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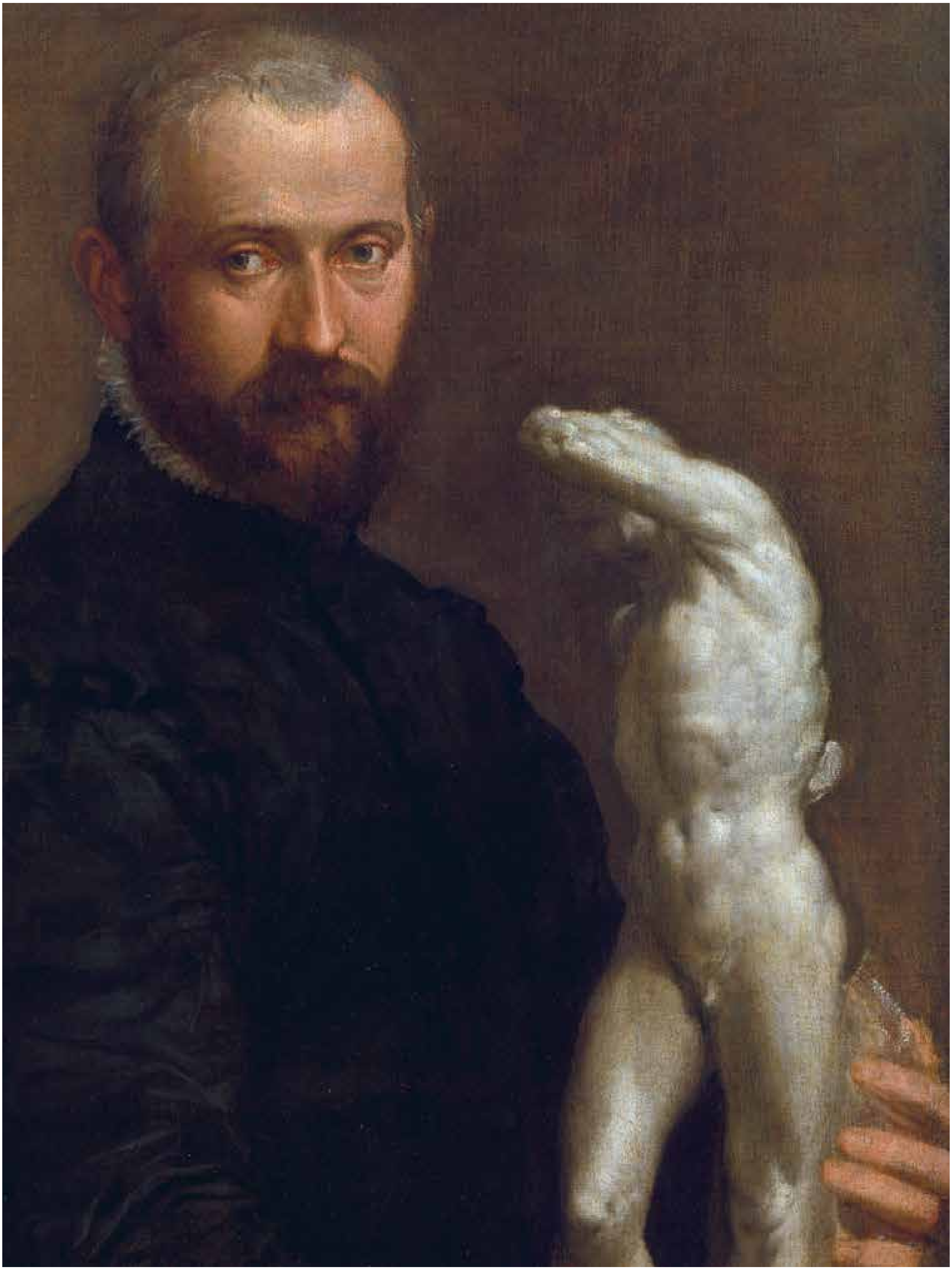

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Front and back cover illustration: Horace Pippin (American, 1888–1946). Detail of *The Lady of the Lake*, ca. 1936–39. See fig. 2, p. 97.

Illustration on p. 2: Paolo Veronese (Italian, 1528–1588). Detail of *Alessandro Vittoria*, ca. 1575. See fig. 1, p. 116.

Contents

ARTICLES

“Assyrian Clay Hands” in the Architecture of the Ancient Near East
SEBASTIANO SOLDI, 8

A Possible Cypriot Origin for an Assyrian Stone Mixing Bowl in the Cesnola Collection
LUCA BOMBARDIERI, 24

Andrea del Sarto’s *Borgherini Holy Family* and *Charity*: Two Intertwined Late Works
ANDREA BAYER AND MICHAEL GALLAGHER WITH SILVIA A. CENTENO, JOHN DELANEY, AND EVAN READ, 34

Benjamin Franklin, Ambassador to France: Portraits by Joseph Siffred Duplessis
KATHARINE BAETJER WITH MARJORIE SHELLEY, CHARLOTTE HALE, AND CYNTHIA MOYER, 56

The Sacred and the Modern: The History, Conservation, and Science of the Madina *Sitara*
KAREN M. KERN, YAEL ROSENFIELD, FEDERICO CARÒ, AND NOBUKO SHIBAYAMA, 72

“Working My Thought More Perfectly”: Horace Pippin’s *The Lady of the Lake*
ANNE MONAHAN, ISABELLE DUVERNOIS, AND SILVIA A. CENTENO, 94

RESEARCH NOTES

An Examination of Paolo Veronese’s *Alessandro Vittoria*
ANDREA BAYER, DOROTHY MAHON, AND SILVIA A. CENTENO, 116

The Roman *Maniera*: Newly Identified Drawings
FURIO RINALDI, 128

The Madonna and Child with Saints Francis and Dominic and Angels by Giulio Cesare Procaccini: A Masterpiece from the Archinto Collection
MARTINA COLOMBI, 142

MANUSCRIPT GUIDELINES
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The *Metropolitan Museum Journal* is issued annually by The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Its purpose is to publish original research on works of art in the Museum's collection. Authors include members of the Museum staff and other art historians, conservators, scientists, and specialists.

The *Journal* publishes **Articles** and **Research Notes**. **Articles** contribute extensive and thoroughly argued scholarship. **Research Notes** typically present a concise, neatly bounded aspect of ongoing research, such as the presentation of a new acquisition or attribution, or a specific, resonant finding from technical analysis. All texts must take works of art in the collection as the point of departure. Contributions are not limited in length, but authors are encouraged to exercise discretion with the word count and the number of figure illustrations. Submissions should be emailed to: journalsubmissions@metmuseum.org.

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ABBREVIATIONS

MMA The Metropolitan Museum of Art
MMAB The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin
MMJ Metropolitan Museum Journal

Height precedes width and then depth in dimensions cited.

