to be restored and another 517 excluded but remaining in the collection, there was no space to accommodate this number of paintings.²⁰¹ These conditions would become insurmountable when the gigantic paintings from the Maggior Consiglio and other rooms in the Palazzo Ducale arrived in the laboratory. The “Compagnia dei Restauratori” just would not accommodate any more art without more space.²⁰²

The other delicate issue that Edwards outlined in this same report concerned the

²⁰⁰ Ibid., Document 54, pp.168-70, “...in luoghi del Pubblico Palazzo, dove per la mancanza del lume, per l’ improprietà delle nicchie, e per la scarsa frequenza di spettatori si rendono abbandonate, e quasi perdute...; Document 55, p.171,...di galleria per gran numero di quadri frequentemente visitati da forestiere....”

²⁰¹ Pietro Edwards, S.P.V. MS 787.6-876.7/10 March 3, 1785, *Piano Pratico per la generale Custodia delle pubbliche pitture...*, “Ad evitar questa sorta di pregiudici par che tenderesso i Sovrani Decreto dell’ Eccmo. Senato 13 tber 1779, 6. tber 1780, e 16. Febb. 1781. M.V., coi quali si riconosce la necessità d’ istituire una pubblica Galleria nella quale fossero trasferite le nostre preziose pitture disperse per i Ducali Palazzi, e si facilitasse così non meno la sicurezza, e la diligenza della custodia, che l’ utilità ed il credito delle arti, a cui tanto contribuir potrebbero questi esemplari se fossero in tal modo raccolti....mi trovai costretto a significare la inesguibilità del progetto per quanto spetta la formazione d’ una galleria consistente dei soli pub.co impronto, che periscono senza soccorso, e che nello sqallor in cui sono, conferiscono piuttosto al dispreggio, ed all’ indecoro, anziché l’ onor, ed al vantaggio della nazione...che del grandioso numero di circa 747 quadri che saranno restaurati al termine dell’ attuale impresa non computando li 512 che saranno stati esclusi...e quindi suppost’ ancora la istitri 600 esemplari, la maggior parte vastissimi, che non potrebbero aver luogo nel nuovo ricovero....”

²⁰² Olivato, 1974, Document 55, p.171, “La molteplicità perché la continuazione, e la aumento di tanti incomodi non possono fare a meno d’ influire sul procedere di tutta opera.”

problem of private commissions for him and his fellow restorers: “Conspicuous families who dominate, nobles of the State, city, notable foreigners, the religious community,...all have tried the constancy and I have always withstood the acceptance of these private commissions.” The team’s renown had led to increased demand for services, but Edwards’ ethical refusals had resulted in making enemies of powerful characters in the Republic. This jeopardized “singular paintings” which had to be turned over to lesser trained hands. This action allegedly “fed the appetite” of deceitful craftsmen and displeased other skilled restorers who saw lucrative commissions evaporate. Because of this sensitive and even perilous situation, Edwards requested that during the summer the Professors maintain the laboratory for public work, but also intervene in certain cases for churches, convents, and foreigners of “clear fame” and in other special circumstances by consent of the Senate.²⁰³

Dissertazione preliminare al piano di custodia...(1785)

Edwards’ organizational skills were obviously prodigious and are clearly revealed in his first two major position papers after *Privata Informazione preliminare al progetto del restauro generale...(1771)*. The *Disserazione preliminare al piano di custodia da istuirisi per la possibile preservazione eper il miglior mantenimento delle pubbliche pitture* (1785) (Appendix #1) and the *Piano Pratico per la General Custodia delle Pubbliche Pitture* (1785) together formulate an early unified method for preservation of art in Venice. Often he repeated the same theory and method in many reports and papers during his career, but in these three expositions we can extract most of his important ideas

²⁰³ Olivato, Appendix Document 55 p.173.

about restoration. As usual he began logically, walking the reader through the complete formulation of conclusions which could be considered obvious now. Edwards stated in the *Dissertazione preliminare*... that the most perfect preservation of a work of art would be removal of all causes, eliminating the need for a restorer's work at all.²⁰⁴ However, since this course was hypothetical, and preservation efforts would likely fail in some cases, he described three possible avenues for action. These consisted of the absolute removal of devastating causes of deterioration and decay where possible, the possible suspension of the effects of any causes, and finally the remedy for the damages inflicted.²⁰⁵

Extrinsic and Intrinsic Causes of Damage

Thus Edwards introduced the most basic concepts and organizing principles for a theory of conservation. His logic proceeded impeccably, for as he noted, the first two premises could be called preservative, but these causes must be identified in order to carry out the third rule of repair. He divided the causes into two basic categories which he called extrinsic and intrinsic or inherent to the picture. Separate from both of these, but an inextricable ingredient, was time itself as the supreme culprit. Edwards claimed that "...Under this generic aspect (time) that comprehends nothing more of the cause of corrosion of painted things as that which precedes the dissolution of all (things)

²⁰⁴ Edwards S.P.V MS 787.6-876.7/10 *Dissertazione preliminare*...

²⁰⁵ Ibid., "L'arte in tai casi vien di nuove chiamata in soccorso e da esso procurarsi di ottenere in via curativa quel che non si potè conseguire per l' impotenza dei metodi preservativi: cossichè nella custodia general delle cose soggette a deperizione s' includono necessariamente tre diverse maniere di agire; rimovimento assoluto delle cause devastatrici che si posson intieramente sopprimere in loro stesse; sospensione degli affetti in quella causa che non si poteron distruggere; e rimedio dei danni da cui non potuto per tai vie preservarci."

constituted.”²⁰⁶

Extrinsic causes could be called environmental factors. These included climate, weather, the condition of structures that housed the art and the location of the work on a wall perhaps in direct sunlight, or on walls vulnerable to the north wind. Another danger *in situ* were fireplaces constructed with poor drafts that allowed smoke back into the room. These causes could all be identified and alleviated over a few years, Edwards promised, by structural repair and regular vigilance by a skilled custodian.²⁰⁷

The most pernicious of all the extrinsic harms, however, was not so easily remedied. This serious problem was not restricted to particular cases, not accidental or contingent, but perennial. The most active enemy to art in Venice was the climate, Edwards proclaimed, and this would be hard to protect against over time.²⁰⁸

He explained that the air in Venice was filled with humidity that contained salts in solution which left a residue on the painting, a kind of mixture that also affected the ground.²⁰⁹

Edwards revealed a knowledge of current principles of chemistry, encouraging further examination of these frustrating and mysterious conditions affecting the art. Among the

²⁰⁶ Ibid., “ L’affatto inconcludente, e vuoto di giusta significazione il volgare concetto, col quale, senza punto curarsi d’una maggior nitidezza d’ idee, si definisce alla conta, che il tempo sia la causa irresistibile della rovina che deploriamo. Sotto questo generico aspetto non si comprende niente di più la causa del corrosimento nelle cose dipinte che quella da cui procede la dissoluzione di tutti gl’ esseri composti....”

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid., “Ma fra tutti agenti esteriori avviene ancora uno, il più pernicioso d’ ogni altro, non ristretto ad alcuni casi particolari, e generale per tutti; non accidentali o contingente, ma perenne dir necessario; e di cui non si può certamente sopprimere l’ esistenza. L’ ambiente nel qual trovarsi le pitture e’ il nemico più attivo di esse, e solo in pochissimi casi potrebbero i quadri esser forse difesi contra la sua incessante, ed universal efficacia, la quale comunque sia di grande importanza in ogni luogo, lo è poi tanto particolarmente nel nostro clima, che un celebre moderno autore nel far la lunga esposizione dei fenomeni particolari a tutte le ragioni della terra, e relativi alle diverse costituzioni dell’ aria, d’ altra maniera non caratterizza quella di Venezia che indicando la singolar sua proprietà di corrodere le pitture in breve spazio di tempo.”

problems most destructive, he wrote, were the “affinity of elements” in the air and their action on the substance of the painting, when in “substantial deposition on the painting they became “secret germs of their decadence.”²¹⁰

However, this aspect crossed over into the next primary category of damages to art, which Edwards referred to as the “intrinsic” or inherent causes of deterioration.

Intrinsic causes were those that had become problems in the work as it aged having been inherent in the work as it was created. For example, there might be degradation found in the original materials and their quality and application. Colors could be badly prepared or of a fleeting nature as with lake pigments. Mixtures that were not synthesized completely included a mineral pigment combined with medium or with too much solvent. This might cause separation among the layers of support, ground, and paint.²¹¹ The Venetian school of painting with its layers of glazes and texture was particularly prone to this destruction. Retouches made by the painter himself on top of dried pigment could also lead to a fragile and crumbling surface. Edwards called all these factors the “original vices” of the work.²¹² With this diabolical breakdown, new chemical compositions were born, which Edwards, said facilitated access to the work by acid solvents, causing disintegration and mutation of tints.

²⁰⁹ Ibid., “Quest aria carica d’ umidi vapori, e contenente gran coppia di sali in dissoluzione, opera senza posa come a guisa di mestruo sul dipinto non solo, ma pur anche sopra i fondi che lo sostengono....”

²¹⁰ Ibid., “...Non e’ pero in egual modo conosciuto l’ affinità recipocra che s’incontra fra gli elementi più operativi dell’ atmosfera, e la sostanza material del dipinto: e siccome dalla precisa intelligenza di tai vai cose dipende in gran parte la conclusion che si cerca sulla possibilità dei preservativi...Che nella sostanzial disposizione delle cose dipinte sianno segretamente nascosti i germi del loro decadimento, non si puo metterne dubbio.”

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid. “...son tutti vizi originali dell’ opera, che la guastano per difetti diro’ cosi, di temperamente impedindo la perfetta coalizione della superficie e della massa interiore; per lo che, oltre alla facile consunzione delle parti troppo sottili che sono immediatamente esposte all’ attrito dell’aria esterna.....”

He wrote that the constructed reality of a painting relied on its materiality, but this contained the origins of its own potential ruin. This “seed” was planted by the original artist’s varying skill in execution and technique, and the work’s flawed state could be explained by science, explained by Edwards in terms of chemical bonds and compounds. This knowledge led Edwards to the conclusion that the technique of oil painting was innately flawed. He described the paint surface itself as particles of pigment suspended in oil, which ideally made a unified and durable surface over time, a process now called polymerization.²¹³ The problems existed among what Edwards called the “vegetable oils” used commonly in painting since 1500, and his criticism of most oil technique was absolute.²¹⁴ Even while knowing its destructive qualities, Edwards claimed to have remained silent in the past because of his respect for the experts who had viewed the medium in positive ways. However, this could not hide the facts, he warned, that “to oil therefore attribute insuperable decay, the special loss of half-shades not found in some kinds of tempera or even fresco.” He continued, “you must impute to oil, the excessive dryness, the loss of cohesion of the mixtures, rigidity of the canvas that acquires the character of talc, and the loss of certain colors that disappear into darkened and hard lobes

²¹³ Gettens, Rutherford & George Stout, *Painting Materials: A Short Encyclopedia*, New York City: Dover Publications, 1942, p.38, Drying oils are suitable for mixing with pigments because of two distinct processes when they are exposed to heat or atmospheric drying. These are oxidation followed by polymerization of molecules. The oil absorbs oxygen slowly then more quickly with an escape of volatile products of decomposition, it slows to completion and the molecules form linkages into a hard surface; See Feller p. 108-9, Linseed oil films dry by polymerization process in which unsaturated triglyceride molecules combine with the aid of oxygen, with the natural decomposition these materials form a kind of interstitial plasticizer in the dried linseed oil film. Where pigment is present changes may occur faster or slower. Film age can affect solvent leaching, but films up to 300 years old exhibit leaching or solubility behavior.

²¹⁴ Gettens and Stout, p.36 on vegetable oils as characterized by too many glycerides of acids which prevent drying into a skin.

which artists call (simmered).”²¹⁵ This rant against oil painting seems surprising because it was the most favored medium of Venetian painting. This tool allowed the giants such as Titian and Giorgione to achieve subtle modeling, colored glazing layers of unsurpassed brilliance, rich textures, and illusions of depth, all effects that are found in the legendary images of Venetian Renaissance painting.²¹⁶ Edwards reduced this all to a set of annoying problems so intent was he on preservation--even at the expense, it may appear, to the creation of the art itself!

Pietro Edwards and Conservation Science

Perhaps we can forgive Pietro Edwards for his zealous crusade, which at times seemed to put the preservation of art above the vagaries of creative genius. He nonetheless was far ahead of his time and showed a remarkable understanding of advances being made in eighteenth-century chemistry (Fig. 9). Edwards also realized the critical importance of ongoing scientific research in the advancement of restoration theory and practice.²¹⁷ This awareness is illustrated in his description of the results of chemical

²¹⁵ Edwards, *Dissertazione preliminare...*, “All’oglio dunque attribuir si deve l’annerimento insuperabile a cui particolarmente soggiaciono le pitture di queste nome; all’oglio la perdita special delle mezze tinte, che non si trova essere così fatale in alcuni sorta di tempera, e neppure nel fresco; all’oglio deve imputarsi l’eccessiva essicazione, la perdita di coesion delle particelle del misto, la rigidità nel dipinto che acquisita quasi la temperatura del talco, e suddividesi poescia (sic) in infinite porzioni; ed all’azion dell’oglio dicasi pur che appartiene il rappigliamento di certi colori, che si contraggono in lobuletti distinti, oscurati e durissimi...dagli artisti sotto la denominazione di sobbollimento.”

²¹⁶ David Rosand, *Painting...* p.16-18, Two technical factors that advanced Venetian painting were the use of canvas due to the deterioration of fresco type painting in the damp climate and the introduction of oil painting by Antonella or in use already by Bellini by 1475. Use of the oil medium inspired the theme of light in religious works, glazes, darker tones over light tones...the fatty substance changed sequences of layers in execution, exploitation of rough canvas texture, and tonalism in such artist’s works like Giorgione; Sir Charles Lock Eastlake, *Methods and Materials of Painting of the Great Schools & Masters*, Volume I, pp.30-89, New York: Dover Reprint of 1847 edition, on Antonella and oil painting in Venice p.192-218., olio resinous vehicles p.269-319.

²¹⁷ Dooley, pp. 113-115, During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries government committees in charge of Italian universities added scientific research as a criteria for advancement in the institutional hierarchy...this ethic permeated the schools and magistracies so deeply by the eighteenth century that

processes of sublimation and their comparison to the natural action between similar materials occurring on the pictures. According to Edwards, when these substances such as oil are sublimated (turned to vapor by heat without going through a liquid stage) in chemical experimentation, they suffer degeneration and an imbalance in the proportion between the elements occurs. One element incapable of being sublimated will remain-- called "inflammable earth" as a fragile and black substance. This same result, according to Edwards, could be found in the observations by Kunckel, who described essential vegetable oils uniting with concentrated acids, and after distillation become a dry earth that resisted the heat of infusion.²¹⁸ Another good source, Edwards remarked, was Joseph Macquer's analysis of fatty oils, their imperfections and instability, a treatise known to every "initiate of chemical operations."²¹⁹

We must suspect that Edwards included the details of a rather esoteric scientific study of causes of degradation of painting materials to strengthen his proposal to the Senate and to secure his credibility as an expert in art and science. As early as 1778 his interest in promoting scientific research was evident, and one example is found in his

Gasparo Cozzi, an advisor to the University of Padua suggested instituting research as the only means for promotion. He wrote that "...only research contributed to the common advantage of men by observations, findings, discoveries, and only research procured fame and esteem even outside the country..."

²¹⁸ Edwards *Dissertazione preliminare...*, "Attissimi come sono di fatti questi liquori ad esser esaltati, soffrir deggiono uno squilibrio grandissimo nella propozione dei loro elementi per la costanza dell' evaporazione; in fin della quale altro d'essi poi non rimane che la parte feccio sa incapace di sublimarsi; chiamata terra infiammabile, la quale nell' operazione lentissima degl' anni e nella commistion in cui trovasi, acquista un grado maggior di friabilità, e forse ancora una più cupra nerezza di quanto si rimarca nella artificiali separazioni dell' ambicco; ed anziche figuradarsi come il solito residue di tutti gli ogli; sembra che considerare si debba come un risultato simile a quello riferito nell' osservazioni di Kunckel..."

²¹⁹ *Ibid.*, L' analisi degli ogli grassi contenuta nella memoria di M. de Machy, mette in chiaro assai meglio ch' io non posso far di presente, d' imperfezioni di questi liquori, soggetti a grandissimi mutazioni; benchè le notizie sopra la natura degl' egli sian gia' comunissime, massime dopo che l' opera del Sig. Macquer, che assai ben maneggia un tale argomento, trovas in mano d' ogn' iniziato nelle chimiche operazioni." ; See Gettens on volatilization of oils, p.38-41.

response to a prize offered by the Royal Academy of Science in Paris.²²⁰ He related that in his correspondence with Signor Colonello Lorgna at the Accademia in Paris, he learned that a prize was to be offered by King Louis of France to anyone who could develop a cheap method of mass-producing “lisciva” (lye) from “salnitro” (sodium nitrate) to make soap, which Louis noted that he needed in his bath every day! Edwards recognized that this opportunity should be considered by eager entrepreneurs in Venice and instructed that the necessary materials could be found anywhere from collecting efflorescence on damp stone walls to gathering and rendering the manure and urine of animals. Edwards then explained in great detail the many possibilities and processes for utilizing salnitro. His experience in the scientific side of restoration and cleaning paintings made him more knowledgeable about soap than many of his peers in the government.²²¹

As the chemist-restorer, he described the noxious odor manifested in effervescence during sublimation, admitting that the new compositions appear “marvelous “ to researcher and instructor if one were looking for clues behind the transmutations seen in old paintings. Things like “sulfur never used in the painting originally, are born out of a mixture of oil and sulfuric acids (a caustic) as obtained by Robert Boyle and George Ernst Stahl in simple assimilation.”²²²

Pietro Edwards and Oil Painting

However, it was the essential defect of oil technique that garnered most of his

²²⁰ Pietro Edwards, MS S.P.V. 788.9-877.9 1778, *Premio Straordinario: Proposto dall' Accademia Reale delle Scienze di Parigi*.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Edwards, *Dissertazione Preliminare*; also see Georg Ernst Stahl “Traite des sels,” Paris: 1771, p.230; also Holmes, pp.46-47, ...Stahl discussed thoroughly the effects of varied conditions on the combinations,

concern. To Edwards it had conquered the more admirable technique of tempera, a medium that utilized egg yolk and gave a “soft lucidity to work.” While encaustic, which was the use of molten wax mixed into paint, was known to the Romans and Greeks and still attracted followers.²²³ Edwards acknowledged that these archaic mixtures gave way to a method that must have seemed “miraculous” in the 15th century and that a few capable teachers guarded their secret jealously, even resorting to murder to protect it.²²⁴ Here Edwards referred to the old tale that Andrea Castagno (1417-1457) killed Domenico Veneziana (1410-1461) to obtain the recipes for this innovative painting practice. Although Veneziana actually outlived Castagno by four years, at least according to the archivist Gaetano Milanesi.²²⁵ Edwards recounted the false glory of the tradition of oil; his tale is one of a success too easily won and the catastrophic results of changing practices without understanding the technical implications. He lamented:

The discovery of the oil mixture then seemed a divine thing, because it made it easier to achieve (the effects) which were sought after with great anxiousness. The supreme jealousy with which from the beginning a few talented professors kept this secret gave it an appearance of the highest importance, and thus cost someone his life. More than anything else, the dazzling effect of its colors, and comfortable advantages of the new method seduced everyone. And so this occurred. Once the mystery was discovered, the use of oil in a few years received universal applause in the whole of Europe, and

displacements, and the properties of salts formed....although weaker than the other acids...marine acid attacks silver, lead, and mercury more than nitrous and even vitriolic (sulphuric) acids.

²²³ Cennino d' Andrea Cennini, *Il Libro del Arte*, New York: Dover Reprint, 1960, on tempera pp.20, 32-34, 51 and wax p.37; Daniel V. Thompson Jr., *The Practice of Tempera Painting*, New York: Dover Reprint, 1962 on tempera pp.1-7, See *Vasari On Technique*, Translated by Louise S. Maclehorse, New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1960, pp. 190 & 292; Eastlake pp.149-175, on wax.; Gettens and Stout, tempera p.69-71 and wax 78-80.

²²⁴ Edwards *Dissertazione preliminare...*; Merrifield, p. ccxciii on Northern Italian use of oil. In Venice she described four types of oil painting by Bellini and followers, Titian early and later, Paolo Veronese and Palma Giovane who painted on dark grounds. According to Vasari this led to the “decline of the art.”; *Vasari On Technique*, p. 226 ff1 on Van Eyck and invention of oil painting; Eastlake Volume I, pp.182-92 on oil painting and Van Eyck..

²²⁵ Frederick Hartt, *Italian Renaissance Art: Painting-Sculpture-Architecture*, New York: Harry Abrams, 1994, p. 267 on false story about Castagno killing Veneziana for secret recipe for oil painting.

was made in maximum degree respectable for adoption by all schools and by the most illustrious men in art.²²⁶

He felt so strongly about the ills of the oil medium that he saw its effects as ongoing and generational:

One age only is not enough to reveal the sad consequences, and in the meantime, in good faith sons were raised and nephews prepared in this style alone, which in this way then became necessary. The founders encountered some difficulty which they then quickly ascribed to bad ingredients; and thus the (inventors) placed the great work in the hands of youth an apparatus of filtration, purification and 100 other fables with which they thought to correct the problem, although they always preserved the primary basis by keeping oil as an essential element of painting.²²⁷

The popularization of this “arcane affliction,” as Edwards called it, fooled the great masters, who would never be able to see the effects of time on their materials. He exclaimed in outrage that,

Even Titian and Raphael, Paolo, and Correggio would cry bitterly to see today the miserable condition of their works that were destined to immortality, and they would be the first to retry the recipe by the priest Teofilo, that after 500 years of oblivion almost universal, came to light in 1410 by the renowned Van Eyck and now is promulgated by Italian restorers of art. Let me not be thought sacrilegious by the ingenuous and respectable study of so many opponents. If they do not think rightly deduced, the few physical things I indicate, but let me point out the deep and natural imperfection of this favored liqueur, this risk referred to always with great difficulty that is encountered in the explanation of the nature of mixtures, the true manner of

²²⁶ Edwards MS 787.6-876.7/10 1785 *Dissertazione preliminare...*, “Parve allora una cosa divinà la scoperta delle mestiche ad oglio appunto perchè queste agevolavano il conseguimento di ciò che con maggior ansietà ricercavasi. L’ altissima gelosia onde sul principio da pochi valenti professori si custodi quel segreto diedegli un carattere di somma importanza, e tale che costò la vita ad a qualcuno; ma più ch’ altra cosa, l’ effetto abbagliante dei suoi colori, ed i comodi vantaggi della nuova pratica dovean sedur tutt’ il mondo. Così appunto seguì. Scoperto che fu il mistero, l’ uso dell’ oglio in breve corso d’ anni fu ricevuto con plauso universale per tutta l’ europa, e si rese in massimo grado rispettabile per l’ adozioni di tutte le scuole, e degli uomini più illustrati nell’ arte.”

²²⁷ Ibid., “Una sola età non era bastevole a farne conoscere in fatto la tristissime conseguenze; e frattanto con buona fede si allevavano i figli, e si preparano i nipoti unicamente in queste sorta di stile, che per tal via divenne poi necessario. Qualche pregiudizio di cui s’ accorsero i fondatori, fu subito attribuito alla cattiva degli ingredienti; e quindi grand’ opera si diedero i precettisti nel metter in mano della gioventù un apparato di filtrazioni, di purificazioni, e di cent’ altre fole, con le quali pensarono di correggere il male, benchè ne conservassero la base primaria mantenendo sempre l’ oglio con essenzial elemento della rinovellata pittura....”

their action, nothing is safe from the relationship of the effects... that the damages peculiar to the picture in oil proceed from diverse causes, every reasonable speaker will have the right to attribute what constitutes the essential difference between this kind of painting and every other painting.²²⁸

Beyond the subject of oil painting in the paper, Edwards reiterated the goals for his theory and practice of restoration in Venice. He hoped to impede the principal causes of ruin, discern those among them that were accidental or contingent, and study the integrity of the substance of the painting itself. All external causes could be repressed, except climate, and some intrinsic ones might be alleviated by regular preventative care. He then dissected three more important parts of the painting of interest to the restorer. These layers were the undercoat or priming layer, the preparation or “imprimitura,” and the original varnish covering. He asked several questions: How do the fine layers of varnish and color of unequal porosity fuse into a uniform consistency? How could one affect the hardened if fugitive nature of some glazes? How could one separate the improper ingredients from the proper ones in various mixtures? He urged an understanding of the natural defects of the art, stating “A painting in oil stays a painting in oil,” and the immutable parts of a work over 200 years old can never be completely extracted, including

²²⁸ Ibid., “Tiziano stesso, e Raffaello, e Paolo e Coreggio (sic), piangerebbero amaramente al di d’oggi se veder, potessero la misera condizione dell’ opere ch’ essi destinate aveano all’ immortalità, e sarebbero i primi a riprovare la ricetta del prete Teofilo, che dopo circa cinque secoli d’oblivione quasi universale, fu alla perfine riprodotta in luce nel 1410 dal rinomato Van Eick (sic) e promulgata poscia presso gl’ italiani ristoratori (sic) dell’ arte. Che non mi sià dunque imputata a sacrilegio l’ ingenua franchezza, ond’ io affronto studio rispettabile di tanti oppositori. Se non si credono giustamente dedotte le poche fisiche cose da me sol di voto indicate, a fin di mostrare l’intima e natural imperfezione di questo favorito liquore, ciò per avventura dee (sic) riferirsi alla sempre grande difficoltà che s’incontra nello spiegare la natura dei misti, e la vera maniera del loro agire; ma ciò niente toglie alla sicurezza in cui siamo rapporto agli effetti; fin a tanto che non si dimostra con evidenza che i danni peculiari alla pittura in oglio procedono da una causa diversa, ogni ragionata imparziale avrà diritto di attribuirli a ciò che costituisce l’essenzial differenza fra questa specie di pittura, ed ogn’ altro dipinto.” ; Eastlake, Volume I, pp.30-89; See Merrifield Volume I, Chapter VI, ppcxx-cxxi, on Correggio’s paint mixture.

the chemical reactions of metallic based pigments.²²⁹ Edwards explained that lead-based colors could be revived and metallic greens that had blackened (due to an excess of acid that combined with the sulfur in oil) could be improved by moderate application of an alkaline. Finally, he cautioned that the repair of intrinsic color changes would always be imperfect. If not slowed, the aging process would result in the breakdown of the paint itself and the loss of the entire work would follow.²³⁰

On Varnish & Coatings

Much of the rest of Edwards' *Dissertazione* focused on the complex issues around the use of varnishes, which still haunt conservators and scientists today.²³¹ Edwards saw that a variety of problems plaguing the pictures began when there was no protection of their surfaces. He described the difference between paint that has been protected under the edges of a frame for hundreds of years compared to that exposed to the air. The

²²⁹ Edwards, *Dissertazione preliminare*, "La pittura in oglio resta pittura in oglio e prima a dopo le operazioni mal dedotte, puerili, e dannose, che si spacciano dagl' impostori: niuna forza d'arte potrà mai estrarre dalla pittura di dugent' anni la parte fissa, e annerita del cemento, che non ha potuto esaltarsi: il piombo, il rame, ed il mercurio restaranno all' incirca soggetti alle medesime alterazioni, qual ora continuo ad oprar sopra d'essi gli agenti medesimi: le trasmutazioni di questi corpi, che bene spesso si revivificano, ciocchè avvien specialmente del piombo, possono riprodursi di nuovo; e con grandissima restrizione deve intendersi, che alcune tinte, e specialmente i verdi metallici anneriti per l' eccesso dell' acido ch' entra in combinazione sulfurea con l' oglio, richiamati una volta mediante l'uso d' un alcali temperato a dovere, migliorino stabilmente la lor condizione."

²³⁰ Edwards, *Dissertazione preliminare*..., "Che se non si cangiano nel loro maggior complesso queste naturali disposizioni, e' dunque certo che nella sostanza del dipinto devono rimanere, per fisica necessita', della cause di alterazione e di danno benche forse alcuna di esse diminuisca nell' attività sua; ed ogni poco di riflessione poi basta ad intendere, che sussistendo in qualche grado le affinita' le relazioni e le mutue corrispondenze dell' part essenziale del quadro con prinziipi risolvienti dell' atmosfera che rimangono sempre in tutta la lor efficacia, deve a più presto, o più tardi inevitabile seguir prima il guasto, e poi la perdita intiera dell' opera."

²³¹ Wendy Samet, Editor, AIC Paintings Specialty Group, *Painting Conservation Catalog Volume I: Varnishes and Surface Coatings*, Washington D.C.: American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, 1998; Ernst Gombrich, "Dark Varnishes: Variation of a Theme of Pliny," *Burlington Magazine* #104, 1962, 51-55; S.J. Wilsmore, "The Philosophical Implications of Varnishing Pictures," *Ratio* XXIX 1987, p. 68; Otto Kurz, "Varnishes, Tinted Varnishes, and Patina," *Burlington Magazine*, #104, 1962, pp.56-59; Robert Feller *On Picture Varnishes and their Solvents* (1958); Feller & Stolow,

interaction between atmosphere and paint ended with a basic instability when the volatile parts of the medium and adhesive evaporated upon contact with the salty air. This resulted in a rigidity and a lack of cohesion in the substance of the paint, and the “secret ferment” could be seen clearly in “ancient pictures...where blues, greens, the lake pigments, and all the other colors become dark, rigid, blackened, and detached while the places under the wide frames appeared smooth, unified, rich, and beautiful...as if they were awakened in amazement.”²³² Edwards did not deny the value of this useful discovery that the frame could serve as such a prodigious defense, but nonetheless lamented the slow pace of scientific discovery because “continuous is the deterioration of the pictures.”²³³

Edwards identified some coverings used in the past as generic and false, and warned that it was childish to think a varnish could keep a painting “as fragile as a butterfly preserved for a thousand years in a concretion of sap!”²³⁴ Of the three kinds of varnish known to Edwards, not one achieved all the necessary results. He described those that contained alcohol, with thickened oils, and others that combined drying oils and spirits. None could preserve the flexibility necessary for a non-rigid support and still retain internal pliancy after drying. All would harden and become solid like glass, but

pp.47-58; Also Brandi, “Some Factual Observations about Varnishes and Glazes,” *Bolletino dell Istituto Centrale del Restauro*, 1950, pp. 11-29.

²³² Edwards *Dissertazione preliminare...*, “Tutte le volte che si snicchia un quadro antico dalle larghe cornici nelle quale fu strettamente commesso senza mai esserne stato rimosso per ben dugent’ anni, trovasi che quei medesimi azzurri, quei verdi, quelle lacche, e tutti gl’ altri colori che nella parte del quadro esposta al commercio dell’ aria sono crepolati, assiderati, anneriti, consunto; nelle porzioni poi sottoposte alle cornici sud. appariscono lisci, ben uniti, sucosi, e vaghissimi fin a destar lo stupore.”

²³³ *Ibid.*; Brandi, “The Cleaning...”, p. 187, On another discovery. At the Istituto Centrale in Rome, Brandi and others were cleaning a *Madonna* by Coppo di Marcovaldo and removed the eighteenth century frame revealing the original frame underneath. Underneath they found a date and artist’s signature and what Brandi firmly believes was the original varnish layer from the Ducento. Dr. Liberti’s analysis showed the varnish on the frame to be dammar and on the picture the coating was copal.

these were not the best coating for Venetian paintings, especially the large works. According to Edwards, it was not possible to assure mobility of the paint skin during expansion and contraction of the surface in varying atmospheres or on stretched on swollen stretchers. Both situations would result in crumbling and detached surfaces. The hardness of some varnish layers also produced a reflective surface that detracted from viewing the subject matter and painterly effects. Yet if the varnish was applied too thinly, it would crack and allow dirt into the work. Edwards continued that other varnish skins were generally too porous and this attracted dirt and allowed oxidation that darkened the picture. Finally, this type of varnish would also consistently yellow over time.²³⁵

Edwards expanded his review of the variety of defects found in many surface coatings, beginning with the legendary Flemish varnishes. He cautioned that the substance referred to as "varnish" on Flanders' panels could be some other mixture, as there was no shared vocabulary for the term.²³⁶ Edwards related that Italian restorers used a similar recipe to the Flemish *gomme*, which could be sandarac, mastic, or dammar resin dissolved in lavender oil (as a plasticizer) creating a blend incapable of fusing into the solid surface that was sought in a protective coating. The veneer lost cohesion when mixed with a

²³⁴ Ibid., Edwards, "Quanto però non è pueril la pretesa, che far si possa d' una pittura come una fragile farfalle rappresa, e preservata per mille anni in una concrezione di succino!"

²³⁵ See E.H. Gombrich, "Dark Varnishes: Variations on a Theme from Pliny," *Burlington Magazine*, 1950; Feller & Stolow, p.48, The traditional varnishes used by artists and restorers have been composed essentially of natural resins such as dammar or mastic dissolved in alcohol (spirits of wine, consisting of 80-90% ethyl alcohol) or distilled turpentine. These varnishes had admirable aesthetic properties because of the way they saturate the colors and the quality of finish...they are notorious for their tendency to yellow and become embrittled with age...it is this yellowing and the degradation of gloss in mastic and dammar that have caused restorers to clean and revarnish them periodically; See Gettens, p..55, When exposed to ultraviolet light resins tend to yellow and decompose.

²³⁶ Edwards, *Disserazione preliminare...*, "Chi ne parla non sa che la vernice comun dei fiaminghi si chiama vernice solo perche manca una voce tecnica che caratterizzi questo liquore con proprietà di

condensed oil and then could become slightly tinted or darken, it also proved very difficult to remove without inflicting damage to the paint underneath.²³⁷ Edwards ironically commented that if the critics thought that “beyond the Alps they have adopted a real defense for their paintings, it remained only a partial one, for their paintings are no better preserved than ours.”²³⁸

Next, past masters of art came in for criticism when Edwards remarked that “all other suitable mixtures whether ancient and modern, were messes of little utility or even harmful.” Even the immortal Leonardo da Vinci, Edwards exclaimed, “proposed in his treatise on painting the use of an *eternal varnish!*...We read with eagerness the words of this great man, the summa of painters, a profound philosopher, who actually suggested placing a crystal over the painting held in place with thickened oil!”²³⁹ Edwards admitted that this was an implausible solution when considering the huge *Paradiso* by Tintoretto and the immense ceiling paintings in the sala of the Grand Consiglio covered in glass. It was clear to Edwards that even the genius Leonardo da Vinci could not anticipate the

vocabolo, appunto come per la ragione medesima chiamasi vernice quella composizione che usano i nostri restauratori analoga di molto alla fiamingha....”

²³⁷ Edwards, *Dissertazione preliminare*....; Samet, *AIC Painting Specialist Group*..., p. 23, This recipe also known as French Varnish; See Gettens & Stout, p. 57-58 on various varnish preparations such as the Lucca MS where resin is dissolved in linseed oil; or Flemish paintings which owe their durability to the inclusion of varnish in pigment mixture or Venice turpentine dissolved in turpentine spirits with mastic or sandarac along with drops of oil for toughness; A.P. Laurie, *The Painter's Methods and Materials*, New York: Dover Republished 1967, p.170, where soluble resin (sandarac or mastic or both were dissolved in linseed oil with pica greca (colophony) added, also p.166, Spicco or Oil of Spike or Lavender is a distillation of flower of species of lavender known as Lavandula spica. It oxidizes and thickens when exposed to air.

²³⁸ Edwards, *Dissertazione preliminare*...

²³⁹ Ibid., “Chi non si stupiro' leggendo l'articolo 350 nel trattato della pittura di Leonardo da Vinci, dove si propone l' uso di una eterna vernice! il credito d'un si grand' uomo, somme pittore, e profondo filosofo; la pienezza della promessa, e l' importante della proposizione vi fan divorar quel paragrafo con trasporto di avidita'; ma finalmente la vernice eterna del Vinci consiste nell' attaccare un cristallo sopra la pittura ben bene impastriata d'oglio cotto.”

many difficulties that involved preserving art. Other serious attempts in the distant past to invent a covering included the efforts by the inventor of malleable glass, who was murdered by Tiberius Julius Caesar (42 B.C.-A.D.37) the second Roman Emperor (A.D.14-A.D.-37). Other fantastic claims came from alchemists, who nonetheless earned Edwards' respect for their unsuccessful experiments to advance the cause of science.²⁴⁰

However, although these pioneers were to be lauded, they all still fell short in Edwards' estimation. There were the hard resins, amber or copal, their efficacy yet to be deduced from the observation of Watin and F. Bonanni. The latter was "much applauded in his time" for his book with its "secret of arts and crafts" and a purported "perfect varnish."²⁴¹ Then there was the treatise on glass, *Arte vetraria distinta in libri sette* (1689) by Antonio Neri (d.1614), translated by Johannis Kunckel (1630-1703), and another on the long list of "plagiarizers, repetitions, and copiers, all practiced between these authors...and in so much mixed fodder." There was still no helpful information to be found in the *Dictionnaires* or by the encyclopedists like Denis Diderot (1713-1784).²⁴² These scientific contributions were followed by those of Conte de Caylus, also known as

²⁴⁰ Ibid., "Bellissimo ritrovato che sarebbe questo onde preservare il Paradiso di Tintoretto; e gl'immenso soffitti nella sala del gran consiglio. Io penso però che il suggerimento di Leonardo debba considerarsi come un'ironia. Che a un tempo stesso dimostrata la necessità d'impedire il commercio dell'aria con la pittura che si vuol preservare e la difficoltà di prevenir a un tal fine. La mania di qualche altro giunse fin ad istituire con serietà degli studi sul ritrovamento del vetro malleabile, e il cui sfortunato, ma probabilmente favoloso inventore fu fatto morir da Tiberio. Delle stessa tempra sono ancora molti altri segreti ed altre fantastiche pretese di questi alchimisti." ; Merrifield, p. 208-216 on glass in Eraclius' *De Coloribus et artibus romaorum*, on varnish, cxxxii & p.748 & Index p.916.

²⁴¹ See Watin, *L'Art du Peintre, Doreur, Vernisseur*, (Paris 1778-1793); Feller & Stolow p.47-48.; Gettens and Stout p. 57-58, The term amber was used to cover a wide variety of resins and it referred often to their color regardless of origin. True amber could have only been dissolved after the turpentine had been fused, and adding the amber before the oil....this would have made a varnish that was very stiff and could only be rubbed on. Probably the "amber" so often generically cited was hard copal, possibly indistinguishable even to varnish makers.

²⁴² Edwards *Dissertation Preliminare...*

Anne Claude Phillipe de Tubieres (1692-1765), the French antiquarian who studied with Antoine Watteau and became an etcher and patron of the arts. His thoughts on “varnish” came under the heading of “Encaustique” in the *Encyclopedie* (Paris 1751-52), but Edwards could not really recommend him as a source for varnish. Edwards continued to list the many scientists who attempted to create the perfect varnish. There was René Antoine Ferchault de Reamur (1683-1757), who invented the alcohol thermometer (1731), did research on Chinese porcelain. He also invented an opaque glass and silk varnish and studied the solid oil extracted from cane. He is best known for his exhaustive study of insects (6 vols. 1734-42), where he identified another kind of wax called cerume made by ants which completed Edwards’ summation of numerous unsuitable possibilities.²⁴³ Yet among all these possibilities there was still no suitable coating that combined “fluidity and transparency, neutrality of tint, that would resist dampness, salts, remain flexible, resistant to the heat of the sun, not friable, and non-reflective and forever unchanging....”²⁴⁴

Edwards warned that research into methods that used wax as a covering deserved cautious attention. Pliny the Elder (A.D. 23-A.D.79) wrote in his *Historia naturalis* that waxes dissolved by heat do afford durability, but Edwards wanted to be very clear about the distinction he made between the use of wax as part of the painting medium and the practice of applying waxes over dried oil paintings as a coating. This latter technique involved burning the wax on the surface to the melting point creating a skin. The use of

²⁴³ *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, Fifth Edition, Editor Barbara Chernow & George Vallasi, New York City: Houghton Mifflin Co. 1993, p.2286, “Reamur.”

²⁴⁴ Edwards, *Dissertazione preliminare*; See F. Bonnani, *Trattato sopra la vernice detta comunemente cinese*, Rome 1720, Watin, *Manuel du Vernisseur*, pp.6-7; Conte de Caylus *Reflexions sur quelques chapitres du XXXV livre de Pline* (date); See Diderot *Encyclopedie ou Dictionnaire Raisonne des*

fire on the surface is obviously a dangerous practice and required restraint and skill similar to the notorious cleaning method found in Giovanni Secco-Suardo's manual from 1867.²⁴⁵ Edwards described his own rather horrific experiments conducted in years past on some paintings to test the recipe using wax that he found published in 1754 by Bachiliere, a respected painter in Paris.

Edwards applied Bachiliere's wax recipe (unknown to us exactly) over his own large new oil painting on canvas, then only a year old. He left the painting out during summer in scorching sun and other weather.²⁴⁶ Later, after seven or eight years, Edwards noticed a sensitive alteration in the painting. He then tried what he called the same "soap" on an unrestored antique painting and after a second or third burning, the technique lifted up sheets of paint surface. He stated that he used the same technique on an antique oil painting restored with *fiel di bue* (ox gall), essence of turpentine, and gum resin with good results, until later that winter he noted that the color and underpainting began to detach in wide sheets.²⁴⁷

As destructive as this sounds, Edwards recalled that Florentine restorers had used wax over fifty years before, and that the results were disastrous enough to discredit the

Sciences, des Arts, et des Metiers on ant/insect wax; See OED Volume 1, p. 237, cerume or cera formed of wax from ceruminous glands secreted in the inner canal of the ears.

²⁴⁵ Giovanni Secco Suardo *Il Restauratore dei Dipinti*, Milano:Hoepli, 1927, pp. 162-63, "Delle croste durissime...Il Deon suggerisce per certi casi più ostinati l'uso dell' olio bollente mentre il celebre restauratore prof. Giuseppe Guizzardi suggeriva addirittura--con opportunità accorgimenti--di dar fuoco a dell' alcool versato sul quadro spegnendo la fiamma al momento opportuno con un panno bagnato. Il calore della fiamma cuocendo la crosta l' ammoliva in modo che, col cotone intinto d' acqua ragia ed alcool, si poteva levare facilmente."

²⁴⁶ See Merrifield, Chp VI, p.cccviii, Merrifield citing Ruben's claim that the Italians always exposed their newly finished paintings to the sun or between every coat, to dry the painting quickly and perfectly. The belief was that oil would rise to the surface of a picture if the colors took too long to dry and caused the medium to spoil and colors to darken.

procedure entirely. He explained that even the French academicians like Robert Picault (active in 1746 in Paris), who had a “fervent enthusiasm” for the use of wax in restoration, did not risk ruining the *Saint Michael* (c.1500) or *The Holy Family* (c. 1500) by the “Divine Raphael” with novel treatments like Bacheliere’s.²⁴⁸ Edwards concluded that although there were benefits to wax, the effects were too dubious to rely upon, and he could not advise it with assurance. Edwards still pressed on with his belief that only scientific research could improve the technical and material resources for improved restoration of art. On this subject his tone is hopeful and passionate, but only through this process would there be the new and exciting discoveries to be made that would expand the understanding and application of conservation science.²⁴⁹

The Rules of Restoration

A primary idea expounded in Edwards’ whole discourse was his belief that the first and most tangible goal in conservation was to prevent, whenever possible, the causes for damage. However, if these efforts failed, then the immediate repair of works of art must follow.²⁵⁰ Only with a constant routine that combined responsible and knowledgeable care

²⁴⁷ Edwards, *Dissertazione preliminare...*; Cagiano de Azevedo, p.121, on Edwards’ distrust of varnish and wax mixtures.

²⁴⁸ Edwards, *Dissertazione preliminare...*; See Conti, 1988, on Bachelier and encaustic p.148; Jacques Gautier d’Agoty, *Observations sur l’arte de conserver les belles peintures qui menacent ruine* Paris, (1752); Marcia Hall & John Sherman *The Princeton Raphael Symposium: Science in the Service of Art History*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990, pp.39-55, On restoration of Raphael at Louvre; Goethe, pp.575-576, on techniques; Lanzi, *Painting in Italy*, Volume I, p. 85.

²⁴⁹ Edwards *Dissertazione preliminare...*, “...in guisacche declinando dal piano servile d’ una cieca consuetudine tanto nella parte intellettuale che nella meccanica delle bell’ arti, sollevino ora mai le loro speculazioni dietro le traccie della ricercatrice filosofia e si convincano che nel periodo di perversimento in cui siamo, il peggiore di tutti i partiti si e quello di battere ostinatamente la stessa carriera e di seguire l’ ottuso sistema della sola reciproca imitazione.”

²⁵⁰ Ibid., “Fin dal cominciamento della mia dissertazione fissai come assioma che un piano di generale custodia comprende egualmente la preservazione dal danno, ed il sollecito riparo ai pregiudizi che non si soon potuti imperdire...una completa preservazione esclude qualunque bisogno della cura riparativa...”

would Venice have something to pass onto future generations.

The important philosophical position that Edwards espoused at this time was that one should never approach an important restoration with an *idea* of a work more perfect than it actually was when it left its creator's hands. Edwards felt a profound respect for the consequences of the aging of the works in his care and accepted this process as a force of nature. He believed that it was false to hope "to return the work to a youth that contained an incorruptibility it never had, even in its primary state."²⁵¹ Ernst Gombrich admitted this same dilemma during the heated cleaning controversy at the National Gallery in London in 1960 when he remarked that "Even the picture restorer must and will be influenced in his difficult task by the image he has formed of the original appearance of the work he hopes to restore."²⁵²

Like Cesare Brandi, Edwards believed that restoration must be understood as an intervention that allows a "product of human activity to recover its function."²⁵³ Again and again he proclaimed that art has supreme value to the spiritual and economic

Edwards was the first to really focus on prevention of damage which seems like a logical course of action today; See also Cesare Brandi, *Teoria del Restauro*, Torino: Einaudi Editore, 1977 pp.53-61, Restoration as a "momento metodologico," which must extend the work's improved condition into the future in responsible conservation practice.

²⁵¹ Edwards, *Dissertazione preliminare...*, "La somma eccellenza che ricercar si volesse in un egregio ristauo non potrebbe includer giammai una idea più perfetta di quella corrispondente all' original condizione in cui trovavasi l' opera quando sorti della man dell autore; e perciò se fin da quella data comincio essa a manifestare la sua, fralezza, sarà incoerente ed ingiusto il pretendere che restituita alla gioventù, acquisiti ancora un incorruttibilità che non fu mai compresa nell' idea del suo stato primiero. A ben ponderar adunque tai cose, la ricaduta dei restaurati esemplari altro non è che una continuazione, una conseguenza delle insuperabili loro tendenze, e non un difetto dell' arte, cui scopo non può essere il cangiamento della natura, ma soltanto l' aiuto, ed il soccorso di essa." ; Brandi, *Teoria...*, Ch.4-5, On responsibility of the restorer to respect age value"; Albert Albano, "Art in Transition," 1988, p.183, "Should our function as conservators then be to impose our own perspective concerning durability onto the creative process of the arts?"

²⁵² E.H. Gombrich, "Controversial Methods and Methods of Controversy," *Burlington Magazine* #105, London: 1963, p. 93.

²⁵³ Brandi, *Teoria...*, p.3.

wellbeing of the state, and his closing arguments in the *Dissertazione...* were directed at any who might question this value and consequently the preservation of art. If paintings inevitably darken over time, restoration can return some of their original glory. If pigment dries up and sloughs off and canvas is torn, these can be repaired. To Edwards those “with eyes to see and hands free to touch” could only agree that a restoration could save the aspect and substance of a work. This was only part of the process because the restorer held a myriad of other smaller objectives crucial to the work’s aesthetic and physical totality.²⁵⁴ Edwards’ ultimate ambition for restoration practice in Venice was to honor the aesthetic, historic, and material reality of the work. This same holistic theory would not be formally or completely articulated again until 1977, when Cesare Brandi explained his “Teoria del Restauro” and reconstructed the basis for modern Italian conservation practice.²⁵⁵

Edwards listed the little things that constituted a complete and proper restoration. This list included the lining of a work when its ancient support no longer had integrity and did not resist the action of salts, the flattening of unwanted folds that crumpled the surface, and the removal of yellowed varnish. Edwards instructed that a restorer’s duty was never to let the remedy exceed the causes of damages, and always to refrain from

²⁵⁴ Edwards, *Dissertazione preliminare...*, “...ed è un fatto egualmente palpabile, e visibile che i colori ossiderati, infranti, slegati, e cadenti si riducono col ristauo medesimo ad uno stato di solidità, e di consistenza. In questa due operazioni che non possono assolutamente contraddirsi da chi ha gli occhi in capo per vedere, e le mani li deve per toccare, si contien senza dubbio il più essenzial di cio che si brama salvare in una pittura; aspetto e sussistenza; ed a questi due principalissimi oggetti tendono anche l’ altre operazioni del restauro che si chiamano accessorie delle quali non e’ niente meno innegabile, e materialmente di mostrata l’ utilita’.”

²⁵⁵ Brandi, *Teoria*, p.6, “...il restauro costituisce il momento metodologico del riconoscimento dell’opera d’ arte nella sua consistenza fisica e nella sua duplice polarita’ esetica e storica, in vista della sua trasmissione al futuro.”

engaging in the practice, camouflaged by administrative corruption, which allowed the same works to be repaired repeatedly.²⁵⁶

The “small restorations” which he promoted required the diligence of a bureaucracy that was not crisis-driven. His practical plan, supported by a theoretical understanding of intrinsic and extrinsic causes, depended on an application of scientific remedies which he claimed could preserve the artistic heritage of Venice for generations to come. He described the European context for his theories, citing Rome as deficient because they waited too long to act, while the English attempted to protect their collections in large structures, but had no indigenous body of restorers or artists to take on the task. Edwards continued that Prussia, Saxony, and Russia had all expended huge salaries for professionals in hopes of maintaining their public galleries, with questionable results. Edwards’ criticism of France identified the supposed Gallic penchant for endless discussion about problem-solving. To him such indecisiveness compromised the ability to move quickly to protect the art. Finally, the reigning Austrian Emperor had spent millions of florins on the repair of the Imperial Gallery, yet these efforts did not secure the collection itself nor advance new research in chemistry or preventative restoration.²⁵⁷

Pietro Edwards and Gianantonio Selva: Questo e Risposto per la general lavatura...

The importance that Edwards placed on a theoretical foundation for conservation practice is revealed again and again in his writings. In 1802 he replied to a letter written by Gianantonio Selva, the Neoclassical architect who had collaborated with Edwards on a

²⁵⁶ Edwards, *Dissertazione preliminare...*

²⁵⁷ Ibid.; See Marijnissen, *Degradation ...* (1967) Throughout for overview on other countries.

book about the Algarotti collection in 1776.²⁵⁸ Selva's letter questioned Edwards about the necessity and procedures for cleaning a painting in oil.²⁵⁹ Their discourse took the form of questions and answers, which slightly resembled the "Modo da tener nel Dipingere," part of the *Volpato Manuscript* written by Giovanni Battista Volpato (c. 1633) from Bassano, a pupil of Novelli, who had studied under Tintoretto. This manuscript was preserved in the library of Count Giuseppe Remondini and then placed in the public library at Bassano. Luigi Lanzi, Sir Charles Eastlake, and Mary Merrifield later all studied the manuscript, which is considered one of the most important treatises in the history of artists' workshop practices, materials, and techniques due to its combination of information and instruction. In Merrifield's opinion, it was a revealing commentary on Venetian painting as it was practiced at the close of the seventeenth century.²⁶⁰

Edwards characteristically began with a long answer to Selva's relatively simple question, "If one were to wish to know how some pictures should be cleaned, such as those painted in oil that are in good preservation substantially, would one clean these works only superficially?" Edwards replied that a general cleaning was a procedure typically undertaken much too casually for:

if the paintings are actually in a good state as you claim, then it is better not to attempt to improve their condition with any sort of cleaning neither simple or

²⁵⁸ Gianantonio Selva & Pietro Edwards (attributed) *Catologo dei quadri dei disegni e dei libri che trattano dell' arte del disegno della galleria del fu Sig. conte Algarotti in Venezia*, Venice: 1776. In Library of Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, California, There is some confusion if Edwards really collaborated on this catalog as his name is not found in book. Yet catalogues in both Cleveland Museum of Art and National Gallery in Washington list Edwards as co-author. The copy used in this research is located at Getty Research Library, Getty Center, Los Angeles. It is 58 pages sized at 21cm long. The copy at Cleveland is same length and page size as Getty while copy at National Gallery in Washington D.C. is 80 pages and 23 cm long.

²⁵⁹ Pietro Edwards MS S.P.V. 913.64-985.64 (1802), *Questo e Risposto per la general lavatura a di alcuni quadri--di corrigano gli errori del copista che spesso volte gustano senso.*

²⁶⁰ Merrifield, Volume II pp.721-755, *Volpato Manuscript*, "Modo da Tener nel Depingere."

complex, nor gentle or strong. The cleaning of a painting is essentially the most difficult part of a restoration and should only happen when the substance of a painting is solid.²⁶¹

He listed the examples where one should avoid such comprehensive cleaning. One exception could be when a small picture was covered in a thick varnish coating which had no cracks. However, a variety of circumstances could be risky for cleaning paintings. Such cases included a picture that was painted over a rough ground made with weak glue. This allowed moisture to enter through the back of the canvas and caused pigment to become detached. Another problem was that if a surface with different kinds of dirt was cleaned, it could react in different ways, leaving behind irregular surfaces and blotches. A harsh cleaning might force loosened dirt to settle into small fine cracks if the work had scaling pigment or if it was painted without a fatty or rich medium leaving the colors skinned.²⁶² A heavily varnished painting with no cracks should be cleaned with care as if unvarnished. The surface of these works could become cloudy when wet with water or solvent a condition called “blanching.” Washing with pure water probably would not dissolve fine particles of varnish, but could further dirty the painting. However, Edwards assured Selva that the cloudiness would not affect the durability of the varnish.²⁶³

Edwards hoped to reform the traditional and destructive practice of submitting all works immediately to a uniform cleaning. There were few situations that would induce him to abandon this caution, but he described two that could be considered radical cleaning. In both, he assumed that the color was firmly attached to the canvas or panel

²⁶¹ Edwards, S.P.V., MS 913.64-985.64 (1802).

²⁶² Luigi Grassi & Mario Pepe, *Dizionario dei Termini Artistici*, Milan:UTET, 1994, “Leccare, Leccato” p.455, Perhaps used more in French writing of the eighteenth century. Refers to the style usually by Flemish painters known for their meticulous smooth surface and rich colors.

before beginning the process. He called a good example of such a work “quasi modern” and thought it could be cleaned all over. The second case for an overall cleaning was an antique painting so darkened and obscured that the subject matter could not be discerned. In this situation the soot or grime should be “thinned” to reveal the state of the colors underneath before any more invasive steps were taken. Care must be given to any of the glazes so important to Venetian painting, and Edwards advised rinsing the painting four or five times with a damp sponge every hour, spreading beaten egg white over the surface, and leaving this substance on for three or four days.²⁶⁴

Although Edwards confronted the complex problems of cleaning, he usually did not propose drastic methods or a wide range of materials. His approach was cautious and prudent, based on experience or on procedures with historical precedent. The application of certain ideas was to be accompanied by a solid knowledge of the proper materials and techniques. As seen here, he discouraged draconian cleaning and also recommended the use of substances “friendly to pigments.” Through the procedures, the restorer had to remain aware of the condition and composition of the various strata of dirt, paint, medium, glazes, ground, and support comprising the whole painting.²⁶⁵

Edwards was circumspect when he instructed Selva regarding the use of experimental or traditional materials and techniques.²⁶⁶ He did not elucidate the risky methods, ever popular, of using caustic or soda to remove oil retouches. The soda

²⁶³ Cagianò de Azevedo, pp.117-118.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Tranquilli, p. 176.

²⁶⁶ Cagianò de Azevedo, p.118; also see p.116, Edwards must have been aware of Orlandi’s *Abecedario Pittorico* in use by Venetian Academics. It contained many recipes for cleaning which were of dubious value and potentially harmful.

mixture was obtained from cooking ashes with “acqua forte,” a solution obtained from boiling potassium. This particular recipe was fraught with danger for the art because the soda and potassium were strongly alkaline, and although they could loosen old oil retouches, the mixture would roughen the paint surface and weaken the binding between pigment and medium. To prevent this, a solution of linseed and walnut oil was applied, and their acidic component effectively neutralized or “stopped” the action. For the dilettante Selva, Edwards listed acquavite, wine, and egg white for a more gentle cleaning.²⁶⁷ The percentage of pure alcohol contained in both acquavite and wine varied, their purity affected the speed of evaporation of the liquid from the surface of the painting. Acquavite was comprised at 50% purity level. These substances were combined with soaps, which made them more dilute in alkaline content. They still could dissolve varnish, and although less aggressive, they might damage the colors if not monitored closely.

Hot Sand Method of Lining

Besides the Selva document, one other manuscript describes more precisely the materials Edwards used in restoration.²⁶⁸ The information particularly details the lining process. Before this part of a restoration could begin, a paper called “sugarina” was glued with a flour paste adhesive to the original paint surface to prevent any detachment of pigment during the procedure. The old glue was scraped from the back of the canvas with pumice stone, and also with various metal instruments such as a *bisturi*. The new canvas, described as “tela Costanza grezza,” featured a similar weave to the original canvas and was stretched on a *telaio* made of seasoned wood to prevent expansion or contraction.

²⁶⁷ Tranquilli, p.176.

The cloth was cut in the laboratory for extremely large paintings. The glue was a traditional *colla di pasta* and the ingredients included farina (flour), colla tedesca (a glue derived from trimmings of animal cartilage), and ox gall as a preservative. This mixture was poured on both surfaces and spread out with a roller. The lining piece was attached to the old canvas back, covered with an oiled sheet of paper called “scaletteri,” and then blanketed for several successive days with a quantity of hot sand distributed evenly from the center of the canvas out to the sides. The weight expelled the air from between the two layers and guaranteed a better adhesion. Usually only one layer of fabric was attached to the original canvas, even if the dimensions were huge. Finally, the “sugarina” was removed from the picture’s surface and the work was re-stretched on its stretcher bars.

Loss Compensation

In the final stage of restoration, the restorer decided which areas of loss must be replaced and how this inpainting or retouching should be done. Edwards had written that integration of losses should only occur in parts completely gone and that they should be painted in the style of the original artist. The appropriate pigment and medium mixture for this delicate task was a subject of intense study by Edwards, who had written extensively on the problems of the oil medium and had mentioned research into the archaic medium of “encaustic” in the Correr manuscript as well as in his *Dissertazione preliminare*. He does not describe this experimentation in depth, nor does it appear to be the traditional recipes for encaustic, but his desire was always to replace outdated artisanal technique with new

²⁶⁸ Ibid., p.182, ff 12, in the Biblioteca Correr MSS 307-c fascicolo XXX, “Dipinti Restauro.”

science.²⁶⁹

Our knowledge about the materials Edwards used can be further supplemented by a list of the palette of pigments utilized in the laboratory at SS Giovanni and Paolo, which included: a range in quality of ultramarines (lapis lazuli), Prussian Blue (called azzurro di Berlino), white lead (Biacca), lead tin yellow, yellow, red and brown ochres, another yellow from a rue plant (Giallo Santo), vermilion (cinnabar), Van Dyke Brown (Terra di Colonia), bitumen (Mumia) used to create artificial patina, black, and green which was probably obtained by mixing yellows and blues.²⁷⁰

A Unified Theory of Conservation

What becomes apparent in Pietro Edwards' manuscripts and reports is the organized and complex nature of his views on a unified theory of conservation. His orderly dissection of mundane tasks and duties obscured at times a deeper commitment to a technical-scientific superstructure on which to build a conservation profession. He considered restoration a separate discipline from that of the artist, the restorer's status remained murky because they were not trained in their own professional school with a specific curriculum based on the special needs and requirements of restoration.²⁷¹ Another condition of his new vision of the role of a restorer was the importance of the prevention of deterioration of works of art, a realization that grew out of the regular maintenance of art in the public buildings of Venice. And finally, the problems surrounding the inevitable

²⁶⁹ Tranquilli, p. 176.

²⁷⁰ Ibid., p.177; Also see Basile, *Piano Pratico...*, p. 62, Document 78, Agosto 26, 1786. "Genere di colori esisenti nel laboratorio ad uso del ristauo delle Pubbliche Pitture in SS Giovanni e Paolo, A.A.V.B., Atti dell Collegio dei Pittori, 1689-1798.

obsolescence of the materials used in restoration led to his commitment to a reversibility principle in treatment, still one of the basic rules today in conservation practice.²⁷²

Edwards obviously believed that science had a large role to play in restoration. This belief also was manifested by his knowledge of theories of the affinities of elements like air (gases), salts, and water promoted by Pierre Joeseph Macquer (1718-84), Antoine Laurent Lavoisier (1743-94), and Torbern Bergman (1735-84).²⁷³ All these scientists published treatises and books on chemistry and physics and their names appear throughout Edwards' papers.²⁷⁴ Edwards' own research would prove crucial in determining the causes of painting degradation in Venice. The successful establishment of the laboratory at SS Giovanni and Paolo had already shown his vision in improving public relations and an awareness of the practical necessities of restoration. The laboratory had become a symbol of legitimacy for those engaged in scientific experimentation.²⁷⁵

²⁷¹ Ibid., Basile, pp.4-5 on Edwards' idea for a school to train restorers which was the earliest in Italy, perhaps in Europe. Also his plan formed a basis for the first public school for restoration at the ICR in Rome.

²⁷² Tranquilli, p. 177, "Ancora più attuale infine il problema dell inadeguatezza dei materiali di restauro in rapporto alla necessità di un intervento reversibile."

²⁷³ L.J.M. Colby, *The Chemical Studies of P.J. Macquer*, London: 1938, On Macquer for his work in dye research, search for perfect porcelain for Sevres factory, discovery of composition of Prussian blue and Comte de la Garaye's tincture of mercury, solubility and gases.; also P.J. Macquer, *Elements of Chemistry and Elements of Theory* (1749); on Antoine Lavoisier see his *Traite elementaire de chemie* (1787); Torbern Bergman see "Tables of Elective Attractions" from *Dissertation on Elective Attractions* (1775) trans J.A. Schuffle (London 1968); See Holmes, pp.on chemical affinities 5-6, 58,109-110, 120.

²⁷⁴ Molmenti, Part III Volume II, p.149. There was a tradition of interest in science in Venice although later the Republic would be accused of discouraging such curiosity. For example in 1592 the Republic summoned Galileo to Padua to study and for eighteen years he was the Chair of Mathematics at the University.

²⁷⁵ Holmes pp.17-32, On scientific laboratory in eighteenth century; On French influences in establishment of scientific experimentation in eighteenth century see Roger Hahn, "Scientific Research as an Occupation in Eighteenth Century Paris," *Minerva: Review of Science, Learning and Policy*, Volume 13 #4, London: 1975, pp.501-13.

Chapter Three

A Unity of Method: Practice

Edwards expounded the second part of his dual objectives for a professional conservation practice in Venice in the *Piano Pratico per la General Custodia delle Pubbliche Pitture* (1785). This provided a clear and detailed way for the team to proceed and encouraged the constant vigilance of Inspector and restorer. In this paper, Edwards attempted to communicate the ways to approach various specific problems in a highly organized fashion. He intended by this tedious but exacting method of explanation to prohibit any faulty application of analysis in restoration practice. Edwards hoped that the daily custodial care tied to small tasks would prevent the drastic and urgent interventions of the past, when works had been neglected too long or left in dangerous situations that even common sense would reject.

Building Maintenance

The first step of his regimen focused on the extrinsic and preventable causes of building maintenance. Edwards proposed that the public buildings such as the Palazzo Ducale be routinely inspected for leaks that allowed rain, snow, dirt, and air into sensitive areas where art was exhibited. These inspections were to be at regular three-month intervals. All ceilings or openings such as windows were to be insulated with glass or drapery. These defenses were particularly important to the “already rotted” ceilings in the Maggior Consiglio, the ceiling in the Bussola, two in the Consiglio dei Dieci, the old

Pregadi, and those in the Quattro Porte.²⁷⁶ Inspectors were to examine all parts of the buildings and notify the appropriate magistrates and custodians immediately of any problems. All rooms moreover were to be inspected soon after storms and in seasons of long rains and winter, when draperies should be hung or plaster poultices applied to cracks or holes. Depending on the season, windows were to be covered in the Maggior Consiglio, particularly when “boats full of contraband were being burned in the harbor nearby.”²⁷⁷ Another source of grime and soot came from fireplaces which needed repair, and ventilation was needed from holes drilled in the ornament in the ceiling. Ideally, “these rooms as Vitruvius said, should contain no paintings.”²⁷⁸ Most importantly, no bureaucratic delays were to be tolerated because even an eight-to-ten-day wait could cause the destruction of a work of art.²⁷⁹

Interior Spaces

Edwards then moved to consider the interior spaces or “Localita prossima,” where the conditions in parts of a room could affect the art. The north wind and the zephyr

²⁷⁶ Edwards MS 787.7-867.7/10 March 3,1785, *Piano Pratico per la generale custodia delle pubbliche pitture*. 1°, “Sieno generalmente esaminati tutt’ i difetti di fabrica, dai quali proceder possono pioggie, colature immonde, ed introduzione d’ aria per piccoli pertugi, massime nella parte posteriore de’ quadri fra il quadro stesso, ed il muro; con altro disordine relativo all parte statica del fabricato in cio riguarda la sicurezza delle pitture; 2°, Tutti i luminari delle soffitte sien provveduti di scuri, se non ne avessero, e questi siano aperti soltanto per dar passaggio all aria nelle giornate di bel tempo, e restino poi sempre chiusi nelle notte, ed in tutto l’inverno...Queste difese avrebbero in buona parte salvati il gran soffitti nella sala del Mag C, che si trovarono infraciditi. Il soffitto della Bossola (sic), due di quei nella sala del Consiglio dei X, tutti gli altri in quella della quattro porte, alcune nel soffitto del Pregadi vecchio, ed altri ancora furon tutti vicini a perire e ve ne peiron diffatti per mancanza dell’avvertenze accennate in questi due articoli.”

