



TIZIANO VECELLIO
CALLED TITIAN

DOROTHEUM

Tiziano Vecellio, called Titian

(Pieve di Cadore circa 1485/90–1576 Venice)

The Penitent Magdalen

oil on canvas, 115 x 96.7 cm, framed

estimate: 1,000,000–1,500,000

Auction: 11 May 2022

Dorotheum, Vienna

PROVENANCE

probably collection of Rudolf II, Holy Roman Emperor (1552–1612), Prague;

probably thence by descent to Ferdinand III, Holy Roman Emperor (1608–1657), Prague;

probably seized for the Swedish Crown in 1648;

Collection of Christina, Queen of Sweden (1626–1689), Stockholm, later Antwerp (1653-6) and Rome, until 1689;

Collection of Cardinal Decio Azzolino (1623–1689), Rome;

by descent to his nephew, Marchese Pompeo Azzolino (1654–1706), Rome;

sold to Don Livio Odescalchi, Duke of Bracciano (1652–1713), Rome, in 1697;

by inheritance to his nephews, Marchese Baldassare Erba Odescalchi (1683–1746);

sold to Pierre Crozat (1665–1740) on behalf of Philippe II, Duke of Orléans (1674–1723), Paris, in 1721;

by descent within the House of Orléans to Louis-Philippe-Joseph, Duke of Orléans (1747–1793), Palais Royal, Paris;

from whom acquired by Viscount Joseph Édouard Sébastien de Walckiers de Tronchiennes (1758–1837), on behalf of his cousin François Louis Jean-Joseph, Marquis of Laborde de Méréville (1761–1801), who exported the painting to London in July 1792;

acquired by Michael Bryant on behalf of a syndicate of three noblemen – Francis, 3rd Duke of Bridgewater (1736–1803), his nephew George Granville Leveson-Gower (1758–1833) and Frederick, 5th Earl of Carlisle (1748–1825), in 1792;

sale by private contract of the Orléans' Italian Pictures, Lyceum, London, 26 December 1798, lot 231 (as Titian; acquired by J. Maitland, Esq., for 350 guineas);

John Maitland, Esq. (c. 1754–1831), Woodford Hall, Essex;

his deceased sale, Christie & Manson, London, 30 July 1831, lot 101 (as Titian);

where acquired by John Rushout, 2nd Baron Northwick (1770–1859), 2 Connaught Place, Marble Arch, London, until 1838, then Thirlestane House, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, until 1859;

his deceased sale, Phillips, Thirlestane House, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, 18 August 1859, lot 1506 (as Titian; sold for 66 guineas);

where acquired by David Marks;

Private collection, England;

where acquired by the grandfather of the present owner



LITERATURE

L. F. Dubois de Saint-Gelais, *Description des tableaux du Palais Royal: avec la vie des peintres à la tête de leurs ouvrages, dédiée à Monseigneur le duc d'Orléans, premier prince du sang*, Paris 1727, pp. 476-77 (as 'Titien Vecelli');

G. L. Le Rouge, *Les curiositez de Paris, de Versailles, de Marly, de Vincennes, de S. Cloud, et des environs: avec les antiquitez justes & précises sur chaque sujet, et les adresses pour trouver facilement tout ce que ces lieux renferment d'agréable & d'utile: ouvrage enrichi d'un grand nombre de figures en taille douce*, Paris 1742, vol. 1, p. 180 (as 'une Madeleine' under 'De Titien Vecelli');

A. N. Dezallier d'Argenville, *Abregé de la vie des fameux peintres: avec leurs portraits gravés en taille-douce, les indications de leurs principaux ouvrages, quelques réflexions sur leurs caractères, et la maniere de connoître les desseins des grands maîtres*, Paris 1745-52, vol. 1, p. 146 (as Titian, 'une Madeleine à demi-corps');

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L.V.Thiéry, *Guide des amateurs et des étrangers voyageurs à Paris*, Paris 1787, vol. 1, p. 260 (as 'une Magdeleine, du Titien');

W. Buchanan, *Memoirs of Painting: with a Chronological History of the Importation of Pictures by the Great Masters into England since the French Revolution*, London 1824, p. 114, no. 14 (as Titian);

A. Hume, *Notices of the Life and Works of Titian*, London 1829, p. 97 (as Titian);

H. Davies, *Hours in the Picture Gallery of Thirlestane House, Cheltenham: Being notices of some of the principal paintings in Lord Northwick's collection*, Cheltenham 1846, p. 27, cat. no. XCI (as Titian);