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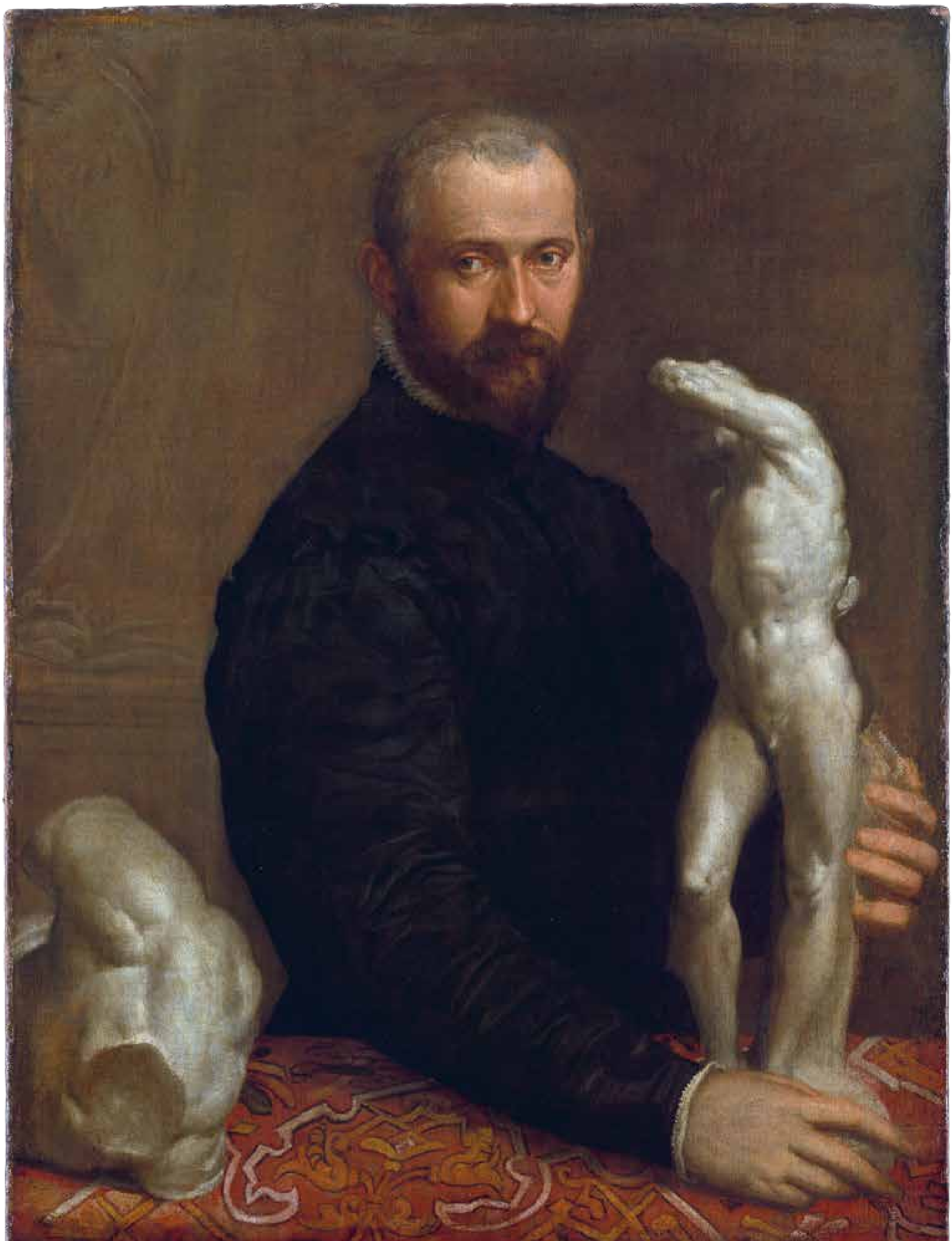


ANDREA BAYER
DOROTHY MAHON
SILVIA A. CENTENO

An Examination of Paolo Veronese's *Alessandro Vittoria*

fig. 1 Paolo Veronese (Italian, 1528–1588). *Alessandro Vittoria*, ca. 1575. Oil on canvas, 43½ × 32¼ in. (110.5 × 81.9 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Gwynne Andrews Fund, 1946 (46.31)

Paolo Veronese's (1528–1588) portrait of a sculptor entered The Metropolitan Museum of Art's collection in 1946, and was presented in the Museum's *Bulletin* by Margaretta Salinger as a depiction of the painter's great contemporary Alessandro Vittoria (1525–1608) cradling a version of one of his most significant works, the bronze statuette *Saint Sebastian*, also in the Museum's collection (figs. 1, 2).[1] Since that time, the painting has been admired as one of Veronese's most refined portraits, but there have been persistent questions about its condition, quality of execution, meaning, and date. In addition, scholars have queried the identification of both the sitter and the statuette. We undertook an examination using only noninvasive means of analysis to understand the technique and surface of the painting more accurately before attempting a new consideration of these issues. Our study utilized X-radiography and macro-X-ray fluorescence (MA-XRF), with the aim of explaining the oddly unsatisfying pattern of the table covering, often assumed to be an Eastern carpet; determining the condition of the sitter's proper left hand, and other areas that appear weakly painted; and clarifying the prominent but indistinct markings at the upper left quadrant of the painting. Unanticipatedly, we also learned about the original composition on the canvas and, above all, changes in the painting that have led to an appearance that is far less colorful than originally intended. Overall, we have recovered information that leads to a more secure grasp of the artist's intentions for this important canvas.

TECHNICAL EXAMINATION

X-radiography revealed that Veronese painted the composition on top of another portrait that depicted a bearded man (fig. 3). He began by turning the canvas support upside down and canceling the earlier image by applying sweeping strokes of radiopaque lead white, which are visible in the X-radiograph. Reusing a previously painted support was a common practice, and examples such as this one are frequently discovered through X-radiography, as artists painted over their own compositions, as well as those begun by other artists. When reusing a canvas, artists often turned the painting upside down and painted out the earlier image as Veronese did here. In this case, the sweeping strokes are confined to the head and torso area of the earlier portrait, suggesting that it was not entirely finished, as this was the only portion that required canceling. We set out to determine whether Veronese or another artist painted the first portrait. A comparison of the two portrait heads demonstrates a very different application of paint. The earlier portrait head is much smaller and overall exhibits a significantly more dense appearance in the X-radiograph (fig. 4b). This effect is due to the way in which the artist began to model the forms of the subject's head and face with fussy, dappled applications of lead-rich paint to create the flesh. The portrait head of Alessandro Vittoria (fig. 4a) was constructed from the beginning in an entirely different manner, with a more economical touch, and with the application of lead white concentrated on the highlights of the nose, cheekbones, and forehead to skillfully establish the forms with a sureness of mind from the start. A comparison to X-radiographs of other heads by Veronese

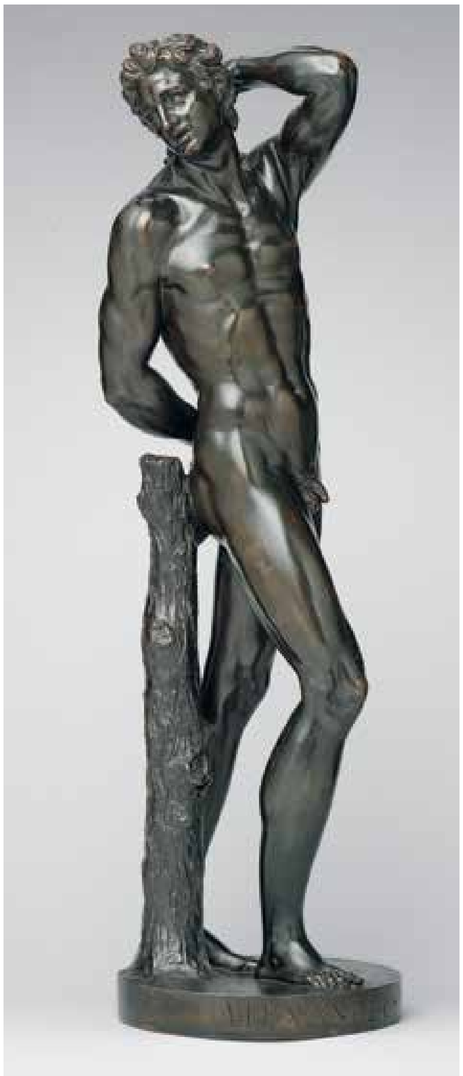


fig. 2 Alessandro Vittoria (Italian, 1525–1608). *Saint Sebastian*, 1566. Bronze, 21⅜ × 6¾ × 6¼ in. (54.3 × 17 × 16 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Samuel D. Lee Fund, 1940 (40.24)