²⁷⁷ Ibid., *Piano... Avvertenze 6°*, “...e sien instituto l’opportune intelligenze affinche l’abbrucciamento delle barche di contrabbando, e d’ altra simili cose, non segua ne’ sopra il molo....”

²⁷⁸ Ibid., *Piano... Località Prossima 5°*, “Avvertasi poi che secondo Vitruvio non dovrebbero tenersi pitture in queste camere. E che l’accennata difesa e’ d’una intiera preservazione.”

²⁷⁹ Ibid., *Piano.... Avvertenze...5°*, “...avvertendo che possono incontrarsi tai combinazioni, nelle quali non sia possibile di applicare, o d’ estendere lungamente il soccorso provvisionale; e che otto, o dieci giorni decidon tal ora l’ intiera perdita di una opera.”

blowing from the Levante, laden with moisture, were thought to be very damaging in Venice. Winds from the east were bad for works higher up on the walls; thus all the “pictures put on the upper floor in the Palazzo Ducale have suffered much...,” while others in the Consiglio di Dieci were “entirely destroyed.”²⁸⁰ Edwards believed it would be better to remove all the paintings and transport them to another place, where their care could be maintained. The details which he did not address in this *foglio* included the care of works situated on walls not subject to humidity but those that needed proper ventilation. A system of pipes and holes along the ceiling, and also in the floor and baseboard of the rooms, could alleviate some of the destructive dampness. Heavy curtains hung over windows were to be opened and closed consistently throughout the day by servants to protect paintings from too much light; this could moreover prevent them from “simmering” in an overly heated and airless space. Here Edwards criticized the lower clerks, for as he did not, “...trust the usual low ministers of Magistrates, from which I can never get the least diligence in such matters.”²⁸¹

Many of the remedies for these conditions were inexpensive, Edwards pointed out. Paintings should be movable, or better yet, not even sited on walls affected by these various threats. Coverings on damp walls would help also. Paintings were to be taken

²⁸⁰ Ibid., *Piano... Località Prossima 1°*, “La collocazione de’ quadri sopra pareti esposte al dritto vento di tramontana cagiona in lungo andare la perdita delle pitture e lo stesso effetto produce ancora nostre vento di levante, benché un poco più tardi, e con qualche diversità nei fenomeni fra le quali vi è ‘ questo, che il vento di levante è più pernicioso per gli appartamenti superiori, e quello di tramonta per gli inferiori...Tutti li quadri collocati parte del rio nel Palazzo Ducale di S. marco sul piano di sopra, hanno sofferto moltissimo; ed alcuni di quei nella Sala dell Consiglio di X situati fra le finestre sono intieramente periti.” ; On north walls and south walls See Merrifield, Vol I chp VI, p.cxxxvii.

²⁸¹ Ibid., *Piano...Località Prossima. 4°*, “Determinate per tanto le cortine che fan di bisogno sia dover dell Ispettore di inviare ogni giorno alcun sorvente a chiuder quelle, alle quali dovrà prestarsi attenzione secondo le varie stagioni; ne in ciò da fidarsi dei soliti bassi ministri dei Magistrati dai quali non potei giammai ottenere la minma diligenza in sifatti propositi.”

down regularly from niches for three to four days per year to dry in the heat of the sun, and the niche itself was to be dried. For this procedure he instructed that one must warm the painting slowly in the sun, then peel back some of the nitrous concretion that had collected by rubbing the surface gently with soft wool. Alternatively, one could expose the work to the heat of the fire, removing the salty accretions which had become malleable. The room in question was to be “defended against fetid vapors,” such as the salty air, with heavy draperies or by blocking holes. However, no complete remedy was possible because, as Edwards implied, there was no way to remove salt from the air.²⁸²

The environment in each room was paramount in Edwards’ assessment of the works located in the Palazzo Ducale. These conditions brought up the most contentious issues in restoration revolving around the theory and practice of cleaning a painting. This debate rages today as it did in Edwards’ Venice, accompanied by the insistent question of whether “to clean or not to clean.” Its judicious resolution, case by case, is crucial for the best preservation of an aesthetic and genuine experience of the work of art.²⁸³

The Climate in Venice

In Venice, the notorious saline-drenched air was the prime culprit, and although Edwards prescribed sturdy canvas drapery to help absorb what he called “exhalations,” eventually the mordant salts would destroy both fabric and painting. Wet cleanings with solvents or water were also threatening, and Edwards suggested rubbing the surface of the

²⁸² Ibid., *Piano...Localita Prossima* 2°.

²⁸³ Ernst Gombrich, “Controversial...”90-93; Otto Kurz, “Time...”p.94-97; S. Rees Jones, “The Cleaning Controversy: Further Comments,”97-98; P.L. Jones, “Scientism and the Art of Picture Cleaning,”98-103; all in *Burlington Magazine* #105, 1963; Feller & Stolow, pp.48-111,171-191; See Cesare Brandi, “The Cleaning of Pictures in Relation to Patina Varnish and Glazes,” *Burlington Magazine*, #105, 1963, 185-

work with wool every eight days. A dry brush or pouch filled with clay powder, covered by fine flannel or calf skin, could also clear the surface. He explained, "if one understands the affinities of fixed alkalis with acid urine and the decomposition one gets from ammonia salts with half alkali, this is a suitable operation. Clay is more efficacious than soda if it is ground with living calcium, but there is a chance that the clay will remain too rigid and soda becomes too dangerous because it is volatile when in contact with calcium limestone."²⁸⁴ In the dampest situations, Edwards advised the use of "mortar" mixed as above, which was most advantageous since it was attracted to oil, less so to damp, and finally to "dust also on dry days."²⁸⁵

The impact of salts which circulated in the lagoon atmosphere was an obvious and insoluble problem for Edwards, as it still remains today.²⁸⁶ He recognized that, "...no one remedy is absolutely immune from every defect," but still believed that the whitish stains could best be removed by the restorer. In the end it would be better, he stated, to try environmental palliatives rather than rely on the dubious results of a major restoration. The list of compromised works was long and it included "all the pictures in the passage of the Quarantia Vecchia, the ceilings by Camille Battini between the Sala del Maggior Consiglio and the Scrutinio. Also two pictures hanging near the Sala dei Quattro Porte,

88; Also See Wechsler, Bettina "Cleaning Controversy," *ICROM*:n.d.; Helmut Ruhemann, "The Cleaning of Paintings: Problems and Potentialities," London: 1968.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., Edwards, *Piano Pratico...*, "Si forma il sacchetto di fanella; vi si pone dentro della creta ovvero altra terr' assorbente seccata al fuoco, pesta, e macinata a secco, ridotta impalpabile, e riscaldata di nuovo; si lega il collo del sacchetto, e con questo si passa due o tre volte sulla pittura più che dura il tepor delle polvere...."

²⁸⁵ Ibid., On attractions, affinities of soda, clay, alkali etc.

²⁸⁶ Luigi Lanzi, *Viaggio nel Veneto*, Translated by Thomas Boscoe, London: 1893, p.319, See on salts in Venice; Rodolfo Pallucchini, "Il Problema della Salvaguardia del Patrimonio Artistico Veneziano," *Atti...*, Venice: 1971, pp.155-58, Climate effects on art

and the painting by the celebrated Carletto Caliari that has become the color of ash. It has suffered like no other from sun, but also because the gesso ground absorbed ammonium salts, and also the work by Contarini painted over an underpainting in oil is now black....”²⁸⁷

Dry Cleaning Works of Art

The third section in the plan addressed the surface condition of the paintings and the dry-cleaning of a work of art. Edwards explained that the style and technique of Venetian painting required even more care than other art because the paint surface was usually textured by impasto and rough canvas weave.²⁸⁸ All these surfaces served as magnets for dust. Edwards explained that the “manner of many Venetian painters whose rough, rich use of pigment, handled in all senses with big lines, is disposed to pick up anything that circles in the air...”²⁸⁹

Dry cleaning, still practiced today is non-invasive and one of the safer methods used in cleaning a painting. Edwards’ procedures for this technique were listed as external remedies for extrinsic causes that responsible restoration must first attempt. Edwards noted that in the past the practice had been to dust the pictures twice a year, but now he believed it should be done every day. Another problem which arose from dusting was that

²⁸⁷ Edwards, *Piano Pratico... Località Prossima 2°*, “Non poco pur ne risentono i due quadri verso il rio nella sala delle quattro porte: quelle celebre di Carletto Caliari era divenuto colore di cenere, ed aveva sofferto più dell’ altro, non solo per i raggi solari, come si crede da tutti, ma perche essendo dipinto sul gesso avev’ assorbita maggior coppia di sal ammoniaco; ciocchè non pote far l’ altro del Contarini dipinto sopra l’ imprimitura in oglio.”, Perhaps he described a “sinking in” of the varnish layer when a painting is too dry; See Holmes pp. 36-7 on sal ammoniacs as volatile salts.

²⁸⁸ Rosand, *Painting...* pp.20-21, 25-26, See on Venetian painting technique; Marco Boschini, *La Carta del Navegar Pittoresco*, 1672, p.752.

²⁸⁹ Edwards, *Piano Pratico... Exterior 1°* “...A questo si aggiunge che la maniera di molti pitori veneziani ruvida, ricca di colore e manneggiata tutti sensi a gran tratti e’ più d’ogni altro stile dipost a raccogliere dalle polvere queste pitture....”

works already cleaned were not covered afterwards, and consequently the dust that had been stirred up around and in other rooms would just settle again on the same works. This floating haze included the chaff utilized as an absorbent during regular sweeping throughout the Palazzo. Typically, the cleaners employed a long and unmanageable bar attached to a broom to reach the paintings high above the floor and this awkward tool succeeded only in rubbing dust into the pictures or merely moving it around on the surface. Edwards worried that small “atoms” of dust would be imbedded into the wrinkles of the canvas and proposed a massive use of drapery for these problems.²⁹⁰ The Inspector would adapt the curtains to the various requirements of the paintings where they hung.²⁹¹ Most could not be completely protected in this way, but perhaps some specific pictures could have their frames altered to allow fabric guards that dropped down covering the image.

Edwards claimed that ultimately it was the cleaning that would make the difference for improved long-term care of the public pictures. His ideas could be expensive, requiring three men employed full time during the year to “polish up the public pictures.”²⁹² Among the expenses was the provision for wagons (carts) that would carry a kind of composite step ladder that would help to reach all parts of a picture from top to bottom. Edwards cautioned that the ladders and wagons must be kept in a locked and

²⁹⁰ Ibid., *Piano Pratico...Avvertenze I°*..., “Questo metodo ad altro non serve che a rimenare in giro quella sozzura, ed a ben bene inserime gl’atomi più sottili in tutt’ i minuti solchi dell’ opera.”

²⁹¹ Merrifield, “Extracts from an Original Manuscript...,” pp.880-881, On other Venetian remedies for protecting paintings on damp walls including a charcoal layer.

²⁹² Ibid., *Piano Pratico...Avvertenze... Terzo*, “Il metodo più vantaggioso e che si estende universalmente su tutt’ i quadri e’ quello delle frequenti e giudiziose politure;... Tre uomini almeno son necessari alle esecuzione di questo provvedimento; e supponendoli occupati tutto l’anno a ripulire in giro li quadri pubblici....”

convenient location when not in use in the Palazzo.

Prevention and Protection

While cleaning was important, the Inspector would also investigate the tension of the paintings still nailed on their stretchers. During these examinations, Edwards cautioned that the pictures must be lifted up and off the wall carefully from their hooks by using long metal staffs or *piccaglies*. The restorer also needed to watch for canvas that moved in drafts that blew through the rooms the room. Other afflictions included the presence of water on the work or its frame. When moisture was discovered, the canvas had to be removed immediately and the leaks that caused it repaired. For the huge paintings, Edwards admitted that the use of a *ruotolo* or roller around which canvas was curled, while not ideal, was probably unavoidable, so eight or ten rollers twelve inches in diameter and six to seventeen feet in length should be always available.²⁹³

Edwards was convinced that all these activities, hopes, and intentions rested on the appointment of an Inspector who was a thoroughly competent, reliable, and experienced artisan. The authorities must never be allowed to forget this primary rule: the Inspector must be a person of honor and knowledge, or the “result will be similar to all those other enterprises conducted with ignorance and malice, nor will he be able to defend the code of obligations, rules, and warning that I am now able to place in the hands of your Excellencies.”²⁹⁴ The Inspector must also be given enormous freedom to achieve the Republic’s stated goals in regards to the preservation of the art.²⁹⁵ However, Edwards

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid., *Piano Pratico... Parte Seconda: Restauro dei Danni...*

²⁹⁵ Ibid., “Inoltre; non v’è dubbio, che quest’affare dev’essere appoggiato a persona di nota esperienza, e di tutt’abilità, alla quale e’ di mestieri che sia con fiducia rimessa in gran parte l’ esecuzione del piano...”

returned to a fatalistic tone, because he recognized the natural destructive forces of nature that made the work of restoration inevitable.

The first step of these operations required that the work be removed from its usual location if at all possible. Complete restorations were to be avoided because they were expensive and could be more infrequent if the preventive plan was followed diligently. Edwards divided the work into three main categories of harm. These were damage to the priming layer, impairment of the surface layer or present in the substance and body of the painting.²⁹⁶ Edwards identified the dampness of Venice as the most pernicious source of destruction to the ground and underpainting. He described symptoms which included calcium deposit on the reverse, a swollen lining, a lack of adhesion between lined canvas layers, fissures between canvas and panel, and a buckling of the undercoating. He noted that shrinkage, wrinkling, or rot could be prevented by regular inspection before this deterioration advanced too far in any one work.

The corrosion of the surface by “ammonium salts” and “oil volatilization” could also be inhibited by a sharp eye and quick action of the Inspector. Every three years the threatened works should be friction-cleaned, or perhaps “irrigated” with spirits of wine.²⁹⁷ Edwards reminded the reader that the simple stains from water or the faded color left behind by an errant ray of sunshine could all be repaired if dealt with promptly. However, when these damages were untreated for too long they caused deep and irreparable harm to

²⁹⁶ Ibid. ...pregiudizio relativi al fondo del dipinto, pregiudizio relativi alla superficie di esso; e pregiudizio relativi alla sostanza del dipinto medesimo.”

²⁹⁷ Ibid., “L’ umido che avessero contratto le fodere, e la imprimiture d’ un quadro, per cui fosse necessario voltarlo ed impolverarlo di qualche terra calcarea dalla parte posteriore per estrarne l’ umidità; il distacco parziale delle fodere che si manifesta con le gonfiezze della tela originale dalla parte davanti; l’

the pictures.

Edwards revealed his scientific understanding when he described potential threats in assessing the state of conservation of a work. For example, the cracking of surface paint was a small problem that could nonetheless grow. It was through “these fine cracks that damage enters, this facilitated the interior circulation of air, inflated beads of color site to site that then detach from the canvas.”²⁹⁸ With regular maintenance and dusting, surface crust formation could be prevented, and some of the larger paintings that had suffered extensive pigment loss from being bumped or struck in cleanings should be moved carefully from their niches or protected in some manner. Edwards believed that an Inspector with the proper knowledge and experience could resolve these issues with the best and quickest remedy. This included “always conducting the procedures in moderation, with prudence, and full awareness of the condition of the work.”²⁹⁹

Some Disciplines to Observe in the Execution of the Plan

Among Edwards’ most important administrative skills manifested during his career was the ability to identify and correct the bureaucratic impediments to achieving good results. We recognize this ability in the section called “Some Disciplines to Observe in the Execution of the Plan,” where little was left to chance in his methodical approach. As a restorer and manager he had inherited the results of poor organization, lack of accountability, and institutional negligence, and thus firmly entreated the authorities to

apertura delle giunte di questa tela medesima; le fenditure dei quadri dipinti tavola, o le contorsioni di questi fondi. . . .” See on friction cleaning, use of wine as solvent

²⁹⁸ Ibid., “Nelle sostanze poi del colore con molta cura devonsi esaminare e riparare le sottili sue crepature che danno ingresso, e facilitano l’ interno circolo dell’ aria: le bolle del colore che rigonfiandosi a sito a sito si stacca dalla tela; le trasmutazioni di quali che tinta del cui cangiamento può bene spesso avvedersi l’ attento indagatore, e potrà qualche volta impedirne i progressi. . . .”

prevent unnecessary delays between the submission of an Inspector's report and its implementation. This was a sore point for past restorers and an obvious source of frustration for those sincerely engaged in the job of salvaging and preserving the artistic heritage of the city. To Edwards, the Inspector, assisted by his team, must be allowed to conduct his business with respect and expedience; he should not have to suffer confrontations with "ministers or Magistrates that sometime excite some difficulties with good intention and bad result."³⁰⁰

The mechanics of review and report were more completely outlined when Edwards assigned part of the monthly inspections to members of the Collegio dei Pittore. If the Collegio found special problems they would then submit a report in writing and the Inspector would respond with a proposed plan. Any assistants to the Inspector would defer to him and avoid possible conflicts of interest. Although the position of the Inspector should be made a permanent one in the bureaucracy, an alternate Inspector should also be hired to take over any duties in case of illness or other hindrance.³⁰¹

The Projected Budget of the Practical Plan

Finally, and certainly most important to the Senate and the funding bodies, Edwards presented a detailed accounting of the expected budgetary requirements. This aspect of Edwards' grand design was a meticulous and logical list of a wide variety of contingencies. First and foremost, the maintenance and repair of the various buildings were urgent. Edwards noted that there already existed foremen and other workmen for

²⁹⁹ Ibid.

³⁰⁰ Ibid., *Piano Pratico...Alcune Discipline...*, "...massimamente in confronto dei ministri ne' Magistrati, che con buona intenzione, ma con cattivo effetto eccitano qualche volta delle difficoltà."

³⁰¹ Ibid., *Piano Pratico...Ristretto...5°*.

many of the structural problems should they arise. However, another person, separate from that crew, should also be employed to monitor the state of the buildings in San Marco, the Rialto, and the Libreria, but their remuneration should not require more than fifty ducati per year. Not every building would need window shutters, glass and architectural ornament, but Edwards included his estimate of these expenses in the total budget. The removal of paintings from niches and damp walls and their replacement would come to around ninety ducati. The use of four wagons with twelve sets of stairs to lift paintings from walls, wood for wagon sides, iron hooks and utensils, braces, buckles, *ruotoli*, tarred canvas to attach to the ceiling and walls, and over two thousand lengths of canvas for draperies covering paintings would all cost 1,500 *reale* annually. Curtains for windows would be taken from the canvas now on the ceiling during construction in the Maggior Consiglio, but more fabric could add up to a considerable expense. While not itemizing other small items, he combined them with other preparatory expenses that totaled around 2000 ducati for the year.

He made an inventory of costs for the maintenance of buildings and janitorial duties of various kinds. Two laborers would earn under £ 5, and one skilled worker at £ 4 to 5 daily. A primary assistant, who served as back-up to the Inspector, would hold no other job and be given a wage of ten or fifteen ducati a month, with all these expenses coming to 570 ducati per year. The stable annual expenses would count repairs, materials, cleaning of buildings, and moving the large and heavy wagons from place to place. This last item would require ten workers at least in the Maggior Consiglio, and would include removal of the seats in the Pregadi and their replacement afterwards, all for 200 ducati or

more.³⁰² A fund for all unforeseen expenses (including extraordinary cases of damage caused by things like windstorms) should be fixed at about 200 reale, with the grand total of expenses reaching 970 ducati per year.³⁰³

Beyond this dry if informative accounting, Edwards' manipulation of the latent pride of the Venetians about their position among the cultured cities of the continent is masterful. In grand rhetorical style he juxtaposed his own forward-looking plan and scope of responsibility for preservation of the public pictures next to some imaginary plan perhaps considered by other cities which may hold dear their artistic legacies, but which lacked the expertise, the quantity or quality of art that was present in Venice.

In every Metropolis when respective Sovereigns employ subjects entrusted with similar duties, the choice falls on individuals of the greatest reputation, who cannot be trodden under foot by lower ministers or common persons, and often such a post comes decorated with prerogatives of power. It is necessary however, to separate speculations of mere luxury from those of real utility and in this matter I am convinced of three things: first, there is no other City with such a pressing need of this kind of position as in Venice: second, that nowhere could the difficulties encountered by this person be as laborious and extensive as must be found here, given the dispersion, size and number of paintings and variety of damages; and the problems of the place itself; third, that in no place is there a plan established that from so many points of view includes so many obligations and bears the weight of so many duties as I have assumed here, so that in all respects the public service is assured.³⁰⁴

Edwards presented another hypothetical example to highlight the modest demands

³⁰² Ibid., *Piano Pratico...Ristretto...* 7°.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Ibid., "In ogni Metropolis dove rispettivi Sovrani si stipendiano soggetti incaricati di simil incombenze, cade la scelta sopra individui della riputazione maggiore, che non si possono trattare sul piede di bassi ministri, o di triviali persone; ebbene spesso un tal posto viene condecorato con prerogative d'onore. Bisogna per altro separare le speculazioni di mero lusso, da quelle d'una reale utilità; ed in questo confronto io son convinto di tre cose: la prima che non vi sia in alcuna Città un bisogno così pressante d'un tal incaricato come in Venezia: la seconda che in nessun luogo le incombenze di questa persona possano essere così laboriose ed estese come si devono trovare attese la dispersione, la vastità, ed il numero de' quadri; attesa la maggior frequenza, e la varietà dei danni, ed atteso il disagio delle località; la terza poi che in alcun luogo non si troverà fissato un piano che si dirami a tante viste che comprenda

he was making for adequate payment of an Inspector and restorers. He asked the authorities to consider what the expense would be for an Inspector to travel across town or from some greater distance to examine merely one important work--such as "Paolo's *Europa*, Carletto's picture in the Sala delle Quattro Porte, or the *Christ at Emmaus* by Bonifacio." He continued, "then add to this cost for one painting, a more scrupulous examination at least twelve times a year. After this the cleaning, repair of niches, coverings, removal of the work, or serious restoration of the substance of the painting."³⁰⁵ He cautioned the Senate not to forget the numerous petitions that all these exigencies would require. He queried, "What teacher would assume the weight of such duties for only ten or twelve ducati per year?" Edwards' final argument referred to the huge number of paintings that were already designated to be restored. They numbered over 740, with another 500 more for minimal review, which still took time and specialized skill. Edwards suggested that his budget was a bargain that the Senate should not ignore.

Edwards also predicted controversy because many artists resented these revelations to the Senate and public about the past corruption in restoration practice. Edwards explained that the critics would deride the "refinement of his investigations and novelty of his methods." Edwards slyly insinuated that their jealousy and ignorance might only stem from "old age and a practical blindness that comes at the end of life." These

tante obbligazioni, che importi un peso di tanti dovervi, come quello ch' io mi fece conoscenza di rassegnare, onde in tutt' i rapporti fosse quant è possibile assicurato il puo servizio."

³⁰⁵ Ibid., "Se poi rilevar si volesse qual sia la proporzione fra la spesa da incontrarsi nell' esecuzione totale del sistema, ed il merito di tutta l' opera, mi pare che facilmente se ne possa formar un idea dividendo in membri/ separati tutto il complesso dell' una e dell' altro. Suppongasi che la custodia generale istituita di sopra fosse ordinata unicamente per un sol quadro, come sarebbe l' *Europa* di Paolo, il quadro di Carletto nelle Sala delle Quattro Porte, ovvero il *Cristo in Emaus* di Bonifacio...Qual professore, benchè infelicissimo assumerebbe il peso di tal incombenze per dieci, or dodici ducati all' anno?"

offenders had never examined their reasons or motives and could not acknowledge their errors.”³⁰⁶ Edwards dismissed these potential critics with contempt and consolidated his control of the official institutions concerned with preservation of the public pictures of Venice.

Istituzione di una formale pubblica scuola pel ristauero...

Pietro Edwards’ vision for a unified theory and practice of restoration in Venice was largely realized during his tenure as Inspector and Director of the Public Pictures of Venice. However, his long-term goals were not achieved through all those same years. These objectives included the creation of a school for training restorers. This plan was revolutionary in its time, and many scholars believe today that his school was the first ever proposed in Italy or indeed in Europe. To Edwards, the need was clear. What was the point of developing a responsible and effective restoration policy if it could not endure? What if its life span was only as long as his own? What would happen to these precious works of art after his influence and vigilance passed away and a new generation of restorers appeared? Would they be forced to struggle in the same ignorance he had encountered early in his career, making the same old mistakes and sacrificing the immense and valuable legacy of the Venetian Renaissance?

It appears that even after Edwards’ long and devoted commitment to the principles of honesty and openness in the profession, the old traditions of jealousy and secrecy reappeared and prevailed. Edwards’ son wrote that from the beginning, Edwards worried

³⁰⁶ Ibid., “Io poi so benissimo che dopo l’improba fatica di tante meditazioni non ancora mi sarò posto al coperto della censura di molti artisti, che riguarderanno con derisione la sottigliezza delle mie indagini e la novità de miei metodi; ma similmente io non ignoro, che un gran numero d’essi giunge alla canizie, ed

that even with twenty-six artists who were highly trained in this public service, their newly acquired skills were unlikely to become “hereditary.” The whole program for restoration was always limited by jealous, self-interested restorers; in a vain effort to monopolize the newly emerging profession, they did not share their extensive information, increased knowledge, and discoveries of recipes and techniques.³⁰⁷

Edwards’ extensive plan for a school to codify and institutionalize the practice of the restoration of art in Venice would turn out to be a unrealized dream,. He saw the *Instituzione di una Formale Pubblica Scuola pel Restauro delle Dannigate Putture* (August 1 1820) as the most important and final achievement of his long and dedicated career. Like all his position papers, this one is meticulous in detail and logically argued. Furthermore, it contains an extensive section on the potential expenses for such a school. Edwards reminded the authorities to whom he addressed the plan that this was an original and even radical idea to add to the studies at the Academy. He enumerated four primary points and then developed each fully in the long and carefully written petition. He believed that his proposal could be best understood, and consequently best appreciated, if he explained the theory and practice behind the instruction and curriculum. He also submitted a reasonable budget, because as a successful administrator he realized that the

al fin della vita, con le sole notizie d’una pratica ceca, di cui non esaminaron giammai, e non saprebber conoscere le ragioni, o gli errori.”

³⁰⁷ Merrifield, Volume II, pp.865-866, Giovanni O’Kelly Edwards on his father, Pietro’s fears about the future of restoration as a profession: “The best informed persons being dead, there was still less hope that the art would be transmitted as the patrimony of posterity; nor could others’ expectations be entertained from those who succeeded them, who, notwithstanding the estimation to which they had been raised their instructions of others and on account of the scarceness of other workmen, were in fact but idiots and mechanical artists only.”

financial costs would invite the most scrutiny within the Magistratura.³⁰⁸

Section I: The Need for a School for Restorers

Edwards explained in Section I that the three principal reasons that motivated his plan for a school were the destruction of paintings due to the inevitable action of time, the lack of trained restorers now and potentially in the future, and the necessity to defend the art against slipshod practices of restorers who had no formal training.³⁰⁹ Paintings were composed of material substances and so were necessarily unstable. He wrote that this caused them to be held in “cohesion against their chemical dispositions or affinities,” and now more than three centuries past “that happy epoch” that made them, few actually survived, particularly in the salty and damp climate of Venice. Each painting carried the seeds of its own dissolution, and each required a unique solution for preservation. Edwards made another important observation that when a painting began to deteriorate, there must be immediate remedial care or the ruin accelerated and the art might be completely lost.³¹⁰

Edwards pointed out that of his original team of Inspector, three restorers and four assistants, five had died and a sixth was now in Rome. Over the years Edwards had been President of the Academy, not to mention his many other duties, and these multiple responsibilities had prevented him from overseeing the ongoing practice of restoration.

³⁰⁸ Edwards MS 788.15-877.15 May 6, 1819, *Instituzione d'una Formale Pubblica Scuola pel Restauro delle Dannegiate Pitture*

³⁰⁹ Ibid., *Sezione I^o: Necessità di una Scuola di Ristauro*, “Tre sono i principali motivi che reclamano questo provvedimento: il guasto sempre maggiore al quale soggiacciono le pitture per la irresistibile azione del tempo, la nacciata mancanza di operatori bene istruiti nel’ arduo esercizio dell’ arte restauratoria e la impotanza di assicurarsi contro le cattive pratiche di questo mestiere.”

³¹⁰ Ibid., “Quindi avviene che quando un dipinto ha cominciato a manifestare la sua decadenza se non si accorre a ripararlo con prontezza, si accelera ben presto la sua rovina sino alla intiera perdita.”

Now ill health plagued him, and two years away from his own death, he wrote this proposal. Edwards continued that only he and Professor Baldassini remained, and they both were “very old.” The restorers who operated in Venice more recently were endowed with some skill, but lacked a profound intelligence in art. They had not inspired trust and were successful in making only minor repairs on unimportant works. One exception to this regrettable situation was Professor Anthony Floriani, whose views had contributed to Edwards’ *Dissertazione Academico* (c.1817). Edwards considered him a reliable partner and teacher in the proposed new school of restoration. Although Floriani differed with some of Baldassini’s principles and practices in restoration, Edwards seemed confident that they would synthesize their approaches and function well together in their capacities at the school.³¹¹

Edwards reiterated the need to place the art of Venice in secure hands, not in those of artists who were “without fame” and with “weak or false education in the arts”--those whose ignorance made the repair of the immense and famous canvases of the city impossible. These “so-called restorers,” as Edwards described them, were “conceited dilettantes” who lacked theoretical knowledge, indiscriminately applied new grounds and linings, and thought that they were experts if they merely knew a secret mixture with which to clean a painting. Edwards reminded his readers that it was “not necessary for a

³¹¹ Ibid., Una eccezione dovrebbe farsi riguardo al professor Antonio Floriani menzionata nell’ altro Accademico Rapporto 20 dicembre 1818 ed indicato allora come quegli che nello stabilirsi la nuova scuola associar si potrebbe al Baldassini. Fattosi riflesso però dalla Presidenza che la sua istituzione come pittore fu formata sopra principi assai diversi da quelli del Baldassini e che diverse pur sono anche le di lui abitudini nell’ esercizio esecutivo dell’ arte, riconobbe che la unione di due artisti di massime e di pratiche differenti, lungi dal promuovere gli avanzamenti dei comuni discepoli, introdurre soltanto dei scismi e della confusione e Le parve perciò di dover mutare consiglio, differendo i suggerimenti da umilarsi per la

restorer to be formed of the highest genius that characterized the most sublime practitioners of the Fine Arts or even possess a rich and creative imagination full of plentiful inventions.” What one wanted, he stated, was a restorer to have a general ability in drawing and color and to be able to assess the great Masters’ unique abilities in each of these things. The restorer must study and understand intrinsic character and technique of the various schools of painting, the differences among the artists, and he must know the history of traditional materials.³¹² Experience and knowledge were the only guides, because without them, Edwards wondered, “How can the restorer resolve the doubts of a drawing obliterated in part by time or man?” Or how could one revive traces of lost heads, hands, feet or darkened drapery and landscape specific to each master? Only a school would ensure the kind of training and confidence consistent with the skills necessary in the restorer.³¹³

scelta d’ altro soggetto, allorchè sieno superiormente approvate le idee genreali del qui rassegnato argomento.”

³¹² Ibid., “In tanta deficienza di mani sicure, ed in tanto accrescimento continuo di bisogni noi dunque resteremmo in breve nelle deplorabile alternativa o di dover abbandonare a certa rovina le periclitanti nostre pitture o di doverle affidare ad artisti non solo di niuna fama, ma effettivamente di debolissima e falsa educazion nel mestiere o per lo meno non sperimentati in cosi vasti dipinti quali sono nella massima parte quelli che dovremmo pensar di salvare. E di fatto non si potrebbe declamar abbastanza contro l’ errore di molti pretesi ristoratori, e di non pochi presuntuosi dilettanti che senza il buon fondamento di cognizioni teoretiche e senza il corredo di una sicura pratica nel maneggio dei colori, credono che per essere provetto in quest’ arte basti aver il secreto di qualche menstruo da usarsi nella politura dei quadri e saper applicare ad essi indistintamente foderature, stucchi, vernici, con poche altri operazioni di sola materialità e no rado eseguite a contrassenso rispetto alla diversa esigenza dei casi. Di buon grado si accorda non essere necessario che il ristorator di pitture sia dalla natura, e dallo studio, fornito di quella elevatezza di genio che costituisce il sublime ed il grande nelle Bell’ arti: o possenga il dono di una ricca fantasia creatice di copiose invenzioni, anzi neppure si vuol richiedere che’ Egli sia cosi’ dotto general del disegno e del colorito, da potersi riguardare qual maestre in cisacuna di questa facoltà....”

³¹³ Ibid., “Senza un sufficiente capitale di siffatte cognizioni, e neppur col suffragio di una veterana esperienza, con quale altra scorta il ristoratore imperito risolverà i dubbi di un contorno quasi cancellato da fatali erosioni, ovvero in gran parte seppellito da invincibile annerimento? Come si dirigerà nel caso di dover alquanto rianimare le tracce smarrite di teste, di mani, di piedi, di abujate drapperie, o di offuscato

Edwards laid out a comprehensive lesson plan for the prospective student of restoration. He had a personal understanding of the motivations of such a student because he himself had not decided to become a restorer at the outset of his career. Almost all those who became active in the field were hopeful “artist-inventors” at first, and only after apprehending that their talents were not those of the creative artist would they dedicate themselves to developing the specialized skills demanded by restoration.³¹⁴

Section II: Instruction in Theory and Practice

Section II described the first aspect of schooling as preparatory, which involved the mastery of drawing and handling of color. In drawing, the student must be able to display a competent understanding of the human figure. This included mastery of proportion, anatomy, and the study of the nude such as any student achieved in the Accademia painting program. However, the lessons for student-restorers would differ from the painting curriculum by suspending the focus on invention and expression instead augmenting traditional exercises--like copying paintings by a diverse range of artists, particularly the best of the ancients. Edwards encouraged the academic practice of making many “copies of heads, hands, and feet in works with a dry style often found in the Second or Third epochs that rarely reach the artificial Ideal of statues, without life and containing no imperfections.”³¹⁵

paesaggio allorchè la cospicuità di queste arti esige particolarmente che ne sia conservato il gusto dominante nel vario stil de' Maestri si per le forme e per la espressione e si per la scelta local delle tinte?”

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Ibid., *Sezione II: Istruzioni teoretiche e pratiche della nuova Scuola*, “... sospesi gl' interminabili studii delle statue, delle invenzione, delle espressione, con tante altre parti fondamentali o ausiliarie dell' arte) il Professore Accademico di pittura eserciti lo studente facendogli eseguire primieramente molteplici copie in disegno tratte da buone pitture di autori differenti, ed in particolare dagli antichi migliori dei quali gli farà specialmente copiare teste, mani e piedi, perchè nelle opere anco scelte dei vecchi maestri

Edwards encouraged the student to recognize the individual stylistic characteristics of each artist's depiction of the human figure. Each Master had his own "tendencies, which included defects that could be called habitual," Edwards explained. It was risky when a restorer tried to revive the antique work. Edwards counseled that they might "attempt to enoble with features of Veronese, the austere faces by Capriccio or soften like Guidesca (Guido Reni), the lean and firm in a Virgin by Bellini."³¹⁶

The long and respected tradition of copying from past masters when training an artist was important in Edwards' new school for restorers. However, he had some very specific concerns about its implementation and function when the goal was to develop skills and aptitudes for restoration rather than for painting as a creative activity. Edwards wanted these exercises to encourage a practical imitation of the beautiful Ideal derived from the pure and simple "truth" of nature which the art of the greatest artists to him always exemplified. Edwards cautioned that a higher level of "sublime beauty" recognized in Renaissance masterpieces should not be expected from a restorer, but who with discipline could only achieve an "industrious and precise execution that could be elevated to a bold and fine exactness."³¹⁷

He rejected the rigid exactitude demanded by some teachers and stipulated that the student should work from drawings and copy entire paintings that belonged to "an epoch of better taste." These should include landscapes filled with leafy trees and under the

queste parti ritengono alquanto dello stil secco spettante alla seconda, e terza epoca dell' arte, e assai di rado coincidono con 'l'artificio ideal delle statue; in luogo di che sono imitate quasi sempre dal naturale con una accuratezza che neppure ammette i minimi accidenti delle cute...."

³¹⁶ Ibid., "...non si creda permesso di nobilitare con le fattezze del Veronese le austere faccie del Carpaccio; né di rammorbidire alla Guidesca la scarna e non leggiadra mano in una Vergine del Bellino."

³¹⁷ Ibid.

tutelage of a dedicated teacher the student would learn how to preserve every subject or aspect in a picture. The successful pupil would learn how to identify tricks and techniques used by an artist to break up masses of color and shadow, recognize the unique harmony of color and chiaroscuro, recover lost contours obscured in dirt, and note the natural darkening of old varnish. This last phenomenon was a constant source of difficulty for the restorer, Edwards maintained. The student must study the artist's technique found in original paintings rather than rely on prints based on the same works.³¹⁸

The school would train craftsmen who understood the character, expression and imperfections of the human body, or any part of the original. This was made possible by studying the art from the past.

...the greatness of the Masters, where the restorer must distinguish between the gradations of line and finish with a light and clean chiaroscuro. Elaborate outlines hinder the well-prepared youth, and must be abandoned for they suffocate the sparks of his genius in its first development, and they become slow difficult sips in serious study.

Edwards cautioned about "over-drawing," becoming distracted by unimportant detail, and wasting too much time in rendering. A clarity of style must be achieved *alla* Mantegna, not necessarily copied from those "too rare sketches or paintings by that Almighty Teacher, but handled with lightness and precision found in his prints."³¹⁹

The second important exercise was to make copies of original compositions, but reduced in proportion to smaller dimensions in order to help the student understand the

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Ibid., "A fine pertanto di esemplificar con chiarezza lo stile esteriore nel quale si vorrebbe che eseguiti fossero questi disegni, diremo che devono essere condotti alla Mantegnesca; non già copiato dai troppo rari disegni o pitture di quell' eccelso Maestro, ma bensì maneggiati per quanto è possibile con la leggerezza e precisione usata da esso anche nelle sue stampe, qualunque siasi l'Autore da cui vengono tratti."

general aspects of the total picture with its effects of light and shade. The student would strive to compose the masses not as mere accidents of chiaroscuro, but to work them with refinement and to approximate the artist's original intention. This would allow the student to define objects by diffused light or with elements reinforced locally or in deeper relief.

Edwards hoped that the entire course in drawing could be completed in a year and a half or in some rare cases perhaps in two years. After the student had shown a competent hand and eye for imitating the Masters, then he would move onto color. The beginner must first paint with "intelligence" a copy in oil that renewed a lost part of the original or utilized a variety of pigments, medium, and varnish. But the novice was not expected to possess the "full and magisterial ability of the brush of a truly inventive painter."³²⁰

Edwards then addressed the integration of losses, also called inpainting or retouches, which are critical to the pictorial aesthetic of the painting. This procedure consisted of applying gesso mixed with glue to areas of loss. These patches were then scraped to smoothness, imprinted with the texture of canvas or impasto, and painted to resemble the surrounding colors. Edwards knew that the restorer must understand each artist's individual style and technique to repair successfully this subtle aspect of presentation. The restorer began with an investigation of the material execution of the painting which included the ground and any sketches in color. The distribution of color in any given area, from intense to moderate colors with little shadow, or those finished with separate strokes, with glazes or superficial reinforcements, and some with full density.

Nor did Edwards believe it was impossible to gain an approximate knowledge of the underpainting by looking closely at the final touches on a work.³²¹ There were many works from all periods and styles that would come to restorers “corroded from site to site, abraded and skinned to varying depths in their layers from accidental bad luck, as well as from rash washings by ignorant custodians and inexperienced artists.”³²² These disasters could be treated only by someone trained in observation and skilled in the application of a variety of traditional materials and techniques. Edwards planned that all of these lessons and exercises would allow the instructors to focus on other important details of execution. Hair, wings, plumage, and fronds were among the aspects of a painting that demanded a “looseness of hand” aided by colors mixed with varnish for liquidity.

Edwards noticed over the years that the areas of loss that required the most retouching were usually in the drapery. In these examples almost no paint remained, so that the restorer was left without any clue to color, texture, brushwork, and light and shadow. Edwards listed four major points about the treatment of drapery to guide the student. The first stated that the technique of “ancient authors” from the early Renaissance varied little to distinguish represented fabrics--such as, wool, silk, satin or velvet; a “modern” artist’s technique would show these differences. His second point was

³²⁰ Ibid., “Non è però necessario che quest’ ordine di artisti possega quella piena e magistral padronanza nell’ uso del pennello alla quale aspirar deve un pittor d’ invenzione.”

³²¹ Ibid.

³²² Ibid., “Ne’ si creda impossibile o difficilissimo sia il far prossimamente cognizione delle imprimiture, degli abozzi, e quasi di tutto quello che rimane coperto dagli ultimi finimenti del dipinto; i imperciocchè, sebben accada di non poter giungere a tali scoperte sopra qualsisia quadro, sono però anche troppe le pitture di tutte l’ età, e di tutti gli stili, corrose a sito a sito, abrase e spolpate per diversi strati della rispettiva loro profondità a cagione di accidentali sventure, nonchè di temerari lavacri adoperati da ignoranti custodi e talor pur anco da imperiti artisti; di modo che l’occhio dell’ osservatore intelligente può discernere in esse tutto il materiale artificio col quale furon condotte.”

that in early art the brocade and transparency of veils presented the most variety and challenge. The third general observation was that the folds painted by artists in the fourteenth century were generally poor, simple, and almost tube-like, while later draperies were richer, more angular and characterized by minute pleats. The models for this were arranged by hand using the method of “wet drapery,” which involved covering a mannequin with sheets of wet paper or cloth dipped in loose clay or plaster to achieve realistic folds. Edwards was critical of this technique. Finally, Edwards extolled the “exquisite drapery painted in a better century” as true to life and sensitive to the all the diverse types of fabrics. The teacher also instructed the student in various painterly styles to integrate losses of original paint.

Edwards used Raphael and Titian to illustrate the difference of styles and techniques. Edwards explained that Raphael created folds that were precise and revealed the body clearly, and the artist, like a good tailor, made the cut of the cloth obvious. Titian’s draped figures, however, had a senatorial grandeur because the painter used masses of color that dressed the body in rich and flowing brushwork that did not obscure the figure’s movement. Along with the illusion of rich fabrics, the material appeared to be split with inserts like linen, as seen in the traditional costume of the period.³²³

Similar comparisons would enhance the daily lessons and allow the student to

³²³ Ibid., “...ed a palmari confronti di una massima stessa eseguita con modificazioni diverse, mostrando al discepolo che a cagion esempio, tanto Raffaele che Tiziano cercano di far conoscere la positura e la forma principale delle membra coperte; ma le pieghe del primo sono precise, involgono quasi dappresso la persona, e fanno in certo modo discernere la estensione ed il taglio del panno; laddove il falcheggiar del secondo (salva la convenienza del soggetto)inclina, direm cosi alla grandiosità senatoria, determina la massa ed il primario girare del drappo che veste agiatamente il corpo senza lasciar in dubbio i suoi movimenti; ma contrappone in qualche sito le frappe trinciate ed incerte di una stoffa, o di un pannolino

imitate the characteristic differences of the Masters in order to understand the complexities of the trade. Edwards cautioned that the pupil should proceed with care and remain cognizant of his own abilities. These talents were to be developed under the eye of a painting teacher at first, rather than a practicing restorer, since painting was the foundation for both professions. Although linked at this fundamental level, Edwards recognized that the disciplines also diverged. The imitation of things in painting as a creative endeavor relied upon personal perceptions, while the purpose of imitation for the restorer was to follow the traces of someone else's conception with the understanding that a good restorer must first be a good copyist.³²⁴

After studying color for at least one year, the student would come under the guidance of an experienced restorer to study the many technical operations used in restoration. Some of these tasks included preventing the detachment of color, the transferral of a painting from one foundation to another when the old one could not be preserved, and lining a painting. Other basic knowledge included the removal of old varnish or the application of gesso fills, with emphasis on mimicking the qualities of impasto in the original. This last point was important because the gesso patches were to have the same surface texture or degree of smoothness as the rest of the canvas to resemble the painted original. Further subtleties of inpainting required special attention to pigments like whites and earth pigments. Most pigments could not be mixed with oil, and lake pigments were not to be tempered with varnish. Other courses of instruction

alle spaziose andature di un altro vestimento del quale per il solito non risolve la figura, furochè negli abiti di obbligato costume.”

³²⁴ Ibid.

included brushwork, the preparation of glazing tints, and the blending of retouches with original patina.³²⁵

These procedures all preceded the cleaning, which could be decisive in achieving a successful restoration overall. Edwards called it the first “rule of pictorial intelligence” and stated that the restorer must observe the work’s general harmony both in foreground and background, the superficiality of the half shades, and the final glazes (particularly found in the paintings by the Masters of the painting schools of Venice and Lombardy). He had written earlier to the Magistrati that “When one is confronted with cleaning a painting it is important to maintain an equilibrium between the aspects assumed to be original and those caused by the actions of time: with this double warning it is difficult to return the work to a state close to that of the time of the author, and not cut away that accidental beauty caused by the passage of time.”³²⁶ The process for completing a judicious and respectful cleaning involved choosing the correct mixture of solvents and “stops” and their degree of concentration in order to be effective in removing dirt or darkened varnish without harming the surface. Another common mistake occurred when a restorer removed small points of light or white pigment because he may have confused them with superficial smears. Also, a careful assessment must be made to see if the underdrawing was covered with a fine layer of color that was perhaps typical of the artist’s practice.³²⁷

As we have seen earlier in his writing, Edwards had many reservations about the

³²⁵ Ibid., “... meno di un anno non si può assegnare per l’ esercizio del colorito al giovane studente prima di farlo passare alla stanze del restauro, dove con le istruzioni sorveglianza ed esempio di un sperimentato professor di questa arte comincerà ad esercitarsi nelle diverse opere della restaurazione.”

³²⁶ Tranquilli, pp 174.

oil medium and the problems and expense it created in a restoration project. According to Edwards, some paintings in oil become dark intrinsically and there was no hope of reviving them with cleaning. He mentioned that only some of the metallic-based colors that oxidized in the course of the years might be reclaimed. The cleaning mixtures and varnishes used in restoration often increased rather than alleviated the darkening process. There was also the problem of how to clean dark masses of shadow or those mixed with little or no white. This was in contrast to cleaning the brightest parts and half tones, often bleaching them out in such a way that there was a loss of equilibrium between the new state of the picture and the deeper shadows without intermediary shades. This imbalance in brights and darks could be softened or moderated with an artificial patina tinted with color matching the main part of the work. Edwards did not encourage this except in cases when time had diminished the brighter parts of the work. The teacher should demonstrate for the inexperienced student the various methods and degree of cleaning all over the work. The student should also learn how to enliven darkened places without adding new color. The restorer must leave behind a veil of varnish and patina all over the painting of almost "accidental smokiness."³²⁸ In this way, Edwards prefigured Cesare Brandi's

³²⁷ Edwards, *Piano Pratico... Sezione II°*.

³²⁸ Ibid., "Parlando in generale le masse delle ombre più forti, ed altresì quelle di certi panni nel cui misto entra poco o niente di biacca, sogliono in questi vecchi dipinti oscurarsi intrinsecamente, nè vi è speranza di ravvivarli col nettamento, eccettuato qualche colore metallico ossidato nel corso degli anni. I sughi poi e le vernici adoperati pel ristauo di siffatte pitture, lungi dal diminuire le tenebrosità di quegli oscuri ne accrescono la vigoria; quindi se l'operatore comincia e prosegue il nettamento dell'opera dal pulire le parti luminose e quelle di mezza tinta, purgando le une e le altre sino, direm così, allo stato di quadro nuovo, ne risulta infine un gravissimo sconcerto fra lumi sommamente acuti ed oscuri profondi, senza intermedia gradazione di tuoni: ciocchè poscia induce la necessità di ammorzare con le così dette pattine artificiali le porzioni più brillanti e cospicue di tutto il quadro, e di raddolcire con colore di corpo l'aspro contrasto delle ombre coi lumi; tutti espedienti di non felici conseguenze, e da usarsi soltanto quando il tempo ha corrosa effettivamente la superficie del dipinto nelle parti più luminose dell'opera...se possa

modern thoughts on patina and the implications of a restorer's every action.³²⁹

The proper use of varnish at various stages during the restoration began with the application of a light coat before cleaning in order to see the varying shades of color in lost and abraded areas. Wetting with varnish also helped the restorer to determine the degree of light still present in masses now rendered almost completely black. This varnish saturated the colors and gave an indication of the whole scale of values in the richest forms that were possible to resurrect in the picture. The final coat, or finish varnish, must be applied with care for any original surface left.³³⁰

Section III: Administration and Responsibility

In Section III Edwards described the important committees and their function regarding the examination of students during their course of study. A passing skill in drawing, color, and an elementary knowledge of art formed the primary foundations for the school taught by the Academic Professors in Painting. No student could avoid these classes except those already advanced through their natural abilities or experience. After exhibiting skill "suitable for a restorer" in the two subjects, a committee was convened composed of three painters, two restorers, and any other important teachers relevant to that student's classes. The Academic Professor of Painting was to be present but did not cast a vote. All would meet to decide whether to pass the student onto the "salon of

nettarla egualmente in ogni luogo ovvero debba contentarsi di lasciarvi a sito a sito come un sottile velo dell' accidentale suo affumicamento...."

³²⁹ Brandi, p.27, "Nell'attuazione pratica queste esigenza storica dovrà tradursi non solo nella differenza delle zone integrate, già esplicita in sede del ristabilimento dell' unità potenziale, ma nel rispetto della patina, che può concepirsi come lo stesso sedimentarsi del tempo nell' opera, nonché nella conservazione di campioni dello stato precedente al restauro e anche di parti non coeve che rappresentano la stessa traslazione dell' opera nel tempo."

³³⁰ Edwards, *Piano Pratico... Sezione II°*.

practice.” If found lacking in any skills, the student was assigned new exercises in areas of deficiency.³³¹

The salon of restoration practice would be conducted by two Professors of this art, who would select from paintings in the Academy and those other works that the government desired to be restored. The students would be employed in all aspects of the work, including observing the functions of inspector, and would be further instructed in the materials and techniques of restoration. These had often had been kept secret by “feeble artists” in an attempt to protect their business, Edwards lamented. When the teachers deemed that student had developed a plausible degree of skill, they would invite a committee to select a painting that presented various and complex problems for the student to solve successfully. The student was expected to fully describe in an oral exam the condition of the picture before the restoration. After the treatment he would explain and evaluate its efficacy. No unreasonable expectations should be held that a badly ruined picture could be returned to some imaginary state of perfection. The committee would pass judgment in writing and then officially promote the aspirant into the restoration profession.³³²

Edwards proposed certain conditions to ensure a continuing level of competence and expertise in the school. The two restorers attached to the school should always have a great number of commissions from the government to share with students. The

³³¹ Ibid., *Sezione III: Discipline per la Scuola di Ristaurazione*.

³³² Ibid., “La sala del ristaurazione avrà due professori maestri di quest’ arte ai quali si darà un doppio incarico, quello cioè di eseguire tutte le ristaurazioni dei quadri accademici, come pure degli altri che il Governo ordinasse di ristaurare a sue spese; e quello di addestrar nella practica i giovani inviati dalla commissione, impiegandoli secondo la loro abilità e con prudenza, in ogni sorta di lavoro spettante a ristaurazione; ed

restoration laboratories must be well furnished with the requisite tools and materials, including *acqua mordente*, varnishes, and a variety of devices for all kinds of tasks. Two assistants must be hired for the more laborious duties like grinding colors in water and then drying them. These same helpers also would carry water, oil the floor tiles in the salon, paint gesso grounds onto the canvases, transport sand for lining, attach and detach stretchers, clean the rooms, and take on any other related work with the help of another assistant if needed. This last person would primarily be at the service of the Professors and students and would prepare the color palettes daily with enough fresh paint for one day. This rule became necessary because in past practice, too much pigment had been mixed, and then in an attempt to salvage the unused portion, the paint was pushed into pots or bladders for storage, a practice which often lead to waste. This assistant would also prepare the glues, mordents, varnishes, and paper linings, all under the guidance of the Professors. The work schedules would be determined later for all these positions, but Edwards suggested that a painting professor from the Academy familiar with restoration should make daily visits to the salon. He was authorized to discipline students, examine their work, and maintain order. If this added task proved too expensive for the budget, general committee visits by academics could be arranged, but if this review was treated merely as a formality it became ineffective in Edwards' opinion.³³³

Section IV: Expenses and Budget

Section IV is an extensive part of the plan and outlines the potential expenses for

instruendoli ancora degli ingredienti, della preparazioni, e dei metodi che qualche debil artista spaccia come misteri dell' arte."

³³³ Ibid.

Edwards' school. He admitted that these potential costs were speculative and might seem high, but he also reminded the authorities that time and again the Venetian government had proven their commitment and usually delegated the necessary funds to finance the many campaigns of restoration of the city's artistic treasures. He suggested that it would be more sensible to ensure this care over time by creating a school that trained future professionals. He then outlined the two primary ways that contracts for restoration were now awarded, along with the pitfalls of these options. One method of granting commissions was that a single work could be delivered to a chosen artist, who would be paid a certain definite sum. This agreement generally did not require the restorer to record the condition upon receipt and consequently mistakes and negligence could pass unnoticed when the painting was finally claimed to be restored. Sometimes the restorer had too many commissions at the same time and rushed through a project, or other unforeseen difficulties might cause him to neglect details in order to maintain profitability. Then there were many unscrupulous craftsmen who charged a high price up front, but counting on the gullibility of the owner, did very little to the work of art.³³⁴

The other method of awarding commissions invited the restorer to a collector's home to treat a painting on the premises. The owner and restorer would agree on a daily charge separate from expected expenses for materials. In Edwards' estimation this agreement ensured a more ethical relationship because the labor was accomplished daily under the eyes of the owner, who could comment on and judge the repairs and changing state of the work of art. However, on the negative side, the restorer might demand a

³³⁴ *Ibid.*, Sezione IV^o: *Dispendi, o sia Parte Economica*.

higher price because perhaps he was restricted from accepting other commissions while completing the contracted work. Then there were hidden expenses because mundane aspects of the work could consume up to one quarter of the restorer's time. This added to the cost when working in a private home without an assistant. These time consuming functions included mixing colors, preparing the palette, cleaning brushes several times daily, thinning the glue, making gesso fills, and taking preliminary steps for lining.

Edwards believed that with only these two unsatisfactory alternatives, it would be more logical to locate the new school at the existing Academy already available to take on the projects of importance in the city. The professional staff, with established schedules and salaries, would be trained in restoration. A supply of eager and talented pupils would permit the whole operation to prove more economical and, in the end, ensure better care and preservation of the art. Besides the human advantages, the physical plant itself at the Academy would minimize the costs of creating a new school. A large working studio for restoration already existed, with solvents, glues, gesso, pigments, and varnishes waiting to be put to use. Although having novices engaged in the myriad and exacting tasks necessary for competent restoration could cause waste and error, the manpower would, however be enormously helpful by taking on the most laborious and boring tasks and providing comradeship throughout the long hours in the studio.³³⁵

Edwards then carefully detailed his proposal for remuneration of the various faculty positions.³³⁶ Included in this was an increase in yearly salary of 600 francs for a painting teacher at the Academy to compensate for the extra time and special knowledge

³³⁵ Ibid.

needed to instruct students of restoration in drawing and color at the new school. Added expenses could include increased use and cost of supplies like pigments and varnish, but Edwards declined to go into hypothetical projections on this point.

The most important part of the budget would show the school's viability when compared to a general estimate of each individual work of art consigned to a private restorer. For an example, Edwards used as a case study Titian's *Assumption* in the Frari, which had been recently repaired in a controversial restoration in 1816 under the direction of Baldassini. The painting had not required any complicated procedures such as a new lining or pigment stabilization.³³⁷ Yet according to Edwards, Baldassini was working without an assistant or a prescribed schedule and so had been mired in daily laborious tasks like gesso and color preparation. Consequently, the work took over ninety-three days to finish and rose to a cost of one hundred zecchini. This was unnecessarily expensive, Edwards explained, because the same job would have taken the restorers in Edwards' school only sixty days, and with eleven zecchini profit per day this would bring the total to only around sixty zecchini.³³⁸

Edwards understood that perhaps the most compelling aspect of his proposal was the increased security that such an institution could bring to the huge collections of art in Venice. This included the development of a professional class based at the Accademia, well trained and devoted to their work. Two official restorers working full time would

³³⁶ Ibid.

³³⁷ Ibid., This painting had become a focus of a bitter argument between Leopoldo Cicognara, President of the Accademia and Edwards, who warned against unnecessary restorations that could damage the art. See Merrifield Volume II, p. 876n1; also see Valcanover, "Il Restauro dell' Assunta," in *Tiziano, Ateneo Veneto*, Venezia: 1977, pp.40-51.

³³⁸ Ibid., *Piano Pratico...Sezione IV*^o.

minimize the time and costs of preserving the great art in the Venetian collections. The constant presence of faculty and managers would insure efficient completion of projects and prevent disasters created by the isolation, dilettantism, and corruption of the private restorer, who had gained prominence again in the years after Edwards had passed on his authority to others.³³⁹ In his advancing years and ill health, Edwards must have viewed with alarm the deteriorating state of conservation practice in Venice. For so many years he had expended every ounce of his physical, emotional, and philosophical resources to preserve the artistic heritage of his beloved city. These final efforts to return conservation practice to a professional and ethical path would be his last gift.

Pietro Edwards' school for restorers would never come to pass, but his legacy is now finally acknowledged in Italy. Also, when comparing his proposed curriculum with the current education of conservators today, the modernity and subtlety of his perspective is strikingly evident. Among the major components in Edwards' view to training a restorer included a clear understanding of the inherent differences between being an artist and being a restorer.³⁴⁰ The whole practice of art conservation up until and after Edwards' appearance had relied on the services of artists. Their participation would seem logical, yet it had become apparent that many of those who participated were actually very

³³⁹ Ibid., *Piano Pratico... Conclusione*, "Così a quanto si disse intorno alla necessità di aver fra noi la nostra propria scuola di restauro, necessità dimostrata dal sempre crescente bisogno dei periclitanti nostri dipinti; dallo scarso numero di artisti dedicati con apposita e ben esercitata istituzione a soccorrerli; e dall' agevole introducimento dei fallaci metodi che si possono insinuare nella pratica di questo mestiere, risulterà senza meno il grave indecoro nazionale, ed il pericolo ai quali andrebbe incontro se costretti dalla mancanza di operatori propri dovessimo invitarne dei forestiere, bene spesso non molto conoscitori degli stili e dei modi escutivi usati dai Veneti Capi-Scuola, ed assai di rado esperti quanto occorre nella riattazione di vaste pitture, come sono in gran parte le nostre. Facile sarà similmente da riconoscersi che nello esporre la preventiva generale idea degli studi, delle occupazioni, e delle discipline di una Scuola affatto nuova, e forse non mai tentata neppure altrove, non si potevano individuare tutte le modificazioni e le aggiunte, alle quali posson dar motivò l' esperienza ed il vario concorso delle circostanze."

poor artists, with limited skills, bad science, and an exaggerated sense of their own talents. It was also true that the unique and personal demands of a creative mentality could be detrimental when replacing losses. To avoid these conflicts, Edwards hoped to attract and develop a very special class of craftsman, those like himself who were properly trained in the arts of painting, aware of their artistic limitations, and yet dedicated to the preservation of the Venetian artistic heritage.

However, to compare the curriculum and emphasis of Edwards' school with these contemporary incarnations begs the question. What exactly comprises the body of art these institutions were created to preserve? This reality has changed dramatically beyond all Pietro Edwards' expectations from his position as Director of the Restoration of the Public Pictures of Venice so long ago. He imagined a world that encompassed art up to the nineteenth century. We now know this to be a conservative vision devoid of the stunning changes that have more recently occurred in art. Edwards worked to save the great art of the Old Master tradition as he understood that to be, the culmination of centuries of artistic practice that would be honored in all future generations. This heritage considered painting as a window on the world, and it valued sculpture that embodied the Classical tradition of the Ideal revived in Renaissance and Neoclassical sculpture. The canon remained intact for Edwards, and with this standard he could formulate a theory and practice of restoration and enshrine it in his school to ensure its longevity. This view of the world of art existed because of a reasonable belief that the original intent of the artist could be known.

³⁴⁰ Pietro Edwards S.P.V., MS 787.7-876.7/1 *Privata Informazion* ... June 1771(7).

Things are very different today in the world of art and opinion. Today's students of conservation are trained to function in a much more eclectic and insecure universe, their skills honed to fit the demands of a vaster market that could involve paper, books, film, photography, acrylics, site and installation art, or even performance art. Issues about quality, relevance, and interaction of human and machine intrude on the humanistic vision of art that existed in eighteenth century Venice. Even with these differences of time and culture, Pietro Edwards could have adapted his philosophy of restoration to these contemporary exigencies. Although he was a dedicated champion of a powerful craft tradition from a cultural milieu that viewed change with horror, he also represented the positive aptitudes of Enlightenment experimentation. With these tools he would have eagerly faced the exigencies of modern and contemporary art and would have devised new ways to further its conservation.

Chapter Four

Condition and Treatment Reports 1778-1795

Edwards' underlying principles are manifested in this selection of comprehensive condition and treatment reports from 1778-1795 based on works of art in the Palazzo Ducale. (Fig. 10) including his examination of the *Martyrdom of St. Lawrence* by Titian works in the Church of the Gesuiti. It is unusual to have such extensive reports in the history of conservation, and Edwards' descriptions of the works provide a rare view of the problems and solutions he developed. Edwards supervised and restored the paintings in these important buildings over many years, and his accounts also exhibit political acumen in his presentation of information to the authorities.

After the French appropriations in 1797, some of these same works were transferred to the Louvre. Later during the Regno Italico, the paintings were adapted to fit into the new royal buildings, the villa in Stra, or sent to state galleries including Milan, the Brera, Treviso, and the Accademia at Venice. Today only a few may reveal traces of Edwards' cleaning and retouching, such as those suspected to be present in the *Disputa* by Bonifacio Veronese now in the Palazzo Pitti in Florence.³⁴¹ Many of the works are no longer in their original sites, but the complexity of the arrangements gives some idea of the scale of work involved in their care. A brief review of the history of the decoration and function of the room is followed by Edwards' assessment and proposed treatment of various works.

³⁴¹ Conti, 1988, p. 171.

Sala della Bussola October 8, 1778

The Sala della Bussola served as a vestibule and waiting room for the Sala degli Consiglio Dieci, which was built and decorated as part of the Council's three room suite and refurbished and redecorated in the mid-16th century by Jacopo Sansovino and his pupils. Some of the paintings, attributed to Paolo Veronese, represent scenes from Venetian history. The name of this *sala* was taken from a huge compass which masked the passage to a secret chamber where the three Capi and Inquisitors met.³⁴² The sala had opened onto the Scala dei Censori from which the Council approached the room.

Among the first projects launched by Edwards and his team were restorations of the ceiling paintings by Paolo Veronese from 1562 to 1564 of *St. Mark and the Theological Virtues*, with various *grisaille* representations of *Victory* and *Fame*, *Scenes of War*, and bronze colored *Lions Heads*.³⁴³ They were all considered important to the public collection and in 1797, much to Edwards' dismay, the large primary canvas of *St. Mark and the Theological Virtues* (Fig. 11) became one of the group of sixteen works appropriated by the French.³⁴⁴ Today the original is still in the Louvre, while a copy is installed in the Palazzo Ducale. Edwards described the central canvas' state of conservation in 1778 and commented as follows on the obviously extrinsic factor of many previous destructive restorations:

³⁴² Eugenia Bianchi et al, Piazza San Marco and its Museums, Venice: Electa, 1997, p.81.

³⁴³ Juergen Schulz, *Venetian Painted Ceilings of the Renaissance*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1968. pp.99; Pietro Edwards, S.P.V. MS 787.7-876.7/3 October 8, 1778.; Conti, 1988 p.166.