G. Camponi, *Raccolta di cataloghi ed inventarii inediti di quadri, statue, disegni, bronzi, dorerie, smalti, medaglie, avorii, ecc: dal secolo XV al secolo XIX*, Modena 1870, p. 343 (as Titian);

J.A. Crowe and G. B. Cavalcaselle, *Life and Times of Titian*, London 1877, vol. 2, p. 316 (as copy);

A. de Montaignon (ed.), *Correspondance des directeurs de l'Académie de France à Rome avec les surintendants des bâtimens*, Paris 1887-1908, vol. 5, letter 2241, p. 342 (as Titian);

O. Granberg, *Drottning Kristinas tafvelgalleri på Stockholms slott och i Rom, dess uppkomst och dess öden ända till våra dagar: en historisk-konstkritisk undersökning*, Stockholm 1896, p. 15, no. 33; app. III, pp. 120-21, no. 32; app. IV, p. 155, no. 8 (as Titian, with partly incorrect provenance);

O. Granberg, *La Galerie de Tableaux de la Reine Christine de Suède ayant appartenu auparavant à l'Empereur Rodolphe II plus tard aux ducs d'Orléans*, Stockholm 1897, p. 35, no. 33 (as 'Oeuvre d'atelier ou copie d'après l'original à l'Ermitage de St. Petersbourg', with partly incorrect provenance);

V. Champier and G.-R. Sandoz, *Le Palais-Royal d'après des documents inédits (1629-1900)*, Paris 1900, vol. 1, p. 304 (as Titian);

C. Stryjenski, *La galerie du régent, Philippe, duc d'Orléans*, Paris 1913, p. 151, no. 37 (as 'Madeleine à mi-corps', with partly incorrect provenance 'Lansdowne House, no. 53');

E. K. Waterhouse, 'Queen Christina's Italian Pictures in London' in *Queen Christina of Sweden. Documents and Studies*, Stockholm 1966, p. 374, no. 64 (as lost);

H. E. Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian, I. The Religious Paintings*, London 1969, pp. 147-48, no. 126 (as lost);

W. R. Rearick, *Le 'Maddalene penitenti' di Tiziano*, in: *Arte Veneta*, 58, 2001, p. 37 (as lost);

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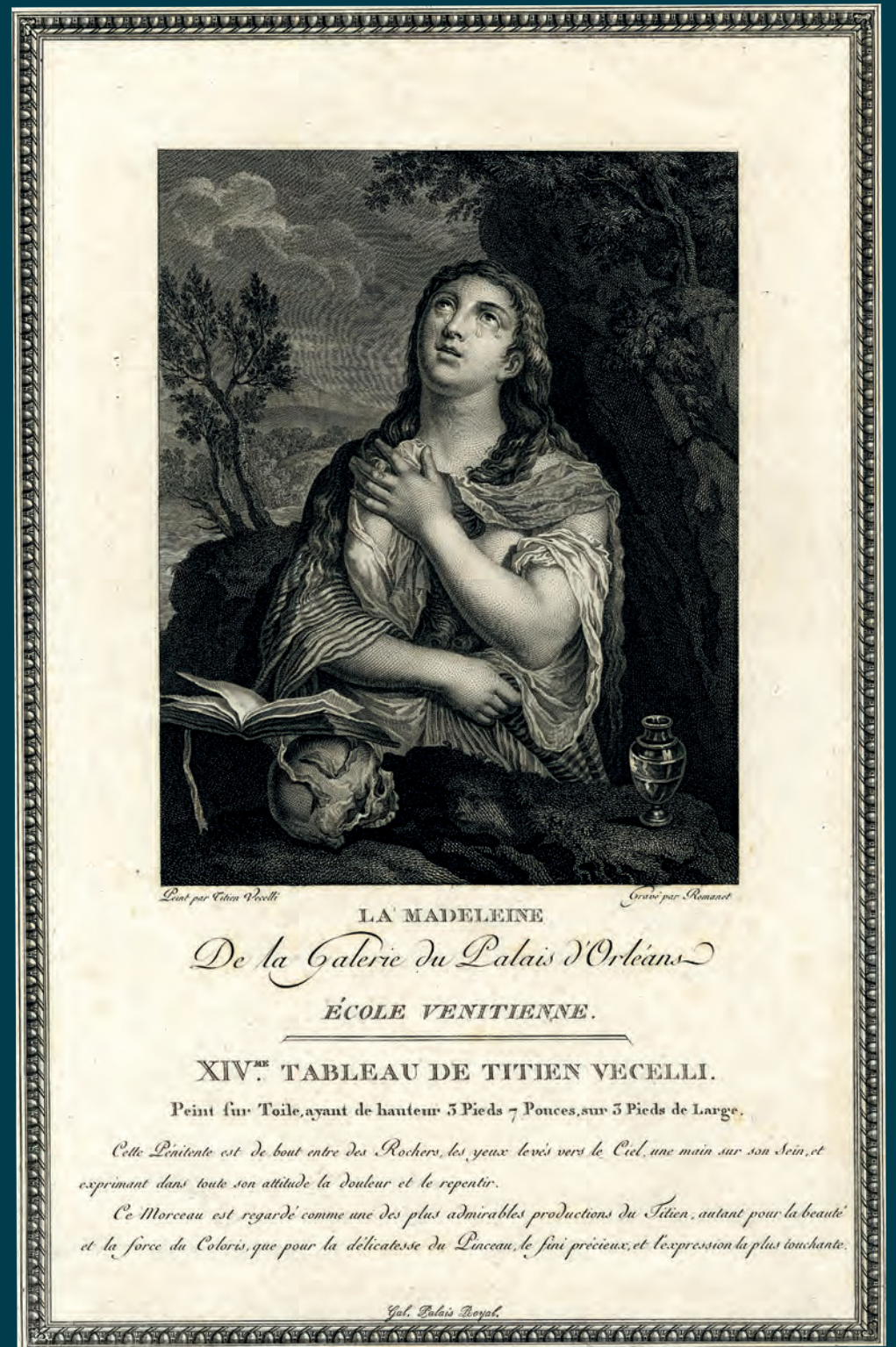