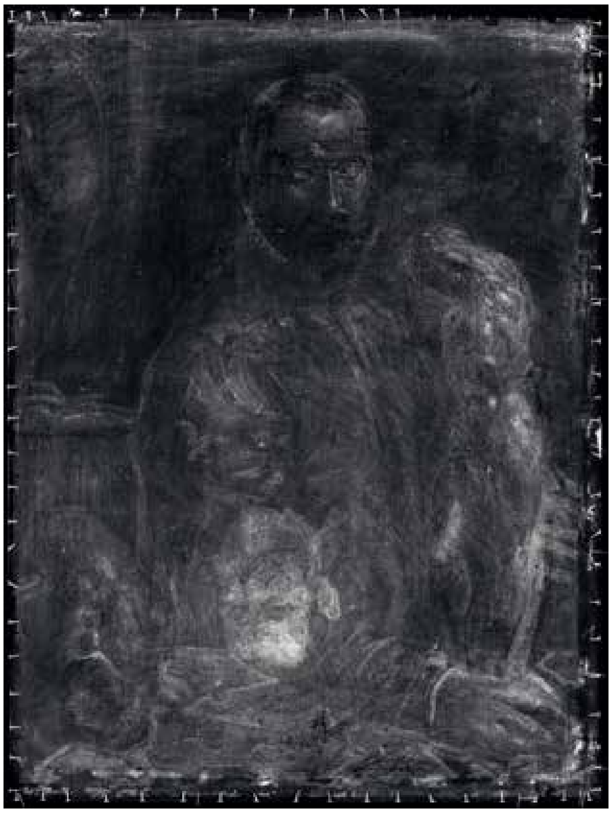


fig. 3 X-radiograph of *Alessandro Vittoria* (fig. 1), revealing that Veronese used a canvas on which there was a partially painted portrait depicting a bearded man. The first portrait appears at the bottom, upside down, because the canvas was turned 180 degrees before the artist began the portrait of Alessandro Vittoria.

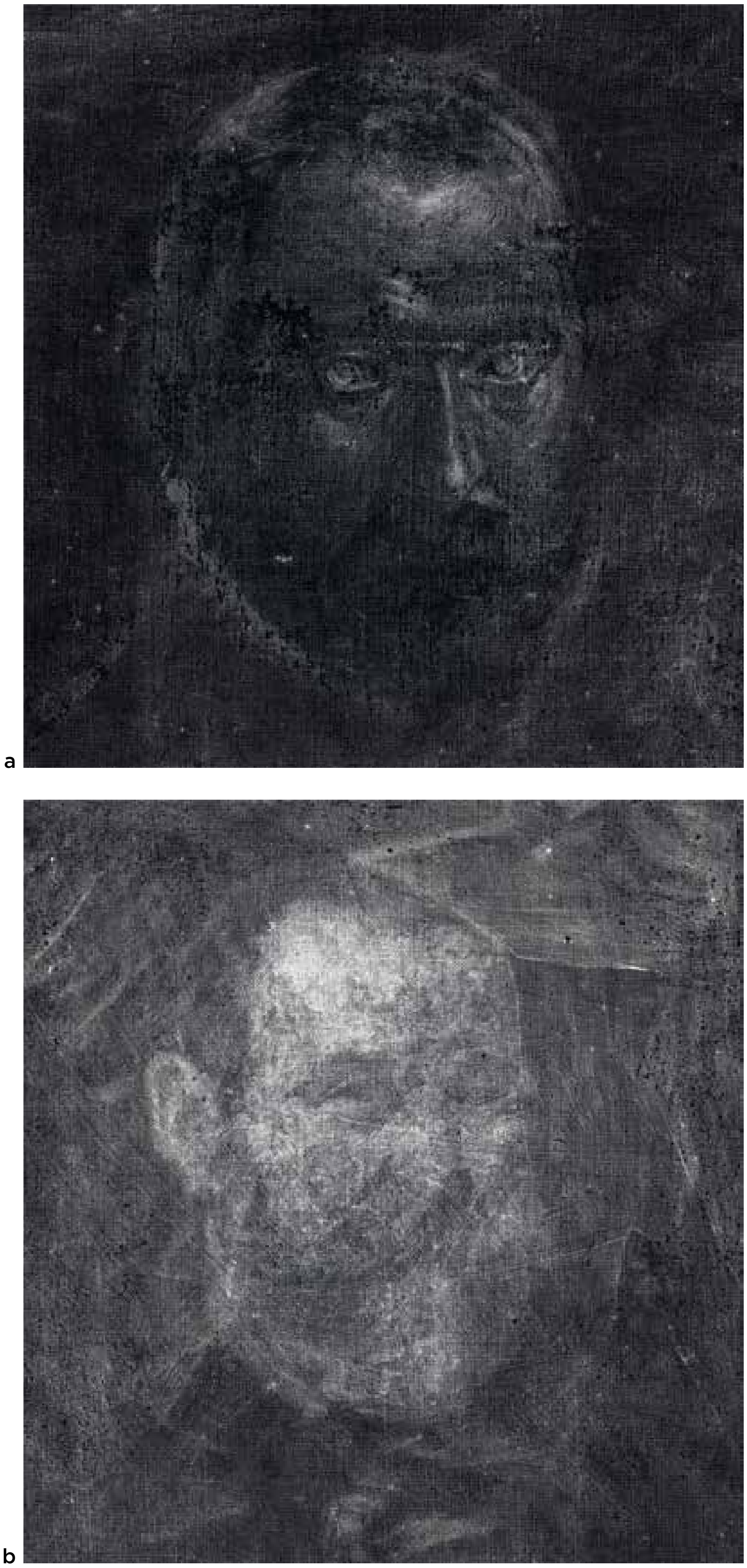


fig. 4 X-radiograph details of fig. 1, showing the head of Alessandro Vittoria (a) and the portrait below the paint surface (b). The head in (b) has been rotated 180 degrees for comparison. The random strokes sweeping across the head illustrated in (b) are applications of lead white that Veronese used to cancel out the earlier image before proceeding to paint. The head below the paint surface is smaller in scale, and overall the image appears dense (white). Conversely, the X-radiographic image of Veronese's portrait head of Vittoria (a) reveals a head that was constructed in an entirely different manner, less dense (darker). This comparison of the X-radiographs, which reveals starkly different techniques used to construct the two heads, indicates the hands of two different artists at work.