³⁴⁴ Schulz., pp.99-100, Schulz says the major canvas is very much restored and in a list dated 1762, the Collegio dei Pittori cited it as the work most in need of restoration along with eight others. This was accomplished by Domenico Maggiotto that same year. It was taken to Paris in 1797 and after

The middle of this great picture represents St. Mark in glory and three theological virtues in the lower part of the canvas. Approximately half of its (picture) area was vilely repainted in oil by a reckless and inexperienced hand; the retouches extend not only over parts that lack paint, but on the virgin surface; so that a (bare patch) no larger than---(gran di fava)---is seen thickly smeared the space a span around (the picture). These awkward retouches do not equalize even in depth the layer of the original color, and therefore the whole level (surface) of the picture remains rough, bumpy, and deformed ...³⁴⁵

...again it reveals to every untrained eye the deplorable condition of this work. That proves the complete ignorance of who at another time laid hands on this painting and to demonstrate here the diligence it required to restore it, suffice it to say we saw the intolerable error of the drawing of an angel stretched out on the right hand of the saint lifting immediately the retouch to discover someone who made an unpardonable mistake, much to my surprise and my trusted workers who uncovered what was the addition of a thigh and a leg all invented. The original color and a large part of the retouch are shifting and detached from the ground...³⁴⁶

...and a good portion of the last fleeting strokes by the master, with tints called glazes, skinned by corrosive washing, and which destroyed the diamond brilliance of the color and confused the harmony of the work. Particularly to remark on the puttino that holds the book of the Evangelists and two angels on the right of the saint. The picture is edged by 18 other pieces all darkened in varying shades. In two lower parts there are found two pieces of ground detached from canvas, things that perhaps fell because of the imperfections of the paste (glue) used in the operation. The canvas of the picture suffers because of the rain that fell on places of the ground, but this damage is of no consequence. The above described picture is surrounded by eighteen other pieces of chiaroscuro in various tints. The two larger pieces represent two symbolic

enlargement installed in Versailles. In 1861 it was returned to the Louvre reduced again to its original size.

³⁴⁵ Pietro Edwards S.P.V. MS 787.7-876.7/3 October 8, 1778, "Il quadro grande di mezzo rappresenta San Marco in gloria e le tre virtù teologali nel basso della tela. Questo quadro per circa meta' dell' area sua fu vilissimamente ridipinto ad oglio da mano temeraria, ed inesperta egualmente; ed i redipinti sono estesi non solo sulle parte ch' erano mancanti di colore, ma inoltre sulla superficie vergine di esso; di maniera che per una scrostatura che non oltrepassava la circonferenza d'un gran di fava si vede spesso imbrattato lo spazio d'una spanna quadrata all' intorno. L' maggior parte poi di questi goffi ritochi non uguaglia neppure in profondità lo stratto del colore originale. e perciò tutto il piano del quadro rimane scabro, scosceso e deforme...."

³⁴⁶ Ibid., "...anche ad ogni occhi inerudito la deplorabile condizione di quell' opera. La provare la somma ignoranza di chi altra volta pose le mani su questa pittura e a dimostrare le accuratissime diligenze che si richieggono a ripristinarla, bastera' il dire che essendomi avveduto di un intollerabil errore nel disegno di un angelo sdraiato alla dritta del santo feci levarne subito il ritocco per discernere da chi procedeva l'imperdonabile fallo, e con sorpresa mia e dei valenti operatori si scopri che eravi stat' aggiunta una coscia ed una gamba tutta d'invenzione. Il color vergine, poi e gran parte del ritocco sono smossi dal fondo e si distaccano dalla...."

figures of Victory and their condition corresponds in everything to that mentioned above except that the surface is not detaching. There follows two oblong chiaroscuro of faded colors, representing the triumphal entry of an Emperor conceived on a (whim) capriccio to correspond to the antique reliefs below.³⁴⁷

... These two pieces do not seem entirely painted by Paolo....³⁴⁸

A third small chiaroscuro depicts an Emperor seated on a throne surrounded by a group of warriors in conversation with a very old man in a toga, they appear to allude to the siege and liberation of Brescia, and the painter used the customary figures for this story; the three oblong *quadretti* are of similar size, but are in better preservation with a natural deterioration of tints and some artificial patina probably in order to cover the effects of a corrosive washing...³⁴⁹

Four more small *quadretti* represent fame sounding a trumpet. They are glossy chiaroscuro like fake plaster and the most important damages from being too often washed and now are an off-white. They are also particularly soiled from flies more than any other piece of the ceiling, attributed to some varnish painted over after cleaning; the ingredients of which attracted the flies; the color of these (little) pictures like all the other chiaroscuro is faint due to the action of the liquid left by the insects, always a little caustic that corroded the delicate layer of colors on the canvas. There remain six narrow paintings not well painted, of six lion heads in a yellowish shade, and a good subject for whoever laid hands on the rest forgot these little pictures which are exempt from the devastation that I with great sadness refer to your

³⁴⁷ Ibid., "...e buona porzione degli ultimi colpi fugace del maestro, con quelle tinte che si chiamano svelature, furono sfiorate da lavacri corrosivi; e mal applicati, che raschiarono il Prillante del colorito, e sconcertarono l'armonia dell' opera, ciocche' particolarmente si rimarca nel Puttino che sostiene il libro degli Evangelii, e negli altri due Angioli alla destra del santo. Nella parte posteriore del quadro trovansi due ripizzi di foderatura distaccata dalla tela; cosa che forse accadde per le imperfezione dei gluttini adoperati in quelle operazione. La tela stessa del quadro soffri qualche cosa per cagion delle piogge cadute fuori dei siti foderati; ma il danno pero non e' di conseguenza. Il sopra descritta opera è contornato dagli altri 18 pezzi tutti a chiaroscuro di varie tinte. I due pezzi più grande rappresentaano due figure simboliche della Vittoria; e lo stato e condizioni loro corrisponde in tutto e per tutto a quello del quadro suaccennato; se non che i redipinti sono ancor più liberi, per non dir temeria, ma il colore non è smosso dal suo fondo. Seguono due chiariscuro bislungi, di tinta molta passa rappresentanti l'ingresso trionfale d' uno Imperadore, immaginati a capriccio sul gusto degl' antichi bassi rilievi romani.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., "Questi due pezzi non sembrano tutti dipinti da Paolo...."

³⁴⁹ Ibid., "Tale all' incirca è lo stato di un terzo chiarscuro minore, in cui scorgonsi un Imperadore sedente in Trono, ed un gruppo di Guerrieri a colloquio con alcuni Vecchioni togati, senza però che vi si possano conoscere caratteri di storia particolare, se però non voglia dirsi che tutti i descritti chiaroscuro e gl' altri che li accompagnano hanno allusione all' assedio e liberazione di Brescia; e che il Pittore trattò quei fatti senza osservazione di costume, come fece altre volte. Il tre quadretti bislungi di misura simile all' ora indicato non che di soggetto analoghi ai sopra descritti, sono in miglior preservazione; ed il loro principal difetto consiste nell'annerimento natural delle tinte e forse in un po di pattina artificiale, che si sospetta essere stata posta su tutti per nascondere la rovina cagionata ad alcuni con l'uso non giudizioso delle lavature."

Excellencies of these very unhappy things, and without the duties of my office I would ignore, but this should reveal the imperfections of past methods, ignorance, and the monopoly of who worked, and who approved these operations, not like the importance and utility of (our) existing caution.³⁵⁰

Edwards then proposed the treatment he recommended to recover the lost genius of the artist's original work:

- The pigment of the three pieces already mentioned should be stabilized with a new lining.
- Three of these pictures should be lined with one piece entirely not in separate pieces as they are now.
- All retouches should be lifted that cover original paint, it is badly applied with faulty materials and is black and yellowed in places.
- All diligent work performed on the five pictures mentioned indicate how essential these operations are due to their location. The central section behind St. Mark, almost all the clouds (now in confusion without distinction of brush and light, original paint covered) the left shoulder, two arms and two hands of the Saint, an angel near the Saint's right hand, other angels, profile and shoulder of Charity, an arm of Hope, and a veil that symbolizes Faith all are retouched that should be removed...the two Victories are indistinguishable because of the extent of their damages...all contours of the figures are altered and a strip from top to bottom of the whole picture must be repainted...
- The four figures of Triumph should be repainted in the style of the author...
- The smoke, patina, and stains should be lifted...the whole thing was clearly excessively cleaned in the past...we could discover the lights, change aspects of the picture... in which to read parts of the painting behind the real and artificial patinas...we will not be able entirely to lift that ugliness without dissolving the old color...and who speaks otherwise is a charlatan...it will be worthwhile to remove the external dirt leaving a fine veil of primary old surface...this point is

³⁵⁰ Ibid., "Quattro più piccoli quadretti rappresentano la fama sonante. Sono d'un chiaroscuro lucido e come a finto stucco ed il danno loro più importante dipende dall'essere stati troppo dilavati, e resi biancastri. Furono anche trovati particolarmente imbrattati da mosche più d'ogni altro pezzo del soffitto, ciocche' potrebbesi attribuire a qualche vernice soprappostavi quando furono polita, gli ingredienti della quale forse attirarono le mosche; e siccome il colore di queste pitturelle come di tutti gli altri chiaroscuri e' assai scarso così l' azione del liquore lasciatovi dall'insetto essendo sempre un poco caustica ha corrosa quello strato sottilissimo di tinte fin sulla tela. Restano sei ristretti quadretti nè quali sono mirabilmente dipinte sei teste di leoni in tinta giallastra; e per buona sorte il soggetto che pose le mani sul resto dei quadri fin ora deperiti, si dimenticò queste piccole tele, e perciò andarono esenti dalla devastazione che con mio sommo dolore, darà molt' altre volte occasione di riferire a Vostre Eccellenze delle cose assai dispiaacevoli, senza però che per dover del mio ufficio possa dispensarmene, quantunque a tai confronti della sempre più rivelarsi l' imperfezione dei passati metodi, e l'ignoranza, e il monopolio di chi travagliò, e di chi approvò le operazione; non che l'importanza e l'utilità delle presenti cautele."

very difficult and requires a mastery of problems.

- Rough surface must be returned to perfect smoothness particularly on the first three pictures...
- Variety of absorption and luster depend on the gesso ground, canvas, original paint surface...and retouches...these must have the same health (glow) over the whole work."³⁵¹

Stanza della Consiglio dei Dieci July 14, 1779

The Consiglio dei Dieci (Fig. 12) was an emergency magistracy created to deal with the Tiepolo-Querini conspiracy in 1310, and it retained its emergency functions until 1455, when it became a permanent institution. The Consiglio was empowered to investigate anyone who might threaten the security of the state, and its meetings were highly secretive. Apart from the Doge, the members consisted of ten appointed by the Senate and elected by the Maggior Consiglio. Its rooms included the Stanza dei Tre Capi and the Audience Hall, both were part of the last section of the Palazzo Ducale to be built. The larger room was begun in 1546 on the site of other structures destroyed in fire. It became a banquet hall after the Fall of the Republic in 1797 and under the Austrians it was a court of law.³⁵²

Scarpagnino directed most reconstruction in 1533-50, and many of the paintings were executed at the same time by Giovanni Battista Ponchino, Paolo Veronese, and Giovanni Battista Zelotti. The ceilings were first decorated from 1553 to 1554 with a cycle of illustrations devised by Daniel Barbaro in the main meeting room. These depicted allegorical representations of the functions of the councilors who met in the chamber. The ceiling is divided into twenty-five framed compartments or *quadretti*, with the centerpiece

³⁵¹ Ibid.

now a nineteenth-century copy of *Jove Expelling Crimes and Vices* by Paolo Veronese, the original taken to the Louvre in 1797. Among the finest works in the room are the *Aged Oriental and a Young Woman* and *Juno Offering the Ducal Crown to Venice* (1553-54) also by Paolo Veronese. This last work was also seized by the French in 1797 and then sent to Brussels. It was eventually repatriated in 1920 when the Brussels Museum exchanged it for Roger Van der Weyden's *Portrait of Laurent Froimont* (formerly in the Accademia). Other important works include Aliense's *Adoration of the Magi* opposite the window and the *Pope Alexander III Blessing Doge Ziani*, which was begun by Francesco Bassano and completed by his assistants. The titles of the pictures were recorded chiefly by Vasari, Ridolfi, and Boschini, but a full original interpretation is unknown.³⁵³

Edwards' report (Appendix #6) on this room and that of the Tre Capi revealed several complex issues about how restorers should proceed in a specific case. For example, given the importance of the public locations of the art, what was the best use of the restorers' time and expenses? The wide variety of quality of works represented in these very public spaces also created problems. This was an ethical conundrum for Edwards if his plan was to ensure efficiency, yet at the same time to give *all* works of art their due regardless of their perceived value.

The descriptions of the lesser-known paintings on the walls in proximity to the paintings on the ceiling of the Stanza della Consiglio dei Dieci in the report dated July 14, 1779, reveal some of this dilemma. Edwards explained that these paintings displayed

³⁵² Eugenia Bianchi et al, *Piazza San Marco and its Museums*, Milan: Electa, 1997, pp.78-79. Schulz, pp. 97-99.

³⁵³ *Ibid.*, Schulz.

damages caused by a combination of extrinsic and intrinsic causes and that some of the paintings were of dubious artistic value. Among the seven in the Camera degli Exc Capi were the *Cristo Morto* (n.d.) attributed to Antonella da Messina and Edwards called it “a most respectable and precious antique work” from this Master’s small oeuvre. It sustained very fine damages from smoke that permeated the surface and body of paint. It was covered with retouches that had grown into surface accretions; even more worrisome were the two splits down to the ground, which threatened the integrity of the whole painting.

Another work attributed to the Renaissance artist Raphael Sanzio of Urbino was so damaged that Edwards doubted it could be restored. The panel was split into two pieces and each part was curved and warped, turning the painting into a convex surface. The pigment had powdered due to this expansion and contraction and the whole work needed to be transferred to a canvas foundation.³⁵⁴ Another important painting, (title unknown) attributed to Albrecht Dürer, and known as the “Caposcuola Tedesco,” contained over 150 places where the original color had fallen off and dirty black specks of organic matter were scattered across the surface. Apparently Edwards considered it even more ruined than the two panels previously mentioned.

Four other paintings in the stanza were restored and included a *Deposition, Mary Magdalen at the Resurrection* and *Jesus in the Temple* by Paris Bordone and Jacopo Bassano (1517-1592). These were all retouched, dark from water damage, and desiccated with flaking pigment. Any remedy was difficult, for as Edwards explained, the pigments

³⁵⁴ Ibid., also see Basile, E.I., *I supporti nelle arti pittoriche*, p. 349, On Edwards and this panel painting.

were chemically altered by improper washing and the irregularity of surfaces between the paint and ground layers of the painting, created by dampness, would prevent a successful restoration. The fourth work, *Christ at the Sepulchre with Two Angels*, was in a good state of preservation and needed only a thin varnish layer.

The report next addressed the removal of an unidentified work taken from the Tribunale in the Collegio and a *Blessed Virgin* by Jacopo Tintoretto that was divided into three pieces--also two lateral works that depicted statues in chiaroscuro probably also by Tintoretto. All needed repair, although they were considered to be minor works by famous masters. Other pictures in the room, including numerous tonal pictures like the *Betrothal of St. Catherine* over the door to into the Pregadi, had suffered "incomparable damage." This work had previously been indiscriminately cleaned, thereby altering the color and leaving a calcium layer and areas of dried resin varnish. According to Edwards, all the works needed to be lined to stabilize pigment and revive the color. The green areas were particularly dirty, "destroying the harmony of the work," while the old cleaning had reduced the overall tone to gray. Five other smaller paintings on the same wall, comprising a monochrome frieze, were also in inferior condition. The heads, hands, and flesh tones were so clumsily repainted that Edwards called them a mockery of their original state. The hardened retouches would reveal their age upon closer examination, Edwards explained, after which he would decide if new retouches would be necessary.³⁵⁵

Consiglio dei Dieci July 5, 1782

Edwards reported again in July 5, 1782 on the detachment and transferral of the

³⁵⁵ Pietro Edwards, S.P.V. MS 787.7-876.7/4 July 14, 1779.

twenty-five ceiling compartments to the restoration laboratory at SS Giovanni & Paolo. He also recommended the relocation of wall paintings to proper niches around the room after the ceiling was complete, but the laboratory was too full to accommodate them for repair at this time. Within the large grouping Edwards divided the works into “Three Classes of Need” which helped to organize the extensive treatments. The first or “Prima” class was those paintings needing the most repair. This included nine paintings by Paolo Veronese around the large center medallion, five monochrome canvases, five other chiaroscuro by Zelotti, and eleven pictures executed by Basacco comprised of nine chiaroscuro and two in “natural” color. These all had been restored at some time in the past and contained many retouches that had turned black and were covered with non-original glazes. The paintings also suffered small scrapes, smoke, grime, and innumerable specks of organic matter from the flies that covered various works, attracted to the warm dampness and resin coatings on the ceiling. The cleaning of such an expanse would be a huge enterprise, but Edwards requested permission to proceed.³⁵⁶

He placed five paintings in his second group of Need. These included a Zelotti over the Tribunal, an oval work by the same artist, and several by Paolo Veronese, all were disfigured by “incompetent retouches” which had ruined the original color. The Zelotti oval in particular was “full of indiscriminate abrasions,” having lost all harmony of tone and being corroded in many parts. The drapery and figures in the painting above the Tribunal were full of repainting and Edwards described all the color of the flesh as lost. In another oval by Veronese, the arm of the seated old man, which Edwards called

³⁵⁶ Pietro Edwards, S.P.V. MS 787.7-876.7 July 5, 1782

“bellissimo,” was so covered by retouches that Edwards was not sure what he would find when all additions were removed. There was a great loss of pigment and degradation of color by a previous improper cleaning.³⁵⁷

The third class of damage consisted of only two works. The glorious center work (now in the Louvre) by Paolo Veronese suffered four ugly lacerations in its most “noble” parts, a large number of scrapes improved upon in the past, and retouches that had discolored. Edwards explained that the drapery of Jove and of the Giganti were not original, but painted by a past inept restorer. Much of the original delicate glazing and many of the half-tones were lost. The canvas fabric itself was spoiled and hardened from too much flour paste applied on the reverse, which prevented a good bond between lining and surface. There were flies and insects all over this painting, attracted by a varnish mixture that probably contained sugar.³⁵⁸ Then came the Zelotti with a similar varnish icing, but without the tears or scrapes of the Veronese. The head of a lion and the Delphino were completely but clumsily remade, but Edwards doubted that under the repainted surface one would find much original brushwork left. The semi-nude body of the woman was littered with small retouches and tiny scrapes and the outline of the torso of the principal River god was still legible. Finally, although the painting was darkened, the detachment of pigment was not too advanced. However, Edwards warned that the work would deteriorate quickly without any preventive care. Overall, Edwards’ general plan was to line all the works, clean most of the soil away, and remove all old retouches

³⁵⁷ Ibid. ,...è stato fregato assai indiscretamente...

³⁵⁸ Ibid., “Delle sporchie e delle mosche non parlo. E’ probabile che il gran numero d’ insetti, de quali trovarsi le traccie sopra queste quadrai vi sia stato affinato da una sorta di vernice leggera meschiata col

(except the drapery in a center section), and to rescue these works from the “miserable ruin” they revealed when they were delivered.³⁵⁹

Sala del Collegio August 25, 1780

The Sala del Collegio was intended for assemblies of the Magistratura called the “pien Collegio” made up of the Signoria (the Minor Consiglio) the three Capi della Quarantia (judicial magistrates), and the three Zonta (the Savi del Consiglio, Savi di Terrafirma, and the Savi degli Ordini). They received ambassadors in this room, where the effect of great art and magnificent ornament were intended to be overwhelming. In the mid-16th century the original decoration included an immense *Map of the Venetian Dukedom* by Domenico Zorzi, a large clock, various unspecified paintings described by Sansovino as a Giovanni Bellini, and a Titian (the elder). The record also mentioned another large painting by Parrasio Micheli called *Doge Lorenzo before the Holy Spirit*, destroyed in a fire probably in 1574. Although some scholars attribute the design of the ceiling to Antonio da Ponte, many believe that his function was supervisory and that the sala was truly redecorated by Andrea Palladio and G.A. Rusconi from 1574 to 1575. They added a beautifully carved ceiling, wooden wainscoting, and they returned the original wooden benches and dais perhaps salvaged from the fire in 1574.³⁶⁰

Although climate played a major role in Edwards’ ongoing battle against the destruction of the public paintings of Venice, the interfering and inexperienced hands of past restorers received his most vitriolic comments. This was the case in the report of August

zuccaro, che ancora, con assai cattiva pratica, vien posta in uso decerti pittori poco attenti alla preservazione delle opere loro.”

³⁵⁹ Ibid., “... miserabile decadenza in cui vengono a me consegnati.”

25, 1780 on the ceiling paintings in this room. The devastating critique of the past restoration began with the paintings by the “Divino Caliarì” (Paolo Veronese) who was commissioned for 100 ducats, followed by other payments for this series.³⁶¹ These grand paintings were executed in 1575 and completed at the death of Doge Venier in 1578. The cycle was meant to extol the glory and the sea power of Venice, the Faith on which it survived, and the virtues that the Republic encouraged and exemplified. Various writers from Ridolfi to Boschini and Zanotto all tried, with varying results, to identify the personifications and histories.³⁶² The central compartments represent *Mars, Neptune, Faith the Strength of the Republic, and Venice Enthroned with Justice and Peace*. At the sides the *Virtues* are depicted, each with a symbolic attribute.

The past disgrace of restoration practice haunted Edwards in these paintings. It was obvious to him that highly unskilled workers had reworked these great paintings. They had succeeded in obscuring so much of the original character that one could say they were really not by Veronese, who was known for the clarity of his compositions. Edwards wrote with undisguised contempt about every mediocre connoisseur who proclaimed the “sublime merit in the originals,” but who failed to notice how completely disfigured the ceiling really was. The conditions in the room were deplorable, with continuous smoke damage and a chronically leaking roof that had persisted through two centuries. Edwards lamented that perhaps no work by Paolo so admired in Venice or in all of Europe retained

³⁶⁰ Eugenia Bianchi et al, *Piazza San Marco and its Museums*, Venice: Electa, 1997, p. 72-73; Schulz, pp.104-05, An account book survives that documents all the repair and redecoration.

³⁶¹ Schulz, p.105.

³⁶² *Ibid.*, p.106.

so little amount of its original pictorial surface.³⁶³

There were two campaigns of past restoration that caused this disgraceful situation. The first took place at the end of the sixteenth century and changed the whole appearance of the ceiling--or so Edwards believed. With a few "scraps" left behind by the "idiots with ignorance or evil intent," the antique surface lacked clarity consistent in Veronese's "noble and gay style." The few original parts left were modest and interrupted by clouds in a field of "turchino"(indigo) without any accord or harmony remaining in the composition. Edwards believed that Veronese painted in water-based tempera, yet the ceiling was retouched in oil, leaving behind a soiled and miserable remnant. Several caustic washings had taken away what was left of the artist's "matchless beauty" of color.³⁶⁴

Edwards' tirade against clumsy techniques of the past restorers was alleviated only briefly by a brief mention of climatic damages and possible chemical alteration of pigments. His main wrath was directed at the lack of skill, equaled only by an "ignorance of Theory." These thoughtless actions led to extremes in intervention, for as Edwards

³⁶³ Edwards, S.P.V. MS 787.7-876.7/15 August 25, 1780, "Già si sapeva per tradizione, e si riconosceva pur anco dal fatto, che tutti dicisette Quadri di quel soffitto erano stati altra volta ripassati da certo malagurato artista, che a modo suo pretese di racconciarle: se ne discernevano le arie rinnovate; se ne vedeva lo sfioramento delle tinte, divenute sfacciate e senza quella sobria venustà, che caratterizza lo stile nobilmente festoso del divino Calliari (sic); si comprendeva, che la confusione, e l'offuscamento di alcuni pezzi non potea esser opera dell' Autore, il quale trattò tutti quei soggetti con somma lucidezza; ed ogni mediocre conoscitore confessava che veramente subblissimo dovea essere il fondo di merito in quegli Originali, poichè ad onta di molti innegabili discapiti pur tutta via eran capaci di eccitare l' ammirazione d'ogn uno. A provar poi per via di confronto che da tai Quadri era stata quasi del tutto spenta la virginità dell' antico loro aspetto, si rifletteva non esservi certamente in Venezia, e forse neppure in Europa, alcun altro Quadro di Paolo che apparisca tanta nuovo e mostri una faccia così attempata come queste pitture..."

³⁶⁴ Ibid., Si crede altresì che le arie Paolo fossero dipinte a Tempera, a differenza delle nuove che sono ad oglio. In questa prima riparazione furono ancora miseramente dilavate le tinte di tutte quest' opere, e rese d'un sapor insipido, che resta soltanto sostenuto dalla scelta nell' universale dell atto di colore, e dalla

wrote, “when only a finger was scraped, they would retouch the whole hand.” Or they would alter the color of the original to match an old discolored retouch instead of adapting the inpainting to original color. Surface irregularities were never equalized thus leaving lustrous areas next to desiccated resins. Edwards complained that the pictures looked as if they were painted at all different time periods, resulting in a dirty and disjointed image.³⁶⁵

The crowning blow was the way the central and most important scenes of the allegory were treated. The figure of Neptune, barely exhumed from dirt and damages, was seen as an old nude man. Edwards exclaimed that the author had not intended this virile God of the Sea and symbol of Venetian maritime power to metamorphize into a “sordid satyr.” The previous restorers had misunderstood many symbolic aspects of the content, including the presence of smoke wafting up from an altar that consumed a sacrifice and ascended into the sky. They had mistaken this gauzy film for some surface loss or stain caused by rain and so had attempted to remove it. The misguided restorer overpainted the original surface and turned youthful figures into melancholic bearded octogenarians, and robust bodies into languid examples of “decrepitude.” Edwards rightly fumed that the grave damages perpetuated on the work, particularly on the figures, removed the character of the original artist’s intention completely and presented a false

impareggiabile Leggiadria d’un tocco il più nobile, il più sciolto, il più significante che siasi mai veduto in Pittura.”

³⁶⁵ Ibid., “Nel secondo restauro poi furono foderati tre dei Quadri minori; fu applicato a tutti un secondo lavacro, che fini di scorticare le poche svelature campate dal primo guasto; furono ad oglio ritoccate tutte le macchie precedenti o dall’ intrinseca mutazion del colore, o da qualche esterna cagione, e principalmente dalle affumicature insinuatesi con l’umidità; e da oglio altresì furono risarcite tutte le parte scrostate dal fondo; e tutti quei luoghi, nel quali il restauratore credè di trovare, o pregiudizi, o annerimento, o confusione furono da esso rischiarati, e modo suo rifatti a forza di pennello. Con quale impudenza, con quanta goffaggine nel meccanismo, e con quanta ignoranza nelle Teorie, siano state eseguite queste operazioni, non ispero di poterlo descrivere.”

content of the work. This left behind only evidence of criminal ineptitude and a tragic loss of a great artist's vision.

He discovered that some of the original painting could be recovered, but only when the old retouches were completely removed. These excesses were examples of the "detestable license" of past restorations. He intended to restore the smooth and luminous surface and restore Neptune completely. Edwards was confident that the six chiaroscuro at the ceiling borders were actually salvageable, even though they had remained invisible for years because they were sunk in blackness. He reassured the Magistrati that on the rest of the ceiling the many colors would in due course be revealed in their true glory. The pigments would be stabilized and then blossom into a palette of perfect hues of "rich yellow-brown, or brilliant green, along with all the drapery" if all the pictures were lined with new canvas. Edwards discovered now that the engraving by Valentino LeFebre of the ceiling, used as a guide for restorers, was not reliable after these revelations of content and color. LeFebre had completed it after the first restoration, and its composition could now be recognized as a variation on the Veronese original.³⁶⁶

Stanza dell' Anticollegio October 26, 1781

This stanza formed an anteroom for ambassadors and delegations waiting to be received by the Doge and other Venetian dignitaries. The original decorative scheme had

³⁶⁶ Ibid., "Nel quadro rappresentante Marte con altre figures simboliche, oltre alle innumberabili alterazioni, che hanno rapporto con le cose dette di sopra, si scopri che l'ultimo restauratore si tolse dall'impaccio, che davagli la figura principale d' un vecchione nudo, simboleggiato dall'Autore per il Dio del Mare; e non sapendo egli come disseppellirla dallo sporco, e dei danni che la deturpavano nella parte inferiore, se ne sbrigo la valentuomo coprindone tutte le coscie con lanuggine caprina; di modo che per una bizzarra metamorfosi a capriccio, Nettuno restò cangiato in un sordido satiro, che niente ha che fare nè con la intenzione di Paolo, nè con l'allegoria, nè col poetico istoriato dell' opera tutt' allusiva all forza del Veneto Impero sulle acque."

been similar to that of the Sala delle Quattro Porte, but was destroyed in a fire in 1574. The room was then redesigned by Palladio, and again by Scamozzi. The central ceiling fresco, entitled *Venice Confers Rewards and Honors* (1575) is by Paolo Veronese. The room was completely redecorated in 1716 with new hangings and paintings. The theme has been interpreted as an allegory of wise government seen in the harmonious succession of seasons which was symbolic of a perpetual and successful rule.³⁶⁷

The report was the second of two concerning this same room where Edwards claimed to have achieved some “miraculous results” on six paintings. A “celebrated work” by Jacopo da Ponte (Bassano) entitled the *Return of Jacob with his Family* was sunk into a horrible blackness, exhibited flaking and detached pigment, the loss of the cohesive strength of animal glue in the ground, and cloudy varnish. The condition was almost indescribable and certainly made any chance of repair seem dubious. Edwards admitted he was not surprised by the damages; he even felt that it might be impossible to return clarity to parts of the work because of intrinsic chemical changes of pigment. Edwards also believed that the rigidity of the ground and paint layers would prevent any successful consolidation of pigment through the back of the canvas. He cautioned that one should always make a judgment about restoration based on a comparison between what the work looked like when it came into the restorer’s hands and then how it looked after it was finished.”³⁶⁸

The condition of the *Rape of Europe* by Bonifacio Veronese, the companion piece

³⁶⁷ Bianchi et al, p. 70-71.

³⁶⁸ Pietro Edwards, S.P.V. MS 787.7-876.7/6 October 26, 1781, “Non bisogna, però dimenticarsi ciò che più d’una volta ebbi occasion di ripetere, val a dire che il giudizio d’un opera di ristauero dev’ essere

to the preceding work, suffered from its location on a damp wall across from a window. Edwards and his team consolidated the surface pigment, gave the painting a renewed ground, and removed unsightly old retouches. Edwards was very enthusiastic about the restoration, although this painting, like the Bassano, contained serious structural problems. He described the murky brown surface and considered how to create a balance in tone. This would be difficult because if he lightened the dark layers of varnish, there was a danger of “skinning” or scouring the delicate pale flesh tones.³⁶⁹

The authorities were already concerned about specific safeguards when cleaning Venetian paintings because of their layers of glazes, characteristic of the best of the Venetian school. In 1762 the Magistrati al Sal hired Domenico Maggiotto and warned him about the “patina” that must be carefully preserved.³⁷⁰ It was logical to find this interest in patina because Venetian painting was revered for these final touches. Edward cautioned, “In treating an antique painting, I do not think to give to it again the harmony of color except the same practiced by the author of the work; the feeling is the same, otherwise we come to remove a characteristic difference between diverse artists’

comparativo, o sia di confronto fra lo stato; nel quale fu consegnata la pittura al restauratore a quello in cui egli la ridusse doppolo (sic).”

³⁶⁹ Ibid., “...il fatto vero si è che un tal disordine dipendeva da una oscura vernice, a cui era stata levata la lucidezza dal fumo e dal succidurne, ma che realmente aveva reso il quadro quasi intrattabile, attesochè la sua tenacità impediva la azione dei liquidi per la parte del dipinto, e la sua rigidezza inflessibile non permetteva che il colore si adattasse ai glutini che vi si volevano introdurre dal rovescio...e che impossibile sarebbe di richiarmare alla maggior lucidezza tutte le parti; nelle quali un qualche misto cangio intrinsecamente l’atto della sua tinta, pensai di non far alzare il grado dei lumi più di quanto necessario fosse alla schietta intelligenza del soggetto; con che sembra mi che tutta l’opera sia restata in perfetta consonanza e benissimo armonizzata.”

³⁷⁰ Muraro p.475, “Per troppa insistenza di separare oltre quanto convien questa pattina, quei tratti maestri dell’ Arte non se siano logorati, e perduti come pur troppo agevolmente avvenir potrebbe; restando così perdute miseramente nel complesso ed aspetto universale di queste tele ammirabili, quel armonia e concordanza, che ne formano il pregio maggiore.” ; Marijnissen, p.29, on maintaining “pleasant overall tone” in Venice; Otto Kurz, p. 94, On “Time the Painter.”

styles.”³⁷¹

Edwards was very clear that it was important to maintain equilibrium between the values of light and dark, allowing half-tones to be brighter without losing the depth created in a work.³⁷² The team removed retouches that altered the hues after consolidating the color threatened by detachment. Edwards emphasized that lights and whites should not be cleaned too much. He cautioned, “the only flesh tones (in the work) that should be cleaned is that of the breast of Europa, a miraculous thing.” To Edwards the flesh should be treated in a way differently from the rest of the composition for two reasons: the first was because it was the most important part of the main figure and should lift the lights in the rest of the work. The second point was that the color was “fat” (grasso), which would resist the use of solvent and lead to an undesirable alteration of the artist’s tonal values and thinned impasto.³⁷³

Edwards held strong opinions about artificial patinas applied by past restorers.

This is apparent in his recommendation for treatment of the four works by Jacopo

³⁷¹ Ibid. Muraro, p. 476, “Trattandosi di un quadro antico non si dee pensar di ridonar ad esso l’armonia del colore tal quale questa dovrebbe essere in se stesso ma quale fu pratocata dall autore dell opera seconda apparisce che ei la sentiva in se’ medesimo, altrimenti si verrebbe a togliere una caratteristica differenza fra I diversi stili dei passati maestri.”

³⁷² Brandi, “Cleaning,” p.187, Various examples that prove that Old Masters employed varnish and glazes to create a unification of tone; Gombrich, “Controversial...,” p.92-93 on flatness of a picture when stripped of its glazes and patina.

³⁷³ Ibid., Brandi, p. 187, Brandi had a similar concern for the total work after a cleaning has reduced it to “the layer of paint in full impasto” where even a dark patina is preferable to the “raw, brutal surface of paint laid bare by cleaning.”; Sheldon Keck, “Some Picture Cleaning Controversies: Past and Present,” *JAIC*, 1984, p.77, The critic J. Morris Moore described the cleaning of the *Stonemason’s Yard* by Canaletto in London’s National Gallery under Sir Charles Eastlake’s care in 1852. “The picture has been literally flayed...the various white objects in it have been scoured...to an almost uniform whiteness...the consequence is that near and distant objects are jumbled together in unmeaning confusion, and that linear perspective is forced in direct antagonism with the aerial...that the chalky veiled appearance of the foreground is owing to some solvent having disturbed some portion of the body pigment.” Some ascribe Moore’s motive in these criticisms to an ambition to supplant Eastlake at the National Gallery. However,

Tintoretto. *The Mercury and the Graces, Minerva Driving Back Mars, Ariadne and Bacchus*, and *Vulcan's Forge* were all painted for the Sala delle Quattro Porte, but moved into the Anticollegio after a restoration of that room in 1716. Edward concluded that a lesser evil for these pictures would be “to leave a little surface of the original uncovered rather than remain under an artificial layer” and that the “too warm tints should be reduced.” He recommended that the Tintoretto be lined with new canvas along with the Bassano group.³⁷⁴

Sala dell' Auditor May 30, 1783

In this report Edwards stated his policy of objective repair towards works of different value or even copies. He also confronted the fascinating dilemma that faced a restorer when a complete over-painting was removed, but no original remained underneath. Such an example was a painting attributed to Pietro Malombra, whom Edwards described as a mediocre picture in the Sala di Auditor. However, Edwards proudly claimed that this painting received the same diligent care as the more valuable works under his custody. He claimed to administer similar conscientious treatment to a suspected copy discovered in the Magistrati alle Legne. Among the remaining three pictures in the Sala di Auditor only the Bonifacio was successfully recovered. During his

in general his observations are not uncommon, as many works have exhibited these same effects due to a heavy hand and harsh solvent cleaning.

³⁷⁴ Edwards MS 787.7-876.7/6 October 26, 1781, “La Ariana con Bacco, ed il quadro con Mercurio la sorte di si sarebbero potuti ridurre più calda di tinta riponendovi la pattina artificiale che vi era stata posta dal passato restauratore, il quale con ciò ha cercato di rimediare al male ch'egli aveva cagionata a quelle pitture con la temerità dei suoi lavacri. Ma per dire il vero, io sono nemecissimo a questo triviale artificio, e nepppur in tal caso volli adoperarlo, stimando che sia men male il lasciar un poco troppo scoperto l' originale, che il ricoprirlo con un arbitrio spesse volte fallace. Ancora questi quattro quadri, come pur il sopraddescritto di Bassano furono foderati di nuovo; anzi per quest' ultimo, e epr il quadro di Paolo sàebbe la buona sorte di ritrovare due pezzi di tela tutta d' un pezzo, che bastaranno alla loro foderatura.”

treatment the restorers became suspicious of the highly irregular surface and found an original figure hidden beneath a layer of repainting.³⁷⁵

The other works in the room included a ceiling painting by Paolo Veronese and a portrait by Jacopo Tintoretto. These were badly damaged and twice repainted in the past from top to bottom. Edwards and team removed all the restored surface down to the original artist's ground in the Tintoretto. This revealed what Edwards called "a miserable sketch." They attempted to retrace the original composition in every way, which differed entirely from the last restoration. The past restorer had substituted architecture for blue sky. This extreme example encouraged Edwards' notorious integrity about the extent of a restorer's responsibility to the original work and the expected reception. He wrote,

I would be an impostor if I led your Eminences to believe that these parts so ruined were repaired without the use of the brush. To the sole omnipotence of the Divine is reserved the virtue to extract something from nothing....³⁷⁶

Edwards found himself speechless when he described the condition of the ceiling painting by Veronese. The painting was in "extreme disorder...and this makes it difficult

³⁷⁵ Pietro Edwards S.P.V. 787.7-876.8 MS May 30, 1783, "Quest' opera maniera di Pietro Malombra e' l' unica ch'io presi dalla Sala Sudetta, e sebben sia solo una mediocre pittura, fu trattata con tanta diligenza come se fosse uno dei quadri più preziosi. Nella stessa maniera li procede intorno ai pezzi del Magto. alle Legne. Di essi avevo già indicato che forse sarabbesi lasciata addietro una tela, sospettando io che fosse una copia come di fatti ho scoperto dopo un più diligente esame. Escluse questo quadro me ne restarono solamente tre, che sono Emol. ritratti di Giacomo Tintoretto; 2d. La Giustizia di Bonifacio; 3rd il soffitto di Paolo Veronese. Il quadro di Bonifacio riussi più di quanto potevasi credere poiche sotto il ridipinto che copriva la Figura li trovò buona parte di originale preservato. Il campo moderno fra gli stemmi era intollerabile sebben fosse d'una sola tinta, poichè era stato disteso sopra una inegalissima superficie di rilevate stuccature. Quest' ultime furono corrette o a dir meglio rifatte, e così pure tutto l'accennato campo moderno, che almeno adesso lascia in queste l'effetto della figura principale."

³⁷⁶ Ibid., "Il primi di questi due pezzi oltre gl' altri infiniti mali descritti, o piuttosto appena' accennati nella prefata relazione 30 Obre 81 era stato due volte redipinto nel Campo da capo a fondo. Levata la più recente rifacitura li scopri la più antica, e levata anche questa li trovò finalmente il fondo vecchio dell' Autore ma in uno stato di miserabilissimo abbozzo. Ad ogni modo però li procurò di seguire queste poche tracce originali, le quali differivano intieramente dalle dur rifaciture moderne, in guisa che dov' era stata sostituita un architettura si ritrovò un cielo azzurro, e così del resto. Io sarei un impostore se facessi credere

to explain what it would take for its repair.” The surface had been grossly retouched and it was almost impossible to recover what original surface remained. Clumsy plaster fills covered the work (infiniti stuccature goffissime) and extended outside the losses onto the paint surface. The previous restoration had occurred after the original had been scoured away by a destructive cleaning. The numerous retouches were then covered with a gum resin dissolved in spirits that hardened the surface and now made it friable. The color flaked away down to the ground when softened by the restorer’s ministrations.³⁷⁷

Camera dell Armar June 7, 1784 (Sala Morosini)

There is a consistency in theory and practice, at least on paper, in these reports. However, it becomes apparent in the description of this room that Edwards changed his mind about the desired outcome of a restoration that contradicted what he previously had voiced as principle. This change in attitude involved the condition of a painting by Giovanni Battista Cima among three paintings that were removed from the Camera dell’ Armar (now the Armory that displays over 2,000 weapons). The picture was divided into three pieces and characterized by a profound blackness covering the whole work; this dark layer was caused by repainting and old varnish that Edwards removed.³⁷⁸ Edwards then explained the draconian measures taken in this project. He stated that “all darkened

a VV.EE. che queste parti così rovinare furono risarcite senza alcun uso del pennello. Alla sola onnipotenza Divina è riservata la virtù di cavare qualche cosa dal nulla....”

³⁷⁷ Ibid., “Dell’ altre operazioni spettanti a questa pittura non faccio parola per evitare l’ eccessiva prolissità...Quando le pitture sono ridotte ad un grado di estremo disordine, è quasi impossibile lo esprimere colle sole parole tutto ciò che occorre di lavoro per ricuperarle.”

³⁷⁸ Pietro Edwards S.P.V. MS 787.7-876.7/9 Referte June 7, 1784, “Il quadro diviso in tre comparti, e dipinto da Gio Btta Cima è già terminato, ma non si deve riconsegnare se non se da qua a due o tre mesi, così richiedendo l’ avvertenza necessaria da prendersi intorno a quell’ opera, a fin di assicurarsi che la somma rigidità della tela, e del colore smosso, e sobbillito, abbiano preso la debita consistenza. Questo opera che fu subito posto in lavoro non sarà certamente riconosciuto da quelli che lo videro per l’

repaint was removed and in parts absolutely lacking, as in the background where these were replaced with much mastery.” It becomes clear that, as in present day conservation practice, all decisions must be made on a case-by-case basis. Theory can be a guide, but cannot be a prison. The resulting color appeared so vivid that Edwards considered its moderation. He seemed buoyant while mentioning his usual concerns about the climate and weekly dusting to remove powdered pigment from the paintings. Other works in the room were treated, including one by Battista dal Moro that was lined and its color stabilized. Edwards noted that a small panel painting (no title) by Benedetto Diana withstood its cleaning well and looked almost like new because its varnish layer was solid, almost like glass.³⁷⁹

Sala delle Quattro Porte August 9, 1783

The Sala delle Quattro Porte functioned as an anteroom that gave access to various chambers. It was originally the meeting place for the Collegio, approached by a small lobby at the top of the Scala d’Oro and extending the whole length of the palace. However, after the fire in 1574 the Collegio moved further north and the Sala became a ceremonial space. Its decorative program was associated with the Republic’s view of itself as the “New Rome.” The ceiling was a Roman Renaissance barrel vault style

innanzi. Fu totalmente sgombrato dal profondissimo strato di nerzie che la teneva coperto, e ciò con una fatica, e con una diligenza che merita tutta la mia approvazione.”

³⁷⁹ Ibid., “Tutto il colore dei redipinti anneriti fu rimosso e le parti assolutamente mancati, specialmente nel campo, furono rimesse con molta maestria. Il colore è adesso così ben assodato, che solo per estremo vigor di precauzione pensi si attendere anche la prova del suaccenato intervallo onde accertarmi della sua sussistenza. I colori sono riusciti tanto vaghi che quasi abbisognano d’essere temperati; al che però provvederà ben presto l’influenza della nostr’ atmosfera, e la solita incuriadi chi non si prende la pena di levar almeno una volta alla settimana le polveri che cadono sopra questi poveri quadri...Finalmente, il piccolo quadro in tavola di Benedetto Diana benchè abbia resistito alla politura più che non si credeva perchè la nerzie che ricoprivalo era di una qualità durissima, s come vetrosa si è nulla di meno restaurato perfettamente ed ha preso un aspetto quasi nuovo.”

covered with stucco and gilding. It was attributed to Bombardi and decorated with frescoes of the Republic's subject cities.³⁸⁰ Andrea di Pietro, known as Palladio (1508-80) and Giovanni Rusconi designed the new room in 1574. Imperial imagery was amplified by wall paintings of notable events in Venetian history complimented Palladio's richly carved four classical doors with Corinthian columns. The room is filled with pictures by some of the most respected painters in Venice, including the wall paintings by Titian the Elder and Marco Vecellio (1545-1611). The frescoed ceiling was devised by Jacopo Tatti (known as Sansovino 1486-1570) and painted between 1578-81 by Jacopo Tintoretto. Various other types of imagery were suggested by nobleman Giacomo Contarini (1536-95) and some were finally painted by the sons of Veronese and Giovanni Contarini.³⁸¹

Edwards described the myriad causes of damage in this important public room with the recommendation that the time was right to remove and line the huge paintings. Other works from the Sala della Quattro Porte and Salotto al Savio alla Scrittura were to be transported to the laboratory.³⁸² The terrible condition of some of the pictures was attributed to the last fire that had destroyed other Ducal rooms. These pictures had been retouched with new color, but the repairs had not endured, and an immediate restoration was clearly needed. Given the nature of the damages Edwards could not assure complete success, but he announced a better prognosis for the *Doge Antonio Grimani Kneeling*

³⁸⁰ Goy, p. 125.

³⁸¹ Bianchi et al, p.68-69.

³⁸² Pietro Edwards, S.P.V. MS 787.7-876.7/8 Referte August 9, 1783, "Avvicinandosi la stagione più propria per le grandi foderature, e per la preparazione dei lavori feci eseguire il trasporto dei quadri spettanti alla Sala delle quattro porte, e con la stessa occasione presi ancora in consegna tutti gli altri del Salotto al Savio alla Scrittura; le quali operazioni di trasporto furono effettuate nei giorni 4, e 5 corrente."

before Religion and St. Mark (1595-1600) by the Elder Titian. The painting had been completed by the nephew, Marco Vecellio, and now exhibited disfiguring symptoms of rippling pigment that all “simmered together with the canvas and onto the ground....”

Edwards reassured the authorities that the “colors to be uncovered will be the original and least harmed having escaped the effects of the fire.”³⁸³

Edwards made an aesthetic and critical decision regarding a large work by Titian and two lateral wall paintings by Marco Vecellio. He explained that he considered the wall paintings to be a separate work from that of the elder Titian, although they were now joined together. He stated that the nephew had claimed to unite the paintings and make them all into a single work, but the colors were now weakened and the tints lowered in value, with a dusty and smoky surface. Edwards continued that the Titian was covered with old retouches that presented the usual problems of cohesion to the surface. For example, the surface appeared to have crumbled during a second repair attempted some time before the present campaign. According to Edwards, six years after the first interventions these same three pictures in the room were subjected to destructive washing. The overall damage could not be assessed without the removal of the paintings from their original places on the walls. He stated that only by purging all repaint that covered the original surface could the memory of this “sublime work” be retrieved.³⁸⁴

Carletto Caliani’s *Legates of Nurenberg Receive the Laws of Venice from Doge*

³⁸³ Ibid., “Il suo colore è tutto raggvinzato, e sobbollito unitamente alla tela, ed alla imprimitura ma appunto le poche parti nelle quali si ritrova il colore in queste disordine sono le originali, e le meno pregiudicate.”

³⁸⁴ Ibid., “Anorchè, però non si trattasse che di conservare la memoria, e piccoli bricioli di quest’ opera sublime, sarebbero assai ben impiegato le fatiche alle quali sono di già rassegnati nostri professori. Mi

Loredan and Doge Pasquale Cicogna Gives Audience to the Persian Ambassadors

suffered from a slow deterioration due to their proximity to windows. The sun had baked the glazes, sinking the half-tints, the lakes (red), the blues and the general harmony of the work into a dim reminder of its original glory. Edwards warned that the greatest danger in this case was the pigment, now reduced to powder that could be brushed away in even gentle friction cleaning. He believed that animal skin glue was painted over the picture as a covering and increased the fragility of the surface.³⁸⁵ The largest section of the painting was in the worst condition, but Edwards predicted a good result because most of the harm was not attributable to a previous inexpert restoration.

Another of the twelve works in the room was the large canvas by Andrea Vicentini representing the scene *Henry III Arrives at Venice*, which presented more serious problems. It had been split to its foundation and its color blackened by a poor washing. Then it had been rubbed, retouched, varnished and twisted in its stretcher so much that the painting needed to be “treated with much discretion” as Edwards delicately stated.³⁸⁶ Edwards claimed that he and his team had miraculously salvaged the painting even with these insurmountable injuries, and many people visiting the laboratory commented on its improved condition. The darkened masses in the picture presented a predicament common in restoration-- how to lift the over-blackened shadows without heightening

lusingo però che quando sarà purgata dai redipinti vi si scoprirà qualche cosa di più, e si estenderà maggiormente il complesso delle parti vergini e originali.”

³⁸⁵ Ibid., “Le due belle pitture di Carletto Calliari hanno pure sofferto i danni d’un altra sorte d’incendio, che li ha rovinati lentamente e ridotti in uno stato a vero dir deplorabile. La loro vicinanza alle finestre, ed il difetto di un riparo che li difendesse dall’azione del Sole condussero queste pitture poco men che all’ultimo periodo della rovina.”

surrounding lights and whites too much and thus destroying a harmony between all tones.

The view on this procedure was then and still is that cleaning becomes a search for a reasonable balance of values that are faithful to the original perceived aesthetic unity of the work.³⁸⁷

There were two paintings by Giovanni Contarin here and the *Blessed Virgin and Other Saints* suffered less damages than the other. It was abraded, blackened, and covered with dried pigment and dirt. This required an equalization of tints, a re-saturation of pallid colors, and retouches of scrapes and lacerations all caused by previous cleaning. Another painting, *The Venetians Under Gattamelata Defeat the Visconti and Retake Verona*, was the most restored work in the room. In Edwards' words this work suffered from washing and repairs made of a glutinous oily paste called *beverone*.³⁸⁸ The mixture had been applied through the reverse of the canvas and oozed through the weave onto the front and paint surface, thereby creating an organic black crust. Edwards removed the *beverone* and returned the tints to their natural "state of beauty." He warned that after washing delicate paintings of this type, they always suffered a loss of unity between lights and darks. This defect was minimized in various ways, but these operations should always sustain the original color of the artist and "prevent the necessity of the use of the

³⁸⁶ Ibid., "Questa opera è infracidita nel suo fondo, ed annerita nella sostanza del colore. Fu lavata, ed arcifregata, e ritoccata, e verniciata, e tormentato tanto e poi tanto, che adesso bisogna trattarla con somma discrezione."

³⁸⁷ Paul Philippot, "The Idea of Patina and the Cleaning of Paintings," *Historical and Philosophical Issues in the Conservation of Cultural Heritage*, Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 1996, p.375.

³⁸⁸ Luigi Grassi & Mario Pepe, *Dizionario...*, p.125, *Beverone* is a term that originally was a mixture of farina and fat later adopted by restorers in various mixtures of wax, oil, and resins. It was also used as an adhesive and to secure pigment to the surface. It is an obsolete material and is considered disfiguring to paintings.

brush.”³⁸⁹ This determination can already be found in the early records of Venetian restoration history and reveals a respect for the original artist’s brushwork and a concern for indiscriminate inpainting. Edwards’ own reports show that he could not always maintain this principle in his practice.

Other works in the room included the four over-doors in chiaroscuro, their authorship uncertain. They were painted “*alla prima* with much boldness,” and Edwards recounted their terrible neglect. They had been forgotten for years in their niches without even a dusting. This had contributed to the disintegration of the canvases, but the paintings still revealed original traces of paint and Edwards considered them worthy of restoration.

Salotto alla Scrittura August 9, 1783

In this same report Edwards remarked that the nine ceiling paintings by Jacopo Tintoretto located in the Salotto alla Scrittura had also barely survived damage by fire and thus exhibited a bubbled paint surface. However, the most serious problems he noted were probably caused by prior restorations. Edwards commented that the contours of figures were altered and had even entirely disappeared in some places. Edwards was shocked at the extent of surface stains and irregularities of texture. Darkened squares of color dotted the surface, perhaps stemming from some mixture of pigment and medium used by Tintoretto when he painted all nine compartments. Then there were the “awful

³⁸⁹ Edwards., 787.7-876.7/8 August 9, 1783. “Il più impotante di tale ristaurazione consistenel purgare il quadro dall’ accennato beveronc, e ridurre le tinte allo stato della loro natural vaghezza per quanto lo permetteranno le circostanze generali dell’ opera; avvertendo che in questa sorta di quadri avviene quasi sempre che dopo la pulitura resti qualche grado di crudezza nella unione dei lumi, e degli oscuri; difetto che si può ben minorare in diversi modi, ma volendolo togliere affatto sarebbe necessario l’usare il pennello; dal che io mi tengo sempre lontano quand’ ancora sussiste il colore dell’ Autore.”

retouches” that deformed the whole work. Edwards believed that four of the quadretti in chiaroscuro were almost completely lost, and only after complete reconstruction could the paintings function in the original decorative scheme of the room. Four other paintings with putti representing the four seasons lacked color and appeared over-cleaned to Edwards.³⁹⁰

The other paintings in the room included one wall painting by Paolo Veronese that depicted *Adam and Eve* and *Cain and Abel* while another picture depicted the *Agony in the Garden*. Both were greatly diminished from their former splendor with blackened backgrounds and overall grime that prevented identifying even the edges where the works were joined on the walls. Edwards explained that the light color in the *Adam and Eve...* did not need strengthening too much by cleaning to enrich half tints or embolden the whites. He could not predict the outcome of the two restorations without removing some of the surface grime caused by smoke. Another painting in the ensemble by Giacomo Bassano depicted an angel awakening a priest; this was badly repainted and was scrubbed in a harsh washing that had consumed the original glazes. Edwards sharply criticized the procedure of rubbing the paint surface with oil and observed that the pigment had become

³⁹⁰ Ibid., “Il quadro di mezzo è tutto sobbollito, e tanto raggrinzato nel colore che io non so attribuire un tal pregiudizio ad altro che all’ azione del fuoco, benchè non mi sia noto che quest’ opera abbia sofferto simile disgrazia. Vi sono delle figure tanato contrafatte per la mutazioni dei contorni cancellati, confusi, o ristretti che a grave stento se ne può raccapezzare l’insieme. Lo sporco si è immedessimato in quella scabra, ed inegual superficie più di quanto io possa descivere; ed oltre a ciò sembra che alcune piazze di tinta oscura siansi molto pregiudicate per la cattiva qualità del misto usato da Giacomo Tintoretto che dipinse tutti i nove compartì di questo soffitto. Lo stato di quest’ opera è tale che non posso discernere se molte delle macchie, e delle irregolarità ch’ ora vi appariscono procedano dall’aggiunta di qualche vizioso ritocco...Le quattro storiette a chiaroscuro sono quasi del tutto perdute...ma senza rifacitura è impossibile di rendere questi quadro adoperabile...Sono scarsi di colore, e sembrano alquanto dilavati; ma siccome il loro colore non è tanto consunto, nè sobbollito come quello del quadro centrale, così mi lusingo assaissimo della loro riuscita.”

blackened and exhibited small and tentative retouches obscuring the composition.³⁹¹

Sala del Maggior Consiglio February 15, 1784-1789

The Sala del Maggior Consiglio (Fig. 13) was the room where the primary legislative body of the Venetian State deliberated.³⁹² The Maggior Consiglio or Grand Council was comprised of all Venetian nobles over twenty years of age whose mandate to govern lasted one year. The Doge and Signoria presided over the assembly. The members could be re-elected and most were, but after the famous Serrata or closure of the Maggior Consiglio in 1297, the number of members was finally restricted, and these members held permanent seats. The meetings were secret until the sixteenth century, and by the seventeenth century even after much real power had passed to the Senate and the Council of the Ten, the Maggior Consiglio still retained certain prerogatives such as the power to grant pardons.³⁹³

The chamber itself was constructed in mid-fourteenth century and its earliest paintings date from 1365, such as the commission offered to Guariento to fresco the wall behind the throne with the *Coronation of Mary* (1365) now located in the Sala del Guariento. This painting was badly damaged in the second (1577) of two fires which destroyed virtually all the state accommodations in the upper stories of the Palace. The first fire broke out in 1574 and burned much of the top floor, including the newly completed chambers of the Senate and Collegio; the second began on December 20, 1577 in the Molo wing and gutted the hall of the Maggior Consiglio on the Piazzetta side.³⁹⁴

³⁹¹ Ibid.

³⁹² See Appendix #6 of this dissertation for a copy of this report.

³⁹³ Bianchi, pp.86-92.

³⁹⁴ Goy, p. 123.

Before this disastrous event, the whole chamber had been decorated in fresco, a technique considered suitable for the *gravitas* of the actions of government. The series illustrated the history of relations between Emperor and Pope and the mediator role of Venice, based on a set of inscriptions by Petrarch written during his stay in Venice during 1362. These same inscriptions were displayed on scrolls in the Grand Council hall, and a document from 1425 comments on the imagery of the paintings. However, the traditions of fresco wall painting that came from Tuscan practices could not endure in damp Venice. When the frescoes deteriorated they were replaced by paintings on canvas by the most celebrated painters in Venice. This early prestigious list included Gentile da Fabriano, Antonio Veneziano, Michelino Besozzo, Alvise Viviarini, Jacobello da Fiore, and Michele Giambono.³⁹⁵

The fires caused immense disruption of the functions of government, since the *Maggior Consiglio* formed the foundation of the whole hierarchy of rule. The only spaces large enough to hold the huge body of assembled patricians were industrial spaces in the *Arsenale*, like the oar-making halls and the ropeworks. These were used, but it was felt to be a less than grand environment for the prestigious company.³⁹⁶

After the conflagration the *Signoria* commissioned reports and proposals from many notable architects, including Palladio. Should the unique Gothic shell be saved and restored or demolished? The interior was also devastated, including all wooden structures like benches and architecture in the rooms which were destroyed. Almost all the canvases and frescoes were also obliterated. Palladio recommended tearing down the structure and

³⁹⁵ Ibid.

erecting a new building in a noble Roman style, but the Republic rejected this drastic course and selected six from the twelve architects to restore the historic structure inside and out.³⁹⁷ The damage was so extensive that they decided to rebuild the entire chamber, including creating a flat coffered ceiling in a heavy Baroque style to replace a vaulted timber roof. They then agreed upon a design of partial reconstruction by Antonio Rusconi. This plan retained any original features surviving the fire and today these form the design in the great room.

The plan for the ceiling paintings was designed shortly before July in 1578 by Cristoforo Sorte, an architect, engineer, and cartographer from Verona, and during the summer of 1579 woodcarvers had begun on the giant frames. Sorte's idea called for fifteen large figured scenes and twenty smaller pictures. These commissions were distributed among ten painters, and their contributions were printed in a guide published in 1587 by planners of the iconographic program, biographers, and topographers. Ridolfi described in detail these projects and this helps fix the date for the commencement of the various works. The four officials contracted were Veronese, Tintoretto, Jacopo Soranzo, and Francesco Bernardo, all elected members of the "Provveditore sopra la restauration del Palazzo" with appointments to this office that varied in length. In Borghini's *Riposo* (1584) some of the works by Tintoretto and Palma are clearly described and must then have been completed.³⁹⁸

³⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 127.

³⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁹⁸ Schulz, pp. 108-109; Ridolfi, *Maraviglie II* (dates); R. Borghini, *Il Riposto* (Florence 1584); G. Bardi, *Dichiarazione di tutte le storie che si contengono ne i quadri...nelle Sale dello Scrutinio & del Gran Consiglio* (Venice 1587); also see Schulz on Ducal decorations, "Cristoforo Sorte and the Ducal Palace of Venice," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, X 1961/1963, pp193-208.

The paintings in the ceiling are part of a larger cycle of histories and allegories covering both the walls and ceiling of this room and the adjoining Sala dello Scrutinio. The design was conceived as a sequence of large panels in which paintings on canvas were enclosed in ornate gilded frames, in *quadri riportati* style. This grand scheme was conceived by the Camaldolese monk, Gerolamo Bardi, two members of the Great Council, and the Provveditore for the restoration of the building. Bardi explained the design in a booklet he published in 1587.³⁹⁹ The images represented the history of relations between Emperor and Pope and add episodes from the Fourth Crusade and others that were symbolic or celebratory of Venice, including valiant deeds enacted by private citizens. The program observed events in chronological order starting in the Scrutinio, continuing in the Maggior Consiglio, around the walls and ceiling in clockwise order beginning at the entrance from the Scrutinio, marching toward the Tribunal on the inner side of the room and away at its outer side, and ending at the far end opposite the Tribunal. The triumphs at Milan, Ferrara, and the League of Cambrai are Renaissance continuations of Medieval battles such as the victory over the Pisans at Rhodes in the eleventh century displayed on the ceiling of the Scrutinio. The virtues to which the Republic owed their triumphs were also depicted in personifications on the ceiling of the Scrutinio, while the glory derived from these actions was shown allegorically in three huge paintings on the ceiling of the Maggior Consiglio.⁴⁰⁰

These three immense paintings that depict the Glory of Venice act as the centerpiece of the ceiling and are surrounded by twelve smaller pictures (six per side)

³⁹⁹ Schulz, *Ceilings...*, p.109.

which represent acts of heroism by the Republic's condottieri. These three primary canvases (c.1588-90) were *Venice Enthroned Above Her Conquered Provinces Being Crowned by Victory* by Palma il Giovane, *The Doge Receiving Palm and Laurel from Venice as Diverse States Render Their Spontaneous Submission to the Signoria*, painted by Tintoretto and assistants, and *The Triumph of Venice* (c.1583) (Fig. 14) by Veronese and his workshop.⁴⁰¹ In the spaces between the works are monochrome depictions of historical or allegorical scenes. This ambitious program was completed under the Doge Nicolo da Ponte (1578-1585), and the most famous painters in Venice were encouraged to make an artistic contribution to the historic decoration of this important public building. In 1579 Jacopo Tintoretto and Paolo Veronese began work, followed by Palma il Giovane and Francesco Bassano among others.⁴⁰²

Two of Edwards' reports (Appendix #7) that discussed the paintings located in the Maggior Consiglio are dated twelve years apart and provide much interesting information about the works of art and their changing condition over time. The first letter to the Senate, dated October 1, 1777, was written one year before Edwards was appointed as Director of all the Public Pictures, and he signed the letter as an academic professor appointed to the Accademia. In the petition, he explained his system of deciding the Classes of Need that generated condition reports for the endangered art. Among those in "horrible condition" were three by Paolo Veronese, including *L'Adria Trionfate sopra le*

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., and p.110.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., pp.110-111, Schulz mentions the official condition reports from 1762 by the Collegio dei Pittori stating that the *Apotheosis of Venice* was losing color by flaking and needed restoration. However, he mistakenly (in my opinion) does not consider what he calls in 1968, the dull and coarse techniques and style in parts of the painting, as the work of restorers. Rather he blames the many assistants active in Veronese' workshop.

nubi con molti emblemi, a large oval canvas which Edwards called “a sublime work.”

There were also four by Francesco Bassano, all containing the artist’s true signature and all “superbissime” canvases. Then there were four attributed to Jacopo Tintoretto, one to Domenico Tintoretto, three to Palma di Giovane, and one by Leonardo Corona showing a half moon before a throne and “so damaged that the subject was unreadable” and only “known to the author.” All works were considered of great value except the last by the little known Corona, which, Edwards presumed, “while difficult to say, is probably inferior to those around it.”⁴⁰³

Edwards mentioned that of the twenty-seven canvases that occupied the walls of the Sala, nine deserved immediate repair, including two by the followers of Paolo Veronese, Jacopo Tintoretto’s *Venetian Ambassadors with Frederico Barbarossa and the Siege of Zara*, his son Domenico’s *Second Conquest of Constantinople*, two by Andrea Vicentino, a work by Giulio Moro, and Paolo Veronese’s *Triumph of Andrea Contarini Against the Genoans*. The Veronese had been restored before, yet was still one of the most damaged of this lot.⁴⁰⁴

The third and lowest Class of Need contained thirty-eight portraits of the Doges

⁴⁰² Bianchi, pp. 90-91.

⁴⁰³ Olivato, 1974, Appendix Document 51, pp.150-52, “Ristringendomi pertanto alla individuazione dei bisogni riguardanti i soli Quadri di detta Sala, e sempre con relazione e quanto avanzai con la prefatta memoria, 2 dicembre nella quale riverentemente introdussi qualche riflesso, che ometto in questa comincio dai trenta tre Quadri destinati all ornatura di quel soffitto, di tutti quali non so vederne pur uno in buona preservazione, a segno che par a me che in breve tempo non vi sarà più altra cosa da perdersi. Ciò nondimeno i più malconci son quelli che rappresantano i seguenti argomenti...Leonardo Corona: La mezza Luna in faccia al Trono è così annerita che non ne so indovinare il soggetto, e solo ne cognosco per tradizione l’Autore...Queste sedicic Tele mi sembrano in pessime condizione, e sono senza esitanza tutte opere di somma pregio, eccettuatane l’ultima menzionata di cui non posso dire ne bene, ne male, ma presumo che sia inferiore alle sue vicine.”

