

MYSTICAL AND EVANGELICAL REFORM IN TINTORETTO'S SALA

DELL'ALBERGO

by

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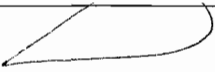
## An Abstract of the Thesis of

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Tintoretto's four-painting Passion cycle in the Sala dell'Albergo of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco in Venice has generated dramatic and affective responses from artists and critics since its completion in the late 1560s. While scholars have addressed the cycle's formal qualities that stimulate such responses, the context surrounding the cycle has not been fully explored. The city was a refuge for reformers and the printing center for potentially heretical writing in the sixteenth century. Tintoretto maintained relationships to members of the reformist *poligrafi*, and the Passion cycle responds to the mystical theologies propagated in widely disseminated works from Ignatius of Loyola's officially sanctioned treatise, *Spiritual Exercises*, to the more controversial work of Don Benedetto and Marcantonio Flaminio, the *Beneficio di Cristo*. This thesis constructs a strong relationship between Tintoretto's work in the Sala dell'Albergo and contemporary mystical and evangelical reformatory theology and activity in the city.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

Tintoretto's four-painting Passion cycle in the Sala dell'Albergo at the Scuola Grande di San Rocco (figs. 1-4), highlighted by the monumental *Crucifixion*, has elicited dramatically powerful responses from its viewers since its completion in 1567. In 1589, Agostino Carracci was so taken with the *Crucifixion* that he produced an engraving of the scene and is even said to have presented this work upon its completion to an aged Tintoretto (fig. 5).<sup>1</sup> Its affective power continued into the Baroque, as the Sala dell'Albergo became a subject of study for developing artists like Peter Paul Rubens, Anthony van Dyck, and Diego Velázquez in their visits to Italy in the seventeenth century.<sup>2</sup> In the nineteenth century, two young English writer-artists would reaffirm the dramatic appeal of the works in the small sala in the Scuola Grande di San Rocco. In his visit to Venice in 1845, John Ruskin famously remarked that he could "not insult this marvelous picture (the *Crucifixion*) by an effort at a verbal account of it." He then continued for several paragraphs however, noting that Tintoretto's "enormous powers"

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<sup>1</sup> See Diane de Grazia Bohlin, *Prints and Related Drawings by the Carracci Family: A Catalogue Raisonné* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1979), 254-255. According to Boschini, Tintoretto was said to have thought so highly of the print that he considered it equal to the original.

<sup>2</sup> Francesco Valcanover, *Jacopo Tintoretto and the Scuola Grande of San Rocco* (Venice: Storti, 1983), 31-32. We do not have any extant examples of works from these artists that directly reflect the composition of any of the works in the Sala dell'Albergo. The dramatic use of light and the emotional and expressive use of figures characteristic of Tintoretto are prominent in certain works of these artists.

had left him “quite overwhelmed.”<sup>3</sup> Two decades later, Henry James echoed Ruskin’s sentiments and observed of the *Crucifixion* that “no single picture contains more of human life; there is everything in it, including the most exquisite beauty.”<sup>4</sup> In the twentieth century, Tintoretto’s biographers have unanimously concurred with these effusive reactions, frequently identifying the artist’s work in the Sala dell’Albergo as the most affecting and effective set of paintings in the artist’s entire oeuvre.<sup>5</sup>

While these responses certainly establish the dramatic and psychological potentials of the paintings in the Sala dell’Albergo, Domenikos Theotokopoulos’ (called “El Greco”) claim that the *Crucifixion* was “the best painting there is in the world,” noted during his short stay in Venice in 1567-68, triggers the following examination of the relationship between Tintoretto’s Passion cycle and mystical and evangelical reform in sixteenth-century Venice.<sup>6</sup> Adhering to traditional historical approaches, Miguel Falomir

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<sup>3</sup> John Ruskin is one of the few art critics to consider Venetian Renaissance painting as being equal to or surpassing the more universally heralded Roman and Tuscan painting styles. Ruskin favorably compared the Venetians’ characterization of nature to the work of the Romantics at the turn of the nineteenth century. See John Ruskin, *Modern Painters* (1846), vol. 2, *The Works of John Ruskin*, eds. Edward Tyas Cook and Alexander Wedderburn (London, 1903), 263.

<sup>4</sup> Henry James, *The Art of Travel: Scenes and Journeys in America, England, France, and Italy from the Travel Writings of Henry James*, ed. Morton Dauwen Zabel (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1958), 405-406. James continues: “It is one of the greatest things of art; it is always interesting. There are works of the artist which contain touches more exquisite, revelations of beauty more radiant, but there is no other vision of so intense a reality, an execution so splendid.”

<sup>5</sup> Ilchman claims that the *Crucifixion* represents the “sheer ingenuity” of Tintoretto and is “exciting.” See Frederick Ilchman, “Tintoretto as a Painter of Religious Narrative,” in *Tintoretto*, ed. Miguel Falomir (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2007), 64. Nichols defines the painting as the artist’s “imaginative projection” of the event and speaks to a certain “spiritual essentialism” of the time period. See Tom Nichols, *Tintoretto: Tradition and Identity* (London: Reaktion, 1999), 162-168. Valcanover responds effusively, calling the painting both “climatic” and “tragic.” See Valcanover, *Jacopo Tintoretto*, 28-33.

<sup>6</sup> Although scholars note that El Greco studied with Titian during his Venetian sojourn, the Greek painter reserved the utmost praise for Tintoretto. See Edward Sullivan, “El Greco of Toledo,” *Art Journal* 42 (1982): 239. El Greco recorded this quotation in his annotations to his edition of Vasari’s lives. For information on El Greco’s relationship with Tintoretto and Titian, see Miguel Falomir, “Tintoretto and

argues that El Greco's response resulted from the several stylistic associations that one could make between Tintoretto's work in the Sala dell'Albergo and the style that came to define the mature El Greco. The historian identifies the artists' shared interest in three-dimensional representation, the treatment and application of anatomy to evoke emotion and drama, formal and compositional simplicity, and the preparatory practice of using wax figurines to formulate figural compositions.<sup>7</sup> While these observations firmly suggest that El Greco drew upon Tintoretto for influence, constricting the association between the two artists merely to style obscures this relationship's potential to reveal novel connections between Tintoretto's work and the religious and social context of Venice in the 1560s. Although when historian Rodolfo Pallucchini claimed that El Greco was "the only disciple of Tintoretto's ideas" he might have only been referring to Tintoretto's artistic conventions, it likely has broader applications. El Greco, an artist keenly attuned to spiritual matters, likely recognized the aesthetic and visionary power of the older painter's work.<sup>8</sup>

Scholars have traditionally considered El Greco to be the archetypal mystical painter of late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century Spain. His works demonstrate the imaginative projection that characterized visionary descriptions of sixteenth-century

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Spain: From El Greco to Velázquez," in *Tintoretto*, ed. Miguel Falomir (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2007) 168; Lionello Puppi, "El Greco in Italy and Italian Art," in *El Greco. Identity and Transforation: Crete, Italy, Spain*, ed. José Álvarez Lopera (Milan: Skira, 1999), 94-113; Nicos Hadjinicolaou, *El Greco: Byzantium and Italy* (Rethymno: Crete University Press, 1990); and Pál Kelemen, *El Greco Revisited: Candia, Venice, Toledo* (New York: MacMillan, 1961), 64 and 67.

<sup>7</sup> Falomir, "Tintoretto and Spain," 168.

<sup>8</sup> For Pallucchini's thoughts on the association between Tintoretto and El Greco, *ibid.*, 169.



Spanish mysticism.<sup>9</sup> The manipulation of space, the illuminative lighting, and the contorted poses, immediately evident in paintings such as his *Agony in the Garden* (c. 1595; fig. 6), maintain the visionary qualities and inspire the psychological and physical reactions that define visionary experience. Curiously, despite Tintoretto's relationship to El Greco, scholars have yet to adequately consider the relationship between the Venetian painter's work and mystical trends in contemporary Venice.

The scholarly disregard of this association is either due to a misconception that the Venetians were generally disinterested in mystical theology or the lack of confirmable biographical evidence to suggest that Tintoretto maintained reformist beliefs. First of all, as this thesis seeks to clarify, Venice was the heart of Catholic reform in Italy in the sixteenth century, and several leading members of the reform movement living in Venice promoted and circulated the principal tenets of Counter-Reformation mysticism throughout the city. Secondly, while the dearth of primary or immediate secondary sources on Tintoretto's religious practices, inclinations, and convictions complicates this discussion, it does not prevent the reasonable construction of a relationship between the paintings and the mystical practices that came to be integral to the evangelical reformation movement. Thirdly, while the byproduct of this argument suggests that Tintoretto carried affinities for visionary contemplation and mid sixteenth-century mystical exegesis, this essay, adhering to the example set forth by scholars in their discussion of El Greco's relationship to mysticism, does not seek to necessarily identify

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<sup>9</sup> For an in-depth discussion on the relationship between Spanish art and contemporary mystical trends in Spain, see Victor I. Stoichita, *Visionary Experience in the Golden Age of Spanish Art* (London, Reaktion, 1995).

Tintoretto as a mystic practitioner (though that possibility remains open). Instead, it argues for a profound relationship between the artist's Passion cycle in the Sala dell'Albergo and mystical doctrine as propagated by the Venetian evangelicals or *spirituali*.<sup>10</sup>

Until recently, this type of cultural contextual analysis has been absent from scholarly discussions of Tintoretto. Tintoretto's prolific output and his disinclination or inability to produce consistently psychologically and emotionally affective work have created challenges for scholars. Annibale Carracci noted that "(he has) seen Tintoretto as equal to Titian, and at other times as inferior to Tintoretto."<sup>11</sup> Tintoretto is as elusive stylistically as he is biographically, and as a result, those few scholars who have addressed Tintoretto limited themselves to formal discussions of the artist's work (often on a case by case basis) and dismissed the artistic persona of Jacopo Robusti as an enigmatic individualist.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> In his contribution to the catalogue, *El Greco*, David Davies does not consider El Greco to be a mystic, but claims that the painter's work cannot and should not evade analysis through the cultural lens of mysticism. He claims that the paintings are as much products of the culture as they are of individual artistic ingenuity. See David Davies, "El Greco's Religious Art: The Illumination and Quickening of the Spirit," in *El Greco*, eds. David Davies and John H. Elliott (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 45-71. Fernando Marías also discusses changing perceptions of El Greco from the crazed artist, the philosopher, and the mystic. See Fernando Marías, *El Greco* (Madrid: Anaya, 1991).

<sup>11</sup> Miguel Falomir, "Jacopo Comin, alias Robusti, alias Tintoretto: An Exhibition and Catalogue." In *Tintoretto*, ed. Miguel Falomir (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2007), 17-18.

<sup>12</sup> Until recently, even in comprehensive monographs most scholars have addressed Tintoretto's work in a case-by-case basis. Additionally, scholarship prior to the mid-1990s tends not to consider the relationship between Tintoretto and his cultural context. Traditionally, historians have contextualized Tintoretto in terms of the Venetian artistic tradition. They frequently categorized him as functioning outside the Venetian tradition and identify the artist's motifs as resulting from Tintoretto's desire to be Titian's antithesis. Scholars have also understood Tintoretto as the Mannerist combination of Michelangelo and Titian. See Hans Tietze, *Tintoretto: The Paintings and Drawings, 1518-1594* (New York: Phaidon, 1948); Charles de Tolnay, "Interpretazione dei cicli pittorici del Tintoretto nella Scuola di San Rocco," *Critica*

David Rosand is the first scholar to attempt to contextualize Tintoretto in his 1997 book concerning sixteenth-century Venetian painting, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice: Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto*.<sup>13</sup> He argues that Tintoretto's work appeals to "a basic popular level of Christian imagination." The general legibility of his painting and the "directness of his pictorial language" leads Rosand to suggest that "Tintoretto's own religious vision is neither mystical nor exclusively personal" and that the artist's "piety can be considered Counter Reformatory only in the most general way, if at all."<sup>14</sup> Rosand's conclusions about Tintoretto's piety are reached almost exclusively through formal means. There is little consideration of the artist's social network, the nature of the confraternity, or the Venetian atmosphere in the early to mid sixteenth century. While Rosand accurately exhorts the accessibility of Tintoretto's work, he discounts the provocational and physiognomic potentials of the painter's work specifically in the Sala dell'Albergo. The cycle may or may not represent Tintoretto's mystical vision of Christ's Passion, but Rosand's admittance of the participatory role of the audience in the interpretation of the cycle suggests that the paintings likely motivated mystical and evangelical responses in Tintoretto's viewers.<sup>15</sup> Contrary to Rosand's assertion, the

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*d'Arte* 7 (1960): 341-376; Rodolfo Pallucchini and Paola Rossi, *Tintoretto. Le Opera Sacre e Profane*, 2 vols (Milan: Electa, 1982); and Roland Krischel, *Jacopo Tintoretto, 1519-1594* (Köln: Könemann, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> David Rosand, *Painting in Sixteenth-Century Venice: Titian, Veronese, Tintoretto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 159. It is important to note that Rosand's interests lie in the attempt to understand the sixteenth-century Venetian painting tradition, as is clear in his title, rather than examining how Tintoretto's art might have functioned in the broader cultural framework.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 150. Rosand argues that the audience is intended to act as witness to the events of Christ's Passion. Yet in Rosand's text, the witness remains passive and critically unaware the significance and personal

Venetian painter's general de-emphasis of the visceral brutality of Christ's torture in favor of triumphant humility further connects the cycle to the late fifteenth-and sixteenth-century renovation of medieval mysticism, which suggests that beauty and realism are more closely associated with the spiritual as opposed to the material. Rosand's recognition of the physical process of painting as Tintoretto's "gesture of piety" also points to the functionality of visionary meditation and evangelism in Counter-Reformation Venice, as active piety combined with traditional ascetic contemplation to comprise sixteenth-century mystical practice.<sup>16</sup>

Tom Nichols' 1999 monograph on Tintoretto continues where Rosand's discussion concluded by reaffirming the artist's connection to his native city.<sup>17</sup> Yet while Rosand addresses the artist's association to the Venetian artistic tradition from a more stylistic context, Nichols' argument relied on stronger historical methodology. While Nichols arrives at a familiar result in his claim that Tintoretto was in fact a "maverick individualist," the art historian introduces relevant new avenues of exploration that include cultural influences. Nichols discusses the existence and importance of the artist's ties to Venice's artisan community and the contemporary *poligrafi*.<sup>18</sup> The term *poligrafi* literally means "publishers," but in the context of sixteenth-century Venice, the term

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importance of the cycle. For him the viewer responds more didactically than emotionally or psychologically.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 161. Rosand is the first author since Ridolfi to recognize that the act of painting functions as a gesture of piety on the part of the artist. However, Rosand prefers to read this gesture of orthodoxy rather than an act of religious exploration.

<sup>17</sup> Nichols begins his introduction with the phrase: "Jacopo Tintoretto was born and died in Venice." See Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 13.

<sup>18</sup> For Nichols' discussion of Tintoretto's relationship with the *poligrafi*, see *ibid.*, 69-100.

specifically refers to an innovative literary culture that catered to popular rather than classical taste and was frequently subversive. The few documented friends of Tintoretto all held ties to this group, a group whose ties to the Venetian publishers made them suspect in the eyes of the Venetian *papalisti* (those members of the patrician class that supported the papacy) and the Venetian and Roman Inquisitions.<sup>19</sup> However, Nichols neglects to reveal the close association that the Venetian *poligrafi* and artisan community, a group with which scholars claim that Tintoretto identified, had with the reformist and heretical activities in Venice, ensuring that Tintoretto would have, at the very least, been conscious of reformist and mystical doctrine.<sup>20</sup>

The claim of this thesis that there exists a significant and active dialogue between Tintoretto's four-painting Passion cycle in the Sala dell'Albergo and mystical and evangelical reform in sixteenth-century Venice will be supported in three ways: 1) through a close formal analysis of the Passion cycle (paying special attention to the *Crucifixion*) that reveal the qualities of the Sala dell'Albergo that stimulate visionary response; 2) through the examination of the culture surrounding Tintoretto and the Scuola Grande di San Rocco supportive of mystical theology and evangelical reform; and 3) through the consideration of the paintings' relationship to the mystical writings

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<sup>19</sup> As will be discussed later, the Roman and Venetian Inquisitions considered the Venetian publishers to be a primary target of attack for their publishing of potential heretical literature.

<sup>20</sup> Tintoretto's identification with the artisan community that inhabited the Canareggio region of Venice (where Tintoretto lived and worked) rather than the Venetian patrician class is largely anecdotal. Ridolfi stated, "with the encouragement of his wife who held the rank of citizen of Venice, he wore the Venetian toga. Thus it was that that lady used to watch him from the window when he went out in order to observe how well he looked in that dress. But he, instead, in order to annoy her, showed little regard for it." In his *Abecedario* of 1713, P-J Mariette extends this anecdote, suggesting that the artist threw the patrician toga in the mud. See Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 16.

(specifically Saint Ignatius of Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* [1522-24] and Don Benedetto and Marcantonio Flaminio's *Beneficio di Cristo* [1543]) that were popular and widely disseminated in mid sixteenth-century Venice.

## CHAPTER II

### RECOGNIZING THE VISIONARY IN TINTORETTO'S PASSION CYCLE

Tintoretto's representational strategies for depicting the four-painting Passion cycle (*Crucifixion*, *Christ before Pilate*, *Ecce Homo*, and *Christ Carrying the Cross*) provide the visual foundation for understanding the cycle in terms of mystical and evangelical practice and reform. The following section examines the compositions of each of the four paintings with specific consideration given to formal characteristics that could potentially stimulate mystical or dramatic responses from viewers. While examining these characteristics in isolation cannot confirm the cycle's relationship to mystical and evangelical activities in the sixteenth century, this chapter will lay the groundwork for the contextual approach in the following chapter.

#### *History of the Commission*

The Scuola Grande di San Rocco was dedicated to Roch, a fourteenth-century saint who left France in 1315 to offer his assistance to plague ravaged Italy. While Saint Roch's saintliness was more immediately recognized in France, and though he never worked in Venice, the saint was an ideal fit for the disease infested, water-locked city. The Council of Ten, the supreme legislative body in Venetian government, recognized the Scuola Grande di San Rocco in 1478, and the entire body of the saint was

“transported” to Venice from France in 1485.<sup>21</sup> The brotherhood of San Rocco held confraternity meetings in other churches and meeting houses until they commissioned Bartolomeo Bon to build them a large meeting house adjacent to the Church of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari. The economics of Venice after the War of the League of Cambrai and the brothers’ dissatisfaction with the architect’s designs delayed the construction of the building. The delay led to the hiring of Antonio Abbondi (called Scarpagnino) in place of Bon and Sante Lombardo, Bon’s ineffective successor. The ornate and ostentatious building was for all intents and purposes completed by Scarpagnino’s death in 1549 (fig. 7).<sup>22</sup>

The interior decoration of the Sala dell’Albergo was the first decorative priority for the confraternity after the construction of the building (fig. 8).<sup>23</sup> The room functioned as a refectory and hospitality room for the confraternity, and the brothers originally awarded Titian the commission.<sup>24</sup> Titian never fulfilled this commission, and in the

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<sup>21</sup> The body of the saint is said to have been surreptitiously transferred to Venice according to the traditions of *furta sacra* (sacred theft), in which the will of the saint determines the location of his body. For the seminal discussion on the translation of St. Mark and other sacred thefts, see Patrick J. Geary, *Furta Sacra: Thefts of Relics in the Central Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978).

<sup>22</sup> For a complete background to the foundation of the confraternity of San Rocco and the construction of the *scuola*, see Franco Tonon, *La Scuola Grande di San Rocco nel Cinquecento: Attraverso i Documenti della sua Mariogola* (Venice, Italy: Quaderni della Scuola Grande Arciconfraternita di San Rocco, 1999); and Franco Tonon, *Devotissima Scuola e Fraternità del Glorioso Missier San Rocco ‘Registro delle Parti’ 1488-1549* (Venice, Italy: Quaderni della Scuola Grande Arciconfraternita di San Rocco, 2003).

<sup>23</sup> While this thesis only directly addresses the Passion cycle in the Sala dell’Albergo, Tintoretto completed nineteen other smaller paintings in the Sala dell’Albergo. While these paintings do not significantly contribute to the discussion of stimulation of visionary response, paintings such *Saint Roch in Glory* and the *Allegory of the Scuola della Carità* (school of charity) are certainly complementary to this mystical reading as the saint rises to unite with God and, as will be discussed in chapter 2, mystical theology and charity are intimately connected.

<sup>24</sup> It should be noted that although “albergo” literally means “hotel” in modern Italian usage, in the sixteenth century it referred more broadly to a place of hospitality. It remains unclear as to how the



Spring of 1564, the confraternity summoned Giuseppe Salviati, Federico Zuccaro, Paolo Veronese, and Tintoretto to participate in a competition to decorate the Sala.<sup>25</sup> The confraternity asked each artist to offer a design of “Saint Roch in Glory” for the central ceiling panel (1564; fig. 9). While Veronese would have been the favorite given his rising reputation in the city and the involvement of his friend and mentor, Titian, with the supervising board of the Scuola Grande, Vasari claims that Tintoretto’s unusual business practices ensured him the commission:

But while the other artists were giving themselves with all diligence to the preparation of their designs, Tintoretto made an exact measurement of the space for which the picture was required, and taking a large canvas, he painted it without saying a word to any one and with his usual celerity, putting it instantly up in the place destined to receive it. One morning, therefore, when the Brotherhood had assembled to see the designs and to determine the matter, they found that Tintoretto had entirely completed the work, nay, that he had fixed it in its place; whereupon, becoming angry with him, and observing that they had required designs and had not commissioned him to do the work, Tintoretto replied that this was his method of preparing designs, that he did not know how to make them in any other manner; and that all designs and models for a work should be executed in that fashion, to the end that the persons interested might see what it was intended to offer them, and might not be deceived: he added, that if they did not think proper to pay for the work and remunerate him for his pains, he would make them a present of the same. At the last... the picture still retains its place.<sup>26</sup>

While the accuracy of Vasari’s anecdote is certainly questionable, the story adheres to conventional accounts of Tintoretto’s business practices. Nichols argues that

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*albergo* room in the Scuola Grande di San Rocco functioned in the sixteenth century specifically. While the confraternity brothers (women would have only been allowed into the confraternity on special occasions) would have undoubtedly eaten in this room, the room may have also had additional functions.

<sup>25</sup> For a brief discussion of Titian’s role in this project, see Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 153.

<sup>26</sup> Vasari’s consideration of Tintoretto’s work in the Scuola Grande also includes a description of the newly-finished building itself, although, as is typical, Vasari’s critique demonstrates his general disdain for Venetian painting and craftsmanship. See Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of Seventy of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, vol. 3, ed. and trans. E.H. Blashfield, E.W. Blashfield, and A.A. Hopkins (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1926), 392-393. Carlo Ridolfi also reveals a similar story in his narration of the commissioning process, and scholars have generally accepted this story as being relatively accurate. See Carlo Ridolfi, *Vita di Giacomo Robusti detto il Tintoretto*, translated by Catherine Engass and Robert Engass (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1984), 19-26.

Tintoretto may have had supporters within the Scuola Grande who notified him that the confraternity must accept any gifts offered to the saint, thus all but forcing the brothers to award him with the commission.<sup>27</sup> Tintoretto's selection was not without opposition. Zuan Maria Zignoni, a member of the selection board, stated that he would only offer financial support to the decoration of the sala if Tintoretto did not receive the commission. Yet, the Tintoretto supporters won out, and Girolamo Rota, *guardian grande*, commissioned the artist for the enormous *Crucifixion* to decorate the entire west wall of the Sala dell'Albergo in 1565. Tintoretto clearly regarded him as an ally because in the lower left corner of the painting, the artist dedicated the work to Rota: "Made by Jacopo Tintoretto in the Time of the Magnificent Girolamo Rota and Company."<sup>28</sup> Tintoretto's gamble had won over the majority of leading bodies in the confraternity, but Tintoretto's reputation and position as official painter in the Scuola Grande di San Rocco remained tenuous throughout the following decades despite his acceptance into the *scuola* as a brother in 1566 and the positive reception of the *Crucifixion*.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Scholars remain vague in their discussion of Tintoretto's relationship to members in the confraternity of San Rocco. While he had artistic supporters, it is unclear as to whether these members could be considered friends (as Nichols implies). Given that twenty-five percent of the confraternity membership is comprised of wool dyers from the Canareggio region where Tintoretto resided ("Tintoretto" literally meaning, the "little dyer"), it is likely that he could have had friendly and familiar allies involved with the project. For a more complete discussion of the commission and subsequent awarding of the project to Tintoretto, see Pallucchini and Rossi, 189-191 and Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 153-156.

<sup>28</sup> Translation by Nichols: *Tempore Magnifici / Domini Hieronimi / Rotae, et Collegarum / Iacobus Tintorectus Facebat*. See Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 156.

<sup>29</sup> Tintoretto applied for membership into the Scuola Grande di San Rocco in 1568, perhaps assuring the *scuola* that he would decorate the Sala Superiore and the ground floor of the building for minimal cost (to cover the cost of the materials; the labor was free). He received a yearly stipend from the confraternity, although this stipend was a fraction of the actual market value of his work.

### *The Compositional Layout of the Crucifixion*

The enormous and impressive scale is the most defining characteristic of the *Crucifixion* (5.36 by 12.24 meters). Tintoretto experiments with dramatic lighting, complicated composition, and the posing of figures on an extended horizontal canvas. The painting completely fills the central register of the western wall of the Sala dell'Albergo, thereby heightening the tension between real and fictive space and suggesting that the viewer participates in the narrative action.

The composition's angular components, which frequently appear in the works of Tintoretto, complicate the relationship between real and fictive space further. The artist raised the landscape in both the upper left and right of the painting in order to create a v-shaped triangle. The triangle's apex is the base of Christ's cross on the stage-like plateau and effectively confronts the viewer in real space. A downturned V-shape formed through clever figural composition only moderately eases this tension. Tintoretto forms this secondary triangle through various figures in red, a compositional tool that the artist likely borrowed from Titian's famous *Assunta* (1518; fig. 10) located in the neighboring Frari church. The torqued executioner pulling up the good thief in the lower left represents one corner. The rope he is pulling guides the eye of the viewer up to the equestrian onlooker in red who tilts his torso in the direction of Christ's head. Likewise, to the right of Christ another equestrian figure adopts the reverse pose and directs the viewer through the digging figure to the seated onlooker in the lower right. The reflective triangles reaffirm the central subjects of the narrative by guiding the viewer to Christ on the cross and the group of mourning figures at the cross' base.

