

GOYA'S RELIGIOUS PAINTINGS AND THEIR ROLE IN CONSTRUCTING AN
ARTISTIC IDENTITY

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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My thesis examines four major religious commissions from distinct points within Goya's artistic development. Each piece serves as a touchstone for a discussion of its particular moment, provoking analyses of iconography, history, aesthetics, or patronage. These paintings offer profound evidence of the artist's ability to tactfully navigate the demands of involved patrons, religious decorum, complex aesthetic allegiances, and his own desire for invention. My thesis opposes teleological readings of Goya's work that have historically privileged both his secular and later work. Instead, I take an episodic approach and argue the merit of each work on its own for revealing a unique and invaluable element of Goya's artistic identity. By demonstrating the similarity in conception that exists between Goya's religious and non-religious works, and by asserting the equivalent value of these two traditional groupings, I aim to deconstruct the religious genre itself as it pertains to Goya.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The religious paintings of Francisco de Goya y Lucientes (b. Saragossa, 1746; d. Bordeaux, 1828) hold the unfortunate distinction of being the worst received group of works created by one of Spain's most highly regarded artists. In this thesis I propose that Goya's religious paintings are actually representative of his artistic accomplishment and not an exception to it, thus challenging a systemic undervaluation.

The most comprehensive treatment of Goya's religious paintings—and the only monograph devoted solely to this genre of his art—is Jose Morales y Marín's *Goya, Pintor Religioso*.¹ This text provides a comprehensive catalogue of Goya's religiously themed paintings with an historiography for each. In his introduction Morales traces the complete history of critical reactions to Goya's religious works as a genre. The historiography demonstrates shifting responses to these paintings: initially positive, increasingly negative, and finally, more measuredly acknowledged. As the title suggests, *Goya, Pintor Religioso* treats Goya's religious works alone, making no attempt to incorporate them into a broader understanding of Goya as an artist.

Published near the same time as Morales, Sarah Symmons's monograph *Goya in Pursuit of Patronage* includes a chapter devoted to "The Sacred Image."² In this chapter Symmons rightly asserts that Goya's religious paintings served as self-advertisement, their highly visible nature allowing the artist a means to market himself. *Goya in Pursuit*

¹ Jose Morales y Marín, *Goya, Pintor Religioso* (Zaragoza: Diputación General de Aragón, Departamento de Cultura y Educación, 1990).

² Sarah Symmons, *Goya in Pursuit of Patronage* (London: Fraser, 1988), 42-58.

of Patronage addresses the inherent conflict Goya faced with clerical commissions, given his social progressivism and the decorum required for religious works. In establishing and insisting on this firm dichotomy, Symmons ultimately discredits Goya's religious paintings, identifying in them unease and uncertainty of purpose.³

Valeriano Bozal Fernández has contributed much to Goya scholarship in recent years and has gestured toward a new appreciation for the religious paintings. In *Francisco Goya: Vida y Obra*, Bozal recognizes the integral position of religious paintings as part of Goya's artistic identity.⁴ Bozal, though, seems compelled to address them more by their sheer quantity than from any conviction in their quality. He overtly privileges Goya's later works, identifying *Christ on the Mount of Olives* (1819) and *The Last Communion of Saint Joseph of Calasanz* (1819) as the most important representatives of the genre.⁵

A recent exhibition at the Museo Nacional del Prado entitled *Goya en tiempos de guerra* incorporated the artist's late religious works. In doing so, the exhibition affirmed Bozal's conviction that the late religious paintings should be given prominence within the genre.⁶ The exhibition catalogue provides the most substantive commentary available on the religious paintings completed from 1816-20. The scope of the exhibition, limited to addressing Goya's interaction with and response to the Peninsular War, precludes any discussion of his early religious work.

³ Symmons, *Pursuit of Patronage*, 57-8.

⁴ Valeriano Bozal Fernández, *Francisco Goya: Vida y Obra* (Madrid: Tf Editores, 2005).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 195.

⁶ *Goya en tiempos de guerra*, eds. Manuela Mena Marqués and José Luis Díez (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2008; exhibition catalogue).

This thesis aims to redress the gaps in Goya scholarship by examining four major religious commissions from distinct points within the artist's development: *Saint Bernardino Preaching* (1782-3), *The Taking of Christ* (1798), *Saints Justa and Rufina* (1817), and *The Last Communion of Saint Joseph of Calasanz* (1819). Each piece serves as a touchstone for a discussion of its particular moment, provoking analyses of iconography, history, aesthetics, or patronage. Each painting also provides a case study to illustrate the larger themes of Goya's religious work, such as the roles of invention and expressivity.

The first altarpiece, *Saint Bernardino Preaching*, provides opportunity to explore contemporary Spanish aesthetics, in which Goya's relationships to his baroque predecessors and to the Neoclassicist Anton Raphael Mengs were especially significant. By placing Goya's religious paintings into direct interaction with late-eighteenth-century Spanish aesthetics, I demonstrate both his initial orthodoxy and his development of a unique style.

The Taking of Christ, in which Goya employs grotesque facial expressions and tenebrist lighting to powerful emotive effect, evidences the fantastic as a characteristic element of the artist's style. I demonstrate that this piece drew from the imagery of Northern and Spanish sources and was meant to interact meaningfully with El Greco's *Disrobing of Christ*, displayed in the same room. A comparison with contemporaneous Spanish art illustrates that Goya's work from this moment related to that of his peers in style and imagery, yet it was unique in its highly affective quality.

Goya's depiction of *Saints Justa and Rufina* for the Cathedral in Seville earned great acclaim in his lifetime and served as the subject for the earliest art historical exposition on his work. A surviving letter written by Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez preserves a picture of the very involved role the author played while serving as a liaison between artist and patron on this commission. The conventional, idealizing style of *Saints Justa and Rufina*—an aberrance within Goya's artist production—encourages investigation of the painting as a conceptual product of multiple authorship. This aberrant style also suggests Goya's desire to accommodate the prevailing Neoclassical taste.

The Last Communion of Saint Joseph of Calasanz exemplifies a moment in the artist's career characterized by expressivity and a lack of censorial presence. I situate this and Goya's other works from the same moment in relation to scholarly interest in the uniquely dark, emotive aesthetic they manifest. Additionally, I apply an iconographic analysis to his late religious works in order to demonstrate the emotive effect Goya achieved through borrowing and reuse of artistic motifs.

With the conviction that art historians have frequently mischaracterized or understated the value of Goya's religious paintings, my project seeks to articulate a more nuanced view. These paintings offer profound evidence of the artist's ability to tactfully navigate the demands of involved patrons, religious decorum, complex aesthetic allegiances, and his own desire for invention. My thesis opposes teleological readings of Goya's art that have historically privileged his later work. Instead, I take an episodic approach, arguing the merit of each work on its own for revealing a unique and invaluable element of Goya's artistic identity. Assuming this perspective prevents one

from imposing structures of expressive development onto Goya's oeuvre and encourages close examination of the paintings themselves. My thesis maintains the presence of Goya's milieu and predecessors in Spanish painting, pushing against scholarly desire to consider him as a lone Romantic genius. Re-situating Goya within his milieu provides a measured perspective on his achievement.

This thesis does not address every religious work or even every major altarpiece Goya completed. Excluded are a series in the church of Santa Ana in Valladolid (1787), scenes of the life of Saint Francis Borgia in Valencia cathedral (1788), a group of three altarpieces for the church of Monte Torrero in Saragossa (ca. 1798-1800), and an altarpiece for the church at Chinchón (1812), among many others. Limitations of time and space preclude discussing every altarpiece, which, regardless, is beyond the scope and intention of this thesis. The pieces I have chosen to discuss are exemplary for their imagery, style, or conception. They promote the employment of various art historical methods, discussions on a wide variety of socio-cultural and artistic issues surrounding Goya, avenues into his other works, and contemplative consideration of his religious art as a whole.⁷

Each of the major religious works I have chosen to discuss makes visible a different facet of Goya's commitment to the concept of *invención*. It contrast to its

⁷ It should also be said that this thesis does not attempt an assessment of Goya's private religiosity. Many Goya scholars have approached this question; for instance, nineteenth-century Goya biographer Conde de la Viñaza claimed that the artist "painted works with religious subjects, but not religious works." By discussing Goya's drawings, Chapter IV demonstrates that such arguments are reductive and should be acknowledged as speculative. Joan Sureda and Anna Pou provide a brief but thoughtful discussion on the subject of Goya's religiosity in *Los Mundos de Goya*, where they note in the artist's correspondence both a lack of religiously centered entries and several incidents of seemingly heartfelt religious sentiment. Conde de la Viñaza, *Goya: Su tiempo, su vida, sus obras* (Madrid: Tipografía de Manuel G. Hernández 1887), 78. Joan Sureda and Anna Pou, *Los Mundos de Goya, 1746-1828* (Madrid: Lunwerg Editores, 2008), 342-3.

modern significance, “invention” in late-eighteenth-century Spain could be approximated as an “imaginative reformulation of traditional concepts.”⁸ A painting demonstrating *invención* need not be an entirely innovative composition; rather, it must only render a traditional scene uniquely. In this way, one artist’s work might well be of “his own invention” although explicitly based on that of a predecessor. The term could also be applied when an artist emphasized a previously unacknowledged aspect of a traditional scene. Distinctions between the source and the invented adaptation could be as particular as the gesture of a hand, the inclination of a head, or the rendering of a garment. Thus, Janis Tomlinson establishes that “invention” should not be equated with “originality” in Goya’s context, for everything original must necessarily be invented, but not everything invented is original.⁹

The term *invención* appears frequently in Goya’s writings, and his paintings bear out a preoccupation with it. Goya referred to his *Crucified Christ* as an “original painting of his invention.”¹⁰ With *Saint Bernardino Preaching* the artist attempted to distance himself from other painters at San Francisco el Grande by taking a uniquely historical emphasis. *The Taking of Christ* was a daring composition for such a prominently staged work; the Toledo altarpiece and the contemporaneous *Caprichos* participate in an innovative form of emotive artistic expression that Goya was instrumental in developing during the 1790s. Perhaps the least original-seeming work in Goya’s oeuvre, *Saints Justa*

⁸ Janis Tomlinson, *Francisco Goya: The Tapestry Cartoons and Early Career at the Court of Madrid* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 11.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 11-12.

¹⁰ Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, *Diplomatario*, ed. Angel Canellas López (Zaragoza: Librería General, 1981), no. 30, 222.

and Rufina nonetheless inspired Ceán Bermúdez to suggest for Goya the title “Original Painter.”¹¹ In contrast, one finds a very modern notion of invention and originality fulfilled in Goya’s last religious works, *The Last Communion of Saint Joseph of Calasanz* and *Christ on the Mount of Olives*. By 1819 Goya was working in relative isolation from his contemporaries and showed little concern for the predominant aesthetics. During this moment of separation Goya produced artworks that are dark and personal expressions. Considering Goya’s incessant desire to innovate—and the expectations of the artistic community as to how he would do so—provides a helpful lens through which to view each of the paintings discussed below.

I judge Joan Sureda and Anna Pou to be right in stating that “Goya’s paintings do not lend themselves to limits of genre: there is only one humanity . . . All his work bears the mark of the same atmosphere, the same way of thinking and feeling.”¹² Accordingly, this thesis considers Goya’s religious paintings in dialogue with his secular works, hoping to raise the esteem of the former to a level already enjoyed by the latter. The argument here is not one of difference but comparability. The religious genre serves as an exemplary case study to illustrate Goya’s complexity as an artist, and it is one that has yet to be fully acknowledged. By demonstrating the similarity in conception that exists between Goya’s religious and non-religious works, and by asserting the equivalent value of these two traditional groupings, I aim to deconstruct the religious genre itself as it pertains to Goya. An earthly form of spiritualism manifests throughout his work, and it is

¹¹ Juan Augustín Ceán Bermúdez, *Análisis de un cuadro que ha pintado D. Francisco para la catedral de Sevilla*, trans. in Glendinning, *Goya and His Critics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 290.

¹² Joan Sureda and Anna Pou, *Los Mundos de Goya, 1746-1828* (Madrid: Lunwerg Editores, 2008), 342-3.

this unique duality of spiritualism and humanity, revealed in both secular and religious contexts, to which I hope to draw appropriate scholarly attention.

CHAPTER II

GOYA AND THE ACADEMY: *SAINT BERNARDINO PREACHING* AND *CRUCIFIED*

CHRIST

Recently, Valeriano Bozal Fernández expressed a conviction that Goya's early and religious work is inferior to what would come after it:

Goya executed many religious paintings in his youth, as was common for painters of the time. Once in Madrid, he attempted to gain prestige with a religious work, *Saint Bernardino of Siena* (1782-3, Madrid, San Francisco el Grande), that he presented in a competition to decorate the church, where it remains. Later, seeking membership, he presented a *Crucifixion* (1780, Madrid, Prado) to the Academy of San Fernando. But none of these works, though distinguished from the common product of Spanish painters at the time, suggest to us what would come to be Goya.¹³

Despite the critical and public success Goya enjoyed with *Saint Bernardino Preaching* and the academic approval he earned for *Crucified Christ*, Bozal sees an incongruity between these and his later works—for neither suggests to us what would become “Goya.” Bozal's statement implies a qualitative judgment—for if they do not manifest an essential quality of Goya-ness, the early religious commissions must necessarily be inferior. The best of Goya's religious works, Bozal goes on to state, are the less religious ones.¹⁴ If one conceives of Goya only as an artist who developed into a Spanish Romantic and highly expressive painter, then early points along that development will inevitably remain unexplored and undervalued. When carefully considered, however, the early religious paintings demonstrate a characteristic artistic achievement on Goya's part.

¹³ Valeriano Bozal Fernández, *Pinturas negras de Goya* (Madrid: Antonio Machado Libros, 2009), 36.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 37.

Goya's altarpiece depicting *Saint Bernardino Preaching* [Fig. 1] provides opportunity to discuss the artist's relationship to the Royal Academy and contemporary Spanish aesthetics, in which his baroque predecessors and the Neoclassicist Anton Raphael Mengs were especially significant. Drawing from an artistic treatise by theorist Juan Interián de Ayala, *The Erudite Christian Painter* (1730), this chapter assesses the style and composition of Goya's religious painting from the years surrounding the *Saint Bernardino* commission (1780-4), investigating his orthodoxy and idiosyncrasies. In this period Goya was entwined in a complex network of aesthetic connections: one notes in *Saint Bernardino* evidence of pervading European taste for classicizing figures and compositions; of a burgeoning trend toward historically accurate, earthbound scenes; of a traditionally Spanish conflation of the religious and historical genres; of definitive influences and Goya's departure from tradition. In this sense *Saint Bernardino Preaching* holds a critical place in the development of Goya's artistic identity. Where his academy entry, *Crucified Christ* (1780), represents an accommodation of past tradition and prevailing



Figure 1: Francisco de Goya y Lucientes, *Saint Bernardino Preaching*, oil on canvas, 1782-3. 189 x 118 in. (480 x 300 cm). Madrid, San Francisco el Grande.

aesthetics, *Saint Bernardino Preaching* demonstrates an assertion of the artist's own early aesthetic.

1. Early Years in Religious Painting

During his teenage years Goya began working professionally at a local church in Fuendetodos, for which he painted a reliquary door with the *Apparition of the Virgin of the Pillar* (ca. 1768). Throughout the 1770s Goya's commissions were largely clerical—in Spain these were the most available and best suited for aspiring young artists—making this decade his most prolific for the production of religious images. In this way Goya followed a common path to professional artistic advancement in Spain. Despite later conceptions of Goya as artist-genius, he remained undistinguished in this regard during the early years, enduring numerous failures and setbacks before attaining prominence. Goya was twenty-eight at the time he was called to Madrid, thirty-four when he established himself as an academician, and forty before he was steadily employed at the royal court. In the period preceding that appointment, he pursued religious commissions, as did the majority of his contemporaries.¹⁵

A young artist who offered a cost-effective option for the clergy, Goya earned two commissions in Saragossa from 1772-4 that would have great implications for his professional advancement. The first of these was for a fresco at El Pilar Cathedral, in which the artist would depict *The Adoration of the Name of God* (1772) [Fig. 2].¹⁶ When

¹⁵ During the years he was establishing himself, Goya also painted a significant amount of tapestry cartoons (ca. 1775-80) and court portraits (ca. 1780s) that were integral parts of his professional success.