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., “Di questi nove Pezzi i due ultimi sono i più pregiudicati, e quello di Paolo fu’ in addietro poco ben ristaurata altra volta.”

of Venice, works that occupied niches around the room. (Fig. 15) Most of these were painted by the School of Tintoretto, and although many had artistic value in Edwards' opinion, they were difficult to see. Although they were not considered in the first class of need (due to authorship and condition), Edwards considered them still a disgrace and their past shoddy repairs seemed to him a waste of public dollars.⁴⁰⁵

Edwards proposed the method of execution and the expense this would incur. He warned of the sloth and gossip that dogged any new ideas to reform the care of the public pictures. In this paper too, he recognized the need for a place to work undisturbed on the paintings and so nominated the Refectory of SS Giovanni e Paolo to serve as a laboratory. It is in this document that he first proposed the system of payment which would be applied to all work as discussed previously in this paper. The "fixed price" for canvases based on size was to be £ 18 per square foot, a sum which did not include other expenses. However, the price of £ 24 per square foot would include scaffolding, transport, wagons, laborers, lining, upper-level assistants, new stretchers, and other ingredients like oil and varnish. This price would apply only if all the works in the Maggior Consiglio could be restored at one time in an efficient system.⁴⁰⁶ The program could not begin, however, without Edwards' disdain of the absolute incompetence of previous restorations. He reiterated his own "zeal in public service for the good of art"

⁴⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 153, "Circa i 38 Nicchi occupati coi Ritratti dei Dogi si può dire che comunque ve ne sian molti di assai meritvoli, e quasi tutti di sian di mano e di scuola dei Tintoretti, cio' non ostante se si vogliono escludere dalla presente provvidenze alcune pitture di questa Sala, è mia opinione che meglio sia rivogliere il pubblico dispendio all' altre più esposte File, in vece di questi Ritratti lontani dall' osservazione, e rovinati nel più riprovabil modo da qualchedun di quelli, a quali la buona Fede pubblica ebbe spesso la disgrazia di affidare il prezioso Capital delle pubbliche Pitture...."

that made him so outraged at the “miserable ruin” that some unspecified person in the past caused the precious public pictures. The ignorance and greed that directed their hands could be clearly read in what he called the “fatal examples” seen in the Sala del Maggior Consiglio. The painting by Leandro Bassano was completely repainted from top to bottom with “inexpressible impudence” and the great canvas of the *Paradiso* by Tintoretto was “barbarously disfigured” at a cost of £ 16 milla.⁴⁰⁷ Edwards deplored the state of other paintings in the room, including the eleven paintings adorning the ceiling, almost all by Paolo Veronese; sixteen chiaroscuro similar to those in the Collegio were also in the same deplorable condition. Edwards assured the authorities that his appointment would correct this intolerable situation and preserve the public artistic heritage.

After this report perhaps something was done, but it is unclear what repair of the paintings actually occurred. Twelve years later the continuing conservation problems that beset the Sala del Maggior Consiglier appear again in Edwards’ report of February 15, 1789. Edwards wrote that he and his Professors had again been at work, repairing the art in this grand chamber for more than three years. In describing the history of the room’s condition, Edwards claimed that over a period of at least sixty years there had been twelve previous petitions submitted by the Collegio dei Pittore to address the preservation problems in this room. Finally, under his competent direction the art was to be repaired and preserved.

Edwards’ report of 1789 is divided into sections, each of which addresses a

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid., “Capitale delle pubbliche pitture: quindi resta compito il mio esame concludendo che, ridotte le mie osservazioni al più essenziale bisogno, almeno 25 Quadri di tutti 99, ch’ esistono in quella Magnifica Fabrica, sono in grave necessità di piena riparazione....”

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid., p.155.

different aspect of the restoration in the Maggior Consiglio. Edwards first makes it clear that the restorers have inherited some negative conditions, like fragility and mobility of pigment. This was due to deterioration of the medium in the paint mixture. Also in the past, many of the works had been consolidated through the back of the canvas with viscose (a thick golden brown solution of cellulose xanthate) or glue, *beverone*, or some other substance not identifiable to Edwards. This unknown material had permeated into the front and dried into hard tear-shaped blobs. Combined with the blackness and filth of the paint surface, the pictures hanging in the Sala were, according to Edwards, almost impervious to any repair. These huge canvases also sustained injuries when they were rolled up or constantly moved from place to place for repair, and these operations caused serious losses of original paint and detachment of canvas from the stretcher frame.⁴⁰⁸

The next category of restoration work Edwards addressed was the lining of canvases, a common procedure. Edwards explained its importance and dangers and is credited with inventing a method of lining using sand as a uniform weight distributed over the whole canvas. This method ensures a smooth paint surface and strong adhesion.⁴⁰⁹ Although this was a repair that remained hidden, it was essential to the overall health and longevity of the work of art. However, it was an expensive proposition because of the

⁴⁰⁸ Pietro Edwards, S.P.V. MS 787.7-876.7/12 February 15, 1789, "Questa verità si è fatta riconoscere con moltiplici prove a gran numero di persone invitata nel laboratorio, onde ben esaminar da vicino la condizione delle Belle Pitture stessi dopo il restauro; ma la dimostrazione luminosa della ridonata solidità conveniente si deduce dall' esito della ricollocazione di quelle tele al primo nicchio; poichè se tutto il dipinto di esse non fosse stato in una perfetta ed equal consistenza, non avrebbe giammai potuto resistere a tanta irruotolazioni, svoglimenti, e trasporti diversi, nè alla violenza degli sforzatissimi distendimenti sù quegli' immensi telaio, e molto meno agl' certi svariati che dovettero soffrire in questa nuova riposizione stando sempre in positiva di soffitto, ed in continuo tremito per le percosse occasionate dal lavoro superiore."

⁴⁰⁹ Alessandro Conti, *Dictionary of Art*, Volume 9, London & New York: MacMillan & Grove, 1996, p.740.

number of paintings in need and their size, which required large expenses of fine new canvas and stretcher wood. Edwards explained that the task also demanded great manual skill and strength on the part of the restorer. It was considered a complex procedure not undertaken lightly.

The process as described in this report went something like this: First, the back of the old canvas had to be cleaned thread by thread of all dirt and old glue so that the new canvas would adhere to the old. This cleaning, a time-consuming operation, required much care. The two surfaces of canvas would then be stuck together and weighted down with a force of 20 mille libre. Problems in lining could be diagnosed when raking ight was shown across the paint surface, while wood batons could be inserted to tighten the canvas and make it taut. The need for this could be assessed if the canvas appeared convex or billowed out when restorers hung the canvas from the ceiling.⁴¹⁰

Edwards realized in his earlier reports that a proper cleaning of a painting was the key to the whole restoration. While calling cleaning the most noble of jobs, he also identified it as potentially the most destructive action to the future aesthetic perception of

⁴¹⁰ Edwards, S.P.V. MS 787.7-876.7/12 February 15, 1789, "Un'altra laboriosa operazione relativa alla sussistenza de' quadri fu quella della generale foderatura di tele nuove sottoposta a ciaschedun pezzo; articolo pur questo che si nasconde all'occhio dell'osservatore, ma che in aggiunta del gravoso dispendio che portò secco per la gran quantità di telami, per la costruzione dei robusti contorni di legname necessari a questo lavoro, e per l'occupazione manuale di molti operasi, fu anche il soggetto di straordinari studi, e di non poche perplessità a cagion che la imprimitura oagliosa di cui si trovò imbrattato il rovescio di quelle pitture benchè fosse storto diligentemente rimora, avea lasciata la tela originale in una disposizione contraria a quella che si richiede per unirsi coi glutтини che devono tenervi attaccate queste fodere a filo per filo. Di più, la viziazione delle vecchie grespe si trovò così rigida, e resistente che bene spesso superò la forza d'una sopressa di venti mille libre di peso; e quindi tanto per un motivo che per l'altro si dovettero più volte rinnovar queste foderature finchè fu vinta ogni difficoltà, come lo manifesta la veramente meravigliosa uguaglianza di superficie, alla quale con la ajuto del Signore sono ridotti quegli' esemplari. Ogni piccoli difetto nelle foderature si rende maissempre visibile dal dritto dell'opera con le gibbosità che risaltano da quella parte; e la situazione di que' soffitti è tale che ricevendo lume più forte da un Lato che

the work. In this concern he prefigured centuries of later conservation controversies. This task was also particularly onerous in the *Maggior Consiglio* because of the terrible condition and immense size of the works found there. Much of the damage to the paintings made it dangerous to employ even the usual materials and techniques. The oily cracks that appeared on the reverse of many canvases had seeped through onto the front and collected into small dry globules over the surface. These were described as “tears of hard gum from gross retouches” caused by previous restoration. This condition was very risky to cure because it required solvents to dissolve these substances without harming the paint. Above all, cleaning required patient skill in order to attempt to return every painting to its “original state,” in those parts not so intrinsically altered that to Edwards’ dismay they “resembled carbon.”⁴¹¹

Edwards mused on the dilemma inherent in the decision to clean a painting: the

dall'altro, gli spettatori che sono in faccia al più forte vedrebbero le più minute irregolarità che fossero rimaste sul piano della pittura.”

⁴¹¹ *Ibid.*, “La prima nobile operazione suol esser quella della politura, la quale sù questa tele fù delle più pericolose che dar si possano. L'uso dei soliti mezzi si trovò insufficiente a conseguire l'intento con sola mediocrità; ed a convincersi del grave imbarazzo di queste lavoro barta reiflettere/senza punto badare a mill' altre difficoltà /che la lunga giacitura degl' ogni crassi sovrapposti al roverscio delle pittura avea cagionato il trassudamento d' una materia viscosa raccolta in piccioli, ed invulnerabili lobuletti rilevati sopra il dipinto, ed essiccati poi come lagrime di durissime gomme nere instucchiate nell' altro succidurne di ogni cotti, e ritocchi grossimi di colore adoperato negli anteriori accomodamenti; perlo che s' incontrarono dei larghi tratti di pittura come incrostati dentro a quest' immondezze, le quali poi per essere d' una mistura analoga à quella del colore originale, e quasi immedisimate con esso, non si poteva tentar di scoagularle con attivi dissolventi senza metter a pericolo gli avanzi della opera che vi poteva esser di sotto. Convene perciò trovar la maniera di agir lentamente, e per gradi cambiando i ripieghi a seconda delle circostanza diverse, ed operando mai sempre col presidio d' un' incredibil pacienza, tanto che finalmente si ridusse la superficie d' ogni quadro allo stato della sua originalità. Ma qual prò di tanta fatica eccettuate le parti luminose della composizione, quasi tutte le altre si ritrovano il più delle volte, intrinsecamente cangiate, ed in istato simil a quel del carbone.” Perhaps Edwards refers here to the possibility of reviving some of the original color in the work and not really returning the work to its original state since he frequently rejects this in his theory of conservation. Another possibility is that he tailored his proposal for an audience he knew well, the *Provveditori* and who may have accepted nothing less than his stated commitment (however impossible in reality) to regain the “original” beauty of these important paintings; Muraro, p. 475, “Un artificio che in Venezia ha avuto in questo secolo non poco

restorer always must remain aware that there was only a degree to which one should or could lighten areas sunk into dark shadow without losing harmony between darks and lights. He cited in particular the schools of Lombardy and Venice with their tradition of glazing that could be mistaken for merely smears of paint by an unknowing restorer.⁴¹² He also identified some of the causes of a deterioration in the surface, including changes in color and its stability when powdered pigments were mixed with the wrong media (which he called “vegetable” as opposed to, presumably, a drying oil like linseed).⁴¹³ Edwards pointed to the work executed by Francesco Bassano and those by the elder Tintoretto and his workshop as examples of paintings whose relationships between tonal values and color had been destroyed by cleaning. These previous flawed interventions would excite the spite of “mediocre experts” even if the originality of the author were preserved scrupulously.

However, in the case of works by Tintoretto, Edwards claimed that they held “intrinsic” defects such as a lack of clarity of line that could be traced to the artist. Tintoretto’s style of complex compositions filled with figures striking dramatic poses and defined by many contours and outlines with masses sharply defined by light had lost perhaps “a felicitous tempering between all the parts.”⁴¹⁴ However, Edwards warned it

umento...è quello di rinfrescare e di rassettare i lor quadri. Piacque a quel Sapientissimo Governo di pensionare artefici i quali vegliassero alle conservazione de’ quadri pubblici...”

⁴¹² Conti, 1988, p. 179.

⁴¹³ Edwards. 787.7-876.7/12 February 15, 1789; See Gettens & Stout on Oils and Fats, pp.38-41.

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., Edwards, “Lo tuttavia conosco Benissimo che nei menzionati quadri del Tintoretto resta molto da desiderarsi in linea di buon’ armonia, ma un tal difetto è imputabile totalmente all’ Autore, il quale nella stravaganza d’intralciatissime composizione si appigliò al partito di renderle un poco più precise, o men confuse introducendo dei fierissimi contrapposti, ed esprimendo i contorni delle masse generali, e di molti corpi particolari con l’uso di lumi che diconsi rabbiosi, ed oscuri taglienti al maggior segno; cose tutte che a quadro fresco restavano forse temperate dalla felicità dei passaggi nell’ intreccio di tutte le parti.” This

was a mistake to overestimate these intrinsic alterations and hence ignore the harm inflicted by short-sighted restorers who had not been able to choose whether to sacrifice the “intelligence”(coherence?) of a painting in favor of its color and modeling harmony, or vice versa. Edwards claimed that he tried to walk between these “two precipices” and preferred to acknowledge the work in its “general aspect” by allowing a loss of harmony in only some of its most disfigured details. Finally, he suggested that these paintings were not the “best of the Master.”⁴¹⁵ Edwards was gratified to note that public approval of the restorations justified his aesthetic choices. Other revelations about Tintoretto’s practice would follow. Edwards boasted that the academics who asserted that the artist’s gloomy tones derived from dark priming coats now stood refuted because after eagerly cleaning away the “horrible blackness,” the restorer revealed that the pictures contained only those shadows intended by the artist just as “Boschini always sustained.”⁴¹⁶

Two important parts of the report explore the sensitive issue of loss compensation or inpainting on these highly public paintings. There were some restorers and connoisseurs in Venice who firmly opposed any restoration that would include repainting losses in an attempt to mimic the original artist’s hand.⁴¹⁷ Edwards began this section with a disclaimer that it was usually his custom to try to avoid too many “fills,” but in the case

kind of criticism has convinced some scholars that Edwards did not admire Tintoretto’s work; See *Dizionario Biografico...*, pp. 296-298 ; Conti, *Storia...* pp.186-87.

⁴¹⁵ Edwards, MS 787.7-876.7/12, February 15, 1789, “... per le quali si può dir con franchezza che questi quadri non sono i migliori di quel Maestro.”

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., “ L’orribile annerimento che le ricopriva fù tolto via con felicità, ed ora si riconosco per pitture belle e buone tutte a chiaroscuro, e degli Autori segnati dal Boschini come sempre sostenni.” ;

⁴¹⁷ Marijnissen, p. 29, A statute enacted in Venice in 1784 stipulated that restorers had to refrain from making arbitrary additions or “arbitraria aggiunta” which could mean “arbitrary corrections” and not a prohibition against replacement of missing fragments. Edwards’ own records show that he sometimes did restore major losses in heavily damaged paintings. Also see Edwards’ *Disseration Academico* (c.1819) on the disagreement among restorers on when and how much to restore.

of the works in the *Maggior Consiglio*, many of the paintings contained “infinite” lacerations, peeling of surface layers, and some had even been crudely pieced together with thread. These damaged areas required gesso patches, but Edwards reassured the authorities that he applied these with “extraordinary diligence and care.”⁴¹⁸

The gesso that formed the grounds for the paintings in the ceiling was particularly prey to extrinsic causes of deterioration, like leaking water and snow, which would drench the painting and then remain, soaking through the canvas. This caused separation between layers of ground and paint, and rotted the canvas itself. Edwards requested more protection for the art in these rooms and worried that snow and rain would harm the team’s restorations, creating a futile round of damage and repair.

Edwards described some of the past inpainting in these rooms as barbarous, effects now partially “undone” by his team of professors. However, Edwards was adamant about the misguided perception that restoration could put back something that no longer existed, as if by an “art of magic.” According to Edwards this deceit was practiced by past “quacks” of the profession and must be avoided.⁴¹⁹ However, we have already read some of his own conflicting information in reports about this highly sensitive subject in conservation practice. Edwards stated that only in cases of rigorous need and with narrow restrictions should restorers be allowed to compensate lost areas of the original. He used Tintoretto’s works again as examples of this potential need. According to Edwards, they

⁴¹⁸ Edwards 787.7-876.7/12 February 15, 1789, “E’ gia noto che questi quadri avevano infinite lacerazioni, e scrostamenti, e ripezzi tai difetti furono riparati con incastri di fila; e di tele in vario modo fermati; e dove fù indispensabile la stuccature si usarono delle straordinarie diligenze per assicurarsi delle sua tenacità sopra quei difficilissimi fondi.”

were “so defective in the contour with which they are expressed that the Author may well have known this fault and allowed someone (like Edwards?) to make reasonable corrections...the same could be extended to works by Palma and others also...”.⁴²⁰ Edwards was ultimately reassured by the visitors who came to his laboratory. He claimed they could not tell what parts of paintings had been restored, and thus “gave proof to the plausibility of all the operations.”⁴²¹ At times, Edwards’ held an almost mystical view about his own elevated role as the rightful voice for a long-dead artist, justifying this aesthetic and ethical autonomy as necessary to the survival of the works.

Another important section of this long report describes Edwards’ unsuccessful study of the etcher Lovisa’s prints in search of definitive information on the original or at least the earlier content of the paintings in the room. Conservators and scholars have in the past, as they still currently tend to, relied on prints for secure attribution of paintings and for insight into the working process of the artist. However, this method of cross-referencing can also create confusion regarding an artist’s work.⁴²² In this case, the paintings in the Maggior Consiglio were so murky and dark in places that Edwards sought help from these earlier sources.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid., “...ed il dar ad intendere che simili disordini si sieno riparati per arte magica senza rifare quello che più non esisteva, sarebbe una di quella riburtant’ imposture che purtroppo ebbero spaccio frà li passata ciurmatori di queste professione.”

⁴²⁰ Ibid., “...ma nel raccontarli si rispettarono anche questi difetti, sebben possa credersi che l’ autore medesimo mi avrebbe saputo buon grado se avreser permesso qualche d’una di queste ragionevoli corezioni. Le medesime osservazioni potrebbero estendersi ad alcune opere del Palma....”

⁴²¹ Ibid., “Questi duri cimenti tranquillarono le mie trepidazioni, e servirono ancora di norma ai miei giudizio, come servir deggion di prova intorno alla plausibilità di tutta l’ operazione.”

⁴²² Marcia B. Hall & John Shearman, *The Princeton Raphael Symposium: Science in the Service of Art History*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990, pp.79-83, plates 273-74. A Wenzel Hollar etching after a painting in Lord Arundel’s collection (now lost) showed Raphael’s *La Velata* as St. Catherine, and suspicion grew that the Raphael painting in the Pitti Palace, *Portrait of a Lady* (1505) may have originally

However, the prints proved to be unreliable because the etcher had in Edwards' words, "consigned to caprice that which seemed doubtful...and copied the confusion to which the pictures had already been reduced." Edwards explained some of the problems manifested in the use of faulty documentation. The print, based on the painting the *Taking of Smyrna* by Paolo Veronese and assistants, further amplified the confusion of figures and landscape in the background of the painting. The *Liberation of the Scutari* (1574) by the same artist also shared this compositional lack of clarity in both print and painting. Two chiaroscuro by Pietro Longhi, the *Martyrdom of Marco Antonio Bargadino, Defender of Cyprus* (1570) and *Leonardo Loredan Rejects the Proffered Aid of Bajazeth during the War of Cambrai* (1509), exhibited the same kind of puzzle for the restorer attempting to be faithful to the original design by using later prints. These two works were almost "entirely destroyed" and then, as Edwards remarked, "restored in many arbitrary ways", thus indicating that the engraver must have copied the work after these later alterations.⁴²³

There was some good news during this particular cleaning when Edwards uncovered what he called a "more antique painting underneath." The color shone through the added layers and revealed the entire original composition. It still existed under layers of grime and varnish and he could still identify the original figures. Because of this discovery, Edwards attempted to use Lovisa's prints again to guide him in distinguishing the original from the etcher's later fabrication. "In every way I thought to follow certain

represented St. Catherine. After a recent radiograph, however it appears that Raphael had never shown La Velata as a saint, but had swathed the sitter completely in veils which he later painted over.

⁴²³ Edwards MS 787.7-876.7/12 February 15, 1789, "Per verità queste due opere erano quasi affatto perite, e con esse era pur anco perito il rifacimento molto arbitrario di una passata accomodatura. E' probabile che l' incisore li ricopiasse dopo quest' alterazioni; ed è assai naturale che in tal caso si attenesse a quel che allora vedevasi."

marks of the author in no way heeding the dissimilarity, in this way making comparison between the print and the picture.”⁴²⁴

Edwards related in one more entry from June 1795 the repair of damages caused by an “extraordinary rain” which fell *inside* the grand room. The downpour had occurred on October 1, 1794 and caused major structural damage. It then filtered through the roof to soak a painting (unknown) by Francesco Bassano. It could have been the *Este Forts at Polsella* (1482), *Defeat of Maximilian at Cadore* (1508) or the *Defeat of the Visconti Troops Near Macclodio* (1426). The last title cited here already had an extensive restoration history and is a likely candidate.⁴²⁵ Although Edwards thought the work irrevocably ruined by accretions of salts and calcium deposits, there was a fortunate outcome to the restoration, which served as a positive example of Edwards’ methods and skills. He warned that the expenses for the job were high at £128, which included removing and then relocating the painting to a more secure location; this was done because Edwards warned that the wall would require at least a year to dry out. Edwards computed his total fees at £128, paying his team of restorers about £ 60 for their work.⁴²⁶

AntiSecreta March 5, 1792

The case of the *Arca di Noe*’ by Jacopo Bassano can serve as an example of

⁴²⁴ Ibid., “...ma in quale stato è facile il raffigurarselo. Ad ogni modo io pensai di dover seguire le Marche certissime dell' autore niente curando la dissomiglianza, che così facendo, sarebbe comparsa frà la stampa ed il quadro. Queste due pitture sarebbero state escluse da me come tant' altre dei Ducale Palazzi, di cui già rassegnai spontaneamente una lunghissima lista....”

⁴²⁵ Schulz, *Ceilings...*, p.111. In 1762 the Collegio dei Pittori conducted a survey and this painting, as well as another by Bassano, were torn and rotting and among the nine most urgent cases designated for restoration.

⁴²⁶ Pietro Edwards, S.P.V. MS 787.7-876.7/16 June 8, 1795, “La spesa totale da mie incontrata in questa ordinazione si ristrinse a Lire 128, nelle quali sono comprese le fatture di rimuovere, e ricollocare il quadro al suo posso (? che col metodo vecchio dei soliti ? avvrebbe importante circa E??50) e sono pur

another problem facing Edwards and the stewards of Venetian art during these years.

Many great works were left unprotected in public places and subject to recurrent theft or vandalism. This presented constant problems to authorities and the restorers. The *Arca* had originally been left in a legacy from Cavaliere Simone Lando in 1584, but then was stolen in the Settecento from Santa Maria Maggiore.⁴²⁷ After its recovery, it was located in the AntiSecreta in Palazzo Ducale.

Edwards acknowledged the receipt of the work to be restored by his workshop in 1782. The notorious events that caused the great damage to the painting affected its reputation and its monetary value. Edwards admitted his concern because the entire work was already ruinously disfigured from a restoration forty years before. The vivacity of Bassano's color was gone and the painting hardly showed a trace of the original glazes and characteristic style. The terrible instability of the pigments was traced to the violence of the theft, for the old painting had been cut from its stretcher and frame, an act which seriously damaged the lining. The canvas was then rolled or folded up in order to travel more easily. The effects of this mistreatment are not hard to imagine. Four horizontal folds and two vertical twists stretched from top to bottom of the canvas, causing the loss of color in primary sites, and of course the painting could no longer fit in its original stretcher. The background also showed signs of past over-painting that possibly covered the total loss of original paint in that area. Edwards suggested a two-fold plan for a restoration stemming from his Classes of Need, based on distinguishing between the repair

anche comprese £ 60 date in via di mercede alli Professori di eseguirono alcune parti non meccaniche di queste lavoro....”

⁴²⁷ Alvise Zorzi, *Venezia Scomparsa*, Venice: 1988, p.534.

and reinvigoration of extant parts and restoration of lost ones. He felt he could promise to return a clarity and strength to the color without adding new color except in the background. The pigment could be secured; moreover, in the worst sites Edwards thought he could remove or flatten the folds.⁴²⁸

Near the Sala Corner off Sala dei Filosofi

The *Deposition* or *Dead Christ* by Giovanni Bellini painted as over-doors in the Ducal Palace in the Sala dei Scudieri is an important example of Edwards' approach to another problem. The painting was disfigured with extensive overpainting and Edwards pondered the possibility of reclaiming much of the original. In 1783 he had observed that the later additions were painted in a mannered style different from Bellini's, and also the restorator had ignored parts of the original composition. Edwards believed that the dirt and grime covering the painting interfered with the public enjoyment and veneration of the work. He also noted that areas of the original had been rubbed away and that these patches revealed a dark underpainting containing only contours of figures. However, he was hesitant to reveal an imperfect state of the work to the public, and he did not want to cause more harm by performing a serious cleaning. He mused, "how can I revive the work and resolve the immense distance that lay between these two manners [the original

⁴²⁸ Pietro Edwards MS 787.7-876.7 1782, "Quest' opera di cui non so dire se il merito intrinseco attuale eguagli la grandissima sua riputazione fu' già ristaurata intorno a quarant'anni adietro quando ancora praticavasi il rovino so metodo dei generali lavacri su tutto il dipinto. Essa pertanto si trova universalmente decaduta dal brio e dalla vivacità del colorito bassanese, e appena mostra una qualche traccia dell' ultime svelature originali e caratteristiche di quello stile. Potrebbe darsi che il tempo solo, anche senza colpa di alcun imperito artista avesse cagionato quel deplorabile sfioramento di tinte, ed altresì che queste sia state l' unica causa che rimesse tutto il colore ad una generale mobilità' pregiudizio che si manifesta ad ogni leggera pressione che facciasi nel rovescio della tela affm di rilevare le infinite crepolature dalle quali tutta la opera e' seminata da capo a fondo. Siccome poi nell' atto del termerio furto, la tela originale fu con violenza strappata dalla sua fodera la quale se ne resso fitta sul vecchio

and the other work that now covered it]?”⁴²⁹ Edwards refrained from any substantial intervention and many years later Mauro Pelliccioli removed the additions to the composition in 1948.

Various Churches

Although this study of Edwards’ career has been directed at the history of his policy and practice of restoration of the public pictures, his mandate clearly included the art found in churches and those works of art historically commissioned by confraternities from the most important artists in Venice. Gianbattista Mengardi was a member of Edwards’ team from 1779 to 1795 and was assisted by Giovanni Maria Sasso, an engraver and restorer hired by the English Resident Udney for his private collection. Their work included repairing two paintings by Giovanni Bellini in San Michele a Murano, one identified as a triptych in Dusseldorf and the other a *Resurrection* in Berlin attributed to Cima da Conegliano.

Other interventions by Mengardi included two panels by Carpaccio, a panel by Bonifacio Veronese in Sant Antonio di Castello a San Barnaba, the *Nozze del Cana* by Padovanino in the Convent of San Giovanni di Verdura in Padua, several canvases in the Scuola di San Giovanni Evangelista, a Tintoretto in Santa Margherita, and a painting entitled the *Cena* by Veronese in San Sebastiano.⁴³⁰ In his last report, Mengardi expressed concern at the state of paintings in San Giobbe, notably a Basaiti, the San Giobbe

telaio...eseguita probabilmente in gran fretta, e da mano impertissima nell’ arte di trattare un quadro antico, e arridissimo.”

⁴²⁹ Conti, 1988, p. 160.

⁴³⁰ Ibid., 157-60, The panels by Carpaccio and Bonifacio in San Barnaba were transferred with the help of Giuseppe Bertani who in 1783 observed that his fee of 50 zecchini was fair because figures in the

Altarpiece by Bellini, and a Carpaccio. He had volunteered to restore these in 1784 when the pigment in the Basaiti had flaked off and fallen on the table of the altar. The altar would have to be demolished to repair the picture, however, and the Foscarini patrons did not want to take on that expense. Edwards was active in some of these repairs in churches, as was Francisco Maggiotto, who also was an Inspector from 1796-97. Maggiotto complained about the condition of a “Bellini *Madonna*” in Santa Maria Maggiore (today in the Brera and attributed to Mantegna).⁴³¹ Some other examples from various collections discussed here can begin to reveal the scope and detail of Edwards’ concern for all the artistic heritage of the Republic.

Santa Maria Assunta (Church of the Gesuiti)—February 15, 1781

The Church of the Gesuiti, called Santa Maria Assunta, across the water from the Isola di San Michele, had been rebuilt in 1714-29 by Domenico Rossi and was famous for its Baroque facade designed by Giovanni Battista Fattoretto. Its fantastic gray and white marble intarsia interior is unusual too, filled with illusionistic, billowing stone drapery over the altar and frescoes by Fontebasso and in the Lezze monument by Jacopo Sansovino. Other paintings that decorate the interior by Palma Giovane and the Tintoretti pale next to the most renowned work in the basilica, the *Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence* (1567) (Fig. 16) (Appendix #5) by Tiziano Vecelli, the premier Renaissance painter of Venice. The painting is famous for its dark coloration, utilized by the artist to depict the Saint’s tortuous end enacted at night, lit only by the fiery flames of torches and grill. The subdued

Veronese lacked heads and hands while another whole figure was lost. The blue in the center of Carpaccio’s *Martyrdom of the 11, 000 Virgins* had altered, but the work generally was in good condition.

tonal values imbue the painting with a certain ominous mystery, characterizing Titian's view late in life of the struggle between human suffering and spiritual transcendence.

However, if light was the true protagonist of the work (as esteemed scholar David Rosand has written), then the painting in its blackened state seriously interfered with the artist's original intent.⁴³² The moral tensions symbolized by light and dark were sacrificed to the vagaries of saline air and the smoke- and soot-filled atmosphere of the church.

This inky vision has presented many problems in the preservation of the painting over the years, even up to the present day⁴³³ The importance of the work and of its author was heightened in Edwards' 1781-82 report by the presence of the Tsar of Russia and his wife in Edwards' studio during this restoration. The Hereditary Grand Duke of Russia (Tsar Paul I [1756-1801]) and the Duchess were in Venice, where they maintained their anonymity by the use of the pseudonyms "Conti del Nort." They desired to explore the city and meet its interesting denizens like Edwards, whom they found in his restoration laboratory. There they showed a keen interest in art and collecting.⁴³⁴

Edwards account was produced some eight days after the regal visit and described

⁴³¹ Ibid., When the Basaiti was finally removed during the Suppressions it came apart. In 1792 when the nuns of Sant Antonio in Torcello would not pay for the repair of Veronese' work there, Giuseppe Bertani and Baldassini mended it at their own expense.

⁴³² Rosand, *Painting...*, p. 71.

⁴³³ Nepi-Scire, "Recent Conservation....," p. 132 ff 76, Ottorino Nonfarmale Restored the *Martyrdom...* in 1988-89 which consisted of lining, cleaning and varnishing.

⁴³⁴ G. Lorenzetti, *Fanfulla della Domenica*.XXV #7, 1913. Tsar's visit on February 15,1781/82, and Haskell, *History and its Images...*, p.502 n17. Son and successor to Catherine II, Paul attempted various reforms in Russia including some protection for the serfs, but ended as a tragic example of the erratic and absolutist nature of Russian sovereigns and was assassinated in 1801. In his own country he tried to limit the power of the nobility, and forbade outside travel or importation of Western books and music. Things that he however, did not deprive himself. He is said to have admired the crowd control he saw in Venice, where magnificent parties and events were held in his honor. At one, a huge dove, activated by the mere touch of the Tsarina's hand, flew around the Piazza San Marco sparking one hundred torches and landing

the distressing condition of Titian's *Martyrdom*--one of the most famous examples left by this artist. The "famous degeneration," as he called it, included an increasing obscurity of the image, and Edwards marveled that the whole work, conceived in darkness, was not blacker still given its placement over the altar lit by candles. According to Edwards, Ridolfi attributed the cause of this "disgrace" to the noxious "fumes" from decomposing corpses wafting up from the old tombs in the crypt beneath the floor of the church.⁴³⁵ Precautions were taken by removing other paintings from the niches most exposed to this phenomenon. Edwards found it easy to imagine that such factors operating over time would cause ruin in the canvas, but there was an added complication due to a harsh restoration fifty years before by a "certain painter" who rubbed and scoured the unfortunate work in "all parts."⁴³⁶ Edwards vowed that he and his Professors, fueled by the zeal of their public service, the love and glory for the national Genius and the Venetian school of painting, and spurred on by hope, would return some portion of beauty to this painting. Not forgetting his political or social savvy, Edwards' report also complimented the wisdom of the Conti del Nort and their admiration for the Venetian Senate (who had conferred the important function on Edwards that he and his laboratory now served in the repair of the Titian). Edwards described the curiosity and deep understanding the two

on a replica of the Arch of Titus over 80 feet tall (see Norwich, p.603). The Tsar Paul I was murdered by a conspiracy of his military officers and perhaps his son who took the throne;

⁴³⁵ Umberto Baldini, *Restoration of Cimabue Cross, Firenze: Nardini Editore, 1977, p. :* in Santa Croce after the Flood of 1966 when sulphur salts from crypt below leached up through walls of the chapel damaging frescoes on the walls. Certainly in Venice, a city built on water with its constant flooding suffers this disturbing consequence to all its art attached to or part of its stone walls.

⁴³⁶ Edwards MS 787.7-876.7/7 Feb 15, 1781, "Ma poichè io devo riferir tutto con esattezza mi convien aggiugnere che il malore più deplorabile sofferto da questo dipinto dal lavoro istituitovi sopra, son già' 50 anni, da un certo Pittore, che a forza di fregare, e rifregare credeva di restituirlo in buon essere; e finalmente dopo averlo ben bene scorticota da tutte le parti, si accinse a ripararla di sua propria mano."

royal visitors displayed in examining the whole laboratory and in this way they passed almost two pleasant hours.⁴³⁷

The report is a perfect example of Edwards' polished abilities as a pragmatic if bureaucratic flatterer and diplomat, for his purpose is made explicit at the close of his letter. He desired to keep the authorities informed, as they wished, about all visits by esteemed "foreigners." This form of reporting is in keeping with the repressive laws at work in the Republic that governed foreign and native aristocratic interactions. Edwards' obsequious pose masked a shrewd understanding of international relations and the reputation of Venetian artistry in the marketplace. The Tsarina wanted to try her own hand at removing some of the shades of grime and was unconvinced that most of a nude arm in a work by Bonifacio was in fact a creation by Edwards because the original was gone. Edwards proved his skill to the royal couple by removing the new paint and adding the arm again "under their very eyes." Edwards also related that the Tsar called the workshop a "New Academy" and dubbed it an institution unique to Venetians.⁴³⁸

Church of the Redentore (1577)

The large canvas called *The Presentation of the Doge Mocenigo* by Tintoretto in

⁴³⁷ Ibid.

⁴³⁸ Ibid., "Il nome però del suo Autore bastò per attirare anche su di essa gli sguardi conditi delle loro Altezze Imperiali li SS Conti del Nort, e son non più questo pregiudicatissimo quadro servi a rendere più sensibile ai loro riflesso la necessità della providenze istituita dell' Ecc. Senato per la riparazione delle pubbliche pitture. Quest importante oggetto trattenne moltissimo le sagge esecuzioni delle Altezze loro, e ben avendo raccolto tutto il sistema le cautele di tal, fondazione si spiegarono su di essa coi sensi più grandi di lode. La serietà poi con la quale si prestarono ed esaminare il merito intrinseco delle molte pitture, ch io avevo procurato di disporre in guisa la più vantaggiosa, ma conveniente ad una sala di lavoro; ed l' attenzione con cui cercano d'istruirsi intorno alle difficoltà, ai precetti, ed alla pratica dell' arte, fece conoscere a tutti gli astanti che di singolare trattenimento riusciva per quegl' Illustri Viaggiatori la dimora ch' eglino facevano in questa specie di nuova scuola da essi chiamata col nome di nuova Accademia, confessando che di fatti una tale istituzione era tutta peculiare dei Veneziani, giusta il sentimento rimarcato nella epigrafe essistente sopra la porta interna di quella stanza."

the Church of the Redentore had been restored in 1779, and Edwards reported that “three times at least the painting had been repainted and each time some original color had been obscured, now buried under a triple layer of retouch.” The layers of color, combined with dirt and smoke, had caused a general darkening of the work, so that the distribution of the figures and the color values of the draperies were not clear. This condition also prevented the “intention of the Master” from being known. Edwards acknowledged that although the restorer must face “that dangerous dark, with doubt and the possibility of error,” the risk was worth it to try to recover the painting by removing the hardened and rough retouches that infused the craquelature. This tale did not have such a happy ending, however, for when the ancient picture was finally uncovered, it became clear why past restorers had resorted to such extreme overpainting. The canvas was in a “miserable condition and the restorers had magically created parts” that no longer existed. Edwards believed this extreme measure was employed because so little of the original remained.⁴³⁹

Traces of Pietro Edwards’ Restorations

One of the most frustrating aspects of studying conservation history is the lack of visual and written documentation for much of the work completed by past restorers. Pietro Edwards was rare as a craftsman and cataloguer because he documented the general condition of the painting when it came into his hands and often revealed how he planned to proceed in the intervention. However, without photographic documentation we can only imagine what the “before “ state of these works may have been. There is really no accurate visual evidence about the appearance of most paintings he restored, and

⁴³⁹ Conti, 1988, p. 175.

the expected results can only be reconstructed from his descriptions. This deficiency is compounded by the fact that most of the “Public Pictures of Venice” have been restored several, if not many times, since Edwards was active. Edwards explained his theory over and over in the many reports submitted to the Senate, but among the hundreds of paintings that he and his team restored, there are few in the collection of the Accademia Gallery that are believed to have remained relatively untouched since Edwards’ day. The five works now discussed here have only recently been photographed and examined closely for research into Edwards’ methods.⁴⁴⁰

The first four, *San Marco Enthroned with Saint Andrea and Saint Francesco* by Andrea Busati; *Portrait of Three Magistrates* by Giambattista Del Moro; *Venice Crowned by Virtue*; and the *Allegory of Monte Nuovissimo* by Vitruvio Buonconsiglio are in storage. The fifth work, Jacopo Tintoretto’s *Madonna dei Tesorieri* (1576), is on exhibition in the Gallery.⁴⁴¹ Recent examination revealed some general characteristics of the works including the state of conservation of each picture; however, this information can be deceptive and can obscure the quality of Edwards’ expertise and skill. For example, some of the works came to Edwards already in a damaged condition, and more than two hundred years have passed since he repaired them. However, in 1994 many aspects of the structure and general appearance of the paintings were relatively secure. This included the solidity of the support, the health of the lining and the stretchers, and the integrity of the painting surface. The more recent pigment (and original color), although

⁴⁴⁰ Tranquilli, p. 177.

⁴⁴¹ Also see Giovanni Nepi-Scire, “La Madonna dei Tesorieri di Jacopo Tintoretto,” *Quaderni #17: Restauri a Venezia*, Venice: 1993, pp.10-11.

obscured with yellowed varnish, was attached firmly to the ground and reveal Edwards' expertise in fills and retouches.⁴⁴² Some of this discoloration appeared to be artificial patination obtained with glazing and not with *beverone* made with a base of oil.

More damage was evident and repaired using *stucco* also known as gesso "fills," and pictorial integration was generally limited to the areas of loss only, not often spilling outside onto original painted surface. The abraded parts were retouched lightly (non a corpo) and covered with transparent glazing. The plaster "fills" were either white or colored and were textured to match the weave of the canvas. The canvas on the back of each painting held traces of sand in the weave, which presented evidence of Edwards' lining method explained in an earlier section of this dissertation. Also the canvases often contained seams where pieces had been sewn together while fixed tightly to the stretcher bars in preparation for lining, another example of Edwards' stated methods.⁴⁴³ Each of the five paintings will be analyzed in more detail in the following paragraphs.

Andrea Busati (1503-1529)
Saint Mark Enthroned with Saints Andrea and Francis
Dimensions: 171 x 266 cm.

Edwards restored this painting (Fig. 17) in 1783 and there was a later intervention and maintenance of the work in 1826. It is the subject of a report by Edwards from 1783 and currently it is found in the picture gallery in the Accademia.⁴⁴⁴ The original canvas, loosened from its lining, consists of three pieces united at two vertical seams. (Fig. 18) Traces of sand are still clearly visible over all the verso surface. The stretcher is from the

⁴⁴² Tranquilli, p. 177.

⁴⁴³ Ibid., p. 178.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 182.

Settecento and remains solid; vertical boards on the right have been replaced, while on the left, the original is reinforced by another board attached next to it. These are nailed to the stretcher and held by two iron bars that probably date from the Ottocento.⁴⁴⁵ The surface is strongly yellowed from oxidation of old varnish, which has changed the original chromatic values. Parts of the landscape have been completely restored, and a technique called “puntinatura” (Fig. 19) is employed to distinguish the original fifteenth century brushwork from Edwards’ restoration. Also evident is the way the orange trees are retouched in areas of loss with a transparent glazing technique not in body color. (Fig. 20) Parts of the trees were almost totally lost according to Edwards’ report in 1783. However, most of the pigment is intact, except in a portion where the canvas was folded over at the edge (Fig. 21) when the original telaio was altered.⁴⁴⁶

Giambattista Dall’ Angolo or Del Moro (1514-1573/75)
Portrait of Three Magistrates
Dimensions: 121 x 132 cm

This painting was (Fig. 22) sent to Vienna in 1833 and returned in 1919; it is now in storage at the Accademia. The original canvas was arched and then made rectangular with a new lining, and it remains in fairly good condition. The lining canvas consists of two pieces united at a center and horizontal seam with traces of sand present. (Fig. 23) The stretcher was probably substituted when the painting was in Vienna. The surface is darkened by some discolored retouches; there are many fills, and their surface is rough and irregular (Figs. 24-26) like painted canvas. This effect was probably

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid., “... Tutto is sgretolava: nell’ aria mancavano dei pezzi, dell’ albero dietro a San Francesco esistevano le cime alcune fronde...”

created with a tool, not by the usual *graffiatura* or scratching by hand. In some places there are retouches with glazes. (Fig. 27)⁴⁴⁷

Vitruvio Buonconsiglio or Vitruvio (1523-1573)
Venice Crowned by Virtue (Warrior Maiden)
Dimensions: 209 x 154 cm.

This work was located in the Palazzo dei Camerlenghi al Magistrato del Monte Novissimo and taken to the Palazzo Reale in 1834. Then it remained in storage in the Accademia for the next 70 years. It was restored by Pietro Edwards during 1780 and 1781 and described in his report of June 12, 1781. The original canvas, woven in a “spina di pesce” (herringbone) pattern, was originally arched (Fig. 28) and made into a rectangle later by lining. This altered the shape of the stretcher which is no older than Settecento. The lining canvas consists of two pieces joined vertically and shows staining and traces of sand. (Fig. 29) The painting has many retouches that have darkened. There are small areas of detached color from numerous gesso fills that follow the line of the original arched top of the stretcher. These are evidently retouches that were added when the shape was modified. Edwards found this painting and the one following in terrible condition at the Camerlenghi. He wrote that the surface had “completely fragmented and were full of sites with only traces of color....” There are many “fills” textured to resemble canvas, retouches, and the usual traces of sand in lining. (Fig. 30)⁴⁴⁸

Vitruvio Buonconsiglio or Vitruvio (1523-1573)
Allegoria del Monte Novissimo
Dimensions: 207 x 155 cm

This work (Fig. 31) was a pendant to the preceding painting in the Palazzo dei

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid., pp.182&185.

Camerlenghi al Magistrato del Monte Novissimo and was taken in 1838 to the Accademia, where it is now in storage. The original canvas, also a “spina di pesce” weave has lost tension on its stretchers and is loose at the center. The lining canvas consists of three pieces joined at a vertical seam along the sides; sand (Fig. 32) covers all the verso surface. The stretcher is from the Settecento and in 1912 was reinforced transversely. The paint surface has darkened and is oxidized and the retouches have altered. The painting adheres to its support except along the borders, where some nails (Fig. 33) inserted into the stretcher bars have caused loss of paint. Gesso “fills” in these areas are partially detached, but are textured to present a surface that imitates canvas weave. (Fig. 34)⁴⁴⁹

Jacopo Robusti or Il Tintoretto
The Madonna of Treasure or Tesorieri
Dimensions: 221 x 521 cm

This painting by Tintoretto (Fig. 35) was held in the depository managed by Edwards at the Ex-Commenda di Malta, and in 1817 was taken to the Church of San Giovanni e Paolo. It was removed in 1833 to the Accademia, where it is on exhibit today. Pietro Edwards restored it in 1780-81 and also discussed it in his reports of April 18, 1780, and February 17, 1781. It is impossible to see the canvas behind the picture today. The stretcher can be examined and it is not from the settecento. The surface of the painting is generally yellowed and oxidized from old varnish; no detached color or “fills” are noted. The retouches are altered in some places, but appear to remain within the limits of the losses. The state of the painting is better in some respects than any of the others observed. Perhaps it was originally in better condition when it came to Edwards, who

⁴⁴⁸ Ibid., p.185, “...tanto consunti che appena in alcuni siti v'era più traccia di colore...”

emphasized the paint losses in his reports, notably in the drapery of San Giuseppe (Saint Mark) and San Giorgio (Saint Teodoro) and in the Senators.⁴⁵⁰

Modern technical and scientific study done on these canvases illuminates some of Edwards' methods and gives us a deeper understanding about restoration in the past. The techniques include fiber analysis for reading cross-sections with a polarizing microscope and reflected light. The specimens were also scrutinized using a stereomicroscope for the number of threads per square centimeter. The researchers discovered that Edwards used the canvas called "lino grezzo" with thread counts per square centimeter with a difference in weave #1:8-10; #2:8-11; #3:8-14; #4:8-13; #5:5-10.⁴⁵¹

The analysis of pigment strata cross-sections fixed in polymer--with polarizing microscopy, reflected, and ultraviolet light--revealed that the fills or *stuccature* are comprised of gesso with animal glue. The higher density of some areas suggests the presence of "colla di pasta"; supporting this conjecture are Edwards' recipes in which he mentions "colla di pasta." Frequently he used pigment to color the "fills" and approximate the tone of the original canvas. Some of the "fills" are laid over original paint surface, indicating either that the original paint was so abraded that it could not be retouched or that the restoration was not done with as much care as Edwards officially recommended.⁴⁵²

The pictorial integration of the losses, whether deep or superficial, is complete. Some overpainting of original paint occurred, while in other areas the retouches stayed

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² Ibid., p. 186-87.

within the limits of the lacunae. The retouches of abrasions followed by glazing are thick but smooth, while integrations of the fills vary in regard to the thickness (corpo) of the pigment and the technique of execution, whether with one or more layers of color. The final layer is generally a yellowed varnish.⁴⁵³

Study of the cross-sections with ultraviolet light has given some information regarding the composition of the medium. Varnish is confirmed in five samples, while in others some mixture was used. In some cases oil is present, but perhaps from an intervention before that of Edwards, while the succeeding layers are pigment mixed with varnish.⁴⁵⁴ In some examples oil may have been the medium when mixed with *terre* or earth pigments because they are so absorbent, and drying too rapidly if mixed with varnish. Edwards mentioned in his *Progetto per una Scuola...* that there could be a problem with some pigments that are bound with oil and not varnish, particularly the lake pigments, which are fugitive anyway. Due to the minute samples, interpretation of medium was difficult because of the presence of other materials like gesso.

With Infrared Absorption Spectrophotometry, which passes variable wave lengths through a paint sample dispersed in a potassium bromide disc, the binding materials were confirmed. A spectrum is analyzed in the form of a graph and a comparison is made with other known spectra which permit identification of substances. This process revealed the presence of oil and resin in areas with earth-based pigments. In these cases, oil was used more often, but did not substitute completely for varnish. Resin in some form was present

⁴⁵³ Ibid., p. 187.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

in reduced amounts as compared to oil.⁴⁵⁵

These few surviving examples of paintings that contain traces of Pietro Edwards' work are crucial evidence for any objective analysis of his stated theories and methods. However, the art in the Palazzo Ducale can only be envisioned through his literary exegesis of their condition described at length in his reports. These records support what he saw as his mandate from the government to focus almost all his energy on the Public Pictures of Venice. These were found in the Palazzo Ducale, civic symbol of the Republic and the primary showcase for the most famous names in Venetian art. The decorative programs of the rooms had been designed over centuries to tell the tale of Venetian power and glory.

Even with the wealth of art all over the city, Edwards maintained the particular legacy in the Palazzo Ducale, but he also used the grand *sale* as a laboratory for the evaluation and subsequent repair of the works. In report after report, he deplored the results of past incompetent restorers and vividly painted in words the distressing reality of the condition of the most famous paintings in the city. His detailed records have provided a rare perspective, often lacking in conservation history before photographic documentation became possible. It will never be known if his despair and hyperbole sometimes found in the reports regarding the state of the art were entirely objective but perhaps served his greater vision of inspiring a higher level of competency and getting the financial support that his goals required.

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., pp.187-88.

Chapter Five

Pietro Edwards After “La Caduta”(The Fall of Venice)

“In Nome della Sovranità del Popolo: il Comitato di Salute Pubblica:”

Nota dei quadri che debbon essere consegnate alla Repubblica Francese in virtu del trattato con chiuso tra il Generale in Capo dell' Armata d' Italia ed il Governo di Venezia.”⁴⁵⁶

On August 2, 1797 some of the most beautiful and valuable works of art, the pride of the Venetians, were delivered into French hands while Pietro Edwards sadly supervised. Many paintings never returned to the city of their artistic birth. The Treaty of Milan, signed on May 16, 1797 between Napoleon and Venice, ended the thousand-year life of the Venetian Republic. Article Five of the treaty was agreed to in secret and contained the infamous terms that stipulated the appropriation of many Venetian treasures and works of art.⁴⁵⁷ The dramatic decree enumerating the art to be turned over came from the Minister and Napoleon's General Lallement, and the actions were carried out by three Commissars. These were the painters Jean-Simon Barthelemy(1743-1811), Jacques Tinet (1753-1803), and the chemist Claude-Louis Berthollet (1748-1822). The terms of the decree included eighteen important works (Appendix #9) (including two sculptures), which the French demanded be sent to Paris for the Louvre collection.⁴⁵⁸ Edwards wrote, “The list represents sixteen primary pieces which brings me much sadness...to see in this decree the

⁴⁵⁶ A.S.V *Busta Edwards*, #1 Folio #3 Fascicolo 4, Document #1 *Quadri inorati in Francia nel 1797: Trasporti*, “Libertà' Egalità'...”; Zorzi, pp. 46-47; See Appendix # in this book for this list.

⁴⁵⁷ Annibale Alberti, “Pietro Edwards e le Opere d' arte Tolte da Napoleon a Venezia,” *Nuova Antologia: Rivista di Lettere-Scienza ed Arti, Settima Serie, Volume CCL-Della Raccolta CCCXXVIII, Novembre-Dicembre*, Rome: 1926, p. 327, Excerpt from Article Five, “La republique de Venise rimettra enfin aux commissaires à ce destines vingt tableaux et cinq cents manuscrits aux choix du general en chef.”

⁴⁵⁸ Alberti, See for list of sixteen works pp.331-332.

loss of some of our finest examples, but at the same time I note with satisfaction that although most of these paintings have been restored under my direction, some of these remained in this way seriously damaged as I could not take them on consignment because of the tentative success of restoration, without a formal protest on the impossibility of saving them.”⁴⁵⁹ Even his despair at this devastating turn of events for Venice could not prevent his feelings of pride and vanity at the selection of works made by Napoleon and his art commissars.⁴⁶⁰

Edwards was in a terrible position. He was the logical choice to safeguard the works to be sent to France, but his feelings about participating must have been grim. In one correspondence he said, “...with profound sadness, but concealed...I assist as passively as possible.”⁴⁶¹ He let the Commissioners exercise their choices with little interference until they planned to remove Tintoretto’s *Last Judgment*, newly restored two years earlier. In this matter, in order to dissuade the French from taking the work, he emphasized its precarious condition. He described it as “immense” and could not reassure the French that if moved the picture would remain intact. Edwards claimed that this was due to the physical changes of the paint and surface. This method of dissuasion did not always work,

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., p.329, “La lista esibitami dei primi sedici pezzi cagionò in me un vivo sentimento di dolore nel vedere decretata la perdita di alcuni nostri eccellenti esemplari, ma nello stesso tempo not potei rifutarmi ad una qualche emozione di compiacenza rimarcando che il numero maggiore di queste pitture consisteva di quadri restaurati sotto la mia direzione, alcuni dei quali erano giunto a stato di così grave deperimento ch io non potei prenderli in consegna per il tentativo di suddetto ristauero, senza una formale protesta sulla temuta impossibilità di salvarli.”

⁴⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 330, “Se pero la presente necessità in cui ci troviamo costa la Patria il cordoglio irreparabile della diminuzione di alcuni suoi pregi, non si può negar d’ altra parte che da questo fatto il Governo riceva una consolante e solenne testimonianza sulla importantissima utilità del già tanto avanzato generale ristauero e smentisca l’ audace maldicenza, l’invidia e la malignità che per tanti anni rabbiosamente ne per seguitarono l’ esecuzione.”

⁴⁶¹ Reunion des Musees Nationaux, *Les Noces de Cana de Veronese: un oeuvre et sa restauration*, Paris: 1992, p.91, “avec une tristesse profonde mais dissimulee...passivement.”

however, and in another report he wrote in dismay that “without consulting him” the French had decided to take the huge *Feast in the House of Levi* (1573) (Fig. 36) by Veronese in place of the Tintoretto. However, Edwards warned that recent restoration of many works could threaten their condition if shipped to Paris. The authorities did not want take this risk in transport and so abandoned their plans regarding some art. This development prevented a major pillaging of the Maggior Consiglio, and Edwards’ negotiations left the glorious *Assumption of the Virgin* and *Madonna of the Pesaro Family* (1519-26) by Titian in place in the Frari.⁴⁶² Among other works retained by the humbled Republic due to Edwards’ efforts were Bellini’s *Enthroned Madonna and Child with Saints Francis, John the Baptist, Job, Dominic, Sebastian, and Louis of Toulouse* (c. 1470), also known as the *San Giobbe Altarpiece*.⁴⁶³ The French basically kept to their initial list except for the substitution mentioned above.

A favorite of the Commissars was the *San Marco in Gloria with the Four Theological Virtues* by Paolo Veronese in the ceiling of the Sala della Bussola (the original is in the Louvre today). This work had already endured two terrible restorations before Edwards’ tenure, and he had conducted the recent third. An example of Paris Bordone’s work was desired by the French, and they chose the *Consegna dell’ Anello al Doge* in the *albergo* of the Scuola Grande di San Marco. This painting had been disfigured by an incompetent restorer over twenty years previously, and the work was still

⁴⁶² Francesco Valcanover, “La Pala Pesaro,” *Ateneo Veneto*, pp. 57-71; also Valcanover, “Il Restauro dell’ Assunta,” in Tiziano, *Ateneo Veneto*, Venezia: 1977, p. 43.

⁴⁶³ Alberti, p. 330, “*Finale Giudizio*, tela immensa che fin da circa due anni addietro poteva ricollarsi al suo posto nella chiesa della Madonna dell’ Orto, ma che fu da me trattenuta insieme con la sua compagna a fin di riconoscere le alterazioni che in quelle preziosissime opere possono cagionarsi dal tempo, ciocchè pur praticai molte volte rispetto ad altri difficili e mal sicuri lavori.”

in dreadful condition. The committee wavered, contemplating another work in Treviso by the same painter, but returned to the *Consegna...* and carried it off to Paris, much to Edwards' chagrin. In place of two other canvases, the French decided upon two pieces of sculpture from the Biblioteca Marciana, a decision which perhaps gave Edwards some rueful glee--one work was a broken bas relief and the other was a bronze bust of Emperor Hadrian, which the Venetians believed was from the sixteenth century and the French thought was antique.⁴⁶⁴

Removal-Packing-Transporting the Art of Venice

Edwards was deeply concerned about the proposed transport of all these treasures and so was preoccupied with both the detaching of the art from their sites and the packing of them. His worry was justified, because now it is generally agreed that the French were rather brutal in the removal of the art. For example, the altarpiece by Titian of the *Death of St. Peter Martyr* (Fig. 37) in San Giovanni e Paolo appeared almost impossible to move because of its size and close attachment to the altar. Edwards noted that the French decided to knock out a hole in the large wall behind the altar and remove the altarpiece through it. This very first effort to dislodge such a valuable, old, and heavy painting presented risks to the picture due to the possible destabilization of a huge pillar (pier) directly behind the altar and the ambulatory on that side of the church. Edwards related that it was achieved with great difficulty and trepidation.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶⁴ Ibid., p.332-333 The cameo was returned ; Ibid., p.337 ff2, The copy of the *San Marco in Gloria with Theological Virtues* in Palazzo Ducale was painted by Giulio Carlini.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid., " Finalmente si concluse di atterrar per quanto occorreva le grossissime muraglie...praticando le aperture necessarie...Le enclastro che gira da quel lato della Chiesa dei Santi Giovanni e Paolo ed il gran pilone che appunto cade dietro di queste altare facevano apprendere come pericolosissima quest' operazione, per lo che, fattosi un primo esperimento...ma non pero continua palpitazione per l'estrema

The painting would face other problems in Paris. The ship which carried it to France was hit by a fierce storm that caused the crating to become water-logged and drenched the canvas. This loosened and softened the glue in ground and lining, and an immediate intervention was required.⁴⁶⁶ It was one of the first Italian works to be transferred to canvas by French restorers, and the procedure and the overpainting were done by the Louvre restorer, Jean-Louis Hacquin.⁴⁶⁷

An analogous problem occurred at the Church of San Zaccaria when the French tried to remove Giovanni Bellini's *Enthroned Madonna with Saints* (1505), also known as the *San Zaccaria Altarpiece* (Fig. 38). Edwards had written about the panel's condition in a prior report:

...most figures are covered with retouches...I am suspicious of the background; the colors are bubbled and detached on the surface, especially the clothing, but also in the flesh tones; the colors are too red in places; half-tones are darkened and only partially conserved. The colors in the lower part of the picture are loose and swollen. There are multiple scratches and some scorching of color from powerful corrosives. Generally, the whole work is darkened and will require a long and difficult restoration. Restoring it will be possible when it is removed from its niche, but the work must be scrupulous, taking no less than eight or ten months...and cost no less than 150 zecchini.⁴⁶⁸

Now other problems beyond the work's aesthetic health were at stake. The wall behind the painting in the church was joined to a house next door, making the removal very

diligenza che si rendeva necessaria nel maneggiare un pezzo composto di tante tavole antico, di oltre due secoli e mezzo, e d' un peso vicino alle 3000 libbre.”; On removal see A.F. Tosi, *Della pittura veneziana*, Venice 1797, n.p., section on SS Giovanni e Paolo; Titian's masterpiece was destroyed on August 15-16, 1867 and a copy taken from the Gallerie di Firenze by Nicolo Cassano now hangs in San Giovanni e Paolo.

⁴⁶⁶ T. Von Frimmel, “Tizians Skizze sum Petrus Martyr,” *Studien und Skizzen sum Gemaldekund*, Vienna II, 1917, p. 34; also see Meilman p.106 ff72, Benjamin West claimed that a cannon shot damaged the panel when the French ship was chased by an English cruiser at the port of Ancona.

difficult and slow. It required supporting the wall at three levels while simultaneously cutting through, yet sustaining the altar to prevent collapse of the walls onto the painting. The procedure was scheduled to take ten days, but it was fifteen before the workmen, with Edwards directing, finally lifted the altarpiece safely down and moved it to San Giorgio Maggiore for packing. It then was sent to the Arsenale for transport to France. The picture traveled to Paris with more than 470 precious manuscripts from the Biblioteca Marciana and other Venetian monasteries, hundreds of incunabuli, books and musical manuscripts from the fifteenth century. In substitution for thirty other volumes, the Venetians sent a valuable Roman agate cameo depicting *Giove Egioco*.⁴⁶⁹

Paolo Veronese's *Marriage at Cana* (1563) (Fig. 39), originally commissioned for the refectory of the Benedictine Monastery of S. Giorgio Maggiore in Venice, was number six on the French list. This was the largest of the painter's *Feasts*, measuring 21'-10" X 32'-6."⁴⁷⁰ Its potential fate during its detachment shook Edwards from his demoralized state and caused him to demand that its removal from the walls be handled with special care. After it was dismembered into several large pieces, Edwards decided to have the packing done on site due to the size, numerous pieces, and fragility of the work. An interesting note on the condition of the work is found in another list. There were "rows of nail holes found two meters apart or so from three bars which crossed the painting." Flaking paint was noted at these points. In the recent conservation of this painting in

⁴⁶⁷ *Notice de plusieurs precieux tableaux receuillis à Venise, Florence, turin et Foligno*, Paris, 1802, 62-64.

⁴⁶⁸ Cagian de Azevedo, p. 120.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid.*; Alberti also p.338 ff 2-3, The bust of Hadrian was returned to Venice in 1816 and is now in the Marciana collection with the cameo.

⁴⁷⁰ Hart, pp.620-621.

1994, the line of holes was revealed in cleaning with small folds just above and along the central balustrade in the painting.⁴⁷¹ Treatment reports dated in 1797 from Charles Hacquin, a restorer for the Louvre reveal the French perspective of the painting's condition after it arrived. There appeared to be serious obstacles to consolidation of the support, because only one part of the huge work was secure enough to line with new canvas. This section stretched across the width below the balustrade, where the seams joining canvas ends were becoming unstitched. It finally was lined by Hacquin by June 19, 1799 at a cost of 630 francs. In July the upper and lower halves of the painting were repaired by a Monsieur Michaud (n.d) and Matthias Bartholomeus Reiser (1747-1804), two restorers who cleaned and consolidated the surface and applied four or five layers of toned varnish.⁴⁷²

The journey of the Veronese masterpiece indicates some of the perils of transporting art during this period. The crated painting was placed on-board the frigate, *La Sensible* which embarked on September 26, 1797. The *Sensible* carried thirty-two cannons--double the usual amount to provide extra security for the art. By January 22, 1798 the ship had docked at Toulon and the crates were immediately removed to land, because of the fear that rats would gnaw through the wood and devour the precious freight. Transferred to the ship *La Creole*, the convoy made its way to Arles by February 28, and then went up the Rhone past Lyon and Saone. At Chalon-sur-Saone it entered the canal headed to the center of Paris. The boat stopped at Digoin from May 20 to June 19

⁴⁷¹ *Noces*, p.92, The measurements according to the Archives du Louvre on June 19, 1799 were 10 meters wide by 6 meters and 7 centimeters high or 30'-6" wide x 20'-8" high. Obviously there has been a loss of original canvas or removal of additions.

⁴⁷² *Ibid.* p.93; also see Archives du Louvre, *Comptabilite'*, January 17, 1800, 27 nivose an VIII.

because of a surge of water descending the Loire to Nevers, which was flowing against the current of the canal. Finally, the ship entered the canal at Briare, went up the Seine, and arrived in Paris on July 16, 1798 at the port of Hopital.⁴⁷³ This marked ten months en route from Venice! The painting was presented on July 27, 1798, on the anniversary of Robespierre's downfall; the party celebrating the possession of the great Venetian works by the victorious French lasted two days. The painting was taken to the Louvre on July 31 and exhibited there in the Grand Salon (Salon Carré) of the Museum on November 8, 1798, was announced that, "Notice des principaux tableaux recueillis en Italie par les commissaires du government français, seconde partie comprenant ceux de l'État de Venise et de Rome dont l'exposition provisoire aura lieu dans le grand Salon du Musée...."⁴⁷⁴

During the awful period of preparation, Edwards spent over twenty days traveling back and forth across the Basin to the refectory at San Giorgio Maggiore to pack the pictures by rolling them up, with the last part of the operation completed at the Arsenale. Rolling giant oil paintings is extremely destructive to the surface and ground layers, and one can imagine the damage incurred by these packing methods. Edwards carried out these depressing tasks with diligence and exactitude, committed to the masterpieces and their long-term protection wherever they were destined to be. The records show that Edwards directed the construction of crates for the art, selected the most sturdy wood, adjusted the sizes of boxes to fit every work, and devised the way the paintings were rolled up. The French Commissioners were impressed by his scrupulous attention to detail and described the way Edwards inserted a large piece of paper at every revolution of large

⁴⁷³ Ibid., p.92

canvases to protect the paint surface. They also noticed the way he demanded that the cylinder be tightly packed into the cart with no possibility of movement.⁴⁷⁵ The other items selected for French galleries included manuscripts from the Biblioteca Farsetti, the Abbey of Santa Giustina in Padua, the Basilica of San Marco, and many monastery libraries. One hundred and twenty editions from the fifteenth century, fifty-nine texts from libraries in Venice, Padua, and Treviso (including fifty books of music) were sent and never returned after the treaty with Vienna 1799.