fig. 1: Antoine Louis Romanet, after Titian, *St Mary Magdalen in the wilderness*, The British Museum, London, inv. no. 1855,0609.414 © The Trustees of the British Museum

ENGRAVED

by Antoine Louis Romanet (1742 – after 1810), after Titian. La Madeleine, in: Abbé de Fontenai [Louis de Bonafous], *Galerie Du Palais Royal Gravée d'après les Tableaux des différentes Ecoles qui la Composent: Avec un abrégé de la Vie des Peintres & une description historique de chaque tableau Par Mr. L'Abbé De Fontenai. Dediée A S.A.S. Monseigneur Le Duc D'Orléans Premier Prince du Sang Par J. Couché Graveur de son Cabinet*, Paris 1808, vol. 2

DOCUMENTED

Inventory of Queen Christina, Antwerp, 1656: 'Une pièce, une Magdalène, de Titien' and "Encores une pièce, Marie Magdalene, de Titien' (J. Denucé, *The Antwerp art-galleries: inventories of the art-collections in Antwerp in the 16th and 17th centuries*, Antwerp 1932, pp. 178 and 179, respectively);

Inventory of Queen Christina, Rome, 1662: 'Una Madalena mezza figura grande al naturale, con paese in tela in piedi con cornice liscia indorata alta palmi cinque, e mezzo, e larga palmi cinque. Di Titiano [...] Altra Madalena della medema grandezza, et effigie, mezza figura grande al naturale, mà diversa nel paese, nel velo, ne capelli, e quasi in tutto il resto, in tela in piedi con cornice liscia indorata alta palmi cinque, e mezzo, e larga palmi cinque. Di Titiano' (Riksarkivet, Stockholm, SE/RA/710003/04/~K 441 [Nr 48], fol. 45);

'Un quadro d'una Maddalena piangente più di mezza figura di buon naturale ignuda le braccia, e poca parte del petto capelli sciolti, et avanti di se una testa di morte con un libro aperto in bel paese di Titiano in tela in piedi, alta palmi quattro meno un quarto con cornice dorata liscia alla romana. // Un altro Quadro d'una Madalena simile quant'all'idea del viso, ma diversa in tutto al rimanente dell'istesso Titiano in tela in piedi alta palmi quattro, e tre quarti, e larga palmi quattro, meno un quarto, con cornice liscia dorata alla romana' (see M. G. Paviolo [ed.], *Aristocratici Inventari. Cristina di Svezia (1626-1689)*, s. l., 2020, p. 373);