¹⁶ Goya's low prices were a deciding factor in his earning the commission: Goya charged 15,000 *reales*, which compared quite favorably to the asking price of the more established Antonio González Velázquez—25,000. Morales y Marín, *Pintor Religioso*, 60.

completed the work was favorably received, and it served to place Goya promptly among the preeminent religious painters in Spain.¹⁷ Two years later he was commissioned for a fresco series of the Holy Family that would adorn the walls of the Charterhouse at Aula Dei (1774), a monastery in Saragossa. The scenes there materialize in a cool, Neoclassical style redolent of the Italian artists Goya studied on his voyage to Rome in 1770-1.¹⁸

Goya's adeptness with the international, classically inspired style of the Grand Manner, evident in these two successful commissions,

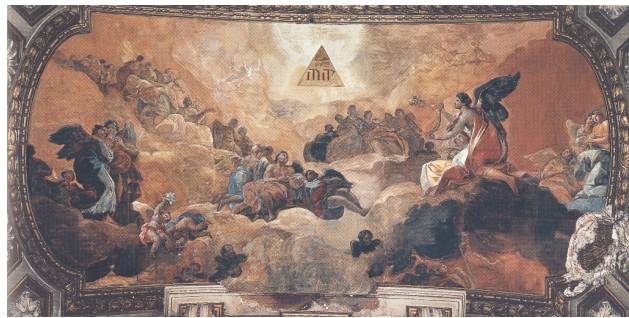


Figure 2: Goya, *The Adoration of the Name of God*, fresco, 1772. Saragossa, El Pilar.

established his reputation. Probably through the introduction of his brother-in-law Bayeu, Goya drew

attention from Mengs and the court in Madrid. Goya moved from Saragossa to Madrid in January of 1775 and began work at the Royal Tapestry Factory soon after his arrival.

Goya's first substantial successes aside from the tapestry designs came between 1780-4, an essential moment in the artist's early, Mengsian aesthetic. On May 5, 1780 Goya submitted *Crucified Christ* [Fig. 3] for entry into the Royal Academy, whose members unanimously welcomed Goya two days later.

¹⁷ Sureda and Pou, *Los Mundos de Goya*, 331.

¹⁸ Goya traveled to Italy at his own expense in order to advance his career. While there, he copied works by the Old Masters held in the Vatican collection in what is termed the *Italian Notebook*. See Joan Sureda, *Goya and Italy* (Zaragoza: Fundación Goya en Aragón, 2008; exhibition catalogue).

2. *Crucified Christ*

Goya's painting of the *Crucified Christ*, in which the artist explores the idealized male form in a supernatural setting, relies heavily on artistic convention for its style and composition. The subject qualified the piece as history painting, then the most respected genre within the academy. Not only the genre but the specific subject and its stylistic execution appear carefully calculated choices on Goya's part. The Spanish Golden Age painters Diego Velázquez (1559-1660) and Francisco Zurbarán (1598-1664) both painted notable Crucifixion scenes, from which Goya visibly draws his chiaroscuro and otherworldly background.¹⁹

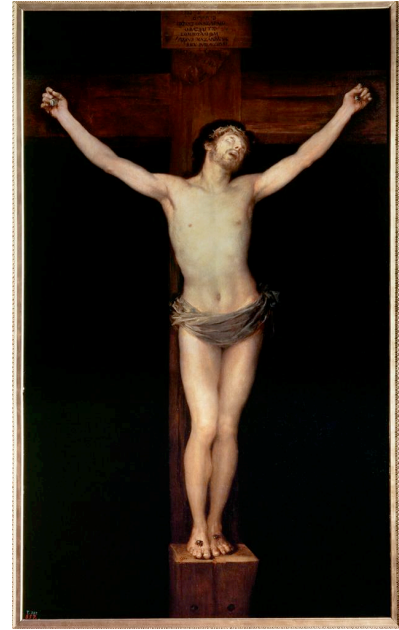


Figure 3: Goya, *Crucified Christ*, oil on canvas, 1780. 100 x 61 in. (255 x 154 cm). Madrid, Museo del Prado.

Also influential in Goya's style was the Bohemian-born painter and theorist Anton Raphael Mengs (1728-1779), who definitively marked Spanish aesthetics during the 1780s (Goya's compatriot Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos referred to his writings as "the catechism of good taste").²⁰ Mengs had been called to the court of Charles III in 1761 to oversee decoration of the new Royal Palace, and his influence grew thereafter. Mengs

¹⁹ One specific compositional detail evidences Goya's interaction with, and adherence to, the Spanish pictorial tradition. Beneath the hanging Christ he includes a foot pedestal into which two nails are driven. As Benito Navarrete Prieto has convincingly shown, this motif originated in the prints of Albrecht Dürer and was re-instituted with vigor by Francisco Pacheco in the seventeenth century. Pacheco's painting of the *Crucifixion* (1614) and his treatise *Arte de la Pintura* (1649) served as stimuli, encouraging artists to follow Dürer's example—which Velázquez, and later Goya, would do. Benito Navarrete Prieto, "Durerero y los cuatro clavos," *Boletín Museo del Prado* 16 no. 34 (1995): 7-10.

²⁰ Sureda and Pou, *Los Mundos de Goya*, 336. See also Andrew Schulz, "The Expressive Body in Goya's *Saint Francis Borgia at the Deathbed of an Impenitent*," *Art Bulletin* vol. 80 no. 4 (1998): 671.

advocated Neoclassicism, professing that the only path to artistic greatness was imitation of the Greeks, in whose art one finds a perfection of sensibilities.²¹ Neoclassical artists faced challenges imitative and imaginative: their role was to construct an ideal “consisting of a judicious choice of the parts dispersed in nature; and by the combination of this choice to form a subject all perfect, superior to nature itself.”²² Art historian Johann Joachim Winckelmann, with whom Mengs came into contact while both were in Rome, further theorized the goals of Neoclassicism in his highly influential *Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture* (1775). Winckelmann claimed that the distinctive quality of Greek art that made it, and not any other form, the example *par excellence* of figural idealism was its “noble simplicity and quiet grandeur.” Artists, he argued, fell into error when depicting temporary emotions, passions, or violence, for “The more tranquil the state of the body the more capable it is of portraying the true character of the soul.”²³

Mengsian Neoclassicism embraced the beautiful, ideal, and timeless over and against the emotive and expressive. Goya demonstrates clear indebtedness to that sensibility in *Crucified Christ*.²⁴ Placing Mengs’s *Crucifixion* [Fig. 4] next to Goya’s, one notes several conventional similarities: the highly idealized form with little evidence of physical suffering, the tilt of the head and slight parting of the lips, the subtle

²¹ Anton Raphael Mengs, *The Works of Anthony Raphael Mengs First painter to his Catholic Majesty Charles III. Translated from the Italian. Published by the Chevr. Don Joseph Nicholas D’Azara Spanish Minister at Rome*, from *Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*, vol. 1 (London: 1796): 37.

²² *Ibid.*, 49.

²³ Johann Joachim Winckelmann, “Reflections on the Imitation of Greek Works in Painting and Sculpture,” in *The Art of Art History*, ed. Donald Preziosi (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 30.

²⁴ Schulz, “Expressive Body,” 666-686.

contrapposto stance and curve at the torso. Inasmuch as Mengs represented the idealized style and Velázquez the expressive, Andrew Schulz posited that by “aligning himself with Mengs rather than Velázquez, Goya was attempting to gain admission into the academy by appealing to the current tastes of its members and advisers,” a conception corroborated elsewhere by Janis Tomlinson.²⁵ This evidence suggests that *Crucified Christ* represents an impersonal execution on the artist’s part; though painted of his own volition and invention, Goya allowed the picture’s content and conventions to be dictated by his awareness of the intended audience.²⁶

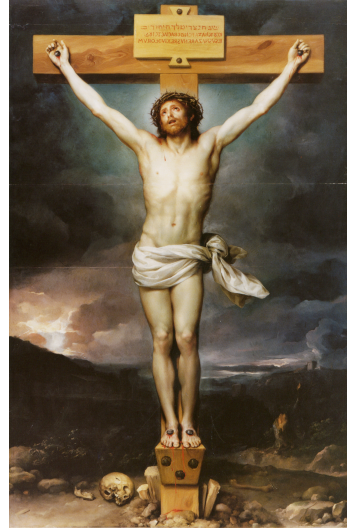


Figure 4: Anton Raphael Mengs, *Crucifixion*, oil on wood, c. 1765-8. Aranjuez, Royal Palace.

3. Developing Individualism in *Saint Bernadino Preaching*

That Goya spent two years painting *Saint Bernadino Preaching* for the convent church of San Francisco el Grande suggests a dedication and impressive effort on the

²⁵ Schulz, “Expressive Body,” 673. Tomlinson, *Francisco Goya y Lucientes, 1746-1828* (New York: Phaidon Press, 1994), 51.

²⁶ Despite the fact of Goya’s pandering, or perhaps because of it, seemingly no audience outside of the painting’s first has been receptive to the piece. Aureliano Beruete, a nineteenth-century Spanish critic, painter, and collector, harped that the painting seemed insincere, vulgar, and improper, adding that it “undoubtedly lacks religious spirit and inspiration.” In 1926 German critic Julius Meier-Graefe called it “*fideo relleno*” (“noodle filling”). Recently, Robert Hughes dubbed it “without much doubt the worst painting he ever did”; a “soapy piece of *bondieuserie*.” Morales y Marín, *Pintor Religioso*, 134, 136. Robert Hughes, *Goya* (New York: Knopf, 2003), 99.

project.²⁷ The artist held evident enthusiasm for this particular commission, as he revealed in his private correspondence. Goya mentions *Saint Bernardino Preaching* in six separate letters—the most documented notations regarding any single artwork he produced. On October 13, 1784, the artist wrote to his friend Martín Zapater saying that the revelation of his painting was “an event eagerly awaited by the professors and connoisseurs of the Arts,” and on October 25 Goya assured his friend that the piece would “certainly be something big.”²⁸ Convinced that a positive response was imminent, Goya greatly anticipated the reviews of art critics and the general public, which he finally related in a letter on December 11, 1784: “It is certain that I have succeeded in the opinion of the connoisseurs and the public with the painting of San Francisco, and everyone is for me without any doubt, but as of now I do not know what will result from it.”²⁹ Once again, on January 14, 1785, he boasted, “I could not have desired more than what has come from this San Francisco competition.”³⁰

Two preparatory sketches survive that allow glimpses into Goya’s creative process [Figs. 5,6]. The basic composition remains the same throughout, yet several perceptible adjustments betray careful thought in regard to iconography. The object that Bernardino holds in his outstretched left hand, unidentifiable in the first sketch, takes form in the second as a tablet bearing the initials of Christ and appears in the final altarpiece as a crucifix. Goya’s self-portrait enters in the second sketch at the far right,

²⁷ Pierre Gassier and Juliet Wilson-Bareau, *Goya: His Life and Work, with a Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings, Drawings, and Etchings* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1971), 55.

²⁸ *Diplomatario* no. 84, 256.

²⁹ *Diplomatario* no. 88, 258-9.

³⁰ *Diplomatario* no. 89, 259.

contributing an authorial presence, both literally and figuratively.³¹ Also in the second sketch, Goya paints his crowd of witnesses receding to the left, rather than the right, making their forms meld with the trees and creating a unified vertical element. While in the first version one finds the king seated with legs crossed, in the second Goya introduces the image of the kneeling supplicant with arms widespread—a seminal trope in his iconographic lexicon. Though a slight formal change, this alteration effectively establishes the piety of temporal leadership as a secondary theme to spiritual leadership.³² The artist’s insertion of the supplicant figure here and elsewhere evidences a calculated approach to evoking a specific intellectual or visceral response.³³

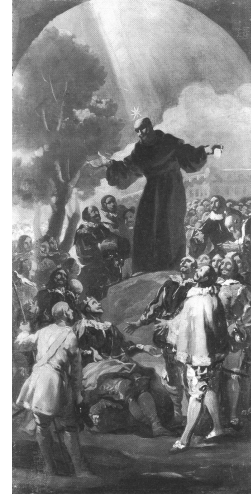


Figure 5: Goya, *Saint Bernardino of Siena Preaching before King Alfonso of Aragon*, oil on canvas, 1781 (first sketch). Private Collection.

Goya explains the composition of his painting in a letter dated September 22, 1781 and addressed to the Count of Floridablanca, an invaluable patron who was partially responsible for securing him the commission.

³¹ John Ciofalo connects Goya’s inserting himself into the composition with his substitution of King Alfonso V of Aragon for King Renato of Sicily. At some point between Goya’s letter to Floridablanca (September 22, 1781) and the unveiling of the altarpiece (between October 25 and November 3, 1784), Goya re-named the figure. Ciofalo argues that this change may reflect Goya’s desire to present himself as a philosophical painter—a narrator of his own historical record. Alternatively, Goya’s re-identification of King Alfonso may have simply enabled the artist to insert himself as well. Neither were physically present to hear Bernardino preach, but artistic and historical precedents condoned their places in the painting. John Ciofalo, *The Self-Portraits of Francisco Goya* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 18-19.

³² Janis Tomlinson, *Goya in the Twilight of Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 37.

³³ Chapter V will explore the significance of this motif in greater depth.

I have prepared a small painting to scale of the measurements given to me (as to the others) of the Miracle witnessed on the occasion of the Saint preaching in a wide open space immediately outside the city of Aquilina (since the streets and squares of the city offered insufficient space), in the presence of King Renato of Sicily and a great concourse of people, at the moment that, when the Saint was extolling the Coronation of the Queen of the Angels, there was seen to the great amazement of the gathering the most resplendent star descend from Heaven and come to rest above the Saint's head, bathing him in a Divine Radiance. It is a subject that offers sufficient scope to enrich the composition, in spite of the limits of the narrow proportions of the painting, for Your Excellency's enlightened understanding will appreciate that since a pyramidal construction is demanded and a serpentine arrangement of the foreground and background for the best decorative effect it is necessary to lose to some extent the depiction of the spacious setting of the scene, which I leave suggested . . .³⁴

Goya notes that constrictions of space within the chapel in San Francisco el Grande accounted for the painting's tall and narrow appearance and dictated the organization of its figures.

In the painting Bernardino perches on a rock, the better to project his message, wielding a crucifix in his left hand and offering an open right palm in a gentle gesture of provocation.

A mass of witnesses surrounds him, the king and his cortège in the foreground, Goya himself (at lower right) and the Spanish

common folk in the background. Though it may also be seen as an assertion of artistic presence, Goya's embedded self-portrait follows an established convention that includes as examples Dürer's *Martyrdom of Ten Thousand* (1508),

Botticelli's *Adoration of the Magi* (1470-5), and closer to

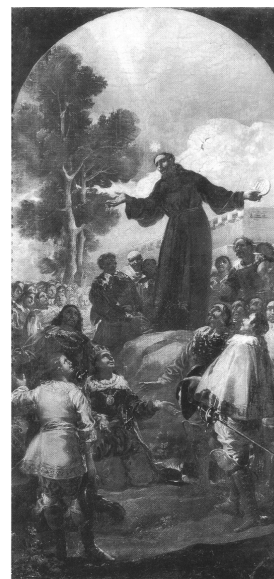


Figure 6: Goya, *Saint Bernardino of Siena Preaching before King Alfonso of Aragon*, oil on canvas, 1781 (second sketch). Private Collection.

³⁴ *Diplomatario* no. 52, 238.

Goya, Mengs's *Adoration of the Shepherds* (ca. 1770).³⁵ On the left Bernardino's congregants recede into the trees that provide a strong second vertical element while signaling the arcadian setting. Gazes of adoration throughout the scene direct the viewer's eye to the central figure of Bernardino.

In the final version Goya has decidedly de-emphasized the miraculous. In the rural landscape setting and costumed figures, the artist sought to re-create the historical moment of Bernardino's preaching, thus lending the piece an earthly and naturalistic quality. The cluttered staffage serves to ground the scene in time and physical space, exemplifying a tradition of history-*cum*-religious painting unique to Spain.³⁶ In the appearance of the king's entourage and the motif of the crowd, parallels exist between Goya's altarpiece and Velázquez's paintings for the Buen Retiro Palace—the most prominent example being *Surrender of Breda* (1634-5).³⁷ That Goya adopted similar conventions suggests his desire to have his work seen in a similar light. As we will see, the earthbound quality of Goya's work proved a defining characteristic in his success relative to his competitors.

Goya's compositions were carefully planned and meticulously executed, and his painting of Bernardino manifests that studied approach. Goya depicts the saint in a posture fitting to the historic Bernardino, who preached zealous messages that drew

³⁵ Ciofalo, *Self-Portraits*, 20.

³⁶ Eighteenth-century Spanish painters drew from a vocabulary of imagery that was strictly delimited by the Church and its Inquisition. Whereas other European artists at the time were free to employ themes of classical mythology and the female nude, Spanish painters were held to a conservative moral code. In this context religious painting emerged as the academic genre. It provided similar opportunities to paint visible, large-scale, multi-figural works without offending the sensibilities of the Inquisition. On the role of the Inquisition, see Richard Herr, *The Eighteenth-Century Revolution in Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), 12, and Sureda and Pou, *Los Mundos de Goya*, 341.

³⁷ Tomlinson, *Twilight of Enlightenment*, 12, 37.

massive crowds to churches and city squares throughout Europe. Scholar of religious iconography Robert Kiely records that

Bernardino was not a sedate or calm speaker. He gesticulated and pointed; he made oinking, clucking, and baaing sounds in imitation of beasts and members of the congregation. He frequently expressed outrage and shock with ‘Uuuh, uuh, uuh’ or ‘Oime, oime, oime.’³⁸

Goya pictures Bernardino actively preaching the gospel, gesturing from his high place, lips parted for exhortation. Bernardino carried with him, in every city he preached, a large banner bearing the initials of Jesus in the form of a sunburst monogram; this symbol appears in Goya’s second sketch on the tablet in Bernardino’s hand. Artistic representations of the saint nearly always include the monogram—for example Vecchietta’s *Saint Bernardino da Siena with Monogram* (ca. 1450), Sano di Pietro’s *Saint Bernardino da Siena Preaching the Campo in 1427* (1445), and Jacopo Bellini’s *Saints Anthony Abbot and Bernadino da Siena* (1456-60).