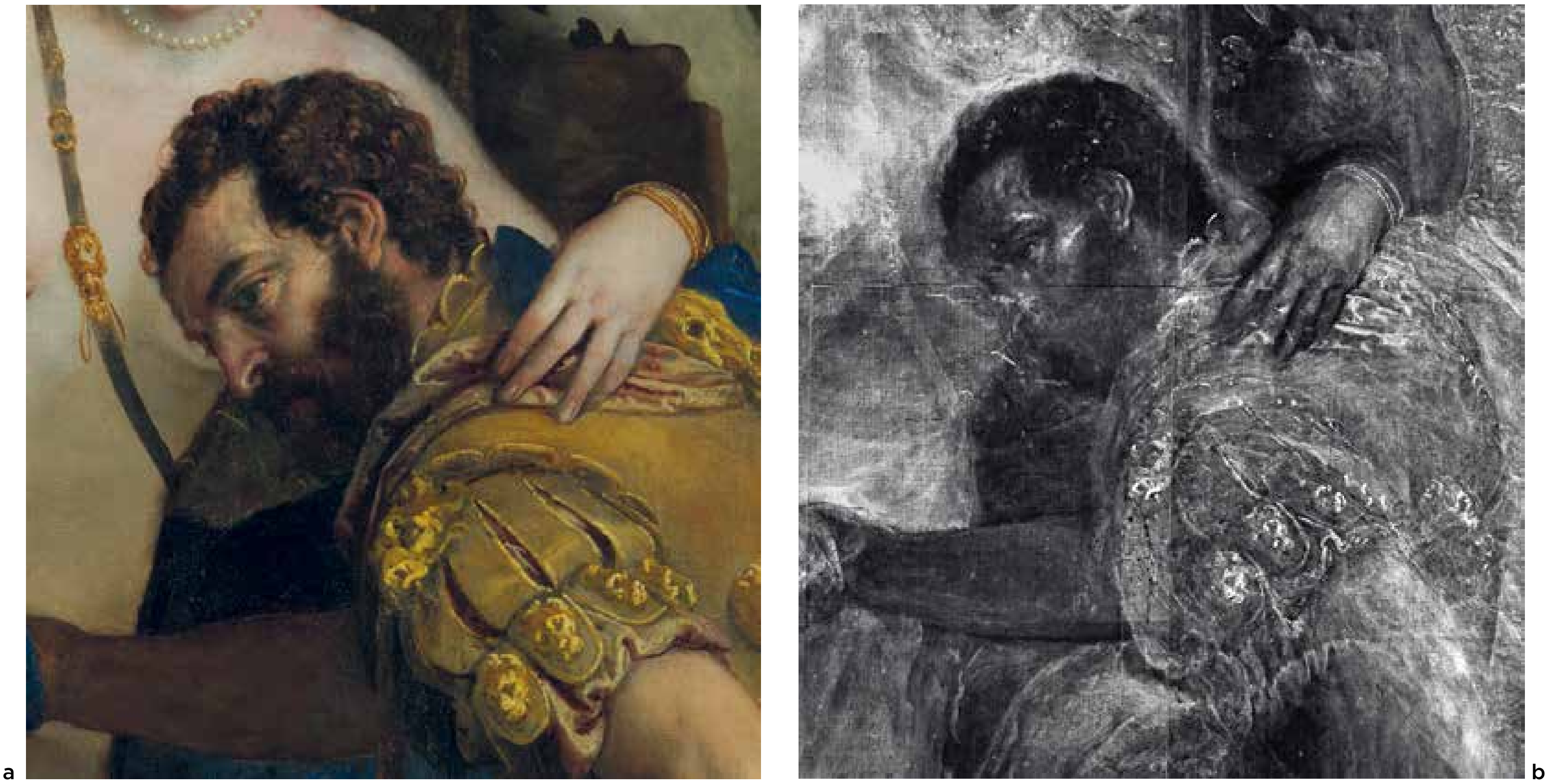


fig. 5 Paolo Veronese. Detail of *Mars and Venus United by Love*, 1570s. Oil on canvas, 81 × 63⅜ in. (205.7 × 161 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, John Stewart Kennedy Fund, 1910 (10.189). Detail (a) and X- radiograph, detail (b). The X-radiographic detail of the head of Mars, from a painting firmly attributed to Veronese, demonstrates characteristics of a painting technique that are similar to those revealed in the X-radiograph of Vittoria (fig. 4a). The skillful and economical applications of lead white on the eyebrow, eye, cheekbone, and nose result in a strongly modeled form.

confirms his characteristic and consistent clarity of mind with regard to modeling the form (figs. 5a, b). The painting beneath this portrait was surely not painted by Veronese but may have been done by another artist working in his studio.

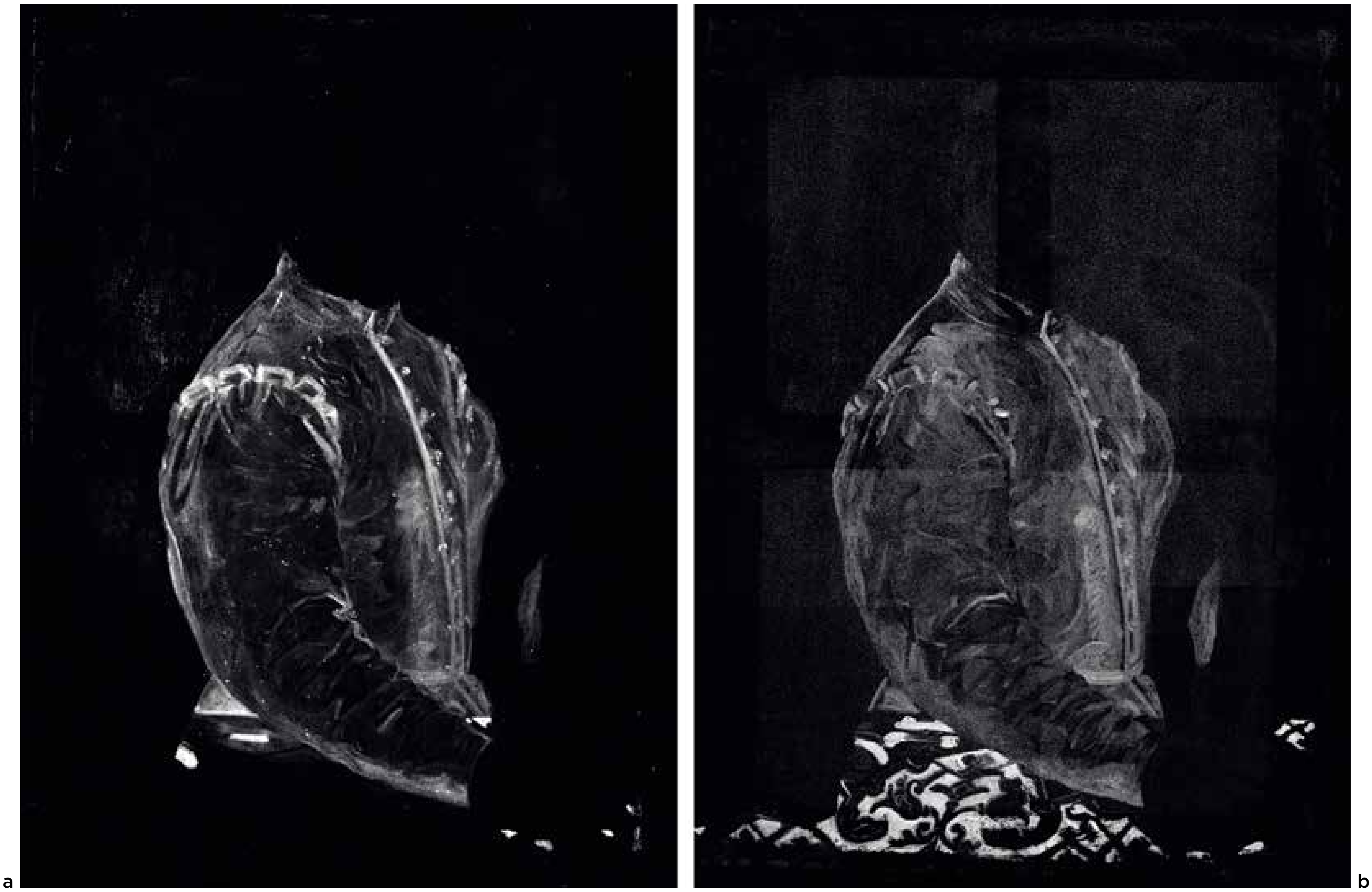
The portrait was also subjected to macro-X-ray fluorescence (MA-XRF). While point XRF analysis provides only the capacity to obtain the elemental composition of pigments in discrete spots, the MA-XRF scanner developed relatively recently allows the possibility of obtaining maps of the elemental composition of large areas by means of a moving stage.[2] The resulting maps of elements frequently provide broader insight into significant technical aspects.[3] For example, when the portrait by Veronese is viewed in normal light, the sitter's jacket or doublet appears to be black and rather lacking in detail and form (fig. 1). The XRF distribution map for copper provides a clearer image of the original forms and details, and strongly indicates that this garment was largely painted using the copper-based blue pigment azurite, and had a pattern (fig. 6a).[4] The discoloration or blackening of the blue pigment azurite when used in an oil medium, or in egg tempera when affected by later oil coatings, is well known.[5] Here the discoloration, which has led to the apparent diminishment of form and detail, is possibly exacerbated because the artist used azurite in combination with smalt, another blue pigment that is also prone to discolor to an ashy gray or brownish hue.[6] Indeed, the XRF distribution map for cobalt, the primary element of the blue pigment smalt, reveals that a significant amount of this pigment is present (fig. 6b). It is probable that Veronese used this combination of azurite and smalt for specific reasons, as he did in other paintings. The pigment azurite tends to shift to a more greenish hue over time when used in an oil medium, while smalt has a cooler, more intensely blue color and frequently has been used as a substitute for the preferred but prohibitively expensive pigment ultramarine.[7]