The whole operation took more than forty days. Edwards wrote eloquently in his report to the Comitato di Salute Pubblica, his words perhaps laying the foundation for a future Accademia museum as well as urging the necessity of ongoing restoration:

Many times I cried patriotic tears in the act of removing a few great ones from our walls, those precious documents of genius and national greatness; and God then wants the humiliating bleakness of their nakedness to be soon and worthily sheltered with the productions of animated ingenuity of liberated enthusiasm to which they prepare eagerly in the energy of the new course of things. Awaiting the moment of this happy development however, not to forget provident Citizens, that the actual losses have embellished more highly the little that remains to recover and in a brief hour they will be entirely stolen by time... Paris, you anticipate with your vast Museum the solicitude of other peoples, of which you excite now this late remorse and envy. You garland your brow with the most beautiful flowers you found, dispersed over soil not your own. Venice, you can encircle your head with a more modest garland, but all woven with the noble products of your own soil.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid.; also see *Bibliothèque nationale, Cabinet des Estampes, Fonds Deloynes*, t.55 #1683.

⁴⁷⁶ Alberti, p.334, Edwards wrote: "Molte volte io versai delle patriottiche lagrime nell' atto di staccare dalle poco prima celebri nostre pareti quei preziosi documenti del genio e della grandezza nazionale; e Dio pur voglia che l' umiliante squallore di quelle nudità sia presto e degnamente riparato con le produzioni d' ingegni animati dal libero entusiasmo a cui si van preparando nella energia del nuovo corso delle cose. Attendendo però il momento di questo felice sviluppo non si dimentichi provvidi Cittadini, che la attuali perdite nostre hanno impreziosito al più alto segno quel poco più che rimane da ricuperarsi e che in brev' ora ci sarà del tutto rapito dal tempo... Parigi, tu previeni con il tuo vasto Museo le sollecitudini degli altri Popoli, di cui ecciti adesso il tardo rimorso e l' invidia. Tu però t' inghirlandi la fronte coi più vaghi fiori che trovasti dispersi sopra un suolo non tuo. Venezia, tu puoi cingerti il capo con un serto più modesto sì, ma tutto tessuto coi gentili prodotti del tuo solo terreno."

Much popular opinion supported the appropriations, seen in the jubilation with which the Parisians greeted the parade of art that was marched through the city upon arrival after the Italian campaign.⁴⁷⁷ When, after the Battle of Waterloo, France was forced to return some of the art, howls of outrage in editorials and riots in the streets revealed the thwarted Imperialistic tenor of the society in defeat.⁴⁷⁸ However, the despoliation of Italy and other countries conquered by Napoleon was not unanimously welcomed back in France by all members of the cultured class of politicians who were responsible for managing the art. However, today much of the purloined art still remains enriching French national and city collections.⁴⁷⁹

Quatremère de Quincy: The Ethics of Appropriation of Art

The psychological impact on Venice of the terrible loss of art can be imagined. In France there were some figures sympathetic to the Venetians and opposed to the appropriations of art. One was Antoine C. Quatremère de Quincy (1755-1849), an important cultural force in France as a proponent of the Academy and Winckelmann's Neoclassical theories of art. Quatremère wrote *Considerations sur les arts du dessin* (1791), a thoughtful response to the crisis of the Academy after the French Revolution. Jacques Louis David, official artist of the revolutionary government, and his circle were

⁴⁷⁷ Cecil Gould, *Trophy of Conquest: The Musée of Napoleon and the Creation of the Louvre*, London: Faber & Faber, 1965, pp 178-79.; Alberti, p. 336, The artist and academician, Charles LeBrun reported in the *Moniteur*, on the presentation to the Directory by Napoleon in 1797: "Héros cher à la Paix, aux Arts à la Victoire, Il conquit, en deux ans, milles siècles de gloire."

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., Gould.

⁴⁷⁹ Alberti, p.335, "Plusieurs personnes ont crié' contre l' enlèvement de ces monuments des arts; on a même écrit pour en détourner le gouvernement; car le Français jouissent de la liberté' de la presse a un point qui ne laisse pas même aux étrangers ses ennemis la consolation d'espérer qui ils puissent jamais censurer avec plus de sévérité' les actes de son gouvernement qui ils ne le sont journellement nas ses propres citoyens." From *Campagne du General Bonaparte en Italie pendant les années IV et V de la*

highly critical of Quatremère, who was a monarchist at heart. He was a friend and correspondent of Antonio Canova and Leopoldo Cicognara and could easily have known Edwards during these tumultuous years. Edwards traveled to Paris several times before the collapse of the Republic to address the the Societè des Artistes. An important cultural organization in French society active in the study of art, science and technology.⁴⁸⁰

Quatremère was imprisoned during the Reign of Terror and freed clandestinely during the uprising of the revolutionary calendar *Vendemiaire an III* (roughly September 25, 1794-95).⁴⁸¹ His ideas about a museum's purpose and function were primary in the development of French attitudes toward art collecting. The vast collections were to ensure Bonaparte's place in the long line of world conquerors who used art to support claims of legitimacy. This view conferred upon Paris the position that had been held by Rome or Athens for centuries, making Paris now the center and guardian of world art and culture.

As the self-proclaimed savior of subjugated peoples everywhere, Napoleon also proclaimed his mandate as liberator of art.⁴⁸² The defeated nations, however, did not see this naked looting of their artistic and cultural heritage in quite such a benevolent light. Given his regressive views on other subjects, Quatremère de Quincy wrote a surprisingly passionate attack on Bonaparte's appropriations of other nation's art in his famous

Republique Francais, par un officier general, à Paris et chez Les Principaux Libraires d'Italie, l' an IV 1797; See ff 1 p. 335, Written by Francois Renè Pommereul, an officer in Napoleon's army.

⁴⁸⁰ Conti, pp.208-09.

⁴⁸¹ Quatremère de Quincy, *Lettres à Miranda sur le Deplacement des Monuments de L Art de l' Italie*, Paris: Macula, 1989, Introduction.

⁴⁸² Alberti, p. 336, Napoleon wrote on the banner of the French Army that he sent to a meeting of the Directory in Paris in 1797, "A l' Armee d' Italie, la Patrie reconnaissante...Envoye a Paris tout les chefs d'

correspondence entitled *Lettres à Miranda sur le Deplacement de l'Art de l'Italie* (Paris: 1796). It is a profound and sensitive matter, according to Quatremère's first letter, to remove the great monuments of art and other objects of science and learning from their home countries. Although great art knows no national boundaries, the individual character of a particular country's art is unique and should be respected.⁴⁸³ He stated that the arts support institutions of Reason and add to the betterment of humanity, suggesting that it was ignorant and barbaric if art were destroyed during conflicts or political unrest.⁴⁸⁴ Quatremère offered with some irony the idea that conquerors, including ancient Romans, had justified their theft of the national treasures of conquered foes by claiming cultural and military superiority. They believed that they alone could offer the kind of asylum that great art required for ages to come. Of course, Quatremère implied that it was clear that history does not ensure any one nation's power forever.⁴⁸⁵

Italy was a special case for Quatremère because of its deep connection to the classical past. It had conserved and created so much of the art of the world that its very soil was fertile ground for artistic inspiration and creation due to the presence of antiquity.⁴⁸⁶ He warned against the transport of art, citing the doomed efforts in 1687 of Venetian naval Commander Francesco Morosini (1619-1694), who attempted to remove part of the facade of the Parthenon (attributed to Phidias), which then broke in two.⁴⁸⁷

Quatremère wrote that this was an ignorant and barbarous act, disastrous in its

oeuvres de Michel Ange, Du Guerchin, du Titien, de Paul Veronese, Corregge, Albane, de Carraches, Raphael, Leonardo da Vinci, etc..."

⁴⁸³ See Quatremère de Quincy, *Premiere Lettre*, p.88.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁴⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p.92.

⁴⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, *Deuxieme Lettre*, p. 93.

consequences for all art lovers in Europe.

Rome was the supreme “museum” of the classical past, and Quatremère’s polemic and outrage at Italy’s despoliation by Bonaparte’s focused on a theory of context which demanded an appreciation for the place where the art was created. This theory asserted the existence of a nurturing essence that permeated art created in a particular place and provided a unique environment crucial for the viewer’s experience and understanding of the work.⁴⁸⁸ Perhaps this environment was primarily found in a city, Quatremère pondered, but one that was still connected to its surrounding countryside.⁴⁸⁹ Another of his important arguments was that a necessary unity existed between the ensemble of sculpture and painting, one which must be diligently maintained. Sculpture or painting should not be separated from its setting or architectural framework, because future artists could only truly comprehend the great masters of the Western tradition in a comprehensive way, when their work remained *in situ*.⁴⁹⁰

Regarding the collecting of art, Quatremère identified England as a poor example for France to follow. England was a country that held many great works of art plundered from all over the world. However, it had no major national collection; the many works of art were dispersed among countless private collections, outside of the cultural matrix for which they had been created so that their beauty was lost to most people and the meaning fragmented and confused.⁴⁹¹ Quatremère espoused a new understanding about the concept of culture, which could not be easily reproduced by just moving famous works of art to a

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., p.112.

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., Quatrieme Lettre, p.114-115.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., Cinquieme Lettre, p.119.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid., p.118.

new location. He bitterly denounced the commercial instincts that were behind these appropriations, not actually reflective of love for great art or its beauty. He warned that “love of money has never produced anything but more money...” and that the French “would mortgage these precious sculptures only into effigies on bank notes.”⁴⁹² The awful result would affect all mankind, for the destruction of culture and taste would see Rome “...its ancient ruins taken away as rubbish...causing Europe to enter into again a Night of Bad Taste covered by a mantel of barbaric error and ignorance.”⁴⁹³

Quatremère appears to have spoken for a minority, but the French were concerned about the state of conservation of works of art, perhaps more in an abstract sense, during those tumultuous days. After the collapse of Venice, the victorious government was nervous about its own ability to control the conquered territories or to secure the funds necessary to administer an interim government from afar. France’s enemy, Austria, was militarily strong, and England was ready to finance any opposition force to Napoleon’s plans. It was clear that the French needed to rely on local implementation of their revolutionary goals and to apply the same system to Venice that they had used in Lombardy. This included the end of hereditary rule by aristocrats and the quartering of a division of French troops to maintain order and to protect the citizens and their property.⁴⁹⁴ On April 17, 1797, shortly after the Treaty of Milan, the French closed

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., p. 121-22.

⁴⁹² Ibid., Septieme Lettre, p. 134.

⁴⁹³ Ibid., p. 139, “...l’Europe reentrer dans la nuit du mauvais gout, et la barbarie etendre de nouveau sur elle le voile de l’erreur et de l’ignorance!”

⁴⁹⁴ Alberti, p. 326, “...renonce à ses droits de souverainete’ ordonne l’abdication de l’Aristocratie hereditaire...La Republique francaise sur le demande qui lui en a ete faite voulant contribuer, autant qu’ il est en elle à la tranquillité de la ville de Venise et au bonheur de ses habitants accorde une division de troupes francaises pour y maintenir l’ordre et la sureté des personnes et des proprietes’.

Edwards' historic laboratory at San Giovanni e Paolo and turned the space into a military hospital for French troops (Appendix #10).⁴⁹⁵ Edwards transferred the remaining works of art, including large canvases, to the huge Palazzo Grimani (16th century and now the Court of Appeals) on the Grand Canal near the Church of San Luca. Its large water gate allowed easier access for the huge paintings Edwards and his team intended to restore. However, he later admitted that the work did not proceed at a rapid pace; indeed it had really almost halted after the French occupied Venice. On May 16, 1798 after Venice was ceded to Austria, Edwards compiled a list of all the pictures that had been taken by French decree from offices and suppressed religious bodies and had been deposited in his studio for restoration.⁴⁹⁶

Pietro Edwards and the Provisional Government

From April 1798 to May 1799 Edwards was involved in or directed an immense number of projects and committees regarding all aspects of restoration, arts administration, and artistic institutions in Venice.⁴⁹⁷ This list is a but a brief summary of the forty-eight projects that were carried out at the Commissario Pellegrini after the Fall of the Republic. Among them was the proposed written history of the Accademia del Disegno and also the selection of appropriate personnel such as architects and other experts who would organize the vast task of repair and maintenance of the public

⁴⁹⁵ A.S.V *Busta Edwards* #1 Fascicolo #4 Document 14. August 24, 1797. "Cittadini restano autorizzati gli operari che vi faranno tratti conoscere del Cit Edwards ad nel Convento di S Gio Paolo, e nella Chiesa stessa onde possano rimuovere le Pitture ed altri effezzi che devono ? rissi in altro luogo operando secondo gli ordini dell Edwards suddetto possa d' intelligenza con li Commissari Francese...."

⁴⁹⁶ Conti, 1988, pp. 184-85.

⁴⁹⁷ Pietro Edwards, S.P.V, MS 787.5-876.5, "*Sommario delle Principali Commissioni eseguite dal sottoscritto Ispettore sopra le Belle Arti dall' Aprile 1798 fin a tutto Maggio 1799: descritte senza rigorosa osservazione all' ordine dei tempi.*"

buildings. Edwards wrote the regulations and a position paper on this matter and hired Andrea Querini to begin the demolition of some older parts of the Arsenale. Edwards also compiled a catalogue of all works of art that remained in public buildings, classifying them into Classes of Need as determined in his earlier papers on restoration.⁴⁹⁸

A long list recounted his numerous responsibilities and contained some specific description of problems surrounding individual works of art. This list included the restoration of a panel painting by Giovanni Bellini and its consignment to the Church of San Zaccaria to replace a work taken to France. There was also the repair and replacement of the many lion sculptures, symbol of the Republic of Venice, that had adorned public and private buildings around the city. Napoleon had removed or destroyed many of these, while Edwards planned to salvage those that remained. He demanded all records relative to these sculptures; these included the bronze version attributed to Donatello from the facade of the Church of San Marco and later sold to N. Cornoldi. There were several lions in *pietra fina* (Fig. 40) on the Church of Santa Maria della Salute, and Edwards was especially disturbed by the loss of the ancient lion on the column in the Piazzetta, which Venice had taken from Constantinople in 1204. It had remained an important symbol and image of the Republic. The French had carried the bronze off to Paris and a new one in its place was “execrable,” in Edwards’ words.⁴⁹⁹

Although his scrutiny of the *Belle Arti* of Venice included architecture, sculpture, and the Academy, Edwards was also interested in the fate and future of the collections of works on paper and hoped to conduct research in London and Rome on the engravers

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid., page 2 Items: #6, #7, #0, #8, #9; page 3 Items: #10, #11.

Volpato and Schiavonetta. Such investigations would further add to knowledge about the prints which were then becoming a focus for erudite collectors. As described in a previous section, prints after famous paintings had always been an important resource for the restorer when reconstructing a lost part of the composition in a work of art. Edwards was also considering a petition from Giovanni dal Pian, who wanted to set up a school for intaglio, specifically engraving on copper.⁵⁰⁰

The diversity and complexity of Edwards' duties and activities again reveal the amazing scope of his influence and commitment. Although his oversight included all the buildings and art in the Rialto district too, his long-term goals focused on the training of Venetian artists, if the city was ever to regain its past artistic glory. For Edwards, this dream required a rigorous assessment of the faculty at the Academy and the impact of the programs in disegno, sculpture, architecture, and painting. With the complete catalogue of all works in the city, he intended to commission or compose a history of the Collegio di Pittura which had been so involved with the fate of the art in Venice. He also reviewed the payments to and participation of the Collegio in the restoration of the public pictures.⁵⁰¹ Finally, Edwards continued to observe and monitor the condition of art held by religious institutions as he and other Inspectors of the public pictures had always done in the past. This included handling conflicting claims of ownership of art by various churches and petitions requesting restoration of works.⁵⁰²

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., page 1 Items: #3, #4, #0.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibid., page 4 Item #14, page 5 Item #17.

⁵⁰¹ Ibid., page 7 Item #30, page 8 #31, page 9 Item #35, page 11 Item #41

⁵⁰² Ibid., page 7 Items #24-25, #28.

Suppression of Religious Organizations

The Venetian territories passed to Austria soon after the Fall of the Republic to Napoleon on May 12, 1797; the terms of the Peace of Campoformio were enacted on May 17. However, Austrian rule devolved back to France in January of 1806 and French troops returned to attach the Venetian provinces to the Regno Italico. One of the policies enacted in Venice at this time was the suppression of religious entities and the immediate confiscation of their property, including all art resulting from Napoleon's decree on July 26, 1806 and followed by other notices in 1808 and 1810.⁵⁰³ This kind of appropriation was not totally unknown in the former Republic, having been used in the past in times of emergency. However, this action was different because the suppressions took on an ideological character, anti-religious in tone and far more radical. Rather than targeting a few monasteries and convents, the French terminated whole orders and congregations.⁵⁰⁴ Although part of the motivation was philosophical, stemming from a rejection of clerical power as seen in France during the Revolution, the intent was also economic.⁵⁰⁵ The French had to ensure that governing their new territories did not drain their own state coffers, consequently the auctioning or selling of valuable objects of art could prove to be

⁵⁰³ Anna Maria Spiazzi, "Dipinti Demanali di Venezia del Veneto nella Prima Meta del Secolo XIX: Vicende e Recuperi," Rome: *Bolletino d'Arte* #20 V.68, July-August 1983, p. 85, ff 37, List for suppressed religious orders.

⁵⁰⁴ Alvise Zorzi, *Venezia...*, see pages 614-15 *Fonti Archivistiche* for list of churches, convents, monasteries closed or suppressed.

⁵⁰⁵ Haskell, *History and Its Images*, pp.236-38, The reasons for these confiscations were a combination of hostility to the Church and greed. In November, 1787 Church possessions were nationalized in France, with convents closed and their contents confiscated by the State. Various works of art and other objects were collected in depots and then sold. Many buildings and works were destroyed or victims of Revolutionary vandalism. This destruction was exacerbated by the abolition of Christianity in September 1792.

very helpful in balancing the budget.⁵⁰⁶ These policies were complicated by the aristocracy's loss of hereditary power, which led to the auctions of many cultural treasures to eager foreign and domestic collectors.⁵⁰⁷ Besides the sales and appropriations of art taken to France as war booty, the Austrians would show a dedicated interest buying Venetian art for its museums, particularly those in Vienna. Edwards' position as administrator and bureaucrat, astute in market and restoration matters, was certainly pivotal during these events.

A rare source of detailed information about these important sales and dispersals of art came from Count Bernadino Corniani of Algarotti, who reconstructed many of the events during the years from 1797 to 1814.⁵⁰⁸ The Austrian government hired Corniani as Conservatore to research the origin, location, and condition of the paintings under its management in 1825. Corniani admitted that he could not have compiled his information without the considerable documentation left behind by Pietro Edwards from the years 1806-1821.⁵⁰⁹

After the first infamous requisition by the French of twenty works in 1797 destined for Paris, the Comitato di Salute Pubblica instructed Edwards to transfer all paintings from the public magistracies and from the former Convent of San Cristoforo di Murano to the

⁵⁰⁶ Spiazzi, p. 69.

⁵⁰⁷ Francis Haskell, "Some Collectors of Venetian Art at the End of the Eighteenth Century," London: *Burlington Magazine*, London: volume? p.xxxi, On John Udney as Consul of Venice from 1773-74 who freely made contact with Venetian nobility to purchase works of art. Also during an earlier suppression of religious orders in 1773 he tried to acquire a (doubtful) Veronese from one of the suppressed convents.

⁵⁰⁸ Sandra Marconi-Moschini, *Opere d'Arte dei secoli XIV e XV*, Rome: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, Libreria dello Stato, 1955, p. xvi, Corniani replaced Edwards as Conservatore of the Gallery after Edwards' death in 1821.

⁵⁰⁹ Spiazzi, p.69, Corniani considered that "...nulla avendo in sua mano di carte o documenti sopra tale materia che potessero addottrinare la si luminosa e ben lunga corrispondenza del suo emerito Predecessore

to the Scrutinio in the Palazzo Ducale and Guarantia Civil Nova.⁵¹⁰ There were many works quickly removed from suppressed convents and transported to Milan of which no trace of an inventory remains in the archives. According to Corniani other gaps in the record include the lists dating from February 9, 1798 to 1806, when on March 8, Edwards was instructed to produce an accounting of all the public pictures, including their location and condition.⁵¹¹

Prina, the Minister of Finance, followed this with a specific disposition from June 24, 1806, which stated that “the diligent collection and custody of all the precious monuments of science and art such as books, manuscripts, pictures, and sculpture by important authors...should be collected in suitable and secure sites to protect them from the seasons....”⁵¹² An official meeting took place on July 14, 1806 with Pietro Edwards present to discuss the disposition of all other art in the region. The first pressing case involved moving the art from the Scuola dei Mercanti to the Madonna dell’ Orto, because the confraternity was now used as a barracks for the police. Another concern was for the works in the Scuola Grande of San Marco, which were being damaged from smoke because that structure had been turned into a military hospital.

Edwards was assigned the task of detaching all these paintings and moving them to a provisional site at the Scuola Grande della Misericordia. He also was asked to design a system to classify and inventory all the pictures. Edwards accepted both assignments, but

Sig. C.e Pietro Edwards...nulla si meno fissatosi che solamente con tali messi poteasi in qualche modo saperne....”

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., p. 70

⁵¹¹ Ibid., p. 70, No letter with this request and this date is found in Edwards’ files, but that from Prina on June 24, 1806; see Spiazzi p.85, ff38 for inventory of suppressed religious corporations.

⁵¹² Zorzi, p. 106.

only on the condition that his position as Inspector was assured with appropriate salary, independence, and responsibility. He demanded that his competence and experience be respected in order to accept the position of “Delegato della Corona per la scelta degli oggetti di Belle Arti già appartenenti alla Repubblica Veneta,” an official who examined all pictures and inventories for the Crown.⁵¹³ At the same time Giovanni Rossi was placed in charge of evaluating the vast book collections in the Republic, and Professor Niccolo Baldassini (Edwards’ old colleague) was assigned to various duties and responsibilities.⁵¹⁴

Paintings, sculpture, bronzes, china, ivories and other objects, (now the property of the Crown) were assembled in the Sala dello Scrutinio in Palazzo Ducale and were to form the foundation for a royal museum. As part of his responsibilities Edwards was to manage these collections with the assistance of the official government advisor Bellati and the Censor Carpani. Edwards would be responsible for the duration of the Regno Italico of the dispensation of all art, whether intended for the Crown collection in Milan or the Accademia collection in Venice.

Until this time only the paintings in the Venetian magistracies had been removed and collected in depositories. However, with the return of the French, this situation changed drastically. For example, in April of 1806, orders had been sent to the Department of Internal Revenue for verification of all sales finished or in progress of art and objects taken from the suppressed convents. This was enhanced by another decree of July 28, 1806, which tried to prevent the destruction of all registration, titles of ownership,

⁵¹³ Basile & Tranquilli, *Pietro Edwards: Piano Pratico...*, p.51.

⁵¹⁴ Zorzi, p.106, Edwards wrote the Minister of Finance that he had, “Il solo capace a soprintendere ad una tale operazione che fu per oltre 22 anni Ispettore alle Belle Arti e segretario perpetuo della relativa

and other important papers at the convents that clarified the property rights and their sale. The sweep of art and ecclesiastical objects from these houses was further facilitated because a public official and the Prior of the Order had to verify on the same day and time, orally and in writing, the value and number of objects on the premises that “do not serve the practice of the cult or are in daily use by members of the Convent or staff.”⁵¹⁵ Whatever objects were not constantly in use during services would be confiscated by the State. All the art not connected to the daily ritual was to be placed in sealed boxes and transported locally, with the Prior guaranteeing the safety of the goods.⁵¹⁶ A general inventory, no doubt compiled by Edwards, proceeded from these summary lists, which unfortunately cannot be found today or no longer exists. Many of these paintings, along with those from other suppressed religious houses in other parts of Italy controlled by Napoleon, were sent to Milan where they formed the foundation for the Brera Gallery.⁵¹⁷

The Closure of Some Churches

The development of a Royal gallery transpired after Napoleon Bonaparte's stepson, Prince Vicere, had decreed that none of the paintings taken from suppressed religious bodies should be put up for sale. Instead the art must all be deposited in the care of the government.⁵¹⁸ Ostensibly the sovereign's intent was to prevent the commercial exploitation of these artistic assets and to retain the best for the collections of the State.

Accademia sotto la cessata Repubblica; che a lui merito e con ottimo effetto furono restaurati quasi tutti li Quadri del Palazzo Ducale, ed altri di Pubblica ragione.”

⁵¹⁵ Spiazzi, p. 70.

⁵¹⁶ Ibid.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid.; also see A.S.V. *Demanio 1806-1811*, fascicolo I.1/9.

⁵¹⁸ Zorzi, p. 106, June 25, 1806, “I quadri che trovansi nelle Chiese e Conventi soppressi non son destinati ad essere venduti. Tutti debbono essere posti a disposizione del Demanio e poi alla scelta del Ministero

However, the reality was to prove very different. The despoliation of so much of the art of Venice and the rest of Italy at this time was only to accelerate and become a scandal of immense proportions. Thousands of works were sold off in large blocks. For example, when Napoleon handed Venice over to the Austrian government in 1798, the Austrians purchased in one group more than five-hundred works for 1185.06 (Austrian £).⁵¹⁹

Various churches and convents were emptied of everything when Napoleon's decree in 1806 was strictly enforced. San Giacomo in Giudecca located near the famous Redentore by Palladio is one example of this treatment. The church was founded in 1338 by virtue of the will of Marsilio da Carrara from Padua and was run by the Serviti order under the patronage of the Doge and Senate of Venice. The exterior was classical, simple and stately, with a triangular tympanum and four large columns decorating the facade. The convent, on the right flank of the church, was constructed with an ample cloister that sheltered a large vegetable garden. The interior had been restored in the sixteenth century with a profusion of marble, large columns, and an isolated altar, behind which were the choir with stalls made of walnut. Among the many works in the church were those by Canaletto, the *Assumption of the Virgin* by Giuseppe Heinz, an altarpiece by Domenico Tintoretto, the *Creation of Adam and Eve* by Andrea Vicentino, a work by Jacopo Palma il Vecchio, and a polyptych of *San Giacomo Maggiore tra Quattro Santi* by Michele Giambono. The decoration of the Refectory was even more impressive, with a copy of Paolo Veronese's *Convito in Casa di Levi* (by a relative of the artist) today in the Palazzo

dell'Interno. Quelli che non siano per occorrere per la Galleria di Brera saranno rimessi nei Dipartimenti in quella proporzione e con quella distribuzione che sarà trovata più conveniente.”

⁵¹⁹ Ibid.

Gran Guardia in Verona. The ceiling was adorned with the *Annunciation* and *Visitation* by none other than Veronese and his workshop.

The inventory for confiscation, dated October 22, 1806, cited all these works plus two paintings on either side of the altar, two silver and iron candelabras, four reliquaries, sixty-four paintings by foreign artists, and many others from the library (along with books and manuscripts). From this impressive body of works Edwards reserved for the Crown only the Veronese ceiling from the Refectory. Later, six more altars from the church with the primary altar were removed, as well as the marble from the Tabernacle with two lateral angels, the walnut choir seats (but no benches), the cantoria, the organ, and other furnishings from the Sacristy and chapel in the convent.⁵²⁰

On August 8, 1808 the Counts Leonardo and Bortolo Dona requested to purchase two altars formerly on the left side of the Church of San Giacomo della Giudecca. They had been found in a ruinous state caused by their hasty and brutal removal “without care for the ornament.”⁵²¹ Their value, after some discussion, was fixed at £75.10, and the sale in this amount concluded on August 31. In the same month, the city of Pederobba offered £ 80 for the marble pavement from the church. This offer was refused when the government decided to utilize the pavement for new offices of the Cassa di Finanza e del Demanio. The wooden choir and seats from the Sacristy were sold in 1809 to Domenico Cerin, who claimed they were worm-eaten, while the main altar “colla Pelilla d’acqua santa di marmo” was purchased by Count Panciera di Zoppola for £1.65 Other sales continued in 1812-13 and by 1821 nothing remained of the church except its standing

⁵²⁰ Ibid., p.339.

walls. Obviously selling off works of art from suppressed religious houses could be very beneficial for some collectors, but the financial gain for the state was minimal at times. The convent was later converted into a barracks, then turned into an open space and finally became a grim residential section of laborers' houses.⁵²²

Edwards reserved for the Crown twenty-three works from the hundreds in the Church of Santa Maria Maggiore, which was completely liquidated. His inventory included the *Agony in the Garden* by Paolo Veronese; *Ecce Homo* by the school of Titian; *Arca da Noe* by Jacopo Bassano; the *Risen Christ* that Edwards attributed to Salviati (perhaps by Paris Bordone); *Madonna with Child and Saints* by Girolamo Santacroce (perhaps Palma il Vecchio); *Madonna with Child and many Cherubs* by Giovanni Bellini; *Christ on the Cross*, a drawing by Jacopo Bassano; *Christ before the People* by Paris Bordone; works by Padovanino and Polidoro; the *Assumption* by Paolo Veronese; *San Giovanni Battista* by Titian; and the *Marriage of the Virgin* and the *Adoration of the Magi* by Jacopo Tintoretto. Many of these works now make up the collection of the Accademia Galleria in Venice--like Veronese's *Assumption*--while others--such as Tintoretto's *Marriage of the Virgin*--were sent to Cendriole near Riese. Many other paintings were lost--like Bassano's *Quattro Stagioni*--while other valuable objects connected to Santa Maria Maggiore showed up later in churches such as San Toma.⁵²³

Another important example of the depredation and dissolution of religious houses was the Convent and Church of San Giorgio Maggiore, which was filled with prized

⁵²¹ Ibid., p.340.

⁵²² Ibid.

⁵²³ Ibid., pp. 534-535.

works of art. By far the pearl was the *Marriage at Cana* by Paolo Veronese, a work seemingly admired by everyone, including the French. Edwards' list of December 14, 1806, detailed the fifty-three chosen for the Crown from San Giorgio Maggiore, which left about four hundred and seventeen works--considered exceptional for a Venetian convent--not including the great number of paintings in the Church itself. Among the best, according to Edwards' selection, were some twenty landscapes by Zuccarelli, four paintings by Solimena, five canvases by Evaristo Baschenis depicting musical instruments, and several others by artists like Marco Ricci, Cima, Carriera, and da Ponte (the Bassani). Edwards' comments on the rejected works are revealing, providing insight about his taste in art and the odd aspects of many of the collections in Venice that he sorted through. He acerbically describes some of the works as

Subjects insipid, lacking action and would not hold the interest of a connoisseur or one who studies art...the many portraits of monks in black clothing also darkened by time...the Benedictine Saints in the same kind of clothes, the lifeless portraits of some prelate and similar things...a good number of pieces, of a lower genre of painting, i.e. landscapes, fruit, views, and some of these things affected by too much mediocrity...including some one hundred and three half-length busts of monks, all quasi-modern and all ugly or barely tolerable.⁵²⁴

Not only were religious houses obliterated, but also the wealthy and powerful schools or confraternities connected to various churches suffered similar pillaging. The richest of these was the Scuola Grande di San Marco. In 1797 the French turned the scuola into a military hospital and it remained so during the first Austrian occupation, until

⁵²⁴ Ibid., p.599, "...soggetti insulsi mancanti di azione ed ai quali non poteva prendere interesse nè il conoscitore nè lo studioso...I tanti ritratti di monaci vestiti di nero e anneriti dal tempo ancora più, Santi benedettini dall' abito stesso, i freddi ritratti di qualche prelato e cose simili...un buon numero di pezzi che diconsi appartenenti all'ulterior pittura, vale a dire paesi vedute, frutti, ecc...cose queste delle quali si soffre assai malvolentieri la mediocrità...centotre mezzi busti di monaci dipinti, tutte operucce quasi moderne e tutte cattive o appena tollerabile."

in 1806 it became a barracks. In 1807 Edwards listed twenty-four works reserved for the Crown from the scuola, while the important *Miraculous Rescue of the Saracen by St. Mark* (1548) by Jacopo Tintoretto had already been transported to Paris. There were also paintings by Giovanni Bellini, Giovanni Mansueti, and Vittore Belliniano. Those by Tintoretto included the *Discovery of the Body of St. Mark*, part of the cycle painted for Tommaso Rangone of Ravenna that was sent to Vienna in 1838 and returned in 1919. The rest of the series, *Removal of the Body of Saint Mark* (1562-66) (Fig. 41) and the *Miracle of the Slave*, were taken to Paris, but subsequently returned in 1815. On March 16, 1807 Edwards transferred the *Discovery...* from the suppressed Scuola di San Marco along with its two companion works, *Removal of St. Mark's Body* (1562) and *St. Mark Rescuing a Slave* (1562), this last sent to the Brera in Milan. The first two would be seriously altered by cutting away sections to fit into the decorative scheme of the Libreria Sansovino in 1816. Edwards directed this unfortunate occurrence, and it is now impossible to recreate exactly the parts that were excised. *Removal..*(Fig. 41) was reduced in size with the loss of a figure in the frontal plane of the painting.⁵²⁵ A print by Zucchi of Lovisa's *Gran Teatro* (Fig. 42) can give us some idea of what was lost. In the case of the *Removal...*, a strip along the viewer's right was removed, and on the left a segment was sliced away; these portions comprised almost a third of the composition, which had contained two primary figures and another shadowy form above them. A piece along the bottom was also removed, thus reducing the work overall, with a major alteration of the composition. In all, the painting was reduced by a meter in height and 80

⁵²⁵ S. Moschini-Marconi, "Revisione di Due Tintoretto," *Bolletino d'Arte Anno XLIV Serie IV #1 Gennaio-*

cm. in width.⁵²⁶ The picture had also been overcleaned so that the figures appeared almost as pentimenti.⁵²⁷ It is assumed that Edwards did not condone such adaptations, for he had specifically shown his disapproval of such treatment in his program for the public pictures. However, these alterations allowed very large works to be removed from the disorder of storage rooms where theft and damage were possible. It also prevented the paintings from being sent long distances to other galleries away from Venice.⁵²⁸

By 1806 the central government for Napoleon's Regno Italico, located in Milan, had claimed all works held in churches and corporate bodies as the property of the State.⁵²⁹ Edwards had been charged with the compilation of a list of all these holdings. To fulfill this demand he relied heavily upon Anton Maria Zanetti's earlier catalogue.⁵³⁰ The fate of the many private collections in Venice from 1797 to 1806 was also complicated and confused. Edwards continued to advise members of the aristocracy, now struggling to survive their new political and economic fortunes. Edwards' efforts not only included the preparation of inventories and the transport of paintings and objects for auction, but also involved the confiscation of certain collections destined for Milan or for the Accademia Galleria in Venice.⁵³¹

Marzo, Rome: Istituto Poligrafico dello Stato, p. 69.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp.69-81.

⁵²⁷ Conti, 1988, p. 185, Luigi Lanzi wrote, "i veneti anche moderni hanno un vantaggio sopra le altre scuole ed è quello di dare al quadro unità, immaginandola tutti insieme co' suoi passaggi di luce, così che l'occhio per sè medesimo va seguendone la traccia e lo scorre gradevolmente da cima a fondo. Il Signor Pietro Edwards asserisce che in occasione di dover scemare i quadri per volere di possidenti, tanto è difficile il farlo nella scuola veneta quanto è facile nelle altre ove la composizione si vede spesso fatta parte a parte non ideata nel suo insieme."

⁵²⁸ Conti, pp. 185-86.

⁵²⁹ *The Columbia Encyclopedia*, p. 1775, Napoleon Bonaparte made Milan the capital of the Cisalpine Republic in 1797 and of the kingdom of Italy 1805-14. In 1815 the city came under the control of Austria.

⁵³⁰ Spiazzi, p.70.

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, p.69.

One of the first collections documented by Edwards in the days after the Fall of the Republic was that of the art belonging to the once powerful Pesaro family. As specifically cited in his report (Appendix #11) of September of 1797. Edwards named Pietro and Giovanni Pesaro, belonging to the parish of St. Eustachio as owners of the collection to be examined.⁵³² Edwards acted “In the name of the Provisional Government of Venice and the Committee of Forfeiture and Indemnity” to list and appraise all the pictures in the Pesaro palace and divide the collection into three parts. According to his inventory of this collection, he gave an average value for the pictures as a whole. Factors considered in Edwards’ valuations were the official taxes and expenses, the artists represented, the importance of the subject matter, the merit of the work, the state of preservation, the size, and the condition and worth of the frames. He also made note of particularly important works or those made with precious materials.⁵³³

Edwards’ position during these years was a difficult one. He acted concurrently for the government of the Regno Italico in Milan and for the interests of his own city, which he tried to manage and protect. He steadfastly anticipated the day when he would see the creation of a comprehensive gallery of Venetian painting. However, after the suppressions of 1808, Milan demanded eighty-eight of the best Venetian works intended for the soon-to-be Pinacoteca di Brera (Brera Picture Gallery). Edwards tried to hinder or prevent their prompt dispatch. He remained the official Conservatore of the depository at the Ex-Commenda of Malta and tried to improve the conditions and facilities there for the

⁵³² Pietro Edwards, S.P.V., MS 733.13 inserto 1, 1797, Pesaro Confiscations.

⁵³³ Ibid. Inserto 2, The list showed Bonifacio’s (Veronese /Pitati) *Adoration of the Magi* at £328, the *Convito di Nozze* by Bertranda Fuchier worth £310, and among others, a *Sacra Famiglia* given to Jacopo Tintoretto valued at £176.

storage of paintings. He also tried to dissuade Milan from making the Commenda the site of the Royal Collection in Venice.⁵³⁴

The situation for evaluating, preserving, and dispersing the art was complex in Venice and certainly proved a challenge to Edwards' political and organizational skills. However, it was worse in the former Venetian territories of the Terraferma during the years of the Regno Italico, when Edwards' responsibilities were myriad and the problems harder to solve. The cities maintained a kind of passive resistance, as seen in the case of Padua. The director of the government in Padua rejected repeated inquiries from Edwards about the delivery of chosen paintings for the State. In other cities like Treviso, Verona, and Vicenza, Edwards' collection efforts often failed. The city in question would refrain from sending detailed or accurate lists of required inventory of objects residing in offices, churches and religious houses. Without complete and detailed descriptions, Edwards admitted that he had no clear idea of the quality of "classical works" existing outside Venice in most of these places. The list sent from Udine to Edwards was so incomplete that Edwards claimed he could not make any further examination of the art at that time, while Treviso reacted against Venice with strong protests and refused to deliver three works by Paris Bordone and one by Palma il Vecchio. One list can serve as an example of what Edwards was up against. It contained over 5143 paintings, but only 109 were attributed to any particular artist, while thirty were scantily described as merely "good" and ninety-seven as "mediocre."⁵³⁵

⁵³⁴ Spiazzi, p. 71.

⁵³⁵ Ibid., pp.71-72.

The Restorer as “Expertiser”

Edwards' activities were almost frantic during these years; he was extremely overburdened with the responsibilities incumbent in his position. His skills were those of the connoisseur and savvy bureaucrat with wide connections and access to art. In this he served the interests of the art market, as advisor and expert to many private collectors in situations beyond the functions he performed for the Venetian state. He was instrumental in the formation and cataloguing of a private collection in Venice at the end of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and through this activity encouraged the study of the Venetian artistic heritage. He also compiled meticulous lists of much of the art in Venice, including collections of the wealthy. Edwards' effort over the years suggests a view of the city as a museum, following in the tradition of Marco Boschini in *Le Carte del Navegar* (1666), yet resembling Zanetti's systematic approach in *La Pittura del Veneto* (1771). The lists also serve to illuminate the tastes of collectors while Edwards methodically recapitulated the history of Venetian art and its glorious past in his inventories, papers, and reports.⁵³⁶ One such inventory was for the Widmann family in October of 1808 and showed the division of all the works among five family members, as well as typifying the fate of most family collections during this period. Some of the artists included among over seventy-six works were Luca Giordano, Bonifazio, Titian, Lanfranco, Lotto, Carracci, Mola, and Paris Bordone. Other important inventories that can be found among Edwards' papers are those of Marina Donado (1790), Casa Collatto (1780), Scipione Maffei (1781), Dolfin Fratelli (1788), Antonio Zen, (1790), Mocenigo

(1790), Renier (1795), Manin Fratelli (1799), Catherine Corner (1803), and Niccoli Biondi (1807)⁵³⁷ In the political and economic fortunes of the city all were powerful names, who in this circumstance relied on Edwards.

The part he played in the actual amassing and sale of these many collections is not made clear in the archives. The preparation of such detailed lists was surely linked to the expected sale of the art on the Italian and international art market, as had occurred with church holdings, or else the art might be added to the Accademia holdings.⁵³⁸ In two cases of privately held art, we can document both Edwards' reputation as a connoisseur and the perceived access he represented for those who relied on his judgment.

Girolamo Manfrin was a perfect example of the wealthy collector who, although successful in business, knew little or nothing about art. Pietro Edwards served as an advisor in the development of Manfrin's collecting interests, and it is intriguing to imagine the relationship between this consummate art *cognoscento* and the brash and crude trader in commodities with too much money to spend. Manfrin wished to improve his position in a society that respected the taste and erudition reflected in a fine art collection. He was born in Zara in modest circumstances and rose to the top of a mercantile empire by gaining the monopoly in the tobacco trade with plantations in Dalmatia. He was actively despised by many, took bribes, was banished from Venice, and reinstated between 1769

⁵³⁶ Fabrizio Magani, "Alcuni Raggiugli e Novità sul Collezionismo dei Widmann tra Seicento e Ottocento Attraverso un Inventario Redatto da Pietro Edwards," *Atti*, 1989-90, pp.1-19. (p 2)

⁵³⁷ Pietro Edwards S.P.V MS 788.13-877.13 inserto 1-17; MS 788.2-877.12 October 8, 1781, Maffei collection examined by Pietro Edwards, Giuseppe Fossati, and Ab. Andrea Ruffi.

⁵³⁸ *Busta Edwards #2 A.S.V, Final Fascicolo (29 or 30?)*, "Venditi Mobili," shows records with sales of works to private collectors of church holdings. Note large number to a "Giuseppe Fabris."

and 1786, when he was allowed to carry arms for fear of attempts on his life.⁵³⁹

By 1787 he had established himself as one of the few and most important private patrons of art in Venice. The immense Manfrin collection with 455 works, was considered one of the finest in Venice. It was a major tourist attraction, thanks to the efforts of Edwards, who also was first to publicize the gallery in his own papers, today in the Seminario Patriarcale.⁵⁴⁰ Among its many prizes was Giorgione's *Tempest*, which would eventually find its way into the Accademia by 1934.⁵⁴¹ The collection was designed to give a general historical view of Italian and Flemish painting, which was a reflection of Edwards' own beliefs about the didactic importance of an art collection. Later a printed catalogue for sale was issued in 1856 (Figs. 43-44) and another with the remaining pictures, including the *Tempest*, was published by Ab.G. Nicoletti in 1872.⁵⁴² In correspondence with Edwards, Manfrin openly admitted his ignorance on the finer points of the selection of valuable works, but professed his abiding trust in Edwards' knowledge and judgment:

As I wish that everything should proceed as satisfactorily as possible in the choice of pictures to be included in my gallery, I naturally wanted real experts in painting such as yourself and Sig. Giovanni Battista Mingardi (sic), to take over the responsibility of choosing, identifying, and excluding pictures as (they) see fit, without paying attention to the expense involved; for I only wanted pictures of the highest quality in my gallery...you must have no hesitation in being ruthlessly selective...⁵⁴³

⁵³⁹ Francis Haskell, *Patrons and Painters...*, p. 379.

⁵⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p.381.

⁵⁴¹ Nepi-Scire & Valcanover, *Accademia Galleries of Venice*, Venice, 1985, p.120.

⁵⁴² Haskell, *Patrons & Painters...*, p. 380, ff5; *Galleria Manfrin: Catalogo dei Quadri esisenti nella Galleria Manfrin in Venezia.*, Venice: 1856; #225 *la Famiglia di Giorgione*", annotated in pencil "Giorgione" and "Tempesta," #164 *Astronomo* by Giorgione annotated "now in Dresden," Other works are #252 *Madonna and Child with Angels*, by Pietro Perugino, #279 *Adoration of the Magi* by Titian, #345 *St. Ursula Takes Leave from her Father* by Carpaccio, #352 *Christ on the Column* by Antonella and many more; See John Murray in his *Handbook for Travelers in North Italy* (1860), p. 359, who wrote that the best paintings were sold in 1856.

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*, Haskell, *Patrons and Painters...* p.380, also see his Appendix #7, p.395, for complete letter.

Manfrin did exercise some of his own taste, because his collection contained very few paintings from before the sixteenth century. This was in spite of the opinion of some scholars of the day, including Edwards, who recognized the importance of these early works and encouraged their collection.⁵⁴⁴

Edwards' documented forays into the art market included another prominent figure. This was the collector and critic Francesco Algarotti (1712-1764), who has been acknowledged as the most important patron of the arts in Venice in the eighteenth century. His collection of art, including works commissioned from living "modern" artists, confirms this reputation. Although from the middle class, he maintained extensive contacts with eminent persons among the nobility, as well as with the leading painters of the day including Tiepolo and Canaletto.⁵⁴⁵ He had lived in Rome, Paris, Dresden, France, England, and Russia, and later assumed some real importance in the international art world as both patron and critic. Although a devoted collector of the Classical and Neoclassical, he was a pioneer in the appreciation of the so-called "Primitives," those painters who were looked upon as harbingers of the Renaissance, such as Lorenzo Veneziano, Gentile da Fabriano, Carpaccio, Giovanni Bellini, Alvise Vivarini, and Mantegna.⁵⁴⁶

Soon after the Algarotti's death, times had changed in Venice; many of the patrons of his generation had died, and important artists left the Republic, such as Tiepolo who now resided in Spain. Algarotti's own extensive holdings were sold after his brother

⁵⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 380.

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 347.

⁵⁴⁶ Ibid., p.350; See Giovanni Previtali *La Fortuna dei Primitivi*, Einaudi, 1989, p. 231, Edwards' vision for the Accademia Gallery also included many neglected early Renaissance artists as seen in his list from 1812.

Bonomo's death. Pietro Edwards and Gianantonio Selva were selected by Bonomo's daughter, Maria Algarotti Corniani, to compile and write the catalogue for the sale.⁵⁴⁷

(Fig. 45) The catalogue was divided into sections that highlighted the various parts of the collections including prints, books, and paintings. The introduction is highly complimentary about the quality of the paintings and takes particular care to stress the condition of the pictures. This perspective would make perfect sense given the position Edwards played in the restoration of so many Venetian paintings in the city including those in this collection. It also affirms suspicions that the appearance of a work as fresh from the creator's hand was a desirable element in a sale.

Most Precious is the collection of pictures, distinct in their intrinsic value, famous are the names of the authors, virgin and well-conserved as they strike a well-trained eye that recognizes their originality, these final touches of the master's hand bring pleasure, that contribute so much to the perfection of the work, and as evidence show the profound knowledge of their maker. So it is with all the paintings in this gallery, because not one has the misfortune of falling in the hands of people who use corrosives, and the tool to remove the most beautiful (parts) of a painting, and damage in an attempt to give them new life....⁵⁴⁸

The quality of the artists represented in Algarotti's collection was truly impressive, containing works by Giovanni Bellini, Paolo and Bonifacio Veronese, Vittore Carpaccio, Cima da Conegliano Corona, Albrecht Durer, Luca Giordana, Guercino, Palma the Younger, Preti, Ricci, Ribera, del Sarto, Tiepolo, Van Dyck, Velasquez, and Leonardo da Vinci, to name only a few. In the text Selva and Edwards placed great emphasis on the

⁵⁴⁷ Gianantonio Selva & Pietro Edwards, *Catalogo ... 1776*.

⁵⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, "Pregievolissima è la raccolta de' quadri, distinto essendo il loro intrinseco valore, rinomassimi i nomi degli autori, e tanto vergini e si ben conservato che il pratico intelligente al primo colpo d' occhio ravvisa la loro originalita', anzi vi gusta con piacere quegli ultimi tocchi della maestro mano, che tanto contribiscono alla perfezione delle opere, e che evidenza mostrano la profondita' del sapere di chi ne fu l' Artefice. Tal sono tutti dipinti di questa Galleria, perche niuno di essi ha avuto la sfortuna di cadere nelle

pristine-looking surface of the work. The critical opinion that promoted the presence of the hand of the original artist over the reality of restored works would benefit collectors and sellers and not let the status of the work remain in doubt. These same questions persist today about undue access and influence that art historians and restorers may have on the market for wealthy collectors and institutions whose acquisitive desires create economic value.⁵⁴⁹

Pietro Edwards and the Accademia Gallery of Venice

Edwards remained nervous about the realization of his dreams for a comprehensive and important collection at the Academy and Gallery. He unfortunately had to acknowledge that the art taken from suppressed religious orders was officially the property of the Monte Napoleonico, which would ultimately decide its fate. Edwards believed that the Accademia collection should contain only the best and most representative paintings and he did not believe all the works held in the depository of the Ex-Commenda met those standards. He would later suggest as much to the authorities.

The Galleria dell' Accademia di Venezia remains one of the jewels in a city full of treasures. However, its formation and its prized collections were not easily achieved. Its origin can be traced to the Treaty of Pressburg between France and Austria, signed on December 26, 1806, when Venice was admitted to the Regno Italico.⁵⁵⁰ A decree on February 12, 1807, organized the new Academy of Belle Arti, applying a statute already operative in the Academies in Bologna and Milan since September 1, 1803. Article X/4

mani di coloro che coll' adoprare e i corrosivi, ed il ferro levano il più bello da quadro, e danno ad intendere di dar loro nuova vita....”

⁵⁴⁹ Gaskell, p.178.

stated that “...the academy have a Salon of the Nude, a Salon for Statues, a Pinacoteca, and a Library: the Salon of Statues would include casts of the principal ancient statues, busts, bas reliefs, animals, idols, furniture, and ornaments — all important subjects in the training and erudition expected of an artist. Article XIV stated that the new Pinacoteca must accommodate those who manage the painting classes...”⁵⁵¹ The didactic purposes of the collections were apparent from the onset. The old Venetian Academy, which was replaced by this new incarnation, had maintained a modest collection of paintings, primarily gifts from former Academicians as well as an important group of plaster casts drawn from the classical sculptures of the Abbott Philip Farsetti which had already been acquired in 1805 by the Austrian government for the Academy.⁵⁵²

The prospective gallery required a professional director versed in all aspects of collecting and preservation and Pietro Edwards seemed the natural choice for this position. He had proven his commitment to the Republic in conserving the public pictures and his dedication in resolving the chaos following the appropriations of art by the French. On February 21, 1807 he was nominated to be the “Conservatore della Galleria dell Accademia delle Belle Arti di Venezia e della Galleria Farsetti.” He addressed certain important issues for the Gallery barely two months after his appointment in a report sent to Almore Pisani, President of the Academy on April 28, 1807. His first act had been to review the art objects from the old collection then stored in the Fonteghetto della Farina

⁵⁵⁰ Langer, p.641, Austria ceded to the kingdom of Italy, all Venetian territory it had gained in the treaty of Campo Formio and also recognized Napoleon as King of Italy.

⁵⁵¹ Marconi-Moschini, 1955, *Galleria... XIV e XV*, p. vii.

⁵⁵² *Ibid.*

and to compile a catalogue.⁵⁵³ When sending the catalogue to Pisani, Edwards explained how insignificant the collection was, and how it did not represent the greatness and historical importance of Venetian painting. He expressed his eagerness to make it more conspicuous and interesting, but first he noted that an appropriate space must be secured for this important endeavor. In his opinion, it must be large and well lit and completely adequate for the restoration of the art because so many works were in grave condition.⁵⁵⁴ He had already documented the holdings of the Farsetti Gallery prior to his nomination as Conservatore, when he advised that the collection should always remain in its original location at the Palazzo Farsetti. The Farsetti casts were, however, in dire need of a restoration that would include a program of consistent maintenance.⁵⁵⁵

Antonio Diedo, Secretary of the Academy, Abbot Morelli, Librarian of San Marco, and Pietro Edwards were all assigned by the government to study the monuments and make the selections for a spectacular gallery worthy of the artistic legacy of Venice. Edwards also was to make recommendations about what art would go to the Brera Pinacoteca in Milan. However, his efforts did not result in the retention of many great works of art. Only Titian's *St. John the Baptist* was offered to Venice by the Provisional Government in 1808. After the death of Diedo, there was even less priority at the highest levels of government given to the formation of the Accademia collection.

Count Francesco Leopoldo Cicognara (1767-1834) (Fig. 46) was elected after Antonio Diedo as President in April of 1808. He found the situation for creating a

⁵⁵³ *Busta Edwards #1*, A.S.V. Document 4, "Specifica di quadri....," A list of works from Venetian Academy over 22 pages.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p.ix.

superior gallery in Venice seriously compromised by delays and by Milan's preference for the best paintings, thus causing an ever-dwindling supply of first-class works.⁵⁵⁶

Cicognara was an important critic, art historian, theorist, bibliophile, and painter who was educated at the Collegio dei Nobili in Modena (1776-85). He lived in Rome until 1790 and then moved to Venice in 1807. There he devoted himself to scholarship, painting, and published a treatise on aesthetics called *Del Bello* which synthesized an Enlightenment perspective on Neoclassicism. His later correspondence with sculptor Antoine Canova and Quatremère di Quincy, provide another clue to the ethics and personality of Pietro Edwards. Cicognara was elected President of the Academy from 1808 to 1826, and is credited with opening the Gallery to the public in 1817. He was involved with architectural and artistic issues and professed a deep belief in the concept of "artistic progress" and originality. He was also considered a strong promoter of culture and a staunch custodian of artistic heritage. However, his motivations would cause a rift with Edwards over the restoration policy at the Accademia, a conflict which came to a head in 1816 over Titian's spectacular altarpiece, the *Assumption of the Virgin* (Fig. 47) which had been painted for the Order of Brothers at the Frari.⁵⁵⁷

With the availability of the best paintings now shrinking, Cicongara also had to deal with the government's selection of the site for the Venetian Academy and gallery. In March of 1807 the Viceroy had determined that the institute would be set up in the

⁵⁵⁵ Ibid., This report dated February 19, 1806; Also A.S.V. *Busta Edwards #1*, Inserto 12, L32188, on the Galleria Farsetti.

⁵⁵⁶ Ibid., p.xii, Among the works selected for the Gallery were *St. Rocco and his Afflictions* by Bassano, *St. Peter Martyr* by Cima, and the *Adoration of the Magi* by Palma il Vecchio, but these were sent to the Brera.

complex of buildings known as the Scuola della Carità, the Convent of the Laterans, and the church of the Carità, which had been consigned to the city of Venice to lodge troops. The religious order there already had been suppressed. The once-burned Palladian complex was fraught with disadvantages, including the need for a total renovation and redesign to suit the diverse needs of a gallery and school.⁵⁵⁸ Other problems were the windy northern exposure, which would be harmful to the Farsetti plaster collection, and the distance from the center of the city, which would create extra expense and inconvenience for the intended function as school, museum, and restoration laboratory. Pietro Edwards had suggested other better locations like the School of San Marco with the bordering buildings of the Convent and the Hospital of the Mendicanti. His pleas were useless and the Accademia Gallery was located in structures considered from the beginning to be unsuitable.

The official inauguration of the Academy took place on July 4, 1808 with the installation of the Farsetti plaster group, paintings taken from around the city, and Titian's *St John the Baptist* in pride of place, still the only work of great value in the collection. By February 1809, Cicognara complained that the government's promises of other treasures like the Titian had not materialized and that the collection was not sufficient to

⁵⁵⁷ Rosand, *Painting...*, p.52. Sanuto recorded the unveiling of the *Assumption of the Virgin* on May 19, 1518; On rift see Conti, *Dictionary of Art...*p.740; Merrifield, pp.875-878.

⁵⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. x. Giovanni Antonio Selva drew up the plans which showed the Carità divided in height and width with "seven grandiose spaces," five in the lower level for painting and two in the upper for sculpture. The entry door onto the Piazza was closed, the monuments surrounding the church demolished, and the side windows of the church closed up. A century later these were replaced to let in light. The two rooms for the Farsetti Collection were illuminated by two large skylights some 17 feet in diameter. Selva also planned for numerous other rooms, a stairway and hallway to access all rooms. The Grande Salon of the scuola retained its quattrocetro ceiling and the altar remained until June 20, 1811 when it was sold to a stonecutter, Domenico Falga who had a shop near the Academy.

achieve any prominent reputation in the arts. This unhappy state of affairs would require the museum to make exchanges with foreign courts to add the necessary depth and breadth to what was meant to be a comprehensive historical collection of Venetian painters. Meanwhile the construction phase still was not finished and the buildings were not ready to receive the group of paintings already consigned.⁵⁵⁹

The Director General of Public Instruction further delayed action on past decisions because he wanted a full accounting of all works presently in the Gallery. Edwards was charged with this assignment, and on December 28, 1810, he compiled a “Catalogo delle Pitture ora esistenti nei locali della R. Accademia di Belle Arti.” This consisted of works from the old Academy and those left in the former Scuola di Carità. The works controlled by the government and already promised to the Academy were slow in coming, a situation which Cicognara in part blamed on his predecessor Diedo, vowing that he would not be put in the same position. Cicognara, with the help of Edwards, sent petitions for requested paintings held in deposit that would be suitable for the Academy Gallery. This included the stores of Venetian works at Verona and Bologna, which Cicognara hoped to secure by barter and exchange with those cities.⁵⁶⁰

These actions succeeded in securing three panels (by Giovanni Bellini, Vittore Carpaccio, and Basaiti) for Venice from the Church of St. Giobbe. Utilizing Edwards’ strategy during the earlier French appropriations, the Academy claimed that all these paintings were in a condition too precarious for transport to Milan. The works might just arrive as “completely denuded by damage, and a scandal for those who did not heed these

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid., p.xi.

warnings.”⁵⁶¹ After difficult negotiations in October of 1815, these three pictures were offered to the Gallery. Cicognara suggested having other works that were in poor condition shipped immediately to the Gallery for safekeeping and restoration. He believed that, once they were on site, it was unlikely they would be taken to Milan. This tactic did not always work, however, and the Academy lost some exceptional masterpieces like works by Giovanni Bellini from S. Giovanni Cristotomo and San Pietro di Murano; a Lorenzo Lotto from SS Giovanni e Paolo; Sebastiano del Piombo at S Giovanni Crisostomo; a Titian from S. Giovanni Elemosinario; a Moretto (1498-1554) (Alessandro Bonvicino) from the Pietà; and a Catena from S. Maria Mater Domini.⁵⁶² Pietro Edwards described the condition of these paintings as “in continuous danger... and increasing in darkness caused by smoke.”⁵⁶³ Cicognara even recommended bringing the originals to the Gallery and replacing them with copies by contemporary artists, but this idea was rejected by the authorities.⁵⁶⁴

Finally, on September 3, 1811, the Director General declared that after the selections for the public buildings and royal collections were installed, the art for Galleries in the Academy if Venice would be authorized. He asked that Edwards make another list of all works under his control, adding that those in need of restoration should be withdrawn from churches and public places. Edwards could then consider all the pictures on his list consigned to the Academy, but also should evaluate other valuable art objects in

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁵⁶¹ Ibid., p.xii, Cicognara wrote on May 8, 1811 “Potrebbe arrivare a Milano...una tavola nuda con danno di tutti, e scandolo di chi dopo queste avvertenze lo comandasse assolutamente.”

⁵⁶² Ibid.

⁵⁶³ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid.

official storage that might be retained by Venice. What was left could decorate Royal Palaces. President Cicognara would be responsible for their disposition in the collection, whether by organizing it in an historical chronology or in some other order for didactic purposes. This would include “Categories of Need” for paintings that required restoration.⁵⁶⁵ Edwards made this new inventory by June of 1813. The list included paintings and some twenty works of bronze and marble. Along with artist and title in chronological order, Edwards cited the measurements of each work, its provenance, condition, and aesthetic and critical observations about each painting. This document became the first real catalogue of the Gallery collection.⁵⁶⁶

Other artists mentioned in the early inventory were Jacopo il Palma Vecchio, Palma Giovane, Andrea Schiavone (1522-1563), Giovanni Bellini; many by the Tintoretti, Bassani, various relatives of Titian, Carpaccio’s *Cycle of St Ursula*, and the relatively recent Venetian Master, Canaletto, whose paintings did not stay in Venice for long.⁵⁶⁷ He noted as well Antonio Diziani (1737-1797), Padovanino (Alessandro Varotari 1588-1648), Marco Ricci (1676-1730), Sebastiano Ricci (1660-1734), Paolo Veronese (1528-1588), Giambattista Tiepolo (1696-1770), Luigi Crespi (1709-1779), Cortona (1596-1669) Dürer, Antonella, and many others. Other works that Edwards had already restored were soon were added to the Gallery collection when they returned from France in 1816. This included *La Consegnà dell’ Anello al Doge* by Paris Bordone(1500-1571) restored in

⁵⁶⁵ Ibid., p. xiii., also See Spiazzi pp.71-72, In February of 1811, the Prefect from Milan, Joseph Appiani visited Venice and accompanied by Baldassini, scoured the churches and depositories departing for Milan with crates containing 38 of the best of Venetian paintings.

⁵⁶⁶ Moschini, *Galleria ... XIV*, p. xiii.

1733 and later in 1775 under Zanetti.⁵⁶⁸

During Edwards' long and complex career he held many positions often concurrently. How successful was he in achieving his goals and fulfilling his duties when at times he had to satisfy differing bureaucratic interests?⁵⁶⁹ One incident gives some insight into this dilemma. It seems that Edwards always hoped that only the best works of art would be placed in the Academy, but his discrimination was overruled. The Academy was expected to take delivery of all the works in the Commenda, and on December 3, 1811, some 200 paintings were counted upon arrival at the Gallery. This lot, however, did not account for all the art stored in the depository, and no official document exists that explains why Edwards held back other paintings.⁵⁷⁰ It appears that Edwards' vision for the Academy was at odds with that of his superiors. Perhaps, in this case, Edwards had served diverse interests in the distribution of works of art, and it was only a matter of time before he could not please everyone concerned. After these events he felt his integrity had been compromised for he wrote a long and apologetic letter later that same month to the Superintendent of the Crown. He defended his actions but admitted an appearance of a conflict of interests. The Crown accepted Edwards' explanation and long and dedicated service. He was paid £ 4000 for services in December of 1812 and thus concluded his official public position as Delegato della Corona..., the intermediary for French interests in

⁵⁶⁷ On Carpaccio see Francesco Valcanover, "Le Storie di Sant Orsola di Vittore Carpaccio dopo il Recente Restauro," *Atti dell' Istituto Veneto di Scienze, Lettere, ed Arti*, Tomo CXLIV (1985-86), pp.195-197.

⁵⁶⁸ Marconi-Moschini., *Galleria...XVI*, pp.70-71.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, *Galleria ...XIV*, p. ix.

⁵⁷⁰ Spiazzi., p. 72.

Venice.⁵⁷¹

Pietro Edwards and Leopoldo Cicognara

The growing value of the collection at the Gallery was cause for satisfaction for Edwards and the others so pivotal in its development. However, the long struggle to maintain an enlightened awareness about competent restoration of the pictures was again under attack. Although President Cicognara was Edwards' ally in many things, the Count made a grave mistake in the policy of restoration of some very important works at this time. In 1816 the Government finally consigned 250 long-desired paintings to the Gallery to facilitate Cicognara's dream of opening a public picture gallery at the Academy.⁵⁷² He hoped to have at least thirty of the major works restored in time for the Academic Prize ceremony in August of 1817.⁵⁷³ Titian's famous *Assumption of the Virgin*, taken from the Frari, was one of these works.⁵⁷⁴ With this prized painting transported to the Scuole Grande di S. Maria della Carità (the new Academy) and hung in the upper salon, (Fig. 48) Cicognara hoped to represent the finest works of the Venetian School of painting for all the world to see.

There appears to have been little consensus in the Academy about whether or how the paintings should be restored before displaying them. Pietro Edwards was by this time an aging man and very ill, but he was shocked by the following hasty and ill-conceived plan.⁵⁷⁵ Two restorers had been appointed for this prestigious campaign, and neither one

⁵⁷¹ Ibid., p. 85 ff #44; also see Pietro Edwards, A.S.V., *Corrispondenza*, n.63 / n.234.

⁵⁷² Merrifield, p.874.

⁵⁷³ Ibid., p.875.

⁵⁷⁴ Rosand, *Painting...*, p. 51, Titian's *Assumption of the Virgin* was returned to the Frari in 1918 after WWI.