Inventory of Queen Christina's possessions, Palazzo Riario, about 1697, no. 8: 'Titiano. 8. Una Madalena mezza figura con volto elevato al Cielo afflitto con ambe le mani Libro e testa di morte con fondo di paese et cetera cornice d'oro liscia misura sopra 4 palmi e larga à proportion' (see S. Danesi Squarzina, *La collezione di Cristina di Svezia, appendice documentaria*, in: *Cristina di Svezia. Le collezioni reali*, exhibition catalogue, Milan 2003, p. 83);

Inventory of Palazzo Odescalchi, Rome, about 1703, no. 57: 'XVII. Santa Maria Maddalena Penitente, con Libro, e Testa di morto avanti, con Vaso di Cristallo, con Capelli sciolti, et è di mezza figura, anco un poco più grande del naturale. Quadro assai nominato, e cognito. Alto palmi Cinque, ed un Quarto, largo à proporzione, con Cornice dorata. Si pone per sua stima, e prezzo luigi d'oro 2000' (see *op. cit.* Danesi Squarzina, 2003, pp. 73-74);

Expert valuation by Mr Guilbert of the Italian paintings formerly owned by Queen Christina in 1720: 'La Madeleine, à demy-cors, du Titien, semblable à celle de l'Escurial, est aussi un peu equivoque, et l'on en peut douter, jusqu'à qu'on la voye de près.' (see A. de Montaignon in literature)



THE PENITENT MAGDALEN WAS TITIAN'S MOST SUCCESSFUL AND MOST FREQUENTLY COMMISSIONED SUBJECT

We are grateful to Professor Paul Joannides for accepting the full attribution to Titian after examination of the present painting in the original and for his assistance in suggesting the provenance for this work.

We would also like to thank Dr Carlo Corsato for his help in establishing and clarifying the provenance of the present painting.

The *Penitent Magdalen* was Titian's most successful and most frequently commissioned subject. Its popularity with his patrons lasted for more than forty years, during which time the artist revised and subtly altered the image, producing several slightly different iterations of the theme while maintaining the essential composition. The slightly turned pose, the prayerful upward gaze and cascade of long wavy hair parting over the Magdalen's shoulders are those of a *Venus Pudica*; a compositional device influenced by Giampietrino (see fig. 2). However, it was Titian who fully explored both the emotional and sensual potential of the image, earning the Magdalen the popularity she enjoyed amongst his contemporaries and beyond.

By 1500, the iconography of the penitent Magdalen had begun to move away from a merely devotional to a more human, visceral portrayal of the saint. Narrative elements began to appear, not only alluding to her repentance, but now also conveying her humanity and the suffering of her mortal condition. In this present painting Titian embraces the profound emotion of the sorrowing woman. Her left hand on her heart, right hand clutching her garments, the Magdalen looks up to heaven, her red eyes filled with tears and her mouth slightly open; she is caught in a moment of intense supplication, catching a breath between sighs.





Titian produced two distinct basic iconographies for the *Penitent Magdalen*, the present painting being an exemplar of the second type, Type II. Type I, the earliest, was realised from the early 1530s onwards. In these early versions of the subject, the Magdalen is placed in a dark setting, the night sky is just visible in the background with lunar light illuminating the saint's naked skin. The saint's body takes up most of the canvas, confined in a severe, oppressive darkness. Vittoria Colonna, Gian Giacomo Calandra and Elenora Gonzaga were among the prestigious recipients of this earlier version (see fig. 3).

Type II, which pertains to the present work was produced by Titian from around 1550, presents a less sensuous Magdalen, her nudity concealed by drapery, closer in type to the chaste model of *Venus Pudica* and still retaining her sensual character.

fig. 2: Giampietrino, *Mary Magdalen*, Bergamo, Accademia Carrara, inv. no. 58AC00286
© Fondazione Accademia Carrara, Bergamo



Here the slightly claustrophobic composition of Type I was replaced with a more spacious, daylight scene, which opens to reveal a mountainous landscape. This may be a reference to grotto-hermitage at La Sainte-Baume, where, according to tradition, Mary Magdalen settled after fleeing to France to engage in a life of solitary prayer and contemplation. Joannides subdivides Type II into two variants, one more austere, one less (see P. Joannides, in: *Artibus et Historiae*, no. 72, 2016, p. 170).

