



Image from: [41. Titian, The Vendramin Family, venerating a... in A Closer Look: Colour](#)

Summary Article: **Titian**

From *Chambers Biographical Dictionary*

properly

Tiziano Vecellio

c.1488-1576

Venetian painter, one of the greatest artists of the Renaissance

Titian was born in Pieve di Cadore in the Friulian Alps. He lived from the age of 10 with an uncle in Venice and studied under the mosaicists there, becoming a pupil of Giovanni Bellini and Giorgione. Bellini's influence is apparent in such early works as *Bishop Pesaro before St Peter* (c.1505). Titian assisted Giorgione with the paintings for the Fondaco dei Tedeschi (1508) and completed many of the works left unfinished at his death, for example *Noli me tangere* (c.1510) and the *Sleeping Venus* (c.1510), which was to serve as a model for Titian's more naturalistic *Venus of Urbino* (1538).

Giorgione continued to be the chief influence on Titian's work. The first works definitely attributable to Titian alone are the three frescoes of scenes in the life of St Anthony at Padua (1511), the pastoral setting of *The Three Ages of Man* (c.1515) and the masterly fusion of romantic realism and classical idealism achieved in his *Sacred and Profane Love* (c.1515). After 1516 restrained postures and colouring give way to dynamic compositions in which bright colours are contrasted, and the classical intellectual approach gives way to sensuous, full-blooded treatment. *Assumption of the Virgin* (1516-18), *Madonna of the Pesaro Family* (1519-26), both in the Frari, Venice, and *St Peter Martyr* (destroyed in 1867) exemplify the beginnings of Titian's own revolutionary style.

For the Duke of Ferrara he painted three great mythological subjects, *Feast of Venus* (c.1515-18), *Bacchanal* (c.1518) and the richly coloured exuberant masterpiece *Bacchus and Ariadne* (1523). In sharp contrast is the finely modelled historical picture, *Presentation of the Virgin* (1534-38). In 1530 he met the Emperor Charles V, of whom he painted many portraits, including the striking equestrian *Charles V at the Battle of Mühlberg* (1548), and also the portraits of many notables assembled for the Augsburg peace conference, and was ennobled.

To this period also belongs *Ecce Homo* (1543), and portraits of the Farnese family including Pope Paul III and his nephews (1545-46), painted on Titian's first visit to Rome. The impact of the art collections there is reflected in a new sculptural treatment of the *Danae* (1545). For Philip II of Spain he executed a remarkable series of mythological scenes, to which belong *Diana and Actaeon* (1559), *Diana and Callisto* (1559) and *Perseus and Andromeda* (c.1556). To the poignant religious and mythological subjects of his last years belong *The Fall of Man* (c.1570), *The Entombment* (1565), *Christ Crowned with Thorns* (c.1570), *Madonna Suckling the Child* (1570-76), *Lucrezia and Tarquinius* (c.1570) and the unfinished *Pietà* (1573-76).

Titian was ceremoniously buried in the church of S Maria dei Frari, Venice. He revolutionized techniques in oil, and has been described as the founder of modern painting. His influence on later artists, including Tintoretto, Rubens, Velázquez, Nicolas Poussin, Anthony Van Dyck and Antoine Watteau, was profound.

Hope, C, Titian (1980); Wethey, H E, *The Paintings of Titian* (2 vols, 1969-71).

*"Nobody cares much at heart about Titian; only there is a strange undercurrent of everlasting murmur about his name, which means the deep consent of all great men that he is greater than they."*

- John Ruskin, in *The Two Paths*, lecture 2 (1859).

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Titian. (2011). In L. Rodger, & J. Bakewell, *Chambers Biographical Dictionary* (9th ed.). London, UK: Chambers Harrap. Retrieved from <https://search.credoreference.com/content/topic/titian>

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## Chicago

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## Harvard

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## MLA

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