

THE EMBEDDED SELF-PORTRAIT IN ITALIAN SACRED ART
OF THE CINQUECENTO AND EARLY SEICENTO

by

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THESIS ABSTRACT

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Cases of Italian embedded self-portraiture appear in the sacred art of some of the most renowned artists of the Cinquecento and early Seicento, artists such as Bronzino, Michelangelo, Titian, Tintoretto, and Caravaggio. This thesis first examines the history of the practice from its origins in Quattrocento Florence and Venice then argues that an important development in the function and presentation of embedded self-portraits can be observed as Cinquecento artists experienced broad shifts in religious and cultural life as a result of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. It also assesses three works by Caravaggio to suggest that embedding self-portraits in religious art was a variable and meaningful convention that allowed artists to inject both their personal and public emotions. This thesis argues that in the Cinquecento and early Seicento, the very gesture of embedding a self-portrait in sacred artworks provided a window into an artist's individuality, personality, and piety.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The visual construction of individual identity is only part of what made portraiture fascinating to viewers during the Italian Renaissance and Baroque periods. During this process, the portraitist navigated, interpreted, and employed a web of physical, social, and personal elements specific to his or her subject to arrive at a convincing artificial presence; a presence that often conveyed, among other qualities, status, pride, piety, and character. There were also visual and social transactions between subject, artist and viewer that took place during the production and subsequent reception of a portrait, each transaction vulnerable to changes in decorum, convention, and context. The issues art historians face in scholarly pursuits that aim to identify and interpret portraits are complicated by the fact that so many variables existed in the creation of a portrait. The art historian must consider each element carefully, using sensitivity and caution, if a plausible, balanced study is to be achieved.

Although a renewed interest in humanism and individualism facilitated portraiture's remarkable growth in frequency and sophistication during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Europe, the practice of capturing visual representations of dynamic, living, breathing and evolving personas can be traced to our earliest impulses to create images. The definition of what merits inclusion in the category of portraiture is often changeable, but for the sake of clarity, the baseline definition of portraiture that will be used in this thesis is taken from Richard Brilliant as, “works of art, intentionally made of living or once living people by artists, in a variety of media, and for an audience.”¹

¹ Richard Brilliant, *Portraiture*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991): 7-8.

Studies of self-portraiture are presented with many of the same impulses and difficulties experienced in assessments of portraiture. In self-portraiture, however, what would otherwise be a negotiation between multiple individuals became largely a dialogue with the self, which required a new degree of intimacy with and knowledge of oneself. While the artist intensively labored to extrapolate the most convincing and recognized parts of his or her subject in portraiture, self-portraiture afforded full insight and knowledge of invisible constituents, such as personality and character. Self-portraiture is still subject to influences related to decorum, society, and culture despite this specific relationship between subject and object.

In an artist's vast repertoire of identifying features available for use in portraiture and self-portraiture, physical appearance was the most inherently recognized. Unfortunately for the historian of art, physical likeness is often difficult to confirm in Renaissance and Baroque art. The notion of self-portraiture is broad and of further concern is its insecure definition, which is often complicated by the famous proverb "every painter paints himself."² Brilliant suggested, "One image of the artist is surely to be found in all his work, recognizably manifesting his identity in the telltale signature of his personal style, in the choice of subject matter, and in its characteristic treatment."³ Indeed, the traditional belief that self-portraiture necessitated the inclusion of physiognomic identifiers was challenged by artists of the early twentieth century and

² Leonardo da Vinci is one Renaissance master to have proclaimed this truism, See Colin Eisler, "Every Artist Paints Himself": Art History as Biography and Autobiography," *Social Research* 54, n. 1 (1987): 73-99.

³ Brilliant, *Portraiture*, 142. See also Eisler, "Every Artist Paints Himself: Art History as Biography and Autobiography," 73.

continues today.⁴ But this thesis will take a more traditional definition of the self-portrait as still bound by physiognomic signifiers.

Within self-portraiture, there is an important distinction to be made between the autonomous and what is termed in this thesis as the embedded self-portrait.⁵ In autonomous self-portraiture, the artist occupies a position as the only subject. In contrast, the embedded self-portrait is only *part* of a larger context, which in many cases is a narrative whose primary subject is the story. The viewer must now consider not only the method in which the artist visualized his or her own identity in the piece, but additionally the choice of context and his or her placement within it. Many embedded portraits and self-portraits are found in religious contexts or narratives, which is the focus of this Master's thesis. Scholar Paolo Berdini has described the broader process of an artist's interpretation of scripture, which is another variable this thesis considers:

“The painter reads the text and translates his scriptural reading into a problem in representation, to which he offers a solution - the image. In that image the beholder acknowledges not the text in the abstract, but the painter's reading of the text so that the effect the image has on the beholder is a function of what the painter wants the beholder to experience in the text. Painting is not the simple visualization of the narrative of the text but an expansion of that text, subject to discursive strategies of various kinds.”⁶

In light of the complex transactions taking place between artist, the artwork, and scripture, much about the placement and context of embedded self-portraiture in religious

⁴ Henri Matisse's *The Painter and His Model* (1917) and Arnold Schönberg's *Self-portrait* (1911) are examples of this challenge.

⁵ Use of the term 'embedded' taken from Azar Rejaie, *Defining Artistic Identity in the Florentine Renaissance: Vasari, Embedded Self-Portraits and the Patron's Role*, (Dissertation, Pittsburgh University Press, 2006).

⁶ Paolo Berdini, *The Religious Art of Jacopo Bassano: Painting As Visual Exegesis*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997): 35.

narratives begs consideration. This thesis treats the intersection between two rich fields, self-portraiture and religious art, from the Quattrocento to the early Seicento.

Self-portraits embedded within religious art likely developed from a fourteenth century convention of donor portraiture. In such cases, donors are often distinguished from the divinities through scale and are seen standing or kneeling on the periphery of the scene as a contemporary witness to biblical events. There appear to have been several key motivations for such an inclusion: acknowledgement of financial support of the church, patronage of the arts, the establishment of a pious connection between the donor and holy scene, and the validation that such a holy event occurred. In some cases the donor appeared not at the threshold of the scene, but within it. There was additionally a commemorative motive for donors, who could be freed from the bonds of their mortality and remembered for graciousness, patronage, and piety.

During the late Trecento and early Quattrocento, Italian artists expanded on this convention and began embedding their self-portraits in religious narratives, often in similar peripheral locations and in reduced scale. The resurgence of humanist philosophy during the Quattrocento encouraged artists to pursue higher social statuses and professional recognition, which is reflected in the evolution of embedded self-portraiture during this time.⁷ As could be expected, the Quattrocento witnessed embedded self-portraiture fully emerge as an established genre. Quattrocento and Cinquecento artists appear to have had similar commemorative motivations as donors, as many used embedded self-portraiture and portraiture to glorify themselves and artists influential to their work. In the Cinquecento, representing oneself as a biblical character in the

⁷ Astrik Gabriel, *The Educational Ideas of Vincent of Beauvais*, (Indiana, Notre Dame: Medieval Institute, 1956): 8.

religious scene, a practice that was established by donors in the late Quattrocento, became fashionable. In these cases, artists experienced a transformation and assumed certain qualities specific to the character chosen as their surrogates. As embedded portraiture and embedded self-portraiture became the subjects of criticism from individuals who felt the practice was blasphemous and indecent in the early Cinquecento, artists began to innovate with autonomous self-portraiture. The increased use of autonomous self-portraiture in the Cinquecento also serves as evidence that artists were continuing to engage in deep self-reflection and examination of their subjective individuality.

While the practice of embedding self-portraits in religious narratives reached its apex during the second half of the Quattrocento in Florence and Venice, a number of significant examples can be located well into the Cinquecento, Seicento, and Settecento. Yet no study has approached the topic of embedded self-portraiture within the context of Counter-Reformation Italy. The present thesis explores several major types of embedded self-portraits in Quattrocento, Cinquecento, and early Seicento Italian religious art. This thesis has identified as many examples as possible within this scope, but because historical evidence is often limited, it must be admitted that the list will necessarily be incomplete. Unless otherwise noted, all cases detailed in the present thesis have earned general acceptance among scholars. Both primary and secondary sources are cited in corroboration with the identifications. The intention of this thesis is to treat this understudied area with a thematic approach, rather than an in-depth analysis of each individual work, its artist, and its full context within his life and corpus.

A few recent publications have explored, at varying depths, embedded self-images. Consideration of the patron's role and motivations form the core of Azar Rejaie's 2006 dissertation *Defining Artistic Identity in the Florentine Renaissance: Vasari, Embedded Self-Portraits and the Patron's Role*. The dissertation is, apart from being one of the most recent publications, the sole text that treats embedded self-images as a distinct and exclusive topic. Rejaie systematically traces previously treated and well-documented examples of embedded self-images in Quattrocento Florence, which may well be considered the major center for the birth and subsequent evolution of embedded self-portraits on the Italian peninsula. Rejaie's emphasis on patrons provides her readers with a fresh perspective not explored in previous scholarship. She also parallels the evolution of patrons' identity and social status with those of artists, which allowed her to illuminate a unique connection in their motivations to include embedded portraits and self-portraits in commissioned religious works. Rejaie discovers that the lures of including likenesses of contemporary individuals in religious narratives, whether donors, clergy or artists themselves, are strikingly similar.

Giorgio Vasari's monumental *Lives of the Artists* is without a doubt the most extensive primary source that identified embedded self-images in Italian Renaissance art.⁸ Although his authority has and will continue to be the subject of vexed skepticism, Vasari's text remains the indispensable starting point for a study like this one. Rejaie's

⁸ Giorgio Vasari, Julia C. Bondanella, and Peter E. Bondanella, *The Lives of the Artists*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991). It should be noted that throughout this thesis I use several different publications of Vasari's *Lives*. Many translations choose to isolate the most important artists of the Renaissance for whom Vasari provided a *vita*, leaving important information on other artists out. In addition to the aforementioned translation there are: Giorgio Vasari, *Le vite de' più eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani, da Cimabue insino a' tempi nostri nell'edizione per i tipi di Lorenzo Torrentino Firenze 1550*, ed. L. Bellosi and A. Rossi (Turin, 1986); Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of Seventy of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, IV. ed. Blashfield and Hopkins. (New York, 1923); Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, ed. Betty Burroughs, (Simon and Schuster: New York, 1946).

treatment of Vasari and his agenda in identifying portraits and self-portraits of artists is more complete and thorough than this master's thesis can do justice. She suggested that, "By presenting the artists as dutiful citizens whose works glorified and enhanced their cities, Vasari puts them on a par with the illustrious and notable figures of whom a Renaissance patron would naturally desire a portrait."⁹ At stake was the social and professional status of artists during the Cinquecento, a status that had been in a state of flux since the first half of the Quattrocento and arguably earlier, too. While artists had seen their social status rise during Vasari's life, decrees on sacred images established by the Council of Trent in 1563 cast uncertainty on their creative license, an important part of their professional and personal identities. This thesis will rely on several of Vasari's identifications, though primary documented sources as well as contemporary portraits of the artists in question will be cited to corroborate and strengthen his claims.

Leon Battista Alberti (1404-1472) was another Renaissance author who commented, albeit sparingly, on the practice of embedding portraits in Quattrocento art. Alberti's *Della Pittura*, published in 1435, was extremely influential to artists on the peninsula and abroad. *Della Pittura* revolutionized not only how art objects were conceived, constructed and created, but also how artists viewed themselves as skilled and learned makers of images deserving of a higher social and professional status. In addition to providing lessons in how to construct perspective, manufacture paints and canvases, and critique beauty, Alberti stressed that artists must be highly educated individuals who needed to fashion a new professional self in the Quattrocento. Significantly, Alberti made a request to his readers in the concluding lines of *Della*

⁹ Rejaie, *Defining Artistic Identity in the Florentine Renaissance*, 32.

Pittura, which has informed many studies of embedded portraits and self-portraits and deserves quotation in full:

“These [are the notions] which I thought to report in the present commentaries on painting. If these are such as to offer an advantage and some usefulness to painters, I expect, above all, this prize for my toils: that they paint my face in their *istoria*, in such a way to proclaim, to posterity, that they are mindful of a benefit and grateful, or rather, that I have been a scholar of art.”¹⁰

Alberti’s statement thus sheds an important light on the commemorative function of embedded portraits in the Quattrocento, largely prefiguring Vasari’s motives over a century later. It is not clear whether Alberti was making reference to embedded portraits and self-portraits, in another statement within the pages of *Opere Volgari*, his five-volume treatise on topics ranging from the family to painting, he instructs painters to include a figure that looks out and engages the viewer or brings their attention to the most important part of the scene.¹¹ Because the creation of a self-portrait required the use of a mirror or some other surface to reflect back one’s likeness, an intense gaze directed toward the viewer is an often-noted characteristic of self-portraiture. In light of this distinctive feature, embedded self-portraits in religious narratives often perform the function Alberti describes in the *Opere Volgari*, engaging the viewer with a direct gaze.

Joanna Woods-Marsden’s 1998 text *Renaissance Self-Portraiture: The Visual Construction of Identity and the Social Status of the Artist* is perhaps only second to Azar Rejaie's dissertation in its treatment of embedded self-images as participant and witness

¹⁰ Leon Battista Alberti and Rocco Sinisgalli, *Leon Battista Alberti: On Painting*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011): 84.

¹¹ Leon Battista Alberti, C. Greyson, *Opere volgari*, (Bari: G. Laterza, 1960-73): 72-3.

in Quattrocento Florence.¹² Her chapter entitled “The Florentine Artist as Witness in Religious Narrative” is particularly significant for this study in its mapping of the evolution of the Florentine convention of embedded self-portraits. Because the increase in professional recognition of the artist during the last quarter of the Quattrocento continued well into the Cinquecento, Woods-Marsden’s attention to artist identity and status provides a significant basis for the examination of artists of the Counter-Reformation and beyond. Woods-Marsden closely linked the growth and stylistic development of embedded self-images in Florence to the increased concept of subjectivity that accompanied the Renaissance’s appreciation of humanism. Likewise, Katherine Brown’s chapters “The Artist as Participant” and “The Artist in Guise” in her 2000 publication *The Painter’s Reflection: Self-Portraiture in Renaissance Venice 1458-1625*, are beneficial in much the same way as Woods-Marsden’s book, though as her title suggests, Brown limited her scope to Venice.¹³ Importantly, Brown brought her discussion, albeit briefly, into the Cinquecento, laying part of the foundation for the present study as well as becoming an important secondary source for the identification of several Cinquecento embedded self-portraits.

In *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, John Pope-Hennessy considered briefly the embedded self-portrait in his last chapter “Donor and Participant,” centering his attention on one type: the artist as Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus, the topic of Chapter II of

¹² Joanna Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-portraiture: The Visual Construction of Identity and the Social Status of the Artist*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

¹³ Katherine Brown, *The Painter’s Reflection: Self-portraiture in Renaissance Venice 1458-1625*, (Olschki, 2000).

the present thesis.¹⁴ He additionally provided his readers with a broad survey of the embedded donor portrait as it developed from Giotto's generation in the Trecento through the Cinquecento. As mentioned above, the convention of embedded donor portraits in the Quattrocento seems to closely parallel the evolution of embedded self-images of the same period in terms of style, spatial placement and scale.

Chapter II will investigate the specific and unique cases of embedded self-portraits of the artist as the biblical characters Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus. In this way, the reader will be equipped with the necessary interpretive tools for Chapters III and IV. Chapter II will also highlight the iconographic issues art historians face when identifying self-portraits as specific biblical characters. Considering six examples, this chapter will track the erratic iconography of Joseph and Nicodemus, its development, as well as the potential professional and religious resonances the two biblical figures may have had with artists. Both biblical men have similar devotional and pious connotations, but what distinguished the two men to artists was wealth and status. Donors and artists alike found these two characters particularly attractive as surrogates for their likenesses and they were chosen more frequently than other characters described in the Crucifixion and Entombment, such as Saint John the Evangelist.

Chapter III will broaden the scope of Chapter II and situate the larger categories of 'witness' and 'participant' in Tridentine and Post-Tridentine Italy. While summarizing the Quattrocento convention of embedded portraiture and embedded self-portraiture in Florence and Venice, Chapter III extends the trajectory into the Cinquecento. This chapter will seek to illuminate a significant progression in function and presentation of

¹⁴ John Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1979).

embedded self-portraiture during the Cinquecento. The religious background of Tridentine Italy and its potential effect on both autonomous and embedded self-portraits provides an important context. Chapter III will also underline the viewers' changing experience in post-Tridentine sacred art as a result of the Council of Trent. As will be demonstrated, as the century progressed, artists began to infuse their embedded self-representations with new functions and interpretations that were emotional, personal, and more specific to the artist.

Chapter IV will conclude this thesis by sharpening the focus and considering the case of Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610). Chapter IV will assess the artist's problematic biography and spirituality, attempting to underline both his conventional and strikingly unconventional use of embedded self-portraiture. This chapter will also note how Caravaggio refashioned the viewer's artistic experience in post-Tridentine art and dramatized the emotional and psychological relationships of figures in his painting, including those identified as the artist himself. Including the life and work of Caravaggio will allow this thesis to consider a brief but significant transition between Renaissance and Baroque identity and iconography. Contextualizing Caravaggio in this way may shed new light on his method of self-representation and will confirm or challenge the lens through which art historians have predominantly viewed his art today.

Self-portraits can allow art historians to approach artist identity with a closeness not always afforded in artists' other works. Moreover, studies of embedded self-portraits can illuminate the formulation and evolution of both patrons' and artists' identities. The intentionality behind self-portraiture, as well as its theoretical play between subject/object

and artist/audience has encouraged writers to explore the cultural formation of identity and how it is displayed in art. At stake in identifying embedded self-portraits within a religious context is the chance to explore the formation of artistic identity in both public and private realms, in some exceptional cases leading to the potential knowledge of how artists viewed themselves as spiritual beings and makers of images that propagated the Christian faith.

CHAPTER II

THE ARTIST AS JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA OR NICODEMUS

The chapter to follow is a case study of a traditionally rich subcategory of what may be more broadly termed as ‘participant’ portraits and self-portraits. As defined by scholar Azar Rejaie, an embedded self-portrait as participant is a figure that actively engages with the narrative in a manner that helps realize the plot.¹ Chapter III will broaden this study by assessing the larger categories of ‘witness’ and ‘participant’ embedded self-portraits of the Quattrocento and Cinquecento. The term ‘witness’, by contrast, is intended to connote cases in which the figure, often located on the periphery and perhaps ignoring the action, has no active role in the narrative.

Considering six cases in which artists represented themselves as the characters Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea, this chapter will attempt to underline the potential motivations, political or spiritual or other, for an artist’s identification with one or the other of the two biblical characters. To establish that self-portraits are indeed present, the cases are limited to those where relatively solid corroborative proof of identity is available. The cases explored in this chapter will range from paintings in which artists represented themselves as Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus, to cases where artists illustrated fellow sculptors, or commemorated sculptors of the past as Nicodemus specifically. Discussion will also include a representative example of the donor or patron as Nicodemus. Donors appeared to have been the first to appear in embedded portraits as Nicodemus in Quattrocento narratives and assessing one of the earliest examples of this practice will illuminate this important precedent.

¹ Rejaie, *Defining Artistic Identity in the Florentine Renaissance*, 83.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus are two characters closely associated with the deposition, lamentation and entombment of Christ. Joseph is described in all four Christian Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) as a rich follower of Christ from Arimathea who asked Pilate if he might have the dead Christ. The other mention of Joseph's name comes during the account of the entombment when the gospels describe him wrapping the body in a clean linen cloth, placing it in his own new tomb, which he had carved out of a rock-face.² Descriptions of Nicodemus are even fewer than those of Joseph; he is only mentioned three times in the Gospel of John, although he figures in an apocryphal gospel bearing his name. In the Gospel of John, Nicodemus is described as a Pharisee or Jewish leader who secretly came to Christ at night. John's Gospel mentions him again in 19:39, where he is described as assisting Joseph of Arimathea in the deposition and preparation of Christ's body for entombment. This source additionally credited Nicodemus with having brought to the entombment nearly seventy-five pounds of myrrh and aloes to anoint Christ's body.³

There are several indispensable publications that serve as a starting point for any study considering embedded self-portraits as Nicodemus or Joseph of Arimathea. As mentioned, John Pope-Hennessy in *The Portrait in the Renaissance* briefly considered embedded portraits and self-portraits as Nicodemus.⁴ Discussing the iconographic evolution of both Joseph and Nicodemus, he offered supporting identifications of several

² *The Holy Bible: New International Version*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Bible Publishers, 1978). Verses describing Joseph of Arimathea are found in Matthew 27:57, Mark: 15:43, Luke 23:51 and John 19:38.

³ Verses describing Nicodemus are found in John 3:1-10 (visitation), 7:50 (Defense of Christ) and 19:39 (Deposition and Entombment).

⁴ Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, 257-300.

Quattrocento and Cinquecento portraits and self-portraits as Nicodemus, such as Michelangelo's Florentine *Pietà* and Titian's Madrid *Entombment*. Janet Cox-Rearick, in her 1993 publication *Bronzino's Chapel of Eleonora in the Palazzo Vecchio*, expanded Pope-Hennessy's discussion by more thoroughly assessing biblical descriptions of the two men, including iconographical precedents from Medieval images.⁵ Cox-Rearick also identified potential examples from the Quattrocento and Cinquecento. Wolfgang Stechow, Valerie Shrimplin-Evangelidis, and Jane Kristof all considered the peculiar case of Michelangelo's Florentine *Pietà*.⁶ Finally, in 1993 Corine Schleif considered the circumstances surrounding two late fifteenth century embedded self-portraits as Nicodemus by the German sculptors Adam Kraft and Tilman Riemenschneider.⁷ Shrimplin-Evangelidis, Kristof, and Schleif also offered enlightening studies and analyses of the potential association Nicodemus may have developed with sculptors dating back to the Eighth and Ninth centuries.

Joseph and Nicodemus: A Portrait in Text

The apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus (*Acta Pilati*) considerably broadened Gospel descriptions of Joseph and Nicodemus. The Gospel of Nicodemus was believed by Medieval Christians to have been composed by Nicodemus himself as eyewitness

⁵ Janet Cox-Rearick, *Bronzino's Chapel of Eleonora in the Palazzo Vecchio*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993): 194-212.

⁶ Wolfgang Stechow, "Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus?" *The Tomb of Julius II and Other Works in Rome*, vol. 4 (Garland, 1995): 195-208. Jane Kristof, "Michelangelo as Nicodemus: The Florence Pieta." *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 20, no. 2 (1989): 163-182. Valerie Shrimplin-Evangelidis, "Michelangelo and Nicodemism: The Florentine Pieta." *The Art Bulletin* 71, no. 1 (1989): 58-66.

⁷ Corine Schleif, "Nicodemus and Sculptors: Self-Reflexivity in Works by Adam Kraft and Tilman Riemenschneider," *Art Bulletin* 75, no. 4 (1993): 599-626.

testimony of the Passion and held almost as much authority on the events surrounding Christ's Passion as the Gospels did.⁸ While the Bible was deemed the word of God, the Gospel of Nicodemus was nevertheless the report of a man who had seen and touched Christ, forming a mystical bond with the Savior.⁹ Interestingly, however, in both biblical Gospels and the Gospel of Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea is mentioned more frequently, which may suggest his character was of greater importance and canonical. For example, the Gospel of Nicodemus mentions Joseph over 40 times, while mentioning Nicodemus only 25 times.

Both biblical and apocryphal textual sources have provided three important characteristics for Nicodemus that deserve record: He was a Jew who converted to Christianity and received an exclusive teaching from Christ on the nature of rebirth; he was a Pharisee who among his peers sympathized and defended Christ; and he was a peripheral witness to the events of Christ's crucifixion and death, eventually touching the body and assisting Joseph in its proper burial. In chapter 12 of the Gospel of Nicodemus, Nicodemus defended himself, his actions and his faith before a group of Jews.¹⁰ Several

⁸ Corine Schleif, "Nicodemus and Sculptors," 605. Scholars have determined the Gospel of Nicodemus to have been rewritten and revised in four stages. 'Form A' was composed in Greek circa 600AD detailing Jesus' trial before Pilate. 'Form B' appeared a little later and added accounts of Karinus and Leucius, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 'Form C' is a Greek paraphrasing of 'Form B'. 'Form D' is the most recent adaptation with the story of Joseph of Arimathea being fully expanded. See Hack C. Kim, *The Gospel of Nicodemus: Gesta Salvatoris* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1973): 2.

⁹ Byzantium's championing of Humanist philosophy and the humanization of biblical characters in art add further support to the Gospel of Nicodemus's importance and influence during this period. For an interesting discussion that continues this vein of thought, see Kurt Weitzmann, "The Origin of the Threnos." *De Artibus Opuscula XL: Essays in Honor of Erwin Panofsky II*, (New York: New York University Press, 1961).

¹⁰ Montague Rhodes James, *The Apocryphal New Testament: Being the Apocryphal Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Apocalypses, with Other Narratives and Fragments*, (Berkeley: Apocryphile Press, 2004). In conjunction with his secret visitation to Christ, Nicodemus is mentioned once in verse 7:50 of John's Gospel, in which Nicodemus defends Christ to a group of Pharisees: "Does our law condemn a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?"

important characteristics for Joseph found in these textual sources should be noted as well: He was a wealthy man and disciple of Christ; he boldly asked for Christ's body and touched the Savior; he wrapped and anointed the body before giving Jesus a proper burial in *his own* tomb. The Gospel of Nicodemus further reported that Joseph was briefly imprisoned for his Christian beliefs and his participation in the deposition and entombment of Christ. This apocryphal gospel would further note that Joseph was eventually released and would be praised and glorified for his actions.

The Iconographical Conundrum

Wolfgang Stechow, John Pope-Hennessy and Janet Cox-Rearick all consider, in varying depth, the iconographical issues surrounding Joseph and Nicodemus. In the oldest publication, Stechow illuminated the iconographical conundrum in his discussion of Michelangelo's Florentine *Pietà*, though offered no solutions to understanding its broader developments. Pope-Hennessy and Cox-Rearick both attempted to provide their readers with some sources, such as the influence of northern miracle plays and Flemish donor portraits on traditional iconography. Pope-Hennessy's discussion was framed around the iconography of a single figure in contact with the body of Christ, which preceded a brief consideration of the embedded donor portrait as Nicodemus. Cox-Rearick's study was also concerned with the iconography of the single mourner as Nicodemus and drew on Pope-Hennessy's analysis. These brief discussions concerning the iconography of Nicodemus and Joseph provided just enough to encourage further exploration in search of more conclusive explanations for the problem.