Goya may have viewed El Greco’s *San Bernardino* (1603) [Fig. 7] in his extensive preparation for the San Francisco el Grande commission.³⁹ El Greco’s painting broke with previous pictorial tradition in depicting the saint as youthful, strong, gentle, and thoughtful. That sensibility may intentionally reflect the asceticism and introspection associated with Spain’s Franciscan order, who commissioned the piece.⁴⁰ If Goya sought a precedent for his main figure, El Greco’s *San Bernardino* likely would have been his

³⁸ Robert Kiely, *Blessed and Beautiful: Picturing the Saints* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 290.

³⁹ El Greco’s painting remained the property of the Franciscan school of Saint Bernardino until it was acquired by the Prado in 1902. Chapter III will explore Goya’s interaction with El Greco’s work in greater depth.

⁴⁰ Kiely, *Blessed and Beautiful*, 310.

example. However, few similarities exist between the two works apart from the Franciscan robes that clothe the main figure, and Goya has discarded all of El Greco's symbolic imagery. In this way Goya's *Saint Bernardino Preaching* may be seen to develop an innovative naturalistic approach.

4. Spanish Academic Art in the 1780s

Goya's commission was one of seven, given to the most renowned Spanish painters of the late-eighteenth century, meant to decorate seven side altars in San Francisco el Grande as part of a series of extensive renovations. *Saint Bernardino Preaching* would be juxtaposed and compete with religious scenes by Goya's highly esteemed contemporaries, among them his brother-in-law Francisco Bayeu y Subias (1734-1795), Antonio González Velázquez (1729-1793), and Mariano Salvador Maella (1739-1819). Placing Goya's painting in this artistic context brings forth its conventional and unique qualities, demonstrating the artist's conflicted relationship to the Spanish painting tradition. The other six commissions for the church do not reflect a single unified aesthetic—to which one could read Goya as responding positively or adversely—but a mélange of forms, palettes, and artistic formulae derived from an eclectic national history in painting. Nonetheless, Goya's altarpiece stands apart.

Perhaps the secondary achievement of the group, after *Saint Bernardino Preaching*, was Maella's *Immaculate Conception* [Fig. 8]. In contradistinction to Goya's



Figure 7: El Greco, *San Bernardino*, oil on canvas, 1603. Madrid, Museo del Prado.

work, Maella's painting exhibits a baroque composition rendered in a high-key palette of light blues and pinks, complemented by a celestial gold. Also in its effusively sentimental tone and blatantly supernatural subject matter Maella's piece forms a striking contrast to *Saint Bernardino*. Historical reception has privileged Goya over Maella in the general and particular. In the case of the San Francisco el Grande commissions, Tomlinson has attributed the cold response toward the works by Maella, Bayeu, and González Velázquez to several factors. In terms of subject matter, contemporary critics privileged Goya's earthbound scene to the more traditional imagery employed by his peers. Goya also prevailed in conception, for the others would "fail to acknowledge a movement toward greater historical accuracy in religious painting, promoted in Spain by Interián de Ayala's treatise *The Christian and Erudite Painter*."⁴¹

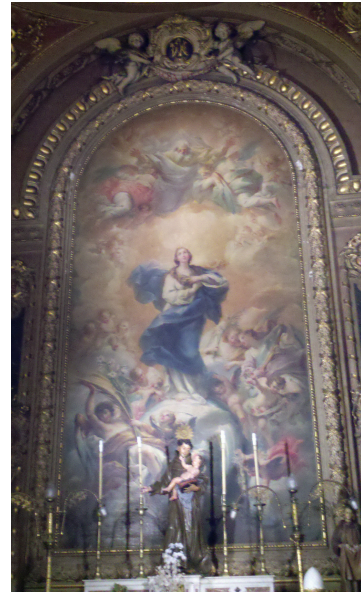


Figure 8: Mariano Salvador Maella, *Immaculate Conception*, oil on canvas, ca. 1782. Madrid, San Francisco el Grande.

The text to which Tomlinson refers was the product of Spanish theologian, philosopher, and theorist Juan Interián de Ayala (1656-1730). Ayala achieved wide recognition for this, published in Latin the year of his death. It was re-published in a full Spanish translation in 1782, the same year Goya began painting *Saint Bernardino Preaching*. The contemporaneity of text and painting gives reason to address Goya's work through this lens. Further, it was Floridablanca, first minister to the king and an

⁴¹ Tomlinson, *Twilight of Enlightenment*, 34.

important patron of Goya's, who ordered that Ayala's work be translated into Spanish, hoping to broaden readership and disseminate ideals of "correctness" in religious painting.⁴² Thus, Goya may well have seen and read the text during the execution of his commission for San Francisco el Grande. Ayala's treatise reflects the most significant contemporary debates over artistic representations of sacred themes, and one may reasonably suspect Goya's awareness of the arguments expressed within the treatise, if not of the text itself.

A reflection of Spanish Counter-Reformation theology and iconography, *The Erudite Christian Painter* represents a broader movement toward greater historical accuracy in religious painting. In this sense it opposed the prominent Neoclassicism, espousing realistic representations over idealizing ones.⁴³ *Pintor cristiano* describes Bernardino as a "brilliant light of seraphic faith," and as one with a "beautiful and graceful face," incorruptible so that God's purity and innocence might forever manifest itself in his features.⁴⁴ One may certainly speak of Goya's *Saint Bernardino* as a "light of the faith," surrounded as he is by a golden glow. Ayala further recommended that the saint, though he was not a medical doctor, be shown healing the spiritually sick with his pious books and erudite sermons.⁴⁵ In Goya's piece, Bernardino acts as one imparting God's wisdom for the benefits of those attendant at his feet. Goya defies another stipulation of Ayala's that artists depict Bernardino with three miters lying at his feet,

⁴² Xavier Bray, "Interián de Ayala, Juan," in *Oxford Companion to Western Art*, ed. Hugh Brigstocke (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 362.

⁴³ Tomlinson, *Twilight of Enlightenment*, 34.

⁴⁴ Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. Juan Interián de Ayala, *El pintor cristiano y erudito* (Barcelona: Impr. de la viuda e hijos de J. Subirana, 1883), III:6.VII.4.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

meant to symbolize the three bishoprics—Siena, Ferrara, and Urbino—that he denied himself.⁴⁶

Goya's departure from the conventional prescriptions in *Pintor cristiano* should not be over-emphasized because there are simultaneously many Spanish painting traditions that he does follow. *Saint Bernardino Preaching* was both conceptually unique amid the commissions for San Francisco el Grande and deeply steeped in Spanish tradition. Further, the fact that Goya's work during this period aligned with the conceptual underpinnings of Ayala's text was central to his professional advancement. Indeed, scholarship has credited the success of Goya's painting relative to the six others in San Francisco el Grande to its worldliness.⁴⁷ If Goya's correspondence is an accurate indication, the result of his efforts satisfied courtly taste under Charles III and also pleased the public.

Goya's religious paintings from this early moment show a modicum of personal expression that is largely subjugated to artistic conventions and pragmatic concerns. In his religious art and elsewhere one must be wary of essentialist claims for Goya's expressivity that ignore or understate other attributes. Nigel Glendinning presented a nuanced view that correlates to the artist's religious painting:

In Goya's youth the basic skills of drawing and rules of artistic decorum took precedence over personal style and approach. Goya would frequently have to compromise his bent towards originality in order to satisfy the exactingly academic taste of many of his contemporaries. There will be evidence to show

⁴⁶ El Greco's *San Bernardino* [Fig. 7] follows this stipulation, suggesting that it was not merely conceptual but actually employed in artistic practice.

⁴⁷ Tomlinson, *Twilight of Enlightenment*, 33-4.

that his mastery of traditional techniques and conventions was respected in the early stages of his career, as much as his ability to break the rules later.⁴⁸

The distinction bears repeating: Goya's accomplishment lies not only in trumpeting emotive expression as a leading figure of Romanticism, but in technical skill, application of convention, and his discernment as to when these were necessary. In *Crucified Christ* and *Saint Bernardino Preaching*, the artist's mastery (of which Glendinning speaks) clearly won Goya supporters in the Royal Academy of San Fernando and in the court of Charles III. The former painting earned Goya acceptance into the academy for its careful drawing, subtlety of handling, and capability with idealized form, while the latter incorporated Mengsian structure into a framework of Spanish religio-historical painting; both found highly receptive audiences.

⁴⁸ Nigel Glendinning, *Goya and His Critics*, 31.

CHAPTER III

INTEGRATION AND INNOVATION WITH *THE TAKING OF CHRIST*

With its dramatic intensity, Goya's *Taking of Christ* (1798) asserts its singularity in style and composition while simultaneously participating in discourses of Passion iconography and Spanish aesthetics [Figs. 9, 10]. Two frontal figures frame the composition: a Pharisee on the left, and a Roman soldier on the right. On the horizontal, Goya's painting bears a careful symmetry, the figures clustering around Christ forming a semi-circle that frames his serene, luminous visage. On the vertical, both the lower and upper third of the composition are remarkably without incident. Goya establishes a secondary ground-line with the strong horizontal provided by the arm, hand, and finger of the pointing figure at the left, and continued in the forearm and belt of the soldier across from him. The artist concentrates visual interest directly above this ground-line, in the middle third of the composition. Goya's Christ figure



Figure 9: Goya, *The Taking of Christ*, oil on canvas, 1798. 118 x 79 in. (300 x 200 cm). Toledo, Cathedral sacristy.



Figure 10: Detail of *The Taking of Christ*.

occupies a prominent space at the convergence of diagonals formed by the soldier's halberd and the robes of the religious leader.

Relatively little scholarship exists on Goya's *Taking of Christ*, which belies its accomplishment in stylistic expressivity and shrewd awareness of site. Painted for Toledo Cathedral, the commission was high profile. The archbishop of Toledo was head of the Spanish church, and the city had long served as a locus of Catholicism in Spain. Goya's finished painting would face careful criticism from the Cathedral chapter, who would assess it on the basis of propriety and quality. Even under such pressures Goya produced a daring exposition of pathos that cites tradition but also innovates in significant ways.

This chapter considers Goya's painting in relation to the picture it was commissioned to accompany, El Greco's *Disrobing of Christ* (ca. 1577-9). Goya's referencing of, reaction to, and competition with the Greco painting significantly determined stylistic and conceptual elements in his own work. Additionally, Goya's painting demonstrates his development of the imagery of the "monstrous."⁴⁹ Strong parallels exist between the *Taking of Christ* and Goya's contemporaneous print series, *Los Caprichos*, in that the artist demonstrates in both works a fascination with the affective potential of physiognomy and pathognomy. Finally, the work of painter Mariano Salvador Maella provides an instructive comparison with Goya's and signals the broader direction of Spanish painting in the 1790s. Because few names from that period are known to anyone other than specialists, the temptation exists to consider Goya as a lone genius and, it follows, to essentialize this commission/painting as a moment in his

⁴⁹ Paul Ilie uses the term "monstrous" to describe Goya's art during the 1790s, pointing to its inherent psychological tension. Paul Ilie, "Goya's Teratology and the Critique of Reason," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 18 (1984): 35-56.

development of expressive techniques. Instead, this chapter seeks to enable new levels of understanding by providing a contextualized perspective from which to view his work. Notwithstanding frequent analyses in scholarship that isolate him from his artistic milieu, Goya's interaction with his peer group proved highly significant for his development in the 1780s and 1790s. During the latter decade Goya's art remains in dialogue with that of his peers, but it also reveals a seed of the dark, psychologically intense aesthetic by which he ultimately distanced himself from them.

1. Goya in the 1790s

The 1790s were tumultuous for Goya, who lost his hearing as a result of a serious illness that plagued him from late 1792 until March of 1793. From this incident arose the artist's first uncommissioned works, a series of fourteen cabinet paintings on tinplate created during his convalescence.⁵⁰ Unbound by the constraints of patronage, Goya depicted in the tinplates innovative and disparate subjects: the stages of a bullfight, castaways on a rock, and most memorably, an insane asylum in *Yard with Lunatics* (1794) [Fig. 11]. Not only in subject matter but in style and conception the cabinet paintings mark a turning point. They announce the arrival of a new expressiveness in Goya's art, first suggested in the fantastical *Saint Francis Borgia at the Deathbed of an Impenitent* (1788), and to be developed further in the highly affective *Taking of Christ*. The same sensibility also appears in public, secular works like *Third of May, 1808* (1814), in late religious works like *The Last Communion of Saint Joseph of Calasanz* (1819), and in the

⁵⁰ Gassier and Wilson-Bareau, *Life and Work*, cats. 317-330.

enigmatic Black Paintings. The onset of Goya's deafness seems to have marked his artistic output significantly. Many of his paintings thereafter contain an overt emotionalism perhaps intended to transcend the communication gap he experienced in the world. Further, the years directly following Goya's illness saw the arrival in his art of what might be termed a sonorous quality, of which *The Taking of Christ*—with its several screaming witnesses—provides a striking example.

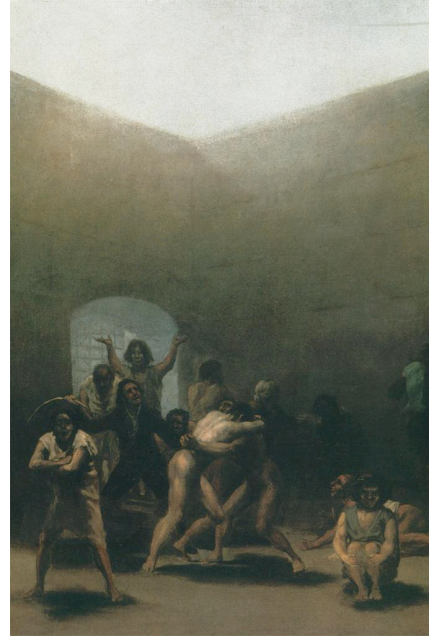


Figure 11: Goya, *Yard with Lunatics*, oil on tinplate, 1794. Dallas, Meadows Museum.

Despite his poor health, Goya was productive during the second half of the 1790s, painting numerous court portraits and garnering several important religious commissions: an altarpiece for Santa Cueva in Cadiz (ca. 1796-7), a sacristy painting for Toledo Cathedral (1798), and frescoes for the church of San Antonio de la Florida (1798). The painterly style Goya exhibits in the latter work provides an especially meaningful comparison with *Taking of Christ*, crystallizing a significant moment in his development. Goya enjoyed relative freedom from critical censure with this commission: because San Antonio de la Florida was royal property and free from the parish system, no provincial chapter would dictate style or iconography.⁵¹ Goya used the opportunity to display his virtuosic capacity with the brush, evident in the central dome depicting the *Miracle of Saint Anthony of Padua* [Fig. 12], but even more so

⁵¹ Gassier and Wilson-Bareau, *Life and Work*, 140.



Figure 12: Goya, *Miracle of Saint Anthony of Padua*, fresco, 1798. Madrid, San Antonio de la Florida.



Figure 13: Detail of an arch from San Antonio de la Florida.

in the exuberantly painted angels and cherubim that adorn the church's pendentives and archways [Fig. 13]. As in the Toledo painting, these frescoes mingle the earthly and the

fantastic: amid a scene of miraculous resurrection Goya paints a crowd of commoners numbering about fifty; his decorative angels are clearly modeled after beautiful young women. This is consistent with the tactic he developed, in the late 1790s, of imbuing an earthly scene with a supernatural tone (and vice versa), an approach by which he differentiated himself from his Spanish contemporaries.

During these same years Goya was drawing and etching his masterpiece of satire and imagination, the series of eighty engravings known as *Los Caprichos* (ca. 1797-9). As Andrew Schulz has explored in depth, this series presents a dramatic rethinking of traditional, Neoclassical conceptions of the heroic body—subject in Goya's prints to deformations of caricature and physiognomical experimentation.⁵² Most interesting for this discussion, Goya's *Caprichos* and his *Taking of Christ* evidence the artist's ability to effectively apply figural expression in secular and religious cases, respectively. For instance, in *Tragala Perro* (*Swallow that, dog*) [Fig. 14] Goya pictures a group of

⁵² Andrew Schulz, *Goya's Caprichos: Aesthetics, Perception, and the Body* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

malicious priests threatening their victim with a massive enema. In this manifestation physiognomical extremes elicit disgust, whereas in the contemporaneous *Taking of Christ* they contribute to a heavy sense of pathos.

Evidence demonstrates that Goya continued to engage with his peers throughout the 1790s, seeking acceptance from the art academy and hoping to benefit from courtly patronage—even as he began to experiment with uncommissioned works and innovative, expressive forms. The artist’s often cited letter to Bernardo de Iriarte, written on January 4, 1794, speaks of his cabinet paintings

both as exercises of the imagination and as a potentially profitable enterprise. Goya insists in the same letter that the cabinet paintings be presented to the Royal Academy for approval. He similarly submitted the Toledo painting to the academy before its installation. Goya’s efforts to maintain a working relationship with the academy reflect his pragmatism and remind us of the difficulty artists then faced in finding professional success outside of orthodox aesthetics.