The XRF mapping results also raised questions about the patterning of the textile laid across the table. While the XRF distribution map for mercury (fig. 7), which indicates the red pigment vermilion, confirms that the base color of the fabric was intended to be red, the full range of colors of the pattern are no longer apparent. Looking at the same time at the XRF distribution map of cobalt (fig. 6b), it is possible to assert that smalt was used extensively in this section of the painting, and, oddly, its distribution seems to coincide with areas of pattern that now appear red. Examination of the surface with a stereomicroscope reveals that the textile underwent extensive restoration before entering the collection in 1946, likely prompted by the appearance of the *fig. 6* Elemental distribution maps acquired by XRF imaging of *Alessandro Vittoria* (fig. 1): copper (a) and cobalt (b). While the color of the sitter's doublet is black in normal light (fig. 1), the XRF map of copper on the left (a) indicates an abundant use of the blue pigment azurite, and the XRF map of cobalt on the right (b) indicates an abundant use of the blue pigment smalt. These two blue pigments used in combination confirm that the doublet was intended to be blue. Degradation of the two pigments has resulted in a significant change of appearance. The XRF images also reveal that much of the doublet's form and detail is no longer apparent to the naked eye. The XRF image (b) also reveals that parts of the pattern of the textile laid across the table contain a significant amount of the blue pigment smalt, indicating that here too a color change has occurred.

degraded smalt. Nevertheless, microscopic inspection, as well as close inspection of the surface of the painting with the unaided eye, reveals fragmentary evidence of the original paint layer consisting of a blue pigment combined with lead white. This mixture was applied in a thin layer on top of the red, resulting in a hazy purplish hue in order to effectively achieve a subtle fabric texture. Furthermore, in reviewing this information, carpet expert Walter Denny noted that the textile's pattern does not reflect any Islamic carpets of the types known to have circulated in Venice in the sixteenth century. Two possibilities have emerged from this reconsideration. The textile represented may be a cut velvet, the color of which has changed, and the patterns of which have been distorted during restorations that misinterpreted the original fabric. Alternatively, it could be a velvet or silk with embroidery and appliqué produced in Italy and France during this period.[8]

XRF mapping has in general provided clear elemental distributions that reveal locations where there is a complete loss of the original paint layers. Damage has occurred around the perimeter, which has most notably affected the knuckles of the sculptor's proper left hand. The present restoration completed these digits in a clumsy manner, which has falsified the quality and form of the original. The XRF distribution map of iron provides a better-defined image of the original strength of form in this hand (fig. 8). Iron is a primary component of earth pigments, such as ochers, sienna, and other brown and red earths, which are used in paint mixtures to deepen tones and model forms.

The small black spots that pepper the XRF distribution map of lead reveal the small losses in the paint film and ground of a painting that is generally in good condition (fig. 9). The XRF distribution map of lead also provides a stronger image of the feature in the upper-left background, the identification of which was part of the genesis of this investigation. Despite surface abrasion and the increased transparency of the lead white–containing paint that has resulted in the diminishment of the form, XRF mapping helped to gain a better visual understanding of this passage. It is a statue, depicted



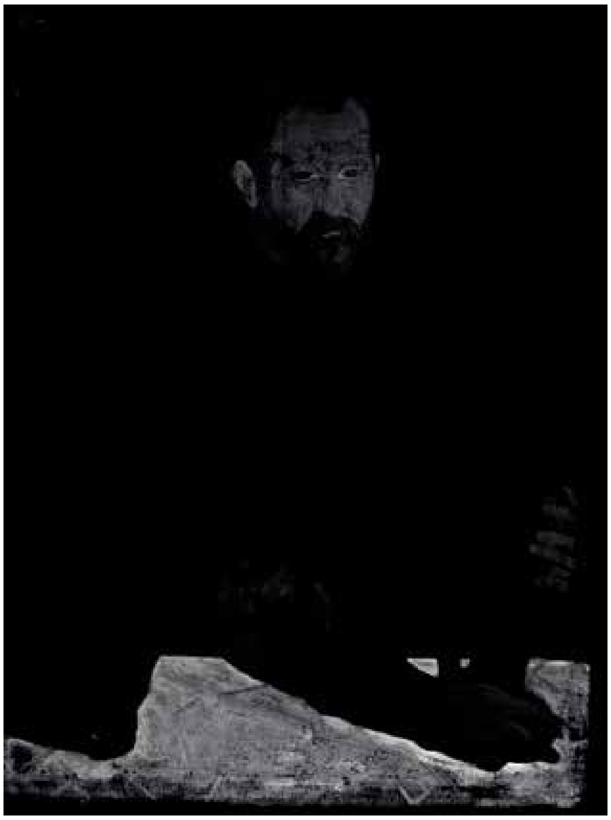


fig. 7 Mercury distribution map acquired by XRF imaging of *Alessandro Vittoria* (fig. 1). Mercury, a component of the red pigment vermilion, was used in mixtures to paint the flesh. It was also used as the base color for the fabric laid across the table. Details of the fabric pattern were applied on top of the base color to effectively achieve the subtle colors and texture of a cut velvet or an embroidered and appliqué surface.