The circular composition of the crowd of onlookers partially obscures this angularity and implicates the viewer in the scene. Tintoretto abandoned the classical frieze-like placement of the onlookers that had defined the High Renaissance approach to composing the Crucifixion, including those of both Bellini (1465; fig. 11) and Andrea Mantegna (1457-59; fig. 12). This departure from artistic tradition infused the painting with an organic naturalism that draws the viewers into the work. The witnesses form a flattened arc around Christ, only interrupted by the picture plane. This interruption implies that the completion of the circle occurs in real space. In that sense, the inhabitants of the Sala dell'Albergo become active participants in the compositional formation of the scene. The artist blurred the distinction between fictive onlookers and the viewers. The witnesses, who are presumably focused on the execution, utterly disregard the viewers, suggesting their participatory presence is not unusual. That said, the circle of figures around Christ only further complicates the turbulent composition, as the disharmonic relationship between the circular and the angular heighten the drama and intensity of the scene.

Tintoretto ingeniously established the iconic image of Christ on the cross as the compositional exception. The Christ figure provides the painting's only vertical and horizontal stability. The central location of the long shaft of Christ's cross not only divides the composition, but also steadies the viewer's focus on the image. Similarly, the slightly elongated arms of Christ echo the upper horizontal edge of the picture plane, reaffirming the inherent rectilinear format of the work. By using Christ as the compositional exception, the artist effectively isolated the figure from its setting.

*Perspectival and Temporal Manipulation in the Crucifixion*

The artist carefully manipulated depth and traditional perspective to create the effect of Christ protruding into the viewer's space. Spatial manipulation is not unusual in Renaissance art. Masaccio employed a similar technique in his *Holy Trinity* (1428; fig. 13), projecting God the Father forward in space, and Mantegna pushed the feet of Christ forward in his *Dead Christ* (1501; fig. 14).<sup>30</sup> Tintoretto employed this technique for a more visual than symbolic effect. The base of Christ's cross appears to lie further back in space than the actual figure of Christ (fig. 15). While at its base the cross is behind the throng of mourners, Christ appears to hover over the crowd. The scale and proportion of Christ does not correspond to his accurate spatial position. If his body were taut and upright, he would be significantly larger than any foreground figure. Although his hands may exhibit the nails, his torso is leaning so far forward as to suggest that the figure is separated from the wooden crossbeam.

This spatial manipulation forms a relationship between the iconic figure of the crucified Christ and the viewer. This relationship, in the midst of all else, makes the scene both chaotic and tranquil, both foreign and intimate. Without physically or visually addressing the viewer, Christ is the only figure to actually address the world beyond the picture plane. Tintoretto likely recognized the intimate, mystical power contained in the image of the crucified Christ. He would have agreed with his influential predecessor,

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<sup>30</sup> Masaccio's God the Father is not projected into the viewer's space. In Masaccio's work, God's feet stand on a platform deep within the fictive chapel, while his torso and arms extend forward to hold the arms of the crucifix that is located much closer to the picture plane.

Michelangelo, who wrote that “no brush or chisel will quiet the soul, once it is turned to the divine love of Him who, upon the Cross, outstretched His arms to take us to Himself.”<sup>31</sup>

Tintoretto’s allusion to three different stages of Christ’s crucifixion complicates the relationship between the iconic figure of Christ and the viewer. The artist chose to represent the two thieves still in the process of being crucified in order to reinforce the stages of Christ’s own crucifixion process. This presentation designates a significant shift in the traditional Italian Renaissance representation of the two thieves in Crucifixion images, although northern Renaissance printmakers had frequently depicted Christ in the process of crucifixion.<sup>32</sup> Typically, as is the case in Tintoretto’s later *Crucifixion* for the Church of San Cassiano (1568; fig. 16), the thieves are depicted already upright, one to each side of Christ. The representation of the thieves at different stages of the crucifixion process produces several results. The most immediate result of this subrogation is to remind viewers of Christ’s own process. While this might reinforce the Crucifixion as an actual historical event, more importantly, it asks viewers to envision Christ being crucified before them, thereby suggesting that the vision of the Crucifixion is unfolding

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<sup>31</sup> This excerpt, from a letter of Michelangelo, was extracted from Anthony Blunt, *Artistic Theory in Italy, 1450-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962), 80.

<sup>32</sup> Northern examples of Christ in the process of being crucified include Albrecht Dürer’s woodcut *Nailing Christ to the Cross* (1509-1511) as part of his *Small Passion* series and Hans Baldung Grien’s *The Erection of the Cross* (1507) from his series, *Speculum passionis domini nostril ihesu christi*. Images of these prints are available in Giorgio Zampa, *L’opera completa di Dürer* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1968). Northern Renaissance prints were ubiquitous in Venice during the sixteenth century, and it is rumored that Tintoretto may have carried special ties to the German community in Venice. See Robert Echols, “The Decisive Years: 1547-1555” in *Tintoretto*, ed. Miguel Falomir (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2007), 150-157. For a more in-depth discussion of Tintoretto’s relationship to northern prints of the early sixteenth-century see Krischel, *Jacopo Tintoretto*, 108-111.

in the sixteenth-century confines of the Sala dell'Albergo. In this sense, Christ is both an historical figure and an iconic figure that exists as much in the contemporary environment of the Sala dell'Albergo as he does in the painted representation of the hill of Golgotha.

The various figures in the crowd of witnesses suggest that Tintoretto wanted to separate this painting from historical reality further. The inclusion of an impressive crowd of onlookers, several of whom are dressed in contemporary Venetian garb, was not unusual for sixteenth-century Venetian representations of the Crucifixion. Yet the scene is no longer restricted to the pious, Christian viewer or the persecuting Roman soldier, but also turbaned easterners entering on oversized camels in front of an obelisk in the upper left and visitors apparently from the Far East approaching the scene in the upper right (fig. 17). The inclusion of an obelisk in a depiction of the crucifixion of Saint Peter is more standard, given that during the Renaissance it was believed that the Vatican obelisk marked the spot of his crucifixion in Rome. It has no immediate precedent in depictions of Christ's crucifixion, and perhaps points to the foreign nature of the setting. In apocalyptic thinking that was present throughout the period, and will be discussed at greater detail later in this essay, this Christ towering over this obelisk may also refer to the ultimate triumph of Christianity over paganism. The fantastic vision of the Crucifixion might also point to a temporally ambiguous interpretation of the event, as the bystanders' costumes are not appropriate for the historical moment and location. Tintoretto appears to have been more interested in representing the dramatic and universal potentials of the event rather than the event itself.

*The Mystical Effect of Brushwork and Light in the Crucifixion*

Tintoretto's characteristic loose and expressionistic brushwork in the *Crucifixion* reinforces the temporally ambiguous nature of the scene by creating a dynamic scene that seems to unfold before the viewer. This style of brushwork and its effects are evident in the musculature and drapery of the foreground figures. Additionally, the foreign-dressed figures that enter the scene in the upper right and upper left are composed loosely and highlighted by white accents. Tintoretto most notably applied this technique shortly before painting the *Crucifixion* in his *Removal of the Body of Saint Mark* (c. 1563; fig. 18) for the Scuola Grande di San Marco. While this pictorial technique undoubtedly implies distance (as it does in the *Crucifixion*), it might also function as religious commentary. While the artist clearly represented the primary foreground figures, the citizens of Alexandria dissolve into the tempestuous background in this earlier work. Nichols argues that this physical and spatial dissolution of the setting of the *Removal of the Body of Saint Mark* reflects the "moral disintegration" of the Alexandrians.<sup>33</sup> If one applies this argument to his subsequent *Crucifixion* painting, the relative impermanence and ghostly nature of these alien figures, in stark contrast to the firm forms of the figures visually focusing on Christ's crucifixion, suggests that they are morally and spiritually

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<sup>33</sup> Nichols' discussion of Tintoretto's characteristic technique confines itself to the works the painter completed for the Scuola di San Marco shortly prior to his work for the confraternity of San Rocco. Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 142.



inept.<sup>34</sup> While the standard argument that this technique signifies depth is certainly valid and in play, Tintoretto's decision to include these distant background figures who ignore the Crucifixion seems to suggest that although the promise of redemption of lies in front of them, these figures do not actually partake in the witnessing of Christ's crucifixion and remain ignorant bystanders to this act of ultimate charity. Therefore, this painting not only behaves as a conduit for pious worship, but also implicitly condemns those who do not participate in visionary and contemplative meditation on Christ's sacrifice.

The intense chiaroscuro heightens the drama, most notably in the presentation of the executioner and the upturned faces of John the Evangelist and Mary Magdalene, and draws attention to the active and frequently contorted poses of the human body, enhancing the viewer's visceral response to the event. Tintoretto adhered to the architecture of the Sala dell'Albergo and identified the northern windows (the side bordering the Frari church and the Church of San Rocco) as his source of light. Christ is the sole figure that partly escapes the restrictions of this system. While his left side is fully illuminated according to this system and in a manner that is similar to that used in his *Crucifixion* in the Scuola del Sacramento, the aureole surrounding Christ extends beyond the traditional halo format to backlight the figure. This lighting has the spatial effect of further projecting the figure beyond the picture plane. Tintoretto's decision to obscure Christ's face in shadow not only isolates the figure from its dramatic setting, but also helps to forge a quiet relationship between the viewer and the icon. This Christ does

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<sup>34</sup> Tintoretto used this technique later in his *Baptism of Christ* (1578-81) in the Sala Superiore of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, in which a line of ghostly figures seems to wait to be baptized by John. The modality suggests that they are, in essence, morally inept until they undergo this spiritually cleansing process.

not exhibit the pain of being crucified, nor does he remain lifeless on the cross. Instead, the figure functions as a dynamic Eucharistic offering that intimately and unwaveringly confronts the viewer, thereby provoking visionary, meditative response.

### “Absorption”

Though Michael Fried develops the theoretical category of “absorption” for another period, one could argue that something parallel is operative in the *Crucifixion*.<sup>35</sup> Fried defines absorption with regard to painting as the effect of engaging the viewer in the narrative by virtue of stylistic and compositional elements without visually referring to the viewer.<sup>36</sup> The boundaries between real and fictive space, observation and participation, and intellect and emotion are ambiguous, as either the viewer joins the historical world of the Crucifixion or Christ enters ours. As Brian Robb noted, Tintoretto was meticulous in the study of his paintings’ surroundings, and he was surely aware that the relatively small size of the Sala dell’Albergo possessed tremendous potential for a dramatic, sweeping Crucifixion scene.<sup>37</sup> In this sense, the *Crucifixion* functions more

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<sup>35</sup> Michael Fried’s discussion of Diderot’s approach to high art primarily focuses on those paintings and artists that Diderot himself examined; Tintoretto was thus not directly referenced. See Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and the Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1980), 107-160.

<sup>36</sup> Frequently in Italian Renaissance art, artists engage the viewer by including a figure that looks out to the audience or by formulating a scene in which the setting essentially “stages” a performance of a scene. Fried would categorize these approaches as being overtly theatrical, or antithetical to absorption. Tintoretto’s *Crucifixion* is an example of absorptive painting, while the *Ecce Homo* is somewhat more theatrical, given the manner in which the figures present Christ to the viewing audience within the real space of the Sala dell’Albergo.

<sup>37</sup> See Brian Robb, *Brian Robb on Tintoretto’s San Rocco “Crucifixion”* (London: Cassell, 1969), 19.

similarly to a Tuscan *Cenacolo* or Renaissance tapestry.<sup>38</sup> Given Tintoretto's origins as the son of a Venetian dyer, he was likely familiar with the encompassing nature of such large-scale fabrics. The monumental canvas literally becomes the western wall of the meal room, and the narrowness of the space forces the viewers to address the work at close proximity. The overwhelming presence of the work even assails the inhabitants of the sala when they are not directly facing the painting; viewers have no choice but to become absorbed into the painting as long as they are present in the room.

The concept of absorption was not foreign to art theory of the later Renaissance, as fifteenth-century Dominican Fra Michele da Carcano stated that "images were introduced on account of our emotional sluggishness; so that men who are not aroused to devotion when they hear about the histories of the Saints may at least be moved when they see them, as if actually present in the pictures."<sup>39</sup> The friar's comment suggests that there existed a close relationship between artists as "professional visualizers" and their audiences.<sup>40</sup> The painter must present the subject matter in a visually logical way, and more importantly, the artist's vision should not contradict the individual beholder's created mental picture of the scene and its figures. The Council of Trent met for its

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<sup>38</sup> *Cenacolo* describes an Italian refectory decorated with the Last Supper scene in which the entire frescoed image covers the wall (although usually the painting is on the short wall). Examples of this include Leonardo's *Last Supper* for Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan and Andrea del Castagno's *Last Supper* for the Church of Sant'Apollonia in Florence. Also, I do not wish to assume that frescoed paintings and tapestries function identically. While frescoes and tapestries obviously differ in many regards (portability, material richness, etc.), they frequently share the wall-sized scale.

<sup>39</sup> Fra Michele da Carcano offered these thoughts in the fourteenth century, but they remain especially applicable in the Tridentine era of Italy. See Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention: on the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), 41-42.

<sup>40</sup> One result of the Tridentine Counter Reformation was the reaffirmation of the religious artist as an artisan working as much in theological terms as creative terms. *Ibid.*, 45-47.

twenty-fifth and final session in 1563 and argued that religious imagery should inspire the pious worshipper to devotion.<sup>41</sup> Tintoretto was likely working in response to the Tridentine doctrinal framework when he approached his *Crucifixion*. His Christ is relatively idealized, non-descript, and generic, thereby allowing the viewer's reconstructive and interpretative nature the freedom to mold the figure into his chosen image of Christ.

*The Compositional Relationship between the Eastern Wall and the Crucifixion*

The three paintings on the opposing wall of the Sala dell'Albergo (*Christ before Pilate*, *Ecce Homo*, and *Christ Carrying the Cross*) complement and contribute to the dramatic and visionary qualities of the *Crucifixion* (see fig. 19). Tintoretto completed these paintings in 1566-67 and intended for them to prepare the viewer for the climax of the *Crucifixion*. There is significant dialogue between the artist's depictions of the events leading up to the Crucifixion and the culmination of Christ's sacrifice.

The physical organization of the three paintings on the eastern wall of the sala reflects the fresco-like spatial quality of the *Crucifixion*. Only small frames prevent the wall from being viewed as a single unit containing three distinct scenes (figural scale is comparable in each painting). The result of this placement is a strong narrative fluidity, albeit in a reverse direction, and it enables the subsidiary paintings to function as a relatively cohesive unit in response to the *Crucifixion*. Furthermore, if one were to view

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<sup>41</sup> The Council of Trent also argued that religious works of art should represent the chosen subject more clearly (at odds with the contemporary Mannerist tendencies) and reflect official church doctrine. See *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, ed. and trans. H.J. Schroeder (St. Louis: B. Herder, 1941), 214-278.

the scenes as a single unit, the compositional qualities of the trio also mirror those of the *Crucifixion*. The beaten Christ of the *Ecce Homo* provides the apex of the triangle that is continued through the flanking figures in the same image and down through the two thieves en route to Calvary and the Christ and scribe adorned in white in the presence of Pilate. This triangle mirrors the triangle of figures in red with Christ at the apex in the *Crucifixion* as well as echoes the pediment above the room's entrance.<sup>42</sup> The secondary inverted triangle of the *Crucifixion*, whose apex encroaches on the viewer's space, is also reflected in the two images flanking the entrance of the room. Christ's uphill (or upstairs) climb in both *Christ Carrying the Cross* and *Christ before Pilate* creates an inverted triangle, the apex of which is the viewer entering the room, enhancing the cycle's absorptive effect. In each case, Christ bows his head in humble awareness of his fate and faces outward in order to redirect viewers to the *Crucifixion*.

### *Mechanical Iconography*

While the iconography of each painting, for the most part, is specific to the Passion scene depicted, Tintoretto's unusual inclusion of elements that specifically and explicitly refer to the mechanical process of binding, pulling, and raising Christ to the

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<sup>42</sup> Given the frequency that Tintoretto employs the color red throughout the cycle, the symbolic connotations that the color carried in Renaissance Venice should be considered. Red maintains its most immediate connections to Eucharistic sacrifice and offerings, while simultaneously reaffirming the physicality of the Passion narrative- Christ is bound, beaten, and driven to his death. The blood-stained marks on the columns in *Christ before Pilate* foreshadow those found on the robe in the *Ecce Homo* and allude to the intermediate event when the Romans tied Christ to a pole to be beaten, but they also reinforce the concept of sacrifice through his trial and execution. In the *Ecce Homo*, Tintoretto presented this same garment stained with blood as if to simultaneously indict the viewer and offer salvation. Certainly, the blood-stained robe heightens the confrontational nature of the cycle and immediately portends the fate of the Christ opposite.

cross might refer to the *scuola* and its constituency. Nichols' argument that the motif of the rope, most prominent in *Christ Carrying the Cross*, could refer to the flagellant functions of the *scuola* is attractive, and it is likely that the motif also refers to the physical process of Christ's crucifixion, an argument strengthened by Tintoretto's inclusions of hammers, nails, ladders, and other artisan's tools in his depictions of Christ on his way to Calvary and his crucifixion.<sup>43</sup> The connection between the spiritual and mechanical processes of the crucifixion would have carried strong meaning for a confraternity whose membership largely consisted of upper middle-class artisans. This association would have intensified the narrative action, and the mechanical motif would have emphasized the physicality of the process, thereby heightening the cycle's sensorial engagement of viewers. The ascending Christ is portrayed neither in agony, nor in triumph. This Christ suffers the physical torment of his execution with quiet dignity that suggests that he already accepted his fate. The shared position of those who help him bear this burden accentuates the charitable aspects of Christ and calls the viewer to emulate the behavior.

### *Christ before Pilate*

Despite postdating the creation of the *Crucifixion*, Tintoretto's *Christ before Pilate* represents the opening biblical event in this Passion cycle. It is unknown the extent to which Tintoretto was involved in the selection of the three supporting Passion

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<sup>43</sup> Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 172. The association between the Scuola Grande di San Rocco and penitent practices during the sixteenth century will be discussed in further detail later.

scenes; yet, by choosing the trial of Christ as the first scene depicted (as opposed to the entrance into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, or the Betrayal of Judas), this Passion cycle emphatically foreshadows the story's fatal conclusion, as the destiny of Christ is already clear when Pilate washes his hands. From a judicial perspective, this scene represents the first clear step toward Christ's sacrifice.

Tintoretto's depiction of the protagonist in *Christ before Pilate* suggests that the fate of Christ is already sealed. Nichols has compared the elongated and profile view of Christ to Albrecht Dürer's woodcut of *Christ before Herod* (1507; fig. 20).<sup>44</sup> While Dürer is a likely source, the ethereal and illuminated figure shares much in common with Byzantine mosaics of Christ in which the reflective quality of the tesserae comprising Christ's garment creates a figure bathed in 'holy' light (see fig. 21). Tintoretto clearly drew upon the abundant Byzantine sources in Venice at this point in his career, as is evident in his portrayal of Madonna with the Christ child in her breastplate directly above the *Crucifixion* (fig. 22). This motif is a descendent of the *Virgin Blachernitissa* image that developed in Byzantium several centuries earlier. To a certain degree, this Byzantine ethereality disconnects Christ from his historical context. Tintoretto further enhanced this effect through the relationship between the painted setting and the physical constructions of the Sala dell'Albergo. Although the pictorial recession does not precisely correspond to the recession of the southern wall of the sala, the oblique angle from which the viewer approaches the scene creates the illusion that the wall extends into

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<sup>44</sup> Both Nichols and Krischel discuss Tintoretto's compositional interest in German woodcuts, but Nichols is the only scholar to identify the Dürer woodcut as a direct source. *Ibid.*, 172; and Krischel, *Jacopo Tintoretto*, 108-111.

the panting. Furthermore, the painted capitals neatly replicate the columns that frame the windows on the northern and southern walls of the sala. The Sala dell'Albergo itself becomes the setting for the event and the contemporary viewers become absorbed witnesses.

### *Ecce Homo*

The setting of the *Ecce Homo* also harmonizes with the physical space of the room. Not only does the triangular composition of the three primary figures repeat the shape of the pediment directly beneath, but also the two figures flanking Christ appear to be descending the staircase into real space. Tintoretto presented Christ as a symbolic offering to the viewer. The luminescence of the figure corresponds to the ethereality that the painter previously established in both the *Crucifixion* and *Christ before Pilate*. Yet, simultaneously, Pilate descends the staircase toward real space and gestures toward the picture plane. The actions of Pilate reaffirm the narrative basis for the scene and suggest that the visitors of the Sala dell'Albergo are among those that comprise the mass of witnesses. This enables the painting to become more confrontational as Tintoretto demanded that the viewers share in the burden of responsibility for this sacrifice.

### *Christ Carrying the Cross*

The final painting of the Passion cycle, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, is perhaps the most compositionally intriguing of the three subsidiary scenes. Tintoretto opted for the more narrative representation of the scene as opposed to the more iconic depictions that



had become more popular in the sixteenth century, an example of which is the Giorgione version also owned by the Scuola Grande di San Rocco (fig. 23). Peculiarly, Tintoretto decided to decentralize the Christ figure in this painting in favor of the two thieves who struggle up the hill in the foreground. This technique is strongly characteristic of his religious painting and is first explored in *Christ among the Doctors* (1542; fig. 24). The shift of attention to the two thieves signifies the artist's desire to highlight the charitable aspects of those men, in contemporary dress, who are providing assistance. This representation directly references the charitable achievements of the confraternity during a period in which the *scuole* were frequently criticized for reckless spending.

The painting's atypical spatial construction only enhances the immediacy of the scene for the viewer. Tintoretto composed the scene based on two strong diagonals that either continue or neatly complement the pediment above the entrance (in fact, the diagonals meet at the lower left corner of the pediment). This construction not only established a fluid composition and allowed for the opportunity to explore dramatic potentials of light and dark contrasts, but also blurred the distinctions between real and fictive space. The artist manipulates physical realism of the hill as the two thieves ascend and walk further from the picture plane while Christ unfeasibly encroaches on real space. In this sense, Christ is literally walking to his own crucifixion on the opposite wall, reminding viewers of the powerful image that hovers over their shoulders.

*No Last Supper?*

The absence of a Last Supper image in the refectory is unusual. While Tintoretto did position a depiction of the Last Supper near the main altar in the Sala Superiore nearly a decade later, the convergence of the Passion theme with the alimentary function of the Sala dell'Albergo and Tintoretto's fondness for depicting the event would argue for the inclusion of the Last Supper.<sup>45</sup> There are two plausible reasons the confraternity of San Rocco may have chosen not to include the Last Supper. Firstly, the offertory nature of the Christ figure in the *Ecce Homo* suggests that eucharistic undertones might be implicitly present. In addition, the donkey eating palm leaves immediately to the left of Christ on the cross not only refers to Christ's entrance into Jerusalem signaling the beginning of the Passion, but also metaphorically reaffirms the analogous relationship between the sacrifice and spiritual sustenance, as the sacrifice of Christ's body provides nourishment for the pious soul. Secondly, Eucharistic undertones would have imbued mystical significance into the otherwise mundane purpose of the room. Implicitly and mysteriously, each meal in the Sala dell'Albergo functioned as a mystical reenactment of the Last Supper. It is reasonable to believe that given the symbolic capabilities of both the decoration and activities of the Sala dell'Albergo, the confraternity felt that the inclusion of the Last Supper would have been redundant.

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<sup>45</sup> It is possible, but very unlikely, that the Scuola Grande di San Rocco had always planned for the Last Supper to decorate the Sala Superiore as opposed to the Sala dell'Albergo. The *Last Supper* was painted a decade and a half after Tintoretto secured the commission for the Passion cycle in the Sala dell'Albergo. Yet, even if the confraternity had indeed originally planned for the *Last Supper* in the Sala Superiore, it still begs the question as to why choose this room rather than the traditional refectory?

The close relationship between the three subsidiary paintings to the *Crucifixion* and the implied reenactment of the Last Supper reinforce the cycle's specific emphasis on the participatory role of the viewer. Tintoretto asks the viewer to envision the scenes as if unfolding before them in the Sala dell'Albergo. As the next chapter illustrates, this cycle's focus on the dramatic and visionary potentials of the Passion narrative echoes the mystical practices and doctrines of the evangelical reformers in the contemporary period.

CHAPTER III  
MYSTICAL AND EVANGELICAL THEOLOGY SURROUNDING TINTORETTO  
AND THE SALA DELL'ALBERGO

While the previous chapter visually examined Tintoretto's Passion cycle in the Sala dell'Albergo, this chapter investigates a mystically and evangelically-charged cultural milieu surrounding the cycle's construction and reception. The first part of this chapter defines and describes the specific mystical and evangelical currents in sixteenth-century Venice. The latter sections of this chapter consider both Tintoretto's place within this reformist context with respect to the artist's personal relationships and the cycle's relationship to the contemporary evangelical and mystical doctrine, with the paintings' relationship to the heretical *Beneficio di Cristo* (1543), written by the followers of Juan de Valdés, forming the strongest link.<sup>46</sup> It is my intent to provide compelling connections that prove that Tintoretto's cycle participates in the contemporary dialogue of social and religious reformation.

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<sup>46</sup> It should be noted that although this thesis only considers the cultural context surrounding Tintoretto, the same examination could be done surrounding the confraternity of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco; the sheer magnitude of information and participants in the confraternity during the sixteenth century made such an in-depth study too extensive for my current project.

*Understanding Mystical Practice and Theology*

Before specifically addressing the religious context of sixteenth-century Venice, it is necessary to establish an applicable framework for understanding the term “mysticism.” In common usage, “mysticism” has functioned as an umbrella term for Christian studies and practices that deviate from officially sanctioned activities in their focus on establishing direct and personal relationships between the practitioner and the divine. While scholars generally accept this definition, it is not particularly informative because its broadness does not directly address the actual application of mystical thinking. As in Bernard McGinn emphasizes in his introduction to his extensive four-part series on the foundation and development of Western Christian mysticism, the term “mysticism” defines both mystical behaviors and mystical theology.<sup>47</sup> While one is able to define easily mystical practice as the participation in a divine vision or joining in union with God, the definition of mystical theology is far more slippery. McGinn appropriately argues that mystical theology extends beyond the traditional definition as that which addresses or interprets mystical experience. Saint Teresa of Ávila (1515-1582) would have agreed by noting that, while reading, “I used unexpectedly to experience a consciousness of the presence of God of such a kind that I could not possibly doubt that he was within me or that I was wholly engulfed in him. This was in no sense a vision: I

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<sup>47</sup> McGinn emphasizes the differences between mystical practice and mystical theology in part to establish the basis for the development of later mystical behaviors. He argues that the roots of mysticism were inherent to Greco-Roman philosophy and culture at the turn of the century. See Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism* (New York: Crossroad, 1994), xiii-xvi.

believe that is called mystical theology.”<sup>48</sup> Teresa’s emphasis on the “consciousness of the presence of God” as the basis for mysticism and mystical theology completely alters the historical understanding of the ways in which mysticism functioned in the larger, lay cultural setting. Mystical theology stretches beyond experiences of rapture and union and inevitably permeates any discussion of divine involvement with the individual.