2. The Composition of *The Taking of Christ*

In *The Taking of Christ* Goya renders complexities of emotion and character with unflinching probity and highly affective results. Specifically, the two foreground figures attest to Goya’s keen psychological insight. The Pharisee at the left fixes a steady gaze on

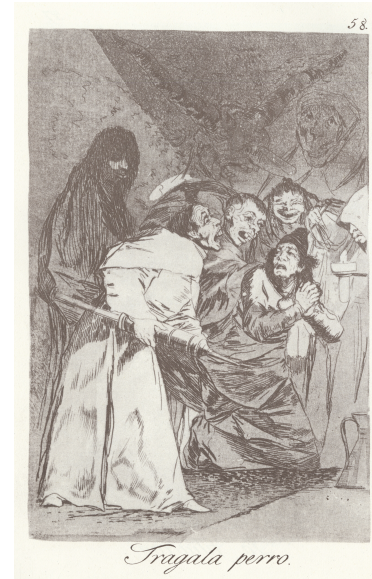


Figure 14: Goya, *Tragala perro* (*Swallow that, dog*), plate 58 of *Los Caprichos*, aquatint, 1799.

the centurion at the right; with his demonstrative and deflective pointing gesture, he shirks responsibility for the events to unfold. The centurion clings defensively to his halberd, his face betraying a combination of apprehensiveness, awe, and fear. To the immediate left of Christ, Judas—the disciple who betrayed Christ with a kiss—physically clutches the robes of Christ as the artist elevates his perfidy from scheming to physical threat.⁵³ Interestingly, Goya depicts Christ and his betrayer in similar robes of white, and amid Goya's extreme experimentation with pathognomy and physiognomy (to be explored below), Judas appears strikingly normal: the artist seems to have emphasized in the betrayer, as in the Christ figure, a certain humanity.

Goya's treatment of the impassioned crowd merits careful attention. Surrounding the composed Christ figure is a mob of tortured faces that scholarship groups together as the enemies of Christ.⁵⁴ The artist's adeptness with facial expressions, evident here as in *Los Caprichos*, may serve a meaningful purpose in their differentiation. The man to the right of the soldier draws visual attention, his representation the height of pathos. With his bestial scream, he seems to be either descending into unconscious madness—an unwitting accomplice in treachery—or agonizing over its occurrence. Little resemblance exists between this man's primal emotion and the vacuous expressions of the inmates in *Yard with Lunatics*, a painting that demonstrates Goya's precision in rendering madness. Such interpretive clarity is lacking in the case of the screaming witness from *Taking of*

⁵³ Because of this figure's proximity to Christ in the painting and Judas's role in the scriptural accounts, his identification here seems clear. Mt 26:47-52, Lk 22:47-53, Mk 14:43-50.

⁵⁴ See, for example, *Goya, Truth and Fantasy: The Small Paintings*, eds. Juliet Wilson-Bareau and Manuela Mena Marqués (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago; exhibition catalogue), 240, and Morales y Marín, *Pintor Religioso*, 256.

Christ. Rather, his expression betrays raw pathos, perhaps even the bitter anguish of a mourning disciple.

Four “monstrous” faces appear above that of Christ. From the left, two men gaze upward and release primal roars, the one farthest from the viewer evoking an especially crazed mental state. Goya balances these men with two downcast figures to the right, seeming both aloof and sinister. The rightmost visage of the quartet, in its gangrenous coloration and oversimplified features, seems a ghoulish mask. Lit only by candlelight from below, Goya’s demonic tormentors must have haunted their original eighteenth-century audience. That none of these figures’ legs appear in the bottom half of the composition serves to further dematerialize and dehumanize them in comparison to the grounded front group.

Goya employs chiaroscuro throughout the scene to enhance its palpable drama. He obscures a light source that emanates from the lower left, as indicated by the shadows. The light falls heavily on the central figure of Christ, accentuating the white of his robe and its symbolism of divine purity. The priest in the left foreground remains entirely in darkness, as do the crazed individuals circling Jesus. In addition to a proclivity for emotive effect, Goya’s lighting in the piece reveals his attentiveness to the physical space where his art would be installed: in the sacristy the painting would be lit by candlelight from below.⁵⁵ French writer and critic Théophile Gautier noted the dramatic lighting and dark mood as echoing the Dutch master Rembrandt. He writes, “In Toledo, in one of the chapter houses, we saw [Goya’s] painting of Jesus betrayed by Judas, with a night effect

⁵⁵ Goya developed and reused this lighting convention in one of his most affecting works, *Third of May, 1808*, in which a single lantern illuminates a Christ-like victim. *Truth and Fantasy*, 238.

evocative of Rembrandt (to whom I would have attributed it had not a canon shown me the signature of Charles IV's favorite painter)."⁵⁶

3. Sources and Influences

In addition to Rembrandt, Goya drew from several textual and visual sources when composing the *Taking of Christ*. Ceán Bermúdez claims that the artist would read biblical accounts and any other germane literature so as to avoid anachronisms and factual errors.⁵⁷ All four Evangelists relate the arrest of Jesus, but Goya's scene most closely resembles the account in the Gospel of John:

[Jesus] went out with His disciples over the Brook Kidron, where there was a garden, which He and His disciples entered. And Judas, who betrayed Him, also knew the place; for Jesus often met there with His disciples. Then Judas, having received a detachment of troops, and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, came there with lanterns, torches, and weapons.⁵⁸

El Greco's *Disrobing of Christ* provided the primary compositional example for Goya in developing his piece. In 1797 the Cathedral chapter had decided upon a re-installation of the El Greco painting within a more grandiose altar setting, also commissioning works from Goya and Francisco Ramos to complement the El Greco from recessed bays on its left and right, respectively.⁵⁹ Though scholarship often records that

⁵⁶ Théophile Gautier, "Voyage en Espagne," reproduced in *Goya in Perspective*, ed. Fred Licht (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973), 25. Originally published with the same title in Paris: 1843.

⁵⁷ One might reasonably question the veracity of Ceán's statement. He unilaterally presents Goya as a philosopher-painter in alignment with his own artistic sensibility, despite a reality that was likely more nuanced. Chapter IV explores these issues in greater depth. Ceán Bermúdez, *Análisis*, 288.

⁵⁸ Jn 18:1-3 (NKJV).

⁵⁹ *Truth and Fantasy*, 238.

Taking of Christ was meant as a complement to the *Disrobing*, the relationship between these works has yet to be explored in depth.⁶⁰

El Greco relocated from Rome to Spain in 1577, staying briefly in Madrid before continuing on to Toledo.⁶¹ *The Disrobing of Christ* (ca. 1577-9) [Fig. 15] was one of two

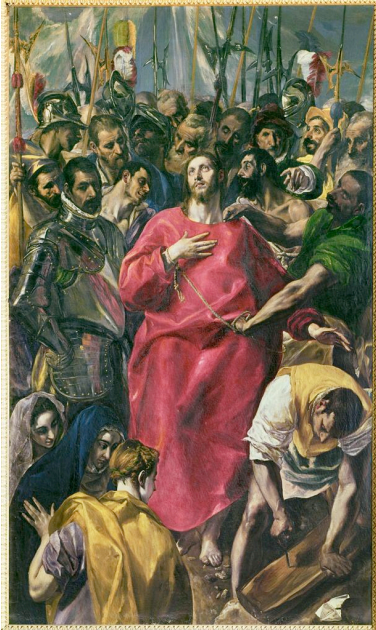


Figure 15: El Greco, *The Disrobing of Christ*, oil on canvas, ca. 1577-9. Toledo, Cathedral sacristy.

significant commissions that encouraged this move.⁶² In Toledo El Greco was painting for an audience spurred on to religious fervor by the Catholic Counter-Reformation and therefore highly attuned to orthodoxy. Accordingly, the *Disrobing* met with criticism from literalists, who put forth two theological objections: first, the artist painted several heads above that of Christ, and second, he included figures of Mary Magdalene and the Virgin Mary in defiance of the biblical account.⁶³

Despite the painting's mixed initial reception, the following two centuries saw a great enhancement in its popularity. The commentary of Antonio Ponz (1725-92), secretary of the Spanish Royal Academy, clergyman,

⁶⁰ The connection between Goya's piece and its actual pendant, a scene of the *Agony in the Garden* by his compatriot and fellow court painter Francisco Ramos, receives still less attention. The chapter commissioned successive scenes from the Passion, counterposing Jesus's prayer in Gethsemane (Ramos's subject) with the event that directly followed it, his arrest (Goya's subject). *Truth and Fantasy*, 238.

⁶¹ Fernando Mariás, *El Greco in Toledo* (London: Scala, 2001), 47.

⁶² The second influential commission came from the Toledan convent of Santo Domingo el Antiguo, for whom El Greco would paint a Titianesque *Assumption of the Virgin*. Marcia B. Hall, *The Sacred Image in the Age of Art: Titian, Tintoretto, Barocci, El Greco, Caravaggio* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 233-5.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 235.

painter, and writer, will effectively illustrate eighteenth-century response to *The Disrobing of Christ*. Ponz's detailed *Viaje de España* represents the first comprehensive catalogue of monuments and works of art in Spain. In the first volume (1772) Ponz visits Toledo and praises the *Disrobing* in aesthetic terms, describing it as one of El Greco's best paintings and comparing it to a Titian in manner and beauty.⁶⁴ Ponz was a prominent advocate of Mengsian Neoclassicism—still a very prevalent aesthetic in the Spanish Royal Academy during the 1790s. His approval suggests a broader positive reception for the piece. Finally, the Cathedral chapter's decision to build a more elaborate setting for the painting in 1797 attests to the high esteem in which it was held during the late eighteenth century.

The theme of the painting, which cleverly invokes the purpose of the sacristy as a ceremonial space of robing and disrobing, may have been an original conceit of the artist because no iconographic precedent exists.⁶⁵ Interestingly, El Greco appears to have drawn from traditional images of the Taking of Christ (alternately known as the Betrayal) for the organization of his figures. The iconography for this scene was firmly established, traceable back to at least the Italian proto-Renaissance master Duccio. In the *Betrayal of Christ* (1309-11) Duccio portrays Christ and Judas centrally, flanked by several frowning priests and elders [Fig. 16]. Behind them stands a mass of Roman soldiers, metonymically present through their white, plumed helmets. The crowd carries spears, halberds, lanterns, and torches, wielding them so that they rise above the figural group and form a screen behind it. In the foreground and to the left of the central pairing, Simon

⁶⁴ Antonio Ponz, *Viaje de España* (Madrid: M. Aguilar, 1947), 50.

⁶⁵ *Truth and Fantasy*, 238.

Peter has just impulsively cut off the right ear of the high priest's servant, Malchus.⁶⁶ A number of other representations of the Betrayal of Christ throughout the Renaissance and early modern era reuse this schema with few alterations; Albrecht Dürer's woodcarving from 1509-11 provides a notable example.

El Greco's and Goya's paintings derive from this established convention, sharing significant similarities in their organization and portrayal of the Christ figure. El Greco creates a triad in the center



Figure 16: Duccio di Buoninsegna, *The Betrayal of Christ*, tempera on wood, ca. 1309-11. Detail from the back of the Maestà altarpiece. Siena Cathedral.

of his composition, with Christ centrally placed, a finely suited knight to his right and worker to his left. The figural arrangement serves to monumentalize Christ, who appears framed by two dark columns. In his painting Goya adapts this formal structure, enhancing the psychological drama of the scene by picturing a tense interaction between the priest at the left and the Roman centurion at the right. Both artists have encircled and framed Christ with a cast of figures drawn from the iconographic tradition of the Betrayal. El Greco disperses passages of similar color throughout the composition to flatten and condense the pictorial space, and he uses bold coloration to set apart the Christ figure, who dons a striking ruby-red tunic.⁶⁷ To a similar end Goya relies on chiaroscuro, shedding a bright light on Jesus while leaving other figures in significant shadow. The paintings also share a similar conception that sought to reconcile intellectual

⁶⁶ Jn 18:10.

⁶⁷ Hall, *Sacred Image*, 234-5.

respectability and doctrinal correctness.⁶⁸ In this affective sense Goya shared the ambition of his predecessor, evidenced in the earthly, biblically rooted, heavily pathetic composition of his *Taking of Christ*.

Goya draws from a second prominent iconographic example in his use of the grotesque in the crowd. This tradition is traceable to the Northern Renaissance—a cultural moment when artistic interest in physiognomical experiment correlated with a prodigious production of Passion scenes. Principally through the collecting of King Phillip II (r. 1556-98), the art of Hieronymus Bosch became particularly influential in transplanting this expressive element to Spain. Bosch's capacity for grotesque invention, manifested most prominently in his *Garden of Earthly Delights*, drew Goya's interest and may well have inspired the chimeras that pervade the second half of *Los Caprichos*.⁶⁹ Bosch also developed a trope of the suffering Christ figure surrounded by disfigured enemies, and Goya may have seen one such example in Bosch's *Christ Carrying the Cross* (ca. 1505-7) at the Monastery of San Lorenzo of the Escorial [Fig. 17].⁷⁰ In this panel several mockers with sneering, grossly exaggerated features at upper left [Fig. 18] compete for visual attention with the Christ figure, who stoops under the weight of the cross.⁷¹ Bosch deliberately juxtaposes Christ's perfection with the imperfection of his enemies to illustrate a theological principle: Christ is a paragon of innocence, virtue, and beauty

⁶⁸ Hall, *Sacred Image*, 232.

⁶⁹ See Schulz, *Goya's Caprichos*, 75-6, 143, 176-7.

⁷⁰ Larry Silver, *Hieronymus Bosch* (New York: Abbeville Press, 2006), 329.

⁷¹ Bosch would further develop his penchant for facial deformation in a later version of the same scene (ca. 1510-1515), a monument to the affective capacities of caricature.

amid antagonists personifying evil, vice, and ugliness. In this aspect Goya's *Taking of Christ* perpetuates the tradition that Bosch initiated.⁷²

Finally, as Gautier noted during his *Voyage in Spain*, Rembrandt served as another important example. Goya's veneration for the Dutch Master is recorded in his son Javier's short biography, suggesting that his use of chiaroscuro toward theological ends may well reflect this influence.⁷³ Moreover, Cean gifted several Rembrandt prints to Goya while the latter was at work engraving *Los Caprichos* (ca. 1798-9).⁷⁴ The contemporaneity of the *Caprichos* and *Taking of Christ*, and their shared interest in expressive techniques, makes this interaction especially



Figure 17: Hieronymus Bosch, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, oil on wood, ca. 1505-7. Monastery of San Lorenzo of the Escorial.

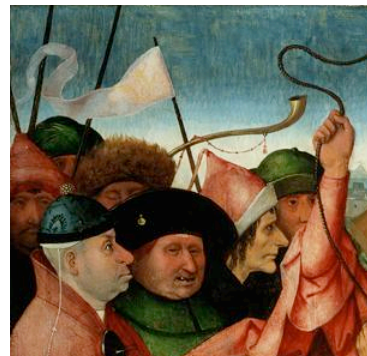


Figure 18: Detail of *Christ Carrying the Cross*.

⁷² Demonstrating the lasting influence of these ideas, G.W.F. Hegel theorized portrayals of the Passion in a series of lectures from the late 1810s and 1820s, published posthumously as *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*. Hegel supports outward, physiognomic manifestations of evil in artistic depictions of Christ's enemies. While disciples of Jesus should be shown as normal individuals drawn to Christ's righteousness, "The enemies are presented to us as inwardly evil because they place themselves in opposition to God, condemn him, mock him, torture him, crucify him, and the idea of inner evil and enmity to God brings with it on the external side, ugliness, crudity, barbarity, rage, and distortion of their outward appearance. In connection with all these there enters here as a necessary feature what is unbeautiful in comparison with the beauty of Greek art." Hegel's argument for the "unbeautiful" in depictions of Christ's enemies demonstrates the prevalence of that conception in the art academies of the early nineteenth century, and it solidifies the assertion that Bosch's iconography remained prominent. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, trans. T.M. Knox (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), 538.

⁷³ Javier Goya, "A Biography of Goya written by his Son," trans. in Tomlinson, *Goya y Lucientes*, 307.

