ИЗОБРАЗИТЕЛЬНОЕ ИСКУССТВО

UDC 75

Venetian Cinquecento Pictures and France in the 1820s: Painting, Perception, Influence

V. D. Sedleryonok

University of Bari Aldo Moro,
1, Piazza Umberto I, Bari BA, 70121, Italy

For citation: Sedleryonok, Valeria. "Venetian Cinquecento Pictures and France in the 1820s: Painting, Perception, Influence". *Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University. Arts* 12, no. 1 (2022): 69–89. https://doi.org/10.21638/spbu15.2022.104

This article deals with reassessing Venetian Cinquecento painting in France in the 1820s. This research is a series of case studies related to this problem and providing various types of historical analysis. It examines particular artworks, artistic, social, political contexts, and the influence of Venetian art on the formation of a new artistic language in France in the 1820s. Using an analysis of a wide range of both visual and verbal primary sources, I explore theoretical and practical aspects of the reassessment of Venetian Cinquecento painting in early nineteenth-century France. The paper presents a detailed examination of various French publications of that time regarding Venetian art, as well as a comparative analysis of artworks by Venetian and French artists, namely, Jacopo Robusti, Paolo Veronese, Andrea Schiavone, Eugène Delacroix, Xavier Sigalon, and Eugène Devéria. In this article, I address the following questions. What was the knowledge about Italian Renaissance art in France in the early 19th century? What place did the Venetian school take among the Italian schools of painting in the French consciousness at that time? How was Venetian painting perceived, revisited and presented? How did it influence the formation of a new artistic language in the 1820s? This study reveals the causes, specifics, aspects, and far-reaching consequences of the reconsideration of Venetian Cinquecento painting in the 1820s and its significance for the understanding of the patterns of art development in 19th-century France.

Keywords: Venetian Cinquecento painting, French art of the 1820s, influence, reassessment, art criticism.

Role of France in Italian Art Study in the Early 19th Century

The turn of the 18th century was a period of significant changes in the study of the Italian Renaissance. These changes were introduced by France, which at that time was the main European trendsetter in art. Until the end of the first decade of the 19th century, the French conducted innovative research focused mainly on the early Italian Renaissance. Studies by historian Alexis-François Artaud de Montor reflected the interest in previously long rejected Italian Primitives. In 1808, his work *Considerations about the State of Art in Italy during the four centuries preceding Raphael's* was published [1]. In this essay, the author focused on the Tuscan and Venetian schools of painting, examined the works by Antonio Veneziano, Giotto, Cimabue, and many other Italian painters of the 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th centuries, including anonymous ones. Earlier, connoisseur and historian Seroux d'Agincourt had written an extensive six-volume work about Italian art, *History of Art by its Monuments, from its Decline in the Fourth Century to its Restoration in the Sixteenth* [2]. A significant part of the study deals with Italian Primitives. D'Agincourt attempted to find a correlation between artistic style and cultural context. He was among the first who rejected the biographical approach to art history, which was prevalent earlier and represented the Italian Renaissance as one of its stages. Thus, the French author applied Winckelmann's idea of phases in the development of the arts to examine the art of the later period [3, p. 317].

French studies of the early 19th century provided various approaches to Italian art. In the 1820s, the attitude towards Renaissance painting had its own unique characteristics. The term "Renaissance" was not yet clearly defined, but it was used[1]. The name of the period can be found in the works of such writers as Stendhal (*Walks in Rome*, 1828), Balzac (*Country Ball*, 1829) and Victor Cousin (*History of Philosophy*, 1829). In the 1820s, French authors did not write extensive works on Italian art. The encyclopedic desire to explore everything became a thing of the past. The study of the Italian Renaissance in general was replaced by interest in particular artist, painting, style and specific artistic language. The French began to focus on a particular artwork, but not on the era as a construct. They began to be interested in the paintings of an entire period such as from early to High, and especially the late Renaissance. In those days, 16th century Italian art was associated primarily with Venetian pictures. In the 1820s, interest in Venetian Cinquecento painting began to grow rapidly.

Creator of the *Madonna della Seggiola*: Changes in Reception

The nature of interest in Italian Renaissance painting changed in the early 19th century. It is natural to begin speaking of these changes with Raphael. For a long time the French considered his position in the Renaissance to be a key one. Among other things, the title of the work of Artaud de Montor, which marked Raphael's activity as an important moment in the development of Italian art, proves this statement. Later, in publications of the 1810 and 1820s, Raphael's name was replaced by the words "creator of the *Madonna della Seggiola*". The popularity of the author and his work in Paris was undoubted. This picture

[1] For more information on the notion of Renaissance in French criticism of the early 19th century, see: [3, p. 322].

was being copied in painting and reproduced in engraving. Stendhal wrote, "The *Quai Voltaire* in Paris is full of prints that represent the *Madonna della Seggiola*" [4, p. 95].

However, this attitude of the French towards Raphael was rather a consequence, and even a lessening of that interest in this painter, which was extremely strong in the Napoleonic era. Raphael's works were of a major interest of the French, when they selected Italian art treasures for transfer to Paris at the turn of the century [5, p. 31–43]. But in the 1820s, Raphael's art ceased to be something new for the Parisian audience. This is true not only for his own paintings, but also for pictures illustrating Raphael's life. Among these were *The Death of Raphael* by Nicolas-André Monsiau (Salon of 1804), *Honors Rendered to Raphael on His Deathbed* by Pierre-Nolasque Bergeret (1806) and *Raphael in his studio* by Jean-Baptiste Mallet (1814). Additionally, Raphael and the Fornarina were repeated in works by Dominique Ingres, François-Édouard Picot and by Coupin de La Couperie that were exhibited at the Salons of 1822 and 1824.

In the 1820s, the creator of the *Madonna della seggiola* continued to be the same "figure worthy of fine collections" [6, p. 87]. The French continued to pay tribute to his genius, but they did it often under the influence of established ideology: neo-classical tradition, on the one hand, and the centuries-old idea of Raphael's art canonicity, on the other hand. Meanwhile, sometimes the pictorial language of these works began to seem archaic and rigid. Afterwards, noting the qualities of his paintings, the audience did not forget to mention the coldness of his art. Thus, France showed a decreasing interest in Raphael and increasing one in Venetian Cinquecento painting.