The controversy surrounding the scholarly labeling of certain Christian figures as “mystic” obscures the actual implications of such thinking and activities. McGinn carefully reminds his readers that these labeled “mystics” did not practice mysticism in as much as they practiced Christianity, a religion consisting of mystical elements.<sup>49</sup> The historiographical tendency to identify (absolutely) Christian theologians and saints as mystics (or non-mystics) negates the impact of mystical theology on the religious climate of society at large. Despite emphasizing the individual’s personal relationship with God, mystical movements largely function as reoccurring and adaptive cultural phenomena. The defining conditions of mysticism are innately connected to the culture and time period in which they are present.

The growing dissatisfaction among religious reformers with the behaviors of the papacy in sixteenth-century Europe facilitated the development of a social and religious

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<sup>48</sup> Teresa of Ávila, *The Life of Teresa of Jesus: The Autobiography of Teresa of Ávila*, trans. and ed. E. Allison Peers (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Image, 1960), 119. While Teresa may have used the term “theology” in its most literal sense (“knowledge of God”), by virtue of providing a response to her mystical experience, she engaged in the broader theological realm of mystical theology. In other words, the moment one analyzes mystical experience is the moment that one contributes to mystical theology.

<sup>49</sup> McGinn adheres to the scholarly tradition in his identification of Christianity as a mystic religion. This exegetical approach to mysticism would come to characterize “true” mystical practice of the sixteenth century. The separation between heretical pretention of holiness and authorized mystical experience was in part dependent on the defendant’s ability to return to biblical texts. See McGinn, *Foundations*, xiv.

culture hospitable to mystical theology. While the role of Christ as mediator was always controversial in discussions of mystical Christianity, the emphasis of mystical practice on the purification of the interior of the individual, at its most basic level, certainly threatened to bypass the role of the Church and its rituals in the quest for salvation.<sup>50</sup> The development of mystical theology and practice in late Renaissance Italy correlates to the renewed emphasis Italian reformers placed on pious behavior and purity of the individual in hopes of stimulating change on a societal level.

At first glance, the development of sixteenth-century mysticism in Italy resembled the various forms of mysticism propagated in the previous few centuries. The renewed concentration of Franciscan piety among the religious fused with a resurgent rise in Neoplatonic thought in the fifteenth century.<sup>51</sup> The new wave of religious fervor emphasized the meditation on and the imitation of Christ. The medieval religious stress on humility, piety, and the contemplation of Christ's life resonated with late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century theologians concerned with the humanist curiosities that defined the previous century. The major Florentine predecessor to the later Venetian reformers, Fra

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<sup>50</sup> The traditional religious chain-of-command stressed the role of the Church as the intermediary between the individual worshipper and the divine. The increasing advocacy for the ability of the individual to approach Christ directly diminished Church authority on behavioral governance. For a more complete discussion of orthodox theologies during the Reformation, see Michael A. Mullett, *The Catholic Reformation* (London: Routledge, 1999), 29-68 and 111-142.

<sup>51</sup> Scholars have in part attributed the cultural and popular renewal of Neoplatonism in the fifteenth-century to the contact between Cosimo d'Medici and Neoplatonic philosopher George Gemistos Plethon during the meetings of the Council of Ferrara-Florence, a council called to heal the schism in the Church, in 1438-45. For the relationship between the Medici and Neoplatonism, see James Hankins' discussion of Neoplatonism and its cultural functionality in Florence. James Hankins, *Plato in the Italian Renaissance* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1990), 27-102. For an in-depth perspective on the fifteenth-century Florentine, Marsilio Ficino and his dissemination of the Neoplatonist philosophy throughout Europe, see *ibid.*, 265-359.

Girolamo Savonarola, reestablished the focus of Christian piety on the individual and thereby set the tone for certain aspects of the following century. In his criticism of the papal and Medici administrations, he encouraged the pious worshipper to return to the Bible, and “you who cannot read, go to his paintings and contemplate the life of Christ.”<sup>52</sup> Savonarola’s recognition of the didactic function of religious paintings not only alludes to the friar’s inclusion of the arts in his attack on late fifteenth-century immoral behavior, but it also establishes the visual arts as an important critical medium in the reformist actions of the early-to-mid 1500s.<sup>53</sup> Michelangelo, who was introduced to Savonarola’s theories as a young artist in Florence, became more receptive to the friar’s emphasis on individual piety in his later years. The Florentine artist noted in 1554 that to be a good religious painter one must lead a pious life and that he felt that “(he) had let the vanities of the world rob (him) of the time (he) had for the contemplation of God.”<sup>54</sup> In his old age, Michelangelo believed that true beauty extended beyond nature and into the realm of imagination. Contemplation of the divine motivated his later works that scholars have traditionally recognized as being more mystically and spiritually infused.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Savonarola’s quote was extracted from Blunt, *Artistic Theory*, 46.

<sup>53</sup> While indelibly impacting the art of the following century, Savonarola remains a controversial figure for art historians. His attack on representations in humanist Florence instigated several burnings of notable literary works and paintings, including several works by Sandro Botticelli. For a more complete reading of Savonarola’s influence on Michelangelo, see Ronald Steinberg, *Fra Girolamo Savonarola, Florentine Art, and Renaissance Historiography* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1977), 39-42. For the friar’s relationship to Botticelli, see *ibid.*, 69-81.

<sup>54</sup> Michelangelo’s quote was taken from Blunt, *Artistic Theory*, 77. For a closer examination of Michelangelo’s relationship with Fra Girolamo Savonarola, see Edgar Wind, *The Religious Symbolism of Michelangelo: The Sistine Ceiling*, ed. Elizabeth Sears (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1-33.

<sup>55</sup> Scholars have cemented Michelangelo’s *Last Judgment* in the Sistine Chapel as the representative work for the spiritual transformation of the artist’s style. See Bernadine Barnes, “Metaphorical Painting:



Ironically, several sixteenth-century mystical and evangelical movements fused Savonarola's propagation of contemplative piety with the Neoplatonic beliefs of those Florentines whom he was attacking. The Medici-supported Neoplatonic academy in Florence, not a mystical group in itself, examined and applied Plato's theories about divine knowledge. While the group's pursuit of supreme knowledge, and therefore knowledge of a perfect and ethereal reality (a pre-Christian *gnōsis*, or knowledge of God), tended to be more classically than Christian oriented, the academy's emphasis on contemplation and the mystical theory of God as illuminative light were key characteristics that defined mystical and evangelical theology and practice of the sixteenth century.<sup>56</sup>

The writings of Saint Augustine supplied the more Christian directed application of Neoplatonism for later theologians and reformers. Augustine's mystical theology and his response to fourth-century Neoplatonism manifested itself in three forms: his description of ecstatic experience with God through contemplative or meditative ascension, his explanation of the relationship between the human person and the image of God as the Trinity, and the importance of Christ and the Christian Church in attaining *gnōsis*.<sup>57</sup> Augustine incorporated Neoplatonic theory in his first description of ecstatic

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Michelangelo, Dante, and the Last Judgment," *Art Bulletin* 77 (1995): 65-81; Marcia Hall, *Color and Meaning: Practice and Theory in Renaissance Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 95-112; Valerie Shrimplin, *Sun Symbolism and Cosmology in Michelangelo's 'Last Judgment'* (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2000); and Alexander Nagel, "Gifts for Michelangelo and Vittoria Colonna," *Art Bulletin* 79 (1997): 647-668.

<sup>56</sup> For more information on the Neoplatonic Academy in Florence under the patronage of the Medici, see Hankins' discussion of Marsilio Ficino and his interaction with the Medici. Hankins, *Plato*, 265-359.

<sup>57</sup> When referring to the image of God, Augustine is not directly referring to pictures of God, but rather the abstract "image" of God. See McGinn, *Foundations*, 231.

experience as being introduced to God in the form of light. The theologian noted that ecstasy and divine light are interrelated, while emphasizing that the worshippers' response to visionary experience is not a result of human action, but is God's action within them. Augustine argued that human nature granted pious Christians the possibility of such an experience and that the dual nature of Christ (both human and divine) acts both as a conduit as well as the goal of the visionary journey.<sup>58</sup>

Augustine's reliance on the Aristotelian aspects of the Epistles for the basis of his mystical theology established the theologian as the primary early Christian influence for the mystical and evangelical reform movements of the sixteenth century.<sup>59</sup> Unlike his direct mystic predecessors and contemporaries, like Saint Ambrose, John Cassian, and, most notably, Saint Jerome, Augustine de-emphasized the importance of mystical union with the divine presence and stressed the functionality of mystical theology on the societal level through Paul's biblical writings on the importance of charity in pious life.<sup>60</sup> Augustine separated himself from the Neoplatonists in that his version of the *vita contemplativa* does not represent sufficient Christian behavior, but must be complemented with the *vita activa*.<sup>61</sup> The theologian wrote in his *Homilies on the*

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 240-252.

<sup>59</sup> Augustine adopts the Aristotelian method of examining the societal implications of philosophy and religious discourse in his approach to the texts of Apostle Paul. For a closer examination of the ties between the Pauline texts and mysticism, see Frederick C. Grant, "Saint Paul's Mysticism," *The Biblical World* 44 (1914): 385-387. Grant's article also provides strong support for the Greco-Roman foundations of Christian mysticism.

<sup>60</sup> Deems details Augustine's uses of Paul as an example to speak to pious Christian behavior. See Mervin Monroe Deems, "Augustine's Use of Scripture," *Church History* 14 (1945): 194.

<sup>61</sup> Saint Augustine first established the terms *vita contemplativa* and *vita activa* in his *City of God (De Civitate Dei)*. See Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (New York: Modern Library, 2000).

*Psalms*, “Charity (*caritas*) both finds him through faith and seeks to have him through the appearance (*speciem*), where he is found in such a way that he satisfies us and is not sought any more.”<sup>62</sup> Augustine’s imagery suggested that the partial knowledge of God caused the soul to emit a beam of life and light that manifested itself in charity. The Augustinian argument that charity prepares one for the mystical vision and is also the result of ecstatic experience became a central point for late Renaissance theologians. The relationship between mystical faith and charity gave impetus to the widespread social reformist movements in Venice during the sixteenth century and, as will be explored, may have provided the theological foundation for understanding Christ’s Passion cycle in the Sala dell’Albergo.

### *Contarini and Pole in Sixteenth-Century Venice*

The Italian reformers of the sixteenth-century concurred with Augustine’s association of faith with charity. In response to his readings of Paul and Augustine, Cardinal Gasparo Contarini, the leading native Venetian reformer of the period, wrote in his *Scholia in epistolas divi Pauli* shortly before his death in 1542 that these theologians tried to emphasize that “we are grafted into Christ through faith and charity.”<sup>63</sup> If one considers the argument of faith versus good works to be the primary disagreement between the northern European reformers and proponents of Catholic orthodoxy,

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<sup>62</sup> Augustine, *Saint Augustine on the Psalms*, trans. by Scholastica Hebgin and Felicitas Corrigan (Westminster: Newman, 1960), 104.3.

<sup>63</sup> Emily Gleason notes a renewed interest for Contarini in Pauline and Augustinian texts in the years preceding his death, most notably in the *Scholia*. See Emily Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini: Venice, Rome, and Reform* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 284.

mystical theology highlighting the connection between faith and charity became crucial doctrine for Catholic reformers. The English cardinal, Reginald Pole, who wished to reconcile the theologies of the growing Lutheranism movement in the north with the orthodoxy propagated by the papacy in the 1540s and 1550s, concurred with Contarini when suggesting that “the house of God is ruled by charity... inflamed by the spirit of God.”<sup>64</sup> The two most prominent reforming theologians in Italy carefully claimed that although they agreed with the Lutheran understanding that faith was in fact a basis for salvation, good works and charity through the vehicle of the Catholic Church was representative and the result of such faith.<sup>65</sup>

This argument generated significant criticism from the *papalisti* in Venice and Rome. Giovanni Pietro Carafa led the conservative efforts in Rome to eradicate potential heresy.<sup>66</sup> The sharp dichotomy between the orthodox *papalisti* and the growing group of reforming *spirituali* and evangelicals increased the pressure on reformers to unify the divisive factions. Contarini chastised the Lutherans for their harsh verbal attacks that

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<sup>64</sup> The Pole quotation was acquired from Thomas F. Mayer, *Reginald Pole: Prince and Prophet* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 18. Scholars have argued that the death of Contarini in 1543 coupled with the rise of hardliner Giovanni Pietro Carafa (who was to be elected Pope Paul IV over Cardinal Reginald Pole in 1555) signaled the end of any hopes of reconciliation. For more in depth discussion, see John Jeffries Martin, “*Renovatio* and Reform in Early Modern Italy” in *Heresy, Culture, and Religion in Early Modern Italy: Contexts and Contestations*, eds. Ronald K. Delph, Michelle Fontaine, and John Jeffries Martin (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2006), 3-10. For a thorough discussion of Cardinal Pole’s association between faith and charity and his influence on the Venetian religious climate, see Dermot Fenlon, *Heresy and Obedience in Tridentine Italy: Cardinal Pole and the Counter Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972).

<sup>65</sup> Both Contarini and Pole were careful to affirm the role of the Catholic Church in the connection of faith and charity. The theologians argued that the Church was responsible for providing the basis for true faith and was also the ideal outlet for charitable behavior.

<sup>66</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of Carafa and his papacy as Paul IV, see Graham William Searle, *The Counter Reformation* (London: University of London Press, 1974), 91-92.

“radically damaged” the Christian Church, while concurrently informing the outspoken *papalisti* that in their attempts to contradict Luther, “they contradict Saints Augustine, Ambrose, Bernard, Jerome, and Thomas.”<sup>67</sup> The Catholic reformers turned toward mystical theology to appease both parties. They employed the Pauline texts as proof that knowledge of God could be gained and the presence of God achieved through the careful study and contemplation on the *logos* (the word of God), made manifest in the life and Passion of Jesus Christ.<sup>68</sup> They complemented this interpretation in their return to the teachings of Saint Thomas Aquinas who spoke of the Church as the mystical body of Christ, thereby reaffirming the Church’s earthly authority.<sup>69</sup> While the polarities of religious discord in sixteenth-century Italy have attracted more historical attention, this moderate approach to Catholic reform described the majority of religiously-conscious citizens in Venice, including Tintoretto and the majority of members of the confraternity of San Rocco. Under these circumstances, the mystical and evangelical ideologies present in the Passion cycle in the Sala dell’Albergo do not usurp the power of the Church, but rather emphasize the viewer’s direct relationship to the divine within the traditional framework of the Church.

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<sup>67</sup> Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini*, 253, 265.

<sup>68</sup> The Gospel of John did not separate the *logos* from the life the Christ. In mystical terms, the historical Jesus was the physical embodiment of the word of God.

<sup>69</sup> Contarini invokes both Paul and Thomas Aquinas in his discussion of the Eucharist and its ritual implications in his *Catechesis sire Christiana instructio* (a compiled set of Contarini works first published in 1571). Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini*, 286-288.

*Tintoretto and Contarini within the Madonna dell'Orto Church*

While Contarini never considered himself sufficiently qualified to be a reformer, his success in the role of international diplomat and honorary cardinal made him the most vital player in the shaping of the Venetian religious landscape. Contarini's belief that humanity could only be saved through grace and that one cannot "purge the spirit from the soul of emotions" more closely aligned the cardinal to Lutheran reformers than the traditional *papalisti* in Venice's patrician class.<sup>70</sup> Yet, the native-born Venetian's fervent stance as a unificationist as well as his established diplomatic relations with Spain, France, and the papacy ensured that Contarini was never a target of the Venetian Inquisition. He largely functioned outside the realm of religious law until Pope Paul III made the layman a cardinal in 1535, most likely a political maneuver to garner support in an ever-rebellious Venice. Contarini presided over a papal commission in 1536 and was the papal ambassador to several conferences at the Council of Regensburg in hopes of restoring religious unity to the divided German states.

Contarini's engagement in mystical meditation remains questionable, and clearly the cardinal could not be classified a mystic. However, there is sufficient evidence that he supported mystical doctrine in the restructuring of Catholic dogma and maintained close friends that carried ties to mystical practice. James Bruce Ross notes that the letters between a young Contarini and Vincenzo Querini reveal that the cardinal attempted to "apply Pauline precepts to his own way of life" and "(integrate) classical ethics with a

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<sup>70</sup> Patricia Meilman, *Titian and the Altarpiece in Renaissance Venice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 54.

mystical-contemplative approach to life... by bringing together... two essentially diverse elements, Latin mysticism and German evangelical impulses.”<sup>71</sup> In his final years, Contarini gathered with reforming figures like Reginald Pole, Marcantonio Flaminio, and Alvise Priuli in Venice to discuss evangelical and mystically contemplative ideas that were not to be considered heretical until the 1550s and as such, enhanced the city’s growing position as the center of evangelical propaganda. The issues of mystical practice and visionary meditation that the *Beneficio di Cristo* introduced were widely discussed within this circle, and most scholars identify Flaminio as a contributor to the text. In fact, the support from such prominent *spirituali* in the patrician class likely motivated the first printing of the book shortly after Contarini’s death in 1542.

Considering Contarini’s important and celebrated role as Venice’s leading theologian and religious diplomat, his mystical theology may have influenced a young Tintoretto. While the artist’s relationship with Contarini cannot be firmly established and Tintoretto certainly lacked the clout in the late 1530s and early 1540s to maintain familiar relations with the elder statesmen, the two men called the same neighborhood home, and Tintoretto may have held some affection for Contarini as a result of communal pride. Both figures grew up along the Fondamenta dei Mori in the Canareggio region of northern Venice. Tintoretto rented property along the Fondamenta dei Mori in 1554 just

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<sup>71</sup> The associations between Contarini and mystical theology are revealed in letters five through nine, as originally published by Hubert Jedin, *Contarini und Camaldoli* (Rome, Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1953), 3-67. Ross is perhaps the most outspoken supporter of Contarini’s mystical and evangelical tendencies. See James Bruce Ross, “The Emergence of Gasparo Contarini: A Bibliographical Essay,” *Church History* 41 (1972): 26.

a few blocks from the Madonna dell'Orto church in order to facilitate his growing bottega.<sup>72</sup>

Madonna dell'Orto, lying just off the fondamenta, enriches this regional connection between Tintoretto and Contarini because the church contains both the Contarini and Robusti family chapels where Gasparo Contarini and Jacopo Tintoretto are buried. It is unknown whether the diplomat was an active member of the church's parish, but Alvise Contarini's (a distant cousin of Gasparo's father) position as a secular canon for the church in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries and the actions taken by the Contarini family following the death of Gasparo seem to suggest that the church of the Madonna dell'Orto and the Contarini del Zaffo (Gasparo's branch) family were familiar.<sup>73</sup> Additionally, the Contarini family commissioned Tintoretto to depict the Miracle of Saint Agnes (fig. 25) for the chapel's altar in the early 1560s, thereby guaranteeing that in the years immediately preceding his work in the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, Tintoretto had developed a relationship with the Contarini family (first noted in the commissioning of Tintoretto to complete a portrait of Tommaso Contarini in

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<sup>72</sup> See Michael Douglas-Scott, "Jacopo Tintoretto's Altarpiece of Saint Agnes at the Madonna dell'Orto in Venice and the Memorialisation of Cardinal Contarini," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 60 (1997): 140.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 133-142. No documentation exists to suggest that Contarini requested a specific burial site, and, thus, his body remained in Bologna at San Petronio. In the year following his death, his nephew, Tommaso Contarini, arranged a 400 ducat endowment for masses for his soul to be said at the Madonna dell'Orto. At some point between 1557 and the late 1560s (Douglas-Scott convincingly argues for the earliest possible date of 1557) the Contarini del Zaffo family purchased the chapel that the Colti family had previously ceded to the Secular Canons of San Giorgio in Alga. The earlier date conforms to the suggested transportation date of 1563 for the cardinal's body to the grounds of Madonna dell'Orto as well as the dates traditionally given to Cardinal Contarini's sculptural bust (1561-62) that decorates the chapel.



1557).<sup>74</sup> The Contarini family asked Tintoretto to represent an early Christian virgin who refused to marry the Roman prefect's son on the account that she was already mystically betrothed to Christ. The mystical nature of the Agnes biography may not have appealed to the members of the Contarini family who were papalist in their loyalties, but Giulio Contarini, the cardinal's illegitimate nephew who adhered to the principles of the *Beneficio di Cristo* and was largely responsible for the transportation of Contarini's body to Madonna dell'Orto in 1563, would have appreciated the importance of the mystical relationship and interaction between the saint and the divine.<sup>75</sup>

Tintoretto's relationship with the Contarini family and the church extended beyond his work for the Contarini chapel; Madonna dell'Orto was Tintoretto's parish church and a frequent place of worship for the artist. Frederick Ilchman noted that Ridolfi's characterization of Tintoretto as the pious artist who used his art to realize his inner religious dilemmas is significant because the Ridolfi biographies do not typically address the religious behaviors of the artist.<sup>76</sup> According to Ridolfi, Tintoretto "spent

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 142. There exists no evidence to indicate that the chapel was dedicated to Saint Agnes before the Contarini's purchase; the commissioning of Tintoretto to depict the Miracle of Saint Agnes for the chapel's altar is the first definitive evidence suggesting such. There is much debate regarding the dating of Tintoretto's *Miracle of Saint Agnes*. Pallucchini and Rossi followed Henry Thode's preliminary dating of the altarpiece to 1577-78 shortly before Tommaso Contarini's death, and the church of Madonna dell'Orto still considers this date accurate. Douglas-Scott questions this date, preferring an earlier date that corresponds to the reconstruction of the chapel from 1557-1563. Considering the strong compositional relationship between the *Miracle of Saint Agnes* and his earlier *Miracle of Saint Mark* (1548; fig. 26) and the contemporary *Removal of Saint Mark's Body*, I am inclined to date *Saint Agnes* to 1563.

<sup>75</sup> Douglas-Scott identifies Giulio Contarini as the closest disciple of Cardinal Contarini in regard to mystical theology. See Ibid., 154.

<sup>76</sup> Ilchman, "Religious Narrative," 85.

much time in pious meditation in the Church of the Madonna dell'Orto and in conversation on moral themes with those fathers who were his intimates.”<sup>77</sup>

While it is safe to assume that Tintoretto was religiously active and spiritually guided, there exists no documentary evidence to determine the artist's religious convictions. Ilchman argues that Tintoretto's *Last Judgment* (1557; fig. 27), which flanks the altar at the Church of Madonna dell'Orto, reflects the artist's desire “to proclaim his own orthodoxy.”<sup>78</sup> Yet, his *Apparition of the Cross to Saint Peter* (1556; fig. 28), also at the altar of Madonna dell'Orto, suggests the artist's beliefs were less papalist. Peter is dressed in formal papal garb, holds the holy book with his left hand, and turns to see the vision of his martyrdom. The key to the Church, and sign of papal authority, rests in a limp, phallic position in between his legs, leading several scholars to suggest that Tintoretto intended the placement as pictorial joke to criticize the papacy.<sup>79</sup> Undoubtedly, the artist's comfort with the organizational and religious hierarchy of his local church allowed him to offer this daring critique of the Roman Church. Furthermore, the church's immediate acceptance of the work and placement of the work at the altar imply that at the very least, the hierarchy of Madonna dell'Orto was equally not averse to disparaging the behavior and decision-making of the papacy.

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<sup>77</sup> Ridolfi, *Tintoretto*, 22.

<sup>78</sup> Ilchman points to the inherent orthodoxy and apocalyptic nature of the Last Judgment story during a period in which heresy was widespread and public. Ilchman, “Religious Narrative,” 88.

<sup>79</sup> Krischel is among the scholars who have claimed this interpretation. Krischel also notes that Tintoretto's close poet and writer friend, Anton Francesco Doni (who will be discussed at greater length later), wrote a satirical piece on the conditions of the papacy entitled *La Chiave* (“The Key”) during the 1550s. See Krischel, *Jacopo Tintoretto*, 54.

Ridolfi's suggestion that Tintoretto's relationship with the church of Madonna dell'Orto extended beyond the significant commissions that the artist garnered in the 1550s and early 1560s is confirmed with the Robusti family's acquisition of a chapel to the right of the main altar. Marco Episcopi, Tintoretto's father-in-law, purchased the chapel for the Robusti family in 1555 (the concession of the chapel corresponds to the artist's acquisition of property along the fondamenta, reaffirming Tintoretto's desire to associate himself with the Canareggio neighborhood).<sup>80</sup> The chapel, which now celebrates Tintoretto's tomb, includes a painting of Saint Augustine and Saint Jerome by Girolamo Santacroce, an active artist in Venice from 1503-1556. The details of the commission are unclear, but it is likely that Tintoretto held significant responsibility in determining the subject matter. Augustine and Jerome represent two of the primary four early Christian church doctors (Ambrose and Gregory the Great being the others). The contemporary theologians maintained frequent correspondence with each other, and Augustine, considered to be the founder of Latin mysticism, frequently used Jerome as a sounding board for his theological struggles. Assuming Tintoretto is the pious Christian figure that art historians intend him to be, he would have been fully conscious of the relationship Augustine and Jerome had with mystical theology. The dedication of the chapel to these figures suggests that the Venetian artist identified not only with the saints' theological explorations, but also perhaps with the visionary and mystical tendencies outlined by them.

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<sup>80</sup> See Douglas-Scott, "Tintoretto," 140.

*Mysticism and the Venetian Public in a Time of Heresy*

If Tintoretto is undeniably a *Venetian* painter, as appears to be the case, the Sala dell'Albergo likely responds to Venice's rapidly deteriorating relationship with the papacy and changing social climate in the sixteenth century. While the "Myth of Venice" propagated the belief that the city represented the ideal Christian community, it became the home to Counter Reformers and religious dissension.<sup>81</sup> The turbulent relationship between Venice and the papacy was perhaps in its most strained state as the reformation movement took hold in the 1520s and 1530s. Venetian geopolitical prominence had already been diminished through the collapse of the Byzantine Empire in the east and the increasing Turkish control of trading on the Mediterranean Sea when the Papal States, accompanied by the French, Spanish, and Germanic coalition, formed the League of Cambrai in 1508 as a military alliance aimed at reclaiming lands held by the Venetian Republic.<sup>82</sup> Although Venice would eventually overcome the League in 1515, the war and resulting political instability fostered societal unease and tarnished the already fragile relationship with the papacy and Rome. The Venetian public's strong reaction against

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<sup>81</sup> The "Myth of Venice" refers to the Venetian self-fashioning of a pious and just identity based on supposed mythical origins (rising miraculously out of the lagoon). Venice was proclaimed the "New Jerusalem," and its citizens understood that they held special favor with the divine (namely through the Virgin and Saint Mark), and acted accordingly. For a complete discussion of the myth of Venice, see David Rosand, *Myths of Venice* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001).

<sup>82</sup> Gilbert discusses the relations between the papacy and Venice in the early stages of the sixteenth-century. He identifies Agostino Chigi, a wealthy Sieneese resident in Rome, as a banker that acted as an intercessor between the two parties. See Felix Gilbert, *The Pope, His Banker, and Venice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), 1-15.