⁵⁷⁵ Merrifield, p.875.

was equipped, in Edwards' opinion, at a sufficiently professional level to operate without constant supervision.⁵⁷⁶ He warned that not only were the pictures of supreme value to the city, but also that some were immense in size; moreover, for work that should have taken at least five years, Cicognara allotted only four months.⁵⁷⁷

At the time of this campaign, the contract made between Pietro Edwards as Conservatore of the Gallery and Antonio Floriani for the restoration of the *Assumption* was dated February 21, 1816. It included some of the following stipulations: any new ground was to be composed of gesso and "colla di ritagli" and all retouches were to be made with varnish, the use of oil being strictly forbidden. Edwards was to supply and deliver eight pounds of varnish consisting of "acqua di ragia" and mastic. The paste for relining included flour, Flanders glue, and ox gall, which was to preserve the mixture from insects. Mary Merrifield, who examined the *Assumption* in 1847, believed the painting to be retouched with megalip, based on its distinctive cracking pattern. The color values were lowered, which she attributed to the use of oil, and the dark pigment was harmed by some corrosive cleaning. She concluded that the painting had again been restored between 1816 and 1847 and without Edwards, who died in 1821.⁵⁷⁸

Giovanni O' Kelly Edwards wrote years later about his father's dismay at Count Cicognara's plan. Although he praised Cicognara's general goal of bringing new life to

⁵⁷⁶ Valcanover, "Il Restauro dell Assunta," p. 44. One of these restorers was Lattanzio Querena, a "modest painter and uninhibited restorer," who was to repair the "parts lost and rubbed by the robes of the monks." He did not contain his repairs to repainting the robes of St. Peter, however but also "unfortunately over-painted the sky, and behind the Virgin and Eternal Father with a sulphur(yellow)...in particular the group of angels above...this according to a rule of the time to create an artificial patina...yellowing of pigments or additions called corrections, obtained by arbitrary retouches."

⁵⁷⁷ Merrifield., p.876.

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid., p.877.

these works in the public eye, the younger Edwards described as obvious and visible some of the injuries that the restorations inflicted. He also warned of the more pernicious damage that would appear slowly and perhaps go unnoticed by those who had not known the state of the works before.⁵⁷⁹ The Count's own earlier letter to Antonio Canova, dated March 30, 1816, only reiterated a profound commitment to the preservation of the great Venetian works. Cicognara described the removal of the monuments to Doge Marcello the Vendramin from the Church of the Santa Marina and in the Servi (both demolished) to the Church of San Giovanni e Paolo. He then continued,

...these works from my dearest fifteenth century, and other works I will save like the Giovanni Bellini and the Carpaccio of San Giobbe, and the *Assunta* in the Frari, to be substituted and placed in the Accademia. In this way the monuments of our art have a cult and preservation.⁵⁸⁰

Cicognara's relationship with Edwards was complicated. Both had positions and reputations that merited great respect, and Edwards' knowledge and ability in matters of conservation were unparalleled. On December 16, 1816, Cicognara wrote to encourage Edwards to direct the inspections of the churches in the Sestiere of Castello. It was a daunting assignment and Edwards would have to utilize many assistants. Cicognara asked him to pay particular attention to works that were in fragile or damaged condition.⁵⁸¹

The letter was respectful and flattering, as the style of the day required, and

⁵⁷⁹ Ibid., p.878; Rosand, *Painting...* p. 55., Crowe and Cavalcaselle mention a darkening of the picture in the nineteenth century.

⁵⁸⁰ Leopoldo Cicognara, *Lettere Cicognara ad Antonio Canova*, "Lettere XLVI," p. 122.

⁵⁸¹ A.S.V. *Busta Edwards #2, Fascicolo 5 #7 Document 23* December 16, 1816. Cicognara to Edwards: "Io non ho d'uopo di richiamare alla sua memoria ciò che nell' ultima riduzione tenute al Corpo Accademico annunziando il savissimo divisamente dell Eccelso Governo, que questa R. Accademico compiti un Elenco delle Pitture, Sculture, bassirilievi, ed altro esistenti delle Chiese di queste Città, le qualore preziosità e raro pregio meritano di essere con particolari cura conservate."

Cicognara acknowledged Edwards' "activity and intelligence."⁵⁸² The President was particularly interested in the causes of damages and requested that Edwards take special note if ignorance or "devotion to the cult"--such as the rites of the Mass, candles, touching the images etc.--were the culprits in the ruin of any work. Cicognara hinted at problems with Edwards in another letter to Canova about a painting attributed to Titian (but unnamed in the letter) damaged by past restoration. It was probably a Titian, according to Edwards, whose expertise Cicognara acknowledged, but the Count still withheld an Academy vote on the painting⁵⁸³ He appeared to make light of the controversy about the massive campaign to restore so many works. Cicognara was obviously well pleased with the restoration of the *Assumption* when he wrote to Canova on May 24, 1817,

You see a huge salon with the greatest of antique works from our school, which will impress you, and I dare say think the first in Europe. The *Assumption* from the Frari is first, which was covered with a crust of smoke and incense inciting horror. Now it is splendid, the only painting to rival Raphael's *Transfiguration*; if not that I poor devil, even think it more beautiful.⁵⁸⁴

Pietro Edwards and the Dissertation Academica... (c. 1812)

We can assume that Edwards made his concerns known to Cicognara orally, but he also responded in the way most predictable. After the paintings were displayed in the Accademia to great acclaim, if to public ignorance about their true condition, Edwards

⁵⁸² Ibid., "Assicurate a ben chiare prove della di Lei attività e intelligenza accolgo con lieto ammirabili e graziose obbligazioni che Ella mi ha fatto di concorrer nell' opere di offrirse spontaneo a collaboratore quindi la prego di assumere al capo delle sue dotte ispezioni le Chiese e Locali..."

⁵⁸³ Ibid., *Lettere Cicognara Ad...*, p.156.

⁵⁸⁴ Valcanover, ...*Assunta*, p. 44, "Vedrete un Salone immenso di grandi opere antiche di pennello della nostra scuola, che vi farà stordire e ardisco crederlo il più sia in Europe. L' Assunta dei Frari vi primeggia, ed era coperta di una crosta di fumo e di incenso che faceva orrore. Ora è uno splendido, è il

wrote a long, eloquent, and detailed exposition of the facts as he saw them. The paper, directed at the Academy, incorporated his wide knowledge about the field and his aspirations for the profession of restoration in Venice. This document, *Dissertazione Accademica sul quesito Se si debbano ristaurare le antiche dannigate pitture* (c.1812-16), completed Edwards' whole body of written work, both as government functionary and dedicated advocate of cultural preservation.⁵⁸⁵ This last paper was presented to the Academy and contained Edwards' perspective compared to his colleagues on important questions about restoration. He must have been very weary of again defending what was so obvious. He had spent his life trying to create and sustain a system and a consciousness that would ensure the future commitment to preserving and repairing the artistic heritage of Venice. Now again in his own city, the forces for expediency and the "quick fix" threatened to destroy all he had achieved; they endangered some of the most cherished paintings in Venetian art history. Edwards also knew that his own career and research could have far-reaching effects, and so made his cause a crusade. Every paper he wrote compared other countries' attempts to save their own art with the more successful campaigns in Venice. With this international perspective he hoped to inspire the protective and competitive interests of the city about its art.

While Edwards lay ill, this debate raged in the Academy, and four other prominent restorers had submitted reports in defense of their own diverse experiences and opinions. Edwards summarized these points of view and synthesized them, creating what he hoped

solo quadro da contrapporre alla "Trasfigurazione" di Raffaello; se non che io, povero diavolo lo credo più bello."

⁵⁸⁵ Pietro Edwards, S.P.V., MS 787.10-876.10 Insetto 1, *Dissertazione Accademica sul quesito Se si debbano ristaurare le antiche dannigate pitture* (c.1812-16).

would be a moderate position and the one most likely to succeed. The three who generally agreed with Edwards were Professors Cozza, Bini, and Antonio Floriani, all restorers and instructors of painting in the Academy. It was Galgano Cipriani, Professor of Engraving and Chiaroscuro in the same institution, who believed that there should be little or no meddling with original works.⁵⁸⁶

The first three submitted various recipes and techniques they utilized which are summarized here. Professor Cozza described his method of cleaning paintings using soap, water, alum, and wine, stating he was careful always to regulate the time and intensity of the mixture on the painting. To him, theory should not displace the practical decisions that must be made on a case-to-case basis.⁵⁸⁷ He believed mastic mixed with acqua ragia (turpentine) was the best varnish, that the ground should consist of Bolognese gesso with wheat flour glue, and that retouching pigments should be blended with varnish or a little poppy seed oil. Bini stated that he had seen many bad results from using poor quality materials combined with a lack of skill in emulating the diverse styles of different Masters. He also advised that surface retouches must be protected from the air by the use of waxes or encaustic, citing the successful preservation of mummies wrapped in wax-coated bandages!⁵⁸⁸ Even with this fairly eccentric view he did not consider wax the only medium

⁵⁸⁶ Pietro Edwards (written by Galgano Cipriani), S.P.V., MS 788.15-877.15 *Memoria in difesa delle Celebri Pitture*, March 22, 1812.

⁵⁸⁷ Maria Rosaria Mioni, "Restauratori a Confronto sulla Tecnica di Conservazione dei Dipinti: Venezia Prima Meta del XIX Secolo," *Atti...* 1986-87, Tomo CXLV, p. 209.

⁵⁸⁸ Edwards S.P.V. MS 788.15-877.15, "Al Signor Bini, dopo alcune premesse, e dopo aver osservato che la cattiva riuscita di tai operazioni fu sempre cagionato dall'uso d' ingredienti disadatti al fin che si cerca , e dalla poca intelligenza dell' arte pittorica, non che delle maniere diverse de' Maestri le cui pitture debbonsi ristaurare; conclude che l'unica via onde assicurarsi contra l' alterazioni de' ritocchi operata dall' ossigeno, e vogliamo dire dall' aria vitale, si è quella di adoperare le cere all' encaustiche; e in prova di tal osservazioni ricorda il fatto delle tuniche , e delle bende che involgono le mummie antiche; e riporta il

to use. Bini also related that a good example where wax served a preservative function was its incorporation into a Correggio (no name) sited on a wall and supposedly in superlative condition. Floriani cautioned against using oil when retouching antique pictures painted with a wax medium, because the application of oil would always remain visible and would deface and detract from the whole work. His cleaning recipe involved water, sodium carbonate and walnut oil, with all retouches made with pigment mixed with varnish.

The document that best expressed Cipriani's views is probably the *Memoria in difesa delle Celebri Pitture* (March 22, 1812), which can be found among Edwards' papers in the Seminario Patriarcale.⁵⁸⁹ Cipriani quickly presented two examples of disastrous restorations of works held in the Academy. These were *The Presentation in the Temple* (1539) (Fig. 49) and the *Saint Giovanni* (c.1540) (Fig. 50) by Titian, the latter considered the pride of the new collection. Cipriani characterized the first as an "antique work" and the *Baptist* represented one of the worst examples of restoration gone astray. He called it a "modern retouch, observed with stains and inharmonious glazes."⁵⁹⁰ Some of the restorer's concerns were the quality of the pigments available and how they would age over time. He also questioned whether most restorers had the humility required to even touch a painting by such an artist or "Divine Author" and he warned that if mistakes were made, "how late it would be for our repentance!" Cipriani pointed to a famous treasure in art history, the *Torso Bebevedere*, "adored by all artists and yet mutilated in

detto ad un dipinto del Coreggio eseguito sul muro; alle quali esemplificazioni aggiunge l'esperienze sue proprie."

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁰ Cipriani, S.P.V.MS 788.15-877.15, March 22, 1812.

various ways from time and circumstances,” but not by a restorer.⁵⁹¹

...but to see them scour with colored brushes the divine paintings and scrape away not only minute stains, but the ancient original! And during some times they knew to diminish or to increase some parts believing it for the better. They removed pure shadows thinking that life was concealed beneath it...to remake it more perfectly...as we see in the hand of the first priest in the *Presentation* I already referred to, and in other great paintings...In diverse cases, is it believed that it will make the work more perfect if one covers bad imagination? Some have groped according to the style of various paintings and they boast of caution...but the results are always unhappy...perhaps altered and full of wax: disconnecting the effects and making them deformed...one sees what a brutal fellow Time is reducing Titian, Leonardi, Bartolomeo, Vanucchi, Correggi, Michel Angioli; the Honored Ones from Ancient Tombs...to observe the precious Works for which you need rare elevated Wisdom: and shed tears for the tortures that the arrogant hands have made them suffer! Except in the singular case when the surface crust is peeling and falling away, it is wise to restore the painting from the back...

Cipriani's impassioned plea closed with these words:

My views represent the opposition, beautiful ideas and for you to choose the best of them...This is the innocent motive that has made me write the present memo against the restorations of paintings, not to desire to hurt them. Thank you for your attention.⁵⁹²

It is clear that Cipriani held strong yet cautious views on restoration. He felt that paintings should be restored only if their continued existence were in question, and he believed that restoration was acceptable only when the gesso ground was crumbling and threatening the paint surface or when a new lining was needed to stabilize the painting. There should be no retouching of precious original paint. He hoped that the Academy would first examine any work designated to be repaired before delivering it into the hands of any restorer, all decisions benefiting from a variety of opinions.⁵⁹³

⁵⁹¹ Ibid.; Seymour Howard, *Antiquity Restored*, p.21, Seymour stated that unlike so many classical sculptures, this monumnetal work was never restored.

⁵⁹² Cipriani, S.P.V., MS 788.15-877.15, March 22, 1812.

⁵⁹³ Edwards, *Dissertazione Academica...*, S.P.V., MS 787.10-876.10, “Rigettato in generale dal Signor Cipriani, la ristaurazione, eccettua egli soltanto le foderatura con nuova tela sul dorso del quadro nell’

Edwards admitted that the Academy had to work hard to resolve this range of points of view, but maintained his own course while granting the four experts their deeply held opinions, particularly Cipriani. Edwards admitted that the choices were not easy, and that each painting stood as an individual case requiring special consideration. However, he believed that restorers might err on the side of caution. What could be lost was too precious, and so restorers must persevere with firm and clear principles guiding their practical knowledge.⁵⁹⁴

He delineated the two primary concerns in any restoration again as the extrinsic and the intrinsic causes, both harmful to the material substance of the work. He observed some obvious criteria in a guide to action for the restorer. The restorer must remain vigilant and address any perceived threat to paintings before the damage occurred, but he must also be able to stabilize any deterioration already in progress. Clear signs of this urgency included when a painting was detached from its ground, or had too rigid substrata or exhibited a bubbling surface, or had rotted or moldy canvas due to invasion of worms or salt (sodium nitrates), flaking pigment, or a crumbling panel support. The worst result of all these causes was the loss of precious original paint, which brought up the sensitive subject of retouches or inpainting — dubious when dealing with the issue of respect for the original artist, authenticity, aesthetic and market value.⁵⁹⁵

unico caso che una pittura si vada scrostando e sia cadente, ma intende che per nullo toccar si debba al di sopra nè coi pennelli, nè in altro modo. Che se contra il suo parere si volesse far eseguire di più, vorrebbe almeno che nessuno dipinto fosse consegnate alle mani dei così detti Restauratori se prima dagli Accademici giudicato non fosse soggetto a quello che /dice egli/ io chiamo pericolo....” (emphasis is Edwards).

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁵ Ibid. “L’ arte restauratrice delle pitture contiene in se due parti primarie, e distinte, una delle quali per iscopo la preservazione delle pitture stesse dai ma che le minacciano variamente nelle loro material

Edwards rejected what he called Cipriani's more extreme view, one that would threaten the existence of Venetian art for future generations. Edwards also wondered why Cipriani focused on works on canvas. What about the many antique panel paintings that needed to be transferred to another panel--how could they be saved without touching the picture? Edwards made an analogy at this point to the practice of medicine by asking who would refuse to administer medicine to the sick even if it only relieved the effects of disease, but did not cure? The incessant law of decay condemned all natural and artificial compositions to a limited existence, and to Edwards, painting was the frailest, yet it was imperative to try to save the work.⁵⁹⁶ Edwards warned the assembly about Cipriani's restrictions on restoration and their potential consequences.

I would only say to his delusion, that if he should follow the erroneous superstitions about not touching a painting that may perish. Paris now would not have the *St. Michael* of Sanzio, nor Rome the celebrated pictures in the Vatican by the same (artist); and Venice would have lost the ceiling by Paolo representing the *History* situated in the Biblioteca, and two or three admirable ceilings by Vecelli in the Salute...and Albrecht Dürer that exists in the Palazzo Reale, and the *Judgment of Solomon* painted by Bonifacio seen now in the S.A.I., and the *Adoration of the Magi* and the *Slaughter of the Innocents* by the same author now in the Academy, with countless other precious works that I do not mention for the sake of brevity. These works nearly entirely lost, snatched from the rapacious hands of Time that was about to triumph on the existence of these as it did on many others; now only in tales of Art, or like the wretched relics held in public sight to (our) national disgrace.⁵⁹⁷

sussistenza, o dal progresso di quelli che hanno di già cominciato ad invaderla; e l'altra che nei confini della ragione e del possibile rimediarsi deve ai danni intrinsecamente riportati da esse. Un dipinto da segni assai chiari d'esser prossimo a staccarsi dal suo fondo: un' altra per la rigidità del suo sostrato, o vegliam dire della sua imprimitura si va screpolando poco a poco, e con la sottile introduzione dell' aria nella tenue massa del suo composto si prepara ad un tardo, ma sicuro discioglimento: la tela originale di quadro se è infracidita per muffa, o nitrosa esalazione calcestre, in guisa che il suo tessuto si smaglierebbe in laceri filamenti traendo seco o lasciando cadere sbriciolato il sovrapposto colore...cui si andasse accostando qualche opera preziose degli Eccelsi nostri Maestri, anzicchè accorrere con ogni presidio di Arte onde non si avverci la prevedata perdita di alcuni loro periclitante originale."

⁵⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁹⁷ Ibid., "Pure se mai si trovasse taluno cotanto restio, che accordar non volesse nè anche si fatti esteriori sussidi, non potendo io convincerlo in questo momento col far ad esso conoscere quanto cauta, e ben dedotto sia la parte fisica, e la meccanica de vari modi esperiti per simili operazioni, sempre in qualche

Edwards proclaimed that the success of his long and dedicated work was due to the application of reasonable remedies seen in the salvation of such cherished works like Titian's *Assumption* or the Bellini in St. Giovanni Christomo. Edwards agreed with Cipriani that often the selection of the works to be restored was faulty, and he also concurred that paintings that those that were too damaged probably should not be repaired. He noted Rossi's work on a Bellotto, unfortunately "covered with new impasto," and even cited the unfortunate restorations of the *Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci as being "guttet...a sublime production not able to be revived in its original appearance... [it] should have been left intact as venerable leftovers in a kind of cult due to the immortal name of the Author."⁵⁹⁸ He likened such risky efforts to that of re-carving an ancient inscription, almost entirely lost. Where would one begin? However, short of those extreme examples, Edwards believed that even works with multiple damages, if they retained their underpainting, could be saved in some form. However, they must not be entirely "reproduced"; and thus they could be enjoyed in their diminished but stabilized

aspetto diverso, perche' giammai un caso è uguale in tutto ad un altro, gli direi solo a suo disinganno, che se si fosse ovunque seguito l'erroneo superstizioso principio di non mai toccare dipinto alcun che perisca, Parigi ora più non avrebbe il suo S. Michele del Sancio, nè Roma le più celebri pitture vaticane dello stesso; e Venezia da parecchi anni avrebbe perduto il soffitto di Paolo rappresentante la *Storia*, situato nella dimessa Biblioteca, e due dei tre ammirabili soffitti del Vecelli alla Salute, e l'Alberto Durerò che esiste nel Palazzo Reale, e il *Giudizio di Salomone* dipinto da Bonifacio spettante adesso a S.A.I.; e *L'Adorazione dei Magi*, e la *Strage degli Innocenti* dello stesso autore passate in quest' Accademia, con tanti altri pregievoli esemplari che per minore prolissità non menziono; tutte opere nel loro materiale poco men che perite, e strapate per così dire dalle rapaci mani del tempo, che stava per trinofare su la esistenza di esse, come fece su quella di assai altre; o vi mancò ogni soccorrevole ajuto, e restano adesso in essere solamente nei racconti dell' Arte, o a guisa di miserande reliquie tenute in pubbliche vista a nazional disonore."

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid., "Quest è ciò che al dire del dottissimo Signor Rossi fece il Bellotto coprindo di nuovo impasto quasi tutto lo sparuta cenacolo del Vinci, produzione sublime, di cui non potendosi più rianimare l'originale comparsa, se ne doveano rispettare intatt' i venerabili avanzi per una specie di culto dovuto al nome immortale dell'Autore."

state.⁵⁹⁹

The many paintings that languished in an unrestored state stood as examples of missed opportunities. Edwards described the *Preaching of Christ*, or the *Nativity of the Baptist* by the Bassani, as dark and indecipherable canvases. He compared these two to the glory of the *Departure of Doge Ziani* or the *Return of the Doge* in the Palazzo Ducale, “ransomed now for twenty eight years from decay” for immoderate sums, as shining proof of a successful program of preservation. He chided the overly cautious and stated that he could not believe the Immortal Titian would have wanted his masterpiece, the *Death of St. Peter Martyr*, left in its previous ruined state and legible only in a print by Valentine. This and many other works now survived in Edwards’ beloved city, this “most outstanding Museum of Mankind,” due to their dedicated efforts.⁶⁰⁰

Edwards did not ignore the conspicuous failures that so concerned the conservatives like Cipriani or the mistakes that encouraged the tradition of secrecy surrounding restoration — “so much part of the dense veil of hidden precepts.” There were any number of bad restorations, he agreed, but he warned against the more purist opinion that art with “intrinsic” faults should be left untreated because the faults were part

⁵⁹⁹ Ibid., “Di fatti se questa riproduzione si referisse al complessa, o alla maggior parte d’un opera consunta nel suo tutto insieme, par certamente che il ripassarla quasi per intiere di nuovo impasto onde farvi ricomparire quello che se ne era perduto, sia lo stesso che voler sopprimere un documento dal quale per il manco si fa fede ad onore di quel Maestri ch’ altra volta esiteva un suo lavoro eccellente; e in quella guisa che niun saggia antiquario vorebbe far ripassare a colpi di scalpello le sigle e tutta la iscrizione d’un antichitissima preziosa lapide corrosa dagli anni, ma ne farebbe riportare in altro marmo, o diversamente la quasi irreconoscibile scrittura coi supplementi eruditi delle sue lacune; cosi credo che rispettato l’avanzo dell’ antico originale, possa talora esser lodevole partito, e proficio anche per l’arte il fare che da quegli’ indizi si fraga su d’altra tela un novello dipinto, adoprando ogni sforzo a fin di ridurlo il più che si possa vicino alle presenti bellazze dell’ esemplar deperito.”

⁶⁰⁰ Ibid.

of the artist's original work.⁶⁰¹

The approaches must be different for every work of art, and this included the medium itself. Edwards extensively used the analogy of the restoration of antique sculpture to present and support his views. He stated that although there were risks in "restoring" a piece of stone, the original fragment would remain. This was not so with painting, a more fragile art form that, once lost, was gone forever. The eighteenth century had seen the development of collections of Classical sculpture in places like Venice and Rome, and most works were greatly restored. This appetite for antique sculpture contributed to the industry of antiquarianism, expanding the market for these commodities during Pietro Edwards' life. The desire for this art derived from the power of an ancient figure, usually a life-sized perfect human nude which could carry the weight of cultural expectation for a city like Venice struggling to reinvent itself.⁶⁰² Major additions and adaptations transformed these marble fragments of the past which we now recognize as pastiches, created to satisfy a collector's idea of wholeness at the expense of authenticity.⁶⁰³ Edwards promoted the invisible restoration of many antique works and

⁶⁰¹ Ibid.

⁶⁰² Seymour Howard, *Antiquity Restored...*, pp.16-17.

⁶⁰³ Seymour Howard, *Bartolomeo Cavaceppi, Eighteenth-Century Restorer*, New York & London:Garland Publishers 1982, p.2-3, Bartolomeo Cavaceppi (1716-77) was the leading restorer of sculpture in antiquarian obsessed Rome in the late 18th century. He could be considered comparable to Edwards in his prominence in his city and area of expertise, pp.144-145, In the essay "Del Arte di Ben Restaurare le Antiche Sculture" found in his book, *Raccolta I* (1768), he explained his reasons for restoring ancient sculpture. Because of its excellence, although often found in fragmented condition, antique sculpture should be the focus for the amateur collector because of its high and lasting quality. Cavaceppi called his own scheme of restoration the only true and valid one. It required that the restorer have a thorough grounding in history and mythology of antiquity to correctly identify the subject. The craftsman also must match marble perfectly and duplicate all styles and qualities of antique aculptors. The restored parts must fit perfectly, connected with dowels not cement, and be finished after they are attached to the original fragment. He warned against interpeting freely and also advised that the joins between ancient and modern pieces be irregular to mimic the quality of the antique.

lamented others:

... the graft of new marble onto the old induces a disagreeable and tuneless effect on the eye that distracts from quick and easy awareness of the relationship of the parts to the whole. Worse to see how much the modern desire to darken artificially, (patina) to make it even the color of the antique; the new marble absorbs the tint, to darken in a brief time, and the piecing together to become more deformed. Go see the proof in the Museum of the Public Library. The shame of this unsupportable damage in restoration of the marble they continue without opposition to connect, to patch, and reconnect entire limbs. The formation of all these restorations to revive (the art) but is never happy! One knows that the leg of the *Apollo Belvedere* has been badly put together, and yet they continue to restore: likewise the legs of the *Antineo* like the *Belvedere* has defects, again many but they continue to restore: the hand of the *Medici Venus* is not pleasing; but they continue, and will continue to restore in succession, because they like the other parts too much, and they deserve many praises for the raised arm of the *Laöcoon*, the right arm of the supposed fighting gladiator, and the beautiful head of the *Farnese Hercules*, even if a little small compared to his beautiful legs.⁶⁰⁴

Edwards suggested that perfection was hard to achieve in anything, but that the attempt should not hinder well organized attempts to save the art. However, he stated that the best way to appraise what could be done to a work or had already been done was by comparison. By comparing the appearance of a picture before and after an intervention, some things were obvious. For example, the viewer could decide whether the intervention had increased the aesthetic appreciation of the picture. More subtle

⁶⁰⁴ Edwards, *Dissertation Academico...*, "... L'innesto del marmo nuovo sul occhio induce una spiacevole scordatissimo affetto, che distoglie dalla pronto e facile conoscenza della relazione che aver debbano le parti col tutto ciascuna figura. Peggio poi se la quanta moderna vogliarsi oscurare artificialmente, onde renderla pari al color dell'antico; il marmo nuovo assorbe quella tinte, si annerisce in breve tratto, e il ripezzo diviene più deforme vadasi a vederne le prove nel Museo della Pubblica Biblioteca. Ad onta però di questa insuperabili discapiti propri alla ristaurazione dei marmi si continua senza contrasto a connettere, a rapezzare, ed a rimetter se occorre membra intiere. L'quanto al formale tutti questi ristauri sono essi poi riusciti mai sempre felici! Neppure si conobbe che una gamba dell' Apollo di Belvedere era stata mal posta insieme, ma si continuo a ristaurare: si rimarcò similmente che le gambe del creduto Antineo detto anchi esso di Belvedere aveano diffetti ancora maggiori ma si continuo a ristaurare: non piacquero le mani della Venere di Medici, ma si continuò e si continuerà in seguito a ristaurare, perchè d'altra parte piacquero assai, e meritano molti elogi il braccio alzato del Laöcoonte; il braccio destro del supposto gladiator combattente, la bella testa dell'Ercole Farnese, comunque al parere di alcuni un pò piccola, e le sue bellissimo gambe."

factors to observe were the effects of the changes in the materials used in the arts of paintings. These included the transition from the tempera medium to oil or the exchange of traditional gesso-and-glue based grounds for an oil priming layer. All these factors influenced the skill and practice of restoration over the years.⁶⁰⁵

At this point Edwards addressed his concern about the corruption that restoration had contributed to the value of art on the market. His own place in the constellation of dealer, seller, and restorer is not entirely clear. Whatever his own culpability in this practice may have been, he seems to have condemned certain abuses. Some works that had been over-valued before restoration were sold after repair for even more money because of what he called the restorer's "universal aberrations which do not correspond to historical truth..." With this kind of activity there were other reasons to doubt the true value of restoration, like the difficulty in applying the complex science that the craft demanded and then making sensitive and effective repairs.

In his previous papers, Edwards embarked on a campaign to educate the legislators or Academicians on conservation science. This last essay was no exception as he briefly outlined for his target audience the chemistry of discoloration of old and new retouches, the doctrine of inflammable gases in the research of Bergman, Boume, and Macquer, and the dangers of indiscreet cleaning with solvents. He mentioned the transformations of copper resinate (green) and some blue pigments while pointing to Paolo Veronese's painting as an example of such intrinsic alterations due to the original

⁶⁰⁵ Ibid.

artist's practice.⁶⁰⁶

Edwards ended his argument by reminding the Academy that all the major cities of Europe practiced restoration, albeit none as professionally or successfully as Venice. To Edwards Rome was still “uncivilized,” while Florence was too conservative and Naples, Bologna, and Milan watched others to learn ideas (having few of their own). Only Venice, with its unfortunate maritime climate, taught the lessons necessary to preserve the precious art in the best way. He warned that the Academy must now abandon any new doubts and encourage restoration and scientific research openly and with confidence. The Academicians must not confuse the bad practitioners with the value of the practice itself, and they must “escort restoration from false wisdom...and earn the respect and honor from all the Nations of the world.”⁶⁰⁷

The Restorer as Ideologue

Pietro Edwards has shown in his writing that what he called the “art of restoration” combined technical and theoretical understanding. His perspective included a broader context for his goals that revealed a political and artistic orientation that influenced the value of a work in its critical and physical survival. The exercise of these

⁶⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁰⁷ Ibid., “Venezia sola dunque, Venezia il cui clima nelle lezioni fisiche del Sauvi vien definito. Clima particolarmente infesto alle pitture; Venezia la cui scuola pittorica primeggia sull’ altre per la solar eccellenza del suo colorito, ed è perciò sogget à perdere prima d’ogni altra la speciosità del pregio che la distingue; Venezia il cui circospetto Senato in altri giorni si decise ad un esteso ristauero con la scorta delle consulte pervenutegli dalle sue legazioni comandate di raccogliere il parere dai più accreditati professori, e dai rinomati loro Collegio dotto diversi Governi; Venezia, dissi sarà dunque la sola che trascurando il suo pericolo maggiore, e il suo maggiore interesse; che contraddicendo se stessa, che risultando al discernimento di tutto il ben istruito Mondo...Scortata la ristaurazione dai non fallaci lumi che la somministrerà il nostro Consesso, e rincorata dallo schermo che tutti le farete contra gl’ insulsi attachi esteriori, progredirà essa con giovale alacrità nè suoi avanzamente; ed allo stesso tempo questa R. Accademia...in vece di trovarsi costretta a soffrire i rampognamenti amarissimi delle Patria, e i

extra-artistic attitudes has not been previously analyzed in art history. Matteo Panzeri, in his research into the career of Lombardian restorer, Mauro Pellicoli (1907-1987), has also concluded that the restorer operates within a socio-political arena that cannot be separated from parts of the work.⁶⁰⁸ In Pellicoli's case it was Fascist Italy (Fig. 51) which made his role as a State Conservator unpopular in post-war Italy. A few of Mr. Panzeri's case studies reveal some approaches to restoration that move Pellicoli beyond the realm of the objective ideal. Coincidentally, Pellicoli also restored many of the same works in Venice that Pietro Edwards did, a situation which presents an interesting parallel. One example, the restoration of Giovanni Bellini's *Pieta* was discussed earlier in this dissertation. Pietro Edwards had refused to touch this painting located in the Palazzo Ducale. It had been extensively overpainted and the composition included the new sixteenth century owners, their family crest, and the iconography had been altered affecting the meaning of Christ's death. Pellicoli did not have the same reservations as Edwards and proceeded with what Panzeri calls a "philological restoration." This approach selects and deletes history, even the visual record of the conservation history as the restorer sees fit, in an attempt to return the work to some perceived original state.⁶⁰⁹ In an unidentified work by Francesco Mola, Panzeri described Pellicoli's work as an "art market restoration" that removed and invented history to ennoble the painting and raise its economic value. Restorers are not immune to the influences of art historians who, in another unidentified example, perhaps

queremoniosi dissensi delle adontate germane Accademie, ricevera i plausi festosi dell' una e le congratulazioni, e gli encomy di tutte le Nazioni cultrici delle libere discipline."

⁶⁰⁸ Matteo Panzeri, Unpublished writing in Getty Research Institute Archives, Getty Center, Los Angeles, Spring 1998. I am grateful for Mr. Panzeri's insights.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid.

the Brancacci Chapel, caused “Masolino to be restored in the manner of Masaccio.”⁶¹⁰

Restoration can be manipulated by ideology or other extra-artistic goals, which can socially determine the praxis of the profession. The question that arises then is how much of the image of the artist do we owe to the restorer?

During Pietro Edwards’ long career, the taste in art was evolving from the Baroque to Neoclassical in Venice, as all over Europe. The forms of Classicism had developed into a more critical orthodoxy, where literary and artistic rules were classified according to systems, qualities, and rules that demanded order and elegance.⁶¹¹ Pietro Edwards was representative of his class and education reflected in his taste for Neoclassical art.⁶¹² This preference made its way by necessity into his highly organized classifications of pictures into categories of Need and Merit. In this system he made choices about what art would be saved and its treatment, favoring the art of the Renaissance.⁶¹³ This combined with the Venetian nostalgia for the past and the requisite bolstering of the myth of *La Serenissima*.

These attitudes stimulated an appeal for the recognized values of the past; and in the early eighteenth-century, art critics like Carlo Maratta, Bottari, and Baldinucci expressed a dislike for Baroque painting and encouraged the restoration and preservation of work from the “Golden Age” or cinquecento. Their interests were also historical, and

⁶¹⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹¹ Ferguson, p.86.

⁶¹² Haskell, *Patrons and Painters...*, pp. 354-5, p. 359, On Neoclassicism among society in Venice such as Algarotti; Howard, *Bartolmeo Cavaceppi...*, p. 233, On the forces of Neolassicism working on a restorer.

⁶¹³ Conti, p.

suggested that the art be recorded in engravings.⁶¹⁴ Edwards' own predecessor, Anton Maria Zanetti, had described his first catalogue of all the paintings in Venice as a "renovation" of the *Ricche Minere* by Marco Boschini and Zanetti's *Della Pittura Veneziana* (1771). He showed a respect for the Classical ideals of clarity and order in its literary style that Edwards' administrative organization emulated.⁶¹⁵

Among the numerous papers written by Edwards is his plan for the new Academy in Venice to train future artists. The *Progetto Statuti e discipline per La Veneta Accademia di Belle Arte* (c.1805) can be found among Edwards' papers in the Seminario Patriarcale, and it reflects much of what is known about his attitudes toward the traditions of the Academy and hierarchies of art. It resembles his other writing also by the cover page and by a careful and detailed structure, but it is not signed by Edwards. However, because it is among his other important papers it is considered part of his written legacy. Although not a revolutionary conception, it presented an idea for a Academic school to like others all over Europe, to train the artist in theory and practice with an emphasis on studying Antique and Renaissance artists, facilitated by the study of the Farsetti cast collection that was part of the Accademia Gallery.⁶¹⁶

The comprehensive course of study included anatomy, the nude, and figure studies in diverse styles, but particularly based on Greek and Roman prototypes. Besides painting, the Academy would also offer courses in sculpture and bas-relief in stucco, wood, marble, and metal. The curriculum included the study of classical architecture,

⁶¹⁴ Philip Sohm, *Pittoresco: Marco Boschini, His Critics, and their Critiques of Early Brushwork in 17th & 18th Century Italy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 197-201.

⁶¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 225.

perspective, ornament, and engraving, with examinations and prizes given upon successful completion of each course. The proposal was endorsed by several people, including the Neoclassical architect and Edwards' colleague Gianantonio Selva, who signed for "the sculptor, Antonio Canova, Deputy of the Academic Plan in the Faculty of Sculpture"⁶¹⁷ The presence of Canova and Selva affirms the Classical and Neoclassical commitment in the proposed school.

Pietro Edwards' relationship with Antonio Canova is not able to be fully developed in this research. However, he was advisor to the artist on collecting and, as an important official of the Venetian Academy, wrote an homage to the sculptor for the unveiling of a gesso cast of Canova's bust (Fig. 52) (1803) of Napoleon. This was to complete the statue of the "Colossale di S. M. Imperatore e Re Napoleon il Grande," sent to Milan.⁶¹⁸ Never one to hold back, Edwards is positively effusive about the work, the artist, and about Napoleon, the Emperor who rules like "Pericles and Augustus." Although who, it must be remembered was the conqueror of Edwards' beloved city.⁶¹⁹ Edwards described the giant work as animated, and filled with intelligence like the finest of antique sculpture. Edwards claimed that Canova honored all humanity, the Throne, and the Nation with the

⁶¹⁶ Pietro Edwards, S.P.V., MS 788.14-877.14, *Progetto Statuti e Discipline per La Veneta Accademia di Belle Arti*, (November 19, 1805)

⁶¹⁷ Ibid., *Gianantonio Selva per lo Scoltura Cav. Canova, Deputato al Piano Accademico nella facoltà di Scoltura incaricato con lettera in ??...*

⁶¹⁸ Pietro Edwards, S.P.V., MS 788.2-877.2 n.d. *In occasione che fu esposto in Venezia il Busto di gesso formato sopra la Statua Colossale di S. M. Imperatore, e Re Napoleon il Grande: scolpita Dal Chiarissimo Cavaliere Antonio Canova, Elogio inviato all' Autore Dalla Regia Veneta Accademia di Belle Arti.*

⁶¹⁹ Ibid., "Connobe l'amico vostro il doppio titolo, per cui questo Regio Istituto aspirare poteva se non al possesso, almeno alla contemplazione di un Simulacro, cui come a rappresentanza del proprio Sovrano Rigenerator Munificentissimo dei Veneti Accademici Studi tributar dovea profondi omaggi di ossequio insieme, ed di gratitudine; e come a cospicua opera d' arte, che ravniva nel secol nostro esempli creduti

work's power and grace. Canova's fame and the obvious artistic and commemorative importance of the sculpture dedicated to the Emperor reflected well on the Academy and the legacy of Venetian genius. The threads of awe, critical ability, flattery, and courtly style are woven together in this speech. To modern and skeptical sensibilities Edwards seems less than genuine, yet he achieves all that a sophisticated and experienced government employee should. As for the Neoclassical style, Edwards proclaimed its national and international power.

Edwards correspondence with Canova in 1804 revealed a more personal relationship between restorer and artist (Appendix #8). He had been acting as an agent scouting for works for the sculptor to purchase, but described his own present illness at some length.⁶²⁰ He apologized profusely for not answering a recent letter sent months before.⁶²¹ Edwards may have been ill, but the letter expressed his strong opinions about artists and collecting genres in Venice for Canova the collector:

Your desire to acquire a modello by Tiepolo and a view of Venice executed by a good hand, reached me in good time. The best models of Tiepolo have fallen into the hands of the late Giovanni M. Sasso. After his death they were quickly bought by two dealers in paintings who paid an exorbitant amount and then hid them, or caused the prices to go up very high. The *Immaculate Conception* seen by Sig. Selva is excellent for a certain elevated thought, out of the ordinary. It is not painted with great energy by the Author, but languidly from one part of his career. Nonetheless it is a fairly precious thing, and is well conserved, so it would seem to have enough merit to be sent to the collection you want to form. The acquisition of views is again more difficult. There are few Canalettos remaining, not to mention his nephew Bellotto, they were nothing marvelous and for the most part copies of the originals of his uncle. Of Marieschi I have not seen any, or only those quite blackened with stains. Of Vicentino, of Soli, and of Battaglioli, almost all are inventions or *capricci*

finora partaggio dei soli fortunati giorni di Pericle e di Augusto, dovea tessere per quanto era in suo potere i piu' onorevoli encomi."

⁶²⁰ Pietro Edwards, S.P.V. MS 788.10-877.10 June 23, 1804, *Ornatissimo ad Sig. Cav. Canova*

⁶²¹ Basile & Tranquilli, Document 110, p.65, B.C.V. March 22, 1802, lettera ad Antonio Canova a Pietro Edwards.

or scenes of the terraferma. I repeat on the works by Guardi, as ever incorrect, but spirited and much sought after now, but perhaps because nothing better can be found. You know however, that this painter worked every day for his bread, and bought used canvases with terrible underpainting to paint on. Then he mixed his paint with much oil and painted quickly, *alla prima*. Anyone who buys his paintings must be content to lose them in a short time, for they will not last ten years. On the discovery made by Sig. Tonioli, I tried to acquire two small pictures for you, but we could not come to terms with the seller. They were fairly nice, but nothing more. On my instructions, Sig. Orsetti procured others from a third party, all workshop pieces, stuff to throw away, and I refused them. I made inquiry whether some others I remembered owned by N.H. Battaglia were still available, those of which I had favorable memory, but they were sold. I will continue to trace these without rest and perhaps some piece, satisfactory to us will show up. What a shame! Also pictures of our school are drying up in Venice; and there are no longer view painters of good name.⁶²²

Pietro Edwards' conservative and classical leanings are confirmed strongly in this correspondence. He advised Antonio Canova, to many people the most important artist in

⁶²² Ibid., "Suoi desideri per l' acquisto di qualche modello del Tiepolo, e di qualche veduta di Venezia eseguita da buona mano mi per vennero in tempo assai favorevole. Li migliori modelli del Tiepolo erano caduti in mano del fu Gio. M. Sasso. Dopo la di lui morte furono subito comprati da due, 'o tre altri negozianti di quadri che li pagarono benino, e poscia o li nascosero, o li fecero montare a prezzi esorbitanti. Quello dell' Immacolata Concezione Fattomi vedere dal Sig. Selva è ottimo per ma certa elevatezza di pensiero dantesco, che si cava dall' ordinario. Non è però dipinto nel tempo della maggior energia dell' Autore, ma piuttosto in quello della sua posatezza, per quanto comportavano le sue abitudini, ed il suo stile; e temo che la soverchia minuzzaglia di tanti cherubini sia in parte una introduzion posteriore di Domenico. E per altro assai pregievole cosa, ed è molto ben conservato, cosicchè parvemi che meritase d' essere inviato alla collezione ch' Ella vuol fare. L' acquisto delle vedute è ancora piu difficile. Per quelle di Canaletto non se ne dinorre più; anzi non si parla quasi neppur di quella del suo Nipote Bellotto, quantunque non fossero meraviglie, e per la maggior parte fossero copie tratte dagli originali del Zio. Di Mareschi o non si vede cos' alcuna, o solo qualche pezzo annerito per l' accesso nel partito dell sua maschia. Del Vicentini, del Soli, e del Battaglioli sono quasi tutte invenzioni di capriccio, o vedute alterate di terraferma. Reitano le cose del Guardi, scorrette quanto mai, ma spiritosissime, e di queste vi è adesso molta ricerca, forse perché non si trova di meglio. Ella sa però che questo Pittore lavorava per la pagnotta giornaliera; comprava telaccie da scarto con imprimiture scelleratissime; e per tirar avanti il lavor usava colori molto ogliosi, e dipingeva bene spesso alla prima. Chi acquista de suoi quadri deve rassegnarsi a perderli in poco tempo; ed io non ini farei mallevadore della lovo durata per altri dieci anni. Sulla scoperta fattane del Sig. Tonioli trattai l'acquisto di due di tai quadretti per V. S., ma non ci siamo potuti aggiustare col venditore. Erano graziosetti, e nient' altro. Il Sig. Orzetti procurò alle mie istanze di farmene vedere alcuni altri di terza persona, tutta roba da bottega, anzi da rifiuto. Feci indagare se più esistevano quelli altra volta posseduti dal N.H. Battaglia, e dei quali avevo una qualche vantaggiosa reminiscenza; ma seppi che furono venduti. Lo continuerò a star in traccia senza posa, e forse sbuccherà fuori qualche pezzo di nostra soddisfazione. Gran peccato! anche questo raino del nostro albero pittorico si va seccando in Venezia: non si sono più pittori vedutisti di buon nome."

eighteenth-century Europe, about a wide variety of paintings and made no attempt to promote any work that he saw as inferior, even to flatter the taste of the sculptor.

Edwards was completely confident of his own critical opinions, whether to comment on the state of conservation of a work or to express his obvious distaste for the *vedusti* whose work he dismissed as “only capricci or scenes of the terraferma.” He was not impressed by the bad technique and reputation for modernity of the artists, Bellotto and Guardi. Edwards’ professional experience had convinced him that the greatest of the Renaissance painters had generally excelled in their studio practice, and that their subject matter stood on the highest philosophical plane. This was not a progressive view, but one that the “New Classicism” of the Venetian Academy embraced and that Edwards believed would ensure the future of the renewal of Venetian art.

Looking back on Pietro Edwards’ life and career, his contribution to the conservation of art is quite stunning. He constructed the foundations for a professional ethic in the international world of art conservation, he proposed the first school to train restorers, and he applied scientific principles to treatments. Above all he showed a profound love for art that demanded its preservation for posterity. Many works survive today because of his theoretical, technical, and political advocacy. Pietro Edwards died on March 17, 1821; he was certainly mourned officially, but privately too in the profound grief of his son Giovanni, who is our only link in history to the human and private side of this very public figure.⁶²³

⁶²³ Biblioteca Correr, MS 585C/LXII. Letters from Giovanni O’Kelly Edwards, March 23-26, 1821.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

This study has shown that Pietro Edwards deserves recognition for his innovative approaches to the restoration of art and his influence on events in European and art history. Above all, he wanted to secure quality of care for the art of Venice. To achieve this he developed a unity of method that combined theory and practice that now forms the philosophical basis for modern conservation of art. Edwards' first major position papers, *Dissertazione preliminare al piano di custodia da istituirsi per la possibile preservazione e per il miglior mantenimento della pubbliche pitture* (1785) and *Piano Pratico per la generale custodia delle pubbliche pitture* (1785), are amazing for their modernity and unique in the history of conservation.

His other goal, unprecedented until contemporary times, was to raise the status of the restorer from craftsman to professional – comparable to that of the “learned artist.” He considered the restoration of art a noble calling and knew that it required skills distinct from those of the artist. He believed the prestige accorded to the “valued artist” should be extended to the “expert restorer,” and that each must be trained separately to realize their potential. For this reason he proposed in *Istituzione d'una Formale Pubblica Scuola pel Restauro delle Dannegiate Pitture* (c.1804) the creation of a school for restorers. This proposal was the first of its kind in Europe or perhaps in the Western world. Edwards was far ahead of his time in developing other major principles of art conservation in pursuit of a professional and standardized ethic. He created a team comprised of restorers and inspectors, an approach that is the foundation for the state- sponsored conservation of

art in Italy today. He opened the first official laboratory for restoration at the Monastery of SS Giovanni e Paolo, which operated from 1778 until the French took control of Venice in 1797. Edwards fully recognized the importance of scientific research to advance restoration materials and techniques. The establishment of a space dedicated to the complex work of restoration gave the restorer a necessary autonomy within the complex bureaucracy of Venetian institutions. These changes helped elevate the restorer's status to that of a member of an educated class.

Pietro Edwards encouraged consistent implementation of other rules that are now the standards of contemporary conservation of art. These include a respect for the artist's original intent with strict rules about loss compensation and control of an "imaginative brush." He adhered to reversibility principles and demanded the use of varnish rather than oil as a medium in retouches. He incorporated environmental solutions to problems that were absolutely critical, given the weather and climate in Venice. He analyzed at length the issues of cleaning a painting and advocated a conservative case-by-case approach. His own research involved the study of varnish and coatings, searching for a suitable substance. He invented the hot-sand lining technique creating better adhesion of new canvas to the original. He wrote meticulous condition and treatment reports and submitted them to the authorities, thereby creating a wealth of documentation about specific works. This aspect of his administrative expertise guaranteed the government's financial and political support for his ideas and methods.

He never stopped working towards his goals for improving the institutional and philosophical foundations of art restoration. Near the end of Edwards' career and life he

became involved in another dispute when some of his colleagues rejected any restoration as disrespectful to the great artists of the past. In his final paper, *Dissertazione Accademica sul quesito Se si debbano ristaurare le antiche dannegiate pitture* (c.1812-16), Edwards addressed the issues surrounding this conflict. The respect for the artist's original intent was at the root of much of this debate, yet Edwards took the position that responsible and conservative preservation was essential. His view prevails today, over two hundred years later.

This dissertation reveals that Pietro Edwards played a pivotal part during the most painful and dramatic period in Venetian history and provides a perspective on the fate of cultural property during times of war. Edwards was placed in charge of the public pictures when the Republic collapsed in 1797 and came under French rule. This political disaster played out in the cultural realm as well, because, as has been documented the French appropriated many of the greatest Venetian works of art for their own museums. Edwards acted for his beloved city in every way possible; he discouraged the French from taking certain works like Tintoretto's *Paradiso* and Titian's *Assumption of the Virgin*, arguing that they were too fragile to travel. When he had no power to intervene, he designed elaborate transport crates and protective packing techniques so that the art would not be ruined en route. He also prevented hasty and destructive removal of art *in situ* by utilizing careful engineering methods.

This research has also explored Edwards' critical presence in the establishment of the state galleries of art after the Fall of the Republic. He was President and Conservatore of the Accademia Gallery and responsible for the selection of the first collection of art. He

hoped to create a museum that contained the most important and representative works of the Venetian School. This was no easy task during these years, and Edwards' ambition competed with that of the authorities in Milan over who received the best works. His vision would help to make Venice a permanent destination for art connoisseurs and would remind the world of the artistic supremacy that was the city's legacy. Edwards' labors include the compilation of the Gallery's first catalogue with condition reports that give the historian and conservator a rare look at the condition of works in the past.

Pietro Edwards advised many of the most wealthy and prestigious people in Venice and in this way he also affected the collecting practices and evaluation of important works of art in Venice. Many of these same paintings comprise the canon of Venetian art today. Among Edwards' clients was Francesco Algarotti, connoisseur and scholar, whose collection was catalogued and marketed by Edwards and the architect Gianantonio Selva. The catalogue extolled the pristine condition of the paintings in the collection, implying that the works appeared untouched by anyone since the original artist. This assessment revealed Edwards' knowledge that restoration affected the value of a work.

Girolamo Manfrin's collection was assembled under Edwards' tutelage and contained hundreds of works by famous artists. It was considered the most important collection in Venice, and Manfrin completely relied on Edwards' judgment. Edwards also had the confidence of Antonio Canova, the Neoclassical sculptor and most important living artist. Edwards directed the appropriate selection of the most valuable works in the best condition for the artist's personal collection.

Edwards' biases and ideology further affected the fate of certain works of art. He was trained within the artistic traditions of the times when people longed to recall the past glory of Venice and favored Neoclassicism. His philosophy towards all art was a democratic one, at least on paper or in his higher intentions. He advocated the preservation of some of the primitive or proto-Renaissance painters like Crivelli and Veneziano, and chose them for the first collection at the Accademia. However, early in his career he developed a criteria of Need and Merit for restoration, that was influential in the years to come, particularly after the Fall of the Republic.

Edwards exercised this power in a cultural and political context. During Napoleon's suppression of religious organizations, there was no perceived conflict of interest between Edwards' position as the government's chief restorer and his dispersal of private and religious collections that included selling off major works. The confiscation of art from the nobility and the suppressed religious houses brought an influx of art to be catalogued and reviewed by Edwards and his team. It was impossible for him to accurately assess the thousands of paintings and he favored the great names of the Renaissance and Baroque periods as his contemporaries did. There was a strong need for systemization of care; decisions had to be made in a triage kind of atmosphere for preserving art. Many works disappeared from the city or disintegrated in their locations without the state's care. This left a body of work behind that is perhaps not entirely representative of Venetian taste or history. As a result Edwards has been criticized by some historians for his neglect of Medieval art, the vedusti, work by foreign artists and

even his craftsman-like disapproval of Tintoretto's use of substandard materials and techniques.

Edwards promoted his Neoclassical inclination and attempted to play a role in the future of Venetian art with his design of the *Progetto Statuti e discipline per La Veneta Accademia di Belle Arti* (November 18, 1804) to train subsequent artists. He followed the Vasarian model of the three stages of art, with Raphael or Michelangelo at the pinnacle. Classes were patterned on the Academic prototype found all over Europe, using Classical sculpture, plaster casts, Ideal form, and the works of Renaissance Masters to guide all students.

Venice as Context for Pietro Edwards

This examination of Pietro Edwards has demonstrated why Venice was so successful as an incubator for his revolutionary conservation principles and their implementation. Venice was no longer a world power, yet it enjoyed commercial prosperity as a popular destination on the continent for visitors on the Grand Tour. They were drawn to the spectacular location, exotic pastimes like the *Ridotto* and Carnival, and legacy of power and wealth seen in the art and architecture throughout the city. The city served as a magnificent museum, and Pietro Edwards became its chief Curator. *La Serrinissima* was not politically progressive and tried to maintain the status quo of its thousand-year rule by Oligarchy. The Venetians hoped to revive a mythic past as an inheritor to Rome and the Renaissance and so preserved their artistic heritage.

Venice also exhibited an early concern for preservation of art before many other cities, due to the weather and climate in the Lagoon. Cold winds from the Adriatic, flood

tides, and the wet saline atmosphere all contributed to the precipitous deterioration of the art held in stone and marble palazzi, churches and public buildings. The authorities grew particularly worried about the art in the Palazzo Ducale, symbol of the Republic and showcase for all the great names of Venetian painting – Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto, the Bassani and others.

Edwards' career was a product of a detail-oriented bureaucracy that had documented complex functions and activities of the government for centuries. In Venice this archival focus even extended to artistic institutions like the Collegio dei Pittore and the artist's workshop, which had no enduring tradition of recording and submitting reports. Edwards' numerous accounts of his activities prove his expertise as dedicated craftsman and a savvy politician.

The Implications of Art Conservation for Art History

Paintings are physical objects that change through time. This assertion is supported by the case of the Public Pictures of Venice and the evidence presented in this dissertation. These works were primarily Venetian Renaissance paintings, and the record proves that hundreds of such paintings from the "canon" were treated by restorers such as Pietro Edwards. When the restorers "rested," the Venetian environment – natural and manmade – went to work. If any restorer alters a pictorial surface, this action mediates the viewer's perception of an authentic work; yet art historians have rarely recognized the restoration of paintings in their interpretations. In doing so they treat the work as an intellectual abstraction. In fact, this simplification of analysis is unavoidable when the conservation history of a work is unknown or unknowable. Nor can it be said that the

results of art historical analysis are necessarily incorrect because they fail to consider the conservation record. However, this research has shown that the conservation histories of Venetian Renaissance works are knowable. Future analyses of these works that fail to address their conservation history should not be considered definitive.

Michel Foucault observed that in the realm of attribution, the “author” or “author function” represents a level of artistic or economic value, aesthetic coherence, or stylistic unity, and that this author then serves as a unique marker in historical chronologies.⁶²⁴ Likewise, the entity “original artist” is a fundamental organizing element of art history – crucial to ideas of authenticity and originality. Restoration threatens these constructs and puts at risk the canonical interpretations of artistic value or intent.

The history of art is constructed on the foundation of the discrimination of quality and the presence of a particular “hand” as maker of the work, maintaining the concept of a singular or reputable (if a workshop then a known one) authority that confers authenticity. This method historically relied upon the skills of connoisseurship traced to collectors and connoisseurs like Bernard Berenson, who called the experience an “aesthetic reverie.”⁶²⁵ This metaphysical appreciation sees the physical facts of art as manifestations of principles that go beyond experience.⁶²⁶ More recently, this information has been augmented by the contributions of scientists who investigate materials and techniques to verify subjective

⁶²⁴ Michel Foucault, “What is an Author,” *The Foucault Reader*, Ed: Paul Rabinov, New York: Pantheon Books, 1984, p.111; Catherine Sousloff, *The Absolute Artist: The Historiography of a Concept*, Minneapolis & London: University of Minneapolis Press, 1997, pp.6-7, The rise of the importance of the individual artist is traced to a psychological response to the world.

⁶²⁵ Price, Talley & Vaccaro, p. 3.

⁶²⁶ Benedetto Croce, *Guide to Aesthetics (Brevario di esetica)*, Translated by Patrick Romanell, New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1965, p. 10.

criteria that are still often inconclusive.⁶²⁷ The idea of the artist-as-sole-creator turns a work of art into a relic prized for its unbroken connection to the maker. This is a myth in the case of most Venetian Renaissance art because it has been so extensively restored for the restorer also contributes to the making of the work, resulting in a shared authority.

Pietro Edwards intended that the hundreds of paintings he restored would be returned to their public domain looking as much as possible like the work of the original artist. This intent implied that a restorer functions as a collaborator in the “making” of a work of art over time. The restorer worked within the closed system of inherited critical perspective to transform a real object into an ideal one – fed by an “idea in the mind,” although Edwards sincerely cautioned against this. However, the decisions inherent in any intervention involve an interpretation of the object by the restorer that must be considered. The following speech by Edwards to the Societè des Artistes in Paris on February 7, 1793 eloquently expressed his philosophy on these matters.

The art of painting and that of restoration are not similar in any way; a painter who may produce a masterpiece, may still spoil a masterpiece by another, trying to restore a picture that is too damaged. For in a damaged painting, the most famous painter will substitute his own style for that of Raphael, the Carracci or of Titian and his retouches will result in some monstrous assemblage, the effect will devalue the picture. For the painter has never dealt with these problems that require long and careful study, or he has only studied it in a mediocre and superficial manner. That to successfully restore a work requires long study in basic rudiments, a knowledge of various useful and indispensable techniques, and to be thoroughly facile in the style and techniques of every master and school; to recover what is lost, or restore what is only altered. In a word restorers must return at a minimum, the nuances that characterize every school and every master. A painter unfamiliar with this type of work and to its innumerable aspects has almost always adopted one master or one model who he has intended to reach or surpass: this is a constant truth in the arts and confirmed by experience, from the painter in good faith and the admission of one of our most famous artists; while the restorer who studies all the masters and all the

⁶²⁷ Gaskell, “History of Images”, p. 176-77.

schools, has not quite formed (and must not form), his own style. He has achieved the sacrifice of his own ideas to bend to the ideas of others; he no longer has his own existence; he exists outside himself, and as in the scene of the---- that represents the anger of Achilles or the pride of Agamemnon, he (restorer) must know how to make the proud and vigorous touch of Raphael, Caravaggio, or the sweet and moving graces of Correggio, Titian etc... And when these great ones no longer exist, it is he and only he who can console us of their loss, allowing the precious rest of their genius and talent to live again, including their defects.⁶²⁸

Critics, historians, and connoisseurs have typically not recognized the extent of the restorer's contribution to the viewer's and critic's experience of a work of art as the following examples will illustrate.⁶²⁹ Bernard Berenson (1865-1959) was the foremost connoisseur in the world of Italian Renaissance painting. His perspective and opinion of the art have been profoundly influential in maintaining the longevity of the canon of certain works and artists in art history. He is known for his intense poetic and aesthetic

⁶²⁸ Conti, pp.208-09, "L'arte di dipingere e quella di restaurare non si assomigliano in niente; che il pittore che è in grado di produrre un capolavoro guasterà i capolavori di un altro, volendoli restaurare; che in quadro malato e malandato il più celebre pittore sostituirà il suo stile dei Raffaello, dei Carracci e dei Tiziano; che dal suo ritocco non risulterà che un mostruoso assemblage il cui effetto sicuro sarà quello di svalutare il quadro; che il pittore non si è mai occupato di questo problema che richiede studi lunghi ed attenti, o non se ne è occupato che medicamente ed in maniera accessoria; che per restaurare con successo sono necessari uno studio finalizzato fin dai primi rudimenti, la conoscenza di una serie di operazioni utili quanto indispensabili, così come un'abitudine consumata allo stile ed alla tecnica dei maestri di ogni scuola che si tratta di recuperare se sono perduti e conservare se sono solamente alterati; in una parola, si devono restituire fin le minime sfumature che caratterizzano ogni scuola ed ogni maestro; e che il pittore estraneo a questo tipo di lavoro ed ai suoi innumerevoli aspetti non ha, quasi sempre, adottato che un solo maestro od un solo modello che si è proposto di raggiungere o sorpassare: verità costante nelle arti e confermata dall'esperienza, dal pittore in buona fede e dall'ammissione di uno nostri artisti più famosi, mentre il restauratore che studia tutti maestri e tutte le scuole non si è affatto formato (e non si è dovuto formare) come il pittore, un proprio stile. Ha compiuto il sacrificio delle proprie idee per piegarsi alle idee di altri; non ha più una propria esistenza; esiste fuori di sé stesso; e come questire (sic) della scena che ci rappresentano la collera di Achille o l'orgoglio di Agamennone, egli deve saper rifare sia il tocco fiero e vigoroso dei Raffaello, dei Caravaggio, sia le grazie dolci e commoventi dei Correggio, dei Tiziano etc....E quando questi grandi non esistono è lui e solo lui che vi può consolare della loro perdita, facendo rivivere i resti preziosi del loro genio e del loro talento, perfino i loro difetti."

⁶²⁹ Clara Erskine Clement, *Venice: The Queen of the Adriatic: Palaces and Pictures*, Boston: Dana Estes & Co., 1893, p. 347, Berenson and other experts are unlike the traveler and non-expert, Clara Erskine Clement who did not feel she had to maintain any reader's illusions about the way a painting looked when she wrote during her trip to Venice. "These splendid paintings are among the earliest which were executed on canvas, and for that reason are important in the history of art...they are much blackened by age and villainously repainted, but still worthy of study for the art student."

descriptions after seeing such works as Titian's *Assumption of the Virgin* in the Frari, yet he never mentioned its actual condition or an awareness of a restorer's hand in the work.

Berenson exclaims:

The Virgin soars upward not helpless in the arms of angels, but borne up by a fullness of life within her...The angel seem to be there only to sing the victory of a human being over his environment. They are embodied joys, acting on our nerves like a rapturous outburst of the orchestra at the end of Parsifal.⁶³⁰

The history of the state of conservation of the *Assumption of the Virgin* can be traced in the historical record. Vasari described the painting like this in 1546:

For the high altar in the Church of the Minorite Friars, called the Ca Grande this artist painted a picture of Our Lady ascending into heaven, with the twelve Apostles beneath. But that work which was painted on cloth, and perhaps not carefully kept, little can now be seen.⁶³¹

Boschini had already written in 1664 about the loss of the figure of the Apostle Peter as "scrostata" or completely peeled away, and Anton Zanetti described the misty veil that obscured the work. In 1797, thanks to Edwards, it was saved due to its fragile condition from transport to Paris by the victorious French. Later he would compare the painting's damages to those of the *Madonna of the Pesaro Family* also in the Frari. Both works were obscured by darkness, loss of original surface, heavy varnish, and overpaint.

The *Assumption*... had enormous public appeal and sparked a conflict between Leopoldo Cicognara and Edwards about its too hasty restoration in 1816 for the newly opened Accademia Galleries. To Edwards' dismay, Cicognara hired Lattanzio Querena, a copyist and painter of modest talents, who reconstructed Peter, worked over the

⁶³⁰ Berenson, p. 19.

⁶³¹ Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, Orig . published in 1546, Translated by Mrs. Jonathan Foster, London: George Bell & Sons, 1885, p. 387.

background, and turned the sky an intense yellow. Querena finished the restoration by covering the painting with a tinted varnish to create the effects of aging.⁶³² We realize that the hand of Titian has been augmented by many others over the years from Vasari's early observations and these later accounts of this painting's restoration. Yet the idealized perspective, described by Berenson has only grown in the eyes of experts and authors. In 1970 the respected historian, S.J. Freedberg admired the form, chiaroscuro, and bold color one hundred years later as just several of the aspects that made the work "inclusive in its range of artistic resource."⁶³³

Another canonical Renaissance work that was profoundly damaged and frequently restored is the *Martyrdom of St. Lawrence* by Titian in Santa Maria Assunta, the church of the Gesuiti. The critical interpretation of this painting has often omitted the disturbing reality of its compromised condition. The French critic and historian Hippolyte Taine (1828-93) visited Venice and saw the painting as a fantasy by some "Italian Rembrandt," a vision in gloom. He interpreted the shadow and obscurity as something entirely intended by the artist, who conjured up an "opaque darkness...pierced by lights...the superb executioner whose torso is swelling in vinous tones."⁶³⁴ But in 1969 Titian expert Harold E. Wethey described in his comprehensive catalogue the innovative composition, eerie light, fantastic effects, and monumental figures. After reading the accounts by Pietro Edwards and others in restoration history, Wethey may not be correct in ascribing the

⁶³² Valcanover pp. 43-44, After the most recent conservation, conservators left Querena's depiction of St. Peter because there nothing is left of Titian's original figure.

⁶³³ S.J. Freedberg, *Painting in Italy 1500-1600*, Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1970, p. 99.