Artists of the Trecento, Quattrocento, and Cinquecento frequently borrowed iconography from the Deposition and translated it into Lamentation scenes. The same could be said for Entombment scenes, which often borrowed Lamentation, and subsequently Deposition, iconography. Unfortunately, the result of these artistic transactions is an unstable but meaningful iconography of Joseph and Nicodemus, whose identities can thus become conflated. There are basic iconographical foundations art historians have used to help navigate the erratic iconography of Joseph and Nicodemus in Quattrocento and Cinquecento Italian art. The Lamentation does not derive from biblical scripture¹¹ and characters present in this type of scene were often taken directly from scriptural accounts of the Deposition, such as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea.¹² In other words, the Lamentation seems to have been an artistic development that resulted from artists combining the Deposition and Entombment in art or transitioning between the two scenes.¹³ In early Medieval Deposition scenes, Joseph is typically given the more prestigious task of embracing the body due to his more noble stature and because he volunteered his own tomb for Christ. Along with his physical proximity to and embrace of Christ, Joseph is typically distinguished from other characters, such as Saint John and Nicodemus, through his age. Joseph is additionally marked by his dress, which often signifies him as a wealthy man.

¹¹ I will use the term ‘scripture’ to signify the text of the entire Bible, both Old and New Testaments. The term ‘Gospel(s)’ is used to connote the more specific New Testament passages by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John.

¹² Weitzmann, “The Origin of the Threnos,” 479. Occasionally the term ‘Threnos’ may be used to describe the Lamentation.

¹³ Examples, many of which will be considered in this chapter, include: Francesco Salviati’s *Lamentation* of 1560, Pietro Perugino’s *Lamentation* of 1495 and Andrea Solario’s *Lamentation* circa 1505-7.

Nicodemus on the other hand is frequently shown lowering Christ's arm or removing nails with pincers from the Cross. He is sometimes shown at the feet of Christ or, more often, above Christ on a ladder to his left or right. Evidence of this early precedent can be found in images that clearly distinguish the two men through labels and color, such as a Tenth century manuscript illumination (figure 2.1, see end of chapter). Another Ninth century Byzantine miniature from an illuminated Gospel, though it provides no labels, communicates some of the earliest Deposition iconography as well (figure 2.2). Joseph passionately holds Christ's body while gazing into his face while Nicodemus supports the left arm of Christ while removing a nail with pincers. Neither have halos; Joseph is shown as old and white-bearded, in contrast with Nicodemus, who is younger with short dark hair and bearded.¹⁴ Nicodemus is shown in short sleeves and a tunic while Joseph wears a full-length robe and sash, which distinguishes their status. Scholar Kurt Weitzmann has suggested that in later Byzantine art Nicodemus "may actually be found digging the grave," which further solidified his low-wage worker status.¹⁵ As is the case with many of the examples to be considered in this chapter, the most consistent distinguishing factor in identifying Joseph and Nicodemus may be their difference in age. With the exception of the Nicodemus' ewer or container, all other elements used in identifying both men are variable and even interchangeable.¹⁶

¹⁴ It should be noted that halos are occasionally employed to distinguish Joseph and Nicodemus as early as the Ninth century. See Gertrud Schiller's, "The Deposition and the Entombment of Christ" in *Iconography of Christian Art*. (Connecticut: New York Graphic Society, 1971): 164-181.

¹⁵ Weitzmann, "The Origin of the Threnos," 479.

¹⁶ Janet Cox-Rearick makes this conclusive claim about Nicodemus and the ewer. For her discussion on this particular identifier, see *Bronzino's Chapel of Eleonora in the Palazzo Vecchio*, 196-7.

A late Quattrocento *Lamentation* by Perugino shows a quintessential Renaissance representation of how Deposition iconography was translated into an imagined event, the lamentation (figure 2.3). Eleven figures hover around the limp Christ as he lay on a carved stone slab. Two figures support and bracket Christ to either side while the Virgin holds her son's arm and occupies the center of the composition. As might be expected, Joseph of Arimathea, on the left, is older, white-bearded, bareheaded and richly dressed. In the picture, Joseph is shown embracing the head and upper torso of Christ while his fingers delicately touch the puncture wound in Christ's side. The position, one of the most exalted in the scene, elevated Joseph's importance in the narrative. This arrangement allowed the possibility for both Joseph and Nicodemus to embrace Christ's body. Nicodemus is displayed again as a younger and dark-haired man wearing an exotic headdress. Nicodemus is beardless and makes no contact with Christ's body, but instead is shown grasping the shroud at Christ's feet.¹⁷ The origin of Nicodemus' position at the feet of Christ in Lamentation and Deposition scenes can be traced to miracle plays of northern Europe. In these plays, Nicodemus instructed Joseph, "Do thou take the head, for I am worthy only to take the feet."¹⁸

Embedded portraits and embedded self-portraits as Joseph and Nicodemus also appear in entombment scenes. Gertrud Schiller, in her foundational *Iconography of Christian Art*, suggested that images of the entombment began to appear in western art during the last quarter of the tenth century and follow deposition iconography.¹⁹ The

¹⁷ Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, 289.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, 169. Schiller further suggested that in some cases the two events may well be combined to form one solitary image.

iconography in early entombment scenes is more irregular than the deposition. Moving into the Renaissance, however, some threads of consistency between entombment and deposition iconography can be noted. Unless captions are present, Joseph and Nicodemus are difficult to differentiate in Tenth century entombments. An unusual example may be observed in an illustration of the deposition and entombment found in the Tenth century Ottonian Codex Egberti, which shows both men as young and beardless (figure 2.4). The miniaturist distinguished Joseph and Nicodemus with the use of color and labels. The upper half of the page shows the deposition, where Joseph occupies his more exalted position at the head of Christ and Nicodemus embraces the feet as the body is lowered from the Cross. Juxtaposed to the arrangement within the eastern Byzantine deposition detailed above, the locations of Joseph and Nicodemus in the western Ottonian deposition are in agreement. In the lower half, the positions of the two men are reversed in the entombment as Nicodemus supports the head of Christ and Joseph the feet. A later *Entombment* by Duccio di Buoninsegna, from circa 1308-11, seems to display more consistency with deposition iconography and could illustrate how early Renaissance artists attempted to develop some regularity (figure 2.5). Eight figures hover over the deceased Christ, who is displayed on top of a carved rectangular tomb. Five women in the scene are distinguished by their hoods. The Virgin, in her canonical blue, is seen kissing the cheek of Christ and is clearly second in importance to Christ. Three men populate the scene, two of whom are bearded and another beardless. Using deposition iconography, the characters of the two bearded men can be identified as Joseph and Nicodemus. Again, age and color differentiate the two as Joseph may be recognized as the older, white-haired man while Nicodemus is the younger brown-haired

man. Nicodemus is shown at the feet of Christ while the beardless man is seen at the head. This beardless figure may be identified as Saint John and his location at the head of Christ is not necessarily surprising given his canonical importance to the crucifixion narrative and crucifixion scenes. In contrast to Nicodemus, Joseph still occupies a position of greater importance, closer to the viewer and at the center of Christ's body. While some irregularities remain in the iconography, this picture is undoubtedly dependent upon the deposition and displays notable similarities.

Embedded portraits of donors as Nicodemus first appear in fifteenth century northern Europe or in areas saturated with northern influence.²⁰ Part of the iconographical irregularities involving Joseph and Nicodemus may have resulted from the introduction of embedded portraiture. The earliest examples, such as Rogier van der Weyden's *Entombment* circa 1450, produced during his visit to Florence, and Dirk Bouts' *Deposition Altarpiece* circa 1450, may have displayed portraits of donors who wished to be identified with the sufferings of Christ.²¹ No portraits as Joseph of Arimathea have been identified as such in the Quattrocento and all accepted cases are of Nicodemus. In Rogier van der Weyden's *Entombment*, five figures surround Christ, whose body is posed to evoke the Crucifixion (Figure 2.6). The Virgin embraces Christ's arm while the beardless and haloed Saint John leans to kiss his left hand. Mary Magdalene kneels at the feet of Christ in lament. The two men who support Christ are almost certainly Joseph and Nicodemus, the one on the left old, balding and bearded, the one on the right

²⁰ Cox-Rearick, *Bronzino's Chapel of Eleonora in the Palazzo Vecchio*, 194-212 and Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, 257-300.

²¹ Pope-Hennessy follows Roger van Schoute's identification of a donor portrait as Nicodemus in Dirk Bouts' *Deposition Altarpiece*. See Roger van Schoute, *La Chapelle Royale De Grenade: Les Primitifs Flamands*. (Brussels, 1963): 36-53.

beardless. John Pope-Hennessy identified a portrait of Cosimo de' Medici in the figure of Nicodemus.²² No primary sources corroborate his inclusion in this context. The only supporting evidence for this identification comes from posthumous portraits of Cosimo by Pontormo and Bronzino. Both display the Duke as beardless and closely resembling the figure in van der Weyden's picture. Lending further support is the beardless figure's dress, which clearly alludes to his wealth and high status. His is the only face displayed in a full frontal view, which highlights his individualized physiognomy and directs his gaze towards the viewer as if to call attention to the significance of the scene. Both figures supporting Christ are displayed in spatial parity with Christ and the artist makes no further attempt to distinguish who he intended the portrait to be.

Pope-Hennessy noted that, "in the fifteenth century in Italy, Nicodemus portraits occur very seldom, but when they do, it is almost always in centers which lay open to Flemish influence."²³ Continuing, he suggested Nicodemus' more humble role in Passion scenes and in northern miracle plays made him the more attractive candidate for embedded donor portraits in the late fifteenth century.²⁴ Because contemporary dress was frequently employed for these donor portraits, the iconography may have become conflicted when the donor as Nicodemus is shown in fine dress and/or in old age. Moreover, since Joseph is treated as a more important or central character in texts describing Christ's Passion, patrons might have felt it inappropriate to assume his character in narrative paintings. Embedded portraiture was experimental and

²² Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, 289.

²³ *Ibid*, 290.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 289.

revolutionary during the Quattrocento and Nicodemus' humble, more peripheral role during these important moments would have provided the perfect candidate to coyly introduce their characterized portraits into religious narratives.

Nicodemus: The Christian Sculptor

In the Cinquecento, artists such as Pontormo, Francesco Salviati and Baccio Bandinelli appear to have followed patrons and stamped their own features onto Nicodemus. However, it seems sculptors had an additional factor in favoring Nicodemus over Joseph, which may be closely linked to the legendary belief that Nicodemus was a sculptor. Tradition ascribed to his hand a large wooden crucifix called the *Volto Santo* (trans. Holy Face).²⁵ With the practice of connecting saints and holy figures with particular professions, such as Saint Cecilia with Musicians, sculptors were eager to claim Nicodemus as their own in the Cinquecento.

Located today in the Cathedral of Saint Martin in Lucca, the *Volto Santo* has incited continued fascination and veneration since its arrival in the city, arguably in 742. The legend surrounding Nicodemus' fabrication of the *Volto Santo* may be found in the Gospel of Nicodemus, though much of what we know was likely passed down orally. Scholar Corine Schleif suggested that “Perhaps it was the paucity of information on this central yet enigmatic figure that enticed later Christian imaginations to spin elaborate pious legends around him.”²⁶ Eastern versions of the legend credit Nicodemus with

²⁵ Schleif, “Nicodemus and Sculptors,” 605 and Francesco Luiso, *La Leggenda Del Volto Santo: Istoria Di Un Cimelio*, (Pescia: Benedetti & Niccolai, 1928). Unfortunately, this has been an area of limited scholarship with comparison to the related and well-documented legend of Saint Luke, the patron saint of painters.

²⁶ Schleif, “Nicodemus and Sculptors,” 605.

having sculpted only the body of Christ, while angels completed the face.²⁷ Western legends argue that Nicodemus carved the image not from life, but through a vision gained through his intense mystical bond with Christ.²⁸ By the end of the Medieval period, combined with his descriptions in biblical and apocryphal Gospels and the *Volto Santo* legend, Nicodemus had accumulated a number of venerable characteristics. He was now the holy man who had followed and touched Christ, forming a mystical bond with the savior through the Deposition, Entombment and carving of Christ's image. In both word and sculpted image, Nicodemus had communicated marked piety, devotion, and faith.

Two sculptures, one by Baccio Bandinelli in 1559 and another by Michelangelo Buonarroti in 1548 are mid-Cinquecento examples in which sculptors chose to represent themselves as Nicodemus.²⁹ These cases lend strong support not only to artists' awareness of Nicodemus' professional association with sculptors, but potentially their desire to construct a personal, emotional, or pious link to Nicodemus' sacred character as conveyed in the Gospel of John. What is more, these two cases serve as evidence that in the 1550s as both sculptors were entering old age, each began to contemplate his legacy and mortality, which could offer insight into intent.

Michelangelo carved one of his only self-portraits in one of his last sculptures: the Florentine *Pietà*. The unfinished group displays four figures in a triangular composition.

A large hooded man hovers over a slumping Christ as he supports the martyr's upper

²⁷ The *Volto Santo* is just one of a group of objects categorized as *acheiropoieta*, which is a Greek term used to describe objects not made by human hands, but by miraculous circumstances.

²⁸ Luiso, *La Leggenda Del Volto Santo*.

²⁹ Another example of this type can be seen in Adam Kraft's *Entombment* relief of ca. 1491 for the Schreyer-Landauer Epitaph.

torso (figure 2.7). Christ falls into the lap of his mother as another female figure, presumed here to be Mary Magdalene, supports Christ's right side, his arm draped behind her head and resting delicately on her shoulder. The faces of the two female figures are generalized and are distinguished from Christ and the hooded male by their small size at the base of the compositional triangle. The large hooded figure is more specific and individualized from Christ, the Virgin, and Mary Magdalene. Ascanio Condivi, a pupil and assistant of Michelangelo, had intimate knowledge of the sculpture's production and was the first to identify the large hooded figure at the apex of the composition as Nicodemus in his 1553 biography of Michelangelo.³⁰ Vasari, too, witnessed the production of the group and took the identification further, recognizing the hooded figure as *both* Nicodemus and Michelangelo in the second 1568 version of his *Lives*.³¹ The self-portrait in the Florentine *Pietà* was also mentioned by Vasari in his famous letter to Michelangelo's nephew, Leonardo Buonarroti, dated March 18th, 1564.³² Vasari reported that the sculpture was to be Michelangelo's own sepulchral monument and placed at the altar where the sculptor had hoped to be laid to rest, strengthening the possibility of a self-portrait and its potential emotional tone.³³ Finally, contemporary portraits of

³⁰ Ascanio Condivi and Hellmut Wohl. *The Life of Michel-Angelo*, (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999): 87.

³¹ Vasari, *Lives of Seventy of the Most Eminent Painters*, 149-50.

³² Karl Frey, *Il Carteggio di Giorgio Vasari*, transl. A. del Vita, (Arezzo, 1941): 110. See also Ernst Heimeran, *Michelangelo Und Das Porträt*, (München: F. Bruckmann, 1925): 81.

³³ Vasari, *Lives of Seventy of the Most Eminent Painters*, 150.

Michelangelo, such as Jacopino del Conte's 1535 canvas, would appear to confirm the visage in the sculpture.³⁴

Michelangelo's sculpture may be an exceptional example in which the iconography contradicts the identifications made by Condivi and Vasari and the Florentine *Pietà* is an example of the iconographic problem art historians face.³⁵ To begin, the position "Nicodemus" occupies at the upper torso and head of Christ is invariably that assigned to Joseph of Arimathea in the Lamentation. Making the identification of the character more difficult, there are no other men, with the exception of Christ, in the group nor are there tools or other attributes that may sway the identification in favor of one or the other. Michelangelo would have presumably displayed himself accurately as old and bearded, which again is a major distinguishing characteristic of Joseph. Considering this and the primary documents supporting the Nicodemus identification, it is not unreasonable to assume Michelangelo, the sculptor, was aware of the specific connection Nicodemus had with sculptors. The professional associations Nicodemus had with sculptors may have held particular relevance with Michelangelo as he designed his own commemorative monument. While identifying the figure as Joseph is not difficult to defend and is supported iconographically, it is also difficult to challenge Condivi or Vasari's identification of it as Nicodemus. However, a closer look at Michelangelo's life and certain individuals with whom he associated may yield further clues to the artist's intended character.

³⁴ Scholars such as John Pope-Hennessy, Valerie Shrimplin-Evangelidis and Jane Kristof all follow Vasari and Condivi in identifying the figure as both a self-portrait and Nicodemus. However, for an alternative argument for Joseph see Leo Steinberg, "Michelangelo's Florentine Pieta: The Missing Leg," *The Art Bulletin* 50 n.4 (1968) 343-53.

³⁵ Wolfgang Stechow, "Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus?" 195-208. Janet Cox-Rearick, Corine Schleif, Jane Kristof and Valerie Shrimplin-Evangelidis have all noted this difficulty as well.

As artists advanced in age and began to contemplate more seriously their inevitable deaths, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus were two biblical men artists could have easily appropriated to convey piety and intimacy with Christ's sufferings. Of the works addressed in this study, two-thirds were by artists reaching old age. However, one particular biblical account of Nicodemus may have had importance to aging artists. In chapter 3 of John's Gospel: Jesus tells Nicodemus, "no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."³⁶ Confused, Nicodemus asks Jesus how men can be born again when they are old, to which Jesus replies, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the spirit gives birth to spirit."³⁷ It seems likely that both Michelangelo and Bandinelli were familiar with scripture and possibly these verses. Teachings surrounding the concept of spiritual rebirth may have held significance for these sculptors in their last years. The allure of this hypothesis lies in the fact that Bandinelli died shortly after the completion of his monument in 1560; Michelangelo kept his sculpture in his studio until his death in 1564.

According to Jane Kristof and Valerie Shrimplin-Evangelidis, Michelangelo's choice to include his own features as Nicodemus in his Florentine *Pietà* was reflective of not only his personal identification with Nicodemus as a sculptor, but also his

³⁶ New International Version, John 3:3.

³⁷ Ibid, 3:5-6. Verses 16 through 18 read, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned."

membership in a group called the *Spirituali*.³⁸ Cinquecento Italy played witness to intense social, political and spiritual changes. Centuries of growing resentment towards the practices, traditions and corruption of the Catholic Church had culminated in an intense resistance and iconoclasm of religious imagery. Reformed Catholic theology in the face of the Protestant movements was pervasive and varied depending largely on geographic location and personal conviction. During the vacillating religious atmosphere of Tridentine Europe, the terms “Nicodemism” and/or “Nicodemite” were employed to distinguish Catholics who outwardly promoted the established tradition but who secretly sympathized or even accepted reformed theology.³⁹ The term may have originated from the story of Nicodemus’ secret visit to Christ, where he sympathized with Christ's movement, though concealed his beliefs to avoid persecution.

By contrast, the *Spirituali* were members of an open reform movement within the Catholic Church between 1510 and 1560. The *Spirituali* included several Cardinals, such as Gasparo Contarini, Jacopo Sadoletto, and Reginald Pole. The *Spirituali* members were, however, closely associated with Nicodemism between 1510 and 1560 on the Italian peninsula.⁴⁰ Scholar Carlos Eire has researched the evolution of the terminology and found that by 1529, “the epithet ‘Nicodemisch’ appeared in a letter of Johannes Brenz,

³⁸ Kristof, "Michelangelo as Nicodemus: The Florence Pieta," 163-182. Shrimplin-Evangelidis, "Michelangelo and Nicodemism: The Florentine Pieta," 58-66. See also Marcia B. Hall, *The Sacred Image in the Age of Art*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 2011): 101.

³⁹ Carlos Eire, "Calvin and Nicodemism: A Reappraisal." *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 10, no. 1 (1979): 44-69, 44-47.

⁴⁰ Dermot Fenlon, *Heresy and Obedience in Tridentine Italy: Cardinal Pole and the Counter Reformation*. (Cambridge University Press, 1972): 21. Sometimes the group may be referred as Valdesians, after the Spanish mystic, Juan de Valdes.

where it referred to people who were afraid of openly confessing their faith.”⁴¹ Jane Kristof and Valerie Shrimplin-Evangelidis have suggested the term was given particular currency when in 1544 one of the foremost reformers, the Frenchman John Calvin (1509-1564), delivered a polemical attack on all those who concealed their Protestant beliefs but outwardly conformed to the established tradition for fear of excommunication or persecution.⁴² The two scholars based much of their argument that Michelangelo was a Nicodemite on Michelangelo’s close relationship with Vittoria Colonna, a central member of the *Spirituali* and labeled a heretic by the Papacy upon her death in 1547.⁴³ In the case of Michelangelo, both Kristof and Shrimplin-Evangelidis provided just enough information to make the artist’s membership in the *Spirituali* quite possible, though we will never know definitively whether it affected his intent in the Florentine group.⁴⁴

Baccio Bandinelli’s penchant for self-portraiture is well known.⁴⁵ Several relief sculptures and drawings, such as his *Self-Portrait* in black chalk (circa 1555), show Bandinelli's features, distinguished by his flattened profile, long, thin nose with

⁴¹ Fenlon, *Heresy and Obedience in Tridentine Italy*, 46.

⁴² See Kristof, "Michelangelo as Nicodemus," 166 and Shrimplin-Evangelidis, "Michelangelo and Nicodemism," 62.

⁴³ Kristof, "Michelangelo as Nicodemus," 175-6. Letters survive which show close correspondence between Michelangelo and Colonna over a period of almost twenty years. Kristof suggests Michelangelo was acquainted with Cardinal Pole, a sympathizer of Nicodemism. While intriguing, the nature of secret societies naturally makes establishing its members all the more difficult.

⁴⁴ The crux of Kristof’s and Shrimplin-Evangelidis’ argument rests on Michelangelo’s attempt to destroy the sculpture in 1555. For the two scholars, the May 1555 election of Pope Paul IV (Giovanni Carafa), who was militant in his persecution of reformers, motivated Michelangelo to destroy the sculpture for fear that his *Spirituali* membership would become known.

⁴⁵ Kathleen Weil-Garris, “The Self-Created Bandinelli,” *World Art: Themes of Unity in Diversity. Acts of the XXVIth International Congress of the History of Art*, v. 2 (University Park & London, 1989): 497-501 and “Bandinelli and Michelangelo: A Problem of Artistic Identity,” in *Art the Ape of Nature: Studies in Honor of H.W. Janson*, ed. M. Barasch and L.F. Sandler, (New York, 1981): 223-51.

protruding nostrils, and a lengthy, curly beard that splits in the middle. In his *Lives*, Vasari identified a self-portrait as Nicodemus in Bandinelli's 1559 sepulchral monument in SS. Annunziata when he described, “*un Cristo morto, che è retto da Niccodemo, il quale Niccodemo è Baccio ritratto di naturale*” (figure 2.8).⁴⁶ Mainstream art historical consensus follows Vasari and little debate surrounds his claim.⁴⁷ The sculpture is a Lamentation in which a lone male figure embraces the upper torso of a deceased Christ. Compositionally, Bandinelli's group differs considerably from Michelangelo's Florentine sculpture in that it is horizontally oriented and opened to the viewer. Bandinelli has further chosen to eliminate the Virgin and Mary Magdalene, which intensified the bond of Nicodemus with Christ. Iconographically, Bandinelli includes a hammer and pincers below Christ in front of the short plinth. By themselves, these tools do not definitively connote that the single figure supporting Christ is Nicodemus, though the tools were closely associated with his character and were ones sculptors used. Much as Michelangelo had, Bandinelli executed this sculpture for his own tomb and was likely aware of Nicodemus' association with sculptors. Both Bandinelli and Michelangelo represented themselves as Nicodemus for a few reasons: the commemoration of themselves and their profession; a claim to authorship; and most importantly, a public statement of their faith and connection to Christ's sacrifice.

The connection sculptors had with Nicodemus' character seems to have carried into the Seicento. It has been suggested by scholars such as Karolina Lanckorońska, Wolfgang Stechow, Corine Schleif and Rudolf Preimesberger that Caravaggio painted

⁴⁶ Vasari, *Le vite de' piú eccellenti architetti, pittori, et scultori italiani*, 186.

⁴⁷ Hanna Sygietyńska and Izabella Galicka. “A Newly Discovered Self-Portrait by Baccio Bandinelli”. *The Burlington Magazine* v.134 n.1077 (1992): 805-807; 805. Janet Cox-Rearick, Wolfgang Stechow, Kathleen Weil-Garris (1981) and John Pope-Hennessy all note the self-portrait as well.

the features of his namesake Michelangelo Buonarroti as Nicodemus, the figure in his 1602-3 *Entombment* who supports Christ's legs and stands closest to the picture plane (figure 2.9).⁴⁸ The man is displayed barefooted and wearing a modest tunic, which, iconographically, would favor his identification as the humble Nicodemus rather than the wealthy Joseph. His gaze deserves mention as well. His face is the only one tilted towards us, and he directs his stare at the viewer, an element briefly isolating our attention and, conversely, his character. Life-sized, a beardless youth assists Nicodemus in bearing Christ's weight as he is lowered into an unseen tomb. Behind these two figures and Christ, three women express varying degrees of sorrow. The two young women bear similar features, with one resting her head in her hand and another raising her arms in a traditional pose of mourning. An older, hooded woman in blue gazes down at Christ and completes the group. The sharp corner edge of a massive stone slab breaks the picture plane and invades the space of the viewer. Recalling the contemporary portrait of Michelangelo by Jacopino del Conte, the features of the carrier closest to the viewer do call to mind those of the Cinquecento master. However, no primary evidence has surfaced to support this claim and the identity of the man remains a matter of conjecture. Rudolf Preimesberger has argued that in a well-known copy of Caravaggio's painting located today in Ottawa, Peter Paul Rubens more definitively stamped Michelangelo's face on Nicodemus in 1612, which if true, may offer contemporary

⁴⁸ This identification was first proposed by Karolina Lanckorońska, "La Descente de Croix de Michel-Ange" *Dawna Sztuka* (1939): 111. Wolfgang Stechow additionally took this identification to be correct. Bellori also identified the figure embracing Christ's legs as Nicodemus, though he made no mention of Caravaggio using Michelangelo's features as the model. See Giovanni Bellori, "The Life of Caravaggio" in *The lives of Modern Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, (New York, 2005): 207 and Rudolf Preimesberger, *Paragons and Paragone: Van Eyck, Raphael, Michelangelo, Caravaggio, Bernini*, (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 2011): 100-107.

support to this identification.⁴⁹ Unfortunately, the iconography is reduced, with no tools or other identifying attributes included. The younger figure supporting Christ's torso could be Saint John; his identification as Joseph seems improbable due to his age. If we were to accept both identifications of Nicodemus and Michelangelo in Caravaggio's picture, it would shed light on an important practice surrounding the commemoration of fellow artists as biblical characters as well as the continued endurance of Nicodemus' association with sculptors through the Renaissance and into the Baroque.