Rome did little to jeopardize Venice's self-fashioning, as in the minds of its citizenry, the "papacy and church were separate bodies necessitating different policies."<sup>83</sup>

While Venice still considered itself the ideal Christian community, the massive influx of foreigners into the city in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century sparked new concerns among the populace and ensured that the city would become the sixteenth-century Italian center for religious dissent. Citizens of *La Serenissima* (or "the most serene Republic"), a state that fashioned itself as the "New Jerusalem" and beneficiary of divine favor, grew concerned that beneath its pious façade there existed a sinful underbelly. Immoral activities and behaviors certainly existed in Venice prior to the turn of the century, but the growing instability of Venice's population in the sixteenth century worsened the problem.<sup>84</sup> Ethnic and religious diversity combined with this societal impropriety to increase concern. Venice had become home to over 14,000 Greeks exiled after the collapse of Byzantine Constantinople and had become a place of refuge for Florentine religious and political exiles.<sup>85</sup> The Greeks brought elements of Eastern Orthodoxy, including the emphasis on the mystical meditation on icons (perhaps

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<sup>83</sup> Paul Grendler's commentary was primarily intended to describe the Venetian printers' reaction to the papal indexes of prohibited books in the mid-sixteenth century, but the remark also eloquently describes the mood and opinions of the general populace. See Paul Grendler, *The Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 29.

<sup>84</sup> There were, for instance, over six hundred cases of rape or sodomy tried in Venice from 1326 to 1500. Guido Ruggiero, *Binding Passions: Tales of Magic, Marriage, and Power at the End of the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 94 and 128.

<sup>85</sup> For more information on the Greek immigration to Venice, see William Bouwsma, *Venice and the Defense of Republican Liberty: Renaissance Values in the Counter Reformation* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1968), 350. For more information on the Florentine immigration to the city, see Paolo Simoncelli, "The Turbulent Life of the Florentine Community in Venice," in *Heresy, Culture, and Religion in Early Modern Italy: Contexts and Contestations*, eds. Ronald K. Delph, Michelle Fontaine, and John Jeffries Martin (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2006), 114-118.

influencing Tintoretto's approach to the Sala dell'Albergo), to an already diverse and religiously independent republic. These external contributions only fueled the ideological separation between the greater Venetian community and the papacy, and by the 1540s, the city became the retreat and safe haven for most Italian reformist activities.

The Venetian Signory and patrician classes did little immediately to quiet the fervor of religious dissent that was rising among the younger generations of the intellectual and middle classes.<sup>86</sup> As Marino Sanuto, a sixteenth-century Venetian historian, noted in his diary in 1530, the republic refused to prosecute Lutherans and other possible heretics because "our state and dominion is free and thus we cannot forbid them."<sup>87</sup> Certainly, the elder members of the patrician class were mildly concerned about the ramifications of the growing mystical and evangelical movements, but given that the concentration of the reformist efforts sought to overhaul social and religious morality rather than challenge the political establishment, the movements remained relatively unthreatened.

Letters to the Signory from Venetian ambassadors suggest that the republic begrudgingly accepted if not welcomed the arguments of Counter Reformers and Lutherans. Carlo Contarini, of distant relationship to Cardinal Gasparo Contarini, wrote in 1525 that in the Germanic regions "the Lutheran peasants say they merely require

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<sup>86</sup> Although the evangelical movement was primarily composed of the younger generations, they received significant support from older reformers like Gasparo Contarini.

<sup>87</sup> Sanuto was officially a Venetian senator. The Venetian Republic praised the senator for his insider accounts of the state's political activities shortly before his death. See Marino Sanuto, *I diarii*, eds., Rinaldo Fulin, et. al, 53 (Venice: Deputazione R. Veneta di Storia Patria, 1879-1903; Bologna: Forni Editore, 1970), 65-68, quoted in Massimo Firpo, "Lorenzo Lotto and the Reformation in Venice," in *Heresy, Culture, and Religion in Early Modern Italy: Contexts and Contestations*, eds. Ronald K. Delph, Michelle Fontaine, and John Jeffries Martin (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2006), 26.

freedom for their property and persons, such as is enjoyed by the subjects of the Venetian Signory... apparently they are in the right.”<sup>88</sup> Another Contarini ambassador, Francesco Contarini, confirmed the appeal of the Lutheran arguments and presentation in a letter to the Signory March 26, 1541, written from the Diet at Ratisbon:

I for myself believe and maintain what Holy Mother Church believes, in which belief I shall persist until death, and I have the extreme satisfaction in hearing the right reverend Legate (Gasparo Contarini) discourse, it seeming to me that no one understands these matters better than he does; but really afterwards, when talking with these Lutherans – for I am compelled to associate with them likewise – they adduce so many arguments and have such a flow of language that I confess ingenuously to your serenity that I know not how to answer them.”<sup>89</sup>

The polite and conservative language in response to the Lutherans and to the reform-minded Gasparo Contarini, who was in fact representing the Church at the Diet, seems to reinforce Counter-Reformation historian John Jeffries Martin’s suggestion that many Venetians offered an orthodox façade of Catholicism to the public while “inwardly continuing to hold Protestant beliefs in their hearts.”<sup>90</sup> As religious dissent continued to grow in popularity among the Venetian nobles, most notably Giovanni Grimani, Pietro Cocco, and the Donà family, the fashioning of a conservative public identity became a necessity for the leaders of the state.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> This letter from Carlo Contarini to the Venetian Signory is also part of Marino Sanuto’s diaries that are housed in the Venetian archives. Carlo Contarini to Venetian Signory, 5 April 1525, in *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy, 1520-1526*, ed. Rawdon Brown, vol. 3 (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1869), 4.

<sup>89</sup> Francesco Contarini to Venetian Signory, Ratisbon, 26 March 1541, in *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy, 1534-1554*, ed. Rawdon Brown, vol. 5 (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1873), 95.

<sup>90</sup> John Jeffries Martin, *Renovatio*, 12-13.

<sup>91</sup> Martin recognized that the growing popularity of the reformist movements in the patrician class complicated the future prosecution of heretics. The Council of Ten, at times concerned with self-indictment, was inconsistent in its support of Rome’s counter-reform movements. John Jeffries Martin,

Rome responded to the laxity in the prosecution of heresy by establishing a Venetian Inquisition in 1547 that was to be overseen by a papal appointed inquisitor. Although the Inquisition remained relatively active in its early years, with a yearly average of thirty-three defendants on trial annually from 1547-1630 and fourteen executions on record between 1555-1593, it never received significant support from the republic itself until the 1580s when the organization largely shifted its focus to cases of witchcraft.<sup>92</sup> The lack of Venetian support caused the Inquisition to focus more frequently on mediation rather than prosecution. Fra Marino, the appointed commissioner in the early 1550s, was eventually reassigned because he too often established bonds with those accused and covered up potential heresies of the Venetian elite.<sup>93</sup>

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*Venice's Hidden Enemies: Italian Heretics in a Renaissance City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), xii, 74-75.

<sup>92</sup> John A. Tedeschi, *The Prosecution of Heresy: Collected Studies on the Inquisition in Early Modern Italy* (Binghamton, NY: Medieval and Renaissance Texts and Studies, 1991), 92-103. Tedeschi's book, *Prosecution of Heresy*, essentially acts as a statistical analysis of the inquisitorial activity in Italy, providing statistics by region, time period, and accused crime.

<sup>93</sup> Silvana Seidel Menchi, "The Inquisitor as Mediator," in *Heresy, Culture, and Religion in Early Modern Italy: Contexts and Contestations*, eds. Ronald K. Delph, Michelle Fontaine, and John Jeffries Martin (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2006), 186. Menchi's article identifies Fra Marino as inquisitor-mediator caught between the desires of Rome and the reality of Venice, and Schutte discusses Marino mediatory role in the trial of Pier Paolo Vergerio. Anne Schutte notes those overseeing the proceedings facilitated in providing Vergerio with favorable testimony. Schutte writes in a footnote: "Supporting Vergerio, allegedly in return for a consideration, was one of the charges made against Fra Marino when he was tried for heresy in a *processo* begun in 1551 and concluded with his acquittal ten years later. Fra Marino denied having accepted any gifts or favors from the friends of Vergerio or any other heretic, and he claimed that Vergerio must have forged the letter to Gonzaga (speaking of such gifts). See Anne Jacobsen Schutte, *Pier Paolo Vergerio: The Making of an Italian Reformer* (Geneva: Droz, 1977), 222-226.



*Tintoretto and the Venetian Interest in Apocalyptic Eschatology*

In a recent essay, Benjamin Paul identifies key Tintoretto works in the 1570s and 1580s as proof of the flourishing of millenarianism, or more specifically “apocalyptic eschatology,” in Venice following the victory over the Turks in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. Paul defines “apocalyptic eschatology” as that which is “concerned with God’s active and visible rectification (putting right) of the created world (‘cosmos’), which has somehow gone astray and become alienated from God.”<sup>94</sup> The historian convincingly proposes that this millenarianist approach defined Venice’s social theology in the late sixteenth century. While Paul uses Tintoretto’s portraits of Sebastiano Venier (1571) and Pietro Loredan (1582) as supporting objects as opposed to primary subjects of study, his claim that “Tintoretto, like many Venetians, assigned a religious dimension to the conflict with Ottomans” is relevant to understanding his work done less than a decade prior to the Battle of Lepanto.<sup>95</sup>

The danger in Paul’s argument is to assume that the Venetian interest in “apocalyptic eschatology” did not appear until the triumph at Lepanto. The historian’s stipulation that this theological concept only concerns those visible events “that are considered cosmic in scope and implication” belies the political and economic decline of Venice earlier in the century.<sup>96</sup> If, as previously argued, the intensity of the religious

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<sup>94</sup> Benjamin Paul, “Apocalypticism and Religious Reform in Venetian Art at the time of the Battle of Lepanto,” in *The Turk and Islam in the Western Eye (1450-1750): Visual Imagery before Orientalism*, ed. James Harper (Aldershot: Ashgate, forthcoming 2009). Thank you to Professor James Harper for access to the (unpaginated) manuscript.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

reform of individual piety reflects a growing communal fear in the instability and fragility of the republic, apocalyptic eschatology is certainly applicable. The hardships did not affect the Venetians' belief that the republic held divine favor, but instead further inspired social reform. Guillaume Postel (1510-1581), the French humanist and religious reformer, argued that Venice must be the center of reform because "God loved Venice more than all other cities in the world."<sup>97</sup> He stressed to the Venetians the inevitability of triumph as God's chosen community, and that it was the responsibility of the citizens to ensure its salvation through reform.

Tintoretto's belief in the inevitability of Venetian triumph through God's divine favor manifested itself over a decade before the Battle of Lepanto in his symbolically prophetic painting, *Saint George and the Dragon* (1555-58; fig. 29). Tintoretto depicted the apocryphal event for the Cornaro family, a family that held ties to the Giovanni Grimani, Alessandro Caravia, and the *poligrafi*. It remains unclear whether Tintoretto or the Cornaro family was responsible for determining the composition, but the painting's disregard for the traditional representation of the Saint George story stimulates significant interpretations. Scholar Jill Dunkerton argues that the miraculous and mystical presence of God the Father above the diminished George intentionally emphasizes the "delivery

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<sup>97</sup> Marion Leathers Kuntz argued that religious and political reformers in Venice during the mid-fifteenth century stressed that the Venetians reemphasize their associations with their community's patron saints as these saints represented divine favor. See Marion Leathers Kuntz, "Venice and Justice: Saint Mark and Moses," in *Heresy, Culture, and Religion in Early Modern Italy: Contexts and Contestations*, eds. Ronald K. Delph, Michelle Fontaine, and John Jeffries Martin (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2006), 153.

from danger by the hand of God, rather than by a knight in armour.”<sup>98</sup> Dunkerton’s compelling assertion also changes one’s understanding of the prominent position of the princess. Artistic tradition removed the princess to the background in favor of the narrative action. Scholars have argued that Tintoretto’s foreground placement reflects the artist’s desire to infuse the scene with drama.<sup>99</sup> While Tintoretto’s de-emphasis of the primary narrative activity is not overly unusual (see *Christ Carrying the Cross*, *Christ among the Doctors*, and the *San Rocco Nativity*), the artist may have altered the position of the princess to instill more symbolic meaning in the figure.

In traditional iconography, Venice is typically personified as being the royal female in both terminology (ex. *La Serenissima*, *La Venezia*) and art (see Veronese’s *Venice Enthroned* [1562]). The princess in Tintoretto’s painting could function as such a personification. Saint George, who Venetians consider a secondary patron and honor with the Basilica of San Giorgio and a prominent statue in the San Marco piazza, saves Venice through God’s divine favor and intervention. Accordingly, the dragon in the painting symbolizes the threat of the Turks. Paul sites the dragon as the most popular personification of the Turks in the sixteenth century due to the relationship between the crescent moon, the Turkish symbol, and the apocalyptic dragon in John the Evangelist’s *Revelation*.<sup>100</sup> In correlation to the story in *Revelation*, Paul argues that the Venetians

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<sup>98</sup> Jill Dunkerton, Susan Foister, and Nicholas Penny, *Dürer to Veronese: Sixteenth-Century Painting in the National Gallery* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2002), 67.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>100</sup> Saint Michael chases off the dragon that attacked a pregnant woman on the crescent moon. See Paul, “Apocalypticism.”

believed the Turks functioned as an apocalyptic weapon for divine punishment. The millenarians in Venice used this mystical symbolism to highlight a renewed focus on individual piety as the harbinger of the republic's salvation.

Tintoretto's cycle in the Sala dell'Albergo subtly reflects these contemporaneous millenarian ideologies and interests. The millenarians, like the evangelicals, recognized the transcendent capabilities of contemplation of Christ's sacrifice. This theology, however, emphasized the sharp dichotomy between good and evil, light and dark, in the Passion story. Tintoretto used light and dark to separate good and evil in his paintings: Christ stands against a dark background in his luminescent white robe; both Christ of the *Crucifixion* and the *Ecce Homo* are flooded with radiant light against dark surroundings; and the good thief glows while the bad thief is cast in shadow in both *Christ Carrying the Cross* and the *Crucifixion*.

This binary reading of good and evil and potential visual references to the Turks may also apply to the compositional organization of figures surrounding the Crucifixion. Traditional apocalyptic and Passion imagery mandates that those saved be placed to Christ's right and those damned or condemned to his left, hence the identifications of the good and bad thieves. Directly adjacent to those Roman soldiers gambling for Christ's clothes in the right foreground, several turbaned figures witness the event astride their horses. Turbans might function as a multivalent symbol for Tintoretto in that they would not only reinforce the foreign or exotic nature of Jerusalem and its inhabitants, but also refer to the threatening presence of the Turks in the sixteenth century, frequently

identified with a turban in Venetian Renaissance iconography.<sup>101</sup> Their placement on the left side of Christ and so closely juxtaposed to the immoral activity of the soldiers alludes to their fate. In contrast, the left foreground includes a representation of the good Christian, and perhaps Venetian, soldier on a white horse perhaps (the armor is characteristic of sixteenth-century Venetian military apparel). He directs his companion toward Christ on the cross as if to indicate the path for their salvation. Christ's Passion and sacrifice stand as the ultimate examples of God's divine intervention, redeeming the Venetians. Given the Venetian self-identification as God's chosen people, the *Crucifixion* might have functioned as a reassuring testimony for the republic's survival.

This interpretation is not without its potential counter arguments, as the left side of Christ also contains a figure thought to be a self-portrait of Tintoretto (the dark bearded figure in burgundy immediately to the right of the Crucifixion) and a figure wearing the ceremonial bishopric cap in the deep background.<sup>102</sup> First of all, assuming that the self-portrait identification is accurate, Tintoretto's placement on the damned side could readily be explained as an effort in suggested humility. The figure leans far forward as if to reenergize his focus on Christ's ultimate act of charity. Of course, this suggestion of unworthiness in reality would have had the opposite effect, as viewers would have praised Tintoretto for his apparent humility. Secondly, the representation of a high-ranking religious figure in this context is not surprising considering Tintoretto's distaste for the behavior and/or ideology of the papacy (see Tintoretto's witty placement

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<sup>101</sup> See Paul, "Apocalypticism."

<sup>102</sup> The bearded figure is identified as Tintoretto by Valcanover, among others. See Valcanover, *Jacopo Tintoretto*, 33.

of the keys of Saint Peter in fig. 28). The figure's attention is not focused on Christ's Crucifixion, but rather on the contorted bad thief, as if to allude to the fallacies and irrepentance of the papal government.

### *Venetian Poligrafi*

The 1555 election of Pope Paul IV (Giovanni Pietro Carafa), who had an abrasive relationship to Venice prior to his election, signaled a harsher stance in Rome on heresy, and much of the papacy's attention was directed to Venice.<sup>103</sup> Venice was the foremost print center in Italy and was primarily responsible for the dissemination of reformist literature in the sixteenth century. Paul IV was dissatisfied with the Venetian censorship of heretical literature and published the first prohibited book index in 1558.<sup>104</sup> This index prohibited all potential Lutheran literature, including the popular *Beneficio di Cristo*. The Venetian publishers met the Roman censorship with disdain, while an evangelical group focused on religious and social reform formed around the printing community. While the term *poligrafi* primarily refers to evangelically-minded writers, poets, and publishers such as Vincenzo Valgrisi, the leading Venetian publisher in the 1540s, the term also came to describe a broader reformist network comprised of members of the elite artisan community in the Canareggio district in northern Venice.

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<sup>103</sup> The turbulent relationship between Carafa and Venice is detailed in the report of the Venetian ambassador to Rome to the Venetian Signory, Rome, 1557, in *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy, 1555-56*, ed. Rawdon Brown, vol. 6 (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1875), 694.

<sup>104</sup> In his discussion of the "correcting" the works of Gasparo Contarini, Fragnito notes that Contarini's ideas were considered heretical shortly following the death of the theologian. Fragnito, *Expurgatory*, 194. For a more complete discussion and listing of the books included on the prohibitive index, see Grendler, *Roman Inquisition and the Venetian Press*.

This growing group became especially attractive to younger generations, as was the case internationally with evangelism and Lutheranism. The *poligrafi* would have surrounded a young Tintoretto, a native of the Canareggio region. While scholars remain relatively hesitant in defining the artist's social circle, two of Tintoretto's friends, Anton Francesco Doni and Andrea Calmo, were active, vocal members of the *poligrafi*. As Nichols suggests, Tintoretto also likely associated with goldsmith Alessandro Caravia, an outspoken evangelical who emphasized pious, contemplative worship in his attack of the decadence of late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century religious institutions, most notably the Venetian *scuole*.<sup>105</sup>

Anton Francesco Doni (1513-1574) was a late arrival to the *poligrafi* group when he arrived to Venice from Florence in 1547.<sup>106</sup> Doni was a humanist poet, writer, humorist, and social critic who addressed wide-ranging topics including theatre, politics, art, religion, and society. The Florentine expatriate first made his literary mark with his *Dialogo della Musica*, a collection and commentary on popular contemporary madrigals, written in 1544 and published in Venice by Girolamo Scotto shortly after his arrival.<sup>107</sup> He became a prominent member of the *poligrafi* circle in the 1550s, during the most intense decade of sixteenth-century Venetian publishing, becoming friends with such

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<sup>105</sup> For a more in-depth discussion of Tintoretto's association with members of the *poligrafi*, see Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 75-79. For Nichols' proposal of a possible connection between Caravia and Tintoretto, see *ibid.*, 148-152.

<sup>106</sup> A. Longo and G. Romei, "Doni, Anton Francesco," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 59 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2002), 158-165.

<sup>107</sup> Jane A. Bernstein, *Music Printing in Renaissance Venice: The Scotto Press (1539-1572)* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 176-178 and 303. For the most part, Bernstein restrains her discussion of Doni's *Dialogo della Musica* to the details surrounding its publication, although she did note that Doni "bridged the gap between the worlds of vernacular discourse and music."

notable figures as Pietro Aretino and Ludovico Dolce.<sup>108</sup> His first collection of *Lettere* on art was published in Venice in 1547, and Doni called Tintoretto a major Venetian figure in his 1552 book, *I Marmi*.<sup>109</sup> The friendship between artist and writer was firmly established by 1553 when Tintoretto painted a portrait of Doni, and the social critic honored Tintoretto as the dedicatee of the new edition of *Rime del Burchiello*.<sup>110</sup> The two figures connected in their artisan roots, and Doni remained an ardent supporter of Tintoretto throughout the 1550s and 1560s. Doni praised Tintoretto's *prestezza del fatto* and propagated the idea that the artist's work reflected "divine speculation" and an appropriate vision of divine events.<sup>111</sup> Doni's 1562 edition of *Dichiaratione sopra il XIII capitolo dell'Apocalisse* (first published in 1552-53) emphasized the individual's role in the coming Apocalypse, complementing his previous critiques of the opulence and lack of humility in contemporary Venetian culture. Tintoretto's emphasis on the humility of Christ in *Christ before Pilate* and *Christ Carrying the Cross* and the cataclysmic undertones in the monumental portrayal of Christ on the opposite wall reverberate with Doni's critiques, albeit in more dramatic and confrontational terms.

Andrea Calmo (1510-1571) was another significant member of the *poligrafi* group and maintained a close relationship to both Tintoretto and Doni.<sup>112</sup> While little is

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<sup>108</sup> Longo and Romei, "Doni," 162.

<sup>109</sup> Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 19n.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

<sup>111</sup> Longo and Romei, "Doni," 161.

<sup>112</sup> Calmo likely knew of Tintoretto from childhood, as the poet's father Tadio ran a dyeing business in the Canareggio region. It is also possible that Tintoretto executed a mural of the *Abduction of Ganymede* for a building owned by Calmo's father. See Krischel, *Jacopo Tintoretto*, 6.



known about Calmo outside of a few extant plays and letters, the Venetian playwright was, like Doni, one of Tintoretto's greatest advocates during his formative years, calling the artist the "adoptive son of Apelles" and praising his ability to "portray a figure from nature in half an hour."<sup>113</sup> Calmo likely recognized Tintoretto's *prestezza* as the artistic equivalent of the literary *prestezza*, naturalism, and improvisation that was reminiscent of the *poligrafi*'s literary production during this period. Calmo's satirical style of drama and social critique, characteristics that became the hallmark of the sixteenth-century Venetian theatre, is reflected in much of Tintoretto's work of the 1550s and 1560s. Tintoretto adopts this satirical spin on sexual affairs in his *Venus, Vulcan, and Mars* (1550-1551; fig. 30), as the barking dog in the foreground alerts Vulcan to Venus' deceit. The use of satire also pervades Tintoretto's religious work as in *Christ Washing the Feet* (1547-49; fig. 31) in the adjacent Church of San Rocco in which the disciples' absurd preparation distracts from Christ's humble gesture of piety.<sup>114</sup>

Tintoretto's relationship with Calmo must have also relied on their shared interest in theatricality and the close connection each had to Venetian theatre.<sup>115</sup> The base of Christ's cross functions as the apex to the elevated stage-like platform on which the drama unfolds. Furthermore, in a manner similar to an actor breaking character to

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 6; and Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 77. Calmo's preference for Tintoretto's *prestezza* was likely influenced by the increasingly spontaneous nature of the theatrical scene in Venice in the mid-sixteenth-century. This was a period in which playwrights and theaters would frequently and quickly produce one-act plays. There was an appreciation for the rawness of the material and the acting.

<sup>114</sup> The satire is clearly evident in that the disciples that struggle to remove their boots and pants, while others sit around in what is an oddly casual atmosphere.

<sup>115</sup> Calmo paid special interest to the presence of the Spanish in the Veneto region, highlighted by his play, *Las Spagnolias*. See L. Zorzi, "Calmo, Andrea," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 16 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2002), 778-780.

address the audience directly, Tintoretto detaches Christ from his temporal setting to forge a personal relationship to the viewer in the Sala dell'Albergo. In addition to the artist's relationship with Calmo, Tintoretto's construction and decoration of stage sets as a young artist in the 1530s and 1540s likely enhanced the theatricality of his style.<sup>116</sup>

Perhaps the most notable reforming figure of the *poligrafi* group was Alessandro Caravia (1503-1568), an outspoken goldsmith and poet who championed a return to piety, humility, and charity.<sup>117</sup> Caravia, who lived and worked in the Canareggio region Venice, used his shop near the Rialto Bridge as a major distribution center for evangelical and social reformist ideals and literature. As Nichols notes, his primary target of criticism were the Venetian *scoule grandi* whose increasing interest in ostentatiousness and "elaborate devices and banquets" had separated these confraternities from their original function as fraternal charitable organizations.<sup>118</sup> Caravia especially took exception to the Scuola Grande di San Rocco, as the rapid growth in membership in the early sixteenth century afforded the confraternity the opportunity to construct a new meeting house near the Basilica di Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari. The reformer criticized the lavish decoration and significant expenditures in his poem, *Il sogno di Caravia* (1541),

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<sup>116</sup> Ridolfi notes that Tintoretto spent the early part of his career doing work for the theatre. It is unlikely that he worked on anything specifically for Andrea Calmo, as Tintoretto was fairly well established during the playwright's most prolific period. See Ridolfi, *Tintoretto*, 19-25.

<sup>117</sup> Krischel confirms the relationship between Tintoretto and Caravia by suggesting that the artist did a portrait of Caravia for art dealer Hans Jakob König after 1541. Krischel, *Jacopo Tintoretto*, 102.

<sup>118</sup> Nichols restricts his discussion of Caravia to his direct interaction with the Scuola Grande di San Rocco. For the Caravia quotation, see Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 150. For a more complete discussion of Caravia's approach to the *scoule*, see Manfredo Tafuri, *Venice and the Renaissance*, trans. Jessica Levine (Cambridge, MA: MIT University Press, 1995), 76-84.

They have spent 80,000 ducats when 6,000 would have been enough  
 The rest which was spent in vain  
 Could have been spent for the barefoot and naked who cry “alas”  
 Each one unhealthy and hungry<sup>119</sup>

Nichols highlights this exaggerative account to argue effectively that the confraternity hired Tintoretto in response to Caravia’s critique because the artist had agreed to decorate the meeting house at minimal cost.<sup>120</sup> The impact of charity is immediately evident in the artist’s construction of *Christ Carrying the Cross* in which two figures, dressed in Renaissance garb, assist the two thieves in carrying their crosses. Caravia agreed with his evangelical and reforming predecessors that there existed a direct relationship with the pious worshipper and God and that this faith demanded charity. He declared that the *scoule grandi* “should have an affection for Christ / And for the love of him these ill-spent ducats / Should clothe the naked and feed the hungry.”<sup>121</sup> Caravia’s use of the phrases “affection for Christ” and “for the love of Christ” recalls the traditional mystical teachings in which love of and affection for Christ signify a partial attainment of *gnōsis* and the presence of God.<sup>122</sup>

Caravia was called to testify before an inquisitional tribunal in 1561 when a heresy charge was brought against Giovanni Grimani (1506-1593), Patriarch of

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<sup>119</sup> Excerpt taken from Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 149.