⁶³⁴ Hippolyte Taine, *Italy-Florence-Venice*, Translated by J. Durand, New York: Leypoldt & Holt, 1869, p.255

“apotheosis of martyrdom achieved through light and form” to only Titian’s artistry.⁶³⁵

Carlo Ridolfi noted the painting’s advanced deterioration in 1676, stating that it was “totally blackened and ...incomprehensible.”⁶³⁶ Its original composition was altered and could be seen only in an engraving by Cornelius Cort. Edwards described the painting in a report to the Magistrati in 1781, when the Tsar of Russia visited his studio and the “famous degeneration” of the surface was attributed to salts leaching up the walls from decomposing corpses in the crypt. This horrid brew mixed with candle smoke and dampness that ate away original paint surface. According to Edwards, these dreadful conditions were exacerbated by a “harsh restoration of fifty years earlier that scoured away all parts of the painting.”⁶³⁷ The fate of this picture is instructive in the ongoing discussion of the contribution of the restorer to the aesthetic evaluation of the work. The painting was taken in 1797 to France, where it suffered a heavy-handed restoration; the return voyage in 1815 was very destructive as well. The nudes and the square in the center were badly darkened by copyists in Paris, who oiled the surface. Restorer Gaetano Astolfini examined the work in 1834 and wondered if under those “French daubings enough of the original could be revealed as Titian’s.” He also found it badly lined by the French with several pieces of canvas and overlapping layers of glue that caused the canvas to shrink. This necessitated cutting the canvas to relieve the pressure. The President of the Academy at this time feared that there was no original paint left to be uncovered, stating that “the painting may not retain fully its own originality...and rather one may not

⁶³⁵ Harold E. Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian: The Religious Paintings*, London: Phaidon Press Ltd., 1969, p.139.

⁶³⁶ Giovanni Nepi-Scire, “Recent Conservation of Titian’s Painting in Venice” in *Titian: Prince of Painters*, Munich: Prestel, 1990, p.122.

have after vast expense, merely the work of the artist from whom the restoration was commissioned.”⁶³⁸ The work was restored again, this time by Sebastiano Santi, who was considered “capable of execution in all manner of painting...only thus could it be restored to its status as an original and distinguished work by Titian...”⁶³⁹ There appeared to be a firm belief, even with the damage and extensive loss of original paint, that the restorer could return the painting to its original state.

The Academy instructed Santi to overpaint in certain areas because they misunderstood Titian’s brushwork and thought it merely a sketch and lacking finish. Santi refused, stating that his duty was to “conserve by any means whatever original exists in the painting.” The Academy responded and issued detailed orders to Santi. He was to

Make use in this case of the skill practiced by him and other artists to maximum effect...to deceive even the most expert eye around these parts which (this deceit) is indispensable...to repaint making them appear ancient as the original...to scrape it with the usual iron instrument until the part returns to the luminosity it had before.⁶⁴⁰

Santi reluctantly completed his task resuscitating the legendary painting again and issued an “Atto di Laudo,” or Act of Approval. Despite Santi’s restoration, by 1877 the picture was in a ruinous state. Only the heads of some soldiers and other small details in the upper part survived of the original painting and there were over seventy-seven detachments of the paint surface.⁶⁴¹ This dramatic case is just one account of the physical history of a work of art. It is a single example from a body of evidence that shows the history of art as largely the history of works in their restored conditions. Restorers like

⁶³⁷ Edwards, S.P.V. MS 787.7-876.7/7 February 15, 1781.

⁶³⁸ Nepi-Scire, “Recent...,” p. 123

⁶³⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid. p.124.

Pietro Edwards have had an immense, yet still barely acknowledged, influence on the story as it has been told so far. His visionary commitment to the solution of many primary problems in the conservation of art and his place in the cultural life of eighteenth century Venice add another important chapter to art and conservation history.

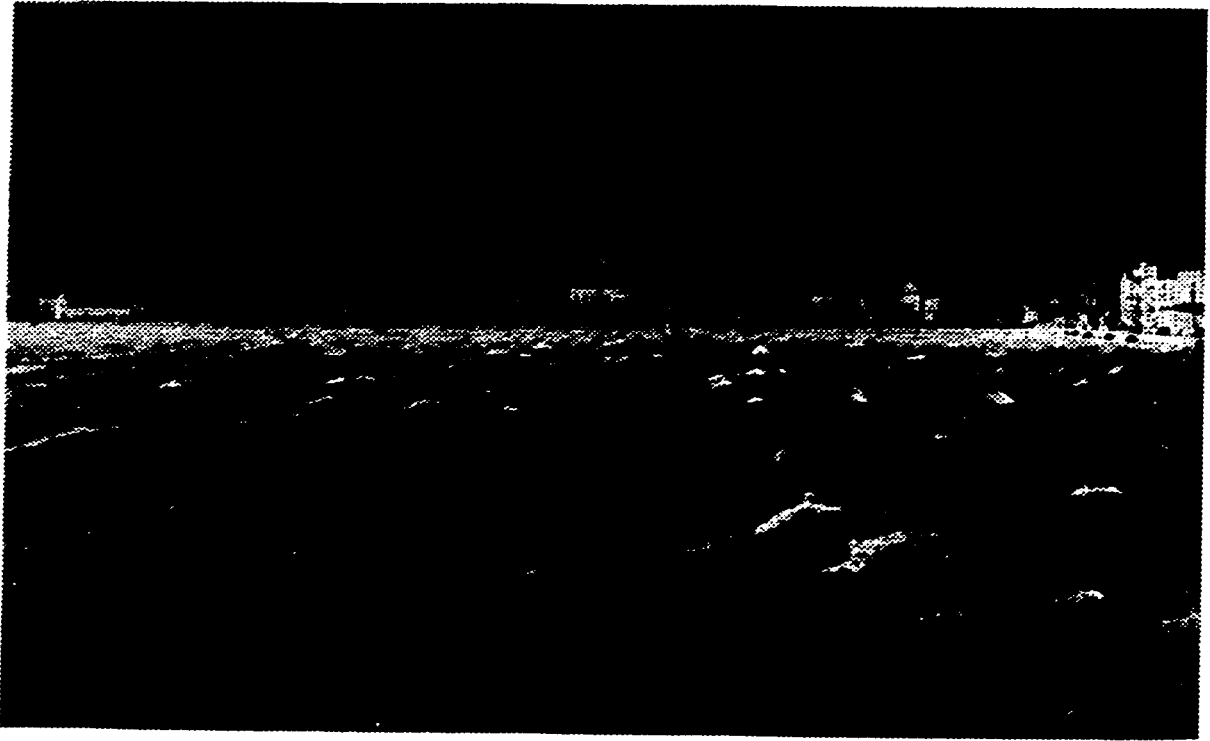
Figures

Figure 1. *Storm in Venice, eucas azzurra*



**Figure 3. *View of San Marco Basin, Edizione Ongania 1928*
with gondola**



Figure 4. *Paradiso* by Jacopo Tintoretto, Eugenia Bianchi, *Piazza San Marco and its Museums*, Milan: Electa , 1997. Largest painting in the world during Edwards' life and the subject of many destructive restorations.



Figure 5. *Il Ridotto* by Francesco Guardi, Richard Goy, *Venice: The City and its Architecture*, London: Phaidon Press, 1997.



Figure 6. *Seminario Patriarcale and Santa Maria della Salute*, Collezione Privata B.V. The location of Pietro Edwards personal papers and original manuscripts.

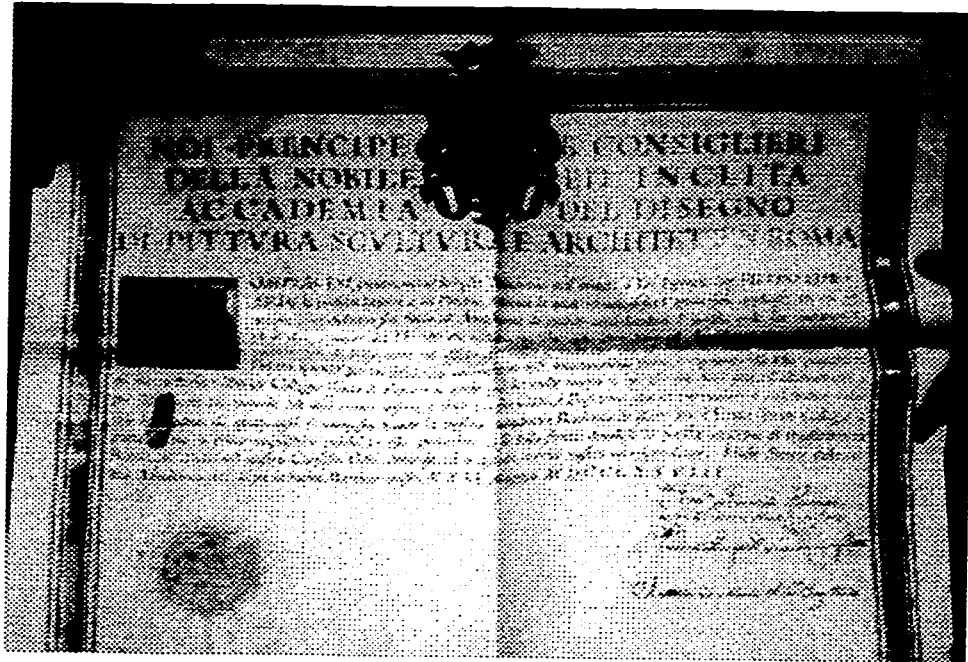


Figure 7. Pietro Edwards' Diploma for Membership in Academy of San Luca in Rome, S.P.V., Photograph by James Walseth.

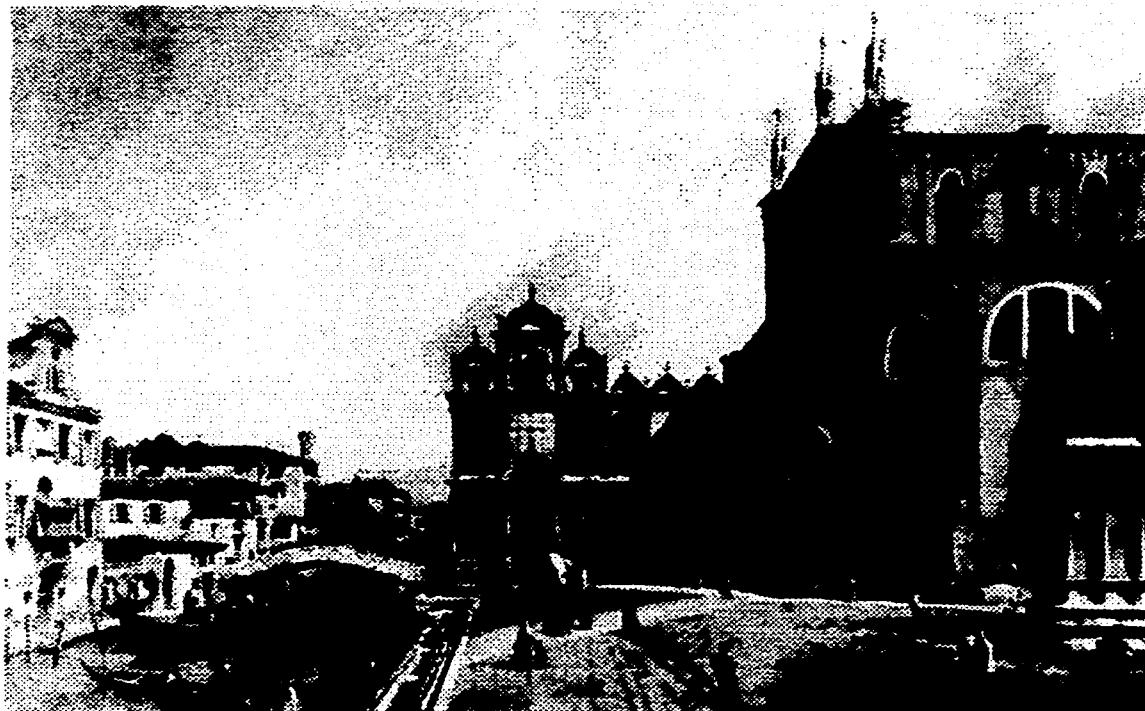
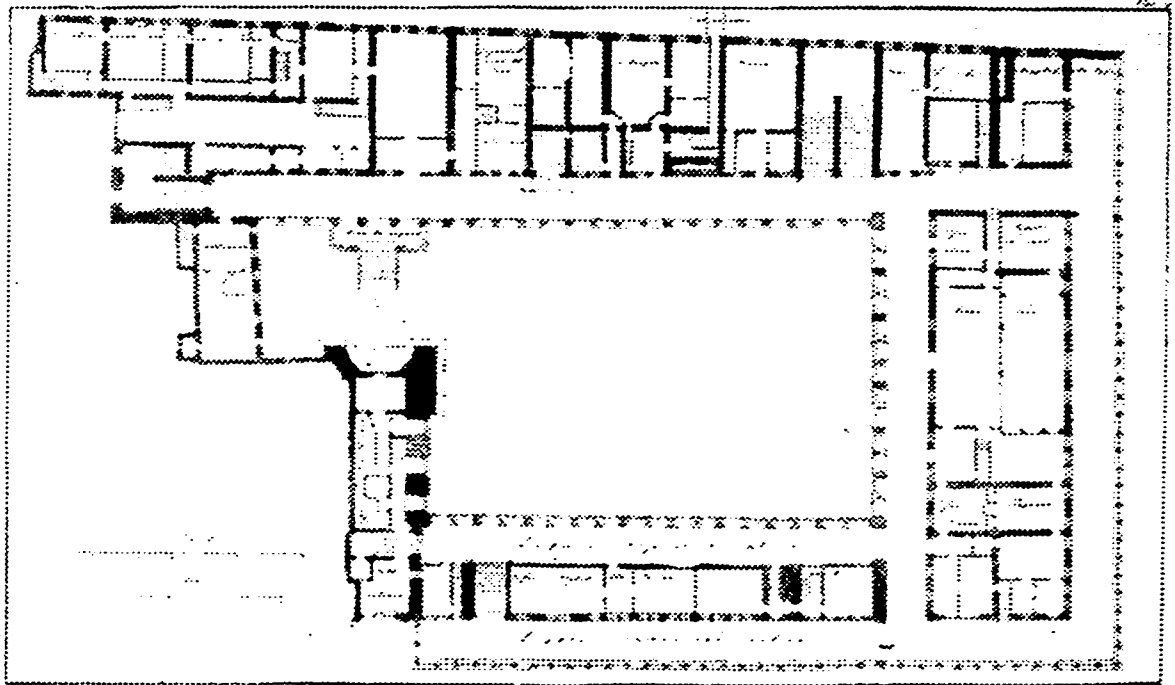


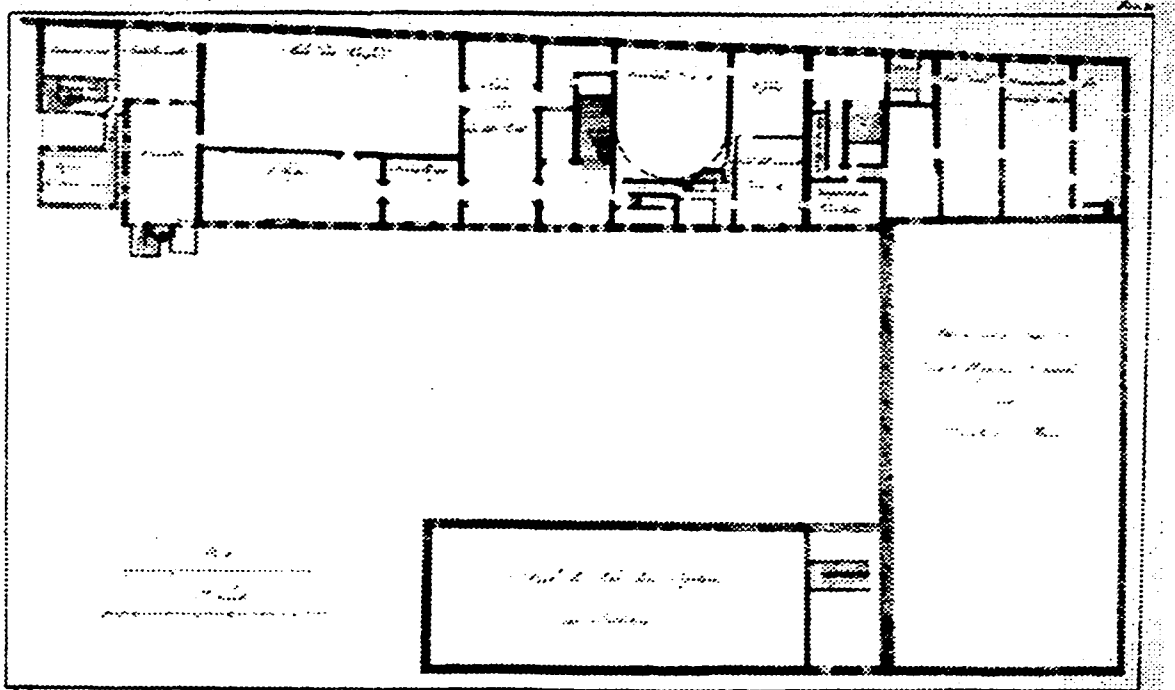
Figure 8. *View of Campo dei SS. Giovanni e Paolo*, G.A. Canaletto, Ediz. Ardo, Venezia, Pietro Edwards' restoration laboratory was located at this church.



Figure 9. Chemistry Laboratory in the Eighteenth Century, depicted in *Recueil des planches pour la nouvelle edition du dictionnaire des sciences, des arts et des metiers*, Frederick Holmes, *Eighteenth Century Chemistry as an Investigative Enterprise*, Berkeley, 1989.



Plan générale de la salle de conseil de la République



Plan générale de la salle de conseil de la République

Figure 10. Floor plans of rooms in Palazzo Ducale, Charles Goy, *Venice: The City and its Architecture*, London: Phaidon, 1997.



Figure 11. *St. Mark and the Theological Virtues* by Paolo Veronese, Juergen Schulz, *Venetian Painted Ceilings of the Renaissance*, Berkeley, 1968. This painting was the subject of extensive restorations. It originally was located in the Sala della Bussola until taken to France in 1797, where it still remains.

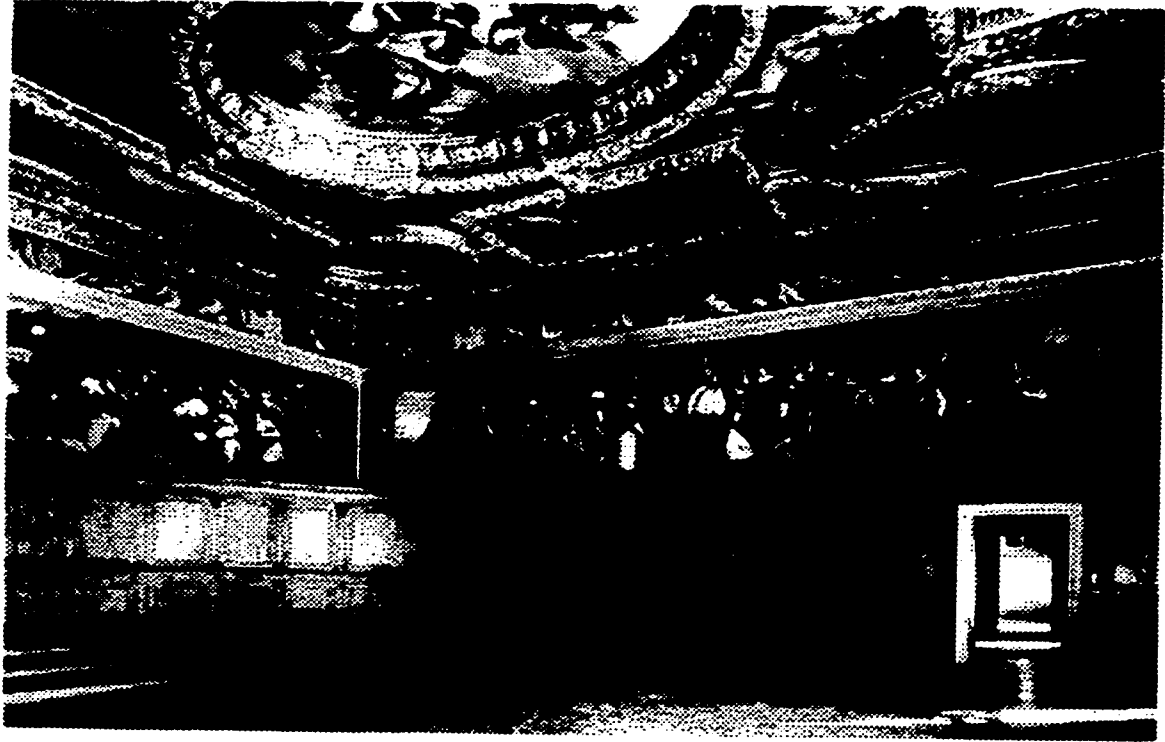


Figure 12. Consiglio dei Dieci in Palazzo Ducale, Bianchi, *San Marco and its Museums*, Milan: 1997.

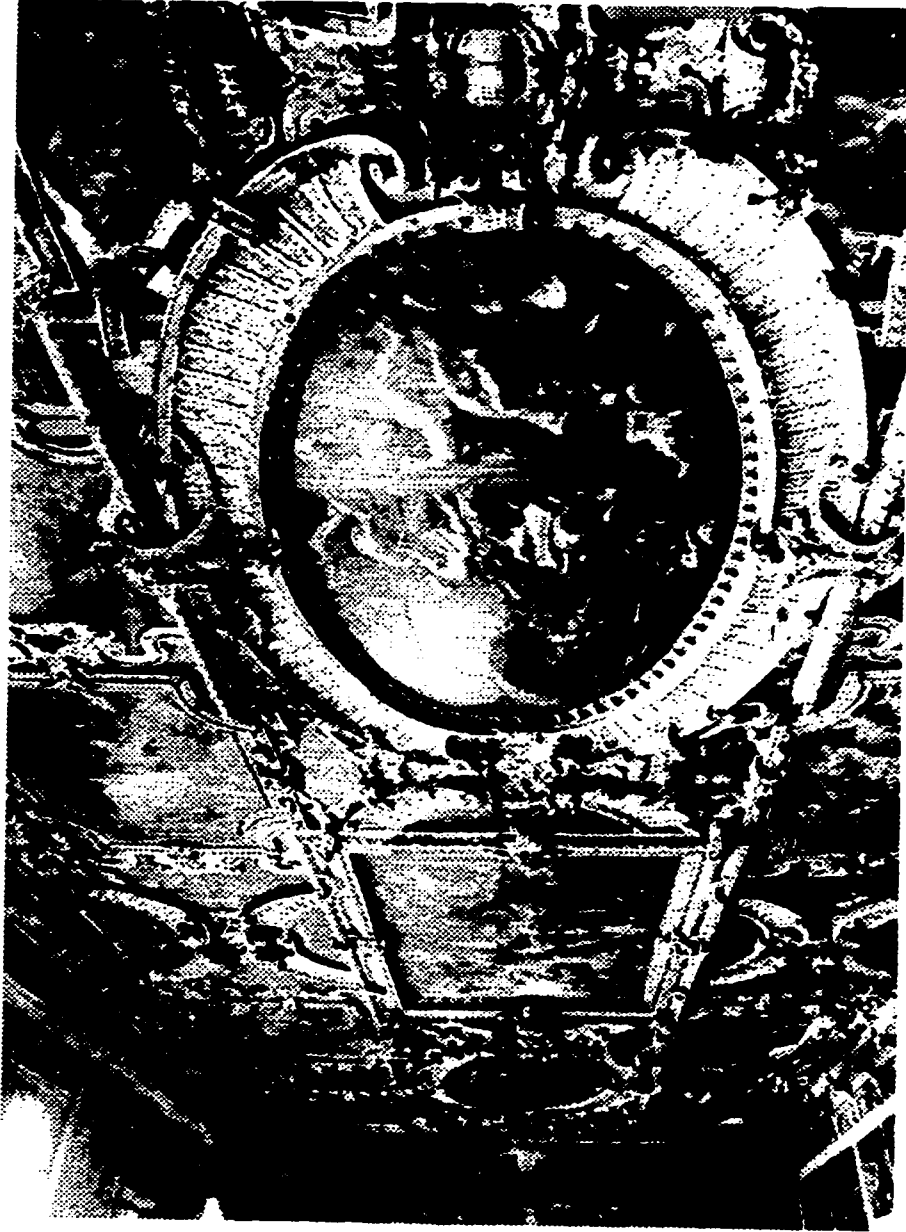


Figure 13. Sala of the Maggior Consiglio in Palazzo Ducale, Frederick Hartt, *History of Italian Renaissance Art*, Fourth Edition, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1994.



Figure 14. *Triumph of Venice* by Paolo Veronese, Richard Goy, *Venice: The City and Its Architecture*, London: 1997. Located on the ceiling of the Maggior Consiglio.



Figure 15. *Portraits of Doges by Jacopo Tintoretto and Assistants, Eugenia Bianchi, San Marco and its Museums, Milan: 1997. Located in the Maggior Consiglio in the Palazzo Ducale.*



Figure 16. *Martyrdom of St. Lawrence* by Titian in Santa Maria Assunta (Gesuiti),
Exhibition Catalogue, *Titian: Prince of Painters*, Munich: Prestel, 1990.



Figure 17. *St. Mark Enthroned with Saints Andrea and Francesco* by Andrea Busati, Galleria Accademia di Venezia, in Gloria Tranquilli, *Aspetti Tecnici dell' Attivita di Pietro Edwards...*, Rome: Bolletino d' Arte #96/97 Aprile-Settembre 1996.

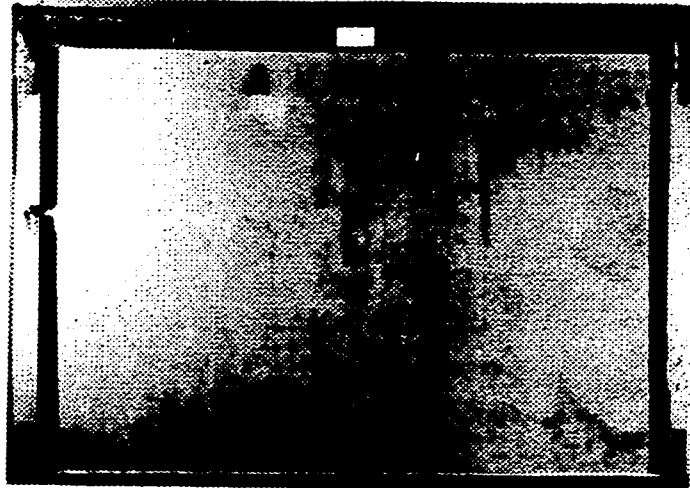


Figure 18. Verso of *St. Mark Enthroned with Saints Andrea and Francesca* by Andrea Busati, Tranquilli, *Aspetti...*, Rome, 1996. Note seams.



Figure 19. Detail of building in *St. Mark Enthroned*, Tranquilli, *Aspetti...*, Rome 1996, Shows Pietro Edwards technique of inpainting called *puntinatura*.



Figure 20. Detail of leaves in *St Mark Enthroned*, Tranquilli, *Aspetti...*, Rome: 1996. Retouching using varnish glazes.



Figure 21. Canvas edge of *St. Mark Enthroned*, Tranquilli, *Aspetti...*, Rome: 1996.



Figure 22. *Portrait of Three Magistrates* by Giambattista Dall'Angolo or Del Moro, Galleria della Accademia di Venezia, Tranquilli, *Aspetti...*, Rome: 1996.

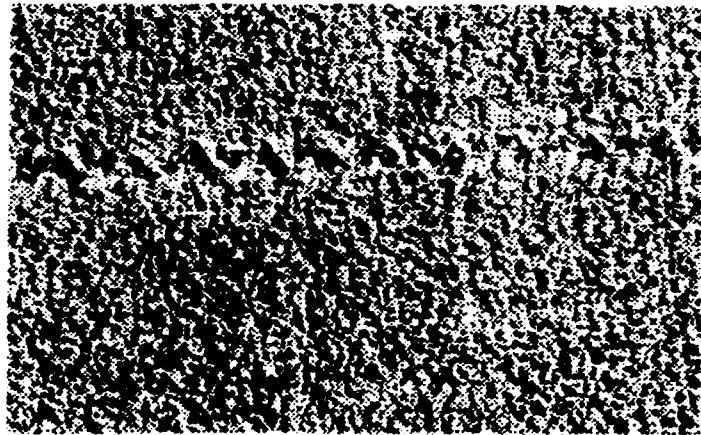


Figure 23. Verso of *Portrait of Three Magistrates*, Tranquilli, *Aspetti...*, Rome : 1996. Shows stitching on canvas verso.

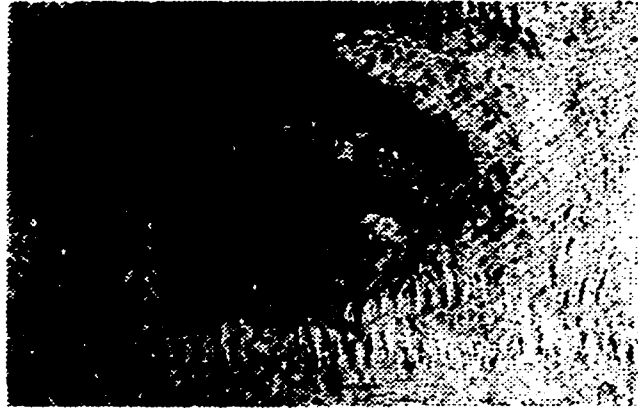


Figure 24. Shows textured fills on *Portrait of Three Magistrates, Tranquilli, Aspetti...*, Rome : 1996.

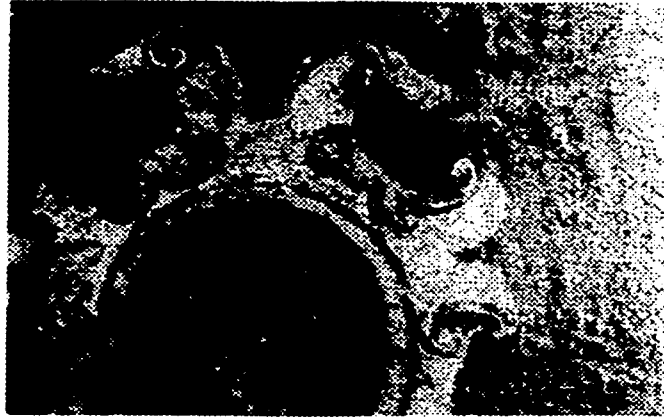


Figure 25. Shows textured fills on *Portrait of Three Magistrates, Tranquilli, Aspetti...*, Rome : 1996.

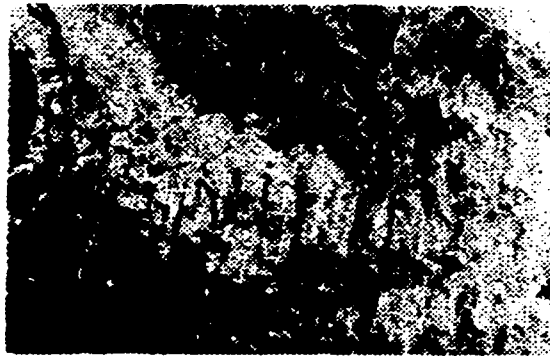


Figure 26. Shows textured fills on *Portrait of Three Magistrates, Tranquilli, Rome, 1996.*

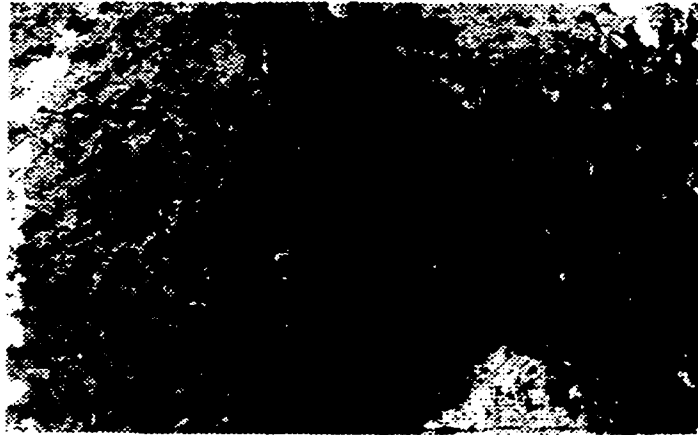


Figure 27. Retouches in glazing technique on *Portrait of Three Magistrates*, Tranquilli, *Aspetti...*, Rome : 1996.



Figure 28. *Venice Crowned by Virtue (Warrior Maiden)* by Vitruvio Buonconsiglio or Vitruvio, Tranquilli, *Aspetti...*, Rome : 1996.

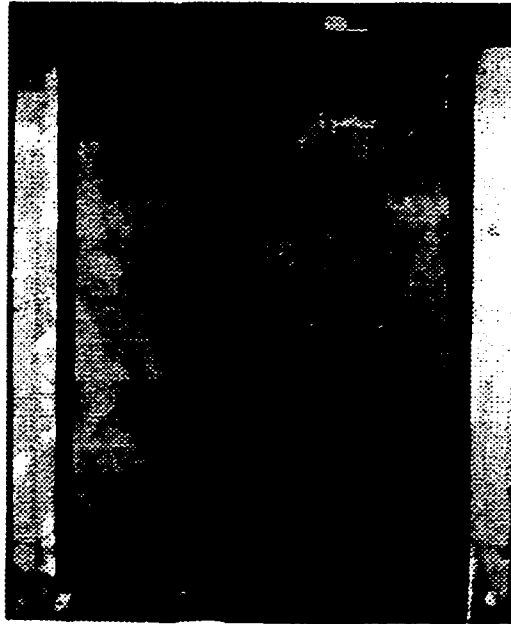


Figure 29. Vertical seam and traces of sand *Venice Crowned by Virtue (Warrior Maiden)*
Tranquilli, *Aspetti...*, Rome : 1996.



Figure 30. Fills with texture like canvas on *Venice Crowned by Virtue (Warrior Maiden)*
Tranquilli, *Aspetti...*, Rome : 1996.



Figure 31. *Allegoria del Monte Novissimo* by Vitruvio Buonconsiglio or Vitruvio, Tranquilli, *Aspetti...*, Rome : 1996.

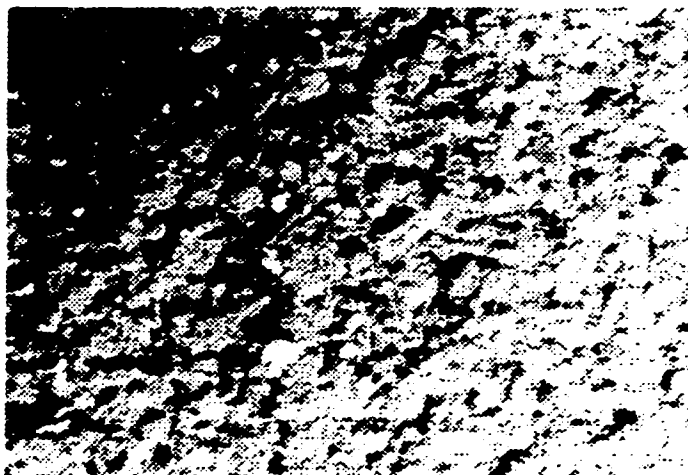


Figure 32. Sand in canvas threads *Allegoria del Monte Novissimo* Tranquilli, *Aspetti...*, Rome: 1996.



Figure 33. Pigment loss at nail holes *Allegoria del Monte Novissimo* Tranquilli, *Aspetti...*, Rome: 1996.



Figure 34. Fills with canvas texture near loss areas in *Allegoria del Monte Novissimo* Tranquilli, *Aspetti...*, Rome: 1996.



Figure 35. *The Madonna of the Tesorieri* by Jacopo Robusti or Il Tintoretto, Tranquilli, *Aspetti...*, Rome: 1996.

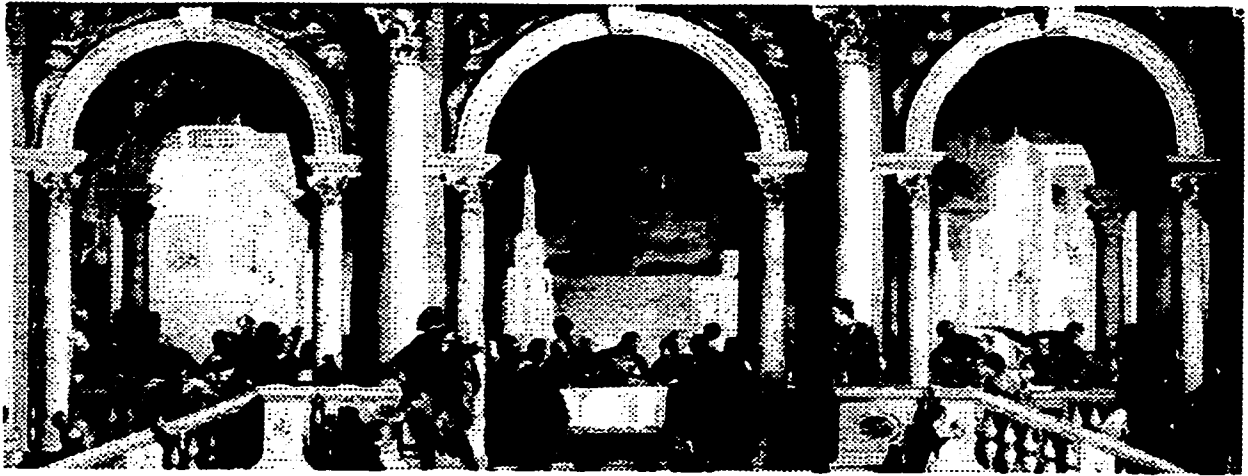


Figure 36. *Feast in the House of Levi* by Paolo Veronese, Giovanna Nepi-Scire in *Accademia Galleries of Venice*, Electa, 1985. This work was cut into three vertical pieces between central columns to remove it to safety during a fire in 1571. It was appropriated by the French in 1797 and returned to Venice in 1815.



Figure 37. Engraving by Martin Rota of *Death of St. Peter Martyr* by Titian, Harold Wethey, the *Complete Paintings of Titian: Volume I The Religious Paintings*, London: Phaidon: 1971. The original was restored by Pietro Edwards with the poet Goethe watching. It was destroyed in a fire in 1867.

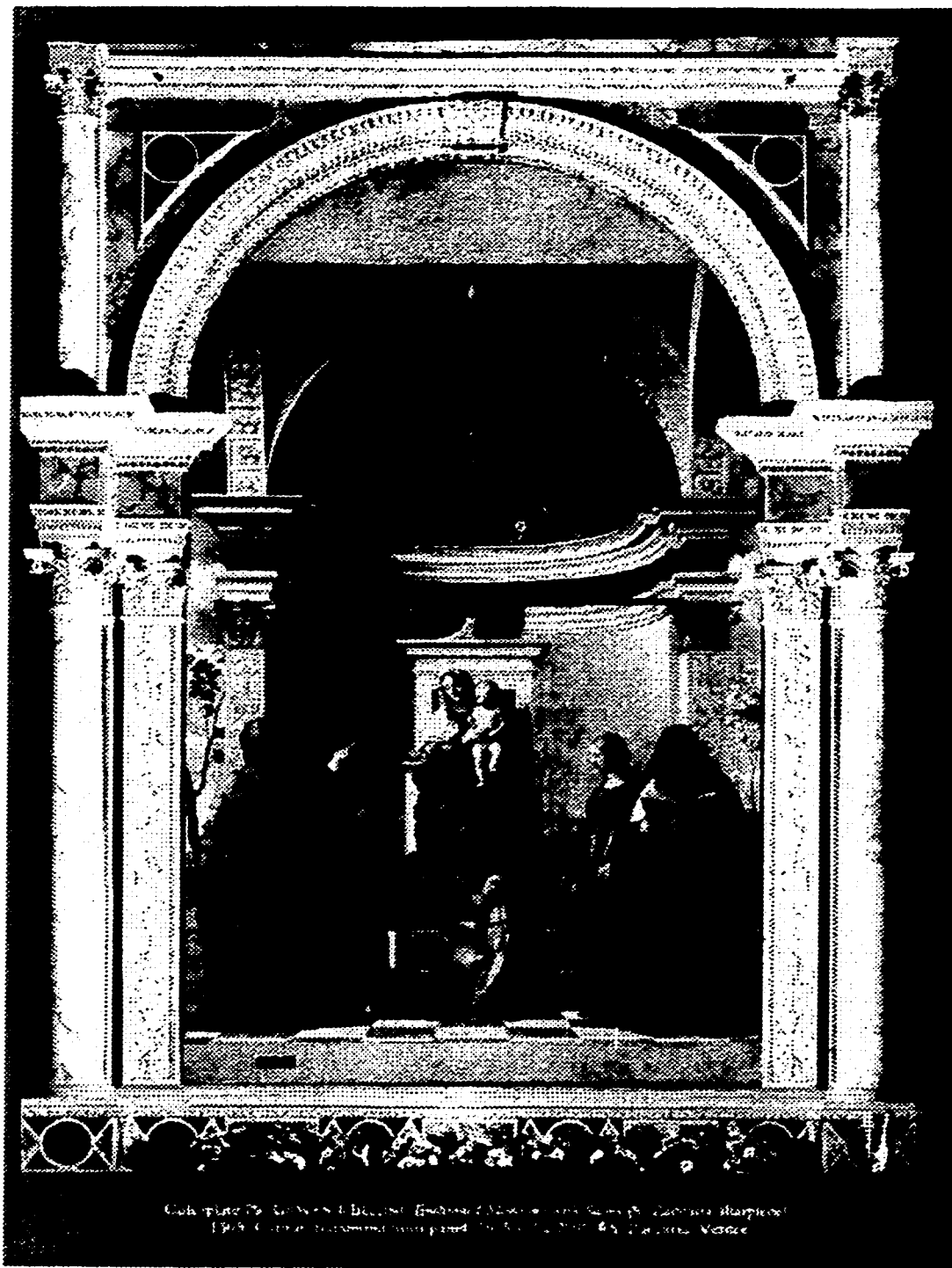


Figure 38. *San Zaccaria Altarpiece* by Giovanni Bellini in the Church of San Zaccaria, Frederick Hartt, *History of Italian Renaissance Art*, Fourth Edition, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1994. It was appropriated by the French in 1797 while Pietro Edwards directed its removal.



Figure 39. *Marriage at Cana* by Paolo Veronese in Musee di Louvre, Paris



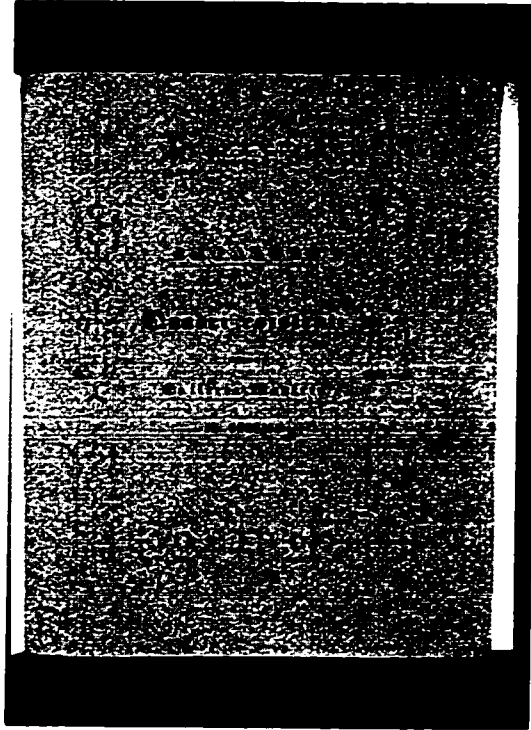
Figure 40. Lion on Porta della Carta with Doge Foscari, Bianchi, *Piazza San Marco and its Museums*, Milan: 1997. One of many lions made out of *pietra siena* that Napoleon removed.



Figure 41. *Removal of the Body of St. Mark* by Jacopo Tintoretto after being cut down to hang in the Libreria Marciana. Galleria della Accademia di Venezia.



Figure 42. Engraving by Zucchi in Lovisa's "Il Gran Teatro" of the *Removal of the Body of St. Mark* by Jacopo Tintoretto before being cut down, Nepi-Scire, Accademia Galleries of Venice, Electa, 1985.



NO.	TITOLI	PREZZO	VAL.	STATO
170	Trattato di Teologia	1/2	1/2	1/2
171	Trattato di Teologia	1/2	1/2	1/2
172	Trattato di Teologia	1/2	1/2	1/2
173	Trattato di Teologia	1/2	1/2	1/2
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199	Trattato di Teologia	1/2	1/2	1/2
200	Trattato di Teologia	1/2	1/2	1/2

Figures. 43-44, Manfrin Catalogue cover and page with *Tempest* by Giorgione, 1856. Getty Special Collections. Getty Center, Los Angeles.



LA Nobile Signora Contessa Maria Algarotti Corniani unica figlia erede del fu Signor Conte Bonomo Algarotti; mancato con sommo suo, ed universale rammarico sin dai 9. Settembre 1776. ritrovò per di Lui ordine formato il presente Catalogo di sua Galleria, e rilevando ch'egli avea intenzione di promulgarlo colle stampe; premurosa però di dimostrare il rispetto, che conserva alla di Lui memoria, lo dona al pubblico, coltivando ad un tratto quelle idee, che forse lo aveano determinato alla pubblicazione.

L'alta estimazione, che si acquistò il celebre Letterato Conte Francesco Algarotti fra gl'Intel-

a 2 tel-

Figure 45. Page from Count Francesco Algarotti's Collection Catalogue compiled by Gianantonio Selva and Pietro Edwards, 1776, Getty Special Collections, Getty Center, Los Angeles.



Figure 46. *Count Leopoldo Cicognara, President of the Accademia Gallery in Venice, c. 1812, Getty Special Collections, Getty Center, Los Angeles.*



Figure 47. *Assumption of the Virgin* by Titian in the Church of the Frari. This painting was the subject of numerous restorations over the years.

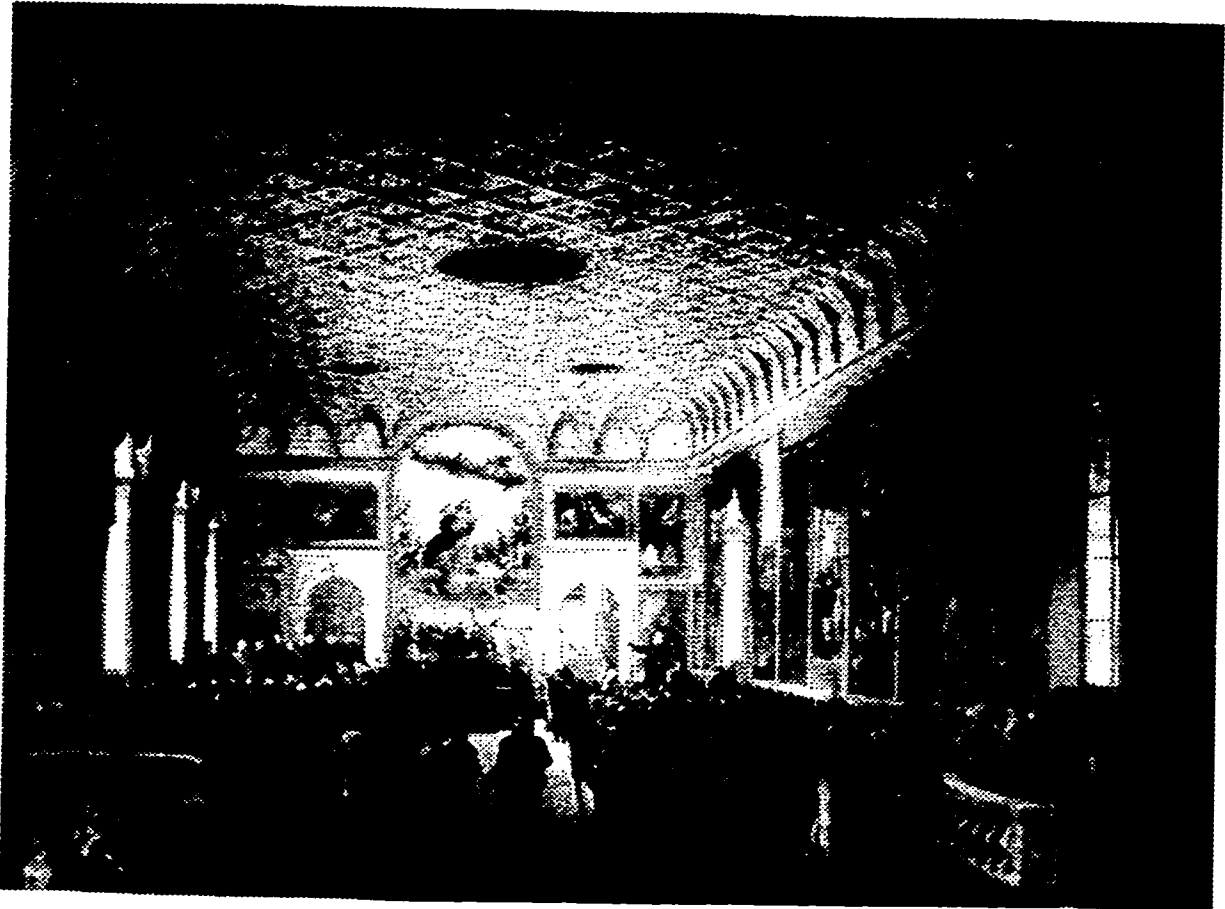


Figure 48. *Assumption of Virgin* by Titian on exhibition at Commemoration of Canova in the Accademia Gallery in 1816, Giovanna Nepi-Scire and Francesco Valcanover, *Accademia Galleries of Venice*, Milan: Electa, 1985.



Figure 49. *Presentation in the Temple* by Titian, *Accademia Galleries of Venice*, Milan: Electa, 1985.



Figure 50. *Saint John the Baptist* by Titian in *Galleria della Accademia di Venezia*.



Figure 51. Photograph of Mauro Pellicoli with National Socialists in Rome c. 1939, Getty Special Collections, Getty Center, Los Angeles.

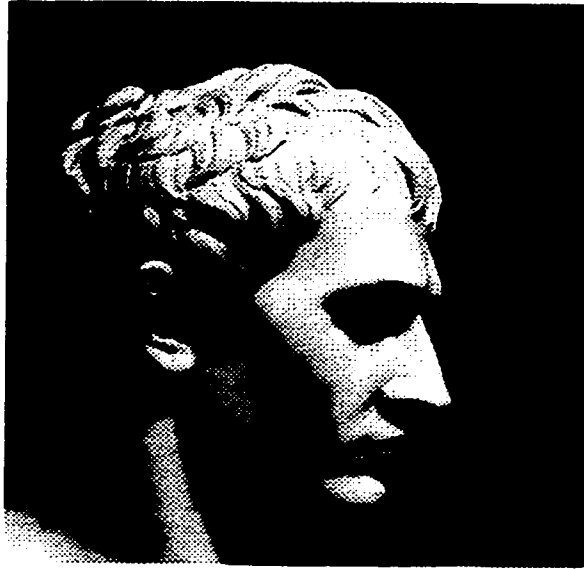


Figure 52. Marble portrait head of Napoleon (1803) by Antonio Canova to be attached to "*Colossale di S. M. Imperatore e Re Napoleon il Grande*," David Finn & Fred Licht, *Canova*, New York: Abbeville Publishers, 1983.

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Abbreviations of Archives

A.S.V.- Archivio di Stato di Venezia

S.P.V.- Biblioteca del Seminario Patriarcale di Venezia

B.M.C.- Biblioteca di Museo Correr

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Busta Edwards #2, Fascicolo 5 #7 Document 23, December 16, 1816, A.S.V.

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Appendix of Original Documents

G.

Dissertazione preliminare al piano di custodia da istituirsi per la possibile
preservazione, e per il miglior mantenimento delle pub.^l pitture.

1785
372.71.0
168

Sembra che l'idea generale ed astratta d'una perfetta preservazione supponga il rimovimento dello casuso, da cui si verrebbe la rovina di ciò che si vuol preservare. Discom per altro all'esecutive ed al pratiche di custodiam, che siccome non sempre possono distruggersi originariamente le cause del danno, così la preservazione deve restringersi a quelle volte a sospendere soltanto l'effetto delle cagioni, che di se natura non sono amovibili; in quella maniera appunto che non essendovi mezzo con cui levar il corso, o toglier la forza impulsiva del torrente, si feriscono a più notei suoi argini. Nonion ancora pare che neppure a questo nobilito intento si ottia, perché non sempre vi sono in pronto delle cose che resistano con tanto di forza alla natura degli agenti, e quindi ne segue allora per necessità il disordine, ed il guasto che si debbono immedire. L'arte in tali casi vien di nuovo chiamata in soccorso, e da esso procurasi di essere in via curativa, euel che non si può conseguire per l'impotenza dei metodi preservativi: comechè nella custodia general delle cose soggette a deteriorazione s'inclusano necessariamente tre diverse maniere di agire, namentamente assolute delle cause occasionali che si possono interamente sopprimere in loro stesse, prevenim degli effetti in quelle cause che non si possono distruggere, e rimedio dei danni, da cui non alliam potuto per tal via preservare. Queste ben premesse si convieno ad istituire con chiarezza le nostre ricerche intorno al miglior sistema di custodia che conviene si debba a fin di preservare le pub.^l pitture, conforme ai sensi dell'Acc.^l Veneta. Convien cercar di togliere da esse le cagioni de' loro deterioramenti: convien impedir sopra di esse i mali effetti delle cause che non sono amovibili: e convien per ultimo rimediare ai pregiudizj inferiti ad esse anche ad opera di tutte le praticate attenzioni. Le sue prime parti di questo ragionamento riguardano la custodia che veramente si dee chiamare preservativa, ma non è possibile di ben rilevare fin dove si estenda la sua pratica eseguibilità, se non si comincio in prima l'analisi, e la resistenza delle cause medesime, contro le quali si tratta di dover operar: e similmente non si può formarne azzardati giudizi intorno alla necessità del terzo ordine di operazioni se non in quanto siano conosciute l'insufficienza delle due precedenti. Per questo adunque io mi faccio ad esaminare semi altro quali siano le funeste cagioni che inducono il decadimento delle pitture.

È affatto inconcludente, e vuoto di giusta significazione il volgare concetto, ed equivale, senza punto curarsi d'una maggior nitidezza d'idea, si legitimo alla certa, che il tempo sia la causa irresistibile della rovina che desideriamo. Per questo genere di obietto non si conviene niente di più la causa del compromimento nelle cose dipinte, che quella da cui nasce la dissoluzione di tutti gli esseri composti, ma chi non si accostia tranquillamente alle decisioni del natura, convenendo benissimo che il tempo non è causa material' e organica di alcuna distruzione, e che ei soltanto è misera roba duration dell'arime distruggitrice non meno, che in questa con cui si preservan:

Document 1. Page 1/27. *Dissertazione preliminare al piano di custodia da istituirsi per la possibile preservazione e per il miglior mantenimento delle pubbliche pitture* (1785). Pietro Edwards presents all of his important issues for the reform of the restoration of art in Venice.

La natura fin ora si è delle qualità un complesso di essenze tutte di una specie in natura come il più
 cinghi cause della vita che si vorrebbe impedire. Egli non si riflessione, non basta per essenza insieme, si
 medesime, e discernere quali di loro siano contingenti e accidentali, e quali non di altri che sussistono necessariamente
 ed eterna material del dipinto. ovvero, per negarmi in ciò accento male, quali sono le cause che possono rimoversi
 totalmente, e distinguersi in se medesima, e quali siano le indestruibili, e permanenti.

Libram quia reitute che tutte le ragioni esterne possono impedire, e impedire, e questa è l'influenza universale
 del aria che tanto calidamente concorre alla distruzione del tempero pittorio, ed ecci perciò in le cause esterne che una
 di esse la più estesa e la più nocente che resta in piedi. Tra le cause intrinseche non videntisi altri errori ed errori,
 a tutte per verità venute tutte radicalmente ed amore d'indistricissimi intrinsechi, ma ciò si verifica per pochi anni
 frequentati e di grandi importanza, che riguardano soltanto il fine, le preparazioni, e le vernici originali delle pitture, e
 più o meno si riferiscono alla sostanza pittoriale del dipinto. Come accrescere la purità degli stoffi naturali, e un'azione
 come estrarre da essi, e interpretarsi in ciò che si tiene diversi in lamina sottilissima, come si vuole l'ineguale natura di
 la massa alla consistenza uniforme d'un corpo, e se tutti ad un tempo? come congiugli in se stessa, e resistente in luce e
 leggera natura della svelature? qual mezzo si adopera, e fin di separare dal tutto gli ingredienti perocchè se impo-
 per, ed ogni più completo? e quale sarà il segreto, onde disimpegnar si possano le combinazioni di cose, che uno si separa
 se parate, e in altra maniera congiunte? questi, praticamente parlando, sono tutti veni impossibili, qualunque cosa voglia
 si militante in contraria per abitudine di imperia, e per estrazione nella persona operante.

Stella stessa maniera, perciò a più, si èe rassicurare soggetti di effetti naturali ed arte. La pittura in ogni parte, e tutta
 in ogni e prima, e dopo le operazioni mai vedere, puerili, e sanasse, che si praticano dagli imperiti, ma una cosa è certo
 più mai estrarre dalla pittura. Si dipent'anni in parte, e ancora del cemento, che non ha potuto esaltarsi in
 modo, il rame, ed il mercurio restano in incerta soggetti ad medesime alterazioni, qualora continuino ad essere sopra
 l'essi gli agenti medesimi: la trasformazione di questi corpi, che bene spesso si qualificano, eccchè avvien spontaneamente
 del primo, possono rimoversi di nuovo, e con grandissima restrizione deve intendersi, che alcune volte, e specialmente
 verità metalfici aumenti per l'eccezione dell'acido ed in una combinazione suavia con l'acqua, richiama ora una in-
 diante fuso d'un acido temperato a bere, migliorino stabilmente la lor condizione. Non dico per assoluto ciò, ne in alcun
 grado, ne in alcun rapporto, diminuir si possa la forza degli agenti intoriti, o per dir meglio che mai si tempo alcuna
 mala disposizione della natura: se fin loro si arriva con l'arte, e videntien mi fermerò a far parca sulle distinzioni che
 mi rimane in questo breve cenno relativo all'opera della restaurazione, ma troppo altre cose mi rimangono da dire. Sento
 gli stoffi che giammai per intiere si cambia la natura propria de' medesimi, e che i vantaggi possibili, che si aspettano sopra
 di esse, sono sempre assai limitati.

Che se non si cambiano nel loro maggior complesso queste naturali disposizioni, è dunque certo, che nella sostanza di dipinto
 devono rimanere per forza necessitate, dalle cause di alterazione, e di danno, benché forse alcuna di esse diminuisca nel
 stato suo; ed ogni più di riflessione più basta ad intendere, che sussistenza in qualche grado se affinità, se restano,
 e le matre corrispondente della parte essenziale del quadro in variazioni nocenti dell'atmosfera che rimangono sempre
 in tutta la lor efficacia, deve o più presto, o più tardi inevitabilmente seguire, prima il quarto, e poi la perdita intiera
 dell'opera.

Catologo di tutte le Pitture restaurate sotto la direzione dell'ingegner Pietro Edwards
 questo è Detto dal 1.º Senato il 2.º Feb. 1778, secondo secondo. Invece, col quale furono, e ora
 in compenso, col compimento delle Fedi di Laudo, nelle quali sono riportate, e ristampate dal detto stesso.

<u>Classe delle pitture restaurate</u> con le pitture restaurate	<u>N.º delle</u> <u>Pitture</u>	<u>Nome dell'Artista Pittore</u>	<u>Data di Laudo nelle</u> <u>due colonne e Fedi di</u> <u>compenso -</u>
Pittura della Chiesa della Chiesa di S. Maria	10	Di Paolo Veronese comprese 10 pezzi di quattro scure	22. Apr. 1778.
	9	Di Antonio Tiviano	23. Apr. 1778.
	2	Di Marco Vecellio fratello di Tiziano	7. Aug. 1778.
	10	Di Paolo Veronese comprese 10 pezzi di quattro scure	
Pittura sopra l'altare della Chiesa di S. Maria	1	Di Tiziano	
	1	Di Sebastiano del Piombo	
	1	Di Andrea Mantegna, con due scure, e quattro pezzi di quattro scure di Leonardo da Vinci.	22. Apr. 1778.
	1	Di Marco Vecellio	28. Apr. 1780.
	1	Di Antonio Tiviano	18. Apr. 1778.
	1	Di Antonio Tiviano	
	1	Di Antonio Tiviano	
Pittura all'altare Collegio	17	Di Paolo Veronese tutt' in sottile	23. Apr. 1779.
	20	Di Antonio Tiviano con 20 pezzi di quattro scure, e quattro pezzi di quattro scure.	7. Aug. 1778.
	2	Di Antonio Tiviano di quattro scure	4. Apr. 1778.
	3	Di Antonio Tiviano del tutto comprese due scure con due scure di quattro scure.	18. Apr. 1780.
	4	Di Antonio Tiviano di quattro scure	28. Apr. 1780.
Pittura del'altare di S. Maria a S. Maria	3	Di Benvenuto	21. Apr. 1778.
	1	Di Antonio Tiviano	
	14	Di Antonio Tiviano	
Pittura sopra l'altare della Chiesa di S. Maria	1	Di Antonio Tiviano	27. Apr. 1778.
	1	Di Antonio Tiviano	28. Apr. 1780.
	1	Di Antonio Tiviano	28. Apr. 1780.
	1	Di Antonio Tiviano	8. Aug. 1778.
Pittura del'altare della Chiesa di S. Maria	2	Di Antonio Tiviano	
	2	Di Antonio Tiviano	
	3	Di Antonio Tiviano	10. Apr. 1781.
	1	Di Antonio Tiviano	2. Aug. 1782.
	1	Di Antonio Tiviano	2. Aug. 1782.
Pittura sopra l'altare della Chiesa di S. Maria	3	Di Antonio Tiviano	10. Apr. 1780.
	1	Di Antonio Tiviano	8. Aug. 1780.
	1	Di Antonio Tiviano	
Pittura sopra l'altare della Chiesa di S. Maria	1	Di Antonio Tiviano	4. Aug. 1780.
	2	Di Antonio Tiviano	19. Apr. 1780.
Pittura sopra l'altare della Chiesa di S. Maria	1	Di Antonio Tiviano	17. Apr. 1780. III.
	4	Di Antonio Tiviano	13. Aug. 1781.
Pittura sopra l'altare della Chiesa di S. Maria	1	Di Antonio Tiviano	26. Apr. 1781.
	1	Di Antonio Tiviano	8. Aug. 1780.
	1	Di Antonio Tiviano	15. Apr. 1780.
Pittura sopra l'altare della Chiesa di S. Maria	7	Di Antonio Tiviano	23. Apr. 1780.
	1	Di Antonio Tiviano	20. Apr. 1780.
	1	Di Antonio Tiviano	10. Apr. 1781.

N.º 155:

Document 2. Page 1/6, A. *Catologo di tutte le Pitture...* Pictures Restored under Pietro Edwards from 1778-1785. Listing the date of contract or Fedi di Laudo, the title, artist, the number of works, and the Class of Need or degree of damages for each work.

B

Catálogo degli Autori, a quali appartengono le Pitture di Pab^o in gesso restaurate nel 1774, fin a' Aug^o 1785. registrate, per ordine d'Alfabeto, col numero delle opere a ciascuno spettanti, e con alcune brevi considerazioni relative agli Autori stessi, ovvero alle Opere, sulla loro bellezza e importanza, e la qualità dei Quadri restaurati finora

Alberto Durero	—	Opera celebre di quest'Autore, ed unica presso il Pab ^o . Fuor di opera di essa impiegato 108 giornate di lavoro; veggasi le relazioni dell'Ispezione. 24 Mag ^o 1779, ed 4 Aprile 1785	Pezzi 17	1
Alcibiade Vaccaro	—	detto il Padovano, imitator di Tiziano, e mirabile		1
Amadeo Coz	—	valente Ritrattista		1
Andrea Baffino	—	Uno dei primi fondatori della Scuola Veneta, e sue Opere sono in vedutissimo numero		3
Andrea Biondini	—	celebre, ed eccellente colorista del 1500		3
Andrea Vicentini	—	Opera qui conservata, è la città Teia corrispondente al disegno d'Urbano VIII. esistente nella Sala delle quattro porte		1
Antonio da Melica	—	Il nome che tradusse la Pittura ad Oglio in Italia. Opera unica presso il Pab ^o		1
Antonio Mianse	—	Stefano di Paolo, e perciò per punteggi, seguace del mentovato		11
Basacco	—	Le opere qui descritte sono quelle da lui dipinte con Paolo, e col disegno sul soffitto della Sala dell' C ^o C ^o di X.		11
Benedetto Diana	—	imitatore di Gio: Bellino, e dello stesso tempo		1
Bombelli Cavaliere	—	Celebre ritrattista		2
Donifacio Nob. Trugiam	—	famoso competitor di Tiziano		5
Caricco Calari	—	figlio di Paolo Veronese; ma della opera qui descritto è la sentenza tela, in cui rappresentò l'udienza degli Ambasciatori Peruviani		4
Calzani	—	Ritrattista di molta riputazione, diverso dal Casanova per le d'animali		1
Cirio de Conegiano	—	Valentissimo artefice di Gio: Bellino		3
Cesio bellissime	—	di tre Complan di Donifacio ora perduti		3
Domenico Tintoretto	—	figlio, e seguace di Giacomo		12
Donato Veneziano	—	imitatore di Gio: Bellino; le sue opere sono assai rare		5
Finco Gio: Andrea	—	detto Sembei, o Gio: da Udine, uno dei buoni scolari di Raffaello		5
Frattelli Fratini	—	Le tre Opere qui citate compongono la serie dei soffitti della Pab ^o libraria, e furono prese per questo riguardo		3
Francesco Baffano	—	competitor di suo Padre Giacomo, e nella parte dell'invenzione, più ricco, e più nobil di lui		1
Giacomo Bello	—	Diverso da Isobello Tore, altro Artista del 1400, non s'è alcuno storico che ne faccia menzione, e non si sa ove si trovino altre sue opere: quella citata nella parte nota è la singolarità, e basta a svelare il nome dell'Autore al Banco. q. 10		1

17 128:

C.