On the left of the composition, and significant in the identification of this work, Titian placed a singular glass flagon with water, and on the right a book, which is laid open on a skull. This attribute, placed prominently in the foreground, references the Magdalen's mortality – and that of the viewer – and suggests a cultural assimilation between the story of Magdalen and that of Saint Jerome.

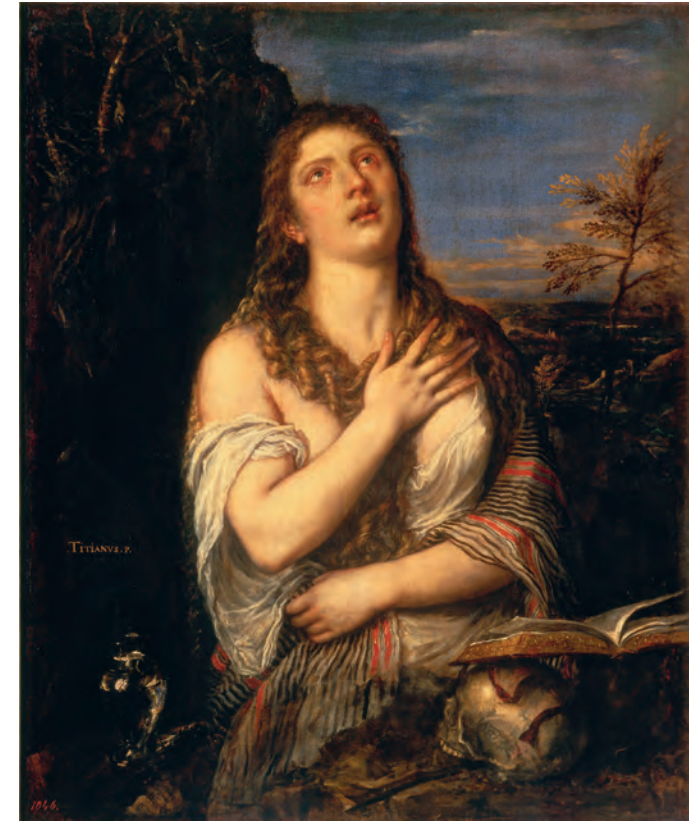
fig. 3: Titian, *The Magdalen*, Galleria Palatina, Florence, inv. 1912 no. 67



The present painting, which was long believed to have been lost, exhibits both the structural and stylistic characteristics of a Type II Magdalen, and can accordingly be dated after 1550. Close connections can be traced with other high-quality versions by the hand of Titian, one of which is conserved at the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, and another, documented by Paul Joannides, which is in a private collection in Lugano (see P. Joannides, in: *Artibus et Historiae*, no. 72, 2016, p. 172). Both can be dated between 1550 and 1560. Much like the Lugano version, the present painting shows an additional transparent, diaphanous scarf over Magdalen's upper arm, held in her left hand, although the arrangement of the scarf differs between the two paintings. Stylistically, the artist's execution of the present composition appears tighter than in paintings known, or reasonably assumed to have been realised after 1560, indicating, according to Joannides, that this work can be dated to the second half of the 1550s, close to 1560.

As this plurality of versions might have already suggested, the authorship of the different versions of the *Penitent Magdalen* varies from fully autograph, through collaborative, to

fig. 4: Titian, *The Penitent Magdalen*,
The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, inv. no. 56.PA.1
© Digital image courtesy of the Getty's Open Content Program.



fully studio works, as well as a number of copies. It is not often that a version can be confidently attributed to the hand of Titian himself, with little or no studio intervention, such as the present painting.

This work is a significant picture of the *Penitent Magdalen* painted by Titian in which the usual sensual, even erotic character employed in earlier depictions of the subject is subordinated to the human emotion of the moment, the tears of the saint drawing the viewer into the narrative of her ardent devotion.