Painters as Nicodemus or Joseph

Painters who found Nicodemus a suitable character for their embedded self-portraits appear to have done so for similar spiritual and commemorative purposes as had sculptors. Francesco Salviati's 1546 *Lamentation*, located today in the Palazzo Pitti, is representative of the iconographical problem (Figure 2.10). Scholar Janet Cox-Rearick recognized Salviati's features in the dark-haired man at center based on his portrait in Vasari's *Lives* and several other self-portraits of the artist, such as another embedded self-image observed in his *Triumph of Camillus* in the Sala delle Udienze of the Palazzo della Signoria (1543-5).⁵⁰ The figure in the *Lamentation* is shown in profile and gazes outside the picture frame, holding his left arm to his chest and gesturing with his right hand. Salviati is recognized for his dark curly hair and beard, deep angled brows and a hooked nose, which appears consistent with his figure in the painting under consideration. The older, white bearded figure that is seen as a mirror reflection of this younger, dark-haired

⁴⁹ Preimesberger, *Paragons and Paragone*, 101-4.

⁵⁰ Cox-Rearick, "From Bandinelli to Bronzino," 66-68 and *Bronzino's Chapel of Eleonora in the Palazzo Vecchio*, 201-203.

man can be identified as Joseph on the basis of his age. A young beardless man, likely Saint John, supports the upper torso of the deceased Christ. A young female completes the group of five in the foreground as she delicately holds Christ's hand; she may be identified as Mary Magdalene, though her red hair appears to be the only potential identifier of her character. Behind this group in the background, three women support a lamenting Virgin Mary. The identification of the self-portrait appears to be Cox-Rearick's alone, with no other primary or secondary sources corroborating her identification. Cox-Rearick additionally suggested the painting is a smaller variant of a larger tapestry designed for Duke Cosimo of the same year, in which she again identified Salviati's embedded self-portrait as Nicodemus.⁵¹ Salviati's embedded inclusion in the scene would seem to bespeak his pious identification with and participation in the event. The embedded self-portrait may have served as a visual signature as well.

In his powerful *Lamentation* for the Chapel of Eleonora da Toledo of 1553, Bronzino (Agnolo di Cosimo 1503-1572) cast himself as the biblical character Nicodemus (figure 2.11). Janet Cox-Rearick identified Nicodemus as the young brown-bearded figure wearing a leather cap on the periphery of the painting to the right of Christ and the Virgin. In his arms he holds a blue, lavishly carved ewer with a golden handle. Bronzino's likeness displayed a long, slender nose with a broad exposed forehead and full beard. Many art historians are in agreement on several identifications of Bronzino's embedded self-portraits, including his example here.⁵² No primary sources identify

⁵¹ A discussion surrounding the provenance of this tapestry can be found in Iris H. Cheney's *Francesco Salviati (1510-1563)*, (Dissertation, NYU 1963): 376. Her treatment of the painting is limited as well, only listing it as a supporting example within the larger context of allegorized self-portraits as Nicodemus.

⁵² Janet Cox-Rearick offered two additional drawings and paintings by Allori to support her conclusion. For a more detailed explanation of this identification see *Bronzino's Chapel of Eleonora in the Palazzo*

Bronzino as Nicodemus in this case, but the artist can be found in several labeled portraits drawn by Alessandro Allori, the earliest of which is located in a cartoon of about 1555 for a painting showing Christ in Limbo. A portrait of Bronzino by an anonymous artist exists contemporaneously with the *Lamentation*, which has aided several identifications, such as the one under consideration here. Joseph of Arimathea and a third companion join Nicodemus in the *Lamentation*. Joseph is identified as the older, white-haired and bearded figure, here wearing a white robe with gold embroidery. He holds three large nails in his right hand across his chest and a pair of pincers in his left. Numerous other figures crowd the painting. A boyish Saint John supports the upper shoulders of a fully exposed Christ, limp in the Virgin's lap. Mary Magdalene is shown supporting the feet of Christ while gazing painfully at his corpse. Seven other female figures, presumably the women described as following Jesus from Galilee in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, complete the group.⁵³ Above the mourners, plump and rosy-cheeked putti carry objects referring to Christ's torture and Crucifixion.

As evidenced by the nails and pincers in Joseph's hands, the iconography of Joseph and Nicodemus are inconsistent in Bronzino's *Lamentation*. Hammers, nails, pincers, lidded containers and baskets are all closely associated with Nicodemus' role; it is often the crown of thorns or shroud that connote Joseph.⁵⁴ For art historians attempting to identify Nicodemus and Joseph in Cinquecento art, Bronzino's unstable iconography illustrates a typical problem. In Bronzino's case, the artist has included just enough for

Vecchio, 204-209. See also Robert Gaston, "Iconography and Portraiture in Bronzino's 'Christ in Limbo.'" *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz* 27, no. 1 (1983): 41-72; 47-48.

⁵³ New International Version, Matthew 27:55 and Luke 23:55.

⁵⁴ Cox-Rearick, *Bronzino's Chapel of Eleonora in the Palazzo Vecchio*, 196.

an identification of the *characters* Nicodemus and Joseph to be made. The differences in age between Joseph and Nicodemus are consistent with traditional iconography, which is how they are distinguished here. Joseph and Nicodemus would be unidentifiable in Bronzino's case had the artist not brought into the scene certain age and wealth-specific attributes of the two men as well as their tools from deposition iconography. Similar to the embedded self-portrait of Salviati, the figure identifiable as Bronzino has averted his gaze and does not engage with Christ. As might be expected, his inclusion in such a context exhibits the artist's faith and identification with Christ's sufferings. Bronzino's choice of Nicodemus for his self-portrait may be an indication that Nicodemus had a professional association with artists beyond his specific connection to sculptors, because of his manual-worker status, which may explain Salviati's identification as well.⁵⁵ Bronzino and Salviati's choice of context may offer an explanation for the variable iconography. Their cases are unique examples in which they have chosen to employ a separate Lamentation iconography consistent with Florentine Quattrocento witness (self-) portraits, a topic of Chapter III. What is more, these two cases can serve as illustration of this transposition from deposition to lamentation iconography.⁵⁶

There are fewer cases in which artists identified with Joseph of Arimathea. In the second half of the Cinquecento, two artists broke away from the convention of representing oneself as Nicodemus and displayed themselves as Joseph. In 1559, Titian displayed himself as Joseph in his *Entombment of Christ*, located today in the Museo del Prado, Madrid (figure 2.12). In her study of self-portraiture in Renaissance Venice,

⁵⁵ Ibid, 210-12.

⁵⁶ Scipione Pulzone's (Il Gaetano) *Lamentation* of 1593, today located in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is another Cinquecento example.

Katherine Brown noted the possibility that Titian painted himself as Joseph in this picture, though is hesitant to conclude to its authenticity.⁵⁷ Pope-Hennessy, earlier, had been more confident and conclusive when he made the same identification.⁵⁸ Titian's features are well known due to the large number of portrait medals, self-portraits and documents that describe and display them. Located today in the British Museum, London a medal showing the head of Titian by Pastorino da Siena details Titian's unmistakable aquiline nose, skullcap, beard, and high forehead. The 1559 painting shows three men lowering Christ into his carved tomb. At the head of Christ is an old, richly dressed, white-haired and bearded man who shares Titian's likeness. At Christ's feet, we observe the back of a brown-haired, albeit balding, man in a vibrant red robe. A woman, identified here as Mary Magdalene, stands next to the Virgin with her hands thrust out in lament. The Virgin, dressed in a brilliant blue, holds the arm of Christ. Iconographically, the figure recognized as Titian is consistent with Joseph. In contrast, the same could be stated for Nicodemus, identified as the figure at Christ's feet. Moreover, note how the hand of the figure identifiable as Titian gracefully touches Christ's wound, which recalls Perugino's Joseph in his *Lamentation* of 1495.

There is little precedent or convention for this type of identification and Titian's choice to display himself as Joseph in lieu of Nicodemus may isolate him as exceptional. The elevation of social status experienced by artists throughout the Cinquecento, and perhaps exemplified by the career of Titian himself, may provide a possible explanation for his character choice in this case. In 1533, the artist was awarded the title Count of the

⁵⁷ Katherine Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 77-78.

⁵⁸ Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, 295.

Lateran Palace by Charles V, who later appointed the artist as Count Palatine and Knight of the Golden Spur for which he was given a sword, golden spur and a golden chain.⁵⁹

The universal renown that Titian experienced may have been sufficient motivation to forego the convention of artist-Nicodemus as humble, pious, manual laborer and fully assume the noble, pious and socially superior role of Joseph.⁶⁰

Jacopo Robusti (Tintoretto) may have followed the precedent established by his fellow Venetian, Titian. Indeed, the motivations for his identification with Joseph in lieu of Nicodemus could have been similar. Scholars have recognized Tintoretto's likeness in his 1594 *Deposition of Christ*, located in San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice (figure 2.13).⁶¹ However, Tintoretto's painting is perhaps the most problematic example encountered in this study in terms of identifying both the self-portrait and the characters. A well-known self-portrait of Tintoretto has survived from circa 1588 that has aided in the identification of his embedded self-portraits. Tintoretto's portrayed himself with a rounded widow's peak, flat-bridged nose with a large, rounded tip; round eyes with bags and full white beard. Pope Hennessy first recognized a self-portrait in the *Deposition*, but only noted its existence, and made no attempt to distinguish for his readers with which biblical figure assumes Tintoretto's features. Scholar Tom Nichols followed Pope-Hennessy in his 1999 publication *Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity*, identifying the presumed self-portrait as Joseph of Arimathea. However, the iconography Tintoretto uses is unique and does not

⁵⁹ See Carlo Ridolfi and Julia Conaway Bondanella, *The Life of Titian*, (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996).

⁶⁰ It should be noted that the same 'status' argument could be made for both Michelangelo and Bandinelli in their two sculptural monuments discussed above. That both men were renowned sculptors would appear to lend more support to their identifications as Nicodemus.

⁶¹ Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, 295-6 and Tom Nichols, *Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity*, (Reaktion, 1999): 236-7.

appear to clarify the identity of the characters. The painting can be divided into three stages from the top to the main scene at the bottom. Represented above is Christ's empty cross on Golgotha while the mourning Virgin is found just below in the upper middle of the composition. The bottom displays the main group of seven figures with the deceased Christ, all of whom hover above a large stone slab that evokes the pending Entombment.

The white-haired and bearded figure embracing Christ's feet bears similar features to the man supporting Christ's head wearing a red and blue robe with a furred collar. These two men appear to be the only potential candidates for Tintoretto's likeness due to their apparent age, consistent with the artist's in 1594 (aged 75). As is the case with several of the examples considered, Tintoretto did not include any features that would convincingly identify the characters, nor his self-portrait. Further, none of the other men accompanying the group seem to afford solid identification. However, the bearded man bearing the weight of Christ's head displays more consistent features with Tintoretto's aforementioned 1588 self-portrait, such as the rounded widow's peak. His face, while not in full view, is more illuminated in comparison to the other aged figure at Christ's feet. Moreover, the aged figure's location at the head of Christ would appear to suggest his identity was intended to be Joseph. Based on his features and location at the head of Christ, we may presume this figure to be the embedded self-portrait that both Nichols and Pope-Hennessy describe.

Conclusions

As this chapter has demonstrated, there appear to have been several Cinquecento sculptures and paintings in which artists included embedded self-portraits as the two

biblical men Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus. This chapter also assessed the potential commemorative, pragmatic, and pious intentions of artists for such identifications. First considered were Gospel reports of the two men that confirmed their presences and described their roles in the Deposition and Entombment of Christ. Also determined were apocryphal accounts of Joseph and Nicodemus, which expanded their characters and may have later resulted in a legend surrounding Nicodemus as sculptor of the *Volto Santo*. The iconography of the two men was examined as a way of determining how they might be recognized in Christian art of the Quattrocento and Cinquecento. What followed was a detailed account of the iconographical evolution between deposition, lamentation and entombment scenes, which underlined the difficulties art historians face in simply identifying Joseph and Nicodemus. It was argued that Joseph of Arimathea is more often distinguished by his old age, dress and location, with particular focus on his proximity to the head of Christ. This study also determined that Nicodemus, as an assistant to Joseph, was identified by his younger age, lower-status dress and position at the feet of Christ. Through this assessment of Joseph's and Nicodemus' iconography, a northern convention of representing contemporary donors as Nicodemus was established, which opened the door for artists in the Cinquecento to employ the practice for themselves through embedded self-portraiture. While the spiritual motivations for an artist's identification with either biblical character was the same, it was important to establish that Nicodemus was a man that had professional resonances with artists and, more specifically, sculptors. What is more, the lessons Nicodemus received from Christ in John's Gospel during his secret visitation may have struck a true spiritual chord and held particular significance to aging artists. Finally, it was posited that Nicodemus' status as a manual laborer was one

that painters may have identified with. As the social status of the artist rose to heights never before achieved during the Cinquecento, cases were highlighted in which the artist appeared to have chosen to forego identifications with Nicodemus and fully assume the more noble stature of Joseph of Arimathea.

As Chapter III will demonstrate, the use of biblical characters for embedded self-portraiture to communicate pride and piety fits well into the Cinquecento narrative of the genre. The fundamental commemorative and pragmatic nature of embedded portraiture and embedded self-portraiture was one that accompanied the genre during the Tridentine and post-Tridentine periods as embedded self-portraiture experienced an injection of fresh ulterior functions. As artists became increasingly aware of their intellectual legitimacy through humanist philosophy and increased professional recognition in the Cinquecento, they also became increasingly aware of artistic strategies that enabled them to express specific ideologies through embedded self-portraiture.



Figure 2.1. Manuscript illumination, *Deposition and Entombment*, Tenth century



Figure 2.2. Manuscript illumination, *Deposition*, Ninth century Byzantium

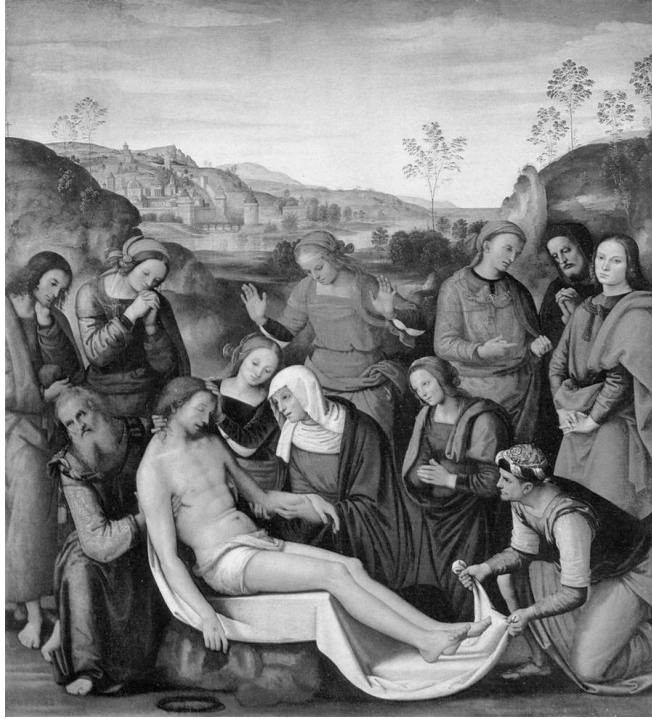


Figure 2.3. Pietro Perugino, *Lamentation*, 1495, oil on panel 220 x 195 cm Galleria Palatina, Florence

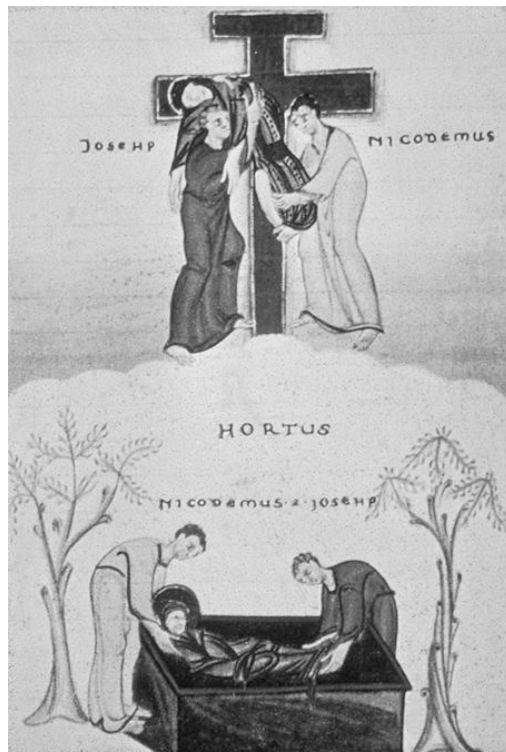


Figure 2.4. Manuscript illumination, *Deposition and Entombment*, Codex Egberti 10th century

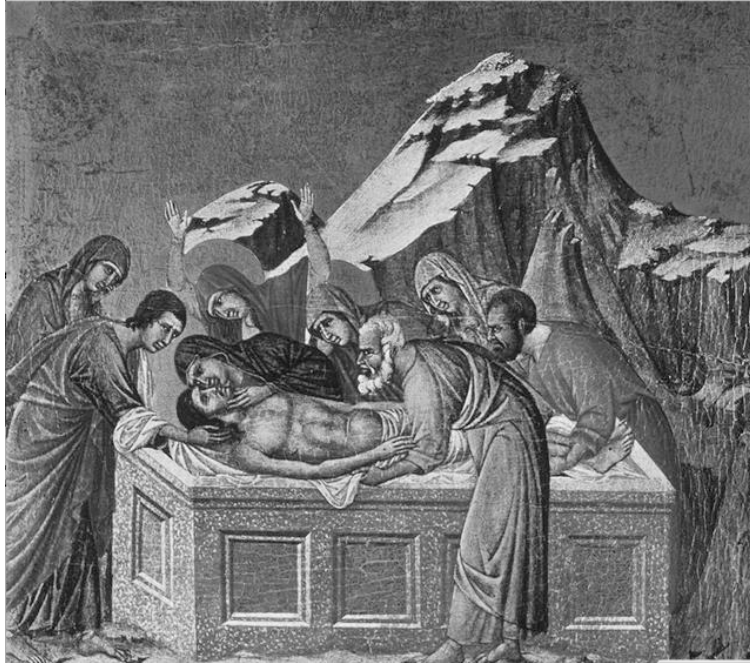


Figure 2.5. Duccio di Buoninsegna, *Entombment*, ca. 1308-1311, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo

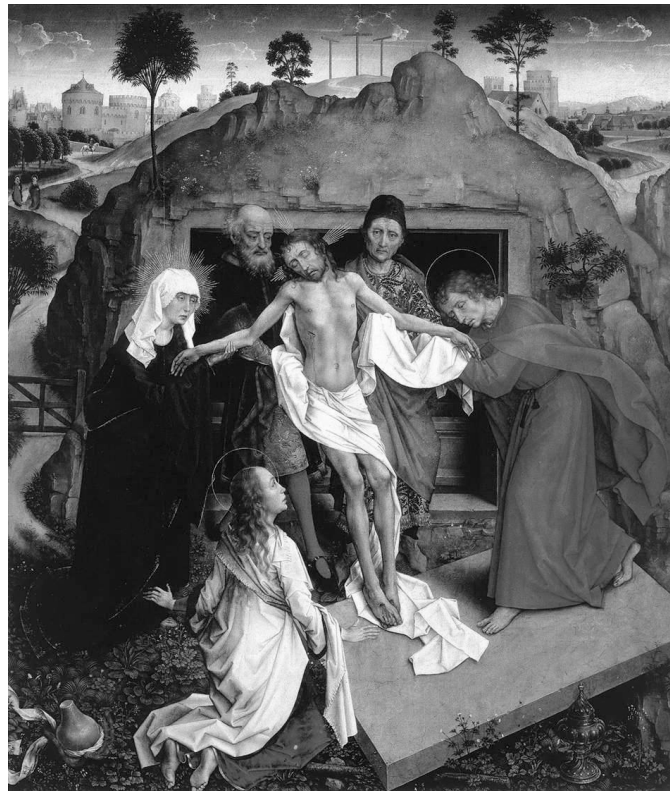


Figure 2.6. Rogier van der Weyden, *Lamentation Over Christ*, ca. 1450, oil on panel 110 x 96 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence



Figure 2.7. Michelangelo Buonarroti, *Pietà*, ca. 1548-1555, marble, Florence Cathedral



Figure 2.8. Baccio Bandinelli, *Pietà*, ca. 1559, marble, Basilica of Santissima Annunziata, Florence

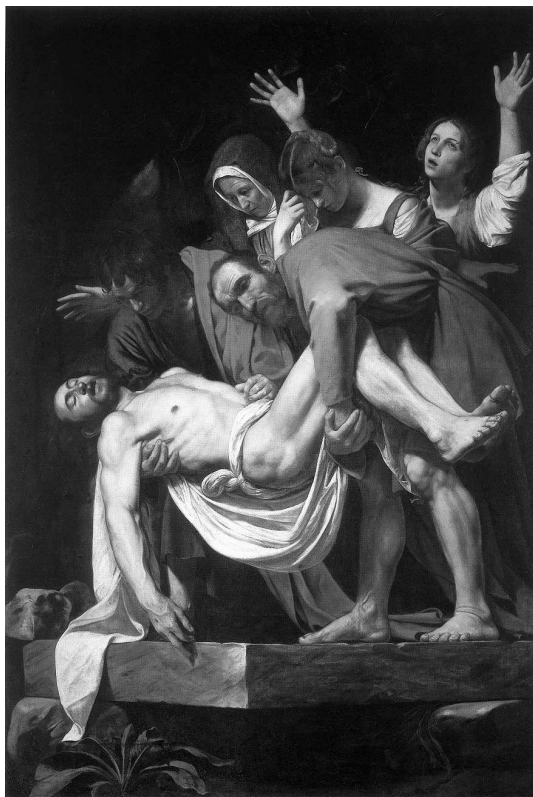


Figure 2.9. Michelangelo Caravaggio, *Entombment*, 1602-3, oil on canvas 300 x 203 cm, Vatican, Pinacoteca



Figure 2.10. Francesco Salviati, *Lamentation*, ca. 1560, oil on panel 77 x 53 cm, Galleria, Palatina



Figure 2.11. Agnolo di Cosimo (Bronzino), *Lamentation*, ca. 1553, oil on panel 243 x 174 cm, Palazzo Vecchio, Florence



Figure 2.12. Titian, *Entombment of Christ*, ca. 1559, oil on canvas 137 x 175 cm, Museo del Prado

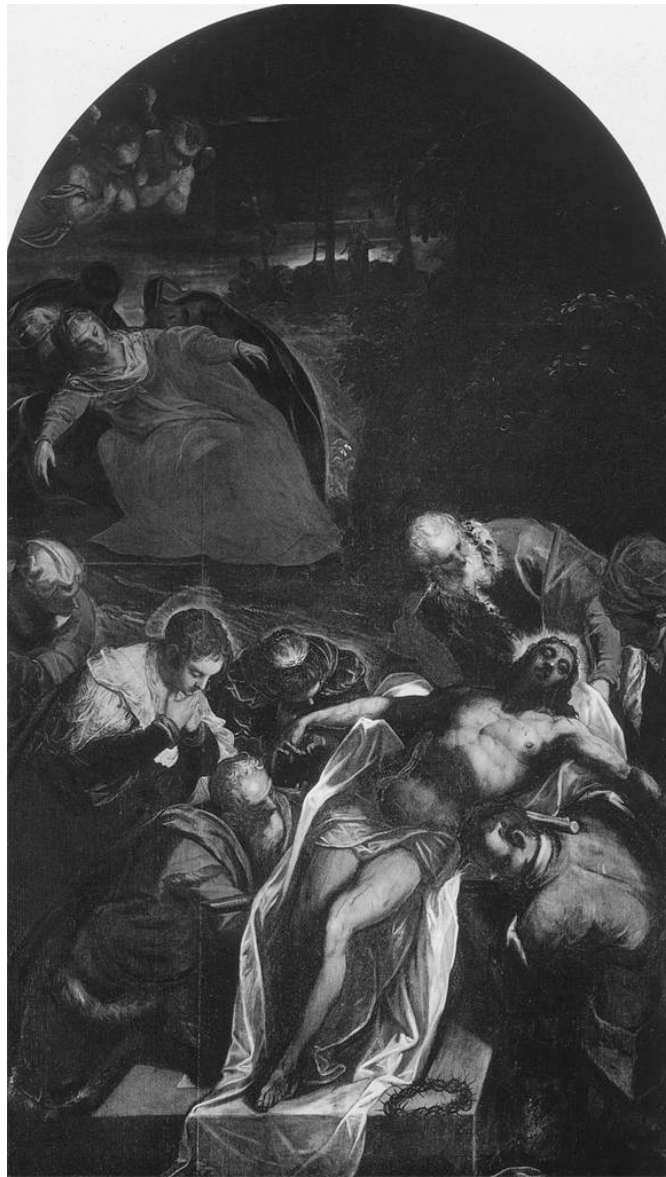


Figure 2.13. Jacopo Tintoretto, *Deposition of Christ*, 1594, oil on canvas 288 x 166 cm
San Giorgio Maggiore, Venice

CHAPTER III

THE ARTIST AS WITNESS OR PARTICIPANT

Scholarship discussing the broad category of embedded self-portraits as witnesses or participants is decidedly centered in the Quattrocento. No systematic study exists of Cinquecento or Seicento practices of this type of self-imaging. While detailing three instructive Cinquecento examples, this chapter will transplant current theories surrounding the development of embedded self-portraits of the Quattrocento into the Cinquecento in an attempt to see where, how and if they apply. It will examine the unstable religious and cultural environment that resulted from the Reformation and Counter-Reformation on the Italian peninsula. This chapter will also consider how decrees established by the Council of Trent from 1545 to December of 1563 may have altered the placement, frequency and function of embedded self-portraits as witnesses or participants. Effects of the Council's ordinances on sacred images were immediate and widespread on the Italian peninsula and would continue to exercise influence for several hundred years.¹

Azar Rejaie's 2006 dissertation and Joanna Woods-Marsden's aforementioned study of self-portraiture provide the foundations for this chapter's summation of the Quattrocento practice of embedded self-portraits in Florence.² Both scholars survey the earliest developments of embedded self-portraiture and examine the works of Masaccio, Botticelli, Ghirlandaio and Gozzoli. Further, Rejaie opens the investigation into the ways that patronage, secular and religious, resulted in portraits appearing in works like the

¹ Hall, *The Sacred Image in the Age of Art*, 120.