Stendhal and Valery: Two Views on Cinquecento Painting

During Stendhal's lifetime, his reputation was largely based on his books on Italy dealing with the arts and with tourism. However, the key idea about the change in attitude towards Italian art in the 1820s is reflected in his work *Racine and Shakespeare* (1825). This pamphlet is not only about the opposition between the classical and romantic trends at all times, but also about contemporary changes. It was in this work that Stendhal discussed the appearance of an interest in art, which was previously unusual for France. It was a request for passion, movement, variety, complexity of perception of the world, simple and natural expression, and, finally, violation of unity of action, place, and time. Stendhal's view of literature in *Racine and Shakespeare* was related to trends in fine arts and an increasing interest in the Venetian late Renaissance.

Stendhal's authority as a writer about Italy, it seemed, was unrivaled. However, he was not the only one who had influence. Antoine Claude Pasquin, known as Valery, was one of the keepers of the library in Versailles and a widely read French travel writer. Valery became recognized primarily thanks to his travel guides. One of them is *Historical, Literary, and Artistic Travels to Italy in 1826, 1827, and 1828* [7]. Thanks to author's interest in the subject matter and his subjectivity, Valery's writings reflect the ideas of his time, showing, in particular, the place of Italian art in the consciousness of 19th century France. In his guide, the author expressed his preferences and at the same time, quite likely, preferences of his customers and many readers. Valery explored many regional Italian schools, but he was particularly attracted to Venetian painting. His description of this in the Venetian Academy of Fine Arts is exemplary, "This rich collection, more than four hundred paintings, consists almost entirely of paintings by great masters of Venetian school. The school

is delightful, natural and truthful rather than ideal; more brilliance of color, courage, and picturesqueness (rather than the purity of the figure), which our young school emulates just like our young poetic school, tired of seeing the old models, refers to Shakespeare" [7, p. 346].

Some guidebooks of the 1820s considered Raphael's works as perfection. Valery contrasted to this "ideal" painting naturalness and truthfulness of Venetian school[2]. The existence of opposites eventually leads to the choosing of one of them. The moment of choice came in the 1820s. Valery and Stendhal pointed to these changes.

Venetian Myth and Pictorial Language

The French of the first half of the 19th century imagined contemporary Venice ambivalently as flowering and decadent. Venice seemed different from the rest of Europe, both in the negative and positive sense. There was hardly a city that caused as many historical reflections as Venice at that time. Speculations about the decadence of Venice were frequent in the 1820s, as well as before and after that period. Goethe's comparison of a gondola with a coffin in his *Venetian epigrams* (1790) opened an epoch of speculations about Venice's death. For the entire first half of the 19th century the French writers were creating the myth that Venice is in decline, Venice is in ruins, Venice is in agony, Venice is dead, and Venice is "a huge cemetery of floating tombs" [8, p. 146; cit. 9 (Feuillet de Conches)]. Pierre Daru's multivolume famous work *History of the Republic of Venice* added fuel to the fire [10]. Daru began the first volume of his Venetian history by saying, "The famous republic, for a long time strong, remarkable by its originality, its location and institutions, nowadays disappeared, before the eyes, in a moment" [10, p. 5][3]. Later, the theme of the decline of Venice was continued by Valery [7, p. 332, 246] and Jules François Lecomte, who, like the early writers, called Venice a ruin [8, p. 146; cit. 11]. Although statements about Venice's decline were backed by evidence, they were greatly exaggerated. After the fall of the Republic, the city, indeed, became fairly dilapidated, but to a complete collapse, which the French writers described, it did not come. It should also be noted that the idea of Venetian decadence was accompanied by the thought of Venice's flowering. For example, Arsène Houssaye in his *Travel to Venice* named Venice an abandoned paradise [8, p. 146; cit. 12]; Stendhal considered it as "the most gay, natural, and the happiest country in Europe" [8, p. 61; cit. 13]. What did Venice become for the first half of the 19th century? The French remembered enthusiastically the Venice of the past, but their attempts to define it clearly were failing. Venice was retaining its inscrutability, while its image was being created anew.

The creation of the new image of Venice was not only a product of romantic imagination. It was also closely linked to renewed interest in Italian cultural heritage. The French wanted to take possession of Venetian paintings, portraying Venice as a decadent city and calling Paris the best place to exhibit these works. In the 1820s, they put forward Vene-

[2] In publications of that time, truth is often contrasted with perfection. To illustrate, Valery's remark on Titian's *Magdalene* from Palazzo Barbarigo, "<…> sa célèbre Madeleine moins idéale que vraie <…>", "<…> his famous *Magdalene* is more truthful than ideal <…>" [7, p. 335].

[3] However, already in the 1820s, the Venetians analyzed *History of the Republic of Venice* of the French author and defended their homeland against the foreign critic of Venetian culture. Giannantonio Moschini, Count Domenico Tiepolo and Count Leonardo Manin uncovered evidence of Daru's deliberate falsification.

tian pictorial language. The specific composition, dynamic and color of the 16th century Italian works attracted the attention of the French. They were interested in a rich variety of shades, complementary colors, golden-cherry-ultramarin colour of Venetian paintings. Also, it is no coincidence that the name *le vert Véronèse* the tone received from the French. The typical composition of Venetian Cinquecento paintings is dynamic. The relationships between canvas's large parts, as well as that of small forms are fundamentally important in these pictures. All these characteristic features of Venetian art were in demand in Paris in the 1820s.

New Tendencies: Discovery of Tintoretto

The reputation of Jacopo Robusti changed over the centuries. The Cinquecento was marked by his glory. Influential theorists of art, Giambattista Armenini in his work *De' veri precetti della pittura* ["*On The True Precepts of the Art of Painting*"] (1587) and Gian Paolo Lomazzo in *Trattato dell'arte della pittura* ["*Treatise on the Art of Painting*"] (1584), expressed great reverence for the Venetian artist. In the 17th century due to Federico Zuccari and his poem with a telling title *Il lamento della pittura su l'onde venete* ["*Lament of Painting on the Venetian Waves*"] (1605) the situation changed radically. According to Zuccari, Tintoretto was the artist of decline. The fame of the Venetian painter started to lessen outside the Venetian Republic. It was not until the era of Romanticism that Tintoretto and his painting anew received a great recognition outside Venice [14, p. 31, 10].