<sup>120</sup> Nichols’ interest in Caravia and the representation of charity in Tintoretto’s work, however, only extends to social reform and does not consider Caravia’s evangelism.

<sup>121</sup> Tafuri, *Venice*, 81.

<sup>122</sup> Saint Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) discusses “love” as union in more ecstatic terms, which was to set up the basis of female mysticism for the following several centuries. See McGinn, *Foundations*, 210-238.

Aquileia.<sup>123</sup> The tribunal found Grimani's association with Caravia less troublesome than his intimate connection to more prominent reforming Italians like Pier Paolo Vergerio and Bernardino Ochino, both key supporters of the *Beneficio di Cristo*.<sup>124</sup> In 1549, Grimani was accused for being a "crypto-Lutheran," and he was forced to relinquish his position. He was acquitted in 1552, but was unable to restore his religious reputation until 1561 when he began the initiation process to become a cardinal. Anticipating his elevation, he commissioned Tintoretto for a "portrait in cardinal vestments" in 1561 (now thought to be lost).<sup>125</sup> Grimani must have been satisfied with Tintoretto's work because the cardinal commissioned the artist to paint the *Deposition of Christ* (1561; fig. 32) for the Church of San Francesco della Vigna in Venice.<sup>126</sup> It is inconclusive as to whether Tintoretto's association with Grimani, Caravia, Calmo, and Doni reveals the artist's theological leanings, yet considering the strength of these associations it is likely that he was aware and open to such reformist concepts and ideologies.

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<sup>123</sup> See L. Zorzi, "Caravia, Alessandro," in *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 19 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2002), 670.

<sup>124</sup> Nichols claims Giovanni Grimani to be one of the *papalisti* despite the significant evidence that he supported the reformist movements of Venice. See Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 137.

<sup>125</sup> "ritratto in veste cardinalizia." See G. Benzoni and L. Bortolotti. "Grimani, Giovanni." In *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani* 19 (Roma: Istituto della Enciclopedia Italiana, 2002), 617-618. Falomir also notes that Tintoretto continued his work with the Grimani family in the late 1570s in two portraits of Marco Grimani. See Miguel Falomir, "Tintoretto's Portraiture," in *Tintoretto*, ed. Miguel Falomir (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2007), 105-108.

<sup>126</sup> Benzoni and Bortolotti, "Grimani," 615.

*The Spanish Influence*

The evangelical aims of the *poligrafi* extended beyond the publication and promotion of Venetian works to include the dissemination of evangelical ideals and literature of foreigners as well. The most influential doctrines of Catholic mystical and evangelical reform in the sixteenth century arrived in Italy from Spain. As a result of its long and fraught “reconquering” of the Iberian Peninsula from Muslims and its close ties to both northern and southern Europe, Spain became a hotbed of religious reform in the sixteenth century. The Hapsburg Empire’s attempts to eradicate religious diversity in an area historically filled with various Christian, Jewish, and Muslim sects sparked a diffusion of religious theologies throughout Europe.

The most notable of these groups were the *alumbrados* (illuminists), whose emphasis on the benefits of contemplative worship and the attaining the presence of God inspired Catholic mystics and reformers like Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Juan de Valdés, and Saint Teresa of Ávila. The direct Christian roots of the *alumbrado* movement reside in the early Gnostic tradition, Franciscan “affective spirituality,” and Germanic mysticism.<sup>127</sup> The movement also contains elements of Arabic Sufism.<sup>128</sup> The *alumbrados* practiced mystical, visionary meditation in their attempts to achieve interior enlightenment. While the Church initially ignored the *alumbrados*, the cult-like

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<sup>127</sup> The specific elements of Germanic mysticism that most heavily impacted the *alumbrado* movement were its renewed emphasis on the individual (as opposed to the clergy), its Neoplatonic interests, and the focus on Christ rather than the church. See Steven E. Ozment, *Mysticism and Dissent: Religious Ideology and Social Protest in the Sixteenth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973), 39-133.

<sup>128</sup> For a discussion of the *alumbrado* movement and the important life and trial of María de Santo Domingo, almost universally known as “La Beata de Piedrahita,” see Alison Weber, “Counter-Reformation Misogyny” in *The Counter-Reformation*, ed. David M. Luebke (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1999), 143-162.

following of some of the major leaders of the movement threatened Church authority.

The daughter of a laborer born in Salamanca, known as “La Beata de Piedrahita,” was the first prominent member to be prosecuted by the Inquisition in 1511. The woman claimed that she had frequently communicated with God and the Virgin Mary, and the Church charged her with the pretense of holiness (she was eventually acquitted). This trial sparked the heavy prosecution of the *alumbrados* and potential sympathizers for the following century.<sup>129</sup>

The differences between the heretical *alumbrado* movement and accepted mystical theology were slight and largely depended on the ability of the accused to provide a thorough exegetical defense and to supply significant and high-ranking supporters. Those that escaped persecution were careful to reaffirm the connection between this intimate faith and the Church.<sup>130</sup> Notable inquisitional suspects like Ignatius and Teresa also reaffirmed crucial elements of Catholic doctrine: the innate sinfulness of humanity, the connection between faith and charity, the importance in performing all Catholic rites, and the Christocentric approach in attaining salvation.<sup>131</sup> They explicitly

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<sup>129</sup> Venetian ambassadors note the frequency, especially during the 1550s and 1560s, of the burning of the *alumbrados* in Spain. See, for instance, the report of Paolo Tiepolo to Venetian Doge and Senate, Spain, 16 June 1559, in *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy, 1558-80*, ed. Rawdon Brown, vol. 8 (London: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1890), 159.

<sup>130</sup> This connection became especially important in Spain where Charles II relied on the uniting capabilities of Christianity to bring several factions under one rule. For a discussion of the later reconquest of southern Spain and the continuous presence of the Jewish and Muslim traditions, see Derek W. Lomax, *The Reconquest of Spain* (New York: Longman, 1978), 160-178; and Edward D. English and Mark D. Meyerson, eds., *Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Medieval and Early Modern Spain: Interaction and Cultural Exchange* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1999), 197-308.

<sup>131</sup> Slade discusses Teresa’s inquisitional defense effectively by noting the key distinctions between the nun’s religious philosophy and that of the *alumbrados*. See Carol Slade, *Saint Teresa of Ávila: Author of a*

argued in both writing and practice that their direct relationship with God led them to reform the Church, not in terms of doctrine but rather in terms of behavior and practices.

Ignatius' association with the *alumbrado* movement began after a cannonball shattered his leg during a French siege at the fortress in Pamplona. In his recovery, Ignatius (still at this time known as Iñigo López de Loyola) wrote on the life of Christ and the life of saints. After leading a life of austerity in France, he was struck "in a wave of ecstatic illumination one day at the River Cardoner."<sup>132</sup> The mystical experience inspired Loyola to make a pilgrimage through Italy and Jerusalem, whereupon his return to Spain he began preaching a return to piety through the establishment of a direct relationship with God. During this period in Salamanca, Ignatius established an association with the *alumbrado* movement and the practice of mystical contemplation. While the extent to which Ignatius identified himself with the movement is unclear, his appreciation for the practices led to his inquisitional arrest in 1527.<sup>133</sup> When heresy charges against him were rescinded, Loyola began his religious studies at the University of Paris where he and a small group of fellow students, including Saint Francis Xavier,

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*Heroic Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 35-40. To understand the significant exegetical approach of the saint in her defense, see Teresa of Ávila, *The Life of Teresa of Jesus*.

<sup>132</sup> For an effective synthesis of the early, pre-illumination life of Ignatius of Loyola, see Bruce L. Shelley, "The Impact of Saint Ignatius of Loyola and the Council of Trent," in *The Reformation*, edited by Stephen P. Thompson (San Diego, CA: Greenhaven, 1999), 178-180.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 181. Ignatius was officially arrested under the charge of preaching potential heresy in a public space but was quickly released.

founded the Society of Jesus, familiarly known as the Jesuits, a missionary order that immediately began to disseminate Catholic doctrine throughout the world.<sup>134</sup>

Ignatius' imprint on Italian religious culture and sixteenth-century piety first occurred during his sojourn through Italy from 1522-24. While in Venice, Ignatius passed out thousands of copies of his reforming meditational guide, *Spiritual Exercises* (1522-24).<sup>135</sup> This book became the seminal work for the advocacy of mystical, contemplative prayer.<sup>136</sup> It ignited a publishing wave of treatises, dialogues, and books in Venice in which "the readers were instructed to meditate systematically on the events of Christ's life, as if they were present themselves" and feel themselves "present in those places as if the things were done in your presence, as it comes directly to you soul in thinking them."<sup>137</sup> In his spiritual guide, Loyola sought to discipline the human imaginative capabilities in order to achieve a more affective Christological focus in prayer.

One key theme running throughout the meditational guide was the importance of "suffering love." Ignatius dedicated an entire week of his four-week guide to this theme, as he asked his readers to contemplate Christ's Passion and Crucifixion. In the more

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<sup>134</sup> For a closer reading of Loyola's schooling and the formation of the Jesuit order, see Philip Caraman, *Saint Ignatius of Loyola: A Biography of the Founder of the Jesuits* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1990).

<sup>135</sup> For Ignatius' early influence on Italian religious society, see Terence O'Reilly, *From Ignatius Loyola to John of the Cross: Spirituality and Literature in Sixteenth Century Spain* (Brookfield, VT: Variorum, 1995), 445.

<sup>136</sup> While the Church initially recognized the potential heretical results of *Spiritual Exercises*, given the increasing support for Ignatius' Jesuit movement and Pope Paul III's commendation of the Society of Jesus, the Church considered the book acceptable.

<sup>137</sup> Ilchman provides a brief discussion of these new religious texts and associates them to the overwhelmingly pious quality of Tintoretto's works. See Ilchman, "Religious Narrative," 83, 93.



literal and extremist interpretation, and when associated with the renewed sixteenth-century interest in the imitation of Christ, “suffering love” supported the Christian tradition of penitential flagellation, a tradition that was a central and constitutional practice of several confraternities, including the Scuola Grande di San Rocco.<sup>138</sup>

Loyola’s Christ emphasizes to the practitioner that “whoever wishes to come with me must labor with me, so that through following me in the pain he or she may follow me also in the glory.”<sup>139</sup> In sixteenth-century Venice, “suffering love” described the experience of God’s presence through empathetic contemplation of Christ’s Passion.

Before having his readers reenact the events of Christ’s Passion, Loyola instructed his readers to envision the setting for each event, calling upon the viewers’ imaginative projection.<sup>140</sup> According to the reformer, the re-creation of the setting more easily enabled the practitioner to participate in the event.<sup>141</sup> Here Ignatius further departs from the *alumbrados* in his recognition of the efficacy of images for contemplative worship.

Tintoretto’s dramatic, monumental, and original manipulation of the traditional Renaissance Crucifixion image suggests that the artist intended his *Crucifixion* to both

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<sup>138</sup> See Christopher F. Black, *Italian Confraternities in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 100-105. Nichols associates the prominent use of rope in Tintoretto’s Passion cycle with the flagellant tradition of San Rocco. See Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 170-172, 224. Franco Tonon discusses the specific flagellant practices of San Rocco in his book on the early bylaws of the confraternity. See Tonon, *La Scuola Grande*, 11-15.

<sup>139</sup> See Ignatius of Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*, trans. George E. Ganss (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1992), 54.

<sup>140</sup> Ignatius asked the reader to envision the setting for each of the meditations on historical events in the life of Christ or Mary. Yet, in general, his text focuses on historical action more than physical description.

<sup>141</sup> Joseph F. Chorpenning provides the best discussion of the manner in which Ignatius’ emphasis on the “composition of place” and the “application of the senses” correlates to religious art of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. See Joseph F. Chorpenning, “Another Look at Caravaggio and Religion,” *Artibus et Historiae* 8 (1987): 149-158.

stimulate contemplation and perhaps represent the results of his own meditative practices. While the painting includes the standard Crucifixion elements, the artist's addition of witnesses who remain relatively oblivious to the chaos that surrounds them reinforces the theme of empathetic, contemplative participation. Furthermore, in his discussion of the mysteries of the cross, Loyola noted that the sky was "darkened, the rocks were split" when Christ commended himself to God the Father.<sup>142</sup> Tintoretto's painting perhaps speaks to this crucial moment in the story as Christ's commendation occurred while the executioners prepared the vinegar for his wound. The artist's sky is dark and ominous, and the vertically posed Christ splits the composition, pushing the landscape to either side. If the traditional reading of the offering of Jesus' spirit to God speaks to the union or reunion of Christ with God the Father, then Tintoretto's painting depicting this mystical union has the transformative function of uniting the witness to God through the mystical "Body of Christ" on the cross; Ignatius contended that as Christ ascends to God, so might the pious worshipper.

Sixteenth-century Venetian theologians recognized the unifying capabilities of Christ's sacrifice propagated by Ignatius. Contarini viewed the contemplation on Christ's Passion as the appropriate response to theological questions, and believed that Christians "must attempt merely to unite (themselves) with (Christ's sacrifice)."<sup>143</sup> Contarini's emphasis on the *imitatio Christi* highlights his reliance on Saint Augustine, who claimed

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<sup>142</sup> Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*, 115.

<sup>143</sup> For a brief discussion of Contarini's views on the role of the sacrifice in Christian salvation, see Fenlon, *Heresy*, 7-10.

that “Christ’s Passion is mystical and his mystical setting (*fixio*) of his cross in our hearts points out the wounds of our sins.”<sup>144</sup>

Contarini’s interest in Augustinian theology and familiarity with the *alumbrado* movement made him an ardent supporter of Ignatius’ teachings.<sup>145</sup> Scholars have argued that the Venetian *spirituali*, led by Cardinal Contarini, had received “vital impetus” from Spain and was a “direct descendent” of this *alumbrado* movement.<sup>146</sup> While generally refraining from involving himself in inquisitional matters, Contarini did note that he carried an affinity for the new Spanish religiosity.<sup>147</sup> Historian Peter Matheson argued that Contarini’s interest in Spanish mystical theology manifested itself at the Conference of Regensburg in 1541 when he employed the teachings of Ignatius’ movement.<sup>148</sup> The cardinal’s position as the unofficial leader of Venetian religious reform as well as his strong relationship with like-minded evangelical *spirituali* in Venice such as Reginald Pole, Marcantonio Flaminio, and Alvise Priuli supported the spread of Ignatian theology throughout the city’s reforming circles and the Canareggio district surrounding Tintoretto.

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<sup>144</sup> Augustine, *Augustine. Later Works*, edited by John Burnaby (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1955), 33:1; 32.7, 19.

<sup>145</sup> The cardinal was introduced to the *alumbrados* and mystical theology and practice on a cultural level through his work as the Venetian ambassador to Spain from 1520-1525.

<sup>146</sup> See Fenlon, *Heresy*, 69; and Eva-Maria Jung, “On the Nature of Italian Evangelism in Sixteenth-Century Italy,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 14 (1953): 514.

<sup>147</sup> The diplomat’s direct relationship with Ignatius began during the late 1530s after Pope Paul III elevated the secular Gasparo Contarini to the Cardinalate. The cardinal offered his recommendation for the approbation of the Society of Jesus in 1540. See Gleason, *Gasparo Contarini*, 35-48.

<sup>148</sup> See Peter Matheson, *Cardinal Contarini at Regensburg* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 164. Matheson’s claim that Contarini spoke in the “language of Ignatius” is somewhat controversial.

*Valdés and the Beneficio di Cristo*

It is perhaps the Venetian reformers' fondness for Ignatius' teachings that primed their quick acceptance of the culminating ideas of Juan de Valdés and his followers for the subsequent three decades.<sup>149</sup> Juan de Valdés, born in Castile in 1509, was a follower of the *alumbrado* movement during his studies in the 1520s.<sup>150</sup> His 1528 political and religious critique, *Diálogo de Mercurio y Caron*, attacked the corruptions of the papacy and Spanish religious administration. In fear of inquisitional proceedings, Valdés fled to Naples in 1531 where he began preaching on the importance of the interior conversion of the soul and the benefits of Christ's death. His shared ideology with Ignatius was confirmed in his 1537 treatise, *Alfabeto Cristiano*, when he emphasized that the pious Christian should "experience for himself every event of Christ's life."<sup>151</sup> His teachings and treatises attracted a widespread Italian following including Bernardino Ochino, Pier Paolo Vergerio, and Marcantonio Flaminio, all of whom resided in Venice shortly following Valdés' death in 1541.<sup>152</sup> The Valdesian philosophy was not restricted to the religious. Its mysticism and individuality attracted Vittoria Colonna in Naples, Venetian

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<sup>149</sup> This author considers the significant influence of Juan de Valdés and his movement to comprise the culminating period (1530s-1560s) of the evangelical movement in sixteenth-century Venice. Certainly, reformist activities continued in the city after the 1560s, but no organized movement received comparable widespread public response for the duration of the century.

<sup>150</sup> For historical background on Valdés, see Ruth Prelowski, introduction to "The *Beneficio di Cristo*," in *Italian Reformation Studies in Honor of Laelius Socinus*, ed. John A. Tedeschi (Firenze: Felice Le Monnier: 1965), 21-43.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, 2n.

<sup>152</sup> For a complete discussion of the influence of Ochino, Vergerio, and Flaminio in Venice, see John Jeffries Martin, *Hidden Enemies*, 74-84.

noblemen Donato Rullo, Vittore Soranzo, Tommaso Sanfelice, and Ercole and Giulia Gonzaga in Mantua.<sup>153</sup>

The followers of Juan de Valdés ensured the legacy and the influence of the Valdesian philosophy through the writing, publishing, and dissemination of the *Beneficio di Cristo*. Scholars agree that the book was written around 1540 by an anonymous Mantuan friar (commonly referred to as Don Benedetto) and revised by Marcantonio Flaminio shortly thereafter.<sup>154</sup> Both men were intimate associates of Valdés. The treatise on the benefit of Christ did not receive significant attention until leaders of the Venetian *poligrafi* published the first edition of the work in 1543.<sup>155</sup> Two more editions were printed within the following decade, and the *Beneficio* became the primary text on reforming theology of the sixteenth century.<sup>156</sup> Due to the cosmopolitan nature of Venice and the high literacy rate, Vergerio reported that the book remarkably sold over 40,000 copies in the city alone.<sup>157</sup> This number does not take into account the distribution of the book among friends and artisan shops and its frequent reselling by hawkers, who did “thrust” the books into the arms of those passing at prices that were equal to only two or

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<sup>153</sup> Tintoretto completed portraits and a Turkish battle scene for the Gonzaga family in the early 1560s. He was later commissioned by Ercole Gonzaga’s nephew, Duke Guglielmo Gonzaga, in the late 1570s, to paint eight large battle scenes. Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 133.

<sup>154</sup> The authors remained anonymous until 1566. Fenlon, *Heresy*, 74. Prelowski, “*Beneficio*,” 26.

<sup>155</sup> Bouwsma, *Venice*, 127.

<sup>156</sup> John Jeffries Martin, *Hidden Enemies*, 84.

<sup>157</sup> Prelowski, “*Beneficio*,” 23.

three days wages.<sup>158</sup> Martin describes the *Beneficio* as ubiquitous in Venice from 1540-1570. The book's immediate appearance on the prohibited book index in 1549 did little to stop its circulation or the spread of its reformist ideals. In the inquisitional trials of those accused of owning heretical literature, the *Beneficio* appeared in most collections.<sup>159</sup> The arrival of the work signaled the popularization of the evangelical movement that was previously limited to a select group of religious reformers.

The book, likewise, became the standard of Italian evangelism. Historian Ruth Prelowski argues that the book functioned as the quintessential amalgam of international and pre-Tridentine religious reform, combining Catholic tradition with Spanish mysticism, Erasmian humanism, and Lutheran interest in the justification of salvation through faith.<sup>160</sup> As historian Frederick Church noted in his seminal discussion on mid-century Italian reform, at its most basic level, the book relays Valdés' "mystical conception of the individual conscience as man's highest spiritual guide."<sup>161</sup> The *Beneficio* finds its strength in the return to traditional mystical theology. The authors reestablished the connection between faith and charity in the third chapter: "for our works cannot be good, unless we ourselves are made good and just through faith before we do

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<sup>158</sup> Martin provides the primary account of how these books circulated within popular society, and he is most effective describing the reformist movements as a widespread cultural phenomenon rather than the activity of an elite few. See John Jeffries Martin, *Hidden Enemies*, 29, 80-93.

<sup>159</sup> For an examination of the Venetian prohibited index as well the transcripts from some of these inquisitional hearings, see Grendler, *Rome and the Venetian Press*, 295-324.

<sup>160</sup> For a discussion of influences on the *Beneficio di Cristo*, see Prelowski, "Beneficio," 29-31.

<sup>161</sup> See Frederick C. Church, *The Italian Reformers: 1534-1564* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1932), 47-54.

them, as Saint Augustine also affirms, for the spirit of Christ is the spirit of charity.”<sup>162</sup>

The *Beneficio* also recalls the works of Saint Jerome and John Cassian in its emphasis on mystical union and mystical marriage imagery: “every faithful soul is the bride of Christ, and Christ is her spouse.”<sup>163</sup> The treatise applies the Neoplatonic theory of *gnōsis* as light, quoting and emphasizing the gospel of Saint John: “I came into the world as a light, so that everyone who believes in me may not remain in darkness” (John 10:46).<sup>164</sup>

Finally, it renews the emphasis of individual, mystical contemplation on Christ’s Passion and Crucifixion: “we are reconciled with God through his most precious blood,” and “it is this divine faith which inserts us in the death and resurrection of Christ, and consequently mortifies our flesh with its affections and concupiscences.”<sup>165</sup>

Tintoretto’s relationship to the *Beneficio* cannot be established biographically, but given the proliferation of copies in Venice, the popularity of the work in the artisanal district of Canareggio, the artist’s ties to the Venetian *poligrafia*, and his documented interest in religious matters, it is almost certain that the artist was familiar with the work and its ideals and possibly had read the book before embarking on the Passion cycle in the Sala dell’Albergo. The subject matter of the cycle alone suggests its engagement with the *Beneficio*. Tintoretto’s depiction of the tribulations of Christ’s Passion shares

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<sup>162</sup> Don Benedetto and Marcantonio Flaminio, *Trattato utilissimo del beneficio di Giesu Christo crocifisso, verso i Christiani*, translated by Ruth Prelowski, in *Italian Reformation Studies in Honor of Laelius Socinus*, edited by John A. Tedeschi (Firenze: Felice le Monnier: 1965), 52-53, 68.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, 59.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 67, 78.

the *Beneficio*'s emphasis on Jesus' physical suffering and the inherent meaning in this sacrifice. The authors remind the reader,

He should contemplate, on one hand, Christ on the cross, burdened with all our sins, and on the other, God who chastises him, beating his most-beloved Son instead of us. Oh, happy is he who closes his eyes to all other sights, and wants to see and understand only Jesus Christ crucified, in whom all the graces and treasures of wisdom are stored! Happy is he who always feeds his mind with such divine food and makes his soul drunk with the love of God by means of such a sweet and saving liqueur!<sup>166</sup>

The juxtaposition of Tintoretto's Christ on the cross and the beaten Christ of the *Ecce Homo* immediately opposite the cross seems to speak to the *Beneficio*'s dual contemplative emphasis. The spatial correlation between the central figures of the two paintings reinforces the cycle's sacrificial undertones. The morose poses of the mourning figures at the base of the cross alludes to the treatise's Augustinian claim that those who envision the Crucifixion and "take up the cross daily" have mystically "died with Christ."<sup>167</sup>

The Christ that projects from the cross reflects the *Beneficio*'s specific employment of light. The treatise combines the two mystical theories of God as light and Christ as charity to create a new transitive association: charity as light. The *Beneficio* argues for the interrelationship between faith and charity in stating,

Justifying faith then is like a flame of fire, which cannot help but to shine forth. It is true that the flame alone burns the wood without the aid of light, and yet the flame cannot exist without light. In the same way, it is true that faith alone burns and extinguishes sins without the aid of good works, and yet faith cannot exist without good works. If we see a flame of fire with no light, we know it is painted and unreal, and similarly, if we do not see the light of good works in someone, it is a sign that he does not have the true, inspired faith that God gives to his elect to justify and glorify them.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid., 82.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 76, 67.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 69.



If Nichols is to be believed and Tintoretto intended for his work in the Scuola Grande to emphasize charity, then the absence of symbolic images of charity in his defining painting in the *scuola* is peculiar. *Christ before Pilate* and *Ecce Homo* illustrate charity in Christ's quiet and humble resignation to his fate, and *Christ Carrying the Cross* highlights those figures in contemporary garb assisting with the thieves' crosses. Tintoretto might have intended for the ideal of charity to be more subtle visually in the *Crucifixion*, but the Crucifixion scene itself is symbolic of Christ's ultimate act of charity. In Augustinian and Valdesian terms, Christ is symbolically flooded with radiant light. The painter's savior manifests the *Beneficio*'s emphasis on the recommendation of Saint Paul that Christians should "cast off the works of darkness and put on weapons of light."<sup>169</sup>

The *Beneficio* might also be responsible for Tintoretto's decision to break away from the Renaissance tradition of portraying Christ before Pilate in red or burgundy attire.<sup>170</sup> The lavishly decorated white robe of the artist's elongated protagonist, which stands out against the dark and obscured sea of denouncers, reflects the mystical focus of

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<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>170</sup> It was traditional to clothe Christ before Pilate in the color red as a symbol of his future sacrifice. This is evident in Duccio's *Christ before Pilate* (1311), Pietro Lorenzetti's *Christ before Pilate* (fourteenth century), Jean Fouquet's *Christ before Pilate* (1445), and Hans Multscher's version (1437). In the early sixteenth century, artists tended to lighten the red; see Albrecht Altdorfer's *San Sebastian Altarpiece* (1509-16). Jacopo Pontormo's Christ in his unfinished version of the scene (1523-26) is the closest relative to Tintoretto's work, but his tonal selection lacks the brilliant emphasis (at least given its unfinished state) of Tintoretto's version.

the fifth chapter, entitled, “How the Christian Clothes Himself with Christ.”<sup>171</sup> The authors write based on Revelation,

I advise you to buy from God some gold made red-hot with fire, namely true faith inflamed with good works, so that you may become rich and clothe yourself in white garments, that is, in the innocence of Christ, and that the shame of your nakedness, namely the ugliness of your sins, may not be apparent.<sup>172</sup>

Tintoretto’s adoption of this color symbolism propagates the mystical belief that through the adornment of Christ’s garments one becomes “pure and free from all stains.”<sup>173</sup>

Furthermore, the *Beneficio* suggests that Christians clothe themselves in the innocence of Christ when coming before the Lord.<sup>174</sup> Accordingly, Tintoretto’s Christ submits himself before Pilate’s political authority and, in turn, the will of God to purify the sinfulness of mankind. In addition, the humble and charitable connotations filling the entire Passion cycle reminds the viewer of the *Beneficio*’s discussion of the Passion of Christ “in whose imitation we should clothe ourselves.”<sup>175</sup> Therefore, the effect of Tintoretto’s white-clad figure not only redeems our sins, but also inherently instructs the viewer to emulate Christ by wearing a garment of innocence.