² Rejaie, *Defining Artistic Identity in the Florentine Renaissance* and Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture*.

Brancacci Chapel. This chapter will employ for Cinquecento examples the link Woods-Marsden draws between artist identity/status and embedded self-portraits. Katherine Brown's study of participant self-portraits informs this chapter's discussion of the unique circumstances in Venice during the late Quattrocento and Cinquecento, as in the works of Giovanni Mansueti and Gentile Bellini.³ Brown's brief mention of Cinquecento Venetians such as Titian, Tintoretto and Jacopo Palma il Giovane will serve as a basis from which to launch a more detailed contextualization of the city and Titian. This chapter will treat the city and artists of Venice as intimately connected to the larger trends of Quattrocento and Cinquecento portraiture, but also as entirely exceptional and deserving of separate consideration. This chapter also draws from Pope-Hennessy and his description of the stylistic parallels between embedded donor portraits and self-portraits in the early Quattrocento.⁴ More specifically, Pope-Hennessy's contextualization of Masaccio and his stylistic modernity will inform the current chapter's larger summation of Masaccio and Quattrocento embedded self-portraits in Florence.

Marcia B. Hall's 2011 publication, *The Sacred Image in the Age of Art: Titian, Tintoretto, Barocci, El Greco, Caravaggio*, deserves special mention. Hall explores the radical and unstable artistic and religious environment in which artists reinvented the way sacred images were conceived and produced in the Cinquecento. Her discussion of the historical circumstances of Tridentine and post-Tridentine Europe have helped formulate this chapter's contextualization and categorization of Cinquecento embedded self-portraits. Further, Hall discusses the unique and innovative artistic responses of Titian,

³ K. Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*.

⁴ Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*.

Tintoretto, Barocci, El Greco and Caravaggio to the decree on sacred images established by the Council of Trent in 1563. Importantly, Titian has a vital role in the current chapter's discussion of post-Tridentine embedded self-portraiture because he painted his 1576 *Pietà* in an individualized style while appearing to infuse the piece with a personal psychology that was influential and exceptional for its time. As this chapter will attempt to demonstrate, a significant evolution of embedded self-portraiture may be observed from its earliest inception in the late Trecento to Titian's remarkable *Pietà* in the late Cinquecento.

Masaccio and the Birth of a Quattrocento Convention

Pope-Hennessy informs us that portraiture surfaced timidly into Italian religious narrative painting during the Trecento in the form of minute figures, functioning as a way to “associate the gift with the individual who had donated it.”⁵ The *Enthroned Madonna* panel circa 1335, located today in the Columbia Museum of Art and attributed to the studio of Bernardo Daddi, is a representative example of the iconographic practice of donor portraiture (figure 3.1, see end of chapter). The donor, seen in the bottom left corner of the painting, kneels with hands clasped in prayer as a much larger Saint John the Baptist extends a hand in a gesture of blessing over the donor's head. The Madonna, who occupies her throne at the center of the composition, dwarfs the saints surrounding her. Taddeo di Bartolo's likely self-portrait in his 1401 *Assumption of the Virgin* reflects trends of Trecento and early Quattrocento self-portraiture. Scholar Christian Wolters, whom Woods-Marsden later followed, first proposed Taddeo's presence in the

⁵ Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, 257.

Assumption and further suggested the artist displayed himself as his name saint, Thaddeus.⁶ Located below the Assumption and within a group of apostles surrounding the Virgin's empty tomb, Taddeo has traditionally been identified as the partial figure with lighter facial tones, who tugs his left forefinger and gazes intently towards the viewer (figure 3.2).⁷ In addition to his gaze, the figure is more individualized and further distinguished from the other figures that have darker facial tones.⁸ The bust identified as Taddeo is nearly lost among the profusion of similarly scaled figures, below the much larger enthroned Virgin in this multi-figured composition, which is divided into several sections by a supremely carved and painted frame. Taddeo's placement of his portrait in the lower-center of the altarpiece, near the Virgin and her Dormition, as well as his presumed saintly identification may reflect the artist's increased self-esteem as a result of the prestigious commission.⁹

In contrast to the figures in Taddeo Bartolo's early Quattrocento precedent, Masaccio's figures in the Brancacci chapel differ in that all are shown on the same scale as divinities and are treated in more naturalistic terms. Masaccio was part of a generation of original artists who reinterpreted religious iconography in new, "realistic terms," an approach that influenced his style of painting in his frescoes at Santa Maria del Carmine

⁶ Christian Wolters, "Ein Selbstbildnis des Taddeo di Bartolo," *Mitteilungen des Kunsthistorischen Institutes in Florenz*, 7 (1953): 70-72. Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture*, 44-48, accepts the identification. Orcagna's self-portrait within his marble relief titled *Dormition and Assumption of the Virgin* of 1359 is one of the earliest accepted cases of Italian embedded self-portraiture. Orcagna displayed himself as himself and signed the work. Woods-Marsden theorized that a number of early Trecento self-portraits were associated with the Virgin's Assumption and Coronation in accordance, "with her importance as an intercessor and the growth of her cult at the end of the Middle Ages."

⁷ Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture*, 44-48. See also G. Solberg, *Taddeo di Bartolo: His Life and Work*, (Ph.D. Dissertation, NYU 1991): 519.

⁸ Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture*, 48.

⁹ Ibid.

in Florence.¹⁰ Masaccio's innovations permeated his employment of portraiture in the *Raising of the Son of Theophilus* fresco in the Brancacci Chapel (figure 3.3). Illustrating a miraculous resurrection performed by Saint Peter after his release from prison, the fresco is large with many life-sized figures. Nude, kneeling and located at center is the son of Theophilus. Saint Peter, in a brilliant yellow robe, full-figured and haloed in gold stands with his hand extended in blessing towards the boy. The continuous narrative shows St. Peter once more, seated above a small group of ten kneeling and standing figures to the far right of the *Raising*, among which is the figure identified as Masaccio. Mario Salmi was the first to identify Masaccio as one of the figures closest to the seated St. Peter, gazing out at the viewer with self-awareness reminiscent of Alberti's famous command to painters to include such a figure; he wears a red tunic, is in three-quarter view and plays witness to the scene.¹¹ While a few other figures gaze out at us, it is the figure accepted as Masaccio that captures our attention with its individualized features and poised expression. Paul Joannides suggested the painter in fact included several portraits within the same group of spectators observing the resurrection.¹² Among the figures immediately surrounding Masaccio, he identified the architect Brunelleschi standing behind "Masaccio" and Alberti as the figure overlapping "Masaccio."¹³ Further,

¹⁰ Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, 257-58.

¹¹ Mario Salmi, "L'autoritratto di Masaccio nella Capella Brancacci," *Rivista Storica Camelitana* 1, (1929): 99-100. Vasari reports in both editions of his *Lives* that Masaccio painted his self-portrait in the *Tribute Money* fresco between 1424 and 1428 in the Brancacci chapel, though this has largely been rejected in favor of Salmi's identification. See Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, 107. See also Rejaie, *Defining Artistic Identity in the Florentine Renaissance*, 94-95. Occasionally this separate, yet compositionally connected, scene may be referred as the *Chairing of Saint Peter*.

¹² Paul Joannides, *Masaccio and Masolino*, (London: Phaidon Press Limited: 1993): 333-336.

¹³ Joannides, *Masaccio and Masolino*, 336 followed Ornella Casazza, "La grande gabbia architettonica di Masaccio," *Critica d'Arte*, 4th series, LIII, 16 (1988): 78-97, in these identifications.

several Carmelites have been identified by Joannides within the group of spectators, clad in contemporary liturgical dress, on the far left of the fresco, opposite the figures identified as Masaccio and his companions.¹⁴

One could suggest that Masaccio's incentive for including his likeness in the Brancacci Chapel fresco may have been for the same pious and commemorative purposes as his patrons and the Carmelites.¹⁵ In her analysis of the portraits embedded within Masaccio's fresco of the festival that commemorated the 1422 consecration of Santa Maria del Carmine (entitled *La Sagra*), Megan Holmes suggested that "The Florentine Carmelites were determined to write themselves into the history of their Order at the precise moment in which that history was being worked out in all of its specificity and the Western identity of the Order redefined. The patrons of the Carmelites sought the special protection of the Virgin of Mount Carmel and the Carmelite saints for themselves and their families, making a conspicuous public demonstration of their piety and influence in matters sacred."¹⁶ Rejaie, building on Holmes' argument, concluded her discussion of the Brancacci chapel with the suggestion that the Carmelites chose the theme of Saint Peter for political and theological motives, requesting representations of

¹⁴ Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, 7, made similar identifications, noting the inclusion of posthumous portraits in the Brancacci Chapel. In Masaccio's lost *La Sagra* fresco, he proposed that the seated figure directly to the left of the standing Saint Peter in the *Raising* was the State Chancellor, Coluccio Salutati, who had died twenty years before. The posthumous portraits were often identified with the aid of portrait medals.

¹⁵ Megan Holmes, *Fra Filippo Lippi: The Carmelite Painter*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1999): 50. See also Rejaie's summation of Holmes' argument in *Defining Artistic Identity in the Florentine Renaissance*, 97-106.

¹⁶ Holmes, *Fra Filippo Lippi*, 50. Vasari, *Lives of the Artists*, 106-7, described the fresco as containing numerous portraits of Florentine citizens, ranging from fellow artists to high-ranking clergymen and powerful secular Florentines. Vasari provided a vivid description of the fresco as well as the numerous embedded portraits believed to have been included. Vasari additionally locates the fresco over the door inside the cloister leading towards the convent. See also Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, 4-7.

themselves in the *Raising* to “attest to both the Order’s antiquity and the divine favor whose receipt could be inferred in their privilege of witnessing such an important event.”¹⁷ Both Holmes and Rejaie agree that Masaccio’s self-portrait in the Brancacci chapel resulted from the inclusion of so many portraits of contemporary Florentines, both alive and dead. As Pope-Hennessy argued, it illuminates the predominantly commemorative nature of Renaissance portraiture during the Quattrocento; a genre “consciously directed to a future when the living would no longer be alive.”¹⁸

Masaccio’s self-image can be said to have laid the early foundations for many succeeding Quattrocento Florentine artists to continue the practice.¹⁹ Vasari attested to Masaccio’s monumental contribution to the development of Renaissance art in his *Lives*. In his description of the Brancacci chapel in Masaccio’s *vita*, Vasari reported that it “has been visited by countless masters and those who were practicing their drawing from those times to our own... Thus, his labours deserve endless praise, above all because he gave shape in his masterful painting to the beautiful style of our own times.”²⁰ Vasari continued his assessment of the chapel by naming nearly twenty-five artists of the Quattrocento and Cinquecento who studied the fresco cycle, including the Florentines Sandro Botticelli and Domenico Ghirlandaio.²¹

¹⁷ Rejaie, *Defining Artistic Identity in the Florentine Renaissance*, 104.

¹⁸ Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, 8.

¹⁹ Rejaie, *Defining Artistic Identity in the Florentine Renaissance*, 258.

²⁰ Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, 108.

²¹ *Ibid*, 108.

Botticelli embedded his self-image in the *Adoration of the Magi* panel circa 1475, perhaps in a gesture towards Masaccio's stylistic modernity (figure 3.4).²² Botticelli has been identified with the figure displayed fully in a radiant yellow toga on the right periphery of the action, conveying a sense of pride and confidence through his intense gaze, characteristically directed towards the viewer.²³ Equally noted are the number of Medici portraits included in the image, such as the wealthy patron and money broker Guasparre del Lama, the only figure who looks out at the viewer and indicates himself by pointing as his chest on the right side of the painting.²⁴ Other figures include Cosimo il Vecchio, Piero and Giovanni de' Medici, all kneeling figures and surrounding the Virgin and Child.²⁵ Woods-Marsden has gone as far as to describe the scene as being, "re-enacted" by the Medici.²⁶ Following Masaccio's model, the portraits of Cosimo and Piero were posthumous, highlighting again the nature of Renaissance portraiture as largely driven by commemoration, politics and status. Indeed, the inclusion of so many Medici portraits as well as the artist's self-portrait in Guasparre's commission moved

²² See Rejaie, *Defining Artistic Identity in the Florentine Renaissance*, 145-62.

²³ Hermann Ulmann, *Botticelli*, (Munich: Vormalis Friedrich Bruckmann, 1893): 59, first proposed the identification, which several scholars have subsequently followed. Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture*, 48-50; Ronald Lightbrown, *Sandro Botticelli*, (Berkeley & Los Angeles, 1978); Rab Hatfield, *Botticelli's Uffizi "Adoration": A Study in Pictorial Content*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1978); Rejaie, *Defining Artistic Identity in the Florentine Renaissance*, 150. Scholars L. Ettliger and Helen Ettliger, *Botticelli*, (London: Thames & Hudson, 1976): 41, rejected the identification on the basis that the figure is, in fact, too prominent in the piece to be the artist's self-portrait. However, it is precisely the figure's gaze and notability that suggest its validity as a self-portrait.

²⁴ Rejaie, *Defining Artistic Identity in the Florentine Renaissance*, 153, followed Jacques Mensil, *Botticelli*, (Paris: 1938): 94, in the identification. The figure fits Guasparre's age at the time and because of the self-indicating gesture, few scholars doubt the identification.

²⁵ For these suggested identifications see Rejaie, *Defining Artistic Identity in the Florentine Renaissance*, 153. Ulmann, *Botticelli*, 59; Hatfield, *Botticelli's Uffizi "Adoration"*, 31; Lightbrown, *Sandro Botticelli*, 45.

²⁶ Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture*, 50.

Rejaie to postulate that Botticelli and Guasparre were “both attempting to build reputations and to catch – and flatter – the roving Medici eye.”²⁷ Importantly, the use of portraiture had now fully integrated itself into the sacred narrative and, in addition to equal scale, Guasparre and the Medici were afforded prominent positions close to the divinities, possibly illustrating the growing role of piety, pride and power in Renaissance embedded portraiture.

Botticelli’s location of his own self-portrait at the periphery of the panel would appear to be consistent with Masaccio’s early model, but his full-figured presentation and pairing with a Medici portrait could illustrate more broadly that artists continued to experience an increased social status in the waning years of the Quattrocento, aspiring to higher professional recognition in the lived world as well as the worlds created through art.²⁸ The figures identified as Masaccio and Botticelli are both juxtaposed with portrait groups within the panel and fresco, respectively. The pairing of portrait groups doubtless had a technical function in balancing the composition, but may have also visually connected the two on both spiritual and social levels, which could reflect artists’ growing confidence in their profession. Standing opposite to the figure identified as Botticelli in the *Adoration* is a well-dressed young man, often taken to be the adolescent Lorenzo de’ Medici, a citizen of considerably higher social rank than the artist’s.²⁹ Another instructive example that displayed similarities to Botticelli’s and Masaccio’s self-portraiture is

²⁷ Rejaie, *Defining Artistic Identity in the Florentine Renaissance*, 156.

²⁸ *Ibid*, 152-62.

²⁹ Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture*, 50, followed Hatfield, *Botticelli’s Uffizi “Adoration,”* in this identification.

Domenico Ghirlandaio's *Expulsion of Joachim* circa 1485-90.³⁰ Other Florentine masters of the Quattrocento who represented themselves as both participant and witness within their works include Filippo Lippi, Benozzo Gozzoli, and Filippino Lippi, all of whom Vasari mentioned as studying Masaccio's fresco cycle in the Brancacci Chapel.³¹

The integration of portraiture into sacred narratives was not a practice that went unnoticed, and its reception grew increasingly sour as the century progressed. Two contemporary sources can reflect this negative view of the inclusion of embedded portraiture or self-portraiture in sacred art during the late Quattrocento. In an extreme case, the well-known Dominican friar and preacher Girolamo Savonarola (1452-1498) denounced the practice of using recognizable individuals as saints during a sermon delivered in 1496.³² Savonarola specifically attacked the embedding of Medici portraits (and subsequently self-portraits of artists) within sacred works in Florence in the 1490s and additionally criticized the inclusion of irrelevant naturalistic details, such as setting a Christian narrative in a Tuscan landscape, within sacred images.³³ In this way, Savonarola effectively attacked the humanist foundations from which the Medici and Florentine artists had built their conceptions of individualism through the outward display

³⁰ Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture*, 60-62, takes this identification as well as Rejaie, *Defining Artistic Identity in the Florentine Renaissance*, 170-85. Again, the fully rendered figure on the right periphery of the canvas looking out at the viewer is the presumed self-representation of Ghirlandaio.

³¹ Filippo Lippi is recognized as one of the men at the foot of the Virgin's bier in the *Dormition, Assumption, and Coronation of the Virgin* fresco of 1469 in the Duomo, Spoleto. Benozzo Gozzoli has been identified as one of the procession characters in his *Procession of the Magi* fresco of 1459 in the Medici Palace Chapel. Filippino Lippi, it has been suggested, included two self-portraits in the Brancacci Chapel frescoes by his hand, namely the *Crucifixion* and *Dispute of Saint Peter* circa 1482 and 1489. For these suggested identifications, see Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture*, 48 & 57-60 and Rejaie, *Defining Artistic Identity in the Florentine Renaissance*, 121-45 & 162-70; Vasari, *The Lives of the Artists*, 108.

³² Girolamo Savonarola, *Prediche Sopra Amos e Zaccaria*, ed. P. Ghiglieri, (Rome, 1971-2).

³³ *Ibid.*

of luxury, materialism, power, and status in sacred works. Further, in his 1582 treatise Cardinal Gabriele Paleotti echoed the Council of Trent's objection to using faces of worldly persons as saints.³⁴

In the art of Botticelli, Filippino Lippi, and Ghirlandaio, embedded portraiture was reaching its climax in late Quattrocento Florence, but growing resentment eventually forced a re-conceptualization of the practice, which can perhaps be illustrated in the changing frequency of autonomous self-portraiture. The prevalence of autonomous self-portraits increased during the early Cinquecento, with this new genre inheriting many of the same functions that embedded portraiture and embedded self-portraiture had served during the Quattrocento. Autonomous self-portraiture became a way artists could continue the outward expression of their growing social statuses in art. It also had a pragmatic function: to advertise the painter or sculptor's ability to render a convincing, life-like visage. The shift towards autonomous self-portraiture may also reflect artists' desire to delve deeper into their own psyches, emotions, and spiritual journeys.

Albrecht Dürer's 1500 autonomous *Self-Portrait as Christ Pantocrator* has come to represent one of the first explicit visualizations of how artists viewed themselves as craftsmen inspired by God (figure 3.5). As suggested by Joseph Leo Koerner, Dürer's 1500 panel is "formalized so as to display its underlying construction almost in the manner of an architectural front elevation, and set off against a neutral ground, the 1500 likeness is less a body in a setting than a principle of pictorial order consubstantial with

³⁴ Paolo Barocchi, ed. *Scritti d'arte del Cinquecento*, III, (Milan, 1971-77): 273-5. See also Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 69.

the visual image itself.”³⁵ The deep symbolism, semiology, proportions and ratios Dürer manipulated in his 1500 panel were extraordinarily original and radical for the time. The picture is not just a visual representation, but something beyond appearance *and* status, something that gave the viewer “access to an interior self and reflected the underlying idea of painting itself: art is the image of its maker.”³⁶

An example of this broader shift as it affected embedded self-portraits can be seen in Pinturicchio’s fresco of the *Annunciation*, completed in 1502 and located in the Collegiata of S. Maria Maggiore in Spello (figure 3.6). The scene is set within opulent walls of colored marble and lofty arches and includes an angel who kneels to the left, lips already parted to proclaim the coming of Christ; the elegantly posed and equally as brilliant Virgin, haloed in gold and standing to the right; and God the Father launching a beam of divine light from the upper left, creating a dramatic diagonal that focuses our attention on the Virgin. Significantly, a *framed* self-portrait of the artist hangs behind the Virgin on the far right periphery. The identity of the sitter is confirmed by a tablet below, which reads ‘BERNARDINVS PICTORICVS PERVSINVS’. Further, the artist has included the tools of his practice below the frame in a configuration that closely resembles a trophy. In autonomous self-portraiture, the artist typically voided any religious, historical, mythological or allegorical context and instead used dress as well as other attributes, such as pose and structure, to connote status, pride and piety. In contrast to Masaccio, Botticelli, and Ghirlandaio, Pinturicchio displays only his framed bust. The frame transforms the artist into a representation, both reducing his anachronistic ‘presence’ at

³⁵ Joseph Leo Koerner, *The Moment of Self-Portraiture in German Renaissance Art*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993): 63.

³⁶ Omar Calabrese, *Artists' Self-Portraits*, 1st ed. (New York: Abbeville Press, 2006): 18.

the Annunciation while advertising his creative role in visualizing the sacred moment. Moreover, his self-representation functions as a visual signature, his trophy-like tools and text confirming his authorship of the beautiful cycle. One may assume that Savonarola would have disapproved of such an inclusion, but the picture can illustrate one of the earliest ways artists began to navigate the changing artistic landscape of the late Quattrocento and early Cinquecento.³⁷

Venetian Embedded Self-Portraiture in the Quattrocento and Early Cinquecento

There was a special relationship and development of autonomous self-portraiture in Venice during the late Quattrocento and early Cinquecento. Vasari's description of Venetian portraiture in the *vita* of Giovanni Bellini (c. 1430-1516) provides illuminating insight into the citizens' interest in preserving likeness: "In all Venetian houses may be seen portraits to the fourth generation back. This is a most praiseworthy custom. For the satisfaction of seeing the effigies of his ancestors, quite aside from the ornamental aspect, is of the greatest value to any man and awakens in him the love of glory."³⁸ Venetian artists, too, produced a diverse range of independent self-representations to preserve their likenesses for future generations. Some of the major Venetian figures that produced autonomous self-representations in a variety of graphic media during this period were Giorgione, Gentile Bellini, and Giovanni Boldú.³⁹ Boldú has earned the designation as the earliest artist to produce an independent self-portrait in Venice, which was a bronze

³⁷ Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture*, 105-110, also noted the framed self-portrait of Pietro Perugino in his 1500 fresco cycle in the Collegio del Cambio.

³⁸ Vasari, ed. Burroughs, *Lives of the Artists*, 134.

³⁹ K. Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 71-76, 94 & 97.

medal displaying his profiled bust circa 1458.⁴⁰ Gentile Bellini has been noted for his sketched self-portraits, a well-known example being a chalk study for a self-portrait embedded in his *Miracle of the Relic of the Holy Cross in Campo San Lio*, one of the paintings considered here.

Unlike in Florence, where a noted development from embedded to autonomous self-portraiture can be observed, embedded and autonomous self-portraiture developed at roughly the same time in Venice. Both genres were commemorative and functioned largely to “re-appropriate the past for the benefit of the present.”⁴¹ In Venice, the use of anachronistic portraits of contemporaries embedded within sacred narratives was seen as an accepted strategy in making such events relevant to the late Quattrocento viewer. Further, the commemorative connotations of such a practice reflected the city’s connection to the larger trends of embedded portraiture observed in Florence and other mainland cities such as Rome. This is not intended to suggest that appropriating the past for contemporary viewers was not a function of embedded portraiture on the mainland, but, rather, to agree with scholars such as Patricia Fortini Brown and Katherine Brown that these conceptions were of particular strength in Venice as a result of the city’s unique political, social and cultural situation. Indeed, Venetian conceptions of the individual were made central by a renewed appreciation of humanist philosophy during the Renaissance, the result of the city being a center for humanist book publishing.⁴²

Katherine Brown reported, “Venice possessed the political stability to nurture a sense of

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ K. Brown, *The Painter’s Reflection*, 58. See also Patricia Brown, *Venetian Narrative Painting in the Age of Carpaccio*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988): 234.

⁴² K. Brown, *The Painter’s Reflection*, 31-35.

self for all of her citizens. There was no revolution, war, or radical change in government in Venice during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Relative social harmony allowed Venetians, in part, to devote their attention to trades, families, and personal pursuits.”⁴³ As Marcia Hall succinctly noted, “No crisis occurred in Venice like the one in Florence instigated by Savonarola.”⁴⁴

Self-portraits embedded within commissioned, narrative paintings began to appear in Venice during the 1490s.⁴⁵ Pope-Hennessy suggested the practice of embedded donor portraiture in Venice had been established by Pisanello in the early Quattrocento and evolved in a similar way as it did in Florence, in terms of scale and placement.⁴⁶ During the Quattrocento and early Cinquecento in Venice, narrative paintings were often set within the city, which intensified the sense of community and allowed artists to glorify the city’s architecture and reflected colors. Giovanni Mansueti’s likely self-portrait in his *Miracle of the Relic of the Holy Cross in Campo San Lio* circa 1500 may illustrate not only the unique nature of Venetian narrative painting, but additionally the extension of the Florentine convention of embedded self-portraiture that began with Masaccio three-quarters of a century earlier (figure 3.7). The figure standing at the far left periphery of the canvas, clad in artisan black is undoubtedly the artist’s self-portrait.⁴⁷

He raises his hand to his head while holding a *cartellino* (trans. little sign) reading:

⁴³ Ibid, 31-32.

⁴⁴ Marcia Hall, *The Sacred Image in the Age of Art*, 4.

⁴⁵ K. Brown, *The Painter’s Reflection*, 57.

⁴⁶ Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, 19.

⁴⁷ P. Brown, *Venetian Narrative Painting*, 233, follows Lodovico Foscari, “Autoritratti di Maestri della Scuola Veneziana,” *Rivista di Venezia* 12, (1933): 247-62. K. Brown, *The Painter’s Reflection*, 58, followed Patricia Brown in the identification.

"Work of Giovanni Mansueti, Venetian, disciple of Bellini, believing rightly." The painting documents an event that took place in 1474 when a reliquary containing a sacred fragment of the Holy Cross was taken to the church of San Lio for the funeral of a member of the Confraternity of the Scuola Grande di San Giovanni Evangelista in Venice. Crowded, the piece displays nearly one hundred individuals. The artist has also set the scene using convincing Venetian architecture and views of canals to make the historical story feel more relevant for contemporary viewers.⁴⁸ Katherine Brown suggested that Mansueti's self-representation, "serves as a dual written and visual signature," but also confirms the artist's claim to "have been an eyewitness to the event, thus attempting to validate the subject of his painting for viewers."⁴⁹

The self-portraits of both Florentines and Venetians, such as Bartolo, Masaccio, Botticelli, Mansueti and Pinturicchio illustrate the first phase of a notable progression in the function and presentation of embedded self-portraiture in the Quattrocento. As the century advanced and the social statuses and wealth of *both* patrons and artists continued to rise, embedded portraits and self-portraits increasingly exhibited all figures on the same scale as biblical or divine characters. Moreover, artists appear to have afforded their self-portraits ever more prominent positions and visibility to their audiences. In Venice the artist proclaimed his identity and even called attention to his figure. This progression or increased audacity among painters and patrons did not go unnoticed, as the attacks of Savonarola attested. As will be demonstrated, increasing resentment towards the Catholic Church forced the re-conceptualization not only of the practices taking place

⁴⁸ K. Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 58.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 59.

within sacred images, but the entire foundation of Catholic liturgy, procession, oratory and theater.