The reassessment of Tintoretto's art in the 1820s is especially reflected in Valery's Italian guidebook. One event of his journey is a discovery of Tintoretto's painting in the sestiere of Cannaregio in Venice. The writer was attracted by the church of Madonna dell'Orto. He described it as abandoned to a periphery of cultural life, as desolate and mysterious, such as his French readers imagined contemporary Italy in a whole. Due to his romantic way of thinking, Valery presented to French readers a quite well kept church almost as a ruin, where masterpieces of Italian painting were hidden from the eyes of all of Europe. *The Presentation of Virgin in the Temple*, *The Last Judgment* and *The Adoration of the Golden Calf* are "works of extraordinary power, passion, courage" [7, p. 382]. Eventually, Valery termed Tintoretto's pictures as full of "amazing ease and transparency" [7, p. 382].

Nevertheless, Tintoretto's painting is not transparent and especially is not light. Apparently, Valery meant ease as virtuosity, brilliant mastery of the brush, broad brushstrokes, dynamic painting created by the artist without any visible effort. Why did the author of the guide write about it? Perhaps to a great extent it was determined by the characteristics of the French art scene of the 1820s. The language of the majority of modern paintings, which the French could regularly see in the Salon or at other contemporary exhibitions, was very different from the painting, which Valery found in the church of Madonna dell'Orto. Valery's description pointed to the appearance of French interest in this dynamic painting of spirals and diagonals, its coloristic virtuosity, "strength, passion and courage" (fig. 1, 2). In other words, it was an interest in art distinct from linear painting, characterized by local colors and static composition, which was prevalent in the French art of the early 19th century.

Fig. 1. Tintoretto, The Last Judgment (Il Giudizio Universale) (detail), 1560–1562. Oil on canvas. The Church of Madonna dell'Orto, Venice. Photo by the author

Fig. 2. Xavier Sigalon, Athaliah (Athalie), 1827. Oil on canvas, 428 × 600 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Nantes. Photo © RMN-Grand Palais / Gérard Blot

Picture for San Giorgio: *The Wedding at Cana* by Paolo Veronese in the 1820s

For centuries, the major works of Paolo Caliari were in Venice, primarily in the Venetian church of Saint Sebastian. The French knew it well and called this church a temple of the painter. They noticed, "this church has seen birth and growth of Paolo Veronese's glory" [15, p. 359, 392–3]. However, despite their attention to the works that were in Venice, the French focused on those pictures of the artist that were nearby. Therefore, to analyze the issue of reassessment of his art in the 1820s, it is more fruitful to talk about Veronese's paintings, which at that time already belonged not to Venice, but to Paris.

Although the first lines in the long list of Italian art treasures brought by Napoleon to Paris at the turn of the centuries were given to Raphael's works, a Venetian picture *The Wedding at Cana* of Veronese (fig. 3) also took the foreground sixth position of this register [16, p. 91]. The canvas of the Venetian became a pride of the French and received considerable attention from its first days in Paris, namely from July 1798. Upon its arrival, the work was exhibited in the Louvre's Salon Carré, and began to be studied and copied by many contemporary painters. Among them were Chataigner, Niquet, Ellston, Delacroix, Devéria, Etty, Révoil, Cibot, Jeanron, Souchon, and a number of anonymous copyists [16, p. 93–102]. But the greatest interest in Veronese's picture, and in Venetian Cinquecento painting in general, arose two decades later. In the 1820s, the Venetian artist became a symbol of innovation and revolt. Romantics focused on Veronese's painting, most often

Fig. 3. Paolo Veronese, The Wedding at Cana (Le Nozze di Cana), 1562–1563. Oil on canvas, 677 × 990 cm. The Louvre, Paris. Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / image RMN-GP

turning to his *The Wedding at Cana* [16, p. 315] (fig. 4). Stendhal even concluded that this canvas is divine [17, p. 119–20].

Created in 1563 for the San Giorgio cloister, the painting represents the first miracle of Christ in an unaccustomed place. On the one hand, the compositional arrangement of *The Wedding at Cana* is similar to the open views of Palladian villas. Like in these, the central open space of Veronese's picture goes not only deep "into canvas", but also "continues" behind the viewer. On the other hand, the marble decorations of *The Wedding at Cana* look like graphic architecture in the first published in Venice in 1537 *Quarto Libro* of Sebastiano Serlio (fig. 5). Venetian artists were familiar with this book and used it in their painting practice [18, p. 147; 19, p. 56–64]. But unlike others, Veronese changed the logic of Serlio's scene. Thanks to presence of multiple vanishing points in the picture, the space of *The Wedding at Cana* turns out to be complicated and "wrong". Moved from the central axis, campanile clearly demonstrates a deliberate imbalance. Veronese presented an "amphitheater" of figures slightly removed by the empty foreground, which looks like a proscenium of this stage. He created composition both moving and motionless, place filled and empty, as well as artfully painted space. In the 1820s, the French admired the characteristics of Veronese's painting. They perceived, revisited, and explored it. That was why, after leaving Venice, his magnificent *Cana* had a new lease of life in France.