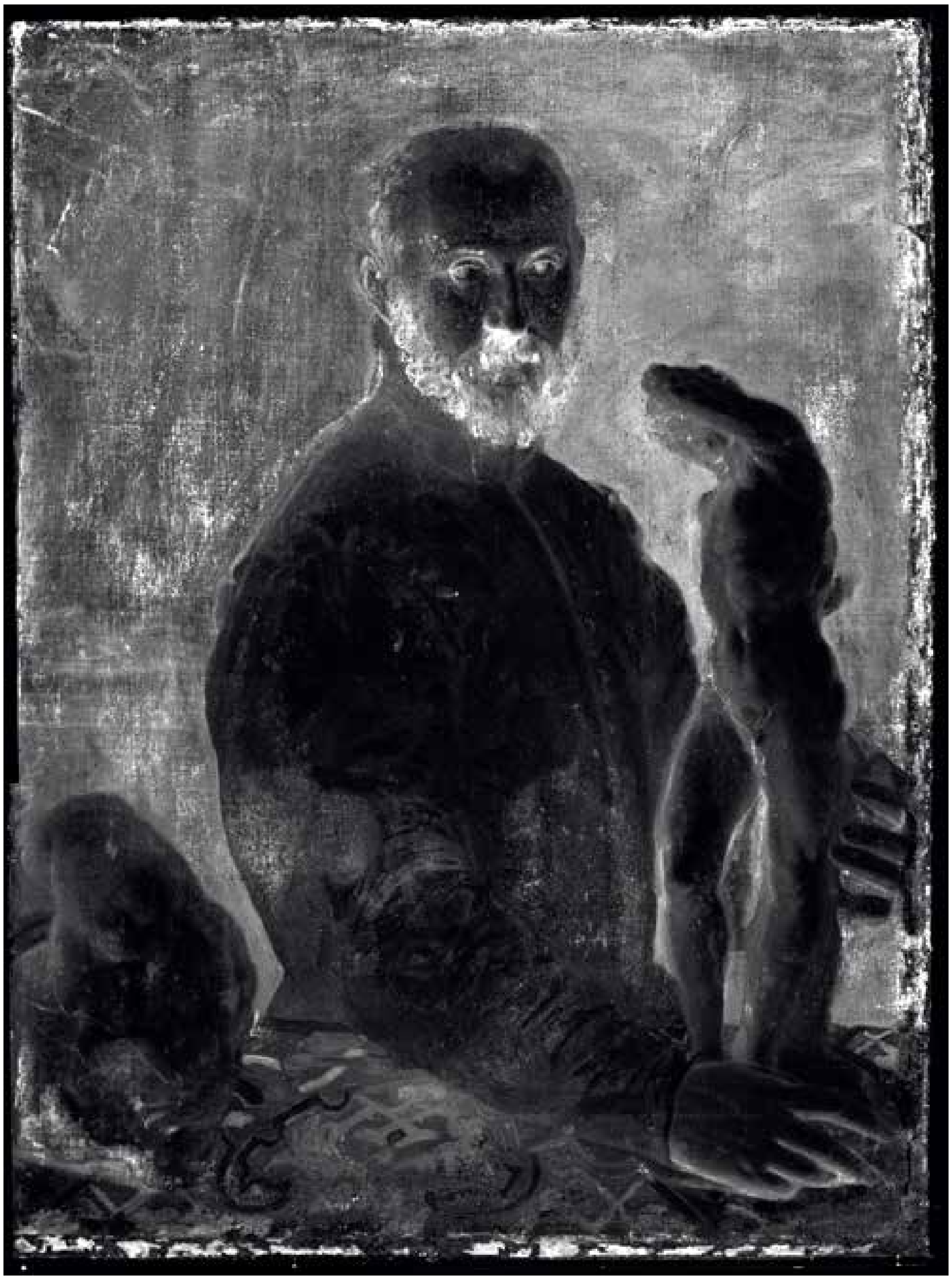
from the waist down, with a weight-bearing left leg, a bent right knee, and drapery gathering on the pedestal base. This subject makes sense here, as statues appear in the background of other works by Veronese, perhaps as a reference to his training in Verona by his stonecutter father, as well as an attribute to enhance the depiction of a sculptor (see below, and fig. 11).[9] Following the completion of this study, consideration will be given to cleaning the portrait of its discolored varnish and extensive repainting, in order to regain the colors, forms, and original intentions of the artist to the extent possible.

INTERPRETATION OF THE PAINTING

The changes described above demonstrate that the viewer must imagine a more vivid surface, with a more subtle cloth (perhaps crimson-purplish in tone) swung over the table, a greater articulation of the position of the statuette within the sculptor's curling fingers, and a better-defined statue in the left background. All would have added to the success of the painting. With this new understanding of the condition and quality of the painted surface in mind, we can review the debates about the work's meaning and date.

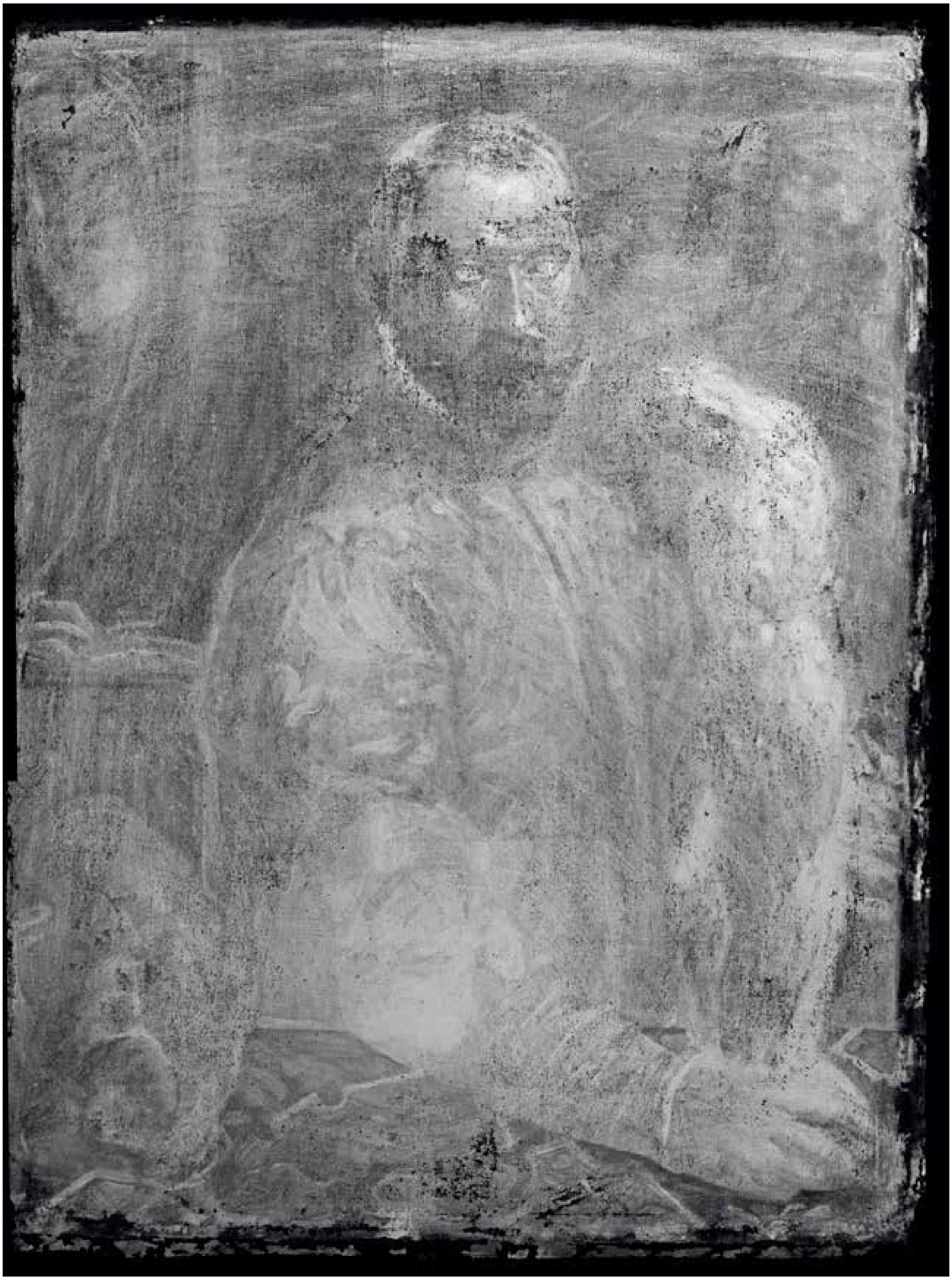
The identification of the sitter and statuette has been the subject of some deliberation, to which we add our observations here. As noted earlier, Alessandro Vittoria has generally been considered its subject, posed with his own statuette. However, in 1972, Wladimir Timofiewitsch proposed that the sitter is the considerably younger Veronese sculptor Girolamo Campagna (1549–1625), basing his analysis on the strong similarity between the statuette in the Museum's portrait and Campagna's large sculpted Atlas found at one side of a great fireplace in the Sala dell'Anticollegio in the Palazzo Ducale, Venice, and other factors.[10] This identification would force a dating of the picture to the last year of Veronese's life, as that sculpture was dated by the author to 1587/88, and would make it the last of his portraits. The sitter would have been in his late thirties. While the Museum did not adopt this new identification, many experts on the painter did, with the tide turning only in the context of recent studies of Vittoria.[11] These investigations added to the previous arguments by focusing on the importance of the design of the Saint Sebastian figure to Vittoria, as he referred to it repeatedly in his wills and owned one cast of it at his death; and of the significance of his own portraits to his professional self-presentation. Posthumous inventories list five portraits done at different times and by various artists. Vittoria kept them in a room of his home next to his small studio and near his garden: those who visited would see the artist represented by masterful portraitists in the context of his own studio.[12]