The Impact of the Council of Trent on Sacred Images

Much of the disputation of sacred images began in the Protestant North in 1522, when Andreas Karlstadt spearheaded significant attacks on sacred images, which soon spread to Zürich and other parts of northern Europe.⁵⁰ In the south, artists' *invenzione* had, over the course of the Quattrocento, secularized the sacred by transforming the divinely inspired Byzantine icon into a naturalized image. As Marcia Hall explained, “the worshiper was no longer communing with a symbol, but was now confronting something that strongly resembled physical presences from the secular world.”⁵¹ For Karlstadt and the Protestants, embedded portraiture, the sensual rendering of sacred females, and nudity were among the prime indecent developments they felt had infiltrated and corrupted sacred art.⁵² While Martin Luther took a slightly more tolerant approach to images, one centered on their proper didactic use, Karlstadt was militant in his opposition and believed that worshipping art was tantamount to worshipping the flesh. In his view, images were unnecessary for proper faith. Even worse, their art had also become the outward symbol of Catholic indulgences, luxury, materialism and rule.⁵³ The resentful

⁵⁰ Hall, *The Sacred Image in the Age of Art*, 21.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, 20.

⁵² See Robert Scribner, *Religion and Culture in Germany (1400-1800)*, ed. Lyndal Roper, (Leiden: Brill, 2001): 131-32. This crisis seems to have resulted from a delayed reception of Italian naturalism in the north, which conflicted with what has been termed the medieval sacramental gaze. See also Hall, *The Sacred Image in the Age of Art*, 20.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 20.

atmosphere culminated in May of 1527, when the mutinous troops of Charles V besieged and sacked Rome, an act interpreted as “a retribution for moral decline and the glorification of luxury and sensuality” in Papal Rome.⁵⁴ The sack of Rome brought the Reformation to the doorstep of Saint Peter’s Basilica and a response was vital for the Church if it wished to conserve its spiritual authority. The blasphemous and indecent practices of artists and patrons in sacred works and the worshiping of images were, among others, major points of contention that the Council of Trent sought to resolve.

Before the Council of Trent sacred images were subject to very few restrictions, and could include virtually anything a patron or artist wished. This freedom allowed artists to be experimental with their religious images and many used the opportunity to highlight their artistic innovations and genius. Parmigianino’s *Madonna of the Rose* circa 1530 illustrates some of the indecorous practices that Protestants and Catholic reformers vehemently opposed. Working in a Mannerist style, Parmigianino displayed the Virgin as an ideal woman with tasteful and elongated physiognomy, whose breasts are all but revealed under thin clothing. Perhaps more shocking is the Christ child, who reclines in full nudity on the Virgin’s lap. His inviting pose, shameless to some eyes, would appear to be more consistent with those highly sexualized images of a reclining Venus, such as Giorgione’s 1510 *Sleeping Venus*, than with a sacred image. That Parmigianino’s 1530 painting represented the typical Mannerist distaste for the ideals of High Renaissance Classicism, and the style’s promotion of subjective interpretation, intellectualism, and abnormality in sacred art, made the Mannerists a primary target for Protestant critique.

⁵⁴ Manfred Wundram, "Mannerism," *Grove Art Online, Oxford Art Online*, (Oxford University Press).

Giants of the Cinquecento art world were not exempt from the probing inquisition. Michelangelo's *Last Judgment* fresco in the Sistine Chapel, unveiled in 1541, also represented for many reformers the larger failure of sacred images at mid-century. Above all was the master's pervasive use of nudity that drew contentious commentary. Had Michelangelo's fresco been unveiled a few years earlier, when Paul III commissioned it in 1535, it might have avoided the level of controversy it generated in the mid-1540s. Indeed, between 1535 and 1545, the entire religious and artistic environment changed dramatically towards conservatism, evidenced by the reinstatement of the Roman Inquisition in July of 1542 and the establishment of the Council of Trent in December 1545.⁵⁵ As Elisabeth Gleason summarized:

“Church leaders of the next generation were men of the Counter-Reformation whose outlook was quite different. The old church of the Renaissance was about to disappear, and with it the religious openness that had characterized many of its leading figures, including the *spirituali* cardinals. It was not a matter of fanatics replacing proponents of toleration, but of legalistic bureaucrats succeeding more latitudinarian prelates who had been educated in the spirit of Renaissance humanism.”⁵⁶

Although the religious and artistic worlds were shifting quickly towards conservatism during the period of the Council of Trent, some artists continued to include themselves and others in their religious images at mid-century. Florence remained one of the centers for the practice of embedding portraits and self-portraits in sacred art and, as the cases of Pontormo, Salviati, Bandinelli, Bronzino, Naldini and Federico Zuccaro can attest,

⁵⁵ Hall, *The Sacred Image in the Age of Art*, 103.

⁵⁶ Elisabeth Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini: Venice, Rome, and Reform*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993): 301. See also Hall, *The Sacred Image in the Age of Art*, 104.

Mannerists were particularly attracted to the convention.⁵⁷ What is more, embedding portraits and self-portraits in sacred art was also particular to Venetians, such as Titian, Tintoretto, and Jacopo Palma il Giovane. Political and social stability allowed Venice to remain relatively distant from the religious disruptions of the 1540s and 1550s, which made possible a unique and unaffected artistic evolution during this time.

That Titian employed nearly every category of self-representation during his long and acclaimed career isolates him as an artist worthy of extended discussion. While Chapter II demonstrated a case in which he displayed himself in character as Nicodemus in religious narrative painting, Titian embedded himself as a witness in sacred narratives as well. Importantly, Titian did not embed his self-portrait into any mythological or secular works of art and he represents himself only in religious contexts. The artist also created autonomous self-portraits, in which he displayed himself as he most surely was: a wealthy and distinguished court artist. What is more, Titian may have infused his autonomous self-images with a degree of thoughtfulness that was experimental for its time. The following assessment of two of Titian's autonomous self-portraits suggests the artist provided a new insight into his own psychology by displaying himself contemplating something other than himself, signaled by his averted gaze. It will further suggest that this type of meditation carried over to Titian's embedded self-portraiture at mid-century as well. While determining *what* an artist is thinking is a dangerous interpretive venture, it will be an aim of this discussion to use the artworks to suggest possible religious intent.

⁵⁷ Pontormo has been identified in his 1525-28 *Entombment*. Federico as well as his brother, Taddeo, have been identified in numerous works, such as Federico's 1573 *Flagellation of Christ*. Finally, Giovanni Battista Naldini has been recognized in his 1583 *Deposition*. For these suggested identifications, see Cox-Rearick, *Bronzino's Chapel of Eleonora in the Palazzo Vecchio*, 200-250.

Establishing the precise number of autonomous self-portraits that Titian produced is a difficult task. Today, two survive while a total of five self-representations have been textually established ranging from 1550 to circa 1570. While the noteworthy catalogue raisonnés by Wethey, Humfrey, and Pedrocco provided illuminating commentary and provenance for Titian’s corpus, including his autonomous self-representations, their discussions emphasize technical aspects and Titian’s presence within sacred narratives is a topic left largely unaddressed.⁵⁸ Katherine Brown only noted the existence of Titian’s embedded self-portraits. Woods-Marsden built on Pope-Hennessy’s brief consideration of Titian’s autonomous self-portraiture, which connected Titian’s style and presentation with his unparalleled social status. Pope-Hennessy and Woods-Marsden discussed two self-portraits by Titian, one circa 1550 (today in Berlin) and the other dated to 1565 (Madrid). Both revealed a painter confident in his social status and supremely gifted in his professional career. It was further suggested by Woods-Marsden that the two self-representations, respectively, “refer to the active and the contemplative lives” of Titian.⁵⁹

Although unsigned and not dated, the authenticity of Titian’s 1550 *Self-Portrait*, located today in Berlin, has never been in doubt (figure 3.8a). Dressed in an ivory-colored jacket with satin sleeves and a dark hazel coat with fur lapels, Titian has represented himself as a wealthy nobleman. The weighty gold chain that hangs from his neck solidifies the picture’s connotations of wealth, status, and power. Compositionally, the 1550 canvas appears conventional for autonomous self-representations of the time: the artist is displayed frontally, in half-length view with a muted background and no

⁵⁸ Harold Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian: I. The Religious Paintings*, (London: Phaidon, 1969); Peter Humfrey, *Titian*, (New York: Phaidon, 2007); Filippo Pedrocco, *Titian*, (New York: Rizzoli International Publications, 2001).

⁵⁹ Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture*, 167.

context. Titian created a barrier is created between himself and his viewers with the addition of a table, upon which one hand rests. Woods-Marsden has proposed that his gaze injected new connotations of psychological reticence with the viewer not observed in autonomous self-portraiture before.⁶⁰ Rather than exhibiting a self-analytical, objective psychology through the self-absorbed gaze, one typical of Quattrocento embedded and early Cinquecento autonomous self-portraiture, the artist appears to be thinking *about* something as opposed to looking *at* something.⁶¹ That Titian appeared to be thinking rather than looking injected a new dimension of thoughtfulness into his 1550 *Self-Portrait*. Indeed, while the eschewal of context conceals the object or idea that Titian contemplates, his averted gaze nonetheless provided a new psychological access for viewers. Titian's later 1565 *Self-Portrait*, today in Madrid, would appear to exhibit a similar relationship with the viewer, but with perhaps more contemplation (figure 3.8b). Again in half-length, Titian is shown in a large black coat and skullcap with gold chain and an ivory-colored collar. In contrast to the 1550 self-image, the artist has now turned his pose to show himself in total profile, making the self-portrait quiet and meditative. The profile pose now directed Titian's gaze further from the viewer, making him more withdrawn and, perhaps, "lost in a profound reverie."⁶² While his pose creates more psychological space with the viewer, it additionally generated deeper reflection and meditation on the part of the subject/artist.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 159-167.

⁶¹ Ibid, 163. A typical example of this self-absorbed gaze can be observed in Tintoretto's *Self-Portrait* circa 1546-48, located today in the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Here, the young artist's gaze is striking in its intensity and confidence. While the picture highlights the painter's marked talent, his gaze seems objective, as if to impede any penetration beyond its surface.

⁶² Ibid, 165.

In the category of embedded self-portraits, Titian included himself within his 1554 *Adoration of the Holy Trinity* (commonly entitled the *Gloria*). Lodovico Foscari first associated him with the bearded figure in profile with a bared shoulder and extended hand, who gazes towards the Trinity among a column of figures on the right periphery (figure 3.9).⁶³ The *Gloria* was commissioned during Titian's visit to Augsburg in 1550-51 by the Hapsburg king, Charles V of Spain.⁶⁴ The commission included portraits of the royal family, all of whom can be identified in the group of figures directly above the man recognized as Titian. The Emperor, placed closest to God the Father and Jesus, is shown kneeling next to his crown with hands clasped in prayer. Charles' wife, Empress Isabella in profile (posthumous), and his son, Prince Philip II, are displayed behind him. Below Philip, two female figures in profile have been identified as Mary of Hungary, the Emperor's sister, and the Princess Juana.⁶⁵ New and Old Testament figures have been recognized as well, such as David, clad in blue, holding his harp at the bottom right; Noah, who raises a wooden model Ark at the lower center; and Moses, who anchors the composition together with a turbaned Ezekiel, at the lowest register.⁶⁶ The Virgin, covered in a brilliant blue robe at the top left of the canvas, stands next to Saint John the Baptist.

⁶³ Lodovico Foscari, *Iconographica di Tiziano*, (Venice: Sormani, 1935): 45. Both K. Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 62, and H. Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian*, 165, followed Foscari in the identification. That figure indeed appears to display striking similarities to his surviving autonomous self-portraits of the same period. Cornelius Cort, in his 1566 engraving of the *Gloria*, added the same distinctive headgear, seen in Pastorino da Siena's 1546 portrait medal of Titian, to this figure, assuring its identification as a self-portrait.

⁶⁴ Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian*, 166.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 165. Humfrey, *Titian*, 164, also made these identifications.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

Letters from Francisco de Vargas, Spanish ambassador at Venice, to Charles V indicate the Emperor eagerly anticipated the *Gloria*'s completion.⁶⁷ These letters also indicate the commission was made for the Emperor's personal devotion rather than a public defense of orthodox views of the Trinity, as Craig Harbison suggested in his 1967 article.⁶⁸ If the *Gloria* was intended to serve the Emperor's personal devotional needs, Titian's possible inclusion of his own image within the work becomes all the more intriguing. While Marcia Hall's characterization of Titian as exhibiting, "no hints of religious fervor, orthodox or otherwise, in his correspondence, revealing a man who was constantly engaged in political maneuvering to obtain the position and favors he wanted from his patrons, be they Farnese or Hapsburg, or others" is sound, it is also incomplete.⁶⁹ As Pope-Hennessy suggested, "The testimony of his paintings is that on a deeper level he lived a serious spiritual life, and proof of that, if proof be needed, occurs in 1559, in the great *Entombment* painted for Philip II of Spain, in which he depicts himself, with ravaged features, as a participant in the burial of Christ."⁷⁰

The fact that Titian included his signature in the *Gloria* on the scroll in Ezekiel's hand would appear to suggest his embedded self-portrait functioned not just as a visual signature, but as something ulterior. Unlike the embedded self-portraits of the preceding century, here Titian's gaze is fully engaged on the Trinity and not with the viewer. His

⁶⁷ Wetthey, *The Paintings of Titian*, 166.

⁶⁸ Ibid. See Craig Harbison, "Counter-Reformation Iconography in Titian's *Gloria*," *Art Bulletin* 49, no. 3 (1967): 244-246. Upon retirement in 1556, Charles V took residence at the monastery of Yuste and with him he took his most prized possessions, including Titian's *Gloria*. Other evidence of the Emperor's personal attachment to the *Gloria* is found in a codicil to his will, which Humfrey, *Titian*, 164, reported as containing "orders [that] the high altar of the church at Yuste be equipped with a marble relief following the design of the *Gloria*."

⁶⁹ Hall, *The Sacred Image in the Age of Art*, 146.

⁷⁰ Pope-Hennessy, *The Portrait in the Renaissance*, 293-295.

location within the royal portrait group and close to the Trinity suggests a degree of status and self-confidence as seen in earlier works. Unlike his autonomous self-representations, however, the *Gloria* has narrative specificity and context, which could suggest *what* Titian is thinking *about*. As Chapter II demonstrated, the cases of Michelangelo's Florentine *Pietà* and Bandinelli's self-portrait as Nicodemus may illustrate not only the introduction of characterized self-portraiture in the Cinquecento, but additionally the increased development of piety in embedded self-portraiture as artists entered advanced age. As the foundation of Christian liturgy, faith, and tradition was rocked in the wake of Protestant opposition, it is possible that some artists felt the need to make a pious statement to themselves and their God through the use of embedded self-portraiture in sacred works. If true, might this offer insight into why the practice was particularly strong with Mannerists, whose religiosity was questioned as a result of their controversial style and artistic intellectualism?

Agnolo Bronzino's 1552 *Christ in Limbo*, as well as his aforementioned *Lamentation* of 1553 discussed in Chapter II, typify Mannerist painting during the Tridentine period (figure 3.10). Bronzino's likely inclusion of himself as well as numerous other painters and contemporary Florentines in the *Limbo* could lend supporting evidence to the above suggestions about Tridentine embedded self-portraiture. At nearly fourteen and a half feet tall, the *Limbo* includes a larger-than-life Christ dominating the center of the composition. Nearly forty figures of nude females and males populate the work. Mannerist artists of central Italy during the Tridentine period were the subjects of strong Protestant opposition and their readiness to "exploit their right to personal interpretation," and pursue highly idiosyncratic, and artificial means of

evoking the divine were indicative of a more cerebral approach to images rather than a didactic tool of the Church for a largely illiterate *popolo*.⁷¹

Anna Matteoli appears to be the first to have identified Bronzino in the *Limbo* as the bearded figure clad in blue with his hand extended towards Christ in the upper left periphery.⁷² As discussed in Chapter II, Bronzino's likeness was documented by his pupil Alessandro Allori in a 1555 cartoon for his version of Christ's descent into Limbo. What is more, the figures identified as the artist in these three works, the *Lamentation*, *Limbo* and cartoon, all bear noticeable similarities and appear consistent with Bronzino's age at the time. The profusion of additional portraits of contemporary Florentines scattered throughout Bronzino's *Limbo* were noted by Vasari, and subsequently other scholars such as Matteoli and Robert Gaston.⁷³ Gaston followed Matteoli in the identification of Allori as the beardless youth framed by Christ's torso and extended arm; Giovanni Battista Gelli and Pier Francesco Giambullari as the two balding and bearded heads between the figure recognized as Bronzino and Christ; Giovanni Zanchini, the patron, is identified as the man with whom Bronzino converses, though Matteoli admittedly makes the identification on pure conjecture in the absence of any portrait. Bronzino's master, Pontormo, has been recognized as the bearded head between Christ's shoulder just above Gelli and Giambullari.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Hall, *The Sacred Image in the Age of Art*, 84-5.

⁷² Anna Matteoli, "La ritrattistica del Bronzino nel *Limbo*," in *Commentari*, XX, 4 (1969): 281-316. Scholars Gaston, "Iconography and Portraiture," 48, and Cox-Rearick, *Bronzino's Chapel of Eleonora in the Palazzo Vecchio*, 207, follow Matteoli in her identification of Bronzino as well as several other portraits within the *Limbo*.

⁷³ Vasari, *Le Vite*, VII, 599-600. Matteoli, "La ritrattistica del Bronzino nel *Limbo*," 281-316 and Gaston, "Iconography and Portraiture," 46-8.

⁷⁴ Gaston, "Iconography and Portraiture," 48-52.

Giovanni Zanchini commissioned the *Limbo* to hang above his family chapel in Santa Croce and the theme of salvation related to his hope for the life of his soul after death. The figure identified as Bronzino is afforded an important position close to Christ and, significantly, to the savior's right-hand side. As the Quattrocento saw the donor portrait become increasingly prominent in terms of proximity to sacred individuals and events, so too the Cinquecento saw the positioning of embedded self-portraits becoming more important and meaningful. Gaston took the identification of Bronzino's character a step further when he suggested the artist displayed himself as David the Psalmist based on the lyre cradled in his left arm, which would categorize the figure as participant.⁷⁵ As Gaston suggested, "we may assume that Bronzino has cast himself as David because of the significance he gave to his own poetic talent. By 1552, Bronzino had published a sizeable collection of poetry, some of it devotional, and the part of David was an obvious one to choose for himself."⁷⁶ Bronzino's gaze, in similar fashion to Titian, is directed away from the viewer and outside the picture frame, which suggests a degree of thoughtfulness.

The end of the Council of Trent in 1563 may also mark the end of a second phase in the evolution of embedded self-portraiture in Italy. This phase, extending from the 1520s to 1563, can be characterized by a growing use of characterization, introspection, and piety in embedded self-portraiture. Further, artists appeared to position their self-portraits in more venerable and important places within sacred works, following the precedent set by patrons and donors in the Quattrocento. Artists continued to employ embedded portraiture in their art during the second half of the Cinquecento and into the

⁷⁵ Ibid, 52.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

Seicento, though, as Titian's late religious works illustrate, their intentions appear to shift towards sacred art that is more meditative and decidedly personal.

The Decree and Post-Tridentine Sacred Art

On December 4th, 1563, 255 Catholic delegates to the Council of Trent signed a decree, "On the Invocation, Veneration, and Relics of the Saints, and on Sacred Images," which effectively established the conditions for the function, inspection and judgment of sacred images. As Marcia Hall noted, the decree was intentionally vague and, "attempted only to define the grounds on which the Church confirmed its support of images and to provide general guidelines those images had to meet."⁷⁷ As a result, a number of *Trattatisti* (treatise writers) immediately built upon the publication of the decree, such as Andrea Gilio in his highly influential 1564 *Dialogue on the Errors and Abuses of the Painters*, which provided artists and their patrons with more specific guidelines absent from the decree.⁷⁸ Artists and their patrons alike felt the immediate effect of the post-Tridentine artistic, cultural and religious environment, and sacred art emerged fundamentally changed as a result. Artists were changed as well, "free to address the worshiper with a directness not felt possible before," wrote Marcia Hall.⁷⁹ She also

⁷⁷ Hall, *The Sacred Image in the Age of Art*, 117.

⁷⁸ Andrea Gilio, *Dialogo nel quale si ragiona degli errori e degli abusi de' pittori circa l'istorie*, 1564, (Camerino/Barochi: 1960): 2-115. See also Hall, *The Sacred Image*, 122-126. Gilio's treatise was beneficial in its distinction of three categories of representation, each of which had its own decorum: *istorico* (historical), which was intended to connote sacred images, *pure poeta* (pure poetry), which allowed some artistic license in secular works, and *misto* (mixed), which represented a mixture of secular and allegorical themes.

⁷⁹ Hall, *The Sacred Image in the Age of Art*, 118.

suggested that the artist also expanded "his technical means, enabling him to make his style more personal and individual than ever before."⁸⁰

Titian's 1576 *Pietà* includes an embedded self-portrait of the artist and provides an illustrative comparison between his Tridentine and post-Tridentine self-portraits (figure 3.10). In addition, it highlights some of the broader artistic revolutions of post-Tridentine sacred art. Although Hall proposed that, "The blending of religious decoration into secular life made it easy for an artist like Titian to supply satisfactory sacred images without any trace of personal piety," Titian's *Pietà* presented viewers with an extraordinary situation: a sacred image that centered on the artist's devotion and personal piety.⁸¹

Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle were the first scholars to have identified Titian as the aged man kneeling next to the deceased Christ in the *Pietà*.⁸² Other scholars have followed Crowe and Cavalcaselle in the identification, such as Rona Goffen (1986), Bruce Cole (1999) and Katherine Brown (2000).⁸³ The pointed beard, aquiline nose and high forehead remain consistent with the artist's known features from portrait medals and his autonomous self-portrait of the same period. As Bandinelli had done in his sepulchral monument, Titian reduced the setting and number of characters to intensify his connection with Christ and the weeping Virgin. A lamenting Mary Magdalene clad in green and two somber putti complete the scene. The figures are

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid, 145-146. The picture is today located in the Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.

⁸² Joseph Crowe, Giovanni Cavalcaselle, *Titian: His Life and Times*, (London: Murray, 1877-88).

⁸³ Rona Goffen, *Piety and Patronage in Renaissance Venice*, (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1986); Bruce Cole, *Titian and Venetian Painting 1450-1590*, (Boulder & Oxford: Westview Press, 1999); and K. Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 77.

placed below a monumental aedicule, flanked by two striking sculptures; Moses to the left and Saint Helena to the right. Brown's suggestion that Titian intended the piece to hang over his tomb in the Cappella del Crocifisso in Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari strengthens the possibility of a self-portrait.⁸⁴ Moreover, it is not difficult to read the personal implications behind such an intention. The figure identified as Titian has now reached a spatial parity, nearly equal to that of the weeping Virgin, as he touches the deceased Christ's hand, kneeling so close that his head begins to overlap Christ's arm.

It is unclear whether Titian appears as himself or as a biblical character and candidates that scholars have suggested include Joseph of Arimathea, Job, Nicodemus or the penitent Saint Jerome.⁸⁵ David Rosand made an argument in 1971 when he suggested the aged man appeared to display notable similarities to a series of penitent St. Jeromes in Titian's oeuvre.⁸⁶ The lack of iconographic specificity makes any type of identification arduous to ascertain and Rosand's suggestion seems to be based more on conjecture than any historical facts or evidence. It appears more secure to propose that the artist intended the figure to represent himself as himself, gracefully approaching the savior as if to ensure the salvation of his soul after death, an end he doubtless knew was approaching. In any case, the apparent personal and pious nature of the piece would not be lost if one were to believe Titian had shown himself as a particular character.

⁸⁴ Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 77. Unfortunately for Titian, the painting was never hung where he intended. The artist died in 1576 and the *Pietà* was discovered unfinished in his studio. After Titian's death, his compatriot and contemporary Jacopo Palma il Giovane, who completed the inscription at the bottom, bought the piece. Palma il Giovane's hand is also evident in the rendering of the flying putti.

⁸⁵ K. Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 78.

⁸⁶ David Rosand, "Titian in the Frari," *The Art Bulletin* 53, n.2 (1971): 196-213; 208-212. For illustration see Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian*, 133-136.

Titian's well-recognized late style, seen in the *Pietà*, presented a wholly different approach than observed in the *Gloria* and his early style: the canvas vibrates with color, texture, and movement, revealing a unique touch. In other words, Titian's late style became more individualized and distinct to the artist, the agitated surface harder to imitate and the execution at once more economical and specific. Marcia Hall noted that, "Unlike the calculated effects of the *maneria* painters, where a cerebral response was sought, Titian's painterly brushwork appealed to the viewers' senses and emotions."⁸⁷ She further suggested, "In his late works executed with his painterly brushwork it is difficult to imagine that he had much assistance from the workshop because the touch seems so *personal* [my emphasis]."⁸⁸ Combined with its late style, intended location, and embedded self-portrait, Titian's *Pietà* could have functioned in a more personal way than most other self-representations seen before that moment. As such, the *Pietà* possesses a personal intimacy that directly spoke to the artist's piety and devotion.

Other artists of the post-Tridentine era also employed embedded portraiture, though the functions appear to remain consistent with the Quattrocento precedents, which include visual signatures, the commemoration of influential artists and a proclamation of status. Some examples that have earned general acceptance among scholars and may illustrate this continuation include Veronese's *Wedding at Cana* of 1563, where the artist has displayed himself as well as three other Venetian artists as part of a quintet of musicians, Federico Zuccaro's *Assumption of the Virgin* of 1589, in which the artist shows himself as witness on the left periphery, and Jacopo Palma il Giovane's *Adoration of the Magi* circa 1608, where only his head appears in the upper-left edge of the canvas,

⁸⁷ Hall, *The Sacred Image in the Age of Art*, 153.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

perhaps functioning predominantly as visual signature.⁸⁹ By contrast, the group of examples detailed in this chapter offer evidence that personal meditation, piety, and individualism were elements that were beginning to become established motives and to function more prominently in the genre of embedded self-portraiture after 1563.