*Sommario di tutte le Fedi di Lauco rassegnate
dall'Ingegnere Pietro Edwards per la generale
ristaurazione delle Pub. P.iture.*

- La prima Colonna indica le date delle Fedi sud.
- Le tre seguenti mostrano il n.º di piedi di lazo,
secondo le tre Classi nelle quali desidero diviso;
- L'ultima dichiara li pagamenti corrisposti per
ciascheduna delle Fedi sudete.

Date delle Fedi	1 ^a Classe		2 ^a Classe		3 ^a Classe		Pag. in Sc. Effettu.
	Piedi	Onze	Piedi	Onze	Piedi	Onze	
22. Aprile 1778	76	72	137	—	76	48	Cf. 64: 22
23. Marzo 1779	153	58	58	76	110	5	7-700 22
7. Luglio 1779	318	—	—	—	279	24	8-1372 18
27. Apr. 1779	202	113	102	13	29	108	11-881 21
4. Set. 1779	149	120	148	104	92	72	11-832 20
19. Aprile 1779	458	75	89	—	51	72	11-1053 1
15. Marzo 1780	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
28. Aprile 1780	53	97	235	139	38	22	11-747
8. Luglio 1780	119	74	101	23	121	67	11-752 17
25. Apr. 1780	142	17	81	14	99	65	11-755 12
23. Aprile 1780	134	4	97	12	75	70	11-733 18
20. Aprile 1780	247	129	39	39	—	—	11-832 1
29. Aprile 1780	74	120	99	6	29	36	11-491 5
17. Aprile 1780	152	8	—	—	—	—	11-456 11
10. Apr. 1781	178	89	102	72	23	129	11-802 15
12. Luglio 1781	251	80	93	16	11	120	11-981 22
26. Aprile 1781	375	48	38	102	45	128	11-1349 9
20. Aprile 1781	25	104	346	48	44	100	11-924 1
25. Maggio 1781	—	—	338	110	—	—	11-762 15
26. Marzo 1782	—	—	235	2	—	—	11-573 18
	3094	5	2393	96	1068	61	16263 10

D

Catalogo delle Pitture pub.^l escluse, per solo sentimento del Signor Pietro
Edwards dalla generale ristaurazione cominciando dal principio dell'
mese di 3. Aprile 1778. fin a Giugno 1785 -

Salita della Beata	— Due pitture rivisate restorate sopra la Beata fuor di veduta	N.º	2
Stanza C. M. Copi	— Due pitture di Raffaello nel soffitto, e sulle pareti, per essere state ridipinte da capo a fondo, e per esser intrinsecam. ^{te} assai mediocre	4	2
	Due bellissimi ritratti scesi di Paolo Veronese che non abbisognano di ristaurazione	4	2
	Cinque pezzi di Giuliano Roth fiamingo, sopra le pareti — Si lasciarono per essere stati ristaurati da pochi anni, e quindi si crede di dover ripetere l'opera d'altri professori	4	5
Cassa del C. di X.	— Due quadri attribuiti a Bonifacio, ma che realmente sono due pitturacce ordinarie	4	2
Camera S. degli Scigi	— Undici pezzi considerabili solo per la prevenzione d'alcuni inaspettati. Sono in molti tutte pitture assai mediocre	4	11
Ante - Collegio	— Due quadrate laterali al Camino, e fuor di veduta; non si poterono rimuovere dal muro, nel qual sono fritte senza pericolo di maggiormente pregiudicarsi	6	2
Decime del Coro	— Tre quadri affatto irrecuperabili, e due de' quali non sono dall'Ispettor sud. ^o creduti originali	4	3
Pro' fion di Zecca	— Due contorni, forse di Vitulio, ma dipinti in abbozzo, e sottilissimi. Furono accomodati superficialmente per la necessità del nichio, ma non furono messi a conto per alcuna mercede	4	2
	Più nello stesso Mag. ^o Quadro grande creduto di Bonifacio, ma riconosciuto per Copia	4	1
	Più altro quadro, forse dello stesso Bonifacio, ma restato perire. Li Professori contro il parere dell'Ispettore, velleto far deturbarli sopra quest'opera, della quale speravano qualche uscita, ma non avendo conseguito l'intento, la loro fatica restò senza mercede	4	1
			N.º 33.

E.

Catalogo provvisorio e di avviso concernente l'indicazione di tutti i Quadri del
che oltre si già eccettuati per ora giunto al foglio D. si possono escludere
dalla ristaurazione generale ristaurazione in riguardo alla loro tricalità, e per
lo stato irrecuperabile a cui sono ridotti, ovvero per essere tuttavia in buona
ristaurazione, non comuni quali che non si possono negleggiare in conside-
razione della sala alla quale appartengono, e dei luoghi capricci nei quale
son collocati; e similmente non comuni tutti gli altri che saranno detti
dopo altri etami nell'atto di prendersi in lavoro —

Sala delle quattro Porte —	Tutti li soffitti di Giacomo Tintoretto si considerano come non più ristaurabili; son pezzi	15
Sala del Pregadi —	Dieci quadri del Trepolo non abbisognano di ristaurazione	2
Antidivisa —	Non abbisognano di alcuna ristaurazione	6
Antiscena —	Oltre il quadro dell'Arca di Noè ultimamente occupato, vi è il quadro del Limbo, e quello della commessione di Francesco de questo lasciarsi nello stato in cui sono, e prendersi pericoli di peggiorarsi	2
Sala delle Armi —	L'opera preziosa di Palma vecchio rebben alquanto affumicata si gode assai bene anche nella sua presente condizione; gli al- tri otto pezzi sono questi totalmente mediocri, chi lo quadri- caver di poter escludere	4 ⁷ / ₃₂
Maggior Consiglio —	Il gran quadro del Paradiso di Giacomo Tintoretto, si esclude so- lamente in riguardo dell'incertezza dell'opra, e non si pren- derà in consegna se non per apposta ordinazione, e con u- na protesta dei Professori, e dell'Ispettore Il quadro di Leonardo Bassano sopra una finestra del cortile, se esclude nella soppressione che sia stato tutto redipinto dal Car- dinale, come si asserisce, e come ancora, non che sia vero nella distanza in cui si trova; più il Quadro di Domenico Tintoretto rappresentante la Vittoria navale del Doge Ziani sopra Fi- lippo Barbarossa, fu ben ristaurato in addietro; più il qua- dro di Fedenco Zuccato, ed uno di Ant. Alivisei nell'ang- olo della Sala, possono ancora per qualche tempo salvarsi,	

F

Catalogo de' quadri rest., che, indipendentemente da quanto po-
tè risultare con ulteriori esami, restano da essere restau-
rati oltre li già compiti giusto al Foglio A.

- Antiscrota* -- Oltre ai prezzi da escludersi indicati nel foglio E, restano in
questa stanza altri nove quadri di merito, ma la maggior par-
te di essi è stata così vergognosamente trattata da un irrespi-
tabile restauratore, che sarà ben difficile il recuperarli . . . 11 9
- Chiesa de' Pregadi* -- Vengono da restaurarsi 27. Quadri, i cui Autori sono Giacomo
Tintoretto, Giacomo Palma, Alvise dal Tiso, Delabella, e Mar-
co Vecellio; il maggior numero è del Tintoretto . . . 27 7
- Reste Stanza C. D. Cap.* Cinque pezzi di Giacomo Tintoretto; un del Gambirotto, ed uno
di Gio. Bellone . . . 5 7
- Quarantia Civil Vecchia* -- Opere del Tintoretto, del Palma, del Leruzzetti, e del N. Celispi;
alcune di queste sarebbero da commettersi, ma la dignità del
luogo par che non lo possa permettere . . . 9 9
- Quarantia Criminale* -- Oltre all'escluso nel foglio E, per non esservi bisogno di ris-
tauro, restano altri 18. quadri esigenti riparazione, tutti
del Palma; e per molti di essi vale lo stesso riflesso fatto or-
ora di sopra . . . 9 18
- Sala del Mag. Consiglio* -- La celebrità di tutte quelle Pitture è abbastanza nota, come
pur è visibile. La mala condizione in quelle del soffitto, e nel-
la serie dei ritratti che sono per la maggior parte dipinti da
Giacomo Tintoretto, e furono tutti deturpati con un campo nuo-
vo fatto ad Oglia. Alcuni Angoli o stappizzi a disegno scure del
soffitto medesimo sarebbero da escludersi se non si dovesse ris-
pettare la serie alla quale appartengono, e questi sono eccesi-
vamente rovinati, o triviali, e si reputo al numero di sette o
otto pezzi di piccola grandezza. Fin i laterali in nu-
mero di 27. io non escludo per ora altro che cinque pezzi
compresi in questi la immensa tela del Paradiso che non
sarà presa in consegna altro che con opportuna ordinazione:

B.

Ristretto del Pubblico Contratto per la generale Ristaurazione delle Pitture Pubbliche con alcuni notizie relative al soggetto medesimo.

Le Pitture pubbliche si sono a diverse volte ristaurate per lo più per le distinzioni in esse fatte, e per l'incendio del quale sono rimaste in gran parte consumate. In occasione di questa ristaurazione si sono convenute le Pitture in quattro parti: le dipinte, quelle che sono in parte consumate, e quelle che sono in parte consumate, e quelle che sono in parte consumate.

L'arte di ristaurare le pitture è una delle più difficili, e per questo si sono convenute le Pitture in quattro parti: le dipinte, quelle che sono in parte consumate, e quelle che sono in parte consumate.

- Concordato questo, convennero per ordine del Re a più parti con loro, e al detto Re, se di esse principali condizioni fossero le seguenti:
 - Che a tre suddette Professioni toccando in premio, ed abilità, la ristaurazione, e governo delle Pitture di pubblica ristaurazione, ristaurazione, con ciascuno di esse presedere un Assistente, sotto la propria direzione.
 - Che tutti i ricavi, e redditi di una pubblica legge, che gli sono, e che sono...

Document 3. Page ¼. Ristretto del Pubblico Contratto per la generale Ristaurazione delle Pitture Pubbliche con alcuni notizie relative al soggetto medesimo. (1785). Public contract the responsibilities and proposed payment rates for the team of restorers.

- e sempre con dipendenza di un Direttore che sarà loro assegnato.
- Che debbano interamente desistere da ogni privata operazione, per dedicarsi interamente a questa pubblica commessione, e sulla fede di tal condizione, si professino essi: obbediranno e vorranno, ogni loro avvisamento, e tutto.
- Che la mercede di tali professori debba proporzionarsi al diverso grado dei pregiudizi, e alla estensione delle opere da restaurarsi, e non al merito, ed al valore intrinseco dell'opera; per lo che furono fissate tre Classi di lavoro con tre prezzi differenti, cioè Quadri di massimo deterioramento detti di 1^a Classe, lire 20 al piede quadrato. Quadri di medio deterioramento detti di 2^a Classe, lire 14 al piede quadrato, e quadri del minore deterioramento detti di 3^a Classe, lire 8 al piede quadrato.
- Che nelle tre specie di balchi, trasporti, tele, per faticosi, ed ingredienti necessari al lavoro fossero compresi nella sudd^{ta} mercede, e restassero a peso dei avergi suoi. L'accomodamento poi delle misture, gli intalcati, le ricure, costeggiature di tela, con l'accomodamento o rinnovazione di cornice restar dovesse a peso, ed oltre in conto a parte.
- Quanto poi all'incarico del Direttore fu stabilito
- Che egli dovesse ordinare il modo dei lavori cominciando dalle opere più pericolose, e con cautela di preferire i luoghi di maggior importanza, etc.
 - Che egli fosse tenuto a peso per peso l'eseguire di ogni Quadro, o Edificio, riparazioni occorrenti.
 - Che egli dovesse accudire all'ecatta esecuzione di queste ordinazioni, e poter comandar la rifiutazione delle operazioni finché temesse possibile, e far e miglioramento, senza però potersi scrivere d'altre mani, né a quelle dei Professori assegnati, e loro assistenti.
 - Che egli potesse licenziare, o farli assistere quando non fosse contento di loro.
 - Che egli dovesse esaminar la qualità degli ingredienti adoperati dai Professori nelle livore, e corruzione dell'aria.
 - Che egli fosse tenuto con suo governo, e la diversa classificazione dei lavori, e di tal confronto di tal documento il lavoro cominciare a Professori il loro pagamento.
 - Che la mercede di tal Direttore fosse indipendente dalla mercede dei Professori e sempre uguale per qualunque Classe di lavoro a lire quattro di lire.
- Con queste discipline cominciossi l'operazione nel fine dell'anno 1784, ed in

...fatto dichiarò in parecchie occasioni il suo compiacimento intorno all'esito di esse
 ...loro verso all'ottavo anno di cui sommissa al Professor Baldassini, e in fine sostituì suo
 figlio Pierluigi: noni poscia il Professor Bartoloni, ed al caso di tale mancanza
 l'Ispettor Edwards supplicò che non si sostituisse altro soggetto in luogo di lui, fu fatto
 tremando egli troppo paventosa la scelta fra gli aspiranti, oltre ad una vicinanza
 col fatto in difficoltà di prestarsi alla direzione di molte figure, e d'inventare in
 tutta la necessaria durezza: quindi si ebbe con questa restrizione di tempo e
 di tempo e suoi proprii pregj ed attenzione, che si continuasse l'opera con
 li soli dieci Professori Fizzianis, e Tradisiani, e con li loro assistenti.

L'Edwards stesso pensò se li Professori queranti a porre all'Ispezione un gran
 numero di opere di vario compasso nella generalità del Contratto: in conse-
 guenza di ciò produsse una nota di circa 200 pezzi, ai quali consigliava di
 dar l'Inclusiva o come troppo triviali, o come troppo quasi stati del tempo, e
 dalle precedenti visitazioni; con alcuni pochi che in allora non avevano
 bisogno di ristaurare. Il suo ricordo non fu mai decretato, ed egli lasciò
 spesso le brida alle particolari Magistrature che volendo ridur a decuria
 la stanza di pubblica residenza. L'obbligarono a far eseguire il ristauramento
 di molte opere di egli avrebbe lasciato indietro.

A compimento di questa impresa restano da ristaurarsi molte opere nella sala
 detta del Regadi; il celebre d'arabesco nella sala del fu Regio Consiglio; opera
 che l'Edwards non volle mai procedere senza una particolare sua autorizza-
 zione; qualche pezzo di alcune registrazioni; ed alcune sue tavole, nelle quali
 tacciò a Chiesa di S. Maria di S. Maria. La rovina però dell'altare di S. Maria
 va di povera per la Chiesa della Città, e dell'Isola innumerevole e grandissima;
 ed il passato Governo cominciava già da qualche anno a valersi d'ogni
 parte; non fu mai deliberata provvidenza alcuna nel proposito.

Nei consulti dati al Senato prima della Decretazione 1774 fu incaricato di fissare
 ad una somma determinata l'importo dispendio di questa operazione ma
 il Senato credè opportuno di non fissar alcun limite a quest'essenza americana.

Per il fatto per risultato che considerato così nuovo per l'altre si avrebbe una
 dispendio di circa 4000 Ducati all'anno concesso necessariamente, e non ac-
 cessione che si sono fatte in questo lungo periodo di tempo.

Junta le angustie della Città nei primi mesi dell'anno scorso, non si potè
 ve che non convenisse in quei momenti riporre ai loro luoghi le pitture che

B.

si trovavano in di lui mano, e nello stesso modo eredi di doverci condurre. di
 omli. l'occupazione del monumentale S. Maurizio Pavese, da cui s'è voluta
 di rimanere al suo posto insieme con li Professori operanti. Egli però aveva
 sospeso ogni lavoro con l'oggetto di tenere la sala sempre chiusa, e solo
 rimasti in via privata il pericolo che correvano alcune pitture esistenti nel
 luogo che si destinavano per Guardie di Soldati; in conseguenza di che gli
 fu dato l'ordine di asportare le poche cose di Pitture esistenti, e la
 sala di S. Cristoforo in Siena, e di levarla dalla Chiesa poco frequentata della Sa-
 nità un Quadro condotto di S. Brellino per collocarla dopo la sua restaurazione
 nella Chiesa di S. Zaccaria in sostituzione d'una tavola dello stesso artista
 consegnata alle Commissioni Francesi. L'Edward lo levò dal suo posto, e prima a parte
 fu posta ordinata al S. Edward di voler sul momento ed in grandissima
 fretta la sala di ovagli stati assegnata per suoi lavori nel convento
 di S. Paolo, e Paolo, volendosi questa veder inavvicinamento ad uso di sala
 tale per la truppa francese. Le vaste pitture di cui si ritrovavano de-
 ventare a precipizio strapparsi dai telai, involtate sopra sacconi in
 cui alcune di esse facevano troppa freschezza dalle vecchie anse, e fu
 sposta ogni cosa nella sala superiore in Casa de S. Giovanni dove
 di presente si conservano sulla la Pitture descritte nel foglio A ed ovunque
 soltanto del Quadro di S. Brellino che apparteneva alla Chiesa della Santa
 come poco sopra si è detto

Molte altre particolarità si tralasciano per non accrescere la lunghezza
 di questa relazione, e secondo provvidizioni l'Edward ad ogni vicin
 gli fece fatta per tenerli sotto cura nel detto argomento per ovun-
 questo, quanto relativamente alla paralogia provvidenza che sussiste
 ma sotto il passato Pavese per custodia, e difesa delle pubbliche Pitture.

787, 3

supplicò un numero collettivo all'Imperatore e a' suoi Ministri, e per una
 fatta di combinazioni e operazioni, si tentò ad accelerarne l'operazione, e che verrebbe
 di sventura, quando si accorre a qualche rimedio, come il detto, e le
 persone destinate a queste cure, potessero imporsi a segno di stare in buona fede
 i più nocivi veleni, credendoli innocenti, ed opportuna medicina. Questo un sì
 istruzione non dovrebbe essere molto astrusa, per chi non sia un ingenuo, e se-
 dunque suoi laboriosi e peranti devono essere state le qualità dell'attuale materia
 operanti, a cui mette riflettere in dove in tanto venisse l'operazione in buona fede
 in quelle tele dove stato nel quale secondo l'annunzio ricevuto, mi furono esser
 venute in mano, per tentarne il risanamento migliore. Siff. come con que-
 ste generiche osservazioni non resterebbe soddisfatta la prudente vigilanza
 di S. S. E. E. e neppure sarebbe supplito a quanto richiede la mia delicatezza, e ad
 mi è necessario di trattare con la mia relazione almeno sopra le divisioni
 principali di tutta l'operazione.

Nella prefata scrittura ad. d. 17. avea già detto che un de' più nocivi veleni, era
 giudizj di queste pitture era quello della fragilità, e mobilità del colore guasta-
 ribotto a stato polveroso, e senza veruna coesione nella. ne, parte. Questo disordine
 che per un fenomeno difficile da spiegarsi non si estendeva se non se per inter-
 valli, nel mantra che in altri siti dell'opera, dove il colore trovavasi indovato
 la viscosità fatte dire dal tempo, richiedeva un rimedio che procedesse ogni altro
 lavoro; senza di che, la necessità di voltar, e rivoltar quella molti, e tanti diverse
 operazioni avrebbe cagionato la perdita intiera di tutti gli spazi di pitture cadenti
 ma la nevizia, fuliginosa, e la struttura di tante parti che equivocano questi quadri
 si opponevano all'istruzione di ogni rimedio, che applicar si doveva nella parte
 anterior del dipinto, onde nell'atto di consolidar la sua coesione non si distaccasse
 vie più adentro, e più tenacemente le vezzure della superficie. Similmente
 trovarsi impedita ogni utile cura dal reverso del dipinto medesimo, poiché
 fra le micidiali operazioni dei passati ritratti vi fu, per quella di estendere
 sul tal reverso una intonacatura di terraccia ad opio crasso, ed essicante, con
 cui s'investì prima la tela originale, e su d'essa ^{l'opio} perciò un telone di cotone
 cio pur imbevuto d'altro opio, o mistura; cose tutte che prima d'esser usate
 bene rimossa vezzure qualunque operazione di buona riuscita operando da
 quella banda. Al onta però di così gravi difficoltà, la fermezza del colorito
 è ridotta consistente, per modo, che se mai nella casualità di qualche urto occor-
 riva se ne dovesse perdere alcun briciolo, ciò accaderà più facilmente nei siti
 rinnovati per la mancanza del color antico, di quello che nella massa dell'originale.
 Questa verità si è fatta riconoscere con molti esperimenti, prova a gran numero di
 persone invitate nel laboratorio, onde ben esaminar in vicino la condizione
 della

delle pitture stesse dopo il ristaurò, ma la dimostrazione eliminata della ridonata in un
 conveniente si deduce dall'effetto della ricollazione di questa tela al primo nichio, poiché
 se tutto il dipinto di esse non fosse stato in una perfetta ed egual consistenza, non avrebbe
 giammai potuto resistere a tante irrazionevoli, avvilimenti, e tempesti diversi, ed
 alla violenza degli sferzatisimi deturcamenti su quegli immensi telaj, a molto
 meno agli altri tavolati che dovettero soffrire in questa nuova riparazione stando
 sempre in posizione di soffitto, ed in continuo tremito per le percosse occasionate
 dal lavoro superiore. Questa porzion di fanche, dalla cui riurcita dipende, poi
 tutto il resto, è una di quelle cose delle quali non si può più mente quando si
 rivedgono le pitture ai lor posti, ma lo dovete rimarcare prima d'ogni altro
 particolare non meno per dover d'ufficio, che per la lode che se ne deve ai
 nostri valorosi operai.

Un'altra laboriosa operazione relativa alla sussistenza di quadri, fu quella
 della generale fedatura di tela nuova sottoposta a ciaschedun pezzo, articolo
 per questo che si nasconde all'occhio dell'osservatore, ma che in aggiunta
 del gravoso dispendio che portò seco per la gran quantità di telami, per la
 costruzione dei robusti contorni di legname necessari a questo lavoro, e per
 l'occupazione manuale di molti operai, fu anche il soggetto di straordinari
 studi, e di non poche perplessità, a cagion che la imbrattatura ogliera di cui si
 trovò imbrattato il rovescio di quella pittura, benché fatta stata diligentemente
 rimossa, avea lasciata la tela originale in una direzione contraria a quella
 che si richiama per unirvi coi glutini che dovevano tenervi attaccate queste federe
 a filo per filo. Di più, la viziazione della vecchia grana si trovò così rigida, e
 resistente che bene erano superò la forza d'una sovrana di venti mille libbre
 di peso; e quindi tanto per un motivo che per l'altro si dovettero più volte rimettere
 queste fedature, fin che fu vinta ogni difficoltà, come lo manifesta la perfetta
 maravigliosa uguaglianza di superficie, alla quale con l'ajuto del Signore sono
 ridotti quegli esemplari. Ogni piccola difetto nella fedatura si rende ancora
 sempre visibile dal dritto dell'opera con la gibberità che risaltano da quella
 parte; e la situazione di que' soffitti è tale che ricovendo lume, più forte da un
 lato che dall'altro, gli spettatori che sono in faccia al più forte vedevono
 le più minute irregolarità che fossero rimaste sul piano della pittura.
 Siccome poi l'applicazione di tai federe fu intrisa non meno per la miglior
 esecuzione del ristaurò attuale che per difera contro la insidia del tempo
 avvenire, così pensai di condur questo lavoro in modo che togliessi ogni
 necessità di brutare in alcun tempo la pittura forandola di sotto insù con l'
 inserzione di centinaia di larghissime brocche; cioè che fu sempre in uso di parti
 quando la tela di soffitti cominciava ad allentarsi, e diventava cavalle verso del
 piano

piano inferiore. Ma se voleva da me immaginare gran d'ora innanzi l'effetto
 d'impedire la discesa, o la incurvatura della setta che restavano stabilmente
 obbligate a punti fini sul rispettivo telaio, costrutto pur anche questo in cartonghi
 senza dell'oggetto medesimo; e quindi succedendo dalla parte superiore la caduta
 di polveri, e calcinacci, non potremmo questi raccogliersi mai in un centro solo,
 dal che veniva per il parato accresciuta mostruosamente la incurvatura della
 pittura fin all'improvvisa loro caduta, come più volte è avvenuto in questa
 sala medesima. Che se nel corso di anni si rilevava qualche alterazione di
 poco momento negli intervalli dei ritorni da uno di questi, sarà felicissimo il
 rimediarsi senza l'uso d'impurissimi della bottega.

Da tutte le cose fin qui ragionate ben rileva la necessità di S. S. E. che si parta sciolta
 della generalità relativa alla parte medesima di quest'impresa. Ma come potrei non
 tener di annodar al istesso la loro tolleranza, se di tutto il resto parlar vedessi
 con accurata esattezza? per ^{quanto} riguardo io toccherò unicamente le più importanti circo-
 stanze di questo lavoro considerandolo nel suo complesso; e non a quadro per quadro.
 La prima nobilitazione suol esser quella della coltura, la quale su questo ten-
 fe della più pericolosa che dar si possono. L'uso dei soliti mezzi si trova insufficiente
 a conseguire l'intento con sola mediocrità; ed a convincerli del grave imbarazzo
 di questo lavoro basta riflettere / senza punto badare a mill'altre difficoltà / che
 la lunga giacitura degli ogli crassi sottoposti al rovescio della pittura avea cagio-
 nato il travardamento d'una materia viscosa raccolta in piccioli; ed insubstantibile.
 Lobuletti rilevati sopra il dipinto, ed ariccati; poi come lagrime di durissima gomma
 nera intrucchiato nell'altro succeduto di ogli con, e ritocchi grossissimi di colore adoperato
 negli anteriori accomodamenti; per lo che s'incontravano dei larghi tratti di setta come
 incrostati dentro a questi immundezze, la quali poi per essere d'una pittura analoga a quella
 del color originale, e quasi immundissimi con esso, non si poteva tentare di scongiurarle con
 attivi dissolventi senza metter a pericolo gli avanzi della opera che vi restava sotto di
 sotto. Convenne perciò trovar la maniera di agir lentamente, e per gradi cambiando i
 ripieghi a seconda delle circostanze diverse, ed operando mai sempre col presidio d'una
 incredibile pazienza, tanto che finalmente si ridusse la superficie d'ogni quadro allo
 stato della sua originalità. Ma qual pro di tanta fatica? eccettuata la parte lumina-
 rose della composizione, quasi tutte le altre si ritrovavano il più della volte, intrin-
 sicamente cangiato, ed in tutto simil a quel del carbone.

Si è in altra scrittura espasi la mia teoria sul principio dell'intimo cambiamento che
 soffrono le polveri colorate nella lor unione con gl'ogli vegetali, per espressione. Ma i
 ragionamenti non mi lasciavano dubitare del fatto anch'essendo di verificare; ma
 le conseguenze di esso nel caso presente riuscirono assai mortificanti, poiché l'ecce-
 siva nerizia d'alcuni indue, ed il nuovo cupo di molte altre indue, inducono la necessità di
 non

non lasciare in tutta la loro vaghezza quella molta cosa si trovavano intatte; e quindi
 dopo aver pulita una vasta pittura con immenso, ed inestimabile stento, fu dovuto
 sciarare molta cosa di tutto di quanto si potevano ridurre, onde non perdeva il più im-
 pregiato relativo all'unione dei colori, voglio dir l'armonia. Di questa dovei riservarmi
 a parlare sul fine della mia relazione; ma poiché ho dovuto farne cenno anche alcuni
 continuarsi a rimarcare sullo stesso proposito, che se li quadri di Francesco Bassano, e quelli
 del Tintoretto si potessero vedere nello stato di armonia in cui si ritroverebbero dopo una
 politura non eseguita con la or ora indicata avvertenza, eccitarebbero il dispetto d'ogni
 mezzano conoscitore benchè nel giudizio si deve preservata l'originalità dell'inte-
 tore a tutto rigore di scrupolo. Io tuttavia conosco benissimo che nei menzionati
 quadri del Tintoretto resta molto da desiderarsi in linea di buon'armonia, ma un
 tal difetto è imputabile totalm^{te} all'autore, il quale nella stravaganza d'intrecci-
 atissime composizioni si appigliò al partito di renderla un fuoco più, orecchie, e men-
 confuse introducendo dei fierissimi contrapposti, ed esprimendo i contorni delle masse
 generali, e di molti corpi particolari con l'uso di lumi che dicono rabbiosi, ed oscuri
 taglienti al maggior segno; cosa tutta che a quadro fresco restavano forse temperate
 dalla felicità dei passaggi nell'intreccio di tutta la parte. Ma sopravvenuta, e scin-
 l'alterazione intrinseca degli oscuri, ed annaritasi la mezza tinta, restarono allora
 eccessivamente disuniti gli estremi del concerto generale, li quali non si possono ric-
 ravvicinar tanto bene dal restauratore, ed egli spesso non si trovi nella necessità
 di sacrificare l'intelligenza del quadro all'armonia, o di sacrificare l'armonia
 all'intelligenza del quadro. Nella direzione che io diedi su questo punto mi regolei
 camminando meglio che io sappi fra li due precipizii. Ho preferito però il più delie-
 volte il consociamento dell'opera nel suo general assunto, e sacrificai all'armonia
 solo alcune vigesimissime particolarità, per le quali si può dir con franchezza che
 questi quadri non sono i migliori di quel maestro. L'approvazione del pubblico
 mi ha fin ora confortato nella mia scelta, sulla quale per verità non saprei
 far cambiamenti ragionevoli ancorchè non avessi conseguito l'applauso dell'
 università. In tutte l'altre cose di quel seppero se l'amor proprio, e l'ammuffazion
 dell'occhio non m'ingannano, sembrami che vinci ottenuto non solo più di quello
 che sperare potevasi relativamente alla primiera lor condizione, ma che siano effec-
 tivamente ridotte a qual più giusto grado di modesta armonia che lor si conviene.
 Ora per finir di parlare intorno alla generalità della politura mi do l'onore di
 ricordava a S. M. E. E. la otto duna che ho dato motivo al diverbio con li SS. Accademici
 dai quali si optava che fossero tale spauramente soppressi di tinta nera. L'orri-
 bile annerimento che la ricopriva fu tolto via con felicità, ed ora si riconovano
 per pittura bella e buona tutte a chiaro scuro, e degli autori segnati dal Boschini, come
 Senyora sostenuti. Questa opera anzi non avevano sofferto tanto nel proprio fondo come le
 altre;

altre; in guisa che non ne stovvi alcuna che paritasse. Si avere collocata fra i lavori di
 prima classe, sopra di che si suppone che mi sia parso di rimarcare esser questo uno
 dei molti esempi occorsi fin adesso, da quali si può argomentare che io non colgo vantag-
 gi né dall'averi conservata, né dal frutto meraviglioso che a me di rado avrai potuto mettere
 a profitto; e che la sola ragione del mio contanto sono la verità l'onore, ed il diletto mio.
 L'operazione della stuccatura incontro della resistenza, che per dirla in breve io covai
 di superarla evitando quanto fu possibile la stuccatura medesima, com'è mio costume.
 E' già noto che questi quadri avevano infinita lacertozia, e versamenti, e rotture;
 tal difetto furono riparati con incastri di gesso, e di tela in vario modo firmati; e dove fu
 indispensabile la stuccatura si usò un modo della straordinaria diligenza per assicurarsi
 della sua tenacità sopra quei difficilissimi fondi. Né ogni modo mi credo in dovere di
 preavvertire N. S. E. che se quella pittura non saran vani di fare dal colamento delle acque,
 e dell'acqua piovana, tutta l'opera del ristaurato sarà gravemente pregiudicata, ma di
 stuccatura in particolare saranno più a mal partito del resto. Quest'avvertimento
 per verità è applicabile a qualunque sorta di quadri nuovi, o vecchi, ristaurati, o non
 ristaurati, ma per li quadri avvechiati in rispetto è d'una importanza maggiore
 che per quelli della pittura, dove l'acqua trascorra, e non resti sopra altro che sul lambu
 inferior della tela.
 L'ultima cosa finalmente di cui deggio far parola riguarda il ristauramento delle parti
 perdute. Molte di queste riparazioni erano state barbaramente già praticate in addi-
 tro, e furono quasi tutte difette dei nostri professori. E non dire che vi fossero
 tal pregiudizii sarebbe lo stesso che voler nascondere la luna del sole, perchè infiniti
 testimonj sussistono di questo fatto; ed il dar ad intendere che simili disordini s'isino
 riparati per arte magica senza rifare quello che più non esisteva sarebbe una di quelle
 ributtanti imposture che per troppo ottuso spaccio fra li parisi ciurmatosi di questa on-
 fessione. Ciò che deve essere in tali casi ridotto a due sole cose; Maratogna in cui
 si deve contenere nei margini del panno indispensabile bisogno è la più rigorosa con-
 formità col resto dell'opera che si ristaura.
 Quanto al primo capo poco accennato N. S. E. che sarebbe piuttosto da incoraggiare
 la troppo reverenda ritenutezza dei nostri professori, anziché l'acervo, e l'altrezza loro;
 e certo che molta opera farebbero un effetto sensibilmente migliore l'eglino non
 avessero saputo maneggiare all'egualità che potevano procurarsi con qual che
 libertà di condotta. Difatti specialmente nell'opera di Dintoretto vi son delle cose
 difettosissime non meno per la ricchezza d'introdotta, che per il contorno con cui
 sono coperte; ma nel rassicurarla si rispettano anche questi difetti, sebbem
 possa crederli che l'autore medesimo mi avrebbe saputo buon grado se avessi
 permesso qualche una di queste ragionevoli correzioni. Le medesime osservazioni
 potrebbero estendersi ad alcune opere del Lalma, e ad altre ancora; e questa

per mio avviso è una delle migliori, prova che ancor si possano a favore compiuto
 circa la fedeltà dell' esecuzione. Quanto poi alla perfezione del lavoro medesimo
 mancherà a quella verità di cui mi vanto vedersi che in un sì lungo, e
 variato travaglio non vi sia cosa su cui siami restato il desiderio di una via
 scelta migliore; non similmente mancherà ad un dover di giustizia tenendosi
 agli professori nostri quella pienissima lode che si meritano per esser arrivati
 fin dove forza forte non si troverebbe un altro artista capace di giungervi.
 Non ostante però della tormentosa incertezza con la quale mi tempo sempre
 nella brama di migliorar più alla squisitezza tutt' i lavori massimamente
 in quest' articolo dei necessari rifacimenti, non posso dissimular la grandissima
 consolazione che provai quando avendo invitato nel laboratorio molte
 persone pratiche dell' arte a cercar sopra de' quadri restaurati le imperfezioni
 mancanti ch' erano state rimaste, m' avvidi della loro incertezza, e tremore
 finalmente che cadevano in equivoci, ed in questi sbagli. Questi due cinotti
 tranquillarono le mie trepidazioni, e venivano ancora di norma ai miei
 giudizi, come servir deggion di prova intorno alla possibilità di tutto l' ^{l'}
 operazione. -
 Prima di terminar quest' articolo è necessario ch' io manifesti a mia idem-
 nità le molte dissimiglianze che riscontrai fra questa pittura, e la stanza
 che ne furono tracciate nel Livra tanti anni addietro. La oscurità di mi-
 quadri mi fece andar in traccia della carta fedita, dalle quali scemò di
 ottenere qualche lume a mia direzione; ma in fatto ne ricevetti pochissimo
 ajuto, poichè li disegnatore di quel tempo defenirono a capriccio tutte le
 cose equivocate, regolandosi come loro sembrò meglio dalla distanza in cui
 si trovavano, e fra i disordini a cui erano di già ridotta quella pittura;
 nuovo argomento onde formarsi più chiara idea dell' orribile guasto nel
 qual esser doviano quando poi mi furono consegnate. Tali diffezenze son più
 ch'abbia sensibile nel quadro di Paolo che rappresenta la presa di Sirina, in
 cui stampa oltre a non pochi cambiamenti lascia in una man confusa
 quasi tutti gli accidenti del campo. Variato pure si trovò l'altro in fatto
 dello stesso autore esprimente la liberazione di Scutari. Sia sopra tutto la
 due chiaro-scuro di Pietro Longo, nell' un de quali è distinta la morte crudele
 data da Durchi a Marc' Antonio Bragadino, e nell' altro il rifiuto religioso
 fatto dalla Sera Sppa all' assistenza offerta da Durchi, si rinvennero diversi a
 gran tratto dalla incisioni che se ne veggono. Per verità queste due opere
 erano quasi agate perite, e con esse era pur anco perito il rifacimento
 molto arbitrario di una passata accomodata. È probabile che l'incitore
 si ricopiassero dopo questi alterazioni; ed è assai naturale che in tal caso si adessero

a quel che allora vedersi.

Nel ripulimento presentasi scappioni della confusa l'adiazione d'un più antico dipinto che tralucevano a traverso del color rimpolito, ed a forza d'insistenza si trovò alla fine l'indizio della composizione originale; ma in quale stato è facile il raffigurarlo. Ad ogni modo io pensai di dover seguire la traccia certissima dell'autore niente curando la dissimiglianza, che così facendo, sarebbe comparso fra la stampa ed il quadro. Queste due pitture sarebbero state escluse da me come tant'altra dei Ducali palazzi, di cui già v'avevo fatto l'annunzio una lunghissima lista; ma il decoro della tradizione a quella della Regia Sala a cui appartengono consigliavo a ritenerele; del che si fece apposito discorso con l'Es.^{mo} S.^{no} Caracci al momento della consegna. Lo stesso riguardo fu pur osservato con molti dei ritratti che rimangono il fragio, e che sono ritoccabili: sol tanto per il rappresentato, e per la serie che conviene serbare nell'una originalità. Dalla mia relazione del 26 agosto v's. si può rilevar abbastanza la condizione, con la quale devono confrontarsi adesso; ricordandosi però rivolto a molti di essi che l'elemento dei restauratori non può mai aver quello di far diventat eccellenti le pitture triviali.

Questa ES.^{ma} ST.^a è la più ristretta che ch'io dar sapria di tutto l'esiguito lavoro. Se che molto difficilmente altri potrà chiamar la ristretta come a me sembra; ma se veder si potesse in dettaglio per qual maniera si sia curata. La mia fantasia, e le infinite cose che potrei dire ancora, sarebbe anzi dubio giustificata la mia proporzione.

Per solo rispetto adunque tralascio di parlare intorno alla felicità dell'effetto, e niente dico del valore a cui montano adesso quella opera che, potremo riguardarsi come un capitale perduto. Il Re.^{mo} tanto mal prevenuto, e la invidia che attendeva in agguato la ricompensa di quest'opera, supplirono all'onore dovuto agli nostri benemeriti artisti, il primo con la sincerità, e con la pienezza degli applausi, e la seconda con lo sforzato silenzio a cui si è dovuta venire.

Tralascio pure la descrizione del pericoloso ricoltocamento di quelle tele eseguita con nuovo metodo di mia invenzione. Quell'articolo concerne solo l'umilissima mia persona, e può esserle d'ovvio come fosse d'ovvio alle mie incombenze; motivo per cui mi son procurata l'autentica approvazione del mio piano col susseguente laudo dell'esecuzione; ciò che risulta dalle tre carte che unisco alla presente. Il mio zelo su tal particolare è stato largamente compensato dall'orbe felicissimo che

che ho ottenni, dalla cortesia d'una maggior, osservazione di quella opera;
e dalla compiacenza di avere spontaneamente procurato alla Rub^{ca} Cassa
un risparmio considerabile. Di spero, per ogni ulterior avvenimento relativo
a simili eriggenze.

Il dover dell'incarico che mi obbliga alla presentazione di queste mie
riferte serve ad impetrarmi da cadaun di S. S. E. S. il perdon che ossequio
osamente addimando per il risent' esercizio nel quale mi fu necessario
di tenere la loro sofferente clemenza. S. S. E. S.

Comitata questo d. 15 Aprile 1789

Umilissimo obbedientissimo
ossequiosissimo fedelissimo
Antonio De' Rossi
Chirurgo generale della R. S. S.

Illmo, ed Eccellentissimo SS^{to} Provveditor al Sol.

177 = 1772

1772

Nei giorni 20, 21, e 22 Decem: feci distaccare, e trasferire alla Sala del lororo i venticinque pezzi di pittura che compongono tutto il soffitto nella Sala dell' E^{to} C^{to} di ze. Prima di eseguire questa rimessione fu convenuto con l'assenso degli E^{to} sig^{to} Capi, ai quali altresì feci ricercare se fosse piuttosto piacere di SS^{to} E^{to} che si ricollocassero ai proprii nicchi i quadri laterali della Sala medesima restaurati da qualche tempo, o che si differisse tale riponimento fin a tanto che terminati sara una anche li soffitti; e per noi avremo SS^{to} E^{to} deciso per quest'ultima partita ho recato di adagio v. i laterali sudotti nella Sala dei nostri lavori, in qual modo è ora piena, ed ingombata dalle opere, che per diverse ragioni non si possono rimettere come appartenengono, che a grave stento si può continuare l'opera nostra. Ora per non allungare VV. CC. con la minuta esposizione dello stato in cui trovai gli accennati venticinque pezzi non si può in conseguenza far cosa di formare tre Classe diverse, e sopra ciascuna di esse fare alcune osservazioni più importanti oltre alla generale descrizione che può appartenere a tutti li quadri in ogni una esser così. Ho sono i Autori che lavorarono a queste opere delle quali nove sono di Paolo Veronese, rimasero in esse in quattro tela di mezzo, e cinque chiari-securi laterali; cinque sono di Zilotti compreso un Chiaro-scuro; e undici son opere di Basacio, delle quali nove sono a chiaro-scuro, e due soli a color naturale. In tutti questi quadri furono in addietro restaurati poco o niente, e perciò trovansi quasi su ciascuna una qualche ritocco ammesso, e molto pregiudizio nelle mezze tinte. Il meno pregiudicati sono i sei, cioè i due piccoli chiari-securi, due chiari-securi grandi, un ovato di Zilotti, altro di Basacio, e li due quadri-lunghi, dei quali uno, è dello stesso Basacio, e l'altro è una superba stittura di Raffaello. Oltre al danno venuto di alcune mezze tinte, che si rimarca specialmente nell'ovato del Zilotti, oltre a molti tocchi, e svelature non originali, che conviene rimuovere da questi quadri, ed altre ad alcuni squarci, ed altre piccole servature disperse qua, e là su tali stitture, è singolare l'affumicatura, e l'immensabile coppia di sporchie lasciatevi sopra dalle mosche; nei quali due pregiudizii sono li diciotto pezzi vanno del pari con tutto il resto di quel soffitto. La diligenza che si richiede a non perdere questi quadri è irriducibile, poichè da una parte il fondo del colore è già pregiudicato a ragione del vecchio tavacchio; e dall'altra l'affumatura, e le mosche sono d'una vesuzienza che non si può sopprimere con un opera superficiale. Nel secondo ordine poi si possono riporre altri quattro quadri, ma a

dire, uno di Zilotti che è quello sopra del Trono, altro ovato dello stesso autore, altro simile di Paolo.
 un chiaro-scuro grande di Zilotti, ed altro pure di Paolo. Supposti già gl'acconciati, ov-giudicj come
 su a tutte le pitture del soffitto medesimo, questi cinque poi si distinguono per il maggior numero di
 cattivi ritocchi, e per la perdita di colore caduto. L'ovato di Zilotti particolarmente è stato fregato
 assai indebitamente, ed il quadro sopra il Tribunale è pieno di ritocchi, ma come nelle due statue,
 e nei panni della figura principale oltre a qualche mancanza di colore nelle carni della figura vicin
 sime nella gloria, e negli accessori. Il braccio destro del bellissimo Vecchione sedente nell'ovato di
 Paolo è molto ricupinto, né so cosa si troverà sotto di quei ritocchi, che però sembrano fuor di luogo; el
 chiaro-scuro di Zilotti è sìemmentalissimo nell'armonia, e corretto in moltissime parti; e quello di Paolo
 ha sofferta molta perdita di colore, oltre alla decadenza di tinta in cui è stato ridotto con la impropria
 lavatura indicata di sopra. Il terzo rango dei più danneggiati vien riempito da due soli pezzi, che sono
 il sontuoso quadro centrale di Paolo, e l'altro di Zilotti nel capo del soffitto opposto al Tribunale. Diversi
 diverse, e grandissime lacerazioni attraversano delle parti nobilissime del quadro di Paolo; un gran
 numero di scrostature mal accennate in passato, ed una quantità di ritocchi cangiati di tinta forma
 no un secondo pregiudizio di quest'opera; il panno volante del Giove, e quello d'una dea signati furono
 affatto dipinti dal vecchio restauratore; il fior delle svelature, e molte mezze tinte sono in gran parte
 perduti; la tela poi in generale è così piena di viziate, e tanto dura per l'applicazione di qualche
 glutine nella parte posteriore, che sarà molto se si giunge ad appianarla perfettamente, ed a tener un
 ta con la federa che vi sarà sottoposta. Della sporchizia e delle mosche non parlo. È probabile che il
 gran numero d'insetti, de quali trovansi le tracce sopra questi quadri vi sia stato attirato da una sot
 ta di vernice leggera meschiata col zucchero, che amara, con assai cattiva pratica, vien posta in uso da
 certi pittori poco attenti alla preservazione delle opere loro. Allo stesso modo è pregiudicato il quadro
 ov era indicato del Zilotti; se non che i squarci sono minori, e men decisivi, e la tela non è assidera
 ta, e vizziata come quella di Paolo. Del resto poi, la testa del Leone, e quella dell'ene sono rifatte entis
 samente, ina con somma goffagine; e da quando appariva adesso credo che sotto tali rifaciture non si
 troverà quasi una pennellata di originale. Tutto il corpo della Donna seminuda è temperato in
 piccoli ritocchi, e da scrostature minute; ed il torso gigantesco del Fiume primitivo è quasi ag

Commiss. ad Excep. Sig. Canova

Venezia 23 giugno 1804

Non so se la presente io scriva in altissimo contrasto con me medesimo. La compiacenza di
 scriverle in una mia lettera, non può disgiungersi dal rimorso, e dal ramore di non esserle riuscito a
 di lungo tempo, ed in tante occasioni, che me ne furono permesso dalla sua gentilezza, ma l'altra parte non
 conseguendo mai, e per me sarebbe un terribile indizio d'impertinenza finale, che Dio me ne liberi. In ogni
 adunque la scorgo, e in questa uza parte della penna che si muove il mio presente

Carissimo Sig. Canova, le giuro che della stessa conghetta inquietudine nel scrivere che il mio pensiero a volte
 interpretare in qualche sinistro senso, e le dico a più d'una, ma ecco la stessa immagine del tutto

Sul finire di Maggio 1802 ricevetti una sua lettera, in cui, facendomi nella più d'onore che non avessi, mi
 chiedeva il parere mio sopra l'egregia sua Statua del Cavaliere Comiss. ad Excep. Sig. Canova, il Sig. Canova d'
 Canova: Cav. Sig. Giacomo Giustiniani, alcuni Orifici dell'attuale Governo che vollo invitare nella
 casa in mia compagnia, e molti altri persone colle stesse testimonie dell'entusiasmo col quale parli di quel
 mio lavoro; e già me aveva preparato per V.S. la mia risposta congratulazione in iscritto. Ma non appunto per
 quella quando mi venne fatto di vedere la lettera di ringraziamento preparata dalla mia scrivano, e
 poi non era stampata nella gazzetta. Fui a me che fosse troppo mossa con, e non facevo altro se ad una
 copia di quella, né all'importanza di quel sentuoso parlo dell'atto. In un tempo di meno mi era
 quindi nel mio spirito. Rifaccia vuol Ella che lo dica, fui aggraziatamente preso dal pensiero di scrivere, e cedei
 alla tentazione. Feci adunque indietro il primo abbozzo mio, solo per sostituirlo una dissertazione
 stolare, che condussi a termine in tempo bastantemente discreto, onde non incomparisse con V.S. ma che ap
 pena l'ebbi finita entrò nel sospetto di poterne ripostar la faccia di perantuzo, come se lo intendesse di
 le rimarcare la mia voce al di sopra di quello tanto che s'innalzavano allora in sua lode per l'oggetto stesso,
 ed in detto tempo che il mio scritto si potesse credere dettato soltanto da una mal sostenuta voglia di compiacere
 e non di tutto.

(In tal pensiero per il capo demandai venti volte a me stesso = faccio sapere la mia costanza sì o no, e se
 do, o non la mondo? In tanto il tempo scorse, e l'affare si finiva per me scritto, ma per poco
 ruse completamente obsoleto si volea tutto quel tanto di cose che si sviluppò per me intorno la fine di
 que, e mi vapi ad ogni altra cosa per un tratto assai lungo. Un Decreto di Vienna riguardante la mia
 d'Aspettare sopra le Belle Arti era d'essa; un foglio d'impacci fortissimissimi, precedenti di quell'Asse,
 una questione giudiziaria [non l'avevo] con un Convento di Venetie; un grande attacco di epidemia nei
 mi

ni sul mio piccolo Rodolfo, mentre il mio biterzo stava malato; e per finire la lista, una malattia mia propria che con recidive terribili mi tene in sommo languore sino all'età dell'anno passato, sono una parte delle vicende che mi colsero d'improvviso, e nelle quali d'allora in poi, fu sempre mai involupata un seguito d'infelicità. Addio pensieri geniali per tutto questo tempo. Dopo così lungo interstizio non dubitai punto d'ingannarmi nel concludere che la mia compassa oppure sarebbe affettata, ed estemporanea, e mi persuasi in silenzio che il miglior partito fosse quello di non parlare altro.

Questa è la verità stessa che da parecchio ho promesso, e questo si chiama far vedere la propria coscienza in uno specchio.

Ma perché, perché non risurre al Sig. Canova almeno quando ei trovassi con nuovi saluti, o quando te mandò la Stampa con le giudiciosissime sue osservazioni sopra i disegni di Canova (L'arte) [o Dio quanti rimproveri!] perché? perché non poteva scrivere ad esso senza toccare il delicato punto del diritto in cui mi trovavo, e la cui cura richiedeva una leggenda tanto eccitante, quanto per prova si vede essere divenuto ormai questa.

Avvedutomi in fine che ad onta del mio mal contegno Ella tuttavia insisteva per me le stesse buone disposizioni, e mi faceva ricercar di qualche parere col mezzo delli D. Selva, e Tencoli, non potei più resistere, e finalmente proposi di sommere le cause, dell'avidità, e d'ogn'altro difetto, non'ora fatto lo cedendo: dal qual questo soffocante boccone, e disiggendo al dolcissimo Sig. Canova la povertà mia stessa.

Amè! Dopo questa confessione generale mi sembra propriamente d'essere divenuto leggero, ed assai simile a un uccello. Però mi manca il meglio, perchè mi mancano ancora l'assoluzione, e la pazienza. In prima però io me la prometto pienissima dal suo buon cuore, e accompagnata con mille anni d'indulgenza: e rispetto alla seconda sono preparato da buon penitente a tutto ciò che sta nella sfera delle mie forze.

Persuaso adunque ch' Ella voglia benignamente dimenticarsi tutto il passato, rivolgo adesso il restante di questo foglio agli oggetti covanti:

I suoi desideri per l'acquisto di qualche modello del Tiepolo, e di qualche veduta di Venezia eseguita da buona mano mi pervennero in tempo assai favorevole. I migliori modelli del Tiepolo erano caduti in mano del fu Gio. M. Sessa. Dopo la di lui morte furono subito comprati da due, o tre altri negozianti di qualche città, e pagavano benino, e perciò o li nascessero, o li facesse montare a prezzi esorbitanti. Quello dell'Immacolata Conceptione finitami vedere dal Sig. Selva è ottimo per una certa elevatezza di pensiero dantico, che si avea dall'ordinario. Non è però dipinto nel tempo della maggiore eccellenza dell'artista, ma piuttosto in una sua sua povertà, per quanto comportavano le sue abitudini; ed il suo stile, e ierni ciò in sovrachin minuscolo di tanti che si videro sia in parte una introduzione posteriore di Domenico. E per altre assai peggiore cosa, ed è molto ben conservato, sicchè paremi che meritasse d'essere inviato alla collezione di Elia von Saxe. L'acquisto delle vedute è ancora più difficile. Se quelle di Canaletto non ne dinosse più, non si parla quasi più che di quelle del suo Nipote Bellotto, quantunque non fossero meraviglie, e per lo maggior parte furono copie fatte dagli originali del Zio. Di Massimiliano non si vede così alcuna, o solo qualche pezzo rinvenuto per l'eccesso nel partito della sua marchia. Del Vivantini, del Zoli, e del Battaglioli sono quasi tutte invenzioni di copisteri, o vedute elizzate di trasforma. Restano le cose del Guardi, scovette quanto mai, ma ipertossissime, e di que-

vi è adesso molta smania, forse perché non si trova di meglio. Ella sa però che questo Pittore lavorava per la pignotta giornaliera, compiva telecche da senno con impirimitiva scioltezza, e per questo poteva aver il lavoro un po' copioso, e dipingeva bene spesso alla prima. (In acquisto de suoi quadri dove sapevo, non si perdeva in poco tempo, ed io non mi fossi mallecode della loro durata per altri dieci anni. Sulla scoperta fattane dal sig. Jannoli trattai l'acquisto di due di voi quadretti per il S. marino, e un mio potui acquistare. Il venditore erano graziosetti, e non altro. Il sig. Guetti procurò alle mie usanze di farvene vedere alcuni altri di testa perona, tutta vota da Coltegn, anzi da vifuto. Dei indagine se più esistevano quelli altri volta presentati dal H. Barteglia, e dei quali suruo una qualche vantaggiosa remissione, ma seppi che furono venuti. Se continuerò a star in trattia senza peso, e in un qualche luogo più o meno di mia soddisfazione. 'Non peccato' anche queste sono del nostro nostro pittore, si sa secondo la tenerezza non si sono più pittori veduti di buon nome.

Ma la mia lettera è già troppo lunga perché la possa continuare in argomenti, su de quali non so più aver bene, voglio dir quelli di sette arti. Due parole però disegno ch'io dica intorno al suo vantaggio ritraendo a queste quel tanto che ne direi se potessi ne dovessi di proposito. Voglio in amore, che se c'è in e qualche se non vidda opere della nostra età che se gli accolti con qualche possibile vivacità. Se gli encomi ch'io farò di questo lavoro potessero varre qualche cosa, la fama del Canova non oblierebbe ch'altro d'esser fatto alla sua tomba. Siccome da 11 anni io non uoglio avere alcuna comunicazione con la nostra Accademia, e non entro in quelle stanze, così resto privo di contemplare di tanto in tanto quel superbo Colosso, come numerare, e tutte le mie osservazioni se le feci quando ancora esisteva nella fu casa Albizzi a S. Benedetto. Mi risuscito talora alcun poco di questa perdita postandomi dal sunnominato amico sig. Jannoli, che anni stimo e dove posso vedere almeno la sublime testa di quella Statua, unitamente a quella in uso di una della chela sa, ed ai mirabili bassirilievi di Sacrate. Questo è molto, ma diventa poco per chi ammirando se essere, sarebbe abbracciare fra di noi l'Autore di esse.

Bisogna finire. Dopo due anni di scongiurata, miserabile facituzza non si uoleva lettera in lingua d'un invero figlio. So per altro quanto sia prezioso il suo tempo, e saprò rispettarlo in avvenire, qualche poco di assoluzione, e d'indulgenza. Ella voglia onorarci de' suoi comandi, e di qualche sua linea in iscritto. Questo sarà di tanto maggior conforto per me, quanto che mi arriverà un titolo che stetto in pericolo di perdere, quello, cioè di essere.

Cinabro ed Egregio Sig. Canova

V. S. la mia abitazione per ora
è a S. Canovano Rio terra
- N. 5707.

io il mio - Devotiss.
186. - Seridosa.

Pietro Edwards

Libertà



Eguaglianza

IN NOME DELLA SOVRANITA' DEL POPOLO.
IL COMITATO DI SALUTE PUBBLICA

*Alle Comandanti Militari e alle Autorità
dei Municipi ove esistono i Quartieri descritti nella annessa nota.*

*Essa incaricato dal Comitato nostro il Cio: Eclair a portarli in com-
pagnia di missionari commessari della Repubblica Francese, destinati
alla scelta de' Quartieri a norma del Trattato di pace. Si precepiti postar-
re in qualunque luogo ove esistano i Quartieri perche' sieno indicati
immediatamente il loro luogo salute e tranquillita'*

*Fontana di Parigi
Sigaretto
Parigi*

di volta di Segt

Per la via Combronne

di volta di Segt

Document 9. Page 1/4, Works of art appropriated by the French in 1797 in official communiqué signed by Commissars Tinet, Barthelemy, and Claude-Louis Berthollet.

(10.ª dei Quadri che devono essere consegnati alla Repubblica Francese in virtù del Trattato concluso tra il Generale in Capo dell'Armata d'Italia, ed il Governo di Venezia

220 del

1797

Sala delle Corti

N.º 1. Un quadro del Contarini, che rappresenta la Vergine, alcuni Santi all'intorno, e un Poete in fondo del quadro.

(Nella Sala medesima)

2. Un Quadro di Tiziano, che rappresenta la fede, S. Pietro, varj Soldati, ed altre figure.

(Sala dell'Anti-Collegio)

3. Un Quadro di Paolo Veronese, che rappresenta il rapimento di Europa.

(Sala del Consiglio di X.)

4. Un soffitto che rappresenta Giove che fulmina i vizj, di Paolo Veronese.

(Nella stessa Sala)

5. Junone che versa tesori sopra la città di Venezia, soffitto di Paolo Veronese.

(Nella medesima Sala)

Lucca

(Nel Refettorio)

7. Un Quadro di Paolo Veronese, che rappresenta Gesù Cristo presso Simone Fariseo, colla Maddalena a' piedi &c.

In Sacristia

Lucca

8. Un Quadro di Paolo Veronese che rappresenta la Vergine, il Bambino, S. Giuseppe, S. Caterina &c.

Lucca

(Nel 1. Altare a muro sinistra nella Chiesa)

9. Una Vergine, un Angelo che suona il Violone, e sant'Anna. Di Giovanni Bellini

Lucca
dell'
170.

10. Un Quadro di Tintoretto che rappresenta il Giudizio finale.

Questo quadro trovasi nel Convento di S. Paolo per essere restaurato.

Lucca di
Marzo

11. (Nel fondo della Cappella un Quadro di Tintoretto, che rappresenta uno Schiavo liberato dai Turchi, e liberato da S. Marco

A S. Gio.
Paolo

12. Nella 1. Cappella a muro sinistra, un Quadro di Tiziano, che rappresenta il Martirio

dro del Pontenone, che rappresenta S. Lorenzo
Giustiniani, ed altri Santi &

(Maestro) 14. Un quadro di Leonardo Buonarroti, che rappre-
senta il risorgimento di Lazzaro

(Madonna
dell'Inno) 15. Un quadro di Pintorecchio, che rappresenta il
giovane che prega per il taglio del Profeta.

(Gli Gesuiti) 16. Il Martirio di S. Lorenzo; di Tiziano

— I Commissarij del Governo Francese alla ri-
ca degli oggetti di Scienze ed Arti —

(Barthelemy) (Tinet)

(Berthollet)

— I Commissarij faran conoscere in breve la scelta
dei quattro — che restano —

È Colonn Confonno.

È Carlo Maria Montanari, un'altro

2

Libertà



Eguaglianza

IN NOME DELLA SOVRANITA' DEL POPOLO.
 IL COMITATO DI SALUTE PUBBLICA.

Alli Cti. Militari, Custodi del Convento e Chiesa di S. Pio. Paolo
 e di S. Spirito Francesi
 Venezia - 7. Anno Rev. 24. Lug. 1797 - V.S. Anno 1.º della Libertà Italiana.

Si viene a prestare autorizzati gli operai che vi faranno fatti conoscere dal Cti. Ediz. a entrare nel Convento di S. Pio. Paolo, e nella Chiesa secessa, onde possano rimuoovere le Pirame, ed altri effetti che devono esser ritti in altro luogo, operando secondo gli ordini dell'ordine suddetto, sopra d'intelligenza con li Commisarij Francesi.

Lutice - Franzellony
 = [Signature]

Il Cti. per sede
 di S. Spirito
 con l'ordine di S. Spirito
 = [Signature]

Document 10. Notification given to Edwards of official closure of the laboratory at SS Giovanni e Paolo when the French turned the space into a military hospital dated August 24, 1797.

LIBERTÀ



EGUAGLIANZA

In nome della Municipalità di Pesaro e di
 a cominciare alle Confische, si indicherebbe con gli Appunti
 Aggiungendo all'invia del giorno a poi per obbligo. Sono Edwardi ~~per~~ incaricati di firmare
 e scrivere tutti quelli altri procedi, che per autunno seguire per i principi del firmare. Invece
 sono, e che vengono nella Casa Sejour, facendo poi di conto una nota a parte, e con un
 stato mai comparso nella prima, e di giorno, sopra cartolina. Si firmare sopra il buon salute, ed
 di 3 ottobre, in data 1797 U.S. come primo della libreria pubblica
 Pesaro, il 1797

Simone Casaroli Not.

Incipit

Libertà. Equivalenza
Venezia a di 16 Bre. 1797 25 anno 1° della Libertà d'Italia.

Catalogo e stima gravata di tutti i quadri ora esistenti nella Casa dei Cittadini Fratelli Desaro posta in Venezia nella Parrocchia de S. Sestacchio, valutati a prezzo medio giusta le cognizioni de' suoi sottoscritti professori Collegiali accademici di Lettera, eletti da una giunta per conto del pub. fisco, ed uniti al tra per conto della Cittadini Pietro e Giovanni Fontelli Desaro. Il listi seguente con avvertenza al credito de' Autori diversi di Quadri stessi, all'importanza del soggetto rappresentato, al merito del lavoro, alla stoffa di pittura, e alla grandezza, e forma delle opere, quale scorgono da loro apprezzate unitamente alle rispettive loro Comici, ad occasione soltanto di questi due fisco ingente con singolarità di lavoro, e uniti con materiale, pittura

Segue Catalogo e Stima

Autori - Soggetto rappresentato - - - - - { Altre Comici in Stima di Stima

Comici da Quadri nel. apprettamento
Stipendio, o sia Gallaria, tutti segnati
con la lettera A. oltre al minimo

1°	Torzo Bonaventi	Maddalena in meditazione	1:9=1:5	29
2°	Traverso	Mercato con Bianchieri	1:9=1:4	32
3°	Bonifacio	Adorazione di Re Maggi	3:9=6	328
4°	Tiziano, copia	Stadelaiera, nella vigilia	1:6=1:1	8
5°	L. Finelli	Ecce Homo, mezzo busto	1:2=1:2	6
6°	Favio Nicipino	Sacra famiglia, S. Sebastiano in stregolo	4:10=6:10	100
7°	Alessand. Variani	Abbraccio di S. Petronio	1:5=2:5	44
8°	Detto	Simile	1:5=2:6	44
* 9°	Paolo dai fuschi	Sopra porta - Ritratto di un Doge, S. Carme	4:3=2:8	16
10°	Fioravante Zan	Sacra famiglia, 1 ^a collezione	3:10=3:1	176
11°	Bertrando Todor	Convito di notte	3:11=5:11	310
12°	Aless. Favolari	Madonna, e S. Ambrogio	2:1=1:8	30

1315

Document 11. Page 2/2. Notification of confiscation of Pesaro collection inventoried by Edwards in 1797.

Vita

Elizabeth Jane Darrow received her Doctorate in art history at the University of Washington in the year 2000 with her study of a restorer, *Pietro Edwards and the Restoration of the Public Pictures of Venice (1778-1819): Necessity Introduced these Arts*. She was awarded her Master's degree in art history in 1992 from the same institution after writing her thesis, *A Chronicle of the Conservation of Italian Renaissance Paintings* that surveyed the changing theories and practice of the restoration of Italian Renaissance painting. Ms. Darrow's research focus is object-based and considers theoretical, technical, cultural and historiographic influences on art. She combines her interests in art history with those of her studio training in fine arts at the Emily Carr College of Art and Design in Vancouver, British Columbia and conservation of painting at the Istituto per l'arte e il restauro at Palazzo Spinelli in Florence, Italy. She has taught art history at the University of Washington and Montana State University and lectured on the history of conservation of art to numerous museums and cultural organizations.