In addition, Veronese and Vittoria had a professional relationship, the strength of which seems reflected in this portrait. The two worked alongside each other in the Venetian church of San Geminiano about 1560, when Vittoria produced a marble bust of the dynamic parish priest Benedetto Manzini (Ca d'Oro, Venice), while Veronese used Manzini's features for the figure of Saint Severus in the church's organ shutters (Galleria Estense, Modena). The visual comparison between Veronese's painting and Vittoria's sculpture must have been striking.[13] In the Museum's portrait, Veronese creates another dynamic between the two arts, presenting—in paint—a nuanced description of sculpture's diverse qualities. The Saint Sebastian statuette is not identical in form to the finished bronze, but more interestingly, seems to be a model for it, possibly in terracotta washed with a white clay slip, a technique often used by Venetian sculptors.[14] To the other side of the sitter an antique torso—perhaps a variation of the upper half of the *Belvedere Torso*—is displayed on the table with its truncated head placed pointedly outward, toward the viewer. It recalls Veronese's great scene *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* (San Sebastiano, Venice) (fig. 10), in which the living saint is posed directly above *fig. 8* Iron distribution map acquired by XRF imaging of *Alessandro Vittoria* (fig. 1). Iron is the primary component of earth pigments, such as ochers, sienna, and various brown and red earths, which are used in paint mixtures to deepen tones and model form.



his Roman cuirass, the molded torso of which is foreshortened, its empty neck aligned similarly toward the viewer. There Veronese juxtaposes the Christian saint and his Roman armor; here the modern and ancient worlds coexist in the sculptor's realm.[15] Finally, as our analysis has confirmed, Veronese blocked out another sculpture in a niche in the background. Comparable examples appear in numerous works by the artist, including other portraits (fig. 11), but only here in an abbreviated fashion that gives no sign of the sculpture's purported material, implying an architectural setting without competing with the physicality of the other pieces. The collegial relationship between painter and sitter could account for Veronese's careful consideration of the sculptural elements of the portrait.

Although Vittoria's age in the portrait is difficult to pinpoint, his dark, clipped beard, graying hair, and the prominent veins on his temple suggest he is about fifty and the painting may date to about 1575 or a few years later. The subtle twist of the body, the glance away from the viewer, and the sober expression are reminiscent of portraits by Jacopo Bassano (ca. 1510–1592) of the 1570s with which this painting has been compared, and coincide with Veronese's more general interest in that artist at that time.[16] Only a handful of portraits date to the last decade or so of Veronese's career. The latest ones, such *fig. 9* Lead distribution map acquired by XRF imaging of *Alessandro Vittoria* (fig. 1). This XRF map provides an enhanced image of the lead white paint used to construct the statue, depicted from the waist down, standing on a pedestal base in the background upper left, which is largely illegible when the surface of the painting is viewed with the unaided eye. The small black spots distributed throughout the image are locations where the paint layer and ground preparation are lost.



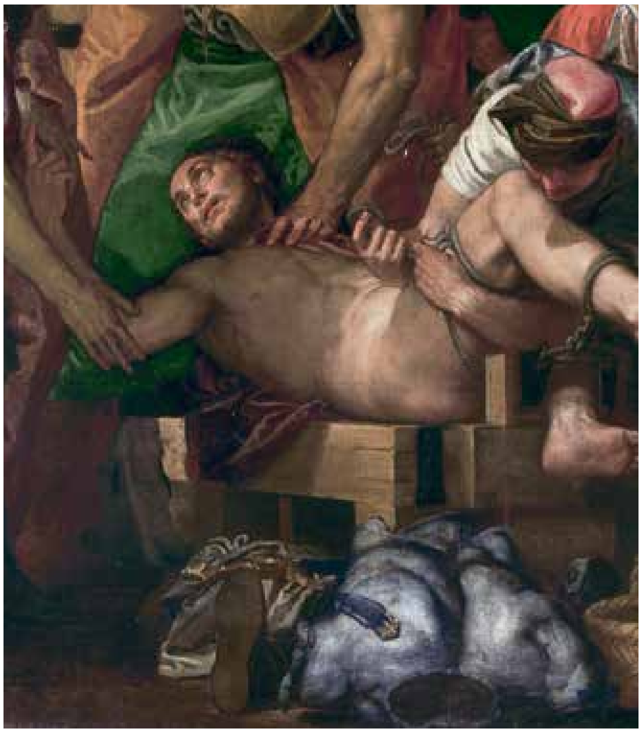


fig. 10 Paolo Veronese. Detail of *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian*, ca. 1565. Oil on canvas, 140 × 212½ in. (355 × 540 cm). San Sebastiano, Venice