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<sup>171</sup> Benedetto and Flaminio, *Beneficio*, 75.

<sup>172</sup> Revelation 3:17-18. *Ibid.*, 69. It is important to note that the concept of imitating Christ’s innocence would not have been unfamiliar to the sixteenth-century Venetian lay audience, regardless of the viewer’s familiarity with the *Beneficio*. Likewise, the *Beneficio*’s emphasis on wearing the clothes of purity only emphasized the ideas present in Revelations, and thus, does not require knowledge of the *Beneficio*. That said, given the book’s ubiquitous presence among the non-religious in Venice, its dedication of an entire chapter to wearing the clothes of Christ, and Tintoretto’s decision to break with tradition in draping Christ in white (as the *Beneficio* suggests), the *Beneficio* is influential. Familiarity with the book would enrich the sixteenth-century viewer’s experience of the work, and Tintoretto may have had the teachings of the *Beneficio* in mind when painting the scene.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 75.

<sup>174</sup> The authors of the *Beneficio* noted that the wearing the “clothes of innocence” when visiting a lord was traditional in the political sphere. *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, 76.

The authors dedicated a significant portion of the *Beneficio*'s final chapter to the mystical significance of the Eucharist. They claimed that only pious practice could ensure the effectiveness of the Eucharist by arguing that “whoever usurps the Lord’s meal without faith and charity, does not recognize the Lord’s body” and cannot unite himself with the body of Christ.<sup>176</sup> As was discussed in the previous chapter, the Sala dell’Albergo is loaded with eucharistic symbolism considering the room’s function. Each meal mystically unites the participant with Christ, and in this act, the Scuola Grande di San Rocco member is reminded of the confraternity’s call to charity.

*Mysticism and Evangelism in the Confraternity of San Rocco*

As is clear in the introduction of this paper, the discussion of mystical and evangelical elements in Tintoretto’s Passion cycle in the Scuola Grande di San Rocco is heavily contingent on the work’s reception and cannot be disassociated from its intended and actual audiences. My reluctance to address this audience, the mid-sixteenth-century members of the confraternity of San Rocco, thus far is not due to their lack of interest in these reformist movements, but rather to the unavailability of first-person responses to the cycle. It is clear that the cycle produced positive and affective reactions from its early viewers through the testimonies of sixteenth-century art critics like Vasari or in the preserved diaries of visiting artists like El Greco, but the confraternity’s archives do not contain any documents addressing the local reception of the work. Membership support for Tintoretto as the official artist of the *scuola* increased following the unveiling of the

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 80.

Sala dell'Albergo, but the confraternity does not explain the reasons for this increase.<sup>177</sup>

Due to the lack of confirmable evidence, this section will not attempt to describe specific reactions to the cycle, but rather reveal a community that would willingly accommodate mystical and evangelical practices and doctrine.

On the whole, confraternities in the sixteenth century intended to focus on the social branches of Christianity rather than debate theology. The foundation of the confraternities and their respective *mariegole* (treatise of bylaws) addressed theology only in the loosest sense. They needed to appeal to a variety of viewpoints in the upper artisan and elite classes, and therefore, publicly took an ambivalent stance to the reformist movements around them. However, considering that the confraternity of San Rocco drew upon the same artisanal class that had given rise to social and religious reform in Venice, it is probable that evangelical and mystical theology found adherents within the San Rocco membership. The confraternity's artisanal membership was substantial and, by the conclusion of the sixteenth century, included forty-two textile dyers, comprising twenty-five percent of its membership.<sup>178</sup> The textile industry was especially active in the Canareggio region of Venice where the *scuola* sponsored a *botteghe* and was among the largest groups that the Inquisition targeted for possible heretical activity.<sup>179</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> Tintoretto's willingness to work for low wages ensured him the support of the confraternity that was frequently attacked (including by Caravia) for excessive expenditure on the construction and decoration of the Scuola Grande. Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 175-180.

<sup>178</sup> Tonon, *Devotissima*, 93.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*, 58.

More specifically, two of the more important families with ties to reformist activities in Venice also maintained relationships to the Scuola Grande di San Rocco: the Contarini and Donà families. Neither family was among the membership of the confraternity of San Rocco, as it was unusual and unbecoming of elite families to directly participate. That being said, these families frequently functioned as patrons and unofficial guardians over the *scuole*. While participating in the Council of Ten in the mid 1530s, Tommaso Contarini, the brother of Cardinal Contarini, considered himself as an overseer of the newly developing confraternity. In September 1538, he helped the brothers resolve a dispute with local friars about the construction of a bell tower on the church façade.<sup>180</sup> He sided in favor of the confraternity of San Rocco, although admitted understanding the friars' perspective. A similar situation occurred ten years later with a relative of Tommaso, Francesco Contarini, who also supported the charitable activities of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco.<sup>181</sup> He commended the *scuola* for its charitable contributions and authorized their distribution of funds.<sup>182</sup>

This ruling was authorized under the guise of the Commissaria Donà, a commission established and originally funded by Maffeo Donà to help govern the *scuola* and its charitable donations. While the family did not necessarily take part in the everyday activities of this commission, they remained sponsors of the governing body

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<sup>180</sup> See Tonon, *La Scuola Grande*, 15.

<sup>181</sup> See Tonon, *La Scuola Grande*, 63-65.

<sup>182</sup> Francesco Contarini was also selected to participate on the lay tribunal for heresy in Venice. This tribunal only responded to specific accusations of the most serious heretical offenses and frequently ignored general concerns of heresy.

until late in the sixteenth century. The confraternity considered Francesco Donà, one of the most sympathetic doges to the evangelical movement during his reign from 1545-1553, a major hero of the school and one of its brethren.<sup>183</sup> The school was so enamored with Francesco that it commissioned a print of Francesco Donà presented to the Virgin to celebrate the election of the doge in 1545 (fig. 33). He also was among those who authorized the continuation of the annual donation to the Church of San Francesco della Vigna, the parish church of Giovanni Grimani and carried several ties to the evangelical movement.<sup>184</sup>

The influence of the Donà and Contarini families on the general membership's religious ideologies is unclear. However, an archival document suggests that at the very least some members were beginning to understand their spirituality in evangelical terms. In one entry in the Commissaria Constantin de Toderò Marcorà in March 1544, an anonymous writer establishes a direct relationship to the divine. He writes that it is his "voglia" (wish) to "entrust his soul to our Omnipotent Creator God, the Virgin Mary, and the entire Celestial Heart."<sup>185</sup> The final emphasis on the Celestial Heart corresponds to the mystical Augustinian concept of the invisible, Universal Church or communion of the elect. While in the sixteenth century the Catholic Church emphasized the external or terrestrial aspects of the Universal Church, Luther and the reformers sought to reinstate

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<sup>183</sup> See Tonon, *Devotissima*, 132.

<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, 66.

<sup>185</sup> "raccomendo l'anima mia al onnipotente Creator Iddio Nuò et alla sua gloriosa Madre Vergene Maria, et à tutta la Cuore Celestial." See Commissaria Donà, 1552, fol. 18, busta 270-6, Scuola Grande di San Rocco, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Venice.

its ethereal and invisible nature, returning closer to the Universal Church's Augustinian origins.<sup>186</sup> The Catholic Church's claim to its earthly authority and its decisive role as intercessor is significantly devalued, as the pious Christian's participation in the community of elect is no longer bound to its subordinate participation in the external Catholic Church.

The writer's emphasis on his unmediated relationship with the divine is further demonstrated in his claim that he will donate a hundred ducas to local hospitals because "the Omnipotent God calls me from this life."<sup>187</sup> It is significant that he receives instruction directly from the divine as opposed to the Church "calling him." The implication of this distinction is that his donation does not directly function to support his salvation. He has already entrusted his soul to the grace of God, but suggests that God calls him to demonstrate his faith through this good work. This belief recalls our earlier discussion of the ideas that Gasparo Contarini and Pole propagated at this time: the performance of charity is the direct result of the inflammation of the spirit sparked by intimate interaction with the divine.

In 1996 the confraternity of San Rocco guided, commissioned, and published Bruno Bertoli's book on the theological function of Tintoretto's art for the cult of San Rocco that argues that members of the confraternity responded to Tintoretto's cycle in

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<sup>186</sup> Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmann Publishing, 1969), 236.

<sup>187</sup> "I Omnipotente Iddio me chiama da questo vita." See Commissaria Donà, 1552, fol. 18, busta 270-6, Scoula Grande di San Rocco, Archivio di Stato di Venezia, Venice. Due to San Rocco's association with the plague, hospitals were frequent recipients of the confraternity's charity.

such mystical and evangelical terms.<sup>188</sup> The author suggests that the confraternity would have maintained an evangelical and mystical understanding of the paintings (Bertoli speaks to the entirety of Tintoretto's works in both the *scuola* and the church) due to its close relationship with practice of prayer; the confraternity recognized the potential of prayer to promote the "elevation of the soul to God."<sup>189</sup> As Bertoli argues, the paintings were meant to guide and accompany prayer, and the confraternity claimed that "the highest form (of prayer) was mystical contemplation, as a detachment from any personal interest and desire or as a moment of union with God."<sup>190</sup>

This interest in mystical elevation to the divine also seems to have corresponded to musical performance within the Scuola Grande di San Rocco in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century.<sup>191</sup> English traveler Thomas Coryat noted in August 1608 during a musical performance at the *scuola* that he (and likely others) "was for the time even rapt up with Saint Paul into the third heaven."<sup>192</sup> Historian Denis Arnold suggests that the Tintoretto-decorated setting for these often extravagant musical performances would have only enhanced the affective response to these musical pieces. While

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<sup>188</sup> Bruno Bertoli, *Arte e Teologia nel Culto di San Rocco* (Venice: Quaderni della Scuola Grande Arciconfraternita di San Rocco, 1996). It is important to note that my use of Bertoli's book is carefully selective as the author often reveals his bias, celebrating the paintings in the Scuola Grande di San Rocco.

<sup>189</sup> See Bertoli, *Arte*, 14.

<sup>190</sup> "La forma più alta divenne la contemplazione mistica, intesa come distacco da ogni interesse e desiderio personale o come momento di unione con Dio." *Ibid.*, 13-14.

<sup>191</sup> Denis Arnold notes that the San Rocco confraternity was one of the largest and wealthiest of the confraternities in Venice during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Furthermore, they were considered to be the foremost patrons of the musical arts. See Denis Arnold, "Music at the Scuola Grande di San Rocco," *Music and Letters* 40 (1959): 229-230.

<sup>192</sup> *Ibid.*, 236.



Tintoretto cannot be considered a musical or lyrical painter in relation to the poetic Venetian tradition, the intensity of his works would have highlighted orchestral crescendos and dramatic melodies.

Bertoli concludes his discussion of Tintoretto's work in the *scuola* by suggesting that it inspires "the contemplation of the great mystery, the contemplation of the story of salvation."<sup>193</sup> Yet, this interpretation is not complete. The Passion cycle not only illustrates the confraternity's interest in "lives lived in union with God," but also speaks to the importance of charitable activities as a result of such a union. Bertoli claims that the confraternity recognized charity as "the light of the evangelical message."<sup>194</sup> This metaphor conforms to the Augustinian understanding of charity as expressed in the *Beneficio di Cristo*, charity as the "light" of faith. Charitable activity, therefore, is inextricably linked to worship in the minds of the members of the confraternity, as the good Christian "prays while working and works while praying, knowing that he is invited to ask for the gift of mystical contemplation."<sup>195</sup>

The understanding of charity as the manifestation of mystical practices and beliefs, a reoccurring theme throughout this chapter, functions as the strongest link between mystical doctrine and evangelical reform in sixteenth-century Venice. Whether or not each member of the Scuola Grande di San Rocco would have understood the theological foundations of charity, the average confraternity member would have

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<sup>193</sup> Bertoli, *Arte*, 42.

<sup>194</sup> "esistenze vissute in unione con Dio" and "la luce del messaggio evangelico." *Ibid.*, 18-21.

<sup>195</sup> "prega operando e opera pregando, sa di essere invitato sia a domandare sia a tenersi disponibile al dono mistico del contemplare." *Ibid.*, 15.

recognized that pious, visionary worship leads to pious, charitable behavior. Through its close relationships to popular mystical texts, Tintoretto's Passion cycle in the Sala dell'Albergo functioned as the stimulus for such visionary meditation.

## CHAPTER IV

## CONCLUSION

In March 2009, the show “Titian, Tintoretto, Veronese: Rivals in Renaissance Venice” opened at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts. This exhibition followed closely on the heels of the 2007 feature show at the Prado dedicated to Tintoretto (and aptly titled, “Tintoretto”), as sixteenth-century Venetian painting has become a popular genre in both scholarly and more mainstream art circles. While both exhibitions and their respective catalogues impressively describe Tintoretto and his art in relationship to the Venetian artistic tradition, in general, they disregard cultural context, a deficiency present in the majority of Tintoretto scholarship.<sup>196</sup> If one agrees with Nichols’ claim that Tintoretto, above all else, was a “Venetian” painter, then the artist’s personal and professional identities, as well as the works he produced, must be responsive to his community environment. This thesis sought to understand Tintoretto as functioning within a broader cultural and civic history as well as within the Venetian artistic narrative.

It is clear that the underlying cultural milieu in Venice during the early-to-mid sixteenth century was one of religious and social reform, with the Canareggio region of the city as the center of activity. Mystical and evangelical ideas swelled within this

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<sup>196</sup> Works that specifically depict historical events in Venetian history are exceptions to this statement. Nichols’ monograph is the only notable published exception that examines cultural context more thoroughly.

setting that produced not only Tintoretto, but also the majority of his audience in the Scuola Grande di San Rocco. These Venetians turned to a mystical and personal understanding of their relationship with God as the strain of papal religious prosecution, rapid immigration to the city, and their instable political and economic position in the Mediterranean bore down on the city.

Tintoretto introduced his Passion cycle to the confraternity in this context, significantly altering the traditional understanding of these paintings. The *Crucifixion* is more than a dramatic visual spectacle; it is a panoramic image that might engage the viewer in contemplative activity. The three paintings on the eastern wall serve to reinforce the visionary potential of the *Crucifixion* and reflect mystical theology and complementary social reform propagated by Gasparo Contarini and in texts like Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises* and Don Benedetto and Marcantonio Flamini's *Beneficio di Cristo*. Tintoretto's Passion cycle in the Sala dell'Albergo should no longer function primarily as an impressive display of artistic genius and innovation whose atypical style and iconography make it difficult to situate within the Venetian artistic tradition. Scholars should recognize that the paintings are deeply embedded in, and contributors to, the reformist attitude that took hold of Venice in the mid sixteenth century when reformers emphasized the need for Venetian citizens to return to the pious practice of meditative contemplation on Christ's sacrifice, thereby guaranteeing their spiritual salvation as well as to re-stabilizing Venice's mythical position as God's chosen city.

## APPENDIX A

TINTORETTO'S *ECCE HOMO*: EUCHARISTIC AND SEXUAL UNDERTONES

The *Ecce Homo* is perhaps the most iconographically and theologically complex painting in the cycle in the Sala dell'Albergo. While the following argument is speculative and bears a loose relationship to the thesis, it is necessary to identify and consider possible interpretations of the sexual imagery in the *Ecce Homo*.<sup>197</sup>

Tintoretto's intimate portrayal of Pilate's presentation of Christ stands in stark contrast to the more monumental (in terms of figural composition and setting, not physical size) scenes flanking the picture. The artist unusually emphasized the tactile carnality of Christ and embedded sexual imagery into his representations of the scene's three primary figures.<sup>198</sup> This section will examine possible Eucharistic and mystical understandings of the painting's erotic undertones. Whether or not the lay sixteenth-century viewer would have consciously agreed with these interpretations is debatable (although I would argue that frequent viewers would have recognized the hidden sexual

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<sup>197</sup> Tintoretto scholars have yet to even identify the sexual symbols in this painting, which alone makes this appendix a significant contribution to the field. Scholars such as Nichols and Krischel have subtly noted the "rod" to which Christ is tied, but the "rod" of the soldier placed conspicuously and the hidden-in-plain-sight female genitalia in Pontius Pilate's robe have yet to be addressed.

<sup>198</sup> While Tintoretto excelled at using the body to relay emotion and psychological affectations, he rarely displayed especially in religious works an interest in tangible musculature or the glimmering sweat of the body.

symbols), the erotic charges of this image would have subliminally resonated with sixteenth-century viewers.

The placement of the rod to which Christ is bound generates possible controversy in the reading of the *Ecce Homo*. While the figure's *pudenda*, or "shameful parts," remains covered, the rod's phallic functionality identifies and highlights the sexuality of the Christian savior. Leo Steinberg asserts in his controversial book, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion*, that the erotic, sacrificial Christ is rich in symbolism.<sup>199</sup> Traditionally, the naked adult Christ has carried important meanings visually within the mystical branch of "incarnational theology" as the redeemer of Adam. Unlike Adam who covered his body in shame, Christ heading toward the cross is shameless, confirming that although he was human, he was not conceived in flesh as fallen man. The body in the *Ecce Homo* functions as an offering of forgiveness rather than as the motivator and symbol of sin.

Inevitably, the general reading of the disrobed adult Christ as sacrificial redeemer lends itself to the Eucharistic theologies propagated by the *Beneficio di Cristo*. The *Beneficio* emphasizes the unifying importance of the physical body of Christ in arguing that Christians are "enlivened by that immortal flesh, and in a certain way, (come) to share in its immortality."<sup>200</sup> The revealing of Christ's sexuality "participates in a mystic or tragic vision" and indulges the viewer in a mystical, "erotic communion," a theory that

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<sup>199</sup> Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996). I must note that this section is not intended to defend Steinberg's controversial theories on the meanings of the naked Christ figure. This section's reliance on Steinberg's controversial text is based more on his research rather than his conclusions.

<sup>200</sup> Benedetto and Flaminio, *Beneficio*, 80.

recalls Augustine's writings on the Trinity, in which the theologian identifies the consecration of the Eucharist as a "mystical prayer."<sup>201</sup> Historian Caroline Walker Bynum argues in her book, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*, that medieval monks and nuns understood Christ's sacrifice and the consecration of the Eucharist in mystically feminine terms.<sup>202</sup> Just as a woman sacrifices her breast and body to sustain the life of an infant, Jesus offers the pious his body to renew the life of mankind through the Eucharist. As an infant might suckle from her mother's breast, a pious Christian would mystically eat or suck from Christ's wounds to be spiritually renewed (see fig. 34).<sup>203</sup>

The phallic surrogate for Christ's penis complicates the symbolic reading of the central figure in the *Ecce Homo*, as Christ is not only exposed but also implicitly aroused.<sup>204</sup> Steinberg suggests that the erect penis on the dead Christ might mysteriously symbolize "flesh vivified," citing the orthodox understanding of the Resurrection story in

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<sup>201</sup> Steinberg, *Sexuality*, 5, 41. For the quote from Saint Augustine, see Augustine, *Saint Augustine: The Trinity*, translated by Stephen McKenna (Washington D.C.: Catholic University Press, 1963), 3.4.10.

<sup>202</sup> The very nature of understanding Christ and his redeeming capabilities in feminine terms recalls the Song of Songs' understanding of Christ as bridegroom and worshipper as the bride, a relationship in which the pious Christian behaves as both a lover and child of Christ. Bynum cites Anselm of Canterbury, a twelfth-century Cistercian monk indebted to the theology of the Song of Songs: "But you, Jesus, good lord, are you not also a mother? Are you not that mother who, like a hen, collects her chickens under her wings? Truly, master, you are a mother. For what others have conceived and given birth to, they have received from you... You are the author, others are the ministers. It is then you, above all, Lord God, who are mother." See Caroline Walker Bynum, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 114.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 119, 123.

<sup>204</sup> Depictions of sexual arousal are rare in Tintoretto's oeuvre. Unlike his Venetian predecessors and contemporaries, the artist did not consider the naked human form as a primary subject of exploration (this, in part, may be due to Tintoretto's focus on portraiture and religious subjects- neither genre conducive to the naked, aroused human form).

which Christ's body ascends as well as his soul. In *Ecce Homo* images, or in the iconic images of the Man of Sorrows that functioned as forerunners to the *Ecce Homo*, the activated sexual organ foreshadows the resurrection. The witty and provocative connotation appeared to be present in popular culture. Boccaccio's *Decameron* describes a character's sexual arousal as "the resurrection of the flesh."<sup>205</sup> Boccaccio's humor appears to function more as a lighthearted pun than a theological critique and alludes to the suggestive etymology of the term "resurrezion" or "Anastasis" (the Greek term for the Resurrection).<sup>206</sup> Sexual activation and spiritual rebirth were intertwined during the Renaissance. Sixteenth-century mystics recognized that to be "engulfed in (God)" was to be spiritually and physically resurrected, and physical affectivity often accompanied that process.<sup>207</sup>

The sexual undertones in Tintoretto's *Ecce Homo* are not restricted to the Christ figure, as the two flanking figures intensify the painting's connection to mystical spiritual rebirth. The soldier in his descent of the stairs turns back toward the center in an awkward pose as his left hand, holding a bastion, crosses his torso to support his body weight. The physical plausibility of such a maneuver appears to have been a secondary concern for Tintoretto. The artist placed the firmly erect and downward-directed bastion in a conspicuous position that counters the phallus of Christ. Similarly, Pontius Pilate's puzzling pose on the right functions to subtly reveal another sexual symbol. Tintoretto

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<sup>205</sup> "la resurrezion della carne." Steinberg, *Sexuality*, 84.

<sup>206</sup> Anastasis: "ana" meaning "up" and "stasi" meaning "to stand."

<sup>207</sup> Teresa of Ávila, *Life*, 119.



did not strive for naturalism in the drapery, but instead wittingly represents the female genitalia within the clothing. It is possible to understand the two flanking erotic images as support for reading of the *Ecce Homo* as portending Christ's Resurrection. These hidden depictions, while certainly demonstrating the humor that frequently accompanies Tintoretto's mature works (see *Venus, Vulcan, and Mars*), serve to emasculate Pilate and the soldier.<sup>208</sup> In this mystical interpretation, Christ's sexual fortitude counters their sexual inferiority. Christ's phallus represents the spiritual power of the resurrection that even death and degradation cannot overcome.

The physical layout of the Passion cycle generates another plausible and complementary interpretation of the erotic imagery within the *Ecce Homo*. Given the painting's position facing the *Crucifixion* (only twelve meters apart), the gaze of the battered Christ extends beyond the picture plane to himself on the cross, thereby confirming the fatal undertones of the cycle and suggesting a reactive role for *Ecce Homo*.<sup>209</sup> While this explanation is largely speculative, the sensual presentation of Christ and the inherent sexuality in the poses of the subsidiary figures might function as an erotic physical response to the event on the opposing wall. The gender-inclusive symbols, as well as the bow and curtsy poses of the soldier and Pilate respectively, argue

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<sup>208</sup> For a discussion of the wit and humor in Tintoretto's early to mature works (like *Venus, Vulcan, and Mars, Leda and the Swan, and Susanna and the Elders*), see Paul Barolsky, *Infinite Jest: Wit and Humor in Italian Renaissance Art* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1978): 175-179. Barolsky also includes *poligrafi* Andrea Calmo and Anton Francesco Doni in his analysis of sixteenth-century Venetian critical humor (*ibid.*, 167-169).

<sup>209</sup> The impact that the small space of the Sala dell'Albergo has on the process and approach to viewing this cycle cannot be understated. When seated in the center of the room facing the southern wall, with the *Crucifixion* and the *Ecce Homo* to each side, it is impossible to ignore the visual and contextual interplay between the two paintings.

for the naturality and universality of visceral response. In essence, spiritual, and thus physical, stimulation is inevitable when one chooses to become engulfed in God. Furthermore, the painting's placement directly over the entrance to the Sala dell'Albergo might cleverly suggest that Christ's response echoes the viewer's response to the *Crucifixion* when entering the room.<sup>210</sup> The viewer reacts as the triumvirate of the *Ecce Homo* symbolically reacts, suggesting that Tintoretto might have intended the confrontational potency of the western wall to stimulate a physically affecting relationship between the viewer and the divine.

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<sup>210</sup> It is unclear whether this sexual imagery would have appealed to the Scuola Grande di San Rocco more so than another Venetian confraternity. It is important to remember that outside of their religious and charitable functions confraternities functioned as social communities for gentlemen in which one could explore pleasurable activities such as music, art, food, and elite social engagements. In other words, sexual imagery should not be considered all that surprising given the intended, limited audience.

## APPENDIX B

## FIGURES

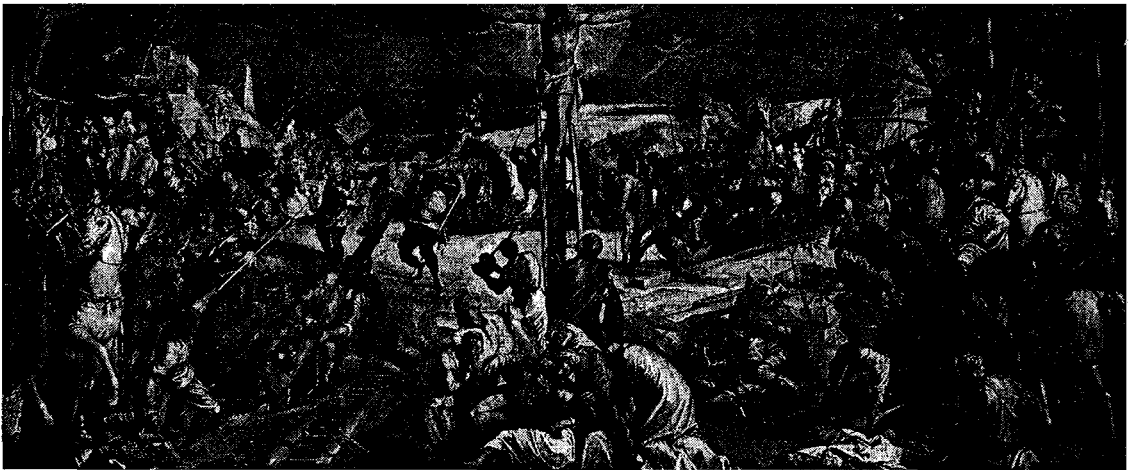


Figure 1 – Tintoretto – *Crucifixion* – 1565 – Oil on canvas – 536 x 1224 cm – Sala dell’Albergo, Scuola Grande di San Rocco, Venice. From Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 163.