Fig. 4. Delacroix's copy of Veronese's Wedding Feast at Cana (Les Noces de Cana), 1820/1826. Oil on canvas, 59.5 × 73 cm. Private collection (COLLINS Fine Art, Ltd), New York

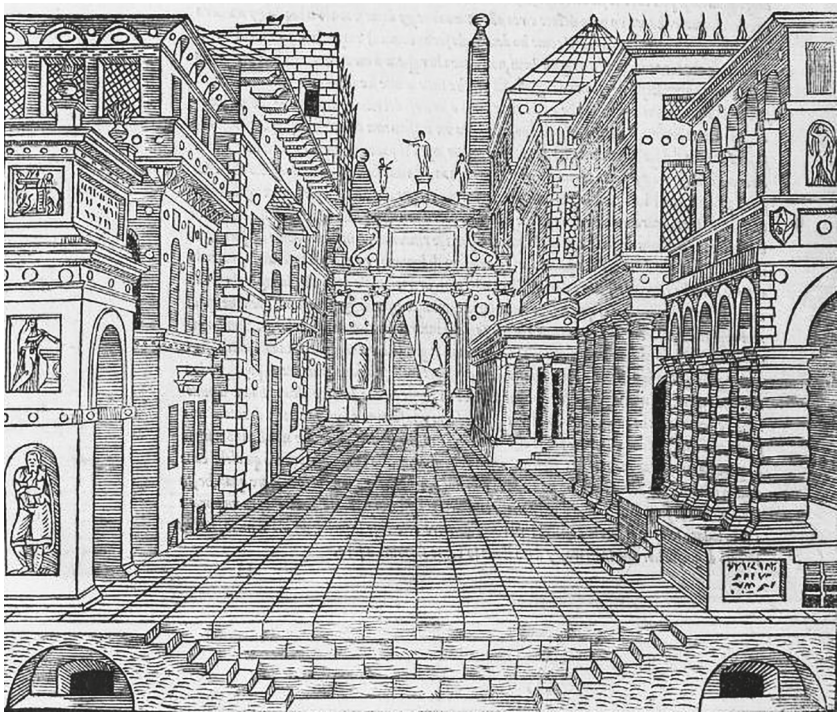

Fig. 5. Sebastiano Serlio, Scena tragica from the second book, "On Perspective", 1551. Serlio, Sebastiano, *Il primo [-secondo] libro d'architettura* (Vinetia: Per Cornelio de Nicolini da Sabbio a instantia de Marchio Sessa, 1551)

Venetian Frenchman; or, French Venetian

Parisian publications of the third decade of the 19th century stated that some French contemporary paintings were like Venetian Cinquecento painting. Not only the frequency of these statements, but also their non-triviality is striking. There was not anyone who publicly compared the art of a contemporary French artist to that of a Venetian painter until the 1820s. This comparison was prevalent in the third decade of the 19th century, often with regards to Eugène Delacroix's and Eugène Devéria's art[4]. Ultimately, it became common place in French literature and criticism. One of the most illustrative examples is the comparison of French painting of the early 19th century with Paolo Caliari's art. Even decades later, Charles Baudelaire wrote about the *magic* ("féerique") Delacroix's colors, which are like the Veronese's colors [31, p. 12]. Théophile Silvestre noticed that the Delacroix's paintings are similar to paintings by Veronese "in spirit, refinement and charm of color" [32, p. 75]. Considering Delacroix's picture *Marino Faliero* at the Paris Exposition of 1855 Théophile Gautier remarked, "This painting <…> could take its place in the Venetian gallery between Vittore Carpaccio and Paris Bordone" [33, p. 794 (2)]. In

[4] For more information on the comparison of Devéria's painting with Veronese's painting, or with Venetian art in general in the 1820s, see the following primary sources: [20, p. 122, 124–5; 21, p. 91–2; 22, p. 812–3; 23, p. 2; 24, p. 2, 3; 25, p. 72–4; 26, p. 1].

For more information on the comparison of Delacroix's painting with Venetian Cinquecento pictures in the 1820s, see the following primary sources: [27, p. 938; 28, p. 780; 24, p. 1; 29, p. 10; 30, p. 106].

his book titled *History of Romanticism*, the writer named Devéria a great colourist [34, p. 218]. Gautier emphasized that the presence of Devéria's painting *The Birth of Henry IV* at the Salon of 1827 predicted that France would have its own Paolo Veronese [34, p. 218]. Despite the unanimous opinion of these critics, the following questions arise. Were there valid grounds for this comparison of Italian and French paintings? Why did conversation on this relationship emerge in the 1820s?

Today's Veronese: Origin of Eugène Devéria's Painting

In the 1820s, *Journal des artistes* pointed to the French opinion that the Venetian school was one of the most remarkable schools of painting. In accordance with the same columnist, painter Eugène Devéria belonged to those who had such a belief. Bold composition, crowded scene, strong and natural color are the words that can be used to characterize Venetian pictures. That was how *Journal des artistes* described Devéria's *The Birth of Henry IV* (fig. 6), which achieved a great success in France [22, p. 812–3].

Fig. 6. Eugène Devéria, The Birth of Henry IV (La Naissance d'Henri IV), 1827. Oil on canvas, 484×392 cm. The Louvre, Paris. Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Gérard Blot

Fig. 7. Paolo Veronese, The Sacred Conversation (La Sacra Conversazione). Oil on canvas, 100×99 cm. The Louvre, Paris. Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Gérard Blot / Jean Schormans

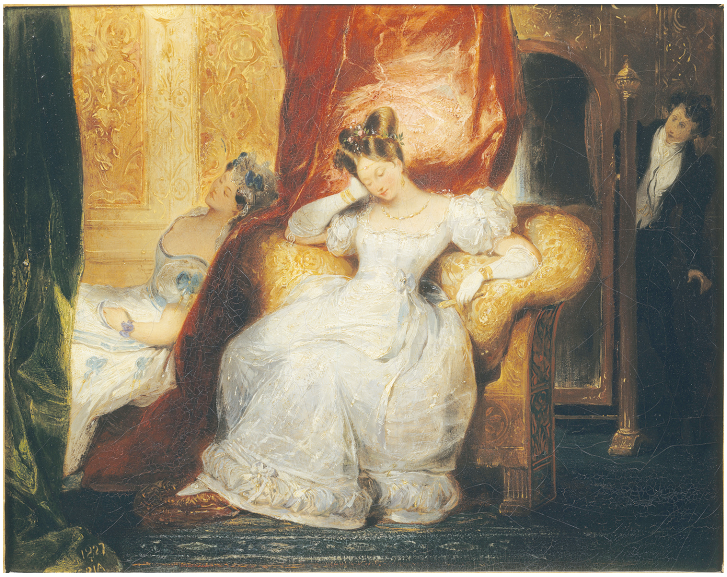

Fig. 8. Eugène Devéria, Sitting Young Ladies (Jeunes femmes assises), 1827. Oil on canvas, 33×41 cm. The Louvre, Paris. Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Gérard Blot / Christian Jean