Conclusions

Chapter III has taken a set of recognized cases of embedded portraiture and self-portraiture and sought to establish an observable progression in the genre's function and presentation from the early Quattrocento to the post-Tridentine era. In the Quattrocento, identified examples from Taddeo di Bartolo to Giovanni Mansueti suggested that artists began to acquire more visibility in sacred works, likely reflecting the experience of growing professional recognition and social status. From a miniature bust strategically placed among a host of similar figures to the confident proclamation and self-gesturing indication of a full-figured man, embedded portraiture of the Quattrocento functioned in a predominantly pragmatic way as a visual signature and commemorative gesture. An intimate connection with donor portraiture was established, which offered support to this position. As Botticelli's *Adoration of the Magi* illustrated, commemoration and politics were often the dominant motivating factors in the practice. What is more, the calculated juxtaposition of self-portraits with portraits in the cases of Botticelli and Masaccio indicated the possibility of similar functions and motives between artist and patron.

⁸⁹ K. Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 63-64, identified Tintoretto, Jacopo Bassano, and Titian as the other artist portraits embedded within Veronese's work. The fifth and final member of the quintet remained unidentified. She also noted the self-portrait of Palma il Giovane in the *Adoration*, see Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 65; Dietmar Spengler, "A Drawing and a Self-Portrait by Federico Zuccaro," *The Burlington Magazine* 137, n.1112 (1995): 750-52, associated the standing figure at the left, wielding a large book, as Zuccaro's self-portrait.

The inclusion of portraiture in sacred art was criticized at the beginning of the Cinquecento and the artistic environment took a turn towards conservatism. Many artists found autonomous self-portraiture a suitable replacement, using dress, structure and gesture to make similar suggestions about status, wealth and power. However, Mannerists and some Venetians continued to employ embedded portraiture. As the recognized examples of Bronzino and Titian suggest, the Tridentine period may have seen an infusion of thoughtfulness or psychology into self-portraiture, illustrated through elements such as the averted gaze. While Tridentine cases still displayed commemorative functions, examples detailed in Chapter II, such as Michelangelo's Florentine *Pietà* and Bandinelli's sepulchral sculpture, could serve as supporting evidence that personal piety began to have a growing role in embedded self-portraiture. Illustrated through donor portraiture in Botticelli's *Adoration* and followed by artists with their embedded self-portraits, such as Bronzino in his *Limbo*, the close spatial relationship of artist or patron to divine characters may also reflect the pious intentions of both.

Finally, Titian's 1576 *Pietà* may represent one of the most explicit injections of psychological realism and personal piety into embedded self-portraiture during the post-Tridentine era. What is more, it could be suggested that his often-noted late style was indicative of a larger shift towards individualism in post-Tridentine religious art. As Chapter IV will propose, Caravaggio's controversial embedded self-portraits demonstrate the continuation and an even more dramatized display of emotion in sacred narratives.



Figure 3.1. Studio of Bernardo Daddi, *Enthroned Madonna*, ca. 1335-40, tempera on panel 40.3 x 22.5 cm, Columbia Museum of Art

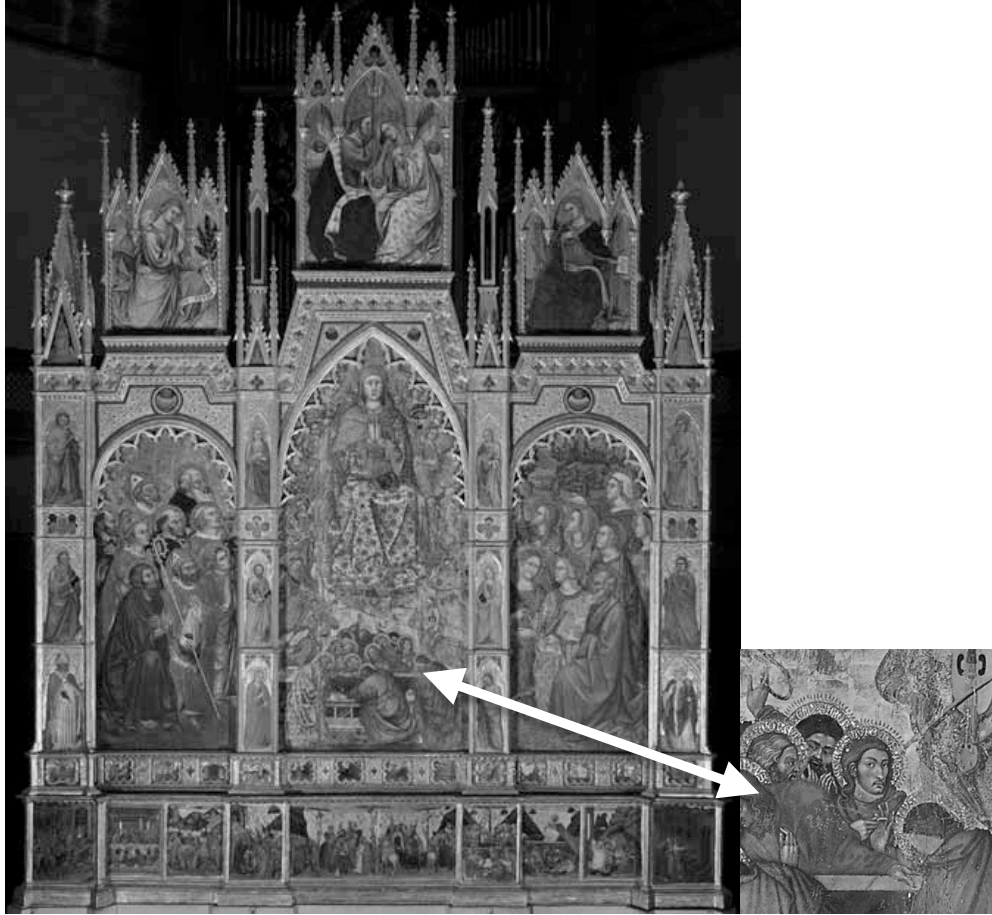


Figure 3.2. Taddeo di Bartolo, *Assumption of the Virgin*, 1401, tempera on panels, Cattedrale di Santa Maria Assunta, Montepulciano



Figure 3.3. Masaccio, *Raising of the Son of Theophilus*, ca. 1424-27, fresco 232 x 597 cm Cappella Brancacci, Santa Maria del Carmine, Florence



Figure 3.4. Sandro Botticelli, *Adoration of the Magi*, ca. 1475, tempera on wood 111 x 13 cm, Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence



Figure 3.5. Albrecht Dürer, *Self-Portrait*, 1500, oil on panel 67 x 49 cm, Alte Pinakothek, Munich



Figure 3.6. Bernardo Pinturicchio, *Annunciation*, ca. 1500-01, fresco, Santa Maria Maggiore, Baglioni Chapel



Figure 3.7. Giovanni di Mansueti, *Miracle of the Relic of the Holy Cross in Campo San Lio*, ca. 1494-1500, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice



Figure 3.8a. Titian, *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1550, oil on canvas, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin

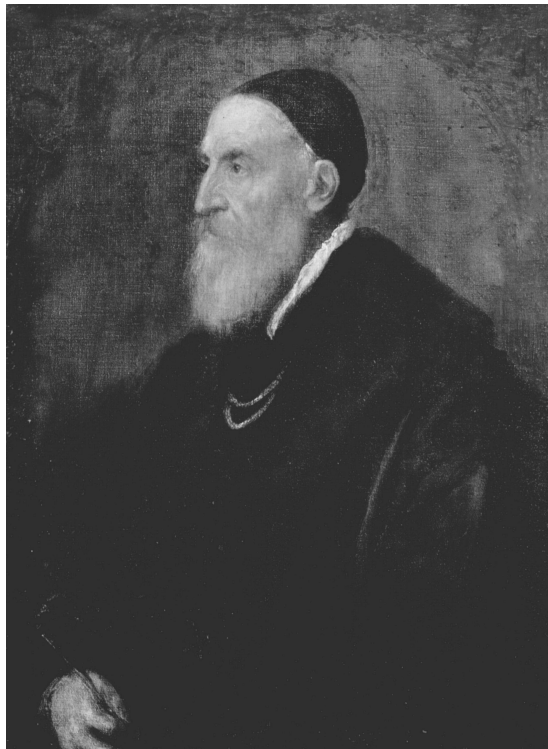


Figure 3.8b. Titian, *Self-Portrait*, ca. 1565-70, oil on canvas, Museo del Prado, Madrid



Figure 3.9. Titian, *Adoration of the Holy Trinity (Gloria)*, ca. 1551-54, oil on canvas, Museo del Prado, Madrid

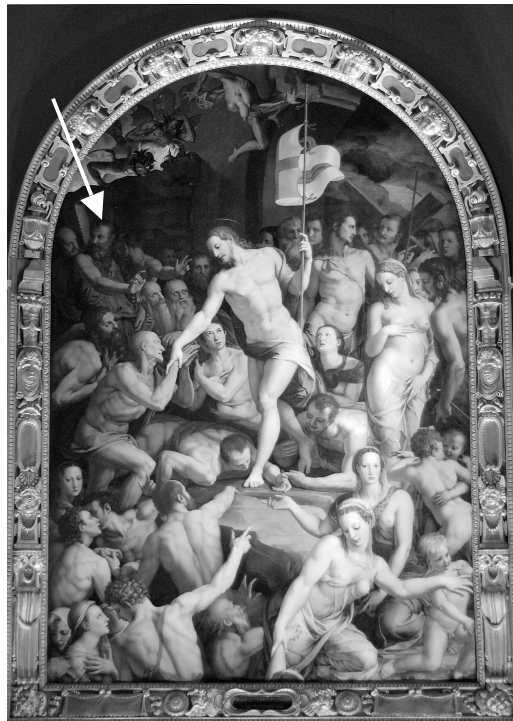


Figure 3.10. Agnolo di Cosimo (Bronzino), *Christ in Limbo*, 1552, oil on panel, Chiesa di Santa Croce, Florence



Figure 3.11. Titian, *Pietà*, 1576, oil on canvas 378 x 347 cm, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice

CHAPTER IV

CARAVAGGIO

Chapters II and III have highlighted the problems a study of embedded self-portraiture faces and traced a progression of the genre from the Quattrocento through the Cinquecento. The identification of self-portraits embedded within sacred art has necessitated the support of primary visual and textual sources throughout this thesis. In an investigation of the unique cases of self-portraits as Joseph of Arimathea or Nicodemus, Chapter II underlined the iconographic and literary complications that accompany this subcategory of participant self-portraits. In noting the evolution in function and presentation of autonomous and embedded self-portraits, Chapter III began to illuminate the injection of personal piety and emotion into both genres during the Cinquecento. Chapter III also broadened the scope of Chapter II and considered the larger categories of participant and witness self-portraits. Both chapters took on the difficult task of deciphering artists' intentions behind their embedded self-representations by assessing the formal placement, context, and characterized nature of the self-portraits.

Chapter IV will specify and sharpen the focus, assessing the embedded self-portraiture of Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio (1571-1610). However problematic Caravaggio's biography may be, an examination of this context could clarify interpretations of his embedded self-portraiture as well as their particular settings and unique treatment. In Caravaggio's short but highly influential life and career, the artist encountered a level of both success and vilification that few artists had ever experienced. Caravaggio's artistic evolution, penchant for violence, and unusual thematic preferences may be better understood if viewed through his exceptional biography. Indeed, the artist

has been endowed with a mythic persona and is one of the most heavily studied individuals in the history of art. While many scholars have attempted to decode the motivating force behind the unusual contexts in which Caravaggio included his self-portraits, none have considered how his embedded self-portraits fit into the broader conventions and circumstances of the genre in post-Tridentine Italy. The primary goal of this chapter will be to suggest that Caravaggio used self-portraiture to convey ulterior intent and meaning in his religious paintings commissioned for a private gallery: the 1602 *Betrayal of Christ*, the *Martyrdom of Saint Ursula*, and his *David with the Head of Goliath*, both circa 1610 (figures 4.2, 4.7 and 4.8). Determining this intent and meaning is a venture to be taken with a healthy dose of caution, but this chapter amasses and builds upon several interpretations of his self-portraiture from 1602 and 1610 not to ascribe validity, but to highlight their strength and general acceptance. It is important to note that much of Caravaggio's illustrative power in these paintings stems from the psychological interactions and relationships of characters, including those recognized as Caravaggio himself.

The work of many scholars has helped formulate the foundation of this chapter. Walter Friedlaender's landmark book *Caravaggio Studies* and John Varriano's essay "Caravaggio and Religion" provided a basis for this chapter's consideration of Caravaggio's religiosity and its potential display in the artist's public and private paintings, respectively.¹ Anthony Apesos discusses at length Caravaggio's 1602-3

¹ Walter Friedlaender, *Caravaggio Studies*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), and John Varriano, "Caravaggio and Religion," in *Saints & Sinners: Caravaggio and the Baroque Image*, (Chestnut Hill, MA: McMullen Museum of Art, Boston College, 1999): 191-203.

Betrayal of Christ, offering an intriguing and plausible interpretation of the piece.² More specifically, Apesos' discussion of the identified self-portrait in the *Betrayal* and its possible reflection of Caravaggio's belief and mission as a painter have helped highlight the artist's unorthodox use of embedded self-portraiture. Joseph Chorpenning's analysis of the artist's public religious works in his article, "Another Look at Caravaggio and Religion," was vital to this chapter's aim to relate Caravaggio's style to larger Counter-Reformation concepts and defenses.³

Giovanna Dell'Orto, Michael Fried and Helen Langdon, among others, all considered at varying depths the self-portraiture of Caravaggio. Similarly to Apesos' article, Dell'Orto's study has helped underscore Caravaggio's use of broader conventions of embedded self-portraiture. Her article, "Caravaggio: Self-Portraits as Exploration of Living Reality," investigated the potential link between Caravaggio's self-portraits and the artist's personal philosophy of art.⁴ In Michael Fried's book, *The Moment of Caravaggio*, he looked for the impulses for making art and suggested Caravaggio used self-portraiture to allude the actual creation of his paintings through complex and ulterior narratives.⁵ Finally, Helen Langdon's acclaimed book, *Caravaggio: A Life*, and

² Anthony Apesos, "The Painter as Evangelist in Caravaggio's Taking of Christ," *Aurora* 11 (2010): 12-56.

³ Joseph Chorpenning, "Another Look at Caravaggio and Religion," *Artibus et Historiae*, 8 n. 16 (1987): 149-58.

⁴ Giovanna Dell'Orto, "Caravaggio: Self-Portraits as Exploration of Living Reality," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 138, no. 595 (2001): 225-30.

⁵ Michael Fried, *The Moment of Caravaggio*, (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2010).

Catherine Puglisi's, *Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio*, have both provided necessary biographical information from which to understand the life of the painter.⁶

The Source

The paintings by Caravaggio that survive today suggest the established tradition of autonomous self-portraiture was not one the artist favored or ever attempted. Indeed, no drawings, sketches or paintings survive that can undoubtedly serve as Caravaggio's definitive self-portrait. Fortunately, a contemporary document dated 1597 has provided scholars with a rare written description of a man whom many believed was Caravaggio.⁷ The document recorded an investigation into the assault of a barber's apprentice near San Luigi dei Francesi where, apparently, Caravaggio witnessed the event and returned the apprentice's dropped cloak. When questioned about the man's appearance, the barber's description read: "*he was a large, cheeky chap, twenty or twenty-five years old, with a bit of black beard, quite fat, with bushy eyebrows and black eyes, who wears rather disarrayed black clothes, who wore slightly ripped black socks, who wears his hair thick and long on the forehead.*"⁸ The description is general: a man with dark hair, eyes, and clothing. Interestingly, the description also displays the pervasive use of the adjective 'black', an attribute that became attached to the artist and was delightfully aggrandized by the artist's biographer Giovanni Baglione.

⁶ Helen Langdon, *Caravaggio: A Life*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999), and Catherine Puglisi, *Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio*, (London: Phaidon, 1998). Walter Friedlaender's aforementioned text is an additional source providing critical biographical information.

⁷ Giovanna Dell'Orto, "Caravaggio: Self-Portraits as Exploration of Living Reality," 227-228. See also Sandro Corradini and Maurizio Marini, "The Earliest Account of Caravaggio in Rome," *The Burlington Magazine* CXL, (1998): 25-28.

⁸ Corradini and Marini, "The Earliest Account of Caravaggio in Rome," 25-28.

Visual sources provide firmer ground and no scholarly study of the artist's embedded self-portraiture can proceed without a description and consideration of Ottavio Leoni and his critical 1597 portrait drawing of Caravaggio, which has been universally trusted as the closest record of the artist's visage (figure 4.1, see end of chapter).⁹ Number IV of an album of twenty-six portraits, an inscription under the bust identifies the figure as 'Michel: da Caravaggio' and another identifying label exists within the album's index. Located today in the Biblioteca Marucelliana in Florence, Leoni's representation displays notable similarities with the barber's written description above. Caravaggio is shown on soft blue paper with curly and relatively unkempt black hair that flows over his forehead and obscures his ears. His slightly bulging eyes created a penetrating gaze while his arched eyebrows gave the artist an unsettled appearance and an air of arrogance. His wide nostrils, black moustache, and goatee frame his mouth, completing the rather static portrait. Albeit limited, these two contemporary records are the most frequently cited when attempts are made at identifying Caravaggio's self-portraiture.

Biography

The painter's earliest biographies have formed the center of frustrated skepticism. Seicento biography, as noted by Philip Sohm, "was often an artful construction of embellished or even invented "facts" that explain why paintings look the way they do,"

⁹ Six other portraits of Caravaggio exist, though all appear to have originated from Leoni's drawing. See Dell'Orto, "Caravaggio: Self-Portraits as Exploration of Living Reality," 226-7. It is sometimes thought that the portrait was drawn from memory, a practice promoted by portraitists, such as Ottavio's father, Lodovico, and Leoni himself.

and Caravaggio's biography was no exception.¹⁰ Giovanni Baglione (1566-1643), a contemporary and rival artist, and Gian Pietro Bellori (1613-1696), provide the primary biographies of Caravaggio and were dismissive of the artist.¹¹ Indeed, scholars often criticize the biographer's quick attributions of the painter's dark style with his evil, uninspired, and dark character. Viewed from a historical perspective, many of Baglione's and Bellori's 'embellishments' can be omitted from this discussion. As Catherine Puglisi succinctly noted, any investigation of Caravaggio "means judging, with healthy skepticism and sensitivity, the plausibility of previous stories."¹² As most scholars agree, three broad stages form Caravaggio's larger narrative in life and art: his developing years between 1591 and 1599, his mature years from 1599 to 1606, and his years on the run from 1606 to 1610.¹³

A freshly minted master out of Simone Peterzano's Lombard studio in Milan, Caravaggio likely arrived in Rome between 1591 and 1592 at the age of 20 or 21, effectively beginning his early career. Interestingly, Caravaggio's artistic lineage can be linked to Titian, as Peterzano was himself a pupil of the Venetian master. Caravaggio's early works are often genre scenes of boys, musicians, cardsharps, gypsies, and still-lives of baskets with fruit. These works suggest Caravaggio had a sharp and keen eye for

¹⁰ Philip Sohm, "Caravaggio's Deaths," *Art Bulletin* 84 n.3 (2002): 449-68; 449.

¹¹ Giovanni Baglione, *Le Vite De' Pittori, Scultori Et Architetti Dal Pontificato Di Gregorio Xiii Fino a Tutto Quello D'urbano Viii (Roma, 1649)*, V.1, ed. Pesci C. Gradara, (Bologna: A. Forni, 1986), Bellori, *The Lives of the Modern Painters, Sculptors and Architects*, trans. Hellmut Wohl, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005). See Sohm, "Caravaggio's Deaths," 449-468. In this chapter I follow Friedlaender's English translation of both Baglione and Bellori, which are included in *Caravaggio Studies*, pp. 231-254.

¹² Catherine Puglisi, "Caravaggio's Life and Lives Over Four Centuries," *Caravaggio: Realism, Rebellion, Reception*, (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006) 23-35; 25.

¹³ I largely follow Catherine Puglisi's 1998 text, a meritorious encapsulation of nearly fifty years of Caravaggio studies.

details in his world as well as the effects of light, color, and shadow. A few paintings of religious subjects are found during the period, such as the *Penitent Magdalene* circa 1593-94 and *Saint Francis of Assisi in Ecstasy* circa 1595-96. From his earliest paintings, Caravaggio's talent was marked, catching the eye of an art connoisseur and Cardinal, Francesco del Monte, who took the artist into his home at the Palazzo Madama by 1595. Cardinal del Monte's taste for science, music, and culture are reflected in Caravaggio's early works as well.

This first period of Caravaggio's development is often noted as lasting about 9 years or until the artist received his first major public commission in 1599: the *Calling* and *Martyrdom of Saint Matthew* on the laterals of the Contarelli Chapel in San Luigi dei Francesi. These commissions were likely secured through Cardinal del Monte, whom Baglione suggested recommended Caravaggio for the project.¹⁴ These large-scale canvases were unlike anything Caravaggio had undertaken before. They required the artist to develop multi-figured compositions with iconographic and biblical specificity. Modern advances have revealed the artist may have begun the series with the *Martyrdom*, reworking the composition, altering the placement of figures and architectural setting as he navigated this difficult commission. The Contarelli Chapel laterals are where Caravaggio's personal style, known for its deep shadow, intense lighting, and interwoven and complex compositions, began to mature. The 'maturation' of the artist is perhaps evidenced by his confidence in the *Calling*, which appears to have no reworking or alteration. The changing state of Caravaggio's career is not solely marked by his stylistic

¹⁴ See Friedlaender, *Caravaggio Studies*, 234. See also Puglisi, *Caravaggio*, 145.

maturation, however, but additionally by a shift in patronage, which came from families and religious orders all across Rome after the Saint Matthew cycle was installed.

Caravaggio's mature phase is noted by the artist's intense productivity and acclaimed success in Rome through the patronage of "a tight web of wealthy laymen and prelates."¹⁵ In the span of about seven years, from 1599 to 1606, Caravaggio would complete numerous private gallery paintings and a staggering six public commissions. These public works established Caravaggio as one of the top, albeit controversial, painters in Rome and also pushed the artist to develop the style and practice he began in the Contarelli Chapel. While his subjects shifted to predominantly religious narratives, there is a notable increase in Caravaggio's penchant for violence, both in life and in paint after 1600.

Caravaggio's first Christological subjects appear in his private gallery paintings beginning in 1601 with the *Supper at Emmaus*, commissioned by Ciriaco Mattei. The private works that Caravaggio would produce during these years for Mattei and Del Monte deserve special mention because they are the artist's most impressive and magnificent, evidenced by the number of copies in Rome and abroad. Using a horizontal format, his private narratives from the Christian Gospels display brilliant immediacy and fresh compositional innovations, with three-quarter length figures brought close to the foreground. The artist would also explore a new range of psychology and human emotions in his artistic themes of divine conversion, revelation, and betrayal. Caravaggio further developed his unique working method, which waived the process of preparatory sketching. The artist was firmly labeled a profound naturalist who preferred live models

¹⁵ Puglisi, *Caravaggio*, 143.

that allowed him to capture those fleeting moments where emotional, spiritual, and dramatic intensity would be at their height.

The final phase of Caravaggio's life and career abruptly began on the night of May 28th, 1606. In the Via della Scrofa, near a tennis court close to the Palazzo Firenze, Caravaggio and the son of a dominant family in his neighborhood, Ranuccio Tomassoni, tussled and fought, ending with Caravaggio fatally stabbing the man.¹⁶ Caravaggio was badly injured during the scuffle, but quickly fled from Rome to Naples, where, under the jurisdiction of Spain and the protection of the powerful Colonna family, the artist could live and work freely. Perhaps motivated by patronage or the fear his actions would bring swift and heavy consequences, Caravaggio shifted his residence frequently, rarely living in a single place for more than a year. Bellori reported, "Caravaggio's misfortune did not abandon him and fear drove him from place to place."¹⁷ Indeed, not long after the murder, a *banda capitale* may have been issued for Caravaggio, a papal death sentence that could be carried out nearly anywhere by any person.¹⁸

Between 1606 and 1610, Caravaggio's palette became increasingly muted and darker, his colors consisting of predominantly earthy tones, whites, and grey, while his brushwork became more pronounced, expressive, quick, and maybe agitated. There is a thematic consistency during this period as well, one focused on death and human evil, which moved Hibbard to suggest, "We sense him moving toward a tragic, horrific end in

¹⁶ Langdon, *Caravaggio: A Life*, 309.

¹⁷ Friedlaender's translation, *Caravaggio Studies*, 251.

¹⁸ Langdon, *Caravaggio: A Life*, 314. Also reported by Maurizio Calvesi, *La Realtà del Caravaggio*, (Turin, 1990): 138-45.

his later art.”¹⁹ By October of 1609, the artist had apparently been granted a papal pardon for the murder of Tomassoni, a possible result of the artist’s close acquaintance with Cardinals Del Monte or Girolamo Mattei, brother to Ciriaco. En route to Rome and with his possessions in hand, Caravaggio sailed from Naples to a small town at Porto Ercole where, under mistaken identity, he was detained for a few days. Caravaggio’s possessions left Porto Ercole and, the artist, falling ill after his release, died in mid-July, 1610.

Caravaggio produced embedded self-portraits during each of these biographical phases, offering scholars a visual record and reflection of the artist’s changing mentality, status, religiosity, style or visage. Because such a unique and exceptional biography exists for the artist, many scholars have felt it safe to elaborate his oversized personality and complex character. Recently, psychoanalytic approaches have attempted to decipher Caravaggio’s sexuality while his self-portraits have been cited as an expression of his personal philosophy or his responsibility to bear witness to and illuminate the past. Conceptions of Caravaggio as the darkest, most malevolent and rugged painter in the history of western art are all rooted in the prejudices of Baglione and Bellori. The frequent police and court records of the artist’s reckless behavior after 1600 are often seen as confirmation of his undesirable temperament. Although one could presume Caravaggio’s most successful years may have been the his happiest, Friedlaender has suggested, “the marked change in the character of his expression might be taken as an indication that something happened, in his outward life or his inner experience, which

¹⁹ Howard Hibbard, *Caravaggio*, (New York: Harper & Row, 1983): 264.

influenced and altered the natural development of his personality.”²⁰ To what ‘outward life’ and ‘inner experiences’ Friedlaender referred is unclear and determining if such an event occurred is doubtful. The pronounced injection of a violent tenor in Caravaggio’s mature and (even more prominently) in his late paintings is a characteristic noted by the artist’s contemporaries and modern scholars. “The real character of Caravaggio,” wrote Friedlaender, “cannot be judged only on the basis of his irresponsible actions – the most significant facts about his personality are to be seen in his works.”²¹ The number of interpretations surrounding Caravaggio’s self-representations, personality, and character underline the difficult task art historians face in constructing a sensible image of the artist. That Caravaggio led such a dramatic life, and because of the intensity of his imagery, scholars, including the present author, have considered the place of religious belief in his work, a topic that will inform the discussion that follows since it is within his religious images commissioned for private galleries that the most important embedded self-portraits occur: the *Betrayal of Christ*, *Martyrdom of Saint Ursula*, and *David with the Head of Goliath*.