⁷⁴ Ceán Bermúdez, *Historia de la pintura*, 11 vols. (Madrid: Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando, 1824), vol. IV, 124.

significant. Last, Rembrandt's attentiveness to and adeptness with pathognomy—his ability to evoke a wide range of complex emotions via the human visage—was an essential characteristic of his art. The many highly expressive faces that fill *The Taking of Christ* may be thus be understood as following the great Dutch painter-etcher.⁷⁵

One encounters in Goya's *Taking of Christ* significant moments of both pathognomy and physiognomy; physiognomy being that which concerns the human faculties and qualities observable through the unchanging body parts, especially the face, while pathognomy interprets human passions observable through movable ones.⁷⁶ José López-Rey was the first to argue the significance of physiognomy in reading Goya's art from this period. López-Rey stated that a belief in the correlation between moral/mental faculties and physical traits was widely practiced in eighteenth-century intellectual circles, citing as a primary source Zurich minister Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741-1801), who codified physiognomical notions into a quasi-scientific system.⁷⁷ Andrew Schulz has clarified that Lavater's influence in Spain is questionable, but the epoch did nevertheless place a great significance on the character of the body and face, and a number of Spanish

⁷⁵ An ambitious exhibition at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, *Drawings by Rembrandt and His Pupils: Telling the Difference*, attempted to teach visitors a lesson in connoisseurship, enabling them to differentiate between drawings of the master and those of his workshop. Range of emotion in facial expressions was one criterion in this process of discernment; no member of Rembrandt's workshop was able to achieve his virtuosic diversity. Examples are catalogue entries 14.1 and 14.2, in which Rembrandt "concentrates on the facial expressions of listeners, some in agreement, some unconvinced, others either uninvolved or dismissive," while his follower Gerbrand van den Eeckhout's drawing is "dominated by a collection of heads drawn with simple lines and with far less individuality." The entry concludes, "Rembrandt always imbues his face with a wide range of expressions with minimal yet varied strokes." *Drawings by Rembrandt and his Pupils: Telling the Difference* (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2009; exhibition catalogue), 110-11.

⁷⁶ José López-Rey, "Goya's *Caprichos*: Beauty, Reason, and Caricature," reproduced in *Goya in Perspective*, 120.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 115-6.

ilustrados aligned with a system of physiognomical thought.⁷⁸ Like the contemporaneous *Los Caprichos*, Goya's *The Taking of Christ* signals a shift away from momentary expression and toward portrayals of inward disposition. The prints and painting crystallize a moment between expressive techniques, manifesting both displays of passion and constitution.

4. A Spanish Context for *The Taking of Christ*

Having addressed Goya's painting in relation to El Greco's *Disrobing of Christ* and other iconographic influences, its connection to the work of Spanish religious painters in the late eighteenth century remains to be considered. Mariano Salvador Maella, Goya's slightly older contemporary, provides an instructive comparison. Maella enjoyed sustained prominence in the Spanish art establishment, winning several competitions at the academy in the 1750s (allowing him to study in Rome 1758-64), earning admission as a Court Painter in 1774, and later gaining the academic titles Director of Painting (1794), Director General (1795-8), and First Court Painter (1799, the same year as Goya). Following the death of Bayeu in 1795, it was Maella who exercised the greatest influence over the aesthetics of the court and who held the favor of the king. Maella's work also merits special attention because he and Goya both achieved new heights of accomplishment simultaneously, at nearly the same moment of the Toledo commission.

⁷⁸ Schulz, *Goya's Caprichos*, 59.

Though a former assistant and disciple of Mengs, Maella often more closely resembles Goya than his own master in terms of style. In 1798-9 Maella painted a fresco of *The Goddess Cybele Offering to the Earth Her Fruits or Four Seasons* for the Casita del Labrador at the Palace of Aranjuez [Fig. 19].⁷⁹ Neoclassical in its grandeur and mythological conception, the *Cybele* fresco is nonetheless executed with a heavy impasto unlike the restrained facture of Mengs. Throughout the composition Maella suggests a robe, plant, or cherub's wing with one visible, vibrant stroke. In regard to facture one may compare Maella's fresco with Goya's of the same year, painted at the church of San Antonio de la Florida in Madrid. There Goya executes passages of angels with a looseness, rapidity, and elegance that mirrors Maella's *Cybele* fresco. In these cases Goya and Maella display likemindedness in technique.



Figure 19: Mariano Salvador Maella, *The Goddess Cybele Offering to the Earth Her Fruits or Four Seasons*, fresco, 1798-9. Aranjuez, Sala de María Luisa, Casita del Labrador.

Maella's painting of the *Ascension* (1800) [Fig. 20], however, illustrates essential differences between the two artists.⁸⁰ Morales writes of the *Ascension* that the "Mengsian imprint, after years, returns with special intensity."⁸¹ A divinely radiant Christ levitates toward heaven, arms

⁷⁹ Morales y Marín, *Mariano Salvador Maella: Vida y Obra* (Zaragoza: 1996), cat. 175.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, cat. 178.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*

wide and signaling his readiness to be taken. Below him, witnesses to the miracle respond with postures of humility and gestures of devotion. The developed musculature of Christ's torso and his angelic, idealized facial features reflect the Mengsian Neoclassicist ideal that Morales noted. Maella renders the scene with a highly sentimental tone that differs palpably from Goya's painting of Christ, completed two years earlier. It should be said that Maella's subject was supernatural and Goya's earthly, yet beyond that distinction the two works bear out entirely different aesthetics. Maella's palette of light pastels forms a striking contrast to Goya's oppressively dark coloration. Maella renders his faces with almost no differentiation and a minimum of expressivity, whereas Goya visualizes a scene of tortured humanity, infused with pathos. The Maella expresses a distinctly Neoclassicist notion of the heroic body that Goya's painting, with its deformations of the face, vehemently denies.



Figure 20: Maella, *Ascension*, oil on canvas, 1800. Private collection.

This comparison between Goya and Maella illustrates that the former was not entirely unique in his stylistic proclivities—nor was he alone in finding success with them. In 1798 both artists began frescoes that exemplify strong stylistic similarities, and in 1799 both achieved the title First Court Painter. The most coveted status appointment for the Spanish artist, which only Mengs had achieved in the previous half-century, the title is a

testament that both artists were equally successful. Nonetheless, Goya's art in the late 1790s also moves away from academically sanctioned aesthetics and the work of his contemporaries. By testing the expressive limits of his art, Goya began to distance himself from painters like Maella, who remained loyal to Mengsian Neoclassicism well into the nineteenth century. Maella's *Ascension* and Goya's *Taking of Christ* illustrate these differences. By employing idealized figures and a reverent sentimentality, Maella perpetuates the influence of Mengs, while Goya adapts and moves beyond accepted convention toward a darker, more earthly aesthetic. Thus, re-situating Goya within his artistic milieu allows a measured perspective on the extent of his innovation with *The Taking of Christ*.

CHAPTER IV

SAINTS JUSTA AND RUFINA AS COLLABORATIVE PROJECT AND NEOCLASSICIST REVIVAL

In 1817 the Seville Cathedral chapter commissioned a large altarpiece to decorate its sacristy [Fig. 21]. The city's patron saints, Justa and Rufina, with their symbolic accoutrements, would serve as the subject matter. When solicited for his opinion, art critic and historian Juan Agustín Ceán Bermúdez recommended his friend Goya receive the commission; Ceán would later serve as a highly involved intermediary between patron and artist during the painting's execution.

In a letter to the Majorcan art collector Tomás de Veri following the painting's

completion, Ceán declared *Saints Justa and Rufina* to be an immense success:

The painting turned out marvelously well, and is the best work that Goya has ever done, or will do in the future come to that. It is already hanging in its place and the chapter and the whole city are wild with joy at having the best picture to be painted in Europe so far this century.⁸²



Figure 21: Goya, *Saints Justa and Rufina*, oil on canvas, 1817. 122 x 70 in. (309 x 177 cm). Seville, Cathedral sacristy.

⁸² Ceán Bermúdez to Tomás de Veri, January 14, 1818, trans. in Glendinning, *Goya and His Critics*, 56.

Such was Ceán's enthusiasm for the piece that he also praised it publicly in the first critical exposition on Goya's art, *Análisis de un cuadro que ha pintado D. Francisco para la catedral de Sevilla*.⁸³ This treatise extolls the painting in theoretical terms, specifically citing the artist's careful preparation, incorporation of established iconography, attention to site, Neoclassical conception of beauty, graceful figures and decorous postures, facility in handling facial expressions (for Ceán "the most philosophical part of the painting"), coloristic harmony, vigorous brushstrokes, and innovative composition. The *Análisis* concludes,

The fertile creative genius of Goya, his innate and unshakeable vocation for an art in which he had no guide apart from nature herself, his talent for revealing the beauties of nature, his complete command of his brushes, the harmony and clarity of his coloring, and his bold and extraordinary style, will not this entitle him to the glorious title of Original Painter?⁸⁴

Ceán was not alone in lavishing praise on Goya and his altarpiece: three separate sonnets survive, written by some of the Sevillians who were the painting's first audience, corroborating his enthusiasm.⁸⁵

Despite the favor it received immediately, none of the work's later, prominent critics saw originality in *Saints Justa and Rufina*. Instead, the painting came to represent Ceán's micromanagement and a dutiful, uninterested execution on the artist's part. The

⁸³ Ceán Bermúdez, *Análisis*, 287-90.

⁸⁴ In defense of his claim for Goya's originality, Ceán highlights Goya's ability to apply accepted conventions in unexpected ways. He also cites other elements of Goya's quality as a painter: his innate artistic genius, capability in rendering nature, virtuosic brushwork, harmony and clarity in coloring, and bold style. Thus, Ceán's usage of "Original" corresponds to Tomlinson's conception of "invention," explored in Chapter I. In order to be an original painter in the early nineteenth century, one had to master the prevailing technique and style; a secondary expectation was applying these aesthetics in a unique manner. *Ibid.*, 290.

⁸⁵ For instance, one of the sonnets culminates with "Inventa Goya, lo que Ceán describe: / Trabajan ambos con destreza suma: / Nuevo esplendor la profesion recibe." In Valerian von Loga, *Francisco de Goya* (Berlin: G. Grote, 1903), 170.

commentary of Aureliano de Beruete y Moret, Spanish critic, painter, and collector of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, encapsulates that negative reaction: “This painting is not, in my opinion, a particularly interesting work of Goya’s; despite its importance, it lacks the strength of his productions from these years; it is drab and bland, but it has beauty of color and form, and demonstrates mastery of art.”⁸⁶ Beruete’s indifference starkly contrasts with Ceán’s effusiveness. The Neoclassical execution that Ceán had enthusiastically praised less than a century earlier did not find a sympathetic audience with Beruete and his contemporaries—to whom the style had become uninteresting. For Francis Klingender, the compositional similarities between Goya’s work and those of his iconographic sources demonstrated the artist’s apathy and solidified the notion that his motive was primarily a monetary one.⁸⁷ Paul Guinard attacked the painting’s lack of decorum, of which Ceán had been convinced: “[Goya’s] painted saints . . . have an animal-like beauty, and they are more reminiscent of ‘women of the night’ than the humble potters from Triana.”⁸⁸ Thus, the very strengths by which Ceán argued the painting’s merit in 1817 were reconsidered by later generations and reframed as weaknesses.

The vicissitudes of aesthetics across time may not sufficiently explain this dramatic shift in the painting’s reception. This chapter puts forth two main points regarding *Saints Justa and Rufina* and its critical response: first, that the painting is best

⁸⁶ Cited in *Goya*, ed. F.J. Sánchez Cantón (Madrid: 1928), 163.

⁸⁷ Francis Klingender, *Goya in the Democratic Tradition* (London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1948), 182.

⁸⁸ Paul Guinard, “Goya et la tradition religieuse au siècle d’or”, in *Revue du Louvre* 4-5 (1970): 267.

understood as a product of multiple authorship and should be analyzed as such, and second, that it represents Goya's return to the Neoclassical aesthetics with which he had succeeded at San Francisco el Grande and that rose to preeminence again at the court of Ferdinand VII in the late 1810s.

Regarding the first of these theses, Ceán's correspondence from the year of the commission reveals that he played an extensive role in this commission as an intermediary between Goya and the Seville Cathedral chapter. Two extant letters from Ceán to Veri demonstrate his definitive impact on the painting's composition. These letters encourage us to explore *Saints Justa and Rufina* as an exposition of Ceán's taste, a kind of visual accompaniment to the ideals he expressed in writing. The work of more recent scholars has moved toward such an understanding: Tomlinson justified Goya's preference for uncommissioned works by pointing to Ceán's domineering role in the Seville commission, while Schulz expressed that the painting represents a stylistic aberration for Goya and thus likely reflects Ceán's aesthetics more than his own.⁸⁹ Following in the same vein, this chapter considers *Saints Justa and Rufina* with respect to the roles of Ceán and Goya in its execution.

One may also understand the painting as an attempt by Goya to participate in the revival of Neoclassicism that occurred after the Peninsular War. With his restoration to the monarchy, Ferdinand VII brought conservative artistic taste. Rather than the gestural style and emotive content of Goya's work, Ferdinand preferred classical subject matter, a cool palette and clean finish. Under his influence the latter half of the 1810s saw a revival

⁸⁹ Tomlinson, *Francisco Goya y Lucientes*, 234. Schulz, *Goya's Caprichos*, 28.

of the aesthetics that informed the San Francisco el Grande commissions addressed in Chapter II of this thesis. Commissioned by Ferdinand himself, Goya's tempera grisaille of *Saint Isabel of Portugal Tending to a Sick Woman* (1816-17) may be read as an attempt on the artist's part to accommodate the prevailing Neoclassicism. *Saints Justa and Rufina*, painted a year later, continues this effort.

1. *Saints Justa and Rufina* as a Product of Multiple Authorship

The decidedly negative perspective from which posterity has judged the Seville altarpiece reflects an expectation to see the artist-genius in Goya's work. Instead, with *Saints Justa and Rufina* one finds him collaborating closely with his Neoclassicist supervisor and Catholic Sevillian patron. Acknowledging the painting as a product of multiple authorship will enable a more precise understanding of Goya's contribution and a fuller appreciation for the work itself. This section applies critiques of auteur theory in order to illuminate the disparity between past scholarship on Goya's *Saints Justa and Rufina* and the approach of this thesis.

Because of its theorization of the problematic nature of author-focused analyses, auteur criticism is especially applicable in the case of the Seville commission. The original auteurists analyzed the artistic genre of film through the assumed presence of an *auteur* (the director), whose stylistic imprint greatly informed the film. The film/art object was of value to auteurists only in that it contributed to the oeuvre of a particular director/artist; its quality was determined by the relative presence of that director manifest in the film's stylistic aspects. André Bazin provided a measured critique of

auteurism in 1957 by arguing that analyses addressing only authorship will always understate the complexity of the artistic process.⁹⁰ To the firm advocates of auteurism, who posited the lasting significance of creative genius over the temporary accomplishment of the art object, Bazin responds,

The individual transcends society, but society is also and above all *within* him. So there can be no definitive criticism of genius or talent which does not first take into consideration the social determinism, the historical combination of circumstances, and the technical background which to a large extent determine it.⁹¹

Assuming an historicist framework, valid and valuable assessments of an art object must acknowledge the system in which they were created. Further, Bazin continues, auteurism injudiciously applied takes the personal imprint of the artist as a standard of measure and imposes a structure of progressing revelation/greatness upon the artist's oeuvre, whereby later works are assumed superior because they manifest more creative genius.⁹² Inevitably such a structure will distort critical reception of the works themselves.

Graham Petrie provided a second instructive critique of auteurism in 1973 when he demonstrated that films are the product of a team of collaborators with varied interests and almost never the result of a single controlling director.⁹³ As an alternative form of analysis, Petrie considers cinema as a cooperative art. Although he claims film to be distinct from other arts in regard to its collaborative studio production, it requires only a minor interpretive leap to apply Petrie's theory to the realm of painting—especially in a

⁹⁰ André Bazin, "De la Politique des Auteurs," trans. Peter Graham, in *Auteurs and Authorship: A Film Reader*, ed. Barry Keith Grant (Malden and Oxford: Blackwell, 2008), 19-28.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 25.

⁹³ Graham Petrie, "Alternatives to Auteurs," in *Auteurs and Authorship*, 110-118.

case such as Goya's with the Seville commission.⁹⁴ The latent presence of the Cathedral chapter—which dictated the painting's subject matter and likely some of its imagery—and Ceán Bermúdez—who carefully assessed the artist's conformity with the prescribed look and feel of the painting—discredits an auteurist reading. When speaking of the Seville altarpiece, one necessarily refers to a collective project.

Goya scholars whose approach may be described as "auteurist" have been disappointed by a lack of authorial imprint on *Saints Justa and Rufina*. According to the auteurist's progressive model, the painting should have revealed an increasingly intimate expressiveness in correlation with Goya's advanced age, but clearly it does not. Author-focused criticism like that applied in much previous scholarship fails to account for a stylistic anomaly such as *Justa and Rufina*. Broad perceptions of Goya as author-genius have driven scholarship to consider his work in relative isolation. However, the collaborative nature of the Seville commission, with the multiple artistic personalities it reveals, serves as a check on such impulses. Moreover, as previous chapters of this thesis have attempted to show, readings of Goya's work that do not connect him to contemporary Spanish painting and aesthetics prove comparatively superficial.

2. The Neoclassicism of Ceán Bermúdez and Goya's Desire for Originality

In order to assess Ceán's artistic presence in *Saints Justa and Rufina*, it will be helpful to establish his aesthetic principles. The elements of the painting that he praises in the *Análisis* reveal a firm commitment to Mengsian Neoclassicism: idealized figures that

⁹⁴ Petrie, "Alternatives to Auteurs," 111.

occupy a middle ground between nature and the figures of classical antiquity, coloristic balance, and a studied composition.⁹⁵ In presenting Goya as a careful, learned, and well-prepared painter—one imbuing the works of the past with new and vigorous life—Ceán reveals a conception of the artist connected to Neoclassicism and the Age of Reason.