Fig. 9. Eugène Devéria, Christ Carrying the Cross (Le Christ portant sa Croix), the 2nd quarter of the 19th century. Oil on canvas, 147 × 211 cm. National Museum, Pau

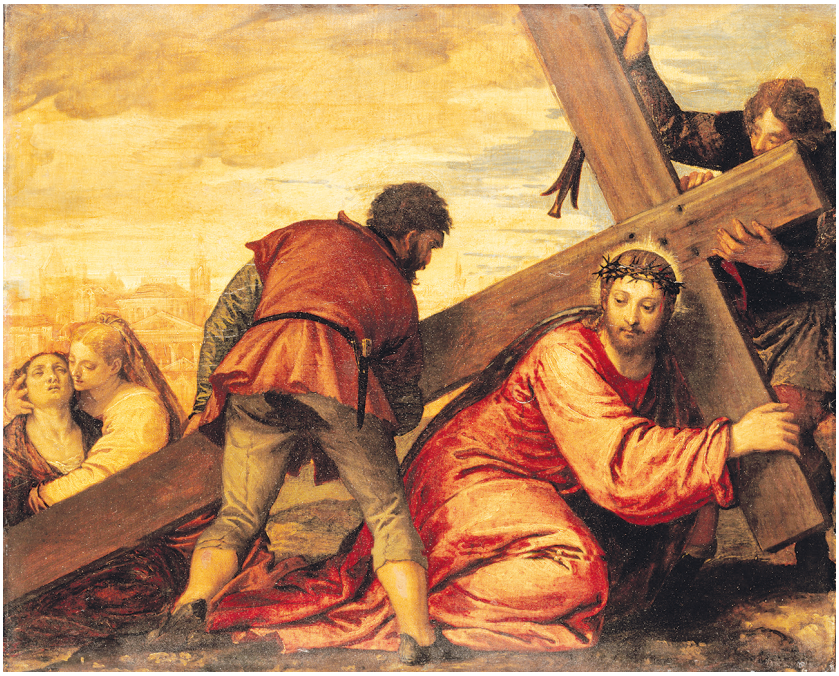

Fig. 10. Paolo Veronese (a workshop?), Christ Carrying the Cross (Cristo portacroce). Oil on canvas, 57 × 72 cm. The Louvre, Paris. Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Franck Raux

One of the features reflecting the intense dialogue of French artists of the 1820s with the Venetian pictorial tradition was the presence of Venetian color in their artworks, but not only this. For example, Devéria borrowed details of Veronese's paintings and added them to his own compositions. Thus, brocade on the bed in *The Birth of Henry IV* is like a fabric of the throne in *The Sacred Conversation* of Veronese (fig. 7). In the 1820s, this Veronese's picture was in the Louvre, where Devéria probably studied it. The composition of *The Sacred Conversation* by Veronese is similar to Devéria's *Sitting Young Ladies* (fig. 8). One more prime example of Veronese's influence on Devéria is the French artist's canvas *Christ Carrying the Cross* (fig. 9). Its composition is very similar to that of the picture by the Venetian painter on the same subject exposed in the Louvre (fig. 10). Additionally, the French artist studied and copied Veronese's *The Wedding at Cana*[5]. It is possible to continue listing the similarities between Devéria's pictures and Veronese's works that are in the color, composition, as well as in details: dwarfs, dogs, a self-portrait of the artist, and so on. They are Veronese's hallmark that became details of Devéria's painting. Nineteenth-century art critics saw it clearly.

But was Devéria equal to the Venetians or did he just imitate them? Opinions of critics of the 1820s were quite diverse. However, almost all of them noticed the relationship between the French artist's painting and the paintings by the Venetians. A critic from a liberal newspaper *Le Figaro* wrote, "…Devéria follows in the footsteps of Paolo Veronese. <…> Mr. Devéria looks like Paolo Veronese, took his power of modeling, interesting richness of color" [26, p. 1]. Etienne-Jean Delécluze, the conservative art critic of the *Journal des débats*, commented in a similar way, "At first glance one might think this is a picture of an artist, who aged in his studio and spent his entire life studying secrets of Venetian school" [24, p. 2–3]. Delécluze emphasized that Devéria studied Old Masters art "not to imitate them, but to find his own manner" [24, p. 2–3].

In the 1820s, among other French paintings, the famous Devéria's *The Birth of Henry IV* was most often equated with Venetian paintings by the Parisian press. But from this perspective, the comparison with another, little-known, French artist's work *The Conversion of Saul* (fig. 11) is equally interesting. Its composition is very similar to Veronese's painting on the same subject (fig. 12). Devéria did not study it directly because Veronese's *The Conversion of Saul* was in Russia beginning from the late 18th century. But he definitely was familiar with it. In his *The Conversion of Saul* Devéria slightly changed the arrangement of Veronese's painting. The French artist made the sharp edges of Veronese's composition smooth and therefore changed its rhythm. Also, he added new elements, such as the image of God in the upper part of the picture. This detail is similar to element of *The Conversion of Saul* by the Venetian painter Andrea Schiavone (fig. 13). The movements in Veronese's picture are multidirectional, and there is an illusion of depth. Schiavone's painting is a frieze composition that does not create the illusion of deep space. Devéria's picture seems to be a middle way between these two compositions. *The Conversion of Saul*, like some other works by the French artist, is a pastiche. Devéria used the painting of his predecessors as a model changing it significantly; nevertheless, the relationship with it was not lost. The manifestation of the pictorial tradition, which Eugene Devéria claimed to follow, and which his critics wrote about, remained in the early paintings of the artist forever.

[5] About Devéria's copies of Veronese's *The Wedding at Cana,* see: [35, p. 140].