Caravaggio’s Religion

Primary sources and biographies of Caravaggio yield little insight into the artist’s religiosity. Apart from the occasional contract describing the terms and conditions of a commissioned altarpiece, what survives are largely the police records and court transcripts that appear to characterize Caravaggio as an individual of quick mood-swings

²⁰ Friedlaender, *Caravaggio Studies*, 117.

²¹ *Ibid*, 119.

with a touchy sense of pride and a high degree of violent unpredictability. However, a few isolated documents that have surfaced are illuminating. In 1605, a parish record registered one Michelangelo da Caravaggio as taking communion.²² Writing in the early Settecento, biographer Francesco Susinno claimed Caravaggio questioned his faith towards the end of his life while recording that the artist refused holy water at a Sicilian church because his sins were all mortal.²³ No other primary accounts give any indication of Caravaggio's religious affiliations or that he was a religious man at all. As a result, any study assessing this subject must consider Walter Friedlaender's classic study.

Friedlaender believed that in Caravaggio's altarpieces, such as the 1604-6 *Madonna of Loreto*, the artist created "direct communication between the human being and the divine," which reflected the deep pietistic mysticism that was promoted by Saint Philip Neri (1515-1595) and the Oratorians.²⁴ He further observed connections between the artist's religious paintings and the "spiritual rationalism" of Saint Ignatius Loyola, outlined in Loyola's 1522-24 *Spiritual Exercises*, which again centered on the demystification of the supernatural.²⁵ These liturgical ideas encouraged the worshipper to imagine supernatural and divine events as if they were happening before them, through the senses, in the here and now. Friedlaender saw in Caravaggio's art an amalgamation of the human condition with the transcendental order of the universe through "close

²² Puglisi, *Caravaggio*, 252-253. For the account, see Maurizio Marini, "Un'estrema residenza," *Antologia di belle arti*, nos. 17-18, 19-20, (1981): 180-3. Caravaggio is also recorded in attendance at the Lenten Forty-Hours Devotion in October of 1594.

²³ *Ibid.* For the Sicilian account, see Francesco Susinno, *Le vite de' pittori messinesi*, ed. Valentino Martinelli (Florence, 1960): 114.

²⁴ Friedlaender, *Caravaggio Studies*, 120.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 129.

contact with the divine by physical means, through the senses.”²⁶ Caravaggio’s theatrical lighting with intense chiaroscuro, later termed *tenebrism*, his reduction of distracting elements, such as background and periphery characters, and his humanization of divine characters, were viewed by Friedlaender as a perfect achievement of these popular Counter-Reformation meditative techniques and reflected Caravaggio’s identification with them.²⁷

Responses to Friedlaender’s position have fluctuated since its first publication in 1955. Respected scholars such as Howard Hibbard reported outright rejection and believed that it was the Augustinians who indoctrinated Caravaggio, but other notable *Caravaggisti* such as Mina Cinotti and John Gash could not overlook the consistencies Friedlaender suggested.²⁸ Joseph Chorpenning argued that the ideas of Saint Philip Neri and the Oratorians were “widely disseminated, and specifically Catholic, methods of meditation during the Counter-Reformation.”²⁹ Indeed, Caravaggio produced altarpieces for five religious orders: the Augustinians, Capuchins, Dominicans, Carmelites, and Oratorians, which suggests the artist was not indoctrinated by any specific order and was keenly aware of the specific needs of each, integrating his paintings into the unique context for which they were intended.³⁰ Chorpenning concluded the physical tangibility of Caravaggio’s style and the artist’s ability to make the supernatural actual, as elucidated

²⁶ Ibid, 120-121.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Hibbard, *Caravaggio*, 313. Mina Cinotti, *Michelangelo Merisi detto il Caravaggio*, (Bergamo, 1983): 223. John Gash, *Caravaggio*, (London: Jupiter, 1980): 15.

²⁹ Chorpenning, “Another Look at Caravaggio and Religion,” 149-150.

³⁰ Varriano, “Caravaggio and Religion,” 196. Chorpenning, “Another Look at Caravaggio and Religion,” 156.

by Friedlaender, was merely “an artistic response to, and interpretation of, these [meditative] practices.”³¹ The refusal of some altarpieces by their commissioners, such as the *Saint Matthew Writing the Gospels*, *Conversion of St. Paul*, and the *Death of the Virgin*, could serve as a counter-argument to Chorpenning’s conclusions, suggesting Caravaggio’s controversial style was not as representative of the “widely disseminated” meditative ideas of Loyola and Neri as Chorpenning claimed. Varriano noted that, “The circumstances surrounding the rejection of these works remain in every case undocumented, and speculations as to what elements may have prompted the refusal of any given picture are never conclusive.”³² Caravaggio’s rejected altarpieces do, however, attest to the interest eager connoisseurs had for the artist’s style, as many were quickly bought after refusal.

Caravaggio’s public altarpieces have typically formed the center of studies assessing the artist’s spirituality, as the cases of Friedlaender, Hibbard, and Chorpenning attest. However, within Caravaggio’s religious paintings commissioned for private settings the artist may have more clearly revealed his personal religious and artistic beliefs, a proposal offered by John Varriano in 1999.³³ Indeed, the majority of Caravaggio’s religious paintings, nearly thirty, were commissioned for private galleries. Varriano proposed that Caravaggio enjoyed a certain freedom of religious expression and artistic experimentation in these works because of a growing appreciation of stylistic

³¹ Chorpenning, “Another Look at Caravaggio and Religion,” 150.

³² Varriano, “Caravaggio and Religion,” 194.

³³ *Ibid*, 191.

choice and artistic novelty in early Seicento Rome.³⁴ Scholars John Gash and Creighton Gilbert have both offered supporting ideas, suggesting that purchasers of Caravaggio's private religious works were unassertive and, "more fascinated with Caravaggio's artistic experiments than with his distillation of Counter-Reformation sentiment."³⁵ Varriano followed the widely accepted observations concerning Caravaggio's stylistic preference for the meditative power of the senses, the elevation of the human condition, and the relegation of the miraculous and supernatural. Varriano concluded that Caravaggio more assertively expressed and dramatized these meditative ideas within his private religious paintings, which revealed more clearly the artist's identification with this humanized conception of Christianity because of the expressive and artistic freedom his patrons allowed.

The Role of the Embedded Self-Portrait

Using Varriano's study as a foundation, it would appear possible that the relative freedom Caravaggio enjoyed in three private paintings produced at polarized phases in Caravaggio's life and career (the 1602 *Betrayal of Christ*, *The Martyrdom of Saint Ursula* of 1610, and *David with the Head of Goliath* of 1610) are still more revealing because of the self-portraits embedded within them. Significantly, all but one of Caravaggio's identifiable embedded self-portraits occurs in private religious paintings, which could support an argument that Caravaggio used his private paintings to communicate

³⁴ Ibid, 195-6.

³⁵ Gash, *Caravaggio*, 16. Creighton Gilbert, *Caravaggio and His Two Cardinals*, (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995): 99-110.

something personal.³⁶ The exception is the early *Martyrdom of Saint Matthew* of 1599, which, viewed from a historical perspective, would seem to be driven by pride and claim to authorship. If Titian's *Pietà* can serve us here as a precedent, an examination of Caravaggio's self-portraiture embedded within these privately commissioned religious works could reveal many things about the artist: his religion, artistic philosophy, or emotional condition.

Caravaggio's *Betrayal of Christ* is one of the masterpieces produced for the private gallery of Ciriaco Mattei between 1602 and 1603, during the artist's 'mature' and most successful years in Rome (figure 4.2).³⁷ Aside from its commanding presence, dramatic intensity, and brilliant color, the painting is made all the more exceptional because, located at the far right and brightly illuminated, the man raising a lantern to reveal the fateful kiss has been identified as Caravaggio himself. This identification was first proposed in 1943 by one of the foremost Caravaggio scholars, Roberto Longhi, an identification that a number of subsequent scholars have followed.³⁸ Caravaggio would have been about thirty-one at the time, which is consistent with the age of this figure. Juxtaposed with Leoni's portrait of the artist, the figure's features bear enough similarities (wide nostrils, goatee, curly black hair, bushy black eyebrows) that a self-

³⁶ The suggested identification by Varriano, "Caravaggio and Religion," 202, of Caravaggio's self-portrait in the *Raising of Lazarus* seems unconvincing to me. The beardless man directly behind Christ's head, peering into the scene, is too obstructed to comfortably identify as a self-portrait.

³⁷ For a detailed account on the provenance of the Dublin canvas see Sergio Benedetti, "Caravaggio's 'Taking of Christ' a Masterpiece Rediscovered," *The Burlington Magazine* 135, no. 1088 (1993): 731-41.

³⁸ Roberto Longhi, 'Ultimi studi sul Caravaggio e la sua cerchia,' *Proporzioni* I (1943), and *idem*: 'Un originale del Caravaggio a Rouen e il problema delle copie caravaggesche,' *Paragone* 121 (1960). Many scholars have followed Longhi, including Langdon, *Caravaggio: A Life*, 234; Pugisi, *Caravaggio*, 221; Apesos, "The Painter as Evangelist," 36; Dell'Orto, "Caravaggio: Self-Portraits as Exploration of Living Reality," 229; and Kristina Herrmann-Fiore, "Caravaggio's 'Taking of Christ' and Dürer's Woodcut of 1509," *The Burlington Magazine* 137 n. 1102, (1995): 25.

portrait of the artist is likely. Finally, his face is one of the few that is brightly illuminated, which further distinguishes him from the group and draws our attention to his individualized physiognomy.

The *Betrayal* is one of Caravaggio's most dramatic and compelling scenes, with figures painted in three-quarter length, forced so close to the picture plane that his viewers must have felt their presence. Caravaggio has shown his viewers the moment immediately after the revealing kiss, just as the group of soldiers rush towards Christ to apprehend him.³⁹ Scholars have noted Caravaggio's obvious quotation of Albrecht Dürer's Woodcut of 1509, though he has chosen to tighten the composition, focusing on the essential characters at the event (figure 4.3).⁴⁰ Seven men are included in the painting. To the left, a beardless youth in red and green flees the scene with arms raised as his robe flows in an arch over the heads of Christ and Judas. This youth almost emanates from the back of Christ as his head appears attached to Christ's and their robes fuse. Jesus somberly leans towards the right and gazes down, hands extended in front, still clasped in prayer. Continuing towards the right, Judas and an armored soldier grasp Christ's right shoulder, their arms forming a complementing arch to the fleeing youth's robe, framing the heads of Judas and Christ. Two other soldiers and the figure identified as Caravaggio complete the right half of the painting. All but one of the soldiers' faces was concealed, and that one is generalized. Some confusion has arisen surrounding the hand that bears the lantern, though the flash of a blue undergarment confirms its owner as

³⁹ There is some discussion on the moment Caravaggio has chosen to portray. Leo Bersani and Ulysse Dutoit, "Beauty's Light," *October* 82, (1997), have suggested the artist displays the moment before the kiss. However, the compositional rush of movement from right to left would appear to suggest that what we are shown is the instant following the kiss. The Gospels reveal that it was only *after* Judas' kiss that the soldiers moved to apprehend Christ.

⁴⁰ Herrmann-Fiore, "Caravaggio's 'Taking of Christ' and Dürer's Woodcut of 1509," 24-27.

Caravaggio's figure. Only a few faded olive leaves and branches give the scene its spatial context at Gethsemane.

Caravaggio's painting is remarkable in what he chooses to present and, surprisingly, omit. The scene was familiar to Seicento viewers in Rome and represented the fulfillment of divine prophecy and the result from Judas' capital sin of greed and envy: an onslaught of soldiers and lantern-bearers, sometimes shown with torches and lances, find Christ and his disciples praying in the Garden of Gethsemane where, for a payment of silver, Judas reveals the identity of Christ with a kiss. As Christ was being arrested, a few apostles are described as fleeing the scene, while Peter is said to have attacked a servant to the Jewish High Priests, Malchus, and severed his ear. The arrest was reported in all four Gospels, each providing different numbers and identities of those who attended. According to Anthony Apesos, "there is sufficient complexity and contradiction among the four Gospels that an illustrator such as Caravaggio had plenty from which to pick and choose."⁴¹ Given Caravaggio's marked talent for the depiction of violence, his choice to omit such an occurrence seems puzzling, but a necessary compositional choice. By this time, Caravaggio was becoming increasingly known as an artist who preferred to concentrate his paintings on the most essential events and principal characters of a narrative.

Several interpretations of the *Betrayal* and its identified self-portrait suggest the high likelihood that Caravaggio used self-portraiture in this case to construct hidden meaning. Three important characteristics of the presumed self-portrait formulate the crux of many interpretations and deserve mention. Although Caravaggio has presumably

⁴¹ Apesos, "The Painter as Evangelist," 23. For Gospel accounts, see Matthew 26:36-56, Mark 14: 32-52, Luke 22: 39-52, and John 18: 1-14.

placed himself within a scene many artists would have been hesitant to associate with, he appears to occupy a unique position in that, unlike the soldiers and saints, he does not wear armor or robes. His expression suggests an individual absorbed in witnessing the action, not partaking in the sinful arrest. The case here would appear to be represented in the manner of the participant embedded self-portraits, discussed in Chapter III. However, Caravaggio gives the impression of holding a ground of moral neutrality, as if the lantern-bearer were drawn to the scene by curiosity and not malevolence.⁴²

Caravaggio's use of light in the *Betrayal* begs investigation as well. The only source of illumination should emanate from the lantern Caravaggio holds. The real light source is unexplained, emanating, almost divinely, from outside the scene to the upper left. Caravaggio's taste for concealing the light-source in his paintings is well documented, which has suggested to some that light in many of his canvases functioned to metaphorically signal the supernatural or divine.⁴³ What is more, other than his 1606 *Seven Acts of Mercy*, the *Betrayal* is the only painting in which Caravaggio included an artificial source of light.

These three elements have suggested to scholars that Caravaggio's self-portrait in the *Betrayal* may be the artist's allusion to his larger philosophy of art, which was faithfulness to nature.⁴⁴ Equally as interesting is the hand wielding the lantern,

⁴² Varriano, "Caravaggio and Religion," 202.

⁴³ A few publications provide interesting commentary on Caravaggio's 'metaphorical' and 'supernatural' use of light. See Bersani and Dutoit, "Beauty's Light," 19-20; Langdon, *Caravaggio: A Life*, 235-36; Varriano, "Caravaggio and Religion," 200; Sergio Benedetti, "Classical and Religious Influences in Caravaggio's Painting," in *Saints and Sinners: Caravaggio and the Baroque Image*. ed. Franco Mormando, (Boston: McMullen Museum of Art, 1999): 210; and Friedlaender, *Caravaggio Studies*, 130.

⁴⁴ This interpretation of the *Betrayal* self-portrait has been accepted by Langdon, *Caravaggio: A Life*, 234-235; Puglisi, *Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio*, 221; Dell'Orto, "Caravaggio: Self-Portraits as

positioned in a specific gesture often seen in self-portraits of artists working at their easel. In nearly all cases, the working hand is shown with the brush pinched between the thumb and forefinger with the other three fingers sliding under the forefinger as support.⁴⁵ A representative example may be observed in Artemisia Gentileschi's *Self-Portrait as Allegory of Painting* from 1630 (figure 4.4). The self-portrait seems to reference tools essential for artists because Caravaggio's hand gesture cites the act of painting and the lantern he holds only illuminates the artist's hand and eyes.⁴⁶ Further, the fact that Caravaggio wields a lantern could suggest that he, the artist, brings light to nature and, thus, this biblical scene through his art. Helen Langdon further suggested that "his holding of the light was an evangelical call to younger artists, a revelation of the true path to follow, a symbol of the rebirth of painting."⁴⁷

In the *Betrayal*, Caravaggio appeared to assimilate himself into a complex system of visual relationships between the characters displayed. In the contrasting interpretations of Anthony Apesos and Michael Fried, the principal concern of both is the evident relationship between Caravaggio's figure to the right and the fleeing youth to the left. The two figures frame the scene, with one exiting as the other enters; one sees the principal action as the other turns away and does not see; one seeks to get away while the other seeks to get close and illuminate Christ. Considering the pose and treatment, both figures raise their right arms and have brightly illuminated profiled faces. Apesos has

Exploration of Living Reality," 228; Apesos, "The Painter as Evangelist," 36-42; Varriano, "Caravaggio and Religion," 200.

⁴⁵ Fried, *The Moment of Caravaggio*, 213.

⁴⁶ Helen Langdon, "Caravaggio: Biography in Paint," in *Caravaggio and Paintings of Realism in Malta*. eds. Cynthia De Giorgio & Keith Sciberras. (Malta, 2007): 59.

⁴⁷ Langdon, *Caravaggio: A Life*, 235.

noted how even the eyes of each figure are positioned the same distance from the edge of the canvas, which has never been cropped or cut.⁴⁸ Fried made similar observations, leading him to propose “it is as though the *Betrayal* at once represents a particular instant in the biblical narrative and evokes a multiplicity of relationships that redirect our attention away from the events in the Garden of Gethsemane toward a very different “narrative,” not declarable in any straightforward way, of the painting’s production.”⁴⁹

While Fried was concerned with underscoring Caravaggio's metaphorical presence within the painting and the artist's impulse for making art, Apesos was interested in decoding Caravaggio's religious beliefs and piety. Although Apesos noted that the lantern-bearer and the fleeing youth appear to display opposite emotional reactions, he nonetheless viewed the connection between the two as significant and potentially revelatory of the artist's intent. Apesos emphasized this implied relationship in the *Betrayal* as well as Caravaggio's use of the lantern, which appears to highlight the artist's eyes and hand. However, Apesos found the crux of his argument in the identity of the fleeing youth. Indeed, if the visual relationship between the fleeing youth and Caravaggio may be granted, that figure’s identity obtains a high level of significance and merits exploration.

Arguments that suggest the figure was a young follower of Christ are based on the Gospel of Mark (14:51-2), the only source that mentions him. Saint John the Evangelist is the more likely candidate, in part because his presence in the garden appears in all four

⁴⁸ Apesos, “The Painter as Evangelist,” 36.

⁴⁹ Fried, *The Moment of Caravaggio*, 214.

gospels.⁵⁰ The earliest identification of the figure in the painting came from a description in Bellori's biography of Caravaggio: "Judas is shown after the kiss with his hand on the Lord's shoulder; a soldier in full armor extends his arms and his ironclad hand toward the chest of the Lord, who stands still, patiently and humbly, his hands crossed before him, as John runs away behind with outstretched arms."⁵¹ Saint John is customarily identified by his youth in painting and sculpture, usually shown beardless with fairish skin and hair. In Italian painting, he is almost solely displayed in red or green and red robes, as seen in Antonio da Viterbo's 1505 *Pietà* (figure 4.5). Apesos felt that the importance of the scene as Caravaggio presented it would not support the inclusion of an anonymous figure.⁵² There seems no reason to doubt Bellori's identification and works that include the fleeing youth described in Mark's Gospel are rare, such as a surviving copy in the Columbus Museum of Art of Correggio's lost *Youth Fleeing the Capture of Christ*, in which the youth is displayed as the painting's main subject. With the iconographic precedent and relative lack of representations showing the anonymous youth, Saint John is the fleeing figure.

Saint John the Evangelist's relative fusion with, as well as his implied emanation from, the body of Christ in Caravaggio's *Betrayal* could function as a visual metaphor for the Apostles "being the first bishops and the prototypes for the priesthood, the Church

⁵⁰ For an argument that the figure represents the anonymous youth, see Gilbert, *Caravaggio and His Two Cardinals*, 135-141. Mark 14:51-2 reads, "[51] A young man, wearing nothing but a linen garment, was following Jesus. When they seized him, [52] he fled naked, leaving his garment behind." For Gospel accounts of Saint John, see Matthew 26:36-56, Mark 14: 32-52, Luke 22: 39-52, and John 18: 1-14.

⁵¹ Friedlaender's translation, *Caravaggio Studies*, 249.

⁵² Apesos, "The Painter as Evangelist," 31.

which they propagated, and emanations of Christ himself.”⁵³ For Apesos, the compositional pairing between John and the lantern bearer was the artist’s way of “asserting this [evangelical] role of the artist in the Church’s mission of spreading the faith. The dim lantern he holds is a simile for the effort of his imagination to recreate what we cannot really see.”⁵⁴ As we have seen in his style and biography, Caravaggio was decidedly attracted to humanization of the divine, which could explain his parity with Saint John here: the Apostles were all unlike Jesus in that they were decidedly human and struggled to disconnect themselves from earthly conventions and materiality. What is more, Saint John’s emotional reaction in the *Betrayal* seems strikingly human, one that Caravaggio and his audience could empathize with in their own interior thoughts. “He put all life on the same level” wrote Dell’Orto, “and captured the divinity of a saint’s sacrifice in the same terms of an instant of natural existence, just as he saw it, for without a model, Bellori wrote, he could not paint.”⁵⁵

In the previous chapter, the pairing of self-portraits with portraits in works like Botticelli’s *Adoration* or Titian’s *Gloria* suggested artists may have visually connected themselves to royalty or laymen to communicate a level of pride, piety, or aspirations of higher status (see figures 3.4 and 3.8, respectively). Chapters II and III also noted cases in which artists displayed themselves as specific characters, transforming themselves into men within a narrative and allegorizing the specific qualities of those personas. What is more, we have seen artists act as witnesses, which can be understood as a desire to identify with the event but also with the created work.

⁵³ Ibid, 32.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 41.

⁵⁵ Dell’Orto, “Caravaggio: Self-Portraits as Exploration of Living Reality,” 230.

Caravaggio employed several of these elements in the *Betrayal*, presenting the viewer with a new and meaningful way into the dilemma of a religious event. By emphasizing the painter's tools through the metaphor of the lantern, Caravaggio was assessing the significance of the scene as well as identifying with it, while claiming his authorship of the painting. By pairing himself with Christ's favorite, more important, Apostle Caravaggio indicated his increased pride, confidence, and success. To this author, Caravaggio not only sent out an evangelical call to younger artists about the rebirth of naturalism, as Langdon has suggested, but also identified himself as a painter who was evangelical, and was ready to show the world that he was, after all, pious. Although each component of Caravaggio's ulterior constructions and 'narratives' in the 1602 *Betrayal* may be considered conventional when viewed separately in the context of post-Tridentine embedded self-portraiture, the exceptional new combination and intricacy of these factors in this case were unprecedented.

Painted Biography in the *Martyrdom of Saint Ursula and David with Goliath*

Two late embedded self-portraits by Caravaggio are best understood within the emotional and biographical circumstances of their production. A month or two before his death in the spring of 1610, Caravaggio embedded his self-portrait within the *Martyrdom of Saint Ursula* (figure 4.6).⁵⁶ The painting includes five figures cloaked in shadow. Apart from the martyr's vermilion robe and the Bowman's red sleeves and armor embossed with gold, the palette of the painting is muted with blacks, whites and browns dominating the canvas. Among the five figures included in the painting, the goateed man

⁵⁶ The self-portrait has been suggested by Hibbard, *Caravaggio*, 254; Langdon, *Caravaggio: A Life*, 388; Varriano, "Caravaggio and Religion," 202; Puglisi, *Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio*, 355; and Fried, *The Moment of Caravaggio*, 222.

behind the martyr, straining to gaze over her shoulder matches all of the physiognomic details of Leoni's drawing (figure 4.1). Moreover, the self-portrait appears to be a copy of his earlier *Betrayal* self-portrait. In each painting, respectively, the figures identifiable as Caravaggio are placed in nearly identical positions and are portrayed with similar expressions. Although the chance that Caravaggio's contemporaries recognized this quotation or even saw the two paintings together was extremely rare, the citation of his *Betrayal* self-portrait in the *Martyrdom* nonetheless merits assessment.⁵⁷

Saint Ursula's legend was largely formed from ancient martyrologies in the Cologne region and appeared in a text dating from 975 that compiled the life and martyrdom of holy virgins, titled *Relatio de historia sanctarum Agrippinensium virginum*.⁵⁸ The text reported that Ursula was the leader of eleven thousand pilgrim virgins, who had stopped in the city of Cologne, which had been conquered by Attila's Hun warriors in the fifth century. The King of the Huns, who lusted after Ursula, gave her an ultimatum: marriage or massacre. Upon refusal, all of Ursula's followers were killed and the Hun King, seeing himself rebuffed, shot Ursula with an arrow, which pierced her breast from one side to the other. A characteristic representation of the subject during the early Seicento can be observed in Ludovico Carracci's altarpiece of 1600, in which the martyr is seen piously at center while a chaotic and violent massacre unfolds around her. Carracci chose to capture the moment just before the bowman lets his arrow fly.

⁵⁷ For provenance, see Ferdinando Bologna, "The Martyrdom of Saint Ursula," in *Caravaggio: The Final Years*, (Naples: Electra Napoli, 2005): 144. Marcantonio Doria, Prince of Angri and Duke of Eboli, commissioned the painting, choosing the subject in honor of his stepdaughter, a nun renamed Sister Ursula (Anna Grimaldi).

⁵⁸ Gianfranco Ravasi, "Saint Ursula: History, Legend, Iconography," *The Last Caravaggio: The Martyrdom of Saint Ursula*, (Milan: Mondadori Electa, 2004): 16-20.

The *Martyrdom* serves as evidence that even in exile, Caravaggio still possessed the ability to create powerful images “with an intensity and drama that no contemporary could match.”⁵⁹ Caravaggio has depicted the instant after the arrow has pierced its intended target, when psychological, emotional, and dramatic intensity were at their peak. The immediacy of the scene is heightened by Caravaggio’s typical reduction of figures and spatial context. What is more, the executioner stands close to the martyr, dramatically emphasizing that she has been violently shot point-blank. Although Carracci cast the executioner as a generalized soldier, in Caravaggio’s painting the Bowman’s elaborate armor and plumed hat suggest the figure is meant to be Attila himself. An attendant to the martyr stands at center. Recent restoration has revealed that this figure thrusts his hand between the King and Ursula in what would have been a hopeless attempt to save the virgin. Saint Ursula stands quietly in shock, her hands slightly lifted to her chest as she somberly contemplates the fatal wound. The figure identified as a self-portrait of Caravaggio and a final armored soldier complete the composition. That the soldier’s face to the right of the canvas is concealed and his costume displays no red would appear to suggest an individual of lower rank and distinguishes him from Attila.