Ceán expands on his aesthetic theory in an imaginary dialogue he composed between Mengs and Swiss philosopher Johann Georg Sulzer,⁹⁶ published as *Arte de ver en las bellas artes del diseño: segun los principios de Sulzer y de Mengs*.⁹⁷ In this text Ceán conceives of the painter as charged with delighting and instructing the viewer by carefully selecting beautiful objects from nature. For Ceán, much of the artist's role lay in selection: "The most precious gift of invention is to know how to choose"; "to see is nothing, to discern is everything."⁹⁸ It is in this respect that Ceán considers Mengs a superior artist even to Raphael, whose work does not evidence a careful study of nature. Further, Ceán argues that Mengs has managed to bring together the best aspects of Raphael (beauty in form), Correggio (effective chiaroscuro) and Titian (harmonious color).⁹⁹ Ceán's effusive praise for Mengs places the former well within the aesthetics of

⁹⁵ Ceán Bermúdez, *Análisis*, 289.

⁹⁶ Sulzer was an established member of the Prussian art academy and holds an important place in the history of aesthetics as the author of *A General Theory of the Polite Arts* (1771). In this lexicon of art terms, Sulzer expresses a political-didactic view of the arts, uniquely arguing that they are essential to the formation of civilized society. Ceán's correspondence attests that he would have identified with Sulzer's desire to offer moral guidance through aesthetics. For more on Sulzer and eighteenth-century to current receptions of his lexicon, see Johan van der Zande, "Orpheus in Berlin: A Reappraisal of Johan Georg Sulzer's *Theory of the Polite Arts*," *Central European History* vol. 28 no. 2 (June 1995): 175-208.

⁹⁷ Ceán Bermúdez, *Arte de ver en las bellas artes del diseño: segun los principios de Sulzer y de Mengs* (Madrid: Imprinta Real, 1827).

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 63.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 88.

Neoclassicism, and *Saints Justa and Rufina* would satisfy his taste in several significant ways.

Ceán's letter to Veri from September 27, 1817, encourages a careful assessment of his role in the commission. The letter reveals extensive interaction between Ceán as intermediary and Goya as painter, and it further substantiates claims of multiple authorship. The letter merits quotation at length:

At the moment I am busy trying to instill into Goya the requisite decorum, humility and devotion, together with a suitably respectable subject, simple yet appropriate composition and religious ideas, for a large painting that the Chapter of Seville Cathedral has asked me to obtain for their church . . . The tender postures and virtuous expressions of the saints must move people to worship them and pray to them, since this is the proper object of such paintings You know Goya and will realize the efforts I have had to make to instill ideas into him which are so obviously against his grain. I gave him written instructions on how to paint the picture, and made him prepare three or four preliminary sketches. Now at last he is roughing out the full size painting itself, and *I trust it will turn out as I want*. If *I am successful* it will be entirely worthy of a place beside the others in the cathedral.¹⁰⁰ (My emphasis.)

Ceán foregrounds his own role in producing the elements of “decorum, humility and devotion” that he understood as critical to the work’s reception. The picture of Ceán presented in the letter is traditional and conservative, while that of Goya is rebellious and irreverent. Ceán considers the viewer’s experience of the painting as paramount, noting that religious inspiration is the proper role of such works; Goya seems otherwise inclined. Ceán is at pains to express the difficulty of his task (and the value of his accomplishment), this sense of decorum being “so obviously against [Goya’s] grain.” As the fee for the commission was a very significant 28,000 *reales*, Ceán would face

¹⁰⁰ Ceán Bermúdez to Tomás de Veri, September 27, 1817, trans. in Glendinning, *Goya and His Critics*, 56.

criticism from the Cathedral chapter if the painting were poorly received.¹⁰¹ In self-interest he persistently sought to impress his aesthetics on Goya, contributing significantly to the sentimental tone of the work as seen in the “tender postures and virtuous expressions of the saints.” He dictated elements of the composition and oversaw the production of several preparatory *bocetos* before authorizing Goya to begin work on the final altarpiece.¹⁰² Importantly, Ceán assumes responsibility for the commission—to the extent that it becomes his project and his future success. The evidence provided by Ceán’s letter suggests that failing to account for his involvement with *Saints Justa and Rufina* would significantly limit any interpretive assessment of the picture.

Ceán’s complaint about the difficulty of directing such an independent and irreverent artist deserves further attention. Throughout his career Goya persistently expressed a desire to be free from artistic direction. In 1781 he received a commission from the Building Committee of El Pilar Cathedral in Saragossa to paint the dome known as the *Media Naranja* and its four surrounding medallions.¹⁰³ The medallions were rejected on the basis of their rough, unfinished quality, and the dome for its lack in taste, coloring, and conception, after which Goya was asked to submit to the authority and approval of his brother-in-law Bayeu on the commission. Edith Helman recounts his response, in which the artist refused to alter his work and conform to another painter’s style; to do so would be to relinquish the role of original painter, demoting himself to

¹⁰¹ Tomlinson, *Francisco Goya y Lucientes*, 234.

¹⁰² The one surviving *boceto*, in the Museo del Prado collection, likely represents the final preparatory stage because of its compositional similarity with the final painting. *Truth and Fantasy*, 312.

¹⁰³ Edith Helman provides a helpful recounting of the so-called “Saragossa Affair” in “Identity and Style in Goya,” *The Burlington Magazine* 106 no. 7 (1964): 33-4.

mere artisan.¹⁰⁴ Goya eventually submitted to Bayeu's supervision, but the "Saragossa Affair" was a frustration that the artist would remember throughout his life.

For Goya, creative imagination, conceptual freedom, and stylistic individuality were essential components of quality artistic production. This sentiment manifests as early as the artist's self-defense at El Pilar and is firmly entrenched in Goya's philosophy thereafter. He echoes the language from the Saragossa defense in his advertisement for the publication of *Los Caprichos*, appearing on the front page of *Diario de Madrid*, February 6, 1799:

Painting (like poetry) chooses from universals what is most apposite. It brings together in a single imaginary being, circumstances and characteristics which occur in nature in many different persons. With such an ingeniously arranged combination of properties the artist produces a faithful likeness, *but also earns the title of inventor rather than that of servile copyist.*¹⁰⁵ (My emphasis.)

Goya's stated ambition was to transcend the role of painter-as-artisan and to earn renown as an imaginative creator; Ceán's fastidious involvement in the Seville commission must have irritated him.¹⁰⁶ However, Goya was perpetually complaining of poverty during this period, and his acceptance and execution of the commission were surely encouraged by the 28,000 *reales* it paid.¹⁰⁷ From Ceán's perspective *Saints Justa and Rufina* represented

¹⁰⁴ Helman, "Identity and Style in Goya," 34.

¹⁰⁵ Trans. in Glendinning, *Goya and His Critics*, 49.

¹⁰⁶ In Goya's report on education to the Royal Academy, delivered October 14, 1792, the artist contrasts the uninformed, hyper-critical patron with an ideal, enabling, non-restrictive one: "In the face of true values blind enthusiasts cease to dominate the arts and a generation of prudent art lovers arises. These appreciate, respect and encourage outstanding artists, giving them the kind of commissions in which they can use their abilities to the full, helping them as best as they can to fulfill their promise." Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Much of Goya's correspondence from the post-war years relates to financial matters. For example, he wrote to the Royal Academy on October 14, 1816 seeking payment for a portrait of Ferdinand VII that he had completed in 1808. The letter reveals the difficulty Goya faced in finding commissions after the restoration of the monarchy. At this time he was under scrutiny for involving himself with Joseph Bonaparte, and thus the letter also reflects a desire to demonstrate loyalty to the Spanish crown. *Diplomatario* no. 251, 376.

a great coup for Neoclassical taste from the brush of the most eminent Spanish painter of the quarter-century. In a second letter to Veri, he declared the painting a marvelous success.¹⁰⁸

3. The Composition of and Influences on *Saints Justa and Rufina*

In *Saints Justa and Rufina*, the composition places two fair-skinned saints within the earthbound space of their city. Seville Cathedral and its characteristic minaret-cum-bell tower La Giralda provide a symbolic setting. Goya indicates the blessing of the Holy Spirit through a schematized light emanating from above. In *Saints Justa and Rufina* this is a triple-line band of light, in which the left and right beams spotlight the saints' upturned visages. Interacting with La Giralda and the saints' figures, the triple-line band forms a pyramidal construction that anchors and unifies the composition.

The scene is rife with symbolism: each saint holds the palm of martyrdom and a cup and saucer that signals their profession as potters. The broken statue of Venus lying at the saints' feet refers to their public refusal to worship the Roman goddess; Goya was apparently responsible for adding this element to the traditional schema.¹⁰⁹ He paints the figures barefoot in order to recall the Roman Emperor Diocletian's order that, in Ceán's words, they be led "unshod up the slopes of the Marian mountains as a test of the constancy of their faith."¹¹⁰ The saints faced other tortures, from which Justa, at the left,

¹⁰⁸ Ceán Bermúdez to Tomás de Veri, January 14, 1818, trans. in Glendinning, *Goya and His Critics*, 56.

¹⁰⁹ Francisco Calvo Serraller, *Francisco Goya: Obra pictórica* (Barcelona: Random House Mondadori, 2009), 266.

¹¹⁰ Ceán Bermúdez, *Análisis*, 288.

died first. Rufina was thrown to lions, who, rather than attacking her, licked her feet in adoration.¹¹¹ By placing a lion at Rufina's left foot, Goya suspends his preference for realistic scenes in order to reference her legend. A paper fragment in the lower left corner identifies the artist: "Francisco de Goya y Lucientes. Saragossan and First Court Painter to the King, Madrid 1817."

Goya's and Ceán's most prominent example for iconography was Ésteban Murillo's *Justa and Rufina* (1665-6) [Fig. 22], painted as the high altarpiece for the Capuchin monastery in Seville, and now held in the Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes in the same city.¹¹² Murillo conceives the saints as two pillars anchoring the scene on left and right, bearing between them a symbolic miniature of La Giralda. Murillo's painting occupies a fantastical and visionary space that Goya makes earthly in his later rendition. His saints bear the same symbolic pottery and palm fronds. Additionally, the division of both compositions appears quite similar: in each case the lower portion of the canvas is devoted to rolling plains, and an expanse of sky above serves to frame the heroines. In the Murillo *Justa* engages the viewer with a confrontational gaze while her counterpart looks up toward the heavens. That Ceán preferred the devotion manifest in the posture of Murillo's *Rufina* may be inferred from Goya's inclusion of two such figures. An allegorical drawing of Goya's, titled *Poor and bare goes philosophy* (ca. 1816-7) [Fig. 23], depicts a young woman with a strikingly similar upturned gaze, demonstrating the artist's shrewd ability to reuse figural motifs for distinct effects. Whereas the figure in *Saints Justa and Rufina* expresses piety and divine inspiration, the drawn figure

¹¹¹ Manuela Mena Marqués, "Las Santas Justa y Rufina," in *Goya en tiempos de guerra*, 459.

¹¹² Morales y Marin, *Pintor Religioso*, 287.

personifying philosophy engages in a more worldly form of contemplation.

Saints Justa and Rufina manifests conventionalism in its Neoclassical techniques of portraying the body and the traditional symbols embedded within the work. The saints bear idealized features that manifest their transcendence beyond the earthly to the divine realm. The radiant porcelain skin of each figure demands visual attention amid a composition of mostly somber earth tones.

Their facial expressions, eternalized and devoid of momentary passion, more closely resemble that of Goya's *Crucified Christ* [Fig. 3] than any in the artist's work from the 1790s or thereafter. Goya's figural idealism in this instance represents an exception within the context of his oeuvre, suggesting again the prominent influence of his artistic milieu, patron, intermediary, and audience in directing the painting's form.



Figure 22: Ésteban Murillo, *Justa and Rufina*, oil on canvas, 1665-6. Seville, Museo Provincial de Bellas Artes.



Figure 23: Goya, *Pobre e gnuda bai filosofia (Poor and bare goes philosophy)*, Album E.28, brush and ink with wash. New York, Private collection.

4. The Late Religious Paintings

Goya's *Saints Justa and Rufina* may be interrogated as a reintroduction of religious themes, as well as Neoclassical aesthetics, into his artistic production. A dearth of religious paintings exists in Goya's output from the years 1800-1815, a period during which he painted only an *Assumption of the Virgin* (1812) for the church at Chinchón (where his brother was a priest). Gassier and Wilson-Bareau propose three possible explanations for the inconsistency of Goya's production in the genre. First, the unpredictable nature of artistic commissions may have directed him to other work for an extended period. Secondly, fluctuating levels of financial need may have necessitated his acceptance of clerical commissions at some points and freed him from the responsibility at others. Thirdly, his production or lack of production may reflect a corresponding psychological state of piety or skepticism.¹¹³ That Goya produced so few religious works in the years surrounding the French occupation—which incited war and inculcated secular politics—should not be surprising. Whatever the cause, the almost complete lack of religious works in Goya's output from the first part of the century makes his two paintings of saints from 1816-17 all the more notable.

Before *Saints Justa and Rufina* Goya painted a tempera grisaille, *Saint Isabel of Portugal Tending to a Sick Woman* (1816-17) [Fig. 24], as part of a series of semi-allegorical scenes for the apartments of the queen, Mary Elizabeth Braganza of Lisbon, the second wife of King Ferdinand VII. The king had commissioned a series of grisaille works from painters at the court that capitalized on the storied history of his wife's

¹¹³ Gassier and Wilson-Bareau, *Life and Work*, 305.

name.¹¹⁴ Goya's would be the last royal commission he ever received. In addition to financial support, the commission also provided an opportunity for Goya to participate in the burgeoning revival of Neoclassicism at the royal court.

The restoration of the Spanish monarchy in 1814 initiated a corresponding shift in popular aesthetics. Goya suffered for it, since King Ferdinand preferred the exacting technique of Vicente López and a younger generation of Paris-trained artists.¹¹⁵

Whereas Goya worked most often in gestural, energetic brushstrokes and a dramatic palette, López combined cool colors with a licked finish. Striking for its candor (and reminiscent of Goya's work in that respect), López's portrait of *Mary Elizabeth Braganza* (1816) [Fig. 25] nonetheless demonstrates the artist's Neoclassical technique. López has centered the sitter within the composition as an architectonic form. The artist employs a simple palette, contrasting the queen's pale white skin with the



Figure 24: Goya, *Saint Isabel of Portugal Tending to a Sick Woman*, grisaille on canvas, 1816-7. Madrid, Royal Palace.



Figure 25: Vicente López, *Mary Elizabeth Braganza of Lisbon, Queen of Spain*, oil on canvas, 1816. Madrid, Museo del Prado.

¹¹⁴ Goya *en tiempos de guerra*, 456.

¹¹⁵ Morales y Marín, *Pintor Religioso*, 282.

robust red of her dress and setting her against a background of cloudy blue skies. The queen's elegant pearl necklace and lace collar demonstrate López's capacity for meticulous detail, and his careful line may be seen throughout the portrait.

For Goya, whose patriotism was in question after his involvement with the Bonapartist regime and whose aesthetics were no longer in favor, the grisaille commission represented an opportunity for the artist to reinvent himself. He had painted the same scene once before, for an altarpiece at the Church of San Fernando in Monte Torrero. Although the final painting was destroyed, a sketch survives in the collection of the Fundación Lázaro-Galdiano (ca. 1798-1800) [Fig. 26]. In both instances Goya employs the traditional imagery of the Deposition, substituting the slumping sick woman for the corpse of Christ.¹¹⁶ Goya concentrates pictorial incident within the lower half of both compositions and organizes his figures into semi-circles, highlighting the central heroine. What is striking, however, is the vast stylistic disparity between the two works. The sketch evidences loose, gestural brushstrokes and compares to *Taking of Christ* in its organization: Goya renders the central group in bright light while casting secondary figures into shadow. In its chiaroscuro and structure the sketch relates to *The Taking of Christ* [Fig. 9], but



Figure 26: Goya, sketch for *Saint Isabel of Portugal Tending to a Sick Woman*, oil on canvas, ca. 1798-1800. Madrid, Fundación Lázaro-Galdiano.

¹¹⁶ Goya *en tiempos de guerra*, 456.

stylistically it corresponds much more closely to the San Antonio de la Florida frescoes [Figs. 12, 13]. The grisaille also seems to reference *The Taking of Christ*, but it does so instead by the expressive capacity of its figures' facial expressions: comforting the invalid, Elizabeth wears a seemingly unflappable smile and gestures in benediction, while the figures around her betray feelings of melancholy, agony, or measured hope. By virtue of its structured, sculpted quality and its emphasis on gesture and response, the grisaille demonstrates a clear Neoclassical influence. In it, one sees Goya engaging with and participating in the artistic discourse that followed the reinstatement of Ferdinand VII.