Fig. 11. Eugène Devéria, The Conversion of Saul (La Conversion de Saint Paul), the 1820s. Oil on canvas, 41×83 cm. Museum of Fine Arts, Pau

Fig 12. Paolo Veronese, The Conversion of Saul (La Conversione di San Paolo), *c*1570. Oil on canvas, 191×329 cm. The State Hermitage Museum, St Petersburg. © Государственный Эрмитаж, Санкт-Петербург, 2022. П. С. Демидов

Fig. 13. Andrea Schiavone, The Conversion of Saul (La Conversione di San Paolo), 1540–1545. Oil on canvas, 205×265 cm. Gallery Foundation Querini-Stampalia, Venice

Marino Faliero by Eugène Delacroix — a Venetian Picture

In the 1820s, France expressed a strong interest in Venetian Cinquecento painting. Delacroix's picture *Marino Faliero* was closely related to it (fig. 14)[6]. Exhibited at the Salon of 1827 for Parisian audience, canvas was being compared to Venetian painting in almost every review of the exposition. "This easel picture is, indeed, Venetian…" [28, p. 780], "[The figures] have exceptionally Venetian color and nature" [27, p. 938], "This easel painting is a true Venetian <…> interior, poses and color worthy of historical painter"[29, p. 10], — *Journal des Artistes*, *Le Figaro*, *Examen du Salon de 1827*. A few quotes from these publications correspond to the common view of Delacroix's *Marino Faliero* in the 1820s. The focus of the discussion was not a Venetian subject, but the pictorial language, which was considered "Venetian." Originating in the third decade of the 19th century, the tendency to compare Delacroix's work to Venetian art became common place in French literature and criticism.

There were real reasons to discuss the similarities between Delacroix and the Venetians. The French painter reinterpreted the traditional themes and motifs, just like Venetians. There are wonderful colors, variety of shades in his picture, and some prototypes for Delacroix's work are to be found in Venetian painting. Nowadays, one of the patricians represented in the gallery of Ducal Palace in the picture *Marino Faliero* is considered to be an allusion to

[6] For more detailed analysis of the picture and its relationship with Venetian art, see my article: [36].

Fig. 14. Eugène Delacroix, Marino Faliero, 1826. Oil on canvas, 146 × 114 cm. The Wallace collection, London. © Wallace Collection, London, UK / Bridgeman Images

Titian's Berlin self-portrait (c1546–1557, Gemäldegalerie). Delacroix could see this work in the English Solly collection during his trip to England in 1825. Among other things, Delacroix's remarks in his journal show the French artist's interest in the old Venetian master. In particular he wrote on the 19th of March 1824, "Splendid day at the Louvre with Édouard. The Poussins! The Rubens! And above all, Titian's *Francis I*!" [37, p. 26]. Delacroix's approach is to consider an individual style, its relation to technique, and its place within the history of art. His notes on Titian provide a fine example of this, integrating Titian's particular style into the formal and technical interests of the 16th century. For Delacroix, the change in materials favored a different style: a "breath" in the rendering of figures and drapery, in contrast to the "dryness" of Titian's predecessors; a perfection in the rendering suited to expressing "the nuances and preciousness of objects", in contrast to the architectural "broad lines" of fresco; richness and the variety of expression rather than simplicity of impression, but with no less naturalness (5 January 1857; III, 4–7) [38, p. 115].

Fig. 15. Eugène Delacroix, Copy of Titian's Entombment of Christ (La Mise au tombeau), 1820. Oil on canvas, 40 × 55.5 cm. The Museum of Fine Arts, Lyon

Although the French artist never visited Italy, he described the Italian trip as his "most ardent desire" in his letter of the 21 April 1826 [39, p. 85]. He had longed to see Florence and Venice but difficulties were at first too great [37, p. xvi]. Delacroix knew Italian painting only through the Louvre [37, p. xxxviii]. One more important example of Delacroix's attention to the art of the Venetian painter is a copy he made in 1820 after Titian's work the *Entombment of Christ* (fig. 15, 16), displayed in the Louvre. The painting by the French artist looks unfinished in all parts of the scene: it was not an attempt to replicate the picture by Titian, but a study of the Venetian artist's method. It seems that, while exploring the painting, Delacroix was more focused on Titian's color and composition. Some decades later the French artist noticed, "My memories and my predilections are for the past, and all my studies are directed towards the masterpieces of bygone ages". It is clear from Delacroix's writings that he had deep respect and great esteem for tradition and that he allied himself and his art with traditional history painting [40, p. 64].

The French painter wrote in the letter to his friend Soulier dated April 21, 1826, "We will have an exhibition in aid of the Greek cause. <…> I am finishing a rather significant picture *Marino Faliero* that I think will be exposed at the exhibition for the Greeks that I was talking to you about". That was the only mention of Delacroix's Venetian work in the artist's letters [41, p. 117]. Since the author did not discuss the meaning of the painting in his writings, its semantics is a complex issue. *Marino Faliero* by Eugène Delacroix can be interpreted in different ways, but it is hardly possible to say what its original meaning was. Francis Haskell have pointed out the attempts made by the artists of the 19th century to look back into their national history in order to be able to express their feeling about

Fig. 16. Titian, The Entombment of Christ (La Deposizione di Cristo), *c*1520. Oil on canvas, 148×212 cm. The Louvre, Paris. Photo © RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre) / Stéphane Maréchalle

their own times [42, p. 110]. This seems to be true also for the presentation of the past in Delacroix's picture. "I feel that I want to paint my own century", wrote the French artist in his journal on the 9th of May 1824 [37, p. 39]. The Venetian work can be interpreted as a painting about 19th-century France, in particular about its political situation. But as was mentioned above, a definite meaning of the work can hardly be found due to the absence of the artist's statement on this matter[7]. Delacroix's canvas represents the story of the 55th doge of Venetian Republic, who, in 1355, was convicted of treason for an attempt of power usurpation and was condemned to death by the Council of Ten. The story of Marino Faliero was interpreted and popularized by early 19th-century French writers, in particular his name was mentioned often in various historical works and travel guides to Italy [43, p. 167; 44, p. 44; 45, p. 21, 46, p. 27]. Along with them, Delacroix's presentation of the story deserves special attention. The black cloth, which the lifeless Faliero lays on, is an allusion to the painting that is in the Grand Council Hall of the Doge's Palace. There is only the image of black cloth with an inscription instead of the portrait of Doge Marino Faliero in the portrait gallery of Venetian Doges. Thus, Delacroix's painting shows that Marino Faliero was not only condemned to death, but also to *damnatio memoriae* ("condemnation of memory"). Additionally, there is one more sign of French artist's involvement with the Old Master tradition. This is the lettering "Fbat" in the lower left of the picture, namely, latin *faciebat*, which was in the paintings of old masters.