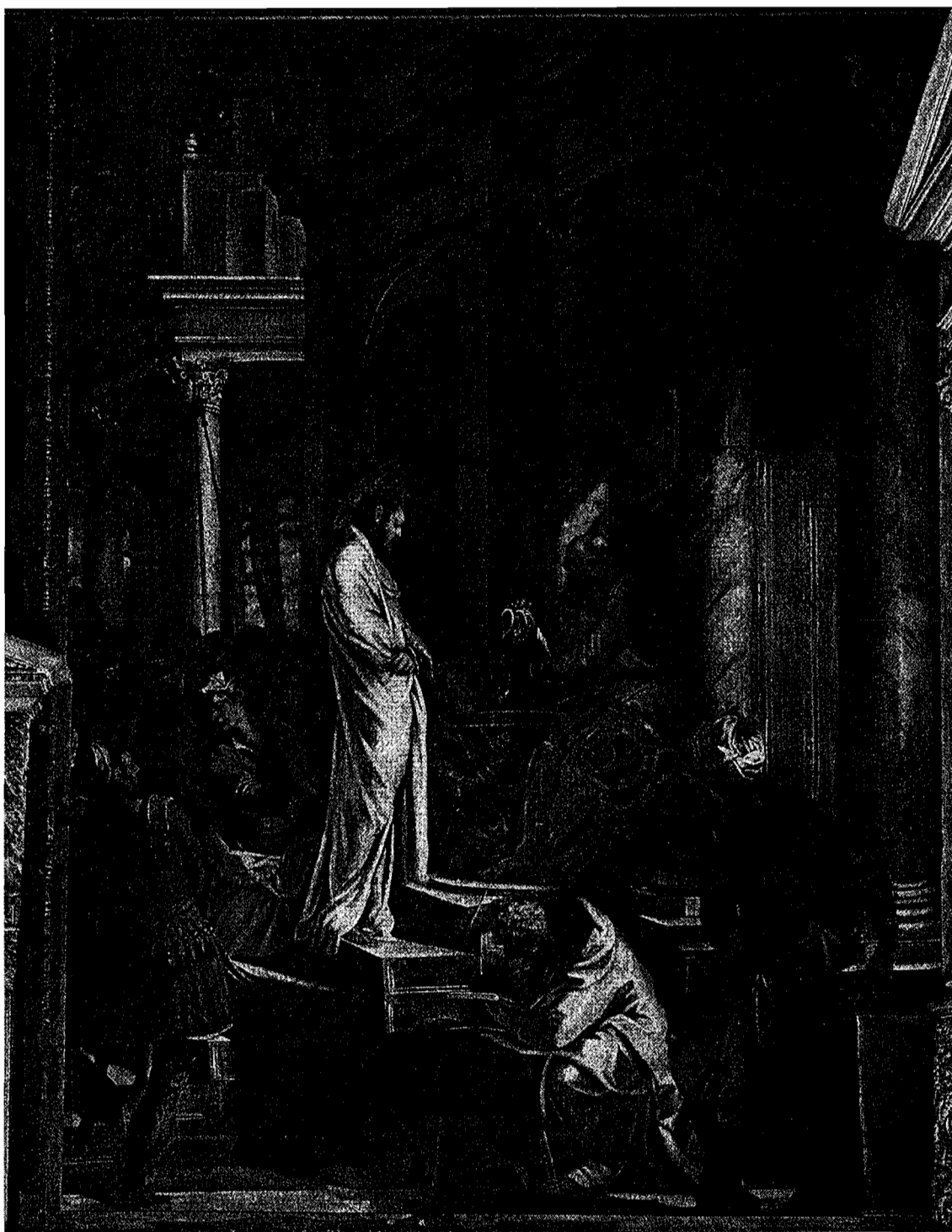


Figure 2 – Tintoretto – *Christ before Pilate* – 1566-68 – Oil on canvas – 515 x 380 cm – Sala dell’Albergo, Scuola Grande di San Rocco, Venice. From Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 171.



Figure 3 – Tintoretto – *Ecce Homo* – 1566-68 – Oil on canvas – 260 x 390 cm – Sala dell’Albergo, Scuola Grande di San Rocco, Venice. From Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 170.

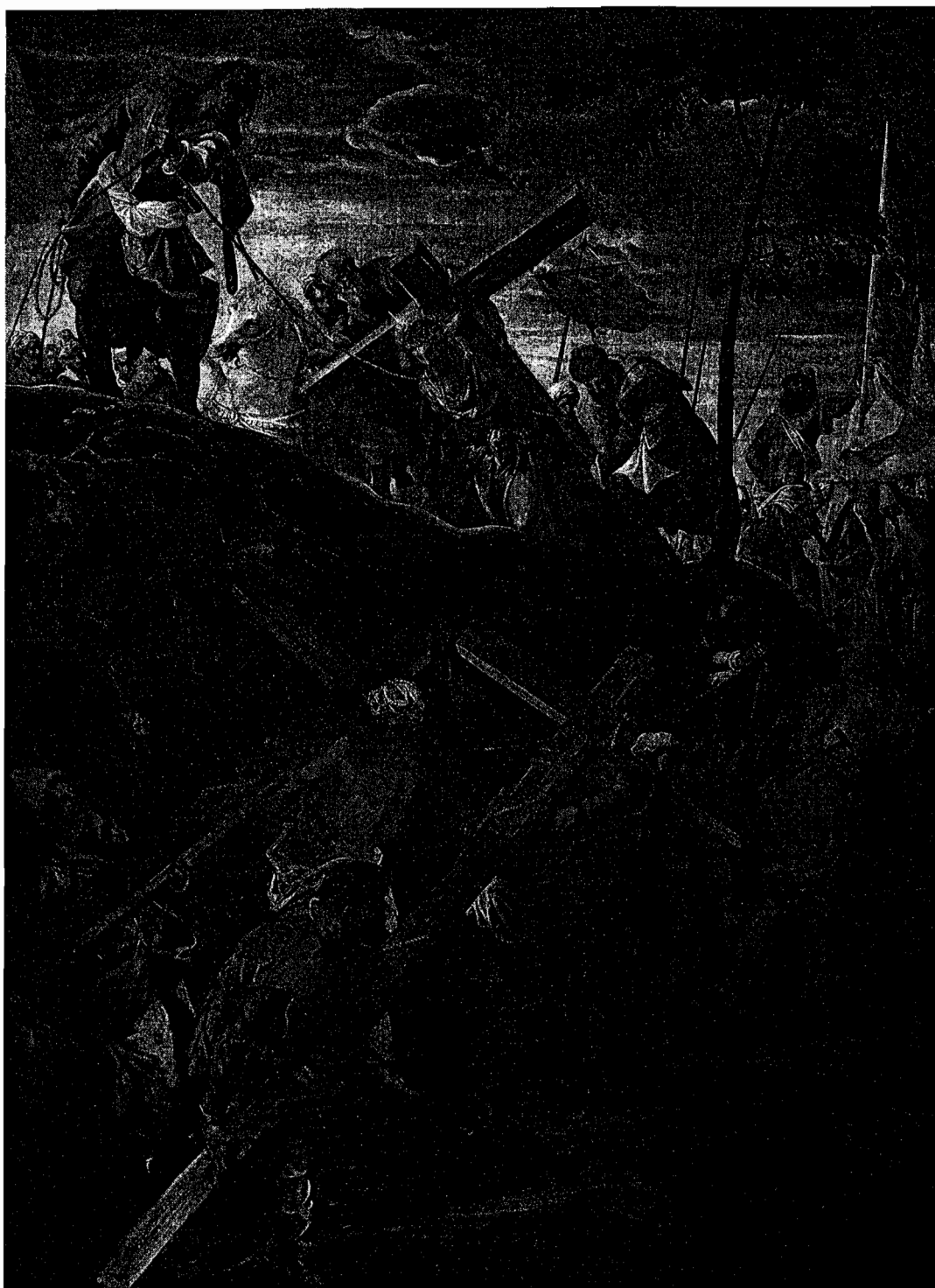


Figure 4 – Tintoretto – *Christ Carrying the Cross* – 1566-68 – Oil on canvas – 515 x 390 cm – Sala dell’Albergo, Scuola Grande di San Rocco, Venice. From Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 148.



Figure 5 – Agostino Carracci – Copy of Tintoretto’s *Crucifixion* – 1589 – Engraving.  
From ArtStor.

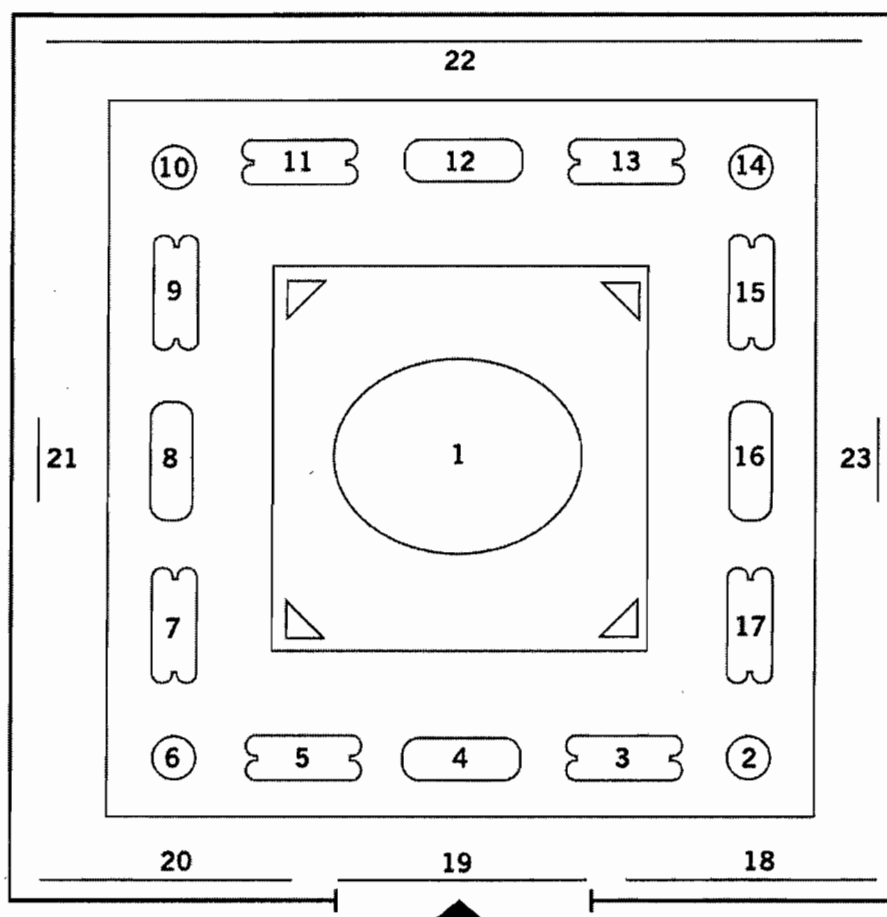


Figure 6 – El Greco – *Agony in the Garden* – 1597-1603 – Oil on canvas – 1020 x 1140  
cm – Toledo Cathedral, Toledo. From ArtStor.



Figure 7 – Scuola Grande di San Rocco and the Chiesa di San Rocco (exterior view).  
From Valcanover, *Jacopo Tintoretto*, 3.





- |    |  |    |  |    |  |
|----|--|----|--|----|--|
| 1  | <i>St. Roch in Glory</i>                   | 11 | <i>Allegory of the Scuola di San Giovanni</i>    | 16 | <i>Allegory of the Scuola di San Teodoro</i> |
| 2  | <i>Winter</i>                              |    |  | 17 | <i>Faith</i>                                 |
| 3  | <i>Female Figure</i>                       |    |  | 18 | <i>Way to Calvary</i>                        |
| 4  | <i>Happiness</i>                           | 12 | <i>Allegory of the Scuola della Misericordia</i> | 19 | <i>Ecce Homo</i>                             |
| 5  | <i>Female Figure</i>                       | 13 | <i>Allegory of the Scuola di San Marco</i>       | 20 | <i>Christ Before Pilate</i>                  |
| 6  | <i>Autumn</i>                              |    |  | 21 | <i>Prophet</i>                               |
| 7  | <i>Goodness</i>                            |    |  | 22 | <i>Crucifixion</i>                           |
| 8  | <i>Allegory of the Scuola della Carità</i> | 14 | <i>Spring</i>                                    | 23 | <i>Prophet</i>                               |
| 9  | <i>Truth</i>                               | 15 | <i>Hope</i>                                      |    |  |
| 10 | <i>Summer</i>                              |    |  |    |  |

Figure 8 – Layout of the Sala dell'Albergo, Scuola Grande di San Rocco, Venice. From Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 158.



Figure 9 – Tintoretto – *Saint Roch in Glory* – 1564 – Oil on canvas – 240 x 360 cm – Sala dell’Albergo, Scuola Grande di San Rocco, Venice. From Valcanover, *Jacopo Tintoretto*, 15.



Figure 10 – Titian – *La Assunta* – 1516-1518 – Oil on panel – 690 x 390 cm - Basilica di Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari, Venice. From ArtStor.

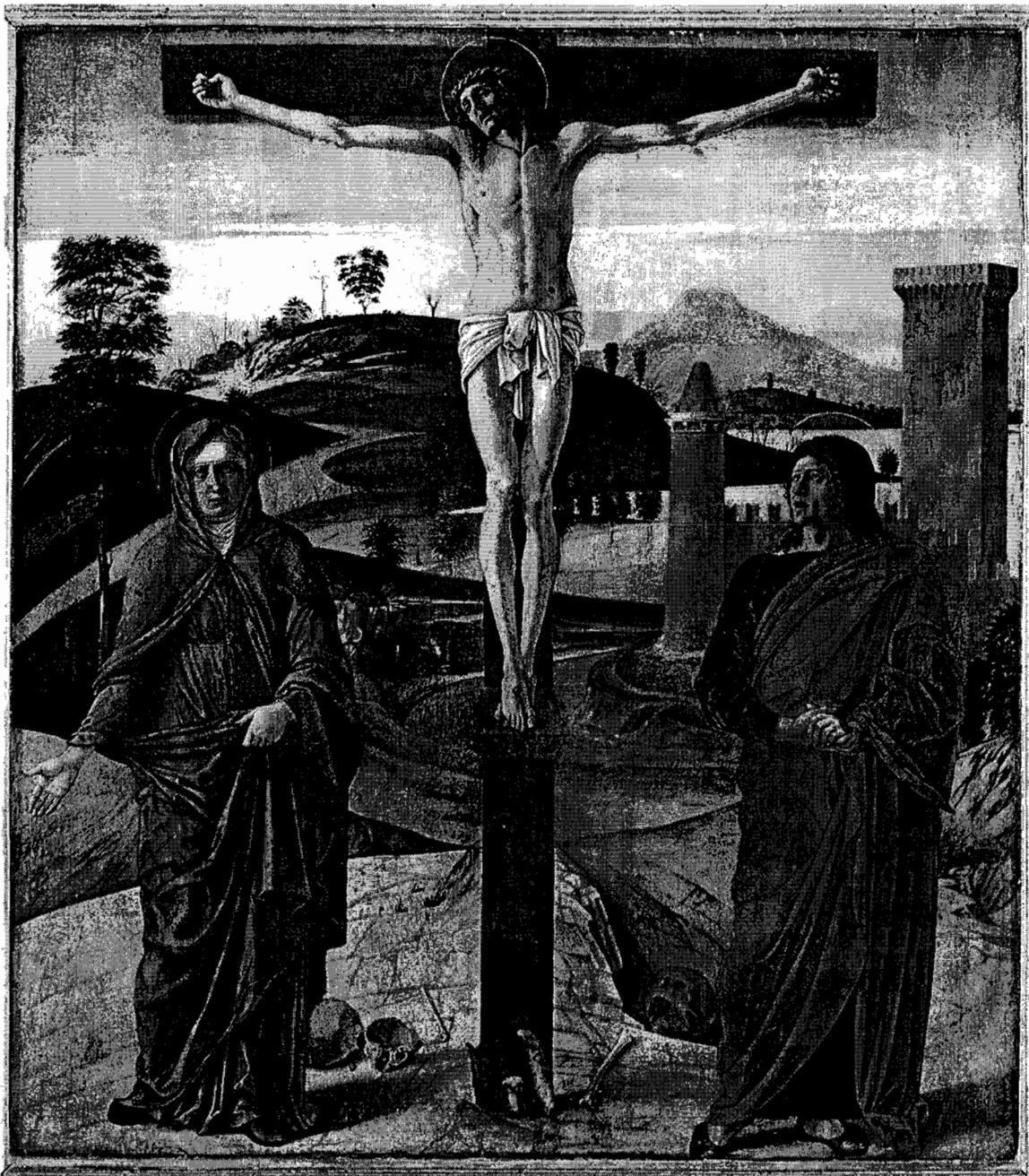


Figure 11 – Giovanni Bellini – *Crucifixion* – 1465 – Oil on canvas – 71 x 63 cm - Musée du Louvre, Paris. From ArtStor.

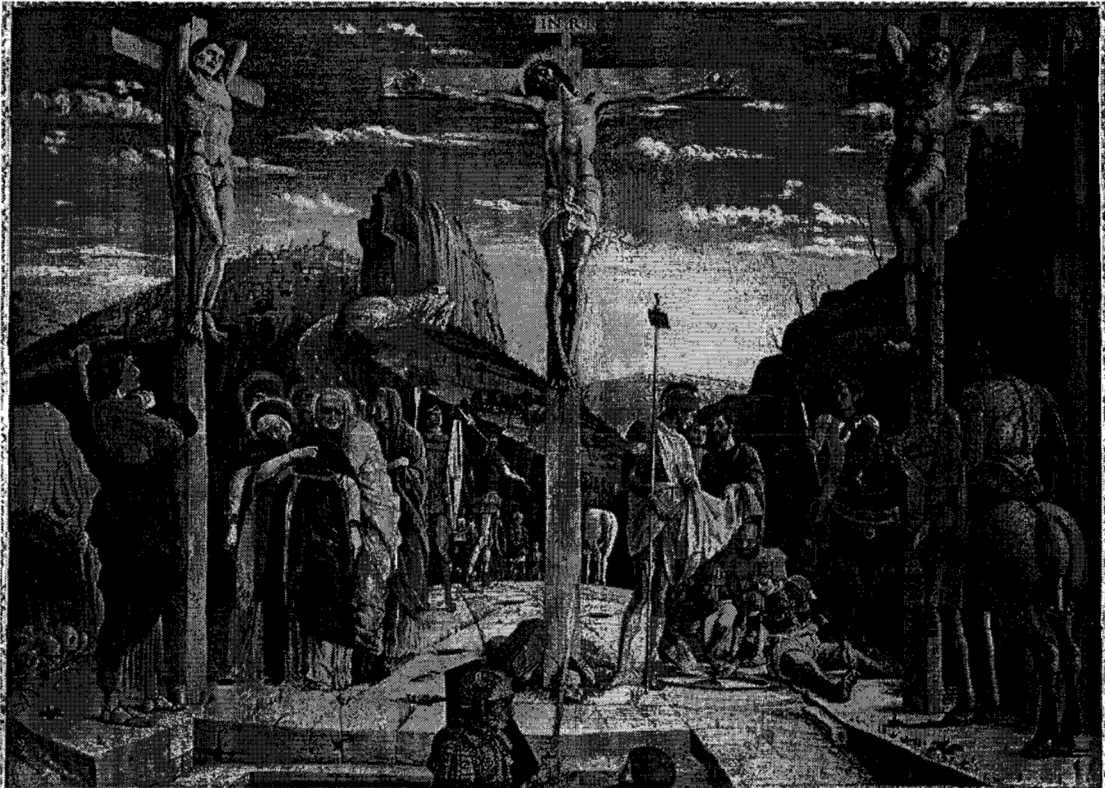


Figure 12 – Andrea Mantegna – *Crucifixion* – 1456-59 – wood panel – 760 x 960 cm – Musée du Louvre, Paris. From ArtStor.

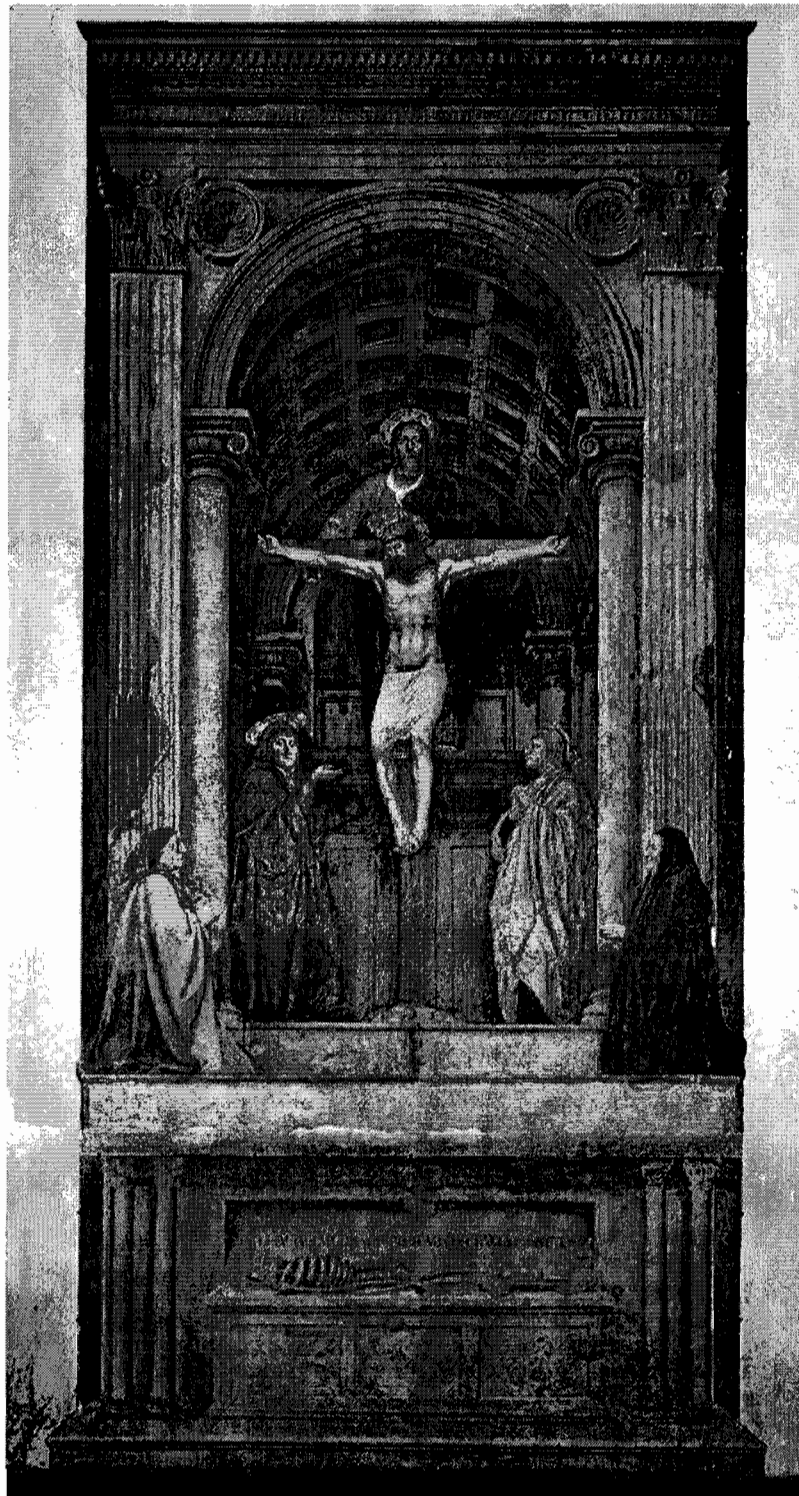


Figure 13 – Masaccio – *Holy Trinity* – 1428 – Fresco – 667 x 317 cm – Santa Maria Novella, Florence. From ArtStor.



Figure 14 – Andrea Mantegna – *Dead Christ* – c. 1501 – Tempera on canvas - 68 x 81 cm  
– Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan. From ArtStor.

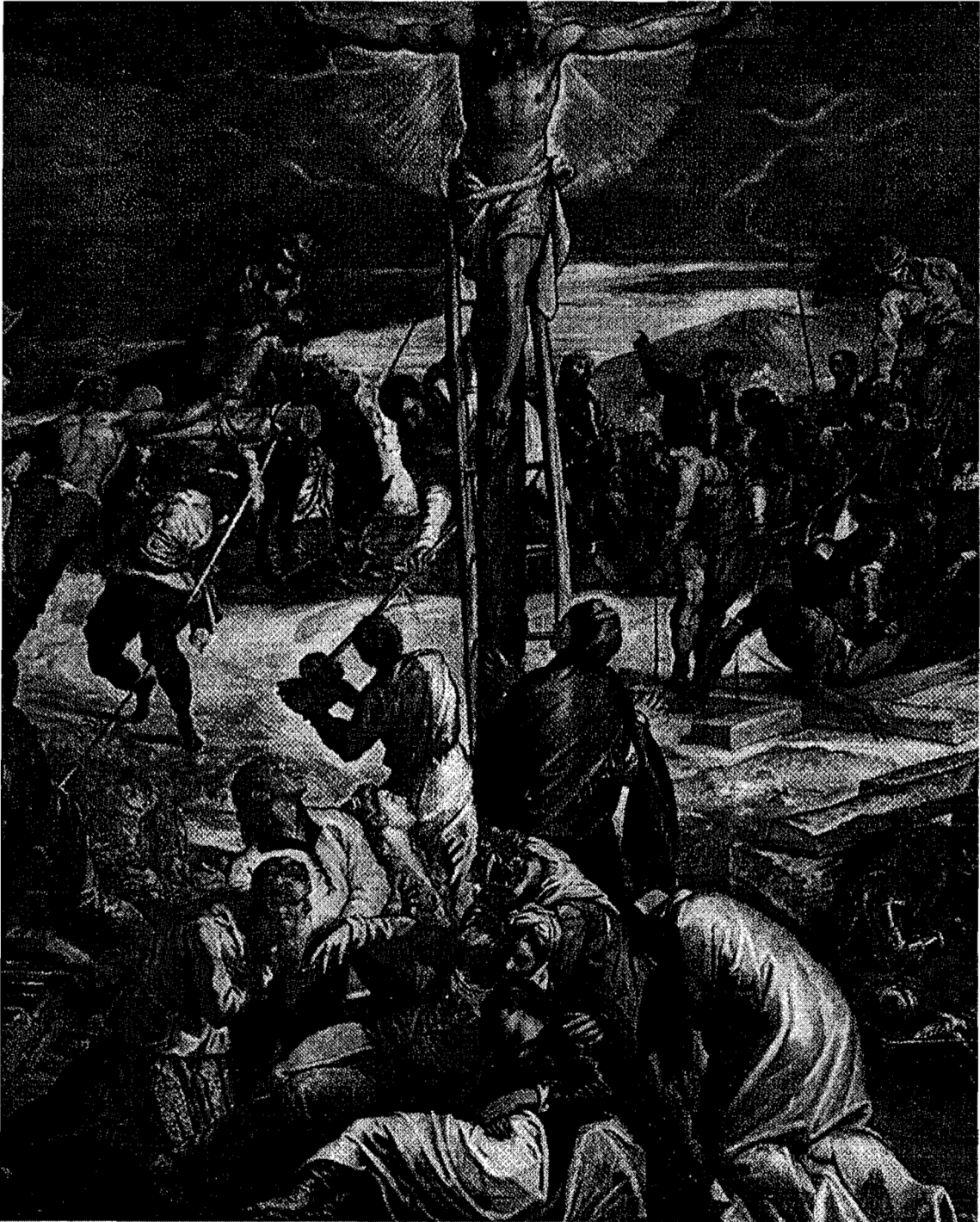


Figure 15 – Detail of figure 1.