In the 1610 *Martyrdom*, Caravaggio’s treatment of his embedded self-portrait is best understood by reading back into the biographical circumstances of its production. Both Baglione and Bellori reported that while in Malta during 1608, Caravaggio was accepted into the Knights of Malta and given the prestigious title of Cavaliere di Gratia

⁵⁹ Hibbard, *Caravaggio*, 253.

for, among other paintings, his portrait of the Grand Master Alof de Wignacourt.⁶⁰ Caravaggio's celebration was brief, as he found himself in prison by October 1608 where he was "subjected to misery, fear, and maltreatment" for attacking a noble knight of the order.⁶¹ With unknown aides, Caravaggio escaped the Maltese prison and fled to Syracuse. Caravaggio's condemnable attack on the noble knight was an event that, along with the murder of Tomassoni, led to paranoia and anxiety on the part of the artist in 1609 and 1610. Baglione and Bellori both suggested that someone or some group were in pursuit of Caravaggio.⁶² The artist fled Syracuse to Messina where Bellori suggested Caravaggio eventually "felt that it was no longer safe to remain in Sicily."⁶³ Continuing north, Caravaggio found himself back in Naples, where he tried to amend his relationship with the aggrieved Maltese Grand Master by painting for him *Salome with the Head of John the Baptist*. His attempts were futile and several months before he painted the *Martyrdom of Saint Ursula* Caravaggio was nearly killed in Naples when his enemies finally caught up with him. Caravaggio's face was severely slashed in the attack, leaving Baglione to suggest that Caravaggio "was almost unrecognizable."⁶⁴

Considering the embedded self-portrait in the *Martyrdom*, it would seem possible that the paranoia and anxiety Caravaggio experienced during these years was translated into this image. As expected, the brilliancy of the *Betrayal* seems a distant memory when

⁶⁰ Friedlaender's translations, *Caravaggio Studies*, 236 & 251.

⁶¹ Friedlaender's translation of Bellori, *Caravaggio Studies*, 251.

⁶² Hibbard, *Caravaggio*, 249. Also reported by Bellori and Baglione. See Friedlaender's translations, *Caravaggio Studies*, 236 & 251.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

juxtaposed with the *Martyrdom*, and their differences revealing. Helen Langdon observed Caravaggio's sense of "flamboyant pride in creativity" in the *Betrayal* and the "drained and desperate" nature of the *Ursula* canvas.⁶⁵ She further noted that, "In Naples the mood harshens," while Hibbard suggested the artist's late works were "sober and hushed."⁶⁶ Caravaggio's lantern bearer in the *Betrayal* witnesses the event with eager, possibly curious, assessment. A close examination of Caravaggio within the *Martyrdom* reveals that his gaze does not appear to be engaged with the violent death unfolding before him, but rather averted towards the unidentified light-source that floods the scene from the left or possibly towards the executioner. The interpretive possibilities are reduced in the *Martyrdom* because of the painting's emptiness and Caravaggio does not appear to construct any underlying relationships or references to his profession, as seen in the *Betrayal*. However, his choice to include an embedded self-portrait in the painting suggests Caravaggio infused the piece with a personal tone. Fried has suggested that Caravaggio's treatment of himself in the *Martyrdom* recorded the toll on his body that resulted from the 1609 attack as well as being a fugitive for nearly 4 years.⁶⁷ Howard Hibbard, in describing Caravaggio's late 1608 *Burial of Saint Lucy*, which dates from the same period as the embedded self-portrait, remarked that the, "essential hopelessness of the interpretation may well reflect Caravaggio's own doubtful attitude toward salvation"

⁶⁵ Langdon, *Caravaggio: A Life*, 388.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 383.

⁶⁷ Fried, *The Moment of Caravaggio*, 222.

and/or safety.⁶⁸ When viewed within this biographical context, the *Martyrdom* self-portrait does display the artist's fatigued and fragile physical and emotional state in 1610.

Another 1610 embedded self-portrait of Caravaggio supports the above assessment of the *Martyrdom*. As one of the most studied paintings in Caravaggio's oeuvre, his *David with the Head of Goliath* includes a visage unlike any embedded self-portrait that had ever been produced during the two hundred year history of the genre, which has driven countless scholars into an endless debate of its potential motivations and meanings (figure 4.7). The Old Testament scene of a victorious David with the head of his enemy was one frequently encountered by Renaissance and Baroque viewers. Artists had placed their self-portraits in the scene before, such as Giorgione's 1510 *David with the Head of Goliath*, in which the artist displayed himself as the conquering and youthful David, his gaze one of stern but unremorseful reflection.⁶⁹ Conversely and quite remarkably, Caravaggio shows himself as the gruesome Goliath. Bellori was the first to suggest the severed head was Caravaggio's, an identification accepted by many subsequent scholars.⁷⁰ A comparison with Leoni's portrait also leaves little doubt as to the intended identity of Goliath. The head, which is thrust by its hair uncomfortably close to the viewer by a disgusted David, seems almost alive with its grimace and opened eyes; blood still streams from the neck. The emotional and hidden power of the self-

⁶⁸ Hibbard, *Caravaggio*, 240. The quote is used here as it seems an apt way to think about Caravaggio's *Martyrdom of Saint Ursula* as well.

⁶⁹ First suggested by Vasari, *Lives*, 641-42. Followed by Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 71-6.

⁷⁰ See Friedlaenger's translation, *Caravaggio Studies*, 250 for Bellori's identification. Scholars who accept the identification include Gilbert, *Caravaggio and His Two Cardinals*, 25; David M. Stone, "Self and Myth in Caravaggio's *David and Goliath*," *Caravaggio: Realism, Rebellion, Reception*, ed. Genevieve Warwick, (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2006): 36; Langdon, *Caravaggio: A Life*, 385; Hibbard, *Caravaggio*, 262. Friedlaender, *Caravaggio Studies*, 202; Varriano, "Caravaggio and Religion," 203; and John Varriano, *Caravaggio: The Art of Realism*, (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006): 10.

portrait transfixes viewers, freezing them in a moment of anxious and stunning meditation. It has been suggested the painting was given to Cardinal Scipione Borghese, a patron and collector of the artist's work, as a desperate plea for the artist's papal pardon for the murder.⁷¹ The *David* self-portrait could be read as an offering of himself, the artist's explicit identification with evil while displaying a degree of submission and confession. Hibbard has suggested that, "The *David* takes its place with the *Beheading of the Baptist* and the late *Salome* in its overpowering suggestion of Caravaggio's fear, indeed expectation, of violent punishment-perhaps castration-and death."⁷² The treatment and contexts of both the *Martyrdom* and *David* self-portraits make the most sense when viewed in the context of Caravaggio's biographical circumstances from 1608 to 1610.

While Caravaggio's embedded self-portrait in the *David* canvas may be classified as extraordinary, it nonetheless displays a few consistencies with some Tridentine and post-Tridentine examples of the confessional self-portrait. Gilbert has argued that Titian displayed himself as a sinner "rebuked by Christ for being too concerned with money," in the master's 1516 *Tribute Money* while further suggesting that Titian's close friend Pietro Aretino had requested his portrait be painted as Pilate in Titian's 1543 *Christ Before Pilate*.⁷³ Philip Sohm also discussed the parallels between the life of Caravaggio and Andrea del Castagno, who was also accused of murder and reported to have painted his

⁷¹ Suggested by Langdon, *Caravaggio: A Life*, 384; and Maurizio Calvesi, "Michelangelo da Caravaggio: il suo rapporto con i Mattei e con altri collezionisti Romani," *Caravaggio e la Collezione Mattei* (Rome: Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Antica di Palazzo Barberini): 24; and Friedlaender, *Caravaggio Studies*, 202.

⁷² Hibbard, *Caravaggio*, 264.

⁷³ Gilbert, *Caravaggio and His Two Cardinals*, 25. See also Creighton Gilbert, "Some Findings on Early Works of Titian," *Art Bulletin* 62, (1980): 36-65. See also Wethey, *The Paintings of Titian* 1, 79, for identification of Titian within the artist's 1543 *Christ Before Pilate*.

self-portrait as Judas Iscariot.⁷⁴ That Caravaggio was concerned and/or absorbed with death and salvation in the *Martyrdom* and *David* self-portraits could also be paralleled with the last embedded self-portraits of Michelangelo, Bandinelli, and Titian, all of which suggested a degree of contemplation concerning their mortality and death. Although Caravaggio had no ability to foresee the time and mode of his death in the summer of 1610, we may presume that death was a constant reality for the painter as a result of the brutal 1609 attack in Naples as well as the *banda capitale* sentence brought upon him after the murder of Tomassoni. Caravaggio's 1610 embedded self-portraits in the *Martyrdom of Saint Ursula* and *David with the Head of Goliath* can be better understood with this biographical background and, viewed together with the *Betrayal*, form a visual progression that echoes the artist's difficult biography. Giovanna Dell'Orto concluded that Caravaggio's self-portraits are, "portraits of his true spirit, a painted exploration of the self as a fiercely involved spectator in the sudden burst of life, and the final end of death."⁷⁵

Conclusions

Determining the precise motivations behind Caravaggio's exceptional embedded self-portraits may be a venture with no end, but what this chapter has suggested is that the artist's self-portraits within private commissions reflected something personal and emotional to him, whether it was his religion, an autobiographical record, professional pride and mission, or artistic philosophy. While it is problematic to argue that Caravaggio's biography was the driving force behind his self-representations in the

⁷⁴ Sohm, "Caravaggio's Deaths," 455.

⁷⁵ Dell'Orto, "Caravaggio: Self-Portraits as Exploration of Living Reality," 230.

Betrayal of Christ, the *Martyrdom of Saint Ursula*, and *David with the Head of Goliath*, this chapter has used the artist's life as possible evidence that supports progressions and ideas posited from the paintings and their embedded self-portraits.

In the earliest of the three, when Caravaggio was considered the most famous painter in Rome, the artist proclaimed his authorship of the painting while also using visual/psychological relationships with other characters to identify with the scene and claim that he was a pious man. Caravaggio presented his viewers with an unconventional, but meaningful, vision of the divine by bridging the gap between the supernatural and the human, making God tangible not only to the illiterate masses of Seicento Rome, but to himself as well. Caravaggio treated his embedded self-portrait in the *Betrayal* with vivacity, life, and brilliancy that echo his success during these mature years. The impossibility, however, of placing Caravaggio's embedded self-portraiture as a whole into a convention is evidenced by his choice to employ multiple established functions of the genre, even within one painting, such as the *Betrayal*.

In the two later works, this thesis argues that we can observe the psychological strain of Caravaggio in the face of a papal death sentence and acts of physical violence. Characters with whom he identifies in the paintings and their placement suggests elements of confession and a desire to return to Rome for redemption as well. In the *Martyrdom*, Caravaggio treated his embedded self-portrait with harshness; it is a drained and depressed image in style, subject and interpretation. Caravaggio appears hopeless in the image, an attribute that can be associated with his character in the painting as well as his actual emotional state in 1609 and 1610. The *David* self-portrait is more direct than the *Martyrdom* in the way it communicates Caravaggio's feelings of admission and his

identification with wrongdoing and evil. The identity of Goliath has never been doubted and David's triumphant thrust of the decapitated head close to the viewer could serve as a metaphor of the contrast between Caravaggio's psychological state in 1602 and 1610.⁷⁶

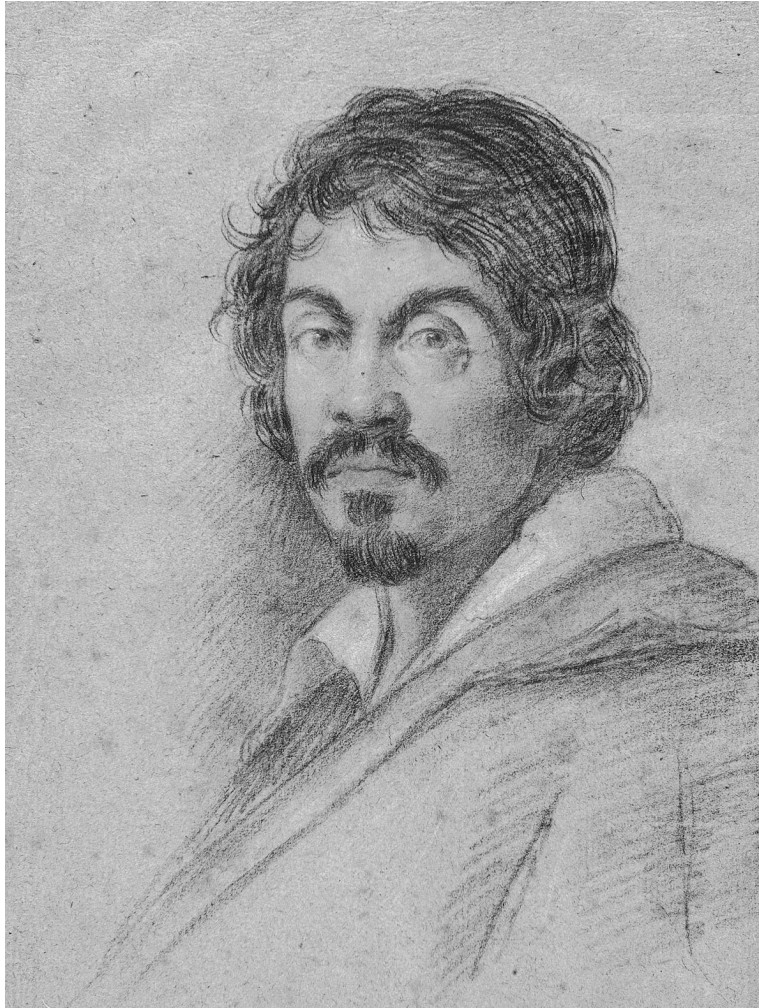


Figure 4.1. Ottavio Leoni, *Portrait of Michelangelo da Caravaggio*, 1597, chalk on paper
Biblioteca Marucelliana, Florence

⁷⁶ Some scholars have suggested that the triumphant David is a second self-portrait of Caravaggio as a youth. For commentary see Langdon, *Caravaggio: A Life*, 384-7.



Figure 4.2. Michelangelo Caravaggio, *Betrayal of Christ*, 1602-3, oil on canvas 133.5 x 169.5 cm, National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin



Figure 4.3. Albrecht Dürer, *Taking of Christ*, 1509, woodcut 12.7 x 9.7 cm



Figure 4.4. Artemisia Gentileschi, *Allegory of Painting*, 1630, oil on canvas 97.8 x 74.9 cm Windsor Castle, England

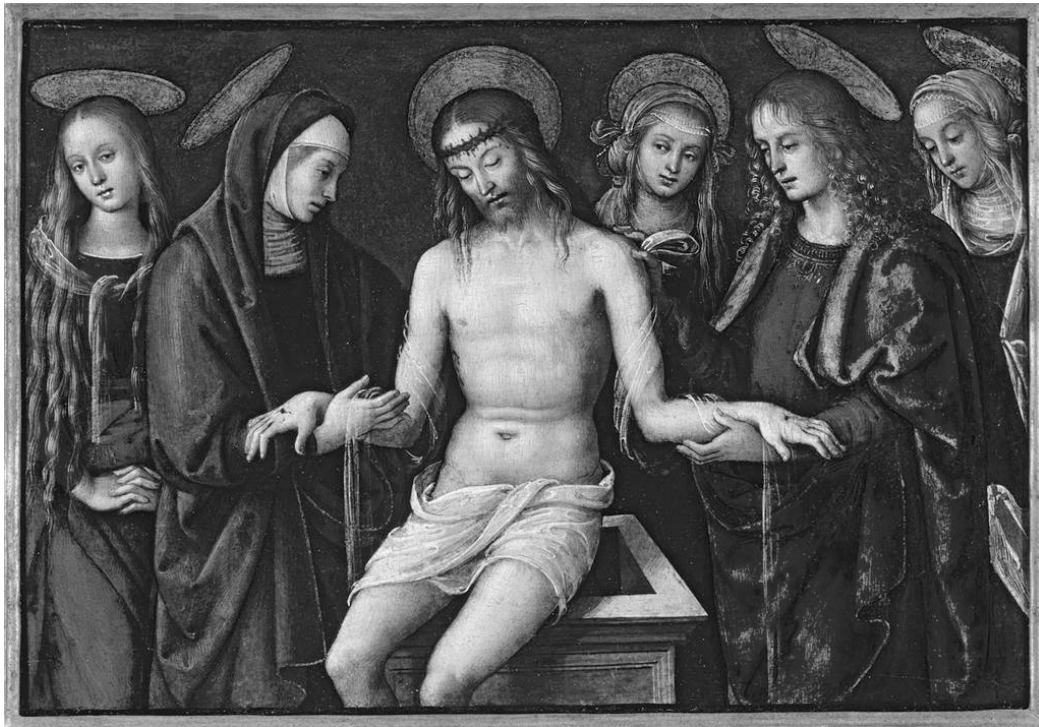


Figure 4.5. Antonio da Viterbo, *Pietà*, ca. 1505, tempera on panel 29.5 x 43.2 cm, High Museum of Art, Georgia



Figure 4.6. Michelangelo Caravaggio, *Martyrdom of Saint Ursula*, 1610, oil on canvas
154 x 178 cm, Museo e gallerie nazionali di Capodimonte



Figure 4.7. Michelangelo Caravaggio, *David with the Head of Goliath*, 1609-10, oil on
canvas, 125 x 101 cm, Galleria Borghese, Rome

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This thesis has looked at a series of Italian religious images in which the artist included his embedded self-portrait. It has investigated the existence, placement, style, frequency and history of this practice and its particular uses and meanings from the Quattrocento to the early Seicento. This thesis has called attention to the problems art historians face in locating artists' self-representations within religious narratives. Moreover, it has used iconography as well as primary and secondary textual sources to decipher artist intent. This research, and especially the exploration of Caravaggio's exceptional embedded self-portraits, has suggested that over time artists increasingly infused their self-representations with emotion, psychology, and piety. Cinquecento and Seicento artists such as Bronzino, Titian, and Caravaggio employed embedded self-portraiture for both public displays of devotion and private desires for salvation.

Before this thesis, scholarship assessing Italian embedded self-portraits was centered in the Quattrocento. Many texts, including parts of the present study, consider how both artists' and patrons' social and professional identities evolved during the Quattrocento and the ways artists reflected this growth through embedded portraiture and embedded self-portraiture. This thesis reiterated that artists and patrons of the Quattrocento, Cinquecento and early Seicento were motivated by commemoration, politics, and fashion to embed themselves in religious artworks. By placing themselves into religious contexts, patrons and artists identified with the scenes while also calling attention to their statuses, wealth, and financial support of the church. For artists, embedded self-portraiture also provided the solution to an artistic problem of

representation. As an alternative to signing the artwork, a practice that invariably flattens the piece and alters the illusion of depth, embedded self-portraits would have been recognized by contemporaries and served as visual signatures of authorship.

This study has extended the trajectory of scholarship into the Cinquecento and early Seicento by investigating how artists' embedded self-portraits changed during the unstable religious environment of Reformation and Counter-Reformation Italy. It expands past inquiry by more broadly emphasizing the importance of religion and piety to Cinquecento and early Seicento artists and their embedded self-representations. Much scholarship on the Quattrocento has stressed, and rightly so, artists' social and political identities. The unstable religious atmosphere of Reformation and Counter-Reformation Italy encouraged some artists to go beyond, or behind, their social and political identities and publically demonstrate their faith through embedded self-portraiture. Artists such as Bandinelli, Michelangelo, Titian and Caravaggio explored their own emotions and spiritual individualism in their embedded self-portraits. Artists of the Cinquecento adopted the practice of Quattrocento patrons by appearing as specific biblical characters in religious narratives. This transformation, along with closer, more prominent, placements with regard to the figure of Christ strongly suggests that their piety and devotion played a vital role in the very gesture of embedded self-portraiture of the Cinquecento and early Seicento.

By concluding this study with Caravaggio, an artist whose biography and self-portraits have occupied many scholars, this thesis has shown that the embedding of self-representations was a practice that some artists continued to develop and experiment with into the Seicento. It also demonstrated the advantages an artist's biography can offer

scholars in deciphering intention and meaning behind choices of context, style, and placement. Caravaggio understood embedded self-portraiture as a convention and recognized the many ways it had and could be employed. While specific elements of Caravaggio's embedded self-representations can be viewed as conventional and indebted to artists of his past, when seen in the context of the history this study has demonstrated they gain in nuance and originality. Rather than keeping audiences at distance, Caravaggio invited his viewers to interpret his art and himself through embedded self-portraiture. Caravaggio's viewers, both contemporary and modern, participate with the artist in the larger narrative, as witnesses of Caravaggio's witnessing in the *Betrayal of Christ*, the *Martyrdom of Saint Ursula*, and *David with the Head of Goliath*. His embedded self-portraits are the only autobiographical records that survive and are thus profound in their importance to art historians. This study also indicated, and more importantly, that Caravaggio's embedded self-portraits were meaningful and important to him. The striking contrasts between the *Betrayal* and *David* self-portraits suggests Caravaggio used embedded self-portraiture to communicate his triumphs, fears, and desires.

APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL ITALIAN EMBEDDED SELF-PORTRAITS OF THE CINQUECENTO AND SEICENTO

1. Jacopo Tintoretto, *The Miraculous Rescue of a Christian Slave by Saint Mark*, 1547, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.
(Witness): Tintoretto has been identified on the left periphery observing the scene. The self-portrait was recognized first by Francesco Valcanover and Terisio Pignatti, *Tintoretto*, Robert Wolf, (New York: Harry Abrams, 1985): 26; Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 65.
2. Jacopo Tintoretto, *Transport of Saint Mark*, 1562, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.
(Witness): The artist has been associated with the bearded figure to the right of the camel's neck. Identification made by Frederick Hartt, *Italian Renaissance Art*, (New York: Harry Abrams, 1997): 616; Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 65.
3. Titian, *Madonna and Child with Saint Andrew*, ca. 1560, Chiesa Arcidiaconale, Pieve di Cadore.
(Witness): Titian is identified as the kneeling figure on the left periphery of the painting. Identification by Vasari, *Lives*, II (New York): 789; Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 77.
4. Paolo Veronese, *The Feast in the House of Levi*, 1573. Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.
(Participant): Veronese is identified as the full figured man in the foreground, clad in green, with arms gesturing outward. Recognized by Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 64; Elizabeth Gilmore Holt, *A Documentary History of Art 2*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986): 68.
5. Federico Zuccaro, *Virgin and Child with Saints*, 1603, Sant'Angelo in Vado, Pesaro de Urbino, Marche, Italy.
(Witness): Both Taddeo, Federico, and the entire Zuccaro family may be identified in the painting. Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture*, 181.
6. Federico Zuccaro, *Flagellation of Christ*, 1573, Oratorio del Gonfalone, Rome.
(Witness)
7. Federico Zuccaro, *The Saved* (Detail from Last Judgement Fresco), 1576.
(Participant): Both Taddeo and his brother, Federico have been identified as members of the saved in the larger west compartment showing the Holy People of God in the cupola of the Florence cathedral. Woods-Marsden, *Renaissance Self-Portraiture*, 173-75.

8. Federico Zuccaro, *Assumption of the Virgin*, S. Trinita dei Monti, Rome.
(Witness): Federico is associated with the figure on the left periphery holding a large book and gazing at the viewer. Identification by Spengler, "A Drawing and a Self-Portrait by Federico Zuccaro," 750.
9. Caravaggio, *Martyrdom of Saint Matthew*, 1599, Contarelli Chapel, San Luigi dei Francesi, Rome.
(Participant): Caravaggio is often recognized as the grimaced and bearded figure in the back left of the composition. He turns to run away from the scene but twists his body back to contemplate the scene. Identification by Puglisi, *Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio*, 159; Langdon, *Caravaggio: A Life*, 170-84; Hibbard, *Caravaggio*, 108.
10. Michelangelo, *The Last Judgement*, 1541, Sistine Chapel, Rome.
(Characterized as Saint Bartholomew, Participant): Identification made by Charles De Tolney, *Michelangelo: The Sistine Ceiling*, (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1969): 95-96; John T. Paoletti, "Michelangelo's Masks," *The Art Bulletin* 74, n. 3 (1992): 423-40, 428.
11. Bronzino, *Martyrdom of Saint Lawrence*, 1569, San Lorenzo, Florence.
(Witness): Bronzino is traditionally identified in the group of portraits located on the middle-left periphery of the fresco. Cox-Rearick, *Bronzino's Chapel of Eleonora in the Palazzo Vecchio*, 201-3; Gaston, "Iconography and Portraiture in Bronzino's 'Christ in Limbo,'" 65.
12. Bronzino, *Deposition*, 1561, Accademia, Florence.
(Witness): Gaston, "Iconography and Portraiture in Bronzino's 'Christ in Limbo,'" 48, identifies the man in the left center of the painting as Bronzino's self-portrait.
13. Titian, *Last Supper*, 1564, San Lorenzo de El Escorial, Spain.
(Participant): Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 78, suggested the presence of a self-portrait in the painting.
14. Pontormo, *Lamentation-Entombment*, 1528, Church of Santa Felicita, Florence.
(Characterized as Nicodemus, Participant): Cox-Rearick, *Bronzino's Chapel of Eleonora in the Palazzo Vecchio*, 199-200.
15. Gentile Bellini, *Procession of the Relic of the True Cross in Piazza San Marco*, ca. 1494-1505, Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice.
(Witness): Contains both a self-portrait and portrait of Giovanni Mansueti in the left foreground. Identification made by Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 59.

16. Gentile Bellini, *Saint Mark Preaching in Alexandria*, ca. 1504, Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan.
(Witness): The figure in the left foreground, clad in a red toga with gold trimming has been associated with the artist. Recognized by Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 61.
17. Jacopo Palma il Giovane, *The Decapitation of Saints Tiburtius and Valerius*, ca. 1620, Chiesa di San Nicolo dei Tolentini, Venice.
(Witness): The figure at the left periphery gazing at the viewer is accepted as a self-portrait. Identification by Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 66.
18. Jacopo Palma il Giovane, *Saint John the Baptist Preaching*, ca. 1620. Bloomington, Indiana University Art Museum.
(Witness): In the center left of the painting within a crowd, the bearded and aged figure looking at the viewer is identified as a self-portrait of the artist. Recognized by Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 66-7.
19. Giorgio Vasari, *Saint Luke Painting the Virgin*, ca. 1565, SS. Annunziata, Cappella di San Luca, Florence.
(Characterized as Saint Luke, Participant): Identified by Brown, *The Painter's Reflection*, 71.

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