[7] For more information on the interpretation of the picture by French art critics, as well as by contemporary researchers, see: [36].

In the 1820s, similar to other French painters, Delacroix worked in the Louvre and admired Titian, Tintoretto and Veronese [14, p. 82] (see: fig. 4, 15). French artist's relationship with the latter can be found, inter alia, in the free attitude towards the text. Before starting to work on the painting, Delacroix saw some of Venetian watercolors by Richard Parkes Bonington, including his works inspired by Titian's painting[8], read Byron's tragedy *Marino Faliero* and fragment from *Life of the Doges* by historian Marino Sanuto. Sanuto considered Faliero a betrayer; Byron considered the 55th doge a hero. Who is he for Delacroix? The painter did not give a clear answer. Almost everything in his painting is fictional, namely, the murals, entourage, and the place of execution. Nevertheless, there are some historical references in the picture. These include *Porta della Carta* with the image of a kneeling Doge Francesco Foscari, the open book with inscription "PAX TIBI MARCE EVANGELISTA MEUS", and Doge's Palace building with the Giants' Staircase, which, however, did not exist in 1355.

Thanks to the arrangement of decorations, Delacroix created simultaneity of Faliero's story. The relation of the first, second, and third plan with the imaginary scenic backdrop forms the composition of the painting, like in Veronese's *The Wedding at Cana*, which the French painter was studying and copying. The characters looking beyond the space depicted emphasize the fragmentary nature of the composition. Delacroix's picture is a unique combination of elements, as well as meanings. All above characterizes the canvas *Marino Faliero* as a complex artistic invention. Delacroix's contemporaries saw it not only as a picture dealing with Venetian historical event, but also as the reinvention of old pictorial language, which was revived in the 1820s and predetermined the line of French art for many subsequent decades.

Conclusion

Venetian Cinquecento paintings were of undoubted importance in France in the 1820s. French writers and artists appreciated the pictorial language of the late Renaissance. They were interested in the color, movement, space and time of Veronese's, Titian's and Tintoretto's works like never before. Caliari's and Titian's paintings attracted far more attention than Robusti's pictures, first of all, because they were in plain view and were collected and exhibited in the most important art center of nineteenth-century Europe. While Tintoretto's art was just beginning to be discovered.

The 19th century created its own image of Venice, depicting it as both attractive and outcast. Speaking about the decadence of the city, the French wanted to obtain the best Venetian paintings for their collections. Presenting Italy as a country of the past, they presented themselves as inheritors of its artistic tradition. The numerous comparisons between French pictures and Venetian works were another aspect of French interest in Venetian art. Venetian Cinquecento painting shaped that of some French artists of the 1820s who wanted to retrieve Venice's past artistic tradition.

The issues raised and discussed here concerned sixteenth-century Venetian painting, namely its pictorial language, its reassessment by French writers and artists, as well as its impact on French painting in the 1820s. Examination of Venetian Cinquecento art in the

[8] This is about Titian's frescoes in the Scuola del Santo in Padua (1510–1511), which Bonington had sketched in May 1826 during his trip to Italy, and then adapted them for the new context [47].

context of the third decade of the 19th century has revealed the topicality of these works at that time.