Figure 16 – Tintoretto – *Crucifixion* – 1568 – Oil on canvas – 341 x 371 cm – San Cassiano, Venice. From Krischel, 74.



Figure 17 – Detail (Far East) of figure 1. From ArtStor.



Figure 18 – Tintoretto – *The Removal of the Body of Saint Mark* – 1562-68 – Oil on canvas – 398 x 315 cm – Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice. From Krischel, 70.



Figure 19 – East wall of Sala dell'Albergo. From Valcanover, *Jacopo Tintoretto*, 12.



Figure 20 – Albrecht Dürer – *Christ Before Herod*, from the *Small Passion cycle* – 1511  
– Woodcut. From Nichols, 172.

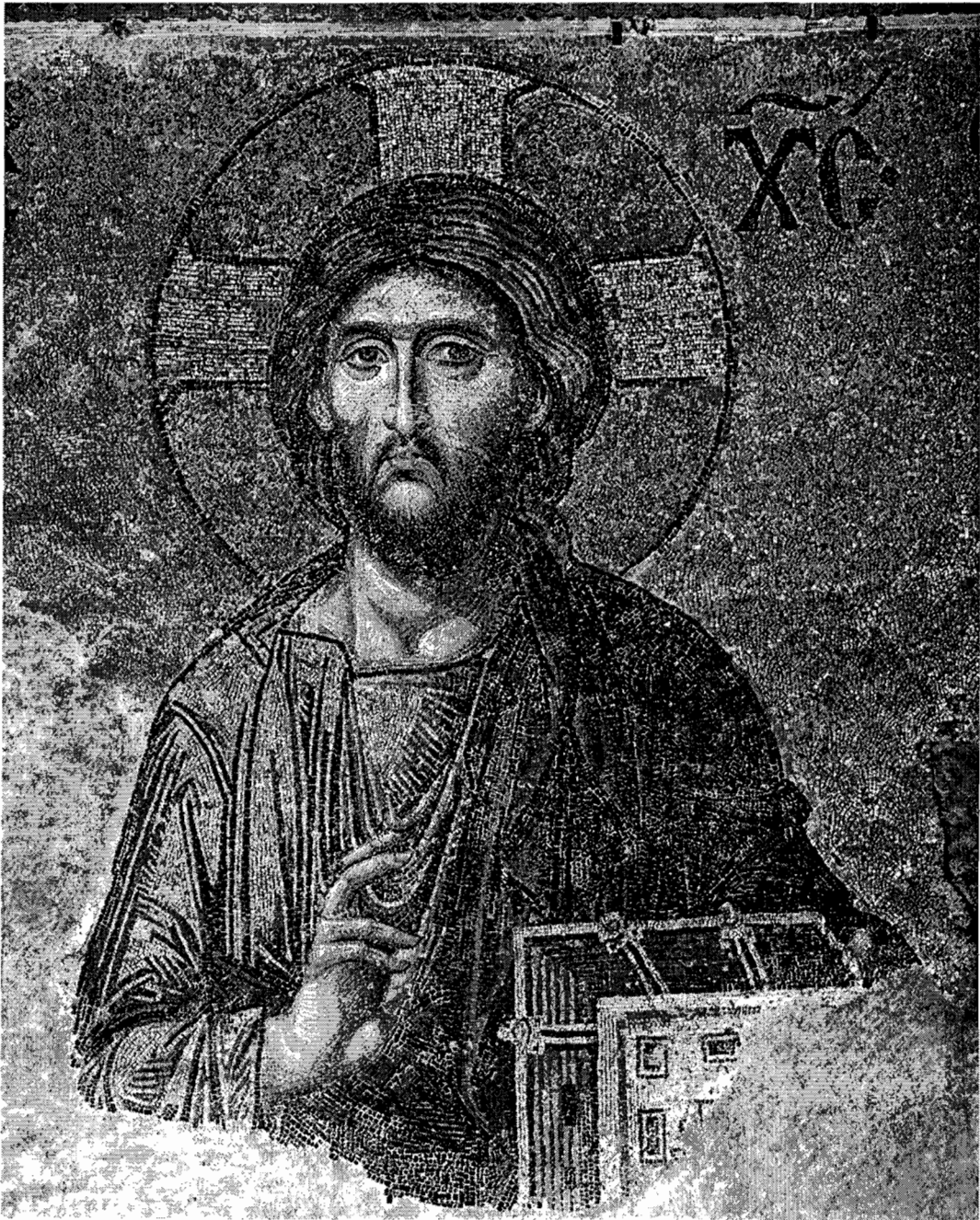


Figure 21 – *Deesis* (detail) – 12th century – Mosaic – Hagia Sophia, Istanbul. From ArtStor.



Figure 22 – Tintoretto – *Allegory of the Scuola della Misericordia* – c. 1564 – Oil on canvas – 90 x 190 cm – Sala dell’Albergo, Scuola Grande di San Rocco, Venice. From Valcanover, *Jacopo Tintoretto*, 17.

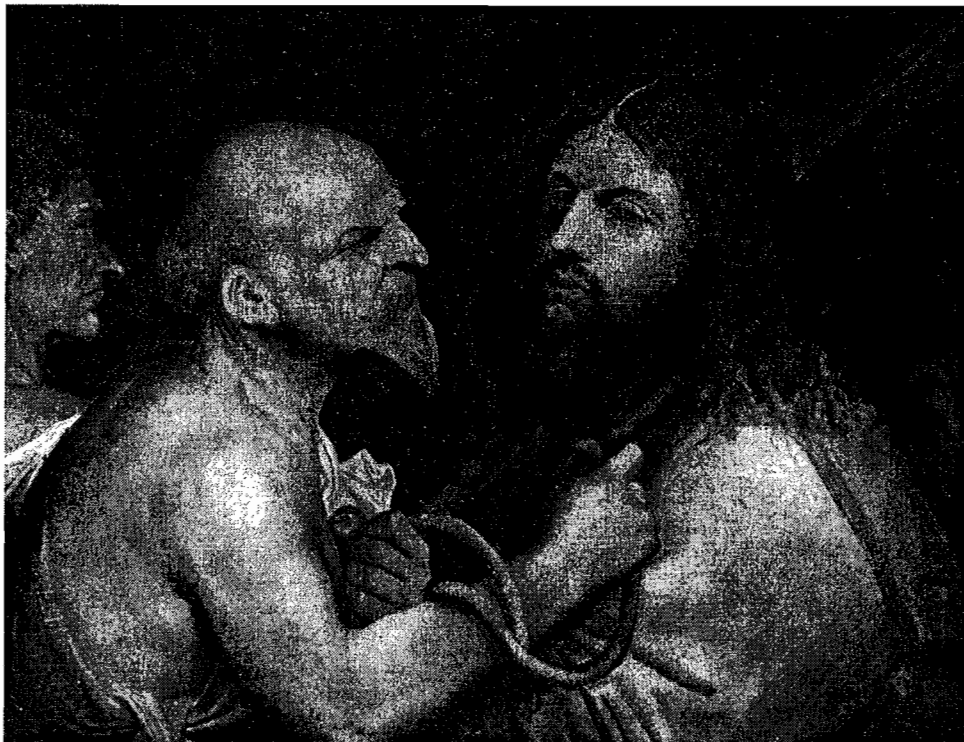


Figure 23 – Titian – *Christ Carrying the Cross* – c. 1506 – Oil on canvas – 68 x 88 cm – Scuola Grande di San Rocco, Venice. Valcanover, *Jacopo Tintoretto*, 36.



Figure 24 – Tintoretto – *Christ among the Doctors* – c. 1541-42 – Oil on canvas – 197 x 319 cm – Museo del Duomo, Milan. From Nichols, 32.



Figure 25 – Tintoretto – *The Miracle of Saint Agnes* – c.1563 – Oil on canvas – 400 x 200 cm – Madonna dell’Orto, Venice. From Krischel, 60.



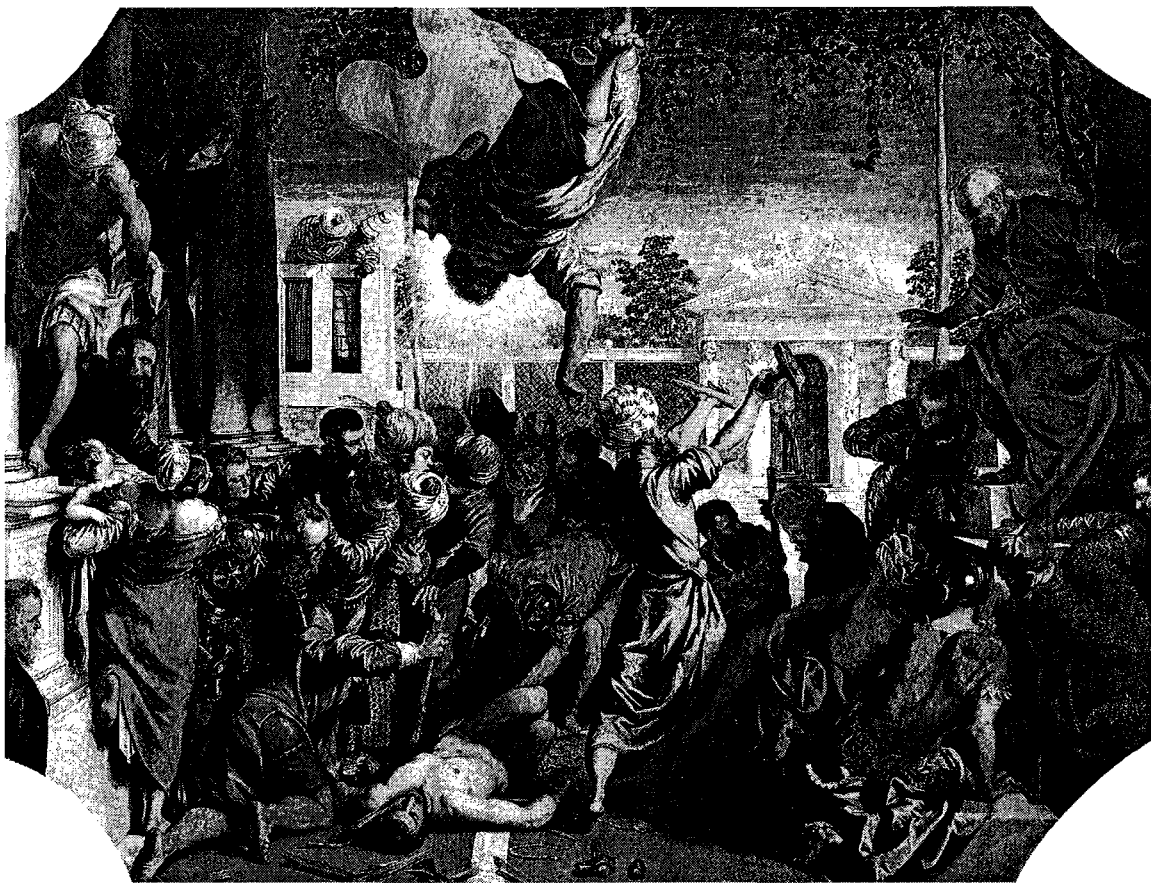


Figure 26 – Tintoretto – *Miracle of the Slave* – 1547-48 – Oil on canvas – 415 x 541 cm – Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice. From Krischel, 32.



Figure 27 – Tintoretto – *Last Judgment* – 1557-1563 – Oil on canvas – 1450 x 590 cm –  
Madonna dell’Orto, Venice. From Krischel, 67.



Figure 28 – Tintoretto – *The Vision of Saint Peter* – c. 1552 – Oil on canvas – 420 x 240 cm – Madonna dell’Orto, Venice. From Krischel, 54.

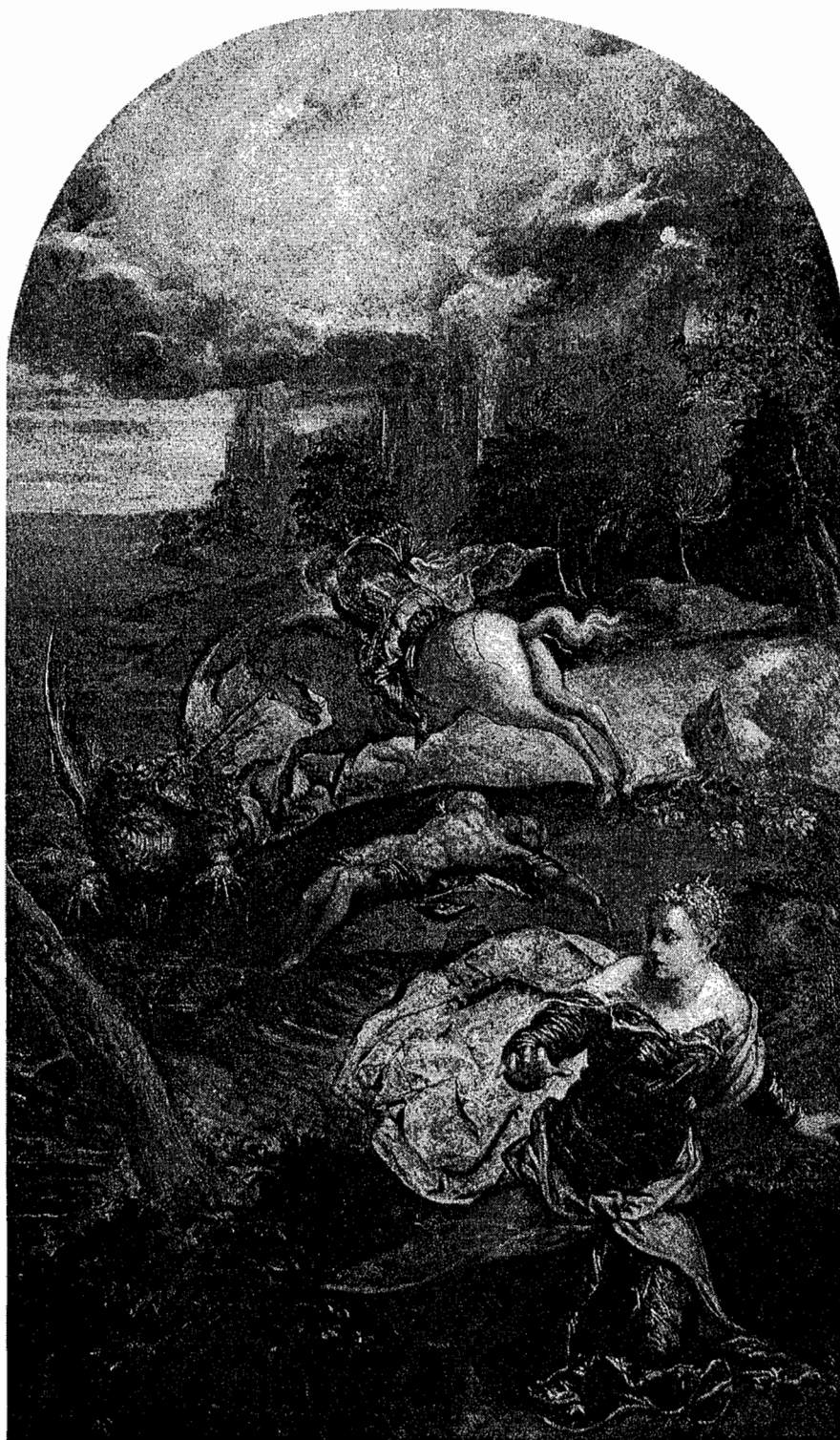


Figure 29 – Tintoretto – *Saint George Fighting the Dragon* – c.1553 – Oil on canvas – 158 x 100 cm – The National Gallery, London. From Krischel, 97.

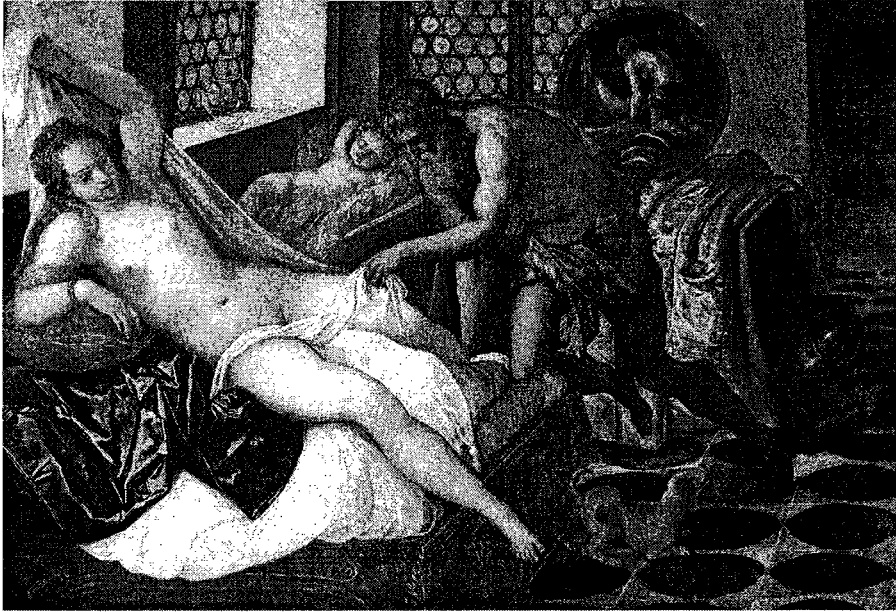


Figure 30 – Tintoretto – *Venus, Vulcan, and Mars* – c. 1551 – Oil on canvas – 135 x 198 cm – Alte Pinakothek, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlung, Munich. From Krischel, 94.

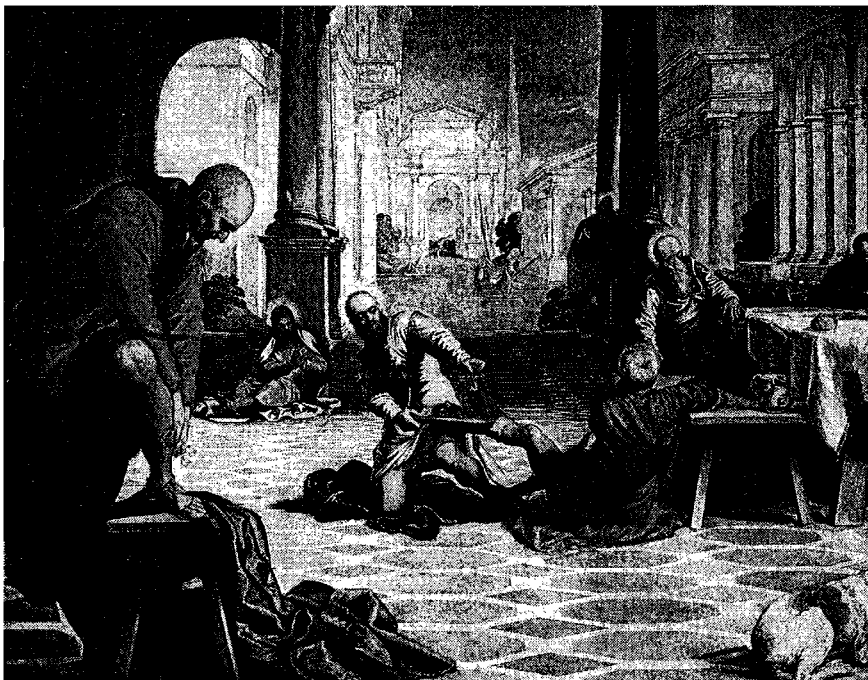


Figure 31 – Tintoretto – *Christ Washing His Disciples' Feet* (left detail) – c. 1547-49 – Oil on canvas – 210 x 533 cm – Museo del Prado, Madrid. From Nichols, *Tintoretto*, 80.

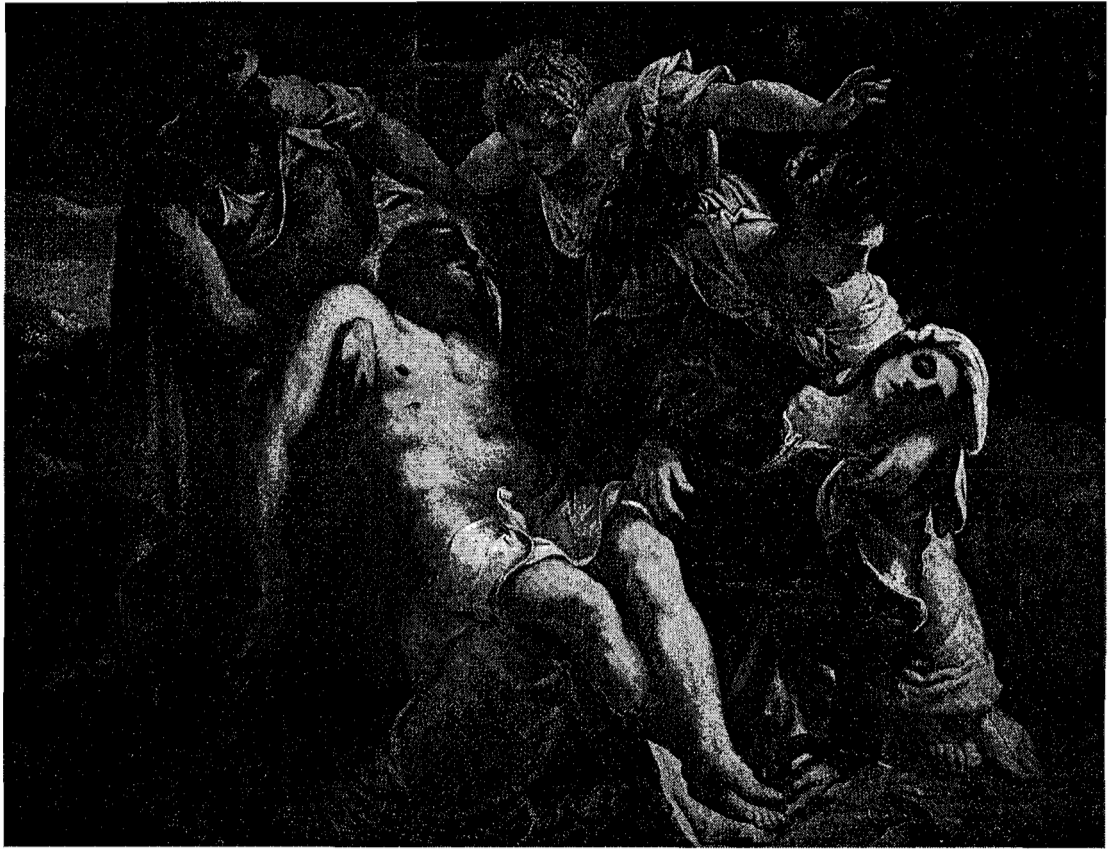


Figure 32 – Tintoretto – *Deposition of Christ from the Cross* – 1561 – Oil on canvas – 227 x 294 cm – Gallerie dell'Accademia, Venice. From Nichols, 144.



Figure 33 – Anonymous – *The Doge Francesco Donà Presented to the Virgin* (detail) – 1545-53 – Engraving. From Tonon, *Devotissima*, 132.

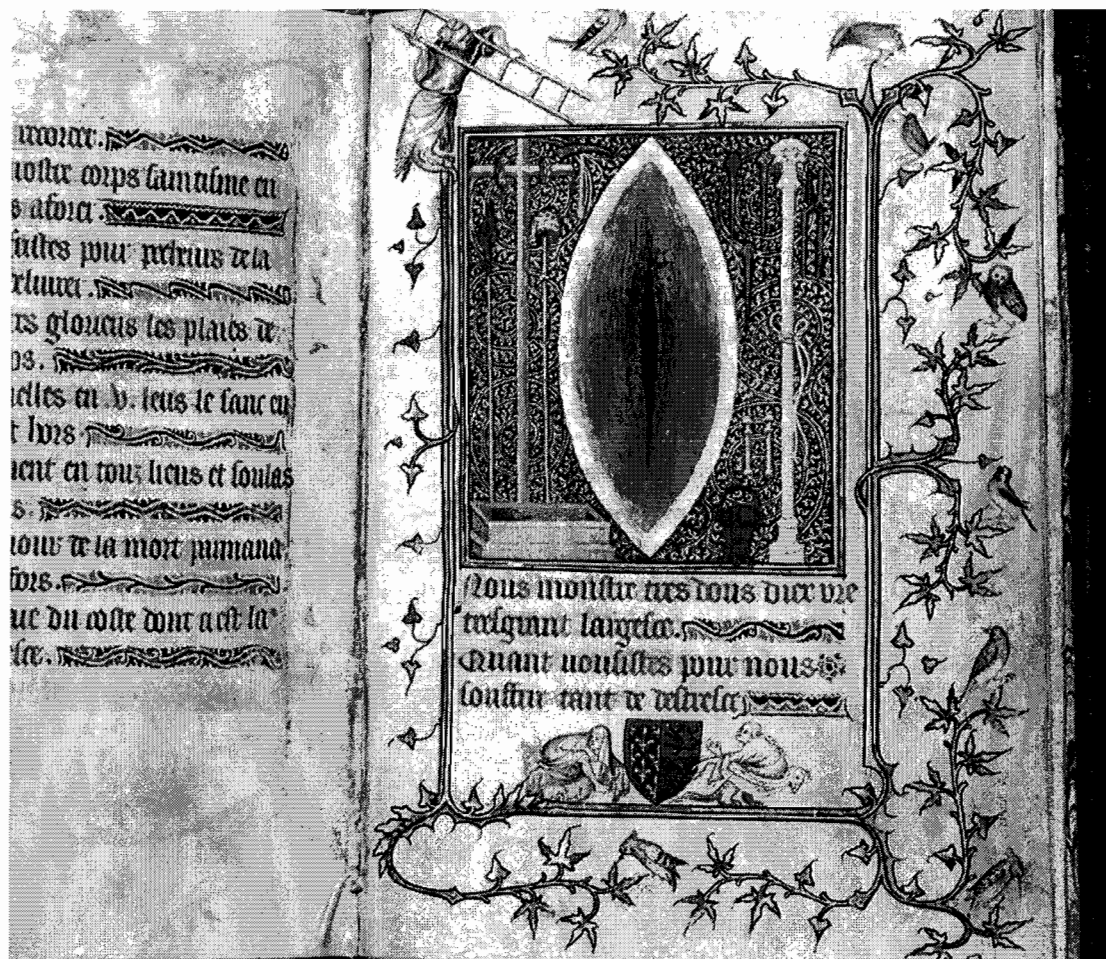


Figure 34 – Folio 331 from *Psalter and Hours of Bonne of Luxembourg* – before 1349 –  
 Tempera and gold leaf on vellum – Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. From  
 ArtStor.



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