By way of closing, this chapter will now move to a discussion of personal sentiment in Goya's art. In the scholarship analyses will often propose Goya's aversion or indifference to religious imagery, using as evidence the conformist quality of the art he produced from 1816-17. Such readings must be nuanced in order to maintain any authority, since these works represent only a fragment of his religious art. Further, arguments for Goya's secularism often prove reductive and unhelpful. Tomlinson provides a valuable critique of these kinds of analyses that draw broad conclusions from selectively chosen case studies: "A risk inherent in iconographic consideration of Goya's mature work is the sacrifice of the ambiguity inherent in much of his later imagery as one or another level of meaning is elevated to support a proposed interpretation."¹¹⁷ One sacrifices interpretive ambiguity—an integral aspect of Goya's complexity as an artist—by arguing for a universal secularism to his work.

¹¹⁷ Tomlinson, "*Goya and the Spirit of Enlightenment* by Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez and Eleanor Sayre," reviewed in *Art Journal* 48 no. 3 (1989): 262.

5. Religious Sentiment: The Case of Goya's Drawings

This section addresses Goya's private drawings as one instance where analyses have proven essentialist. A common charge against Goya's religious commissions states that his true (critical) sentiment manifests only in these uncensored drawings. Such a view may be found in the catalogue to the exhibition *Goya and the Spirit of Enlightenment*, in which Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez refers to the drawing albums as Goya's "hushed confessions," revelatory of a more sincere sentiment than any commission.¹¹⁸ This exhibition presented a highly selective offering of drawings that bolstered its theme of Goya-as-social critic.¹¹⁹ By juxtaposing these graphic works with Goya's paintings, the exhibition organizers suggested that the (curated) ideas expressed in the former must have significant bearing on the latter. Thus, the exhibition used the drawings to formulate an image of Goya that was oversimplified, and then it relied on that image to inform the rest of Goya's oeuvre.¹²⁰

Goya drew voluminously, his extant works on paper forming eight distinct cycles organized by the artist himself, in addition to other uncollated works. The largest of the albums, known as Album C, comprises at least 133 drawings executed in brush, India ink wash, and brown ink, and its contents are now dated to the years between the outbreak of

¹¹⁸ Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez, "Introduction," in *Goya and the Spirit of Enlightenment*, eds. Alfonso E. Pérez Sánchez and Eleanor Sayre (Boston: Museum of Fine Arts, 1989; exhibition catalogue), xxi.

¹¹⁹ See, for example, the selections from Album C that foreground Goya's criticisms of the Inquisition. *Ibid.*, cats. 98-106.

¹²⁰ In her review of *Goya and the Spirit of Enlightenment*, Janis Tomlinson eloquently raises and expounds upon several of these criticisms. Tomlinson, "Goya and the Spirit of Enlightenment," 260-4.

the Peninsular War (1808) and the restoration of the monarchy (1814).¹²¹ In *Goya and the Spirit of Enlightenment* and in Pierre Gassier’s catalogue, as elsewhere, the Album C drawings have been used to illustrate Goya’s “true” attitude toward the Church.

Under close examination Goya’s treatment of religious devotion appears to vary within and between the drawing albums.¹²² Perhaps the clearest example of anti-clericalism in Album C—and all of Goya’s drawings—is the fifty-first in the series (“C. 51”), titled *One still sees this* [Fig. 27]. In it, Goya depicts two figures, a monk and a chained convict, within the nominally sacred space of the church. Bearing a menacing look, the monk wields his cross as a weapon, attempting to force confession and



Figure 27: Goya, *Esta ya se ve* (*One still sees this*), Album C.51, ink and ink wash, ca. 1808-14. Madrid, Museo del Prado.

repentance from the prisoner, while the latter seems to faint from a combination of exhaustion and fear.

Goya’s drawing (and its caption) puts forth an unequivocal condemnation of fear mongering in the Church. Although C.51 expresses a decidedly critical view, it finds a telling comparison with H.44, titled by Gassier *He’s helping him to die well* (1824-8) [Fig.

28].¹²³ The striking compositional similarities

between the two works encourage us to read them together, as pendants. While the basic conception

¹²¹ Schulz, “Goya’s Manner: Surveying the Album Drawings,” In *The Spanish Manner: Drawings from Ribera to Goya* (New York: Frick Collection; in association with Scala Publishers, 2010; exhibition catalogue), 124.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 123.

¹²³ Pierre Gassier, *Francisco Goya, Drawings: The Complete Albums* (New York: Praeger, 1973), no. 459.

remains the same, the Album H drawing pictures the monk's offer of religion positively, with the monk's visage exhibiting gentleness and genuine concern. For his part, the convict seems open to true repentance. Thus, Goya balances the harsh anti-clericalism of C.51 with a softer and more open portrayal of religion in H.44. To say that Goya expresses a more sincere sentiment in his private drawings than elsewhere becomes problematic when conflicting attitudes like these exist.



Figure 28: Goya, *He's helping him to die well*, Album H.44, chalk, ca. 1824-8. Madrid, Museo del Prado.

Concerning this point Schulz cites the turbulence of the war and postwar years in Spain, concluding: "If we are to argue that the private character of the albums means that they contain Goya's 'true' thoughts and opinions (as is often claimed), it is important to recognize that these were far from constant or, for that matter, consistent."¹²⁴

Thus, it would behoove the viewer of Goya's drawings to maintain their interpretive flexibility, acknowledging Goya's shifting and complex attitudes. There are two other notable instances where Gassier reads harsh criticism onto the content of an open-ended engagement with religious subject matter. Drawing C.7, labeled *Into the Desert to Be a Saint, Amen*, depicts a muscular male figure in a rustic setting, with both the iconography and text caption referencing the religious life of asceticism [Fig. 29]. Gassier's commentary argues that in the context of the album this image functions as one

¹²⁴ Schulz, "Goya's Manner," 123.

of many assaults on the monastic orders.¹²⁵ One could not form such a critical understanding from a purely visual assessment, nor is it at all clear that Goya's title mocks his subject. The scholarship on drawing C.62 [Fig. 30] offers another example of interpretive heavy-handedness. Goya depicts a Benedictine monk at study over the Scriptures. Affixing the title *It May Be that He Is a Good Man*, the artist leaves his language and sentiment entirely ambiguous. Gassier nonetheless reads



Figure 30: Goya, *Puede ser que sea bueno* (*It may be that he is a good man*), Album C.62, ink and wash, ca. 1808-14. Madrid, Museo del Prado.

the drawing as a negative satire, Goya's scathing judgment of this inactive, unproductive man of the Church.¹²⁶

Scholarship has tended toward oversimplification in the interest of fashioning a consistent and easily grasped identity for Goya. However, significant value lies in maintaining the ambiguities and vicissitudes of Goya's own character. The drawing albums, in which a great amount of interpretive ambiguity exists, offer evidence of Goya's multi-faceted personality. They exhibit polyvalent

attitudes toward the Church and religious ideals—not just bitter attacks. Further, the



Figure 29: Goya, *Al desierto para ser santo, amen* (*Into the desert to be a saint, amen*), Album C.7, ink and wash, ca. 1808-14. Madrid, Museo del Prado.

¹²⁵ Gassier, *Drawings*, no. 157.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, no. 209.

argument that Goya reveals a truer, more negative sentiment toward religious imagery in private artworks falls flat when one considers that none of the drawings exhibit harsher anti-clericalism than the publicly sold *Caprichos*. Certain instances within Goya's drawings complicate the question of his relation to religious subjects, but they should not be used as a definitive statement of his attitudes one way or another.

6. Concluding Thoughts

Several Goya scholars see *Saints Justa and Rufina* as representative of the artist's apathy toward the religious genre. Gassier and Wilson-Bareau, for instance, state that "Goya does not seem to have felt any particular attraction for religious subjects and whenever he tackled them, as an immature young artist or in the full possession of his powers, he inevitably went beyond the traditions and conventions appropriate to this kind of painting."¹²⁷ As established in this chapter, though, authorial intentions must remain at some level indeterminate. The example of *Saints Justa and Rufina* also invalidates any claim that Goya was antithetical to tradition: the composition relied heavily on conventional symbolism and structure established by the Spanish baroque artist Murillo, and it received effusive praise from Ceán Bermúdez and the citizens of Seville for its achievement in that respect. Certainly Goya was motivated to execute this painting for monetary reasons. Yet, the aspersions of critics like Beruete, calling the painting cold and bland, seem to reflect more the degenerate state to which Neoclassical aesthetics had fallen than Goya's disinterest or ineptitude with religious subjects. The artist did follow a

¹²⁷ Gassier and Wilson-Bareau, *Life and Work*, 305.

tradition in the case of *Saints Justa and Rufina*, but that tradition was one ill-received by subsequent generations. The negative attention that this painting has brought Goya is made all the more ironic by the fact that he was not expressing his artistic ideals alone, but mingling them with (and subsuming them under) those of Ceán as intermediary and Catholic Seville as patron/audience.

CHAPTER V

TOWARD A BLACK AESTHETIC: GOYA'S FINAL RELIGIOUS PAINTINGS

In *The Last Communion of Saint Joseph of Calasanz* (1819), Goya paints a hauntingly dark church interior [Fig. 31]. The elderly saint kneels to receive the Eucharist, while behind him stretches a crowd of pious onlookers—students and monks metonymically representing the Piarist order. Goya includes an archway in the background, effectively expanding the pictorial space through the creation of depth. Re-deploying a convention seen in *Saint Bernardino Preaching* [Fig. 1] and elsewhere in Goya's religious works, the artist signals divine favor with a ray of light that shines the saint. The supernatural white beam seems especially conspicuous in the context of the near-black and earthy church interior.

This, Goya's last large altarpiece, stands in contradistinction to his painting for Seville Cathedral painted two years prior. Whereas *Saints Justa and Rufina* seems notable for its reserve, the *Last Communion* altarpiece exemplifies a late moment in Goya's stylistic and professional development, characterized by expressivity and relative independence from censorship. Gassier and



Figure 31: Goya, *The Last Communion of Saint Joseph of Calasanz*, oil on canvas, 1819. 98 x 71 in. (250 x 180 cm). Madrid, Colección de los Padres Escolapíos.

Wilson-Bareau read the painting's affective style as manifesting an increase in Goya's personal religiosity, counting this among the most "profoundly religious" paintings he ever created.¹²⁸ Eschewing claims for Goya's spirituality, one may see the painting's effectiveness as demonstrating a facility with religious subject matter often denied Goya in scholarship.

This chapter situates *The Last Communion* and the small *boceto* depicting *Christ on the Mount of Olives* [Fig. 32] within Goya's biography, refocusing claims for his achievement in these paintings. The dark-toned, brooding compositions of 1819 emerge from a moment when Goya experienced deteriorating health but enjoyed much creative freedom. They demonstrate an idiosyncratic experimentation with religious imagery, in which the artist applies his own subjective lens to previous iconographic examples. The preponderance of black paint in both, and the rough gestural style of *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, invites comparison with the so-called Black Paintings, completed over the subsequent four years. Finally, an iconographic analysis of the *boceto* illustrates the distinct emotive effects Goya achieved by borrowing and reusing artistic forms, and this point demonstrates the polyvalence of his imagery more generally. As a means of conclusion, this thesis

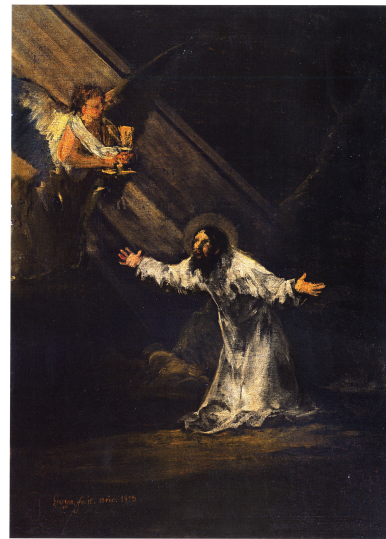


Figure 32: Goya, *Christ on the Mount of Olives (Agony in the Garden)*, oil on canvas, 1819. Madrid, Colección de los Padres Escolapíos.

¹²⁸ Gassier and Wilson-Bareau, *Life and Work*, 305.

indicates a trajectory for Goya's particular strain of religious expression within the art of his successors in Spanish painting.

1. Goya in 1819

The many stylistic and conceptual differences between *Saints Justa and Rufina* and Goya's individualistic statements in *The Last Communion* and *Christ on the Mount of Olives* must be the result of several variables. Goya suffered a life-threatening illness at the end of 1819, an event he memorialized in *Self-*

portrait with Dr. Arrieta (1820) [Fig. 33]. An inscription below the scene records the impetus for its execution: "Goya thankful to his doctor Arrieta: for the skill and care with which he saved his life during his short and dangerous illness, endured at the end of 1819, at seventy-three years of age. He painted it in 1820." In this instance illness cannot be said to have initiated artistic exploration like it did in Goya's career during the 1790s. He completed both *The Last Communion* and *Christ on the Mount of Olives* in August of 1819, before his infirmity.

However, failing health generally seems likely to have affected Goya's stylistic development. In their grey-black tonality and bleak conception, these works, along with the Black Paintings (1819-23), manifest a dark



Figure 33: Goya, *Self-portrait with Dr. Arrieta*, oil on canvas, 1820. Minneapolis Institute of Arts.

aesthetic unique in Goya's career and suggest ruminations of his own death. Significantly, though, this sensibility had begun to develop even before his grave illness.

Goya's stylistic exploration related to his poor health seems to have been further encouraged by relative financial security. This would have meant that Goya was less restricted by the aesthetics of patron and audience, and thus free to explore his own expressive style in these works. It seems likely that Goya's finances improved between 1817 and 1819, enabling him to treat the commission for *The Last Communion* with a sense of altruism. His patrons were the fathers of the Royal College of San Antón Abad in Madrid, the church of the Piarist order. Though Goya charged 20,000 *reales*, he returned 6,800 of the first installment. Moreover, he asked significantly less for this commission than he had for the Seville altarpiece (28,000), a painting that had smaller dimensions, fewer figures, and was executed for a wealthier patron.¹²⁹ Additionally, the artist did not attempt to sell but gifted *Christ on the Mount of Olives* to the Piarists, writing "Here I give to you this painting that I leave for the community and it will be the last that I do in Madrid."¹³⁰ Goya's pragmatic nature would not have allowed him to carry out these acts of altruism if he had been in a precarious living situation.

The charitable circumstances of the 1819 paintings suggest a strong connection between Goya and his subject and patrons. Goya admired Saint Joseph of Calasanz (1556-1648), whose mission was a sweeping, democratic reform of the school system. The founder of the Piarists, Calasanz incorporated care for youth as an essential tenet of the order and was responsible for opening Europe's first free school for impoverished

¹²⁹ Manuela Mena Marqués, *Goya en tiempos de guerra*, 503.

¹³⁰ *Diplomatario* no. 257, 379.

children in November 1597.¹³¹ Goya and his friend Zapater had been educated at the “pious school” as children, and the rare charity Goya demonstrated with the 1819 paintings may well reflect a desire to express gratitude.

Goya produced both *The Last Communion* and *Christ on the Mount of Olives* in 1819—the year labeled “*l’heure religieuse*” by F. J. Sánchez Cantón in relation to Goya’s oeuvre.¹³² Cantón considered these two paintings especially significant because they seemed to express a moving sincerity in their execution. A careful assessment reveals that the 1819 paintings are not an exception within Goya’s artistic output. Rather, these paintings demonstrate by their affective character that the artist was not uncomfortable with religious commissions, as Sarah Symmons has argued, nor was he apathetic toward religious subject matter, as the Gassier and Wilson-Bareau catalogue raisonné claims.¹³³

2. The Composition of *The Last Communion of Saint Joseph of Calasanz*

As in his composition for *The Taking of Christ* in Toledo Cathedral, Goya drew on a studied knowledge of the physical setting for *The Last Communion*, echoing and extending the actual interior of San Antón Abad in his painting. When placed at the altar the work created a *trompe l’oeil* effect, through which the artist mystically blurred the boundaries between physical and painted space.¹³⁴ Goya’s creation of illusionistic depth within the scene also allows the image to read as a procession: initially halted at the

¹³¹ John J. Delaney, *Dictionary of Saints* (New York: Doubleday, 1980), 128.

¹³² F.J. Sánchez Cantón, *Goya*, 89.

¹³³ Symmons, *Pursuit of Patronage*, 57-8. Gassier and Wilson-Bareau, *Life and Work*, 305.

¹³⁴ Mena Marqués, *Goya en tiempos de guerra*, 504.

figures of the priest and Calasanz in the foreground, the viewer's eye then wanders into the recesses of the dark and gloomy interior, only to make its way back across the onlookers and rest again on the presentation of the Eucharist. Valeriano Bozal has noted that each episode in this procession corresponds with a more advanced age group, making the whole a metaphorical evocation of the states of life.¹³⁵ Accordingly, Goya divides the composition horizontally in thirds, the rightmost group representing youth, the figures between Calasanz and the priest symbolizing maturity, and the left group, old age. The procession further corresponds to a type of spiritual ascendancy, where childhood reflects a distracted naïveté, maturity recognizes a need for repentance, and old age demonstrates true piety. The postures of the first two groups bear out such a reading, as does the visible spirituality of the two eldest figures—a man, to the left of the priest, of whom the viewer can only glimpse a pair of clasped hands and a wizened face turned upward to heaven, and the faithful saint himself.