References

1. Montor, Alexis-François Artaud, de. *Considérations sur l'état de la peinture en Italie dans les quatre siècles qui ont précédé celui de Raphaël, par un membre de l'Académie de Cortone. Ouvrage servant de catalogue raisonné à une collection de tableaux des xii*e*, xiii*e*, xiv*e *et xv*e *siècles.* Paris: P. Mongie aîné, 1808.
2. Seroux d'Agincourt, Jean Baptiste Louis Georges. *Histoire de l'art par les monumens, depuis sa décadence au IVe siècle jusqu'à son renouvellement au XVI*e*.* 6 vols. Paris: Treuttel et Würtz, 1823.
3. Bullen, Barrie. "The Source and Development of the Idea of the Renaissance in Early Nineteenth-Century French Criticism". *The Modern Language Review* 76, no. 2 (1981): 311–22.
4. Stendhal. *Promenades dans Rome.* Paris: Arvensa Editions, 2015.
5. Gould, Cecil. *Trophy of Conquest: The Musée Napoléon and the Creation of the Louvre.* London: Faber and Faber, 1965.
6. Gault de Saint-Germain, Pierre-Marie. *Guide des amateurs de peinture dans les collections générales et particulières, les magasins et les ventes; utile aux artistes.* Paris: Destouches et Didot, 1816.
7. Valery, Antoine Claude Pasquin. *Voyages historiques, littéraires et artistiques en Italie: guide raisonné et complet du voyageur et de l'artiste.* 2e éd. 3 vols. Paris: Baudry; Aimé André, 1838, vol. 1.
8. Misan-Montefiore, Jacques. *Venise des voyageurs romantiques français.* Moncalieri: Centro Interuniversitario di Ricerche sul Viaggio in Italia, 2000.
9. Feuillet de Conches, Félix-Sébastien. *Léopold Robert: sa vie, ses oeuvres et sa correspondance.* 2e éd. Paris: Michel Lévy Frères, 1854.
10. Daru, Pierre. *Histoire de la République de Venise.* 8 vols. Paris: Firmin Didot, 1821.
11. Lecomte, Jules. *Venice ou coup d'oeil littéraire, artistique, historique* <…>. Paris: Hippolyte Souverain, 1844.
12. Houssaye, Arsène. *Voyage à Venise*. Paris: Ferdinand Sartorius, 1850.
13. Stendhal. *Vie de Rossini*. Établissement du texte et preface par Henry Martineau. 2 vols. Paris: Le Divan, 1929, vol. 1.
14. Lepschy, Anna Laura. *Tintoretto Observed: A Documentary Survey of Critical Reactions from the 16th to the 20th Century.* Ravenna: Longo Editore, 1983.
15. M. R. C. [Colomb, M. Romain]. *Journal d'un voyage en Italie et en Suisse pendant l'année 1828*. Paris: Verdière, 1833.
16. Musée du Louvre. *Les Noces de Cana de Véronèse: une oeuvre et sa restauration: Musée du Louvre, Paris, 16 novembre 1992 — 29 mars 1993:* [catalogue de l'exposition]. Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1992.
17. Stendhal. *Chroniques pour l'Angleterre: Contribution à la presse britannique,* [1822]. Textes choisis et commentés par Keith G. McWatters. Traduction et annotation par Renée Dénier. 5 vols. Grenoble: ELLUG, 1986, vol. 1.
18. Monte, Michele di. "Veronese a Cana. De ludo revelandi cum figures". *Venezia Cinquecento: Studi di storia dell'arte e della cultura* 17, no. 33 (2007): 141–88.
19. Gould, Cecil. "Sebastiano Serlio and Venetian Painting". *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 25, no. 1/2 (1962): 56–64. https://doi.org/10.2307/750541
20. Jal, Auguste. *Esquisses, croquis, pochades, ou tout ce qu'on voudra sur le Salon de 1827*. Paris: Ambroise Dupont et Cie, 1828.
21. Béraud, Antony, et une société d'artistes et d'hommes de lettres. *Annales du Musée et de l'École moderne des beaux-arts <…>. Salon de 1808 A 1824.* Paris: Charles Paul Landon, 1827.
22. "Musée Royal: Exposition de 1827 (6e article)". *Journal des artistes*, no. XXVI (1827): 812–3.
23. D. [Delécluze, Étienne-Jean], "Beaux-Arts. Salon de 1828", *Journal des débats: politique et littéraires,* janvier 2, 1828.
24. D. [Delécluze, Étienne-Jean], "Beaux-Arts. Salon de 1827", *Journal des débats: politique et littéraires,* décembre 20, 1827.
25. L. V. [Vitet, Louis]. "Beaux-Arts. Salon de peinture de 1827". *Le Globe: journal littéraire* 6, no. 13 (1827): 72–4.
26. "Figaro au Salon", *Le Figaro: journal non politique*, janvier 3, 1828.
27. "Figaro au Salon", *Le Figaro: journal non politique*, décembre 21, 1827.

28. F. "Musée Royal: Exposition de 1827. (5e article)". *Journal des artistes*, no. XXIV (1827): 780–4.
29. Vergnaud, Amand-Denis. *Examen du Salon de 1827. Novembre*. 2e éd. Paris: Chez Roret, 1828, pt 1.
30. Martin, Alexandre. *Visite au Musée du Louvre, ou Guide de l'amateur à l'exposition des ouvrages de peinture, sculpture, gravure, lithographie et architecture des artistes vivans* (Année 1827–1828) <…>. Paris: Chez Leroi, 1828.
31. Baudelaire, Dufaÿs [Baudelaire, Charles]. *Salon de 1845*. Paris: Jules Labitte, 1845.
32. Silvestre, Théophile. *Histoire des artistes vivants: français et étrangers: études d'après nature.* Paris: E. Blanchard, 1856.
33. Gautier, Théophile, "Exposition universelle de 1855: Peinture, sculpture. XVII. M. Eugène Delacroix", *Le Moniteur universel*, Juillet 19, 1855.
34. Gautier, Théophile. *Histoire du romantisme* <…>. Paris: Charpentier, 1874.
35. Comte, Philippe. "La naissance d'Henri IV de Devéria". *Revue du Louvre et de musées de France*, no. 2 (1981): 137–41.
36. Sedleryonok, Valeria. "Marino Faliero by Eugene Delacroix — a Venetian Picture". In *Aktual'nye problemy teorii i istorii iskusstva: sb. nauch. statei,* ed. by Svetlana Mal'tseva, Ekaterina Staniukovich-Denisova, Anna Zakharova, 61–70. St Petersburg: St Petersburg University Press, 2018, iss. 8. (In Russian)
37. *The Journal of Eugene Delacroix: a Selection*. Ed. and introd. by Hubert Wellington, transl. by Lucy Norton. 3rd ed. London: Phaidon, 1995.
38. Hannoosh, Michele. *Painting and the Journal of Eugène Delacroix*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995.
39. Burty, Philippe. *Lettres de Eugène Delacroix (1815 à 1863).* Paris: A. Quantin, 1878.
40. Mora, Stephanie. "Delacroix's Art Theory and His Definition of Classicism". *The Journal of Aesthetic Education* 34, no. 1 (2000): 57–75.
41. *Lettres de Eugène Delacroix recueillies et publiées par Philippe Burty*. 2 vols. Paris: G. Charpentier, 1880, vol. 1: 1804–1847.
42. Haskell, Francis. "The Manufacture of the Past in Nineteenth-Century Painting". *Past & Present*, no. 53 (1971): 109–20.
43. Miel, François. *Histoire du sacre de Charles X, dans ses rapports avec les beaux-arts et les libertés publiques de la France* <…>. Paris: C. L. F. Panckoucke, 1825.
44. Simond, Louis. *Voyage en Italie et en Sicile*. 2 vols. Paris: A. Sautelet et Cie, 1828, vol. 1.
45. Lemonnier, André Hippolyte. *Souvenirs d'Italie*. Paris: Mme de Bréville, 1832.
46. Valery, Antoine Claude Pasquin. *Venise et ses environs*. Bruxelles: Société belge de librairie, 1842.
47. Meslay, Olivier. "Les collections de peintures et de dessins britanniques du Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon". *Bulletin des Musées de Dijon*, no. 6 (2000): 55–60.

Received: June 2, 2020
Accepted: December 2, 2021

Author's information:

Valeria D. Sedleryonok — valeria.sedleryonok@gmail.com