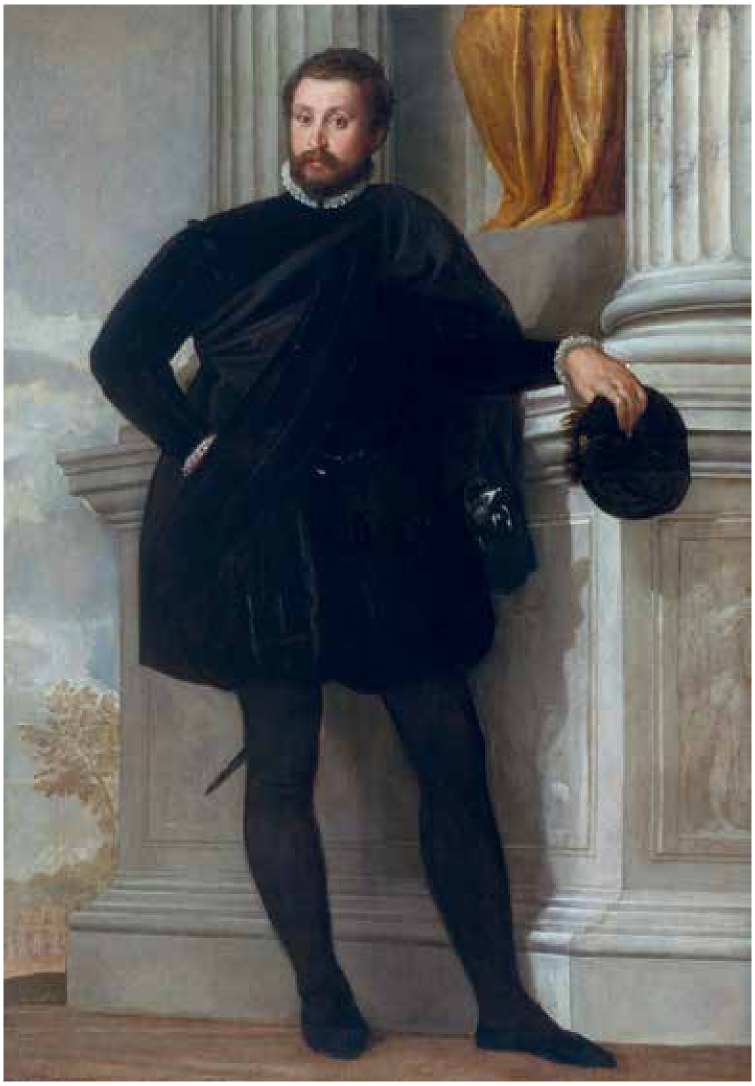


fig. 11 Paolo Veronese. *Portrait of a Man*, ca. 1560, or 1576–78. Oil on canvas, 75⅝ × 52¾ in. (192.1 × 134 cm). The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Gift of J. Paul Getty (71.PA.17)

as a portrait of the jeweler and merchant Hans Jakob König (Castle Picture Gallery, Prague Castle, Prague), with a likely date of 1583, are even more somber than that of Vittoria, especially as we now know that his doublet began as a more colorful blue.[17] However, they share the rather reserved facial expressions that add to their powerful impact.

Veronese's portrait of his colleague Vittoria is one of the finest examples of a group of paintings for which Venice was noted: artists capturing the appearance of other artists.[18] Despite the physical changes over time that we have observed, it remains one of the artist's most perceptive portraits, and one that speaks eloquently about relations between two of the most significant artists active in the city in the later decades of the sixteenth century.

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NOTES

1 Andrea Bayer thanks Thomas Martin for his insightful comments. See Venturi 1937; Valentiner 1942; and Salinger 1946 (Salinger's observations were built on earlier insights by Alfred M. Frankfurter; Memorandum, February 1937, Archives, Department of European Paintings). These authors based the identification of Vittoria on the similarity of the painted portrait with Vittoria's memorial bust made for his tomb in San Zaccaria, Venice, designed between about 1584 and 1595, as well as the statuette.

2 Alfeld et al. 2011.

3 Alfeld et al. 2013; Noble et al. 2012; Mahon et al. n.d. (forthcoming).

4 The XRF instrument used here consists of a measuring head that is moved across the painting surface by means of a motorized X-Y stage with a maximum travel range of 80 × 60 cm. The measuring head includes a 30 W Rh-target micro-focus X-ray tube and a Silicon Drift Detector (SDD) to collect the fluorescence signal. The X-ray source was operated at 50kV and 500 mA, and the resulting beam was focused by means of a polycapillary optic. The overall painting was scanned at 140 msec/pixel with a 600 micron step-size. The spectra were processed employing a combination of Pymca and Datamuncher software as described by Matthias Alfeld and Koen Janssens (2015, p. 777) and by the software provided by Bruker® for the M6 Jetstream instrument. We thank Giulia Olmeda, who at the time the painting was analyzed was a visiting graduate student from the Università degli Studi di Padova, for her assistance with the XRF mapping. We are also thankful to Joris Dik, Delft University of Technology, and Koen Janssens, University of Antwerp, for the loan of an XRF scanner prototype to the Metropolitan Museum, and to Geert Van der Snickt, University of Antwerp, for the initial processing of the data.

5 See Gettens and Fitzhugh 1993.

6 Mühlethaler and Thissen 1993.

7 Another feature visible in the XRF map of cobalt, abandoned at an early stage, is an object that cannot be identified with certainty, extending vertically from the waistline of the doublet. Mahon et al. 2010.

8 The authors thank Walter B. Denny, University Distinguished Professor of Islamic Art, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and Melinda Watt, curator, Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, and supervising curator, Antonio Ratti Textile Center, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, for their pertinent observations about the fabric. Examples of velvets can be found in Monnas 2012, especially nos. 40 (pp. 130–31), and 46 (pp. 142–43); on Venetian velvets in general, see Hills 1999, pp. 182–85. Examples of comparable textiles with embroidery and appliqué can be found in the Metropolitan Museum's collection and include a French band (16.32.333), an Italian runner (41.190.78), and a (possibly) Italian panel (41.190.175). All may be seen at www.metmuseum.org/collections.

9 The depiction of a statue was suggested orally by Xavier Salomon; and by Linda Borean in Marini and Aikema 2014, p. 140, no. 2.9.

10 The complicated issue of possible portraits of Campagna is outside the scope of this article. See Timofiewitsch 1972, pp. 32–34, for the full argument (fig. 124).

11 While preparing the Museum's catalogue of Venetian paintings, volume 2 of *Italian Paintings: A Catalogue of the Collection of The Metropolitan Museum of Art* (1973), the authors Federico Zeri and Elizabeth E. Gardner exchanged letters about the debate over the identification of the sitter as Alessandro Vittoria or Girolamo Campagna (Archives, Department of European Paintings, MMA). The following were inclined to accept Timofiewitsch's identification of Girolamo Campagna: Pignatti 1976, pp. 95, 154, no. 277; Pallucchini 1984, pp. 155, 188, no. 255; Rearick 1988, p. 192; and Pignatti and Pedrocco 1995, vol. 1, pp. 432–33, no. 325. For the re-identification as Alessandro Vittoria, see especially Kryza-Gersch 1999, pp. 153–56, 162, no. 3.

12 Kryza-Gersch 1999, pp. 153–56, 162, no. 3; Bayer 2005, pp. 20–25; Garton 2008, pp. 126–32; Koering 2009, pp. 180–86; Borean in Marini and Aikema 2014, p. 140.

13 Martin 1998, p. 119; Salomon 2014, p. 98.

14 Fiorentini 2007, pp. 227–28.

15 For further interpretation of the sculpture in the painting, see Garton 2008, pp. 129–32.

16 Pignatti 1976, vol. 1, p. 154. Zeri and Gardner 1973, p. 87, dated the painting about 1566, connecting it more closely with the first mention of a bronze of that subject by Vittoria.

17 For the portrait of Hans Jakob König, see Andrew John Martin in Marini and Aikema 2014, pp. 178–79, no. 3.3.

18 On this subject, see Fiorentini 2007; Koering 2009; and Borean 2014, for developments in the following century.

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METROPOLITAN MUSEUM JOURNAL 52

ARTICLES

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RESEARCH NOTES

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