With no iconographic precedent the scene appears to be an original conceit of Goya's. Wilson-Bareau has drawn comparisons with the imagery of his contemporaneous Black Border Album (Album E, ca. 1816-20), in which one encounters figures of similar dignity and psychological depth.¹³⁶ Goya's drawing of *Penitence* (E. 43) [Fig. 34] in indian ink and brush provides a particularly telling comparison. A solitary ruminating nun kneels and gazes downward at the crucifix she clutches in her hands. Goya has rendered the scene in stark contrasts of black ink and white paper, using very minimal line and

¹³⁵ Bozal, *Pinturas negras*, 39.

¹³⁶ Wilson-Bareau, "Goya's Albums," in *Goya, Drawings from his Private Albums* (London: Hayward Gallery, in association with Lund Humphries, 2001; exhibition catalogue), 18-19.

establishing figural depth by means of shadow. This nun assumes the same pose as Calasanz, only in reverse, and the conceptual importance of chiaroscuro in both compositions justifies Wilson-Bareau's observation. In several drawings from the Bordeaux years, too, Goya would depict praying figures that echo the posture of Calasanz but with essential differences. One of these, labeled *He's praying* (G.23), shows a disheveled man kneeling at the foot of his bed, arms crossed in a gesture of repentance, his visage a picture of intense remorse [Fig. 35]. That figure juxtaposed with the figure of Calasanz creates a powerful impression of the latter's sanctity and peace before God.

Joseph of Calasanz was only canonized in July 1767, and an iconography for the saint had not been firmly established by the time of Goya's painting. The theme of the Communion may have been proposed by the Piarists to memorialize the importance this sacrament held for Calasanz: the saint had installed in each of his schools a central chapel for the celebration of Communion, and even at ninety-one years of age he observed the sacrament every day in the order's Roman church of San Pantaleón.¹³⁷ During his life the social progressivism for which Calasanz stood—evident in his propagation of the controversial teachings of Galileo Galilei in



Figure 34: Goya, *Penitencia* (*Penitence*), Album E.43, Indian ink and brush, ca. 1816-20. Paris, private collection.

¹³⁷ Mena Marqués, *Goya en tiempos de guerra*, 503.



Figure 35: Goya, *Reza (He's praying)*, Album G.23, crayon, ca. 1824-8. Destroyed (1945) in Berlin, formerly Gerstenberg collection.

science and Tommaso Campanella in math, in addition to his policy of admitting Jewish students—made him an object of suspicion within the Church.¹³⁸ In 1642 the Inquisition interrogated Calasanz concerning a scandal within the Piarist order that would lead to its dissolution in 1646. Calasanz remained an outcast at the time of his death (August 25, 1648), and the Piarists were only restored as an order in 1656.¹³⁹ From this context Manuela Mena Marqués has deduced that Goya's lighting carries thematic significance. That the beam

of light shines directly on Calasanz and not on the priest may signal Goya's empathy for the saint as a social progressive amid the darkness of oppressive obscurantism.¹⁴⁰ Though intriguing, her assertion is dubious. A high altarpiece for a provincial order, the painting would be an ill-fitting venue for the artist to express anti-clerical sentiments.

Thus, in *The Last Communion* Goya navigated a series of complex aims, identifying with a social activist, pleasing his monastic patron, and pursuing his stylistic development toward a darker aesthetic. Somber in subject, mood, and tonality, the 1819 altarpiece offers a profound contrast to Goya's picture of *Saint Bernardino Preaching* [Fig. 1] painted for San Francisco el Grande in 1782-3. The viewer encounters here not a

¹³⁸ Mena Marqués, *Goya en tiempos de guerra*, 503.

¹³⁹ Delaney, *Dictionary of Saints*, 128.

¹⁴⁰ Mena Marqués, *Goya en tiempos de guerra*, 504.

saint at the height of his ministry, in full possession of his God-given faculties, but a weathered and reverential old man finding repose in the Holy Communion. With his viewer, Goya moves fluidly between the physical and spiritual realms, demonstrating a comfort in both.

3. *Christ on the Mount of Olives (Agony in the Garden)*

In the *boceto* depicting *Christ on the Mount of Olives* [Fig. 32] Goya conjures for a setting an otherworldly black void, reminiscent of the backgrounds of Crucifixion scenes painted by Spanish baroque artist Francisco de Zurbaran (1598-1664). A patch of brown paint in the bottom third signals the ground on which Christ kneels, arms outstretched and gaze lifted to heaven. Goya places the Christ figure at the intersection of his schematic divine light, descending from upper left, and a vaguely suggested tree that leans toward the upper right, lending him visual prominence within the composition. In the upper left corner an angel breaks the beam of light, bearing in hand a chalice. Perhaps symbolic of the Eucharist (and therefore the presence of God), this could also be the metaphorical cup of suffering, to which Christ refers in his prayer from the garden: “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”¹⁴¹ Thus, Goya leaves ambiguous whether the angel foretells aid or affliction. The uncovered repainting of the angel’s arm and chalice suggests that this painting was a preparatory work for a second larger altarpiece—perhaps meant to accompany *The Last Communion*. The artist enlivens an otherwise oppressively dark scene with virtuosic

¹⁴¹ Mt 26:39.

passages of color: broad, golden bands of light, a gritty white robe that seems itself to struggle against encroaching darkness, smudges of red on Christ's fingers (for "being in agony . . . His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground"), and a ruddy-skinned angel with indigo-accented wings.¹⁴² At lower left he signs the painting "Goya made this in 1819."

By comparing and contrasting *Christ on the Mount of Olives* with two earlier depictions of Christ discussed in previous chapters, *Crucified Christ* (1780) and *The Taking of Christ* (1798), one detects notable variance in Goya's religious imagery. A large stylistic gap separates Goya's reception piece of 1780 and the 1819 *boceto*. Figural idealism gives way to highly expressive forms. In the later work the body of Christ lacks volume, disappearing into the folds of his robe that also seems to dissolve at the lower parts of the sleeve. Visible, summary brushstrokes replace Goya's earlier subtlety in handling. Christ's visage betrays a divine serenity in the Crucifixion scene but expresses terror and exasperation in the later painting. Gassier and Wilson-Bareau referred to these elements by calling Goya's 1819 paintings the most "profound" of his religious works. Yet all of these differences may be attributed to the change in circumstance as much as any stylistic development: in the former work Goya sought to placate the academic art community by conforming to an established aesthetic, while in the latter, a personal gift to the Piarists, he explored stylistic freedom and depicted a raw spirituality.

The Taking of Christ [Fig. 9] provides a much closer comparison; in content and style *Christ on the Mount of Olives* may be seen as parallel to the Toledo altarpiece. The

¹⁴² Lk 22:44.

two paintings depict successive scenes in the Passion narrative, Christ's prayer in the garden being directly followed by his arrest. They also exhibit a similar emotive employment of chiaroscuro: darkness pervades the scene, broken only by the symbolic light of the white robes of Christ. In both works Goya creates deeply pathetic portrayals of the Christ figure that underscore his humanity and suffering. Accordingly, they share a somber and despairing tone. In this comparison the notable parallels disrupt expectation: given the great disparity in public visibility and patron involvement between the Toledo commission and the gift to the Piarists, their similarity is surprising. In this way Goya demonstrates again the complexity of his stylistic choices and the consequent elusiveness of a stable meaning.

Though Goya could draw from a broad iconographic tradition for the Agony in the Garden, his composition seems to follow most closely a painting (ca. 1754) [Fig. 36] done by the Italian-born baroque artist Corrado Giaquinto.¹⁴³ Goya would have known Giaquinto's work well from his decorations for the Royal Palace and his lingering influence on the court painters at the time of Goya's arrival in Madrid. While Giaquinto's painting exhibits a polished finality that Goya's does not, the basic compositional elements are strikingly similar: an angel with a goblet descending from the left, rays of heavenly light announcing its presence, and Christ kneeling and gazing up to heaven. What becomes a vaguely suggested ground in the Goya painting begins as a fully developed rocky outcropping in the Giaquinto, in which the artist depicts a significantly

¹⁴³ The Giaquinto painting hung in the king's prayer chamber at the Buen Retiro Palace and then occupied the same space in the Royal Palace upon its completion in 1764. Goya would have had opportunity to view the painting at this location. From the Royal Palace it passed to the Prado, where it appears in the first catalogue of 1828. To my knowledge this comparison has not yet been made in Goya scholarship.

more naturalistic setting. A gnarled tree trunk rises above and to the right of Christ; this vestigial element remains in Goya's painting and solidifies a connection between the two works apart from the similarly conceived interaction between Christ and the angel. Though in the *Giaquinto* an unremarkable aspect of the naturalistic setting, the tree seems conspicuous in Goya's supernatural environment. Barely identifiable, it serves in the latter instance simply as a second diagonal to emphasize the central Christ figure. This shared compositional element demonstrates Goya's forethought in developing the scene and provides further evidence to suggest that he intended to complete a larger altarpiece of the same subject.



Figure 36: Corrado Giaquinto, *Agony in the Garden*, oil on canvas, ca. 1754. Madrid, Museo del Prado.

The kneeling figure with arms outstretched recurs as a motif throughout Goya's oeuvre, appearing prominently in *Saint Isidore* (ca. 1775-8), *Third of May, 1808* (1814), *Sad Premonitions of What is to Come* (frontispiece to *The Disasters of War*, 1812-15), and several drawings including *Weeping and Wailing* (G.50, 1824-8) and *Divine Liberty* (ca. 1820). Klingender suggested an iconographic reading of the kneeling figure whereby each instance represented an invocation for the oppressed.¹⁴⁴ Thus, *Christ on the Mount of Olives* did not represent a visualization of religious piety but a continuation of Goya's

¹⁴⁴ Klingender, *Democratic Tradition*, 188.

humanistic impulse that would culminate conceptually in his rendering of *Divina Libertad*. Completed directly after Ferdinand VII signed Spain's new constitution in 1820, this drawing served for Klingender to reveal Goya's primary concern: the hopes and struggles of his native people. For Klingender, the religious character of the *Christ on the Mount of Olives* was but a "momentary choice," its subject matter irrelevant in contrast to the ideological imagery of restriction/liberation.¹⁴⁵

One must remain critical of analyses like Klingender's that attempt to explicate Goya's purposes with a single, broadly applicable formula. Rather, what proves striking about Goya's use of the kneeling figure motif is the broad range of instances in which he employed it and the diversity of emotional effects he achieved from its employment. The figure appears in works of an overtly religious nature to denote awe before divine revelation or supplication before a greater power. In secular works like *Sad Premonitions of What is to Come*, the figure reveals a heightened sense of desperation and abandon. In *Third of May, 1808*, Goya spiritualizes a nominally secular work by interposing a kneeling man who, bearing the stigmata, acts as a Christ-like victim. Thus, although Klingender suggested a fixed significance for this motif, its polyvalence demonstrates again Goya's shrewd ability to reuse and adapt artistic forms in his lexicon to achieve distinct effects.

The affective quality of Goya's 1819 paintings should figure significantly into constructions of his artistic identity. Yet, their achievement was not unique: Goya demonstrated in these works the same acute ability he had shown throughout his career to

¹⁴⁵ Klingender, *Democratic Tradition*, 188.

make a desired impact on his audience. The Piarists apparently granted him creative freedom with the *Last Communion* altarpiece, but the aim of the commission was clearly to memorialize the order's venerable founder. The painting's dark tones, contemplative mood, and sensitive treatment would have allowed for a powerful emotive connection between the Piarists and the subject of their new altarpiece. Goya's portrayal of *Christ on the Mount of Olives* bears comparison with his cabinet pictures of 1793-4 because of its exploratory nature. Considered as an artwork in its own right, this painting demonstrates Goya's perpetual desire to test the expressive limits of his medium. A virtuosic and gritty application of paint enhances the piece's tangibly tense atmosphere. *Christ on the Mount of Olives* serves as a characteristic example of Goya's religious work by manifesting the artist's unique ability to picture the duality of spiritualism and humanity.

4. Epilogue: The Legacy of Goya's Religious Imagery

As a means of conclusion, this section will make a few brief observations on the reception and integration of Goya's religious art within Spain's unique cultural heritage. In the 1831 biography written by Goya's son Javier, one finds evidence of the high esteem the artist's religious paintings were afforded shortly after the artist's death:

The paintings done for the Church of Monte-Terrero in Saragossa, those for the Cathedral of Valencia, the Taking of Christ in Toledo, the Virgin in the Church of the town of Chinchón, Sts. Justa and Rufina in Seville, a Saint John and Saint Francis for America, the Venuses that were owned by the Prince of Peace, the equestrian portrait of the Duke of Wellington and his Excellency General Palafox, and some other portraits such as that of her Excellency the Marquesa of Santa Cruz and various others, especially those that he kept in his own studio, attest that

nothing was beyond him in Painting, and that he knew the magic (a term he always used) of the atmosphere of a painting.¹⁴⁶

Javier gives the religious genre pride of place in listing his father's characteristic achievements, citing its representatives first and most frequently. That Javier—who made part of his living from marketing and selling his father's paintings—viewed the religious works as integral to Goya's artistic identity suggests that they enjoyed a broader positive reception in Spain at that historical moment.

In the years following his death Goya became a touchstone for a late and dramatic form of Spanish Romanticism, championed by Eugenio Lucas and Leonardo Alenza, that perpetuated elements of his religious iconography. Lucas (1817-1870) was the most famous follower of Goya in his day, achieving in his paintings a striking stylistic likeness to his master.¹⁴⁷ Inspired by Goya's subject matter as much as his gestural brushwork, Lucas painted bullfights and a series of Inquisition scenes that echo Goya significantly in their emotive capacity.¹⁴⁸ If Javier Goya's biography does indicate a moment that was receptive to the religious paintings, Alenza (1807-1845) was in Spain working at the height of that moment. A genre painter also heavily influenced by the northern masters of the seventeenth century, Alenza appropriated several iconographic aspects of Goya's religious work. In his painting of *The Last Rites* (1840) [Fig. 37] Alenza preserves both Goya's fascination with religious ritual and his acute attention to the life of common people. The painting exhibits a dark palette suffused by a single source of warm light,

¹⁴⁶ Javier Goya, "A Biography of Goya written by his Son," 307.

¹⁴⁷ Javier Barón, "Nineteenth-Century Spanish Painting and Sculpture in the Collections of the Prado," in *The Nineteenth Century in the Prado*, eds. José Luis Díez and Javier Barón (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2008), 39.

¹⁴⁸ *The Nineteenth Century in the Prado*, cats. 15-17.

evoking Goya's *Taking of Christ* and *Third of May, 1808*.¹⁴⁹ Alenza employs vigorous, emotive brushwork that enlivens the scene and reveals a goyesque affinity for portraying the human condition. Moreover, Alenza similarly merges genre and religious subjects—either spiritualizing humanity or grounding divine occurrence in the natural.



Figure 37: Leonardo Alenza, *The Last Rites*, oil on canvas, 1840. Madrid, Museo del Prado.

Outside of Spain, Goya's religious paintings have never received similar praise or imitation from artists—although his legacy in other respects was definitive. Goya's art indelibly marked nineteenth-century European painting in both its ostensible truth to reality and its daring facture.¹⁵⁰ During the 1860s Goya's style was deeply admired as “proto-impressionist” and broadly imitated.¹⁵¹ Later followers in the 1880s emphasized instead the fantastical, dream-like character of his content.¹⁵² In each case the goyesque painters accentuated one aspect of his artistic personality to the exclusion of others. Goya scholarship has followed a parallel and selective trajectory that this thesis has attempted to amend in two ways: first, by stressing Goya's complexity as an artist and the pitfalls of neglecting certain aspects of his artistic identity, and second, by pointing to the genre of religious paintings as one

¹⁴⁹ At the moment of Alenza's painting, Spanish aesthetics considered Goya a master of lighting on par with Rembrandt. José Luis Díez, *The Nineteenth Century in the Prado*, 134.

¹⁵⁰ Tomlinson, *Goya y Lucientes*, 292.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 297.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 299.

particularly affected by scholarly oversimplification. My hope is to have recovered these works from the undue obscurity into which they have been systematically cast.

In the end, one might even argue that “religious art” is a meaningless category in terms of Goya’s artistic identity. All of his work, religious or secular, bears evidence of the dualities and ironies within Goya’s character. His paintings reveal shrewd pragmatism and lofty idealism in varying measure. They demonstrate a commitment to artistic innovation (*invención*) that maintains a place for Spain’s artistic tradition. Whether strictly religious in subject matter or not, Goya’s works consistently manifest elements of the spiritual and the earthly. Juxtaposing *Saint Bernardino Preaching with Saints Justa and Rufina*, or *Crucified Christ with Christ on the Mount of Olives*, illustrates that one side of this duality often surfaces more prominently. The stylistic disparity between each of these works shows an impressively wide range that complements these differing sentiments. Yet, considered as a whole, Goya’s artistic output shows a complex sensibility that incorporates both the common and the holy. For these reasons, a painting like *The Last Communion of Saint Joseph of Calasanz* should be given an important place in discussions of Goya, Spanish art, and Romanticism alongside works like *The Third of May, 1808*. The former painting, like the latter, comprises a kind of nexus between the temporal and the heavenly realms. It is this dualistic profundity, an integral aspect to all of Goya’s art, that is revealed most significantly in his religious paintings.

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