No other known canvas shows the same compositional arrangement as the present painting which very closely resembles an engraving by Antoine-Louis Romanet (see fig. 1), which documents a painting in the collection of the Duke of Orléans, in 1786. This engraving provides a link not only between the present painting and the Orléans collection, but also to a further previous illustrious provenance including the collections of Christina, Queen of Sweden, the Odescalchi, and possibly the Holy Roman Emperor, Rudolph II in Prague.

fig. 5: Titian, *The Magdalen*,
Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, inv. no. ГЭ-117
© 2022. Photo Scala, Florence



TECHNICAL REPORT

BY GIANLUCA POLDI

The construction of the painting

Interesting data regarding the painting process emerges from X-Rays (RX) and IRR long-wave (1000-1700 nm). In the RX, in particular, it is apparent that the figure was originally painted a little larger along her right side (left for the viewer), with loose but careful brushstrokes, and hence the white sleeve was wider, as well as the lower striped mantle flap. The transparent glass vase, which was actually painted larger; the rising ground in the foreground, which holds the vase and skull, just overlaps the mantle, and is in turn slightly modified; the skull was larger on the right. Comparing IRR and RX to the picture, it is possible to see that in the first painted version the opened pages of the book were more raised, as if moved by the wind.

A vaguely triangular shape was set on the right side (X-Rays), beyond the left elbow of Magdalen, under the landscape: it is not clear whether it was a strip of the garment thought to be wider or a first structure of the hill, lower than the one visible today.

These changes are illustrated in, where I marked in red the main contours traced on the basis of the RX, superimposed on the colour image of the painting.

In the figure, the main lines invisible to the naked eye and recovered from the IR reflectograms are indicated in green: they are principally corrections occurred to the mantle, which covered the left arm a little more and that was not completely covered above the right hand holding it. IR reflectography, thanks to the opacity of the black stripes that

fig.6: Infrared reflectogram of the present painting
© NTK 2021 Univ. Prof. Dipl.-Ing. Dr. M. Schreiner



decorate the fabric, shows that the mantle continued downwards under the left hand, and that therefore this and the arm were initially drawn higher.

So, both the arms were slightly re-placed and some changes occurred, that is interesting in the light of the other versions of the subject, some of which do not show similar variants. In the face of these changes, the tracing of the head is instead precise, especially in the definition of the facial features, with only an ear lifted. For the head it is possible, although an underdrawing cannot be traced in IR, to believe that the painter used a model somehow transferred to the canvas.

Even if we can admit the existence of an overall model on paper used for the figure and perhaps for the entire composition – which will thus be codified in the numerous replicas, several of which are attributed to Titian himself – it is evident that the painter proceeded with successive tests and variations, to adjust the figure according to the desired shape in the present painting. This way of proceeding is typical of Titian himself, just as are his typical brushstrokes which can be read in the X-ray.

Regarding the underdrawing, IR images allow the reading of some black thin contour lines, that cannot be referred to a drawing transfer but are functional to highlight some contours which are then brushed over with subtle shading.

fig.7: X-Ray of the present painting
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PROVENANCE

Probably Rudolf II, Holy Roman Emperor (1552–1612)

It is possible that this painting was once in the collection of Rudolf II, Holy Roman Emperor in Prague. In 1648 at the end of the Thirty Years War, while the negotiations for the Peace of Westphalia were proceeding, the Swedish mounted one last campaign into Bohemia. The main result, and probably the main aim, was to loot the fabulous art collection assembled in Prague Castle, the best of which was then taken to Stockholm.

It has been suggested that this may have been when the present painting entered the collection of Christina, Queen of Sweden (1629–1689).

Christina, Queen of Sweden (1629–1689)

For generations prior to the reign of Queen Christina, the rulers of Sweden had shown little interest in the artistic developments of the European courts. The Sack of Prague in 1649 at the end of the Thirty Years War heralded the end of Sweden's cultural confinement. It has been suggested that at the Queen's behest, a large part of the collection formed by Holy Roman Emperor, Rudolf II in Prague was looted by Swedish troops and transferred to Stockholm. The seizure of the works of art from the celebrated collection would have been both political and personal for Christina. She not only appropriated the paintings and objects in which she had a profound and deeply held interest herself, but also assumed the magnificence of the Holy Roman Emperor, enhancing her reign in the eyes of her European contemporaries.

Christina of Sweden was one of Europe's most flamboyant and intriguing monarchs. She was a figure of controversy throughout her life. Born a girl instead of the longed-for boy, she was educated as if she had been a boy in the arts and sciences, religion, statecraft and diplomacy. She became known for her knowledge and patronage of the arts and Stockholm became a centre of the sciences and philosophy, even becoming known as the Athens of the North.

Christina's life was colourful and her reign short. She had little respect for social convention, habitually wearing men's clothing and her private life was the subject of rumour and gossip throughout her life. She disdained the notion of marriage and at the age of only 28 she abdicated from her throne, converted to Roman Catholicism, left her country and, at the invitation of Pope Alexander VII, moved to Rome, taking her art collection with her. She took with her an estimated seventy to eighty paintings, most of which were Italian, including possibly the present painting, together with sculpture, jewels, tapestries, and other works of art. She was concerned that the royal collections would be claimed by her successor, and prudently sent the works to Antwerp by ship before she abdicated, and later onward to Rome.



fig. 8: Sebastien Bourdon, *Christina of Sweden (1626-89) on Horseback*, Museo del Prado, Madrid, inv. no. P001503
© Bridgeman Images



fig. 9: Filippo Gagliardi and Filippo Lauri, Reception at Palazzo Barberini in Honor of Christine of Sweden, Museo di Roma, Rome, inv. no. MR 5698 © 2022, Photo Scala, Florence



Her arrival in Rome in 1655, at this time of intense religious rivalry between the Catholic and Protestant churches, was of the greatest ideological significance for the Papacy and cause for enormous celebration. A triumphal entrance was arranged, and Christina processed into the Eternal City through the *Porta del Popolo*, which had been recreated for the occasion by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, amid 'trumpets, drums and illuminations'.

Christina established herself as a prominent patron of the arts in Rome. She surrounded herself with the leading artists, musicians and academics of the city, founding the *Accademia dell'Arcadia* and several other of the city's cultural institutions, including the first opera house, the *Tor di Nona*. Over the ensuing years, Christina was

embroiled in a number of personal and diplomatic plots and skirmishes on the European stage, most of which did not bear fruit for the ex-Queen. She continued in her central role as patron of the arts in Rome until her death in 1689. She was buried in the crypt of St Peter's Basilica, one of only three women to have this honour bestowed on them.

On her death, Christina bequeathed her collection of 275 paintings (140 of which were Italian) to Cardinal Decio Azzolino, who himself died within a year. He left the collection to his nephew, who sold it to Don Livio Odescalchi. The year after Odescalchi's death in 1713, his heirs began negotiations with the French connoisseur and collector Pierre Crozat, acting as intermediary for Philippe II, Duke of Orléans. The sale was finally concluded, and the paintings delivered in 1721.

fig. 10: Correggio, *Leda with the swan*, (formerly in the collection of Christina of Sweden)
Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, inv. no. 218
© bpk / Gemäldegalerie, SMB / Jörg P. Anders

fig. 11: Titian, *Venus and Adonis*, (thought to have been in the collection of Christina of Sweden)
Gallerie Nazionali di Arte Antica – Palazzo Barberini, Rome
© 2022. Album/Scala, Florence



Philippe II, Duke of Orléans (1674–1723)

Philippe II, Duke of Orléans was regent of France during the minority of Louis XV who formed a significant and important collection of over five hundred paintings, mostly acquired between about 1700 and his death in 1723. Apart from the great royal, later national collections of Europe it was arguably the greatest private collection of western art, especially Italian painting, ever assembled, and one of the most celebrated.

The core of the collection was formed by one hundred and twenty three paintings from the collection of Christina, Queen of Sweden, including the present work, which itself had a core assembled from the war booty of the sacks by Swedish troops of Munich in 1632 and Prague in 1648 during the Thirty Years War.

After the French Revolution the collection was sold by Louis Philippe of Orléans, *Philippe Égalité*, and most of it was acquired by an English consortium of buyers led by Francis Egerton, 3rd Duke of Bridgewater. Much of the collection has been dispersed, but significant groups of paintings have remained intact amongst them the Sutherland Loan or Bridgewater Loan, including sixteen works from the Orléans Collection, in the National Gallery of Scotland. There are twenty-five paintings formerly in the collection now in the National Gallery, London, which have arrived there via a number of different routes.

The collection is of central interest for the history of collecting, and of public access to art. It figured in two of the periods when art collections were most subject to disruption and dispersal: the mid-17th century and the period after the French Revolution.

John Rushout, 2nd Baron Northwick (1769–1859)

Lord Northwick was considered to be one of the greatest English connoisseurs of the nineteenth century. In 1838 he purchased Thirlestaine House, Cheltenham, to house his exceptional collection of over five hundred pictures which was open to the public.

fig.12: Jean-Baptiste Santerre, *Portrait of Philippe Duke of Orléans*, Birmingham Museum & Art Gallery, acc. no. 1967P52
©Photo by Birmingham Museums Trust, licensed under CC0.



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